

Today's Presenters



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**HOW DO YOU
DEFINE
"HOMELESS"?**

"THE PUBLIC" (2018)



MEANWHILE...



PBS NEWSHOUR

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Library social worker helps homeless seeking quiet refuge

January 28, 2015 at 6:20 PM EDT



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<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/library-social-worker-helps-homeless-seeking-quiet-refuge>

Northwest

Northeast

Northeast

TWIN CITIES

METRO: 6202

GREATER MN:

3037

West
Central

Central

Anoka

Washington

Ramsey

Hennepin

Dakota

Carver

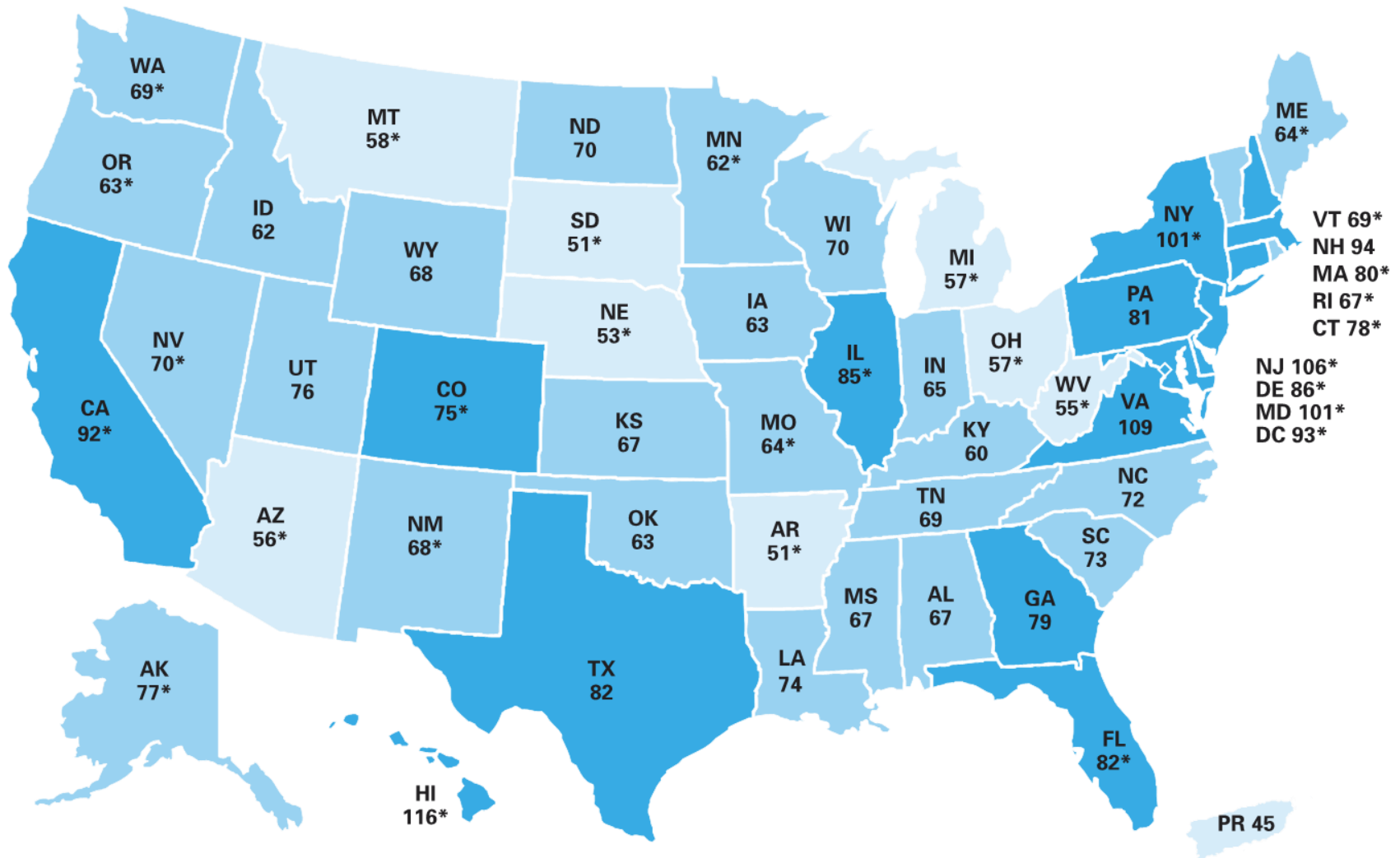
Southwest

Scott

Southeast

2017 HOURS NEEDED AT MINIMUM WAGE NEEDED TO AFFORD RENT

In no state can a minimum wage worker afford a **ONE-BEDROOM** rental home at Fair Market Rent, working a standard 40-hour work week, without paying more than 30% of their income.



Hours at minimum wage to afford a one-bedroom rental home


60 hours per week or less 61 to 78 hours per week 79 hours per week or more

*This state's minimum wage exceeds the federal minimum wage

YOUTH

FAMILIES


VETS

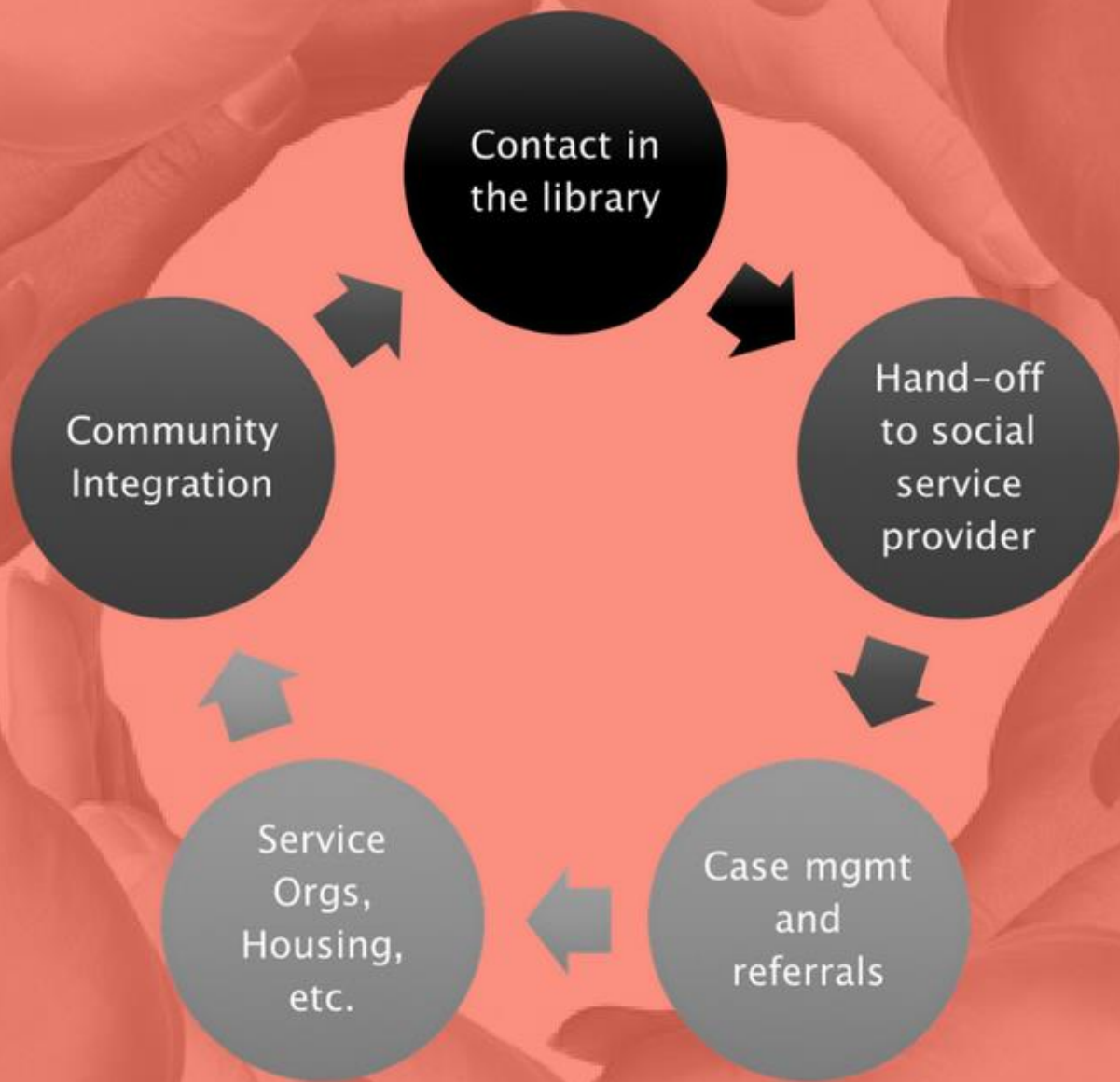
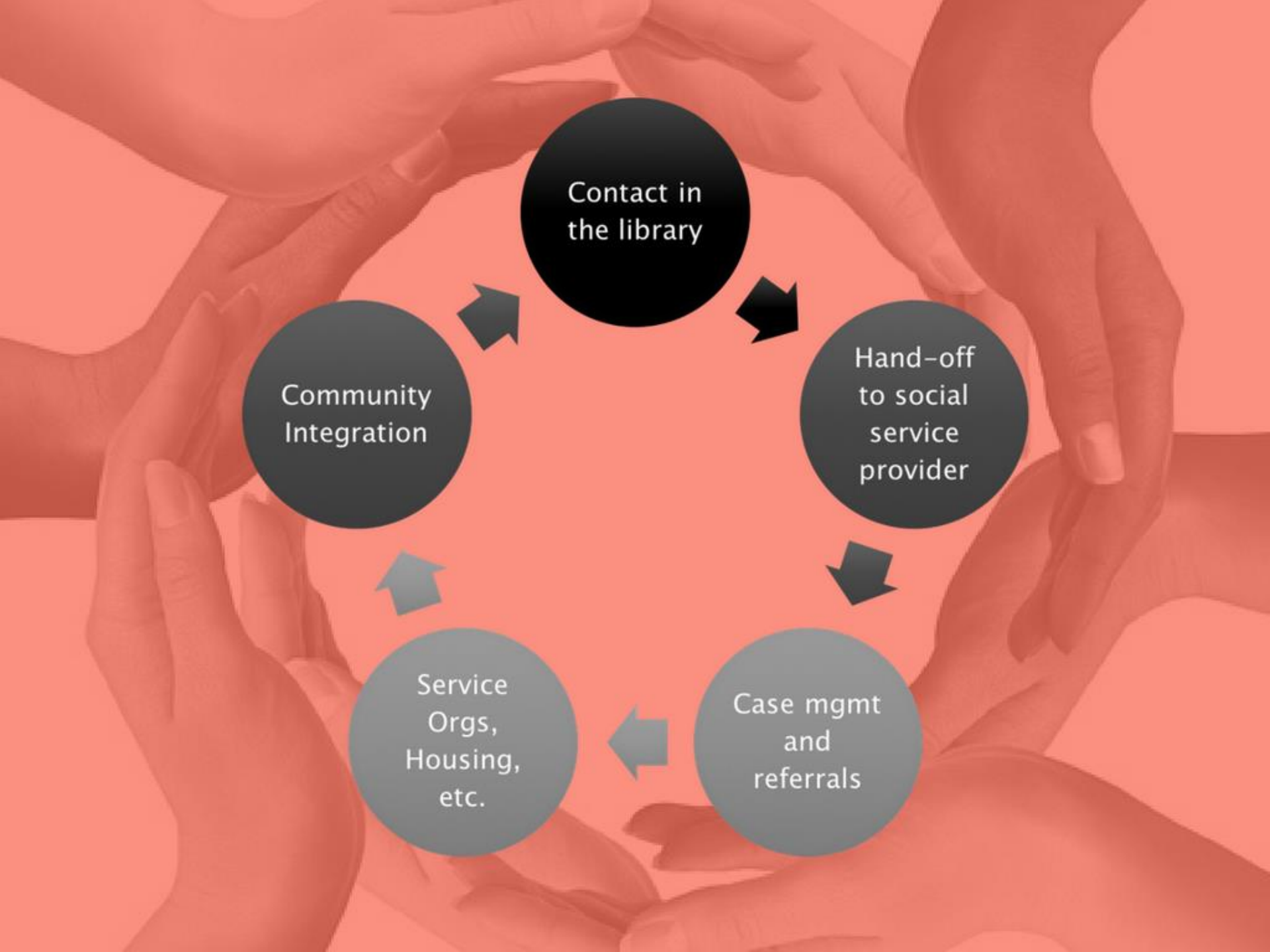


Youth on their own make up a significant but often invisible subset of people experiencing homelessness

Families with young children face unwanted disruption to education with unstable housing

Vets make up a small percentage of PEH but often have complex physical and mental health issues





Trinidad, Colorado

The Library


- The Carnegie Public Library serves **8,500** in the City, total **14,500** in the Las Animas County.
- The **library is one of the primary service providers** for people experiencing homelessness in the community. We provide: **laundry vouchers, food. We act as a day shelter for many patrons.** We have the **only public restrooms** in the downtown.
- We made **700 new library accounts in 2017 and 2016.** Large # of people moving to Colorado (and Trinidad) has created a **rental shortage.** Trinidad Housing Authority averages a **22- month waiting list.**



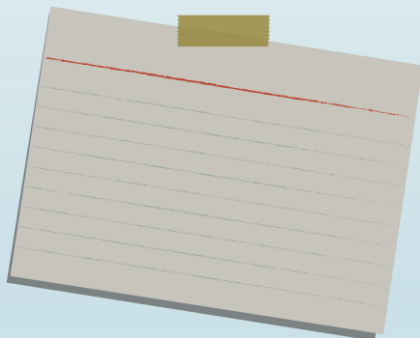
Trinidad, Colorado

Community Services

- **Soup Kitchen:** serves 1,720 meals monthly, one meal each weekday
- **Community Center:** provided 2,500 free showers in 2017
- **ACTS** (Assisting Community through Service): provides immediate need services like food, gas, utility assistance
- Colorado **Workforce** Center, local **churches**, addiction **recovery**, **hospitals**
- **We do not have:** Salvation Army, United Way, etc.



What does homelessness look like in your library?



Share your story in chat



Barriers to Library Access

- **Barrier:** Library may require proof of address to get a card. This discourages patrons who aren't able to give a permanent address.
- **Solution:** Create a policy and/or procedure to include people without a permanent address (share your examples)



Barriers to Library Access

- **Barrier:** Patrons who are homeless or highly mobile move homes frequently and are sometimes evicted without much notice. This means library materials are often not renewed or returned, in turn creating an insurmountable financial barrier. This is especially hard on children.
- **Solution:** Eliminate fines, at the very least on children's materials

Create Common Language

► Speak the same language

- With staff and your board, agree on **shared terms**. At the CPL we say “**patrons experiencing homelessness**” unless we know names
 - Get to know your **patrons’ names**
- With patrons, **encourage perception changes** by using these terms, and explaining why it might be hurtful to use the words “bum” or “hobo”
- **Get in front** of City Council, write for your local paper



Humanize Each Other

► Coffee & Conversations

- Coffee, cookies (or not), and activities with library staff and patrons as peers



<https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/community-connector.html>



Humanize Each Other

- **Create** a task force (including staff and patrons?)
- **Host** a service fair
- **Provide opportunities for staff to leave the library and visit service organizations**

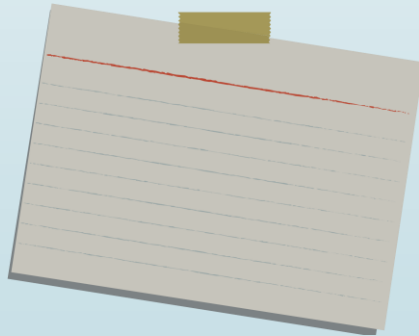
3 S's: sleep, stink, and stuff

At the CPL: Behavior that disrupts or hinders use of the Library is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, offensive odor, loud or boisterous behavior, public indecency, drunkenness or drug intoxication, running, and fighting.

- **Snoring can be loud!** - when waking up a patron, don't touch them. If their snoring isn't disturbing anyone, we allow our patrons to sleep. When you're camping by a fire or wandering the streets all night, not getting sleep is stressful.
- **Hygiene** - give your staff a script. At CPL we offer laundry vouchers, the community center has showers.
- **Stuff** - we have lockers and need bigger ones.

What's *your* script?

“Hello. We’ve had a complaint from a patron about a strong odor. You might not realize this, but the odor seems to be coming from your clothing. Before you can continue to share this space with others, we need you to clean up. How can I help you do that today?”



Share your script in chat!



Tips for Response & Safety

- **Create a resource list** – even if it seems like there aren't many in your town
- **Keep a list of phone numbers**, know when to call 911. Write an Emergency Action Plan.
- Know what your **patron code of conduct** is. Enforce it.
- **Stick to priorities.** Give your staff autonomy. Support your team through difficult interactions.

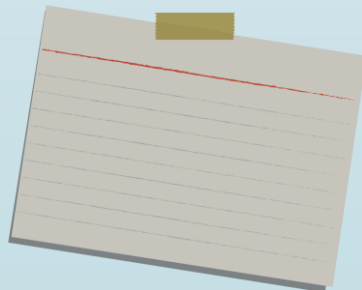
Community Connections

In Trinidad, **we have support** from City administration, City Council, Library Friends and Foundation, and other organizations.

Community perceptions of the library as being “unsafe” or a “homeless hangout” can affect when, and how others support the library.

What do you do when **you don't have community support**?

Make connections with support organizations.



In the chat box, share your partners.
What works well? Challenges?

01

PATRONS

Patrons are influenced by their life experiences and social systems.

02

LIBRARIES

Libraries have a place in those social systems.

03

STAFF

Library staff members are influenced by all of this, too.

BOUNDARIES:

The cookies
are not your
responsibility



REFLECTIVE PRACTICE



What happened?
What does it mean?
What's next?

Reflective practice is a method of reviewing an experience to process it through **thinking** and **feeling** in order to **learn** from it and **improve** your work.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE



REFLECTIVE PRACTICE TOOL



What happened?
How did you feel
during and
after?



What was good
or bad about
how things went?
What was really
going on?



What did you
learn about
yourself and
others?
What will you do
differently?

A circular arrangement of hands in various skin tones, with the text 'Q&A' in the center.

Q&A