

Volunteer Counselor Orientation

TOP 10 LIST

Revised for Camp Allegheny 4/26/07

The following 10 things are those things that the Conference Director of Camping (Kathy White) has deemed most important for volunteer counselors to know. By no means is this a comprehensive list of what you need to know, but you will be expected to abide by these procedures and policies. If you ever have questions, feel free to call your dean or Camp Allegheny.

1. Safe Sanctuaries is a program that watches out for and helps prevent child abuse.

It is very important to be vigilant as we supervise campers. Honor the RULE OF THREE. Keep in groups of at least 3 people. This is for everyone's safety! Don't forget, we have zero tolerance for abuse of any kind. Campers cannot abuse other campers or staff. Staff cannot abuse campers or each other. Any incident of abuse must be reported to the dean who reports to the nurse or camp director or the designated assistant at that time.

2. Risk Management is the use of good judgment by an adult to limit the amount of risk that campers are exposed to.

The most vital part of Risk Management is your presence. If you are not able to see your campers, you have put them at risk. All minors are to be within an adult's vision at all times while at camp. At times when being in sight is not appropriate (e.g. showering) a counselor must be able to hear the camper.

3. Dealing with a sick or injured camper is never something that you will have to do alone. Always feel free to contact the Nurse or Camp Office if you feel uncertain of what to do.

If you are in an emergency situation contact the Nurse immediately and inform the office as soon as possible. Follow the procedures that are in the counselor manual (have them read beforehand). Two things are of utmost importance: STAY CALM because your campers are depending on you to; care for ALL of your campers. At least one adult should remain with the injured camper (or staff) and the other adults should take the uninjured campers out of earshot and sight of the emergency, pray with them, then get them involved in another activity.

4. Sharing Jesus with campers is the real reason why we do this whole "camp" thing anyway.

You do not need to be a pastor to share Jesus. All believers are called to share the good news of salvation at some point. Do not feel that you need to have it all "figured out," simply be ready to share who Jesus is to you. Campers aren't looking for an exegetical study of the Bible, they are looking for a real person with real experiences of God.

Think of an experience that helped you know God loves you. Pray and think about how God is working in your life now. The more recent the experience, the better it is to share. It will be fresher in your mind and more real when you talk about it. Consider your age group and make sure that you are sharing things that are appropriate (talking about overcoming addictions to pornography with mini campers simply isn't going to connect.) Practice by trading testimonies with another counselor. Ultimately, just be ready to share about Jesus, somehow. Our campers will not talk about Jesus if we do not model that behavior.

5. Sharing the many forms of worship (spiritual disciplines) is an important part of discipling campers.

How do you attribute worth to God? Do you read the Bible daily (if you never have, try it). Do you worship through music? Do you pray or witness to others or do mission trips? Be ready to share how God meets you EVERY DAY! Again, our campers are not looking for a perfect person, but a real person in a relationship with a real God!

6. Counselor duties during free time, “flex” time, and FOB are often misunderstood or simply never communicated.

Be sure to communicate with your dean as to your specific responsibilities. Remember that campers are to always be under adult supervision. This may not always be you, but if you are away from the campers, be sure that you are supposed to be away from your campers and that they are being supervised. Be sure to communicate with your Dean.

7. The Camp-Home-Church connection sheets are often called “green sheets.”

“Green sheets” are for all counselors to fill out on each of their special four or five campers! We want to send home positive messages that sincerely build up the camper. You may even want a camper to write on their green sheet about a great camp experience. Remember, you are the person with the primary contact between camp-home-church. Of course, we are not saying that every camper does nothing but great things at camp. But, pastors, parents and even campers themselves may read the green sheet. Remember, in a week of camp, we cannot diagnose problems. For example, saying: “*Jimmy doesn’t listen, please get his hearing checked before next summer?*” This feedback will not be appreciated by most pastors or parents.

8. In the case of a big emergency your primary responsibility is always the camper’s safety!

“Stuff” can be replaced, people can’t (including you). Be sure that you go over emergency drills and procedures with your dean before the week begins. Additionally the Counselor Manual has Emergency procedures in it. Read them and ask questions if you need to.

9. What is your role in individual activities?

Your role in individual activities can change quite a bit. Be sure to communicate with your dean concerning what he/ she expects of you throughout the week of camp. As a general rule, if you are not leading an activity, then participate in it.

10. Traveling off-camp involves special preparation and supervision.

Again, be sure to go over specific assignments and roles with your dean BEFORE you leave. Be aware of potential problems specific to where you are going as well as more general issues. There is much less support and many more dangers when you are off camp.

Thank you very much for coming to camp!