

HANDLING CHALLENGING CALLS

COURSE OUTLINE

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Course Aims

This one-day course will develop a structured approach to managing challenging calls and will help build your skills and confidence to manage these telephone calls to achieve better outcomes. Through trainer input, group discussion and live practice sessions on the kinds of calls delegates actually find difficult, participants will define what a challenging call is, learn positive telephone skills to minimise the risk of calls becoming challenging, explore the triggers that lead to challenging behaviour, and work through five types of challenging caller — the abusive caller, the persistent caller, the talkative caller, the expert and the emotional caller — including how to respond to people who talk about suicide or self-harm. The course ends with practice sessions and an action plan for applying the skills back at work.

Duration

6 hours (Face to Face or Virtual)

Target Audience

This course is for anyone who handles telephone calls in their role and wants to develop a structured approach to managing challenging calls — building the skills and confidence to handle these calls and achieve better outcomes.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Define what is meant by a challenging call
- Identify steps they can take to minimise the risks of calls becoming challenging
- Identify what triggers, and what lies behind, challenging behaviour on the phone
- List five types of challenging caller behaviour, and how to respond to them effectively
- Plan how they will manage challenging calls in future

Course Content

Session 1 - What Is a Challenging Call?

- Defining different types of challenging call.
- Identifying which ones delegates find most difficult.

Session 2 - Positive Telephone Skills

- Planning and preparing for calls.
- Getting yourself into a positive mindset.
- Building rapport at the start of the call.

Session 3 - Behaviour and Triggers

- What leads people to behave the way they do.
- What triggers challenging behaviour on the phone.

Session 4 - The Abusive Caller

- Defusing their anger.
- Setting limits with confidence.

Session 5 - The Persistent Caller

- Dealing with callers who refuse to listen or accept your answers.
- Managing repeated questions and going-over-the-same-issues.

Session 6 - The Talkative Caller

- Striking the balance between empathy and call control.
- Managing the call so it doesn't become excessively long.

Session 7 - The Expert

- Dealing with callers who think they know more than you do.
- Maintaining authority without escalation.

Session 8 - The Emotional Caller

- Demonstrating empathy and concern.
- Getting to the underlying issues.
- Responding to people who talk about suicide or self-harm.

Session 9 - Practice Sessions and Action Planning

- Dealing with the calls that you find challenging.
- How will you apply your skills in the workplace?