

All Work and No Play: New Reference Librarians and Stress

Anne Larrivee | Binghamton University Libraries | Larrivee@binghamton.edu

Causes:

- Job Relocation
 - It's important to fulfill basic needs in order to grow (Maslow, 1943)
 - Homesickness

Watt and Badger (2009) found that the level to which people feel accepted affects their degree of feeling homesick.
 - Stress of transition, especially if it's not in a preferred location

According to the Occupation Outlook Handbook (2012), librarian positions are predicted to grow by only 7% in the years 2010-2020, and with a competitive market, new librarians may not always have the option of selecting their preferred location.

Martin (1999) sites a study that found over 50% of surveyed participants felt stress for up to six months post relocation.
- New Work Culture
 - Occupational Stress

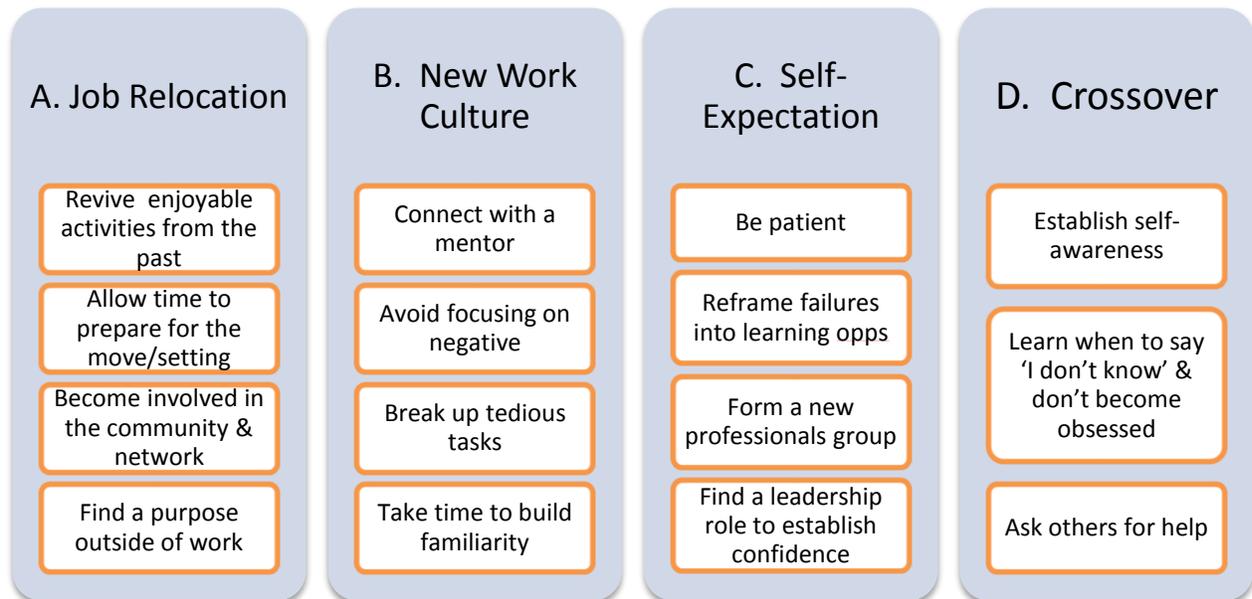
Mazzola, Schonfeld, and Spector's (2011) qualitative study of work-related stress across occupations, countries, and gender found that most people identify **interpersonal conflict, work overload, and situational/organizational constraints** as their primary complaints of stress. The problem forms when, as Joanne Oud (2008) writes, new librarians' expectations for their new position differ from the actual reality.
 - Clarifying professional role: ambiguity, overload, conflict
- Self-Expectation
 - Self-doubt
 - Fear of under-education

According to a study by Sare, Bales, and Neville (2012) many new Library and Information Science graduates wish they had been challenged more during their graduate education.
 - Self-pressure leading to burnout (emotional exhaustion)
 - Inability to keep up with all the latest emerging trends

According to Riley-Huff and Rholes (2011), several librarians felt the stress of trying to keep up with evolving technology.
- Crossover Stress
 - Crossover happens when situational strains are transmitted to other people who are closely related to the person dealing with the strain (Bakkar, Westman, & Emmerik, 2009)
 - Over-empathizing can lead to crossover

The type of person susceptible to absorbing stress of others in the workplace is described as empathetic and caring toward others (Bakkar, Westman, and Emmerik, 2009). Empathizing with the other person could lead to crossover and the transmission of anxieties (Bakkar, Westman, and Emmerik, 2009).

Coping:



A.

- Martin (1999) found that when people have time to prepare for change it makes their transition slightly less stressful.
- Since home, according to Watt and Badger (2009), is often associated with a sense of belonging, new librarians must figure out how to deepen their roots in a new area.
- New librarians must deal with basic physiological and safety needs before skipping ahead and worrying about self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1943).

B.

- The first year of library work is usually spent with the librarian trying to make sense of everything (Sare, Bales, and Neville, 2012).
- Organizational socialization, according to Oud (2008), happens when organizational interaction allows a person to collect the knowledge, skills, attitude, and behavior needed to be successful.
- To ease into a new library position, Oud (2008) recommends seeking out the guidance of a mentor.

C.

- Oud's (2008) study found that many adjustments could take up to 6-9 months.
- Leong and Vaughan (2010) claim that new professionals groups could provide reassurance and a voice to new librarians. Having a group who understands your needs and issues can be reassuring.

D.

- Bakkar, Westman, and Emmerik (2009) say that social comparison can be used to adjust emotions and regulate.

References

- Bakker, A. B., Westman, M., & van Emmerik, I. J. Hetty. (2009). Advancements in crossover theory. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 24*(3), 206-219. doi: 10.1108/02683940910039304
- Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. (2012). *Occupational outlook handbook, 2012-13 edition, librarians*. Retrieved 05/29, 2012, from <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/librarians.htm>
- Bronstein, J. (2011). The role and work perceptions of academic reference librarians: A qualitative inquiry. *Portal (Baltimore, Md.), 11*(3), 21. doi:10.1353/pla.2011.0032
- Leong, J. J., & Vaughan, M. (2010). Preparing new librarians for career and organisational impact. *Library Management, 31*(8/9), 635-644. doi: 10.1108/01435121011093405
- Martin, R. (1999). Adjusting to job relocation: Relocation preparation can reduce relocation stress. *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology, 72*(2), 231-235, doi: 10.1348/096317999166626
- Maslow, A. A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*(4), 370-396. doi: 10.1037/h0054346
- Mazzola, J. J., Schonfeld, I. S., & Spector, P. E. (2011). What qualitative research has taught us about occupational stress. *Stress & Health: Journal of the International Society for the Investigation of Stress, 27*(2), 93-110. doi: 10.1002/smi.1386
- Oud, J. (2008). Adjusting to the workplace: Transitions faced by new academic librarians. *College & Research Libraries, 69*(3), 252-266. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lih&AN=32479261&site=ehost-live>
- Riemer, J. W. (2000). Job relocation, sources of stress, and sense of home. *Community, Work & Family, 3*(2), 205-217. doi: 10.1080/13668800050127274
- Riley-Huff, D., & Rholes, J., M. (2011). Librarians and technology skill acquisition: Issues and perspectives. *Information Technology & Libraries, 30*(3), 129-140. doi: 10.6017/ital.v30i3.1770
- Sare, L., Bales, S., & Neville, B. (2012). New academic librarians and their perceptions of the profession. *Portal: Libraries and the Academy, 12*(2), 179-203. doi: 10.1353/pla.2012.0017
- Shupe, E. I., & Pung, S. K. (2011). Understanding the changing role of academic librarians from a psychological perspective: A literature review. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 37*(5). doi: 10.1016/j.acalib.2011.06.005
- Watt, S. E., & Badger, A. J. (2009). Effects of social belonging on homesickness: An application of the belongingness hypothesis. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin, 35*(4), 516-530. doi: 10.1177/0146167208329695