

LIS Mental Health

January 30-February 3, 2017

LIS Mental Health aims to raise awareness of mental health among library and archives workers.

<http://tinyurl.com/LISmentalhealth17>

Organizers

[Kelly McElroy](#) (2016, 2017)

[Jessica Schomberg](#) (2017)

[Kate Deibel](#) (2017)

[Court](#) (2017) - help with chat questions

[Cecily Walker](#) (2016)

If you're having a mental health emergency, please call 911 or a crisis hotline ([USA](#), [Canada](#), [UK](#), [Australia](#)).

Ways to participate

[Twitter chats](#)

[At your institution](#)

[Post to your own blog, etc](#)

[Share resources](#)

Ways to participate

LIS Twitter chat

February 2 ~ twitter chat @ 2 pm PST / 4 pm CST / 5 pm EST / 10 pm UTC

#lismentalhealth

If you have any concerns about going public with your mental health status, please use the [anonymous relay](#).

- Q1. Name and location (if you're comfortable sharing) #ismentalhealth
- Q2. What do you see as the biggest barrier to talking about mental health in LIS? #ismentalhealth
- Q3. How does mental health/illness affect your work life? #ismentalhealth
- Q4. What kinds of support does your employer offer in the workplace? What support do you think employers should offer? #ismentalhealth
- Q5. Have recent political changes in the US/UK/Canada/Australia impact how you view mental health care? #ismentalhealth
- Q6. What types of self-care help you? #ismentalhealth
- Q7. How can people respond to mental health ableism in the workplace? #ismentalhealth

Medication Twitter Chat

Kate Deibel will lead a twitter conversation about taking mental health medications using the hashtag #endpillshaming. This will take place throughout the day on Wednesday, February 1st. Anyone is encouraged to talk openly about how medications help them manage their mental health issues. No shame is to be had anymore for using meds!

At your institution

Libraries, archives, professional organizations, and other institutions can provide trainings, facilitated discussions, or other opportunities for education, skill-sharing, reflection, and advocacy. You might consider the following:

- **Bring in a speaker.** At your institution, there may be a counseling or mental health unit. A social worker, mental health counselor, or psychiatrist may be willing to come in and speak to library staff. You could suggest a topic like mindfulness or self-care, or ask them what they think would be relevant for workers in your environment. There may also be mental health advocates, such as a chapter of the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#), in your community. Or, you could bring in the Americans with Disabilities Act compliance officer to talk about the process for getting accommodation, or a representative from HR who can speak about how to use insurance for mental health counseling.
- **Create a space for reflection and self-care.** If there is a shared space for staff, or even an empty cubicle, create a wellness space. This can include signage or handouts explaining programs available to employees (for example, how insurance can be used for mental health treatment, or how to contact an ombudsperson) as well as coloring books, meditation programs, or other materials used for self-care. You can see an example from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners here: <https://twitter.com/eminencefont/status/690226806675365888>.
- **Discuss (and adjust) your policies.** This can be done at any level, from the whole institution down to individual units or departments. Even small things, like practices around disclosing the reasons that an employee takes a sick day, can make a workplace

more welcoming to people experiencing mental illness. Does your institution have an [Employee Assistance Program](#) that provides free counseling? Who can help with ADA accommodations at your workplace? Put LIS Mental Health on the agenda for your next meeting, and use this as a chance to discuss how things work, and how they could work better, for staff with mental illness.

- **Watch the [Mental Health First Aid USA for Library Staff](#) webinar** recorded for ALA. MHFA trains individuals to help someone who is experiencing a mental health crisis. The full 8-hour MHFA training [may be available in your area](#), but the webinar is a good starting point. If you watch with a group, follow up with a discussion of how this information could be helpful in your workplace, but also what other questions folks have.
- **Hold a reading discussion.** There are many books about mental illness, self-care, and mental health. Whether it is a book chapter or an article, invite staff to read a shared text and then host a discussion. You might consider a chapter from [The Psychology of Librarianship](#), one of the [zines on this list](#), or a story from the [Librarian Burnout](#) project.
- **Share resources.** Even if you can't do an in-person event, perhaps you can share a list of resources or send an email each day of LIS Mental Health week, covering a different topic. Topics could include local resources for staff, links to readings/videos, information about support organizations, and reminders of federal laws and institutional policies related to mental health and disability.

Post to your own blog, etc.

Please do not feel you must self-disclose your own mental health status -- and absolutely do not disclose someone else's status -- but if you choose to share your story through social media, please tag it with #lismentalhealth. If you post to a personal blog, discuss it on a podcast, or through some other form that's not immediately hashtagable, please send it to the LIS Mental Health Tumblr below.

You can also submit anonymously to the LIS Mental Health Tumblr: [Anonymous submissions welcome](#).

Share Resources

If you know of websites, books, zines, organizations, or other things related to mental health that you believe others can benefit from, please share them in this [editable document](#).