



# Camp Odayin Winter Camp 2018 Staff Manual

## **Camp Odayin Mission and Value Statements**

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Camp Odayin provides safe, fun and supportive camp experiences and community building opportunities for young people with heart disease and their families.

Our purpose is to provide positive life changing experiences for young people with heart disease. Camp Odayin is a place where the transformative experience of camp fuses with the power of belonging among kindred friends. Our family boasts unmatched acceptance, support and camaraderie.

### We Value:

- A holistic approach to healing hearts
- Nurturing and developing independence, confidence and acceptance throughout our campers' lives
- Creating a sense of community among our heart family
- Having fun and celebrating life!

## The First Day

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We'll start the day with staff training in the morning and medical staff will sign up for Winter Front sledding hill/broomball shifts. In Minnesota, camper registration will begin at 11:00, we'll get campers registered and then ride the bus to camp. Here we are at CAMP ODAYIN!

- When we arrive at camp, one counselor stays to unload luggage into lobby of Crossfire, one counselor takes campers directly to their cabin's room.
- It's likely your cabin will have campers who are being dropped off at camp, or riding the bus from Madison. Please work together as a cabin leadership team to ensure these kids are welcomed and incorporated into the cabin right away.
- Once many of the bags have been unloaded, one counselor stays in the room with campers, while the other brings 2-3 campers (not the entire cabin) to identify and retrieve luggage.
- Immediately upon arrival, nurses head to upper Cross Fire to check in campers getting dropped off and connect with the nurses who will be traveling with campers on the bus from Madison.
- Following camper check in, nurses bring bins of medication directly to the locked health center before taking personal items to their rooms.

### UPON ARRIVAL AND AFTER HELPING YOUR CAMPERS MOVE INTO YOUR CABIN...WHAT DO YOU DO NOW?

1. **INTRODUCTIONS & NAME GAMES**
2. **BED ASSIGNMENTS AND UNPACK**
3. **CODE OF LIVING (CREATE YOUR OWN CABIN RULES AND POST IN YOUR CABIN)**
4. **MAKE A CABIN CHEER**

## The Importance of First Impressions

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At camp we have an important expression: "FIRST IS LAST." What this means is that first impressions may be the ones that last the longest. We may or may not be able to undo the effects of a negative first impression. A lost opportunity to make the most positive first impression may not be recovered. You will be meeting a majority of your campers and their parents for the first time at the hotel or at camp when we arrive. In order to make a good first impression everyone must be on full alert about:

**\*WHAT WE LOOK LIKE**

**\*WHAT WE SAY**

**\*WHAT WE DO AS WE MEET OUR CAMPERS AND PARENTS**

When greeting our campers and their families for the first time, remember to bring your "GAME" face.

**G = get on their level**

**A = announce their name**

**M = make it known how you feel**

**E = engage them in conversation**

## DOs FOR STAFF

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### CAMPERS ARE YOUR FIRST CONCERN

Know your campers; not as labels but as individuals.

Play with your campers; don't just provide opportunities for play.

Get on the same level as your campers: eye-level, bend your knees.

Have open arms; sit with your campers; always have them participate with you. Your behavior lets campers know they are your first priority.

Stay with your campers at all times to provide supervision.

### USE "PUKE PROOF PRAISE"

Find opportunities to praise specific actions and responses for every camper.

Recognize each individual camper's victories and let them be known.

If you tell them they did well ... good, but they will forget it.

If you tell them over and over... they will resent it and it will seem insincere.

If they overhear you telling others... they will remember it forever!

### HELP CAMPERS MAKE GOOD DECISIONS

When presented with a request/question, try to put a question mark at the end of every sentence. Instead of saying NO! or YES! (judgment statements), help campers make appropriate decisions by asking 'thinking questions'. "I heard...tell me about that?" "How did you decide?" "What are the ups and downs of that idea?" "What are our options?"

"What else could we try?" "How do you think we should do it?"

### USE HAZARD EYES

Enter all situations or areas with open eyes for possible hazards to campers, other staff and self. This includes not only physical objects and behavior, but also emotional and self-esteem issues. Appropriate action in dealing with hazards is important and prevention is key. Some situations need dramatic intervention, others educated decisions.

### ENERGY & ENTHUSIASM

The energy and involvement modeled by staff adds to a camper's experience and the camp community. Your willingness, promotion and example to try new things and have fun will model this for campers. Pace of energy is important for the staff member in that it creates a healthy and obtainable high energy level.

### REALIZE THERE ARE 24 HOURS IN A DAY

Camp is a community of individuals. All organized communities run on a schedule (in order to provide meals, participate in all activities, have events, etc.). Plan ahead for the particular needs of your campers (and yourself). "How long will it take us to get to an activity?"

Show responsibility to co-staff and the camp community and be on time!

Communicate plans. Know that you will not be able to do everything in a day/week ... plan and pick priorities with our campers. Let staff who are counting on you know if there is a change or challenge for your group. Get enough rest. The campers need all of us at our best ... alive, alert, awake and enthusiastic!

## Cabin Closing / Staff Meeting

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Cabin closings can be a very meaningful time of the day. It is an opportunity to put closure to the day's activities and discuss both accomplishments and challenges. As a staff member, it also allows you to see which campers may need more of your attention or a little extra love.

It is very important that you keep your cabin together in the cabin space during closing. This creates unity and cohesion among the cabin. Please do not combine groups or move your closing to another location without asking the Winter Camp leadership.

Before camper bedtime you and your co-staff should have a cabin closing prepared for your campers. Closings can be as varied as the individuals who prepare them (i.e. reading a short story or poem, sharing favorite parts of the day or singing a quiet song). It may help to have a staff member explain the closing and start it off to provide a good example. Please remember that not all campers will feel comfortable enough with the group to participate freely. It is okay if the camper wants to "pass" and chooses not to speak. Please remember that campers and staff should not have any candy or food with them at camp. Do not give campers food at cabin closings, and if you see that campers have candy or food, please confiscate it or ask a director to come and take it.

Additionally, there is a staff meeting every night. We will announce the time each night. Please budget your time! Your cabin closing should be complete and children should be in bed with the lights out at the time of the staff meeting. This ensures that one counselor is not in charge of putting all the kids to bed by him or herself.

\*At Winter Camp, the medical staff sleeps in the same building (although in different rooms) as camper cabins. In the event of an emergency during the night, please don't hesitate to wake the Lead Nurse. Be sure that you're aware of the location of the Lead Nurse's room.

## Health Care Orientation

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### About our campers with heart disease

The two types of heart disease in children are "congenital" and "acquired." **Congenital** heart disease is present at birth and is shown as a defect in the structure of the heart. Defects range in severity from a hole between the two chambers of the heart to complete absence of one or more chambers or valves. **Acquired** heart disease typically develops during childhood and can include heart damage due to infection (such as Kawasaki disease and rheumatic fever) and heart rate problems (known as arrhythmias). Camp Odayin has campers with both types of heart disease and represents a large spectrum of childhood heart disease. Our campers look and act like most other kids...with some exceptions – some may have surgical scars, blue lips, and some may be smaller than other kids their age. Although our campers have special needs – remember kids are kids! Our kids come to camp to feel normal and to have fun!

### Camper information

Cabin counselors will receive specific information about each camper assigned to their cabin. The nurse assigned to your cabin will review information with counselors, such as physical activity limitations, bed-wetting, and specific information regarding medication i.e. taking blood thinner. Information about the campers' health is confidential and is only to be shared with the particular staff that is entrusted with the care of that camper. Health documents and permission to treat forms are always kept in the Health Center.

### Look at each camper/staff (and yourself!) daily.

If there is a change in a camper's/staff's condition, have it checked out by your cabin nurse or the lead nurse:

- Do they look more tired?
- Does their color look good?
- Do they have dry or chapped lips or skin?
- Have they changed their clothes?
- Have they taken a shower?
- Have they used the toilet?
- Have they brushed their teeth?
- Have they combed their hair?

Parents do not expect their kids to “take a vacation” from health. Camp is not a place to ignore good hygiene. Camp staff should model good health habits for themselves and their campers.

### **Other general points...**

**Make sure your campers (and you) are drinking fluids.** It is important to encourage campers to drink frequently.

**Make sure your campers are eating.** Our wonderful camp cook prepares fantastic camp food! Most of the kids enjoy mealtime. However, if you notice a camper not eating, let your nurse know.

**Rest period** - Camp days are filled with activity. For most people, and especially the campers, the camp day is much busier than their usual day at home. Please encourage your campers to lie down on their bunks and rest. If they do not want to sleep, make sure they remain in their bunk and are quiet so other campers can rest.

**Bedwetting** - Sometimes we have campers who wet their beds. This may be because of their medication or a change in environment, or they may wet the bed at home. Hopefully we will be able to let cabin counselors know who may wet the bed...but sometimes it may come as a surprise. If you know or discover a camper who wets their bed, some preventative strategies to consider are:

- Limit drinking after dinner
- Encourage the camper to use bathroom before going to sleep
- Let the camper know which bunk is the counselor’s so they can get assistance at night

If a camper does wet the bed:

- When the camper is at breakfast with the rest of the cabin, let the nurse assigned to the cabin know. Each day nurses do “bed checks” to look for wet bedding (super fun job!)
- Try to keep it as quiet as possible so the camper is not embarrassed
- Remind them to shower and change their clothes
- The nurse will use universal precautions and bring the wet sleeping bag and clothes to the Health Center in a plastic bag

### **Universal precautions**

Universal precautions were instituted by the Center for Disease Control in the 1980s to protect health care providers from contracting infectious diseases. The rule of universal precautions is that all care-givers use precautions when coming into contact with body fluids - blood, urine, vomit, etc. or materials contaminated with body fluids of any person to minimize the risk of transmission of blood-borne diseases.

### **General principles of universal precautions:**

\*Wash your hands!

\*If you come into contact with blood or body fluids, wash the area of your body which comes into contact with them.

\*Report to the Health Center if you come into contact with material contaminated with blood or body fluids.

\*Materials contaminated with blood or body fluids will be disposed of in special containers.

While at camp, all staff are to use universal precautions. To help in this practice – gloves will be kept in the Health Center, in the red back packs worn by nurses, and in the dining area. If you, or a camper, come in contact with blood or body fluids – report to the Health Center for further instructions.

## Medical Safety

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- Anytime a camper needs to go to the Health Center, he or she needs to be accompanied by a staff person.
- ALL medications, camper and staff, must be checked into the Health Center on the first day of camp.
- If you have a general medical concern (non-emergency), about a camper or yourself, contact the nurse assigned to your cabin first.
- All medical records are kept in the Health Center.
- Emergency equipment is checked daily by the Lead Nurse.
- All campers visiting the Health Center will be seen, assessed, and have their visit documented in the daily log.
- Staff members shall report any camp related injury (to self, staff, or camper) immediately to a Nurse and the Lead Nurse. An incident report will be written and all involved persons will be asked to read and sign it, when appropriate.

All campers and their parents are required to sign the following form:

### **CAMP ODAYIN CAMPER EXPECTATIONS**

Our hope is that Camp Odayin will be a place for campers to make friends and find support. In order for Camp Odayin to be safe, fun and enjoyable for everyone, there are some expectations we'd like you to share with your child before coming to camp. Please read and discuss the following expectations with your child.

1. Campers must treat every person (campers and staff) at camp with respect and consideration. We will not tolerate intimidation, verbal or physical abuse, or destruction of property.
2. Camp is an experience in group living. For camp to run successfully, everyone must cooperate and help with cabin chores and comply with the cabin code of conduct (established by cabin mates).
3. Alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, smoking or tobacco products are not allowed at Camp Odayin. Camp Odayin has the right to search my child's belongings (with the child present) if suspicion of possession of any of the above prohibited substances.
4. Guns, knives, slingshots, fireworks or any other kinds of weapons are not allowed at Camp Odayin.
5. Physical, sexual or suggestive behavior is not appropriate or acceptable at Camp Odayin.
6. Cussing, swearing and foul language is not acceptable at Camp Odayin.
7. Campers will not bring cell phones to Camp Odayin.

If at any time during camp, these expectations are broken or we feel a camper's behavior takes away from a positive camping experience, the parents/guardian will be notified. We consider this document to be a contract and in the event that a camper breaks this contract, Odayin reserves the right to ask a camper to leave camp. Transportation will become the parent/guardian responsibility.

We have read, discussed and understand the above camper expectations:

Print Camper Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Camper Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Standards of Conduct for Camp Odayin Staff

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1. Staff members will not be in the possession of or use any alcoholic beverage or illegal substances during the camp session, or during any training prior to the camp session. All prescription and over-the-counter medications must be kept in the Health Center.
2. Some staff expectations:
  - a. ALWAYS know where all of your campers are at all times.
  - b. Relationships with other staff members should be friendly and supportive. Staff members may never become intimate, suggestive or sexual with each other while at camp. Staff relationships may not interfere with any camp responsibilities.
  - c. Staff members are expected to maintain an appropriate and acceptable standard of dress and behavior.
3. Some staff “no-nos”
  - a. Smoking, drinking, chewing chew
  - b. Firearms, slingshots, fireworks, anything that could hurt someone
  - c. Misuse any camp property, including equipment, vehicles, or materials.
  - d. Fighting between staff members and campers or other staff
  - e. Stealing stuff, using yucky words, lying
  - f. Don’t bring your pet
4. Staff members shall comply with all camp safety rules and common safety practices, including, but not limited to the following:
  - a. No one is allowed in the sledding & broomball area outside of scheduled activity time.
  - b. Please model appropriate winter clothing by wearing a winter coat, boots, snow pants (if sledding), gloves and a hat anytime you’re outside.
  - c. No candles are allowed in the cabins.
  - d. All schedules and curfews must be adhered to.
  - e. Campers are **NEVER** to be left in cabins alone; one counselor should be with their cabin group at all times.
  - f. Campers are not allowed to ride in any vehicle that does not have proper seat belts or in staff’s personal vehicles unless asked by a director.
  - g. Please, no pillow fights, cabin raids, or horseplay in the cabins.
  - h. Food and drink remains in the dining hall.
  - i. Shoes must be worn at all times when outside of the cabin.

### **5. Never be alone with a camper! Never leave a camper alone!**

6. Staff members shall not enter the cabin areas or cabins of the opposite gender, with the exception of Medical or Directing Staff.
7. Camp Odayin is not responsible for any personal items or sports equipment that gets lost or damaged while you are at camp.
8. There are no laundry facilities available for staff to use.
9. Camp is a place where staff members are responsible to protect campers from possible outside intervention. Please notify the director of any security concerns on the camp property.
  - Most campers ride the bus to and from camp, but some are picked up and dropped off at camp. No camper is allowed to leave the site with a non-staff person without permission from the Camp Director.

## Social Media Policy

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We understand that staff members may have a personal Facebook or other social media accounts. Please know that your behavior within social media reflects upon you as a representative of Camp Odayin. Remember that on public sites, campers and their parents may be viewing your profile.

- You may not become “friends” with campers on your Facebook or other social media apps until they are 18
- If you are already “friends” with campers – please send them a message and let them know it is Odayin policy that this is not ok and communication between the two of you needs to be via email instead of via social media.
- Emailing campers is ok if they ask for your email address and contact you first
- If you mention your experience at Camp Odayin on The Book of Face or via social media:
  - a. At no time should names of campers be posted
  - b. Be respectful (and positive) about your experience at Camp Odayin
  - c. No confidential information (regarding campers) may be shared

If your amazing experience at Camp Odayin inspires you to start a Facebook page, please refrain from doing so. Camp Odayin has an official Facebook page – please become a fan and follow us on Twitter.

## Cell Phone & Technology Policy

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Staff members are prohibited from using cell phones, Apple Watches, tablets or iPods in the presence of campers, and under no circumstances should a camper ever be allowed to use a staff member’s phone. Cell phones, tablets and iPods are to remain turned off unless a staff member is on free time at rest hour or after the staff meeting and is outside of the cabin. **You are not allowed to share your cell phone number with any campers.** This includes text messaging!!!! If you find your campers have cell phones or iPods, please take it away or let the Winter Camp Director or leadership team know. FYI - your camper and their parent(s) signed off at registration that they were not bringing a phone or iPod (or anything that can connect to the internet) to camp, or turned it in. Confiscated phones / mp3 players should be turned into the Camp Director.

## American Camp Association

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Did you know that Camp Odayin is accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA)? What does that mean? ACA Accreditation means that Camp Odayin submitted to a thorough review (over 300 standards) of its operation by the ACA — from staff qualifications and training to emergency management. The ACA collaborates with experts from The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Red Cross, and other youth service agencies to assure that current practices at the camp reflect the most up-to-date, research-based standards in camp operation. Camp Odayin and the ACA form a partnership that promotes summers of growth and fun in an environment committed to safety.

Our staff to camper ratio is 1:2 and our counselor to camper ratio is 1:4, which exceeds the ACA guidelines of 1:6.

## Touch

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At camp, hugging, touching, holding hands and other physical contact is quite common, normal, and good. The following guidelines are designed to help you know when and what kinds of touch are appropriate at camp.

- a) Make sure that you spread your hugging around! One way to keep touch from being misinterpreted by a single camper is to show the same genuine affection to many campers.
- b) Appropriate touch is done in group settings. Touching one another by hugging, holding hands, or putting an arm around a camper is a very reassuring feeling for campers. It's normal, healthy and good! It shows you care. However, always express these gestures of care in a group setting. Avoid one-on-one contact situations.
- c) Avoid touch in situations that could be misinterpreted as sexual advances; this includes "tuck ins" and back rubs, etc. For example, touching under the water in the lake is inappropriate because it is hidden.
- d) At no time should a staff member and a camper have conversation alone in a cabin or out in the woods. A perfect place to do one-on-one counseling is the front deck of the lodge. This keeps the situation from appearing inappropriate. Have the most private conversation in the most public place.
- e) As stated in other policy areas, camper/staff relationships of a romantic nature are not acceptable.
- f) If you notice a touching situation that is inappropriate, it is the staff's responsibility to inform the Camp Director immediately.
- g) If you are getting your own personal needs met through relationships with campers and hugging of campers – it is wrong; you need to re-evaluate your actions.
- h) As a staff member, it is inappropriate to disclose to campers any aspect of your own intimacy history or current relationships.

It is important that staff understands, with sensitivity and wisdom, that touch is a loaded act given the current climate.

## Policy against Harassment

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Camp Odayin is committed to providing a camp environment that is free of discrimination. In keeping with this commitment, Camp Odayin maintains a strict policy prohibiting harassment. This policy applies to all volunteers, including supervisors and staff volunteers. This policy prohibits harassment in any form.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwanted behavior of a sexual nature that is personally offensive to its recipient(s).

Any volunteer who believes he or she has been harassed by a co-worker, supervisor, or agent of Camp Odayin should promptly report the incident of harassment to the Camp Director. The Director will investigate all such claims and take appropriate action.

At a minimum, when a volunteer complains about harassment, Camp Odayin will do the following in accordance with the procedure outlined in this policy.

1. Fully inform the volunteer of their rights to make a complaint about the harassment.
2. Immediately conduct a thorough, objective, and complete investigation of the alleged harassment. Camp Odayin shall make a determination about whether harassment occurred, and communicate this alleged finding to the harasser and any other concerned party.
3. Take prompt and effective remedial action if harassment has occurred. The action must correspond with the severity of the offense and be made known to the victim.

Please Note: All complaints will be documented in an Incident Report (located in the health center) that all involved parties will be asked to read and sign.

## Child Abuse

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The children placed in our care come from unknown backgrounds, they have had experiences you may not know about and some will bring problems that you do not have the experience or training to address properly. In spite of these disadvantages, you are in a position to be a source of strength and help to children placed in your care.

If a child/camper tells you about an abusive experience they've had – or that they have been treated inappropriately (physically, mentally, sexually), please take the following precautions:

If a case of sexual or physical abuse is reported or suspected, staff is expected to report this situation to the Camp Director immediately; Minnesota law requires it. Follow the guidelines below:

What To Do:

- DO remain calm. Try not to panic or overreact to the information disclosed by the child.
- DO get just the facts. Try not to criticize the child or claim that the child misunderstood what happened.
- DO respect the child's privacy. Immediately take the child to a place where other campers cannot overhear you but still in sight of others. It is important that you discuss the child's situation only with the Camp Director and with the child protective services agency.
- DO encourage the camper to tell the Camp Director. Find her right away. Offer to be there with them. Make sure that the child feels that he or she is not to blame for what has happened. Tell the child that no one should ask him or her to keep a special secret and that it is okay to talk with appropriate adults about what happened.

## Camp Staff Daily Expectations

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1. Expect to spend most of your time with your cabin. Co-counselors will alternate who goes to staff meetings each night. During rest hour, communicate to be sure that both counselors have an opportunity for free time (if desired).
2. Staff are expected to have fun at camp. While our program is inherently "fun" it is up to you to approach the weekend with a positive attitude. Be ready to make friends and be silly. This weekend is entirely what you make it!
3. Staff should model good behavior by participating in all activities and programs. Staff who sit out will always find themselves surrounded by campers. Staff should model good behavior by participating in all activities and programs. **It is expected all staff will participate in all activities!**
4. Nurses are with their cabin at all times with the exception of sleeping at night, and if they are assigned to clean cabin / wet bed duty during the first morning rotation.
5. Cabins should stay clean! This will ensure a healthy living space and cut down on misplaced items. There is a permanent marker in every cabin bag to label all campers' items. Nurses will announce the cleanest cabin each day.
6. Expect that the leadership team is available to help you make this a great weekend. We are here to support you and if you need anything please ask!

## **Volunteer Performance Policy**

There are some instances where volunteering as a counselor or nurse at Camp Odayin is just not a right fit for our program. In an effort to ensure we continue to have the best possible folks taking care of our amazing campers, we are creating guidelines for folks wanting to return to our summer staff. These are intended as guidelines; the behaviors are not limited those listed below.

Positive staff behaviors:

- Talking with campers and learning all of their names on the first day
- Playing with campers
- Putting the needs of your campers before yours
- Modeling positive interactions
- Balancing responsibilities

Negative staff behaviors:

- Talking to staff more than your campers
- Picking favorite campers
- Being more concerned with your experience at camp than the experience you are providing for your campers
- Having your needs trump your camper needs
- Inappropriate conversations / discipline
- Inability to set limits and be an adult role model
- Secluding yourself from your campers

If we receive negative feedback from your peers or leadership staff, you will be contacted the following year if you re-apply for a volunteer position with Odayin. Constructive feedback will be given and your re-application will depend on severity and repetition of behaviors. If appropriate, re-application will be granted to allow for growth and skill development. If no improvements are made and negative feedback is received for the 2nd year in a row, your application will not be considered in the future. Camp Odayin has the right to dismiss an application at any time.

## **Transgender Camper Support Plan**

Camp Odayin serves all people regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. Camp Odayin is a safe and accepting place that supports the development of personal identities, free of fear and stigma when promoting self-expression.

Pre-camp meeting – A meeting, preferably face to face if possible, will be held with the camper and his/her guardians to learn how to best support the camper while at Camp Odayin. Discussion topics will include pronoun choice, cabin placement, privacy, support person at camp, confidentiality....

At staff training we will provide resources to support transgender campers and have a discussion with counselors and nurse assigned to the transgender camper cabin. Leadership will maintain confidentiality and decide what information is shared and with whom.

Email a letter to parents of campers in the same cabin as the transgender camper if appropriate and approved by parents of the transgender child. Include a statement in the letter from the parents of the transgender child, or from the transgender child themselves

At camp -focus on inclusive programs, avoiding programming that forces campers to align themselves with one side – i.e. boys vs. girls. Provide a safe place for respectful discussions and camper questions.

American Camp Association - <http://www.acacamps.org/topics/transgender>

Human Rights Campaign: <http://www.hrc.org/explore/topic/transgender-children-youth>

Family Acceptance Project: <http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>

Gender Spectrum: <https://www.genderspectrum.org/>

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## Emergency Response and Communications

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In the event of an emergency such as death, serious accident, child abuse, missing camper, or any other serious situation, the following steps will be taken.

1. Phones at camp will be made inaccessible.
2. Staff will not communicate with anyone outside of camp, including the press. They may not be in touch with outside contacts, including family until the Director has given them permission to contact others.
3. All trips out of camp will be postponed. Trips already out of camp will be allowed to continue; however, the driver will be instructed to make no mention of the incident until a general announcement to the camp is made.
4. The people involved in the situation will be thoroughly questioned by the directors as soon as the incident occurs. A tape recorder will be used, with the permission of all parties present. A written transcript will be drawn up from the conversation and all parties will be asked to sign it, verifying events, time, place, etc.
5. The people involved will be asked to make no comments to the media, other staff members, or the public. They will be informed that anything that they say may be held against them at some later date by a court of law.
  - Any statement to the media will be made by the Executive Director.
  - No statement will be made until the parents of campers involved in the incident are contacted.
6. Our legal counsel and our insurance agent will be notified of the incident.  
Legal Counsel: Bob Day, work: 952.693.3340  
Insurance Agent: Irene Jones at Markel Insurance: 800.431.1270
7. The American Camp Association will be contacted and their advice and counsel will be solicited. The hotline pager number is 800.573.9019.
8. The parents of campers (and emergency contacts of staff members) involved will be notified by the Camp Director, or appointed personnel, and apprised of the situation. This may be via email or phone call.
9. A meeting of the entire camp will be organized and the entire camp community will be apprised of the facts. As soon as possible, campers will be given opportunities to ask questions and clarify their understanding of the incident.
10. No media or journalists will be allowed into camp.
11. The camp program will continue to the extent possible and staff will be asked to try their best to remain as appropriate adult role models and be interested in the camp programs.

## Camper Communication

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Practical Considerations: **Remember, you are working with INDIVIDUALS – even though part of a group! Count them as such.**

- A. Learn their names and fix their faces. Be able to call each by his/her first name within the first day. If you do not, you will be at a disadvantage, as kid's sense their importance in being recognized on a first name basis.
- B. Treat each one as an individual. Do not try to force your will on a camper. All people are different (emotionally and socially) from others. They will not respond the same, even in similar situations.
- C. Have a sympathetic understanding of the varied home backgrounds from which your campers have come. Some may be involved in deep predicaments, though not apparent on the surface.
- D. Have a genuine love and personal concern for each camper under your care and make it a point to spend some time with each one.
- E. Be alert and sensitive throughout the weekend to the needs of individuals-those who are lonely, those who have trouble making friends, etc.

**BE AVAILABLE** - Do not appear so busy and rushed or important that your campers feel they should not bother you. Be willing to spend much time with them, taking the time to listen if a counseling situation arises.

**BE A GOOD LISTENER** - Become thoroughly familiar with the problem before you dole out advice. Many times simply "talking it out" will aid a camper to find the solution him/herself without your actually having told him/her. Be interested, but not to the point of uncalled-for probing. Encouraging your campers to talk about their heart disease and other emotional issues might open flood gates of tears from hormonal girls. Indeed Camp Odayin is a safe and supportive place, but please let the campers initiate and guide the conversations.

**DO NOT SEEM SHOCKED** upon learning something from an individual. Give encouragement with one of the best devices of putting a camper at ease – the fact that "you are not the first one" to face such a problem or temptation.

**DO NOT PRETEND TO HAVE THE ANSWER** when you do not. Frankly admit your limitations and offer help in finding the answer. Perhaps arrange for an appointment with a director or another counselor.

**BE A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL** in all your words and actions towards yourself and others.

## Age Characteristics of Children and Behavioral Outcomes

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Each child is an individual, but after many years of observing our campers, we have recognized some common traits among age groups. Maturity levels between campers of the same age can vary, so don't rely wholly on these characteristics. This list is intended to give you a general idea of what to expect from the different age groups of campers.

### Campers 8 – 11 years old

- Strong attachments to home and family that can result in frequent homesickness
- Short attention spans
- Self-motivated
- Enjoy “make-believe” or pretend games
- Respond well to interested adults, whom they see as “nice”
- Repetition-oriented; easily upset by disruptions in routines
- Dependent on adults to meet their physical and emotional needs
- Demand patience, understanding and close supervision
- Behaviors often mirrors blood-sugar level, with low sugar often producing inappropriate behavior

### Campers 12 – 14 years old

- Strong desires for a “live-away” experience
- Preference for groups and teams
- Patience to work toward short-term goals
- Form cliques – more likely to exclude, scapegoat or tease
- Seek status through excellence in skills and adult-like knowledge
- Stronger competitive spirits than younger campers
- Growing concerns centering on physical size, weight and appearance
- Need more guidance than they can often admit
- Like to do, make, and collect things
- Enjoy being mischievous and daring

### Campers 15 – 17 years old

- Strong desires for group conformity
- Self-conscious and inhibited, especially when deviating from group norms
- Intense feelings and emotions with frequent mood swings
- Influenced by popular adults and teen idols
- Rapid changes in interest and ambitions
- Longer attention spans and growing capacity for self-discipline
- Preference for competition with outside groups
- Pubescent and interested in romantic lives of others, especially counselors
- Tend to cover own weaknesses by finding fault in others

### CHILDREN IN GENERAL

- Become tired and hungry more quickly than adults.
- Become cranky and irritable when they are tired or hungry.
- Play until exhausted or bored.
- Have different energy patterns than adults, i.e. campers are wired during Rest Hour and adults want to take it easy.
- See their “best interests” from a short-term perspective.
- Argue relentlessly for the very things that might harm or frighten them.
- Miscalculate time and often fail to judge time constraints well.
- Interpret the use of the word “maybe” by adults to mean “yes.”

- Assume that adults just “know” what is bothering them without being told.
- Practice “forum shopping”—keep on asking different counselors if they can do/have something until someone says “yes.”

#### ALL AGES – BEHAVIORAL OUTCOMES

- Increase acceptance of themselves and others
- Develop and improve friendship skills
- Become more responsibly engaged through being a team player as a part of cabin group
- Gain a greater sense of independence through being away from home and unplugged

## Cabin Spirit - What It Is and How to Promote It

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One excellent way to promote camaraderie, to get campers involved from the very beginning, to ward off homesickness even before it begins, is with lots of cabin spirit.

- 1) Make up a “team” name for your cabin (ie. the Wonderful Walleyes)
- 2) Create a cabin yell or chant and repeat it often (in the dining hall, going down the tubing hill, on the bus, etc.)  
-when you are singing in the dining hall, please refrain from pounding on the tables; also, make sure your campers are still getting a chance to eat!
- 3) Make up a secret handshake or hand sign
- 4) Make up a cabin song
- 5) Take pride in a clean cabin. Work together to keep things clean and decorate the cabin

Please remember to keep all cabin spirit positive (not putting down or getting overly competitive with other groups)  
EVERYONE’S A WINNER AT CAMP ODAYIN!

## Listening to Kids Effectively

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As counselors, a huge part of your job is listening to campers. We believe that children need, want, and should be heard by adults. Many of our campers will enjoy having an adult taking such a keen interest in their lives and their feelings as we ask of you. Initially, these campers may be hesitant to talk until they feel that you are (1) really hearing them and (2) really care about them.

Active listening is an important part of your job; it will be a skill that will serve you well this summer and for the rest of your lives. Campers will feel validated when they know that you care about how they feel and what they think. For campers, your ability to listen makes it easier for them to talk with you. By talking with you (and with your encouragement), they can practice talking about their feelings. This is not automatic—one of the big steps in growing up is learning to express feelings. When kids can talk about their feelings, they will be less likely to act their feelings out in behaviors. If a camper is feeling upset or angry, wouldn’t you prefer that they verbalize their feelings rather than act them out in a negative way? Of course, so here are some ways that you can help them:

#### WAYS TO LET CHILDREN KNOW THAT YOU ARE LISTENING

- Most importantly, *stop talking!* You can’t listen effectively if you are talking.
- Be genuinely interested in what they are saying.
- Use body language to your advantage – make eye contact, get down on their level, lean forward, mirror their position.
- Concentrate so you can understand what the camper is saying and how he/she feels.
- Ask clarifying questions that repeat some of the statements made by the camper

## METHODS FOR ENCOURAGING CONVERSATION WITH CAMPERS

- **ACKNOWLEDGE AND ENCOURAGE FEELINGS.** Let campers know that you understand what they are saying.
- **EXAMINE.** Help campers to explore their options or other problem-solving opportunities.
- **AFFIRM.** Give lots of positive feed-back to the campers for expressing their feelings!
- **FOLLOW UP.** Check back after a while; make sure things are going better.

## Diversity Acceptance

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We promise our campers' parents that our staff will be healthy, positive role models and it is important that we keep this promise. Here's a good rule of thumb: if you are talking with a camper about something that would make you uncomfortable if his/her parent overheard, then you should not be talking about it. It is always appropriate to say to a camper "I'm not comfortable talking about this" or come to a director for help. One thing to remember is that personal values are part of a belief system, and there are different ways to look at everything. We need to be tolerant of the perspectives, experiences and opinions of others. This information is not designed to give you a script to follow on sensitive issues, rather, it will give you an awareness of the different ways we see things. Some of these issues include, but are not limited to: Smoking, drugs, sexuality, body piercings, tattoos, dating, cults, religion, divorce, personal lives of staff, ghosts, politics, and anything else that could be controversial.

## Tips on Discipline

1. Avoid disciplining kids in front of their peers.
2. Avoid put downs and shouting contests.
3. Deal with discipline problems on a one-to-one basis.
4. Teach campers peacemaking skills – sharing how they feel and problem solving solutions
5. Look beyond behavior to what is its cause.
6. Establish rules ahead of time.
7. Remain calm. Stay in control.
8. Retain your sense of humor. Try to see the humor in what is going on.
9. Reward good behavior.
10. Give kids the opportunity to blow off steam at times.
11. Learn to "roll with the punches"; shift gears when necessary.
12. Use positive peer pressure to its best advantage.
13. You may need to change your expectations; let kids be kids

## Peacemaking skills

Camp Odayin is a very respectful place and rarely do we have to deal with campers in conflict. In the event this does arise, the following peacemaking steps (taken from Nomi Drew, MS) can be used. If you would like additional support to help the camper resolve the conflict, please connect with the Camp Director or Program Director and they can assist you

Step 1: Cool off. Conflicts can't be solved in the face of hot emotions. Take a step back, breathe deep, and gain some emotional distance before trying to talk things out.

Step 2: Tell what's bothering you using "I messages." "I messages" are a tool for expressing how we feel without attacking or blaming. By starting from "I" we take responsibility for the way we perceive the problem.

Step 3: Each person restates what they heard the other person say. Reflective listening demonstrates that we care enough to hear the other person out, rather than just focusing on our own point of view. It actually fosters empathy.

Step 4: Take responsibility. In the majority of conflicts, both parties have some degree of responsibility. However, most of us tend blame rather than looking at our own role in the problem. When we take responsibility we shift the conflict into an entirely different gear, one where resolution is possible.

Step 5: Brainstorm solutions and come up with one that satisfies both people. Resolving conflicts is a creative act. There are many solutions to a single problem. The key is a willingness to seek compromises.

Step 6: Affirm, forgive, or thank.

A handshake, hug, or kind word gives closure to the resolution of conflicts. Forgiveness is the highest form of closure

## Useful Interventions for Helping Homesick Campers

Adapted from Myrna Pravada, RN, MS

1. Help your campers adapt to camp environment and camp routine. Don't assume because all of the children have been to summer camp, that they will be comfortable right away.
2. Review schedules and tell your campers what is happening next. Children thrive on routine.
3. Give your homesick campers extra attention.
4. Acknowledge and validate the camper's feelings. Children need permission to express feelings.
5. Share your own experience with homesickness in a positive way.
6. It is okay to talk about home, Mom, Dad, and family. At the end of discussion, bring your campers back to upcoming camp events.
7. Encourage campers to socialize with others; facilitate friendships with another camper or buddy.
8. Conduct a group discussion on the normal feelings everyone has when coming to camp.
9. Have campers journal about what they'll tell their families about the fun parts of camp when they're picked up on Monday. They are never allowed to call home, this invariably worsens homesickness.
10. Get the campers involved in an enjoyable activity.
11. Use the camper's talents in the cabin; find something that only that child can do. Make the camper a "helper," or give him/ her a special job.
12. Encourage the camper to take one day at a time.
13. Do not ignore a child's physical complaints or shrug them off. Refer the camper to the nurse with your suspicions of homesickness; often all they need is a little "TLC."
14. Consult the nurse or camp leadership about the camper who has adjustment problems and is very homesick. A plan can be worked out to help the camper.
15. Give your camper a special job, make them in charge of something
16. Keep the camper with their cabin mates and involved in activities rather than pulling them out