

# Instructional Scenario

## Working with Challenging Clients



Course/Duty Area: Legal Administration/Conducting Client Services

**Scenario:** Andrea, a high school student working as an entry-level intern in a local law office, receives a call from a frustrated client who is upset about a delay in their case processing. The client raises their voice and demands an immediate update. Andrea is unsure of the case details but remembers her training in professional communication and client handling.

**Big Question:** How can legal office interns professionally handle challenging client interactions while maintaining the reputation and integrity of the office?

Focused Questions:

1. What steps should Andrea take to de-escalate the situation and address the client's concerns professionally?
2. How can Andrea ensure the client feels heard while adhering to office protocols?
3. When should Andrea involve a supervisor or another team member?

Student Project or Outcome:

1. Identify key techniques for de-escalating challenging client interactions.
2. Demonstrate professional communication skills in a simulated client scenario.
3. Develop a protocol for discussing unresolved issues to supervisors.

Project-Based Assessment:

### Role-Play Exercise:

1. Students work in pairs or small groups to simulate the scenario. One student acts as Andrea, while another acts as the frustrated client.
2. The "Andrea" role must demonstrate the following steps:
  - Listen actively without interrupting.
  - Acknowledge the client's frustration empathetically.
  - Politely explain their role as an intern and their limitations in providing immediate updates.
  - Offer to take detailed notes and ensure the appropriate team member follows up.
  - Discuss the issue with a supervisor when necessary.

**Reflection:** After the role-play, have the students write a short reflection on their performance, focusing on what they did well and what could be improved.

Teacher Resources:

1. **Sample Scripts for Dealing with Challenging Clients:** Provide templates for professional responses to common client concerns.
2. **Office Protocols and Chain of Command Document:** A brief overview of when and how to escalate client issues.
3. **Video Examples:** Share YouTube clips or role-play examples of professional communication in challenging situations.
4. **Worksheet:** A checklist of best practices for handling client challenges.
5. **Rubric:** Develop a rubric to assess students' performance in the role-play activity, focusing on empathy, clarity, and adherence to protocol.

*Scenario submitted by Marvella Phillips, Virginia Beach Technical and Career Education Center, Virginia Beach City Public Schools*