University Housing – University of South Carolina Lesson Plan

Strategy 3: Learning Community Initiatives – Values and Beliefs/House Rules Community Gathering

Facilitator(s): Resident Mentors

Date (When Lesson Takes Place): November – Week 1

Target Audience(s): Floor communities

Community Involved: All

Rationale/Purpose:
The purpose of this Community Gathering is to create community on the floor and to facilitate a conversation on the values and beliefs that the floor holds. RMs should encourage residents to get to know each other, to respect each other and the building, to maintain an open-door atmosphere, to participate in community events and initiatives, and to reinforce the slogan of “I’m home at Carolina.”

University Housing Learning Outcomes:
Awareness of Self Goal 2 – Evaluate similarities and differences of current values and beliefs from pre-college life.

- Tier 2 - Recognize the existence of values and beliefs that are different from their own
- Tier 3 - Develop personally constructed values and beliefs

Materials/Preparation:
- Materials for social activity afterwards
- List of upcoming events/initiatives
- Materials needed to create advertising
- Index cards and pens for the “Muddiest Point” exercise
- Card Swipe Machine
- October bulletin board
- Copies of “things to think about” sheet
- Materials for “House Rules” visual

Facilitator Guide:
1. Before the Community Gathering:
   a. Gather the materials listed above. Crafting resources can be accessed via the University Housing Resource Room located on the Garden Level of Patterson Hall.
   b. Touch base with your supervisor to:
      i. Gather important updates that need to be shared.
      ii. Discuss any purchases or funds that will be used for the community gathering.
      iii. If applicable: Discuss with your co-RM(s) how the community gathering will be executed (individually or jointly).
   c. Create a list of upcoming events/initiatives to share with the floor.
   d. Develop an innovative and engaging advertisement to publicize your community gathering. This can be anything from digital media, fliers, door clings/hangers, post-it notes, etc.
   e. Distribute the House Rules guide (“things to think about” sheet) that is provided by your supervisor. The RM’s role is to challenge residents to reflect on what they value in their community. This will assist residents in creating effective and appropriate “House Rules” that help to minimize floor conflict and vandalism.
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2. During the Community Gathering:
   a. Part 1: Introduce what is going to happen and provide an agenda. You might want to say something like, “at the end, we will have our own house rules to see how we want our community to look and respond to one another.”
      i. In upper-class communities we encourage RMs to utilize returning residents to help in this process. They can help by taking notes while members are talking, co-facilitating, etc., and by also providing real life examples.
   b. Part 2: Utilize materials from the October bulletin board to discuss values/beliefs of residents on the floor
      i. Ask residents what they thought of the values and beliefs bulletin board and lead them in a discussion of values/beliefs.
         1. Example Questions: Why did you place “insert value” as an important value? Did anyone notice their value had been moved to another location? Where do your values/beliefs stem from? Was this informed by family, friends, social media, cultural view, etc.? Is it okay that people on this floor have different values and beliefs? What are the benefits/takeaways?
         2. Attempt to get to the point that values and beliefs come from different upbringings and experiences. Values and beliefs can be explored and shared as a group to identify their own beliefs while learning those of others.
      ii. Discuss how values and beliefs play into the “House Rules” concept.
         1. Example Questions: With what you know about “House Rules,” what roles do values and beliefs play in determining those rules? Do our values and beliefs guide how we view the world? Will that impact the way each of us views the House Rules process? If so, how? How can we make this process good for each one of us knowing that we all hold different values?
   c. Part 3: Explanation of the “House Rules” Process (Protect this house!)
      i. What are “House Rules?”
         1. Expectations created by community members
         2. Established through consensus
         3. Does not replace USC Housing policies, but serves as an addendum
         4. Should be revised and changed based on community needs throughout the year
      ii. Explain how they should differ from USC policies
         1. Community based and not just enforced by the RM, but also by fellow residents
         2. Pass out “things to think about” sheet
         3. Facilitate discussion about the process
      iii. Discuss major areas of “House Rules”
         1. Inclusive Communities
         2. Floor Lounge and Bathroom Cleanliness
         3. Quite Hours and Noise
         4. Damages
         5. Community Security Issues
         6. Student Engagement and Empowerment
   a. Part 4: Hall Updates
      i. Provide residents with any important updates that are/will be occurring in the hall.
         1. Upcoming events and building initiatives:
            a. Community-wide, LLC specific, CET, Hall Government, etc.
         2. Date and time range of next community gathering.
         3. Important building updates from your supervisor.
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d. **Part 6: Muddiest Point Exercise**
   i. Hand out one index card to each resident.
   ii. Explain the purpose of each side of the card:
       1. *Side 1*: What is your muddiest point from today’s community gathering? This is the side where residents can ask for a clarification or a question that was sparked from the community gathering.
       2. *Side 2*: What was your biggest take-away from today’s community gathering?
   iii. Collect the index cards and create a word document with the questions and take-aways for your supervisor. Answers to questions can be emailed out to residents after the meeting.

e. **Part 5: Social Activity**
   i. This is a chance for you to use your RM community development funds. A list of appropriate activities is listed below, but it is not comprehensive. If you want to something that isn’t on this list, it must be pre-approved by your supervisor.
      1. Baking cookies/cupcakes/brownies for your residents and allowing them to mingle on the floor.
      2. Floor Dinner.
         a. *Example*: Ordering pizza/other foods for a meal.
   3. Take your students to Yoghut, Russell House, etc. as a floor outing.

3. **After the Community Gathering:**
   a. Discuss with residents periodically throughout the semester to see how they are feeling about the “House Rules” through A-Chats, informal conversations, etc.
   b. Create an innovative and engaging visual (i.e. a large poster, bulletin board, etc.) that presents your “House Rules” and can be displayed on the floor. Materials can be gathered from the Resource Room and the “House Rules” visual can be laminated.
   c. Process the “Muddiest Point” index cards by synthesizing common themes and answering questions that are still lingering on the floor. Send any major themes to your supervisor via email.
   d. Submit an Interaction Form.

**Assessment:**
1. “Muddiest Point” assessment exercise.
2. Interaction Form.