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## Strategies for Dealing with Difficult Patrons

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### Library administrators:

- Set clear policies concerning these issues.
- Provide training for library staff.

### Library staff:

- Listen effectively to understand the issues presented by the patron.
- Keep an open mind to understand all points of view, whether you agree or not.
- Speak in a manner that shows you understand and care.
- Give a clear response that the patron can easily understand.
- Use active listening skills.
- Offer the patron alternatives.

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## Useful Phrases for Library Staff

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- "I can see that you are upset by this situation."
- "I can relate to that."
- "I would be irritated, too."
- "You have a point..."
- "That's an interesting idea..."

As you seek solutions to a problem situation, use comments like:

- "I can help you look for that."
- "Let me explain how it works."
- "Let's consider some alternatives to help you in the meantime."

### Turn a Negative into a Positive

*Instead of saying...*

- "You can't..."
- "It's not our policy..."
- "You have to..."
- "You don't understand..."
- "I'm not allowed to..."

*Try saying...*

- "You can..."
- "Usually we..."
- "It would help if you..."
- "Let me clarify..."
- "The best way I can help you is..."