

Responding to suicide threats

Let me just check what I've heard: did you say that you are thinking about taking your own life?

I can't imagine how you are feeling just now and I can hear that you are very distressed.

We have a good partnership with the Samaritans, they are an organisation who are particularly skilled in offering support for people who are experiencing difficult / stressful times. I'd like to offer you their telephone number.

TELEPHONE: 08457 90 90 90

NOTE: we can also call the Samaritans, with the caller's consent and give them a name and telephone number to call back.

ANGRY

I can hear you are very angry.

I understand why that would be upsetting. / I agree that would be frustrating.

I understand your position and why you feel strongly about this and we have looked at this carefully and we have a different view.

I can understand you're angry, let me see what I can do to give you advice on the matter.

I need you to stop shouting.

A few minutes ago, you said you would stop shouting and we were making good progress but you have started again.

I'm sorry you feel that way – we can't solve the problem whilst you continue to shout at me.

If you stop shouting, I'm sure I can help you

If you don't stop shouting, I'm afraid I'm going to have to end this call.

I now intend to end this call as I have advised you that I will not continue being shouted at, I have asked you (previously or 2,3 times) to stop shouting at me and you have continued. I am now ending the call, goodbye.

GOING ROUND IN CIRCLES

We are now going round in circles and this is not taking things forward.

Can I please ask some questions to offer you the best advice possible.

Can I ask you to put this in writing, please consider summarising what you would like us to consider using numbering or bullet pointing.

I want to focus now on what steps you need to take to progress your complaint.

I am sorry, I feel that we are now repeating ourselves which is not helpful. I do not wish to take up any more of your time and thank you for talking to me today, I need to now go and ... note what we've agreed / send you information / make enquiries etc.

Let me clarify. / Let me summarise. / Let me recap.

WON'T STOP TALKING

TIP - Going silent will often prompt the other person to go silent too, however, when doing so you must be ready with a statement which takes the conversation forward.

Thank you for letting me continue...

We have been talking for a while now, I'd like to summarise what we have agreed and agree what you/I are going to do. I don't want to take up any more of your time.

I need to ask you some questions.

I need to let you know what I'm going to do next.

I need to take time to consider the information you have given me and I will get back to you.

I have explained why I am unable to help.

TOO MUCH IRRELEVANT INFORMATION

I don't require you to give me any further information, I have an enough of an understanding of the matter to advise you what you need to do next.

I would like to ask you some questions now to allow me to give the best advice that I can - I simply require you to answer - yes or no.

I don't want to take up any more of your time.

I don't want you to have to speak to me further about this matter as I can hear it is upsetting you. I have enough information on the situation, thank you.

ACCUSATIONS AND ALLEGATIONS

We are committed to offering a high-quality service and we believe that complainants have a right to be heard, understood and respected. However, I would like to make you aware that we consider unsubstantiated allegations to be abusive behaviour.

Contacting lots of different colleagues

I know that you have also spoken to X/Y/Z about this matter recently. My colleagues and I have all given you the same advice and that advice still stands.

Can we agree that if you have any further questions that you contact me directly as I am dealing with this matter.