

Fall 10-10-2018

Book Review: The Dysfunctional Library: Challenges and Solutions to Workplace Relationships

Pat Hawthorne

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, pat.hawthorne@unlv.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/lib_articles



Part of the [Human Resources Management Commons](#), and the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Hawthorne, P. (2018). Book Review: The Dysfunctional Library: Challenges and Solutions to Workplace Relationships. *RUSA Reference and User Services Quarterly*, 58(1), 57. American Library Association. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5860/rusq.58.1.6844>

This Book Review is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Scholarship@UNLV with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Book Review in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Book Review has been accepted for inclusion in Library Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.

ideas, collaboration suggestions for schools and other institutions, and information about additional research. Especially informative is the chapter on program security, user expectations, and rules of conduct. From background checks on volunteers to how best to word a list of rules, this short-but-essential chapter covers heavy topics in a positive manner.

Information about electronic resources, like Tutor.com and Brainfuse, and the inclusion of suggestions for evaluation, enhance the book's breadth and depth. Abundant back matter includes staff manual samples, boilerplate guidelines, assessment tools, and even model volunteer applications. Behavior management schemes, including explicit scripting for implementation, further enrich the appendixes. Leading the ample appendix section is an overview of ten "Model Homework Programs," each including contact information for the people running the programs. Urban centers like Boston, Chicago, and Minneapolis-St. Paul are covered, along with suburban and rural areas in California, Ohio, and elsewhere. Overall, this volume is perfect both for organizations exploring the possibility of a homework center and for libraries looking to refresh existing programs.—*Deidre Winterhalter, Digital Learning Coordinator, Oak Park Public Library, Oak Park, Illinois*

The Dysfunctional Library: Challenges and Solutions to Workplace Relationships. By Jo Henry, Jo Eshleman, and Richard Moniz. Chicago: ALA, 2018. 216 p. Paper \$59.00 (ISBN 978-0-8389-1623-0).

It is not easy to tackle the issues and address the impact of abnormal or unhealthy interpersonal behaviors and interactions in the workplace. Drawing from literature on dysfunctional organizational cultures and workplaces from the library, management, and organizational development disciplines, Jo Henry, Jo Eshleman, and Richard Moniz approach the subject of the dysfunctional library in a slim volume titled *The Dysfunctional Library: Challenges and Solutions to Workplace Relationships*.

Addressing the topic from an academic viewpoint and drawing conclusions from available evidence, the first chapter provides an overview of individual traits that contribute to emotional intelligence and outlines the impact of psychological disorders and burnout on professionals. The next chapter shifts the focus to organizational culture, discussing multiple aspects that can lead to dysfunction. The authors cite leading scholars to articulate their premise that learning and the ability to adapt to change are crucial if individuals and organizations are to avoid dysfunction.

Over the next seven chapters, the authors define dysfunctional organizations and discuss the factors that contribute to them. Each of these chapters can stand alone and may serve as a general overview and introduction to specific issues such as incivility, bullying, passive-aggressive behaviors, "cyberloafing," fraud, sabotage, and bias. Each chapter presents relevant research to help the reader understand the topic and its impact both on the workplace as a whole

and on individuals. Within each chapter, the authors seek to present solutions, but this is a bit uneven throughout the volume. The authors end with a thought-provoking chapter on leadership, specifically library leaders and their role in creating dysfunctional—or functional—libraries.

In addition to the research consulted for this book, the authors conducted their own survey of 4,186 library workers because they found that little research had been done on the topic. Some of their research findings are presented throughout the text. More information on the survey and its findings might have made a helpful appendix.

Overall, this book presents a general overview of the topic and does a good job of defining specific behaviors and interactions that contribute to dysfunctional workplaces, provides some examples, and presents relevant supporting research. The book seems incomplete: with a few exceptions, solutions and strategies that might be used to counter dysfunction are lacking or not well presented. In some cases, a solution is presented with little discussion or context, which leaves the reader wanting more. In other cases, the references provided at the end of the chapter offer a more satisfying read and real solutions. The nature of the topic and, at times, the style of writing make for a choppy and difficult read. This volume would have benefited from much tighter editing to eliminate the repetition both within chapters and across the volume. The book tackles an important subject related to library workplaces and provides a good introduction, but it falls short as a true resource offering meaningful solutions.—*Pat Hawthorne, Associate Dean for Research and Education, University of Nevada Las Vegas University Libraries, Las Vegas, Nevada*

LGBTQAI+ Books for Children and Teens: Providing a Window for All. By Christina Dorr and Liz Deskins. Chicago: ALA, 2018. 168 p. Paper \$45.00 (ISBN 978-0-8389-1649-0).

LGBTQAI+ Books for Children and Teens: Providing a Window for All is a necessary purchase for all staff collection shelves. Boundaries in libraries, often bordering on censorship, have prevented children and teens from accessing certain library materials. While libraries have come a long way since the days when a parent had to accompany children to the library and give permission for them to read books in the adult section, schools and libraries are not always keeping up with the evolving concepts of gender identity and sexuality. This book is the tool that can help libraries and schools continue the journey toward greater access by making LGBTQAI+ materials available to children and teens. Dorr and Deskin bring to this timely topic their fifty-plus years of experience working with children and teens.

The foreword by Jamie Campbell Naidoo, PhD, is in itself a superb testimonial advocating for diverse literature accessible to all. He writes: "A good book can . . . save lives and build bridges between seemingly disparate worlds" (ix). He discusses the need for children and teens to see the