

Social Work Concepts in Libraries

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Learning Objectives

After attending this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand the role of social workers in libraries
- Recognize the shared values between social workers and library settings
- Analyze the challenges and opportunities presented by locating social work services within library settings
- Develop pathways for similar services to be considered in their communities



Shared history of social work and library professions



Commonalities in library and SW professions

- Emerged in the 1800s
- Female-dominated frontline workers
- Male-dominated leadership
- 1850's
 - Hull House founded
 - Melvil Dewey founded American Library Association
 - Columbia College - 1st library degree
 - *The Library Journal* was launched

Shared values by both SWs and librarians

- Commitment to creating services accessible to all
- Emphasis on promoting the public good
- Prioritize community health and well-being
- Committed to individual rights such as autonomy, self-determination, privacy, and confidentiality

Shared Ethics by SW's and Librarians

- Service
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Access to Information
- Respect for Rights
- Professional Skills
- Integrity
- Social Justice

Library SW presents many unique opportunities

- Provide services in a free, accessible space
- Lack of stigma associated with entering a library
- Services provided regardless of age, gender, race, citizenship, income, insurance coverage, etc.
- Ability to develop programs to meet community needs
- Policies and practices can be examined through a social justice lens
- Brings awareness of issues such as MH and trauma to a government agency

Challenges within library SW

- Some ethical/values conflicts do arise (e.g. documentation)
 - Documenting system that includes the requirements for both the library and social work needs
- Potential for reducing librarians' role in addressing community needs (e.g. "the SW will handle that.")
- Community need may exceed SW capacity
- Working in a non-SW setting can raise challenging questions in areas that don't have standardized protocols/answers



Where are we now and future directions for library SW

- The first full time library SW was hired in San Francisco in 2009.
- Increasingly, libraries are tailoring their SW services to the needs of their specific communities
- As of 2023, there are 300 library SWK partnerships, and this is a growing trend
 - Whole Person Librarianship

You may be thinking, is a social work collaboration right for my library if...

- You find that staff are being asked by customers to help with things that they cannot do, either because of time or not having the training.
- Staff complain of not being able to help people in the way that they would like.
- Staff benefit from training to work with individuals with various needs and life experiences.
- There are unmet needs in your community.
- You want to serve your customers in a more holistic way- serve the whole person.



Non-Exhaustive List of Social Service Collaboration Types & Funding Sources

- Employed social worker by the library, library system, or shared with city
 - Grant funding or city funding
 - Dually trained librarian and social worker
 - Full-time -> part-time
- Contracted social worker by the library or library system
 - Hospitals, department of human services, etc.
- Peer navigators- Peer support specialists
- Social work internship placements
- Service learning students
- Hosting a social service provider for office hours, events, etc.
- Therapists/ drop in mental health & physical health clinics
 - Mental health students, nursing students, etc.
- Education for staff from an outside entity



Cost Considerations

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Grants + Donations + City or Library System Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Salary & Benefits - Supplies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Postage - Technology - Paper - Bus Passes - Software, documentation - Backpacks - Contracts - Supervision - Licensing - Insurance - Professional Organizations - Continuing Education |
|---|---|



Library/university partnerships...
The Racine story



Librarians were increasingly seeing issues beyond their expertise

- Patrons facing housing insecurity and/or homelessness
- Unaccompanied minors
- Elderly patrons seeking technology assistance but also:
 - Trying to access public benefits
 - Increasing isolation
 - In need of social services



There was a growing recognition that this type of work was beyond their core areas of expertise



Librarians began to track the time they were spending on "social service" related duties

They found this collectively equated to approximately a full time position



In 2019, a local MSW student (attending a remote MSW program in another state) approached RPL about a potential internship opportunity

A local school SW agreed to serve as the supervisor



The groundwork for SW within RPL was beginning to be laid

Initial services offered by MSW intern

- Intakes for patrons looking to access services
- Office hours for SW services
- Beginning development of community partnerships to facilitate patron referrals
- Introduction of SW model to library team



In order to sustain the work that was started, RPL reached out to Carthage to develop an ongoing field partnership

First Carthage BSW intern began in 2020-21 academic year

- Due to the pandemic, the library was closed for the entire year
- Intern focused on laying more groundwork for the SW line of service
 - Research and development activities aimed at developing a sensory room
 - Training library staff on trauma-informed practices
 - Research and data collection in areas of social justice practice in libraries

Several other changes at RPL

- Change in leadership
- Retirement of full-time librarian
- A decision was made to transition that FTE into a full time SW position



Carthage faculty's support of this new role

- Ongoing consultation
 - Assistance in developing the job description
 - Served on interview panel
 - Discussions of scope of practice, ethical mandates, etc.
 - A Carthage SW faculty member joined the RPL board
 - Hired Ashley Cedeno in September, 2021 (Carthage BSW alum)
 - Provide weekly supervision

Other areas of continued collaboration and growth...

- Continuation of field partnership
- Partner on RPL staff trainings
- Assistance with networking efforts to support library SW effectiveness
- Development of new partnership between Kenosha Public Library and Carthage College
- Growth of RPL internship program to potentially host students from other BSW/MSW programs
- Intro of SW internship at KPL

What the Social Work programs look like at Racine Public Library and L.E Phillips Memorial Public Library & Other Applications



3 PRACTICE AREAS of Social Work



Social Work Concepts



What has it looked like at RPL?

- **Micro:** Light case-management, direct resources
- **Mezzo:** Community Connections, partnerships and case referrals
- **Macro:** Systemic Change, library policy reviews with Social justice lens



Micro

- Patron Interactions (appointments, walk ins or phone calls that resulted in a referral to a community resource or direct assistance)
 - Since September 2021, RPL's Library Social Worker has had a total of 1,577 Patron Interactions
 - 2021 (4 months)- 55 (13.75 average)
 - 2022- 449 (37.4 monthly average)
 - 2023- 1,073 (119 monthly average)
 - *Tracked up until end of September 2023
- Bus Pass Program
 - Free bus passes for social service needs, started in September 2022
 - 951 bus passes have been distributed
 - Funding



Mezzo

- Programs/Projects
 - Sensory Room
 - Coffee and Conversation
- Community Partnerships
 - American Heart Association
 - Blood Pressure Kits added to our Beyond Books Collection
 - National Alliance on Mental Illness
 - Educational Trainings for staff
 - Free Mobile Hotspots (County Program)
- Community Partnerships cont...
 - College Nursing Program partnership
 - Students completed their clinicals by conducting free health screenings and education at the library.
 - College SW partnership
 - Social work student interns- complete their required field hours at the library, providing assistance to the library social worker, ability to create their own programs while honing their skills in the social work field
 - LIFT WI
 - Driver's license clinic and other legal support; have monthly pop-up clinics



Macro

- Social Worker a part of Leadership Team
- Rules of Behavior Policy
 - Stressing that "different," behavior is not necessarily dangerous behavior
 - Regular review of policies with social justice lens
 - Emphasis on bias trainings and Trauma-Informed Care
- Banning Procedures
 - Who is affected most by these procedures?
 - Often, those that are banned are those that need services the most, so how to mitigate that?
- Ending Contract with Security Agency (End of 22')



Social Work Services at the Racine Public Library

What is a Library Social Worker and what can they help with?

The Library Social Worker is available to guide patrons in accessing with community resources that meet their unique needs. The Library Social Worker is equipped to help with the following topics:

- Housing
- Employment
- Mental Health
- Adult and Elder Care
- Substance Use
- Group Therapy
- Many other topics

Other services:


- Free Bus Passes: Month passes are available to patrons who are unable to drive to work. Bus passes are provided by government transportation (Dane's government job seekers only, south side).
- Money: Monday 7:30 am, Wednesdays 10:30 am and Thursdays 10:30 am.
- Housing: The county has provided the Housing and Self-Help Centers that are for eligible Racine residents. These facilities provide free grants to pay interest on rent. Contact the Library Social Worker for more information.

How can I connect with the Library Social Worker?

Adina Gubins, MEd, LSW
 *Bilingual in Spanish
 adina.gubins@racinelibrary.org
 (608) 331-9458

What else should I know?

Conversations with the Library Social Worker are confidential with a few exceptions: a public interest issue to themselves, a child, or other child or if served with a legal court order or subpoena. The Library Social Worker can refer you to other service agencies however, they do not provide counseling, therapy or case management.



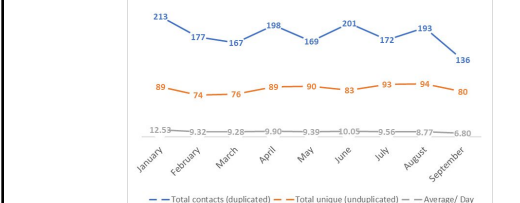
Data




Other: motivational interviewing, incident response, clothing, vital record replacement, phone/ internet, veteran services, education, family, etc.



CONTACT TRENDS



| Month | Total contacts (duplicated) | Total unique (unduplicated) | Average/Day |
|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| January | 218 | 89 | 12.59 |
| February | 177 | 74 | 9.32 |
| March | 167 | 76 | 9.28 |
| April | 198 | 89 | 9.90 |
| May | 169 | 90 | 9.39 |
| June | 201 | 83 | 10.05 |
| July | 172 | 93 | 9.56 |
| August | 193 | 94 | 8.77 |
| September | 186 | 80 | 6.80 |



Programming




THESE AGENCIES ARE HERE TO HELP:

| HOUSING | EMPLOYMENT | LEGAL |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Racine Housing Authority | • Racine Workforce Development | • Racine Public Library |
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FREE LEGAL CLINIC
 Third Wednesday of the Month 5:30 - 7 PM
 L.E. Phillips Library, Riverview Room (third floor)





Possible Partners:

- Any and all agencies that might be a good fit for your customers and community! Consider the gaps.




Housing & Shelter

- Housing Assistance Applications
 - Workshops
- Housing Search Assistance
- Library As A Protective Factor



Possible Partners:

- County Department of Human Services
- Shelters (day & night)
- Housing Authorities
- Other Homeless Serving Agencies



Food

- Food Pantries
- Grab & Go Bags
- Ready To Eat Snacks And Meals
- Designated Events




Possible Partners:

- Local Food Pantries
- Grocery Stores
- Food Distributors
- Faith Based Organizations
- Volunteer Organizations




Health & Physical Literacy

- STD Testing Clinics
- Walk In Therapy Clinics
- Walk In Wellness Checks
- Vaccine Clinics
- Health Fairs
- Mindfulness Activities
- Yoga
- Exercise Classes
- Emotion Regulation Take Home Activities
- Check Out Kits

Possible Partners:

- Hospitals
- Health Department
- Other Clinics
- Nursing, Mental Health Students
- Yoga Studios
- Gyms
- YMCA




L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library
100 MICHIGAN BLVD.

Occupational

- Office Hours For Job Centers and Workforce Programs
- Job Fairs
- Resume Or Interview Workshops

Possible Partners:

- Workforce Resource
- Job Center
- Staffing Agencies
- Etc.




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Substance Use

- Allow spaces and policies that would allow for 12 Step Meetings
- Provide Information At Optimal Points
- Naloxone Training
 - o Community
- Look Into Prevention And Risk Reduction
 - o Locks On Sharps Containers


Possible Partners:

- 12 Step Programs
- Health Department
- Police/ Sheriff
- Risk Reduction Programs (Vivent Health)




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Resources



Help with Literacy

Learn how to read and write better. We offer classes for adults and children. Contact us for more information.



RUCHE TALKS

Join us for a series of talks on various topics. Sign up today!

Food Resources

| Organization | Address | Phone | Hours |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Food Bank of Racine | 1000 1st St. Racine, WI 53401 | (262) 938-2200 | Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, Sat 9am-12pm |
| St. Vincent de Paul | 1000 1st St. Racine, WI 53401 | (262) 938-2200 | Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, Sat 9am-12pm |
| Carroll Food Bank | 1000 1st St. Racine, WI 53401 | (262) 938-2200 | Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, Sat 9am-12pm |

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Questions? Comments? Discussion?



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