

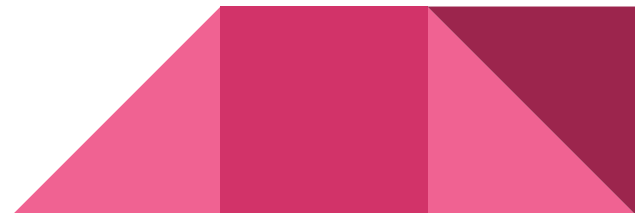
Social Work Principles in Libraries: On the Ground in Racine

Presented by:

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Racine Public Library




Social Work Principles in Libraries: On the Ground in Racine


Overview:

- What steps Racine Public Library took to hire a full-time Social Worker
 - Day-to-Day Responsibilities of the Social Worker
 - Statistics to reflect the impact thus far of the role
 - How else can the Social Worker's role is influential within the Library
 - Q&A
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Little Bit About Myself (quickly...)

- Director in Racine for nearly two years
 - Prior to that I was Director in Mukwonago for four years and Palmyra for about one year
 - Before that, I worked in the private sector as a translator
 - Presenting is definitely NOT my forte
 - I am NOT the Social Worker!
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Racine Public Library Statistics

- One physical location and two mobile libraries (Bookmobile and Techmobile)
 - Resident Population: 77,127 (*according to 2021 data*)
 - Service Population: 133,432 (*according to 2021 data*)
 - Annual Budget of \$4,295,131 (*2022 fiscal year*)
 - Half of our circulation comes from the County
 - 50,678 registered borrowers
 - 14,312 Post-COVID average number of people per month
 - 43.65 FTE total staff (*15 MLIS*)
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City of Racine Statistics

- 5th largest city in the state and currently declining at a rate of .13% annually and its population has decreased by .27 since the most recent census*
- Median household income is \$44,346*
- Median rental cost in recent years comes to \$860 a month*
- Per capita income in past 12 months, 2016-2020: \$22,837*
- Persons in poverty, percent: 20.7% (comparatively to the County: 9.4%)*
- With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2016-2020: 12.7%*
- Within our service population, 6,279 households have no household Internet (the most Internet devoid area is in inner Racine)**

* Data from the [United States Census Bureau](#)

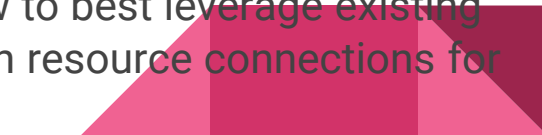
** Data from the Racine County [ArcGIS No Household Internet by Census Tract](#)

Integrating the Social Worker...

- Observed a shift in the needs of the community members as requests for services around homelessness, addiction, mental illness, poverty, domestic violence, and other issues increased
 - Hired an outside consultant in 2019 to facilitate 'Conversation Cafes' held with local social and human services
 - Goal #1: Educate cafe participants on the mission/vision, utilization and services of the Library
 - Raise awareness of resource and service needs of Library patrons
 - Brainstorm solutions for connecting Library patrons to community resources and social services.
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Integrating the Social Worker...

Recommendations from the Conversation Cafes

- Community Engagement
 - Share the ideas and insights from the Conversation Cafes with key stakeholders
 - Continue the discussion and brainstorming by staying connected to library staff and social human services organizations
 - Conduct ongoing, community-wide activities to build awareness of the evolving role of RPL and its services and the resource connections frequently requested by patrons
 - Partnerships
 - Map the current partnerships of RPL to determine how to best leverage existing partnerships and identify new partners who assist with resource connections for library patrons
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Integrating the Social Worker...

Recommendations from the Conversation Cafes


- Social and Human Services Resource Inventory: Assess the current landscape to get a sense of the social and human services programs that already exist and the access points and to identify voids/gaps in services that are being requested by library patrons
 - Social Work Intern: Continue the process of identifying a social worker to supervise an intern who can facilitate resource connections for library patrons
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Integrating the Social Worker...

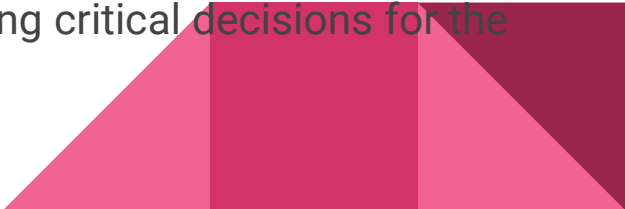
Partnership with Carthage College and their Social Work Department

- Four Interns since late 2019 (temporary and part-time)
 - COVID definitely disrupted our second intern who was then able to focus on more projects concerning documentation and creating a plan for our sensory space
 - Reference Staff took a six-week [Whole Person Librarianship](#) course to address the trend towards social services in libraries
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Integrating the Social Worker...

- Interns impact was extremely noticeable, helping dozens of individuals with referrals and direct counseling services
 - Elected to hire a social worker of our own
 - Barriers from both Library Board and various other stakeholders
 - Interview questions and job description
 - Licenses, Supervision, CE and Liability Insurance
 - Full-time, bilingual / began in September of 2021
 - Natural fit for the Library to build this role into our work
 - Still have social work intern partnership as well
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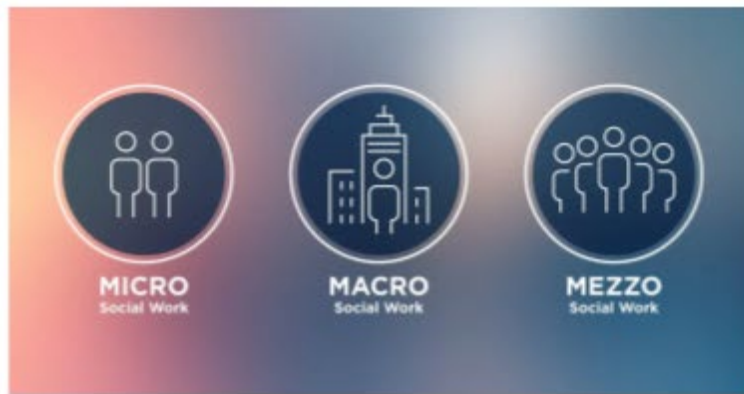
Day-to-Day Responsibilities of Social Worker

- Not really a “typical” day but for the majority, it’s helping community members either via walk-in or appointment
 - Various projects
 - Sensory Room
 - Blood pressure kits
 - Sensory kits
 - Collaborate with community members/agencies
 - One-hour weekly supervision for Social Work student intern
 - General Research in Library Social Work trends, needs, and impact
 - Participate in biweekly direct service calls with other Library Social Workers across the country
 - Sits on the Library’s Leadership Team and is a part of making critical decisions for the Library
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Full Time Library Social Worker

What has it looked like?

- **Micro:** Outreach and light case-management
- **Mezzo:** Community Connections, partnerships and case referrals
- **Macro:** Systemic Change- Policy reviews with Social justice lens



First Year Accomplishments



- Form/build a new documenting system that fills the needs/requirements for library and social work needs.
- Meet with patrons with a variety of needs which include but are not limited to: applying for benefits, elderly concerns, emotional support, food insecurity, housing/homelessness, substance use, and other general needs.

First Year Accomplishments



Building Relationships with Organizations in Community

- National Alliance of Mental Illness
 - Crisis Interventions Partners (CIP) Training
 - Educational Programs at library on Mental Illness
- American Heart Association (AHA)
 - Blood Pressure Monitor Kits available for checkout

Form a documenting system that includes the requirements for both the library and social work needs

- Patron confidentiality/Right to privacy in libraries is a priority
- Documenting enough for ongoing case management and/or transfer of care
- Created Excel sheet that tracks general information, without any identifying information, and on paper/physical files, tracking any identifying information

First Year Accomplishments



- Social Worker a part of Leadership Team
- Rules of Behavior Policy
 - Stressing that “different,” behavior is not necessarily dangerous behavior
 - Review policies such as this with social justice lens
 - Emphasis on bias trainings and Trauma-Informed Care
- Banning Procedures
 - Who is affected most by these procedures?
 - Often, those that are banned are those that need services the most, so how to mitigate that?

Data and Statistics

Patron Interactions

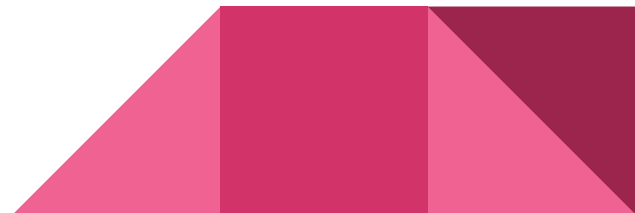
September - December 2021 = **127**

January - August = **359**

Total: 486 patron interactions (not including October 2022)

Highest Needs

- Housing
- Financial Assistance / Applying for Benefits
- Employment



Data and Statistics

Bus Passes: 297 total

- General/Unspecified: 84
- Employment (Job search or to get to work): 90
- Healthcare: 85
- Housing/Homelessness: 8
- Food Access: 12
- Other (Parole Officer visitation): 8
- Other (Volunteer Work): 2
- Other (Laundry): 4
- Other (SSI): 4

We're currently working on tracking when the role is most needed but do not have active statistics on that just yet.




Influential Role of the Social Worker among staff

- Member of the Leadership Team
- Input on policies and procedures from a social justice lens
- Input with on our 'Library Commitment of Excellence for All' policy
 - Involved in banning and appeals process
- Leads Crisis Prevention Institute Training as well as Whole Person Librarianship Training
- Important voice in the decision making process to eliminate our security contract
- Crucial to our goals of providing an holistic approach to all of our services



Various Social Services Issues facing Public Libraries

- Differences in Documentation: Social Work vs. Library Values and Ethics
 - Libraries prioritize patron confidentiality
 - Social Workers need to document more than librarians need to know
 - Setting Boundaries
 - Our Social Worker is not a caseworker or therapist but more of a resource referral
 - Community needs at times exceed Social Worker's capacity
 - Challenges being new to the library field
 - Onboarding process for the Social Worker is crucial
 - Training/Education on responsibilities of various departments
 - Training on basic/general library related topics
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Questions?

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