**INTRODUCTION TO RESIDENTIAL LEARNING**

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Resident Assistant’s Name:

Residential Community:

Date:

**Overview:**

One of the most important aspects of the Resident Assistant position is the role the staff members play in the development of the community in their assigned area. This project has been created to serve as a continuation of the RA’s work with the Community Investigation Analysis. In fact, it will provide the RA with the opportunity to use their knowledge about the physical lay-out of the community and their residents as well as their understanding of student development theory and community development to assess the needs of the community and set several goals for the semester.

# Brainstorming Activity

1. General Questions:

* What are your residents discussing?

My residents are discussing clubs, sports, jobs and future activities they might persue outside of college after graduation.

* How are they spending their free time?

Several residents have joined club sports a handful have jobs back home. Videogames are popular and many residents relax by cooking a good meal.

2. Behavior Issues:

* What things are happening on the floor or in the community that need to be addressed?

On the weekends certain residents can be rather loud, but tend to quiet down after being asked without further incident. The biggest issues arise when the residents have their daily routine interrupted by an emergency or drill. Members of my RA team in the Landings have told me how certain residents have been uncooperative and even disrespectful when they were only trying to tell the resident what needed to happen most often for their safety.

* What are some potential behavior issues?

During an emergency, the last thing anyone needs is an erratic individual who refuses to comply putting themselves and others in danger. Although the issue has been minimal thus far and addressed on a few occasions it is difficult to tell if everything is resolved given the infrequency of the behavior.

3. Contemporary College Student Issues:

* What are some contemporary college student issues (for example, weight, fitness, exercise, alcohol, drugs, and homesickness) that are having an impact on your community?

Several transfer students have expressed feelings of homesickness off and on since the beginning of the semester. Many students frequent the gym, but they appear to use it more for sports training or a social activity than pure fitness. While it is probable that some underage residents have had alcohol (statistically speaking), there have not been any incidents of note that have prompted any specific concerns on my part.

* How are they impacting the floor?

Those who were homesick have joined organizations and gotten involved on campus. They are attending events and one even won 50$ in amazon Gift cards at the Tech Expo. As for the other issues, no one seems to be particularly struggling with anything. I see my studio room residents often enough that I know they are alright. The others have suitemates and almost always say hi when we meet on campus. None of them appear to have anything of major concern.

4. Academic Environment:

* What aspects of the academic environment seem to be impacting your residents the most?

Many residents are upperclassmen in intense course loads and upper level classes. It is a lot of work on top of clubs, sports and work.

* Are they talking about their classes or professors?

I hear the occasional complaint about a professor or the amount of reading assigned. Many students say they enjoy the majority of their classes with the caveat that the disliked classes are often a matter of preference whether for the subject or professor and not an objective review of the worth or content..

* Are they adapting/readapting well?

I have had at least five residents ask about tutoring and what resources they can turn to. I have recommended the writing center and subject tutoring as well as meeting professors at their office hours. One resident even asked for a friend struggling in a subject I tutor, so I gave her some advice on how to approach the subject and how to get the most out of the class. Overall everyone seems to get less sleep than they should and have a healthy level of stress for the amount of work they are doing.

**Residence Life Programming Focus Areas**

**Goal Setting Activity**

Introduction: Below, you will have the opportunity to set several programming goals for the upcoming semester. You will also be encouraged to share this goal setting activity with your supervisor as you work to meet your programming requirements.

**PART ONE: ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

Think about the following questions.

* What have been your observations regarding your residents’ involvement in their coursework and the academic environment?
* How can you help your residents become more successful in their academic pursuits?
* What do your residents need and/or want to know more about concerning the academic environment at Longwood University?

1. List **three to five (3-5)** potential topics for a community interaction that will address the academic needs of your residents.

Study Tips, Trick, and Habits

Where to go for help on papers, assignments and study strategies

What one needs to be certified or licensed in a specific field of study

How to get the most out of class

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2. Choose **one** of these topics and briefly describe the community interaction that you will present in **four or five** (4-5) sentences. Be sure to include a **target date** in your description.

I see many students who could be getting more from their classes by making small changes in their own behaviors and habits. This can include where one sits, how someone takes notes, recording a lecture, and even how a question is asked can greatly affect what answer a professor may give. For a direct connection, I could give out advice in a meeting style, or in my opinion, a better option would be to invite a few professors to talk about how they personally react to different student behaviors. This could be accomplished in-person, over a group chat, a Skype meeting or any number of different methods.

**Target Date**: October 10th

**PART TWO: PERSONAL GROWTH**

Think about the following questions.

* What have been your observations regarding potential behavioral issues in the community?
* How can you help your residents become more successful in living a healthier lifestyle?
* What can you teach your residents regarding how to adapt/re-adapt to the college environment?
* What are your residents talking about? What questions are they asking you?

1. List **five to seven (5-7)** potential topics for community interactions that will teach your residents or provide them an opportunity to grow.

Time-management

Mastering Communication

Cooking on a Budget

Small Home Repairs

Budgeting Basics

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2. Choose **three (3)** of these topics and briefly describe the three community interactions that you will present in **ten to fifteen (10-15)** sentences. Be sure to include a **target date** for each activity in your description.

Small Home Repairs

This connection is strictly advice for future mishaps. In the Longwood Landing put in a work order or in case of emergency call an RA and they will direct you to the appropriate resources. Now that my disclaimer is out of the way, this connection would focus on how to make small home repairs and when a job is serious enough to warrant a professional. This connection would assist residents prepare for future home ownership and prevent them from spending too much on professional services when they are not required and in some cases can not be afforded. On the flipside, the connection should also prevent residents from trying to perform dangerous repairs or making things worse when they should really call for help. This connection could be an interactive session with staff from maintenance, a series of instructional videos, a step-by-step guide, or a small group demonstration held in an apartment. Ideally, I would hold a meeting with professional staff and have hands-on teaching; however, the other options provide for an acceptable though less exciting alternative that may be necessary due to scheduling. While students are still at Longwood, I believe that learning how to use basic tools and make small repairs could help reduce anxiety over mishaps and build confidence that comes with a feeling of competence. Both of these effects would benefit residents in their daily lives and could provide better self-image. Such a session would also assist students in filing work orders. It is much easier to give information for a potential job when one knows what needs to be done.

**Target Date:** September 26th

Budgeting Basics

One reason I believe that budgeting is difficult is the separation between money and its worth. Money is such an abstract idea that sometimes it can be difficult to ground one’s thinking in concrete terms. This connection would attempt to get residents thinking of their money not as 1s and 0s in an electronic banking account, nor as some infinitely flowing resource from a magical plastic card. In this connection, residents could play my version of the price is right, but instead of prices residents would have to guess the number of hours worked to attain the item, taking money out of the equation entirely. For example, a question could be, how many hours would someone have to work at minimum wage to buy a Keurig? The questions could be based on a variety of desirable and common items residents normally want to buy. Then they can think about whether or not they are actually willing to do the work to buy that particular item. Answers could also be easily adjusted for different hourly rates that residents might earn working at different jobs in the future to put life after graduation in perspective. In addition to the game a handout with approximately what a budget should look like can be distributed for reference. The information would include basic statistics on what percentage of a budget should be spent on necessities such as rent/mortgage, food and clothing. The connection could finish with a preview of different tools including apps, excel and online banking that can assist individuals with making budgets and monitoring their progress.

**Target Date:** November 7th

Mastering Communication

Many people have difficulties making friends and meeting new people or even continuing to interact with others once a conversation has started. This connection could focus on the first few minutes of interaction between people when they first meet and then how to continue that connection afterwards. A direct connection could be an interactive workshop from Disability Services as they often assist students with difficulties in this area. The event would be set up as a social with a brief presentation at the beginning and then a chance to test out what they have learned. The presentation could include social cues that may be commonly missed or misunderstood. Another topic to include is how one might resolve a suspected misunderstanding between people in a respectful if not sometimes professional manner. Finally, how might one handle a conversation when the subject changes to something that might be uncomfortable for the other person. These skills are especially important to those going into humanities, but can also be useful for reading everyday cues. While my residents do mostly live with friends and are fairly well-established here at Longwood, there will always be a time when getting to know another person is necessary if not desired. This connection would be a fun way to dive into reading cues and making sure that residents mingle outside of their regular apartments and friend groups. The connection can also help lower social anxiety and give students the ability to take more control of their interactions.

**Target Date:** October 17th

**PART THREE: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Think about the following questions.

* What have been your observations regarding the relationship that is building amongst your residents? Is there a close bond among your residents? Are their cliques?
* How can you help your residents create a stronger environment?
* What do your residents seem to enjoy doing? How do they spend their free time?

1. List **seven to ten (7-10)** potential community interactions that could help your residents develop a stronger community?

Movie night

Potluck dinner

Community dinner at a local restaurant (Moe’s or Chic Fil A)

Video Game Night

Board Game Night

International Cuisine Night

Decorating Christmas Cookies

Coloring/Painting Night

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2. Provide a list of **six (6)** smaller community interaction activities that you plan to organize and include **target dates** for each event.

International Cuisine Night **Target Date:** November 11th

Video Game Night

**Target Date:** October 19th

Coloring/Painting Night

**Target Date:** November 28th

Board Game Night

**Target Date:** October 13th

Decorating Christmas Cookies

**Target Date:** December 1st

Community Dinner at Local Restaurant

**Target Date:** September 21st

**PART FOUR: PASSIVE INTERACTIONS**

1. What can you do to inform residents about topics that are important to college students?

I can post information on Bulletin Boards, send links to articles in emails, hang signs on doors, call a Hall meeting or knock on doors delivering information in person.

2. Provide a list of no less than **three (3)** topics do you anticipate residents would benefit from learning more about?

Career Center Resources

Healthy Habits

Saving Money

3. How do you plan to educate residents about these topics?

Most of these topics are easily placed in a bulletin Board; however hand outs are great reference tools for students to have on-hand when they need them.

4. Provide a list of **five (5)** topics that you plan to address. Also, provide the mode that you plan to use to convey the information (i.e., education bulletin board, door hanger, etc.). Finally, include **target dates** for their completion.

Immunity Boosting Supplements Truths and Myths

Delivery: Bulletin Board with take away handouts

**Target Date:** October 1st

Interview Support offer by Career Services

Bulletin Board and an Email with links to schedule appointments and read more on what they have to offer

**Target Date:** November 2nd

Couponing and Discounts

A pocket reference guide on a door hanger

**Target Date:** October 30th

Linked-in and Handshake

Promote any events Career services puts on and provide links to websites and pages that will help students get connected online through a mass email.

**Target Date:** September 28th

Emergency Destress Kit

A small goodie bag of helpful tips, web resources and tools to destress before final exams would be placed either in the common area by the elevator for pick up or delivered to each door

**Target Date:** November 21st