

**Oak Park Public Library
Transgender Resource Collection
Staff training and discussion**

Scenarios for discussion created by Sharon Grimm

SCENARIO 1:

Mark is working a busy afternoon shift at a Service Desk. A patron approaches the desk looking for a book that is checked in but can't be found on the shelf. Mark asks for the title of the book.

PATRON: It's called *Ethics and Intersex*.

MARK: I'm sorry, *Ethics and*?

PATRON (leaning in): *Ethics and Intersex*.

MARK: I'm sorry, I'm still not hearing you, can you spell that for me?

Another patron is now waiting in line.

PATRON (nervously): I-n-t-e-r-s-e-x.

MARK: Oh, I see it in the catalog now. It was last checked out four years ago, so it shouldn't be still on a shelving cart. And you say it wasn't on the shelf?

PATRON: No.

MARK: Well, let's go have a look.

After a search Mark hasn't found the book on the shelf.

MARK: I'm sorry we weren't able to locate *Ethics and Intersex*. I'll have to put a trace on it.

What are the issues in this scenario?

What recommendations do you have for the staff member(s) involved?

ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCENARIO 1:

- Read the body language and clues from the patrons to be aware of nervousness or discomfort.
- Search for "Ethics and" to bring up titles that might match what hearing from the patron.
- Move to catalog to search together with the patron or ask patron to write down title.
- "Last checked out four years ago" could be perceived as a value judgment.
- Offer to obtain the item through interlibrary loan.
- "Trace" is too much library talk. Don't tell too much about how the Library operates. Let patron know that you will do what needs to be done to find our copy.

SCENARIO 2:

Tonda is passing by a Service Desk. It's clear from her shirt and her name tag that she works for the Maintenance staff. Someone steps out of the line at the Service Desk to ask Tonda a question.

PATRON: Can you unlock this restroom for me to use?

TONDA: Do you have any kids with you?

PATRON: No, but...

TONDA: Are you with anyone that needs assistance?

PATRON: No.

TONDA: I'm sorry, this is an assisted use restroom. It's our policy that it not be used by single people.

What are the issues in this scenario?

What recommendations do you have for the staff member(s) involved?

ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCENARIO 2:

- Patrons may assume there is only the one restroom so they ask for the key.
- Offer the key and also indicate that other restrooms are available.
- There is no policy concerning this.
- When any patron asks where the restrooms are located indicate there is also a single-use restroom available.

SCENARIO 3:

Will, a staff member, is near the front entrance when three middle school girls enter. They are louder than usual so Will overhears their conversation about another person.

GIRL 1: I don't know and usually I can tell.

GIRL 2: I know, I mean really, people usually want you to know.

GIRL 3 (giggles loudly): Well it must just be an it!

GIRL 1: I don't know, it's not saying anything.

GIRL 2 (laughing): It's an it.

Will watches as the three girls continue their conversation, following the patron into another part of the building.

What are the issues in this scenario?

What recommendations do you have for the staff member(s) involved?

ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCENARIO 3:

- Wear your Staff ID and Access Card and/or gold nametag visibly to be identified as staff.
- Be aware of developing situations that may become unsafe for library users.
- Understand that the targeted person could be in danger or minimally be made to feel unwelcome in the Library.
- Notify Security and other staff (as appropriate) of the situation.
- Monitor the situation so that it does not escalate.
- Address the behavior of a group if necessary, according to the Rules of Behavior.
- Address the group to redirect/distract them. Use phrases like "Can I help you?" or "Welcome to the Library." to indicate they have been seen.
- Be visible to and near the targeted person to be available if they feel threatened.
- Approach the targeted person to communicate they are welcome. Use phrases like "Can I help you?" or "Welcome to the Library." to indicate they have been seen.
- Understand your responsibilities in maintaining a safe library environment for all library users.
- Know your options for handling harassment situations.

SCENARIO 4:

Rebekah answers the telephone.

REBEKAH: Oak Park Public Library, how may I help you?

PATRON: I heard you were buying books about freaks. I'm calling to say that I don't want my tax money spent on books about how to apply lipstick and become a pedophile!

What are the issues in this scenario?

What recommendations do you have for the staff member(s) involved?

ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCENARIO 4:

- Don't assume to understand the nature of the complaint.
- Understand that the switchboard is not the venue for longer telephone calls.
- Use reassuring tones to lessen the caller's anger.
- Offer to transfer the caller to someone in Administration: "I'd like to direct your call to someone in Administration who can talk to you about your concerns."
- Send call directly to Dee Brennan or Jim Madigan.
- Do not transfer the call until Dee or Jim have answered their phone.
- Do not send the call to voicemail without the caller's permission: "I'm sorry I'm getting their voicemail. Can I transfer you to voicemail or take your name and contact information?"
- Take name and contact information and pass on to Dee and/or Jim.

SCENARIO 5:

Chris is working in the Children's Department when a parent approaches.

PARENT: Do you have any books about princesses? My spouse thinks our daughter is too masculine.

CHRIS: Yes! With our new sorting system we have an easy-to-find bin with lots of books about princesses! See, (leading the way) right here with the princess picture on the sign. It can be easily found by kids who can't read yet.

What are the issues in this scenario?

What recommendations do you have for the staff member(s) involved?

ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCENARIO 5:

- Respond to the question not the comment.
- Provide a variety of princess books.
- If the child is present, connect with the child not with the parent. See what types of books are interesting to the child.
- Model respect to the child.

SCENARIO 6:

Karina is working at the Circulation Desk when a patron steps to her station from the nearby Self Checkout. The patron has a DVD case that needs to be unlocked. Karina notices that the title is Transgeneration and has the words “sex change” on the case.

What are the issues in this scenario?

What recommendations do you have for the staff member(s) involved?

ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCENARIO 6:

- Understand that staff should not comment on any items checked out by a patron.
- Possibly offer the patron a bag.

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SCENARIO 7:

Jaspreet is working in an empty meeting room to set up AV equipment for the evening speaker. Robin Turner, the evening speaker, enters the room and greets Jaspreet for the first time. Jaspreet warmly welcomes Robin indicating that the projector and screen are nearly ready. Robin has brought along a laptop and it quickly becomes apparent to both that an extension cord is needed. In a stroke of good luck, Jacob from Maintenance has come by to check on the room set up.

JASPREET: Jacob, great, you're just in time. This is Robin Turner who needs an extension cord for his uh, her . . . uh, for the laptop.

{an embarrassed silence}

JASPREET [THINKING]: Uh-oh, I was expecting Robin to be a man, I mean his book is about Chicago baseball. But on second thought, this person looks and sounds more like a woman. How can I be sure?

What are the issues in this scenario?

What recommendations do you have for the staff member(s) involved?

ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCENARIO 7:

- Anticipate you might be in a similar situation where you mess up. Give yourself permission and handle with the best of intentions.
- "I don't mean to be insensitive but what pronoun should I use when referring to you?" Or, "I'm sorry, but I'm unsure what pronoun to use when referring to you."
- Staff can support each other. "Neither of us know what pronoun to use. Can you clarify that for us?" Give each other permission to make mistakes.

SCENARIO 8:

Imani is working at a Service Desk when a patron who appears agitated approaches the desk.

PATRON: I just left the men's restroom and there's a woman in a stall in there.

IMANI: Ok, thanks for letting me know.

PATRON: What are you going to do about it?

IMANI: I, um, I will let my Supervisor know.

PATRON: Then what will happen?

IMANI: Well...you know what, can I have you write this down on one of our suggestion forms?

What are the issues in this scenario?

What recommendations do you have for the staff member(s) involved?

ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCENARIO 8:

- Communicate that the concern was heard and that you will check it out.
- Clarify with the patron who made the complaint whether or not there is a behavior issue.
- Call Security.
- Wait outside the restroom until Security arrives.
- Keep other people from entering before Security arrives. "I'm sorry, this restroom is out of order, you'll have to use a restroom on another floor."
- Keep the situation low key and respectful.
- Announce "Security" before entering restroom.
- Address behavior issues as appropriate.
- Know that the security cameras capture activity in the corridor, not in the restrooms. Confront patrons in the corridor.
- If the patron that made the complaint is waiting for a response. "I checked out the situation and found everything to be appropriate." Or, "I checked out the situation and everything is taken care of."
- Keep in mind that the Library has physical suggestion boxes and an online form for patron feedback. Patron complaints can also be directed to Administration.

SCENARIO 9:

Taylor works for Maintenance and is making the rounds checking on public restrooms. When he announces “Maintenance” before entering the women’s room, he hears what he thinks to be a man’s voice answer, “Just a minute.”

What are the issues in this scenario?

What recommendations do you have for the staff member(s) involved?

ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCENARIO 9:

- Rules of Behavior apply if the situation might create a disturbance or interfere with the safe use of the Library by others.
- If you have the sense that the situation is a bit off, check it out. “Is there anything in the men’s room that Maintenance should address?”

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SCENARIO 10:

Moises is working the Circulation Desk and receives a completed application from a patron. He notices from the application that the patron's name is Geoff Johnson. But the patron has handed him a driver's license and bank statement both with the name Gina Johnson. The driver's license photo looks like the patron standing in front of Moises.

What are the issues in this scenario?

What recommendations do you have for the staff member(s) involved?

ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCENARIO 10:

- A person who is transitioning will probably already understand how to complete applications and have appropriate identification.
- There may be a situation where the patron completing the application doesn't look like your idea of a "Geoff" or a "Gina." The photo on the identification will likely look like the same person.
- Use courtesy but be clear about the Library requirements. "The name on your library card application needs to match your proof of identity."
- Offer options. "We can change your application to match so that you receive your library card today." "When you have updated your identification you can come back and we can update your library card account."
- Clarify how the patron would prefer to have the name printed on the library card. Then make a notation on the record if it is printed differently than on the application.

SCENARIO 11:

Tamar is working in the stacks, busily shelving books in the 600s when a patron asks a question.

PATRON: Excuse me; can you help me find a book? It's supposed to be checked in but I can't find it here on the shelf.

TAMAR: Ok, what's the title you're looking for?

PATRON: *Intersex and Identity: The Contested Self.*

TAMAR: I'm sorry, *Int-* what?

PATRON: *Intersex and Identity: The Contested Self.*

TAMAR: Well, if you can't find it, I think we should let them know at the Service Desk.

What are the issues in this scenario?

What recommendations do you have for the staff member(s) involved?

ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCENARIO 11:

- Ask for the dewey number to help locate the title.
- Use good customer service skills to assist the patron in finding the title on the shelf.
- Take the patron to a service desk and communicate to another staff person that the patron needs assistance and that a title can not be found.

SCENARIO 12:

Terry is shelving books in the 300s when a patron looking at nearby titles holds a book up and asks . . .

PATRON: Why does the library have this book? Look at the cover? Look what it's about, "*Drag Queens at the 801 Cabaret.*" What are you people pushing here?

TERRY: That's a book in our Transgender Resource Collection.

PATRON: Your what? Now I've heard it all.

TERRY: The Transgender Resource Collection is about the Library's serving underserved people who have the same right to information as anyone.

PATRON: And *Drag Queens at the 801 Cabaret* is an informational book, I don't believe it.

What are the issues in this scenario?

What recommendations do you have for the staff member(s) involved?

ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCENARIO 12:

- Communicate that the concern was heard.
- Understand you do not have to educate the patron or have a longer conversation with them.
- Refer to the talking points for the Transgender Resource Collection.
- Take the patron to a service desk and communicate to another staff person that the patron has a complaint about the collection.

SCENARIO 13:

Jasper is leaving the Library on a warm day. From the name tag he forgot to remove from his shirt, it is clear that he works for the Library. A reporter from the Oak Leaves approaches him.

REPORTER: What can you tell me about the Library's new Transgender Resource Collection?

JASPER: This collection reflects the Library's commitment to diversity and inclusion. The Oak Park Public Library, like the Illinois State Library, wants to provide Illinois residents with a full range of information.

REPORTER: Do you think the Library hasn't served transgender people in the past?

JASPER: The Library has had some books about transgender people and covering relevant topics. But we haven't had such a concentration of books before.

REPORTER: Do you know anyone who is transgender?

JASPER: Yes, a friend of mine has told me he identifies as transgender. And through him I've met some others who are transgender. These people mostly live in Ohio. But I think someone who attends my church is also transgender.

REPORTER: Do you expect that with these new books, that lots of transgender people will use the Library?

JASPER: I can't say for sure. We hope that the Library does a great job publicizing the collection and that people who are interested come to the Library for these books.

REPORTER: How do you feel about the Library offering the Transgender Resource Collection?

JASPER: I think it's great. We have such a wide-variety of people who use the library and this new collection can offer helpful resources to not just transgender people, but their friends, and family, and people doing research. I just hope that people can find the books once they come to the library. The signage is so poor. Patrons wander into the Children's Room and ask where the adult books are.....

What are the issues in this scenario?

What recommendations do you have for the staff member(s) involved?

ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCENARIO 13:

- Keep in mind that the official spokespeople for the Library are the Executive Director, Assistant Director, and Public Information Officer.
- Stay on script with the talking points.
- Direct further questions to Dee Brennan, Jim Madigan, and/or Bleue Benton.