



Caller Stories – March 2020

COVID-19 Response Specific Stories

Ella

Ella is an 80-year old woman with a disability who lives alone. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ella relied on friends to help with errands such as grocery shopping and picking up her prescriptions. With all the confusion and fears over the coronavirus, Ella's friends have not been able to help her as much in the last week or two and she is running low on supplies. She called NC 211 to see if there was a community resource that could help. The 211 Call Specialist provided Ella with information on a local organization that specializes in helping older adults meet their needs and has added capacity to help during this stressful time. The Specialist also spent time telling Ella that she was making smart choices by staying inside away from potential germs and reassured Ella that 211 was there for her 24/7 if she had more questions.

Jessie

Jessie is a single mother of two who works the day shift as a waitress at a local restaurant while her boys are in school. With the COVID-19 pandemic, everything in Jessie's world has changed. Her boys are now out of school for the foreseeable future requiring Jessie to be home during the day. The restaurant where she works had to close the dining room and serve only take out orders to comply with the social distancing requirements and Jessie was laid off. Jessie is scared about how she will pay her rent, buy food and take care of her boys. She called NC 211 to speak with a call specialist and get help. The call specialist listened carefully to Jessie's situation and provided multiple referrals, including information on how to apply for unemployment. The call specialist also reassured Jessie that for now, she and her boys cannot be evicted, even if she is unable to pay her rent and encouraged her to reach out to her landlord to see if they can work together on a plan. The call specialist also provided Jessie with information on where she could find lunch for her and her boys every day while school is out and a referral to a food pantry to help with dinners. After talking to the call specialist, Jessie felt less overwhelmed and that she had some easy steps she could take for her and her boys.

Hillary and John

Hillary and John are retired and receive Social Security. They were interested to learn about the stimulus checks being provided to Americans as part of the CARES Act. This week, Hillary read an article online that said that individuals who receive Social Security must first file their taxes to qualify to receive the relief payment from the federal government. The same article linked to a company that offered to help file taxes and expedite the stimulus payment for a low fee. Hillary thought it sounded like a great deal because she and John could use the cash right now. But John had a bad feeling and suggested they call NC 211 for more information. The NC 211 Call Specialist listened to John and Hillary and was able to search her resource list and provide clarification to the couple. The Call Specialist explained that what Hillary had read was not accurate or true. Further, the Specialist explained that John and Hillary did not need to take any action at all to receive the stimulus payment and should simply wait for the payment to arrive and to remain alert because there are a lot of scams happening right now. John was relieved to have the accurate information and glad that Hillary had not acted before they checked.