

Union College
Brief Motivational Interventions

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In a Utopian Community...

What campuses do to unintentionally create barriers to achieving that community:

- Reactive and often oversimplified programming.
- Measures of success are too quantitative.
- Telling students what to think versus teaching them how to think.
 - Reactive Programming
 - Programs that actually model the bad behavior

How these barriers collide with the modern generation of college students:

- Students are entering colleges and universities expecting frequent 1-on-1 interactions with faculty and staff members. Furthermore, they are expecting these interactions to be POSITIVE.
- This generation is less likely to take advantage of an “open door policy.”
- This generation’s college student arrives on campus with a very unique skill set.
 - Service and teamwork oriented
 - Want challenge and want to be problem solvers

Theory to Practice in the Residence Halls at UNLV: The Reflective Engagement Model

- With a focus on making meaning of every experience and interaction, the Reflective Engagement Model is designed to treat RA interactions with residents as if they were interactions between RDs and RAs.
- RDs have 1-to-1 meetings with each RA that are individualized based on the skills and limitations of each RA. RDs then implement strategic learning activities and programs for the RAs based on the needs of the group. This model would do away with the standard programming model and replace it with 1-to-1 interactions with residents.

Why we thought the 1-to-1 model would work at Union

- Student leaders had been asking for this
 - Orientation Leaders were requesting one on one time with their incoming students
 - RAs had requested ways to increase their influence as mentors in the position
 - RAs (largely because of the design of the campus) had trouble avoiding the stigma of the “party police”
 - Unique residence halls for first year students provide limited programming space, and/or make optimal programming difficult

Anticipated Challenges

- Letting go of programming
 - RA connections with clubs and organizations
 - Crucial faculty-staff relationships were products of programming
 - Most RAs like the programming component of their position
- Documentation
 - Confidentiality – where is the line?
 - Consistency – Discussions? Reports?
 - How comfortable will the students be?

How it started

- Six BMIs per year for a target of 90% of the floor for first year communities (two-per academic term, roughly 1 per month)
- Utilize a common reporting form
- Changed programming requirements from 4 per term, to 2 per term (this did not include additional sub-committee programming or all-area programs)

What is a BMI?

- Semi-directive counseling intervention style used for eliciting behavioral change
- Goal-oriented method of communication
- Non-judgmental, non-confrontational, non-adversarial
- Helps to enhance intrinsic motivation
- Empathically explores ambivalence
- Focuses on self-efficacy

Why are we using this new approach to programming?

- Build rapport with your residents
- Assist them in reaching their goals; personally, academically and socially
- Become better engaged with your residents
- Personalized attention and feedback specific to individual needs
- Develop personal interests
- Personal connections help to build community
- Take the focus off the RA being an authority and rule pusher
- Allows you to be more of a mentor, friend and source of support

Stages of Change

- Precontemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action
- Maintenance

Readiness for change

- One of the most important things to consider is to meet your resident where they are and to not impose your personal values or interests on them
- Consider where your resident is presently and how you can assist them

The helper's role is to assist in making and maintaining individual change

- Support
- Encourage
- Assist in making connections
- Refer to other sources of support as needed

How do we do this?

- Active Listening
- Open Ended Questions
- Reflective Listening
- Using Scales to Elicit Solutions
- Supporting Change

How to use these with our residents?

- Modeling exercise
- Practice with a partner and share with the larger group
- Feedback and critiques

Key points to remember

- Just be yourself – you were chosen for your position for a reason. You already have the skills needed to do this, now you just need a little practice with the BMI method!
- RDs are available and trained to be the support system for our RAs implementing this method
- There are no time quotas to reach

Final training thoughts

- Sample questions are provided as suggestions. Once RAs get to know their residents, they may ask very different questions than what we have suggested here
- No two interactions will be the same; every student will have different goals and interests
- Nothing should be scripted. Being genuine and in the moment in your interactions will help you build relationships and community

How we assessed it

- Focus group with RAs in first year communities about ways in which BMIs could be enhanced (Do the RAs “buy in?”)
- EBI and Union “Quality of Life” survey results to establish whether or not there were increases in residential satisfaction (Do the residents “buy in?”)
- Anecdotally, did policy violations change either in volume or in nature?
- Referrals for follow up care and support are happening more frequently and with greater consistency
- In what ways did resident behaviors change?

Measurable outcomes

- 85% overall resident satisfaction in first-year building
 - 80% national average
- 27% increase in number of first-year students who self reported attending residential programming
- 15% increase in resident satisfaction with student staff over the last two years
- 59% decrease in physical vandalism damages over the past two years in first-year communities
 - From \$38,795.41 to \$15,853.27

Where we are now

- Six BMIs per year for a target of 100% of the floor for all communities (report 51% of your meaningful interactions)
- Target first year and upper class BMIs differently, depending on both time of year and student needs.
- Completely new programming model: Designed Programming, Supported Programming, Committee Programming, 1-on-1 Interactions.

Considerations moving forward

- Changes to both RA selection and RA training (EMBRACE THE INTROVERTS!!!!!!)
- Differences in the RA candidate pool
- Increased accountability
- “What’s your why?”