

Deep Dive into Camping: Interest Sessions for MACC 2019

Presented by Jack Schott, Laura Kriegel, and Sylvia VanMeerten

Building Autonomy into a Camp Schedule (Interest Session 2)

There is a major misconception in the youth development world. Structure is confused with control. Structure is about being consistent, reducing anxiety around the unknown, and building a safe space for kids. To control is to determine behavior; to decide for kids how they are to behave or act. Children learn best how to make decisions by making them. They figure out what works and what doesn't by interacting with the world. We need more "sandboxes", places where kids understand the structure of the space but are free to create, explore and learn alongside other kids and compassionate adults. Come learn how to build more "sandboxes" at camp.

Autism 101 / Hidden Curriculum 101 (Interest Session 3)

Children on the Autism spectrum are increasingly likely to attend summer camp. Whether or not you know their diagnosis in advance, you can be ready to help campers with autism join your existing program by learning a few practical communication skills. Too often, children with autism are on the social outskirts of a group and it can be difficult for young counselors to help them fit in. In this session, you will learn how to reliably communicate with campers with autism and several methods for positive inclusion with other campers. Attendees will practice techniques during the session and watch video clips of staff performing the targeted skills with campers.

Diversity and Inclusion for Staff and Campers (interest session 4)

Join Sylvia, Jack and Laura for a session about a growing trend in camping: Inclusion Assistants. This role can be played by a staff member hired specifically for the position, or by a member of the leadership team who is eager to help out in new ways. Inclusion Assistants receive a little extra training, and then take the lead on campers who come from a different background, have a diagnosis, or challenging behavior, or language barriers, or difficult home scenarios. They work with the camper directly and work with the cabin members to create a positive experience for all. Our team will explain more about the training that Inclusion Assistants need and where to find it in the Midwest region. We will highlight concrete tasks that this role could support at a day camp, specialty camp, or overnight camp program.

Helping Your Seasonal Leaders Lead Staff Training

(Interest Session 5)

You are awesome and you lead an incredible staff training, but at a certain point your staff still stop listening. It happens to all of us. Staff training can be an incredible opportunity to grow your admin/leadership team, develop buy-in for your seasonal leaders, and let's be honest give yourself a break. The problem: a lot of our best admin staff aren't great session leaders, YET. This session is designed to help you help them deliver better content by breaking down big ideas and giving them some simple tips to be more successful.

Elevate Programming from Excellent to Unforgettable

(Interest Session 6)

Traditions at camp are important—but innovation is also crucial. The best camps maintain mission-driven practices and strive to improve by shedding stale customs. This session will give you tons of new ideas that you can implement this summer, plus essential methods for crafting new and inspiring program activities. From whale wrestling to make your own backpack, let us inspire your creativity with ideas and prompts that your staff can run this summer mostly using supplies you already have.

Being a Boss and a Friend (Interest Session 7)

It is exciting to have a leadership position at camp but it can be a little intimidating, mostly because it seems awkward to 'supervise' your friends/peers. Most good supervisors (of any age or experience) are worried about achieving that elusive balance between being liked, and being taken seriously. This session will help you feel more comfortable about doing your job, having difficult conversations, leading good meetings, and keeping your friends while you do it. Our team loves leading sessions that are super-practical, pretty funny, and move quickly. Join us for an honest discussion combined with real skill-building practice.