

My 2026 cpd25 LISA Conference 2026 Reflection – Rosemary Johnson

In the rising heat of London's Knowledge Quarter, the attendees gathered at Mary Ward House. I received a warm welcome and was optimistic that the conference would enhance my experience as an Academic Library Assistant. I love these rare occasions when I can network with other professionals in my line of work, helping me to develop meaningful connections while reinforcing my professional practice. I welcomed the opportunity to grow professionally, to network with like-minded colleagues, and seek ways to improve the standard of service delivery I provide.

Workshop 1

Helen Rimmer, the author of the book "The Kind Brave Leader" brought a fresh perspective on the meaning of kindness, as compared to niceness. Healthy boundaries can preserve well-being, increase respect for those who struggle, and encourage independence. In contrast, niceness has less boundaries, leading to glossing over issues or coping alone without asking for help. If we keep things 'nice' we can put off difficult conversations, take control of someone else's work, or miss the opportunity for others to develop and grow. I could see the difference.

The three levels of Kindness, i.e. Self, Interpersonal and Systemic, are like the 'hierarchy of needs' by Maslow. Noticing our stress, we can build healthy boundaries to form a culture of self-growth. When individuals progress professionally and the workplace is built on caring frameworks, there will be stronger collaboration in teams. These nuggets of wisdom were carefully constructed, and I was inspired. Within the library, this has encouraged me to think about supporting colleagues by setting clear expectations while remaining approachable. It also reinforces the importance of encouraging independence in students rather than solving every problem for them.

The Library Tour

My group faced the heat to tour the remarkable Senate House Library. Not only was the building a grand architectural wonder, but I was also humbled by the vastness of the library collections. In thirty minutes, we saw thousands of books in many handsomely furnished rooms, and it was a reassuring sight. Knowledge felt powerfully protected. Seeing how the Senate House manages such extensive collections reminded me of the importance of preserving and presenting library resources in ways that inspire confidence in users. It also reinforced my appreciation of the role our own library plays in supporting learning.

Workshop 2

Neil Johnstone allied our reactions to workplace change with the stages of grief, (denial, anger, bargaining and acceptance). This made sense considering the strength of resistance I experienced during changing times. This theme flowed well into my

lightning talk, “Thriving through Change”. I was realizing how much power is created when we form boundaries that protect our well-being, making space where we can be kind to ourselves and others through the process. I can use these ideas when supporting colleagues through organisational change and when adapting to new systems or procedures within the library.

Workshop 3

Thomas Pratt introduced us to the ‘Career Development Filter’, and a useful ‘Career Compass’ made up of direction, capability, energy and support. Instead of career climbing, we can build a sustainable career that grows using our energy and directives. I found this to be a very intelligent way to look at a career, viewing it as a holistic process in which we grow naturally according to our strengths and desires with the support of people we know and respect. I could see how my Continuing Professional Development experience could be important to this process, and how each course or project I have taken can form part of this compass. This has encouraged me to continue seeking CPD opportunities that will improve the service I provide to students and academic staff.

Thanks to this fascinating day, I grew professionally in ways I did not expect to. I returned to Global Banking School with practical ideas that I can apply in my everyday work, such as supporting colleagues during changes to library systems, procedures, and working practice. I can focus on maintaining healthy professional boundaries, strengthening communication and collaboration within the library team, and continuing to develop a positive, student-focused library service. The conference reinforced that professional development is not simply about acquiring knowledge but about applying it thoughtfully to improve both individual practice and the wider workplace.

Practical Applications

- Apply the change management techniques discussed during the conference to help me respond more positively to organisational change and support colleagues through periods of transition
- Encourage a supportive teamwork by practising the distinction between kindness and niceness, setting healthy boundaries while remaining approachable and collaborative
- Build on the confidence gained from delivering my lightning talk by sharing ideas more readily with colleagues and contributing to professional discussions
- Adopt a broader industry-wide perspective to bring purpose into the daily work we undertake
- An improved quality of service to Students and Academic Staff due to my stronger boundaries that encourage individual growth and wellbeing