THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

Charlie Scott
Chen-Hong Tony Chen
Britt Locklin (Team Leader)

Land Acknowledgement

We want to acknowledge that our team presents from the occupied homelands of the Narragansett Indian Tribe. In addition, we want to acknowledge the violence of chattel slavery that occurred against both Black and Indigenous communities in what is currently the United States. Many of the infrastructures you see or have used on college campuses were built on their displacement, genocide, and enslavement.

Presentation Overview

Bronson University

Our Team

Why Go Online?

Theme 1: Community
- *Building An Online Community*
- *A Virtual Fishbowl*
- *Curating Joy*

Theme 2: Student Leadership
- *Professional Boundaries*
- *Leadership Inventories*
- *Self-Care & Work/Life Balance*

Theme 3: Social Justice
- *Decolonization*
- *Students on the Spectrum*
- *Trans Inclusivity*

Conclusion & References

Bronson University

"Bronson University is a public, liberal arts institution, located in Kingston, Rhode Island. Bronson University currently serves approximately 10,000 students in both undergraduate and graduate programs."

"Bronson University's mission is to offer vibrant programs in a wide array of disciplines within a supportive, respectful, and diverse community."

(Adapted from Rhode Island College)

Residence Life Training Team

Britt Locklin

(She/Her Pronouns)
Area Coordinator for
First Year Housing

Charlie Scott (Diné)

(They/ Them English Pronouns)
Area Coordinator for
Upperclass Housing

Chen-Hong Tony Chen

(He/Him Pronouns)
Area Coordinator for
Sophomore Housing

Why
Go Online?

the Flipped Classroom

(CLICK VIDEO)

"Flipping the classroom employs easy-to-use,readily accessible technology in order to free class time from lecture" (Roehl, Reddy, & Shannon, 2013).

- Frees up in-person lecture time to be used for hall preparation, team bonding, one-on-one mentoring, and rest time during an otherwise draining time period.

- Accommodates multiple types of abilities, competency levels, and learning styles so all RAs can succeed in training.
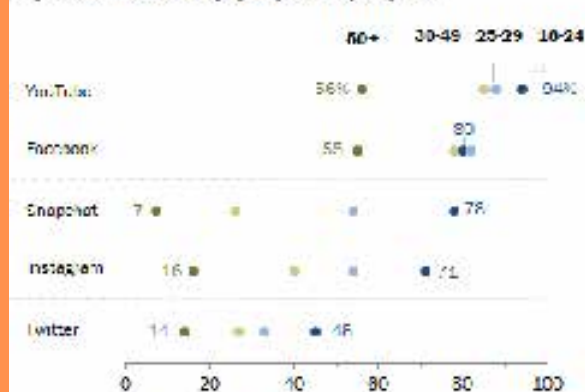
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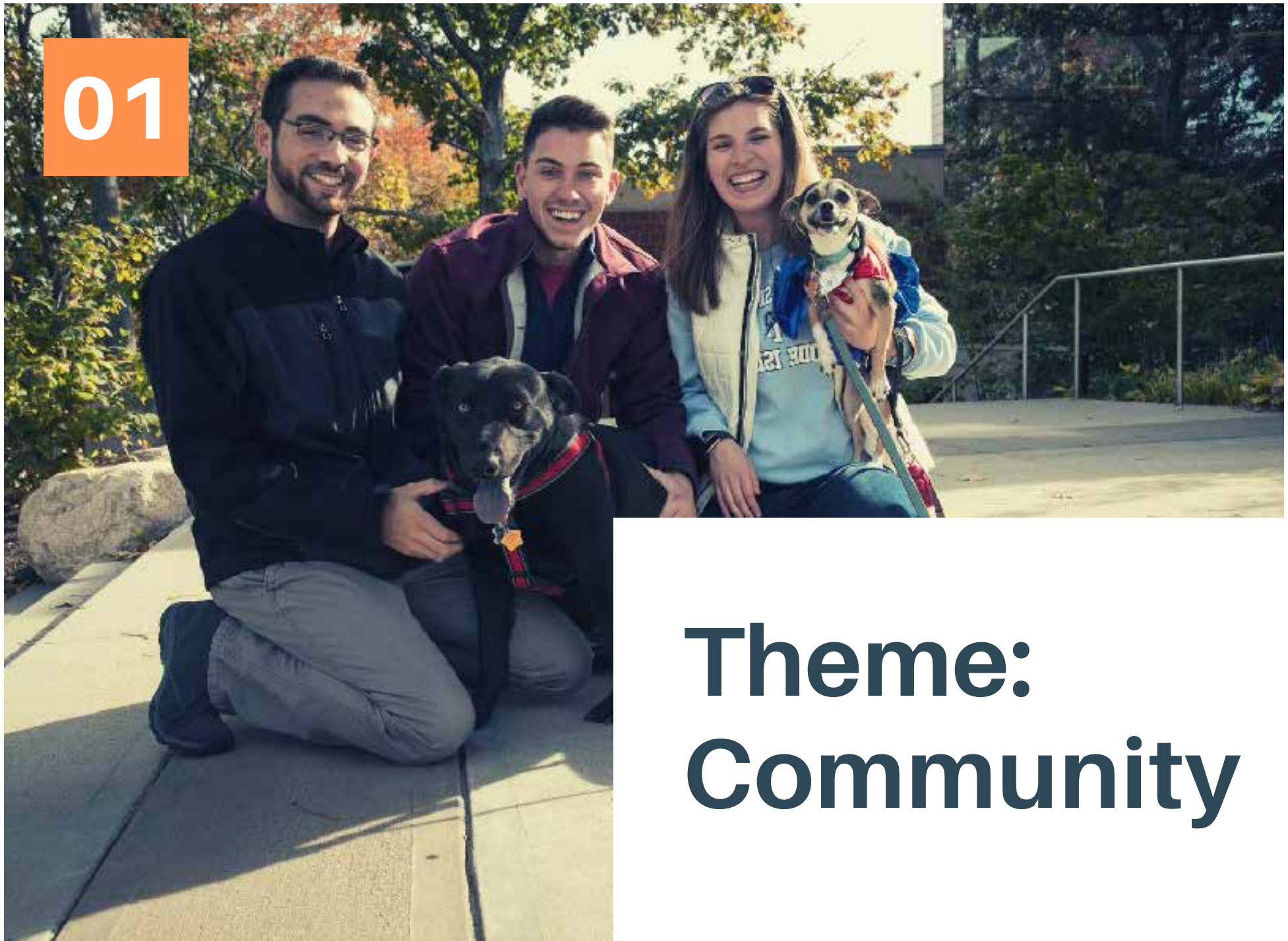
Theme:
Community

Building an Online Community

86%
of 18-29 year olds are on social media (Pew Research Center, 2018)

Social platforms like Snapchat and Instagram are especially popular among those ages 18 to 24

% of U.S. adults in each age group who say they use ...

	50+	30-49	25-29	18-24
YouTube		56%		94%
Facebook		55	80	
Snapchat	7			78
Instagram	16			71
Twitter	11		45	

0   20   40   60   80   100

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 3-10, 2018.
"Social Media Use in 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

- **Generation Z** make up most of current college students (born between the late-1990s and the early 2000s.)
- They Grew up surrounded by social media.

Through this training, RAs will learn:

- How to utilize the most popular social media platforms with college students - - Youtube, Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram (Pew Research Center, 2018).
- How to connect and form relationships with residents on each respective platform.
  - How to create and moderate a community group on Facebook.
  - How to create an Instagram and a Snapchat account for your community and what are best practices in posting on each one.
  - How to promote inter-community dialogue between residents within an online community.
- How to conduct outreach to residents who may post online about mental health (Lin, et. al, 2016) or binge drinking / drug use (Hoffman, Pinkleton, & Austin, 2017).

This training would be in collaboration with the Communications & Marketing Office at Bronson University.

A Virtual Fishbowl

- RAs are representatives of Bronson University at all times - even online.
- Others build their understanding of you as a leader, employee, and student first based on your social media presence (Smith, 2014).
- RAs need to be cognizant of their social media presence in all facets.
- This training will go through the ways RAs can be impacted by social media posts.

Through this training, RAs will learn:
- What is the online Fishbowl Effect.
- How to communicate with friends ways their tags and posts could impact their RA role(Wilson & Hirschy, 2003).
- How to determine personal values and how they present online.
- Authority over their online presence through pre-set alerts, timeline reviews, and overall privacy settings.
- How to react to posts online connected to them that may impact their RA role.

This training would be in collaboration with the Communications & Marketing Office and the Office of Community Standards at Bronson University.

"Curating Joy"

"Normally, people can't see inside your house. However the way you organize the area and how you treat your belongings will greatly affect your way of thinking" (Marie Kondo - SXSW, 2017).

- **As student affairs professionals, we understand that educational environments influence our students in a variety of ways (Strange & Banning, 2015).**
- **Our physical environments often influence a students' emotional and mental state.**
- **This section recognizes that and is intended for RAs to essentially curate joy for their residents, which will be accomplished through three intended outcomes.**

Through this training, RAs will learn:

- **The concept of place**
  - Not only is there a constructed physical environment, but place also includes objects made by people and "artifacts of material culture that adorn the campus and interact with students" (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 12).

- **How to facilitate restorative places for their residents**
  - Places where students go to rest, relax, unwind, recuperate, and feel safe (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 34).

- **How to utilize the functionality of a building to "curate joy" in their residential spaces.**
  - The design of a space affects and encourages certain behaviors, communicating nonverbal messages (Strange & Banning, 2015).
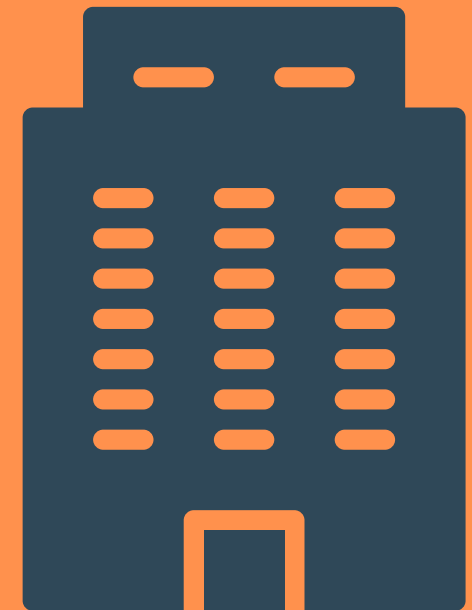
02

Theme: Student Leadership

Professional Boundaries

- Having unknown boundaries as a residential staff member can cause stressors to push into your personal life and physical space (Rankin & Yancey Gulley, 2018).
- This training will walk RAs through a residence life-focused, boundaries activity (Peipock, 2017).
- RAs will be asked to number a list of statements 1-20, 1 being 'I would definitely do this' and 20 being 'I would definitely NOT do this'. Examples of statements include:

"I would go to a restaurant with a resident."
"I would loan money to a resident."
"I would share an Uber/Lyft with a resident."
"I would date a resident."

This training is designed to scaffold an in-person conversation at the first staff meeting.

Through this training, RAs will learn:

- Boundaries are often a personalized experience that your identities, comfort, and job will all factor into. - Self-Reflection is key in maintaining healthy boundaries.
- How to talk openly about their boundaries as an RA with residents.
- How to effectively approach residents who push or cross boundaries.

Leadership Inventories

"You cannot be anything you want to be- but you can be a lot more of who you already are" (Rath, 2007 , pp.9)

- **RAs will complete two inventories: Gallup's CliftonStrengths & The 5 Love Languages**
  (Previously called StrengthsFinder)

- **The completion of the CliftonStrengths assessment will scaffold into an in person discussion with an official Gallup coach** *(Alternatively, an experienced staff member at Bronson University may also facilitate this conversation if cost is a factor.)*
- **This conversation will also fold in the topic of Love Languages in places were strengths may also play into staff appreciation.**

Through this training, RAs will learn:

- **How their own and their teammates' top strengths and how they manifests in their lives.**
- **How their own and their teammates' preferred language of appreciation.**
- **How using a strengths-based approach to teamwork can benefit the overall group.**

Self-Care & Work/Life Balance
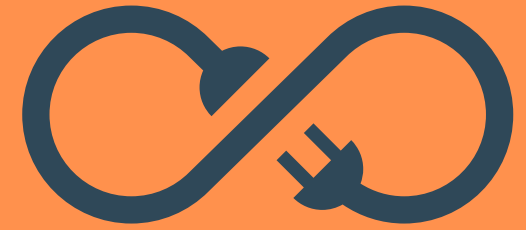
- RAs will complete a self-care assessment measuring their emotional, environmental, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, and spiritual wellness.
- They will watch educational TedTalk videos about mental health hygiene and compassion fatigue.
- They will write reflection responses applying the content of the videos and assessment to their personal lives.
- Finally, they will complete the self-care action plan.

self-care practices like mindful acceptance, seeking social support, sleep hygiene, and food habits increases students' sense of well-being (Moses, Bradley, & O'Callaghan, 2016)

Through this training, RAs will learn:
- How to articulate and define the three components of burnout: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Reduced Personal Efficacy.
- How to create and reflect upon one's own self-care by completing a self-care inventory.
- How to actively practice focused breathing exercise.

Self-Care & Work/Life Balance
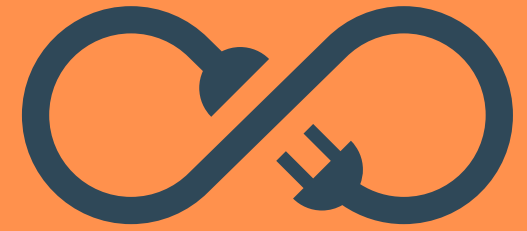
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03

Theme: Social Justice

Decolonization

The concept of decolonization has taken importance over the last few years within student affairs, particularly with the recent release of ACPA's Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization.

We understand *decolonization* as the following:

- about "centering [Indigenous] concerns and world views" (Smith, 2012, p. 41).
- Wilson (2004) further posited that decolonization is "about empowerment - a belief that situations can be transformed, a belief and trust in our own peoples' values and abilities, and a willingness to make change" (Smith, 2012, p. 71).
- Tuck and Yang (2012) articulates that decolonization "requires the repatriation of Indigenous land and life" (Smith, 2012, p. 21).

Decolonization

Smith (2012), Wilson (2004), and Tuck and Yang (2012) thematically describe decolonization as centering and supporting Indigenous Peoples. Decolonization is a continuous process that centers the needs of Indigenous Peoples. RAs and us will emphasize this through "honor[ing] connections to place" (Reyes & Shotten, 2018) and integrating an "ethic of care" (American Indian College Fund, 2019).

This training would be in collaboration with the Native and Indigenous Studies Department at Bronson University.

Through this training, RAs will learn:

- How to define decolonization.
- The importance of land acknowledgements.
- Skills to create meaningful relationships with students, most particularly with Native/Indigenous-identifying students.

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Students with ASD often experience challenges with:

Social/Interpersonal Skills

Verbal & Nonverbal Communication

Repetitive or Ritualistic Behaviors
(Rodden, 2017)

Through this training, RAs will learn:

- Common challenges of students with ASD
- Societal stereotypes & myths about ASD
- Ways to support students with ASD
- Resources on campus to refer students

This training would be in collaboration with the Disability Support Services Office at Bronson University.

Trans Inclusivity

24%

of those who are or have been verbally, physically or sexually harassed" (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2016, p. 11).

(CLICK UNICORN)

- RAs will acquire an understanding of the impact of language, the importance of introducing with pronouns, supporting and sharing essential resources with trans-identifying residents.
- Our goal is that these outcomes address and mitigate the systematic trans oppression within a college environment that Nicolazzo (2018) urges besides gender-inclusive housing.

Through this training, RAs will learn:

- How to utilize the gender unicorn to describe gender identity, gender expression, sex, etc.
- Gender-inclusive language through the importance of pronouns.
- Trans-affirming practices.

It is ideal that Bronson University offer gender-inclusive housing, creating a restorative and supportive space for trans-identifying students. We also have to recognize the limitations of being a public state-affiliated institution. It is within this frame of limitations that we articulate how the RAs can support and be inclusive of students who are trans-identifying, especially if gender-inclusive housing is not offered or not allowed on campus.

Conclusion

- Online components could be added to RA training utilizing the flipped classroom model.
- Trainings could include topics such as those we have proposed above.
- Online trainings are an excellent avenue for cross-campus collaboration, which lowers costs to produce the training, but also adds a resource to RAs portfolios.

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2019 Virtual Case Study Competition

Britt Locklin (Team Leader)

Charlie Scott

Chen-Hong Tony Chen

The University of Rhode Island

Our Presentation and Process

We began the presentation with a written land acknowledgement (slide 2). This was particularly important for us because of exhibition of one of our themes, social justice, yet also recognizing the relationship that Indigenous Peoples have with the land. Despite the digital presence the case study is moving towards, there is still a tied to land, which for many Indigenous Peoples' ways of knowing is not just a space that one occupies. Rather, land reflects an indigenous existence, communicating essential cultural aspects and their development. In addition, within the decolonization section, we explained our intentions as honoring connections to place and integrating an ethic of care for Native/Indigenous students as a move towards decolonization. The land acknowledgement exhibited an honoring to the Narragansett Indian Tribe connection to the University of Rhode Island and whose land we occupy.

After the land acknowledgement, we share an outline (slide 3), how we envision Bronson University (slide 4), and an introduction to our team (slide 5) . The outline was intended to provide the themes and the corresponding topics. The topics we selected for the case study are topics that we, as student affair professionals in different functional areas, found to be a much needed supplement to enhance residential assistant (RA) training. Our team decided on nine topics, each with the capacity to enhance training and derived from our own particular functional area, strengths, and research interests.We prefaced our training topics with a foundation of the benefits of online learning (slide 6). What resulted is nine different topics grouped into three themes - community, student leadership, and social justice.

Theme 1: Community (Slide 7)

Community was a theme we incorporated because developing and sustaining one is a priority for resident assistants. Particularly within this theme, we focused on the potential for the digital and the influence of the environment. Both of which are crucial for encouraging community.

Digital Community & Presence (Slides 8 & 9)

The digital community section acknowledges that the students who often reside on university campuses tend to be students between the ages of 18-24, most of whom are non-adult learners and are classified as Generation Z. Many of them are skilled in technology. A 2018 Chronicle article by Jeffrey J. Selingo argued that institutions of higher education should "create immersive environments" (para. 3), which is something we hope to do with *Building An Online Community* and *A Virtual Fishbowl*. The fishbowl effect is the idea that student leaders are always being observed by residents and residents look to them both in-person and online for guidance on behaving appropriately (Putnam, 2014). Likewise, RAs will be taught The RA-First mentality in online space - which focuses on the importance of reporting incidents of concerning behavior by residents online (Kacvinsky & Moreno, 2014).In addition to creating a digital community, RAs are also being encouraged to be cognizant of their online digital presence, a form of professional development, and what their digital footprint communicates to their residents and supervisors.

Physical Space & Environment (Slide 10)

The other part of community was *Curating Joy*. This particular section was inspired by Marie Kondo, known as an organizing consultant and author, who recently had a Netflix Series called, *Tidying Up With Marie Kondo*. She created the KonMari method. Within this section, we wanted to introduce environmental theories as explained by Strange & Banning (2015) through a cultural icon like Marie Kondo. The intention was to encourage RAs to understand the influence of the environment on their residents mental and emotional well-being, and learn to "curate joy" for them. The three topics build on one another sharing a skillset for the RAs to encourage *community* among their residents.

<center>**Theme 2: Student Leadership (Slide 11)**</center>

The second theme, student leadership, was created with developing certain skills for RAs that we considered crucial for their professional development. Personally, leadership involves more than the title one holds. Rather, we conceptualized leadership as a process, rather than rooted in title and influencing

others to change their attitudes or behaviors (Ahnee-Benham, M. K. & Napier, L. 2002). Through such a framework, leadership is holistic, which centers the RAs and their abilities to be role models.

Professional Boundaries (Slide 12)

The first section within student leadership focuses on establishing proper boundaries for RAs. An important skill development since it pertains to navigating university settings with residents and developing an awareness of one's own interpersonal strengths. A strengths-based approach to leadership training has been found to improve confidence, direction, hope, and kindness towards others (Ruth, 2007).

Leadership Inventories (Slide 13)

The next section continues the strength approach through the CliftonStrengths assessment and the 5 Love Languages inventory. CliftonStrengths is based on positive psychology and will help identify, understand, and leverage talents, passion, and strengths to set staff up for success (Shushok & Hulme, 2006). Our intentions for the 5 Love Languages is for relationship building and the importance of appreciation and affirmations in leadership developing. A connection to how leadership is conceived by the *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* (ACPA/NASPA, 2015) in which individuals work together to "envision, plan, and affect change" (p. 27). By taking inventory of an RA's strengths and their love language, the process of working with each other and supporting each other becomes easier because of the foundational self-inquiry.

Self-Care & Work/Life Balance (Slide 14 & 25)

The third topic, *Self-Care & Work/Life Balance*, was in response to the demands of the RA position. It was important to provide RAs the tools and knowledge to practice self-care and to recognize burnout. Hintz, Frazier, and Meredith (2015) conducted a study on the effectiveness of online interventions on stress management in college students. Groups that received an online intervention that included an application exercise were found to have significantly less perceived stress and less symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress than the groups that received only information about stress. Thus, our

RAs will be completing a variety of exercises and/or writing reflections on the information provided to them with this training. Self-care must be incorporated into our curriculum since students that may need it may not take advantage of the resources available to them (Moses, Bradley, & O'Callaghan, 2016). We also felt it was appropriate to include videos explaining emotional hygiene and compassion fatigue. These videos provide a framework for discussion and reflection in regards to self-care, and they support the need to attune to students' mental wellness as supported by Moses, Bradley, and O'Callaghan (2016).

Theme 3: Social Justice (Slide 16)

Finally, we end the powerpoint with our third and final theme, social justice. We understand social justice as "both a process and a goal" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 30). Nair and Thomas (2018) argue that social justice, "by its very nature, demands the respect that we must show one another" (para. 5). It is within this theme that we include topics such as decolonization, students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and trans-inclusivity, as each theme demands respect for each population.

Decolonization (Slide 17 & 18)

The decolonization section was initially about supporting Native/Indigenous students. Yet, after further consideration, we felt it was important to emphasis decolonization as the most appropriate way to develop structures of support for Native/Indigenous students. Introducing the concept of decolonization early on challenges us as professionals and our RAs to be cognizant of their/our role within the university and social justice. As earlier explained, the land acknowledgement at the beginning of our powerpoint was an exhibition and a practice of this topic.

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (Slide 19)

The second topic, students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), was included because of the high likelihood that RAs would interact with students with ASD. There are approximately 50,000 people with ASD that will turn 18 years old in the U.S.A (Cox, Mintz, Locks, Thompson, Anderson, Edelstein & Wolz, 2015) and many will continue onto higher education. Thus, there is a high likelihood that our RAs

will interact with students with ASD. This training uses media portrayals of stereotypes associated with ASD such as Sheldon Cooper from The Big Bang Theory and Sam Gardner from A-Typical to help RAs identify their potential unconscious biases towards people with ASD. RAs will acquire support strategies such as conversing in low-stress environments, de-escalating a panic attack, building a community of respect for disabilities, and knowing the resources both on and off-campus for students with ASD (Rochester Institute of Technology, 2014). Training RAs to support residents with ASD aligns with creating an inclusive community.

Trans Inclusivity (Slide 20)

Finally, the last section, trans inclusivity focused beyond policies offering gender inclusive housing. Rather, we focused on the process of mitigating systemic trans oppression that occurs throughout colleges and universities. We wanted to highlight the limitation that some institutions have when it comes to being unable to offer gender inclusive housing, whether they are restricted by their religious affiliation or state funded. This section was focused on emphasizing inclusive language and the importance of language as a trans affirming practice.

<div align="center">

Summary

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Overall, what we created as a team was a supplemental training topics that would enhance the RAs skills, abilities, and capacities. The themes, community, student leadership, and social justice, were selected because of the desired topics. Each topic was intentional based on our own areas of expertise and desire to provide additional in-service training programs in areas most lacking and areas of improvement. The theme of community outlined the promise of the digital capacity for sustaining relationships with their residents and expanding an awareness of the environment. Student leadership shares with our RAs modes of self-inquiry and the need for boundaries. Finally, social justice inspires us to be and do better. Not only in our positions, yet also as a community and being a student leader through decolonization, supporting students with ASD, and trans inclusion.

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