

Building Campus Community

Restorative Practices in Residential Life



“We have finally found the mechanism that helps students live cooperatively, connect and genuinely build community in a higher education residential setting.”

Stacey Miller

Director of Residential Life
University of Vermont

Reduce:

- » Resident conflicts
- » Student complaints
- » Resident advisor turnover

Increase:

- » Safety
- » Decorum
- » Compliance with campus regulations

Improve relationships & attitudes among:

- » Residents
 - » Resident advisors
 - » Related staff and administration
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College and university residential life administrators will find Building Campus Community a cost-effective way to provide residential advisors and their supervisors with the skills to effectively engage residents, establish authority and uphold expectations, while providing support and giving voice to resident needs and concerns.

Residential staff learn to establish agreed-upon behavioral norms, build decorum and facilitate collaborative processes that prevent and resolve conflicts. Building Campus Community reliably produces positive outcomes from the very outset of implementation.

Program Overview

As young adults, campus residents and resident advisors function best when they play an active role in managing their own affairs. Building Campus Community teaches resident advisors and their supervisors how to establish an effective community and, when problems arise, to use their authority to reliably achieve positive outcomes.

Through collaborative processes, resident advisors establish norms and build relationships, empowering residents to take active responsibility and build and maintain a cooperative residential environment. Campuses implementing this program have fewer formal disciplinary procedures because conflicts are less likely to occur and less likely to escalate.

With a comprehensive implementation model, administration and staff develop a customized plan based on their own goals. Staff are organized into “professional learning groups,” which foster peer learning. IIRP staff provide on-site professional development, follow-up phone consultation and ongoing evaluation of progress.

Once established, the Building Campus Community program is sustained by a cost-effective strategy that develops on-campus training capacity, so that selected residential staff provide professional development for new staff in the future.

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Building Campus Community is a program of the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP), a graduate school based in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Since 1999 the IIRP Continuing Education Division has helped educational institutions around the world build community, develop decorum and effectively respond to conflict through “restorative practices,” a proactive approach based on communication and responsibility.



Program Activities

Preliminary steps:

- » Schedule initial professional development days.
- » Provide phone consultation with residential life leadership and administration.

Three days of on-site professional development instruction for all resident advisors and related staff:

- » *Introduction to Restorative Practices in Residential Life* – Basic restorative concepts and skills.
- » *Using Circles Effectively* – How to use circles for a broad range of residential life purposes.
- » *Restorative Conferencing* – How to facilitate structured meetings that effectively respond to wrongdoing.

Monthly phone consultation and support for one year:

- » Hold monthly in-depth phone calls with resident advisors, staff and administration, as needed.
- » Provide ongoing assistance and consulting with implementation progress.
- » Focus on deepening implementation of restorative practices to 100% of staff.

3-day training of trainers for up to 12 staff:

- » Select staff to be trained to provide restorative practices professional development for new hires.
- » License and train those staff to utilize the IIRP’s proprietary materials, presentations, “scripts” and videos.

Resources provided for all staff:

- » *Building Campus Community* handbooks
- » Restorative Questions Cards and “talking pieces”



Supplemental opportunities:

- » Optional graduate courses available for staff.