

“The Buck Stops Here”—Harry S. Truman

Our ADRC Standards

What underlies all of these standards is striving for a balance between caller’s expectations and system capacity. We are striving for a consistent customer service message.

1. Caller is a unique individual with a unique problem; their problem is the only one that matters to them. They should know that they are not the only person experiencing this problem.
2. Make the caller feel special and unique, like you like them!
3. A caller’s income or assets should not determine the answer they receive in requesting services.
4. Address any issues immediately
5. Do not pass the buck.
6. Have the most current information about the customer as possible. Do not make them repeat their story if it’s not necessary.
7. Show empathy with the caller’s problem.
8. Provide a timely response if an issue can’t be immediately addressed.
9. Provide caller with as much information around a referral as possible (operating hours of the referral, any information that should be left on voicemail, ‘you’ll have to show your card’).
10. Give immediate attention to crisis calls
11. Give people a timeline to put their crisis in perspective (housing issues take a while to resolve, so don’t expect resolution of this issue overnight).
12. Prevent ‘phone tag’ games by leaving on voice mail the best time to be reached or asking the other person when a good time to reach them is. (BDS)
13. Follow up: we expect a referral to follow through with the caller. Person answering initial call should tell caller, “If you don’t get your needs met please call me back”.
14. When you answer the phone you are a representative of your agency and this project. Callers can tell your mood by the way you answer the phone and in order for them to feel welcome as callers, they should be made to feel that you are happy AND in the moment—that they are #1 on your list. SMILE when answering/talking on the phone. Callers can hear it. If you can’t live up to these standards, don’t answer the phone.
15. Have an awareness that there is a power dynamic between the person who answers the phone and person calling for information. The person calling for information should be offered the service (they should not be made to beg for it),
16. The person answering the phone should not assume that the caller knows what they are asking for. Finish the call by asking, “Is there anything else?” During the call ask if you are addressing their most immediate need.

17. Walk-ins: Staff greeting walk-ins will provide all clients with the highest level of service, no matter what their appearance. Conversely, staff meeting with walk-in clients will maintain a professional appearance.
18. Walk-ins: Any physical environment a walk-in encounters should be welcome and uncluttered, sensitive to client's needs regarding clutter, smell, etc. (SS office). There should be a nice balance between sterile and homey.
19. Don't assume clients can:
 - Read
 - See
 - Hear
 - Speak your language

Know/understand what you are talking about. Refrain from using acronyms and get back verification that you are understanding each other.

20. Strive for consistent, on-time delivery of service. Don't make promises you can't keep.
21. Communicate that the caller is calling the ADRC in Maine. If referring them to an organization outside the area, say so, so that they know whether they are being referred to a national or local agency.
22. Strive for minimum errors, correct errors immediately.
23. Guarantee that the quality of the referral you are making is good, that the service exists. Don't refer people to services that don't exist and if there is a waitlist, let them know.
24. Explain what the term "you're on the list" means if you put them on a list. Do they move from one list to the next? Explain the process.
25. Professionalism, courtesy, respect—these are our simplest standards. Look for cracks and make sure no one falls through them. We will collect data on the cracks and try to fill them.