

WebJunction Learner Guide

Whole Person Librarianship: Structured Empathy in Challenging Times

<http://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/whole-person-librarianship.html>

Event Description: Libraries providing public services are more important than ever in our current political landscape, where few public spaces feel safe and welcoming to everyone. As librarians, we strive to provide equitable service, but this can be challenging when patrons approach us from life experiences we don't share. Many public libraries and some academic libraries have been turning to social workers for help. Social workers are trained to approach their clients with empathy while maintaining professional boundaries, and public service librarians can benefit from understanding their methods. Whole Person Librarianship is an approach drawing from social work concepts, such as cultural humility and person-in-environment, to help librarians become more confident in learning from, interacting with, and serving diverse patrons. In this webinar, you will learn some basic ideas from social work which you can apply right away to your library practice, as well as where to find more in-depth information and support.

Presented by: Sara Zettervall, MLIS and Mary Nienow, MSW

What are your goals for viewing this webinar?	
Personal Goals	
Team Goals	

Gain an Understanding
Whole Person Librarianship uses social work concepts to help serve diverse patrons. Take time to reflect on your own interactions with diverse patrons and approaches you use. For a deeper understanding of the concept of cultural humility, we highly recommend the video: Cultural Humility
What is most challenging for you when serving diverse patrons?
What support or resources do you have in serving diverse patrons?

What resources do you need to better serve diverse patrons?

Librarianship Blog

Whole Person Librarianship Blog: www.wholepersonlibrarianship.com
Find posts of interest. Read through them and identify three new ideas.

What college/university in your community you could do an informational work internship? Or hosting a community services day, to share and learn about competencies for serving diverse patrons, government agencies and educators in your thinking. Identify one you'd connect with. For an extended list of options, review WebJunction's [Community Partnership and Collaboration](#)

Are you writing a book on Whole Person Librarianship? Help them identify topics you need more information on regarding Whole Person Librarianship. The survey also serves as an assessment of practice and application at your library.

Access the survey at: <https://tinyurl.com/survey-wpl>
Following the survey, list a few ideas for next steps that surface for you, and the work you need to do to move towards Whole Person Librarianship:

What are your next steps, along with who, when, etc.)

Use alone or with others, to extend and apply your learning!

Today's Presenters



Sara Zettervall
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County Library,
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Mary C. Nienow
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WHOLE PERSON LIBRARIANSHIP: Fostering Empathy in Challenging Times

Sara Zettervall, MLIS, MFA

Librarian, Hennepin County Library, Minneapolis, MN

Mary C. Nienow, MSW

PhD Candidate, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN

WHO ARE SARA AND MARY?



Mary C. Nienow (left)

- Completing PhD in Social Work at the University of Minnesota
- Assistant Professor at UW-Eau Claire in fall 2017

Sara Zettervall (right)

- Founder, Whole Person Librarianship
- Community Engagement Librarian, Hennepin County Library, Minneapolis

WHAT IS WPL?

www.wholepersonlibrarianship.com

Whole Person Librarianship:

1. Library-social work collaboration in library settings
2. Concepts of social work applied to library practice



WEBINAR STRUCTURE

- Social work core values
- Person-in-environment
 - Library-in-environment
- Cultural humility approach
- Resources
- Questions

What do you hope to get from
this webinar?

CORE VALUES

SOCIAL WORK

- Service
- Social Justice
- Dignity and worth of the person
- Importance of human relationships
- Integrity
- Competence

LIBRARIANSHIP

- Access
- Confidentiality/
Privacy
- Democracy
- Diversity
- Education and
Lifelong Learning
- Intellectual
Freedom
- Preservation
- The Public Good
- Professionalism
- Service
- Social
Responsibility

<http://www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/code.asp>

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/statementspols/corevalues>

STAYING GROUNDED IN LIBRARIANSHIP



PERSON IN ENVIRONMENT

Person-in-environment means **understanding** an **individual** and their **behavior** based on the environmental **contexts** in which they live.

This perspective directly informs **practice**.

HOW DOES THIS INFORM PRACTICE?

Examples from Social Work:

- Assessment
- Relationship Building
- Paying attention to power and privilege

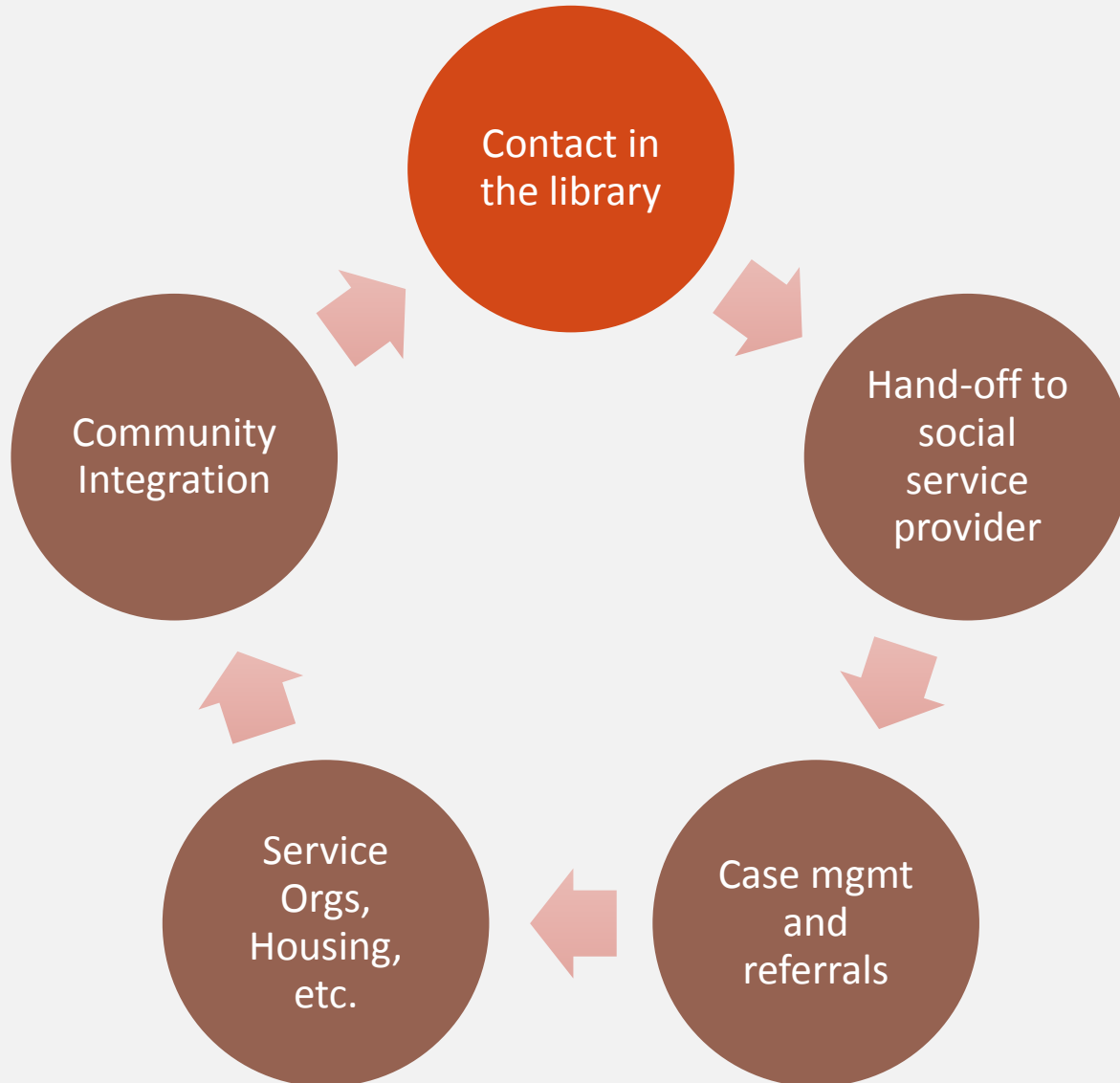
When has understanding the context of a person's life helped you give great library service?

HOW DOES THIS INFORM PRACTICE?

Examples from Librarianship:

- ALA advocates for funding for public internet access
- Many libraries provide lunch for kids during the summer
- Obama asked libraries to support ACA enrollment
- Services for patrons experiencing homelessness meet them where they are

LIBRARY-IN-ENVIRONMENT



CULTURAL HUMILITY

A step beyond cultural competence.

“Those who practice cultural humility work to increase their **self-awareness** of their own **biases** and **perceptions** and engage in a **life-long self-reflection process** about how to put these aside and **learn** from clients.”

CULTURAL HUMILITY

Cultural Competence

- Cultural knowledge
- Cultural skill
- Cultural encounters
- Cultural desire

Campinha-Bacote (2002)

Cultural Humility

- Self awareness
- Lifelong learning
- Institutional Accountability
- Supportive Interactions

Tervalon and Garcia (1998); Foronda (2015)

HOW DOES THIS INFORM PRACTICE?

- Client as the expert in their own life
- Supervision to check our own biases
- Moving away from the “checklist” in social work education and focusing on historic and current issues of oppression, privilege and discrimination

HOW DOES THIS INFORM PRACTICE?

Cultural humility is an **approach**, not a result.

- Be in the community without an agenda
- Ask people about their lives and interests
- Talk to them about what they're doing with their day
- Ask yourself: How do I use my library-specific expertise to be of help?

HOW DOES THIS INFORM PRACTICE?

Examples from Librarianship:

- Teen Advisory Groups
- Spaces and supplies to make the library safe for kids on the autism spectrum
- Prayer space for Muslims

When has learning something new about a patron's culture shifted your perspective or approach?

LEARN MORE

- www.wholepersonlibrarianship.com
- Join our Community of Practice!
- Google map from earlier
- Research article shared library (Zotero)
- Prior writings on exploring this topic
- edX Michigan Social Work “MicroMasters”
- Session at ALA Annual in June

LEARN MORE

- Connect with your local social service agencies
- Talk to your closest university – do they have social work students who could intern at the library?

OUR RESEARCH AND BOOK

“Whole Person Librarianship,” Libraries Unlimited, 2019

- Survey

- Link: <https://tinyurl.com/survey-wpl>
- What do people know? What stories can we share?
- Good for self-assessment as well as sharing info

What questions do you have?
How will you use what you just
learned?

THANK YOU!

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