Empathy Mapping

An empathy map is used to better understand customer needs through understanding observations and assumptions.

How to:

1. Introduce intention: gain a deeper understanding of customer needs. Ask volunteers to record observations at the next distribution.
2. Before distribution, remind staff and volunteers to pay close attention to what customers are saying and doing and how they are engaging with others in the waiting area.
3. Post paper, divided into four quadrants, in a place accessed by volunteers only (kitchen, storage area, office, etc.) with Post It notes and pens.
4. After distribution, have staff and volunteers record observations in the four quadrants:

Say	Do
What are some quotes and defining words your clients said?	What actions and behaviors did you notice?
Think	**Feel**
What might clients be thinking? What does this tell you about their beliefs?	What emotions might your client be feeling?

5. Choose a time (after every distribution, once a month, etc.) to gather volunteers together to debrief and talk through observations.
6. After discussing as a group what was written in the four quadrants, identify needs and insights:
   a. Needs are verbs, activities, and desires with which your customers could use help, not nouns or solutions. For example, customers need a way to bring food home from distribution (activity) vs. customers need carts with wheels (solution).
   b. Insights are found by asking "why?" This is a great opportunity to capture assumptions, tensions, and contradictions as you work. Use these insights to build survey questions or as topics to bring up with feedback groups.