



DEAR LIBRARIAN,

I would like to acknowledge the invaluable role you play in preserving knowledge, providing essential resources to our community, and creating a space for gathering and learning.

As a library user, I'd like to share my experiences about the significant impact libraries have on my life.

I know first-hand that safety is not a single decision, task, or situation. It is a delicate balance I live every day, a balance between the risks I face and the spaces I inhabit.

Your library plays a role in this dance.

Through my lived and ongoing experiences of violence and abuse, I may visit your library to make use of its resources and dedicated space for reading, research, learning, intellectual engagement, and community events. I might visit to be less visible to people who know or monitor me, to study or work anonymously. A space where I can reflect and think about my experiences, options and steps. A place to be still. I may not reach out for support but may feel supported by the space itself.

The surveillance I experience at home and on my devices might be one of the reasons I use your technology and not my own; "Leave no trace" is my motto. My visits to the library might be intentional, or wandering, where I bump into or seek out resources that can assist my quest for a safer life for myself and my family.

Like many people who experience violence and abuse, I have been responding to and resisting the violence used against me for a long time. Not all responders wear uniforms or drive cars with sirens. If I seek your assistance in locating information; this request could require your discretion. I may never have the safety to ask, but I will be looking to see if you provide the information in ways I can quietly notice and draw from.

How you treat me or respond to my request is important, as it could be the first, only or last time I reach out for help. Making information and support material easily and discreetly accessible can make an important difference for my ongoing pursuit of safety.

Please listen to my lived expertise about what I need now and next.

FOLLOW MY LEAD.

LIBRARIES LAB

INSIGHT EXCHANGE

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