TIRED OF TRADITIONAL FLOOR MEETINGS...TRY COMMUNITY/TALKING CIRCLES!

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SUNY Geneseo

IIRP – August 2012
SUNY Geneseo
“Knights”

- Undergraduate – liberal arts college
- Located – western New York
- Total enrollment of 5,458
- On campus population is 2,894 (55%)
- Male/Female ratio: 43%/57%
- Multicultural students: 20%
- SAT mean score of 1333
- First year class: 950
Goals of this session

• Development of Community/Talking Circles

• Implementation of Community/Talking Circles

• Data

• Mistakes and accomplishments

• Plans for 2012 - 2013
Development of Community/Talking Circles

- Attended trainings with *Partners in Restorative Initiatives*
  - community circles
  - restorative conferencing

- Worked with a student intern to develop a plan of implementation
  - Presented Circles to the Dean of Residential Living and the Dean of Students

- Replaced traditional floor meetings with a Community/Talking Circle
  - 3 first year halls (Jones, Niagara and Onondaga) - Fall 2010
  - added a hall of international and honor students (Wayne Hall) – Spring 2011
Implementation

• Developed a training packet
  • the professional staff members in the Residence Life Department
  • Resident Assistants

• Held training sessions
  • hosted an overview of the history of Circles
  • need for developing stronger communities
  • increase student accountability

• Provided “suggested outlines” for each Circle
  • August/September – welcome, community values, standards of behavior
  • October – fall closing, roommate conflicts
  • November – Thanksgiving Break
  • December – celebration of the end of the semester and closing procedures
  • January/February – welcome and review of the community values
  • March – alcohol and Spring Break
  • April/May – celebration and closing procedures
Assessment Tool

Community/Talking Circles – Geneseo
Student Survey

Your thoughts and feelings are needed and valued. Please take a few minutes to complete the following survey so that your voice can be heard. Please √ your responses. Your input is greatly appreciated!

Gender: Male _____ Female _____ Transgendered: _____
Hall: ____________________________
How many semesters on campus? ______

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After participating in my Community/Talking Circles for the academic year of 2011-2012</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I felt welcomed on my floor/section?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt physically safe on my floor/section?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt emotionally safe on my floor/section?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt a positive sense of community on my floor/section?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt comfortable sharing myself (personal stories, experiences, identities, etc.)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I have had the opportunity to know the members of my community more deeply/personally?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have enjoyed the Community/Talking Circle experience.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have confronted behaviors that are inconsistent with our community values.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please share your thoughts and observations. It is okay to use the back of the paper too.

The things I like **best** about Community/Talking Circles is:

The things I would like to see **improved/changed** about Community/Talking Circles is:
Assessment

- 2010 - 2011
  - Survey all student who participated in Circles
  - Paper and pencil survey
  - Response rate of 34%

- 2011 – 2012
  - Surveyed all student who participated in Circles
  - Paper and pencil survey
  - Response rate of 46%
Response rate based on gender

2010 – 2011

2011 – 2012
Outcome of 2011-2012 Surveys

- I felt welcomed on my floor/section?
- I felt physically safe on my floor/section?
- I felt emotionally safe on my floor/section?
- I felt a positive sense of community on my floor/section?
- I felt comfortable sharing myself (personal stories, experiences, identities, etc.)?
- I feel that I have had the opportunity to know the members of my community more deeply/personally?
- I have enjoyed the Community Circle experience.
- I have confronted behaviors that are inconsistent with our community values.

Agree
2010 – 2011 Comments

Positive comments:

- The feeling of welcome on the wall.
- Everyone is very friendly and I don’t feel any source of uncertainty in terms of safety on my floor.
- I liked the first community circle where we got to know each other and did building characters/community activities.
- The opportunity to sound-off and make myself heard.
- Getting to see everyone.
- We all come together as a floor
- It’s a break from everyday routine. They are interesting.
- Getting to meet/see new faces.
- Even when everyone is stressed or tired, we all can laugh and have fun in a safe environment. The RA’s make it really easy to talk them and the people on the floor are welcoming.
- Open door policy.
- Hearing people’s stories.

Not so positive comments:

- Keep it short.
- More floor-wide activities.
- More “get to know you” activities.
- Less formal/structured.
- Address issues like dorm/bathroom rules and etiquette. More enforcement from RA’s.
- Help us find solutions to any problems our floor might be having-brainstorm together.
- More and earlier second semester.
- Staying focused/getting through things faster.
- Advanced warning of topics.
- Make them longer.
- Have more of them.
- Have more people show up.
- More community respect.
- More interesting topics.
Outcome of 2011 – 2012 Surveys

- I felt welcome on my floor/section?
- I felt physically safe on my floor/section?
- I felt emotionally safe on my floor/section?
- I felt a positive sense of community on my floor/section?
- I felt comfortable sharing myself with others?
- I have had the opportunity to know the members of my floor?
- I have enjoyed the Community Circle experience?
- I have confronted behaviors that are inconsistent with our

Agree
2011 – 2012 Comments

Positive comments:

- getting to hang out with the fellas
- being able to share my feelings
- sharing feelings
- talking with everyone on the floor
- seeing faces I haven't seen in a while and giving my input
- I like seeing new people every time
- Getting to talk to and hear from the people on my floor that I don't always see
- everyone has a chance to get involved
- the circle removed an anxiety about living with new people
- They are fun. I get to express my feelings.
- I got to know everyone a little bit better
- Any issue on the floor were discussed and settled
- Good laughs
- Bonding
- We talked
- Easy way to voice opinions and to hear others thoughts
- Community
- Everyone seemed honesty about their opinions
- built a sense of trust among the hall mates

Not so positive comments:

- Incorporate a physical activity so as to alleviate wide spread passing
- Have more time to share
- No pointless activities
- Nothing – abolish them
- A smaller Community Circle
- More interactive things, no silent trust games
- Allow people to open up more
- Force people into groups with people they don’t know so they can get to know each other
- I wish there were more Circles
- Can be a little long at times
- More focus
- More space
- More directed at times people had nothing to say
- No complaints
- Smaller circles
- People not taking the Circle seriously
- More structure
- I hate when people interrupt or are not paying attention
# Student Conduct – Jones Hall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hall</th>
<th>Circles Implemented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>2009 - 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total IRs</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishonesty</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorderly</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jones Hall = 200 student – all first year students
# Student Conduct – Niagara Hall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hall</th>
<th>Circles Implemented</th>
<th>2009 - 2010</th>
<th>2010 - 2011</th>
<th>2011 - 2012</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total IRs</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishonesty</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorderly</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Niagara Hall = 200 students – mix of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students/transfer
Student Conduct – Onondaga Hall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hall</th>
<th>Circles Implemented</th>
<th>2009 - 2010</th>
<th>2010 - 2011</th>
<th>2011 - 2012</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total IRs</td>
<td></td>
<td>139</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td></td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage</td>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishonesty</td>
<td></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorderly</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Onondaga Hall = 330 students – all first year students
# Student Conduct – Wayne Hall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hall</th>
<th>Circles Implemented (January 2011)</th>
<th>2011 - 2012</th>
<th>2012 - 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>2009 - 2010</td>
<td>2010 - 2011</td>
<td>2011 - 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total IRs</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishonesty</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorderly</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wayne Hall = 90 students – international and upper-class students
# Successes and Failures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successes</th>
<th>Failures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Some increase in incident reports</td>
<td>• Lack of “buy in” from some staff members – professionals to student staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use of Circles to solve conflicts</td>
<td>• Not enough training for student staff members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Excitement of students and student staff members</td>
<td>• Not enough support for the student staff hosting the Circles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good PR with the administration</td>
<td>• No input on the monthly outline for Circles by the student staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allowed the use of restorative methods in all conduct matters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased the feelings of community and belonging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plan for 2012 - 2013

- Implement Circle Advisory Board

- Training

- Outlines for monthly Circles

- Pre and post survey of participants and circle keepers

- Restorative Practices into all aspects of conduct – starting with language and questions being asked

- Begin to use Restorative Conferencing for conduct reviews
Resources


• Partners in Restorative Initiatives, Rochester, New York.  www.pirirochester.org


Contact Information

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