

Harmful Content Policy

Murray Library's Statement on Potentially Harmful Content

The library is committed to supporting the educational work of Messiah University through acquisition of materials appropriate to help students “to attain specialized knowledge and abilities in at least one area of study and to engage in scholarship in a selected, specialized discipline” (Murray Library Mission Statement). We also endorse the Freedom to Read statement from the American Library Association (https://www.messiah.edu/download/downloads/id/8349/Freedom_to_Read_Statement_2021.pdf).

What harmful content may be found?

- Discriminatory and biased language
- Language that offends, excludes, or diminishes people based on age, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity
- Materials with views and opinions that are harmful.
- Images depicting violence, war, terrorism, graphic sex, death, crime, natural disasters, or torture.

Why is this content available?

- Language used in historical resources will use the language of the period.
- Standardized vocabulary often lags behind current language; what was accepted terminology at the time of data creation may no longer be appropriate.
- We make available resources from libraries around the world, databases with historical documents, and materials that have been collected and donated over time, which often include harmful language.
- Images are often used in collected resources, including art, history, biology, and sociology, as part of their content.

What is Murray Library doing about this harmful content?

- We recognize that potentially harmful content does exist in our library resources
- We acknowledge that the standards that libraries have relied on to describe and catalog information are often biased
- We support and encourage efforts in the library community to change the language used to reflect a more equitable and just terminology.
- We understand that the work to improve is ongoing

