

DE-ESCALATION MACRO CHEATSHEET

20 high-pressure phrases for maintaining clarity, boundaries, and forward movement.

1. Acknowledge the impact

I can hear that this has been frustrating. Let me focus on what we can do next.

2. Slow the interaction

I want to make sure I respond accurately. Give me a moment to separate the issue from the next step.

3. Clarify the priority

Before I act, let me confirm the main issue you need resolved first.

4. Correct without arguing

I understand why that conclusion makes sense. The information I have shows something different.

5. State the boundary

I can help with the available options, but I cannot override that requirement.

6. Offer the next authorized step

What I can do from here is [authorized action].

7. Handle repeated demands

I understand the request. My answer on that point will not change, so let me show you the options that are still available.

8. Respond to interruption

I want to address that. Let me finish this one point so I can give you the correct next step.

9. Re-center after emotion

I hear the frustration. Let's bring this back to the part we can solve right now.

10. When the customer says 'You're not listening'

You're right to want the issue addressed directly. Let me restate what I understand before I continue.

11. When accused of not caring

I want to keep this useful. I'm going to focus on the action I can take for you now.

12. When asked for the impossible

I cannot promise that outcome. I can tell you what is available and what I can do next.

13. When the answer is no

I'm not able to approve that request. The available path is [option / next step].

14. When policy is challenged

I understand you disagree with the requirement. I still have to work within it, and I can help you with the options it allows.

15. When the customer demands a supervisor

I can review the situation and, if a transfer is appropriate under our process, I'll follow the authorized escalation path.

16. When the conversation becomes personal

I want to help with the issue. I'm going to keep the conversation focused on resolving it.

17. When facts are disputed

Let's separate what we know from what still needs verification.

18. When you made a communication mistake

I explained that poorly. Let me correct it and give you the accurate information.

19. When you need recovery time

Give me a brief moment to verify that before I give you an answer.

20. Close with control

Here is what will happen next: [action], [timeframe if authorized], and [what the customer needs to do].