**Employee Tips: Responding to COVID-19 Conflict and Behaviors of Concern**

The following tips are intended for RLPSA Members to use freely in their employee communications, posters and training. Please draw from these where appropriate and helpful in preparing your existing and new employees for customer interactions that may be particularly challenging in these testing times.

For free eLearning visit [www.maybo.com/restaurant-covid-conflict](http://www.maybo.com/restaurant-covid-conflict)

**Employer message** (example)

We appreciate the current situation can be stressful for our employees and our customers. Most people understand that restrictions are necessary to keep everyone safe and well, however they can also cause inconvenience and frustration.

Although present circumstances are beyond our control, through positively engaging with customers from the moment they arrive we can help reduce tensions (ours and theirs!) and win their support and loyalty.

The following tips are intended to help reduce and de-escalate emotive situations, including:

* Customer dissatisfaction over restrictions on our offerings and service as a result of essential COVID-19 safety precautions
* Conflict between customers over each other’s behavior such as not complying with social/physical distancing, or line jumping

**Positive approaches for reducing conflict**

We can help reduce conflict and prevent a situation escalating through adopting a positive and helpful approach, including where safe and appropriate:

* Greeting and positively engaging with waiting customers
* Respecting personal space
* Politely reminding customers of restrictions and acknowledging their frustrations
* Thanking them for their patience, for waiting etc.
* Apologizing for the inconvenience they may have experienced
* Listening attentively to their concerns and offering alternatives where viable
* Introducing them to a manager who may be able to help them

It is important that you:

* Try not to take criticism personally
* Do not argue with customers

*Remember: It’s not just what we say, it’s the way we say it!*

**Personal safety and behaviors of concern**

Your personal safety is paramount so:

* Ensure colleagues know when you are going to be alone or out of sight
* Make sure you are able to call for assistance and/or have a route to safety

If you become aware of people behaving in ways that are of concern such as being disruptive or behaving unsafely:

* Inform your supervisor right away
* Stay a safe distance and do not get in people’s way
* Treat people with respect, even if you disapprove of their behavior

**Teamwork**

Now more than ever we need to work together as a team and support each other, so please also treat your colleagues with courtesy and respect i.e. as you would wish to be treated.

*(Option to add here key information on how to access assistance and report incidents)*