

May 24, 2022

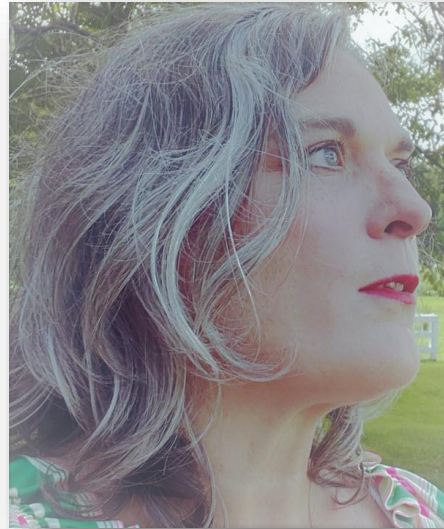
# **Book Challenges and Intellectual Freedom: Proactive Planning for Public Libraries**



# Today's Presenters



**Amanda Vazquez**  
Library Director, Dubuque  
County Library District (IA)



**Jennifer Pearson**  
Director, Marshall County  
Memorial Library (TN)



**Brianna Hoffman**  
WebJunction Project  
Coordinator and Executive  
Director of the Washington  
Library Association



**Amber McLain**  
Digital Services Specialist,  
Lakeland Library Cooperative (MI)

# BOOK CHALLENGES AND INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

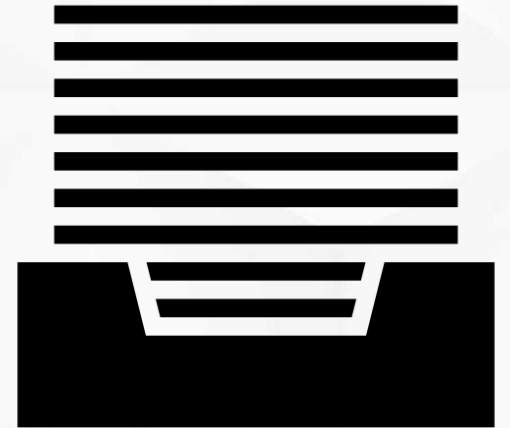
PROACTIVE PLANNING FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Amanda Vazquez**

Director, Dubuque County Library District  
Iowa Library Association Intellectual Freedom Committee Chair  
ALA Intellectual Freedom Round Table Chair-Elect

# IOWA CHALLENGES LANDSCAPE

- Primarily school library challenges
  - 80:20 school:public
  - Public Library challenges in reaction to School Library controversy
- Non-traditional challenges
  - Intentionally not returning items
  - Challenge to decisions not to include items
  - Flooding staff with challenges- One title or multiple



Paperwork by Hea Poh Lin  
from NounProject.com

# LIBRARY CHALLENGES LANDSCAPE

- Public library boards
  - Remove power from library board
    - State
      - Legislation proposed to give city councils authority to overrule library board decisions
    - Local
      - Governing to Advisory



Meeting by IconforYou  
from NounProject.com

# LIBRARY CHALLENGES LANDSCAPE

- Public library staff
  - Proposed legislation
    - HF274- Creates penalties for a person affiliated with a public school or library who **knowingly provides obscene materials to minors**
    - HF185- Prohibits public libraries and elementary and secondary schools from knowingly **allowing a minor to be exposed to or participate in "inappropriate" programming.**
    - HF2176- Makes it an **aggravated misdemeanor or Class D felony** for a school employee or public librarian to knowingly give obscene material to a minor.



Librarian by LUTFI GANI AL ACHMAD from NounProject.com

# DISCLAIMER: IANAL

- Consult with your own legal resources
  - Applicable Law and Legal Opinions
  - Public Information Board
  - State Library Consultants
  - State Law Librarian
  - City/County Attorney
  - Outside Counsel



Lawyer by Fahmi  
from NounProject.com

# LIMIT LEGAL LIABILITY

- Know and follow the law and professional best practices
  - [ALA Library Privacy Checklists](#)
  - State Library and Association Resources
- Educate your Library Board
- Train your Library Workers
- Implement *and follow* your policies and procedures



# BOARD

- Understand their powers and their limits
- Challenges
  - Part of Policy
- Limiting public comment



Law by Andre Buand  
from NounProject.com

# LEGAL

- City Attorney works for the City Council
  - Conflicts may arise
- Retain outside counsel that specialized in 1A or library law
  - State Bar Association
  - ACLU
  - Other Attorneys



## KEY

- █ Elected by the Citizens of Dubuque
- █ Appointed by the City Council
- █ Appointed by the Library Board of Trustees
- █ Appointed by the Airport Commission
- █ Appointed by the City Manager

# CONTACT

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Speech Bubbles by DinosoftLab  
from NounProject.com



# Book Bans

Put Me in Coach!  
How to effectively activate your team for success

\*Yes- It's a sports analogy- but don't worry you'll get it even if you're not a fan of sports ball

Jennifer Pearson  
Director, Marshall Co. (TN) Memorial Library



# It's not always the Winner's Circle

In the current climate we are seeing a lot of challenges to our winning ways in libraries. It helps when we have a good game plan in place to address these challenges...



"139th Preakness Stakes" by [Maryland GovPics](#) (CC BY 2.0)



# The Best Defense is a Good Offense



"Eli Manning — New York Giants" by Mike Lizzi (CC BY 2.0)

# Ensure your assistant coaches and team management understand the game plan

Assistant coaches = staff

Team management = board

Game plan = collection development policy





# Bring in the Fans!

## Your fans are

- Patrons
- Friends of the Library
- Community members
- Who else?



Photography Department of Texas A&M University- Commerce Marketing & Communications, CC2.0



# When someone questions the game plan

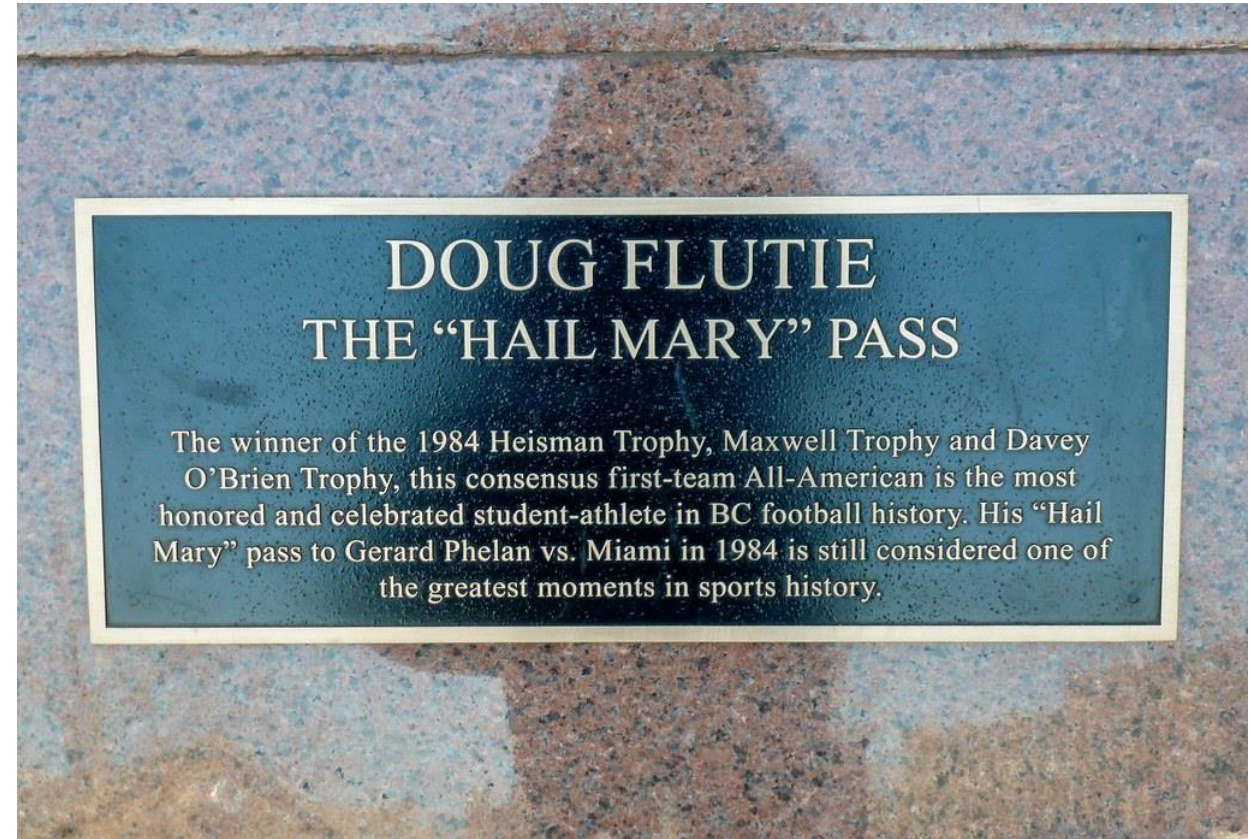
- **The Coach and the Management handle the questions** = making the form; directing the assistants in their role
- **The Assistant Coaches take direction** = make sure they know how to handle a challenge
- **A clear redress must be established** = reconsideration form



Andy Reid throws out the challenge flag - Eagles vs Redskins 10.16.11 by [Matthew Straubmuller](#) (CC BY 2.0)

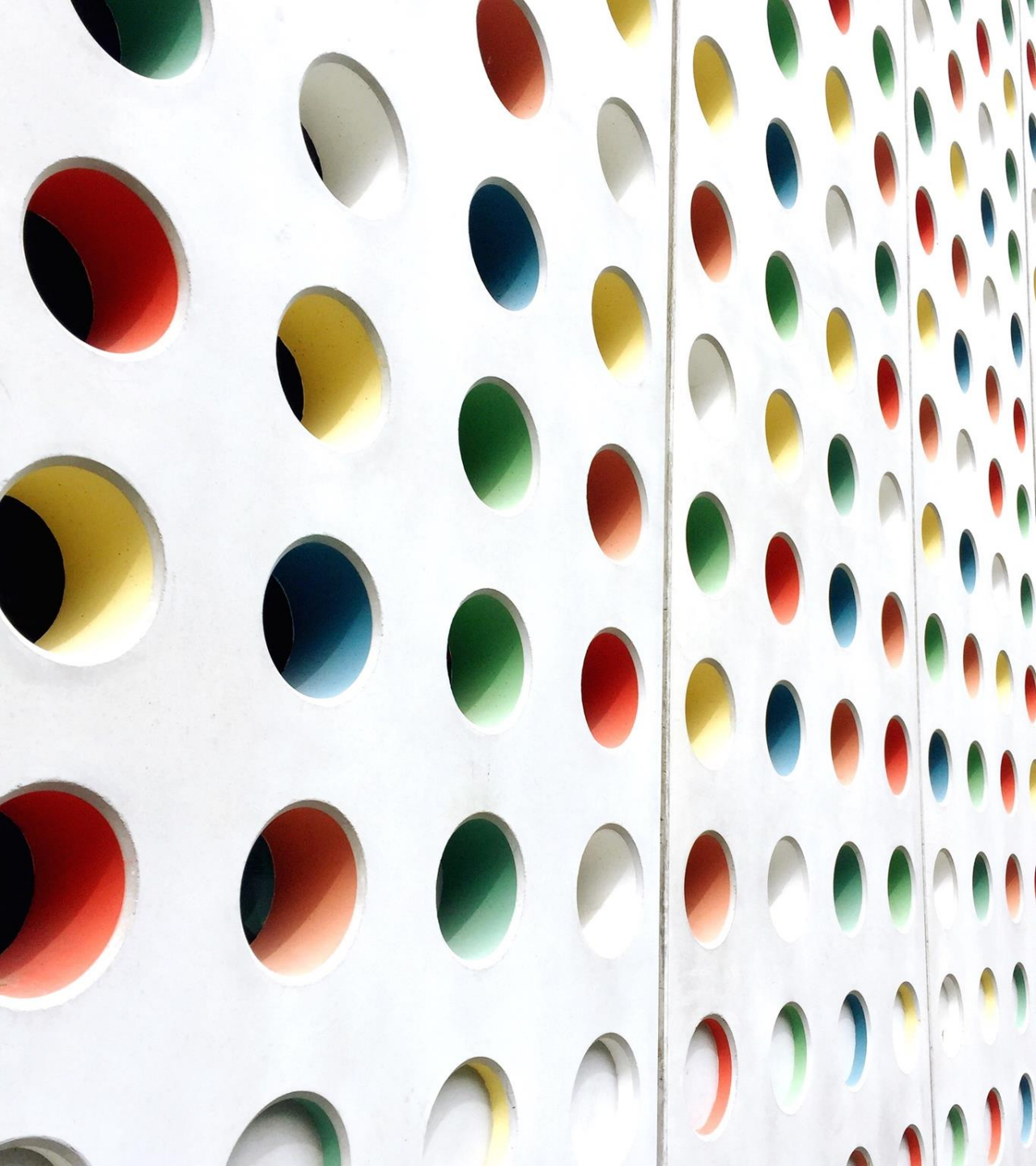
# How to Win in the End

- Cool heads prevail
- Logic and reason win the day
- Don't be afraid to throw that Hail Mary



[Doug Flutie statue, Boston College Chestnut Hill, MA](#), by [Lorianne DiSabato](#), (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)





# Book Challenges

The Role of the  
Association

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BRIANNA HOFFMAN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WASHINGTON LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

# Associations and Partners

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**THINK NATIONAL**  
AMERICAN LIBRARY  
ASSOCIATION (ALA)



**THINK LOCAL**  
STATE LIBRARY  
ASSOCIATIONS



**THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX**  
OTHER POTENTIAL  
PARTNERSHIP & SUPPORT



## Think National – ALA

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THE MERRITT FUND





# Think Local – State Library Associations

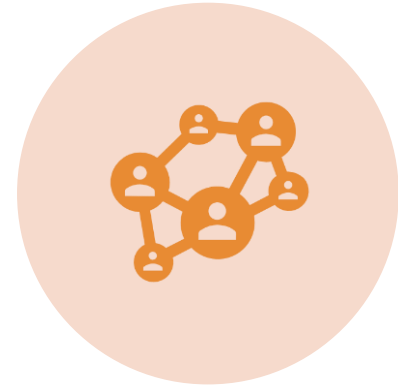
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TOOLKITS



RESOURCES



CONNECTIONS



# Thinking Outside the Box

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**Library Association Lobbyist**

**State Library**

**State and Local Government Offices**

**EveryLibrary**



# Thinking Outside the Box

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**City Council**

**School Superintendents/Administration**

**Community Members**



# What About Boards?

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“Library Lovers”

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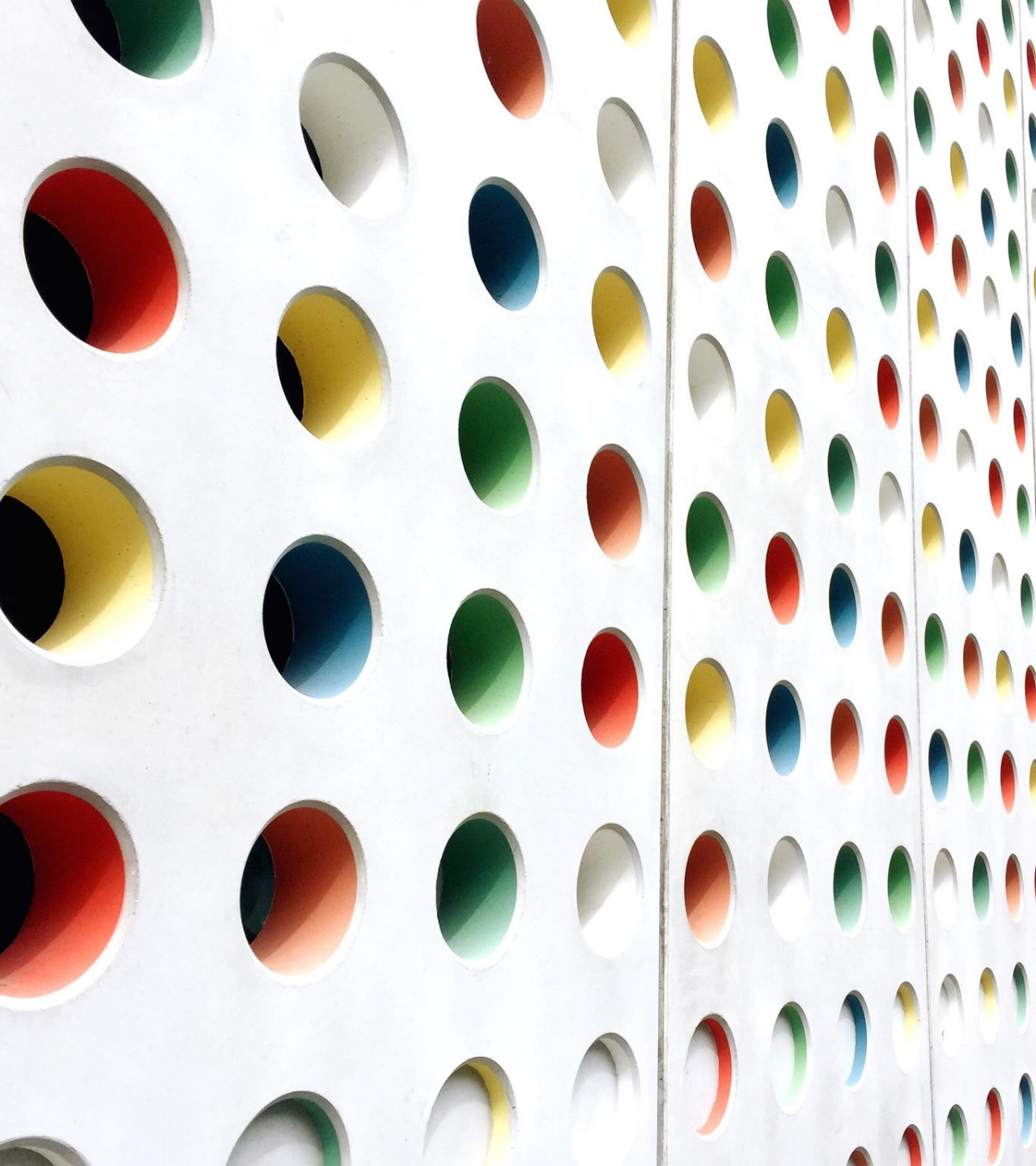
Engaged Patrons

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Library Board

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Advocates



**BRIANNA HOFFMAN**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WASHINGTON LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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**BRIANNA@WLA.ORG**

# Amber McLain

Digital Services Specialist, Lakeland Library Cooperative (MI)  
Previous Director, Patmos Library (MI)

# Staff Roles In Challenges

These roles will vary

- Depending on the size and structure of your library
- Your library may not have all roles
- Some roles may be merged into one



# Staff Roles In Challenges

## Library Pages/Shelvers

- These roles most often encounter patrons on the floor and should listen empathetically to the complaints and give excellent customer service.
- If the patron still wishes to complain, they should direct them to the appropriate place.



# Staff Roles In Challenges

Library Assistants (Circulation, Reference), Librarians

- When a complaint is brought to the attention of Library Assistants or Librarians, they should listen to the patron, just as the Library Page. If the patron still wishes to complain, they should be provided with a packet including: the Library's **Collection Development Policy**, the **Policy for Request for Reconsideration**, the **Library Bill of Rights**, the **Freedom to Read Statement**, and the **Reconsideration Form** last.



# Staff Roles In Challenges

## Managers, Library Director

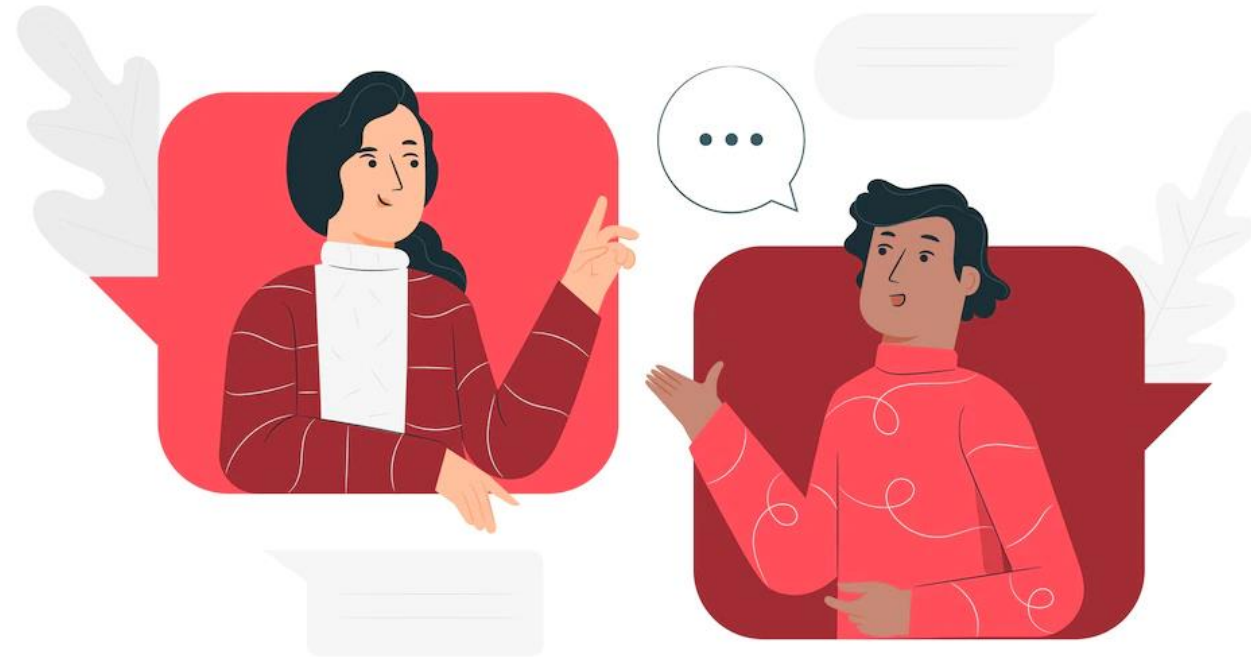
- If a Request for Reconsideration is filed, it should be escalated to the level of management outlined in the Library's Collection Development and Request for Reconsideration Policies.
- Policies must be followed to a T, every time.
- Typically, Branch Managers or Library Directors will be responsible for responding to the complaint with a decision in a certain amount of time.
- Once the patron is notified, all appeals should be handled by the Library Board where applicable.



Network isometric vector created by macrovector - [www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com)

# Empathetic Listening

- Be attentive
- Pay attention to body language
- Ask open-ended questions
- Request clarification
- Acknowledge feelings
- Don't react, just listen



Online chat vector created by storyset - [www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com)



# De-Escalation Techniques

- Pause
- Respond, don't react
- Keep body language open and neutral
- Ignore challenges and loaded questions
- Validate feelings & experiences
- Don't take it personally



Teamwork people vector created by pch.vector - [www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com)

# The Toll of Challenges

- Challenges of all varieties come with some sort of cost
- At the very least, there is the cost of time and effort
- There is also the emotional and psychological cost
- Following steps and reaching out can lessen these costs
- Having a strong foundation and preparedness plan for challenges can bring all levels together and allow for better communication across the board



# Q&A



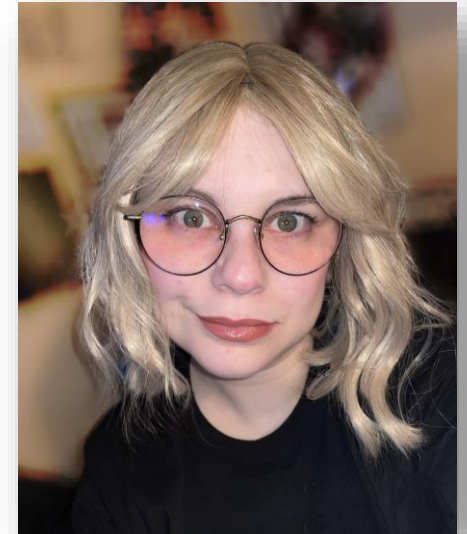
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