

A checklist to support your team handle challenging situations

This guide has been designed to help managers and team supervisors identify the key things they can do to create a supportive environment for staff that have interactions with others in their day to day role. This will include with students, other staff and external customers that may, on occasions, give rise to a challenging situation.

Following this process will help to reduce the likelihood of challenging situations arising and ensure there is support for staff in how to handle them if they do arise.

Step 1

The manager/supervisor works through the checklist on the following pages to ensure practices and processes are in place to support staff delivering a service to others. This could be in-person, virtually, email or telephone.

Step 2

Individual members of staff work through the 30 minute online training package entitled Handling Challenging Situations

Step 3

Using the reflective exercises in the online training managers/supervisors can discuss with individuals whether there are any processes or practices that could be introduced or amended to reduce the risk of challenging situations arising.

Step 4

If the above raises a number of issues the next step could be to arrange a facilitated team coaching workshop to provide an opportunity for the team to discuss the situations that give rise to challenging encounters and agree a team approach to deal with them.

Step 5

Ensure there are feedback mechanisms in place with individuals and the team to regularly review and reassess the processes that are in place.

Checklist

The most effective way to support staff to deal with challenging situations is to ensure that the strategy, systems and people processes are all aligned to provide a clear and consistent service. The following list of good practice has been compiled to help managers/supervisors assess any gaps.

Situation	Action required
We have a clear procedure for interacting with and providing a service and this is disseminated to staff and students and is referred to regularly.	
We have articulated service standards so everyone knows what to expect when they access our service.	
Recruitment procedures ensure the right people are recruited to forward facing roles.	
We incorporate the expectations around the service that we are expected to provide into PDR discussions.	
All staff understand the standards of performance they are expected to meet when interacting with and providing a service to others.	
All staff are given appropriate training at induction and this development continues throughout their service on issues such as handling aggression, dealing with mental health issues and coping with stressful situations	
Staff are empowered to be able to make decisions and are trained to be consistent but not too inflexible.	
Managers/supervisors are fully and visibly engaged in promoting a service culture.	
Managers/supervisors have regular opportunities to experience some of the issues that their staff are facing.	
The views and experiences of staff who have the most interactions with others are sought and listened to.	
Systems are in place to monitor and provide feedback to all staff on their performance in their interactions with others.	
Clear guidance exists for staff about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour from others and when and how to terminate an interaction.	
Staff know how and to whom to refer issues if they need to.	
There is appropriate support in place for staff that have had to deal with a difficult or stressful situation.	