

Today's Presenter



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Intersections of Mental Illness
and Library Work*](#)

Supporting Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Survivors at Your Library

Provided by: Miranda Dube

Self-Care Reminder

- This material can be difficult to talk about.
- Take breaks when you need to.
- As you are able, be present for one another.

Outline of the Day

Recognize	potential signs of abuse
Discuss	what to do if you suspect someone is experiencing abuse
Identify	best practice for responding to disclosures
Learn	how to provide resources to someone who is not disclosing

Key Things to Know

Language use:

“victim” vs. “survivor” vs. “target”

Gender neutral

Nonheteronormative

DV=Domestic Violence

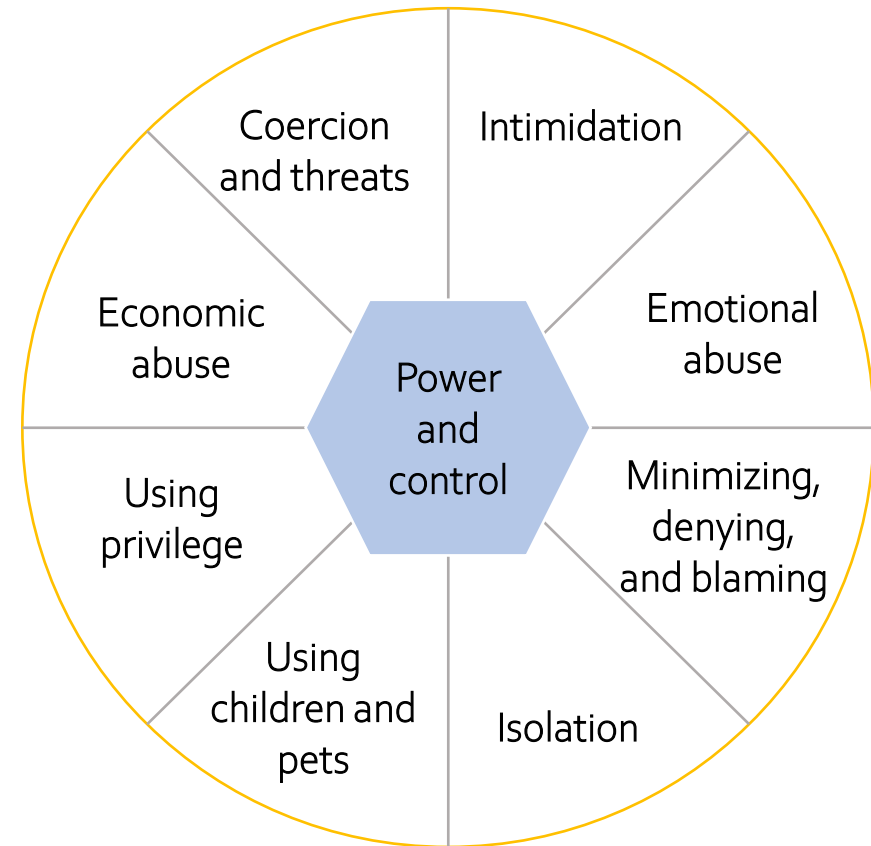
SA=Sexual Assault

SIGNS OF ABUSE

Adult Victims of Domestic Violence

What you might see/hear

- Lack of decision making
- Limited verbal communication
- Bruises/Injuries
- Lack of financial independence
- Self-blame for partner's behavior
- Person gaslighting another

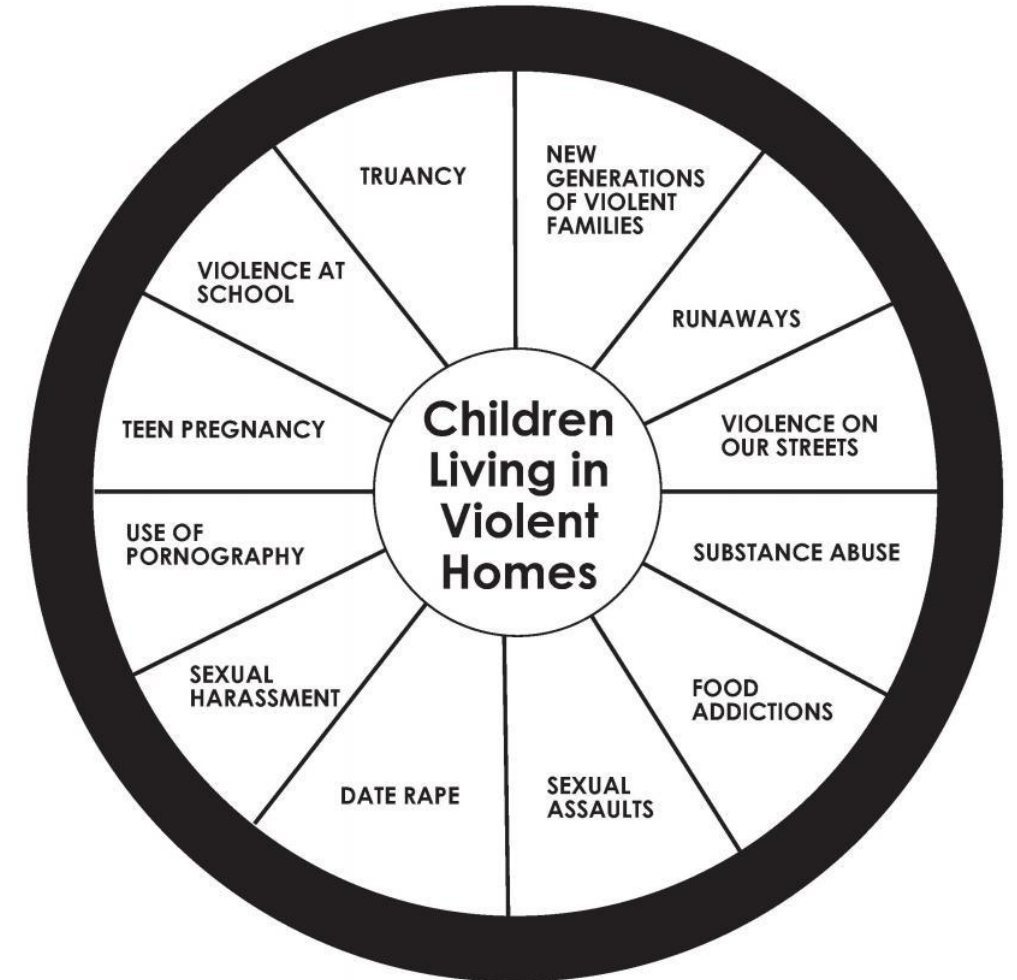


Children Who Have Witnessed Domestic Violence

What you might see/hear

- Expression of fear
- Anger at parent or other caregiver

CHILDREN COPING WITH FAMILY VIOLENCE



Developed from:
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
202 East Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802
218.722.4134

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on Domestic and Sexual Violence
training • consulting • advocacy
4612 Shoal Creek Blvd. • Austin, Texas 78756
512.407.9020 (phone and fax) • www.ncdsv.org

<https://www.centerffs.org/serv/children-and-domestic-violence-facts>

Children Who Have Been Sexually Assaulted or Abused

What you might see/hear

- Sexual behavior inappropriate for age
- Bedwetting
- Not wanting to be alone with certain people
- Not wanting to remove clothing
- Nightmares or fears of being alone at night
- Regressing in behaviors

Teens/Adults Who Have Been Sexually Assaulted or Abused

What you might see/hear

- Depression or anxiety
- Self-harming behavior/suicidal thoughts or ideation
- Avoiding specific places or people
- Increase in drug/alcohol use
- Weight gain/loss



Photo taken by Miranda Dube at Clothesline Project

People Who Are Being Stalked

What you might see/hear

- Not the term stalking
- Heightened fight/flight/freeze response
- Security questions

STALKING:

pattern of repeated & unwanted attention, harassment, contact, or conduct directed at someone that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.

Learn about prevention:

[go.usa.gov/xnD9y](https://www.usa.gov/xnD9y)



People Who Are Being Trafficked

Human Trafficking includes Sex and Labor Trafficking

- Lack of control over passport or ID documents
- Monitored by another person
- Living in dangerous/overcrowded, inhumane conditions provided by employer
- Live where they work or are transported by someone to and from work
- Child who lives with family member who is dependent on substances

DIVERSE POPULATIONS

Women with Disabilities

- Experience abuse for longer periods of time
- Experience abuse from a greater number of perpetrators
- More frequently at the hands of health care workers and personal care attendants
- Fewer options for leaving
- Less reporting options

(Lockhart, L. L., & Danis, F. S. (eds.), 2010; NHCADSV, n.d.)

LGBT+

- Homophobia and Heteronormativity
- Double closet
- Reduced access to traditional sources of support
- Institutional resources may be unresponsive or unavailable
- Perceptions of gender and abuse cycle
- Threats from abuser to out them
- Normalized abuse in LGBT relationships
- Interfering with hormone therapy if partner is transitioning

(Lockhart, L. L., & Danis, F. S. (eds.), 2010; NHCADSV, n.d.)

African American Women

- Don't wish to participate in furthering the prison-industrial complex and associated criminal "justice" system
- Utilize family, friends, and faith-based community more often than institutional resources
- Police brutality, unfair treatment, dual arrest
- Find the term "victim" unrepresentative of their experience
- Geographically inaccessible services with lack of childcare or transportation

Immigrants and Refugees

- Often ineligible for commonly available services such as housing assistance, income assistance, health insurance
- Language barriers and lack of translation services
- Unaware of resources for crime victims (U-Visa, T-Visa)

Lockhart, L. L., & Danis, F. S. (eds.). (2010). *Domestic violence: Intersectionality and culturally competent practice*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Male Identifying Victims/Survivors

- Stigma
- Perceived failure to conform to masculinity
- Fear of not being believed
- Denial of victim status
- Lack of support from society, family, and friends

(NHCADSV, n.d.)

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

“If you don't have a lens that's been trained to look at how various forms of discrimination come together, you're unlikely to develop a set of policies that will be as inclusive as they need to be.”

– Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw

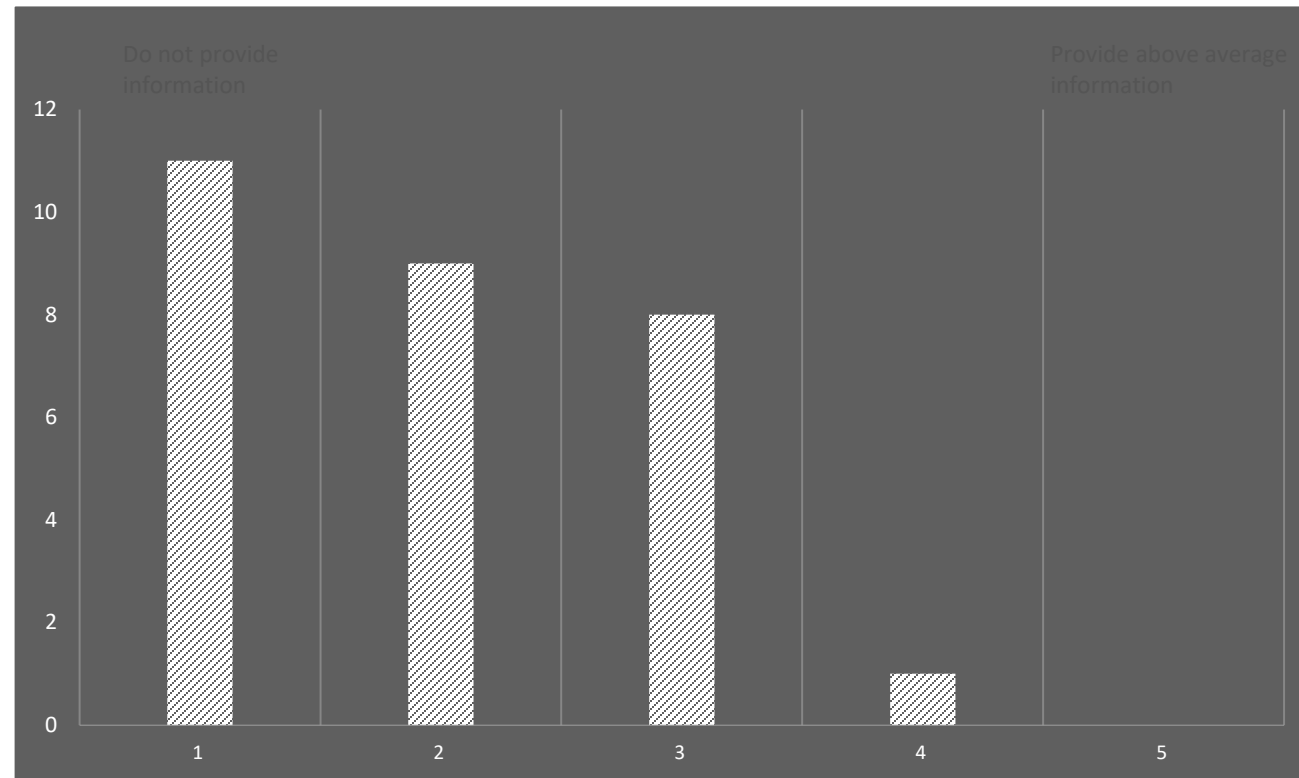


UNIQUE INFORMATION NEEDS

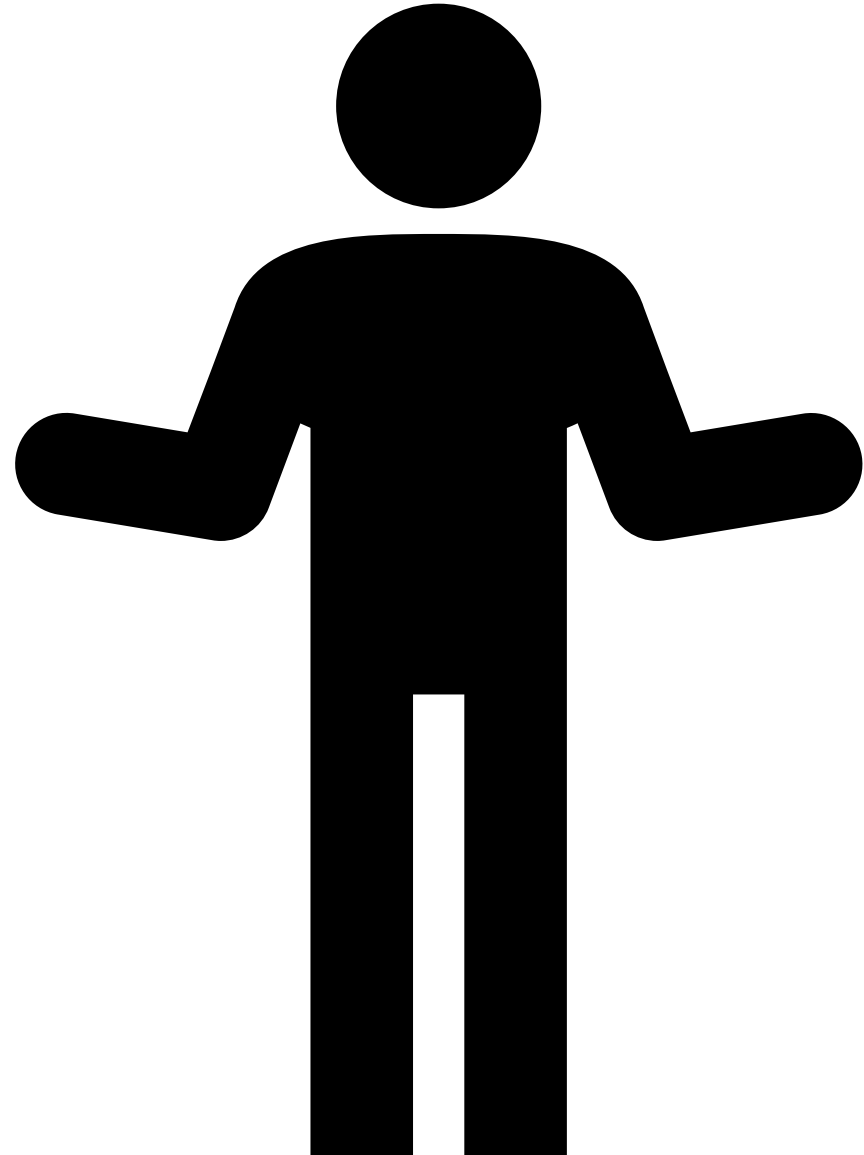
Six Information Seeking Stages

- Stage One: Initial consideration of a life change
- Stage Two: During shelter and/or criminal justice engagement
- Stage Three: Post-shelter/Post-police planning
- Stage Four: Legal concerns in making a life change
- Stage Five: Immigration-related information needs
- Stage Six: Prior five stages overlapping

You can use these stages to evaluate your library services and collections...



Now what?

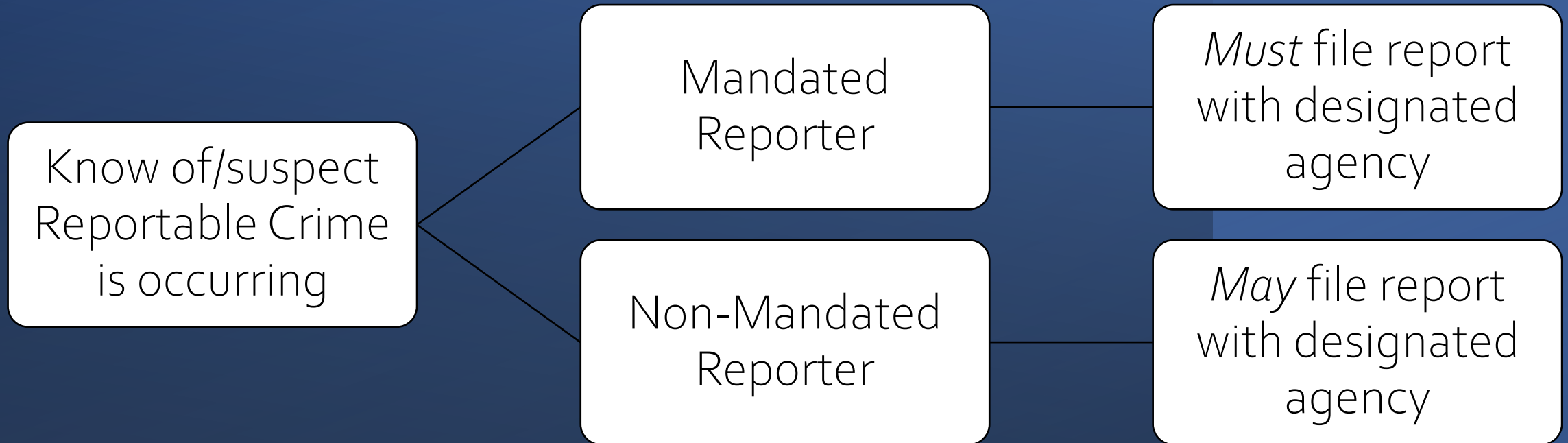


You may:

- Receive a disclosure of abuse/reportable offense
- Suspect abuse/reportable offense
- Provide support to patrons and community as a whole



On Reporting



Knowing if you are a Mandated Reporter

The following websites should be used as a guide ONLY. They are not 100% accurate and you should consult your state's law (typically located on a local government website).

- <https://mandatedreporter.com/child-abuse/>
- <https://mandatedreporter.com/domestic-violence/>
- <https://mandatedreporter.com/elder-abuse/>

Reporting to Agencies

Ensure person
disclosing knows
your responsibilities
PRIOR to disclosing

Ask if they would
like to be involved
in the reporting
process

Active Listening



Focus on understanding what the person is saying.



Don't think about your response.



Show that you are listening.



Ask clarifying questions if needed.

Responding to a Disclosure



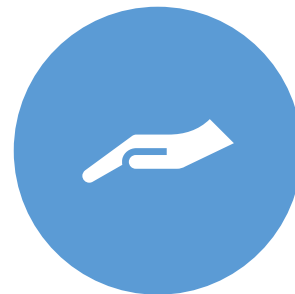
Be aware of disclosures
of previous trauma



Honor and acknowledge
the strength it took to
disclose



Relocate if necessary



Ask: "How can I best
support you?"

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Safety Considerations

Ensure the person is:

- Alone
- Will not be put in harms way by talking to you (i.e., they are alone, but the potential abuser is in the building).

How to say something

“I’ve noticed some changes and I’m feeling concerned. I’m worried about you because [insert thing(s) you have noticed]. I’m here for you if you want to talk about it. Let me know how I can support you.”

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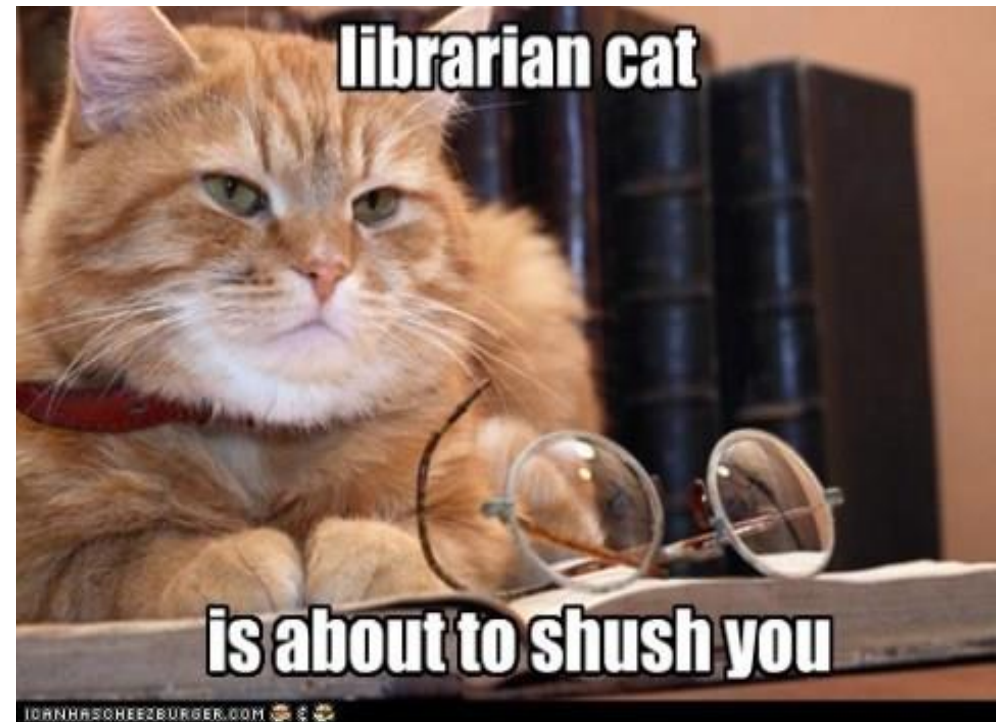
Supporting Community and People Not Disclosing

Environment



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

Culture



<https://cheezburger.com/7120360704/librarian-cat>

Environmental

APPROACHING
PATRONS IN THE
STACKS

DISPLAYS

CRISIS CENTER
INFORMATION

Approaching Patrons in the Stacks

Don't say "Can I help you find anything?"

Say "I noticed you browsing and in case it's of any help to you, the bulk of information on X is here, Y is here, and Z is here. If you need anything, please don't hesitate to ask."

Displays

Create displays in both prominent and private areas.

Do not only put displays in areas with heavy traffic or lots of surveillance.

A small display in a private area with information a patron can take is better than no private display.

Crisis Center Information

Should be:

- Accessible to everyone
- In every restroom
- On every community bulletin board
- At every reference desk

Cultural



CREATE SAFE SPACE



COLLABORATE WITH
CRISIS CENTERS



LANGUAGE USE

Create safe space

Do:

- Use a trauma aware approach with patrons and staff
- Ask crisis centers or survivors how you can improve your space

Don't:

- Approach people from behind
- Touch someone who is experiencing dissociation or PTSD flashbacks
- Box someone into a corner

Collaborate with Crisis Centers



BOOK DISPLAYS



PROGRAMMING



STAFF TRAININGS



POLICY
DEVELOPMENT

Language Use

Be aware of how you discuss issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Pay special attention to how you use linguistic avoidance—changing this can help reduce unconscious victim blaming and assist in reducing rape culture.

What We Say Matters



Librarians on Library Services for Survivors:

"I have been in my profession for 18 years, and never had a DV survivor come to the library for post relationship help."

"In the small town that I am currently working in, it has not been a concern."

"It isn't a community that talks about things like this."

"I appreciate your assuming that we do any of this but sadly no."

"Yes. But never is a strong word. There are occasions when it is appropriate to reveal a book title to a family member but generally speaking we respect privacy."

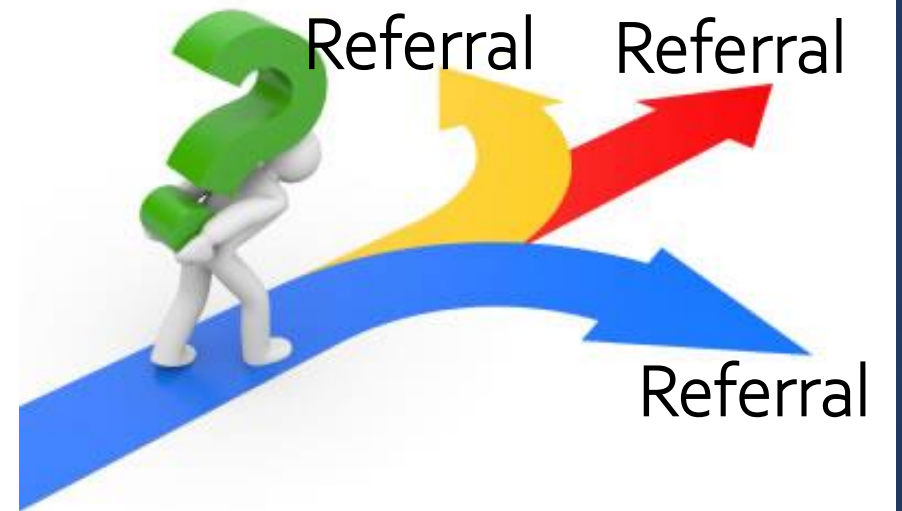
"I didn't do [the survey] when your initial request came out because I frankly don't understand your research model."

"We have no information on any kinds of these topics."

"Advocates should just reach out to the libraries if they want to help."

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What you need to know

Informal disclosures of abuse to informal networks, such as a library, are *only effective* when the person within the informal network has prior knowledge of resources.

Your #1 Referral...

Your local crisis center!

What Survivors Want

- More brochures/guides
- More online resources
- Meeting space for support groups
- Better staff training/train staff how to assist survivors
- More flyers with Crisis Center information
- Hosting support groups
- Contact list of sources that can help
- Materials for children who witness domestic violence
- Confidential consultations with a reference librarian
- “Lend an expert” night with a crisis counselor
- Connect community resources in one spot
- Greater visibility of physical materials

Library Projects

Out of the Shadows

- San Diego Public Library Human Trafficking awareness program <https://www.sandiego.gov/public-library/services/sex-trafficking-awareness>

Creating Access for Violence Survivors

- Monroe County Public Library program that waives fees, provides library cards to patrons in shelter, and provides tablets with digital access to library materials to shelter residents <https://mcpl.info/blogs/think-library/pioneer-grant-reduce-library-barriers-domestic-violence-survivors>

BiblioUnderground

- Program creating “Book-it 2 Freedom Kits”: prepaid burner phones, uploaded with DV and Safety Planning resources, hidden within discarded library to assist those fleeing domestic violence <https://www.bibliounderground.org/>

Library Projects

Other Projects Include

- Rewriting policy to be inclusive of patrons living in shelter
- Developing programming that is trauma-informed but not trauma-focused
- Weeding materials and purchasing updated materials
- Changing online information request forms to allow for anonymity
- Developing a holding spot for people who cannot check out materials and bring them home
- Bookmarks at checkout with hotline numbers



Questions?

Contact Me

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