

**DEVELOPMENTALLY
APPROPRIATE
COLLECTION
DEVELOPMENT**

A PSYCHOLOGIST'S PERSPECTIVE

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INTRODUCTION

Who am I?

Why am I here?





AGENDA, AKA INFORMED CONSENT

What this is not.

What this is.

Expected risks & outcomes.

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“HARMFUL” MATERIALS?

What constitutes harm?

How do you assess harm?



AN ASIDE ABOUT MORAL PSYCHOLOGY

- Moral psychology is both “built in” to our brains and deeply culturally bound.
- Humans agree across societies that harm is bad and care is good.
- Huge parts of our brains are dedicated to identifying, anticipating, and avoiding harm, especially to ourselves, our “tribe”, and our young.
- Cultures, subcultures, and individuals disagree on –what– is harmful.
- In-built human psychological mechanisms as a reflex seek to identify harm in things that make them uncomfortable, with which they disagree, and/or which are outside their cultural norm.
- “the intuitive dog and its rational tail”—Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*

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“HARMFUL” MATERIALS?

If what constitutes harm is not universally agreed upon, how do we decide?

TO THE ETHICS!

In the discipline of psychology:

Principles of Beneficence and Nonmaleficence

- Aspirational
- Used as a guideline for considering specific actions

Actions are evaluated as:

- Congruent with standards of care within the profession
- Those standards should be informed by the body of scientific evidence
- Avoiding harm is an active process, and combines thinking about intent and impact, and weighing that against potential benefits (symptom improvement)



The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

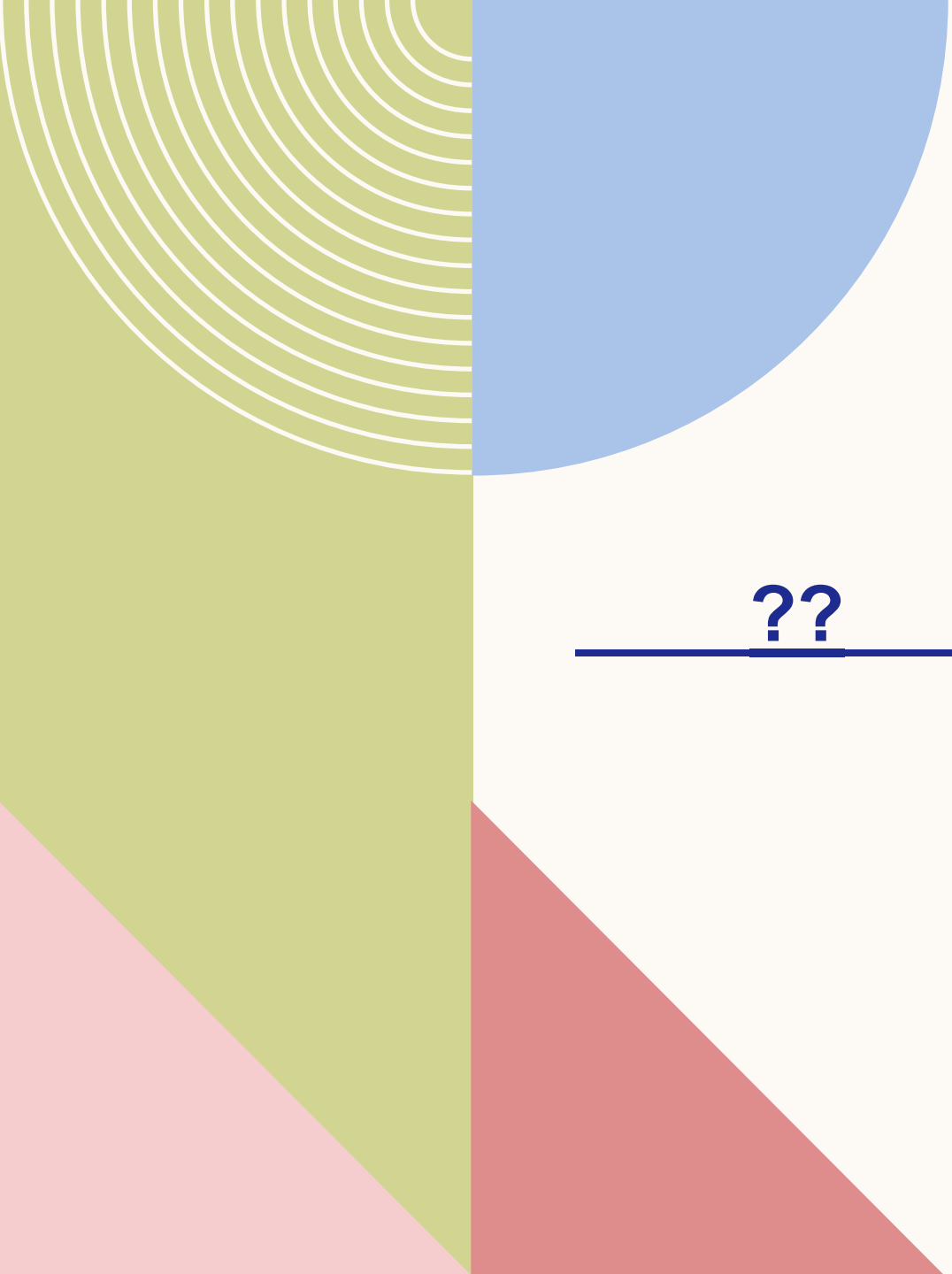
1. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
2. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
3. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.
4. We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.
5. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.
6. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
7. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
8. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.
9. We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.

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“APPROPRIATE” MATERIALS?



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-APPROPRIATE MATERIALS?



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APPROPRIATE MATERIALS?

- Contextually appropriate?
- Culturally appropriate? (does not necessarily mean culturally similar)
- Age appropriate?
- Developmentally appropriate?

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APPROPRIATE MATERIALS?

ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING QUESTION: WHAT DOES YOUR DISCIPLINE SAY ABOUT YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THESE CATEGORIES?

CONTEXTUALLY APPROPRIATE?

AGE APPROPRIATE?

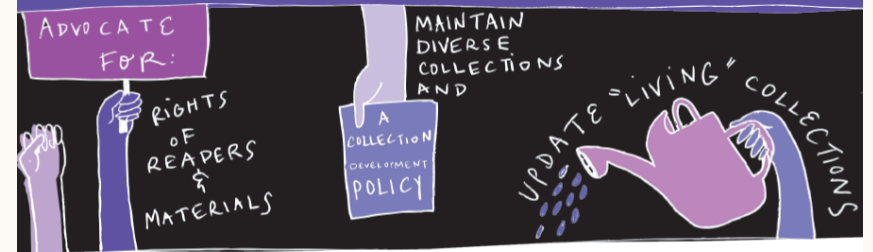
CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE?

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE?

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IV. Collection Knowledge and Management



1. Demonstrates knowledge, management, use, and appreciation of children's literature, multimodal materials, digital media, and other materials that contribute to a diverse, current and relevant children's collection.
2. Maintains a diverse collection that is inclusive of the needs of all children and their caregivers in the community and recognizes children's needs to see and learn about people like and unlike themselves in the materials they access.
3. Advocates for and purchases materials by and about underrepresented communities, addressing the need for more representation of marginalized groups.
4. Maintains collections in different languages and formats, as appropriate, to remove linguistic barriers to access.
5. Understands and applies criteria for evaluating the content, artistic merit, and cultural authenticity of children's materials in all genres and formats.
6. Keeps current by consulting a wide variety of print and digital review sources (including blogs and online scholarship) and publishers' promotions (including those of independent presses), by attending professional meetings, by considering patron suggestions and popular demand, and by reading, viewing, and listening.
7. Keeps up to date on teen and adult digital and print reference sources that may serve the needs of children, families, and caregivers.
8. Understands and implements the library's comprehensive collection development policy, and develops, assesses, and revises the policy as necessary. Works to ensure that collection policy is consistent with the library's mission, the ALA's Library Bill of Rights and its interpretations, and other relevant standards.
9. Responds to community challenges to materials according to the library's materials-review policy, collection development policy, the ALA's Library Bill of Rights and its interpretations, and other relevant standards.
10. Demonstrates a knowledge of cataloging, classification, indexing procedures, and practices to support access to children's materials.



AN ASIDE ABOUT “OBSCENE”

- Obscene is a legally defined term, which is inherently culturally bound. “the average person, applying contemporary community standards”
- The law is outside my scope of practice.



NUDITY AND DEVELOPMENTAL APPROPRIATENESS

- Non-sexual nudity is common across different cultures, subcultures, and families, while uncommon in others. Even in more modest cultures, non-sexual nudity with same sex family or community members may be common in certain contexts.
- American Academy of Pediatrics:
 - References to nudity vs. modesty are referenced as culturally/familially bound
 - “Evaluate family respect for modesty”
 - It is suggested families discuss their rules and guidelines regarding nudity and expectations for public behavior



NUDITY AND DEVELOPMENTAL APPROPRIATENESS

- Children's possible developmentally appropriate expected reactions to encountering nudity
 - Developmentally appropriate interest/curiosity/questions/naming
 - Developmentally appropriate (but sometimes embarrassing to adults) commentary
 - Disgust or play disgust
 - Discomfort/aversion/avoidance
 - Neutral



NUDITY AND DEVELOPMENTAL APPROPRIATENESS

- Consider children's behaviors/reactions which
 - Are normal and need no response
 - Are normal but require/would benefit from an adult response/guidance
 - Are more rare but readily manageable with adult response/guidance
 - Are more concerning and would benefit from professional intervention
- Parents can use children's reactions as guideposts for developmental readiness and targets for a more active parenting approach



SEXUAL INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

- Includes (or may be broken down into) information about health and hygiene, safety, and sexuality.
- Organizations of experts stress the importance of factual information.



RESOURCES FOR CONSIDERING AGE/ DEVELOPMENTAL APPROPRIATENESS RE: SEXUAL EDUCATION MATERIALS

- American Academy of Pediatrics:
 - [“What’s normal, what’s not” \(2-6 year olds\)](#)
 - References to media involve having a family media plan (links to a tool to help parents make a family media plan) and open discussions about what is appropriate
- [When and How to Talk With Your Child About Sex](#)
 - Age brackets:
 - 18 mos-3 yrs
 - 4-5
 - 5-7
 - 8-9
- [Gradeschool page with links to various topics related to puberty](#)
- [Teen page with links to topics about sex & dating](#)



RESOURCES FOR CONSIDERING AGE/ DEVELOPMENTAL APPROPRIATENESS RE: SEXUAL EDUCATION MATERIALS

- [National Child Traumatic Stress Network: Sexual Development and Behavior in Children](#) (link downloads a .pdf)
 - Age brackets:
 - Preschool (<4)
 - Young children (4-6)
 - School aged children (7-12)
 - Common and less common behaviors by bracket
 - What to teach when by bracket: basic information & safety
 - Includes book lists for parents and children, several of which list target ages
- [Common Sense Media: Sex Ed Books for Kids](#)
 - By age, curated by a health educator

PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF A DIVERSE COLLECTION: COMPETING WITH BAD INFORMATION

- Average age of exposure to online pornography (often accidental/unsought) is between 10-13 (depending on the study).
- High quantities of unsupervised screen time and households where discussions about sex are discouraged are associated with increased sexual behavior in youth



PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF A DIVERSE COLLECTION: PUBLIC HEALTH

- Information is preventative:
 - Children educated about their own bodies and in basic self-advocacy skills are less likely to be sexually abused and more likely to seek out adult support if something does happen.
 - Accurate and proactive sex education reduces high risk sexual behavior, which also reduces likelihood of experiencing sexual violence.
 - Exposure to various body types reduces body dysmorphic thoughts and some problematic eating behaviors.
 - Positive or neutral LGBTQIA+ representation is a suicide prevention intervention. LGBT youth in high rejection environments are far more likely to have substance use problems, chronic suicidal ideation, and to die by suicide. Youth in high acceptance environments show lower risk in all these areas.



SUMMARIZING THE THOUGHT PROCESS

What are your ethics and duties in your profession? Is what is being asked of you in or out of your scope of practice?

What's the balance between potential reader risk and benefit?

Current recommendations and/or guidelines by trusted bodies of experts focused on developmental well-being who update their guidance when warranted?

Organized in age brackets similar to identified developmental brackets?

Consider some developmentally complex items for specialty use cases for underserved populations, such as sex and relationship education materials for adults with cognitive and/or social limitations.

THANK YOU

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