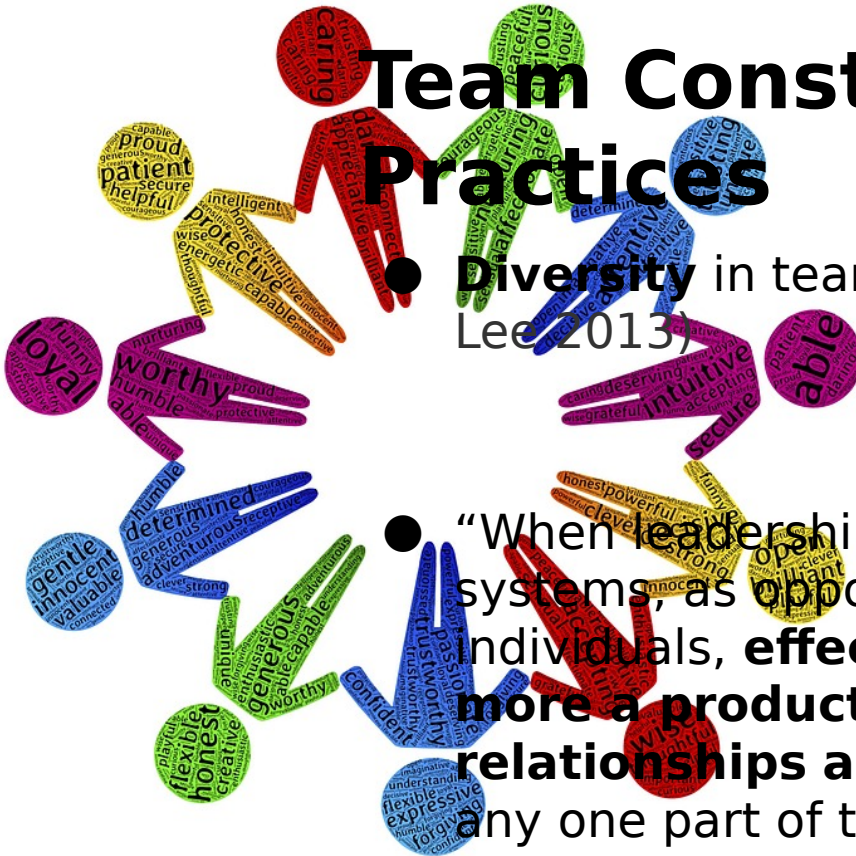# The Umbrella Method

Paige Matzerath (Team Leader)
Sarah Avery
Stephen Weinmann
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Team Constructions Best Practices

- **Diversity** in teams **increases innovation**. (Nathan & Lee 2013)

- "When leadership is viewed as a property of whole systems, as opposed to solely the property of individuals, **effectiveness in leadership becomes more a product of those connections or relationships among the parts** than the result of any one part of that system (such as the leader)." (O'Connor & Quinn 2004)

Replicating the Mindset: Umbrella Method

RAs will be required to take one session from each of the 3 Overarching Focus Areas

Communication
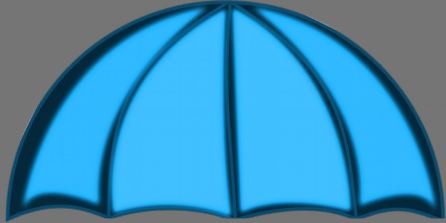
Conflict Management

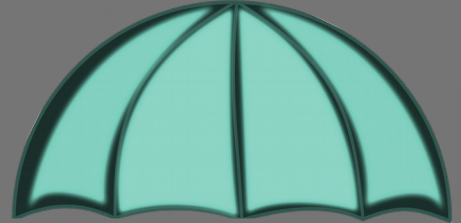Time & Place

Social Media

Mental Health

Exercising Self-Care

Mental Wellness

Resiliency

Work-Life Balance

There is Always a Knock

Friends

Burnout

Provides Ra Staff with…

- Opportunity to be **specialists**
- **Leadership** and **Teaching** experience
- **Continuity** across all teams
  - ○ Comfort knowing all have a piece of the same overarching topic
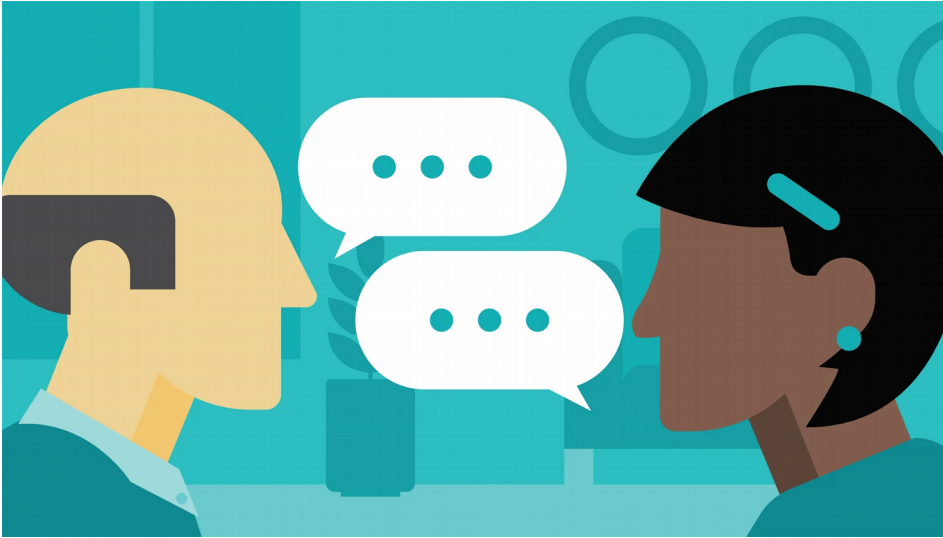
Topic 1: Communication

Focus Area 1: Conflict Management

- Discussion will focus on:
  - Confidential information and how to properly disclose it if needed
  - When and where it is appropriate to confront an individual/conflict
  - Creating an open dialogue and safe space for residences to speak their mind
  - How to develop and work towards goals with staff and residences
  - Appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication when discussing big ideas/heavy topics with an individual

Focus Area 2: Time and Place

- Discussion will focus on:
    - Creating a welcoming and safe environment for residences
    - Knowing your environment and when it is appropriate to act on a situation
    - Knowing your tone of voice, both in person and through online communication
    - How to properly construct an email and the differences between emailing your residences and supervisor
        - Different tone of voice
    - Learning to display confidence and seriousness when communicating with residence

Focus Area 3: Social Media - Creating your Brand

- Discussion will focus on:
  - Understanding social media and the different types of online presence
    - Appropriate online presence
  - Having separate personal/professional social media accounts
  - Implementing social media in the residences halls
    - Connecting residences on social media
  - Creating boundaries with residences on social media

Topic 2: Mental Health

Focus Area 1: Exercising Self-Care

Definitions:
- the practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health.
- the practice of taking an active role in protecting one's own well-being and happiness, in particular during periods of stress.
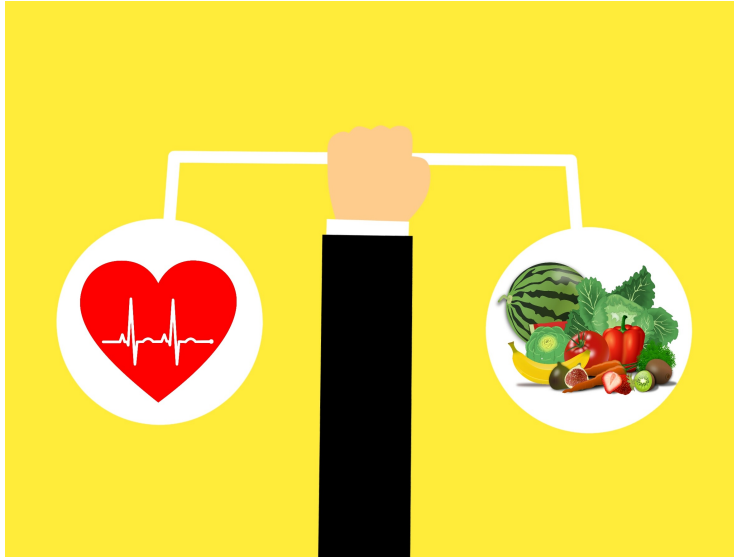
Questions to be Answered:

1. **What is and what isn't Self-Care?**
2. **Why do we need Self-Care?**
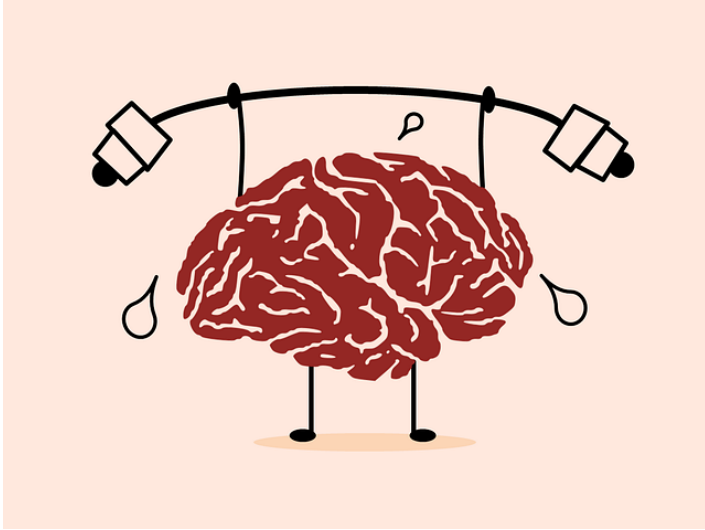3. **How do you show yourself Self-Care?**

_____

Focus Area 2: Mental Wellness

Questions to be Answered:

1. What are signs and symptoms of common Mental Illnesses?
2. How do we reduce the stigma around Mental Illness?
3. What are some programs or challenges you can employ to educate or promote Mental Wellness?

Focus Area 3: Resiliency

Questions to be Answered:

1. What are Resilience and Grit? Why should we build them?
2. What are key factors to building Resiliency?
3. Why is failure a goal for some student and not others? Is failure something we should strive for?

Topic 3: Work-Life Balance

Focus Area 1: There is always a knock

Ways to deal with all the knocks

- Know who is on call so you can get them involved so you can go back to your own work
- Just don't answer....it is okay if you are sick or asleep to just not answer
- Be honest and let people know you are busy
- Be realistic with your own needs, if you are busy tell them you are busy

Focus Area 2: Friends

New Friends and Old Friends

- Don't worry about being best friends with your residents - as well as staff members
- Make sure to keep an appropriate balance
- Losing friends
- Gaining lots of new ones

Focus Area 3: Burnout

Definition

- "Exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration" - *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*
- Ways to deal with burnout
  - Talking it out
  - Remembering why you got into this position in the first place
  - Being Mindful of yourself and your co-workers

Conclusion

- Striving to give an overview of important topics that leaders on campus should be knowledgeable about:
  - Students should learn proper communication, both online and in person
  - Students should be aware of the increase in mental health awareness and how to support the impact
  - Students should strive for appropriate work-life balance in order to be a successful leader

- With funding and time, we can develop these segments with the following resources:
  - O'Connor, P. M. G., & Quinn, L. (2004). Organizational capacity for leadership. In C. D. McCauley, & E. Van Velsor (Eds.)
  - The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development (2nd ed.) (pp. 417–437). San Francisco, CA7 Jossey-Bass.
  - Junco, R. (2014). *Engaging students through social media.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.