Setting Boundaries in the Library with Patrons

How confident are you?

Image of library books

BEGIN

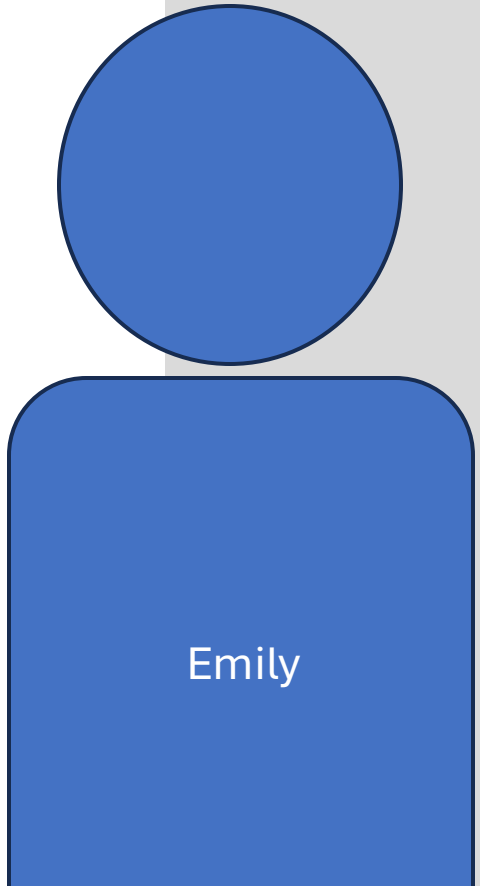
Slide 1.2 Meet Emily

Image of inside library

Hi, I'm Emily, and I've been working at the library for the past five years. While I love helping patrons and being part of this community, I've been struggling with one thing—setting and enforcing boundaries.

…able

…your help—together, let's explore how to set boundaries professionally while still maintaining the respect and support our patrons deserve.



BACK

NEXT

Slide 1.3 Boundaries

BOUNDARIES

WHAT?

WHY?

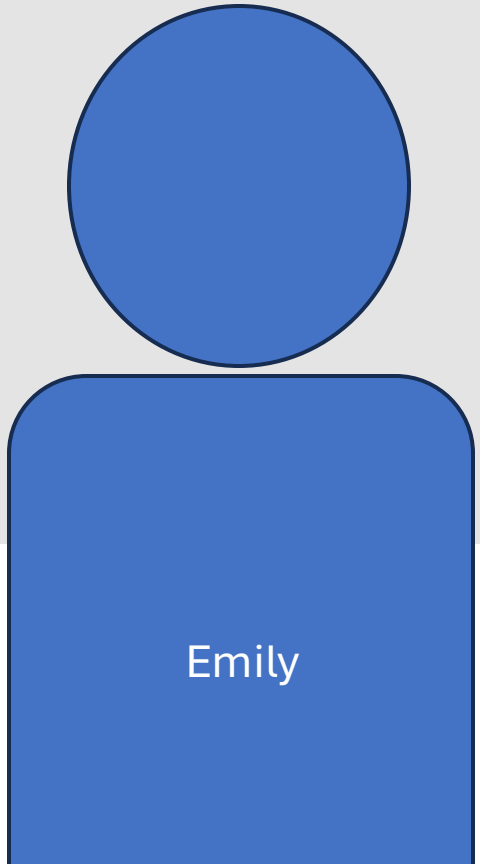


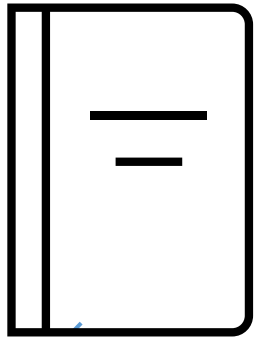
Image of inside library

BACK

NEXT

Slide 1.4 Found it!





When clicked, new slide layer with static text with tab interaction or cards (click to reveal) ???

BACK

Slide 1.5 (tab1) Reference Book

WHAT are boundaries | WHAT cont.' | WHY boundaries | WHY cont.'

Boundaries are personal limits that show what behavior is okay and what isn't, both in everyday life and at work.

They act as invisible rules that help us speak up for what we need, keep ourselves safe, and let others know how to treat us, so you feel respected and comfortable.

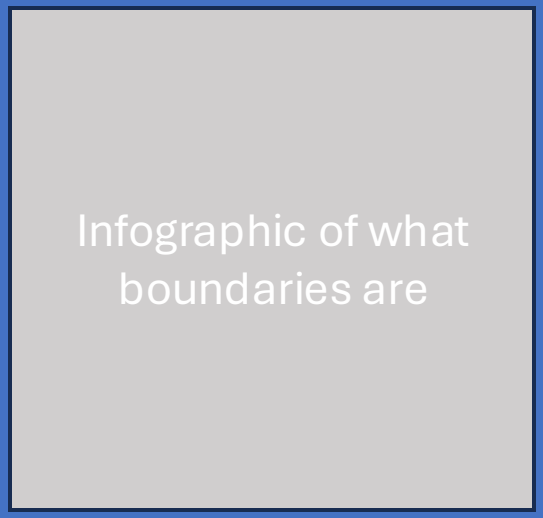
At work, having boundaries helps prevent burnout, stress, and anxiety.

BACK

Slide 1.5(tab2) Reference Book

WHAT are boundaries | WHAT cont.' | WHY boundaries | WHY cont.'

Boundaries are set by changing how you respond to situations, instead of expecting others to change what they do.



BACK

Slide 1.5(tab3) Reference Book

WHAT are boundaries | WHAT cont.' | WHY boundaries | WHY cont.'

Boundaries are important because they protect our well-being and maintain balance, ultimately leading to happier, more productive work environments and healthier relationships, allowing us to serve both ourselves and others effectively.

Saying "no" is a full sentence. It's not something we should only do in certain situations; it's a skill we need to practice regularly to protect our time and energy.

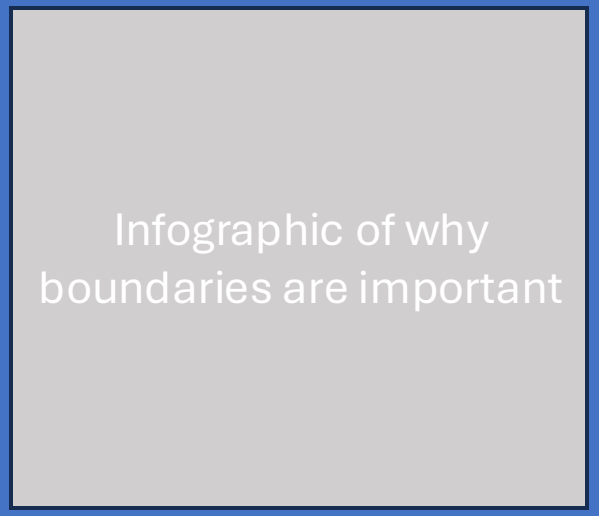
It's important to communicate clearly and follow through, so others understand and respect your limits.

BACK

Slide 1.5(tab4) Reference Book

WHAT are boundaries | WHAT cont.' | WHY boundaries | WHY cont.'

Boundaries start with self-awareness. If you do not like the way you feel or act, know that you have the power to change it.



BACK

Slide 1.6 Reflect with Emily



How self-aware are you?

BACK

NEXT

Slide 1.7 Self- Reflection Survey

Reflect on your confidence level when managing challenging patrons.
This self-assessment is designed for reflection and growth throughout the training.
There is no right or wrong answer.

	1	2	3	4	5
I feel confident in my ability to set clear boundaries with patrons.	○	○	○	○	○
I can de-escalate inappropriate or uncomfortable conversations with patrons.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel comfortable enforcing library policies related to patron behavior.	○	○	○	○	○
I can confidently use tools to address unruly patrons.	○	○	○	○	○

BACK

SUBMIT

Slide 1.7 Learning Objectives





- Define and understand boundaries
- How to identify boundaries within the library setting
- Gain practical strategies to address & set boundary violations
- Increase your self-confidence when responding to a patron who has crossed a boundary

← *Learning objectives will appear on clipboard. Slide will zoom in to each objective they are being read by Emily.*

image of library

BACK

NEXT

Slide 2.1 Transition 1

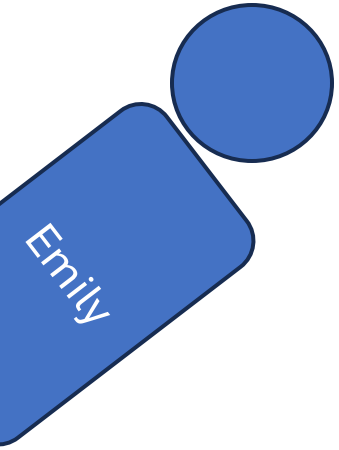
image of library

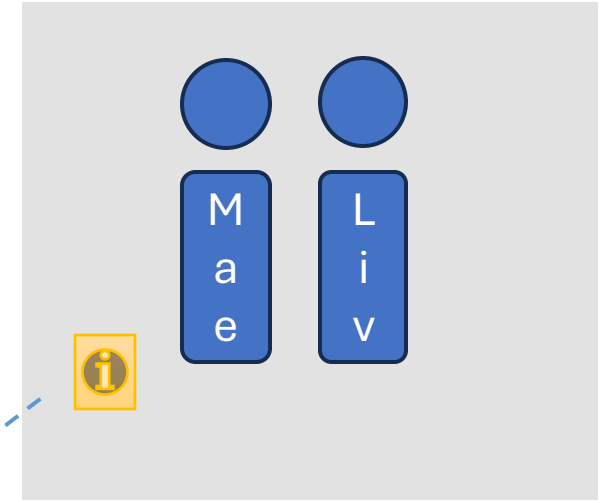


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NEXT

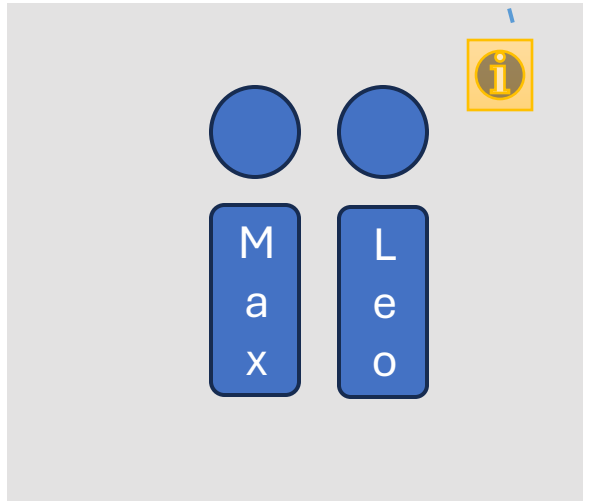
Slide 2.2 Inside the Library

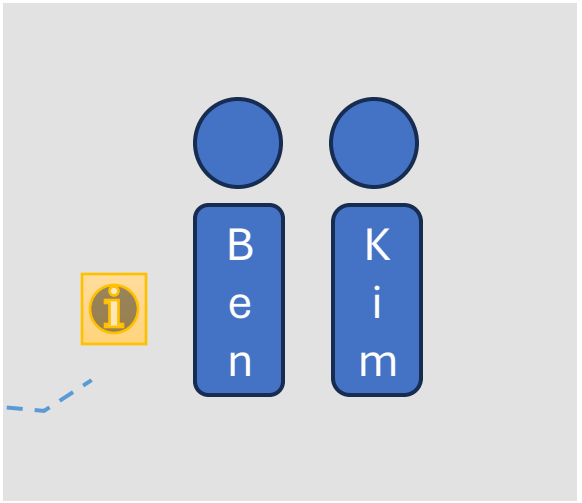




New slide layer with interaction between staff member Liv and patron Mae.

New slide layer with interaction between staff member Max and patron Leo.



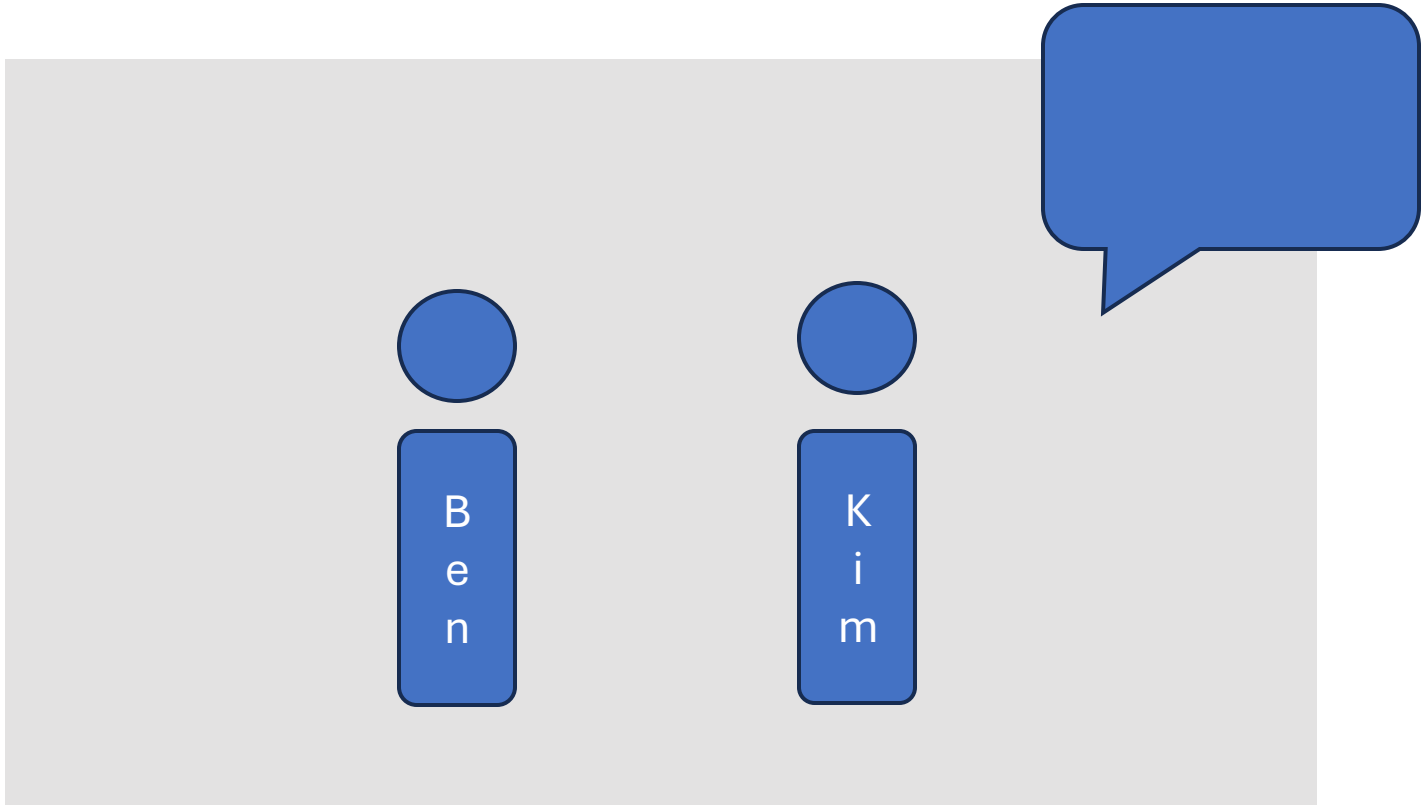


New slide layer with interaction between staff member Kim and patron Ben.

BACK

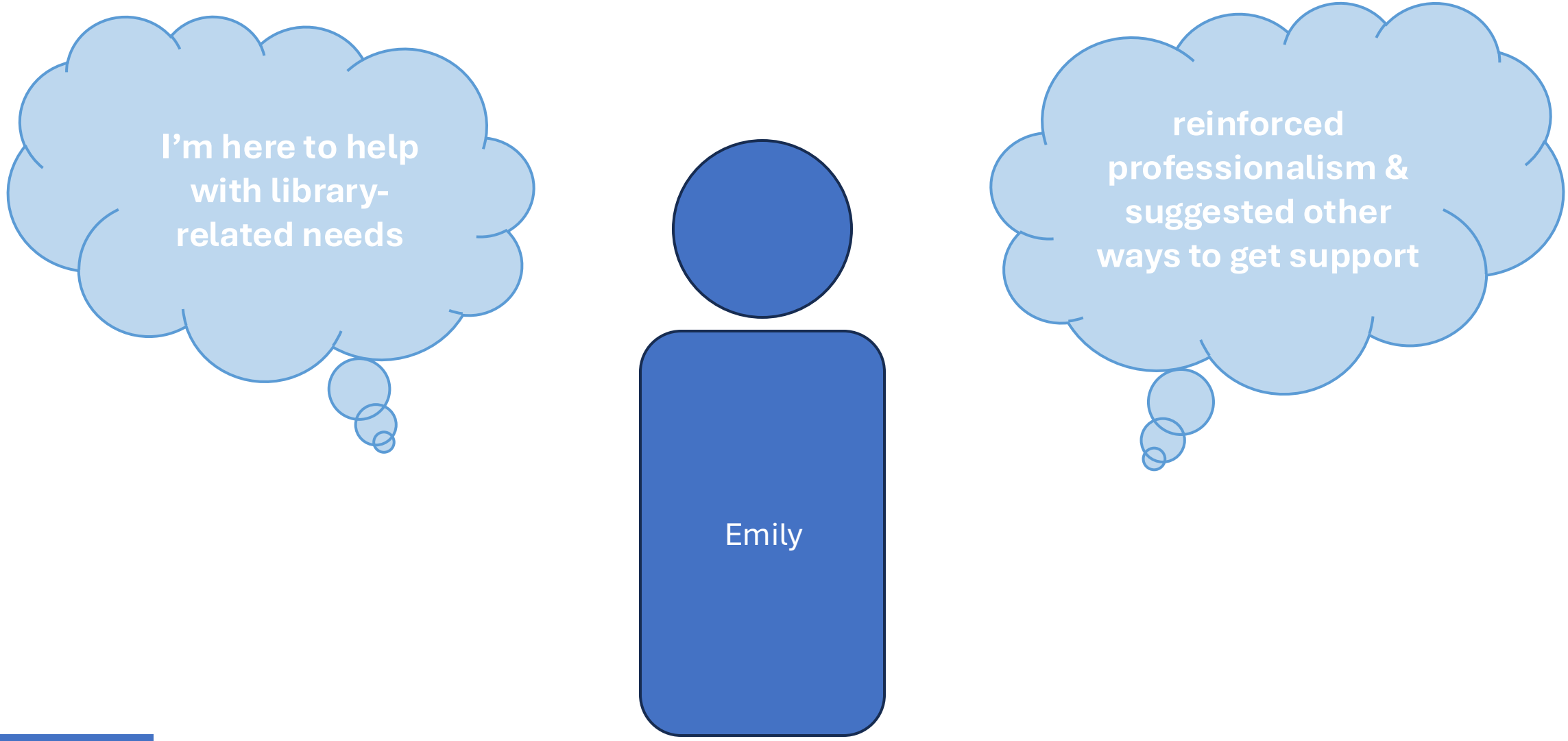
NEXT

Slide 2.4a Sharing Personal Details



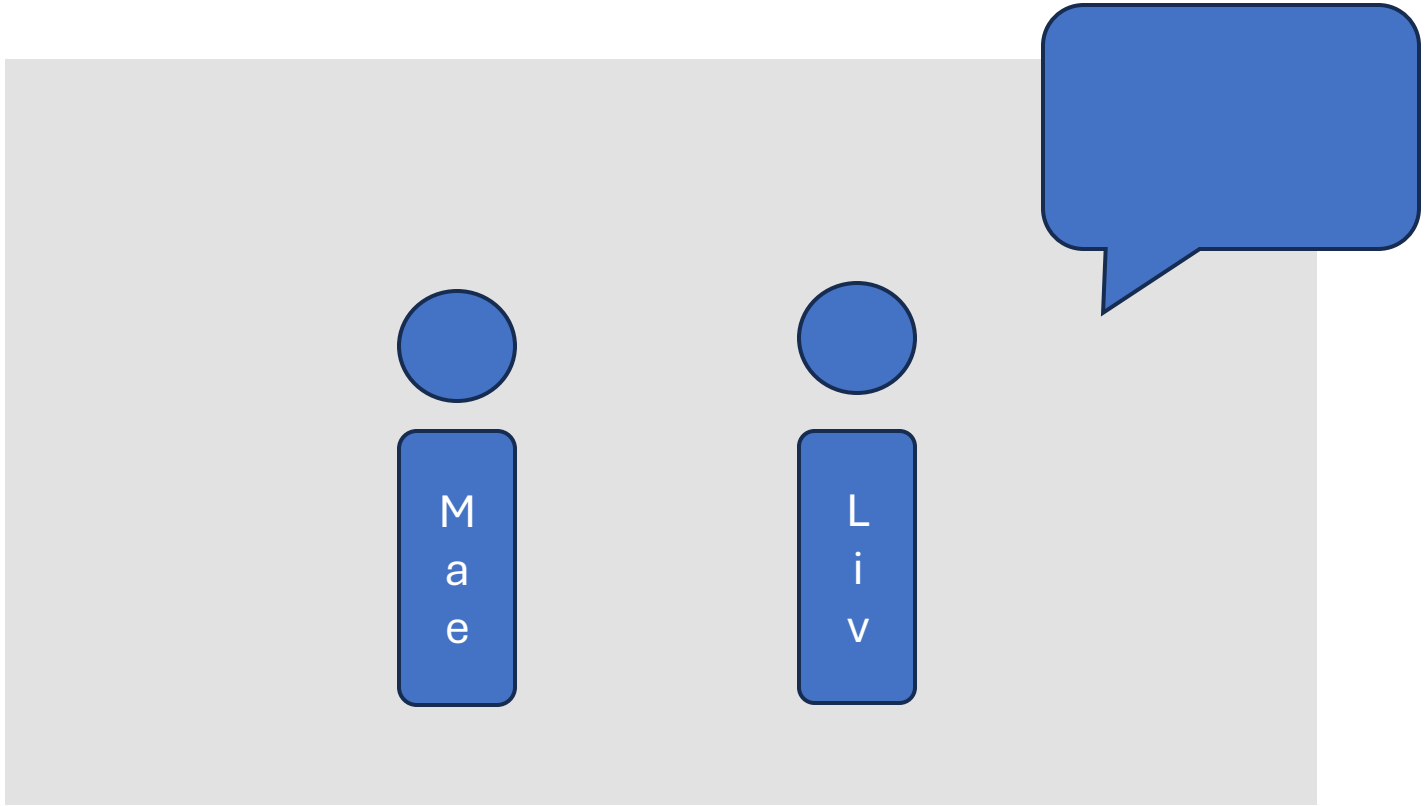
Let’s Reflect

Slide 2.4b Let's Reflect



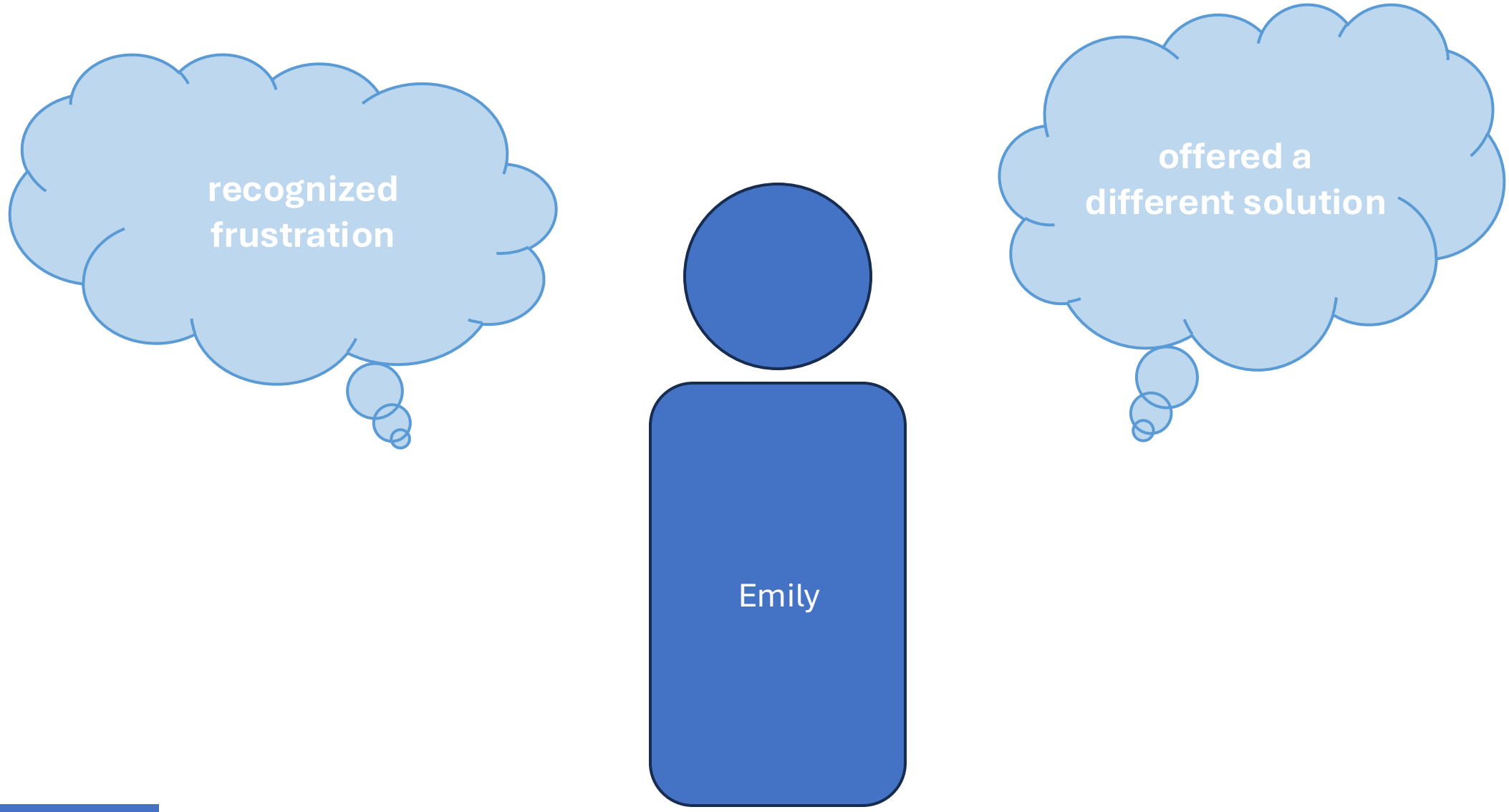
BACK

Slide 2.3a Request for Special Privileges



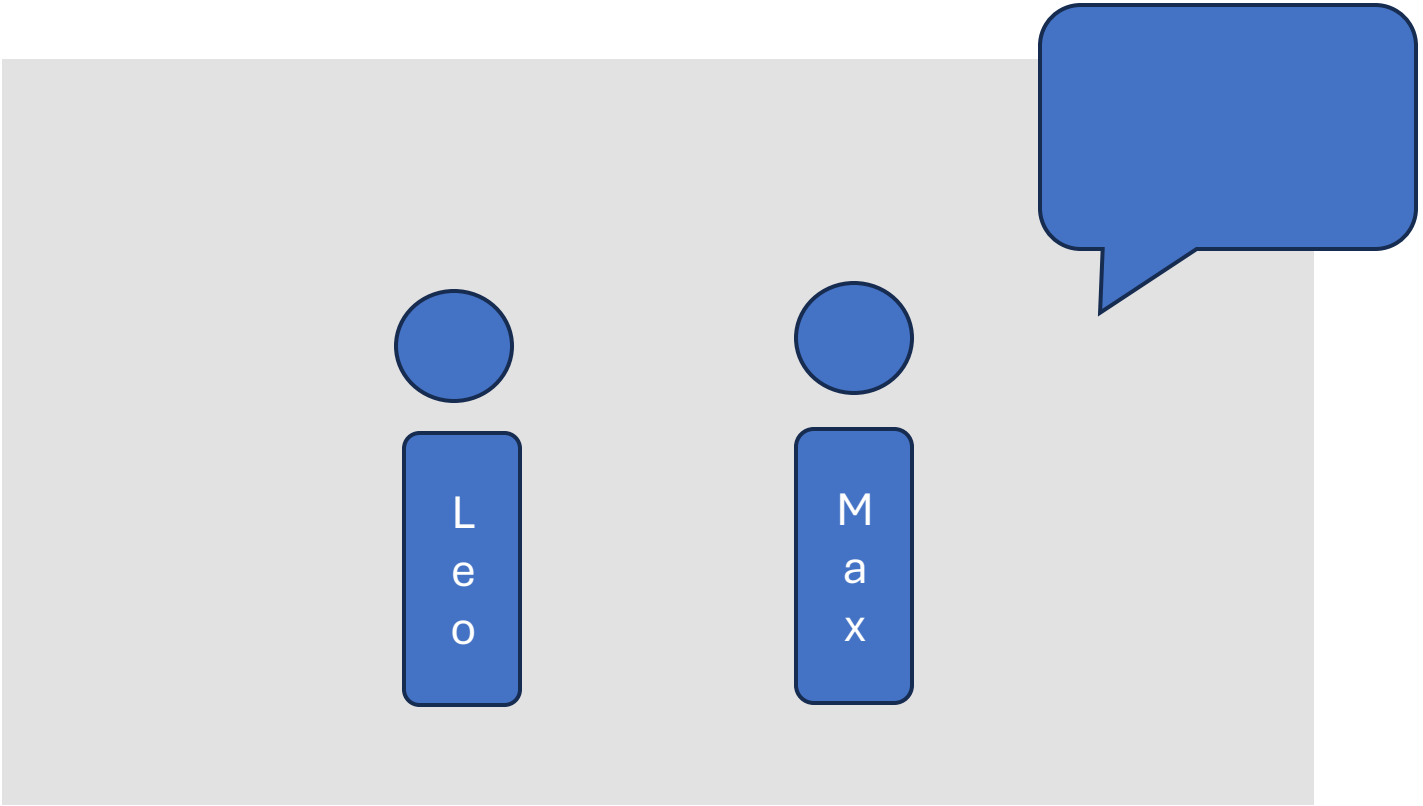
Let's Reflect

Slide 2.3b Let's Reflect



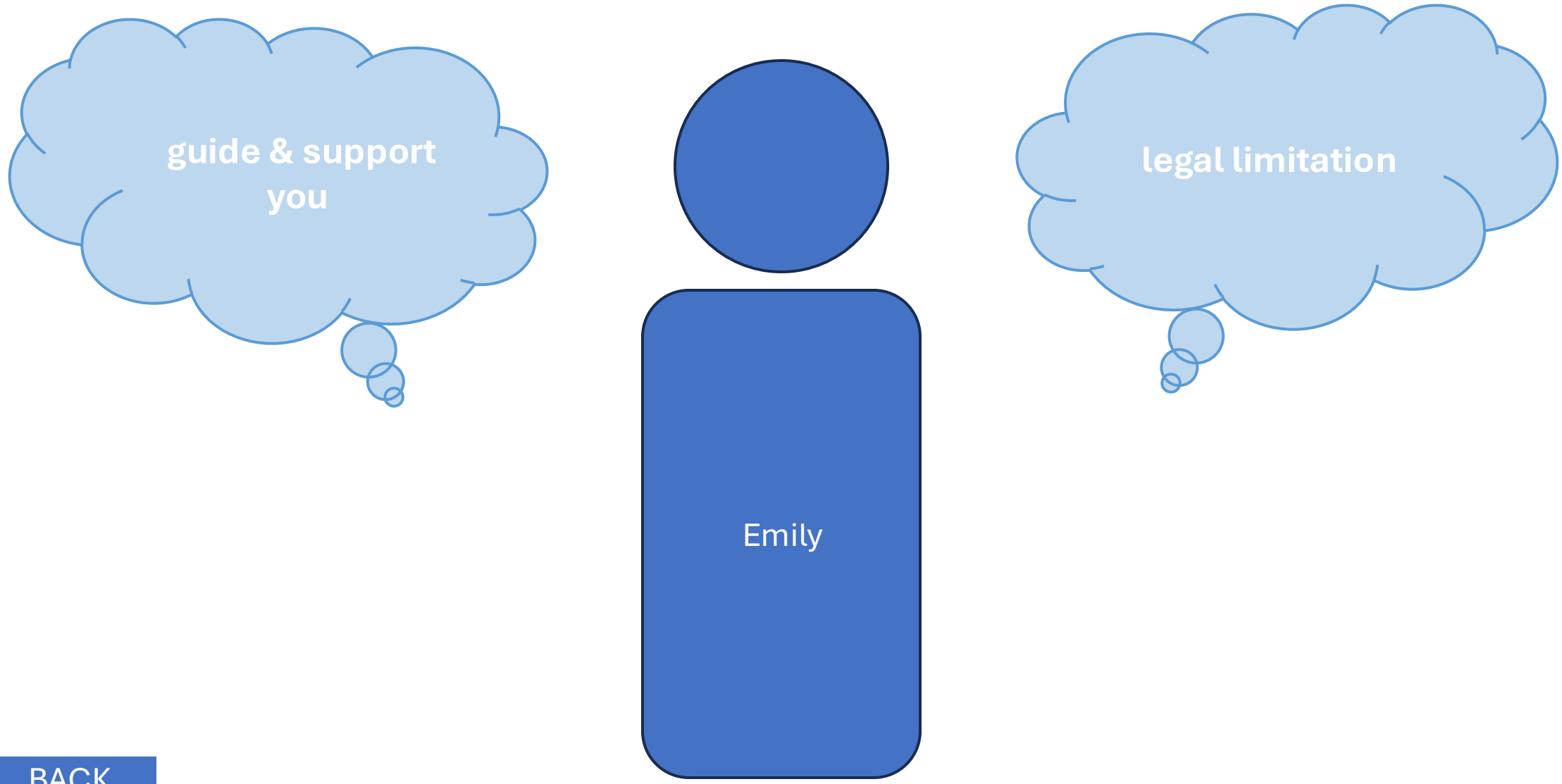
BACK

Slide 2.5a Personal Health Documents



Let's Reflect

Slide 2.5b Let's Reflect



BACK

Slide 2.6 Transition 2



BACK

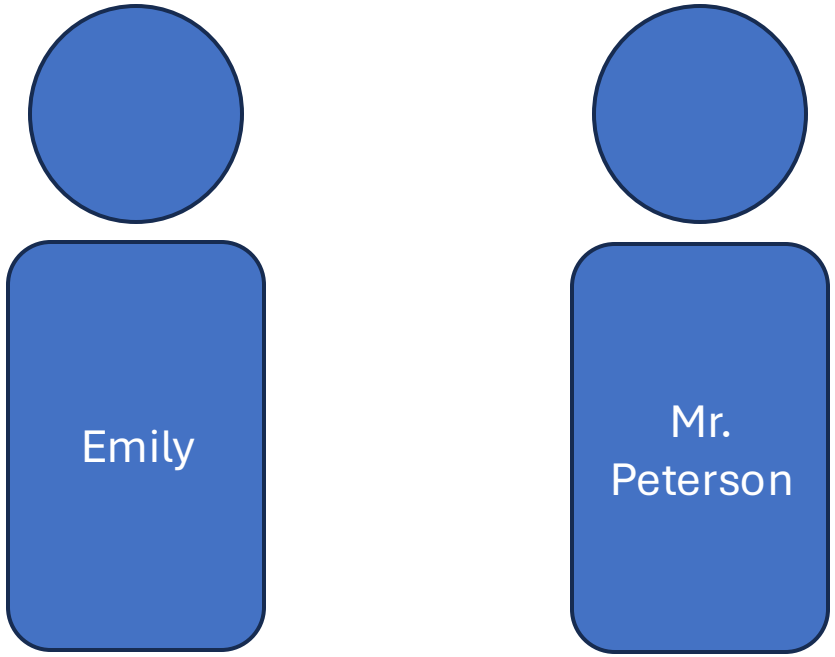
NEXT

Slide 2.7 Situation 1: Excessive Praise

Scene: Information Desk

Emily notices a frequent patron, Mr. Peterson, approaching her. Every time he visits, he compliments her appearance in a way that makes her feel uncomfortable. Today, as he comes up to the desk, he says, "You always look so beautiful with your hair like that, and you blouse is so nice!"

Although his remarks aren’t overly inappropriate, the excessive praise crosses a professional boundary, and Emily feels uneasy.



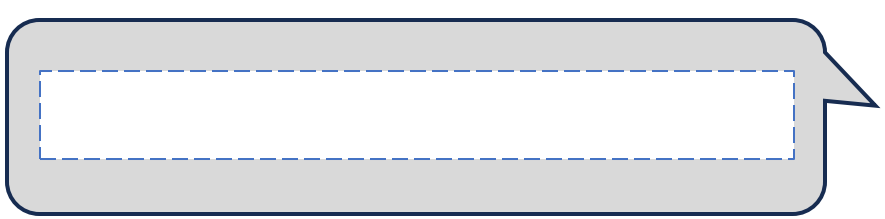
BACK

NEXT

Slide 2.8 Situation 1: Excessive Praise

How can Emily establish a clear boundary and stop the excessive personal comments while remaining polite and professional, ensuring she is not dismissive of the patron's needs?

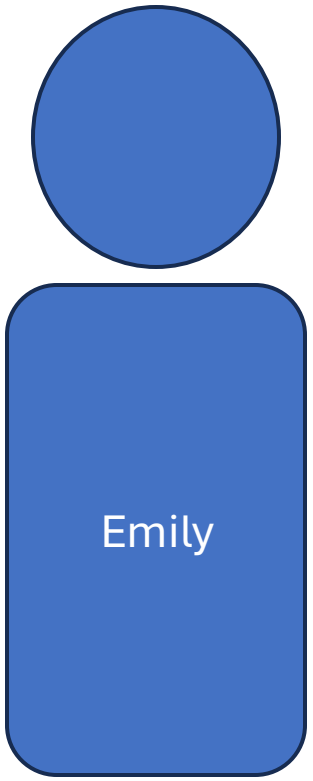
Drag the most appropriate response that helps her set boundaries with Mr. Peterson.

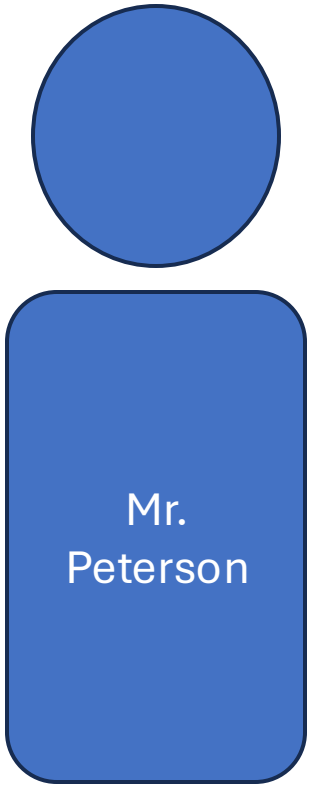


"Thanks! My blouse is new!"

"That's enough! Stop commenting on my appearance!"

(Polite acknowledgement, without a smile) "Thank you. This is my place of work. Do you need help with something library related?"





BACK

NEXT

Slide 2.8a Situation 1: Excessive Praise

How can Emily establish a clear boundary and stop the excessive personal comments while remaining polite and professional, ensuring she is not dismissive of the patron's needs?

Drag the m

"Thanks! My blouse is new!"

Emily's face

"That's enough! Stop

Polite acknowledgement, without a smile: "Thank you. This is my place of work. Do you need help with something library related?"

X

TRY AGAIN

This response could unintentionally encourage Mr. Peterson to continue or even escalate his behavior, as he may take her politeness as an invitation to further the conversation.

BACK

NEXT

Slide 2.8b Situation 1: Excessive Praise

How can Emily establish a clear boundary and stop the excessive personal comments while remaining polite and professional, ensuring she is not dismissive of the patron's needs?

Drag the m

"That's enough! Stop commenting on my appearance!"

"Thanks! My blouse i

Polite acknowledgement, without a smile: "Thank you. This is my place of work. Do you need help with something library related?"

Emily's face

X

TRY AGAIN

This sharp response could lead to a confrontation, as Mr. Peterson may feel embarrassed, causing him to become defensive or retaliate verbally.

BACK

NEXT

Slide 2.8c Situation 1: Excessive Praise

How can Emily establish a clear boundary and stop the excessive personal comments while remaining polite and professional, ensuring she is not dismissive of the patron's needs?

Drag the m

Polite but firm, without a smile: "Thank you. This is my place of work. Do you need help with something library related?"

"Thanks! My blouse i

"That's enough! Stop

Emily's face

X

CORRECT!

This response keeps the interaction professional, while clearly signifying the library is not a social space for personal interaction. The choice to respond without a smile adds another layer of professionalism and subtly communicates the Emily is not encouraging or welcoming further personal comments.

BACK

NEXT

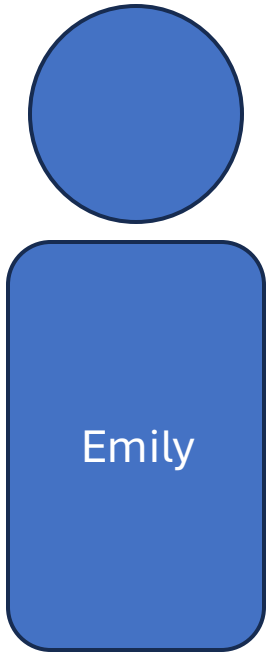
Slide 2.9 Situation 2: Controversial Opinions

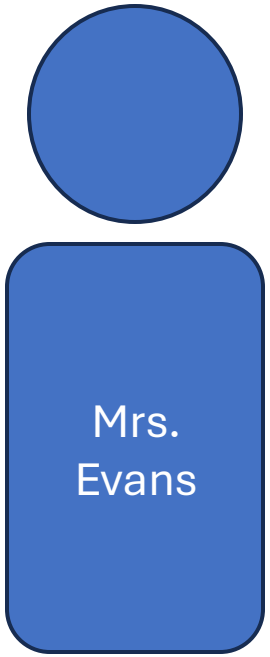
Scene: Library Display Area

Emily is organizing a new display featuring diverse authors and banned books when a patron, Mrs. Evans, walks by. Mrs. Evans eyes the display, notices the Black Lives Matter flag and selection of LGBTQ+ literature, and loudly expresses her disapproval.

"I don’t understand why you people promote this stuff. Libraries should stick to normal books!" Mrs. Evans’ comments attract the attention of nearby patrons.

Emily feels embarrassed and self-conscious.





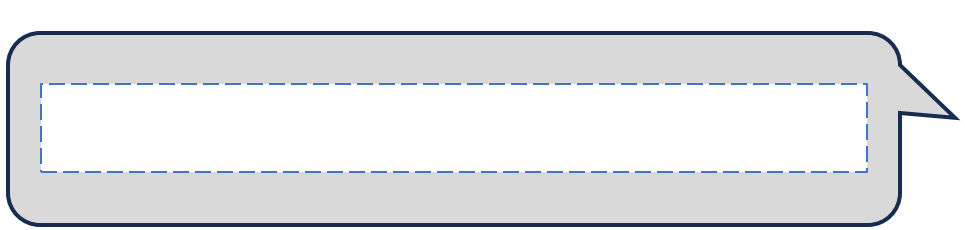
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NEXT

Slide 2.10 Controversial Opinions

How can Emily set clear boundaries when faced with offensive or disruptive remarks while maintaining professionalism and protecting the library's inclusive values?

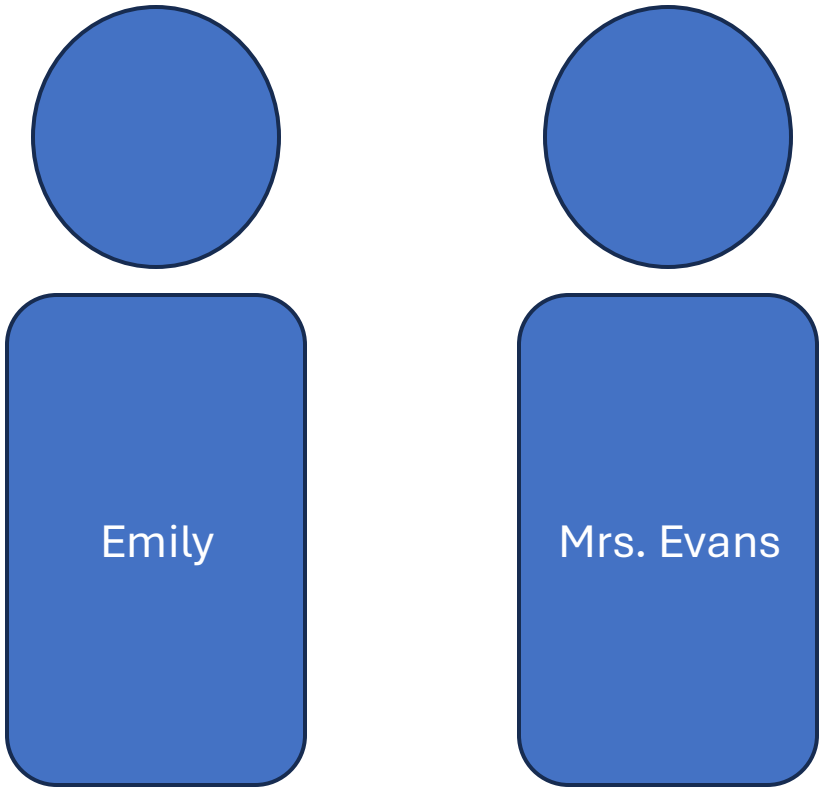
Drag the most appropriate response that helps her confidently enforce library policies.



"That's just your opinion. And it's not appropriate to expresses it here!"

"These books are important, and you're wrong for not seeing their value."

"Our library strives to represent and welcome all members of our community. We offer materials on a wide range of topics to ensure everyone can find something of interest. If you're looking for different materials, I can help you find them."



BACK

NEXT

Slide 2.10a Situation 2: Controversial Opinion

How can Emily establish a clear boundary and stop the excessive personal comments while remaining polite and professional, ensuring she is not dismissive of the patron's needs?

Drag the m

"That's just your opinion. And it's not appropriate to expresses it here!"

Emily's face

"These books are imp
their value."

"Our library strives to repre
community. We offer materials on a wide range of topics to ensure everyone can find something of interest. If you're looking for different materials, I can help you find them."

TRY AGAIN

This response may open the door for a heated debate, as Mrs. Evans may feel justified in continuing to voice her strong opinions, It may turn into a public argument, attracting attention from other patrons.

BACK

NEXT

Slide 2.10b Situation 2: Controversial Opinion

How can Emily establish a clear boundary and stop the excessive personal comments while remaining polite and professional, ensuring she is not dismissive of the patron's needs?

Drag the m

"These books are important, and you're wrong for not seeing their value."

"That's just your opi
expresses it here!"

"Our library strives to rep
our community. We offer
ensure everyone can find something of interest. If you're looking for different materials, I can help you find them."

Emily's face

TRY AGAIN

This response could provoke a louder and even more controversial exchange. Mrs. Evans may feel censored or disrespected and target specific individuals or groups, furthering offending others around her.

BACK

NEXT

Slide 2.10c Situation 2: Controversial Opinion

How can Emily establish a clear boundary and stop the excessive personal comments while remaining polite and professional, ensuring she is not dismissive of the patron's needs?

Drag the m

"Our library strives to represent and welcome all members of our community. We offer materials on a wide range of topics to ensure everyone can find something of interest. If you're looking for different materials, I can help you find them."

"That's just your opi
expresses it here!"

"These books are imp
seeing their value."

Emily's face

CORRECT!

This response is professional and neutral. Mrs. Evans recognizes this and acknowledges Emily's boundaries without pushing the conversation further. She also realizes the library is a public, inclusive space where different perspectives are welcome.

BACK

NEXT

Slide 2.11: Transition 3

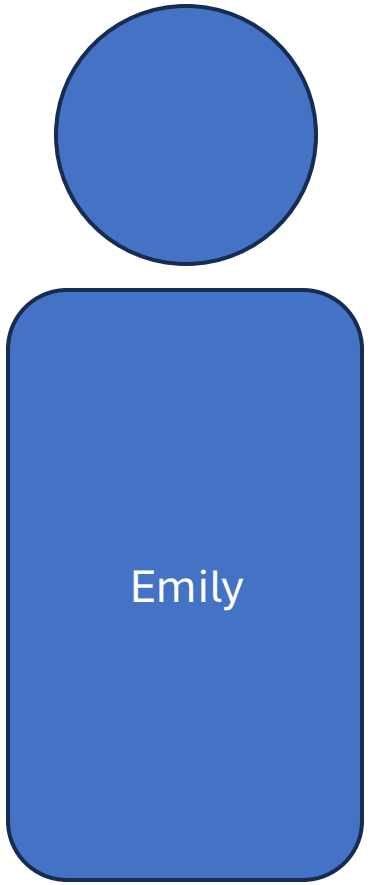


Image of library

BACK

NEXT

Slide 3.1 Put it into Practice



BACK

NEXT

Reference Guide Pop Out Window

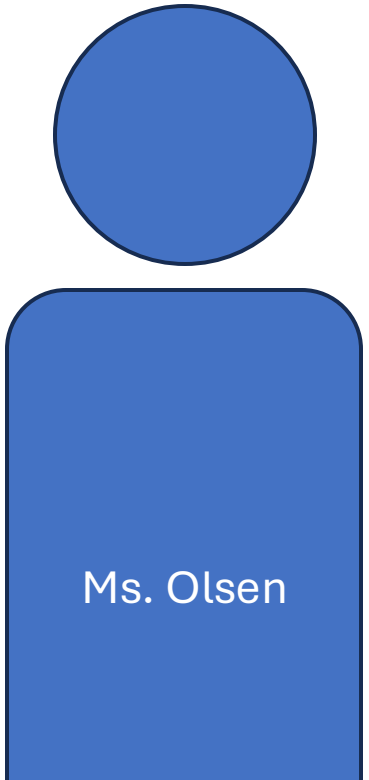


✓ maintain professionalism	× respond harshly, abruptly
✓ redirect conversation	× become defensive
✓ stay neutral	× share opinion
✓ acknowledge feelings	× ignore library's policies

Slide 3.2 Scenario 1: Unsolicited Physical Contact

Scene: Reference Desk

You are approached by a patron, Ms. Olsen, who frequently visits the library. She's always been friendly, but today, as she asks for help locating a book, she touches your arm and stands very close to you while speaking. You feel uncomfortable with the physical proximity and contact, but Ms. Olsen continues her behavior throughout your conversation.



BACK

NEXT

Slide 3.3 Scenario 1 Question

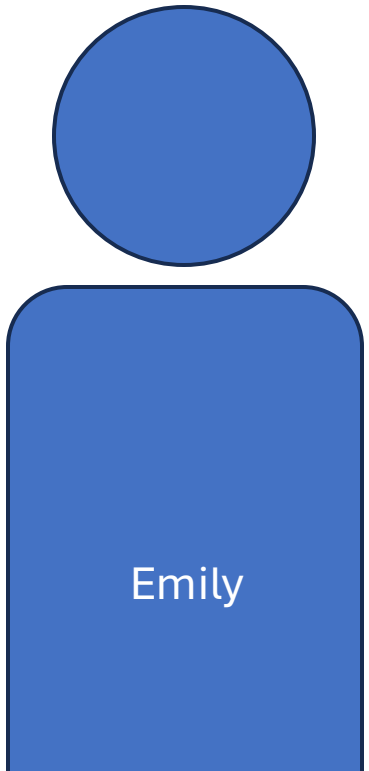
How can you enforce personal space boundaries in a polite yet firm manner while avoiding making the patron feel uncomfortable or embarrassed?

Click on the behavior and response that sets boundaries and follows library policies.

Continue to help Ms. Olsen without addressing her physical proximity, pretending it's not an issue.

"Ms. Olsen, I'm happy to help you find the book you're looking for, but I'd appreciate it if we keep a little more personal space while we look."

"You're too close. Stop touching me!"



BACK

NEXT

Slide 3.3a Scenario 1 Question/Answer

How can you enforce personal space boundaries in a polite yet firm manner while avoiding making the patron feel uncomfortable or embarrassed?

Cli

Continue
pretendi

"Ms. Olse
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"You're t

Continue to help Ms. Olsen without addressing her physical proximity, pretending it's not an issue.



TRY AGAIN

Ms. Olsen escalates her physical contact and becomes more invasive by brushing up against you. Ms. Olsen returns the library frequently and becomes more emboldened with these interactions: touching your back and shoulders.

BACK

NEXT

Slide 3.3b Scenario 1 Question/Answer

How can you enforce personal space boundaries in a polite yet firm manner while avoiding making the patron feel uncomfortable or embarrassed?

Cli

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pretendi

"Ms. Olse
I'd appre

"You're t

"You're too close. Stop touching me!"



TRY AGAIN

Ms. Olsen becomes embarrassed by the rejection and reacts defensively, which leads to further tension and passive-aggressive pushback. "I was just trying to be nice!"

BACK

NEXT

Slide 3.3c Scenario 1 Question/Answer

How can you enforce personal space boundaries in a polite yet firm manner while avoiding making the patron feel uncomfortable or embarrassed?

Cli

Continue
pretendi

"Ms. Olse
I'd appre

You

"Ms. Olsen, I'm happy to help you find the book you're looking for, but I'd appreciate it if we keep a little more personal space while we look."



CORRECT

Ms. Olsen immediately recognizes that you are setting a boundary and politely responds, "Oh, I'm so sorry! I didn't realize I was making you uncomfortable."
By acknowledging her actions and your polite request, she shows she understands the need for personal space and respects it moving forward.

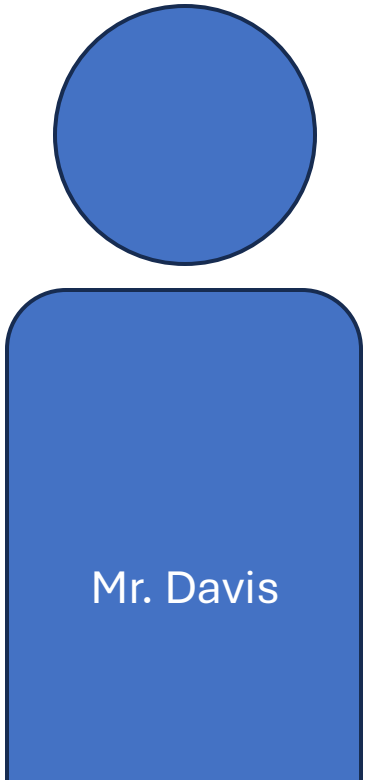
BACK

NEXT

Slide 3.4 Scenario 2: Political Candidate Agenda

Scene: Circulation Desk

You are checking out books for a patron named Mr. Davis when he starts discussing the upcoming election. He begins praising his preferred political candidate and strongly criticizes one of the candidates. After a few minutes, Mr. Davis shifts his attention to you, asking your opinion on the matter and pushing you to agree with his political stance.



BACK

NEXT

Slide 3.5 Scenario 2 Question

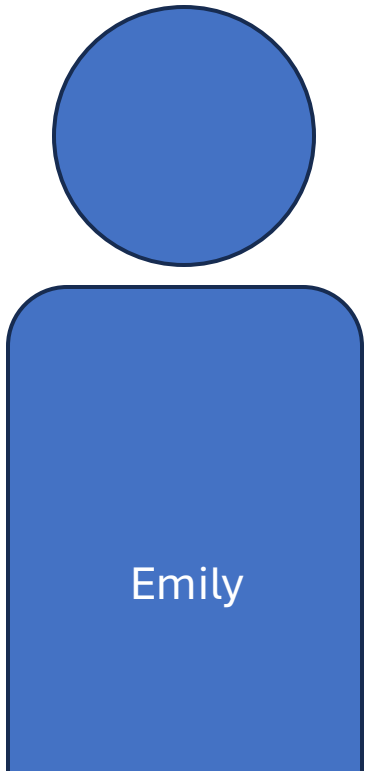
How can you enforce the boundary of not engaging in political discussions while maintaining a calm, neutral stance?

Click on the behavior and response that sets boundaries and follows library policies.

You decided to share your own political opinion, disagreeing with Mr. Davis. You begin to point and wave around your finger and say, “Well, I actually support the other candidate because…” and go into your own political agenda.

You respond neutrally, "As a library staff member, I'm here to assist you with library services, but we try to avoid political discussions in this space to ensure everyone feels comfortable. If you have any questions about your check-out today, I'd be happy to help."

You don’t agree with Mr. Davis's political stance and become frustrated. “This is not the place for that kind of rhetoric. You’re making people feel uncomfortable.”



BACK

NEXT

Slide 3.5a Scenario 1 Question/Answer

How can you enforce personal space boundaries in a polite yet firm manner while avoiding making the patron feel uncomfortable or embarrassed?

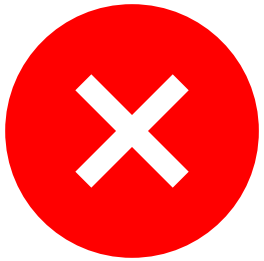
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You don’t agree with Mr. Davis's political stance and become frustrated. “This is not the place for that kind of rhetoric. You’re making people feel uncomfortable.”



TRY AGAIN

Mr. Davis reacts defensively. He escalates the confrontation by making louder or more aggressive comments, attempting to provoke a reaction from Emily or gather support from other patrons. “You’re supposed to serve the public, not silence us! It’s just a conversation!”

BACK

NEXT

Slide 3.5b Scenario 1 Question/Answer

How can you enforce personal space boundaries in a polite yet firm manner while avoiding making the patron feel uncomfortable or embarrassed?

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You decided to share your own political opinion, disagreeing with Mr. Davis. You begin to point and wave around your finger and say, “Well, I actually support the other candidate because…” and go into your own political agenda!



TRY AGAIN

This response opens the door for a heated political debate. Mr. Davis becomes more insistent and argumentative, trying to “convince” you to change your mind, which makes it difficult for you to disengage from the conversation without conflict.

BACK

NEXT

Slide 3.5c Scenario 1 Question/Answer

How can you enforce personal space boundaries in a polite yet firm manner while avoiding making the patron feel uncomfortable or embarrassed?

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You respond neutrally, "As a library staff member, I'm here to assist you with library services, but we try to avoid political discussions in this space to ensure everyone feels comfortable. If you have any questions about your check-out today, I'd be happy to help."



CORRECT

Mr. Davis realizes that you are politely but firmly steering away from the political conversation. "Fair enough. Can you recommend any new books in the history section?" Mr. Davis shows that he understands your attempt to maintain neutrality and respects her boundary.

BACK

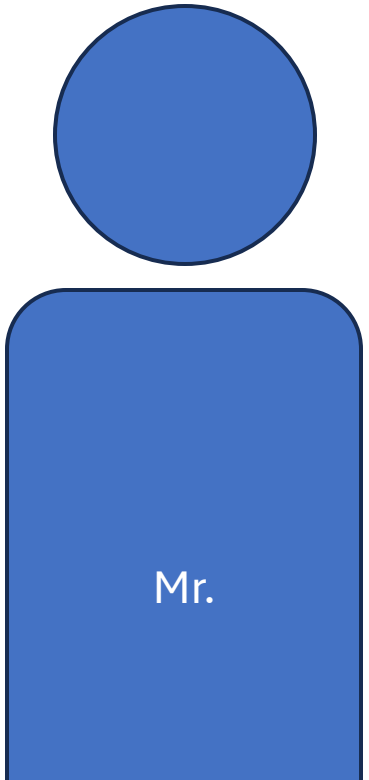
NEXT

Slide 3.6 Scenario 3: Religious Monologue

Scene: Reference Desk

You are helping a few patrons with routine inquiries when a woman named Mrs. Evans approaches. She asks you for a book on religious philosophy, which you quickly locate for her.

However, instead of thanking you, Mr. begins engaging you in an intense religious monologue. She insists on sharing her beliefs and becomes more insistent as you politely try to redirect the conversation.



BACK

NEXT

Slide 3.7 Scenario 3 Question

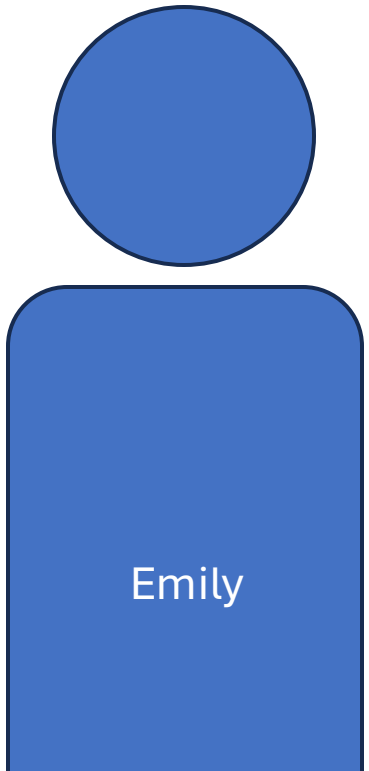
How can you firmly but respectfully disengage and redirect Mrs. Evans while maintaining the library's neutral and welcoming environment?

Click on the behavior and response that sets boundaries and follows library policies.

You . . .blah, blah, blah

You react out of frustration and say, "I don't want to talk about this! I don't want to hear about your religion. I have my own beliefs. I don't need yours!" in a harsh tone.

You say calmly and politely, “Mrs. Evans, I understand that this topic is important to you, but I’m here to help with library services and resources. If you’d like more information on religious philosophy, I’d be happy to guide you to relevant materials. However, I won’t be able to discuss personal beliefs further.”



BACK

NEXT

Slide 3.7a Scenario 3 Question/Answer

How can you enforce personal space boundaries in a polite yet firm manner while avoiding ma

You listen to Mr. Johnson and engage with your own opinion, " Well, I see your point, but I believe . . ."

TRY AGAIN

You've signaled to Mr. Johnson that you're open to debate and he becomes more animated and passionate. What started as a brief interaction has now turned into a lengthy discussion of his religious views, monopolizing your time and preventing you from attending to your duties and assisting other patrons.

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Slide 3.7b Scenario 3 Question/Answer

How can you enforce personal space boundaries in a polite yet firm manner while avoiding ma

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You react out of frustration and say, "I don't want to talk about this! I don't want to hear about your religion. I have my own beliefs. I don't need yours!" in a harsh tone.



TRY AGAIN

Mrs. Evans becomes confrontational and raises her voice, accusing you of being disrespectful. "I'm just trying to share the truth!" You look around and other patrons are staring at the tense environment that has been created.

BACK

NEXT

Slide 3.7c Scenario 3 Question/Answer

How can you enforce personal space boundaries in a polite yet firm manner while avoiding ma

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You say calmly and politely, “Mrs. Evans, I understand that this topic is important to you, but I’m here to help with library services and resources. If you’d like more information on religious philosophy, I’d be happy to guide you to relevant materials. However, I won’t be able to discuss personal beliefs further.”



CORRECT

Mrs. Evans recognizes that you are politely declining to continue the conversation on religion. She says, “I see, I didn’t mean to overstep. Thank you for your help with the book.” This shows that she understands your need to focus on professional duties rather than personal discussions.

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NEXT

Slide 4.1 Recap

Be assertive in your communication

Establish clear policies



You should never have to:

- discuss your religious or spiritual beliefs
- your political opinion or vote

Don't be afraid to say no

Don't be afraid to walk away

We have learned establishing healthy boundaries is crucial, as it maintains a safe and respectful environment for all. Navigating these boundary issues requires clear communication and a firm, yet professional approach. Remember, setting boundaries is healthy and respectful. It allows you to manage your time effectively while maintaining positive interactions.

Finding the right words can be difficult. Remember to reach out to your director when you need support. There's nothing wrong with getting backup.

Image of library

BACK

NEXT

Slide 4.2 Self- Reflection Survey

Reflect on your confidence level when managing challenging patrons.
This self-assessment is for your personal reflections and will help your growth throughout the training. There is no right or wrong answer.

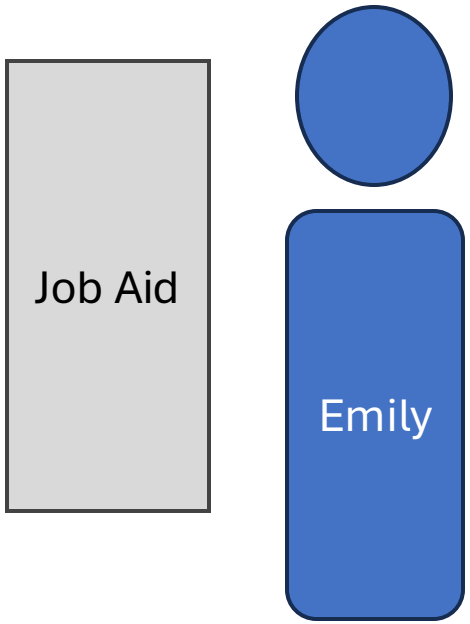
	1	2	3	4	5
I feel confident in my ability to set clear boundaries with patrons.	○	○	○	○	○
I can de-escalate inappropriate or uncomfortable conversations with patrons.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel comfortable enforcing library policies related to patron behavior.	○	○	○	○	○
I can confidently use tools to address unruly patrons.	○	○	○	○	○

BACK

SUBMIT

Slide 4.3 Resources

Download the following job aid for your reference.



BACK

Options for closing slide:

(1) Where to find additional information and who to contact when learner has run out of effective tools & dealing with a patron who has crossed some boundaries

(2) Compare and contrast Likert survey beginning & end survey

(3) Recap learning objectives & how they were met, read over some “scripts” or “prompts” from the job aid . . .

(4) “pose a challenging question related to the course content and encourage learners to appl what they’ve learned to their real-world work context”

(5) E.g.) Which prompt will you try out first tomorrow?

(6) E.g.) Which speaks to you? (eww that sounds stupid)

(7) E.g.) Emily says, “I can really get into setting boundaries with a firm, ‘Is there something I can help you with that is library related?’ (when she says this, it is zoomed in on the job aid) Then she asks the learner, “Which boundary enforcing prompt do you see yourself using? Try it out tonight so you’re ready for your shift tomorrow!” Then Emily repeats her a few time looking into a mirror.

(8) Celebrate learners’ completion of the course

(1) Learner types in prompt to remember and use