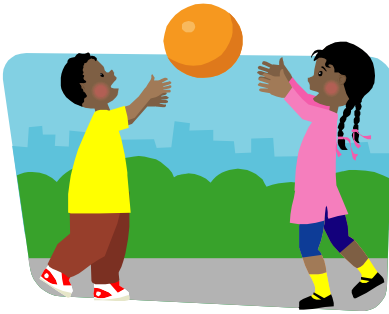


Becoming a Youth Development Professional

Your Example is Your Most Powerful Teaching Tool

*Becoming a Youth Development Professional entails making the transition from M.E. to K.I.D.S. You'll need to change from being **Mostly Egotistical**, focusing primarily on yourself at school or at work, and instead focus on your campers by exhibiting **K**indness, **I**nitiative, **D**iscretion, and **S**afety.*



Discussing the transition from M.E. to K.I.D.S. is not meant to imply that you're a selfish person or that you never engage in public service or volunteer your time. Instead, it's meant to highlight the monumental shift most camp staff make when they move from school or another job to caring for other people's children. Are you ready to make that shift?

By choosing to work at camp, you have chosen to be responsible not only for your campers' emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being, but also to be responsible for their growth and development. This is both a serious and highly rewarding set of responsibilities. Participating in this training will help prepare you.

Just as saying or doing one positive thing can change a child's life forever, it is also true that saying or doing one harmful or neglectful thing can devastate a child. Children are resilient, but they cannot bounce back from a careless lifeguard who looks away or a reckless van driver who goes too fast or a distracted climbing instructor who forgets to check a harness.

Although some of the points below seem obvious, each is worth noting because each can become a serious pitfall if neglected. Becoming a youth development professional means adhering to the general principles below, as well as to the specific requirements of your particular job at camp. Write your action plans and any questions for your camp director in the "NOTES" spaces below.

1. **Learn**—Find out all you can about the camp where you're working and the responsibilities of your job. Participate in all the training that your camp offers and read your entire staff manual.

NOTES:

2. **Show Up**—Arrive at camp on time, start activities on time, and be available to your campers.

NOTES:

3. **Make a Positive First Impression**—When meeting colleagues, campers, and parents, be in dress code, wear your name tag, make good eye contact, use a firm handshake, and smile.

NOTES:

4. **Lead by Example**—Your most powerful teaching tool is your own example. The way you conduct yourself shapes the behavior of everyone around you and speaks louder than words.

NOTES:

5. **Spend Time with Your Campers**—Spending time having fun with your campers is the best way to understand them and earn their respect, which in turn increases their compliance. You'll also want to put the K.I.D.S. principles into action.

- a. **Kindness**—Treat others with love and consideration, putting their needs first.
- b. **Initiative**—See what needs to be done and do it without asking.
- c. **Discretion**—Use good judgment anytime you are on camp property. Whether you're working directly with campers or just in the vicinity of young people, the choices you make shape the camp's culture and your reputation. Be on your best behavior.
- d. **Safety**—Follow all of the camp's rules and regulations and use common sense in order to maximize the well-being of those around you. Avoid unhealthy risks.

6. **Keep Your Personal Life Private**—Keep any staff romance strictly compartmentalized to your time off, away from camp. Politely deflect and personal questions from your campers.

NOTES:

7. **Spend Your Time Off Wisely**—Plan relaxing and rejuvenating activities, rather than let heavy drinking become the default choice for time off. Obey all laws and camp rules.

NOTES:

Duty of Care, Part I

The Concept of *In Loco Parentis*

*Your job as a leader in a camp, school, or other youth program includes the responsibility for the health and safety of the participants. That is, you have a **duty of care** for the participating children. You function as a surrogate caregiver, in place of the parents or **in loco parentis**.*

Definition of the Concept

Duty of Care is a legal concept recognized in the United States and most other countries around the world. The duty of care formula has the following elements:

- Every person with respect to every other person, is expected to act in a reasonably prudent manner; if a person fails to act in such a manner; that is acts negligently; and
- If such negligence is a proximate cause of damage or injury to another person; then
- The negligent actor may be financially liable for the damage or injury.

Here's an example of these elements applicable to operating a motor vehicle. You are driving along the road. You want to make a left turn across the traffic coming the other way when you get to the driveway of your friend's house. The problem is you don't know exactly where the home is located along the road. Suddenly you are there and you turn left. Unfortunately you don't look at the traffic coming the other way before you turn. As you are turning left your car is struck by a car coming in the other direction. The collision injures the driver of the other car.

Testing the formula, the questions are:

- Is it negligent (not reasonably prudent) to make a left turn across traffic without looking?
- Was the failure to look a proximate cause of the other driver's injury?
- Are you liable for the driver's injury?

The answer to each question is obviously; "yes".

In fact you may be liable even if the person coming the other way was operating without a license, was speeding and had stolen the car. This is because you do not need to be the sole cause of the injury, but only a cause of the injury.

The same principles apply to your duty of care for the children in your summer program or camp. In every thing you do, all summer long, the law requires that you act in a reasonably prudent manner. If you fail to so act and your failure is a cause of a child's injury, then you, and the camp or program that you work for, may be liable for the damages caused. Remember that your negligence does not need to be the only cause for you to be liable for the injury.

In the law this duty of care for children is referred to as "In Loco Parentis". In Loco Parentis is Latin and means; in place of the parents. In Loco Parentis means that you have the same duty to care for the campers in the place you will be working as the parents have for the care of their children.

When Your Duty of Care Applies

This duty extends not just to the children in your cabin, or in your activity or at your table at meals, but to **every child you come in contact with in the program or camp for which you work**. This means that you can not “walk by” a situation in which a camper needs care without taking action on behalf of the child. The law not would find that you were reasonable prudent if you failed to take action for the care or safety of the child in such a situation.

Example

Here’s an example of the duty of care in a camp situation. You, along with other staff are life guarding general swim. The campers in the water are playing tag. This is a game they often play. One way the campers avoid getting tagged is to slip under the dock for a few seconds when the camper that is “it” comes in their direction. It is against the rules and unsafe for campers to be under the dock because they can not be observed there by the life guards. Because you are talking to another staff member and not keeping a watch on the campers in your area, you don’t see a camper go under the dock. That camper gets tangled in a rope and drowns. You never know what happens because of the noise the campers in the water are making and your inattention until the whistle for “buddies” is blown. Then you discover a camper in your area is missing.

As in the driving example above, here the questions are the same.

Is it negligent (not reasonably prudent) to fail to pay attention to the campers in the water when you are life guarding?

Was your failure a proximate cause of camper’s drowning?

Are you liable for this death?

Again the answers to these questions are; “yes”.

Acting in a Reasonably Prudent Manner

These examples are ones of obvious failure to act in a reasonably prudent manner. But, will you have only one situation at camp requiring you to act in a manner that is obviously reasonably prudent? Of course not, you will have hundreds even thousands of situations during employment at camp to act on behalf of the children. In many there may be no obvious “right” answer. **However, in each one it will be your duty to act in a reasonably prudent manner.**

In order to act in each situation, in a reasonably prudent manner, you need to know what reasonably prudent conduct is in each situation. Because each situation will be different and there is no way of knowing the details of every situation, there can be no specific answer to what is reasonably prudent conduct.

However, there is a legal test that is helpful in answering this question. In the law, reasonably prudent conduct in each situation is what most parents or other camp counselors would do in the same or similar situation.

Thus the first question to ask yourself in any situation is; what would the parents or other camp counselors do now? There is another way to think about this. What if a child you are responsible for is injured and the parents asked what happened. Will what you did be seen by them or other camp counselors as reasonable prudent?

Fulfilling Your Duty of Care

To fulfill your duty of care as In Loco Parentis does not require you to be perfect. It does not require you to be all knowing or all seeing. ***It requires you to be reasonable.***

To fulfill your duty of care does not require you to protect a child against all injury. Some risks are inherent in summer camp programs. For example, there is a risk of falling down or bumping into another person in many team sports. You do not have a duty to protect campers from such risks. However, if there are protective or safety devices used in the activity you are supervising, it would not be reasonably prudent to permit the campers to participate in this activity without using these devices.

In summary, in your job as a program or camp counselor you have a duty of care for the children. You are In Loco Parentis, which means your duty is the same as if you are the parent of the child. That duty is owed to all of the children with whom you have contact. To fulfill your duty you must act for the safety and care of the children in a reasonably prudent manner. Reasonably prudent conduct is that which most parents or other camp counselors would do in the same or similar situation. Before you act, think about whether your conduct will be seen as having been reasonably prudent if the child or children you are responsible for are injured.

Put most simply; **THINK BEFORE YOU ACT**

Notes:

Duty of Care, Part II

Applied Strategies for Acting as *In Loco Parentis*

In DUTY OF CARE, PART I, I discussed the concepts of duty of care as applied to your job as a camp leader, program counselor, or summer school faculty. In this PART II, I give you seven strategies to help you act in a reasonably prudent manner in your role as In Loco Parentis to fulfill your duty of care for the children in your program or at your camp, school, or other youth-serving organization.

Applied Strategies for Acting in a Reasonably Prudent Manner

Here are the essential steps you should take whenever you are engaged in an activity with the children in your camp or program:

(1) First, think about who you are.

In regard to the activity you are leading or supervising; are you properly skilled, experienced and prepared to do what is required. If not, you need to take steps to become so or decline to undertake the activity. Becoming sufficiently skilled or experienced means, learning on your own and/or working with a more experienced leader to become knowledgeable in the skills and safety issues of the activity. It can also mean taking steps to be mentally and physically prepared to perform the work necessary to lead or supervise the activity.

(2) Second, think about who the children are who will be doing the activity with you.

Both the *nature* of the activity and the *method* of doing the activity should be determined by answering, in each situation, questions such as:

- How many children are there?
- What are their ages?
- What is their gender?
- What is their experience level?
- What instruction do they need to perform the activity?
- Does one or more of the group members have special needs?
- What is the group composition and dynamic?

(3) Third, think about the equipment you need to conduct the activity.

The success and safety of the activity will be enhanced by answering, in each situation, questions such as:

- What equipment is needed?
- What is the appropriate size of the equipment for each participant?
- What quantity of the equipment is needed?
- Is the equipment in the condition needed?
- Have you got all the parts?

(4) Fourth, think about the risks associated with the activity and how to best manage them.

Risks and injuries can be managed, that is reduced and/or eliminated by answering, in each situation, questions such as:

- What are the risks of the activity listed by severity and frequency?
- What steps can be taken to manage these risks before the activity begins?
 - What actions can be taken to control exposure to or otherwise limit these risks?
 - What action can be taken to reduce any injury that occurs?
 - If help from third parties is needed, where is it available, how is it obtained and how long before it will arrive?

(5) Fifth, as the activity is ongoing, continue to think about the questions listed in Steps 1-4 above.

As the activity is going on, things change. You may find yourself in a situation that you know little about or become emotionally unable to lead. The children with you may become hot, cold, tired or bored. The equipment may break, not work as expected or a part of it lost. New or different risks may present themselves. Any of these things or any thing else, alone or in combination, must continuously be assessed and guide how you continue to do the activity. Just as you can not play tennis or sail a boat, you can not lead an activity without being flexed, alert, informed and ready.

(6) Sixth, think about “go – no go” determinations just before you start and all the while you are leading the activity.

“Go – no go” decisions are the decisions you make based on the latest information. They are “change or maintain” direction decisions. If the decision to do the activity was based on information that indicated it could be done safely but before you start the activity you get new information that indicates otherwise, you need to reassess where to proceed, proceed differently or stop. The same is true as you are doing the activity. As the situation changes you continuously need to assess whether to continue, continue with modifications or stop.

The no go decision is not easy to make. The children will likely be unhappy and you may never be complimented for having made that decision. However, think about the alternative. If with the new information, the reasonably prudent decision is to stop, you decide not to and a child is injured, you have failed in your responsibility for the care of the children and may be liable for the injury.

(7) Seventh, obey all laws, rules, standards, guidelines, policies, procedures and instruction. These include state or provincial laws and rules, camp association standards, activity or place specific guidelines and camp policies, procedures and instructions.

Obey them all, even the ones you don't agree with; even the ones you think are really dumb. All of these, from laws to instructions, come from persons likely to have more experience than you. These persons have made the mistakes or witnessed the outcomes of not obeying. They are passing or promulgating these in an attempt to reduce or eliminate risks and injuries. If you second guess them by deciding that you do not need to obey any of these from laws to instructions and a child you are responsible for is injured your conduct is not likely to be judged to have been reasonably prudent.

In summary, if you think before you act using the seven steps described here you will succeed in being a reasonably prudent camp counselor. The job you will have at a summer camp, school, or other youth-serving program is not easy but will be incredibly rewarding. Because of the magnitude of your responsibility, it's a job worth doing well. It's worth it, both for yourself and the children in your care.

Youth Inspired

How Kids Want *You* to Behave

The authentic voices of children and teens in the video anthology that accompanies this handout provide candid advice to adults about the importance of balance, rules, having fun, keeping your cool and—above all—spending time with young people. Learn from children’s own experiences what leadership practices separate the best from the rest. Then, see what immediate enhancements you can make to your own leadership style.

Balance Fun and Firmness

- Have high expectations and push young people to succeed.
- Provide support as young people work toward achieving great things.
- Balance being fun and having a good time with being firm and enforcing the rules.
- Reward good behavior when you see it, rather than just pointing out rule violations.

Enforce Rules Fairly

- Understand that it is your job to enforce rules and boundaries.
- Use a patient tone when enforcing the rules. Provide reasons for rules.
- Be consistent. Follow your own rules, especially in front of young people.
- Balance giving freedom and responsibility with enforcing safe and reasonable limits.

Be Calm and Respectful

- Avoid yelling, shaming or getting overly angry. Stay positive.
- Avoid favoritism. Other young people will notice and will feel neglected.
- Be patient, because some young people won’t always listen or follow directions.
- Make young people your top priority. Let your behavior demonstrate how important they are.

Spend Time with Kids

- Get to know each young person individually. What is unique? What do they have in common?
- Remember that kids want to be kids and have fun and be a little crazy once in a while.
- Provide comfort to any young person who is feeling bad. Listen carefully to their experiences.
- You will gain the respect of young people by spending time with them. Turn off mobile devices.
- Lead by example.

Additional Points offered by Tom Giggi, Leadership Director at Camp Belknap

- All young people want structure and guidelines, even though they won’t ask for them.
- Establish guidelines and structure early on. Enforce those rules strictly and consistently.
- Young people will not do what they are told simply because they are told. Instead, they need a role model—a strong leader—to follow.
- Be consistent. Remember that little problems, if left uncorrected, turn into bigger problems.
- Inexperienced staff may not see that you can’t be solely a young person’s friend. You must also be the authority figure, the leader, the person who is not afraid to enforce rules.
- Great leaders “spread the love;” they never play favorites, even though they will have favorites.
- Great leaders also blend confidence with humility. They know when and how to ask for help.

Move It Like You Mean It

Using Body Language to Enhance Communication

It is only when we are really present in the moment and paying attention to the cues and feedback that campers are giving us that we can be conscious of and manipulate all of the other nonverbal communications skills we've covered in this module. When you remove distractions, you can heighten your awareness of your own body language and deliver a clear message.

Did you know that nonverbal cues make up more than half of what we understand from what someone says?

- Campers absorb your body language and other nonverbal cues
- Non-verbal communication plays into your campers' judgment and attitude about what you are saying
- They may develop a critical opinion or negative attitude about what you are saying because of inconsistent messages in your body language

Seven principles of Non-Verbal Communication

1. Proximity
2. Kinesics
3. Posture
4. Gesture
5. Eye contact
6. Haptics (or physical contact)
7. Presence

Proximity is about understanding how people use and perceive the space around them.

- Personal space versus public space
- How to use the space around you
- How it affects the messages that we are sending

Kinesics is just a fancy way of saying body *movement*.

- It includes using your arms, hands, and torso, facial expressions, and body orientation.
- These movements can all affect how your message is heard and understood.
- Facial expressions

REMEMBER TO SMILE!

Posture and body position can be used to determine your degree of attention, involvement, and interest. It is also a pretty clear indication of caring, respect, and fondness.

- Leans in, sits up, and angles his body towards the activity= more interest and excitement
- When listening, attentive posture says, "Your words are important to me."

Gestures are non-verbal body movements that communicate a specific meaning.

- High fives, nodding, winking, thumbs-up, OK, and waving are all good examples.

Eye contact

In most Western cultures, eye contact with another person shows respect, interest, and confidence. It shows you care enough to focus on the message you're hearing or delivering.

Haptics or physical contact

A safe and reassuring touch, can send the message of caring and attention.

- Can add depth and clarity to your message
- Can help a lot of campers feel more comfortable with you

Examples of appropriate haptics:

- Hand on shoulder
- Hand on head
- Hand on upper back
- Arm around shoulder
- One hand on each shoulder, standing face-to-face

Presence is the final principle of nonverbal communication. Being present when you're speaking or listening is crucial to clear communication.

Notes:

Cultivating Patience

Creating a Calm Presence for Learning & Leadership

Principles of youth development specific to patience

1. Your patience helps young people learn
 2. Getting impatient hurts your interactions with young people
 3. Patience is a skill and like any other skill, it improves with practice
-

Patience helps young people learn

They are experts at finding and pushing the limits and boundaries we set for them. It's like it's their job. It's a talent and a skill that they are born with.

And... pushing limits is totally normal. It's one important way that young people learn about the world. Pushing limits with adults teaches young people what's possible.

Key strategies:

- Be clear and consistent with the boundaries and limitations
- Be willing to explain (and re-explain) why boundaries and limits exist
- Engage in the conversation and tolerate the question of essential boundaries

Impatience hurts interactions

Losing your cool, overreacting, giving dirty looks, yelling, being sarcastic, and other responses adults use when they are being challenged don't work that well with young people.

- Campers learn that you've lost control
- Campers learn that your response to their pushing limits is unpredictable
- They may respond by losing respect for you or by pushing back harder
- Losing your cool leaves you feeling uncomfortable and out of sorts

Patience is a skill. And just like other skills you have to practice to get better at it.

(You are in the best place in the world to practice getting better at being patient!)

Practical strategies for every day development of patience:

- 1) Speaking calmly when you are unhappy
- 2) Taking a breath before you speak, especially if you don't like what you see
- 3) Let others go first
- 4) Ponder ideas when it's not urgent to make a decision
- 5) Try things again
- 6) Ask for help when you need it

Simply break things down into specific behaviors to practice.

A patient mindset involves three things:

1. Recognizing what's developmentally normal behavior. Camper's exuberant, silly, or impulsive behavior is normal for their age.
2. Not personalizing children's misbehavior. 99% of children's misbehavior is evidence of a skills deficit, rather than an intention effort to annoy you
3. Being truly present. Reduce distractions as much as possible. This means packing away your cell phone and mentally setting aside events in your personal life.

Case Studies of Practicing Patience

Case Study #1

You have asked your campers several times to clean up in the activity area. Each time a few of them start to clean up, the others distract them and they all begin to play again. A few have even ignored your request and are continuing to make a mess. You are really losing your cool.

- What are some strategies for getting them to clean up?
- What probably won't work with this group of campers?

Case Study #2

You are on a hike with a mixed age group of campers. They are not all from your unit so you only know a few of them by name. Although you have asked them to stay on the path, several of the campers keep veering off the path into the woods.

- Why are the campers not listening?
- What are some possible reasons they shouldn't be going off the trail? Why is that important?

Case Study #3

There is one camper, Matthew, in your cabin that is being picked on by the other campers. They don't do it in front of you, but he has told you several times that it is going on. You have tried various strategies including talking as a group, talking to individuals, pairing them up for games, and including everyone at meals and activities. Nothing seems to be working. Matthew has come to you in tears and wants to go home.

- How come the other campers are still picking on Matthew?
- What does this case study have to do with being patient?

Notes:

Safe Touch Guidelines for Youth Leaders

adapted from Friedman, 2004; ACA/Johnson *For Their Sake*, 1992; Thurber, 2000, 2001, and Ditter, 1994, 2003

All people like to feel safe, both physically and emotionally. Part of our job as youth development professionals is to help our children feel safe, even if they do not have that feeling all the time at home or at school. Understanding how to provide safe touch and protect children from unwelcome touch is a requisite step to helping all youth feel safe. Children and adolescents are, each in their own way, physical and sexual beings. They are curious and easily over-stimulated. As one of the adults at your summer program, you are responsible for setting appropriate limits around touch, regardless of what a child may express. You are also responsible for setting a positive example, in your self-expression, your interaction with fellow staff, and your interactions with youth.

The following guidelines are general recommendations. The policies at your camp, school, or other youth-serving organization, as well as the laws in your state, may be different in important ways. Always consult with your director and the policies and documentation your employer has provided.

Definitions: *What is child abuse?*

- The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), (42 U.S.C.A. §5106g), as amended by the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003, defines child abuse and neglect as, at minimum:
 - Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or
 - An act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.
 - Most Federal and State child protection laws primarily refer to cases of harm to a child caused by parents or other caregivers; they generally do not include harm caused by other people, such as acquaintances or strangers.

Definitions: *What are the specific kinds of abuse and neglect?*

- Within the minimum standards set by CAPTA, each State is responsible for providing its own definitions of child abuse and neglect.
 - Most States recognize four major types of maltreatment: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse.
 - Although any of the forms of child maltreatment may be found separately, they often occur in combination.
 - In many States, abandonment and parental substance abuse are also defined as forms of child abuse or neglect.
- The examples provided below are for general informational purposes only. Not all States' definitions will include all of the examples listed below, and individual States' definitions may cover additional situations not mentioned here. Consult childwelfare.gov to learn more.
- **Physical abuse** is non-accidental physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting (with a hand, stick, strap, or other object), burning, or otherwise harming a child, that is inflicted by a parent, caregiver, or other person who has responsibility for the child.² Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caregiver intended to hurt the child. Physical discipline, such as spanking or paddling, is not considered abuse as long as it is reasonable and causes no bodily injury to the child.

- **Neglect** is the failure of a parent, guardian, or other caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs. Neglect may be:
 - Physical (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision)
 - Medical (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment)³
 - Educational (e.g., failure to educate a child or attend to special education needs)
 - Emotional (e.g., inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs)
- These situations do not always mean a child is neglected. Sometimes cultural values, the standards of care in the community, and poverty may be contributing factors, indicating the family is in need of information or assistance. When a family fails to use information and resources, and the child's health or safety is at risk, then child welfare intervention may be required. In addition, many States provide an exception to the definition of neglect for parents who choose not to seek medical care for their children due to religious beliefs that may prohibit medical intervention.⁴
- **Sexual abuse** (sometimes called "molestation") includes activities by a parent or caregiver such as:
 - Fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.
 - Sexual abuse is defined by CAPTA as "the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; or the rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children."
- **Emotional abuse** (sometimes called "psychological abuse") is a pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth. This may include constant criticism, threats, or rejection, as well as withholding love, support, or guidance. Emotional abuse is often difficult to prove and, therefore, child protective services may not be able to intervene without evidence of harm or mental injury to the child. Emotional abuse is almost always present when other forms are identified.
- **Abandonment** is now defined in many States as a form of neglect. In general, a child is considered to be abandoned when the parent's identity or whereabouts are unknown, the child has been left alone in circumstances where the child suffers serious harm, or the parent has failed to maintain contact with the child or provide reasonable support for a specified period of time.
- **Substance abuse** is an element of the definition of child abuse or neglect in many States.⁵ Circumstances that are considered abuse or neglect in some States include:
 - Prenatal exposure of a child to harm due to the mother's use of an illegal drug or other substance
 - Manufacture of methamphetamine in the presence of a child
 - Selling, distributing, or giving illegal drugs or alcohol to a child
 - Use of a controlled substance by a caregiver that impairs the caregiver's ability to adequately care for the child

Reporting: *What should you do if you suspect a minor has been abused or neglected?*

- The law defines most youth development professionals as “mandated reporters” of suspected abuse and neglect. This includes school staff, camp staff, parks & rec staff, whether paid or volunteer. Adults responsible for children—whatever their job title—have a duty of care called *in loco parentis*. This means that the adults serve *in place of the parents*. As such, they have an implicit duty to protect young people. For this reason, they are mandated reporters.
- If you witness or hear about an instance of questionable or clearly abusive or neglectful behavior, consult immediately with your director. The law does not require you to have proof, only to have a *suspicion* that inappropriate touch or abusive or neglectful behavior may have occurred.
- Signs of possible abuse or neglect include; (a) injuries with a sketchy explanation; (b) precocious sexual knowledge; (c) public sexual behavior or sexually provocative behavior; (d) injuries to places on the body normally covered by a bathing suit; (e) withdrawn or aggressive behavior not reliably attributable to another cause (e.g., homesickness); or (f) the person tells you about an instance where he was touched or treated in an unsafe manner.
- If a young person asks, “Can you keep a secret?” the best response is, “I’ll do my best to keep our conversation private, but if I have concerns about your safety or the safety of someone else, I will involve a few other people in order to keep you safe.”

Safe Touch: *What are the safest and most welcome kinds of touch?*

- You are the adult, so it is always your responsibility to set safe and appropriate limits.
- Short hugs and touching young people on the hand, shoulder, or upper back is fine.
- Generally, it protects you to be in the company of other adults when touching a child.
- Never touch a young person against his or her will or if he or she expresses discomfort.
- Beware of over-stimulating a child with tickling, wrestling, or other physical activity. It is generally wise to keep playful physical touch to pats on the upper back, high-fives, handshakes, or a hand on the shoulder. These touches are unlikely to over-stimulate a child.
- Never touch a young person’s body on a place that is normally covered by a bathing suit, *unless for a clear medical necessity (e.g., you need to apply well-aimed direct pressure to stop severe bleeding), and then only with the supervision of another adult.*
- A more conservative “no-touch zone” is *waist-to-knees*. Only the child himself, his primary caregivers, or a medical professional should touch a child anywhere in the waist-to-knees zone.
- If you need to touch a young person near a place normally covered by a bathing suit: (a) explain what you’re going to do [e.g., “In just a minute, I’m going to check the safety of your climbing harness.”]; (b) demonstrate on yourself [e.g., “Here’s how I’m going to check that the loop is doubled back.”]; and then (c) ask permission [e.g., “Can I check your harness now?”].

Discipline: *What kind of discipline is permissible or forbidden?*

- Discipline, especially 1:1 conversations, should be done in view of other staff
- Never use abusive or derogatory language with campers
- Never hit, poke, or shake a child, or use any kind of physical discipline
- Never haze campers or use abusive or humiliating initiation rites
- Abide by the “rule of three” or “double coverage.” This means that when you are with a young person—especially in a disciplinary situation—you have another leader or staff member present.

Coverage of Activities: *How can you protect yourself from a false accusation?*

- If you need to touch a child (for example, to position a water-skier in the water or to fasten a safety harness on a climber), first explain the contact, then demonstrate on yourself, then ask permission. (See “Safe Touch” section above.)
- Most youth-serving organizations use double adult coverage during changing or showering times. Always have your kids within earshot and talk with them so they know you are present.
- Almost all youth-serving organizations use double adult coverage during overnights.
- Carefully supervise physical activities, such as pillow fights, that can become over-stimulating. (Note that some organizations do not allow pillow fights and other rough-housing.)

Cabin / Bunk / Group Living: *What needs to be monitored on a daily basis?*

- Acknowledge young people’s natural curiosity about sex and their bodies. Never shame them, but do redirect explicit questions and steer conversations in an appropriate direction.
 - For example, if a young person asks, “Are you a virgin?” you might say, “I know you’re curious about me, and that’s OK, but my social life is personal.”
 - Or, if a young person says, “I’ve gone to third base. Has anyone else in the cabin gone that far?” you might say, “It’s OK to be curious about other people, but talking about your exploits is not an appropriate topic at camp. Let’s change the topic.”
- Respect all young people’s spiritual or religious convictions regarding sexuality and sexual practices. As a rule, acknowledge differences of opinion (“There are different opinions about that.”) and steer the conversation to a safer topic.
- Do not share sleeping bags or beds under any circumstances.
- Gently set limits with children who physically cling or hang on you. Instead of rejecting a child who clings on you, suggest an alternative (e.g., “How about a high-five?”).
- Be aware of children who may develop a crush on you; again, gently set limits.
- Do not give back rubs unless another adult is present and clothes are on. (Note that many organizations do not allow back rubs or any other kind of massage. Know your policies.)
- Younger children should be encouraged to change their own clothes as much as possible.
- Censor your campers’ music and movie selections and explain your reasoning for not playing media (songs, films, etc.) with strongly sexual, violent, crude, or otherwise inappropriate themes.

Staff Relations: *What’s appropriate when it comes to staff-staff interactions?*

- Always model the kind of touch and interaction with fellow staff that would be appropriate between children or between a children and a staff member. Good leadership-by-example helps ensure that children emulate safe touch with each other. (Note that a considerable amount of inappropriate intimate behavior occurs between children, so your example is very important.)
- Do not perform “wedgies,” “purple nuckles,” “credit card checks”—or other questionable acts that involve touching genitals, anus, buttocks, or nipples—on campers or in the presence of children. Save that kind of goofing around (which may be OK among consenting adults) for time off.
- Staff sleeping together during an overnight (or anywhere around children) is unacceptable.
- Staff sharing their romantic or sexual lives with campers—verbally or otherwise—is unacceptable.

Detailed Signs and Symptoms: *What exactly should make me suspicious?*

- The following list comes from the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Report these possible indicators of abuse or neglect to your supervisor. If you feel that your supervisor has not taken appropriate action, report your concern to a different trusted adult.
- If you observe someone abusing or neglecting a child, it is your legal duty to report that event. If steps are not taken to protect children from that abusive or neglectful person, is your ethical duty to continue reporting your concerns until someone takes corrective, protective action.

The following general signs **may** signal the presence of **child abuse or neglect**.

The Child:

- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention
- Has learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Lacks adult supervision
- Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home

The Parent:

- Shows little concern for the child
- Denies the existence of—or blames the child for—the child's problems in school or at home
- Asks teachers or other caregivers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome
- Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve
- Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of emotional needs

The Parent and Child:

- Rarely touch or look at each other
- Consider their relationship entirely negative
- State that they do not like each other

Types of Abuse

The following are some signs often associated with particular types of child abuse and neglect: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. It is important to note, however, that these types of abuse are more typically found in combination than alone. A physically abused child, for example, is often emotionally abused as well, and a sexually abused child also may be neglected.

Signs of Physical Abuse

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the **child**:

- Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school
- Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- Shrinks at the approach of adults
- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury
- Describes the child as "evil," or in some other very negative way
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child
- Has a history of abuse as a child

Signs of Neglect

Consider the possibility of neglect when the **child**:

- Is frequently absent from school
- Begs or steals food or money
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs
- States that there is no one at home to provide care

Consider the possibility of neglect when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Appears to be indifferent to the child
- Seems apathetic or depressed
- Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner
- Is abusing alcohol or other drugs

Signs of Sexual Abuse

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the **child**:

- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14
- Runs away
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex
- Is secretive and isolated
- Is jealous or controlling with family members

Signs of Emotional Maltreatment

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the **child**:

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression
- Is either inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging, for example)
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development
- Has attempted suicide
- Reports a lack of attachment to the parent

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child
 - Is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems
 - Overtly rejects the child
-

Notes:

Cracking Kids' Secret Code

Listening Sensitively to Forge Understanding

What people say is not always what they mean, which poses a challenge for all youth leaders. Listening carefully to the subtext of what young people say promotes compliant behavior through authentic relationships. Use the information in this handout to cultivate your ability to decode subtext and respond empathically.

How do you know something is code?

- Coded messages can be hard to spot. They range from total silence to violent acting out.
- Coded messages are sometimes belied, revealed, or translated by body language.
- Look for code when you find yourself saying: *"Something about this interaction doesn't seem quite right."* or *"There's a disconnect here between what this person is saying and how I guess they feel."*

Why do people use code?

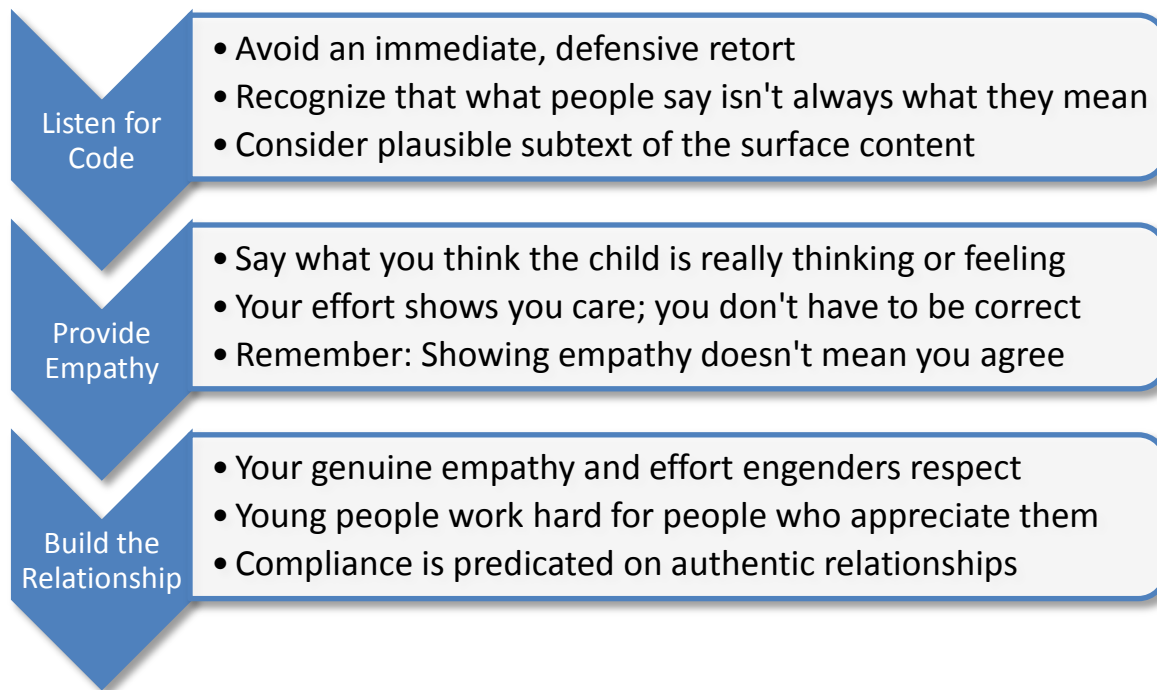
- Codes may be defenses against uncomfortable feelings. (Freud had lots to say about this!)
- Codes are sometimes first drafts of what people really want to say. (Adults use code, too, of course.)
- Code is sometimes used unintentionally, or unconsciously when people are afraid to trust another person with their authentic feelings, are afraid of rejection, or afraid of offending another person.

What do you do with a coded message?

- Decode the message with careful listening, observing body language, and reflection.
- Diffuse the strong emotion with empathic statements and gentle guesses at true feelings.
- Enhance understanding with sensitive observations about the uncomfortable situation.
- Work to enhance the connection you have with the other person (e.g., conversation or shared activity).

Possible Responses	Possible Explanations (Can you think of others?)
"Code Quiet"	People keep their mouths shut because those around them are critical, disapproving, intimidating, or shaming.
"Code Underground"	What people feel deep in their hearts may be too painful, embarrassing, or anxiety-provoking to say out loud.
"Code Unknown"	People can't say exactly what they're feeling because they may not understand the situation or their emotions yet.
"Code Foggy"	People are so overcome with emotion that they say something that doesn't make sense or isn't accurate.
"Code Smoke Screen"	People say things wildly different (or opposite) from how they're really feeling in order to hide their pain.
"Code Clown"	People joke, play, and put on a happy face out of nervousness or to mask the sadness they really feel.
"Code Barbed Wire"	People are so scared of revealing their true feelings that they act out or even lash out at others.

Flow-Chart of Cracking Kids' Secret Code



Examples of Decodes:

Surface Content

*I don't want to play.
I hate kickball.*

*Ben doesn't like me.
He's always mad at me.*

*This place stinks.
All the activities are
stupid.*

Plausible Decodes

- I'm tired. I'm thirsty. I've overheating.
- I've just been bullied by a peer.
- I'm embarrassed because I'm not a good athlete and I don't want to look foolish on the kickball field.

- I don't make friends easily.
- I'm unsure of my social standing.
- I don't know how to respond to someone else's bad mood.

- I'm homesick. Everything here seems unfamiliar.
- My first attempt at trying a new activity was miserable.
- Games here are more competitive than I expected.

Notes:

Examples of Empathic Responses:

Surface Content

*I don't want to play.
I hate kickball.*

Possible Empathic Responses (based on plausible decodes)

- You don't feel much like playing anything right now.
- Things aren't going well for you today.
- You're not feeling confident in your kickball skills.

*Ben doesn't like me.
He's always mad at me.*

- Making friends can take time.
- It's not always easy to know how a friendship is going.
- Ben seems mad at you, but you're not sure what to do.

*This place stinks.
All the activities are
stupid.*

- Being in a new place can make you miss home a lot.
- The activities here are different than what you're used to.
- So far, you don't like the way kids play games here.

Notes:

Skillful Discipline

Part I: Prevention

Inexperienced staff tend to react to children's misbehavior with simple punishment or lengthy lectures. However, the most skillful discipline approach emphasizes prevention—strategies that reduce the likelihood of misbehavior occurring in the first place. Here are six powerful strategies.

1. Get to know your campers

Campers are most likely to comply when they respect you. Respect, in turn, hinges on your campers' feeling that you really care about them. Begin showing this care by learning their names, hometowns, likes, and dislikes. Campers are especially impressed when you know something about them on opening day, so ask your camp's director to give you a cabin, bunk, or group list to memorize ahead of time. This investment will pay dividends in compliance.

2. Lead close-up

Barking orders, commanding from the sidelines, and otherwise leading from a distance will separate you from your campers and make them less inclined to listen to you. You *are* in a position of authority, but you need not be authoritarian or bossy. Your campers will resent you if you abuse the power that your position affords.

3. Establish Rules Early

To set a tone of respect and state clear expectations, gather your campers within hours of their arrival. Most camp leaders prefer a combination of explaining the camp's rules (typically called "orientation") and allowing the campers to discuss and establish some rules of their own.

4. Put On the Brakes

Children are naturally curious and energetic, but their impulsivity and poor judgment can quickly transform enthusiasm into chaos...or worse. Plus, it can be easy to begin acting immaturely when you're playing with kids all day. Just remember: You are the adult. It's your job to put on the brakes and regain control when your campers start to lose control.

5. Supervise Actively

Some camp leaders confuse being "on duty" with snoozing or simply being in the vicinity of campers, but when you're on duty, you need to be active. Walk around, talk with campers, and see what everyone is up to. Actively supervising, rather than passively existing at camp will prevent misbehavior and camper-to-camper abuse.

6. Use Effective Praise

It's easy to notice bad behavior but "catching kids being good" is a skill you may need to cultivate. When children arrive at camp, they'll be looking for boundaries. They won't ask aloud, but they *will* be thinking: *What are the rules here? What can I get away with? How are things here different from home or school? How will my counselor or cabin leader treat me differently than my parents?* Naturally, some things will be different; some will be the same. But when children listen, follow directions, and behave unselfishly, you should offer praise that is positive (not sarcastic), immediate (not delayed for days), specific (not vague), and true (not exaggerated). Genuine praise, used strategically, helps reinforce and shape good behavior.

Skillful Discipline

Part II: Intervention

The six prevention strategies summarized in Part I of this handout will go a long way toward preventing misbehavior in the first place. But there will still be some misbehavior that you'll need to deal with at camp. Here are six strategies that are particularly useful with children.

1. Time Outs

Asking campers to sit and think about how they've behaved is not just a technique to use with young children. If done well, time outs work with older children and teens, too. Of course, your tone with teens will be different, but the objective is the same: To reflect on how your behavior affects yourself and others. When giving a time out, keep your own voice calm and ask the camper to sit quietly for five minutes. At the end of five minutes, discuss the behavior that led to the time out, its effect (including on others), and the positive, alternate behavior.

2. Requests + Rationales

Sometimes, children misbehave out of ignorance, not malice. Calmly stating your request, such as "Please ask me before you take my tennis racquet" is even more effective when you tag on a rationale, such as "I just like to keep track of my stuff." Giving campers the reason for rules provides an added incentive for them to comply next time.

3. State Desired Behavior + Consequence

This technique combines a calm, clear statement of the positive alternate behavior ("Instead of hitting someone you're angry with, use your words or come find a staff member.") with a pending punishment ("If you hit someone again, you'll be sent home.") Avoid the common pitfalls of anger and hyperbole. Screaming at a child or threatening a consequence you would or could never enforce is folly. And remember, it is never OK to withhold food or mail as a punishment; it is never OK to use physical discipline; and it is never OK to use profanity.

4. Logical Consequences

Whenever possible, impose a consequence (i.e., a punishment) for a misbehavior that is logically connected to the misbehavior itself. If you can design something for campers that helps them make amends for what they've done, so much the better. For example, it's logical to have a camper sand off the graffiti he wrote inside a camp building. Taking away candy for movie night might be a popular punishment, but it's less logical for this infraction.

5. Natural Consequences

When there are no safety or health concerns, it is sometimes appropriate to let natural consequences take their course. For example, if a camper forgets to hang up a wet bathing suit or wet life preserver, let it stay wet on the ground. Putting on a cold, wet suit or PFD may help this camper remember to hang it up next time.

6. One-on-One Conversations

Sitting and talking with your campers allows you both to share your perspectives and brainstorm about possible solutions. Stay calm, listen carefully, and make a specific plan. Finish by asking the camper, "What can I do to help you be successful with this plan?"

Even More Skillful Discipline

Part I: Even More Prevention Techniques

Inexperienced staff tend to react to children's misbehavior with simple punishment or lengthy lectures. However, the most skillful discipline approach emphasizes prevention—strategies that reduce the likelihood of misbehavior occurring in the first place. Here are seven more powerful strategies.

1. **Create Structure and Limits** (Mark it)

Stating rules up-front—before children have a chance to test limits—helps to minimize misbehavior. Rather than lengthy lectures, **mark** limits with a few clear, simple guidelines for each activity. Set a reasonable duration for the activity so that fatigue doesn't spark mischief.

2. **Make Process Comments** (Say it)

Most young people understand rules and the basic difference between right and wrong. Therefore, simply **saying** what you've observed—such as "It looks like it's important for you to win" or "That was a harsh way to treat a friend"—is an effective way to correct misbehavior.

3. **Stay Physically Close** (Park it)

Experience with particular young people will teach you which ones are prone to misbehavior and even what the precursors to serious misbehavior are. Use this valuable knowledge to **park** yourself physically close to potential troublemakers. See what you can stop early.

4. **Prepare for Transitions** (Prep it)

Stopping a fun activity, especially when your team is behind, can be frustrating and spark misbehavior. **Prep** your group for transitions by announcing half-times, two-minute warnings, and end-of-period transitions. Punctuate competitions with cheers and good sportsmanship.

5. **Redirect Emerging Problems** (Send it)

Left to their own devices, many young people spin activities out of control. When you notice things getting a bit rowdy, **send** the activity in a positive direction by giving it some structure and limits (Strategy #1 above). For example, a volleyball fight turns into volleyball instruction.

6. **Assign Responsibility** (Give it)

When you **give** young people a meaningful and age-appropriate job to do, they feel a sense of purpose. In turn, this sense of purpose—this feeling of belongingness and importance—diminishes the desire and the opportunities to misbehave. Supervise all jobs, of course.

7. **Tap Signature Strengths** (Tap it)

Young people who misbehave often get a steady diet of criticism and punishment. You can motivate positive behaviors when you reverse that trend by **tapping** into the skills individual children possess. Offering genuine praise and chances to help other children really helps.

Notes:

Even More Skillful Discipline

Part II: Even More Intervention Strategies

The seven prevention strategies summarized in Part I of this handout will go a long way toward preventing misbehavior in the first place. But there will still be some misbehavior that you'll need to deal with at camp. Here are seven more strategies that are particularly useful with children.

1. **State the Positive Alternate Behavior**

It's easy to spot misbehaviors and describe what you don't like. However, if you'd like to teach new and positive behaviors, then you'll need to describe them specifically. "Stay within 10 feet of your swim buddy" is more powerful and lasting than "Stop drifting apart from your buddy."

2. **Invite Problem-Solving**

To reinforce the rationale behind rules and give young people healthy perspective on the consequences of their misbehavior, ask questions such as, "What do you think we might do about this?" "How might you turn things around?" and "What's a reasonable consequence?"

3. **Rehearse and Redo**

In the spirit of forgiveness and grounded in the notion that performing the positive alternate behavior (Strategy #1 above) promotes durable behavior change, try having an individual or a group start fresh and perform an activity correctly. With a little coaching, most kids get it right.

4. **Provide Buddies**

Peers can be excellent teachers, though their youthful explanations and easy-to-follow example. Share some leadership responsibility by buddying up a skilled child with a child who is still learning. Supervise their interaction to keep the instruction positive and inspiring.

5. **Allow Positive Peer Pressure**

Peer pressure can often shape positive behaviors. Under your watchful eye, you can allow the group's sentiments to put pressure on a peer who may need encouragement or direct feedback on how his or her misbehavior is affecting the group. Social consequences do work.

6. **Debrief Time-Outs**

Some young people won't understand exactly why you removed them from an activity, asked to take a break, or given a time-out. When things have settled, it's essential to ask, "Do you know why I asked you to take a break?" and then allow them to make amends with others.

7. **Communicate with Parents**

If a young person's misbehavior is chronic or severe enough that you are *considering* shortening his or her stay, it's time to call parents so they are not blindsided by a definitive call to come pick up their child now. In this early call, discuss the child's specific misbehaviors, your approach so far, what has worked, what hasn't worked, and what the effects have been on the other young people. Explain that you must take into account the needs of the other young people at your camp, school, or youth program. Listen carefully to any suggestions parents have for managing their child's misbehavior and plan a follow-up call to update them.

Design Your Own Case Studies

Think back to your youth or to a child you worked with last summer. Describe the specific misbehavior, the context in which it happened most often, your best guess at what caused the misbehavior, and your ideas about how to apply some prevention and intervention strategies when you encounter a similar misbehavior this summer. Remember: The root of the word *discipline* means “to teach.” Your goal should always be to teach new, positive behaviors. Teach young people to navigate the world and get what they want—for themselves and for others—in prosocial ways.

Brief Description of Sample Past Case:

Specific Problematic Behaviors:

Circumstances in which Misbehavior Happened Most Often:

Hypothesis about What Caused the Specific Misbehavior:

Ideas about Combining Prevention and Intervention Strategies:

When you are ready, assemble a small group of other leaders to role-play your case. Realistically depict the problematic behaviors and play out your most skillful approach.

Bullies & Targets, Part I: Prevention

Definition: Bullying is aggressive or abusive behavior intended to hurt another person. Bullying is also using relationships in manipulative ways, such as ostracizing or intentionally embarrassing. Whereas teasing is episodic, reciprocal, and playful, bullying is one-sided, repeated physical or psychological intimidation.

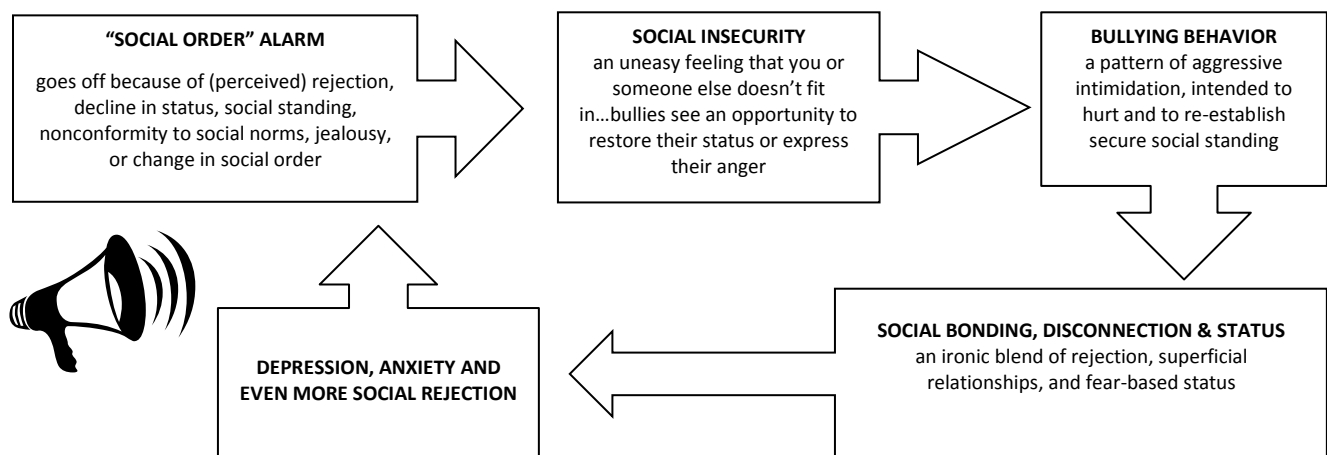
Characteristics: Bullies come in all shapes and sizes. Some common characteristics include:

- ✓ Low impulse control
- ✓ Poor problem-solving skills
- ✓ Low empathy
- ✓ Popularity struggles
- ✓ Underdeveloped social skills
- ✓ Negative attribution bias (interpreting neutral events as hostile, especially ambiguous social events)
- ✓ Fragile self-esteem (unsure of skill set or competence or popularity, relative to others).

Prevalence: In a recent CDC study, 81% of teens admitted to bullying; 75% said they had been bullied. Ironically, bullying may be so prevalent because it is a misguided attempt to form social connections.

The Cause: Children bully for a variety of reasons, including the thrill of it, but mostly they bully because they feel socially insecure. All people want to fit in...to feel that others like them...to feel they belong to an important group. When children feel that they don't fit in somehow, when they experience some kind of social rejection or a threat to their role in a group, they may resort to bullying to re-establish their social position. Thus, the best intervention is to teach social skills and help everyone feel part of the group.

The Consequences: The social insecurity that bullies feel, combined with the rejection they may get from their peers, often leads to feelings of depression and isolation. Unfortunately, this can become a cycle, where feelings of isolation lead to more bullying, in a misguided attempt to nurture meaningful interpersonal connections. Sometimes "bad" kids are actually sad, unconnected, unskilled kids.



Sources: A. Beane, C. Giannetti, M. Leary, H. Marano, W. Pollack, & M. Sagarese

Preventing Bullying

Preventing bullying has four components: Tone, Expectations, Presence, and Example. Together, these four preventive approaches will dramatically reduce the incidence of bullying behavior at your camp, school, or youth program. Most of your energy should be directed toward creating a culture of kindness, rather than punishing misbehavior. When you do encounter bullying behavior, refer to the intervention strategies in Part II.

Warm Tone

Bullying prevention begins with setting a warm tone at your camp, school, or youth program. This warmth may or may not stand in stark contrast to what a young person is used to at home, in their neighborhood, or in other organizations. Nevertheless, your sincere, gentle, and welcoming presence establishes an atmosphere where that warmth is reciprocated. Intentionally create opportunities for children and adolescents to participate in this warm and welcoming mood by facilitating introductions, playing name games, and involving everyone in some fun, non-competitive activities.

Firm Expectations

As early as possible after everyone's arrival, make a point of explicitly stating your standards for good behavior. Explicitly describe what you mean by kind behavior and what you mean by unkind behavior. Give examples of friendship and of bullying so that all young people—both new and returning—are clear about the distinction. Then, explain exactly what you expect: That people will use their words to work things out; that everyone will be included in activities, and that people will speak up and be “upstanders” not bystanders when they see someone being mistreated or left out. Mention the consequences for misbehavior so young people have a fair warning.



Vigilant Presence

After setting a warm tone and explicitly stating your expectations for prosocial behavior, you must closely supervise young people. Some misbehavior is bound to occur, and you should be ready to respond. Far less bullying will occur if you make your presence known than if you supervise intermittently or from a distance. Most young people know how to treat each other kindly. Most are excellent at resolving conflicts peacefully. Your mere presence helps to motivate them to use the prosocial skills they already possess. And, when you see them falter, provide some social coaching that teaches good behavior.

Kind Example

Your best teaching tool is your own example. Lengthy lectures often fall on deaf ears, but when young people see you assisting your peers on the staff, they'll do the same with their peers. Let young people hear you resolve some minor conflicts with other staff by using your words. Let them see you help out other staff with various duties. And let them

witness you sticking up for someone who may feel mistreated or excluded. Your kind example will inspire the same good behavior among the young people you serve.

Bullying Paradoxes...Can You Resolve Them?

1) We tell kids to be honest with their feelings, but...

the honesty paradox:

If kids react emotionally to bullying, they tip their hands by allowing the bully to see what hurts, which can increase bullying behavior.

what to do?

2) We tell kids to seek support from a trusted adult, but...

the assistance paradox:

If kids report bullying behavior to an adult, they get labeled as a “tattle-tale,” which can decrease social standing and increase bullying behavior.

what to do?

3) We tell kids to stand up for themselves and be assertive, but...

the violence paradox:

If kids respond to physical intimidation by fighting back physically, they can get themselves in trouble, whether or not the bully also gets in trouble. (See also “the honesty paradox.”)

what to do?

4) We tell kids not to bully other children, but...

the social paradox:

Bullying is a misguided attempt to make a social connection. Therefore, we may deprive bullies of opportunities for connection.

what to do?

5) We single-out bullies for punishment and targets for protection...

the bully-target paradox:

Most bullies are also targets; most targets also bully others. Therefore, we may unintentionally punish targets and protect bullies.

what to do?

Bullies & Targets, Part II: Intervention

Intervening for bullying at camp or school involves **three steps**:

1. **Enforcement**
 2. **Teaching**
 3. **Praise**
- } → Your ultimate goal is to redirect the bully's attempt at making a social connection.

STEP #1. Enforce standards for kindness. **See** bullies and their behavior for what they truly are.

- ✓ Understand that popularity counts..... All children want to belong, to feel worthy, to be liked.
- ✓ Put this behavior in context. Bullying behavior means a child's "social order alarm" has gone off.
- ✓ Recognize the cycle. Understand that to stop bullying, you must stop a cycle.
- ✓ Remember that bullies are volatile. They are acting from a place of insecurity.
- ✓ Remember that bullies are biased..... They are set up to see neutral events as threatening.
- ✓ Never take sides..... Remember that bullies and targets both need support.
- ✓ Reject the notion that "That's just how boys are" or "That's just how girls are." Act on what you observe.

STEP #2. Teach both bullies and targets (who are often the same person) alternate ways of behaving.

For bullies:

- ✓ Stop any unacceptable, dangerous, or inappropriate behavior immediately.
- ✓ Listen patiently to both sides of the story, without shaming or blaming. What led to this interaction?
- ✓ Try to figure out what set off a child's self-esteem alarm. What made them feel socially uneasy?
- ✓ Watch for signs of emotional pain and depression. How can you help this child feel better?
- ✓ Teach the bully alternative ways of having fun and expressing pain, anxiety, and other strong emotions. Give him or her a chance to re-do the social interaction right there, on the spot. Praise improvements.
- ✓ Use classic problem-solving techniques to help resolve actual disputes, if there are any.
- ✓ Spend time with the bully and work to help the bully have some success experiences. He or she is seeking social connections and may feel like a failure. Boost the bully's self-esteem in authentic ways.
- ✓ Never accept the bully's explanation "That's now how I meant it." Reply with "It doesn't matter how you meant it. I need you to understand that that kind of behavior isn't tolerated here."

For targets:

- ✓ Teach children to ignore teasing. Although difficult to do, this works well to make bullying less satisfying.
- ✓ Teach children to make fun of teasing. This takes the fun out of bullying by making it seem silly.
 - "That's a good one." or "Brilliant!"
 - "That one's so old it's got dust on it." or "Last time I heard that one, I fell off my dinosaur."
 - "What?" or "So what?" or "And your point is...?"
- ✓ Teach children to be assertive and to say "NO!" and "Thanks for not doing that."
- ✓ Teach children they don't have to deal with bullying alone. Asking an adult for help right away might be counter-productive, but should always be done in cases where a child's safety is in question.
- ✓ Help the target develop an alliance of protective, supportive peers and adults. Target ≠ Victim.

STEP #3. Praise and guide progress. Impose reasonable consequences as needed, but focus on the positive.

- ✓ Spend time with both bullies and targets so no one feels left out. Create opportunities for success.
- ✓ Model and create opportunities for forgiveness and making amends, when the two parties are ready.
- ✓ Remove a bully from a situation if the abusive or threatening behavior doesn't change. This may mean sending the child home, but do so only after you've consulted parents and given the child fair warning.
- ✓ Use the novelty of camp or school to set a tone of tolerance and cooperation. The fact that these are new places, quite different from home, gives everyone a chance to re-define their social roles.
- ✓ Praise children's good social skills. Redirect bullying behavior by suggesting alternative, pro-social behaviors.
- ✓ Yes, there should be reasonable consequences for misbehavior and expulsion for egregious rule-breaking.

Case Studies of Bullies & Targets

Case Study 1: No Glove for You

Mariana and Daniela are playing catch on the sports field. They are among dozens of children who are enjoying a period of supervised but unstructured free time after lunch. Mariana comes over and asks, "Can I play?" You hear Mariana reply, "Um...we only brought out two gloves, so I guess you'll have to find someone else to play with." "Um...so...bye for now," says Daniela.

Notes on your response:

Case Study 2: This Ain't Wus Camp

Richard and Jimmy are tossing a football in front of the lodge before dinner. Billy walks up and asks, "What are you guys up to?" Richard replies, "What does it look like we're doing, Shmilly?" "Wanna play?" asks Jimmy, who then throws the football as hard as he can at Billy, knocking the wind out of him. "Oh, can't you talk now?" asks Richard. "This ain't wus camp," says Jimmy, just as you walk up.

Notes on your response:

Case Study 3: Pass It Around

At the lunch table, you and Pat are supervising your campers closely, having already witnessed some bullying behavior earlier in the day. You are both now focused on including everyone in a polite conversation about their favorite movies. Unbeknownst to you, each time the tray of food goes around—first salad, then grilled cheese—the camper next to Robin takes the tray and skips it past her, reaching out to pass it to the next camper at the table. Ten minutes into the meal, you and Pat realize that Robin's plate is empty.

Notes on your response:

Case Study 4: Write Your Own Example