

WVLS Staff WAPL Conference

Name: Jamie Matczak, Education Consultant

1. What was the title of a session you attended?

Grace-ful Security in Difficult Times

Presenter: Michelle Denis, Head of Public Services, Hedberg Public Library

How can we use lessons from the pandemic to broaden and strengthen our connections to the community? Michelle Dennis will discuss how we can use our security services to both protect our spaces and teach new users how to successfully stay within our rules; confirm that our personal and organizational foundations are solid and that our practice matches our ethics; and be serious about what we do without taking ourselves too seriously.

2. What two things are you taking away that you heard or think are most important?

- Patrons are unaware of terms that we use regularly. (patron, pornography, panhandling, due date). It's important for us to remember that the language and words we use might not be understood by everyone.
- Our emotions and charges only last for 90 seconds. We stay angry because we allow our emotions to get into the way. How can we work on letting go of that anger and those emotions when we have an unpleasant interaction?
- "Showing grace" was talked about often. I feel like this phrase has been used a lot in the last year.

3. What websites or resources did the presenter share for attendees to learn more about this topic?

- Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself by Dr. Joe Dispenza
- [Ryan Dowd's work](#) was referenced, which is helpful because his webinars and trainings are available to all libraries in Wisconsin through LSTA funds, through 2021.

4. What was the audience reaction to this session? What kind of feedback was given?

There was a request for advice on staff getting along with one another. Michelle's library (Hedberg Public Library) recently did some in-service training for staff that focused on the phrase "help me understand." Michelle eluded that this feels like a graceful way to overcome differing opinions.

Michelle is a seasoned presenter, and someone I had hired when I worked at the Nicolet Federated Library System. She is very skilled at presenting and has a lot of worthwhile material to share on the topic of customer service. This webinar was well done!

1. What was the title of a session you attended?

Don't Stand So Close to Me: Physically-Distanced Programming

Presenters: Paige Crawford, Library Assistant, and Kristie Hauer, Director
Shawano County Library

Join us and see how our small town library was able to have in-person programs while physically distancing yet still maintaining a social connection. Learn how we proactively engaged our community during our "new normal" with fun programs like The Amazing Race using transmitter headsets to keep in contact with our participants on their car radios. Other programs like Drive-in Bingo and Community I-Spy kept our patrons from losing a sense of community while keeping a sensible distance. We converted existing programs into kit distribution for patrons to pick up with curbside appointments. Families who loved attending our escape rooms or adult DIY crafts were able to pick up kits to complete at home.

2. What two things are you taking away that you heard or think are most important?

- The session covered several key programs the library had done in the past year when programming at the library wasn't possible. One of the programs was "The Amazing Race," where teams had to use clues to do a scavenger hunt, similar to the tv show. Teams needed a vehicle and a smartphone to participate. Instructions to the teams were given via a local radio station so the library could talk to people in their cars. The event was very well received, and many participants want the library to do it again.
- What I found most impactful is that each of the clues promoted some of the library services. One of the activities involved teams having to place a hold in the catalog. Another one promoted their Escape Room and decoding a puzzle. This is an active and passive way of promoting library programming.
- This August, they will be trying their first, interactive movie night.

3. What websites or resources did the presenter share for attendees to learn more about this topic?

I can't recall specific resources that were mentioned, but Shawano County Library is very active in the community and in professional development. I've seen its staff do several presentations for state conferences, and for the ARSL (Association for Rural and Small Libraries) Conference.

One resource that was mentioned was the FM headsets, which were purchased on Amazon for \$13 each.

4. What was the audience reaction to this session? What kind of feedback was given?

There were several questions on program logistics, such as staffing needs and costs. One question was how the library was able to read stories over the radio considering copyright issues. The response was that the library contacted the publishers ahead of time and didn't run into any issues.

The presentation ended around the 35-minute mark, so there was more than enough time for questions. As a continuing education consultant, I would request at least 45-50 minutes of content for a conference or for contact hours.

Overall, this session was presented very well and offered great ideas.

5. How was your experience with the conference being virtual?

I thought this virtual conference was very well done and engaging and that the WAPL Conference Committee did an excellent job. The platform, WHOVA, was easy to navigate. There were a few times that I could not get into a session right away, but that seemed to dissipate as the week went on. I tried the virtual photo headshot, which was fun. I had no idea that something like that existed.

Initially I thought the conference being spread out over 4 days would be too much, and by Friday, I did feel some conference fatigue. The only suggestion I would offer for future online conferences would be to shorten it to 3 days. The conference committee should feel very proud of the work they did!