Helpful Scripting: Challenging Calls

"I hear you…"

"We are just a basic information and referral line. We do not provide direct services. I can only provide information that is in my database. I can do a search and see if there are any resources you can contact who might be able to answer your questions."

"We don't provide that type of service or information, but what I can do is…(or how I can help you). We are an information and referral service, and based on what your situation is, we provide referrals to places that may be able to help you with X."

"I'm sorry I'm not able to assist you with that. Is there anything else I can look up for you today?"

"I'm sorry I wasn't able to assist you today, but if you do need anything else, you can give us a call back…"

"I'm not able to find resources for _____ (rent, electric bill, etc.) in our database at this time. Can I look for resources for other bills you may have so that you could possibly rearrange how you'll budget your money this month?"

"Thank you for sharing that information. I'd like to get you some information on resources that might be able to help. I'm looking at a resource now that sounds like it might be helpful…"

"We've talked about multiple resources today (reiterate resources given). Does that sound like a good place to start?"

"Well, we've talked about a lot of things and I do have other callers to get to. Do you want to try to start out with that information then give us a call back?"

"Looks like I've given you a good place to start. Please feel free to call us back if you need anything else, we're here M-F 8-6" and end the call.

"I appreciate you wanting to share your story, I think I have enough information to provide you with some referrals"

"I hear that you are frustrated (upset, afraid, etc.), I am looking for an agency that may be able to help you"

"Unfortunately, our database only searches by city or zipcode. Can you give me a city or zipcode that I can do a search in? ...and while I'm looking this stuff up, I do want to let you know that all of our resources are searchable on our website. Do you have access to the internet?"

"I hear that you are upset and crying, but I am having difficulty hearing/understanding you. Can I ask you some demographic questions we ask all of our callers?" or "would it be helpful to call us back?"

“It sounds like you’ve got a lot going on and that it might be helpful to have someone to talk to. Are you interested in a talkline?”

“I’m glad you called and I want to get you connected to the people who can help. They are the experts and are more equipped to help you than I am.”

“I hear that you are very frustrated with your situation. Do you have a caseworker that you’re working with? Do you have anyone (friends, family, faith organization) you can talk to about what’s going on right now?”

Other Tips:

- Don’t take things personally!
- Meet callers where they are at!
    - It’s OK for people to cry, be angry, upset, frustrated, sad, in crisis, etc.
- Remember EFFECTIVE PAUSES!
- It’s OK to end a call without finding any resources.