

UNDERSTANDING POVERTY & PRACTICING COMPASSIONATE CUSTOMER SERVICE

“WHAT WOULD YOU DO?”

Key Principles

Empowerment:

- Create processes and an environment that encourages independence, self-direction, and confidence
- Set clear expectations and boundaries
- Always stay positive and communicate what you can do
- Use every opportunity to connect, engage, and encourage

Empathy:

- Acknowledge and validate a person's feelings
- Ask how you can be of assistance without assuming you know how to meet a person's needs
- Seek to understand- be patient, sensitive, and respectful and make the time to listen

Agility:

- Seek to understand a person's need and respond with an openness to solutions
- Remember to always remain calm and judgment free when meeting people where they are regardless of your perception
- Be flexible and willing to offer alternatives without breaking organizational boundaries



Scenario:

A pantry participant is frustrated with a volunteer, stating they can't even begin to understand what it is like to live in poverty.

Food for Thought:

Understand that everyone views the world through a different lens based on their personal experience.

Acknowledge their feelings and let them know you want to support them. Ask them how you can help and take the time to listen and connect.

What would you do?

1. Using empowerment, how can you use this opportunity to connect, engage, and encourage while also setting clear expectations and boundaries around the treatment of volunteers and patrons?
2. With empathy in mind, how can you use patience, sensitivity, and respect to respond to this patron?
3. How can you use agility with a calm and judgment free attitude to meet this patron where they are at?