



PETERSBURGH PUBLIC LIBRARY MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

PURPOSE:

This policy is in effect in order to provide guidelines for the employees and the Board of Trustees of the Petersburgh Public Library in addressing mental health situations within the library. These guidelines are based on suggestions provided by the National Council for Behavioral Health, the NYS Office of Mental Health, and the NYPL mental health policy.

POLICY:

Per New York State Law, neither the employees nor the Board of Petersburgh Public Library are mandated by law to report mental health concerns. We are permissive reporters rather than mandatory reporters meaning that we are not legally obligated to report reasonable concerns but are strongly encouraged to do so. As concerned professionals we should take responsibility to help members of our community when we see a significant need.

PROCEDURE:

If the occasion should arise that we are faced with a patron who appears to be in a mental health crisis situation, the immediacy of the situation should be evaluated:

- If the person is in imminent danger of attempting to commit suicide or of causing harm to himself or others, the staff member should, as calmly as possible, attempt to obtain that person's name, home address if possible, and then contact the police at 911.
- If the threat is not imminent, the staff member has two options:
 - Still contact 911, but ask that a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trained member attend the situation. This is a police officer who is specially trained to handle non-critical mental health concerns. They will approach the person less "dramatically" than a standard 911 call would warrant.
 - If the person is not in an obvious mental health crisis but the person is well known to the staff or board and the person is displaying concerning behavior that is inconsistent with the typical behavior for that person: Approach, question and evaluate the mental status of the person. If after

discussion with the patron there is still concern of depression or other mental health concerns, staff should, coming from a place of concern, suggest that the depressed person contact one of the following:

Rensselaer County Mental Health Troy Main: 518-270-2800 Hoosick Falls Satellite: 518-686-0694	National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-TALK	800-SUICIDE which is linked to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
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- The staff member should immediately record the date and time of the contact, the staff member's name, and that 911 and any other organization was notified, along with the name and address of the caller.

PROCEDURE FOR UNDERAGE PERSONS – CHILD, TEEN, OR YOUNG ADULT

If the library staff does not feel that immediate attention is required but is concerned about the mental well-being of the student, the staff member should get in contact with Jill Augustine, MSW at 658-2515 ext.2117 or Anne Lazarony, Berlin Middle School Counseling at 658-2515 ext. 1073 who will use the information provided by the library staff to evaluate the student and determine whether additional follow-up is warranted.

If the person of concern is a minor person (child, teen or young adult), the staff has the option of contacting the legal guardian of the minor if and only if they have a personal relationship with the guardian and are more than reasonably confident that it would be in the best interest of the minor to contact the guardian instead of/in addition to contacting 911 or the Crisis Intervention Team.

APPROVED DATE: February 2017
REVISED DATE: