



CAMP
ODAYIN
for children with heart disease

Minnesota
Summer & Winter
2025 Staff Manual

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Camp Odayin Mission and Value Statements

At Camp Odayin, our mission is to provide fun, safe and life changing experiences to build community for young people with heart disease and their families.

Our vision is to ensure that supportive connections and empowering experiences are accessible to everyone impacted by childhood heart disease.

Kids play. Worries rest. Fun happens.

Our goal is to improve the quality of life, mental health, and overall well-being of children with heart disease and their families. We provide a fun and adventurous environment, while giving parents and children peace of mind knowing medical precautions are in place. Campers are engaged in empowering activities that improve their self-concept, self-confidence, independence, and social skills.

At Odayin, you are welcomed into a “heart” family. Members of the whole family benefit from the sense of community that comes with connecting with others who share similar health, emotional, and social concerns.

We Value:

- **Celebrating Life** – We play with purpose, create fun, and share hope.
- **Commitment to Community** – We remove barriers and build connections, knowing we are stronger together.
- **Emotional Safety** – We create an environment that honors mutual respect, trust and acceptance.
- **Personal Growth** – We try new things to build confidence and encourage gratitude.



The Basics

The First Day of Summer Camp

****WEAR YOUR STAFF T-SHIRT ****

We'll start the day with some last-minute reminders in the morning before campers arrive. Campers who are riding the bus will be checked in at the registration table, meet with their cabin nurse, and join you and your cabin group for some introductions.

The First Day of Winter Camp

We'll start our day with staff training in the morning and nurses will review files and sign up for Winter Front shifts. Campers who are riding the MN bus will be checked in at the registration table, meet with their cabin nurse, and counselors and their cabin group for some introductions.

Here we are at Camp Odayin!

Your campers are now in a new place with a new group of peers and adults that they may or may not know. A good number of our campers have never been to camp before. They might wonder what is going to happen next, have various reactions to the group (living) arrangements, and worry about making new friends.

After welcoming your campers...What do you do now?

1. Introductions (no one ever changes cabins – returning campers might ask)
2. Code of living (create your own cabin rules)
3. Make a cabin cheer (sometime on the first day) Create a cabin cheer, handshake, or chant to build cabin spirit and camaraderie

The Importance of First Impressions

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. In order to make a good first impression everyone must be on full alert about:

- What we look like (appearance, body language, energy level)
- 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 "G.A.M.E." face:

G = get on their level

A = announce their name

M = make it known how you feel

E = engage them in conversation

Upon Arrival to Summer Camp

- You will be greeted by the Camp Knutson staff and by the families that are dropping their campers off at camp
- Camp Knutson staff will unload the bags from the bottoms of the buses into the Gazebo
- The campers who were dropped off at camp will be waiting in or near their cars. Nurses should meet those parents, introduce themselves and collect any medications. Nurses will bring these campers to lunch
- Proceed from the bus to your bench and greet/introduce your campers.
- We'll do a welcome and eat lunch
- Nurses bring bins of medication directly to health center BEFORE taking personal items to Husby
- After lunch, your cabin will get unpacked, determine bed assignments, and start writing your Code of Living

Upon Arrival to Winter Camp

- When we arrive at Camp Wapo, one counselor stays to unload luggage into the lobby of Cross Fire, 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 Wisconsin. 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.
- Nurses immediately check in campers in the Cross Fire lobby who are getting dropped off and then connect with the nurse(s) on the Wisconsin bus. Once all campers are checked in, nurses bring bins of medication directly to the locked health center before taking personal items to their rooms.
- Helmets are required for sledding/tubing. Some campers will bring their own. Bin(s) of Camp Odayin orange helmets will be brought to Winter Front and kept in the dining hall.
- After you have moved into your cabin, **what do you do now?**
 - Introductions & Name Games

- Bed Assignments and Unpack
- Code of Living (create your own cabin rules & post in your cabin)
- Make a Cabin Cheer

Standards of Conduct for Camp Odayin Staff

1. Staff members will not be in the possession of or use any alcoholic beverages or illegal substances during the camp session, or during any training prior to the camp session.
2. All prescription and over-the-counter medications must be kept in the Health Center.
3. Some staff “no-no’s”:
 - Smoking, drinking, chewing chaw, vaping
 - Firearms, slingshots, fireworks, anything that could hurt someone
 - Misuse any camp property, including equipment, vehicles, or materials
 - Fighting between staff members and campers or other staff
 - Stealing stuff, using yucky words, lying
 - 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 waterfront area outside of scheduled activity time and unless supervised by a lifeguard
 - b. Closed toe shoes must be worn at archery, trust, and horseback riding
 - c. Shoes must always be worn, except on the beach or while swimming
 - d. Campers are NEVER to be left in cabins alone; one counselor always needs to be with their cabin group
 - e. 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
 - f. Please, no pillow fights, cabin raids, or horseplay
 - g. Food and drink remain in the dining hall, no other buildings. If you see that campers have candy or food, please confiscate it or ask a director to come and take it

Summer Camp specific safety rules...

- a. No candles are allowed in the cabins
- b. Wet clothes should be hung outside on the clothesline or in the bathrooms, never on the heaters, furniture or bunks
- c. “Off limits” areas at camp are the garage, back of the boathouse, staff quarters, woods (unless on supervised hike), fishing dock, kitchen (unless on KP), waterfront (unless scheduled activity)
- d. Camp Knutson has natural and physical hazards as any camp does. There are steep banks down to the lake and on the beach path. Please use caution in these areas.

- e. Staff members shall not enter the cabin areas or cabins of the opposite gender, except for Medical or Directing Staff.
- f. Please do not ring the bell. The bell will be rung to signal the start of: Breakfast, lunch and dinner; Start of morning rotations; Waterfront; and Emergencies – continuous ringing

Winter Camp specific safety rules:

- a. Quiet hours are from 10:00PM until 8:00 AM
 - b. To avoid foot injury, shoes are required to be worn
 - c. To avoid injury or damage to camp property or facilities, no rough or dangerous play or activities
 - d. Only the building, equipment and areas that Camp Odayin has reserved are available and accessible to you.
 - e. Camp must be left in good order and clean at the end of the retreat. Clean out and cleaning processes are listed in lodging areas.
5. **Never be alone with a camper! Never leave a camper alone!**
 6. Help create the best experience for your co-staff
 - a. Show responsibility by offering to help and be on time!
 - b. Let staff who are counting on you know if there is a change or challenge for your group.
 - c. Communicate your plans and opinions. “How long will it take us to get to an activity?” and “How should WE handle this inappropriate behavior?”
 7. Camp is a community of individuals. All organized communities run on a schedule. Plan with your team to meet the needs of your campers (and yourself).
 8. Camp Odayin is not responsible for any personal items or sports equipment that gets lost or damaged while you are at in person camp.
 9. Private conversations happen in the most public places. Respecting a campers’ privacy never means having a conversation in private.
 10. Camp is a place where staff members are responsible to protect campers from possible outside intervention. Please notify a director of any security concerns. For in person camp, please be advised of the following:
 - a. Staff is always on alert for strangers on the site. If someone you do not know is around, it is your responsibility to go to that person and find out who they are and what they want
 - b. All visitors should be directed/escorted to the Health Center or walkie talkie a leadership staff to come and escort them
 11. No camper can leave the site with a non-staff person without permission from a Camp Director.

Camp Staff Daily Expectations

1. Expect to spend most of your time with your campers / cabin group. Stay with your campers to provide supervision and support your co-staff.
2. Co-counselors will rotate who goes to staff meetings each night. This will give each counselor some time to spend on their own. We ask that all staff are in their cabins by midnight.
3. Help campers make good decisions. When presented with a request, try to put a question mark at the end of every sentence. Instead of saying “No!” or “Yes!” (judgement statements), help campers make appropriate decisions by asking ‘thinking questions’ such as:
 - a. “I heard...tell me about that?”
 - b. “How did you decide?”
 - c. “What are the ups and downs of that idea?”
 - d. “What are our options?”
 - e. “What else could we try?”
 - f. “How do you think we should do it?”
4. Enter all situations or areas with open eyes for possible hazards to campers, other staff and self. This includes physical, behavioral, and emotional concerns.
5. Your willingness, promotion, and example to try new things and have fun will SHOW instead of TELL campers how to enjoy themselves, make friends, and be silly.
 - a. It is up to you to approach the week with a positive attitude and high energy
 - b. Staff should model good behavior by participating in all activities and programs.
 - c. Staff who sit out will always find themselves surrounded by campers
 - d. It is expected all staff will participate in all activities – this includes waterfront time. Staff should expect to be in the water with their campers or engaging their campers in alternate activities. Waterfront is not the time for staff to sit and socialize with other staff
6. End each day with a Cabin Closing to discuss accomplishments, challenges, and/or the day’s activities. Do not give campers food at cabin closings.
7. Staff supervision ratios for each cabin of 7-9 campers are three staff (one nurse and two counselors) with the cabin group. During rest hour, one nurse is with the cabin. During shower hour, two staff (two counselors) are with the cabin. At bedtime, 1 staff (counselor) is with the cabin after lights out. Exceptions to this are when a camper is in the health center or being transported off site for medical reasons. Only then is a 1:1 camper/med staff ratio acceptable.
8. Nurse specifics:
 - a. Nurses eat with their cabin groups
 - b. Nurses are with their cabin except for shower hour, sleeping at night, and if they are assigned to clean cabin/wet bed duty during the first morning rotation.

- c. Cabins should stay clean! This will ensure a healthy living space and cut down on misplaced items. Nurses will announce the cleanest cabin each day.
9. There are no laundry facilities available for staff

Camp 101

- **Water Bottles:** Need to be with campers at all times, including meals and waterfront. Refill often, and encourage campers, and yourself, to stay hydrated! Replacements are available, come see Leadership staff.
- **Name Tags:** Write real first name on one side (nicknames on reverse is OK). Must be worn at all times unless swimming / snow tubing or sleeping.
- **Electronics:** No use of electronics is permitted at camp, specifically cell phones and iPads (see Cell Phone Policy for more information).
- **Health Center:** There will be a building/space designated as the Health Center monitored by the lead nurse and/or cardiologist 24/7.
- **Walkie Talkies:** All med staff and directors carry a walkie talkie during the day. Cabin nurses keep them off inside their red backpack. Docs, Lead Nurse and Directors keep theirs on and use it frequently to communicate.
- **Staff Meeting:** Additionally, there is a staff meeting once per day. This meeting will happen approximately 45 minutes after “Happiness Runs,” our closing song. 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 themselves.
- **Walkie-Talkies (emergencies):** Each cabin building has a walkie talkie that is turned off in the charger. Specific location in each building will be discussed at the first staff meeting.
 - To use: turn the walkie talkie on, hold down button – state your name, location and what you need. RELEASE button.
 - Keep the walkie talkie on until you receive a response from the lead nurse and/or doctor on call that evening.
- **Code of Living:** While meeting with your cabin group/pod for the first time, you and your co-staff will facilitate the discussion about rules and expectations within your cabin. These rules act as a guide and reference when problems arise to ensure a fun and safe environment within your cabin group. Use the ODAYIN WAY as a starting off point. As a cabin, create and post them in your bunk area for all to see.
- **Cabin Spirit:** 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.
 - Make up a “team” name for your cabin (ie. the Wonderful Walleyes)
 - 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!

- Make up a secret handshake or hand sign
- Make up a cabin song
- 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!

- **Cabin Closing:** Cabin closings are 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 especially important that you keep your cabin together during closing. This creates unity and cohesion among the group. Please run it by leadership staff before combining groups or moving to an outside location.
 - By the end of each day, 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. Start by explaining the closing and 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.
 - Suggested activities: Reading a short story or poem; Sharing favorite part—High/Low; Heart stories; Games—Frogger, Mafia, cards
- **Talent Show:** This is a big deal at camp! It's one of our favorite traditions because it empowers our campers, builds their confidence, and provides a chance to try something new (and maybe scary). We have single acts, cabin acts, and sometimes counselor and nurse acts. Some campers come prepared with props (like instruments) while others decide on their act (or make one up) while at camp. Campers sign up for the show during meal times at camp.

Camp 101 (Summer only)

- **K-Staff:** Camp Odayin partners with Camp Knutson for residential camp. Camp Knutson is staffed in the summer by wonderful people known as K Staff. K-Staff members run morning activities, waterfront, and evening program. They also keep us entertained all weeks. 1-2 K-Staff will be assigned to your cabin. Invite them to your cabin closings.
- **KP (Kitchen Prep):** NEW! When your cabin is assigned Kitchen Prep, you will be in charge of kitchen clean up AND leading a cheer during the meal. You will assist the K staff with gathering bins, collecting trash, wiping down tables, sweeping, etc. Please prep with your

cabin by deciding on your song / cheer and expect to stay after the meal for at least 15 minutes.

- **Cabin Bins:** There is one for cabins to share in each housing location (i.e., Renner, Timberlane, Linda Lodge, Crosslake Cabin). Within each bin, you will find resources for down time activities, stationary, markers, paper, cards, and games. See the directors for stamps or other necessary supplies.
- **Candle Ceremony:** Each one of us is a light. This is the time to shine some light on each camper and highlight how they brought light and joy to camp that week. On Friday, Camp Odayin/Camp K staff will light a candle for each camper in their cabin and share how that camper “brought light” into their cabin. You will receive a certificate for each camper, which you will fill out, sign, and present to campers at the candle ceremony. Some ideas to get you started: peacemaker, energetic, cabin clown, joke teller, spirited, bug finder, fisher, crafty, bravery, adventurous, timekeeper, artistic, early bird, cabin beautician, dance/rhythm award, trustworthy, tuber, s’mores maker, loud singer. Be creative with a theme, like candy bars, superheroes, careers, “Oscar-est” awards.

Camp 101 (Winter only)

- **Leadership Staff:** These amazing people include program staff volunteers, the Odayin team, Lead Nurse and one Camp Doc. The program staff runs the morning and evening programs with the Program Director. The Odayin team participates in activities and works behind the scenes to help camp run smoothly.
- **Movie Night:** The evening program for the second night of camp is an all-camp movie. Leadership staff is in charge of supervising the campers. The counselors and nurses have a night off for free time.
- **Cabin Certificates:** Each cabin will present a certificate to their cabin group (the same award) before we go to lunch on Monday, an abridged version of our candle ceremony. See above “Candle Ceremony” for more information and ideas.
- **Winter Front:** This is the only time we are scheduled to be outside. Weather permitting, there is a snow tubing hill (helmets required) & a broomball court. Other optional outdoor activities include gaga ball, air square, and the playground. The dining hall is open to all who would rather stay inside. Indoor options include arts & crafts, games, & hot chocolate. Halfway through Winter Front, everyone goes inside to warm up and eat a snack.

Volunteer Performance Policy *UPDATED

Every staff member is expected to be knowledgeable of and in compliance with the policies and procedures within this Staff Manual. We understand that reading this manual will not result in perfect application, nor do we expect that. However, we do expect every staff

member to be open to feedback & correction from the Directors when necessary, and then make changes accordingly.

Every staff member fills out an evaluation about the performance of co-staff, directors, and K staff and provides feedback on how Camp Odayin can improve in the future. Combined with observations, the Directors determine if a volunteer needs to improve before returning as a counselor or nurse or if a volunteer is not a good fit for the program. Camp Odayin has the right to dismiss an application at any time.

If a volunteer violates a policy while at camp, there are several possible outcomes:

- Directors will speak with the volunteer, share concerns, reiterate expectations, and follow up.
- Immediate removal from camp. The volunteer will be expected to find a ride home.
- In extreme cases, the volunteer could be escorted off the property by law enforcement.

If a volunteer needs to improve, several routes will be taken either post camp or during the hiring process the following spring:

- A Director calls or emails the volunteer to share feedback and discuss what needs to be improved. The volunteer must agree to meet the goals set by the Director to return as a counselor or nurse.
- A Director expects the volunteer to meet 2-4 times to discuss progress, set goals, and provide support to develop leadership skills.
- A Director calls or emails the volunteer to tell them their application will not be considered in the future.

(A Director could be Executive Director, Nursing Director, Summer Camp Director, or the Program Director).



Health Care Orientation

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/pod. The nurse assigned to your cabin/pod will review information with counselors, such as physical activity limitations, bed-wetting, and specific information regarding medication i.e., taking a 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 Member Daily

If there is a change in a camper’s/staff’s condition, have it checked out by one of the Nurses:

- Do they look more tired?
- Do they have dry or chapped lips/skin?
- Does their color look good?
- Have they brushed teeth?
- Have they combed their hair?
- Have they changed their clothes?

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 Great Points

- Make sure your campers (and you) are drinking fluids. It may be very warm at camp. It is important to encourage campers to drink frequently.

- Make sure your campers are eating. If you notice a camper not eating, let your nurse know.
- Make sure your campers are wearing shoes at all times – closed-toe shoes are preferred. This is simply to avoid foot injuries. Camp has uneven ground, rocks, and sticks just waiting for you to step on them! The only time shoes are not required is while swimming, but shoes must be worn on the beach path.
- Wear sunscreen every day. If you need sunscreen, talk to your nurse.

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. It is especially important to get out of the sun and rest for a while. 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. 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 yours 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 caregivers 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.

Mental Health Support

Any concerns about a camper should be reported to Leadership. Concerns for safety or well-being include:

- Expressing suicidal/self-harm thoughts
- Statements like “things will be better when I’m gone.”
- Severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress.

Leadership will meet with the camper and assess any immediate safety concerns. If the camper does not have any plans or intentions for self-harm, a safety plan will be created, and the camper’s family will be contacted. If the camper is expressing plans or intentions for self-harm, or is unable to contract for safety, Camp Leadership will call for support (see below) or call 911. (see below).

If the camper is in any immediate danger of hurting themselves or others. Leadership will do the following

- CALL 911
- Explain the situation to the dispatcher - if not a certain emergency, but requiring their assistance, it can be requested as a “wellness/safety check.”
- You can request the police arrive quietly with no lights or sirens if appropriate for the situation.
- If deemed appropriate, fill out the “Patient Safety Plan Template” located in the Red Binder in the health center.

How to Talk About Mental Health with a Camper

Try leading with these questions, and actively listen to the response:

- Can you tell me more about what is happening? How are you feeling?
- Have you had feelings like this in the past?

- Sometimes you need to talk to an adult about your feelings. I'm here to listen. How can I help you feel better?
- Do you feel like you want to talk to someone else about your problem?
- I'm worried about your safety. Can you tell me if you have thoughts about harming yourself or others?

How to Talk to a Camper About Mental Health Concerns

- Communicate in a straightforward manner.
- Speak at a level that is appropriate to a child or adolescent's age and development level (preschool children need fewer details than teenagers)
- Discuss the topic when your camper feels safe and comfortable.
- Watch for reactions during the discussion and slow down or back up if your camper becomes confused or looks upset.
- Listen openly and let your camper tell you about their feelings and worries.

Mental Health Resources

- Warmlines MN from mentalhealthmn.org Call 651-288-0400 or 877-404-3190, or text "support" to 85511
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call, chat, or text 988.
- Call **CRISIS (274747) from a cell phone
- Text 741 741
- Crow Wing County Children's Mental Health Support - 1-800-462-5525



Policies and Procedures

The Odayin Way

Camp Odayin is committed to creating a safe space where campers, staff, and volunteers feel welcomed, respected, and valued. We are dedicated to promoting equality in our programming and in our organization. We ask our Camp Odayin family and our entire community to join us in an ongoing commitment to rejecting hate, racism, and intolerance.

Campers sign their “contract” committing to lead with their HEART by choosing the Odayin Way:

I will choose **THE ODAYIN WAY** while at Camp Odayin:

- I will be **Helpful**
- I will be **Encouraging**
- I will be **Accepting**
- I will be **Respectful**
- I will be **Thankful**

Gender Fluid Camper and Staff Support

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.

Both our camper and volunteer staff applications ask for pronouns used and helpful information about the child or staff member’s gender identity. We use this information to connect with the guardian of the camper and/or the staff member to discuss cabin placement and how to ensure a safe and supportive camp experience.

At staff training we provide resources to support ALL campers and have a discussion with counselors and nurse that have a gender fluid camper in their cabin. Leadership will maintain confidentiality and decide what information is shared and with whom.

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

Resources:

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

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

Social Media Policy

We understand that staff members may have personal social media accounts so please be mindful 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, especially if it is public.

If you mention your experience at Camp Odayin or share photos on your social media accounts:

- At no time should names of campers be posted
- Be respectful (and positive) about your experience at Camp Odayin
- No confidential information (regarding campers) may be shared

If your amazing experience at Camp Odayin inspires you to start a social media group or page, please refrain from doing so. Camp Odayin has an official Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn – please become a fan and like & share!

You may not accept friend requests or allow campers to follow you on any of your social media apps until they are 18 years old and initiate contact. For example, if your account is public, do not accept their request to follow them back. If you are already connected with campers on any social media (or gaming) platform – please remove them as a follower or unfriend them.

Communication Policy - No External Contact with Campers ***NEW**

To maintain the safety, privacy, and integrity of our camp community, all staff members are strictly prohibited from engaging in any form of communication with campers outside of official camp sessions until the camper is 18 years old and the camper initiates contact. This policy applies at all times—before and after the camp season. This includes, but is not limited to:

- *NEW - Email communication with campers is no longer acceptable.
- Text messages or phone calls
- Social media (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat) – see Social Media policy
- Messaging apps (e.g., WhatsApp, Discord, Messenger)
- *NEW - Online gaming platforms or forums

If a camper contacts you outside of camp:

- Do not respond or engage in any way.
- Take a screenshot or note of the attempted contact.
- Email content to info@campodayin.org or a director as soon as possible.
- Camp Odayin will take over communication to ensure the policy is upheld.

If you would like to connect with your camper(s) outside of the camp session, please contact the Camp Director for next steps.

Cell Phone Policy ***UPDATED**

Staff members are prohibited from using cell phones or wearing smart watches in the presence of campers. Bringing a cell phone/smart watch is allowed but **MUST** remain turned off in your luggage. The exceptions to this rule are:

1. The staff member is enjoying free time away from the cabin group.
2. MN Nurses bring them to horseback riding (off and in backpack) to be used in emergency only or to communicate with the directors from the stable.

DAYTIME: Counselors' cell phones are powered off and in luggage (in the cabin, not on their person) for the day. Cabin Nurses carry their cell phone in their red med backpack, powered off for the day. ***NEW** Everyone is on walkie talkie. 1 Walkie per counselor pair, 1 walkie for each nurse. Counselors and nurses are on the same channel. Leadership (Directors, Lead Nurse, and Doctors) are on another channel. The channel numbers will be shared the first day of camp. If an ALL CAMP announcement needs to be made, Leadership communicates with both channels. If a counselor or nurse needs someone on Leadership – they switch channels.

NIGHTTIME: When campers are asleep, cell phones will be turned on so Leadership can communicate with you in case of an emergency. Counselors continue to use the walkie to communicate for emergencies. *** NEW** - Cell phones can be used for alarm clocks.

Under no circumstances should a camper ever be allowed to use a staff member's phone. **You are not allowed to share your cell phone number with any campers.** Staff members who break this policy will be excused from participating as a volunteer for all future programs.

If you find your campers have cell phones or electronics that connect to the Internet, please take it away. Campers are fully aware that they are **NOT** allowed to bring phones, electronics, smart watches, etc. to camp. Turn in confiscated electronics to the Camp Directors. If you'd rather, let the Camp Directors know and they will uphold this policy.

Policy Against Harassment

Camp Odayin is committed to providing a camp environment that is free of harassment and maintains a strict policy prohibiting harassment. This policy applies to all volunteers, including supervisors and staff volunteers and campers. 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, camper, supervisor, or agent of Camp Odayin should promptly report the incident of harassment to a Camp Director. The Director will investigate all such claims and take appropriate action.

At a minimum, when a person or camper complains about harassment, Camp Odayin will do the following in accordance with the procedure outlined in this policy:

1. Fully inform the person 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 decide 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 and Neglect

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 might not have the experience or training to address properly. Regardless, 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 or a safety concern they've had at home or at camp – or that they have been treated inappropriately (physically, mentally, sexually), please follow the guidelines below:

- 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 a Camp Director.
- DO encourage the camper to tell a Camp Director. Offer to be there with them.
- DO make sure that the child knows it is not their fault, they didn't cause it, no one should ask them to keep a secret, and it is okay to talk with trusted adults about what happened.

****If the camper requests that the abuse remains confidential, be prepared to walk away/end discussion if they will only talk once this request is granted. Do not lie!**

If a case of sexual or physical abuse is reported or suspected, staff is expected to report this situation to a Camp Director immediately; Minnesota law requires it since you are considered a **mandated reporter**. However, it's not your role to investigate, ask to follow up questions, or provide solutions. Camp Leadership will call DHS or Child Protective Services to make the report. They might want to speak with you as well.

Please Note: All reports of abuse or neglect will be documented in an Incident Report and expected to be signed by witnesses and staff.

Abuse Prevention

Creating and enforcing boundaries is one of the best forms of child abuse prevention. They divide the "ok" and "not ok" behaviors of staff with campers and campers with campers. Boundaries not only protect the campers, but also protect the staff from the negative perception of a blurred boundary. When the boundaries are clear, staff and campers can create a healthy relationship, set appropriate limits, and promote mutual respect.

In between these boundaries, there can be potential gray areas. To determine which behaviors are appropriate to set healthy boundaries takes open conversations, awareness, and clear definitions of the physical, emotional, and behavioral boundaries at Camp Odayin.

Please Note: If you notice a situation that is inappropriate, it is the staff's responsibility, not the camper, to inform a Camp Director immediately.

Physical Boundaries

- 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. **Ask consent to touch them!**
- Avoid touch in situations that could be misinterpreted as sexual advances; this includes "tuck ins" and back rubs, sitting on a camper's bunk behind a closed curtain, etc. For example, touching under the water in the lake is inappropriate because it is hidden.
- Camper/staff and camper/camper relationships of a romantic nature are not acceptable.
- Applying sunscreen with spray applicator only, unless on the camper's face. Best practices include asking camper to rub in their own sunscreen and stating your intent when offering to help, i.e., telling camper "I am going to rub in the sunscreen on your back. Is that ok?" We have spray sunscreen available in the Health Center.

- Campers and/or staff do not need to sit on each other's laps.
- Hugging is encouraged when initiated by campers but follows the "catch and release" approach and/or side hugs. 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.
- Fist bumps, elbow bumps, high fives, etc. are also encouraged to fit everyone's comfort levels.
- **Never be alone with a camper, never leave a camper alone.**
- Have the most private conversation in the most public place. At no time should a staff member and a camper have a conversation alone. A perfect place to do one-on-one counseling is an open space where lots of people are present. This keeps the situation from appearing inappropriate.

Emotional Boundaries

- Healthy connections with ALL campers don't exclude or produce favorites—no camper should be able to say, "I'm the favorite because..."
- Many campers will see you as a hero or important role model (we hope this is the case because YOU ROCK!). Most campers are too young to identify or understand when their admiration and respect becomes too loving, so it's your job to keep your ego in check.
- Use common sense when being sarcastic and bantering. What is your intent?
- Be aware of nicknames or pet names. Even if they sound loveable, they could be problematic.

Behavioral Boundaries

- Keeping secrets is unacceptable. Secrets have bad endings. This is especially important when a camper discloses sensitive information. SURPRISES, on the other hand, have good endings.
- Avoid personal disclosures to "educate" campers. Campers are not your peers, so you do not need to have conversations related to your personal/dating life.

American Camp Association (ACA)

Did you know that Camp Odayin's resident program 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 in 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.

When Campers are in Public Places/Horseback Riding

When you are with campers in public places, your primary responsibility is to supervise the campers. No camper should be unsupervised at any time and our staff ratios are the same off site. When traveling in a vehicle, there should always be a minimum of 2 staff in each vehicle. At least one of the staff should be an RN or doctor or be able to walkie-talkie/cell phone with an RN or doctor in the convoy. All vehicles must stay in convoy the whole time. That means that all cars are able to see the other cars at all times. If one car pulls over, all cars pull over. Campers are not allowed out of a vehicle that is stopped on the side of the road. Camper code of conduct is honored off site. Camper files are not brought to public places, but medical staff can call from the stables to gather information if needed.

Whenever a large group of campers leave camp, a nurse and doctor will accompany the group with a first aid kit and Transport Pack/AED. If any problems arise when in a public place, medical staff should immediately call camp and follow emergency procedures listed in this manual.

Emergency Procedures

In emergencies involving the whole camp during the night, you will receive a phone call/text message with instructions or camp leadership will come to your building.

SUMMER CAMP: In emergencies involving the whole camp during the day:

1. The bell will ring continuously
2. All campers and staff meet outside of Angela Hall
3. Count your campers

4. Stay calm
5. Listen for directions

We will have a drill on the first day of camp.

WINTER CAMP: In emergencies involving the whole camp during the day:

1. The bell will ring continuously
2. Get your cabin together and account for each cabin member.
3. Send an adult to Martin's Commons (Dining Hall) for instructions.

General Camper Responsibilities

In this time, campers are too quickly:

- Use the restroom
- Wear appropriate clothing – dry, warm, shoes, etc.
- Bring a full water bottle, flashlight, book, etc.

General Counselor Responsibilities

Counselors are to think about putting kids first and ensuring the cabin's safety. When in cabin buildings, keep one counselor with the campers, and send the other counselor to close windows, bring things in from clotheslines, check the bathroom, and turn off lights. Take things to entertain a group, i.e., cabin tub, games, etc. All counselors should have on clothing to handle the given emergency.

Fire

- Evacuate from threatened areas and seek a safe, open area out of the way from emergency vehicles
- Notify a Camp Director
- Keep campers and staff away from the scene of the fire

Missing, Lost or Runaway Camper

- Check the immediate area and ask nearby campers and staff if they have seen the camper or know where the camper is
- Maintain supervision of other campers
- Notify a Camp Director immediately
- Obtain a detailed description of the camper – apparel and circumstances of disappearance
- Send staff immediately to areas of greatest hazard and known attractions – lake, trails, woods

Medical/Health Emergency

- Someone with a walkie-talkie (all nurses, doctors, and leadership team) will be near your group at all times. Send a message over the walkie-talkie stating the nature of the emergency, your name, and your location
- If necessary, camp medical/leadership team will respond in person to the call and contact 911
- Upon medical assessment of the camper / staff member, transportation to the Health Center will be provided for all cardiac related issues
- If a camper needs to be transported out of camp, a Camp Odayin staff member will remain with him/her
- Counselors remove the rest of the cabin group from the area
- AED are in the following buildings/locations:
 - a. Summer Camp: Pauly's Place, Dining Hall, Boathouse
 - b. Winter Camp: Upper Crossfire, Dining Hall

Stranger or Aggressive/Dangerous Intruder

Generally, unknown individuals at camp are there out of curiosity or to see a camper. Those people will gladly go to the office if dealt with politely and directed to the office. Vendors and service individuals should be in areas that are appropriate for their task. It is generally assumed that people in camp during daylight hours are visitors and those at camp from dusk to breakfast are truly intruders. Be aware of unauthorized persons in the following areas: parking lot, ballfield field, waterfront, swim dock, in any cabin areas, and along the entrance to camp. Deal with strangers at camp in the following manner:

1. Identify yourself and ask if you can be of help. If they are visiting or need assistance direct them to the office
2. Never lead an unknown individual to a camper they request to see
3. Always accompany these individuals to the office, or, if you are busy with campers, visually ascertain that these individuals do go to the office
4. Try to keep these people in "neutral" camp areas, like the center of camp
5. Discourage unknown people from moving into cabin areas. Do not allow ANYONE (stranger or known) to remove a camper from camp
6. If you encounter unknown people after dark, assess the situation before you act. Think about your location, how many people there are, how close help is, your physical strength and size. Remember that a firm voice and shining your light in their eyes can be beneficial to the situation
7. Try not to leave intruders alone, if possible
8. Get help, there is greater safety in numbers

9. If individuals refuse to identify themselves, leave the property, or go to the office, notify a member of Odayin leadership or camp staff. Even if they do the above, you should notify leadership immediately
10. On-site staff will determine if the sheriff should be called, depending on the situation
11. The public is not allowed to use our restrooms or any other facilities unless approved by camp leadership

Active Shooter

In these situations, common sense should be at the forefront of your mind. Gather all the campers in your area and proceed to Lock-down or Run & Hide, depending on your location. If an armed intruder is detected, call 911 and be prepared to give the following information:

1. Intruder description – clothing, race, how many (intruders), what type of weapon(s)
2. Location of intruder and location(s) of campers
3. Are there any injuries? What kinds?
4. Have there been any explosions?
5. Warn others of the threat whenever possible, using your judgment as to whether to take this risk. Based upon the situation, decide to direct the group by shouting either:
 - a. “Armed intruder, hide!” when indoors
 - b. “Armed intruder, run!” when outdoors

Indoors: Hiding and Lockdown

- Hide in the nearest building
- Lock the doors, close the shades or blinds, and turn off lights and electronic equipment that may draw the intruder’s attention
- Silence cell phones
- Stay away from windows and glass
- Place heavy objects in front of doors if you have time and can do so quietly
- Remain silent
- Do not respond to voice commands to leave your place of hiding, unless you can be certain that it is the police or camp leadership stating “all clear”

Outdoors: Running or Escaping

If you are caught in the open, your best course of action is often to flee the area and follow these steps:

- Run, and place as many objects/trees/buildings between you and the intruder as you can

- Ultimately lead campers away from the main camp area and to the closest place of safety – a neighboring house, in the woods, on a (fast) boat
- If you are injured by the intruder, and are unable to flee, play dead

Law Enforcement Arrival

As law enforcement arrives, follow their directions precisely, stand still, and keep your hands in plain sight. Remain calm and quiet so instructions can be given and understood.

Tornado/Storm

In the event of a tornado or storm, the designated storm shelters for camp. Proceed to these locations if it is safe to do so. If you do not have time to leave your location, these are the nearest/safest places to take shelter:

Summer camp:

- Primary shelters: basements of Husby and Hilltop.
- Health Center/Pauly's Place: An interior room with no windows
- Bear Hug Pavilion: Health Center/Pauly's Place in an interior room with no windows
- Timberlane: Unless you have access to the basement, proceed to the interior bathrooms
- Bazinet: Unless you have access to the back of Bazinet, proceed to Timberlane
- Dining Hall: Take shelter in either of the bathrooms or in the basement (access through the kitchen)
- Renner: Proceed to lower-level bathroom and/or interior bathroom. If overflow space is needed, proceed to Hilltop
- Fischer: Proceed to lower-level bathroom and/or interior bathroom. If overflow space is needed, proceed to Hilltop
- Waterfront/Downland: Proceed to the lower level of the Boathouse, away from any windows. Alternatively, you may take shelter in the Bathhouse sauna

Winter Camp:

- Primary storm shelter: Cross Fire
- Lower Anderson Hall

Camp leadership will give further instructions and signal the "all clear" when it is safe to leave.

Emergency Response and Communications

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. Camp leadership calls the Executive Director
2. The Executive Director will confer with legal counsel, insurance, and/or ACA.
 - a. Legal Counsel: Andrew Holm, (651) 403-1845
 - b. Insurance Agent: Tim Henningsgard at Noah Insurance Group: (715)-294-2510
 - c. ACA Crisis Hotline: (800)-573-9019
 - d. ACA Non-Emergency Hotline: (800)-428-2267
3. Staff will not communicate with anyone outside of camp, including the press. They may not be in touch with outside contacts, including family, until a Director has given them permission to contact others.
4. 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.
5. The people involved in the situation will be thoroughly questioned by the directors as soon as the incident occurs. Statements will be recorded, 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.
6. 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.
7. Any statement to the media will be made by the Executive Director after the parents of campers involved in the incident are contacted.
8. Camp Odayin and Partner Camp will convene to discuss future steps and the best course of action.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. No media or journalists will be allowed into camp.
12. 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.

Objectives and Safety Precautions for Activities (Summer only)

While at camp you will participate in activities with your campers. These activities are led by staff from Camp Knutson. Here is basic information about safety and objectives for each project. This should provide you with a better understanding of potential risks and safety measures. See the Camp Knutson staff for further and more specific information.

Safety precautions for ALL activities include sunscreen, full water bottles and a nurse present with a walkie talkie.

Arts & Crafts/Theater/Music/Cards

Objectives:

- Explore imagination and creativity.
- Allow each child to express their own artistic sense. Encourage campers to express themselves in new ways.

Safety Precautions:

- Make sure participants are familiar with tools/supplies used in a project.
- Be cautious of hot weather and take frequent water breaks.

Emergency Procedures:

- A nurse will be at each arts and crafts/cards/theater activity period with a walkie-talkie.

Nature

Objectives:

- Teach campers to respect and appreciate the wilderness environment/surroundings.
- Identification of plants, animals and insects found at camp.

Safety Precautions:

- Make sure campers are properly clothed for the weather conditions and to protect from mosquitoes and ticks.
- Many of the trails at camp include poison ivy. Teach campers to spot and avoid poison ivy. Wearing long pants and closed-toe shoes will limit possible exposure. Use proper techniques for avoiding animal encounters when on trails. Never cause an animal to feel “cornered.”
- Be cautious of hot weather and take frequent water breaks.
- When on trails, all campers should remain within the sight of staff.
- Wear insect repellent when exploring heavily wooded areas.

Emergency Procedures: A nurse will be at each nature period with a walkie-talkie.

Horseback Riding

Objectives:

- Teach campers safety and confidence on and around horses.
- Instruction on how to mount, dismount, control, saddle, and bridle horses.

- Have fun riding horses; walk, trot, canter and gallop.

Safety Precautions:

- Be a conscientious rider.
- Be cautious of hot weather and take frequent water breaks.
- Wash hands upon return to camp and before eating.
- Wear sunscreen and dress for sun protection.
- Closed-toe shoes and long pants must be worn to horseback riding.
- Appropriate fitting helmets are mandatory for all campers and staff

Emergency Procedures:

- Doctor and Nurse attend riding sessions.
- If an emergency arises, use a phone to call the Odayin cell phone immediately (651)-491-8673, which will connect you with a director.
- Follow all applicable safety procedures pertaining to vehicles.

Swimming

Objectives:

- For campers to feel comfortable in the lake.
- Improve swimming skills and stamina.

Safety Precautions:

- All water activities are high risk.
- Be cautious of hot weather and take frequent water breaks.
- Make sure everyone is using a sunscreen of SPF 30 or better.
- At least one lifeguard (LGT or equivalent) must be stationed and on duty for the campers to go in the water.
- The ratio of lifeguards to campers is 1:8.
- Lifeguards should be stationed at key areas according to Camp Knutson's waterfront procedures.
- Two breaks for snack and counselors to make sure all campers accounted for.

Emergency Procedures:

- Lifeguard, Doctor and Nurses are on the waterfront.
- Remove all campers from the lake at the first signal of lightning or thunder.

Canoeing/Kayaking/Boating

Objectives:

- Learn parts and functions of canoe (bow, stern, ribs, air pockets, thwarts, keel, gunnel, etc.). Learn parts of paddle (grip, shaft, blade, throat, tip).
- Learn how to properly select and wear a PFD (life jacket).
- Understand and safely execute the launching of canoe at beach.
- Execute strokes and learn how to steer the canoe, particularly forward stroke, backward stroke, forward sweep, backwards sweep, pull-to, push away, and J stroke.
- Learn self-rescue techniques in case of capsize or swamping.

Safety Precautions:

- All water activities are high risk. Campers should always wear PFDs when in the water.
- One staff member should be stationed at the beach when campers are out on the lake. One staff member should be in the canoe or in a neighboring canoe on the lake.
- Be cautious of hot weather and take frequent water breaks; use sunscreen SPF 30 or better.
- At least one lifeguard (LGT or equivalent) must be at canoeing for the campers to go out on the lake.

Emergency Procedures:

- Lifeguards, doctors, and nurses are always present at waterfront.

Fishing

Objectives:

- Instruct campers on baiting hooks, catching fish and removing fish safely from the hooks.
- Learn and practice “catch and release” skills.

Safety Precautions:

- Watch campers closely to avoid campers falling off a dock. All campers fishing in boats must wear a PFD.
- No casting on the swimming dock! Every effort should be made to avoid anyone becoming injured by a hook. Hooks can easily get lodged in clothing, skin and eyes.
- Beware of sailboats. Campers should move to the other side of the dock to avoid incoming or outgoing sailboats.

Emergency Procedures:

- Lifeguards, doctors, and nurses are always present at waterfront.

Camp Craft

Objectives:

- To gain knowledge on fire building and safety.
- To learn to cook over an open fire.

Safety Precautions:

- Ensure campers are a safe distance away from the fire.
- No throwing things in the fire. Whoever makes the fire, tends the fire.

Emergency Procedures:

- Nurse is with cabin, Doctor by the boathouse.

Trust Activities

Objectives:

- We hope campers have fun as a team and learn to value teamwork and trust.
- Campers should not do more than they feel comfortable with.

Safety Precautions:

- Only trained Camp Knutson staff lead and spot trust activities.
- Follow instructions to ensure safety.

Emergency Procedure:

- Nurse with the cabin, Doctor by the boathouse.

Water Wars/Games

Objectives:

- Cool off
- Competitive teamwork
- Fun!

Safety Precautions:

- Latex allergy folks are cheerleaders
- Follow the game instructions
- Only launch balloons

Emergency Procedures:

- Nurse is with cabin and Health Center is nearby.



Resources for Working with Youth

Camper Communication

You are working with **individuals**, even though they are part of a group! Count them as such. Here are some practical considerations:

- Learn their names and fix their faces. Be able to call each by their first name within the first day. If you do not, you will be at a disadvantage, as kids sense their importance in being recognized on a first name basis.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Be alert and sensitive throughout the week 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 themselves without your having told them. Be interested, but not to the point of uncalled-for probing. 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

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 other

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.
- 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”: Continuously 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.