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OUTLINE

HELPING SKILLS

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- RAs who complete a training module on helping skills should be able to describe three skills that demonstrate active listening
- RAs who complete a training module on helping skills should be able to demonstrate active listening skills in one-on-one and group conversations

HELPING SKILLS

- RAs promote holistic student development through intentional interactions with students and often discuss academic, personal, and social issues with residents in one-on-one settings
- Learning helping skills such as active listening can facilitate the process of building rapport with students
- Helping skills are directly related to the Advising/Supporting competency (ACPA & NASPA, 2015)
- It is important to remind RAs that they are not counselors or mental health professionals; they must refer residents when appropriate and make reports to their supervisors as necessary

HELPING SKILLS

Two examples of helping skills that will be beneficial to RAs:

Active Listening (Brew & Kottler, 2017)
- Active listening includes non-verbal and verbal components
- Non-verbals include facing the person you are speaking to, making eye contact, leaning in, and nodding
- Verbal components include validation and reassuring

Reflecting Content & Feelings (Brew & Kottler, 2017)
- Reflecting content can be one way to demonstrate active listening; reflecting content allows the student to clarify what they said if there is a misunderstanding
- Reflecting feelings pushes deeper and requires the RA to reflect the feeling underlying the content back to the student

CAMPUS RESOURCES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- RAs who complete a training module on campus resources should be able to identify the resources provided by on campus offices
- RAs who complete a training module on campus resources should be able to explain the resources provided by on campus offices
- RAs who complete a training module on campus resources should be able to interpret ways in which these resources can serve themselves and students

CAMPUS RESOURCES

- RAs come into contact with a wide variety of students who may require additional resources to be successful while completing their education
- As RAs interact with these students, being able to identify and communicate these resources can assist in a student's awareness of resources available at their institution
- Conversations with RAs about these resources provides further information the extends beyond university emails or bulletin boards, and allows the student to connect to an RA who also may have used these resources themselves
- *Examples of these resources include: (Departments)* University Counseling, Advising, Student Union, Career Development, and Financial Aid
- *Additional resources:* tutoring, food banks, university programming, resource centers, financial literacy centers, and intramural sports

CAMPUS RESOURCES

- Positive faculty-student interactions and taking advantage of resources that promote academic success such as learning centers, tutorials and office hours have been demonstrated to positively influence retention (Wyckoff, 1998)

- A study found that students who receive at least 6 counseling sessions have higher retention rates than students who request but do not receive counseling (Turner & Berry, 2000)

- Providing resources that allows students to feel supported through on-campus resources and self-awareness directly connects to the Advising and Supporting Competency (ACPA & NASPA, 2015)

OFF CAMPUS RESOURCES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- RAs who complete a training module on off campus resources should be able to identify the off campus community resources
- RAs who complete a training module on off campus resources should be able to define the importance of off campus resources in meeting the needs of students

OFF CAMPUS RESOURCES

- Community building is important in residence halls and on campus, but also with the surrounding communities outside the institution

- Off campus resource information will be available for RAs so that they can inform their residents about them

- Examples: food stamps, local discounts, food pantries, soup kitchens, thrift stores, homeless shelters, public libraries, religious organizations, emergency services, community assistance organizations, school supply drives, and advocacy organizations (Lee, n.d.)

OFF CAMPUS RESOURCES

- It is crucial for RAs to know off campus resources because on campus resources may not meet the needs of the diverse student body
- 58,000 students reported they were homeless (Lee, n.d.)
- "Food insecurity occurs at both two-year and four-year institutions. Twenty-five percent of community college students qualified as having very low food security, compared to 20 percent at four-year schools" (Dubick, Mathews, & Cady, 2016)
- Food insecurity can hinder academic success (Lee, n.d.)
- Basic needs of students need to be met in order for them to be successful (Maslow, 1943)

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- RAs who complete a training module on emergency management should be able to understand proper procedures to take during emergency situations
- RAs who complete a training module on emergency management should be able to identify points of contact for various emergency situations
- RAs who complete a training module on emergency management should be able to identify resources in the event of an emergency

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Colleges and Universities are not immune to tragedies and catastrophic incidents, but with community building, planning, training and exercises our nations campuses can become resilient. The risks that academic campuses face encompass both natural and man-made disasters (FEMA, 2018)

- Plans should identify and engage internal and external partners, and ensure that all planning tasks are performed within a collaborative and integrated approach (Schultz, 2019)

RECOVERY 04

MITIGATION 01

03 RESPONSE

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CYCLE

PREPAREDNESS 02

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Emergency Management can include points of contact and proper procedures during the following:
- Natural disasters such as tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes and etc
- Housing emergencies can include flooding, fires, power outages and etc
- Violent crimes such as robbery/burglary, physical altercations and etc
- Active Shooters
- Contagious illnesses
- It is also imperative to know what locations are safe during certain events, what supplies are needed and what to do in the moment

RESILIENCY BUILDING LEARNING OUTCOMES

- RAs who complete a training module on resiliency building should be able to identify various self-care strategies
- RAs who complete a training module on resiliency building should be able to recall methods in which to advocate for their needs
- RAs who complete a training module on resiliency building should be able to describe coping methods to address stressful situations

RESILIENCY BUILDING

- Being an RA comes with a lot of challenges and at times, burn out. Resiliency building teaches RAs on how to advocate for their needs while focusing on self-care

- As RAs are students as well as university employees, the ability to advocate for their needs is critical to promote their personal and academic success

- Due to the nature of the position, RAs may be exposed to a variety of stressful and sometimes traumatic situations. From this, RAs need to be able to not only effectively handle the situation but also support their personal well-being

- In college, each day may come with a variety of stress related to academic or employment-related situations. The need to be equipped with methods to manage stress is critical for effectively address these situations

RESILIENCY BUILDING

- It is essential for live-in housing staff (both professional and paraprofessional) to learn how to develop appropriate strategies that target problem behaviors to improve self-care (McLaughlin, 2018)
- *A recent Rice University study found clear evidence that students at four-year colleges get better grades and are more likely to graduate if they exhibit three key traits:* a growth mindset (belief that their intelligence can improve over time), a sense of belonging and social integration into campus life (flagged as especially important for underrepresented students), and an intrinsic motivation to achieve (Marthers, 2017)
- Setting healthy, effective boundaries is an important aspect of the Personal and Ethical Foundations Comptency (ACPA & NASPA, 2015)

CUSTOMER SERVICE LEARNING OUTCOMES

- RAs who complete a training module on customer service should be able to implement these skills in their day to day functions
- RAs who complete a training module on customer service should be able to demonstrate proper skills to students, parents, University officials, etc
- RAs who complete a training module on customer service should be able to represent the University in an appropriate manner

CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Having great customer skills can teach RAs how to appropriately talk to various stakeholders, how to represent the University, and what should and should not be said in various situations
- Keep the effort focused on the student and their needs, and on how delivery of services can help retention and graduation numbers (Peatman, Richardson, Soisson, & Boice-Pardee, 2017)
- Being a representative of the University helps RAs understand their own intellectual and ethical development (Perry, 1970)

CUSTOMER SERVICE

- The top two reasons students leave college is because they believe the institution does not care about them and poor service (Peatman, Richardson, Soisson, & Boice-Pardee, 2017)
- The following image is the core values associated with customer service and Student Affairs provided by the University of Sheffield (2017)

Service Driven 1

Student Centred 2

Friendly and Helpful 3

Professional Excellence 4

Teamwork and Collaboration 5

Reliable, Responsive and Accurate 6

TECHNOLOGY

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- RAs who complete a training module on technology should be able to identify three different technological platforms to us as an RA
- RAs that complete a training module on technology recognize the prevalence of smartphone usage with Gen Z and Millenials

TECHNOLOGY ON THE JOB

- Technology on the job teaches RAs the resources they have in regard to technology and various ways of using technology to promote student engagement in university housing
- Technology is one of the 10 professional competencies for student affairs educators (ACPA & NASPA, 2015)
- Gen Z uses their smartphones 15.4 hours a week while Millennials follow at 14.8 hours a week (Kleinschmit, n.d.)
- 94% of adults 18-29 have a smartphone (Pew Research Center, 2018)
- There are lots of free apps to help RA's with organization, communication, and creativity; such as Canva, Doodle Poll, GroupMe

TECHNOLOGY ON THE JOB

- Utilizing technology helps RAs connect with residents in other ways than face to face or through bulletin boards
- Technology is often a faster way to reach someone especially with groups of students who have conflicting schedules
- Canva can be utilized by RA's so that they can produce creative and eye catching graphics to advertise events or make announcements
- Doodle Polls simplifies the process of scheduling meetings and polls for RA's and the residents or other staff they work with
- GroupMe is a better way to create group texts for groups of any size because it is inclusive of different phones; whereas with iMessage group texts it sometimes excludes Android users

SUSTAINABILITY

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- RAs who complete a training module on sustainability should be able to explain the importance of making sustainable choices
- RAs who complete a training module on sustainability should be able to convey simple, sustainable choices to other students
- RAs who complete a training module on sustainability should be able to implement programs that conserve fiscal and material resources

SUSTAINABILITY

- Sustainability is a popular topic among younger generations, including Millennials and Gen Z
- Whether or not sustainability is something the institution is able to commit to, it is necessary for individuals to make changes to their own habits regarding sustainability
- RAs have opportunities to make sustainable programming choices regarding fiscal and material resources
- RAs also serve as leaders on campus and are therefore in the unique position to encourage others to make more sustainable choices, such as bring reusable dishes and utensils to programs serving food

SUSTAINABILITY

- One aspect of encouraging students to develop into global citizens is to ensure that they are aware of contemporary issues like sustainability and solutions to those issues (ACPA, 2008)
- Encouraging sustainability, particularly of the institution's resources, is directly related to the Organizational and Human Resources competency (ACPA & NASPA, 2015)

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Before approaching the case study, we considered various elements regarding the logistics of how these online training sessions would be completed. We wondered first when students would be expected to have completed these training sessions by and raised related questions. If these training sessions need to be completed before face-to-face training, how will student staff be compensated for their work? Additionally, requiring these sessions to be completed over the summer may not be inclusive to students who need to work over the summer or may not have access to a computer and/or the internet when they are not at school. We want to ensure that those students are still able to participate in these trainings. If these modules are to be completed during training, we want to ensure that the student staff have opportunities to practice self-care in addition to their online and in-person training commitments.

Helping Skills

RAs serve as a key support system to residents living in University Housing, often advising students on how to address personal, social and academic concerns and referring them to other resources. As we discuss below, RAs must know about resources available to students, but they also must be able to hear the student in the moment and respond to their concerns appropriately. This requires skills such as active listening and validation. Including a module on these and other helping skills will improve our RAs' abilities to support residents regarding the complex and unique issues that today's college students are facing.

Campus Resources

Campus resources are an essential part of promoting student success, well-being, providing engagement opportunities, and addressing additional academic needs. In addition, the utilization of campus resources can further an institution's desires related to graduation,

retention, and providing a supportive environment for all students. As RAs consistently interact and share a living space with residents, this module is necessary as the communication of campus resources can provide residents information that exceeds beyond university-wide emails or bulletin posts across campus. Even further, RAs may identify resources through this module that can promote their own success and well-being in addition to residents. Through completion of this module, residents will learn about all available resources on campus and how to translate this information to residents in an effective, supportive manner. On campus resources can include various departments such as Counseling Services, Academic Advising, and Financial Aid. Other various resources can be discussed such as tutoring, food banks, university-wide programming, resource centers, financial literacy centers, and intramural sports.

Off Campus Resources

We believe having knowledge of off campus resources can benefit both RAs and residents living in University Housing. Off campus resources can include various things such as food pantries, food stamps, thrift stores, homeless shelters, advocacy organizations, religious organizations, emergency centers, and many more. These off campus resources can help a percentage of residents who have maxed their meal plans, do not have adequate clothing for the weather, need advocacy organizations, or other needs that cannot be met through on-campus resources. RAs and students they share these resources with may also serve as a liaison by sharing this information with other students. Through this module, RAs will not only connect residents to their off campus community, but they will also strengthen community relations. Students have a variety of needs and off campus resources can assist in meeting those needs which can ensure in their overall happiness and ability to persist.

Emergency Management

We chose emergency management due to the simple fact that emergencies can happen anywhere and at any time. Student safety is one of the main concerns associated with residents living in University Housing. RAs need to be able to understand what to do and identify points of contact during various situations. This module will also educate RAs on appropriate ways to proceed during these situations in order to minimize any additional issues. Emergency management situations can include natural disasters, housing emergencies, violent crimes, active shooters and contagious illnesses.

Resiliency Building

From duty calls at three in the morning to finishing up 10-page papers, building resiliency allows for RAs to effectively manage their stress surrounding these situations and promote their emotional well-being. Also, it is not unknown that both students and staff experience burn out, so what can we teach our staff to help minimize this effect? Selecting this module as a necessary segment of this training not only allows RAs to recognize sources of these stressors but also provides the strategies to avoid subsequent burn out that may follow. In addition, allowing RAs to learn strategies for advocating for their needs provides effective routes of communication to voice their concerns and needs as a student to supervisors as well as other professionals. During completion of this module, RAs will explore methods of handling stress, promoting healthy emotional management, and balancing their role while succeeding as a student. In addition, this module will provide tips and tricks on self-care after difficult situations experienced in University Housing to continue their success as a student and university employee.

Customer Service

Customer service is one of those cliche topics that needs to be talked about. Customer service is an umbrella term that includes how an RA interacts with students, parents, and others at the University. Because the RA is a leader on campus, they serve as a representative of the institution and must be aware of how they are being perceived. A training module on customer service would cover the importance of customer service and how RAs should communicate with University staff, students, and parents.

Technology

Technology is changing and advancing every day. The statistics we found showed that a high percentage of Gen Z and Millennials have smartphones. We found that GroupMe, Canva, and Doodle Poll are three of the best to use because they are free and can be used on a computer or a smartphone. While every student may not own a computer, they can access them through their universities. By encouraging RAs to use different resources in technology, they can connect with the residents in other ways than the traditional face to face interaction. Technology is also a part of the professional competencies that ACPA and NASPA have created and we find them to be extremely important in the field, not just for professional staff but for paraprofessional staff as well.

Sustainability

We chose sustainability as our final module because it is one way that RAs can be empowered in their daily lives. With sustainability, everyone can make a difference by making small changes to their daily lives. These small, sustainable changes can have a big impact. Sustainability is also directly related to conserving the financial and material resources of the

institution, which will be beneficial to the department. Additionally, because RAs serve as leaders in University Housing specifically and on campus in general, they have the power to share this information with the rest of the student body and make an even larger impact.

Conclusion

As we are excited to learn from submissions for this case study competition, we found it necessary to include our method of assessing student learning as RAs complete our online training. Through the construction of learning outcomes for each module, our assessments would connect directly to the expected skills and knowledge gained from RAs for each section. In addition, at the end of each module, we would use formative assessment to ensure that RAs were effectively understanding the material discussed. An example of this assessment would come from asking, "Was there any material from the previous module that you struggled with?" For our team, we believe that it is not only important to understand the ways in which the RAs are understanding the information but also to collect data to improve this online training in the future. In addition, a summative method of assessment would be used to collect information about overall student learning at the completion of the online training as well through multiple-choice and open-ended items. It is important to note that this information would not be used to rank or "grade" each RA, but rather, gain an understanding of constructs that were retained from the completion of the training. Overall, we believe that assessments such as this could allow our team to learn from ways in which this online training provided, improve the online modules in the future, and gain an understanding of the differences between delivering this information virtually.