



HOW TO RECEIVE A CHALLENGE

When a patron approaches a public service desk to challenge library materials, programs, etc., they might express disapproval that the item(s) or program(s) were paid for with taxpayer money or that they were displayed where children would find them; they may feel that the content is harmful to children or misleading to the public.

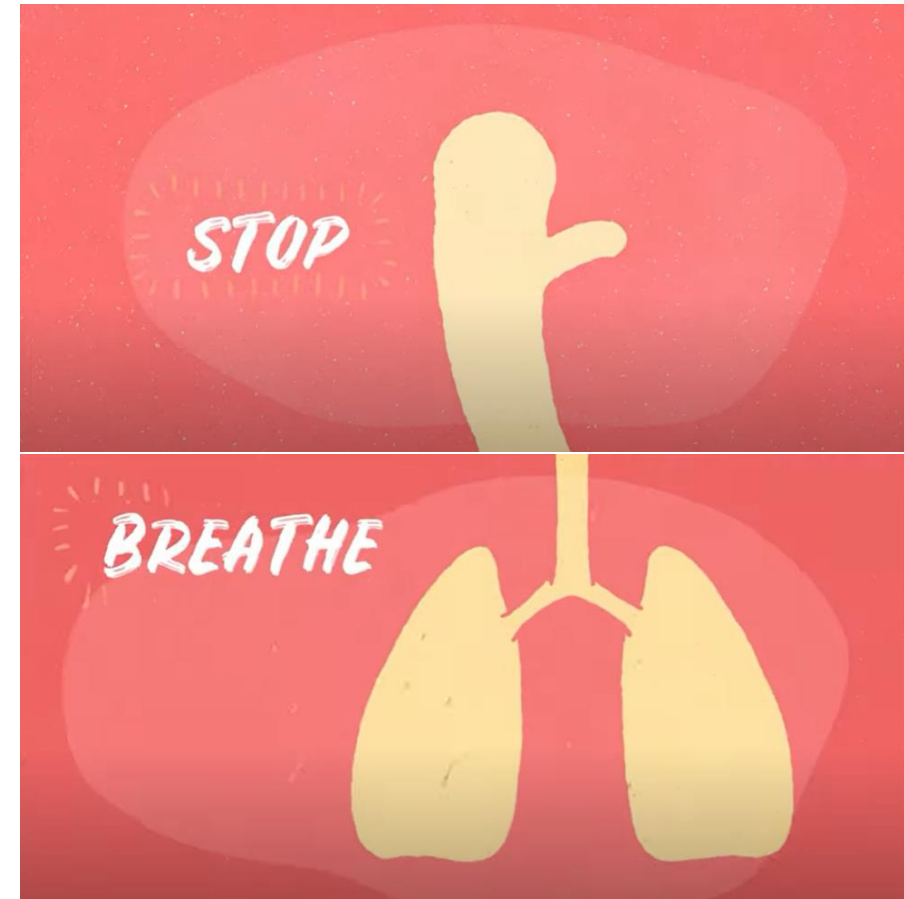
Often the content in question is sexual, contains offensive words, covers controversial topics, or includes LGBTQIA+ characters.

Learn how to handle one of these situations in four simple steps.

1. REMAIN CALM

The patron may already be upset or emotional, which may trigger an emotional response.

Remaining calm will help to de-escalate the situation.



2. ACTIVELY LISTEN

Whether or not you agree with their perspective, remain unbiased and non-judgmental to avoid escalation of the situation.

Actively listen to the patron's concern. Often, the patron just wants to express their opinion and will not take their complaint any further.

Learn some quick tips to improve your active listening skills:

[Active listening is a skill! Here's how it's done.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nmJW_zExk0)
HeartlinesZA



3. OFFER A RECONSIDERATION FORM

Reconsideration Request Forms are the first step in the process for patrons to request that EPL consider withdrawing existing materials, programs, or displays.

Completed forms should be directed to Marcy Rodriguez as Head of Collections.

Forms are located on the EPL website:

About Us > Administration & Board > [Policies](#) > Library Materials 6.0

LIBRARY MATERIALS 6.0

6.1 [Collection Management](#)

6.1.4.5 [Reconsideration Form](#)

6.1.4.7 [Self-Published Materials Form](#)

6.3 [Sale or Disposition of Library Material](#)

4. END THE CONVERSATION / CALL FOR BACKUP

The patron may choose not to fill out a form, but persist in expressing their challenge.

If you find the interaction is going on beyond a reasonable amount of time or if the situation has escalated past your comfort zone:

- Ask the patron if they have any other questions about the process.
- Reiterate that the form is the first step in the process, and they will be contacted if they fill it out.
- If necessary, direct the patron to contact the Administration Department and/or get a manager or Person-In-Charge for back-up.

