

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:

One volunteer tells another that since they have worked at your agency longer, they have more authority and the newer volunteer needs to listen to them.

Food for Thought:

Just as with patrons, your volunteers' personal experiences influence their feelings and behaviors. Helping all volunteers feel valuable to your agency is important to keep everyone engaged. It is important to create and maintain a volunteer handbook and include volunteer job descriptions. Be sure to communicate your organization's expectations and boundaries at every volunteer orientation and training. It can be helpful to review the handbook annually with all volunteers.

What would you do?

1. As an organization, how can you create an environment and processes that will empower patrons and volunteers alike?
2. Using empathy, what would you say to acknowledge and validate the feelings of both volunteers? How would you seek to understand the why behind the conflict?
3. Can you use agility in this situation to be flexible to meet the needs of both volunteers?