Detect, Defuse, and Delight Your Difficult Patrons

With Kathy Pape

Conneaut Public Library
Conneaut, Ohio
Kathy Pape ~ Biography

Kathy has worked for 12 years in Ohio libraries and is currently the Executive Director of the Conneaut Public Library in Conneaut, Ohio and serves on the Board of Trustees of the Northeast Ohio Regional Library System. Kathy also works as a producer, writer, actor, and director for one of Ohio’s cable access channels that provides programming to households in Northeast Ohio and Western Pennsylvania.
The patron/customer is always...

- Right

Do you believe this? Why or why not?
Dance monkey!
Ask yourself
Do you...

- Contribute to a problem solving work environment?
- Participate in decision making?
- Apply strategies for conflict resolution?
- Feel trained to manage difficult situations?
- Remain calm and professional in difficult situations?
- Communicate and listen effectively?
Customer Service

- The delivery of excellent customer service is a fundamental factor in effectiveness and needs to be prioritized throughout the organization.

- Interactions with users require trust, respect and focus on the needs of the individual.

*Last two slides taken directly from the 2014 Competency Index for the Library Field Compiled by WebJunction*
Are you invested?

- Why
- Why not?
- What about your co-workers/team?
- Do you have a team?
- What are the road blocks?
All patrons are different

- Social services
  - Diversity
- Re-entry families
  - Stratified difficulties
- Generational poverty
  - Hidden language
- Underserved
  - New to library environment

Everyone walks through the door. Are you ready?
A framework for understanding

- Empathy

  The feeling that you share and understand another person’s emotions and experiences.

  The ability to share another person’s feelings

Why is this important?
What does empathy look like?

- Show with your face
- Show with your feet
- Listen to the stories
- Reflect back
Now what about you (team)?

- Circ desk skills
  - Beyond check in/check out
- Staff procedures
  - What do you have in your tool box?
- Are you empowered?
  - Why does this make a difference?
Empowerment

- No more passing the buck
- You are a leader in your organization
  - Are you? Are you really?
Detect

- What does this imply?
- Expect and anticipate
  - Setting up for failure
  - Signage
  - What is the user experience?
    - How can you gather information?
- Be informed
  - Look for trends
- Be a leader
Defuse

- Engage
  - Ask the right questions
  - Listen
- Talk with a smile
  - Listen
- Offer choices
- Agree with them
- Find positive ways to talk about the negative
Defuse

- Change of scenery
  - Step away from the circ desk
- What language are you using?
  - Who are you talking to?
- Hold and let me get my director...
Delight

- Empowerment
  - Can you make decisions?
- Vouchers
  - What will work in your facility?
Delight

- Staff incentives
- Performance themes
- Road blocks
  - What is holding you back?
The truth is...

- Sometimes there is nothing you can do.
- Can you handle it?
Worse case scenarios

- Zero to 10
  - Are your buttons being pushed?
- Safety net
  - Can you count on your team?
- Serenity savers
  - What is in place to save you?
Resources and Workshops

- PCI Webinars
  - Creating and Fostering a Culture of Accountability
  - Customer Service for Challenged Libraries
  - How the Culture of Poverty Impacts Your Library
  - Library Service to the Underserved of Your Community

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*Mandatory reading for staff
*Quick read with real life explanations
Thank You
Other available workshops

- Adjusting Your Attitude and Self-Talk to Stress
- Creating and Fostering a Culture of Accountability
- Customer Service for Challenged Libraries
- Finding, Supervising and Motivating Volunteers
- How the Culture of Poverty Impacts Your Library
- How to Measure and Document the Performance of Employees
- Library Service to the Underserved of Your Community
- When, What, and Why: Delegating to Your Employees
- Establishing Your Library’s Footprint in Your Community