

Scenarios of Mental Health Issues at Camp

Part of “Supporting Campers with Anxiety” workshop by Natalie Rothstein

Anxiety – Anxiety Attack

Greg is having a really tough day and appears to be really tired. His counselor, Sam, notices that he has bags under his eyes and is dragging this morning. He asks Greg if everything is okay. Greg responds to Sam telling him that he was up in the middle of the night having what he calls an “anxiety attack” and that this has happened three times in the last six nights.

Anxiety – Social Anxiety

While Abby is on her way to teach swimming, she notices a camper, Matthew, sitting on a bench in tears. Abby sits down to ask Matthew if he’s okay, Matthew responds that he’s been feeling left out with his cabin mates. Abby asks Matthew if he’s tried talking with them or inviting them to play a game of cards. Matthew responds to Abby that whenever he tries to talk to anyone in his cabin, he gets so overwhelmed and anxious that he feels frozen.

Not Anxiety – General Nervousness

It’s the night of the camp play and Rachel seems very antsy at dinner and isn’t eating as much as she normally does. Her counselor, Jamie, checks in with her to see what’s going on. Rachel tells Jamie that she’s really nervous for the play and it’s making it hard to eat as much as she normally does. Rachel is one of the leads in the play and has never had such a big role before.

Anxiety

Mikey is getting ready to go on the climbing wall for the first time. His counselor, Jake, finds him sitting on his bed staring at his hands not ready for the activity that starts in five minutes. Jake checks in with Mikey to make sure he’s ok and Mikey gives a light nod. A few minutes later, Jake sees Mikey is sitting in the same position and goes over to check in. Mikey’s speech is flustered and he’s saying he’s going to break his arm if he goes on the climbing wall so he’s not going to go. Mikey keeps making similar bold statements and Jake notices his hands are trembling and he’s not being very receptive.

Not Anxiety – dislike / nervousness

Sarah gets down to the lake and says to her counselor that she’s not going swimming today. When her counselor, Lizzie, asks why, Sarah says, “because there are sharks in the lake!” Lizzie explains that it’s impossible for sharks to be in the lake but Sarah continues to push back and is getting frustrated. Finally, Sarah admits that the lake is cold and makes her feel uncomfortable so she doesn’t want to swim.