

Library Newsletter

Intelligence Insider – June 2025

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On building bridges

On 13 June, I had the privilege of attending an event in Oxford organised by [healthcare workers for Palestine](#).

It was incredibly inspiring to hear from healthcare professionals and others who are committed to caring for some of the most vulnerable people in the world— those starving to death while being massacred.

Moments of dancing and laughter with my daughter often move me to tears, especially when I think of the countless parents and children robbed of these simple joys in the most horrific way. Many feel compelled to take even small actions to acknowledge the pain endured by others, hoping this might contribute to change. However, [attending demonstrations](#), wearing a keffiyeh, or adding the [image of a watermelon to our screens](#) as a sign of compassion can sometimes feel like placing ourselves in the crossfire.



Bertha Calles Cartas
Interim Library Service
Manager

In such difficult times, this is what we continue to offer in the Oxford Health libraries:

A Culture of Compassion


In challenging times—when many of us feel powerless in the face of global suffering—small acts of empathy matter. Whether it's joining a book club, supporting a colleague, or simply creating space for stories to be shared, compassion is at the heart of what we do.

As [Dr Sara Ali](#) says for those in caring professions, acts of solidarity are never performative. Like their approach to patient care, these expressions of solidarity arise from a profound empathy that transcends borders, identities, and religions. It is part of our professional identity also; and in our library spaces, we see this every day: staff turning towards each other, listening, and learning together.


Stories That Build Connection

Compassion is more widespread than we might expect. Through the book clubs, staff often discover that—despite different backgrounds or roles—we share many of the same experiences: grief for loved ones, fears about health and safety, and the need for meaningful connection. These shared reflections foster understanding and remind us of our common humanity, [regardless of background or skin colour](#).

The feedback from our users shows that we are creating a space where these shared experiences are recognised and valued.



We have always known that wellbeing is supported by learning, connection and empathy. We hear we should do more of these to enhance our lives and scaffold our resilience. This book club truly puts this into action. It provides encouragement to read, thereby supporting continuous learning and widening of horizons, it fosters a community and safe space for discussions and the two leaders of the women's book club could not be more likeable – really enjoying being part of it and well done for such a wonderful idea!



Zainab Al-Shalchi, OH pharmacist

This growing engagement reinforces an important message: investing in library resources and staff is not just about books—it's about supporting people.

Book Clubs on the Rise

In the past year, our book club subscriptions have grown by over 50%. After each session, we receive encouraging feedback from participants—and more teams across the Trust are setting up their own book clubs. These groups are helping staff learn, connect, decompress, and grow—supporting wellbeing while also improving confidence in reading and health literacy.

Promoting Learning and Research

We offer access to [BMJ Learning](#) for all Trust staff—high-quality, flexible e-learning to support your CPD. We also support [Critical Appraisal Training \(CAT\) groups](#), helping you start, resume or enhance your research skills.

Spaces That Support You

Our libraries at **Littlemore, Warneford, and Whiteleaf** hospitals provide calm, welcoming spaces staffed by professional, friendly information specialists ready to support your learning and research needs.

Each month, we receive fantastic feedback from users who visit our sites—especially from those living in Trust accommodation, many of whom are international staff. We're proud to bring our services closer to where you live and work.

Here for You – Now and Into the Future

Our library team is committed to ongoing professional development to support colleagues in an ever-changing information landscape. We work to ensure access to high-quality, evidence-based information while staying compliant with copyright legislation. So we can continue to meet your evolving needs with care and integrity we also enrol on professional qualifications and continue our professional development through various CPDs.

Reminiscence boxes

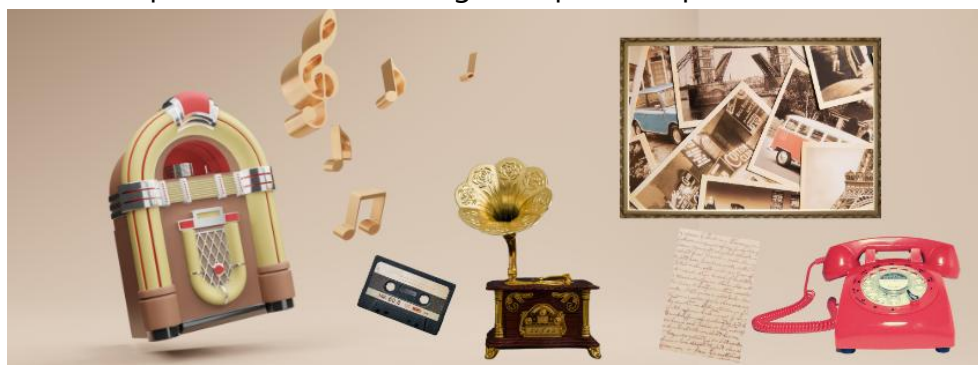
Did you know we collaborate with public libraries and can source **Reminiscence Boxes** for your patients? Reminiscence Boxes are thoughtfully curated kits filled with nostalgic items, photos, music, and reading materials designed to spark memories, conversation, and connection. They're especially powerful for patients with dementia, mental health challenges, or learning disabilities.

The **collections for Inpatient Wards** include themed books, photos, or tactile items. They can be tailored to specific decades, events, or cultural references.

There are lots of benefits in borrowing a Reminiscence box:

- Stimulate memory and meaningful conversations
- Encourage social interaction
- Support therapeutic goals in a meaningful way

By taking care of the administrative tasks, Oxford Health Libraries eliminate a key obstacle, enabling Occupational Therapists and Activity Coordinators to concentrate fully on engaging with their patients and delivering therapeutic experiences. [Contact us](#) to find out more.



Let's play!

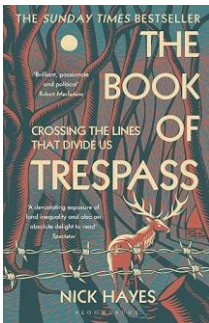
We recently added some new games to our [Board Games catalogue](#) to help our Trust staff sharpen their learning skills and team work.

Cooperative games teach players to work together towards a common goal, fostering teamwork and collaboration. Players must often analyze situations, make decisions, and anticipate opponents' moves, which improves critical thinking skills.

Engaging in a fun and immersive activity like playing a board game can be a great way to relax and reduce stress. To borrow them just [contact us!](#)



The Breakroom Book Club



Are you ready to discuss ***The Book of Trespass*** with us?
Don't forget to join us via Teams on **Thursday 17th of July at 1pm.**

If you want join the discussion, email library.Enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk.
We look forward to seeing you there!

Contact us

Require an article or a book? Want to learn how to perform a quicker and more effective search on specific topics? Need a literature search for guidelines, case studies, research papers or a quality improvement project? Want to keep up to date with the latest information in your field of interest? Contact us at library.enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk or take a look at our website.