

# De-escalation durante un'azione

De-escalation is about trying to **keep things calm and safe**, and presenting a **positive public face** for XR. Depending on the action, you might be **actively** approaching drivers queuing at your road block, or you might be speaking to pedestrians who **come to you**. It's important to have at least **two de-escalators** so they can support each other and so there is always someone **on the alert**.

## Cosa vuol dire de-escalation?

Trying to calm down a tense situation, and/or prevent it from escalating further. This is usually because a member of the public is angry, confused or scared by our protest.

If you are doing a disruptive action, it is likely that members of the public will be angry because they are being disrupted. It is important to **nominate people in advance** to do deescalation, so that they can **actively approach** drivers or other members of the public who are likely to become angry.

Note that deescalation is **NOT** about trying to change someone's mind, it's about trying to calm down a situation and offer practical advice where possible (e.g. take an alternative route).

## De-escalation key points

1. Have some **GOODIES** (biscuits, fruit ..) to offer to people.
2. Take a **DEEP BREATH** before approaching the situation, and remind yourself of others around you
3. **LISTEN:** Show the person that you are listening, e.g. by echoing their words back to them. E.g. If they say "I am really late for my appointment", you could say "I understand that you are late for your appointment"
4. **ASK:** If they calm down, ask "Would you like to know why we are here?"
5. **EMOTION:** If they say yes, share your own personal feelings, and talk about emotions rather than facts.
6. **DEBRIEF:** Tell someone how it went.
7. If you see someone else having a difficult conversation, **help them** or **check in** with them afterwards.

In summary, **Empathy before Education.**

# De-escalation - helpful tips

It can be easy to feel anger or frustration, but it's important to stay **friendly, helpful** and **positive**, regardless of provocations. Avoid doing or saying anything that might raise tensions. Do not interrupt, contradict, evangelise or argue. Use phrases like "**I see where you're coming from**".

Be prepared for **likely questions** such as when the protest finishes and alternative routes. Many drivers who are diverted by XR actions are feeling anxious about finding their way, and being able to help them with this can often diffuse their anger.

**Keep other rebels on board** - they may also be feeling anger or frustration and you may need to actively discourage them from responding to insults. You may see rebels "jeering" in response to insults, but this kind of behaviour will increase tensions amongst rebels and amongst the public, and is terrible PR!

**Don't try to educate** anyone unless they ask you to explain. If they do want to hear, it's best to keep it **short and personal** - for example, "It's about the climate and ecological crisis. I'm terrified my grandchildren won't have anything to eat".

You need to be calm, confident, relaxed. Everyone has a different way of keeping calm, but some people find it helpful to take **deep breaths**, and to think about the **ground** beneath their feet and the **sounds and sights** around them. It can also help to connect with your fellow rebels - for example, by **making eye contact** or **smiling**. Remember your motivations and why you are there.

**Respect and empathise** with the person in front of you. Give them your full and kind attention, allowing them to fully express their feelings to you (often anger or frustration). Try to let them know you have heard them, reflecting their feelings but without getting dragged into the details of their 'story'. When people are angry they often say things that they don't really believe - you can get to the bottom of what they really think if you are prepared to listen to what they have to say for long enough and don't shut them down.

**Remember to stay focused, watching and listening for potential threats, and greeting members of the public where appropriate. Don't get distracted by conversations or doing other jobs. As a de-escalator, you may be further up the road and may be the first to hear about sirens - if possible, have a radio so that you warn others about incidents or call for support if you are in a difficult situation. If this is not possible, make sure you remain in sight of the action so that others can see you if you are having any issues. We recommend that deescalators work in pairs to support each other, share the work and also help to ensure that there is always someone free to speak to a member of the public.**