

# WHAT DO I DO NOW?:

## Handling Challenging Situations with Mentally Ill and Homeless Library Users

### Part One



An *Infopeople*  Webinar

Tuesday, May 14, 2013  
Karen Strauss and Leah Esguerra

# Who We Are



← Karen Strauss



Leah Esguerra →

# Parts 1 and 2 Takeaways

---

↪ **Partnerships**

↪ **Setting limits**

↪ **Real life**

# Homelessness in America

---

Assumptions and  
labels

# Homelessness in America

---

People whose behavior is  
challenging to us might be  
**homeless or housed;**  
**mentally ill or healthy.**

# Homelessness in America – Trends 2011-2012

633,782 overall

20 homeless people per 10,000

29 states reported increases

**38% unsheltered**

2,325 fewer homeless people

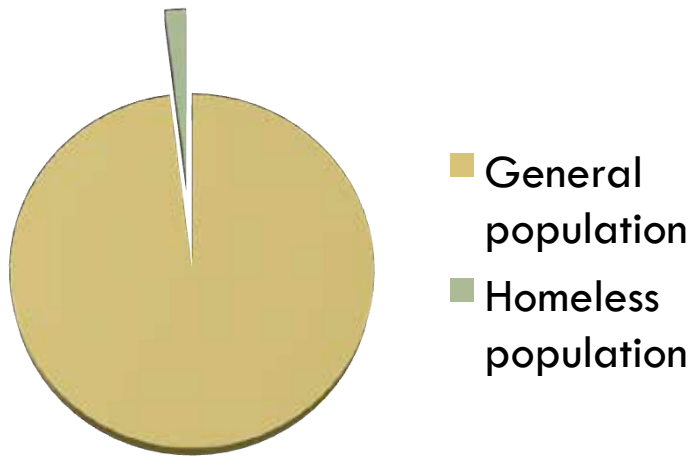
*6.8% fewer chronically-homeless individuals*

**National Alliance to End Homelessness:** [endhomelessness.org](http://endhomelessness.org).

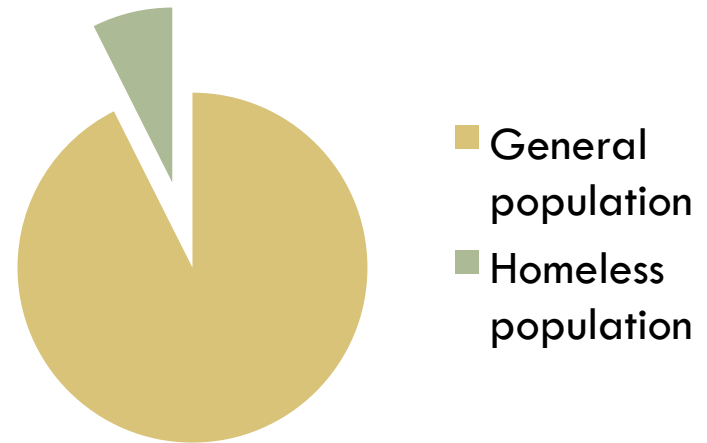
Source: 2011 and 2012 point-in-time counts as reported by jurisdictions to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

# Homelessness within Populations

## United States



## San Francisco











# Homelessness in San Francisco

THEN:

Barbary Coast > Great Depression >  
Summer of Love >  
AIDS and crack epidemics > Shelters



NOW:

*Care-Not-Cash*



Project Homeless Connect

# Homelessness in San Francisco

---

People who spend their  
days at the library...

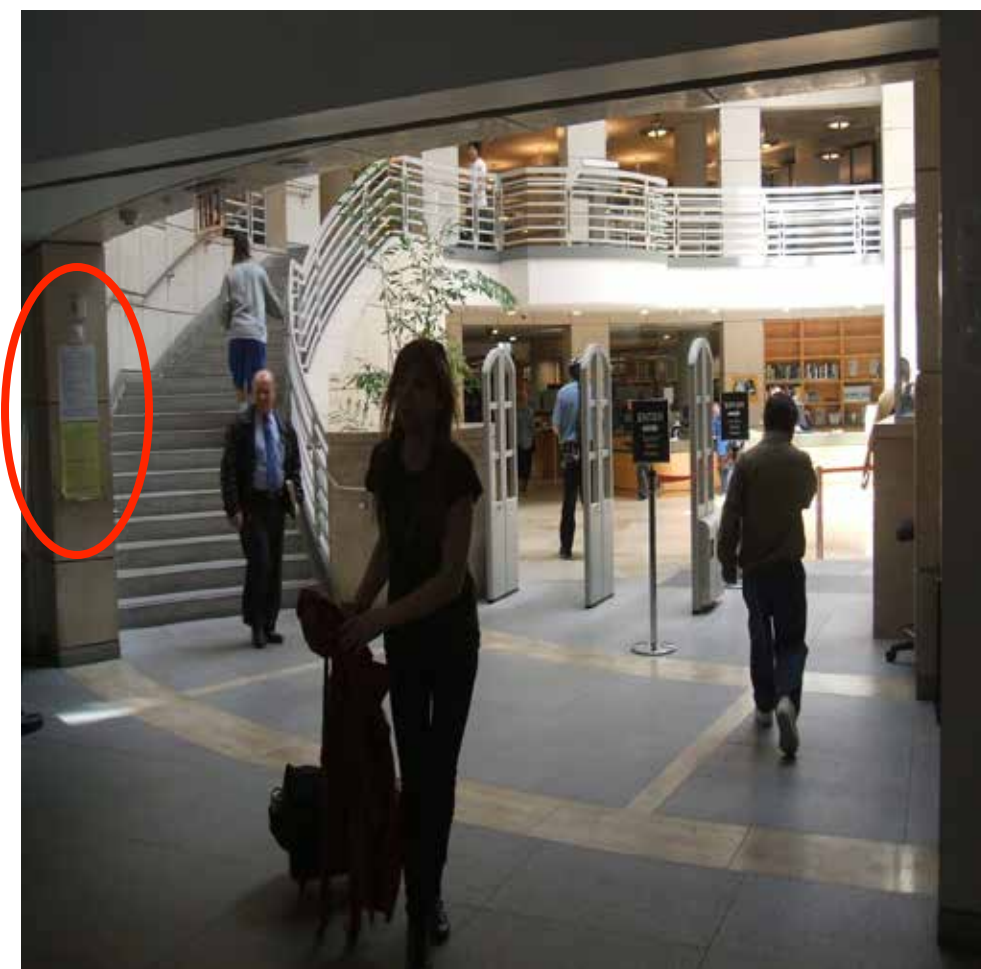
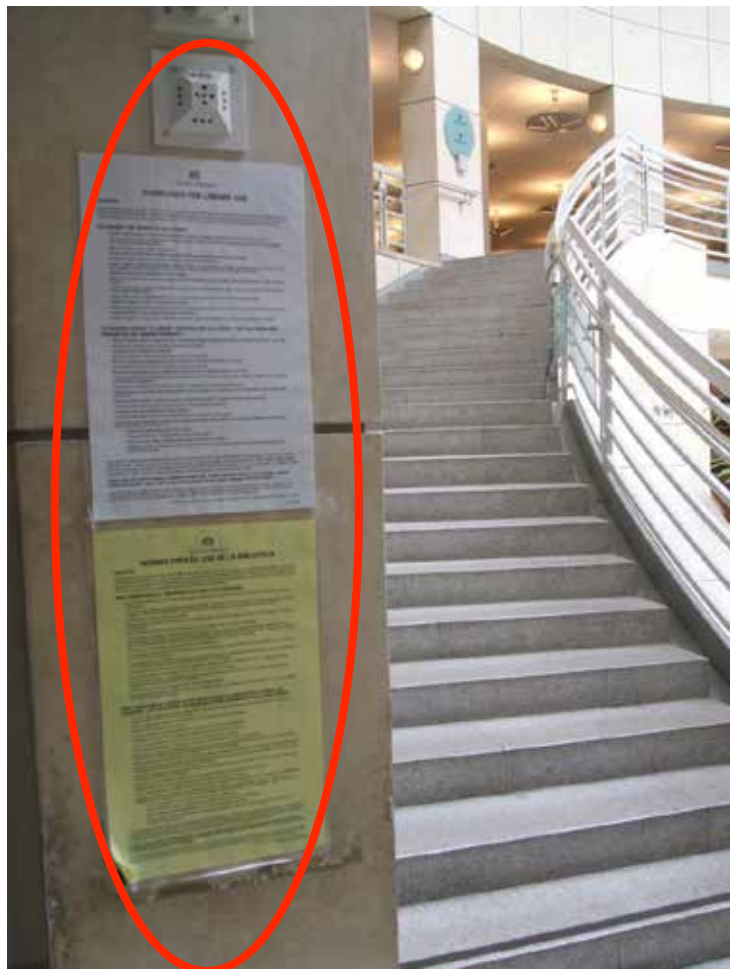
have nowhere else to go

during the day... have


jobs... are housed... are

homeless... *just enjoy what we  
have to offer.*





# Patron Behavior Guidelines



San Francisco Public Library

## GUIDELINES FOR LIBRARY USE

### PURPOSE

The San Francisco Public Library ("Library") seeks to provide its users with a safe and pleasant library experience in an atmosphere conducive to study, reading and appropriate use of materials and services. So that all persons may enjoy the benefits of the Library, individuals visiting or using the Library's facilities or services ("users") must comply with the following Guidelines for Library Use:

### TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF ALL USERS:

- Children under the age of 5 must be accompanied at all times by a parent, guardian, or other responsible person.
- The City Librarian may restrict adult use of Children's areas in order to ensure the adequate protection of the Library facilities and of persons and property therein.
- Shirts and shoes or other footwear are required.
- Persons under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs are not allowed on Library property.
- Smoking is not permitted inside Library facilities or within 20 feet of any door.
- People, animals or property must not block aisles, doorways, stairways, elevators or ramps. Large objects such as carts, bicycles and luggage may not be brought into Library facilities. Personal property must be within sight of the owner.
- Weapons of any kind are prohibited on Library property.
- Animals, other than service animals assisting persons with disabilities, are not permitted inside Library facilities or within 20 feet of any door.
- Persons who remain at Library facilities after closing, and who need assistance to return home may be referred to the police in order to ensure their safety.
- Roller skates, scooters, skateboards, bicycles, or other similar devices must not be used on Library property.
- Sleeping or lying on the floor or furniture is prohibited.
- Library entrance areas shall be used exclusively for entering and exiting the Library and as temporary waiting areas for Library users.
- Possession/illegal use of or intent to sell drugs is prohibited.
- Indecent exposure, including but not limited to having sex and/or exhibiting lewd and offensive nakedness is prohibited.

### TO ENSURE ACCESS TO LIBRARY SERVICES FOR ALL USERS, THE FOLLOWING ARE PROHIBITED ON LIBRARY PROPERTY:

- Eating or drinking, except in designated areas. Water bottles, covered beverage containers, and foodstuff must be kept out of sight.
- Vandalism or abusing Library materials, equipment, or facilities.
- Soliciting money, donations or signatures.
- Selling merchandise without prior permission from the City Librarian.

# Patron Baggage Limits

## LIMITATIONS ON ITEMS BROUGHT INTO THE LIBRARY

For the safety of the staff and patrons of the Library and to ensure unimpeded access to the collection, comfort of all patrons, open walkways and timely evacuation of the buildings in the event of emergencies, SFPL has placed the following limits on the size and number of items that patrons may bring into the Library.

- ✦ The maximum combined size of items may not exceed 16" x 18" x 24" per patron.
- ✦ A patron who brings an item measuring 16" x 18" x 24" may also bring a personal item such as a purse or briefcase.
- ✦ Strollers and wheelchairs—when used for the purposes for which they were designed—are allowed in addition to the maximum combined size of items allowed per patron.
- ✦ Patrons and their belongings may not block aisles, shelving or tables and patrons may not leave personal items unattended.
- ✦ Patrons who violate these Guidelines will receive
  - ✦ an opportunity to correct the violation or leave the Library;
  - ✦ a warning from the Library staff;
  - ✦ and/or a suspension of Library privileges.
- ✦ In the event of an emergency evacuation, patrons may be required to leave behind any items that impede evacuation of the building.

Please see a Security officer for more details or to request a waiver for such items as frame packs (if worn at all times) and musical instruments.





# Consequences

Uniform Staff Procedures for Enforcement of the *Guidelines for Library Use*  
September, 2008



San Francisco Public Library

## Uniform Staff Procedures for Enforcement of the *Guidelines for Library Use*

This document is intended to ensure that patron conduct issues are dealt with in a consistent manner and guarantee that Library facilities are safe and welcoming to all members of the public.

Persons who violate [the] Guidelines may receive a warning from the Library staff and/or an opportunity to cease the violation or leave the Library. Illegal activity, as well as any willful or repeated violations of these Guidelines or other posted Library regulations (e.g. computer use rules), may result in removal from the facility and/or suspension of Library privileges. In addition, where authorized by Federal, State or local law, violations of these Guidelines may also result in arrest. [From *Guidelines for Library Use*, adopted August 2001 and amended August 2007, by SFPL Library Commission.]

Text that follows each Library rule specifies the actions the Library will take when those rules are violated. If repeated incidents occur within a period of one year, consequences will be applied appropriate to a "2nd Offense," or "3rd Offense." If the behavior is repeated a 4th time, staff should consult with Security and the Administration.

Any violation that results in a suspension of 7 days or less will be in effect at the library site where the violation occurred. When a patron is suspended more than 7 days, it means the patron is prohibited from entering any building within the San Francisco Public Library system.

### TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF ALL USERS:

1. Children under the age of 8 must be accompanied at all times by a parent, guardian, or other responsible person.

#### 1st OFFENSE

Inform parent of rule and remind them that child must be accompanied

#### 2nd OFFENSE

Notify Security; request they speak with parent

#### 3rd OFFENSE

Notify Security; Security will follow procedure for working with SFPD

2. The City Librarian may restrict adult use of Children's areas in order to ensure the adequate protection of the Library facilities and of persons and property therein.

#### 1st OFFENSE

Ascertain if adult is using the children's collections or resources. If not, inform adult of policy and direct adult to other areas in the building where seating is available.

#### 2nd OFFENSE

Remind adult s/he has been informed of policy previously and direct adult to other areas in the building where seating is available.

#### 3rd OFFENSE

Notify Security

# Appeals Process Following Suspension

## LIBRARY SUSPENSION/EXCLUSION PROCEDURE TO REQUEST AN APPEAL

Effective April, 2007

If you have received a suspension of library service and exclusion from library property of more than 3 days and believe this suspension and exclusion has been imposed unfairly or in error, you are entitled to an opportunity to appeal your suspension/exclusion.

To request an appeal, you have two options:

- ◆ Complete and mail the attached postcard or
- ◆ Leave a message with your contact information and reason for requesting an appeal at (415) 557-4200

We will schedule your appeal promptly upon receiving your request and notify you of the time and place for the hearing using the contact information you supply. If you do not provide a telephone number or address, the scheduled time for your appeal hearing will be available at the Security office of the Main Library by 5:00 p.m. on the second business day after we receive your request.

Pending your appeal hearing, your suspension remains in effect and you may not enter the Library property or properties from which you have been excluded pending your appeal hearing, except to (1) obtain your appeal hearing notice at the Security office of the Main Library and/or (2) attend your appeal hearing.

At your hearing, you will have the opportunity to explain why you believe this suspension should be withdrawn or modified. You should plan on having about 15 minutes to present your case, unless the hearing officer determines that more time is required. Generally, you will receive an oral ruling at the end of this hearing which will be confirmed in writing.



San Francisco Public Library



San Francisco Public Library

Security Department  
100 Larkin Street  
San Francisco, CA 94102

## PROCEDURE FOR "NOTICE OF SUSPENSION"

### MAIN LIBRARY:

#### WARNINGS

-If security is notified and responds, brief security on the situation and they will handle the rest.

-If security is not notified:

- Admonish the individual for violating the rules of the San Francisco Public Library
- Get the individual's identifying information (i.e.: name, Calif. I.D. number, Library card number)
- Check the suspension list on staffnet to see if he/she is on the list
- Forward an E-mail to head of security ([PKwan@sfppl.org](mailto:PKwan@sfppl.org)) with the following information:
  1. All of the individual's identifying information
  2. Date and Time of Incident
  3. Location of Incident
  4. A brief description of the incident
  5. Your name
- If suspension is warranted due to prior warnings, follow suspension instruction

#### SUSPENSIONS

- Notify security
- Security will conduct investigation



# What's in **Your** Library?

# San Francisco Police Department



# Department of Public Works

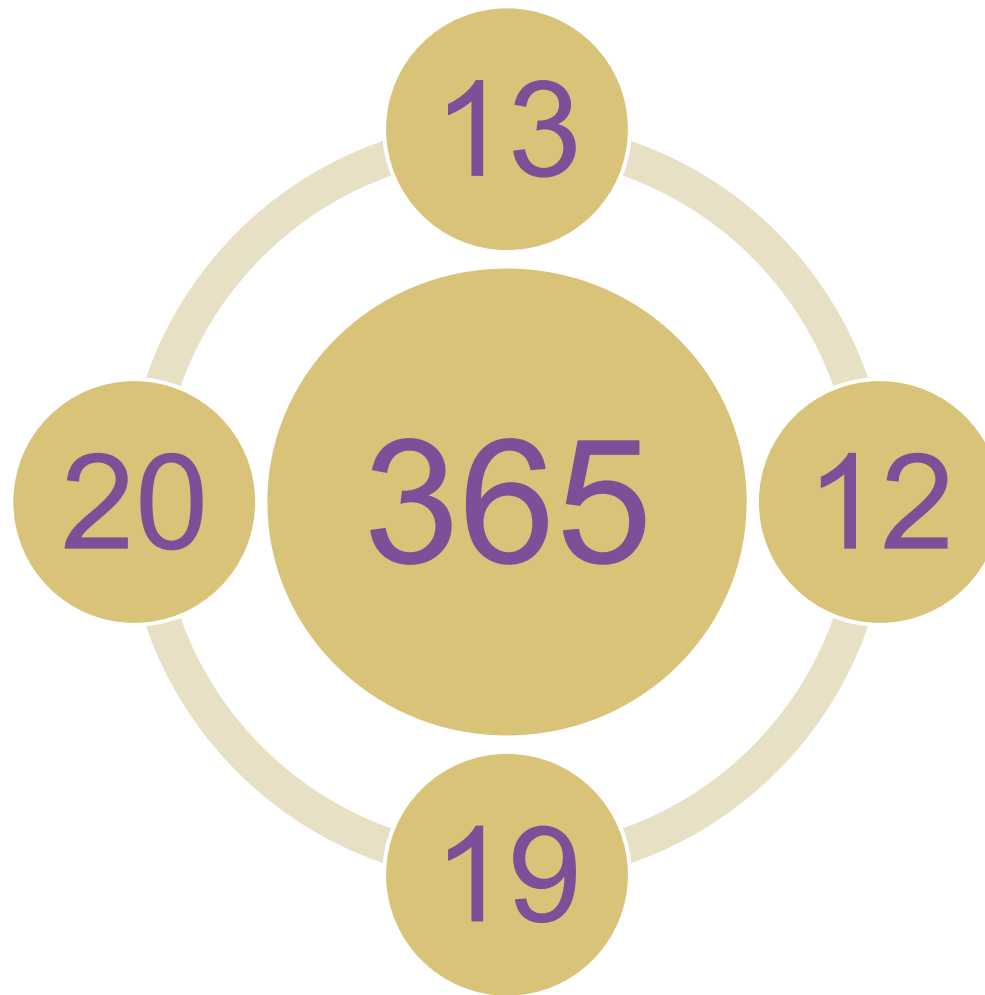


# Department of Public Health



# Patrons Served YTD

---



# Other DPH Services

---

Meetings & consultations with staff

Staff Training:

- ➔ History of homelessness
- ➔ Understanding mental illness
- ➔ Understanding substance abuse
- ➔ Anger management
- ➔ Limit-setting





Who's **doing**  
**what?**

# The Library's Social Worker

Leah Esguerra ,  
LMFT





# LIMIT-SETTING WITH LIBRARY PATRONS

# What is Limit-Setting?

---

**Providing direction when patrons might be confused and disorganized in their thoughts, speech and/or behavior.**

**Providing guidance using a reasonable amount of time and attention, while also using a range of interventions that are respectful, welcoming and sometimes firm.**

# Why Set Limits?



You'll manage your **time**  
more effectively.

# Why Set Limits?

---

Inappropriate and hostile  
behavior won't escalate and  
should even **stop**.

# Why Set Limits?



You'll be in **control** of otherwise-confused patrons and/or unmanageable situations.

# Why Set Limits?

---

Your mental, emotional and physical health will benefit – you will manage your own frustrations and anger instead of “losing it.”



# How To Set Limits

---

Taking a risk is  
**essential**  
for effective limit-  
setting.

# How To Set Limits

---

Evaluate  
*Evaluate*  
the situation  
*the situation*

# How To Set Limits

---

- Be clear
- Be RESPECTFUL
- Be Kind
- Be firm and tactful
- Be consistent



# HELPFUL HINTS



# Respectful disengagement

**HELPFUL HINTS**



# TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES

**NEXT WEEK:**



**Helping Others as we**

**Help Ourselves**





# Thank you



Karen Strauss, Acting Chief of Main  
[kstrauss@sfpl.org](mailto:kstrauss@sfpl.org)



Leah Esguerra, Social Worker  
[lesguerra@sfpl.org](mailto:lesguerra@sfpl.org)



Infopleople webinars are supported in part by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons 3.0 Share & Share-Alike license. Use of this material should credit the author and funding source.