



# Prospective Online RA Training

**Team Leader:** Justin Majors

**Team:** Lilian Diaz, Lisa Kappil, Chad,  
Lawhorn



# Training Topics

- Managing Conflict
- Crisis Response
- Creating Effective Boundaries
- Drugs/Alcohol Training
- First Amendment Rights
- Community Building
- Technology/Social Media
- Mental Health/Self-Care
- Living Learning Programs (LLPs)
- Resource Fair



# Managing Conflict

## Background and Focus:

- This aspect of RA training will provide RAs with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to effectively manage conflict between the RA and resident(s), between residents, and between RAs.
- Poorly managed conflict leads to tension between students, low morale, and unproductivity. Training RAs how to manage conflict encourages a deeper understanding of complex situations that arise as well as of other people they work with.

## Assumptions:

- We are assuming that RAs at this institution work to engage their residents and their peers and have frequent communication (in-person and/or online) with these individuals.



# Managing Conflict - Learning Outcomes

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Understand effective communication practices to manage conflict.
- 2) Obtain the skills necessary to managing conflict and de-escalation.
- 3) Recognize when a situation is beyond their control and to ask for help via the chain of command.
- 4) Articulate how the above information applies to their role.



# Crisis Response

## Background and Focus:

- This aspect of RA training will provide RAs with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to effectively respond to crisis situations that can occur.
- Any situation can be a crisis if it is one student or the community; it is important for RAs to have basic skills and knowledge on how to act in these situations.

## Assumptions:

- We are assuming that RAs at this institution work an on-call system in which they would respond to the needs of residents within the community.



# Crisis Response - Learning Outcomes

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Respond to and prioritize crises appropriately.
- 2) Understand how the department will respond to certain crises.
- 3) Understand what constitutes a crisis.
- 4) Reiterate the importance of staying calm and following protocol.
- 5) Articulate how the above information applies to their role.



# Creating Effective Boundaries

## Background and focus:

- The main focus of this training is to teach RAs how to get help for other students that may be over-utilizing the RA to solve all of the residents issues, but the resident clearly needs more help than the RA can give.
- Training is intended to teach RAs to be able to have appropriate working relationships with their students, peer, and supervisors.

## Assumptions:

- We are assuming that the RAs have been trained and informed about all of the different student resources offices/spaces available on their unique campus.
- We also assume that RA staff members work to engage their residents and have close relationships can be somewhat normal.



# Creating Effective Boundaries - Learning Outcomes

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Identify poor resident to RA boundaries within your community and adjust them appropriately.
- 2) Appropriately inform a resident that a boundary has been crossed.
- 3) Appropriately refer a student to an on-campus service if they are emotionally reliant on the RA.
- 4) Reconnect with a student once they have been referred to an on campus service.
- 5) Build professional staff relationships with peers and supervisors.
- 6) Understand procedures when it comes to working in live-in position.





# Drug/Alcohol Training

## Background and focus:

- Binge drinking, prescription drug misuse, and illicit drug have become increasingly prevalent among college students.
- This training module will review the institution's policies and protocols regarding situations involving alcohol and drugs.
- This training will focus on the aspect of identifying high-risk situations.

## Assumptions:

- We are assuming that this is an issue at this institution, along with the assumption that this institution prioritizes and this topic and does not consider it 'taboo'.



# Drugs/Alcohol - Learning Outcomes

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Articulate how to effectively identify high-risk situations.
- 2) Identify the campus resources to refer students in high-risk situations.
- 3) Understand the protocol when dealing with students who may possess drugs/alcohol.
- 4) Articulate how the above information applies to their role.



# First Amendment Rights

## Background and focus:

- Freedom of a speech is a right given and utilized by college students across the country so that they can vocalize their opinions on matters important to them.
- This training will inform RAs on policies and procedures on how they as student leaders can utilize their freedom of speech within their position (acting as a residence life staff member).
- The training will focus on the first amendment on campus and how to navigate certain displays of speech from students.

## Assumptions:

- We are assuming that the residents on campus are subscribed to the Generation X culture of trying to make a difference through displays of speech.
- We are also assuming that the campus is diverse and has individuals from many demographics represented within the community.



# First Amendment Rights - Learning Outcomes

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Identify displays of first amendment rights
- 2) Understand policies and procedures regarding first amendment rights
- 3) Properly respond to active displays of first amendment rights



# Community Building

## Background and Focus:

- This training focuses on specific intentional practices to implement in an RA community in order to build strong effective communities.
- This training will look deeply into how to engage residents without seeming to fake and or forced.

## Assumptions:

- We are assuming that the RAs will have certain programmatic requirements such as event planning, door decorations, and bulletin boards.



# Community Building - Learning Outcomes

RAs should be able to....

- 1) Define community.
- 2) Identify multiple strategies to create a community.
- 3) Create action oriented goals on how to construct their community.
- 4) Articulate how the above information applies to their role.



# Technology/Social Media

## Background and Focus:

- This aspect of RA training focuses on the importance of incorporating technology and social media into programmatic planning for residents.
- This training focuses on engaging residents in a unique way making collaboration easier, and tailoring to students of different learning styles.

## Assumptions:

- We are assuming that all RAs and residents have equal access to technology and social media platforms.



# Technology/Social Media - Learning Outcomes

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Gain knowledge on increasing effectiveness of programming with technology.
- 2) Learn current best practices for increasing student learning and development with technology.
- 3) Have a knowledge of how technology can enhance the student experience in higher education.
- 4) Encourage the opportunity to enhance interaction with their residents by encouraging collaboration with the use of technology
- 5) Integrate technology to connect with students of all learning styles





# Mental Health/Self Care

## Background and focus:

- This training module will be focused on the importance of mental health and positive self-care.
- With the rates of anxiety and depression in college students increasing within the last few years, it is important for RA's to learn ways to practice self-care.

## Assumptions:

- We are assuming that the RA's know how to identify their stress levels and manage their wellbeing.
- We are also assuming that the Residence life staff promotes and practices positive self-care.



# Mental Health/Self Care - Learning Outcomes

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Articulate how to effectively take care of yourself within the RA role.
- 2) Identify ways to practice positive self-care.
- 3) Implement strategies for promoting positive wellness/self-care to residents.
- 4) Articulate how the information applies to their role.



# Living Learning Programs

## Background and focus:

- RAs will be working with diverse student groups and populations and it is important to understand the needs of the groups.
- While there can be commonalities in Living Learning programs, this training would also be an extension of diversity and social justice.
- Living Learning Programs have become a part of many residence life departments and have become a proven way to improve residential experiences.

## Assumptions:

- We are assuming that the the department has placed importance in utilizing living learning programs and there are multiple LLPs on campus.



# Living Learning Programs - Learning Outcomes

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Understand various student demographics and populations.
- 2) Be able to work with various students within communities and understand the needs of community members



# Campus Resources

## Background and focus:

- Awareness and familiarity to on-campus resources are a crucial part of an RA's role.
- This training is focused on services provided to students within other departments/offices.

## Assumptions:

- We are assuming that these campus resources exist at this institution.

- Academic Advising
- Legal Services
- Career Center
- Counseling Center
- Financial Aid
- Health Clinic
- Multicultural center
- LGBTQ+ CENTER
- Women's center
- Recovery center
- Food Pantry
- Center for Accessibility resources
- Veterans Center



# Campus Resources - Learning Outcomes

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Reiterate the campus resources discussed in the training
- 2) Identify key components of the campus resources
- 3) Appropriately refer a student to an on campus resource



# References

Bird, L. E., Mackin, M. B., & Schuster, S. K. (2006). *The first amendment on campus: A handbook for college and university administrators*. Washington, D.C.: NASPA.

Reslife. (2014, May 13). Reslife. Retrieved February 5, 2019, from <https://reslife.net/ra/creating-boundaries-within-our-communities/>

The College Student Mental Health Crisis. (n.d.). Retrieved February 5, 2019, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/theory-knowledge/201402/the-college-student-mental-health-crisis>

Palmer, R. S., McMahon, T. J., Moreggi, D. I., Rounsaville, B. J., & Ball, S. A. (2012). College Student Drug Use: Patterns, Concerns, Consequences, and Interest in Intervention. *Journal of college student development*, 53(1), 10.1353/csd.2012.0014.

Ziolkowski, S. (2019, January 14). Alcohol Abuse in College Students: Warning Signs, and Prevention Tips. Retrieved February 5, 2019, from <https://alcorehab.org/alcoholism/college-alcohol-abuse/>

2019 StudentAffairs.com Virtual Case Study

Lilian Diaz, Justin Majors, Lisa Kappil, Chad Lawhorn

Texas A&M University



When deciding on online training topics for the Resident Advisors (RAs) at Bronson University, we chose topics that we believe are supplemental to the essential trainings already provided. The online trainings are ordered in a grouping of management of common incidents, RA well-being, and community/campus specifics. Each training will have three to five learning outcomes that students will be able to achieve upon completion of the training. Each learning outcome identifies an action that a student is expected to demonstrate in terms of knowledge, skills, or attitudes upon completion of a program. To determine the learning outcomes we utilized the Audience Behavior Condition Degree (ABCD) model and the Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Time-Bound (SMART) model.

Below are training topics that we believe are beneficial for online RA training, as well as the background and focus, assumptions, and learning outcomes for each respective topic.

### **Managing Conflict:**

The Managing Conflict module of this RA training focuses on providing RAs with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to effectively manage conflict between the RA and their resident(s), between residents, and between RAs. We believe that poorly managed conflict can lead to tension between students, low morale, and unproductivity. Thus, it is imperative to train RAs on how to manage conflict in order for them to deeply understand complex situations that arise, as well as understand those whom they work with. In this case, we are assuming that RAs at this institution work to engage their residents and their peers, and have frequent communication (in-person or online) with these individuals. The learning outcomes for the Managing Conflict module are listed below:

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Understand effective communication practices to manage conflict.
- 2) Obtain the skills necessary for managing conflict and de-escalation.
- 3) Recognize when a situation is beyond their control and to ask for help via the chain of command.
- 4) Articulate how the above information applies to their role.

### **Crisis Management:**

One of the training topics included is Crisis Response training. In this training, RAs will be tasked with various scenarios to ensure they have the appropriate knowledge in whom they need to follow-up with in terms of duty. The reasoning to include this module is to allow the RAs extra practice in handling and thinking about various scenarios. This is due to the assumptions that RAs will serve on call and deal with various types of crises. Our RAs are tasked with being on-call, and due to being on-call they are placed in situations where they will need to navigate crises. Through this training, RAs would learn about how to handle crises and fundamental counseling skills. This will teach the RAs basic skills so that they can potentially de-escalate the situation before calling the appropriate response unit whether that is the police,

EMS, or a professional staff member. The learning outcomes for the Crisis Management module are listed below:

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Respond to and prioritize crises appropriately.
- 2) Understand how the department will respond to particular crises.
- 3) Understand what constitutes a crisis.
- 4) Reiterate the importance of staying calm and following protocol.
- 5) Articulate how the above information applies to their roles to their role.

### **Creating Effective Boundaries:**

The Creating Effective Boundaries training will be focused on teaching RAs how to get help for students that may be over utilizing the RA to solve all of the residents issues, but the resident needs more help than the RA can give. This training will also assist the staff member by giving tips on how to have appropriate relationships with their students, peers, and supervisors. This training assumes that the RAs have been trained and informed about all of the different student resource office/spaces available on their unique campus. It is also assumed that RA staff members work to engage their residents and to have close relationships are somewhat reasonable. The learning outcomes for this training are listed below:

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Identify poor resident to RA boundaries within your community and adjust them appropriately.
- 2) Appropriately inform a resident that a boundary has been crossed.
- 3) Appropriately refer a student to an on-campus service if the student is emotionally reliant on the RA.
- 4) Reconnect with a student once they have been referred to an on-campus service.
- 5) Build professional staff relationships with peers and supervisors.
- 6) Understand procedures when it comes to working in a live-in position.

### **Drugs/Alcohol Training:**

The Drugs/Alcohol training module will focus on the aspect of identifying high-risk situations. This training module will review the institution's policies and protocols regarding situations involving alcohol and drugs. Since binge drinking, prescription drug misuse, and illicit drug have become increasingly prevalent among college students, we found this to be an essential training module for RA's. A report from AlcoRehab estimates that annually universities report 690,000 alcohol-related student assaults, 150,000 college student develop an alcohol-related 10,000 students aged from 19 to 24 are arrested each year for an alcohol-related offense, such as public drunkenness or driving under the influence (Ziolkowski, S., 2019). In a survey conducted of 262 college students around 70% of students reported at least one negative consequence throughout their lifetime due to drugs (Palmer, R.S., et al., 2012). The students also reported being concerned about their frequency and indicated that they would be interested in

some form of intervention (Palmer, R.S., et al., 2012). Some assumptions we have concerning this topic are assuming that this is an issue at this institution, along with the assumption that this institution prioritizes this topic and does not consider it 'taboo.' The learning outcomes for this training module are listed below:

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Articulate how to effectively identify high-risk situations.
- 2) Identify the campus resources to refer students in high-risk situations.
- 3) Understand the protocol when dealing with students who may possess drugs/alcohol.
- 4) Articulate how the above information applies to their role.

### **First Amendment Rights:**

First Amendment Rights training is included within our modules due to the current climate of our country, and that many students are taking the opportunity to voice their ideas. In our module students will be informed of passages excerpts from the First Amendment On Campus reading. The students will then be informed of their position and what they can do when they are acting in the RA role. Our students will be able to handle multiple situations in terms of freedom of speech and expression. Utilizing their crisis response and conflict management skills, they will be able to respond appropriately to first amendment issues. The learning outcomes for the First Amendment rights module are listed below:

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Identify displays of first amendment rights
- 2) Understand policies and procedures regarding first amendment rights
- 3) Appropriately respond to active displays of the first amendment rights

### **Community Building:**

Community Building Training will be super beneficial for RA staff members. Many times RAs are instructed to build community but are not always given the appropriate tangible tools to succeed. This training session will focus on providing concrete examples from best practices for how to intentionally create healthy, active communities. The training will look deeply into how to engage residents without seeming too fake and or forced. This training assumes that RA staff members will have specific programmatic requirements such as event planning, door decorations, and bulletin boards. The learning outcomes for this training are listed below:

RAs should be able to....

- 1) Define the community.
- 2) Identify multiple strategies to create a community.
- 3) Create action-oriented goals on how to construct their community.
- 4) Articulate how the above information applies to their role.

## **Technology/Social Media:**

The Technology/Social Media module of this RA training focuses on the importance of incorporating technology and social media into programmatic planning for residents. We believe that incorporating technology and social media in this way engages residents in a unique way making collaboration more accessible, as well as tailors to students of different learning styles. In this case, we are assuming that all RAs and residents have equal access to technology and social media platforms. The learning outcomes for the Technology/Social Media module are listed below:

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Gain knowledge on increasing effectiveness of programming with technology.
- 2) Learn current best practices for increasing student learning and development with technology.
- 3) Know how technology can enhance the student experience in higher education.
- 4) Encourage the opportunity to enhance interaction with their residents by encouraging collaboration with the use of technology
- 5) Integrate technology to connect with students of all learning styles

## **Mental Health/ Self-Care:**

The Mental Health/Self-Care training module is crucial for the wellbeing of the RA's and their students. This training module will be focused on the importance of mental health and positive self-care. With the rates of anxiety and depression in college students increasing within the last few years, it is essential for RA's to learn ways to practice self-care. According to a report on Psychology Today, 30% of college first-year students report feeling frequently overwhelmed, and 57% of women and 40% of men reported to feeling anxiety. Trends show that stress, anxiety and depression levels continue to be on the rise. Some assumptions we have been assuming that the RA's know how to identify their stress levels and manage their wellbeing. We are also assuming that the Residence life staff promotes and practices positive self-care. The learning outcomes for this training module are listed below:

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Articulate how to effectively take care of yourself within the RA role.
- 2) Identify ways to practice positive self-care.
- 3) Implement strategies for promoting positive wellness/self-care to residents.
- 4) Articulate how the information applies to their role.

## **Living Learning Programs:**

In the Living Learning Program module, RAs will be trained on specific trainings for their community. This involves understanding various student groups including first-year, LGBTQ, major specific, Veterans, honors college and other identity groups. There is an assumption that the campus is utilizing living-learning programs. Living-learning programs

increase resident satisfaction and learning experience. The goal is to ensure our RAs are trained on how to make an inclusive community. The learning outcomes for the Living Learning Programs module are listed below:

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Understand various student demographics and populations.
- 2) Be able to work with various students within communities and understand the needs of community members

### **Campus Resources:**

The last training module is focused on Campus Resources. Awareness and familiarity with on-campus resources are a crucial part of an RA's role. This training is focused on services available to students provided by other departments/offices. We have selected 13 different offices to collaborate with in order to organize the training. The offices are listed as followed, Academic Advising, Legal Services, Career Center, Counseling Center, Financial Aid, Health Clinic, Multicultural center, LGBTQ+ CENTER, Women's center, Recovery Center, Food Pantry, Center for Accessibility resources, and the Veterans Center. We recognize that this is not an exhaustive list; however, we found that these resources provide great value. An assumption we have is that these campus resources exist at this institution. The learning outcomes for this training module are listed below:

RAs should be able to...

- 1) Reiterate the campus resources discussed in the training
- 2) Identify critical components of the campus resources
- 3) Appropriately refer a student to an on-campus resource

### **Conclusion**

Our team reviewed many different options when it came to adding supplemental trainings to the RA training curriculum. When our discussions concluded, we decided that that curriculum was both adequate and thorough in order to improve the skills and knowledge of the RAs. We acknowledge that not all of the trainings may be implemented in the same way for all institutions. Our primary mission was to think about the ten trainings that would assist RA's in being knowledgeable, competent, and confident when performing in their roles.

## References

Bird, L. E., Mackin, M. B., & Schuster, S. K. (2006). *The first amendment on campus: A handbook for college and university administrators*. Washington, D.C.: NASPA.

Palmer, R. S., McMahon, T. J., Moreggi, D. I., Rounsaville, B. J., & Ball, S. A. (2012). College Student Drug Use: Patterns, Concerns, Consequences, and Interest in Intervention. *Journal of college student development*, 53(1), 10.1353/csd.2012.0014.Reslife. (2014, May 13).

Reslife. Retrieved February 5, 2019, from <https://reslife.net/ra/creating-boundaries-within-our-communities/>

The College Student Mental Health Crisis. (n.d.). Retrieved February 5, 2019, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/theory-knowledge/201402/the-college-student-mental-health-crisis>

Ziolkowski, S. (2019, January 14). Alcohol Abuse in College Students: Warning Signs, and Prevention Tips. Retrieved February 5, 2019, from <https://alcorehab.org/alcoholism/college-alcohol-abuse/>