



# Healthy, Engaged, and Successful

Restorative Practices in the Residence Halls



The University of Vermont

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# Welcome



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## Check in

Name

Where are you coming from?

Why did you choose this session?

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## Our Time Together....

- History of Restorative Practices
- Assessment of Restorative Practices
- Impact in the Residence Halls
- Growing Restorative Practices
- Q&A



# **History of Restorative Practices at the University of Vermont (UVM)**



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# History of Restorative Practices @ UVM

In the academic year of 2009 – 2010 Residential Life adopted and implemented Restorative Practices as our **community development philosophy and framework** for **building and facilitating community**.



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## Who is trained in Restorative Practices?

### Residential Education Team

Full-time staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students living in the residence halls

- Assistant Directors (Full-time staff)
- Area Coordinators/Residence Directors (Full-time staff)
- Assistant Residence Directors (Graduate students)
- Resident Assistants (Undergraduate students)

Residential Learning Community staff are not formally trained but are supportive and involved in embodying restorative approaches.



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## What is Restorative Practices

- ▣ Restorative Practices, is a *community development approach* that focuses on **building relationships** through on-going and sustained **interactions**
- ▣ There are four critical components of RP
  - **Fair Process:** How we engage
  - **Social Discipline Window:** How we lead
  - **RP Continuum:** How we build relationships
  - **Shame & Affect:** How we understand ourselves and others





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# Why Restorative Practices works

## **Punitive Approach in Isolation**

- ❖ Behavior is often only seen as a breach of the code of conduct
- ❖ Focuses exclusively on the offending resident(s)
- ❖ Often pre-occupied with blame and punishment as the sole solution
- ❖ Condemns the offender, resulting in stigmatization- “bad resident(s)”
- ❖ Accountability is only viewed in terms of punishment and consequences

## **Restorative Approach**

- ❖ Acknowledges that behavior is also harmful to individual and community
- ❖ Allows the offender to understand impact of their behavior on community
- ❖ Promotes opportunity for offender to be challenged, reflect and learn
- ❖ Condemns the behavior, reducing the potential for stigmatization and can help separate “deed” from “doer”
- ❖ Connects accountability to repairing harm and relationships



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# How does UVM Res Life use Restorative Practices?

## **Proactive Community Building**

- Used throughout the academic year with residents
  - RP provides your students and staff the opportunity to interact and dialogue in positive ways
  - First way that we (student/staff) get to know each other

## **Responsive Community Restoration**

- Allows members of a community to confront general and on-going disruptive behavior
- Provides a community the opportunity to share how they have been impacted by behavior(s)
  - RP gives “voice” in times of anger, pain, crisis



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## How has Restorative Practices helped?

Gives Residential Life staff and Resident Advisors the skills needed to **proactively build and strengthen relationships** within the community. When issues arise, they can utilize social capital (relationships) to **repair harm** and in best case scenarios, also **repair relationships**.



# Assessment of Restorative Practices



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# Assessment of Restorative Practices

Sense of Community Survey

Powerful peers: Implementing Restorative Practices in  
Residential Life

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# Sense of Community Survey

- **Who is surveyed**
  - All undergraduate students living in the residence halls
- **Frequency**
  - All students are surveyed once a year
  - Students are divided into four cohorts
  - Each cohort is surveyed at a different time of the year
- **Response Rate**
  - 2014-15 - 37%
  - 2015-16 - 31%

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# Sense of Community Survey

## The Survey

- Measures level of agreement
- Divided into three categories
  - Building Community
  - Managing Conflict/Repairing Harm
  - Perceptions of Circles/Community meetings

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# Sense of Community Survey

## Building Community

- I know my fellow residents on my floor
- I have a sense of connection on my floor
- I treat my community with respect
- Other residents respect my community
- I regularly attend Community Circles
- My RA is a good resource



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# Sense of Community Survey

## Managing Conflict/Repairing Harm

- Issues impacting my community are addressed
- I have a voice in addressing conflict and issues in my community
- When I personally have an issue with a member of my community I feel comfortable addressing it
- My community is able to discuss concerns openly and freely
- My community can solve issues/problems in a manner that seems fair to everyone involved
- Community members are held accountable for their behaviors
- Community members are not ostracized as a result of their actions

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## Sense of Community Survey

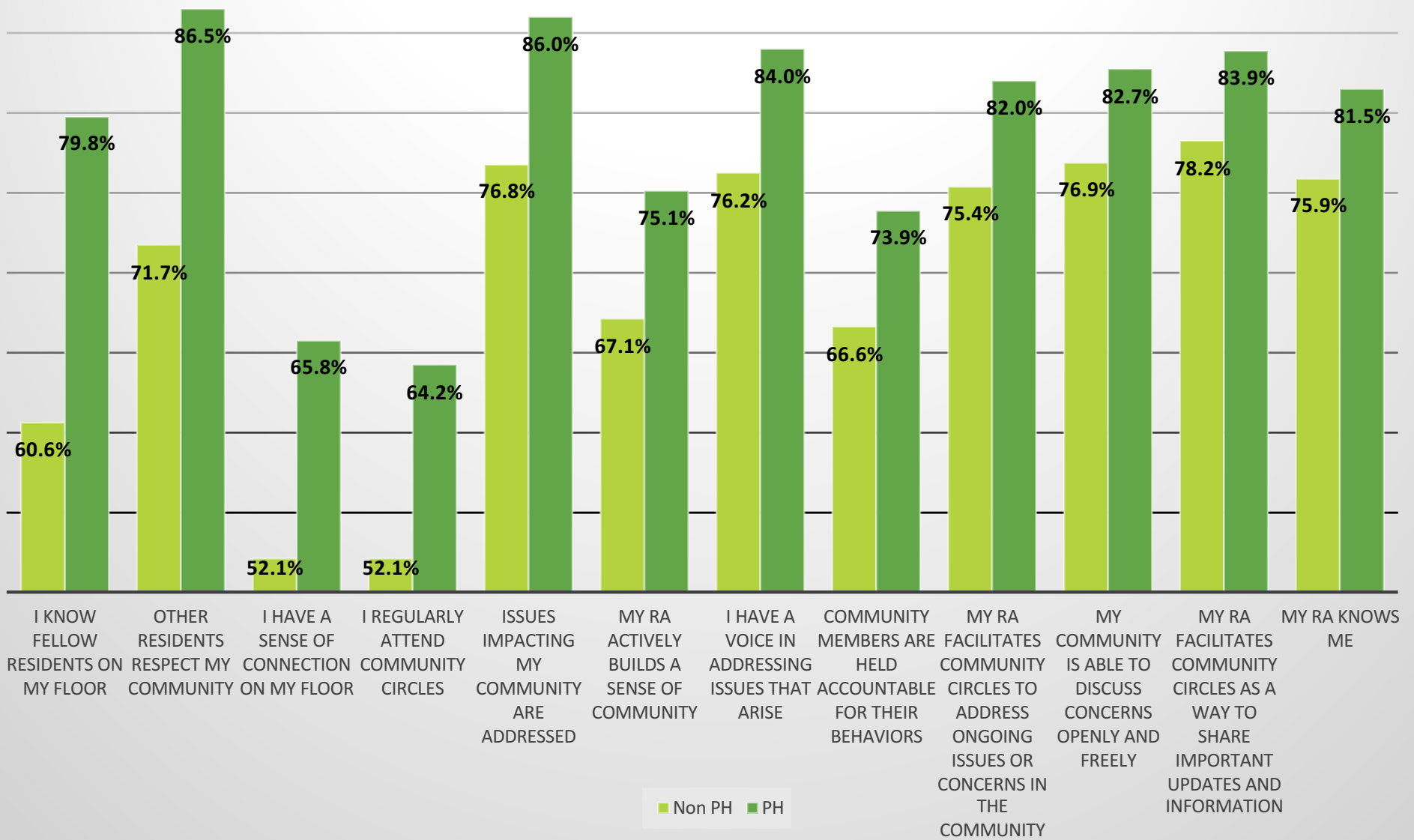
### Perceptions of Circles/Community meetings

- My RA knows me
- My RA actively builds a sense of community
- My RA holds others accountable while still caring and respecting them
- The RAs in my building hold others accountable while still caring and respecting them
- My RA discusses relevant issues via Community Circles (community meetings where all members are able to share their perspectives and have their voices heard)
- My RA facilitates Community Circles as a way to share important updates and information
- My RA facilitates Community Circles to address ongoing issues or concerns in the community

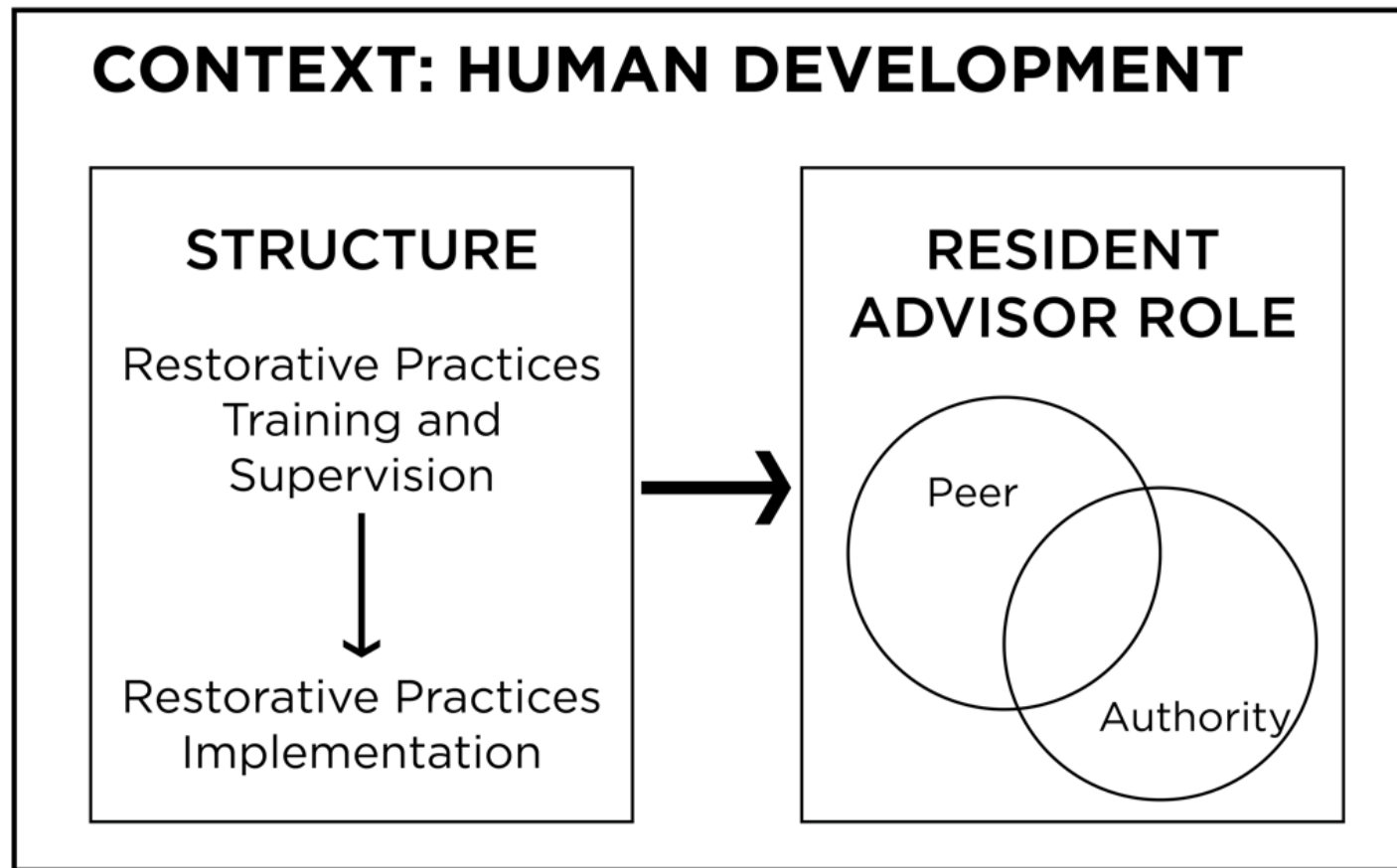
# Sense of Community Survey

Questions	All PH	Non PH	Difference
I know fellow residents on my floor	79.8%*	60.6%*	19%
Other residents respect my community	86.5%*	71.7%*	15%
I have a sense of connection on my floor	65.8%*	52.1%*	14%
I regularly attend Community Circles	64.2%*	52.1%*	12%
Issues impacting my community are addressed	86.0%*	76.8%*	9%
My RA actively builds a sense of community	75.1%*	67.1%*	8%
I have a voice in addressing issues that arise	84.0%*	76.2%*	8%
Community members are held accountable for their behaviors	73.9%*	66.6%*	7%
My RA facilitates Community Circles to address ongoing issues or concerns in the community	82.0%*	75.4%*	7%
My community is able to discuss concerns openly and freely	82.7%*	76.9%*	6%
My RA facilitates Community Circles as a way to share important updates and information	83.9%*	78.2%*	6%
My RA knows me	81.5%*	75.9%*	6%

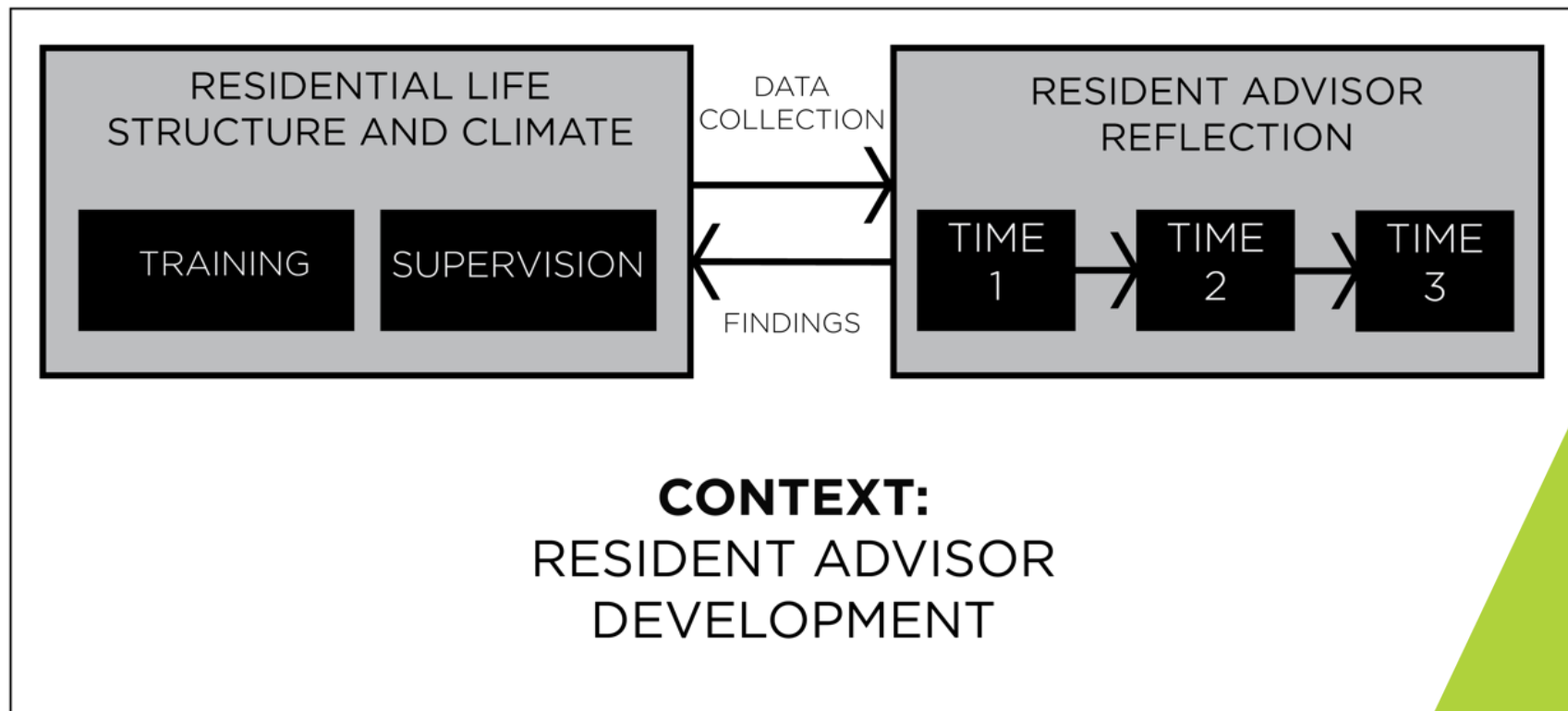
\* Significant difference  $p > 0.05$



# Powerful peers: Implementing Restorative Practices in Residential Life



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## Powerful peers: Implementing Restorative Practices in Residential Life

### Conception of the RA Role

“As a resident last year I viewed an RA... as someone who was perfect. Who was there to almost police. Who was there not just to be friends but almost to be a supervisor”

--(Emerson, Interview 2).

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# Powerful peers: Implementing Restorative Practices in Residential Life

## Conception of the RA Role

Our role isn't based on the idea of justice or the idea of dealing out punishment. Our role is to help guide students during their first few years... it doesn't mean you'll take their hand and pull them through school. It means that we're there for them if they need a resource (Riley, Interview 3).



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# Powerful peers: Implementing Restorative Practices in Residential Life

## Conception of the RA Role

- Relationships with Residents and reacting naturally to these relationships
- Powerful experiences (reactive and proactive)
- Getting out of the way



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# Powerful peers: Implementing Restorative Practices in Residential Life

## Conception of the RA role

I think the key thing is to make sure that all those voices are heard and really pushing to make sure that they have that confidence and the comfort [level] to be in that space. I think that goes back to how I address that conflict... [by] being supportive of the community and showing that it was a community problem

-- (Emerson, Interview 3)

# Impact in the Residence Halls



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## Impact on Residential Life

- Reduction in High Risk Drinking rates over the past six years
- Decrease in unassigned damage
- Allows for stronger and genuine relationships among staff



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## Growing restorative practices



- Expansion of Restorative Practices within the division
- Expansion of programmed housing
- Formal training of programmed housing staff

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**QUESTIONS  
AND  
DISCUSSION**



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