Trauma Informed Library Transformation: Toolkit

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**University of Georgia
School of Social Work**

School of Social Work
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
Advocates for positive social change

ATHENS REGIONAL library SYSTEM

Table of Contents

Trauma Informed Library Transformation (TILT)

In 2018, the Athens Regional Public Library was one of twelve institutions in the United States to receive a federal grant from the Institute of Museum of Library Services (IMLS) and partnered with the School of Social Work at the University of Georgia. The initiative focused on developing the first trauma-informed library system and applying a trauma-informed framework to the library setting. This framework requires changes to an organization so that staff: (i) realize the impact of trauma; (ii) recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma; (iii) integrate this knowledge into policies, procedures, and practices; and (4) resist further harm (SAMHSA, 2017).

The Trauma Informed Library Transformation (TILT) has three components: (1) Social work resource and referral services. MSW student interns provide resource information and brokered case management services to library patrons; (2) Staff training and education on trauma and trauma-informed care. Staff are provided training on signs of trauma and trauma-informed practices; (3) Contextual assessment and intervention. Library policies and the physical environment are assessed to ensure they are following trauma-informed principles (Grantee Data Technical Assistance, n.d.; Trauma Informed Oregon, n.d.). TILT's primary goal is to embed trauma-informed practices in order to best support the multi-faceted needs of at-risk and vulnerable patrons as well as provide organizational supports for staff to best inform trauma awareness, cultural sensitivity, and best practices in delivering support services to individuals and the community.

Since its onset, TILT has worked to best support the multi-faceted needs of at-risk and vulnerable patrons as well as provide organizational supports for staff to best inform trauma awareness, cultural sensitivity, and best practices in delivering support services to individuals and the community. Brokered case management services were provided to patrons delivered by 3-4 Master of Social Work interns annually, a bilingual peer support volunteer, and a clinical supervisor overseeing

the coordination of the program. TILT worked with dozens of community partners to provide information about and connected the library to area resources and made effective referrals for patrons, striving to make warm and attainable referrals. Social work interns were available for open-office hours for case management. Additionally, each intern was paired with a librarian for a collaborative approach to engaging community partners, asset building, and increasing outreach.

Through March 2020, when the library physically closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, 14 trainings and in-services were provided on trauma-informed approaches, empathy, self-care, and mental health. Interns have hosted 28 tabling events in the library with area social service organizations and regularly attended community meetings on topics addressing homelessness, poverty, housing, mental health, and medical health issues. Interns have conducted more than 380 individual case management sessions from the onset of patron direct services in late January 2019, with an average of 40 patrons seen each month. Members of the ARLS and TILT team have presented at national conferences including the Council on Social Work Education, the Public Library Association, the Society of Social Work Research, the American Association of Law Libraries, the ACES Southeast Summit, and the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies conferences. ARLS is being recognized as a leader in the development of social work services in library systems.

Summary of Deliverables

(*full list will be available in the finalized report, pending completion May 2021*)

Trainings:

1. Training 1: **QPR** (2 sessions facilitated by ABHS November 2018)
   - Session 1: 11/16/2018
   - Session 2: 11/27/2018

2. Training 2: **Leadership Team Trauma 101** (facilitated at Leadership meeting 12/18)
   - 12/18/2018

3. Training 3: Trauma Informed Libraries (3 sessions facilitated January 2019)
   - Session 1: 1/23/2019
   - Session 2: 1/24/2019
   - Session 3: 1/31/2019

4. Training 4: Self-Care and Empathy (3 sessions facilitated September 2019
   - Session 1: 9/26/2019
   - Session 2: 9/27/2019 a.m.
   - Session 3: 9/27/2019 p.m.

5. Training 5: Self-Care Activities (2 sessions in November and December 2019)
   - Session 1: 11/15/2019
   - Session 2: 12/06/2019

6. Training 6: Strategies, Behavior Management, and TIC Scenarios (2 sessions January 2020)
   - Session 1: 1/23/2020
   - Session 2: 1/24/2020

7. *TILT Kick-off April 18, 2019 (documentary and TIC panel discussion)

Presentations:

* an asterisk indicates a juried presentation

- *Sharkey, C. N. (2020, November). Transforming public spaces to promote social inclusion and trauma informed care. Poster at the 36th Annual International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Conference, Virtual.

- *Sharkey, C. N. (2020, November). *The bridges we build: Enhancing student development through collaborative field supervision.* Oral presentation for the 66th Annual Program Meeting, Council on Social Work Education, Virtual.

- Sharkey, C. N., Green, T., & Mauldin, S. (2020, July). *Healing without hurting: Toward a trauma-informed model for law library service.* American Association of Law Libraries 2020 Reimagined: Unmasking our Potential Virtual Program.

- *Bell, V., Elkins, J., Green, T., & Sharkey, C. N. (2020, February). *A trauma-informed approach to public library service.* Panel Presentation at the 75th Annual Public Library Association Conference.

- *Sharkey, C. N. & Elkins, J. (2020, February). *Connecting the Dots: A trauma-informed approach to building family-school-community connections using public libraries*. [Presentation cancelled]. Presentation at Creating Trauma Sensitive Schools 2020 Conference, Atlanta, GA.

- *Bae, J., Lee, S., Scheyett, A., Caplan, M., Elkins, J., & Sharkey, C. N. (2020, January). *Challenges and opportunities of a public library in the U.S. as a social service provider.* E-Poster at the Society for Social Work and Research 24th Annual Conference - Reducing Racial and Economic Inequality.

- * Sharkey, C.N., Elkins, J., Caplan, M., Bell, V., and Scheyett, A. (2020, January). Transforming public spaces to promote social inclusion and trauma informed care: A library-social work partnership. Roundtable at the Society for Social Work and Research 24th Annual Conference - Reducing Racial and Economic Inequality.

- *Elkins, J., Caplan, M., Sharkey, C., Lee, S., & Scheyett, A. (2019, November). *The Trauma Informed Library Transformation (TILT) Academic-Community Partnership: Assessing readiness for trauma informed care in a public library.* Late Breaking Poster at the 35th Annual Meeting, International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, Boston, MA.

- *Elkins, J., Bell, V., Caplan, M., Sharkey, C.N., Lee, S., Hawkins, L., & Scheyett, A. (2019, November). *Trauma Informed Library Transformation (TILT): A library-social*

work partnership transforming public spaces to promote social inclusion and trauma-informed care. Oral Presentation at the Adverse Childhood Experiences Southeastern Summit 2019, Asheville, NC.

- Sharkey, C.N. (2019, October). *Unconventional: Bold ideas for better libraries.* Keynote Panel Presenter, Missouri Library Association Conference.

- *Sharkey, C.N., Johnson, Z., & Bell, V. (2019, October). *Creating trauma-informed Library spaces: Lessons learned from a pilot program.* Oral Presentation at 65th Annual Program Meeting, Council on Social Work Education.

- *Bae, J., Sharkey, C.N., Elkins, J., Caplan, M. & Scheyett, A. (2019, October). *Assessing readiness for trauma informed care and social work services in a public library.* Oral Presentation at 65th Annual Program Meeting, Council on Social Work Education.

Public Libraries are not just for books anymore!

Many people are surprised to learn about the wide variety of services that public libraries provide these days. Here are some of the services at the Athens Regional Library System:

- Free internet access
- Free space for meetings and events
- Free passes for localattractions
- Media lab with 3Dprinter
- After-school programs for teens
- Board games DVDs and Audiobooks
- Ebooks for check out
- Passport services (also in Spanish)
- One on one computer assistance
- Book Clubs and a variety of classes
- A Solar Garden for renewable energy
- Ukuleles for check out
- Storytime and activities for children, homework help
- Film screenings and live music
- Online databases from consumer reports to language learning software to academic journals
- Online access to place holds and renew books online, from any library in the PINES system
- A location for early voting and has an option for voter registration when people sign up for library cards
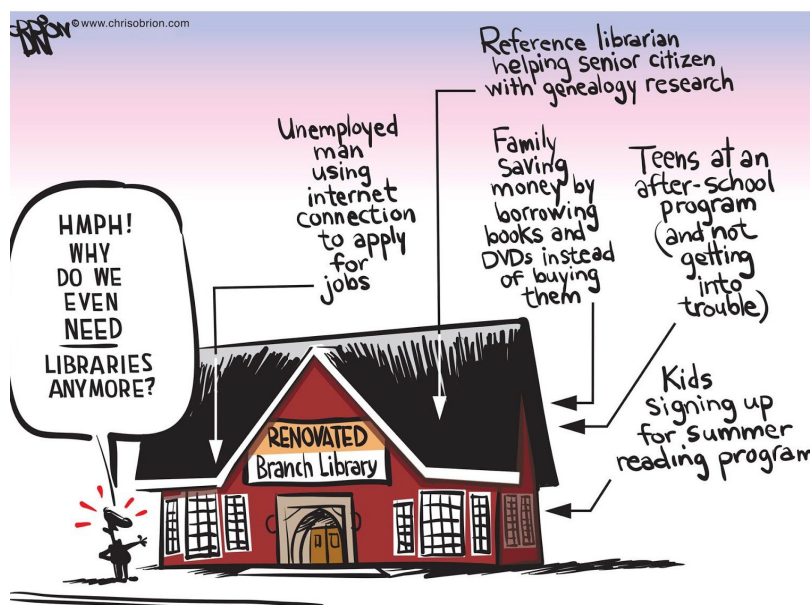
Today's libraries are not just collections of books but community institutions that provide a unique free public space to create social capital and grow human potential. Public libraries support lifelong learning, entrepreneurship, workforce development, informed citizens, and community engagement.

Community Centered Libraries serve their populations in many ways:

Libraries as Center for Lifelong Learning	Libraries as Centers for Disadvantaged Populations
Libraries as Centers of the Arts	Libraries as Centers of Democracy
Libraries as Centers for Youth	Libraries as Centers for Sustainability

There are many additional creative ways that other libraries serve communities.

- Libraries may offer collections of other materials such as Toy libraries and tool libraries (often part of a bigger movement called a Library of Things which have been around for many years and are continuing to expand.

- Libraries may let patrons check out cake pans, lend out ties for job seekers, have sewing machines and sewing classes, or keep a seed library – basically libraries are great centers for sharing economy.

- Libraries also work hard to engage a wide variety of marginalized community members by offering cooking classes that teach English, taking books to barbershops, providing groceries in a food desert.

- Libraries support the LBGTQ community and people with disabilities, offering Drag Storytime, or Sensory Storytime for children with autism and sensory processing disorders.

- Libraries support public health with nutrition classes, stress relief classes, and harm reduction programs for addiction.

- Libraries create opportunities for social interaction to decrease loneliness and isolation with programing for specific groups such as new parents, seniors, or interest based events such as game nights (board or video!) or crafting.

- Libraries continue to fill their traditional role answering reference questions, from the weather forecast for state park campers, to genealogy, to available real estate opportunities.

Brief History

In the United States most public libraries were originally by subscription or small circulating libraries that required a membership fee. Andrew Carnegie hastened the change to the public libraries we know today by funding the construction of over 1,500 libraries across the US in the late 1800s and early 1900s, as long as the community committed to free access and local government provided ongoing operating funds. Many towns would not have had a public library without Carnegie and many Carnegie libraries are still in operation.

Today public libraries are governed by a local board of directors and most are funded locally, averaging 85% local funds, 7% state funds, 7% other, and less than 1% in federal funds. In 2016 the average total operating funds per person in the U.S. varied from $72.41 per New York resident to Georgia at the bottom with only $18.75 per person. In Georgia 80% of that funding is local and 15% is state - the Georgia Library Service breaks it down in graphics. Check out the IMLS Annual Report 2016 for more information.

Despite the ideal of free access, most public libraries were segregated and have not always been welcoming to those dealing with poverty. Bans against odors, large bags, sleeping, and late fees, requirements for a fixed address to sign up for a library card are still common and can create barriers for access for some community members. Libraries are starting to phase out late fees to reduce economic and social barriers and in January 2019 the ALA passed a resolution stating that monetary library fines are a form of social inequity.

Librarianship has traditionally been a field for white women, while there are diversity initiatives in place and the increasing role of technology in today's libraries may be attracting more men, it is still true today. One of the largest ongoing issues is how best to balance the conflicting needs of very diverse patrons and manage the various expectations of how the library should be used while keeping the library a safe and welcoming environment.

Athens

The Athens-Clarke County Library was originally started by the Athens Women's Club in 1936. The Dunbar Branch Library for black citizens was opened in 1942 and operated in various locations

until a new building was constructed on Dougherty Street in 1972 and the two branches were consolidated. The ACCL is the hub of the Athens Regional Library System (ARLS) which includes 5 counties and 11 locations ranging from ACCL with 74 available computers and open 7 days a week, to Lay Park Community Center, open on weekday afternoons to support afterschool programming.

Athens Regional Library on Dougherty St. / 1976

The Athens Regional Library System is part of PINES (Public Information Network for Electronic Services), a program of the Georgia Public Library Service that covers most of the public libraries in the state of Georgia - over 300 libraries in 146 counties. In FY17 Georgia Public Libraries had over 28 million visits and almost 3 million attended programs. A patron with a PINES library card can check out and return books from any other PINES library, and thousands of materials are transported from library to library each week to fulfill holds and return items. PINES uses the open source software Evergreen to manage the catalog, materials, and patron accounts. Evergreen was developed by the GPLS but is now used worldwide in over 1500 libraries.

Valerie Bell has been the ARLS Director since 2015. ARLS has many employees. In Athens-Clarke County, the library is a quasi-governmental independent agency and has been allocated slightly over 2 million in the 2020 ACC budget. Funding for construction of a new East Side Library, long asked for by the community, was approved on the 2019 SPLOST ballot.

Librarianship Values

Librarians and social workers have many values in common. Both are service oriented helping professions.

SHARED VALUES

Social Work	Librarianship
• Service	• Access
	• Confidentiality/ Privacy
• Social justice	• Democracy
	• Diversity
• Dignity and worth of the person	• Education and Lifelong Learning
	• Intellectual Freedom
• Importance of human relationships	• Preservation
	• The Public Good
• Integrity	• Professionalism
	• Service
• Competence	• Social Responsibility

https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English

http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/corevalues

Privacy has been included in the ALA Code of Ethics since 1937. Librarians have a strongly held belief in confidentiality and intellectual freedom. Where a social worker would usually do a complete psychosocial assessment, librarians use reference interviews to get to the heart of a patron's information needs, focusing on answering the questions they are asked. In the 1970s and 80s, the FBI had a program that collected information about library users (largely foreign diplomats) and their reading habits. Libraries were outraged and many made policies about what to do if contacted by the FBI. This issue came up again after the creation of the Patriot Act in 2001. In 2005 a Connecticut library refused an FBI request for patron records under the Patriot Act and turned to the ACLU for help. The court case was

eventually dropped but the four librarians were under a gag order until after the Patriot Act was reauthorized. Many libraries make a point of not keeping records of book checkouts or browsing history just in case, with some even offering digital privacy classes.

For more information about how they go together, read Two Noble Professions

Libraries and Social Services

As libraries have become one of the last public places to spend time without paying money, inequality grown, and the social safety net has been weakened, libraries have been forced to deal with patrons experiencing social problems. Some have embraced this role and others have not. Some libraries have staff carry Narcan or focus on what they can do to help the patrons experiencing homelessness. But public libraries are underfunded and staff are overworked. As funding has decreased, library staff have had to do more with less. When librarianship is treated with vocational awe, where working at a library is treated as a sacred calling and considering the money and self-care is thought of as not true to the vocation, librarians and library staff are vulnerable to exploitation and burnout. Librarians are not social workers and many are not willing or able to provide extensive social services. Bringing social services to the library supports patrons experiencing difficulties and also supports the library and library staff.

The San Francisco Public Library hired Leah Esguerra, LMFT, in 2008 when they saw that many of their patrons were experiencing homelessness. Other libraries, primarily those in large urban centers started to follow suit, often in partnership with other organizations such as health departments, charitable foundations, or mental health organizations. Universities have also started realizing the value of the public library as a field placement for social work interns. Since then, the idea has continued to grow, with social workers at a growing number of locations and social work interns at 68 libraries as of October 2019. There is now a Social Work Task Force through the Public Library Association that offers frequent webinars and a regular column in Public Libraries Magazine online, as well as frequent news coverage as people hear about the possibilities of bringing social services to library patrons.

Trauma informed are also growing in popularity. Instead of just adding a social worker, a trauma informed approach looks at the library as a whole so that all staff members are trained to recognize and deal with trauma. The policies and environment are assessed for trauma friendliness as well and a trauma informed approach also acknowledges the effects of trauma on staff and works to mitigate those effects with support in the workplace.

Resources

Important Organizations

American Library Association (ALA)

Public Library Association (PLA) - A division of ALA that focuses on public libraries

Georgia Library Association (GLA) - the Georgia chapter of ALA which has an annual conference and supports professional development

Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS) - federal agency that provides grants and funding opportunities, collects data and supports research, and assists with policy development

Georgia Public Library Service - the state library administrative agency and a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia that provides technology, training and services

Groups

Whole Person Librarianship - https://wholepersonlibrarianship.com/

SW Interns in Libraries - https://swlibraryinterns.com/

PLA Social Worker Task Force - http://www.ala.org/pla/about/people/committees/pla-tfsocwork

PLA Social Work Interest Group - http://www.ala.org/pla/about/people/committees/pla-tfsocwork

Links

Athens Clarke County Library

ACC Library Solar Garden - https://www.athensclarkecounty.com/8717/Library-Solar-Garden

Organizational Chart - http://www.athenslibrary.org/homepage/regional-information/organizational-chart

PINES - http://pines.georgialibraries.org/about

Athens Regional Library System. (n.d.). History of Dunbar Branch Library - http://www.athenslibrary.org/athens/departments/heritage/services/blogs/colophons-annotations/315-history-of-the-dunbar-branch-library

History of Athens Regional Library. (1997). *The Georgia Librarian*. Retrieved from

http://www.libsci.sc.edu/histories/Georgia/libraries/public/athens/athens_regional_history.pdf

Library of Things

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https://www.ocls.info/its-sew-easy

https://www.jesspublib.org/sewing-machines-are-here/

https://www.saclibrary.org/Books-Media/Specialty-Checkouts/Library-of-Things

https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2016/09/01/tiebrary-community-ties/

https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2013/12/03/toy-libraries-a-place-to-play/

https://elmhurstpubliclibrary.org/about-us/building-information/library-of-extraordinary-things/library-of-extraordinary-things-culinary-cupboard/

https://www.dragqueenstoryhour.org/

https://www.npr.org/2013/08/11/209584333/at-libraries-across-america-its-game-on

https://www.webjunction.org/news/webjunction/board-in-the-library-part-one.html

Philbin, M. M., Parker, C. M., Flaherty, M. G., & Hirsch, J. S. (2019). Public libraries: A community-level resource to advance population health. *Journal of Community Health*, *44*(1), 192–199. doi:10.1007/s10900-018-0547-4 Retrieved from
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Privacy and Intellectual Freedom

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https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/otm/segments/librarians-vs-patriot-act

https://slate.com/technology/2015/06/usa-freedom-act-before-snowden-librarians-were-the-anti-surveillanc

e-heroes.html