

Seasonal Affective Disorder: Caring for Collections During Seasonal Special Events

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Seasonal Affective Disorder

- General Guidelines for Special Events
- Seasonal Event Specifics
- Navigating Institutional Politics



General Guidelines for Special Events

What makes an event special?

- Unique activities
- Builds audience
- Raises revenue
- What's a party without food and drink?
- Seasonal events are cherished



General Guidelines for Special Events



Write it down!

- Write a special event policy
- Be specific
- Get buy in from everyone involved
- Include collections protection language in contracts

General Guidelines for Special Events

- Keep food and drink away from collections areas
- Specify where and when food and drinks are allowed
- Use lots of signs!



General Guidelines for Special Events

- Use high tables or tray stands for drinks
- Clear empties throughout event
- Use mats to protect floors from spills
- Have catering set up away from collections



General Guidelines for Special Events

Protect collections on display if you must use galleries

- Place objects in cases
- Use stanchions or other barriers to protect objects in the open
- Move objects out of the way temporarily



General Guidelines for Special Events

Housekeeping is important!



- Before
- During
- After



“The Event Never Happened” policy

Tina Karl, National Museum of Natural History

General Guidelines for Special Events



- Encourage good behavior
- Communicate expectations
- Use signs
- Employ extra security, custodial and catering staff

General Guidelines for Special Events

Integrated Pest Management

- Monitor areas where food and plants are placed
- Green house flowers only
- No wild flowers
- Catering access and passage away from collections
- Remove waste and recycling promptly
- Clean immediately after event



General Guidelines for Special Events

- Noise causes vibration
- Monitor objects, especially on mezzanines, balconies.
- Control amplification if objects are affected



Winter Holiday Events



Hazards to collections

- Christmas trees
- Candles
- Lights
- Decorative food and plants
- Decorations on collections
- Objects used as decorations

Winter Holiday Events

Christmas Trees

- Use fake trees and garland
- Fire code may prohibit live trees
- Make sure there is sufficient electrical power for lights
- Make sure fire response is current, extinguishers charged, and staff trained
- Use barriers to protect surroundings from sap and water



Winter Holiday Events

- Avoid placing decorations on objects
- Use barrier layers if decorations must be on objects or building features
- Cleaning protocols once decorations are removed
- Consult a conservator if objects are damaged



Winter Holiday Events

IPM

- Increase monitoring near live decorations
- Use greenhouse plants
- Do not over water plants
- Avoid food based decorations, i.e. popcorn strings, etc.
- Clean areas before, during and after decorating



Spring Flower Events

- Communicate guidelines to participants ahead of time



- Supervise installation to make sure objects are protected



Spring Flower Events



IPM

- Use greenhouse flowers
- No wild flowers
- Inspect incoming products
- Increase monitoring in area during and after event
- Clean before, during, and after event

Spring Flower Events

- Remove stamen
- Spray loose bits with hair spray
- Do not spray near artwork
- Place flowers away from artwork
- Contain water



Spring Flower Events

- Temporary shields protect paintings
- Use new polyethylene or HDPE sheeting
- Tape to wall, not frame!



Spring Flower Events



- Give participants room to work
- Use floor coverings
- Clean area after installation
- Control water; clean spills immediately

Sleepovers



- Communicate guidelines to participants ahead of time
- Expect good behavior
- Enlist chaperones to supervise youth
- Emphasize the special nature of the event
- Safety for participants and collections

Sleepovers



- Secure storage for belongings
- Communicate guidelines again
- Restrict food and beverage to non-collections areas
- Plan activities: keep campers busy



Sleepovers

- Staff adequately
- Some staff should stay awake for safety and security
- Consistent messages about behavior
- Housekeeping
- Check for damage in morning



Halloween

- Safety and security at 21+ events
- Discourage masks; messy or large costumes
- Staff adequately
- Plan fun activities



Halloween

- Encourage good behavior
- Schedule extra security and custodial staff
- Price alcohol to limit consumption
- Clean during and after event



Halloween



IPM

- Avoid pumpkins and other plant based decorations if possible
- Increase monitoring during and after event
- Clean immediately after event

Politics



It's our job to imagine the worst case scenario

Politics



It's also our job to find workable solutions

Politics

- Know the players
- Understand why the event is important



Politics

Recognize overall benefit to institution

- Revenue
- Marketing
- Attendance
- New audiences
- Membership
- Visibility
- Donors



Politics

- Create allies among staff and stakeholders
- Align common interests
- Cultivate collections advocates
- Find someone else to say no



Politics

- Be proactive - suggest win win solutions
- Compromise for a reason-extreme measures to mitigate risk
- Event budget could be used to fund collections work



Don't fear the event!



Have (collections safe) fun!



Thank you!

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Verne Anderson, cartoonist

