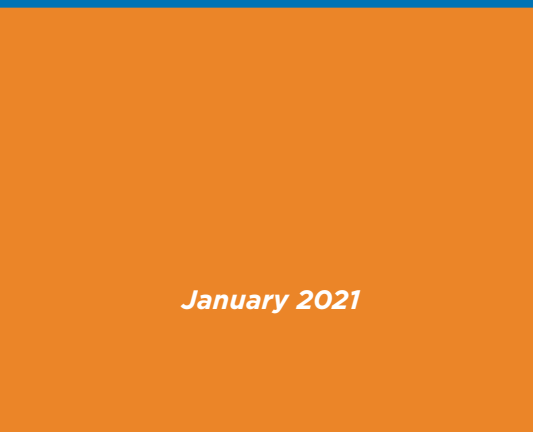


#6

EFFECTIVELY MEETING THE NEEDS OF CURRENT RESIDENTS

Instructor Guide



January 2021



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Acknowledgments

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

The NAA Education Institute wishes to thank the many apartment industry professionals who contributed their time and expertise to the rewrite of the Certified Apartment Leasing Professional course.

Lead Subject Matter Expert

Susan E. Weston, CAM, CAPS, NAAEI Faculty

Licensed Texas Broker

The Susan Weston Company

972-308-6092 Office

972-415-6299 Cell

susan@susanweston.com

CALP

Certified Apartment Leasing Professional

NAA Education Institute

4300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 800

Arlington, VA 22203

833-86-MYNAA

education@naahq.org

naahq.org

Further Acknowledgments

The National Apartment Association Education Institute acknowledges the contributions of countless volunteers who made this program possible. We extend our thanks to all and pledge to maintain the CALP credential as the premier standard apartment industry training program for all Leasing Professionals.

Just for Instructors

The National Apartment Association Education Institute thanks you for your time, talent and expertise in training and developing the next generation of Leasing Professionals.

Whether you are a subject matter expert, a seasoned instructor or new to training, this guide will help you become an even more engaging and effective instructor.


The Certified Apartment Leasing Professional (CALP) program is designed to teach leasing skills to multifamily residential management professionals. It has been recently enhanced to reflect the changing dynamic of techniques, technology and sales demanded by the responsibilities of this position.

This course is targeted for people with at least six months of leasing experience.

For more information about this program or any of NAAEI's education programs, contact your local apartment association or contact NAAEI at **833-86-MYNAA** or **education@naahq.org**.

Using this Guide

This Instructor Guide is identical to the Participant Guide that your class participants have, with the following exceptions:

- The Course Schedule page for instructors provides suggested timing for each component of each module. The participants' version shows only the timing for each module.
- In the left-hand margins of this guide, you'll see a Slide icon [- Also in the left-hand margins, you will occasionally see an “instructor’s note” to suggest something you might want to do, particularly during the suggested Activities.
- This guide includes answers to all questions that the participants will be asked in this course.

Other than the above, the participant and instructor guides are identical and all page numbers are the same for you as they are for the participants.

Preparing to Teach the Course

To give course participants a first-rate learning experience, plan to spend several hours preparing to teach this class.

When to Prepare

Depending on your experience with this course, begin preparing one to two weeks before the scheduled course date. That is enough time to absorb the material without feeling rushed.

How to Prepare

- **Read the Participant's Guide carefully.** Material matches your Instructor Guide, but look for occasions when the students will need to write down slide content or answers. Plan to allow extra time as you present. Note how Participant Guide page numbers align with Instructor Guide numbers.
- **Review the Course Table of Contents.** See yourself as a guide. Knowing and recalling the entire course outline will help you to help students understand where they are in the program.
- **Read the Instructor's Guide carefully.** Get familiar with the organization and flow of the course, as well as the content itself.
- **Mark up this guide.** Write notes throughout. Highlight passages you want to emphasize. Add prompts for your examples and explanations.
- **Practice.** Do a dry run of the material (or at least some of it) in front of willing colleagues or family members. Get their feedback. Find out: What are you doing well? What is one thing you could improve?
- **Preview and practice the PowerPoint slides and videos.**

When it is Time to Teach the Course

- **Do not Read the Slides.** Students have copies of the slides in their handouts. Slide content typically paraphrases what is in the text. Reading it is not helpful and actually might bore your students! Paraphrase or simply refer to the slide.
- **Do not have Students read from the Text.** Not only are students uncomfortable with this but it turns the text into the presentation, instead of your comments and student discussion. Again, retention and engagement plummet!

- **Link Module to Module.** Help the student move from one topic within a course to another. Students like to know where they are in the program and how the subject you are just finishing relates to the next area of learning. Use a simple connector like, “So now that we have learned the basics of the relationship sales process, let’s move to applying this process in real situations.”
- **Use this guide.** Refer to it often to keep the class on track. Using notes will make you look natural, relaxed and even confident.
- **Approach the course as a conversation, not as a presentation.** Keep things open and easygoing. Pick yourself up if you make a “mistake.” Answer the questions you can. Most important, avoid the temptation to be the expert—simply share what you have learned.
- **Keep participants actively involved.** Allow participants to ask questions, share ideas with one another and get as much hands-on experience as possible. Remember: telling is not training.
- **Be yourself.** Participants appreciate (and learn more from) instructors who are not only knowledgeable, but also approachable, personable and dedicated.

Preparing the Classroom

To complete your final preparations, arrive at the training site at least one hour before class begins.

- **Find the Location of these Public Facilities or Services**
Restrooms / Kitchen facilities or vending machines / Emergency exits
- **Prepare Materials**
This Instructor’s Guide (with all your preparation notes in it) / The Participant Guide (one for each participant) / The PowerPoint / Evaluation Forms / Sign-in form (to be turned in to the affiliate office after class)
- **Prepare Classroom and Test Equipment**
Flipchart with stand or whiteboard / Markers / Microphone or sound system (if needed) / Laptop computer with LCD projector

Arrange the tables and chairs in the room so that participants will be able to talk with one another, work in small groups and take notes / Make sure the room is not too hot or cold / Ensure that there is adequate lighting / Write the course agenda on the flipchart or whiteboard

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Slide 2

Message to Apartment Leasing Professionals

The Certified Apartment Leasing Professional (CALP) program is designed to teach leasing skills to multifamily residential management professionals. It has been recently enhanced to reflect the changing dynamic of techniques, technology and sales demanded by the responsibilities of this position. Your managers, supervisors and executives understand your importance to the industry. They recognize you as the key to leasing, renewing and serving future and current residents of your communities.



Slide 3

Effectively Meeting the Needs of Current Residents is one course in the CALP series.

The complete set of CALP courses is:

1. **Bringing in New Residents: Be Prepared**
2. **Marketing and Maintaining your Community**
3. **Why Your Competition Matters**
4. **Relevant Laws and How to Apply Them**
5. **The Sales Process and Building Relationships**
6. **Effectively Meeting the Needs of Current Residents**
7. **Market Analysis for Leasing Professionals**

For more information about this program or any of NAAEI's education programs, ask your instructor, contact your local apartment association, or contact **NAAEI** at **833-86-MYNAA** or **education@naahq.org**.



Course Schedule

This course includes three modules and will run for approximately three hours. Each module will include a mix of activities, discussions, watching videos and slides. [Note: the participant guide shows only the module names and times, not the specific components.]

The time structure of the course will be:

Component	Time
Module 1 - Handling Maintenance Issues	45 minutes
Introductions	
Activity: Difficult Situations	
Working with the Maintenance Team	
Summary	
Module 2 - Handling Disputes and Incidents	45 minutes
Activity: Handling Issues and Incidents	
Activity: What Would You Do?	
Summary	
Break	15 minutes
Module 3 - Securing and Processing Lease Renewals	50 minutes
Video: The Ultimate Question	
Activity: Customer Loyalty	
Activity: Your Lease Renewals	
The Mechanics of Lease Renewals	
Encouraging Lease Renewals	
Activity: Difficult Situations	
Summary	
Module 4 - Building a Sense of Community	25 minutes
Video: The Current Resident's Point of View	
Building a Community Feel	
Summary	



Slide 5

Introduce yourself first and then ask all participants to do the same.

Introductions

Welcome to the **Effectively Meeting the Needs of Current Residents** course, part of the National Apartment Association Education Institute's Certified Apartment Leasing Professional program!

Your instructor will ask you to participate in the following activity:

Introduce yourself to the group and answer the following questions:

- **What is the most often recurring “issue” for your residents?**
- **When confronted by an angry resident, how do you stay calm and focus on solutions, rather than emotion?**
- **Are you increasing rents with your renewals? If so, what do you tell to your residents about why they should still renew?**



Slide 6

Learning Goals

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- **Build relationships with residents.**
- **Work in a team with your co-workers (front desk staff, maintenance staff, etc.)**
- **Handle issues with, or among, residents.**
- **Manage any maintenance issues on a resident's behalf.**
- **Sell and process lease renewals.**
- **Apply a sense of community in resident interaction.**



Slide 7

Module 1 - Handling Maintenance Issues



Slide 8-9

ACTIVITY: DIFFICULT SITUATIONS



Handling service requests from current residents is often part of a Leasing Professional's role—and it can be tricky to handle these situations well! Now, you'll participate in several scenarios. You'll see a difficult situation and will have to decide how to handle it.



Slide 10

Divide the class into four groups tell them that they will listen to all of the scenarios and each group will be responsible for answering one set of questions.

Interaction 1 of 4: A Modification Request



Here's the situation:

Sean Kagan is a Leasing Professional at a Hudson Grove Apartments, a large apartment community. Sean has just had a conversation with Alejandro, a maintenance staff member. Alejandro says that he was just in Apartment 302 fixing the sink for Maria, a 40-year-old resident.

While he was there, Maria told him that she is having difficulty using her shower and needs a grab bar installed as soon as possible. This surprised Alejandro—Maria seems to be physically healthy and is not in a wheelchair—but Alejandro told Maria that he will take care of it.

Sean needs to talk to Maria to understand the situation and determine what to do.

Answers to questions will appear in italics in this guide. In the participants' version of the guide, they see lines to write their answers or to take notes.

In the clip you just watched, what should Sean say to Maria?
Select from the following choices:



Choice 1: I am sorry to hear about the difficulties you have been experiencing, Maria. I would like to assist you in the best way I can. Help me understand what I can do.

This is the best response.

- ✗ Choice 2:** Sure, of course, Maria! I will put in a request for a modification to your shower immediately and hopefully this will no longer be a problem for you!

You cannot jump to the conclusion to move forward with the modification request until you have proper information or documents to prove the resident's disability. Offering to help the resident is understandable, but it can result in costly mistakes if you try to move forward too quickly. Also, you should always check with your manager before making a promise to a resident that will incur an expense.

- ✗ Choice 3:** I totally understand and I wish I could help you. But, our policy is that modification requests are granted only for residents with disabilities. If you can prove with a doctor's note or a relevant document that you have a disability, we can discuss the next step immediately.

You may have accurately stated the company policy for modification requests, but can also come off as uncaring and insensitive. It is understandable to want to follow the company regulations and you should, but how you interact with the resident in handling her situation is equally important.

The Explanation:

This is the only appropriate response that empathizes with the resident and asks a question without making a judgment, yet still elicits details of the problem. The way the question is articulated enables Maria to openly describe her situation without feeling offended or judged.

Consider this a request that any resident - disabled or not - might make for a unit improvement. This is a reasonable request although your policy may require you to ask for a request from a healthcare provider and your resident may be advised that she must pay for this installation. It is important to document and keep a record of this interaction.

Interaction 2 of 4: Daily Resident Issues



Now, you'll help Amanda, a Leasing Professional, interact with a resident.

Here's the situation:

Glenn May is a resident at Avalonian Apartments. He's known by the community's staff for his complaints and cranky personality. Amanda, the Leasing Professional, has heard some stories from other residents and colleagues about his short-tempered outbursts at people who get in his way. One day he comes storming into Amanda's office with a paper in his hand, stands in front of her desk and waves the paper in her face.

What should Amanda say? Select from the following choices:

✗ Choice 1: Hello, Mr. May. What brings you to our office this time?

This response—especially saying “this time”—has angered Glenn even more! It sounds as if you are annoyed and fed up with the resident’s “complaints”; however, it is the responsibility of the Leasing Professional to listen and respond appropriately to the voice of the residents. Brushing Glenn off without giving his complaint attention is poor customer service and might even be a violation of the Fair Housing Act!

✓ Choice 2: Mr. May. Good to see you. How can I help you today?

This is the better response because it offers no blame, no prejudice and an open ended offer to help.

Interaction 3 of 4: Daily Resident Issues



Amanda said: **“Mr. May. Good to see you. How can I help you today?”**

Glenn responds: “I have been paying \$2,500 every month on time for the past year to live in this community and what do I get in return? Nothing but problems in my apartment. Look at this! I have listed out everything wrong with my apartment unit.”

Glenn holds the paper out for Amanda to see. The paper says:

What’s Wrong Today:

1. Broken window in my living room.
2. Mold growing on my shower room wall.
3. Heating system hasn’t been working the past two days and it’s COLD!
4. Leaking fridge.

What should Amanda say? Select from the following choices:

- ✓ **Choice 1:** Mr. May, we are sorry to hear that you haven’t been satisfied, but I hope there have been many moments where you enjoy living in this community. Your concerns matter to us.

This is the better approach. While it doesn’t yet address Glenn’s concerns, it reminds him of the good things about living at Avalonian Apartments.

- ✗ **Choice 2:** I understand that the issues on the list have been bothering you quite a lot. Trust me, I would do everything in my power to create the best living condition for all residents. But due to the holiday season, we have a bit of a backlog, so your request may take up to 2 to 3 business days for us to review.

This response would anger the resident even more! It sounds like you are trying to dismiss the validity and/or urgency of the resident’s claims. Yes, you may be quite swamped with other tasks, especially during the peak season, but you always want to make the resident feel that he/she is being heard and prioritized. This can be done by simply speaking from the perspective of the resident. In addition, he has also raised a potential health and safety issue so you should respond expediently.

Interaction 4 of 4: Daily Resident Issues



Amanda said: ***“Mr. May, we are sorry to hear that you haven’t been satisfied, but I hope there have been many moments where you enjoy living in this community. Your concerns really do matter to us.”***

Glenn responds: “I did enjoy the Christmas party, that’s true. [Calmer than before] OK, so what can be done about my list?”

What should Amanda say? Select from the following choices:

✗ Choice 1: Mr. May, I am glad that you had a great time at the party! Our team put in long hours to make it enjoyable for our residents. We are always striving to create the best experience for the community. Looking at your list, I see that some of your items appear to be emergency items and some are less so. Also, I need to inform you that you will be charged a repair fee if the damage was caused by your negligence and accident. The next required step is for you to submit a work order through our online system.

This response would irritate the resident even more! Glenn was already stressed and emotional when he came in to voice his claims. You did well to explain the cost of the repair fee responsibility and the repair process, but you can articulate the same message in a more comforting, friendly and helpful way. This way, it feels like you are not really trying to help.

✓ Choice 2: Mr May, let me help you to submit a written request on our online work order system and then our maintenance staff will contact you today or tomorrow to fix the listed things. Now, some items may require more time to be completed, but we will do our best to meet your needs promptly. Finally, I do need to remind you that any repair fees incurred due to negligence or an accident by the resident may be expected to be charged to you. I will touch base with you tomorrow.

This is the better approach.

You may want to discuss participants’ answers, as well as the “best answer,” with the participant group

Summary

In your apartment community, you will always encounter residents with a variety of personalities.

This diversity is what makes your work dynamic and enjoyable! At the same time, it can be quite challenging to satisfy each resident's needs. A successful Leasing Professional understands how to tailor his or her style to the needs of each resident. The key is to listen and respond appropriately, showing that you care and hear their frustration, needs and concerns. After all, service and sales should never be disconnected! They are both part of professional community management.



Slide 16

WORKING WITH THE MAINTENANCE TEAM

Great Service Begins with Teamwork

The concept of “great service” is not limited to your direct interactions with residents or prospective residents. Within an apartment community structure, multiple teams must work together to create a safe and high-quality living environment. For example, your maintenance team is an essential business partner that contributes significantly to the success of your apartment community.

To create a positive relationship with your maintenance team, always be sure to treat everyone politely and respectfully. The maintenance team doesn’t work for you, they work with you—and everyone needs to work together as a team.

Great relationships with the maintenance team will not only help you in your job (things will go more smoothly!), but will have a positive impact on the residents and the apartment community. Sales and service are always partners in teamwork!



Slide 17

Collaboration is the Key

One of the causes of tension between different groups in any organization comes from working in a “Silo Mentality”. The Silo Mentality is a mindset in which certain groups are reluctant to share information with others, or even harbor hostility toward other groups within the same company. This type of mentality will result in low work efficiency, poor morale and can dramatically impact the culture of your community.

To create a thriving and productive team environment with the maintenance team, there should be strong collaboration between the teams. In a cooperative work environment, everyone needs to work together in order to succeed.

Steps to effective collaboration include:

- Share a unified vision of your apartment community with all the teams and work towards achieving common goals. This helps create an open-access culture where each team values interdependent efforts and solutions. There should be no division of “Us versus Them” between the management office and the maintenance team. To accomplish this, open a dialogue with the maintenance team so that each group understands the other’s concerns and you can all work together toward a common goal.
- Share responsibilities with the maintenance team. Too often, some people have such a strong devotion to their specific job description that when gray-area issues arise, they tend to say that it’s not their job and blame other team members or groups for the failure. While your team and the maintenance team are accountable for executing your direct functional responsibilities, you should also contribute to the overall success of

your apartment community and support each other in any way you can. Think about job shadowing. Job shadowing is where you accompany your maintenance tech for a half of a day and then your maintenance tech shadows you for a day. Think of how much each of you would learn!

- Allow more people to have a voice. When there are decisions to be made, encourage input from the maintenance team that will help you to be more informed and will give you insights into their perspective.



Slide 18

How Well Do You Know Your Maintenance Team?

Taking time to get to know your maintenance team will work wonders in creating a positive work environment as well as creating a great impression on residents and prospective residents. Residents and prospective residents can always sense tension or collaboration—if you get along well with your maintenance team, that will come through!

For example, imagine that you are a prospective resident on a tour of an apartment community. During the tour, you see a maintenance team member and your Leasing Professional stops to introduce him to you by name, perhaps even offering some highlights or strengths about him such as, “Joe’s been taking care of this community for nine years now!” or “Jack is usually able to resolve any service request within 24 hours. He is one of the most reliable and valuable team member in our community.”



Slide 19

Effective Communication Alleviates Problems

Nurture constant communication between the maintenance team and the property management team. The better the communication and respect within the entire team, the more comfortable and secure your residents will feel about the service they are receiving. It also avoids any mistakes or misunderstandings that could occur from lack of clear communication.

Sometimes, you will need to talk to your maintenance staff on your cell phone or radio throughout the day about repair issues. Remember that you or the staff could be in front of a resident or a prospective resident when these conversations take place. Keep the conversations professional and respectful, being sure to uphold a positive community image to the residents. Try to talk with team members in person privately as much as possible, especially regarding sensitive topics.

Since you are the primary point of contact when a resident has a maintenance issue, you must ensure that full and accurate information is given to the maintenance team. For example, a “loose rod in the closet” needs to describe which closet. One of the most important factors in service satisfaction and resident loyalty is fast, courteous, effective communication between management and maintenance. The team must operate together!



Slide 20

Recognition and Appreciation

An organization that formally or informally recognizes the contribution of their employees and acknowledges their value to the apartment community will have employees with a higher level of job satisfaction. This will have a positive impact on work—the team will be motivated to maintain or improve their good work and as a result, the quality of the property and community will be recognized by the residents.

Ask students what they are doing at their community and in their companies to recognize associates.

In your community, what are some ways you can recognize the service work of your maintenance team members? It may seem that some maintenance team members are more comfortable working behind the scenes and just taking care of the requests and don't need (or want) recognition. The truth is, their work and their relationship with the residents are the cornerstone of the success of your property. Besides, appreciation is a fundamental human need—nearly everyone likes to feel valued. Think about how your company can recognize and appreciate employees from various teams. Here are some suggestions to consider:

- Give firsthand feedback to the maintenance team on work that has been specifically mentioned by a resident.
- Acknowledge their work contribution and the impact of their service in improving the community.
- Recognize opportunities to appreciate and praise their work, whether small or large. Use the company Intranet or resident portal to brag. Make it formal or informal.
- Define exactly what makes a “wow” moment so the team can aspire to reach it.
- Share any and all survey comments about maintenance.
- Consider a financial incentive based upon above and beyond service.

One of the most important factors in service satisfaction and resident loyalty is fast, courteous, effective communication between management and maintenance. The team has to operate together.



Slide 21

SUMMARY

The maintenance team is a critical part of your overall team and working successfully with them is one of your key responsibilities! In this section, we covered some ways you can form good relationships with the maintenance team in order to provide fantastic service to residents. Since you are the primary point of contact when a resident has a maintenance issue, you must ensure the full, accurate information is given to the service team. For example, “a loose rod in the closet” does not describe which rod or which closet.



Module 2 - Handling Issues and Incidents

Slide 22-23

ACTIVITY: HANDLING ISSUES AND INCIDENTS

Even in the best-run communities, there will be occasional issues between residents, incidents to handle such as safety issues and other concerns. Next, your instructor will show you two scenarios. In each, you'll need to decide how to handle the situation. You may wish to take notes on the lines below.

For these scenarios, divide the class into thirds, ask them to read the scenarios in their books, discuss the question you have assigned and then you will reveal the slide with the best answer. Do not reveal the slide before the group has discussed their chosen response.



Scenario 1 of 2: Safety First

Slide 24



Here's the situation:

You're a Leasing Professional at a large, suburban apartment community that houses a lot of families.

Upon arrival at work in the morning, you hear from colleague about a man—not a resident of your community—who wandered onto the community's grounds, then attacked one of the residents' children yesterday afternoon at the apartment community playground area.

Thankfully, the child was rescued in time by one of the residents and taken straight to the hospital. The child was discharged a few hours later with minor cuts and bruises. The mother of the child was in shock at first, but as the shock wore off, became very angry at the poor security in the apartment community.

Jessica, the mother of the girl who was attacked, comes into your office and says:

"My daughter was attacked by a crazy man yesterday right here inside this apartment complex, where it's supposed to be safe. Some of it is my fault for not keeping a better eye on her, but your company is also liable for my daughter's injuries. It is your responsibility to keep this place safe for the residents and you have failed to provide that for us."

What should you say? Select from the following choices:

- ✗ Choice 1:** First of all, I am so sorry to hear about your daughter's incident. I can imagine how shocked you and the family have been after hearing this tragic news. What can we do to make it up to you and your daughter?

You're right to be concerned and shocked, but asking what you can do can get you into trouble in two ways: first, it's so open-ended that you could be setting yourself up to commit to something expensive, or something you can't come through on. Also, it would seem better if you had a plan and could tell Jessica what you were already going to do to address this.

- ✓ Choice 2:** I am sorry to hear about your daughter. It must have been a very difficult two days for you and your family. In response to your concerns about our community's safety, our team will be sending out flyers, newsletters and other communications forms regarding the safety warning notices, especially for our younger occupants.

This is the better approach.

- ✗ Choice 3:** I am sorry to hear about your daughter's incident. It must have been tough for you and your daughter. I totally understand your safety concerns about the community. We try our best to keep the premises safe, but it is difficult to guarantee everyone's security. This incident is unprecedented in the past 10 years of managing this community. I think that our community still stands as a safer community than other places.

While this may well be the first such incident, Jessica doesn't want to hear this—you came off as cold, callous and bureaucratic. Jessica needs to feel that you're taking action!



Slide 25

Summary

In the best response, you are expressing your sympathy to the family as well as taking ownership of the situation with a prompt action step.

Generally speaking, owners and managers of apartment communities do not provide or offer security services to prevent, detect or deter crime or other common emergencies that can occur. Under the law, it is clearly the responsibility of residents to assume responsibility for their own personal safety and that of their families and guests. However, a management company can be held liable for injury caused due to its negligence and failure to repair something that causes the apartment or common areas to be unsafe for normal use. In this case, the management has a duty to warn residents about reasonable risks of criminal attack. Failure to do so may result in the management company being held liable for negligence.



Scenario 2 of 2: What's That Odor?



Here's the situation:

Jeremy and Sharon Cheng, a couple in their early 30's, are new residents to the Golden Swan Apartment Community. They moved in one week ago, into a three-bedroom apartment home with their two children, 7 and 9 years old.

Soon after they moved in, the neighbors started to complain about a strange odor, perhaps a food odor, coming from Jeremy and Sharon's home. You have been told that they tend to keep their apartment door open quite often. So, you walk over to Jeremy and Sharon's home to make them aware of the complaints.

As you near the Chengs' apartment, you smell a strong odor.

You knock on the already-open door.

Sharon comes to the door and says "Hello, how are you?"

Continue to show the question, discuss as a small group and reveal the best answer slide.

What should you say? Select from the following choices:

- ✓ **Choice 1:** Good afternoon, Mrs. Cheng. I am doing well, thank you. How are you enjoying your new home so far?

This is the better approach. The best way to begin this conversation is gently.

- ✗ **Choice 2:** Good afternoon, Mrs. Cheng. I am great! I am actually here to talk about a concern your neighbors have brought up to my attention recently. Would you mind sparing some time to talk?

It's better to build rapport before going directly to the concern.

- ✗ **Choice 3:** Hello, Mrs. Cheng. I am doing well, thank you. I noticed that you like to open your apartment door. Wow, what is that smell?

Be careful not to appear insensitive to other cultures that you may not be familiar with. Be sensitive and polite in your phrasing—this choice could easily come across as rude.



Scenario 2 of 2: What's That Odor?



You said: **“Good afternoon, Mrs. Cheng. I am doing well, thank you. How are you enjoying your new home so far?”**

Sharon responds: “We really love it here! My children like to play in the big living room like a playground! I love the kitchen. I really like cooking in the new kitchen.”

What should you say? Select from the following choices:

✗ Choice 1: That’s wonderful to hear! We always welcome residents from China! They bring in the wonderful culture of Chinese cuisine. I knew a Chinese family who loved to host great parties with so many delicious foods, though I remember a distinct smell from the food.

This is not a good solution. You just made a stereotypical assumption about her birthplace and culture and tried to bring up the issue indirectly. You used a story about another Chinese family that added to the assumption. This answer could potentially bring fair housing national origin discrimination claims because of the connection to the food of one particular culture.

✓ Choice 2: That’s great! We always work to please our residents, including hearing and responding appropriately to the concerns and needs of our community. And, it has come to my attention that you like to leave the apartment door open quite often. But, may I suggest that you open the windows instead? There are plenty of windows in each room and this will be safer than having the door wide open. Plus, it will help the community be free of noise and odors that can disturb other residents.

This is the better approach. This answer is polite, links your intent back to resident satisfaction. It presents the concern and a plausible solution in a caring manner.

✗ Choice 3: That's good to hear! Well, the thing is, Mrs. Cheng, I am here to bring to your attention a concern expressed by your neighbors. Please do not take this the wrong way, but I am just here as a messenger and hopefully we can work this out. They were complaining about the strong cooking smell from your apartment and it makes it stronger with the main door wide open all the time. Would you mind closing the door and using the windows instead?

This embarrasses the resident and she has "lost face" in her new community. Try to communicate in a way that helps her to understand without feeling frightened or self-conscious.



Summary

In this scenario, you have seen the importance of understanding other cultures and traditions. It is easy to fall into stereotyping a group of people or expecting them to adapt to your culture. The ways in which different cultures communicate, understand and react are all unique in their own ways. As a Leasing Professional, being culturally savvy can promote success and great rapport in a multicultural community. Cooking certain foods and observing certain rituals and practices should not interfere with other residents' enjoyment of the property, but such discussions should not make any reference to protected classes.



ACTIVITY: WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

In this activity, your instructor will give you seven situations. For each, you'll decide what you would do based on a set of choices. The goal is to decide as quickly as possible. You may wish to take notes on the lines below.

Divide the students into small groups and assign the following 7 scenarios in a fairly even breakdown. Give each group 5 minutes to read their scenarios, respond and be prepared to offer their solutions to the group. Once again, show the slide with the question, discuss, then reveal the answer slide and explanation. Remind the groups that there may be differences in company policy here.



Question 1 of 7



Juan is a Jehovah's Witness and is offended by holiday decorations in his apartment community. He visits the office and requests that the decorations in the public and common areas be removed.

What would you do?

- ☐ Accommodate Juan's request immediately.
- ☐ Tell Juan not to use those areas until the decorations are taken down.
- ☒ Tell Juan that you understand his concerns, but that holiday decorations are common and many people appreciate them.

The Explanation:

Courts have generally allowed broadly accepted symbols of the season - snowflakes, holiday trees and Santas. As long as the decorations are not religious in nature they can stay. The common areas of the community should not imply directly or indirectly a preference or limitation for any particular religion.



Question 2 of 7



Abdul Khan is a new resident who recently emigrated from Jordan. He wants to paint his apartment with colors that remind him of his home country. However, the apartment community's policy regarding painting is that residents may paint their apartments, but cannot use bold colors like red, black, purple, etc. but only pastel colors or white. Abdul calls your office and asks if he can paint his home red.

What would you say?

☐ "No, you can't paint your apartment red."

☒ "We do not permit bold colors, but you can paint your apartment white or any pastel colors."

☐ "Our policy is that you cannot paint any bold colors in your apartment."

The Explanation:

Avoid using negative phrasing. Try to avoid telling someone "not" to do something or that you will "not" be able to do something. Instead, suggest what can be done. As an owner, you may make reasonable rules about how your building units are maintained by the residents.

Question 3 of 7



Lois Rupe is a 85 year-old resident who has been living in Happy Village for fifteen years. During the past year, she broke her hip and now uses a wheelchair for mobility. She is having a difficult time caring for herself so she decides to employ her 19 year-old niece as a full-time aide. Her niece has been in and out of jail during the past couple of years. You are uncomfortable because you may not want her niece living in your facility.

What would you do?

- ☒ Permit Lois to have her niece as a live-in-aide subject to passing a criminal background screen.
- ☐ Regretfully reject Lois' request due to potential security concerns.
- ☐ Persuade Lois to hire another full-time aide who does not have a criminal background.
- ☐ Accommodate your policy and let her move-in.

The Explanation:

Lois is a resident with a disability, so she has the right for management to provide reasonable accommodations. You may need to permit her to have a live-in-aide if the aide is necessary for Lois to remain living in the apartment community, but you can screen for a criminal background without violating Fair Housing laws.

Question 4 of 7



Recently, Greg Hood, a disabled resident, requested a designated parking space close to his apartment door. So you have assigned the requested parking space, even though you do not have designated parking at the community. The resident has later complained that other residents are improperly using his assigned space for their quick drop-offs.

What would you do?

- ☒ Assign a few spots for 10-minute loading and unloading only.
- ☒ Establish escalating enforcement steps to use against violators.
- ☐ Assign a different parking space to Greg that is also convenient for him (there is one).
- ☒ Educate all residents to respect the assigned parking policies.

The Explanation:

Greg is a resident with a disability, so his request for an assigned parking space close to his home needs to be strongly enforced and protected. You should come up with ways to educate, warn, or penalize other residents who do not comply with the regulation. Once the community identifies the space, the community must enforce its availability.

Question 5 of 7



Akie and Kaz Kawazoe are a Japanese couple who have been living in your apartment community for six months. In your apartment community, residents should place their trash out near the curb after 5 p.m., but you have been informed that the couple has been putting out their bags before 5 p.m. You go to discuss the issue with Akie and Kaz and are bothered because they don't seem to be paying attention to you.

What would you do?

- ☒ Try to understand that maybe avoiding eye contact is an expression of respect in their culture.
- ☐ Decide they didn't fully understand your point, so you repeat it.
- ☐ Ask them what is wrong or what is bothering them.
- ☐ Decide they aren't being honest with you and have something to hide.

The Explanation:

It is important to be mindful of an individual's cultural uniqueness. Typically in Asian cultures, it is important for individuals to show respect and not to "lose face" for themselves and for the other person. When you notice an Asian resident looking away when making a request or voicing a complaint, it is an expression of respect. It does not mean the person is not sincere or is hiding something.

Question 6 of 7



Theresa Jane has had trouble sleeping ever since she rented an apartment in Peaceful Land Apartments three months ago. Theresa is not an insomniac but she has spent countless nights counting sheep at night. She hears constant pacing, dropping objects, dragging and arranging furniture above her bedroom area. She attempted a few times to talk to the upstairs neighbor about the noise, but the only response Theresa received was a blank, confused face from the neighbor. Theresa, having had enough of this ongoing feud, asks for your help to solve the problem.

What is the best response?

- ☐ Write and send off a warning letter to the neighbor who is causing the noise.
- ☒ Meet with Theresa and the neighbor separately to mediate the problem.
- ☐ Require the neighbor to have certain parts of the apartment carpeted and inspect for the compliance.
- ☐ Offer Theresa a chance to transfer at her expense.

The Explanation:

Before taking an action against the resident who is causing the problem, it is wise to first investigate into the situation to acquire evidence beyond the complainant's information. Then, try a mediation method that involves all affected parties in a conversation that promotes understanding and reasonable resolutions. If this does not work, then more affirmative action steps should be taken. A transfer might set a precedent and it is inconvenient for the resident.

Question 7 of 7



Carlos Di Mario has always struggled with severe asthma and allergies ever since he was young. He has moved to an apartment community located near the beautiful nature reserves and parks in suburban California. After living there for six months, he feels that his condition has worsened due to the exposure of secondhand smoke drifting into his apartment from the apartment next door. He later found out that three young male professionals share the apartment and they are all heavy smokers.

After you spoke to the neighbors at Carlos' request, the density of smoke definitely decreased, but Carlos could still smell it! The only reason he moved to the apartment community was for the nature and cleaner air, but now he feels betrayed by your marketing. He requested the following to solve the situation immediately or else he threatens to sue the company.

Which request would you honor?

- ☐ His request to evict the neighbors who smoke to another vacant unit on another floor or building.
- ☐ His request for a reduction in rent since he is not getting the full value of the apartment.
- ☐ His request for building alterations such as sealing gaps and cracks and installing fans or air purifiers.
- ☒ His request to move to a vacant unit away from the drifting smoke.

The Explanation:

As long as there is another vacant unit, this is the most viable option that solves the problem immediately. The law clearly states that the landlord must bear some costs of the move for the disabled resident.

Why not answer a? According to the Fair Housing Act (2 U.S.C. 3613), you cannot evict the tenants who smoke to another vacant unit.

Why not answer b? The request for a rent reduction does not have a direct impact on solving the issue, meaning it does not alleviate the impact of drifting secondhand smoke.

Why not answer c? Building alterations rarely solve the problem of drifting tobacco smoke. One study finding evidences that as much as 60 percent of the air in one unit can come from another unit and the sealing leaks and openings reduce air flow by about 3 percent. Also, the air cleaning technologies and ventilation systems are ineffective in that it does not filter the minute particles and toxic gases in secondhand smoke.

SUMMARY

Even in the best-run communities, there will be occasional issues between residents, incidents such as safety issues and other concerns. In this module, you've learned how to handle difficult situations!



Slide 37

Module 3 - Securing and Processing Lease Renewals



Slide 38-39

THE ULTIMATE QUESTION: EARN THE LOYALTY OF YOUR CUSTOMERS

Having concern for and taking care of your residents pave the way to resident loyalty. In a competitive apartment market, residents are often drawn to communities where they feel valued. Their loyalty to you and your brand can increase and result in more renewals.



Your instructor will show a video from FranklinCovey about how to earn the loyalty of your customers. There will be a brief introduction, followed by a video entitled “The Ultimate Question: Earn the Loyalty of Your Customers.” After you see the videos, your instructor will ask you to answer a question relating to it.

Summary

Now you know the ultimate question that you can use to think about your community’s level of customer loyalty. The question, as you saw in the video, is:

How likely is it that you would recommend this company, product, or service to a friend or colleague?

Your Net Promoter Score

The Net Promoter Score described in the video is a widely used management tool to measure the perceived loyalty of your customers or residents. The scores can be used based on your own perception or on feedback you received from resident surveys. As Dr. Reicheld described, the formula is:

- % of Promoters (satisfied customers who would rate you a 9 or 10).
- Less % of Detractors (customers who would rate you a 6 or less).
- Equals % Net promoters.

The higher the net promoter score, the more loyal your customers. The score can range from -100% to 100%. Anything positive (above 0%) is considered good and 50% or more is excellent.

If your Net Promoter Score is not where you want it to be, you must:

- Secure more 9 and 10 ratings by strengthening levels of satisfaction in 7 and 8 raters.
- Reduce the 6 and less ratings by targeting dissatisfied residents.



ACTIVITY: CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Customer Loyalty: A Question for You



Consider the ultimate question from the video and complete your own Net Promoter Score for your own community. Consider how your residents would respond and rate their answer to the ultimate question. Fill in the blanks requested:

_____ % residents who would rate you a 9 or 10
(eagerly recommend you)

LESS _____ % residents who would rate you a 6 or less (not so impressed)

EQUALS _____ % Net Promoter Score

Discuss your results with the class.

SUMMARY

Thinking about your community from the viewpoint of new and prospective residents will help you be more successful and make sure that your community prospers.



ACTIVITY: YOUR LEASE RENEWALS

Slide 41

Your Lease Renewals



Consider residents you've known at your community who chose not to renew the lease and answer the following questions.

Lead the class in a discussion about residents who have not renewed their leases. Build a list of reactions to the questions below. Consider using three flip charts and ask a student scribe to list these.

- Have you had anyone not renew that you thought would have stayed?
- Why do you think they left?
- What could you have done differently?



THE MECHANICS OF LEASE RENEWALS

Slide 42

Introduction

There's a process to lease renewals and following a clear process will protect you legally and increase the chances of a resident renewing. In this section, we'll cover the mechanics of lease renewals. Please note that there is great variety in how communities price their apartments, pass price changes onto their renewable residents and systematically notify and work with residents to renew.

Sending out the Lease Renewal Notification

It's customary to send out a lease renewal notification to residents as it nears the end of their lease term. This document typically reminds residents about the approaching expiration of their lease and/or offers renewal terms (such as a new rent). This notification may be a form, a letter, an email, a text and may also include the lease renewal document itself or a lease extension form. The recommended time to send out these letters should meet the regulations of your state. The letter should include specific information concerning the renewal, including any changes in the rent, lease riders and any other items that need to be addressed to the residents. Often, a renewal letter also instructs residents that they need to give notice if they will not be renewing and will be vacating the apartment. Many communities are using resident portals and email for these notifications.



Slide 43

The Lease Addendum/Extension

A *lease addendum* is a supplement to the lease which includes terms, conditions, or updates not covered in the original lease. This protects both the lessor—your company—as well as the lessee. For example, if you changed certain policies or fees or if you offer garages or coded entries or animals or satellite dishes, these additions will be covered by addenda. The NAA lease document package has a long list of available addenda. They might also be part of the lease renewal extension form.



Slide 44

Responding to the Renewal Offer

After a renewal offer is made, you should proceed to secure either the signed form or confirmation from the residents or the signed lease renewal within 30 to 60 days of the offer. Some communities do not use forms, just a letter and then schedule a meeting with the resident to complete the renewal. It may be necessary to plan a timely reminder to follow up with the residents to complete and return the copy of the form in advance.

The following is a sample timeline—though be sure to consult the guidelines for your state to be sure you are in compliance:

90 Days Out:

- Send out the renewal offer form by email or mail to the resident.
- Follow up with a phone call informing the resident that the form has been sent out and clarify the deadline date by when the signed renewal is required (usually 30 days from the time you sent it, so 60 days before lease expiration). This is a super time to discuss satisfaction levels and offer changes or upgrades.

60 Days Out:

- If you have not received any word or a completed renewal notice a few days after the 60-day deadline, remind the resident of the renewal deadline by phone, email and/or in person.
- Once you have the signed form or notice, begin your internal renewal process.

30 Days Out:

- If you still have not received a response from the resident, make it an urgent matter to contact the resident immediately—or to get clarification that the resident plans to move out.
- Begin to market the apartment to prospective residents, assuming you do not have a signed renewal.



Renewing a Lease

After all parties have signed the lease renewal, it should go into effect on the day after the expiration date of the current lease. Follow your company procedures on issuing a full renewal lease and addenda or using the lease renewal extension form in the NAA lease package.



When a Resident gives a Notice to Vacate

If a resident notifies you of his or her plans to move after receiving a renewal notice, it is time to reach out to the resident personally to attempt to retract their notice and stay! It may also be the time for the residents to look at other apartments and compare features and prices. During this time, you can start searching for another prospective resident to sign a lease. Make sure that you confirm receipt of the resident's "intent to vacate" in writing.

ENCOURAGING LEASE RENEWALS

In its Fourth Quarter 2019 Resident Satisfaction Report, Kingsley Associates reported that over 58% of renters said they would be renewing their leases. How can you ensure your residents will be part of this majority?



Take Five Minutes to Talk

Think about how actively you tried to lease your apartment home and community to the prospective residents. You successfully convinced them to move to your community by focusing on the great values, benefits and conveniences of your community and how it was a fit for a particular prospective resident. The prospective resident excitedly signed the lease! If this strategy helped you to bring in a new resident, then why not use it when a resident notifies you about their decision to move out? Remember the ABC motto – Always Be Closing. Especially when it's time for a renewal, it's time to continue to close.

Too many times, a Leasing Professional responds to a move-out decision with a question about when their lease actually ends, quoting either the 30 or 60 day lease termination notice in writing and other paperwork details regarding lease termination. This may be giving up on a great opportunity to identify the intentions for moving out and to influence their decision. All you need is to take five minutes to talk with the resident about their decision to move. You will be surprised by how much your effort can reward you with a lease renewal. Some questions you can consider are the following:

- What services does this resident use or value at your property? (e.g., concierge service for package deliveries, dry cleaning pickup or delivery, 24-hour maintenance service, day care service, etc.)
- What is the resident looking for in his or her future home?

Remind the resident about the cost of moving and offer a quick comparison of market rates for your competitors.

Sometimes, current residents may be surprised to learn of amenities at your community that they had perhaps even forgotten about. Don't miss the golden opportunity to ask questions because you'll never know if you don't ask!

Even better, communicate with your residents throughout the year to better assist you in the lease renewal process—the better you communicate with residents during the year, the less likely they are to plan to move out. Just as in the initial sales process, you should Always Be Closing renewals with current residents, too!



Slide 49

Discussing Automated Rent Pricing

Encouraging a lease renewal may come down to explaining pricing. As we will discuss in our next tip, residents may want a better sense of “value” when you are requiring a rent increase. Automated revenue pricing is based on supply and demand, apartment type vacancies, lease flexibility, competitive rates in the marketplace and future economic impactors like jobs, apartment supply and household growth. That’s a lot to understand, much less discuss with a resident. But the Leasing Professional must be able to support and justify the price with confidence.

The value discussion below clarifies that there are many components that go into how each one of your residents determines value. Pricing is always linked to value – as a consumer yourself, you want the appropriate value for an appropriate price. Your discussion of automated pricing speaks to the value of an objective formula rather than a “gut level,” localized market review to set prices. Yet it still allows your valued resident to use available flexible lease terms to impact the rental rate.

Ensure this conversation encourages the resident’s continued occupancy with you.



Slide 50

Maintain the Value of Your Apartment Community

Sometimes, the rent adjustment for a renewal may be priced “right” or the rent is unchanged, but residents still choose to leave because they no longer agree that their apartment provides sufficient value. Certain deciding factors that the residents consider when renewing the lease may include the number of times they had to make calls to resolve maintenance problems, the quality and upkeep of the common area facilities or customer service issues. The residents choose to rent an apartment home in a certain community for not only great location and price, but also the value they anticipate to get such as comfort, satisfaction, pride and convenience.

Here are some ways to both satisfy the needs of the residents and to uphold the value of your community:

- **Preventive Maintenance:** Preventive property maintenance is always a cheaper option than waiting for a small problem to turn into a large expense. Do all you can to make sure your property is updated and in top shape.
- **High-quality Maintenance Service:** According to the 2013 SatisFacts, one of the highest ranking factors for an apartment resident’s lease renewal decision related to the quality of maintenance service provided. A common mistake some management companies make is to cut costs relating to maintenance—even forgoing repairs or improvements. It may save some money for that year, but in the long run, it will end up breaking or requiring a higher cost to fix and maintain. And you may lose residents!

- **Aesthetic Value:** Try to perform maintenance that improves your property so that it will be more desirable to current residents and attractive to prospective residents. Inexpensive ways to make your property more desirable include applying a fresh coat of paint to various areas, or planting trees and flowers.
- **Promptness and Attentiveness:** Another reason residents exit is the feeling that the management and maintenance are not being attentive to their issues with promptness and care. Give residents a sense of faith that you care about their concerns and opinions and that their presence is valuable to the apartment community. Residents who feel they are heard will most likely renew the lease.



Slide 51

Offer Renewal Benefits

Some communities typically offer benefits to renewing residents. The Leasing Professional should meet with the manager to understand if such benefits exist, what they are and under what circumstances can the Leasing Professional offer them

Little perks such as painting a room free of charge a carpet shampoo, new ceiling fan or even scaling a rent increase based on some non-discriminatory factor (if possible) can have a huge impact on rent renewal. Residents will appreciate your act of thoughtfulness so much that they may end up referring your community to their friends. You can further incentivize those residents who have successfully referred you to prospective residents who turned into residents.

For those residents who are uncertain about renewing the lease, particularly due to a rent increase, you can provide helpful information that breaks down the total expenses for moving to another place, such as the cost of moving, the new deposit, moving trucks, etc. You can also provide the market value of other apartment homes that are similar to the home of the current resident to help him or her compare the rent prices. If you can provide information that convinces the resident of the financial benefits of staying rather than moving, the resident may see staying as a better value.

Summary

In this module we have explored how to secure and process lease renewals. As a member of the community team, the Leasing Professional can have significant influence in attracting lease renewals and completing the necessary process to ensure satisfied renewing residents.



ACTIVITY: DIFFICULT SITUATIONS



Next, you'll watch a video covering three scenarios. Each will show an interaction with a resident regarding a renewal. In each scenario, you'll watch a video showing the interaction and will decide whether or not you think the resident will renew the lease.



Question 1 of 3: Take It or Leave It



Next, we'll watch a video scenario. After the video, you'll be asked if you think the resident will renew her lease.

Divide the class into 3 groups - assign one video clip per group. Play the clips and ask each group to be prepared to report on their solution.



Based on this interaction, do you think that Hannah will renew? Why or why not?

The best answer is:

Based on what we saw, the resident will definitely move. Laura, the Leasing Professional, sounded not only nonchalant about the rent change but treated the resident as a transaction. She showed no concern or care toward her situation. A better way to handle the talk would include empathizing with her concerns and negotiating options to make it work for both parties. At the end of the day, it is more cost effective if the "good" residents renew the lease.

Question 2 of 3: It's Not My Fault



Next, we'll watch another video scenario. After the video, you'll be asked if you think the resident will renew her lease.



Based on this interaction, do you think that Casey will renew?
Why or why not?

The best answer is:

Based on what we saw, the resident will definitely consider moving out. First, Darryl indirectly blames Casey for not updating her email address with the company. That is why she only has a week to decide her renewal option which was sent out two weeks back. The problem here is that it is Darryl's responsibility to follow up with Casey after emailing the form to ensure her receipt. But Darryl assumed that she received it and waited until two weeks after to give her a call.

Second, Darryl again blames Casey for breaking the repaired fridge. He merely relies on the note updated in the system and assumes that it is Casey's fault for breaking it again. He jumps to this conclusion without gathering enough evidence, which not only makes him look bad but raises the community's maintenance quality into question. Always be attentive to what residents are trying to say and make them feel that they are valued in your apartment community. Don't point at fingers at the residents but handle the situation diplomatically. He should have written a new service request for the fridge repair.

Question 3 of 3: Two-Year Lease



Next, we'll watch another video scenario. After the video, you'll be asked if you think the resident will renew his lease.



Based on this interaction, do you think that Josh will renew?
Why or why not?

The best answer is:

Based on what we saw, the resident will definitely consider renewing the lease. Annie shows a personable approach to Josh while discussing the possibility for a two-year contract. Annie didn't overpromise, but also didn't discourage Josh's proposal.

She took the right next step; she was honest about where the boundaries of her authority fell and appeared serious about her commitment to talk to the manager.

From the resident's perspective, this brings comfort and trust in the Leasing Professional because she is willing to support him as best as she can.

SUMMARY

In this module, you learned some ways to better handle lease renewals.



Module 4 - Building a Sense of Community

VIDEO: THE CURRENT RESIDENT'S POINT OF VIEW



What makes current residents likely to stay in apartment? What factors convince them not to renew and to move elsewhere? In the video you're about to see, apartment residents tell us what matters to them.

LIKES		DISLIKES
The Experience	The Apartment	
1.	2.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.



The Current Resident's Point of View: A Question for You



Think about the video you just watched. What new ideas did you get from the video? Name at least two.

Here are some of the highlights of the video to trigger student conversation:

Likes

The Experience

1. *Fulfill promises.*
2. *The Super (maintenance – lots said this).*
3. *Communication from staff.*
4. *Smile, knew my name, personalized.*
5. *There for you.*

The Apartment

1. *Washer and dryer.*
2. *Big kitchen.*
3. *The neighborhood.*
4. *Rent is fair.*

Dislikes

1. *Hidden defects.*
2. *Misrepresented the building.*
3. *Water, bed bugs, trash.*
4. *Over promising, under delivering.*
5. *Poor maintenance.*
6. *Dirty common areas.*
7. *Holes in the wall.*
8. *Water leaks.*

BUILDING A COMMUNITY FEEL

In order to encourage residents to stay—and to make sure they enjoy living in your community—there are a number of things you can do. Surveys of thousands of residents confirm that “a sense of community” is one of the proven resident satisfiers. We’ll cover some of those in this section.



Slide 62

Step Up the Social Life

Community-organized events and common gathering spaces are great for mingling and meeting new people. When many residents participate, the energy can fuel the positive experience of sharing life together in your community. The sense of community is what makes modern apartment living important and creates loyalty with your residents. Use your shared space and turn it into a communal lounge area. You can even step it up a notch by fashionably transforming your shared spaces and amenities into rooftop night clubs, outdoor dining rooms, or movie screening rooms. Be creative with events and tailor them to your resident profile. If you are in doubt about what will work - survey your residents!

Ask students to share ideas on what social events and activities they are doing at their communities.



Slide 63

Redefine the Meaning of Your “Community”

Apartment communities are constantly evolving and enriching the needs of the residents beyond the basic wants and needs. The meaning of “community” goes beyond the definition of various residents living in the same apartment building. It focuses on more efficient and effective ways to build relationships and increase interactivity between the residents. It meets the physical and emotional needs of the residents with family, elderly residents and young-adult residents.

For example, residents in their 20s tend to look for apartments that offer a great social environment, social media connectivity and communication and high-end amenities. Residents with a family might look for a place that offers on-site children's programs, daycare service, or after-school sessions at no extra cost. For adults or seniors, they might enjoy the enrichment and social aspect of arts classes, theatre, arts exhibitions, or other learning opportunities provided by the community.

Consider your apartment environment: how can you redefine the meaning of your community that enriches the lives of your residents? How can you progress from being an apartment 'community' to an apartment 'society'?

Here are some things you can do:

- Define and redefine your community. Listen to the voice of your residents and hear their needs and wants. Collect data by talking to people and studying how your residents live.
- Analyze the collected data and determine what the data tells you. Identify areas of gaps and root causes of existing issues in your community.
- Improve or optimize your value as a community by creating better communication processes and channels between the residents and management, implementing creative events and ideas to enhance living experience and more!
- Control your new processes and activities by measuring their effectiveness, seeking and receiving feedback from the community and reflecting on ways you can further improve. Ask yourself - 'are you easy to do business with?' Your resident shouldn't struggle through process to get what he or she needs.



Slide 64

Building Relationships

Creating rapport is the key to building relationships with your residents. There are five ways to create rapport:

- Express genuine interest. Find out what is important to them, ask questions and use their first name.
- Be genuinely friendly. Smile, have a pleasant disposition, use a warm handshake, display good manners, maintain strong eye contact and use the tone of your voice.
- Create physical rapport. Try to match body language, vocabulary and tone.
- Be an active listener. Encourage the speaker, paraphrase to show and ensure understanding.
- Seek agreement. Search for a way to reach similarities and look for beliefs and opinions you can share.



Slide 65

Go Green

More and more residents value apartment communities that are environmental friendly and have energy-efficient living standards in the apartment units. According to a survey conducted by Strata Research, 62% of the residents voted that environmental friendliness was a key factor in their apartment search.

Ways to improve your community's green living include installing more green areas on the ground, such as Zen gardens, bike paths, community garden plots and adding plug-in stations for electric cars. What products are you using that are made from recycled materials? Which of them have less polluting or carbon imprint? Brag about these efforts towards sustainability and conserving our natural resources!



Slide 66

Use Diversity to Your Advantage

In today's world, it is common to live in a community made up of people with different ethnicities, cultures, traditions, orientations and interests. This is what makes a community diverse and dynamic!

The focus of your community efforts should be on breaking down the physical and psychological barriers that people often build against different cultures. The impact of such barriers is unintentional segregation and isolation. This is not part of the true meaning of community.

So how can you build a community that is trusting and supportive and that can embrace the differences of backgrounds and experiences? By encouraging awareness of differences and promoting inclusiveness. Then, as one community, share and build common interests, goals and concerns.

For example, you can create a dinner event where residents are encouraged to share something about their culture and traditional cuisine. During this time, residents of all backgrounds can mix naturally and learn more about one another's uniqueness. Then, the event can move toward sharing and building common interests, concerns and goals as the residents of the same community. Make sure people feel welcomed so that no one will feel offended. In fact, you might ask specifically for as much variety as possible!

Another example is to have an international market day where residents can feel free to display a variety of foods, items and other goods that represent their culture and backgrounds. The market is a great way to connect many residents in the building of a community.

SUMMARY

In order to encourage residents to stay—and to make sure they enjoy living in your community—there are a large number of things you can do. We covered some of these in this module.



Course Summary

You should now be able to:

- Build relationships with residents.
- Work in a team with your co-workers (front desk staff, maintenance staff, etc.)
- Handle issues with, or among, residents.
- Manage any maintenance issues on a resident's behalf.
- Sell and process lease renewals.
- Apply a sense of community in resident interaction.

You can take these skills and apply them on the job!

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National Apartment Association Education Institute
4300 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 800
Arlington, VA 22203
833-86-MYNAA | naahq.org

