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Welcome to the **QMR Training Scenes Library**

Volume 3 - *Diffusing Hostility* - Customer Service Training Scenes

Introduction:

This volume of the **QMR Training Scenes Library** consists of 4 training dramatizations addressing the challenges associated with serving hostile or angry customers. Each scenario is followed by a brief discussion by legal, human resource and customer service experts who review key learning points.

Training Methodology:

The **QMR Training Scenes Library** is a flexible resource with a variety of uses:

- it can be plugged into comprehensive training programs which you have designed or are presenting
- it can be used as part of a refresher course for employees who are already familiar with the training issues being addressed
- it can be presented by team leaders or supervisors to help focus a group's discussion of specific behavioral challenges
- it can form the basis for regular discussions on a wide range of team issues

The application that best meets your needs will determine how you will use this learning resource.

This guide offers the facilitator a series of questions which can be used to stimulate and focus discussion following the screening of a particular training scene. We recommend that you use the following methodology in most settings:

1. Welcome participants, *introduce* the topic to be addressed and explain why this learning session is taking place.
2. Screen the *video scene*. Stop before the expert discussion which follows.
3. Distribute the appropriate *handout* and ask participants to respond to the questions, noting down their initial thoughts.
4. Lead a *discussion* by addressing the questions one at a time and asking for feedback from participants. Your Facilitator's Guide has suggested answers for these questions to assist you.
5. Screen the expert discussion to *reinforce the key points* brought out in your discussion.

With your purchase of the **QMR Training Scenes Library**, Quality Media Resources grants you license to make as many copies as your organization needs of this guide and the accompanying handouts.

QMR Training Scenes Library - Volume III

Diffusing Hostility - Customer Service Training Scenes

INDEX

<u>Scenario #</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Issues Addressed</u>
1	The Permit	Reasons for customer complaints; when bureaucracy gets in the way of service; caring about customer needs; when customer needs and employee needs clash
2	Dances With Wolverine	Customer “hot buttons”; asking open ended questions; finding service alternatives to meet a customer’s needs; getting on a customer’s side against a problem
3	Handle With Care	Bringing a customer back into a respectful relationship; early and effective communications to prevent angry, disappointed customers
4	Help!	What to do when a customer crosses the line and becomes abusive; distinguishing when a customer service issue has become a safety issue; knowing your own hot buttons

The scenarios are followed by a series of handouts which present the discussion questions for each of the training scenes.

SCENARIO ONE: *The Permit*

What was the customer's initial goal in this scenario? What was his expectation of the employee and of the agency?

(The customer wanted to get his permit as quickly, easily and inexpensively as possible; he expected the employee to be helpful and attentive to his needs; he expected the agency to provide an easy, inexpensive permit process.)

What was the employee's initial goal and expectation in this scenario?

(Her goal was to leave work as soon as possible and to not allow this customer to keep her later than necessary; she expected him to be prepared for a long and expensive permit process, to have his forms filled in, etc.)

What might the employee have done in the first visit to better serve her customer?

(She could have found out more information about what exactly he needed, and she could have better prepared him for the process he was about to face; she also could have been more understanding of his frustration and confusion and made a sincere effort to help him with his process.)

What did the employee do (or not do) on the customer's return visit that caused his anger to escalate?

(She surprised him with additional paperwork; she showed no empathy or concern for his frustration; she offered him no real alternatives that might have better met his needs; she delayed including a supervisor in the process after she had been specifically requested to get one; she allowed the customer to trigger one of her "hot buttons", allowing herself to get into the escalation of the conflict as well.)

What lessons might the agency and the employee learn from this scenario?

(The agency needs to look at its procedures to see if they can make the permit process more user friendly; the employee needs training on diffusing hostile situations and on basic customer service skills; they both need to learn to put their customers' needs first.)

SCENARIO TWO: *Dances With Wolverine*

Was Mrs. Richards (the customer) initially hostile in this encounter? What hot button was pushed for the customer?

(Mrs. Richards was under pressure, but not hostile initially. She became hostile once her expectation that she could quickly pick up a pair of ballet shoes for her daughter proved false; she felt she had been tricked or deceived by the store which pushed her "hot button".)

What impact can issues that have nothing to do with the customer service relationship have on an interaction with a customer?

(Customers bring in a host of immediate and long term baggage when they walk in the door. Much of what happens in the interaction with the customer service person is strongly influenced by the experiences, expectations, feelings and temperament of the customer. The challenge facing the customer service person when helping a hostile customer is to remain on the customer's side of the service issue - making the process one of "us against the problem" rather than "you against me".)

How might the employee have better responded to Mrs. Richards' hostility and anger?

(Instead of accusing Mrs. Richards of overreacting, the employee could have empathized with her frustration, recognized her anger, asked her open ended questions to determine what was making her so angry - "you seem very upset - what would you like me to do to help you get what you need here", and offered Mrs. Richards some alternatives to help her get what she came into the store to get.)

If you were the employee in this scenario, what alternative solutions might you have offered Mrs. Richards to help her get her daughter's shoes?

(Calling another branch if applicable; calling a competitor to see if they have the shoes; offering to deliver the shoes to Mrs. Richards before her daughter's class; calling the supplier; offering her a more expensive pair of shoes at the same price as those offered in the ad)

What is your organization's policy on meeting customer needs and expectations? Do you feel empowered to make decisions when faced with a difficult customer service situation?

SCENARIO THREE: *Handle With Care*

What could Nancy have done to alleviate the problem *before* Jamal arrived at her company?

(Nancy could have called him as soon as she knew his boxes would be late; she could have called Jamal's supervisor to let him/her know that it was Nancy's fault that the delivery was late - not Jamal's; she could have called her supplier to see if a smaller quantity of the boxes could be priority shipped to arrive on time...)

What emotional posture was Nancy taking in communicating with Jamal? Would another position have been more helpful?

(Nancy anticipated that Jamal would lose his temper and that she would just have to grin and bear it. If she had started out with an attitude that this is her problem to fix and she will do whatever it takes to work with Jamal to ensure it works out to his satisfaction, she could have improved the initial customer interaction where the problem was defined.)

Did Nancy ever recognize Jamal's position? If not, why not?

(Nancy never got onto Jamal's side of the situation. She never recognized his disappointment or empathized with how this might impact him. She was so concerned about dealing with his anger that she never dealt with his problem, fears or concerns.)

How might Nancy have engaged Jamal in helping to find a solution? Could this solution have been initiated even before Jamal arrived at Nancy's? If so, how and when?

(Nancy could have called Jamal to inform him of the delivery delay and to determine when exactly he needed to have how many boxes. She could then have offered a variety of solutions and asked for his input and other suggestions. For example, she could have contacted the customer whose boxes she did have to see if she could borrow some of those to be replaced by Jamal's order; she could have contacted other suppliers or even her competitors to see who had appropriate boxes in stock to meet Jamal's immediate needs.)

Does your organization put meeting or exceeding customer expectations at the top of the organizational priority list? How might a similar situation to the one described in this scenario happen within your organization? How would you handle it?

SCENARIO FOUR: *Help!*

Did Tracy stay detached from Mr. Leonard's anger? If so, how?

(For the most part, Tracy did a great job of staying detached from Mr. Leonard's anger. He empathized with Mr. Leonard's feelings, he reassured him that he was concerned and determined to help.)

Did Tracy know his own "hot button"? What was it? How did Tracy respond once his hot button had been pushed?

(Tracy's hot button was people making fun of his name or challenging his masculinity. Once his button had been pushed, Tracy knew it was time to detach himself from the situation and get his supervisor.)

Why is it important to know your hot buttons? What is yours?

(Once you have been triggered by a customer, you begin to respond based on your need to defend your feelings rather than to find ways to meet your customer's needs. By recognizing that this is happening, you may be in a better position to either remove yourself from the situation or to redirect the relationship with the customer back into respectful territory.)

Was Tracy's decision to call in a supervisor a good one? If so, why?

(Tracy had reached a point where he could no longer help this customer. In addition, his physical safety was being threatened. This relationship had moved from a customer service issue to a safety issue. Tracy had to remove himself from the confrontation with Mr. Leonard and get help.)

Have you ever faced a situation where a customer became threatening to you? How did you handle the situation? Would you handle it differently if the same situation happened today?

SCENARIO ONE: *The Permit*

What was the customer's initial goal in this scenario? What was his expectation of the employee and of the agency?

What was the employee's initial goal and expectation In this scenario?

What might the employee have done in the first visit to better serve her customer?

What did the employee do (or not do) on the customer's return visit that caused his anger to escalate?

What lessons might the agency and the employee learn from this scenario?

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SCENARIO TWO: *Dances With Wolverine*

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How might the employee have better responded to Mrs. Richards' hostility and anger?

If you were the employee in this scenario, what alternative solutions might you have offered Mrs. Richards to help her get her daughter's ballet shoes?

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What emotional posture was Nancy taking in communicating with Jamal? Would another position have been more helpful?

Did Nancy ever recognize Jamal's position? If not, why not?

How might Nancy have engaged Jamal in helping to find a solution? Could this solution have been initiated even before Jamal arrived at Nancy's? If so, how and when?

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