Home Away From Home

A Review of Support Staff Training Practices
and Innovations in Residential Living

MTC Institute

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Young people across America attend educational institutions today in order to obtain a wide range of credentials and/or technical training. Some choose to live on campus because it allows better focus on their studies in a secure and stimulating environment, without the distractions and difficulties of life outside. Residential training programs afford students the opportunity to complete a course of study that spans far beyond the classroom. While many institutions are experimenting with new and improved ways of delivering training, fewer exert the same effort in trying to make better use of the 'residential' side of their programs.

Job Corps is a residential career training program run by the Department of Labor for disadvantaged youth aged 16-24 aimed at helping them become responsible, employable and productive citizens. The program provides GED/High school diploma preparation with vocational/technical training primarily in a residential setting. The program upholds the view that job training and life changes can occur through a holistic approach to learning both in and out of the classroom.

During a 24 hour day, Job Corps students spend 6 hours in educational and/or vocational training, 8 hours sleeping, and the remainder is spent involved in a variety of activities designed for 'socialization', 'recreation', 'employability readiness' and 'life skills' training. In an era when we are trying to improve educational achievement while controlling escalating costs, consideration of how best to maximize the impact and relevance of the residential component is equally vital.

Many educational and technical training institutions, community colleges, boarding schools, correctional facilities and universities are concerned about the recent push for ever higher academic and technical standards. At the same time, students are leaving school prior to completion of their training, lured by a paycheck from employers who cannot find enough skilled workers. Unfortunately, many of these entry-level jobs do not offer the possibility for career advancement. Thus, the question arises as to how to maximize the learning power of the students while attending school so they are better prepared for a career. In order to bring the full impact of the educational experience to bear upon students, both the in-class as well as out-of-class activities must be geared toward developing the skills required by employers today as well as encouraging students to complete their studies. Given this imperative, now is the time to design detailed strategies that maximize the effectiveness of group life. Along with researched strategies for enhancing the residential programs, assessment measures of the outcomes and impact of these strategies may further strengthen programs. This report examines the role of residential advisors and their requisite training so that they can completely satisfy the mandate of residential life in a time where an attractive labor markets draws students away too soon.

The report also discusses themes for organizing group life in such a way as to target its objectives around socialization and workplace readiness skills. The more we integrate in-class curriculum and activities into student's out-of-class time, the stronger the program we offer tomorrow's workforce. The more we maximize the quality and content of the residential experience, the higher the overall value of the program to employers and students. In a highly competitive world, every minute counts, regardless of whether or not you are in a classroom.

INTRODUCTION

Residential life plays a commanding role in shaping students' attitudes toward programs, institutions, peers and commitment. Recruiting, hiring and training the most qualified individuals to meet the demands of this challenging job is essential in advancing the quality of the residential program for students and reducing turnover. We discuss the role of the Residential Advisor (RA) or residential support staff and relevant training competency areas. In addition, the report outlines several model programs proven to effectively manage group life situations for disadvantaged youth.

The majority of Job Corps students reside on center. Actually, 84% of the students enrolled in a Job Corps center managed by Management & Training Corporation (MTC) are residential. Since these students (aged 16-24) spend 16 hours a day outside of the classroom, the residential dimension can be a formidable tool in shaping their outcomes.

While the principle objective for Job Corps students is the completion of a trade and academic credentials, studies show that activities/programs not associated with those results often influence the attitude and decisions of the student more than the actual completion of

the certificate or diploma (Bullard, 2002). Out-of-class residential experiences have demonstrated impact on a student's level of satisfaction and commitment to a program and academic performance (Allen, 1992; Suzuki, 1994; Pascarella, Terenzini, & Bliming, 1994; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1989; Zheng, 2002).

With an intensification of the debate about the nature and desired outcomes from group life in residential training programs, an examination of the aspects of the residential environment that make a program effective is essential. In that regard, the RA plays a critical role in student retention, satisfaction and success with the program. Thus the processes used to recruit, train and retain the RA need more attention, since they are the staff entrusted with a significant portion of the out-of-class living and learning environment.

- developing the "whole student" while supporting the emotional psychosocial side of disadvantaged youth.

We suggest areas of primary impact within residential life and how to maximize the quality and value of time spent outside of the classroom in the residential setting. If the goal of residential life is to cultivate the whole student beyond the intellectual realm, then the residential programming offered in Job Corps must reflect this philosophy.

The staff comprised of RAs, Supervisors and Managers take on the responsibility to provide a safe place as well as a stimulating, multicultural haven that reflects the social fabric of the outside world. They are the linchpin of the program, satisfying the physical as well as psychosocial needs of the students. Training for residential staff, the principle facilitators of whole

For growth to occur, the work that is done in the classroom must find expression in other aspects of a student's life (Davis & Murrell, 1993, p. 286).

Further, in keeping with the need to view residential life as impacting the "whole person," we must not overlook the importance that the living environment has on the level of commitment by students and their social growth. The goal of residential life is to prepare students to not only have the academic and vocational skills necessary to enter the workforce, but to develop the balance of the tool kit needed to reasonably meet the challenges of the real world. Group life focuses on the cultivation of independent living skills that will help students to land a job, keep a job and launch a career path successfully.

Based on a review of the literature and research conducted with Job Corps residential staff, we can ascertain four areas of primary impact on the student through group life experiences:

- learning about how to live in a multicultural group setting;

- integrating vocational and academic training into residential life;

- ensuring safety and shelter in a positive and growth-oriented environment; and

student development, should harmonize with the primary impact areas to bring a cohesive message to the student. For this reason, this report reveals information about staff training needs and researched staff competencies found to be most useful, and which ultimately reinforces those areas of primary impact.

The information imparted here is drawn from a wide range of sources. Studies of residential living environments similar to Job Corps are limited. The scarcity of comparable settings and corresponding research required an examination of two somewhat different alternatives: 1) community college, college and military/boarding schools; and 2) juvenile justice programs or substance abuse, mental health or behavior modification residence programs. In the first case, extensive public research has been conducted over the last decade on residential life and staffing in higher education, less so on boarding schools or military institutions. However, given the age differentials and degree of responsibility for custodial supervision as well as the costs assumed by college students contrary to Job Corps participants, this research is applicable only in limited form.

The second source relates to residential living environments for juvenile justice or delinquent wards, and/or therapeutic schools for substance abuse, mental health recovery or adolescent behavioral problem management. These residential environments tend to be narrowly focused on programs directed to remediation or therapy on that issue, which is not the goal of the Job Corps training program.

However, studies published by The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) emerged as an excellent source of research on group home living, with some initial constraints lingering. Likewise CORE—Coalition for Residential Education, a "national advocacy group and association of established and newly developing residential education programs for economically and socially disadvantaged youth," (www.residentialeducation.org) suggested comparable model programs, which we included in the final section of the paper.

Some programs for at-risk and disadvantaged youth serve similar populations as Job Corps on a smaller scale and with lower ratios between counselors and students. We applied information cautiously from these because the programs themselves were reluctant to share data and discouraged comparison. Nonetheless, most prominent examples of best practices surface from Piney Woods School, Girard College (a k-12 boarding school) and the Milton Hershey School. These schools most closely represented the residential environment and structure found in Job Corps for educating disadvantaged youth in a residential program that utilizes the large dorm, high student/RA ratio and prepares the whole person.

social educational opportunities for a participant who lives on campus, learning independent living skills as well as a trade. One of the original tenets of Job Corps was that residential life within the healthy, safe, and supportive environment offered through the program helped these students to break the pattern of their disadvantaged past.

Life on center helps to distance individuals from negative influences that may have hindered their success. They live on center in order to dissociate from the dysfunctional influences of their home surroundings. Group life, 24 hours a day, reinforces the concept that students can create a new life and home, partially through their own efforts, in conjunction with center staff that allows them to live as a group with all races in a cooperative community with similar objectives. By committing to live on center, the students enter a new phase in their lives where change can take place and new vocational, academic and social opportunities abound. Throughout their stay, students are immersed in an environment which endorses their potential and promotes respect for laws, rules, employment etiquette, other people and most importantly, self.

PURPOSE AND IMPACT OF RESIDENTIAL LIFE IN JOB CORPS

Job Corps provides career training for the emerging workforce, drawn from eligible disadvantaged youth 16-24 years old. The majority of the students are residential for a period spanning a maximum of three years in the advanced training program. The Department of Labor offers room and board, health

Running a residential program requires the 'supreme orchestration of events and people'.... Boarding school students are to be kept productively occupied throughout their waking hours. Student's time is structured from the moment they wake up until they go to bed.... Even at Quaker schools, which are more flexible, there are not many minutes during the day when a student is not supposed to be somewhere doing some specified thing (Hays, 1994, p. 13).

The literature in this field suggests the purpose of residential life is comprehensive; it involves far more than provision of room and board. In fact, the goal is to stimulate a positive, learning and caring environment that nurtures the whole student in his/her psychosocial, soft skill and noncognitive development. The premise upon which group life in Job Corps stands is that there is more value and greater

benefits, academic/vocational training and recreational activities for eligible individuals. Because the program is primarily residential, the intent is to support the classroom training with group life programming. Students spend significant time in the dormitory where academic/vocational and soft skills enhancement opportunities exist that maximize the quality of non-classroom experiences.

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In Job Corps, the Policy and Requirements Handbook (PRH) outlines the purpose of Residential Living as:

P1 To create and maintain an environment that allows students to learn and practice independent and community living skills.

P2 To model and reinforce social and employability skills, such as positive attitude, dependability and teamwork.

P3 To provide a safe, secure, clean, and attractive physical and social living environment for students that is appropriate to their varied needs and levels of maturity.

instruction on maintenance of their living space, techniques for organizing and managing their time, proper etiquette and attire, multicultural diversity, and strategies that strengthen their interpersonal relations so that they can function effectively after graduation in the less-structured outside environment.

ROLE OF RESIDENTIAL STAFF

The role of the residential staff is varied and complex. As the first contact with students and responsible for the area where students spend the most time, the RA is pivotal in creating an atmosphere where students

Comfort in the environment as a predictor of persistence supports the existing literature that indicates institutional climate plays a significant role in the persistence of minority students (Allen, 1992; Fleming, 1990; Sailes, 1993; Terenzini et al., 1982; Tracey & Sadlacek, 1989).

The quality indicators recommended by the Department of Labor Job Corps program are

Q1 Students accept responsibility for their living conditions and leisure time activities.

Q2 Student residences are attractive, clean, safe, and in good repair.

Q3 Students demonstrate self-management skills.

Q4 Students feel safe in their living areas.

(See Addendum 1 for requirements in residential life at Job Corps centers.)

As a starting point, these policies indicate the broad range of purposes the residential living program encompasses. In fact residential living affects life skills development, social skill instruction and employability training, while simultaneously satisfying the physical needs of the students. Thus, residential life contributes to the development of the whole student focusing on affective, psychosocial, ethical/moral and physical growth (Baxter-Magolda, 1993).

These soft skill areas, where we know group life has high impact (Pierce, 1998), complement the academic and vocational classroom training and help to shape the student into a marketable individual in the modern workforce. Residential life teaches students how to live with others in a courteous, respectful and multicultural environment, recognizing the parallel impact in their work world. Students receive

organize their free time. They are responsible for supervision and accountability of students, dissemination of information, enforcement and compliance of center rules and regulations, and upkeep of the hall. The daily tasks assumed by the dormitory staff fall under the "rubric of administration, advocacy, behavior management, case management, counseling, evaluation, fiscal management, group maintenance, health and safety, home management, program planning and team building" (Dodge, 1990).

Therefore RAs assume a broad spectrum of responsibilities acting as "human growth educators as well as facilitators" (Johnson-Durgans, 1994) of the daily dorm functions. The extended contact students have with the RA, in many cases, shapes students' views of the entire program, their commitment (Gloria, et al., 1999) and their initial satisfaction with the new environment (Upcraft & Gardener, 1989). RAs often become the first point of contact when students are in distress or in need of counseling on campus (Schuh, 1988). Their assistance with a host of problems, i.e. substance abuse (Ness, 1985), relationship issues, sex, AIDS, etc., can drive a student's likelihood of continuing in the program.

As facilitators, RAs work closely with students in the dormitories directing the maintenance of the dormitory system through the administration of the living area. On the frontline, they interact in diverse situations, answering student questions, supervising

students' chores, and holding dorm meetings. They are responsible for structuring the environment and organizing meaningful activities related to independent living.

In either role, some interactions will require RAs to deal with difficult, heart-wrenching situations sometimes played out in negative student behavior. Many individuals in the program have a history of

Living in a residence hall may also facilitate the development of principled, moral reasoning (Pike, 1999, p. 280).

Conversely, as human growth educators they are vital to the process of smooth student transition into center life beginning the moment they welcome trainees to the residence hall and introduce the student to their new roommate(s). In this capacity, they provide counseling, encouraging involvement in new challenges and positive experiences. The RA helps the student integrate into the academic and training environment, acclimatize into the social milieu and commit to the program. In the long term, RAs make trainees feel less isolated through the advice and counseling they provide, the role model they serve and the symbol of safety and composure they inspire. They also encourage participation in leadership roles within the dorm or through involvement with Student Government Leadership programs (Willett, 1989).

In order to stimulate and support their role as facilitator and human growth educators with a wide range of non-competitive associations / connections (Shostack, 1997), RAs must build trusting relationships, and find a niche from which to interact with the students. The development of a professional relationship based on mutual respect is the foundation upon which the balance of the derivative interactions depends.

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For both functions, RAs must possess varied talents including outstanding listening and communication abilities, a capacity for excellent judgment and decision-making in difficult times, and compassion for and understanding of multicultural people and their respective histories.

academic frustration, face continuous emotional and social upheaval and look to the RA as a source of grounding and surrogate parenting; all of which can be extremely draining. Beyond that, the complexity of the situations they face cover death and grief therapy, severe homesickness, identification of and referral for substance abuse treatment (Schuh, 1988) as well as simply persuading students to clean the bathroom.

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Insights Related to Staff Selection

Several studies outline qualities associated with a successful RA. Shostack (1997), in an excellent book called *Group Homes for Teenagers*, identifies essential attributes of effective and competent residential staffers working in this difficult field (p.66-68). The following checklist of attributes most befitting a future RA helps the interviewer to discern which individuals have the maximum potential.

1. The most important characteristic is self-awareness—being task-oriented, not vindictive
2. Demonstrate deep interest for at-risk youth
3. Dependable
4. Able to make quick and good judgments
5. Demonstrate self-confidence through assertiveness and initiative
6. Emotional stability
7. Team player
8. Able to distance self from events and not take incidents personally

9. Charismatic
10. Realistic and flexible expectations—not single-minded in views.

An MTC Institute survey of high performing RAs confirms this list of attributes and suggests two additional qualities. 1) Personality traits—a positive and consistent manner. 2) Skill sets—broad based skills in communication and group management. (See Addendum 2)

In contrast, a student focus group indicated the primary qualities students seek in an RA are 1) that they "do what they are supposed to do," resolving problems brought to their attention in short order, and 2) follow-up, particularly if an issue requires further action. For many students in Job Corps, learning to

Professional Development Needs

Training is essential for an RA to satisfy the role outlined above. In addition, there should be performance standards for assessment that reflect training competencies. Studies on the current content of residential staff training break down training components into a few core areas: 1) community development skills; 2) intervention techniques with students and building rapport; 3) residence hall system/maintenance and control procedures, including paperwork.

In addition to the literature review of training competency areas, an MTC Residential Staff Training Needs Survey of November 2002 recommends training on the 1) creation of a supportive, multicultural environment rich with activities that promote the individual

Efficacy of the RA correlates to their training, which develops competencies in an intensive, systematic and guided manner. RAs need to have highly developed skills in a wide variety of unrelated areas. 'RAs persistently face some of the most complicated, multifaceted, prolonged and obstinate problems of human development' (Margolis, et al., 2001, p. 406).

trust adults as reliable, positive and consistent forces in their lives is a big step. Students look to the RA to fulfill basic roles, in a consistent, fair and responsible manner. For students the most important function of RAs is the consistent role modeling of appropriate adult behavior and reliability.

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The discrepancy between the perspectives of RAs and students regarding the role of this key person in their lives is notable. We suggest that the two views will come into alignment in the following sections of this report. The RA is a position that may have been undervalued in the past and yet RAs are indispensable in the instruction and preparation of students. To reinforce the significance of RAs and the value of the work they do, we must train to empower them to meet the needs of students and the program. Central to their role is fulfilling the wide range of expectations in a professional manner.

as well as team building; 2) policies, rules, programs, goals and culture of a Job Corps institution; 3) exposure to a disparate array of topics (i.e. multiculturalism, substance abuse, mental health problems, adolescent stages of development, emergency care, handling behavior problems, stress and anger management, accountability, consistency reinforcement, and effective communication, boundary setting, group management and counseling skills, and relationship building strategies). Addendum 3 summarizes the findings of the Training Needs Survey.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING

Training for specific competencies varies from institution to institution. With these differences in mind, we describe a model for organizing the training content into basic themes drawn from the literature and recommendations from MTC residential staff. The core competency areas for training fall under four themes: 1) creation of positive dormitory culture; 2) provision of educational programming complementary to the vocational and academic training; 3)

establishing and ensuring continuous safety and shelter (system maintenance and control) [1]; and 4) counseling (helper/facilitator)[2].

Creating Positive Dormitory Culture

To develop a positive space for students, use of passive techniques helps to make the process natural, instead of forced. Students will thrive because they will feel more comfortable in an environment that reflects equality, tolerance and respect for multicultural, ethnic, racial and sexual difference. The topics that follow are suggested modules for training RAs in passive community building strategies.

Non-Authoritative Means of Control

 CWLA (Child Welfare League of America, Bullard, 2002) suggests training RAs to grasp the centrality of the concept "dorm as a safe place." In order to boost safety, the RA acts as the agent who curtails bullying and hazing, assigns compatible roommates; all of which reduces feelings of anxiety and insecurity for the students and raises their sense of safety. When the RAs emphasize their respect for personal space and belongings, theft is curtailed rather than ignored. To increase the psychological feeling of dorm as "sanctuary" or home, welcoming students warmly and paying concerted attention to new students upon arrival alleviates stress. Humanization of the dorm, making it more homelike, so it feels less institutional achieves similar objectives. Allowing new students to decorate the room as much as possible right away helps them to make a connection with their new

home from the outset. Personalization of the bedroom instills a sense of ownership since that individualized space may be the best place for students to express who they are and their origins. These students struggle to mold a private space in a densely populated area that does not lend itself easily to that task (Bullard, 2002). Personalization of some part of their living environment fulfills this need.

Fostering a Positive Culture

By intentionally structuring the environment, the RA can minimize behavioral difficulties and promote a safe, calm space. Work in a dormitory is a job that especially requires that staff leave personal issues at the door when their shift begins because negativity impacts the environment directly. It is imperative that RAs exude positive attitudes and beliefs in the residential area so as to fortify the sense of calm. Students pick-up on and intuit depression, pessimism, disapproval or frustration and are prone to react negatively. In decisions regarding dorm decor, selection of appropriate durable, yet aesthetically pleasing, furnishings and equipment encourages ownership and pride in the physical space for the students (Shostack, 1997). Similarly, visual and constant verbal prompts in the corridors listing appropriate behavior reinforces and reminds students of expectations. Putting into place passive structures that promote a calm, supportive environment helps to reduce tension and divert attention from negative activities into positive, constructive choices (Bullard, 2002; Shostack, 1997).

At Quaker schools, dormitory rooms like clothes are seen as a means through which individuals can express their personalitites; at military school, dormitory rooms, like uniforms are a vehicle for expressing self-discipline and loyalty to military expectations (Hays, 1994, p. 21).

[1] Based on an extensive recent study of RA pre-service training currently in use at 100 institutions, Twale and Muse (1996) classify training modules into three categories: First order: 1) Crisis intervention; 2) Conflict resolution; 3) Confrontation skills. Second order: 1) Safety and security issues. Third order: 1) Team building. From the 100 institutions mentioned, delivery formats, duration and other details were difficult to generalize because of the lack of uniformity amongst training methods, funding and modes at every institution.

[2] Another model described by Elleven et al. (2001) outlines seven RA competency fields and corresponding training needs: A) role model; b) community development; c) system maintenance and control; d) leadership; e) helper/facilitator; f) educational programming; and g) general skills. The suggestions in this report draw on both of these footnoted studies.

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Relationship Building

To build positive relationships, RAs can spend extra time with newcomers or loners, learn something about each individual, try to praise each person and offer public recognition in dorm/hall meetings or center wide assemblies. Making oneself available to those seeking out individual attention rather than saying "I am busy, come back tomorrow" validates the importance of that specific student (Shostack, 1997). If a student dislikes an RA, it is best to simply focus on work and not force the relationship. Attention to the job, and maintaining order and security will unconsciously spur an association of those tasks with the RA. When an emergency arises, the students will know whom to trust (Bullard, 2002).

Multicultural Training

RAs also serve as the bridge between multicultural and multiethnic individuals living in close quarters. On account of the wide spectrum of ethnic groups involved in Job Corps, RAs must be aware of the philosophical assumptions and life experiences of a diverse group of students, particularly minority groups. Racial sensitivity, with regard to cultural preferences and different communication styles (Merchant, 1992) as well as similarities and differences in relating to African-American and others, is central to their endeavor (McEwan et al., 1990). Posters and decorations hung in the corridors, as well as sponsored programs reflective of the diversity of the group affirm cultural diversity in the public setting. Paying attention to and recognizing verbal and non-verbal messages sent to and between students (Johnson-Durgans, 1994), especially of ethnic groups different from their own, can be helpful in order to prevent or diffuse tense situations.

Interpersonal Topics

Training on topics related to student and staff relationships, development of a professional relationship with students, the role of a paraprofessional, non-confrontational communication, group dynamics, alternative life styles and specific discipline methods enhance the RAs effectiveness in building relationships and maintaining a positive and nurturing environment in the dorm (Upcraft and Pilato, 1982).

Miscellaneous Professional Issues

Other topics for training help staff to explore their own attitudes about a broad range of issues related to community building. Researchers agree that training could also include 1) empathy training, 2) assertiveness, 3) motivation, 4) goal setting, 5) burnout, 6) networking, 7) time and stress management, 8) values clarification, 9) ethics, and 10) professionalism (Bellucci, 1976; Bowman & Bowman, 1995; Shipton & Schuh, 1982; Twale & Burrell, 1994; Shostack, 1997; Winston & Fitch, 1993).

Complementing In-Class Training with Related Activities in the Dormitory

Training on how to make in-class and out-of-class time a seamless experience suggests the need for residential staffers and academic or vocational instructors to collaborate. These training topics are designed to support the delivery of a harmonious message to students that reflects this integrated approach. Bringing relevant activities from the classroom into the dorm reinforces this message.

Structuring Time to Support Career Training

Partnerships with local employers who contribute to both in-class as well as residential programming facilitate the integration of employability opportunities in the dorm. Training can provide information on how to access those local employers as well as suggested activities in the dorm. The students can invite and host speakers who present in the dorm in the evening or afternoon. Question and answer sessions with employers or alumni working in related fields exposes students to the trade in an informal setting.

Programming to Raise Awareness on Substance Abuse

Coordinating activities with substance abuse counselors helps integrate the topic into the dorm. Students can sponsor invited talks in the dorm by recovered alcoholics or drug addicts, survivor's testimonials, who speak candidly and openly about these issues and their negative impact (Ness, 1985). Substance abuse issues addressed out-of-the classroom speaks to the centrality of this problem as part of the life skills area.

Promoting Relationships and Communication with the Vocational and Academic Staff

Building relationships across departments bolsters the efforts to ensure residential life is viewed by all as an integral part of the students' education. Mutual visits by RA staff to the classroom and instructors in the residence halls will help students understand that all staff are working together to support their learning. With open communication, the dorm staff can reinforce training with activities in the dorm recommended by the classroom teachers. Likewise having training instructors support group life in the classroom tells students life is not compartmentalized rather all of these areas are interwoven.

Modeling Skills

Training that emphasizes the importance of modeling respectful treatment of other employees and students, guides RAs to be aware of the example they set. Not only are the RAs expected to model employability skills, but also soft skills and life skills for living independently. If a component of the training speaks to modeling the desired behavior, the RA can appreciate the relevance for the students. For those RAs continuing with education, students see learning as a life long experience.

Employability Activities

Sessions held in the dorm on resume writing, interviewing, and general employability skills show students that careers involve commitment both in and out of the classroom. Instructing RAs on an employability (portfolio) notebook, its' contents and how to help students gather materials is essential in a career

Ensuring Safety and Shelter (System Maintenance and Control)

Safety

Safety of the students is paramount. They must feel the surroundings as well as their belongings are secure from external or internal threats. Some situations require active intervention; however, the focus of this training is on putting into place a secure system that reduces conflict and the need for constant active intervention. A safe environment allows students to focus on their studies.

> To prevent students from engaging in negative behavior, redirection of students' energy into positive, constructive and fun activities keeps them out of trouble.

Prevention Measures

Rules that make sense mean more maneuverability for the authority figure, and minimize the likelihood of having to take inflexible stances. Resident participation in determining the system makes adherence more likely. Rules are part of the process; however, caution must be taken in establishing what may become an unenforceable rule. To prevent students from engaging in negative behavior, redirection of students' energy into positive, constructive and fun activities keeps them out of trouble. Being fair and consistent with the use of phones, television, computer access or other services that have measured equal distribution/accessibility requirements reduces bickering among students (Shostack, 1997).

At military schools, daily inspections...emphasize the importance of orderliness, and companies win points or acquire demerits based on the state of their members' rooms (Hays, 1994, p. 21).

training residential program; retention and periodic reviews of the employability notebook in the dorm also reinforces the same point.

Natural Consequence

Rather than punishing/using punitive measures (generally proven ineffective), establish natural consequence. A natural consequence is "closely linked to the action the child has committed" (Crone, 1984, p.86). Hence righting a wrong, or assuming closer supervision until behavior is modified. In disciplining students, the goal is to make "the costs of negative

behavior sufficiently high to outweigh rewards... without leaving a harmful residue of rage, rejection, anxiety and humiliation" (Crone, 1984, p.86). Students who consider the consequences of their actions and then are required to suffer the natural consequences may modify their behavior without rejecting the enforcer of the rules.

Incentive/Points Systems

Points systems that reward good behavior and subtract points for bad behavior are extremely effective. Positive incentives reward constructive behavior, outweighing the presumed gain from negative behavior. Points, tokens, phases etc. are part of simplified behavior modification systems that tend to be successful. The advantages of these types of incentive systems are the consistency and perceived lack of arbitrariness.

Intervention and Diffusion Techniques

Relying exclusively on active intervention techniques instills a hostile and adversarial atmosphere; however, there are situations that require immediate active intervention to resolve a difficult situation. Given the high level of contact between the RA and student, intervention and diffusion techniques are critical. To determine and effectively undertake an intervention, problem solving skills come into play. RAs have to recognize problems and help to find solutions. On-the-job training directed toward proactive problem solving and skill application improves efficacy of intervention (Heppner and Reeder, 1984). Because of the complexity of the job and the nominal previous training, a RA often depends on personal experience and common sense to solve problems (Ames, et al., 1979; Bowman & Bowman, 1995; Ender & Carranza,

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1991; Twale & Burrell, 1994). Practice in confrontational methods and the development of the advisor role improves success of interventions. Training can address conflict resolution, crisis management, interpersonal skills, and disciplinary matters and methods (Upcraft, 1982). Addendum 4 describes de-escalation techniques and other interventions proven effective.

Discipline

First and foremost, discipline refers to establishing and maintaining order. To help youth assimilate into the broader society, RAs promote the basic canon of acceptable adult social behavior and how to control impulses. Basing reactions on consequences rather than fixed, unilateral punishment is preferred. Unless the RA maintains consistency, uneven disciplining can lead to perceptions of prejudice. Carrying out rules even if one has a personal objection also preserves constancy.

Some situations mandate punishment. Disciplinary action must take into consideration circumstances and always be consistent. Behavior management can employ nondirective steps first and then directive actions (Shostack, 1997). See Addendum 4.

Crisis Management

"Broadly, crisis management is when people become so upset or angry that they are a clear threat to the safety of themselves and other people. Crisis management is designed to keep the breakage of people and property to an absolute minimum" (Crone, 1984, p.95). For steps in crisis intervention, see Addendum 4.

Dorm and Resident Oversight

To provide shelter for the students, training in residence hall systems/maintenance and control procedures allows staff to focus on the students affective needs instead of paperwork or upkeep of hall. The more time dedicated to the student's psychosocial needs, the stronger the relationship. Staff that focus exclusively on paperwork and the bureaucratic tasks involved in running a dormitory runs the risk of alienating students and meeting only the most basic criterion of residential life. In order to engage the student in beneficial activities, the following training skill sets free up time for the RA. Furthermore, upkeep of the hall is the joint responsibility of the students. The role of the RA is to facilitate system maintenance, and instruct students on residence upkeep.

Job Duties and Responsibilities

Staff trained on Job Corps policies, center rules, programs, objectives and culture can guide students and model behavior from an informed perspective. RAs

need campus information with specifics of programming, referral procedures and contacts, and community resources in order to satisfy the requirements of their job. Manuals with rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and protocols as well as a description of the requisite administrative tasks help to clarify their position and how they fit into the larger organization. A FAQ manual that summarizes key information for quick reference is a useful tool for newcomers.

Clerical Work

Most researchers concur that staff should have a minimal degree of clerical work expertise for system maintenance. However, standardization of forms/paperwork streamlines the process for the staff as well as administration and can minimize the need for previous experience. Nonetheless, one module of pre-service training should be dedicated to paperwork. Crone (1984) divides paperwork into five categories: "1) log entries; 2) reports on a particular individual(s); 3) reports describing crises, accidents, illnesses, and other occurrences; 4) accounting for money; 5) time sheets and other strictly employment-related items" (Crone, 1984, p.113).

> **Staff that focus exclusively on paperwork and the bureaucratic tasks involved in running a dormitory runs the risk of alienating students and meeting only the most basic criterion of residential life.**

General Communication and Documentation Skills

Another area of consensus amongst researchers regards communication and documentation skills. Incident reporting supports monitoring processes and responsiveness, as well as documentation for legal purposes (Bullard, 2002). Documentation of inappropriate behavior episodes or dangerous situations is vital. Key information is who, what, where, when and why. Recall and summation are complementary skills that facilitate effective documentation. Clearly and consistently describing 1) the nature of the problem; 2) probable causation; 3) the solution with referrals enumerated and aspects addressed; 4) the results of intervention; and 5) recommended course of action avoids omissions and confusion in passing off the information to those not involved in the altercation or incident (Elleven, et al., 2001).

Chore Assignments

When distributing chore assignments, particular care should be taken to be equitable and even-handed; perceptions of bias or unfairness induce a negative reaction in the residents. A transparent system that equally distributes chores to all residents allows no room for criticism or prejudice and clarifies the decisions and allocation of chores for the students.

> **When distributing chore assignments, particular care should be taken to be equitable and even-handed; perceptions of bias or unfairness induce a negative reaction in the residents.**

Helper/Facilitator

Because of the centrality and significance of their role as frontline mentors for the students, RAs can benefit from basic training in assuming that supportive role. Although they are not trained counselors, they can facilitate, refer and help students, utilizing some of the counseling techniques that follow.

Career Counseling

Although the vocational instruction occurs in the classroom, RAs must reinforce that training by providing information about careers in the dormitory. Magazines related to the trade interests of students, bringing employers for invited talks in the evenings, mock interviews and participation in career training can be part of their role. RAs can discuss career plans and allow students to bounce ideas around regarding the future without having a lot of technical expertise.

Curbstone Counseling

Good listening skills reassure teens and tell them the RA is supportive of their needs. *Active listening* where the RA does not prescribe nor analyze, but rather identifies the predominant feeling students are expressing is another useful technique. Feedback interpretations of what you hear the student saying demonstrates concern and caring. *Open lines of communication* that position truth and honesty at the heart of all interactions is crucial. Anger, anxiety, fatigue and emotional distress impede communication. Although oral communication is preferred, in some situations encouraging students to write letters to gain clarity and calm down after an incident can

be therapeutic and instrumental in their maturation process. Foremost in working with youth is the importance of treating youngsters *with respect*. Listening to their opinions, being consistent and considerate of individual tastes and habits and demonstrating public tolerance for unique, unfamiliar customs reinforces the concept of respect. (Bullard, 2002; Crone, 1984)

Supportive Counseling

Supportive counseling "involves building a relationship and helping [students] learn to solve problems" (Crone, 1984, p.87). The most effective way to implement supportive counseling is by creating and adhering to a routine. The "routine speaks louder than words... and says to the youth that the worker is there to provide food, clothing, shelter, safety, protection, supervision, recreation, and all other things that go into nurturance... If you concentrate on the routine, the student will come to trust, and like you" (Crone, 1984, p.88).

Non-Rejecting Responses

Use of "I" statements rather than "you" place the thrust of the response on the shoulders of the caregiver. "I was worried" indicates continued acceptance of the child while pinpointing the infraction/problem and its impact on others (Shostack, 1997, p.139).

Specialized Knowledge Development

Health related topics such as eating disorders, AIDS, suicide, sexuality issues and substance abuse frequently arise, suggesting that RAs receive some exposure to these subjects. Emergency response information on first aid and CPR training are other useful skills and knowledge they may use on an on-going basis (Shipton, 1982). Required certification courses in first aid or CPR enhance the professional qualifications of the job.

Student Developmental Theories

A general outline of the physical and emotional stages of human development of 16-24 years old helps RAs to comprehend the actions, reactions and motivations of students as well as the appropriate intervention (Schuh et al., 1991). Given the broad age range of participants in Job Corps, and the diverse and troubled personal histories of the population served, knowledge of earlier stages of development is useful to identify possible behavior consistent with a younger person or delayed maturation. (See Addendum 5)

Training/Evaluation Formats

Research shows that delivery of training is best if relevant, frequent and participatory. Peer training components, collaboration, group think, role playing, team building and sharing experiences involve the RA in hands-on, fun and insightful training they will value and use (Komives, 1991; Twale and Muse, 1996; Wesolowski, 1996).

Each subject merits an entire module of training, though the time duration remains at the discretion of the program, preferably spanning at least one hour. Activities related to the training would involve presentation of material, role playing scenarios, group discussion and brainstorming solutions or methods to modify these topics for implementation at the residence hall.

In a profession that requires 24 hours-a-day, seven days a week in coverage, providing adequate training options for third shift staff can be difficult. Web-based training and professional development options lend themselves well to this schedule allowing RAs to access and complete the training at their convenience.

Given the modern technology available to students and staff, Management and Training Corporation developed a series of web-based training applications that will support current and future e-learning needs for staff in Job Corps. In-service modules were designed in response to the RA Needs Assessment Survey in 2002 and may be taken in any order. Typically they last 30 to 45 minutes. Some of the topics covered include 1) Residential Advisor's role in the Job Corps program; 2) Understanding youth development; 3) Developing professional relationships with students.

Naturally, all residential staff are given a Residential Living Manual. At MTC centers RAs obtain a hard copy at the commencement of their work, and later can access the web for additional information and comprehension exercises. The Manual chapters focus on a broad range of skills development and provide links to information on many subjects. End of chapter assessment questions test proficiency and comprehension. See the Professional Development Needs Survey summary as a guide to the themes discussed.

Training related materials can also take the form of newsletters that focus on Group Life areas. Newsletters can keep third-shift RAs informed and updated. The MTC RA newsletter includes training ideas for

upcoming on-line in-service lessons in residential living, articles relevant to the Job Corp group life community, innovations and useful resources to support students and staff on a day-to-day basis.

In terms of face-to-face meetings, research indicates the most commonly employed meeting formats for relaying information to residential staff are 1) small group, 2) one-on-one RA to staff, or 3) entire staff meetings. The preferred modes of evaluation of RA performance are self, student and administrative (Twale and Muse, 1996). Evaluation is crucial and should measure outcomes based on goals and objectives.

Rewards

Given the importance of the residential staff on the lives of the students, a continued analysis of their remuneration packages is vital. A variety of formal pay and recognition activities reduces turnover. Pay is extremely important, but recognition is essential. Managers and directors emphasize the use of informal modes of sustaining, bolstering and rewarding residential staff such as social events, lunches with cross-functional administrators, and RA Appreciation Day (Bierman & Carpenter, 1994; Twale & Muse, 1996).

> **Pay is extremely important, but recognition is essential.**

Clearly, incentive systems must be relevant. Although most RAs work in the residence hall because they love youth and are happy to see them succeed, the importance of extrinsic rewards should not be underestimated. Remuneration for in-service and pre-service training, occasional half day-off options, consistent full staffing or having administrators work the dorms when low on staff helps to alleviate the stress of absorbing additional responsibilities. It is important that RAs know that the promotional system places a value on continuing education and professional development. In-service training should also count toward the professional status of the RA, opening up career paths within the center for those who seek additional responsibility and opportunity. Demonstrating through rewards the possibility for advancement in the organization also promotes staff retention as well as acts as an indication of the organization's commitment to the residential staffer.

The literature indicates that factors associated with high performance due to high satisfactions are good RA/Resident Director (Manager) communication and words of encouragement, open door policy with staff, and strong administrative support.

The MTC Institute survey of high performing residential staff found the factors that contribute to job satisfaction working in a dorm relate primarily to 1) validation for performance and 2) receiving sufficient resources in order to perform well (Addendum 6).

PROGRAM PROFILES

This section identifies examples of institutions with exemplary programs. We present a brief description, the mission statement, selection criteria, demographics and elements of group life programs.

The Piney Woods School

The Piney Woods School (founded in 1909) located in rural Mississippi, runs a 500-acre working farm, as well as academic/vocational and residential facilities for over two hundred residential students. Piney Woods School is the largest of the four remaining Black boarding schools; their goal is "to increase the number of African-American students who participate in life-transforming experiences." The Board of Directors mandates that 60 percent of the population come from low-income backgrounds. At least 95 percent of graduates each year go on to college.

Mission statement: "The Piney Woods School recognizes that throughout the United States there are students, especially African-American students, who have the capability to make their lives extraordinary through excellence in education and the development of moral and ethical attitudes but do not have the opportunity to do so for financial or other reasons. The Piney Woods School mission is to provide that excellence in education within a Christian community through creation of an exceptional academic model which supports the tenet that all students can learn, develop a strong work ethic and lead extraordinary lives through academic achievement and responsible citizenship."

The remote, farm campus provides services for the student community parallel to those offered by Job Corps. The program stresses cleanliness, neat appearance and good manners. All of the boarding students, regardless of background, are required to work 10-hours

a week in the student work program, for grades 9 though 12, helping with the operation of the school and earning tuition work credit. This aspect inculcates a strong work ethic in the students and helps to build character, beyond the academic training.

Another unique feature of Piney Wood's group life entails an active "Save the Males" program. The *Save the Males Center* sponsors residential programs, reviewed by academic experts from University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill and University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee, which are focused on reducing dropout/enhancing retention of males in school. To prevent dropout, the program offers tutoring for improving academic performance and Christian education to develop a strong moral code. Integrating writing across the curriculum helps reinforce in-class subject matter beyond the walls of the classroom for all students. Male and Female Forums address transitional life topics such as personal hygiene and interpersonal skills that prepare graduates for life. These programs seek to bring employability, ethics, academics/vocational and psychosocial development opportunities to the students throughout the day. Hence, the group life options span across the entire spectrum of personal and professional development needs (www.pineywoods.org).

Girard College

Girard College is on a self-contained 43-acre campus in Philadelphia. As an historic college preparatory boarding school, they enroll 639 disadvantaged youth in first through twelfth grades, ages 7-18. Funded by an endowment left to the City of Philadelphia by philanthropist Stephen Girard 154 years ago, many students receive full scholarships. Approximately 95 percent of graduates attend college and 30 percent earned 1000 or better on the SAT.

Mission Statement: "Girard's mission is to prepare students for advanced education and life as informed, ethical and productive citizens through a rigorous educational program that promotes intellectual, social and emotional growth" (www.girardcollege.org).

Residential services are available on campus seven days a week throughout the school year. However, the majority of students attend boarding school only five days a week. "The TAP (Total Attention Program) division operates Thursdays through Mondays to ensure seamless operations with the other four residential divisions." TAP cares for students who

remain on campus during the weekend in what they call a "home-life" connection. These students' families live beyond the Philadelphia area making weekend visits difficult. Helping those students to grow up in a nurturing and supportive environment, TAP teaches them life skills and offers recreational diversion that promotes socialization for college and life.

The residential staff is certified, charged with the responsibility of coordinating and overseeing recreational and culturally based activities, and fomenting a safe and healthy residential program. The TIME (Teaching, Inspiring, Motivating and Encouraging) philosophy guides student life. RA staff produces and directs plays with the students from their dorm each year. They take the students on outings based on their personal interests and guide study in the dorm. In a homelike atmosphere, the residential staff organizes community events, including on-campus programming for all age groups and general educational activities. "Student's wellness is achieved through scholastic, intramural and extra-curricular activities. This program offers a wide range of activities for students during non-school hours to enhance their cognitive and physical abilities." The goal of the group life program is to have students achieve self-discipline, independence and responsibility while on campus (www.girardcollege.org).

The Milton Hershey School

The Milton Hershey School is the largest pre-k through 12th grade school in the United States, serving "1,300 racially and ethnically diverse boys and girls who are in financial and social need." They provide room, board, medical and dental services and academic/vocational training in order to allow youth to "discover which career path is best for them based on their skills and interests." A primary goal of the school is social and civil preparation for individuals "to become self-reliant citizens and workers" through a combination of "educational, home life, and extra curricular responsibilities that inspire self-discipline, demand endurance, foster a strong work ethic, and teach sound values" (www. mhs-pa.org).

The mission of Milton Hershey School (MHS) is "to nurture and educate children in financial and social need in keeping with Milton and Catherine Hershey's Deed of Trust" (www. mhs-pa.org).

The "Community Services Programs" is responsible for providing the residential, life skills programming for these disadvantaged youth. A unique program called C.A.R.E. (Character and Religious Education) focuses on spiritual and character formation. The mandatory "weekly, youth-oriented chapel services, the student home devotional program, and the school-wide character development initiative" place heavy emphasis on the moral and ethical development of the students beyond the classroom.

The "Healthy Lifestyles" component of the program is geared in every way toward reinforcing the concept of living in a healthy manner both physical and moral. The staff members promote and direct students in activities that keep them active, involved, contributing to society and healthy (www. mhs-pa.org).

CONCLUSION

The various social programs and learning opportunities offered in group life at Job Corps centers during the time students are not involved in academic or vocational training are essential to their personal development. Residential life, which is inclusive of aspects of a well-rounded healthy home life, is fundamental to the holistic development of students.

The role of the RA is critical in the creation of a safe living environment that supports student growth. The selection of staff to fill the complex role of an RA is challenging. Vital to recruiting the proper staff for RA positions is an understanding and consideration of the wide range of responsibilities they carry out. Once selected, proper orientation and training needed to meet the multiple dimensions of the job are key to success with the diverse student population. Furthermore, a dynamic in-service training program and appropriate remuneration is important for retention. With a systematic approach to career steps in group life that progressively increase levels of responsibility, as well as cross-divisional promotional opportunities, the position becomes more attractive.

Although each of the cited residential programs targets a unique segment of the at-risk population, certain striking commonalities of structure and organization are evident. With residential life as a key component of success for these students, the highlighted programs may shed light on residential living in Job Corps, where it also plays a pivotal role in shaping the outcomes of disadvantaged youth.

These programs offer "a privileged total institution designed to teach character as well as the usual" academic and vocational subjects (Hays, 1994, p. 38). Based on a clearly defined, articulated concept of character and virtue, the group life environment reinforces the mission of those institutions just as residential life in Job Corps supports career readiness.

Structuring the out-of-class time for students in such a way as to maximize a wide range of activities brings home the point that educating and preparing students for the workplace of this millennium is a 24-hour a day process. The themes selected to organize the residential environment must focus on developing the whole person and not simply dormitory maintenance. If managed with care, the residential dimension can change lives because it is in those out-of-class hours where the greatest growth occurs and Job Corps as a program can really make a difference. ■

Addenda

ADDENDUM 1—PRH REQUIREMENTS FOR JOB CORPS

R1. Student Self-Management Skills Development

Centers shall develop systems that involve students in the management of their living areas, which shall incorporate the following features:

a. Opportunities for all students to have input into the development of the center policies governing the management of their living areas.

b. Procedures to solicit input, disseminate information to and obtain feedback from students.

c. Student responsibility for maintaining cleanliness within their living areas.

d. Progressive opportunities to learn, practice, and demonstrate personal responsibility and self-management skills.

R2. Supervision of Student Living Areas Centers shall:

a. Provide staff supervision of all student living areas at levels that assure the safety, security, and accountability of all students at all times.

b. Develop a structured process for sharing information that ensures effective student accountability.

R3. Delivery of Services to Students

Centers shall develop a structured process for the sharing of information between residential staff and other center staff as needed to assure the coordinated delivery of services to students.

R4. Reporting/Documentation/Record Keeping Centers shall:

a. Implement safeguards to assure that personal information about individual students, subject to the Privacy Act, is shared among staff only to the extent necessary to ensure the safety and effective provision of services to students, and no further, in accordance with Appendix 601, Student Rights to Privacy and Disclosure Information.

b. Develop procedures to record important information about student-related events as the events occur and to transmit the information from each shift to the next.

ADDENDUM 2—INSTITUTE SURVEY OF RA's

The MTC Institute surveyed RAs at many MTC centers to determine what these high performance residential staff considered the most important qualities in an RA for effectively managing the dormitory and students. In addition, we asked them to identify the attributes they believed students most value in the RA. The percent of respondents surveyed with the same answer is indicated by (%). If most concurred, then we only use a percentage to differentiate discrepancies or unique responses.

Attributes that make for an effective RA:

1. Personality traits (100%)—positive attitude, ability to set firm boundaries, willingness to learn, being fair and honest, consistency, compassion, patience, open-mindedness, flexibility and calmness, adaptability, empathy, able to form relationships with students (friendly and outgoing), a positive disposition, an advocate for the students, non-judgmental, physically active (30%).

2. Skill sets (80%)—Mediation skills, communication skills, leadership ability, behavior modification skills, employability skills, group management skills, listening skills, problem solving skills, basic counseling skills, basic first aid training, conflict resolution, teamwork, basic diversity skills, knowledgeable about job.

Qualities valued by student in a RA (as delineated by RAs):

Listening (100%), respecting them (100%), doing some of the chores with them (30%), being honest and direct (90%), having some familiarity about who the student is (60%), feeling safe and cared for (80%), spending time with them (100%).

ADDENDUM 3—MTC STAFF TRAINING NEEDS SURVEY FINDINGS

Self identified training needs gathered from the MTC Residential Training Needs Survey of November 2002 fall into four categories: a) intervention techniques with Job Corps students and building rapport; b) residence hall system/maintenance and control procedures, including paperwork; c) Job Corps policies, center rules, programs, objectives and culture; d) knowledge of a disparate array of topics (i.e. multiculturalism, substance abuse, mental health problems, adolescent stages of development, emergency care, handling behavior problems, stress and anger management, accountability, consistency reinforcement, and effective communication).

With a 97% response rate from MTC centers, the findings point to some important areas for training based on RAs' experience.

A. Intervention techniques with Job Corps students and building rapport:

The interactions of an RA with a student include not only the dorm maintenance and management side, but extend into the grey areas of supplemental education-for-life skills and holistic development (Deluga & Winters, 1991).

Given the high frequency and variety of contact, intervention techniques applicable to assorted circumstances are essential.

The key training topics requested in the MTC Staff Training Needs Survey are:

1. Crisis intervention for a serious illness/emergencies
2. Dealing with violent or non-violent incidents
3. Ethnic group relations/mediation
4. Running a team efficiently, pleasantly, and effectively
5. Disruptive behavior management
6. Minimizing gang influence
7. Drug and alcohol awareness
8. Stress management
9. Alternative lifestyles awareness and interaction
10. Fomenting a safe and tolerant environment (Passive intervention)
11. Medication management
12. Building success through teams
13. Using the employability notebook

B. Residence hall system/maintenance and control procedures, including paperwork.

The central concern voiced in the staff survey responses point to a need to learn about the correct procedure for documenting incidents and activities in the dorm. The survey responses indicated that within the first 60 days documentation was a key skill requirement. Training in the management of the physical aspects of the dorm was secondary to paperwork.

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C. Job Corps policies, center rules, programs, objectives and culture

Staff acknowledged the importance of training in PRH guidelines, expanding RA awareness to include center-wide policies and programs and exposing new staff to the Job Corps program/its objectives, the population served and organization of the center. The primacy of knowing what the PRH says as well as having a clear idea of the mission of the center; who, what and where to refer students; and comprehending the broader Job Corps system is evidenced in the responses in this area. Largely, the responses indicate an interest in having available a quick reference guide or FAQ book to refer to for immediate answers. Other staff mentioned training in early detection of potential dropout behavior and prevention measures.

D. Knowledge of a disparate array of topics (i.e. multiculturalism, substance abuse, mental health problems, adolescent stages of development, emergency care, handling behavior problems, stress and anger management, accountability, consistency reinforcement, and effective communication).

The variety, intricacy and immediacy of topics confronting a RA can be overwhelming. These topics depend on the point of origination of the student, their ethnic and racial make-up, rural or inner-city locations, family history and so forth. This means that unilateral training for all is difficult to determine. There appear to be a core set of issues residential staffers deal with, that are augmented by an idiosyncratic and discrete subset of skills, related to the demographics of the residents and center that might come into play, but not consistently.

ADDENDUM 4—CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION TECHNIQUES

De-escalation—The *CWLA Best Practices Guidelines for Behavior Management* describes de-escalation methodology. "The purpose of de-escalation as a behavior intervention is to engage with a potentially violent child in a manner that helps him or her to meet needs in ways that are not harmful to self or others. When de-escalation is used appropriately, the goal is to intervene in such a way that the child or youth is able to exercise self-control and stop the escalation of violence" (Bullard, 2002, p. 37).

Implementation of de-escalation techniques adheres to this set of guidelines (Bullard, 2002, p. 38-39):

1. Determine level/nature of the incident so as not to overreact or trivialize.
2. Identify the motive for the behavior and respond in view of that reason.
3. If student threatens only minor levels of danger, use verbal (or nonverbal) crisis intervention skills.
4. Use nonverbal cues with instigator and others in immediate vicinity.
5. Keep communication short and simple.
6. Remain spontaneous so that nonverbal interventions can be altered depending on the dynamics of the situation.
7. Remain culturally sensitive to verbal phrases, tones and physical (nonverbal) gestures and postures/pay attention to facial expression.
8. Use reflective, supportive listening.
9. Refrain from making reference to consequences.

Other intervention techniques utilize (Bullard, 2002, p. 39):

a. *Prompting*—a non-threatening and non-judgmental approach delivered in a neutral tone. Proactive prompting anticipates problems and warns of a changing situation.
b. *Redirection*—turning attention of youth to a more neutral or positive behavior or activity.
c. *Planned Ignoring*—this method contains harmless, non-threatening, attention-seeking behavior. As a passive intervention, at times it is not completely effective. Assess other individuals possibly engaged in the same behavior and apply appropriately.

d. *Structuring the environment*—Be aware of location and how physical space affects individual and group behavior. "Clean and orderly environments foster a calm and therapeutic milieu."

e. *Directive statements*—when other methods fail, use directive statements. Speak clearly, using an authoritative tone to deliver a concise and unambiguous instruction. Avoid requests; issue a directive.

f. *Repeating*—repeat back what you understand the person to have said thereby showing you listened and allowing for clarification.

Corrective discipline is applied in five distinct modes: peer group, distraction, interference, removal, restitution. Clarification and persuasion are the cornerstones of these corrective discipline modes. Try to clarify a situation and then persuade the individual to change their behavior. Peer group pressure and distraction are passive forms of discipline designed to encourage the youth to discontinue their bad behavior. Halting and impeding further unacceptable behavior is an active form of discipline that relies on interference, removal and restitution. (Mayer, 1991, p. 134-140) Intervene appropriately, remove the individual from the situation and then bring restitution to the victim of the bad behavior.

Crisis Management Steps—Crone (1984) suggests the following steps in crisis intervention:

1. Remove all bystanders from the room
2. Have two staff members present; one to intervene the other as observer
3. Stand in a relaxed position beyond the youth's reach or blows
4. Keep the individual talking since this reduces the likelihood of violence
5. Stay relaxed and reassure youth that they will not be hurt.

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ADDENDUM 5—STAGES OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT—QUICK REFERENCE CHARTS

Adolescence is the stage of development that occurs between childhood and adulthood when significant physical, intellectual and emotional transformations take place in the individual. These years can be a period of stress and crisis for some teens, though most individuals adjust and adapt well to their families' and society's changing demands and expectations.

There are three stages of adolescence: EARLY > ages 10-14

MIDDLE > ages 15-17

LATE > ages 18-22

Every individual matures at a different speed and time. It is useful to understand the consequences of early or delayed maturation as it affects girls and boys in unique ways. Table 1 describes the advantages and disadvantages associated with early or delayed maturation.

TABLE 1: DELAYED MATURATION

Physical Effects	Advantages	Disadvantages
Early maturing boys	More muscular early-on, more self-confidence, chosen as leaders	More submissive, more somber, less creative and spontaneous, less flexible, less open
Late maturing boys	Delayed development may protect them from pressures to become socially and sexually active; more opportunity to develop own identity	Resemble children physically, tend to be judged & viewed unfavorably as impulsive, immature and socially inferior; Self conscious about delayed physical development
Early maturing girls	Better sense of social attractiveness; vulnerable to ending up in awkward situations, for which they are not emotionally prepared to deal	Feel less attractive, more preoccupied with physical appearance, more awkward in social situations, experience less support from peers, have poorer self-concept; higher truancy, academic problems and substance abuse
Late maturing girls	Social advantages, more attractive, and better leaders	Must wait to catch up with their cohorts

Adapted from *Lifespan Development*, Seifert, K; Hoffnung, R & Hoffnung, M.

During adolescence, teens experience many changes in the physical, emotional and intellectual realm. Their bodies change and begin to assume an adult size and shape. With hormonal changes, not only is their body transformed, but their thinking evolves through a roller coaster of feelings, which may be difficult to control. When trying to communicate with teens, remember that their cognitive development is honing formal, abstract thought, critical thinking skills, social cognition and moral judgment. Table 2 illustrates the changes occurring during the teen years in three realms: physical, emotional and intellectual.

TABLE 2: CHANGES DURING ADOLESCENCE	
Realm	**Impact/Transformation**
Physical	Sex hormones—Changes in body build
Emotional	Preoccupation & dissatisfaction with looks
Intellectual/Cognitive	Acquire formal, then concrete operational thought

CHANGES OCCURRING IN ADOLESCENT THINKING

Elements of Formal or Abstract Thinking

- Possibility vs. Reality—Abstract Thought
- Scientific Reasoning—Critical Thought
- Logical Combination of Ideas

Elements of Critical Thinking

- Basic operations of reasoning
- Domain-specific knowledge
- Meta-cognitive knowledge
- Values, beliefs, and dispositions

**Elements of Social Cognition
(Knowledge & beliefs about interpersonal and social matters)**

- Self-centeredness/egocentrism
- Preoccupation with reaction of others (imaginary audience)
- Personal fable (their life embodies a story that is heroic & unique)

Stages of Advanced Moral Judgement

- Interpersonal orientation: concern for opinion of peers, right based on peer validation
- Social system orientation: The use of principles to evaluate rather than rewards for gratification

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ADDENDUM 6—MTC INSTITUTE SURVEY RESULTS

The MTC Institute surveyed high performing RAs to determine their opinion about the factors that contribute to job satisfaction for workers in group life as well as suggested strategies for bolstering the paraprofessional aspect of work in the dormitory. The results of the survey follow, with the percentage of respondents with that answer appearing in parenthesis.

Factors that contribute to job satisfaction working in a dorm:

1. Validation for performance (100%)—recognition and being respected by other staff on the center, feeling like a part of a team, the materials and resources to do the job, supportive structure to work in, verbal thanks, getting an hour/day off occasionally.

2. Pride regarding own performance and student accomplishments—seeing students graduate successfully and completing their own work (80%), flexibility to implement their ideas/solutions and bounce ideas off each other (30%).

3. Miscellaneous: professional development encouraged, receiving appropriate training, working closely with others on the center (50%), and consistent full staffing.

Strategies for making the job of the RA a more satisfying professional experience:

Providing technical assistance (30), more relevant training (40%), drug and alcohol training (20%), fun activities (10%), ropes course (10%), gaining respect from other center staff (10%), incentives like RA of the month (60%), appropriate staff development education (40%), paid tuition up-front (10%), showing appreciation for their work (10%).

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