Peer Counseling Training and Resident Assistant Job Performance

Jennifer Duvernay
Carroll College, Helena, MT

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholars.carroll.edu/psychology_theses
Part of the Counseling Commons, and the Higher Education Commons

Recommended Citation

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Psychology at Carroll Scholars. It has been accepted for inclusion in Psychology Undergraduate Theses by an authorized administrator of Carroll Scholars. For more information, please contact tkratz@carroll.edu.
Peer Counseling Training and
Resident Assistant Job Performance

Jennifer M. Duvernay
Department of Psychology
Carroll College

Running Head: RESIDENT ASSISTANT
This thesis has been approved for graduation with honors from the Department of Psychology of Carroll College by:

Thomas W. Hamilton, Director
Associate Professor, Psychology

J. Bailey Molineux, Ph.D., Reader
Associate Professor, Psychology

Rev. J. Eugene Peoples, Ph.D., Reader
Professor of Theology

April 4, 1991
Date
I would like to extend my thanks to the Department of Student Affairs for their support throughout the various stages of this project. I would especially like to express my appreciation to Fr. Dan Shea, Vice President for Student Affairs, for his interest and input. Thanks goes to Patty White as well who overcame her over-booked schedule and understaffed department to assist me in the training. I am also grateful to the resident assistants who participated in the training. Their patience and enthusiasm made this project possible.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my parents, Tony and Vicki Duvernay, for their never-ending support throughout my four years at Carroll. Thanks for paying the phone bills for all those calls home!

I also truly appreciate the presence of my honors thesis comrade, Liz Cooley. Attempting something this huge has been overwhelming at times and her company throughout the process (especially the late night computer lab sessions) has helped to make my task accomplishable.

Thank you to my readers, Fr. Gene Peoples and Dr. Bailey Molineux for their interest, support and encouragement throughout the duration of this project.

I would especially like to recognize my director, Tom Hamilton, for his aid in this project. Without his patience, sense of humor and persistence ("Hard copy, Hard copy!") I would not have completed my objective, nor would I have been able to laugh at myself as I fumbled through the process.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................. v  
Introduction ............................................................. 1  
Method ................................................................. 9  
Discussion ............................................................... 13  
References .............................................................. 17  
Appendixes .............................................................. 19
Abstract

This study was designed to evaluate the effects of peer counseling skills training on resident assistant job performance. Training in peer counseling skills was given to six of seventeen resident assistants working in the residence halls of Carroll College in the academic year 1990-1991. The communication skills taught in this training included attending, empathizing, questioning, summarizing, genuineness, assertiveness and confrontation. At the end of the semester, a job performance evaluation form was distributed to the students occupying the residence halls on campus. Comparisons of student evaluations for resident assistants who had been trained and resident assistants who had not been trained indicated no significant differences. These results were discussed in relation to procedural imperfections, scope of training and the possible occurrence psychological reactance. Future research in determining the interaction of personality types and successful job performance for resident assistants was suggested.
Peer Counseling Training and
Resident Assistant Job Performance

College students generally lead tumultuous lives. For many students their first experience away from home combined with the tasks of forming new friendships and establishing new peer groups, working under intense academic pressures and adjusting to new living situations makes their lives chaotic. For those students who live in residence halls on college campuses this experience is tempered by the presence of a resident assistant who shares a living environment with them. The resident assistant tends to have an amalgamation of roles: part parent, part older sibling, part friend, part antagonist. He or she is a person who facilitates the student's transition from the home environment to the independent living.

Resident assistants serve as liaisons between the student and the college professional staff. As such they typically are required to carry out a wide variety of duties and responsibilities. While specific job requirements vary from institution to institution, Upcraft (1982) identified six basic duties that most resident assistants must perform. The first is to provide personal help and assistance to the residents. Secondly, the resident assistant is expected to manage and facilitate groups. The third duty is to facilitate social, recreational and educational programs. Informing students or referring them to appropriate information sources is the fourth responsibility of resident assistants. The fifth duty is to explain and enforce rules and regulations in the residence halls. Maintaining a safe, orderly and relatively quiet environment is the last general...
responsibility of a resident assistant. These duties are so encompassing that resident assistants are on the job twenty-four hours a day available to respond to the needs of their students.

A special role the resident assistant often plays is that of a "paraprofessional" counselor. Paraprofessionals are trained individuals who are given responsibility for performing tasks generally reserved for professionals. While they are not qualified as professionals in their chosen field of work, they do contribute to the central workings of the agency (D'Andrea, 1987). In their unique position as staff members living among the students, resident assistants are often confronted with situations and issues similar to those addressed by professional counselors. For example Schuh, Shipton & Edman (1986) identified and categorized counseling issues encountered by resident assistants at a major university over a 12 year time span. They separated counseling problems by placing them into the following categories: remedial, preventive, and developmental. Roommate conflicts, lifestyle concerns, physical confrontation between students, sexual harassment, and sexual assault comprised many of the problems encountered in the remedial category. Preventive issues addressed included racial problem situations, birth control concerns, abortion concerns, and academic problems. The developmental concerns included dating problems, student government officer problems and concerns, sexual problems of both heterosexual and homosexual natures, and alcohol and drug abuse. These wide-ranging issues challenge the resident assistants to address them effectively and efficiently.

Resident assistants are not expected to provide long term counseling services to students experiencing serious problems, but rather their role is to
provide services on a short-term remedial basis. An example of such type of service would be crisis intervention and referral to on-campus agencies. Resident assistants also serve as prevention agents, by limit-setting and conflict mediation. (Schuh et al., 1986). In this way the resident assistant augments the services provided by professionals.

Because of the diverse demands placed on the resident assistant, from administrative duties to counseling students to referring students to other agencies, a need has been established for adequate training for these individuals (Winston & Buckner, 1984). There has yet to be developed a widely accepted model for effectively training resident assistants. Individual institutions do it their own way: some concentrate on referrals, others stress how to complete the administrative tasks, while others emphasize communication skills to aid in the paraprofessional counselor role. Some trainings may try to address all the areas of the job. Individual needs make effective training difficult: some prospective resident assistants may have a complete grasp on the administrative aspects of the position, but may have no idea how to handle a crisis situation. That individual would need a different approach to training than one who has experience in crisis counseling, but never had to deal with an administrative position. To try to find a medium ground is very difficult indeed (Upcraft, 1982).

The variety of roles the resident assistant fulfills, including that of peer counselor sometimes combine to exert a great deal of stress on the individual resident assistant. A number of factors have been isolated in contributing to resident assistant stress and burnout. Female resident assistants, as well as those resident assistants working in freshmen halls, report higher levels of
stress and burnout. (Hetherington, Oliver, & Phelps, 1989; Fuehrer & McGonagle, 1988). While some individual factors, such as gender, may not be able to be addressed, solutions to the problem of stress and burnout have been suggested. One such suggestion is the implementation of peer counseling skills training in the training programs for resident assistants.

Winston & Buckner (1984) performed a study to determine the effects of systematic peer helper training on the reported stress of resident assistants. They hypothesized that by training resident assistants effectively, their resources for meeting job demands would increase and their reported stress would decrease. The subjects, 82 undergraduate resident assistants of a large university, were divided into three groups: one receiving concurrent training, one receiving training prior to being on the job, and one receiving no training. The results indicated that the resident assistants who received training prior to beginning their jobs reported less stress than those trained while already working on the job or those who had not received training. Thus this type of training may be instrumental in improving the quality of life of resident assistants.

Because of the current prevalence of peer counseling training for resident assistants it is necessary to come to an understanding of the concept and goals of peer counseling as well as the diverse applications of it outside of the residence hall setting. Peer counseling may be defined as follows:

Peer counseling is the use of active listening and problem-solving skills, along with knowledge about human growth and mental health, to counsel people who are our peers -- peers in age, status, and knowledge. Peer counseling . . . is both a method and philosophy.
The basic premise behind it is that people are capable of solving most of their own problems of daily living if given the chance. The role of the counselor in peer counseling is not to solve people's problems for them but rather to assist them in finding their own solutions. (D'Andrea & Salovey, 1983, p. 3).

Peer counseling has focused on a variety of roles since its inception in the 1960's. Some established peer counseling programs have been set up to serve as crisis intervention programs (e.g. drug problems). Other programs function as simply information referral sources. In addition peer counseling services exist to develop interpersonal and social skills as well as to improve academic and decision making skills. These programs also provide volunteers with opportunities to develop friendships among their peers (Scott & Warner, 1974).

Peer counseling programs have been enacted in such diverse settings as corporations, rehabilitation centers, churches, and other community agencies as well as schools (Evans & Livneh, 1982; Tindall, 1985). In addition, these programs have been developed in all levels of schools, from elementary to collegiate. But, as D'Andrea (1987) puts it, "it is within the context of the educational community that peer counseling comes into its own. The educational mission of a college or university is expressed in the work of peer counselors at all levels in residential counseling, personal counseling, and academic advising, residential advising, career planning, etc." (p. 45).

Peer programs in post-secondary educational institutions are not limited to the United States. A study conducted by Lawson (1989) concentrated on evaluating the peer helping programs in the colleges and universities of
Quebec and Ontario, Canada. While it is noted that the most common form of peer program in Ontario is peer tutoring, other areas of peer helping, including peer counseling, have been implemented in these institutions. These peer helpers in Canada were involved in an assortment of roles and responsibilities including academic advising and tutoring, assertiveness training, and crisis intervention. Other functions mentioned were health promotion, personal counseling, working in residence halls, facilitating self-help groups as well as telephone counseling.

A survey was conducted by Salovey and D'Andrea (1984) of 200 colleges and universities in the United States. Of the 156 respondents, 122 institutions indicated they had peer counseling programs in existence on their campuses. The most common form of peer counselor role indicated in this survey was residence hall counseling and/or advising with 79% of the questionnaires Other common roles included academic tutoring, academic problem solving, services for minority students and services for women. The same survey identified typical problems brought to these peer counselors as academic difficulties, friendship relationships, romantic relationships, career/future anxieties and depression. The average campus sees approximately 25% of its student body making use of the peer counselor during an academic year (Salovey & D'Andrea, 1984).

Training for peer counselors was reported differently by both the studies by Lawson (1989) and Salovey & D'Andrea (1984). Lawson reports that the peer programs concentrating on peer counseling training are generally extensive. This training is usually in an intense workshop format followed by weekly meetings. Both didactic and experiential components are involved and
role playing is considered to be essential. Training manuals are used by most programs and are designed to provide skill training in observing, communication, problem solving and referral.

The American colleges and universities surveyed by Salovey and D'Andrea do not have a general format for training. These trainings ranged from brief workshops to longer classes lasting more than 10 hours. The most common form of training found in order to prepare for service was in-service training sessions (D'Andrea, 1987). The models used by these training programs varied as well. Most, 46%, used no particular model, while 15% used specific counseling training models. In addition, 7% indicated they used an eclectic or mixture of models for their training (Salovey & D'Andrea, 1984).

The present study was conducted at Carroll College, a private liberal arts college located in Helena, Montana. Like other American educational institutions, peer helper programs have been established on campus. These peer programs include the Peer Mentors, an organization of older students to help other older students adjust to the rigors of college life. Another peer program is the Student Ambassadors, a student-run organization designed to assist the admissions department in recruiting new students. Additionally, there are seventeen resident assistants who work in the residence halls on the Carroll College campus.

The job description of resident assistants at Carroll College follows very closely the duties Upcraft listed. The general responsibilities of the resident assistant at Carroll College include providing personal help and assistance to students, managing and facilitating groups, facilitating social, recreational and educational programs, serving as an information and referral source, explaining
and enforcing rules and regulations, maintaining a safe, orderly and relatively quiet environment on the floor and serving as a member of the Student Affairs Staff of the college (see Appendix A for full job description). In addition to these general responsibilities, Carroll resident assistants must also perform a myriad of administrative duties ranging from checking residents in and out of their rooms, to keeping track of maintenance requests, to working at the front desks of the residence halls.

It has been shown that peer helper training can be effective in improving the quality of life for resident assistants. Currently, however, there exists no such type of training for the resident assistants at Carroll College. The existing mode of training (see Appendix B for training schedule) consists of a four day session encompassing all aspects of the resident assistant job: from the job description itself, to rules and regulations, disciplinary procedures, and reports from the different departments on campus for purpose of referrals.

The purpose of this study was to determine if peer counseling skills training would produce a difference in the job performance of resident assistants at Carroll College.
Method

Subjects

The subjects were seventeen resident assistants working at the Carroll College residence halls for the academic year 1990-1991. They were all between the ages of 19-21 years. There were five seniors and twelve juniors in the total group.

Originally the trained group consisted of eight members, four male and four female. Of these eight, one was a senior and seven were juniors. None of the subjects in this group had had previous resident assistant experience. All of these subjects volunteered to take part in the training.

There were nine members in the non-trained group, four male and five female. Four of the members of this group were seniors while the other five were juniors. Two subjects in the non-trained group had had at least one semester of previous resident assistant experience, unlike the trained group. These subjects elected not to participate in the training program.

Two subjects did not complete the training, one due to scheduling conflicts, the other resigned from her position as resident assistant. The final groups, then, consisted of six in the trained group and eleven in the non-trained group.

Procedure

The researcher attended the resident assistant orientation in August 1990. During this session the researcher explained the nature of the project, the concept of peer counseling skills training, what the training entailed and
how it could possibly assist them in their position was presented. The resident assistants were informed that an evaluation of this program would be conducted at the end of the first semester, the results of which might influence whether or not training of this nature would be offered in the future. After this presentation, the resident assistants were asked to sign up for either the trained group or the non-trained group. The training would then begin two weeks after the conclusion of resident assistant training.

The training consisted of six 1 1/2 hour sessions, spaced over three weeks during the Fall 1990 semester. These sessions were conducted by a counselor from the Student Development Center of Carroll College, who was assisted by a senior psychology student. The training manual used was *Peer Power: Becoming an Effective Peer Helper* by Judith A. Tindall, Ph.D (1985).

Each training session followed the same basic format, as outlined in the training manual. The sessions each involved didactic, role modeling and experiential components. Each new skill was introduced and explained, usually accompanied with handouts from the manual. The trainers then demonstrated the skill through role modelling. Each skill modelled was performed both correctly and incorrectly and was followed by a discussion among the trainees on what they observed. After the discussion, the trainees separated into pairs to practice the new skill in real-life situations. Further discussion and feedback from trainers followed these exercises. The sessions ended with homework assignments aimed at getting the trainees to implement each new skill into their everyday life. These homework assignments were discussed at the beginning of the following training session.
each new skill into their everyday life. These homework assignments were discussed at the beginning of the following training session.

Specific skills addressed in each session, as designated by Tindall (1985) are as follows (please see Appendix C for complete definitions and lesson plans for instructions):

- **Session 1:** Attending
- **Session 2:** Communication Stoppers
- **Session 3:** Empathizing
- **Session 4:** Summarizing and Questioning
- **Session 5:** Genuineness
- **Session 6:** Assertiveness and Confrontation

Each skill was practiced with the aid of specific exercises taken from the text of the training manual.

A follow-up meeting was held three weeks after the completion of the six training sessions. The purpose of this follow-up meeting was to allow the trainees to discuss any difficulties they had in implementing their new skills as well as to evaluate the training they had received. Each trainee filled out a training evaluation form (see Appendix D) and returned it anonymously to the trainers.

The week prior to the end of the fall semester, approximately two and a half months following the completion of the training, an evaluation form was distributed to the residents of each residence hall. These forms were folded and placed in an unsealed envelope, with a note from the experimenter thanking the residents for their cooperation and given to the residents by their resident assistants.

The Resident Assistant job description found in the Resident Assistant Handbook formed the basis for the evaluation form (see Appendix E). The
questions on the instrument were derived from the seven areas of responsibility of the resident assistant mentioned in the "Philosophy" section of the Resident Assistant Job Description of Carroll College (refer to Appendix A) and focused on overall job effectiveness. The residents were asked to fill out the form, seal it in the enclosed envelope and return it to the boxes placed at the front desks of each residence hall. The evaluations were then collected from the boxes at the end of the semester.

The evaluations were then totalled by adding up the number circled for each question, after reversing the score question 5 which had been worded negatively. The total score possible was 55.

Results

The mean score on the residents' evaluation for the trained group was 39.61 and the mean for the non-trained group's evaluation was 40.90. A t-test was conducted on the two groups' means to determine if the difference between them was significant. The results of the analysis indicated that there was not a significant difference between the two groups: \( t(185) = -0.813, p < 0.2136 \).
Discussion

Even though the results of this experiment were statistically insignificant and did not support the hypothesis that this training would result in more positive evaluations of performance in the group of trained resident assistants, negating the value of this type of training would be too hasty. A better controlled experiment, using more refined training techniques, could possibly lead to more accurate results. The following procedural errors may need to be rectified in future efforts.

First, the method in which the subjects were placed in the experimental and control groups could be suspect. Random placement was not an option due to the time constraints the training would place on the individual. Consequently, the resident assistants volunteered as to which group they wanted to be assigned. The people volunteering for the project could have been at a different skill level to begin with than the control subjects. It is possible that the subjects who volunteered for the training felt less confident and had less experience with the communication skills involved, thus starting out at a disadvantage. None of the subjects in the training group had had any prior resident assistant experience while two subjects in the control group had. The training, then, may have served to bring these inexperienced resident assistants to the same level of ability as the control group.

Another factor that may have influenced the results is the timing of the training. Due to circumstance, the training had to be conducted in the Fall, after the semester had started and the resident assistants had already begun their
job. Yet research has found that this type of training is most effective when conducted prior to the resident assistant assuming his/her duties (Winston & Buckner, 1984). The fact that no significant difference was observed as a function of this training is supportive of this previous research. A more effective training program could perhaps be worked out the semester before the new resident assistant assumes his or her duties in the fall.

Furthermore, this training was the first of its kind to be attempted by the trainers. Consequently, it is possible that the training was not conducted in the most effective and efficient manner. Some fine tuning of the training procedure would need to be done in order to be certain it is done systematically and effectively. More precisely, some of the feedback mentioned by the trainees on their evaluation forms indicated a need to better aid the implementation of the skills learned in the training sessions to real life situations. Obviously, if trainees are finding it difficult to transfer the new skills to their lives, then it would be difficult to establish a difference in job performance based on skills training.

All of the trainees believed that they benefitted from the program as reflected by their evaluation of the training. Most of them felt that the skills were useful to them in their lives, both professionally and personally and would recommend this type of training program to future resident assistants. Consequently, it may be advantageous to offer the skills training to resident assistants if it results in a more positive attitude about the job and about themselves. Future research could explore these effects of training on resident assistants to further evaluate its possible benefits.
The procedural imperfections of the experiment aside, it is likely that training in this specific area alone, while conceivably personally useful for the individuals, may be an inappropriate allocation of time and energy for resident assistants. Since the position of Resident Assistant is so all encompassing, perhaps to target only one area for intensive training is not enough. A suggestion to achieve integration of training in all areas of the job description this would be to offer a course designed for training of future resident assistants the semester before they are to begin their duties. This class could address a variety of areas needed to be mastered in order to be an effective resident assistant: including counseling skills, referrals, group facilitation skills, stress management, and administration.

Another factor in the failure of finding a difference in evaluations could have to do with the personal motivation of the resident assistants who volunteered. It was previously mentioned that they might have felt insecure about taking on the job and felt that additional training could assist them. These individuals may also have been motivated by a desire to appear likeable to their students. If this is the case the principle of psychological reactance could have come into play. Reactance refers to "the unpleasant, negative reactions we experience whenever we feel that someone is trying to limit our personal freedom" (Baron & Byrne, 1987, p.128). Perhaps by trying too hard to be liked, these individuals achieved an effect counter to the one hoped for (i.e. their residents may have perceived them as being too involved and reacted by pulling away). In this case the training would then be a non-factor as attitude, reflected in evaluations, could take precedence over actual performance.
Moreover, it seems that some personality types may excel at this job better than others. Someone who normally experiences a lot of stress and tends to be a perfectionist would have a difficult time effectively meeting the expectations of this type of position without experiencing distress. If someone is in this position whose personality is at odds with the demands of the job, it is unlikely that any amount of training will rectify the situation. As a resident aptly commented on his evaluation form, "... it takes a person with more than extra training to deal with people. An effective resident assistant must have charisma and compassion tempered by a sense of fairness." For future research it would be interesting to study the interaction of personality types and successful job performance. This information could be valuable not only for the selection of resident assistant applicants but also for targeting specific goals in peer counselor training programs.
References


Appendix A

Resident Assistant Job Description

PHILOSOPHY

RA’s are paraprofessional staff members. Paraprofessional means that the RA’s assist professional staff members in their duties. The nature of the job requires that the RA will get the job done even though some aspects of the job on a particular day may require more time than another. Professional staff members do not punch a time clock every time they do something job related. Some of the duties are more specified than others. For example, desk duty is more scheduled than is the time spent with individual floor members. The same quality of work goes into the unscheduled times as into the scheduled duties.

The job description can be divided into seven areas of responsibility:

1. **Availability**... Do students perceive their RA to be available during the evening hours? Is the RA available when needed by students?
2. **Approachability**... Do students perceive their Resident Assistant as someone to whom they could go to discuss a social or personal concern? Is the RA effective when called on to respond to a social or personal concern?
3. **Information and Referral Source**... Do students perceive the RA as someone from whom knowledgeable information about Carroll’s facilities or procedures can be obtained? Is the RA familiar with the contents of the student handbook, the college catalog and the RA manual? Does the RA keep up to date information posted on the bulletin boards?
4. **Student Conduct**... Do students perceive the RA as having explained college and residence hall rules and regulations and the discipline system? Does the RA enforce rules and regulations?
5. **Floor Atmosphere**... Do students perceive the RA as having developed a floor atmosphere where people respect each other’s rights and privileges? Does the RA work closely with the floor Senator and floor council or floor government?
6. **Programming**... Do students perceive the RA as promoting the floor’s education or cultural programs and social or athletic activities? Have such activities and programs occurred?
7. **Administration**... Do students and other members of the staff perceive the RA as fulfilling assigned duties and expectations? Is the RA cooperative with the Residence Directors and the Vice President for Student Affairs in carrying out administrative procedures and duties which occur throughout the year such as check in, room checks, room sign up, issuing of keys, etc.?

**JOB DESCRIPTION** - The Resident Assistant aids the Residence Director in promoting and exemplifying the academic, spiritual and social growth of each resident. This growth is based on the premise of respect for self and others within the Christian tradition. While the RA is responsible for a designated floor in a residence hall, the RA has authority and responsibility as a member of the Student Affairs Staff to enforce policies and practices of Carroll College throughout the college campus.

I. **General Responsibilities**:
   A. Provide personal help and assistance to students.
   B. Manage and facilitate groups.
   C. Facilitate social, recreational and educational programs.
   D. Serve as an Information and referral source.
   E. Explain and enforce rules and regulations.
   F. Maintain a safe, orderly and relatively quiet environment on the floor and in the residence hall.
   G. Serve as a member of the Student Affairs Staff of the college.

II. **Objectives and Duties**:
   A. To strive to grow into and live up to the ideals of the Carroll College Mission Statement, the Expectations of Student Life, and the RA job philosophy.
B. To be familiar with and carry out the policies and procedures of the residence halls, dining room and college as a whole as expressed in the student handbook, RA manual and directives from the Vice President for Student Affairs and the RD.

C. To promote interaction among floor members in order to create a conducive atmosphere for personal, academic, spiritual and social growth.
   1. To meet personally each resident on your floor by the end of the first month.
   2. Each RA must provide at least two social activities per floor and two educational forums per semester. One educational forum must deal with addictive behavior and one with sexuality.
   3. Create an atmosphere that is conducive to sleeping, studying and social interaction.
   4. Cooperate in the election of a floor council, by the end of the first month, who will assist the RA in floor management, atmosphere, spirit, etc.
   5. To maintain a standard of discipline which is consistent with the established policies and practices of the college.

D. To attend all scheduled meetings of the Office for Student Affairs staff requested by the VP for Student Affairs.
   1. To attend all inter-residence hall meetings per semester.
   2. To attend spring training meetings.
   3. To attend pre-service RA training at the beginning of the academic year, prior to the opening of the residence halls.
   4. To attend all RA in-house meetings.
   5. To attend all in-service training sessions.

E. To keep the RD informed of all health incidents, breach of policies and practices, as well as any information pertinent to the well-being and growth of the residents. To keep the Health Service informed of all health incidents.
   1. To file a medical report of illness or accident of a floor member by 9:00 am in the RD's office.
   2. To file an incident report with the RD on breach of policy or practice within 24 hours of the incident.
   3. To submit maintenance forms to the RD when necessary.

F. To disseminate any relevant information or items of concern to hall residents on a periodic basis.
   1. To have at least one floor meeting per month throughout the year. A floor meeting means contact with all floor members by the floor RA.
   2. To keep bulletin boards current and attractive at all times.

G. To cooperate with campus organizations in helping to create, promote and support activities that are beneficial to the residents or students.
   1. To cooperate in the election of the ASCC floor senator.
   2. To post and advertise on floor bulletin board upcoming events sponsored by on-campus organizations and/or other floor sponsored campus-wide activities.

H. To establish the suitability of each room for occupancy and to check residents into their individual rooms at the beginning of the year.
   1. Fill out carefully the room inventory forms prior to occupancy by resident: to be validated by signatures of both resident and the RA. Inventory forms to be completed by student registration date and kept on current file by individual RA.
   2. To corroborate information on room assignment form (white card), validate form by signature, and return card to RD office file: keep card updated. (Room withdrawal, changes, etc.)
   3. To issue keys for designated rooms to residents.
   4. Prior to occupancy check room for missing equipment (light bulbs, waste paper basket, mops, etc.) and report these to maintenance as soon as possible before occupancy arrive.

I. To be responsible for proper check-out procedure at any time during fall or spring semester.
   1. To review inventory form validated at check-in and carefully assess any damages, missing equipment, etc.
2. Indicate the amount to be charged for damages on the back of the room assignment for in consultation with the RD.
3. Notify students to return keys to the front desk of St. Charles (for Borromeo and St. Charles) and Guadalupe.
4. RA must return all keys and room assignment forms to the main RD office.

J. To assist in the operation of the residence hall.
   1. By duty at main desk(s) according to the on-duty and on-call schedules.
   2. By being responsible for weekend duty rounds or hall floors at prescribed times and hours.
   3. Being responsible for floors of the RA's who are specifically off-duty on any given weekend.
   4. To be maximally available to floor residents: this assumes that the majority of study time will be spent by the RA in his/her room rather than in the library, classrooms, etc.
   5. RA's are to remain until halls close and room checks have been completed and arrive to be here when halls open at vacation times. Coverage of resident halls during breaks, holidays, and vacations will be arranged with the RD.
   6. Careful and attentive possession of all RA residence hall pass keys - the loss of which will mean a minimum $100.00 fine.

K. To assist the student manager of St. Alberts Community Center.
   1. To assist the student manager with duty hours according to the schedule. St. Alberts duty will include some daily maintenance of the Center facilities.
   2. To keep the manager informed of needed repairs and other situations which may need special attention.

*Inability to fulfill minimum job tasks as enumerated in the objectives of the RA job description will result in probation at the discretion of the RD in conjunction with the VP for Student Affairs.

*Inability to correct probationary infraction will result in termination of the RA at the discretion of the VP for Student Affairs in conjunction with the RD.
### Appendix B

**Carroll College 1990**

**Resident Assistant Orientation Schedule**

#### Sunday, August 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Mass, Guadalupe Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
<td>Mission Statement; Goals and Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RA Job Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On duty/On call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St. Alberts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 Noon</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 PM</td>
<td>History &amp; Impact of Resident Halls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residential Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rules, Discipline &amp; Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judicial Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
<td>Dinner, St. Alberts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Monday, August 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Counselors:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description of Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process of Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alcohol &amp; Sexuality Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 Noon</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 PM</td>
<td>Dr. Baker, Vice President for Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
<td>Financial Aid, Brenda Sebastian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15 PM</td>
<td>Maintenance:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jim Lester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Butch Biskupiak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30 PM</td>
<td>Marriott Food Service:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ersen Ozer, Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christine Kunda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 PM</td>
<td>Student Activities:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ed Noonan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 PM</td>
<td>Hall Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 PM</td>
<td>Get Together at Fr. Shea's House</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Tuesday, August 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Procedures and Forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 Noon</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 PM</td>
<td>Tour of other hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15 PM</td>
<td>Freshman Seminar: Dr. Dorothy Poulsen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2:30 PM  Advising & Scholarship:
Cindy Grieman
2:45 PM  Advising Center:
          Mary Lou Abbott
3:00 PM  International Students:
          Shirley Baker
3:30 PM  Learning Center:
          David Watson
4:00 PM  Pictures:
          Stephanie Skinner

Wednesday, August 22
9:00 AM  Campus Ministry:
          Fr. Leo Proxell
          Patty Opitz
10:00 AM  Health Issues, First Aid and Wellness
          Colleen Harper, RN
          Lynn James, RN
12:00 Noon  Lunch
1:30 PM  CPR training
Appendix C
Lesson Plans

Peer Counseling Training

Session #1:

1. Welcome
2. Administration of Pre-test
3. Discussion of helping behaviors:
   a. Handout #1: "Exploring Helping Behaviors"
   b. Handout #2: "How Do I Help?"
4. Introduction to the skills of Peer Counseling:
   a. Attending
   b. Responding
      Empathizing
      Summarizing
      Questioning
   c. Genuineness
   d. Assertiveness
   e. Confrontation
   f. Problem solving
5. Skill #1: **ATTENDING**
   a. Definition: "Attending behavior relates most directly to the concept of respect, which is demonstrated when a helper gives the helpee undivided attention and which by means of verbal and nonverbal behavior expresses a commitment of focus completely on the helpee. The term connotes an active behavior on the part of the listener and is a prerequisite to effective helping" (Tindall, 1989, p. 10).
   b. Description of components of attending
      1.) posturing
      2.) moving
      3.) holding
      4.) eye contact
      5.) facial expression
   c. Modelling of poor attending skills:
      1.) nonverbal
      2.) discussion of what it looks and feels like
   d. Modelling of correct attending skills --- discussion of difference
   e. Role plays
      1.) break off into groups of three, each will have an
opportunity to be helper, helpee and observer
2.) helper consciously avoids attending to helpee by not looking at helpee, by doing other things while listening, by facing another direction
3.) then try to implement all aspects of correct attending behavior
4.) group discussion
f. Homework: Without consciously doing anything differently, try to observe your own attending behavior with others. Then, at least once, try to implement correct attending skills and see if you can notice a difference. Be prepared to discuss your findings at the next session.
Peer Counseling Training

Session #2:

1. Go over homework assignment from session #1. Discuss difference in attending behaviors.

2. Introduce **Communication Stoppers**
   a. Definition: "Communication stoppers are helper behaviors, which although they appear to be helpful, are really responses that are negative in effect and retard helpful interpersonal relationships" (Tindall, 1985, p. 59).
   b. Identify the eleven mentioned in the book
      1.) Directing, Ordering
      2.) Warning, threatening
      3.) Moralizing, preaching
      4.) Persuading, arguing
      5.) Advising, recommending
      6.) Evaluating, criticizing
      7.) Praising
      8.) Supporting, sympathizing
      9.) Diagnosing
     10.) Diverting, bypassing
     11.) Kidding, teasing
   c. Discuss the possible effects/feelings aroused by each
   d. Ask if anyone can think of any more
   e. Modelling/ Role plays: use variety of communication stoppers in order to personally feel the effect
   f. Discussion
   g. **Homework:** Identify at least three times when you encounter a communication stopper over the weekend. Note how it felt and how you dealt with it. Be prepared to discuss at next session.
Peer Counseling Training

Session #3:

1. Go over homework assignment from session #2. Discuss personal encounters with communication stoppers.
2. Introduce Peer Counseling Skill #2: EMPATHY
   a. Definition: "Empathizing responses must communicate an accurate awareness of the feeling and meaning of the helpees' statements and of the conditions that generated those feelings and statements. Empathic responses do not go beyond the helpees' demonstrated level of understanding . . . the helpers respond with an accurate identification of what the helpees have communicated and do so in such a way that the helpees may easily perceive the helpers' understanding" (Tindall, 1989, p.10).
   b. Handout for Module #6 from Peer Power
   c. Discuss the difference between sympathy and empathy
      1.) Sympathy means having pity or sorrow for the distress of other persons
      2.) Empathy means understanding other individuals so completely that their surface feelings and even their deeper feelings, thoughts and motives are easily comprehended.
      3.) Empathy assists individuals to grow; sympathy causes individuals to feel hopeless and belittled.
   d. Involves Discrimination and Response
      1.) Discrimination is the ability to separate effective and facilitative empathic communication from ineffective and/or destructive responses.
      2.) Response is feeding back accurately the feelings and meanings.
   e. Paraphrasing
      1.) Not simply a "parroting" back of what helpee said
      2.) important because when their own thoughts and feelings are fed back to individuals they sound differently and this difference increases individuals' understanding of the way they feel.
      3.) Activity:
         Read statements and have trainees write down paraphrasing responses; then discuss with group
         Statement #1: "I don't know what to do; sometimes she is nice and sometimes she is mean."
         Statement #2: "I am really having a hard time getting my parents to trust me, and it makes me angry."
Statement #3: "I am so tired of getting up every morning and going to class."

4.) Modelling of high, medium and low paraphrasing
   a. refer to rating scale
   b. get feedback from trainees

3. Role plays
   a. refer to pp. 77-78
   b. Discuss

4. Homework: Try to use the paraphrasing skills at least once before next session and note how it facilitates conversation. Be prepared to discuss.
Peer Counseling Training

Session #4:

1. Review empathy
   a. ask for any questions left over from last time
   b. distribute exercise 6.8 for homework for next session

2. Role plays
   a. focus on integrating the skills learned thus far:
      1.) Attending
      2.) Empathy
      3.) Paraphrase
      4.) Feelings

3. Skill #3: **SUMMARIZING**
   a. Definition: "Summarizing is any helpee behavior that organizes several helpee statement into one concise statement. Initiative responding is listening so as to be able to respond in a manner that sheds new light on and adds new dimensions of awareness to the solution of a problem" (Tindall, 1989, p. 11).
   b. handout
   c. discuss
      1.) what are the benefits for summarizing?
      2.) when should you summarize?

4. Skill #4: **QUESTIONING**
   a. Definition: "Questioning is the process of inquiring so as to prompt a reply. Questioning pertains to a subject under discussion and oftentimes an area of concern to the individuals present. Effective questioning from the helpers prompts the trainees to consider their concerns in greater depth, to identify, to clearly understand a problem and to consider alternatives" (Tindall, 1989, p.11).
   b. handout
   c. discuss difference between open ended and closed questions
      1.) what are the effects of each?
      2.) in what situations would you use each type
      3.) open ended questions help:
         a.) begin a conversation
         b.) elaborate on a point by requesting information
         c.) give examples to help the helpee understand his/her behavior better
         d.) focus on feelings of the helpee

5. Skill #5: **GENUINENESS**
a. distribute packet
b. assign them to look over module #9, for discussion next time

6. Role plays
   a. assign situations
   b. give rating sheet, have trainees in triads and have one be helper, one helpee and one be rater
   c. give each person a chance to perform in each role
   d. situations:
      1.) freshman, homesick, long-distance romance broke up
      2.) sophomore, depressed, flunking out of school
      3.) freshman, depressed, friends like to party too much, feel like they don't fit in.
   e. discussion
Peer Counseling Training

Session #5:

1. See if anyone has any questions left from last sessions or any problems related to implementing new skills.

2. Skill #5: **GENUINENESS**
   a. review handout on Module #9
   b. Definition: "Genuineness is communicating honest feelings in such a way that the relationship between two or more individuals is maintained or enhanced. Helpers must be genuine in all behaviors" (Tindall, 1989, p. 11).
   c. Discuss differences in nonresponsive, nongenuine and genuine responses.
      1.) **Nonresponsive**: person making response is emotionally dishonest or indirect
      2.) **Nongenuine**: response may be emotionally honest but is made at the expense of the other person
      3.) **Genuine**: person responds with emotional honesty and directly expresses own feelings
   d. role modelling of each response
   e. Activity: putting together a genuine message
      1.) sending of "I" message
      2.) include feelings, specific happenings, reasons, effects
      3.) everyone participate - give situations - immediate feedback from trainers and fellow trainees

3. Skill #6: **ASSERTIVENESS**
   a. distribute assertiveness evaluation for homework to be discussed next session.
Peer Counseling Training

Session #6:

1. Check in to see if anyone has any leftover questions or comments regarding last session.

2. Skill #6: **ASSERTIVENESS**
   a. Definition: "Assertiveness involves the ability to express thoughts and feelings in an honest, straightforward fashion that shows respect for the other person" (Tindall, 1989, p. 11).
   b. go over assertiveness questionnaire
   c. discuss nonassertive, assertive and aggressive behavior
      1.) nonassertive:
      2.) assertive
      3.) aggressive
   d. discuss basic assertive rights
      1.) Right to freedom of opinion and expression
      2.) Right to be independent
      3.) Right to change your mind
      4.) Right to say "I don't know"
      5.) Right to say "I don't understand."
      6.) Right to say "I don't care"
      7.) Right to make mistakes
      8.) Right to feel and express anger
      9.) Right to refuse requests without feeling guilty
     10.) Right to offer no excuses to justify your behavior
   e. Role play
      1.) make sure to include all components of assertive behavior: eye contact, body posture, gestures, facial expression, voice tone or inflection, timing and content
      2.) use situations from exercise 10.6
      3.) discussion

2. Introduce Skill #7: **CONFRONTATION**
   a. distribute handout
   b. Definition: "Confrontation is communication that identifies discrepancies in another person's behavior" (Tindall, 1989, p. 11).
   c. talk about roles of genuineness and assertiveness
   d. discuss
   e. brainstorm possible situations where it would be appropriate
      1.) Co-workers
      2.) Supervisors
3.) Floor members
4.) Friends
f. Role play above
Appendix D

Peer Counseling Training Evaluation

In order to determine how well we have conducted this training, and to make plans for possible future trainings, we need your honest input. Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible and feel free to make any additional comments and/or suggestions at the bottom of the page. Thank you.

Rating scale: 1 Disagree Entirely  
2 Somewhat Disagree  
3 Indifferent  
4 Somewhat Agree  
5 Agree Entirely

1. I feel that the peer counseling training I have received has been overall beneficial.  
2. I feel that the skills I have learned have helped me in my job.  
3. The training has been of no use to me whatsoever.  
4. The skills I learned through the peer counseling training have aided me in interacting with my floor members.  
5. I would recommend a similar training series to other RA's, even if it were not required.  
6. I believe that these training sessions were a waste of my time.  
7. The skill I have learned through this training have benefitted my in my personal life.  
8. I would recommend that this training or skill training of this type, be regularly taught to RA's as part of their job preparation.  
9. This training would have been of more benefit had I experienced it prior to starting my job.  
10. I would not suggest this training be included in RA training in the future.  
11. I feel the skills covered in this training series were inadequately taught to me.  
12. Given the same opportunity, I would volunteer to take part in the project again.
13. Please take this opportunity to provide any suggestions for future training series of this nature.

14. Any additional comments are welcomed.
Appendix E

Resident Assistant Evaluation Form

We are now in the process of trying to evaluate the benefits of advanced RA training to residential life. What we need from you, the resident, is to simply fill out the questionnaire below regarding your experience with your particular RA. The RA's will not be individually evaluated, rather, the group of specially trained RA's will be compared to the group of RA's who did not receive training. Your anonymity will be protected and all replies will be kept confidential. Please take a couple of minutes and fill out the questionnaire, place the form back in the envelope and return it to the boxes at the front desks of the residence halls as soon as possible. Thank you for your cooperation, this project could not be completed without it.

A. Demographic Information
1. Sex: Male ____ Female ____
2. Year: Fr. ____ So. ____ Jr. ____ Sr. ____
3. Hall: St. Charles ____ Guadalupe ____ Borromeo ____
4. Floor: _____

B. Please rate the following questions according to this scale:
1 = Disagree Entirely
2 = Somewhat Disagree
3 = Indifferent
4 = Agree Somewhat
5 = Agree Entirely

1. I feel that my RA is readily available. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I feel that my RA is someone I can discuss my personal and academic problems with. 1 2 3 4 5
3. My RA has been effective when I have come to him/her with a personal problem. 1 2 3 4 5
4. My RA is knowledgeable about Carroll's facilities and procedures. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I feel that my RA is not familiar with school, procedures, as presented the student handbook and college catalog. 1 2 3 4 5
6. My RA keeps current information available to the floor through use of bulletin boards and floor meetings. 1 2 3 4 5
7. I feel that my RA has explained college and residence hall rules and regulations and the disciplinary system adequately. 1 2 3 4 5
8. I believe that my RA enforces said rules and regulations fairly and justly. 1 2 3 4 5
9. I feel that my RA has worked to promote a respectful atmosphere on my floor. 1 2 3 4 5
10. My RA has organized and promoted floor educational and cultural activities (through forums and social events). 1 2 3 4 5
11. I feel that my RA has succeeded in fulfilling his/her assigned duties and expectations. 1 2 3 4 5

12. Please use the opposite side of the paper to add any additional comments.