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Reconsidering Reference for a Generation Without Boundaries

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Chapter 12

RECONSIDERING REFERENCE FOR A GENERATION WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

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Introduction

Much attention has been focused in the media recently upon the "dangers" that mentally ill college students pose to their communities. Indeed, there have been several well-publicized, albeit sensationalized, accounts of mentally ill college students lashing out violently against an individual or the wider community. Pundits have hotly debated the level of responsibility these students' respective campuses had in identifying these students, assessing them as "at risk" for violence, and remediating the risks posed by these students to society prior to their violent outbursts. These campuses contend that they addressed the students' behavior in a manner consistent with any higher educational institution's responsibility to act *in loco parentis*. The level of campuses' legal or ethical responsibility in these instances is beyond the scope of this chapter. What is important to note, however, is that it was individual faculty members who first reported their concerns about student behavior indicative of severe mental illness. One could rightfully dismiss these instances of extreme emotional disturbance as comparatively rare occurrences within the entire college student population. One cannot, however, dismiss the fact that students today are less prepared than previous generations to deal with

the stressors of college life. They are seeking help in greater numbers to deal with those stressors, and they are more comfortable disclosing their problems in non-clinical, public settings. This situation presents several significant challenges for librarians and other academic faculty. These challenges include not only recognizing students experiencing emotional disturbances, but also responding sensitively to those students at that moment and identifying the appropriate campus or community resources to which one should refer them.

College Student Mental Health

The scholarly literature supports the contentions that increasing numbers of students are seeking treatment for mental health concerns, and that college students in recent years frequently demonstrate more severe problems than those demonstrated by students in the past. Benton, Robertson, Tseng, Newton, and Benton (2003) report that students increasingly present with complex problems such as anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and personality disorders rather than comparatively simple issues such as relationship problems and developmental issues. Benton et al. (2003) further report that some of the increases in problem severity and complexity were "dramatic" (p. 69); their study of client problems at a college counseling center also demonstrated that the number of students treated for depression doubled during the 13-year study period, and the number of students treated for suicidality tripled. Pledge, Lapan, Heppner, Kivlinghan, and Roehlke (1998) found a consistent need for treatment for suicidality, substance abuse, depression, anxiety, or high distress in their six-year study of campus counseling center client problems. Pledge et al. (1998) and Benton et al. (2003) both demonstrate that the types of problems students present at college counseling centers have reached and stabilized at a higher level of severity than in previous decades. Hunt and Eisenberg (2010) further report that the overall prevalence of more severe mental health diagnoses among young adults may have increased. Rice, Leever, Christopher, and Porter (2006) theorize that the risk factors inherent to college academic life,

such as stress, achievement expectations, and perfectionism, may exacerbate students' pre-existing mental health problems. Students' coping mechanisms, now comparatively weaker than in previous generations, may worsen the stressors attendant to college life.

Treatment Barriers

Studies have also demonstrated numerous significant barriers to students' use of mental health services. Eisenberg, Golberstein, and Gollust's (2007) oft-cited study of help-seeking and access to mental health resources in a large university sample found that "30% of respondents perceived a need" for mental health services during the study period, but "only 36% of those students who screened positive for depression received medication or therapy" (pp. 596-598). Hunt and Eisenberg's (2010) study affirms the results of multiple authors' findings: "fewer than half of students who screened positive for depression or anxiety disorders" receive any mental health treatment on campus or off campus (p. 6). Eisenberg et al. (2007) also found that between 37% and 84% of students with depression or anxiety symptoms did not receive mental health treatment. Quinn, Wilson, MacIntyre, and Tinklin (2009), moreover, report that when students sought help for mental health issues, they were "most likely to seek help or advice from family or friends" rather than more formal counseling services (p. 406).

Eisenberg et al. (2007) cite "financial constraints, attitudes and knowledge about services (including stigma), concerns about privacy, and lack of time" among major barriers to students' use of services (p. 595). Among the most frequent reasons students provided for not seeking treatment were that "stress is normal in college/graduate school," that they did not perceive a need, that the problem would get better by itself, that they did not have the time, that no one could understand their problems, and that they worried about what others would think (p. 598). Furthermore, in Eisenberg et al.'s (2007) sample of students who had not used university mental health services, "only 32% reported they would know where to go for professional mental health care" (p. 597). Hunt

and Eisenberg (2010) found that the barriers to student help-seeking, including "lack of time, privacy concerns, lack of emotional openness, and financial constraints," were consistent across studies (p. 6).

Compounding the treatment problems accompanying students' increased problem severity is the lack of resources accorded to college counseling centers. Campus-level interventions and resources for student mental health problems admittedly vary widely. Benton et al. (2003), however, found that counseling services are often limited to fewer than ten sessions per client due to budgetary limitations and the advent of managed care. Furthermore, overburdened campus counseling centers are often forced by virtue of staffing realities to treat only the most severely emotionally disturbed students, particularly those who have demonstrated suicidal intent, and to refer the other students to similarly overburdened community resources (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010).

Boundaries? What Boundaries?

College students inhabit a world in which traditional interpersonal boundaries have eroded significantly. College students today, often referred to as millennials, generally expect high levels of accessibility, availability, and person-centered attention. The speed of accessing resources often trumps the quality of the resources. One can observe this tendency in students' use of Wikipedia or "top 5" Google results rather than library databases. By extension, a college student might question the utility of waiting weeks for an appointment at the counseling center when seemingly adequate informal resources are available elsewhere on campus. The digital world with its emphasis on unfettered connectedness, in particular, reinforces students' comfort with and expectations about the resources that are available to them. Social tools such as Facebook and Twitter enable students to disseminate comparatively intimate details without considering the consequences or appropriateness of spreading these details to a vast and very public audience. Students post private matters online with levels of ease and comfort that Baby Boomers and Gen Xers generally find unfathomable. One can see how students may

become habituated to sharing personal details with relative strangers in live, in-person venues as well. Furthermore, students and faculty differ in their delineation of interpersonal boundaries appropriate to an academic setting. Quinn et al. (2009) found that students often feel they must turn to academic staff to resolve anxiety since they tend to associate anxiety with academic pressures. This use of academic faculty to resolve anxiety, regardless of the source of the anxiety, highlights students' perceptions about interpersonal boundaries between themselves and faculty. It is easy to see how these characteristics reinforce students' expectations that their emotional or academic needs must be met immediately, regardless of the appropriateness of the resource they are utilizing.

Librarians = Listeners?

One can perceive how reference librarians, in particular, provide students with ideal opportunities for both passive "venting" and active help-seeking. Reference interviews often provide confidential, low risk, non-threatening, accessible, one-on-one help. It may be the essential nature of reference librarianship itself, however, that feeds into students' boundary-crossing during reference services. During a reference interview, librarians actively attempt to elicit multiple layers of information in order to better assess and meet student needs. Admittedly, student needs are most often research-related. Librarians, however, have routinely provided information related to personal interests as well. Bopp and Smith (2001) report that reference interviews related to patrons' personal interests have historically been deemed "guidance" (p. 11). They further describe that this guidance requires the reference librarian to "find out more about the user's interests, goals, and background than is typically necessary in answering reference questions" (p. 11). One may note the similarity of this guidance to interviews early in the mental health counseling process. Bopp and Smith (2001) also relate that a reference interview requires gaining the user's trust, accurately understanding the user's concern, and ensuring the user's satisfaction with the outcome. These goals are very similar to several fundamental counseling goals.

Furthermore, Bopp and Smith (2001) assert that successful reference encounters require effective communication strategies, listening skills, willingness to help, sensitivity, patience, approachability, and cognizance of patrons' "unique needs" (pp. 49-50). These requirements are not only central to millennials' interpersonal preferences, but are also hallmarks of successful counselors. The American Library Association's Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) 2004 Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Services Professionals reaffirm that ideal behaviors associated with the performance of reference services include approachability, interest, and listening/inquiring (Reference & User Services Association, 2011). These RUSA guidelines, in fact, mirror standard counseling emphases. The commonalities between reference services and counseling include communicating in a "receptive, cordial, and encouraging manner," smiling, welcoming body language, facing the patron, eye contact, signaling "understanding of patron needs through verbal and nonverbal confirmation such as nodding of the head," and using an appropriate tone (Reference & User Services Association, 2011, sections 1.0-3.0). Librarians' use of these classic attending skills may unintentionally encourage students to divulge personal problems during the course of normal reference practice.

Data

Data collected by this author suggest that students do, indeed, routinely divulge non-academic emotional problems to librarians at the reference desk. In a national survey of librarians concerning student personal problems encountered at the reference desk, 94% of the librarians who responded reported that students had, indeed, divulged personal problems during the course of reference services at the reference desk, in their offices, or during the course of one-on-one reference services elsewhere in the library. The types of personal problems encountered during reference services include: academic stress/anxiety, non-academic stress/anxiety, family conflict, roommate conflict, intimate partner conflict, grief, suicidality, substance abuse, eating disorders, depression,

employment problems, legal problems, illness/physical problems, harassment/bullying, and assault. Predictably, the respondents reported that the student problem most frequently encountered was academic stress/anxiety. It is unsurprising that students would disclose experiencing academic stress or anxiety while receiving help for a research need, typically a stressful situation for many students. A surprisingly large percentage of librarians, however, also report that students divulge non-academic personal problems during the course of their reference interviews. During reference transactions, librarians commonly encountered personal problems including non-academic stress/anxiety, illness/physical problems, employment problems, family conflict, and legal problems. Severe personal problems like grief and depression were not encountered as commonly. They were, however, encountered by a number of respondents. The respondents, moreover, reported that the severity of personal problems divulged by students in previous years is consistent with the severity of student problems encountered today. Moreover, roughly one-third of respondents reported that the severity of the personal problems disclosed by students has increased compared to previous years. Of particular concern is that only 16% of librarian respondents felt well-prepared to deal with these disclosures. The data indicate, therefore, that students not only disclose comparatively serious emotional problems to reference librarians, but also that reference librarians have been forced for many years to deal with student emotional problems during the course of reference services without adequate preparation. Yet procedures for dealing with these admissions have remained unaddressed in graduate coursework, in professional development opportunities, and in the scholarly literature.

Ethical Obligations

Interview 1:

Student: [Rolls his chair to the Reference Desk] I overheard you talking to that other student. Do you know any counselors?

Librarian: Can you tell me a little more about whether you are looking for a counselor for research needs or for personal reasons?

Student: [Whispering] Lately, when I talk to people, I don't see them as people. I see them as hunks of meat. They don't mean anything to me. I feel removed from reality.

Librarian: [Gently] Have you had any thoughts about harming others or yourself?

Interview 2:

Student: [Walks up to the Reference Desk] Do you know anyone with PTSD (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder)?

Librarian: Did you need to find someone with PTSD for a research interest or for a personal reason?

Student: I have PTSD and I just really wanted to talk to someone else who has it.

Interview 3:

A student sitting near the Reference Desk starts crying.

Librarian: [Gently] You seem upset. How can I help you?

Student: I just feel really overwhelmed. I have this paper due tomorrow and a final exam. And I can't concentrate because I have horrible test anxiety.

Interview 4:

Student: [Casually] You know, I hate leaving here late at night because the homeless man who lives behind my garbage cans watches me leaving and entering the building.

Librarian: What kinds of behaviors has he exhibited toward you?

Student: Well, he's sometimes "doing things" to himself when I get home and it makes me feel really unsafe.

As librarians we are accustomed to providing research help based on our years of research experience and subject expertise, but many of us would not know how to handle scenarios such as these if they were to arise while on duty. Furthermore, one may not *want* to deal with situations such as these. However, instances like those above do occur. In fact, the previous four interviews occurred at reference desks during the 2009-2011 school years. They are admittedly not routine reference questions, but they illustrate the necessity of ethically and competently addressing students' personal disclosures.

When a student divulges personal problems at the reference desk, there are several guiding ethical principles of which one must remain cognizant. First, librarians have an ethical obligation to protect the privacy of their users. If students felt that the confidentiality of their information seeking might be broken or that they might be subject to some embarrassment, then one could argue that their First Amendment rights were being violated (Bopp & Smith, 2001). However, one could argue, conversely, that the obligation to protect users' privacy and confidentiality is not absolute. One might argue that the threat of harm to oneself or others overrides First Amendment rights. Similarly, confidentiality does not apply between counselor and client in situations where there exists a threat of harm to oneself or others. This author argues that spontaneous disclosures of emotional problems unrelated to information seeking are potentially exempt from the expectation of privacy. Bopp and Smith (2001) further argue that librarians are ethically obligated to conduct "minimally intrusive" reference interviews and that questioning should be related only to the user's required information (p. 39). This author further believes that additional questioning by the librarian unrelated to the user's immediate information need is not only warranted, but ethically mandated in order to determine if a student presents a risk to themselves or others. Granted, the process of discerning whether a student is "at risk" is not a clear-cut, straightforward process. One must carefully weigh the available evidence gleaned from the

reference interview against the ethical standards of confidentiality and privacy attendant to librarianship. One must, moreover, carefully weigh the risks of erroneously alienating or embarrassing patrons against the risks of not addressing suspicions that could potentially prove harmful.

Intentional Interviewing

How then does one ascertain the seriousness of a student's personal problem? One of the guiding principles in intentional interviewing is to avoid using techniques that do not feel authentic or outside one's established comfort zone. These interviewing suggestions, therefore, should be used mindfully and judiciously. It is far better that a student feel a librarian is genuinely interested in their presenting concern than feel that the librarian's interest is insincere. Lest the reader be seized with anxiety about acting as a de facto counselor, most of these interviewing techniques are ones librarians already use during the course of reference interviews. Remember, however, that these techniques are not meant to enable reference librarians to provide counseling; rather, they are tools to be used only to gather enough information from students to provide referrals or resources appropriate to the students' presenting concerns.

1. **Communicate interest.** Simply smile, lean forward toward the student, and keep attention focused on them. Maintaining a responsive, expressive demeanor will further communicate to the student that you are "hearing" and are interested in what they are communicating.

2. **Communicate acceptance and relaxation.** By maintaining a calm, steady voice, as well as an open posture with uncrossed arms, you communicate relaxation and acceptance of what they have shared. If you appear shaken by what the student has divulged, they will likely feel uncomfortable talking further and you may not be able to adequately discern the students' needs.

3. **Facilitate privacy.** If possible, accompany the student to a location that provides more privacy. One could simply say, "Let's talk

over here where I can find out a little bit more about that," or "Let's talk over here where we won't be interrupted."

4. **Ask open questions to gather additional information.** Using open questions encourages the student to provide additional information about the problem they have disclosed. You may need this information to make an informed decision about the severity of the distress they are experiencing. Open questions typically begin with question words such as what, could, why, or how. Examples of open questions include, "Could you tell me what you mean when you say you feel removed from reality?" or "What's causing you to feel so overwhelmed?" These questions subtly discourage students from answering with a yes/no or a few words, so one can more readily gather crucial information. It should be noted that in some cultures questioning can be associated with intrusiveness or distrust, so questioning should be used judiciously (Ivey & Ivey, 2007). Questioning must always serve a useful purpose rather than one's own curiosity.

5. **Use closed questions to gather specifics.** Closed questions are helpful when there is a specific, concrete piece of information you need in order to decide on a course of action. These questions typically result in a yes/no answer, so they are not helpful in encouraging students to elaborate on what they have previously stated. Closed questions include, "Have you thought about hurting yourself or others?" or "Did he hit you?" If the student's presenting concern entails a risk of harm to themselves or others, it is *essential* to assess the student for those risks using a closed question, such as "Have you thought about hurting yourself or others?" If the student answers in the affirmative, the designated campus first responders should be called *immediately*.

6. **Use encouragers to prompt students to continue talking.** Encouragers can be extremely useful if you need the student to continue to provide information about their concerns. Encouragers can be verbal or non-verbal and include head nodding,

open-handed/facilitative gestures, and murmuring "Mmm, hmm" or "Uh-huh." Conveying interpersonal warmth also helps the student feel comfortable continuing to talk with you, but will depend on the librarian's comfort level with the subject matter. Authenticity is crucial to using encouragers competently.

7. **Use reflection of feeling to clarify the nature of student's distress and encourage elaboration.** Reflection of feeling simply entails verbally acknowledging students' feelings. Gently stating "You seem [insert feeling word here]" may allow the student to perceive that their feelings have been acknowledged and encourage the student to elaborate upon the nature of their distress. This may require some educated guessing if you are unsure exactly what feelings the student is experiencing. "Upset" is a useful, nonspecific adjective to use if you are unsure whether the student is frustrated, sad, overwhelmed, etc. Reflection of feeling is also useful for starting conversations with distressed students whom a librarian feels it is necessary to "assess." When in doubt about the severity of a student's distress, however, it is crucial to call campus first responders and let *them* discern whether the student is, in fact, at risk.

8. **Be vigilant for "distress" phrases and erratic speech or behavior.** During conversations be aware of students using phrases that communicate more severe distress, including words such as hopeless, desperate, depressed, despondent, alone, rejected, delusion, helpless, etc. Use of these phrases in combination with worrisome topics/behaviors may indicate the need to gather further information or to contact campus first responders.

9. **Do not pass judgment.** Although it is occasionally tempting to note students' poor judgment (i.e. "When did you actually start the term paper?"), it is not the librarian's role to communicate their own perspectives. Rather, it is the librarian's role to elicit enough information from the student to provide an appropriate resource or referral. Remember, the student may, in fact, be divulging their personal issues during the reference interview

due to the fear of stigma. Passing judgment on students' presenting concerns may further perpetuate the deleterious effects of stigma on their help-seeking from appropriate campus or community resources.

10. **Remember that librarians are not counselors.** We are information providers, not mental health professionals. Our job is to elicit enough information from the student to make an informed referral to other *trained* campus or community professionals.

Responding to Students' Needs

In the event that one determines a student is a risk to themselves or others, what does one do then? Most college campuses have a well-established set of campus response systems with which it is incumbent upon every librarian to be familiar. On many campuses, University Police are considered first responders in situations that present risk to any member of the community. Risky situations are not limited to suicide risk; these situations could potentially include students at risk for intimate partner violence, physical harm from substance abuse, or assault. Librarians should be familiar with their own campuses' procedures for reporting various emergencies. In dealing with crisis situations, one should first take every precaution to ensure one's *own* safety; having ensured one's own safety, campus first responders may then be called. This phone call should not be made in the presence of a violent or agitated student. Students who are calm, however, should be involved in making the phone call, since it is good practice to actively involve students in remediating their own problems. In addition, the utmost care should be taken, if it all possible, to protect the student's dignity during and after the phone call. For example, one should not call campus responders in public. One should also provide the student with a non-public place in which to wait until campus responders arrive. This location also provides the responders a private place in which to interview the student. *Under no circumstances* should the student be left

alone while waiting for the appropriate responders; a colleague can be located to provide reference coverage.

Students may also verbalize personal problems that do not entail risks to themselves or others, but you may nevertheless feel that campus officials should be made aware of them. These problems might include suspected eating disorders, substance abuse problems, or intimate partner violence. In these cases, Student Affairs professionals would argue that cooperation from other campus constituents, such as librarians and professors, is necessary to help establish *patterns* of behavior (J. Davis, personal communication, May 24, 2011). Consulting other librarians or appropriate campus offices may help in determining the appropriateness of divulging a student's concerns. One must carefully consider, however, the ethical implications of violating a student's expectation of privacy between themselves and librarians. One must also remain cognizant of the stigma still associated with many types of personal concerns that could, in turn, affect the reported student. It can be difficult, moreover, to establish a student's identity without employing intrusive or unethical methods. After fully considering the ethical risks inherent to violating a student's expectation of privacy, one may simply choose to be content with providing the student with a handout of campus help resources and hoping that they will avail themselves of those resources.

Recommended Resources

In the event that a student divulges a personal problem that requires a routine resource, such as a legal referral or a roommate concern, librarians should have a list of campus and community resources to which they can direct students. Librarians, moreover, should be familiar with the scope of those resources' services and their operating hours. For instance, a librarian should be aware whether it is the Student Association, University Police, or the Dean of Students' Office that provides legal referrals, and given libraries' comparatively extended hours, whether the appropriate resource is available after normal business hours. Furthermore, campus policies and procedures for addressing students'

concerns vary widely. If librarians are unfamiliar with which campus offices officially deal with a particular student concern, it is helpful to seek consultation with colleagues or a supervisor. The Student Affairs/ Dean of Students' offices may also be able to suggest which campus offices to contact for further clarification. Librarians at smaller institutions may also want to investigate community resources available to students and to prepare a handout of contact information for those resources. Institutions may also have partnerships with community agencies that may not be well-advertised, so campus resources like the Student Affairs Office should be consulted about these partnerships. Once the appropriate contacts and campus offices are determined for each type of student concern, these contacts and resources should be compiled into a routinely updated handout kept at the Reference Desk to which one may refer if needed. Copies of these handouts should be readily available for distribution to students who ask for referrals or resources. The handout should incorporate the following resources at minimum:

Concerns about:	Refer student to:
Academic/Course Advisement	Student's Advisor/Advising Office: (555) 555-XXXX Registrar: : (555) 555-XXXX
Academic Support/ Tutoring	Student Support Services: (555) 555-XXXX Tutoring Center: (555) 555-XXXX Academic Advising: (555) 555-XXXX
Bullying/Harassment	Campus Police: (555) 555-XXXX Dean of Students/Student Affairs Office: (555) 555-XXXX
Counseling	*Assess for risk Counseling Center/Psychological Services: (555) 555-XXXX

Depression/Grief	***Assess for risk** Counseling Center/Psychological Services: (555) 555-XXXX
Disability Concerns	Student Support Services: (555) 555-XXXX
Discrimination/Sexual Harassment	Student Support Services: (555) 555-XXXX Affirmative Action Office: (555) 555-XXXX
Eating Disorders	Student Health/Medical Center: (555) 555-XXXX Counseling Center/Psychological Services: (555) 555-XXXX
Employment/Resume Information	Career Center: (555) 555-XXXX Financial Aid Office: (555) 555-XXXX
Family/Intimate Partner Concerns	Counseling Center/Psychological Services: (555) 555-XXXX
Financial Problems/Aid	Financial Aid Office: (555) 555-XXXX
Judicial/Disciplinary Referrals	Judicial Affairs Office: (555) 555-XXXX Dean of Students' Office: (555) 555-XXXX
Legal Issues/Referrals	Dean of Students' Office: (555) 555-XXXX Student Affairs/Student Association Office: (555) 555-XXXX
Medical Problems/Illness	Student Health/Medical Center: (555) 555-XXXX
Physical/Sexual Assault	Campus Police: (555) 555-XXXX
Psychological Concerns	***Assess for risk** Counseling Center/Psychological Services: (555) 555-XXXX
Religious Concerns	Campus Ministry: (555) 555-XXXX Student Association Office: (555) 555-XXXX

Roommate/Housing Problems	Student's R.A./R.D. : (555) 555-XXXX Housing/Residential Life Office: (555) 555-XXXX
Substance Abuse	Student Health/Medical Center: (555) 555-XXXX Counseling Center/Psychological Services: (555) 555-XXXX Campus Police: (555) 555-XXXX (Emergencies)
Suicidality	***Assess for risk** Designated first responders or Campus Police: (555) 55-XXXX
Support Groups	***Assess for risk** Counseling Center/Psychological Services: (555) 555-XXXX

Future Roles

In view of previously discussed social and campus realities, librarians are in a unique position to aid overburdened college counseling centers with their efforts to provide outreach to students. Consider the breadth of campus faculty and staff with whom students come into contact on a regular basis. Hunt and Eisenberg (2010) report that by virtue of the "multiple channels by which students can be reached on college campuses, practices and policies based on a holistic, public health approach seem promising" (p. 7). This approach, though far-fetched to some, has already been implemented on some college campuses that have investigated non-centralized methods of mental health outreach. Among the models currently utilized on campuses are the Question/Persuade/ Refer (QPR) model, in which faculty and staff help identify and refer students with mental illness (Hunt and Eisenberg, 2010), the Counselor-In-Residence (CIR) program where nonprofessional staff work with counselors to provide "bridges to partner offices across campus" (as cited in Rawls, 2004, p. 164), and the Community Consultation and

Intervention program (CCI) where faculty and staff offer "problem solving, support, advice, and advocacy" to students unlikely to access mental health services through traditional outreach (Mier, Boone, & Shropshire, 2009, p. 16). In fact, according to Hunt and Eisenberg (2010), more than 200 campuses have started training faculty and staff in the QPR model.

Librarians, in particular, are well-positioned to potentially heighten students' awareness of mental health resources on campus and in the community. Quinn et al. (2009) report that students feel information regarding counseling services should be provided "in a more accessible way than at present" (p. 413). The nature of the Reference Desk itself, as the campus domain of information providing, is well-suited for this expanded role. Librarians could very easily provide a campus clearinghouse for information related to mental health. Just as librarians are considered campus experts in information literacy, by extension they could also become experts in what Quinn et al. (2009) refer to as "mental health literacy" (p. 416). The field of academic librarianship, however, must first acknowledge the emerging need for providing these kinds of information services. If librarians truly value their collective identity as a "helping profession," then it is necessary for the profession to help facilitate access to these services. Individual academic libraries could then begin to create plans of action for equipping reference librarians with the tools to more effectively address students' emotional concerns. If emotional well-being is a prerequisite for students' academic success, academic libraries have an obligation to provide these information services.

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