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.

1:55 PM · Dec 10, 2019

Kristen wants you to VOTE
@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.

2:00 AM · Dec 11, 2019
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.

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

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
2:03 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Bat-Child Librarian
@adammizelle
Hello #critlib. I'm Adam, an academic librarian living in Philadelphia
2:05 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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.
2:05 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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.
2:06 AM · Dec 11, 2019
Q1: What is a toxic work environment? Is that a useful term? Why or why not? #critlib

Katharine C Chandler @freyjawaru

Replying to @GingerReads

Q1: a problem I've seen and experienced and heard many others experience is bullying or mobbing. There are peer-reviewed articles about mobbing in libraries

2:10 AM · Dec 11, 2019
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

@violetbfox

Kristen wants you to VOTE @GingerReads

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

2:08 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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

@adammizelle

Kristen wants you to VOTE @GingerReads

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

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Violet Fox @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

2:10 AM · Dec 11, 2019

15  See Violet Fox’s other Tweets

Tracy Shields @tcshields

#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

2:10 AM · Dec 11, 2019

7  See Tracy Shields’s other Tweets

Paul Jewell @pdjewell

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

2:10 AM · Dec 11, 2019 from Sydney, New South Wales

4  See Paul Jewell’s other Tweets
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

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
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

Tracy Shields @tcshields
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
2:12 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Violet Fox @violetbfox
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_... #critlib
2:12 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Cynthia/真理江 Orozco @Cynthinee
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
2:13 AM · Dec 11, 2019
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_workplace #critlib

This checks out #critlib

Sounds about right 😁😊 #critlib

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

I'm glad you brought up gaslighting. That is a hard one to deal with! #critlib
Hi 👋 I'm Paul academic librarian listening and learning from a smoky Sydney town #critlib

2:15 AM · Dec 11, 2019 from Sydney, New South Wales

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.

2:15 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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

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
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

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: 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
Tracy Shields
@tcshields
Agreed on the pervasiveness. You can't leave it at work. It seems into everyday things, can affect health (mental and physical) #critlib #LISmentalhealth
2:16 AM · Dec 11, 2019

anonymous LibRev
@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.
2:16 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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
2:17 AM · Dec 11, 2019
Q1: What is a toxic work environment? Is that a useful term? Why or why not? #critlib

A1: There are people who create toxic environments through bullying or otherwise controlling behaviors. I think many librarians can attest to that. For example, at one library where I worked, there was a toxic administrator who had been let go from four different academic libraries prior. #critlib

2:19 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Kristen wants you to VOTE @GingerReads

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

2:19 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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

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

2:19 AM · Dec 11, 2019
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

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

zemkat @zemkat · Dec 11, 2019
Replying to @rlgunt2001 @freyjawaru and @GingerReads
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)

Katharine C Chandler @freyjawaru

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
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

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

2:21 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Violet Fox @violetbfox
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

2:22 AM · Dec 11, 2019

anonymous LibRev @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.

2:22 AM · Dec 11, 2019

#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.

2:22 AM · Dec 11, 2019
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

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

2:23 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Rachel Walden @rachel_w

Absolutely. The effects can linger even after you leave the toxic environment. #critlib t.co/0bGNiKYEaj

2:24 AM · Dec 11, 2019
Alyssa Jocson Porter @itsuhLEEsuh · Dec 11, 2019
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

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

Cynthia/真理江 Orozco @Cynthinee
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)
2:25 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Bat-Child Librarian @adammizelle · Dec 11, 2019
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Kristen wants you to VOTE @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
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)

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

Tracy Shields
@tcshields

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
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

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

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)

Kristen wants you to VOTE @GingerReads
Q2: How so toxic work environments impact efforts to dismantle oppression in libraries? #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)

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

Kristen wants you to VOTE @GingerReads

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

Every place is different. I think it’s important for you to do your due diligence 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?...”

Sorry! #critlibaru

2:28 AM · Dec 11, 2019 from Baltimore, MD
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)

Kristen wants you to VOTE @GingerReads

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

Rachel Walden @rachel_w

#critlib

2:28 AM · Dec 11, 2019

See Rachel Walden’s other Tweets

Katharine C Chandler @freyjawaru · Dec 11, 2019

Replying to @zemkat @rlgunt2001 and @GingerReads

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

zemkat @zemkat

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

2:28 AM · Dec 11, 2019

See zemkat’s other Tweets
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

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

Finding the people to trust is key! #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...
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

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. 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

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.
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

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

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
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
Repeating 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.

Katharine C Chandler @freyjawaru
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
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...😊

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

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.

The good people are your canary.
#CritLib Q3: honestly, my answer to this question is the same as my answer to the best thing I've learned in therapy--

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.

twitter.com/CarolineMoss/s...

2:34 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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. #critlib

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

2:35 AM · 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

2:36 AM · Dec 11, 2019

5

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

2:36 AM · Dec 11, 2019

6

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

2:37 AM · Dec 11, 2019

6
I agree! It’s such a hard choice. I’ve saved this tweet and think about it ALL THE TIME #critlib

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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.

The good people are your canary.

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

A3 make library friends, join twitter chats, talk, be mindful and stay safe 👊 #critlib

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

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

2:40 AM · Dec 11, 2019

ABSOLUTELY toxic workplaces can and do exacerbate existing mental health concerns #critlib

2:40 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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

2:41 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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

2:41 AM · Dec 11, 2019

I've seen a lot of workplaces have an employee assistance program. It's anonymous, free, and has services like therapy, coaching, and mediation. Check to see if your place has this great resource! #critlib

t.co/56lWYLL9PL

2:41 AM · Dec 11, 2019
Kristen wants you to VOTE @GingerReads · Dec 11, 2019
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 t.co/56lWYLL9PL

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

Rachel Walden
@rachel_w

A3: YES form a support network with colleagues if possible, but also work HARD to build your external professional network #critlib

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

Kristen wants you to VOTE @GingerReads · Dec 11, 2019
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

See Kristen wants you to VOTE’s other Tweets
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.

2:44 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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

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

2:44 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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

2:44 AM · Dec 11, 2019
Kristen wants you to VOTE
@GingerReads

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

2:45 AM · Dec 11, 2019

See Kristen wants you to VOTE’s other Tweets

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

anonymous LibRev
@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

2:45 AM · Dec 11, 2019 from Baltimore, MD

See Katharine C Chandler’s other Tweets

anonymous LibRev
@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.

2:45 AM · Dec 11, 2019

See anonymous LibRev's other Tweets

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

2:46 AM · Dec 11, 2019

See Tracy Shields's other Tweets
Kristen wants you to VOTE
@GingerReads

Healthy conflict is something EVERY team needs to have practice with. It could be vital to the work! #critlib
twitter.com/LeapYrLibraria...
2:46 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Alyssa Jocson Porter
@itsuhLEEsuh

It's dinnertime for me. Good night, #critlib! Wishing you all healthy work environments.
2:46 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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

Kristen wants you to VOTE  @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
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 sever and aren't going to be a problem for the team #critlib LOVE THIS ANSWER

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.

2:48 AM · Dec 11, 2019
6  See Kristen wants you to VOTE’s other Tweets

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

2:48 AM · Dec 11, 2019
13  See Tracy Shields's other Tweets

anonymous LibRev @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

2:49 AM · Dec 11, 2019
14  See anonymous LibRev’s other Tweets
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

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

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...
#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.

@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...

Rachel Walden
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...

Tracy Shields
That’s when you start hearing phrases like “witch hunt” being tossed around in meetings and conversations

#critlib

Kristen wants you to VOTE
Q6: What fundamental changes could be made to librarianship to prevent toxic work cultures from forming? #critlib

See anonymous LibRev's other Tweets
See @freyjawaru's other Tweets
See Rachel Walden's other Tweets
See Tracy Shields's other Tweets
See Kristen wants you to VOTE's other Tweets
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

2:54 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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

2:55 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Cynthia/真理江 Orozco

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

2:55 AM · Dec 11, 2019
Yup. I once got major blowback for refusing to disclose a report’s medical condition, but I will never regret that. #critlib

2:55 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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

2:57 AM · Dec 11, 2019 from Baltimore, MD

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.

2:57 AM · Dec 11, 2019
THIS. It hinders change because a workplace bully is often totally different to those “up” the chain vs “down.”

#critlib

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

2:58 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Tracy Shields @tcshields

Feeling appreciated can go a long way in helping deal with a toxic environment #critlib

2:59 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Cynthia/真理江 Orozco @Cynthinee

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

2:59 AM · Dec 11, 2019
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

Stop faculty layoffs now!

Sign the Petition
Stop faculty layoffs at St. Cloud State University
🔗 change.org

2:59 AM · Dec 11, 2019

The first time I read this I was like yep, yep, yep
#critlib

3:01 AM · Dec 11, 2019
Kristen wants you to VOTE
@GingerReads

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

3:01 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Husky Defender
@DefenderHusky

Also, follow us for some stress relief! #critlib

anonymous LibRev @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

3:02 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Paul Jewell
@pdjewell

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

3:02 AM · Dec 11, 2019 from Sydney, New South Wales
Danielle Baum the beacons of hope are lit @ · Dec 11, 2019
Replying to @librarianmer and @rachel_w
same. it fucked me over from moving to a different job in library land too. maybe that's changed.

Rachel Walden
@rachel_w

Have absolutely seen toxic leaders try to sabotage people from moving on. Outside champions are key I think. #critlib
3:03 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Kristen wants you to VOTE
@GingerReads

Good onboarding is sooooo important! Must set folks up for success! #critlib
3:03 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Cynthia/orozco @Cynthiaee · Dec 11, 2019
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

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
3:04 AM · Dec 11, 2019
Kristen wants you to VOTE
@GingerReads

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

3:06 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Tracy Shields
@tcshields

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

3:06 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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!

3:07 AM · Dec 11, 2019
Kristen wants you to VOTE @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 wants you to VOTE
@GingerReads

Find ways to turn conversations into actions. Find your people. (Looking at all of you) #critlib
3:07 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Gina "Wear a Mask, 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.
3:08 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Rachel Walden
@rachel_w

#critlib chats might be my favorite thing in librarianship right now
3:10 AM · Dec 11, 2019
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

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

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.
Kristen wants you to VOTE
@GingerReads

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

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

3:15 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Gina "Wear a Mask, 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

Kristen wants you to VOTE @GingerReads

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

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.

A1.2 "Toxic" is a useful term because, ultimately, the entire organization becomes poisoned, affecting the health (mental & physical) of those who work within it.

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.

Q2: How so toxic work environments impact efforts to dismantle oppression in libraries?
I don't normally participate in #critlib but they're playing my song tonight

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

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
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

Kristen wants you to VOTE @GingerReads

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

3:34 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Kate Deibel
@metageeky

I keep forgetting about #critlib talks... bah

3:36 AM · Dec 11, 2019

Carrie-on my Wade-ward son
@TheGnarrator

Culture devours strategy.

If your personal values conflict with institutional culture, gtfo. It's better for everyone. #critlib

Kristen wants you to VOTE @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

3:38 AM · Dec 11, 2019
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. 

Kristen wants you to VOTE @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

3:39 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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!

Kristen wants you to VOTE @GingerReads

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

3:40 AM · Dec 11, 2019

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.

Kristen wants you to VOTE @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

3:43 AM · Dec 11, 2019
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

Kristen wants you to VOTE @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

3:48 AM · Dec 11, 2019

end qualified immunity @LibrarianAngie
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

Kristen wants you to VOTE @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

3:55 AM · Dec 11, 2019