Customer Service tips for assisting patrons with the SCVOS system

Remember that patrons that are seeking work may be frustrated, tired, stressed out, uncertain, scared, worried, and any number of other emotions that could make your interactions with them unpleasant or difficult.

Although you may not be an employment counselor, patrons will expect the same level of service as if they were seeking library materials.

It is important to do your very best to control your emotions, not get sucked into the patrons problems, all while providing professional and courteous service.

These are some helpful techniques to assist patrons.

Using the HEAT Technique:

Hear them out
Empathize
Apologize
Take action...

Hear them out:
Tune out distractions that could affect the conversation.
Be and/or act receptive.
Understand the situation before being understood by the patron.

Empathize
Show empathy with your customers. Try some of these phrases:
    I understand...   I am sorry...   I can appreciate...
Empathy is also conveyed by your tone of voice and body language.

Apologize: but also address the problem
Simply hearing that a staff member recognizes the issue, and feels sorry about it, can help alleviate the situation all together.

Address the problem:
Sound and appear:
  – positive
  – energetic
  – competent

Take action:
❖ Check back with customer afterward to see if problem was solved to satisfaction
❖ Offer suggestions
❖ Diffuse - hand the situation to a co-worker
You can also try using these 25 phrases that can help to calm customers:

1. I’m sorry for your inconvenience.
2. What can we do to make you happy?
3. No wonder you’re feeling frustrated.
4. Please tell me what happened.
5. How can I help?
6. We value your business, so we want to resolve this quickly for you.
7. I appreciate what you’re saying.
8. Yes. (The power of a Yes can go along ways to alleviate frustration)
9. Let me write this down so I’ve got it right.
10. I’m sure we can find a solution.
11. No problem.
12. Let’s get this resolved.
13. I’d be glad to do that.
14. We’ll make it right.
15. I’ll find out for you right away.
16. Help me with some details so we can start fixing this.
17. I can see why you feel that way.
18. I agree.
19. What do you think is a fair way to settle this?
20. Let me see if I understand clearly.
21. I’m here to help you.
22. You’re right.
23. I’ll go to work on that immediately.
24. I see what you mean.
25. Thanks for bringing this to my/our attention.

Remember that you can only do for the patron what you have time for. With the new VOS system there will be more and more patrons needing this type of assistance. As you become more familiar with what types of questions and issues the patrons may have, you will be more prepared to get them the assistance and answers that they seek. As with anything in life, the key is to practice these skills, be prepared to use them, and refine them for your personal situation as you see fit.