

UNDERSTANDING RATIONAL DETACHMENT

AUTHOR(S):	Westchester Jewish Community Services & Foundation for Jewish Camp (some information included from National Council for Behavioral Health and Crisis Prevention Institute.)
SUMMARY:	Rational detachment is the ability to control our own behavior and not take hostility personally. This program will review definitions and allow for role playing.
TOPIC(S):	Communication Skills, Leadership Development
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will be aware of how they are feeling and communicating, and they will recognize that their behavior has an impact on the behaviors of those in their care. The objective is to maintain professional attitudes during crises by rationally detaching yourself.
AUDIENCE:	8-30 staff
SPACE:	Private area
TIMING:	20-40 minutes (can be separated into shorter pieces)
MATERIALS:	<i>Optional:</i> Laptop to view optional videos and/or Copies of optional ending quote

REVIEWING RATIONAL DETACHMENT

Ask the group for definitions of Rational Detachment and Precipitating Factors.

- **Rational Detachment** is the ability to control our own behavior and not take hostility personally.
- **Precipitating Factors** are internal and external causes that influence behavior. (Have the group brainstorm some examples: being sick, getting up late, poor nutrition, lack of sleep, hunger, abuse, neglect, self-confidence, bullying, anxiety, etc.)

Review:

- Ability to stay in control of own behavior and not take acting out behavior personally
- A professional attitude must be maintained – avoid overreacting or gossiping
- Control what you can control
- **Q-TIP** – quit taking it personally - do not take disruptive behavior personally
 - *“I do so much for him and this is how he acts*
 - *“I just took him . . .*

You may not be able to control precipitating factors, but you can control your own response to acting out behavior and stay in control of your own behavior. Sometimes this is easier said than done! It is important to identify strategies to utilize in advance of a situation to be prepared, what tools or techniques you can rely on while managing a disruptive situation, and positive outlets for the negative energy absorbed during conflict.

Optional Videos

- Brene Brown on Blame and Control, discharging discomfort:
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZWf2_2L2v8
- Brene Brown on Living B.I.G. with Boundaries, Integrity, Generosity:
 - <https://www.facebook.com/theworkofthepeople/videos/10153967066765682/>



ROLE PLAY IN THE ROUND EXERCISE

Have participants sit in circles of 6-10 and choose a pair of people sitting next to one another as volunteers to start the activity in each group. Give a scenario in which a camper is wildly misbehaving shortly after a counselor did something very special for them. One volunteer is the camper who is acting out, and the person sitting next to them is role playing the counselor. Have this first pair in each group start the role play conversation. After 2-3 minutes, have the two volunteers get up and half the circle on each side will move one seat over to fill the seats. The new people in the 'hot seats' will resume the role play *exactly where the others left off*. They must *build* on the prior scene – unable to change anything 'in the past' which has already occurred. This will repeat/continue until the issue is fully resolved and/or each person in the circle has gone.

Debrief the experience as a whole group. Consider asking how it felt to have to deal with a the precipitating factors – the residuals of what happened in the scene prior to their role play turn?

Optional Quote & Discussion on Empathy & Asking for Help

Share this quote:

- “Empathy & Lettuce”
When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look for reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertilizer, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce. Yet, if we have problems with our friends or family, we blame the other person. But if we know how to take care of them, they will grow well, like the lettuce. Blaming has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to persuade using reason and argument. That is my experience. No blame, no reasoning, no argument, just understanding. If you understand, and you show that you understand, you can love, and the situation will change. – *Thich Nhat Hanh*

Discuss:

- How is this quote connected to precipitating factors and rational detachment?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you feel like you are trying but nothing is changing/being affected?
- When might you consider getting help in a situation?
- Who and where are your supports in camp?