



# Library Violence and Safety:

## *Building Resiliency in a Complex World and Workplace*

*Prepared for members and guests of the  
Ex Libris Association – November 20, 2025*

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Proactive Anti-Violence Education  
PAVE Prevention Inc.

# WELCOME!

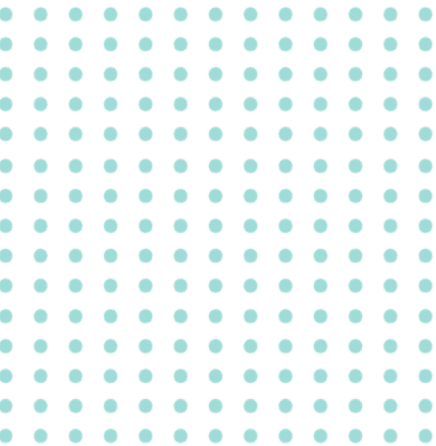
## *About this webinar....*

- . Introductions and Self-Care
- . What you shared
- . Who is PAVE Prevention
- . What we're experiencing/noticing
- . The results so far
- . Discussion/Q and A
- . Commitment to **Action!**



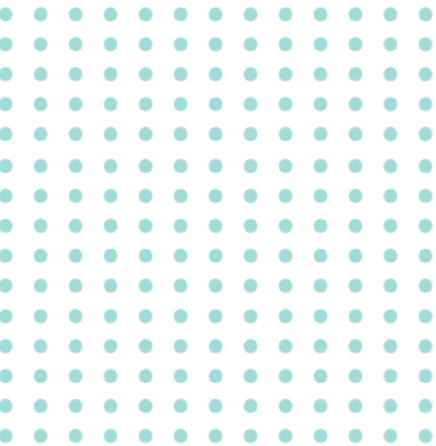
## While we're assembling.....

*If you could rename a “library” to describe its **contemporary function**, what would you call it?*





## What You Shared in the Survey

- Mixture of small communities, suburban and rural locations – ON, NS, AB
  - Generous, pragmatic, resourceful, methodical; systems and policies
  - Prevention vs. reaction mindset
  - Titles reflect expanded scope of safety responsibility
- 



## Q. 1 Methods & Approaches

- ✓ Vigilance; frequent reminders; tools (e.g., panic alarm)
- ✓ Clear procedures
- ✓ Leadership and frontline teamwork
- ✓ Emphasis on welcoming “whole community” (sets up trust); and meeting people where they are (“care ethic”)
- ✓ Encourage support from agency professionals
- ✓ Code of conduct/empowering staff

## Q. 1 Methods & Approaches (cont'd)


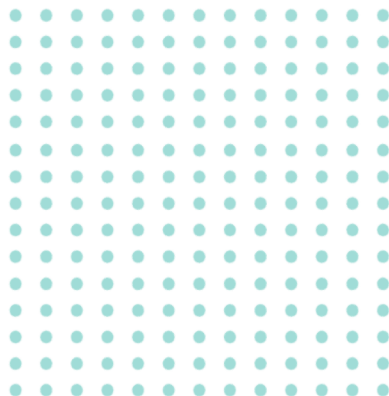
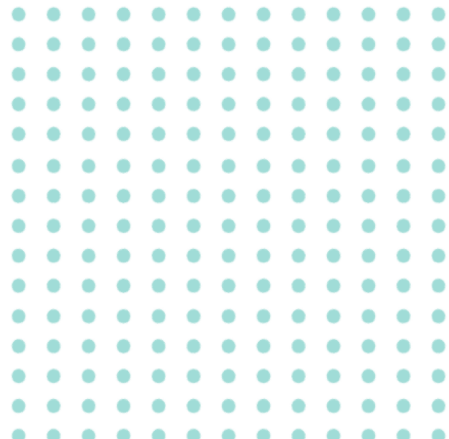
- ✓ Self-care/recovery from traumatic incidents (small town)
- ✓ Installing a camera (optics put patrons at ease)
- ✓ De-escalation, safe distancing techniques; mental health crisis training
- ✓ Incident reports; communication plan; post-incident follow up (1:1); dedicated teams as responders (community connections staff and managers)

## Q. 2 Resourcing the Supports

- ✓ Partnerships with municipal and community organizations; free training
- ✓ Professional development investments
- ✓ Soliciting the community directly
- ✓ Online courses, Staff Development Days, Niche Academy
- ✓ Reallocation of existing staff budgets for “wellbeing and community connections” positions

## Q. 3 Advice to Sector

- ✓ Stay vigilant; defer to professional supports; listen!
- ✓ Develop a “**culture** where safety is everyone’s responsibility...”
- ✓ Build relationships on community members’ terms
- ✓ Clear **boundary setting** with patrons; set and implement policies
- ✓ Embrace awkward conversations; expect that people will “freak out with what is on our shelves”
- ✓ Build staff confidence for decision-making, and implications
- ✓ Ensure all **stakeholders** - “government, community members, and partners” are at the table and work together to find solutions

- 
- 
- Who is **“PAVE”** (Proactive Anti-Violence Education)?
  - What informs our **approach**, and why?
  - The **roots** of our experiences and commitment
- 

## ABOUT Proactive Anti-Violence Education ("PAVE") Prevention Inc.

PAVE Prevention is a social enterprise dedicated to *shifting the culture of violence* in workplaces.

We believe that by empowering the individual, focusing on human development, and creating more equitable and violence-resistant workspaces, we can disrupt the domino effect of workplace violence and create safer communities.

# PAVE TEAM

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**Arlene Limas, OLY  
(She/Her)**

Founder & CEO



**Jennifer Cusentino  
(She/Her)**

Director of Business  
Development &  
Operations



**Federica Lacava  
(She/Her)**

Director of  
Partnerships & Grants



**Heather Turnbull  
(She/Her)**

Country Manager;  
Strategic Advisor



**Dr. Julie Harmon  
(She/Her)**

Learning &  
Development Advisor



# WHAT BRINGS **PAVE PREVENTION** TO THIS WORK.....

We are a human safety skills consultancy driven to support cultures where everyone who aspires to perform their best, *can do so...*

***In the Field***



***In the Boardroom***



***In Community***



...within an environment **free** of aggressive, threatening, and violent behavior.



# PAVE CLIENTS AND PARTNERS



MECHANICS'  
INSTITUTE  
Since 1854



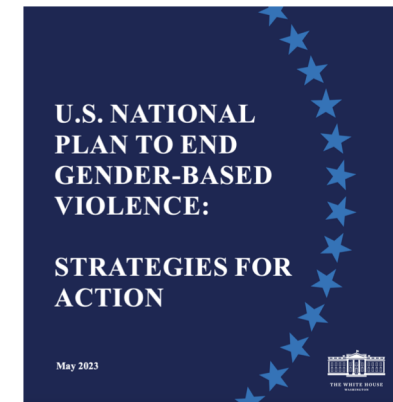
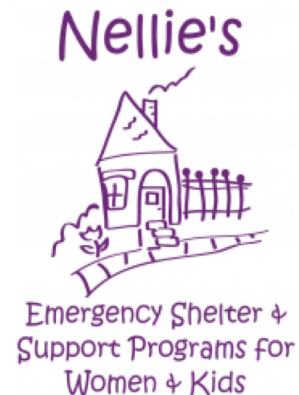
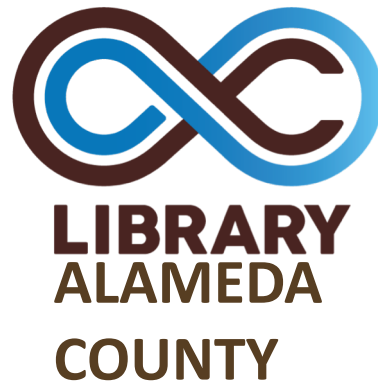
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HOSPITALITY AND  
TOURISM MANAGEMENT  
Spears School of Business



Milken Institute School  
of Public Health  
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

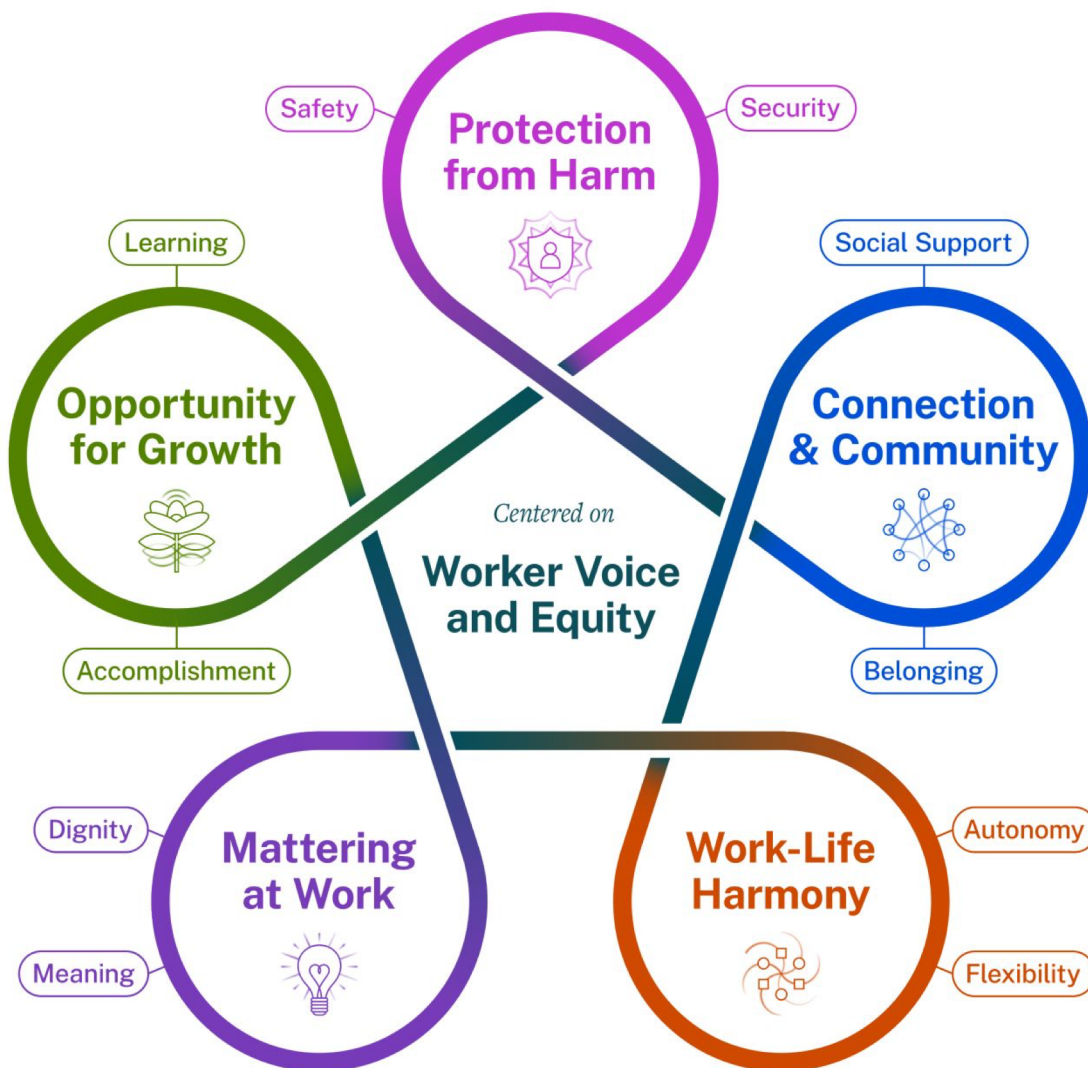


EVANSTON  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY





# According to the U.S. Surgeon General's Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being



Equal Employment Opportunity Commission



Occupational Safety & Health Administration



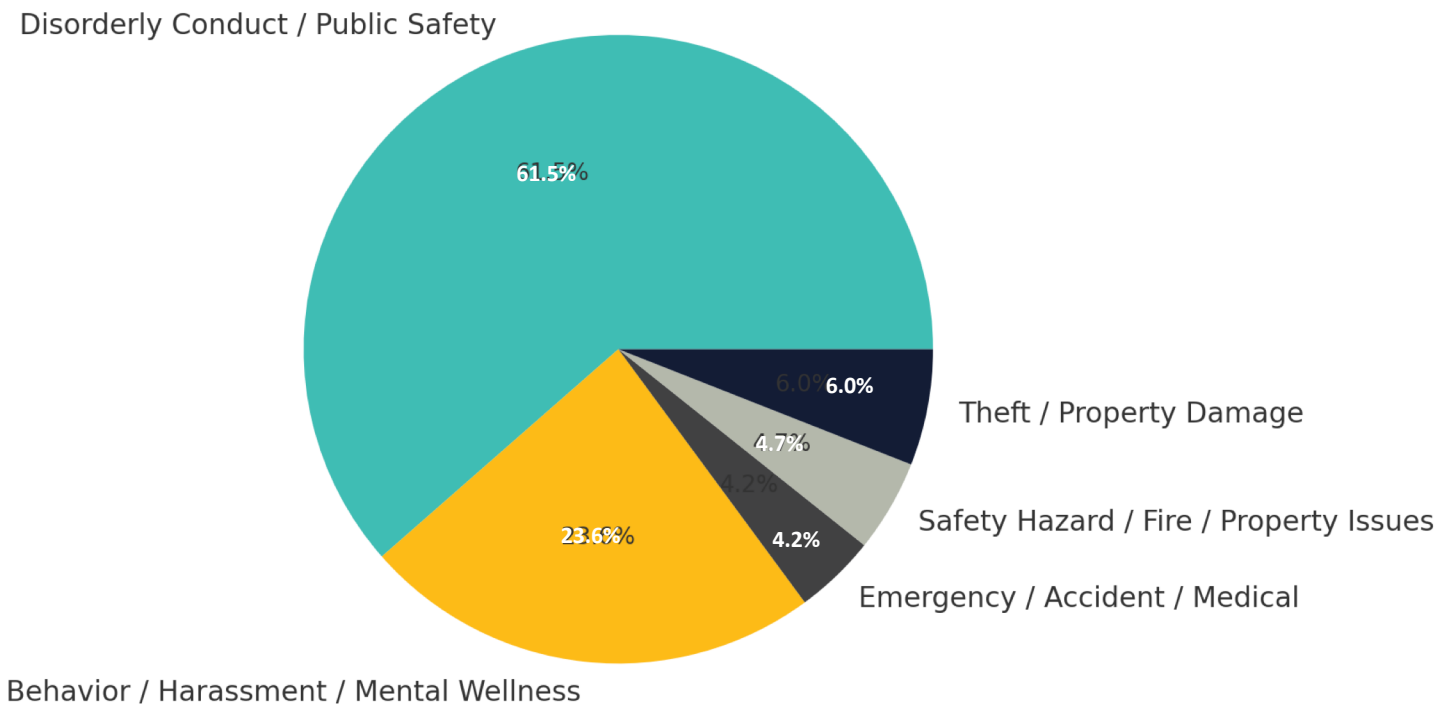
International  
Labour  
Organization



# U.S. LIBRARY INCIDENTS

## PAVE Prevention Clients 2024-2025

### Incident Totals By Category



Category	Total
Disorderly Conduct / Public Safety	2,437
Behavior / Harassment / Mental Wellness	937
Emergency / Accident / Medical	166
Safety Hazard / Fire / Property Issues	188
Theft / Property Damage	237
Grand Total	3,965

## 'Frontline' Experiences

- . 28 cohorts; 1200+ participants
- . **24 Library cohorts, 660 participants**
- . 44 branches/locations; 65% urban, 35% rural
- . Proud Boys, Amendment Auditors, Racialized violence (vulnerable patrons), book banners



## \*Urban Library Trauma Study:

- . 68.5% of urban PL staff reported experiencing violent or aggressive behavior
- . 22% reported experiencing ***similar behavior from co-workers***



\*Source: Library Worker Support Network (LWSN):  
[libraryworkersupport.org](http://libraryworkersupport.org)



## \*Urban Library Trauma Study:

- . 83% reported receiving colleague support, but ***many felt neglected or unsupported by library administration***



\*Source: Library Worker Support Network (LWSN):  
[libraryworkersupport.org](https://libraryworkersupport.org)



# The Macro View

- ***Space*** – purposeful design and navigation
- Cocktail of the aggrieved and aggressed, fueled by **deprivation, desperation, and entitlement**
- ***Unresolved conflict*** from pandemic lockdown, general incivility (absence of consequences)

## The Macro View (cont'd)

- Burden of **maintaining public forum** for free speech, democracy (Met Lib Conference, Oct. 2025)
- Weary but digging in (introverts and empaths): upholding DEIB
- ***“We didn’t sign up for this”***
- Academic preparedness lacking (safety training needed in MLS core curriculum)
- Remarkably resilient (*“The Librarians”*)



# DELIVERING HUMAN SAFETY SKILLS:

## PAVE's Proven Model

### HOLISTIC APPROACH

Addressing violent events *before, during, and after* they occur creates healthier, more inclusive workplaces.

1

### MEASUREMENT

Capturing and evaluating people's perceptions of their workplace (e.g., proprietary assessment tools) creates trusting learning environments.

2

### TRAUMA-INFORMED

PAVE's protocols equip trainers with curriculum that is anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and intersectional.

3

### CUSTOMIZED CONTENT

Addressing clients' needs with real life scenarios and flexible delivery.

4

# SIX DIMENSIONS OF A TRAUMA-INFORMED LIBRARY

## Safety



Ensuring physical and emotional safety.

## Trustworthiness/ Transparency



Decisions are made with transparency, with a goal of building and maintaining trust for all.

## Peer Support



Utilizing their stories and lived experience to promote healing.

## Collaboration / Mutuality



Everyone has a role to play in the healing process.

## Empowerment, Voice & Choice



Individuals' strengths are recognized, built on, and validated.

## Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

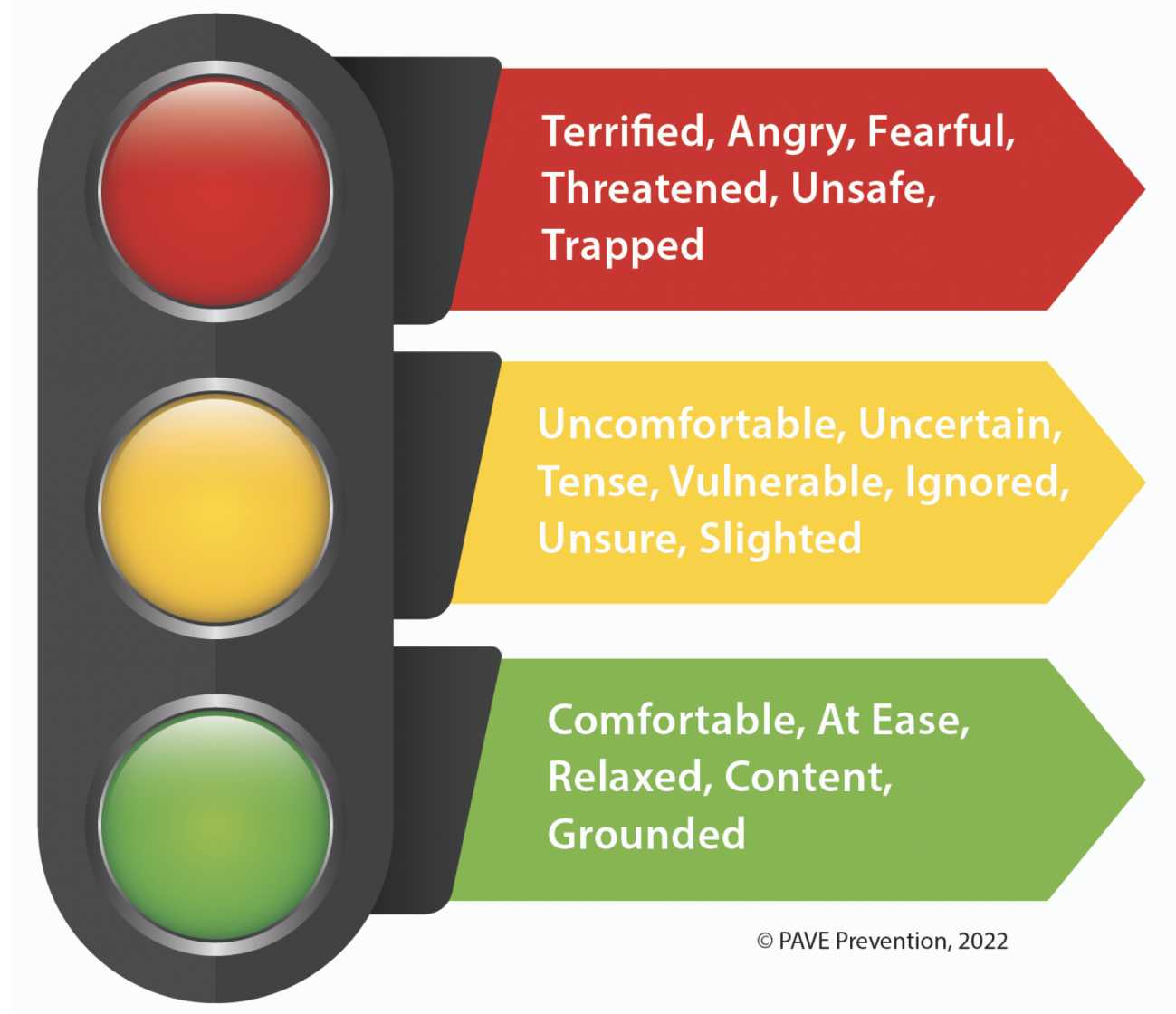


Actively moving past stereotypes and biases, offering inclusive services.

# SPECTRUM OF SITUATIONAL AWARENESS AND RESPONSE

***“What’s Going On?”***

***“How am I Feeling About It?”***



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## Selected Resources

- **M.E.A.L. Report (2024) - pdf**
- **Library Worker Support Network**  
**([libraryworkersupport.org](https://libraryworkersupport.org))**
- ***Library Journal* Summit (FAQs)- pdf**



## **Alameda County Library and PAVE Prevention (3-year project)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pE60pqTYEv4>



**MACRO (Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland)  
and PAVE Prevention (ongoing project)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qnN1ALIRu8>

<https://www.ktvu.com/news/macro-growing-ahead-of-busy-summer-in-oakland>





## Q & A / Calls to Action



# Thank You!

Let's keep in conversation:

- [heather@paveprevention.com](mailto:heather@paveprevention.com)
- Mobile/WhatsApp: 416.859.5630
- [www.paveprevention.com](http://www.paveprevention.com)

***See you at OLA Super Conference 2026:  
"WE PERSIST" - Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> in Toronto!***