

Guidelines for Appropriate Camper/Staff Contact

Overview:

Everyone wants staff and campers to be happy, healthy and safe while they are at camp. To that end, it is important to avoid situations where campers feel unsafe or feel they have lost self-control. Also, as staff, it is critical to take care to not act (by word, look or touch) in a manner that might be misunderstood by campers. Maintaining a safe environment for staff and campers is in everyone's best interest. The following are guidelines to meet these goals.

The Long of It:

1. Avoid over-stimulation of campers when they are:
 - a) Very scared or frightened.
 - b) Overly curious about private romantic lives of counselors.
 - c) Excessively excited.
2. Avoid campers feeling loss of self control in:
 - a) Tickling
 - b) Wrestling
 - c) Scary stories
 - d) Details of private romantic lives.
3. Work to keep an emotionally safe environment for campers:
 - a) Never embarrass a camper about their body.
 - b) Take care not to draw attention to a camper while they are showering or getting dressed.
 - c) Do not sit on a camper's lap, or vice versa.
4. Guidelines for camper/staff contact include avoiding touching a camper:
 - a) Against their will (unless in case of clear and present danger).
 - b) Against their verbal or non-verbal expressed discomfort.
 - c) Without the company of other adults.
 - d) In a manner which might over-stimulate the camper.
 - e) On any part of their body that is normally covered by a bathing suit (any medical necessity will be handled by the nurse).
 - f) Limit touching to the hand, shoulder or upper back.
 - g) Give hugs or backrubs only with the consent of the other person.
5. Important practices to maintain safety of campers and staff:
 - a) No hazing of campers or staff.
 - b) No abusive initiation activities.
 - c) Encourage younger campers to change their own clothes as much as possible.

- d) If possible, have at least two adults present for supervision of changing, showering, etc.
- e) Limit “clinging” children who hang all over you.
- f) It is important for counselors not to be alone with a camper anywhere where others are not present (double adult coverage is always best).
- g) Staff should never share a bed or sleeping bag with other staff or campers.
- h) Outpost camping needs at least two adults present of the same gender as the campers.
- i) Details of romantic lives should not be shared by staff or campers.

The Short of It:

- Avoid situations where campers may feel uneasy or may feel they have lost control.
- Take care to not act in a manner that might be misunderstood by campers.

