#critlib: serving homeless library users

Storify of the #critlib chat from 2/16/2016 on serving homeless library users, moderated by @GinaMurrell1. For more information about #critlib, including past & future chats, please see http://critlib.org

[The usual disclaimer: I tried to include all of Tweets from the chat and string Tweets from the same thread together as best as I could. Retweets, favorites, & tweets without the hashtag omitted on purpose. Lacunae, misreadings, or other mistakes my own.]

Suggested readings:

* “A home to the homeless” by Ellyn Ruhlmann, from American Libraries (2014)

* “What do I do now? Handling challenging situations with mentally ill and homeless library users, part 2” from Infopeople (2013) (direct link to 50-minute webinar)


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**Gina Murrell**

@GinaMurrell1

Welcome to tonight’s #critlib on serving homeless patrons. I'm Gina, the mod. I work at Univ of Oregon Libraries. Please introduce yourself!

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**David J. Seleb**

@davidjseleb

I'm David Seleb from the Oak Park Public Library. #critlib

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**Nisha thecheez**

Hello! I'm Nisha, MLIS student at U of I in Champaign! #critlib
Hi, #critlib. I'm April. Academic librn in NYC.

Jenna Freedman
@zinelib

This is Jenna in NYC eager for tonight’s #critlib on svc to homeless library users bc my LIS prof's advice was hand homeless a bar of soap.

Kate Crowe
@kcrowe

Hey #critlib I'm Kate, I'm an archivist in Denver at a private uni with (to my knowledge) no focused approach to engaging w/homeless patrons

S. Hackney
@fliidget

Hi #critlib, I'm Sarah, LIS student in NYC. Mostly lurking tonight...

Liz McGlynn
@thelizbrarian

Hi #critlib, I'm Liz, academic librn in MA/CT tho most of my perspective serving homeless comes from exp in a public lib in Chapel Hill NC.

Maura Smale
@mauraweb

Hi #critlib, glad to be here tonight, I'm Maura and I work at an academic library in NYC, also a frequent user of the public library.
Hi #critlib folks. I'm Ryan, a community college librarian in Boise.

2 YEARS AGO

Hi #critlib Charissa, academic librarian in Kansas

2 YEARS AGO

Hey #critlib I'm Evan, an LIS student in London, Ontario. Mostly here to listen and learn!

2 YEARS AGO

Happy that so many of you are joining us for tonight's #critlib! First question is coming soon. All questions are at critlib.org/serving-homele...

2 YEARS AGO

Arriving late to #critlib, but here we are. Greg, faculty librarian at a small academic library in Kirkland, WA!

2 YEARS AGO

@GinaMurrell1 I'm not a librarian but I'm into zine culture & volunteer at book collectives. Also spent undergrad sleepin in the lib #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
Hi #critlib! Kelly here, academic librarian in Oregon. I'll be in and out, I'm doing a drop-in service for veteran students tonight.

2 YEARS AGO

Hi #critlib! I'm a new librarian/library assistant at UMN, but my interest mainly comes from past public library work. Mostly here to lurk

2 YEARS AGO

I'm in @chrisalensula's Cmmnty Bldgg & Engmnt class (#LIScbe) rn, & we read abt this for class this week: bit.ly/1KoD2NC #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

@fiidgid @chrisalensula Wow. That article is gross. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

@AprilHathcock @fiidgid @chrisalensula Whenever I read "good old-fashioned common sense" I kind of want to... ugh. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

@bembrarian @AprilHathcock @fiidgid @chrisalensula Par for the course with that writer. All I've seen from him has been upsetting. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
@foureyedsole @bembrarian @AprilHathcock @fiidgit @chrisalensula that is awful. Also, "micturate"?.....? #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

@foureyedsole @bembrarian @AprilHathcock @fiidgit @chrisalensula Also, our library *is* a bathing facility - we have a shower! #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

@whippersnapperQ Open whenever the library is open, it's a single unisex bathroom with a shower stall that locks & a changing table #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Chris Alen Sula
@chrisalensula

@AprilHathcock @fiidgit It’s totally gross, and the class reading is abt inclusion in libraries. Hi #critlib! Here to listen & think

2 YEARS AGO

Jessica Hochman
@jessica_hochman

@fiidgit @chrisalensula (I'm speechless & now stress-eating a bag of licorice). Would love to hear about the ensuing class convo. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Jessica Colbert
@JessicaColbert

Hey #critlib! LIS Student @gslis. Hopefully future (radical) cataloger.

2 YEARS AGO
Jessica Hochman  
@jessicahochman

Hiya #critlib, I’m an LIS prof who teaches about teaching; mostly here to listen & learn.

2 YEARS AGO

Charlotte E. Price  
@PoorCharlotte

Hello #critlib! I’m Charlotte, an academic librarian in NYC, but most of my exp. w homeless patrons comes from my history with public libs

2 YEARS AGO

Sunny Kim  
@sunnykins

hi #critlib! LIS student. really glad to have the chance to learn more on this topic. @SPLBuzz recently hosted panel on homeless queer youth

2 YEARS AGO

SLComstock  
@Brarian

Hi #critlib folk. Looking forward! I’m mgr of assessment at oak park public library, among other things!

2 YEARS AGO

CyndeeSturgisLandrum  
@ComposedCitrine

Hi #critlib I’m a new public library director in IN. Formerly an Asst. Director in Oak Park, IL.

2 YEARS AGO

amelish  
@amelish

hi #critlib, student/archivist in Maryland, thinking on this as DC rolls out plan for network of homeless shelters washingtonpost.com/local/dc-polit...

2 YEARS AGO
Q1. Does your library offer support services/outreach to homeless patrons?

Gina Murrell
@GinaMurrell1

Q1. Does your library offer support services/outreach to homeless patrons? #critlib
David J. Seleb
@davidjseleb
At the Oak Park Public Library, we have just hired a Manager of Community Resources -- a social worker -- for outreach #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Nisha
@cutting-thecheez
@davidjseleb Is this a FT resource #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

David J. Seleb
@davidjseleb
@cutting-thecheez Yes, the manager is full time and will begin his work on March 7 #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Jessica Colbert
@JessicaCColbert
A1: work in academic library open to public, but no specific services or outreach despite being "public." #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Jessica Colbert
@JessicaCColbert
A1: although computer terminals are open to public, because federal gov docs repository #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Liz McGlynn
@thelizbrarian
A1 nowhere I've worked so far has. I've never librn-ed in a city city, but still places w/ populations of homeless users... #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
April Hathcock
@AprilHathcock

A1. Not even remotely. Used to work in a public lib in urban area that also did not other than grudgingly allowing folks in. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Greg Bem, MLIS
@bembrarian

A1. Our library welcomes and provides services to all but does not particularly reach out to the homeless. #critlib twitter.com/GinaMurrelll/s...

2 YEARS AGO

Greg Bem, MLIS
@bembrarian

@bembrarian Interestingly, a work-study student was recently homeless & we supported him during his transition to find a home. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Kelly McElroy
@kellymce

@bembrarian I have heard of this happening in at least one other academic library. Probably happens a lot around campus. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Joanna Gadsby
@jkgadsby

@bembrarian There was a student living in our 24 hr space and "campus" made the decision to ignore it. #shameful #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Kat
@kittenhumyn

Following #critlib taking notes

2 YEARS AGO
sveta @oksveta

A1.1 at a public uni library, homeless patrons are part of our user community, but because academic not seen as 'core users' #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

sveta @oksveta

A1.2 but this framework effectively erases university students experiencing homelessness, which is an issue in our campus #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Sunny Kim @sunnykins

@GinaMurrell1 #critlib I'm still learning about the systems around me but I know @SPLBuzz partners with social service agencies to reach yth

2 YEARS AGO

Joanna Gadsby @jkgadsby

Chiming in late from Bmore. Working in acad lib that does no outreach but hosts many homeless patrons daily. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Kelly McElroy @kellymce

A1: Not explicitly, nope. Dunno how often we get questions at ref/circ that end up being referrals. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Kelly McElroy @kellymce

A1: comm'ty users can use computers, and get a lib card -- but you need an address (and/or driver's license) to get the card. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
Kat
@kittenhumyn

Yes! Is there any way to combat this? #critlib twitter.com/kellymce/status... 2 YEARS AGO

Kelly McElroy
@kellymce

.@kittenhumyn apparently in OR, you can get an ID w/a "descriptive address" but still a lot of barriers. #critlib oregon.gov/ODOT/DMV/pages... 2 YEARS AGO

Gina Murrell
@GinaMurrell1

@kittenhumyn Yes. Some libraries are allowing homeless patrons to use a shelter address when applying for a library card. #critlib 2 YEARS AGO

Christie Kliweer
@christielouwho

@GinaMurrell1 @kittenhumyn we accept shelter addresses and corrections facilities for patrons at our public library (large system) #critlib 2 YEARS AGO

Charlotte E. Price
@PoorCharlotte

@kittenhumyn at my mum’s library, patrons could present a letter from a shelter in lieu of driver’s license. Not perfect solution #critlib 2 YEARS AGO

April Hathcock
@AprilHathcock

Public lib where I used to work also did this. & shelters/PO boxes wldn't count. I'd sign ppl up anyway. #critlib twitter.com/kellymce/status... 2 YEARS AGO
Jenna Freedman
@zinelib

Yes to signing up people w/out an address! Should be resistance-as-policy for undocumented people as well. #critlib twitter.com/AprilHatchcock/...

2 YEARS AGO

Guadalupe Colin
@colin_gpe

@zinelib #critlib assuring them that the library doesn’t track them or anything of the sort is helpful too!

2 YEARS AGO

Ryan P. Randall
@foureyedsoul

@colin_gpe @zinelib I wouldn’t have thought to emphasize that. Thank you! #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

amelish
@amelish

+++ something all of our patrons should in theory be concerned about! #critlib twitter.com/colin_gpe/stat...

2 YEARS AGO

Calle Cai
@whippersnapperQ

@amelish Tho being homeless means ur constantly being harassed by police & tracked in so many ways that this is just one instance. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

amelish
@amelish

yes so let’s extra not be like that. #critlib twitter.com/whippersnapper...

2 YEARS AGO
Maura Smale
@mauraweb
A1: We don’t, which I think is prob not uncommon for acad libs, even those open to the neighborhood. #critlib
2 YEARS AGO

Maura Smale
@mauraweb
A1: The college where I work for sure has svcs for homeless students, tho we've not worked w/those offices directly that I know of. #critlib
2 YEARS AGO

Greg Bem, MLIS
@bembrarian
@mauraweb How open is your library to the neighborhood? What does that look like? Do a lot of non-academic folks use your lib? #critlib
2 YEARS AGO

Maura Smale
@mauraweb
@bembrarian Technically open but in prac don't get much neigb use, ID req to enter bldg w/lib = discourages (+ pub lib is nearby). #critlib
2 YEARS AGO

Greg Bem, MLIS
@bembrarian
@mauraweb Woah. ID required to enter the library's building? That's very closed, IMHO. #critlib
2 YEARS AGO

Maura Smale
@mauraweb
@bembrarian Not the lib but the campus, we're w/in a bldg w/others uses. ID req is standard across CUNY afaik. #critlib
2 YEARS AGO
@bembrarian @mauraweb same at my inst, but the only seem to ask on weekends. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

@jessicahochman @bembrarian Yah, there's scanning in/signing in to get into all of the college buildings at MPOW. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Guadalupe Colin
@colin_gpe

in a reference class while following #critlib inception?

2 YEARS AGO

Charissa Powell
@CharissaAPowell

A1 Not to my knowledge...but there is also not a large homeless population in my town #critlib twitter.com/GinaMurrell1/s...

2 YEARS AGO

SLComstock
@Brarian

Naperville library trained staff in social work srvcs to recognize broad spectrum: not 'homeless' but 'unhomed'. Mental health key #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Jenna Freedman
@zinelib

@Brarian How intense is the training? Does it address systemic oppression? Is there certification? Is there staff resistance? #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
Nisha
cuttingthecheez

@Brarian Wow, I have never heard that term. Really interesting. I wonder how this "works" compared to hiring a social worker. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Liz McGlynn
@thelizbrarian

@Brarian what gets me upset is librns aren’t soc workers! No one benefits from that arrangement/more passing the buck #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Guadalupe Colin
@colin_gpe

@thelizbrarian @Brarian #critlib exactly! we don’t know how to help. If there’s no funding for a social worker, libraries should do training

2 YEARS AGO

SLComstock
@Brarian

@thelizbrarian Agreed. Naperville initiative a triage approach based on who sees spectrum of community. @davidjseleb wise #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Kate Crowe
@kcrowe

A1 not explicitly, nope (again, private university, but as others have pointed out, open terminals due to gov’t depository status). #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Gina Murrell
@GinaMurrell1

Judging by the answers to Q1, it seems services for homeless patrons at most libraries are sorely lacking. Sad (but not shocking). #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
CyndeeSturgisLandrum  
@ComposedCitrine

A1: Not currently, but it is an on-going discussion. Since I'm new to my role, it's something I'll be assessing for the future. #critlib

amelish  
@amelish

A1 Working in special collections, no. Main library open to public until 12a then ID checks. Lobby remains open 24-7. #critlib

Guadalupe Colin  
@colin_gpe

@amelish this also happens at the library I used to work. The rules are even harsher during finals. #critlib

amelish  
@amelish

. @colin_gpe To be fair, I only pull late nights to work on my own finals. Maybe more lenient (no checks?) the rest of the time #critlib

Jenna Freedman  
@zinelib

A1: my private urban women's college library doesn't explicitly offer svc to homeless. tbh I can't imagine what that wd look like. #critlib

Jenna Freedman  
@zinelib

A1: just realized that our open guest wireless network provides service to homeless, if they have a smart phone. #critlib
Maura Smale  
@mauraweb
@zinelib Yes! That is hyoooge here in NYC I think - I see loads of folks using wifi outside the BPL, CUNY GC, etc. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

April Hathcock  
@AprilHathcock
A2 Our lib is locked down so you can’t even get in w/o ID. So no homeless at all. And we are in New York City. So...yeah. :( #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Charlotte E. Price  
@PoorCharlotte
A1 (from my mum, who was in a city library): None in specific, they could go to any services/classes offered. Budget cuts, tho... #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Ryan P. Randall  
@foureyedsoul
A1 As a comm. coll., we have "retention alerts" for students with variety of issues. Have used when students w/ housing insecurity #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Ryan P. Randall  
@foureyedsoul
A1.1 Housing insecurity can affect your highly regular patrons, even your student workers, without being very obvious. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Q2. Does your library have policies that prohibit behaviors often associated with homelessness?

Gina Murrell  
@GinaMurrell1
On to Q2: Does your library have policies that prohibit behaviors often associated with homelessness? #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
Charlotte E. Price
@PoorCharlotte

A2 (from my mum): Yes. Had rules for behavior, made sure the homeless knew. Rules like no unaccompanied adults in children’s area #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Nisha
@PoorCharlotte

@PoorCharlotte How are the homeless identified though? Is it a "warning" of the rules based upon appearance? #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Charlotte E. Price
@PoorCharlotte

@cuttingthecheez I believe they worked with the shelters and/or food kitchens on that #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Charlotte E. Price
@PoorCharlotte

A2.2 (for mum) other rules: No public drunkenness. No fighting. Just the general behavior policies that everyone had to follow. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Charlotte E. Price
@PoorCharlotte

A2.3 (from my mum) No state ID needed to get library card - homeless could present a letter from a shelter in lieu of I.D. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Greg Bem, MLIS
@bembrarian

@PoorCharlotte Curious to think about perceptions/prejudice re: homelessness as relating to substances and violence. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
Kelly McElroy
@kellymce

A2: Late night hours, you have to have a campus ID to be in the building. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

April Hathcock
@AprilHathcock

A2. Yes. MFPOW at public lib didn't allow washing in bathrooms or SLEEPING. Sigh. That was a prob for everyone. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

April Hathcock
@AprilHathcock

A2. This public lib was in central FL. So lots of old folks. So sleeping in library was kind of a thing for everyone. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

CyndeeSturgisLandrum
@ComposedCitrine

A2: Unfortunately! #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

David J. Seleb
@davidjseleb

@GinaMurrell1 My library has Rules of Behavior, but has tried to avoid rules that "prohibit homelessness" such as "no sleeping" #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Kaia
@knsievert

A2 My public library had a no sleeping rule framed as a health concern #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
Greg Bem, MLIS
@bembrarian

A2 We're really open in our lib & haven't developed many antagonistic policies, except against noise & sex. #critlib twitter.com/GinaMurrell1/s...

2 YEARS AGO

amelish
@amelish

aiii #critlib happening so fast. Anyone have collections representing / documenting homelessness? Outreach could use a broad base...

2 YEARS AGO

Liz McGlynn
@thelizbrarian

A2 we had a no sleeping rule that I usually didn’t enforce. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Greg Bem, MLIS
@bembrarian

@thelizbrarian @jkgadsby "Excuse me, you're not allowed to sleep here." "I'm not sleeping, I'm resting my eyes." #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Miss Fabularian
@MissFabularian

A2: if you want a library card, you must have an address establishing you within the library’s city. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Emily Lofquist
@ProudPoodieMom

A1: No... V wealthy and V small suburb. To my knowledge we do not have any resources in our direct community for the homeless. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
@bembrarian @PoorCharlotte How does the general public, and how do inst. admin. define homelessness? What are defined stereotypes? #critlib

Jessica Colbert @JessicalColbert A2: must be affiliated to use printers #critlib

Jessica Colbert @JessicalColbert A2: For non-affiliated borrowing card, MUST present ID AND current address. #critlib

@cuttingthecheez A2. I wonder what the implications would be to use the library as a home address? #critlib

@bembrarian @cuttingthecheez I’m reminded of the first season of Portlandia w/ the hide and seek legend who lives under the lib’s stairs. #critlib

@oksveta A2.1 we have a number..including some that truly reflect our lack of meaningful programs/infrastructure to address homelessness #critlib
A2.2 ie generalized policy to address very specific "problem patrons" or broader to discourage certain groups of users #critlib

Liz McGlynn
@thelizbrarian

We’d let anyone who had some form of ID (tho still prohibitive) get a computer pass. Had to have an address to check out books #critlib

Charissa Powell
@CharissaAPowell

A2) just skinned our policies and nothing jumps out at me... #critlib

Gina Murrell
@GinaMurrell1

In theory, #libraries are welcoming to all. Unfortunately, there are many policies keeping access from the homeless. #critlib

SLComstock
@Brarian

@zinelib CITY of Naperville supported/paid 4 training to leverage. oak park library @davidjseleb took it on based in #community #critlib

Sunny Kim
@sunnykims

#critlib here's a question: how do these anti-homeless policies get applied? are there patterns of racial bias in enforcement?
Liz McGlynn
@thelizbrarian

@sunnykins abbb. sooo. luuuute. lyyyy. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

April Hathcock
@AprilHathcock

Good Q. Esp given many homeless are ex-cons and most incarcerated are black and brown men. #critlib twitter.com/sunnykins/stat...

2 YEARS AGO

CyndeeSturgisLandrum
@ComposedCitrine

A2: always wondered how you enforce a no sleeping policy objectively. Ppl perceived to be homeless can’t sleep, but babies are ok? #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Greg Bem, MLIS
@bembrarian

@ComposedCitrine Are babies allowed to sleep in the library? #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Jessica Hochman
@jessicaehochman

@bembrarian @ComposedCitrine seems like a win-win when babies sleep in the library ;)
#critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Kate Crowe
@kcrowe

@ComposedCitrine seriously, especially at a uni library. There is no acad. library not constantly filled with people sleeping. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
@kcrowe @ComposedCitrine Lots of sleeping students at my uni library every single day! #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Emily Lofquist
@ProudPoodleMom

A2: Must have a home address within the village to get a libcard -- which is also used at times for program registration #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Jessica
@schomj

A2 We bring in Affirmative Action to help with "problem patrons" since they're likely to be students or employees #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Jessica
@schomj

A2 But while we do have homeless students, my impression is that they're more likely to sleep than cause problems #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Q3. What kind of staff training, if any, does the library provide in serving homeless patrons?

Gina Murrell
@GinaMurrell1

Q3. What kind of staff training, if any, does the library provide in serving homeless patrons? #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Greg Bern, MLIS
@bembrarian

A3. None. Though if there was an identified homeless population that used our lib., we would do training. #critlib twitter.com/GinaMurrell1/s...
@bembrarian Paradigm-wise, it seems like a lot of libs could be more proactive in identifying potential homeless using their lib. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

@bembrarian In a positive, service-providing way, of course. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

April Hathcock
@AprilHathcock

A3 The only training we got in public lib was "Here's a whistle. Use it if a homeless person gets creepy in the stacks." #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

April Hathcock
@AprilHathcock

I still have that stupid whistle. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

S. Hackney
@fiidget

implicitly reinforcing negative stereotypes abt homelessness is crappy & dehumanizing & hurts everyone. >:( #critlib twitter.com/AprilHathcock/...

2 YEARS AGO

Greg Bem, MLIS
@bembrarian

@AprilHathcock Oh jesus. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
Jessica Colbert
@JessicaLColbert
A3: GAs got "disruptive patron" training. included white man doing black stereotype for homeless patron. Some of us were furious. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Liz McGlynn
@thelizbrarian
@JessicaLColbert I'm fighting for the day when "disruptive patron"/"problem patron" gets stricken from the librarian vocab. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Jessica Hochman
@jessicaahochman
@JessicaLColbert yikes. Anybody report that? #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Jessica Colbert
@JessicaLColbert
@jessicaahochman Yes. A group of us are working to change the videos used. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Jessica Hochman
@jessicaahochman
@JessicaLColbert that's so awesome. Hey, #critlib could make better videos with a critical/culturally responsive perspective.

2 YEARS AGO

Ryan P. Randall
@foureyedlowl
@JessicaLColbert @jessicaahochman That's in a ****ing video? It was deliberate & considered? My jaw's literally hanging open. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
Jessica Colbert @JessicaLColbert
@foureyedsoul @jessicahochman Yes. Was originally used for RA training (homeless person in dorm). #critlib

Ryan P. Randall @foureyedsoul
@JessicaLColbert @jessicahochman I won't type them here, but I'd have _words_ with whomever made these choices. #critlib

Jessica Colbert @JessicaLColbert
@foureyedsoul @jessicahochman First, I was mad a COP #acab was speaking to us about deescalation #critlib

Jessica Colbert @JessicaLColbert
@foureyedsoul @jessicahochman And then some of us talked to HR about it, and the police chief agreed to have us work to change them #critlib

Jessica Hochman @jessicahochman
@JessicaLColbert @foureyedsoul that's super cool; it's great you spoke up and real change is happening! #critlib

Ryan P. Randall @foureyedsoul
@jessicahochman @JessicaLColbert Seriously. I'm impressed. Thank you for doing, especially as I assume it wasn't comfortable/easy. #critlib
Jessica Colbert @JessicaLColbert
@foureyed soul @jessicahochman I think all three of us who spoke up also have mental illnesses, which was also in the training #critlib

Charlotte E. Price @PoorCharlotte
A3 (From mum) workshops on difficult patrons in general. police gave training on deescalation (lots of addiction issues, violence) #critlib

SLComstock @Brarian
Key thing is that #communityinformatics informed @davidjseleb leadership w/@ComposedCitrine to respond to documented need. #critlib

David J. Seleb @davidjseleb
@GinaMurrell1 That's one of the objectives for our new manager, to determine the appropriate staff training needed #critlib

Kate Crowe @kcrowe
A3 not to my knowledge, but our Access Librarian was a bartender/bouncer, he is fabulous at de-escalation. He should do a training! #critlib

Liz McGlynn @thelizbrarian
A3 generic deescalation training from HR (which was honestly a total nightmare) #critlib
Nisha @thelizbrarian Yes, I think "deescalation" is subjective in practice. #critlib

Gina Murrell @GinaMurrell1 I'm finding your answers to Q3 esp interesting; I think workshops on serving homeless users would help. But respect for all is key. #critlib

Calle Cai @whippersnapperQ @GinaMurrell1 Yes, trainings are important but smtms seen as delivered solution, rather than small step towards real respect & care #critlib

Liz McGlynn @thelizbrarian @whippersnapperQ @GinaMurrell1 SUCH an important point! #critlib

Gina Murrell @GinaMurrell1 @whippersnapperQ Respect & care - just treating the homeless as human beings - should be basic. Sadly, oftentimes it's not. #critlib

CyndeeSturgisLandrum @ComposedCitrine A3: Training related to dealing w/difficult patrons but nothing yet to engage with patrons facing homelessness. I got work to do. #critlib
It seems like the only training libraries give regarding homelessness is negative. Eg: how to deal with "problem patrons" #critlib

@alegriarchivist Agreed. Where are these perceptions coming from? Is it systemic? Societal? #critlib

@alegriarchivist A lot of people who are homeless suffer from mental illness too, and there's still a lot of stigma associated with that. #critlib

@bembrarian Are there any open trainings like these available online? Would love to experience something so negative! #critlib

A3: There could be labor issues to discuss. Perspectives vary by job bc sometimes librarians decide & support staff have to enforce. #critlib

@zinelib Yup. We've done some all-library worker workshops but doesn't change that support staff on svc desks more than lib fac. #critlib
Greg Bem, MLIS
@bembrarian

(Aside) is it exceptional to say that all the librarians I work with are tolerant, inclusive, and respectful? #critlib

Andrea Snyder
@alsnyder02

I focus trainings on reducing barriers for all, social service & community resources. Generally not specially on homelessness #Critlib

Kat
@kittenhumyn

does your library have specific programming for homeless patrons? #critlib

Kat
@kittenhumyn

@kittenhumyn if your library does have srvcs for homeless patrons, are they included in the brainstorming/planning in any way? #critlib

Emily Lofquist
@ProudPoodleMom

A3: recently watched this webinar w/ staff bit.ly/1TpKzn1 our "challenging patrons" are rowdy kids not homeless #critlib

Q4. What role should the library have in providing support services to homeless patrons?

Gina Murrell
@GinaMurrell1

Q4. What role should the library have in providing support services to homeless patrons? #critlib
Guadalupe Colin
@colin_gpe

#critlib partnering with local organizations that help them can be useful.

2 YEARS AGO

This is a great video lecture from a practitioner. A Librarian's Guide to Homelessness #critlib
youtu.be/FYiEEhhrFh4

ANDREA SNYDER @ALSNYDER02 . 2 YEARS AGO

Nisha
cuttingthebreakingthecheez

@alsnyder02 Thanks for the resource! #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Jessica Hochman
@jessicahochman

@alsnyder02 thanks for sharing this! #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
aah! I’m late to #critlib after reminding my fellow MLISers today! i’m Alex, acad lib worker, MLIS student, mostly watching & learning tn

We in LIS need to face our discourses: "homeless" as proxy. Community colleges, state, public library: we are natural supports #critlib

A4 Treat them as a patron base rather than a problem area. Develop services/programming tailored to their needs. #critlib

Also remembering that we are libs. We provide info, not solutions. Refer but don’t try to overdo. Bad for everyone. #critlib

. @AprilHathcock Seems hard (if worth it) to draw a line and know whether that line is about what’s best for library, patrons, libs #critlib

A4. I like the idea of being open/transparent re: providing the services, to positively influence others. #critlib twitter.com/GinaMurrell1/s...
Guadalupe Colin
@colin_gpe

#critlib I've seen homeless people volunteer at the library as well. The library is their home so there should be more resources to help!

2 YEARS AGO

Greg Bem, MLIS
@bembrarian

@colin_gpe Partnership is key, gaining new perspectives. Being a leader but not the only leader.
#critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Kate Crowe
@kcrowe

A4 This is hyperlocal, but I've discussed working w fac member who does outreach in homeless comm/soc services on oral hist project #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Kate Crowe
@kcrowe

@kcrowe A4 both with service providers & people in homeless community. We haven't figured out *how* yet tho. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Andrea Snyder
@alsnyder02

While not all libs will be able to provide social services on site, all should know of the community orgs & be able to do referrals #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Cyndee Sturgis Landrum
@ComposedCitrine

Q4: creating services/programs with patrons experiencing homelessness. Love quote from Oak Park's new social worker on this #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
@GinaMurrell1 I see our role as part of broad community engagement, working with partners. Welcome, engage, identify, guide, refer. #critlib

@davidjseleb @GinaMurrell1 #critlib and we we shouldn’t be reinforcing negative stereotypes.

A4 Our homeless users are probably students, so getting them info for campus or community services seems key + #critlib

A4 that said, we haven’t done any targeted outreach and I’m not sure if we’d get much uni support (don’t pull back the curtain) #critlib

@schornj If at a uni, there must be a committee that deals with homelessness on some level (beyond the library)?? #critlib

@bembrarian not to my knowledge, but I think a lot of that work is done quietly by diversity, VA, other offices #critlib
@schomj @bembrarian We use retention alerts & individual counselor appointments at MPOW. Maybe advocate for similar there if poss.? #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Jessica
@schomj

@foureyedsoul @bembrarian Our whole advising system is borked. Campus initiative to fix it is in progress, but... #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

sveta
@oksveta

#critlib A4 as uni lib, i get that many of our services are for affiliates... but v important to treat everyone who comes in w/respect +

2 YEARS AGO

sveta
@oksveta

#critlib A4.2 & recognize that housing insecurity effects our whole community, including those who are formally affiliated with the uni

2 YEARS AGO

sveta
@oksveta

#critlib A4.3 how we treat those who are visibly homeless (or so we presume) impacts/reflect/reinforces overall culture of the institution

2 YEARS AGO

CyndeeSturgisLandrum
@ComposedCitrine

A4: Dallas public was doing some great podcast programs w/ homeless patrons a while back #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
Charlotte E. Price
@PoorCharlotte
A4 I (and mum) agree respect 1st off. working with city services to have counsellors on hand several x a week can also help #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Andrea Snyder
@alsnyder02
When working in Baltimore, I made sure that I knew the major service providers so I could confidently tell ppl about the services. #Critlib

2 YEARS AGO

alex hanam
hanamerino
library goals from #critlib: do better! twitter.com/kcrowe/status/...

2 YEARS AGO

*Kate Crowe
@kcrowe
protip: frame it as a service for bike commuters. :) #critlib twitter.com/hanamerino/sta...

2 YEARS AGO

amelish
@amelish
A4 Partnerships with other organizations and individuals important to homeless patrons - in case we forgot, not a monolith #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

amelish
@amelish
A4 but also learning more about homeless patrons w/o violating privacy seems like a starting point (others have mentioned) #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
Liz McGlynn  
@thelizbrarian

A4 something I can do better personally is speak up when meetings take a turn toward the disrespectful and venting becomes..more #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Liz McGlynn  
@thelizbrarian

Having the right attitude is step 1 and sadly not everyone is so inclusive/empathetic as #critlib, even in libraries

2 YEARS AGO

Kaia  
@knsievert

A4 At public lib, I attended meetings our local coalition for homeless persons (consisting of local service agencies) #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Kaia  
@knsievert

A4 it was great for keeping on top of places/service for referrals. If I could go back, I would try to expand this 2 more outreach #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Greg Bem, MLIS  
@bembrarian

This is a fantastic idea. Going to add it to my docket of things to do this week. :D Thank you! #critlib twitter.com/knsievert/stat...

2 YEARS AGO

Kate Crowe  
@kcrowe

A4 question for the acad librarians - do any of you have MSW programs you partner w on this? #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
@kcrowe We don't, but maybe we could. We've hosted discussions w/the counseling folks & lib staff tho not specific to homelessness. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Nisha cuttingthecheez

A4. I support library-initiatives. It makes, but I wonder what libs would do if SE issues were dealt with. How would role change? #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

SLComstock @Brarian

Women & children are high risk: studies show domestic violence as driver toward "homelessness". Libraries offer digital safety too #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

SLComstock @Brarian

@bembrarian digital safety means we are able to seek resources: health, financial etc without domestic violence perps' eyes #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

T. Sullivan @thomthomthom

@Brarian queer youth too #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

CyndeeSturgisLandrum @ComposedCitrine

A4: whatever we do we can't assume ppl want what we or others prescribe as "help" #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
Q5. What can libraries do to better serve homeless patrons?

@ComposedCitrine Good point. This is where diverse perspectives (including, ideally, representation from the homeless) helps. #critlib

Emily Lofquist
@ProudPoodleMom

A4: Host services onsite (provided by community experts). My lib has vet & senior resource reps avail. monthly for 1on1 assistance #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Gina Murrell
@GinaMurrell1

OK, final question! Q5. What can libraries do to better serve homeless patrons? #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Etta Verma
@ettaverma

@GinaMurrell1 I bet helping them to get ID would help #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

David J. Seleb
@davidjseleb

@GinaMurrell1 A5: Recognize them. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Jessica Hochman
@jessicahochman

In NYC, sleeping was just outlawed on the subway, which imo relies on assumptions abt sleepers similar to those we’re discussing. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
@jessicahochman I did not know that! I am (too) often sleeping on the subway, but I’m sure I’m not who this is targeting! #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

@jessicahochman Wow! Every NYer has fallen asleep on the subway (long day at work, drunk, lack of sleep, etc.) not just homeless. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

@jessicahochman Thumbs way down, CUNY students have told me they sleep while commuting on the subway (as we all do, right?). #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

@jessicahochman imo targeting sleepers is a form of profiling. It's assigning a particular signification to the practice of sleeping #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

A5 Helping students financially is part of why my boss is pushing the library to play a role in OA textbooks #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

A5 Continuing to have these convos. Thinking critically. Acting thoughtfully. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
in some universities you can get a masters in SW along with your masters in LIS. maybe they should have this option in every uni. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

#Critlib learn about ALL of your community. Constantly work to reduce barriers. Practice empathy. Be kind. Do your best.

2 YEARS AGO

oh the incorrigible humanity... of librarians and our patrons. As it should be #critlib twitter.com/alsnyder02/sta...

2 YEARS AGO

A5 at the very least, offering information about resources that are available to them is important. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

A5 whoops I skipped ahead 1. But yeah. 1st off see them as a population w/ needs just like everyone else. Don't "prob patron" them. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

A5: see them. make them visible. understand homelessness is a condition NOT who a person is. engage #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
Greg Bem, MLIS
@bembrarian

A5. Great question. Simple & short, but: have more conversations. Be more mindful of what’s not being done. #critlib twitter.com/GinaMurrell1/s...

2 YEARS AGO

Calle Cai
@whippe

@bembrarian Yes, re: having conversations. Library can be space where homeless patrons can connect with dignity; creative programs. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Ryan P. Randall
@foureyed

A5 Starting from the position that our unhoused patrons are _patrons_, then figuring out how to work with them for _their_ needs. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

SLComstock
@Brarian

@foureyed needs are *ours*. Seriously. Many are one step away from being there. Empathy key. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Ryan P. Randall
@foureyed

@Brarian Yes! Empathy!! Didn't mean to pose relationship as a simple "us/them," more meant "help patrons act on own behalf" #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

SLComstock
@Brarian

@foureyed all's good: I am behind you on how challenging our dichotomies are. Keep up the good fight! #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
Kate Crowe @kcrowe

A5 Hard question. mpow's vision statement: "grt private uni dedicated to the public good" but outreach is in msw, other acad prog. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Nisha @thecheez

A5. We need to interrogate ourselves & our discourse. Use open-ended ?s. Cater to them instead of making them accommodate to us. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Annie Pho @catladylib

Also, sorry for tuning in late to #critlib. Looks like @GinaMurrell1 moderated a great chat!

2 YEARS AGO

SLComstock @Brarian

oak park last yr staff day domestic shelter was part of community *IN reach*. Very popular among staff cuz we SEE survivors often #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

CyndeeSturgisLandrum @ComposedCitrine

A5: always loved how @davidjseleb handled complaints abt homeless patrons. Forced others 2 acknowledge their humanity #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Jessica Colbert @JessicaLColbert

A5: Ask about their needs and wants. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
April Hathcock
@AprilHathcock

Yes. And then respect them. Don't be patronizing. Maybe they just want a DVD and don't want a social worker. #critlib twitter.com/JessicaLColber...

2 YEARS AGO

sveta
@oksventa

@AprilHathcock :nods: This speaks to how much even "progressive" convos about homelessness rely on stereotypes #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Emily Lofquist
@ProudPoodleMom

A5: Accept a shelter (or willing organization in community) as their home address for lib card #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Wrapping up with thank yous & #critpitches!

Gina Murrell
@GinaMurrell1

This has been such an incredible #critlib chat that I almost hate to wrap things up. Any final thoughts?

2 YEARS AGO

Nisha
cuttingthecheez

@GinaMurrell1 This was great! Thank YOU! I love having #critlib on the mind :)

2 YEARS AGO

Jenna Freedman
@zinelib

#critlib pitch--Apply to be the Dean at mpow. I want a #critlib boss at @barnlib. careers.barnard.edu/postings/2020

2 YEARS AGO
Jessica Hochman
@jessicahochman

Thank you, @GinaMurrell1! GREAT topic, super lively and thoughtful discussion. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Guadalupe Colín
@colin_gpe

@GinaMurrell1 #critlib talking about these topics can help bring changes to libraries, however small they may be!

2 YEARS AGO

Jeanette Wallace
@alegriarchivist

This was my first #critlib chat. And a very important topic.

2 YEARS AGO

Greg Bem, MLIS
@bembrarian

@alegriarchivist Hope to see you in a future #critlib. They get better and better!

2 YEARS AGO

April Hathcock
@AprilHathcock

Great #critlib! Thanks @GinaMurrell1!

2 YEARS AGO

Jessica Colbert
@JessicaLColbert

@GinaMurrell1 Excellent #critlib! Gonna really start seeing how I can change things at my academic lib.

2 YEARS AGO

amelish
@amelish

Thanks @GinaMurrell1 & everyone for so much to think on. Good to be back #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
CyndeeSturgisLandrum
@ComposedCitrine

Thanks @GinaMurrell1 great #critlib!

2 YEARS AGO

Gina Murrell
@GinaMurrell1

Thank you all for participating in tonight's #critlib on serving homeless library patrons! Do we have any volunteers to Storify this chat?

2 YEARS AGO

sveta
@oksveta

@GinaMurrell1 I can Storify. It's been a few months since the last time. Thanks for a really great chat! #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Gina Murrell
@GinaMurrell1

@oksveta Thank you! And thanks again everyone for taking time out from your busy schedules to discuss this very important topic. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Maura Smale
@mauraweb

Such a terrific #critlib chat tonight, thanks so much @GinaMurrell1 and everyone!

2 YEARS AGO

Kelly McElroy
@kellymce

Hooray for @GinaMurrell1 for moderating an excellent #critlib!

2 YEARS AGO
April Hathcock
@AprilHathcock

Here's my #critlib #critpitch: Some thoughts on IRB and vulnerable populations (like prisoners & homeless). aprilhathcock.wordpress.com/2016/02/16/som...

2 YEARS AGO

Greg Bem, MLIS
@bembrarian

Make sure y'all invite your librarian friends to the next one! The more the merrier at #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

T. Sullivan
@thomthomthom

#critlib thanks for the wonderful convo, lurked and chatted with a classmate as we watched on the IQ Wall

2 YEARS AGO

SLComstock
@Brarian

Thank you so much for this topic. Soooo real. #critlib

2 YEARS AGO

Paul Jewell
@pdjewell

Catch stories now at #critlib on serving homeless library users @GinaMurrell1 steering, ALL #library workers WELCOME critlib.org/serving-homele...

2 YEARS AGO

T. Sullivan
@thomthomthom

thank you @GinaMurrell1 for moderating this discussion #critlib

2 YEARS AGO
Evan Beazley
@ebeaz
Thanks for such an amazing #critlib tonight. Looking forward to reflecting on the issues that were raised. Can’t wait for the next one!

Kelly McElroy
@kellymce
Super interested in this -- anyone do this combo? #critlib twitter.com/colin_gpe/stat...

Guadalupe Colin
@colin_gpe
@kellymce #critlib if anyone is interested, dominican has this option. I don’t know anybody who’s done it though. :( socialwork.dom.edu/academics/msw--...

SLComstock
@Brarian
@GinaMurrell1 You. Are. Awesome! Thank you! #critlib

Lisa Hinchliffe
@lisalibrarian
Sorry I missed #critlib; my #critpitch is that we in academia act on fact that some of our students+their families are homeless, hungry, etc

Lisa Hinchliffe
@lisalibrarian
And that we acknowledge that some of our staff are too bc wages are low and employment precarious. #critlib twitter.com/lisalibrarian/...
Thx @davidjsleeb and @ComposedCitrine for fighting good fight. Walk the talk: it is all we can do #critlib

Fin.