

American Camp Association Camp Research Forum Book of Abstracts

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January 3, 2023

Dear Colleagues:

This book includes 19 abstracts that will be presented at the 2023 American Camp Association (ACA) Research Forum to be held during the ACA annual conference from February 21-24, 2023 in Orlando, FL. Abstracts have been grouped into similar areas and will be verbally presented in four sessions. All abstracts will be on display as posters.

The Camp Research Forum has grown in quantity and quality over the past decade. ACA's Committee for the Advancement of Research and Evaluation (CARE) has been instrumental in pushing this forum forward. Staff at ACA have been enthusiastically supportive, especially Dr. Laurie Browne and Melany Irvin. Two external reviewers provided peer-reviewed evaluations for the selection of these abstracts. We thank these reviewers for their time, expertise, and energy.

We look forward to presenting these papers at the 2023 Camp Research Forum, but also recognize that many people cannot attend the annual meeting. We hope these short, three-page abstracts will provide information for those not able to attend. Please contact the authors if you have further questions.

Best wishes,



Ann Gillard, Ph.D.
2023 ACA Research Forum Coordinator

The proper way to cite these abstracts using APA 7th edition is:
Author name(s). (2023, February 21-24). Title of abstract. In A. Gillard (Chair), *ACA Camp Research Forum Book of Abstracts* [Symposium]. American Camp Association's 2022 Camp Research Forum, United States.

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ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENCE: A STUDY ON DISEASE SELF-MANAGEMENT AND SELF-EFFICACY AT AN ARTHRITIS FOUNDATION CAMP

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Resident camps are an excellent opportunity for youth to build independence and confidence outside of their usual routines. Camps are also an important space for learning and growth through targeted programs and experiential learning. These learning experiences are often transferable to various contexts, remaining relevant for youth as they transition to adulthood (Wilson et al., 2019). For children with chronic illness, camp has been shown to influence greater initiative on disease-related tasks (Fullerton et al., 2000). Extensive research documents the self-management skills needed for a successful transition to adulthood for youth with chronic health conditions, yet there remains a significant gap between what is known and what is implemented in healthcare practice (White et al., 2018).

Staff at an Arthritis Foundation camp in Minnesota developed a program targeting self-management and transition skills for youth with rheumatic conditions. The program was designed with Bandura's theory of self-efficacy in mind, with the understanding that self-efficacy is critical in self-management of rheumatic conditions (Brady, 2011). The program is created and administered by adult patients with rheumatic conditions in collaboration with healthcare providers. This study evaluated the effects of this program on campers' disease self-management and self-efficacy.

Methods

Camp staff administered pre- and post- surveys on the first and last days of a week-long Arthritis Foundation camp during the summer of 2022. Surveys contained three quantitative instruments: 1) an adapted version of Transitions: Managing My Own Health Care (Transitions Scale) which measures disease self-management (Children's Hospital Boston, n.d.); 2) The Children's Arthritis Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES) which asks about symptoms, emotional impact, and their ability to control symptoms (Barlow & Wright, 2001); and 3) Children's Hope Scale (Hope Scale; Snyder et al., 1997). Surveys also included two open-ended questions 1) "What do you hope to get out of camp?" and 2) "What did you learn at camp?" This project was approved by the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Institutional Review Board.

The research team generated descriptive statistics for pre- and post- responses for demographic characteristics, cumulative scores for each scale and subscale, and individual questions within each scale. Cumulative scores were stratified by three dichotomized variables: age; number of years of camp experience; and number of years living with one or more autoimmune diagnoses. Given the lack of identifiers collected, Fisher's Exact and *t*-tests were used to assess differences between pre- and post- responses. All analyses were conducted using R. After initial coding, the research team used thematic analysis to examine the open-ended responses.

Results

Quantitative results

The pre- sample ($n = 51$) was 13.9 ± 2.6 years old, predominantly female (78.4%), white (90.2%), and had 3.4 ± 2.3 years of camp experience. Their most common diagnosis was arthritis (89.6%) and they lived with their diagnosis for 8.7 ± 4.4 years. The post-sample ($n = 50$) was not significantly different for demographic characteristics.

Cumulative scores for the three scales and corresponding subscales increased modestly from pre- to post- camp, though the majority were not statistically significant (see Table 1). For Transitions (older group), improvements in cumulative scores were observed overall ($M: 54.9 \pm 5.8$ to 58.6 ± 5.4 , respectively), among those with 4+ years camp experience ($M: 57.2 \pm 4.3$ to 59.9 ± 4.5 , respectively), and among those with 8+ years living with their condition ($M: 55.7 \pm 4.6$ to 59.4 ± 5.3 , respectively) ($p < 0.05$ for all). Similar trends were found for CASES. Overall, scores improved from 40.1 ± 10.3 to 43.7 ± 8.1 ($p = 0.0615$). Scores improved the most for the older group (39.1 ± 10.2 to 44.1 ± 6.9 , respectively) and those with 8+ years living with their condition (40.0 ± 8.8 to 45.0 ± 6.5 , respectively), ($p < 0.05$ for all). For Hope and its subscales, only very small (non-significant) improvements occurred overall and when stratified by the three variables.

Table 1
Cumulative Scales and Subscales Pre- and Post Camp¹

Scale and Subscales (Lowest and Highest Possible Scores) ²	Pre Mean \pm SD	Post Mean \pm SD	Pre-Post Change T-Test p-value
Transitions Scale ³			
Younger (15–60)	44.4 \pm 5.2	47.7 \pm 4.8	0.1918
Older (17–68)	54.9 \pm 5.8	58.6 \pm 5.4	0.0089
Children's Arthritis Self-Efficacy Scale			
Overall (11–55)	40.1 \pm 10.3	43.7 \pm 8.1	0.0615
Symptoms Subscale (4–20)	14.4 \pm 3.7	15.4 \pm 3.2	0.1428
Emotions Subscale (3–15)	10.7 \pm 3.3	11.8 \pm 3.0	0.0880
Activity Subscale (4–20)	15.1 \pm 4.5	16.5 \pm 3.2	0.0816
Hope Scale Overall (6–36)	27.8 \pm 6.1	28.7 \pm 4.3	0.4429
Pathways Subscale (3–18)	13.9 \pm 2.9	14.2 \pm 2.7	0.5953
Agency Subscale (3–18)	13.8 \pm 3.5	14.4 \pm 2.5	0.3266

¹Only participants who had complete scale and/or subscale information were included in the cumulative analyses.

²For each scale and subscale, higher scores represent better health.

³The prompt, "I worry about my health," was reverse coded.

Qualitative results

In response to the pre-question "What do you hope to get out of camp?" campers wanted to make new friends who understood them, "be in a space of feeling safe," and learn more about their health conditions. Post-survey responses to the question "What did you learn at camp?" fit into two primary themes: relating to others and learning how to manage their health/disease. Relating to others included making friends "that understand you" and knowing that "I'm not alone." Learning encompassed disease-specific information ("how to live my life with arthritis"), transition-related information ("what it can look like to transition doctors"), and social-emotional information ("how to advocate for myself and cope with my disease").

Discussion and Implications

This study assessed how a health education program affects campers' self-management and transition-related knowledge, self-efficacy, and hope. Results suggest that campers learned more about their conditions and healthcare transition through the

programming implemented, along with making meaningful connections with other kids with arthritis. Camp also aided in their self-efficacy as their perceived ability to manage their symptoms in certain situations improved. The modest sample size may have occluded more statistically significant results between pre- and post- tests as the qualitative data indicate stronger changes in disease self-management and perspective than the quantitative data. We are looking into other possible tools that might be better able to measure the aforementioned skills.

Camps serve as a way to increase independence and allow campers to develop new skills. Campers with chronic illnesses often lack the support and education needed to successfully take over their own healthcare and disease management. The findings of this study demonstrate the potential of medical camps to serve as venues for self-management and transition education to supplement the services provided in healthcare settings. While this research was focused on medical transition for chronically ill youth, results from this study indicate that youth benefit from programming focused on self-efficacy, a skill that is central to the learning process, motivation, and autonomy. Further research should examine if other medical camps are implementing similar educational programs, if the findings are replicable at such camps, and compare the content of the educational programming to continue improving campers' self-efficacy and knowledge of disease self-management.

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Encouraging Independence: A Study on Disease Self-Management and Self-Efficacy at an Arthritis Foundation Camp

Kaye Anderson; Dana Guglielmo, MPH; Katelyn Melcher MA; Anya Khurana, BS; Ela Chintagunta; Courtney Wells, PhD, MPH, MSW



The aim of this study was to evaluate the effects of the Seeds Program on campers' disease self-management, self-efficacy, and hope.

Seeds Program

Program targeting self-management and transition skills for youth with rheumatic conditions

Content

- Self-Advocacy
- School, Doctors Appointments, Home
- Transition Skills
 - Pediatric to Adult care
 - High School to College
 - School to Job
- Disease Management
 - Administering Medications
 - Pain Management
- Mindfulness
- Nutrition
- Low-Impact Exercise



Results

Large improvements ($p < 0.05$) observed for those that have lived with their health condition for 8+ Years in both the Transitions Scale (Figure 1) and CASES (Figure 2)

Significant improvements ($p < 0.05$) observed in individual Questions:

- Knowing others with same condition
- Looking up to people with same condition
- Confidence in condition knowledge
- How condition affects pregnancy
- Managing swollen joints
- Managing arthritis in exercise at school



What did you learn at camp?

It's ok to cry

How to accept myself. I'm not alone.

I learned about how pain works

To be your best self and not be afraid of my disease

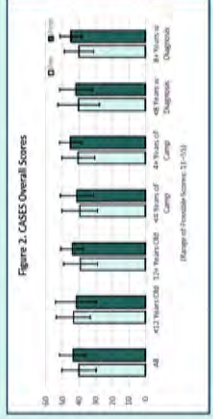
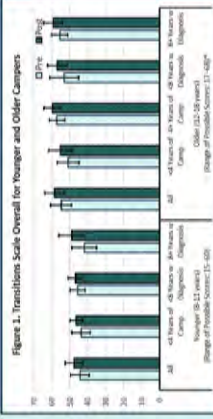
I learned about my physical, mental, and emotional health

I learned how to live my life with arthritis and also that I think

that I never tell anyone about my arthritis because I am afraid

that they will treat me different or think I'm weird and camp

has helped me realize I need to advocate for myself more.



Methods

Design

- Created and implemented by patients
- Pre- and post-camp anonymous surveys
- Sample size (pre: n=51; post: n=50)

Quantitative Instruments

- Transitions: Managing My Own Health Care
- The Children's Arthritis Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES)
- Children's Hope Scale

Quantitative Analysis

- Descriptive statistics generated
- Cumulative scores calculated for scales
 - Stratified by 3 variables
- Pre-post differences assessed using Fisher's exact tests and t-tests

Discussion

- Campers learned more about their conditions and healthcare transition along with making meaningful connections with other kids with arthritis
- Camp aided in campers' self-efficacy as their perceived ability to manage their symptoms in certain situations improved
- Medical camps can serve as venues for self-management and transition education to supplement the services provided in healthcare settings
- All campers may benefit from programming focused on self-efficacy and self-management, as these are skills critical to the transition to adulthood and independence

Young Patients' Autoimmune Research & Empowerment Alliance

The Young Patients' Autoimmune Research and Empowerment Alliance (YP AREA) seeks to make healthcare research accessible and inclusive by empowering young patients with relevant information about autoimmune diseases and the skills to engage in all stages of research.

This project was created and implemented by members of YP AREA (Kaye, Anya, Ela, and advisor Courtney Wells).

Acknowledgements

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LIONS, TIGERS, AND GLUCOSE, OH MY: PILOTING A TEEN DIABETES CAMP ON CAMPUS

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Type 1 diabetes (T1D) is an autoimmune disease where the pancreas stops producing insulin. T1D is managed by checking blood glucose levels and giving insulin. When poorly managed, blood glucose levels increase potentially leading to severe complications. Although management is crucial in preventing complications, one of the major challenges of living with diabetes is carrying out effective self-care (Hill et al., 2019). Most youth with T1D know and understand the potential complications of their diabetes, so the motivating factors that drive youth to manage their diabetes should also be considered. Through the self-determination theory (SDT), Ryan and Deci (2020) argue that when an individual's basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met, individuals are more likely to internalize healthy behaviors. One way to offer support to youth with T1D is using a diabetes Camp on Campus designed for teens/tweens. The purpose of this study was to determine if a theoretically grounded, diabetes camp for tweens/teens increased participants level of perceived autonomy, competence, and relatedness, while helping to maintain effective glucose levels.

Methods

Recreate, Educate, Advocate, and Climb Higher (REACH) is a university-based diabetes recreation program for youth. Based on a 2021 two-day camp, REACH fully introduced a new program, the tween/teen diabetes five-day camp in summer 2022. This camp was engineered through Outcome-focused Programming (OFP) and geared towards youth 11-16 years old. OFP uses structured recreational activities that are intended to meet outcome-oriented goals. For example, choice provision of activities was built into many aspects of the week-long day camp. Camp also focused on competence through such activities as Nutrition Jeopardy. Relatedness was addressed through having all campers with T1D at camp, sharing challenges, and supporting one another. Additionally, REACH used CampViews which is software designed for diabetes camps and participants to sync their Dexcom, giving camp administrators and medical staff access to their blood glucose levels in real time. Time in Range (TIR) while at camp should be between 70-180mg/dL; we evaluated the data recorded through camper's Dexcom while attending camp. To measure the dimensions of SDT, campers also completed the 24-item Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction Frustration Scale (BPNSFS) prior to camp and at the conclusion of camp. A paired sample *t*-test was run to measure the data collected through the BPNSFS.

Results

After data were matched, 23 complete data sets (92% response rate) were analyzed using a *t*-test in SPSS V28. Fifty percent of the campers identified as male, and the average age of the campers was 12 years old. Seventy percent of campers identified as white, 16.7% as African American, and 12.5% as Latino. The average time with diabetes among all campers was 4.5 years and the average self-reported A1C was 7.7%. Of the 23 matched pairs, 11 campers used Dexcom, thus allowing camp staff to monitor their blood glucose while at camp. The overall average blood glucose level for campers was 178 mg/dL during

camp hours (9am-4pm). Additionally, after evaluating the data provided by campers' Dexcom, 11 campers had the most effective blood glucose average on Monday (161 mg/dL).

A paired sample *t*-test was run to calculate composite scores for autonomy, relatedness, and competence. The composite scores for Autonomy (A) pretest ($M = 3.86$, $SD = .50$) to posttest ($M = 3.95$, $SD = .49$), with $t(22) = -.731$, $p = .15$), effect size $r = 0.23$ (weak). The composite scores for Relatedness (R) pretest ($M = 4.11$, $SD = .73$) to posttest ($M = 4.45$, $SD = .59$), with $t(22) = -2.049$, $p = .05$), effect size $r = .4$ (medium). The composite score for Competence (C) pretest ($M = 3.86$, $SD = .64$) to posttest ($M = 3.99$, $SD = .65$), with $t(22) = -.903$, $p = .37$), effect size $r = .81$ (weak).

Discussion and Implications

Worldwide, the number of people living with T1D is expected to double by 2040 (Gregory et al., 2022). The goal of camp was to use OFP grounded in SDT to help tween/teen participants internalize better diabetes management skills while also measuring TIR at camp. Of the three SDT outcomes measured, relatedness was the closest to statistical significance, although all three scores were trending in a positive direction. Furthermore, the BPNSFS is a newer measure. The BPNSFS youth version has not yet been used in a diabetes camp setting, thus adding to the body of knowledge. The use of CampViews to track participants TIR while at camp builds on current research within the field. Maintaining an average glucose level of 178 mg/dL, as campers did, is an effective range at camp. Our data aligns with other research that "youth with T1D can benefit from a high level of physical activity without undue fear of hypoglycemia," (Gal et al., 2022). Monday's camp day consisted of swimming, walking, tie-dye and activity games of the court, resulting in a TIR of 161 mg/dL, which was the most active day and most effective TIR.

This study had a few limitations. First the sample size was small. The small sample size affected the significance of our results. Additionally, of our small sample size 70% identified as white making the sample not diverse. Finally, the pre-camp survey was designed to be taken by campers prior to participating in any camp activities. The pre-camp survey was distributed via email to participant's parents prior to camp starting with the option for campers to take the survey at home. This was a potential limitation since some parents may have provided extra assistance completing the questionnaire. This final limitation can be controlled and next year we plan to administer all surveys directly to the participants at the start of camp.

Using OFP grounded in SDT and campers' basic psychological needs can be applied to other medical specialty and traditional camps. Within this study the theoretical basis of SDT is centered around campers' motivation to manage their diabetes, but SDT can be applied to any human behavior requiring motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Many camps can use this model by using OFP grounded in SDT and measure if participants' basic psychological needs are further met after attending camp. Future research should explore longitudinal studies on participants who frequent several REACH programs over the course of the year to determine if campers maintain a more effective TIR while participating. The study attempting to capture the psycho-social and biometric outcomes of the unique camp of campus model serving youth with diabetes. This model and data assist in building a Community of Practice within the diabetes camp world by way of common interest, creating a network, and assisting practitioners to improving quality of life (e.g., Hill et al., 2022).

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Lions, Tigers and CGMs, Oh My: Piloting a Teen Diabetes Camp on Campus

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A special thank you to Aiden Hill for his hard work and dedication as the best Counselor in Training (CIT) for two years.

INTRO

- Type 1 diabetes (T1D) is an autoimmune disease in which the pancreas stops producing insulin
- When T1D is not managed well blood glucose levels increase and can cause severe complications
- Research suggests that T1D have the highest glycated hemoglobin (HbA1c) during adolescence (Hegger, 2018, p. 1)
- The motivating factors that drive youth to manage their diabetes should be considered
- Self-Determination Theory (SDT) argues that when an individual's basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met individuals are more likely to internalize healthy behaviors (Ryan and Deci 2020)
- One way to offer support to youth with T1D is through the diabetes Camp or Campus model designed for teens and "teens" with T1D
- The purpose of this study was to determine if a theoretically grounded, diabetes medical specialty camp for teens/teens increased participants level of perceived autonomy, competence, and relatedness, while helping to maintain effective glucose levels.

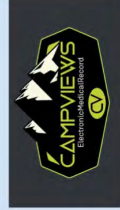
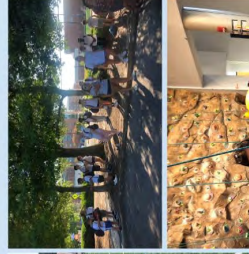


METHODS

- Based on a 2021 two-day camp, REACH fully introduced a new program, the teen/teen diabetes five-day camp in summer 2022.
- Camp was designed using Outcome Focused Programming (OFP) grounded in SDT
- To assess if camper's basic psychological needs improved by attending camp The Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction Frustration Scale (BPNSSFS) was administered prior to and post camp
- To assess camper's glycemic levels, data were collected via CampViews through camper's continuous glucose monitors (CGM) and analyzed to track Time in Range (TIR) during camp.



Campers' average blood glucose level was in range while attending camp and their feelings of relatedness increased.



RESULTS

- 25 campers attended camp
- 50% of campers identified as male
- Average age of camper = 12 years
- Of the 25 participants 23 completed both surveys (92% response rate)
- Average time with diabetes was 4.5 years
- A pair sample t-test was conducted to determine if participants basic psychological needs were met further after attending camp
- Significant posttest composite scores for Relatedness (R) pretest ($M=4.11$, $SD=.73$) to posttest ($M=4.45$, $SD=.59$), with $t(22) = -2.049$, $p = .05$, effect size $r = .4$ (medium)
- Of the 25 campers 11 synced their Dexcom to CampViews allowing for data collection of their blood glucose levels
- The overall average blood glucose level for all 11 campers was 178 mg/dL during camp hours (9am-4pm)
- Campers had the most effective blood glucose average on Monday



DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

- Worldwide, the number of people living with T1D is expected to double by 2040 (Gregory et al., 2022)
- The use of CampViews to track participants TIR while at camp builds on current research within the field.
- Our data aligns with other research that youth with T1D can benefit from a high level of physical activity without undue fear of hypoglycemia (Gai et al., 2022)
- Maintaining an average glucose level of 178 mg/dL, as campers did, is an effective range at camp
- Monday's camp day consisted of swimming, walking, life-dye and activity games of the court, resulting in a TIR of 161 mg/dL, which was the most active day and most effective TIR
- Future research should explore longitudinal studies on participants who frequent several REACH programs over the course of the year to determine if campers maintain a more effective TIR while participating
- Using OFP grounded in SDT and campers' basic psychological needs can be applied to other medical specialty and traditional camps (Arrington et al., 2021)
- This model and data assist in building a Community of Practice within the diabetes camp world by way of common interest, creating a network, and assisting practitioners to improving quality of life (Hill et al., 2022)

SERVING CHILDREN WITH FOOD ALLERGY AT SUMMER CAMP

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Severe food allergy (SFA) is an emerging issue in public, educational, and recreational spaces, as the condition rises in prevalence and severity (Capucilli et al., 2019). While many camps do not focus exclusively on serving children with food allergies, nearly all camps (94%-99%) serve some children with food allergies (Schellpfeffer et al., 2020). While this youth population may be small (Schellpfeffer et al., 2017), it is critical that camps are prepared to safely serve children with food allergies as anaphylaxis due to allergen exposure is a major concern. Many studies examining food allergy and camp have focused on documenting rates of food allergy, anaphylaxis management, and training staff on food allergy and anaphylaxis (Schellpfeffer et al., 2020). This work has been foundational to ensuring a safe experience for youth attending camp. However, less research has focused on the socio-emotional impacts of attending camp with a food allergy or exploring how children with food allergy may uniquely experience summer camp (Liebel & Fenton, 2016).

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the experience of summer camp for children with food allergies. Two critical sensitizing concepts underpinning this research are inclusion and social identity theory. Inclusion, defined as a sense of belonging, acceptance, and value (Stainback & Stainback, 1990), is a significant concern for children with SFA because lack of inclusion of children with special needs can further decrease quality of life by making children with SFA feel they do not belong. Social identity theory is the way in which social identity is created through opportunities for social comparison to develop a sense of self (Hogg & Ridgeway, 2003). Social identity theory is salient as a sense of self is critical as campers begin to negotiate adolescence and the rapid changes occurring throughout that phase, while becoming more independent from their parents.

Method

This qualitative study was grounded in phenomenology to better understand the experience of food allergy at summer camp from a youth perspective. A tiered approach was developed to identify camps with high to low food allergy accommodation levels. The high accommodation camp was a food allergy specialty camp, the mid-level accommodation camp was a Kosher healthy eating camp, and finally a traditional camp.

Campers and staff were recruited in cooperation with administrators from the three low to high tiered camps identified, and staff were recruited from the same camps. This study was approved by Clemson University's Institutional Review Board, and the appropriate consent or assent was obtained for all participants. Zoom interviews were conducted with six campers, two from each camp, as well as the campers' mothers, and staff from each of the three camps.

All data were transcribed verbatim and coded by the primary author for emergent themes. Themes were generated deductively, based on the research questions, and inductively, emerging from the transcripts. Trustworthiness of data was established with triangulation of youth interviews and staff interviews, and a member-checking procedure where parent-child dyads had the opportunity to review themes and representative quotes and give feedback (Creswell, 2013).

Results

Four themes emerged from the data analysis process: 1) Trust and Transparency, 2) Inclusion is about Connection, and 3) Inclusion and Exclusion Coexist and 4) Parental

Influence on Campers Conceptualization. The first theme, Trust and Transparency, relates to the way campers interact with the camp staff and kitchen, and the process of building trust with campers through transparency in the kitchen. Campers needed evidence the food was safe to develop trust in the kitchen and camp staff in general. The development of trust facilitated autonomy, as campers were able to independently identify safe foods and self-manage their allergies. The second theme, Inclusion is about Connection, reflects inclusion at mealtime and throughout the camp experience. Campers reported feeling included when they were engaged with other campers in a way that engendered connection, such as relating to another camper about a shared interest or participating in an activity that brought people together. The third theme, Inclusion and Exclusion can Coexist, highlights the tension that exists when inclusion requires special accommodations that may mark a child as different, causing exclusion or isolation. Sometimes including someone in a broader experience meant excluding them from smaller moments within that experience. It may also mean campers need to negotiate experiences to balance safety and maximum inclusion.

The final theme, Parental Influence on Campers Conceptualization, relates to the role of parents in allergy management and the ways in which parental attitudes towards the food allergy are sometimes mirrored in their children. Many mothers involved in this study managed an extraordinary amount of work behind the scenes to ensure their child was safe at school, in social situations outside of school, and at camp. Many campers, especially younger campers, were not fully aware of the work their mothers were doing and thus had a skewed perspective of how easy managing their allergy is: it is easy for them because their mother had proactively established plans for their safety in cooperation with camp administrators. Additionally, it was apparent that how parents speak about food allergy often becomes how children speak about their allergy. Parents who are very comfortable with allergy management tend to have children who are more comfortable with allergy management, while parents who remain hypervigilant may have children who are hypervigilant, exemplifying the role parents play in modeling for their children.

Discussion and Implications

The themes identified in this study provide insight into how children with food allergies experience camp and how camp provider accommodations to serve children with SFA impact campers' experiences. Generally, campers reported a positive camp experience which was improved by trust in the safety of the food and peer connections that facilitated inclusion. For example, if a camper typically felt safe and included in the peer group, they were not upset when they had to miss parts of an activity for their safety (e.g., peanut butter cookies for dessert) as those instances were brief, and they had friends to support them.

Campers also expressed a desire for the opportunity to independently manage their allergy, while being included in the traditional camp meal service. Older campers in particular felt most comfortable when ingredient lists or food labels were readily available to them and wanted access to the person who made the dish if they had questions. Participation in typical (rather than a specialized, often separate) meal service was also highly valued. For campers at one camp, participation involved being able to eat food from the traditional buffet line, rather than the allergen-free table, which was free of all reported allergens and might not be as appetizing. Campers at another camp regretted missing pre-COVID-19 food service, where they had the unique experience of an allergen free buffet and noted that getting a pre-portioned plate of safe food made the camp experience more like their usual school or home routine.

Limitations to this study were primarily associated with the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study is not a true phenomenology due to lack of embeddedness, as many camps were limiting visitors during the summer of 2021 and the lead researcher was not allowed to be embedded in the camp. Additionally, camp cohorts were smaller leading to a smaller pool from which to recruit study participants, and a smaller than desired sample size. Finally, the pandemic disrupted the typical trajectories and experiences of many adolescents. For example, most of the older campers had not yet had the typical teenage experience of going out to eat without their parents as they were too young to do so when the pandemic started. Therefore, participating in allergy management at camp was a more novel experience for them than it would be for the teenagers who were involved in studies that occurred pre-pandemic.

Conclusion

Camp leadership needs to think critically about how they serve the growing population of campers with food allergies. Decision-making needs to consider the developmental abilities of the participants to balance youth needs for autonomy with safety, and to allow campers to practice allergy management in a supportive environment. Adolescence is a primary risk factor in food-related anaphylaxis deaths, as teenagers spend less time with parents and may take risks regarding food (Mudd & Wood, 2011). However, adolescence is also a prime developmental time during which teens can learn allergy management skills as the responsibility for allergy management shifts from the parent to the child (Sicherer et al., 2021). Camps can use their intentionally designed positive youth development context to support campers during this transition and help prepare them for a safe and successful adulthood.

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Serving Children with Food Allergy at Residential Camp

Ali Dubin, PhD & Barry A. Garst, PhD, Clemson University

Top 9 Food Allergens:



Purpose: To understand the experience of residential summer camp for children with food allergies

Methods: Qualitative study grounded in phenomenology looking at camper experience and camp accommodations/ procedures
 3 camps ranked from high to low accommodation were included in the study
 Zoom interviews conducted with staff, campers, and campers' mothers

KEY FINDING: Effective allergy management in camp balances safety and autonomy.

THEMES

1: Trust and transparency

Camps should consider strategies to increase trust through transparency: kitchen tours, food labels, ingredient lists

2: Inclusion is connection

Camps should consider activities that bring people together in meaningful ways to facilitate inclusion

3: Inclusion and exclusion coexist

Camps need to consider how they balance safety and inclusion and minimize exclusion

4: Parents are influential

Camps need to work with parents, while providing campers opportunities for autonomy in a supportive environment

APPLICATIONS

Strategies for Food Allergy Safety for Developmental Stages

Strategy	Use for Elementary School campers	Use for Middle School campers	Use for High School campers
Clear knowledge of allergens contained in foods	Green	Green	Green
List of allergens in each dish	Green	Yellow	Yellow
List of ingredients in each dish	Green	Green	Green
Staff available to answer questions	Green	Green	Green
Staff supervise food choices	Green	Green	Yellow
Safe plate made for camper	Green	Yellow	Red
Self-carried epinephrine	Green	Green	Green
Knowledge of emergency response plan	Green	Yellow	Green
Ability to recognize allergic reaction	Green	Yellow	Green

Green= Always, Yellow= Sometimes, Red= Never

AN EFFICIENT AND PRECISE MEASURE OF IMMERSION FOR EVALUATING CAMP EXPERIENCES

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A substantial and growing body of literature points to the potential developmental importance of immersion during structured experiences, such as individual camp activity sessions. Immersion refers to the transitory motivational state people feel while participating in an activity requiring performance of a task, such as during archery, rock climbing, dancing, and swimming. Csikszentmihalyi (1988) showed how such immersive “flow” experiences can expand important beliefs, expectations, and concepts people have about themselves, and Ellis et al. (2021) provided empirical data showing how immersion facilitates fulfillment of people’s needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2002). As such, future evaluators and researchers will likely have a need for an effective and efficient way of measuring immersion during camp activities.

Yet, measuring immersion can be challenging. Current approaches to measuring flow and immersion follow from “true score” theory (e.g., Nunnally, 1978), requiring multiple questionnaire items to achieve reliable scores. Multiple-item measures not only intrude on campers’ time and experience, but they also typically use Likert-type response scales, yielding imprecise, ordinal data (Stevens, 1972) that are often inappropriately summed to create a total score. Likert-type response formats often give rise to acquiescence (“yea-saying;” Posten & Steinmetz, 2022) and “halo effects” (Thorndike, 1920). Acquiescence and halo effects produce negatively skewed distributions and artificially high central tendencies. Variation is often insufficient to detect differences between immersion levels evoked by different activities (e.g., Bennett, 2018; Ellis et al., 2020). An improved process for evaluating camp activities is possible. Magnitude scaling (e.g., Cardello et al., 2005) can be used to produce precise, minimally invasive, ratio-level measures with substantial potential to discriminate among immersion in different activities or programs. Thus, we developed a Labeled Magnitude Scale (LMS) for measuring immersion during camp activities. We evaluated three newly introduced camp activities using the LMS, and evaluated distributions for validity, acquiescence, the halo effect, and discriminating power.

Method

Phase 1 of our study involved developing the LMS. LMS are commonly used in the food sciences industry to evaluate sensory reactions such as sweetness, texture, and satiety (Lawless & Heymann, 2010). They are founded in psychophysics instead of true score test theory. Unobservable magnitudes of subjective states (such as immersion) are equated with intensities of directly observable physical phenomena, such as light intensity, sound volume, numeric quantities, and line lengths. As an example, Green et al. (1993) developed an LMS to measure oral sensations. They equated food sensations with a graphic drawing of a continuum of numeric values. Their LMS locates six adverbial modifiers along a continuum based on their relative intensities: barely detectable (intensity = 1.4), weak (5.8), moderate (16.2), strong (33.1), very strong (50.1), and strongest imaginable (95.5). Research participants mark the point along the continuum best representing the magnitude of their oral sensations. The adverbial modifiers inform decisions regarding the precise point at which to mark the continuum.

For our LMS, 117 youth in a 4-H summer camp (59% girls, ages 12-15) judged the intensity of meaning of eight adverbial modifiers (e.g., “somewhat,” “slightly,” “rather,” and

“extremely”) using two modalities: hand grip squeeze intensity and line drawing length, in the context of their immersion during camp experiences. We then used magnitude scaling calculations (non-linear transformations) to locate each adverbial modifier along a continuum at its ratio-scaled distance from all others. Calculating magnitudes includes taking the log of responses, calculating geometric means per modifier, exponentiating, and normalizing magnitudes to a range of 0-100. Our LMS for measuring immersion at the peak moment of experiences (e.g., Kahneman, 2000) appears in Figure 1.

Phase 2 was a post-camp survey evaluating three newly introduced camp activities using our LMS: Fun with Food, Leathercrafts, and Outdoor Living. We distributed the questionnaire in the week following camp. Our questionnaire included LMS measure of peak and end moment immersion, and two criterion-validity measures: proclivity to recommend the activity and leveling-up (challenge-skill match). We hypothesized significant, positive relations between immersion (the average of peak- and end-moment immersion) and proclivity to recommend. We also hypothesized that peak-end immersion means would be highest when the challenges of the activity were commensurate with campers’ skill levels (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). Twenty-eight of 122 campers responded, a response rate of 23%.

Results

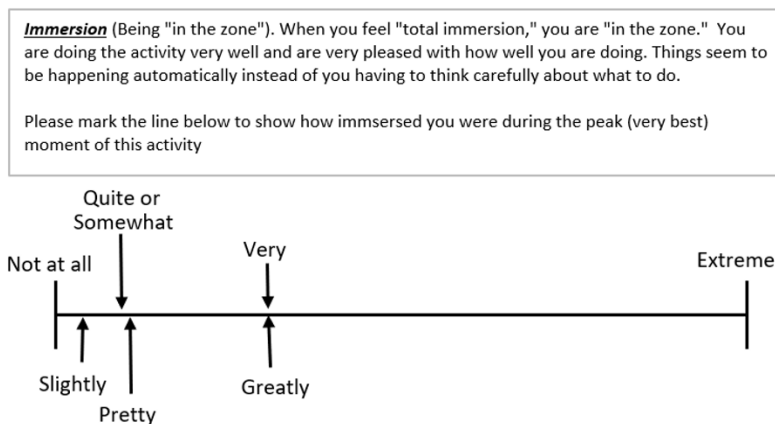
Evidence of validity was found in both phases. In Phase 1, the correlation between adverbial modifier strength via the two modalities was $r = .97$. In Phase 2, the LMS discriminated among immersion in the three new camp activities. Immersion during Outdoor Living was significantly less than during Fun with Food and Leathercrafts. Immersion was significantly correlated with proclivity to recommend for all three activities ($r = .61$, $.61$, and $.62$, respectively). For leveling-up, immersion means were highest in the “just right” difficulty level for all three activities. Unlike Likert scales, the ratio-level LMS scores allow for meaningful interpretation of percent differences. For Leathercrafts, the mean when leveled-up was 62.43, and only 30.22 when not leveled-up, a difference of 107%. The corresponding differences for Fun with Food and Outdoor Living were 42% and 24%, respectively. Box and whisker plots approximated near-normal distributions. These distributions indicate absence of halo effects and acquiescence.

Discussion

We developed a minimally invasive approach to measuring immersion during camp activities, at the ratio level of measurement. Validity was supported by correlations between the two psychophysics modalities as well as significant relations between immersion and criterion variables. Our LMS did not reflect halo or acquiescence effects, and it discriminated among camper immersion in three new camp activities. Within the limitations of the small sample size for Phase 2, sufficient criterion-related evidence of validity was provided to warrant recommending using the LMS as it appears in Figure 1 in future camp evaluations.

Figure 1

LMS for Measuring Immersion During Camp Activities (peak moment immersion illustrated)



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Study Aim/Purpose

We developed a Labeled Magnitude Scale (LMS) for measuring immersion during camp activities. We evaluated three newly introduced camp activities using the LMS, and evaluated distributions for validity, acquiescence, the halo effect, and discriminating power. Research Questions:

- 1) What are the relative distances in magnitude of six adverbial modifiers (see Methods, below)?

2) Criterion Validity

- 1) Will our LMS discriminate among camp activities and show criterion-related evidence of validity?
- 2) Will our LMS avoid halo effects and acquiescence?



Method

Phase 1: Calibrate adverbial modifiers: slightly, quite, somewhat, very, greatly, extremely, using two modalities: hand grip squeeze and line length drawing.

Phase 2: Post-camp survey to evaluate three newly introduced camp activities: fun with food, leathercrafts, and outdoor living.

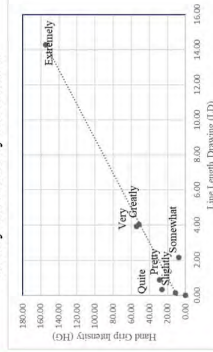
Results

Immersion (Rate "in the zone") When you feel total immersion, "you are in the zone." You are doing the activity well and are pleased with how well you are doing. Things seem to be happening automatically instead of you having to think carefully about what to do.

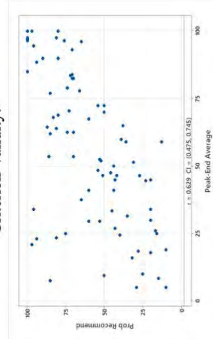
Please mark the line below to show how immersed you were during the peak (very best) moment of this activity.



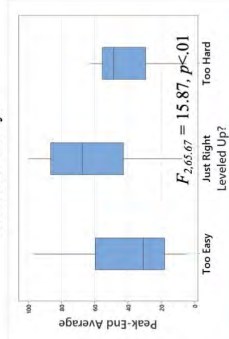
Validity via Modality Correlation!



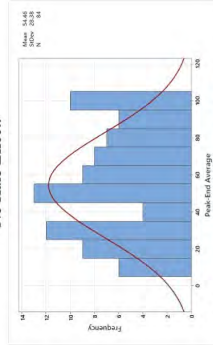
Criterion-Validity!



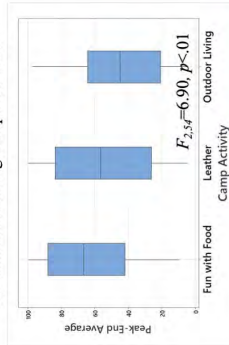
Criterion-Validity!



No Halo Effect!



Discriminates Among Camp Activities!



Implications for Practitioners

- 1) Labeled magnitude scale can be used for evaluation. It provides an efficient approach, minimally invasive on campers' time and experience.
- 2) It substantially minimizes the halo effect and produces scores that distinguish among evaluated activities.

MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SOCIAL HEALTH: EXPLORING YOUTH AND STAFF ISSUES AND SUPPORTS IN SUMMER CAMPS

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Concerns have escalated about youth mental health and well-being, with studies suggesting increases in anxiety and depression among youth (Chadi et al., 2022; Zolopa et al., 2022) and increases in depression, alcohol use, and eating disorders among college-age young adults associated with the COVID-19 pandemic (Bountress et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2022). As these mental, emotional, and social health (MESH; see Weare, 2013) issues have emerged, research has examined contemporary MESH issues impacting youth program participants, staff, and organizations (Bloomer et al., 2021; Woodberry-Shaw et al., 2022). While pandemic-related MESH issues have been studied in select youth settings (Borelli et al., 2020; Woodberry-Shaw et al., 2022), few empirical studies have examined MESH in the camp community, yet camp providers have identified participant MESH as a critical issue (Wilson, 2017). Furthermore, because MESH is socially constructed, a specific community or population’s perspective toward MESH may differ, making the study of MESH additionally complex. As Weare (2013) suggests, “...different professions, communities, societies and cultures have very different ways of conceptualizing its nature and causes, determining what is mentally healthy, deciding what interventions are appropriate, and so on” (p.13).

Figure 1

Health Promotion Framework Camp Community MESH (adapted from Cavioni et al., 2020)



The current study explores youth and staff MESH within the context of summer camp, building on prior literature by examining MESH from the perspective of camp health care service providers and camp administrators. This study was informed by a comprehensive health promotion framework suggested by Cavioni et al. (2020; see Figure 1). When adapted to the camp community, this framework suggests that youth and staff mental health is best understood as supported (through health promotion and prevention) within three domains (i.e., social and emotional learning, resilience, and social, emotional, and behavioral challenges) that exist within an ecology of family and community and a broader

ecology of policy. The study research questions are: (RQ1) What youth and staff MESH issues are most challenging for camp providers? and (RQ2) What available and needed supports are camp providers utilizing for youth and staff MESH issue management?

Methods

A two-phased mixed-methods design was used. In Phase 1, qualitative data were collected through two Zoom listening sessions ($N = 100$ total participants) to capture camp health care provider and administrator perspectives on participant MESH issues. The Padlet online tool captured additional listening session participant feedback. In Phase 2, listening session and Padlet responses informed an online survey developed by the research team. Survey items included MESH scales and open-ended items related to the research questions. The survey was distributed in the fall of 2022 to 438 ACH organizational members responsible for a camp’s MESH response and 80 usable responses were collected (18.26% RR). Descriptive statistics were calculated using SPSS version 26.

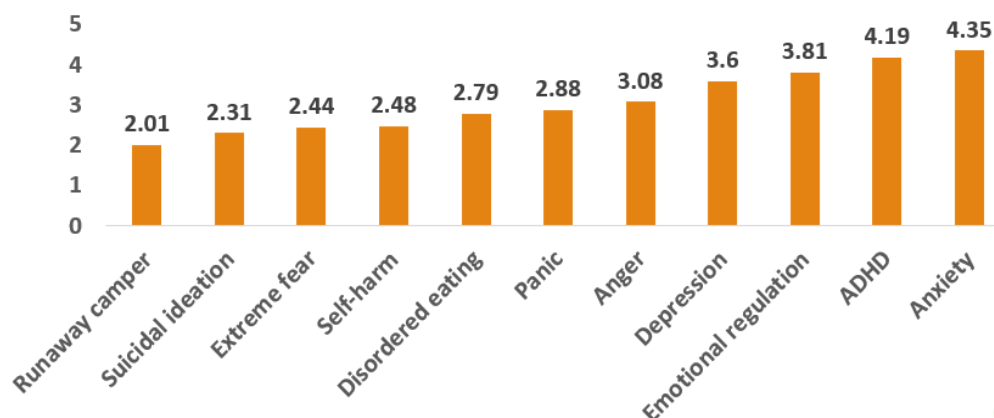
Results

Participants were predominantly female (84%, 67) and White (93%, 74). A majority of participants (79%, 63) represented overnight camps and 16% (13) represented both day and overnight camps. Of the 80 respondents, 55 (69%) were employed in camp health care positions (e.g., Advanced Practice Nurse, Nurse, Director of Health) and 25 (31%) were employed in camp administration positions (e.g., Camp Director, Owner, Board Member). Most participants (59%, 47) reported having worked at a summer camp for more than ten years.

RQ1 results identified camp providers’ most challenging youth and staff MESH issues. Respondents reported that ADHD, anxiety, depression, and difficulty regulating emotions are being seen at heightened levels across both youth and staff (see Figure 2 for camper findings). Furthermore, three-quarters (75%, $n = 60$) of respondents indicated increases in MESH issues among camp staff over the last two years in comparison to previous years. Participants reported camper anxiety as the most challenging issue to manage, followed by suicidal ideation, panic, self-harm, and emotional regulation. Respondents shared that managing these issues was difficult because it takes staff time and resources which are then not available for the larger camper group.

Figure 2

Frequency of camper MESH challenges (1-5 scale, where 1=never and 5=a great deal)



RQ2 results revealed available and needed supports for camp providers seeking to respond to youth and staff MESH issues. Over one-third (36%, $n = 29$) of respondents

reported feeling “somewhat supported” given their current MESH resources, with the three most utilized resources being the *ACH MESH Resource Guide* (30, 38%), Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidance (36%, $n = 29$), and the book *Camp Nursing: Basics and Beyond* (35%, $n = 28$). Staff preparation was another important support identified by respondents, yet respondents reported less confidence (on a 1-5 scale) in their staff’s ability to address disordered eating ($M = 2.66$, $SD = 1.027$) and depression ($M = 2.96$, $SD = .999$). Additionally, while forty-four (55%) of the 80 respondents required staff to complete pre-camp MESH training, half (50%, $n = 40$) reported staff received no ongoing MESH training during the camp season.

Discussion and Implications

Youth and staff MESH represents a critical issue facing the camp community, and this study provides evidence that the frequency and severity of MESH issues is intensifying, with some issues (e.g., anxiety, suicidal ideation, panic, self-harm) being particularly challenging for camp providers. These findings support the broader literature suggesting increases in youth and young adult MESH issues (Chadi et al., 2022; Zolopa et al., 2022).

The study findings indicate gaps in how staff are prepared to address MESH issues; many staff do not receive MESH training throughout the summer and therefore may not be equipped to successfully respond to emerging youth MESH issues. Camp providers can strengthen their MESH response plans by providing staff with ongoing MESH training, particularly for issues identified as challenging. Further response strategies have been proposed by Gaslin et al. (2022), including helping campers and staff develop coping strategies, expressing affirmation and appreciation, and providing opportunities for unstructured time and play.

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Mental, Emotional, and Social Health: Exploring Youth and Staff Issues and Supports in Summer Camps

Barry Garst, Alexandra Skrocki, & Ali Dubin, Clemson University; Tracey Gaslin, Alliance for Camp Health

Background

Youth mental health and well-being concerns have escalated, particularly following the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Few empirical studies have examined mental, emotional, and social health (MESH) within camp settings.

Purpose: This study explores youth and staff MESH within the context of summer camp, building on prior literature by examining MESH from the perspective of camp health care service providers and camp administrators.

Method

Phase 1: Qualitative data through Zoom Listening Sessions, n=100.

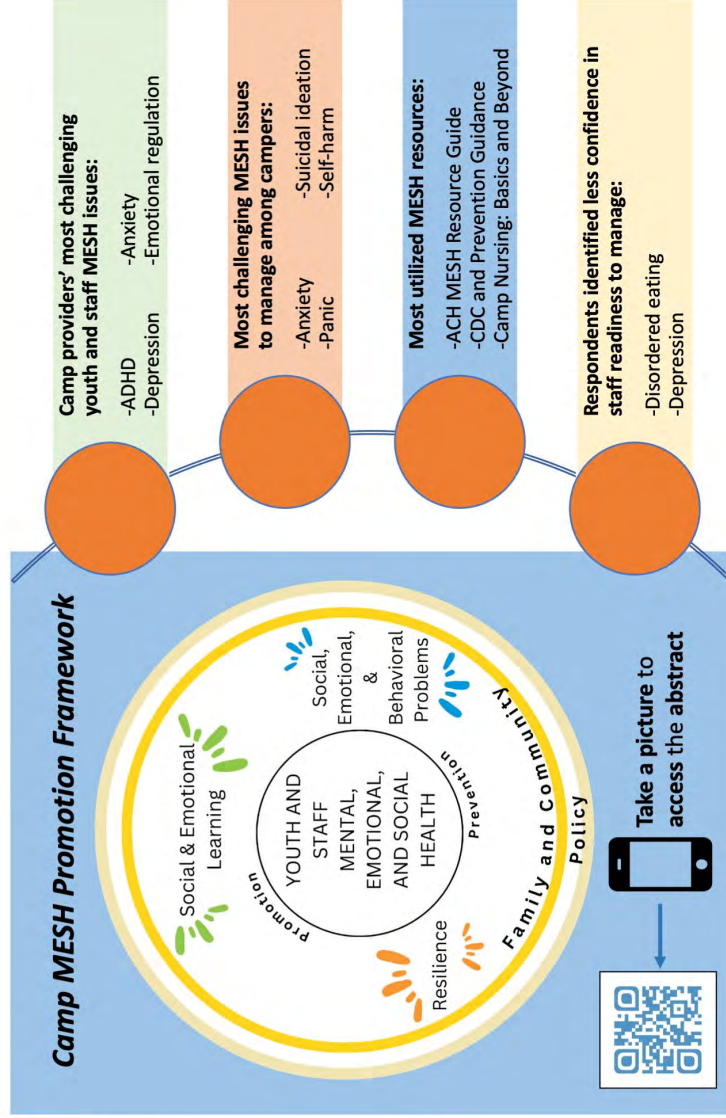
Sessions captured camp health care provider and administrator perspectives on MESH issues.

Phase 2: Online survey, n=80.

Responses from the Listening Sessions informed an online survey sent out to ACH members.

KEY FINDINGS

75% of respondents indicated increases in MESH issues among camp staff over the last two years in comparison to previous years. 50% of camp staff do not receive ongoing (in-service) MESH training throughout the camp season.



EXPLORING THE MOTIVATION OF TWEEN/TEENS WITH DIABETES AT SUMMER CAMP: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

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An estimated \$16 billion is contributed annually to T1D associated healthcare expenses including the purchase of insulin, presenting both an economic burden and reduced access to life-saving medication in the future (ADA, 2018). With only 17% of youth reaching their target blood sugar, it is important we explore the role of youth programs to address psychosocial needs and promote self-motivated behavior related to diabetes management for youth living with T1D (e.g., Allen et al., 2021). Having a community of support is vital for youth to reach their desired goals, including identified targeted blood glucose levels. Appropriate support can be provided through community partnerships and medical specialty camps.

Similar to other medical specialty camps grounded in self-determination theory (SDT), this theoretical framework assists in the development of outcomes such as motivation (Hill et al., 2015). The motivation-focused theory SDT offers a framework for both scholars and practitioners that promotes the internalization of healthy behavior and can be used to intentionally plan camp experiences. Autonomy supportive environments can promote positive health behaviors while also emphasizing opportunities to build competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2012). The transfer of skills relevant to managing diabetes, as well as enhancing their quality of life, is facilitated by using SDT for medical specialty camps. Youth programs such as medical specialty camps can provide youth with T1D the opportunity to engage in health-promoting behaviors related to diabetes management (Collins et al., 2021). The purpose of this study was to answer the following research questions: (1) how do youth experience autonomy within their everyday lives, and (2) what opportunities, if any, are presented to youth to nurture competence, autonomy, and relatedness within a medical specialty program for youth with T1D?

Methods

In summer 2022, 25 campers participated in the Recreate, Educate, Advocate & Climb Higher (REACH) Tween/Teen camp. This was a five-day program for youth ages 11-17 held on a college campus. The REACH camp followed an Outcome-focused Programming model (OFP) grounded in SDT. Programming emphasized a multidisciplinary approach incorporating a combination of physical, educational, and art-based activities to promote the three dimensions of SDT. For example, physical activities requiring higher degrees of skill such as biking, rock climbing, and swimming, encouraged youth to build competence through self-assessment of skills and short-term goal setting.

At the conclusion of the week, staff conducted focus group interviews with 21 campers. Participants were separated into three groups based on length of diagnosis divided into three groups based on length of diagnosis (i.e., less than two years, three to six years, and more than six years) and consisted of seven campers in each group. Questions on the interview protocol used were grounded in SDT, including probes such as “What everyday decisions do you find yourself making throughout the day relating to diabetes management?” and “If you could go back in time, is there anything you would change about the choices made this week at camp? If so, what was it?”

After transcribing the initial recording, focus group transcripts were coded both deductively and inductively by the first two authors. Interview transcripts were coded using a predefined set of codes corresponding to the research questions, followed by further investigation within emergent codes during a second and third round of coding. Throughout the coding process, proposed themes were discussed and corroborated by first two researchers.

Findings

Participants in the study shared opportunities to build self-determined behaviors within camp, perceived attitudes, and perspectives related to diabetes management described in three themes. In the first theme, the adolescent perspective considered outsider understanding, youth felt as if they were misunderstood. They felt categorized as “the diabetic, who could not eat sugar.” They described feeling as if others did not understand anything about the treatment or management of diabetes. They shared that others would “mock their insulin pump” and would feel like they must disclose their T1D to everyone, while explaining the truths of T1D which others would not understand. With this, they felt as if their autonomy was taken away through daily situations and the school setting.

In the second theme, participants expressed that their autonomy changes through the day and depending on their context or situation. For example, at night the youth expressed that their parents would help monitor throughout the night to treat low blood glucose values. Throughout sports and clubs, the youth expressed it was easier to navigate those situations with the assistance of others. This looked like several different things: moms watching blood sugars, taking breaks, or even stopping practice when blood glucose values were above 400 mg/dL to prevent injury. Each individual had their own way of alerting others while being physically active, such as “tapping my leg to alert my teammates that I am going low during cheer.”

In the final theme, youth shared multiple opportunities to engage in activities and behaviors that promote competence, autonomy, and relatedness during REACH. The youth had the ability to explore the effects of new foods in a successful way, which they had the support of the camp staff. Participants expressed having less parental involvement through the process of counting carbs and treating blood sugar values. Using CampViews (electronic medical record platform), staff were able to see the youths blood glucose values and allow “us to not have to worry about blood sugars.” With the camp only having youth with T1D, they expressed a sense of community and understanding in the space of REACH.

Discussion and Implications

Medical specialty camp can provide youth an autonomy-supportive environment outside of traditional youth serving institutions, allowing for intentionally designed opportunities that promote competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Allen et al., 2021). With rising prevalence of T1D diagnosis, the utilization of programs such as medical specialty camps to promote positive health outcomes should be considered, particularly for adolescent youth who may struggle to meet target A1C levels (Gregory et al., 2022). Understanding the experiences of program participants can provide both healthcare professionals and medical camp staff unique insight into opportunities that can support camper autonomy. Additionally, focus groups with participants can provide evaluative data that provides insight into contextual influences that can contribute to participant’s overall program experience including interactions with peers, families, and other significant adults within their lives. With wide support from both medical professionals and funders, this program provides evidence-based practices to assist serving youth for outcomes of

autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Williams et al., 2022). This study is limited to T1D specific camps, not all medical specialty camps. With the focus groups that were conducted, asking the youth about diabetes management skills would not be applicable to other medical specialty camps. Practitioners are encouraged to view these findings as a meaningful contribution to aid in the creation of a Community of Practice for diabetes camp professionals. This data helps to inform perspectives of youth living with T1D, providing insight to assist in motivating healthy lifestyles.

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Exploring the Motivations of Tween/Teens with Diabetes at Summer Camp: A Qualitative Approach

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INTRO

- Roughly \$16 billion of healthcare expenses are associated with T1D (ADA, 2018).
- 17% of youth with T1D reach their target blood glucose, therefore, programming needs to explore psychosocial needs and promote self-motivated behavior related to diabetes management for youth living with T1D (e.g., Allen et al., 2021)
- Self-determination theory (SDT), a theoretical framework that assists in the development of autonomy supportive environments to promote positive health behaviors (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Hill et al., 2015).
- Through medical specialty camps youth with T1D could engage in health-promoting behaviors related to diabetes management (Collins et al., 2021).
- The purpose of this study was to answer the following research questions:

- (1) how do youth experience autonomy within their everyday lives, and
- (2) what opportunities, if any, are presented to youth to nurture competence, autonomy, and relatedness within a medical specialty program for youth with T1D?

METHODS

- Five-day program for youth ages 11-17 during the Summer of 2022 at Old Dominion University, 25 campers participated in the Recreate, Educate, Advocate & Climb Higher (REACH) Tween/Teen camp.
- Focus group interviews were conducted where 21 campers participated.
- Participants were separated into three groups based on length of diagnosis (i.e., less than two years, three to six years, and more than six years) and consisted of seven campers in each group.
- Focus group transcripts were coded both deductively and inductively by the first two authors.
- Interview transcripts were coded using a predefined set of codes corresponding to the research questions, followed by further investigation within emergent codes during a second and third round of coding.



Based on the qualitative findings, campers shared their motivations in relation to T1D management.

RESULTS

- The adolescent perspective considered outsider understanding, youth felt as if they were misunderstood. They felt categorized as “the diabetic, who could not eat sugar”, “mock their insulin pump”
- The youth expressed that their autonomy changes through the day and depending on their context or situation, easier to navigate those situations with the assistance of others: moms watching blood sugars, taking breaks, or even stopping practice when blood glucose values were above 400 mg/dL to prevent injury
- Youth were provided multiple opportunities to engage in activities and behaviors that promote competence, autonomy, and relatedness during REACH by exploring the effects of new foods in a successful way, which they had the support of the camp staff, having less parental involvement through the process of counting carbs and treating blood sugar values
- Using CampViews (electronic medical record platform), staff were able to see the youths’ blood glucose values and allow “us to not have to worry about blood sugars”

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

- Medical specialty camp can provide youth an autonomy-supportive environment outside of traditional youth serving institutions, allowing for intentionally designed opportunities that promote competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Allen et al., 2021).
- With rising prevalence of T1D diagnosis, the utilization of programs such as medical specialty camps to promote positive health outcomes should be considered, particularly for adolescent youth who may struggle to meet target A1C levels (Gregory et al., 2022).
- Understanding the experiences of program participants can provide both healthcare professionals and medical camp staff unique insight into opportunities that can support camper autonomy.
- Focus groups provide evaluative data that provides insight into contextual influences that can contribute to participant’s overall program experience.
- Practitioners are encouraged to view these findings as a meaningful contribution to aid in the creation of a Community of Practice for diabetes camp professionals.
- These data help to inform programming for youth living with T1D, providing insight to assist in motivating healthy lifestyles.

EVALUATION WITH A PURPOSE: CONTINUOUS PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT OF A FAMILY DIABETES CAMP

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Type 1 diabetes (T1D) is an autoimmune disease that necessitates regular monitoring and is one of the most common chronic diseases facing youth (Imperatore et al., 2018). People living with T1D are at risk of complications, although with quality management the severity may be diminished. Practicing quality diabetes management, however, remains a challenge for many youth (Allen et al., 2020). Research suggests family support is a critical component for effective diabetes management by youth (Ahmed & Yeasmen, 2016). Engaging family members alongside youth can be effective at improving self-management skills (Haegele et al., 2022). Family diabetes camps can be a unique setting for youth to enhance these skills. This space allows education through recreation in the hopes of improving quality of life.

Utilizing theory-based programming rooted in self-determination, diabetes family camps have been shown to be effective in helping youth meet their basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness – foundational for youth developing autonomous diabetes self-management skills (Hill et al., 2015). This theory explores the realms of human motivation. Deci and Ryan (2000) explain, to become intrinsically motivated a person's three psychological needs of are autonomy, relatedness, and competence must be met. Although diabetes camps remain rare in comparison to traditional camp offerings, including families in these camps offers education for caregivers in how to create autonomy supportive environments and life skills. This particular program evaluation explored the impact of the REACH program's family component. Specifically, the purpose was to evaluate the Family Diabetes Camp experience for program improvement.

Methods

Family Diabetes Camp (FDC) is a medical specialty camp operated through a partnership between the Lions Club, a university, and local hospitals. The 2022 three-day, two-night camp included 31 families. All volunteer counselors were trained on T1D, outcome-focused programming, and participated in Autonomy Supportive Environments Training (ASET), the theoretical foundation for camp. The camp used Outcome-Focused Programming to improve diabetes management grounded in human motivation. All programming was grounded in the self-determination theory (SDT).

Families were organized into cohorts with no more than 12 participants including two counselors and one healthcare provider. The inclusion of a health care provider in each cohort was based on 2021 feedback. Traditional camp and specific diabetes focused activities that promote healthy lifestyles were embedded throughout camp. Based on the 2021 program evaluation, families wanted fewer parent sessions (2021 included five sessions). In 2022, we reduced parent sessions to two, both focused on ASET as a strategy for motivation of diabetes management. Also based on the 2021 data, a 30-minute forum with counselors living with T1D was added to the parent session to assist in perspective-taking. Finally, campers from 2021 expressed a desire for decision-making regarding activity selection. On the last day, campers were permitted to choose activities. Parents and

counselors were surveyed about the camp experience. Quantitative data were collected and analyzed through Qualtrics. A direct content analysis was used to interpret the open-ended questions and find patterns and commonalities of experiences shared by parents and counselors. The 24-item Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction Frustration Scale (BPNSFS) was used to assess the theoretically grounded camp impact on competence, autonomy, and relatedness among campers.

Results

Utilizing a posttest only design, responses from 14 parents and nine counselors provided insight to their experiences and the effectiveness of camp. Response rate from parents was 47% and 75% from counselors. Forty-three percent of parents and 67% of counselors were new to FDC. Both surveyed groups were highly satisfied (90%) with how the camp was organized, pre-camp communication, and training was found to be effective. The majority (92%) of parents and 67% of counselors felt camp was effective at increasing diabetes education. Most parents (86%) found the ASET was highly effective. The majority (85%) of parents felt having a healthcare professional embedded within their cohort effective. Three themes emerged from the qualitative data: learning from others' experiences, implementing choice provision, and a sense of community. Two themes emerged from the counselors: the importance of camper self-advocacy and learning more about diabetes management. Finally, parents were asked what they perceived as their child's biggest takeaways. The two main themes involved: a sense of being "normal" and making friends who also have T1D. The counselor's reflection of what they felt their campers gained from FDC included central themes of: not being alone in their diagnosis and recreational barriers to youth with T1D.

Discussion and Implications

Family diabetes camps are one of several supports that assist youth living with and learning about T1D. Continuous program evaluation is critical and allows practitioners to share evidence-based practice with community partners (Collins et al., 2021). Worldwide, the number of people living with T1D is expected to double by 2040 (Lancet, 2022). Practitioners need to know how to better serve this population and program evaluations such as these will lay the framework for needed expansion of camping to teach and improve T1D management. These data will be used for programming plans for 2023. While diabetes education is key to successful self-management, so is the sense of community that provides the safety net of support, vulnerability for learning from others living with similar experiences, and learning new skills (e.g., ASET). The findings support the effective programming and value staff training; to support camper self-advocacy necessitates comprehensive knowledge of diabetes. However, some limitations must be taken into consideration such as the small sample size and response rate of this evaluation. And while parents and staff reaped benefits from the camp, the impact on the child, as perceived by the parents, is notable – youth want to feel "normal" while living with a disease that to the layperson often looks complicated. Fitting in and finding a cohort of like people is powerful and real or perceived, a support that may lead to better understanding how to develop and sustain self-management skills. This evaluation can help to create the needed Community of Practice for diabetes recreation services as well as provide the framework for the REACH program to be expanded nationwide.

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Evaluation with a Purpose: Continuous Program Improvement of a Family Diabetes Camp

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INTRO

- Type 1 diabetes (T1D) is an autoimmune disease that necessitates regular monitoring and is one of the most common chronic diseases facing youth (Imperatore et al., 2018).
- Quality management may diminish the severity of complications. Predicting quality diabetes management remains a challenge for many youth (Imperatore et al., 2018).
- Research suggests family support is a critical component for effective diabetes management by youth (Ahmed & Yaxson, 2016).
- Engaging family members alongside youth can be effective at improving self-management skills (Haegele et al., 2022).
- Autonomy-supportive environments allow selection through recreation in the hopes of increasing quality of life.
- Diabetes camp provides support, in an engaging environment, that can assist in the development of self-management skills. Theory-based camping supports the recreational programming that develops autonomy, confidence, resilience, and sense of accomplishment among youth with T1D (Hill et al., 2019). The present study details the Family Diabetes Camp experience for program improvement.



METHODS

- Quantitative and qualitative data collected in spring of 2022 at a residential family diabetes camp
- Counselors trained on T1D, Outcome Focused Programming, and autonomy-supportive environments
- All programming was grounded in the Self-determination theory (SDT)
- Eight cohorts of campers including two counselors and one healthcare provider rotated through traditional camp activities and a choice block (autonomy)
- Feedback from 2021 influenced reduction in parent-centered educational programs (i.e., five in 2021 and two in 2022)
- Added healthcare provider to each cohort based on 2021 feedback
- New Autonomy Supportive Environment Training (ASSET) for parents
- Post-test questionnaires were administered to parents and counselors



While diabetes education is key to self-management, it's the Community of Practice which provides the safety net of support, vulnerability for learning from others living with similar experiences, and learning new skills.



RESULTS

- Thirty-one (31) families and 14 counselors participated in the camp.
- Matched data resulted in 14 parents and 9 counselors.
- Response rate from parents was 47% and 75% from counselors.
- Both surveyed groups were highly satisfied (90%) with how the camp was organized (e.g., pre-camp communication, and training).
- Majority (92%) of parents and 67% of counselors felt camp was effective at increasing diabetes education
- Most parents (86%) found the Autonomy Supportive Environment Training (ASSET) was highly effective.
- The majority (83%) of parents felt having a healthcare professional embedded within their cohort to be effective.
- Three themes from parents emerged: learning from others', exposure, implementing choices provision, and a sense of community.
- Two themes from counselors emerged: the importance of camper self-advocacy and learning more about diabetes management.
- Parents perceived their child's biggest takeaways under two main themes which involved: a sense of being "normal" and making friends who also have T1D.
- The counselor's reflection of what they felt their campers gained from PDC included central themes of (1) not being alone in their diagnosis and (2) recreational barriers to youth with T1D.



DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

- Workable, the number of people living with T1D is expected to double by 2040 (Gregory et al., 2022).
- Family diabetes camps are one of several supports that assist youth living with and learning about T1D.
- Continuous program evaluation is critical and allows practitioners to share evidence-based practices with communities of practice (Collins et al., 2021; Hill et al., 2022).
- Program evaluations such as these will lay the framework for needed expansion of camping to teach and improve T1D management.
- The sense of community that provides the safety net of support, vulnerability for learning from others living with similar experiences, and learning new skills (e.g., ASSET) alongside diabetes education is important to successful self-management.
- The findings support the effective programming and the value of staff training to support camper self-advocacy necessitates comprehensive knowledge of diabetes.
- The impact on the child, as perceived by the parents, is notable—youth want to feel "normal" while living with a disease that to the layperson often looks complicated.
- This evaluation can help to create the needed Community of Practice for diabetes recreation services as well as provide the framework for the REACH program to be expanded nationwide.

PARTICIPATORY ACTION EVALUATION: IMPROVING CAMPER OUTCOMES BY ENGAGING STAFF IN DATA-BASED GOAL SETTING

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Camp counselors are often the “face” of camp programs: they are among the people campers remember from camp and are influential in shaping campers’ experiences (American Camp Association, 2006; Halsall et al., 2016; Rabin et al., 2022). However, counselors are not often involved in the camp evaluation processes that might help them understand camper perceptions and possible ways to improve these. This study uses strategies of youth participatory action research (YPAR) to include summer camp counselors at a midwestern, 5-night, residential camp in data analysis from previous campers’ experiences at camp. The camp counselors used this analysis to set goals for their upcoming summer camp sessions. We attempted to measure the impact of the camp counselors’ data analysis and goal-setting process on campers’ perceived camp experiences.

Our research questions included the following:

- 1.) Are campers’ perceived experiences impacted when camp counselors intentionally engage with campers?; and
- 2.) Do camp counselors report following through with their pre-summer plans to intentionally engage with campers throughout the summer?

Methods

In 2019, the last year the site held overnight camp before a 2-year COVID-19 shutdown, campers completed a survey about their perceptions of the developmental context, or program quality, at a midwestern camp for youth ages 8-16. The survey utilized the 4-H Thriving Model instrument, which measures the developmental context of out-of-school time program settings using scales to measure the constructs of developmental relationships, belonging, and sparks (Arnold, 2018; Arnold & Gagnon, 2019). During camp counselor training in 2022, camp counselors analyzed data from the 2019 survey using data party techniques (Franz, 2013, Lewis et al., 2019). Specifically, large posters defining the various aspects of the developmental context constructs and the response means for each was placed around the room. Counselors moved between posters in small groups, recording their reactions to the data and any questions from the information. Then, the group came together and discussed the information, common perceptions among the small groups, and differing thoughts between the groups. After evaluating the 2019 data, the group determined a focus for their interactions with campers for the 2022 year. These goals included aspects of developmental relationships, including interacting more with campers, engaging them in conversations, and paying attention to their thoughts and ideas. They made plans to create posters for their shared space away from the campers to remind them of their goals. At the end of camp in 2022, campers were given the same 4-H Thriving survey used in 2019.

Results

To explore research objective one, survey results from the 2019 survey were compared to results from the 2022 survey. We only compared survey responses of first-year campers in 2019 ($n = 52$) and 2022 ($n = 123$), so previous experiences with camping did not enter into their answers. All items on the survey were measured on a 7-point Likert scale

(Arnold, 2018). Among first-year campers in 2022, the mean scores for all indicators of developmental relationships were higher than first-year campers in 2019. However, only three components had a statistically significant increase between 2019 and 2022. These include the indicators asking participants to rate how true the following statements are about adults at their camp: *Expect me to do something positive with my future* ($t(173) = 2.20, p < .05$), *Hold me accountable* ($t(170) = 1.74, p < .05$), and *Respect me* ($t(172) = 1.88, p < .05$). Table 1 displays the mean scores of the Developmental Relationship scale Thriving Indicators for the first-year campers in 2019 and 2022.

Table 1

Comparison of Mean Scores of Developmental Relationship Thriving Indicators for Campers in 2019 and 2022

Thriving Indicator <i>Think about the adults in this 4-H program and rate how true each of the following statements are:</i>	2019 Campers <i>n</i> = 52		2022 Campers <i>n</i> = 123		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Pay attention to me	5.23	1.40	5.52	1.22	1.25	.11
Like me	5.27	1.22	5.57	1.33	1.40	.08
Invest time in me	5.12	1.44	5.41	1.42	1.27	.10
Show an interest in me	4.90	1.46	5.22	1.73	1.16	.13
Help me see future possibilities for myself	4.50	1.76	4.71	1.92	.67	.25
Expect me to do something positive with my future	4.96	1.70	5.53	1.49	2.20	.01
Stretch me and push me in new ways	4.80	1.60	4.89	1.68	.32	.37
Hold me accountable	5.17	1.38	5.59	1.48	1.74	.04
Listen to my ideas	5.12	1.61	5.50	1.60	1.44	.08
Treat me fairly	5.75	1.51	6.08	1.28	1.48	.07

Treat me seriously	5.48	1.59	5.82	1.43	1.39	.08
Respect me	5.71	1.42	6.11	1.26	1.88	.03

To explore research objective two and determine if camp counselors committed and followed through with reaching their goals of increasingly interacting with campers during camp, a survey was sent to all camp counselors and camp staff ($n = 43$) one month after the end of camp. A total of 29 (67%) responded. The survey asked about their experiences and interactions related to the set goals. All but one camp counselor/staff that responded to the survey question stated that they did interact with campers differently based on the goals set during camp counselor training at the beginning of the summer. All reported ways they thought their efforts had made a difference to campers, and many related to developmental relationships. Some comments included:

- *I made sure to treat campers as equals and respected them rather than just little kids.*
- *I definitely made kids think deeper about what they did, why they did it, and what they'd do in the future with what they learned.*

Counselors also responded using the terms of the 4-H Thriving model that were defined in the training data party at the beginning of camp, including “sparks” and developing an environment that is both “safe” and “welcoming.”

- *This summer I noticed more campers discovering "sparks" at my program area than any other summer I've worked at 4-H camp. what stuck out to me the most was campers experiencing "spark" moments that weren't even necessarily related to the program we were running, but related to counselors and staff sharing common interests with campers.*
- *I stepped into a new role as a staff member and I interacted with the kids for each and every tournament. I tried to make the environment a safe and welcoming place where each camper felt like they belonged and could have fun.*

Discussion and Implications

This study demonstrates that including camp counselors and staff in data-driven decision-making and goal-setting can impact the camper experience. Responses from counselors reinforce that these individuals did remember the information they learned about developmental relationships during their counselor training and thought about their actions while interacting with the campers. However, we realize that comparing data from camps bookending the COVID-19 pandemic comes with limitations. The 2022 first-year campers may have a different perception of developmental relationship indicators influenced by the years when camp and camp experiences were not an option. Even if the pandemic has had an influence, the results are positive enough to consider more efforts to include camp counselors in goal-setting practices using data-driven methods.

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PARTICIPATORY ACTION EVALUATION: IMPROVING CAMPER OUTCOMES BY ENGAGING STAFF IN DATA-BASED GOAL SETTING

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Are campers' perceived experiences impacted when camp counselors intentionally engage with campers?
- Do camp counselors report following through with their pre-summer plans to intentionally engage with campers throughout the summer?

INTRODUCTION

Camp counselors are often the "face" of camp programs; they are among the people campers remember from camp and are influential in shaping campers' experiences (American Camp Association, 2006; Rabin et al., 2022). However, counselors are not often involved in the camp evaluation processes that might help them understand camper perceptions and possible ways to improve these. This study used participatory methods to include summer camp counselors at a midwestern, 5-night, residential camp in data analysis from previous campers' experiences at camp. Specifically, the counselors participated in a data party (Franz, 2013; Lewis, et al., 2019) during training in which they analyzed data related to the Developmental Context of the 4-H Thriving Model (Arnold, 2018) to set goals for their interactions with campers during the upcoming summer camp sessions.

Comparison of Mean Scores of Developmental Relationship Thriving Indicators for Campers in 2019 and 2022

Thriving Indicator	2019 Campers		2022 Campers		r	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Think about the adults in this 4-H program and rate how true each of the following statements are:						
Pay attention to me	5.23	1.4	5.52	1.22	1.25	0.11
Like me	5.27	1.22	5.57	1.33	1.4	0.08
Invest time in me	5.12	1.44	5.41	1.42	1.27	0.1
Show an interest in me	4.9	1.48	5.22	1.73	1.16	0.13
Help me see future possibilities for myself	4.5	1.76	4.71	1.92	0.67	0.25
Expect me to do something positive with my future	4.96	1.7	5.53	1.49	2.2	0.01
Stretch me and push me in new ways	4.8	1.6	4.89	1.68	0.32	0.37
Hold me accountable	5.17	1.38	5.59	1.48	1.74	0.04
Listen to my ideas	5.12	1.61	5.5	1.5	1.44	0.08
Treat me fairly	5.75	1.51	6.06	1.28	1.48	0.07
Treat me seriously	5.48	1.59	5.82	1.43	1.39	0.08
Respect me	5.71	1.42	6.11	1.26	1.88	0.03

DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

This study demonstrates that including camp counselors in data-driven decision-making and goal-setting can impact the camper experience. Responses from counselors reinforce that these individuals did remember the information they learned about Developmental Relationships during their training and thought about their actions while interacting with campers. However, we realize that comparing data from camps bookending the COVID-19 pandemic comes with limitations. The 2022 first-year campers may have a different perception of Developmental Relationship indicators influenced by the years when camp experiences were not an option. However, the results are positive enough to consider more efforts to include camp counselors in goal-setting practices using data-driven methods.

CAMP COUNSELOR DATA PARTY

- 1. REVIEW DATA**
Camp counselors reviewed data related to the Developmental Context of the 4-H Thriving framework, collected from campers during the most recent year of camp (2019).
- 2. ANALYZE DATA**
Counselors spent time learning about the campers' perceptions of the Developmental Context at camp and recorded things that surprised them or that stood out as important.
- 3. SET GOALS**
As a group, the counselors set goals for their interactions with campers during the summer of 2022. They recorded their goals as an implementation plan and posted in a central location during the summer to help them remember.

4-H Thriving Model



Arnold, 2018



Counselor Reflection after Training

Counselor Goal Setting

How Will We Meet Our Goal?	When Will We Meet Our Goal?	Who Will We Meet Our Goal With?	How Will We Measure Our Progress?
After this meeting	After 1 week meeting	With all counselors	Check in with each other
After 1 week meeting	After 1 week meeting	With all counselors	Check in with each other
After 1 week meeting	After 1 week meeting	With all counselors	Check in with each other
After 1 week meeting	After 1 week meeting	With all counselors	Check in with each other
After 1 week meeting	After 1 week meeting	With all counselors	Check in with each other
After 1 week meeting	After 1 week meeting	With all counselors	Check in with each other
After 1 week meeting	After 1 week meeting	With all counselors	Check in with each other
After 1 week meeting	After 1 week meeting	With all counselors	Check in with each other
After 1 week meeting	After 1 week meeting	With all counselors	Check in with each other
After 1 week meeting	After 1 week meeting	With all counselors	Check in with each other

RESULTS

CAMPERS PERCEIVED EXPERIENCES

First-year camper experiences from 2019 surveys (n=52) were compared to first-year camper experiences from the 2022 survey (n=123). Among first-year campers in 2022, the mean scores for all indicators of developmental relationships were higher than first-year campers in 2019. However, only three components had a statistically significant increase between 2019 and 2022. These include the indicators asking participants to rate how true the following statements are to you about your positive relationship with your counselor: *Expect me to do something positive with my future* (t(173) = 2.20, p<.05), *Hold me accountable* (t(170) = 1.74, p<.05), and *Respect me* (t(172) = 1.88, p<.05).

COUNSELOR FOLLOW-THROUGH ON GOAL-RELATED PLANS

A total of 29 out of 43 counselors (67%) responded to a survey one month after the end of camp. The survey asked about their expectations related to the set goals. All but one counselor stated that they did interact with campers differently based on the goals set during camp counselor training at the beginning of the summer. All reported they thought their efforts had made a difference to campers, and many related to developmental relationships. Some comments included:

- I made sure to treat campers as equals and respected them rather than just little kids.
- I definitely made kids think deeper about what they did, why they did it, and what they'd do in the future with what they learned.

Counselors also responded using the terms of the 4-H Thriving model that were defined in the data party, including "sparks" and developing an environment that is both "safe" and "welcoming."

- This summer I noticed more campers discovering "sparks" at my program area than any other summer I've worked at 4-H camp. What stuck out to me the most was campers experiencing "spark" moments that weren't even necessary related to the program we were running, but related to counselors and staff sharing common interests with campers.
- I stepped into a new role as a staff member and I interacted with the kids for each and every tournament. I tried to make the environment a safe and welcoming place where each camper felt like they belonged and could have fun.

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DIFFUSING A PROGRAM QUALITY INITIATIVE IN A MULTI-SITE CAMP ORGANIZATION

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Program quality (PQ) is essential to youth programs and positive outcomes for youth (Smith et al., 2012). PQ reflects the programming environment created by staff practices and staff interactions with youth (American Camp Association (ACA), 2021) and is measured through observations and assessments using tools such as the SEL Program Quality Assessment (PQA) for Camp (Weikart Center, 2021).

PQ is gaining traction within the summer camp field (ACA, 2021); however, seasonal challenges within the industry (e.g., staffing, training; Richmond et al., 2020) make implementing PQ initiatives difficult. Diffusions of innovation theory (Dol; Rogers, 2003; Sahin, 2006) is a helpful framework for understanding how an innovation, such as PQ, is socialized. Diffusion occurs over five stages (knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation) and is supported with the presence of five attributes during the persuasion stage (Rogers, 2003). Little is known about the diffusion of PQ within camp organizations or the camp field and thus, the purpose of this study was to understand the process of PQ diffusion in one multi-site camp organization.

Methods

We conducted an instrumental case study across six locations within one camp organization. Case studies include an examination of various types of data (e.g., records, documents, interviews, surveys) and instrumental case studies are intended to generalize findings to other similar cases (Stake, 1995), in this case, other multi-site camp organizations.

Two project leads coordinated all PQ trainings and assessments. Most participants were full-time employees, participated in ongoing PQ training, and were given opportunities to workshop and test modified PQA tools during Spring 2022. During summer training, all staff were trained on PQ and assessments for the summer. Study data include records of training (hours and focus) and PQA tool refinement meetings. We deductively coded data using Dol concepts, specifically stages of innovation and five attributes of Dol.

Findings

Figure 1 outlines the hours and focus of program quality work within the stages of Dol, Figure 2 indicates participant attendance at pre and post-summer PQ meetings.

Figure 1
Innovation Stages

Stage of Innovation	PQ Focused Content	Total Time Spent
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intro - Sessions #1- #4: SEL PQA for Camp tool deep dive - Youth advisory council (YAC) workshop - Training reviews (x4) - Session #8: observations & notes - Onboarding for late hires 	12 hours- Spring 2022

Persuasion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activity plan reviews (organized by early adopters- optional) - Session #5-#7 (adapted tool creation) - YAC workshop (collaboration with camp teams) - Assessment tool trials with camp teams - Practice scoring activity & office hours 	11 hours-Spring 2022
Decision (Organization-led)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summer assessment planning meeting (1 per camp = 6 total) 	6 hours-June 2022
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summer staff training (x6) - Self-assessment cycles - 2 per camp (12 total) - Assessment follow ups- 2 per camp (12 total) - External assessments (6 total) 	<i>12 Hours per Camp</i> <i>6 Hours per External</i> 108 hours Total-Summer 2022
Confirmation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshop & debrief - Data review meetings - Re-launch PQ session to adapt tools & processes based on learning 	12 hours

Figure 2
2022 PQ Engagement

Months	Engagement
Jan/Feb	86%
March/April	75%
May/June	42%
July/August	25%
Sep/Oct	92%

Throughout pre-summer meetings and trainings, we highlighted the five attributes of the diffusion of PQ to program teams. The relative advantage of this work is that the approach is research validated and would provide consistency across multiple sites, compatibility was present through being mission and value aligned as well as being tied to our organizations strategic plan, the tools and approach were perceived as complex by the camp teams, there was an element of trialability for PQA during the spring season, and the observable benefits of PQA included being able to make data driven program improvement plans.

Prior to summer, most camps anticipated concerns about their ability to execute PQAs as planned due to leadership capacity, particularly for locations with staffing or operational challenges. Having a short window to train seasonal staff on PQ, difficulties staffing camps to full structure, and competing priorities for leadership staff impaired diffusion of PQ across sites. The implementation of co-created tools requiring reduced training and assessment were more feasible for camp teams during summer operations. Though there was a struggle with uptake during the operational summer months, there was an increase buy-in for Program Managers during the data review workshops this fall as 57%

of Program Managers reported that they saw *more* value in PQA after the assessments and fall workshops. One manager described “the data and key information that came out of the tools” as the best part of the assessment experience.

Implications

At our organization, we were able to dedicate time and resources to PQ yet we still faced significant capacity and operational challenges to its implementation. Although full-time leadership and seasonal staff were at different stages of DoI depending on myriad factors, dedicating time to providing opportunities for staff to see and/or experience the relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability of the innovation (Rogers, 2003) was critical in early stages to ensure everyone was committed to PQ. Regardless of staff commitment, challenges will still arise given the seasonality of camp and short training opportunities. Leveraging the social currency of leadership and returning staff who model commitment to PQ may further support diffusion within an organization.

The findings indicate that modifying established measurement tools to create tools that obtain similar PQ information with less staff burden and strategically layering PQ into training may efficiently persuade staff to adopt PQ practices and assessments. Practitioners should consider their intentions with PQ (i.e., internal improvement or benchmarking with similar programs) and dedicate finances, staff, and time accordingly. Findings from this study may be generalizable to other multi-site camp organizations, however practitioners should consider differences in their structure, programs, and participant needs that may impact the diffusion of PQ. Future research should evaluate diffusion of PQ longitudinally in spaces with significant seasonal turnover in staff and regular challenges with capacity to yield a greater understanding of PQ organizational diffusion and innovation amongst youth-facing teams.

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Diffusing a program quality initiative in a multi-site camp organization

Lacey Maglinger & Victoria Povilaitis, PhD | Tim Hortons Foundation Camps

Introduction

- Program quality (PQ) is essential to youth programming and is gaining traction in summer camp.
- Seasonal challenges within the industry (e.g., staffing, training) make implementing PQ initiatives difficult.
- Diffusions of innovation (DoI) is a framework to understand how an innovation is socialized.
- Little is known about the diffusion of PQ within summer camp
- Purpose of this study: to understand the process of PQ diffusion in one multi-site camp organization.

Methods

- Instrumental case study across six locations within one camp organization.
- Data include records of training (hours & focus) and PQA tool refinement meetings.
- Data were coded using DoI concepts (i.e., stages of innovation and five attributes).

Findings

- 12 hours were spent building knowledge, 11 hours in persuasion, 6 hours explaining and agreeing to the decision, 108 in implementation, and 12 hours in confirmation
- Pre summer, most camps anticipated concerns about their ability to execute PQAs due to leadership capacity.
- Short staff training, difficulties staffing camps, and competing priorities impaired organizational PQ diffusion.

Table 1. Participant attendance at PQ meetings

Months	Engagement
Jan/Feb	86%
March/April	75%
May/June	42%
July/Aug	25%
Sep/Oct	92%

- 57% of Program Managers saw *more value* to PQ work after data review workshops in the fall.

Discussion and Implications

- Leveraging social currency of leadership and returning staff who model commitment to PQ may support diffusion.
- Regardless of staff commitment, challenges will arise given seasonality of camp and short training.
- Modifying established tools to create those that obtain similar PQ information with less staff burden and strategically layering PQ into training may efficiently persuade staff to adopt PQ practices and assessments.
- Consider your intentions with PQ (i.e., internal improvement or benchmarking with similar programs); dedicate finances, staff, and time accordingly.

CULTIVATING UNDERREPRESENTED YOUTH'S INTEREST IN CAMP EMPLOYMENT

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Camp can be a rich developmental opportunity where youth build skills that prepare them for college and career success (e.g., Wilson & Sibthorp, 2018). Although individual camps vary, many people see the summer camp industry as being more accessible to affluent, White youth (Browne et al., 2019). Many camps want to attract youth from underrepresented backgrounds and become more inclusive (American Camp Association, 2013). Having staff who share campers' social identities may support this goal because they can help campers feel a greater sense of belonging (Thomas, 2016). Subsequently, youth from underrepresented backgrounds may be more likely to enroll and gain camp's developmental benefits.

Counselors often report that they value the relationships and their ability to have a meaningful impact in their camp work, which increases their likelihood of retention (Richmond et al., 2020). Many camp staff obtain their positions after having been campers or participating in counselor-in-training (CIT) programs. Thus, one productive avenue for recruiting staff from underrepresented backgrounds could be through high-quality CIT programs. Introducing underrepresented youth to camp and creating progressive opportunities (from camper to CIT to camp counselor) may strengthen their camp identity and lead them to become camp staff (see Bond & Haynes, 2014, for a description of how to increase workplace diversity). Although turnover in camp employment is high, some underrepresented camp staff recruited through these channels may eventually obtain leadership positions, resulting in greater representation of underrepresented populations across camps. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify what characteristics of the CIT experience made it more likely that youth from underrepresented backgrounds who participated in a CIT program developed an interest in becoming counselors.

Methods

Participants ($N = 95$) were recruited from camps that developed CIT programs for youth that the camp identified as being underrepresented at that camp. Most CITs had previously attended the camp where they were a CIT (88.3%) and were 12-18 years old ($M = 14.75$, $SD = 1.4$). Sixty percent of participants identified as a person of color, and almost half identified as a member of a marginalized group, including 15% who identified as non-binary.

Participants completed a post-CIT program survey and answered open-ended questions about high- and lowlights, and the most important factor in deciding to return as a CIT or counselor. They answered questions on a Likert-type rating scale about the likelihood of returning as a CIT and the importance of lowlights in their decision. In addition, participants completed a modified Diversity Engagement Survey (DES), which assesses an organization's ability to foster inclusion and engagement (Person et al., 2015). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to more deeply understand CITs' experiences ($n = 11$). Two coders reviewed the transcripts and coded content using an open coding scheme related to three questions (Saldaña, 2009). 1) How did the participants' social identity impact their experience as a CIT? 2) What qualities would increase the likelihood that participants with these social identities return as a CIT or future camp counselor? And 3)

What recommendations do CITs have for increasing representation of people with their social identity at camp? After each coder reviewed all transcripts, they met to discuss discrepancies and used thematic analysis to collapse their codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results

Results from the DES largely suggested that the camps in this study were equitable and inclusive. Each of the seven subscales exhibited ceiling effects within our sample and did not vary by self-identified aspects of CITs' social identities (e.g., race, gender, or marginalization).

Drivers of CIT Retention

Participant responses to open-ended questions were coded and analyzed for frequency. The three most frequently identified highlights included the CIT program (21%), camp structure (e.g., the size of the camp) (20%) and specific activities (16%).

Drivers of CIT Turnover

The three most frequently identified lowlights included issues related to camp structure (18%), management (16%), and the CIT program (11%). Participants rated how important each lowlight was to their decision to return as a CIT. The lowlights scored as most important differed from the most frequently identified lowlights. Compensation ($M = 4.88$, $SD = .33$), the diversity within camp ($M = 4$, $SD = 1.41$), and the availability of learning opportunities ($M = 4$, $SD = 1$) were the most important factors teens would use to determine if they returned to camp as a CIT.

Interest in CIT/Counselor Employment

Most participants (89%) were very confident they would return as a CIT, and 75% of participants were very or extremely interested in becoming counselors. Personal reasons were the most frequently identified factor in whether a participant would return as a CIT (27%) or counselor (21%). After personal reasons, CITs most frequently identified camp structure (17%) and relationships at camp (14%) as the most important factors in whether they would return. They most frequently identified compensation (16%), support from management (11%), and relationships (10%) as most important to their decision to become a counselor.

Interview Data

When asked directly, participants reported that they did not perceive that their social identity impacted their CIT experience, although one CIT reported an incident where derogatory comments were made about CITs of different racial identities who dated at camp. In line with previous research (c.f., Riley et al., 2021), CITs thought the CIT experience would be improved with more structure and stronger training and mentorship from camp staff. They also said that compensation rates would significantly impact their decision to return. Their families generally supported their decision to be a CIT, although some CITs reported that their parents or caregivers did not understand the value of working as a CIT or camp counselor. One participant said, "My mom doesn't really know about my job. She's like, 'Yeah, it's fun stuff, right?' She thought that I could [spend] my time doing something more beneficial." Many participants said they wanted to become a CIT because they had positive experiences as campers and wanted to provide similar experiences for others. Another participant said, "I really wanted the opportunity to impact kids the way my life was impacted in that short time. So, I just feel it was really important to use my summer to do that." Most CITs were initially introduced to camp through social networks, including neighbors, friends, family, school, and church. The CITs also described the camps they attended as being especially successful at creating an inclusive environment.

Discussion

Although the CITs in this program represented a more diverse group than is typical at many camps, almost all had previously been campers and their experiences aligned with past research on campers and CITs (c.f., Richmond et al., 2020). The participants reported that their camps provided an inclusive experience for campers who shared their social identities, findings that coalesced in both the quantitative and qualitative data. Overall, the CITs in this study were highly interested in returning to camp. The most important draw to returning to camp was the camp community and relationships with peers and campers. Differences emerged in returning as a CIT versus a counselor, suggesting that camp aligns differently with CIT's short- versus long-term goals. What makes a CIT program important may be the camp structure and relationships, but when considering future employment, CITs prioritized pay, opportunities that prepared them for future learning and careers, and positive interactions with management. It appeared that CITs' families—and at times, CITs themselves—did not appreciate that camp employment could teach valuable skills until after the CIT program ended.

A key limitation within this study was that the sample population was drawn from former campers who had an established relationship with the camp where they were a CIT. Thus, they represented individuals with prior exposure to camp rather than individuals who were new to camp and camp employment. However, the findings offer preliminary evidence that CIT programs can be a bridge to keep underrepresented youth connected to camps they had attended and to maintain their interest in becoming camp counselors until they are old enough to do so. Given that many CITs in the study reported a desire for better training and more feedback, camps could improve the CIT program structure to provide these opportunities. They could also focus on ensuring that CIT and camp counselor compensation is in line with similar job opportunities and consider how to better communicate the types of job-relevant skills youth obtain through camp employment.

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Cultivating Underrepresented Youth's Interest in Camp Employment

Lisa Meerts, Hilary Lambert, Wenting Yu & Jim Sibthorp, University of Utah



Study Aim/Purpose
Identify characteristics of counselor-in-training (CIT) programs that increase likelihood that youth from underrepresented backgrounds who participated in a CIT program want to become camp counselors

Participants (N = 95)

- Age 12-18 ($M = 14.75$, $SD = 1.4$)
- 60% identified as a person of color
- ~ 50% identified as a member of a marginalized group, including 15% who identified as non-binary
- 88% percent had previously attended the camp where they served as a CIT

Methods

- Completed post-CIT program survey
 - Interest in returning as CIT or camp counselor
 - Diversity Engagement Survey (DES)
 - Highlights/lowlights of CIT program
 - Most important factors impacting decision to return
- Subset ($n = 11$) completed semi-structured interviews



Interest in Returning as CIT/Counselor

89% of participants were very confident they would return as a CIT
75% of participants were very or extremely interested in becoming counselors.

Semi-structured Interviews

CIT programs generally seen as inclusive
Families and friends do not immediately appreciate how hard being a CIT is or know what CITs learn from their work

Implications for Practitioners

Aspects like CIT program features and camp structure can be an asset or a headache. To make these things a highlight, create a well-designed CIT program where CITs know they are valued and receive regular feedback and mentorship from camp staff.

Because youth who identify as camp kids want to become CITs, focus on building inclusive camp that appeals to potential underrepresented campers

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HIRING AND TRAINING PRACTICES THAT INCREASE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT SUMMER CAMPS

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As camps strive to become more diverse and inclusive, they can use various effective strategies to improve their practices. Common practices include developing inclusive and equitable administrative policies, assessing and evaluating diversity and inclusion (D&I)¹ in their programs, and increasing access to camp by removing barriers and recruiting more diverse campers (Browne et al., 2019). Another important focal area is staffing. First, camps can expand their ability to recruit and hire diverse employees who may reflect the diversity of the campers they want to attract. Deep-level diversity refers to an organization's values and attitudes, which when communicated through recruiting materials can better attract diverse employees than recruiting for surface-level diversity (e.g., demographic characteristics) (Casper et al., 2013). Second, regardless of their employees' identities, camps can increase their employees' ability to be inclusive through training (Gutiérrez et al., 2017). Diversity training tends to be most successful when coupled with multiple initiatives rather than one-off trainings (Bezrukova et al., 2016). Trainings typically focus on three categories of outcomes: cognitive (when trainees acquire knowledge), behavioral (the development of skills), and affective (beliefs and attitudes about diversity) (Bezrukova et al., 2016). Given that little research has focused on the range of D&I practices that camps employ, the purpose of this study was to survey camps about the practices they use to increase D&I at camp and identify approaches to hiring and training that seem especially useful.

Methods

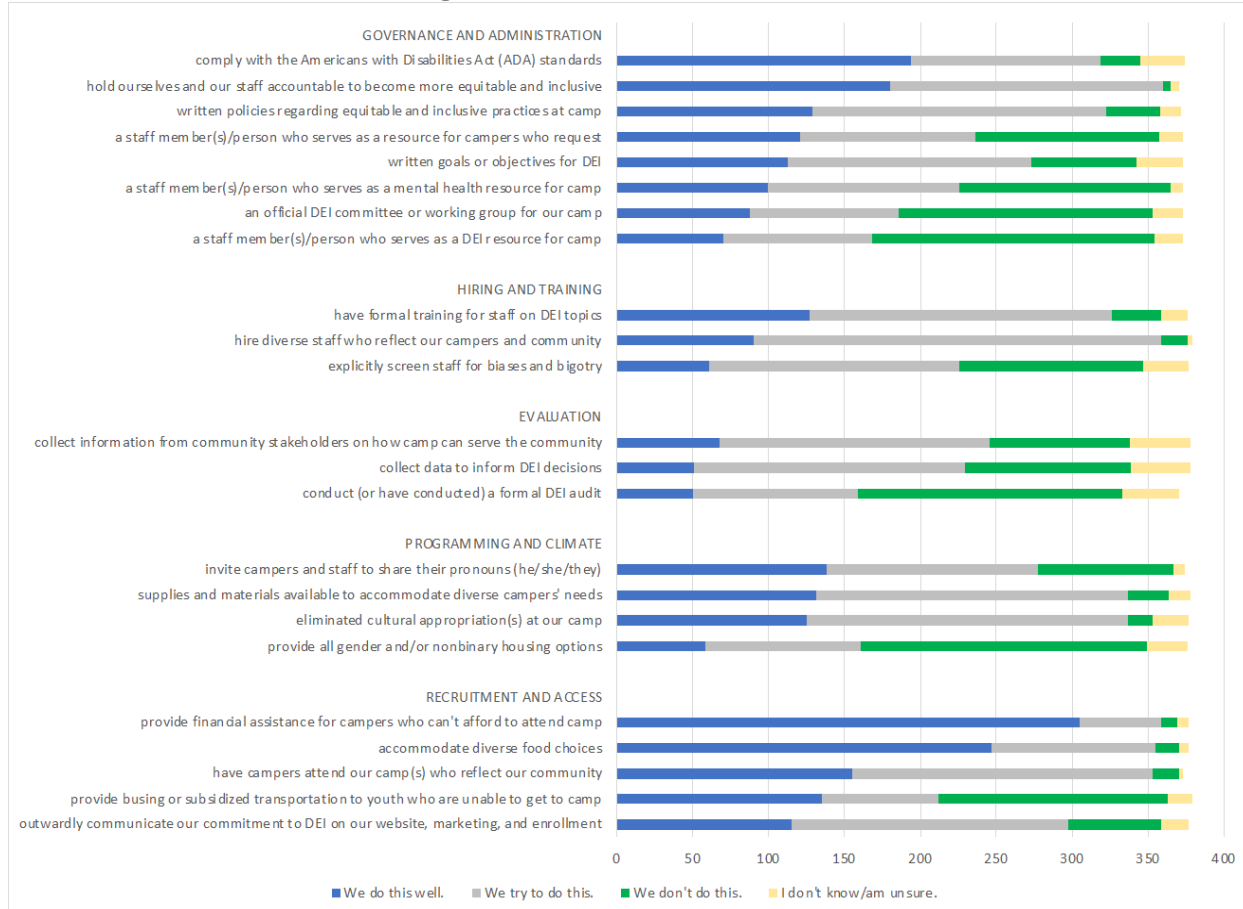
Participants ($N = 390$) in this study were recruited through the ACA Now and Y-USA's online newsletters, and the ACA National Conference, and included representation from across the United States. The majority were non-profit camps (82.6%) and the majority offered overnight programming (38%). Participants completed a survey about 23 diversity, equity and inclusion strategies that were organized in five groups (see Figure 1). Participants rated whether they did a particular strategy well, tried to do the strategy, did not do the strategy or whether they were unsure if they did the strategy. A subset of participants ($n = 19$) who responded that their camp did well with the hiring and training strategies completed semi-structured interviews about what made their hiring and training practices effective. Two coders analyzed the interview data and used constant comparison to develop codes that were thematically analyzed (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results

We analyzed survey data for frequency counts (see Figure 1). Between 24 and 27 percent of survey participants indicated that their camp did the three hiring and training strategies well (formal diversity, equity, and inclusion training, hiring diverse staff, screening for biases) and met the interview inclusion criteria. The 19 interview transcripts were subsequently coded, and the codes were grouped into five main categories that reflected the major themes: a) recruitment; b) diversity training; c) key aspects for success at inclusion; d) needs to build inclusive camp culture; and e) camp culture: readiness for D&I.

¹ Although equity was also of interest in this study, most of the staffing practices were focused on increasing D&I rather than equity. For simplicity, we have used the terms diversity and inclusion.

Figure 1
Frequencies of Camp DEI Strategy Use Reported by Staff



Interview participants reported that reaching outside of traditional networks and building relationships with underrepresented communities was essential to recruiting diverse employees. Diversity training differed depending on whether it served full-time or seasonal staff. Full-time staff were more likely to hold leadership positions and receive cognitive, behavioral, and affective training (c.f., Bezrukova et al., 2016) whereas seasonal staff received more behavioral, skills-based training to help them address concerns that arose with campers during camp sessions. Camps found updated policy documents, transparent communication with parents and campers, repetition and review of D&I training, funding, and resourcing D&I work, and partnerships with external groups to be key aspects of their success at inclusion. They identified needs as having more clear policies from partner organizations or organizations that oversaw their camp (e.g., a local university), being able to address the physical structure of camp (e.g., bathrooms and cabins), having better assessment and evaluation tools, and having better ways to share knowledge across camps. Finally, a camp's readiness for D&I depended on characteristics such as the values of the camp as well as the values of the community where the camp is located. Values between camps and their local community often differed and affected how quickly camps could increase inclusive practices. Camp culture around D&I contained three domains: readiness (an explicit commitment to improving D&I), integration (the degree to which

camps have embraced D&I practices overall) and competency (skill that emerges after navigating D&I topics).

Discussion

This study aimed to understand what camps are successfully doing to improve D&I at their camps and focused on recruiting diverse staff and diversity training as two of the more actionable steps camps can take. The data demonstrated, however, that recruitment and training do not happen in a vacuum. Rather, they are crucial aspects of any given camp's culture, which is comprised of their governance and administration, evaluation, programming and climate and recruitment and access. While specific strategies camps use were identified, the findings serve as a reminder that each camp must be willing to customize promising approaches for D&I to their own contexts. The strategies several camps found most successful involved building relationships within diverse communities to recruit staff and, in line with Bezrukova et al. (2016), integrating D&I training approaches throughout the camp.

Camps that want to improve D&I may benefit from taking an inventory of their camp culture to identify how ready they are to integrate more D&I training at their camp. Based on their assessment, they could prioritize different strategies. For example, a camp without clear D&I policies may start by reaching out to similar camps to identify their approach, consulting with partner organizations, or working with an organization that oversees the camp to implement their D&I policies at that camp. Regardless of a camp's readiness to integrate additional D&I practices, they can benefit from regularly reviewing the D&I work they already complete to help camp staff keep D&I principles at the forefront as they operate the camp. One limitation within this study was that the survey was sent to a broad range of camp staff who have differing levels of knowledge and familiarity with practices and the history of practices related to D&I at that camp. Additionally, while camps identified practices as useful, we did not assess the impact of any given practice on a camp.

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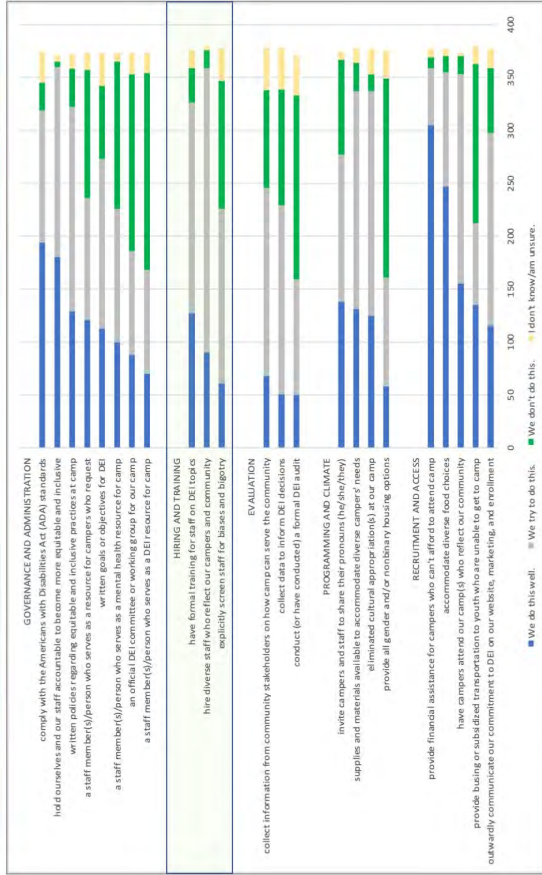
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Hiring and Training Practices that Increase Diversity and Inclusion at Summer Camps

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Study Aim/Purpose

- Survey camps about the practices they use to increase diversity and inclusion
 - Identify effective approaches to hiring and training
- Participants and Methods
390 camps completed survey about 23 diversity and inclusion strategies (See figure)
- Most (83%) were non-profit camps; a majority (72%) offered overnight programming (some with day camp)



Implications for Practitioners

Hiring and training are effective places to implement a camp's overall D&I strategy. However, camps need to assess their culture to determine what they can presently accomplish and where they can grow to achieve long-term D&I goals.

A subset (n = 19) of participants who said their camp did well at hiring and training completed semi-structured interviews about what made their hiring and training effective.

Hiring and Training for Diversity and Inclusion

Camps recruited staff from diverse backgrounds through social networks and targeted advertising but continue to need more effective recruitment strategies.

How diversity training is implemented varies in context, design (e.g., who facilitated it), focus, targeted outcome (e.g., awareness, skills), instructional methods and challenges. Entry-level staff typically received more skills training whereas long-time staff received more knowledge/awareness trainings.

Camps who describe themselves as successful at inclusion depended on updated policy documents, transparency around D&I, repetition of trainings, had financial resources/other support for D&I, and external partnerships and relationships. Camp needs to improve inclusion included policy documents, visual and structural changes, assessment tools, and ways to share knowledge and learn from other successful camps.

Camp culture was shaped by the interaction between the camp's values, the local community culture, staff attitudes, and ability to adopt changes.

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EXAMINING GEN Z, EMERGING ADULT SUMMER EMPLOYMENT PRIORITIES

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Over one million summer camp staff positions are filled annually by individuals aged 18 to 25 years. This population aligns with two categories: emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2007) and Gen Z (demographic population born after 1997; Dimock, 2019). The relevancy of Gen Z characteristics to this emerging adulthood population is perplexing industries that employ seasonal workers due to their distinct employment behaviors (Agarwal & Vaghela, 2018). Summer camp jobs have been considered a traditional, coming-of-age experience for this population. Today, more industries are competing for these workers, which leaves many camp professionals scrambling to understand Gen Z's characteristics and desires when recruiting new staff (e.g., Owens, 2022). The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of Gen Z's priorities regarding summer seasonal employment.

Prior research illuminated camp staff work motivations (e.g., DeGraaf & Edington, 1992; Roark, 2006) and career skill development (e.g., Duerden et al., 2014). Those findings remain informative, yet the foundational staff motivation research occurred twenty years ago and focused on actively employed staff members. Since then, a worldwide pandemic occurred and a new generation of emerging adults (i.e., Gen Z) began challenging traditional employment practices (Aggarwal et al., 2020). Two research questions guided this study: to what degree does (1) first generation status relate to employment priorities and (2) school position (i.e., year and academic focus) relate to employment priorities?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation (1987). This theory considers the impact of hygiene factors (i.e., pay, policies, peer interactions) and motivator factors (i.e., growth opportunities, responsibility, achievement) on a worker's job satisfaction and motivation. This framework has informed studies examining camp staff motivation and employment choices (e.g., DeGraaf & Edington, 1992; Roark, 2006). The prior research suggested that the motivator factors influenced camp staffs' employment experience more than hygiene factors. A research gap in understanding Gen Z's motivations, particularly related to summer, seasonal employment following a global health and economic disruption necessitates another examination of this topic.

Methods

An online survey was administered to all undergraduate and graduate students at two midwestern universities during Fall 2022. The survey design was informed by a literature review of Gen Z employment practices (e.g., Aggarwal et al., 2020), past camp employment motivation factors (e.g., DeGraaf & Edington, 1992), and communication with camp professionals during staff recruitment events (i.e., university job fairs). Students answered questions based on their Summer 2022 employment needs (e.g., pay, location, skill development), personal priorities (e.g., fun work environment, flexible scheduling, personal and organizational value match) and recruitment communication experiences. University IRB approval was obtained and participants consented prior to completing their online survey. Two executive level camp professionals reviewed the survey and provided input regarding scale item modifications. The final survey was pilot tested by a recreation

graduate student unfamiliar with the study. Minor design errors were identified and corrected prior to administration.

Data were analyzed using SPSS (v28). The employment priority scale included fifteen items and had acceptable internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .76. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed with the fifteen priority items and yielded four factors with eigenvalues above 1.0 (flexible and fun work environment: 3.6; career preparation/development: 2.8; personal interests and values: 1.3; pragmatic needs: 1.0). The four priority factors were used to explore the relationship of employment priorities to first generation status, school year and academic focus. Respondents ($n = 576$) represented each level of college: freshman (20%), sophomore (14%), junior (23%), senior (23%) and graduate students (19%). Most respondents were female (74%), identified as White (70%) and half of respondents were considered first generation college students (53%).

Results

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the priority factor scores for first generation status. A significant difference in scores only occurred with the factor Personal Interests for First Generation status ($M = 7.4$, $SD = 1.974$) and non-First Generation ($M = 7.76$; $SD = 1.979$; $t(551) = -2.11$, $p = 0.04$, two-tailed).

A one-way between-group ANOVA was conducted to explore the impact of year and academic area on the employment priority factors. First, participants were divided into five groups representing their school year. Statistical significance was reported for three factors, however the difference in mean scores was quite small (see Table 1). Graduate and senior students differed from freshman students.

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way ANOVA for Priority Factors by School Year

Measure	Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior		Graduate Students		F (4,550)	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Flexible and fun work environment	7.03	2.15	7.53	2.50	7.25	2.25	7.24	2.15	8.39	2.72	5.57***	0.04
Career preparation and development	5.52	2.05	5.26	2.02	4.98	1.87	4.78	1.83	4.84	2.16	2.72*	0.02
Pragmatic needs	5.52	2.05	5.26	2.02	4.98	1.87	4.78	1.83	4.84	2.16	2.62*	0.02
Personal interests	7.84	2.17	7.47	2.04	7.49	1.74	7.62	1.91	7.4	2.08	0.84	0.01

Note: $N = 567$. ANOVA = analysis of variance; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

The second ANOVA involved dividing participants into five groups representing their academic focus. Statistical significance was reported for two factors, however the difference in mean scores was quite small (see Table 2). Business/technology students differed from arts/sciences students for Career Preparation while fine arts differed from undeclared students for Personal Interests.

Table 2*Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way ANOVA for Priority Factors by Academic Focus*

Measure	Arts and Sciences		Business and Technology		Education and Human Services		Fine Arts		Undeclared		<i>F</i> (4,550)	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Flexible and fun work environment	7.34	2.23	7.6	2.41	7.49	2.52	7.41	2.22	5.25	0.5	1.13	0.01
Career preparation and development	5.40	2.13	4.62	1.83	4.99	1.87	5.43	2.10	7.50	1.7	5.26***	0.04
Pragmatic needs	3.88	1.16	4.03	1.24	4.20	1.15	4.31	1.39	3.75	1.5	2.06	0.01
Personal interests	7.86	1.97	7.46	2.05	7.43	1.88	7.11	2.03	10.00	1.4	3.31**	0.02

Note: N = 567. ANOVA = analysis of variance; *p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Discussion and Implications

Gen Z employment priorities for summer employment were explored in this study. Research examining Gen Z's full-time career priorities indicated a strong desire for flexible scheduling (Singh & Dangmei, 2016), unique and personalized experiences (Agarwal & Vaghela, 2018), and person-organization value match (Brinke, 2021). The current study found that advanced students (e.g., graduate and senior students) were more pragmatic and focused on career development for their summer employment compared to early-stage students (i.e., freshmen). Academic area suggested that business/technology and arts/sciences students sought opportunities to develop career skills compared to students in other academic areas. No statistically significant findings occurred to suggest differences between groups (i.e., first generation, school year or academic focus) in relation to their priority for a flexible, fun work environment or address their personal interests during summer jobs. This finding may suggest that Gen Z generally seeks flexibility, variety, and personal growth from their summer employment with a greater focus on career development at certain academic stages.

Camp professionals recruiting current college students may consider adjusting their recruitment techniques and staff structures to capture the desired candidates.

1. Initially inquire about the students' year in school and academic focus then proceed with the available opportunities that will meet their interests (e.g., senior student is more likely to be interested in internship or leadership opportunities than freshmen or sophomores).
2. Create more depth to your staff structure to address Gen Z's desire for flexibility and personalization. Providing opportunities to work different lengths of time or in

different positions across the summer will allow Gen Z staff members to fulfil these personal priorities.

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Background

- Recruiting and retaining Gen Z employees is increasingly difficult
- There is high competition for workers across all industries
- Gen Z is displaying nuanced work behaviors challenging traditional work culture norms

Purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of Gen Z's priorities regarding summer seasonal employment.

Methods

- Online survey to undergraduate & graduate students at two midwestern universities
- Data gathered Fall 2022 (n = 576)
- Students answered questions related to summer 2022 employment needs, personal priorities & recruitment experiences
- Exploratory factor analysis yielded four factors from the 15-item priority scale
- Analysis focused on examining the relationship of (1) first generation college student status, (2) year in school and (3) academic focus to employment priority factors.

Results

- 1. School year** appeared to have the strongest relationship. Advanced students (i.e., graduate, seniors) were more concerned with career development while early-stage students (i.e., freshmen) sought opportunities to meet personal interests.
- 2. Academic focus** analyses revealed that business/technology and arts/sciences students were more focused on using summer employment for career development than students with other academic foci.
- 3. First generation** student status had little relationship to employment priorities, except a small effect on priorities related to Personal Interests.

Gen Z college students generally seek summer employment that provides flexibility and allows them to address their personal interests. Only some focus on career development from summer jobs.



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ILLINOIS STATE
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Practical Implications

1. Before sharing recruitment information to potential applicants about opportunities at your camp:
 - a) Inquire about their year in school and academic focus to provide more relevant information
 - b) Inquire about their personal interests, goals and needs to identify and discuss matching opportunities
2. Evaluate staff structure to identify ways to increase job flexibility & personalization for Gen Z staff.



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THE VISION OF STAFF AND VOICES OF YOUTH: WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING AT CAMP?

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Overnight camp programs through 4-H and other youth development organizations should lead to positive outcomes for campers. Assessment of outcomes and experiences is essential to the process of continual program improvement. Some positive outcomes from camp include practical life skill development (Anderson, 2021; Bialeschki, et al., 1998), improving characteristics related to youth thriving (Alberts, et al., 2006; Hershberg, et al., 2014), and increases in elements of Positive Youth Development (Halsall, et al., 2016; Henderson, et al., 2007). Measurement instruments such as ACA's Youth Outcomes Battery (ACA, 2022) or 4-H's Common Measures (4-H, 2022) may provide camp leaders with information about camper growth. Large-scale ACA (2005) and 4-H (Li et al., 2008) studies have evaluated youth development outcomes, and many camps implement some form of evaluation each summer. Camp leaders often desire a tailored program assessment, unique to their program's values.

During 2022, a one-million-dollar American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant funded youth development efforts through day and overnight camp activities for a 4-H extension program in the Pacific Northwest. Goals stated in the grant included helping mitigate educational learning loss, providing educational activities supporting student learning, and providing behavioral health supports for children. A large portion of grant funding provided camp scholarships to unserved and underserved youth in the geographic location of the 4-H extension program. Our research team was invited by extension educators to design a values-based program assessment of the overnight camp portion of grant-funded activities.

The purpose of this three-phase study was to conduct a tailored assessment comparing expectations of adult and youth staff members with camper perceptions, related to valued experiences, during a 4-H overnight camp program. Our study was developed in conjunction with staff and 4-H extension educators. To assess camper experiences and outcomes, the first phases of the study were focused on identifying the expectations of staff and counselors related to the camp program. Two research questions guided our study. 1) What camper experiences and outcomes are expected and valued by professional and volunteer staff members? 2) What are camper perceptions regarding the identified valued experiences and outcomes?

Methods

During spring and summer of 2022, we conducted descriptive research in three phases. To increase face and content validity, protocols and pilot instruments were reviewed by experts in the field. First, we conducted recorded semi-structured interviews with all six professional staff members who would be leading the 4-H camp during the summer. Next, we conducted recorded focus groups and administered written surveys to 18 youth and young adult (aged 15 to 18) volunteer counselors during the final pre-camp counselor training. Finally, we administered written surveys to 232 campers (entering 3rd through 9th grade) on the final day of five weeks of camp. A total of 243 camper surveys were included in the analysis, as 11 campers completed the survey during two camp sessions. Percentages reported are out of total surveys, rather than total campers. Related to gender, 43% identified as boys, 53% as girls, and 3% as another gender identity. Almost three quarters (72%) of participants were first-time campers.

When interviewing adult staff members, we asked them questions regarding their expectations for camper experiences and outcomes from overnight camp. We also asked about what might encapsulate the “essential” camp experience, and why they had chosen to work in their position at 4-H camp. Survey and focus group questions for youth and young adult volunteer counselors were similar, with additional items regarding an evaluation of their training meetings, and what they felt prepared and unprepared to address during camp. Camper surveys included: 1) three five-point Likert-type scales measuring perceptions of the camp experience, cabin group, and safety; 2) three binary questions about making new friends, learning something new, and first time at camp; 3) 16 items regarding participation in specific camp activities; and 4) five open-ended questions, related to positive and negative camp experiences, cabin group, safety, and new things learned. We transcribed and manually coded interviews and focus groups. Open-ended survey responses were analyzed using inductive values-based and descriptive coding. We analyzed quantitative data using descriptive statistics and Pearson’s correlation.

Results

Emergent themes from the first two phases informed the final phase of the study with campers. Essential conclusions from adult staff interviews included expectations that camp would be a place of safety, growth, and new experiences in a positive environment. They stated that the social dynamic between cabinmates would shape overall perceptions of the camp experience. Counselors expected campers to have new and positive experiences, make friends, and gain confidence in themselves. Survey questions were then developed to examine overall perceptions of camp, new experiences, safety, and the cabin group.

Regarding overall perceptions of camp, most campers rated camp as either “Very Good” (28%) or “Good” (38%), with 28% rating camp as “Okay” and only 2% of campers rating camp as “Bad” (1%) or “Very Bad” (1%). Major positive themes included social interactions, activities, and workshops. Major negative themes included arguments, drama, and trouble sleeping.

Related to new experiences, nearly all campers (99%) had at least one new experience at camp, with 72% attending camp for the first time, 88% making a new friend, 68% learning something new, and 75% trying a specific activity for the first time. The most frequent learning themes were related to camp activities, such as swing dancing, canoeing, and archery.

On the topic of safety, almost three quarters of campers rated their feeling of safety as “Very Safe” (24%) or “Safe” (48%) while at camp. Some campers (17%) rated their safety as “Okay” and 5% of campers rated their safety as “Unsafe” (4%) or “Very Unsafe” (1%). Prevalent themes related to feeling safe included the presence of counselors, a general feeling, friends, and many people around. Related to feeling unsafe, themes included cabin issues, cabin member behavior, and fears of insects or animals. A moderate positive correlation was found between feelings of safety and overall perceptions of the camp experience ($r(219) = .471, p < .001$) indicating that campers who felt safe tended to also rate camp more positively.

Regarding social dynamics within the cabin group, less than half (48%) reported that their cabin group was “Very Good” (24%) or “Good” (24%). The largest percentage rated their cabin as “Okay” (39%), with only 8% reporting that the cabin group was “Bad” (6%) or “Very Bad” (2%). Positive themes included positive attributes, getting along, and counselors, whereas negative themes included cabinmates being too loud – especially at night, negative attributes, and fighting or drama. Written comments in this section were more often

negative than positive. A moderate positive correlation was found between perceptions of cabin group and the overall camp experience ($r(223) = .448, p < .001$) indicating that campers who rated their cabin group positively tended to also rate camp more positively.

Discussion and Implications

The 4-H camp staff members stated enjoyment, new experiences, positive social dynamics, and feelings of safety were the most valued camper experiences while at camp. Camper perceptions were mixed, with responses indicating that the above constructs were overwhelmingly related to social interactions. Most negative responses were related to perceptions of conflict, drama, noise, and difficulty getting to sleep. Counselor meetings took place at “lights out,” leaving campers to self-regulate at bedtime. Based on camper comments, many cabin groups struggled to do this. Camp staff should consider a more appropriate time for counselor meetings and provide structure and routine for campers at bedtime. Staff members valued camper growth and building of confidence through new experiences. Since nearly all campers reported having new experiences, camp staff should provide campers with opportunities for reflection on their accomplishments and struggles. Whether during nightly cabin meetings, at campfire, or on camp surveys, campers may benefit from recognizing and reflecting on their new experiences. Ultimately, camp leadership will benefit from identifying the expected and valued outcomes for their program and developing methods of assessment related to those values. While standardized measurement instruments provide useful data, tailored mission-focused assessments will provide rich information about alignment with camp-specific values. Future research will include developing a method for identifying organizational values and targeted outcomes.

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The Vision of Staff and Voices of Youth: What's Really Happening at Camp?

An *ARPA grant-funded 4-H Overnight Camp Program*

Amanda C. Palmer, MS, and Sharon K. Stoll, PhD, University of Idaho Center for ETHICS*



Study Aim/Purpose

To design and conduct a multi-phase assessment comparing expectations of staff members with camper perceptions, related to valued experiences, during a 4-H overnight camp program.

Methods

Timeline and Setting

- Spring and summer 2022
- Pre-camp, staff training, and five sessions of 4-H overnight camp

Participants and Measures

- Six adult staff members (*semi-structured interviews*)
- 18 high-school-aged volunteer counselors (*surveys/focus groups*)
- 232 third through ninth grade campers (*post-camp surveys*)

Data Analyses

- Descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlations
- Inductive values-based and descriptive coding

Adult and Youth Staff Expected:

- Campers would have **POSITIVE OVERALL** experiences, have fun, and engage in many opportunities for **EXPERIENCES**, learning, and growth
- **CABIN GROUP DYNAMICS** would shape campers' **OVERALL** perceptions



feel **SAFE**

Campers Reported: (*numeric responses*)

- 66% rated camp as **POSITIVE OVERALL** (28% "Okay" and 2% "Bad" / "Very Bad")
- 72% rated their **SAFETY** as "Very Safe" / "Safe" (17% "Okay" and 5% "Unsafe" / "Very Unsafe")
- 99% had at least one **NEW EXPERIENCE**: 72% were first-time campers, 88% made a new friend, 68% learned something new, 75% tried a specific activity for the first time
- **Cabin group dynamics did impact overall perceptions** of the camp experience with a moderate positive correlation ($r(219) = .471, p < .001$)
- Campers who rated their cabin group positively tended to rate their overall camp experience more positively



Campers Wrote: (*open-ended responses*)

BEST things about camp: Making Friends/Spending Time with Friends; Activities/Games; Workshops
HARDEST things about camp: Trouble Sleeping/Getting to Sleep; Arguments and Drama
SAFEST elements of camp: Counselors; General Feeling; Friends/Other Campers; Many People
LEAST SAFE elements of camp: Cabin Issues; Cabin Member Behavior; Fears of Insects/Animals
CABIN GROUP POSITIVES: Positive Attributes of Campers; Getting Along; Counselors
CABIN GROUP NEGATIVES: Too Loud, Especially at Night; Negative Attributes; Fighting/Drama

Implications for Practice

1. Campers' most frequent concerns were related to bedtime, which was when counselor meetings were occurring. **Counselors should be in cabins at bedtime, providing active supervision, conflict mediation, and building established routines.**
2. With so many campers reporting new and first-time experiences, **intentional opportunities for reflection should be provided**, whether during nightly cabin meetings, at campfire, on camp surveys, or immediately after individual activities.
3. Camp leaders may benefit from **tailored program assessments** specific to their stated mission, values, and expected participant outcomes.

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WHAT AND HOW YOUTH LEARN AT CAMP: A STUDY OF CAMPS SERVING YOUTH FROM LOW-INCOME BACKGROUNDS

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Camp attendance can afford developmental opportunities for youth (Garst et al., 2016). Indeed, researchers have identified camp-related social-emotional outcomes (e.g., relationship skills, self-confidence; Richmond et al., 2019), as well as mechanisms that support learning in this setting (e.g., being away, feeling challenged, people; Sibthorp et al., 2020). Although researchers have examined camp-related outcomes and mechanisms, much of the recent research has used retrospective designs with alumni samples and little of this research has focused on camps serving youth from low-income backgrounds (YLIB; cf., Warner et al., 2021). Thus, there is a gap in knowledge related to what YLIB *want* to learn at camp, as well as the outcomes and mechanisms reported following camp attendance. Addressing this gap may provide a more equitable understanding of how to design camp programming for the greatest impact. Therefore, we sought to answer the following questions: 1) What do YLIB report they *want* to learn at camp and why? 2) What do YLIB report *actually* learning at camp? 3) What mechanisms do YLIB report as being important to their learning at camp?

Methods

In the spring and fall of 2022, we sent approximately 2000 youth ($m_{age} = 14.6$; $SD = 1.9$; 52% female; 60% white) a link to an online survey prior to and after attending a camp for youth from low-income backgrounds. All youth receiving the survey were enrolled to attend a 10-day summer camp experience at one of seven locations. In the pre-camp survey, youth identified what they wanted to learn at camp from a list of 18 outcomes commonly used in camp research (e.g., Richmond et al., 2019). Following their camp experience, youth identified what they actually learned (same 18 outcomes as pre-camp) and which mechanism (Sibthorp et al., 2020) most supported their learning of these outcomes. A total of 954 useable pre-camp survey responses and 636 post-camp surveys were collected. For the purposes of this study, we focused on the 319 youth who provide pre- and post-camp responses as a means for understanding the extent to which outcomes youth reported wanting to learn compared to the outcomes youth reported learning at camp. Following data cleaning, we calculated frequencies of pre-/post-camp reported outcomes and mechanisms. We used open-coding to identify salient themes in youth's responses to open-ended questions.

Results

Youth reported wanting to learn and learning a variety of outcomes at camp. YLIB wanted to learn outcomes for two primary reasons: they were areas where they felt they could improve and they felt the skills would be useful in their future lives. Youth also reported learning a variety of outcomes and reported that leaders were most important to their learning. See Figure 1 for frequencies of pre/post-camp outcomes and Table 1 for the mechanisms most frequently associated with post-camp outcomes.

Figure 1
Desired and Actual Outcomes

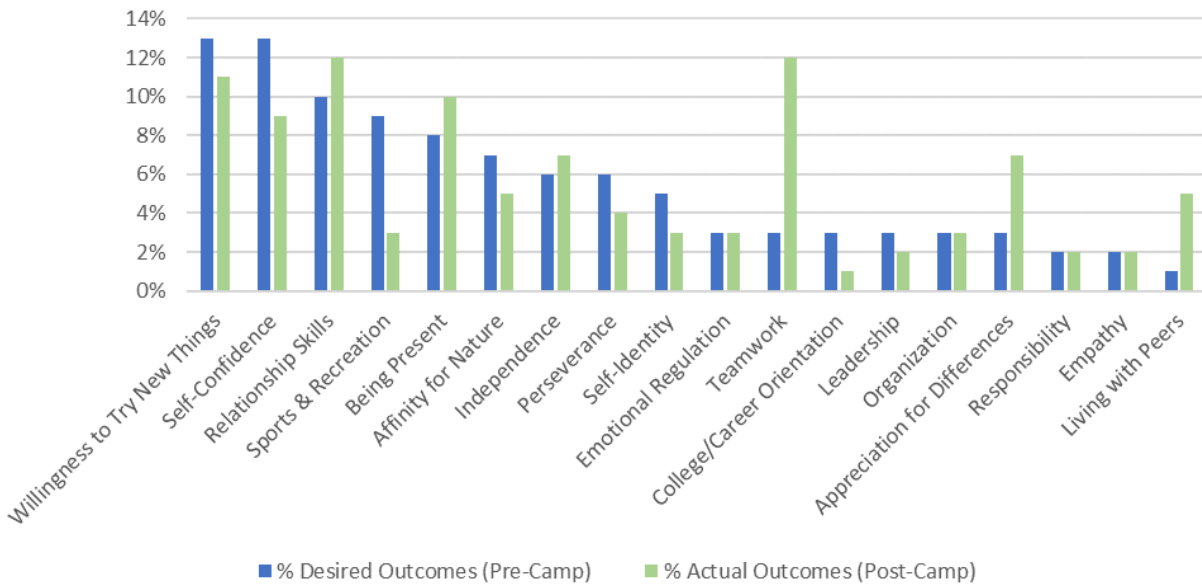


Table 1
Most Frequently Associated Mechanisms

Outcome	Mechanisms	%* (n)
Willingness to Try New Things	Leaders	23% (8)
Self-Confidence	Leaders	33% (9)
Relationship Skills	People in general	36% (14)
Sports & Recreation	Being challenged; leaders	30% (3)
Being Present	People in general	31% (10)
Independence	Being away from home	55% (12)
Perseverance	Being challenged	39% (5)
Emotional Regulation	Other campers	38% (3)
Self-Identity	Leaders	30% (3)
Teamwork	People in general; camp programs/activities	23% (9)
College/Career Orientation	Leaders	100% (4)
Leadership	Leaders	43% (3)
Appreciation for Differences	People in general	32% (7)
Empathy	Leaders; other campers	40% (2)
Living with Peers	Other campers	53% (8)

Note. Outcomes are arranged in the same order as Figure 1. *Of people who selected that as the top outcome learned. **No responses were given related to affinity for nature, responsibility, and organization.

Discussion & Implications

The results of this study have numerous implications for practitioners. First, with a greater understanding of what youth want to learn at camp, practitioners can tailor programs to youth. As camps are businesses, they would likely benefit from delivering on what the “client” (in this case, campers) want and need, not just parents’ expectations. In this study, the most commonly desired outcomes were trying new things, self-confidence, and relationship skills. Our organization can use this information to ensure we offer a variety of different activities, support youth in building self-confidence by providing direct and ongoing feedback, and include activities designed to bring youth together and build relationships with their peers.

By understanding how youth learned specific outcomes at camp, practitioners can modify camp programs to better target desired program outcomes. In our study, it is clear that “leaders” was the most commonly reported mechanism for achieving outcomes. This showcases the critical importance of hiring and training leaders appropriately to support camper learning.

Previous studies have asked former campers similar questions. Sibthorp et al. (2020) found that from a nationally representative sample of camp alumni, top reported outcomes were relationship skills, teamwork and independence. Our campers reported relationship skills, teamwork, and willingness to try new things as the top outcomes, indicating that campers from low-income backgrounds report similar outcomes associated with camp attendance as alumni who attended a variety of camp types, not just camps serving youth from low-income backgrounds. Similar to Sibthorp et al.’s study, our participants also reported leaders and the people in general as the most impactful mechanisms to their learning. These findings reinforce existing knowledge regarding the importance of high-quality staff and the unique social milieu the camp environment often provides.

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What and how youth learn at camp: A study of camps serving youth from low-income backgrounds

Victoria Povilaitis (Tim Hortons Foundation Camps) & Robert P. Warner (University of Utah)

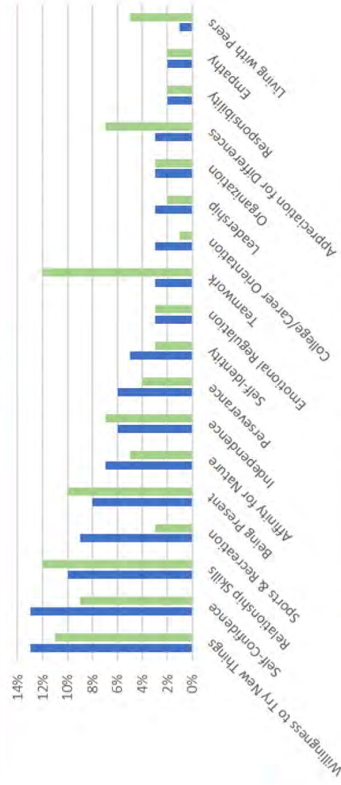
Introduction

- Research related to youth from low-income backgrounds (LIBs) is minimal and these youth may report different outcomes and mechanisms
- Research questions:
 - What do youth from LIBs report *wanting to learn* at camp?
 - What do youth from LIBs report *actually learning* at camp?
 - What *mechanisms* do youth from LIB report as important to learning at camp?

Methods

- Online surveys pre and post camp ($n = 954$, $n = 636$); this work focuses on matching pre- and post- surveys ($n = 319$)
- Choose from list of 18 established outcomes in camp-based research
- Pre: What do you want to learn at camp?
- Post: What did you actually learn at camp? And how?

Findings



- Youth reported wanting to learn outcomes as they felt these were areas where they could improve and that the skills would be useful in their future lives
- Most commonly reported mechanism was “leaders”

Discussion and Implications

- Camp practitioners can tailor programs to youth learning-based desires to build engagement
- Offer a variety of activity options (trying new things), provide direct and ongoing feedback (self-confidence), create intentional activities that focus on team building and working together (relationship skills)
- Staff are important to facilitate the development of outcomes for youth; provide training related to youth development and outcomes, clearly make links for staff between activities and intended outcomes so they deliver programs as created, ensure staff are comfortable in their roles and expectations



ESTABLISHING ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS TO CREATE MORE DIVERSE, EQUITABLE, AND INCLUSIVE CAMPS

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Summer programs and camps are increasingly recognizing the need for greater awareness and sensitivity to topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion; however, many struggle to know how to create more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and racially just spaces (Browne, Gillard, & Garst, 2019). How camps address diversity, equity, and inclusion vary across organizations based on the organization's needs, readiness, and ability to implement equitable and inclusive programming.

The successful implementation of a change initiative, such as improving a camp's DEI efforts, often hinges on the organization's readiness. Without readiness, change initiatives are likely to fail. Readiness refers to an organization's willingness and ability to implement a particular change or innovation (Rafferty et al., 2013). Moroney (2020) theorizes organizations can promote positive youth development strategies as well as restorative justice through organizational readiness.

The purpose of this study is threefold: 1) to create an expert consensus on essential DEI practices and policies for creating more diverse, equitable, and inclusive camps, 2) to identify consensus on the prioritization of essential DEI practices and policies and, 3) identify key indicators that allow camps to assess their DEI organizational readiness. This study allows camps to assess readiness by content area and prioritize action steps.

Method

A consensus-building technique known as the Delphi method was implemented to facilitate structured expert communication around a complex problem (Okuli & Pawlowski, 2004). A diverse expert panel of participants were selected, stratified to represent three groups a) DEI and racial justice content experts, b) national intermediary perspectives, and c) local practitioners' perspectives. Round one primarily focused on content areas to assess a program's DEI status. The content areas included: Community/Camper Engagement, Organizational Culture, Leadership Development, and Board of Directors along with associated indicators (American Camp Association, 2021). For example, indicators of Community/Camper Engagement include Youth Engagement Strategies and Impact Measures.

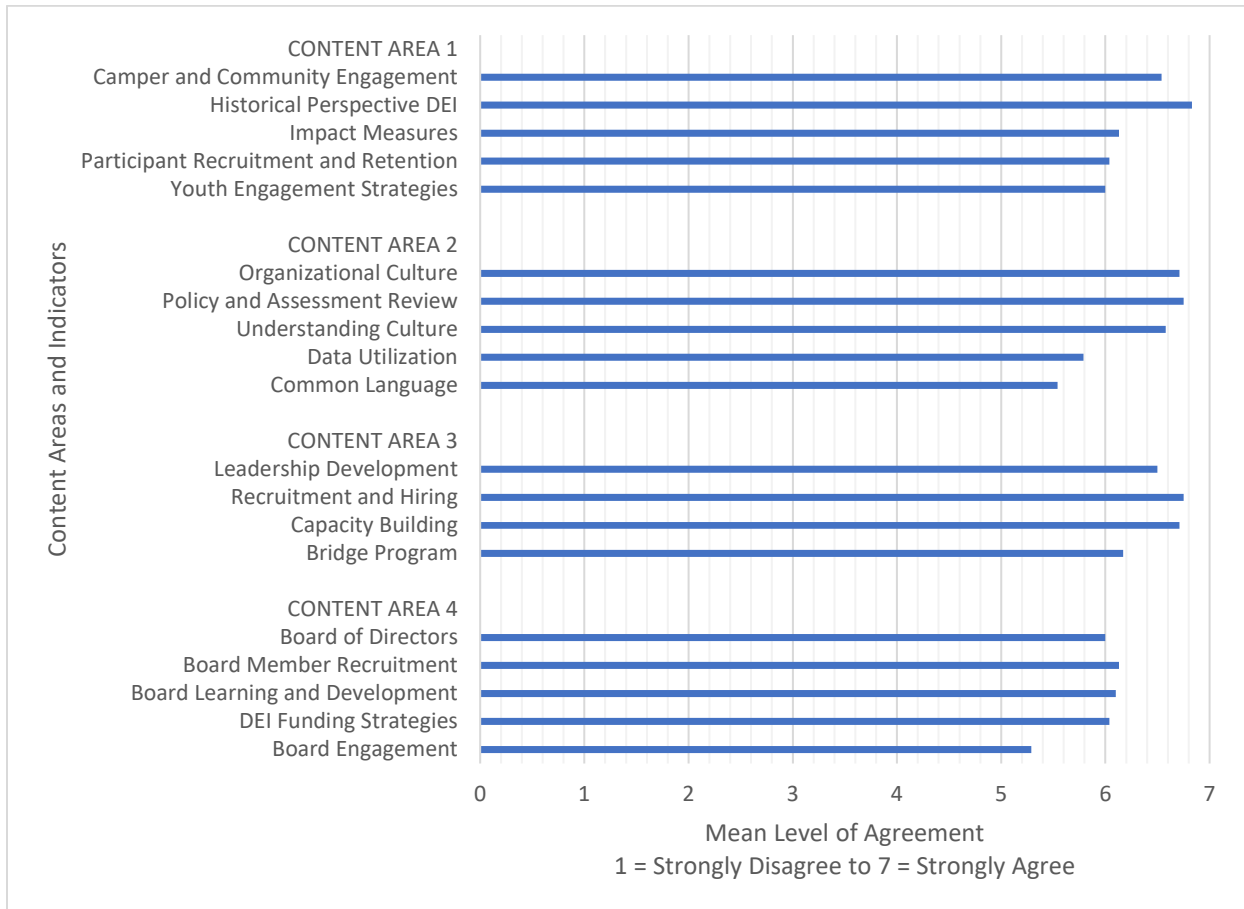
The second round verified results from round one and began generating recommendations for policies, practices, methods, or processes that camps exemplify that have exemplified DEI organizational readiness and progress. Round three built upon round two by presenting participants with results from round two and introduced questions regarding potential first steps for camps beginning their DEI journey. The final round presented results from round three and asked participants for any concluding thoughts.

At the end of each round, the data were assessed for consensus based on the mean/median ratings and rankings as well as the standard deviation. If the mean responses were within an acceptable range ($\text{mean} \pm 0.5$) and with acceptable coefficient of variation (50% variation) then the response was considered a firm consensus. Stability across rounds was assessed using the Wilcoxon test.

Results

Each content area was endorsed by the panel with at least mean of 6 on a 7-point Likert-type scale. At the recommendation of several panel members in round one, additional indicators were added to the content areas. The panel determined Participant Recruitment and Retention would become an indicator under Camper and Community Engagement and DEI Funding Strategies would fall under Board of Directors. Figure 1 displays the final means for each content area and indicator.

Figure 1
Content Areas and Indicator Means



The panel was asked in round three what recommendations they would provide to a camp leader wishing to begin DEI work. These recommendations were compiled and presented to panelists in round four. The recommendations can serve as a starting point for DEI organizational readiness. On a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), the most highly endorsed recommendation ($x = 4.93$) was “Avoid defensiveness and listen to the representatives of the marginalized communities” under Understanding Culture. The next two most highly endorsed recommendations ($x = 4.87$) were both under Camper/Participant Recruitment and Retention: “Check back in after camp: What worked? What didn’t?” and “If your camp can be a fit, make changes that show you listened.” Each of these recommendations demonstrate the importance of listening, reflecting, and implementing feedback. The least popular recommendation ($x = 3.8$) was “Poll the

community (staff, family, campers, alumni) about their experience with systemic oppression” under Historical Perspective DEI. One participant cautioned polling a community might cause harm if “internal, personal work hasn’t been done yet.” Panelists also cautioned against “one solution fits all” when it comes to creating more equitable camps.

Discussion

Applying principles of organizational readiness with the current findings regarding DEI, camps can begin the process in a way that aligns with the organization’s needs. Desire to change alone does not necessarily equate to organizational readiness. Implementing DEI policies and practices before camp leadership, staff, participants, and the community are ready could potentially cause more harm to marginalized populations. The findings from this study suggest ways in which camps can assess their current state of DEI readiness to further their DEI efforts. Readiness and DEI work both require sustained effort and commitment and are cyclical in their processes. A camp may be ready in one content area, but not in another. Based on organizational readiness, a camp may tailor their DEI goals to reflect the organization’s readiness with the anticipation that readiness may change over time allowing for further DEI measures to be implemented. Camp leadership should understand organizational change requires time and sustained efforts, thus enabling leadership to set goals. Once camps have established DEI goals, the camp can begin applying best DEI practices in their program.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is threefold: 1) to create an expert consensus on essential DEI practices and policies for creating more diverse, equitable, and inclusive camps; 2) to identify consensus on the prioritization of essential DEI practices and policies and; 3) identify key indicators that allow camps to assess their DEI organizational readiness.

METHODS

A diverse expert panel of participants were selected for this Delphi study, stratified to represent three groups a) DEI and racial justice content experts, b) national intermediary perspectives, and c) local practitioners' perspectives. The study consisted of four rounds of consensus building. Table 1 defines the content areas and indicators used in the study.

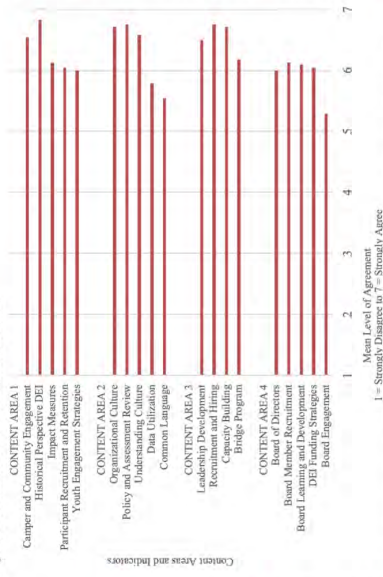
Table 1 Content Area and Indicators Definitions

Historical Perspective DEI	CONTENT AREA ONE – Camper and Community Engagement Camp leadership seeks to expand on their current lack of knowledge to benefit excluded communities and understand systemic oppression.
Impact Measures	Youth voice is measured and data is reviewed to identify gaps that may lead to exclusionary outcomes and used to explore the experience within underrepresented identities.
Participant Recruitment and Retention	Camp leadership and staff work with families and communities to increase awareness of the program for groups not historically represented at camp.
Youth Engagement Strategies	Youth are engaged to help keep the organization accountable to its participants to ensure inclusive changes.
Policy and Assessment Review	CONTENT AREA TWO – Organizational Culture A task force assesses, eliminates discriminatory or non-inclusive policies, and creates new policies with a focus on advancing a culture of inclusivity for participants and the organization.
Understanding Culture	Leadership works with staff and participants to understand dominant culture within the organization and how it contributes or detracts from a sense of belonging for individuals from marginalized communities and how it creates barriers to engaging in DEI work.
Data Utilization	Leadership recognizes the value of data utilization but does so while emphasizing the importance of intentional relationships with underrepresented communities.
Common Language	Camp leadership recognizes there are terms and common language utilized to discuss DEI topics.
Recruitment and Hiring	CONTENT AREA THREE – Leadership Development Organizational commitment is demonstrated by demographic data shifts in hiring, promotion, and advancement. The organization is committed to create an inclusive culture are set in place to reduce exclusion of marginalized groups.
Capacity Building	Camp leadership utilizes individual and organizational professional development plans that include DEI objectives to improve inclusion, sense of belonging, and equitable programming.
Bridge Program	The organization works to create paid internships and fellowship programs (either internally or across organizations in the sector) for youth from marginalized communities to support diverse representation across the organization.
Board Member Recruitment	CONTENT AREA FOUR – Board of Directors The board assesses the organization and designs clear strategies to advance diverse recruitment and representation on the board at all levels.
Board Learning and Development	Board units around the common goal of providing culturally relevant experiences for youth across identities and uses data to identify community needs which align with the organization's mission to develop goals.
DEI Funding Strategies	Camp leadership communicate their DEI goals to potential funders and are committed to finding new sources of funding to reflect their commitment to DEI. DEI efforts are funded with sustainable methods.
Board Engagement	The primary creation strategies for members to engage beyond the boardroom by creating shared ownership. Board uses observations, data, and feedback to determine if DEI goals and specific objectives that the board and organization have identified.

RESULTS

At the recommendation of several panel members in round one, additional indicators were added to the content areas. The panel determined Participant Recruitment and Retention would become an indicator under Camper and Community Engagement and DEI Funding Strategies would fall under Board of Directors. Figure 1 displays the final means for each content area and indicator.

Figure 1 Content Areas and Indicator Means



The panelists prioritized the indicators based on first, second, and third priorities. Based on the results, the groupings were categorized in the following order: Understanding, Practices and Applications; and Changing Broader Organizational Culture. Table 2 displays the prioritized indicators.

Table 2 Prioritized Indicators

First Priority Understanding	Second Priority Practices and Applications	Third Priority Changing Broader Organizational Culture
Youth Engagement Strategies Capacity Building Historical Perspective DEI	Capacity Building Policy and Assessment Review Common Language Data Utilization Camper/Participant Recruitment and Retention	Ident Identity Bridge Program Board Learning and Development Board Member Recruitment

The panel was asked in round three what recommendations they would provide to a camp leader wishing to begin DEI work. The recommendations can serve as a starting point for DEI organizational readiness. The results are on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Table 3 displays selected recommendations.

Table 3 Selected DEI Recommendations

Camper and Community Engagement Strategies	Mean	SD
Historical Perspective DEI	4.8	0.41
Impact Measures	4.53	0.64
Youth Engagement Strategies	4.6	0.49
Participant Recruitment and Retention	4.4	0.8
Common Language	4.87	0.34
Policy and Assessment Review	4.47	0.62
Understanding Culture	4.93	0.25
Common Language	4.8	0.4
Capacity Building	4.67	0.47
Recruitment and Hiring	4.67	0.6
Bridge Program	4.73	0.62
Board of Directors	4.73	0.44
Board Member Recruitment	4.67	0.47
Board Learning and Development	4.67	0.47
DEI Funding Strategies	4.8	0.4
Board Engagement	4.67	0.47

APPLICATION

The findings from this study suggest ways in which camps can assess their current state of DEI readiness to further their DEI efforts. Readiness and DEI work both require sustained effort and commitment and are cyclical in their processes. A camp may be ready in one content area, but not in another. Based on organizational readiness, a camp may tailor their DEI goals to reflect the organization's readiness with the anticipation that readiness may change over time allowing for further DEI measures to be implemented. Camp leadership should understand organizational change requires time and sustained efforts, thus enabling leadership to set goals. Once camps have established DEI goals, the camp can begin applying the most relevant DEI practices in their program.

KEY FACTORS IMPACTING GROWTH AMONG SUMMER CAMP STAFF

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Most of the research assessing the impacts of the summer camp experience focuses on youth participants (Thurber et al., 2007; Garst et al., 2011; Richmond et al., 2019; Warner et al., 2021). This is an obvious focus, since children and youth comprise the primary audience of day and residential summer camps. However, there is considerable evidence that the experience of serving on summer camp staff has impacts equal to or greater than those of summer campers (Garst et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2011; Sorenson, 2014). The Camp and Church Leadership Project sought to assess the impacts of working on summer camp staff on faith formation and leadership in the church. The study uncovered the degree and frequency of these specific impacts at Christian camps, but it also revealed major elements of the summer staff experience that have implications for all types of summer camps. Three major factors impacted the growth among summer camp staff: agency, support, and consistency of a central community ethic.

Methods

The Camp and Church Leadership Project explored the impact of working on summer camp staff on faith formation, congregational involvement, and church leadership among camps affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The study used a sequential exploratory design, using the findings from an initial round of 24 semi-structured interviews with former summer camp staff to develop questionnaires for current staff. Church judicatory staff from the six synods of Wisconsin identified candidates for the interviews, which took place in spring 2020. There were four from each synod, with half serving as clergy members and half non-clergy. They ranged in age from the mid-20s to late 60s. Three researchers did the initial coding of interview transcripts, with two coders per transcript for inter-rater reliability. The coders then collaborated in the process of axial and thematic coding to develop a working model of the camp staff experience and the factors leading to common outcomes.

The quantitative phase used a test-retest methodology during summer 2021. It was open to all camps affiliated with the ELCA, and roughly half opted to participate by surveying their summer staff at the beginning and end of the summer. The resulting data set included 880 adult summer staff members from 50 camps, including 517 with matching pre-camp and post-camp surveys. Researchers analyzed the data using various statistical methods, particularly t-tests to assess change in perceptions of 28 items that appeared in both surveys. These 28 items were designed to test the outcomes identified in the interview phase. Researchers investigated the factors associated with the variations in outcomes among study participants by assessing their perceptions of the experience, differences based on demographics, and pre-camp motivations/perceptions.

Findings

Thematic coding of the interview data indicated that there were three major elements of the summer staff experience: a community of common purpose, experiential leadership, and openness to experiences of God. The interaction of these three elements with each unique staff member resulted in several common outcomes. The most common were lasting relationships, a deeper sense of vocation/calling, faith formation, ongoing connection to the camp, and new skills valuable for life, particularly self-confidence, resilience, and leadership abilities. These outcomes, including wording used by interview participants, were included in the surveys.

The survey of summer camp staff confirmed the importance of the three major elements in a surprising way. Researchers expected the outcomes revealed in the interview phase to be overwhelmingly common and measurable among survey participants, but this was not the case. Only eight of the 28 items included on the pre- and post-camp surveys showed significant change, on average, and five of these showed an unexpected negative trajectory (all related to connection to the Christian church). The items that showed consistent growth were related to leadership and self-confidence. However, participants exhibited patterns of growth at each camp based on three major factors: perceptions of agency, support, and consistency of faith among fellow staff. This suggests that camps that more consistently offered their staff agency, support, and a community of faith were more effective at achieving desired outcomes.

The first two factors, agency and support, were identified with correlation coefficients using Likert-type questions and subsequently confirmed with categorical analysis. Questions from the post-camp survey evaluating the quality of the staff experience (e.g., “I felt like my opinions and input were valued”) were correlated with those measuring perceived impact (e.g., “I grew in my leadership abilities”). Four of the six variables with the highest correlation coefficients (Pearson’s *r*) related to the support that staff members perceived during their time at camp (from supervisors and fellow staff). The other two were related to staff agency. The stronger the sense of support and agency, the greater the impact they reported. Researchers created an index using four of the most highly correlated variables to categorize camps based on the average levels of support and agency among their responding staff (low, moderate, and high).

Staff who worked at camps with higher levels of support/agency were much more likely to agree that they were strengthened in their faith, grew in leadership abilities, felt more confident in themselves, and that the camp experience had a significant impact on their lives. They also reported significantly less frequent feelings of overwhelming anxiety, feeling very down or hopeless, and having thoughts of self-harm during the summer. At the end of the summer, staff working at camps with low levels of support/agency were 1.4 times more likely to be physically exhausted/burnt out, 2.3 times more likely to be emotionally exhausted/burnt out, and 3.8 times more likely to be spiritually exhausted/burnt out compared with staff at camps with high support/agency. In terms of growth in the 28 individual survey items, staff working at camps with low levels of support/agency showed a pattern of non-growth (including the most common outcome: leadership), while those working at camps with high levels of support/agency had significant positive growth in multiple variables from pre-camp to post-camp.

The other major factor impacting growth was consistency of faith in the staff community. Though all participating camps were church affiliated, staff members varied in their degree of belief and faith commitment. Several survey items were combined to create an index measuring faith commitment (using the dimensions of belief and faith relevance) ranging from “uncommitted” to “highly committed.” Two-thirds of participating camps had a majority of their staff categorized as highly committed, while these were in the minority at the other camps. Respondents who were part of a staff that was majority highly committed Christians were significantly more likely to exhibit growth in multiple survey items, particularly those related to faith and personal wellbeing. In contrast, those on staffs that were minority committed Christian tended to decline in faith measurements, even if they began the summer as highly committed.

The ten camps that were categorized as having all three factors (high support, agency, and majority committed Christians) demonstrated the most consistent outcomes. They demonstrated the highest outcomes related to self-confidence and faith commitment, and they did not show the decline in regard for the Christian church evident among other respondents. They were also the only group to increase significantly in items related to vocation/calling. Additionally, they exhibited significantly less exhaustion and burnout at the end of the summer, compared with respondents from other camps.

Significance and Future Research

The summer camp staff experience offers clear potential for emerging adults to grow in multiple areas, including faith, leadership, self-confidence, and a sense of vocation/calling. These outcomes are dependent on the experience itself. In order for summer staff to thrive in their role, they need support from their fellow staff and supervisors and a sense of agency that makes them feel valued and that their role fits in with the mission of the camp. At the Christian camps involved in this study, they also clearly benefited from a community that was committed to the core values of the camp (in this case, committed Christians). Not all camps are Christian, but they generally have core values. This study suggests that the summer staff experience is partially dependent on the staff community sharing these essential core values or a central community ethic. In the interview phase, this was identified as a community of common purpose.

The study was limited in its focus on a single Christian denomination, a single summer, and a limited post-camp assessment. Future studies should assess the roles of support, agency, and a community of common purpose on staff in other camps, both religious and not religiously affiliated. Summer 2021 took place in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, after many people had been socially distancing for many months and most camps had come through a summer of closure in 2020. Future studies can assess how much these unique circumstances impacted the camp staff experience and whether similar findings will be evident in other summers. The post-camp survey was administered at the end of the camp experience. Future studies will benefit from a follow-up administered two or more months following the camp experience to assess perceptions and ongoing impacts.

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Key Factors Impacting Growth Among Summer Camp Staff

Jacob Sorenson, PhD, Sacred Playgrounds LLC

INTRODUCTION

The Camp and Church Leadership Project explored the impact of working on summer camp staff on faith formation, congregational involvement, and church leadership among camps affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It uncovered lessons applicable to all camp types.

METHODS

Semi-structured interviews
(12 clergy, 12 non-clergy)

Surveys of Summer Staff
880 staff at 50 camps, including 517 pre and post

LESSONS TO SHARE...

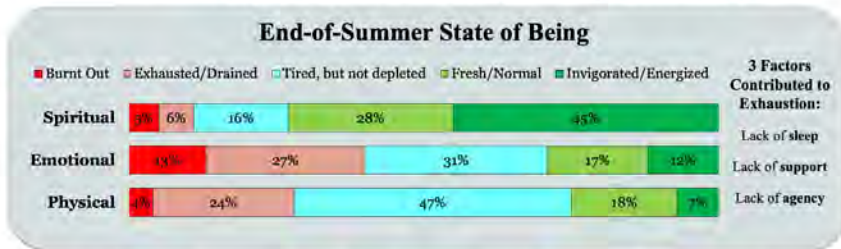
- ❖ Former staff at Christian camps identified 3 essential elements of the experience: a community of common purpose, experiential leadership, and openness to the activity of God/the Holy
- ❖ The outcomes identified were common among staff members, but they were dependent on the quality of the experience.
- ❖ 3 factors clearly impacted staff experience and subsequent growth: support, agency, and consistency of a central community ethic
- ❖ Many staff struggled with MESH and needed specialized support

The Camp Staff Experience: A Conceptual Model

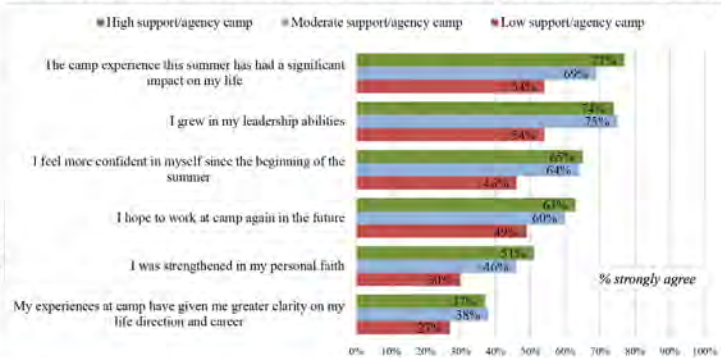


Among 880 Staff Prior to Summer 2021

- 69%** Felt overwhelming anxiety at least monthly
- 33%** Agreed: "I am oftentimes unhappy about my life and who I am"
- 76%** Grew up attending church monthly+ throughout grade school
- 54%** Were highly committed Christians (high belief and faith relevance)
(2/3 of camps had majority highly committed Christian staff)



Staff Growth Based on Strength of their Camp's Support/Agency



2023 ACA Camp Research Forum, Orlando, FL

THE LASTING BENEFITS OF MULTI-YEAR CAMP PROGRAMMING FOR YOUTH FROM LOW-INCOME BACKGROUNDS

Authors: Robert P. Warner, University of Utah & Victoria Povilaitis, Tim Horton Foundation Camps. Contact: Robert P. Warner, warner.robert(at)utah.edu

Camp can be a setting that supports youth development (e.g., Garst et al., 2011); however, not all youth have opportunities to attend camp given financial barriers (Browne et al., 2019; NASEM, 2019). To address this gap, many camps provide financial scholarships. Other camps focus specifically on serving youth from low-income backgrounds, some of which offer multi-year experiences. Given inequitable access to camp and the limited number of multi-year camp programs serving youth from low-income backgrounds, little is known about the lasting benefits of camp attendance for this population.

Examining outcomes of camp for alumni from low-income backgrounds who attended multi-year programs may reveal the value of greater access to camp and inspire efforts to create more equitable and culturally-sustaining camp experiences (Browne et al., 2019). To this end, we sought to answer two questions: 1) What outcomes do camp alumni from a multi-year camp serving youth from low-income backgrounds report as influenced by camp and important to life today? 2) What is the relationship between years of camp attended and outcomes?

Methods

Using a cross-sectional, retrospective design, we collected online survey responses from 449 camp alumni ($M_{age} = 22.1$, $SD = 5.2$) who attended at least one 10-day session at one of seven Tim Hortons Foundation Camps. Sixty-three percent of alumni identified as female and 56% identified as White (9% Black, 2% Hispanic, 7% Multi-racial, 7% Asian, and 6% Indigenous, 11% other).

Similar to Richmond et al. (2019) and Warner et al. (2021), participants responded on 10-point Likert-type scales regarding how critical Tims Camp was in their development of 18 camp-related outcomes and the importance of these outcomes in daily life. These outcomes included: willingness to try new things, affinity for nature, perseverance, being present, teamwork, appreciation for diversity, relationship skills, self-confidence, leadership, living with peers, independence, empathy, self-identity, responsibility, leisure skills, self-regulation, organization, and college and career orientation. Following Warner et al. (2021), we created camp impact scores to demonstrate regarding how critical Tims Camp was to outcomes *and* the importance of these outcomes in everyday life by calculating the square root of the sum of each variable squared (range of 0–14.14). We also asked about participants' highest educational degree earned.

To answer research questions 1 and 2, we used a repeated measures analysis of variance with camp impact score as the within-subjects factor and total summers as a continuous between-subjects predictor. To answer research question 2, we also used a binomial logistic regression to examine the relationship between years of camp and post-secondary degree earned. We included age, gender, and race as covariates in all analyses.

Results

Research Question 1

Participants reported higher camp impact scores for some outcomes compared to others ($F_{(17, 5933)} = 2.70$, $p < .001$, $partial h^2 = .01$). See Table 1 for detailed results.

Research Question 2

The results also suggested that, on average, alumni who attended camp for more summers reported higher camp impact scores ($F_{(1, 349)} = 9.24, p = .003, \text{partial } h^2 = .03$, individual outcomes $B = .175-.430, S.E. = .07-.09$). Relatedly, the differences across an alumni's camp impact scores were associated with the number of years they attended camp ($F_{(17, 5933)} = 8.69, p < .001, \text{partial } h^2 = .01$). Lastly, for each year of attendance past the first, alumni were one and a half times as likely to have earned a bachelor's degree compared to no degree ($B = .42, S.E. = .18, Wald = 5.69, p = .017, Exp(B) = 1.53, 95\% CI [1.08, 2.16]$).

Table 1
Scores for Camp Critical, Importance to Life, and Camp Impact Outcomes

Outcome	Camp Critical <i>M(SD)</i>	Importance to Life <i>M(SD)</i>	Camp Impact <i>M(SD)</i>
Willingness to Try New Things	8.5 (1.8)	8.01 (1.75)	11.8 (2.5)
Affinity for Nature	8.4 (2.0)	8.24 (1.84)	11.8 (2.2)
Perseverance	8.1 (2.0)	8.70 (1.58)	11.9 (2.0)
Being Present	8.0 (2.3)	8.31 (1.85)	11.7 (2.5)
Teamwork	8.0 (2.2)	8.40 (1.74)	11.7 (2.2)
Appreciation for Diversity	7.9 (2.2)	8.94 (1.51)	12.0 (2.2)
Relationship Skills	7.8 (2.3)	8.24 (1.86)	11.5 (2.4)
Self-Confidence	7.7 (2.2)	8.44 (1.82)	11.5 (2.4)
Leadership	7.6 (2.3)	7.83 (2.16)	11.0 (2.7)
Living with Peers	7.6 (2.5)	6.47 (2.75)	10.2 (2.9)
Independence	7.4 (2.4)	8.64 (1.71)	11.5 (2.3)
Empathy	7.3 (2.5)	8.50 (1.77)	11.4 (2.5)
Self-Identity	7.3 (2.5)	8.66 (1.73)	11.5 (2.5)
Responsibility	7.2 (2.4)	8.85 (1.42)	11.5 (2.2)
Leisure Skills	6.8 (2.6)	6.93 (2.51)	9.9 (3.0)
Self-Regulation	6.6 (2.7)	8.40 (1.87)	10.8 (2.7)
Organization	6.1 (2.8)	8.16 (1.98)	10.4 (2.7)
College and Career Orientation	5.4 (3.0)	8.02 (2.31)	9.9 (3.0)

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that Tims Camps experiences impacted skills that participants find useful in their lives (demonstrated by high camp impact scores). The results build on camp research including youth from low-income backgrounds (e.g., Warner et al., 2021) and suggest that a multi-year camp program may be more beneficial than single year experiences. Given the opportunity gap (NASEM, 2019) that creates limited access to quality youth programs, camp is a setting where youth from low-income backgrounds learn skills they may not have the ability to learn elsewhere, making repeated camp experiences particularly salient. Lastly, the results also indicate that the impact of camp extends beyond skill development. That is, skills learned at camp may have laid the foundation for essential elements of thriving (Nagaoka et al., 2015). The results of this study suggest that youth from low-income backgrounds who attend more years of a multi-year program may also complete higher levels of education, such as post-secondary education. These results help connect camp attendance to broader outcomes beyond those commonly associated with camp.

Camp and youth development practitioners have called for greater access and more equitable youth development programs for youth from all backgrounds (Browne et al., 2019; NASEM, 2019). Results of this study highlight the impact that a camp experience can have on the lives of youth from low-income backgrounds. Practitioners can use the results of this study to articulate the impact of a camp experience and advocate for government support and funding for multi-year camp programs. Practitioners can use these findings to advocate for funding for programs to support youth year-round in an effort to increase retention. The results of this study also suggest the potential benefits that may be related to multi-year camp programs. More research is needed to better understand if there is a causal relationship between years of camp and outcomes.

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Introduction

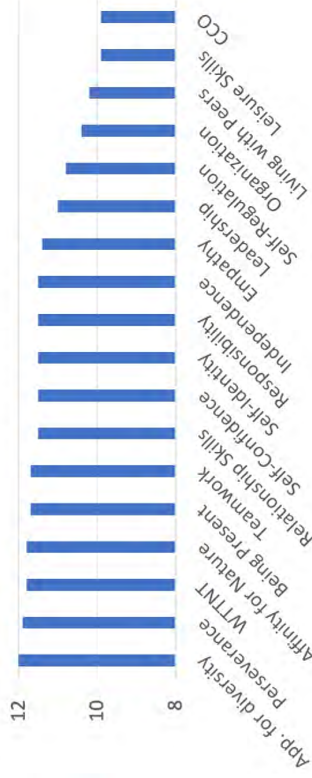
- Little is known about the lasting benefits of camp for youth from low income backgrounds
- Research questions:
 - What outcomes do camp alumni from a multi-year camp serving youth from low-income backgrounds report as influenced by camp and important to life today?
 - 2) What is the relationship between years of camp attended and outcomes?

Methods

- Cross-sectional, retrospective design, online survey
- 449 camp alumni (Mage = 22.1, SD = 5.2)
- 63% identified as female (percent male or non-conforming)
- 56% identified as White (9% Black, 2% Hispanic, 7% Multi-racial, 7% Asian, and 6% Indigenous, 11% other).
- 10-point Likert-type scales about Tims Camps’s role in development of 18 outcomes and importance of these outcomes in daily life

Findings

- Participants reported high impact scores for outcomes.
- Attending camp for more summers linked to higher outcomes
- For each year of attendance past the first, alumni were 1.5 times more likely to have earned a bachelor’s degree compared to no degree.



Discussion and Implications

- Practitioners can use these findings to advocate for funding for year-round programs.
- Tims Camps experiences impacted skills that participants find useful in their lives.
- Multi-year camp program may be more beneficial than single year experiences.
- Skills learned at camp may have laid the foundation for essential elements of thriving (Nagaoka et al., 2015).
- Practitioners can use the results of this study to articulate the impact of a camp experience and advocate for government support and funding for multi-year camp programs.



EXAMINING THE DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS IN YOUTH'S MEMORABLE CAMP EXPERIENCES

Authors: Robert P. Warner & Michael Froehly, University of Utah; Taylor Wycoff, University of California Irvine. Contact: Robert P. Warner, warner.robert(at)utah.edu

Many characteristics of camp support development (Sibthorp et al., 2020). Research about these characteristics has used surveys or interviews, has relied on former campers, or has examined the camp setting as a whole. These approaches may not capture the developmental characteristics of camp that resonate with youth as they make meaning of their experiences long after attending camp.

In a recent study exploring defining moments of camp, Garst and Whittington (2020) found that achievement, challenge, emotional safety, friend-making, novelty, positivity, and tradition were the salient moments for campers. While this study provides insight into the discrete moments of camp, the authors describe their study as exploratory and likely not representative given the small sample drawn from a single camp. The authors' use of interviews conducted immediately after participants' camp experiences likely limited the authors' ability to capture the salient characteristics of camp experiences related to how youth make meaning of their experiences because people need time to meaningfully process their experiences (Habermas & Bluck, 2000).

To address the limitations of Garst and Whittington's (2020) study, we examined youth's accounts of memorable camp experiences several months after attending. Narrative identity theory suggests that over time people make meaning of their experiences in the context of their current and future lives when sharing stories about their experiences (Pasupathi et al., 2007). The ability to make meaning of one's experiences begins in late childhood and becomes increasingly sophisticated throughout adolescence (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). Thus, examining youth's stories about memorable camp experiences may provide insight into the characteristics of camp that support development as well as the experiences that remain salient throughout youth's lives.

Methods

During semi-structured interviews (≈ 30 minutes) conducted in fall 2021 as part of a national study about summer camp, 74 youth shared two stories about memorable experiences from summer 2021. For the purposes of this study, we focused on the 49 participants who shared stories about camp. About 51% of these participants identified as male ($n = 25$), about 65% identified as white ($n = 32$), 46% were in 7th ($n = 22$) or 48% in 8th grade ($n = 23$), and 82% were from middle-income households ($n = 36$). On average, these participants attended camp in 2021 for 3.39 weeks ($SD = 2.71$, 1–8).

Before analyzing the data, we transcribed narrative audio verbatim. After establishing adequate inter-rater reliability ($k > .70$; Syed & Nelson, 2015), the first and second authors independently coded half of the cases. Considering the narrative as the unit of analysis, we coded narratives for developmental characteristics commonly associated with camp, including: opportunities to try new things; opportunities to develop skills; positive relationships with peers; positive relationships with adults (Sibthorp et al., 2020). We defined opportunities to try new things as a novel experience that allowed participants to do a new activity or have an unfamiliar experience. We defined opportunities to develop skills as a learning experience that allowed participants to engage in an activity that led to greater competence in a specific skill. We defined positive peer relationships as an experience that allowed participants to have an experience with peers, or develop/nurture relationships with

peers, that were positive in nature. We defined positive adult relationships as an experience that allowed participants to have an experience with adults, or develop/nurture relationships with adults, that were positive in nature. We also engaged in open-coding to explore the narratives for other themes.

Findings

Participants’ narratives contained evidence of developmental characteristics. We identified positive peer relationships most frequently and positive adult relationships least frequently. We also found that many participants’ narratives were about experiences that occurred during unprogrammed time.

Table 1

Frequencies and Example Quotes for Developmental Characteristics

Characteristic	% of Narratives (<i>n</i>)	Example Quotes
Positive Peer Relationships	51% (25)	“we all actually felt like a village instead of just like a couple small groups of boys.”
Unprogrammed Time	34% (19)	“there's finally break in the lightning. It was still raining but we decided we wanted to go outside...we all went out in shorts and socks and started running around”
Opportunities to Try New Things	33% (16)	“I had never swam across the lake before.”
Opportunity to Learn New Skills	10% (5)	“I learned how to ride a dirt bike”
Positive Adult Relationships	2% (1)	“me and my counselor and a couple of other kids had a lot of fun on that trail”

Discussion

The findings address a gap in knowledge about the developmental characteristics present in youth’s stories about their memorable camp experiences. Several of our findings align with Garst and Whittington (2020). For example, their findings regarding friend-making and novelty align with our finding of positive peer relationships and opportunities to try new things. Our findings also extend what has been found through scale or prompt-based evaluations of the camp setting as a whole by identifying the salient characteristics in youth’s stories as they make meaning of their camp experiences. For example, peers were very common in youth’s stories, which is a commonly identified aspect of camp that supports learning and development (Sibthorp et al., 2020). Our finding about the importance of unprogrammed time has not yet appeared in the literature and is an area ripe for future research. Given our narrative approach, the characteristics we identified are likely indicative of the characteristics most salient to these youth’s camp experiences.

Camp professionals may use these findings in several ways. First, the findings reinforce what is known about the characteristics that most impact youth, and thus,

characteristics that warrant the most attention. Second, camp professionals may reconsider the value of unprogrammed time (e.g., cabin time, “free block/hour”) and how it can be incorporated into daily schedules. Third, our findings point toward the developmental value of youth sharing stories about their camp experiences. Doing so may yield useful stories for marketing as well as information about the most salient characteristics for youth who attend their camp. Furthermore, encouraging youth to share stories about their experiences extends how camps support development. This act of reflection, a key piece of program quality, is also essential for narrative identity development. This study suggests that memorable moments occur at camp during programmed and non-programmed times, and that developmentally supportive characteristics of camp are present in youth’s meaning making about their experiences long after attending camp.

Readers should consider several limitations when interpreting our findings. First, the prompt to consider a ‘memorable’ experience may have influenced the type of story told by participants. A different prompt may have yielded different findings. Second, despite inter-rater reliability, there is possibility of bias, thus influencing our findings. Third, the sample was relatively white and affluent; thus, our results may not generalize to more diverse samples.

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Examining the Developmental Characteristics in Youth's Memorable Camp Experiences

Robert P. Warner, Michael Froehly, & Taylor Wycoff



Background

- Common research approaches may not capture the developmental characteristics of camp that resonate with youth as they make meaning of their experiences long after attending camp.
- Narrative identity theory suggests that over time people make meaning of their experiences in the context of their current and future lives when sharing stories about their experiences (Pasupathi et al., 2007).
- Examining youth's stories about memorable camp experiences may provide insight into the characteristics of camp that support development as well as the experiences that remain salient throughout youth's lives.
- Semi-structured interviews (≈ 30 minutes) fall 2021
- We coded narratives for developmental characteristics
 - opportunities to try new things
 - opportunities to develop skills
 - positive relationships with peers
 - positive relationships with adults
- We also open-coded to explore for other themes.

What we did...



Who participated?

- 49 youth shared stories about memorable experiences at camp in 2021.
- About 51% identified as male ($n = 25$)
- About 65% identified as white ($n = 32$)
- 46% were in 7th ($n = 22$) or 8th grade ($n = 23$)
- 82% were from middle-income households ($n = 36$).
- Participants attended camp in 2021 for an average of 3.39 weeks ($SD = 2.71, 1-8$).

We learned that...

- Participants' narratives contained evidence of developmental characteristics.
- Positive peer relationships occurred most frequently
- Positive adult relationships occurred least frequently.
- Many participants' narratives were about experiences that occurred during unprogrammed time.

What do our findings mean?

- These findings extend what has been found through scale or prompt-based evaluations of the camp setting as a whole by identifying the salient characteristics in youth's stories as they make meaning of their camp experiences.
- Given our narrative approach, the characteristics we identified are likely indicative of the characteristics most salient to these youth's camp experiences.

Camp professionals may use our findings...

- The findings reinforce what is known about the camp characteristics that most impact youth
- Reconsider the value of unprogrammed time (e.g., cabin time, "free block/hour") and how it can be incorporated into daily schedules.
- Youth's stories may be useful for marketing as well as information about the most salient characteristics for youth who attend their camp.
- Encouraging youth to share stories about their experiences extends how camps support development.

Table 1. Frequencies and Example Quotes for Developmental Characteristics

Characteristic	% of Narratives (n)	Example Quotes
Positive Peer Relationships	51% (25)	"we all actually felt like a village instead of just like a couple small groups of boys."
Unprogrammed Time	34% (19)	"there's finally break in the lightning. It was still raining but we decided we wanted to go outside... we all went out in shorts and socks and started running around"
Opportunities to Try New Things	33% (16)	"I had never swam across the lake before."
Opportunity to Learn New Skills	10% (5)	"I learned how to ride a dirt bike"
Positive Adult Relationships	2% (1)	"me and my counselor and a couple of other kids had a lot of fun on that trail"

DISCUSSIONS WITH PARENTS: TOWARDS BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF CONSTRAINTS TO RECREATION FOR YOUTH WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES

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While participation in out-of-school recreational opportunities like camps can positively impact youth living with type 1 diabetes (T1D), empirical evidence is limited (Collins et al., 2021). Research within T1D communities typically has concentrated on individual biometric indicators of health, unintentionally limiting empirical understanding of experience within social and community context (Kiesch & Elertson, 2020). One approach to expand understanding of health outcomes of youth living with T1D, including psychosocial implications that impact wellbeing, is to explore contextual influences that also account for variability in the environments in which they live, learn, and play. These contextual influences include youth's schools, peers, and families (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Family systems, particularly parents, have a high level of influence and insight into the behavior of youth.

Positive health outcomes are associated with increased physical activity. Outside of the regular school year, summer camps represent the largest setting for youth to be active. In a recent national study, 80% of boys and 72% of girls in summer camp programs surpassed the daily physical activity standards set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2018; Brazendale et al., 2017). Youth with T1D fall short of recommended physical activity standards (de Lima et al., 2017). Understanding constraints to recreation opportunities may assist in improving health outcomes for youth with T1D. To learn more about the recreational habits of youth with T1D, dialogs can be created with their parents. These discussions focused on accessible recreational opportunities at camp and beyond. The purpose of this study was to explore the constraints parents perceive their child(ren) faces with activity participation and type of activity involvement, both within and outside of camp.

Method

This study was informed by a pragmatic conceptual framework, a derivative of general qualitative inquiry that takes an interpretive approach interested in "finding solutions to real-world problems" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 34). By focusing on the human experience and problems that can arise, pragmatism centers human inquiry as the point of focus for researchers (Shields, 1998).

A total of 29 parents in a family diabetes camp agreed to participate in the study. Five semi-structured focus group interviews were then conducted with the parents. The focus group protocol concentrated on youth's participation in the camp, recreational behavior outside camp, and challenges faced accessing recreational opportunities. Transcripts were coded using a deductive and inductive approach. Initial codes were grounded in literature supportive of the conceptual framework used, and themes were derived from second-round coding developed within the data reduction phase of analysis (Saldana, 2021).

Results

Three themes were constructed from the data. The first theme described how parents perceived their child's recreation behavior. The second and third themes represented recreational opportunities available for youth and constraints preventing participation, respectively. Because of the centering of research participant voice and experience, themes were both inductively and deductively extrapolated.

Parent Perceptions of Physical Activity

Parents reported that youth are at high risk for low involvement in recreational opportunities, including programs that provide adequate support for disease management. Parents additionally discussed youths' initial hesitation in participating in a camping program that sought to meet the needs of the T1D community through recreation and diabetes education. When asking their child about concerns regarding camp, one parent shared their child's response "she's like, 'you know what? It's gonna [sic] be really weird seeing everybody like pricking their fingers. And I'm not the only one. But [after participating in camp] she's already told me she wants to come back.'" After engaging in the curriculum focusing on recreation and diabetes education with other youth with the same diagnoses, parents noticed their child's attitude change towards the experience.

Opportunities to Participate

Recreational opportunities identified by parents included both active and passive recreational activities. Parents shared their child's difficulty in ongoing participation in sports teams due to skill requirements, resulting in their child "aging out" of sports teams. "Hiking is what [my child] likes to do... she used to do soccer too when she was younger," one parent shared, "but she [aged out] when she got older. It just didn't work out so well." Activities such as art and music would later become a sought-after recreational experience by youth and other activities like video games.

Constraints to Participation

Many parents stressed their child's aversion to outdoor recreational activities, with camp as an accessible means of trying new activities in a supportive environment. Initial constraints to participating in camp were identified by parents, including unfamiliarity with the requirements of the setting. One parent shared "we didn't know a camp like this existed... she was nervous. She didn't know what to expect. You know, neither one of us did... [But] I wanted her to be around other kids just like her. When I talked to her at lunch... she's like 'I made a friend, and got her phone number!'"

Discussion and Implications

This study describes parents' perceptions of the recreational experiences and physical activity of youth with T1D, providing insight into the behaviors and perceived constraints to recreation. Research engaging community partners within youth's environments, such as parents, can provide insight into interactions between perceived attitudes and constraints to recreational opportunities available for their children (Allen et al., 2021). While this study had a total of 29 parents participating, qualitative findings are intended to provide exploratory insight into the group of parents' unique circumstances. Additionally, findings suggest considerations for resource allocation and strategic planning of youth-serving organizations, allowing practitioners to better address identified needs of both youths with T1D and their parents. For example, partnerships with pediatric medical staff and their inclusion in the program setting could potentially alleviate feelings of worry and stress for both parents and youth while engaging in physical activity. When seeking to promote physical activity within youth populations, rather than providing ultra-focused opportunities for physical activity, we should consider providing a range of activities for

youth to participate in. Appropriate support should accompany the diverse array of activities offered to supplement the experience. Choice provision in activity participation and support provided through positive adult interactions (e.g., parent-youth; staff-youth; peer-youth) can aid youth in working through perceived and environmental constraints to overall participation. While parents' perceptions can serve as insight into relationships, interactions, and perceived health and well-being of youth, future research should center on youth perspectives of parent-identified constraints and experiences.

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Discussions With Parents: Towards Better Understanding of Constraints to Recreation for Youth With Type 1 Diabetes

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INTRO

- Despite the collective understanding that camp participation can benefit youth, empirical knowledge of the impact of involvement in medical specialty programming is limited (Collins et al., 2021).
- While positive health outcomes are associated with increased physical activity, youth with T1D fall short of recommended physical activity standards (de Lima et al., 2017).
- Family systems, particularly parents, possess significant influence and insight into youth behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).
- Instead of focusing on biometric data as the sole indicator of wellness for youth living with T1D, exploring contextual factors that account for variability in environments in which youth live, learn, and play should be considered (Kiesch & Elerston, 2020).
- The purpose of the study was to explore parents' perceived constraints faced by their children regarding activity participation and involvement both within and outside of camp.

METHODS

- A pragmatic conceptual framework, which focuses on addressing real-world problems and centers human inquiry informed the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Shields, 1998).
- Twenty-nine parents at a family diabetes camp agreed to participate in focus groups (five groups) that centered around their child's recreational behavior within and outside of camp, as well as recreational opportunities accessible to them.
- Analysis consisted of deductive and inductive coding approaches applied to the focus group transcript, in which themes were identified post-data reduction phase (Saldana, 2021).



Choice provision in active participation and support provided through positive adult interactions (e.g., parent-youth; staff-youth; peer-youth) can aid youth in working through perceived and environmental constraints to overall participation.



RESULTS

- Three themes were constructed from the data describing how parents perceive their child's recreational behavior, recreational opportunities available for their child, and constraints preventing participation in recreational activities.
 - Parent's Perception of Physical Activity
 - Parents acknowledged their child's risk of low involvement in recreational activities, including hesitation to participate in programs with outcomes related to diabetes management and education.
- Opportunities to Participate
 - Parents identified recreational activities, including passive (e.g., art and music) and active recreational activities (e.g., sports teams).
 - Youth tended to "age out" of sports teams due to the high skill requirements, encouraging them to substitute team membership with self-contained activities, such as drawing and playing guitar.
- Constraints to Participation
 - Aversion to outdoor recreation spaces was cited as a source of anxiety for their children from participants.
 - Parents explained that camp was their first experience participating in various recreational activities with adequate support, including from program staff.

DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

- Research investigating parents' perceptions can provide valuable insight into interactions between perceived attitudes and constraints to recreational opportunities available to youth.
- Providing youth and their families opportunities to participate in new recreational experiences with the support of staff can contribute to positive experiences associated with physical activity (Kiesch & Elerston, 2020).
- Introduction to physical activity outside of traditional settings (e.g. within camp settings) provides a supportive environment for youth to explore various modalities of physical activity (de Lima et al., 2017).
- Community partnerships focusing on participant experience with local medical establishments can provide program support through volunteer opportunities for medical professionals.
- Programming provided through collaborative efforts of youth development professionals and medical professionals specializing in diabetes management can alleviate elements of stress and worry for both youth with T1D and their parents.