

Book Review

LIS Interrupted: Intersections of Mental Health and Library Work

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Care ethics are ostensibly an underlying principle for library work: care for our patron communities is considered central to our purpose. But what about care for each other? Or care for ourselves? And who is doing the caring? *LIS Interrupted: Intersections of Mental Health and Library Work* asks, discusses, and finds answers to these questions by sharing stories of people in our field who live with mental health conditions, as well as broader analysis of LIS systems and culture. As the authors have found, LIS can be a nurturing place, but it is also exhausting and exclusionary. We library workers are usually tasked with emotional labor, yet lack of care for the people performing this invisible work is all too common and this absence of support creates further harm.

While each chapter is clearly and engagingly written, *LIS Interrupted* is not an easy collection to read. After all, this is a title focused on mental illness and the support (or lack thereof) for behavioral health in workplaces and classrooms of a field that professes inclusivity. This is a book of trauma, laid bare and often still bleeding on the page. The chapters are raw, their authors vulnerable; even the critical perspectives are deeply personal. The content warnings at the beginning of each chapter are appreciated. This said, it took me too long to write this review because I had to keep stepping away from the book to soothe myself after identifying with another stranger whose inner world's battles are painfully familiar. Yet while the ills of the world impact each story, every one contains hope.

Thanks to the openness of these authors, *LIS Interrupted* can guide administrators, teachers, and library workers who wish to create a more equitable environment for supporting behavioral health and self-care. This book speaks to the approach of using knowledge of and support for people living with mental illness as a principle of universal design: what we do to include others is important for everyone. It also interrogates the ethics of care, offering examples of what happens when workers are overburdened without support for their contributions. *LIS Interrupted* has implications for LIS research as well: personal narratives are invaluable, especially as our field increasingly employs autoethnographic methods. Through these perspectives, practitioners and researchers (not to mention practitioner-scholars) can find guidance from

people who are not afraid to share what they know and to begin creating structure in LIS to support mental health.

The courage of the contributors *LIS Interrupted* makes these impacts possible. Public disclosure of personal topics combats stigma and helps others address their own needs. Admitting a problem is the first step to creating a solution and this volume is a catalyst for improving our internal structures to support colleagues, students, and ourselves, especially as we deal with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on mental health.

LIS Interrupted is, at its heart, an invitation for people to feel less alone. As a person who lives with comorbid mental health conditions, this volume made me feel part of a community of honest, brave people whose open hearts have space for so many others, but who are not always able to extend that love to themselves. For anyone else who knows depression's black dog and anxiety's electric shock: this book is for us. And for people who want to be genuinely supportive of their mentally ill colleagues, friends, research participants, students, relatives, and patrons: this book is for you.