**Challenging Behaviors**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Behavior** | **Category** | **Suggested Response** |
| Asks frequent, difficult questions; is indifferent to staff effort. | Unperceptive/Unaware | Say, “Because of how busy it is, we have to limit in-depth questions to no more than three per day.” Our reference team is another resource for these patrons. On the phone- after listening to the questions, say, “I will take your name and number and will get back to you with the results today or tomorrow.”  |
| Overhears other patron’s questions to staff and interjects unsolicited answers. | Unperceptive/Unaware | Say, “Thanks for your help, but I’ll take it from here.”If the patron really has valuable information to share, ask the original patron, “This patron seems to know more about this, do you mind if we include them in on this conversation?” |
| Offers biased opinions of a political or religious nature; may ask baited questions. | Intensive Staff Time | Interject politely: “I can direct you to books on this topic and you can read more about it. Why don’t you follow me to the section on this topic?”Say politely. “I can’t discuss or give my opinions about hat. Do you have a specific question I can help you with?”If the patron asks for legal or medical advice, say, “Unfortunately, I cannot offer you any legal (or medical) advice, but maybe I can connect you with a resource.”  |
| Stops by too often just to chat; monopolizes staff attention; is oblivious to others waiting.  | Intensive Staff Time | Say, “I can talk with you for just a couple more minutes and after that, I have to get back to work.”Say, “Excuse me for a minute. I need to speak with someone in the back room.” |
| Stalks a staff member or a patron. | Potentially Violent | If the patron gives unwanted or obsessive attention, or follows someone, call 911 immediately and then get a supervisor. Document the problem by taking discreet notes.  |
| Is experiencing a mental illness crisis and makes illogical or frightening statements. | Potentially Violent | Do not argue with the patron or raise your voice, this may agitate them further. Respond calmly with, “I’ll need to call a supervisor to answer your questions.” Then call 911 if you feel anyone is threatened, or get the supervisor, a security guard, or another staff member. Fill out an incident report if there is an actual incident. Be sure to notify your supervisor later and share the report with them and any staff involved.  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Treats staff members as personal servants. | Social Rule Breaking | For patrons that want you to stay with them and assist them beyond a reasonable time: “I will leave you to work on this so that I can get back to the desk.”For those who want you to do everything for them: “Our goal is to teach people how to do this so you can explore more on your own. I’ll get you started.” |
| Exposes too much skin, has a clothing malfunction, is sleeping or is smelly.  | Social Rule Breaking | Say kindly and quietly, “Excuse me, are you aware… You may want to adjust your pants/shirt/etc.If the patron is smelly and is bothering other patrons, let the patron know that the smell is disrupting other patrons and they are welcome to come back after they have showered and laundered their clothing. Approach the sleeping patron gently and say, “Hello. I wanted to see if you’re ok.” Do not tap on the chair or table and do not touch the patron.  |
| Expects staff will break the rules, “just this once”, or repeatedly. | Social Rule Breaking | Restate what they are asking you to do and say, “I understand this is frustrating for you, but I cannot do this.”Show a positive side of the situation: Example, “We don’t have any study rooms available right now for one person, but you can go to our quiet area and sit at a table or study carrel.” |
| Is territorial, claims certain computers or spaces. | Space Monopolizing | If someone insists on using a certain computer. “I’m sorry, that patron was here first.”Say firmly, “This is a public place, and all patrons have the right to use this furniture. You will have to choose another place to sit.”  |
| Doesn’t like certain staff members or prefers certain staff. | Complaining | Do not buy into the argument by agreeing with the person, instead listen for 30 seconds and kindly say, “I’m sorry to hear this. What can I help you with?”A supervisor could say, “I’m sorry; you cannot choose who will help you. She/He is going to assist you today.”  |
| Doesn’t like a rule that is a library policy.  | Complaining  | Get a few pieces of information by asking direct questions: “Please tell me specifically what you are upset about…” and take notes. Try to respectfully explain the reason for the policy in a few sentences. Try to remain positive, If the patron keeps complaining, listen and don’t respond further.  |