Helping Challenging Evergreen Patrons

INDIANA STATE LIBRARY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE EVERGREEN INDIANA 2013
“You won’t believe what just happened!”
Start with you!!!!!
People are People Even Evergreen people

THE TRIGGERS & THE TYPES
Why Do Patrons Get Upset?

- Evergreen Fines and fees
- Evergreen Rules/Policies
- Staff attitude
- Perception
Types of Challenging Patrons

- Disruptive (adult, teen, child)
- Oblivious parent
- Chronic complainer
- Patron who is dissatisfied with a service or policy
Types of Challenging Patrons

- Irrational patron
- Lonely conversationalist
- Hygienically challenged
- Alcohol or drug abuser
- Mentally ill
Types of Challenging Patrons

- Sleeper
- Internet voyeur
- Politically connected
- Know-it-all
- Teen
Challenging Evergreen Patrons – Some common foes

- What do you mean I cannot pick up my husband's books?

- What do you mean I can't check out on my husband's card?
Challenging Evergreen Patrons

- What do you mean you don’t know when that Janet Evanovich book is going to be here? I’ve been on the holds list for 3 months!!!!!!
Challenging Evergreen Patrons

- I owe a fine at my home library. Why can’t I pay it here?
What do you mean I have to have ID to renew my card? All my information is the same.
Types of Challenging Patrons

- Who did I forget?
People are People

CONFLICT RESOLUTION
People are People

- Judging
- Empathize
- Relate
- Understand what they are asking you to do in terms of Evergreen.
- Assist with needs
You Control You!

- Breathe
- Talk slowly and calmly
- Be courteous and respectful
- Don’t become defensive or angry
- Never touch a patron
- Assess the situation
Tactical Styles

- Forcing
- Avoiding
- Accommodating
- Compromising
- Collaborating
Acknowledge Patrons’ Concerns

- No problems
- Paraphrase
- Policy – know your Evergreen policies
- Appropriate staff member - know who has Admin privileges.
- What to do during evening, weekend hours
Accentuate Positive to Eliminate Negative

- No excuses
- Take responsibility and action
- Avoid negative words
- Empower the patron – help them understand what all the benefits are of using Evergreen
- Don’t forget to use Help desk tickets if you encounter a problem.
Rules are Made to be Broken

- Exceptions
- Managers empower staff

Rules
1. you can.....
2. you can’t...
3. you can.....
4. you can’t
Policies and Procedures
Know your Evergreen!

- The Evergreen Indiana blog is the source of updates for all things Evergreen.
- [http://www.in.gov/library/3382.htm](http://www.in.gov/library/3382.htm)
- Contact the Evergreen Indiana Coordinator for further information as well.
- Consider service on one of the many Evergreen Indiana committees as well: Circulation, Cataloging, etc.
Policy vs. Procedure

**Patron Policy Manual**
- Public document
- Approved and adopted by Library Board
- ISL, WebJunction, listservs great places to get ideas
- Make sure your Evergreen policies are included in your patron policy manual

**Procedures Manual**
- Internal document
- Step-by-step instructions for staff in dealing with difficult patrons or situations
- ISL, WebJunction, listservs great places to get ideas
- Make certain your EI policies are included in your procedures manual.
Work to Eliminate Problems

- Customer Comment Cards – maybe solicit suggestions on how to improve Evergreen.
- Do library policies make sense or are they creating more problems?
- Have staff meetings to address Evergreen Indiana changes and issues. Make sure you know what’s going on and you are able to back it up.
Educate and Empower Staff

- Staff trainings
  - Police
  - Mental health professionals
  - Customer service trainings
- Staff meetings
  - Patron comment cards
  - Incident reports
  - Library policy and procedure manuals
Incident Reports

- File a report even if you do not think it was “big deal”
- Include all relevant information
- Immediately give copy to supervisor
Police / Security

- Always trust your instincts on calling police or internal security guard
- Steps in procedure manual for calling police
- Have police come in once a year for all-staff meeting
Directors / Supervisors

- Communicate with staff
- Communicate with patrons
- Staff training - make sure your staff is properly trained in Evergreen. ISL offers a variety of resources: classes, webinars, and documentation.
- Keep policies and procedures up to date
- Establish and communicate parameters for staff
When Opportunity Knocks…
Conflict as Reality

- Natural part of life
- Neither positive or negative
  - the way we deal with conflict makes the situation positive or negative
Conflict as an Opportunity

- Opportunities to learn and grow personally and professionally
- Chance to create regular library patrons, and strong library advocates
Examples?

QUESTIONS?
Works Cited

- Search For Common Ground, http://www.sfcg.org/resources/resources_tips.html
- Librarian411.org
- The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, http://www.nami.org
Contact

BILL ANDERSON
REGIONAL COORDINATOR
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
INDIANA STATE LIBRARY
(317) 517-1738
BIANDERSON@LIBRARY.IN.GOV