



EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AT CAMP

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WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO TALK ABOUT MENTAL WELLBEING:

- Briefly share why **you** are choosing to focus on staff's (and campers') emotional wellbeing this summer
- Take a moment to share some statistics on mental health to normalize the fact that everyone struggles to some degree.
 - According to NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness):
 - 20% of 13-18 year-olds live with a mental health condition
 - 20% of adults live with a mental health condition
 - Includes: 11% suffering from a mood disorder; 8% suffering from anxiety issues
 - 50% of people who have chronic mental health issues first experience symptoms at the age of 14; 75% of people who have chronic or lifetime mental health issues experience symptoms by age 24
 - Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for 10-24 year-olds; it is the 2nd leading cause of death for 10-34 year-olds
 - Only 41% of adults with mental illness sought or received care for their condition in 2018. Only 50% of 8-15 year-olds received the necessary care.
- Let's look at how the past 1.5 years has impacted everyone's general wellbeing:
 - Accordingly to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in the first half of 2019, 11% of adults reported symptoms of anxiety and depression. Now, fast forward into 2021, the world we're in now – a year into the pandemic, post 2020 election stress, ongoing racial disparities, you name it. Let's look at just the last 2 weeks of January 2021 – we're now at 41.5% of adults reporting symptoms of depression and anxiety.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR:

- Ask staff to share - **What safety & protective factors reduce the risk of someone experiencing a mental health episode?**
 - A support system – this includes personal relationships and connections with professionals; connections with others; talking about it and getting help; participation in society
 - Diet & exercise
 - Structure (schedule, commitments such as a job or school)
 - Future orientation, goals, motivation
 - Being aware of your triggers & warning signs

- Having a "Coping skills tool box"
- Ask staff to share about triggers : **What can trigger a mental health episode or symptoms?** *Think you & family & friends & campers*
 - Changes in life – transitions
 - General stressors
 - Medical issues
 - Traumatic experience – big or small
 - Change in relationships
 - Change in substance use
 - "Failure" or "loss" - failing class; missing opportunity; not getting a job; breakup; a "slight"
 - Experiencing "HALTS" – being hungry, angry, lonely, tired, or sick
- Ask staff to share about warning signs: **What are stereotypical warning signs?** *Think you & family & friends & campers*
 - Change in behaviors
 - Physical & emotional changes (eating, sleeping, energy, motivation, interest, mood stability, crying, anger)
 - Change in substance use
 - Withdrawing from others
 - Out-of-control or risky behaviors
 - Difficulties concentrating
 - Worry or fear
- Take a moment to describe what is considered a true mental health crisis.
 - Suicidal thoughts or behaviors, homicidal thoughts or behaviors; uncontrolled or problematic substance use — illegal use (Why is substance use such a problem? It escalates other issues & leads to complications with general wellbeing); abuse towards others (or being abused)

BURNOUT:

- Another thing to consider is burnout. **Raise your hand if you've ever experienced symptoms of burnout.** Describe burnout:
 - Definition according to www.psychologytoday.com - Physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion brought on by prolonged stress.
 - Burnout is real and can cause significant problems in our day to day lives
 - Although this job may be fun, staff are caregivers - taking care of others is hard work. Camp Counselors have some of the hardest jobs, which can lead to burnout. On top of the basic job description, staff are also experiencing the ongoing pandemic, ongoing conversation about race relations in America, global warming, and environmental crisis, and many are uncertain what the future holds.
- **Ask for examples of the warning signs for burnout:**

- Exhaustion - You're tired all the time;
- Problems on the job; poor work performance; you're not engaged in the work you're doing; you are more cynical and bitter about your work making a difference;
- Physical illness - you keep getting sick; this can include symptoms like headaches, stomach aches, general body pain; exhaustion; etc.

MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS:

- Remind staff why you find it is important to take care of themselves. Let them know self-care is extremely important in their role. Remind them of what flight attendants say every time you go on an airplane - you have to put your mask on first then help others put theirs on. Their health & wellbeing impacts others as a ripple effect — they are role models for their campers as well.
- Coping skills include anything we do that are healthy ways to manage our stress and emotions. Ask the group to share what's in their coping skills tool box. **What are your favorite ways to cope? How do you take care of yourself? What do you do to manage your stress?**
 - *There are no right or wrong answers, as long as the coping skill is not detrimental to the person*
 - Other suggestions to add:
 - Spending time outdoors
 - Ensure they're taking care of basic living needs – eating, sleeping, self care, hygiene, etc.
 - Virtual hope box
 - Virtual therapy – Talkspace; Better Help
 - Mindfulness apps
- Let's say those aren't working - what do you do now? Share these simple reminders with the group:
 - Encourage staff to assess themselves - do I feel safe? Do I feel in control (for real)? Separate yourself from your problem - you are not your stressor/problem/etc
 - Figure out if anything else is triggering you that's circumstantial - hungry, angry, lonely, tired, sick?
 - Use external resources to help manage the situation
 - Call supports – identify friends, family or coworkers you can use to distract self and get out of your head space
 - Call supports to talk about the issue – use mental health professionals or medical professionals to talk things through
 - Crisis – if you do not feel you or others can keep you safe - get to crisis center/crisis supports. You can always call the crisis hotline

(800.273.8255) or text "Home" to "741741" to have a text conversation

- Ask the group - **How do you support others who you believe are struggling?**
 - Reach out and open a conversation; don't shy away from difficult conversations
 - Have a judgment-free, assumption-free conversation
 - Offer to help connect or coordinate help
 - Don't spread yourself too thin
 - It's okay to ask about suicide – you will not put the idea into someone else's head. It's an important conversation to have.

DEAR SCOUT – HOW TO ACCESS RESOURCES OVER THE SUMMER:

- Share a basic introduction to Dear Scout – include why you chose to offer Dear Scout services this summer.
- What does Dear Scout offer?
 - Weekly counseling services available to staff in the evenings and on weekends. Services are provided by Licensed Therapists with a background in mental health.
 - The cost of weekly sessions are covered by camp for Summer 2021 (June 1st- August 31st)
 - Sessions are 100% confidential – no personal information will be provided back to camp. Camp will not know which individuals used the services.
 - All services are virtual – easy to access online from the comfort of your own personal space.
- Why should someone utilize Dear Scout?
 - If you're struggling and want to work through it with a therapist, Dear Scout is for you. Dear Scout counseling sessions are there for staff to check in on the resiliency and strengths they already have. They can spend time with a clinician exploring what barriers are getting in their way of feeling better and being content. The weekly supports are there to discuss ongoing stressors and help problem solve to improve general functioning and overall wellbeing.
- How do you access Dear Scout?
 - There are two ways to get started or even just ask more questions about the services available:
 - Fill out a confidential intake form at www.mydearscout.com
 - Email: mydearscout@gmail.com Include your name, email, phone number, and that you're interested in getting counseling services
 - You'll hear back within 24 hours from one of the Dear Scout therapists, and be seen within the week.