Group Work-Library Scenarios

Staff are concerned about one of the “problem customers” who sits and stares at staff and other customers, rocking back and forth and muttering softly to themselves.

A customer uses the computer every day. When he comes in, he drapes his coat over one side of the monitor, then hunches close to the screen. He is rude when told his computer time is up - and usually leaves angrily.

Another computer customer has complained that she sees nudity and sexual content on the screen. When you approach him, he exits the site quickly and asks what you want.

A customer comes to the desk, complaining that everyone in the library is so rude and they never help when she comes in. She says that staff spends all their time talking on the phone to family members or to each other or to their friends.

She is tired of spending her tax money for such poor service.

A customer is arguing with you about an overdue notice on a book he claims returned to the book drop. His record shows a history of late returns, and you know of several times when he claimed he returned an item which later turned up in the book drop, VERY late.

He begins harping about how often you send him these notices unnecessarily - and how bad the library record-keeping systems are. He is really getting warmed up and the desk is busy.

A customer comes to you, letting you know that there is a blog being written by a library staff member, discussing customers and saying some pretty unpleasant things about library services and staff. Upon checking, you figure out which staff it is – and it’s obvious that the staff member is posting to his blog on his own time, off the clock.

Two men come in every afternoon, smelling of alcohol. They talk loudly, then usually fall asleep for a couple of hours, unless woken by staff or after-school kids - at which time they curse loudly about the noise.

The teenage son of the mayor has been wandering around the reference books, looking for some homework information. You notice that he turns his back and acts furtively. A quick check of the shelves shows that there are empty places where he has been working.

A customer complains that a noisy table full of teenagers are staring at her, then laughing loudly while pointing and whispering. While she’s telling you this, another customer begins complaining that it’s always noisy in the library. He gets wound up about the noise from the pre-school area and how libraries are supposed to be quiet study places.

A new staff member is texting constantly while doing his work. Upon being told that he needs to stop, he asks why, when his work is getting done on time and at least he doesn’t stand around talking about illness or gossiping about customers or fellow staff.

As part of an effort to be proactive, you schedule a fire drill in cooperation with the local fire department and the police. You’ve had signs announcing it for two weeks, staff has notified customers coming into the library for the last two hours that a fire drill is going to take place and everyone will need to leave the building. The fire drill starts and now a customer using the computer loudly refuses to leave, claiming that he still has 25 minutes of computer time and you can’t make him leave if it’s not an emergency.

A customer is in the children's section with her child. The child is playing quietly but the parent is becoming first verbally abusive, then physically threatening. (maybe if I slap your face, you'll pick your coat up!) She begins to berate the child as stupid and tells her they will never come back to the library because the child has no respect for her or the library.

There are other people in the area and her volume is increasing as the child begins shaking.