



Staff Safety for Montana Libraries for Return to Work - COVID-19

THINK like a firefighter/EMT

Goal:

- Preserve health of staff
 - o Physical
 - o Emotional
- Leading to... safe, sustainable restoration of library operations

Considerations:

- Physical concerns of staff
 - o Age
 - o Underlying physical conditions
 - o Risk of exposure at home
 - o Others?
- Emotional concerns of staff
 - o Confidence that library will keep them safe
 - o Ability to manage issues at home
 - o Fear of financial impacts
 - o Others?



Debrief - the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing model

- Do it soon – as time elapses from the event (library closure), the debrief is less effective (Davis, 1993, Mitchell, 1988).
 - o Organize fairly homogeneous small groups
 - o Do not record or take personal notes – instead, use a whiteboard or chart paper to only note findings that the entire group agrees to record. Assure everyone of the safety of the room, that nothing stated will be held against the employee. For this process to be effective, there can be no fear of reprisals nor pushbacks.

- Use these 7 steps, with suggested questions:
 1. Audit the impacts: How has the library's reduction in services impacted you?
 2. Identify immediate issues with safety and security: How have you and your family adapted? Do you feel safe? Are you and your family financially secure? Do you have family members that are at higher risk because of their work or their current health?
 3. Venting and validation: How are you feeling? What things happened in the past few weeks that have given you concerns? What could we make happen to give you hope and help you to feel confident about resuming operations at the library?
 4. Predict and plan for hurdles: As we consider restoring library services, what problems or concerns do you see? How should we plan to address these concerns? What additional information do we need to be able to plan well?
 5. Systematic review: as library services were curtailed, what went well in the shut down and what did not go well? If curtailing operations is needed again, how should it be done differently? What have we learned about responding to this emergency that we can use to improve our response to other emergencies?
 6. Seek closure: What are you looking forward to? What can be done to reassure you? What are your ideas to provide for an orderly restoration of library services? What follow-up is needed?
 7. Re-entry: Emphasize that each person has absolute authority over their own personal safety – physical and emotional – and that we can and should look out for each other as well. How can we assure that anyone who does not feel safe, is able to express and address their concerns? Discuss plans for promoting safety in the workplace and invite staff to discuss any flexible accommodations that they may need.

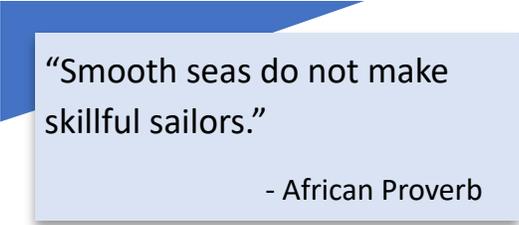
- Provide trauma counseling – does your county/city provide an Employee Assistance Program? MACo program info: <https://www.mtcounties.org/risk-sharing/health-care-trust/employee-assistance-program/>

- As you are planning for phased-in restoration of library services:
 - o Understand the hazards
 - o Put safety first
 - o Everyone has absolute authority over their own personal safety; look out for others

April, 2020

Montana State Library

CCO - firefighter image: Jacqueline Macou Pixabay CCO



“Smooth seas do not make
skillful sailors.”

- African Proverb