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Vision: The Georgetown Public Library will be a catalyst for an enriched community.

Mission: The Georgetown Public Library engages, enlightens, and empowers the community.
Great Staff

Photo: used with permission from Georgetown Public Library
The Public Library as Protective Factor

PATRICK LLOYD, LMSW
GEORGETOWN (TX) PUBLIC LIBRARY
Goals

- Define the phrases “vulnerable patron” and “protective factor”
- Understand and discuss the ways in which libraries function as protective factors for our most vulnerable patrons
- Understand why this lens is important for effective customer service in a public space
When you hear the phrase "vulnerable patron," who do you think of?
Who is a vulnerable patron?

- People with low socioeconomic status
- Older adults who lack substantive familial/social support
- Anyone with ongoing physical or mental health challenges
- People experiencing homelessness
- Members of marginalized or oppressed populations:
  - People of color
  - LGBTQ community
  - Victims of domestic violence/sexual assault
- People who have experienced high numbers of ACEs and adult trauma

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/ace-graphics.html
Vulnerable patrons are folks whose basic needs are not being met by the existing resources in our community.
There is evidence that social isolation is increasing.

The majority of Americans have experienced at least one trauma in their lives.

https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/clinical-practice/trauma
Why do people visit libraries?

- Information
- Entertainment
- Socialization
- Group meetings
- Internet access
- Activities for children, youth, older adults
Why do vulnerable people visit us?

- HVAC
- Water
- Safety
- A place to “just be”
- Healthy relationships
- Social services and referrals
- They have nowhere else to go

- Information
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“**Protective factors** are characteristics associated with a lower likelihood of negative outcomes or that reduce a risk factor’s impact,” while risk factors are “characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community, or cultural level that precede and are associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes.”

The library is a protective factor, particularly for patrons that face significant, ongoing challenges.

My first goal in working with patrons is that they return to the library tomorrow.
This concept is particularly important in smaller communities that may lack:

- Emergency shelters
- Multiple, welcoming public spaces
- Job help centers
- Readily available mental health assistance
- Places for vulnerable people to connect with healthy, supportive socialization
Libraries can be life-changing for all patrons. For vulnerable people, libraries can be life-saving.
“But that’s not what libraries are for!”
Libraries are about people, not books.
Libraries are one of the only places where the entire community comes together.
People trust libraries.

https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/30/most-americans-especially-millennials-say-libraries-can-help-them-find-reliable-trustworthy-information
There is substantial evidence that being socially connected significantly reduces risk of premature death.

Struggling patrons often need someone more than they need something.
The relationship that you have with a patron may be the only healthy connection that person has to greater society.
It’s not our job.

It’s our responsibility.
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Restoring Balance When the Worst Happens

Rivkah K. Sass | Library Director & CEO
Sacramento Public Library
Amber Fawn Wooton-Clark
1977 -- 2018
December 11, 2018

- Shock
- Grief
- Fear
- Action
- Healing
Managing After a Crisis

- Communication
- Transparency – Sharing feelings of loss and grief
- Support
  - Counseling/EAP
  - Chaplains
  - Emotional support animals
  - Admin leave
Staff

- All staff meeting December 14
- 1993
- Amber Clark Memorial January 20
- Time to process
- Remember
The Media

- One Voice
- We controlled the story
- Partnership
- Good and Bad
The Public

- Our worries
- Their reactions
Daily Operations

• Making North Natomas not a scary place to be
• Showing up every day
• Supervisors and managers rotate in – staff too
• On-call and other help
• Plenty of time to heal
  ✓ Counseling
  ✓ Time off the desk
  ✓ Understanding and acknowledging fear
Follow Up

- Safety
- Staff and Staffing
- Partner involvement
- Training
Lessons Learned

- Communication with Amber’s family
- Understanding the grieving process
- If EAP doesn’t work, do something else
- Chaplains!
Changes

- Safety Assessment
  - CPTED
  - Security Doors
  - Safety Plans
- Security Training
- Customer Care Team
- New Rules of Conduct
New Rules of Conduct

This is your library. We strive to create a community of kindness, belonging and safety. We respectfully ask that everyone:

- **Use spaces as intended**
  - Sleeping, smoking, consuming alcohol, drug use are not permitted. Restrooms are intended for toilet and handwashing use only. Covered drinks and reasonable snacking are ok, but please enjoy meals outside.

- **Be considerate**
  - Loud and unreasonable noise must be taken outside of the library.

- **Communicate with respect**
  - Obscene, harassing, abusive language, gestures or behaviors are not allowed.

- **Act responsibility**
  - Violating any law, ordinance or regulation is not allowed. We want our libraries to be a welcome for everyone. Those disrupting the intended use of the library will be asked to leave.
Amber’s Legacy

Library Journal Mover & Shaker
AccessABILITY
Harwood Innovator
Teen Advocate
Superfest 2020

AccessABILITY Advocate

Amber Clark was a rising star at the Sacramento Public Library (SPL) when Director Rivkah Sass nominated her as a Mover & Shaker in fall 2018. Clark was “one of those people whom you knew was strong and was going straight up” to library leadership, says Sass (the 2006 LJ/Librarian of the Year). Tragically, Amber Clark was shot and killed on December 11 in the North Natomas branch library parking lot. Her killer, police say, was a man who had been banned from the library.

Her work, however, lives on.

Clark had been a disability advocate since childhood, having played an integral role in the care of her younger sister who has

IN MEMORIAM

Down syndrome, says her husband, Kelly Clark. The experience led her to a lifetime of passionate advocacy for people with disabilities, beginning as an undergraduate volunteer. Clark came to librarianship in 2014 after a six-year career teaching English and started as a teen librarian at SPL in 2015, becoming

PREVIOUS POSITION
Branch Manager, Sacramento Public Library, CA

DEGREE
MLIS, Texas Woman’s University, Denton, 2014; MA, English, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, 2004

IN MEMORIAM
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