



Summer Camp

**GUIDE
BOOK**



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Getting ready for summer programming is a lot like packing for a trip. What do we absolutely need to bring with us? If something out of the ordinary happens, will we be prepared? If plans change, do we have what we need to enjoy our trip?

No matter what type of program children are enrolled in, day camp, school-based programming, overnight wilderness camp, library programs – the goal is the same. A safe quality summer program that accomplishes our mission and goals through intentional programming, positive staff and camper relationships, and lots of fun! But how do we get there? And how do we help our staff pack their bags to get ready for this great summer adventure?

This series will focus on different elements that front line staff will need in their “backpack” this summer for success presented in a variety of ways to compliment your training schedule, learning needs, and timelines. Each topic has been broken down into a webinar, a podcast, a short video, scenarios, and extra resources.

Guidebook Legend



Short webinar that provides an overview of the topic



Podcast with camp staff to expand on topic knowledge



Short video that shares examples related to the topic



Scenario and questions to use with staff to process the new information and apply to your camp setting



Printable handout and additional resources for deeper learning



How to Use the E-book

This resource is designed with flexibility in mind. Use it as a staff training template and work through each topic in order or pick and choose topics and content that seem most relevant to you and your staff.

HOW TO

Assess New Situations and Take Action



HERE'S WHAT WE'RE PACKING IN OUR BACKPACK:



Webinar In this webinar, [Risk Management 101](#), we will discuss the basics of risk management and what it means to your position at camp. Learn how to reduce, retain, avoid, or transfer risk while maximizing the potential of camp by evaluating presented situations. We are all in this together to ensure a safe experience for our campers!



Podcast In this podcast, [How to Manage When Things Change at Camp](#), we will talk about the value of having well-planned policies and procedures in place to support staff in navigating unexpected challenges before they ever happen. These policies should be revisited regularly to adapt if and when circumstances change and are paired with supportive strategies to help staff stay calm in times of challenge.



Video In this [Safety and Supervision](#) short video, taken from the *Introduction to the School-Age Care Profession* course, we share the foundational importance of providing a sense of safety to youth in our program. A little planning and forethought can foster a supportive environment for everyone.



Scenario Use [this scenario](#) and follow-up questions to implement this information in a real-life situation applicable to your camp and staff.

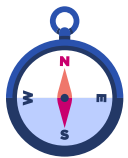


Handout Keep this handout ([Risk Management Plan](#)) with you for easy access when you need it.

The 360-Degrees of Safety



HERE'S WHAT WE'RE PACKING IN OUR BACKPACK:



Webinar In this webinar, [360 Degrees of Safety](#), we will identify five different types of safety and explore how to achieve each. We will introduce a fast and easy four-step safety check that can be used by all staff at your site or on field trips in the community. Participants will be given opportunities to try out the 360-degree safety check themselves.



Podcast In this podcast, [How to Create Safe Space in Programming](#), we discuss the role of safety in camp, understanding that when kids don't feel safe or are in a state of emotional dysregulation, they can't problem-solve, learn, or enjoy activities. And despite our best efforts, things that are often out of our control can trigger kids. Creating a safe space in programming can go a long way in helping keep kids calm.



Video In this short video, [360 Degree Assessment Tool](#), we dig deep into a concrete strategy called the 360-degree safety check. Regular use of this quick tool will help staff build a culture of mindfulness regarding risk and encourage adults to be preventative rather than reactive when it comes to safety.



Scenario Use [this scenario](#) and follow-up questions to implement this information in a real-life situation applicable to your camp and staff.

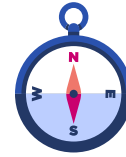


Handout Keep this handout ([Chart of Safety](#)) with you for easy access when you need it.

Having Hard Conversations at Camp



HERE'S WHAT WE'RE PACKING IN OUR BACKPACK:



Webinar In this webinar, [Having Hard Conversations](#), we recognize that difficult conversations – with kids, coworkers, or caregivers – is an important part of our work. We will explore various tactics for keeping difficult conversations positive, respectful, and productive. Wrapping up, we'll discuss the best way to ask for help when you find yourself in a tricky situation.



Podcast In this podcast, [How to Have Hard Conversations at Camp](#), we talk about the challenges in navigating tough conversations as part of the reality of camp. These conversations may never be easy – but we can build our own skills in this area to help us when a hard conversation is required.



Video In this short video, [Tips for Having Hard Conversations](#), we acknowledge that interpersonal conversations are the basis on which all of our work is built. Learn six practical tips adults can use when approaching hard conversations with youth, peers, leaders, or caregivers. Remember that even when emotions are high, we are all here to help kids achieve their best.



Scenario Use [this scenario](#) and follow-up questions to implement this information in a real-life situation applicable to your camp and staff.



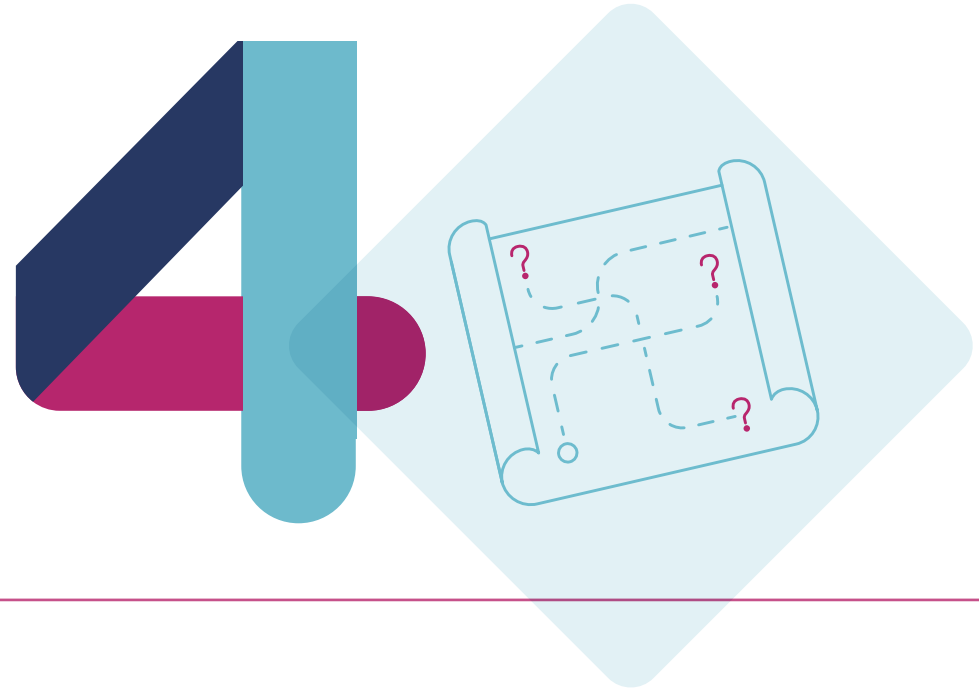
Handout Keep this handout ([Helpful Phrases](#)) with you for easy access when you need it.

For additional information view these resources:

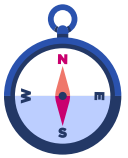
- [Practicing Coworker Confrontations](#) blog
- Crucial Learning [website](#) and [books](#)
- [Resource Review](#) *Coaching the Camp Coach: Leadership Development for Small Organizations* book by Michael Shelton

HOW TO

Plan for the Unexpected – Big and Small



HERE'S WHAT WE'RE PACKING IN OUR BACKPACK:



Webinar In this webinar, [How to Plan for the Unexpected – Big and Small](#), we ground in the idea that the only constant in life is change. We will explore six steps to follow in times of trouble. By having a plan in place for when – not if – stressful situations arise, you can help keep kids and adults safe and calm.



Podcast In this podcast, [How to Pivot When Programming Changes Overnight](#), we talk about strategies to implement at camp on the front end to help set the stage for a smoother transition when challenges do arise – as well as how to handle a need to pivot in the moment.



Video In this short video, [Camp Transitions](#), we think about something that is so central to each day it can be easy to overlook its importance: transitioning between activities. Learn a few tips on how to be intentional about transitions so that they provide a sense of control and safety for both kids and staff.



Scenario Use [this scenario](#) and follow-up questions to implement this information in a real-life situation applicable to your camp and staff.



Handout Keep this handout ([Transition Activity Ideas](#)) with you for easy access when you need it.

For additional information view these resources:

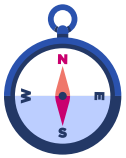
- [Top 20 Transition Activities for Elementary](#)
- [Transition Time Active Style](#)
- [Transition Activities and Reminders](#)

HOW TO

Engage a New Generation of Kids in the Natural World



HERE'S WHAT WE'RE PACKING IN OUR BACKPACK:



Webinar In this webinar, [How to Engage Kids in Nature](#), we will address some of the ongoing challenges of engaging young people in camp and the natural environment. These challenges are real and we need to acknowledge them – and then move forward with strategies to best address them in order to support young people in fully participating in camp experiences.



Podcast In this podcast, [How to Engage Young People in the Natural World](#), we will discuss the realities of engaging young people in nature and the outdoors. We'll cover some practical tips for starting slow, building routines and how to support young people in safe and reasonable technology use.



Video In this short video, [Tips for Engaging Campers in Nature](#), we explore how being intentional about our time in nature can increase engagement and make a simple trip outside into a rich experience with our natural environment. Think about how to keep environmental education simple and accessible, no matter what type of program you serve.



Scenario Use [this scenario](#) and follow-up questions to implement this information in a real-life situation applicable to your camp and staff.



Handout Keep this handout ([Notice, Engage and Wonder](#)) with you for easy access when you need it.

For additional information view these resources

- [Nature Can Be as Engaging as Video Games](#)
- [How to Raise a Wild Child](#)

Use these apps and websites to supplement your programming

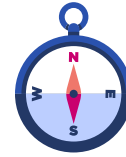
- [iNaturalist on the App Store](#)
- [Environmental Websites for Kids | Common Sense Media](#)
- [13 Apps for Kid Scientists | ParentMap](#)
- [The Best Nature Apps for Kids | Sierra Club](#)
- [Best Science Websites for Middle and High School](#)
- [From puffins to brown bears: The 10 best wildlife livestreams of the summer](#)

HOW TO

Support Campers through Behavior Guidance



HERE'S WHAT WE'RE PACKING IN OUR BACKPACK:



Webinar In this webinar, [Navigating Behavior Guidance](#), we will address behavior guidance strategies in the unique world of camp. We will think about how the new and exciting environment of camp can elevate uncertainty and anxiety in campers and staff. We will also cover tools staff can use to support themselves and their campers when addressing challenging behaviors.



Podcast In this podcast, [The Realities of Navigating Challenging Behavior at Camp](#), our guest shares his wealth of knowledge and experience working in camps – specifically focused on creating safe and supportive camp environments and its impact on navigating challenging behaviors. We will discuss real examples from camp that illustrate the importance of practicing empathy and how approaching challenging behaviors with curiosity are powerful tools in the work of behavior guidance.



Video In this short video, [How to Guide Behaviors in a Few Simple Steps](#), we work from the understanding that all behavior is a form of communication and explore how to redirect undesired behavior in safe and effective ways. Learn about grounding yourself first, helping kids regulate, and making a plan for successful reentry.



Scenario Use [this scenario](#) and follow-up questions to implement this information in a real-life situation applicable to your camp and staff.



Handout Keep these handouts ([Behavior Guidance Filter](#)) and ([Maslow's Hierarchy](#)) with you for easy access when you need it.

HOW TO

Coach Yourself through Tough Moments



HERE'S WHAT WE'RE PACKING IN OUR BACKPACK:



Webinar In this webinar, [Sustainable Self Care](#), we understand that the work of camp professionals is full of stressors. We will discuss how to engage in necessary self-care so you can bring your full, best self to the work you do. Explore your 'why' and how to leverage that into motivation and self-empathy, learn some tools for self-regulation, and consider how being transparent with yourself and teammates builds a culture of care for all involved.



Podcast In this podcast, [How Teams Can Promote Individual Self-Care](#), we discuss the value of supporting and investing in your team. If team members feel a sense of connection and belonging to the group, those relationships foster and support individuals in their own well-being and practice of self-care.



Video In this short video, [How to Counter Your Inner Critic](#), we explore how our biology impacts our inner reaction when dealing with stressful situations. We each have an inner critic, a little voice in our heads that finds space for improvement and often tells us in not-so-kind ways. Learn how to reframe those thoughts so you can feel better and do better.



Scenario Use [these prompts](#) to check-in with yourself throughout the summer or create time to organize group time to work through the check-in questions.



Handout Keep these handouts ([Monthly Calendar for Self-Care](#)) and ([Mid-Summer Check-In](#)) with you for easy access when you need it.

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