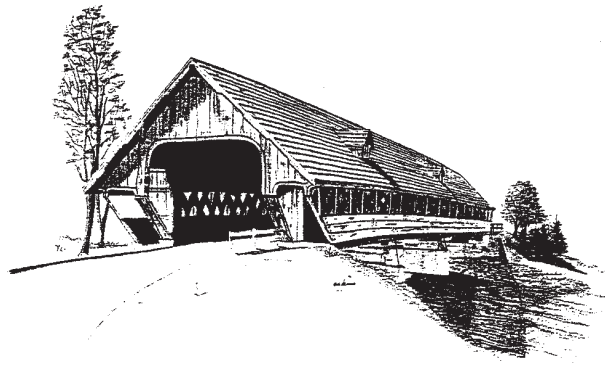


**POSITIVE APPROACHES TO  
MANAGING CAMPERS**

**—a camp counselor's guide to  
behavior management**



Donald P. Carr, Ph.D.  
Nancy J. Jaskiw, M.A., S.Psy.S.  
Nicholas P. Jaskiw, M.A., S.Psy.S.

### **DEDICATION**

This manual is dedicated to our wonderful families. For Don: My wife Marlee, our children Christopher, Amy, and Sara, and our grandchildren, Ashley, and Madison ("Maddy"). For Nick and Nancy; our children Nichole, Breton, Trevor, Jordanne, and Carl Bradley ("C.J."). We love you all!

### **IN APPRECIATION...**

We would like to acknowledge the kind help, guidance, patience, and support we have received while developing this manual. Dale Bell, Rich Cain, Bill Shipp, and Jim Sweeting dedicated hours of personal time in meeting with us, and reviewing our work-in-progress. Bill Shipp also provided us with problem behaviors, and encouraged us with his never-fading optimism. This has been a truly rewarding experience. Thank you!

Don, Nancy, and Nick

Copyright 1995. All rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction, in any manner, is prohibited.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface .....	1
Prevention .....	2
Routines .....	3
Reasonable rules, positive worded .....	4
Requesting campers to do something .....	5
PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION METHODS .....	6
Borrowing without permission .....	7
Bullying .....	8
Campers seeking revenge .....	9
Can't keep hands to self .....	10
Destruction of property .....	11
Difficulty paying attention .....	12
Difficulties with hygiene .....	13
Doesn't want to try new activities .....	14
Fear .....	15
Fear of failure .....	17
Fighting .....	19
Fights over possessions .....	21
Following rules .....	23
Going into restricted areas .....	24
Homesickness .....	25
Inappropriate comments to adults (talking back) .....	27
Inappropriate touching .....	29
Issues of power and control .....	31
Leaving things a mess .....	33
Lighting matches .....	34
Lying .....	35
Name-calling and unkind remarks .....	37
Pushing and shoving .....	39
Refusing to cooperate .....	41
Sharing .....	43
Smoking .....	45
Staying up late .....	47
Stealing .....	49
Swearing, profanity, "talking dirty" .....	51
Temper tantrums .....	53
Testing the limits .....	55
APPENDICES	
Appendix A - Behavioral contracts .....	57
Appendix B - "Silly" interventions .....	58
Appendix C - Reinforcement chart .....	59
Appendix D - List of available help .....	61
Appendix E - Relaxation techniques .....	63

## PREFACE

Camp counselors have the unique opportunity of providing campers from all backgrounds with a rewarding experience that they will remember for a lifetime. It is our hope that this manual will help you to enjoy this wonderful opportunity even more.

The purpose of this booklet is to give assistance to camp counselors. Those reading this manual are not expected to have a background in behavioral treatment methods. We have attempted to eliminate jargon and technical terminology often found in assistance manuals. We have also tried to present the information in an efficient, straight-forward format for ease of use.

We would add two cautions

- 1) The campers in your keeping will have many behaviors which are normal, habitual responses to everyday occurrences. Since they each come from different homes with unique experiences, you will have a multitude of behaviors with which to deal. Most campers' behaviors will mesh comfortably. Occasionally, a camper's behaviors may be unacceptable. Please remember that because a camper's behavior is not acceptable or comfortable for you as a camp counselor does not mean the camper is purposely trying to annoy or irritate. Approach this camper as you would any other in your care; it is the behavior, not the camper, that you find difficult.
- 2) While it is important to react effectively in controllable situations it is equally important to realize when situations are beyond your control or ability to handle, and to seek out the help of more experienced staff or professionals.

**Have a GREAT summer at camp!!**

## **PREVENTION**

**PREVENTING PROBLEMS FROM OCCURRING WILL BE YOUR MOST SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTION.**

The time during which most problems occur seem to be unsupervised free-time, and “down-time” (waiting for the next activity to begin). You will have more rewarding experiences if you make quick transitions, and plan some fun things ahead for use during times you have “nothing to do,” or campers are “bored”.

You can maximize influence over your group, and set a pleasant tone, long before any campers arrive.

Waiting for the water-front to open is more fun if it also includes songs or story-telling. One counselor spent spare time during the school year learning stories. She jotted notes on index cards to remind her of the stories, then took them with her to camp. Another counselor learned songs, kept a list of titles, and used them during the summer. Younger campers especially like finger-play, or motion songs.

Use your imagination! This can be a wonderful time. These, and other approaches developed to prevent difficulties, are part of positive programming.

Throughout the manual we will provide you with examples of ways you may prevent misbehaviors from occurring as well as methods of intervention if or when they do occur. The lists are not exhaustive. Brainstorm with other counselors before campers arrive, to add your own suggestions!

## **ROUTINES**

Children adjust more quickly, and feel more competent, if they know the "routine." This is not to say every minute must be regimentally scheduled, but that children should understand the logic and organization of the planned activities so that they have a rough idea of what's coming next. For example, established wake-up time, breakfast, morning activities, lunch, afternoon activities, dinner, evening activities, and "lights out."

The "big picture" (major activities) will probably be developed by camp directors and senior staff. Within your cabin, however, you may need to help the campers make sense of it, and enjoy it more. You set the expectations: you establish the tone.

### **REASONABLE RULES, POSITIVELY WORDED**

Throughout this manual, we will refer to “rules,” which we feel should be established to provide campers with 1) guidelines for behaviors and, 2) opportunities to earn rewards for following them. While, ideally, campers could help to make the rules, in reality, you can “lead” them to your rules. Be sure to:

1. Word your rules positively. “Keep personal areas clean” can be discussed in detail during the first day explanation and requires ALOT less writing than, “DO NOT leave clothing and personal items out, cots unmade, sleeping bags unrolled, or items in the way for other campers to trip over.” The first example encourages most campers to meet up to your expectations; the second is rather antagonistic.
2. Make FEW rules (4 to 5 is plenty).
3. Be sure they are simple and reasonable.
4. Consistently enforce them (don’t make rules you will be unwilling, or unable, to enforce).

Be sure your expectations are reasonable (requiring campers to be asleep by a set time their first night at camp may not be reasonable). Again, THE KEY here IS PREVENTION! Unreasonable rules and expectations should never make it to the point that they are being used with groups of campers! That alone will sabotage the success of the program you have worked so hard to plan. Compare notes with other camp counselors, and your camp administrators, to be sure that your expectations are reasonable, and are in keeping with the camp expectations. Make rules that can be lived by; campers will meet the set expectations provided they are within reason.

Once you have decided on your expectations, or “rules” for your cabin or tent, put them up where your campers can see them! Just write them on some poster-board with broad- tip markers. In terms of prevention, campers who are made aware of the rules, and can see them daily, will not be able to excuse later misbehavior by saying they didn’t know about the rules. Further, you are setting your campers up for SUCCESS by giving them opportunities to follow the rules and, in turn, be rewarded for doing so.

When do you lead campers to your expectations and cabin rules? Before you do anything else on the first day! Your camp may have more than one set of rules if there are specific frequent activities (such as swimming) which also involve safety issues, and are not specifically addressed by cabin rules. By praising your campers for following the rules and ignoring some of their insignificant irritating behaviors, your cabin can be very enjoyable for the time your campers are with you!

### **REQUESTING CAMPERS TO DO SOMETHING**

To be sure that campers comply with your requests:

- Make your request as a statement, not as a question.
- Make eye contact with the camper when giving instructions or making requests.
- Stand no more than 3 feet away from the camper as you give instructions or make requests.
- Make one request, then follow through with camper to be sure he or she complies...do not repeat your request over and over.
- Use a pleasant tone of voice when talking with your campers; keep your voice volume low, but firm.
- Avoid becoming emotional. Remain calm, and never yell or name-call.
- Be specific in your requests. "Put your dirty clothes into the laundry bag, pull the sleeping bag neatly over your bunk, and put your things under the bunk," leaves no questions compared to "clean your area."
- ALWAYS praise and reinforce your campers when they follow directives. Also reward them for completing tasks without being told to do so.
- Address the issue directly-don't "hint around," and expect the camper to "catch on." DO NOT use sarcasm as a means of control.

These points will be particularly helpful when working with children who have behavioral difficulties, but should be used routinely with all children.



## **PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION METHODS**

### **NOTE TO THE READER**

It is important remember, when looking toward altering a child's behavior, that behaviors have purpose. In the past, it has accomplished something for the camper. We say this in hopes that it will create empathy for, rather than anger toward, the camper(s)' inappropriate behavior

The suggestions offered within this manual are intended to guide discipline practices of camp counselors in dealing with every-day difficulties. Serious emotional and behavioral problems, such as suicide threats or chronic substance abuse, **MUST** be dealt with by trained professionals' involvement.

The behavior difficulties offered were collected from camp and agency persons who have had years of experience working with children in camps. Methods of preventing difficulties, and intervening when they do, are provided as suggestions. The techniques offered are those which we have developed ourselves, and successfully used, in working with children with behavioral difficulties.

We hope you find this manual helpful!

## **BORROWING WITHOUT PERMISSION**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- On the first day, seat campers in circle on the cabin floor. Inform the campers that all personal belongs must be labeled with their names or initials so that there will be no possible mix-ups. Have 3 to 4 permanent markers available for campers to use. Have that many campers at one time empty their bags into the circle and label each un-labeled item.
- Make it known on the first day that you do not allow campers to borrow without permission.
- Do not allow young campers to "swap," or "trade." This invariably leads to difficulties later on, when one or the other changes his or her mind about the trade...eliminate the problem before it occurs.
- Move around your group often during activities to limit the available opportunities for campers to borrow or trade.
- Do not leave your campers unattended (e.g., staying behind in cabin while the group leaves, during "free time"). This will further limit the opportunities to borrow.
- Discourage campers from bringing expensive items to camp with them. If they are brought along, find a place to securely keep them until the camper returns home (e.g. camp lodge safe or locked office).
- Be a good role model; do not "sneak" foods from the kitchen or "borrow" pens, pencils, paper, etc., from the offices. Teach your campers to respect individual property through modeling, and presentation of the rules.

### **Methods of Intervention**

- The borrowed item(s) must be returned to its owner with an apology. If the borrowed item was damaged, restitution must be made or arranged. If the problem seems to be habitual with the camper, contact your staff supervisor and seek help with an advanced behavioral intervention.
- Review the rules with them and ask for group support in dealing with the situation. Remind group of the consequences of borrowing without permission.
- Speak privately with the camper who is borrowing without permission to answer the questions:
  - 1) What happens to me when I take things that don't belong to me without asking, first? (campers may think that he or she stole the item)
  - 2) What should I do, instead?
  - 3) What happens to me when I ask permission, first?

## **BULLYING**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Make your expectations (e.g., rules) known in terms of appropriate communications, and gaining cooperation from other campers on the first day.
- Give campers examples of appropriate ways to try to influence fellow campers (e.g., speak nicely to them, ask-don't-tell them what you would like).
- Move around your group often so that bullying will not happen without your awareness (which is often the case).
- Be sure the camper understands what will happen when she speaks to peers in a disrespectful way, and intimidates other (peers will choose not to interact with her, she may be excluded from activities, peers will not trust her).
- Give your campers alternative behaviors and words to use when angry, frustrated, or trying to influence peers.

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Immediately intervene when you see one camper intimidating, frightening, or bullying another camper.
- Talk, one-to-one with the camper who is bullying others. Have her write, or verbally answer the following:
  - 1) What happens when I bully others?
  - 2) What could I do instead of bullying?
  - 3) What happens when I am nice to others?
- Reward positive behavior that can't occur at the same time as the bullying.
- De-escalate a potential physical confrontation:
  - Move within arm's length of the involved campers.
  - Have the camper being bullied go to a specified area (e.g., Tony, go to the table and sit down, please; I will talk with you in a minute.)
  - Instruct the camper bullying the other camper to go with you to a specified area (i.e., "Justin, come over to this bench with me, please").
  - Walk with him to that place - do not "crowd" the camper...stay about arms' length away from him.
  - Try to stay neutral; keep a "straight" face; do not smile, frown, or display emotions...deal only with bullying issue.
  - Once at designated area, talk over the situation as directed above.
  - Have camper take a time-out to think over situation, and come up with alternative behaviors.
  - Go and speak with the other camper.
  - Reinforce helpful behaviors observed.
- If the problem persists, seek the help of your supervisor, or camp personnel in dealing with the issue.

## **CAMPERS SEEKING REVENGE**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Make your campers aware of your rules and expectations the first day. Also make them aware of the consequences that they will face if they choose not to follow those rules or comply with the expectations.
- Emphasize, during your first day with the campers, that they are living in close quarters with one another. There will be some difficulties from time to time that will be handled in an orderly and kind way. Work with campers for a few minutes "brainstorming" ways to deal with possible problems that may arise (sharing possessions, wanting to be first in line), and emphasize that cooperation is expected.
- Avoid punishment! Revenge is an emotional response that is related to other tense incidents. Keep your campers "upbeat" and happy, and avoid behavioral problems with them to begin with.
- Meet with campers who have had difficulty, once they have settled down. Speak quietly and calmly about the choices they made in terms of behaviors, what happened as a result of their behaviors, and what they could have done differently to have a better outcome.
- Move around among your campers, paying particular attention to those who have had difficulties with each other to avoid the possibility of arguments or fights.
- Reinforce appropriate behaviors always...meet privately with campers who have had difficulty, and offer praise for their good behaviors in attempting to get "back on track."

### **Methods of Intervention**

- NEVER IGNORE vengeful behaviors. Always address these issues, and speak with the campers once things have "settled" down.
- Repeat your expectations, and help the camper to identify what she could have done differently to handle her frustration.
- If destruction of another camper's belongings was a part of this camper's vengeful behaviors, she must make restitution to the camper whose belongings were broken.
- If the camper became involved in physical fight, refer to that section in the manual, and deal with it accordingly.

## **CAN'T KEEP HANDS TO SELF**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Make your rules and expectations known, on the first day of camp, in terms of appropriate and inappropriate touching.
- Talk to campers about the importance of observing every one's "individual space." That is, that invisible boundary that surrounds each person, and determines the comfort level in relation to how close another person is to them.
- Model appropriate behaviors, in terms of touching others, for your campers to follow.
- Explain what "inappropriate touching" is (e.g., unwanted touches, or touches on the parts of the body that are covered by underwear or bathing suits).
- With campers of younger ages, remind them especially prior to activities.
- Move around among your campers to be available to observe any behavioral difficulties of this type. When observed, speak immediately and directly with the camper who is touching others. Remind him or her of the rules and expectations.
- Praise and reward campers who show appropriate behaviors.

This is related to the section on inappropriate touching. This section should also be considered for possible prevention and intervention techniques.

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Meet individually with campers to discuss the importance of observing other campers' "personal space."
- Write a behavioral contract gaining an agreement for appropriate behaviors and consequences.
- Provide learning opportunities for campers to ensure that he or she knows that this type of behavior is not acceptable.
- Remember that some of your campers may have spent many years playfully reaching out and hitting people, or punching them in what they feel is a "joking" manner. This is not something that will be quickly overcome, as it is a habitual response. Frequent reminders, following a one-to-one meeting with the camper may be necessary. Do not get angry; simply handle it in a "matter of fact" way.

## **DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- De-escalate the situation when you notice a camper “losing control.” (see Appendix B).
- Work with senior camp personnel concerning proper procedures to follow in the event that a camper engages in property destruction. Decide, in advance, which behaviors must be documented or reported, and what consequences will be imposed.
- Make campers aware of rules and expectations the first day, in terms of appropriate handling of others’ property.
- Discuss the importance of mutual respect for others’ property, whether it be camp property, or that of a fellow camper.
- Develop a clear understanding of the consequences of destructive behaviors.
- Discourage campers from bringing expensive items with them into camp.

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Write a contract with the camper. If he enters camp with a “history” of this type of problem, write a contract with him prior to the start of camp, gaining his agreement for cooperation.
- If camper’s behaviors result in monetary losses for the camp, or for fellow campers, restitution should be required of the offending camper.
- Instruct campers in the use of relaxation techniques. Begin with extremities, and work your way toward the center of the body. (see Appendix E)
- Reinforce campers for appropriate handling of conflict.
- Have campers write their frustrations in a journal so that they may go back, at a later date, and consider their behaviors, alternative behaviors, and possible alternative outcomes.

## **DIFFICULTY PAYING ATTENTION**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Provide clear, direct, and age-appropriate directions to activities.
- Break down information into workable segments (that is, give younger campers 1 or 2 instructions and wait for them to complete before going on to the next step).
- When giving directions important for campers to know to complete a project, be sure interruptions and distractions are at a minimum.
- If you know you are going to be working with a child diagnosed as having attention deficit disorder, be sure to:
  - Establish routines.
  - Preview the daily schedule, going over with him exactly what he needs to do.
  - Help camper organize his area so that things are easily found when needed.
  - If camper is easily distracted, you may want to have him use a daily check-list or point sheet to help to keep him focused on what you feel is important for him to concentrate on.
  - If a complex task, or complex directions, are to be used with the camper, preview and practice may be necessary to ensure that he has heard and understood what is expected of him.
- Reinforce for attentive behavior, praising and giving points on his point sheet or on your point chart.
- Move around among your group members; bring back to task campers who have "wandered", and are not attending to the task at hand.

### **Methods of Intervention**

- In working with a camper who has attention difficulties, you must be patient, flexible, and willing to work with the camper on an individual basis.
- When teaching activities, focus the camper's attention by guiding him through the instructions rather than simply calling his name and reminding him to pay attention.
- Pair the camper who has attention difficulties with another camper who stays focused and attentive. This will provide an appropriate peer model, and will also help to keep him focused.
- Keep camper who has attention difficulties near you during times when he and the other campers need to be focused (e.g., during directions, presentations, group activities).

## DIFFICULTIES WITH HYGIENE

### Methods of Prevention

- On first day, during orientation with campers, make expectations known in terms of daily showers, and personal hygiene requirements. When done at this time, it is not seen as a personal difficulty, but rather a simple stating of expectations of all campers.
- Be sure that your group takes daily trips to the showers.
- If camper(s) have a limited supply of clothing available, briefly show him or her how to wash the clothes out by hand, and hang them to dry.
- Possibly arrange with camp supervisors to have an extra store of hygiene supplies as a "safeguard" to campers arriving unprepared (e.g., toothbrushes, deodorant).
- Establish, as a part of your reinforcement schedule, a section for earning points for personal hygiene. Again, when done before there are any problems, this would be less likely to be taken personally.

### Methods of Intervention

- An individual session, between you and the camper, should take place wherein you advise her that added attention needs to take place. Be diplomatic, and do not use words such as "stink." As an example, "Barbara, sometimes, I need to use more deodorant than I usually do. You seem to have the same difficulty, and I know I would want you to tell me...I thought I would mention it before anyone else noticed."
- Furnish campers with necessary items, if campers do not have them.
- Reinforce camper when you notice an improvement (e.g., a "thumb's up" sign or bonus points on the point chart).



## **DOESN'T WANT TO TRY NEW ACTIVITIES**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Make your expectations know in terms of participation and cooperation on the first day.
- Reinforce the campers who do attempt new activities.
- Arrange your activities so that asking for help is easy.
- Review your directions for clarity and completeness.
- Introduce the activity in the most interesting way possible.
- Let campers clearly know when it is time to begin.
- Move Around! Be readily available for help when needed.
- Give campers directions and model them at the same time.
- Help reluctant campers with the first few tries until they "get it."
- If it is a project where campers will be making something, have a completed item available for them to look at.
- Be sure campers have all necessary tools to perform the activity.
- Do not emphasize perfection or competition.

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Chart campers attempting behaviors; give a sticker for each attempt.
- Evaluate appropriateness of task (is it too easy? too hard? does it take too long to finish?).
- Check for understanding.
- Assign peer "buddies" - Verbally reinforce attempts with comments that encourage, "Good try, Jason!"

## FEAR

### Methods of Prevention

- Remember not to tell frightening stories to young campers just before bedtime.
- Assure campers, during your orientation with them on the first day, that there are no wild beasts, bears, or monsters at camp, and that they are perfectly safe.
- If a camper is afraid of an activity, and it is not essential to participation in the camp, allow them to watch the other campers in the activity. Keep in mind to try to encourage them to join in the activity as the others progress through it. Do not push, force, or humiliate campers into participation.
- Encourage an overall supportive environment within your group of campers, possibly calling upon some of your “veteran” campers to act as “mentors” to new-comers.
- If a camper is afraid of the dark, and you have access to electricity, plug in a night-light. If you do not, put that camper in the bunk closest to yours, and encourage him to sleep with a teddy-bear, or something that helps him feel safe.
- Give plenty of opportunities for success, and participation in activities which the camper enjoys.
- Talk quietly with the camper and reassure him that everyone is afraid of something, and that it is alright to be afraid. Sometimes, just talking about those fears helps the camper to relax, and the fears to subside.
- Be sure that your other campers are not teasing that camper. Also, be sure that they are not, behind your back, trying to get the camper more afraid by telling him stories or tales purposely meant to “get him going.”
- Move around your group. This will help reassure the campers that you are always nearby.
- Make as many of your activities as possible enjoyable to the campers, and within the ability levels of the average camper to successfully complete.
- Set campers up with “peer buddies.” In this way, they have one more person to rely upon besides yourself.

## **FEAR**

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Show campers that you care. Be patient. Do not ridicule or humiliate campers who are afraid. It is not funny to them, and they will only feel worse as a result.
- If the campers show an interest in doing an activity of which they are afraid, break it down into small increments, allowing them to complete just one part of the activity at a time, and then help them to go on to the next step. By completing one small step at a time, they learn that they are able to do it and, hopefully, will be more open to trying something even when they are afraid.
- Discuss it openly during a group meeting with your campers, giving them an example of when you were very scared, what you did to cope, and how it turned out.
- Review prevention techniques for methods you could implement.

## **FEAR OF FAILURE**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Make your expectations know in terms of participation and cooperation on the first day.
- Reinforce the campers that do attempt to do the activities.
- Arrange your activities so that asking for help is easy.
- Review your directions for clarity and completeness.
- Let campers clearly know when it is time to begin.
- Move Around! Be readily available for help when needed.
- Give campers directions, and model at the same time, exactly what it is that they need to do.
- Help reluctant campers with the first few tries until they "get it."
- If it is a project where campers will be making something, have a completed item available for them to look at.
- Be sure campers have all necessary tools to perform the activity.
- Do not emphasize perfection or completion.

## FEAR OF FAILURE

### Methods of Interventions

- Chart campers attempting behaviors, giving a sticker for each attempt (see Appendix C).
- Evaluate appropriateness of task (is it too easy? too hard? does it take too long to finish?).
- Check for understanding of directions.
- Assign peer "buddies."
- Verbally reinforce attempts with comments that encourage, "Good try, Jason!"
- Once a failure occurs, and student seems upset, meet briefly with camper to reassure, and reinforce for his attempt. Help camper to think of ways that he could do it differently, that may help him to succeed, next time. Develop an "action plan," together with the camper that outlines how to get through the activity next time.
- Model failure...YES, FAKE IT! Campers learn best by modeling, and one thing it would be beneficial to see modeled is how you handle failure.
- If this is a performance-type of activity (such as batting, pitching, swimming), help the camper to relax and practice "visualizing" himself doing it the "right way."
- If the camper is always nervous about the same activities, use a relaxation techniques, and guided instruction through the activity may help the camper to overcome enough of his fear to complete the activity.
- Once he has completed the activity, congratulate him, and assure him that you will help him through the next time, as well. Each successive time, help a little less until he is completing the task completely on his own. This intervention technique is more sophisticated than others in the manual, and may necessitate the help of a senior staff member.

## **FIGHTING**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Make your expectations (e.g., rules) known in terms of handling conflicts
- Reward positive behavior that can't occur at the same time as the fighting.
- Reinforce appropriate behaviors observed in all campers (e.g., "catch" your campers following the rules).
- Be sure campers are within line-of-sight at all times.
- Move around your group often.
- Don't emphasize perfection or competition.
- Prevent "down time," go from one activity to the next with the least amount of time possible in-between activities.
- Provide as many high interest activities as possible.
- Provide campers with plenty of chances for success.
- If a fight seems to be imminent, do something "silly," (e.g., make loud, silly noises) to deflect the attention away from the participants in the possible fight to yourself, and hopefully prevent the fight from occurring. (see Appendix B).
- Remove "agitated" camper from the group for "cool down" period. Talk with him calmly and quietly about his frustrations.
- On the first day of camp, put the entire cabin on a reinforcement schedule, where campers are able to earn "points" on a chart (see Appendix C). These points will later be traded for privileges or special events such as a later bedtime or repeat of favorite activities.
- Provide campers with behavioral options: sit out activity; go to another area to "quiet" self; rejoin group when camper feels he has regained control.

## **FIGHTING**

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Separate fighting campers from each other immediately. DO NOT allow campers to become injured (you may need to implement the emergency procedure outlined for you by your supervisor at the beginning of camp).
- Once the situation is under control, and following a “cool-down” period, have the campers verbally relate, or write an essay, answering the questions:
  - 1) What was wrong with what I did?
  - 2) What happens to me when I fight?
  - 3) What else could I choose to do?
  - 4) What happens to me when I don't fight?
- Write a behavioral contract (see Appendix A)
- Teach campers alternatives to fighting (e.g., withdrawing, talking).
- Separate from campers who may be encouraging the fight.
- Teach combatants problem-solving skills:
  - 1) What is the problem?
  - 2) What do I want to accomplish?
  - 3) How do I do this?
  - 4) Help the camper come up with a step-by-step plan.
  - 5) Help the camper to follow through with the plan.

## **FIGHTS OVER POSSESSIONS**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Advise the parents, well in advance of the camping dates, of restrictions on any items, and ask for their help in avoiding possible difficulties
- On the first day, seat campers in circle on the cabin floor. Inform the campers that all personal belongings must be labeled with their names or initials so that there will be no possible mix-ups. Have 3 to 4 permanent markers available for campers to use. Have that many campers at one time empty their bags into the circle and label each unlabeled item.
- At this time, put into a bag any item (e.g., matches, cigarettes) that are not permitted into camp, and store in the camp office for the camper until he or she leaves.
- Inventory any expensive items that are at camp (e.g., radios, portable c.d. players, video games), and offer to store them in the camp office to limit possible future difficulties.
- Encourage campers to develop mutual respect, working together as a "team," and "looking out" for one another.
- As a "team," there may be a disagreement...help campers to handle these disagreements in a mature and cooperative way to avoid fights.



## **FIGHTS OVER POSSESSIONS**

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Handle all disagreements diplomatically...do not become personally involved, and do not "take sides."
- Intervene quickly to ensure that no physical fighting occurs.
- Separate disagreeing campers to avoid further difficulties, and speak with each one separately.
- Speak, individually, with each of the involved campers to get their own explanations...do not moralize, lecture, or lay blame at this time...simply get information.
- If the disputed item is an unnecessary one, take possession of it, and place into care of the camp office for the duration of the campers' stay to eliminate further arguments or possible fights. Upon parents' arrival, interview to determine which camper does own the property.
- If it is a necessary item, and speaking with the campers does not resolve the issue, you may want to contact the parents to validate ownership. At this time, you may want to inform your camp supervisor of the problem with which you are dealing.
- Hold a cabin meeting to re-state the cabin rules, and gain a new commitment of cooperation and communication.
- Write a behavioral contract, if sure of the camper who is "at fault," to gain re-commitment to rule-following, and adherence to consequences if rules are violated.
- Have camper give you examples of what happens when they violate others' rights to property, and give you acceptable alternative.

## **FOLLOWING RULES**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Make rules and expectations known, during your orientation session with your campers on the first day. Be sure that they understand the rules.
- Review consequences of not following the rules (e.g., loss of participation in the activity; inability to earn points, if using a reinforcement chart).
- Make your rules according to the guidelines set down in the section entitled, "Reasonable Rules, Positively Worded."
- Post your reinforcement chart, with a section for following rules. Be sure that your rules are posted in a highly visible place...this will serve as a constant reminder.
- Add stickers or initials liberally! This is perhaps, one of the more important items on which to reward your campers for compliance.
- "Catch" your campers following the rules...praise them for doing so, as well as posting rewards.

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Remind your group of the rules, and importance of following them. Review the rules that are not being followed, and give your reasons for having the rules.
- Initiate the "prevention" techniques listed above.
- Interview individually, and review the rules ensuring that he or she understands them (for example, have the camper rephrase them and restate them back to you).
- Apply consequences, as reviewed on the first day, and based on camp policies, in a consistent manner. Do not "overlook" times when you observe your campers not following the rules...they will learn that you don't really mean what you say.
- Set the example by following the camp management policies. If you disagree with a camp policy, DO NOT discuss this with your campers. You may use it as an example in a neutral way, such as, "Sometimes adults do not always agree with rules set down, but they are put in place for the good of all, and they must be followed."

## **GOING INTO RESTRICTED AREAS**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Make your expectations (e.g., rules) known in terms of which areas of camp the campers are allowed into, and which areas are "off limits" on the first day.
- If campers are not allowed into these areas because of a physical threat to their safety, be sure to let them know.
- Be sure the camper understands what will happen if he does go into the restricted area he may lose: privileges; respect and trust of staff and fellow campers, etc).
- Use reminders if campers stray close to the restricted area.
- Maintain line-of-sight supervision (always have campers within your sight).
- Move around with your campers to ensure their safety, and "catch" them staying in the allowable areas so that you may reinforce them for doing so.

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Meet individually with camper(s) who chose to go into a restricted area, and discuss the problem.
- Impose the consequences reviewed during the first day of camp.
- Maintain line-of-sight supervision to insure no repeats occur.
- Contract with camper, securing agreement not to enter into the area again (see Appendix A).
- Reward camper(s) for complying with contract and rules.

## HOMESICKNESS

### Methods of Prevention

- When you first meet parent and camper, make yourself available for any questions either may have, and to ease any apprehensions the child may have. Be "upbeat," and expect them to have a good time. Do not belittle a camper who cries.
- Encourage your camper to bring a personal item (such as a teddy bear or, perhaps a picture) that will help the camper feel a little "closer to home," by having something familiar with them.
- If parents advise the camp in advance of campers' arrival, that this may become a problem, recommend that they give the camper something special to bring with them such as a parent's pillow to use at camp, a special teddy bear, a small handkerchief to tuck inside the child's pillowcase with a drop of the parents' cologne on it...anything that will make them feel "closer " to home.
- There is a really no way to prevent a camper from becoming homesick...you can only hope to lessen their difficulty in adjusting, and keep their minds off missing their parents, family, and friends.
- Plan activities to keep camper active, involved, and having fun.
- Write "welcome" notes to each camper; if possible, mail them out to the campers at home before they leave for camp. Include in the SHORT note, some interesting things about yourself (where you're from, what you like to do), let them know you're anxious to meet them, and have lots of fun things planned for them to do!
- If you have a longer-running camp (a week or longer) arrange with parents in advance to write their children encouraging notes, to be delivered each day. Don't assume that parents will automatically "know" to do this; they won't, and some campers will not receive any notes which will make your job worse in terms of homesickness.

## **HOMESICKNESS**

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Meet, as a group, nightly. During this time you can share fun events of the day, and offer encouragement to campers having difficulty adjusting. During this time, other "veteran" campers may also offer ways with which they dealt with homesickness their first time at camp.
- Encourage campers to write letters, or keep journals, throughout their stay. They will have a "fun" momento, once summer is over, of their stay at camp.
- When campers become "down" speak with them briefly, and remind them that camp only lasts a few days, and its alot of fun while it lasts!
- **USE YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR!!!** If you can get the camper to laugh and smile, they are not able to cry, try as they may...reinforce the **OPPOSITE** behavior.
- Eliminate as many "down times" during the first day or so as possible. This is the time during which you will have your greatest difficulty not only with homesickness, but with arguments and fights, as well.

## **INAPPROPRIATE COMMENTS TO ADULTS (TALKING BACK)**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Make your expectations (e.g., rules) known in terms of language and comments that will be acceptable.
- Give campers examples of acceptable ways to voice their disagreements or difficulties with adult decisions.
- Reward positive behaviors that can't occur at the same time as the talking-back.
- Reinforce appropriate comments observed in all campers (e.g., "catch" your campers following the rules).
- Move around your group often to be able to hear comments (both appropriate and inappropriate).
- Be sure the camper understands what will happen when he speaks to adults in disrespectful way (adults may choose not to interact with him, and he may be excluded from activities).
- Place the importance on individual success.
- Be sure you are not inadvertently reinforcing inappropriate language by attending only when profanity is used.
- Be an appropriate role model by using appropriate language and references to others at all times.
- Give your campers examples of alternative words to use when they're angry or frustrated.
- On the first day of camp, put entire cabin on a reinforcement schedule, where campers are able to earn "points" (see Appendix C) for good behaviors. These points will, later, be traded for privileges or special events such as a later bedtime or repeat of favorite activities.

**INAPPROPRIATE COMMENTS TO ADULTS  
(TALKING BACK)**

**Methods of Intervention**

- Do not intervene on "here-say." Only deal with disrespectful comments that you hear, thereby avoiding reinforcing tattling behaviors.
- Don't argue with the camper; you know what you heard.
- Always be consistent in what you expect, and in what will happen when campers fail to meet those expectations.
- Be respectful toward your campers. Speak to them in way that you would prefer to be spoken to; be calm and objective.
- DO NOT ignore inappropriate comments - they probably will spread to other campers rather than go away, thereby increasing your difficulty in dealing with them.
- DO NOT over-react (e.g., don't look astonished, act shocked, become angry, or mirror your campers' behaviors and inadvertently worsening the behavior and the situation). Speak calmly and in a straight-forward manner.
- Review with them some appropriate words or expressions they may use during times of frustration or disagreements with you or other staff members.
- Have campers come up with alternative words or phrases that are acceptable to use.

## **INAPPROPRIATE TOUCHING**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- **IMPORTANT!!** In advance of campers' arrival, discuss:
  - documentation procedures,
  - appropriate reactions (avoidance of over-reaction),
  - expected intervention methods,
  - and when it will be expected that further help is warranted.
- During your first day, make expectations and rules known concerning inappropriate touching.
- Explain that inappropriate touching is unwanted touching, and touching in the areas that are covered by underwear.
- Maintain strict codes of conduct for staff and camp counselors; it is your duty to conduct yourself in a professional manner while at camp. Again, **WALK THE TALK**; set the example.
- If you do observe inappropriate touching behaviors among counselors or staff, **CONFRONT** the issue at your next staff meeting, or, if too far in the future, seek out your senior staff member for discussion of the problem and guidance. Remember, your campers are your **PRIORITIES**, as they have been entrusted into your care.
- Move around among your campers to be available to observe any behavioral difficulties of this type. When observed, speak immediately and directly with the camper who is touching others. Remind him or her of the rules and expectations.
- Praise and reward campers who show appropriate behaviors.



## **INAPPROPRIATE TOUCHING**

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Prior to campers arrival, decide with you senior staff which touching behaviors will be dealt with by you as a counselor, and which ones will be immediately turned over to senior staff members. Plan, in advance, which behaviors are beyond your training to be able to effectively deal with.
- Do not assume that campers know the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touching. Teach your campers the difference. Remember, some of your campers may observe weekly, patting on the buttocks by fellow team-mates during pro football games, which makes this seem like an acceptable behavior, although it obviously is not.
- Restate, and review, the rules once again. Make your expectations known, as well as the consequences for violations of this serious rule.
- Possibly discuss privacy issues (e.g., personal space).
- Have campers write in their journals, or speak directly to you, about their behaviors, what happens when they behave in this way, and alternative responses.
- Help campers to realize that there are acceptable alternatives, and that they are not "bad" people.
- Document, from the first incident, exactly what was reported, what you did to investigate and intervene, and what happened as a result of your questioning (e.g., did the touching stop or did it continue; if it continued, then what did you do?)

## **ISSUES OF POWER AND CONTROL**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- During pre-camp training, before campers arrive, establish how much you must deal with before recommending the transfer of a camper to another cabin. Be sure to clear this with your supervisors before implementation.
- Make your rules and expectations known to campers on the first day, before any other activities occur.
- Be firm and consistent in your enforcement of the rules...never make promises (or threats) that you will not keep; always keep the promises you make.
- Do not try to be your campers "friend;" you are there to guide and protect them. You will gain more respect from them by enforcing the rules and expectations, and not giving them extra room...the power struggle comes into play when campers erroneously assume that they are your equal. This can not safely be the case.
- Work as part of a team with your fellow camp counselors and senior staff members.
- Maintain a professional reputation by speaking positively with and about the other counselors and staff members.
- Be a positive role model to your campers.
- Promote team-work within your cabin among campers.
- Encourage cooperation and mutual respect; reward helping behaviors.

## **ISSUES OF POWER AND CONTROL**

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Meet individually with camper, and review expectations in terms of following rules. Re-establish that he is part of a close-knit group that needs to focus on the same goals in order to have a successful experience.
- Help the camper consider what negative results have occurred as a result of his behaviors (loss of trust by cabin members, loss of your trust, lost opportunities for interaction). Help him, also, to decide upon alternative, positive behaviors.
- Reward camper quietly for positive, helping behaviors...add stickers or initials to behavioral chart, if in use (see Appendix C).
- If it becomes a continual and intense struggle between you and the camper, meet with your supervisors to update them on your difficulties with this camper. It may be necessary to transfer the camper to a new cabin.
- Provide a moderate camper (that is, one who is basically cooperative and respectful, but over-energetic) with leadership opportunities (such as mentoring a more reserved or shy camper through activities, or getting out and putting away recreational equipment).

## **LEAVING THINGS A MESS**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Day #1 - review rules or expectations in terms of “neatness” of cabin or area.
- Be sure to allow for enough time to accomplish both hygiene and personal area cleaning before leaving for breakfast each morning.
- Provide area, on a reinforcement chart, for rewarding clean personal areas within cabin.
- Reinforce persons who have showers, and personal areas in order within your specified time limit, and are ready to go to breakfast in the morning.
- Establish a routine for your group of campers.

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Reinforce, by stars or initials on reward chart, those campers who are ready within the specified time limit; allow for a reward (such as extension of bedtime, or additional privileges) for those who meet the expectation without difficulty.
- Meet, individually, with campers who are not meeting the criteria established to discuss their difficulties in meeting your criteria. Offer suggestions in how the camper may increase their effectiveness in this area.
- Do not allow campers who have not met the criteria to participate in the earned “bonuses” of those campers who worked to meet the criteria - you are not excluding the campers from anything; this was an earned privilege that the non-participating campers chose not to work toward attaining.

Caution: Be sure each camper has the necessary self-help skills to accomplish this goal. Some physically and mentally challenged campers will naturally be at a disadvantage. When this is the case, allowances must be made to help these campers to be successful.

## LIGHTING MATCHES

### Methods of Prevention

- During your orientation session, have campers mark all personal items. Have your campers sit in a circle, put personal items on the floor in front of them, and check to be sure all items are marked; provide a permanent mark to those campers who have forgotten to mark items.
  - At this time, quietly and calmly take possession of any items that are not allowed into camp.
  - Put these items in a safe place until the camper leaves camp, and may take the items with him or her.
- On the first-day orientation session, review rules and expectations concerning the use of matches and other hazardous materials.
- Be sure to inform campers of the consequences if they are found with these items on their person.
- Follow through on your promised disciplinary actions if or when a violation occurs.
- When using matches yourself (to light camp-fires, for example), be sure they do not become accessible to campers. That is, keep them on your pocket, or with you in some way so that the campers are not able to gain access and use them.

### Methods of Intervention

- Immediately take possession of the matches.
- Use the experience as a “teachable moment,” speaking with the camper who lit the matches, as well as the other members of your cabin about the dangers and risks involved in playing with matches and other flammable items.
- Write a behavioral contract with the camper who lit the matches, gaining agreement that he will not again use them without permission.
- Make your supervisor aware of the incident; if the camper again lights matches, ask for intervention from your supervisor or other higher-level person within your camp.
- DO NOT risk the safety of other campers; this may be a serious behavioral difficulty.
- Monitor this camper to ensure that no further incidents occur.
- Have camper share with you his or her belongings to ensure that he or she does not have more matches in their personal possession.

## LYING

### Methods of Prevention

- Aim for the concept, "We're all in this together."
- Place the importance of individual success.
- Don't emphasize perfection or competition.
- More around your group often.
- Provide campers with plenty of chances of success.
- Do not inadvertently "set up" your camper to lie (e.g., if you know your camper has done something that is not in keeping with your cabin or camp rules, do not ask him, "Did you do \_\_\_\_\_?" Instead, say, "I understand \_\_\_\_\_ occurred. What are we going to do to remedy the situation?")
- Do not inadvertently reward untruthful behavior; if lying is an ongoing problem with a specific camper, be sure to reward only observed positive behaviors

## LYING

### Methods of Prevention

- Arrange for an essay, or a one-to-one meeting with the camper who is lying, to answer the questions:
  - 1) What happens to me when I lie?
  - 2) What might I do, instead?
  - 3) What happens to me when I tell the truth?
  
- Caution should be exercised in rewarding a camper (who repeatedly lies) for telling the truth; you may reinforce the very behavior you hoped to eliminate.
- Ignore obvious exaggerations of occurrences/events.
- Provide correction in a kindly manner; give guidance and model the expected behavior, as the camper may not have developed appropriate social skills and, therefore, may not know that it is not acceptable behavior.
- Use story-telling for younger groups (such as fables) to point out the importance of telling the truth.
- Model appropriate behaviors by accurate accounting of your own accomplishments.

## **NAME CALLING AND UNKIND REMARKS**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- On the first day of camp, put entire cabin on a reinforcement schedule, where campers are able to earn "points" (see Appendix C) for good behaviors. These points will, later, be traded for privileges or special events such as a later bedtime or repeat of favorite activities.
- Make your expectations known in terms of language, comments and names (including nick-names) that will be acceptable.
- Give campers examples of acceptable ways to refer to each other.
- Reward incompatible appropriate behaviors (e.g., referring to fellow campers by their names or acceptable nick-names).
- Move around your group often to be able to hear appropriate and inappropriate references to each other.
- Be sure the camper knows what will happen when he speaks to peers in a disrespectful way (other campers may not want to interact with him, and he may be avoided by them).
- Teach your campers about how "hurtful" unkind remarks feel when they are received, regardless of how "funny" it may seem when they are said. Humor is not really funny if it is at another person's expense. DO NOT do this by publicly humiliating them so that they, too, "know what it feels like."
- Be a good role model by treating others respectfully at all times.
- Stress the importance of each member's contributions to the group, including diversity.
- Aim for the concept of, "We're all in this together."



## **NAME-CALLING AND UNKIND REMARKS**

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Provide correction in a kindly manner; give guidance and model the expected behavior, as the camper may not have developed appropriate social skills and, therefore, may not know that it is not acceptable behavior.
- Intervene immediately to name-calling and unkind remarks, as they may spread to other campers, thereby increasing the number of hurtful remarks another camper may have to deal with.
- DO NOT laugh or react positively toward inappropriate behaviors when they are directed from one camp member to another; you will undermine your effectiveness with your group.
- Avoid over-reacting (e.g., don't look astonished, act shocked, become angry, or mirror your campers' behaviors) thereby inadvertently worsening the behavior and situation.
- Speak calmly and in a straight-forward manner.
- Arrange for an essay, or a one-to-one meeting with the camper who is name-calling, to answer the questions:
  - 1) What happens to me when I call peers names?
  - 2) What might I do, instead?
  - 3) What happens to me when I address peers appropriately?
- Write a contract with the camper, and arrange a reward system for appropriate peer references (see Appendix C).

## **PUSHING AND SHOVING**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Make rules and expectations known, on the first day, prior to any other activities, in terms of safety rules, the reasons for them, and the consequences for not following them.
- Be aware of “hot spots” for this type of behavior (e.g., showers, lunch lines, hiking trails, paths to the beach), and be sure that you are nearby to prevent it from occurring, as it could be quite dangerous.
- Reinforce, daily, campers observed walking, observing other campers’ personal space, and remaining “calm.”
- Practice keeping personal space and walking comfortable distances from other campers with your younger campers, so that they have a measurable way of thinking about this (an easy way is to have them maintain arm’s length, or elbow length...not always possible in lines, and so forth).
- Get your campers ready well ahead of time so there is no reason for them to feel that they need to “rush.”
- Move around and be close to your campers so that this is less likely to occur.
- Set the example. Allow yourself ample time, and take your time getting places.

## **PUSHING AND SHOVING**

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Do not ignore pushing; because of the possible danger involved, call camper aside and remind them of the rules. Watch more closely, then, for appropriate behaviors and immediately praise or reinforce for it.
- If pushing occurs within a line, move the camper pushing to the back of the line, and explain your reasons for doing so.
- Remove camper from the activity, speak one-to-one with him concerning the safety issue, allow him ample time to “settle down” before returning to group, and praise for appropriate behaviors observed.
- If the problem persists, meet in a one-to-one setting to ensure that you have his attention, and once again review the rules.
- Set up a reinforcement schedule, if you have not already done so, that will allow the camper to earn points or privileges for “calm” and “polite” behaviors.
- Write a behavioral contract (see Appendix A) with the camper that specifies which behaviors are expected, and what responses will be earned as a result of expected behavior.
- Children diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often experience difficulty in this area. If you have a recurring problem with over-active behaviors that you seem to have little to no effect in controlling, contact your supervisor for advice.

## **REFUSING TO COOPERATE**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Make expectations or rules known, on your first day with campers, in terms of cooperating with one another and working as a "team."
- Encourage a "team" spirit, approaching things with a cooperative, rather than competitive attitude. In other words, each camper should have equal opportunity to earn rewards, not only the "first" few or "best" few campers.
- Remember, in competitive activities, only a few will win; most will lose.
- Be consistent in your treatments of all campers. It is not unusual to have a "favorite" camper...many counselors do. You should be the only one who knows, or can "tell" that you do...enforce expectations consistently, and treat all campers equally.
- Praise, and give points to, campers who cooperate with one another.
- Emphasize the importance of cooperation and how much more fun an activity can be when all involved are friendly, positive, and working toward the same goal.
- Set up a competition with another counselor and his or her cabin to see which "team" can earn the most points each day.
- Encourage positive attitudes...SMILE ALOT!! Your campers will feel happier if you look happy. When campers are happy, they are more willing to cooperate with one another.

## REFUSING TO COOPERATE

### Methods of Intervention

- Remind your campers as a group that you need their cooperation to make their stay more fun.
- Start one of the “prevention” techniques, such as a competition between cabins, cooperation games.
- Meet, one-to-one, with the camper who will not cooperate. Explain, again, why cooperation is necessary.
- Award “bonus” points for cooperative campers.
- Catch the camper having difficulty cooperating doing something helpful (helping another cabin mate, for example).
- Meet, one-to-one with camper, and help him to consider,
  - 1) What happens when I do not cooperate? (e.g., other campers don't want to be near him, he misses out on a lot of fun)
  - 2) What happens when I do cooperate?
  - 3) What could I do differently?
- If camper is having difficulty with a particular camper within your cabin, listen, get the other camper, and help them to speak nicely to one another while voicing their concerns.
- If the problem continues after you have tried other interventions, you may want to set up a behavioral contract with your camper (see Appendix A).
- Make positive comments about observed helpful behaviors. Be on the “look-out” for this kind of behavior from the camper having trouble in this area.

## **SHARING**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Go over "rules" or expectations for sharing camp and activity materials during first-day orientation.
- Be a good role-model. Offer to share your supplies with a camper; borrow something from a camper and return it...set the example of appropriate borrowing and sharing behaviors.
- Place emphasis on sharing and cooperation rather than on competition.
- Discourage sharing personal items; put away personal items in a safe.
- Be sure to have plenty of supplies so that sharing during activities is at a minimum and, therefore, won't result in campers idly waiting for glue or other supplies.
- Ensure that all campers have ample opportunity, considering the availability of supplies, to complete all assigned tasks.
- Move around while your group is participating in activities to be able to aid in sharing behaviors.

## **SHARING**

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Reward campers for sharing supplies and, if you have recurring problems, put it on your reinforcement chart and place sticker or mark for each sharing observed.
- Talk quietly with camper who is not sharing supplies and remind him or her of the rules: reassure him or her that there will be plenty of time to complete the task.
- Determine why the camper doesn't share, and provide support in area in need of support. For example, if he is afraid that he won't get the item back in time to complete his project, be ready to monitor time and ensure that both camper's projects are completed.
- Guide campers in sharing experiences that allow successful experiences and, therefore, encourage future sharing with each other.
- Move around while your group is involved in activities to lend support and offer assistance in teaching sharing/borrowing behaviors.

## **SMOKING**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Prior to camp starting, campers and their parents should be informed of the rules and expectations of the camp regarding smoking and other concerns, to hopefully eliminate any need to intervene.
- Lead by example! DO NOT smoke on camping premises if you expect to gain cooperation from your campers. Also, do not show up at camp, or in your cabin, with smoke on your breath; you will be seen as a hypocrite, and lose the respect of your campers...WALK THE TALK!
- Camp counselors and staff need to discuss, in advance of campers' arrival, approaches that will be used to deal with campers who disregard this rule. Specify what to do following the first offense, second offense, etc.
- The best way to prevent problems with campers smoking (which is not legally allowable at all in many public places) is to keep smoking products out of the camp.
- Inform campers of the rules, and your expectations before doing anything else on the first day.
- In conjunction with ensuring that all property is properly marked, seat campers in a large circle, and have 3 or 4 campers at one time bring their personal belongings and empty them onto the floor in the center of the circle. Give them each a permanent marker and instruct them to mark all unmarked belongings. At this time, take possession of any smoking materials, and place in a bag to be stored for safe-keeping throughout their stay at camp. Advise them they may reclaim the bag upon leaving camp, but that they may not have possession any smoking materials while at camp.
- Explain the reasons why this rule is in place (e.g., state law safety hazard, health risk).



## **SMOKING**

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Explain the reason for the rule (legal, health, safety).
- Review the rules, and request campers to give you all smoking materials.
- Follow the steps that you and your staff have decided on prior to the start of camp.
- Keep campers busy enough that they will not have time to stand around and want to smoke.
- Write a contract with the camper, gaining his or her cooperation and commitment; build in specific rewards for non-smoking behaviors.
- Have on hand, and offer frequently, chewing gum or flavored toothpicks.
- Praise campers who you know are putting forth a lot of effort not to smoke.
- Offer bonus points for good attitudes and positive behaviors of ALL campers.
- If the camp policy is so stated, provide the campers and their parents with a warning that they will have to leave the premises if they continue to disregard the rules.

## STAYING UP LATE

### Methods of Prevention

Note: This problem will probably remedy itself, with some patience in the first one or two nights. Research supports the stance that the main requirement is to maintain the same wake-up time each morning!

- Review rules and expectations regarding bedtime on the first day of camp.
- Be reasonable, on the first day or two, in your expectations of "lights out" (for example, it is not reasonable, the first day of camp, to expect campers to go early to bed).
- If you expect an early, orderly bedtime, DO NOT require campers to "nap" in the mid-afternoon; you are setting them up for failure!
- Set, and maintain, an early out-of-bed time for each morning; be consistent in awakening your campers and getting them up.
- BE PATIENT!! If you allow your campers to "exhaust" themselves the first night, but still keep them to the early-rise time the next morning, odds are that they will naturally fall asleep on time the following night!
- Establish a relaxation routine for your campers. If possible, turn on some quiet music and follow the relaxation training outlined for you in Appendix E.

## **STAYING UP LATE**

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Reinforce every camper for being in bed, with lights out, and not talking by placing sticker or star on their chart.
- Regardless of time to bed, require your campers to arise at the same early time each morning.
- If settling is a problem, the relaxation technique in Appendix E should be beneficial as an intervention.
- Younger campers may be frightened, especially if this is their first camping experience. Reassure them about their fears.
- Allow campers to sleep with an item from home - their sleep difficulty may be related to being "homesick."
- Be patient with younger campers who may believe that "monsters" lurk beneath their bunks, or that bears are going to attack.
- Utilize common sense in your selection of bedtime stories.
- Reassure campers of their safety, if this is an issue. Let them know that you are there to protect them, and will look out for their safety.

## **STEALING**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- On the first day, have each camper mark all of his or her items. Have permanent marks on hand for them to use. Help younger campers mark items.
- Make your expectations known in terms of acceptable behaviors on the first day.
- Move around your group often during activities to limit the available opportunities for campers to steal.
- Do not leave you campers unattended (e.g., staying behind in the cabin while the group leaves or during "free time"), thereby further limiting the opportunities to steal.
- Discourage campers from bringing expensive items to camp with them. If they are brought along, find a place to securely keep them until the camper returns home (e.g., camp lodge safe or locked office).
- Be a good role model; do not "sneak" foods from the kitchen or "borrow" pens, pencils, paper, etc., from the office.
- Teach your campers to respect individual property through modeling and presentation of the rules.

## **STEALING**

### **Methods of Intervention**

- If unsure of who is stealing, make your group of campers aware that you realize there have been instances of stealing. Review the rules with them and ask for group support in dealing with the situation. Remind group of the consequences of stealing.
- Make an agreement with your group that if nothing is missing from the cabin for the day, the group will receive some reinforcement (e.g., participate in favorite activity).
- If you know who is stealing, the stolen item(s) must be returned to its owner with an apology. If the stolen item was damaged, restitution must be made or arranged.
- Speak privately with the camper who is stealing to answer the questions:
  - 1) What happens to me when I steal?
  - 2) What might I do, instead?
  - 3) What happens to me when I don't steal?
- If the problem seems to be habitual with the camper, contact your staff supervisor and seek help with an advanced behavioral intervention.

NOTE: Caution should be used in rewarding the camper (who repeatedly steals) for not stealing; you may reinforce the very behavior you hoped to eliminate (that is, he or she may have stolen without your awareness).

## **SWEARING, PROFANITY, "TALKING DIRTY"**

### **Methods of Prevention**

- Make your expectations know in terms of language and comments that will be acceptable on the first day of camp.
- Give campers examples of alternative words or expressions to use to express their feelings.
- Reinforce appropriate comments observed in all campers (e.g., "catch" your campers talking nicely and reward them for doing so).
- Be an appropriate role model by using acceptable language at all times.
- Give campers examples of acceptable ways to voice their disagreements or difficulties, and of referring to each other.
- On the first day of camp, put entire cabin on a reinforcement schedule, where campers are able to earn "points" (see Appendix C) for good behaviors. These points will, later, be traded for privileges or special events such as a later bedtime or repeat of favorite activities.

## **SWEARING, PROFANITY, “TALKING DIRTY”**

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Avoid over-reacting (e.g., don't look astonished, act shocked, or become angry) thereby inadvertently worsening the behavior and situation. Speak calmly and in straight-forward manner.
- Do not laugh or react in a supportive way toward these behaviors.
- Do not ignore swearing and profanity, as they may spread to other campers rather than going away.
- If it is believed that swearing is out of frustration or anger, the counselor may informally work with the camper on developing coping skills or relaxation techniques (see Appendix E).
- Arrange for an essay, or a one-to-one meeting with the camper who is swearing, to answer these questions:
  - 1) What happens to me when I swear at people?
  - 2) What might I do, instead?
  - 3) What happens to me when I speak appropriately?
- Write a contract with the camper, and arrange a reward system for appropriate peer references (see Appendix C).

## TEMPER TANTRUMS

### Methods of Prevention

- Make your expectations known in terms of handling frustrations in an appropriate way (e.g., talking calmly, speaking politely). Also let campers know the consequences they will face if they do choose to have a temper tantrum.
- Allow campers some freedom of choice (for example, who they sit next to at lunch).
- Intersperse activities so that the more mundane or boring activities are followed by more fun, active choices.
- Keep topics of discussion with your group focused on pleasant subjects.
- Allow campers the option of taking a voluntary "time-out" when he or she begins to feel frustrated.
- Provide activities that will allow for success.
- Separate the target camper from peers that might be triggering a tantrum.
- If tantrums occur frequently, log their occurrence with what happened before, during, and as a result of the tantrum (in terms of the camper), Meet with your supervisor to discuss possible interventions.
- Ask and answer these questions:
  - Was the camper able to avoid an unwanted task?
  - Did camper gain individual attention?
  - Did camper keep group from doing an activity they wanted to do; exactly what purpose did the behavior seem to serve.



## **TEMPER TANTRUMS**

### **Methods of Intervention**

- Remove camper from the situation, and discuss his or her reason for behaving in this way. Review, with him, what happens when this behavior occurs, and what he could do differently.
- Help the camper deal with postponing gratification, and develop patience (this takes some doing, and you may want to seek out assistance from your supervisor, as it must be completed in graduated steps).
- Reinforce appropriate behaviors, especially in reaction to frustrating situations.
- Teach your campers appropriate responses to frustrations (e.g., speaking calm, and telling you what is bothering him).
- Speak with your camper, and have him tell you what is frustrating. Let him know that frustration is a normal feeling that you have to learn how to deal with in an appropriate way. Let him know that you will offer suggestions and help him to learn to do this
- Model appropriate behaviors.
- Teach campers relaxation techniques (see Appendix E).
- Observe your campers to determine if there are any "patterns" in their tantrums (e.g., do they always follow or precede certain activities or do they occur when certain other campers are nearby).

## TESTING THE LIMITS

### Methods of Prevention

- Be sure, before your campers arrive, that rules and expectations are reasonable, and in keeping with camp expectations. Check with fellow camp counselors and administration to ensure that rules meet these criteria.
- Review rules and expectations on the first day of camp.
- Post rules in a highly visible place.
- Be consistent in enforcing rules.
- Do not “bend,” or “expand” your limits.
- Be aware that some campers (especially “oppositional” children) will “test” you by trying to get “just a little more” than you have established will be allowed.
- Reward campers for following the rules by adding a sticker or star to their chart, or praising them.
- Keep transition times between activities to a minimum, or have activities planned for those times.
- Remember, most misbehaviors occur during “down” times; have as few of these as possible.

## TESTING THE LIMITS

### Methods of Intervention

- Meet individually with campers who “test” your limits.
- Have them write, or verbally answer the following, to try to make this a learning experience for them:
  - 1) What happens to me when I do not follow rules?
  - 2) What could I choose to do, instead?
  - 3) What happens to me when I do follow the rules?
- Review the rules with the group, as a whole, and ask for their help in reinforcing positive behaviors.
- Contract with campers who consistently “push” the limits (see Appendix A).
- You may need to withhold privileges from the camper who consistently tests the limits.
- “Catch” your campers following the rules, as you have set them, and give them reinforcement.
- Communicate often with fellow counselors! Often, counselors are not aware that others are experiencing similar difficulties.
- Whenever possible, meet together as a group of counselors to discuss cabin difficulties, and “brainstorm” positive interventions (as well as ways to prevent the difficulties in the future).

NOTE: If you, as the cabin counselor, offer an expansion as a reward this is acceptable...you are offering reinforcement in return for positive behaviors. If, on the other hand, you respond to camper nagging, it is not a behavioral intervention; you have allowed campers to expand your limits.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **BEHAVIORAL CONTRACTS**

NOTE: When writing a behavioral contract with a camper, ALWAYS get your supervisor's approval, and signature, on what you have written BEFORE you use it! Ideally, your supervisor should be a part of the negotiation process between you and the camper in writing the contract

Steps to follow when writing a behavioral contract:

1. Only choose 1 or 2 behaviors at one time to focus on. For example, camper's goal "Comes to breakfast on time."
2. Talk over your concerns with the camper. During your "talk," help the camper decide how this goal can best be met. This is an important part of the process, as the camper will be more likely to abide by the contract if he has had a part in establishing the requirements of it.
3. Decide, together, specifically what the camper will do to fulfill his "end" of the contract, and write it in.
4. Decide, together, specifically what the camper will have to do as a consequence if he fails to meet up to the agreement (for example, each time the camper is late, he will spend 10 minutes after breakfast helping the cook do dishes).
5. Restate the appropriate behavior and write it into the "goal" section of the contract (for example, "Jason will be up, dressed, clean, and at breakfast on time").
6. Have your supervisor present for the signing of the contract. To make it official, and to approve what is being written, have the camper sign the contract, you sign the contract, your supervisor sign the contract, and date it.
7. Keep the contract in a file in the camp office. Write down on an accompanying paper any progress made, or difficulty in making progress.

## APPENDIX B

### SILLY INTERVENTIONS

The reason to plan (maybe even practice—it may be fun!) silly interventions is for use when tensions are mounting between 2 or more campers. By using one of these, or (better yet!!) your own “silly” technique, you will draw the attention away from the disagreement, and onto yourself. This allows you to “de-escalate” the situation somewhat, hopefully avoiding any physical altercations.

We have listed a few “silly” things to do...be creative and add your own creative touches to this list. Remember to do these in an “animated,” loud manner. The purpose is to be so ridiculous that your campers stop to look at you in disbelief!

- act like an ape, saying “oo-oo, oo-oo,” as you do,
- sing like an opera singer,
- screech loudly like a large bird,
- squeal like a pig,
- talk like John Wayne, “Well, Pilgrims!”

Personal Interventions:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Once you have everyone’s attention, immediately separate the involved campers and speak quietly and calmly to each.

## APPENDIX C

### POSSIBLE REINFORCEMENTS

#### TANGIBLE ITEMS:

1 piece gum\*  
1 piece candy (there are many types of candy that are individually wrapped yet not hard...you don't want a choking hazard!)\*  
1 can pop  
Sticker\*  
Pencil  
Stationery (purchase a package of stationery, and make small packets - 2 sheets of stationery with 1 envelope...put in a baggie or wrap in tissue)\*  
Pen  
Eraser  
Poster  
Trinket (such as those found in gumball machines...kids' party favors in the birthday party section)  
Crayons  
Coloring pages (make up coloring pictures and xerox)  
Snack foods  
Paperback story books  
Markers

\* these reinforcements are alot less expensive than others on the list.

The list is inexhaustible...anything that campers enjoy. Use your imagination, and add to this list.

#### PRIVILEGES:

10-minute extension of favorite activity.  
Allow camper to choose 1 activity for the group to do.  
15-minute extension of bed-time (DO NOT allow the campers to sleep in).  
Counselor cleans camper's area for 1 day  
Counselor tells story.

Again, add to this list yourself as you get to know your campers! Find out what their favorite "thing to do" is, and offer it as a reward for points earned.

**CABIN POINT CHART**

NAME - BEHAVIOR	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Amy - neat area am / pm	- / *	* / *	- / *	* / *	- / *	* / *
Barbara - pers. hyg.	-	*	*	* am / pm	*	*
Kathy - pos. react. am / pm   am / pm	- / * - / *	- / * - / *	- / * - / *	* / * * / *	- / * * / *	- / * * / *
Missy - approp. lang. am / pm	* / -	* / *	- / -	* / *	* / *	* / *
Yolanda - neat area am / pm	- / -	- / -	* / -	* / *	* / *	* / *
* = Criteria Met - = Needs Work						

**PLEASE NOTE:** The individual behavioral contracts “spell out” what these abbreviations mean.

e.g. Kathy “pos. react.” = “positive reactions”

- Kathy will make eye contact, smile, and say something pleasant in return to campers speaking to her. She will not make negative statements such as, “how stupid!”

**APPENDIX D**

**LIST OF HELP AVAILABLE**

Complete this phone list, after speaking with your supervisor about established procedures during emergencies. These numbers may be needed at a later time. If an emergency should arise, remain calm, and follow the established procedures as you have been instructed by your supervisor

Ambulance ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
Fire ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
Police  
    Local ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
    Sheriff Dept ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
State Police ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
Dentist ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Doctor ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
  
U.S. Coast Guard  
(for camps near large waterways ..... \_\_\_\_\_

**Mental Health Specialists:**

NOTE: These people will be able to provide assistance in many areas. Specialities are noted, when appropriate; these professionals' skills are not limited to the categories listed, however.

"Hot line" for emergency mental health situations

(not available in all areas) ..... \_\_\_\_\_

Clergy ..... \_\_\_\_\_

Community Mental Health ..... \_\_\_\_\_

    Emergency mental health difficulties (e.g., suicide threats/ attempts, children with attention deficit disorder, children with extreme behavioral difficulties)

Local Community Hospital ..... \_\_\_\_\_

    Emergency help with medical, and sometimes nonmedical, difficulties related to mental health and behaviors (e.g., children on prescribed medications for attention deficit disorders, antipsychotics, antidepressants, mood stabilizers).



INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT \_\_\_\_\_  
(School Psychologist, Teacher Consultants, School Social Workers)

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
(Teacher Consultants, School Counselors, School Social Workers)

Yes, you are able to locate professionals who are employed by these school districts during the summer months for help with emergency issues in their areas of expertise. Non-medical interventions are attention deficit disorder (ADHD or ADD) campers, behavioral difficulties, mentally impaired campers, learning disabled campers (problems with an academic area of reading, math writing, listening comprehension, and/or speech), depression, suicide threat/attempt, dealing with death/dying, emotionally impaired campers.

Private-practice psychiatrist ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
This is an M.D. who has also specialized in psychological interventions, and would be a good source of help with a camper on antidepressant, antipsychotic, and mood stabilizing, or ADHD medications.

Private-practice psychologists ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
These professionals also provide mental health services in the areas mentioned above; they do not prescribe medications.

Private-practice therapist ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
There are a wide range of other professionals with skills in therapy. They may hold degrees in counseling, social work, or other professional areas.

YOUR CAMP NAME, ADDRESS, AND PHONE NUMBER

---

---

---

## APPENDIX E

### RELAXATION TECHNIQUE

Sometimes, it is difficult for campers to settle at night. This particular relaxation technique is one that we use with our own children at home. It is very effective, when used as part of a "routine." We precede this with a bedtime story for younger children.

Be sure to speak in a very calm voice (at a low tone...don't use a high or squeaky pitch), and sound "sleepy" as you speak...like you would if trying to help a baby to sleep.

If you want, use this script. Go very slowly, in a relaxed way:

"Remember, no noise, talking, or laughing during our relaxation exercise. Just listen, and follow my instructions.

- Lay flat on your backs with legs down and arms at your sides
- Now, tense your toes...squeeze them together as tightly as you can...feel how tense they are. Keep them tense to the count of 3, 1...2...3. Now, relax them, and feel how heavy they seem.
- Next, tense your ankles...hold to the count of 5. 1...2...3...4...5. Relax your ankles; feel how heavy they seem.
- Tense you calves very tightly...hold to the count of 5. 1...2...3...4...5. Relax, and feel the heaviness.
- Tense you upper legs tightly...hold to the count of 5. 1...2...3...4...5. Relax, and feel the heaviness.
- Clench your fists tightly...as tight as you can...hold to the count of 5. 1...2...3...4...5. Relax, and feel how heavy your hands seem.
- Tense your lower arms and wrists very tightly; hold to the count of 5. 1...2...3...4...5. Relax, and feel the heaviness.
- Tense your shoulder muscles...hold to the count of 5. 1...2...3...4...5. Relax, and feel the heaviness.

- Pull your head up until your chin is on your chest...hold to the count of 5. 1...2...3...4...5. Relax, and lay your head down.

Now, your whole body should feel very relaxed and heavy. Now, listen to the \_\_\_\_\_ (crickets, raindrops, breeze, waves...whatever constant noise there is at your camp), and do not say or whisper anything for the next 5 minutes.”

Hopefully, during this 5 minutes, some of your campers will fall asleep

**NOTES**



**NOTES**



## NOTES



## NOTES



**NOTES**

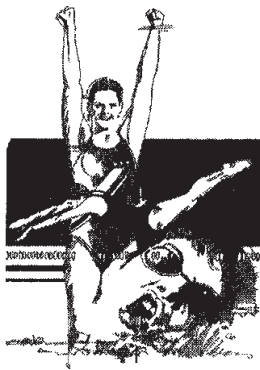




NOTES



**NOTES**



## NOTES



Reprinted by Permission of  
The  
Authors

QUANTITY: 1,000  
COST: \$2,209.87 (\$2.21 ea.)  
AUTHORIZATION: Director

LARA is an equal opportunity employer/program.

BCAL Pub-31 (Rev. 4/16)