

Trustee Development February 27, 2024

The library board organizes training sessions covering a range of community-related topics. These sessions are divided into two parts: the first meeting offers an overview of the topic, while the second meeting features staff discussing its practical approaches and implications for libraries.

Public Libraries and Public Health, part 2:

Libraries support the health and wellbeing of their community in many ways based on their community's specific needs as well as their specific mission, strategic plan, and resources.

1. Providing Information access

- a. Libraries provide access to a variety of resources in various languages and at a range of reading levels including books, databases, and media.
- b. Staff curate topics of particular interest to a community to ensure that patrons have access to accurate and reliable health information. Libraries can collaborate with local medical expert to support collection development and curation of content.
- c. Staff are trained in identifying reputable sources of information on the internet as well as ensuring that the resources are appropriate for the age, reading level, etc.. while still respecting that every patron will have different needs and values.

- #### **2. Developing programs and services promoting health lifestyles** such as gardening, children's programming incorporating pre-literacy skills, music and movement, health relationship programming for teens. As the examples show, these programs can target different audiences.

3. Collaborating with local health organizations and initiatives

- a. Partnerships with local health departments, hospitals, and other health organizations to provide resources and programming. These partnerships can enhance the reach of public health campaigns and services as often many of the individuals who would be most in need of these resources frequent the public library.
- b. Partnerships with local health organizations and national peer-reviewed initiatives such as Reach Out and Read.
- c. Participating in initiatives such as Imagine Fox Cities.

- #### **4. Providing technology access.** Digital equity is an important part of public health to ensure that everyone in the community can participate fully in an increasingly digitized healthcare system.

- a. Libraries offer access to technology or Wi-Fi to help patrons research health information, communicate with providers.
- b. 1:1 technology help.

5. Supporting mental health

- a. Libraries offer a safe, inclusive space for individuals, potentially reducing social isolation and supporting mental health through programs and resources.
- b. Many libraries offer community navigator positions that help patrons access the community resources they need.

6. Providing support in times of crisis

- a. Information hubs supporting dissemination of accurate information during public health emergencies. Library facilities served as vaccination and testing sites during COVID and APL was the centralized storage for city-wide pandemic supplies.
- b. Safe spaces in weather related emergencies like extreme heat and cold and weather tragedies such as severe storms.
- c. Community refuges in times of tragedies.

7. Promoting learning and literacy. Literacy is a key aspect of the social determinants of health impacting economic stability, education access and quality, healthcare access and quality, community engagement, and social and communication skills.