Moving In

Conversation #1

Before beginning the interview it is important for you to realize the following is not a check-listed task for you to complete, but rather, an opportunity for you to engage your residents in conversation. These conversations reflect responsive interviewing in which you respond to the resident and then ask further questions about what they tell you instead of relying on predetermined questions (Baxter Magolda & King, 2007). Because of this, “the interviewer must follow the respondent’s lead, which makes the conversation unpredictable; this requires attentive flexibility on the part of the interviewer, who needs to understand the grounding for this strategy, trust the process, and be able to adapt to potential vagaries that might arise” (p. 503).

This kind of interviewing style should provide you with a window into how your residents currently go about making meaning and defining themselves and their relationships.

Given this relationship, and the goals of this department strategy, we have listed several ways for you to come to understand more about your resident and their expectations for university life. The topical areas for each interview along with several guiding questions have been listed below to help you frame your conversation.

Initial adjustment

Possible Probes:

- It would help me to know a little bit about you. Tell me about what brought you here.
- What did you expect it to be like being a college student here? Has anything surprised you about Miami?
- Talk to me about your transition to college life. Was there anything that you’ve experienced so far that you think will help you during your time at Miami?

Roommate Agreement Review

Possible Probes:

- Tell me a little bit about your roommate agreement. How did you come to a decision with your roommate(s) about how you would interact with one another?
- Do you think you’ll have any issues adjusting to living with another person?
- How can I help you in this adjustment?

Plans for Involvement Outside the Classroom

Possible Probes:

- You mentioned before that you really enjoyed (an activity mentioned during the initial adjustment portion of the interview that led the resident to Miami). Are you planning on becoming involved in that at all here?
- What other interests outside your major would you like to experience?
- How can I help you get involved?
Moving In

Conversation #2

In order to get the most out of each interview, it is important to build on the previous conversation in order to inform the second. Before you begin your second one-on-one, you should consult your notes from the previous conversation and refresh your memory about the particular resident.

You should begin your one-on-one by asking any pertinent follow up questions (e.g. Ask how the student is adjusting to living with a roommate if he or she expressed that as one of his or her concerns during the first interview), and then transitioning into the new topics for the next interview.

Also, while it is important to let the resident make sense of his or her own experiences, you should also be knowledgeable of the possible resources available for any particular issue or problem the student may be facing.

Academic Transition/Resources

Possible Probes:

- Is there anything about your academic experience so far at Miami that has surprised you? Something you didn’t expect?
- How have your expectations for college matched up with what you’ve experienced so far?
- Are you getting the help you think you need to make informed decisions about your classes and your chosen major?

Socially Responsible/Safe Decisions

Possible Probes:

- Have you faced any difficult decisions since coming to Miami? Academically? Socially?
- How have you addressed behavior by others that you found to be either irresponsible or unsafe?
- What is the process you use to make safe, responsible decisions?
- Have you felt pressure to make decisions you felt were unsafe?

Community Standards

Possible Probes:

- Did your experience with the discussion on community standards help to make you feel more a part of this community?
- How do you think that discussion has influenced the people in this corridor?
- Is there anything about the community standards we’ve set up that you would like to revisit at some point?
Moving In

**Conversation #3**

In this one-on-one, there is the possibility that your resident will be talking about issues and relationships that are very personal. It is important for you to keep from offering advice (unless it is warranted) and instead help the student to make sense of the situation for him or herself. Even if the student asks for advice, you should try to refocus the conversation so that they are working through the problem or issue by asking them questions about how they understand or see the problem. If necessary, you should point them to an appropriate office or department to seek assistance.

Since you will once again be revisiting topics discussed during an earlier interview, you should take the time to read through your notes so you can talk about how they wanted things to be in terms of their on-campus involvement and how it has actually worked out.

**Reflection on Changes**

Possible Prompts:

- How have your relationships at home (with friends or family) changed since you’ve come to Miami? What does that mean for you?
- Do you think anything has changed about you since coming to college? What?
- What was it like at home over break? How did you navigate the differences in how other people saw you and how you saw yourself?

**Revisit Involvement Plans**

Possible Prompts:

- I remember you saying something about (a club or group the student was interested in) during our first conversation at the beginning of the year, did you ever get involved in it? How has that experience been?
- Has been getting involved on campus been what you expected? How has it been different? The same?
- How are you able to manage your class schedule and your involvement in other things? Has it been easy? Hard?
Moving In

**Conversation #4**

Discussing a student’s culture and society can be a difficult subject to navigate depending on the student’s ability to define her or her own culture and place in society. The prompts listed below are designed to allow you to be able to help the student discuss times and experiences in which their perceptions of him or herself, culture and society have been challenged by others.

Before you begin the fourth one-on-one, you should have a conversation with your supervisor about additional resources and readings that you could suggest to your resident if they seem interested in furthering their understanding of themselves, their culture and their society.

**Identify Strengths and Areas for Improvement**

Possible Prompts:

- What were some of the highlights of this year? Why?
- What were some of your personal successes? Why?
- What were some of your struggles this year? Why?
- What are things you can do in the future, or things you’ve already started that would help you with the areas in which you struggle?

**Challenge to Reflect on Culture/Society**

Possible Prompts:

- How have your views on social or cultural issues changed since coming to Miami? Have they changed at all? Why do you think that is?
- Is there anything you’d like to challenge yourself or other students about regarding perceptions of other cultures? Your own culture?
- Have there been any programs or events on campus that have exposed you to different ideas about culture and society? What were they?