**Creating a Person-centered Library: Supporting Patrons While Avoiding Burnout**

**Learner Guide**

<https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/creating-person-centered-library.html>

Are you feeling the strain of serving patrons with complex needs? Is your library seeing increased patron behavioral issues and mental health concerns? This session reviews ideas and approaches for how libraries can support both high-needs patrons and staff. As a result of this webinar, you will be able to:

* Articulate the changing needs of library patrons and how these impact staff
* Learn strategies for assessing your library’s unique needs
* Discuss helpful programs, collaborations, and/or services for high-needs patrons
* Apply person-centered strategies to begin creating cultural change in your library
* Anticipate potential barriers to change

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| **What are your goals for viewing this webinar?** |
| **Personal Goals** |  |
| **Team Goals** |  |
| **Assessing impact of changing needs** |
| In the introduction to the webinar, you learned about complex interconnected issues that impact both library patrons and staff: * Historical challenges (especially impacting high needs patrons)
* Changing psychosocial needs of library patrons
* Strained staff
* Library worker trauma
* Secondary/vicarious trauma
* Burnout
* Institutional betrayal

Consider or discuss the ways these factors currently influence your library’s culture, highlighting those most impactful at your library, and why. |

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| **Principles of trauma-informed care** |
| Creating a person-centered environment begins with an increased understanding of, and sensitivity to, the traumatic experiences of others, so that we can work toward reducing trauma/re-traumatization in our library spaces.SAMHSA provides six principles to guide a trauma-informed approach. Review each principle and identify facets of your library work that feel guided and supported by the principle, and areas where new strategies are needed to improve as a trauma-informed library. 1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and transparency
3. Peer support
4. Collaboration and mutuality
5. Empowerment, voice, and choice
6. Cultural, historical, and gender issues

Remember the “4 Rs” of a trauma-informed approach: * **Realize** the widespread impact of trauma
* **Recognize** the signs and symptoms of trauma in patrons, families, staff, etc.
* **Respond** by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices
* Seek ways to actively **Resist** re-traumatization

For more information, see [SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach](https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma14-4884.pdf) (pdf).  |
| **Selecting strategies for your library** |
| Using these four strategy categories and considering ideas shared in the webinar, brainstorm or discuss how your library could improve or expand upon the current ways of engaging and serving high-needs patrons. **Intentional engagement** (being mindful of both overt and covert messages sent to all patrons)**Outreach** (extending library resources outside the traditional walls of the building)**Warm handoffs** (facilitating direct connections between the patron in need and another service organization)**Service coordination** (following up with people after referrals are made to identify barriers or challenges)From this collection, now identify one strategy that's realistic for you to begin implementing in your role or at your library. You can always return to additional strategies, but start small, and focus on one strategy at first.  |
| **Increasing staff wellbeing** |
| Bringing about cultural change, incorporating a trauma-informed perspective, and increasing support for staff wellbeing takes a comprehensive approach that considers individual self-care, supportive supervisory approaches, organizational change, and professional advocacy. Depending on your role at the library you may not have control over all of these things, so consider what strategies feel most manageable for you to begin implementing or adding to your “toolbox.” What strategies from any or all of the following categories can you or your team start implementing? Self-care strategies:Supportive supervisory approaches:Organizational strategies:Professional advocacy:Although the emphasis on workplace stress reduction has traditionally emphasized self-care, there are limits to self-care, and this work depends on healthy organizational practices and workplace structures that support person-centered initiatives. Bring the supervisory and organizational strategies shared in the webinar to your library team, perhaps by inviting leadership to view the webinar, and set aside an upcoming team meeting to discuss strategies to implement and move towards being a more person-centered library. |