

Handling Personal Safety

This is a 1-day course

Are you working in an environment where you are exposed to potential violence and aggression, and your personal safety may be compromised? The pace and complexity of modern life leave some people disenfranchised and prone to unpredictable behaviour. This course is for those that are potentially in their 'firing line'. It focuses on controlling personal risks and defusing anger before it escalates into aggression. This course is highly practical, participants learn through a range of training methods including short demonstration, skills practice, reflection and discussion. PowerPoint is used minimally!

Key topics covered on this course:

- Understanding anger and fear
- Learning how to stay in control
- Discovering one's own attitude to risk
- Understanding the pathway to violence
- Practising the skills to manage confrontation and violence
- Learning how to carry out a personal safety risk assessment
- Learning breakaway techniques
- Developing skills to report and debrief if incidents occur

Taking stock: Understanding anger

It's important that attendees gain a deeper understanding of the sources, causes, symptoms and issues surrounding violence and aggression in the workplace. They focus in on the effect on their physical health/well-being, and on the psychological impact of incidents. A portrait of the 'mind' of an aggressive person before the incident is outlined, to aid initial understanding of the processes that lead to aggression.

Taking stock: Understanding fear

As well as understanding anger it's equally important to understand fear - our own and that of others! The experience of feeling threatened is discussed openly and strategies are learnt to maintain control when faced with anger, threats or abuse.

Compromising safety

We often compromise our own personal safety for a number of reasons, arising from such beliefs as 'I've done this before and it went fine', or 'it won't happen to me'. Successfully tackling our own 'blocks' and raising awareness of the risks involved helps to keep all our safety options open as we go about our work.

The path to violence

Sometimes staff are just in the wrong place at the wrong time (e.g. threatened by a mugger), but more often than not there is some pattern or path that lead to the act of violence. Attendees on the course learn how to spot when clients are getting agitated and how to handle potential triggers.

Skills to manage confrontation

Whenever there is the possibility of customers or others wanting something that the staff cannot provide, there is potential for conflict. In managing the resulting confrontation particular focus is placed on skills around the four elements of: language, personal space, eye contact and touch. Other strategies practiced in this section include avoiding danger, defusing anger and being pro-active.

Managing unpredictable behaviour

Most behaviour from customers can be predicted on the basis of case history or experience. Participants consider what happens when they are faced with unpredictable behaviour. They

review their options!

Assessing Risk

It cannot be stressed enough: carrying out personal safety risk assessments is fundamental to understanding potentially dangerous situations. Therefore, a clear methodology is outlined for conducting this important but often neglected procedure.

Breakaway techniques

Participants get the opportunity to practise simple, safe and effective techniques that would allow them to break free and escape from an aggressor.

Surviving incidents or outbursts

If involved in an incident, it is vital to get help and ongoing support. Participants learn about reporting, debriefing, counselling, on-going support, management's responsibilities, legal matters and insurance and criminal injuries compensation.

Personal planning and review

The skills learnt are reviewed and an action plan is developed to implement those skills back in the workplace.

Who actually runs the training course?

The subject matter of 'Handling Personal Safety' can involve emotions and frustrations (why else would you need the course!). Therefore this course is run by a senior facilitator experienced in working with people in challenging circumstances.

Recent attendee comments:

- *Trainer was plain speaking and to the point. Excellent course, top level. **Security Co-ordinator, Private Industry.***
- *The course was very appropriate, made me think and not take my safety for granted each day. I'm now going to take stock of my working environment. **Security Manager, Private Industry.***
- *First class approach, clear and easy to understand. Vast majority of the workshop was appropriate for my job. I'm going to look at our health and safety procedures. **Car Park Attendant, Local Government***
- *I'm going to look at practical issues, recognising where someone is becoming angry and what to do about it. Course was very well presented. **Environmental Health Officer, Local Government.***
- *The training was excellent. I'm going to be more alert and aware of potential situations that could arise in the department. Will be working with the College to provide policies and procedures. **Student Services Officer, Higher Education.***
- *I would describe this training session as excellent. I learnt most from understanding the legal situation - the understanding that you must put your personal safety before your job or perceived duty to others. I will now do a risk assessment for Student Services. **Head of Student Services, Higher Education.***
- *Excellent course. I would like to see all members of staff have this training as it was very thought-provoking and necessary for all. **Attendance Officer, Higher Education.***