



West River **Volunteer Manual**

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www.westrivercenter.org

The West River Center is a ministry of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church. As a part of the connectional ministry of the Conference, we work in partnership with the other two outdoor sites, Manidokan and Camp Harmison.



Our Mission:

For every person who comes to camp to grow in their love of God, self, neighbor, and nature

Our Vision:

To provide unmatched opportunities to individuals and local churches for spiritual transformation



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Welcome!

We are so excited you will be a part of the ministry at the West River Center this summer! Here at West River we have a beautiful, wooded sanctuary created by God and held in stewardship by the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church where people of all ages and backgrounds can come to worship God in intentional Christian community, modeled on learning to live and love more like Jesus. We hope everyone who comes to West River will grow in their love of God, self, neighbor, and nature.

This manual is meant to help you become more familiar with the camp, our policies, and prepare you for working with and understanding your campers. Coming to West River should afford all who arrive a safe place to get away from the pressures of the outside world and find the courage to be open to the Holy Spirit moving in their lives. As a Christian ministry, our purpose is to make new disciples and to help disciples grow in their relationship with Christ. You will help your campers to experience God deeply through scripture, creation, and all that you do with your group. In the words of authors Kenda Creasy-Dean and Ron Foster, you are a God-Bearer this summer. We pray that the unique way that YOU carry God's light and love can help campers grow in their own personal faith journey and learn how God is calling them to make a difference in their family, community, and world by being more like Jesus.

There are both joys and challenges in every summer camp season. There will be rainy days, hot days, challenging campers, and also tasty s'mores, splashing in the pool, and moments that change lives. We pray that through these highs and lows we will lean on the gifts and talents of those around us, remain faithful to God's calling, and focused on the needs and care of our campers.

May God lead us in our shared ministry together this summer!

Seeking God's Wisdom and Strength,

Chris and Jenna

West River Year-Round Staff

Camp Director – Chris Schlieckert

Assistant Director – Jenna Johnson

RCM Administrator- Amy Marshall

Maintenance Director – Kevin Lloyd

Food Service Director- David Janssen

Aquatics and Hospitality Coordinator – Liz Brown

Maintenance Worker – Rich Sears

Housekeeper – Diane Gunde

Site Map



STAFFING

Staff/Volunteer Roles and Relationships

All of the adults at camp, the Volunteer Counselors, Junior Counselors, Volunteer Directors, Program Resource Staff, Food Service Staff, Maintenance Staff, Nurse and the Camp Director, work together as a team to provide a nurturing Christian experience for the campers who attend West River.

God has given each one in the camp a special ministry. If that ministry is to be done effectively, each one must give their all to their own ministry. This team is the Body of Christ. Everyone has an important role and no one role is more important than another.

1 Corinthians 12:5-7, 25-27 (The Message) explains,

God's various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God himself is behind it all. Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance. You are Christ's body - that's who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your "part" mean anything.

Volunteer and paid summer counselors are immediately responsible for the campers assigned to them during the daily living experience. During the week of camp, a counselor can expect to lead a group of campers in worship, devotions and study—in both large and small group settings. They will have primary responsibility for oversight and discipline of campers during scheduled activities. They should meet minimum age requirements (18 or a HS graduate for elementary and middle school, 21 for senior high). Counselors should be at least 3 years older than the oldest camper in their cabin, ideally 5 years older.

Volunteer Directors are responsible for recruiting the necessary number of counselors, communicating with the Site Director throughout the year about these numbers, and overseeing the volunteers and campers for their particular week of camp. The Director is encouraged to be creative when planning, however, the primary goal should be that the campers have a meaningful experience in ways that are 1) safe and 2) able to be accomplished by the summer staff resources and site supplies. While use of the curriculum is flexible, understand that it is important to provide continuity to all campers who attend camp regardless of the week they came to camp and who the director was. During the week of camp a volunteer director will work closely with the counselors and CITs to insure they are adequately supported, on task and that the program is functioning smoothly. They also maintain open lines of communication with the site director and other summer staff throughout the week. We currently do this through 1) Daily Morning Meetings 2) Disciplinary Binder Notes and 3) As needed and impromptu check-ins.

West River's Support Staff consists of the Maintenance Staff, Food Service, and the Nurse. These people are assigned by the Camp Director to carry out their defined roles to support the total camp program.

The Program Staff will work with the Volunteer Directors and Counselors assisting with the program as assigned by the Assistant Director. Many of the Program Staff are Lifeguards and are in charge of the safe management of the pool and other water-related activities.

The Site Camp Director is the one who is ultimately responsible for the general supervision of the entire program at the camp including the use of camp equipment, property, and placement of paid summer staff. The Site Director will work with the Volunteer Directors and Assistant Director in the planning and implementation of the camp week.

Staff & Volunteer Interactions

Summer Site Staff work 60-80 hour work weeks with time scheduled for meals, breaks, and program set-up. Summer site staff are expected at worship daily unless scheduled for program set-up.

When volunteers are at camp they have a responsibility to their campers 24 hours a day. Volunteer directors should arrange at least a 1 hour break for all counselors either at times that campers are in ratio for large group activities or by asking the Assistant Director when a site staff member can be scheduled to cover a group for a break.

The primary reason we are at camp during the week is to support the campers. Keeping this in mind, if site staff want to visit with a volunteer, both the Volunteer Director and Assistant Director should be in agreement. They may visit, on site only, in public spaces if they have the same designated break, OR, they may hang out in the gathering space of the volunteer's group so they can both keep an eye on campers. The visit should not disrupt a camper's activity.

Remember CITs are minors and you should interact with them with respect while also remembering they are not an adult. CITs may not leave site.

West River Volunteer Job Description

Volunteers are the heart and soul of West River. What you do during your week of camp will make or break our shared ministry. You have a very demanding job during your week of camp, and we thank you for sacrificing your time, energy, and skills to prioritize the campers for this one week. This job description is intended to clarify your role relating to the West River Program Staff.

AT ALL TIMES

You are responsible for the general safety and supervision of your campers at all times. When Camp Staff members (not also serving as counselors) are with your group, they are there to lead an activity and they need your help to keep the campers on task. A part of your responsibility during activities is disciplining campers when they misbehave. Make sure all discipline is done in a fair manner and in accordance with West River's discipline guidelines. You should always be near and interacting with your campers. When this is not possible (like when they are showering at night) you should be within earshot to be sure conversations are appropriate.

Correct supervision ratios must be maintained at all times. Counselors should not leave their assigned group or West River without knowledge of their Volunteer Director and the Assistant or Site Director so proper supervision is assured.

Low Ropes

Camp Staff members are specially trained to lead the low ropes. They need your help to keep the campers together and focused on the element they are working on. The staff may need you to help spot on certain elements if you are physically able. You can also help make the connection between the ropes elements and the other things they are doing throughout their week at camp during the element debriefing.

High Ropes

High ropes are dangerous. We need your help to make sure campers are paying attention to camp staff. We also need some volunteers to help with certain high activities. The most common requests for help are: helping campers put on equipment, reiterating safety rules, and spotting on the low rock wall. If you are asked to help, the staff will make sure you know, and are comfortable with, your role in the activity.

Nature Hikes

Most hikes will be led by one of the program staff. On these hikes we ask you to keep the campers together and listen to the Camp Staff person who is leading the hike. You may also lead a hike without Camp Staff, please just notify a Camp Staff member if you are taking a group hiking. We will make sure you know where you are going and how to keep the group safe. Ask the Director or Assistant Director for nature programming resources.

Pool

During pool time you are expected to, along with our non-lifeguard camp staff, serve as lookouts and help control the pool deck area during swim times so the lifeguards can watch the water. Water activities are the most dangerous ones at camp, so we need your help to keep everyone safe. You can create a rotation with other volunteers and staff so you can enjoy the pool as well. There should be one volunteer lookout for every 10 campers. In an emergency, one counselor may be asked to call 911 and the director. All other counselors should 1) Clear the pool 2) gather and count campers 3) move campers away from the pool and the emergency.

On the River

Canoeing, Kayaking, Banana Boating, and Paddleboarding are led by Camp Staff. During these activities, we need your help keeping the campers focused and safe. During Banana boating, it is usually not possible for all campers to ride at one time. We ask that you look out for and keep the campers on shore occupied and safe while they wait. You can also help by adjusting life jackets and assisting in equipment retrieval.

Archery

The archery range is run by a certified instructor at all times. When a group of campers is up for their turn to shoot, the instructor will be entirely in charge of that group. As a volunteer, you need to oversee the campers who are waiting their turns for instruction. This typically means keeping them from being a distraction to the archers and instructor. Instructors will make an effort to give counselors a chance to shoot if time allows.

Camp-Wide Activities

Each evening during the week, we will be having a camp-wide activity before worship. This time is intended to promote camper interaction with other age groups, volunteers, and staff. Please participate in these camp-wide activities as you are able and help manage campers needs.

Make-up Activity Time

We have thunderstorms regularly over the summer. As part of that, it is built into the schedule to have make up time if a group misses a scheduled activity. The Assistant Director will confirm with your group the day before or morning of what was missed and what time you make up session is scheduled. If your group did not miss any activities, there will be a large group game for you to participate in such as dodgeball or capture the flag.

Bible Study

Your job is to lead Bible study and ensure the messages for the day and week are presented to campers in a way they can understand and bring home with them when they leave camp. Bible study is an important time in the week for our campers to grow in their understanding of God and faith. If you need help or your program does not lead Bible Study, please contact the camp staff with questions or to find out who will be leading this for your campers.

Meal Times

Volunteer counselors will eat with their group. Please make sure there is only one counselor at each of your groups' tables. Try to have the campers use good manners and correct them when they do not. Please try to get your campers to eat things that will fuel them for the day. If you have a particularly picky camper that won't eat anything, let our Assistant Director or Director know so they can help find solutions. Keep track of campers going to the bathrooms and have campers help in the cleaning up process.

Shower/Changing Time

Shower time presents many challenges. During this time, counselors should be within earshot of campers so they can know what is going on even though they need to give campers privacy. When campers need to change clothes, counselors should also be within earshot and stagger campers so they can have the necessary privacy to change in their rooms. There are signs on bathroom doors to keep track of who is in the bathroom at the time.

Night/Sleeping

Counselors are the only adults with the campers during sleeping times, (unless designed differently with the director in the spring). Nighttime supervision of campers is not part of the Camp Staffs' normal duties. If you feel your group of volunteers is not able to provide adequate supervision of the campers throughout the night, please speak with the Assistant Director or Director as soon as possible.

Personal Appearance

Your grooming and appearance make a difference in the trust that we build with campers, parents, and other staff members. We expect you to wear staff shirts and nametags when asked. Staff and Volunteers are encouraged to use good judgment in their clothing—including being thoughtful about messages and symbols on clothing, and appropriate modesty. Staff and Volunteers should keep in mind the rigorous schedule of camp and dress appropriately.

Health

All persons must be in good health so as to meet the demands of rigorous camp life. They will strive to keep hours and habits that will keep them in excellent physical condition. Each volunteer shall have on file before the start of camp a health form listing any conditions that the camp should be aware of as well as emergency contact information. This information is held in confidence. Please share any health concerns that arise during the camp week. If you feel ill, it is critical that you share this with the Nurse or Director.

During summer camp a nurse or camp health aid is available for consultation if needed. Over the counter medications may be distributed to volunteers in accordance with the Camp's Health Policy. Minors under the age of 18 must have a signed health form from a parent or guardian to receive any over the counter medications.

Volunteers MUST keep medicine locked in their car or locked in their room if not keeping it with the nurse. ONLY medicines prescribed to you and on your health form should be taken. If a volunteer has an emergency medicine prescribed, they should have that with them at camp.

Lodging and Meals

Volunteers allergies and food needs are important to us. Please let our staff know of these ahead of time if possible. Please communicate with our kitchen staff if your food needs are not being met during the week.

Gratuities and Tips

Camp staff are not permitted to accept gratuities. Donations may be made towards camperships or our wish list in a staff member's name.

Store Tab

Volunteers can run a store tab to be paid on Friday. Your children can put items on your store tabs.

Vehicle Parking

All cars are to be parked in designated areas, we recommend parking in the pool parking lot. All valuables should be locked in the trunk or left in the office. We suggest all cars be locked.

Leaving the Camp

If you need to leave the camp during your time at camp, please speak with the Assistant or Site Director. CITs are not allowed to leave the camp. Volunteers may not drive campers in their personal vehicle. If driving to do an errand for camp you must wear your seatbelt and abide by all State and Federal Laws.

Inclusivity Statement
(Revised 2025)

In 2024 the United Methodist Church voted to affirm the ministry of LGBTQIA+ clergy and affirm clergy participation in LGBT weddings. The effects of this significant move towards full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ persons in the UMC are still being felt. Unfortunately, some congregations and members chose to leave the UMC. Even for those who chose to stay, these decisions have caused tumult and complexities for many congregations and members.

Retreat & Camping Ministries remains committed to providing camp opportunities that utilize experiential learning and communal Christian living to guide all individuals as they grow in love of God, self, neighbor, and nature. With this goal in mind, Camp Harmison, Manidokan Camp & Retreat Center, and The West River Center will continue to be a welcoming, safe, and supportive place for our LGBTQIA+ siblings.

Despite the conflict and split of Methodist groups, it is our hope and prayer that we continue to serve and minister to people regardless of denominational affiliation.

Each week at camp we strive to create a loving Christian community in which we play, learn, and experience God together as one body. The welcome of all people and the diversity of the group is one of the most powerful elements of the camp experience. We form authentic relationships with each other and learn how to lovingly live with each other through our similarities and our differences. These shared experiences at camp demonstrate God's love, creativity, and grace in ways that campers, volunteers, and staff remember and continue to live into long after camp has ended.

We continue to work with passion and intentionality to offer hospitality and programs which break down all exclusionary practices, including those around race, gender, ability and economic status.

Smoking/Alcohol/Drugs/Vaping Policy
(Revised 2020)

Baltimore-Washington Conference Retreat and Camping Ministries prohibits the possession, use, sale, purchase, or transfer of illicit drugs, controlled substances, marijuana, marijuana products, electronic cigarettes (vaping devices), or alcohol at any BWC Conference sponsored event or at any BWC owned property. The BWC RCM strictly enforces state of Maryland laws regarding alcohol and does not tolerate the illegal use, possession, or sale of intoxicating beverages, minors in possession, furnishing alcohol to minors, possession of open containers, driving under the influence, and exhibiting unruly or intoxicated behavior. In addition, BWC RCM does not permit any form of advertising of tobacco, marijuana, or alcoholic products, including clothing.

Reporting to work (paid or volunteer) while under the influence of alcohol, marijuana or marijuana products, or illegal drugs is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action. Abuse of prescription or non-prescription drugs will be considered illegal drug usage. Employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees may be subject to drug/alcohol testing based upon reasonable suspicion.

Smoking or chewing tobacco use is permitted only in designated areas. Electronic cigarettes or vaping in any form is prohibited. Your supervisor should know if you need to smoke. Smoking in the presence of campers or others who are under 21 is forbidden. It is illegal to share/provide/invite any drugs, alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, or vaping with anyone under 21.

Camper possession, use, sale, purchase, or transfer of illicit drugs, controlled substances, marijuana, marijuana products, electronic cigarettes, tobacco, or alcohol is strictly prohibited. Camper's belongings may be subject to search based upon reasonable suspicion. Campers found to have violated this policy will have their parent or guardian contacted and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from camp.

Ministering Through Conflicts

Some definitions of Conflict

- 1) A difference of opinion about the ways, means or ends of dealing with real-life issues
- 2) A struggle with emotional threat to one's self-esteem that can lead to acts of self-defense
- 3) Two bodies of matter trying to occupy the same space at the same time. These Bodies can be people, ideas, values, etc. The space can be leadership, decision-making, clarifying values, etc.

Our Goal as a Staff Team

Conflicts at camp are inevitable. They tend to come up quickly and explosively due to fact that you live and work with the same small group of people. You also work long, hard hours and can be under a lot of stress. Please be proactive in dealing with conflict in ways that help you to be self-aware and healthy relationally. We want to work towards resolving conflict and seeking reconciliation in ways that are loving, fostering forgiveness, and creating and celebrating unity both within our staff team and camping ministry communities.

Some scripture that helps direct us towards understanding conflict:

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they will be called sons of God. (Matthew 5:9)

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or tax collector. I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." (Matthew 18: 15-20)

A new command I give you; Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13: 34, 35)

In addition, there were many conflicts between people in Bible stories. As you think about some, you should be able to name what are both the healthy and non-healthy ways people handled conflict.

In our camp we might see conflicts this summer in some of these SYMPTOMS:

Division in the staff	Informal cliques	Hostile language
Acting out/over-reacting	Anxiety	Talking behind people's backs
Triangles	Win/Lose attitude	Physical, emotional, spiritual fatigue/illness
Withholding information	Direct Protest	Sabotage of self or others

We might see these SOURCES of conflict:

Staff/Community change or traditions change	Theological differences
Organizational structure (who is in charge?)	Differing expectations
Leadership style	Stress (self-organizational, communal)
Desire for power	Fear (of change, failure, loss, etc.,)
Unmet needs of person involved	Racism/gender issues/age-ism/other isms
Projecting unresolved hurt/pain	Insecurity/need for control

What we will NOT do this summer

We will not debate the value of people or their inclusion into the body of Christ or the life of the Church. We will not exclude people or ideas about people, but we will instead follow our welcome statement of inclusion and diversity and be hospitable, welcoming, and respectful of God's creativeness in each one of us as God's children.

Self-Reflection

Is this an inconvenience, a problem, or conflict (and how do I know?)

Is it actually a problem or is it just an inconvenience or something that is not to my liking? Many times you can decide if you have more than just a mild annoyance by paying attention to your feelings about the situation. Sometimes our pet peeves or patterns of our family of upbringing annoy us when we see them, but they aren't interpersonal conflicts.

What is going on for me? What role am I playing in the conflict? Why?

What emotions is this bringing up for me in the conflict?

Is my feeling of conflict a symptom of something else going on in a relational system?

Is this the time and place?

If you have decided that the situation you are facing is indeed a problem or conflict to you, the second question to ask is whether this is the best time and the best place to address the problem.

What are my chances of at least a small measure of success initially?

Most important problems or conflicts are not solved quickly, easily, or completely. As part of the assessment process, you can mentally measure how close your first assertive step might bring you to your overall goal for the problem situation. How critical is this for you? Is what you might accomplish worth the effort and energy of exploring the conflict?

Helpful Process Hints for Dealing with Interpersonal Conflict

Approach Relationships with an Assertive Position

Assertive behavior honors the self while honoring others. Assertive people authentically care for others and engage in God-pleasing self-care at the same time. It is the constructive way of living and relating to others. It reflects concern about being honest, direct, open, and natural in relations with others. Assertive behavior is non-defensive, open to clear thinking, good listening, good expressions of thoughts and feelings.

Assertive behavior approaches people directly, not by triangulating. Talk directly to the person(s) with whom you are experiencing conflict or disagreement. Do this away from other staff or campers. Do not gossip or try to get others to agree to your side of things.

Avoid Aggressive Responses:

Passive Behavior is behavior that moves against self. The word passive means, "not resisting" or "not acting." Passive problem-solving behaviors are procrastination, escape, passive-aggressive sneak attacks, or denial a problem exists.

Aggressive behavior is behavior that moves against others. The aggressive person has few internal restraints and recognizes few external limits. The worst type of aggression is passive aggression. This is a subtle and underhanded way of moving against another person or manipulation of other people to get one's own way. Aggressive problem-solving behavior usually escalates a conflict by the use of name-calling, blaming, insults, labels, or physical aggression to get your way no matter what the consequence or harm it brings.

The approach of a one-one meeting:

1. Do what you can to reduce tension so that a conversation can occur
2. Set a time and place for the discussion.
3. Set some ground rules to build trust.
4. Stop blaming, speak from a first-person focus, "I" language.
5. Identify what the problem or issue of disagreement is.
6. Own the responsibility of your role in the conflict.
7. Listen to understand. Confirm what you heard from the other person. Affirm/validate the emotions of the other person.
8. Identify past attempts to resolve the problem or conflict that did not work.
9. Brainstorm. List all possible solutions. All participants should attempt to contribute possible solutions for the conflict issues.
10. Discuss and evaluate these possible solutions, searching for a mutually agreeable solution.
11. Covenant together to try one of these solutions. Stipulate what each person will do as he/she attempts to implement the solution.
12. Agree to meet again to check in on how this solution has worked. Choose a time to do so.

Mediated Meeting

If the one-on-one meeting did not produce sufficient progress, involve one or two others to serve as mediators. Choose an impartial Camp Counselor, Assistant Director, or Site Director. If your own conflict is with the Camp Director or Assistant Director, together you may reach out to talk with the BWCUMC Retreat and Camping Ministry Director, Chris Schlieckert, as mediator.

Mediated meetings should follow a similar format to those above. Conversation during this time is done with respect and in confidence. All parties involved in the problem or conflict are asked in advance if they will abide by the decision of the governing group. After listening to both parties and discussing possible solutions, after agreeing on a plan of action and accountability, the volunteer director and leadership team will offer its recommendation.

CAMPERS AND CAMPER BEHAVIOR

Get To Know Your Campers!

Camp is about relationships: our relationship with God and our relationship with each other. Campers want to feel special and know that you care about them. Listed below are some good questions to ask as campers arrive. The more you know about your campers the more powerful your relationship will be and the more impact camp can have on their lives. Be intentional about choosing a different camper at each meal and each time that you are walking to a new activity to talk to and learn more about.

About Home

1. Where is their home?
2. How many brothers and sisters do they have? Who else is in their family?
3. Where do they go to school? Do they like school?
4. What is their favorite subject at school?
5. Do they attend church regularly? Are they familiar with the Bible?
6. What is their favorite activity at home?
7. Do they have any pets at home?

About Camp

8. Have they ever been to camp before this week?
9. Do they feel safe at camp? On the trails? In the rafts or canoes?
10. Are they accepted by the group? Why or why not? Who is a good friend to them in the group?
How are they a good friend to others?
11. Are they prepared for camp with the things they brought?
12. How quickly do they fall asleep at lights out?
13. What is their favorite camp food?
14. Did they make any new friends at camp?
15. What are their favorite camp activities?
16. Did they feel the presence of God during the week?
17. Do you think they'll come back next year?
18. Are these campers potential summer staffers?

About Who They Are

19. In what way are they a leader or a follower?
20. What do they know about Jesus?
21. Can they sing and/or dance? Are they artistic?
22. What other hobbies or skills do they have?
23. What are they proud of accomplishing?
24. Can they speak comfortably in front of others?
25. What is their favorite band/movie/tv show/etc?
26. Can they name any spiritual gifts that they have or think they have?

West River Covenant

This summer we will grow in our love of...

...God...

Draw near to God in Bible study/ worship
Strive to give God your best and whole self
Be open and expecting of God moments

...Self...

Try new things and see what works for you
Speak up for yourself (self-care)
Strive to give God your best and whole self

...Neighbor...

Be forgiving of self and others: we are all God's children!
Inspire and encourage others
Have a servant's heart to care for those around you

...Nature.

Respect nature by keeping it clean and staying safe
Find beauty in the places and people around you everyday
Respect God's World

Group Covenant Making

Camper groups will set covenants within the first 24 hours of begin at camp. Ideally, for week-long events, this is Sunday night after the All-Camp Welcome and Rules. It is helpful for each cabin to have a covenant that they all agree to with basics of how to treat each other, belongings, camp, and counselors.

Introduction:

Invite introductions by campers, volunteers and staff. 1) What is your name? 2) What communities do you belong to? 3) What is something significant that you like about your family or that you think sets your family apart from some others?

Define:

Our covenant is our agreement to how we will live together. We will give each other grace and forgiveness for things that are mistakes as we learn to live together, but we will uphold the covenant as shared expectations. Just like you signed the Camper Behavior Covenant with Camp (have copies to show) and your Parent, now we will create and sign one together as a group.

Emphasize:

- 1) **Respect** each other, each other's things and each other's values. Help campers to talk about respecting diversity. Talk about not bullying.
- 2) **Process:** When we have a question, conflict, or misunderstanding...
SLOW DOWN SUSPEND JUDGEMENT
ASK QUESTION PRACTICE PERSPECTIVE (Walk in someone else's shoes).
- 3) **Identity:** We each see life based on our own experiences in our families, region, race, gender, abilities, who we love and who loves us.
- 4) **Belonging:** We ALL Belong to God, and we ALL belong at camp!
- 5) **Relationship Dimensions:** God—You—Others—Creation
We belong at camp, we live into the camp rules and our camp and group covenant, and we help each other live into it together.
- 6) **Wellness:** An additional goal is to keep one another healthy this summer. Speak up! If you feel sick in any way. Health and Wellness are Critical!
- 7) **Privacy:** Changing rooms and bathrooms are private places
- 8) **Appropriate Touch and Boundaries:** Do not touch other campers (OR allow someone to touch you)
 - In ways that they don't want to be touched
 - In places covered by a bathing suit
 - In any way that is sexual or violent
 - At any time you are not in a public location
 - In ways that involve wrestling or tickling

Speak up! If at any point someone is harming you or if you believe someone is harming someone else, whether that is a camper or an adult, tell another adult immediately. We want campers to be safe and feel safe at camp.
- 9) **How can we express this in our Group Covenant?**

Behavior Management

Campers' behavior has many roots. One week at summer camp will not cure all behavioral problems. As a counselor, understand that children bring their past with them in their behavior. If you can determine the root of the behavioral problem, it will give you clues on how to deal with the behavior.

Keep these things in mind as you work with your group:

- 1) Campers want to feel included: to be a part of something!
- 2) Campers want to have fun and be active!
- 3) Campers want and need limits, but they will test them.
- 4) As simple as it sounds, sometimes rest and drinking more water can change a behavior.

Reasons Behind the Behavior

As you go through your time together it is helpful to be aware of some potential reasons for "surface" behavior problems. Any or all of the following could be a cause of behavior problems:

- Homesickness
- Frustration, unfulfilled needs
- Conflict with a camper/staff member
- Outside conflicts; problems with family, friends, or others can follow campers to camp
- Illness or Exhaustion
- Desire for recognition/attention
- Need for medicine or food

Managing a Negative Behavior

Our camp advocates a positive guidance and discipline policy *with* an emphasis on positive reinforcement, redirection, prevention, and the development of self-discipline. Remind campers that camp rules are established for safety and to ensure that we have a common standard of behavior. As staff members, we need to show the campers that we see the need for following the rules ourselves. (Please do not contradict the established guidelines).

Corrective discipline must be a creative, caring effort on the part of the counselor, and it must be seen as such by the camper. Always suggest positive alternatives to unacceptable behavior before it gets out of control. Enforcement of all rules, **at all times**, will be without malice and consistent in application.

1. Discuss rules with campers and identify behaviors that are out-of-bounds.
2. Set up a step-by-step process with consequences of breaking any rule.
3. Give your camper a chance to explain why they broke the rule.
4. Avoid lecturing and embarrassing the camper. Approach them aside from other campers.
5. Stress that the behavior is the problem, not the camper, and help the camper to name the change in behavior that needs to be seen.
6. Invite a period of quiet time
7. Restrict from current activity, then accept camper back in the group
8. Restrict to adult supervision
9. Perform extra duties related to the problem, i.e. , cleaning up the mess made.
10. Conference with Director or Assistant Director
11. Conference with parent/Director
12. Removal from the camp

Other Time-Tested Strategies for Behavior Management

Try to incorporate some of these tips into your strategy for your events' behavior management.

Be friendly. Always show interest in what individual campers are doing and how they are progressing.	Praise good qualities and actions.	Know as many campers as possible by name. Know something about them. Build relationships.
Remember you are a role model and should obey the rules yourself.	A sense of humor is extremely valuable. Use it frequently.	Maintain your poise; don't let the campers "get to you."
Don't take misbehavior personally. It is a choice the camper is making.	Keep in mind that misbehavior is seldom willful. Try to find the cause by reading between the lines.	Try to see the camper's side of the situation. Discuss it with them until you understand.
Distract, distract, distract – one of the best methods to control behavior is to keep them busy!	Show your disapproval of behavior through your speech, facial expression, and action.	Being close when you note a potential problem can keep it from actually occurring.
Allow natural consequences to occur if the results are NOT too severe.	Withholding privileges or taking away something a camper likes must be timely and appropriate.	Every child has needs; their behavior will give you clues as to what those needs are.
Sending a child to "time out" allows time to cool down and think about behavior change.	Enlist other leaders (peers or staff) to provide role models.	Have a group meeting to discuss and resolve generalized problems.
Avoid getting campers overtired, keyed-up, or tense. Get enough sleep.	Be willing to admit when you're wrong and ask for forgiveness.	

The Question Technique

Use the following steps after you observe a camper participating in negative behavior. Stay calm.

- 1) Calmly ask, "What were/are you doing?" Even though they may not say it, the negative behavior will come to their mind.
- 2) Calmly ask, "Are you supposed to (identify behavior) here at camp?" Your camper then must make a value judgment on their behavior.
- 3) Calmly ask, "What happens when you (negative behavior) here at camp?" Your camper now brings the consequence to mind. This consequence is either based on the camper-defined rules or your camp's non-negotiable rules.
- 4) Present a choice to your camper. "You have a choice to make. You can (negative behavior) PAUSE and what will happen is (consequence) or you can (desired behavior) and (positive outcome)." Your camper will have to choose how to act and accept the consequences.

COMMON BEHAVIOR CHALLENGES

Discriminatory Language

Our campers come to us with a myriad of social and cultural influences and biases because of their social location, class, education, and diverse backgrounds. It often happens that campers use language and verbal expressions that are not appropriate to our camp setting, but are directly informed by their social and cultural influences. For example, you may have a camper who expresses displeasure in something by calling it "gay" or "retarded," it can also include phrases such as "you run like a girl." This is not the type of language we use at camp or want to encourage. With language that is discriminatory to persons or communities, especially marginalized and vulnerable persons or communities, we want to intervene,

educate, and redirect. If a camper continues to use discriminatory language after educational intervention, a warning should be issued. If it continues, the Director or Assistant Director should be informed, so that they can have a further and direct conversation with the camper.

Stealing

Prevent stealing by establishing an atmosphere of trust within all members of the group. Discuss with them during your first time together the importance of respecting each other's things. Discourage them from leaving their valuables out in the open.

If stealing happens:

- Give the "offender" the opportunity to return the article anonymously, without punishment.
- You may need to be a detective if the item is not returned as you talk with campers.
- If evidence is there to identify an offender, deal with them privately. Give them a chance to make amends!
- If the problem persists, inform the Assistant Director! DO NOT GO THROUGH THEIR THINGS!

Some ways to provide structure without having to become a Debbie Downer or Drill Sergeant:

- Establish clear expectations immediately, the group covenant is a great place (relationship, rules, etc.)
- Balance structure with freedom
- Reinforce and encourage desirable behavior

Things to do about breaking rules or refusing to cooperate:

- Give your camper a warning!
- Be consistent and impartial
- Stay calm
- Don't embarrass them
- The BEHAVIOR is the problem, not the camper. There are no bad campers, only bad behaviors
- Explain why the behavior is a problem
- Have consequences that make sense for the issue (sitting out for a bit due to safety concerns, picking up trash/ helping clean up if making a mess, etc)

Suggested Consequences:

- Quiet Time, for day camp: peace corner time; time for the camper to gather themselves and regulate their emotions or have a period to calm down
- Restriction from activity that they are currently doing. If it is not pool related, do not take away pool time
- Restriction to adult supervision
- Extra Duties
- Conference with Assistant Director or Site Director
- Conference with Parent/Director
- Removal from camp

Inform the Assistant Director of all disciplinary measures.

Never allow discipline to include any of the following: depriving a camper of sleep, food, or restroom privileges, placing a camper alone without supervision, or subjecting a camper to ridicule, shaming, or corporal punishment.

Conduct periodic evaluation of the program/staff/camper groups to ensure that the camp environment is not contributing to the behavior problems.

Bullying and Fighting

What is bullying?

Bullying is when one person repeatedly exerts an imbalance of power over another for their own gain of pleasure.

The first key element is that **it is repeated**. This is not one time of pushing someone down in an argument or name-calling, which, while also requiring correction, comes to a halt once the circumstance or emotions are addressed.

The second element is that it comes from an **exertion of power**. This can be physical, emotional, or social power imbalance. It is not a younger sibling taking your things without asking. It is not you and your best friend playing pranks on each other. It is someone who is using power or influence to make another person do something or feel bad.

The third element is that the purpose comes from the **bully's personal pleasure** in gaining money or material items, of gaining attention and esteem from other people being frightened, and in having pleasure in seeing another person be harmed or cry.

What might bullying look like at camp?

At camp, bullying might look like using influence to repeatedly keep someone from being a part of a group through name-calling or story-telling, repeatedly destroying things that matter to another person, demanding that someone buy them things from the store, or harassing someone in the showers by taking their clothes or commenting on their body. Bullies want you to cry, run away, feel scared, sad, ashamed or alone. Physically, a bully might punch, push from behind, pinch, or pull hair. Emotionally, a bully might hurt feelings by calling names. Socially, a bully seeks to ostracize by whispering about others, leaving them out, or manipulating in other ways to make the victim feel like no one likes you. Often there is a threat that if the camper tells someone, the bully will hurt them worse in some way.

What can campers do about it?

Campers can stand up for themselves, tell an adult, stand up for their friend, and avoid situations where the bully is able to connect with them alone.

If you are being bullied, you can work to gain confidence to **say "no!"** Bullies are less likely to try to intimidate people who are assertive and resourceful. Practice or find coaching for yourself to stand up for yourself, act strong, and speak out!

Telling an adult is not tattling when someone is being hurt. Tattling is trying to get someone else in trouble. Telling helps to protect your friend and get your friend out of trouble. Being bullied hurts our hearts and confuses our brain. The bullying is more about the bully than about the person who is being bullied. This means that the person being hurt has most often done nothing wrong.

Standing up for your friend is called being an **Active Bystander**. Often, when people see something happening to another person, we get quiet or avoid calling attention to ourselves as we hope that it stops. If we instead stand up and speak out, bullies are less likely to continue their behavior.

Finally, **don't go** places where you know that someone might not treat you well. This is called steering clear. A way to protect your own safety is to avoid locations and conversations with those who have been bullying. This in no way means a camper is responsible for being the target of bullying.

What can staff do about it?

The first goal for our staff member is prevention. The second goal is to be prepared to respond.

It is important to begin our week with a strong covenant discussion about expectations, respect, being an active bystander, and asking for help. Be clear and consistent about expected behaviors from all children. Be clear that no one deserves to be bullied. Be clear that we will not accept bullying. This creates an environment of safety for everyone. Modelling appropriate behavior and providing open discussion about bullying can also be helpful. Be clear with yourself about the differences between camper disagreements or teasing one another and campers' bullying.

Observes dynamics of kids. Pay attention to children who suddenly seem withdrawn or show abrupt lack of interest in something that was previously important. Be active in listening to camper interactions. Step in when you hear a red flag. Make a note about this in your camp's RED FLAGS AND RAISED EYEBROWS (RFRE) binder for conversations or behaviors that may need additional follow-up by a camp staff director.

Confront campers about unacceptable behaviors, name why they are unacceptable, be sure the camper can name the acceptable behavior, tell your volunteer director, and make a note in the RFRE binder.

Confronting campers a second time should include the involvement of a director either during or immediately after the encounter.

When does bullying become hate speech?

When bullying involves specific singling out of a person based on gender, race, sexuality, culture, ability, etc, then this behavior continues to be unacceptable and approaches harassment. When language or actions are used to demean, make fun of, or marginalize persons for these same reasons mentioned above, then a camp director should be notified immediately.

What about fighting?

Serious fighting often evolves from what starts out as just "fooling around." Keep a close eye on such horseplay to keep it from getting out of hand. Fights that involve serious contact (hitting, kicking, biting, punching) require both combatants to visit the nurse, who will check for bruising and internal injuries. An incident report should be completed.

Once combatants have regained composure, try one or more of the following:

1. Calmly discuss the situation separately with each individual. Listen with empathy for the underlying concern and emphasize resolving the problem.
2. Hold a face-to-face hearing where each participant describes their version without interruption from the other.
3. Update the Camp Director and complete an incident report

DEBRIEFING WITH YOUR CAMPERS

Know what happened! Each camper or cabin of campers is unique, so what works with one group definitely may not work for another group. Be flexible and try your own adaptations. Always remember that a second opinion is better than one opinion (and that where two or more are gathered in the name of Jesus, Jesus will also be there....)

Simple Facilitation Model: After a conflict, or confusing activity, three important questions to ask are:

1. What happened? Get FACTS
2. What now? Get FEELINGS
3. What next? MOVING FORWARD

What do good facilitators do?

1. Set good ground rules
2. Keep a safe environment
3. Model support (eye contact, good body language, etc.)
4. Make sure closure occurs
5. End Positively

What do facilitators do during the activity to help the debriefing process?

- Develop attending behavior (pay attention!)
- Pay attention to the NON-VERBAL cues you may send.
- Pay attention to what you say!

2 Additional Resources:

We have a training recording if you'd like to learn more about adverse childhood experiences or trauma responses. In addition, we are hiring a mental health professional to be available for coaching through the summer with unresolving camper behaviors.

West River Discipline Policy
(Retreat and Camping Ministries 2019)

The Retreat and Camping Ministries Discipline Policy is borne of several core components that aim to uphold and defend the value of both the community and its individual members. Because so many different adults will interact with a camper over the course of any given week, it is important that we have shared expectations for how we will respond to the behavior of campers, and what we expect from them in return.

Camp operates as a team - from a counselor in training, all the way to our Bishop. This means that we are not alone in any situation or decision we make. Be certain to share disciplinary decisions with your team and members of the camp staff so we can all stay informed. Volunteer teams should have regular check ins with one another, as well as the Directors and the Assistant Director on their site. In addition, record disciplinary decisions and behavior in the Red RFRE binder or an incident report depending on the magnitude of the incident. These details help the director communicate with parents. The more significant the incident, the more quickly a plan should be made to communicate the details.

Any issue which involves threats of, or actual violence or abuse should immediately be passed along to camp Directors. A small push on Monday can become a punch on Thursday. Any racist, sexist, or anti-LGBT insults should be documented. Furthermore, with the right adults involved, challenging situations can be more easily managed and the less likely that things will escalate. If we attempt to handle everything on our own, it is likely we will wear thin and campers will not get the best we have to offer.

In addition, many of us can look back on authority figures in our lives and remember the ones who treated us well in our worst moments. The way we handle campers who are struggling says things about us, them, and our understanding of the kingdom of God. It is critical to remember that a much larger picture exists in each of these situations and our actions can help build up, or tear down, how our campers understand themselves and the love God has for them.

When a situation is being resolved, remember that good discipline should contain 3 crucial pieces:

First, it should be Restorative. If a behavior warrants discipline than something within the community or relationship has been broken and discipline should seek to repair those breaks. It is not enough, nor is it okay to simply have someone take a 'time out,' 'sit in a corner,' or any other variation of removing a member from the community. Restorative discipline works to reintegrate people into community, to express honestly and openly the issues caused by the behavior, and to enable action in the future that will be more successful. Discipline can never include actual or threats of physical or emotional violence, forceful restraint, or restriction from basic needs: food, water, shelter, sleeping/beds, or toilets.

Second, it should be Logical/Rational. Whatever response we take to someone's actions should have a clear linear relationship to those actions. If someone were to curse at us in frustration, it would not be logical/rational to take away pool time. Using foul language has nothing to do with swimming. However, if someone is unsafe during a water activity and refuses to follow rules and instructions it is perfectly logical/rational to explain that such behavior could make them unsafe in the pool, and thus pool time could be taken away.

Third, it should be Timely. Camp seeks to build communities reminiscent of the kingdom of God so we must remember that the way we handle campers in these situations has the capacity to teach them the grace of the Gospel. As such, discipline should occur in the immediate moments surrounding the behavior, and once finished should be quickly forgotten. If you are holding someone accountable on Friday for

something they did on Tuesday, they may come to believe they are the summation of their sins. However, if you move through the problem quickly and are able to treat them well after the issue is resolved, they will recognize that nothing can separate them from the love we have to offer through Jesus Christ.

Discipline is challenging, but it is also an opportunity for us to show grace, mercy, and love. Remember to lean on your team, pass the word along, and ensure you are following our three core components. If you have questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to your camp site director staff!

HOMESICKNESS

Often, it is a camper's first time away from home that causes homesickness...no matter what age! Homesickness is a form of acute temporary depression, and depression is expressed as grief over a situation, which can include separation from family or friends.

Campers can have homesickness due to other factors as well. Trying to get to the bottom of homesickness can be an impossible chore, so to make it easy on yourself, know that you are not in it alone...though try to do as much as you can yourself before including other adults. If the homesickness becomes a lot or is affecting other campers, get the Assistant Director involved. We sometimes call parents to see what they want to do- if they want to come get their child or want them to stay.

Some homesickness tips/trends

- Younger campers who are homesick are probably just out of routine. Try to tuck them in, give them a drink of water, pray with them, etc. If none of those work, ask them what their guardian at home does...they will tell you!
- Older campers who are homesick were probably either forced to come to camp or have an outside issue going on that they know they will have to deal with at camp, because distractions are gone.
- Group support- cabin support- can turn around a homesick camper in minutes.
- Let them pout. Ask them to join, ask them to participate, make a positive example out of someone. HAVE FUN. They will want to join. If not, let them sit and watch.
- Older campers who are homesick 9/10 of them have a cell phone. Don't let them out of your sight, and be sure to ask them. If they do have a fun, turn it in to the office and we'll put it in the safe.
- Be aware of campers when there might be something traumatic going on at home, and that's why they want to be there.
- Have them write a (supervised) letter to home; it often works with young campers.
- In situations where a camper may benefit from a parent's support to stay at camp, we may connect a parent with their camper, but only after the Assistant or Executive Director has connected with the family.

If you suspect a camper has a hidden cell phone or has used a camp phone to call home, notify the Assistant Director or the Executive Director immediately. A follow-up with the camper nearing a breaking point, suffering from deep anxiety or depression, or that "something else" is beneath their behavior, please share with the Assistant Director. A call home may be necessary to help make sure that we offer appropriate support and care to the camper.

DISCRETION/REPORTING/COMMUNICATION AROUND SENSITIVE ISSUES

- If a camper has shared something discrete or traumatic with their cabin or group, be sure to process it appropriately with them. It may be necessary to bring in the Assistant Director, Therapist, or Executive Director to help the campers talk through what they heard.

- Encourage campers that have a story that may be more than their cabin is ready or mature enough to hear to share it safely with you. Also encourage them to share appropriately with one another.
- Documenting what you heard by writing it down (behavior log) and sharing with the Assistant Director is essential to protect the camper and their story. Remember we are all mandatory reporters!
- If a group of campers have experienced a particular traumatic story it may be necessary to talk through some of what they have heard with their parents or guardians.

Above all, please keep communication open. We want to be able to support and protect all campers, their lives, and their needs. It's the best way to show them that God loves them and that we love them too!

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES):

- Definition: Repeated or severe traumatic threats during childhood development, so pervasive that they change our physiology: maternal depression, emotional and sexual abuse, substance abuse, domestic violence, homelessness, physical and emotional neglect, divorce, mental illness, and incarceration.
- Impacts Learning – Trouble organizing narrative. Cause & effect isn't clear. Can't take other's perspective. Problems with attention, emotions, and executive functioning.
- Emotional Management – Experiences have disrupted or undermined capacity to regulate emotions. Sometimes child is in trauma response. In other times emotions are stifled or depressed. Need adults to co-regulate.
- Building Resiliency – Kids need at least 1 positive supportive adult to help them frame the world, celebrate success, learn problem-solving, explore hobbies or interests, set goals, trust in dreams, and make positive memories.

Responding to Trauma Response

- Be present, tuned in, supportive, kind, sensitive
- Think of being a safe haven for the child
- Make eye contact, smile, use a gentle voice, get on child's level, listen and help them return to calm
- Ask, "What happened to you?"

Attachment Based Relational Practices

Playfulness – Play is the child's most natural way to engage, learn, and process the world.

Acceptance – Accept thoughts and feelings without judgement or trying to change them.

Curiosity – Take the stance of "not knowing" and ask questions to know the child. Ask open-ended questions using observations of what you do see, like, "what upset you just now about what Samuel said?"

Empathy – Compassion, comfort, support. Don't add stress or confusion.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND PSYCHOLOGY

SET UP FOR SUCCESS

Children need structure and boundaries to thrive. Setting and maintaining clear expectations from the beginning of camp helps campers know what to expect and what is expected of them.

It's helpful to have clear rules that are presented in different ways for different learning styles. For example, you can say out loud that everyone needs to have a towel, their swimsuit on, water shoes, and water bottle before going to the Banana Boat. To reach the other styles, you may consider having a page hanging in the cabin with pictures as a checklist of what campers need and having them show you each item before standing on the porch to leave. While this might seem monotonous, it helps campers understand what is expected from them and helps you ensure they have everything they need for an activity. This also means you will be required to demonstrate the type of behavior you want campers to emulate. For example, if you don't want them sticking into cliques, you shouldn't be only talking with other counselors or only specific campers. One helpful visual you can try is to have a list of what behaviors are not acceptable and then across from that, put the behavior you do want to see so your list is not just of negatives but an alternative for campers.

To help reinforce good behavior, be sure to call it out and praise it when you see it. Campers shouldn't only hear about their negative behavior, they should also be told when they're doing a good job/ doing the right thing/ trying hard.

When things don't go according to plan, it's always easier to stop things early than letting them escalate. If a camper continually teases another camper, it is far easier to have a conversation with them the first time it happens about why that is inappropriate and then impose a consequence the next time it happens (maybe they have to hold the doors for everyone all day and they'll be last in line to remind them to take care of others and put them first) than it is to let it happen a few times which makes other campers think this type of behavior is acceptable which causes a larger issue.

Give campers as much information as possible- do a tour of camp so they know where all the places they'll go are, wear a nametag so they know who their counselor is, talk through what the activity is and what you expect from campers during that time. We want our campers to thrive at camp and part of that is setting them up for success instead of just managing negative behaviors and experiences.

It can also be really helpful to divide your group into smaller groups, 20 or 24 campers is a lot! For day camp, each counselor can have a group of 10 that they do Bible study discussion with, circle time, and whatever times you need smaller groups. For overnight, you can divide campers equally into the number of counselors you have in the group. It's a lot easier to learn 10 names, know where 10 kids are, and build relationships with 10 than with the entire group.

Neurodiverse Kids at Camp

What is a meltdown? An intense emotional and physical response to feeling overwhelmed, often triggered by sensory overload, frustration, or stress. It's not a form of manipulation or a tantrum. During a meltdown, a camper might cry, scream, hit, or shut down completely. During this time, they need support, patience, and a calm environment to recover.

Some common triggers for neurodiverse campers can be

- Sensory overload or deprivation

- Change in routine
- Perceived injustice
- Making mistakes
- Criticism and feeling inferior
- People in their personal space
- Hunger and exhaustion or pain

A standard timeline for meltdowns can include the very early stages when the camper is at full capacity and a teaching moment can occur, if those needs aren't met and the camper is being triggered, their capacity goes down and they begin to become overwhelmed. Once they reach their threshold, a meltdown will occur. After the worst of the meltdown has passed, they need a recovery period to regroup because they often end up exhausted. Once they've had time to regain composure, there is time for a teachable moment again to talk through what happened and how to prevent it in the future.

To help prevent meltdowns, you need to be a calm presence that doesn't further their triggers. Breathe slowly and talk less, even if you feel very strongly, you will need to pretend it does not affect you so you can promote safety for the camper, yourself, and camp. You might need to pull them aside or outside of the main group so they have a chance to regroup and avoid the meltdown (make sure to stay in eye sight or with another person). Help validate the camper's experiences and feelings. You don't have to agree with them to validate that the feel a certain way and feelings are important.

Based on what type of behavior they exhibited during the meltdown (if it comes to that) you can work to discern what the camper needs. Pushing people away could mean they need a sense of control. Refusing to participate might mean they need an escape. Complaining might mean they need more attention. Think through how you might be able to offer what the camper needs in a positive way. The mindfulness section below offers some techniques to help calm campers down after a meltdown or for neurotypical children who just get wound up.

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is doing one thing at a time, in the present moment, with your full attention, and with acceptance. The acceptance part of mindfulness is about non-judgement. We often attach a consequence or meaning to things without being fully conscious of it. For example, we might look in the mirror at ourselves and criticize ourselves for how we look. The acceptance part of mindfulness would instead shift that thought so that we are simply noticing our inner thoughts as a critical thought.

Mindfulness Steps

1. Choose something to focus on
2. Begin to focus
3. Notice when you're attention wanders
4. Gently bring your attention back

Mindfulness Exercises

- **Counting Breaths:** Begin by turning your attention to your breath. Count one as you take a breath in and two as you take a breath out, and so on, count to ten then start over at one. Notice when your attention wanders away and gently pull it back without judgment.
- **Observe and Object:** Pick an object around you and turn your attention towards it. Examine the object with all of your senses. You may want to set a timer for yourself. Notice when your

attention wanders away and gently pull it back without judgment.

- Be the Gatekeeper to your Mind: Begin by turning your focus towards your thoughts. Imagine that you are standing at a gate and you are the gatekeeper for your thoughts. Simply notice the thoughts or feelings as they pass through without judgement. You might even notice metathoughts (thoughts about thoughts) such as a critical or harsh tone. If you find yourself trying to block thoughts just try and relax and observe these feelings. Notice when your attention wanders away and gently pull it back without judgment.

RELAXATION COPING SKILLS

When we get angry or upset our body moves in fight or flight. Here are some things that happen. Have these ever happened to you? What else do you feel in your body when you get upset?

Deep Breathing

- Inhalations: expand the diaphragm, fill the lungs (try to get hand or stuffed animal to lift)
- Exhalations: release all the air from the lungs (blow out the birthday candle)
- You can do different counting methods
- Inhale for a count, hold for a count, and then exhale for a count
- Inhale for a count, exhale for two counts longer

Guided Imagery

Waterfall of White Light

Close your eyes and begin to focus your attention on your breath. Give yourself the suggestion that with each exhalation your body becomes more and more relaxed.

Now imagine that a beautiful waterfall of warm white light is entering the top of your head. You feel its gentle healing energy throughout your brain and pouring over your face, your chin, and your neck. The waterfall of white light now continues to move into your chest and shoulders and back. It moves down your arms and hands and out through your fingertips, taking with it any stress that you have held in your body. The white light continues to flow into your abdomen and solar plexus, your pelvis and buttocks. It continues moving down into your thighs, knees, and calves. Now it enters your ankles and feet and goes out through your toes, taking with it any stress or discomfort that you have stored in your body. Now you are in a continuous waterfall of white light. Every part of your being is filled with white light. Allow this energy to wash over you, and enjoy the gentle calm it brings.

Now slowly bring yourself back to full waking consciousness. I will count to ten. Join me counting aloud at six, and open your eyes at ten, feeling relaxed and alert. One.. two.. three.. four.. five.. six.. seven.. eight.. nine... ten

NERVOUS SYSTEM LADDER

Our nervous system can move into three primary states. I find it helpful to imagine a ladder as a metaphor. Here it is also important to identify for yourself what each state looks, feels, and sounds like. Can you identify a specific memory associated with each state?

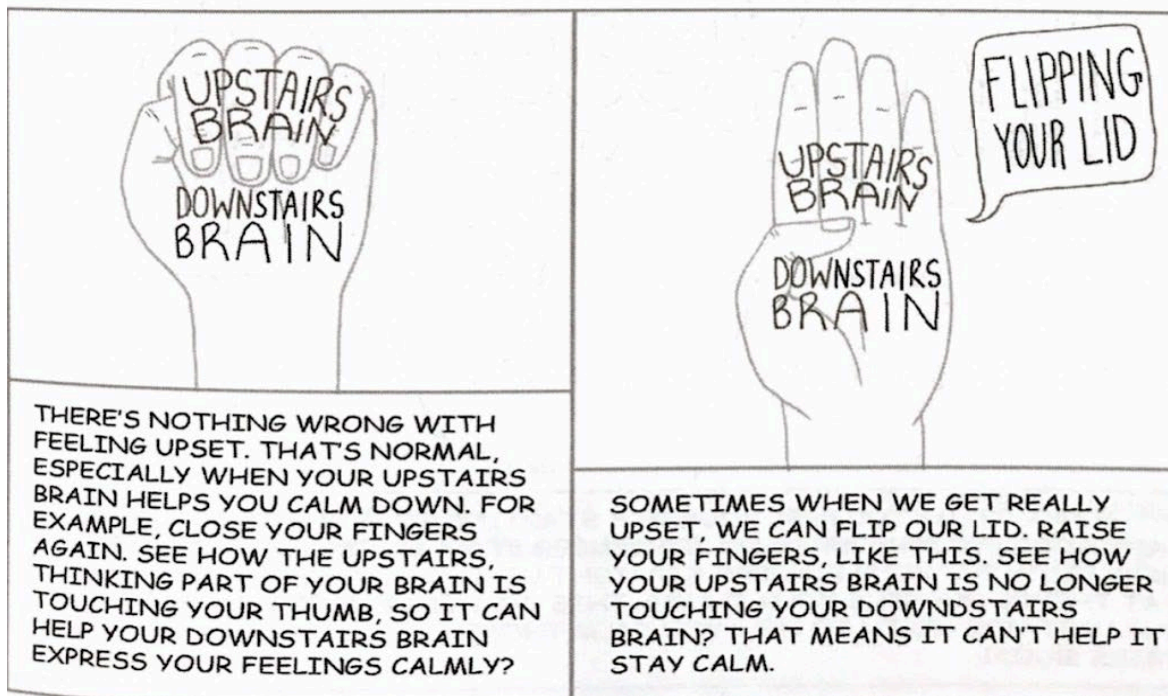
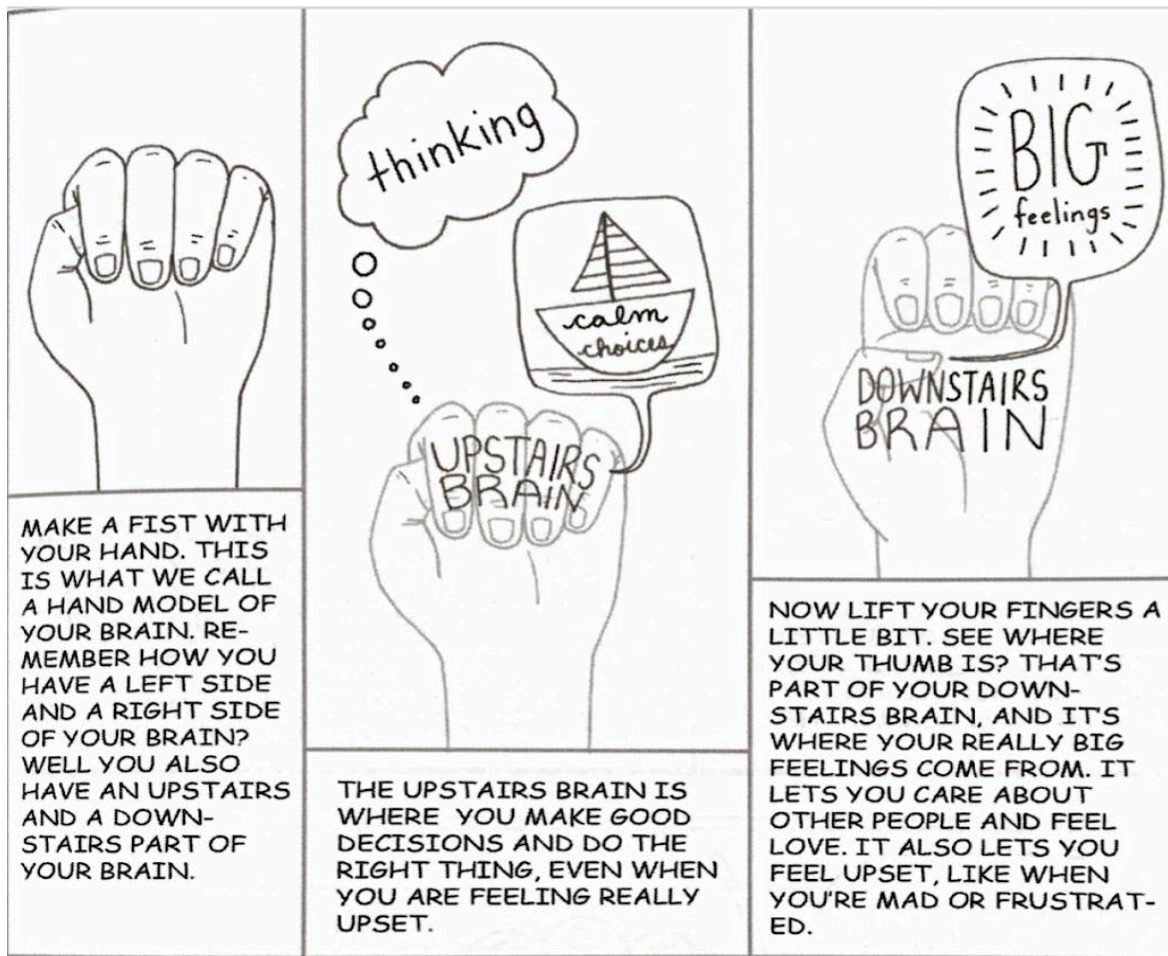
- At the top of the ladder our nervous system feels safe, regulated, calm, flexible, and resilient.
- In the middle of the ladder our nervous system feels protective, activated, ready for movement, fighting, running, freezing, or appeasing others.
- At the bottom of the ladder our nervous system feels protective, dysregulated.

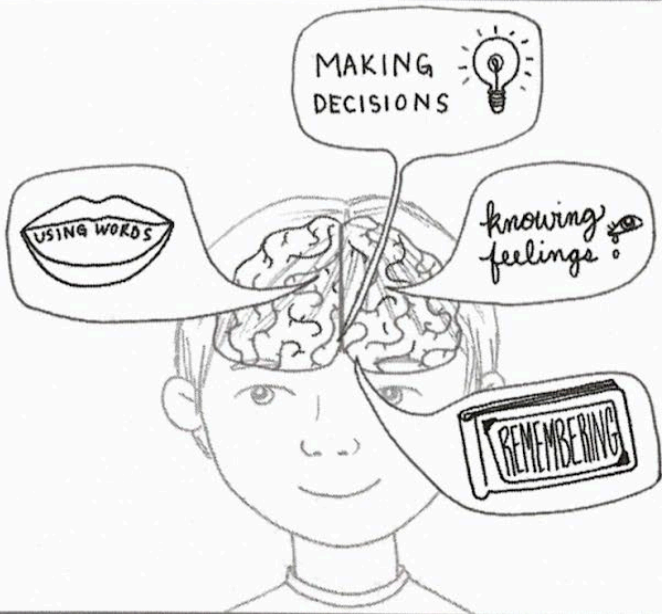
Anchoring

Our nervous system is an automatic and unconscious process. It is a relatively simplistic mechanism in that it either is regulated or it moves us into a protective state. On its own, it does not utilize logic, planning, thinking, or discerning. So we can collaborate with our nervous systems by helping it team up with our prefrontal cortex. We can help it by consciously moving back up the ladder through a process called “anchoring.” If we can identify and experience things that help us, or have helped us, regulate then it’s like throwing an anchor to the top of the ladder. The way to do this is to first identify your anchors. Who? What? When? Where? Once you’ve identified your anchors you can try actively seeking them out as they are accessible to you.

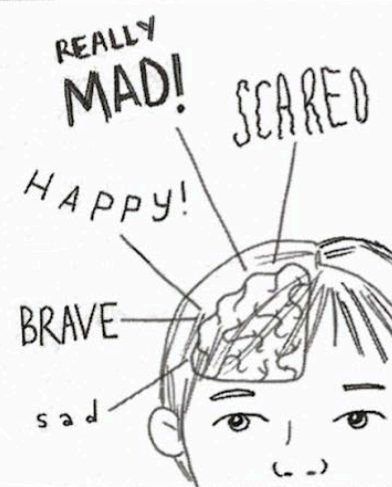
Savoring

Savoring is a particular anchoring exercise. To do a savoring exercise you must first identify a top of the ladder memory. Once you have identified a memory, use all of your senses to imagine yourself back in that memory. This exercise helps our nervous system regulate itself by intentionally reminding it of times when it was previously regulated.





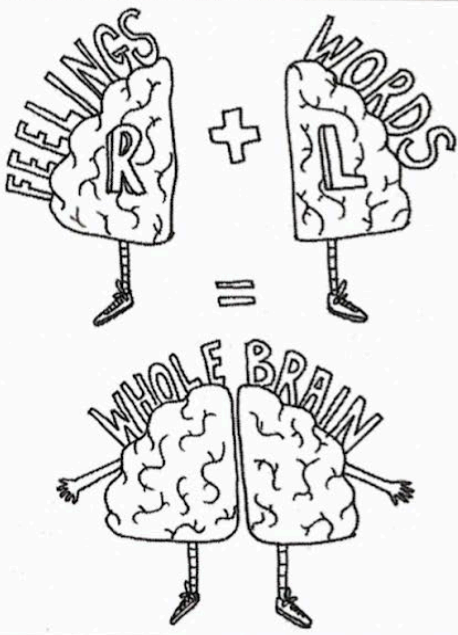
DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU HAVE MANY PARTS TO YOUR BRAIN AND THEY ALL DO DIFFERENT THINGS? IT'S ALMOST LIKE YOU HAVE DIFFERENT BRAINS WITH MINDS OF THEIR OWN. BUT WE CAN HELP THEM ALL GET ALONG AND HELP ONE ANOTHER.



OUR RIGHT BRAIN LISTENS TO OUR BODY AND OTHER PARTS OF OUR BRAIN AND KNOWS ABOUT OUR BIG FEELINGS LIKE WHEN WE'RE HAPPY, OR BRAVE, OR SCARED, OR SAD, OR REALLY MAD. IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE PAY ATTENTION TO THESE FEELINGS AND TALK ABOUT THEM.



SOMETIMES WHEN WE'RE UPSET AND WE DON'T TALK ABOUT IT, OUR FEELINGS CAN BUILD AND BUILD INSIDE US, LIKE A HUGE WAVE THAT WASHES OVER US AND MAKES US SAY OR DO THINGS WE DON'T MEAN.



BUT THE LEFT BRAIN CAN HELP PUT OUR FEELINGS INTO WORDS. THEN OUR WHOLE BRAIN CAN WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM AND WE CAN CALM DOWN.

- A unique challenge facing children and adolescents who are members of ethnic and racial minorities is the development of an ethnic identity.
- Jean Phinney came up with a model of ethnic identity development and he said that ethnic identity development goes through a certain progression.
 - The first stage is the unexamined stage where there is little to no interest directed towards one ethnic identity.
 - The second stage is often brought about by experiences of oppression or discrimination that stimulate their awareness of one's ethnicity. They might be more actively engaged in learning about their own culture. Following a period of exploration they might have a clearer understanding and appreciation of their own ethnic identity.
- Strong ethnic identity has been linked to more favorable psychological adjustment.
- Another challenge that children and adolescents of minority groups face is figuring out their relationship to the dominant culture. There are different patterns of cultural identification or ways in which they conceptualize their relationships to the two cultures that they're exposed to.
 - In the process of assimilation individuals give up their own cultural identification and identify entirely with the dominant culture.
 - In the process of fusion the two cultures are combined to produce a "new" culture.
 - In the blended bicultural process the two cultures are perceived as overlapping by not being identical, almost like a middle ground.
 - In the alternating bicultural process an individual moves back and forth between cultures.
- Again it's been found that strong racial and ethnic identity is beneficial to development.
- My own suggestion for interactions with minority groups, or really anyone that is different is to understand and be aware of your own power.

SUPPORTING THE SOCIALLY AWKWARD CAMPER

Working with children in challenging situations can be difficult, stressful, frustrating, and yes, extremely rewarding. But we have to take care of ourselves or we risk burning out, and that's no help to anyone at all. We have to strike the right balance of honesty, compassion, and humor for ourselves and our campers. So keep a few things in mind:

- It's OK to acknowledge that some campers have a harder time fitting in than others.
- All campers are valued and valuable people who deserve our care and support.
- Sometimes the hardest situations create the best memories

MEETING THAT CAMPER

The camp brochure is full of smiling, laughing kids who are thrilled to be at camp. Why wouldn't the kids you're working with at camp be awesome 24/7? They're playing, making friends, and enjoying absolutely everything camp has to offer. Right?

Yes, some campers truly are a walking example of the "brochure camper." They want to try everything. They listen respectfully to adults. They make friends easily, and other kids want to be with them. They are nuggets of joy and a big part of the reason you wake up each day and look forward to being at camp.

Other campers — not so much. Those campers don't seem to be on the same wavelength as everyone

else. They may say things out of turn and out of context. Their peers can't figure out how to include them comfortably in group games. They alienate others without understanding how or why.

But let me tell you a secret. There is no more rewarding moment, no more well-earned triumph, and no purer joy than when you help that camper find happiness too. They may not be on the front page of the brochure. But they are front and center in your camper group, and they deserve a positive experience at camp just like those campers for whom it seems to come effortlessly.

Fortunately, camp is a fantastic place to teach social skills. Camp can also represent an opportunity for socially awkward children who have been labeled "strange" by the other kids at school to have a fresh start. With direct support from you and other camp staff, they may be able to reinvent how they are perceived by others.

THE WHY BEHIND SOCIAL SKILLS DEFICITS

To understand the campers who struggle in a group of their peers, we first need to agree on a common tenet about children with challenges in general: kids will do well if they can (Greene, 1998). This concept, put forth by Ross Greene, PhD, and now widely shared as a behavior management jumping-off point, is key to working successfully with challenging youth. Humans are born with an innate desire to succeed, to make their caregivers happy, and to be part of a community. So, if a camper is not succeeding, instead of assuming the child is doing it on purpose or to be our own personal nightmare, we should first ask, "Is this child capable of succeeding?" and "Why might this child not be succeeding?" In other words, assume that the child wants to do well, and if they aren't, something else must be going on.

WHAT YOU'LL SEE

When a child is struggling in a social setting, it can be subtle, or it can be very obvious. The more obvious signs to look for are those who play alone, who are isolated from the group, or who are shunned or made fun of by other campers. They may be tolerated by others when staff are clearly watching, but they are rarely invited to join in if other campers can make that choice.

Many socially awkward youths will use "placeholder strategies" that help them assimilate or just "get through." For example, they'll attach themselves to one nice kid in the group who is too polite to refuse their advances. They may profess a love of reading, carry a book at all times, and choose to read under a tree during sports activities or at the lunch table. And while they may truly enjoy reading, it's more likely that they are using reading as a way to avoid social interactions. Watching them do these things can make your heart hurt.

Less clear is how lagging skills may affect campers emotionally and developmentally. For example, they may believe that a "friend" is anyone who doesn't actively pick on them, or who is willing to talk to them on the playground. If asked, they may not be able to truly define friendship or understand what peers are.

Helping campers in the first category — the obvious odd ones out — in some ways seems easier, because you feel successful when you physically connect them with the group ("Hey, Acorns, Jim would like to join in. Let's make space for Jim in the circle.") Mission accomplished, right? Partially, at least. It's no small feat to just get them into the same space to play together, so pat yourself on the back for noticing and doing something about it. But you still need to keep an eye out for that second category of socially challenged campers. Those children who don't understand friendship or the steps to build connections will soon wander away again and reengage in solitary pursuits. Or they may be overly aggressive in their efforts to cement a friendship once they get a foot in the door, and in doing so, actually push others away.

You'll need to scaffold their social interactions — that is, help them with the actual work of appropriate social interactions and making friends. Picture actual scaffolding — the temporary wood and metal pole structures that surround a building when repairs are being made. It's used to support workers and help them access parts of the building not usually available to them. Once they can get the work done on their own, the external support is taken down. Scaffolding for kids is the same idea.

SCAFFOLDING SOCIAL PREDICTION

Social prediction is the ability to predict and understand how others will respond to certain behaviors. For example, we know a joke is not funny because nobody laughs when we tell it. This kind of understanding is key to interacting appropriately with those around us, and unfortunately, it's one of the lagging skills that children with social challenges face. That's why socially awkward children often tell inappropriate or unfunny jokes repeatedly; their brains don't make the connection that not laughing equals not funny. Nor do their brains make the prediction that next time, people will still not laugh.

As a staff member, you can help campers develop their social prediction skill by scaffolding their efforts. One easy-to-implement scaffolding technique involves four basic steps:

1. Identify the problem, with the camper's help if possible.
2. Honestly explain why it's a problem.
3. Teach a replacement behavior.
4. Check for understanding.

In some ways, scaffolding is you making up for the part of the camper's brain that isn't developed enough yet to know this stuff on its own. Identifying the issue and being honest with the camper about why it's a problem helps train their brain to recognize this situation if it comes up again. The conversation might go something like this: "Jasmine, do you know why no one laughed today or yesterday when you told that joke?" Give them a chance to come up with the answer, and if they can't, tell them why. "I know you think it's funny, but actually, that joke hurts people's feelings. It makes other campers feel sad."

In this case, teaching the camper a replacement behavior might be offering a joke that is actually funny and appropriate, which you can encourage them to share instead. Then check that the camper understands. For example, "Jasmine, can you remind me why I taught you this new joke?"

You're checking here to make sure the reply isn't "Because you thought my joke was stupid," or something along those lines. That kind of response will clue you in that the camper is feeling down about themselves, has missed the point, and will require you to do some additional explaining. Don't get discouraged if you have to repeat this process more than once.

The message you want the camper to hear is that you're trying to help them achieve what they already want — to tell a funny joke. More broadly, you want them to understand that you're trying to help them be socially appropriate. Ideally, when you check for understanding, you want to hear something like, "Because you want others to think my jokes are as funny as I think they are." Anything, really, that implies they won't keep repeating the horribly inappropriate joke you heard them tell seven times already that morning.

EVERYONE ELSE KNOWS THEY'RE AWKWARD!

You don't have to ignore or cover up when a camper makes a social faux pas or is struggling. Instead, consider addressing that honestly and acknowledging that they learn or perceive things differently because of how their brain works right now. For example, you might say to Shaun, "I know you're upset that Kevin yelled at you when you got too close in line. Your brain makes it really easy to learn cool things

like dinosaur facts. And your brain makes it harder to remember that people need personal space.” Then patiently re-explain personal space, practice examples with Shaun, and most importantly, catch and praise Shaun for doing it well.

Social skills practice builds on itself, and time and patience are required to both teach and learn individual social skills. If others in the group are consistently frustrated with Shaun’s lack of awareness about a particular thing (i.e., Shaun’s gotten too close in line multiple times), you can also speak to individuals in the group to help them understand Shaun’s actions.

Being honest about challenges they can clearly see happening is not throwing Shaun under the bus. You’re saying, “I think we can both see that Shaun has a hard time remembering to leave space in line. How do you think we can help him with that?” You’re not telling others in the group anything they don’t already know, or anything that you didn’t also say right to Shaun himself. More importantly, you’re including the others in the solution, which will help mitigate some of their (legitimate) frustration.

OTHER WAYS TO SCAFFOLD AND SUPPORT

Camp is a fantastic place to teach social skills, and as frontline staff, you have the ability to make a real difference in helping campers build their abilities in this area. To be at the top of your social-skill-building game, in addition to incorporating the preceding strategies, try following these five tips:

1. Be aware, encourage inclusive interactions, prevent harm. Keep an eye out for the kids who aren’t connecting or making friends. Let it be known from day one that your expectations for your group are that everyone is included and welcomed in games and activities — that you’re not the kind of counselor who is going to look the other way if kids aren’t being nice to all.
2. Pre-cue prior to experiences at camp that might be difficult for a camper. If you know that a camper seems to get in arguments when your group goes to arts and crafts, check in with them on the way to that activity. “I noticed that it’s hard when other campers sit too close to you or try to use supplies you want to use. If that happens today, what do you think we should do?” Previewing options and giving suggestions helps remind them of expectations and pre plan solutions, minimizing risk of a blow-up in the moment.
3. Facilitate social opportunity by setting up “play dates” within the group. When your group has board games, store time, rest hour, or other less-structured activities coming up, have something ready that you know your socially awkward camper and others in the group will be excited about. “Who’s in to build a fort later? I snagged some cardboard and yarn so we can really get a good one going.” After a few of the other kids have already committed to participating, casually invite your more awkward kid. “AJ, I know you’re in, you’re awesome at forts.” Only the bravest of campers will openly back out because they don’t want to play with AJ. And a firm, friendly smile and small shake of the head before they open their mouths to object will usually take care of that, silently reminding them of your expectations that everyone plays together nicely in your sandbox.
4. Keep supervisors informed of difficulties and efforts being made to support the camper. It’s your job to help your campers have fun and successfully navigate camp. It’s the job of your supervisors and directors to:
 - Have a good understanding of the challenges you may have with a particular camper
 - Help devise strategies and plans to support your work with that camper
 - Communicate with parents/guardians or other caregivers about that child’s camp experience
 - The only way they can properly support you is if you keep them informed about what’s going on in your group.
 - Ask for help when you need it. If you’re feeling frustrated or having a hard time, tell

someone. Don't worry that anyone will think you don't know what you're doing or be upset with you. Realizing that you aren't always sure what you're doing is a key part of being a good counselor — because it shows that you're someone who is willing to learn. Awkward campers are awkward. It's tiring and hard to help them be successful —. but you have support on this journey. So keep your eye on the goal and get help in the field when you need it.

Incident Reports

There are binders with incident report forms located in each lodge, in the retreat center, in Ehlers Hall, and in the Dining Hall. Incident report forms should be filled out with as much detail as possible when incidents occur so we have a record of the event. If the Director needs to know immediately or before morning, text Chris and Jenna at (240) 529-8041 and (769) 798-0846.

If the scenario is one in which you have questions, direct them first to the Volunteer Director. They will also have a daily formal meeting and other daily conversations with camp staff who can offer assistance.

If the scenario is one which could require follow-up, could alarm a parent, raises a red flag, or could escalate – **write it up!** This includes safety violations by campers, sensitive topic discussions, name calling, physical aggression, accidental or intentional physical touch or viewing of body parts.

If the scenario is one in which a camper staff, or volunteer was put in danger, the volunteer and staff addressing it both need to complete an incident report and return to Directors within a timely manner: i.e., returning from a trip, before the next meal, unless immediate assistance is needed by Director or Nurse. If Director is needed first complete form, then text us. If Nurse is needed, go there first and then complete the form.

If we need behavioral or mental health assistance, RCM now has an on-call resource that the West River Director/ Assistant Director can reach out to as needed.

Putting it into Practice with “BE-ATTITUDES”

One of the reasons why camp is a special place for spiritual development is because we get to spend 24 hours a day with each other for an entire week. This is more total hours than if a camper went to both Sunday School and Church for one hour each, every week of the year. The shared experience of camp provides a deep foundation for building relationships. Here’s how!

- **Be Welcoming!** Get to know campers’ names and stories. Find out who they are and where they are in their spiritual development. Help campers to know each other too.
- **Be Loving!** Love each camper as a child of God and accept them as they are. There are many different factors involved in age, group, race, culture, gender, ability, and personality, etc. Listen and learn. Be willing to try on new ideas instead of forcing other to evaluate their own based on yours.
- **Be engaged!** In the time that you are present here with kids, really BE present! Supervising can happen best when you are actively involved in the group. Do not use your phone for personal communication. Be present with campers when they are scared, sad, and mad just as much as when they are happy, proud, and successful!
- **Be an Active Listener!** Listen more, talk less. So often we worry about having the right thing to say that we forget to truly listen. Ask open-ended questions to encourage the camper to share more. You can learn something new about your campers each day.
- **Be authentic!** Know your own story and be prepared to share your own stories in an age and setting-appropriate way.
- **Be humble and honest!** It is ok to not know the answer to a challenging question. If possible, try to find an answer and have a follow-up conversation with the camper. Remember to defer back to the camper’s home situation (parents and pastor) about stances on difficult issues. Acknowledge the issue is difficult, share your perspective, then have them talk with their parent and or pastor.
- **Be consistent!** Live your life in a way that demonstrates an authentic Christian life in good times and bad and other people will notice and want to know more.
- **Be a God-bearer!** Share both from the Bible and from your testimony of God’s love and faithfulness. Most campers will not have a deep knowledge of the Bible so help them dig into it. If they don’t have their own Bible, we will give them one.
- **Be patient!** Don't demand a response. God works in mysterious ways. We can't always plan or predict God's timetable. If you demand that a camper responds in a certain way, you may get it, but it probably won't be authentic or lasting.. Our job as counselors is to be faithful to God; the results are completely in God's hands.
- **Be simple!** Don't get too complicated. When using the Bible, try to stick to a few verses or one story. When praying with your campers, don't pray long-winded prayers. Praying simply and from your heart will teach them and engage them in prayer too.
- **Be willing to try and possibly to fail!** We won’t always get things right but we do believe God is working through us.
- **Be Prayerful!** Pray both for and with your campers

SAFE SANCTUARY

Dear Camp Staff Members and Volunteers,

Welcome to Retreat and Camping Ministry of the Baltimore-Washington Conference! Thank you for your commitment to serve in an amazing ministry with Manidokan Camp Retreat Center & The West River Center!

We take our care for campers very seriously. Enclosed are our general procedures and guidelines for both preventing and reporting any harm to campers in our care. This includes physical or sexual abuse, neglect, or emotional, verbal, or spiritual abuse. Our intent is to keep campers safe and you safe as well! These procedures will be enforced.

After you have read this Safe Sanctuary Policy Manual please sign and return the agreement form found on the last page of this handbook. Keep one page for yourself.

OVERVIEW OF OUR SAFETY SYSTEM

All staff members and volunteers complete 3 safety steps before being placed with custodial care of campers.

STEP ONE: SCREENING PROCESS

- Applications: Interested volunteers complete an online application annually.
- References: They should submit 3 personal/professional references every 3 years OR the year after being inactive for a summer. Our pastors will ask for a reference from their DS or SPRC chair.
- Background Checks: Program volunteers submit to a background check online that is processed by Protect My Ministry. Pastor's will also submit to this background check. All volunteers will redo their background checks every 3 years. However, when a program volunteer is inactive for a summer, their background check will be redone. When a volunteer has not been active in a church, they may be asked to redo their background check.

While our registrar's office collects this information, volunteer camp directors are responsible for reminding their volunteers that application, background check, and references are required and should be completed prior to the Sunday before their camp week. Our registrar will notify camp directors with a list of those who have completed their screening to be at camp.

Maintenance Volunteers who will regularly serve at camp while summer campers or retreat guests are on site will complete an application and background check. Volunteers who are serving one day every so often can stay with a host who has been currently cleared to serve including the maintenance director or another volunteer.

Paid staff members do fingerprint background checks through CJIS. This is a live system. As long as a person is working for us, if they commit a crime and are flagged by the system, our camps will be notified through the Director of Retreat and Camping Ministry. Paid staff also undergo a Child Protection Services (CPS) background check and a drug screening.

STEP TWO: TRAINING

- Online video review with tests OR in-person on-site training OR read printed summaries of all videos and complete post- tests.
- Presence at the Sunday staff meeting for review of emergency procedures and review of some of our safe sanctuary policy including risk management and current challenges. Our registrar will also notify camp directors with a list of who has completed on-line trainings.

STEP THREE: PERSONAL REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Read and sign this manual in agreement of understanding of the policy, your role in it, and your agreement to comply.

CAMPER SAFETY POLICY

At our BWC RCM camps and staffed events we have zero tolerance for abuse. It is the responsibility of every member of our staff and volunteer team to act in the best interest of our campers at all times. This means, if YOU observe or suspect inappropriate behaviors between adults and campers or camper and campers OR of suspected abuse whether at camp or from home, it is your responsibility to respond by reporting immediately to your direct supervisor and a BWC year-round camp directors. This includes our directors, assistant directors, and program directors.

Our staff members will immediately follow the protocol listed in reporting abuse. If at any point our volunteers or staff are found to violate these policies of reporting abuse, they face grounds for dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment.

In addition, site directors will view local sex offender registry prior to every summer season for local offenders. However, by following our policies and procedures for screening, references, background checks, and policy for how we greet visitors, we are being very thorough.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

In the eyes of the State of Maryland, we (Baltimore-Washington Conference Retreat and Camping Ministries) are a child care facility, and we are required by law to report suspected incidents of abuse. That means we are mandated reporters. To do so effectively, one must know the law and be able to recognize the indicators of abuse.

Maryland Law: Subtitle 7 of the MD Family Law Code Annotated The abuse and neglect of children is a serious problem, which requires the involvement of all private citizens and professionals in the community for the purpose of prevention, identification and treatment. In MD, the child abuse and neglect law requires that all persons, including professionals, are mandated to make a report as soon as is possible to the department of social services, when they SUSPECT a child has been or is being mistreated. (in cases of child abuse, a report may be made to Social Services or the Police Department.)

Any professional who knowingly fails to make a required report of child abuse may be subjected to certain professional sanctions. The professionals identified in MD law include: health practitioners, police officers, educators, and human service workers. Within this law, we understand adult youth camp workers to be mandated reporters. Child Abuse is defined as the physical injury of a child by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility of supervision of a child. Or by any household or family member,

under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is significantly harmed or at risk of being significantly harmed; or sexual abuse of a child whether physical injuries are sustained or not. Sexual abuse means any act that involves sexual molestation or exploitation of a child, and includes; fondling, incest, rape, or sexual offense in any degree, sodomy, and unnatural or perverted sexual practices.

Child Neglect is defined as the failure to provide proper care and attention to a child including the leaving a child unattended, by the child's parents, guardian, or custodian under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is significantly harmed or placed at risk of significant harm. The law provides immunity from any civil liability or criminal penalty when a report is made in good faith. The law also provides immunity for persons who participate in an investigation or a resulting judicial proceeding.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING ABUSE

1. When a staff member or volunteer has reason to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect, whether the abuse is suspected to have occurred at camp OR at home, they must respond.
2. The camper believed to have been abused or neglected will be cared for by receiving confidential, pastoral care in a safe location.
3. The staff member or volunteer is required to report the circumstances leading to the belief of abuse or neglect to one of our year-round Camp Directors immediately and confidentially. No other persons should be informed or consulted before making this report to the year-round Camp Director, unless the circumstances are such that, in the best judgment of the staff member or volunteer, an immediate call to 911 is warranted.
4. All staff members and volunteers are required to make a written statement to follow up their verbal reports. See the Camp Director for this form.
5. Any camp personnel (whether paid staff or volunteer) accused of abusing or neglecting a child shall be immediately suspended from all activities involving supervision of, interaction with, or proximity to children, and from otherwise leading or participating in any camp activity, pending further investigation. They may be removed from the site or confined in a location where no children are present, while the issue is investigated, and shall only be permitted to return and resume their normal duties once they are cleared of wrongdoing. (Paid staff will continue to be paid while on suspension).
6. The Camp Director will interview the camper and any other persons who may have knowledge relevant to the alleged abuse or neglect.
7. Immediately upon learning of the suspected abuse or neglect, the Camp Director will report the circumstances to the Director of Retreat & Camping Ministries and the Director of Connectional Ministries for the Baltimore-Washington Conference ("Conference Directors"). If the circumstances are such that, in the best judgment of the staff member or volunteer, an immediate call to 911 is warranted, the Camp Director shall ensure that this is accomplished even before contacting the Director of Retreat & Camping Ministries and the Director of Connectional Ministries. The Conference Directors shall inform the Bishop of the circumstances as soon as practicable.
8. Immediately after making the report to the Conference Directors -- and unless one of the camper's parents or another person in the camper's household is the suspected abuser -- the Camp Director will inform the camper's parents or guardians of the allegations, of the steps the Camp is taking in response, and of the care the Camp is providing to the Camper until the Camper's parents or other responsible persons can arrive to be with the Camper.
9. As soon as reasonably practicable, the Camp Director and the Conference Directors, in consultation with the Conference Chancellor, will determine whether the suspected abuse or neglect must be or should be reported to the local authorities through either 911 or the Washington County Department of Human

Resources at 240-420-2222 or Ann Arundel County Department of Social Services at 410-421-8400.

10. In accordance with the law, strict confidentiality shall be maintained. The suspected abuser shall not be informed of the identity of the accuser, nor shall the accuser be informed of the results or subsequent investigation.
11. The Camp Director shall encourage all parties not to discuss the incidents and allegations, specifically with any parties not directly involved, including campers.
12. In the event of a need to make a statement to the press or the public regarding the incident, the only person to do so shall be the Director of Communications or another spokesperson as designated by the Bishop.
13. Any person found to have abused a Camper will, at a minimum, be removed from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities that involve campers. For an employee, such person's employment by the Baltimore Washington Camp & Retreat Ministry may also be terminated, and any volunteer may be prohibited entirely from serving as a camping volunteer. Should a person want to return to employment or volunteering, a request should be made to the Camp Director and the Director of Retreat and Camping Ministry to determine whether or not their offense results in a lifetime denial of participation or if there could be a plan of restoration and renewed contractual relationship.

"WHAT TO DO" (IF A CAMPER REPORTS ABUSE TO YOU)

Used with written permission from the ACA from For Their Sake Handbook by Becca Cowan Johnson (copyright 1993; publisher American Camping Association) Assure privacy but not confidentiality—it might be appropriate to say, "What we talk about will be just between you and me unless I think that you are going to hurt yourself or someone else or is someone if hurting you."

Be calm—if you get upset the child may want to retract his/her story for fear of how others will react.

Believe the child—do not discount anything a child tells you that involves abuse. Assume that what you are told is true; not false.

Get the facts, but don't interrogate—Leave the questioning to the experts. In order to make a report you only need to know the alleged victim's name and address. Additional information is helpful but not always necessary. Don't ask questions to satisfy your own curiosity.

Reassure the child that revealing the abuse was the right thing to do—once the abuse has been revealed, the minor will most likely question whether or not he or she should have made the disclosure. Be careful about what you say or promise. Don't make promises to the minor such as, "Everything will be better now." or "I'll make sure no one hurts you again." Like ourselves, the protective system is not flawless.

Continually emphasize that the abuse was not the minor's fault. Those who have been abused generally assume that the abuse was their fault. All comments made to the contrary can help in the healing process.

Do say, "I am so glad that you have trusted me to tell me this."

Do say, "What kind of friend would I (you) be if we knew a friend was hurting and we didn't try to help them?" Do say, "You don't have to carry this alone anymore."

Do NOT say, "It will all be okay."

STAFF MEMBER AND VOLUNTEER OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION PLAN

Monitoring Staff members for following safety procedures will include both announced and unannounced visits in each program area. At these times, supervisors will observe staff members and volunteer interactions with campers. Also, at all times that we are coordinating programs and hosting campers, we should be self-checking one another.

In addition, we plan for these steps:

1. After completing training, where they check off their skills and knowledge as required by COMAR and other certifying bodies, summer staff will receive evaluations by the Year-Round staff members twice per summer. This may happen more often if needed.
2. The Assistant Director/Program Director(s) conduct more frequent verbal check-ins with summer staff in their areas related to matters in the policy manual and risk management as it pertains to camper safety.
3. Camp Directors conduct annual written and face-to-face performance evaluations of each year-round staff. In addition, feedback is given at or after regular staff meetings, and at regular 1-1 meetings with paid staff.
4. Volunteers should be observed by volunteer director, program director, and site directors. A mid-week check-in by volunteer director is recommended. Coaching mid-week should occur as needed. Volunteer and/or site director should provide an end of summer evaluation for volunteers.

CAMP CULTURE & CONDUCT FOR STAFF MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

While at camp and on camp-sponsored activities, you are a representative of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, Manidokan and West River. Your behavior and conduct reflect not only on yourself and your colleagues but also on the entire camping and retreat program. It is our expectation that you will act with the highest of standards at all times.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER STAFF

We wish to develop a community of respect and trust. Remember that we are all on the same team and working towards the same goals. Modeling healthy Christian relationships, whether platonic or romantic, can be a wonderful blessing.

Integral parts to this include:

- Tone of voice: Be thoughtful about your tone of voice when speaking with other staff members, adults or campers. Our tone should be respectful and supportive of one another. We should not talk to each other in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- Word choice: Remembering our goal is to lift one another up in unity and as serving together as the body of Christ, make good decisions about what you say to or about someone. Cursing is prohibited within the camp environment. Even when we are having a bad day, a camper is pushing our buttons, or we are not getting along with a particular staff member, we are in a role that requires working through problems in ways that are healthy and respectful as well as always prioritizing the campers and ministry.

Displays of affection should be appropriate within a church camp setting. Be aware that campers (and sometimes volunteers) can be overly interested in your personal life. Be cautious about sharing too much, and especially avoid drawing others into your personal relationships and issues.

Observe how the section “Modeling Behavior” relates to this section too.

INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT

Diversity is a gift of God, an understanding that God loves all people. This is a spirituality that binds us to one another and to our natural surroundings and understands God's created order as one. Diversity is a gift of God! We should take our cues from Jesus, who declared God's reign of Justice, peace and love fully present and available to all (see scripture passages about Samaritans, woman at well, Jesus eating with sinners, etc.). It was really the early Christians who began to narrow the focus of the good news, personalizing and privatizing a universal message. In so doing, they reduced the Gospel to squabbles over food, dress, and circumcision. Camp ministry should invite all people to take part in the love of God. Our role as ministers of God's love is to offer it as gracefully and as fully as we possibly can.

The United Methodist Church proclaims the value of each person as a unique child of God and commits itself to the healing and wholeness of all persons. We know that all people are sacred and worthy. We are made equal by God, who created humanity in God's own image. Out of our deep love of God and neighbor, when we see people being treated as less than equal we will speak out. We are called to live this out through our [baptismal vows](#): "to resist evil, injustice and oppression, in whatever form they present themselves."

We strive to provide camp opportunities that utilize experiential learning and communal Christian living to guide individuals as they grow in love of God, self, neighbor, and nature. With this goal in mind, Camp Harmison, Manidokan Camp & Retreat Center, and The West River Center will continue to be a welcoming, safe, and supportive place for our LGBTQIA+ siblings.

Each week at camp we strive to create a loving Christian community in which we play, learn, and experience God together as one body. The welcome of all people and the diversity of the group is one of the most powerful elements of the camp experience. We form authentic relationships with each other and learn how to lovingly live with each other through our similarities and our differences. These shared experiences at camp demonstrate God's love, creativity, and grace in ways that campers, volunteers, and staff remember and continue to live into long after camp has ended.

Those living in the United States exist in a culture permeated with racial bias. We may not be able to avoid racism, but we don't have to accept it. If God's kingdom is to come, and God's will is to be done on earth as it is in heaven, things need to change. Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, The West River Center is committed to standing against, speaking against, and working against racism. The United Methodist Church recognizes that the sin of racism has been destructive to its unity throughout its history. Racism continues to cause painful division and marginalization. As a ministry of The United Methodist Church, we shall confront and seek to eliminate racism, in our systems, institution, hiring practices, and through education of campers.

We feel it is important to name our welcome and support those who experience exclusion and oppression in our world. We hope to work against systems that hold communities back and that camp can be a place where people can come together, learn from one another, and grow.

For some helpful terms, <https://www.bwcumc.org/appendix-c-glossary-of-terms/>

VALUING DIVERSITY

We strive to practice radical hospitality. That means that as an organization we are committed to welcome all

people. We recognize that community building can be complex when we come from different life experiences and contexts. However, treating others poorly because they are different from you is a form of abuse. We want to create an environment that values diversity, opposes oppression and discrimination, and promotes equal opportunities based on merit and business needs and not on race, citizenship status, physical or mental disability, ethnicity or ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, creed, marital status, veteran status, political affiliation, social or economic condition nor any other factor protected by law. In line with the BWC employment handbook, we will not accept bullying, discrimination, harassment, or victimization.

We also strive to be a community that can talk with one another about both the things that make us similar and the things that make us different. We hope to be a staff and community that can ask observational questions when we hear one another speak out of what might be implicit bias. We hope to be able to respond non-defensively when we are asked about something that might indicate our own bias or a systemic-ism. In all ways we want to both value each other as uniquely cultural individuals and grow and learn in our own shared community with one another.

SMOKING, ALCOHOL, AND OTHER DRUGS

Smoking or other forms of tobacco use is permitted only in designated areas. Your supervisor should know if you need to smoke. Smoking in the presence of campers or others who are underage is forbidden. Remember it is illegal to share/provide/invite any drugs, alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, or vaping with anyone underage.

The possession and/or use of alcoholic beverages, drugs, drug related paraphernalia and/or illegal substances is forbidden on camp property or at off-site camp activities (hikes, canoe trips, etc.). Staff should not come to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Employees violating this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including immediate dismissal.

DRESS CODE GUIDELINES

Employees are expected to practice good hygiene and to dress appropriately for an outdoor working environment. Our members and the public expect a level of professionalism in appearance as well as attitude.

It is important to remember that our campers look to you as a role model. You are expected to dress comfortably in a way that will allow you to participate in the various activities at Camp. We suggest that jewelry be kept to a minimum for the safety of you and the campers. Watches should be waterproof. Sneakers or sports-type footwear must be worn while working any ropes activities, including low ropes.

Campers and staff may wear clothes that express their own personality and makes them feel good about themselves. In addition, our goal is to also have everyone wearing clothing appropriate to the activities at camp. Should someone be asked to change their clothes, we will do so in a way that is caring, respectful and non-judgmental. Educating someone about why they are being asked to change should be done calmly, clearly, and not in front of others. Please make a note of this to tell directors should we have any follow-up from parents or guardians.

No images or references to alcoholic beverages, illegal substances, vulgar or sexually suggestive subjects, or references that marginalize or name-call a group of people can be worn.

At all times, clothing worn must also be appropriate for the activity area. All staff, volunteers, and campers must wear appropriate footwear while at camp. This includes while on the river and while ziplining. For most camp

activities a closed toe, closed heel shoe is required. Feet may be bare while swimming at the pool and while showering.

Our underwear, bras, and body parts that should be covered by underwear or a bra should be covered by other clothes. Shorts should also be long enough that harness will cover them without them slipping out and causing an abrasion.

Bathing suits should be modest and appropriate for the recreational activities at camp such as rafting, slip and slide, banana boats, and water games. This means that body parts should not be at any risk to fall out and your bathing suit should not be at risk of coming off. For this reason, your suit should not be primarily fastened by string ties on suits (not tops or bottoms).

Staff are REQUIRED to wear their staff polos on Sunday when they arrive to the meeting hall until the end of the night, this ensures that parents and campers are able to easily identify the staff. On Friday, polos should be put on before dinner and worn until all campers and parents leave. Day Camp Staff should wear polos on Sunday and Monday (Day camp check in).

Modest sleeping clothes should be worn to bed that follow dress code guidelines.

SELF-CARE

While working at camp requires a lot from you in terms of energy and effort outputs, we expect you to take rest when you can, and to eat meals when provided. We treat other people better when we are taking care of ourselves. If you are needing to care for other physical, spiritual, or emotional needs for yourself, please communicate with your supervising staff member.

MODELING BEHAVIOR

Campers look up to staff and volunteers. They mimic what you do, without understanding where boundaries are. While working at camp, the adult staff and volunteer needs to set clear boundaries, which, again, can occur by modeling appropriate behavior. These rules must be followed when working with both camper groups and retreat groups.

- No verbal abuse.
- No profanity of any kind.
- No descriptive stories regarding drinking, illegal drugs, abusing legal drugs, or sexual behaviors.
- No descriptive ghost stories or scary stories. No using such stories as motivation for campers to be afraid enough of the woods or the dark to be quiet and go to bed.
- Never compare, or rate, a camper's body to another camper, staff member, or volunteer. Use positive language in body imagery self-esteem and taking care of our body as something God gave us.
- Never possess or show any sexually oriented materials or images at camp or in the presence of campers.
- No racial put-downs or racial jokes.
- No put-downs related to sexuality or gender.
- Always apologize immediately if you realize you went too far in any of these areas and share with your immediate supervisor.
- Never touch a child in an aggressive manner.
- No displays of nudity or partial nudity.
- No mooning, de-pantsing, wedgies, or swirlies.

- No urinating off porches at any time by anyone.
- No wrestling and no pillow fights.
- No tickling campers. This can overstimulate or be misconstrued as sexual contact.
- No lifting campers unless it is part of a game or activity that includes spotting.
- No restraining campers is permitted for play or discipline.
- No sleeping or napping with campers for any reason.
- No ear piercing, body piercing, or tattooing of any camper.
- Do not take things that belong to a camper without their permission, unless it is an object or substance that is considered contraband. Take that with another staff or volunteer present and give it to the volunteer director or director.
- Always ask to be close to someone, eg to give a hug, tighten a harness, or fix a shirt.
- Always apologize immediately if you touched or bumped someone's body in any place between their shoulders and knees or in any way that could be misunderstood. Then let your supervisor know what happened.

APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL TOUCH

To protect campers more fully, our BWC Retreat and Camping Ministry is implementing these guidelines for maintaining appropriate and consensual physical contact. Appropriate physical touch can be an arm around the shoulder, side hug, a high five or pat on the back. These can be supportive forms of showing physical affection between staff members and volunteers as well as campers in the camp setting. When a camper initiates a hug, it can be returned.

It may be appropriate for elementary campers to want to hold your hand while walking. Older campers should not hold your hand. Any camper who may have an interest in you outside of friendship should not hold your hand or receive additional physical contact. Set good boundaries! For example, encourage campers to sit beside you rather than on your lap.

Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Back rubs and massages are not appropriate to campers nor to CITs. Any inappropriate physical displays of affection or physical contact should be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, and a year-round staff member. This would include consensual touch as well as something like smacking or pinching another person's body as they walk by. It is not appropriate to touch others in a sexually connotative manner. Inappropriate touching is not limited to those of the opposite sex. Nor is it appropriate to touch campers in their private parts. Ask a nurse to help remove a tick or see a cut or rash there.

Physical contact should be given in an observable place, in the presence of other campers and/or volunteers or staff members. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or interpreted as such when physical contact is open to observation. You should never be in a camper's bed for any purpose, including sitting on the bed to talk with or comfort a camper.

Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting campers under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by both other adults and campers.

NEVER express or require physical affection or touching from a child who shows discomfort with physical touch. NEVER ignore a camper's request not to be touched. It is ONLY appropriate to restrain a camper if they are at risk to harming themselves or others. Restrain with limited force and avoiding the throat and chest. If you are not

comfortable stepping into this physical situation, isolate the person as much as possible.

In either case, find help and immediately contact your supervisor. ALL inappropriate touch should be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor.

SUPERVISION OF CAMPERS

Legally, a volunteer counselor or staff member is a person at camp who has supervisory responsibility, or the care, custody, and control of minors, and is seen, in the eyes of the law, as in loco parentis. Following American Camp Association, COMAR, and Safe Sanctuary Recommendations, we will keep to the following ratios when supervising:

OVERNIGHT CAMPER AGE	NUMBER OF ADULTS OVER 18	NUMBER OF OVERNIGHT CAMPERS
4-5 years	1	5
6-8 years	1	6
9-14 years	1	8
15-18 years	1	10

DAY CAMPER AGE	1 ADULT SUPERVISING	1 ADULT + 1 OTHER STAFF MEMBER	1 ADULT + 2 OTHER STAFF MEMBERS	3 ADULTS OR 2 ADULTS + 2 STAFF
4-5 years	8 or less campers in a group	9-16 campers	17-24 campers	
6-10 years	12 or less campers in a group	13-24 campers (1adult or 2 staff required)		
11+ years	12 or less campers in a group	13-24 campers (1adult or 2 staff required)		25-36 campers

The primary Supervising Staff or volunteer counselors must be 18 years or older and must be at least 3 years older than the oldest camper in the group. A secondary staff member must be at least 16 years old. We strive for 5 years or older when at all possible.

COMAR law states that an adult is an individual 18 years old or older or an individual 17 years old who has graduated from high school. Assistant Counselor means either an individual who is 16 years old or older or an individual who has successfully completed the tenth grade. We are also using assistant counselor in our safe sanctuaries planning to mean any counselor who has not met the minimum of at least 3 years older than the oldest camper in the group.

Some of our campers will be 18 years old and still in high school. They will also fall under our supervision policies and practices during the time when they are campers. **The following list of activities, locations, and situations REQUIRE a minimum of 2 adult staff members or approved volunteers to be present.** (In Shower Areas or Sleeping Areas, COMAR law states that this can be 2 adults OR 1 adult and 2 CITs or assistant counselors.)

Sleeping Areas: Adjoining rooms can count as one room within ratio if doors are open.

HIGH RISK AREAS at camp should be monitored even more carefully. These are areas where supervision is more difficult and where campers are more easily bullied by one another. If you are assigned to monitor a high-risk area, stay present and attentive for bullying and abuse while you are in that area. If you notice a high-risk area that is unmonitored, stay in that location and let a supervisor know immediately so that

they can resolve the problem.

High risk areas at camp include:

- **all bathrooms on camp property**
- **any additional changing areas**
- **night activities**
- **water activities**

According to COMAR, 2 CITs or assistant counselors can substitute for ONE of TWO adult counselors during day time routine activities.

According to COMAR, in specialized activities there must always be a director present on site, a trained leader, and an additional ratio of 1 adult for 10 campers. On all offsite trips, there must be 2 staff certified in CPR and First Aid on duty. In each vehicle on trips, we will have one adult in addition to the adult driver.

At our waterfront, the Maryland state youth camp safety act states that we must have a minimum of 2 individuals trained in CPR and first aid. On our sites at the pool, we have at least 2 lifeguards for 50 swimmers. We must have another person on duty in case someone cannot perform their duty. We must have 1 designated watcher for each 25 or less swimmers. We must have 1 counselor for every 10 swimmers or fewer (who is NOT performing one of the above roles).

In an emergency in which one adult is driving one or more campers, bring an adult into the car through keeping an open phone line.

Campers in our care, who are under 18 years old and any 18-year olds who have not graduated high school, should always be supervised while at camp. As CITs are under age 18, they are included in this provision. "Supervised" means within eyesight or earshot (during times when campers are changing or in the bathroom) of the supervising adult with the following exception. According to COMAR, if an adult directs this supervision, a CIT or assistant counselor can supervise 2-5 campers for up to and no longer than 30 minutes without an adult supervisor present. For example, an adult may direct a CIT and that group of 2-5 campers to travel to the nurse. In contrast, however, a group of CITs should not be left without adult supervision or directed to go and accomplish a task without an accompanying adult supervisor.

Adults should not be one-one with campers in a private setting. All camper supervision should be in plain view of others. In the event of a conversation starting and the staff member or volunteer finds themselves alone with a single camper, they should move to a location easily observed by others, for example, to an outside porch or walking towards other campers.

Mentoring can happen in a public space within eyesight or earshot of others and with appropriate supervision and transparency. All ministry should occur in open view. Each room or space should be in open view. When you are with a youth or child younger than 18 years old, there is no exception to this. Again, this includes CIT.

No mentoring or meeting campers should happen in areas that are off limits to campers. This includes areas like staff housing, staff vehicles, the shop or maintenance areas, storage areas, etc.

After every programming event, staff members and volunteers should check every room and restroom prior to leaving to be sure that no camper is left behind unsupervised. Count campers often when moving between

locations and activities.

Campers should also stay in groups of 3. Three campers together in an unseen or less easily viewed location, should be directed to a more visible or open area. For example, at Manidokan, 3 campers alone in the craft cabin at choice time should either be joined by an adult or asked to bring their craft materials/projects and conversation to the outdoor tables.

INTERNET, PHONES, ETC.

At no time are personal telephone calls to be made on the camp phone. Cell phones should be kept with you at all times so other staff can reach you, however, do not use your phone for social media, personal calls or text messaging when campers are present, except in emergencies. Computers should not be used for personal use when campers are present.

Staff may not use electronics (iPods, cell phones, other music devices, laptops, televisions, etc.) in any way that distracts from the camp program. Use of these items should be kept away from camper areas. If any staff member's duties are being interfered with because of use of these devices, the Camp Director may confiscate the items and keep them in the camp safe until the next camp break.

Staff members and volunteers must be respectful in all communications and btrailogs pertaining to the camp, its events, campers, employees, or volunteers. Behaviors such as harassment and bullying are not permitted by our staff and volunteers on personal social media or blogs. Remember that in having any public social media presence, you are representing Camping Ministry and the Baltimore-Washington UMC conference.

Any staff member/volunteer receiving inappropriate/questionable communication from a minor (in person or otherwise) shall not respond without consulting the Camp Director and determining a plan of response, which may include contacting the child's parents or authorities.

NO ONE may take photos in bathrooms or of any undressing in bedrooms. Staff members or volunteers found in violation of any portion of these procedures could be subject to dismissal or denial of future involvement within Retreat and Camping Ministry.

POST-CAMP COMMUNICATION

Personal communication after camp should not be initiated by the adult staff member or volunteer directly to a previous camper. Should a camper reach out to you, no relationships should begin with campers or with volunteers under the age of 18 without their parental permission. If a parent has given permission, and you choose to pursue a connection with a camper, the following are some best practices in order to continue in an open and visible manner. This serves to protect yourself from false accusations and from unintended harm just as much as it protects the camper.

- Your profile picture, first and last name, should clearly identify who you are
- Allow your site to be viewed publicly
- You should not send forms of online interactions that are fleeting or temporary such as Snapchat
- Messaging should always be in a public form: general Facebook board and NO direct messaging or texting
- Any choice to email with a camper should be copied to the site director
- Your communication should never be sexually suggestive or explicit or otherwise inappropriate to the age of the child or youth or the practice of ministry
- Stay appropriate in your "real world" off-line relationships too. Should you choose to meet a previous

camper, meet them only with parental permission, if they are still a minor, and then in a public space within eyesight and earshot of others.

VISITORS TO CAMP

Visitors to camp are all people who are not assigned to staff the event as well as those who are staffing the event but who have not completed their safe sanctuary screening process fully and successfully. Anyone who is not current on background checks and training must sign in as a visitor to camp.

Staff and volunteers are not to have guests during working hours. Arrangements for visitors after hours or for any overnight visitor must be made with a Director prior to the visitor's arrival. If meals are expected, the staff person is to make arrangements with the food service manager and assume payment for the same in advance.

All visitors must check in at the office, sign in and out of camp, wear a visitors' tag, and be escorted around camp with a paid staff member or approved volunteer. The camp director should be made aware of ANY visitors to camp. If you see someone at camp who you do not recognize as supposed to be at camp, please step away from your campers and greet them. Often visitors are retired

Methodist pastors, previous campers, or prospective camper parents. Introduce yourself and ask who they are and how you can help them. Connect them with one of the directors as is appropriate. Do not allow anyone to take photos of or talk with campers at camp or when you are on an off-site trip. Direct anyone interested in doing so to contact the camp office.

Maintenance workers/vendor companies like equipment repair people or plumbers, should also be escorted by a camp staff member.

CAMPER COVENANT

Camper Groups will set Covenants within the first 24 hours of being at camp. Ideally, for week long events, camper covenant writing will be on Sunday night as a part of community building and/or evening devotions. Campers will include in their covenant development some of the following, as directed and explained by camp staff members:

Respect for other people:

- This includes respecting diversity in many ways such as clothing, language of origin, personal care products, showering habits, accents, family, skin color, gender, sexual orientation, ability or disability, etc.
- Respecting people's things. A camper's bed, suitcase, clothing, and things that they brought with them or purchased at camp are off limits to anyone but the camper.
- In addition, when a camper is showering or using the toilet, they should have private time to do so. Only one person should be in the shower stall. Just as only the person using the toilet should be in the bathroom stall. Because we live in community, being thoughtful about how long you spend in the bathroom is important when you are sharing with other campers.
- Appropriate touch and boundary setting. Campers should be told that they are not to be naked in front of other campers. They should shut the bathroom or shower door and change there. Campers should not touch other campers 1) if they do not want to be touched, 2) in any places that would be covered by a bathing suit 3) in any way that is sexual or violent, 4) in any places that are not public places 5) campers should not wrestle or tickle other campers

- Be a community of inclusion. Invite other campers into activities and conversations. No hazing or initiation rites are acceptable.

Respect for the Rules:

- Camp Rules will be shared prior to covenant writing. Of these rules, highlight that campers need to listen to the rules, keep safety a priority, be where they are supposed to be, be appropriate in their language, accept no bullying, take care of the campsite and buildings and be respectful to nature.

Reach out to others for help:

- Stress with campers that there is a lot to remember about living at camp together, and that we cannot do everything right on our own. If they need help, it is important to ask for it.
- Asking adults or other campers for help in understanding an activity or a Bible verse is wonderful!
- If at any point someone is harming you or if you believe someone is harming someone else, whether that is a camper or adult, tell another adult immediately. Your counselor is the first adult that you might find to tell. Our greatest priority is that our campers are safe and feel safe while at camp.

PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING SAFE SANCTUARY PROCEDURES

Each camp site will review their accident/incident log at the end of the season. Changes should be made to policy and procedures as needed.

A team will be pulled together to review our RCM Safe Sanctuary Procedures every 2 years, or when there is a major development or change in camper safety from the camping or church perspective.

Procedures for Major crisis such as serious injuries or death are provided by the Site Directors and Director of Retreat and Camping Ministry when needed. You may see a copy anytime that you are on site.

IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS: ABUSE AND GROOMING BEHAVIOR

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Deliberately inflicting bodily harm to children constitutes physical abuse. Instances of physical abuse include violent assault with knife, strap or other implement, burns, fractures and bruises as a result of being beaten, pushed down, shaken, or thrown. A victim of physical abuse may:

- Talk about abuse.
- Fear parents or other adults.
- Fear going home.
- Demonstrate behavioral extremes: aggressiveness, emotional withdrawal,
- Exhibit violence to peers as well as adults, acting out behavior he/she often experiences.
- May display unexplained cuts, bruises, abrasions, welts, burns, or broken bones.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Anytime a child is used for the sexual stimulation of an adult or a significantly older child, abuse has occurred. The child is powerless to consent or to resist such acts. This includes fondling, sexual intercourse, forced participation in sexual acts, incest and exploitation for the purpose of pornography or prostitution. A victim of sexual abuse

may exhibit fear of adults, react negatively to being touched, or possess an inappropriate amount of sexual knowledge for their age.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse may be very difficult to detect or prove. Spoken or unspoken violence toward a child is devastating. The child receives the message that he/she is “not good, and never will be.” Emotional abuse includes verbal lashings; cruel restrictions or punishments such as locking into a room or closet, withholding parental love or affection, or language used by the parent.

A child who experiences emotional abuse may:

- Talk of verbal, punitive, and restrictive behaviors.
- Exhibit extreme depression.
- Threaten or otherwise talk of suicide.
- Be extremely compliant, eager to please or insecure of their abilities to please adults.
- Display passive/aggressive patterns of behavior.
- Lag in physical and emotional development.

NEGLECT

Children have basic physical, environmental, and nutritional needs which must be supplied. Abandonment, chronic withholding of food, clothing, medication, and proper living quarters are all indicators of neglect. Failure on the part of the parent or caregiver to adequately provide for a child’s physical, emotional, or educational needs represents a far more common form of maltreatment than physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. A victim of Child Neglect may:

- Have untended physical needs and report a lack of care by parent or caregiver.
- Complain constantly of hunger and beg for or steal food.
- Act fatigued or listless.
- Possess a look of abandonment by dressing inappropriately (wear summer clothing in winter for example), appear dirty, or otherwise display poor hygiene.

GROOMING BEHAVIOR

Something to know about those who repeatedly abuse children is that they look for a way in. Here are some patterns that can be red-flags when we see some of them together. These are also part of the reasons that we feel surprised when abusers are the people that we feel like we know and love so well. This person has been actively manipulated to gain access to children in these ways:

- Gains Trust of Gatekeepers (ie. people with control of access to children, teachers looking for volunteers, coordinators of programs, parents, older siblings, youth directors)
- Seeks out marginalized kids, kids already involved in using alcohol/drugs or rebellious in other ways, kids of single parent homes, kids that don’t fit into the popular crowd
- Offers special gifts and attention to specific kids
- Introduces pushing personal boundaries: pornography, verbal language, naked play
- Introduces secrecy, sometimes with promises of affirmation that child seems more mature or does not need to follow the rules or tell/ask their parents
- Manipulated by guilt and shame “Who would believe you?” Some Statistics that Help Tell the Story (based on stats found in 2018)

- On average, 1 in 5 kids have been sexually abused by the time they reach adulthood
- Only about 30 % of sexual assault cases are reported to authorities and 60% of child victims of abuse don't tell anyone about their abuse, at least until they are an adult
- 120-150 is the average number of victims a sex offender has before being caught
- Abusers are about 15% Women and 85% Men
- 60% is the estimated number of perpetrators of sexual abuse known to the child But not family members e.g. Family friends, babysitter, neighbors, coaches
- 30% is the estimated number of child sexual abusers who are family members
- Out of 100 sex offenders, 60 to 70 go unreported. Of the 30 to 40 reported, only 24 to 28 are identified, and of this 18 to 21 go to trial, 12 to 15 are convicted and only 10 are sentenced to jail or prison
- Not all perpetrators are adults—an estimated 23% of reported cases of child sexual abuse are perpetrated by individuals under the age of 18 (There is an increasing percentage of young people abusing young people, though not all because they were also abused. Most teen abusers can receive help/treatment and not have chronic tendencies towards abusing others. Without treatment, however, the average adolescent sex offender will go on to commit 380 sex crimes during his lifetime.)

HEALTH AND SAFETY

INFIRMARY

The camp's standing orders and medical program policies are detailed in a separate document.

STAFF:

There is a nurse on site during each week of camp, and a doctor on call, if you are injured you need to let the directors know immediately, if you are sick let your supervisor know. You have access to the nurse, please utilize their knowledge. We have the capability to get you a doctor's appointment or care as needed. Any medical emergencies that occur involving a Staff member need to be reported to a supervisor ASAP. (Even off duty)

CAMPER:

There is a nurse on site during each week of camp, and a doctor on call. It is the nurse's job to hand out any and all medications to all campers AND CITs. Staff can administer simple first aid/CPR if needed and certified. In emergency situations immediately send someone for the nurse and administer aid until the nurse arrives. After the nurse has handled the situation be prepared to give a detailed written report to Chris, Amy, or Jenna. If you are injured or at risk during the emergency, let a supervisor know immediately.

INCIDENT REPORTING

Completing an incident report form is critical for a couple reasons. First, completing an incident report helps protect both you and Retreat and Camping Ministries. Making a record of the details of an incident immediately after the incident ensures the record is accurate and complete. Completing incident reports helps prevent future incidents because these reports are used to identify areas for improvement in our procedures, facilities, training, and more. Incident reports are also important if there are ever accusations of wrongdoing or potential legal action.

When should you fill out an incident report?

- Any behavior or issue that may result in a call to parents or guardians. If a situation has gotten to the point that parents or guardians need to be contacted, we want to make sure we have a record of what has led to the need for contact and the steps we have already taken to address the issue.
- Any inappropriate behavior that is not corrected with the first intervention or an issue that is repetitive or severe enough to be elevated up the chain of support to a year-round director. We want to have a clear record of what happened and steps we took to address the issue.
- Severe mental illness or crisis. An acute mental health issue may require professional assistance and we want to help individuals get the care they need to be safe.
- Physical injury, depending on the severity of the injury and how the injury occurred. For example, a skinned knee from falling while playing basketball only needs the medical report the nurse makes from treating the injury. However, if the camper was aggressively pushed to the ground by another camper, this would require an incident report.
- Inappropriate touch or other sexually related incident. These types of issues must be taken seriously and potentially reported to authorities. Behaviors, corrective actions, and timelines are very important.
- Safety near misses. An unsafe situation does not have to result in an injury for it to be reported. Recognizing and reporting near misses allows us to address the issue before an injury and helps us

improve our safety procedures.

- Property damage. Both accidental and intentional property damage is serious, so records are needed for potential insurance or legal proceedings.

If you are not sure if you should complete an incident report form remember this rule of thumb: **when in doubt, fill it out**. Incident reports should be turned in to the site director.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The following information is to be reviewed with all summer staff and year-round staff at least once each year prior to the start of the summer camp program. The information is to be reviewed and updated each year or more frequent as required. While this information is intended to be as complete and thorough as possible, common sense and clear thinking should always be used as each situation has different nuances.

In the event of an emergency, the main way we will notify people is through the group text for the week with all volunteers and staff, or radios. Our emergency gathering location is the Basketball Court.

In any emergency, effective action is dependent on those persons placed in charge understanding their roles and keeping calm. In any group, the members will only be as calm and collected as its leaders.

Emergency phone numbers are posted in the Office, Infirmary and at the Pool.

CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM

In the event of a crisis or emergency situation, there shall be a crisis response team assembled to guide the response and actions. In the first immediate phase the team shall consist of the senior site staff: Site Director (Manager), Maintenance Director, Assistant Director and Food Service Director. If any of these folks are not on site, they will be notified and asked to return. This team will organize the response and assign tasks to staff, volunteer directors and counselors to meet the needs of those persons impacted following the guidelines as stated in the following articles.

After the first actions are taken and as soon as practical the BWC Conference office staff shall be notified. These persons shall notify other Conference Staff as necessary that may include the Conference Director of Communications, the Bishop, the Chief Financial Officer and the Conference Chancellor.

The following persons may be utilized in helping the response:

Health Care Provider, Program Staff, Maintenance Staff, Food Service Staff, Volunteer Directors, Volunteer Counselors. These persons shall be utilized as seen fit by the response team. In no case shall campers or Junior Counselors assume roles or responsibility for other campers.

As soon as practical, the insurance provider shall be notified.

The key to effective action in any situation is clear, level headed thinking, a calm and controlled demeanor and unambiguous communication.

The following situations may arise. The protocol for each is listed in order to provide for a quicker response to the situation.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS IN AN EMERGENCY

In the event it is necessary to communicate with parents/guardians about a situation or action at the Center during a week of camp, the following procedures shall be followed:

- As a part of the registration preparation, a phone number shall be included on the registration lists of each camp. The campers attending for the week shall be noted. Any campers who did not arrive shall also be noted. A separate list shall be kept in the office of campers arriving late or leaving early.
- The emergency contact information from the camper's health forms shall be duplicated.
- A detailed message shall be prepared including all pertinent information. This message is to be followed exactly. It is important that all persons making calls should be calm and have a firm grasp of the situation.
- The contact information of the campers shall be divided into two or more groups. Utilizing available office lines and cell phones, calls are to be made to the parent/guardian of each camper. One line is to be left open to handle any outgoing or incoming calls. The name should be checked on the registration list. Notes are to be made on the back of the copy of the camper's health form including who if anyone was contacted, what time the calls were made and any other information that may be relevant. These forms are to be preserved as a part of the permanent records of this emergency or crisis.
- Post info on the website. Details of this process are being finalized and will be added here as soon as they are determined.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE OUTSIDE AUTHORITIES AND THE PRESS

Whenever there is a crisis or emergency there is likely to be press or other outside agencies such as law enforcement, fire protection or emergency medical services that may be present. It is our desire to cooperate and assist. There is a protocol, however.

- The Director of Connectional Ministries shall be notified of the situation as soon as practical. They shall notify the Conference Director of Communications and any other conference personnel as they deem necessary.
- The Center Director or their designee shall act in the immediate phase to coordinate the emergency response. This includes dealing with law enforcement agencies, emergency medical service personnel or reporters.
- It should be made clear to outside authorities who is directing the effort and the roles that each person plays.
- Do not talk with media. We do not want to spread incorrect or incomplete information and it is conference policy that the conference Director of Communications interact with the media in these instances.

I. MISSING CAMPER / RUNAWAYCAMPER

On-site: When it is determined that a camper is not with his/her group during the regularly scheduled program activity and their immediate whereabouts cannot be determined the following steps shall be taken:

- Gather all campers together in a central place under the supervision of a Director, Counselor or staff person
- Notify the Manager as soon as possible
- Using all available Counselors and staff begin a systematic search of the camp including sleeping areas, dining hall, health office, bathrooms, program areas, maintenance areas, swimming pool
- If the camper has not been located after a thorough search of the camp or within one hour, the Manager or designate shall notify the authorities and the camper's parents or guardians
- Campers should not be used in the search

Off-site: When it is determined that a camper is not with their group during a hike or trip off the premises of the camp and their immediate whereabouts cannot be determined; the following steps shall be taken:

- Campers shall be gathered together and placed under the supervision of a staff person.
- All remaining Counselors and staff shall begin a systematic search including backtracking trails or moving ahead in the direction the camper was last seen
- As soon as practical, notify the Manager. The message shall include the area and time the camper was last seen, the present location of the other campers, who is involved in the search and what areas are being or have been searched.
- The Manager shall dispatch all available Staff/Counselors to the area of search.

- If the camper has not been located within a reasonable time (not to exceed one hour), the Manager or designate shall notify the authorities and the camper's parents or guardians.
- Campers should not be used for the search unless absolutely necessary and then only after thoroughly thinking through the campers' ability to act and think calmly and clearly.

In or Around Water: When a camper(s) is determined missing and there is reason to believe the person(s) could be in or around the water, the following procedures shall be followed:

- If the activity involves sailboats, row boats, or canoes - raft the boats together in a safe place or return to shore or the pier.
- Place the campers under supervision of a Counselor or Director.
- Notify the Manager as soon as possible.
- Manager shall dispatch all available Counselors/Staff with Lifeguard Training to the search site.
- Have a Counselor or a staff person begin a search of the nearby shorelines.
- Counselors and staff certified in Lifeguard Training shall begin an underwater search.
- If the camper has not been located within 30 minutes, the Manager or designate shall notify the authorities and the camper's parents or guardians.

Runaways: If a camper is believed to have intentionally left the supervision of his/her Counselor or left the premises of the camp, the following procedures shall be followed:

- The appropriate search procedures in A, B, or C shall be put into action
- The camper shall be dismissed from camp and the parents/guardians shall be notified to pick up their child.

II. FIRE

- Lodges - In event of a fire in any of the lodges, ALL campers should immediately evacuate and proceed quickly to Ehlers Hall and execute the following procedures
 - Have one Counselor/Director or staff call 911 and alert the fire department
 - Take a head count to assure that all campers are accounted for
 - Notify the Manager as soon as possible
- Dining Center, Nature Center, or Ehlers Hall
 - All campers should return to their lodges as quickly as possible.

III. THUNDER STORM OR SEVERE WIND AND RAIN

- Advance Notice: In the event of an upcoming storm with high winds and there is sufficient advance notice before the storm hits, overnight campers should proceed to their lodging areas, in hallways or bathrooms, depending on the severity of the storm. In the event of a storm during day camp, campers should head to Ehler's hall or the Nature Center. Head Count should be taken to ensure all campers are present. Program Staff shall be prepared to lead games, songs, etc. to help occupy the time.
- No Advance Notice: - If a storm comes up suddenly without sufficient advance notice, all campers, Counselors, and Directors should head to the nearest shelter. Site Staff shall come around to each Lodge to insure all persons are safe and accounted for.
- Staff shall have loaded a phone app such as Simple Weather Alert to keep abreast of any severe weather alerts. In the event of a warning, the Director or Assistant Director shall be immediately notified to begin to put the above procedures in to action.

IV. HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS PLAN

When a Tropical Storm Warning or Watch is issued, the staff shall make the following preparations.

A Tropical Storm Warning means high winds and rain. A Tropical Storm Watch means conditions are conducive for a storm.

The questions to ask in dealing with an impending tropical storm is:

Are the campers/counselors in danger by staying here?

Is there sufficient time for parents to pick up their children and safely return?

How can we best provide for those campers who cannot leave?

- Counselors should be prepared to lead some small group indoor games and activities with the campers. There are many suggestions in the back of each curriculum.
- The Program staff will be prepared to lead some large group activities in Ehlers Hall with one or more camps such as talent show, games or indoor Olympics.
- Boating activities will be canceled until further notice.
- All vehicles are to be moved to the main parking lot. The Camp is not responsible for damage.
- If the high winds and rain do not come until bed time or after, it will be best to have the campers settled and in bed. Communication should be through the group chat with Directors in each lodge.
- One situation that could cause a problem is if the high winds were to knock out the electrical power for an extended period of time. The Food Service staff will develop alternative menu plans. If the electricity goes out the generator will start and supply emergency power to the Dining Center, power for the pool well and the sewage lifts stations at the parking lot and behind the Nature Center. The toilets in the Lodges shall only be flushed as necessary as the sewage pumps lift stations are not powered. Use the adage, "If it's yellow, let it mellow. If it's brown, flush it down!"
- If there is a need to move the campers from the Lodges to Ehlers Hall during the rain, this will be done in small orderly groups under the direction of the program resource staff. There should not be a mass exodus of campers from the Lodges to Ehlers Hall.
- If there is a need to evacuate the camp, follow the camp evacuation plan as stated below and the plan to communicate with parents.

Hurricane Preparedness Checklist

CONTINUALLY MONITOR WEATHER SERVICE RADIO

FACILITY

- Secure all boats
- Secure all outside fixtures (trash can lids, tie down sewer cover, lay soccer goals down, recyclables) Chain saws sharp and ready to use, mixed gas ready
- Gas cans full for vehicles
- Collect 5 gallon buckets of water (at least 2 per lodge) for flushing

FOOD SERVICE

- Prepare for at least three meals to be served without electricity (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)
- Fill all clean containers with potable water.

PROGRAM

- List activities/resources for counselors for games and or activities for Lodge Groups
- Prepare large group games/sing a longs for Dining Hall (TV Game show format, Talent Show, etc)
Prepare substitute activities in the event outside activities must be canceled

RESPONSE TO PHONE CALLS FROM PARENTS.

We are: (*Give current status i.e. warning, watch for a tropical storm*) and are continually monitoring the weather service radio, prepared for electrical outages with food preparation and water, making preparations for changes in the program in the event we cannot continue without the normal activities

We will call parents if we foresee there is a need to evacuate the camp. (if they ask we will give a prorated refund)

Do they have another number they would like to leave in the event we need to call?

If they wish they may come and get their child. (say this if they are still feeling apprehensive)

Thank them for their concern

COMMUNICATION

During the day, these staff shall have ready access to each other through cell phones: Manager, Program Director, Maintenance Director, Food Service Director, Secretary, Waterfront Staff, Pool Staff

At night, staff and volunteer directors shall be sure to have means of communication established.

V. FLASH FLOOD

With one side of our boundary being the West River, flash floods are a real possibility at camp. Staff monitor the weather continuously and will provide updates via the weekly group chat. In the event of severe weather, the Director, Assistant Director, or designated emergency staff shall issue, when appropriate, advance warning to allow camp staff, volunteers, and campers to take shelter at safe locations with their groups from the effects of the disaster. The safe location for a flash flood at West River is the Dining Hall.

When campers, volunteers, and staff have arrived at the Dining Hall, a headcount shall be initiated to confirm the presence of all personnel. During the headcount, all injuries and issues shall be reported to the Camp Nurse and appropriate year-round staff.

All persons on camp property shall remain within the Dining Hall until there has been at least 30 minutes without thunder or it has been determined movement is necessary as waters approach. Before release from the Dining Hall at the end of the severe weather, year-round staff shall make a tour of the camp to confirm the surroundings are safe enough for return. The inspection will take note of damage to property, downed trees or power lines, and any areas that are to be restricted due to the damage sustained or which continue to be flooded.

VI. EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE

The decision to call Emergency Medical Services should be made by the Camp Nurse, Camp Manager or the staff person in charge. Dial 911 and give the appropriate information.

- One staff member should immediately go to the end of the road in order to direct the ambulance to the site of the emergency. Counselors and support staff should be deployed to allow campers to resume the scheduled activities.
- Two persons should be selected to accompany the camper to the hospital. Ideally one should be a counselor with whom the camper is familiar and feels comfortable who will ride in the ambulance. The other should be a support staff who follows the ambulance in a camp vehicle in order to bring the counselor and camper back. In selecting persons to go, an overriding concern is to maintain sufficient staff to keep the program for the rest of the campers running smoothly and to provide for adequate supervision. In addition, the persons accompanying the campers need to be persons who will remain calm in crisis situations and can be supportive of the camper.
- The support staff person should be familiar with emergency room procedures. The camper's health form should be taken in the ambulance with the camper. A copy is to be made to stay with the camp nurse. Insurance and billing information should be taken by the support staff.
- As soon as practical, the camp manager/director and the parents/guardians should be notified of the actions taken. Depending upon the severity of the illness/injury, parents/guardians may wish to meet the campers at the emergency room.
- Once at the emergency room, the support staff should periodically call back to the camp to update the nurse on the condition/status of the camper. This information should be relayed to the parents/guardians.
- Under some circumstances, the event may be traumatic for the rest of the campers. Campers should be given reassuring information to let them know that the camper in question is being given the best professional treatment available and is in good hands. Periodic updates of information may be given as appropriate.

IMPORTANT EMERGENCY INFORMATION:

- If an ambulance needs to be called for an injury or illness, ask them to turn off their sirens as they come on site to decrease site wide panic.
- ANYTIME an ambulance is called there should be staff members in the following places (based on proximity and availability)
 - At the beginning of the driveway to direct the EMS onto property (if the emergency happens at the pool there should be a staff member at the pool parking lot entrance)
 - At the fork where the road splits to direct EMS down the proper road
 - If it is a waterfront emergency there should be staff lined periodically along the backroad all the way to the emergency entrance in between cabin 3 and 4
 - At the site of the emergency to assist in group management
 - If all of these places are covered by staff remaining staff should keep track of camp activities to keep things running as normally as possible and to keep campers and volunteers away from the site of the emergency

VII. FOOD POISONING

In the event that there is a suspicion by either the Camp Health Care Provider or a physician of a food borne illness affecting the campers, the following steps shall be taken:

- Campers exhibiting the symptoms of the illness shall be taken to the infirmary. In the event that the numbers are too large, additional mattresses shall be brought over. The Nature Center area shall be cleared out and the mattresses placed on the floor. Any events scheduled for the Nature Center shall be rescheduled.
- If there appears to be large numbers of persons affected by the outbreak, refer to the emergency

back up list for additional Health Care Providers. As an immediate solution, enlist program staff and lifeguards who have first aid and CPR certification.

- All leftover food from previous meals shall be isolated for further examination. Any packaging or cans of the food shall be retrieved and held for further investigation.
- The Anne Arundel County Health Department, Food Services Section shall be notified as soon as possible. The Food Service Director shall work with the Health Department officials to ascertain causes of the outbreak. If required, the Food Service Director shall notify the food suppliers.
- Staff shall begin to contact parents/guardians according to the established procedure. A message shall be prepared for distribution.
- The process shall be put in motion to contact the Conference Communications Director to handle any communication with the press.

VIII. COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

In the event that a communicable disease that has serious health consequences for the campers is suspected, the following steps shall be taken:

- Contact the local physician or emergency room. Take the suspected camper(s) to get a confirmed diagnosis. The physician will then notify the Anne Arundel County Health Department, Communicable Disease Section 410 -222-7186.
- The Health Department will then help to direct the efforts in dealing with the disease including isolating any campers with the symptoms of the suspected illness, vaccinations, etc.
- Notify the Conference Office, Director of Connectional Ministries and have them contact the Director of Communications to handle any public or press briefings.
- If additional medical support is needed contact the numbers on the emergency phone list for back up medical personnel. As an immediate measure, utilize the program and lifeguard staff that are certified in first aid and CPR.
- Begin the process of communicating with parents. If evacuation is necessary and pickup of the campers is deemed warranted, begin that process. Prepare a list of symptoms and a simple statement of what is known for distribution to parents. If warranted, recommend that parents have their camper looked at by their family physician.
- After evacuation, begin any sanitizing/cleaning process that may be required in consultation with the County Health Department.

IX. TRAGIC OR SUDDEN DEATH OF A CAMPER OR STAFF MEMBER

If there were a tragic event such as a death that occurred at camp, there could quite possibly be a need for grief counseling. The following persons are available resources to assist in dealing with the situation:

- Dr. Deborah Haskins –(C)443 691-2536 (H) 410 448-1604 (O) 410 617-2428
- Therapist: Xanthia Johnson- 240-565-5422, xanthia@urbanplayology.com

The Director of Connectional Ministries shall be notified, and the Director of Communications shall be contacted. A statement shall be drawn up and the process of communicating with parents/guardians will begin.

X. CATASTROPHIC EVENT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OR REGION

If there were to be a catastrophic event that impacted our community or region, the decision to be made is it in the best interest of the campers to be evacuated, dismissed or to remain sequestered on the site? The decision criteria will be based on what optimizes the safety, health and well-being of the campers and

staff.

- If it is determined that they are to be evacuated, the established process for evacuation as outlined in this guide will be followed.
- If it is determined that the campers are to be dismissed early, the process of communicating with parents/guardians will begin.
 - Campers shall return to their lodges and begin to pack. They shall stay in the lodges until parents/guardians arrive.
 - There shall be an orderly process of dismissing and checking out the campers. One staff person shall be in each lodge to assist the counselors with the check-out process. The name of each camper and who picked them up shall be recorded along with the time of pick up. The normal check out procedure requiring picture identification of the person picking them up shall be followed. Each camper shall be accounted for throughout the entire process.
 - Counselors and Directors shall remain until all campers have been picked up. The time the counselors leave shall be recorded also.
 - Staff shall be positioned at the entrances to the camp to give assistance and direction to parents/guardians retrieving the campers. They shall also help to maintain control.
- If it is determined that it is in the best interest to have the campers remain at camp but sequestered, the following process shall be followed.
 - All Campers, Counselors and Staff shall come as quickly and orderly as possible to Ehlers Hall.
 - In summer, the Health Care Provider shall bring the first aid kit and any medications. In non summer camp times the first aid kit from the office shall be brought to Ehlers Hall.
 - Once everyone is inside, secure the doors. Place signs on the east and west doors that indicate they are secure and anyone wishing to enter shall come to the south doors (parking lot side).
 - Take attendance. Some staff shall undertake to entertain the campers while others see to the remaining items.
 - Close all windows and latch.
 - Turn off the heat/air conditioning by turning the switches on the three thermostats to the off position. (one in the lobby and two in the main room)
 - Turn off the ceiling fans.
 - The only way in or out of the building shall be through the door in the lobby. Staff shall monitor this entrance and use it sparingly.
 - As needed prepared foods shall be brought from the Dining Center.

XI. EVACUATION OF THE CENTER

In the event it is required to evacuate the premises, the prearranged destination is Davidsonville UMC, 819 W Central Ave, Davidsonville, MD 21035. The directions from West River are:

Right on to Chalk Point Rd. Right onto Muddy Creek Rd and continue on it for 5.8 miles to Mill Swamp Rd. Turn left onto Mill Swamp and continue for 1.7 miles to turn right onto Route 2 N. There is an almost immediate left onto Birdsville Rd. Follow Birdsville for 2.8 miles and Davidsonville UMC is on the left for the back entrance. For the front, continue to the light and turn left and the church entrance is on the left.

The following procedures should be followed if evacuation is necessary:

Notify Davidsonville United Methodist Church of the need to evacuate.

- Church (410) 798-5511
- Rev. Kyle Durbin

Lane's Bus will provide a bus for transportation from camp to the church.

- Campers are to be assembled in Ehlers Hall. Attendance should be taken to be sure all campers and counselors are present and accounted for.
- Identify all available vehicles and drivers on site and bring vehicles to the main parking lot.
- Campers should be loaded in an orderly manner. Campers are not to bring with them their belongings or luggage. The primary concern is for the safety of the campers.
- One or more staff members should precede the campers to the church to prepare and welcome them when they arrive. The staff should have attendance lists. Campers are to go to the social hall and stay inside during this transfer process. Attendance is to be taken as they arrive.

The Food Service staff shall gather as much non-perishable ready to eat food as possible, including water, and pack it into a vehicle for transport to the Church. Once they are there, they shall set up a distribution system.

Once all the campers have arrived, an attendance check shall be taken again. All campers shall remain inside. Games and activities shall be organized and led by the program staff and counselors.

If parents/guardians are coming to pick up campers, there shall be an organized area where they are to come. Photo ID's are to be checked and there shall be a log of who is picked up, by whom and when.

A skeletal crew shall remain behind at the Center to monitor and care for the grounds and equipment as is possible. Once the campers have been evacuated, there shall be one person stationed at the entrance to direct all persons to the evacuation center.

The staff shall remain at the church until all campers have been picked up or the emergency has abated. If the crisis has passed and there are still campers at the church, contact Mt. Zion UMC to return the remaining campers.

XII. CODE RED DAYS

Code Red Days are called when there is significant threat of unhealthy air due to pollution and weather conditions. We follow the air quality rating given by Air Now at <https://www.airnow.gov/?city=West%20River&state=MD&country=USA> . People are warned to limit their outdoor activities, with children, senior citizens and asthmatics especially at risk. In the event a Code Red Day is announced for the West River area, the following precautions shall be taken:

- The Health Aide/Nurse will review the health records and identify any campers that have respiratory ailments. Any of those
- that have inhalers, whether for routine or emergency use, shall be identified and the Health Aide/Nurse shall be sure the counselors have them with them at all times
- Water jugs shall be made available at all outside activities
- Additional activities to keep cool may be planned. (Extended pool time, water relays, slip and slide, etc.)

- Physical activities may be limited. Counselors may be advised of signs of respiratory distress. Any campers exhibiting any of these signs shall be taken to the infirmary for rest in a climate-controlled area. The physician on call shall be contacted immediately.
- In the event the need is widespread, activities will be altered and substitute activities in air-conditioned spaces or the pool will be conducted.

Children having difficulty breathing often show signs that they are not getting enough oxygen, indicating respiratory distress. Below is a list of some of these signs that may indicate that a person is having trouble breathing or not getting enough oxygen. It is important to learn the signs of respiratory distress and know how to respond appropriately.

- Respiratory Rate – An increase in the number of breaths per minute.
- Color Changes – A bluish color seen around the mouth, on the outside of the lips, or on the fingernails may occur. The color of the skin may appear pale or gray.
- Grunting – A grunting sound can be heard each time a person exhales. This is the body's way of maintaining positive pressure in the lungs to keep the airway open.
- Nasal Flaring – The nostrils spreading open while breathing may indicate that person has to work harder to breathe.
- Restrictions – The chest appears to sink in just below the neck and/or under the breastbone with each breath – one way of trying to bring more air into the lungs.
- Sweating – There may be increased sweat on the head, but the skin does not feel warm to the touch. More often,
- the skin may feel cool or clammy. This happens when the breathing rate is very fast.
- Wheezing – A tight, whistling sound or musical sound heard with each breath may indicate that the air passages may be smaller, making it more difficult to breathe.
- Increased fatigue – Increased fatigue in an asthmatic may be a warning sign of severe respiratory distress. Lack of
- oxygen to the vital organs will cause a sensation of being okay but being very tired.

XIII. POOR WATER QUALITY

There may be times throughout the summer when the bacteria levels in the river rise to such a level as to become unsafe for campers, volunteers, and staff to be in the water. In the event the bacteria levels are too high (testing is conducted by the West/Rhode Riverkeeper), river based activities such as Banana Boating, Paddling, Sailing, and Fishing/Seining shall be postponed until such a time when water quality levels have returned to safety boundaries.

XIV. IMMINENT PHYSICAL THREAT ON THE SITE

In the event there is an imminent physical threat to the safety of the campers, counselors and staff on the site, (such as a person on site with intent to harm or maim) the following procedures shall take place:

If you see someone who is intent to harm use your cell phone to notify others on site. You can use the group text we set up at the beginning of the week of camp. Be sure to share the location of the individual. If you are able, provide updates to the location of the individual.
Notify law enforcement.

RUN, HIDE, FIGHT

Run:

If you are able to determine the location of the attacker and can safely leave the camp, gather your campers into small groups and leave the property. Head into the neighborhoods around the camp to the south and east. Keep track of all campers. Continue traveling with your group away from camp until you see emergency responders.

Hide:

If you determine you are not able to safely leave the area, hide with your campers in a place that is out of view of the attacker. Try to put as many barriers between you and the attacker as possible. Stay silent and silence all electronics. Good places to hide include: the hallways of the lodges and retreat center, the dining hall kitchen, the dining hall attic.

Lock all doors possible. Stay hidden until law enforcement gives you the all clear, or you are able to determine that the attacker has moved to a different location and you can safely leave the area.

Fight:

Fighting is an absolute last resort. If the attacker finds you, use any means necessary to fight them off. Be as aggressive as possible and recruit others to ambush the attacker with makeshift weapons like chairs, fire extinguishers, etc. Throw items to distract the attacker. Be prepared to cause severe or even lethal injury.

When you encounter law enforcement:

- Keep hands visible and empty.
- Law enforcement's first task is to end the incident, so they may pass injured persons along the way.
- Follow law enforcement instructions and evacuate in the direction they come from unless otherwise directed.

Camp administration will coordinate with Mt Zion UMC in Lothian, MD (see evacuation plan) and local authorities to transport campers to Mt Zion for pick-up of campers by their parents and guardians.

XV. LOCAL EMERGENCIES NEAR OR ON SITE

There are occasions where there is a local emergency that does not pertain to West River campers, staff, or volunteers. When these situations arise, we strive to do our best to support emergency efforts and our community.

When there are efforts near camp to locate lost persons staff shall aid in those efforts by enacting our lost camper procedures as a search of site and, if needed, a water search.

In the event of a nearby fire, staff and volunteers shall keep campers inside as necessary and away from dangerous areas. West River may also be used as a site for emergency water collection either from the river or the Turtle Pond, in this event, staff and volunteers shall move all campers away from those areas as to not impede emergency workers.

For other unforeseen circumstances, staff may be asked to aid emergency workers in supporting their work not limited to keeping campers indoors, away from certain areas, evacuating campers to safe locations, and aiding in searches.

WHAT'S THAT NOISE? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Continuous ringing of the bell outside Ehlers- All campers, volunteers, and staff assemble immediately on the worship benches or in Ehlers Meeting Hall.

Air horn (Short Blast) - Waterfront emergency, ALL lifeguard personnel should immediately assemble at the waterfront.

TIPS FROM ALL-STAR STAFFERS

1. Be present with the campers, find joy in all that you do.
2. Get to know the campers, and celebrate who they are.
3. If you aren't feeling enthusiastic or joyful, fake it 'til you make it.
4. Keep your directions and instructions simple.
5. Don't be negative, and watch the sarcasm.
6. The campers who need the most love will ask for it in the most unloving ways. Keep that in mind as behavior issues arise. There are no bad campers, only bad behaviors.
7. Your work this summer isn't just a job, it's a ministry to all the people around you, including the other staff.
8. Be curious about everything.
9. Embrace and celebrate the diversity around you.
10. Rest when given the opportunity; even God took a Sabbath.
11. If you need help, ask for it. If you are asked for help, give it.
12. Don't be afraid to give campers responsibility.

EASY NAME AND OTHER GAMES

Group juggle: form a circle. *Have the group remember the person that they threw the ball to* Someone has a ball, says the name of someone in the group and throws the ball to them. That person says the name of another group member and throws them the ball. Start the cycle again. Halfway through, introduce another ball, throwing the ball to the same person each time. Keep introducing balls to make it more interesting.

Common Ground: Everyone forms a circle and one person is in the middle (typically the leader starts in the middle to demonstrate). The person in the middle says “I have common ground with anyone who...” and says something about them. Ex: likes pizza, is an only child, favorite color is rainbow. Once the line is said, anyone in the circle that relates to the statement tries to switch spots with someone else that relates to the statement. At the same time, the person in the middle is trying to claim a spot. Someone is left without a spot and is in the middle and says a common ground statement.

Splat: The group forms a circle and the leader starts in the middle. The person in the middle will choose someone in the circle and point to them and say “splat”. That person then has to duck, and the two people on either side have to face each other and shout “splat”. Whoever says splat last is out. If the person in the middle fails to duck they are instead out.

Mafia: The group sits in a circle. As a group they come up with a town name and then the leader(s) explains the roles of the game. Townspeople- the good, stand-up citizens of the town. Mafia-terrorizes the town and eliminates townspeople. Sheriff- Tries to arrest/takeout Mafia. Angel/Doctor/Superhero- Tries to save the person the Mafia tries to take out. To start the game, everyone goes to sleep. The leaders select at least one person for each Mafia, Sherriff, and Doctor by silently tapping them on the head (the rest of the group doesn't know who each role is). Each round the town will go to sleep (close their eyes). One at a time, the leader will ask each specialized group to wake up. When the Mafia wake up, they select one person they want to take out (without talking) and then they go back to sleep. The Sheriff wakes up and selects one person they believe is in the Mafia and then they go back to sleep.

Froggy Murderer: Everyone closes their eyes and counselors pick one person to be the froggy murderer. When the group opens their eyes, everyone begins looking around the circle. The froggy murderer takes people out by sticking their tongue out at them. The person who got out will wait a couple seconds and then scoot out of the circle.

IN CLOSING

Your job this summer is going to be awesome. Amazing. Incredible. Tiring. Stressful sometimes. But awesome. Along the way some of your campers will be a challenge. Just know that regardless of their difficulties or struggles, kids are still kids. They want to do well, and you want to help them do well. Good luck this summer. Remember to laugh.

