

III. FIRST STEPS

Looking at this guide, it can feel overwhelming to look at and begin to address MESSH in your camp. However, it is important to think about taking it one step and issue at a time.

The first thing all camps can and should look at is your response chain. Who is responsible for handling challenges, where do staff report, and what happens next. Think about the most common issues you face, and what support is needed to better respond to and manage that challenge. Make sure that you are following up any policy or procedure with training. Training is how your policies come to life; it builds and creates your culture, and informs how camp staff, campers, and families know who you are and what you stand for.

Some general advice as you move forward on this journey:

- **Don't box yourself in:** Give yourself space to grow and evolve over time. Don't think that you have to have all the answers today.
- **Recognize that best practices change:** You will need to revisit policies, and just because you wrote it three years ago doesn't mean that you shouldn't revisit or re-evaluate today.
- **Get outside help:** Just like your staff, YOU do not have to do this alone. Reach out to experts locally and nationally who can help.