

Library Security Is Everyone's Job



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Be aware of everything
going on around you.

The Basics

- Do you like people?
- ... of all ages and walks of life?
- What is your natural expression?
- How does your voice sound?
- Do you enunciate and speak clearly and concisely?
- Are you knowledgeable? (Policies, procedures, resources)
- Can you turn “I can’t” into “I can . . .”

Handling Conflict

Do

- Remain calm
- Listen Carefully
- Paraphrase back what they are saying to make sure you understand the issue
- Explain your position in a simple, friendly way
- Suggest realistic alternatives
- Leave a plausible way out for the subject (saving face), whenever possible
- Give the subject written confirmation of rules and policies
- Call police when necessary

Don't

- Lose you dignity
- Show fear, anger, panic
- Use a moralizing or condescending tone
- Become sidetracked by extraneous issues
- Argue the point
- Make physical contact
- Make the confrontation personal
- Physically block their exit
- Bluff by threatening to call the police

Fight, Flight, or Focus

The Problem

- It is not about you
- It is not about them
- It is about the problem
- You represent the library
- How can you and the person together solve the problem?

Empathy

- Seek to understand their point of view
- Apologize (I am sorry you have had a bad experience)
- Go beyond what they expect
- Work to de-escalate the situation

Incident Report

- Date and time
- Name, Address and Phone
- Physical description of person
- Description of clothing
- Names, telephone numbers, addresses of witness(es):
- Location of incident:
- Description of incident (provide as much detail as possible):
- Action taken by staff:
- Were police called, name of officer, number of police report
- What action did the police take?
- Did library staff file a formal complaint with the police? Yes _____ No _____
- Date forwarded to Director: _____
- Action taken by Director:
- Any Library Board action required:

The Library Should:

- Have policies reviewed by an attorney
- Have written rules of behavior. Avoid negative wording.
- Train its staff
 - Policies and procedures
 - Communication skills
 - When & how to refer to a higher authority or call the police
 - How to handle extreme situations
- Be willing to review a policy when there are problems. Make it as user friendly as possible.
- Develop a good working relationship with the police before there is a problem

Problem Situations

Computer Use

- Limits
- Proactively preventing problems
- Software

Homeless

- History
- Issues

Emotionally and Mentally Disturbed

Emotionally disturbed persons may be suffering from mental illness or disorders characterized by somewhat bizarre external behavior, hallucinations, and delusions. They can be extremely withdrawn, timid, and cooperative, or violently aggressive.

Hallucinations

- Hearing voices that other people do not hear, seeing things that are not there, and at times smelling things that are not there.

Delusions

- These involve the person's belief system. A delusional person may believe that there is someone out to get him or that she is president of the United States. Do not argue with a person who is delusional. This is a part of their mental illness. Arguing with them that they are not the president will only agitate the person and make you one of "them" who are out to get them.
- Address only the problem behavior not the delusion.

Policy

All customers should receive the same consistent, good service, but if their behavior is disruptive or distracting, it must be addressed as you would with other customers.

Emotionally or mentally disturbed people are expected to follow rules. Some of these instances are judgment calls.

Patrons may act or talk irrationally, but if the behavior is not distracting to others, ignore it.

Procedure

- Have a backup with you
- Speak calmly but firmly
- Do not touch or leave them with no way out
- Treat with respect
- Connect behavior to results
- Do not argue
- Be direct, concise, and impersonal
- If you feel at risk, walk away
- Practice scripts so you are better prepared on what you might say.

Sexual Misbehavior

There is something about libraries.

- Sexual Harassment
- Child Molesters
- Flashers
- Elevators
- Masturbation
- Performing in Public

Procedure

- If you witness or a patron witnesses an incident, call the police. This is against the law.
- If there is a victim, give them privacy and make them comfortable
- Report to a supervisor
- If you are a witness ...

Other Hot Topics

- Insects in Books or Other Materials
- Talkative Persons
- Unattended Children
- Others?

Resources

- Shapiro, Ronald and Mark Jankrowski. Bullies, Tyrants, & Impossible People: How to Beat Them Without Joining Them. Crown Business, c2005
- Willis, Mark. Dealing with Difficult People in the Library. ALA, c1999.
- Safe Harbor: Policies and Procedures for a Safe Library.
Alliance Library System, 2002.
<http://www.webjunction-il.org/SafeHarbor/>