

Dealing With Difficult Teens From the Public Service Desk

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Eden Grey

Teens & Libraries

Teens belong at libraries.

They are wanted at libraries.

Help them make it their own space.

Libraries are a great way to connect teens with the rest
of the community.

Keep a Positive Attitude

Be the positive influence in a teen's life.

Always be polite and courteous, even when the patrons are not that way to you.

Your positivity has more of an impact than you can see.

Speak in a respect



Share Your Positive Attitude

Share your positivity with teens and coworkers and the community.

Share stories about teens using the library in positive ways.

Encourage teens to see the library, the community, and the world in a positive way.

Talk about teens in a positive way to other patrons.

Remain Unbiased & Non-judgmental

Do not judge teens openly or within their earshot.

Don't talk bad about teens to other coworkers or patrons.

Do not judge teens based on:

Interests

Religion

Lifestyle

Family circumstances

Academics

Considerations & Context

Try to think from the teens point of view.

When it comes up, listen to them talk about their family, home, and school.

Consider what you know about their circumstances when listening and speaking to the teens.

Difficult home life

Learning disabilities

Bullying



Communicate in a Teen-Friendly Manner

Unless the teen is obviously a library fanatic, a volunteer, or expert, avoid:

Library jargon

Complicated phrases or terminology

Quick explanations that don't actually explain anything

Instead, do:

Take your time explaining how the library works

Use words and phrases familiar to the teen, or at least not completely foreign

Communicate in a Teen-Friendly Manner

Examples of library jargon or complicated or too quick phrases:

Discharge

Place a hold on

“I’ll take care of that.”

“That’ll be in the 900s.”

Database

Interlibrary Loan

Periodicals

Helpful phrases and terms:

Is that cool with you?

That makes sense?

What do you think?

It’s up to you.

Okay, I get it.

We can reserve the book for you.

We’ll just check it back in.

That’s a history book, so we’ll find it in the 900 section of Dewey Decimal order. Do you know how Dewey order works?

We can get that from another library system for you; that’s called an Interlibrary Loan.

Opportunities for Library Involvement

Getting teens involved in the library, whether through volunteering, summer reading, or attending programs shows them:

That the library is fun

The library wants them to be a part of things

It also shows patrons and staff:

That the library has value for teens



Consistency & Communication

What kind of methods do you use in your library to **keep track of issues** with teens?

How do you **communicate** with other staff about teens, issues, policy violations, etc?



Policies & Consequences

Share your library's **policies** regarding patrons violating the behavior agreement.

When do you kick patrons out of the library?

When do they get banned?

Policies & Consequences

What kind of **records** do you keep for incidents like the ones we just discussed?

Could your library keep better **records**?

What kind of **communication** is there about incidents, reports, or policy violations?



Potential Solutions

Schedule programming around busy times.

Have open video gaming so teens have something to put their energy into.

Train all front desk staff on teen policies, procedures, programs, etc.

Have front desk staff help with teen programs so they all get to know each other.

Be as consistent as possible with consequences.

Share some solutions that have worked at your library!

Ways to Keep Your Cool

If you are familiar with the teens:

Use a disappointed tone

Explain that they should know the rules/policies/guidelines already,
and that there are consequences

Be consistent with the consequences

Let them know they haven't met your expectations

Communicate with coworkers about the situation

Keep records of any policy violations or consequences

Ways to Keep Your Cool

If you are unfamiliar with the teens:

Start out with who you are to establish a relationship with them.

Explain what they did with respect to library policies.

Explain the policies in an easy-to-understand way, without using jargon.

Then relate the explanation to the appropriate jargon so they understand it later.

Be lenient whenever possible to show that you still want them in the library.

Act like you want them in the library - kicking them out should be a last resort.

Keeping Your Cool in Difficult Situations

What methods do YOU use to keep your cool when teens get difficult?

Share in the chat!



Training Resources for ALL STAFF

Webinars:

Understanding and Managing Teen Behavior in Libraries: <http://pciwebinars.com/jun-30th-understanding-and-managing-teen-behavior-in-libraries/>

Inclusive Programming: Public Libraries, Conservative Communities, and LGBTQ+ Youth: https://kdla.adobeconnect.com/_a1019387739/p200m5na9hq/?launcher=false&fcsContent=true&pbMode=normal

Training from YALSA:

<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/consulting/institutes>

<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/onlinelearning>

Learn From Each Other

I'm looking at you, managers! None of this can happen without your support and approval!

Ask your Youth Services staff & Teen Librarian to give training sessions to new staff.

Discuss repeat issues with teens at staff meetings.

Email out tips and tricks for working with teens to relevant departments.

Trust the Teen Librarian's judgment, and follow his or her suggestions in a consistent manner.

Expect your staff to interact positively with teen patrons.

Make sure *you, as a manager*, are keeping a positive attitude about teen patrons.

Thank you for participating!



edenjeangrey@gmail.com

*photos from pexels.com