When You CAN’T Just Run & Hide!

presented by
Chrissie Morrison
librarinamama@gmail.com
@librarinamama
Difficult Patrons

- Consistency is key!
  - EVERYONE needs to be on board
  - ALL staff need to respond the same

- Youth vs. Adults
  - Problems differ
  - Approaches differ
Difficult Patrons

- Youth
  - Unattended Child
  - Crying Baby
  - Wild Toddler
  - Running/Hide & Seek
  - Rowdy Teens
  - “PDA”
Difficult Patrons

- Adults
  - Food & Drink
  - Cell Phones
  - Chatty Cathy
  - TMI Patron
  - Out of District
  - Angry About Fines
Difficult Youth Patrons

- Unattended Child
  - What is your official policy? (Do you have one?)
  - Safety of the child is utmost
    - Children get anxious/upset
    - Child could get injured if unattended
    - Predators could be anywhere
  - Calm and comfort child
  - Find the adult
    - Explain your policy
    - Contact police if no adult found
Difficult Youth Patrons

- Crying Baby
  - Approach out of concern
  - Try to be understanding
  - Reassure the parent/caregiver
    - This is to be expected with babies.
    - Hope to see you at the library again soon!
- Offer to help
  - Check out while parent/caregiver packs up
  - Meet at front desk, front door, drive through window
Difficult Youth Patrons

- Wild Toddler
  - You must be firm, but try to be gentle
  - Approach with safety in mind
    - Child could get hurt
    - Child could hurt others
- Reassure parent/caregiver
  - Toddlers need practice to get better at behaving in public.
  - Hope to see you at the library again soon!
Difficult Youth Patrons

- Running/Hide & Seek
  - DON’T just wait for parents to correct behavior!
  - Please WALK in the library.
    or simply say: WALKING FEET!
  - Explain safety reasons
- Seek out parent/caregiver
  - Ask for assistance/cooperation
  - Reiterate safety reasons
Difficult Youth Patrons

- Rowdy Teens
  - REMEMBER:
    - Teens are basically toddlers in bigger bodies + hormones!
    - Consistency is key!
  - Friendly but firm
  - Respect begets respect
  - “Clean slate” policy
Difficult Youth Patrons

• “PDA”
  • PDA = Public Displays of Affection
    • What’s acceptable?
      • Short hugs
      • Holding hands
      • Quick “peck” kiss?
    • What is NOT acceptable?
      • Lap-sitting
      • Making out
    • How do you respond?
Difficult Adult Patrons

- Food & Drink
  - What’s the official policy?
  - Should you update your policy?
    - REMEMBER: Patrons take the books home...
  - Minimum accommodations recommended:
    - Water bottles
    - Baby bottles/sippy cups
    - NOT near computers
Difficult Adult Patrons

- Cell Phones
  - Loud ringer
    - Sign upon entry (will likely be ignored)
    - Quick reminder if it goes off
- Loud Talker
  - Approach politely
    - I’m not sure you realize how far your voice carries...
    - I’m sorry, but I have to ask you to please take your call outside/to the lobby.
Difficult Adult Patrons

- Chatty Cathy
  - A little conversation IS good customer service!
  - What do you do if they don’t stop talking???
    - Give attention back to your work
    - Literally comment about having work to do
    - Worry aloud that you might get in trouble for talking
    - Coworkers can “save” you
Difficult Adult Patrons

- TMI Patron
  - Ignore the topic and use the previous methods
  - Wow! I’m sorry to hear that, but:
    - I’m not sure how I/the library can help with that...
    - You may not want to discuss this where so many strangers can overhear your personal matters.
    - I’m really uncomfortable discussing ______.
Difficult Adult Patrons

- Out of District
  - I’m so glad you love our library, too!
  - Did you realize you technically reside in the ___ district?
  - We love having visitors from other libraries, and I’m so sorry, but only local library residents can ______ (e.g. register for programs, submit ILL requests)
  - Offer contact information for their home library
Difficult Adult Patrons

• Angry About Fines
  • Above all, REMAIN CALM!
  • Listen carefully and repeat back what you hear “to be sure you understand the problem”
    • Sometimes just being heard is enough
  • Do you have the authority to make deals?
    • $1 toward fines = computer time today
  • Firm, fair, and consistent
Thank You!

Chrissie Morrison
librarinamama@gmail.com
@librarinamama