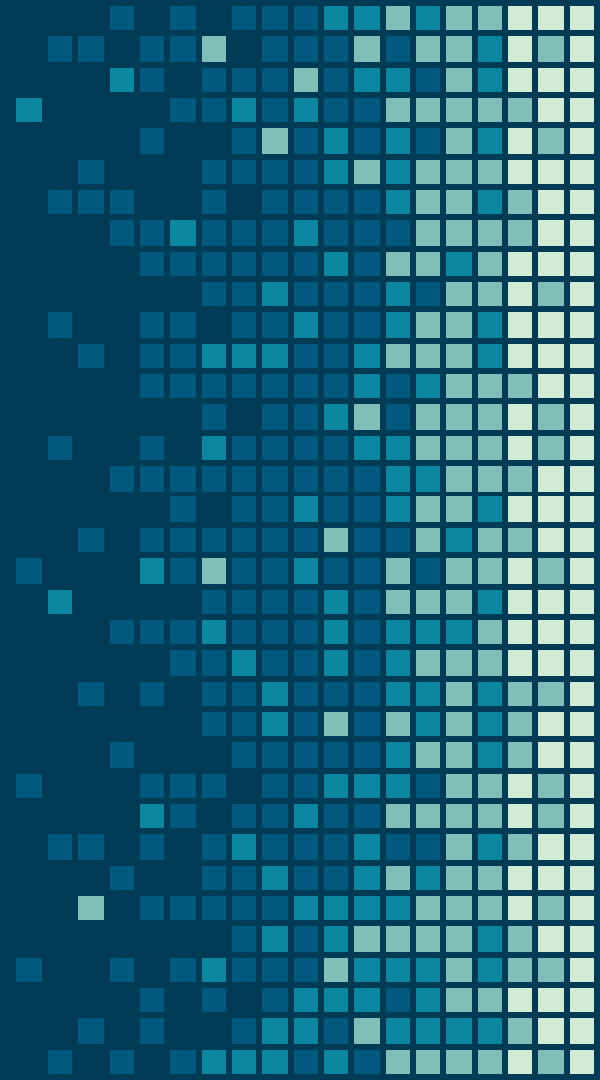


StudentAffairs.com 2019 Virtual Case Study

Institution: California Polytechnic State University — San Luis Obispo

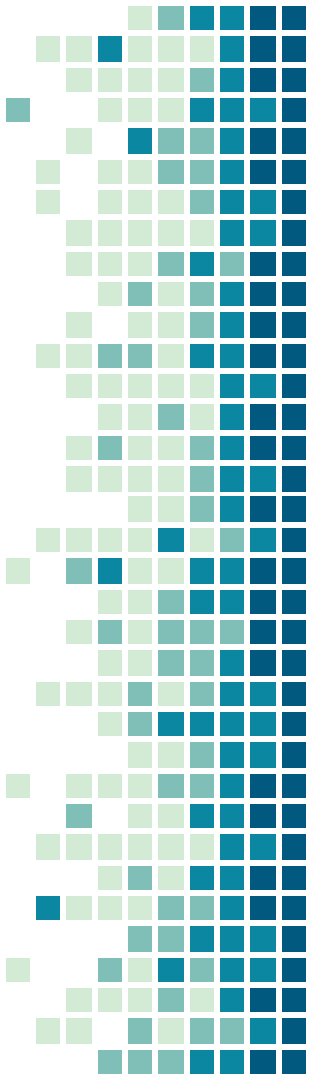
Team Leader: Isheeta Sultana Rahman

Team Members: Evan Falkenthal, Lily Holzner, Aracely Aceves Lozano,
Isheeta Sultana Rahman



Introduction & Learning Outcomes

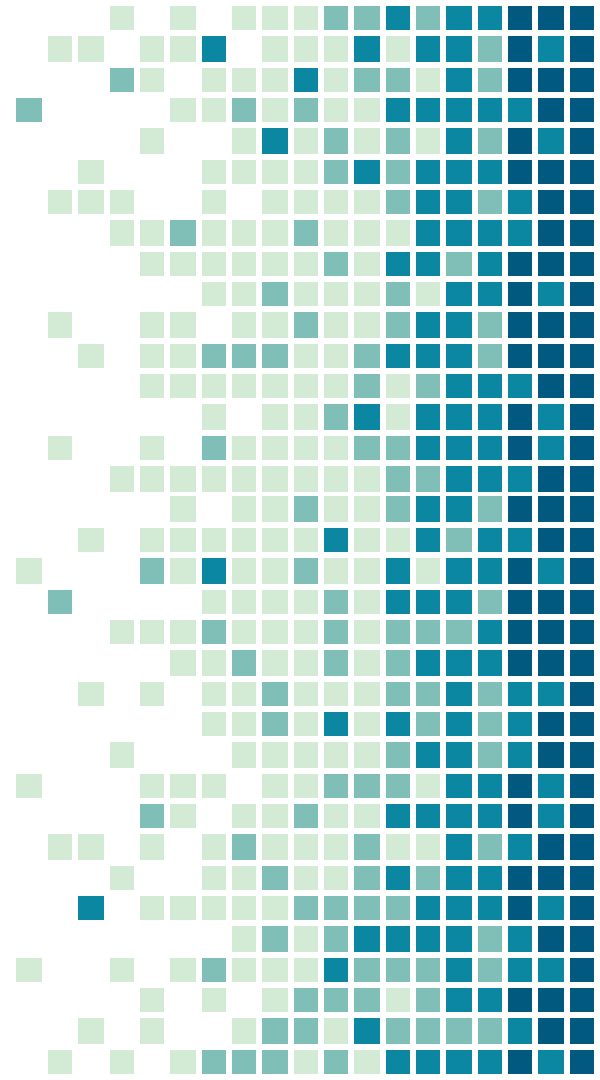
- **Introduction:** With more research on diverse student bodies than ever before, our understanding of how to holistically support today's college student is equally complex. Resident Advisors/Assistants (RAs) often serve as first responders for the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of students who live on-campus. These training modules, in partnership with the traditional RA training, provide RAs with a holistic lens through which they may support students. Modules are organized in three training topic blocks: 1) Mindfulness, Health & Safety, 2) The Modern Student, 3) Student Groups with Special Considerations.
- **Learning Outcomes:** As a result of completing these supplementary training modules, RAs will be able to:
 - Better understand and support students with chronic illness
 - Serve as first responders in mental health triage
 - Identify and address risky dating situations and harmful sexual behavior
 - Further their career development and career readiness
 - Better understand and support students on the autism spectrum
 - Better understand and support trans/gender non-conforming students
 - Better understand and support undocumented students
 - Better understand and support foster youth
 - Provide feedback on their supplementary training experience





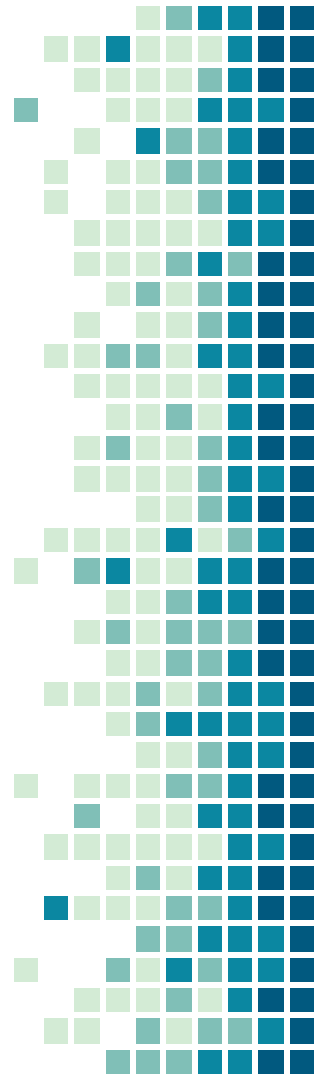
Mindfulness, Health & Safety

Topic Block #1



Supporting "Spoonies": Students With Chronic Illnesses

- **Description:** This module will use an interactive gaming application centered around "Spoon Theory", RAs will plan a day with their given number of spoons to gain awareness of the tasks and challenges students with invisible illnesses face.
- **Rationalization:** As a group, students with chronic/invisible illnesses often experience challenges in social adjustment to college (Shapiro, 2002). RAs who are aware of the impact of chronic/invisible illnesses can help students living with these illnesses adjust to life on campus and ensure development of inclusive programming; students with chronic/invisible illnesses often have limited access to conventional stress-relief and socialization methods (Houman & Stapley, 2013).
- **Considerations for differing campus and residential systems:** Students with chronic illnesses are a small but growing population on campuses across the country. The gaming application allows RAs within every type of college/residential system to empathize and interactively learn about the "Spoonie" experience through their phone, tablet, or computer.

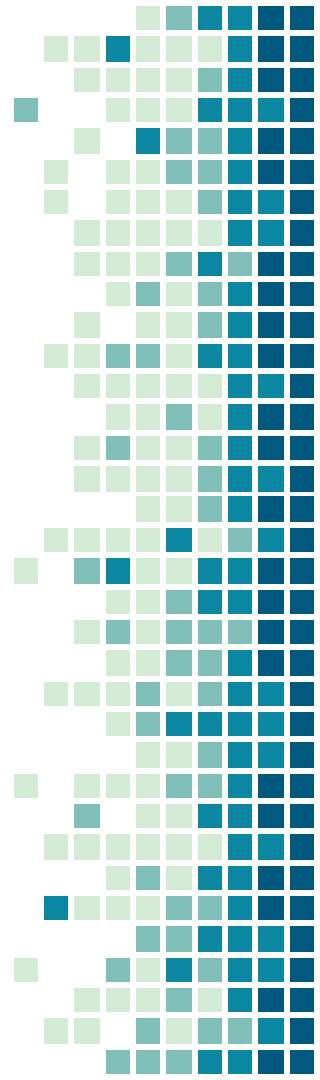


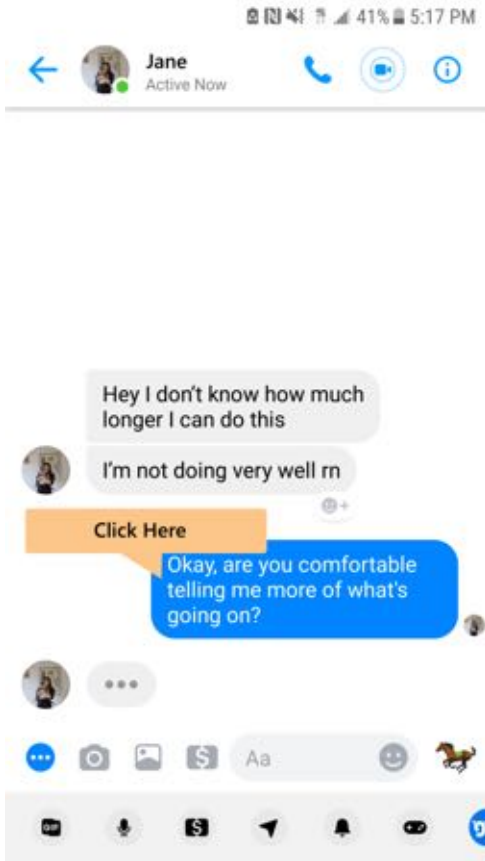


- Spoon Theory: a metaphor used to explain the reduced amount of mental and physical energy for daily life and productive tasks that may result from chronic illness (Miserandino, 2003).
- Important to also understand: not all individuals with chronic illness identify as "Spoones" or wish to be identified as experiencing chronic illness (Kennedy & Ishler, 2008).
- Spoons are used to quantify how much energy a person has throughout a given day, and certain activities "cost" more spoons than others.
- A Spoon Theory gaming application will provide RAs with a random amount of spoons per day, and they must plan accordingly, giving them a glimpse into the experience of students with chronic illness.

Digital Mental Health Triage

- **Description:** Using interactive chatlogs and a chatbot mimicking a student having a mental health crisis, train RAs to use social media as a platform for psychological first aid.
- **Rationalization:** Resident life staff are often the first responders to mental health crises for college students (Paylo et al. 2017). There is a growing body of literature to suggest that online counseling is similarly effective to in person sessions (Richards & Viganó, 2013) with some clients preferring written communication and the accessibility of online platforms (Gilat & Reshef, 2015).
- **Considerations for differing campus and residential systems:** All campuses—regardless of residential system, size, etc.—will have some degree of access to the Internet and subsequent social media platforms. This training has both high applicability to many campus populations and the flexibility to adjust to individual campus cultures.





Interactive chatlog mockup

- This training will address the first five competencies outlined in the Psychological First Aid training model (McCabe et al. 2014):
 1. Initial Contact
 2. Assessment
 3. Intervention
 4. Triage
 5. Referral
- Interactive chatlogs allow students to review conversations and engage with effective strategies for online triaging. The chatbot lets students practice in a controlled, risk-free environment. Chatlogs may be saved and examined in more detail with coordinators as part of extended training.

Stress Management

- **Description & Rationalization:** This online module will be built as an open access responsive website to give RAs continuous access to stress management resources that they need to be successful.
- **Rationalization:** Research has shown that emotional stability, conscientious-ness, and confidence in ability as an RA are predictors of RA performance. (Wu & Stemler, 2008). Given the level of responsibility assumed by RAs on top of being students themselves (Letarte, 2013), this training will offer activities shown to foster relaxation such as yoga postures and guided meditation (Melville, Chang, Colagiuri, Marshall, & Cheema, 2012; Greeson, Juberg, Maytan, James, & Rogers, 2014) as well as boost self-efficacy.
- **Considerations for differing campus and residential systems:** All meditation videos will be non-secular, to appeal to diverse students attending both private and public institutions. The online platform makes content easily accessible to students regardless of their university's size or access to topic expert.

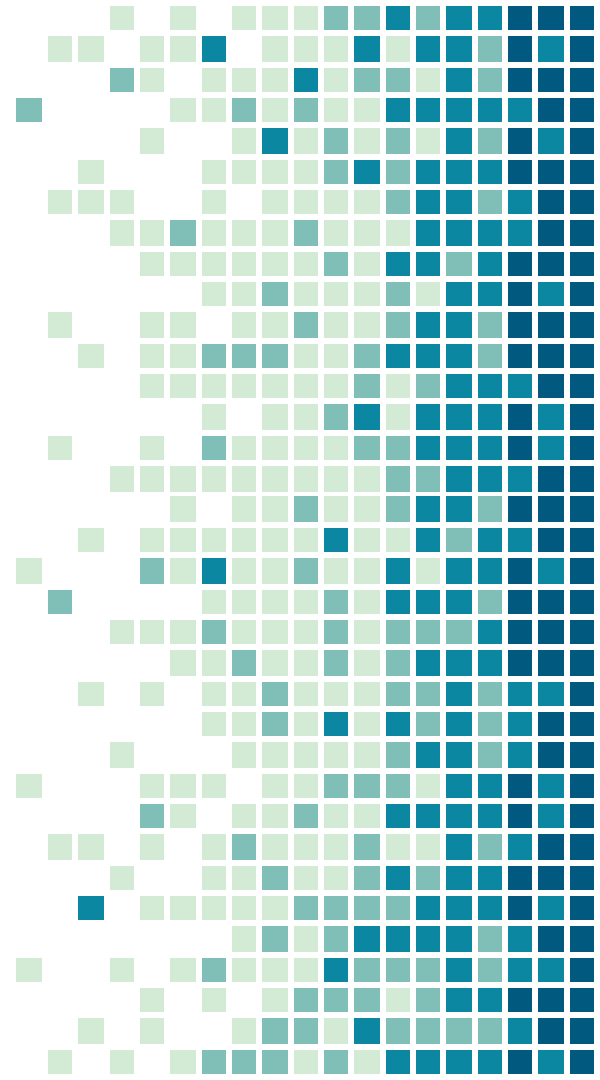


- This online module will address four factors that contribute to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982):
 - Performance Accomplishments
 - Vicarious Experiences
 - Verbal Persuasion
 - Physiological states
- “Judgments of self-efficacy also determine how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles or aversive experiences. When beset with difficulties people who entertain serious doubts about their capabilities slacken their efforts or give up altogether, whereas those who have a strong sense of efficacy exert greater effort to master the challenges” (as cited in Bandura, 1982, p. 123)



The Modern Student

Topic Block #2



Safe Dating & Sexual Behavior



Module would utilize a "swipe right"/"swipe left" feature to respond to questions about safe dating and sexual behavior

Description: This module would be designed for viewing on a mobile device, and would mimic the layout of an online dating app. The training would feature a "swipe right"/"swipe left" tool to respond to questions regarding safe dating and sexual behavior.

Rationalization: Today's college student uses mobile dating apps as a community-building tool, to find friends, and romantic and/or sexual partners. While these apps can be a convenient tool for making interpersonal connections, they can also pose certain risks (Choi et al, 2016). This online module would outline the risks associated with online dating apps, and how RAs can be proactive in ensuring their own safety as well as that of their residents. It would also go over healthy relationships, safe dating, and safe sexual behavior.

Considerations for differing campus and residential systems:

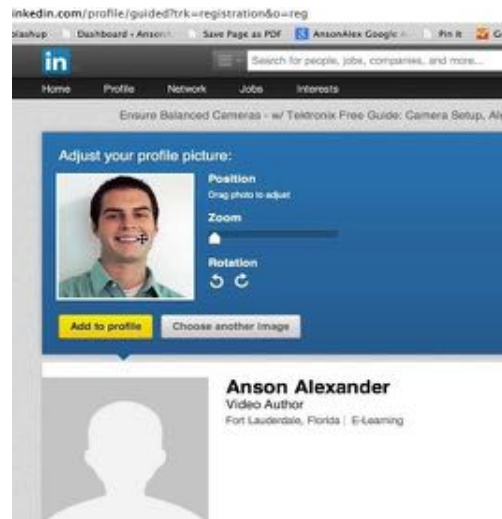
Residence halls/dormitories may have a more difficult time enforcing policies and "community agreements" regarding strangers in the halls. Apartment residents on the other hand might have a more conscious awareness over who enters and leaves their residential space.

Leveraging Your Experience: Career Readiness in the Age of Social Media

Description: In partnership with the campus Career Services/Career Center, this interactive “tutorial” module would walk RAs through LinkedIn and different social media platforms (such as Facebook and Instagram), providing them with career readiness tools they can use during and after their time as a RA (including networking tools, marketing/outreach, and tips for professional conduct and “building your personal brand”).

Rationalization: As student leaders, RAs utilize social media tools daily to advertise programs and events in and around the residences. They may not realize that they are already building their “personal brand.” This module outlines the transferable skills and competencies RAs already hold that can serve as valuable assets in their career readiness well beyond the RA role (Howard, Healey & Boyatzis, 2017).

Considerations for differing campus and residential systems: Smaller campus' Career Services/Career Centers may not have the capacity to partner with Residential Life on a project like this, in which case it may be appropriate to reach out to industry specialists at LinkedIn or elsewhere.

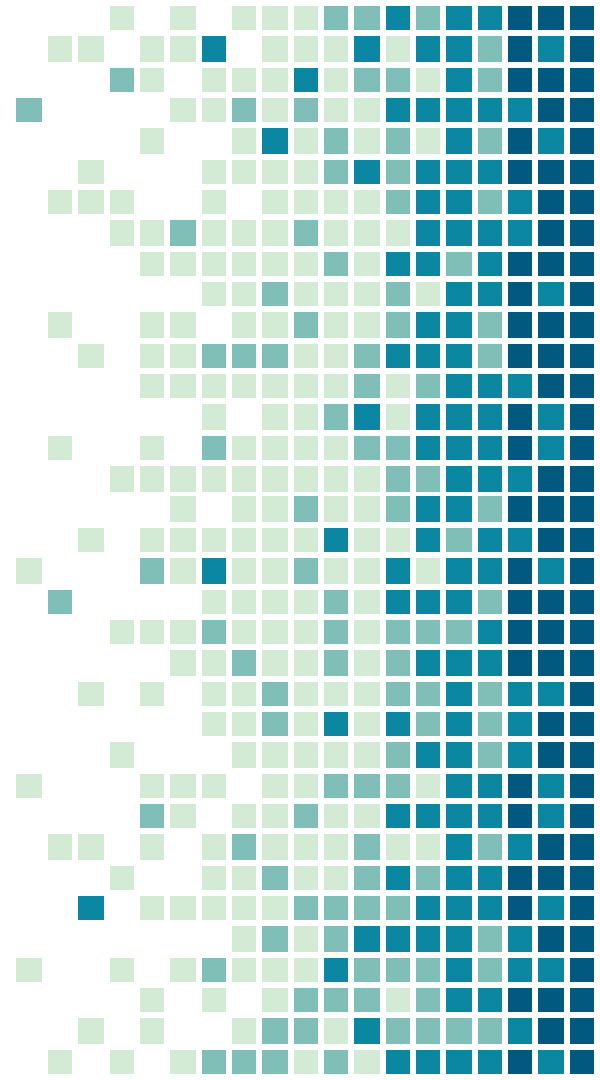


Interactive tutorial would walk RAs through career tools across varying social media platforms



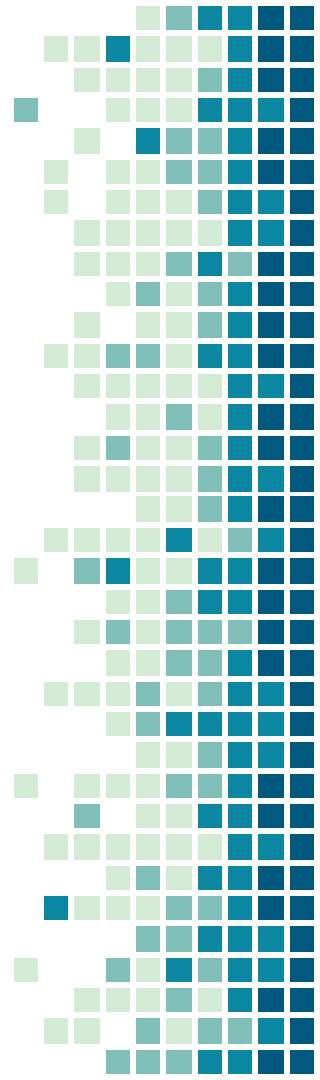
Student Groups with Special Considerations

Topic Block #3



Environmental Concerns for ASD Students

- **Description:** Use an interactive game to train RAs in identifying and alleviating environmental stressors for students on the autism spectrum.
- **Rationalization:** Between .7 and 1.9 percent of college students meet the formal criteria for ASD (White et al., 2011). Environmental concerns are among the most reported obstacles for ASD individuals (Accardo et al., 2018; Kinnaer et al., 2016; Sarrett, 2018). Research shows that successful ASD students have support in every ecosystem of their college experience: academic, interpersonal, residential, etc. (Pinder-Amaker, 2014).
- **Considerations for differing campus and residential systems:** Multiple kinds of living situations and example students will be included into the game to encompass the variability of accommodations an RA may be expected to provide.





- The game will combine individual student scenarios with a selection of various residential living spaces and common rooms. Trainees will navigate the space and perform necessary changes based on the student's needs.
- Scenarios may be procedurally generated by combining randomized students and environments. This ensures that no two trainings are the same, imparting the lesson that every student is unique in the accommodations they require.

Transgender & Gender Non-conforming Students

- **Description:** To broaden RAs' understanding of issues faced by transgender and gender non-conforming students in on-campus housing, this training module will utilize a combination of videos and an online group chat with a trained advocate from a transgender/gender non-conforming supportive agency. RAs will be encouraged to reflect on what they learn from the videos, ask questions, and brainstorm ways in which they can make their residential system a more inclusive environment for transgender or gender non-conforming students.
- **Rationalization:** Institutions struggle to meet the needs of students who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming; the very structure (physical and social) of colleges and universities upholds a binary conceptualization of gender (Seelman, 2014). Sex-segregated housing puts transgender and gender non-conforming people at risk and in situations where they are denied access, harassed, and challenged about their gender identity (Beemyn et al., 2005; Finger, 2010; Seelman et al., 2012). Universities across the United States are beginning to move toward gender-neutral housing (Willoughby et al., 2012).
- **Considerations for differing campus and residential systems:** Some campuses may not have access to professionals who are equipped or comfortable navigating the conversation around the needs of trans/gender non-conforming students. This training module will serve as a starting point for RAs to become more informed about supporting transgender and gender non-conforming students on college campuses through engaging in a conversation with a trained professional, whether that person is actually on their campus.

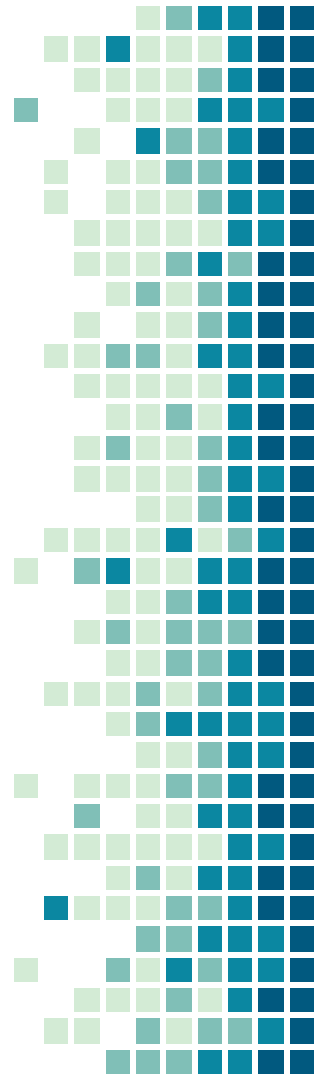


<http://www.trans.cafe/posts/2016/3/25/the-top-11-myths-about-transgender-identity>

- For RAs to support transgender and gender non-conforming students in housing, the societal concept of gender as a binary must be examined and dismantled.
- Following the guidelines set by the American Civil Liberties Union, the videos and group chat will focus on defining and using correct terminology, recognizing the humanity of transgender/gender non-conforming/intersex students on-campus, and provide an overview of the issues these students experience (ACLU, 2019).

Undocumented Students

- **Description:** To help deepen RA's understanding of the realities and challenges faced by undocumented students, this module will consist of a series of videos demonstrating a variety of experiences. After each video, students will be asked to engage in critical reflection activities and contribute to online discussion questions to assess RA achievement of learning outcomes (Mkandawire-Valhmu, 2019).
- **Rationalization:** Given the strong anti-immigrant climate that is pervasive in Washington D.C. and the fear of deportation looming over immigrant students, it is critical now more than ever for schools to be “safe havens, welcoming places of learning, and free from racism, discrimination, and the threat of deportation” (American Federation of Teachers, 2017). RAs can play a critical role by contributing to undocumented student's social support and by creating an inclusive community that supports their unique needs (Bjorklund & Bjorklund, 2018).
- **Considerations for differing campus and residential systems:** by sharing a diverse set of undocumented student stories, content will reflect students across the U.S. and demonstrate the various challenges and strengths found among this student group.



- In addition to the stories shared to illustrate common experiences undergone by many undocumented students, this module will share links to national online resources so that RAs can direct their students to helpful tools that explain things like tuition equity laws and how to find scholarships.
- Through this module, RAs will also be equipped with information about ways to help undocumented students persist like the resiliency intervention designed and implemented by Kwon et al. (2019) which aligns with the retention model put forth by Sedlacek in 2004 (as cited in Schuh, Jones, & Torres, 2017)
- RAs will also receive a list of campus specific resources with designated allies to refer their students to for additional help.



Define American: Jose's Story



Kindness in
Share the UndocuJoy!

Foster Care Alumni (FCA)



Foster Youth - College is For You!!! Via YouTube



Description: This module will consist of a short "docu-series" highlighting the lived experiences of various FCA attending college. At the end of each video RAs will have access to linked information regarding state, campus, and community-specific resources available for current or former foster youth attending college.

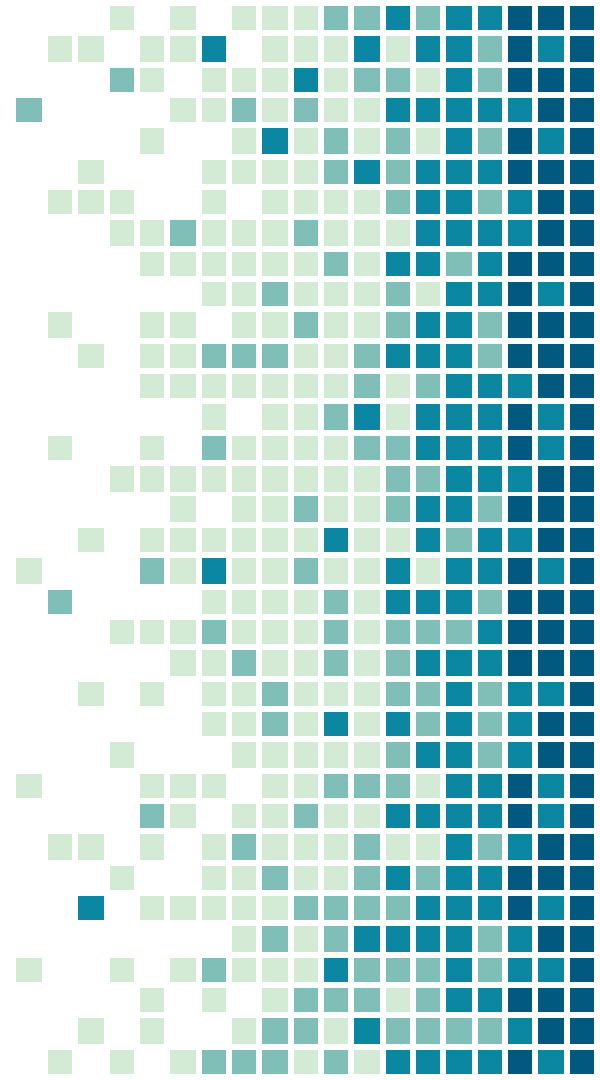
Rationalization: Of the 5-13% of foster youth who enroll in post-secondary institutions, only 2-3% of FCA will graduate and obtain an associate's degree, bachelor's degree, or other advanced degree (Casey Family Programs, 2010). Historically, FCA have been a small population on college campuses and within housing in particular, often due to costs associated with living on-campus (Kinarsky, 2017). As numbers of former foster youth on campus grow, it is important for RAs to understand the unique needs of this population within the environment of higher education, such as year-round housing, food security, and academic support, and mental health support (Day et al., 2011).

Considerations for differing campus and residential systems: Some institutions may have foster youth-specific housing programs available, in which case these videos and resources may be unnecessary or rudimental.



Training Survey

The Final Module



Training Survey

After completing the "Environmental Concerns for ASD Students" training, I feel better prepared to support students on the Autism Spectrum. *

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Agree

After completing the "Transgender & Gender Non-conforming Students" training, I feel better prepared to support transgender and gender non-conforming students. *

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Agree

What training topic(s) were the most helpful in preparing you to support students as a Resident Advisor? *

Your answer

What training topic(s) were the least helpful in preparing you to support students as a Resident Advisor? *

Your answer

Description: The final module, a training survey, would serve as an opportunity for RAs to provide feedback on their online training experience. It would utilize quantitative (Likert scale) and qualitative (short answer reflection) questions. The survey would gauge whether RAs feel more prepared to support students across varying backgrounds and experiences, which topics were the most helpful, what module formats worked best for them, and more. As the final training module, this will be a required survey for RAs to complete their training.

Rationalization: The training survey would ensure that the office/department of Residential Life can continue to improve the supplementary RA training modules every year. Data collected will be essential to making these improvements, and will bolster the credibility of the supplemental training (Schuh & Upcraft, 2001).

Thank you!

Please contact us with any questions:

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StudentAffairs.com 2019 Virtual Case Study:

Narrative Supplement

Isheeta Sultana Rahman, Evan Falkenthal, Lily Holzner, Aracely Aceves Lozano

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StudentAffairs.com 2019 Virtual Case Study: Narrative Supplement

The purpose of this brief paper is to expound on the primary material presented in the previous slides. We will address our criteria for good praxis, expand on some of the theoretical orientations that informed our decisions, and end with a discussion of future trainings that were cut from the final presentation. The references page included in this paper contains all the citations for the submission.

As the case study provided us with a list of topics that were already covered in the Resident Advisor/Assistant (RA) trainings, we decided to leverage this framework and create three topic blocks that could easily supplement the primary curriculum. Each block is general enough in its definition to capture a wide variety of topics, but not so general as to encroach on the space the primary curriculum occupies. For example, “The Modern Student” block contains topics that address the foundational question of, “what are the concerns of the students enrolled in our institution *right now*?” These modules centered around social media but could have included topics on pertinent political issues or other kinds of technology use. The “Mindfulness, Health & Safety” block exemplifies our desire for a healthy combination of topics which address both the interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences of a RA: “Supporting ‘Spoonyes’” and “Digital Mental Health Triage” are interpersonal, skills-based topics, while “Stress Management” is an intrapersonal, knowledge-based topic. Intentionally addressing both experiences ensures that the holistic development of the RA isn’t forgotten.

Although the blocks were formulated to capture a variety of topics, the topics themselves were selected based on an extensive literature review of issues in both student affairs and higher education more generally. The “Students with Special Considerations” block, for instance, is composed of student populations that are currently at the forefront of consideration within

student affairs research; but it is not an exhaustive list of populations with special considerations by any means. Multiple sources for each topic were desired to establish the subject as a meaningful endeavor, and to properly inform the design of the training. Our review of the literature was not limited to higher education however, as the research informing some of the topics is interdisciplinary. “Digital Mental Health Triage,” for instance, incorporates the theory of psychological first aid, which was initially created to inform aid rendered to disaster trauma victims (McCabe et al., 2014). “Environmental Concerns for ASD Students” is partially informed by architectural research conducted with autistic individuals to explore ASD-friendly, built environments (Kinnaer, Baumers, & Heylighen, 2016).

The trainings are intended to cover a range of delivery methods including webpages, games, videos, guided tutorials, etc. This is intended both to experiment with various methods and see what sticks through our assessment process, but also to combat any training fatigue experienced by the RAs. Several of the trainings are informed by educational game design which has been associated with higher cognitive gains and increases in positive learning affect (Lamb, Annetta, Firestone, & Etopio, 2018). “Safe Dating & Sexual Behavior,” for example, adopts the user interface employed by online dating apps such as Tinder or Bumble and displays questions regarding dating and sexual behavior in the form of user profiles similar to the aforementioned apps. RAs would be expected to identify problematic scenarios or profiles and “swipe left” on their device to indicate their refusal of the problematic behavior. This training utilizes a key aspect of gamification that is essential for achieving learning outcomes: creating a safe platform for experiencing simulated risk. This simulated risk is also present in “Digital Mental Health Triage” through the use of a custom chatbot that acts and responds in a realistic and similar manner to an individual having a mental health crisis. Unlike other trainings which proceed in a

linear manner, interactions with the chatbot are procedurally generated which, according to Lamb et al., should result in greater levels of engagement (2018).

Some of the topics cut from the final presentation included a “How to Party Safely” training underneath the “Mindfulness, Health & Safety” block and a “Are You Considering a Career in Higher Education?” topic under “The Modern Student” block. The former topic would have addressed steps RAs can take to realistically engage with their students about partying. These steps would have included a process of acknowledgement, validation, and offer of genuine support that could potentially bring problematic partying behaviors to the forefront rather than fostering an environment of fear whereby students hide their habits from RAs to their own potential detriment. The topic was cut due to the potential overlap with primary curriculum and a desire to focus more broadly on mental health engagement that became our mental health triage module. The latter topic was eventually focused and retooled into “Leveraging Your Experience” to provide career support for the unique skillset of RAs rather than limiting their experience to higher education settings.

While each respective training module has a dedicated assessment tool (in the form of games, chatbots, and more) to gauge RAs’ knowledge, the final module in our series is an assessment that surveys RAs’ thoughts and feedback on their supplemental training experience. The data collected in this assessment would provide both qualitative and quantitative information, utilizing the Likert scale to gauge how prepared RAs feel to support students, and short-answer reflection questions to gauge which training module topics and styles RAs found most and least helpful. Assessment data would serve two main purposes: first, it would give the series credibility, thus ensuring its longevity. Second, it would provide a commitment to the ongoing improvement of the series, thus ensuring the practicality and relevancy of the training.

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