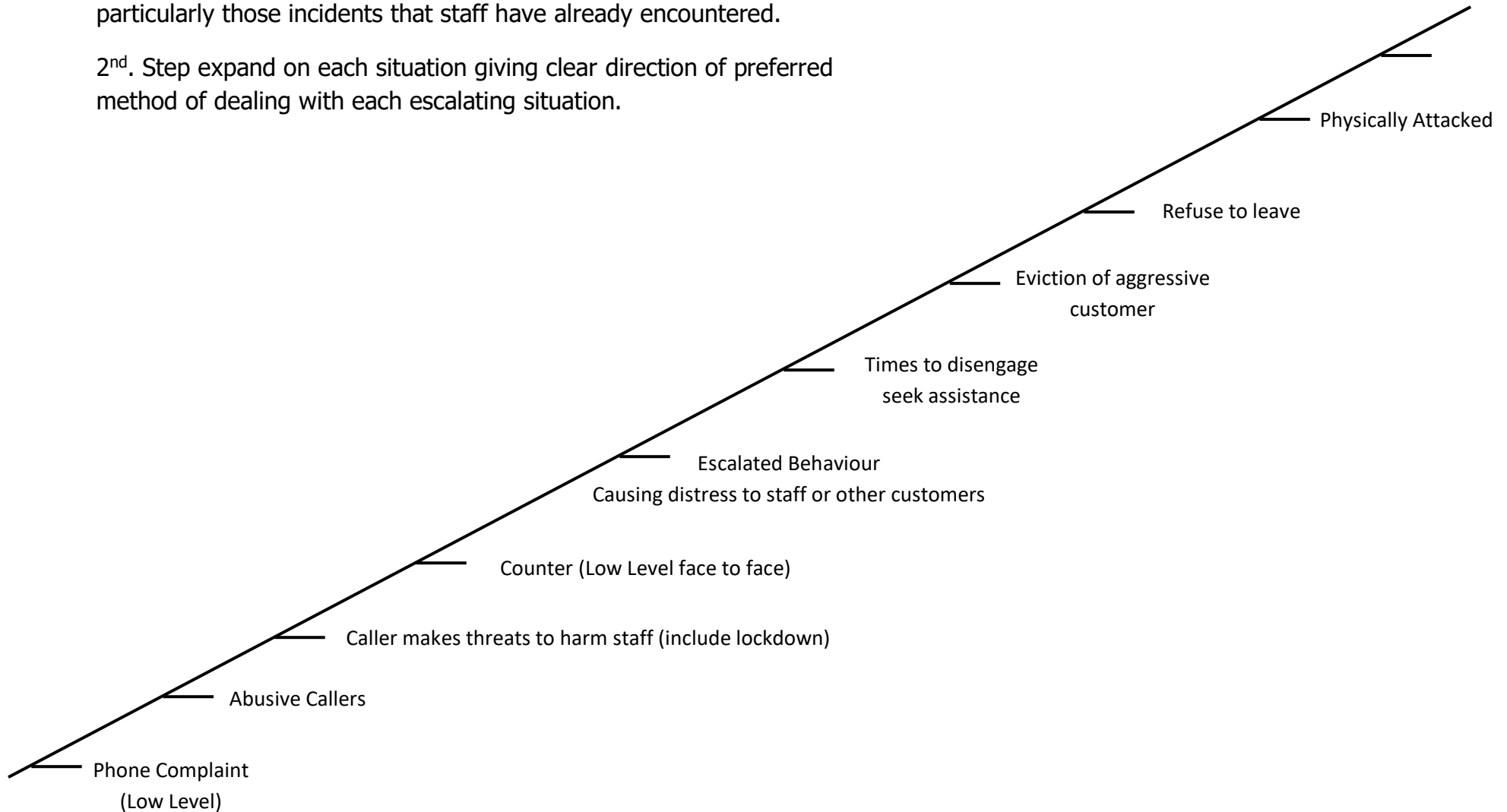


## Lost dogs home – Nth Melbourne

Customer aggression Procedures.

1<sup>st</sup>. Step – Identify all possible conflict situations staff may encounter; particularly those incidents that staff have already encountered.

2<sup>nd</sup>. Step expand on each situation giving clear direction of preferred method of dealing with each escalating situation.



# **Customer Aggression Procedures for Lost Dogs Home**

## **Nth. Melbourne.**

### **Policy Statement**

( state Company name) Some type of statement that outlines company Policy on the care and nurturing of Lost animals and how the company wants customer complaints handled. There should be some OH&S acknowledgement that the company does not expect staff to put up with customer behaviour that creates anxiety or behaviour that puts the staff member in danger.

### **Telephone Complaints**

- Customer Service friendly answering technique.
- Identify the exact nature of the complaint.
- Use good verbal listening technique and verbally respond and acknowledge any major issues raised.
- Empathetic statements where appropriate.
- Explain to the customer the policy or procedure that may be relevant to their issue.
- If you do not have authority to make a decision or you do not know the answer – Either (a) pass the complaint to relevant person or -
- (b) Take ownership of the complaint by stating what you will do in regard to follow up of the issue and where possible give a time frame for response. Or
- Or- escalate up to Duty Manager if necessary.
- Where appropriate thank customer for bring the issue to your attention.

### **Caller becomes abusive**

- When your tolerance level has been exceeded –
- Using a calm tone and manner acknowledge the complainant's issues.
- Tell them you really want to help then ask the customer to alter behaviour, eg: "I really want to help but I need your help first – can we bring the tone down a bit so I can better understand and help". (curbing technique)
- Should there be a further escalation; staff again should calmly either escalate the call to a duty manager or calmly advise the customer that the call will be terminated if behaviour continues.(never use an assertive or aggressive manner or tone – calmly /matter of factly inform them the call may be stopped..
- Calmly terminate the call if necessary and immediately notify Duty Manager.
- Duty Manager may choose to call the customer back and attempt resolution.

## **Caller makes threats to come in and cause harm to staff**

- On termination of the call the staff member shall immediately notify Duty Manager or senior staff member.
- A risk assessment should be conducted. Involve the staff member who received the call and any other staff who have knowledge of the aggressor.
- Based on the Risk assessment make a decision on whether the threat is low risk or high risk.

### ***Low Risk***

- Notify relevant staff including reception staff; that an upset customer could be attending.
- Make a decision on who may be the best person to take the initial complaint, Manager may or may not be suitable for first contact, sometimes Manager can be used as second contact.
- Consider where the initial contact is to be held – Consider the benefits of Isolating the complainant – only if the staff member feels it is appropriate and safe.
- Organise and brief a staff member suitable to monitor and to intervene and initiate termination of interview and implement eviction procedures if necessary.
- Manager may consider to call back the aggressor if possible and try calm the aggressor over the phone – if you have the necessary aggressor's Phone details.

### ***High Risk***

- Consider lock Down. (Lock down is in effect until Police arrive or the threat no longer exists.
- (include what is to be done in your sites lockdown – I am wondering do you lower roller doors to first customer entry?
- Inform all relevant staff.
- Call 000
- Notify any other site entry eg: Cats building?
- Consider what you are going to do with any customers within the lock down area. Eg : notify customers of short inconvenience – Let customers go via a back exit – ask customers to be patient until Police arrive?
- Manager may consider calling the aggressor back if possible.
- Internal procedure – re : notify CEO etc

### ***Aggressor is attempting to Breach the Lock Down***

- As it appears the aggressor may be successful in Breaching the lock Down –
- Staff shall Immediately start evacuating and follow “Fire evacuation Procedures” if possible.
- If fire evac Procedures cannot be implemented – evacuate to any safe place eg : (State a location)
- If possible as you exit areas lock doors behind you.
- Recall 000 and update them.
- Other areas of Nth. Melbourne site to be notified by ph or in person – whichever is safest.
- Every staff member shall stay away from the aggressor - regardless if property damage is occurring.

### **Counter Complaints**

- Assess intensity or sensitivity of the complaint and decide on whether the location of taking the complaint is suitable. Move the complainant if appropriate.
- Reception – move customer to.....(customise for each centre)
- Display good verbal and non-verbal listening skills.
- Empathetically react to any major issue stated demonstrating understanding.
- Where applicable explain any relevant policy or procedure.
- Or – Explain course of action to be taken.
- Or – Where necessary escalate up to Duty Manager.
- Only when appropriate, thank the customer for bringing the issue to your attention

### **Complainant’s Behaviour escalates causing distress to staff or other customers.**

- If possible and you think it is safe – isolate the complaint.
- Attempt curbing technique.
- Call for Duty Manger assistance or a senior staff member.

### **When to disengage and seek assistance**

- You feel anxious or threatened.
- The discussion has become circular with no resolution in sight.
- Curbing the behaviour has failed and others are distressed.
- You do not have the authority to make decisions in the circumstances or you don’t have the knowledge to answer the complainants questions.
- You are becoming angry.
- Seek assistance from Duty Manager or Senior staff member.

## **Evicting Aggressive Customers.**

- Staff handling the crisis to address the aggressor in a calm firm manner and ask them to leave the premises.
- Other staff can; where safe and applicable remove other customers – Isolate the aggressor.
- Crisis handler shall keep a safe distance from the aggressor and if possible stay behind any counter.
- If the staff member is thinking Police then either call 000 or delegate another staff member to call 000 – in the hearing of the aggressor if possible.
- Never threaten the aggressor with Police.
- If the aggressor is reluctant to leave or increases their abuse – calmly inform the aggressor that Police have been called.

## **Aggressor refuses to leave**

- Calmly and firmly inform aggressor Police have been called again. Eg : "Police have been called a few minutes ago – Nth Melbourne is a small suburb – Police will be here any minute – you are better to leave now.
- Remove yourself from the aggressor – Isolate them – don't ever get near them - await Police attendance.
- Incident controller can consider calling 000 a second or third time if necessary.

## **Aggressive behaviour escalating towards violence**

- Where possible two staff to attend.
- Do not place yourself in danger. (do not get too close to the aggressor)
- First responder - Gain attention of the aggressor.
- Always look to remove the easiest person. Eg : staff member or victim
- Second responder remove victim or other person from the immediate scene.
- Use de-escalating techniques to calm aggressor. Get a commitment from the customer not to reoffend (if appropriate considering the behaviour and level of distress caused)
- Or – where behaviour is totally inappropriate inform the aggressor they have to leave the premises.
- Give them space and reasonable time to leave.
- Reapproach aggressor and ask them a second time to leave.
- Should the aggressor refuse inform the customer that you are calling Police then disengage – Isolate the aggressor – inform other relevant staff in the immediate area.
- Inform Duty Manager and consider calling Police

## **Aggressor Physically attacks staff.**

(Company name) – under OH&S / or WHS Legislation we cannot advocate anything that could place the staff member in danger.

However we do acknowledge the right of any person under Victorian Crimes act, section 462A to use reasonable force to prevent or stop an assault against yourself or another as long as the use of force on a reasonable belief that you or another person is in imminent danger of harm and the use of force is in proportion to the perceived harm and the use of force stops when the threat of harm no longer exists.

## **Explanation why certain suggestions have been made.**

CRTC has included best practise in certain suggestions in the procedures covered in this document eg :

1. Addressing escalated behaviour either on Phone or at counters – any time an aggressive person feels confronted they get worse. Therefore attempting to curb swearing or aggressive behaviour should be done calmly and firmly – not assertively. Also when a person becomes emotional or angry they also become self centred – therefore best practise is to first Identify with their crisis - A very negative result can be anticipated if “ Do you mind, we have other people here”
  
2. I highly advise staff handling counter enquiries to have the ability to Isolate certain customers depending on their behaviour including – crying and escalated anger. If this type of behaviour is allowed to occur with an audience the following should be expected :-
  - An angry person with an audience is harder to calm down. They can even enlist support from the audience
  - The audience may agree with the complainant and now you will have several negative contacts in a row or other customers may voice their agreement with the complainant, making the situation worse.
  - Where there is angry behaviour you may get a “White Knight” who gets involved defending staff. Many physical altercations have evolved this way.

Tri'age and isolating can be a massive preventative measure to further escalation of a complaint.

I have given you some suggestions on handling escalated conflict situations. Nicole you and Catherine and possibly John should now see how you manicure these procedures to fill you needs.

Thank you for your custom over the few years and I hope this thank you gesture off loads a little work. Once you have adopted a set of procedures – I would include going over them in training as an overall better way of improving staff's knowledge skill and confidence when dealing with difficult through to aggressive behaviour.



