

CUSTOMER SERVICE

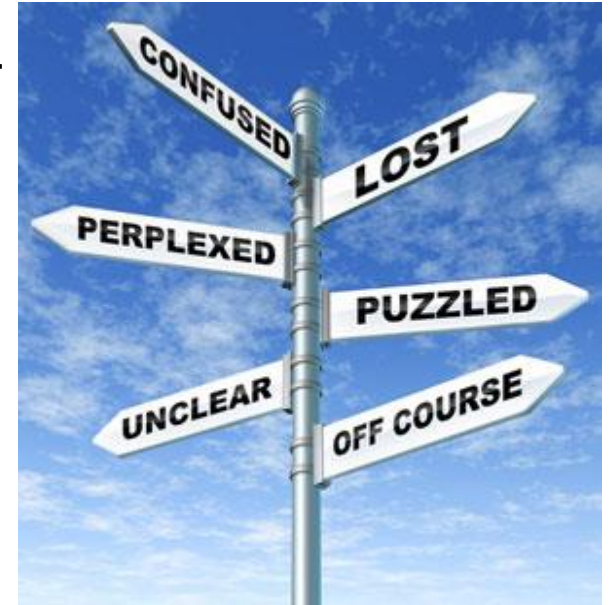
June 2026

OUR CUSTOMERS: WHO ARE THEY?


- **IM clients on the phone**
- **IM clients at the front desk**
- **Co-workers**
- **Consortium Partners**
- **Supervisors**
- **Managers**
- **Directors**
- **FNS, DHS, DCF**

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Each customer and their current situation is unique; avoid making assumptions or stereotyping
- Frustration with their current situation may impact how they interact with you
- Difficult or embarrassing to talk about their situation or ask for help



CUSTOMER SERVICE TIPS

- ❖ Friendly greeting and appropriate closing
 - ❖ Full attention to customer; acknowledge and explain
 - ❖ Focus on pertinent information and relevant questions
 - ❖ Use a calm tone of voice and speak in a professional manner
 - ❖ Actions and expressions should portray that you care about helping
 - ❖ Avoid acronyms or terms customers are not familiar with
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CUSTOMER SERVICE TIPS

ASK AND LISTEN

- “How can I help you?”
- “Just so I understand, you are saying...”
- “I understand you are frustrated”
- “I really want to help you, so let’s see what we can do”



CUSTOMER SERVICE TIPS

Apologize and Empathize

- “I’m sorry that you were not given that information”
- “I’m sorry the issue has not been resolved for you, but let’s try to take care of that today”

RESOLUTION

- Let the customer know that you want to help and solve the problem
- Be honest if you cannot solve it
- “I will check with my Lead/Supervisor and call you back”



CUSTOMER SERVICE TIPS



APPROPRIATE CLOSING


- “Do you have any other questions, or is there anything else I can help you with”
- “Thank you for contacting us with this information”

TELEPHONE TIPS

- Introduce yourself and the agency
- Explain why if you need to transfer a customer
- Avoid holds if possible
- Use hold button in CCA if needed so the customer will hear music



TELEPHONE TIPS

- Check back with a customer on hold within two minutes
 - Apologize and thank the customer for holding
 - Ask the customer if they prefer a call back
 - If a call is dropped, attempt to call back
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WORKING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

- Remain calm when the customer is angry and speaking loudly or yelling



- Explain that you are there to help and that your main goal is to solve the problem
- Actively listen and engage the customer: give them time to explain the issue or concern without being interrupted

WORKING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

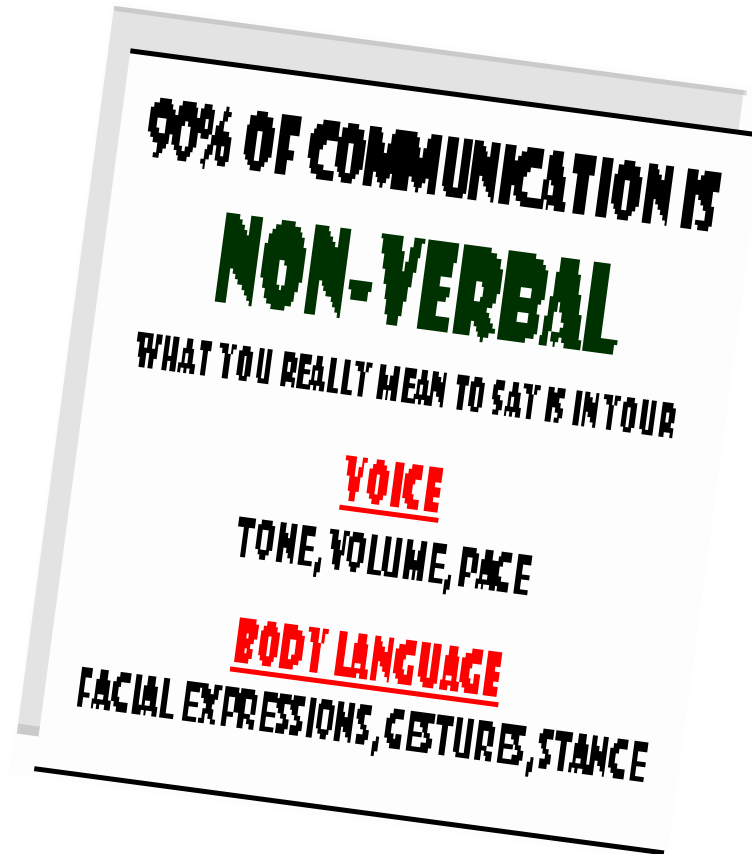
- Show empathy, apologize when appropriate
- Keep the conversation focused on the issue at hand
- Focus on what you can do for the customer, not what cannot be done
- If you cannot completely resolve their issue, search for and offer alternatives



TRY TO DE-ESCALATE

VOICE AND BODY LANGUAGE

- Lower your voice instead of raising it when the customer is getting upset
- Be aware of your facial expressions
- Do not show the customer that you are getting impatient or frustrated
- Stay engaged and explain again if necessary

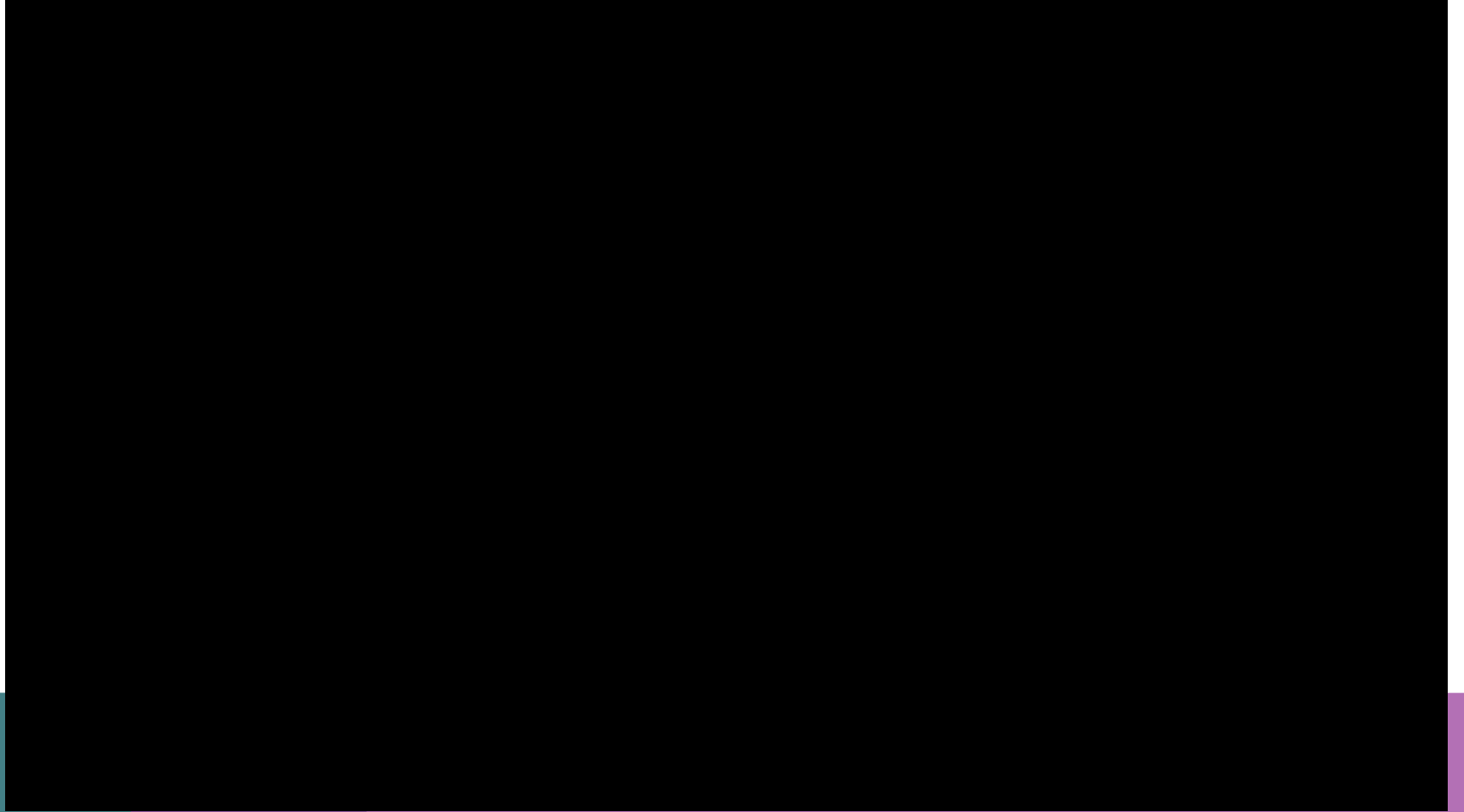


EMPATHIZE BUT REMAIN APPROPRIATE

- **Keep the conversation about the customer, not yourself**
- **Be careful about sharing personal information**
- **Avoid telling the customer about something similar you went through; they should feel like the focus is on helping with their situation**

YOUR MOST UNHAPPY CUSTOMERS ARE YOUR GREATEST SOURCE OF LEARNING

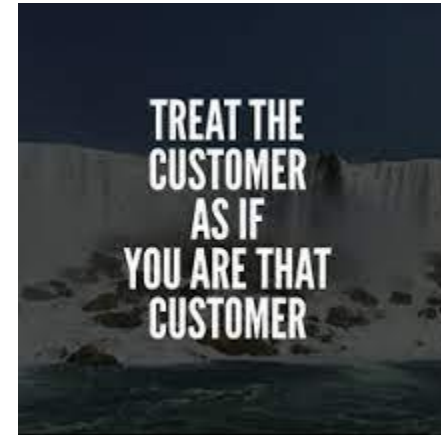




- **Avoiding escalation is easier than trying to de-escalate after the customer has become upset**
- **Using techniques that will prevent escalation will make the workplace safer for you and all of your customers**

TRY TO AVOID THE ESCALATION COMPLETELY

- Listen carefully
- Put yourself in their shoes
- Refer to correct person or resource the first time
- First Contact Resolution to avoid multiple calls or interactions that may lead to frustration
- Look for signs or clues that things may escalate and take action to avoid that escalation



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TAKE CONTROL TO CREATE A GOOD EXPERIENCE

- ✓ Discuss notices, verification items required, and due dates
- ✓ Make sure the customer is clear on what actions they need to take and what they need to provide



TAKE CONTROL TO CREATE A GOOD EXPERIENCE

- ✓ Enter case comments: what was done, what is still needed, other relevant information
- ✓ Follow through and give an estimated time of resolution or when you will call them back if needed

BREAKING THE CYCLE

- ❑ Social media causing less personal interaction time
- ❑ The lost art of customer service
- ❑ Challenge yourselves to break that cycle and make good customer service a priority
- ❑ Commit as an individual worker, so we can commit as a consortium community



CUSTOMER SERVICE WITH CO-WORKERS

- Be mindful of how you are talking to and interacting with co-workers
- Provide a foundation for stronger relationships
- Work culture that people value and want to uphold
- Connections with one another develop stronger ties to work
- Higher levels of motivation and morale
- Trust and a collaborative spirit, rather than negativity

*****Teamwork makes the dream work*****



EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC

Remember that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on many of our customers

- Economic and Social Disruption
- Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms
 - Fear and Confusion
 - Anger and Anxiety
 - Substance Abuse

These hardships may affect how customers react to and interact with us

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



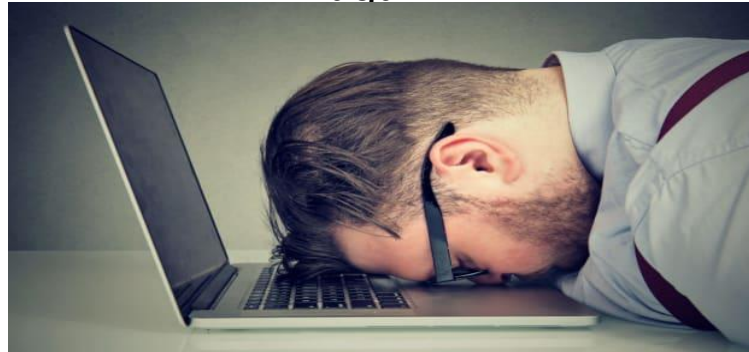
HOW HAS THE PANDEMIC AFFECTED YOU?

- ❖ Are you having anxiety?
- ❖ Feelings of uncertainty?
- ❖ Constant concern about the health of friends or family members?
- ❖ Concern about your own health, especially coming into work?

Be mindful of how this may be affecting the customer service you provide

COVID FATIGUE: WHEN WILL THIS BE OVER??

Frustration over moving toward return to normalcy, then going backwards again



- ✓ **We do this work to help people and make a difference**
- ✓ **Make a conscious decision about your attitude when facing each work day**
- ✓ **Focus on still providing that high level of customer service**

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!

✓ Practice Self-Care

✓ Being aware of your own physical and mental health will allow you to provide better customer service, not only to our clients, but with other team members

✓ Use resources available to you:

*Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in partnership with FEI

800-236-7905 <http://www.feieap.com/>

*EAP available for Dane Co. employees who have disability insurance

<https://admin.countyofdane.com/documents/PDFs/Insurance/Disability/EmployeeAssistance-Flyer.pdf>

*Consortium Partner Resources

*Contact your healthcare provider

CUSTOMER SERVICE

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel”

~~ Maya Angelou





QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

