

**Implications for Resident Adviser Training Programs:
Using the Critical Incident Technique
to Evaluate the RA Experience**

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(ABSTRACT)

This study was designed to determine the ability of the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) to advise changes to training regiments offered to Resident Advisers (RAs). The CIT was devised as a tool in the field of organizational psychology. Its purpose is to assist in analyzing the success of individual team members by examining the self-reported occurrence of incidents on the job, which are deemed critical. The Critical Incident Technique has been implemented with success in business and military applications. This powerful tool allows researchers to make valuable observations about the realities faced by individuals on the job. These observations make it possible to devise and improve existing training methods capitalizing on these realities.

Data for this study came from an examination of incident reports (IRs). RAs generate IRs in response to different kinds of issues faced working with resident college students. Three regional institutions agreed to participate in this study and helped to diversify the data collected.

This study addresses the following questions:

1. What are the critical incidents RAs experience most often on the job?
2. Is there a difference between the critical incident types reported in residence halls by institutional type?
3. Is there a difference between the critical incident types reported by hall types?
4. Is there a difference between the critical incident types reported by gender?
5. What implications do the findings have for future RA training?

Four types of demographic information were collected from the IRs: institution type (large public, midsize public, and small private), hall type (male, female, or coed), RA gender, and incident type. Conducting a survey of the literature concerning RA training and the CIT, generated five general categories of incidents on which RAs report.

- Crisis situations
- Policy enforcement.
- Facilities management
- Administrative procedures
- Advising.

Specific measures including coding, and excision of sensitive information (such as sexual assaults sexual identity situations) from documents were used to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the parties involved. When data collection was complete, a chi-squared test of significance was used to examine the relationships between the incident types reported and each of the other three variables (gender, institution type, and hall type).

After analyzing the data using the statistical research methods described above, it was possible to make recommendations for future RA training. This study examines the impact of institutional environment, department philosophy, and personal bias on the training of RAs. The results suggest that each of these factors influences the success of RAs, and defines the environments in which resident students live.

The WITHOUT-WHO's

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