



# Respectful Conduct Procedure

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**Version:** 1.0

**Document Number:** PRO-001

**Status:** Approved

**Approved for distribution and use by:**

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**Title:** CEO / Managing Director

**Date:** 24 Jan 2025

### Version release history

Version	Date	Author	Reviewer	Approved	Changes
1	24 Jan 2025	Leah Madigan Kodee-lee Allbon Grace Mergan Chloe Benson Becky Gibson Jessica Town Zoe Kensell	Amanda Christie	Karen Benson	First version

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Glossary

Acronym	Meaning
KTS	KARBEN Training Solutions
PCBU	Person conducting a business or undertaking

Defined Term	Meaning
Person conducting a business or undertaking	A person conducting a business or undertaking has a primary duty to ensure health and safety of workers while they are at work in business or undertaking and other who may be affected by the carrying out of work, such as visitors.

## 1.2. Related Policies, Procedures and Resources

Type	Title	Location
JotForm	FORM-016 Incident / Injury Register	JotForm
KTS Policy	19a. Student and Employer Handbook	Z Drive
KTS Policy	05g. Employer Handbook	Z Drive
KTS Policy	04a. Disciplinary action	Z Drive
KTS Policy	23a. Workplace Harassment Bullying and Victimisation	Z Drive
EAP Services	Employee Assistance Program	

## 1.3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Entity	Relevant Sections
SafeWork NSW	<a href="#">Employer and business obligations</a>
Safe Work Australia	<a href="#">Guidelines on the standard of health and safety that a PCBU must meet under the WHS Act and Regulations</a>
NSW Government	<a href="#">Mental health at work</a>

## 2. Purpose and Scope

### 2.1. Purpose

The purpose of this Procedure is to ensure all employees, participants, clients and visitors are aware of their behaviour requirements whilst working at or attending KARBEN Training Solutions (KTS) office or external events.

This Procedure aims to ensure staff at KTS are aware of and undertake the most appropriate steps to de-escalate difficult and/or inappropriate conversations. It also outlines how to appropriately respond after a situation has occurred.

### 2.2. Scope

This Procedure applies to:

- KTS employees
- KTS clients
- KTS visitors
- Participants in KTS programs.

## 3. Respectful Conduct Procedure

It is inevitable when working with the public that you will, at some point, encounter difficult people. Sometimes people are suffering difficulties, disappointments, and even illnesses that trigger their abusive behaviour.

This section outlines the steps to follow when the situation unexpectedly becomes threatening during a phone call, team meeting or face-to-face interaction.

The recommended steps are:

**Listen ⇒ Respond ⇒ Refer ⇒ Resolve**

### 3.1. Steps to Follow

#### 3.1.1. Listen

The first point of action is to listen actively to the person, let them express their concerns or problems and empathise with them. Do not interrupt, allow them time to speak.

Pay attention to what they say, how they say it, and what they don't say. Acknowledge their feelings, concerns, and perspectives, to demonstrate that you care and understand. By listening and empathising, you can build rapport, trust, and respect, and reduce the chances of misunderstanding, defensiveness, or hostility.

Where applicable, show eye contact and hold your posture, look professional.

### 3.1.2. Respond

Remain calm and controlled when things get uncomfortable. After they have expressed their concerns or problems, thank them for reaching out, showing them that they have your focus.

Be clear, honest, and respectful in your response. This means stating your message clearly and concisely, without ambiguity, jargon, or exaggeration. It also means being honest and transparent about the situation, the reasons, and the implications, without hiding, blaming, or sugarcoating. Moreover, it means being respectful and polite, without being rude, aggressive, or patronising. By being clear, honest, and respectful, you can communicate your message effectively and professionally, and maintain your credibility and reputation.

The ultimate goal of any tough conversation is to seek solutions and agreements that are mutually beneficial and satisfactory. This means exploring options, alternatives, and compromises that can address the issue, meet the needs, and respect the interests of both parties. It also means seeking feedback, confirmation, and clarification from the person, and ensuring that they understand and agree with the proposed solutions and agreements. By seeking solutions and agreements, you can resolve the conflict, achieve your goals, and strengthen your relationship with the person.

If you do not have an instant solution, let them know what action will be taken. Importantly, do not name and shame, but support, your colleague and the business. We will take accountability at the appropriate time.

Review the tips in section four of this Procedure on handling difficult conversations.

### 3.1.3. Refer

If this conversation is via a phone call or teams meeting, put them on hold while getting a member of the leadership team to assist. If this interaction is face-to-face, speak to a member of the leadership team and continue the conversation with the person. Provide the leadership team with notes and details of the caller or visitor, ensuring you to mention the reason for their interaction. This eliminates the persons' need to repeat themselves.

### 3.1.4. Resolve

Working together with a leadership team member to assist the person, ensure the situation has been resolved or is there any further action required from you.

## 3.2. Debrief and Take a Break

### Take Five

Take a break. Inform your coordinator. Take a colleague to have a chat for support if needed.

### Log Communication

Enter a contact/event log. Ensuring to enter appropriate details of the interaction. If the details are not appropriate enter a brief note 'Interaction not appropriate to record details within log, has been escalated to the leadership team'.

## 3.3. Incident Report

Incident reports must be completed immediately after a serious incident has occurred to ensure KTS is safe, accessible, and compliant to the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017*, *Standards for RTOs 2015 (Standard 8; Clause 8.5 & 8.6)* and the *Smart and Skilled Operating Guidelines (2. Access to Training; Clause 2.1 & 2.2)*.

Some examples of incidents that would require an incident report are:

#### **Work related injuries**

- Someone has slipped, tripped or fallen and injured themselves
- Someone has cut or burnt themselves
- Someone has a medical episode

#### **Threatening/aggressive behaviour**

- Someone has contacted the KTS office via phone and displayed aggressive or threatening behaviour
- Someone has attended the KTS office and been abusive to staff
- Someone has come into the KTS office looking for a participant in class and displayed aggressive behaviour when information was not provided

#### **Property and equipment**

- Exposed wires
- Trip hazard such as lifting carpets
- Water damage to roof

### **3.3.1. How to access the KTS incident report**

**KTS intranet ⇒ Forms ⇒ Staff ⇒ Incident and Injury Register | F016**

## **4. Handling Difficult Conversations**

Respectful and honest communication is critical for managing difficult situations effectively.

If you are trying to manage disruptive behaviour your tone of voice, your body language, the things you say and the words you choose will affect the outcome.

Here are some tips.

#### **Use 'I' messages**

When done correctly, 'I' messages show that you own your reactions and are not trying to lay the blame. They help to open the conversation, and they help the other person understand the impact of their behaviour. It can be hard to use 'I' messages, especially when there is a degree of emotion involved, or when you are dealing with someone in a more senior role. Be neutral in your tone and in your statements and ask open questions to get the person listening. The three steps to formulate an effective 'I' statement are:

1. Observation: "I have noticed...", "I saw...", "When this happens..." "When you do/say..."
2. Feeling: "I feel (explain feelings)..."
3. Connection: "...because..." (explain reason why behaviour causes these feelings – the impact on yourself and others).

Examples:

- I'd like to see if we might reach a better understanding about \_\_\_\_\_. I really want to hear your feelings about this and share my perspective as well.
- I can see that this has been frustrating for you
- I want to make sure I understand you. You said...
- From what you've told me, I can see how you came to the conclusion that... However...
- I want to thank you for being open to this and sharing this.

### **Control your emotions**

To be the best version of yourself during these difficult conversations, you need to control your emotions.

Of course, that's easier said than done when you have an upset person on one hand and want to defend your team on the other. While negative feedback can spark a wave of emotions, by maintaining a calm mind, you can keep your emotions in check.

Remember, don't take anything said personally. Emotional reactions are contagious. The person may be emotional when giving feedback and if you're emotional about receiving it, these feelings will collide, and the conversation will go nowhere.

It's your responsibility to work with the person to resolve the issue. Even with harsh and seemingly unfounded criticisms, look for a kernel of truth in what the person is saying.

To control your emotional response:

- Anticipate that it might happen,
- Stay open and breathe through the discomfort,
- Remind yourself that you're there to listen, understand, and empathise.

When you feel any emotions arise, take a breath, count to 10, and the heightened feelings will begin to subside for everyone involved.

### **Acknowledgment goes a long way**

Even in normal conversations, people don't always feel heard. That's why it's key to during every difficult conversation to assure the person that you hear them.

Without a way to frame the conversation, it's easy to get caught up in the moment and fumble over your words. Instead, focus on understanding and framing the problem from the person's perspective.

Tell the person, "I'm glad you raised this point so we can talk about it," or simply "I hear you." This will let the person know that you're on their side while also validating their feelings.

### **Slow down with clarifying questions**

Instead of immediately jumping into solution mode to defuse difficult conversations, give the person the space to air all of their concerns. Your job at the moment is to say very little and instead, learn as much as possible. Help fill in any communication gaps by asking clarifying questions.

After the person has stated their issue, repeat what they said and ask for clarification:

- I just want to make sure I heard you correctly, you said ...?
- Did I understand you when you said ...?
- I hear you. Help me understand what you mean by ...

This puts the burden of getting the root of the issue on yourself instead of the person. Also, asking clarifying questions is another opportunity for the person to feel heard, understand that you're on their side, and have another moment to calm down.

### **Embrace truthfulness**

Difficult conversations are never the time to reassign blame. If your team made a mistake, own up to it and move on. If the person came in with unrealistic expectations, be patient with them and let them know you've heard them. What's most important is putting the person first, setting your emotions aside, and working towards a resolution.

### **Work together to find a solution**

Now that you know how the person feels, it's time to work towards a solution. While issues like budget restrictions and timelines can be more easily solved, be ready for an open-ended discussion for more complex issues. Give the person the space to offer their ideas and don't be afraid to propose solutions.

Even if you don't have a solution at the moment, let the person know that you will discuss the issue with your team. Knowing that you're working on a solution will also help ensure that the person feels heard, happier, and more supported leaving the conversation than when they first came in.

After the meeting, you or your coordinator should follow up with an email containing a quick recap of the discussion, proposed solutions, and next steps to make sure everyone is on the same page. Doing so lets the person raise any other issues that might have been overlooked, leaving them feeling satisfied about the outcome.

## 5. Listen > Respond > Refer > Resolve - At a Glance

To ensure all staff, participants, clients and visitors are aware of their behaviour requirements whilst working or attending KTS office or external events.

Listen > Respond > Refer > Resolve			
Interaction Type →	Phone Call/Teams Interaction	Face to Face Interaction	Escalating Point
Action →	De-Escalate the Call	Face to Face Conversation	Escalating the Conversation
<b>Listen</b>	Listen to the person, let them express their concern or problem		
<b>Things to Consider</b>	Do not interrupt Allow them to speak	Listen to them, do not interrupt Show eye contact and hold your posture, look professional	Listen to them Do not interrupt
<b>Respond</b>	Thank them for reaching out Show them they have your focus	Thank them for taking the time to attend and have this conversation with you Show them they have your focus to resolve their concern/problem	Thank them for reaching out Show them they have your focus
<b>Things to Consider</b>	If you do not have an instant solution, let them know what action you will take Don't name and shame, support your colleague and business KTS will take accountability at the appropriate time	If you do not have an instant solution, let them know you will go and speak to a member of management and take a seat Don't name and shame, support your colleague and business KTS will take accountability at the appropriate time	If you do not have an instant solution, let them know what action you will take Don't name and shame, support your colleague and business KTS will take accountability at the appropriate time
<b>Refer</b>	Transfer call or put on hold while getting a member of the leadership team	Speak to a member of the leadership team to continue conversation with visitors	Transfer call/ put on hold
<b>Things to Consider</b>	Provide the leadership team members with notes and details of the caller and reason for their call	Provide notes and details of who the visitor is and their reason for the visit to eliminate them having to repeat themselves	If unable, as the person is not engaging in an appropriate manner, notify someone from the leadership team via Teams if at workstation or phone from reception desk
<b>Resolve</b>	Follow through if it is transferred to another member of staff	Working together with a leadership team member to assist the person	Working together with a leadership team member to assist call
<b>Things to Consider</b>	Ensure the situation has been resolved or if there is any further action required from you	Ensure the situation has been resolved or if there is any further action required from you	Ensure the situation has been resolved or if there is any further action required from you
<b>Take Five</b>	Take a break, inform your coordinator, take a colleague for support if needed		
<b>Log Communication</b>	Enter contact/Event log	Enter contact/Event log	Enter contact/Event log
<b>Things to Consider</b>	Entering appropriate details of the call	Entering appropriate details of the call	Entering appropriate details of interaction If details are not appropriate enter a brief note 'Interaction not appropriate to record details within log, has been escalated to the Leadership team'