**Library Safety and Security: A Holistic Approach**

<https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/library-safety-and-security.html>

Creating a safe environment for the public, staff, and collections is a top concern for libraries. As a public space, this sometimes means that library staff are faced with behavior or events that may feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or be illegal. Although we can’t predict or control every situation, we can be prepared to effectively respond to a range of scenarios. This session will present a holistic approach for creating safe environments through strong community relationships, inclusive policies, and empowered staff. Using a trauma-informed, human-centered lens, we'll explore strategies to create a library where staff possess the skills, and feel prepared, to manage what comes through the doors.

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| **What are your goals for viewing this webinar?** |
| **Personal Goals** |  |
| **Team Goals** |  |
| **Organization**  |
| **Removing Barriers**Challenging behavior in the library can often be associated with stringent library policies. Flip your policies from being potential barriers to users and consider how they might be revised to focus on removing barriers and increasing access to library services.* Review what you require for users to obtain a library card. Are there options for making it more accessible for those without traditional IDs?
* Does your library still collect fines for overdue materials? Consider going fine free to help alleviate stress for patrons and decrease conflict potential. See WebJunction webinar, [Eliminating Library Fines: Improving Community Access, Equity and Usage](https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/eliminating-library-fines.html).
* Review any policies that address community expectations for computer use. This is another policy that can be over complicated and create more confusion for patrons and staff.

**Code of Conduct**Beginning with Organization, reflect and/or discuss how your policies, and especially the library’s Code of Conduct or Behavior Policies, can be simplified and clarified to help improve your community’s understanding of expected behavior.* Simple is better. How might your Code of Conduct be simplified?
* Be sure all staff have a clear understanding of the expectations in applying the Code of Conduct. Remember to gather input from all staff as you update your policies, and ensure they have the information and training to confidently explain the Code of Conduct to patrons. Use sample scenarios to walk through the experience with staff and gather additional tips from the learning process.
* Additionally review your library’s **Exclusion Policy**, to ensure there is alignment with expectations set in the Code of Conduct, and clarity around unacceptable behavior that would result in an exclusion.

**Incident Response Plan**When incidents do happen, it’s critical that the organization and staff are prepared with an Incident Response Plan, to ensure everyone is on the same page, and has a clear and supportive plan for responding.* Have clear guidelines about what to document and how to document behavior issues.
* Who has access to read incident reports? What is the impact of those not directly involved?
* What does staff support look like after an incident? Has leadership provided adequate opportunities to debrief? Do you have resources for staff to process trauma experienced from the incident, e.g., Employee Assistance Program (EAP), or anyone trained to debrief?
* Is there a clear plan on how to handle press inquiries after a crisis or to be prepared for the public response after a tragedy?
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| **Spaces** |
| **Physical Spaces**Public libraries are public spaces, meaning anyone can have access as long as they abide by our behavior guidelines. How we think about our spaces is important. There are physical environmental things you can do to have an impact on people’s behavior. In addition, how staff manage the space can create welcoming and safe spaces for everyone.* What environmental changes can you make to create a more welcoming and safe library?
* How have you used Universal Design strategies to improve accessibility for all? (See WebJunction webinar: [Universal Design at Your Library](https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/universal-design-at-your-library.html))

**Managing Public Spaces**When staff take ownership of the library space, they are more likely to be aware of what is happening in the building. This leads to being able to intervene early if necessary. * What practices does your organization/library have in place for staff to rove the building?
* What tools do staff have to manage patron behavior?
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| **Humans** |
| Library staff are our greatest assets to maintaining a safe and welcoming library for our communities. Providing a safe and welcoming space for staff, or volunteers, is equally as important as providing a safe and welcoming space for patrons. * What strategies do you use to build trust between leadership and frontline staff?
* How do you empower staff?
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| **Training and Staff Support** |
| Creating healthy work environments is the responsibility of all of us. How do we all contribute to creating a space where all staff can come to work as whole humans and be supported and empowered to do their work?* Reviewing the training topics identified in the webinar that intersect with safety and security, what new training could you explore, for you and your colleagues? (E.g., boundaries, trauma informed care, de-escalation, mental health, substance use disorder)
* What strategies does your library organization have in place to support a healthy work life balance for all staff?
* How do you shift your mindset regarding resilience?
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| **Action Plan: (include next steps, when, who, etc.)** |

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| What are 3 helpful things you heard today that you can take back to your library? 1.
2.

What is one thing you will implement in your branch/system? |