



Preparing Human Library Event Facilities

A Human Library is a way for people to engage in conversations that promote tolerance, celebrate differences and encourage understanding of other's choices. The "right" atmosphere for this engagement comes from choosing an area or location carefully.

Location and Space

- Choose a location with a casual atmosphere. Use comfortable chairs and coffee tables if possible.
- Make sure the location is wheelchair accessible.
- Select a location where Human Books and Readers can sit together with enough space between conversation areas to maintain privacy.
- Avoid spreading the event out through different rooms or floors. Ideally, the coordinator(s) should be able to see all of the human library conversations as they happen.
- Try to hold the event in an open area of the library where passers-by will notice the event and feel comfortable approaching event volunteers to ask questions or participate.
- Provide "shelf space" for the Human Books: set an area or room for Human Books to relax and talk to one another when they are not being read. Often great conversations happen between human books waiting "on the shelf". This space also makes it easier for coordinators to find Human Books when a Reader arrives to borrow one.
- Choosing a space with a refreshment area or café and bathrooms nearby is recommended.

Supplies and Equipment

- Ask Human Books, ideally during the interview but certainly sometime before the event, if a/v equipment such as a laptop is needed. Also ask if space is needed to display photographs or artwork.
- Designate conversation locations for Human Books who cannot easily move around or who require special equipment or a different kind of display space.
- Ensure there are enough conversation areas / chairs available to accommodate the possibility that all Human Books could be signed out at once.
- Set up a clearly marked registration desk where Human Books, Readers and other participants can sign-in and ask any questions they may have.
- Draw / label / post a floor plan outlining set up so that staff can quickly and efficiently refer to conversation locations when directing volunteers or participants during the event. Make copies for each staff member and review it with them prior to the event.
- Display an event banner or large poster(s) to highlight the event to passers-by and to inform them that an organized event is taking place in a particular area. Ideally, these signs should be enticing to people who might not have known about the event beforehand.
- Supply t-shirts or visible nametags / buttons to coordinators and volunteers so that participants and passers-by will know who to ask questions of.
- Have a supply of pencils and paper ready should any be requested for note taking.
- Have extra chairs available in case Readers share a Human Book.
- Have evaluation forms ready to hand out to participants as they leave – Human Books, Readers, volunteers and staff. Provide a drop-box for these forms so they can be returned anonymously.

