

Re-Visioning Student Staff Management Through a Pastoral-Care Lens

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Undeniably, the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted the way users interact with libraries. Equally important is a reexamination of the way staff, in particular student employees, are managed in the midst of widespread trauma. Academic libraries rely heavily on student staff to manage the daily operations of the library. While libraries depend on student workers, it is important to recognize these essential members of staff as *students* before seeing them as *employees*, and to prioritize their well-being as whole persons—with obligations and concerns beyond school—rather than treating them merely according to their roles. Managers need to find a balance between the necessity to meet everyday demands and care for people holistically in order to allow for a dependable and sustained student staff.

Theological seminary studies are a different kind of academic experience—requiring students to participate in academically,

emotionally, and spiritually rigorous moments. For this reason, theological libraries occupy a special place in the academic library landscape. Users and the library staff assisting them are often faced with information-seeking behaviors and research needs that are deeply personally significant. While all management should be holistic, those managing student staff in theological libraries must take their unique positions into consideration. Ruben Arjona writes about the interconnectedness of the care of books and the care of souls, reflecting on the vocation of the librarian “as an image of pastoral care” (Arjona 2016, 744). By utilizing some of the best practices of pastoral care and by leaning into a lived pastoral theology, library staff managing and supporting student workers can create a staffing model where care for student workers’ souls is positioned equally as necessary as is the care of books. Re-visioning student staff management through a pastoral care lens leads to better outcomes for students, for librarians, and for the entire academic community. In a 2012 study by Sue Shaper and David Streatfield on the role of librarians in caring for the “whole pupil” in the context of secondary education, one librarian stated:

...we’re not just librarians—but teachers, social workers, security guards, life coaches, a friendly smile, a strict word, and enthuser of reading, a leader of good practice, a constant reminder to remember the basics and so much more, and often on our own. (67)

Each of these roles exist in the environment of a theological library. Added to these is the role of pastoral care provider, a distinctly different role than pastor and entirely different than psychologist. Librarians and staff in theological libraries often occupy a middle ground—an in-between space requiring knowledge of basic best practices of providing pastoral care. Pulling from research in various fields of study—educational psychology, nursing, pastoral care and counseling, and practical theology—we bring forward a new student employee management model.

Many of the concepts related to our student-centered model of student employee management comes from our direct experience. Having first completed seminary and then pursuing a library science degree, Deanna came into student worker management with a desire to support students in a holistic way after having had the experience of working in a theological library context as a student worker at two different seminaries. The age-old joke in theological studies is that

you come to seminary to have your entire worldview challenged, to crumble and fall apart into rubble, and then rebuild yourself anew. This type of spiritually demanding work is unique to the seminary experience and requires student employee managers at seminary libraries to be ever mindful of this reality by creating a safe space and solid ground upon which their student workers may land.

Jude, by contrast, earned her Master's in Library and Information Science degree first and is currently pursuing a Master of Divinity degree after several years of staff management. She recognized the pragmatic difficulties student staff wrestle with such as scheduling shifts around classes, trying to arrange shift changes for sports commitments or other required events on short notice, and making time to finish assignments without neglecting their job duties. She also noticed the emotionally draining effect these difficulties have when stacked on top of the stresses of educational requirements and maintaining family relationships. For many, challenges to beliefs and questions of vocation exponentially compounded their distress at a time when they already felt distant from the people who previously supported them. As she worked to make library employment practically easier, she also started to consider how best to meet the emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs of student staff that so frequently impact their work. Jude needed to add more education and experience in pastoral care to her focus on "student staff as students first."

Defining Influential Frameworks

What is Pastoral Care?

While there is no standard definition of pastoral care, it is important to acknowledge that one's personal theology impacts the way pastoral care is practiced. Philip Helsel (2019) describes three main goals of pastoral care from a Christian perspective: first, to make sure that people's stories are heard and listened to (and that God has been with them in these stories); second, to change the systems of a society so that more people can fully participate in decisions that matter to them; and third, for the minister to experience God's faithfulness (xv). Coming from the Reformed Protestant tradition of the Presbyterian Church (USA), walking alongside others in this faith

journey is a central part of theological practice. It is common to hear Presbyterians referring to God walking with us. For example, the Eucharist (or communion) is an outward display of the inward reality that God is here, in and amongst us, always. Taken quite literally, librarians at seminaries or theological schools are the stewards of the workings of the Spirit throughout time and place. As Paul Schrodt writes, “Alongside the classroom is the library, a parallel educational arena” (Schrodt 1996, 138). The library is a focal point in the education and training of students for various types of ministries. Education is about empowering people to act and think independently. Part of this education for student workers is their part-time employment while in school.

While it is necessary to acknowledge that not all theological library employees are part of the Reformed Protestant traditions, hold a personal faith, or fall within Christian religious traditions, these goals can be used as a starting framework for defining how pastoral care applies to managing student workers. At the heart of pastoral care practice is *koinonia*, commonly translated into English as “communion,” “community,” or “fellowship.” One of the most important parts of creating a workspace grounded in trust is to listen well and listen often. This practice can take shape in multiple ways: consistent individual check-ins with student workers, robust training procedures, clear processing guides to ensure staff members are prepared for success on the job, and fostering connections between teammates so that they have a community of peers to walk alongside. The basic premises are to show up, continue to show up, and build and maintain your community.

It is a tangible reality that every person alive carries a degree of COVID-19 trauma from the collective experiences of the past four years. There is evidence to support a growing student mental health crisis that can already be felt by, and in, those working in academia. Campus libraries need to be mindful of not only caring for the books and resources within the library but, arguably, it is more important to care for souls and the human resources that allow the library to operate efficiently. Writing in their study about the COVID-19 pandemic, disability, and compassion, Anne Parfitt, Stuart Read, and Tanvir Bush conclude that “the compassion generated in focus groups was remarkable in that it was unusual and out of step with our day-to-day experiences of higher education” (Parfitt, Read, and Bush 2021, 186). It is an unfortunate reality that the experience of higher education can often be one where individuals feel like academic minds and

nothing more; this applies to faculty, staff, and students alike. In the wake of a global health crisis in which every person has experienced some form of trauma, it is more important than ever to hold people in the fullness of their humanity. Building a sense of authentic community in and between student staff workers and their supervisors is an important first step in utilizing a pastoral care approach.

Whole Person Care as Student-Centered Staff Management

In a survey done by Sue Shaper and David Streatfield on the experience of school librarians in the UK, without asking questions related to pastoral care, many of the respondents replied with answers that point to four key components that impact their work. The areas highlighted were as follows:

- General support and positive relationships with pupils—“being there”
- Creating and maintaining the right environment—safe, welcoming, peaceful, accessible, and different from the classroom
- Contributing to social inclusion, self-esteem, and appropriate behavior
- Providing emotional support through professional engagement with individuals in a variety of ways—from encouraging reading and helping with schoolwork to fostering cultural engagement and bibliotherapy. (Shaper and Streatfield 2012, 67-68)

These same principles can be applied to managing student workers in a higher education environment. Be present with your student workers, and implement proactive and preventative pastoral care instead of being reactionary in the moment. From the disciplines of sports management and sports team chaplaincy, we can adopt a coaching leadership style of management. Coaching leadership focuses on the “being” of leadership and leading by opening the heart (Howard 2020, 41). This type of leadership focuses on building strong relationships and addressing the unique needs of each individual person on the team. No two members of your student staff team are the same and because of this, they each require a specialized management style. By employing the skills outlined in a coaching management style of leadership, you can build strong foundational relationships

with each of your student workers that will allow them to feel heard, seen, and supported in the entirety of their being.

Approaching student staff management by considering each one individually as a whole person rather than focusing solely on their role as a student worker is vital for supporting them as a library employee. Moreover, working from a student-centered framework can provide other opportunities to support student staff members' educational growth that is simultaneously beneficial to the library. Speaking individually with student staff about their academic interests might lead to displays curated by student workers, showcasing not only the student's topic of choice but library materials on the specific subject, as well as giving the student staff member the opportunity to practice researching and organizing a small collection. Showing display curators how to create signage for the digital monitor and producing a bibliography of library resources, including digital or special collections items, can broaden the experience in ways students might find beneficial for class projects or in their future careers, too. Student staff may also find and express an interest in librarianship, and projects that introduce them to other areas of library work can be fruitful for both the student and the library. Moving beyond the immediate needs of the library and incorporating the academic lives of student staff not only benefits the student staff member, but can be extremely advantageous for the library and the community.

We believe student staff should be viewed primarily as students. Having a student-centered management framework means prioritizing certain aspects of student staff management, including shaping library duties as educational opportunities relevant to their future careers, fitting training around class considerations, and finding ways to allow student staff to reschedule shifts with little advance notice as their academic or personal needs demand time away from work.

Student-Centered Pastoral Care in Practice

Student workers are essential to the day-to-day operations within academic libraries. They are an integral part of the staff and occupy a unique space as both employee and student. Part of supporting student workers is ensuring that there is a robust and well-thought-out

training program to introduce them to their role in the library. It is unfair to expect student workers to do their jobs well if they are not prepared for success.

Deanna's Institutional Context and Implementation

From September 2017 through November 2021, I worked as the Circulation and Reserves Assistant at Burke Library, one of 20 libraries within the Columbia University Library system. While working alongside student staff, and having had the experience of being amongst the student worker team at Burke, it became clear that student staff would benefit from a more focused management model. Even though there was a training program at Burke prior to my beginning this position, there was also an excellent opportunity to improve the process of onboarding the student employees. When I started my position at Burke, student staff would only get training during their first shift, being dropped into a new environment with no contextual knowledge. Having been through this minimal training myself and overwhelmed by it, I wanted to make sure the student staff I was responsible for managing felt more prepared for their first actual shift at the Circulation Desk. With only six full-time staff at Burke Library, we relied heavily upon the team of 15-20 student workers to assist in day-to-day operations.

When I arrived at Sage Library at the New Brunswick Theological Seminary in November 2021 and took over the management of student workers, it became clear to me that training for student employees was virtually non-existent. Because of this, I decided to re-configure the training model I had used at Burke Library and apply it within this new context. At the best of times, Sage Library employs three full-time staff and has a student worker team of eight to ten students, so the need for student staff to help run the library was exceptionally great. During my year at Sage, it was not uncommon for the library to be open with only one full-time staff member and one student worker on site.

In order to ensure that student workers would enter into their roles with more confidence, knowing that they could ask questions and get the necessary support from me, I implemented a version of the training program which I had previously created and utilized with Burke Library's Public Services Librarian, Caro Bratnober. This new training model included one paid 90-minute one-on-one meeting and

a paid 90-minute group “re-orientation” training with fellow teammates. During the one-on-one training, new hires received a tour of the Library, an introduction to the physical space they would occupy, a brief training on the computer systems they would use regularly, and brief introductions to the most essential functions of the job. The group training sessions included dinner, a fun quiz game about policies and procedures within the Library, practical hands-on training with Library of Congress (and Union/Pettee) classification call numbers, a group discussion talking through possible patron interaction scenarios at the Circulation Desk and how best to handle them, with time at the end to provide feedback for how the re-orientation session went. In addition to this, new student workers were encouraged to spend time during their first actual shift reviewing the Circulation Manual and were expected to continue working on computer-based call number practice quizzes until they were achieving 100% scores consistently.

These training sessions set expectations for the student workers to be respectful of themselves and their teammates by communicating proactively, asking questions if they were unsure of a procedure or policy to avoid giving out misinformation, and setting the foundation of trust to be able to come to me if life started to get heavy. In addition to these one-off training sessions, I also made it a practice every week to individually check in with each student employee to ask how things were going, both at work and in life. Writing about student library employee training, staff from University of California, Berkeley Library explain that their “training also explicitly reinforced the value of the student employees’ contributions to the mission of the library” (Quigley et al., 2021, 195). One should not assume that student staff know how essential they are, so making it known is important. My best practice is to continuously express gratitude to student workers by letting them know that I could not do my work effectively, or well, without their support and that library services would fail without the dedicated efforts of student workers. In my current context at Pitts Theology Library, Candler School of Theology, one of six libraries in the Emory University system, I manage a small team of two to three student workers who assist in processing book donations made to the library. At Pitts there are over 15 full-time staff, and the work of book donations processing is not front-facing, yet staff doing this day-to-day work are seminary students and their successful training and ongoing management applies equally.

Jude's Institutional Context and Implementation

In January of 2020, I began working at Yale Divinity Library, located in New Haven, CT. Yale Divinity Library is a unique unit of Yale University Library, located inside the Yale Divinity School building. The school comprises Yale Divinity School, Andover Newton Seminary, and Berkeley Divinity School, all on one campus, the Quad. We have eleven library staff members – six full-time librarians, three full-time paraprofessional staff, and two part-time paraprofessional staff. We also tend to have between 20 and 25 student staff, most of whom are under my direct supervision. Student staff are primarily responsible for shelving books; scanning materials for course reserves, interlibrary loan, and patron requests; and attending the circulation desk to assist patrons with checking items in or out, as well as answering directional questions.

I came in with a student-centered framework for student staff management that I developed at my previous institution, then known as Milligan College. Now called Milligan University, it is a Christian liberal arts school in Johnson City, TN. At Milligan Libraries, we had a smaller library staff but roughly the same number of student staff members, most of whom were under my direct supervision.

Part of my approach to student staff management was the creation and implementation of a “course” inside the school’s learning management system (LMS), Canvas, that provided a central, online location for student staff training, scheduling, and communication. Training was asynchronous, allowing for student staff to learn at their own pace and go back to refresh their knowledge in particularly tricky processes or infrequently invoked policies. Using quizzes, I could also track how well the students understood the material. I would then address specific needs one-on-one as I spoke with them regularly or revise the material when quiz results showed a need to better explain a subject or describe a process. The LMS also provided student staff with the ability to sign up for shifts that fit their personal schedules and communicate directly with the whole group to find shift coverage should they need to miss a shift. Despite reliance on the LMS course to provide basic training and group communication, I recognized the need for in-person, one-on-one training to reinforce areas where student staff needed more direct guidance, which was frequently different for each individual. Regularly occurring conversations with student staff during their scheduled shifts

served as check-ins to make sure everyone was working to the best of their ability to support the Library without interfering with their academic needs.

I had intended to recreate the student staff training “course” at Yale Divinity Library. While a student-centered framework for student staff management was useful under normal circumstances, it was severely insufficient to meet the moment when, two and a half months after I arrived at Yale Divinity Library, COVID-19 upset everything in March of 2020, followed quickly by pandemic-related social upheaval, eruptions of racial injustice, natural catastrophes related to climate change, warfare and civil unrest, and more. Before I could create more than a general plan for revamping student staff training, management, and support at Yale Divinity Library, students were sent home and told to remain there until further notice. Their most immediate needs shifted from academic resources for class assignments to help navigating clinical pastoral education requirements during a global health crisis and information about financial assistance for housing costs. I used the still-in-development LMS course to create an online community hub for my scattered student staff, setting up discussion boards for asking for advice or venting frustrations about the sudden shift to online learning, providing links to school information updates and support services, and listing numbers for emergency services, including mental health crisis lines. I gave out my home phone number, too, and student staff members who called to ask about timesheets or virtual private network access usually ended up starting long conversations about vexations, anxieties, losses, and other outpourings related to pandemic life. Feeling the need for further training, I did some research and discovered the Mental Health First Aid Certification, which I not only earned myself but encouraged both student and regular staff members to pursue as a personal and professional growth opportunity.

When students returned to campus, I began looking for and disseminating ways to support students’ needs to reconnect with faith communities in a still socially distanced environment. Students were also looking for new practices to help them pray and worship when they could not gather together regularly or were struggling to find the same depth of meaning in old rituals in the midst of crisis. I made and distributed prayer beads and rosaries, provided a tabletop labyrinth, and set out other prayer aids and stress-relief activities. While remaining conscious of the problems of vocational awe, i.e., the conception that libraries are sacred and of librarianship as a

holy calling and therefore beyond critique, and mission creep – the expansion of duties with no recognition, training, or support (Ettarh 2018) – that plague librarianship, I recognized the unique position academic librarians at theological institutions hold. We can look for ways our libraries can and should provide some aspects of pastoral care to students who may feel disconnected from their faith communities. Most will be far from home, and those pursuing ordination will be in the midst of significant relationship changes with their faith communities and leaders. Libraries are often seen as safe spaces and librarians are viewed as caring, knowledgeable individuals – we are in a good position to act as trustworthy people to turn to in times of personal crisis.

I began reconsidering my student-centered approach to student staff management. Information about pre-pandemic mental health crisis realities and the predicted long-term results of recent widespread traumatic events led me to recognize the need to use pastoral care as a framework for management. I began reconstructing an approach to leading student staff that still sees each as individuals and whole people including the unique emotional, mental, and spiritual strains they face as students in a theological institution. Their classwork frequently challenges their core beliefs and puts them under immense pressure even as it strives to help them grow into spiritual and academic leaders. I needed to adopt an approach to student staff management with a trauma-informed pastoral care framework. Every student working in the Library for the foreseeable future will come with a history of trauma; how and to what degree each has been impacted by their trauma will differ, and student staff managers must be prepared to address their individual needs in order to create a harmonious and productive work community.

Evolving into Trauma-Informed Pastoral Care as a Management Lens

The truth is, a student-centered pastoral care framework is simply not complete without taking into account the trauma that most, if not all, of our student staff bring with them or pick up while they are under our supervision. Management that considers the student as a whole person and incorporates pastoral care for their well-being

naturally leads to the inclusion of trauma-informed care practices, creating a new theoretical framework the authors have been intentionally exploring: trauma-informed pastoral care as a lens for student staff management.

Student staff experience the same challenges as their full-time colleagues: increased demands at work, expanded duties, fewer colleagues due to retirements and retention issues, and more responsibilities in their personal lives outside of work. It is no longer helpful to assume that undergraduate and graduate students only have their academics to worry about. Many students are working one or more part-time jobs, caring for aging or disabled family members, or assisting in caring for younger family members, all while progressing through their scholastic programs. As Hailley Fargo states, “It is not enough to simply train students on policies and procedures” (2018). Student staff need to feel supported as whole people. While it is important to make sure that library services continue, and users get the support they need, student workers also need to be given flexibility, grace, and understanding. In practice, this looks like:

- Holding student workers to the expectation that they should be at work when scheduled, while also allowing them to seek coverage when needed and to take time away from work if necessary
- Full-time professional staff participating in library projects assigned to student workers
- Allowing student workers to take ownership over the duties they are assigned, and supervisors finding the intersection of the student workers’ passion and skills and the needs of the library
- Managers modifying their management style for each individual student staff member
- Having easy-to-follow and frequently updated processing guides for each task assigned to the work
- Supervisors taking time from their days to get to know student workers on an individual level
- Building community between the student workers so that a network of support is created

Intentionally incorporating Helsel’s goals of pastoral care provides a strong foundation for framing student staff management. Building a culture of trust where student staff feel comfortable sharing their

stories and where they feel heard is important. Reviewing and revising management practices and policies to make room for student staff to participate in decision-making over their own work whenever possible matters, too. Student staff managers must also be aware of where, when, and how their work aligns with their personal beliefs, striving to shape student staff management around purpose and meaning rather than trying to shore up productivity with tips and tricks from the most recent management bestseller. There is a qualitative difference between giving gifts of gratitude to graduating student staff and giving gifts of gratitude to graduates with whom the manager has developed a caring relationship. The first is a good management practice; the second is a reminder of *koinonia*, the community or fellowship intentionally constructed and to which student staff members belong and from which they are launching into the next phase of their lives. Community is most easily built with student workers when the relationship is founded on mutual respect, transparent communication, and kindness.

Student staff managers must also be aware that events of the past few years have left no one untouched by trauma. Rev. Dr. Karen McClintock describes “the most trauma-inducing years of our adult lives” (McClintock 2022, 1) as:

... years that include millions of worldwide deaths and lockdowns due to the pandemic; job losses; food insecurity and homelessness on massive scales; exposed racial injustices; political and social unrest. Catastrophic wildfires are consuming farms, homes, and wildernesses; ice storms, tornadoes, and hurricanes are becoming more destructive, and more frequent (1).

These events have left their mark on those who have lived through them, including every student staff member who will work in an academic library for the next decade and more. They will all wrestle with “lingering traumatic shadows” (McClintock 2022, 1-2).

Trauma has two main components: 1) disruptive, painful experiences that challenge one’s core beliefs, relationships, and faith; and 2) the internal bodily response to these experiences (McClintock 2022, 2). Originating as an external experience to which one responds internally, trauma can transform into an internal experience to which one responds externally (McClintock 2022, 2). When a person who has experienced trauma is put in a situation that is similar to the original traumatic event, they may act in response to that original

event in a manner that seems inappropriate or disproportionate to the current situation, experiencing retraumatization (McClintock 2022, 8). Like pastors, librarians are not infrequently “first responders when it comes to mental and spiritual health...[who are in a position of] coming alongside people during highly stressful times” (McClintock 2022, 14), including those experiencing re-traumatization. This is especially true when the librarian in question is managing student staff members with a history of trauma who are under the intense strain inherent to higher education. Developing a work community as *koinonia* by using a pastoral care framework positions the student staff manager in the best way to help traumatized staff members avoid re-traumatization and flourish as students, as staff – holistically.

The student staff manager needs to understand what trauma-informed pastoral care entails in order to build management practices and policies on a framework which meet the needs of their particular library and its work community. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) lists four key assumptions of a trauma-informed approach:

A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed **realizes** the widespread impact of trauma and understands the potential paths for recovery; **recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and **responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively **resist re-traumatization**. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 2014, 9)

To these, McClintock adds a fifth assumption of trauma-informed pastoral care: reconnecting traumatized people with those who love them, with communities that care for them, and with their faith (McClintock 2022, 22).

We would add yet another assumption specifically for student staff managers: reflecting on particular circumstances in the library workplace. Managers are fundamental builders of the work environment their staff inhabit; academic librarians are acknowledged experts in curating, organizing, and disseminating information. Academic librarians who are student staff managers are therefore in the unique position of being able to create a safe, supportive work community where traumatized staff members can find someone

to trust who will not only listen to their stories but will help them find connections to new communities, too. As circumstances change, and as new students take on staff positions, what is necessary for creating a good work environment will change, and managers will need to adjust policies and procedures for the team as a whole as well as determine how best to manage each staff member individually. Resource lists should be reviewed and updated regularly, too, to make sure the help being offered is still available and sufficient to meet current student staff members' needs.

SAMHSA also provides six principles on which a trauma-informed approach can be built:

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and transparency
3. Peer support
4. Collaboration and mutuality
5. Empowerment, voice, and choice
6. Cultural, historical, and gender issues (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 2014, 11)

Student staff managers in academic libraries can use these principles as a foundation to build a meaningful trauma-informed pastoral care model in their specific contexts. For instance, it may mean cutting back on late-night shifts that are covered only by student staff when those students do not feel safe going home in the early morning hours. Practically speaking, student worker managers can employ a “your safety is our top priority” mindset when it comes to the expectations placed upon workers. At Burke Library, Caro and Deanna made discussing individual boundaries and capacity levels a central part of how to handle public service interactions at the Circulation Desk. This was done by making sure that each student worker knew:

- That they could triage matters up the chain of supervision if they had met their personal capacity for dealing with a specific patron issue
- Specific strategies for how to exit conversations with patrons who were overwhelming their time
- Clearly defined roles of what the student worker was expected to do, what their direct supervisor was responsible for, and what the other full-time staff members would be able to assist with

- Where the important list of contacts was for emergency services, security, and who the current resident assistants and peer chaplains were and in what circumstances to utilize those support systems

Creating this environment may mean discussing sensitive information with student staff when the repercussions of misconduct will affect their work environment. Unfortunately, it is not unheard of for library staff to be involved in theft, embezzlement, fraud, or other impropriety, frequently leading to a change in policy or procedure to prevent reoccurrence. Perhaps, hypothetically, a staff person is discovered accepting cash for fines and marking the patron's account forgiven, pocketing the money. A reasonable response to preventing such misbehavior in the future might be to require fines over a certain dollar amount to be paid at a central location by check or credit card. Staff members who are suddenly told they cannot accept cash and must send patrons elsewhere might face upset patrons who are not happy with the changes, increasing their stress significantly. If a policy change is made that impacts the work expectations of your student staff, make it a point of sharing with them the reasons behind the decision so that they have contextual understanding of why their work environment is changing - even if the reasons are not ones that can be made public. While privacy considerations are important, transparency is equally important and your student staff should understand confidentiality.

Many ways exist to involve your student employees in creating a work community that is beneficial to them as students and to the library. Student staff can be invited to use library space for community-hosted peer-support meetings; to work with librarians to create research guides on topics they find important; to help create workplace policies and procedures that will apply to themselves; or to curate pop-up exhibits of library materials on cultural, historical, gender, and other issues fraught with trauma. It is important to note that none of these hypothetical measures are outside the scope of the student staff manager's role, so there is no mission creep. Likewise, the transparency and inclusion of such measures is likely to reduce vocational awe, opening up room for criticism of the institution itself and finding ways to improve.

While the trauma-informed pastoral care model of employee management is new and not fully conceptualized yet, there are

several supportive actions presently available to librarians and library staff who are responsible for managing student workers:

- Re-evaluate your onboarding and training methods for student workers. Consider the training that currently exists and make decisions that will allow your student employees to begin working with more confidence. This is the foundation for all further work; make sure you are successful in accomplishing this first step.
- Seek the expertise of other staff members within your library or the school who might have relevant skills to help build a student-focused management model.
- Speak candidly with your student staff to learn how to improve the training process.
- Invite a cohort of full-time employees at your institution to commit to Mental Health First Aid certification, perhaps even incentivize participation. It is important to realize that this is an iterative process. You will need to revisit, review, and revise each step (and recertify) on a regular basis. Transparency and documentation are vital.
- Seek training in providing pastoral care. Audit a class or classes, or consult with your faith community leaders to see if training for lay pastoral care is available.
- Create a list of community resource providers for mental, emotional, spiritual, or material help that your students would find useful. Ask your student staff to recommend providers you may have missed. Post the list where students can find it without drawing attention to themselves.
- Let your student staff members know directly that you are there to listen should they need you.

Conclusion

While librarians are not mental health providers or spiritual directors and should not take the place of such practitioners, librarians who manage student staff are situated in a relationship position to provide a particular type of care to a group that, even under ideal circumstances, is likely to need support during a stressful and liminal

time of their lives. The pandemic, along with other concomitant and co-occurring traumatic events, was not the best of times, and required significant shifts in how student staff were managed in academic libraries. While it is not usually necessary to continue policies and procedures adopted to address emergency situations, many of the measures taken to manage student staff in a holistic framework should continue to be maintained for two key reasons: first, the expectation going forward for the next several years is that our student staff members will have histories of trauma; second, a holistic framework is one that supports student staff in what has always been a stressful time of their lives.

Adopting this framework requires much from the student staff manager. Constructing an environment where students feel supported as whole people and trust you to care for them, even under the most trying circumstances, while simultaneously working for the best interests of the library can be difficult, and maintaining a good balance takes effort. Serious reflection on personal beliefs and how those play out in the work community environment can be emotionally and spiritually taxing, especially if one's own beliefs do not align with the library's parent institution. At the same time, the work community environment should be inclusive of student staff members who will each carry unique, individual sets of beliefs. Among other considerations, it takes acceptance and cooperation from library administration and others managing student staff in the library. Creating space for openness and sharing must never become pressure to share when one is not comfortable doing so, and privacy must be respected. Moreover, training in Mental Health First Aid is imperative as a first step in learning to address the needs of traumatized students, especially in cases when re-traumatization might cause a mental health crisis. Certification is an iterative process, requiring recertification on a regular basis. Learning how to provide pastoral care is also vital for those who have not already acquired this skill. Finding time and resources for training may be difficult, especially at libraries that are already working with tight budgets and staff shortages. In addition, while using a trauma-informed pastoral care framework creates a supportive student staff management approach, it does not solve fundamental structural problems that frequently lead to trauma. Care should be taken to root out institutional classism, racism, sexism, ableism, and other harmful and intersecting systemic injustices embedded in our libraries.

Despite the difficulties, the effort is worthwhile for the results that can be achieved. By adopting a pastoral care framework, student staff managers can create a culture of trust and openness, where student staff members feel safe and heard. This approach not only leads to better outcomes for student staff but also benefits the libraries they support, fostering a culture of empathy, understanding, and respect that will echo through the entire institution. Although this shift in management mindset is not a quick or easy one, it is an essential step towards creating a nurturing and resilient work community. The reward is not just a functional team, but one that thrives in mutual support and understanding, setting the stage for all members to reach their full potential.

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