WHAT DO I DO NOW?:
Handling Challenging Situations with Mentally Ill and Homeless Library Users
Part One

Who We Are

Parts 1 and 2 Takeaways

Partnerships
Setting limits
Real life

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Homelessness in America

Assumptions and labels

People whose behavior is challenging to us might be homeless or housed; mentally ill or healthy.

Homelessness in America – Trends 2011-2012

633,782 overall
20 homeless people per 10,000
29 states reported increases
38% unsheltered
2,325 fewer homeless people
6.8% fewer chronically-homeless individuals

National Alliance to End Homelessness endhomelessness.org

Source: 2011 and 2012 point-in-time counts as reported by jurisdictions to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Homelessness in San Francisco

THEN:
- Barbary Coast
- Great Depression
- Summer of Love
- AIDS and crack epidemics
- Shelters

NOW:

**Care-Not-Cash**

Project Homeless Connect

People who spend their days at the library...

- have nowhere else to go
during the day... have
- jobs... are housed... are
- homeless... just enjoy what we
have to offer.

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Patron Baggage Limits

Consequences

Appeals Process Following Suspension

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What's in Your Library?

San Francisco Police Department

Department of Public Works

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Department of Public Health

Patrons Served YTD

Other DPH Services

Meetings & consultations with staff

Staff Training:
- History of homelessness
- Understanding mental illness
- Understanding substance abuse
- Anger management
- Limit-setting

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Who’s doing what?

The Library’s Social Worker

LIMIT-SETTING WITH LIBRARY PATRONS

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**What is Limit-Setting?**

Providing direction when patrons might be confused and disorganized in their thoughts, speech and/or behavior.

Providing guidance using a reasonable amount of time and attention, while also using a range of interventions that are respectful, welcoming and sometimes firm.

**Why Set Limits?**

You'll manage your time more effectively.

**Why Set Limits?**

Inappropriate and hostile behavior won’t escalate and should even stop.
**Why Set Limits?**

You’ll be in control of otherwise-confused patrons and/or unmanageable situations.

**Why Set Limits?**

Your mental, emotional and physical health will benefit – you will manage your own frustrations and anger instead of “losing it.”

**How To Set Limits**

*Taking a risk is essential for effective limit-setting.*

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How To Set Limits

Evaluate the situation

How To Set Limits

- Be clear
- Be RESPECTFUL
- Be Kind
- Be firm and tactful
- Be consistent

HELPFUL HINTS

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HELPFUL HINTS

TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES

NEXT WEEK:

Helping Others as we Help Ourselves
Questions?

Thank you

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