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Workshop Selections

Avoiding the Parent Trap: Working with Difficult Parents

Most camp parents are wonderful, but at every camp, there are a few who are some degree of difficult. From parents who demand special exceptions to parents who are wholly disengaged from their child's development, it is vital that we as camp professionals take a proactive approach when dealing with any challenging situation with a camp parent. This enjoyable (and yes, funny!) workshop will discuss techniques to help you turn your most difficult parents into loyal promoters of your camp!

Camp Staff Appreciation: A Step-By-Step Plan

Campers should leave at the end of the summer thinking that they had the best summer of their lives...and so should the staff! This session will describe a framework for staff appreciation techniques so that camp leaders can prevent burnout, inspire their staff members and show gratitude for everything they do. This in turn will enhance the camp experience for everyone involved!

Microstorytelling

Storytelling is the ultimate tool: Whether recruiting new campers, reconnecting with alumni or fundraising, camp professionals need to be able to bring the magic of camp to life by telling true and engaging stories about camp's power and impact. This interactive session will help participants learn mission-driven techniques for sharing camp stories that evoke passionate responses from audiences big and small.

Creating a Culture of Customer Service

Camps that fill and waitlist likely have a culture of customer service--from front-line registrars to cabin counselors and the camp leadership, everyone works to make clients' lives easier and better. In this workshop, you will learn how "camp style" customer service not only will retain current campers but attract new ones.

Also available in a 3-hour deep-dive workshop format

Get out of the office!

Time management can be tough for camp professionals. Between responding to emails and preparing for your accreditation visit, hours and even days can pass where you find yourself “stuck in the office”. This session will help participants analyze where the hours go during the summer at camp. We will then work on developing tools to get you out of the office and on the ground—interacting with staff and kids, seeing first-hand the good and the bad of your program/site, and becoming a proactive instead of reactive leader.

Leveraging Strengths: A New Approach to Positive Camp Leadership

Camp evaluations and coaching oftentimes focus on staff members’ weaknesses. We challenge a quieter counselor to perform a campfire skit, or tell a scatterbrained activity area head that she needs to get more organized. However, a much more effective approach is to guide our staff members to leverage their strengths. This workshop will show you a different approach to staff development...one where the positive results for individual staffers and for your camp are exponential!

Transitioning from Coworker to Supervisor: Success as a Young Camp Leader

Oftentimes, great camp counselors quickly move into leadership roles and supervise people who are also some of their closest friends. Sarah Kurtz McKinnon speaks from experience at this session (having become the director of YMCA Camp Al-Gon-Quian at the tender age of 23) and discusses some of the common pitfalls but also tried-and-true techniques to make camp friendships an important part of your success as a supervisor, while still respecting boundaries.

Kids, Teens and Sex Today...What You Need to Know as a Camp Professional

From hookup culture to the proliferation of internet pornography, today’s youth have a different orientation toward sex and sexuality than just five or ten years ago. These realities impact how our campers view relationships, each other and reality. This session will help you better understand choices and pressures your campers (and staff face), and better-prepare you to help them learn and grow in a healthy way.

Negotiating for Camp Professionals

Whether securing a new foodservice vendor, buying a tractor or finalizing terms of a staff contract, camp professionals negotiate all the time (and we’re not even going to talk about the negotiations you make with kids!). This session will present a framework that will enable you to come into your negotiation situation with a plan and execute it. We’ll talk about and practice seeking opportunities for mutual gain, understanding the other side’s perspective, building relationship sand making sure you don’t agree to something you did not want.

Camp Magic for Campers with Autism (co-presented with Scott Arizala)

In the United States, 1 out of every 68 children is on the autism spectrum. Many kids and teens with autism can thrive in traditional camp settings. Camps, however, need to adjust some of their traditional ways of doing things to help these campers succeed. In this session, take lessons learned from their experiences working in traditional camping and in camping programs for kids with special needs to give you tangible techniques you can easily incorporate into your programming.

Top 10 Camp Hiring Mistakes and the Tools to Avoid Them

The summer's success is dependent on the commitment, decision-making and abilities of the staff, so hiring and training them well is of the utmost importance. Hiring decisions are some of the most critical decisions you make. It's also huge process that has many pitfalls...and most of us do not have any training on how to do it well. This session will discuss common mistakes camp professionals make while hiring as well as how to avoid them—we've all made bad hires; this session will help you make less and less of them!

50 Magical Camp Marketing Ideas

Stuck in a rut with your camp's promotions? Paid social media advertising just not cutting it for you? This session will blast through 50 of the best unique ideas for marketing camp—many of them free and/or with a minimal time requirement. Marketing should excite you just as much as it should excite your potential clients—and this session will provide the inspiration to get you going!