

# **CODE OF ETHICAL STANDARDS**

## **For University of Idaho Residence Life Staff**

This Code of Ethical Standards was prepared for the Residence Life staff by a committee of the 2001-2002 staff. Revisions and additions were made in 2009 and 2011.

### **I. PREAMBLE**

1. This Code of Ethical Standards is to be used jointly with the student staff job descriptions in determining appropriate behavior and actions of the Residence Hall staff. The purpose of this Code of Ethical Standards is to further clarify the responsibilities of Residence Hall student staff to the University administration, students living in the residence halls, and ourselves.
2. Residence Life staff members are regarded as paraprofessionals in the counseling- advising field in which we have received training in but not to the extent to qualify us as professionals. To maintain our standing as paraprofessionals, we are obligated to participate in all training and committee experiences throughout our period of employment.
3. As paraprofessionals, we are also obligated to recognize the limits of our training and skills, and refer students to the appropriate professionals (e.g., Counseling Center) when necessary.

### **II. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY**

1. As paraprofessionals, we have a responsibility to the University. Our acceptance of employment by the institution implies that we are in agreement with the general policies and procedures of the University. Therefore, our paraprofessional activities also should be in accordance with the objectives of the institution.
2. If, within our individual work setting, we cannot operate within the University policies and procedures, then we should resign our appointment immediately.

### **III. RESPONSIBILITIES TO RESIDENCE HALL STAFF**

1. Each paraprofessional must, at all times, expect ethical behavior from our paraprofessional associates in the residence halls. If a situation arises where one or more paraprofessionals doubt the ethical behavior of another paraprofessional, we are obligated to openly confront the individual in question.
2. As paraprofessionals, we will consult with a professional Residence Life staff member if we need guidance or support with a peer confrontation.
3. As paraprofessionals, we should avoid seeking self-enhancement through expressing evaluations or damaging comments of other paraprofessionals, who are ethically carrying out the responsibilities of their positions.
4. As paraprofessionals, we are obligated to concern ourselves with residence hall non-

paraprofessionals (e.g., hall officers and committee members) whose behavior adversely affects the atmosphere of the living group.

5. As paraprofessionals, we will respect the relationship that staff team members have with Senior Staff. Due to the added responsibilities the Senior Staff position carries, it is important for Senior Staff to set clear boundaries and expectations for personal relationships and appropriate behavior.
6. Romantic relationships between members of his/her same staff team can be detrimental to many elements of that community. Both perceived and actual conflicts of interest from such relationships can seriously jeopardize a staff member's ability to perform in his/her community. Therefore, the paraprofessional is encouraged not to have a romantic relationship with any member of his/her staff team. Should such a situation arise, the individuals should immediately consult with their supervisor.

#### IV. RESPONSIBILITIES TO STUDENTS LIVING IN THE RESIDENCE HALL SYSTEM

1. As paraprofessionals, we have a responsibility to the residents. Our acceptance of employment implies that we realize that our residents' needs and wants are of primary importance. Without our residents we would not be employed.
2. As paraprofessionals, we shall decline to initiate or terminate a counseling-advising relationship when we cannot be of assistance to a student either because of lack of expertise or personal limitation. In such instances, we shall refer the student to an appropriate specialist. If a student declines to pursue the suggested referral, we are not obligated to continue the counseling-advising relationship.
3. Romantic relationships between a staff member and a member of the community can be detrimental to many elements of that community. Both perceived and actual conflicts of interest from such relationships can seriously jeopardize a staff member's ability to perform in his/her community. In addition, new (particularly first-year) students may be substantially vulnerable to figures in power regarding romantic relationships. Therefore, we are encouraged not to have a romantic relationship with any community member under our direct responsibility. Should such a situation arise, we should immediately consult with our supervisor.

#### V. RESPONSIBILITIES TO OURSELVES AS PARAPROFESSIONALS

1. We have the responsibility to accept our limitations and recognize our strengths.
2. If the responsibilities of employment are affecting our mental and/or physical health, we are obligated to examine whether we should continue working in this position.

#### VI. CONFIDENTIALITY

1. Our primary obligation is to respect the integrity and promote the welfare of the students with whom we work. Any information resulting from the counseling-advising relationship must be kept confidential. However, when we learn conditions in which a student is likely to

harm him/herself, others, or property, we have the responsibility to report the situation to the proper authorities.

2. If assistance is needed, we have the right and responsibility to consult with other Residence Life Staff or professionals in the field regarding counseling-advising situations.
3. We must recognize the responsibilities and risks inherent in electing to have non-Residence Life Staff confidants while employed in our position. In personal interactions, we should be cognizant of residents' rights to confidentiality.

## VII. MODELING

1. When present in the residence hall system, we must recognize that students may use our actions as behavioral models. Residents may regard our behavior and attitudes as representative of the expectations and policies of the University.
2. Paraprofessionals should model appropriate behavior publically, personally, and online. Paraprofessionals should ensure that they model appropriate behavior on social networking websites, personal websites and blogs, or any other online communities.
3. The paraprofessional should model:
  - a. honesty
  - b. confidentiality
  - c. approachability
  - d. a positive attitude
  - e. compliance with University and residence hall policies and state laws
  - f. interest in academic/social aspects of University life.
4. We should not take part in violations of state law or University policy nor give the overt appearance of condoning such violations.
5. Modeling does not imply the promotion of perfect behavior, but rather implies that we will function within, rather than around the parameters outlined in the Code of Ethical Standards.
6. We shall utilize appropriate language and demonstrate acceptance of all people. Residence Hall Staff shall not engage in, nor tolerate, bias language or actions towards any individual or group.

## VIII. USE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS BY RESIDENCE HALL STAFF

1. The following guidelines have been established by Residence Life to clarify expectations for the use of alcohol and other drugs by Residence Hall Staff. Both obvious and subtle violations to the Code of Ethical Standards are outlined. The goal of these guidelines is to assist staff in making responsible choices. Supervisors are available for further clarification and discussion.
  - a. Residence hall staff are expected to:
    - i. Follow state law and University policies regarding the use of alcohol and other drugs. Including the following:

1. Illegal drugs are not allowed in the residence halls.
  2. Persons under the age 21 may not possess or consume alcohol.
  3. Persons age 21 and older may possess and consume alcohol in the privacy of their own rooms with the door closed and without minors present.
  4. Persons age 21 and older may not consume alcohol in the room or home of individuals under the age 21.
  5. Persons living in substance-free halls may not consume or possess alcohol in the hall regardless of age.
- ii. Refrain from organizing, attending, or contributing to any parties with hall residents, on or off campus, at which alcohol or drug use is present, regardless of age.
  - iii. Refrain from being under the influence of alcohol, regardless of age, in any residence hall room; a legal age staff member may consume small quantities ONLY in her/his private room. Staff may not consume alcohol on substance-free halls.
  - iv. Maintain open, honest communication with his/her direct supervisor regarding any contradictions to the above expectations.
- b. Additional Issues to Consider:
- i. Staff members are expected to serve as positive role models for their peers. Residents often view staff as "The RA" on or off campus.
  - ii. Each staff team is encouraged to discuss these expectations at the beginning of the year.
  - iii. Regardless of age, staff members are reminded that use/abuse of alcohol in off-campus settings can cause a negative stigma to be cast over the entire staff team.
  - iv. Staff members are encouraged to take an active role in their own accountability and that of their peers.

#### IX. NOT FULFILLING THE CODE OF ETHICAL STANDARDS

1. Any Residence Life staff member whose behaviors or actions contradict the terms of the Code of Ethical Standards or who has two or more unexcused absences from work-related meetings will be required to meet with Area Supervisors to discuss said behaviors or actions and possible sanctions or termination.

I have read and agree to the expectations specified in the Code of Ethical Standards.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff member signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff member name (please print)