

Dealing with Difficult Callers and Customers



1919 University Ave. W., Ste. 400, St. Paul, MN 55104 | Tel. 651-645-2948 or 888-NAMIHELPS | www.namimn.org

People may be difficult due to symptoms of a mental illness, stress, physical illness or disability, past experience, and think it's the only way to get help.

Strategies That May Help

- Be nice and polite
- Be empathetic – I can imagine how upsetting or frustrating this is
- Sincere voice, be interested and concerned
- Don't be defensive and counter attack
- Agree or review the solution
- Set clear expectations on what you can do but commit to helping
- Acknowledge mistakes
- Help them understand process – what will be talked about today
- Tell yourself they are having a bad day and it's not about you
- Use their name occasionally in the conversation
- Actively listen – “uh huh” “really”
- Try to really listen, understand their perspective
- Paraphrase
- Ask a question to show you're listening
- Acknowledge the problem

Strategies for Dealing with Anger

- Remain silent for a little bit when they are very upset
- Don't interrupt
- Talk about the magic wand
- Tell them you will need to ask some questions to clarify
- Say I'm sorry
- Imagine yourself in the caller's shoes.
- Talk in a calm, low voice, telling the caller that you understand her concerns.



NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults with mental illnesses and their families. NAMI Minnesota offers education, support and advocacy.

Dealing with Difficult Callers and Customers



1919 University Ave. W., Ste. 400, St. Paul, MN 55104 | Tel. 651-645-2948 or 888-NAMIHELPS | www.namimn.org

Strategies for Dealing with Anger (continued)

- Let the person know you want to help
- Connect to the feelings underneath
- May need to first almost match them and then bring it down
- I'm taking down everything you say and they aren't going to take you seriously if you keep using those words

Strategies for Dealing with Psychotic Thinking

- De-escalate before trying to problem-solve.
- Speak calmly, slowly and confidently.
- Take it slow.
- Use a gentle, caring tone of voice.
- Use clear language.
- Avoid nervous behavior (including talking).
- Use non-threatening body language.
- No touching, shouting or sudden movement.
- Reduce distractions (ask others to leave, turn off TV/music, etc.).
- Do not challenge psychotic thinking.
- Don't argue or threaten
- Avoid intense questioning. Ask just one question at a time.
- Avoid sarcasm, laughing or humor.
- Announce actions beforehand.
- Don't restrict the person's movement.
- Try to be aware of what may worsen the person's fear and aggression
- Comply with reasonable requests.
- Listen patiently, and listen to learn.
- Paraphrase concerns.
- Take a break.
- Offer solutions instead of taking control.



NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults with mental illnesses and their families. NAMI Minnesota offers education, support and advocacy.

Dealing with Difficult Callers and Customers



1919 University Ave. W., Ste. 400, St. Paul, MN 55104 | Tel. 651-645-2948 or 888-NAMIHELPS | www.namimn.org

Strategies for Dealing with Psychotic Thinking (continued)

- Ask if the person is open to suggestions.
- “Would you like to hear some things that have worked for others in similar situations?”
- Ask how you can help.
- Affirm the person’s positive qualities.
- Offer the person a face-saving way out.

Strategies to Help You

- Don’t internalize story or reaction.
- Take a break – a short walk.
- Take a deep breath and breathe out longer than breathing in (but don’t let them hear you exhale).
- Stay calm – use your brain not your heart.
- Use your “mute” button.
- Look at big picture – will this matter next week?
- Focus on positive.
- Learn to forgive.



NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults with mental illnesses and their families. NAMI Minnesota offers education, support and advocacy.

Crisis Resources



1919 University Ave W, Suite 400, St. Paul, MN 551104 | Tel. 651-645-2948 or 888-NAMIHELPS | Fax: 651-645-7379 | www.namimn.org

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, help is available. There is hope. No matter the age or the challenges people face, help is a phone call, text, or online chat away. The following resources will help those in a crisis:

The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline <i>Calls or texts to these numbers will connect you to a crisis center where trained volunteer counselors or mental health professionals are waiting to help. The calls are free and confidential.</i>		
<p>call 988 Veterans: option 1 En Español: opción 2</p> <p><i>After listening to options, there will be a pause while you are transferred to an available call center.</i></p>	<p>Text to 988 -or- Text “MN” to 741741</p>	<p>Chat 988lifeline.org/chat/</p> <p><i>Fill out a short survey so the counselor will know a bit about your situation, then you’ll see a wait-time message while you are connected to a counselor.</i></p>
<p>The Trevor Project for LGBTQ Youth: 1-866-488-7386 Text START to 678678 Chat thetrevorproject.org/get-help</p>	<p>Mobile Crisis Teams in Minnesota **274747 (from mobile phones)</p> <p><i>Every county in Minnesota has professional crisis teams that will come to you and help resolve the crisis and link you to needed services. See page 2 for how to call them from landlines.</i></p>	<p>Blackline Support for Black, Brown, and Indigenous Communities: 1-800-604-5841 Texting and phone help available 24/7</p>
<p>Translifeline Support by and for the Trans Community 1-877-565-8860</p>	<p>Veterans Crisis Lines 988 (option 1) Text to 838255 -or- Call Vets4Warriors 1-855-838-8255</p>	<p>Minnesota Farm and Rural Helpline 1-833-600-2670 Text “FarmStress” to 898211</p> <p><i>24/7 help for rural Minnesotans experiencing stress, anxiety, or depression. Trained counselors can also connect you to resources for business, financial, or legal help.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">CALL 911 <i>if there is IMMEDIATE DANGER to you or someone else</i></p>		
<p>Stay calm and tell the dispatcher “This is a mental health emergency” and ask for a Mobile Crisis Team</p>	<p>If a Mobile Crisis Team is not available, Ask for a CIT Trained officer (Crisis Intervention Team)</p>	<p>Be prepared to share information about mental health history, diagnosis, triggers, what has worked in the past, details of the current situation, and more.</p>

Minnesota Warmlines

Support for those struggling with their mental health but aren't experiencing a crisis or emergency. Trained Peer Support specialists give free, confidential, anonymous support and are available to talk at the following centers:

Mental Health Minnesota

651-288-0400

toll free **855-WARMLINE**

Text "Support" to 85511

open 7 days a week from 9am – 9pm

Wellness in the Woods

Peer Support Connection

1-844-739-6369

Open 7 days a week from 5pm – 9am

IMALIVE Chat

Online crisis chat service with trained volunteers.

imalive.org

click the "chat now" button at the top of the page

Fast-Tracker Link to Minnesota Mental Health Resources

This website provides a searchable statewide database of mental health and substance abuse services, clinics, and providers- and you can find ones that have immediate openings.

www.fastrackermn.org

MN United Way 211

A 24/7 source of health and human services information for Minnesotans. Includes food and housing support, mental health and medical resources, legal assistance, and much more.

Call 211 or 800-543-7709

Text your zip code to 898-211

National Domestic Abuse Hotline

800-799-SAFE (7233)

Text "Start" to 88788

Free, confidential, 24/7 hotline offering lifesaving tools and immediate support to enable victims to find safety and live lives free from abuse.

NAMI Minnesota Helpline

for non-emergency mental health information, resources, education, classes, and support, call and leave a message at

1-888-626-4435

or email

namihelps@namimn.org

National Sexual Assault Hotline

800-656-HOPE (4673)

A free, confidential, 24/7 service connecting victims with trained support specialists providing support, information, resources, and referrals in their area. Online chat available at www.rainn.org

Local Mental Health and Crisis Resources

Use the following information to find and record contact information for mental health and crisis resources in your own community. Keep this information close at hand so that you can easily find it.

Mobile Crisis Teams

*Every county in Minnesota has mobile crisis teams made up of mental health professionals who will help people experiencing a mental health emergency wherever they are. People using mobile phones can call ****274747**. Dispatchers at 911 call centers will also connect you.*

To contact your county's crisis team directly or from a landline, find the phone number using the following links:

Adult Mobile Crisis Teams: **bit.ly/MNmobileCrisisTeams**

Children's Mobile Crisis Teams: **bit.ly/MNchildrensMCTs**

Your county's Mobile Crisis Team phone #

Your county's Children's Mobile Crisis Team phone #

Other Important Phone Numbers

Nearest Hospital:

Nearest Psychiatric Hospital:

Doctor's Name and Phone #:

Mental Health Provider's Name and Phone #:
