

A photograph of four students sitting around a wooden table in a meeting room. On the left, a young man with glasses and a black t-shirt is smiling and looking towards the others. Next to him is a young man with blonde hair wearing a grey t-shirt with 'LINDENWOOD' printed on it. In the center is a young woman with long brown hair wearing a purple top, smiling. On the right is a young woman with dark hair wearing a grey button-down shirt over a black top, also smiling. They are all looking at each other in a collaborative setting. A laptop is open on the table in front of the woman on the right. Papers and a smartphone are also on the table. In the background, a large screen displays a presentation with the word 'COD' visible. The overall atmosphere is positive and professional.

2019 Virtual Case Study

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OVERVIEW

- Introduction of Team Members
- Current Bronson University RA Trainings
- New Programming Design
- New Program Topics

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TEAM MEMBERS



Elizabeth Ashcraft

Strategist, Internships
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Lisa Jacob

Student Advisor,
School of Arts, Media,
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CURRENT BRONSON TRAININGS

- Programming
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Sexual Assault & Harassment
- Campus Judicial Procedures
- Administrative Tasks & Paperwork

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INTERACTIVE MODULE DESIGN

- Inspired by Black Mirror on Netflix, these modules will allow students to choose how the module unfolds
 1. Basic overview of the topic and information
 2. Scenario based tests that allow users to choose how the scene plays out
 3. After playing out each scenario, students will choose the best outcome from scenario options and write a short reflection on why
 4. Module will state if their selection was correct or not and give reasons as to why

**Heartsaver©First Aid CPR AED certification will be a required training prior to having access to these modules

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NEW TRAINING MODULES

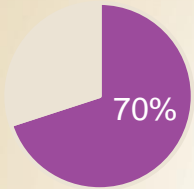
1. Safety First
2. Campus Resources
3. Adulting 101
4. Community Development
5. Feedback
6. Hidden Disabilities
7. Safe Zone
8. Mental Health
9. Self-Care

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SAFETY FIRST

According to the American Heart Association (2017):



About 70% of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests happen in homes



About 46% of people who experience an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest receive the immediate help that they need before professional help arrives

When a person has a cardiac arrest, **survival depends on immediately receiving CPR from someone nearby.**



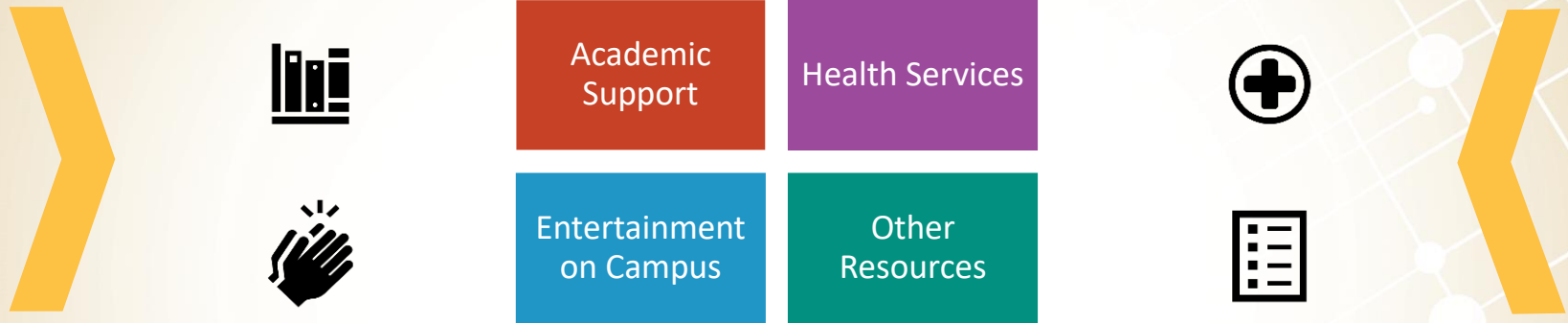
When an emergency medical situation occurs, resident assistants will likely be called on for assistance. Knowing basic first aid, the Heimlich maneuver, and CPR can save a life, and/or help the situation, until professional medical help arrives. Since acting quickly in an emergency is critical, all RA's will be required to obtain Heartsaver©First Aid CPR AED certification.

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CAMPUS RESOURCES

Resident assistants are a great go-to resource (Hoyt, 2017)



Students need to know:

- What resources are available
- How/where to access them
- Who to contact

With an ample amount of resources, students can find any help right on their college campus. Faculty and staff are passionate about helping students in any way possible through safety, writing, tutoring, research and much more (Kiel, 2017).

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ADULTING 101

Example Training Topics:

Some students living in college residence halls, campus apartments, or Greek houses might be experiencing a sense of total independence for the first time. After the initial excitement of independence wears off, students might feel lost in their daily routine. Basic daily tasks like laundry, cooking, or financial decisions might seem overwhelming.

RAs experience in independent living will make them an example to other residential students, but it's important that RAs understand how to teach life skills without embarrassment or assumptions of their students. Each student comes to campus with different life experiences and it's important for RAs to cater to the needs of each individual student.

Finances

Budgeting

Taxes

Need vs.
Want

Health

Wellness
Center

Communicate
with
Professors

Hydration
and Rest

Laundry

Use high
efficiency
detergent

Separate
whites from
colors

Free laundry
on campus

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Why is community development important?



Community development within a residence hall can make or break a student's campus experience. It's crucial for students to feel accepted, valued, and safe within their home on campus. According to theorist Alexander Astin (1999), "Living in a college campus was positively related to retention, and this positive effect occurred in all types of institutions and among all types of students regardless of sex, race, ability, or family background" (p. 523). Therefore, an RA can help students feel connected to their university, whether they live in a dorm, college apartment, or Greek Home, and thus encourage their persistence throughout their education.

How to develop community in your housing:

Know Your Residents

Be Inclusive

Set Shared Goals

Give Residents Ownership

Encourage Open Communication

Uphold University Mission

Nurture Relationships

Plan Events

Host Weekly Meetings

Foster Respect

Optimize Social Media

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FEEDBACK



Positive

- Maintain or increase frequency
- Can include worker resilience
- Reduced burnout
- Staff loyalty



Constructive

- Decrease frequency of undesired behavior
- Identify desired behavior
- Opportunity for positive feedback



None

- Can reduce frequency of desired behaviors OR
- Act as reinforcement
- Not giving feedback still affects performance

Besides basic high school or first job interactions, both RAs and residents may not have experiences where feedback was necessary. Due to their lack of proficiency in feedback, RAs and students alike might view feedback as conflict rather than opportunity for advancement. RAs need to be prepared to handle constructive feedback from their supervisors in order to better their own positions, while also providing constructive criticism to their residents for a peaceful living community.

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HIDDEN DISABILITIES

According to the U.S. Department of Education:

Hidden disabilities are physical or mental impairments that are not readily apparent to others.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 - Protects the rights of those with disabilities, including hidden disabilities.

RAs may never know if their students suffer from a physical or mental impairment, but the chances of an RA encountering a student with a disability is unavoidable. RAs need to be prepared to work and help their students regardless of the difference in abilities.



"Approximately four million students with disabilities are enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools in the United States."



43% - Learning Disabled



8% - Emotionally Disturbed



1% - Other Health Impaired

"Students with disabilities are largely ignored by colleges' assault prevention, study finds"

- Bianca Quilantan (2018)
The Chronicle of Higher Education

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SAFE ZONE

According to Marzullo & Libman (2009):

RAs will be required to participate in Safe Zone trainings. These trainings will be adapted from <https://thesafezoneproject.com/about/>.

The goals of these trainings are to:

1. Educate on updated terminology within the LGBTQ+ community
2. Identify one's own implicit bias and prejudice
3. Foster reflection regarding privilege



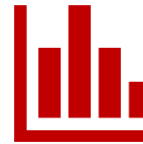
Upon completion of Safe Zone trainings, RAs will understand how to implement safe zones within their community.



Eventually, the goal of Safe Zone training is to create allies for all people identifying with marginalized identities.



54% of LGBT people are concerned about being the victim of a hate crime



Many hate crime victims occupy more than one out-group position in terms of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin and/or disability.



A study of 320 adults found that lesbian and gay victims were blamed for being attacked at a higher rate than heterosexuals.

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MENTAL HEALTH

According to the National Council on Disability (2017):

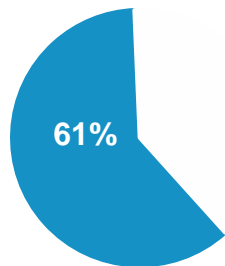


About 1 out of every 3 college students meets the criteria for some type of mental illness.

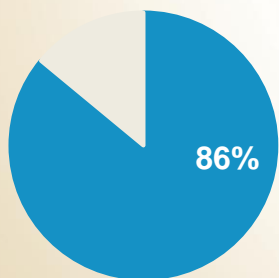
The rise of mental health issues on college campuses is astounding. Many students discover diagnosed disorders in college, while other students continue throughout their education never knowing the reason for their constant mental struggles. As a resident assistant, there is no doubt they will encounter students with varying degrees of mental health issues. From crippling cases of depression, to severe test anxiety, to times of homesickness, it's crucial for RAs to understand the severity of mental illnesses and the impact of the illnesses on the students.

While RAs are not counselors and should not be utilized as such by residential students, RAs should know some basic emergency protocols as well as different tactics to de-escalate situations in the case of an emergency with a student. As always, the RAs should always contact counseling services and refer students to the university counseling center as needed.

As of 2016, 61% of students with a diagnosed mental health illness were **not** getting treatment.



As of 2014, 86% of students who died because of suicide were not receiving help from the university counseling center.



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SELF CARE

As an RA, it can become second nature to worry about the well-being of others, even if that means neglecting the needs of the self. If the emotional, physical, and psychological needs of an RA are not being met, they will be unable to meet the similar needs of the students with whom they work.

According to Psychology Today (2013),

“Burnout is a state of chronic stress that leads to

- Physical and emotional exhaustion
- Cynicism and detachment
- Feelings of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment”

James Stoner's (2017) study on RA burnout demonstrated:

1. RAs who experience burnout are more likely to leave their position
2. RAs are more likely to experience burnout if they are unsatisfied with their job

Practicing Self Care

Play a board game

Read a book (for fun)

Turn off your phone

Journal

Exercise

Practice yoga

Play with a dog or cat

Color

Take a bath

Watch a funny movie

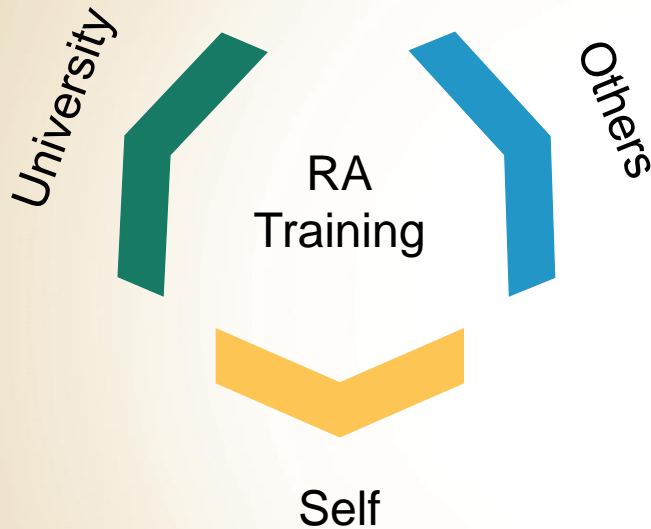
Talk with a friend

Go for a walk

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DISCUSSION



The goals of our proposed RA trainings are designed to educate students on:

1. The value and availability of campus resources
2. The importance of the resident assistant position in serving a diverse population of students
3. The importance of self-care

Through the scenario-based training modules, RAs will learn how to navigate stressful and, sometimes, overwhelming situations that can happen as a resident assistant. However, these modules will also demonstrate the importance and need of the RA position and the positive impact these students will have on the university, their peers, and the growth they will experience because of it.

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Bronson University Proposed Resident Assistant Trainings

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Abstract

Interactive module training has been proposed by the Resident Directors at Bronson University as a solution to the need for supplemental training for resident assistants. This does not replace the usual summer training, but will be additional training that may be completed online at any time once access to the modules is obtained. Completion of Heartsaver©First Aid CPR AED certification is required in order to gain access. The training focuses on health, resources, and community building. Health encompasses everything from emergency care and basic first aid to mental health, well-being, self-care, and feedback. The resources training includes knowing how to access academic as well as other campus resources, events on campus, and adulting life skills. The emphasis on community is geared toward building a sense of belonging and inclusiveness for all residents, regardless of sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnicity, or nationality. Modules on hidden disabilities and safe zone training are featured. Resident assistants (RAs) are critical components to a student's residential experience. The interactive aspect of these proposed training modules allow RAs to assess situations and achieve the best outcomes.

Bronson University Proposed Resident Assistant Trainings

Bronson University strives to provide students with a positive, high-quality education that offers them opportunities to grow and flourish as individuals and make positive impacts on their societies. While Bronson University has a solid commuter population, a majority of Bronson students choose to live on campus. While many students thrive in their collegiate residence life, others tend to struggle and feel disconnected. Therefore, Bronson is dedicated to ensuring that students connect with one another within and outside the classroom.

Resident assistants (RAs) are critical components to a student's residential experience. An RA can be a student's first friend on campus and can act as a mentor throughout a student's collegiate experience. Bronson University values RAs and therefore, wants to ensure that they are prepared for all of the different scenarios that may arise in a campus residence hall, apartment, or Greek House.

Interactive Module Design

Instead of traditional in-person trainings, Bronson University is seeking to incorporate more online trainings for RAs. These trainings would be implemented through an interactive set of modules that would not only teach and train students, but would also have them understand how their choices affect outcomes. Each module will have a basic design which incorporates details about each training subject. After an initial dissemination of information, a few "scenes" will be presented to the RA in which the student can play out each scene to see potential outcomes. After reviewing each scene, students will then be prompted to choose the scenario that they believe would have the most positive outcome. If students choose the wrong scenario, the module will state why that choice was wrong and will then make the students replay the scenario until they choose the best answer. These scenario based modules will lead up to the final total for

assessment, in which the RAs will need to receive at least a 90% average on all modules to be considered complete.

Module 1: Safety First

RAs need to be prepared to handle any emergency that may arise and the knowledge of what to do and how to react to a medical emergency is critical. Under the new training proposal, all RAs will obtain Heartsaver® First Aid CPR AED certification which will ensure that they have the necessary skills to respond to medical emergencies in a calm and confident manner. This certification is required prior to training module access. According to the American Heart Association (2017), if a lifesaving technique, such as CPR, is performed immediately, a victim's chance of survival can double or triple.

Module 2: Campus Resources

While Bronson University offers a plethora of resources to students, many students fail to recognize the importance of these resources or have no knowledge of them. RAs can help direct students in regards to who to contact, where to go, and how to access the different campus resources. In order to ensure the easiest accessibility for students, RAs should have campus resource information readily available, posted in student housing, and available in electronic form for their residents (Hoyt, 2017).

Module 3: Adulting 101

Bronson University is committed to making sure that students receive adequate skills that benefit them after college. In addition to academic skills, Bronson University wants to ensure that students learn basic life skills. RAs have experience living on their own, but other students might not have the same experiences. One of the training modules will cover basic life skills including money management, laundry, and grocery shopping. It is imperative that RAs can help

their students, not only during life threatening situations, but also in the small daily tasks such as preparing a meal or giving advice when discussing how to spend and save money.

Module 4: Community Development

Regardless of age, academic standing, or prior experiences, all students want to feel a sense of belonging. RAs should actively foster a sense of community for their residents.

According to theorist Alexander Astin (1999), involvement is crucial to student retention and persistence. Further, Astin summarized that living on campus increased retention for all students regardless of demographic factors. If RAs are trained on the importance of community development, not only will students feel more connected to one another, they will also feel more connected to Bronson University.

Module 5: Feedback

Providing and receiving feedback is important to a student throughout his/her time as an RA. Resident assistants need to understand that their supervisors will provide them feedback in order to improve their job performance. Similarly, RAs will also need to provide feedback to their residents so that open communication can ensue. The proposed training module will guide RAs through the three types of feedback: positive, constructive, and none. Each type of feedback has benefits and disadvantages, and the module will provide extensive analysis into how feedback can and should be used in a constructive manner when working with residential students.

Module 6: Hidden Disabilities

The U.S. Department of Education (2018) states that over four million students in elementary and secondary education suffer from disabilities. While elementary and secondary schools have the obligation to seek out those with disabilities, colleges are not required to

identify students with handicaps; however, institutions are required to provide all students information regarding disability services. Not all students choose to self-disclose their disability, therefore an RA may never know which of their students have a disability. Unfortunately, students with disabilities can be at a disadvantage when living on their own. Quilantan (2018) reviewed a study that was conducted by the National Council on Disability and found that undergraduate students who have a disability are more likely to be sexually assaulted. Additionally, Quilantan found that higher education institutions are not being prepared to support their students with disabilities when assaults occur. This training will prepare RAs to work with a diverse population of students and support them according to their needs.

Module 7: Safe Zone

Incorporating a Safe Zone training into the interactive module is one way that Bronson University can encourage acceptance within the campus culture. Through Safe Zone training, RAs can learn inclusive LGBTQ+ language and how to support the LGBTQ+ community on campus. RAs should openly communicate to their residents that they are allies of the LGBTQ+ community and should actively work to create a safe environment for people to express themselves freely.

Module 8: Mental Health

The diverse population of students that RAs will encounter also includes students who struggle with mental health. The National Council on Disability (2017) identified one in every three college students as having a mental illness. The likelihood of an RA having an interaction with a student with a mental illness is unavoidable. Therefore, training on the importance of interactions with students with mental illness in addition to emergency protocols if a student is

having an emergency mental breakdown. While RAs should not act as counselors to their students, it is important that they act as a resource and can refer students accordingly.

Module 9: Self-Care

The nature of an RA's position can be exhausting and can lead to burnout. While RAs are required to care for and attend to the needs of their students, it is critical that they also remember to take care of themselves. Bronson University hires specific students as RAs because the institution believes the students are strong representations of the university, have the leadership skills to help others, and can handle stressful situations. RAs are valuable students and the university does not want these students to feel overwhelmed. Therefore, while each module is designed to train the students in how to care for others, the last training module will focus on self-care and will offer insight in the importance of self-care, ways to practice self-care, and how to recognize burnout when it starts to occur.

Discussion

Bronson University understands the importance of the resident assistant position and the impact that RAs have on the students and university. The proposed interactive training modules will cover an array of topics that are relevant and imperative to the success of those working with the student population. The goal of the trainings is to prepare RAs to be ambassadors of the university and knowledgeable of campus resources. Additionally, RAs will be able to work with a diverse student population and understand the importance of self-care while working in an environment where burnout occurs regularly. While RAs cannot be trained on every potential situation, the proposed trainings will at least offer insight on how to interact with different students in diverse situations in a positive and constructive manner, which will better prepare them for their life after Bronson University.

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