Public Libraries and Homeless LGBTQ Youth:

Creating Safe Spaces Through Cultural Competence

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, David, without whose financial and emotional support, ideas, walks, travel arrangements, endless errand running, and love I would never have been able to finish.

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Abstract

This social justice research case study was conducted in an effort to understand the role of the public library in the daily lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) homeless youth. Concerns about the influences of space, power, human rights, and marginalization informed the researcher and served as critical guides. To gain insight into this question, one-on-one interviews were conducted with public librarians, service providers who work with homeless youth, and the youth themselves. Grounded theory provided a basis for the analysis of the collected conversations.

Six theoretical concepts of time, attitude, building relationships, welcoming, feeling safe and cultural competence, and the two core categories of creating safety and developing cultural competence emerged from the data. Out of these, came the final theoretical scheme*: In order for the Library to be able to provide relevant materials and services to the homeless LGBTQ youth, it is necessary for the Library to be perceived as an emotionally safe and welcoming space by both the youth and the service providers. In addition, the librarians need to feel both physically and emotionally safe in providing this space. To create this safety requires shared cultural competence between the Library and the other two groups*. This theoretical scheme offers guidance to librarians committed to the human rights issue of LGBTQ youth homelessness and interested in providing appropriate services.

Suggestions for future research include extending this research to other cities and libraries; developing and piloting cultural competence training for all three groups; further research into existing partnerships between public libraries and service providers for homeless LGBTQ youth; research focusing on public libraries and the lives and needs of homeless transgender youth, as well as other underserved populations; and, research that examines services

to young adults, ages 18 to 24, whose specific needs are not currently being routinely addressed by public libraries.

Preface

It will be obvious to anyone reading this dissertation where my heart is - I fully support the idea of the social responsibilities of public librarians and I consider reaching out to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) homeless youth an act of social responsibility. However, I am also aware of the disagreement over this issue and I am willing to hear the reasons for any reluctance to combine social justice and librarianship. Public librarians are severely underappreciated in our society, and along with this underappreciation comes relatively low salaries, less social capital, and isolation from the larger ideas that challenge our society. As a result, few people understand what librarians do and the critical role they play in the everyday lives of Americans. In addition, this kind of underappreciation can lead to bitterness and an inflexible cleaving to basic rules and policies. Part of my interest in this topic is an effort to show how important public librarians are and how the work they do could be supported and embraced by others who are equally dedicated to their jobs. This kind of collaboration is already being done on a small scale, here and there, usually without much fanfare but with heartening results.

The reading and research I have done for this project has changed me, just as returning to graduate school did. I found a quote that seemed to summarize much of what I have experienced in the past four years in school and in the last two years as I studied this topic. In *Geographies of Identity and Difference: Marking Boundaries*, Pratt (1999) describes Minnie Bruce Pratt's 1984 narrative of travel and discovery: "At the end of the narrative, Pratt is living as a solitary, white, lesbian woman in an African-American neighborhood in Washington DC, choosing this residential location, in part, as a vehicle for continuously destabilizing her sense of identity" (p.157). I love this idea of a destabilized identity, because I can see that my identity has shifted -

it has been destabilized - not just as a librarian, student and researcher, but also as a straight woman who identifies as a woman and yet has always had questions about the roles and expectations laid at the feet of females in our society. I would like to shake these loose and have been slowly doing that as I continue my research and conversations about gender in particular. It is challenging to be in between - in two worlds, really - the world I grew up in and the world I'm trying to become a part of as I shed my expectations.

This destabilization has also led to an increased discomfort on my part with the traditional binary vocabulary of male/female. However, I have been unable to find a workable alternative, although I have certainly spent time looking. There have been - and continue to be - efforts to introduce gender-free pronouns into the English language, but none of them are widely accepted. So for the purposes of this research I have chosen to use male or female pronouns when it is clear the person being discussed identifies that way, and otherwise, as much as possible, I have chosen to use s/he and hir - thereby probably transferring some of my discomfort to my readers, since on the whole we are a society uncomfortable with gender fluidity or ambiguity. But it makes me happy.

Finally, I have found in social justice qualitative research the voices I did not know I was seeking. When I read *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, all of the editions, it is as if I were invited to a cocktail party, expecting nothing except perhaps excellent cocktails and some entertaining conversations. Instead, I found myself on a picket line, with activists who were demonstrating for a cause in which I believe. Phrases like "critical theory" and "social action" and words like "margins" and "otherness" provided not only a language for my feelings and ideas, but they also gave me peace and the relief of shared concerns.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Problem Statement

"Re-departure: the pain and frustration of having to live a difference that has no name and too many names already. Marginality: who names? whose fringes?…" (Min-Ha, 1991, p.14).

"We must create a home for our LGBT youth. This home is an inner and outer dwelling where life is understood and respected in a safe place within mainstream culture" (Goldman, 2008, Introduction, p.xxvii).

The numbers of homeless youth in the United States are daunting. According to the Center for American Progress, as of June 21, 2010, there were approximately 1.6 million to 2.8 million homeless young people in the United States. Of these, it was estimated that 20 to 40% were lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ), compared to an estimated 5 to 10% of the overall youth population - obviously a disproportionate number. This percentage means that at least 320,000 to 400,000 LGBTQ youth face homelessness each year.

This case study was conducted in an effort to understand the role of the public library in the lives of these youth. Whether or not there was a role was examined, as well as any barriers that existed. This chapter offers the reasons for this research. They include concerns about societal attitudes toward space, power, access to information, social exclusion, otherness, the social responsibilities of public librarians, human rights and the general lack of knowledge about what a public library offers to its community. All of these were identified as potential barriers to meaningful library access for the homeless LGBTQ youth in this study. These beginning concerns are what Charmaz (2006) called "sensitizing concepts that address such concepts as

power, global reach, and difference" (p.133). This research used the inductive analyses of grounded theory to highlight the connections between the case study at hand and these larger societal concerns.

Space and Power

Space and power play significant roles in the lives of homeless LGBTQ youth. *Space* because we all occupy space and yet how we occupy it, how it is built to allow us to occupy it and how welcome we are in that space are all part of the hegemony of our society. Hou (2010) described this when he said: "By delineating what constitutes public and private and by designating membership to specific social norms, the official public sphere has long been exclusionary" (p.3). *Power* because those who make decisions about the use of the space and the attendant materials and resources that may come along with it, such as in a public library, are affected by the power structure that mandates what is acceptable and what is not. Wilchins (2002b) alluded to this power when describing being genderqueer in a heterosexual society: "It's about power. By creating notions of realness and dividing bodies along a binary of real/false, bodies like mine are kept disempowered" (p.41).

The status quo in the United States is adulthood, heterosexuality and being safely domiciled in a way that allows the privileged to lead their private lives in private. To live outside of this sphere is to be judged or at least gauged for worthiness and acceptance. In *Geographies of Exclusion*, Sibley (1995) described the attitudes of those who designed space with a particular population in mind:

> There is a connection between the function and design of the space as determined by commercial interests and design professionals, architects and planners, and the construction of one group of the population as 'deviant', out of place, and threatening the

projected image of the development. (Introduction, p.xii)

However, this connection is subtle. This is not a targeted and malicious campaign to ostracize those who are left out of the mainstream. It is, instead, a relative positioning that allows those in power, whether they know it or not, to impose their values on others, just as those values were imposed on them. Bourdieu (1998) alluded to this when he described the social space and his principles of differentiation:

> Social space is constructed in such a way that agents or groups are distributed according to their position in statistical distributions based on the *two principles of differentiation*, which in the most advanced societies, such as the United States…are undoubtedly the most efficient: economic capital and cultural capital. It follows that all agents are located in space in such a way that the closer they are to one another in those two dimensions, the more they have in common; and the more remote they are from one another, the less they have in common. (p.7)

In public libraries, the effects of these distributions are clearly demonstrated by the architecture of the building, the displays and interior design, the materials and resources offered, the public conduct policies and the library staff themselves. Many American public libraries are designed to accommodate and serve a domiciled, able-bodied, heterosexual, English-speaking, Christian and literate public, capable of reading the signs, using the computers, staying awake, arriving showered and well-fed, and interested primarily in the programs and materials that support their domiciled family lives. It should not be a surprise that public libraries are like this because they are created, supported and staffed by those who belong to this same group, who are close together in that social space and who recognize each other. But even those who fall outside

of the limited group, such as gay and lesbian librarians, are still swayed by the power outside of themselves. As Bourdieu (1998) explained:

> Domination is not the direct and simple action exercised by a set of agents ("the dominant class") invested with powers of coercion. Rather, it is the indirect effect of a complex set of actions engendered within the network of intersecting constraints which each of the dominants, thus dominated by the structure of the field through which domination is exerted, endures on behalf of all the others. (p.34)

One result of domination is the social exclusion of various groups of people, in this case, homeless LGBTQ youth. The impact social exclusion has on this group has been well documented by those who have observed and interviewed them, and includes risky behavior, low self-esteem, suicide ideation and depression. These characteristics match well with the description by Hutchison, Abrams and Christian (2007), when they described the effects of being socially excluded:

> Exclusion challenges people's fundamental need to belong to a social unit. It causes a number of dysfunctional reactions including lowered self-esteem, greater anger, inability to reason well, depression and anxiety, and self-defeating perceptions and behaviors. Being excluded also evokes antisocial and aggressive responses, most likely because of the threat it poses to people's need for control. Other responses are more passive and include withdrawal or self-harm, whereas more constructive responses include trying harder to engage with the majority or conforming more strongly to relevant norms. (p.29)

Ironically, homeless LGBTQ youth, unlike visibly homeless adults, are able to "pass" as domiciled and perhaps even straight or gender-conforming. For instance, passing as domiciled

was one of the goals of Cedar, a homeless gay teenager. Cedar explained that, even though he loved using the Library, he did not go every day:

> Um, just because like, that's my biggest thing, you know I shower every day, brush my teeth every day, try to have good hygiene, you know, try to look presentable, but if you see me on a day-to-day, day-to-day basis it's hard, because like, I wear the same thing. So I try not to come here [the Library] every day, um, every few days and, um, so I would I would be surprised if anybody here knew I was homeless.

The ability to pass allows LGBTQ homeless youth to find sanctuary in a library or other public space away from the rigors of street life, but it also adds to their isolation by effectively hiding their identities.

In addition, this invisibility also makes it extremely challenging for those outside their social sphere, such as the public librarians, to provide relevant and critical resources. The youth and the librarians are at cross-purposes: The youth are hiding who they are and the librarians need to know more so they can offer help. The irony of this is that although in some ways this passing makes their lives more tolerable, in the long run it contributes to their exclusion, not simply by keeping them hidden, but also by becoming part of that "complex set of actions" that allows for the domination and resulting disparities to exist.

For many of these young people, it was a lack of invisibility that led to their lives on the street in the first place. According to some sources, as many as 40% of LGBTQ youth who either come out or are outed to their parents or caretakers are kicked out of their homes. This statistic certainly gives them an increased hesitancy to reveal themselves again. The impact of this kind of rejection puts them even more at risk, as Hutchison et al. (2007) pointed out:

> Among the people Durkheim identified as being most at risk [of suicide] are those that are extremely individuated, have limited linkages to family and community, are perceived as misfits, are alienated, and/or suffer from thwarted opportunities…In contrast, strong family ties (Compton, Thompson & Kaslow, 2005)…[are] associated with a sense of belonging or connectedness, which can buffer negative thought processes and self-defeating behaviors." (p.35)

Homeless LGBTQ youth are extremely individuated, by their sexual orientation or gender identity and by their very homelessness. Their linkages to family are, in many cases, stretched or severed, leaving them without the sanctuary of home. They are misfits in many ways, again by sexual orientation or gender identity and, as many cases have shown, they have been murdered for their differences. Their power and their voices have become muted.

Social exclusion can emerge from the concept of "otherness" - being different from what is considered the norm. Mallon and Woronoff (2006) discussed the concept of other in relation to LGBTQ youth:

> As long as LGBT children, youth, and families are viewed as a "them," the burden falls on LGBT persons to do all the work necessary for sound gender and sexual orientation relations. Traditionally, in American society, the members of oppressed, marginalized groups are expected to stretch out and bridge the chasm between the actualities of their lives and the consciousness of those whom oppress them. LGBT persons are frequently expected to educate the heterosexual world about their lives. This expectation permits those who subjugate LGBT children, youth, and families to maintain their positions of power and evade responsibility for their own actions. The implications of this approach is

> that only a certain American can define what it means to be American - and the rest must simply "fit in." (p.121)

Train, a caseworker at the Phoenix Resource Center (PRC), one of the Juniper Youth Services (JYS) drop-in sites, reiterated this idea, when asked about increasing cultural competence among professionals - like doctors and librarians - who work with people who identify as transgender. S/he explained:

> I don't feel like it's very appropriate to be learning about a population through that population themselves as they're coming in. I feel like it's really important to learn about that themselves, so, to read books, and to get to know people who are trans, not just for the purpose of, you know, educating themselves, but knowing people who are trans so as to demystify it as being this othering experience for them, like this unknown. It's like people are just normal like everyone, you know. Normal with their, whatever problems they might have.

This idea is explored further in Chapter Two, in the discussion of the heteronormative attitudes of society and in Chapter Five, with the discussion of cultural alterity and the role it plays in this topic.

Why Public Libraries

One could ask why public librarians should be concerned about a group that chooses to remain invisible and certainly represents a small percentage of the population they serve. One way to understand is to examine the relationship between human rights and public libraries. Amnesty International (2012) defined human rights as: "Basic rights and freedoms that all people are entitled to regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, language, or other status." These basic freedoms and rights should apply to the approximately

400,000 homeless LGBTQ youth in the United States, yet these rights are abridged by their poverty, their youth, their lack of social and family support, and their willingness to live outside the expected gender norms.

In their article "Human Rights and Librarians," Phenix and de la Peña McCook (2005) explore and explain the connection between this idea and public libraries: "Librarians have long been aware of the many ways human rights values intersect with the values of our profession…Human rights values permeate library policies beyond the professional round tables inhabited by intellectual freedom, social responsibility, and international relations" (p.24). These two authors and many more have been active in creating a convincing discourse on the responsibilities of public libraries as social actors in a world that can seem tilted toward the haves versus the have-nots.

However, as public libraries continue to espouse the idea of responding to the stated needs of their communities, it is easy to see why the idea of creating programs and providing resources to a small voiceless group could be ignored. So it is important to also remember that one of the basic tenets of librarianship is to aim toward a goal of access for all, with a nod toward the democratic nature of public libraries. This was described in the American Library Association's Policy 61, which provided suggestions for ways libraries could help those who are struggling in society. The introduction to the policy was as follows:

> The American Library Association promotes equal access to information for all persons, and recognizes the urgent need to respond to the increasing number of poor children, adults, and families in America. These people are affected by a combination of limitations, including illiteracy, illness, social isolation, homelessness, hunger, and discrimination, which hamper the effectiveness of traditional library services. Therefore it

> is crucial that libraries recognize their role in enabling poor people to participate fully in a democratic society, by utilizing a wide variety of available resources and strategies. Concrete programs of training and development are needed to sensitize and prepare library staff to identify poor people's needs and deliver relevant services. And within the American Library Association the coordinating mechanisms of programs and activities dealing with poor people in various divisions, offices, and units should be strengthened, and support for low-income liaison activities should be enhanced. (ALA, 2010)

It is worth noting the words "traditional library service" in this description, because those three words lie at the heart of the discomfort many librarians feel in dealing with those outside their comfort zones. The word traditional, in particular, seems to highlight differences between those who are easily served and those who may not be served as well. The implication is that librarians must step outside the role they are used to and help those who have been, due to their own limitations, excluded from the "normal" library services, thereby supporting the notion of "other."

In addition, information itself is a powerful tool and those who are unable to access it in a meaningful way are rendered powerless and voiceless. In her discussion of social justice research, Charmaz (2005) stated: "…Present, partial, or absent resources…influence interactions and outcomes. Such resources include information…Thus, information and power are crucial resources…" (p.513). Homelessness in particular can make information inaccessible, particularly in public libraries, where barriers to access can include being required to have a permanent address.

Historically, there has been - and continues to be - a struggle in the library world between those librarians who would "accept our moral responsibility to commit ourselves to social and

political issues such as war, poverty and racism" (Nelson, 1987, p. 131), and those who challenge this idea of "too much emphasis on social issues" and who are "looking for a place to go that deals with their concerns within the library world" (personal communication, November 2, 2009). Using long interviews and grounded theory, this research offers an opportunity to hear the voices of the librarians who struggle with the concept of human rights, social responsibility and librarianship, and the challenges of balancing their daily responsibilities against the needs of an almost invisible population. In addition, by using interviews with the professionals who work with homeless youth, as well as the homeless youth themselves, it provides background on the needs of these youth and the ways in which these librarians could play a part in meeting these needs if they so chose.

What the Public Library Means

One final barrier to the use of the public library by the homeless LGBTQ youth was the dearth of knowledge about the Library. The conversations with the service providers and the homeless LGBTQ youth made it clear they did not understand what the Library could offer. Throughout the research, there were numerous epiphanies about this topic. One particularly enlightening exchange was with the previously mentioned caseworker, Train. S/he made hirself available twice and the interviews with hir provided valuable insight into the lives of the homeless youth, the work of the service providers and any intersections with the Library. However, when asked whether or not it would be useful for the City Library to offer access to a list of doctors who were culturally competent about transgender issues, s/he was confused. After being offered an explanation that included the example of a librarian offering a list of retirement homes to a patron seeking one for a parent, Train responded: "Oh, sure. That would be great. *It sounds like the library is more than just books, then. It's more like a resource center?*" [Italics

added for emphasis] It was moments like this that underscored the importance of this research. Train was an important intermediary between the youth and the services they sought. Without a clear understanding from hir about what the City Library could offer, s/he would not be sending them there to ask questions or to look for resources. The meaning s/he attached to the word "library" affected not only hir, but the youth and even the librarians, because the librarians needed to know about their communities - who they were, what they needed and how they were able to receive library services.

Finally, it is hoped the insights provided will help public librarians and those who support public libraries to understand the complexities of addressing the ongoing needs of a group that falls outside the normal service expectations. How public librarians choose to use their power and their spaces is a topic that has myriad applications for the future of public libraries and is therefore worthy of this close examination.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

"Surviving queer, no matter how invisible, often requires knowing how to travel across hostile territory - whether it be physical, emotional, cultural or theoretical" (Ingram, 1997, p.27)

The topic of LGBTQ youth homelessness and public libraries is a complex one. This chapter reviews the literature that helps to tell this story. It provides insight into LGBTQ youth, homelessness, statistics, vocabulary, public libraries, public spaces and the social responsibilities of librarians. It highlights ways public libraries are already providing the kinds of resources used by this population. It is only by bringing together these disparate parts can there be an understanding of the role of public libraries in the lives of homeless LGBTQ youth.

LGBTQ Youth

One way to approach the topic of LGBTQ homeless youth is to begin with a description of LGBTQ youth themselves, including the challenges they face in a society that has been slow to accept those outside what could be called the norm. As mentioned in Chapter One, LGBTQ youth - and adults - have historically been considered as "other" in a society that is reluctant to accept and embrace differences. This othering and the effect it has on youth in particular plays a large part in the lives of the LGBTQ homeless youth, and some understanding of what it means and how it happens may help to shed light on the challenges they face every day.

Vocabulary. A vocabulary lesson offers an introduction to this subject, since many of the terms that are used may not be clear to those who are unaccustomed to them. It is also worth noting many of the books and articles that address the topic of LGBTQ youth include a glossary (see Appendix A for an example of such a glossary). The fact this seems necessary can perhaps give insight into the lack of information that exists for the librarians and any others who are

engaged in helping this group. As Mallon (2010) pointed out, “there is a constantly changing argot” (p.13); however becoming familiar and comfortable with some of the terms currently in use will be a first step toward greater understanding and acceptance.

Gender and sex, in particular, need to be defined as clearly as possible, since they are frequently used interchangeably. Gender, which is not the same as sex, is not biological, it is social. According to Marksamer, Spade and Arkles (2011): “Gender identity or core gender refers to a person’s internal, deeply felt sense of being male or female” (p.10). As explained in the *Sacramento State Pride Center Ally Training Manual* (2010), “**Gender Identity** is a person’s sense of their own gender, which is communicated to others by their **Gender Expression**. Since most people conform to societal gender norms, they have a Gender Identity congruent with their gender Expression” (“Gender Variance,” p.19). Namaste (2000) used the term transgender as an umbrella term, referring to “all individuals whose gendered self-presentation (evidenced through dress, mannerisms, and even physiology) does not correspond to the behaviors habitually associated with the members of their biological sex” (p.1).

A transgender girl or transwoman is a person whose assigned birth sex was male but who understands herself to be female and desires to live her life as a girl or woman. A transgender boy or transman is a person whose assigned birth sex was female but who understands himself to be male and desires to live his life as a boy or man. Transgender people may begin to understand or publicly express their core gender at various points in their lives, from as young as age three or four to elderly and everywhere in between. Many transgender people have medical treatments to change their physical bodies to better match their core gender but not all. Some people are gender fluid - their gender expressions fall aside of the stereotypes society has created about being male or female and they do not consistently identify with either one. Being gender non-

conforming, transgender, gender fluid, gender queer or any of the other terms that are used, does not say anything about a person's sexual orientation, since people who are gender non-conforming can be gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual or asexual.

Sex, unlike gender, is biological - a person's sex is a reflection of his or her sexual organs and the majority of people can be described as male or female. However, about one in 2,000 babies are born with a sexual or reproductive anatomy and/or chromosome pattern that is not typically male or female. People who fall into this category - and there are many variations on this - are currently called intersex, to replace the obsolete and offensive term hermaphrodite. None of the participants in this study identified themselves as intersex, but it is worth briefly mentioning the topic, since people who are intersex also experience social exclusion, misunderstandings and mistreatment. As explained on the Intersex Australia website:

> Our differences are the subject of constant erasure by a society that harbors a deep homophobic fear, even hatred, of our biology. We are the subjects of constant medical experimentation that has the primary aim of eliminating our differences from the ways it is possible to be human.

This kind of social exclusion, much of it based on a lack of accurate information, applies to sexual minorities in general. While youth who are intersex or who identify as gender nonconforming, such as transgender, have an increased risk of being ostracized, LGBTQ youth who identify as bisexual, lesbian, gay or even asexual are also likely to feel out of place in a binary, heterosexist culture. In their research with 748 Australian teenagers who identified as LGBTQ, Hillier and Harrison (2004) found that:

> All of the young people expressed that their sexual feelings were regarded as perverse in their culture…Over half had been verbally and/or physically abused because of their

> sexuality and, unlike information about heterosexual safe sex, less than one in ten had been able to access information about gay and lesbian safe sex from schools or the family. (p.82)

Namaste (2000) gave practical examples of the challenges facing transgendered people in their daily lives. She pointed out that "very few of the monographs, articles and books written about us deal with the nitty-gritty realities of our lives, our bodies, and our experience of the everyday world" (p.1). Her examples included finding a doctor; electrolysis; looking for a job; losing a lover; perfecting the art of binding breasts; trying to get a date; visiting the hospital; attending funerals; and, obtaining legal documents (p.2). Participants at the 2011 LGBTQIAA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and Allies) Western Regional Conference in Berkeley, California, echoed these kinds of experiences and issues. Conversations in one workshop centered on such topics as where to get hormones (Planned Parenthood), losing lovers after transitioning, and whether or not to have "top" surgery (double incision or bilateral mastectomy). The kind of practical information that was exchanged in this workshop gave insight into the real lives of these real people, away from gender theories or academic jargon (personal communication, March 5, 2011). As Namaste (2000) put it:

> These are the activities of our day-to-day, the fabric of how our bodies are located in, and move through, the world. Although banal, these events merit consideration: anything less produces a knowledge of little practical relevance to our lives, reinforcing a world that treats transsexual and transgendered people as inconsequential. (p.2)

The next section offers some statistics as one way to gain insight into the challenges faced by LGBTQ youth. But it is important to point out two aspects of the picture created by these numbers that need to be emphasized. First, sexual minority youth are put at risk by the

behavior of others, not themselves. That is, it is a lack of acceptance that makes them a vulnerable population, not their sexual orientations or gender identities. As with other kinds of bigotry and intolerance, the root causes lie in societal attitudes. These youth are homeless not *because* they are LGBTQ, but because their identities were found unacceptable. As one homeless teen pointed out in the series of videos produced by Moennig (2008): "I'm only at risk because society puts me at risk." Or as Warwick, a teenager in Hillier and Harrison's (2004) study explained, when asked about the way society looks at his sexuality: "Society makes it not great so I don't feel great. If society accepted it, I would feel great (Warwick, 15 years)" (p.89).

Wilchins (2002a) addressed this same issue when describing the daily impact of being genderqueer:

> As a system of meanings in which we participate each day, gender also feels exquisitely personal. So when someone gender-bashes or gender-baits us, we think, *It's my own fault. If only I were more butch, if only I were more femme, if only I were taller, shorter, slimmer, heavier, had smaller breasts or larger muscles…if only I'd dressed or acted or felt differently, this never would have happened to me*. We blame ourselves and so we try to change ourselves. (p.14)

Second, it is important to acknowledge that even though some statistics may give insight into the lives of these youth, it is critical to pull away from the idea they are victims. Driver (2008) expressed this beautifully:

> When queer youth are included within educational, psychological, and social science literature, their marginalized social status is often emphasized in ways that construct them as victims…The negative effects of subordination become the focal point of research in which queer youth are defined reactively against the dominant systems and denied

the chance to exceed hegemonic discursive influences. (p.3)

A good example of the language and descriptions that are used for LGBTQ youth is a quote from a 2002 article in the *American Journal of Public Health*. In the introduction to their study of the challenges faced by homeless sexual minorities, the authors offered this paragraph:

> Among adolescents in general, GLBT youths are more vulnerable to health and psychological problems than are heterosexual youths. Many are victims of parental physical abuse, are substance abusers, and have both mental and general physical health problems. These problems may be amplified for GLBT youths who become homeless. (Cochran, Stewart, Ginzler and Cauce, p.773)

While the information presented in this introduction is probably accurate and fits well with much of the offerings related to the lives of LGBTQ youth, it is also clear the repeated use of descriptions like this without any ameliorating language can present a view of this population that is disempowering and one-dimensional. In keeping with the sentiment expressed by Driver (2008), it is essential to balance the reality of the lives of LGBTQ youth, in particular those who are homeless, with the knowledge that each one of these young people is unique. Any effort to normalize them or to create the impression that only by fitting in will they be able to flourish as individuals must be carefully examined and, one hopes, rejected. As Driver pointed out, “Even the most well-meaning attempts to help queer youth often fall prey to patronizing efforts to impose healthy ‘normative’ ideals in order to simplify their complexities for the sake of mainstream recognition” (p.5). For LGBTQ homeless youth this is doubly true, since there is an equal pressure on people who are experiencing homelessness to behave properly and in a socially acceptable manner so they can be tolerated or even incorporated into the mainstream.

Conversely, acknowledging one's identity and making it visible can create the opportunity to be powerful and free of stigma. Shelton (2008) expressed it like this:

> Before a person can identify oneself outwardly as a member of a community, s/he must be able to comfortably identify and accept oneself inwardly as a valuable individual…When shame is stripped from one's identity, s/he feels worthy of a voice and claims the power to use that voice. (p.81)

Part of this identity process includes choosing a name or description that feels comfortable and appropriate. Terms such as genderqueer, genderneutral, pansexual, omnisexual and gender fluid reflect the creativity and freedom to self-describe. Cedar, one of the homeless youth in this case study, called himself "gay, genderqueer and pansexual," because he did not identify with the stereotypical views of either males or sexual orientation in our society.

These terms can be contrasted with the word cisgender, which is not regularly used by those who can be so identified. The Sacramento State Pride Center (2010a) defined cisgender as: "A gender identity that society considers to match the biological sex assigned at birth. The prefix cis- means on this side of or not across from. A term used to call attention to the privilege of people who are not transgendered" (p.8). This act of giving a name to the dominant culture serves as a way of creating parity between the majority and minority and thereby lessening the stigma attached to identifying as outside a majority view. That is, both groups are identified, moving away from the idea that the minority only exists as a negative of the majority. By using the term cisgender, gender rather than transgender becomes the focus, thereby weakening the power of those who might see someone who is transgender as deviant. One could say this kind of naming helps to re-define the center and creates an altogether different kind of picture. An

illustration of this could be a bicycle wheel, in which the hub is simply the word gender and the spokes all lead to variations on that word.

Keeping all of this in mind, a picture can be created that will help create an awareness of the challenges faced by these youth. The statistics can serve as not a description or summary of their lives, but instead as indicators of the work society in general needs to do to reduce the risks to LGTBQ homeless youth and to allow each one of them to be proud of who they are and what they can contribute.

The numbers. A good place to start for statistics is PFLAG - Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays and Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning People. As indicated by their name, this nationwide organization provides education and support for parents, families and friends of those who identify as LGBTQ. The Phoenix chapter of PFLAG offers an information sheet called "Today's Gay Youth: The Ugly, Frightening Statistics" (n.d.). Some examples included:

- Suicide is the leading cause of death among gay and lesbian youth.
- Approximately 28% of gay and lesbian youth drop out of high school because of discomfort (due to verbal and physical abuse) in the school environment.
- Gay students hear anti-gay slurs as often as 26 times each day; faculty intervention occurs in only about 3% of those cases.
- Gays and lesbians are the most frequent victims of hate crimes.
- Approximately 40% of homeless youth are identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual.
- In a study of male teenagers self-described as gay or bisexual, 27% moved away from home because of conflict with family members over sexual orientation. About half had run away at least once.

The last two bullet points are examples of the many statistics and stories about homeless LGBTQ youth. The next section addresses this issue in particular. However, before moving on, one more point needs to be made and that is the idea of defining a group of people by what they are not or do not have. As an outgrowth of a society that seems focused on housing status and heterosexuality, it is important to highlight the ways in which many descriptions of the out-groups are based not on their strengths but on their perceived lacks. For example, a person who is experiencing homelessness is someone who is defined by not having a home or a person who identifies as gay or lesbian is defined by not being straight. This tendency to create what Wilchins (2002b) called a "binary" is about power. As Wilchins put it:

> It should surprise no one that binaries are about power, a form of doing politics through language. Binaries create the smallest possible hierarchy of one thing over another. They are not really about two things, but only one…The second term of a binary exists only to support the first term. Thus Woman functions not as an equal half but as a support and prop, derivative and dependent on Man. So both terms of the binary are really about the first. (pp.43-44)

It is difficult to get around this use of language because this research *is* about these binaries; in particular, youth/adult, queer/straight and homeless/domiciled. But it is hoped an awareness of this power dynamic will soften the impact of accepting these constructs and possibly provide much-needed insight into ways in which they can be deconstructed and challenged.

Homelessness

"I'm one of y'all" (Homeless focus group participant, when asked what he wanted librarians to know about him)

A homeless person can be defined as someone "who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence" (PBS, 2009). It is difficult to know how many people in the United States fall into this category, since "as a result of methodological and financial constraints, most studies are limited to counting people who are in shelters or on the streets" (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009). However, according to the "National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty," each year more than 3 million people experience homelessness. Much research has been done on this topic, in the United States and elsewhere. In fact, all large urban areas are trying to cope with the challenges of providing services and housing to people who are experiencing homelessness.

The biggest needs are employment and affordable housing, in conjunction with health, safety and security issues. The housing itself requires yet another a vocabulary lesson, since there are terms that form the basis for serving the needs of those who are experiencing homelessness. The basic terms include those used for describing people who are homeless, as well as describing housing and services that may or may not be available.

Vocabulary.

The first term is chronic homelessness, which is federally defined as:

> either (1) an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR (2) an unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. (HUD, 2007)

This term refers to a homeless adult but adulthood can start at 18, so this applied to a percentage of the homeless youth served by JYS. “Throwaway youth” is another term that can apply to this population. This term is defined as:

> A term used to describes two types of circumstance: 1) A child who is asked or told to leave home by a parent or other household adult, without adequate alternative care being arranged for the child by a household adult, and with the child out of the household overnight; or 2) A child who is away from home and is prevented from returning home by a parent or other household adult, without adequate alternative care being arranged for the child by a household adult, and the child is out of the household overnight. (NRCDV, 2011)

Besides the terms used to describe the youth themselves, there is also a vocabulary that pertains to housing. Included in this are affordable housing, emergency housing, transitional housing and supportive housing. Because the youth are accessing or trying to access various kinds of housing, it is important to define these terms. The American Library Association Toolkit, titled “Extending Our Reach: Reducing Homelessness Through Library Engagement” (American Library Association, 2012) offers definitions for these and other phrases that are used in the world of homeless youth and homelessness in general. These definitions are offered in Appendix B.

There are other terms that relate to the interactions between the social services and these youth. Included in these are: Continuum of care, case management, harm reduction and caseworker. Definitions for these terms are also in Appendix B. These terms, especially caseworker, transitional and emergency housing and harm reduction are ones that have reoccurred over the course of this research. They are the language of homelessness and it is

difficult not to consider the importance of this new vocabulary for these youth. When one comes from a stable, loving and accepting home, these words are unnecessary, because their meanings are built into the structure of the environment. Housing is permanent - there is no need for emergency or transitional housing. A parent is the caseworker - providing emergency assistance, advocacy and the myriad other duties willingly and appropriately offered up in the course of a young person's life growing up. Harm reduction is just another way of saying "We accept you for who you are" and these are words that should be on the lips of every parent. The need for this vocabulary lesson offers insight into another world, where assumptions have been left far behind and where these young people need to speak an unnatural but necessary tongue as they strive to make their way. It is part of their education as they learn about the culture of homelessness.

Social exclusion. In addition, there is the stigma of living outside what is considered normal. As described in Chapter One, the feelings of being stigmatized and socially excluded play a large role in a person's emotional and mental attitudes. According to Mason-Whitehead and Mason (2007):

> Stigma has its roots in individual and group 'differences.' The pain and emotional hurt experienced by the stigmatized person is linked to others' pity, fear, disgust and disapproval of this difference, whether the difference is one of personality, physical appearance, illness and disability, age, gender or sexuality. (p.60)

For the homeless LGBTQ youth, the "difference" is primarily that of gender and sexuality, although being a teenager in American society can carry its own stigma. Mason-Whitehead and Mason (2007) summed up the impact of this social exclusion and stigmatizing, by pointing out that "the impact of stigma and social exclusion can be devastating, leading to low self-esteem, poor social relationships, isolation, depression and self-harm" (p.60). These

outcomes mirror the earlier descriptions of LGBTQ adolescents, both domiciled and homeless. It is necessary to mention again that these bleak descriptions present only the challenging aspect of the lives of queer homeless youth - these youth are not defined by these characteristics.

Clapham (2007) stressed that homelessness may be a consequence of social exclusion, as well as a cause. He made the connection between social exclusion and the disadvantages that come out of social exclusion. As he said: "It is clear that social disadvantage is one predisposition of homelessness. Of course, this does not mean that all disadvantaged people become homeless and there needs to be a trigger that impacts on the housing situation" (p.83). One of the triggers he mentioned is " a young person being thrown out of the family home" (p.83), an apt description of many of the youth being described in this research.

Another point that is frequently made about homelessness is the dichotomy of choice versus societal influences. Clapham (2007) described this dichotomy as the minimalist discourse versus the maximalist discourse. Implicit within the minimalist discourse is that homelessness is caused by the "personal shortcomings of the homeless people themselves," while the maximalist discourse lays the cause of homelessness at the feet of societal forces, such as government agencies (p.81). These two attitudes are pervasive - it is not uncommon to hear a member of the domiciled public either supporting or blaming a homeless person for their homeless status. In her article about homelessness and social exclusion, Walsh (2006) gave insight into this:

> The notion that social exclusion results from the moral failure of the individual seems popular within the community…In Australia, the idleness, precarious moral status and fraudulent tendencies of the excluded are commonly cited by the federal government to justify the expansion of mutual obligation requirements…Ultimately, blame falls on the

excluded themselves, who are said to have *failed to include themselves in social life*. (p.195)

The idea of failing to include oneself in social life can also be applied to LGBTQ youth. The assumption made by many people, especially in regards to transgender youth (and adults) is that this change is by choice and not because aligning one's physical self with one's gender is a natural step for any person. Both of these attitudes are good examples of the challenge of being both homeless and LGBTQ in a society with a deep skepticism and intolerance toward those who do not conform. It is critical to keep this in mind when examining the status of LGBTQ homeless youth in a domiciled and predominantly straight society.

Yet another aspect of being homeless is that people who are homeless have to live much of their lives in the open. As Mitchell (1995) put it: "For those who are *always* in the public, private activities must necessarily be carried out publicly" (p.118). As a result, they are punished for performing private acts in public and this "situates homeless people in a highly vulnerable position of being everywhere while permitted to be nowhere" (Dooling, 2009, p.622). This once again reinforces the binary, between citizens and what Dooling called "outlaws," those who are not proper citizens (p.623). One outcome of this punitive attitude is that the legal constraints homeless people encounter in public spaces emphasize who is considered a legitimate citizen - the domiciled - and who isn't (Dooling, 2009). This concept is further developed in the later section on space.

Home. It is not possible to talk about homelessness without examining the concept of home. The oft-quoted Frost (1915) quote: "Home is the place where, when you have to go there,/They have to take you in," sums up much of what home can represent to anyone, including LGBTQ youth. The idea of home as sanctuary can seem obvious to those who have experienced

just such homes. Home in those cases offers more than shelter. As Neale (2003) explained: "It is associated with material conditions and standards, privacy, space, control, personal warmth, comfort, stability, safety, security, choice, self-expression, and physical and emotional well-being" (Watson and Austerberry, 1986, as quoted in Neale). Home, too, offers not just these material conditions, but also status. To be domiciled is to be socially acceptable and to have the power, however weak it may be, that society gives those who are domiciled and withholds from those who aren't. As Neale (2003) pointed out: "Potent social forces do exist and being homeless is to lose a stake in several of them" (p.46).

However, home can be a nightmare for some. Physical and emotional abuse, brought on by poverty, substance abuse or a discomfort with the sexual orientation or gender identification of the LGBTQ youth, can transform home into house and house into a place that offers no sanctuary at all. For LGBTQ youth, losing a home and become homeless is not the same experience as it is for adults. These youth lose not just a house but they lose in addition the feeling of acceptance and love that come from family, however family has manifested itself in their lives. For some LGBTQ youth, Frost (1915) is simply wrong: When you have to go there, they do not have to take you in, and if you are already there, they may tell you to leave.

In addition, the heterogeneity of those who are experiencing homelessness must be emphasized. As DeVerteuil, May and von Mahs (2009) asserted: "Rather than continue to talk of 'the' homeless, we would suggest the need to develop a more nuanced understanding of a varied homeless population and therefore of the quite different experiences of homelessness within the contemporary city" (p.650). Although this research looked at homelessness, it was not simply being without a home for this group. It was instead a state of being ejected from a place that means home in the most basic way. There is no term for this difference and it is challenging to

find one that encompasses the triad of the pain of rejection, the physicality of being alone and the absolute strength and courage required to re-find home. The binary is prevalent here, as there is only a term for the loss and not for the depth of reality that exists for each of these young people.

Homeless LGBTQ youth. "No one ever told me that being strong is by starting from nowhere and having nothing" (Cupid & Dija, 2010).

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness (2010), "unaccompanied homeless youth are defined as youth ages 12 to 24 with no familial support or permanent residency." In addition: "The number one reason that GLBT youth become homeless is family conflict," often created by the teen's disclosure of sexual orientation ((Henderson, 2007). Ray (2006), too, gave insight into this by pointing out that: "According to one study, 50 percent of gay males experienced a negative parental reaction when they came out and 26 percent of those disclosures were met with a demand that the youth leave home" (p.16).

Once the youth are on the streets, their lives can be challenging. As Ray (2006) explained, homeless LGBTQ youth "typically sleep in shelters, public spaces, abandoned buildings, cars, or outside…and some will be exploited by adults and exchange sex for a place to stay." Or, as Shawndelle, a young lesbian in the film *We Are…GLBTQ (*Children's Administration, n.d.) said: "…You get the strong sense that nobody really wants you - that you're not good enough to have around." This film used interviews with LGBTQ youth and the adults who care about them to provide insight into this topic and it joined a range of articles, books and videos that delve into the lives of homeless LGBTQ youth. Included in these resources were heart-wrenching stories of the lives of these youth, as they struggled on the streets, creating new lives and new families for themselves. For instance, the anthology *Kicked Out* by Lowery (2010) provided insight into their thoughts, experiences and successes as they

navigated their way toward safer lives. As Lowery explained in the introduction, the anthology was created because "we can no longer pretend we cannot hear the tears of the youth who have lost their friends, families and homes because of whom they love or how they define their gender" (p.15).

Much of the literature about homeless LGBTQ youth is included in the closely related topic of LGBTQ youth in out-of-home care. These youth may be in foster homes, shelters or even in the juvenile justice system. What they all have in common is an inability to live at home, for a multitude of reasons. In some cases, the homes they have left have been foster homes, where again their sexual or gender identity are not considered acceptable. Many of these youth were verbally and physically abused in foster care, group homes and even in homeless shelters. So it is frequently safer to live on the streets than to be in either foster care or in a shelter, particularly an adult shelter.

Voices from the Street: A Survey of Homeless Youth by Their Peers (2008) provided a broad range of insights into the lives of homeless youth. Since up to 40% of these youth identified as LGBTQ, many of the comments and suggestions were applicable to homeless LGBTQ youth as well. For instance, when asked in open-ended interviews and focus groups about their lives, the following information emerged:

- Thirty percent of youth had spent the previous night outdoors, on the street, or in a car or vacant building.
- The majority (over 75 percent) reported negative and regular interactions with the police. One prominent reason for this was being ticketed for offenses such as sleeping on the street and being unable to pay the fines, resulting in criminal records which impede their efforts to find employment and housing.

- Despite the reality that homeless youth are frequently the *victims* of crime while on the streets, not a single respondent described turning to police for help or reporting being victimized.
- Only seven percent were runaways, in the sense of having left home by choice.
- When asked how they thought others perceived them, homeless young people reported being perceived as, or called, "lazy, bad kid, bum, troublemaker, lowlife, piece of s—, scumbag, junkie, whore, gangbanger, the lowest of the low, and worthless."
- Over thirty percent said their major challenges were finding affordable housing and a job that would provide enough income to maintain that housing (over 45 percent).

This last statistic echoes remarks by one of the service providers at JYS. In an interview, service provider Lucille pointed out that if you were to ask the young people staying at the various programs provided by JYS, "they would tell you that their major concerns are finding work and a place to stay." This fit well with the kinds of resources that are offered at the library in this case study, the City Library.

Needs of homeless LGBTQ youth. **"**Homeless people seek more than food and shelter. Such basic needs are important. However, seeking friendship, support and community are equally important." (Hodgetts, Radley, Chamberlain, and Hodgetts, 2007, p.716)

Finally, it is important to look at the particular needs of the homeless LGBTQ youth. In addition to the information needs of any youth their age, employment and housing, as already mentioned, were high on the list of expressed needs. The Spring 2011 edition of *StreetTalk*, the newsletter published by JYS, gave an overview of the latest report on youth homelessness in the City. Included in that overview were:

- Lack of employment is still a major barrier to stable housing. At program entrance, 77% of youth were unemployed, among those 87% were actively looking for work.
- Average income at program entrance was 12% less than last year and less than half of what it costs for a studio apartment in the City.

In addition, educational opportunities were needed. According to the same report, "Reengaging youth in education continues to be an important step in moving youth toward self-sufficiency. Among older youth, 43% come to us without a high school diploma or GED. More than 1/3 of school age youth have dropped out." Although these statistics related to all homeless youth, they certainly applied to LGBTQ homeless youth, since they represented such a large proportion of this population.

Next, many of these homeless youth - like homeless adults - needed access to legal advice and legal documents, such as birth certificates and court orders. Transgender youth, in particular, who wanted to change their names and their gender identification, needed to know how and where to do the legal documentation changes, such as court orders, passports, social security, legal power of attorney, driver's license or state identification card, wills, birth certificates and marriage licenses. Even domiciled adults can struggle with legal jargon and access to appropriate forms, not to mention any attendant fees and differences among state laws. The added stress of being young, without funds and living on the streets made this much more difficult. For example, one homeless youth, Talyn, talked about the challenge of getting the name on hir library card changed to match hir new name. S/he was confused about how to do it and worried about how difficult it would be. However, s/he was reluctant to draw attention to hirself by asking.

Additionally important is the need for a safe, secure and welcoming environment. Much of what these youth had experienced made them suspicious and uncomfortable with adults in positions of authority and in bureaucracies in general. In many cases they have been ostracized, then shamed and blamed for their living situations. As Woronoff, Estrada and Sommer (2006) put it: "LGBTQ youth are often dispersed and lost without a community to cheer and encourage and love and cherish them. These young travelers need to be armed with the knowledge that they are not broken; there is no need for a cure." Caring adults who welcome and affirm who they are can make a significant difference in their lives and their ability to move beyond their current situations. Shelton (2008) said it well: "Through creating a non-judgmental environment in which queer young people can vocally lay claim to their unique experiences in the presence of other young people and adults, they begin to find validity in their own lives and to trust their own voices" (p.79). The last part of this quote is particularly important, since there is a tendency for adults, such as librarians, to discourage autonomy in young people, even among those they are trying to help and especially if the young people have been described as "at risk." As Rasmussen, Rofes and Talburt (2004) explained:

> How might we reframe young people as creative participants in institutional and non-institutional spaces? And how might we challenge universalizing representations of queer youth in popular and scholarly discourse that focus on support and intervention, and consider instead young people's creativity in the negotiation of their sexual subjectivities, identities, and practices in various contexts? Young people's actions are not representations or enactments of a preconstituted, fixed group, but contingent invocations of identity in which they enunciate desires for affiliation, community, recognition, safety,

> and danger at the same time that they may articulate responses to exclusion and marginalization. (p.7)

These questions underlie much of the work that is being done for and with homeless LGBTQ youth. It is not easy for caring adults to set aside their own preconceptions, especially around issues that may make them extremely uncomfortable. Allowing these young people to truly be themselves, even as they are discovering who that is, can be challenging work that requires a real commitment, as well as pertinent and current information. So another need for these young people are capable adults who are willing to learn and listen by taking advantage of the many resources that are available. These include studies and resource lists, such as *All Our Children: Strategies to Prevent Homelessness, Strengthen Services and Build Support for LGBTQ Youth* (2010), commissioned by New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg, and the *Annotated Bibliography: Resources for Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Youth and Families in the Foster Care System, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice* (2006). *All Our Children* began with a letter to the mayor, which included this paragraph:

> While the Commission's findings confirm that LGBTQ homeless youth face special challenges, we strongly believe that the recommendations and strategies set out in the report offer actionable steps to promote best practices, foster a culture of respect and acceptance, and address the underlying causes of homelessness among LGBTQ youth. (2010)

The report then went on to list a sort of strategic plan for addressing not only the issues confronting homeless LGBTQ youth, but also ways in which that homelessness may be prevented. Examples of suggestions included:

- Identify and disseminate resources for families of LGBTQ youth.

- Create policies and protocols to ensure LGBTQ-affirming service environments and explicitly prohibit harassment and other unacceptable behaviors.
- Provide ongoing, in-depth LGBTQ-competency training to frontline staff at all relevant City agencies.
- Explore ways to expand employment and work experience opportunities for LGBTQ homeless youth.

All of these suggestions related directly to public libraries. Librarians are experts in providing resources in all areas and their goals include providing an environment that is culturally competent and welcoming.

A third report, one of the most in-depth recent documents on homeless youth is *Why They Run: An In-Depth Look at American's Runaway Youth* (National Runaway Switchboard, 2010). This report looked at 10 years of expert studies; weighed the trend data compiled by the National Runaway Switchboard, which handles more than 100,000 calls annually; and, reported on one-on-one interviews with 83 runaway or throwaway youth between the ages of 14 and 17. The goals of the report were:

- To understand the decision to run away and gain insight into prevention.
- To determine youth knowledge of available services and how youth access them.
- To determine any barriers, real or perceived, for runaway and at-risk youth in accessing services.
- To assess the best methods to reduce the barriers to accessing services by runaway and at-risk youth.
- To assess marketing and outreach strategies to communicate with runaway and homeless youth. (p.2)

It is worth noting these goals are strikingly similar to the goals of the needs assessments done by libraries. These assessments are used to gauge interest in services, materials and programs and the ways in which the libraries are meeting the needs of their users. This report gives insight into the very questions asked by librarians when they are interested in serving a population: What are the barriers to accessing needed resources?

When asked to describe themselves, the youth offered a range of terms, such as: "a runaway with permission; a lost child in need of help; looking for a better chance; living on my own; I feel like I wasn't accepted; I was disowned; neglected; traveler; street kid; and, homeless" (p.9). It is possible that if librarians had access to these self-descriptions, they might be more likely to consider playing a role in the lives of these young people. This is part of the core category cultural competence that is discussed in Chapters Four and Five as part of the findings.

A final report worth mentioning is *Voices from the Street: A Survey of Homeless Youth by Their Peers* (Bernstein & Foster, 2008). Their summary of the challenges to these young people included the following list:

> Other challenges to stabilizing their lives that young people cited included finding information, lack of credit history, lack of ID and other documents, a criminal record, discrimination, lack of transportation, pet ownership, lack of self-confidence, finding childcare, difficulty in leaving other homeless friends behind, drug addiction, poor decision-making, harassment by law enforcement, mental illness, immigration status, and lack of money generally. (Bernstein and Foster, 2008, p.39)

All four of these documents, and many more, provided background, statistics, recommended resources and other information that could provide caring adults with the information they need to open their minds and their hearts to these young people. At noted in

Chapter Five, these are examples of resources that could aid public librarians in understanding LGBTQ homeless youth and how to provide relevant services to them.

Public Libraries

Public Libraries and Homelessness. "A library is not a community masturbation center. A library is not a porn parlor. A library is not a refuge for the homeless." (Cronin, 2002)

"I think library administrators need to think beyond the walls of their particular institutions to consider the broader contexts in which they act and exist. Public libraries are part of broader communities, and the excuse that 'we didn't get into this profession to become social workers' doesn't really carry much weight. If you are a public servant, you serve the public. You work within, are a part of, and help to define your community. You absolutely must open your eyes to the social, political, economic and cultural contexts which contour your work. I think we need to wake up to the fact that behavioral policies in public libraries are political." (*Impagination*, 2008, blog entry about homeless man suing public library)

Most of the literature relating to homelessness and public libraries focuses on homeless adults, primarily homeless individuals, although there are a few references to homeless families with children. The impetus for these articles is usually either a concern with managing their behavior in the library or a reaction to efforts to manage their behavior. Public conduct policies in particular target homeless adults by limiting the amount of baggage that can be carried into the library, by forbidding sleeping and by prohibiting the use of the public bathrooms for bathing. Other restrictions include either disallowing a library card for those without a permanent address or severely limiting the number of items that can be checked out. Odor policies, too, are enforced at some libraries, thereby denying library access to people who also have no way to take showers or who choose to remain unwashed to protect themselves on the streets.

It is interesting to note that while homeless queer youth are impacted by many of the public conduct policies in public libraries, the policies were not necessarily designed to target them. As previously noted, this is usually an invisible group and librarians are in most cases unaware of their presence in the Library. When casually asked if they used the Main Library (located five blocks from their transitional housing), a group of homeless youth answered in the affirmative. When asked if they had talked to the librarian or asked for help, all answered in the negative. The homeless youth interviewed individually for this research had the same responses: Yes, they used the City Library and no, they did not interact with Library staff. These responses highlighted the challenge of creating an atmosphere in which homeless LGBTQ youth feel comfortable enough to reach out to Library staff.

Attitude. One theme that can be seen throughout the literature on libraries and homelessness is that of attitude. Hersberger (2005) put it succinctly: "The primary issue facing service providers to the homeless can be summed up in one word: attitude." She went on to describe a study in which friendly librarians were called "friends" and unfriendly librarians made patrons experiencing homelessness feel "unworthy." Wen, Hudak and Hwang (2007) provided excellent insight into this topic in their qualitative study of homeless adults in healthcare settings:

> Most participants perceived their experiences of unwelcomeness as acts of discrimination…The participant stated that he perceived unwelcomeness through the attendant's 'attitude' and not because of anything the attendant said. Thus, some homeless individuals may impute a great deal of meaning to brief contacts that do not involve any overt verbal discourtesy. (p.1013)

The authors pointed out these feelings led to a disinclination to get help with health issues. Homeless focus group participants also commented on the attitudes of the librarians

toward homeless people, noting they felt watched and distrusted (personal communication, 2009). Posner (2003) made the excellent point that if library patrons were confronted with a librarian who seems arrogant or rude, it can be not only infuriating but can be both demoralizing and emotionally painful. It can also discourage library use, as Radford (2006) noted. For the preadolescents she interviewed, "the most important factor in their perception of successful library visits is the attitude of the librarian or staff member they encounter" (p.57). She gave an example of a seventh grade girl who never went back to her library after a negative interaction with a librarian or staff member. This was supported by comments from one of the homeless youth, Monica, when asked about visiting the Main Library:

> They're rude here…I don't think they understand that, like people are low-income… And maybe they weren't, maybe it's not a rule here that you have be considerate of people like that, you know?…So they have this like, they have like this view of people, when you walk in it's like you're going to do something wrong, that's what I can feel.

Relationship building by people who are experiencing homelessness can be directly impacted by attitude. Hutchison, Abrams and Christian (2007) found in their research with homeless adults that while initially the active participation of these adults in accessing social services was dependent on "their own personal attitudes, perceptions and norms," after one year, their service use was predicted by their interactions with service case workers and other users of the service" (p.45). Their point, that developing a positive relationship with caring professionals affects how the participants chose to get needed resources, applies equally to librarians.

Hostile or unwelcoming attitudes can add to the feelings of exclusion felt by LGBTQ homeless youth. Already marginalized by their sexual orientation, gender identity or housing status, they are vulnerable to any negative or unwelcoming comments or behaviors wherever

they go. Public libraries, possibly their only portal to crucial information, must be seen as accessible, reasonable and welcoming or they may be avoided.

Public Libraries as Public Space

"Where we live and our passages across space are central to our identities, outlooks, priorities, strategies for survival" (Ingram, 1997, p.32).

The topic of public libraries as public space is not one that has been frequently mentioned in either library or urban geography literature. However, there has been much written about the connection between homelessness and public space, as well as gender, sexuality and space. Therefore, it seems appropriate to take a look at this topic while considering the role of public libraries in the lives of LGBTQ homeless youth.

To begin, a brief definition of space is offered: "'Space' is commonly defined as a delineated or loosely bound area occupied cognitively or physically" (Désert, 1997). Thus space is not only physical, but also mental or even philosophical. It is essential to keep in mind that space, even physical space, plays a major role in creating environments that are conducive to or obstructive of a truly democratic society in which each person is valued equally.

Homelessness and space are considered first. As a society, Americans hope to not have to deal with the homeless population - this group is moved out of public spaces, like libraries, by the creation of public conduct policies and anti-homeless environments that target people without homes. An examination of homelessness begins to reveal the ways in which public spaces can be created to either validate those who occupy them or seek to expel them. These spaces communicate with the public, whether or not they realize it, and those who do are most often those who are negatively impacted. Finoki (2011) called this concept "weaponized architecture" and he said: "…The physicality of architecture is more dangerous as a form of social control

because we are talking about physical space…" (*Funambulist*). Examples of this kind of architecture are ever-present in the urban environment, although domiciled adults may not notice. They include metal prongs in window wells, benches with arms placed close together, and even pink lights to discourage young people from loitering. That is, purposeful choices are being made about who should be encouraged to inhabit public spaces and who should not.

This same dynamic exists for gender or sexual orientation and space as well, although it can be much more subtle. Désert (1997) gave an example of how space can communicate a preference for gender or sexual orientation:

> In America, the heterocentric domestic house is defined ironically by the suburban home. Programming intrinsic to the home's configuration presupposes and encourages heterocentric activitiy…The Master Bedroom, set in isolation over a litter of smaller bedrooms, orchestrates a social order of age, sexuality, and ownership. (p.22)

While this is private rather than public space, it provides the backdrop for assumptions made in a heterocentric society. These assumptions underlie many of the decisions made about public space, including how people who occupy it are expected to behave. For example, how each community member experiences public space is dependent on whom they are. Ingram, Bouthilette and Retter (1997) offered their observations:

> If we were to ask a few hundred residents of a neighborhood to draw their public open space and to talk frankly about it, different experiences (reflecting various levels of privilege, access to resources, and risks) would emerge, in many ways defined by gender, race, culture, age, mobility, and sexuality. (p.56)

The experiences of homeless LGBTQ youth in public spaces are affected by these societal attitudes, whether or not they are actively aware of this. The impact of the public library

as one of these spaces needs to be examined, because the way the space is experienced can be as important as the other factors already listed, particularly attitude. One could say that the "attitude" of public space itself offers either a welcoming or a hostile environment. How this attitude is exhibited and which of these dominates could affect whether or not needed resources are being accessed. As Massey (1994) put it:

> Social relations always have a spatial form and spatial content. They exist, necessarily, both *in* space…and *across* space and it is the vast complexity of the interlocking and articulating nets of social relations which is social space. Given that conception of space, a 'place' is formed out of the particular set of social relations which interact at a particular location. (p.168)

The social relations formed between homeless LGBTQ youth and public librarians are created by numerous visible factors, such as collection choices, signage, attitude, programs, resources, outreach and the day-to-day human interactions between staff and library users. Whether or not a young person who identified as LGBTQ and homeless felt welcome and supported in the City Library was an integral aspect of this research. Because if the space itself communicated a negative or even disinterested message, the opportunity to serve this young person was lost. Williams (1978) said it well: "In a simple sense we think of buildings as for shelter, for use inside in a simple way. We sometimes forget that buildings, particularly public buildings, very powerfully communicate social meanings and are intended to" (pp.71-72).

When asked about the connection between space and power, Foucault answered: "Space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power" (Foucault and Rabinow, 1984, p.252). How public libraries choose to welcome and serve their library users is a critical part of this power, since - as mentioned in Chapter One - information is

power and libraries are first and foremost purveyors of information. This makes these decisions political, whether or not the architects or designers are aware they are. Smith (1999) said simply: "The appropriation and use of space are political acts." Finoki (*Funambulist*, 2011) expanded on this idea, saying: "Architecture is the materiality through which politics are reified. It is not only how we physically negotiate the landscape but how one imagines it [and] how one imagines it for another…" This imagining for another can lead to social exclusion and stigmatizing, as mentioned in Chapter One. Massey, Allen and Sarre (1999) put it like this:

> …[Geographers] have noted that differences between people can lead to a social exclusion that is spatially enforced. From this perspective, it can be understood that people who are seen as unacceptably different are locked up, moved on, shunned, marginalized, ridiculed, and even/or murdered. (p.112)

Public libraries participate in this imagining, by the creation of a public space that is in theory designed for everyone. The reality is different and this research sought to understand how this was so.

Public Libraries and Social Responsibility. "A legacy of activism stands ready for use made significant by the fact that solutions to the country's deep and worsening crises will come about only through social struggle and because of the strategic role of information in social action." (Bundy, 1987, p.94)

As introduced in Chapter One, there has been much discussion in the library world about the social responsibilities of public libraries. It is amazing, in fact, to know that for over 40 years, library meetings and discussions have included heated and frequently rude exchanges about the role of the public library in modern society. Forty years ago the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) of ALA was created so progressive and activist librarians could have a forum for

conversations as well as action. While in many ways this round table has filled an important function, calling itself the "conscience of ALA," in other ways it has created an easy target for those in the library profession - and outside the profession - who seek to criticize ALA for its progressive and political agenda.

The question that was foremost in these debates is what was appropriate work for librarians and what was not. A 2008 American Library Association (ALA) online survey of librarians about library services to people experiencing poverty prompted an article by Gieskes (2009) titled *Why Librarians Matter to Poor People*. One of the most interesting results of this survey was the following bullet point in the article:

> Given the low rate of ALA member survey response and the hostility shown by some respondents when answering some questions, the [Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty] task force recommends ALA clarify why library services to the poor are integral to our profession, the Library Bill of Rights, and the Freedom to Read and not a fringe issue. (p.55)

This brief paragraph was illuminating, in that it encapsulated this very issue: The role of public libraries in what could be perceived as social responsibility or social justice issues. However, one could ask: What constitutes social justice? How can and do librarians differentiate between social justice and the work they do daily as librarians? Is literacy a social justice issue? Is providing employment resources? Is providing materials in languages other than English? How about passport services or books with large type or fax machines or test preparation materials? On the other end of the spectrum, what are appropriate services and programs for libraries? Are library sleepovers for teenagers appropriate? Should public libraries be providing book groups or yoyo competitions or sing-alongs or magic shows or guess-the-amount-of-candy-

in-the-jar contests? Sometimes it is not easy to differentiate between what is "proper" for a library to provide and what is not, and this confusion is part of the question about social justice and libraries. Bundy (1978) had much to say about this question:

> The inhumane liberalism in which the profession has indulged far too long allows the institution to maintain the importance of serving all comers equally and thus to treat as equally compelling a request from a suburban housewife wanting to plan flower decorations for a dinner party, and the plight of a hungry child. The reality is that the deprived make next to no use of libraries and libraries do next to nothing to reach them… Even the most service-minded of librarians continue to treat the symptoms rather than causes. They will help a welfare mother get her cheque, but they are not actively engaged in working on local welfare rights programs or in bringing about badly needed legislative reforms in the welfare systems. (pp.109-110)

In an article about the history of social activism in ALA, Raber (2007) gave an example of the July 1952 Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston, which made it clear that the library was "to provide the means of equalizing and maximizing individual opportunity to participate in civic society while combating divisive cultural, social and political influences" (p.676). However, at the time - and continuing to the present - some librarians objected to even this kind of statement. As Raber reported it, librarian Ervin Gaines "later argued that racism and urban social violence, although serious problems, were not public library problems and must be left to other agencies because those agencies and libraries have their own but different moral imperatives" (p.678).

Some of the arguments against what are perceived as social justice issues, such as reaching out to local shelters or taking a stand on military spending, are couched in language that

speaks of the need for libraries to remain neutral. The Activities Committee on New Directions (ACONDA), a predecessor to SRRT, included the following passionate passage in their final 1970 report:

> The cry is that we are an association of libraries, not librarians, and should only exist to promote library services. Yet our institutions (libraries) are surrounded by pollutions and violence and under threat of nuclear extinction. Racial tension and social unrest upset their daily routines constantly. For a national association to ignore these threats seems the height of folly. Yet we are daily advised by some of our members to eschew involvement with these dangers, lest we render ourselves subject to reprisals and tarnish our golden neutrality. (Raber, 2007, p.685)

It is difficult to call public libraries neutral, no matter the guise, because whenever a decision is made about library programs, policies, resources, outreach, services or materials, that decision is made by human beings who are influenced by social forces, whether or not the librarians are aware of those forces. The impact of all of these decisions on the library's community is uneven, at best, and alienating for some.

The *Community-Led Libraries Toolkit* (2008) provided excellent examples of this in its report on the "Working Together Project," which ran from November 2005 to April 2008, during which time it "explored the application of community development techniques in developing more inclusive public library services in Canada" (Working Together Project, 2008). This four-year project offered disengaged or underserved community members a chance to relate their library experiences, impressions and expectations. The resulting toolkit offered what they call "six key lessons," most of them echoing Bundy's (1978) concerns from 30 years earlier:

- Library culture, along with rules and procedures, create significant barriers to inclusion.

- Libraries must recognize that *same* or *consistent* customer service, which does not take into account socio-economic disparity, results in inequitable services that further disadvantage socially excluded people.
- Planning relevant and effect library services for socially excluded community members requires a collaboration of equals between the community members and the library.
- Relationship building is at the core of effective service planning.
- Staff "soft skills" such as empathy, interpersonal competence, and open-mindedness are essential.
- People want to see themselves represented in the library and to have an opportunity to participate. (p.8)

The listed key points lend support for public libraries to be actively engaged in improving the lives of homeless LGBTQ youth, since these young people certainly qualify as social excluded. However, how individual librarians perceive their responsibilities varies, as evidenced by regular email exchanges on library e-lists. In this research, the librarians were willing to play a role in the lives of homeless LGBTQ youth; they saw it as appropriate library work. However, there were barriers for them, particularly not having enough time and the lack of expertise in this topic.

Public Libraries and Urban Teens. "In the present political moment, it sometimes seems as if we have an easier time accepting the power and agency of cultural institutions, than that of people, particularly young people." (Rasmussen, Rofes, and Talburt, 2004, p.3)

Another way to approach the question of what role public libraries should play in the lives of homeless LGBTQ youth is to look at the role these libraries play in the lives of urban youth in general. One of the most comprehensive books on this topic is *Urban Teens in the Library*, edited by Agosto and Hughes-Hassell (2010). As they explained, they put together 23

developmental tasks that "covered the range of information behavior teens had reported for the study" (p.29). This list led to a theoretical model with seven areas of development: The social self, the emotional self, the reflective self, the physical self, the creative self, the cognitive self, and the sexual self (p.29). They defined each category and gave examples of the information teens sought for each. For instance, sexual self included "sexual safety and sexual identity" (p. 31).

This breakdown of teens' information needs was useful for public librarians who were looking for guidance on their role in the lives of the teens they serve. It also provided them with support they could use when advocating for services to teens. Agosto and Hughes-Hassell (2010) also provided suggestions from teens on improving library services to them. The authors organized these into four categories and provided the following list:

Staff

Knowledge: Urban teens' resource preferences; local community characteristics

Attitudes: Tolerance, kindness, mutual respect

Policies

Computer: Flexible time limits; free printing; reduced game restrictions

Behavioral: Fewer library use restrictions; space for socializing

Services

Teen programs: More programs; more relevant and interesting topics

Teen input: In planning and developing programs; in selecting resources

Collections

Books: More urban fiction, more popular fiction, multiple copies

Movies and magazines: More popular titles, more relevant titles, more up-to-date titles

Computers: More accessibility, more computer games

Music: Ambient music; in-house listening stations

(from chart on p.34)

It is interesting to note that these suggestions reiterated much of what was said by the homeless LGBTQ youth. This is revealing, since it highlights the relationship between domiciled and homeless urban youth needs. They also help contribute to what has been called an "outcomes based" approach to providing teen services. Examples of outcomes related to teens include:

- Youth contribute to their community
- Youth feel safe in their environment
- Youth have meaningful relationships with adults and peers
- Youth achieve educational success
- Youth have marketable skills
- Youth develop personal and social skills

(Meyers, 2010)

It is clear from these lists that a dedicated effort is needed to create excellent library service for urban teens and that the outcomes apply to any urban teens, whether domiciled or homeless, straight or LGBTQ.

Another author who offers insight into this topic is Brehm-Heeger (2008), with her book *Serving Urban Teens*. She gives an historical overview of library services to teens in urban areas, and she emphasizes the importance of having library staff who are prepared and willing to enthusiastically serve teens (p.14). She offers concrete examples of the messages to give to all staff about serving this population, and one of these seems particularly relevant to homeless youth, although she makes no mention of them:

> Teens in urban areas come from a variety of backgrounds and may have very few positive adult role models in their lives. Library staff members may be the only positive adult role models with whom some urban teens have daily contact. (p.15)

In addition, Brehm-Heeger gives advice to library staff about serving their teen patrons and this advice echoes comments made by homeless youth and adult library users. Included in this advice are:

- Know teens' names
- Greet teens when they come into the library
- For teens living in urban areas where it is not uncommon to live in poverty, negative events unfortunately can be a regular part of life. Staff members should be open to listening when teens talk about what happened that was bad or confusing and should be prepared to refer teens to organizations that can provide further assistance, such as shelters and clinics offering free counseling.
- Treat teens with respect
- Take the time to explain to teens exactly how to find information when conducting a reference interview…Librarians offering this one-on-one attention clearly not only help teens understand how best to use library resources but also reinforce to teens that they have the right to be empowered to make individual choices by being informed about how systems work and about the variety of choices available to them. (pp.18-21)

Using these authors as an example, it can be seen that there are guidelines and resources available for librarians who serve urban teens, including homeless LGBTQ youth. It is also clear that much thought, discussion and effort has gone into the creation of these resources and that teen librarians, at least, consider it worth this effort.

Public Libraries and LGBTQ Youth. In the past 20 years, some progress has been made in addressing the needs of LGBTQ youth and adults in public libraries. Libraries have the potential to change lives, by providing much-needed resources and a staff ready and willing to educate themselves on the needs of all of their library users. However, there is much more work to be done.

One of the seminal (and rare) books on this topic is *Serving Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Teens* by Martin and Murdock (2007). They explained the need for their book by pointing out that "only a handful of researchers have studied the information needs of adult gay and lesbians, and even fewer have specifically examined the needs of queer and questioning teens" (p.20). In addition, "studies of how well libraries are meeting these needs are also scarce or outdated" (p.22). Much of the research they did included descriptions of the lack of meaningful and truly accessible resources and services for LGBTQ youth. They provided some hypotheses as to why this would be:

- Fear of book challenges
- Fear that if a controversy does arise, the library will lose funding
- Assumption that other libraries will pick up any slack in their own collections
- Lack of awareness, or outright denial, that LGBTQ teens frequent the library
- Lack of knowledge about LGBTQ issues - or fear of them
- Homophobia on the librarian's part

These hypotheses fit well with other articles written about serving LGBTQ teens or adults. Fredericks (2005) gave a glimpse into the life of a librarian who works daily as a Youth Services Librarian and advisor to her library's Teen Advisory Board. It was clear from her article that she was concerned about the LGBTQ teens who used her library and consequently she offered

suggestions on LGBTQ resources for other librarians. But most of all, she provided insight into her thoughts about her work:

> Adolescence is a difficult time of life. Teens often look to adults besides their parents for advice and direction. The library, being part of the community, is often the place where adolescents find that other adult. Some librarians fear this kind of responsibility, but working in public service sometime requires doubling as a social worker…By remaining open-minded and really listening and not preaching, librarians can provide teenagers an opportunity to explore their concerns and feelings. The library, as a member of a community, needs to be a safe place where adolescents can explore ideas. (p.14)

These remarks are as relevant to homeless LGBTQ youth as they are to domiciled LGBTQ youth.

Mehra and Braquet (2006) provided insight into the kinds of materials needed by these youth, especially as they "come out," a process they refer to as continual and a "constant negotiation of self-identification as 'queer'" (p.97). In their article, the authors used a table to summarize "the information-seeking behavior during coming-out experiences in terms of thoughts, feelings, and actions" (p.116). This kind of information is valuable to librarians who are serving homeless LGBTQ youth, as well as those who have permanent and reliable housing.

Albright (2006) offered examples of public libraries that already provided services to the LGBTQ community, such as booklists (both print and online), as well as links to "networks, organizations, and authoritative information on pertinent issues from reputable sources" (p.53). As she pointed out,

> Every community needs to see their culture reflected in literature. Due to the overwhelming emphasis on heterosexuality in today's society, this need is especially true

> for the LGBT community…It is especially essential to provide information and support for young adults who are questioning their sexuality or who are aware of their sexual identity and feel isolated from family and friends. (p.55)

Albright's article is a good example of what public libraries could be doing as part of their commitment to provide equal access to all and how services to the LGBTQ community are relevant whether that community is housed or living on the streets.

Hughes-Hassell and Hinckley (2001) also wrote a short article about the importance of reaching out to LGBTQ youth. They offered a list of Web sites that provided credible, reliable and relevant resources for LGBTQ youth, pointing out that "Librarians can reduce the feelings of isolation many LGBT youth experience by providing access to responsible Internet resources designed specifically for them" (p.39). These are the kinds of resources that made a difference in the lives of the homeless LGBTQ youth in this study, and they provide support for the removal of barriers to access such as limited computer time for those experiencing homelessness. This leads to the next section: Barriers.

Barriers. Although there is pertinent and useful information for librarians on how to serve their LGBTQ teen library users, there can be multiple barriers to this service. In *Barriers to Selecting Materials about Sexual and Gender Diversity*, Gough and Greenblatt (2011) provided a list of common barriers to providing excellent service to LGBTQ adults and teens. Examples included statements like:

- "My library doesn't cater to special needs."
- "Only heterosexuals live in the area my library serves" or "Lesbian, gay men, etc. don't seem to use my library."
- "It's too difficult to identify worthwhile LGBTIQ materials."

- "Buying LGBTIQ materials would be promoting gender or sexual nonconformity."
- "I'm personally uncomfortable with exposing myself to what some of these materials describe."
- "That stuff doesn't belong in my library."
- I don't approve of people who don't conform to conventional behaviors or reading/listening/viewing interests." (p.169)

As the authors explained, most of the librarians have been "thoroughly socialized in a heterosexist culture" long before they become librarians. So although they may have had library school classes in such topics as LGBTQ collection development, these classes may not always "penetrate the results of many years of social conditioning" (p.169).

They also pointed to ALA's *Access to Library Resources and Services Regardless of Sex, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, or Sexual Orientation: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights* (ALA, 2004). This interpretation examined the Articles of the Library Bill of Rights and created logical connections from the Bill to the concept of access for all, including those who identified as LGBTQ. For instance, Article V is examined and interpreted:

> Article V holds that "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background or views." In the *Library Bill of Rights* and all its Interpretations, it is intended that: "origin" encompasses all the characteristics of individuals that are inherent in the circumstances of their birth; "age" encompasses all the characteristics of individuals that are inherent in their levels of development and maturity; "background" encompasses all the characteristics of individuals that are a result of their life experiences; and "views" encompasses all the opinions and beliefs held and expressed by individuals. Therefore, Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* mandates that

> library services, materials, and programs be available to all members of the community the library serves, without regard to sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. This includes providing youth with comprehensive sex education literature.

Other Articles looked at materials with all points of view, the origin of materials and their creators, and the use of meetings rooms and exhibit spaces, and it was demonstrated that all of these can be re-interpreted with LGBTQ library users in mind. It is interesting to note that so far this kind of interpretation has not been extended to those who are experiencing homelessness.

A teen services coordinator also offered insight into the barriers to service. When asked why he didn't celebrate Pride Month or create other examples of inclusion in the teen section in his library, he answered "Ignorance" (personal communication, 2011). This powerful word covers much more than might appear initially. In general, teen librarians are active supporters of their library users. They want to help, they want to provide materials, resources, programs and activities that the teens want and need. They create Teen Advisory Groups (TAG), they consult each other on programming, teen spaces, materials, and even outreach. Yet without the information that there are teens who are LGBTQ or LGBTQ and homeless who might use their library if they created an atmosphere of inclusion and safety, their very ignorance acts as perhaps one of the biggest barriers of all.

Public Libraries and LGBTQ Homeless Youth. "None of the youth identified a relationship with a services provider or adult in a helping role when describing what was good and positive." (Bernstein, p.46)

There is considerable overlap between the lists created for urban youth and the needs listed for homeless LGBTQ youth. This makes sense, since these homeless youth are not defined by their housing status or even their gender identification or sexual orientation. That is, they *are*

urban youth and like their domiciled counterparts, they have youth needs. They have the same needs for library materials that reflect their lives and caring adults who reach out to them by learning their names and showing respect.

Another point that needs to be made in this chapter is that many of the youth in this study did not fall into the traditional age range for teen services. The YALSA definition of young adult is ages 12 to 18 (YALSA, October 16, 2012), a definition that does not include the youth who are between 18 and 24. This fact serves as an important barrier to services to homeless LGBTQ youth, because while they may be experiencing what should be adult problems, such as lack of housing, they are still teenagers. Even the ones who are in their early twenties are frequently emotionally younger than domiciled young adults of the same age. There is little literature on this gap in library services for any youth who fall into this category and while this case study can contribute to the conversation, much more research needs to be done. A teen librarian expressed concern about this issue as it related to any young adults, LGBTQ or straight, domiciled or homeless. She found it extremely difficult to suddenly cease providing a separate space and unique materials to the youth she served, simply because they were no longer 18 (personal communication, May 31, 2011). She pointed out that there are special services to older adults - seniors - but not to younger ones.

Although there is overlap between the library needs of homeless LGBTQ youth and domiciled urban teens, it is also true they have other needs related to their housing status or the challenges they encounter on a daily basis. However, so do many other library users. Seniors may need help finding reputable and trustworthy health practitioners or affordable housing. Families with children may seek local school information, resources on childrearing or names of local pediatricians. Spousal abuse, mental illness, poetry to quote at a funeral, help getting online

for the first time - all of these are common topics in public libraries and they are usually answered respectfully and thoroughly. This list could go on and on, because public libraries make it a practice to answer the individuated and unique questions of each of their library users.

This is an important point for librarians, because it could appear that dealing with homeless youth will somehow be more onerous or demanding or will require more skill and time than dealing with those urban youth who identify as straight and who have dependable and regular housing. In their article about libraries that served people who are experiencing homelessness, Gehner and Freeman (2005) provided this insight:

> You don't have to solve a person's problems. I work with homeless people every day and I don't solve anybody's problems. Homeless people don't ask me to…They have to do the work. I can connect them to a resource, but I can't do the work. And librarians can't do the work for people either. But you can connect them to resources, and that's what your jobs are. (Shelter and housing specialist John Petroskas, as quoted in Gehner & Freeman, 2005)

Abbie, a service provider at JYS, expressed this same thought when she defined harm reduction:

> We believe that change needs to be self-driven, programs need to be, include the say of clients. People, you know, can reduce the risk in all aspects of their life. I mean we're just here to help and guide them and give them options and resources, when they're ready for those.

Public libraries also make a point of trying to reach what are traditionally called "underserved" users - those community members who don't use the library at all or who use it rarely. Efforts are made to seek out these individuals and demonstrate to them how the public library is relevant to their lives. However, this population - LGBTQ homeless youth - is not a

group actively courted by libraries. The combination of homelessness, which is a topic many librarians do not want to take on, and LGBTQ, which at best is confusing and at worst is fraught with prejudice, may make this group invisible to librarians. The fact it appeared these youth were reluctant to actively engage with librarians further reduced their visibility.

Finally, Lowery (2010) provided this heartfelt insight into the experience of one homeless LGBTQ youth in a public library:

> When I was kicked out for the final time at seventeen, the first thing I did - after finding somewhere to sleep for a few days - was go to the library. I scanned each spine and in desperation began pulling books off the shelves, running fingers over tables of contents and skimming introductions. This was the first time a library had failed me. I needed a book about how to live through this more than I needed to know I had somewhere to stay, to know I had a way to get to school or to know what I would have for dinner. I needed a book to prove to me that survival was possible. The only books about queer youth I found didn't talk about police reports, restraining orders or backpacks full of clothes. That day, sitting in a back corner of the public library in Gladstone, Oregon, I pledged that if I survived, I would do everything in my power to make sure that never again would a queer kid feel alone after losing family. (Introduction, pp.13-14)

It is experiences like hers that prompted this case study and informed the questions: Do the needs of homeless LGBTQ homeless youth fall within the purview of a public library? What do the librarians think? What do the youth think? What do the providers think? That is, what is the role of the public library in the lives of homeless LGBTQ youth? The next chapter explains how this question was approached.

Chapter Three

Methodology

"…We know there's no such thing as nonpolitical research. The people we set out to understand live in worlds of context and meaning, which in turn are held in place by power - whether local, national or global remains an open question." (Agar, 1996, p.29)

This chapter provides a description of the research perspective, the case study method, the approach to the research itself, the handling of data, the theoretical perspective, the participants and their recruitment, the data analysis and how grounded theory was used and evaluated.

The Research Perspective and Design

This case study used a phenomenological approach and qualitative methods to help understand the role of the public library in the lives of LGBTQ homeless youth. This approach was chosen because it "allows researchers to get at the inner experiences of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture, and to discover rather than test variables" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.12). It was particularly appropriate for this research question because responses to the question of the connection between the City Library and the homeless LGBTQ youth were personal, varied and unpredictable. It would be challenging to create a quantitative study that would be able to take into account the possible feelings, attitudes and underlying beliefs about libraries that existed for the three populations included in this research.

This was a case of a city public library system in an urban gay-friendly U.S. with a large homeless LGBTQ youth population who lived on the streets, in the parks or in emergency or transitional housing. Long interviews with the City librarians, the homeless LGBTQ youth and

the service providers for those youth provided insight into how the Library was impacting and interacting with these youth. Because the question was about the role of the public library in their lives, Library staff, service providers and the youth themselves together told the story of this case. This Library was not chosen as a representation of libraries across the United States, although it seems clear that the findings could be applied to many of these. However, my task was to allow each group to speak and by bringing their voices together, create a theory that would serve as a guide for all of them. Maxwell (2005) said this well:

> The *selection* of this particular case may involve considerations of representativeness (and certainly any to attempt to generalize from the conclusions must take representativeness into account), but the primary concern of the study is not with generalization, but with developing an adequate description, interpretation, and explanation of this case." (p.71)

The use of unstructured interviews also seemed to fit best with this question. Although interview guides were used, they were used as guidelines only (see Appendix G, Interview Guides). As Lindlof and Taylor (2002) put it: "Although the interviewer often goes into the interview wanting to cover certain areas, relatively little structure is imposed (e.g., questions are usually open-ended)" (p.4). The interview guides used in this research were altered as interviews proceeded. This adjustment was in keeping with the basic concept of grounded theory, which will be discussed shortly. The actual changes made to the guides were documented and used as data, since they gave insight into the process of creating a theory from the totality of the data. The adjustments made to the interview guidelines were also a part of the grounded theory approach being used, as the interviews were conducted, then coded and compared to previous

data gathered. This constant comparison offered insights into other questions that could be asked to further inform the research.

Unlike a positivist approach, which uses the ontological creed that "the business of science is to discover the 'true' nature of reality and how it 'truly' works (Guba, 1990, p.19), the phenomenological approach searches for individual answers from the participants and uses these answers to make sense of a question. This approach allows an interviewer to elicit information from participants that is personal and draws on their own life experiences and accumulated knowledge, the "life-world" or the "world as it is encountered in everyday life" (Gurwitsch, 1974). By studying the life-world, the researcher is able to access the "perceptual experience" (Gurwitsch, 1974, p. 18) of the participant, rather than interjecting a preconceived idea of what is true and what is not. That is to say, there is no right answer to a question posed to a participant - the answer s/he gives is based on the meaning the participant makes from the world. This meaning is important because it indicates how the participant interprets the world. It comes from two sources: Sociohistorical and biographical. These two make up a person's "stock of knowledge at hand" (Gurwtisch, 1974, p.19), that is, the way a person looks at the world, the rules s/he lives by and other behaviors and thoughts that guide her or him in life. Sociohistorical knowledge comes from the unconscious: Those ideas, thoughts, impressions that are handed down and are unacknowledged but powerful influences as humans try to understand the world. Biographical knowledge is the information collected from life experiences. Sometimes these two types of knowledge can contradict each other and sometimes support each other.

The paradigm of phenomenology is based on the idea that "knowledge is a *human construction*, never certifiable as ultimately true but problematic and ever changing" (Guba, 1990, p.26). This statement says it all. The study of a subject, like public libraries and LGBTQ

homeless youth, cannot result in one true answer, but instead has resulted in the multiple perceptions, opinions, biases, reflections and experiences of the respondents as well as the researcher. The sum total of this research was the resulting knowledge that was biased and subjective and thereby enlightening. By taking the time to delve deeply into a participant's particular view of the world and the subject of inquiry, this researcher had the opportunity to be exposed to the "acts of apprehension and interpretation" of each individual (Gurwitsch, 1974). These are the ways in which the respondents take in information about their world and interpret it based on their own experiences and the "stock of knowledge at hand" (Gurwitsch, 1974). This stock of knowledge naturally affected the thoughts and opinions that were shared with the researcher. That is, all the factors that created the opinions, feelings, thoughts, ideas and impressions of the participant were in effect during the interview. This is the basis for phenomenology and the study of the individual. As Schutz (1967) said: "The aim, then, is to interpret the actions of individuals in the social world and the ways in which individuals give meaning to social phenomena" (p. 6). That individuals are trying to seek meaning in the world around them underlies the phenomenological approach to research. They use the information available to them to try to understand their lives and the researcher must remain open to the hearing their understanding. As Moran (*Figure/Ground*, 2011) put it: "The discipline of phenomenology means the discipline of stopping yourself from being carried along any particular avenue of meaning, until we really allow the phenomenon to show itself."

This was challenging at times, because a large amount of factual information about homeless LGBTQ youth, the agency that was serving them, and the City Library had been garnered. In addition, the jargon and attitudes that are an integral part of the public library world were ingrained after 20 years as a public librarian. Therefore, there were times when a kind of

shorthand existed between the librarians being interviewed and myself, and it was difficult sometimes to feign ignorance or to ask for specifics without making assumptions. In addition, while fervently pursuing a less gendered, less binary approach to society, it was still true I was raised to see the world as divided into arbitrary groups: Female and male; housed and unhoused; addicted and free of addictions; and, stable (or mentally well) and unstable (or mentally ill and untreated or inadequately treated). These binaries have been an encumbrance, particularly around the issues of mental illness and addiction. There was a struggle to become comfortable with those who are not sober or not coherent in a way that was recognizable. However, the years of this research allowed for progress and it is hoped these experiences can guide others who choose a similar path.

Sacks (1990) alluded to this challenge when he said, describing his work with Parkinson's patients:

> But one cannot go straight forward unless the way is clear, and the way is allowed. One struggles to gain the right perspective, focus, and tone - and then, one loses it, all unawares. One must continually fight to regain it, to hold accurate awareness." (p.xix)

Accurate awareness was definitely the goal.

Case Study Method

There were a variety of qualitative research approaches that could have been used for this study. However, once it became clear the research would be about one the City Library and that it would examine the relationship between that library and the homeless LGBTQ youth in that city, a case study seemed appropriate. As Yin (2009) explained:

> A case study is an empirical inquiry that

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when
- the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

In other words, you would use the case study method because you wanted to understand real-life phenomenon in depth, but such understanding encompassed important contextual conditions - because they were highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study. (p.18)

This study looked at a contemporary library, in the real-life context of its policies, attitudes and environment and how those were impacting the lives of these homeless LGBTQ youth.

In addition, although in-depth interviews were the primary source of data, they were augmented with observations, written records - such as City Library policies and shelter rules - and informal conversations with shelter staff and homeless youth. This was not only in keeping with the qualitative approach, it was supported by Yin's description of relying on "multiple sources of evidence" (p.18). Or as Harper (1992) stated: "Each case study demands a different mixture of observation, participation, and interviewing…How these three elements come together…varies greatly" (p.152).

The case study approach served, too, as a constant reminder of what specifically was being researched. That is, this was not a random set of interviews and observations, cursorily called a case study. It was a response to the question: What is the role of the public library in the lives of homeless LGBTQ youth? It was the story of a library and how it interacted with a group of young people, as they led their lives and struggled to survive on the streets of the city. This was in keeping with Wieviorka, (1992) who admonished readers to remember:

> Regardless of the practical approach for studying it, a case is an opportunity for relating facts and concepts, reality and hypotheses. But do not make the mistake of thinking that it

> is, in itself, a concept. A case draws it unity not from the theoretical tools used to analyze it, but from the way it takes shape, namely as a social or historical fact combining all sorts of elements into a set comprising social roles, an institution, a social movement, or a logic of community action. But it is not, in itself, these roles, this institution, or this social movement. (p.160)

This case study used observations, interviews and written materials to create an understanding of the sociological significance of the story being told. It could be called a parable - there was a moral to this story and the case study approach allowed for a search for that moral. In keeping with this storytelling approach, insights into my own journey through this case have been included in the findings and the discussion. As Platt (1992) so aptly pointed out, there were surprises along the way. Existing assumptions and preconceived ideas about homeless youth, bureaucracies and libraries came up against new knowledge and insights. As Platt put it:

> One way, and a rhetorically very effective way, of reaching a conclusion and taking the reader with you to that conclusion is to tell the story of how you arrived there yourself. This almost certainly entails showing that you were initially wrong or were surprised by what you discovered. This is a very different strategy from the 'scientific' one of concealing human agency in the production of the findings, and starting with a hypothesis which has been confirmed. (p.29)

The story of this public library and its role in the daily lives of these homeless LGBTQ youth could have been be told in many ways. In this case, it was told by someone who worked for 20 years as a public librarian, who believed emphatically in the power of public libraries to serve their communities in positive and active ways, and who was new to both research and the topic of homelessness. One could imagine this case as being like a large multi-faced diamond. I

held it up to the light and turned it slowly between my hands. I wondered at its existence and the light it reflected and I pondered what it meant. I observed, I queried, I thought, I made connections and then, as the storyteller, I could only describe what I saw and experienced. Stake (1978) explained this style well: "Most case studies feature…data that are likely to be gathered at least partly by personalistic observation; and a writing style that is informal, perhaps narrative, possibly with verbatim quotation, illustration, and even allusion and metaphor" (p.7). In keeping with Stake's words, I chose an informal writing style that allowed my voice to come through.

As Padgett (2008) said: "The key distinguishing feature of case study analyses is that they maintain the holistic integrity of the case. A 'case' is unpacked and its contents closely examined, but the parts are ultimately viewed as a whole and in relation to each other" (p.144). The parts in this case were the facets and the whole was a diamond in the hands of an activist librarian.

Interviews. Based on this concept, this research employed primarily one-on-one interviews with three groups: Librarians, service providers engaged in work with LGBTQ homeless youth, and the LGBTQ homeless youth themselves. Initially, my plan was to interview only teen librarians, since they were the group who could be addressing the information needs of this population. However, it became clear that other librarians could provide insights into the services and materials being provided to youth, as well as the barriers to these offerings. Also, I slowly began to realize that perhaps by accepting the idea that teen librarians were the only ones who could provide appropriate services to teens, I could be perpetuating the concept of a segregated population, a kind of "it's not my problem, it's yours" attitude toward serving teens in the Library. In addition, since a case study approach was employed, it was important to talk to participants at all levels of the organizations. This turned out to be a fortunate decision, since it

was not until I had access to the homeless youth that I discovered that although the teen librarians had many of the necessary skills, interest and background for serving homeless LGBTQ youth, some of these youth did not technically qualify as teens in the City Library. Additionally, they did not identify as teens, so they fell into a gap in services, which added to their feelings of being unwelcome at the Library.

It was appropriate to use one-on-one interviews since these individuals were the only ones who know how they felt about public libraries and homeless LGBTQ youth and what the libraries meant to them in light of their roles. As McCracken (1998) put it: "The long interview gives us the opportunity to step into the mind of another person, to see and experience the world as they do themselves" (p.9). The universal theory of consciousness supported this approach, since it was based on the idea that knowledge was created through consciousness; therefore a researcher must gain access to common expressions of the participants' thoughts and definitions. Human beings are striving to make meaning of the world; that is, it is each participant's particular worldview that was being studied.

There was also, unexpectedly, one hour-long focus group with homeless youth, because the opportunity arose. The discussion at the focus group was enlightening and the verbal interactions and non-interactions were pertinent to this study and to the emerging insights into the interactions of the youth with the Library.

Literature review. A literature review was done in advance of the interviews, looking for ideas and information that could serve as prompts during the interviews. The literature review was not used to create an a priori theory, however. To have done so would have been in contradiction to the basic concept of phenomenology - that it is through the participant's words that meaning and understanding and theories can evolve, rather than posing a theory and trying

to make the words of the participant match the theory. Instead, it served as one method of gathering as much information on the topic as possible. As McCracken (1988) pointed out, "the first step of the long qualitative interview begins with an exhaustive review of the literature" (p. 29). With this information, the interviewer is able to look for contradictions to research that have been previously been presented by other researchers. While there is the natural danger that knowing about current theories could bias the researcher, this is offset by the ability to step away from information and use it as way of gaining distance from the topic (McCracken, 1988, p. 31). Keeping McCracken's words in mind, though, the researcher was also aware that

> There is no need to review all of the literature in the field beforehand…It is impossible to know prior to the investigation what salient problems or what relevant concepts will be derived from this set of data. There is always something new to discover…Also, the research does not want to be so steeped in the literature that he or she is constrained and even stifled by it. (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.36)

So, as seen in Chapter Two, there was an overall look at the literature that seemed appropriate to begin with, but with the awareness that as analysis of the data proceeded, there would undoubtedly be other relevant literature that needed to be included. This was indeed true. Additionally, Corbin and Strauss (2008) provided suggestions on how the literature could be used. Examples included:

- It can be a source for making comparisons.
- It can enhance sensitivity.
- It can provide questions for initial observations and interviews.
- It can use used to stimulate questions during the analysis.

- It can be used to confirm findings, and just the reverse, findings can be used to illustrate where the literature is incorrect, simplistic, or only partially explains a phenomenon. (p.36)

These authors explained the second item on this list, sensitivity, by saying it

> requires that a researcher put him- or herself into the research. Sensitivity means having insight, being tuned in to, being able to pick up on relevant issues, events, and happenings in data. It means being able to present the view of the participants and taking the role of the other through immersion in data. (p.32)

All of these suggestions were considered as the research progressed and responses have been included as appropriate.

Bracketing. Next, stock was taken of my own thoughts, knowledge and preconceptions on the topic of teen librarianship, youth homelessness and LGBTQ youth, doing what McCracken (1988) called "using self as an instrument of discovery" (p. 32) or an effort to research the researcher (E. Haley, personal communication, February 5, 2009). Taking stock allowed the use of what has been called "bracketing," a way of attempting to set aside these preconceptions while engaging in the research. This is related to the concept of epistemology, the idea that reality is socially constructed and that research is a co-creation of the researcher and the researched. As Corbin and Strauss (2008) put it: "The researchers' "knowledge and experience (professional, gender, cultural, etc.)…enables them to respond to what is in the data" (p.33). This means that the findings "are a product of data *plus* what the researcher brings to the analysis" (p.33).

In this case, my views on public space, public libraries and LGBTQ youth homelessness and any corresponding attitudes and assumptions affected the questions, the responses and the final analysis of the material.

In particular, as the research progressed, it was critical to constantly stay aware of my own prejudices. My rapid descent or ascent - depending on how one views it - into critical theory has produced a willingness to assume there was always a larger agenda than the one that was visible. For instance, I see homelessness and poverty as failures on the part of society and not on the part of an individual. Yet I also discovered how important it was for the homeless youth to not be considered victims of circumstance, but to instead be supported as resilient and courageous people struggling to move on in life. To truly understand the population being studies, it was imperative to move beyond existing prejudices and assumptions and to allow the librarians, the youth and the professionals to tell their stories without letting those assumptions taint their realities.

Another issue was the assumption that someone who has been ostracized and who leads a less conventional life will be liberal and open-minded. Yet during the focus group I found, for example, that one of the issues the youth were uniformly adamantly opposed to was the ability for Library patrons to access pornography on a Library computer. This was extremely surprising - to hear what could be considered a conservative view coming from this group of youth who dressed and acted in ways that were not always palatable to the average domiciled straight adult. I realized that part of this was their lack of understanding about library culture, in this case, that culture's dedication to intellectual freedom. Of course this issue is not even one that is universally agreed upon even in library circles - there are certainly librarians who do not think this is appropriate. But the contrast between what I thought, the assumption I made about these

youth, and the reality of their opinions was enlightening and offered yet another opportunity for taking stock of my own preconceptions.

Padgett (2008) referred to this as reflexivity and defined it as "the ability to examine one's self" (p.18). She went on to point out that "examining one's biases is not a one-time thing, but requires ongoing vigilance throughout the course of the study" (p.18). I certainly found this to be true.

This is also reminiscent of Corbin's (2009) words, as she described her attitude toward doing qualitative research:

> "I agree with the feminist notion that we don't separate who we are as persons from the research and analysis we do. Therefore, we must be self-reflective about how we influence the research process and, in turn, how it influences us." (p.40)

Interview guide. As a guide for the interviews, a list of possible discussion questions was initially created. These questions acted as prompts for the participants and they came from the personal experience of the interviewer as well as from articles about public space, homelessness, LGBTQ homeless youth and public libraries. This guide was simply a tool and I remained open to either not using particular questions or adding questions as the interview progressed. It is important for the guide to remain flexible since the interviewer should follow the lead of the participant and not apply a rigid conception of the interview. "The interviewer must be able to take full advantage of the contingency of the interview and pursue any opportunity that may present itself" (McCracken, 1978, p.25). This approach is in keeping with the methodology of phenomenology, in that it adheres to the idea there are no preconceived ideas of how the respondent will answer questions but instead allows the interviewer to follow the respondent's lead. By incorporating the interviewee's comments into the ongoing interview

itself, the "final analysis is richer and more descriptive than the initial guide would indicate" (Haley, 1996).

This discussion guide began with broad questions about the participant, such as "Tell me about yourself." This approach fosters trust building, which is an essential part of the long interview, since the interviewer particularly wants insight into how the participant truly views the world and the subject at hand. If the participant is relaxed and comfortable, s/he is more likely to be open and honest. According to McCracken (1988): "This is an important time to reassure the respondent because it is in these opening stages that he or she sets his or her defenses. The biographical data questions can serve this purpose" (p.38).

Next, questions were asked that related directly to the participant's life. Agar (2012, personal communication) also provided useful advice when he encouraged me not to make my participants do my work for me. So instead of asking for a summary, such as a typical day or the biggest challenge, I made an effort to ask more specific questions, such as: "Tell me about a great experience you had at the Library" or "Tell me about a difficult interaction you had on the streets." These questions depended on who was being interviewed. In the case of the teen librarians, other questions included such items as: "Tell me about a barrier you've experienced in doing your work" and "Give me an example of one group you feel you aren't reaching." For the professionals who work with LGBTQ homeless youth, these questions included: "Describe a successful collaboration" and "Can you tell me one thing you would like public librarians to know about this population?" Finally, for the homeless LGBTQ youth themselves: "Do you have a pronoun preference you would like me to use?" and "How did you come to be homeless?" and "Tell me about one time you found help that was really useful." In asking these questions, I

also learned to incorporate the suggestion from Becker (1998) that instead of asking "why?" ask "how?" so as to not make the participant defensive (p.58).

It was hoped that answers to these questions would lead to other questions that allowed the participant to speak from personal opinion, experience and knowledge. That is, the questions were used to facilitate that process, but it was the experiences of the participant that guided the direction of the conversation. This was indeed true. An example of this is when I was interviewing a former chronically homeless person (which means that she was not only homeless but also had a disability of some kind, such as - in her case - an addiction), Theresa, who now works for the Library. I asked her about the youth having a negative experience at the Library and whether or not word about that would spread to other homeless youth. I based my question on the assumption that some library staff were unfriendly to people who appeared homeless and so there would be a negative interaction. I also took my question from her observation that word-of-mouth is one of the most powerful ways of communication on the streets. Her response was that she could not imagine them having a bad experience in the Library and that any negative feelings they might have would come from them. As Theresa put it:

> There's a sense that you're doing something wrong…by being in places that aren't meant for homeless. You know, the general, uh, perception of the Library isn't, it certainly isn't a homeless drop-in center… So, I think there's that same feeling, you know, that "I might not be welcome here. They might not want me here. If they see me, they might throw me out."

This was illuminating, because I had not thought about the way in which homelessness is stigmatized in our culture as affecting a person's comfort level in a library, and so I probably

would not have asked specifically about that. As will be seen in Chapter Four, Theresa's feeling contributed to the final theme of "feeling safe."

As the interviews progressed, it became more and more clear this kind of research provided credibility and respect for the participants, particularly the homeless LGBTQ youth who may not have felt heard or respected in their daily lives. Moran (*Figure/Ground*, 2011) expressed this idea when he wrote about the "personalistic attitude," mentioned by such philosophers as Husserl, Wittgenstein and Scheler, explaining that it is "living first and foremost in a personal world with others; and 'persons', of course, means that we respect each other as sources of meaning and value" This personalistic attitude underlies my work.

Settings. The interviews took place at locations that were, it was hoped, comfortable, non-threatening and convenient for the participants. When interviewing the professionals and the librarians, many of the interviews were in their personal offices or in other private space over which they had some control, such as a staff or meeting room at either the JYS or the Library. This was interesting, since one of the concerns was the idea of space and who controls it. Until I started doing the interviews and accommodating to the less convenient interview spaces of those who have less control over their lives, I had not considered the meaning of the interview spaces themselves. But as I continued to set up interviews, I started to realize how the interview spaces reflected - in most cases - the power of the individual. That is, the interview spaces fit Bourdieu's approach to social differentiation mentioned in Chapter One. The higher up the person was in the organization, the more privacy and space they could access and the more they were able to control with whom they interacted on a daily basis.

For example, one Library administrator had a spacious, beautifully decorated, clean and well-organized room with a view of the City and enough space to house at least one family. Her

comments were not only confidential, because I - in compliance with IRB requirements - erased all personal indicators from the transcript, but they were also confidential because we were able to meet in private. Her power and position gave her privacy.

The other Library administrator also had her own room, but chose not to use it - I did not ask why. We used a small meeting room, with the door open, so others could be heard and could, I assume, hear us if they wanted to do so. Other Library staff - lower in the Library hierarchy - were interviewed at library tables when the Library was closed or in the shared staff room, giving us some privacy although staff members could interrupt, watch or overhear if they so chose.

On the other hand, most of the interviews with the youth took place in a study room in the Library. I was unable to reserve the room in advance, so we sometimes had to wait for someone to vacate a room. We did have some privacy, because we used an individual study room that is somewhat soundproofed. However - I assume to cut down on potential illegal or uncomfortable behavior - the walls of the rooms were entirely glass, so there was no visual privacy at all. An unexpected outcome of meeting the youth at the Library was the opportunity to observe them in the Library setting, to make verbal and physical references to it, and to answer questions about Library resources. Perhaps one of the most enlightening moments came when Talyn, a young homeless youth, and I started to enter through the Library's security gates. One of the uniformed security guards, standing in the doorway of his office, called out to Talyn: "You can't enter the Library with that stick!" Talyn was holding a bamboo pole s/he used as a walking stick. It was about six and a half feet tall, about one and half inches in diameter and was covered with stickers. Talyn had long blonde hair topped by a well-worn cap and wore a t-shirt, jeans and boots. S/he identified as transgender and was not readily recognizable as either male or female.

In response to the guard's admonition, s/he said clearly but not optimistically, "I need it for my back." The security guard stayed where he was, so I approached him and said, "Talyn uses the stick for hir back." The guard said, "Well, it should have a rubber stopper on the end, but I'll let you go this time. Next time it has to have the stopper." I walked back to Talyn, explained the situation, and s/he thanked me as we walked through the security gate, saying, "Last time they wouldn't let me through at all."

Another day, at the close of the interview, one of the homeless youth, Ary had some questions about finding resources in the Library. We went together to the online catalog and I showed her how to search for materials and how to understand how to locate them in the Library. This was a question that obviously could have been directed toward one of the librarians, but it was not. In fact, it was not even directed toward me - it came out of our conversation about the topics she was pursuing. How this young woman could feel comfortable enough to approach one of the Library staff to ask her questions underlies this research. Her hesitancy to do this had no tangible reason as far as I could ascertain. She had never been treated rudely at this Library, she was an outgoing and confident person and she was not obviously without easy access to fresh clothing or showers. Yet not only was she reluctant, but I was, too. I could have suggested walking over to the reference desk together, but I could not be sure they would treat her well. This was enlightening to me, because I am comfortable in libraries and I usually do not hesitate to approach Library staff with a question. I am one of them, yet her discomfort made me protective and uneasy. This was again an aspect of the emerging theme, feeling safe.

In all cases, the location arrangements were made to accommodate the participant as much as possible. It was particularly helpful if it could be a quiet spot, to facilitate not only the conversation but also the tape-recording of it, since all participants agreed to be tape-recorded.

The participants were assured of the confidentiality of the interview and that access to the information gathered was restricted to the researcher alone.

Handling of data

As McCracken (1988) so emphatically states, interviews "must be recorded on tape" (p.41), and they must be verbatim (p.42), since any kind of summary or abbreviation of the material would take away from the ability to understand the participant's own thoughts on the topic. I certainly found this to be true: Being able to access the exact words of the participants afterwards offered much greater insight than my notes could have done. After each interview, I made every effort to immediately transcribe the recordings and review my notes.

However, there were times when I was unable to transcribe the recordings before another interview. I found that when someone was available to be interviewed, it was best to take advantage of that availability as quickly as possible. The interviews seemed to happen in clusters, particularly as I reached out to various groups and got responses from individuals. "Strike while the iron is hot" would probably be the most apt way of explaining this and I chose to do just that. However, overall the interviews were spread over a period of time and that allowed me to apply insights from earlier interviews to later interviews. As mentioned already, one result of this was the constant updating of the interview guide.

To be able to work with the material following the interviews, the researcher must be able to analyze the actual words used by the participant. Accuracy is important: "It must be exact, so that no unnecessary ambiguity exists" (McCracken, 2008, p.50). To best obtain this accuracy, once tape recordings were transcribed, the transcriptions were checked against the original recordings, looking not only for word accuracy but also for a reflection of the nuances of emphases, pauses, laughter and other non-verbal expressions.

However, a small portion of the data for this research relied on quick notes written either during observation or as close as possible afterwards. In these cases, the exact wording of conversations was not obtained, but the opportunities I had to be an observer in various LGBTQ events provided valuable insight into the daily lives of these young people. In addition, there were casual conversations with youth, staff and librarians that added to the data and could only be written as well as possible after the interactions. For these situations, I heeded the words of Stern (2009): "I think we all agree with the truism: Everything is data" (p.56). In addition, Stern's attitude toward accuracy is one I found myself agreeing with in these situations:

> Notwithstanding possible boos from an audience, I confess that from my point of view, data accuracy is highly overrated. A grounded theory study is a theory generated from conglomerate data, interviews, observations, literature or even statistics, so what difference does it make if Mary said, "I don't think I can go on, " or "I just can't go on." The essence is there - *Going on* might be the substantive code. (p.57)

So, although I believe in accuracy as much as possible, I was comfortable with less accuracy when it was necessary.

This process also facilitated deciding when enough participants had been interviewed, since the interview process should continue at least until redundancy is reached. That is, individual participants in each of the three categories were interviewed until clear patterns emerged as to their ideas about the possible role of public libraries in the lives of homeless LGBTQ youth and until it appeared that no new insights would be presented (Haley, 1996, p.26). This is an appropriate criterion for qualitative research, since the researcher is not looking for merely numbers or a particular sample size, but is instead striving to understand the topic through the eyes of the respondents.

I also took into consideration the fact that I was doing a case study and so wanted to gather enough data to get a picture of what was going on in this case. Because of this, participants who represented different dimensions of each agency were interviewed. As with any research, more data could have been collected, but I stopped when I felt I was hearing variations on the same stories. That is, I reached redundancy in each population - the librarians, the service providers and the homeless LGBTQ youth.

Confidentiality. For all three of these groups, University Institutional Review Board (IRB) permission was sought and received before any interviews were held (see Appendices B and C). Although permission was received to interview youth under the age of 18, none of the participants were younger than 19. Prior to each interview, each participant was given a brief description of the research and was asked if s/he would be comfortable being tape-recorded. Permission was granted in every case. Each participant signed a consent form, agreeing both to being interviewed and to being tape-recorded, and each person was given a copy of the form to keep. To protect the confidentiality of each participant, the consent forms were saved in a secure location and kept separately from the transcripts. Each tape recording was erased from the tape recorder after transcription was complete. For all participants, pseudonyms have been used to protect their identity. I chose the pseudonyms for the librarians and the service providers; the youth chose their own.

Bricolage

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) defined qualitative research as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible" (p.3). They went on to point out that qualitative research can involve a variety of methods and empirical materials, "that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings

in individuals' lives" (p.3). Because each practice can create a different view of the world, qualitative researchers frequently use "more than one interpretive practice in any study" (p.4). They used the image of bricoleur, in which a researcher pieces together possibly new tools or techniques in the quest for a deeper and richer understanding of the research question. As they said, choices about which techniques or approaches to use are "not necessarily made in advance" (p.4).

Bricolage was an appropriate image for this research. As has been discussed, the LGBTQ homeless youth lived in many worlds. It was fitting that a variety of approaches were needed to explore the role of the City Library in their lives. The theoretical approach described here informed me as I prepared to begin my research, but it was the research itself that provided the best guidance and illuminated the need for additional methods. These included participant observation, as well as simply observation, casual conversations, and a gathering of written materials from both the Library and the shelter.

Observation. Early on in my research, I applied for and was accepted as a volunteer at the Juniper. For the first six months, this volunteer job was comprised of cooking and serving dinner once a week at an emergency shelter, run by the JYS. This shelter served homeless youth, both straight and gender-conforming, as well as those who identified as LGBTQ. Over this period of time, it was possible to observe the workings of JYS, as well as the daily lives of this particular population of youth. This experience provided insights into the topics of conversation, the behaviors, the interactions, the eating habits and the general demeanor of these youth. Every week there was a combination of regulars and newcomers. At that point JYS still had not provided access to the youth for interviews, but the weekly experiences and observations were invaluable. These observations and interactions were incorporated into the analysis and the

descriptions, providing a more detailed understanding of the environments experienced by the participants. Corbin and Strauss (2008) recommended the use of observation, saying

> It is not unusual for persons to say that are doing one thing but in reality they are doing something else. The only way to know this is through observation. Also, persons may not be consciously aware of, or be able to articulate, the subtleties of what goes on in the interactions between themselves and others. Observations put researchers right where the action is, in a place where they can see what is going on. (pp.29-30)

Volunteering at JYS made it possible for me to be "right where the action" was and this contributed greatly to the ability to tell this story.

Written data. Another source of data were the rules and behavior guidelines that were posted, present on websites or presented as handouts. These organizational attempts at control over the users of both the City Library and the Agency offered a fascinating look at the similarities between the two organizations. The signage, the policies and procedures in public libraries and shelters contributed to the collage of information, by providing "a picture of the presuppositions and meanings that constitute the cultural world of which the textual material is a specimen" (Peräkylä, 2005, p.870). The rules and procedures in both places had the same goals yet they were experienced differently by the participants. This is discussed more fully in Chapter Four.

Participants and Recruitment

Purposeful sampling was used to obtain participants for this research. Maxwell (2005) provided an excellent explanation of the reason for using this method for recruiting:

> This [purposeful selection or sampling] is a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that can't be gotten

> as well from other choices…Selecting those times, settings, and individuals that can provide you with the information that you need in order to answer your research questions is the most important consideration in qualitative selection decisions." (p.88)

The three groups initially chosen appeared to be ideal for providing the kinds of information that was being sought. Each group represented an aspect of this case and the participants were selected to address these aspects. These three categories included public librarians, professionals who work with homeless youth and the youth themselves.

Librarians. For the librarians, initially a choice was made to interview what were called teen librarians. The purview of these librarians was, in theory, youth ages 12 to 19, although in reality most of the materials selected by the teen librarians were used by the youth in the lower range of these ages. As mentioned earlier, there was a gap in Library services to youth, if one goes with the wider federal definition mentioned earlier, that this population is made up of 12 to 24 year olds. Older teens and young adults, those between the ages of 19 and 24, were considered by to be adults and thus it was assumed they would be served by the adult collections, services and programs. However, the fact was they were not so served and this gap in service affected them.

Additionally, one children's librarian and two adult librarians were interviewed. The children's librarian was selected because he was the City Library's liaison to a group of concerned professionals who worked with low income and homeless individuals and families. It was hoped his comments and ideas would offer some insight into why a public librarian would actively engage in community-based advocacy work. One adult librarian was chosen because he was the branch manager for a branch that served a large number of LGBTQ patrons and there was no teen librarian at that branch. It was hoped he could provide insight into his collection

development strategies, as well as into the perceived needs of that community. The other adult librarian was selected because she was the branch manager at a branch that served a large number of homeless youth and so she - more than any other librarian I talked to - had dealt directly with the impact of this population on the Library.

All the librarians - teen and adult - were recruited through the City Library itself. Some contacts were made through an administrator in teen services, some were made by emailing the librarians, and one librarian was interviewed after an unscheduled visit to a branch library. Once word got out I was interviewing librarians, it became easier to get participants, because the interviewed librarians could vouch for me - so the snowball technique was employed. One of the biggest barriers to recruitment was that the librarians said they did not know anything about youth homelessness. It was challenging for them to understand I simply wanted to hear about their work - I did not expect them to know anything about this topic.

The Library administrators were recruited in a similar manner. Some were emailed, others were through existing connections in the Library system. The highest-ranking administrator did not reply to emails, so I finally attended a City Library Commission meeting and introduced myself after the meeting. That proved to be effective and we eventually were able to find a mutual time.

Service providers. The next participants were service providers who worked with the homeless youth, in particular homeless LGBTQ youth. In this urban area, JYS served the largest percentage of the homeless youth. Out of the approximately 5700 youth who were homeless or at risk of being homeless in City, JYS served about 3600 in various ways, including drop-in, residential, employment and education services. Since, as already mentioned, up to 40% of

homeless youth can be identified as LGBTQ, all service providers in this agency had provided services to this population.

In order to get insight into the opinions about the City Library of those holding different positions, six professionals were interviewed. These included: The director, the volunteer coordinator, a case worker at one of the drop in locations, the coordinator for the workforce training and employment program, the Youth Advisory Board coordinator and the manager of education and training. In addition, one volunteer - who had volunteered at a similar agency in another large urban area - was interviewed. These professionals were recruited through JYS. In fact, JYS required a submission of the approved IRB, as well as an interview, before consideration of allowing recruitment of staff or youth would be made. This process was extremely lengthy - it took six months for final approval. However, once this approval was given, access was immediate and extremely helpful.

Homeless LGBTQ youth. Finally, homeless LGBTQ youth were interviewed. As Agar (1996) suggested:

> Rather than contacting the group directly, an introduction from a person or institutions that is well thought if by the group can be helpful…Because these persons will also be in direct contact with the group of interest, or know people who know the group directly, they can be an ideal bridge into the situation. (p.81)

This suggestion on recruitment was taken to heart, because the LGBTQ homeless youth may have had negative interactions with adults and authority figures and so could be more difficult to access. As Cedar put it so well: “But there’s a lot of, you know, like, if somebody’s straight and they’re trying to help you out, you’re like, why?”

Once access to the youth was granted, I attended events and approached the youth during weekly visits to the drop-in location, Stop-By, where I maintained a small library. In general, the youth were open and friendly and receptive to being interviewed, in part because they had been seeing me regularly in my role as volunteer.

Five homeless LGBTQ youth were interviewed one-on-one. Of these, two were young women who identified as bi-sexual, two were young men who identified as gay, and one person as transgender. However, all of them also made a point of saying they really preferred non-traditional terms, like genderqueer or, as Isaiah put it, "My gender is queer." So in a way they had dual identities - ones that might be more recognizable to a heteronormative or straight world and those they felt more comfortable using. They were all between the ages of 19 and 22.

In addition, I held a focus group that included four other youth and one young person, Talyn, who was later interviewed individually. In the focus group I did not ask how people identified, although through casual conversations at Stop-By, I knew that two of the young women, Apple and Riddles, chose not to self-identify.

The following table provides a list of the participants, their pseudonyms and their role in the case study. To further protect their identity, no distinctions have been made between administrators and non-administrators.

Table 1**.** *Participants*

Name	**Description**
Joyce	Teen librarian
Dan	Teen librarian
Katherine	Teen librarian
Alexandra	Librarian
Peter	Librarian

Table 1**.** Continued.

Name	**Description**
Joel	Librarian
Denise	Librarian
Helen	Librarian
Laura	Librarian
Maria	Library social worker
Theresa	Formerly homeless adult, working at Main
Zelda	JYS Volunteer
Lucille	JYS service provider
Abbie	JYS service provider
Train	JYS service provider
Lance	JYS service provider
Sofia	JYS service provider
Daniela	JYS service provider
Deborah	Homeless LGBTQ youth
Isaiah	Homeless LGBTQ youth
Ary	Homeless LGBTQ youth
Talyn	Homeless LGBTQ youth
Cedar	Homeless LGBTQ youth
Apple	Homeless LGBTQ youth
Riddles	Homeless LGBTQ youth
BillyBob	Homeless LGBTQ youth
Quinta	Homeless LGBTQ youth

Analysis

"Researchers are translators of other persons' words and actions. Researchers are the go-betweens for the participants and the audiences that they want to reach." (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.49).

The data from these interviews were analyzed inductively, meaning the "patterns, themes, and categories come from the data…rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis" (Patton, 1990, p.390). This was crucial to this kind of research, since the answers came from within the respondents and were not based on preconceived ideas. Each respondent answered in her or his own words and it was the gathering of these words and the seeking for connections among them that resulted in insights into the research question posed. I looked for key phrases or terms used by the participants as they related to the relationship between the Library and the LGBTQ homeless youth (Patton, 1990, p.391).

Emic terms were used as aids in organizing the data. Emic terms, as opposed to etic ones, come from within the culture being studied; etic ones are imposed from the outside. It was important to use emic terms for this research since the goal was to understand the connection between the Library and the LGBTQ homeless youth, as the participants themselves described it. A good example of an emic term came from one of the homeless youth, Isaiah. When describing how he tried to avoid being identified as homeless, he called it his "class performance." As he put it:

> I do consider it class performance in that like I am, I am not allowing myself to be perceived as homeless… So, I'm, I'm not kind of so much adding anything on, I'm just a little bit more hyper vigilant when it comes to, "Am I looking like a… *Am* I looking homeless? *Am* I looking poor? *Am* I looking in any way out of line of the Hayes?"

The emphasis, as Haley (1996) said, is not on enumeration but on category construction. From larger categories may come smaller sub-categories or offshoots of the categories or standalone ideas. The analysis of qualitative data is an intense, creative and evolving process and, as Patton (1990) says, although concepts may arise from the data, it is really the researcher's task to "get out of the way of the data to let the data tell its own story" (p. 393).

In their book, Corbin and Strauss (2008) described the association between data and concepts or themes:

> Concepts/themes are the foundation for the analytic method described in this book…Concepts are derived from data. They represent an analyst's impressionistic understandings of what is being described in the experiences, spoken words, actions, interactions, problems, and issues expressed by participants. The use of concepts provides a way of grouping/organizing the data that a researcher is working with. (p.51)

The data in this qualitative research consisted predominantly of the words of the participants. The word "impressionistic" in the previous quote gave the greatest insight into this process, since it was really a combination of practice, persistence and intuition, and it is in some ways indefinable.

However, additional data was gathered through observation, as well as print and website materials. Included in these were: Lists of rules, mission statements, the behavior guidelines for both the City Library and JYS, event flyers, signage, posters, procedures (especially at the Library) and general impressions gathered during visits to the Phoenix, Stop By and the City Library. All of these contributed to telling this story.

Grounded Theory. Grounded theory is a form of inductive analysis. It was chosen because little was known about the topic of this Library and its relationship to the homeless LGBTQ youth, and this theory relies on the words and actions of the participants, rather than preconceived ideas about their lives and their daily interactions. It was the job of the participants to be themselves as much as possible and my job to allow their stories and the meanings of their stories to direct my theory creation.

As Morrison (2002) explained: "a theory in qualitative research refers to an organizing scheme for the data that places them in orderly patterns and gives meaning and insight into the lives of others" (p.20). The process of generating a theory that evolved naturally from the information collected was begun while analyzing the data. Glaser and Strauss (1967) have described this process as "the discovery of theory from data - which we call grounded theory…" (p.1). This process of discovery can be contrasted to research that hopes to validate or support a previously chosen theory. Instead, Glaser and Strauss saw "*theory as process*" (p. 9). They stressed the interpretive nature of this theory generation, saying:

> Theorizing is interpretive and entails not only condensing raw data into concepts but also arranging the concepts into a logical, systematic explanatory scheme…The construction of theory necessitates that an idea be explored fully and considered from many different angles or perspectives… (p.56)

These many different perspectives were aided by the initial literature review, subsequent readings and the ongoing reflection that accompanied the research. Glaser and Strauss also pointed out that the generation of theory needs all three components almost simultaneously: Collection, coding and analysis of data (p. 42). In this research, this constant circle was an integral part of the data analysis.

Coding. As Charmaz (2005) stated: "Coding is the first step in taking an analytic stance toward the data…Coding gives a researcher analytic scaffolding on which to build" (p.517). In the process of coding, researchers are constantly comparing the data collected, the data with the categories that emerge and the categories with each other (Charmaz, p.517). This approach was used as the interviews were conducted, transcribed and analyzed continuously. It not only provided insight into the research question itself, but it also provided insight into the researcher's biases and assumptions.

The coding began with initial or open coding, and included efforts to remain open to exploring whatever theoretical possibilities could be discerned in the data (Charmaz, 2006, p.47). Rather than imposing preconceived ideas of what would emerge, I followed the words and thoughts of my participants, looking for the actions being expressed and using words that reflect these actions (Charmaz, p.47). For example, two initial codes were: "Addressing behavior" and "Making assumptions." As the coding proceeded, I frequently asked myself: What is the participant's concern? What is the action being described?

Line-by-line coding was used in this open coding. Although, as Charmaz (2006) pointed out, this coding may seem like an arbitrary exercise, it was also - as she added - extremely useful (p.51). The concepts of grounded theory and coding were new to me and that may be why line-by-line coding of the first group of interviews created almost 2000 codes. Initially overwhelmed by this huge number, it was found that as the codes were organized into categories and then the categories were defined, it was possible to make connections between the codes, the categories and the participants. The constant comparison that is an essential part of grounded theory became my friend, and Oktay's (2012) description began to make sense:

> Constant comparison is the basic method used in grounded theory to create theory out of empirical data. By comparing case to case…the researcher develops "concepts." The process of constant comparison makes similarities and differences among cases apparent. Conceptual categories are specified and described, based on the data. (p.16)

Throughout the research, I have kept memos and field notes of my thoughts, ideas, insights, connections, questions and observations. These memos have played a critical role in the evolution of my research, guiding my interviews, my readings and the conversations I have had with patient family members and unwary strangers. Corbin (2009) writes at length about the importance of memo writing and her words expressed it well:

> I marveled at the information that a researcher can obtain from data if he or she asks the right questions and takes the time to write memos. In memos, it's not just the researcher and not just the data that are talking, but a combination of researcher and the data interacting together to come up with an explanation of what is going on. Memos are a reflection, the records of that interaction. There is no possibility of omitting the writing of memos as a way of shortcutting the research process. (p.50)

Here is an example of field notes taken at the Phoenix Resource Center:

Field note:

> There are youth just hanging around, sitting on the couches, talking or not talking. Dogs are encouraged and they provide dog food, water bowels, dog biscuits. It seems like a lot of homeless youth have dogs. I asked the youth if they had any particular requests for books. I didn't take their names - I wasn't really organized yet. They requested: Fantasy: all, including TOR, an older series; DJ Thomas: any by him, including the White Hotel; folklore: mythology, Greek and Roman.; Jack London; manga: *Dragonball Z*, *Hotel*

> *Hina*, *Battle Royale*; survivor books, like *Hatchet* and *My Side of the Mountain*; Horror: *Dark Tower*, S King: *Tommyknockers*, Robert MacCammon; Anne Rice; how to play banjo, harmonica, guitar - For Dummies series; detailed maps of CA, U.S. - CA and local; Jack Kerouac; *Peter Pan*; *Alice in Wonderland*; *Charlotte's Web;* classics; sex education. (November 15, 2011)

Here is an example of a memo:

> When I started the research, the librarians didn't want to talk to me because they didn't know anything about HY[homeless youth]; the SP [service providers] didn't want to talk to me because they didn't know anything about libraries or they were more concerned with life and death issues. There was a general lack of knowledge about each other. In order for the HY to feel safe enough in libraries to take advantage of all the available resources, they need to feel welcome. What they know is that there are rules and ways of doing things that they don't understand. (September 21, 2012)

Memos and a great deal of thought helped in the organization of these codes into 26 concepts. This second step is referred to in this research as "second open coding," and Charmaz (2006) described it as "using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data" (p.57). The codes that came out of these initial interviews offered insight into what was happening in the data that had been gathered and what could be important themes or concepts for the ensuing interviews. This coding helped crystallize some concepts that continued to be significant as the research continued, while helping to question the importance of other concepts.

The memos provided much-needed insight into my thoughts as I tried to literally focus on what stories were being told, who was telling them, how they were told and why they were told.

During this time, there was a constant flow of possible connections and ideas and I found that if I did not record them immediately, they might be lost. I kept a notebook and pen in my pocket and sometimes would stop in the middle of the sidewalk to jot down a thought. I also had numerous notes written on the back of receipts or on the edge of the morning newspaper or on the back of grocery lists, for the times when the notebook was not handy. After waking up in the middle of the night and trying to write with a dull pencil on the tissue box beside my bed, I placed a pad and paper on the nightstand. This research was constantly in my thoughts and sometimes it felt like one of those firework displays, where there is a burst of light that starts to fade and then suddenly there is another and another. Like the displays, you have to pay attention quickly before they disappear forever.

The next coding, axial coding, led to 16 broad categories. Oktay (2012) described this process well when she said: "Sometimes what was originally identified as a concept is later seen to be a dimension or property of a category" (p.65). These categories were used to create six theoretical concepts, which were then related to the two core categories. Out of these eight came a theory that represented an interpretation of the words of the participants and the added material that came from written sources and my own observations. Chapter Four offers more details on this process.

Evaluation. Evaluating qualitative social justice research requires a variety of approaches. Maxwell (2005) focused overall on the question of validity, which he defined as ""the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation or other sort of account" (p.106). He strongly makes the case that there are no "magical charms," but instead the main emphasis ought to be on "how you will rule out specific plausible alternatives and threats to your interpretations and explanations" (p.107). Padgett's (2008) "strategies for

rigor" mirror many of the ones offered by Maxwell (p.179) and her concluding thoughts on rigor have been greatly appreciated: "Rigor is essential to all forms of empirical research…However the evaluative standards are defined and applied, it is difficult to justify a nonrigorous study as having relevance" (p.197). I also appreciated her thoughts on defining the success of a study: "The capacity for a study to stimulate thought, improve practices and policies, and incite further research is a metric of success agreeable to most anyone" (p.183). If I achieve these with this research, I will be happy.

Taking into consideration that validity or rigor must be maintained throughout the study (Padgett, p.180), I have used a variety of methods, including triangulation, member checking, prolonged engagement, auditing, an auditing trail and "rich data" (Padgett, 2008; Maxwell, 2005).

For triangulation, the primary source of data, the long interview, was augmented with other sources. Maxwell defined triangulation as "collecting information from a diverse range of individuals and settings, using a variety of methods" (p.112) and for this study these included: Print materials, such as public conduct policies; observations; and information conversations, such as those with JYS staff or with the youth when taking book requests. The memos and field notes served as data, but also as reminders of possible researcher bias, thereby also functioning as an "auditing trail" as Padgett (2008) described it (p.191). Padgett also pointed out that "triangulation by data source - the most common type - is typically used for corroboration or confirmation. When data from field notes, interviews and/or archival materials are convergent, one has greater confidence that the observations are trustworthy" (p.188). This convergence was found in the data.

In this research, prolonged engagement included almost two years of weekly volunteering and observing at JYS; 23 long interviews and one focus group, producing approximately 40 hours of recordings; and approximately 1500 pages of field notes, memos and transcriptions.

There was an ongoing awareness of what Maxwell calls "reactivity," because I frequently found myself in the position of unwitting go-between between the Library and the youth and JYS. The fact that I knew an extensive amount about both worlds meant I was frequently asked for information or suggestions. It also meant my very questions served as prompts for all groups, since despite the apparent rifts between them, there was an eagerness to learn more about each other. As Maxwell (2005) pointed out, it is impossible to eliminate the influence of the researcher, but "what is important is to understand how you are influencing what the informant says, and how this affects the validity of the inferences you can draw from the interview" (p.109). I tried to take these interactions into consideration as I analyzed the data.

There was also awareness there was the possibility of bringing researcher bias into whatever data was collected. As Maxwell pointed out, "in the final analysis, validity threats are ruled out by evidence, not methods" (p.112). One way I have used evidence to support my data has been to observe the youth in various settings, including on the streets, at JYS and at the Library. Their ease at JYS and their lack of comfort on the streets and at the Library have been evident. In fact, one notable observation was that even if I had a good conversation with a youth at JYS, he or she would not acknowledge me on the streets. I have also used written materials to support the existence of stated rules and policies.

Overall, the analysis of the data has been made as trustworthy as possible, because trustworthiness was critical if this research was going to accurately reflect the thoughts and feelings of the participants. It must be as accurate portrayal of what the participants have said or

intended to say as possible, as heard and analyzed by the researcher, because the data from the long interview is by definition information that comes from the respondents themselves. If the analysis is inaccurate and not reflective of their own words, it is not doing its job. Narrative and quotations from the participants have been used liberally, since "sufficient quotational data should be presented to illuminate and support whatever analysis the evaluator provides in narrative form" (Patton, 1990). Using these quotations and descriptions has helped allow the data to tell the story.

"Thick, rich description" was also employed. As Patton (2001) said: "Thick, rich description provides the foundation for qualitative analysis and reporting. Good description takes the reader into the setting being described" (p.437). This kind of description is essential if the researcher expects the reader to become involved and invested in the research report. For this research, this kind of description was used to highlight the words of the participants, allowing them to speak for themselves while at the same time giving context to their thoughts and actions.

The goal in this research, as in all qualitative research, was to create as complete a picture as possible, creating "spaces where those who are studied (the Other) can speak" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.26). It is hoped these shared stories will offer readers and participants insights into the ways in which the public libraries and librarians interacted with the service providers and the LGBTQ homeless youth in this case study and possibly lead to the creation of purposeful, positive and productive interactions in the future.

Chapter Four

Findings

Preamble

The title of this chapter haunted me since the first words hit the page of this dissertation. I read, researched, interviewed, thought, read more, did more research, interviewed more, thought more and then read, thought, read. Not only was grounded theory new to me, so too was research. I am a librarian - a practical person who looks for problems to solve and then tries to solve them. You could say research was a problem to solve, but the answers were not clear or definite or finite or even unique. I also like to be prepared for the unexpected. So I took a long time to end all my preparations and finally sit down to allow my brain to make connections and come up with categories and to not keep retreating to the comforting words of Strauss, Corbin, Becker, Agar, Charmaz and all those other people who knew what they were doing. In my mind, I finally took off my training wheels and hoped I would not notice I was balanced on two wheels instead of four and that no longer did the comforting hand of my father rest on the back of my seat as I wove up and down the sidewalk on my own. That is to say: My desk was clear, there were no books, no papers, no highlighters, no colorful Post-Its to mark important passages. There was just my computer, my fingers and my mind. I managed to take in a lot of other people's words and I was finally ready to let out a few myself. Here they are.

Introduction

"My mom kicked me out for being myself and she doesn't even know who I am" (Cedar, 2012)

In this chapter are the stories that have come out of the grounded research in response to the research question: "What is the role of the public library in the lives of homeless LGBTQ youth?" and to the secondary questions that arose during the research process. These included:

(a) “What does it mean to feel safe?” (b) “What is expected from the Library?” (c) “How do attitudes toward visibly homeless adults affect homeless LGBTQ youth?” and, (d) How important are personal connections?”

The interviews, field notes, memos, and examination of supplementary documents, such as behavior guidelines in both organizations, have all contributed to these stories. The open coding at the beginning led to a vast and unwieldy number of codes, which was winnowed down by careful thought, constant comparison and by returning to the data over and over again. This process, called open coding (Oktay, 2012, p.75) resulted in reducing the 1920 codes to 26 concepts.

These concepts were further reduced to 16 broad categories, then six theoretical concepts, and these were combined to create the final two core categories of “creating safety” and “developing cultural competence.” These two themes ran like a thread through the interviews, the collected written materials, the overheard conversations and the observations. The development of these concepts, categories and themes is explained in the following sections, in alignment with a commitment to “increase the reliability of the information in a case study” by maintaining a chain of evidence (Yin, 2009, p.122).

I begin with a description of the institutions and the participants, using “thick description” as described in Chapter Three. Providing this kind of background gives a richer feel to the data, supplementing the large amount of quotations also included. This is followed by a description of the codes, concepts, themes and central categories as they emerged from the data. Finally, this chapter ends with a presentation of the grounded theoretical scheme that has come out of this research, with examples drawn from the data. Together it is hoped these provide

insight into the interactions of the three groups included in this case study: The librarians, the service providers and the homeless LGBTQ youth.

The Institutions

The City Library.

The City Library was located in the City, a large urban area, known as a "gay-friendly" city and made up of neighborhoods that varied greatly in racial and economic diversity. One neighborhood, the Hayes, was particularly welcoming to those who identified as gay. Most neighborhoods had branch libraries and these libraries tried to reflect the communities they served.

The mission statement of the City Library included the City Library system "is dedicated to free and equal access to information, knowledge, independent learning and the joys of reading for our diverse community" (the City Library, 2012). The Library was comprised of one Main library (the Main) and 27 branches libraries. For fiscal year 2010 to 2011, they circulated approximately 10,707,477 items citywide and 2,744,956 items at the Main. That same year, they had 7,042,971 Library visits citywide, of which 2,225,291 were at the Main. The Main was open seven days a week, with shorter hours on Fridays and Sundays. There were 394,453 total registered patrons for that year, out of a population of 805,235 in the entire city.

Located in a city known to be a leader in gay rights, the City Library was committed to serving the LG population. It had a branch designated as the LG branch and there was a gay and lesbian history center located at the Main. It had also highlighted teen services in the latest strategic plan, placing a particular emphasis on creating a new teen center at the Main.

Main Library. The Main, the location for most of the Library observation and for the homeless youth interviews, was opened in 1996 and was built to replace a library that was half its size. The façade, made up of Sierra White granite, gave an imposing and elegant, if somewhat intimidating, look to the outside of this building, which offered 375,000 square feet of usable space. Inside were a large central atrium - topped by a skylight - and an open floor plan with five levels, each accessible by elevators and wide sweeping staircases. It was near the City Hall, as well as the opera house and symphony building. Yet the neighborhood surrounding it, The Shanty, was well known for its poverty and high rates of SROs (singe resident occupancy rooms). As a result, it was also home to social service agencies and churches dedicated to providing resources for those who were experiencing poverty and homelessness, as well as the outcome of these economic challenges - such as substance abuse and untreated or inadequately treated mental illness.

The Main had a social worker on staff to engage with the visibly homeless adult patrons, of which there were many. There was a teen services coordinator, as well as a teen and children's services administrator. There was a large beautifully laid out children's section and a small teen area that had been carved out of a corner of the Library. The plans to create a new teen center were in the works and the goal was to have it be, as one of the librarians, Laura, described it, "state-of-the-art" and designed to appeal to all teens. When this research started, there were two full-time teen librarians at the Main, but they both changed jobs within a week of each other and so the Main was without a teen librarian during the entire time interviews were being conducted.

When one entered the Main, the first impressions were of the vastness of the space, the invisibility of the books and the uniformed security guard seated on a stool next to the narrow entry way and tall security gates that led into the Library itself. It was easy to see why the five

homeless LGBTQ youth in the focus group had concerns about this floor of the Library. Apple described the security as "feeling like an airport" and Billy Bob, agreeing with her, added: "Like if, if I was in the first floor of the public library in the City, I don't feel so safe, 'cause to me I feel like there's a big amount of tension in that area." Talyn commented:

> I agree with everyone, the first floor is intimidating…'cause, I mean I understand they have to be on guard, you know, make sure no one's gonna run off with a book or something, but that doesn't mean that the whole atmosphere of the first floor has to feel like, you know, someone's gonna grab you by the arm and yank you, throw you outside at any given moment.

Once through the security gates, the other floors of the Library felt less intimidating, with their combinations of open spaces and smaller rooms. It was on these floors that many of the interviews were conducted, in the administrative offices - with the librarians - or in the study rooms, with the youth.

Juniper Youth Services. JYS, the agency that served the largest number of homeless youth in the City, was located in this same low-income neighborhood. As previously described, JYS served about 3400 homeless youth annually, with services and housing programs. In 2011, JYS kept youth off the streets for 83,782 nights (Juniper Youth Services, 2011). Their mission was "to provide a continuum of services that inspires homeless and runaway youth to move beyond the streets. We will nurture potential, promote dignity, and support bold steps by all" (Juniper Youth Services, 2011). They had multiple service sites, including the two drop-in centers - Stop-By and the PRC - a health clinic, job and education training center, emergency housing, transitional housing, permanent housing, housing for underage youth (17 and under), housing for LGBTQ youth, housing for youth with severe mental illness and housing for former

foster care youth. They served ages 12 to 24, but the majority of the youth they saw were between 18 and 22 - what were called "transitional aged youth" (TAY). Approximately 70% of them were youth of color and 60% identified as male, 30% as female and 2% as transgender (JYS, 2010).

Stop-By. Much of my observation time was spent at the drop-in center, Stop-By, which felt like the drop-in center for homeless youth it was. The contrast between the City Library and Stop-By could not have been starker. Although the cement walls had been painted with primary colors and there were brightly colored fliers on the walls, as well as youth artwork, and although there was usually a friendly person at the front desk, it could not escape its institutional feel. The odor of food stayed in the air, the stairs to the lower level were frequently littered with debris such as an odd blue plastic glove or an old comb or torn handouts, the dining and common-use long wooden table was usually sticky, the four padded black Naugahyde benches were well worn and there were almost always two huge fans loudly attempting to cool down the space. It was barely clean but it was a welcoming place, where youth appeared to feel safe and free to be themselves. JYS provided a description of Stop-By on their website:

> [Stop-by] is a safe haven for at-risk youth seeking help and is staffed by caring professionals who provide immediate intervention and short-term counseling to prepare kids to start their journeys toward productive adulthood. [It] is more than just a place to hang out. It also offers connection to education and offers recreational activities where they can connect with peers and adults. Through groups, outings and one-on-one conversations…staff support youth with a variety of special needs such as education, family reunification, legal matters, and sexual identity issues. It also serves as a portal to further services. Each new visitor to the Center receives an individual assessment to

> determine what other services—such as medical care, counseling, or housing—would best suit their immediate and long-term needs. For some young people…the Center is just a place to get away from the streets for a little while. But for most, it is a stop on the way to continued recovery, offering a chance to rebuild their lives and leave the streets for good. (Juniper Youth Services, 2012)

The entrance to Stop-By was first through heavily barred metal gates that were unlocked during the day, and then through a thick glass door, controlled by a buzzer at the main desk. Most days, this door was kept locked and each person had to be buzzed inside. However, some days - especially sunny ones - the door was propped open and anyone could enter without screening. However, once inside, youth were required to give their name and birth date to the person at the front desk. Again, Stop-by could be contrasted with the Library, with its security guard and posted behavior guidelines.

Until 2012, Stop-By was only for youth 19 and under; the new age limit was 21, because there were so few places for TAY to safely spend their days. On weekdays, Stop-By was open from 8:15 a.m. until 6 p.m.; weekend hours were 8:15 a.m. until 4 p.m. During the week, three hot meals a day were served from the small kitchen in the back. On the weekends, two hot meals were served. There were always snacks available, including fresh fruit and day-old bakery goods. In general, the food that was offered was a combination of bulk food - canned, frozen, packaged, large blocks of butter, bags of lettuce - added to the upscale foods, especially baked items, from bakery donations. So a meal could consist of bulk frozen beef, bulk frozen vegetables and day-old bread from the local upscale bakery. There was constantly a hand-me-down feeling, and even having volunteers, as opposed to enough paid staff, added to that feeling.

The small library at Stop-By was made up of one large wooden bookcase that took up a large portion of one wall and a stand-alone small wooden bookcase with four shelves. Over the year I volunteered there, I organized the bookcases into subject categories, identified by small, hand-written labels taped to the shelves. Initially, the shelves included an interesting combination of obviously unwanted books donated by someone who just wanted to get rid of them (perhaps the best example being *Passages*, a book about menopause by Gail Sheehy), 14 hardback Nancy Drews, 25 Danielle Steele novels, primarily hardback, a substantial collection of juvenile fiction and then a random assortment of new and interesting novels and philosophy or spiritual books. Some of the books were Library discards, left over from an earlier collaboration with the Main. At the beginning it took several days to weed the collection, organize what was left and then begin to slowly add to it. At each visit, the youth were offered the opportunity to request specific titles or genres and these requests were as diverse as any that can be found at a public library. For instance, the first list of requests included: *Halo*, Dante's *Inferno*, Dr. Seuss books, *The 33 Strategies of War* and the *48 Laws of Power* by Robert Green, *Hunger Games*, *Quantum Consciousness* by Stephen Wolinsky, *Girls Like Us* by Rachel Lloyd and Sistah Souljah's *Midnight*, *The Tempest* and books about New Orleans culture, especially Creole history. In addition, there were requests for true crime, biographies of fashion designers, sociology, psychology and mysteries. The ability to fill the requests was based on thrift stores finds, the generosity of friends and the Library book sales. In contrast, most if not all of these requested materials were available for free at the Library, if these youth had had valid library cards and had felt welcomed and safe there.

Personal interactions with the staff at JYS were generally pleasant and the staff consistently expressed appreciation for the upkeep of the library. The youth tended to be reticent

unless directly addressed and then they were generally friendly, interactive and eager to discuss reading and books. At one of the early visits, two young women, Apple and Riddles (who were later part of the focus group), came over and asked: "Are you the **librarian**?" as if they were asking about God or the President. This reaction offered insight into the innate power of the role of librarian. It was also reminiscent of a homeless adult focus group in another city. The participants there were initially under the impression the focus group they attended represented outreach from the local library (it did not) and they were thrilled. Moments like those serve as reminders that public libraries are about relationships and how easy it is to forget that.

The Neighborhood

The Shanty. The Shanty was an area that encompassed a variety of housing, playgrounds, churches, schools, stores, restaurants and service agencies. A common sight in this neighborhood were people sleeping: Along walls, in doorways, and even propped up against the wheels of cars. They frequently carried rough gray blankets, flecked with colors, which were handed out by various agencies and used to lie on or under or to be wrapped around oneself.

Odor. One of the best clues one was entering this neighborhood was the odor. Because of my unusually keen sense of smell, it was initially extremely difficult to endure the stench of urine and other bodily odors. However, over time I came to understand the powerful connection between smell and stigma and how that partially shaped these reactions. That is, the revulsion I felt was complex: It was not simply the odor, but it was the socialization I have received over a lifetime of living an American middle class domiciled life. Sibley (1995) put it like this:

> The middle classes have been able to distance themselves from their own residues, but in the poor they see bodily residues, animals closely associated with residual matter, and residual places coming together and threatening their own categorical scheme under

> which the pure and the defiled are distinguished. The separations which the middle classes have achieved in the suburb contrast with the mixing of people and polluting matter in the slum. This then becomes a judgment on the poor. The class boundary marked out in residential segregation echoes the recurrent theme: Evil…is embodied in excrement. (p.56)

The experience with the Shanty bore this out. I went from revulsion to making a new emotional link in which concern for the people I encountered on these streets transformed this smell into the odor of inequality and a powerful class system. This transformation was remarkable and it increased my commitment to this research.

Walking to the Library. To get to the Library from Stop-By was a six block walk through The Shanty, down sidewalks where people leaned against graffitied walls, their shopping carts parked nearby, or groups engaged in animated conversations, forcing pedestrians to weave in and out, as the groups gesticulated and shouted and laughed. It was a walk past multiple examples of the weaponized architecture mentioned earlier, like pointed boulders cemented into window wells or benches that only accommodated one person or signs that threatened if one sits or lies down. There was a thick heavy feeling in the air that stuck to my skin and pulled at my heart. This was the Library's neighborhood. This was where some of these young people were spending their days and nights. This was their milieu and make no mistake - it affected them. This was not a place they wanted to call home.

Grounded Theory Categories

First open coding. The challenge in this case study was to see if there were common themes about the Library among the three groups: Librarians, homeless youth and service providers. As mentioned earlier, the initial open coding resulted in 1920 codes. This coding was

the "first level of data analysis in grounded theory" (Oktay, 2012, p.70). These codes came out of line-by-line coding as recommended by Charmaz (2006, p.51) and, as Oktay suggested, everything was coded (p.56), which could explain why there were so many codes. Also, since this case study included three groups, the vocabulary used varied with the participant because the stories were about three different worlds. As much as possible, codes that reflected actions were used, such as "being a good partner," "competing for funds" and "constantly being interrupted" (Charmaz, 2006).

Second open coding. The next step was a continuation of the open coding. Because of the huge number of codes, narrowing the open codes made the data much more manageable. During this step, constant comparison and the memos were used to look for patterns and ideas on what these 1920 codes had in common. As the open codes were initially being assigned, patterns had already begun to emerge, allowing them to ultimately be combined into the 26 concepts that helped group them together for this second open coding. For example, "figuring out how to work with youth organizations" and "meeting with organizations" were subsumed under the concept of "creating connections."

This was a time-consuming and mind-stretching step, since there were so many codes. Initially, the same codes were incorporated into more than one concept. This helped construct the final 26 concepts, because it highlighted the relationships among them. The process required a constant comparison of data to data, as patterns emerged.

Axial coding. Once these 26 concepts were identified, the data was once more consulted, in an effort to look for descriptions or comments that would add to these. A definition of each one was written, using the field notes, interviews and memos. This writing facilitated the identification of connections between the concepts, using Oktay's (2009) advice that some

concepts may turn out to be aspects of a category (p.65). For example, it was found that "collaborating," "creating connections," "interaction" and "outreach" could all be combined to create the category "**connecting**," because they all include the idea of the importance of human interactions among people, whether they are the homeless youth, the service providers or the librarians. "Perception of youth" and "attitude toward youth" were also combined to create "**attitude**," because they both included interactions or potential interactions with homeless youth, driven by the context of the interaction. That is, certain attitudes about homeless youth affected how they were treated or the assumptions that were made about them. "Welcoming," "creating safety," "creating an environment" and "anyone can come in" were all combined to create "**creating safety**," because they related to the space and whether or not it was perceived to be safe.

"Anyone can come in" initially seemed to have great potential as a concept or even as a broad category, since it was used in different ways and how it was used and who used it greatly affected its meaning. Because the public library was just that - public - and because it was frequently described as a democratic institution, the concept of letting anyone come in could be a positive one. However, some librarians used it as shorthand, actually meaning "we have to let anyone in," rather than meaning "we welcome anyone." As Peter put it when asked how he liked being a librarian:

> What it comes down to, I guess, is, it's a public building and everyone can come in. And, so, we, we deal with that…It can mean all sorts of things, and it's probably different every day, but it's, there's public, it's a public building and anyone can come in…We have a set of guidelines… Library use guidelines that are posted by the entrance. And

> then we enforce 'em and, and, as best we can. Um, we also have security that, uh, backs us up.

So for Peter, "anyone can come in" was directly associated with controlling behavior and trying to create a safe environment for his patrons, as he defined safety. This concept ultimately became part of the broad category of "**creating safety**" and how the three identified groups defined it in relationship to the Library.

Another grouping was "work environment," "work challenges" and "attitude toward job." Since all three of these related to employment, it became clear they could be brought together into one term, "**work**." "Work challenges" was created initially because one of the questions for the librarians was about the barriers they encountered when trying to accomplish their jobs. The most common barriers were time, funding and bureaucracy - with bureaucracy at the top of the lists. Only two of the librarians mentioned the presence of homeless Library patrons as barriers to doing their jobs. In one case, this frustration was with the amount of time it took to enforce the behavior guidelines that were created because of patrons experiencing homelessness. In the other case, the librarian had two particular frustrations: Library procedures and the lack of time to address an issue that felt important to her as a librarian and as a branch manager. Here is Denise's story about the problem with not offering restricted cards to all the homeless youth (one of the clerical procedures mandated by the library), so they could use the Library Internet computers for an hour instead of waiting in line over and over again for the 15-minute computer. The people she described in this anecdote were all homeless youth:

> At first I was like, okay you need to get up, you cut the line [for the 15-minute computers]. But then I hear that this other guy called him a faggot and I'm like well you need to leave, 'cause you used hate speech. And then they both start going and I was like

> oh for God's sake, who knows…So I said nobody go anywhere, everybody stay exactly where you are, we're gonna just like pretend we're all fine. And then the guy over here got upset because he thought I was favoring this guy, because this guy wasn't homeless and this guy's yelling well I *am* homeless, you asshole. And then he's up, and he's like I'm homeless and I'm a faggot and then they're screaming and…then it calms down, then I went downstairs for a second…and then I came back upstairs and walked *into* the fight. Like I walked up that staircase, opened the door, and the guy who got the computer was standing over the other guy, like you're not allowed to call people that, I can't believe this, let's take it outside, and…we kicked him out, we kicked him out again, the police ended up, like six police officers came, and maybe they looked for that kid out in the street, I don't know what they were gonna do, no blows were thrown but…there was like 20, 25 minutes in which the whole branch becomes like an insane place over the 15-minute computer.

This anecdote was an excellent example of the overlap of some of the categories. Denise was spending *time* to create *safety* using *rules* - all three of these were emerging categories.

Broad categories. The following table shows the 16 broad categories that emerged from the axial coding. The included concepts are indicated in parentheses. Each category gives an example for the three groups.

Table 2. *Initial grounded theory broad categories/combined concepts*

Broad category (included concepts)	**Example**	**Participant**
Attitude (attitude toward youth/perception of youth)	Describing teen behavior Thinking librarians are rude Feeling judged	Librarian Service provider Homeless youth
Work (work environment/work challenges/attitude toward job)	Being blessed with great staff Not feeling supported Needing job training	Librarian Service provider Homeless youth
Creating safety (welcoming/creating safety/ creating an environment/anyone can come in)	Using humorous signs Hearing youth are unwelcome at Library Feeling heard	Librarian Service provider Homeless youth
Time	Constantly being interrupted Persevering with youth Too old to be a Library "teen"	Librarian Service provider Homeless youth
Connecting (collaborating/creating connections/interacting/doing outreach)	Meeting with organizations Collaborating is "life blood" Not feeling connected to Library	Librarian Service provider Homeless youth
Rules	Creating a safe environment Enforcing rules for safety Getting a Library card	Librarian Service provider Homeless youth
Accessibility	Explaining fines and fees Making it easy to get card Not feeling helped enough	Librarian Service provider Homeless youth
Funding	Funders need results Ages served reflects funding Unable to pay Library fines	Librarian Service provider Homeless youth
Attitude toward homeless	Library becoming shelter Stereotype of homelessness Not identifying with homeless adults	Librarian Service provider Homeless youth
Service population	Not reaching homeless youth Explaining gender terms Being a survivor	Librarian Service provider Homeless youth
Establishing priorities	Staffing affects priorities Meeting basic needs like food, shelter Wanting permanent housing	Librarian Service provider Homeless youth
Job responsibilities	Maintaining building Connecting volunteers & youth Working as intern	Librarian Service provider Homeless youth

Table 2. Continued.

Broad category (included concepts)	**Example**	**Participant**
Getting input	Creating Teen Advisory Board Creating Youth Advisory Board Joining Youth Advisory Board	Librarian Service provider Homeless youth
Job rewards	Successfully helping a patron Seeing youth get housing Working toward the future	Librarian Service provider Homeless youth
Perception of libraries	Wanting youth to believe in the Library Treated rudely at Library Trying to "pass" as non-homeless at Library	Librarian Service provider Homeless youth
Role of libraries	Helping people find information Finding community through arts & culture Seeing Library as a safe space	Librarian Service provider Homeless youth

Theoretical coding. In another return to the data, each of the 16 broad categories was considered again, using the following questions as guides: What were the stories that seemed to be most important to the storytellers? Where was the passion or the commitment or the hurt or the confusion? What was being said about the Library - by the youth, the librarians and the service providers? How did the meanings attached to each of these broad categories by the youth and the service providers contrast or correspond with the meanings offered by the librarians?

In an effort to refine these broad categories, theoretical sampling was also used. As Charmaz (2006) explained: "Use theoretical sampling as a strategy to narrow your focus on emerging categories and as a technique to develop and refine them" (p.107). At this point, there were many ideas about what was being discovered and the meanings that were emerging. To further focus these categories and the ideas, interviews with all three groups were continued, especially focusing on the homeless youth. In addition, observations were continued at both Stop-By and the Main, and there were two more casual conversations with staff at Stop-By, as well as attendance at an improvisational performance at Stop-By.

Theoretical concepts. Finally, from these 16 broad categories came six theoretical concepts: Time, attitude, welcoming, building relationships, feeling safe and cultural competence. Each of these theoretical concepts represented an aspect of the two final core categories: Creating safety and developing cultural competence. The next sections explain how each of these six were articulated by the three groups of librarians, service providers and homeless LGBTQ youth, and how they supported the final theoretical scheme: *In order for the Library to be able to provide relevant materials and services to the homeless LGBTQ youth, it is necessary for the Library to be perceived as an emotionally safe and welcoming space by both the youth and the service providers. In addition, the librarians need to feel both physically and emotionally safe in providing this space. To create this safety requires shared cultural competence between the Library and the other two groups.*

Time. The first theoretical concept was time and what it meant to each group. Early on in the research, it appeared the core of this case study would be about time, because participants in each group used the concept differently and yet each of them mentioned time in some way. Ultimately, time was included as one of the theoretical concepts that helped to build the final theory.

For the librarians, there was never enough time to do the work they needed or wanted to do. It is interesting to note that the City Library, unlike many in the United States, had plenty of money for materials but less money for staff. Dan described the difference between his ideas and having time to carry them out:

> I realized, "Wait a sec. I don't have time to do the programming." Like I'm still new at librarianship, even though I've been working twenty-two years, as far as like having the budget, the responsibilities, I'm finding out, like, my ideas that are all pie in the sky are

> not necessarily gonna get done and I have to figure out, I have to strategize and, um, and it takes me back to library school and strategic plans and all that stuff.

Denise made a similar point:

> And I realized I can't do everything so I thought I'm gonna pick these things I can do, and these are the thing - you know, I kind of looked through my evaluation and I thought 'well these are the things I can do' and this is, you know, what's having a big payoff, and these other things we need to kinda table for right now, um, and try to get more resources for them.

Joyce talked about being constantly interrupted and how challenging it was to get everything done. Not having enough time to do their jobs or to do their jobs well affected all of the librarians. This lack of time influenced the decisions they made about work priorities and their willingness to take on extra work, such as reaching out to underserved populations like the homeless LGBTQ youth.

As mentioned already, time was also a factor in computer use. The time limits, especially for the 15-minute computers, created conflicts and the need for constant surveillance, taking time away from other tasks. The paperwork alone for some of the incidents took away valuable time. In her comments on the number of incidents in her branch, Denise described how time-consuming it was:

> If I spent those five hours I write incident reports a week on programming for homeless youth…I mean, it sounds like, some weeks if there was more than five. It's just, there are a lot of, there's a lot of paperwork associated with every goofy incident…So it's really, um… it just seems like it's a drain on our resources. And it's associated with the number of people who are in need.

Again, this lack of time served as a barrier to creating cultural competence in the lives of these youth. In addition, the youth and the service providers perceived the time limits on the computers as unwelcoming and rigid.

Another aspect of time for librarians was the age limit on services to teens. In the City Library, teens were considered adults when they reached the age of 19 and at that point they were no longer served by the teen librarians. In some ways, this was not a negative for this population, since many of them did not fit into the typical teen category and did not identify as teens. When I asked Isaiah about using the teen section in the Library, he told me:

> But I kind of feel to get more people in, to get this specific demographic [homeless LGBTQ youth]…that's it's important to have the young adult section, 'cause I know a lot of people who do not wanna be called teenagers and wanna be perceived as young adults. And I think that wording itself is truly important for them.

However, like other young adults their age, their needs were not being met by the adult librarians, either. When a librarian from the City Library called me to ask about the needs of this population, she made a point of telling me that she did not know anything about teens because she was an adult librarian (personal conversation, 2012). This gap was significant and it played a role in Library's ability to provide meaningful services to LGBTQ homeless youth.

The service providers also talked about time, but from a different angle. First, they emphasized the importance of giving youth the time they need - to accomplish their goals, to feel safe, to find their way. When asked about the rewards of hir job, Train described having a young person suddenly decide to get on the housing list:

> The rewards are when, after like three or four months of talking about like getting on a housing waitlist, somebody actually says, "I need to do that now." You know, like what

> was the tipping point? I don't know, but now they're coming and saying, "This is what I wanna do, and I don't wanna talk about it anymore."

As s/he pointed out, these youth were on their own timetables and the adults in their lives had to respect that. This attitude toward time and the youth fit well with the work of the librarians, since in general they were providing services as needed, without expectations about what was being done with the services. It was also important for librarians to know this, since they expressed anxiety about being able to help these youth.

Next, the service providers, like the librarians, were also constantly pressed for time. There was a significant staff turnover at JYS and many of the employees found themselves doing double or triple duty in their jobs. This was stressful on the staff as well as the youth, since it made it more difficult for them to get services or even attention. Cedar commented on this when I mentioned looking for a caseworker at Stop-By to interview:

> Good luck getting any of them. Um, there's like four of them and they each have about a hundred cases. So they're really, really swamped. Even when I try to talk to them, I could get like five minutes and then they'd be like all right, well, we'll talk to you later.

This lack of time impacted the service providers' ability to reach out to organizations, such as the Library, and the turnover made it challenging to create ongoing relationships.

Time for the homeless LGBTQ youth revealed yet another aspect of time. Unlike the service providers and the librarians, some of the youth had unlimited daily time, controlled only by having to show up for evening housing or daily meals. For many of them, this time was spent waiting: For housing, for meals, for paperwork, for classes, for a meeting with a caseworker. Cedar described the waiting process for transitional housing:

> There's a waiting list…I've been on it for twenty-something days. It's been, it's long. But

> I think I'm next on the list or at the top of the list anyway so that's a positive part. But you know, you call every day or check in every day and, it's just a very long waiting process. But until then, you're either hoping to get an emergency bed or you're homeless or if you're lucky enough to have some type of income, you can buy a hotel room. But you're pretty much on your own at that point.

With waiting came a need for a safe place to spend this time - and this was one reason they used the City Library. However, since they remained invisible at the Library, the librarians had no idea of how important this sanctuary was to these young people. This waiting time could also alternate with periods of activity. As Daniela explained:

> Our youth who are in college are pretty busy… a lot of them also have a job that they're holding as well. And, then…if they're participating in our employment programs, they usually have a full schedule until that program ends, and a lot of the reason is because they're not only doing this, you know, employment piece, but then they're also participating in our computer class. And now that we're gonna add another hour for GED class, too, and that's when we're able to really work with someone, and so they, you know, if that program lasts for four weeks, then, yeah, you're gonna have a real busy four weeks.

When the youth were busy, the City Library also represented a safe place to study or get private time away from the streets and the stress.

Time for the youth also meant having time to try and fall short of their own expectations and try again. This was a critical part of the JYS services: Offering these young people the time to keep coming back, without judgment. Daniela described this:

> I mean that they're just really resilient young people… they want to make a change and

> there are just so many things that are going on and it can be very challenging and…it's like sometimes it may not have worked out that time, you know, but being there and letting them know that it's okay to come back and if it doesn't work out that we're still here and I think that's been something that's been really important, you know, for me in the work that, we do. Because sometimes, you know, youth completing this one-week class, that may be the only thing that they've ever completed *ever*.

This aspect of time related directly to the approach already being used by one of the teen librarians in particular. Dan described some of the teens at the City Library and observed that, contrary to what one might think, his enforcement of the rules actually helped him create better relationships with the teens who were acting out. As he put it:

> Um [pause] in the process of kicking teens out, it's, it's like, it's a weird like, it's a strange like paradox, but in, as I'm on my way out to kick kids out, often, I say things like, "I really like seeing you in the Library, but this is a place for everybody," and I try to get them into the philosophy of the Library, like, "You're an adult. You're making your own decisions now. This is part of that life skill, like learning how to behave in different places. I know you go out on the street and you say all kinds of swear words, but you come in here, you gotta chill on that stuff."

Initially, Dan found himself kicking out the same youth over and over. But over time, he developed rapport with them and they became his most consistent and dedicated Library users. The use of a large amount of Dan's time initially seemed overwhelming, but he found it to be a worthwhile investment, allowing him to create an environment that felt safe and welcoming for all the teens.

> One final point about time and these young people was that at 25 the youth aged out of

the JYS services and were no longer able to take advantage of the multiple opportunities to improve their lives and get off of the streets. This was similar to the aging out of the teen Library services and in both cases, it left these young people unsupported as they coped with issues that were not the same as the ones for more mature adults.

Attitude. The second theoretical concept was attitude, because there were many comments about the attitudes of librarians, youth and service providers.

In his work as a teen librarian, Dan emphasized that he cared most about the youth and what they needed. He felt as if in some ways he was outside the usual Library attitude toward linking teens with books. As he said:

> The books are secondary. I care about, 'What are you into? What do you wanna do at the Library? What do you wanna do with your life? How are you gonna come here to do that? What,' you know, 'What can you find here that's gonna help you pursue education interests, music?'" whatever the thing is that they wanna get into.

Dan's attitude toward the youth was accepting and committed; he wanted them to have a positive relationship with libraries.

Joyce's description of a young apparently homeless youth gave insight into the lack of information and the comfort level concerned Library staff have in reaching out to homeless youth:

> He was just, you know, he looked like a scared dog, you know, he was not kempt and…I just, I always got so sad just seeing, you know, seeing him, and he seemed so nervous. Um, and I would talk to him a little bit, but I didn't wanna scare him off.

Joyce's attitude, like that of the others, showed that these librarians were paying attention and wanted to help, but they were not sure how to do that.

Although Theresa was not a librarian, she worked for the City Library and infrequently engaged with homeless youth at the Main, as part of her work with homeless adults there. Even though technically she was able to provide referrals to City resources to the youth who were 18 and over, she was reluctant to do so. Her experience as a previously homeless person herself, and as a lesbian, gave her insight into the challenges of being young, LGBTQ and using the city housing services. In fact, when homeless, she herself chose to live on the street, rather than subjecting herself to the shelters. Although there was not much she could do, her attitude was protective:

> I mean they're my children. We have to look out for them. They're fragile, vulnerable you know…What's not cool is that I just don't know if they followed through. Because my inclination is to take them by the hand and walk them over to JYS because I don't know… The only thing I can say to them is, "Go there. If you don't like it, if you didn't get what you need from them, you come back, and we'll do it from here. But I really think that this is a better fit for you. I think you're gonna like this a lot better than you're gonna like what we have to offer."

Theresa's concern for these youth was reflected in the way she interacted with them and worried about them. Because there was no one else at the City Library who was specifically assigned to work with them, she found herself stepping outside of her role because she cared and because she understood their challenges on the streets.

Denise was the librarian who interacted most consistently with the homeless youth, and she seemed to have an attitude that combined affectionate humor, concern and a yearning for concrete ways she could help them. In the past, she had worked with local social service agencies and, although it was time-consuming, she found it helpful to be sharing information about this

population so she could provide appropriate Library services. Overall, she felt isolated in her branch and frustrated by the lack of institutional Library support.

The service providers' attitude toward the homeless youth was well represented by Train, when I asked hir what s/he thought of the term "at-risk":

> I think it describes every youth. It also is kind of lame. When I used to work at AmeriCorps and we would talk about our youth, we would call them "at-promise" youth. I've never heard that since then, though. So it's just another way of like framing who we're working with. Like people with a lot of promise, people with a lot of I don't know, interests and skills in the world, you know, who can do amazing things…I just feel they're some of the wisest people.

Other service providers had a similar attitude and Lance's comments summed up this attitude well. When I asked him what he would like librarians to know about the young people he worked with, he answered: "That they're not horrible street kids and drug addicts and negativity. They're beautiful, sweet, wonderful young people trying to find their way in the world." Both of these JYS staff members admired the youth, not only for their resilience, but also for their creativity and intelligence. If shared, these attitudes would have provided useful insights to the librarians.

Finally, the homeless youth participants talked mainly about attitudes that made them feel less safe or less confident. There is an extensive discussion of this in the section on feeling safe. But one pertinent comment came from Cedar about why he was willing to be interviewed. He pointed out that normally he's suspicious of straight people trying to help: "It kind of gets to the point where because you've been so mistreated by heterosexuals, you kinda become a heterosexualist. And like, you don't trust heterosexual people, you're like, why are you doing

this?" But he made an exception in this case, saying: "But I know for me, like, I mean the only reason I'm really doing this is because you said you're a LGBT-friendly librarian and I'm like okay, let's see how we can advance the youth homelessness LGBT, you know?" One interesting point about his comments is that he was not actually told I was an LGBT-friendly librarian. He was simply told the topic of the research. The fact that a librarian was interested in what the public library could do to make his life better made him perceive me as LGBT-friendly; it made me an ally. This interaction emphasized the importance of letting these youth know librarians are willing to listen and offer resources. He viewed me positively after one brief conversation.

Welcoming. The third theoretical concept was "welcoming." Included in this theme were both feeling welcomed and being welcoming. Feeling welcomed was defined as having one's presence enthusiastically anticipated, with thoughtful attention to specific needs. It was not the same as tolerance, acceptance or inclusion. In a welcoming library atmosphere, each person who enters feels comfortable and wanted. Welcoming could be a natural outcome of creating cultural competence, which will be discussed shortly.

The librarians described welcoming in multiple ways. Like several of the other teen librarians, Katherine identified with teens. She explained why she chose to work with teens:

> Teen librarians are teen librarians because we realize how isolated teens are and how, how they don't feel welcome in libraries and they need libraries so much. And we're just drawn to that demographic in a way that a lot of adults are scared of that demographic, so it's just more, um, in the forefront of our mind to try and help them, and make, find loopholes for them. It's just where our focus is. Where adult librarians are often shushing them and, and dreading when a pack of, you know, African American fifteen-year-olds comes in the Library, like "Eew, I'm gonna have to tell them to be quiet," or their

behavior isn't appropriate or whatever and the rest of us are like, "Oh, my god, this is great! Look at who just came in!"

Katherine's efforts to help the teens feel welcomed were particularly focused on personal interactions with each one: She learned their names, she remembered what they were reading; she handed them books she thought they would like. Like other librarians, providing relevant resources was her way of trying to make her patrons feel welcome. Katherine's positive and welcoming attitude toward teens was based in large part on her comfort with this population - her cultural competence in the teen culture. This demonstrated the importance of understanding Library patrons, no matter who they were, and how that understanding led naturally to a welcoming environment.

Joyce also had personal interactions with the teens. Joyce had an informal TAG, who provided input on ideas for programming. Her "posse," as she called them, was one way she interacted with the teens so they would feel connected to the Library.

In addition, Joyce created displays with LGBTQ books, particularly for Pride Month. For her, this was a way of letting LGBTQ youth know she wanted them there. Peter also designed displays and made a point of using prominently placed signs to highlight the extensive teen LGBTQ collection housed at his branch. Again, he was using his collection to indicate a welcoming environment. These librarians demonstrated a willingness to be welcoming and a positive attitude toward their LGBTQ teen patrons.

The service providers had a lot to say about libraries being welcoming places. Lance, in particular, was not happy with the reports he was getting from the LGBTQ homeless youth he encountered in his work:

First off, they don't feel welcomed [at the Library], even though they're LGBTQ youth,

> they are LGBT youth street youth and there's a stigma to that…This one young person said it very accurately, "We're not offered the same services as someone who comes in dressed nicely and smells good." And I'm like, seriously, he goes, "They treat us as if we're dirt." Not answering questions, ignoring them when they ask questions, and asking them to leave because they smell bad. Not being helpful, being rude, condescension is huge. They've actually given examples of where someone was like, there are three of them standing there and two…didn't look like homeless kids; they would help those two first, and then turn, and in a rude way say, "What do you need?" And they don't feel part of, they don't feel welcomed.

Lance was actually quite hostile toward the Library and did not use it himself, either. There is more about the ramifications of this in the section on cultural competence.

Train gave advice on how the Library could be more welcoming to homeless LGBTQ youth. Hir comments echo the recommendations in Chapter Two on how to help teens in general feel welcomed in a library:

> I think that if librarians are trying to be like allies or advocates or, or whatever, they need to be doing their own individual outreach, too. And that means making sure that any queer youth that come in that are noticeably queer youth or who have identifying, symbols or whatever, are feeling welcomed and are welcomed and are…encouraged to return and encouraged to ask any questions that they have and, and offered any resources that somebody might know about that could be helpful to them. I mean librarians being aware of just the vulnerability that certain young people are experiencing, especially when they're queer and when they're marginally housed. Obviously, you can't always tell who those people are, but, yeah, like having signs up and having flyers out for sure,

> and then just being, yeah, really aware of who's around and making sure to do your own personal connection and outreach, you know, like, "I'm so-and-so. Let me know if you have any questions," making sure that they feel warmth from you because they'll see you as an ally at that point, like knowing that, "Oh, wow. You treated me like a person, a human being. You respected me. And you actually were interested in getting to know my name, even. And usually people don't trust me 'cause I'm young and also I'm a little bit strange and," you know, these sorts of things. That's like the experience of most young people, though, as feeling like they aren't respected or feeling like they're always being watched or like they don't have anything to offer or give in the world, so making sure that, to offer that and being warm about it, and creating like that ally-ship from the very get-go.

It can be seen from this quote that welcoming and attitude in the Library were closely connected, as were feeling welcoming and building relationships. All three were ultimately incorporated into the central categories of feeling safe and cultural competence.

The atmosphere at the JYS sites was also welcoming, particularly at Stop-By. The feeling of casual disorder combined with a pleasant staff made it feel like a place where youth were welcome to be themselves. The small interactions between staff and youth were consistently respectful and helpful. For example, sample sizes of deodorant, soap, lotions, toothpaste and other hygiene items were kept behind the main desk. Over and over during time spent there volunteering, I heard the youth ask for these. The response was invariably friendly and responsive: "Sure, how many would you like?" said with a smile and handful of samples. Then the staff person would ask "How are you doing?" to let the young person know they cared. This attitude offered the youth a respite from the frequently negative interactions they encountered on

the streets and, for some of the youth, in the Library.

The youth also had comments about the City Library and feeling welcome. Talyn commented on how unwelcome s/he felt at the Library. In a focus group discussion about the legality of requiring a person to show paperwork for a service animal, Talyn offered:

> I feel that they, uh, kind of pick and choose who to stop, play favoritism to some extent towards who goes in and who doesn't. It's usually based on just how the person looks, which isn't really good, 'cause like we're just trying, you know, to do what we need to do, go to the Library if we need, maybe use a computer if we need it, but if we're not allowed in because some security guy at the front is obviously, blatantly breaking the law by saying you can't, "I need to see the service tags for this animal," then it's like [pause] what are we supposed to do?

This conversation offered insight into the power of the lack of knowledge about the rules of the Library and the law and it spoke to the need for Library cultural competence training for the youth. Like the previous quote, it also reinforced the relationship between feeling welcomed and attitude.

Cedar had mixed feelings about what it was like at the City Library. He was excited about the LGBT history room at the Library and it made him feel as if his interests had been anticipated: "There's a the section for LGBT which, when I went in there, it blew my mind. I'm like, oh my god you have a whole section devoted to this!" When asked for his opinion on whether the LGBTQ materials in the main part of the Library should be in a separate, labeled section, so they were visible and welcoming or interfiled, so a person using them would not feel conspicuous, he made a good case for having a separate section:

> I definitely like [that] option, just the we'll put 'em all together, 'cause otherwise it kinda

> just seems like it's hidden to me, you know. Don't hide that stuff. Those are probably the most useful books that questioning teens are ever going to read. Because you have such an easy access to the Bible which is condemning you and telling you that you're evil and going to Hell. And then you have such little access to the books that are telling you, no you're not alone, you don't have to commit suicide, you don't have to cut, you don't have to go through the pain, you know. Because you're *normal*. But, when you read the Bible especially in such a religious family like I grew up with, you know, all you're hearing is, you're wrong, you're defying God, you're, you're going to Hell, like, so it's definitely, the access of the books. And I feel like if people could more easily access those books maybe we would see a decline in suicide.

Cedar's reflections on the power of having the LGBTQ literature visible fit well with the basic concepts of librarianship - especially, intellectual freedom and the right to access.

Cedar came from a conservative community, with no support for its LGBTQ youth. He came to the City because he had heard it was a welcoming place for LGBTQ people, especially in the Hayes. Even before he was kicked out of his home for being gay, he had negative experiences related to his sexual orientation. He contrasted these with the welcome he felt in the City:

> [At home] I was walking down the street holding my ex-boyfriend's hand and there were two police standing at the corner and the one turned to the other and said "faggot"…It's a completely different feel where, the first day I was here [in the City], I talked to a policeman for about half an hour, and he was really supportive of LGBT and homelessness, and he was like, "You know what, fuck conservatives." I was like "What? This is a policeman!"

Again, there was a relationship between feeling welcomed and relationships - in this case, there were examples of both positive and negative interactions and the effects they had on these youth. Welcoming is also closely linked to attitude - a good attitude makes a person feel welcomed, a negative attitude creates the opposite effect, as mentioned in Chapter Two. The attitudes and welcoming these youth felt in the Library contrasted in some ways with the ones they experienced in the City. Their expectations about arriving in this gay-friendly city were not always met by the City Library itself because, although the librarians had positive attitudes, they did not have the knowledge necessary to create a welcoming environment for these youth.

Building Relationships. Building relationships was the fourth theoretical concept. All of the groups commented on the importance of relationships for their work or their lives.

The librarians talked about working with City agencies, schools, the Boys and Girls Club and others. For example, Laura described the efforts of the Library to create partnerships:

> I mean at my level, we definitely are looking at the higher-level strategic partners, so I'm looking at things like funding, shared assets…The staff partner at different levels, so we have a Job and Career Center and they would be responsible for identifying all the potential partners in the world of small business, job training, you know, and everything from City departments to private enterprise to nonprofits. So part of it is geography…each branch would be responsible for knowing the partners and their potential partners in their neighborhood, and some of it is service-oriented, again like the job and career center…In the Shanty, we have had an increased effort in services for adults and services for young children, so we have partnerships with all of the care providers and we do some outreach to make sure that they have that information about our early literacy programs…and then you bring them back into the Library and we have

a large beautiful children's center to accommodate them and do programs for them and all this stuff.

Helen described the Library's emphasis on collaborations through programming:

Well, we have a *lot* of collaborations, because we do programming, so throughout the Library system, the branches each have their neighborhood organizations that they have relationships with, and here we have lots of organizations, so with our art and music collection, we have relationships with the symphony and with the ballet and the Opera. And then, um, the International Center has relationships with consulates and embassies, and so it just runs the gamut. It depends, again, what the focus is. The City History Center has a lot of relationships with City organizations. And Alexandra in Youth Services will have relationships throughout the City with, mostly, schools. I mean that's how, I think, the youth, kids through teen, are mostly connected to the Library is through schools summer reading program.

From these examples, it was clear the City Library was comfortable reaching out to some agencies and organizations. For youth-related partnerships, many were through the traditional venue of schools, especially the annual summer reading program. However, as one service provider pointed out, this left out many of these youth, who were no longer attending school - because they did not have reliable places to live or because they had left the cities where they were in school or because of bullying in the schools. Also, these partnerships were frequently centered on one-time programs, where the City Library provided a venue for the organization. These collaborations were convenient for both parties, but provided little in-depth knowledge about each other.

Peter, who was gay and the chair of the City Library's LGBT committee, had made an

effort to reach out to the local LGBTQ youth organizations, but with little success:

> We've tried, actually, to get, to do outreach with QYRR [Queer Youth Recreation and Resources] in the neighborhood. We tried, and have been trying. But it hasn't really worked… I know the kids come in here [the City Library]…I've had a hard time contacting them or getting, you know, return calls and things. I don't know that they're really a place that wants you knocking on their door and coming in…you know, 'cause I think they try to maintain a safe teen space and are, and are controlling about adults that come in…[But] we could have a group come, like a group activity or something, you know, and I'll give a tour and show things around, but it's never came to fruition, so…

Peter went on to talk about giving up on QYRR, because he's so busy:

> And then, I, you know what happens is you just kind of move on…not deliberately, but you end up, you know, "Why won't these people answer the phone?" so I'm gonna go here and then you start working on something else and your pile, or whatever, your memo to call them gets put on a different place on your desk and gets piled up.

This disappointed Peter particularly because he was passionate about the City Library reaching out to the communities. He was a good example of willingness on the part of the Library to engage more fully with local organizations and community members and the amount of time this could take. He described an idea he had to connect the Library to the neighborhood, having librarians go out with I-Pads and showing potential Library patrons the resources available at their local branch. He explained his vision of outreach and creating relationships: "The most meaningful questions you end up answering are when you're at a class visit or at a community event or whatever, and you can link the person directly with the Library right then and there." He also pointed out that this could work well for homeless youth: "With homeless

teens or whatever, if you had your iPad all linked up with the Library material and stuff, you could show them right there."

One of the challenges, though, was keeping up with the changes in staff at the various agencies. Librarian Alexandra talked about the frustration of reaching out to someone who is no longer doing that job:

> It's so much about that person, just one-on-one thing with a service provider. I was on the radar with people who have since moved on or now they're working in another capacity, and they're like, "Oh, yeah, I 'member when we worked on that together, but I'm not with them anymore," and I'm like, "Oh, darn." So, it's just staying on the, on that path [pause] and I have to get more, get more proactive.

This reinforced the earlier comments about the high staff turnover at JYS and the effect it could have on partner organizations, such as the City Library.

Laura's previous remarks provided an excellent example of the efforts being made by the Library to provide services to two populations: Adult and children. However, the LGBTQ homeless youth were not included in either, although some of them qualified based on age alone. However, as already mentioned, although technically adults, some of their needs were unique to their housing situations and past experiences as young members of a stigmatized minority. Some of the resources Laura mentioned, such as the Job and Career Center, would have been ideal for these young people, but since there were no targeted efforts to partner with JYS and there was little understanding between the two organizations on the cultures of each, the youth were not taking advantage of this resource.

Alexandra also described not knowing exactly how to partner with an organization, even if both the Library and the organization were interested in working together: "You know, I'll go

to a member of an organization. They'll be like, 'Yeah, that'd be cool. Hmm. What'd you have in mind?' I'm like, 'I don't know. What do you have in mind? Like I wanna meet your needs,' you know." Alexandra wanted to know what the other organization needed but was not sure how to gather that information.

Peter had a similar reaction. He said he would like to help these youth, but simply did not know what to do. When asked if he would be interested in learning more about how to meet the needs of the homeless LGBTQ youth, he answered:

> Yeah, knowing how to, because…(a) that's more people using the Library, (b) that's more people using the Library and, (c) that's more people using the Library. And so a lot of it is you don't know how to, with a lot of things…I wouldn't know where to begin always.

Peter's comments, too, attested to the need for creating opportunities between the Library and the service agencies that could lead to mutual understandings about each other.

The service providers were committed to working with other agencies, since partnerships were critical for JYS, both to aid in serving the youth and to increase revenue. The partnerships created by JYS stood in contrast to ones made by the Library. As Train emphasized, they learned about each other, so they could feel confident they were referring the youth to the appropriate place. These kinds of relationships fostered deeper mutual understanding that served the youth well. When asked about relationships with other agencies, Train pointed out that it was essential in social services to create alliances:

> We'll build relationships with other groups or other programs and organizations in the community. The MoveIt Foundation, for example, 'cause some of our youth have utilized their emergency crisis services, and so they're interested in working more competently

> with us. We've met and done trainings back and forth, so we'll learn more about them, they'll learn more about us and so it's more about like figuring out how can we utilize other services for the needs of some of our clients that we can't necessarily meet. And then like also letting them know about what we do have, so if they ever needed to refer young people, they would feel confident in knowing where they're referring them to. So that's one of things I do.

The partnerships that Train engaged in did not include the Library, even though the Lake branch was a block away from hir JYS location, and even though both s/he and the branch librarian, Denise, knew there were homeless LGBTQ youth spending time at the Library. For Train, hir reasons for this were twofold. First, when asked about reaching out to the Library, s/he said: "Yeah, I, I guess that would be like a project that I don't have time to take on and off the top of my head, I'm not quite sure how [pause] I would do, go about that." Second, when asked if s/he thought there might be a stereotype of libraries that would act as a barrier, s/he told me about an experience there:

> Well, I had a terrible experience with a librarian over there one day myself. She was so rude. So I can only imagine how she would treat like a youth who was street-engaged, you know…So, yeah, I mean it's funny, 'cause like that was the only experience I've had with a bad librarian, um, but that's somebody my kids are seeing every day possibly.

So for Train, time, knowledge and a bad experience all served as barriers to reaching out to hir local branch.

None of the participants at JYS had thought of reaching out to the Library to create these partnerships, but most of them were open to the idea. As Abbie commented:

> So I think that would be, actually, a really important part is that service providers get

connected with the librarians and if there is an event about usability of the Library or resources at the Library, that both parties are involved and working together.

Even Lance, who had hostile feelings about librarians, was willing to work with them. When asked if he was interested in collaborating with the Library, he offered a surprising reply: "Of course. I'm all about collaboration…I mean, our lifeblood is collaborating. I have forty-seven sites where I put interns. I do all kind of things to help to build relationships and collaborate." When asked if he had ever placed interns at the Library: "Never been asked…no, I have not...Would I? Yes, if I felt it was a safe, supportive environment. Most definitely."

Lucille found out about what other agencies were doing by attending meetings: "There's **no** shortage of opportunities for meetings in City. It's how we do work here." However, she had never attended a meeting with the Library or invited them to be part of her meetings. When asked why, she explained she had not thought of it. This lack of awareness on the part of the service providers was another barrier to building a relationship between JYS and the Library. Creating awareness was necessary as a precursor to creating meaningful partnerships. This was an integral part of the final core category of "developing cultural competence."

For the homeless youth, creating connections to other youth and to adults was a critical aspect of feeling safe and there is more discussion about this in the final section on feeling safe. However, Lucille's comments on the way in which the partnerships with other organizations impacted the youth offered valuable insights: "The work with the other organizations is also about creating community, opportunities for youth leadership, opportunities for youth to come together and opportunities for them to work with staff." These partnerships were initiated by JYS, but they resulted in creating community and relationships for the youth. Deborah mentioned one of these in her interview. I asked her if she would be interested in serving on a

youth advisory board for the Library, and she answered in the affirmative, alluding to her work on the City TAY advisory board. She explained there were 20 youth from around the city who got together once a month and they worked on a variety of issues:

> They do a lot of advocacy work for…transitional, foster and homeless youth in City, like bills in City Hall or [pause] like the free bus passes. They try to go to hearings and advocate for youth and the things that we need, like housing…issues about employment…they're creating a new website. That's what we've been talking about a lot, too. Issues at City Hall and homeless youth and how they would, they're like, I think, laws that they'll pass, how they'll affect us.

The relationships Deborah made by serving on this board allowed her to engage with other youth and to feel less isolated.

Feeling safe. The fifth theoretical concept was "feeling safe" as it related to participants and the Library. The concept of feeling safe was used broadly for this research. It included physical safety: Knowing what it is to feel free from harm and the anxiety about being harmed. Feeling safe also included emotional safety: Feeling supported, respected, heard, seen, worthy, knowledgeable, included, empowered, comfortable. From the words of the service providers to the anxieties of the librarians to the stories of the youth, this was the story over and over again. The youth needed and wanted to feel safe at the Library, by remaining invisible, by taking care of themselves, by learning how to get by, by reaching out for help. The librarians wanted to create and maintain a safe place for their Library patrons, as well as themselves. The service providers wanted to feel safe interacting with the librarians and wanted the youth they served to be safe. Feeling safe served as a cornerstone for the mission for JYS and the behavior rules for the Library. It was one of the primary factors behind the reason these young people were living

on the streets and the reason they needed to get off of them. The following section describes how each of the three groups experienced and defined feeling safe.

To the librarians, feeling safe meant physical and emotional safety, both for themselves and for their Library patrons. One way they tried to create this safety was through the use of public conduct policies. In the last few years, the City Library had gone through a major examination of their policies, creating a substantial list of what were called "Behavior Guidelines," with an accompanying list of consequences (Appendix H). As Laura described this:

> We had had behavior guidelines for a very long time, but about five or six years ago, we started putting some consequences to them…and we refined and refined and refined and refined them, and we finally had, had for the last like seven, five years or so, a pretty good set of, "If this, then that," to be able to follow. And then it's been a matter of training our, our staff… It really helps when people wonder what's gonna happen to somebody who keeps sleeping in the Library, what's gonna happen to somebody who vandalizes our material, and we can point to the intent is, "If they do it one time, this is what happens. The second time, and a third time, this is what happens." It spells out what happens when people break the law versus when they just violate our guidelines.

One primary factor that motivated many of these guidelines was the large homeless population in this city, including both the youth, who tended to remain invisible, and the highly visible homeless adults. Particularly for the Main, located in the Shanty, administrators and Library staff were looking for ways to ameliorate the effect this population was having on the City Library. However, a side effect of these rules was that they also impacted the hidden homeless, such as these youth.

In theory, these guidelines were applied consistently so Library staff could feel comfortable having rules to rely upon and so patrons could know what to expect in the Library. Creating a safe environment in this case was a matter of controlling behavior as well as possible. Overall, that was what happened: There were rule infractions and they were dealt with promptly and even-handedly. However, there were exceptions, because sometimes compliance was not possible. For example, a person might not be able to leave their large bag outside, because it contained everything they owned and yet Library rules prohibited her or him from bringing it in. As Peter described it:

> So, you know, oftentimes folks in that situation, right, they carry their belongings with them. So…there's rules on the number of your items that you bring in, and then there's guidelines on the size of your items and where you can put those. So, you can't bring all these items in and block an aisleway or a walkway…That's for everyone, you know, that's how we can stay ADA compliant, by not hindering access, but also just for the general, for everyone, for staff and the public so they can move freely around in the Library.

He went on to explain that the items had to be "within sight" of the owner, which - he added - "probably leaves some room for interpretation." "Room for interpretation" was how the Library was able to remain flexible even when governed by such clearly written behavior guidelines. Because exceptions *were* made. A patron with a hearing aid was allowed to speak more loudly than someone without one. Babies emitted strong odors. Double strollers found their way into the aisles. By being flexible with these patrons, librarians were demonstrating not only their concern for safety, but also their cultural competence in these areas. They took into account the needs of these patrons and adjusted their rules accordingly.

So while these behavior guidelines existed to create a feeling of safety for staff and patrons, safety also lay in being able to treat each person as an individual, with unique needs. That was one of the biggest challenges for these librarians: They were there to serve the public but not everyone was the same. They had varying needs, a range of reasons for being at the Library, even different reasons for breaking the rules. In addition, how these rules were perceived affected how each person felt being in the Library. This was difficult for the librarians who wanted to make the Library a safe and comfortable place for *all* patrons.

Consequently, for some of the librarians, these new guidelines posed a problem for their patrons and therefore for them. Denise was torn between enforcing rules to keep the building feeling safe and, at the same time, providing a safe physical space for the young homeless youth who found their way to the Library. She described an incident in which a homeless young man who kept falling asleep at the Library was "totally bloodied" when he arrived. It was young people like that who made her question the new guidelines:

> So we were working on kind of a three strikes you're out sleeping rule, and it was for one day. Now it's one strike you're out for one day, two you're out for like two days - the first one's a warning, the second time you're out for the day, and third time you're out for three days, and then the fourth time three days, fifth time three days, sixth time three days, so if you wanna come in the branch you soon figure out you can't sleep. And if you *need* to sleep you soon figure out you can't do it in the branch. But it used to be that it was much more lenient. So we saw a lot more sleepers, and, when I asked one guy why he was, this one, younger guy [the one who was bloodied], why he was sleeping and what had happened, it was basically the case that he could sleep in the daytime here but he couldn't sleep anywhere else because he would be jumped and beaten up at night.

Denise also pointed out that the youth were not allowed to sleep in the parks, although some of them went there at night anyway. When I asked her where they *were* allowed to sleep, she told me "no place." This was an excellent example of how the behavior guidelines may offer safety to some patrons and take it away from others. She was aware of this and as she was developing cultural competence in the world of homeless youth, she felt the dissonance between the impact of the rules on these youth and the domiciled Library users. Her desire to serve these youth as best she could also put her in conflict with her Library system, thereby making her feel unsafe in her work place.

Feeling safe for Denise also included receiving training and information for dealing with patrons who appeared to need social services. As she put it:

> I'm not doing much referring of people to the right services so much as I'm trying to maintain the safe environment within the confines of the building. Which I think is room for improvement or for a philosophy change, probably…I mean, if there's a person who needs social services and I'm kicking them out, does that seem really super fair?

For Denise, safety for her patrons meant physical safety, as well as the safety embedded in the provision of appropriate resources, such as mental health services. Safety for herself and her staff meant a library space that was without daily conflict or the fear of coping with issues with which they have had no training, such as untreated mental illness. As she said:

> The mental illness is really taxing on our staff…If there were like, a resource, like I keep wanting them to give us somebody like Sofia [social worker at Main]…with maybe the five branches where there's a lot of mental illness one day a week visiting, even if we had drop-in hours where a social services person could kind of network with people.

Overall, Denise did not feel safe enough nor did she think her patrons or her staff felt safe. The lack of cultural competence training for her staff left her feeling vulnerable and ineffective. While we were talking, she took notes to remind herself of ideas that came up during the interview. She was eager to find ways to for her Library feel to feel safer for everyone, but the staffing shortages, the lack of institutional support and the daily pressures of maintaining the Library service served as barriers to her goal.

Another place where it was forbidden to sleep was in doorways of buildings, such as the Main. In an effort to make the City Library feel safe to some patrons as they entered, the following sign was taped at both of the entrances:

NO TRESPASSING!

Request for enforcement of municipal police code section 25

Signature of owner or agent

Sgt. Calvin Chou #123

Expires 6 months after date 7-1-2011 [since it was after 1-1-2012, it was expired]

This particular document was also posted in the windows of the stores, restaurants and public buildings that lined the streets of The Shanty. Like the weaponized architecture, these signs served to remind people experiencing homelessness they had to abide by particular rules, such as not sleeping or lying down on the sidewalks or in doorways or window wells. This was yet again an example of trying to create a safe place for some while creating what feels like an unsafe place to others. It was difficult to imagine a homeless LGBTQ youth feeling welcomed in the Main if he/she was without a safe place to sleep. “No trespassing” could be a powerful term for a young person living on the sidewalks.

Another place in the Main where the behavior guidelines were enforced was the bathrooms. When the building was designed, there were bathrooms on the main floor, as well as on upper floors. However, due to concerns about bathroom behaviors not in line with Library rules, the bathrooms on the upper floors were closed, except the controlled-access bathrooms in the children's area. The doors to the bathrooms on the main floor were always kept open, so anyone who was using the wall mounted mirrors, for instance, was clearly visible from the open area between the two gendered bathrooms. In addition, there were behavior rules posted in both, with a list of prohibited behaviors, such as bathing, and drug and alcohol use. There was also a list of local free showers. In both bathrooms, the stall doors were extremely small, so the heads and sometimes shoulders of the person were visible. This increased visibility was also aimed at limiting behavior guideline infractions.

The result of this was a bathroom that felt uncomfortable to use. The goal was to create a safe feeling for Library users, but for me, as a domiciled person with access to regular private bathing facilities and the ability to drink a glass of wine in the evening without anyone passing judgment, it felt ominous, as if there could be dangerous people lurking around. For those who were homeless, such as the youth, the signs and stall doors served as yet another reminder that they were being watched. It was difficult to imagine anyone feeling safe there.

Other ways the librarians tried to create a safe place was through various policies related to getting a Library card and using the computers. These policies were introduced to reinforce the mission of the City Library and provide some sort of accountability for the patrons. For the majority of patrons, this worked and so they were able to check out 50 items total at one time and use the computer up to one hour per day, by using a permanent card that needed to be renewed every four years. For those who could not meet the requirement of picture identification (i.d.)

and address verification, there was a restricted card. This card still required a document that verified the name of the patron, it allowed for one item to be checked out at a time, and it was only valid for three months. However, they were still able to use the Library computer for up to one hour per day. For those without either of these Library cards, there were 15-minute computers, which could be used over and over again, as long as the user got back into the waiting line. This was the kind of line described earlier by Denise, as she told her story about the chaos created by this time restriction on the computers. For her, this policy made the Library feel less safe, not more. For those without i.d. or a permanent address, the Library did not feel welcoming. These patrons were in a constant battle with each other over the limited time allocated for the computers. In this case, it was not clear that anyone felt safer.

There were fines and fees attached to the late return or non-return of library materials. These fines can act as deterrents for those who have less money, and ALA (2010) recommends in their *Policy 61: Library Services to the Poor* that one way to reach the policy objectives described in Chapter One is by "Promoting the removal of all barriers to library and information services, particularly fees and overdue charges." Therefore, this Library - like many across the United States - offered an unwritten, unspecified, subjectively applied alternative to fines and fees. This was again part of the struggle as a public-oriented agency: Serving everyone equally versus serving everyone with compassion. As Laura described it:

> You know, it's like I don't wanna constantly say this in the media or in the public because you don't wanna give people the impression that we're not good stewards of the public resource, we don't take it seriously, or that we're not gonna hold you accountable. But like if a person is in a situation and we have a lot of them here where your backpack

> gets stolen, you're not in a stable housing situation, we try to work with them to make sure that they continue to have access.

So another way this Library created a safe place for their Library patrons was by providing access in difficult times. However, since there was no indication this flexibility existed, it was not consistently utilized by those who felt intimidated or embarrassed by their poverty. That is, one had to feel safe already to be able to take advantage of these exceptions to the rules. Because the librarians may not have been aware of this invisible population, they had set up a system that worked for some but not for others. This was also an example of the unconscious use of power: The librarians could wield their power by either adhering closely to the rules or by bending them. Either way, the power they held could feel unsafe to the homeless youth, even though it may have been meant kindly or benevolently.

An important aspect of public library service to these young people fell under the larger category of helping teens feel safe and welcomed in the Library. When fully staffed, the City Library had 11 teen librarians scattered between the Main and the branches. There was a tendency to direct questions about teen services to these librarians, and more than once it was recommended to me that I do this. This specialty had its advantages: Services to youth ages 12 to 19 were taken seriously enough to devote spaces, time, materials and staff to this group. However, the disadvantage to this approach was that regular adult services librarians did not always feel qualified or equipped to serve them well, as mentioned earlier. This made some librarians feel unsafe in their interactions with young people and this could be reflected in their attitude and their service. Teen librarian Joyce described this:

> It was funny, I went to a staff, all-staff meeting, recently, and there was just a nervousness in people's voices when they were talking about teen stuff…I don't know,

> maybe I was imagining it, but…many librarians like adult or, um, children's librarians are just intimidated by teens; they're afraid of them. And I think partly that fear kind of adds to that discrimination, like, "I don't wanna deal with them. Just gonna kick 'em out instead of talking with them." I think they're not seen as, as people with needs, unique needs.

This kind of unease affected not only the librarians, if affected the youth as well. The librarians needed to feel safe serving all populations for themselves but also for their patrons, because if they did not, their reactions and their attitudes varied across service groups. This variation, no matter how subtle, affected their patrons, particularly those who were already hypersensitive to the environment around them. This relates directly to earlier comments about attitude, for example the ones by Wen, Hudak and Hwang (2007).

When asked how librarians could help homeless LGBTQ youth feel more welcome in the Library, Lance answered:

> Non-judgmental training. They need not to counter-transfer what they're thinking onto the person they're talking to. If you don't like the person or you don't like how they present, let that be in your mind, not out in the open, because these kids are very sensitive to vibrations, and they can feel negativity that quick. And just a slight change in someone's facial structure can show that, "Oh…" And you can't do that. You have to be opening and accepting. If you want the diverse community to come to you, you have to make them feel welcomed.

Feeling safe for the librarian could result in a safe feeling for the patrons as well. This is discussed more in the section on feeling safe and homeless LGBTQ youth. However, it is important to point out that the tension between equal access and the discomfort precipitated by

certain behaviors or appearances was one of the challenges of serving homeless LGBTQ youth, as well as others.

Dan also talked about creating what he called a "hate-free zone." He began by describing the difficulty in claiming a Library is a safe space, because as he has experienced libraries, they are not necessarily physically safe:

> And, and I don't know if you've, are familiar with the argument about libraries as safe places, like there's some people that wanna promote the library as the last beacon of hope for young people, and then other people that say, "The library should not be promoted as a safe place. There are no safe places left. You shouldn't tell the teens this is a safe place," because I've seen some of the crazy stuff, I've caught people having sex, found drugs in the Library, people masturbating in the Library and the children's room. I mean it's not safe…That being said, we're not talking about that kind of safety, we're talking about the, you know, the, um, creating a hate-free space. That's, might be a better way, like this is a hate-free zone.

To Dan, a hate-free zone was created when the Library made it clear that what Joyce called "hate speech" was not allowed. This concern about hate speech, especially homophobic language, was shared by many of the librarians as well as the service providers.

The service providers, as already mentioned, were particularly focused on helping these homeless youth feel safe in their lives. Their goal was to help the youth leave the streets permanently, so these young people could lead their lives productively and in a safe environment. They offered education, job skills and training, case management, housing, meals and physical as well as mental health care. The approach to all of these services was dominated

by what Abbie called a "youth-focused approach." When asked about the qualities she looked for in the volunteers, she answered:

> I think for us what's most important is that someone comes in non-judgmental, so making sure that they can either leave biases at the door – I mean, we all have them – but that they are in a place where they will not judge young people, they don't wanna problem solve for young people, they don't wanna tell people what to do, or share their own stories, that they're really here to come and learn from and listen to and help young people identify their own resources, and then share information about other tools that the young person could gain.

This kind of training was similar to that suggested by Lance in regard to the librarians. This training was seen as essential to help the staff as well as the youth feel safe in the JYS locations.

Also, to create a safe space for these young people, JYS wanted to surround them with adults who respected them and allowed them to "identify their own resources," as Abbie said. To do this required the ability to start with where the young person was, using a harm reduction approach, as explained earlier. This term was a common one in social services, but not in the Library. Using harm reduction methods meant not denying services to people, such as these homeless youth, because they were using drugs or engaging in any behaviors that may have seemed uncomfortable to someone else, as long as they were not interfering with anyone else's use of the Library. This was similar to the equal access in the Library mentioned earlier, but none of the librarians were familiar with the term itself.

Another way of creating safety were the JYS public conduct rules, similar to the Library ones, designed to make the youth and the staff feel safe. Each location had a slightly different set, displayed in different ways. At Stop-By, the rules were handwritten with a purple permanent

pen on a large pink sheet of paper that had been created by taping together eight eight-and-a-half by eleven sheets of paper. It was taped to the wall behind the front desk. The list was titled: Stop-By Rules and Consequences and began with the words: Absolutely No, followed a long list of items, such as stealing, offensive or disrespectful actions, threats of violence and sleeping. The full list is available in Appendix H.

Some of these rules, as at the Library, were enforced more consistently than others. For example, one day a staff member spend about 15 minutes, off-and-on, trying to awaken one of the young people sleeping soundly on one of the couches. Most days there were youth sleeping on the couches or padded benches. However, that was the only time I saw a staff member try to enforce the no sleeping rule.

There were also several comments about stealing - youth warned others not to leave their belongings unattended, because they could be stolen. One day I left my jacket on a box of books for a minute, while bringing in another box, and was chastised by one of the staff interns (a homeless youth being paid a stipend as part of a job readiness program). She held up the jacket and demanded:

"Is this yours?"

"Yes, I just…"

"Never leave your stuff - it will disappear."

This attitude toward stealing seemed to be one of acceptance, rather than anger. This is what happens was the message, so watch your belongings. As Train put it when describing some of the rules:

> And we oftentimes will reinforce some of these things by just saying, "Hey, you know, there's a lot of people in here. Keep your eye on your stuff, 'cause you don't know when it could walk away." Um, that's just a reality within our community…

When asked about the rules at PRC, Train answered:

> We used to have a giant list of rules up on the wall that we actually took down and we decided to figure out a way to enforce rules without like just listing a bunch of rules everywhere. We came up with this thing up here [indicating a large handwritten poster high up on the wall] that says, "Love thy neighbor. Community Agreements: Please be respectful and conscious of how your actions impact others." That's kind of our go-to statement for the space. We want people to be conscious of just how anything they do or say can affect anyone else in the space…Like if there's violence, if there's physical/verbal threats, these are our like non-negotiables, but they're stuff that we're very familiar with, we don't just have it posted places. So if we're dealing with somebody who's like maybe escalating to be violent, then we're gonna address that…It's a community space for everyone, regardless of whatever.

This interactive approach to enforcing rules was also explained by Abbie. When asked about creating a safe space at JYS, she said:

> There are rules, just like at every other agency around safety, that are reviewed with young people during the intake process. And so, in terms of just basic safety, there are things that young people can't bring in, that they have to check at the front door. There are rules around no threats of violence, no physical violence, and then there are rules about not using derogatory language of any kind, and all of that is reviewed and so, if a young person is using inflammatory or derogatory language, they would be asked to stop,

> and if they continue, it could put their ability to be within the space at risk. But it would more likely just be a conversation that they would have with staff.

This engaged but clear approach to ensuring a safe space fit well with harm reduction and using community as a focal point. Both the Library and JYS had rules and consequences for rule infractions. It was necessary for shared spaces to be controlled in some way so those in the space could feel safe. However, it was also important to look at how the rules could impact people. If they appeared to be rigid or uninformed, they created an environment that only felt safe to some. With an average of over 2 million Library visits a year, it was difficult to imagine how the Main could create behavior guidelines that would support the same feeling of community that was created in the much smaller spaces of JYS. However, without that sense of belonging and community, these youth found it difficult to feel welcomed and appreciated when they entered the Library.

My husband made a comment on feeling safe that gave me greater insight into this challenge. One day he helped carry boxes of books into Stop-By and later he mentioned how unsafe that environment felt to him. The casual disorder bothered him and the youth sleeping on the couches made him feel particularly unwelcome. It was the reverse of the Library, where he felt safe and welcome. He did not need disorder or a place to sleep, so the atmosphere at the Library suited him well (personal communication, 2012).

Finally, the homeless LGBTQ youth needed a place to feel safe. When asked about the needs of these youth, Abbie answered:

> I think the first kind of need is just the safety, and I think that comes in a lot of different forms, but I think shelter, having a shelter, a place where they aren't gonna experience exploitation. I think for a lot of young people that have run away, if they're not aware of

> shelter services, the risk of them experiencing exploitation on the street is just so high that simply having a place where they can come in and be away from that is really, really important.

This safety included not only physical safety, but also the emotional safety of being accepted, respected and acknowledged. These young people had left their homes and come to a city that was famous for being gay-friendly, because they were ready to be supported for who they were, rather than denigrated; they wanted acceptance, not violence. They were looking for a sense of community. Even though it could mean living on the streets, they hoped that being allowed to be true to themselves was the ultimate safety. Unfortunately, even in a city known for its openness to the LGBT community, life on the streets was extremely challenging. Lance, who was head of employment services at JYS, described this well:

> They thought this was the gay capital, everyone loved them, someone will help them get a job, and everything will be fine. That's not what happens. They're there, cute and young. They get taken advantage of, they get used and they get thrown away. [pause] "I came out because I met a boyfriend on the Internet." "What happened when you got here?" "We had sex for four days and he told me I had to leave." I hear those stories every day. That's, that's real life…

Because of these challenges, finding community became a critical part of the lives of these young people. On the street, at JYS and at the Library they tried to create connections with other youth like themselves. For example, Talyn placed a high value on spending time with friends. When asked to describe a good day, Talyn answered:

> A really good day? When everything goes right, you know, you get paid, I get a good amount, I actually can get stuff I really enjoy, hang out with friends…*especially* hanging out with friends.

When Talyn was asked whether s/he and hir friends mentioned the Library much and if so, what did they talk about, s/he said:

> Mostly meeting outside. It's, makes for a great meeting point, you know it's there, everybody knows where the Main is. I've met up with people *in* here [the Library], hung out, had fun… Just you know talk, read books, play games…Keep quiet… Having some quiet also kinda contributes a sense of privacy. Just 'cause you know, I can focus on this, I can do what I need to do, without interruptions from all angles. Being loud, being and like that. And I think being quiet in libraries like, is kind of, contributes to that and makes it a more pleasant experience. Just 'cause you're able to concentrate. Focus…But other times it's just you know, I'm not even coming in here and just hanging out outside.

As a homeless transgender youth, Talyn had an appreciation for the quiet space provided by the Library, as well as the opportunity to be in a safe space with friends. Talyn liked the Library and liked the "vibe," despite the reception s/he had the day of the interview. But Talyn had mixed feelings about it, too, as described earlier, so even with that comfort level, Talyn did not interact with the librarians.

Talyn and the other homeless LGBTQ were able to form community through shared adversity and common goals. One of the youth-initiated JYS programs was a weekly night for those youth who identified as LGBTQ. This program, which was called "Queer Eves," was held at Stop-By. As Abbie described it:

> It started as, called like an "Anti-Death Night," after some of the suicides…[It] was a space where young people could participate in an open mic, they prepare meals, and for young people that aren't necessarily staying at one of our shelters, that maybe are staying at an adult shelter, safety where they could shower comfortably was an important one. They also have access to the clothing closet… Yeah, it's just a space, art space, music space, where they can come and feel like part of a community.

This sense of community was in evidence at a Queer Eves drag show. The performers lined up at the front and then each took a turn singing along with the music, which was being overseen by a young disc jockey. As each young person came forward, they were enthusiastically received, with clapping and calling out. Watching this, it became clear why this event and this place were so important to homeless LGBTQ youth. Outside its walls, the young man wearing the skintight dress, the bouffant blonde wig, the black sheer stockings and the black spike heels would probably be at least stared at, if not verbally or physically abused. Here he was safe to be himself - funny, talented and with the best legs in the place. This room, with its stained cement floors and muted body smells, was full of energy, exuberance and the right to be safely oneself.

However, there was another side to this. Deborah, who was actively involved in creating this one event, also talked about feeling isolated from the other youth. Of all the homeless LGBTQ youth interviewed, she seemed to struggle the most with being alone. When asked about the challenges in her life, her list included: "Another hard part is not having my family [pause] because I feel alone sometimes…If something happens to me, I don't have any family or anyone to go to for help." Deborah's experiences at Stop-By and even QueerEves frequently made her

feel like an outsider, even though she was the main force behind the drag show. As she put it, the other youth were not friendly to her and "if you try to talk to them, they have a bad attitude."

What is notable about this is that while this may have been related to Deborah herself, it could also have been connected to her lack of understanding about the lives of her fellow JYS youth. Like any young people, these homeless youth were still developing social skills, and many of the skills they needed to survive on the streets did not necessarily translate well into developing respectful relationships. As Cedar expressed it so well when he described his experiences at JYS:

> It's kind of a cutthroat, slash I wanna help you, community among the youth. You know, if you leave something lay it's gone. And, you know everybody wants to pretend that they're the biggest baddest roughest kid around. And yet at the same time they're like okay well you can go here and can get this, and, so it's like an odd help you slash hurt you.

When Cedar was asked to say more about this, he answered:

> It's just, you know nobody wants to be pushed around, and it kinda comes down to the self-esteem issue where, you know I don't think anything of myself so I'm going to try to make you think something of me. Like, "I know people". Like, I don't care. Like, dude, at this point if you kill me, at least I'd have heaven to go home to.

This aspect of creating relationships showed how challenging it can be for anyone - a homeless LGBTQ youth or a librarian - to gain insight into another person's life; that is, creating cultural competence.

Isaiah also mentioned creating community. After describing the death of a close friend, Thomas, he talked about the memorial service held at Stop-By. The room was full of youth,

some of whom did not know Thomas, but they came together in "a giant spiral hug" outside the building. Isaiah described it as

> Kind of recognizing, one, that life is short, but then, also, that we are all in this together if we like it or not. And, you know, that's so clichéd, but it's, it's still very real for us, that, you know, we are strong and we are [pause] we have our own direction. There is still that part where we still do need help, that we can't do things on our own and that, that there are other people, like that, that we can get through this, like we can get through this [pause] but it's gonna take a lot of people.

This statement was moving, because it made it clear that some of these young people were reluctant to ask for help and yet, as Isaiah said, they were going to need it. This mixed message played a part in the lack of interactions between the Library and these youth. Even if the librarians were willing and able to offer help, they did not know what to offer and how to give it.

Abbie was also one of the few service providers who believed strongly in the Library and the importance of the role it played in the community. She started the interview by saying: "I love the Library!" When asked about the connection she saw between the Library and the homeless LGBTQ youth, she also talked about community. But in this case, she was talking about community in a larger sense - the power of the Library to create community among disparate people. As she explained:

> I think that when you come from, potentially, a place where you have less familial connections, less of that kind of community…finding community in all sorts of ways through culture and arts is really important for our young people. I think it's where they find a lot of healing and growth and …that's often where people connect is through that shared love of music or literature or art and that, so, when you're a young person that

> maybe doesn't have parents or siblings, your friends become your family and so that's how a lot of our young people connect. And I see that as something that the Library provides for some of our youth.

Like the youth, Abbie stressed relationships, but in addition, she emphasized that the City Library offered an opportunity for these young people to feel a part of something larger.

Feeling safe for these youth also included being accepted despite their housing status. This was a challenge, because to be homeless in the United States is to be stigmatized, and so it took courage and self-confidence for them to admit they were homeless. Isaiah described his struggle with this:

> I don't really see homelessness as something to apologize for. It's a circumstance we're put in, and…there is nothing wrong with being poor, and there's nothing wrong with being homeless, it's nothing to apologize about, and this isn't only something that I tell my friends, it's something that I have to tell myself, and I have to continue to talk…to tell myself that at times, when I kind of go through my ebbs.

Intellectually, Isaiah knew there was "nothing wrong with being poor," yet he had to continue to remind himself of this fact, since there were few if any indications in his daily life that poverty and homelessness were socially acceptable.

Because of this, some of these young people went to great lengths to hide their housing status and this behavior served as a barrier to getting needed services, as well as to feeling like a welcome Library visitor. Cedar's Library experience in keeping his homeless status a secret is described in Chapter One, when he talked about how having only one set of clothes kept him from visiting the Library every day. However, after his careful attendance to his appearance and his secret homelessness, it turned out that to get a permanent Library card - one that would allow

him to check out more than one item at a time and use the computer for an hour - he would have to present a signed letter from JYS, effectively revealing himself as homeless. When asked about this, he replied:

> That, it'll be like outing myself. So it'll be interesting to see after that, if anybody changes the way they look at me. I mean I know it's something I wanna do because, you know education is power, and I've always said that. And so, I wanna come here and just get a shitload of books and like, dig in. And so I'm excited for that. But it's difficult because it is gonna be outing yourself.

The stigma of homelessness held these young people back from asking questions; it made them tentative and unsure about being in the Library; it made them self-protective and guarded. It was ever-present, unacknowledged and powerful. This was directly related to the stigma attached to homeless adults who were visibly mentally ill or coping with substance abuse and also experiencing homelessness. The homeless youth, like the librarians, were intolerant of this group and were careful to distinguish themselves from them. An example of this came from Cedar:

> It's just like, you have different types of homelessness. Um, you have the older generation with the Z Z Top beards and that smell like they haven't bathed in three months. And you have the youth that are like trying to make something out of their lives and for some reason you just clump 'em all together and I'm like no, I am not the same as this drug, heroin-addicted fifty-year-old man who hasn't bathed in six months. Like, I, I have something, you know I'm not just a faggot without a future.

For Cedar to feel safe, he needed to distance himself from what looked like an extremely unsafe future: Living on the streets, leaned up against cement walls, surrounded by the odor of

urine, with dirt embedded in one's every pore, waiting en masse to enter the Main each day. This was a frightening future for these young people - they did not identify with these adults and they did not want to be associated with the common stereotype.

This was another aspect that needed to be kept in mind: These were young people, many of them still teenagers. Their future should have been in easy reach as it was for most domiciled youth who lived at home at their age or who had ventured onto college campuses across the United States. Instead, due to circumstances over which they had no control, they were forced onto the streets or into temporary shelter, insecure about their futures. Lance explained:

> We're, we're not trying to make anything special. We're not saying our population is better than anyone else. We're just trying to give them an even playing field, so that they have the same chance every other young person at twenty-one, who had every opportunity, gets. That's all we try to do.

To feel safe, these youth also needed adults on their side. One of the most frequent comments was about the importance of a caring and respectful adult, especially since many of these young people had negative experiences with adults in power: Parents, teachers, foster parents, social workers, government agencies, store owners, even librarians. These youth represented a voiceless and powerless minority and it was difficult for them to feel safe without a voice. When an adult reached out and made a connection to homeless LGBTQ youth, that connection provided much-needed approval and acknowledgement. This again relates to the information about urban teens presented in Chapter Two (Agosto & Hughes-Hassell, 2010; Brehm-Heeger, 2008), as well as to comments made by service provider Sofia when asked what she would like librarians to know about these youth:

> They've really gotten used to being turned away and ignored and I think that needs to change. I think it's really important as an adult to recognize them and acknowledge them… They're young people and they're young people that really seek out adult approval, even though we don't necessarily see it or know it…They're used to being on the streets and asking for change and having people ignore them and ignore them and ignore them, or being kicked out of establishments, so I think it's just so important to kind of build this space where like they're not alienated and they're not ignored, and they're not kind of pushed to the sides…You know, ask questions and talk to them, and, yeah, offer them support in a kind and authentic way…I think that they're afraid that people are gonna judge them a lot, so they just kind of choose to be quiet and ignored.

The librarians had little knowledge about the daily challenges faced by these youth. It would probably come as a surprise to them that these young people, some of whom may have seemed frightening or dangerous, needed to be acknowledged by a librarian. They did not think of the Library as a place of power and privilege or that it could be intimidating and uncomfortable. When asked about the City Library and these young people, Abbie replied:

> I think that our young people, probably, especially our PRC young people that tend to fit within kind of more of the stereotype of homelessness, get judged so much based on how they look for going into any sort of environment, that, yes, they probably aren't as comfortable going into the Library, because people may think that they're just going in there to use the bathroom or, you know, take a book or whatever it may be.

In addition, for these homeless youth, feeling safe meant having a place to sleep at night and a place to be during the day where they were not in danger. Sleeping on the streets could be a frightening experience, but so could sleeping in some of the adult shelters. Cedar and Talyn

both mentioned spending only one night in VTU East, an adult shelter run by a faith-based organization, because there were no beds in the emergency TAY shelter. As Cedar described it:

> So I went up to the Hayes and I was staying there and there were cops on bikes and so I was talking to them and, about, you know where can I go, and they told me about VTU East and VTU East is not somewhere you wanna be…You know, there was a lot of… who's bigger and badder there. And so I got my phone stolen and I got my phone charger stolen and I got threatened and I'm just like okay, I'm not coming back. It's better sleeping on the street.

As described in Chapter Two, it was also dangerous living on the streets. However, the homeless youth did not talk much about this. There were references to feeling safe at Stop-By or at the Main, but there were not many stories about the risks they encountered on a daily basis. Isaiah, Ari and Talyn did mention friends who had died and Isaiah made a connection to this and to being survivors:

> And even though people say that we're victims and that we're from, we're this and that, you can't be a victim and vulnerable and survive on the streets, or be homeless. That there, there comes a little bit of self-sufficiency, and a little bit of direction that's of our own making for us to actually be at this point. A, a friend recently passed away and I was asking, like, "Has anyone actually ever died before within Juniper Youth Services that you guys know of?" and they're like, "I think like one or two, but…" and this is like, um, I guess, my case manager's boss, basically, was like, "But by the time you get in JYS, you're pretty much a survivor," you know. I don't wanna say "natural selection" but whatever has happened in our lives for us to get to this point, like it's, sadly whittles down people.

These youth had learned to use places like the Library as refuges from the dangers of the streets. In this way, the Library provided safety, but usually without the knowledge of the librarians.

Another aspect of safety for the youth was the anxiety not only about obeying the obvious rules, but also about possible unwritten ones. When a homeless LGBTQ youth entered the Main, s/he felt uneasy. What were the rules? What if one accidentally broke those rules - what would happen? Because the Main represented not only the resources, but also the building space itself, breaking the rules could mean losing a sanctuary, as mentioned in the introduction. Worrying that someone could, as Talyn said, "throw you outside at any given moment," precipitated feeling watchful, nervous and unsure of one's welcome. For the homeless LGBTQ youth, it acted as a reminder they probably did not fit in and they could only hope no one would notice. It lay under the desire to "pass," as described earlier, and consequently being unwilling to draw attention to oneself by asking questions that could clarify the rules and expectations. These homeless youth were not able or willing to take the chance of asking for someone to be flexible with the fines or providing services that were not simply about books. When asked about barriers to Library use by these youth, service provider, Sofia put it like this:

> Like, I couldn't, I couldn't really see them approaching a librarian and saying like "Hey," like just asking questions or needing help, and I don't know why. I think, in general, a lot of times they won't approach the staff at places because they're afraid. They don't want to draw attention to themselves. It's like "If I draw attention to myself, I'm gonna get kicked out." Um, which is a valid fear, because they do. Like I said, they get kicked out all the time from places.

These youth were reluctant to draw attention to themselves, because they were afraid they would be kicked out for breaking a rule that may not even have existed. This fear prevailed, even

though the rules and the consequences for breaking them were posted in the Main and the branches. It took self-confidence and self-esteem to question the rules or ask for exceptions, and self-esteem was challenging when one's nights were spent in a doorway. Cedar expressed it like this:

> I just get so frustrated because especially at night when I'm trying to sleep and there are people walking by me, I, I just feel so judged, like, they're looking at me and saying, oh this kid's an alcoholic, this kid's a drug addict, this kid's a drop-out, this kid's a loser, this kid's, you know, whatever… just looking at you like you're dirt. I used to think a lot higher of myself and now I have a lot of self-esteem issues and I'm like well, I don't wanna get in your way. Well, like, what? That never would've been me before, I was more assertive and more, self-positive imaged but recently I'm like uhh, I don't wanna get in your way, don't look at me…and it sucks.

In earlier chapters the resilience of these youth was described. However, the price that can be paid for having to be resilient, for having to persevere despite becoming what Laura called "street-involved" was a questioning of self that acted as a barrier to services and relationship. This was particularly true for homeless LGBTQ youth at the Library, because the Library carried the weight of the straight middle class. The stereotype of a librarian and the Library stood in the way of these young people, who were intimidated - not by learning or knowledge or even books - but by those who controlled the access and the environment in which they were found. This control was governed by rules that appeared unyielding and consequently uncomfortable. There were not rules against being a homeless LGBTQ youth at the City Library - but it felt that way. They were not sure they were welcome, they were not sure they would not

be asked to leave, they did not understand the flexibility in some rules, and they worried that once their housing status was revealed, they would be treated poorly. They did not feel safe.

Apple expressed this reluctance at the focus group, when the question of Library use was introduced. All five of the youth in the group went to the City Library but none of them checked out items. Three had overdue fines that were blocking their Library cards and so they only used the Library for the 15-minute computers and for reading books on site. When I commented that the librarians mentioned they would be flexible with fines and overdue items, Apple talked about having her Library books stolen in one of the shelters and said:

> Um, I haven't talked to them [Library staff] about it, yet. I was concerned…I don't know. So, I, I don't really know how that works or how I could get it waived, so…I mean I could [talk to them]. I just, I just, I mean I'm gonna clear it up at some point. I just haven't gotten around to it, and I really didn't see that as a feasible possibility like or…I didn't think of the option being there that they might be able to waive it, um, I just figured I would have to pay it so I didn't bother.

Apple was an assertive, self-assured young woman. Black hair framed her pale face, her eyes were outlined in black, her lips coated with a deep red lipstick and she had several face piercings, including her eyebrow, her nose and her lip. She led a weekly "healthy eating on the streets" discussion group at the Stop-By, complete with food samples, and she was not reticent to express her opinions. She appeared, like Cedar, to be confident and willing to speak up when necessary. Yet the Library and its rules intimidated her.

This can be contrasted with Stop-By, where the youth were comfortable and relaxed, despite the security upon entering and the long list of posted rules at the front desk. At Drop-In they were not hiding their housing status or their sexual orientation or gender identity. They

knew they would be accepted for who they were. At the City Library, they were keeping their identities hidden, fearful revealing them would get them kicked out. The Library rules felt like one more weapon that could be used against them.

It is interesting to note that this hidden behavior was not as prevalent at the Lake Branch, where Denise worked. There at least some of the homeless LGBTQ seemed to feel comfortable revealing their housing status. However, their behavior at that branch *did* get them kicked out. Since the Lake Branch was located in the Phoenix, where there were a large number of homeless youth on the streets, it may have been that they felt less defensive about being homeless. Some of them, such as the two homeless LGBTQ youth in the altercation described by Denise, also fell into the category of what Lance described as having "this huge sense of entitlement because they're LGBTQ, they're young and live in the City and it's the gay capital and they should get everything they want…[they] are out, loud, proud and demand everything." Either way, whether quiet about their housing status or loudly demanding, these homeless LGBTQ youth were not getting their information needs met at the Library.

Cultural competence. The sixth and final theoretical concept was cultural competence. Cultural competence is not a term that is commonly applied to public librarianship, although it underlies much of the diversity work that has been done in information science. However, it is a phrase frequently seen in healthcare and education, which are also, like librarianship, helping professions. Balcazar, Suarez-Balcazar and Taylor-Ritzler (2009) offered a model for cultural competence that can serve as an example for public librarians. As they pointed out:

> Becoming culturally competent is an intentional endeavor, a journey and a life-long process. The development of cultural competence means our willingness to engage in a series of activities such as examining the institutional biases of traditional practices and

> services of the agencies we work for; being open and willing to accept individuals from other cultures; trying non-traditional interventions or changing standard procedures to better address individual needs…(p.1158)

The term "culture" itself has a range of definitions. Kroeber and Kluckhorn (1952) offered a frequently quoted definition:

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand be considered as products of action; on the other hand, as conditioning elements of further action. (p.181)

Ting-Toomey (1999) described two functions of culture that contribute to an understanding of the role of cultural competence. First, "culture serves the *group inclusion function*, satisfying our need for membership and belonging. Culture creates a comfort zone in which we experience in-group inclusion and in-group/out-group differences" (p.13). Second, "*culture's intergroup boundary regulation function* shapes out in-group and out-group attitudes in dealing with people who are culturally dissimilar" (p.13). Both of these highlighted the reason for the lack of communication between the librarians and the other two groups. Each group's identity with their own culture made it more difficult for them to reach out to each other and to create lasting partnerships.

Using this view of culture as a foundation, the sixth theoretical concept has been identified as "cultural competence." The definition of cultural competence has been expanded to include those who are not within institutions and who are without power or voice; in this case,

the homeless LGBTQ youth. Analyzing the data, it became clear there was a lack of cultural understanding between the librarians and the other two groups - the service providers and the homeless LGBTQ youth.

The librarians did not use the term cultural competence, but it played a role in their work. For example, in the City Library, librarians were expected to be prepared to work with specific populations; that is, they were expected to be culturally competent in particular cultures, such as the culture of seniors, children or teens. Joyce described preparing for her job interview at the City Library by reading books about teens and getting to know the population she would be serving:

> It made me really think about, you know, um, teen groups and teen individuals and how to speak with them and how to communicate and, "Their voice is important," and um, you know, just a lot of things that I might not have really thought about quite in that way…They're forming their identity. And, I know when I was a teen, I was super rough around the edges and had no idea, but I think they can, they can sometimes be abrasive a and, or, or terribly shy, but I don't think that people sometimes give them room for that, and recognize where they're at. Um, they're ignored.

Before her preparations, Joyce was lacking cultural competence in teen culture, but she made an effort to address this by educating herself and by thinking about the relationship between her own years as a teenager and the lives of the teen Library patrons. She knew it was important to connect with the teens to do a good job as a teen librarian and she wanted to do a good job.

The librarians had little to no information about the service providers or the homeless LGBTQ youth. Their assumptions about the youth were based partly on the stereotype of

homelessness that is so pervasive and partly on their apprehensions about engaging with teens. In addition, the teen librarians had knowledge about young adults, but their training and information did not relate directly to this unique population, who could be both emotionally younger and more mature than the domiciled teens who were being served. Most of the librarians were interested in serving these young people, but they had no idea how to go about doing that. Several of them asked for suggestions on how they could help.

For example, late in my research, the City Library formed a task force to do "initial assessments of community partnerships and the libraries they served" (personal communication, August 31, 2012). One of the goals of this task force was to look at ways the City Library could better serve the Shanty. As a researcher looking at homeless youth in this neighborhood, I was asked about any insights I could offer. During the conversation, I encouraged the librarian to directly contact JYS, since this was the population JYS served. A week later an email from a staff member at JYS arrived, asking if I would be willing to answer the questions from the City Library; so this process had come full circle. The questions posed by the City Library to JYS were extensive and included:

- What needs do you think are currently not being met among your service group or the neighborhood community at large?
- How do you think the library might help fill those unmet needs?
- Do you have any suggestions regarding specific services or materials that the library might offer either within or away from the building? (personal communication, September 10, 2012)

This exchange was illuminating and served as an excellent illustration of the lack of cultural competence on the part of the Library, the Library's sincere approach to gathering

information, and the resistance on the part of JYS to spending time educating the Library. Like other agencies that deal with homeless LGBTQ youth, JYS got multiple requests from researchers every week. They were too busy to spend the time filling out yet another questionnaire and they had no idea which services the Library would be willing to provide and how that would help them. This email offered insight into the need for meaningful and ongoing contact between JYS and the Library.

The term cultural competence originally emerged as an in vivo code from one of the service providers, when Abbie used it to describe one aspect of the JYS volunteer training. When asked to explain the term, she replied:

> We start with just of kind of, first, a consideration of what is culture and how everyone defines it very differently, and that just because you look a certain way or come from a certain background, or your parents identified in one way, that that doesn't necessarily equal that that's how our young people identify. And, also, just taking into consideration that youth culture is really important, homeless culture can be very important for our young people, but may not be. And that our, the youth that we work with have experienced, likely, a lot of discrimination potentially from the police, from, you know, going into a store or walking down the street, if they're sitting on a street corner, from all different types of people because of how they look, because of being young, because of being, you know, looking homeless or being homeless. And so that they may come to the door feeling like they've been persecuted so much that breaking down those barriers can be really hard. And just being aware that it can take young people potentially a very long time to feel safe within a system, and feel safe with new adults or new strangers of any kind. And, so, that's just a big part of it is just kind of awareness- raising. Having people

> think about kind of their own culture and, and ethnocentricity, that we always think that, you know, we're right, within that, and just being able to try to come to this space. And "try" I think is really important, 'cause it is just constantly something that you're working towards. Try to come into this space and continue to learn from young people…Never make assumptions.

As Abbie pointed out, new relationships and situations were difficult for these young people. For the volunteers to be effective, they needed to understand the culture of homeless LGBTQ youth, engaging in what Abbie called "awareness-raising." This awareness-raising or culture competence was essential if the volunteers were going to be able to engage with the youth, allowing the volunteers to provide support, meals, services and conversations. This volunteer training was only the beginning, because frequent contact with the youth in their daily lives would enhance the volunteers' ability to develop relationships with the youth that felt safe.

The service providers were also ignorant about the Library. Their assumptions were based on their own experiences, the stories they heard from the youth and the common stereotypes about the librarians and the Library. Consequently, all but one of them had either neutral or negative attitudes toward the Library and its usefulness for the homeless LGBTQ youth. They were surprised to hear the Library could be interested in actively serving these young people, they were unsure what that would mean, and they were concerned about the youths' emotional safety should they use the Library. However, they were also open to the possibility that the Library could turn out to be - unexpectedly - a good connection for the youth and for JYS.

The youth, too, had a lack of cultural competence about the Library - how it worked, what it had to offer them, the mission, goals, rules and attitudes. Consequently the youth were

guessing, basing their assumptions on past or recent experiences and the stereotype of the Library and the librarians. Although on the whole the youth felt physically safe in the Library, they felt emotionally unsafe, because they lacked an understanding of the Library and they were unsure of their welcome. They, like the service providers, were willing to be more engaged with the librarians, if they could feel safe doing that.

Without an understanding of each other, it was challenging for these groups to work together. A lack of cultural competence served as a barrier to exploring partnerships and the lack of partnerships served as a barrier to cultural competence. As Train explained:

> I think that partnerships could be useful especially if we're trying to figure out how to build competency in people who are working closely with our kids, or who are working peripherally with our kids…but, I mean any person that somebody comes in contact with can have a lifelong impact on someone, so building competence in as many people as possible in working with our population is always a great idea.

Train saw partnerships, leading to cultural competence, as a way for adults, like librarians, to have a positive impact on the lives of the homeless LGBTQ youth. This is what s/he wanted for these youth: More respectful and knowledgeable adults in their lives.

Selective coding: Core categories. Once these six theoretical concepts were created, the next step was to look for core categories that would bring these concepts together, doing what Oktay (2012) described as "identifying a core category or categories and then relating the other important categories to this core category" (p.81). The possibility of using these six theoretical concepts as core categories was considered, since they were all supported by the data and seemed to be telling a story about the connection between the City Library, the service providers and the

LGBTQ homeless youth. But although I knew these six concepts could serve as planks for the theory, I was looking for a way to pull them together in a cohesive way.

As I returned to the data and the original 16 broad categories, I asked myself: What is being said? What does it mean? How is it applicable to everyone? The image I had at this point was of writing down all my categories on a sheet of paper and shaking it really hard to see what would stick. I wanted the sticky bits. I wanted the moral of the story.

As I thought and worried and reread and thought some more, two core categories emerged from the stories I heard and the theoretical concepts I already had: Creating safety and developing cultural competence. Table 3 shows the emergence of these core categories.

Table 3. *Core categories*

Theoretical concepts	**Core categories**
Time: Not enough; waiting; allowing time; age limits	**Creating safety** **Developing cultural competence**
Attitude: Institutional; personal; acceptance; wanting to help; admiration; suspicion; caution	
Welcoming: Enthusiasm; dread; resources; equal treatment; being allies; being advocates; warmth; visuals (posters, stickers); friendliness; anticipation of needs	
Building relationships: Creating partnerships; lack of knowledge; collaborating; lack of response; takes time; personal connections; funding; mutual support; learning about each other; feeling safe; feeling isolated	
Feeling safe: Physical safety; emotional safety; staying invisible; creating a safe space; trust; knowledge; understanding; rules	
Cultural competence: Being an ally; being afraid of offending; breaking down stereotype of librarians; educating youth about public libraries	

Discussion

"Is a given grounded theory the only answer to a research question? Absolutely not. A grounded theorist makes choices like any other researcher" (Stern, 2009, p.61).

Emergence of theory.

There was much that emerged from the data in this case study. However, the most consistent stories centered on the two core categories of creating safety and developing cultural competence. All of the groups tried to create safety for themselves or for others. The librarians used numerous behavior guidelines, policies and attitudes to try to attain this safety, and many of these rules were in reaction to the visibly homeless adults who used the Library on a daily basis. The service providers were particularly concerned with the safety of the youth - and overall they were convinced the youth would not be safe in the Library, because they would not be treated respectfully or fairly. The youth wanted to feel safe in the Library and they were able to achieve physical safety, by using the Library space as a sanctuary, but not emotional safety, because their lack of knowledge about the Library and the librarians' ignorance about them made them feel anxious and insecure. They did not feel welcome there and the rules and policies contributed to this discomfort.

Cultural competence played a part in this story because it was a lack of cultural competence that made it difficult for the librarians to be able to engage with the homeless youth and the service providers. The librarians were willing to learn more about serving this population, but they were stymied by the lack of time, institutional support, and information. They were also nervous about what serving homeless LGBTQ youth could entail - their lack of knowledge made them uncomfortable. However, they were willing to work with the service

providers. It is important to emphasize this willingness on their part and the expectation that they *did* a have role in serving these youth.

On the other hand, neither the homeless youth nor the service providers expected the City Library to play such a role. Their lack of cultural competence about the City Library, their experiences, and the stereotype of the librarians served as significant barriers to creating meaningful and positive relationships with the library. The homeless youth had no expectations about being seen and acknowledged by the librarians, but would have been happy to have that happen. The service providers did not reach out to the librarians, but were willing to be approached.

There were little to no interactions between the librarians and the other two groups because the lack of cultural competence served as a barrier to the fostering of positive and productive relationships. The service providers and the homeless LGBTQ youth wanted to or were willing to know more about the Library, but they did not know how to do that or they did not feel safe doing that. For each group there was a different reason, but the overall result was the same: A lack of cultural competence created a rift between the librarians and the other two groups and this rift meant that the homeless LGBTQ youth were not able to feel safe enough in the Library to take full advantage of the myriad resources that could have been available to them. Thus, the Library played a limited role in the lives of these youth.

The following table illustrates the intersection of the core categories and the theoretical concepts.

Table 4. *The grounded theory and its components*

Theory	*In order for the Library to be able to provide relevant materials and services to the homeless LGBTQ youth, it is necessary for the Library to be perceived as an emotionally safe and welcoming space by both the youth and the service providers. In addition, the librarians need to feel both physically and emotionally safe in providing this space. To create this safety requires shared cultural competence between the Library and the other two groups.*
Core categories	Creating safety Developing cultural competence
Incorporated theoretical concepts	1. Time 2. Attitude 3. Welcoming 4. Building relationships 5. Feeling safe 6. Cultural competence
Core categories and theoretical concepts: Examples	1. (a) The librarians lacked the **time** to build cultural competence in the culture of homeless LGBTQ youth and this affected how safe they felt serving the youth and how safe the youth felt in the Library. (b)The homeless LGBTQ youth needed **time** to develop trust and make mistakes. 2. (a)The librarians' **attitude** toward homelessness created a barrier between them and the homeless youth and service providers. (b)The homeless LGBTQ youths' **attitude** toward homelessness made them embarrassed to reveal their housing status. 3. (a)The homeless youth did not feel **welcomed** in the Library and this made them feel emotionally unsafe. However, they felt **welcomed** in the City. (b)The librarians wanted teens to feel **welcome** in the Library but did not realize the homeless LGBTQ youth did not identify as teens. 4. (a)The librarians were willing to **build relationships** with the service providers, but lacked the tools and time to do this. (b)To feel safe, the homeless youth needed respectful and welcoming adults in their lives but the librarians were not **building relationships** with them. 5. (a) The homeless LGBTQ youth used the Library as a sanctuary that allowed them to physically **feel safe.** (b) The adult librarians did not **feel safe** serving the teen patrons. (c)The librarians and the service providers used conduct rules to create a **safe** environment in their spaces. 6. (a)The service providers used **cultural competence** training to provide a safe space for the homeless LGBTQ youth. (b)The librarians' lack of knowledge - or **cultural competence** - about the homeless LGBTQ youth resulted in feelings of discomfort for the librarians, the service providers and the youth.

Theoretical Scheme

The "logical, systematic explanatory scheme" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.56) that emerged from the data analysis was that: *In order for the Library to be able to provide relevant materials and services to the homeless LGBTQ youth, it is necessary for the Library to be perceived as an emotionally safe and welcoming space by both the youth and the service providers. In addition, the librarians need to feel both physically and emotionally safe in providing this space. To create this safety requires shared cultural competence between the Library and the other two groups*. This theory was derived from the two core categories: Creating safety and developing cultural competence, which in turn emerged from the six theoretical concepts: Time, attitude, welcoming, building relationships, feeling safe and cultural competence. These eight - the core categories and the theoretical concepts - provided the underpinnings for this theoretical scheme.

Chapter Five

Discussion, Implications, Conclusion

"In open and accessible public spaces and forums, one should expect to encounter and hear from those who are different, whose social perspectives, experience and affiliations are different." (Young, 1990, p.55)

This chapter begins with a review of the findings, followed by a discussion that relates the core categories of *creating safety* and *developing cultural competence* to larger societal issues, including public space, cultural alterity, the role of impartiality, and attitudes toward homelessness. The six theoretical concepts of time, attitude, welcoming, building relationships and feeling safe are incorporated into this discussion as well. The implications and significance of this case study are also offered, as well as thoughts on the limitations and on future related research. The chapter ends with some personal observations about this topic.

Summary of findings

This was a case study of a public library in a city that was home to more than 5000 homeless youth, of which about 2000 could be identified as LGBTQ. This case study started with the question: What is the role of the public library in the lives of homeless LGBTQ youth? It grew to incorporate other questions that emerged along the way, such as what is safety? What is a library? What does it mean to be homeless? These questions and more were answered by bringing together the voices of the librarians, the youth and the service providers, as well as other data such as observations and materials from both organizations. Out of this data came the six theoretical concepts of time, attitude, welcoming, building relationships, cultural competence and feeling safe, and the two core categories, creating safety and developing cultural competence. The theoretical scheme (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.56) that emerged from these eight was, as

described in Chapter Four: *In order for the Library to be able to provide relevant materials and services to the homeless LGBTQ youth, it is necessary for the Library to be perceived as an emotionally safe and welcoming space by both the youth and the service providers. In addition, the librarians need to feel both physically and emotionally safe in providing this space. To create this safety requires shared cultural competence between the Library and the other two groups.*

Discussion

At the beginning of this case study, I knew little about what each of the three groups would say regarding the Library and its interactions with these young people. It was apparent early on that the youth used the Library but either did not engage with Library staff or interacted minimally. Many of the service providers had either negative or neutral attitudes toward libraries - they expected nothing from them that would help the youth they worked with daily. The librarians were what one librarian called "time-pressed" (Joyce, 2012), although they sincerely wanted to help. Overall, there seemed to be different interpretations of basic ideas, particularly what it meant to feel safe and to be welcomed. Over and over there were the same words, but with different meanings and dissimilar intent.

Each participant's interpretations of these terms were compared to each other. Based on concepts that emerged from the data, such as safety and welcoming, these questions were posed: How does each group define these concepts? In what ways do they agree with each other? In what ways do they disagree? How do these agreements and disagreements inform the question?

Creating Safety. To reiterate the definition: Creating safety means insuring a person feels both physically and emotionally safe in an environment, such as the public library. In this research, it was found that the homeless LGBTQ youth used the Library as a physically safe space off the streets. They had no expectation it would be more than that, and in general, they

maintained invisibility as much as possible, since their expectations of the Library's ability to address their particular needs were so low. They did not feel welcomed and they hoped only to be left alone and not be kicked out.

On the streets, in the shelters and in public spaces, such as the Library, the youth also maintained what Mallon (1998) called "hyper-vigilance, i.e., the constant scanning of the environment for negative signals" (p.27). This vigilance helped them feel safer, and it also made them aware of the attitudes of the Library staff, the enforcement of conduct policies, such as no sleeping rules, and the presence of LGBTQ-affirming indicators, such as rainbow flag stickers and LGBTQ book collections.

The City Library, where these youth spent time, had created public conduct rules that were largely in direct response to the visibly homeless adults who frequented the Library daily. The librarians felt unsafe without these guidelines and thought the majority of the their patrons were also uncomfortable. However, the guidelines and the attitudes that accompanied them made the homeless LGBTQ youth feel unsafe and unwelcome. The rules created an atmosphere of subtle intimidation for those Library patrons who were unable to comply with them and who felt powerless to object.

The librarians considered these guidelines necessary and impartial. "We treat everyone the same" was one of their frequent refrains. Young (1990) described this "ideal of impartiality" beautifully:

> It serves at least two ideological functions…First, claims to impartiality feed cultural imperialism by allowing the particular experience and perspective of privileged groups to parade as universal. Second, the conviction that bureaucrats and experts can exercise their decisionmaking power in an impartial manner legitimates authoritarian hierarchy."(p.10).

This power dynamic existed in the Library. The rules, although applied to everyone, affected each group in a different way. This point was made in Chapter One, in the findings from the *Community-Led Libraries Toolkit (2008)*, which came out of the "Working Together Project." They, too, found that "*same* or *consistent* customer service...results in inequitable services that further disadvantage socially disadvantaged people" (p.8).

One of the challenges in a public space, like the City Library, is making it safe for all who inhabit it, both the employees and the visitors. The choices that are made in how to do this can reflect the norms of society and the hegemony that controls those norms. As Laurenson and Collins (2007) said: "At least implicitly, the 'public' whose safety is to be improved is understood in narrow and exclusive terms, encompassing only those engaged in legitimate acts of production or consumption" (p.651). Because of this attitude, the decisions made about who was welcomed frequently determined who was not welcomed. Feeling welcomed and feeling safe are closely tied - a space that feels welcoming is a space that feels safe.

An interesting aspect of this is that when asked what they wanted the librarians to know about them, several of the youth also referred to the idea of "everyone." Talyn answered: "We are the same as anyone else." Deborah said: "They should treat us normal like everyone else;" and Isaiah replied: **"**Just see us as any other person." The contrast of the desire to be treated "like anyone else" but at the same time not *being* anyone else presented an important dichotomy. At the simplest level, it appeared they agreed with the presumed democratic approach of applying the same public space rules and policies to everyone - rules and policies that were not always to their advantage.

But when questioned further about this, the youth made it clear they meant they wanted to be treated with respect and not be socially excluded or dismissed because of their housing

status, their youth, their sexual orientation or gender identity. In other words, they wanted what everyone else wants: To be recognized and supported for being themselves. They wanted to be approached with a positive and supportive attitude. This fit well with Abbie's comments when asked what she would like the librarians to know about the homeless LGBTQ youth:

> I would say curiosity is really important because that's how we're gonna get to know these young people and build trust is to, is for them to not think that we're just all out to get them, but that we're actually out there, curious about their lives, and what's happened with them and what things they've seen and, um, what perspectives on the world they have that can enhance our own, you know? And, there's a lot of wisdom that we can attain through just being curious, you know?

Abbie's comments reinforced one of the six theoretical concepts, building relationships. This concept was applicable at all levels: Librarian to homeless youth, youth to youth, youth to service provider, service provider to service provider and librarian to service provider. The librarians in particular needed to reach out and create meaningful connections if they were going to be able to serve this population.

One of the largest barriers to creating these relationships was a lack of the appropriate cultural competence. This second core category is addressed in the following section.

Developing Cultural Competence. Cultural competence includes "being open and willing to accept individuals from other cultures" through self-examination, training and applying different approaches to interactions (Balcazar, Suarez-Balcazar and Taylor-Ritzler, 2009, p.1158). The lack of cultural competence affected the youth and the service providers in their interactions with the Library and the Library in its interactions with them. There were multiple reasons for this lack, including stereotyping, attitude, exposure and time.

Stereotyping in particular played a significant role. The librarians were exposed daily to a core population of visibly homeless adults and so their impression of homelessness was greatly affected by this group. In addition, they had the typical societal attitudes toward homelessness, based on media coverage and parental influences. For example, when asked where he got his ideas about homelessness, Dan answered:

> Well, I just had a flashback to grade school, learning about, uh, bums on the street, and having that be like, "Do you wanna end up like that bum there on the street?" That was an example my dad used all the time, like "If you don't do x, y and z, get good grades, and read, go to the right college, you're gonna end up like that.

However, in line with the concept of developing cultural competence, Dan later altered his views, based on his direct experiences with people experiencing homelessness:

> I met a lot of street people, hung out in the City, and realized, "Wait. These are just people without homes. They're, you know, black, they're white. Some of them used to have money. Some of 'em are gay. Some of 'em are… They're just like every other slice of society. They just don't have homes. And some of them stink, but not all of them do.

Dan's willingness to change his mind is a critical aspect of developing cultural competence. As has been pointed out, cultural competence is a gradual and ongoing process that is never complete, because cultures are complex. Multiple researchers have argued that increased exposure to people experiencing homelessness reduces negative attitudes, by increasing knowledge or cultural competence. For example, Knecht and Martinez (2009) reported that after volunteering at a resource fair for homeless adults, "exposure strongly influenced respondents' perceptions of the homeless as individuals. After the event, for example, respondents were far

less likely to view the homeless as substance abusers, mentally ill, or dangerous" (p.522). It is necessary to point out the difference between positive contact, as with these volunteers, and the kind of minimal interactions between the librarians and both the adult visibly homeless Library patrons and the homeless youth. These minimal interactions, like the youth's experiences with the librarians, served in no way as positive contact or cultural competence aids. If anything, they exacerbated existing stereotypes.

The other stereotype that interfered with building relationships was the stereotype of libraries and librarians. This was a powerful stereotype and it carried both positive and negative characteristics. As mentioned earlier, the homeless LGBTQ youth had an attitude that bordered on reverence toward individuals librarians as representatives of an institution they, like many Americans, held in high esteem. However, they were also uncomfortable and anxious when dealing with the Library and the librarians, worried they would be found unacceptable in some way and therefore not allowed to participate. This was created in part by the rules and the atmosphere at the Library, but it also represented a lack of knowledge about the Library and how it worked. Their experiences with institutions and adults had frequently been negative, especially regarding their minority status as LGBTQ. It was no wonder they were reluctant to engage with the librarians. They were intimidated and needed to see indications they were welcomed and safe in the Library space, and this would in turn help them develop cultural competence.

It should be noted that none of the librarians appeared to be homophobic or in any way reluctant to serve youth who identified as LGBTQ. In fact, three of the four teen librarians, one of the adult librarians and one of the Library social workers all volunteered the information that they themselves identified as LGBTQ. Alexandra made a point of mentioning that many of the Library staff so identified and she thought it was important for the youth to know this. When

asked what she would like the homeless LGBTQ youth to know about the City Library, she replied:

> I would want them to know we have queer staff members, you know, like that's really important, too. Um [pause] and that, you know, that's not something that's gonna be, you know, like, "Oh, I'm a," you know, "gay librarian," but at the same time, I think it's good for them to know.

This fact could have played a role in helping the youth feel safer in the City Library, less like an "other" if they had known, since they had become homeless due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. However, without active engagement between the librarians and the homeless LGBTQ youth, it was difficult for the youth to know this.

Another aspect of cultural competence for the homeless LGBTQ youth and the librarians was the definition and use of the term "teen." Although a large percentage of the youth served by JYS were literally teenagers, they did not consider themselves teens. Isaiah explained his thoughts on why he did not use the teen section:

> I can say part of the reason was just because like the things that they put in the teen section, I kind of thought were like really just paternalistic and stereotypical. You think like these are the books that I want to read? like *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* and like, like, basically, like book versions of T.V. shows and other things like that…I think that's great and all for people who are interested in that, but…I'm not.

Isaiah recommended using the term "young adult" instead, because he thought that would attract more of the homeless youth. This adjustment in a simple term relates back to earlier observations about the power being allowed to name oneself. In this case, these youth needed a

term they felt represented who they really were and they emphatically did not identify as teenagers in the common use of that word.

The question of the difference between a teen and young adult is one that has been closely examined by policy makers and service providers. Furstenberg, Kennedy, McLoyd, Rumbaut & Settersten (2004) discussed the changes in the definition and milestones for adulthood. They pointed out that it "takes much longer to make the transition to adulthood than it did decades ago" (p.37). The difference between the needs for teens and those who identify as adults was one the City Library had yet to address. What was particularly relevant to the homeless LGBTQ youth in this case study was that these authors found that:

> More than any time in recent history, parents are being called on to provide financial assistance (either college tuition, living expenses or other assistance) to their young adult children. Robert Schoeni and Karen Ross conservatively estimate that nearly one quarter of the entire cost of raising children is incurred after they reach 17. Nearly two-thirds of young adults in their early twenties receive economic support from parents. (p.38)

Since these youth were not living at home or being supported by their parents, this fact greatly impacted their lives. So the resources they needed from the Library were myriad, because they were in many ways emotionally younger than their age, but their economic needs were much more in alignment with the adult resources. To serve them well, the librarians needed to know this.

Time is an aspect of cultural competence for two reasons in particular. As discussed in Chapter Four, the librarians and the service providers had little time to give to creating relationships with each other or to gaining mutual cultural competence. When one of the

librarians, Joyce, was asked what she would like the homeless LGBTQ youth to know about the Library, she replied:

> I might say, "Look, we're so busy and we're so frantic and we're trying to just keep up, and we haven't forgotten about you, but we haven't had the time to really think about what we can do to help you. Help us help you. What'd you want?"

Her words represent well the dilemma for the librarians: They wanted to help these young people, they did not know how to do that and they did not have time to find out. In addition, because these librarians had little cultural knowledge about the youth, they were concerned helping them might take time away from their other duties.

The homeless youth, on the other hand, tended to have ample time, which was spent waiting for services, shelter, interviews, job training, friends or meals. One of the functions of the Library in their life was as a place to safely spend this time. Because of the nature of the way their time was spent, the youth were also unpredictable. Their lives could be chaotic and so creating programs for them would require not only valuable time, but also a personal connection and cultural understanding. Even then, they might not show up. When asked if he had suggestions for the Library, Isaiah described this issue well:

> I'm in this demographic, love it to death, but …there can be money and there can be space provided for these, for youths like me. It's just a matter of if we will come, and even if we say we'll come, if we'll actually come. And you may have something that on paper would be the most perfect thing and very well may be…however…things come up, and the priorities change, and even though you may want to find out what's going on at that, you know, Library kind of program that's happening, like maybe I'm gonna have to figure out how to make ten dollars to eat, or gonna have to like figure out like how'm I

> gonna walk across town, you know, by the time, uh, the shelter beds open up at JYS, or something like that. So it's really hard for me to kind of say what would work and what wouldn't work.

By gaining cultural competence in each other's lives, the librarians and the youth could work together to create programs or resources that would be valuable to the youth. They could also address barriers the youth might encounter in using the Library as a resource.

This kind of connection has already been created in public libraries, with what are commonly called TAGs or similar names. These are usually comprised of a core group of teenagers who advise the teen librarian on issues of collection development or programming. The inclusion of homeless teens could benefit everyone, but again, the use of the word "teen" might serve as a barrier to recruitment of these youth.

Isaiah made one more excellent point about this. When I asked how he finds out about events or programs, he recommended working directly with homeless youth organizations, in particular JYS, to get the word out. To be able to do this, the Library and these service organizations would have to have a much deeper understanding of each other, by taking the time to meet together and be part of each other's essential networks.

Critical theory. In some ways, my findings mirror the basic assumptions of critical theory presented by Kincheloe and McClaren (2005):

> That all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are social and historically constituted; that facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription; that the relationship between concept and object and between signifier and signified is never stable or fixed and is often mediated by the social relations of capitalist production and consumption; that language

> is central to the formation of subjectivity (conscious and unconscious awareness); that certain groups in any society and particular societies are privileged over others and, although the reasons for this privileging may vary widely, the oppression that characterizes contemporary societies is most forcefully reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary, or inevitable. (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, as quoted in Kincheloe & McClaren, 2005, p.304)

Much of what they described related well to this research population. LGBTQ youth homelessness is a result of inequities in society, perpetuated by stereotypes, bigotry, ignorance and a lack of understanding of the power struggles that exist in shared public spaces, such as public libraries. The presence of a power dynamic had great influence on the interactions of librarians and homeless LGBTQ youth. What was fascinating about this was there was no apparent intention. That was the irony of looking at a group of people who were dedicated to serving their communities. Their power came from their very position in relation to these young people; however, it was not power they chose or even understood. The imbalance in power was well illustrated by the different interpretations each of these groups had of the concept of "feeling safe." They were frequently at odds with each other, through no fault of anyone. The fault lay instead with society and the ways in which serving those who are experiencing poverty and homelessness and treated as others are approached.

However, although the homeless youth were affected by these power dynamics, they also resisted them. For example, one of the outstanding characteristics of these youth was the ability to create a new set of rules or even to invent a lack of rules - allowing for the freedom to create and re-create oneself, using constantly evolving language, behaviors and expectations. This ability contradicted the assertion they accepted their social status, described above by Kincheloe

and McClaren (2005), as "natural, necessary, or inevitable." On the contrary, the very fact a young person identified as genderqueer, for instance, placed hir on the margins of a gendered and heterosexist society, yet the margin itself was a place s/he may have purposely chosen. bell hooks (1990) described this beautifully:

> I am located in the margin. I make a definite distinction between that marginality which is opposed by oppressive structures and that marginality one chooses as site of resistance. This site of resistance is continually formed in that segregated culture of opposition that is our critical response to domination. We come to this space through suffering and pain, through struggle. We know struggle to be that which struggles, delights, and fulfills desire. We are transformed individually, collectively as we make radical creative space which affirms and sustains our subjectivity, which gives us a new location from which to articulate our sense of the world. (p.153)

These young people were on the streets because they resisted society's attempts to define and name them. They chose resistance over compliance, but it was a challenge. As they struggled to find and use their own voices, they were stigmatized and stymied by their housing status, poverty, lack of education and employment, and their drive to have control over their own identities. Their discomfort in the Library and limited interactions with the librarians was a reflection of this marginalization, even as they chose to be outside the established norms. This dual reality was confusing for the librarians and contributed to the lack of understanding between the two groups.

Cultural alterity. The concept of cultural alterity also provided insight into the research question. The librarians represented the Library culture, as well as their own domiciled and middle class culture. Schutte (1998) wrote about cultural alterity and her thoughts on why it was so difficult to address issues of "otherness." As she observed:

> One sees how difficult it is for groups that are deeply entrenched in their own values, and that have the power to ignore the values of other groups, to attain any adequate understanding of cultural alterity. The reason for this is that people of different cultures do not speak the same (cultural) language and do not share the same cultural imaginary order…The speaker from the dominant culture is basically saying: communicate with me entirely on the terms I expect; beyond this, I am not interested. The ethical principle of cultural alterity must point to the inadequacy of such a speaker to engage in cross-cultural as well as interpersonal dialogue and conversation. Yet by the conventional norms of his own culture, the dominant speaker may never understand that he is silencing the culturally differentiated other because it never occurred to him to think that cross-cultural communication contains important, yet incommensurable, elements. (pp.61-62)

This willingness to engage in cross-cultural communication requires a recognition that different cultures exist in a given situation and that communication may be inhibited unknowingly. This is a hard lesson for librarians, because they may be unaware of the impact of their middle class domiciled library culture on those outside of it, such as those living on the streets.

The premise of a public library is deeply entrenched in the idea, beginning in the mid-1800s, that libraries represent a democratic ideal. As Buschman (2005) so eloquently put it:

> Libraries help make possible the democratic public sphere ideal in the form of rational

> organization of human cultural production and they embody an essential element of democracy: A place where the ideal of unfettered communication and investigation exists in rudimentary form, hosting the turbulent discourse of a democracy and its culture. (pp. 9-10)

In many ways, this continues to be true of libraries. Yet it also continues to be true that the "turbulent discourse" in libraries has resulted in behavior guidelines and unwelcoming attitudes toward those, such as people experiencing homelessness, who feel out of place and unsafe in a library.

Philosophy. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), "All qualitative researchers are philosophers" and they are guided by principles that combine beliefs about

> Ontology (What kind of being is the human being? What is the nature of reality?), epistemology (What is the relationship between the inquirer and the known?), and methodology (How do we know the world or gain knowledge of it?) (p.22)

As evident from the previous descriptions of this research, these principles underlie all of it. In addition, the philosophical aspect is worth noting, because some of the literature that has provided insight into the research participants came from philosophers. The combination of the reality of the participants' lives with the abstract and yet significant philosophies that examined stigma, identity, exclusion and marginalization meant this topic functioned in two worlds and it was an excellent mirror of librarianship itself. The day-to-day interactions in the City Library were affected by practical considerations, such as budget, community needs, staff, material selection and much more. At the same time, the democratic principles of intellectual freedom, equal access and privacy supported and inspired the many services offered. This balance of philosophy and practicality is one of the largest challenges to public libraries in general,

especially in times of economic hardships. However, it cannot be overemphasized that both aspects of librarianship are essential for the well being of the libraries as well as the communities they serve.

Implications for Public Librarians

There are a variety of ways this research impacts public librarians. These ways have been broken down into two categories: The role of public libraries in their communities, and some suggested practical applications of this research.

The Role of the Public Library. One of the oft-touted roles of the public library in a community is as a "community builder." In 2006, ALA began the "Libraries Build Community" project in New Orleans, as an outcome of efforts to address the devastation there wrought by Hurricane Katrina (American Library Association, 2012a). This was followed by a new initiative in 2012, "Librarians Build Community," created by the ALA Emerging Leaders Team (American Library Association, 2012b). Both of these looked at concrete ways libraries and librarians could make practical and meaningful contributions to communities. There are many, many more examples of this idea, but the basic idea is that libraries are essential to supporting communities.

There is also much that has been said about the decline of the public library. Buschman (2003) wrote convincingly about the trends in librarianship toward a corporate, customer-driven model. As he asserted: "The cumulative effect of these decisions has been to dismantle the aspects of the democratic public sphere that have been historically embedded in - and extended through - librarianship" (p.48).

How do these two approaches inform this research? Both of them underlie the attitudes towards homelessness, youth and LGBTQ issues. For libraries to build communities and for the

democratic public sphere to be able to continue to be truly democratic, there must be a close examination of underserved and frequently stigmatized populations, like LGBTQ homeless youth. We must ask: "How is community being defined?" "How welcome are these youth in the democratic sphere?"

In his concluding chapter, Buschman (2003) recommended a community conversation about the role of the library in that community, "engaging it in a rational dialogue about what it should be in light of democratic public purposes, and the need to provide alternatives and alternative spaces in a culture dominated by information capitalism and media image and spectacle" (p.180). It is hoped this research contributed to that conversation. When librarians talk about who is being served, they must listen to all the voices, by seeking them out, by letting them know whom the librarians are and what they have to offer; by creating relationships. If the role of the public library is really to build communities, librarians must know what they are building and whom it is for and who is being left out. If they are offering a democratic public sphere, they must open their doors to everyone. In "Mending Wall (Frost, 1917), Frost offered these lines: "Before I built a wall I'd ask to know/What I was walling in or walling out/And to whom I was like to give offense." Public librarians are encouraged to think about whom they are walling out and ask themselves: Is this wall really necessary?

The library approach to homelessness has been mixed. From this case study, it can be seen that rules can supersede or even replace purpose. As Kirst-Ashman (2008) said about this issue for organizations: "Goal displacement occurs when an organization continues to function but no longer achieves the goals it's supposed to. A typical scenario…is when the rules and following those rules become more important than providing services to clients." (p.132). Librarians must remember the democratic purpose of public libraries: The job of public libraries

is not to enforce rules; it is to serve its community. While guidelines will always be necessary, they should only be peripheral.

Power of the written word. This section would not be complete without the mention of the power of the written word, to inform, transform, inspire and create community. Throughout this research, every time the topic of public libraries was mentioned, the response was related only to reading books. This was informative but frustrating, because I wanted the youth and the service providers to understand that libraries are much more than books - they are resources and personal interactions and community centers and all the other aspects we, as public librarians, provide and promote.

But the participants, particularly the youth, really did read. Books really were a way to connect with them. When asked for book requests, the young people consistently asked for particular books by title or for specific subject, such as witchcraft, string theory or mysteries "like John Grisham." There were also intense descriptions of favorite books. For example, when asked if she had used the Library to get materials to support her coming out process, Ary spent several frustrated minutes describing a beloved book, unable to remember the title:

> And then, there's one about [sigh]… Oh, what's it called? It's actually the two Jewish women. You know what I'm talking about? It's the, um [pause] it's called like [pause]… Oh, shit. It's about two – one of 'em is German and one of 'em is Jewish and they both like each other, um… Shit. What's it called. I have to think of it. It's a really good book, and it's cool because it's a true story and it has pictures and the one gets sent to the concentration camp, but they still write letters to each other, and it's like a really good story, like… And the one is, I think she died, but she, she grew old happily, so…

> Shit, what's it called? I don't remember. But, and they even made a movie about it, I think, which I haven't seen. [pause] And that was a good book, though.

Other youth also talked about finding books in the Library that supported who they were, and using the Library to find websites that did the same. In addition, these youth, as mentioned earlier, had a wide range of interests and they enjoyed talking about them with me, the librarian. A conversation between a homeless LGBTQ youth and a librarian is more than a conversation about books - it is a way of showing them respect. Many teen librarians already know this, but for these youth it was especially important, because there were so few respectful adults in their lives. This echoes earlier comments about "respecting each other as sources of meaning and value" (Moran, 2011).

Practical Applications

The following are suggestions, based on this case study. They are only the beginning, because for each library, service provider and homeless LGBTQ youth, the circumstances and personalities will be different.

Trainings. One of the librarians, Denise, had been involved in training in her previous job that provided information about transgender issues. This training had a lasting effect on her and she became an advocate for unisex bathrooms at the City Library:

> One year at our state conference we got like super transgendered. It was great, it was like everything was transgendered that year. And I went to all these things and like, found out we should all have unisex bathrooms. So I'm super into unisex bathrooms.

She spent months fighting to have the single person bathroom at her branch labeled "Unisex" instead of "Family Bathroom," because, as she pointed out, individual patrons were confused

about whether or not they could use it. When it was pointed out that it *did* say unisex on the bathroom door, she was ecstatic: **"**Well then I won!"

These kinds of in-depth trainings can contribute to an increase in cultural competence for public librarians and provide impetus for engaging in partnerships with service organizations.

Meetings. As mentioned earlier, service providers regularly attended meetings, to exchange ideas, to create partnerships, to commiserate, to support each other, to apply for funds. As background for this research, several service providers in large urban areas were interviewed and all of them talked about meetings and conferences. When asked if librarians would be welcome, they consistently said yes - although they were usually surprised librarians would be interested. Meetings are important because the casual interactions that can occur over coffee breaks and the increased exposure to each other's arenas of expertise are not as likely to occur in brief trainings, memos, emails, flyers, brochures or even presentations. To be fully engaged with each other, so the youth can benefit from the individual and joint resources and knowledge, requires constant, uninterrupted interactions that are not dependent on individuals or budgets, but have become institutionalized and welcomed by all.

E-lists. E-lists that are connected to the world of LGBTQ homeless youth provide weekly or monthly newsletters and announcements about special events or memorable occasions. These email reminders offer a way to stay connected to a world that may be far different from the world of the librarian; they are one way to increase cultural competence. They also provide inspiration on ways of partnering with organizations or becoming part of a larger community of caring adults.

Glossary of terms. One of the easiest ways to gain insight into the lives of homeless LGBTQ youth is to read and understand a list of the terms that apply to their lives. Posting such a list in the library would provide information, as well as a constant reminder of the existence of this population.

Strengths

Literature. There is extensive literature on the topic of homelessness. Topics include: Needs, suggestions for service, attitudes toward those experiencing homelessness, statistics, personal stories and much more (e.g., Clapham, D., 2007; DeVerteuil, G., May, J., & von Mahs, J., 2009; Hodgetts, D., Radley, A., Chamberlain, K., & Hodgetts, A., 2007). This literature could provide interested librarians with a large amount of background information on homelessness in the United States, but it provides little insight into public libraries and LGBTQ homeless youth.

Previous writings on public libraries and homelessness focused primarily on visibly homeless adults, who are in many ways different from the youth population studied here (e.g., Gehner, J., & Freeman, K., 2005; Redfern, B., 2002; Ward, C., 2007; Dokoupil, T., 2008; Lilienthal, S. M., 2011; Hersberger, J.A., 2005). Many of these writing were offered as practical guides for librarians when engaging with these populations, either to control behavior or to provide meaningful services. They serve as stopgaps for an issue that has continued to create consternation and concern in public libraries, particularly in large urban areas.

Library literature also addressed serving LGBTQ youth in public libraries. Articles and books discussed such topics as collection development, attitudes and using library resources in the coming out process (e.g., Alexander, L.B., & Miselis, S.D., 2007; Martin, H.J., & Murdock, J.R., 2007; Gough, C., & Greenblatt, E., 2011; Mehra, B., & Braquet, D., 2006). All of these and

more made significant contributions to the examination of public libraries and LGBTQ youth. However, there was little reference to serving those LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness.

There are ample resources offered on homeless LGBTQ youth (e.g., Center for American Progress, 2010; Cochran, B.N., Stewart, A.J., Ginzier, J.A., & Cauce, A.M., 2002; Mok, F., 2006). These focused on creating an understanding of the lives of these youth and clear suggestions for service providers on how to help them leave the streets. The library was conspicuously absent both in the body of the research and in the resources offered.

Available information about the question addressed in this research was scattered among these four different categories: Homelessness, homelessness and libraries, LGBTQ youth and libraries, and homeless LGBTQ youth. However, although these writings served as excellent background resources, none of them addressed this research question. This case study fills in that gap. It brings together these two topics and offers a theoretical scheme that highlights the issues that need to be addressed in order for public libraries to play a significant role in the lives of homeless LGBTQ youth.

Teens in public libraries. There are multiple ways for public librarians who serve teens to gather and exchange information about relevant services and issues. For example, ALA's Young Adult Library Services (YALSA) offered an e-list called YA-YAAC (YALSA Young Adult Advisory Councils). The purpose of this e-list was to offer "information on programming, teen advisory groups, professional development, and just about everything else! Uses: Networking, exchanging ideas, discussing common problems, encouraging youth participation in library activities" (October 15, 2012). As of October 2012 there were 1762 subscribers to this list. The daily emails included book suggestions, program questions, summer reading game ideas and much more. Many of the queries were focused on reading, but many others were about using

social media, game consoles and technology-related interactions with the youth. In the two years of this research, there were no discussions about homeless youth or homeless LGBTQ youth and public libraries.

This research offers valuable insights that could be utilized by librarians on e-lists such as this. It can contribute to the conversation and it is hoped spark interest in addressing the needs of these particular young people, in the ways they do and do not fit the profile of teens who use the library. For example, although homeless LGBTQ youth enjoy using social media, many of them need personal interactions to improve their social skills. This insight into the needs of these youth would serve as an important counterpoint to the public library's ever-increasing emphasis on technology. It also jibes well with comments from Dan, who pointed out that the urban teens he served were more interested in Lego programs than social media ones.

Human Rights and Social Justice. Tompkins (2011) offered a definition of social justice that relates directly to this research and the findings. As he said:

> Social justice is the process of communicating, inspiring, advocating, organizing and working with others of similar and diverse organizational affiliations to help all people gain respect and participate fully in society in a way that benefits the community as well as the individual. (p.10).

This research aims to bring together these diverse organizations, so homeless LGBTQ youth are able to participate fully in society and so society benefits from this participation. In this way, it contributes to the ongoing conversation on social justice, human rights and libraries. This population of young people is not being actively and effectively served by public libraries. Although they may be within the literal walls of the library, they are outside the service walls of

these institutions and it is imperative public libraries take their place alongside city and social service agencies as they all address the needs of these youth.

Limitations

As with any research project, there were multiple limitations. The largest limitation of this case study was the fact that it took place in one city, with one library and one homeless youth services agency. Although this was appropriate for a case study, it certainly leaves open the possibility there may have been different responses in another geographical area or with another library or another agency. This is one of the limitations of qualitative and grounded theory research: The data are highly personal and not necessarily generalizable.

Next, in keeping with the case study approach, only homeless youth who were in some way connected to JYS were interviewed. This meant the voices of the youth who were getting little to no help dealing with their housing status were not included.

Another limitation was my own lack of expertise as an interviewer and researcher. As time went on, there was improvement, but there were times when I listened to the recordings and cringed at the questions or sighed over lost opportunities. It is hoped the lessons learned here can be applied to future research.

Access and time were also limitations. Gaining access to the librarians and service providers was challenging at times, and once access was granted, available time was limited. Access to the youth was also difficult; it took months to find youth to interview and not all of them showed up for the interview appointments. Two of them got frequent text messages during the interviews, and this cut into the time and interrupted the flow of the conversation.

Because on the whole there were face-to-face interviews, it is possible participants may have been affected by my age, gender identity and race. Someone younger, who identified more

obviously as genderqueer, might have gotten different answers to questions and had different questions to ask.

Finally, there was so much data that not all emerging themes were examined closely. For example, several participants expressed disappointment or disapproval about the bureaucracy of their organizations. This was initially identified as work issues, but ultimately incorporated into the larger core category of creating safety. A closer examination of work environment could produce more insights into the barriers to library service for these youth. Another example was the youth's attitude toward unfettered computer access in public libraries. This was again incorporated into the broader themes of creating safety and developing cultural competence, but this could also be an excellent topic for future research.

Future research

There is much more research that could be done in relation to homeless LGBTQ youth and public libraries. Hearing from youth who are not being served by social services - youth only living on the streets - would further inform concerned librarians. This research has led me to an increased interest in transgender and interviews limited to that specific population might offer new information on serving their needs and providing appropriate resources.

In addition, this research has provided some insight into how decisions are made in libraries about which populations to actively serve. Future research on other underserved and marginalized populations could contribute to the lessons learned here.

There does not appear to be any research that closely examines how domiciled library patrons feel about the presence of people who are visibly experiencing homelessness. Such research could offer further insight to librarians on this topic and the pressure to create public conduct policies.

Many of these youth mentioned using the Internet to gather information about resources, and pursuing how, why and where they access the Internet could offer more insights into their information seeking behaviors and provide additional ways of understanding how to meet their needs.

Several of these youth were engaged in artistic activities, such as art, writing and music. JYS offered art and writing groups, as did a local organization that provided a place for youth to showcase their art, through shared activities, support groups, a journal, public readings and more. Concentrating just on the arts and homeless LGBTQ youth would be another way to provide a deeper understanding that could be of use to public librarians.

Future research could expand this research to other cities, in other parts of the country. The flavors of this city, this library and this agency uniquely combined to tell the story offered here. Further research could highlight other attitudes and further approaches to serving homeless youth.

Finally, the question of how public libraries are serving transitional aged youth is a critical one for the future of teen and adult services. There is a gap that needs to be acknowledged and examined. Homeless LGBTQ youth are one example of this population, but there are also domiciled youth whose needs may not be met by the current approach to youth services and the definitions given to terms like “teens” and young adults.” Research into this topic would serve all young people who fall into this category, including the LGBTQ homeless youth in this case study.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the research findings, including a discussion of the core categories and the theoretical scheme that emerged from the data. It also included implications for public librarians, the strengths and limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research. It concludes with the following final thoughts.

Final Thoughts

I came into this research with a belief in the critical role of public libraries for cultures that do not identify with the dominant one. Yet I had little understanding of the power of the word "culture" and how it permeated the daily interactions in this public library.

I also had no insight into the world of homeless youth, particularly homeless LGBTQ youth. In preparation, I read the literature on homelessness in general and on this population. So I knew the challenges and I understood there were terms routinely applied to them, such as "at risk," "suicidal" and "resilient." But it was not until I saw and heard for myself that I understood the lack of vocabulary to accurately reflect the lives of these amazing people. I have been fortunate to have their words to offer, because I cannot imagine how I could claim to speak for them.

Until this research, I had never really interacted with youth workers, like these service providers, and their eloquence and passion inspired me to do my best on this case study, so I could play a role even a fraction as important as theirs. These are people who care deeply about their work and it was an honor to sit with them, asking them questions and recording their words. Again, being able to use their own language allowed me to weave their stories into the fabric of this tale.

Finally, the librarians: I was most aware of their commitment to their work and their willingness to add to their already much too busy days by talking to me and taking my questions to heart. Although I worked as a public librarian for 20 years, I have spent the last four basically out of touch with the daily pressures and decisions that create the life of a librarian. Nothing is simple, nothing is easy, and the goal is at once lofty and practical. The daily job of these librarians was consistently unpredictable and yet every day there they were again, answering questions, providing resources, and drawing on their own beliefs about libraries as they tried to enforce rules such as the one mentioned by Peter: “No willful spitting.” Given all of that, they were still open to serving these youth, interested in how to do that and constrained not by a lack of enthusiasm, but by a lack of time and institutional direction.

As I stand back and look at this case study, most of all I am aware of how much the librarians and the other two groups did not know about each other: The librarians did not know the youth were afraid of being kicked out of the Library and that their rules and attitudes were factors in this fear. The librarians did not know they had useful resources for the youth. They did not that by simply saying hello and learning names they would make a difference in the lives of these young people. They did not know the youth and the service providers expected nothing from them - had no expectations about what the Library could offer; did not even think it could or would or even should serve these young people.

The service providers did not know what the Library could offer or was willing to offer. They did not understand the basic premise of librarianship - serving all, passing no judgments, wanting to create access. They did not know the librarians were busy and overworked and could appear rude but it was not meant personally.

The youth did not know they were welcome, that the rules were flexible, that the librarians wanted to know how to help but did not have enough time to find out. The youth did not realize the librarians were not targeting them but were busy and distracted and unprepared.

The City Library was not perceived as a safe, welcoming environment by the service providers or the homeless LGBTQ youth. The librarians were interested in changing this, but they did not know how.

I was also informed by the repeated observation that while the Library was a physical space, how that space was used and intended to be used was controlled not only by the issues of space and power alluded to in Chapter One, but also by some basic assumptions about what the word "library" meant. The largest contrast in meaning was between the Library as resources and the Library as space. For the librarians, the Library was a place to do library work, whatever that work was construed to be. However, to a homeless LGBTQ youth and to those who provided services to them outside of the Library, it was in addition a building where one could go and sit in relative safety, unmolested by street life. It was a sanctuary - no matter what Library services also existed. At times, there was dissonance between these two perceptions: Library as service versus Library as space. This idea was at the heart of my research and the core categories of creating safety and developing cultural competence offered insight into it.

It is my hope this dissonance can be lessened by prolonged engagement - leading to cultural competence - between the librarians and the other two groups, the homeless LGBTQ youth and the service providers. I believe the Library would benefit, because it not only offers a way forward, it also lets librarians know they do not have to be intimidated by the idea of offering services to these youth. It will take a commitment of time, of which they have little, but it will be paid back to them in not only the social justice of serving an underserved population,

but also in the contributions that will be made to the Library and to the librarians by becoming part of a larger community in the City.

I passionately believe in public libraries as essential contributors to a better society. By taking an active role in the lives of LGBTQ homeless youth, public librarians can yet again show they really *do* build community.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Sample Glossary of LGBTQ Terms

Adapted from the Sacramento Pride Center

Ally Safe Zone Training Manual Glossary of Terms

(As noted in the Training Manual):

A note about the 'terms' list:

This is by no means an exhaustive list. The terms and definitions included here are provided as a starting point for discussion and understanding. We must allow others the freedom to self identify and understand that terms represent different thing for different people, and respect the terms that individuals choose to identify with." (Sacramento Pride Center, 2010a)

Terms

Ally: Someone who confronts heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexual and gender-straight privilege in themselves and others; and possesses a concern for the well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and Intersex people; and a belief that heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are social justice issues.

Asexuality: A sexual orientation generally characterized by not feeling sexual attraction or a desire for partnered sexuality. This does not eliminate the capability or desire for a romantic relationship. Asexuality is distinct from celibacy, which is the deliberate abstention from sexual activity. Some asexuals do have sex. There are diverse ways of being asexual.

BiGendered: Having two genders; exhibiting cultural characteristics of male and female roles.

Binary Gender System: An unspoken cultural system that defines and allows for two and only two distinct, natural and opposite genders. These two genders—what we refer to as male and female - are understood to represent mutually exclusive poles on a spectrum. This system

perpetuates and relies on mythical and culturally specific ideals of man and woman, and disregards any ambiguity or intermingling of gender traits.

Biphobia: The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of bisexuals, which is often times related to the current binary standard. Biphobia can be seen within the LGBTQI community, as well as in general society.

Bisexual: A person emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to males/men and females/women. This attraction does not have to be equally split between genders and there may be a preference for one gender over others.

Cisgender: A gender identity that society considers to match the biological sex assigned at birth. The prefix cis- means on this side of or not across from. A term used to call attention to the privilege of people who are not transgendered.

Coming Out: May refer to the process by which one accepts one‘s own sexuality, gender identity, or status as an intersexed person (to come out to oneself). May also refer to the process by which one shares one‘s sexuality, gender identity, or intersexed status with others (to come out to friends, etc.). This can be a continual, life-long process for homosexual, bisexual, transgendered, and intersexed individuals.

Cross Dresser (CD): The most neutral word to describe a person who dresses, at least partially or part of the time, and for any number of reasons, in clothing associated with another gender within a particular society. Carries no implications of usual gender appearance, or sexual orientation. Preferably replaces transvestite, which is outdated, problematic, and generally offensive, since it was historically used to diagnose medical/mental health disorders.

Gay: Often used to represent males who are attracted to males in a romantic, erotic and/or emotional sense. Can be used as an umbrella term for men and women.

Gender: The expression or behavior of a person qualified by society as masculine, feminine, androgynous or any mix thereof. Fundamentally different from the sex one is assigned at birth.

Gender Expression/Presentation: How one presents oneself in society.

Gender Fluid: Being fluid in motion between two or more genders; shifting naturally in gender identity and/or gender expression/presentation. May be a gender identity itself. Refers to the fluidity of identity.

Gender Identity: One‘s psychological sense of self; one‘s identity; who someone is intrinsically

Heteronormative: Punitive rules (social, familial, and legal) that force us to conform to hegemonic, heterosexual standards for identity.

Heteronormativity: The assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality and bisexuality.

Heterosexism: The institutionalized belief that heterosexuality is inherently superior to homosexuality or bisexuality. Heterosexism excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual people while it gives advantages to heterosexual people.

Heterosexual Privilege: Those benefits derived automatically by being heterosexual that are denied to homosexuals and bisexuals.

Homosexual: A person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex.

Institutional Oppression: Arrangements of a society used to benefit one group at the expense of another through the use of language, media, education, religion, economics, etc.

Internalized Oppression: The process by which a member of an oppressed group comes to accept and live out the inaccurate stereotypes applied to the oppressed group.

Intersex: A biological occurrence where a person is born with reproductive organs and/or sex

chromosomes that are not exclusively male or female.

Lesbian: Term used to describe female-identified people attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other female-identified people.

LGBTIQ(A): A common abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, and ally community. Some change the ordering of the letters and others may use only some of the letters. In some situations the A is omitted, such as in research dealing with LGBTIQ issues only.

Lifestyle: There is no "gay lifestyle" just as there is no heterosexual lifestyle. Lifestyle is defined as a manner of living that reflects the person's values and attitudes.

Oppression: The systematic subjugation of a group of people by another group with access to social power, the result of which benefits one group over the other and is maintained by social beliefs and practices.

Outing: Involuntary disclosure of one's sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status.

Pansexual, Omnisexual: Terms used to describe people who have romantic, sexual, or affectional desire for people of all genders and sexes. Used by many in place of bisexual, which implies that only two sexes or genders exist.

Queer: This term has different meanings to different people. Some still find it offensive, while others reclaim it to encompass a broader range of identities, politics, and histories. Exercise caution when using, and respect individual preferences.

Sex: A medical term designating a certain combination of gonads, chromosomes, external gender organs, secondary sex characteristics and hormonal balances. Because usually subdivided into 'male' and 'female', this category does not recognize the existence of intersex bodies.

Sex Identity: How a person identifies physically: female, male, in between, beyond, or neither.

Sexual Orientation: A pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, both genders, neither gender, or another gender.

Sexuality: A person‘s exploration of sexual acts, sexual orientation, sexual pleasure, and desire.

Transgender: Used most often as an umbrella term. Commonly held definitions: Someone whose behavior or expression does not match their assigned sex; a gender outside of the man/woman binary; the condition of having no gender or multiple genders. Some definitions include people who perform gender or play with it.

Transition: An individualized process by which transsexual and transgender people move from one gender presentation to another. There are three general aspects to transitioning: social (i.e. name, pronouns, interactions, etc.), medical (i.e. hormones, surgery, etc.), and legal (i.e. gender marker and name change, etc.). A trans individual may transition in any combination, or none, of these aspects.

Transman: An identity label sometimes adopted by female-to-male transsexuals to signify that they are men while still affirming their history as females. Also referred to as transguy(s).

Transphobia: The irrational fear of those who are gender variant and/or the inability to deal with gender ambiguity.

Transsexual: A person who identifies psychologically as a gender/sex other than the one to which they were assigned at birth. Transsexuals often wish to transform their bodies hormonally and surgically to match their inner sense of gender/sex.

Transvestite: A person who enjoys wearing clothes identified with the opposite gender, often but not always straight.

Transwoman: An identity label sometimes adopted by male-to-female transsexuals to signify that they are women while still affirming their history as males.

Appendix B - Glossary of Terms Relating to Homelessness

The following definitions came from the American Library Association Toolkit, titled "Extending Our Reach: Reducing Homelessness Through Library Engagement" (American Library Association, 2012):

Affordable housing: Housing, either ownership or rental, for which a household will pay no more than 30% of its gross income.

Emergency housing: Temporary housing provided on an emergency basis. Stays at emergency shelters are limited in time and the amount of time varies among shelters. For some programs, emergency shelters are the first step in a series of steps as homeless adults and youth move from emergency to transitional to permanent housing.

Transitional housing: Housing that is more stable than emergency housing and that can be for a longer period of time, such as 1 to 2 years. Once homeless youth and adults have been stabilized in emergency housing, they may move to transitional housing as a next step.

Supportive housing: Subsidized housing directly tied to specific supportive services for homeless individuals or families who have come from emergency shelters or the streets. Supportive housing may be categorized as transitional (people may stay for up to 2 years) or permanent (there is no limit on the length of stay and clients abide by a lease).

Continuum of care: Organization of service providers established by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to oversee community planning around homelessness. Continua work together to define needs, plan strategies, and prioritize funding for supportive housing services.

Case management: The process of arranging for the provision of an array of services and supports for an individual or family that is based on assessment of their unique needs and designed to address the specific needs identified.

Harm reduction: Harm reduction is a non-judgmental philosophy that allows young people and adults to have input into their treatment plans. A harm reduction approach begins with the person, allowing each person to progress at a comfortable pace.

Another category of housing is Single Room Occupancy or SRO. HUD (n.d.) provided this definition:

> The Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Program provides rental assistance in connection with the moderate rehabilitation of residential properties that, when renovations are completed, will contain upgraded single occupancy units for individuals who are homeless. As a result, it is designed to move people into the permanent housing phase within the Continuum of Care. The SRO Program assists unaccompanied homeless persons.

It was difficult to find a clear definition of caseworker. However, one site that gives insight into the actual job description is the City of Phoenix website (2012), which offered the following distinguishing features of a caseworker:

- Interviews prospective clients to assess and identify problems and determine eligibility for social services;
- Creates and updates manual and/or automated database client files as required to meet contractual requirements;
- Develops and implements casework service plans for moderate to complex cases;
- Performs field work relating to the client case plan, such as making home visits

and meeting with other social service providers and businesses in the community to provide individual client advocacy;

- Acts as a liaison between clients, professional staff and community agencies;
- Counsels and assists clients in understanding causes and contributing factors to their problems and persuades them to identify and utilize personal and external resources to resolve or alleviate those problems;
- Provides emergency assistance, crisis intervention and social service referrals
- Demonstrates continuous effort to improve operations, decrease turnaround times, streamline work processes, and work cooperatively and jointly to provide quality seamless customer service.

Appendix C - IRB 1

FORM B APPLICATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

Application for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects

I. IDENTIFICATION OF PROJECT

1. Co-Principal Investigator:
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Department: School of Information Sciences

2. Project Classification: *Enter one of the following terms as appropriate:* **Dissertation, Thesis, Class Project, Research Project**, or **Other** (Please specify)
Pilot project and dissertation

3. Title of Project:
Social work or social responsibility? Public libraries and homeless LGBTQ youth

4. Starting Date:
Upon IRB approval

5. Estimated Completion Date:
August 1, 2012

6. External Funding *(if any):* **N/A**

II. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objective of this research is to gain insight into the attitudes and actions of public librarians as those attitudes and actions relate to services, programs and materials for homeless lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) youth. By interviewing both those

public librarians who do and those who don't specifically reach out to this population, it is hoped a deeper understanding can be reached as to whether or not this is an appropriate role for public librarians, and what barriers may be encountered by those who wish to do so. Interviews with professionals who work with homeless LGBTQ youth will help provide background material for the librarian interviews.

III. DESCRIPTION AND SOURCE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The primary participants in this research are public librarians. Both public librarians who do reach out to LGBTQ homeless youth and those who don't will be interviewed. It is expected that many of the public librarians who are interviewed will be Teen Services librarians, since this research is particularly focused on homeless youth. All participants will be over age 18. To gain access to this population, 3 approaches will be taken. The researcher was a public librarian for 20 years and is still connected to the public library world in the San Francisco Bay Area. She will contact these libraries directly, through email or telephone, and ask if there is anyone in the library who is doing outreach to this population. It is anticipated that it will be much more difficult to find librarians who are actively serving this population, so the researcher will begin by trying to reach those librarians. The second method will be a snowball technique, following any leads suggested by these librarians. The third will be emails sent out to public librarian e-lists, asking if anyone is currently serving this population. Examples of the e-lists that will be contacted are:

alscpubsch@ala.org
ALSC Public Library-School Partnership Disc. List
centralheads@ala.org
Heads of Central Libraries Discussion Group
glbtrt-l@ala.org
Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Transgender Round Table
iflapubdem@ala.org
IFLA Public Libraries and the Democratic Process
ifrt@ala.org
ALA Intellectual Freedom Round Table
olospoor@ala.org
OLOS Subcommittee on Library Services to the Poor and Homeless
outreach@ala.org
OLOS Library Outreach
pats@ala.org
Partnerships Advocating for Teens Interest Group
serving-otya@ala.org
YALSA Serving Older Teens and Young Adults
centralheads@ala.org
Heads of Central Libraries Discussion Group
srrtac-l@ala.org
SRRT Member Forum
alsc-l@ala.org
Association for Library Service to Children List
teenadvisory@ala.org
Teen Advisory Groups Interest Group

teens-specialneeds@ala.org
Outreach to Teens with Special Needs Interest Group
ya-urban@ala.org
YALSA Serving YA's in Large Urban Populations
ya-yaac@ala.org
YALSA Young Adult Advisory Councils
yalsa-lockdown@ala.org
Discuss issues unique to librarians working with incarcerated youth
yalsaintellectualfreedom-ig@ala.org
YALSA Intellectual Freedom Interest Group
publib@webjunction.org
Discussion list for public librarians

Finding those who aren't reaching out to this population will be a natural outcome of contacting specific library systems and sending out an email to these e-lists, since anyone who says they aren't doing such outreach will automatically qualify. An emphasis will be placed on contacting public librarians in large urban areas with a significant homeless youth population, such as San Francisco, New York City, Boston, Los Angeles, San Diego, Portland (Oregon) and Seattle. No incentives will be used.
In addition, interviews with professionals who also engage with this population, such as shelter directors, researchers and staff at LGBTQ centers, will be conducted when the information collected can inform the primary librarian interviews. To gain access to these adults, emails and telephone calls to the appropriate agencies will be used initially, as well as names obtained from reading articles and attending conferences and programs that center on this topic. This will be followed by using the snowball technique once some names are obtained. It is anticipated that 20-25 participants will be interviewed.
(Please see Appendix I, sample recruitment statements).

IV. METHODS AND PROCEDURES
When at all possible, the researcher will meet with each participant individually for a period of approximately one to two hours. During the interview, the researcher will ask open-ended questions about the participant's experiences with youth homelessness in general and LGBTQ youth homelessness in particular. The questions will be asked to gain insight into the motivation and reasons for providing or not providing outreach and targeted services to this population, as well as the perceived barriers to doing so. (Please see Appendix II, sample interview questions). Because of the length of the interview and in an effort to record the participant's answers as accurately as possible, with permission from the participant, the interview will be tape-recorded. If no permission is granted, detailed notes will be taken. The tape recorder will be placed on the table during the interview in plain sight. The researcher will ask orally for consent before turning on the tape recorder and will record the consent itself.
If, due to geographic constraints, the researcher is unable to meet with the participant in person, a telephone interview will be conducted. Prior to the conversation, the researcher will email or mail a copy of the informed consent form to be signed by the participant and will ask that it be mailed back. Once the researcher has the signed consent form, a telephone interview will scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time and date. If possible, the researcher will tape record the interview and will use the same confidentiality protections as with the face-to-face

interviews. If not, extensive notes will be taken during the interview and no identifiers will be placed on the notes themselves.

The data will be analyzed and interpreted by looking for themes in the answers within each participant's interview as well as among the interviews. The themes will be interpreted as possible indicators of common concerns, ideas and thoughts about LGBTQ youth homelessness and public libraries. Face-to-face interviews will be conducted at a mutually convenient time and location. These interviews will take place in private.

V. SPECIFIC RISKS AND PROTECTION MEASURES

Anonymity is not possible for the participants since the meetings will be face-to-face or since the interviewer knows the participant's name. Otherwise, the other greatest potential risk for this study is the risk of breach of confidentiality. To protect the confidentiality of the participants, the tape recordings will be transcribed by one of the co-investigators. If an outside transcriber is used, he or she will sign a confidentiality agreement (Please see Appendix III, transcriber agreement). During transcription, any identifiers will be removed and a pseudonym will be chosen for the interviewee. The co-investigators will be the only ones to have access to these materials. The digital recordings will be stored on Julie Winkelstein's personal password-protected computer and the original recordings on the digital tape recorder will be erased. The recordings will be transcribed as quickly as possible and only the co-investigators will have access to them. The transcriptions and notes will be kept separately and securely from any identifiers. Since this data contributes to the research for Julie Winkelstein's dissertation, the digital recordings will be erased from the computer at the completion of the dissertation.

VI. BENEFITS

The benefits to the participants will be part of a greater benefit to public librarians who may or may not reach out to homeless LGBTQ youth. It is hoped this research will inform public librarians as to the needs of this group, as well as the ways this group does use public libraries, and possible barriers that prevent them from doing so.

VII. METHODS FOR OBTAINING "INFORMED CONSENT" FROM PARTICIPANTS

A written consent form will be used to obtain informed consent for participation in the interview. The consent form will be read aloud and the participant will be asked to sign the form to indicate his or her understanding of the risks and benefits of participating in this research. The consent form will also include a separate signature line to acknowledge the participant's willingness to be tape-recorded. The participant will receive a copy of the consent form. The signed consent forms will be kept in a locked drawer in the main School of Information Sciences office and will be kept separately from the transcriptions and notes. The School of Information Sciences office address is: School of Information Sciences, University of Tennessee, 451 Communications Building, 1345 Circle Park Drive, Suite 451, Knoxville TN, 37996-0341.

Only the co-investigators will have access to the informed consent forms. After 3 years, the informed consent forms will be destroyed. The participants will be advised that the interview is voluntary, that they may decline to participate without penalty, and that they may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty and that if they withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, their data will be returned to them or destroyed.

VIII. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE INVESTIGATORS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Both investigators have participated in research in the past and have presented at national conferences. In addition, both investigators have a background in public libraries.

IX. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT TO BE USED IN THE RESEARCH

Each face-to-face interview will take place at a mutually agreed upon private location. A tape recorder will be used to tape-record the session.

X. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRINCIPAL/CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S)

The following information must be entered verbatim into this section:

By compliance with the policies established by the Institutional Review Board of The University of Tennessee the principal investigator(s) subscribe to the principles stated in "The Belmont Report" and standards of professional ethics in all research, development, and related activities involving human subjects under the auspices of The University of Tennessee. The principal investigator(s) further agree that:

1. **Approval will be obtained from the Institutional Review Board prior to instituting any change in this research project.**

2. **Development of any unexpected risks will be immediately reported to Research Compliance Services.**

3. **An annual review and progress report (Form R) will be completed and submitted when requested by the Institutional Review Board.**

4. **Signed informed consent documents will be kept for the duration of the project and for at least three years thereafter at a location approved by the Institutional Review Board.**

XI. SIGNATURES

ALL SIGNATURES MUST BE ORIGINAL. The Principal Investigator should keep the original copy of the Form B and submit a copy with original signatures for review. Type the name of each individual above the appropriate signature line. Add signature lines for all Co-Principal Investigators, collaborating and student investigators, faculty advisor(s), department head of the Principal Investigator, and the Chair of the Departmental Review Committee. The following information should be typed verbatim, with added categories where needed:

Co-Principal Investigator:

Julie Ann Winkelstein

Signature: _____Date: _____

Co-Principal Investigator:

Edwin-Michael Cortez

Signature: _____Date: _____

XII. DEPARTMENT REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The application described above has been reviewed by the IRB departmental review committee and has been approved. The DRC further recommends that this application be reviewed as:

[ ] Expedited Review -- Category(s): _____

OR

[ ] Full IRB Review

Chair, DRC: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Department Head: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Protocol sent to Research Compliance Services for final approval on (Date) : _____

Approved:
Research Compliance Services
Office of Research
1534 White Avenue

Signature: _____ Date: _____

For additional information on Form B, contact the Office of Research Compliance Officer or by phone at (865) 974-3466.

Appendix D - IRB 2

FORM B APPLICATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

Application for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects

I. IDENTIFICATION OF PROJECT

1. Co-Principal Investigator:
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Knoxville TN 37996-0332

Department: School of Information Sciences

2. Project Classification: *Enter one of the following terms as appropriate:* **Dissertation, Thesis, Class Project, Research Project**, or **Other** (Please specify)
Pilot project and dissertation

3. Title of Project:
Social work or social responsibility? Public libraries and homeless LGBTQ youth: Homeless Youth

4. Starting Date:
Upon IRB approval

5. Estimated Completion Date:
August 1, 2012

6. External Funding *(if any):* **N/A**

II. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objective of this research is to gain insight into the daily and life information needs of homeless lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) youth, as those

needs relate to public libraries. It is necessary to hear the voices of these youth so their stories can inform this research, which looks at the role of public libraries in the lives of homeless LGBTQ youth.

III. DESCRIPTION AND SOURCE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The primary participants in this research are homeless LGBTQ youth. For the purpose of this research and based on the available literature, unaccompanied homeless youth will be defined as youth ages 12 to 24 with no familial support or permanent residency. A convenience sample will be used, comprised of youth who frequent programs and shelters designed particularly for homeless youth in general, and homeless LGBTQ youth specifically. Julie Winkelstein will be interviewing shelter administrators and public young adult services librarians as part of this research and she will ask these administrators if there are any youth who may be interested in being interviewed for this research. A snowball technique will follow the initial contact, by asking participants to recommend other homeless LGBTQ youth who may be interested in being interviewed. The meetings will take place at a location that is considered by the youth to be secure, comfortable and convenient. In recruiting, it will be made clear to the participants that the research is about LGBTQ homeless youth; the researcher will reinforce this both in the informed consent and orally.

IV. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The researcher will meet with each participant individually for a period of approximately one to two hours. During the interview, the researcher will ask open-ended questions about the participant's personal experiences with homelessness. The questions will be asked to gain insight into the lives of these young people and how public libraries could be of help in their lives (Please see Appendix I, interview questions). Because of the length of the interview and in an effort to record the participant's answers as accurately as possible, with permission from the participant, the interview will be tape-recorded. If no permission is granted, detailed notes will be taken. The tape recorder will be placed on the table during the interview in plain sight. The researcher will ask orally for consent before turning on the tape recorder and will record the consent itself.

A $10 gift card for a local coffee shop, such as Starbucks, will be offered as an incentive to each participant.

The data will be analyzed and interpreted by looking for themes in the answers within each participant's interview as well as among the interviews. The themes will be interpreted as possible indicators of common concerns, challenges and needs for homeless LGBTQ youth. The interviews will be conducted at a mutually convenient time and location, chosen by the participant.

V. SPECIFIC RISKS AND PROTECTION MEASURES

Anonymity is not possible for the participants since the meetings will be face-to-face. Otherwise, the other greatest potential risk for this study is the risk of breach of confidentiality. To protect the confidentiality of the participants, the tape recordings will be transcribed by one of the co-investigators. If an outside transcriber is used, he or she will sign a confidentiality agreement (Please see Appendix II, transcriber agreement). During transcription, any identifiers will be removed and a pseudonym will be chosen for the interviewee. The co-investigators will be the only ones to have access to these materials. The digital recordings will be stored on Julie Winkelstein's personal password-protected computer and the original recordings on the digital

tape recorder will be erased. The recordings will be transcribed as quickly as possible and only the co-investigators will have access to them. The transcriptions and notes will be kept separately and securely from any identifiers. Since this data contributes to the research for Julie Winkelstein's dissertation, the digital recordings will be erased from the computer at the completion of the dissertation.

Because homeless youth are an at-risk group, a list of pertinent resources will be given to each participant at the close of the interview. This list will include local agencies that are available for homeless youth, as well as the contact information for national agencies that provide needed resources, both physical and psychological, for youth who are experiencing homelessness. (Please see Appendix III, resource list).

VI. BENEFITS

The benefits to the participants will be the ability to talk about their lives in a way that may enable public libraries to play an active and positive role. It is hoped this research will inform public librarians as to the needs of this group, as well as the ways this group does use public libraries, and possible barriers that prevent them from doing so.

VII. METHODS FOR OBTAINING "INFORMED CONSENT" FROM PARTICIPANTS

The researchers request that obtaining parental permission be waived because these youth are not in contact with their parents or legal guardians - they are homeless and do not have a consistent place to live or adults to care for them. A written consent form will be used to obtain informed consent from the participants for participation in the interview. (Please see Appendix IV: Informed Consent). The consent form will be read aloud and the participant will be asked to sign the form to indicate his or her understanding of the risks and benefits of participating in this research. The consent form will also include a separate signature line to acknowledge the participant's willingness to be tape-recorded. The participant will receive a copy of the consent form. The signed consent forms will be kept in a locked drawer in the main School of Information Sciences office and will be kept separately from the transcriptions and notes. The School of Information Sciences office address is: School of Information Sciences, University of Tennessee, 451 Communications Building, 1345 Circle Park Drive, Suite 451, Knoxville TN, 37996-0341.

Only the co-investigators will have access to the informed consent forms. After 3 years, the informed consent forms will be destroyed. The participants will be advised that the interview is voluntary, that they may decline to participate without penalty, and that they may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty and that if they withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, their data will be returned to them or destroyed.

VIII. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE INVESTIGATORS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Both investigators have participated in research in the past and have presented at national conferences. In addition, both investigators have a background in public libraries.

IX. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT TO BE USED IN THE RESEARCH

Each face-to-face interview will take place at a mutually agreed upon private location. A tape recorder will be used to tape-record the session.

X. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRINCIPAL/CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S)

The following information must be entered verbatim into this section:

By compliance with the policies established by the Institutional Review Board of The University of Tennessee the principal investigator(s) subscribe to the principles stated in "The Belmont Report" and standards of professional ethics in all research, development, and related activities involving human subjects under the auspices of The University of Tennessee. The principal investigator(s) further agree that:

1. **Approval will be obtained from the Institutional Review Board prior to instituting any change in this research project.**

2. **Development of any unexpected risks will be immediately reported to Research Compliance Services.**

3. **An annual review and progress report (Form R) will be completed and submitted when requested by the Institutional Review Board.**

4. **Signed informed consent documents will be kept for the duration of the project and for at least three years thereafter at a location approved by the Institutional Review Board.**

XI. SIGNATURES

ALL SIGNATURES MUST BE ORIGINAL. The Principal Investigator should keep the original copy of the Form B and submit a copy with original signatures for review. Type the name of each individual above the appropriate signature line. Add signature lines for all Co-Principal Investigators, collaborating and student investigators, faculty advisor(s), department head of the Principal Investigator, and the Chair of the Departmental Review Committee. The following information should be typed verbatim, with added categories where needed:

Co-Principal Investigator:

Julie Ann Winkelstein

Signature: _____Date: _____

Co-Principal Investigator:

Edwin-Michael Cortez

Signature: _____Date: _____

XII. DEPARTMENT REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The application described above has been reviewed by the IRB departmental review committee and has been approved. The DRC further recommends that this application be reviewed as:

[ ] Expedited Review -- Category(s): _____

OR

[ ] Full IRB Review

Chair, DRC: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Department Head: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Protocol sent to Research Compliance Services for final approval on (Date) : _____

Approved:
Research Compliance Services
Office of Research
1534 White Avenue

Signature: _____ Date: _____

For additional information on Form B, contact the Office of Research Compliance Officer or by phone at (865) 974-3466.

Appendix E - Informed Consents

Homeless Youth

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

The Role of the Public Library in the Lives of Homeless LGBTQ Youth

You are invited to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to gain insight into the experiences of homeless lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) youth and gather suggestions and thoughts about the public library's role in providing targeted services, programs and materials for this group. It is the hope of the investigators that the information gathered during this interview will expand on the body of knowledge that currently exists on this topic.

During this interview, you will be asked questions about your life as a young LGBTQ person who has experienced or is experiencing homelessness. With your permission, the conversation will be tape-recorded. You have the right to refuse to be tape-recorded. The tape recorder will be in view at all times. The interview will take from one to two hours. The study itself will last for about one (1) year.

RISKS

The greatest risk to you is the breach of confidentiality. To minimize this risk, the recordings, the transcriptions and any notes will be stored securely and will only be available to the investigators unless you give your permission in writing to do otherwise. To protect your confidentiality, no identifiers will be kept with this material and no reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the study.

The recording will be stored on a password-protected computer.

BENEFITS

It is hoped this research will inform public librarians as to the needs of homeless LGBTQ youth, such as yourself, as well as the ways they do use public libraries, and possible barriers that prevent them from doing so.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study) you may contact the researchers, Julie Ann Winkelstein, School of Information Sciences, 1345 Circle Park Drive, Knoxville TN 37996-0332 and (510) 847.9932, or Edwin Cortez, School of Information Sciences, 1345 Circle Park Drive, Knoxville TN 37996-0332 and (865) 974.2148. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Office of Research Compliance Officer at (865) 974-3466.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this interview is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the interview at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled; you will still receive a $10 gift card. If you withdraw from the interview before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT TO BE TAPE-RECORDED

I agree to have my participation in this interview tape-recorded.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

CONSENT

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

Librarians, library social workers, service providers, volunteer

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

The Role of the Public Library in the Lives of Homeless LGBTQ Youth

You are invited to participate in this interview. Participants must be age 18 or older. The purpose of this interview is to gain insight into the thoughts and attitudes of public librarians about the public library's role in providing targeted services, programs and materials to homeless lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) youth. It is the hope of the investigators that the information gathered during this interview will expand on the body of knowledge that currently exists on this topic.

During this interview, you will be asked questions about your thoughts, ideas and experiences in serving this population. With your permission, the conversation will be tape-recorded. You have the right to refuse to be tape-recorded. The tape recorder will be in view at all times. The recordings, the transcriptions and any notes will be stored securely and will only be available to the investigators unless you give your permission in writing to do otherwise. To protect your confidentiality, no identifiers will be kept with this material and no reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the study.

The interview will take from one to two hours. The study itself will last for about one (1) year.

RISKS

There are no anticipated risks to your participation.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study) you may contact the researchers, Julie Ann Winkelstein, School of Information Sciences, 1345 Circle Park Drive, Knoxville TN 37996-0332 and (510) 847.9932, or Edwin Cortez, School of Information Sciences, 1345 Circle Park Drive, Knoxville TN 37996-0332 and (865) 974.2148. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Office of Research Compliance Officer at (865) 974-3466.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this interview is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the interview at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the interview before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT TO BE TAPE-RECORDED

I agree to have my participation in this interview tape-recorded.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

CONSENT

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix F - Homeless Youth Resource List

National Online resources

***National Runaway Switchboard**

http://www.1800runaway.org/

The National Runaway Switchboard operates 1.800.RUNAWAY, a confidential and anonymous crisis hotline for runaway and homeless youth available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Services include crisis intervention, referrals to local resources (i.e. alternative housing, basic center/shelter services, counseling, alcohol/drug treatment, and child protective services), and education and prevention services to youth, families and community members. Through a partnership with Greyhound Lines, Inc., NRS runs the Home Free program, a youth-initiated program family reunification that provides a free bus ticket home. Call 1.800.RUNAWAY (1.800.786.2929) for help.

***The Trevor Project**

http://www.thetrevorproject.org/home1.aspx

The Trevor Project operates the only nationwide, around-the-clock suicide prevention helpline for gay and questioning youth. The website offers suicide resources as well as local resources information for every community.

The Trevor helpline number is 866.488.7386. For more information on The Trevor Project, please call 310.271.8845.

GLSEN

http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/home/index.html

GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students. Established in 1990, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. GLSEN seeks to develop school climates where difference is valued for the positive contribution it makes to creating a more vibrant and diverse community.

National Resource list from the Ali Forney Center in New York City. (The Ali Forney Center provides housing and resources for homeless LGBT youth.)

http://www.aliforneycenter.org/resources.html#fullbibliography

Includes national and state-by-state listings.

National Coalition for the Homeless

http://www.nationalhomeless.org/need_help/index.html

"If You're Homeless or Need Help" - list of resources that can be used nationally.

Homeless Shelter Directory: Shelters

http://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org/

As of June 2011, there were 2943 shelters listed. Includes clickable map for finding nearby shelters.

Homeless Shelter Directory: List of soup kitchens, food pantries and food banks.

http://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org/foodbanks/index.html

Includes clickable U.S. map to find food locally.

National Alliance to End Homelessness

http://www.endhomelessness.org/

National organization dedicated to reducing or eliminating homelessness.

National Network for Youth

http://www.nn4youth.org/

The National Network For Youth is working to create a community of agencies, people and resources to champion the needs of homeless and runaway youth, to ensure that opportunities for growth and development be available to youth everywhere.

National Gay & Lesbian Taskforce

http://www.thetaskforce.org/

The mission of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is to build the grassroots power of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. The NGLTF does this by training activists, equipping state and local organizations with the skills needed to organize broad-based campaigns to defeat anti-LGBT referenda and advance pro-LGBT legislation, and building the organizational capacity of the movement. The NGLTF has a Youth Section on the website that offers news updates and press releases as well as training information.

For more information, please contact the NGLTF at 202.393.2241.

State-by-state resources

California

San Diego Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Community Center (San Diego)

http://www.thecentersd.org/

Youth Housing Project

Phone: 619.692.2077

Fax: 619.260.3092

The Youth Housing project provides 23 units of affordable, supportive housing for youth between 18-24 years of age, with a special focus on LGBTQ+ youth who are currently transitioning out of foster care and/or group homes, or living in the streets.

My Friend's Place (Los Angeles)

http://myfriendsplace.org/whoweare.html

Phone: 1.888.YOUTH.50

My Friend's Place provides a safe haven and health, education and counseling services for homeless youth.

Larkin Street Youth Services (San Francisco)

http://www.larkinstreetyouth.org/

Phone: 415.673.0911

Fax: 415.749.3838

Larkin Street Youth Services is the only organization providing the full spectrum of services needed to help San Francisco's most vulnerable youth move beyond life on the street. They offer a range of housing options - from emergency shelter to permanent supportive housing - in addition to essential wraparound services including education, technology and employment training; healthcare, including mental health, substance abuse and HIV services; and case management.

The Ark of Refuge (San Francisco)

http://www.arkofrefuge.org/

Young Adult Homeless Programs

Phone: 415.861.6566

Fax: 415.861.6103

The goal of the Ark House is to assist homeless LGBTQQ young adults with stabilizing their lives and establishing greater health and independence through a clean, safe and supportive congregate living environment, on-site counseling, and referrals to a network of supportive services.

San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center

http://www.sfcenter.org

Phone: 415.865.5555

Address: 1800 Market Street (at Octavia)

San Francisco, CA 94102

The mission of the San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Community Center is to connect the diverse community to opportunities, resources and each other to achieve our vision of a stronger, healthier, and more equitable world for LGBT people and our allies. Offers Tuesday night free meals, which include presentations by various agencies dealing with various issues, such as health, jobs, education and homelessness.

LYRIC (Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center)

http://lyric.org

Phone: 415.703.6150

Fax: 415.703.6163

Email: lyricinfo@lyric.org

Address: 127 Collingwood Street

San Francisco, CA 94114 (one block west of Castro, between 18th and 19th Streets)

LYRIC's mission is to build community and inspire positive social change through education enhancement, career trainings, health promotion, and leadership development with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQQ) youth, their families, and allies of all races, classes, genders, and abilities.

Dimensions Clinic

http://www.dimensionsclinic.org

Phone: 415.934.7757

Fax: 415.838.8221

Address: 3850 17th Street (between Noe and Sanchez)

San Francisco, CA 94114

Dimensions is an open and friendly place to get support in being healthy. They offer low-cost health services for queer, transgender and questioning youth ages 12 to 25. With a staff made up

of medical and mental health professionals, they can answer just about any question you might have, including things you might be too embarrassed to ask anyone else.

Appendix G - Interview Guides

Homeless Youth

1. Tell me about yourself - how you identify.

   Prompt: How would you describe yourself? There seem to be a lot terms for sexual orientation, identity, homelessness. Tell me about a good experience you've had with these terms. A bad experience? If I were to describe you to someone else, how would you prefer I identify you?

   Prompt: What do you think of the terms LGBTQ or queer? Is there one that you are more comfortable using or you prefer?

   Prompt: What's the hardest thing you've had to deal with as an LGBTQ youth? How did you deal with it?

   Prompt: Tell me about your coming out experience. Where did you go for information?
2. Tell me a little about your life up to now. How did you become homeless? How long have you been homeless?
3. What kind of resources do you look for? Tell me about a time you found a great resource. Tell me about a time you had a frustrating experience looking for a resource.
4. Networks: How do you find out about resources you need? Do you talk to other youth at JYS or other places? Adults?
5. Homelessness:

   Prompt: What term do you use to describe your housing state? Do you use the term homeless or another term? What do you think of the term at-risk?

   Prompt: How long have you been homeless? Can you tell me about how you came to be homeless? Where are you from originally? Why this City?

   Prompt: Do you think you are treated differently because you are homeless? Tell me more about that.

   Prompt: Tell me about a great day. What made it good?

   Prompt: Tell me about a hard day. What made it hard?

   Prompt: What's the hardest thing you had to deal with as a homeless person?

Prompt: What does the term “safe space” mean to you?

Prompt: Where do you feel welcome?

6. Juniper Youth Services

Prompt: Tell me about a great experience at JYS. What made it great?

Prompt: Tell me about a difficult experience at JYS. What made it difficult?

7. Tell me about an experience where someone really helped you. What happened?

8. Tell me about an experience where someone made your life harder. What happened?

9. Tell me about your experiences with public libraries

Prompt: What does the word library mean to you? Librarian?

Prompt: How did you first hear about libraries?

Prompt: What do you do in the Library?

Prompt: Tell me about your best day in the Library.

Prompt: Tell me about your worst day in the Library.

Prompt: Did you ever go to the Library and come out with some new ideas? How did that happen?

Prompt: Do you talk to your friends about the Library? If so, what do you tell them?

Prompt: Have you ever been to the Library and been unable to get what you need? What was it? What did you do?

Prompt: Tell me about a great interaction you’ve had with a librarian. Tell me about a difficult interaction you had with a librarian.

Prompt: Do you have a Library card? If so, what was it like getting it? If not, why not?

10. Do you feel a part of something larger?

11. Tell me about what family means to you.

12. Librarians are trying to serve their communities based on what they know about their communities. They ask questions, try to fill the needs they’re aware of. What would you like the librarians to know about you so they could have resources that meet your needs?

13. If you were invited to a library conference to speak to librarians, what would you tell them about their libraries? What would you want them to know about you?

14. Why did you agree to be interviewed today?

15. Any other comments you’d like to add?

Public Librarians

1. Tell me about yourself.

    Prompt: How long have you been a librarian?

    Prompt: What made you decide to become a public librarian?

    Prompt: Describe how it has been so far.

2. Tell me about your job.

    Prompt: What are your daily responsibilities?

    Prompt: Tell me about your involvement with collection development, programming and outreach.

    Prompt: Tell me about your work with teens.

    Prompt: What do you love about your job? What is challenging about your job?

3. Tell me about your organization - what do you think of as the mission of your work?

    Prompt: How do you decide what's important for your library to do? What motivates you to choose particular goals, topics or programs?

4. What does the word outreach mean to you? How would you define it?

5. How do you describe yourself - as a youth worker or a librarian who works with youth or neither? Which part of your job dominates?

6. What barriers do you think exist for people who want information from the Library?

7. Tell me about any agencies near your Library that serve youth.

8. Can you tell me what you know about homelessness? Tell me how you came to know this.

9. Do you provide programs for teens that are grappling with issues, like coming out? If so, could you tell me about one? If not, why not?

10. Describe what you have done to serve youth who identify as LGBTQ. Tell me about your experiences with LGBTQ youth inside or outside the library setting. How has working in this job affected you or added to your experiences?

11. Could you please tell me how you define Library service? And how would you say that is different from social services?

12. How do you show results?

13. How would you define a safe space? How would you create one? Is that something you think about?

14. Who enforces the Library policies at your Library?

15. What can you tell me about the librarian stereotype? Do you think this stereotype interferes with the work libraries are trying to do?

16. What do you think of when you hear the word "homeless." Is there a stereotype that comes to your mind? How about LGBTQ?

17. Do you have any thoughts on what homeless youth might need in their lives and how libraries could meet those needs?

18. How is your Library doing financially? What services are impacted when there are cuts? Who decides? Which positions have priority?

19. What does the term "teen-friendly" mean to you? Would you describe your library as teen-friendly? Why or why not? Is this important to you?

20. What does "high need" mean to you?

21. Describe some barriers you think some people encounter in accessing the Library and its resources.

22. How do you identify non-users? And how do you reach out to them?

Prompt: How does it feel to not be able to meet the needs of a particular group?

23. Describe some of the networking you do to expand your library services.

24. What do you think of when you hear the term "disconnected youth"?

25. How do you feel about engaging teens who are just hanging out at the Library?

26. How do you want people to feel when they come into your Library and how do you try to encourage/create, foster that feeling?

27. Tell me about ways you create safe spaces in your Library.

28. What kind of information do you need to do your job?

29. Tell me about some of the barriers you encounter in doing your work.

Prompt: How do you try to overcome these?

30. What do you see as the role of the public library in a community?

31. Please describe any experiences you've had or information you've received about youth homelessness.

Prompt: Please describe the ways in which you think this topic relates to public libraries.

32. What kinds of trainings are you able to attend? Which ones have you attended? Who decides which ones are available and which ones you may attend? Which ones have made an impression on you and why? [Prompt: First-person accounts vs reports]

33. Who makes the library cards for school visits or any outreach you do? Who verifies addresses?

34. What do you see as the barriers to providing services to this population?

35. If you were invited to talk to a group of service providers for homeless youth, what would you want them to know about your Library?

36. Anything you'd like to add?

Library Administrators

1. Tell me about your Library.
2. Tell me about your job.
    Prompt: Which part of your job dominates?
    Prompt: What kind of information do you need to do your job?
    Prompt: How do you see the mission of your work?
    Prompt: Are you actively guided by your library's mission statement?
    Prompt: How do you set your daily goals?
3. What do libraries mean to you?
4. Tell me about what determines your service priorities. Who decides which programs you'll have at your library?
5. What do you see as the role of the public library in your community?
6. Could you please tell me how you define Library service? And how would you say that is different from social services?
7. Do you think there are people in your community your Library isn't serving? How do you reach out to them?
    Prompt: Describe some barriers you think some people encounter in accessing the Library and its resources.
    Prompt: How do you think people hear about the Library and what it has to offer?
8. How do you define outreach? Does your Library do outreach?
9. Do you work with other agencies? If so, how do you find them? Describe some of the networking you do to expand your Library services.
10. Does your Library offer staff trainings? If so, what are examples of these?
11. How do you want people to feel when they come into your Library and how do you try to encourage/create, foster that feeling?
    Prompt: Have you ever heard the term "safe space"?
12. Tell me about some of the barriers you encounter in doing your work.
    Prompt: How do you try to overcome these?
13. Can you tell me what you know about homelessness? Tell me how you came to know this.
    Prompt: How does your Library deal with the issue of homelessness?

14. Please describe any programs or other services your Library has been involved in that particularly target homeless youth.

    Prompt: How did these efforts come about?

    Prompt: If there are none, what do you think about the public library's role in providing such efforts?

    Prompt: What role does the community play in the services you do or don't provide?

15. One homeless youth provider described the role of the library as a "bridge," pointing out that the resources are available but the youth may need help accessing them. Does this seem like something your Library could do?

16. What kinds of resources do you think might be needed for this population?

    Prompt: Do any of these seem like resources a public library could provide?

    Prompt: Would it be helpful to you to know more about what resources might be needed? [If yes, give examples of needed resources, based on recommendations from agencies serving this population]. What do you think about these examples?

17. What do you see as the barriers to providing services to this population?

18. If fines and fees are barriers for homeless youth, do you have any suggestions for ways around this barrier?

19. If you were doing a presentation to homeless youth and homeless youth providers, what would you want them to know about your Library?

20. What do you think of the librarian stereotype? Do you think the stereotype of libraries interferes with the work you're doing?

21. Is there anything else you could like to add?

Library Social Workers

1. Tell me about yourself - your background, how you came to be doing this job.

    Prompt: Did the Library offer any kind of training for you that gave you a background in libraries? If so, could you please tell me about it?

2. Describe your job.

    Prompt: What do you see as your primary goal? Do you think you accomplish that?

    Prompt: Give examples of daily interactions.

    Prompt: How do you identify people who may need your services?

3. Do you talk to other people doing similar work? Are there any people like this? Would that be helpful?

4. What are some of the challenges of doing your job? What barriers do you encounter in trying to do your work? What frustrates you about your job?

5. What are some of the rewards of doing your job? What makes you feel like you are accomplishing your goals?

6. How do you see your job as fitting in with the mission and goals of the Library?

7. Tell me about your experiences with people experiencing homelessness.

    Prompt: How did you learn about this population?

    Prompt: What are your experiences with this population?

        Prompt: From your experience, what would you say are some of their barriers to using to taking advantage of the Library's resources?

8. How do you think this population experiences the Library?

9. Do you think there's a librarian stereotype? A homeless stereotype? Do you think these stereotypes interfere with providing service to this population?

10. What changes would you like to see in how you are able to do your job?

11. Do you work with local agencies? If so, how do you find them? If not, is this something you think a library should be doing?

12. Do you provide resource lists? If so, where do you get the information? If not, is this something you think a library should be doing?

13. If you were giving a presentation about your job to homeless youth, what would you want them to know?

14. If you were giving a presentation to homeless service providers, what would you want them to know?
15. Have you heard the term “safe space”?
16. Anything you’d like to add?

Service Providers

1. Tell me about your work with LGBTQ homeless teens.

    Prompt: How long have you been doing this work?

    Prompt: What got you interested in this work?

    Prompt: Why do you do this work?

2. What ages do you serve? Why these ages?

3. What do you see as the mission/goal of your work?

4. Please describe the biggest needs for this population.

    Prompt: How do you know?

5. Please describe some of the barriers you encounter in trying to address these needs.

    Prompt: Do you think there's a stereotype that needs to be overcome? If so, what is that stereotype? What are suggestions you might have to overcoming that stereotype?

    Prompt: How do you try to overcome these barriers?

6. Where does your funding come from?

7. Tell me about the Agency rules for the youth who are served.

8. What do you think of when you think of public libraries? What was your first thought when you heard I'm looking at the connection between your work and public libraries?

    Prompt: What does the word "library" mean to you?

    Prompt: What have your experiences been in libraries?

    Prompt: Is there a stereotype of librarians or libraries that comes to mind? What is that stereotype? Do you think it serves as a barrier for these youth?

    Prompt: What do you see as the role of public libraries in the community?

9. What role do you think the public library could play in addressing some of the needs of these youth?

    Prompt: Would it help if I gave examples of ways libraries could be of help? [If yes, give examples].

10. If you have ever worked with public libraries on providing support or services to this group, please tell me about it.

    Prompt: Is this something you would like to see happen? If so, in what ways do you think your agency could work with the public library?

    Prompt: What suggestions do you have on how public libraries could reach out to this

population?

Prompt: Tell me about the public libraries in your area. Is there a public library near your agency?

11. Define outreach.
12. Describe safe space.
13. Is there anything you would like public librarians to know about this population or the work you do? Please describe.
14. Anything else you'd like to add?

Volunteers

1. Tell me a little about yourself.

    Prompt: What kind of work do you do?

2. Tell me about your volunteer work. What do you do?

    Prompt: How did you get interested in doing this work?

    Prompt: How did you hear about this opportunity?

    Prompt: What made you choose this Agency?

    Prompt: Is it what you expected? Why or why not?

    Prompt: What would you say is your goal in doing this work? That is, why are you doing it?

3. Describe some of the challenges of this work.

    Prompt: What skills do you need to do this work?

4. Describe some of the rewards of this work.

5. Tell me about what you've learned doing this work.

6. What do you see as the biggest needs for this group?

    Prompt: How do you think this Agency helps with those needs?

    Prompt: How do you think your volunteer work helps with those needs?

7. What do you think of when you think of libraries? That is, what is the stereotype?

8. What role do you think the public library could play in addressing some of these needs?

    Prompt: What could librarians do to connect with these youth?

    Prompt: What do you think are some of the limitations of librarians being involved in the lives of these youth?

9. What would you like public librarians to know about this population or the work you're doing?

10. If you have done similar volunteer work in the past, how does this work compare?

11. Are you aware of working with LGBTQ youth in your volunteer job?

    Prompt: If so, what have you noticed about these youth? Different needs? Different interactions?

12. How do the youth where you volunteer seem to get information?

13. Anything you'd like to add?

Appendix H - Behavior Guidelines/Rules

Library Behavior Guidelines

Purpose

The City Library ("Library") seeks to provide its users with a safe and pleasant library experience in an atmosphere conducive to study, reading and appropriate use of materials and services. So that all persons may enjoy the benefits of the Library, individuals visiting or using the Library's facilities or services ("users") must comply with the following Guidelines for Library Use.

To Ensure the Safety of All Users

Children under the age of 8 must be accompanied at all times by a parent, guardian, or other responsible person.

The City Librarian may restrict adult use of Children's areas in order to ensure the adequate protection of the Library facilities and of persons and property therein.

Shirts and shoes or other footwear are required.

Persons under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs are not allowed on Library property.

Smoking is not permitted inside Library facilities or within 10 feet of any door.

People, animals or property must not block aisles, doorways, stairways, elevators or ramps.

Large objects such as carts, bicycles and luggage may not be brought into Library facilities.

Personal property must be within sight of the owner.

Weapons of any kind are prohibited on Library property.

Animals, other than service animals assisting persons with disabilities, are not permitted inside

Library facilities or within 10 feet of any door.

Persons who remain at Library facilities after closing, and who need assistance to return home may be referred to the police in order to ensure their safety.

Roller skates, scooters, skateboards, bicycles, or other similar devices must not be used on Library property.

Sleeping or lying on the floor or furniture is prohibited.

Library entrance areas shall be used exclusively for entering and exiting the Library and as temporary waiting areas for Library users.

Possession/illegal use of or intent to sell drugs is prohibited.

Indecent exposure, including but not limited to having sex and/or exhibiting lewd and offensive nakedness is prohibited.

To Ensure Access to Library Services for All Users the Following are Prohibited

Eating or drinking, except in designated areas. Water bottles, covered beverage containers, and foodstuff must be kept out of sight.

Vandalizing or abusing Library materials, equipment, or facilities.

Soliciting money, donations or signatures.

Selling merchandise without prior permission from the City Librarian.

Media or commercial photography or filming, without prior permission from the City Librarian.

Unreasonable use of rest rooms, including laundering and bathing.

Blocking Library entrance areas or interfering with the free flow of pedestrian traffic in such areas.

Preventing others from claiming computer reservations or turns at Express computers either verbally or physically (i.e. sitting at the computer not logged in).

Manipulation of/bypassing SFPL computer systems or databases to override established limits.

Refusing to leave a computer after being suspended from computers or continuing to create a disturbance while using Library equipment.

Fraudulent use of another's Library card and/or number for any purpose, including to reserve or use computers.

Refusing to leave building and/or library computer during emergency evacuation.

Refusing to leave the building after being suspended.

Entering or attempting to enter a Library building while suspended (i.e. trespassing).

Any activity that unreasonably interferes with Library user or staff comfort, safety, use or quiet and peaceful enjoyment of the Library, including but not limited to:

Harassing or threatening Library users or staff.

Staring at, following, or photographing Library users or staff.

Strong, pervasive odors, including odors caused by perfume or cologne.

Making any loud or unreasonable noise or other disturbance, including disruptive use of personal communications or entertainment devices.

Persons who violate these Guidelines may receive a warning from the Library staff and/or an opportunity to cease the violation or leave the Library. Illegal activity, as well as any willful or repeated violations of these Guidelines or other posted Library regulations (e.g. computer use rules), may result in removal from the facility and/or suspension of Library privileges. In addition, where authorized by Federal, State or local law, violations of these Guidelines may also result in arrest. Library users who wish to request a reasonable modification of these Guidelines because of a disability or health problem may contact Library staff or may call the Library's Access Service Manager at xxx-xxx-xxx.

STATE LAW PERMITS LIBRARY STAFF TO SEARCH PURSES, BAGS, PARCELS, BRIEFCASES AND OTHER PACKAGES. IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE THEFT OF BOOKS AND LIBRARY MATERIALS, STATE LAW AUTHORIZES THE DETENTION FOR A REASONABLE PERIOD OF ANY PERSON USING THESE FACILITIES SUSPECTED OF COMMITTING "LIBRARY THEFT." (PENAL CODE SECTION 490.5)

Patron Conduct Policy: Guidelines for Library Use - Policy #201

Approved by Library Commission on August 7, 2001. Amended by Library Commission on August 16, 2007.

Stop-By Rules and Consequences

Note: Although this list was called "rules and consequences," there were actually no consequences listed.

Absolutely No:

- Offensive or disrespectful actions, symbols or language: this includes any transphobic, sexist, derogatory or violent attitudes towards any individual.
- Physical violence.
- Threats of violence.
- Stealing.
- Destruction of property.
- Cell phone use (including text messaging). Cell phones must be in your pockets at all times.
- Possession, use or selling of drugs or alcohol, including drug paraphernalia.
- Fire setting.
- Verbal abuse toward staff or clients.
- Sexual activity or advances towards staff or clients.
- Excessive public displays of affection.
- Loitering in front of drop-in. You must keep moving.
- Entering kitchen, basement, or any other designated staff only area without staff permission and accompaniment.
- More than one person at a time in the shower or bathroom.

Absolutely do:

- Check in weapons or anything that can be used as a weapon, needles at the front desk. Weapons will be returned, needles will be safely disposed of.
- No guns allowed.

We reserve the right to search your belongings if necessary.

- Dress appropriately: No gang colors and no revealing clothing.
- Remember front desk phone use is a privilege and is limited to 5 minutes and must be pre-approved by floor staff. It is solely for job searching, medical appointments, and speaking with family. Refer to case manager for all other calls.

- Use computer appropriately. No inappropriate images displaying sexual, violent, or substance use content.

BEYOND ALL ELSE, ALWAYS FOLLOW STAFF DIRECTIONS!

Vita

Julie Ann Winkelstein was born in Syracuse, New York, but spent most of her childhood in Livermore, California, where her father worked as a nuclear physicist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (known locally at that time as "The Rad Lab") and her mother acted in and directed plays. The environment of a small town - where the biggest event of the year was the annual rodeo parade down the main street - combined with the influx of male scientists and their wives had a lasting effect on her; it produced a feeling of never quite fitting in to either world. However, she enthusiastically embraced the cowboy aspect and until the age of 10, her daily attire was a cowboy shirt, jeans, cowboy boots and a pair of six-shooters (toy) strapped to her waist. She excelled in both math and English and decided early on that she would like to either be a medical doctor or a Supreme Court justice. Most of all, however, she could see that life was not fair and it was her job to somehow fix that. After seven years of off-and-on college, starting as a philosophy major and then with a change of majors on each re-entry (physics, Russian and dramatic arts), she graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, with a B.A. in dramatic arts. For the next many years, she ran a small business and then worked in public libraries. In 2003, she entered graduate school, graduating from San Jose State University with an MLIS in 2005. Her decision three years later to enter the PhD program in the College of Communication at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, was precipitated in part by her ongoing concern about social justice and the ways in which public libraries could play a more active role in making society a more humane, loving and equitable place to live. She hopes earning a doctorate in Information and Communication will help her make a difference.