

Exercise #3 It's Hot in Here!

In this group exercise you will devise a method to deal with interpersonal difficulties among your staff.

You are the manager of the Southwood Branch Library, which has a staff of eight. The workroom houses four personal desks, a shared desk, and the work counter where all book covering, labeling, and repair are done.

Your staff normally gets along well, but they are divided on one vital thing – what temperature the workroom should be. They are altering the thermostat, and after you lock it they are hiding the key from each other so the other side cannot change it back. Asides and comments about each other are becoming more common. One day, you hear a shouting match erupt in the workroom with the clerk shouting “I can’t work in a friggin meat locker” followed by the children’s librarian shouting “Well, you can put on a sweater but I can’t work naked!” Now they aren’t speaking to each other.

You have your own office so you aren’t personally affected by temperature either way. This isn’t a public area so the public isn’t affected by the temperature either, but their shouting match was heard on the public floor. What do you do now?

As a group, answer the following questions:

1. What is the problem?

2. What are the interests involved? Who wants what?

3. What should you do now? If you are going to talk to them, what will you say?

4. If the problem persists, what should you do next?