

Bronson University Case Study: Online Resident Assistant Training Modules

Old Dominion University

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Overview of Training Modules

- 1. Growing on Your Campus**
- 2. Collaboration**
- 3. Work Life Balance**
- 4. Self-Care**
- 5. Introduction to Crisis
Management**
- 6. Bystander Intervention**
- 7. Accessibility**
- 8. Free Speech**

Module 1: Growing on Your Campus

Objectives:

- Students will learn about the professional and personal benefit of campus involvement and its effects on campus and cultural citizenship
- Students will explore resources on campus

Theories:

- **Alexander Astin's theory-**A student's environment and involvement during their college experience positively contributes to their characteristics, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and values that exist after a student has graduated college

Benefit:

- RAs will identify resources on campus to further explore their own personal and professional interests
- RAs will model campus involvement for their residents
- RAs will become more familiar with campus organizations and departments to provide resources for their students

Format:

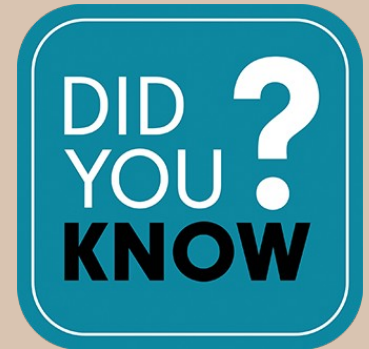
- Overview of Student Development Theory
- Review of campus academic departments, student organizations, and online resources to explore upcoming activities.

Assessment:

- Students will develop an model reflecting their personal interests, research organizations on campus, and create action steps.

Module 1: Growing on Your Campus

- **Exploring campus resources, activities, and growth opportunities**
 - Resident Advisor positions offer significant benefits to the student's psychological well-being, however it is important to explore other resources on campus that compliment your personal and professional interests and prepare you to guide your students.
- **Personal and professional development**
 - Your environments are influential on your outcomes
 - Student involvement on campus increases student's academic success
- **Campus citizenship**
 - An engagement and awareness of diverse campus groups and organizations helps increase cultural literacy, critical thinking, and respect for differences
- **Becoming a resource and model for your students**



Exploring Your Interests on Campus

A training module activity

Students will be asked to identify their personal and professional interests and find campus departments and organizations that provide activities and resources to engage with these interests. Students are then asked to identify actionable steps to become more knowledgeable about these resources. The goal is for students to become more familiar with campus, for their own personal growth and for their students.

Identify personal and professional interests	Campus organizations and departments	Action Steps
Diversity and Inclusion	Office of Institutional Equity	1. Attend ally training with office of Institutional Equity
	CommUnity Conversation Series	
	Bronson OUT	2. Attend CommUnity Bias Event on March 10
	Global Student Fellowship	
	Safe Space	
History	Bronson History Club	1. Join Bronson History Club Facebook Group
	Department of Social Sciences	2. Attend Professor Bragg's lecture series on the Civil War beginning April 7

Model created by L.Pifer

Module 2: Collaboration

Objectives:

- Students will understand the benefits and advantages of collaborating with campus partners and introduce students to parts of campus outside of their residence.

Theories:

Alexander Astin's theory-A

student's environment and involvement during their college experience positively contributes to their characteristics, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and values that exist after a student has graduated college.

Benefit:

- RA's will have productive collaborations
- Students will get connected
- Collabs will enhance the chance for sense of belonging for students
- Campus partners (offices and

Format

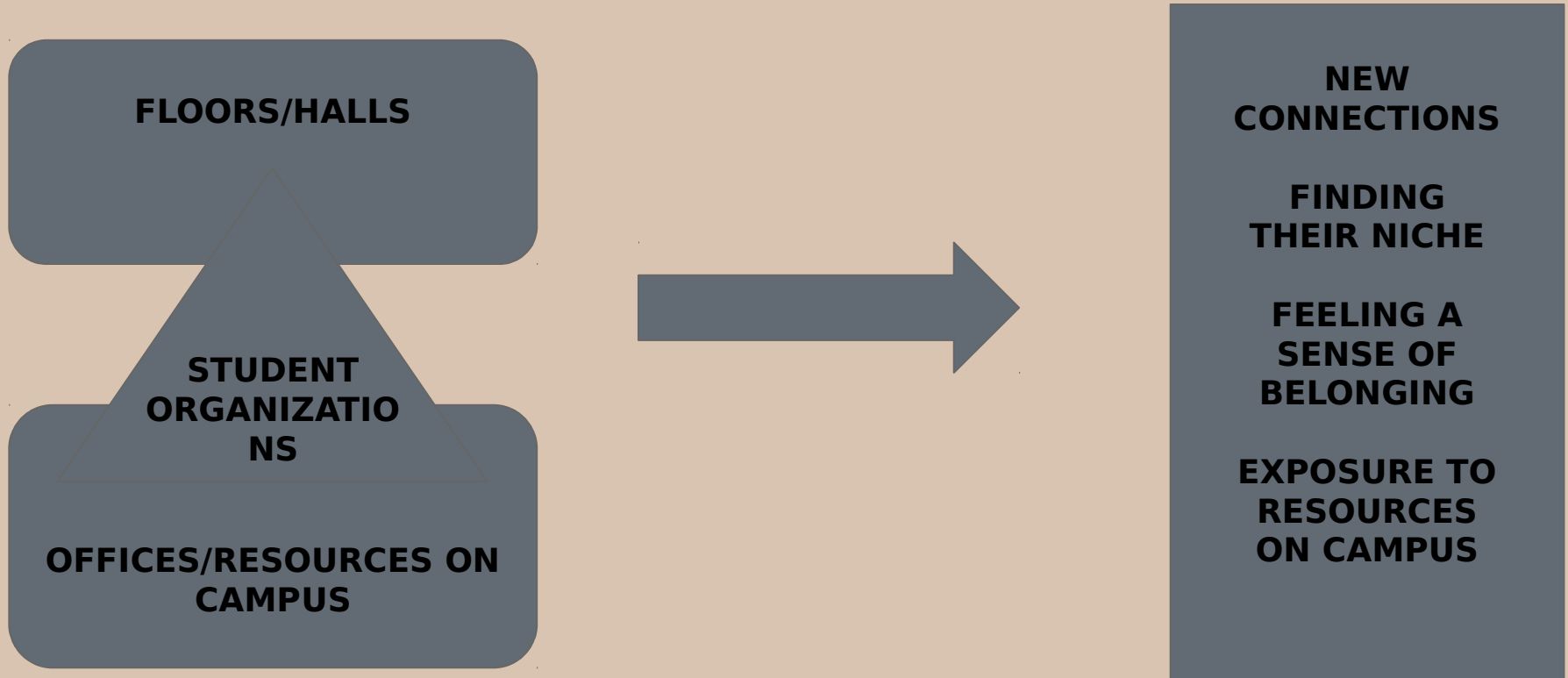
student organizations) will get publicity

- Introduction to collaborations
- Benefits of collaborations
- List of resources/offices/orgs to collab with

Assessment:

- The assessment for this module will include a post-survey after the semester to collect how many campus partners the RA's collaborated with, what organizations they connected with,

Module 2: The Power of Collaboration



Module 3: Work-Life Balance

Objectives:

- Students will explore definitions of work-life balance, stress, and burnout
- Students will learn the importance of balance for RAs
- Students will learn the benefits of balance when working with students

Benefit:

- Developing concrete ways to identify stressors
- Identifying support mechanisms
- Modeling healthy work-life integration for students

Format:

- Overview of key terms and definitions
- Review of on- and off-campus support resources
- Tips for identifying and managing stressors

Assessment:

- Students will create a well-being diagram including identification of time commitments, roles, and responsibilities, and will be asked to prioritize
- Students will identify current support structures they take advantage of and additional resources

Module 3: Maintaining a Work-Life Balance

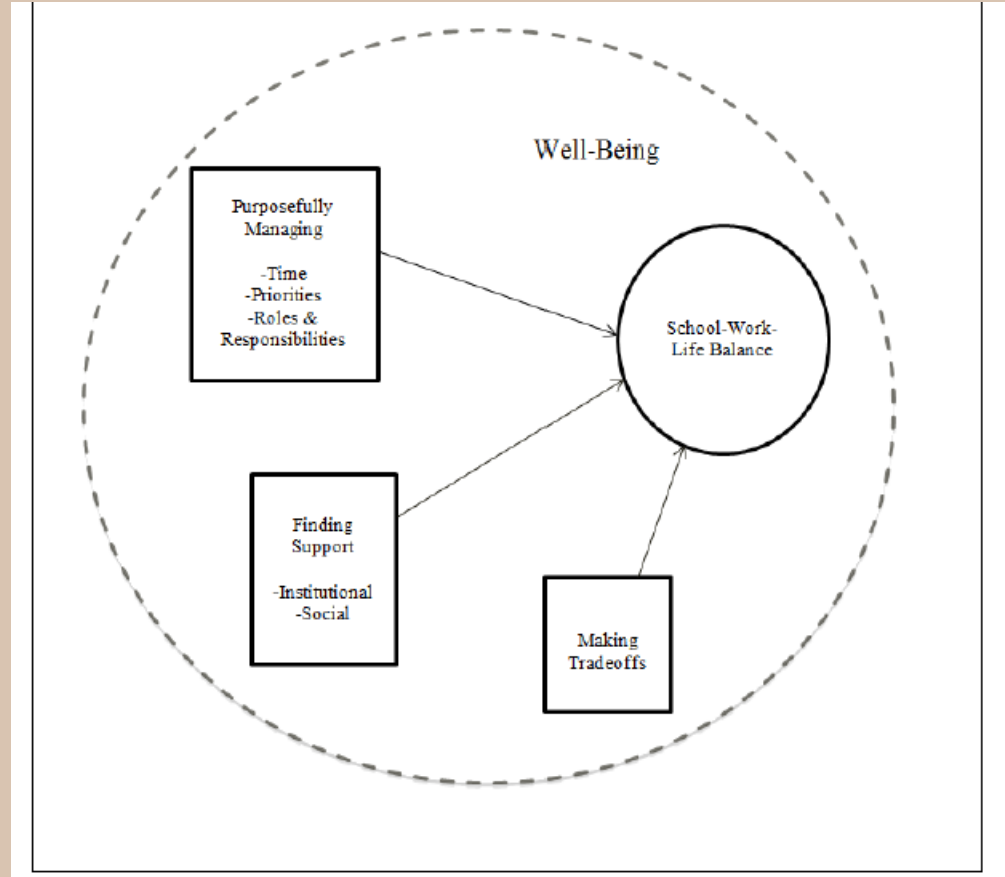
- What is work-life balance
 - The importance of balance in residence life
- Stress
 - Demands vs. Resources
- Burnout
 - Proceeding with caution in our passion
 - The burden of constant accessibility
- The influence of balance on your work with students
 - Presenting your best, engaged and productive self
 - Ability to provide guidance and mentorship
 - Ability to recognize changes in students and identify crises
 - Modeling a healthy integration



Finding Your Balance

An assessment tool

- Purposeful Management
 - Writing down your schedule
 - Prioritizing
 - Identifying roles and responsibilities
- Finding your support
 - Institutional
 - Social
- Necessary Tradeoffs
 - Benefits vs. Tradeoffs for student workers



Martinez, E., Ordu, C., Della Sala, M.R., & McFarlane, A. (2013). Striving to obtain a school-work-life balance: The full-time doctoral student. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 8. Retrieved from <http://ijds.org/Volume8/IJDSv8p039-050Martinez0235.pdf>

Module 4: Self Care

Objectives:

- Student will examine most up to date statistics on college student mental health.
- Students will interpret action steps to support emotional wellness and implement steps into curriculum for their residents.
- Students will be able to identify at-risk mental health behaviors in themselves and their residents.

Theories:

Schlossberg's Transition Theory-The 4 S's

Benefit:

The benefit of this module for students is to teach new and veteran Resident Assistant about the mental health crisis on college campuses. All the while teaching them actionable skills to help prevent mental health crises and know the warning signs for not only themselves, but in their residents as well.

Format:

- Recorded PowerPoint presentation presenting the module's information.
- Request students explore the citation on the first slide. It will take them to the study where the graphics came from. Ask students to explore the study.

Assessment:

The assessment for this module will include a post-test to test the students on their retention of the information provided to them during this module.

Module 4: Self Care

The Importance of Mental Health for Residents & YOU

Current Statistics on Mental Health on College Campuses:

- ❖ 3 out of 5 students experience overwhelming anxiety
- ❖ 2 out of 5 students were too depressed to function
- ❖ On average, only 10-15 percent of these students are seeking help

Felt so depressed that it was difficult to function

Percent (%)	Male	Female	Total
No, never	45.0	34.9	37.3
No, not last 12 months	20.7	21.2	20.9
Yes, last 2 weeks	11.9	15.7	15.1
Yes, last 30 days	6.1	8.6	8.0
Yes, in last 12 months	16.3	19.7	18.8
<i>Any time within the last 12 months</i>	34.3	44.0	41.9

Felt overwhelming anxiety

Percent (%)	Male	Female	Total
No, never	35.7	19.9	24.3
No, not last 12 months	15.4	11.1	12.3
Yes, last 2 weeks	18.2	30.9	27.6
Yes, last 30 days	10.5	14.8	13.6
Yes, in last 12 months	20.1	23.3	22.3
<i>Any time within the last 12 months</i>	48.8	68.9	63.4

Past 7 days, getting enough sleep to feel rested in the morning:

Percent (%)	Male	Female	Total
0 days	10.4	12.6	12.2
1-2 days	27.7	32.9	31.3
3-5 days	47.2	44.5	45.1
6+ days	14.6	10.0	11.3

Past 7 days, how often felt tired, dragged out, or sleepy during the day:

Percent (%)	Male	Female	Total
0 days	12.8	6.4	8.3
1-2 days	34.1	27.6	29.2
3-5 days	40.1	46.0	44.3
6+ days	13.0	20.0	18.2

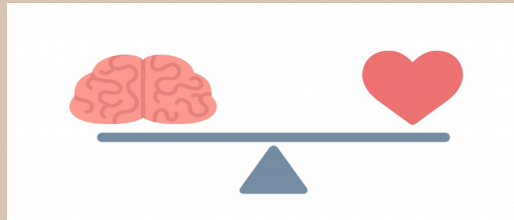
Past 7 days, how much of a problem with sleepiness during daytime activities:

Percent (%)	Male	Female	Total
No problem	13.9	7.9	9.7
A little problem	49.1	46.4	46.9
More than a little problem	22.7	26.2	25.3
A big problem	10.2	13.7	12.8
A very big problem	4.1	5.8	5.4

“You Can’t Take Care of Others if You Can’t Take Care of Yourself”: Taking Care of Your Residents & Yourself

Action Steps to Support Emotional Wellness:

- Teaching different life skills
- Promoting social connectedness
- Identify at-risk students or at-risk behaviors
- Encourage students to get help
- Provide mental health resources and information
- Follow crisis management protocol



Common At-Risk Behaviors: ‘Red Flags’

- Academic
 - Drop in grades
 - Failure to turn in assignment
 - Lack of participation in class or skipping class
- Behavioral
 - Withdrawal
 - Change in routine
 - Avoidance of high stress situations
- Physical
 - Noticeable weight loss or gain
 - Increased amount of sleep or tiredness
 - Verbalization of negative thoughts
 - Signs of drug or alcohol use

Module 5: Introduction to Crisis Management

Objectives:

- Students will be able to define crisis.
- Students will be able to differentiate between types of crises they may encounter in their position as a Resident Assistant.
- Students will be able to understand basic guidelines for crisis management.
- Students will identify what FERPA is, what FERPA does, the benefits of FERPA, and why FERPA is important.

Theories:

Perry's Theory of Intellectual and Ethical Development

Benefit:

The addition of the Introduction to Crisis Management module is specifically beneficial to the new Resident Assistants who don't know the position in and out. This module also serves as a reminder for veteran Resident Assistant(especially FERPA).

Format:

- A recorded voice over PowerPoint presentation of the material.
- A supplemental YouTube video to cover the topic of FERPA.
- Following the presentation, a short assessment to conclude the module.

Assessment:

The assessment for this module will include a 5 questions pre-test and a short 10 question multiple choice post-test. The pre-test will test the existing knowledge the students may have of FERPA or of crisis/crisis protocol.

Module 5: Introduction to Crisis Management

What is a crisis?

A time of intense difficulty or danger; an event that disrupts regular function for students, university, residence hall(s), and faculty/staff.

Types of Crisis:

Emergency maintenance, unidentified packages, theft, alcohol, bomb threats, arrests, fire, physical assault, student illness-hospital attention needed, death, suicide, weapons, drugs, rape or sexual assault, etc.

Goals to Manage a Crisis:

- Identify crisis
- Determine action steps
- Call up who needs to be notified
- Document the incident
- Follow up
- Follow through


Outside of university protocol



Crisis Management: The Importance of Confidentiality

FERPA

Family
Educational
Rights &
Privacy
Act of 1974



Goal: Protect Integrity of a Student's Academic Record & Protect Student's Privacy



Module 6: Bystander Intervention

Objectives:

This module will help RA's adjust to their role as a first responder and be open to bystander intervention. Reviewing these bystander intervention slides will empower RA's to feel capable of helping others and contribute to a safe community.

Theories: Bystander Effect

Benefit:

- Enhance student awareness
- Promote general safety
- Seeing videos to encourage practice

Format:

- Definitions of being a bystander and related topics such as being an ally and bystander effect
- Watch Bystander Intervention Videos
- Encourage RA's to practice with other RA's

Assessment:

After the semester we will construct a survey for RA's to ask questions about RA's bystander intervention experience, examples below

- How comfortable do you feel intervening in a bystander situation?
- How many times have you had to intervene in your residence hall?
- Did you feel prepared to intervene?

Module 6: Bystander Intervention

If You See Something, Say Something!

Bystander-one who is present but not taking part in a situation or event : a chance spectator

Ally-to unite or form a connection or relation between : Associate

Scenario Practice Examples-

- A couple verbally/physically fighting in a dorm or the hall
- Seeing a student steal out of an open room or hall

Bystander effect

a social psychological phenomenon that refers to cases in which individuals do not offer help to a victim

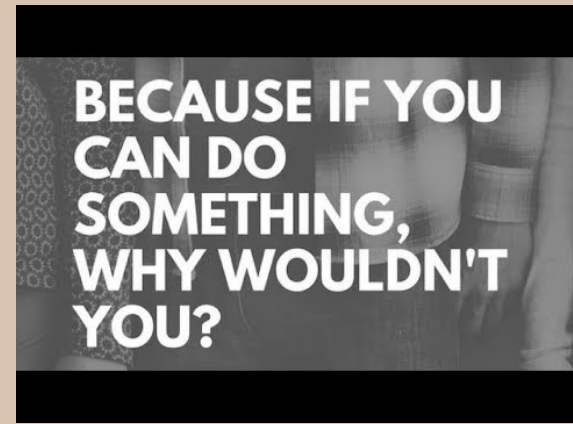


“He probably doesn’t need any help”

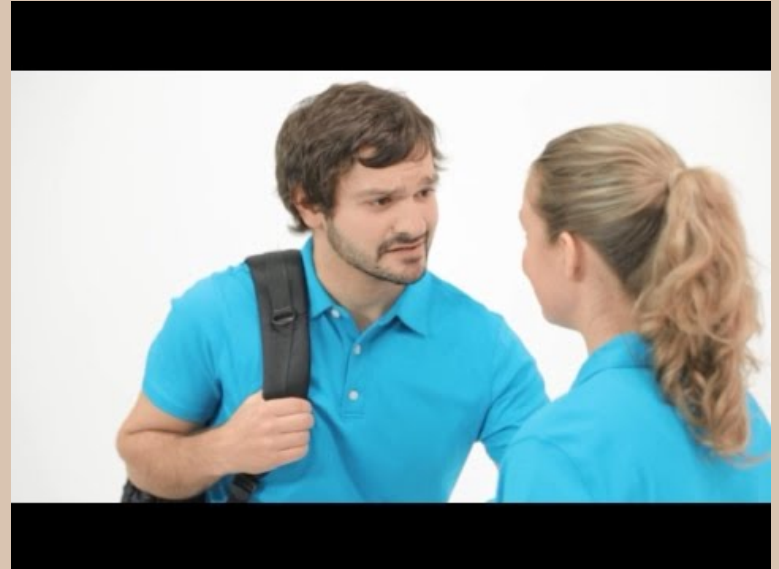
“Someone else will help”

“I’m sure he’s ok”

“I’m just going to mind my business”



DISTRACT: Be *creative* to diffuse the situation. This gives everyone a chance to cool down and might help a victimized person get away.



Module 7: Accessibility

Objectives:

This module will help RAs become more well versed about the topic of accessibility and the tools available on campus for students with disabilities. The information provided in this module will help RAs feel more confident in addressing the needs and concerns of their students with accessibility needs.

Theories:

Experiential Learning Theory-active experience (scavenger hunt activity) and reflection to develop action and learning.

Benefit:

- **Enrich student knowledge of types of accessibility**
- **Enhance awareness of accessibility needs**
- **Provide accessibility resources for**

Format/Reference

- **Define accessibility**
- **Explain different types of disabilities which are considered accessibility disabilities**
- **Provide information on physical accessibility resources and electronic accessibility resources**
- **Provide information on accessibility resources on campus**

Assessment:

Students will participate in an “electronic scavenger hunt” where they are tasked with finding different accessibility resources across campus. After the scavenger hunt they will have a posttest to test their knowledge on the location of resources for students with disabilities.

Module 7: Accessibility

Request accessibility assistance here.



What is accessibility?

Accessibility refers to making sure students with disabilities have equal access to not only an education, but also student service resources and organizations.

Physical Accessibility:

- Elevators
- Curb cut outs
- Handicap doors
- Handicap parking
- Access routes across campus

Electronic Accessibility:

- Making sure all electronic records are easily accessible for students with disabilities
- Moving towards virtual learning environment to accommodate students with disabilities

Resources for Students:

- Office of Educational Accessibility
- Accessibility Counselors
- Accessibility Campus Map

Accessibility Training Activity

What Accessibility Measures are in Place?

- Using the campus map locate any curb cut outs, special parking, handicap accessible buildings, etc.
- What accommodations would you find in an online learning environment?

What is Missing:

- What accessibility features could the campus implement which they currently do not offer?
- What is missing in online learning environments?



Module 8: Free Speech

Objectives:

The objective of this module is to make RAs aware of protections covered by the First Amendment as well as university policy surrounding free speech on campus. This awareness will help RAs tackle controversial speech occurrences on campus.

Theories:

Cognitive Theory- students with practice, feedback, and shaping from the environment we have simulated in this module will be able to transform and store this knowledge. Beyond that they will be able to reflect their beliefs, values and attitudes toward this topic during a feedback portion of the

Benefit:

- Enhance knowledge on protections of the First Amendment
- Enhance knowledge of university policy
- Prepare RAs to be more well equipped to handle free speech issues in their halls and with their students

Format:

- Protections of the First Amendment
- University Policy
- Practice scenarios
- Best practices

Assessment:

At the end of this module RAs will watch several videos depicting a speech issue which has arisen on campus. At the end of the video they will have a list of multiple choice responses to choose from as to how they would best handle the situation.

Module 8:

Free Speech on Campus

What does the First Amendment Protect?

- Freedom of religion
- Freedom of speech
- Freedom of the press
- Right to assemble and petition

What would you do?

- If hateful speech is being used during a white supremacist rally on campus?
- If derogatory words were posted on social media by your fraternity or sorority?
- If a political student organization on campus allowed students to make hateful comments about the political party you affiliate with?



Policy on Free Speech for Students

- Freedom of expression on campus and in the classroom
- Protection against improper or unprofessional conduct of faculty
- Freedom of association, “organizing and joining groups”
- Freedom to present and publish without censorship

Image accessed from
<https://www.thegwpf.com/the-death-of-campus-free-speech-and-how-to-revive-it/>

Free Speech Best Practices

- Respect others ideas and opinions even if they do not align with your own
- Be mindful of the impact your words may have and the consequences of this impact
- Do not try to censor speech you do not agree with
- Speak openly and exchange ideas to promote learning and the marketplace of ideas that colleges aim to promote
- Understand that we must protect the speech we hate in order to protect the speech we love



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A Case Study:

Online Resident Advisor Training Modules

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Beyond serving as guides to their residents in matters related to their hall, Resident Advisors (RAs) develop meaningful relationships with their students and often become a first resource for personal, academic, and professional questions. It is an immensely important, stressful role for a college student who is balancing these responsibilities with their own stressors. With this in mind, the following eight training modules have been developed to ensure RAs feel prepared to tackle more nuanced issues with their residents, while learning skills to develop personally and professionally.

1. Growing on your campus:

In this module, RAs will explore the importance of becoming familiar with the various departments, activities, and organizations on campus both for their students and to further develop their own personal and professional interests. Becoming more involved on campus outside of Residents Life diversifies the students' environments and the people with which they interact. Students will be prompted at the end of the module to develop a personal action sheet that allows them to deep-dive into both personal and professional interests they wish to explore further while on campus. These interests are then paired with researched organizations, activities, staff members, faculty, and student organizations that provide resources that will help facilitate growth. Finally, students are encouraged to include 2-3 tangible "action steps" they can pursue throughout the semester. This activity will encourage research into the college's resources and give the RA experience with an assessment tool that can help their students.

2. Collaboration:

RAs are often described as persons responsible for creating a sense of community in a hall. They are someone who knows the ropes; however no single RA's may know the answer to every question. It is important the RA collaborate with other campus entities so they can often

lead you to the person or office that can help with individual student needs. Collaboration is a great example of how to expose students to different environments on campus that can add to their personal development. Research consistently shows that leadership development is positively linked to involvement. These RAs can collaborate with other RAs' floors, and they can connect with other residence halls, student organizations on campus, and even offices. These collaborations can help a student to connect to other students, enhance a student's sense of belonging, expose students to all the resources on campus, and maybe even help them find their niche or fit on campus.

3. Work Life Balance:

Maintaining a work-life balance is particularly important for students working in residence life. Boundaries between work obligations and personal time can become blurred because the students live and work in the same space and have an obligation to be accessible to their students. Without clarifying work-life balance needs, students can succumb to burnout and become ineffective in their positions. In this training module, students will examine the definitions of stress and burnout and explore the importance of maintaining a work-life balance for their personal well-being and for the well-being of their students. Students will use an assessment tool at the end of the webinar to identify their own schedule and will be asked to prioritize their personal and professional commitments, including leisure time. Students will also be asked to explore what institutional and social support of which they currently take advantage and what resources may be available that could help manage their stress. Stress is sometimes inevitable, but the goal of this seminar is to educate incoming RAs on the importance of balancing work and personal engagements to actively work through stress and identify tools that will help their students as well.

4. Mental Health-Taking Care of Your Residents and You:

This module on mental health will serve as an educational tool for the RAs as well as a healthy reminder on how important emotional wellness is for themselves and their residents. The module starts with some of the most up to date statistics on mental health on college campuses with graphs from the report to support it. The second half of the module provides students with action steps on how to teach and support emotional wellness for not only themselves, but to pass onto their students through programs and activities throughout the school year. In addition to actions steps, this part of the mental health module details at-risk behaviors or ‘red flag’ indicators that commonly occur in people who are struggling with mental health. The at-risk behaviors are broken up into three sections, academic, behavioral, and physical, as to best recognize the behaviors in different aspects of the students’ lives. This module will conclude with a quiz of approximately five questions on the statistics, action steps, and ‘red flags’ from the module.

5. Crisis Management:

The basis for the Crisis Management online RA training is to serve as a preface to their hands-on Crisis Management training they receive when they learn university specific protocol. The training will provide basic information pertaining to what a crisis is and a variety of examples of the different kinds of crises they could encounter as RAs. The students will also learn a basic model for how to manage a crisis situation which will be the basis of the university protocol they will learn later. The purpose of this online module is to give students a basis for crisis and real examples of situations they could encounter prior to applying it in a hands-on training with campus police or public safety. The second part of the online module for Crisis Management will explore confidentiality. In this section of the module, the students will learn

how they will interact with FERPA. This module concludes with a short video explaining what FERPA covers and why it is so important on a college campus, especially in a Residence Life.

6. Bystander Intervention:

College presents students with life changing experiences- both for the better and the worse. While RAs work to nourish positive experiences, they must monitor their floor and be prepared to act as first responders. To prepare for this, RAs are tasked with the challenge of keeping up with the changes, policies, and efforts to create and maintain safety on campus. It may be difficult to adjust to this new role. This Bystander Intervention educational session will empower the RAs and students to be more comfortable with addressing high risk situations, including potential violent or sexual assaults. Teaching about the bystander effect and the definition of a bystander and ally will enhance students' self-awareness and promote general safety. RAs should not take things lightly. Whether they feel a vibe, energy, or what one might describe as "that voice in your head," this module will teach RAs to listen to that instinct.

7. Accessibility:

As more and more students with disabilities have enrolled in college, it is important for RAs to be properly educated on the needs of these students and the resources available to them. This module will begin by teaching that the best initial point of contact for students with disabilities is the Educational Accessibility Office. This office serves and assists students with a range of disabilities from physical disabilities to mental disabilities. This office is equipped with trained counselors to help students with disabilities succeed on campus and extend internal as well as external resources to them. In the activity provided, students will be tasked with finding all the resources and accommodations available for students with disabilities on campus. This will range from identifying the location of the Educational Accessibility Office to locating

handicapped parking lots/spaces, handicapped door openers, curb cutouts, elevators in each building, and points of contact for students with accessibility needs. Students are also tasked with making suggestions on how to improve educational accessibility services on campus as well as online.

8. Free Speech:

During the First Amendment online training, RAs will be given general information and definitions related to the First Amendment and student speech policy on campus. They will be given a brief introduction to the First Amendment and a more in-depth breakdown of the student speech policy as laid out by the Board of Visitors in the Faculty Handbook and Student Handbook. After being given this information, students will be presented with different speech scenarios they may encounter while in their role on campus. Through multiple choice questions, they will decide how they would handle these situations while keeping in mind legal rights of students as well as policies put in place by the university. Scenarios may include: students expressing hateful speech at a white supremacist rally on campus, derogatory words posted on social media by a member of a sorority or fraternity, and a political student organization which allowed students to make written hateful comments towards a political party. The module will finish with a list of best practices for students to use when dealing with issues of free speech on campus.

The eight training modules detailed above will serve as additional resources for the incoming Resident Advisor. The modules will help RAs adjust to their role as models for their students, crises managers, and protocol knowledge experts, and will also explore how RAs can support their students and themselves in their personal and professional growth on campus.