

Facilitation of Community Agreements

Definition:

The community agreement, based on rules and guidelines for appropriate behavior serves two purposes: to set the tone for an inclusive environment where members involve themselves in community decisions that impact their lives, and to provide stability through the use of guidelines that the majority agree are fair and acceptable. This community agreement is developed by the residents through discussions facilitated by the RA.

Philosophy:

A community agreement serves as a proactive way for the members of a community to voice their expectations of each through communication, compromise, and commitment. Through the creation of a community agreement, the concept of holding people accountable shifts from you as the RA to the residents. This agreement empowers and encourages residents to take

responsibility by developing an atmosphere of mutually agreed upon respect. By discussing personal differences, residents will learn from each other continuing to develop an environment of respect and cooperation. In addition, this community agreement will assist you in developing a foundation for your community and a resource to address conflicts that might develop.

Facilitation:

As the RA, you should you should take time and assist your residents in discussing the sections of this agreement. Only through discussion will residents be able to learn about each other and come to an agreement about the items in this document. Throughout the year this agreement will transform and evolve to meet the changes and needs of the community.

As an introduction to this document, the RA should do the following:

- Explain the definition of community;
 - a group of people who accept responsibility for their own actions
 - process concerns, respect each other
 - support each other,
 - abide by university policies during their interactions
- Talk about how living with others in such close quarters can be a new experience for many and something that everyone has to adapt to. By being upfront with each other about expectations, a community can work towards understanding and make a community stronger and living together easier.
- Establish norms for the discussion;
 - Invite everyone to share their ideas
 - One person at a time speaking
 - Comments should be kept positive and productive
- Facilitate a discussion about why community agreements are needed;
 - Develop a foundation for community interactions
 - Help individuals accept responsibility
 - Assists in developing a healthy community in which academic success can occur
- Discuss the non-negotiable points in each section and help the residents understand that there are several rules, policies and procedures that they must abide by while being an IU student including;
 - Residence Hall A-Z Guide
 - Student Code of Conduct
 - RPS Diversity Statement
- Assist the community in processing their thoughts and attempt to reach consensus.
 - The RA's role should be as a facilitator/resource if a community member does not respond positively to a confrontation
 - Feel free to use the italicized scenarios for each section to assist in the facilitation of discussion among the community.
- Record the decisions made by the community and post throughout the community. Revisit this document as agreed upon by community.