

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:

Every week the same patron requests a ride home from different volunteers.

Food for Thought:

Be sure to always communicate your expectations and boundaries positively and clearly. In private, let this patron know what services you can offer. Help them brainstorm other resources and connect or let them know where they can get more information about what else they are looking for. It is helpful to collect community resource information and/or have a resource bulletin to connect patrons with other services they might need.

What would you do?

1. In what way can you use empowerment to set clear expectations and boundaries as well as communicate what you can do?
2. Can you use empathy to seek to understand the why behind the behavior?
3. How can you use agility to respond to this patron's needs?