Customer Service/Reference Interview Standards for Adult Services

While at the desk:

-Be aware of the public. Who is in the adult services area? Do they seem to need help?

When someone walks into the adult services area:

-Smile and make eye contact. You can also say hello if you catch a patron’s eye. This makes you more approachable to patrons.

When someone approaches the desk:

-Make eye contact and smile at them as they come to the desk.

-Be the first to greet them with “Hi, Can I help you find something?”

-Make your body language open and attentive.

-Positively reinforce their question: “Sure, I can definitely help you with that.” Or especially with a young patron, “That’s a great question.”

Things to look for:

-People think that they’re bothering us. They’ll say, “I’m sorry to interrupt but…” or “I don’t want to keep you from doing your work but…” In this situation, make sure that they know that you’re happy to help. You can say, “I’m happy to help!” or “Helping patrons is an important part of my job. What can I help you find?”

-The sign above the AS desk (Adult Services) can confuse younger patrons looking for materials. They’ll sometimes say, “This isn’t an adult services question, but…” Reassure them that we can help any patron anyone materials.

-Oftentimes, those who need help may not approach the desk. It is your job to be aware of who is in the area and be able to read the situation. If they seem lost or unsure, ask “is there something I can help you find?”

Customer Service with Kids:

-A child who approaches a desk might feel unsure or not want to ask their question. At this point, we must be as approachable as we can. Smile and make eye contact and warmly greet them.

-It is important that we take a child’s question as seriously as we take an adult’s question.

When someone appears to be leaving:

-Tell them, “Have a good day!”

-You might have someone come over to look at our programs or take a book mark.

Roaming Reference:

-While straightening up the area or while doing a sweep of the AS area, you might come across someone in the area. Smile or greet them, and if they appear to be in the stacks or looking for something on the catalog computer, you can ask them, “Are you finding everything okay?” Most of the time they are, but with that, you’ve made them feel welcomed and now they’re more likely to come to us for future questions. And if they did need help, they’ve received it, and they feel as though we are attuned to their needs.

Remember: Good customer service goes hand in hand with good reference. Before we can ask the questions necessary to help them with their search or before we start finding information for them, we need to be approachable. And again, at the very minimum, that’s smiling, establishing eye contact, giving a friendly greeting. We need to put them at ease. Many times, they’re concerned that their question is dumb or that this isn’t the right desk to ask--we hear a lot of “I don’t want to bother you!”--and it’s our job to reassure them verbally and non-verbally that we can help them. We need to be confident in our ability to help.