Public libraries and homelessness:

Connecting vulnerable patrons to community resources

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CONTENTS

Abstract

This thesis describes ethnographic and exploratory research conducted to learn more about ways in which public librarians work with vulnerable patrons, particularly homeless patrons, for the purpose of connecting library patrons with resources and services in the community. The literature on the intersection between librarians and social services is presented and discussed. The methodologies employed included semi-structured interviews with librarians and social workers, field observations, reflective research journaling, and autoethnographic (self-study) methods. The data analysis explores my interest in gaining an understanding of the information needs of patrons experiencing homelessness and the information needs of librarians to best serve such a vulnerable population. A significant outcome of this work is a pilot program involving one student intern from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Social Work Department conducting their internship with the Hawai'i State Public Library System (HSPLS). The efficacy of this internship program is a question for further research. Limitations of this study are discussed, and suggestions for future research are presented.

Keywords: compassion, homelessness, public librarians, reflective research, social work

A note on the terminology
Throughout this thesis I use the terms "houseless" or "houselessness" intentionally when discussing the lack of traditional shelter experienced by Native Hawaiians. Houseless/Houselessness is the preferred term of Native Hawaiians, because for many Native Hawaiians, the 'aina (the land) is their home; therefore they reject the term "homeless" (McDonnel, 2010; Watson, 2010; Ullman, 2017). While some Native Hawaiians may self-identify as "homeless," for many this term may be insulting or derogatory.

INTRODUCTION

Public libraries can be considered one of the last free public spaces available to homeless individuals. Library security won't ask you to leave unless you violate the library's rules. The librarian isn't going to ask you to show your receipt or identification or proof of address to prove you deserve to be there. Public libraries have long been regarded as safe havens (Cronin, 2001; Neri, 2015; Wong, 2009). While some worry that creating library programs or services to help the homeless will take away from the library's mission (Conan, 2007), I believe it is of vital importance that libraries implement policies and programs to help this vulnerable population.

Homeless citizens are an identified "vulnerable population" within American society due to the insecure nature of individuals and family groups not having a permanent address as a gateway for educational, medical, social, and economic services within mainstream social discourse (Strehlow & Amos-Jones, 1999). Often, homeless citizens seek assistance to navigate and/or improve their vulnerable status via library and information services provided at public libraries. Given that homelessness is often enacted in the public sphere (sleeping and personal care performed in public spaces), it follows that homeless citizens may seek shelter, education, social interaction, and other services (albeit temporary) within a portal that also exists within the public sphere. This public service entity is known within American society as, the public library.

Library and Information Science (LIS) research has been addressing public library services with the homeless population for many years (Redfern, 2002; Sarkodie-Mensah, 2002; Muggleton & Ruthven, 2012). However, to my knowledge, there does not exist any published, peer-reviewed, research studies on the particular issue of homelessness and public library services in Hawai'i. Due to the fact that homelessness is an ongoing societal issue in Hawai'i (Nagourney, 2016), research on the information needs of homeless patrons is vital and relevant

to the professional practices of public librarians and staff members of the Hawai'i State Public Library System (HSPLS).

In order to be culturally responsive to the unique needs of homeless library patrons in Hawai'i, we need to learn ways in which we can honor the specific information librarians and library staff may need in order to best service the information needs of homeless patrons who visit branch locations of the HSPLS. In order to identify possible solutions to best connect homeless patrons in need of information services or resources in the community, we need to understand the needs of librarians and library staff in terms of their perceptions and expectations with servicing homeless library patrons. Towards this end, I conducted a qualitative study of various branches of HSPLS libraries, some located in urban areas and others in more rural areas. To understand programs and services that are already working at other library systems in other states, I conducted qualitative research on these programs.

This research was conducted through semi-structured interviews with two library professionals, four paraprofessionals, and one library security guard. The goal was to discover the information needs of library workers on the island of O'ahu for engaging with homeless patrons, and how they are referring those patrons to appropriate and meaningful information services. I was interested in studying the intersection between what public library staff need to understand and know (their information needs) in order to fulfill the information needs of homeless patrons on the Hawaiian Island of O'ahu.

I also conducted semi-structured interviews with three social workers and one librarian at other branches in the country to understand what possible solutions to help homeless patrons are already being implemented. My hypothesis was that public library staff on O'ahu may experience a need for further training in their professional practice in working with patrons

experiencing homelessness. Librarians and paraprofessionals may have trouble referring those patrons to appropriate services or resources in the community. While the participants may not be able to definitively identify who is housed and unhoused, I anticipated that the behaviors librarians and library staff would struggle with would be those indicative of mental illness or substance abuse, common among the chronically homeless (Dowd, 2018). I was hopeful that social workers and librarians who work in libraries that have paid or volunteer social workers might inform best practices that could be implemented here.

I expected that there also may be homeless patrons who are experiencing mental illness or drug addiction, and that librarians and library staff may need support around gaining appropriate information that might improve professional practices with connecting vulnerable individuals to needed resources. There may need to be mental health training provided to librarians and paraprofessionals to better serve these communities, such as training on how severe mental illness can affect someone, and how to best respond to behaviors of a person experiencing a mental health crisis.

While there are traditional social services that exist on Oʻahu to assist individuals experiencing homelessness alongside intersectional social issues that such individuals may be experiencing simultaneously (e.g. shelters, rehabilitation centers, etc.), HSPLS library staff may not be aware of these resources. Additionally, vulnerable patrons may also be reluctant to ask librarians or library staff for the help or information that they need. Case in point, one library I visited during my preliminary observations had a "homeless help" card issued by the state's Department of Human Services (DHS). However, when I visited the library branch another time soon after, all of the cards were already gone, which indicated to me that this information is

needed by patrons who visit this library, even if they do not approach librarians or library staff with questions regarding this information (Appendix III).

My preliminary field observations lead me to ask the following **overarching research question:** *What services or trainings would be most beneficial to public librarians on Oʻahu with connecting vulnerable patrons to needed resources?* I was interested in learning what librarians are currently doing, and what services and resources they are already aware of in the community, as well as what information they are missing, so that we can consider ways in which to bridge the informational gap for public library information services to the homeless population. Some additional research questions come to mind for consideration in framing this project:

- What are the reasons that vulnerable individuals visit the public library?

- What kinds of community resources do homeless patrons request?

- What are the information needs for these individuals?

- Are librarians already connecting vulnerable patrons to resources in the community?

- If so, what are the needs of the patrons that the librarians are helping to meet?

- Is it only homeless patrons that require the help of librarians with being connected to services or resources in the community, or are there other vulnerable patrons, or at-risk patrons who are most often being referred to services?

I was interested in identifying solutions for librarian professional practice, and while some of my research questions were included, some, I hope, will foster future research on this topic. Ultimately, I wanted to learn what approaches could be enacted to improve professional library services so that library staff feel empowered to assist homeless patrons, and homeless patrons feel supported by the library.

My research was also informed by the literature on what other branches in other states are implementing, from having a Social Worker or Nurse as a service provider in the library, to hosting community discussions and inviting individuals experiencing homelessness to participate (Africawala, 2015; Honisett, Short, & Schwab, 2019; Johnson, Mathewson & Pretchel, 2014; Luo, Estreicher, Lee, Thomas & Thomas, 2012). I learned of libraries implementing outreach programs to homeless shelters and creating programming to target homeless and at-risk youth (Giesler, 2017; Hill, 2016; Hines, 2015; Terrile, 2009). I was curious if any of these programs could be implemented in Hawaiʻi, or if the librarians here have their own unique ideas about how to help patrons experiencing homelessness or houselessness.

Hawaiʻi is unlike any other state, however. Native Hawaiians live on stolen land, and some houseless Hawaiians choose to live this way in defiance of Americanism, historically regarded as the colonizers and occupiers (Kelly, 2014). Native Hawaiians account for a disproportionate number among the homeless in Hawaiʻi (Lyons, 2011), even though this is their own land. Are libraries culturally sensitive to these issues? Do librarians and library staff create a supportive and welcoming space for Native Hawaiians, inclusive of those who are experiencing - or who are choosing- houselessness? These questions arose for me as I conducted my research, and I kept track of these questions throughout my process of keeping a reflective journal to consider ideas for future research.

Overall, I interviewed 11 participants through nine interviews. I interviewed one librarian, one library administrator, one library security guard, four paraprofessionals, one librarian on the mainland who works at a library where social workers also work, and three social workers who work at public libraries on the mainland. Throughout this project, I adapted to where the research led me. I also implemented reflective practice through journaling during

my observations at library branches, and throughout the process of the semi-structured interviews, from the varied responses from librarians and library staff when I asked them to participate in this project, to their changing reactions throughout the process. I wrote about my research method, what thoughts and reflections I had during and after the interview, and I did this to identify any potential bias I might have due to my background, both as a social worker and as a person who experienced homelessness. I also wrote to explore insights that I noticed during the interview, to further support identifying relevant themes. I also wrote in my research journal my reflections throughout the process of transcribing the interviews and coding the data for themes. I also considered the emotional impact this project was having on me, as I too, was once a homeless/houseless individual, and considered how my background was affecting my approach to the research methods I was employing and my interpretation of the data.

The most troubling aspect of this study I would like to acknowledge now: that it lacks the experiences and voices of those experiencing homelessness and houselessness. While this research is important and may provide insight into what is needed to help homeless and houseless patrons on Oʻahu, it would be impossible to implement best practices without future research that includes the voices of those experiencing homelessness and houselessness. I hope this study is a place from which such future studies can be built upon.

In what follows in this thesis, I will present the literature on homelessness and public libraries, as well as my methods and research design. I will discuss the data and my analysis of the themes which arose through the interviews. I will present the limitations of this study, as well as the implications for future research. Finally, I will discuss what value this study brings to the LIS field, and what changes I hope may be seen in Oʻahu public libraries that will help and empower vulnerable individuals and communities.

Motivation for this Project

I am interested in researching vulnerable patrons and public libraries because I was once a homeless youth. I was an abused child, and later a runaway and victim of commercial sexual exploitation. And while libraries did not literally save my life, nor prevent any of these traumatic experiences, they did provide a safe space for me in a time when there was no safe place in my world. Beyond that, libraries empowered me. While the librarians and staff, to my knowledge, did not know my situation, they treated me with compassion and respect. Libraries became my safe haven, and I was aided in my life by both public and academic libraries. Both provided me with the knowledge and sense of agency I needed to escape my situation and grow to become an educated and independent individual.

Without libraries and those who work within them, I would not be where I am today. I would most likely have never attended university, let alone earned a Master's of Social Work, nor would I currently be earning a second Master's in Library and Information Science. I would never have learned about the other possibilities for my life. No, libraries did not save me. But librarians and library staff did provide me with the tools and resources I needed to save myself.

I want to help the future of librarianship to become better informed about vulnerable patrons, and to understand the severity of trauma patrons may be experiencing or may have experienced in their past. It is my hope that librarians and library staff become better equipped to provide services to individuals in challenging circumstances, whether through in-house library services or partnerships with community resources. Librarians have the ability to empower their patrons to access resources and services in the community. Librarians have the ability to alter the course of a patron's life, for better or for worse. I'm interested in learning what best practices we could implement in our libraries to better help and empower vulnerable individuals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The connection between libraries and social services is not a new phenomenon. Librarians have implemented programs connecting vulnerable patrons to needed resources from, quite possibly, the beginning of libraries. While most of the earliest library literature on the topic refers to patrons who need help as "problems" (Chattoo, 2002; Redfern, 2002) that attitude is rapidly changing (Ferrell, 2010). Altering a librarian's perspective on vulnerable individuals may also be a step towards hope and towards empowering these patrons to access needed resources in the community.

Problematic View of the "Problem Patron"

Much of the early literature in the field of librarianship categorizes homeless people, and other vulnerable populations, as problems. For example, Redfern (2002) defines homeless patrons, mentally ill patrons, and other patrons who may need help accessing resources in the community as "problem patrons." Citing the research of McNeil & Johnson (1996) Redfern includes the homeless, mentally ill, older adults, and the deinstitutionalized into the definition of "problem patrons." Indeed, many libraries historically, and to this day have guidelines or policies in place for how to deal with "problem patrons" or "difficult patrons" (Ferrell, 2010; Grotophorst, 1979; Holt & Holt, 2005; Osa, 2002).

Defining a person as a problem is dehumanizing and creates a negative perception among professionals towards vulnerable patrons (Mars, 2013). To call homeless or mentally ill patrons "problems" does harm to these individuals by creating negative assumptions in staff and negative self-meaning in the individuals who are labeled (Davis, Kurzban, & Brekke, 2012; Kroska, Lee, & Carr, 2017; Ferrell, 2010). Calling a person a "problem" changes the way we perceive that

person; they are no longer an individual human, they become an object of dislike, something to at worst, get rid of, and at best, solve.

However, a change is happening in librarianship today: there is literature which calls into question this concept of the "problem patron" and criticizes those who use this language; literature which proposes alternative ways of approaching patrons who may be in need of services or resources outside of the library. Hersberger (2005) states that categorizing these library patrons as "problems" is outright discrimination. Budnick (2006) discusses that this language starts from a place of viewing people in a negative light. Continuing to call individuals "problems" will perpetuate that negative perception on the part of the one labeling them as such.

One study which gave voice to homeless library patrons by including them as participants, and researching their opinion of the library, found that these patrons do not think of themselves as "problem patrons" (Harvey, 2002). Patrons who are experiencing homelessness are information seekers and utilize the library for this purpose (Harvey, 2002; Hersberger, 2005; Kelleher, 2013). Housed or not, most patrons are at the library for the same reason: to make use of the information and services the library offers. This is why it is of vital importance that librarians discontinue the use of this language; we must treat all our patrons as human beings, not as problems.

In the case of Hawai'i, where a disproportionate number of Native Hawaiians are experiencing houselessness (Lyons, 2011), referring to people as "problem patrons" would be yet another way to marginalize and dismiss the Native population. The words we use influence the way we think and act. By continuing to use such a discriminatory and dehumanizing term, librarians are participating in the systems of oppression which create and perpetuate cycles of

poverty and homelessness. Using this language to refer to a vulnerable and oppressed population perpetuates injustice.

Homelessness Causes, Risk Factors, and Effects

There are many factors that contribute to homelessness. Individuals experiencing homelessness have been typologized as those who are chronically homeless, episodically homeless, and transitionally homeless (Dowd, 2018; Kuhn & Culhane, 1998; McCallister, Lennon & Kuang, 2011). The most visible causes of homelessness are mental illness and drug addiction; however this only accounts for a small percentage of the total number of individuals experiencing homelessness (Caton et. al, 2005; Dowd, 2018), with the highest estimate being 24% of all people who are homeless (Henry, Mahathey, Morrill, Robinson, Shivji, & Watt, R, 2018).

Caton et. al (2005) identifies substance addiction, mental illness, arrest history, and older age as risk factors for individuals to become chronically homeless. For women, domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness (Baker, Billhardt, Warren, Rollins, & Glass, 2010). Surviving a traumatic past is one factor that many people experiencing homelessness share. A history of child abuse, individuals who had unstable housing in childhood, and a history of traumatic experiences are also contributing factors to individuals becoming homeless as adults (Koegel, Melamid & Burman, 1995; Woodhall-Melnik, Dunn, Svenson, Patterson & Matheson, 2018). Traumatic experiences can increase children and young people's chance of becoming homeless, especially when compounded by other factors such as lack of familial and social capital, defined as having social support systems of family and friends (Barman-Adhikari, Bowen, Bender, Brown & Rice, 2016; Schmitz & Tyler, 2015). The experience of being homeless in and of itself is also traumatizing (Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991; Hsieh, 2017).

One possible cause for the increase in individuals who experience chronic homelessness is deinstitutionalization, or the closure of long-term mental health facilities. Deinstitutionalization has led to individuals with severe mental illness to, instead of being in a long-term care facility, experience arrests, be placed in and out of short-term psychiatric wards of hospitals, be placed in jail, experience homelessness, or all of the above (Lamb & Bachrach, 2001; Primeau, Bowers, Harrison, & XuXu, 2013; Yohanna, 2013). Libraries have even identified deinstitutionalization as being linked with an increase in their experience with serving patrons who are homeless and who have severe mental illness (Torrey, Esposito & Geller, 2009).

Again, while the chronically homeless are the most visible population, they represent the smallest percentage, less than a quarter of those experiencing homelessness (Caton et. al, 2005; Dowd, 2018; Henry, Mahathey, Morrill, Robinson, Shivji, & Watt, R, 2018). Many who are homeless are temporarily or episodically homeless, and there are also homeless families with small children. Children who are homeless are an especially vulnerable population. Children who experience homelessness are at higher risk of educational disadvantages and literacy challenges, as well as developmental and behavioral struggles (MacGillivray, Ardell & Curwen, 2010; Terrile, 2009; Walker-Dalhouse & Risko, 2008). Many libraries have implemented programs to help support children and families experiencing homelessness, such as outreach to children in homeless shelters with library staff meeting these families where they live (Dowd, 1996; Terrile, 2009). Children experiencing homelessness are in particular need of support, as the impacts of being homeless as a child can persist into adulthood.

Libraries Implementing Programs

Today, there are libraries which offer services and programs to support patrons who need access to more resources beyond library walls. This is not a new trend, in fact, one library

implemented a program connecting patrons with needed services in the community in the 1970s, called the "Public Information Center" which created ties with the Health and Welfare Council (Donohue, 1975). Some of the libraries of today have programming to help homeless teens, some have a social worker on staff, while some have social workers in the library as volunteers, and one library has a public health nurse on staff (Hill, 2016; Hines, 2015; Johnson, Mathewson, & Prechtel, 2014; Luo, Estreicher, Lee, Thomas, & Thomas, 2012). Public libraries across the country are meeting the needs of vulnerable patrons in innovative and unique ways.

There exists some LIS literature on vulnerable individuals accessing the libraries that indicate that individuals experiencing homelessness are the main patrons of concern or in need of help (Anderson, 2012; Giesler, 2017; Ruhlmann, 2014). However, this may only be the most visible or apparent patron in need of help. Patrons may be facing a variety of challenges that are connected to homelessness/houselessness and may be aided by resources that exist in the community. There are patrons who are victims of intimate partner violence (Benson, 2016; Westbrook, 2015), patrons who may be suffering from mental health disorders and illnesses, or experiencing suicidal thoughts (Boylan, 2010, & Throgmorton, 2017), and patrons who are victims of child abuse (Kysh, 2013). Beyond this, most of the literature regarding libraries helping homeless patrons discusses how to help homeless adults.

One article discusses the Social Workers in the Library program, or SWITL (Luo, Estreicher, Lee, Thomas & Thomas, 2012). This program was implemented in San José, California, in large part because of the Social Work Department at San Jose State University. Between 2007 and 2008, a needs assessment was conducted by social work graduate students to identify the areas of need for patrons of the public library. They identified a range of information needs: housing, hunger, literacy, legal issues, education, food and clothing support, crisis

support, employment, immigration, support groups, parenting, childcare, and domestic violence. In 2009, the Social Workers in the Library program was launched. Social Work students, as well as faculty, volunteer their time to provide social work services to patrons at the library. They provide information consultations and referrals to social service agencies and other resources. Staff at the library help coordinate appointments for patrons with the social workers. Between 2009 and 2011, it was found that most of the areas of need by patrons meeting with the social workers was in regard to housing needs, employment, and health. Many patrons also needed referrals to food resources and mental health services. Feedback on the program has been overwhelmingly positive.

Programs like Social Workers in the Library benefit not only the vulnerable individuals served, but the librarians and library staff, and the community as a whole by empowering librarians and library staff through mental health training to intervene with patrons, and by providing someone in person for patrons in need of services to speak with. Many libraries are implementing similar programs such as a full-time social worker in the library or a nurse in the library (Hill, 2016; Hines, 2015; Johnson, Mathewson, & Prechtel, 2014). Having social work students from the local university physically present at the library to provide services to library patrons would be a cost-effective solution for libraries which cannot afford to hire a full-time social worker. Social work students could also conduct a needs assessment, which would help the library identify the areas of need for their patrons; or they could provide mental health training to library staff to prepare librarians and staff for assisting homeless patrons. More and more libraries are creating partnerships with social service providers to meet the specific and unique needs of their vulnerable patrons.

Another partnership between the university and the library occurred in Pima County (Johnson, Mathewson, & Prechte, 2014). Initially, a partnership between the Health Department and the Pima County Public Library helped create the Library Nurse Program, where a Public Health Nurse would be employed to work forty hours divided among six library branches. The program has expanded since it was first launched, and now employs five public health nurses, and students from the University of Arizona complete their community health rotation in the library branches. While hiring a public health nurse may be outside of a library's budget, or not able to be funded by the Health Department in other cities where such a service may be needed, student interns and volunteers would be a cost-effective way to provide this service.

The research shows that many libraries have social service staff or volunteers physically available at the branch, and that there are also some library staff who leave the physical location of the library to reach out to vulnerable communities in the spaces they occupy. Hines (2015) discusses libraries which are meeting vulnerable individuals where they're at: in shelters. The Denver Public Library visits the day shelter and they provide seminars on interview skills as well as technology skills to low-income women. They also provide free bus passes to participants to access the library so they can register for library cards and learn about library resources. Queens Library in New York also does outreach to homeless shelters to promote the library and offer job search help at the library. While it may not be possible for libraries to conduct outreach with limited staff and funds, this service truly follows the values of equality, social justice, and access for the most vulnerable members of our communities.

Families with children make up a significant segment of those experiencing homelessness, and public libraries across the country have implemented programs to serve this population (Terrile, 2009). Some literature also addresses library services to homeless or at-risk

children and adolescents (Hill, 2016; Neri, 2015; Terrile, 2009). Charleston County Public Library partners with the Youth Development Center, and one library assistant visits the residential settings of this program to help with library card registration and run a book club (Terrile, 2009). In Ohio, the Akron-Summit County Public Library brings summer reading programs into shelters, and a library in Las Vegas provides homework help to homeless youth (Terrile, 2009).

Many libraries are partnering with services and resources that already exist in the communities they serve. Perhaps this is the future of best practice in public librarianship.

Homelessness in Hawai'i

Most people in America experience homelessness due to lack of affordable housing and lack of job opportunities which pay enough to afford the cost of living, and this holds true for Hawai'i as well. Hawai'i has a high number of individuals experiencing homelessness, and the highest rate per capita in the country (Nagourney, 2016). Homelessness is one of the main, and most notable social problems in Hawai'i (Gleason, Barile, & Baker, 2017). Also of high concern in Hawai'i is the lack of shelter for unaccompanied minor youth (Wagner, 2016). Lack of affordable housing is the number one cause for children experiencing homelessness in Hawaii (Meyer, 2015).

Runaway and homeless youth are at an extremely high risk for sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation (Chock, 2016; Flowers, 2011; Lloyd, 2011) and over 70% of homeless teens report having experienced physical and/or sexual abuse (Hill, 2016). Chock (2016) reports that Hawai'i has seen an increase in child sex trafficking, and that Native Hawaiian youth are especially vulnerable due to their social position of being a particularly marginalized and oppressed population. Teenagers who have experienced abuse are at a much

higher risk of committing suicide, and homeless and runaway youth are at a much higher risk of attempting or committing suicide (Yoder, Hoyt, & Whitbeck, 1998). Among homeless and runaway youth, LGBTQ youth are overrepresented, and this population and their unique needs must be understood to best provide services (Maccio & Ferguson, 2016).

Children's education is negatively impacted if they are homeless. Tanabe & Mobley (2011) discuss the *Kaleuati v. Tonda* ruling that found the Hawai'i State Department of Education to be in violation of the McKinney Act, an act which entitles homeless students to stay in the same school regardless of their changing shelter locations, and also requires the school system to provide homeless children with free transportation to and from school. Prior to that ruling, this was not happening in Hawai'i, and in addition there were delays in processing student enrollment. It is unclear at this point how much has changed since this ruling, but the DOE should have implemented changes to support this vulnerable population.

It may be beyond the Hawai'i State Public Library's abilities to develop outreach programs to meet children in shelters and promote library services, but such programs could provide further support and empowerment to homeless children here.

Another issue in Hawai'i is the criminalization of the homeless or houseless. *Sit-lie* bans prohibit sleeping or sitting in public spaces and specifically target the unhoused (Darrah-Okike, Soakai, Nakaoka, Dunson-Strane, & Umemoto, 2018). Sit and lie policies discriminate against the unhoused. Such policies can have a negative impact by further stigmatizing the homeless and perpetuating the notion that homelessness is the fault of the individual, rather than due to systemic causes. It has been argued that these policies are a violation of civil and human rights. Honolulu's "sweeps" of the homeless includes destroying the property of those who are homeless and is an emotionally damaging experience.

Native Hawaiian Resistance

Hawai'i, as affirmed by the Native Hawaiian community, is stolen land. Based on the historical event of the U.S. overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893, the Hawaiian Islands were, and remain stolen by the American government. Native Hawaiians are a marginalized people in their own land (Trask, 1999). It would be impossible to discuss homelessness and houselessness in Hawai'i without acknowledging the ancestral trauma of Native Hawaiians. Native Hawaiians are the most oppressed group on the islands, as they experience disproportionate levels of poverty, poor education, and health concerns (Rohrer, 2010).

Colonialism is linked to the disproportionate representation of Native Hawaiians among the homeless (Darrah-Okike, Soakai, Nakaoka, Dunson-Strane, & Umemoto, 2018). Prior to the American settlers colonizing the Hawaiian Islands, Native Hawaiians, or the *kanaka maoli,* had a strong relationship to the *'aina*, or land, and considered the *'aina* not as a thing to be owned, but as a living, sacred entity (Rohrer, 2010). The Great Māhele of 1848 (a proclamation that shifted possession of land from cultural-communal to commercial-profit ownership) severed the notion of the *'aina* as a living being and inserted the Western notion of private ownership of land (Kame'eleihiwa, 1992). The Great Māhele was a significant event that dislocated Native Hawaiians from their home land, literally (Kame'eleihiwa, 1992.; Lyons, 2011). Understanding the historical context of land redistribution in Hawai'i is important to information professionals' knowledge being competently situated in order to provide appropriate services to the Hawaiian population. Rohrer (2010) writes about the history of the American occupiers using the excuse of "saving" or "helping" the Native Hawaiians to further colonization of the Islands, theft of the land, and devastation of Native Hawaiian culture. Imposing Western ideas of solutions, or implementing a model that works in another state, would not be appropriate in Hawai'i given the

ancestral trauma and historical context of oppression and marginalization of Native Hawaiians. To best provide support to this community, we need to listen to Native Hawaiian voices of what areas of need the library can help them meet.

Settler-colonialism is one of the main causes, if not *the* main cause of Native Hawaiian homelessness, and yet Native Hawaiians are being blamed for their situation or even criminalized for being homeless (Lyons, 2011; Watson, 2010). Some Native Hawaiians choose houselessness and living on the land as that is their right, and historically how Hawaiians lived, and consider land-living to be a form of resistance against the occupiers who stole the land (Kelly, 2014).

In working to provide services to vulnerable populations, it is essential that libraries, as well as the social services and organizations they partner with, understand the needs of those they wish to serve. It is important that we do not impose the values of the American colonizer when we aim to provide help and support. We need to listen to the community and what they themselves identify as areas of need and work from there. The library, and the organizations they partner with, can then implement services that the community has identified as an area of need.

Impacts on the Library

As library literature has shown, there are a myriad of vulnerabilities that some library patrons may be experiencing, ranging from homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, suicidal thoughts, sexual abuse, among other areas of need (Benson, 2016; Kysh, 2013; Luo, Estreicher, Lee, Thomas & Thomas, 2012; Westbrook, 2015). While individuals experiencing homelessness may be the most visible population, there are other vulnerable individuals in the library who may also need help connecting with services and resources in the community, whether they are at risk of being homeless or are in need of other

services such as food resources, employment resources, or even mental health or substance abuse counseling services.

Many individuals experiencing homelessness are facing other challenges as well. Homelessness may be due to the lack of mental health resources (Gunderman & Stevens, 2015), but the main cause of homelessness is insufficient income and lack of affordable housing (National Law Center on Poverty and Homelessness, 2015). For women, the leading cause of homelessness is domestic violence (National Law Center on Poverty and Homelessness, 2015). The majority of people experiencing homelessness are temporarily or episodically homeless, not chronically homeless, but typically are experiencing a financial or personal crisis (Culhane, 2010; Dowd, 2018).

A public library could be one point of intervention for these vulnerable individuals. Libraries across the country are implementing programs to help at-risk teenagers (Neri, 2015; Terrile, 2009) and to help homeless patrons and patrons in need of social services (Giesler, 2017; Hill, 2016; Hines, 2015; Johnson, Mathewson, & Pretchel, 2014; Kelley, Riggleman, Clara, & Navarro, 2017; Zettervall, 2015). Yet the question remains: What services or trainings would be most beneficial to Honolulu public librarians in connecting vulnerable patrons to needed resources? My research aims to offer an answer to this point of inquiry.

METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

For this research, I chose the qualitative methodology of an exploratory study utilizing interviews, and also implemented a reflective research practice. I conducted semi-structured interviews with librarians and library staff within the Hawai'i State Public Library System, as well as with social workers and librarians at public libraries in urban areas on the mainland. I sought to gather narrative data to gain a deeper understanding of what librarians and library staff perceive as the needs of vulnerable patrons in their libraries, and what solutions would be most beneficial to providing equitable services to patrons. I created questions which I felt would help answer my research questions, and then asked additional questions in a natural, conversational way throughout the interview process with each participant. I also implemented reflective journaling throughout the research process to continue to bring awareness to and reflect on my methodology, the interviews, and the themes that I identified.

Research Questions

My primary research question is: *What services or trainings would be most beneficial to public librarians on O'ahu with connecting vulnerable patrons to needed resources?* I ask this question because research of this kind has not yet been conducted here on O'ahu, and while there have been articles published regarding social workers in the library, community conversations around homelessness in the library, and even public health nurses in the library, what works in other places may not be appropriate here. Hawai'i is a unique place and its history and culture must be considered before imposing solutions. I also ask this research question as my study is limited to librarians, library staff, paraprofessionals, and social workers in the library. The aim of this research can only hope to identify the needs of librarians and public library staff here on

O'ahu. The needs of librarians and staff may differ significantly from the actual needs of homeless or houseless patrons.

My supporting research questions are:

- What are the reasons that homeless individuals visit the public library, from the perspective of the library staff?

- What do public library staff need in order to better serve this population?

- How do public libraries connect homeless / houseless patrons with resources and services in the community?

Ultimately, I want to learn what can be done within the cycle of learning relevant information and applying that information towards meaningful information services that benefit vulnerable individuals, librarians and library staffers, and the community as a whole.

Research Design -- Implementation

Methodology

To recruit participants, I called libraries and also visited library sites in-person and asked to speak with branch managers. I requested permission to interview librarians and library staff, as well as security guards, and provided the informed consent form as well as information about my research project. I also invited participants on the mainland via email and over the phone and utilized recruitment scripts included in my Institutional Review Board (IRB) Protocol (Appendix II). I contacted three branch managers and two library administrators/managers, however one branch manager initially agreed to participate and seemed excited about the project. She even discussed inviting some of her library staff who were interested in participating and giving them time during a work day to meet with me. However, she soon stopped responding to my emails and did not follow up on the project. One branch manager was interested but became reluctant

when I asked about interviewing security guard staff as well. At the branches I visited, ultimately there was one librarian who agreed to participate, four paraprofessionals, one security guard, and one library administrator/manager. On the mainland, I contacted four library branches with social workers in the library, and ultimately three responded and agreed to participate. At one branch, the social worker in the library as well as a librarian were interested in participating and agreed to be interviewed together.

I chose qualitative research methods to understand librarians' and library staff members' perspectives in depth. As this is the first research study into public libraries and homelessness here in Hawai'i, qualitative methods seemed most appropriate. I conducted semi-structured interviews, as I believed a semi-structured interview approach would provide more useful data. Semi-structured interviews are a highly used method in qualitative research (DiCicco-Bloom, & Crabtree, 2006). I chose this method for this research because it provides the opportunity for additional questions to be asked that emerge during the interview. Ryan, Coughlan & Cronin (2009) discuss the benefits of semi-structured interviews as allowing for the interviewer to explore unanticipated concepts that emerge during the interview. This type of interview empowers the participant to tell their story rather than restricting them to predetermined structured questions. Utilizing a semi-structured approach permitted me to build rapport with the participants, ask questions in the order they came up in conversation, and to ask follow-up questions.

Upon completion of the transcriptions of the interviews, I analyzed and coded the data utilizing a spreadsheet to identify the occurrences of themes. Throughout the process of conducting interviews, I highlighted meaningful quotes and words that represent any emerging themes across the public libraries, which helped in beginning to create codes to add to the data.

I also implemented context sensitivity (Patton, 2002) as an analysis strategy, as what has worked in other public libraries may not be appropriate in Honolulu with its unique culture and history. To implement context sensitivity, I tried my best to always consider place-specific needs and pay attention to what is unique and particular to Honolulu, and to the island of Oʻahu, overall.

Some of my questions asked about the typical resources librarians are asked about by patrons in need of social services or community resources. Other questions asked more about the librarian's perspective of the patrons, or of possible solutions.

1. What is your experience with library patrons in need of social services or community resources?

2. How do you help patrons who are in need of resources beyond the library?

3. What is your opinion of these patrons?

In addition to these methods, I also implemented reflective research practice. I maintained a research journal and wrote my reflections during my field observations, after interviews, and during the transcription process. I considered any possible biases I might have, and in going through the transcripts I also considered additional questions I may have asked, and concepts I could have explored further. This reflective practice led me to new insights and led to my evolving research design, which I will discuss further in the data analysis section herein.

Data Collection

Over the course of six months, I contacted librarians and library staff on the island of Oʻahu and asked branch managers for permission to speak with paraprofessionals and security guards. I interviewed two librarians, four paraprofessionals, and one security guard. In addition, I contacted librarians and social workers from libraries on the mainland who have either paid or volunteer social workers in the library. I interviewed three library social workers and one

librarian who works at a library that employs social workers. All in all, I completed 9 interviews with 11 participants.

I was given permission to record some of the interviews, but not all. For the recordings, I used an Olympus VN-541PC handheld recorder. For those interviews I recorded, I transcribed the interviews and deleted the recording upon completing the transcriptions. I also redacted any information that might have been identifying. I coded the data using Google Sheets, Excel, Google Docs, and MaxQDA. I identified several themes, not all of which I included in my final data analysis, although these may have potential for future research.

Initially I hoped to complete a comparative analysis between public libraries in Honolulu and public libraries on the mainland who employ social workers. I realize that the small sample size limits my analysis, and that social workers bring a different perspective than librarians. I am hoping that the data will inform best practices for Honolulu libraries in connecting homeless/houseless patrons with resources and services in the community.

This investigation concerning library services to homeless patrons is the first research of its kind conducted in Hawaiʻi. It is my hope that this work will be a useful contribution upon which future studies of this kind are conducted, such as a quantitative approach within a longitudinal research design. While this research focuses on information service providers to the homeless, I am hopeful that future studies will be able to include the voices of citizens experiencing homelessness or houselessness, as only once they are included in the research will we be best informed on how librarians and library staff can help empower them.

DATA ANALYSIS

Evolving Research Design

While I had hoped to interview individuals experiencing homelessness or houselessness, the length of time for IRB approval would have extended my available time for this research by months, due to those experiencing homelessness being a protected population. And while initially I aimed to interview only librarians, paraprofessionals, and security guards, I soon expanded this to interview social workers working in public libraries as well. I hoped to learn more about how social workers in libraries elsewhere help their communities and hoped they could inform best practice here.

Another experience that impacted my data analysis was that, in the course of my research, through my observations and transcriptions, I felt strong emotions. I felt sadness for the vulnerable individuals whose voices would not be represented in my research, and I felt powerlessness and helplessness in my capacity to take action to make positive changes. I wrote in my reflective practice about my experiences during the interviews themselves, and what my emotions and thoughts were at the time and during the transcription process. Research is important, and it is my hope that this thesis will be used to inform best practice and to launch additional research studies, but at the same time, I struggled with feeling that I wasn't doing enough to actively help this population.

I decided to reach out to leadership from the Hawaiʻi State Public Library System (HSPLS) and to the Social Work Department of the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa to discuss creating a social work internship program in the libraries here. In talking with the social worker participants in my studies and reading the literature about social work and library partnerships, I felt that starting a similar program with the public libraries here could be beneficial to our

homeless and houseless patrons. Social workers could conduct a needs assessment, as the Social Workers in the Library program did (Luo, Estreicher, Lee, Thomas & Thomas, 2012) to learn what the needs of our patrons are here on Oʻahu. Perhaps a social work intern could begin developing training modules for librarians and paraprofessionals.

Though reaching out to HSPLS leadership and the UH Social Work internship coordinators was beyond the original scope of my thesis research, I felt that I had to talk with people in a position to take action and do something to help. At the time of this writing, through this partnership, there is currently one student intern from UH who is completing an internship at the Hawaiʻi State Public Library.

At the time, though, I had also begun to doubt my abilities as a researcher when I encountered such overwhelming feelings of helplessness and sadness during this project. I had taken research methods courses in my first graduate program in Social Work, and I took a research methods course as part of the requirement for this thesis. None of these courses discussed emotions or self-care in research. Initially, I felt that my emotions would have a negative impact on my research, and that I was failing to be an objective researcher. I started to look for literature on this topic, and I was surprised to find that there exists a surfeit of articles. One author argues that reflective practice, and self-evaluation are inherently emotional on the part of the researcher, and while historically the LIS discipline has been prohibitive of emotions in research, emotions can reveal biases, insights, and knowledge (Dick, 2013). Other authors have noted how research runs an emotional risk to the researcher (Sampson, Bloor, & Fincham, 2008; Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2008). I felt validated to learn about this, and I hope more articles are written within the LIS field about the potential emotional risks one

may encounter in research, particularly when conducting research on sensitive topics that the researcher has experienced in their own life.

Kiyimba & O'Reilley (2016) also recognize the emotional risk to the research during the process of transcribing interviews on sensitive or difficult topics. I experienced this in my own transcription process, with one interview in particular taking me several times as long as it should have to transcribe, as I had a lot of difficulty listening to that interview even once more. Even though only one participant discussed homeless youth, this interview impacted me the most. I looked for more articles and research on homeless youth, and even though this may be indicative of my own personal bias, it brought me to new insights. Dowd (2018) discusses how economic hardship does not cause homelessness for the majority of people; it's the lack of family that causes people to be homeless due to having nowhere to turn. Many children end up homeless because their family was abusive. Even as adults, people who were homeless as children or had insecure housing as children are at higher risk of becoming homeless again. Adults who experience long-term or episodic homelessness tend to have a history of abusive or disruptive childhoods (Barile, Pruit, & Parker, 2018; Goering, Tolomiczenko, Sheldon, Boydell, & Wasylenki, 2002). This insight led me to reconsider my previous perspectives on solutions for homelessness. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs puts physical needs and safety as the first two top priority needs -- food, water, shelter. This would suggest that providing shelter, food, water, and financial resources to homeless individuals first would be the solution, although some service providers believe in a treatment-first approach (Henwood, Derejko, Couture, & Padgett, 2014). Love or belonging is listed after that in Maslow's Hierarchy, but I would argue that not having supportive relationships, the lack of family and close friends is the main contributing factor to becoming homeless, and the main barrier to having stable housing, and much of the literature

and research I have read concurs (Barile, Pruit, & Parker, 2018; Caton, Dominguez, Schanzer, Hasin, Shrout, Felix, & Hsu, 2005; Dowd, 2018; Goering, Tolomiczenko, Sheldon, Boydell, & Wasylenki, 2002; Schmitz & Tyler, 2015).

One participant shared her observation that for a lot of the homeless patrons who frequent her library, it's a routine for them which creates a sense of normalcy, a sense of "being human." As stated earlier, libraries are regarded as safe havens, and some participants even used this term to describe why homeless patrons visit the library. Homeless patrons may possibly have a lack of family or supportive relationships, and having a safe haven, a physical space they can regularly visit, might be incredibly important for them in a way that people who have supportive families and friends cannot understand.

This participant also discussed that while she believes librarians and staff are compassionate towards this population, she has had acquaintances and people outside of the library context report negative perceptions of homeless individuals in the library. She also mentioned Yelp reviews discussing their negative attitudes towards homeless patrons, which is something I noticed as well in the course of my research. Yelp is a social media tool where business can post their business and users can then write reviews of those businesses. I began to read Yelp pages for several library branches and discovered that nearly every comment that mentioned homelessness described homeless individuals in a harshly negative, dehumanizing way. Reviewers would warn others not to go to the library, that the homeless people were scary or smelly, or they would state that the library should have the police get rid of the homeless. They called homeless people "issues" or "problems" and that they ruined the library. While no one I spoke with expressed these feelings or beliefs, it's clear that there are patrons who feel this way about individuals experiencing homelessness. In one interview, a participant shared that a

librarian she knows expressed a negative perception of and negative attitude towards homeless patrons. It's likely, given the early literature labeling homeless patrons as "problems" that there are still librarians and paraprofessionals who may have negative perceptions of individuals experiencing homelessness.

I wanted to consider the reasons people take on a negative perception of individuals experiencing homelessness. In examining the codes I used throughout my data analysis, I found *compassion* to be an important theme in my research. On the other side of that, *compassion fatigue* or "burnout" is something that the participants identified experiencing. Burnout is very real, and something that anyone is at risk for, no matter what field you work in, though those who work in helping professions, I feel, are at greater risk. For some, having a negative attitude towards those who need help can create distance and take away the burden of having to care and feel helpless. While the Yelp reviewers may not be experiencing compassion fatigue, they and others who have negative perceptions and negative attitudes towards the homeless may be defending themselves against the difficult emotions they would face if they had empathy or compassion instead.

Ultimately, after recognizing and acknowledging the difficult emotions I experienced in the process of conducting this research and finding validation with the literature I read on the topic, I was able to confront my biases and to identify new insights. Instead of trying to disregard emotions or ignore them, I learned, through the literature on this topic, that I could instead use them to identify codes and themes I may not have otherwise considered in the data.

Coding for themes

After transcribing the data, I read through each transcription and highlighted phrases and words that were repetitive and compatible in concept and theme. I continued writing reflective

journals about my process. I re-read each transcript several times. I initially used Google Docs and Google Sheets to begin the process of "coding" the data, the beginning stage of a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). I wrote notes in the transcripts to remind myself of what my thoughts were when highlighting a specific word or phrase. I also utilized MaxQDA, a qualitative data analysis tool, and exported my coded data from this tool to Excel spreadsheets and PDF files. I identified 45 codes and from the patterns of these codes began identifying major themes.

1		Frequency	Percentage
2	compassion	25	10.55
3	partnerships	21	8.86
4	trauma	18	7.59
5	mental health	17	7.17
6	training	12	5.06
7	Library card access	10	4.22
8	substance abuse	10	4.22
9	social workers	9	3.80
10	internet access	8	3.38
11	hygiene items	7	2.95
12	mental health training	7	2.95
13	routine/normalcy	5	2.11
14	problems perceived	5	2.11
15	homeless teenagers	5	2.11
16	domestic violence	5	2.11
17	help/resources sought	4	1.69
18	reading	4	1.69
19	compassion fatigue/burnout	4	1.69
20	ideas for solutions	4	1.69
21	rules/policy barriers	4	1.69
22	noncompliance with rules	4	1.69
23	homeless students	4	1.69
24	relationships/community	4	1.69
25	phone use	3	1.27

Figure 1. Code occurrences and frequency.

In each transcribed document, I added codes related to the text, but I did not do a word-by-word or line-by-line analysis. Rather, I added codes to segments and quotes that I found relevant to my research questions. Some of the transcribed interviews had dozens of codes over multiple sections of text, whereas some only had a few codes designated to a few quotes in the

text. I noticed when looking at the spreadsheets that the codes varied significantly from the librarian and paraprofessional participants and the social worker participants, which was to be expected. The main area of difference was in the discussion of library specific resources, which were discussed by librarians and paraprofessionals as the perceived need areas of the homeless population, whereas the social workers did not discuss library resources such as internet access or library card access.
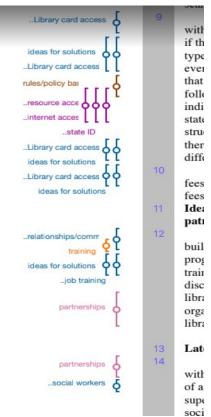

Figure 2. Codes in transcript analysis.

I also had to adjust my codes as I progressed in my analysis. For example, I didn't use the code "trauma" until after one of my last interviews with a social worker who works in a public library. She used the word directly, and I realized that while the word itself had not been used in previous interviews, librarians and library staff did discuss traumatic experiences. I went back through my transcripts and added this code to the appropriate segments. Throughout the coding

process, I would go back through each interview when I identified a new code. Even after I believed I had finalized the codes, I re-read each transcript one more time to verify. I shared my data analysis spreadsheets and quotes with my Thesis Chair who gave me feedback and helped me to triangulate the codes via textual analysis, correlating terms, and connecting topics across data sources, to identify patterns that emerged into four major themes.

Figure 3. Tag cloud of coded themes.

To answer my research questions, I considered the four major themes that came out of my data analysis: **Compassion**, **Training**, **Partnerships**, and **Access.** What follows is my interpretation of how the data answers my research questions.

Research Question: What services or trainings would be most beneficial to public librarians in Honolulu with connecting vulnerable patrons to needed resources?

Theme 1: Compassion

One main theme that emerged in nearly every interview was the importance of

relationships and compassion. According to the librarians, security guard, paraprofessionals and social workers I spoke with, building relationships with patrons and practicing compassion towards them is something they practice every day. Maggie[1] stated that there is a "certain amount of compassion you have to give them" and that "I'm a lot more lenient than the rest of my staff because I think I'm maybe more worried about them." Throughout the interview, Maggie expressed a great deal of concern for the wellbeing of her patrons and her empathy for their struggles. Ruby and Veronica expressed this as well during their interviews, with Veronica stating: "It could be anyone and we need to treat them, I mean these are human beings." Both expressed genuine concern for their patrons and talked about advocating for homeless and houseless patrons.

Another participant, Hermione, stated "the librarians at my library have compassion." She also expressed a lot of insight about the life experiences of patrons who are homeless and demonstrated empathy and understanding of the reasons why they frequent the library: "Part of feeling human is having a routine and a lot of times homeless and houseless patrons don't feel human, and they're not treated human." She stated, "It's a routine. One of the reasons why a lot of our homeless patrons come in is to have that sense of normalcy."

The security guard participant, Benjamin, demonstrated a lot of compassion as well. He stated, "I try to understand how they live, you know? They come up, they don't have much. So… I just understand how they feel. I think a lot of people, they can't understand how they feel so they give them a harder time, or they look at them differently. I just look at them as a person." He also expressed that he learned from the homeless patrons at his library: "For some reason

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[1] Proper names are pseudonyms, throughout.

they come up and want to talk to me. Mostly to talk story. Some of them talk to me about smart things, so I learn a lot." He not only tries to understand their life, he recognizes people experiencing homelessness as human beings, and even acknowledges learning from them. While many people may not even make eye contact with someone they perceive to be homeless, Benjamin talks with and build relationships with the homeless and houseless patrons at his library.

The social work participants described libraries as inherently welcoming, compassionate, and inclusive spaces. Ellie stated: "The Library is all about inclusion, even if someone is homeless and staff are not equipped to help them." Yuna, a librarian who has social worker volunteers at her library stated: "[The library] is a welcoming neighborhood center. In that way it's better than asking for help from traditional services. People have stigma attached with asking for help." This librarian recognized that people experiencing homelessness may not seek traditional services or ask for help from other community organizations, but that the library is a welcoming space for all and may help individuals who may not otherwise have received services.

While the participants expressed compassion, librarians and paraprofessionals are at risk of "compassion fatigue" or burnout if they lack the ability to help homeless or houseless patrons. One participant, Ruby, discussed why people in general lack compassion for the homeless: "It's easy for them to view the houseless as less than, if you're seeing them as human beings, you know, it hurts, but if you think like, they're unhygienic and they use drugs, then it's easier for you." When people become burnt out on caring, due to lack of ability to help, it's easier to stop caring. This essentially describes what compassion fatigue can look like.

In the social work profession, the concept of "self-care" is discussed frequently as a necessary practice to prevent compassion fatigue (Newell & Nelson-Gardell, 2014). This is a topic rarely discussed in library literature (Katopol, 2015) and not at all in regard to working with vulnerable populations.

Self-care is the process of enhancing your wellbeing and making sure you are well yourself, before helping others. This includes identifying challenges and becoming aware of your own vulnerabilities, as well as implementing tools and strategies of wellness, such as creating a strong support system, engaging in fulfilling activities outside of work, and knowing when you might need additional supports prior to being in a crisis yourself (University of Buffalo, 2018).

Perhaps the concept of self-care as a prevention of burnout and compassion fatigue should be introduced to the library profession. Librarians, paraprofessionals, and even security guards discussed encountering patrons who suffer from severe mental illness, have significant substance abuse issues, physical health issues, and also discussed their experience working with patrons who have survived traumatic experiences ranging from having their items stolen, being in situations where they feared being assaulted, and teenagers being kicked out of their homes by their parents or guardians. Sometimes hearing about another person's traumatic experiences can lead to "secondary trauma" which can cause significant emotional distress.

Since this appears to be a fairly common experience for librarians and paraprofessionals, regardless of which section they are responsible for, perhaps there is a need for the profession as a whole to consider how to train librarians and support paraprofessionals in self-care and how to avoid compassion fatigue.

Theme 2: Training

Training to librarians and paraprofessionals is needed, particularly mental health training, as indicated by the participants. Maggie stated, "I've asked for training… mental health training would be wonderful." Wilhelmina, who works in library administration and management, stated, "Staff aren't equipped to deal with mental health issues, substance abuse issues, patrons who refuse to leave or follow the rules." She recommended that all staff receive the same mental health training, so everyone is on the same page. Hermione, a paraprofessional, suggested a training on de-escalation techniques, as well as staff competency to be raised in regard to what services are available in the community: "Maybe a de-escalation or conflict de-escalation seminar would be nice. And a seminar on the local resources that we have here would be great."

Training for many of the participants seems to be focused on mental health training, and training on how to de-escalate patrons experiencing mental health crises or under the influence of substances. Awareness of local resources, as Hermione suggested, may also help librarians and paraprofessionals with connecting homeless patrons to services offered by community organizations. Librarians and paraprofessionals may be best supported and empowered to connect homeless patrons to resources by being trained on how to best communicate and what resources exist to refer patrons to.

Theme 3: Partnerships

Many participants suggested working with other organizations or resources and creating partnerships. The social workers and librarian at a library with social workers discussed that they provide service to homeless patrons through partnerships with other nonprofits and social service organizations in their communities. Perhaps a similar solution could work here on Oʻahu. Ellie, a library social worker, stated that a significant part of her work is in training librarians: "I provide

training to the library staff and respond to requests for trainings. We provide training to help them understand mental health and homelessness." Rikku, another library social worker, stated that "An important piece of what I do is training the library staff... Most libraries do a staff training day, so any time they can invite outside agencies to present on homelessness, how to access shelters…" Yuna and Sora in their interview also stated that the social workers provide training to library staff on "homelessness, mental health, and substance use."

Wilhelmina stated: "Staff do try to help patrons find resources, but the library doesn't have direct partnerships with any direct services." Wilhelmina expressed feeling strongly about creating community partnerships to support librarians and library staff: "Partnering with outside agencies/organizations would be helpful rather than making it the library's responsibility alone." She expressed that new programs created by the library might take away from the library's mission or be beyond the abilities of librarians and library staff. The social worker participants echoed this, as they expressed that the partnerships built between the library and outside resources, such as the Department of Health, nonprofit homeless organizations, and social work schools, helps not only the librarians and library staff who are not trained mental health professionals, but also helps support the patrons who are in need of services. In every interview conducted with social worker participants, I learned that the programs were in partnership with the library. Wilhelmina would seem to be of the same mind about what might be most helpful here and expressed that it would be best for HSPLS to create partnerships with resources that already exist and develop programs in that way.

Theme 4: Access

A lot of participants discussed issues related to access, and many participants also discussed barriers to access. Some participants were of the mind that creating more access or

easier access would be most beneficial, while some seemed to be of the mind that creating

barriers would be helpful. Wilhelmina states that she would like to see the library buildings

designed "in such a way as to deter these behaviors, benches that deter sleeping, deterrents to

blocking doorways, building structures to prevent sleeping or laying down." Maggie discusses

the benefits of the sprinkler system being installed in the yard of the library: "People refused to

leave, and we have to call the police, we haven't had to trespass people in a really long time

since the sprinkler system."

Most participants, however, discussed feeling that they needed less restrictive rules and

policies. Wilhelmina discussed this as well, stating: "Homeless patrons face unique difficulties

when applying for a library card. They can use a shelter address, but what if they're not staying

at a shelter?" She suggested having an alternative type of library card that patrons without an

address can use "for patrons to have digital access, even if they can't check out books with the

card." She discussed the need for digital access "because homeless individuals may need internet

access to get resources, get their state I.D." She also discussed fines and fees as being

prohibitive, and that changing this policy would allow for greater access: "Having no fines or

fees for kid's cards would be helpful. In low-income families fees can be prohibitive to access."

Ruby and Veronica also discussed the barriers to library card access faced by their

patrons. Veronica discussed patrons who only had a booking photo as their identification after

being released from prison: "One way the state sets people up to fail… I sent a letter to the

branch managers… can we accept, as identification, a booking photo? That is their identification.

Literally, it's a piece of paper and it'll say what they were put in prison for." It's quite shocking

to learn that one's identification, issued by the state, upon release from prison states outright

what crimes you committed. Fortunately, Ruby and Veronica stated that they accept the booking photo as valid identification for registering for a library card.

Ruby also talked about the difficulty for homeless patrons to obtain proof of address. "When a houseless person needs to prove their address, they get mail from general delivery from the post office. I told one man that, I believe he had a disability bus pass as ID, and he came back the next week and said, 'They don't do that anymore," like, the post office doesn't send the letter." Now, patrons who are homeless or houseless have to pay to mail a letter to themselves in order to have a "proof of address" to register for a library card. Benjamin talked about the barriers to getting a library card as well, stating: "I know some of them will read books, but they don't have access to a library card."

Changing policies that create barriers can help support homeless patrons in gaining access to needed library resources. Perhaps a "community card" could be a solution to help provide access to digital resources and tools for patrons who do not have an address. Veronica mentioned this possibility as well: "I guess having something like a check-your-email station, just 15 minutes, like 15 minutes free or something, instead of *oh, sorry, we don't care if you get a job or not*." Throughout my interview with Ruby and Veronica, both expressed a tremendous amount of empathy for homeless and houseless patrons and shared the ways they advocate for patrons when they can.

Supporting Research Question 1: What are the reasons that homeless patrons visit the library from the perspective of library staff?

Theme 4: Access

The overarching theme in regard to this question relates to access. Librarians perceive homeless or houseless patrons as needing access, whether to the library building itself, its

programs, library resources through the use of and access to a library card, as well as access to resources the library does not currently provide such as phone use, and hygiene resources. As stated previously, Hermione expressed that homeless patrons visit the library to have a routine and to feel normal. I feel it is important to consider Hermione's insight a bit further, as it relates to access. Patrons experiencing homelessness have nowhere else to go that is free and open to all the public. Public libraries are one of the last spaces that are open to all and perceived by many to be safe havens. Instead of creating barriers, libraries should support access. To support homeless or houseless patrons in what Hermione refers to as their "routine" which, she says creates a sense of "normalcy" and "feeling human," the library should be as open and available to homeless and houseless patrons as to housed patrons.

Another point Hermione raised during her interview was that she frequently receives requests to keep programs free: "We regularly get feedback that asks to keep programs free, which is interesting because it's the library, I'm not sure why that would change." Patrons who are homeless or houseless, or who are in unstable housing or experiencing financial hardship, may use the library's programs as a family outing, or as educational resources for children, as they may not be able to afford paid activities or resources. While Hermione isn't certain if this feedback is coming from homeless or houseless patrons specifically, requests for the programs to remain free is likely to be asked for by patrons who are experiencing or who have experienced some form of economic hardship.

Benjamin and Maggie both discussed phone use. Benjamin stated: "A lot of them ask to use the phone, to borrow a phone." Maggie stated; "Some people don't have a phone. And we don't have a phone people can use. We don't let people use it anyway, we're not allowed to let people use it." What could resolve this? Could the public library provide a phone for patrons to

use? Perhaps the library does not permit patrons to use the phone as the library is supposed to be a quiet space, and in most, if not all library branches, cell phone use is against the rules. For patrons who do not have a phone, perhaps some branches could permit the use of a public phone. Many of the branches have the "Homeless Help" card which lists many, many phone numbers. What's the use of this for a patron who does not have a phone?

Ruby and Veronica also discussed the "sweeps" due to the sit-and-lie policies, and the impact this has on the homeless and houseless population they serve at their library. Veronica stated: "The last sweep we had some pretty young people, maybe in their 20s, ending up here. There was an older haole guy who's a usual houseless person and he was not happy…" Ruby added: "And they don't know that because they just got here, because they were kicked out of where they were." She elaborated that the homeless, or houseless who were at their library due to the sweeps were not familiar with the culture of the local community of houseless individuals, which led to conflict.

The "sweeps" due to the sit-and-lie ban are having an impact on the public library. Homeless and houseless patrons who are displaced from their home may be using the public library more frequently. As they have lost access to the spaces that have been their home, it is so important that the library remains a space that is open and able to be accessed by all. Ruby and Veronica described their library as a sort of home for their houseless patrons. Both Ruby and Veronica continuously discussed larger systemic issues that create barriers for homeless and houseless individuals to accessing needed resources or obtaining stable housing. Ruby shared that she has family members who were houseless, and a family member who is still in unstable housing. She shared from her own personal experience with her family members the barriers faced by houseless individuals in gaining needed resources, such as the struggles with getting

into Section 8 housing, the limitations of disability checks and the need to supplement that income in order to make enough money to survive.

This led me to consider the questions: What role does the public library have in advocating for public policy changes that would benefit their patrons? Could the public library be a resource for helping patrons access housing resources, or learn how to navigate resources such as food stamp applications? At the very minimum, I would say that the library should be about allowing access, not creating barriers. Perhaps there are library policies that can be changed to allow and increase access, if only to the library's own resources.

One participant, Kairi, discussed using outreach to promote access. Throughout her interview she talked about the programs the library offers that can support homeless patrons with children, such as their literacy programs. She expressed that, to promote access might require more outreach directly to homeless and houseless communities: "Further down, there's an encampment… there's like family and children who are there. It would be really cool to do like outreach or storytime outreach to them there, like physically meeting them there… I think giving that extra push to welcome them in, I wish there was just more use in general." There are libraries implementing outreach programs such as this and meeting homeless patrons where they're at, literally. It would be interesting to learn if such an outreach program would benefit the homeless and houseless patrons here on Oʻahu.

Veronica discussed homeless youth patrons, and their struggle to register for, or renew a library card. She said: "Some of these kids, they come in, they want to renew their cards and there's no parent." She talked about some changes to this policy to provide greater access: "It's been relaxed, so they still have to have a guardian. It used to be, it had to be a parent until they were 18… The thing that hasn't gone away is that there does have to be a responsible adult to

sign for the card that has a picture ID and mailing address." Even with that rule relaxed a bit, there are still homeless youth who do not have an adult who can sign for their card. Veronica gave one example of a homeless teenager who needed access to the computers: "He's trying to finish school and get a job, so he needs to check his email. It's very frustrating when, this kid, he's a good kid and I want to help him, but I can't, or I'd lose my job." It's distressing to learn that library staff want to help but are limited by the constraints of the rules and policies. How can we change policies to allow for access to library resources for homeless youth who do not have an adult to sign for their library card? As librarians we believe in equitable access and denying vulnerable individuals access is the opposite of that principle. Homeless youth are already at a severe disadvantage to their peers in so many ways, and the public library is failing them as well due to restrictive policies that restrict access.

Supporting Research Question 2: What do public library staff need in order to better serve this population?

Theme 1 and Theme 2: Compassion and Training

Librarians expressed that they and their colleagues are experiencing compassion fatigue and burnout. The participants requested more training, with some requesting specific training such as mental health training, training on what local resources are available, de-escalation strategies, and training on how to identify patrons who may need help. Hermione stated: "We don't have mental health training that I'm aware of. I think that a training on how to spot mental illness would be helpful."

It's interesting that while the librarians and library staff participants could identify that they experienced compassion fatigue, they didn't request training that would support them around this. The participants requested training on skills and competencies focusing on helping

patrons. Why isn't the concept of self-care a part of our profession? And why are librarians and library staff reluctant to identify that they themselves need help and support? While mental health training and learning de-escalation strategies as well as learning what local resources exist to refer patrons to would all be beneficial, I believe that self-care training would best support librarians and paraprofessionals. Self-care training would benefit library staff by helping them to understand and acknowledge the risks of compassion fatigue and burnout and knowing what strategies can help prevent this.

Another interesting point is that self-care training was not discussed by the social workers I interviewed either. The social worker participants did discuss that they provide various trainings to library staff on homelessness, mental health, substance use, and that outside agencies also present and provide training on resources. However, self-care training was not mentioned.

As stated earlier, perhaps self-care should be incorporated into the education of future library professionals. This may help librarians who work in public library settings by preparing them with skills and training to prevent compassion fatigue. Public librarians are in a helping profession as much as they are in an information profession, and they work every day with patrons who experience all sorts of vulnerabilities. Self-care training can help library staff and reduce staff feeling overwhelmed and burnt out when they are unable to help vulnerable patrons.

Theme 3: Partnerships

Partnerships are already being built by HSPLS with local organizations. Wilhelmina emphasized the importance of creating partnerships with resources that already exist in the community, and Maggie, Ruby, and Veronica all expressed similar sentiments of the importance of collaboration and partnerships. Some participants also mentioned having a social worker in the library, though concern was shared about whether or not patrons would seek help. The social

worker participants who currently work in public libraries shared the importance of partnerships as well. Yuna stated: "We partner with an organization which helps the homeless community in the downtown area." Rikku shared many examples of the partnerships between the library and other organizations, as well as partnerships she built within the community as the library social worker. She stated: "The public library was in partnership with a hospital/health system… we have also coordinated with an agency to bring clothes to the library… and we partner with homeless shelter agencies."

Ellie, another library social worker, shared: "One of my roles is to build partnerships with the community." All of the social workers who are employed at or volunteer at the public library reported that these programs began through a partnership between the library and another agency. The social workers discussed partnerships between universities and libraries, mental health organizations, homeless shelters, domestic violence centers, and other nonprofits and social service agencies already providing services in the community.

After speaking with HSPLS leadership and Social Work internship coordinators from my university, they met and discussed implementing a social worker internship program in a public library here on Oʻahu. At the time of this writing there is a social work student interning at the main library branch downtown. It is beyond the scope of my thesis to evaluate this program, but perhaps future research can be conducted to learn how having a social work intern at the library is helping support homeless patrons as well as library staff, and what further areas of need exist.

Supporting Research Question 3: How do public libraries connect homeless or houseless patrons with resources and services in the community?

Many of the librarians and paraprofessionals I spoke with indicated that patrons do not often ask about resources outside the library. They discussed that homeless patrons will typically

charge their devices or ask to use the library's phone, or use the computers, but rarely ask for resources beyond what the library can provide. The librarians and paraprofessionals I spoke with indicated a few areas they have been asked about: shelter, food, and health resources, though they stated these questions are rarely asked. The librarians and paraprofessionals I spoke with stated that they and their coworkers would know where to refer patrons if asked about these resources or would know how to find this information.

Hermione discussed some of the ways her library branch connects homeless and houseless patrons with resources: "We post the shower truck schedules in the bathrooms. It's kind of a discreet place to look so they don't have to ask for it out loud or be seen taking it off the table." Maggie discussed the DHS "Homeless Help" card as well. I did notice this paper pamphlet at several library branches. One of the library branches I revisited, I discovered that the pamphlets had all been taken since the previous time I had been there. These "Homeless Help" cards are clearly being used. Even though library staff report that they rarely are asked about help and resources outside the library, it is clear that there are patrons who require this information. Perhaps they do not feel that they can ask library staff for help.

Hermione also discussed "hidden homeless" using the library. She stated: "I think the homeless or houseless at that branch are hidden homeless because they're students and they're couch surfing or they're living in their car… and that's why people don't think there's a homeless population at that branch. But I know for a fact, I know two people… who were hidden homeless, bouncing around from couch to couch." Librarians may not be able to help this population at all, as they are not visibly homeless or houseless, and may not ask for help. Veronica mentioned the struggle with identifying children and youth who are homeless as well: "Give me some resources for these kids. Another thing would be identifying them, because I

think, out of self-preservation, the majority of kids that are struggling might hide that." Providing

literature on resources that are available may be one way to reach this population. Hermione

stated that she thinks having more information available in discreet locations would be helpful:

"I think there could be more literature in the bathrooms. I feel like that's probably the safest

place where people aren't going to be judged or feel like they're being judged. I think that would

be a great place to put things like pamphlets." Perhaps having more information available about

what resources exist in the community can be a way to connect vulnerable patrons with services.

There could be information available in the children's and teen's sections of public library

branches as well to reach this population.

LIMITATIONS

This study is qualitative with a very small sample size. Due to this, the results cannot be replicated or applied to a large population. The small sample size will also call the relevance of the results into question. However, I believe these themes may be translated into a survey form which then can be used to conduct a more quantitative research study of a larger population.

My background in social work as well as having experienced homelessness may have created bias in how I interpreted the data. Though I did keep a research journal to reflect on the interviews, my methodology, as well as my interpretations as a way of identifying bias, it is still possible that my background influenced my findings.

A librarian participant who works at a library where social workers are present, discussed homeless students during her interview, and a library paraprofessional participant here on Oʻahu discussed "hidden homeless" and identified that she personally knew of undergraduate students who used the library who were not identifiably homeless. The participants of this study spoke mainly of the identifiably homeless, or the chronically homeless. As stated in the literature review, the chronically homeless comprise the smallest percentage of those experiencing homelessness. The participants may have encountered many more people who are homeless than they know, and because they were not identified as such, their information needs were not reported during the interview.

Another consideration when looking at the data is that while social workers in the library may seem like a wonderful solution, it may not be the best solution here in Hawaiʻi, as this idea came from the mainland. I'm a haole (white) woman from the mainland, and though I thought creating a partnership between HSPLS and UH Mānoa's Social Work Department and

implementing an internship program would be helpful, I may be imposing an American view in a Hawaiian setting that may or may not be helpful.

The most severe disadvantage of this research is that it does not include the voices of those experiencing homelessness or houselessness. Without their voices, I don't believe we will be able to identify the best solutions. Perhaps a social worker in the library would be a great solution, but perhaps not. We need to be informed by those vulnerable individuals, as they are the experts of their own experience. Professionals, volunteers, interns, and security guards all have their perspective, but these are all perspectives from the outside looking in. They express their own biases and limited understanding from the small amount of time they spend with these individuals in the library. Only those experiencing homelessness can best inform us of the challenges they are facing, and how the library can provide aid.

Voicedness is particularly important with serving the Native Hawaiian houseless population, as historically they have been oppressed and silenced by haole occupiers. To impose a Western, haole solution upon a community with this ancestral trauma would not be in the best interest of that community. We need the input directly from the community to be best informed of their areas of need. The Native Hawaiian houseless population are the experts of their own needs and working with them to identify what services or programs would be most helpful to them is essential in providing best services and implementing best practices at libraries. Future research should include the voices of those experiencing homeless and should especially include the voices of Native Hawaiians who are houseless, to best inform what services we could implement at public libraries to help these communities.

DISCUSSION

Many of those invited to participate initially expressed enthusiasm about the project and prior to the interview amended their decision and declined to participate. There was also resistance from library managers to agree to have the security staff be interviewed. The reluctance to participate may be due to compassion fatigue, concern about the attitudes of staff, or a feeling that, as one participant said, "We don't do a very good job." Or perhaps librarians are simply busy and have participated in a lot of research projects for students from the LIS program and were hesitant to engage in yet another study. The participants who did agree to be interviewed for this study all expressed a great amount of compassion for homeless and houseless patrons. It's possible that most librarians and paraprofessionals feel the same way. Without a larger sample size, it is impossible to know if the themes identified here apply to the larger set of librarians and paraprofessionals on Oʻahu. Overall, four main themes were identified: Compassion, Training, Partnerships, and Access.

Theme 1: Compassion

Compassion was the main theme identified and was discussed in almost every single interview. The librarians, paraprofessionals, security guard, and social workers all expressed a great deal of compassion and empathy for homeless and houseless patrons. Compassion fatigue was also discussed and expressed. Librarians and paraprofessionals are at risk for compassion fatigue and burnout. To answer the research question, what do librarians need to better serve this population? It is my view that librarians need to learn about self-care practices, as is taught in Social Work curricula. This leads directly into the second major theme identified.

Theme 2: Training.

Many librarians and paraprofessionals discussed the need for training in various areas, such as mental health, de-escalation strategies (calming down a patron in crisis, or who is being verbally abusive), what resources are available in the community, and how to identify patrons in need of help. It is my perspective, however, that self-care training would be beneficial to the librarians and paraprofessionals, though this was not requested or identified by the participants in this study. Self-care is a concept discussed heavily in the social work field, throughout the courses required to earn the degree, and is even included in the common questions asked by interviewers: What do you do for self-care? Public library staff are also in a helping profession and need to be aware of the risks of compassion fatigue and burnout and understand the importance of self-care. Why is this not discussed in LIS courses? Perhaps self-care should be required material to cover for LIS students on the public library track. As I learned in reviewing the literature, though, emotions are traditionally discouraged from being discussed or acknowledged in the LIS field (Dick, 2013). Clearly this is something that needs to change.

Some universities offer dual degree programs with LIS and Social Work. Perhaps the University of Hawaiʻi could offer a dual degree as well. This may better prepare public librarians who will be working in Hawaiʻi with homeless and houseless patrons. Social work training can prepare librarians to be knowledgeable of local resources, provide appropriate referrals, and serve as advocates. With social work training as well, librarians will be aware of the importance of self-care in preventing compassion fatigue and burnout.

Theme 3: Partnerships

Partnerships was the third major theme identified, and this connects with social work as well. The social workers I interviewed all acknowledged that they work in the library through

partnerships between the library system and organizations and agencies in the community. The social workers also identified that they mainly provide referrals and connect homeless, houseless, and other vulnerable patrons to resources in the community. These partnerships also led to community organizations conducting outreach to the library and providing education to the library staff as well as patrons about local resources. Creating partnerships takes the pressure off of the librarians and allows librarians to meet the information needs of their patrons while housing, food, mental health, and other areas of need can be met by social workers. Social workers can also provide mental health training to library staff and educate library staff about what resources exist in the community to refer patrons to, if needed. Through a partnership between HSPLS and the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa's Social Work Department, a social work student intern began at the Hawaiʻi State Library in February 2019. Perhaps a future research study can learn more about how the social work internship program is helping support the needs of homeless and houseless library patrons as well as library staff.

Theme 4: Access

The final major theme identified was access. Library staff discussed some of the barriers to access, as well as the ways they advocate for access. Homeless and houseless patrons have requested phone access, which currently is against library policy. Homeless and houseless patrons are also unable to register for a library card if they lack proof of address. Some of the participants I interviewed discussed that they help patrons who do not have an address by providing information about general delivery, a service which the post office no longer provides. Another major barrier to access for homeless youth is the requirement of having an adult with proof of address sign for their library card. While the participants in this study report that they advocate for access as much as possible, they are still restricted by rules and policies which

create barriers for vulnerable patrons. One of the solutions proposed by a few of the participants was to allow access to digital resources without requiring proof of address or a photo identification. One library administrator suggested a "community card" which would not permit books to be checked out but would allow for access to the library computers. A library paraprofessional suggested a 15-minute station for using the internet. Perhaps some of these solutions can be implemented to allow homeless and houseless patrons to access resources.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to learn what could be most helpful in empowering public library staff on Oʻahu in connecting homeless and houseless patrons to needed resources. Mental health training, as it was requested by many participants, may be needed for public librarians here. I believe self-care training is needed for those who work in public libraries in order to prevent compassion fatigue, and to help librarians become competent with skills to help patrons who struggle with mental illness. Partnerships between public libraries and helping organizations in the community would also be beneficial for both the homeless patrons as well as the library staff. Partnerships are already being created as librarians advocate for their patrons and fellow professionals. Future research may evaluate the efficacy of these partnerships or conduct a needs assessment to learn directly from patrons what their areas of need are. Future research could also implement and evaluate a self-care training program. As these programs are implemented and evaluated, it's possible that we will see a future where self-care training for librarians, and partnerships between public libraries and social service agencies are considered best practice in librarianship.

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APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Protocol A - Interview Questions for Librarians:

1. What resources or information about resources in the community does your library provide?

    1. Do you have any cards or brochures with information about the resources available in the community?

2. What is your experience with library patrons in need of community-based services?

    1. What resources do patrons/users need help accessing outside the library?

3. What resources do patrons ask about most frequently?

4. Are library workers at your library knowledgeable about resources in the community for homeless or houseless persons?

5. What is your experience with patrons who are homeless/housing challenged at your library?

    1. What are the demographics of these individuals?

    2. Ages?

    3. Do other patrons complain about the presence of homeless patrons? How do you respond to this?

6. What is your opinion of these patrons?

7. How do you help patrons who are in need of services or resources in the community, beyond the library?

8. In your professional opinion, what tools, resources, programs, policies, or staff needs to be implemented at the library to help patrons/users in need of services/resources in the community? Basically, how can we serve vulnerable patrons better?

Protocol B - Interview Questions for Security Guards:

1. What is the one main impression you have of alleged homeless patrons?

2. How do you identify homeless/houseless patrons?

3. What are some typical situations with patrons that require your attention or intervention?

4. What is your approach towards homeless library patrons/users who do require intervention/response?

5. How often have you had to ask a patron to leave the library?

6. What, from your perspective, could be done or what policies/programs could be implemented to improve the library for the community, librarians, and patrons/users who are experiencing homelessness?

Protocol C - Interview Questions for Social Workers in the Library or Library Affiliated Staff:

1. How did your program get started?

2. How successful has your library been with helping homeless patrons? If available, do you have any statistics on the number of patrons who were homeless who are now in permanent housing?

3. What other community organizations or social service agencies does your library partner with?

4. What do you feel has been the most beneficial to homeless patrons in your community?

5. What recommendations do you have for other libraries hoping to help homeless patrons?

APPENDIX II: RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

Phone Recruitment

Aloha, my name is Holiday Vega and I am conducting research on the intersection between public libraries and homelessness. I am inviting you to participate because you work for a public library. Would you be interested in participating in this study?

Email Recruitment

Aloha,

My name is Holiday Vega and I am conducting research on the intersection between public libraries and homelessness, with the goal of understanding how librarians and library staff can be empowered to connect homeless patrons to resources. I am inviting you to participate in this study because you work for a public library.

If you are interested in participating, I have attached the informed consent which includes some sample questions. Please respond to this email with some dates and times that work best for you to participate in the interview, which I anticipate will take around 30 minutes.

Mahalo,
Holiday

APPENDIX III: PRELIMINARY FIELD NOTES

Field Research, September and October

9/24/17-- Branch Visit

Around 1-3 homeless persons. Around 20 library patrons.

Ruby (library assistant) discussed the ways homeless patrons can get a library card through the use of public mail boxes. Homeless live behind library and also mentioned a church area where homeless live. One of them library patrons appeared to be possibly homeless, on the computer furthest from open space and visibility. The man who appeared possibly homeless had a laptop and was playing chess on it. Had a lot of bags, a backpack.

Also Ruby said Benjamin, the security guard would be a good resource.

DHS "Homeless help" card with a myriad of resources.

Also same day-- Visit to IHS and very brief observation of the homeless persons outside of another branch.

Branch Visit -10/2/17

DHS "homeless help card" no longer there, empty space where they had been at last visit.

General delivery- Public mailboxes.

Asked librarian what questions they receive about resources in the community? Twice a day- where is the unemployment office? (At the end of the driveway).

The phone for accessing downtown unemployment office, which is the main office for unemployment for the state, no longer works, so patrons cannot use this phone any longer to access resources.

-Questions about How to get housing resources.

-Questions about Where to take bus to get to this or that place.

Another issue is library card access without proof of address or ID. Disability bus passes with picture are acceptable for library card. Also, recently incarcerated booking photo are acceptable. Library staff reports questions about resources and help with computers with resume writing, and job applications. Library does have a nonfiction section on resume writing.

https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=Berkeley-PL-Launches-Cards-for-Patrons-Without-Fixed-Address

Computers are timed but they can restart unless there's a waiting list which has not happened yet.

Houseless man who comes into the library is friends with Benjamin(security guard) cleans area at top of driveway. Office manager reports another library branch was more confrontational toward homeless. Always call police to roust homeless, this library has a more compassionate approach because of security guard Benjamin. Homeless utilize library and they have a right because it is accessible to the public.

The feelings from homeless to staff and from staff to homeless is different because of Benjamin (security guard). Benjamin is friends with the main homeless man who uses the library. No more confrontation with homeless due to sleeping in spaces that block access walkways or stairs. Another library branch has security guards who were intolerant to homeless and not kind toward homeless. Homeless village near library, with children with families. Security guard - Benjamin

Refers to reference desk for questions about where the welfare is. Benjamin intervenes when homeless patrons are breaking library rules. Approaches them calmly. Working here for 4 and a half years and in the total amount of time has had to kick out people 5 times. And in one case had to restrain an individual who was being aggressive and had mental challenges. He was a

volunteer. Throughout each day about 20 people who are homeless use the library each day. Many of them are not obviously homeless.

Not the norm for unaccompanied homeless youth. A few males a few females about half and half. Ages older people, 30s and older. A few young people homeless. Parents with children who are homeless- used to be but not anymore.

APPENDIX IV: IRB PROTOCOL APPROVAL

Initial Approval:

UNIVERSITY of HAWAI'I®
SYSTEM

Office of Research Compliance
Human Studies Program

TO:	Irvin, Vanessa, EdD, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Library and Information Science Program, Library and Information Science
	Vega, Holiday, Vega, Holiday
FROM:	Rivera, Victoria, Interim Dir, Ofc of Rsch Compliance, Social&Behav Exempt
PROTOCOL TITLE:	Public Libraries & Community Resources
FUNDING SOURCE:	
PROTOCOL NUMBER:	2018-00146
	Approval Date: April 11, 2018 Expiration Date: December 31, 2999

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

This letter is your record of the Human Studies Program approval of this study as exempt.

Revised Protocol Approval:

UNIVERSITY of HAWAI'I®
SYSTEM

Office of Research Compliance
Human Studies Program

TO:	Irvin, Vanessa, EdD, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Library and Information Science Program, Library and Information Science
	Vega, Holiday
FROM:	Rivera, Victoria, Interim Dir, Ofc of Rsch Compliance, Social&Behav Exempt
PROTOCOL TITLE:	Public Libraries and Homelessness: Connecting Vulnerable Patrons with Community Resources
FUNDING SOURCE:	
PROTOCOL NUMBER:	2018-00146
	Approval Date: September 24, 2018 Expiration Date: December 31, 2999

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH