

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, 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:

Patrons are calling each other names and arguing with one another over who arrived at the pantry first.

Food for Thought:

When challenging situations arise, try to relinquish power in a safe way that still helps people get their needs met. Understand that everyone views the world through a different lens based on their personal experience.

Talk with each patron separately to better understand their need to be first. Do they have to get to work? Do they have an appointment? Are they worried about getting specific products that may be limited? If that is the issue, can you implement a rotation system with limited product to be more equitable? Have you explored different intake processes? Have you clearly communicated your organization's expectations and boundaries?

What would you do?

1. Can you adjust your intake process or set clear expectations and boundaries to empower these patrons in this situation?
2. In what way can you use “seek to understand the why behind the behavior”, using empathy, to resolve this conflict?
3. Using agility, how would you react to this occurrence?