

Camp Safety Training: Facilitator's Guide

Behavior Management at Camp

Discussion Questions

- What are campers going to be like on their first day of camp, or halfway through the day or session? What behaviors might we see?
- Why is setting up expectations important?
- How do I build relationships with campers and still stay professional?

Activity #1

Name of activity: Give Me Five

Length of activity: 10 minutes

By simply brainstorming the takeaways from the Behavior Management at Camp training together, you can both encourage reflection and discussion, and also get a sense of staff learning styles and retention. This will give you a sense of what learning will need to be reinforced.

Objectives:

1. Staff will be able to reflect on the basic principles of behavior management.
2. Staff will be able to communicate why relationships are so important in behavior management.
3. Staff will be able to talk about how they might respond to common behavioral issues.

Materials:

Markers, sticky note pads and large chart paper or white board located in front of group.

Instructions:

1. Break into small groups. Write five takeaways together (five minutes) – one on each sticky note.
2. The facilitator can prompt the groups by asking what they remember, what specific actions they would now take differently, and what they think are the most important lessons. It's a good idea to also ask how the role of lifeguard and camp counselor, or staff member, are different.
3. Each group shares sticky notes with the whole group. Write or have someone scribe on sticky notes what the group comes up with.

Activity #2

Name of activity: ABCs of High Energy Campers

Length of activity: 10 minutes

High energy campers can present a specific challenge for staff. But it's important to understand that many behavioral issues related to high energy campers can often be redirected. This activity will help staff to understand why high energy campers behave the way they do, and help them to develop strategies for appropriate response.

Objectives:

1. Staff will experience what it is like to stay on task when your mind is “spinning”.
2. Staff will walk through specific techniques to assist high energy campers.

Instructions:

1. Have staff form groups of four.
2. Ask each group to partner up, and have one partner stand behind the other.
3. Ask the front person in each pair to face another front person in a different pair.
4. Ask one front person to begin telling a story about themselves while the other listens.
5. Ask the two in the back to be the distractors. They will sing the ABCs loudly and distract the front person without touching them.
6. After one minute, have the two people facing each other to switch with the person behind them, and repeat the exercise.
7. Debrief and discuss:
 - What was that like for everyone?
 - How difficult was it to share your story?
 - How difficult was it listen to what was being said?

Explain to staff that this is what is happening to our campers who have high energy. Then discuss different techniques that help with campers who have high energy. For example, light physical touch, saying their name, eye contact, one direction at a time, time cues, prompt positive praise, finding positive outlets for all the energy, etc.

Activity #3

Name of activity: Behavior Scenarios and other Sticky Situations

Length of activity: 15 minutes

Role playing is a great way for staff to start thinking about typical behavioral management problems before they arise at camp. Thinking through specific scenarios will help to generate solutions and effective response.

Objectives:

1. Staff will practice skills needed to handle difficult situations.
2. Staff will learn about typical situations that arise.

Instructions:

1. Ask campers to break into groups.
2. Provide each group with a scenario you will want them to act out.
3. First teach the skills you want to see acted out either by demonstrating them yourself or with your leadership team.
4. Ask staff to role play their scenario.
5. Debrief and discuss what went right, and how staff might adjust their strategies in the future. Encourage them to think about not just what was done/said, but how it felt.

Note: If we are playing the role of the camper, we don't want to make it too difficult that a skill cannot be practice. Also remember that role playing is uncomfortable for some, so be sure to give positive feedback and thoughts for improvement.

Example scenarios:

- Camper is upset because she thinks her art project is ugly
- Camper refuses to get out of bed in the morning
- Teens are ignoring your direction
- Camper doesn't like the food that is being served
- Two campers are arguing over a game of checkers, one kicks the game and walks off
- One camper is having a hard time fitting into the group
- One camper is having a hard time because he did not win at Gaga and he says someone cheated
- A camper doesn't want to do an activity and says it's stupid
- Make up scenarios based on what may have happened before at camp