

The 3 A's

Earn back trust before the call escalates

1

ACKNOWLEDGE

Do you hear me?

Restate what happened and how it's affecting them before you fix anything.

SAY

"Your card was declined while you were trying to pick up a prescription? That's stressful."

AVOID

"I understand" plus an excuse. Jumping to verification first.

2

ALIGN

Are you with me?

Put yourself on the customer's side, and show how the policy works for them.

SAY

"That lock stopped someone from using your card. Let's find a way to pay without undoing that protection."

AVOID

Blaming another team, or quoting policy without explaining how it helps them.

3

ASSURE

Do you have a plan?

Give the what, the when, and how you'll follow through.

SAY

"The temporary card number will be active and ready to use in 5 minutes. I'll stay on the line until your payment goes through."

AVOID

Vague promises like "we'll get this resolved," and offering something you can't deliver.

Signs trust is slipping

- Repeating the problem
- A frustrated tone
- Questioning your plan or your competence

When to bring in your lead

- You've used all 3 A's and the customer still asks for a supervisor.
- The request needs approval above your level.
- There's a safety, legal, or fraud issue you can't resolve.