

Setting Boundaries with Library Patrons: The Four Cornerstones

Teamwork – Everyone Speaks with the Same Voice

- A team addresses problems with the same outcome in mind. Have a consensus.
- A team meets regularly. But keep it light.
- A team understands all policies.
- A team has an open but respectful communication style.
- A team can question authority, but doesn't sabotage its own hierarchy!

Clarity

- Everyone is clear about what is acceptable.
- Be clear about:
 - Rules
 - Norms
 - Standards
- Without internal clarity (inter-team) there can be no clarity with patrons.

Consistency

- Policies are reinforced the same way every time.
- Rules that are not always enforced are not rules. They are booby-traps for us and for them.
- Flexibility, exceptions, and appropriate personal relationships are good. Institutionalize and standardize them.

The Broken Window Theory

- Respond quickly, before a problem becomes a pattern.
- Respond quickly, before small problems become large.
- Have a team response.
- Remember, nothing is more fascinating than an irregular reinforcement pattern.