**Dealing with Difficult People Quick Reference Guide**

# **Angry Customers**

* Keep your cool
* Allow them to vent
* Maintain your composure
* Remain objective
* Set limits & maintain control
* Use a calm tone of voice
* Never interrupt
* Don’t formulate responses
* Make eye contact
* Keep an open posture
* Stop the interaction if too abusive

# **Emotional Customers**

* Don't allow crying to distract you
* Be professional and avoid being condescending
* Express empathy but remain neutral
* Allow them to regain composure
* Get back to the issue at hand

# **Forgetful Customers**

* Narrow down the details
* Be specific when asking questions
* Ask the customer to repeat back information to you
* Re-ask questions
* Show visuals



**Talkative Customers**

* Interrupt respectfully when needed
* Steer the conversation back on topic
* Use close-ended questioning
* Present factual information to elicit shorter responses
* Ask questions that get to the point
* Remain focused
* Be honest in your responses

**Customers Needing an Advocate/Proxy**

* Obtain an interpreter if needed
* Follow all MDES policies before speaking to a proxy
* Explain to the proxy that questions will be directed towards the customer
* Make sure the customer is not being coached by the proxy
* Follow all other suggestions for dealing with other types of difficult customers

If the proxy exhibits one of those characteristics

**Narcissitic Customers**

* Be assertive and professional
* Stick to facts
* Never apologize when you are right
* Present facts and ask for clarification
* Ask follow up questions on incomplete thoughts
* End the conversation if they fail to cooperate
* Set clear boundaries
* Don’t take things personally
* Avoid arguing
* Give constructive feedback
* Be understanding

