

## CRISIS MANAGEMENT HANDOUT

### Responding to a Crisis

Acute Stress Response: How our body responds to stress or a perceived danger is not always predictable, but we can help prepare ourselves for crisis to help our body respond more productively. When we respond to an acute stressor or high-pressure situation, our nervous system is activated and we respond with flight, fight or freeze (which are all driven by the release of hormones: like adrenaline and cortisol). We are then activated to:

- **Fight** (physically fight the perceived danger)
- **Flight** (run away from danger)
- **Freeze** (become immobilized by the fear)

### Your Experience: Discussion Questions

When was a time where you felt you responded well to a crisis at camp or in another setting? What did you do?

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When was a time you wished you had handled a crisis differently? What do you think went wrong?

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What tools and strategies have helped you to manage stressful situations at camp better?

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What have you noticed about how other people respond to high pressure situations?

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## **Tools for Crisis Management**

**Know The Protocol** - Know your camp's emergency protocol and be sure ask any questions for parts of the protocol that don't make sense to you.

**Know Yourself** - Reflect on past experiences of how you've responded to high pressure situations and think about ways you feel you handled it well and ways you can improve upon your response. If you've had a particularly overwhelmed response to crises in the past, use these tools and troubleshoot with a supervisor.

**Breathe** - Don't forget to breathe in a high pressure/crisis situation. If you're not breathing well, your ability to think clearly and respond effectively will go down.

**Stay Calm** - Staying calm during a crisis can help you respond more productively and prevent you from going to an extreme stress response. Remember to breathe! Practicing staying calm by regular meditation and deep breathing can help your nervous system be at a better equilibrium in these circumstances.

**Face your Fear** - If you find yourself experiencing fear or anxiety around dealing with crisis situations, talk through that and troubleshoot with a co-counselor or supervisor.

**Communicate** - Communicating with others during a crisis is imperative. Doing so helps everyone stay on the same page and prevents unnecessary panic and being more effective in action.