

7. TRAINING AND LEARNING

Training is an essential component of helping staff understand what the institution expects of them. It is how an institution brings its policies, values, and goals to life. Training lays the foundation for how staff understand the institution, the role they play, the rules, and the culture. It is a vital way to transmit information and help staff understand their role, and the roles of others, in the lives and development of their campers and within the broader community.

All staff should be trained annually on:

- Mandated reporting
- How to report child abuse, boundary violations, or inappropriate behavior
- Types of child abuse, definitions, and recognizing signs and symptoms
- Building and maintain healthy boundaries with youth
- Appropriate/inappropriate behavior with youth
- Recognizing and responding to mental health red flags (Youth Mental Health First Aid, ASIST, or other comparable training)

Additionally, camp staff should receive training on:

- Child development
- MESSH support for campers and staff, including out-of-bunk employees
- Supporting youth at camp
- Camp values
- Creating trauma informed environments
- Creating a self-care plan for camp staff

These trainings may not take place every summer, may only be offered to certain groups, or may be offered as continuing education sessions where staff receive a bonus for attending or deepening their learning.

Staff should receive training on the policies and procedures enumerated in the sections above. If camp leadership expect staff to follow camp policies and procedures, they must take the time to teach those and show how they work in practice. When possible, training should be interactive and experiential; this will increase staff engagement and learning.

Key questions to keep in mind:

- *What training is camp doing on an annual basis with all staff? Is training limited to the week before camp or does it extend through the summer/year?*
- *Does training help staff understand camp, their role, the expectations and boundaries, and the culture?*
- *How do you remind campers and staff what they have learned so they can continue to use it?*
 - *Can you create a pocket guide, key word(s) or phrase, or other quick/short way for staff to reference and remember what to do?*
- *How are counselors-in-training being educated on some of these topics?*
- *What training is offered to campers about the community they are a part of?*