

2.12. Scripted responses to unreasonable behaviours

Statement or conduct	Possible responses
<p>F#\$%! F#\$%@*&! F#\$%! S@*&! – that is part of their normal communication style or a consequence of being distressed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I want to hear your side of the story. Please stick to the facts to help me understand what happened.</i> • <i>I can hear/see that you're upset/angry. However, I'm uncomfortable with you swearing. Please stop swearing.</i> • <i>[Mr/Ms/name] I'll try to do what I can to resolve this situation, but can you please avoid using swear words. They are distracting us from</i> • <i>I'll have to end this conversation if you don't stop using swear words.</i> • <i>I've asked you at least [number of times] to stop using swear words. I'm going to end the call here and may have another officer call you back.</i>
<p>Are you people stupid or something? or Shove it up your a***.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I'm willing to help you with ..., provided that you stop If it continues I'm going to end this conversation. It's up to you, but I need your agreement now before we continue.</i> • <i>I'm happy to talk to you about this issue, but not while you're yelling at me/but I won't accept you calling me</i> • <i>I hear that you're upset/angry, which is making it difficult for us to focus on the task at hand. Perhaps I should call you back in [X] minutes. [make sure to call them back as promised].</i> • <i>It's quite difficult for us to focus on the issues that we need to when you are [name behaviour]. I'm happy to continue the conversation with you, but you will have to stop [name behaviour]. Otherwise, I'll have to hang up and call you back in five minutes.</i> • <i>I understand that your matter is important to you and that you're disappointed with the decision that I've made/what I'm telling you. However, making personal attacks towards me is not productive. [Name of organisation]'s policy requires me to end this conversation if this type of behaviour continues.</i> • <i>I'm sorry we weren't able to do what you wanted us to do/had hoped we could do. The fact is</i> • <i>Did you call me a [#\$%]? I can't talk to you if you're going to call me that. I'll end this call now and when you feel you're able to speak to me politely/in more moderate language, you can call me back.</i> <p>Note: Only repeat swear words if you feel comfortable repeating them and/or it will not escalate the conversation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>[After warning] – It seems like you've made your choice, so I'm ending this conversation. If and when you're willing to talk without negative remarks, I'm willing to help. But right now, this conversation is over.</i> • <i>I warned you that I would end this call if you continued to speak to me like this. I'm now ending the call.</i> • <i>I'm going to hang up now. I invite you to call me back when you're ready to use more appropriate language.</i>

Statement or conduct	Possible responses
Aggressive behaviour face-to-face.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When you get too close to me, I feel trapped. I'd like you to step back or I'm going to have to ask you to leave.</i> • <i>I've said all that I can about this. I'll have to end our interview here to deal with other people who are waiting.</i> • <i>I'm happy to talk with you about your issue, but not while you're swearing at me. I'll have to end this interview if you don't stop.</i> • <i>I'm a bit thirsty. Would you like me to get you a drink while I get one for myself? [leave the room and seek assistance, if necessary or just take a short time out].</i> • <i>It's clear that you're upset/angry</i> • <i>It's quite difficult for us to focus on the issues that we need to when you are [state conduct]. I'm happy to continue with the interview so long as you stop</i> • <i>I'm afraid I have to ask you to leave now. If you have any outstanding concerns, you can put them in writing.</i> • <i>I'm going to leave the room now. I invite you to call me back when you're ready to use more appropriate language.</i>
Escalated behaviour in the presence of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I'm sure you'd prefer that your privacy is protected so let's go to the office and we can continue there.</i> • <i>That sounds like very personal information you're telling me. This isn't a private place and I think it would be better if we talked about this in the next room.</i> • <i>Why don't we go and sit down in ... room where we can discuss this in more detail and I can get my ... file?</i> • <i>So what I hear you saying is that you're upset/frustrated/angry about Why don't we go into the next room and you can tell me more about that feeling and we can see what we can do about it?</i> • <i>There's a lot of background noise here, perhaps we should go into another room and talk more privately? If the person agrees, take them to the room.</i> • <i>If you think you may need support, you might say: If you'd like to take a seat, I'm sure we can wrap this up quickly. Let me just go and get your file/other object and I will be right back – Go and get support.</i>
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When you say ... it sounds like you're threatening to ... Is that what you mean?</i> • <i>It seems to me you're saying that you're going to do something to hurt me/other person. Is this correct?</i> • <i>So what I hear you saying is that you're going to ...?</i> • <i>Did you just say you were going to follow me home and hurt me and my family?</i> • <i>If this is what you said, I'll have to report your threat to my supervisor. [Name of organisation]'s policy will also require me to report it to the police [or refer to relevant part of your organisation's risk management protocol]. Go on to report it immediately.</i>

<i>Statement or conduct</i>	<i>Possible responses</i>
<i>I'm going to come over there and</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It seems to me that you're saying you'll do something to damage our offices. Is this correct?</i> • <i>If this is correct, I'll have to report your threat to my supervisor. [Name of organisation]'s policy will also require me to report it to the police.</i> • <i>So what I hear you saying is that you're going to ...?</i> • <i>Did you just say you were going to throw a brick through our door?</i> • <i>If this is what you said, I'll have to end this phone call/interview right now and report your threat to my supervisor. [Name of organisation]'s policy will also require me to call the police [or refer to relevant part of your organisation's risk management protocol]. Go on to report the threat immediately.</i>
<i>I'm not leaving. You'll have to carry me out of here.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I'm not going to force you to leave. It's really up to you what happens next. I'm going to leave and if you want to stay here a little while to think, then that's fine. But if you aren't gone in 20 minutes, we'll have to contact security/the police to escort you out of the office. It's up to you.</i>
<i>Inappropriate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We can't stop you from posting something online. However, you should be aware that if we are alerted to any online content that either defames, harasses, intimidates or threatens any officer at this organisation or the organisation as a whole, then we may take legal action through the police and/or the courts.</i> • <i>I should warn you that [name of organisation] takes such conduct seriously and will take legal action if necessary.</i> • <i>We treat inappropriate online behaviour the same way we do inappropriate behaviour generally. If it requires legal action, then we'll do that.</i>
<i>Recording the interview/phone call.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are you using a recording device? If you are, you should know that ... legislation/[name of Act] requires you to have my permission to record me. I don't consent to you doing this.</i> • <i>Are you using a recording device? If you are, I'll have to terminate this call/interview and will send ... in writing instead. I don't agree to being recorded.</i> • <i>You should know that if you are recording me you are violating my rights to privacy and confidentiality</i> • <i>As you are recording this discussion, I'll have to terminate this phone call/interview here. Goodbye.</i>