#critlib 2019-12-10: toxic work environments

Archive of the December 10 2019 #critlib chat on "toxic work environments," moderated by @GingerReads. For more info about critlib, including past and future chats, visit http://critlib.org.

Violet Fox
@violetbfox
Tonight! Please join moderator @GingerReads for a #critlib chat about toxic work environments: critlib.org/toxic-work-env.... Let's investigate the concept & explore ways to improve our work in libraries. 6 pm Pacific/9 pm Eastern.

Kristen Thorp
@GingerReads
Hello and welcome to our #critlib chat on toxic work environments. I am looking forward to our discussion tonight. You can find tonight's questions here > critlib.org/toxic-work-env...

Please remember to use #critlib for every tweet so folks can follow the conversation.
Skylis the Socially Distanced Librarianby
@axolotl_s

stoked to follow this! #critlib always has great ideas and
great discussion, and this topic is close to my heart
twitter.com/violetbfox/sta...

Violet Fox 🦊 @violetbfox
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chat about toxic work environments: critlib.org/toxic-work-env.... Let's investigate the concept & explore ways to
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Kristen Thorp @GingerReads · Dec 11, 2019
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If you’d like to tweet anonymously, you can do so by
using the form at critlib.org/anon/. Tweets will appear on
the @critlib_anon account. #critlib

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads · Dec 11, 2019
Replying to @GingerReads
If you’d like to tweet anonymously, you can do so by using
the form at critlib.org/anon/. Tweets will appear on the
@critlib_anon account. #critlib

If you feel comfortable please introduce yourself. #critlib
Kristen Thorp
@GingerReads

Hi everyone! I'm Kristen (she/her) and I've been a public library Director for 3ish weeks :) #critlib

Tracy Shields
@tcshields

Hey! I'm Tracy (she/her) and I'm a reference medical librarian (#medlibs) here for #critlib chat

Bat-Child Librarian
@adammizelle

Hello #critlib. I'm Adam, an academic librarian living in Philadelphia

Violet Fox
@violetbfox

Hi #critlib, I'm Violet, tuning in from DC. I'm grateful for the opportunity to discuss this topic, it seems to have touched a nerve with a lot of folks.

Cynthia/真理江 Orozco
@Cynthinee

Hi, #critlib! I'm Cynthia, a community college librarian at East LA College. I'll be in and out of tonight's conversation since I'm on desk but I HAVE OPINIONS.
Tracy Shields @tcshields

*waves back* given the #critlib topic, I suspect that it might be somewhat quiet around here with intros.

2:06 AM - Dec 11, 2019

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads

Hi!

2:05 AM - Dec 11, 2019

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads

Q1: What is a toxic work environment? Is that a useful term? Why or why not? #critlib

5 2:05 AM - Dec 11, 2019

Katharine C Chandler @freyjawaru

Rephrased Toxic Environment example

2:07 AM - Dec 11, 2019
Violet Fox
@violetbfox

A1. I don't have a solid definition, but it seems to be a useful term for some folks. It feels a little tricky, though, to label an entire environment toxic and not just certain relationships or patterns within it. #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q1: What is a toxic work environment? Is that a useful term? Why or why not? #critlib

Bat-Child Librarian
@adammizelle

A1: Useful because people certainly offer it when you describe bullying, exclusion, passive-aggressive behavior and worse at your place of work. #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q1: What is a toxic work environment? Is that a useful term? Why or why not? #critlib
Some environments that would be toxic for me would be fine for others. But I recognize that it can help people understand that an individual can only do so much to change established negative patterns and situations, so I think it's useful in that sense. 

#critlib

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q1: What is a toxic work environment? Is that a useful term? Why or why not? #critlib

Violet Fox 🐯 @violetbfox

A1. I don't have a solid definition, but it seems to be a useful term for some folks. It feels a little tricky, though, to label an entire environment toxic and not just certain relationships or patterns within it. #critlib

twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

#critlib I think it's an ok term, but it doesn’t have a lot of nuance to it. Toxic could be a widespread thing (think rotten from the inside out, whole system), or focused on certain individuals who “taint” the work environment

twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q1: What is a toxic work environment? Is that a useful term? Why or why not? #critlib

Amelia is bored in the house @LitjrzyGrl

Hi I’m Amelia a public librarian from NJ #critlib

twitter.com/LitjrzyGrl/st...
A1 Library workers - especially new grads or those on lower grades - are often excluded by managerial speak and divisive language #critlib means #inclusive #conversations for all workers.

A1: While it can mean something different to everyone, I find this to be a helpful term to describe the anguish that is often internalized #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Q1: What is a toxic work environment? Is that a useful term? Why or why not? #critlib

A1. I feel like a toxic work environment is one that harms workers, keeps them from achieving their professional goals, and prevents them from feeling a sense of accomplishment or autonomy. #critlib

Hi! I'm Alyssa, a community college librarian from Seattle. I'll be following the #critlib convo until dinner is served. :)

See Paul Jewell's other Tweets

See Kristen Thorp's other Tweets

See Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH's other Tweets

See Alyssa Jocson Porter's other Tweets
Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH
@librarianmer

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twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q1: What is a toxic work environment? Is that a useful term? Why or why not? #critlib

It is certainly a spectrum of experiences! #critlib
This is a great point. Toxic can be highly subjective (even if there are objective measures to back it up). Some people may thrive under certain conditions, others may encounter serious issues #critlib

Some environments that would be toxic for me would be fine for others. But I recognize that it can help people understand that an individual can only do so much to change established negative patterns and situations, so I think it's useful in that sense. #critlib

A1. When in doubt, Wikipedia 😁: "A toxic workplace is a workplace that is marked by significant drama and infighting, where personal battles often harm productivity." en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toxic_wor... #critlib

A1: I'm not great with definitions and toxicity can manifest in so many ways, but my personal experience with toxic work environments include targeted bullying, gaslighting, administration ignoring problematic relationships that continue to get shittier by the day, etc. #critlib
Violet Fox 🐱 @violetbfox · Dec 11, 2019
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Bat-Child Librarian
@adammizelle
This checks out #critlib

Violet Fox 🐱 @violetbfox · Dec 11, 2019
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Cynthia/真理江 Orozco
@Cynthinee
Sounds about right😊😊 #critlib

Jessica F
@teacher2library
Hi! I'm Jessica. I'm a former teacher and YS public librarian who has worked in 3 very different systems. Super excited for tonight's important topic! #critlib

Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH
@librarianmer
Hi critlibbers, I'm Meredith, a community college librarian in Portland, OR. #critlib
Kristen Thorp @GingerReads

I'm glad you brought up gaslighting. That is a hard one to deal with! #critlib

Cynthia/真理江 Orozco @Cynthinee · Dec 11, 2019

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Kristen Thorp @GingerReads

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Violet Fox 🐱 @violetbfox · Dec 11, 2019

Replying to @violetbfox

Some environments that would be toxic for me would be fine for others. But I recognize that it can help people understand that an individual can only do so much to change established negative patterns and situations, so I think it's useful in that sense. #critlib

Amelia is bored in the house @LitJrzyGrl

I agree I don't like thinking the environment is toxic so much as the relationships within the environments. #critlib

Paul Jewell @pdjewell

Hi 🌞 I'm Paul academic librarian listening and learning from a smoky Sydney town #critlib

See Kristen Thorp's other Tweets

See Amelia is bored in the house's other Tweets

See Paul Jewell's other Tweets
This is difficult because a workplace can be toxic for so many different reasons - sometimes individuals, sometimes leadership, sometimes system wide issues. Like much of what made teaching toxic was larger policies & politics at play. #critlib

twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q1: What is a toxic work environment? Is that a useful term? Why or why not? #critlib

7 2:15 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See Jessica F's other Tweets

anonymous critlib @critlib_anon
#critlib I'm anonymous tonight. I'm in the process of applying for a job at a university library, and feeling some fear because I've heard universities can be pretty difficult environments to work in.

9 2:15 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See anonymous critlib's other Tweets

Tracy Shields @tcshields · Dec 11, 2019
Replying to @violetbfox
This is a great point. Toxic can be highly subjective (even if there are objective measures to back it up). Some people may thrive under certain conditions, others may encounter serious issues #critlib

Bat-Child Librarian @adammizelle
I don't know about others, but my first encounter with the term Toxic was hearing it applied to masculinity, not workplaces.

Workplace behavior that reminds me of Toxic Masculinity could usefully be described as toxic, I think, independent of the agent's gender #critlib

2:15 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See Bat-Child Librarian's other Tweets
A1: For me, toxic work environments focus on negative employee interactions and not at finding innovative solutions to workplace issues. It becomes a never ending spiral that drives out new people and stagnates the work. #critlib

Q2: How so toxic work environments impact efforts to dismantle oppression in libraries? #critlib

A1: I think there are some highly toxic places where everyone agrees it’s toxic but they stay because they are settled and there aren’t a lot of other options in the area. Or there’s a good pension. That sort of thing. They hope to ride it out. #critlib

Some environments that would be toxic for me would be fine for others. But I recognize that it can help people understand that an individual can only do so much to change established negative patterns and situations, so I think it’s useful in that sense. #critlib
Tracy Shields
@tcshields
Replying to @maxgbowman
Agreed on the pervasiveness. You can’t leave it at work. It seems into everyday things, can affect health (mental and physical) #critlib #LISmentalhealth

anonymous critlib
@critlib_anon
#critlib Q1: First and foremost, mistrust. When an employee sees colleagues as competitors, sees success as a zero sum game, and thus feels threatened when colleagues succeed and acts under the assumption that others feel the same.

Ra©hel B.
@FairUseLBR
Hi I'm an academic librarian who's had several different positions and speaking from a wide range of experience (from student worker on up). #critlib
A1. Like others have said I don’t have a solid definition. I don’t like referring to environments as toxic but I understand why some people feel that their environments are toxic when no one seems to care how you feel. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q1: What is a toxic work environment? Is that a useful term? Why or why not? #critlib

Jessica F @teacher2library
Toxic environments don't allow room for ideas or discussion. There's no processes for making sure voices are heard by others besides the immediate chain of command (e.g. all ideas have to be cleared by a supervisor). #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q2: How so toxic work environments impact efforts to dismantle oppression in libraries? #critlib

Katharine C Chandler @freyjawaru
A1: there are ppl who create toxic environments through bullying or otherwise controlling behaviors. I think many librarians can attest to that. Ex: one library where I worked had a toxic administrator who had been let go from four different academic libraries prior. #critlib
A2: We can’t work to dismantle oppression for our users if we are too busy being oppressed ourselves in environments that aren’t healthy or stifle growth #critlib

twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q2: How so toxic work environments impact efforts to dismantle oppression in libraries? #critlib

10 2:19 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See Tracy Shields's other Tweets

Jessica F @teacher2library
So true! Library land is small. Not always a lot of options to escape a toxic environment. #critlib

3 2:19 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See Jessica F's other Tweets

Katharine C Chandler @freyjawaru · Dec 11, 2019
Replying to @violetbfox
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Cynthia/真理江 Orozco @Cynthinee
This is so many people at my institution. Or they say they should have left years ago, but at this point it’s not worth it ($, pension) or it would be hard to get a job this far in their career. #critlib

7 2:19 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See Cynthia/真理江 Orozco's other Tweets
Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH
@librarianmer

A2. They often enforce an idea that there is one right way, which is totally anti-inclusive. Also, they often don't give individual employees the autonomy to be patron-centered; following policy takes precedence over being human & recognizing the humanity of patrons. #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q2: How so toxic work environments impact efforts to dismantle oppression in libraries? #critlib

Alyssa Jocson Porter @itsuhLEEsuh

A2: Working in a toxic environment can cause serious burnout, which in turn can make it hard to continue the hard work of dismantling oppression. I know that when I burn out, I tend to step back or disengage just so I can focus on survival. #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
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See Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH's other Tweets

See Alyssa Jocson Porter's other Tweets
Yes! I posted one other—would like to get in touch with your colleague as I’m proposing a panel on this subject for ALA Annual 2021. Would they be interested? #critlib

Pretty much -- here are some resources on the subject
libguides.uky.edu/c.php?g=222981...

(a colleague of mine had this as a research interest)

People > policies #critlib

They often enforce an idea that there is one right way, which is totally anti-inclusive. Also, they often don't give individual employees the autonomy to be patron-centered; following policy takes precedence over being human & recognizing the humanity of patrons. #critlib

twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Q2: How so toxic work environments impact efforts to dismantle oppression in libraries? #critlib

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
The people who perpetuate the toxicity often want to maintain the status quo because it fits their style. They are not open to change and will uphold the oppressive values through bullying out new ideas. #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st…

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q2: How so toxic work environments impact efforts to dismantle oppression in libraries? #critlib

Amelia is bored in the house
@LitJrzyGrl

Yes this so much yes! This has been my experience too #critlib
Having worked in a handful, I don't know that universities are any more difficult environments than any other place? They're usually big enough that there are multiple ecosystems to work within, from small to large, and each can be functional or dysfunctional. #critlib
twitter.com/critlib_anon/s...

anonymous critlib @critlib_anon
#critlib I'm anonymous tonight. I'm in the process of applying for a job at a university library, and feeling some fear because I've heard universities can be pretty difficult environments to work in.

❤️ 11  2:22 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See Violet Fox 🐾's other Tweets

anonymous critlib @critlib_anon
#critlib Q2: The toxic environment/relationships make it impossible to make progress on any 'real' problems (that is, problems not being generated for their own sake by said toxic relationships) by sucking up all the air and draining those involved.

❤️ 5  2:22 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See anonymous critlib's other Tweets

Bat-Child Librarian @adammizelle
A2: I honestly am a little more lost with the term Dismantle compared to Toxic. It's a way not yet made that implies discovering the process. Which judging by the state of things is not easy.

I guess it makes the effort hard the same way it makes everything else hard #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q2: How so toxic work environments impact efforts to dismantle oppression in libraries? #critlib

❤️ 1  2:23 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See Bat-Child Librarian's other Tweets
Absolutely. The effects can linger even after you leave the toxic environment. #critlib
twitter.com/referencebird9...

Amelia is bored in the house
@LitjrzyGrl
Repeating to @referencebird
You're focused more on how to save yourself rather than making the changes to save the environment #critlib

Alyssa Jocson Porter @itsuhLIEshi · Dec 11, 2019
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Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
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Cynthia/真理江 Orozco
@Cynthiaee
It feels like the majority of my colleagues are burnt out. And there's this culture of onboarding=treating the newest librarian like shit. I feel like this environment produces 3 types: #critlib (1/2)
Bat-Child Librarian @adammizelle · Dec 11, 2019
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Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q2: How so toxic work environments impact efforts to dismantle oppression in libraries? #critlib

Bat-Child Librarian @adammizelle

Just want to follow up by acknowledging I've got the Full Suite of privileges, need to shut up and listen to the oppressed and all #critlib

❤️ 2:25 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See Bat-Child Librarian's other Tweets

Cynthia/真理江 Orozco @Cynthinee · Dec 11, 2019
Replying to @itsuhLEEsh
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Cynthia/真理江 Orozco @Cynthinee

1. Person who went through it so everyone else should, too.
2. Person who went through it so _says_ nobody else should.
3. Person who went through it so actively tries to dismantle this system of shittiness and actively combat workplace toxicity. (2/2) #critlib

❤️ 14 2:26 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See Cynthia/真理江 Orozco's other Tweets
Tracy Shields
@tcshields
Replying to @maxgbowman
It definitely can be intentional, especially when the workplace puts forth a good face, seems productive, has respect in the field - despite toxic behaviors and habits of some or all workers - because the toxicity underpins all that #critlib

Paul Jewell
@pdjewell
A1 Library worker just told me they attended a training session and there were so many acronyms thrown around they had no idea what they were talking about and felt excluded #WorkPlaceCulture #critlib

Ra©hel B. @FairUseLBR · Dec 11, 2019
The people who perpetuate the toxicity often want to maintain the status queue because it fits their style. They are not open to change and will uphold the oppressive values through bullying out new ideas. #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q2: How so toxic work environments impact efforts to dismantle oppression in libraries? #critlib

Bat-Child Librarian
@adammizzle
I like that phrase Oppressive Values. Feels useful #critlib
Q2: toxic workplaces make it much less likely for workers to be able to trust each other and safely communicate with each other without fearing (social or professional) repercussion #critlib (1/2) twitter.com/GingerReads/st…

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q2: How so toxic work environments impact efforts to dismantle oppression in libraries? #critlib

Lena Gluck @LenaGluck
Q2: (2/2) ...which in turn makes them less likely to share wages and easier for employers to perpetuate income inequality. Also makes it harder to organize for better working conditions in general when you can't count on others to have your back. #critlib

Lena Gluck @LenaGluck
Q2: (2/2) ...which in turn makes them less likely to share wages and easier for employers to perpetuate income inequality. Also makes it harder to organize for better working conditions in general when you can't count on others to have your back. #critlib
That "sucking up the air" and "draining" nails it. Toxic work environments drain your passion, your energy and ultimately drain the organization's ability to meet its purpose and goals. They make you feel like you can't breathe. #critlib

Q2: The toxic environment/relationships make it impossible to make progress on any 'real' problems (that is, problems not being generated for their own sake by said toxic relationships) by sucking up all the air and draining those involved.

Q3: How can individuals cope with a toxic work environment? #critlib

Q2. I also think toxic workplaces make workers focus so much on their own unhappiness and powerlessness that they rarely have the wherewithal to make things better for their patrons (or other colleagues). There's just no bandwidth left for it. #critlib

twitter.com/GingerReads/st...
Katharine C Chandler @freyjawaru · Dec 11, 2019
Replying to @violetbfox
Every place is different. I think it's important for you to do what you can about the places where you interview before you accept. I made a huge mistake in not doing that and walked into the most toxic place imaginable: found out later “oh yeah didn’t you know?...”

Rachel Walden @rachel_w · Dec 11, 2019
A1: Absolutely a useful term, and one we probably apply too cautiously. Can include bullying, verbal abuse, manipulation, racism, sexism, toxic narcissism, ableism, micromanagement, homophobia, transphobia, etc. (and often more than one of these)
twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q1: What is a toxic work environment? Is that a useful term? Why or why not? #critlib

Rachel Walden @rachel_w
#critlib

I'm sorry to say that he passed away earlier this year, but I think he'd be pleased to know that people are talking about this more in libraries. (Tom Hecker, author of that 2007 Journal of Academic Librarianship article on the subject) #critlib

You see a lot of this in medicine, where burnout and toxic environments are a growing concern and getting more focus. Lots of “that’s the way it’s always been done / I went through it, so should you” #critlib

twitter.com/Cynthineee/stat...

1. Person who went through it so everyone else should, too.
2. Person who went through it so _says_ nobody else should.
3. Person who went through it so actively tries to dismantle this system of shittiness and actively combat workplace toxicity. (2/2) #critlib
Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Finding the people to trust is key! #critlib
twitter.com/LenaGluck/stat...

Lena Gluck @LenaGluck
Q2: toxic workplaces make it much less likely for workers to be able to trust each other and safely communicate with each other without fearing (social or professional) repercussion #critlib (1/2) twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Oh I’m so sorry to hear that! Well if someone at your institution has also been working on it do let me know, the panel is definitely taking shape! #critlib
Great point, @rbecks29. I think a significant factor is that people in academic libraries can be more free to express their grievances (academic freedom, union protection, etc.) so we hear more about difficult environments. #critlib

Ra©hel B. @FairUseLBR
Replying to @violetbfox
I've worked in universities and public libraries. It can be tricky in university land from the standpoint that there are so many stakeholders who are often there for the long haul. Public libraries can have slightly more turnover and a smaller stakeholder pool.

Jessica F @teacher2library
Honestly in my experience the best way to cope was to GTFO. But if the organization and the people really matter to you, maybe it's worth staying and fighting. Curious to hear what others have to say! #critlib

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q3: How can individuals cope with a toxic work environment? #critlib
Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH

@librarianmer

Q3. I think finding small spaces where you have some control and can do good work are vital. It's also valuable to find ways to learn and collaborate with folks outside of your library. Find lifelines in the wider profession! #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads

Q3: How can individuals cope with a toxic work environment?
#critlib

See Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH's other Tweets

anonymous critlib

@critlib_anon

Reflecting on my own workplace, I'm realizing there are many aspects that would qualify as toxic, but there's also a lot of autonomy granted to individuals. Curious how others see these coexisting? #critlib

See anonymous critlib's other Tweets

Alyssa Jocson Porter

@itsuhLEEsuh

A3: Therapy. Hobbies or activities that have a restorative aspect. Finding allies in colleagues, in another dept, in another library branch, outside of work. Finding another place to work. #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads

Q3: How can individuals cope with a toxic work environment?
#critlib

See Alyssa Jocson Porter's other Tweets
Amelia is bored in the house
@LitjrzyGrl
A3: for me it was about taking care of myself. I had to learn that it was okay to take mental health days, I had to learn how to navigate around the toxic people, I had to find my way out that work space and into one that worked better for me. #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q3: How can individuals cope with a toxic work environment? #critlib

❤️ 10 2:32 AM - Dec 11, 2019
See Amelia is bored in the house's other Tweets

Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH
@librarianmer
Q3. I know when I worked in a truly toxic place, it was my teaching and other interactions with students as well as my research and collaborations outside of the library that kept me sane and hopeful. No one could take that stuff away from me. #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q3: How can individuals cope with a toxic work environment? #critlib

❤️ 43 2:33 AM - Dec 11, 2019
See Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH's other Tweets
A3: finding allies and outside validation (it helps if someone else sees the problems). For some that’s enough, for others you need therapy or professional support. Talking about it is a huge thing - people need to know it’s real. #critlib #LISmentalhealth

twitter.com/GingerReads/st…

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q3: How can individuals cope with a toxic work environment? #critlib

2:33 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See Tracy Shields's other Tweets

I felt more protected working in a public library, by the union. Many academic libraries don’t have unions, or are contracted positions that have to be renewed. However, it’s entirely different work in many ways and a different reward depending on what works for you. #critlib

2:33 AM - Dec 11, 2019 · Baltimore, MD

See Katharine C Chandler's other Tweets

Violet Fox 🦁 @violetbfox · Dec 11, 2019
Great point, @rbecks29. think a significant factor is that people in academic libraries can be more free to express their grievances (academic freedom, union protection, etc.) so we hear more about difficult environments. #critlib
twitter.com/FairUseLBR/sta...

Ra©hel B. @FairUseLBR
Replying to @violetbfox

I've worked in universities and public libraries. It can be tricky in university land from the standpoint that there are so many stakeholders who are often there for the long haul. Public libraries can have slightly more turnover and a smaller stakeholder pool.
Here are some things that helped while I was coping from within: directing my passion and finding fulfillment elsewhere (e.g. blogging, tutoring). Remembering my job was not the measure of my worth. Setting aside a certain time limit to vent at home and then no more.

#critlib
Kristen Thorp
@GingerReads

I agree! It’s such a hard choice. I’ve saved this tweet and think about it ALL THE TIME #critlib

---

Cynthia/真理江 Orozco @Cynthinee · Dec 11, 2019

Replying to @GingerReads @itsuhLEEuh

Yes! And to be fair, I get not wanting to relive your traumatic past experiences. I’m at the point in my position where I’m deciding whether to jump ship or stick around and try to be Person #3... 😊

Kristen Thorp
@GingerReads

I agree! It’s such a hard choice. I’ve saved this tweet and think about it ALL THE TIME #critlib

---

Brian P. Hogan
@bphogan

I’ve had some toxic jobs. Lesson learned:

When things go bad, good people leave, eventually followed by people who thought they could change things but got buried because too many good people left. Those left are bad people or hostages.

♥ 36  2:34 AM - Dec 11, 2019
Q3: honestly, my answer to this question is the same as my answer to the best thing I've learned in therapy--

Lena Gluck @LenaGluck
Isolation can kill you.

If you feel uncomfortable/scared/trapped/worthless/ashamed in your current circumstances, always tell someone. Anyone. Even if they're a stranger.

Telling someone, acknowledging what's happening, can keep you alive.

Bat-Child Librarian @adammizelle
A3: I've found keeping a running journal when a thing happens that affects you and getting your thoughts down when you don't have the energy to respond is helpful.

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q3: How can individuals cope with a toxic work environment?
Kristen Thorp @GingerReads

GTFO was the rally cry of my family when I was in an incredible year toxic job. I stitched it on something once. #critlib

Jessica F @teacher2library · Dec 11, 2019

Honestly in my experience the best way to cope was to GTFO. But if the organization and the people really matter to you, maybe it's worth staying and fighting. Curious to hear what others have to say! #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st…

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads

Q3: How can individuals cope with a toxic work environment? #critlib

Cynthia/真理江 Orozco @Cynthinee · Dec 11, 2019

A3: I'm so thankful for my close friends who keep me grounded. Especially when dealing with gaslighting, which is a popular technique of workplace bullies and those who abuse their power #critlib

A3: Twitter has also been helpful...although being untenured means retrained public documentation of what I've been going through. The support has been incredible, and I've connected with several people going or have gone through similar things. #critlib
Of course it can be difficult to have time/energy for those other things that bring you joy when you work in a toxic work environment 😞 it's a vicious cycle! #critlib

Here are some things that helped while I was coping from within: directing my passion and finding fulfillment elsewhere (e.g. blogging, tutoring). Remembering my job was not the measure of my worth. Setting aside a certain time limit to vent at home and then no more. #critlib

Q4: If you could offer advice to administrators/managers/leaders trying to shift a toxic work culture to be a positive one, what would you say? #critlib
Tracy Shields @tcshields
And the choice is so personal, can be so isolating. Which only adds to the problem. #critlib

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads · Dec 11, 2019
I agree! It's such a hard choice. I've saved this tweet and think about it ALL THE TIME #critlib

Thread

Brian P. Hogan @bphogan
I've had some toxic jobs. Lesson learned:
When things go bad, good people leave, eventually followed by people who thought they could change things but got buried because too many good people left. Those left are bad people or hostages.

Tracy Shields @tcshields
And the choice is so personal, can be so isolating. Which only adds to the problem. #critlib

Paul Jewell @pdjewell
A3 make library friends, join twitter chats, talk, be mindful and stay safe 👊 #critlib
twitter.com/gingerreads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q3: How can individuals cope with a toxic work environment? #critlib
A3: In trying to survive a toxic workplace I unfortunately also learned who my true friends are. Many people who I thought were good friends literally never stood up for me or bothered trying to understand my situation. Realizing that was really important to me. #critlib

Jessica F
@teacher2library

💯 Having some sense (however small) of control is key because toxix environments make you feel so powerless. #critlib
A3: Honestly, leave. Until you can, apply for jobs, go to therapy, and know it’s not your fault. Form a network with fellow survivors where you can. #critlib

twitter.com/GingerReads/st…

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q3: How can individuals cope with a toxic work environment? #critlib

I’ve seen a lot of work places have an employee assistance program. It’s anonymous, free, and has services like therapy, coinciding and mediation. Check to see if your place has this great resource! #critlib
twitter.com/referencebird9…

anonymous critlib @critlib_anon
A4. This is a hard question, because I’ve never been in a toxic workplace where the boss wasn't the main culprit. #critlib

Rachel Walden @rachel_w
Replying to @referencebird90 @referencebird
ABSOLUTELY toxic workplaces can and do exacerbate existing mental health concerns #critlib
Rachel Walden
@rachel_w

Recommend reading “The Bully at Work” for those who need to come to terms with the reality of the toxic environment (and passing along to those who may not yet recognize bullying behavior for what it is) #critlib

Bat-Child Librarian
@adammizelle

Yes. The EAP. My doctor was like: this is easier than seeking therapy through the normal route. Do it. #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
I’ve seen a lot of work places have an employee assistance program. It’s anonymous, free, and has services like therapy, coinciding and mediation. Check to see if your place has this great resource! #critlib twitter.com/referencebird9...

Tracy Shields
@tcshields

And if your workplace does have an assistance program, and you go, and they are already familiar with your work area / department is a known entity with them, well... there you go. That’s your validation that you might be in a toxic environment #critlib
A3: YES form a support network with colleagues if possible, but also work HARD to build your external professional network #critlib twitter.com/pdjewell/status/...

Paul Jewell @pdjewell
A3 make library friends, join twitter chats, talk, be mindful and stay safe 👊 #critlib twitter.com/gingerreads/status/...

Jessica F @teacher2library
Provide opportunity for anonymous upwards feedback. Know that because of the power difference, there are things employees can never feel comfortable saying to their boss but things bosses (and their supervisors) need to know. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/status/...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q4: If you could offer advice to administrators/managers/leaders trying to shift a toxic work culture to be a positive one, what would you say? #critlib

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q5: If you could offer advice to non-managerial workers trying to shift a toxic work culture to a positive one, what would you say? #critlib
Q4 Sometimes there’s no one person at fault. Sometimes there is. When you have most of your team trying to work on the broken relationships, and one person insisting that none of it will work and everything should stay the same, that person might just be your problem.

---

A4: You have to put in the work to have change happen, and to stick. It’s often more than replacing folks. You need to look at the workplace culture. Are there factors there that exacerbate this issue? #critlib

twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

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Q4: If you could offer advice to administrators/managers/leaders trying to shift a toxic work culture to be a positive one, what would you say? #critlib

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If you are experiencing a toxic library workplace and need somebody outside your organization to review your CV/cover letter or help figuring out what types of positions might need your strengths, hit me up I mean it. #critlib
Kristen Thorp
@GingerReads

Replying to @schomj
I hear you but I would hate for ANYONE to feel like they had to slog and grind their way through a bad situation.
#critlib

Katharine C Chandler
@freyjawaru

I have learned since I left one place where I worked that specific tactics are actually learned in management. Creating a hostile environment is sometimes intentional and targeted. #critlib
twitter.com/critlib_anon/s...

Anonymous critlib
@critlib_anon

A4. This is a hard question, because I've never been in a toxic workplace where the boss wasn't the main culprit. #critlib

Anonymous critlib
@critlib_anon

#critlib Sometimes it is a person or persons. I walked into a job with racists, anti-semites, and Islamaphobia. 3 against 1 until I and one more got hired. Then it was 4 against 2.
Tracy Shields
@tcshields

YES! This is critical, and especially challenging in smaller organizations. Fear of reprisal (no matter how small) can keep folks silent on lots of issues. #critlib

Jessica F
@teacher2library

Provide opportunity for anonymous upwards feedback. Know that because of the power difference, there are things employees can never feel comfortable saying to their boss but things bosses (and their supervisors) need to know. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp
@GingerReads

Q4: If you could offer advice to administrators/managers/leaders trying to shift a toxic work culture to be a positive one, what would you say? #critlib

twitter.com/LeapYrLibraria...

Kristen Thorp
@GingerReads

Healthy conflict is something EVERY team needs to have practice with. It could be vital to the work! #critlib

Jessica F
@teacher2library

Sometimes an outside perspective is really important to help you identify what's ok and what's not. You get so used to being treated badly in toxic environments you lose perspective on what's normal. #critlib
Alyssa Jocson Porter @itsuhLEEsuh

It's dinnertime for me. Good night, #critlib! Wishing you all healthy work environments.

Rachel Walden @rachel_w

A4: At a BARE MINIMUM take complaints/reports seriously. Too many organizations ignore, deflect, or even chalk it up to “women not getting along,” jealousy, etc. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads

Q4: If you could offer advice to administrators/managers/leaders trying to shift a toxic work culture to be a positive one, what would you say? #critlib

Z @zayda_delgado

YUP. Leaving my last place of work was the best thing for my stress level and mental health. #critlib
Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH
@librarianmer

A4. I was a middle manager in a toxic work environment. I did my best to insulate my direct reports from the toxicity, tried to understand and support their goals, and advocated for them with administration. I wasn't in a position to do more than that sadly. #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q4: If you could offer advice to administrators/managers/leaders trying to shift a toxic work culture to be a positive one, what would you say? #critlib

2:47 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH's other Tweets

Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH
@librarianmer

A4. Administrators will need to name and face these problems head on. They need to find ways to empower individual employees, to support their goals and make them feel listened, step back and not micromanage, and take action against people who engage in bullying.
#critlib

13  2:47 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH's other Tweets
Hiring the right people and letting them do the work you hired them to do is the best! I can train anyone to be a librarian, I want to make sure you’re going to care about the community you serve and aren’t going to be a problem for the team #critlib LOVE THIS ANSWER twitter.com/GingerSyd/stat…

Melanie Elron @GingerSyd
Replying to @GingerReads

Good recruitment is the key. Hire for attitude foremost, and use the probation period wisely. Once a negative person gets on your team it’s very hard to stop them infecting the whole place. Your good people deserve you standing up for them.

Tracy Shields @tcshields

A5: Not every workplace can be fixed, especially from the inside. You have to pick your battles and realize that even small changes can lead to improvements. Also, it takes time for course corrections. Temper your expectations even if you stay optimistic #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st…

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads

Q5: If you could offer advice to non-managerial workers trying to shift a toxic work culture to a positive one, what would you say? #critlib

anonymous critlib @critlib_anon

Toxicity is highly contagious. Even the normally positive employees can get dragged into the environment and then start being perceived by others as part of the problem and not a possible part of the solution #critlib
Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
A5: keep in mind it is going to be harder than it should be and take longer than it should. Celebrate wins. Find your people. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Jessica F @teacher2library
Some really solid advice for managers/supervisors in toxic work environments from tonight's #critlib! twitter.com/GingerSyd/stat...

Melanie Elron @GingerSyd
Replying to @GingerReads
Good recruitment is the key. Hire for attitude foremost, and use the probation period wisely. Once a negative person gets on your team it's very hard to stop them infecting the whole place. Your good people deserve you standing up for them.

Cynthia/真理江 Orozco @Cynthinee
A4: Address workplace problems at the beginning. Example, in my last job I had a workplace bully, and admin shut it down IMMEDIATELY. In current job, same situation that got continually worse, and it only stopped because this person's relative power was temporary #critlib
Unfortunately the toxic boss will do *everything* to figure out who said what (even when explicitly instructed by HR not to...). #critlib twitter.com/teacher2librar...

Jessica F @teacher2library
Provide opportunity for anonymous upwards feedback. Know that because of the power difference, there are things employees can never feel comfortable saying to their boss but things bosses (and their supervisors) need to know. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

#critlib I have seen this as well. Manager encourages conflict and competition, treats staff unfairly, has an 'in crowd' and an 'out crowd.' Before they know it everyone is elbowing for position, desperate to win favor. twitter.com/freyjawaru/sta...

Katharine C Chandler @freyjawaru
I have learned since I left one place where I worked that specific tactics are actually learned in management. Creating a hostile environment is sometimes intentional and targeted. #critlib twitter.com/critlib_anon/s...
That’s when you start hearing phrases like “witch hunt” being tossed around in meetings and conversations.
#critlib

Unfortunately the toxic boss will do *everything* to figure out who said what (even when explicitly instructed by HR not to...). #critlib twitter.com/teacher2librar...

Provide opportunity for anonymous upwards feedback. Know that because of the power difference, there are things employees can never feel comfortable saying to their boss but things bosses (and their supervisors) need to know. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

A5: Be the change you want to see. It's so easy to get sucked into the mire, become negative, and start complaining about people behind their backs (I know from experience). Just don't do it; you'll be/feel better for it. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Q5: If you could offer advice to non-managerial workers trying to shift a toxic work culture to a positive one, what would you say? #critlib

Q6: What fundamental changes could be made to librarianship to prevent toxic work cultures from forming? #critlib
Lena Gluck @LenaGluck
100% agreed. Talking to people outside that environment and hearing them react with _shock_ to the terrible things that have become normalized is so important to not losing yourself in those places. #critlib

Jessica F @teacher2library · Dec 11, 2019
Replying to @GingerReads
Sometimes an outside perspective is really important to help you identify what's ok and what's not. You get so used to being treated badly in toxic environments you lose perspective on what's normal #critlib

Cynthia/真理江 Orozco @Cynthinee
A5: That's hard. Like I said, I get why people who have bore the brunt of workplace toxicity would want to not bring attention to themselves. I'd say at minimum listen to your colleagues, check in with them. #critlib

Cynthia/真理江 Orozco @Cynthinee
A5: Another interesting thing is that one person's workplace bully can be really freaking nice to everyone else. A colleague in another department was going through a similar thing, and their bully has always seemed incredibly cool and sweet with me. It's so bizarre. #critlib
Rachel Walden
@rachel_w

Yup. I once got major blowback for refusing to disclose a report’s medical condition, but I will never regret that.
#critlib

Meredith says pay your librarians to... · Dec 11, 2019

A4. I was a middle manager in a toxic work environment. I did my best to insulate my direct reports from the toxicity, tried to understand and support their goals, and advocated for them with administration. I wasn’t in a position to do more than that sadly. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads

Q4: If you could offer advice to administrators/managers/leaders trying to shift a toxic work culture to be a positive one, what would you say? #critlib

Rachel Walden
@rachel_w

Meredith says pay your librarians to... · Dec 11, 2019

A5. I think there's value in cultivating an environment of gratitude and recognition. Thank the people you value in the workplace; tell them what they and their work means to you. It will make you and the people you show gratitude toward feel better & it's contagious. #critlib

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads

Q5: If you could offer advice to non-managerial workers trying to shift a toxic work culture to a positive one, what would you say? #critlib

Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH
@librarianmer

A5. I think there's value in cultivating an environment of gratitude and recognition. Thank the people you value in the workplace; tell them what they and their work means to you. It will make you and the people you show gratitude toward feel better & it's contagious. #critlib
I would ask them to look carefully at toxic managers. Bullying behavior of peers. Unfortunately those sorts of things are all too often exactly what an administrator has orchestrated or those conditions give an admin strange power. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q4: If you could offer advice to administrators/managers/leaders trying to shift a toxic work culture to be a positive one, what would you say? #critlib

6 2:57 AM - Dec 11, 2019 · Baltimore, MD

See Katharine C Chandler's other Tweets

Tracy Shields @tcshields
A6: normalizing open and frank discussion (like this #critlib chat) on toxic behaviors, mental health, and workplace conflict. This needs to start in library school, and continue through professional development activities. twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q6: What fundamental changes could be made to librarianship to prevent toxic work cultures from forming? #critlib

9 2:57 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See Tracy Shields's other Tweets
THIS. It hinders change because a workplace bully is often totally different to those “up” the chain vs “down.”

Cynthia/真理江 Orozco @Cynthinee
Replying to @Cynthinee
A5: Another interesting thing is that one person's workplace bully can be really freaking nice to everyone else. A colleague in another department was going through a similar thing, and their bully has always seemed incredibly cool and sweet with me. It's so bizarre. #critlib

Rachel Walden @rachel_w
Replying to @Cynthinee
Yup. I once got major blowback for refusing to disclose a report's medical condition, but I will never regret that.

Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH @librarianmer
Good on you. I burnt every bit of political capital I had in that job defending my direct reports and I regret it not one iota. #critlib

A5. I think there's value in cultivating an environment of gratitude and recognition. Thank the people you value in the workplace; tell them what they and their work means to you. It will make you and the people you show gratitude toward feel better & it's contagious. #critlib

Tracy Shields @tcshields
Feeling appreciated can go a long way in helping deal with a toxic environment #critlib
A6: My strategy is to recognize the problem publicly. I'm not trying to put my institution on blast but rather call in my colleagues to rethink how we work with each other. #critlib

Here's your #critpitch reminder to see the #SaveSCSU_Library hashtag, sign the petition chng.it/B688ZLDN & see unionlibraryworkers.blogspot.com/2019/09/guest-... to support St. Cloud State librarians being laid off. #critlib
Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH
@librarianmer

Replying to @maxgbowman

So true. I have a colleague from our mutual previous place of work who feels like she can never work in libraries after what we went through. It completely soured her on a profession she has a Masters degree in (and in which she was amazing)! #critlib

Jessica F
@teacher2library

Honestly I think more support and training for leadership in libraries would make a big difference. How many supervisors do you know who were promoted with no additional training? Do they know how to recognize and combat toxicity in the workplace? #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q6: What fundamental changes could be made to librarianship to prevent toxic work cultures from forming? #critlib

Bat-Child Librarian
@adammizelle

Replying to @chiuchiutrain

The first time I read this I was like yep, yep, yep#critlib
Tracy Shields @tcshields  ·  Dec 11, 2019
Replying to @librarianmer
Feeling appreciated can go a long way in helping deal with a toxic environment #critlib

Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH @librarianmer

Yeah, and if management isn't focused on recognizing/appreciating good work, the rank-and-file can and should create that culture themselves. #critlib

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads

Totally breaks my heart when great people want to leave librarianship because of bad work environments! #critlib
twitter.com/librarianmer/s...

Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH @librarianmer
Relying to @maxgbowman
So true. I have a colleague from our mutual previous place of work who feels like she can never work in libraries after what we went through. It completely soured her on a profession she has a Masters degree in (and in which she was amazing)! #critlib

Husky Defender @DefenderHusky

Also, follow us for some stress relief! #critlib
twitter.com/critlib_anon/s...

anonymous critlib @critlib_anon
Here's your #critpitch reminder to see the #SaveSCSU_Library hashtag, sign the petition chng.it/B688ZLDN & see unionlibraryworkers.blogspot.com/2019/09/guest-... to support St. Cloud State librarians being laid off. #critlib
A4 Library workers can’t allow unhealthy work environments as our communities rely on us: if managers/leaders don’t get this then they need to get out #librariesmatter #critlib

Have absolutely seen toxic leaders try to sabotage people from moving on. Outside champions are key I think. #critlib

Good onboarding is sooooo important! Must set folks up for success! #critlib
Wait, let me rework this sentence: I AM putting my institution on blast as a form of calling in because we can be better, we deserve better, and our students deserve better. #critlib

A6: My strategy is to recognize the problem publicly. I'm not trying to put my institution on blast but rather call in my colleagues to rethink how we work with each other. #critlib

I want to be respectful of everyone's time. THANK YOU SO MUCH for everyone who contributed to the conversation and who watched the thread. I appreciate everyone's vulnerability and honesty. Keep the conversation going. #critlib
Unfortunately, the document cannot be read naturally as it contains tweets that cannot be properly formatted. However, I can summarize the main points:

Jessica F @teacher2library · Dec 11, 2019
Honesty I think more support and training for leadership in libraries would make a big difference. How many supervisors do you know who were promoted with no additional training? Do they know how to recognize and combat toxicity in the workplace? #critlib

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q6: What fundamental changes could be made to librarianship to prevent toxic work cultures from forming? #critlib

Jessica F @teacher2library
Related, holding leadership accountable for organizational culture. If it’s a toxic environment someone higher up is letting that shit happen if not creating it. #critlib

Tracy Shields @tcshields
Replying to @referencebird90 @referencebird
Being flexible about sick time and not being stigmatizing is a HUGE thing. One of the ways I realized my workplace was NOT toxic is that my boss has allowed me to take time for therapy, and has made a point of normalizing that for others. #critlib

Violet Fox 🐞 @violetbfox
Thanks so much to @GingerReads for leading tonight’s #critlib chat and to all who were able to participate!

If you have an idea for a critlib chat, please submit your idea here: critlib.org/twitter-chats/…. #critlib doesn't happen without you!
Kristen Thorp @GingerReads · Dec 11, 2019
I want to be respectful of everyone's time. THANK YOU SO MUCH for everyone who contributed to the conversation and who watched the thread. I appreciate everyone's vulnerability and honesty. Keep the conversation going. #critlib

Kristen Thorp
@GingerReads

Find ways to turn conversations into actions. Find your people. (Looking at all of you) #critlib

Gina "Wash Your Hands, Don't Be Racist" Murrell @GinaMurrell1

Hi, I'm Gina, an academic librarian in the Bay Area who's joining #critlib after her evening commute. My current environment is among the most functional I've been in, but I've worked in toxic environments & speak based on past experiences.

Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH @librarianmer

A6. Our field has a real problem where a lot of the people who pursue management positions do not see their primary role as supporting their direct reports (not controlling, not policing). I have no idea how to fix that. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...
I've seen administrators who are so focused on external work that they neglect their direct reports. I've seen administrators who police and micromanage their direct reports. Admins need to learn that if their direct reports are miserable, they have FAILED. #critlib
Something important about bullies, esp. “girl bullies” or “mean girls,” is they’re super good at creating personas. One face they show to you, another they show to other ppl. Another version of this is kissing up and punching down. It’s painfully common in library land. #critlib
twitter.com/Cynthinee/stat...

Cynthia/真理江 Orozco @Cynthinee
Replying to @Cynthinee
A5: Another interesting thing is that one person's workplace bully can be really freaking nice to everyone else. A colleague in another department was going through a similar thing, and their bully has always seemed incredibly cool and sweet with me. It's so bizarre. #critlib

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
#critlib twitter.com/evangelestia/s...

Tamar Evangelestia-Dougherty @evangelestia
Replying to @GingerReads
There first has to be a shared acknowledgement- among managers with the agency to truly create change- that the work culture is toxic. Without this self-awareness and shared acknowledgment any efforts to change the toxic culture may be siloed and met with much resistance.
For realz! Fellow managers and directors, there is some important things from tonight. I’m using this time to reflect and learn. Always room for growth and improvement. #critlib twitter.com/ArchivesMaarja...

Maarja K. @ArchivesMaarja
Replying to @violetbfox @GingerReads
Lurked the chat, some really good content!

Gina "Wash Your Hands, Don't Be Racist" Murrell @GinaMurrell1
A1. A toxic work environment is one where you consistently feel defeated, instead of bolstered, by the work you do & the people you work with. Denial & resignation exist in place of real problem solving & effective communication. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q1: What is a toxic work environment? Is that a useful term? Why or why not? #critlib

57  3:16 AM - Dec 11, 2019
A toxic work environment is one where you consistently feel defeated, instead of bolstered, by the work you do & the people you work with. Denial & resignation exist in place of real problem solving & effective communication. #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Q1: What is a toxic work environment? Is that a useful term? Why or why not? #critlib

BrB I’m going to text my boss and thank them for being awesome and supportive.... #critlib
A2. Toxic work environments thwart efforts to dismantle oppression in libraries by not acknowledging that oppression exists, gaslighting those who say that oppression exists & allowing oppressive behaviors to go unchecked. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q2: How so toxic work environments impact efforts to dismantle oppression in libraries? #critlib

3:26 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See Gina "Wash Your Hands, Don't Be Racist" Murrell's other Tweets

I don’t normally participate in #critlib but they’re playing my song tonight twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q3: How can individuals cope with a toxic work environment? #critlib

3:29 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See dolly's other Tweets

A toxic workplace is more likely to change you than you are to change it. Get out if you can. If you can’t, use EAP, make allies, strengthen your coping skills, and remember: it’s not your fault. #critlib

85 3:29 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See dolly's other Tweets
A3. If possible, find allies within a toxic work environment - but use caution if you're in an environment where employees are pitted against each other or indulge in petty jealousies. Have friends & an active life outside of work. And look for another job. #critlib

twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q3: How can individuals cope with a toxic work environment? #critlib

Jennifer Taggart @librarianjennt
Best mgt advice ever heard: Be the person where gossip stops. Let off steam w/ a library friend outside of your library. Never share things with a few dept members you wouldn’t share w/ everyone. Your dept should always feel safe knowing they are being treated equally. #critlib

twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q6: What fundamental changes could be made to librarianship to prevent toxic work cultures from forming? #critlib

See Jennifer Taggart's other Tweets

See Gina "Wash Your Hands, Don't Be Racist" Murrell's other Tweets
Appreciate the #critlib convo tonight 🚀❤️
Folks with low morale, check out @Kaetrena's research. She's created a supportive online community for resource sharing, and classes for those recovering *and* for managers/admin to reconsider their org culture renewerslis.wordpress.com/author/daviske ...

Kaetrena Davis Kendrick
renewerslis.wordpress.com

I keep forgetting about #critlib talks... bah

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q4: If you could offer advice to administrators/managers/leaders trying to shift a toxic work culture to be a positive one, what would you say? #critlib
Gina "Wash Your Hands, Don't Be Racist" Murrell @GinaMurrell1

A4. My advice to administrators & managers is to take an honest look at your behavior & ask yourself what kind of energy are you bringing to the organization. And be intentional about & dedicated to bringing about real change. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q4: If you could offer advice to administrators/managers/leaders trying to shift a toxic work culture to be a positive one, what would you say? #critlib

Abby Deese @absequitur

Oh hey, #critlib had some great and timely discussion tonight. Remember my post earlier about having to be your own advocate for career and life balance in a less healthy work environment? Check out the tag! twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q3: How can individuals cope with a toxic work environment? #critlib
Damn. I missed a good & relevant #critlib topic tonight.

MPOW's interim dean has a LOT of damage to repair from several crappy deans in a row. I think she's making good progress, but there's no simple or fast solution.

twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q4: If you could offer advice to administrators/managers/leaders trying to shift a toxic work culture to be a positive one, what would you say? #critlib

Gina "Wash Your Hands, Don't Be Racist" Murrell @GinaMurrell1
A5. My advice to non-managerial workers is don't feed into the dysfunction. Counteract negativity through affirmations, and care and respect for each other. Clearly communicate & be good listeners. Don't make excuses & practice accountability. #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q5: If you could offer advice to non-managerial workers trying to shift a toxic work culture to a positive one, what would you say? #critlib
This question focuses on people in managerial positions, but if you have tenure, you should also consider yourself a leader. Use that protection for all it can handle, dammit. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q4: If you could offer advice to administrators/managers/leaders trying to shift a toxic work culture to be a positive one, what would you say? #critlib

Gina "Wash Your Hands, Don't Be Racist" Murrell @GinaMurrell1
A6. Acknowledge that dysfunction & inequalities exist, see criticism as an opportunity for improvement instead of an attack, encourage & allow for all voices to be heard, & be transparent about all changes. Put in the work & recognize that it's all for the greater good. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q6: What fundamental changes could be made to librarianship to prevent toxic work cultures from forming? #critlib
Post: #critlib follow up: I try to support my colleagues and stand up for them, but I know it's going to be real hard to do that when those who ignored my pain become the subject of workplace toxicity. I'm seeing it now: the bullies become the bullied in a regime change...

twitter.com/Cynthinee/stat...

Cynthia/真理江 Orozco @Cynthinee
Replying to @Cynthinee
A3: In trying to survive a toxic workplace I unfortunately also learned who my true friends are. Many people who I thought were good friends literally never stood up for me or bothered trying to understand my situation. Realizing that was really important to me. #critlib

és  4:13 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See Cynthia/真理江 Orozco's other Tweets

angela @LibrarianAngie
If you're at a large enough institution, look for an Ombuds office. That's where things started changing for me. And document, document, document, document. Take notes on every single interaction right away to share w/ the Ombuds. #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/stat...

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q5: If you could offer advice to non-managerial workers trying to shift a toxic work culture to a positive one, what would you say? #critlib

és  4:16 AM - Dec 11, 2019

See angela's other Tweets
Also, I would be remiss if I didn't address the advice to just GTFO of a toxic work environment. It's incredibly privileged to be able to just leave for many reasons, none of which I want to get into tonight. #critlib
twitter.com/GingerReads/st…

Kristen Thorp @GingerReads
Q3: How can individuals cope with a toxic work environment? #critlib

Kate 'ProtectLibraryWorkers' Crowe @kcrowe
Ditto. Tritto. Accurate and often the best you can do if you're stuck. #critlib twitter.com/librarianmer/s…

Meredith says pay your librarians to WFH @librarianmer
A4. I was a middle manager in a toxic work environment. I did my best to insulate my direct reports from the toxicity, tried to understand and support their goals, and advocated for them with administration. I wasn't in a position to do more than that sadly. #critlib twitter.com/GingerReads/st…

Cynthia/真理江 Orozco @Cynthinee
My last thought re: #critlib this evening is that my physical and mental health has drastically improved since the regime change in which my workplace bully has no real power any longer. I'm in less physical pain. I'm sleeping. My hair is growing back. I'm cautiously happy.
Lauren DeAccession
@laurenjdeacon
Replying to @maxgbowman
Woooh, I've been observing #critlib for like, eighteen months now coz timezones, but this hit me in the feels. I still can't decide if the obliviousness or the comfort are worse. Both are enraging and depressing in equal measure. Thanks so much for mentioning this.

Katharine C Chandler
@freyjawaru
Replying to @maxgbowman
I'm still rehabilitating my career thanks to a toxic misogynist boss. So toxic workplaces don’t only have emotional scars, they have real, lasting, financial ones too. I will be publishing on this when the time is right.
#critlib

Kate ‘ProtectLibraryWorkers’ Crowe
@kcrowe
The thing I remember the most from being in a toxic work environment is that kvetching about how bad things are to the exclusion of everything else is a surefire path to depression and burnout. Once you've est that you're on the same page about the toxicity 1/2 #critlib
The thing I remember the most from being in a toxic work environment is that kvetching about how bad things are to the exclusion of everything else is a surefire path to depression and burnout. Once you've.est that you're on the same page about the toxicity 1/2 #critlib

work for change and don't give the toxic shit any more fuel than you can help giving it if you can't get out/until you can get out. Also document and insist on an exit interview or file a letter with HR on your way out. 2/2 #critlib

Gosh this is a really interesting hashtag! Is there any UK presence? Really relevant to #LoveLD which is increasingly situated in libraries over here #critlib twitter.com/violetbfox/sta...

Interested in making a #critlib chat happen in November? Please submit your idea for a chat here: critlib.org/twitter-chats/.... They don't happen without someone stepping up: that someone could be you!

This week #critlib discussed the topic of librarians working in toxic cultures. It's a library subject not often spoken about. Credit to those taking part in opening up this conversation.
This post after the #critlib discussion yesterday is a closing keynote. twitter.com/SaraNAhmed/sta…

feministkilljoy @SaraNAhmed
I have been re-reading testimonies by BIPOC that I've collected for my project on complaint.

"When the colonizer wins the diversity award." #complaintasfeministpedagogy #complaintasdiversitywork

Whitney Buccicone @icatalogthings
Seconded. Happy to help look at CVs/cover letters. #CritLib #CritCat #LibrariesCanBeToxicToo twitter.com/rachel_w/statu…

Rachel Walden @rachel_w
If you are experiencing a toxic library workplace and need somebody outside your organization to review your CV/cover letter or help figuring out what types of positions might need your strengths, hit me up I mean it. #critlib

NaoB @BishopNaomi
#critlib Here you go! twitter.com/HarvardBiz/sta…

Harvard Business Review @HarvardBiz
Blaming individual employees for their own burnout is a band-aid solution to a much larger issue. s.hbr.org/2t836u8
#critlib and toxic libraries follow up

"May you never be the reason why someone who loved to sing, doesn't any more. Or why someone who dressed so differently now wears standard clothing. Or why someone who always spoke of their dreams so wildly is now silent about them. May you never be the reason of someone giving up on a part of them because you were demotivating, non appreciative or even worse- sarcastic about it." - Shorouk Mostafa Ibrahim

Artwork: Nono Astro Irareza

I missed yesterday's #critlib discussion and boy do I have feelings... A Jamaican saying "Fish rots from the head". Toxic work environments always start at the top. 1/x
Today’s lunchtime reading is catching up on what looks to have been an incredible #critlib last night on toxic workplaces. Try to everyone who participated, and I encourage folx in management to take a read thru these tweets.