

De-escalation Presentation: Unanswered Questions

<p>Answer "A" does not address the task. Some ppl can't read soft cues so displaying empathy is still not addressing the issue. What is the follow up after that statement?</p>	<p>I appreciate your perspective. I'm not sure which question you are referencing (I'm sorry!). It is exactly right to address issues and try to get at the root cause. It's appropriate (and critical) to discuss it, but remember that our goal is to keep the situation at "calm" to avoid escalation. That said, always remember to display empathy and solution-focused.</p>
<p>I understand that it can be important to be empathetic, but I've also had operators attempt to take advantage of this to either get out of violations, ignore my request for corrective actions, or to downplay the fact that the violation occurred. How do you retain that feeling of rapport while establishing yourself as an authority figure and emphasizing how important it is that these violations occurred and that they need to be fixed promptly? I worry that prioritizing empathy can seem to reduce the severity of the situation.</p>	<p>I understand where you are coming from. Unfortunately, people use many different techniques to deflect, deny, or downplay - especially when the stakes are high. I recommend coming at those situations with a forward-focused approach to keep the situation from escalating and becoming unproductive. Remember, in order to collaborate so that they are serving safe food. Saying something like, "I know we are both committed to serving safe food. Let's talk about how we can address..." Don't take things personally and try to see the situation from the operator's perspective and keep the end goal in mind.</p>
<p>Any suggestions when you are active listening and showing empathy but need to address a violation that needs to be corrected, even if the establishment is busy? Should you wait until then end to address the violation or when seeing it during inspection?</p>	<p>Great question. Being onsite during a "busy" time is actually the best time to conduct an inspection. I'll explain. We want to observe critical practices like cooking, hot-holding, and cooling while those processes are occurring - especially when the pressure is on because we can help the operator see any opportunities to improve their food safety system. Whether you take time to discuss observations at the time of observation or during your closeout discussion with the PIC depends on the nature of the violation. As an example, if you observe bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food that is ready to go out to customers, you want to intervene</p>

	right on the spot. On the other hand, if you observe a cooling violation, you can wait and revisit that later in the inspection.
Are we suppose to provide solutions to their problem - if they say "we don't have enough ppl" or ask us to "find them more workers" how do we respond to questions like this?	I appreciate your question. In any given situation, resources can (and very well may) be a root cause of a problem. However, we always want to be solution-oriented, and we want safe food served at that facility all the time - even when we aren't there (which is almost all of the time). Really focus on finding the root cause of the problem to help the operator find a workable solution. Look at PEOPLE (knowledge or food safety culture), PROCESSES (lack of training, procedures), ECONOMICS (lack of sick leave), EQUIPMENT (access to or convenience, inoperability), or FOOD (knowledge of TCS, food quality). Some solutions might end up a little out of the box. Maybe an operation should limit menu items, adjust timing of particular activities, change processes or flow, use recipe cards that incorporate food safety steps, or implement time as a public health control) to address food safety gaps. It could take some time, but you must always keep your goal in mind.
Is there a limit to empathy to be given during an inspection?	Remember that empathy isn't feeling sorry for the operator. It is identifying how the other person is seeing a situation and behaving in a way that shows you understand where they are coming from). Your goal is to make sure that when you leave the facility, you know that you have worked with the operator to find a way to overcome a problem so they can serve safe food when you're not there. Always try to get to "yes". Keep the conversation moving forward toward a solution and ask the operator probing questions to get at the root cause of the problem and help them find a solution that would work for them.

<p>How do you ensure that empathizing doesn't turn into food managers not taking you seriously enough or thinking you're more lenient?</p>	<p>It is so important to avoid equating empathy with weakness. Your goal is that the operators are serving safe food everyday - even when you're not there. To do that, you must keep interactions in the "calm" phase and avoid escalation that shuts down collaboration. Think of empathy like your car/subway/train to your destination of safe food practices. We will never reach our destination if we don't have that mode of transportation. You need to build trust and rapport to get the operator on the path to safe food.</p>
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