

CORNERSTONE 2018 RESOURCE

Effective Communication at Camp *Elective 2*

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SUMMARY:	In this session, you will learn about how to communicate effectively at camp through talking about skills and ways to be more productive as communicators in different aspects and roles at camp, including with counselors, campers, and supervisors. - Submitted by Natalie Rothstein
TOPIC(S):	Effective Communication
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	The objective of this session is for participants to gain new skills or strengthen their skills to help them be more effective communicators.
AUDIENCE:	Ages 15 and up, group size of 15-30 participants.
TIMING:	90 minutes.
APPENDICES:	Communication Skills, Communication Scenarios
MATERIALS NEEDED:	-flip chart -flip chart stand -sharpies/markers
SET-UP DETAILS:	Set up the room with participants sitting in a circle of chairs. The room should have enough room for participants to spread out throughout the session. Have the scenarios printed and cut into slips to hand out to the groups during role plays.

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

Timeline

- Introduction to Session (10 minutes)
- Communication Holes at Camp (15 minutes)
- Communication Skills (15 minutes)

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- Communication with Campers (15 minutes)
- Communication with Supervisors (15 minutes)
- Communication with counselors (15 minutes)
- Session Wrap Up (5 minutes)

Step-By-Step Breakdown

- **Introduction to session** – (10 minutes) – Facilitator should explain to participants that this session will talk about communication issues at camp, but more so focus on how to be a more productive communicator at camp. This will be broken into multiple settings, which are illustrated in the following goals:
 - Understanding communication challenges at camp
 - Learning and modeling communication skills
 - Communicating more effectively with campers
 - Communicating more effectively with supervisors
 - Communicating more effectively with counselors
 - Ask the participants to consider the following questions and respond:
 - Why is communication important?
 - How does communication relate to Jewish values?
 - Share the following thoughts: Communication is at the core of community. “The Midrash says that ‘decency (derekh erez) precedes Torah.’ At the core of community is communication, and at the core of communication is decency.” (Source: myjewishlearning.com) Using good communication is part of the foundation of Jewish values, encompassing decency and respect.
- **Communication Holes at Camp** (15 minutes) – During this topic, participants will discuss how communication challenges and communication holes exist at camp.
 - Play a game of broken telephone (5 minutes)
 - Give directions of broken telephone. In this game, one person whispers a word into the ear of the person next to them. The person next to them thinks of the first word that comes to mind and then whispers that to the person next to them, they do the same thing until the circle has been completed. At the end of the game, the last person says the word they had and then the first person says what word they started with. Then ask the group the following questions and write examples from the answers on the flip chart:
 - How many of you have witnessed a real-life game of broken telephone happen at camp?
 - What do you think leads to the real life occurrence of broken telephone?
 - What are common communication challenges at camp?
 - Story time – during this time, facilitate a discussion about times people wished they had communicated more effectively at camp. The facilitator should start by sharing a story of their own where they wished they had communicated better at camp and what they wouldn’t have done differently in retrospect. Participants who would like to share can offer their experiences and stories. If participants are not offering stories, facilitator should plan additional back up examples. (10 minutes)
- **Communication Skills** (10 minutes) – Discuss the following communication skills with participants (included in the Communication Skills hand out). Let the group know all of these skills will be role played in the contexts of with campers, counselors and supervisors. Give each participant the Communication Skills hand out and read the skills as a group. Between each skill, ask participants if they have any questions. For each skill, have participants model

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the skill quickly (dependent on group size – either have participants break into smaller groups after group discussion or have volunteers model in front of whole group between each skill).

- **Communication with Campers** (15 minutes) Share with participants the important things to keep in mind with campers: simplifying language, increased empathy, teaching opportunity, being very purposeful with language and how you communicate, boundaries, developmental stages. Then shift the focus to applying the skills to communicating with campers and have the participants use role playing to show how they would use communication skills to address the following situations (break participants into small groups (1 per scenario) and give them 3-4 minutes to prep for their role plays) and then come back to perform the role plays for the group:
 - Having a conversation with a camper who has been aggressive to other campers in the cabin.
 - A camper approaches a counselor and tells them that they are angry with another counselor.
 - A camper talking back to a counselor with extreme attitude.
 - An emergency where a camper is having a hard time understanding the seriousness of the situation and is goofing off.
 - A camper keeps forgetting to go to the nurse in the morning to get their medications.
- **Communication with Supervisors** (15 minutes) Share with participants the important things to keep in mind with supervisors: respecting their authority, advocating for yourself, giving the benefit of the doubt, being extremely clear in explanations. Then shift the focus to applying the skills to communicating with supervisors and have the participants use role playing to show how they would use communication skills to address the following situations (break participants into small groups (1 per scenario) and give them 3-4 minutes to prep for their role play) and then come back to perform the role plays for the group:
 - A supervisor publicly shamed you for making a mistake in front of other staff members and now you feel uncomfortable going to them for support.
 - You've been struggling with a co counselor and after repeated conversation with them, nothing has changed so you want to talk to your supervisor about it.
 - A supervisor approaches you to have a conversation about something you need to improve on as a counselor.
 - You disagree with a supervisor on how they want you to handle a difficult camper situation.
 - You made a mistake handling a camper dispute and now you need to tell you supervisor.
- **Communication with Counselors** (15 minutes) Share with participants the important things to keep in mind with counselors: mutual respect, understanding each other's visions, understanding differences, equal foundations. Then shift the focus to applying the skills to communicating with counselors and have the participants use role playing to show how they would use communication skills to address the following situations (break participants into small groups (1 per scenario) and give them 3-4 minutes to prep for their role play) and then come back to perform the role plays for the group:
 - Your co-counselor has been 10 minutes late to your co-taught activity period 3 days in a row and it's setting a bad example for campers.
 - You and your cabin co-counselor disagree on how to handle low motivation during cabin clean up.
 - You're a returning counselor and a new counselor is continuously not following camp protocol.
 - Another counselor approaches you to complain about one of your closest friends and you don't feel comfortable talking about that.

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- A counselor was very disrespectful to you in front of campers.

- **Session wrap up** (5 minutes) – During this time offer time for any follow up questions from participants but also offer these questions for discussion:
 - What did you learn during this session?
 - How will you use what you learned during this session at camp?

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

This activity can be shortened by only applying one of the contexts (campers, counselors or supervisors) to reduce time or for a more specific goal (staff training).