Breaking Library Silos for Social Justice Strategy Session

Society of American Archivists | Archives * Records 2019
Our Mission

The Breaking Library Silos for Social Justice (BLS4SJ) collective provides an opportunity for workers in libraries, archives, museums, and other information spaces to challenge their personal and professional biases via resources, dialogue, and events that decenter whiteness and emphasize voices of color and queer and trans perspectives in pursuit of racial and social justice.

We work intentionally to gather Central Texas professionals from across workplaces, ages, and identities to create community and work collectively to destabilize inequitable institutions. We believe that by working within a critical librarianship framework, we can amplify and serve underrepresented voices in our own communities.

https://breakinglibrarysilos.weebly.com
How we did it
What worked
What didn’t

THE WORKSHOP
our organizers’ toolkit

https://breakinglibrarysilos.weebly.com/resources.html
our strategy session today

1. Introductions and workshop overview
2. Discussion groups and (optional!) vision board activity
3. Reflections and questions
INTROS

Who are your facilitators?

What was this whole workshop thing about?
Speakers and Panel Discussion
Information Silos “Birds of a Feather” Lunch

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

How Schedules reinforce institutional racism / exclusions

Elevating other voices through programs + speakers

Bring in minority voices

How should a public librarian celebrate Black History Month? What's the plan?

How do we talk about mental divide? 

Saying we're color blind is bullshit.

Website: We Need More Books

Managers need to focus on human needs, align work needs.
Breaking Silos

Group Discussions

White Supremacy

[Post-it notes are attached to a board, discussing topics such as "White Supremacy," "can I really change my ways," "collect data to help advance for the benefit of others," and "If there is an official diversity or inclusion policy do you agree that your social justice or advocacy work is part of that policy?".]
Closing Reflections
ACTIVITY TIME

- Choose a table topic that resonates
- Use the provided materials to envision how the archives profession could address this topic as informed by your experience
- Have fun -- collage, draw, doodle, or just discuss!
- We’ll be using the notecards to reflect on this exercise after about 20 minutes of discussion
Sample creations

1. **Come to Us!**
   - Our Library Has It All
   - Why is no one coming?
   - What issues are we not voicing?

2. **Oh! I guess I need to go into the community!**

3. **Software Voyager**

4. **At the Edge Between Lines**
   - To white supremacy in the Dewey Decimal System
   - To provide a collaborative and learner-oriented learning environment

5. **Resistance**

6. **Decolonize**
   - Boxes
Discussion topics

- Reference & Instruction & Consultation
- Controlled Vocabulary & Metadata & Cataloging
- Inclusive Collection Development
- Confronting Whiteness & White Supremacy
- Advocating for Social Justice Within Institutions
CLOSING REFLECTION

NOTECARDS
TOOLKIT
QUESTIONS /
OPEN THE FLOOR
THANKS!

Amy Armstrong  
Chermaine Burleson  
Molly Hults

Amanda Jasso  
Kristy Sorensen

breakinglibrarysilos@gmail.com