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LEADERSHIP AND COUNSELOR CHARACTERISTICS OF TEEN LEADERSHIP  
PROGRAMS AT MIDWESTERN SUMMER CAMPS

A Chapter Style Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Masters of Education

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College of Education

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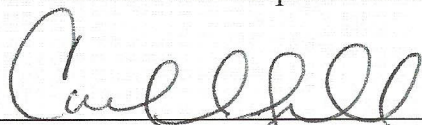
LEADERSHIP AND COUNSELOR CHARACTERISTICS OF TEEN LEADERSHIP

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By Hannah Walleser

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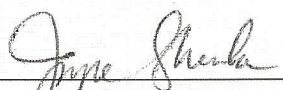
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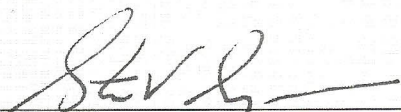


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## ABSTRACT

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Literature about summer camp leadership and teen programs lacks information on the importance of leadership characteristics, activities and strategies for teaching those characteristics, and the relationship to staff training and responsibilities. Eight directors of summer camps completed a survey to rate leadership characteristics, explain program goals, and list skills and activities in staff training and teen programs. The results showed that camps rated Compassion, Honesty, and Responsibility as the most important counselor and leader characteristics. Staff training and teen leadership program skills and activities included leadership, team-building, counselor duties, situational training, working with campers, service, reflection, communication, and critical thinking. Teen program goals varied. Recommendations were for summer camps and school leadership programs to identify program goals, determine which leadership characteristics are important, decide which skills to explicitly teach for youth to develop those leadership characteristics, and implement activities and strategies to support leadership skill development.

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**CHAPTER I**  
**INTRODUCTION**  
**Need for the Project**

Research on organized camping and positive youth development shows that there is a significant positive value in camping and outdoor experiences (Hedrick, Homan, & Dick, 2009; Van Belois & Mitchell, 2009; American Camp Association, 2006; Henderson, Thurber, Scheuler Whitaker, Bialeschki, & Scanlin, 2006; Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2006; Henderson, Scanlin, Whitaker, Thurber, Marsh, Burkhardt, & Bialeschki, 2005; Wallace, 2005; Garst & Bruce, 2003; Nei, 2003; Dworken, 2001; Marsh, 1999; Eells, 1986; Gabrielsen & Holtzer, 1965; Dimock & Hendry, 1947; Cassidy & Bemiss, 1935). Participants of all ages benefit from the opportunities; younger children see the greatest growth and positive impacts. Published research articles, camping editorials, and summer camp manuals describe the general structure of summer camps, including how they are supported and organized, programming that occurs during the camp, and how staff are structured to carry out each camp's mission. Camp leadership publications typically outline counselor responsibilities, including routine activities and skills they do day-to-day, and what is expected of camp staff. Literature on camps also includes examples of successful leadership programs for teenagers that are available at various camps, their structure, and the leadership within them.

The camp leadership literature provides information about various leadership characteristics and skills, methods of teaching and developing leadership, camp counselor responsibilities, camp life, and youth development. Camp leadership research shows general activities and strategies for applying leadership training through summer camp programs available for teens. However, camp leadership literature does not support why certain characteristics and skills are important for each leadership program model. It also does not show the priorities of summer camps in terms of leadership and counselor characteristics. Other camp leadership information that is lacking includes topics such as the leadership characteristics that are important to camps, how they teach specific skills for those characteristics, what activities they use in their programs, and explicit activities and strategies to explicitly teach certain characteristics.

### **Research Questions**

Research questions included the following:

1. What characteristics are important for camp leaders?
2. What characteristics are important for camp counselors?
3. Do summer camp organizers value the same characteristics for counselors as they do for camp leaders?
4. Do summer camp organizers value similar leadership characteristics for staff and teen programs alike?
5. Are the leadership characteristics valued within their camp philosophy and programming?
6. Do summer camp organizers intentionally teach leadership characteristics valued?

7. What activities do camp counselors and leaders use to teach leadership skills?
8. Do summer camp counselors or leaders emphasize leadership skills for the characteristics they prioritize with higher value?
9. Do summer camp organizers achieve an increase in leadership skills in campers from camp-lead activities?

### **Project Benefits**

This study will help document the counselor and leadership characteristics that camp directors believe are important. It will provide examples of what is taught in staff training and teen leadership programs at Midwestern summer camps. Additionally, the study will collect examples of activities to teach certain counselor and leader skills.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

Characteristic: Personal trait or ability that demonstrates a quality of being.

Counselor: “The one who comes closest to the campers and, therefore, has the greatest influence on the character of the camping experiences received by the individual camper” (Benson, Goldberg, & Brownwell, 1951, p.41).

Counselor in Training (CIT): Participant of teen leadership program whose goal is to prepare youth to become counselors in the future. Similar programs may call these participants Leader in Training (LIT), Leader in Development, Junior Counselor, or Counselor Assistant (Brandwein, 2003; Byrnes, 2010; Cronin, 2005; Dimock & Hendry, 1947; Felix & Ambler, 1996; Hartwig, 1962; Katz, 2009; Salow-Bernardo, 2006; Thompson, 2000; Thurber, 2001).

Counselor skill: Skills specific to a camp that allow a counselor to perform their job well. “Certain personality qualifications and specific education and experience” (Benson, Goldberg, & Brownwell, 1951, p.41).

Leader: Person who can “apprehend and consciously adopt aims for their leadership which are worthwhile, clear and specific” (Dimock & Hendry, 1947, p.24).

Leadership: “Consists of three factors: first, the ability to understand and respond to the needs and desires of a group; second, the capacity to help the group express these desires constructively and progressively; and third, the power to focus the attention of the group upon oneself” (Ott, 1964, p.38).

Leadership development: Program that teaches specific leadership skills and provides opportunities to practice those skills in authentic settings.

Leadership skill: Skill that demonstrates leadership; behavior consistent with a leadership characteristic.

Staff training: Pre-camp preparation and orientation which considers “the objectives, policies, traditions, and organization of the camp; the responsibilities of individual staff members; rules and regulations affecting staff and campers; information about campers; and possibly some experience in camping skills” (Benson, Goldberg, Brownwell, 1951, p.51).

Summer camp: Camp facility whose programs operate during the summer season.

Teen leadership program: Youth program within a summer camp that teaches leadership skills to teen campers, often as a precursor to the participants becoming staff in the future. This is often part of a multi-seasonal leadership program which starts with senior campers, and progresses with participant age and experience.

Teen: Youth aged 13 to 19 years. (The age range for the term “teen” may vary among camps depending on their minimum age of employed staff and maximum age of campers.)

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature about summer camps and counselor leadership discusses various leadership characteristics and skills, methods of teaching and developing leadership, camp counselor responsibilities, camp life, and youth outcomes. Research shows positive youth development and improvements in multiple life skills through the camping experience (Hedrick, Homan, & Dick, 2009; Van Belois & Mitchell, 2009; American Camp Association, 2006; Henderson, Thurber, Scheuler Whitaker, Bialeschki, & Scanlin, 2006; Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2006; Henderson, Scanlin, Whitaker, Thurber, Marsh, Burkhardt, & Bialeschki, 2005; Wallace, 2005; Garst & Bruce, 2003; Nei, 2003; Dworken, 2001; Marsh, 1999). However, the research does not support why certain characteristics and skills are important for each camp model. It does not show the priorities of summer camps in terms of leadership and counselor characteristics. Some literature offers strategies for applying leadership training through summer camp programs, but they lack specific activities through which such skills should be taught.

#### **Leadership**

Leadership is a broad term that encompasses many characteristics and visions of authority and empowerment. It is a balance of ambition, competence, and integrity (Bennis, & Goldsmith, 1994). Leadership requires gaining trust, sharing a vision or goal, and empowering others to accomplish tasks. Employers often expect leadership from their employees. This requires trust from the organization and staff in order to help



others. Leadership is often described as an innate skill to take charge; however, describing leadership as something only certain people are born with is misleading. Leadership can be learned (Bennis & Goldsmith, 1994). While leadership can be taught in a variety of environments, experience, rather than formal training, is key to successful leadership skill development (Conger, 1992). In order to develop judgment, a leader needs experience, must reflect on their mistakes, and should learn from others' mistakes, work with mentors, and trust their instincts (Outward Bound USA, 2007).

Leadership has three factors (Ott, 1964). Leaders need to influence the group enough to focus and hold their attention and the ability to understand and respond to the needs and goals of the group. Furthermore, leaders need the ability to help that group constructively and progressively realize their objectives. These factors are summed up in one definition of a leader: "a leader is a person who uses skills to help a group identify and achieve its goals" (Brandwein, 2003, p.6). Leaders have many roles such as facilitator, motivator, organizer, and coach. The required skills to fulfill these roles are specific to what people say or do to help others achieve success.

An outdoor leader has power and responsibility, as well as many roles and responsibilities (Outward Bound USA, 2007). As a skill trainer, leaders must foster confidence and teach participants how to care for others, camp, travel safely, and solve problems. A second role as a program designer, the leader must know participant needs, abilities, and goals, and provide them with effective, meaningful, and replicable experiences. As an interpreter, a third role, leaders help people form values and learn about their strengths and abilities, influence decisions and performance, and facilitate knowledge and skill transfer from practice to performance. The fourth role of group

facilitator requires leaders to know the stages of group development, be able to intervene as needed, and encourage the development of positive relationships. A fifth role, coach, requires that leaders fulfill the responsibility of helping others set goals, accomplish challenges, cope with anxiety, explore emotions, solve problems, and develop confidence. An often overlooked role of leaders as followers requires the leader to allow the group to develop competence, independence, and interdependence; empower participants, and support group leaders, help with chores and routines; admit mistakes; and allow participants to explore and challenge ideas.

### **Power Distribution**

Allowing group members to share authority and take turns as leaders, as well as helping them learn leadership skills is important in leadership growth. “Great leaders are great teachers, and teaching is at the heart of leadership. Leaders think about their own experiences, draw lessons from what they know, and then discern how to share those lessons with others” (Ruch, 2005, p.3). Leadership occurs at all levels of an organization; therefore, the balance of power is crucial to group performance (Henderson, 1996). A leader might direct others to accomplish a task or empower the people they are working with to do it for themselves.

Some leadership styles include directive, consensus, expert, affiliative, engaged, and coaching (George & Sims, 2007). A directive leader demands compliance and obedience with rules, but a consensus leader builds agreement through participation. An expert leader expects competence and self-direction, where an affiliative leader creates emotional bonds and harmony. An engaged leader mobilizes people around shared purpose and values, and a coaching leader develops people for leadership roles.

Whatever the leadership style, a leader must use power wisely, get others involved in decision making, have empathy, counsel others, and help people improve their performance (George & Sims, 2007).

It is in an organization's best interests to empower the next generation of leaders by offering professional development (Pdeszwa, 2010). Mutual respect is the basis for empowerment. Leaders must treat others as equals, be good listeners, learn from others, share experiences, help teammates, challenge others, and align everyone to a mission (George & Sims, 2007). When people are empowered and encouraged to make decisions, they must be allowed to make mistakes, take risks, and change things in order to take ownership. Supervisors can mentor staff, but they ultimately give staff the control. Group members need intentional opportunities to learn, lead, grow, and develop.

Four cornerstones of leadership include a clear set of values, encouragement to apply those values in decisions and actions, follow-through with actions to demonstrate consistency and accountability, and confrontation of ignorance and resistance (Ruch, 2005). Leaders are not managers (Bennis & Goldsmith, 1994). Managers do things right; they focus on efficiency, how things are done, systems, controls, procedures, and structure. Leaders do the right thing; they focus on effectiveness, what and why things are done, trust, goals, innovation, initiation, and creativity. They help a group define a goal and support them in accomplishing it.

In order to support individuals in completing an objective, leaders build relationships. When linking leadership style and use of power, the relationship between group members and their leader may be dependent, interdependent, or independent. The relationship depends on the environment, personalities, and the situation. Leadership

relationships include directing, organizing, delegating, persuading, listening, motivating, empowering, discussing, learning, teaching, advising, coaching, mentoring, and following (George & Sims, 2007).

### **Leadership Characteristics and Skills**

Leadership characteristics often include descriptions such as responsible, caring, and trustworthy. However, these things cannot be clearly defined. Characteristics are qualities that cannot be evaluated without being identified through explicit, observable behaviors. Examples of characteristics include sense of humor, work well with others, sensitive to others' need, idealistic, positive, flexible, faith in others, trustworthy, and high expectations (Henderson, 1996). Characteristics could be personality strengths such as resilience and persistence, based on values such as tolerance and openness, or task-based such as being receptive to new information and having intrinsic motivation (Shelton, 2006).

Alternately, skills can easily be checked off a list because they can be seen or heard. Skills are behaviors rather than qualities (Brandwein, 2003). They include behaviors that allow for success, including decision-making, teamwork, communication, and positive attitude. Skills can be described through specific words and actions. For example, the characteristic of self-starter can be observed through skills such as seeing a situation, analyzing and responding to it, and finding good solutions (Henderson, 1996).

Leadership consists of numerous tasks and skills that are developed through practice, introspection, and coaching (Shelton, 2006; Jordan, 1996). Technical skills include planning and implementing programs, leading activities, and office tasks (Jordan, 1996). Human relations or interpersonal skills require a leader to understand group

dynamics, resolve conflicts, facilitate cooperation, be a good communicator, and value and respect others (Jordan, 1996). Leaders motivate those around them through positive interactions, take risks and encourage innovation, initiate change, listen and respond effectively, get things done through others, and interact assertively (Ruch, 2005).

Conceptual skills require a leader to analyze and see the big picture, handle ambiguity, articulate and support the organization's philosophy, use critical thinking and problem solving, be creative, and contribute to society (Jordan, 1996).

Leaders need to shift their leadership style according to their skills and comfort zone, the different groups they work with, and what is appropriate for the situation (Jordan, 1996). The leader's preferences are influenced by maturity, knowledge, previous experiences, biases, and skills. Concerns about group differences include maturity, purpose, experience levels, and ages. Requirements for a situation depend on the task, time constraints, environment, equipment, temperature, and safety. The purpose and objectives, such as safety, group empowerment, or individual development, also influence leadership style.

### **Leadership Development**

Leadership development is a journey which requires a critical transformation from "I" to "we." The leader stops focusing on personal needs, is less competitive and more open to other view points, and begins motivating and helping others to reach their full potential. In careers, the leadership journey has three steps according to age, experience, and years with the organization (George & Sims, 2007). First, preparing for leadership includes years of education, studying, and gaining experiences. Second, leading includes

working in successive roles within the organization. Third, leaving involves giving back (i.e., completed career leadership roles and opportunities to share experience).

Levels of leadership require self-awareness, values, motivations, a support team, and an integrated life (George & Sims, 2007). Values are developed by considering and prioritizing the level of importance of things in life. When values translate into actions they become leadership principles, or standards to lead others which are based on values. The influence range of leadership principles is determined by ethical boundaries, the limits placed on actions. The impact of leadership power is also influenced by motivated capabilities. Leaders tend to do and excel at what they are good at and what they like to do. In order to improve skills and expand influence, leaders must consider their motivations and strengths and weaknesses, focus on positive feedback, reflect on their actions and results, and make improvements.

### **Leadership Development Stages**

George & Sims (2007) suggest five stages of leadership development. First, a leader develops leadership through self-awareness, values, motivations, a support team, and an integrated life. Second, in order to develop authentic leadership, a leader works on purpose, values, heart, relationships, and self-discipline. The third stage of leadership development is transformation. The leader turns the focus from self to others. Fourth, a leader empowers other leaders by finding a purpose and aligning others with it, strengthening their leadership style, and improving their use of power. In the fifth stage of leadership development, the leader makes an impact and gets results.

Similarly, Martinek & Hellison (2009) describe four stages of leadership development evident in youth group participation. First, an individual learns to take

responsibility. They respect others, participate, persevere, act as a team player, become self-directed, and explore leadership roles. The individual assumes responsibility for their self and contribute to others' well-being, improves relational skills, forms values, and shares perceptions. The second stage is leadership awareness where individuals see themselves as leaders and they begin to concern themselves with the larger responsibilities of leadership. Leaders in stage two help, teach, and coach peers. The third stage of leadership development is cross-age leadership, in which participants teach activities and responsibility values to others, including planning, teaching, and managing behavior problems, as well as evaluating lessons. Leaders work on sensitivity, inner strength, caring and compassion, and service to others. In the fourth leadership development stage, the leader finds opportunities in other situations through self-actualized leadership. They reflect on personal interests and future plans, work to see others succeed, and make community connections.

### **Group Development Stages**

Group development is shown through many models of social interaction which describe distinct stages and transitions marked by behaviors of group interaction. One theory presents a five stage model including these stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning (Outward Bound USA, 2007; Nei, 2003). The forming stage of group development is based on dependency and inclusion. Group members get to know one another, become familiar with the program, and focus on learning the group routines. The storming stage moves toward counter dependency and fighting. This is when challenge intensities increase, problems come up within the group, and members must work to resolve conflicts. In the norming stage of group development, group

members have become used to each other and the group routines. There is a level of trust and a clear structure to events. Group members are familiar with the way people interact, the group goals, and individual responsibilities within the group. They resolve agreements and cooperate. The performing stage of group development consists of group members having a high level of interdependence and flexibility when they work. They focus on achieving goals, which leads to a higher performance level of tasks and greater success, through efficiency and effectiveness. Not all groups reach the performing stage. In the final adjourning group development stage, group members separate at the end of a task. They get ready for separation, reflect on personal growth and find ways to transfer their knowledge to other situations.

An alternative group development stage is suggested for storming, a term which could limit group members to a narrow set of interactions (Nei, 2003). Instead, the term sorting can include a greater variety of behaviors. Sorting does not rely on conflict to indicate group success; rather, it accepts that positive interactions are important and recognizes the importance of distributing and coordinating tasks and responsibilities.

Coutellier (2007) interpreted the stages of group development for use with groups of campers. The five development stages above, forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning, were transformed into saying hello, saying who, saying why, saying we, and saying good-bye. In the saying hello camper group development stage, individuals are insecure, worry about fitting into the group, have some anxiety, learn about expectations and learn about each other. The saying who stage involves group members sorting out relationships, choosing friends, and figuring out their roles and group responsibilities. There are power struggles and conflicts, as well as building cooperation



within this stage. The third camper group development stage is saying why. During this stage individuals understand their role, depend on each other, make group decisions and problem solve, work on team building, and have a sense of group responsibility. In the next stage, saying we, group members acknowledge individual strengths, develop respect and interdependence, share their feelings, and experience success through mutual contributions. Group members interact through discussion and creativity, work through challenges, and share accomplishments. The final camper group development stage is saying good-bye. In this stage, group members prepare to leave each other for the summer or for the week that they are together. Individuals typically have mixed feelings about leaving, recognize their growth and change, reflect on their experiences, and find ways to transfer learning into other situations.

Recognizing the influence of individual leadership development within the group development is important. Each member of a group might learn at a different pace and will perhaps be at a different stage of leadership. This affects how group members interact, form relationships, and take on responsibilities. The stages can help leaders, and summer camps in particular, plan training for staff and facilitate groups through activities. However, group development is complex, and many variables do not clearly fit within the stages of models.

### **Coaching and Mentoring**

One responsibility of a leader is mentoring. Mentors form a two-way relationship of mutual learning and exploration of values (George & Sims, 2007). Mentors are often in the same or a related field, and are more educated or senior staff members. They help less experienced members by giving them feedback and encouraging two-way

communication so that both parties benefit from the working relationship. Mentoring requires a leader to make choices and trade-offs to balance their priorities. They help others integrate personal, family, professional, and community priorities, as well as use their experiences to advise mentees.

Another responsibility of a leader is coaching. “Coaching is the process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective” (Peterson & Hicks, 1996, p.14). Coaches help leaders take responsibility for their successes, show confidence in their abilities, create challenges and higher expectations, and prepare for risks. One way to summarize a coach’s role is to use the acronym FIRST (Peterson & Hicks, 1996). Coaches help leaders [F] focus their attention on priorities and [I] implement actions every day. Coaches encourage leaders to [R] reflect on what happens and [S] seek feedback and support. Did the plan stay on track and sustain progress? Finally, coaches assist leaders in [T] transferring their learning in progressive situations.

Coaching is a continuous process, guiding people to learn and practice regularly (Peterson & Hicks, 1996). Coaches guide people to learn for themselves by organizing resources and learning opportunities, and supporting an environment for risk taking. They often work one-on-one; this direct and personal relationship allows for specific and individual feedback, challenges, and encouragement. A coach’s relationship with a leader includes recognition and respect for the leader’s individuality and identity, focus on strengths, and the capacity to make good decisions (Martinek & Hellison, 2009).

Coaches do not look only to fix problems, they look for opportunities to help others develop their abilities (Peterson & Hicks, 1996). They create conditions for

learning, rather than sharing insights from personal experiences like mentors. Coaches help leaders determine what excites them, how they view themselves, and what they believe about their ability to develop. Peterson & Hicks (1996) described this as GAPS information: looking at how an individual views their own Goals and Abilities, and comparing it to others' Perceptions and Standards.

Leaders do not only function as coaches for others, they also receive support and feedback from others. "Coaches... help leaders maximize their potential by working with them to gain awareness on the effects of their words and actions on other individuals" (Shelton, 2006, p.4). They demonstrate self-awareness, empathy, and experience in the field. Coaching sessions focus on issues to solve, feedback, viewing situations from multiple viewpoints, support, and occasional suggestions and challenges.

### **Leadership Programming**

Summer camp curriculum is based on skills and activities in the outdoors to challenge youth, foster a caring environment, and teach new skills. Campers participate in physical activities such as canoeing, hiking, and swimming. They develop character, values, and social skills through group challenges and camaraderie. Therefore, character development and leadership through physical activity are important concepts for camps to consider.

### **Character Development**

Adults and children face ethical issues in the world. There is a clear need for positive youth development to train and empower future leaders (Kinnamon, 2003). While mentors and coaches can influence leadership development in skills such as decision-making, individuals must invest in themselves and develop their own character.

Leaders can facilitate character development by teaching a set of core values and developing a norm of behavior. Character Counts is an organization that teaches six core values: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship (Kinnamon, 2003). The programs educate youth about the influence of words, tone of voice, and body language.

Character education includes learning new skills and forming habits to develop personality and values. Ott (1964) described three laws of character education for youth participants of summer camps: the laws of practice, effect, and desire. The law of practice is that campers learn what they repeatedly practice. In addition, when values differ in various contexts, campers learn what they practice in specific situations. The law of effect is that campers establish good habits through the experience of feelings related to success and failure. Individuals experience satisfaction from success when things go right and annoyance from failure when things go wrong. The law of desire is that campers must be ready to change or improve. Readiness can be encouraged through positive suggestions, cooperation with leaders, high expectations, and recognition of accomplishments.

The discussion of character education also questions whether individuals need to change their behavior or whether changes should be made within the system or culture. Kohn (2003) suggests that it is the structures, not just individual character, which needs transformation. People's actions reflect their situations, so a societal transformation would produce more lasting results than focusing on remaking children. Leaders should strive to develop intrinsic motivation within children. Therefore, character education must stop focusing on behavior and instead consider the reasons and motives for the

behavior. Summer camps should create a caring community and focus on cooperative games where everyone works toward a common goal. Furthermore, children learn to make good decisions by having opportunities to make decisions. Children need multiple experiences to understand leadership characteristics and develop leadership skills. Campers need opportunities to contemplate competing values such as honesty and compassion, make individual and group decisions, and plan activities.

### **Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility**

Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) focuses on the importance and influence of values (Hellison, 2001). TPSR programs teach youth how to set internal standards. They cultivate the decision-making process, provide opportunities to share beliefs and knowledge, and give youth responsibility. The goal is to teach life skills which address emotional, social, and personal aspects. Criteria for youth development programs such as TPSR include focusing on the whole person, empowering youth, providing a safe environment, setting high expectations, making meaningful relationships with adults, and treating youth as individuals.

The TPSR framework includes the core values of putting children's needs first, being youth-centered, advocating human decency, and instructing behavior for a certain way of being. TPSR holds two fundamental assumptions. First, personal and social development is not automatic; it relies on goals and strategies. Second, TPSR values are embedded in coaches' content knowledge, activities, and teaching skills and strategies. Themes include empowerment, teacher-student relationship, integration, and transfer. The daily program format consists of relational time, awareness talk, physical activity plan, group meeting, and self-reflection and evaluation time. Some TPSR strategies are

modeling respect, setting expectations, providing opportunities for success, fostering social interaction, assigning management tasks, promoting leadership, giving choices and voices, involving youth in assessment, and promoting transfer.

TPSR is a teaching and learning progression through five levels or stages of responsibility. Coaches establish a positive learning environment, help participants extend the learning environment, and teach them skills to transfer learning to responsibilities elsewhere. First, youth learn to respect the rights and feelings of others. They must exhibit self-control and learn they have the rights to peaceful conflict resolution, be included, and have cooperative peers. Second, participants put forth more effort and cooperation. They learn to have self-motivation, explore their effort and new tasks, and get along with others. The third level relies on self-direction. Youth stay on-task independently, progress in their goal-setting skills, and gain the courage to resist peer pressure. Fourth, participants have opportunities to help others and develop greater leadership. They show caring and compassion, sensitivity and responsiveness, and an inner strength. The fifth level is transfer outside the gym. Youth apply TPSR ideas in other areas of life, and are positive role models for others.

The youth responsibilities throughout the TPSR program include self-control, participation, effort, self-direction, and caring. They are encouraged to create personal goals. Program leader responsibilities include gradual empowerment and responsibility shift of youth, self-reflection, embedding TPSR in physical activities, helping teach skills for transfer of knowledge, and building relationships with youth. Leaders also evaluate participants on a scale that reflects the stages of responsibility. These five progressive evaluation ratings correspond to the five levels of responsibility: 0 is irresponsibility, 1 is

respect, 2 is participation, 3 is self-direction and self-responsibility, and 4 is caring.

Through leader evaluations and youth self-assessments, youth are able to recognize their strengths, exercise individuality, use their voice, and practice decision making.

Many sports-based programs incorporate TPSR to teach personal skills. These programs focus on skills such as teamwork and communication while teaching specific sports skills. Some organizations also have job training and placement. For example, Sports 37 is a program in Chicago where high school students are paid coach-mentors to younger children during the summer (Martinek & Hellison, 2009). Older teens who have gone through the program receive job training and placements for lifeguarding or coaching sports. Sports 37 uses rubrics to evaluate these six skill areas: teamwork, communication, critical thinking, work skills, demonstration, and explanation.

Another sports-based program in which high school students coach younger children is called Project Coach in Northampton, MA (Martinek & Hellison, 2009). This low income community sports program focuses on youth leadership and citizenship. Citizenship relies on obeying laws, voting, knowing current events, and having concern for others. The program's basic elements are a combination of leadership, character, the TPSR values of moral and social responsibility, community involvement, political literacy, and activism. Personal and social responsibility includes respect, effort, self-direction, helping and leading others, and using skills outside the gym. Themes for advancement in the program include sharing power, self-reflection, building meaningful relationships, and transferring knowledge to other life situations.

## **Adventure Education**

Adventure education combines experience in the outdoors, challenging situations, and reflection. Learning by doing is part of the education process. Outdoor education goes beyond subject material and classroom lecture learning to make the learning process more meaningful (Gabrielsen & Holtzer, 1965). Experiences are numerous and authentic and produce lasting change. There is an emphasis on providing opportunities for outdoor education at camps, with profound and lasting effects. The goal of outdoor education is leadership development (Toupence & Townsend, 2000).

Adventure education allows campers to learn how to learn, reflect and recognize life lessons, and learn how to apply learning (Nei, 2003). Adventure education includes these components: activity framing, process goals, debriefing, and transfer. Activity framing focuses campers on learning and skills involved in an activity. Process goals are developmental objectives which affect group interaction and task goals or completion goals. Debriefing is ongoing reflection about experiences, facilitated through discussions or journaling. The final goal is to transfer adventure experience learning to other environments and situations. Transfer can also happen from one adventure experience to another event within the camp session, which reinforces the ability to transfer the skills to an outside environment.

Adventure activities are designed by applying experiential education theory to adventure programming (Nei, 2003). Experiential education is a learning theory that combines direct experience with reflection, such as role-playing, on-the-job training, and simulations. Central concepts include assessment, activity sequencing, the learning cycle, and comfort zone. Assessment is necessary to determine an individual's readiness to



participate. Leaders must understand child development in order to set expectations, use effective communication, and provide appropriate activities. Activity sequencing is establishing what, when, and why activities are presented. Leaders balance success with challenge through a progression of teaching and practicing skills, and completion of tasks. The learning cycle recognizes that current learning affects the use of past learning and the process of future learning. It includes acquiring organized, meaningful information. Finally, the comfort zone is related to familiarity with a situation. Leaders must understand and appropriately use the comfort zone to lead to the best learning. There is a high level of communication, a safe and encouraging environment, and challenges to stretch the boundaries of individuals' comfort zones.

### **Summer Camps**

Summer camps are controlled environments that help youth gain experiences and offer opportunities to grow. Examples of experiences include developing new attitudes and appreciation, expanding interests and experiences, achieving success in skills, and finding opportunities for spiritual growth (Cassidy & Bemiss, 1935). Camp activities facilitate youth development of personality and abilities. A successful camp helps campers form good habits, be active participants in life events, and increase their repertoire of interests and skills (Ott, 1964). Camps also help campers maintain good physical and mental health, be creative and individual, control and use emotions appropriately, and increase spiritual awareness.

### **Camping and Education**

Camping and education have a long history from prehistoric to Native American to pioneer cultures (Ozier, 2010). The current school year and camp season are

complementary due to the development of the American school calendar based on the seasons and agriculture. Summer was an opportunity for learning at camps because camps offered a continuum of learning between school seasons (Ozier, 2010, 2009). Organized camping occurred away from home, in the outdoors, within a safe, educational community (Eells, 1986). The first camps were started by not-for-profit educators to teach children with methods different from school settings (Eells, 1986). Summer camps provided physical exercise, mental challenges, social skill development, and spiritual events.

Factors for the development of youth camping include conservationism, charitable interest of social service organizations, progressive educational theories, Protestant work ethic, American pioneer spirit, interest in Native American traditions, patriotism and military traditions, and concern for the physical, mental, and spiritual health of children (Eells, 1986). Writers, including Henry David Thoreau, publicized a reminiscence of nature and rural life in comparison with increased urban areas (Ozier, 2010). This led to the Gunnery Camp in 1861, the first recognized organized summer camp for boys. In 1896, Camp Marienfeld planned to combine formal curriculum and outdoor recreation. The goal was to create healthy bodies and minds beyond the school classrooms and emphasize process and creative learning.

Activities typical of contemporary camping began in family units and expanded to school and community organizations as people centralized in urban areas. Between the 1860s and 1920s, urban children were sent to the countryside (Eells, 1986). Later, the years between 1920 and 1950 were an educational stage (Ozier, 2010). Camp leaders were educators, and camp counselors and directors studied and published findings of

benefits at summer camp. However, despite studies and support, camping was not formally recognized as an important aspect of a child's education.

There were also school-camp partnerships (Ozier, 2010). In several states, camps were maintained and directed by public school education boards. Camps operating separately from school, but with contributing school authorities also existed. Camps working with schools were maintained the entire year. Camps provided experiential educational programs, and camps and schools shared resources (Ozier, 2009).

Furthermore, a link exists between camp sites and school campuses (Ozier, 2009). However, the similarity extends beyond the classroom by influencing campers through engagement and experience. Meaningful learning experiences were created in spaces other than school classrooms.

Camping is an educational venture; therefore, staff members must completely understand camp objectives (Benson, Goldberg, & Brownwell, 1951). Education held the responsibility of developing the physical, mental, social, and moral aspects of youth. The identity of the individual was important, as well as developing citizenship and promoting professional and vocational competency. In 1918 the National Education Association's Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Schools decided on seven cardinal objectives of education: health, command of fundamental objectives, worthy home membership, vocation, citizenship, worthy use of leisure time, and ethical character (Benson, Goldberg, & Brownwell, 1951). The Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association reinterpreted the objectives: self-realization, human relationship, economic efficiency, and civic responsibility.

Youth organizations provided specific aims and objectives for camping experiences (Benson, Goldberg, & Brownwell, 1951). In 1944, the Boys' Clubs of America included camping goals such as healthful and safe living, developing individual interests, well-rounded living, community living, and developing standards of good living. That same year, the Boy Scouts of America focused on developing character and citizenship, physical fitness, motivating the scout troop, and strengthening working units. In 1947, the American Camping Association had these goals for youth camping: develop self-reliance, insight, resourcefulness, new skills and knowledge, spiritual growth, leisure activities, physical health, and a sounder personality. The same year, the Girl Scouts included these objectives: enjoyment and appreciation of outdoors, citizenship and community, physical and mental well-being, resourcefulness, initiative, and self-reliance. Also in 1947, the YMCA focused on health and safety, social adjustment, new skills and interests, good habits, democratic living, and spiritual values.

The camping goals of those organizations persist today. The Boys and Girls Clubs of America continue enabling young people to become caring, responsible, productive citizens (Boys & Girls Clubs of America). The Boy Scouts of America still focus on health, developing self-reliance and resourcefulness, citizenship, spiritual growth, and social development (Boy Scouts of America). The American Camp Association includes camping goals of safe environment, caring adults, healthy experiences, service to others, leadership, experiential education, and self-improvement (American Camp Association). The Girl Scouts emphasizes exploring leadership, building skills, and developing appreciation for nature (Girl Scouts). The YMCA still emphasizes learning skills, developing character and leadership, and building meaningful

relationships (YMCA). Additionally, 4-H focuses on safety, developing life skills, making decisions, and communicating with others (4-H).

### **Camping and Character**

There are increasingly higher expectations on the child care industry (Leiken, 2004). Furthermore, parents are raising children in an entitled, permissive way; the focus of parenting and childhood is on having fun rather than learning. Children's behavior is a result of expectations; they display the behavior they are raised to exhibit (Leiken, 2004). Experiences at summer camp can help fill the gaps in children's education and character development. Summer camps can promote children's social and moral growth, related to character education (Kohn, 2003).

Over the last 100 years, there has been a deteriorating transition from boys into adulthood (Leiken, 2004). Boys are influenced to be critical, sarcastic, and irresponsible. They are raised with a sense of entitlement and lack of gratitude. Traditionally adult men defined the transition for youth, but recently men have not been taking that responsibility, (Leiken, 2004). Camp Champions in Texas was a weekend program for teen boys that promoted responsibility and maturity through emotionally, mentally, and physically demanding programming. The program's goal was to cultivate leaders with integrity, compassion, skill, and purpose. Ten adult men of integrity participated to influence twenty boys ages 15-17 throughout various challenges. The program challenges fostered positive self-awareness, confidence, and independence and interdependence. Activities encouraged the boys to leave their comfort zone and work together. Camp Champions challenged the boys' selfish values, social roles, priorities and values, personal meaning, and resolve. Through email discussion groups and feedback, reported results of the

program included increased honesty and accountability, responsibility, and placing others' needs first.

Camp Ahmek in Ontario, Canada, made case studies and longitudinal group observations during the summers from 1925 to 1928 (Dimock & Hendry, 1947). Psychologists, counselors, instructors, and educators conducted pre-post behavior ratings for 216 boys during the camp's 7-week season. The studies found multiple positive behavioral changes including social skills, independence, and the willingness to try new things. Their conclusions were that camp had a positive but idiosyncratic effect on boys' behavior; the changes depended on program type, peer pressure, leadership quality, and attitude; younger boys benefited more; the length of stay was not related to the amount of behavior change; parent post-ratings were more favorable than camp staff ratings; and some positive changes persisted at home.

All camps teach values regardless of specific programming and philosophy (Kohn, 2003). Dimock & Hendry (1947) described camp as a process for socializing behavior and named seven contributing factors. The first factor is cooperative behavior, which naturally exists due to the community demands of camp life. A second factor is peer pressure; youth are surrounded by peers throughout the camping experience. The third contributing factor is independence from adults, which leads to emotional, intellectual, and social maturity. The fourth factor is flexibility. Youth develop adaptive behaviors for the group good. The fifth contributing factor is citizenship, which is supported by a democratic and cooperative community. A sixth factor relates to counselors as role models; counselors influence campers through their behaviors. The

final contributing factor is the integral environment of camp, through which the whole person is affected by camp leadership.

### **Culture of Summer Camps and Leadership**

Leadership skills can be developed at a summer youth camp as a result of learning process, environment, and social interaction (Toupence & Townsend, 2000). Leadership recurs at camps, and local and national organizations (Nicodemus, 2007). Some campers and counselors eventually decide to make a career at camp. Staff members are able to develop professionally and make a difference for others. They create a safe environment and give children opportunities to experience the outdoors; work with passionate people who challenge themselves and mentors who share the same values; provide emotional support; encourage children to learn; develop compassion, self-motivation and responsibility; learn to work together; and receive support from the camp community.

Camp is a site of cross-disciplinary, authentic learning and inquiry, where process is emphasized over outcome (Ozier, 2009). There are numerous teachable moments outside of the school year, which expands the reach of education from a community-based environment. Summer camp is an environment to explore, discover, appreciate, experiment, and take risks, where campers can choose, are challenged, and reflect on their experiences (Ozier, 2009). Camp makes a lasting impression on people, helps them in activities outside of camp and in the future, and affects leadership within and without the camping realm (Nicodemus, 2007). The summer camp environment encourages independence, responsibility, and choice through structure and supervision (Gucker, 2001). It fosters healthy competition, outdoor skills, adventure, resourcefulness, teamwork, appreciation of differences, friendships, and community respect.

Summer camp provides an environment for building skills and relationships, and socio-emotional growth (Ozier, 2009). Campers experience affective, cognitive, behavioral, physical, social, and spiritual growth. Values from camp include self-assurance, self-esteem, and self-confidence (Gucker, 2001). There is a family-like atmosphere formed by small groups of campers, which leads to humor, contribution, sense of belonging, sharing chores, community through work groups, older campers guiding younger campers, and campers and staff working together. Camp teaches campers to take ownership and share knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills; fosters relationships between parents, staff, campers, and community; teaches maturity, independence, responsibility, interpersonal skills, and attitude; and builds responsibility, respect, caring, leadership, and citizenship (Ozier, 2009).

Toupence and Townsend (2000) conducted a study using 3500 campers ages 10 to 15, 40 CITs, and 134 counselors in summer 1999 from Camp Ondessonk in Illinois. The study documented that the camp recognized that youth camping provided education out-of-doors and wilderness experience had the potential to enhance leadership development. Hypotheses of the study were that there is no difference in the self-perception of leadership skills of campers, CITs, or counselors before and after their wilderness youth camping experience, and that the gender and age of an individual in a wilderness youth camp setting does not affect their self-perception of leadership skills. Campers attended camp for one-week sessions. Leadership development was not an explicit goal of the camp. The study used the Leadership Skills Inventory to assess self-perceived leadership skills. The survey included 21 statements rated on a 5-point Likert scale that corresponded to five internal scales: communication, positional leadership, making



decisions, working with groups, and understanding self. Campers, CITs, and staff had significant increases in self-perceptions of leadership skills. Female campers had higher self-perceptions in communication and working with groups. Female CITs had higher self-perceptions in understanding self. Female staff had higher self-perceptions in working with groups. Age did not have a significant effect. Recommendations were to explore which activities of camp programming and environment impact leadership skill development, and to develop a longitudinal study to track sustainability and transferability of skills over time.

A 2003 4-H study in West Virginia looked at 28 resident camps with campers ages 9 to 19 (Garton, Miltenberger, & Pruett, 2007). The research survey questioned whether campers learn life skills and leadership skills at camp. Participants returned 1,541 surveys which measured overall camp experience, targeted life skills, retrospective pre-testing of leadership skills, and camper demographics. Targeted life skills included learning to learn, decision making, wise use of resources, responsible citizenship, communication, accepting differences, leadership, marketable skills, and healthy lifestyles. Leadership skills included working well with others, working as member of a team, leading a group or team, taking charge of an activity, knowing how to prepare and lead an activity, sharing leadership with others, and knowing responsibilities as a leader. Younger campers ages 8 to 13 responded to 10 questions on a 3-point Likert scale while older campers ages 12 to 21 responded to 22 questions on a 4-point Likert scale. Top skill ratings for younger campers included accepting differences, citizenship, leadership, and communication. Top skill ratings for older campers included citizenship, accepting

differences, and marketable skills. Only older campers took the post-test; they saw significant gains in all seven areas of leadership skills.

### **Camp Counselors**

Camp counselors serve one position as part of a larger camp staff. Counselors range in age from teenagers to adults, all with varying amounts and types of camping experiences. The decision to be a counselor offers the opportunities to act as an older sibling, friend, and parent; help others achieve success; be part of a bigger whole; recognize others' skills and responsibilities; create a community; and encourage progress and learning (Eberly & Moser, 1947). Counselors have many roles and responsibilities. They support the principles of democracy, help campers live together and get along, begin and finish group projects, plan, and solve problems as a group (Ledlie & Holbein, 1946).

### **Hiring and Training Staff**

Challenges exist in hiring and training staff (Cronin, 2004). Camp directors establish contact among staff before orientation and group them by age, personality, or job responsibilities (Cronin, 2004). They create a culture for staff to maintain commitment, motivation, and dedication which leads to staff retention. Staff members are chosen based on variables such as character and personality, decision-making skills, values, and being a role model (Byrnes, 2010). Camp directors communicate camp philosophy, living environment, schedule, expectations, and job requirements. They must think long term and in relation to the qualities and skills of returning staff and the gaps needed to be filled by new staff.

Training and hiring camp-grown counselors through leadership training programs has several benefits (Dimock & Hendry, 1947). First, counselors benefit from having had general camp experiences to develop camp activity skills, appreciate camp goals and culture, know the camp programs and structure, and have developed cooperative social attitudes. Second, they have had practice leading younger campers and helping counselors, informal instruction in activities, and have increased their knowledge of leadership methods and working with children. Third, camp-grown counselors have participated in a leadership training course led by camp administration and learned educational principles and skills for camp leadership.

In addition, it is beneficial to have certified teachers as lead counselors and instructors. Educating is part of their life mission not just a summer job. There is a sense of control and authority, and they have experience with discipline. Trained educators can relate well to campers and radiate positive energy and creativity while serving as role models for staff. Teachers have experience in developmental psychology and child development. They also have developed risk management practices, can recognize lagging campers, and know how to provide additional time and support. Camp administration can use their knowledge during staff training to help teach counselor skills (Herschthal, 2004).

The camp director must have full knowledge of the requirements, stresses, and difficulties of each staff position in order to hire the best qualified staff members. It is important for camp leaders to invest in their staff to retain them (Byrnes, 2010). Within camp, directors create a physically and emotionally safe environment and a sense of family. They have high expectations for model behavior and work ethic. Camp directors

should treat staff as professionals and find opportunities to further their camp education through certifications and conferences (Byrnes, 2010). These off season opportunities also encourage camaraderie. They can help staff create a sense of ownership within the camp, reach camp goals, and support them in pursuit of goals outside of camp.

Staff training includes planning before campers arrive (Aycock, 2009). The director must be an effective trainer, be approachable, have energy and stamina, and establish leadership style, presence, timing, and consistent behavior (Cronin, 2004). Dimock & Hendry (1947) suggest that before camp orientation camp staff members take university camping courses such as leadership, camping, child psychology, educational methods, and nature study.

Camp leaders direct the pre-camp orientation and instruction (Benson, Goldberg, & Brownwell, 1951; Dimock & Hendry, 1947; Hartwig, 1962). They present the camp objectives, history and traditions, camping skills, and explain programs and activities. Camp leaders present camp policies, health and safety regulations, general rules, and camp routines. Directors talk about responsibilities and leadership principles and lead group discussion.

The pre-camp training period prepares staff for working with campers (Schafer, 2007; Dimock & Hendry, 1947; Hartwig, 1962). Staff learns about camper behavior, social adjustment, kinds of learning, steps in learning situations, and how to create meaningful knowledge through authentic activities. They talk about role modeling, persuasion, interpersonal relationships, communication, and expectations. Staff learns aspects of developmental adolescent psychology and concrete behaviors of youth

development. Staff also discusses various problem situations, practices those situations through role-playing, and shares experiences to solve possible problems.

Staff training also allows for individual preparation for activities and areas, recreation and relaxation, and camp activities as a group to build rapport and boost morale (Hartwig, 1962; Benson, Goldberg, & Brownwell, 1951). For example, game play has a positive effect on group dynamics (Berger, Lantzman, & Nathan, 2003). Five factors contribute to this positive effect: purpose, setting and environment, level of intensity, safety and participation, and clear and simple directions. Purpose entails knowing why the game was chosen based on the audience's expectations and needs. The setting and environment include variables such as place, group size, length, reason, time, schedule, and weather. The level of intensity has an impact on success and requires certain levels of energy and commitment. Safety and participation depend on physical and emotional aspects, props, obstacles, and boundaries. Lastly, clear and simple directions apply to explanation and application of the game rules. These five factors of game play can be transferred from staff training to counselor use with campers.

Cronin (2004) suggests that directors vary the content and presentation of information during orientation each year. Returning staff can be mentors, guides, and demonstrators for new staff. They should work with new staff to present ideas, role play, and plan small events to generate common interests. Staff training and development should continue throughout the summer. Effective staff development is a year-round process (Cronin, 2004).

A 4-H camp in Missouri conducted a study to determine if counselors report positive growth experiences in personal and interpersonal domains and if they experience

negative pressures to work at summer camp. It studied whether preparation duration and depth affect personal, interpersonal, and negative domains; if there is a relationship between skills in other organizations and success as a counselor; whether counselor experience impacts career goals; if staff expectations are reasonable and attainable; if staff receive sufficient training and feel prepared; and how counselors assess their proficiency (Nicholson & Klem, 2007). The study used the YES 2.0 (Youth Experiences Survey) which measured identity experiences, initiative experiences, basic skills, interpersonal relationships, teamwork and social skills, adult networks and social capital, and negative experiences. The study surveyed 193 counselors ages 14 to 19 to collect additional information including training and orientation, expectations and ability to achieve them, level of importance, and personal value to counseling. The study results indicated a strong positive impact of camp counseling, with few negative experiences. The strongest domain was team work and social skills. There was also a positive correlation between feelings of social exclusion and low positive means in all seven YES domains. In response to staff training, counselors spent an average of 17 hours in preparation and involvement. Training included information about camp ceremonies, songs, and games; camp procedures; emergency procedures; handling homesickness; handling confidential information; characteristics of different ages of youth; managing group behavior; managing individual camper behavior; and the “Why?” of 4-H camp. Perceived accomplishments included leadership, role modeling, public speaking, teaching, making connections with campers, and helping campers have positive experiences. The participants wanted better preparation to lead activities, manage behavior, and be more familiar with developmental stages of children. They also wanted

to increase patience, communication, and leadership skills. Participants rated camp counselors as very important at camp and rated their experience as a very high value personally.

### **Staff Responsibilities and Objectives**

Camp counselors have a range of responsibilities and they must have a good attitude, be an example, and take responsibility for their contract obligations (Ott, 1964; Benson, Goldberg, & Brownwell, 1951). Staff must know the camp routines such as schedule, procedures for activities, responsibilities at meals and clean-up, and safety. Staff observes camp regulations for campers and counselors, is alert to the health and care of campers, and takes care of property and equipment. They must have an executive ability; know how to discipline, problem solve, and set objectives; facilitate campers in planning and executing events; help campers live together through cooperative control; support campers' interests; and participate in the staff community (Dimock & Hendry, 1947).

Professional responsibilities of counselors include teaching activities, knowing about education and camping, understanding child growth and development, and knowing and implementing methods of working with children (Benson, Goldberg, & Brownwell, 1951). Duties include checking camper health, meeting individual camper needs, keeping campers busy, and widening camper interest (Dimock & Hendry, 1947). Staff members build a feeling of community and camaraderie, act as role models, and know skills of special fields. Counselors work through cooperative planning, supervision, and time management, and have specific objectives for leadership. Camp counselors help campers set goals and reach them.

Campers' purposes and objectives are to have fun, make friends, learn skills, have freedom and independence, and get along with others (Dimock & Hendry, 1947). The camp and staff objectives for campers include goals such as health, social living, citizenship, democratic leadership, learning, personal qualities and leadership characteristics, purposeful work, conservation, and spiritual value (Benson, Goldberg, & Brownwell, 1951; Dimock & Hendry, 1947). Campers learn skills and interests, and develop values, habits, skills, and attitudes for social interaction. Social participation involves appreciation for human values; having empathy; deciding ways to attain goals; cooperating with others with tolerance and understanding; and evaluating results of action adjustment (Dimock & Hendry, 1947).

Camp is the ideal setting to implement age-appropriate activities that test social situations in a controlled environment (Cronin, 2005). Through activities, camp staff instructs fundamental skills that pertain to each specialty area. Leaders should create a plan, which enforces the importance of making good choices through personal accountability. These abilities are demonstrated each day through camper participation and staff guidance. Along the way, the process of building life skills is established through multi-layered learning.

Campers learn through the power of example and freedom of action (Eberly & Moser, 1947). They gain the patience necessary to live together, have concern for others, find common interests, plan for working together, become an active member of a group, and experience personal growth from new skills and responsibilities. Campers have discovery and achievement through adventure, self-improvement, skill instruction and practice, challenges, learning experiences, and creative opportunities.



Counselors cannot just “wing it” throughout the day (Ditter, 2011). They must get to know the campers, get organized, smile, help campers make friends, ask for help, admit what they don’t know, and influence children more than control them. Counselors also need strategies to keep campers busy, resulting in fewer discipline problems, less boredom and homesickness, and more fun. Staff needs specific skills to be able to teach campers character and life skills.

Working as a counselor prepares youth for college and careers (LaFave & Loughran, 2001). In 2000 Camp Alvernia in New York offered a course during staff training called Leadership Skills in Community Youth Recreation. The course developed multifaceted objectives for the participants. For the counselors, the objectives were to be able to: create and organize age-appropriate activities; practice active listening skills with campers, co-workers, and supervising staff; identify the specific needs and abilities of children in groups; and adjust strategies for instruction and supervision based on the needs of the members of the group. The learning experience of the course emphasized the following areas: proper supervision of campers, components of a well-run activity, management strategies in working with children, identifying child abuse and neglect, disciplining with dignity, the functions of play, sports and young children, and risk management.

### **Counselor Characteristics and Skills**

Counselors are hired based on the experience they can create for campers (Cronin, 2004). The composition of staff depends on individual character and purpose, suitability, and certifications. In order to hire leaders, directors must determine what qualities they want, and then create questions and scenarios to determine character and resourcefulness

during staff interviews. Cronin (2004) suggests hiring people in various stages of development based on their maturity, ability, and potential. It is imperative that new staff complement existing staff and reflect core program values. Directors must take into account ages, gender, and personality. See Table 1 for a listing of possible personal qualities and characteristics desirable in camp counselors.

Table 1. Personal Qualities and Characteristics of Desirable Camp Counselors

| Qualities and Characteristics             |
|---|
| ability to make friends                   |
| adjusts quickly to situations             |
| ambitious                                 |
| approachable                              |
| assumes responsibility                    |
| caring                                    |
| cheerful                                  |
| citizenship attitudes                     |
| commands respect                          |
| communicates with parents                 |
| confident                                 |
| confidential                              |
| conscientious                             |
| considerate                               |
| cooperates                                |
| courageous                                |
| courteous                                 |
| creative                                  |
| dependable                                |
| develops abilities                        |
| develops appreciations in life and values |
| develops interests                        |
| develops skills                           |
| education requirements                    |
| efficient                                 |
| emotional adjustment                      |
| emotional maturity and stability          |
| encourages all campers                    |
| energetic                                 |
| enjoys outdoor life and group living      |
| enthusiastic                              |
| fair                                      |
| faith in campers' abilities               |

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friendly  
follows policies and procedures  
good attitude  
good character and personality  
good conduct  
good example  
good judgment  
good personal habits  
guidance in life goals  
handles behavior problems  
handles stress  
health and safety consciousness  
helpful  
honest  
impersonal relationship with campers  
initiates  
insists on cleanliness  
intelligent  
interested in camp and campers  
interested in camper development and well being  
keeps and enforces rules  
keeps campers interested  
kind  
leads activities  
leadership  
listens  
love of outdoors  
loyal  
maintains order  
masks irritation  
mature  
modest  
moral character  
observes all rules  
open minded  
optimistic  
organized  
original  
participates in activities  
patient  
personal appearance  
personal health habits  
physically strong and well  
problem-solves  
prompt  
public agent

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- reliable
- resolves conflicts
- resourceful
- respects others
- responsible
- role model
- self-direction
- sense of humor
- shares feedback and criticism with camp administration
- specific skill or special ability
- supports social skills
- sympathetic
- tactful
- team player
- team worker
- tolerant
- understanding
- understands various differences
- unselfish
- upholds camp traditions and ideals
- volunteers
- well-trained
- willing to work
- works hard
- works to improve
- works well with others

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(Benson, Goldberg, & Brownwell, 1951; Cassidy & Bemiss, 1935; Dimock & Hendry, 1947; Hartwig, 1962; Ledlie & Holbein, 1946).

Table 1 provides a long list of things to “be” (Brandwein, 2003). The qualities are determined based on value judgments. To be more objective, camps need to describe and teach what to “do” using specific terms and examples. They must convert qualities into conduct that demonstrates qualities and character. Leaders determine what a person described like that would do or say. Camp directors can make a list of desired skills with explicit actions and words. For example, the qualities cooperates, helpful, and open-minded can be converted into the skill teamwork, with these observable behaviors: works with others and share responsibilities, offers to help before asked, suggests ideas, accepts suggestions, and is aware of participation levels in the group (Brandwein, 2003).

Similarly, the skill of motivation can be seen through these words and actions: makes positive statements, conveys energy and interest, compliments others, and provides specific praise.

Camp counselors have many responsibilities that require various skills. Staff must be able to create routines and procedures for transitions, expectations for activities and cleaning, start with positive attitudes, ask questions during mealtime, know their roles during rest time, be comfortable and effective in activity instruction, know routines for bed time, have consistency, make good choices, and be intentional (Aycock, 2009). As good citizens they must have a sense of responsibility, check on camper performance, encourage others, praise success, and correct mistakes (Ledlie & Holbein, 1946).

Specific tasks require specific skills. For example, skills for leading children include group leadership, game and activity leadership, body language, enthusiasm, communication, developing positive behavior, managing undesired behavior, teaching, teaching responsibility and problem solving, caring, working together, and positive learning (Brandwein, 2003). Counselors must have the skills for waterfront activities and games, nature activities, outdoor cooking, campfires, storytelling, drama, singing, first aid, safety, sanitation, trips, and arts and crafts (Hartwig, 1962). Skills might include making intelligent and constructive decisions, facilitating decision-making, taking initiative, being patient, and making and taking suggestions (Ledlie & Holbein, 1946).

General leadership skills include teamwork, responsibility, respect, motivation, listening, planning, initiative, creativity, persistence, presenting, problem solving, and observation (Brandwein, 2003). Leadership qualities can be shown through communication skills, creativity, initiative, work ethic, and problem-solving skills, and

how a person copes with stress, is personable, shows a positive attitude, and relates to campers (Cronin, 2004).

Camp is an intense experience. Counselors need the skills to manage stress, recognize limits, resolve problems, and be patient (Coutellier, 2007). They help campers grow intellectually and socially, and must know how to refer to and respond to the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual characteristics of campers. Counselors support and challenge campers, and must be able to manage behaviors with preventative actions and responsive consequences.

Multiple skills and behaviors work together to achieve desired results from campers. Many objectives and regulations need to be fulfilled at once. This can create stress and unrealistic expectations. Counselors must learn to not take things personally, how to wait, recognize others' needs, respect authority, delay gratification, work together, accept help, tolerate conflict, and recover from setbacks (Ditter, 2011). Counselors should never give up hope; there are always solutions (Richman, 2006). Staff can ask colleagues for suggestions and help brainstorming solutions. Furthermore, relying on skills and strategies makes a staff member's jobs easier to perform and goals easier to accomplish.

### **Developing Staff Leadership**

Camp is for the campers (Benson, Goldberg, & Brownwell, 1951). This requires sacrifice, patience, guidance, and effective camp leadership to help campers accomplish their objectives. The organization of camp leadership determines the outcomes. For example, a democratic relationship where staff members have inter-weaving

responsibilities creates a different environment and outcomes than leadership based on a hierarchy or authoritarian management (Eberly & Moser, 1947).

Camp leaders have numerous interrelated roles each with specific skills (Shelton, 2006). The figurehead role revolves around ceremonial duties. Leaders make contacts in the liaison role. As a disseminator, leaders pass on information, and as a spokesperson they send information to people outside the work group. They are social networkers (Litten, 2011). The disturbance handler role requires leaders to cope with problematic situations and maintain organization functions. Leaders deal with differences of opinion and must exemplify good communication (Litten, 2011). As a resource allocator, leaders decide on a budget for resources. Camp leaders need to have a long-term perspective to keep camp thriving.

Dimock and Hendry (1947) suggested providing a leadership training class for staff including proficiency in camp curriculum, leadership abilities, and team work qualities. However, it is important to not get stuck following the most recently popular management and leadership fads (Shelton, 2006). Challenges to leadership include lack of training, lack of insight into personal leadership qualities, and lack of feedback. Successful methods in camp leadership depend on the leader's personality, knowledge, and ability. Leaders must build relationships, listen to ideas, support freedom and independence, have interest, and plan appropriately challenging activities (Cassidy & Bemiss, 1935).

Thurber (2001) described six training techniques for leadership. First is leadership by example, where staff model good leadership, share constructive criticism, support a nonjudgmental atmosphere focused on learning, demonstrate humility, and

have a willingness to listen and desire to improve. The second training technique is enhanced responsibility in which leaders allow staff room to grow, delegate responsibility and decision-making power, and do not micromanage situations. Third, leaders simulate realistic scenarios with role-playing to reveal strengths and weaknesses. They set up and play through situations, debrief, and discuss alternatives. The fourth leadership training technique has leaders conduct ongoing evaluations with honest, two-way communication. Fifth, camp leaders conduct regular mini-trainings with discussions, meditations, simulation drills, and other exercises. Leadership is an ongoing process; not everything can be learned in staff training week. The final leadership training technique is providing time for leaders to bond. This includes structured and unstructured time such as icebreakers, trust-building, team games, get-togethers, and movie nights.

Shelton (2006) listed four necessities to working with the idea that leadership development is a process. First, camp leaders must establish a definition of leadership that goes beyond a vague, amorphous definition of leadership to define something specific and substantial. Second, they need to initiate a formal feedback process to determine how successfully the definition's criteria are met. Critical feedback more accurately gauges performance. Shelton suggests using a 360 degree appraisal system where feedback is solicited anonymously from subordinates and peers, and used by supervisors to discuss results and plan for future development. Leadership is affirmative; leaders get better results when people discipline themselves, rather than relying on a list of rules (Ott, 1964). Third, leaders should support ongoing skill development of objective camp knowledge and interpersonal skills. Fourth, they must monitor the environment for opportunities and changes.



Ruch (2005) described seven initiatives for camp leaders. First, leaders construct a cyclical approach to change. They reflect on what the camp can do better, what form that service or program might take, and what things they should stop doing. Second, camp leaders produce a contagious communication network through their words and actions. Third, they build a system of customer service. Leaders access available data, examine their relevance, solicit feedback from stakeholder groups, invite staff to contribute ideas for meeting camper expectations, and emphasize teamwork and empowerment. Fourth, leaders craft a great governance structure including board responsibilities, CEO responsibilities, and joint responsibilities. Fifth, camp leaders enhance human resource management through their most valuable asset: staff. Sixth, they establish value-added partnerships by working collaboratively with other organizations. Seventh, leaders develop a climate for creativity. They recognize that quantity breeds quality when generating ideas and that it is important to look at things from many perspectives.

Yerkes and Downey (2006) suggest that summer camps develop practicum and internship partnerships with colleges and universities to recruit staff and mentor young camp leaders for the future. Internships are of short duration, career-focused, and could require minimal supervision, documented work hours, reflection papers, and service hours for academic credit. Participating majors could include physical education, recreation administration, elementary and secondary education, business administration, human services, and social work. Camps would gain qualified staff members, universities would have an organization for placements, and students would gain experience in their field of interest.

Project WILD is the longest implemented national wildlife education program in the U.S. (Bourdeau & Knutz, 2006). The Council for Environmental Education has six guides for Project WILD, including a K-12 guide with 100 activity ideas easily adapted for camp. Major themes include habitats, interdependence, changes and adaptations, biodiversity, human dimensions and wildlife, wildlife issues, and wildlife conservation. A study of the Project WILD program run by the 4-H organization in Oregon was done in 2004-2005, using 189 people that attended workshops, including many 4-H counselors. It was calculated that those people reached 22,605 youth and adults with WILD curricula in activities and education programs. Counselors prepared to lead Project WILD activities during un-programmed camp time had opportunities for leadership, provided risk management, and supervised activities.

Camp Alvernia in New York offered a course during staff training called Leadership Skills in Community Youth Recreation in 2000 (LaFave & Loughran, 2001). Counselors were leaders. During the eight-week camp season participants entered experiences into a daily learning log: they described the event, analyzed it, considered alternatives, and planned for the future. Counselors reflected on leadership styles and focused on being effective leaders in all situations. The camper was the focus, not the activity; therefore, responsibilities like activity planning required counselors to make plans based on the appropriateness for camper ages and goals. Procedures had to reflect the purpose of the activity. The emphasis on not “winging it” gave counselors specific plans and the confidence of knowing what to do and how to do it. Suggestions from the program included refocusing pre-camp orientation on leadership, teaching how leadership style affects behavior and attitude, focusing on themes in assigned readings, assigning

weekly themes for learning logs, improving supervision, and modeling leadership characteristics.

### **Impacts of Being a Camp Counselor**

Working at summer camp has a positive effect on teacher-counselors (Herschthal, 2004). They experience emotional growth, novel approaches to relationships, and freedom, and have the opportunity to experiment and explore alternatives. Counselors learn to be professionals, improve work ethic, and combine fun and education experiences in one. Camp has positive social and family benefits and personal impacts on spirituality, life skills, self-confidence, and appreciation of nature (DeGraaf & Glover, 2002). Working as a counselor also has professional impacts on tangible marketable skills, intangible skills like compassion and empathy, diversity, job searching, and sense of vocation. In reflections counselors noted the uniqueness of the experience, making memories for youth, and freedom.

The Girl Scout councils in Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina conducted ethnographic interviews of full-time outdoor program directors or camp directors, ages 20-50 (James, 2003). Discussion about staff experiences resulted in three major topics. First, participants described the people, interactions, and activities of camp. Second, they described how sisterhood happens between staff. Third, participants described how they saw that change. Domains to categorize benefits were created to represent the culture of Girl Scout outdoor professionals. Transformation was the overlying theme. Staff benefits from camp included growth in staff with transformations passed to campers, camaraderie and friendships, leadership opportunities, and camp rituals.

The Wisconsin Youth in Public Leadership Issue Team, a part of the State 4-H Youth Development Program, worked to develop understanding of youth leadership development in camp counselors (Forsythe, Matysik, & Nelson, 2004). Research questions were open-ended and focused on what camp counselors learn from their counseling experience and how they view their training or orientation. Research identified relevant areas of life skill and leadership development. Leadership is a broad and complex idea which was broken into components that are accepted in youth development literature, relevant to counselors, and easily understood: teamwork, communication, decision-making, planning, and organizing. The survey was completed by 274 counselors from 44 counties. Leadership skills learned were working with youth, communication, patience and tolerance, responsibility, problem solving, and planning and organizing. Teamwork skills included the value of cooperation, counselors cannot do everything alone, and people can accomplish more together. Communication skills learned were how children listen, direction giving, the value of communication, interpersonal problem solving, and understanding child behavior. Decision making skills included getting camper input for decisions and having alternative plans. Planning and organizing skills were to be prepared and organized, success comes from planning and organizing, have a back-up plan, time management, and teamwork. Participants were able to use counselor skills for leadership in their communities and benefited in career preparation. The study suggested having statewide standards for camp staff training and orientation to cover certain topics.

A study in Ohio identified 4-H camp counselor contributions to positive youth development in a study that focused on intensity, duration, and breadth of counseling by

youth (Ferrari & McNeely, 2007). Other research shows that campers benefit from camp in many ways, so counselors might have similar benefits. The Youth Experiences Survey (YES) was used to measure personal, interpersonal, and negative experiences. A web-based survey over counselor training, camp planning and preparation, and counselor roles and responsibilities was sent to counselors ages 14 to 18 in 2004. Duration asked for number of years as a counselor. Intensity asked about the amount of time training, planning, and preparing pre-camp and on-site camp. Breadth looked at 4-H committee leadership and membership, formal and informal teaching, and camper supervision. YES measured six domains of personal and interpersonal development, and five negative aspects. Results showed that counselors experienced a high level of teamwork and social skills, initiative, identity, and interpersonal relationships. To a lesser degree they developed basic skills and adult networks. There was a low level of negative experience. Overall there was a positive relationship between number of years as a counselor and the development of leadership and responsibility.

A Louisiana 4-H study investigated the developmental experiences of high-school 4-H counselor volunteers to describe personal characteristics, determine participation in leadership and life skill opportunities, describe developmental experiences through the Youth Experience Survey (YES), determine a relationship between the seven YES experiences and personal characteristics, and to determine if personal characteristics explain variance in YES scales (Carter & Kotrlik, 2008). A web-based survey was completed by 310 counselors in 2006. The survey collected personal characteristics of summer camp counselors, counselor participation in leadership and life skill development opportunities through 4-H, and six scales on the YES 2.0 tool: identity experiences,

initiative experiences, basic skills, positive relationships, team work and social skills, and adult networks and social capital. Ethnicity had a moderate positive significance with adult networks and social capital. Gender had a low significance, but females had higher positive levels with relationships and team work and social skills while males had higher negative experiences. Participation in leadership and life skills resulted in a low significance with positive relationships. Counselors had high experiences in team work and social skills, positive relationships, initiative experiences, and opportunities for positive youth development. Suggestions were to emphasize the quality and focus of counselor training, not necessarily the number of hours; and to focus on handling stress, managing workloads, and increasing communication.

Camping has affective, cognitive, behavioral, physical, social, and spiritual outcomes on youth participants. The 4-H context for positive youth development includes caring adults, physical and emotional safety, age-appropriate structure and limits, sense of belonging, and opportunities to build and master content and life skills. The 4-H leaders and volunteers who teach, supervise, and care for campers are often teens. A 2002 study of youth counselors ages 14 to 18 at six camps in Virginia explored how resident camp participation as a teen leader affects development of leadership and life skills, and how teen counselors affect youth campers (Garst & Johnson, 2005). Research was conducted through focus group discussions with an open-ended interview script for questions and structure. The goal was to understand counselor leadership experience from the teen point of view including their involvement, experiences, skill development, the importance of camp, and possible improvements. Major themes related to internal motives and external factors for participation, increased understanding of

children and self, and development of mentoring relationships with children. Counselors struggled to talk with their friends about camp experience; peers did not understand the context, purpose, or value of camp. Counselors learned to understand children, work with developmental differences, respect children as individuals, use various strategies for each child, have patience, communicate, and appropriately use authority. They increased their understanding of self, responsibility, confidence, overcame shyness, communicated effectively, and problem-solved stressful situations. Counselors developed leadership-related knowledge, skills, and behaviors.

A 2004 study in Oregon examined the long-term impact of 4-H participation as a counselor of 85 camp counselors from the past 20 years (Brandt & Arnold, 2006). The three areas of impact studied were personal experience, development of skills for working with children and groups, and development of life skills using the Targeting Life Skills Model. The four H's of 4-H provided the life skills studied: **H**ead includes problem solving, decision making, and goal setting; **H**ands includes leadership, citizenship, group contribution, and teamwork; **H**ear includes communicating, resolving conflicts, empathy for others, and nurturing relationships; and **H**earth includes self-esteem, good character, managing feelings, and self-discipline. Eleven significant differences were found and were higher for older participants. Camp counseling does have a long-term, positive impact. Personal experience showed positive impacts of self-confidence and transferable skills. Working with groups had positive effects of ability to lead groups, be role model, and encourage and support others. In measuring life skills, the highest impact was found for Hands: leadership, responsible citizenship, contribution, and teamwork.

A 4-H study in Ohio examined counselor experiences, life and workforce skills, impact on career choice, and unique aspects of being a counselor compared to other 4-H experiences (Ferrari & Digby, 2007). Four focus groups determined that the counseling experience provided fun, was enjoyable and challenging, and increased skills in decision-making, planning and organizing, leadership, teamwork, communication, and interpersonal interactions. Skills that transferred to other settings included leadership, communication, interpersonal interactions, teamwork, time management, organization, flexibility and adaptability, and responsibility. Counselors were actively engaged with responsibility, leading and teaching campers, and reflection. Working as a counselor had an indirect impact on career on type of job or work environment, as well as a direct impact on career through enjoying working with children.

### **Youth at Camp**

Youth today receive media images and messages to engage in high-risk behavior (Thomas, 1996). Summer camp activities can lead to leadership and character building. Activities include team and individual sports, drama, ceremonies, environmental education, leadership positions, and problem solving. Campers also learn many skills such as self-awareness, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and responsibilities and ethics. Camps are laboratories for teaching leadership to youth with a variety of approaches (Garst & Chavez, 2010).

In 2003-2004 the American Camp Association conducted research with over 7,600 campers ages 10 to 18, from over 80 ACA-accredited camps to determine the degree to which developmental supports and opportunities were received by those campers (American Camp Association, 2006). They studied which domains were the



strongest in camps and which presented the greatest opportunity for improvement. Youth development domains included supportive relationships, safety, youth involvement, and skill building. Research results demonstrated that camps, more than some other youth programs, provide positive developmental environments for youth, especially in providing supportive relationships with adults and peers and in skill building. Also, while strengths vary by camp type and sponsor, all camps have the potential to provide positive experiences for developing successful life skills. The value of camp for campers is enhanced by attending camps in multiple summers or for progressively longer sessions. Furthermore, the study determined that campers, other than CITs, had few opportunities for meaningful involvement in leadership and decision-making. The greatest challenge for all youth programs is to provide meaningful opportunities for youth to learn and practice life skills in leadership and decision-making.

The American Camp Association completed a Program Improvement Project in 2004-2005 with 23 ACA-accredited camps to learn what strategies and approaches would help strengthen the experiences of youth in four important developmental areas: supportive relationships, safety, youth involvement, and skill building (American Camp Association, 2006). Most of the camps experienced improvement in one or more of these areas. Camps of all types increased the benefits for campers by targeting specific improvement areas and using a continuous improvement process. Camps (83%) had significant improvement in positive camper development areas such as emotional safety, decision making, peer relationships, and challenging activities. The study determined that it is important to get feedback from campers and staff on their perceptions of camp

programs, procedures, and relationships. Strategies to positively impact camper growth need to be integrated into the camp's structures, policies, and activities.

Campers experience multiple forms of growth from camp including affective, cognitive, behavioral, physical, social, and spiritual growth (Garst & Bruce, 2003). Six 4-H educational centers in Virginia developed a standardized evaluation process to measure the outcomes of camping. They created instruments for youth campers and CITs/teen counselors/adult volunteers based on the Targeting Life Skills Model. The six domains measured were being, relating, caring, thinking, giving, and working. Completed surveys (8,118) found significant differences showing that camp positively affects the development of life skill behavior. The main benefit related to responsibility.

A study of over 5,000 children attending one of 92 ACA accredited camps in the U.S. was conducted in 2002 and 2003 (Henderson, Scanlin, Whitaker, Thurber, Marsh, Burkhardt, & Bialeschki, 2005). Campers and parents completed pre-, post-, and follow-up questionnaires; staff completed pre- and post-observation checklists, and camp directors completed questionnaires about camp characteristics and operations. Four domains were measured: 1) positive identity included positive identity and independence; 2) social skills included leadership, making friends, social anxiety, and peer relationships; 3) positive values and spiritual growth included positive values and decision making, and spirituality; and 4) thinking and physical skills included adventure and exploration, and environmental awareness. Camp directors rank ordered nine outcomes: increased positive identity, increased social skills, increased positive values, increased spiritual growth, increased physical and cognitive skills, more positive relationships with adults, enhanced sense of responsibility for belonging to a healthy, diverse community,

increased sense of service to others, and other. Most campers came from camps where directors indicated personal identity, social skills, personal values, or physical and cognitive skills as their 1st or 2nd outcome or goal. There were no relationships found between camp's goals and camper outcomes. Campers had significant increases in seven outcomes: positive identity, independence, leadership, peer relationships, making friends, adventure and exploration, and spirituality.

### **Positive Youth Development**

Summer camp fosters characteristics that promote healthy development. There has been a trend in humanistic psychology, outdoor education, teaching values, the physical play influence on child development, and an interest in positive youth development (Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2006). Approximately 12,000 camps affect 10 million children with the positive benefits of self-concept and self-actualization. The largest studies have been about 4-H camps to assess growth and compare pre- and post-knowledge, feelings, and life skills. Other studies have been conducted by BSA, GSUSA, and CampFire USA. The results of numerous studies show that camp promotes the health and development of children (Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2006). Camps are high-quality, operate away from outside societal influences, provide physical activity, set boundaries, have challenging and fun risk-taking activities, promote friendships, and actualize philosophy. The combination of challenging opportunities and supportive relationships leads to positive youth development, camper choice, and intrinsic motivation.

In general people agree that camp is good for kids, but there is little research showing the influence of camping on youth. "Youth development is the physical and

cognitive (or mental) growth of youth between six and twenty-two years old” (Marsh, 1999, p.36). Camping can respond to developmental needs that are increasingly not fulfilled in the home, neighborhood community, or school due to various societal changes. Camps that focus on self-enhancement in their programs and philosophy contribute significantly and positively to youth development. Campers ages 6 to 10 benefit the most (Marsh, 1999).

Change is a consequence of reciprocal influential relationships between a camper and other factors including community, temperament, and culture (Henderson, Thurber, Scheuler Whitaker, Bialeschki, & Scanlin, 2006). Youth need supports, services, and opportunities to become competent, connected, confident, contributing people of character. Camp provides experiential opportunities for physical, emotional, civic, and social competence. Camps provide positive adult role models, safe environments, human growth experiences in the outdoors, and experiential education. Outcomes include positive values, positive identity, social relationships, and learning.

Camp has a way of changing people; children learn new things and challenge themselves. “The belief is that camp has the potential to change lives, and the hope is that these children will become future leaders in their communities” (Gaut-Correll, 2009, p.1). Summer camps are open-air classrooms where campers learn science, history, respect, math, strengths and weaknesses, social skills, character and kindness, and respect. “It's a type of education that surpasses the walls of schools and the assistance of technology and importance of subject matter” (Davis, 2010, p.29). Camp is a safe environment where campers take responsibility, are empowered to make decisions, and have role models in counselors who are not yet too old to relate to campers. Campers are

able to connect with counselors on an accessible and meaningful level. They also experience self-improvement and self-discovery in an environment of positive behavior expectations and opportunities to make positive decisions.

Enhancing self-constructs builds personal habits of a healthy lifestyle, a greater sense of personal satisfaction, and easier adjustment to new environments (Marsh, 1999). Starting the benefits at an early age provides a stronger personal foundation. The camp experience encourages teens to be more open and social (Gaut-Correll, 2009). Benefits include developing meaningful relationships, learning new skills, and gaining confidence to try new opportunities. Camping experiences can generate this positive effect in a short period of time, from one to eight weeks. Organizations can utilize the camp program method in outdoor and environmental education programs during the school year and in after school programs.

Camp is an intensive experience with structured recreation activities outdoors, in a community focused on youth development. A national study at 92 ACA-accredited camps measured youth development outcomes with input from campers, parents, and staff using pre-, post-, and follow-up surveys (Henderson, Thurber, Scheuler Whitaker, Bialeschki, & Scanlin, 2006). The Camper Growth Index-Child consisted of questions in four domains for camp programs: positive identity, social skills, positive values and spiritual growth, and thinking and physical skills. The domains included seven constructs: positive identity, positive values, social skills, leadership, environment, decision-making, and adventure/exploration. Camps from various sponsorships, geographic areas, gender distribution, and camp types participated in 2002 and 2003. Counselors had observational checklists for campers with descriptions and goals. Ten

factors that related to youth development outcomes were positive identity, independence, adventure and exploration, leadership, social comfort, peer relations, friendship skills, values and decisions, environmental awareness, and spirituality. The relationship of domains and constructs was positive identity: positive identity and independence; social skills: leadership, making friends, social comfort, and peer relationships; positive values and spiritual growth: positive values and spirituality; and thinking and physical skills: adventure exploration and environmental awareness.

A study of 80 ACA accredited camps was conducted to focus on four domains of youth development: positive identity, social skills, physical and thinking skills, and positive values and spirituality (Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2006). Methods included a pre-camp, immediate post-camp, and six-month follow-up survey, observational checklists from camp counselors, and camp program data from senior staff and directors. Researchers also designed, piloted, validated, and field-tested the Camper Growth Index-Child Form. There were ten constructs that fit into four developmental domains: self-esteem, independence, leadership, friendship skills, social comfort, peer relationships, adventure and exploration, environmental awareness, values and decisions, and spirituality (optional section). Results showed that camp experiences contributed positively to children's development. Multiple reporters used parallel forms and showed significant growth in all four domains. Multidimensional growth at camp reflects more growth than natural youth maturation. Camp experiences contribute to positive youth development.

Staff members can observe camper progression and social interaction. Campers at Morry's Camp (53) completed anger assessments, protective factor surveys, life

effectiveness scales, journal entries, focus groups, and evaluations (Bialeschki, Henderson, Krehbiel, & Ewing, 2003). The study also collected staff perceptions of how Morry's Camp "gives kids a world of good". Eleven counselors were interviewed at the end of the 2002 summer session. Five themes of camper benefits were camper leadership and maturity, teamwork and selflessness, skill development, self-esteem and respect, and camp culture.

12 resident 4-H camps in Ohio studied whether there were differences in positive impact of camp based on gender, years attended camp, and camper's age (Hedrick, Homan, & Dick, 2009). Parents/guardians (273) completed a web-based survey that measured independent living skills, leadership, social skills, self-esteem, character, health/safety, citizenship, spirituality, and decision-making. Results found a positive impact based on gender. Females had higher independent living skills, self-esteem, social skills, and character. There was a positive impact based on years attended camp. Higher means, especially in social skills, resulted from more years of camp attendance. There was also a positive impact based on camper age. The highest positive improvement in leadership was for youth ages 13 to 15.

The American Camp Association conducted national research from 2001 to 2004 with over 5,000 families from 80 ACA-accredited camps to determine the outcomes of the camp experience (American Camp Association, 2005). Parents, camp staff, and children reported significant growth in self-esteem, peer relationships, independence, adventure and exploration, leadership, environmental awareness, friendship skills, values and decisions, social comfort, and spirituality. Results indicated that camp is a unique educational institution and a positive force in youth development. The camp experience

benefits youth by increasing confidence and self-esteem, social skills and making friends, independence and leadership qualities, adventurousness and willingness to try, and spiritual growth. No differences were found between day or resident camps or various session lengths.

### **Self Esteem**

Within the past 20 years, many situations in life that build children's positive sense of who they are and what they can become have been removed (Lipof, 2010). Life issues are a reflection of how we see ourselves. Outdoor residential camps have positive impacts on youth development through new activities, independence, leadership opportunities, and social encounters (Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2006). Significant improvements were shown in social skills, positive values and spiritual growth, positive identity, and physical and thinking skills.

Self-concept and self-esteem are the best indicators to assess youth development (Marsh, 1999). Self esteem is confidence, satisfaction in oneself, knowing you have value, and feeling good about yourself (Lipof, 2010). It is the result of real achievement; you succeed authentically and then feel good about yourself. Common factors include positive feedback, supporting campers as individuals, positive interaction, training staff in development of self-constructs, and providing an environment where campers have control over their experiences (planning or management, feedback and input, and giving meaningful answers for understanding). Camps can support self-esteem by having youth work through difficult experiences, setting expectations for youth, and allocating times and places for youth to share their opinions based on experiences.



Resiliency and self-efficacy, through the praise of process, are important factors in youth development (Merryman, 2011). To develop resilience, campers need to know that it is okay to make a mistake; it is part of learning new things and growing up. Resiliency is formed from experiencing a struggle and achieving success (Lipof, 2010). Counselors should help campers learn from mistakes. Campers must ask themselves if they learned from the experience, why they think it happened, and how it would be different if they did it again. To develop creative self-efficacy, campers need to know that they can make/do things. Camp provides opportunities for campers to experience life away from parents, do things differently, gain tangible skills, and participate in autonomous, self-regulated play. Campers need to have opportunities to plan and think and be challenged in order to develop leadership and responsibility (Merryman, 2011).

Self-efficacy and social skills are necessary for everyday life. Social skills include courtesy, values, self-confidence, empathy, and compassion. Self-efficacy is an individual's perception of their own competence and ability to succeed. A study of five campers with special needs ages 22 to 27 at a resident camp was conducted to measure camp impacts on social skills and self-efficacy (Van Belois & Mitchell, 2009). The study used the Camper Growth Index-Camper and Camper Growth Index-Staff Observational Checklist, individual interviews, and daily observations of social behaviors and type of social interaction. All campers demonstrated improvement.

A 1998 study used Reflections of Self by Youth to measure self-actualization (Cartwright, Tabatabai, Beaudoin, & Naidoo, 2000). Participants were 57 gifted students under 16 years old. They attended a month-long day camp at McGill University to gain

experience in arts and sciences. The study found that gender differences in self-actualization favored girls.

Summer camp supports positive risk taking, self-exploration, and learning (Wallace, 2005). The neurochemical process during adolescence promotes physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth. To develop a sense of self, youth need to establish healthy relationships with peers, achieve identity, and attain independence. Self-definition is important in decision-making. Youth engage in risky behaviors to assert individuality and independence. Camps can create meaningful opportunities for positive risk taking to decrease negative risk taking such as combining challenges with physical and social activities. Focusing on quality over quantity and emphasizing intrinsic motivations of responding to a challenge develop greater self-esteem and confidence. Counselors can promote positive risk taking by modeling desired behaviors, supporting group and individual activity and participation, supporting a range of interests, encouraging independence, and facilitating peer relationships.

An informal written survey to campers at 4-H camps in Connecticut asked open-ended questions about what youth gained or learned from camp experience and whether attending camp made a difference in the child's life (Dworken, 2001). Responses corresponded to 40 developmental asset categories identified by the Search Institute for healthy youth development. Internal assets included positive values, commitment to learning, positive identity, and social competence. External assets included boundaries and expectations, support, constructive use of time, and empowerment. The surveys found the most improvement in social competencies, cultural competence, and decision making. Campers developed positive identity and values and self-confidence. Camp

values centered on caring and community, rules and consequences, and group responsibility. Dworken suggests that youth need to spend quality time with significant adult role models for healthy development. Camp counselors can model positive, responsible behavior, and help campers develop lifelong interests and skills.

### **Youth Involvement and Leadership**

Thurber (2009) looked at how camps can rework leadership opportunities. The American Camp Association includes choosing, planning, mentoring, presiding, and governing opportunities for leadership at camp. Other research includes evaluating and envisioning opportunities. Few programs which provide opportunities for youth to lead other youth have been quantitatively evaluated. Such programs included staff training activities to encourage camper leadership and decision making, and building meaningful relationships between staff and campers.

Thurber (2009) named five obstacles to providing more leadership opportunities for campers: campers do not want responsibilities, campers are not developmentally ready for opportunities, directors do not want the liability of minors running elements of camp, camps are programmed experiences without the structure to involve campers in organizational planning, and camp staff are not trained in strategies to provide meaningful leadership opportunities for campers. Thurber recognized that programs would need to integrate campers into previously staff-dominated programming, share leadership with youth, create youth-adult partnerships, and provide specific training in methods for promoting youth participation.

Camps need to increase youth involvement at camp to improve long-term outcomes through leadership opportunities (Thurber, 2009). One model by the

Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development and the National 4-H Council included four levels of involvement. Involvement was divided into decision making, youth leadership, and belonging. Results showed the need to transform visions to include campers as resources and partners. Campers need to have choice and leadership in planning and facilitating activities, and participating in and managing camp.

ACA's Program Improvement Project collected surveys from more than 7,600 campers from 23 camps in 2004 (Scanlin, VanKempen, & Lubecki, 2007). Campers felt they did not have a voice; they wanted more responsibility. Campers reported starting with leadership and decision-making, but staff took over if activities took too long or staff did not like the decisions. New campers felt like they did not belong because they did not know songs or traditions. Suggestions included changing from having a controlling staff to building an empowering staff. Camper leadership experience is more important than staying on schedule. After implementing camper leadership, 83% of camps saw an increase in youth improvement. They included off-season meetings and online chats for camper input. Staff training included facilitation and "de-briefing" skills. Additional suggestions were to improve communication; offer campers opportunities to plan and camp activities; and improve camp structure, policies, and activities.

A 1999 study of 3,500 campers ages 10 to 15 at resident camps evaluated leadership skill development of campers, which contributed to the understanding of leadership education (Toupence, 2003). The Leadership Skills Inventory included the five leadership scales of communication, positional leadership, making decisions, working with groups, and understanding self. Self-perceived leadership skills were measured on 10 scales. A survey was mailed two to four months after the camp

experience. Self-perceptions following camp were stronger in all five scales. There was no significant difference in gender for pre-test scores. Post-test scores showed females higher in working with groups.

Camps need more meaningful opportunities for involvement and leadership by youths including decision making, youth leadership, and belonging. Camp programming allows for efficient decision-making, but youth need the challenge of leadership and decision-making (Scanlin, VanKempen, & Lubecki, 2007). Camps need to determine and support appropriate roles for adults or staff and youth or campers, depending on their programming, goals, and preparation time (Thurber, 2009). Youth participation must be integrated into the camp program through meaningful and developmentally appropriate and safe opportunities. Youth leadership should complement the camp's mission, be implemented by trained staff, and be evaluated for effectiveness.

Program planning should be determined more by campers than staff (Cassidy, & Bemiss, 1935). Instead of allowing staff to show off superior ability, they should have campers learn and add their own knowledge. Programming should offer variety and support camper interest, choice, and freedom. Camp is different from the mass education of public school, and can focus more on individual education. Successful accomplishments are more meaningful if campers learn by doing things themselves. They learn to appreciate a well-done project, learn about self, and learn to conserve time and materials.

Programs need to influence young teens to choose a path of responsibility. Common myths about teens include that they are irresponsible, only want to do fun things, and can only be serious when they are in trouble. In truth, they are curious about

deeper life questions, are capable of profound kindness and generosity, want to feel connected and emotionally close, and want guidance to feel empowered (Leiken, J., 2005). To support teens at camp, leaders can intentionally create experiences and opportunities for development. They can create rituals that generate pride and discipline, schedule activities that foster and require teamwork and group unity, and tell stories that generate discussions and deeper thinking.

### **Counselors in Training**

Counselors in training (CITs) are campers too old to be traditional campers yet too young to be counselors (Felix & Ambler, 1996). CITs are campers in transition and need systems and coaching to develop (Thompson, 2000). They are learning to become independent, have an increased capacity for logic, sometimes have difficulty understanding compromise, and are working on developing career skills. CIT programs consist of senior campers training to become counselors.

Many ACA camps offer youth counselor or counselor in training programs for youth ages 12 to 17 (Salow-Bernardo, 2006). They are positive and beneficial programs for participants and camp programs. Leadership camps are highly structured programs, include professional training staff, and present leadership exercises (Doyle, 2004). Leadership camps have an impact on the skill development, motivation, and values of their teenage participants. Improvement of leadership supports growth in skills, ideals, attitudes, interests, and habits.

The purpose of a CIT program is to prepare future counselors (Hartwig, 1962). CIT programs focus on learning, making mistakes, accumulating successes over several years, and progressing through steps from senior camper to staff member (Dimock &

Hendry, 1947). Advantages of having a CIT program include supporting an educational motive to acquire activity skills; building a staff of counselors who know methods, ideals, and traditions of camp; allowing time and opportunities to test abilities and attitudes before hiring staff; and providing an opportunity for participant development and growth of responsibility.

CIT programs must support developmental changes in teens and provide opportunities for them to practice skills (Salow-Bernardo, 2006). CITs learn skills to use in the community in leadership roles (Salow-Bernardo, 2006). They experience positive effects, learn life skills, become more responsible, gain confidence, and learn to communicate effectively and manage problems. Transferable skills include leadership, teamwork, communication, problem solving, and decision making. Those skills can be used in careers such as teaching and education.

### **CIT Programming**

Training young adults is a big challenge (Cronin, 2005). Staff can be frustrated with the behavior and choices of youth who are no longer campers but are not old enough to be staff. The CIT director trains in an experiential setting rather than a classroom setting, and must have knowledge and experience in communication, conflict management, decision making, and group management (Felix & Ambler, 1996). Several questions are important to answer in relation to the camp program. Is there a staff member able to communicate with and use appropriate methods for teaching this age group? How do these participants affect the camp's future? What experiences provide these campers opportunities to develop the ideals for camp staff?

Camps must determine whether they want to build up their senior camper program or develop counselors (Byrnes, 2010). Camps must intentionally promote specific development. Older campers can be leaders and make decisions, in groups and for the whole camp. Young staff members (after being CITs) know the camp's layout, traditions, and philosophies (Katz, 2009). It is beneficial to build multi-seasonal leadership from senior camper to counselor in training to junior leader to staff member.

An internal leadership development program is implemented to cultivate, promote, hire, and train leaders from the best campers (Thurber, 2001). Camps need to justify the leadership program, improve it, and get cooperation from staff. It takes extra time to evaluate senior campers or junior leaders and to work out the kinks in a program. Objectives must put interpersonal skills above skills in a particular camp craft area in order to hire young leaders. There must be a commitment from upper management to hire "homegrown" leaders; take senior camper to leader-in-training progression seriously; evaluate and train; and maintain high standards. Rituals such as awards, ceremonies, campfires, camp songs, and staff clothing lend to a sense of importance and purpose to leadership and show that program membership is a privilege and honor. When campers move up the ranks through a gradual, multi-seasonal process, staff training can then focus on various leadership styles and how to work with challenging campers.

Camps must determine what to teach CITs and how to teach it, prioritize skills, teach how to work with children, and focus on leadership (Brandwein, 2003). To develop counselor skills for CITs, camps include information from staff training such as child development, behavior management, emergency procedures, health care, risk management, lesson planning, event planning, abuse training, and fostering cohesive



cabins. CITs need to be given privileges and responsibilities. Staff mentors and coaches help CITs by having them instruct and work with various counselors and different age groups. CITs learn to be flexible problem solvers, communicate with diverse people, take responsibility, get along with others, cooperate and use teamwork, be independent, and have an awareness of environment, show positive values, and have a willingness to try new things.

CITs sign a contract for job expectations, and have time off similar to counselors, but a curfew similar to campers (Felix & Ambler, 1996). They stay with a group of campers or are assigned to a support area to work with campers or understand other areas of camp. Programming includes opportunities to be role models and observe effective leadership, and sometimes visits to other camps to see different camp program styles and camp missions. CITs receive information similar to staff orientation such as policies and emergency procedures, team building, group facilitation, leading activities, planning, discipline, child abuse issues, and problem solving possible camp situations.

Camps can create a safe environment for CITs to develop leadership (Cronin, 2005). Opportunities should include training on decision making skills, staff-controlled situations to make decisions, and immediate and specific feedback. Through leadership sessions, CIT training presents camping and guidance philosophy, the aims and purposes of camping, skills and techniques for group work, essential camping skills, teaching experience, and progressive leadership experience (Hartwig, 1962).

To train CITs, information and experiences must be meaningful; they must meet their developmental needs (Cronin, 2005). Training covers general camp topics based on the organization's goals as well as personal topics specific to each participant. CIT

training includes knowing the camp mission, job description, specific skills training, practice, support, feedback, and evaluation. Successful leadership programs create opportunities to practice skills in a safe environment (Thompson, 2000). Program components should be interactive, define camp topics, and provide opportunities to practice skills and experience situations.

CIT programs should develop long and short term goals, give feedback, hold conferences, and evaluate participants. Camps can incorporate CITs into camp culture by having them join other groups as leaders and interact with staff members. It is important to communicate appropriate expectations for participants and provide training for the camp's specific programming. Cronin (2005) offers suggestions for creating quality leaders, including determining important components of the program and creating curriculum to implement the components, establishing working relationships with CITs, and using hands-on activities.

Staff should participate with the campers in all activities (Cronin, 2011). For teen group management, staff should build personal, meaningful relationships, invest in activities, problem solve, use opportunities, and develop outcome objectives. Camp staff must prompt teens to talk and express themselves through showing, helping, changing, and creating. In addition, staff should relate daily activities to life experiences, follow through in all activities, and use teambuilding for decision making. Camp staff can empower teens by allowing them opportunities to plan and present activities and evaluate their efforts. Staff must support teens' successes, praise their efforts, and provide opportunities for them to be camper-mentors. Camp staff should teach survival skills,

listen, teach relationship building, help teens belong to a group, allow healthy risks, increase self-esteem, make time for creativity, and praise successes.

Brandwein (2003) lists seven tools to teach skills: modeling skills, praise using specific actions and words, activities as opportunities to develop and practice leadership skills, discussion to assess progress and discover skills, journals for reflection, mentoring by staff members, and evaluations to recognize success and progress. Brandwein also suggests basic components of CIT or LIT programs. Skill builders are mini-workshops to teach specific leadership skills and working with children. Group initiatives include problem-solving, team-building, and challenge activities. Game time, projects, and team trips promote learning while having fun, allow participants to present projects and personal interests, and introduce journeys or adventures. Log time uses the tools of discussion and journaling. Planorama is time for participants to brainstorm and plan projects and activities. Hang time is free time to relax and socialize, and solo time is free time to pursue individual interests. One-on-one time includes short, individual sessions with a program leader to talk about goals. Initiations, ceremonies, and other rituals create and support an atmosphere of honor, respect, excitement, and challenge. FOTAY (Figure Out The Activity Yourself) is scheduled, unprogrammed time to promote responsibility and independence. Evaluations show progress and feedback. Mentoring and tour time include pairing leadership participants with effective staff and scheduling time to experience different places at camp and administration positions. WIGOOI (What I Got Out Of It) sessions summarize experiences and learning.

## **Examples of Summer Camp Programs for Youth Leadership**

The Henderson County Youth Leaders Program in North Carolina partners with local organizations such as the Boys & Girls Club and Henderson County Public Schools (Gaut-Correll, 2009). Their Leadership for Life program develops leadership, citizenship, and character. Children are nominated and progress through four levels. First, youth attend weekend camps in spring and fall. Second, they progress into a full week of camp during the summer. Third, youth receive an invitation to participate in a year-round leadership and mentoring program. Fourth, participants who show potential for growth and leadership then have the possibility of multi-week camp scholarships during the summer. Program benefits include community collaboration and participant growth through learning, community service, and personal development.

Camp Fiver in New York has a mission of leadership and character, and integrates those qualities into programming for campers to become environmental stewards (Garst & Chavez, 2010). The program's four cornerstones include a free ten-year commitment to each child; programming stages for leadership skills and community service to prepare for school and careers; emphasizing FIVER which means **F**riend, **I**ndividual, **V**aluable **T**eam player, **E**nvironmentalist, **R**isk taker; and using evidence-based practice. Camp Fiver integrated the packaged curriculum Camp 2 Grow, with an intentional scope and sequence to develop essential leadership competencies into their existing LIT/CIT program. Instead of replacing camp experiences with a school day, they matched the lessons with camp activities and included group discussions. The program linked environmental applications to the leadership lessons of leadership, character, teamwork, building relationships, taking risks and getting results, problem solving, and planning.

The camp gave the following three recommendations: use the Camp 2 Grow curriculum framework as a starting point to incorporate into camp culture; use experienced staff with time for preparation; and work through problems early in the process.

The Blue Rill Day Camp studied thirty CITs during the summer of 2007 to show enhanced leadership skills (Katz, 2009). The CITs worked with a single group of campers the whole summer, mentored by an adult counselor. Participants took the Leadership Skill Inventory during pre-camp orientation and the last week of the eight-week summer program and contributed in qualitative interviews. Results showed that leadership skills increased. CITs learned strategies and skills for managing groups of children, established routines, encouraged participation, managed transitions, and adapted their tone of voice, body language and word choice. Better communication made better connections and meaningful relationships with campers. Additionally, there was a direct relationship between skills and attitudes at camp and those during classes, extracurricular activities, and jobs during the school year. Participants were more self-confident, responsible, positive, and better communicators; managed time and stress; took initiative; were role models; resolved conflicts; and used new skills with children for babysitting or teaching. Blue Rill Day Camp offered these recommendations: begin the leadership program in camper years; allow older campers to work with younger campers; create a camp culture that promotes the honor and privilege of being part of the leadership training program; build supportive relationships between CITs and mentors; establish a clear separation between campers and staff; and graduate the programming so returning participants experience new activities and challenges.

A 4-H Camp in Idaho created a counselor training program for counselors in 9th-12th grade who planned camp for children in 3rd-5th grades and teens in 6th-8th grades (Shelstad & Luckey, 2009). The counselors attended training meetings every three to four weeks from February to June to work on communication, self responsibility, decision making, leadership skills development, group management, risk management, teaching strategies, and stages of youth development. Participants also planned programming needs such as theme, schedule, workshops, groups, and activities. The camp used the WSU Life Skills Evaluation Tool to document counselor growth in areas of leadership, decision making, and self responsibility. Fifteen youth took the surveys to rate their growth on a scale of 1 to 4. The results showed positive growth in all three skills; the greatest improvement was in leadership, followed by decision making, and then self responsibility. The counselor training program is having a desired impact on teen life skills.

The Variety Club Camp and Developmental Center and Sesame Day Camp in Pennsylvania modeled a CIT program after the American Camping Association and Camp Fire, INC. programs for CITs (Graham, 1996). “Nationwide, 85 percent of teenagers with disabilities are unable to find summer jobs” (Graham, 1996, p.29). The camp supports child care as a realistic job opportunity. Three teenagers with developmental delays were CITs and then employed at day camps as junior counselors. Participants attended four weeks of training where leaders broke activities into smaller tasks and created specific goals for them. The CITs worked with other day campers with mild to moderate developmental delays and learned about chain of command, emergency care, first aid, child development, behavior management, and the day camp routine. They

also learned how to identify their own responsibilities and the impact of body language and tone of voice. The CITs assisted with swimming lessons and participated in role play to refine interpersonal skills, and were evaluated on a daily basis, observed by specialists, and videotaped for later review. Results showed that the CITs' confidence and self-esteem grew. The camps want to expand the training throughout fall, winter, and spring so CITs can work full-time during the summer.

Camp Sea Lab partnered with California State University at Monterey Bay for informal science education (Yerkes & Downey, 2006). The program with YMCA Rockies offered undergraduate and graduate internships, and opportunities for participants to gain leadership skills, life skills, confidence, and a greater sense of responsibility. Undergraduate internships focused on leadership and programming while graduate internships focused on leading personnel and managing camp operations. Camp Manito-wish also offered undergraduate and graduate credits based on university requirements, supervision requirements, and career mentorship (Yerkes & Downey, 2006). The purpose was to ensure that the field is comprised of professionals with a solid set of skills. All parties benefit from the partnerships: camps get committed and talented staff, colleges and universities find placements and keep updated in the field, students get hands-on experience, camp staff creates quality programs while mentoring, campers get various professionals collaborating, and camp provides leadership development.

High school teenagers (138) from North America and Europe attended BBYO's International Leadership Training Conference, a Jewish leadership camp in PA (Doyle, 2004). The study showed that participants developed stronger leadership skills and confidence and learned to lead peers effectively. The experience fostered self-identity

and the development of interpersonal skills. The variables of gender, age, and previous high school success determined the extent participants benefited from camp. Females scored higher on leadership skill strength while males scored higher in leadership skill growth. Participants under 17 years old had greater growth in leadership skills. The camp reported the need for adequate instructor preparation and training. Leaders must have extensive understanding of topics in order to better understand the material and challenge participants.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Goal of Research Project**

This research project was designed to obtain information on the leadership and counselor characteristics of teen leadership programs at Midwestern summer camps. The objective was to provide answers to research questions about the importance of leader and counselor characteristics. It also aimed to learn which values were implemented in camp philosophy and in the programming for staff and teens. Additionally, the project surveyed the activities summer camps use to teach leadership and counselor characteristics.

This study was implemented in the summer of 2012. A survey was sent by email to 29 camp directors or program directors. The survey included questions about their perceptions of leader and counselor characteristics. It also asked about the training and programming offered at each camp.

The research questions solicited the characteristics that are important to the leaders of various summer camps. Questions also asked which leader and counselor characteristics were a part of teen leadership programs at the camps. Program directors or camp directors shared their opinions, programming, and examples of how they teach skills for the leader and counselor characteristics.

### **Sample Group**

The survey was sent to a sample group which consisted of 29 summer camps within approximately a 130 mile radius of La Crosse, WI. The sample size was based on the number of summer camps located within the research area. The camps were located by internet searches for summer camps, campgrounds, and youth organization programs. The survey was sent via email on August 3, 2012, to the available camp contact address for the camp director, camp program director, or the generic camp email address. Email addresses were acquired through the contact information on the camp websites. Eleven directors replied to the email. Eight camps returned completed surveys.

The survey involved no identifying information and no use of participant's names was involved. There were no anticipated risks for the participants. The survey was expected to take approximately 15 minutes for the participants to complete.

### **Research Design**

The qualitative research design implemented a survey to collect data to answer research questions posed. The first two survey questions used a 5-point Likert scale and were analyzed with descriptive statistics. Statistics described the percentage of respondents and their ratings of the priority of listed characteristics. The survey responses provided a broad picture of the leadership characteristics and skills that camps think are important. The research explored the concept of teen leadership programs and how summer camps teach leadership skills in their programs.

### **Instrument of Study**

The study was designed to collect data on the counselor and leadership characteristics camp directors find important and how they are taught in teen leadership

programs at Midwestern summer camps. The survey questions were created by the author to directly answer the research questions. An informed consent was gathered by asking respondents to actively consent to an initial item on the survey. See Appendix B for the consent form. The first two questions of the survey used a Likert scale and the subsequent four questions of the survey were open ended. Refer to Appendix C for the survey. The survey was not piloted. Table 2 shows the survey questions.

Table 2. Survey Questions.

| Survey Questions   |
|--|
| 1. How important are these characteristics in a good counselor?                            |
| 2. How important are these characteristics in a good leader?                               |
| 3. What are some specific activities you use in staff training to teach leadership skills? |
| 4. What are some specific activities you use in teen programs to teach leadership skills?  |
| 5. What are the goals of your teen leadership programs?                                    |
| 6. What counselor skills do you teach in your teen leadership programs?                    |

### **Rating Counselor and Leader Characteristics**

Question one asked participants to rate the importance of 16 characteristics in a good counselor. Question two included the same characteristics and asked participants to rate their importance in a good leader. The rating was on a five-point Likert scale with 1 being not at all important, 2 being slightly important, 3 being moderately important, 4 being important, and 5 being very important. The goal was to find out which leadership characteristics camps think are most important for being a good counselor and leader.

The characteristics were chosen based on the qualifications, responsibilities, and character traits of camp counselors (Aycock, K., 2009; Benson, M.D.; Goldberg, J.A., & Brownwell, C.L.; Brandwein, M., 2003; Cassidy, R., & Bemiss, H., 1935; Cronin, G., 2004; Dimock, H.S., & Hendry, C.E., 1947; Hartwig, M.D., 1962; LaFave, R., & Buck

Loughran, S., 2001; Ledlie, J.A., & Holbein, F.W., 1946; Ott, E.T., 1964). The 16 characteristics were communication, compassion, confidence, courage, decisiveness, determination, development, flexibility, honesty, integrity, leadership, motivating, passion, responsibility, team-building, and values. These are characteristics, or qualities, not skills or tasks with explicit observable behaviors.

### **Staff Training and Teen Program Activities**

Question three asked participants to list some specific activities they used to teach leadership skills during camp staff training. Question four asked the same information about teen programs. Both questions were open ended. The goal was to compile a list of typical activities camps use during staff training and in their teen programs to specifically target leadership skills.

### **Goals of Teen Programs**

Question five asked participants to share the goals of their teen leadership programs. The question was open ended. The goal was to get an idea of the missions or philosophies of the teen leadership programs at each summer camp.

### **Counselor Skills in Teen Programs**

Question six asked participants to share which counselor skills they teach in their teen leadership programs. The question was open ended. The goal was to collect a list of which counselor skills camps teach in their teen leadership programs.

### **Analysis**

The results of questions one and two were graphed to visually present which characteristics were most highly prioritized across all camps. The characteristics receiving six or more ratings of 5 were considered the most important leadership

characteristics for counselors and leaders. The two lists of most important leadership characteristics were then compared to find shared characteristics that the camps rated highest for both counselor and leader. Next, the results were compared in bar graph formats. The leadership characteristics with a difference of two or fewer ratings were considered the most similar.

Question five received the most diverse answers. The responses of each camp were kept separate as their goals were distinctive. Responses for question five were displayed in a table.

The responses for questions three, four, and six were each compiled. The data was classified using open coding procedures. Responses were coded according to phrases that represented a main idea. Six categories were created for questions three and four to order data. Five categories were created for question six. Major themes related to leader and counselor responsibilities, skills, and qualities. Then the categories created for questions three, four, and six were compared.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **ANALYSIS**

#### **Overview**

Eleven of the 29 camps replied to the emailed survey. Camps with completed surveys were sponsored by various organizations and values including the Baptist denomination, the Boy Scouts of America, Christian values, the Girl Scouts of the USA, Quaker traditions, youth program for children from underserved neighborhoods, and the YMCA. The researcher was aware that there was not a sufficient percent of return to make any confident claims. Result analyses were made with significant caution. Three of the 29 camps replied but did not complete the emailed survey. Reasons for not completing the survey included that the director was not available to complete and return the survey; the camp no longer provided any specifically leadership-oriented programs; and that the camp wanted to participate but did not return the survey. Eight completed surveys were received from the sample group from which to draw results. Eighteen camps sent no reply. The research project results were based on the eight participants with completed surveys.

#### **Results**

##### **Question One: Rating Counselor Characteristics**

The first question asked participants to rate the level of importance of 16 leadership characteristics in a good counselor. The most important leadership

characteristics of a good counselor were Flexibility and Honesty followed by Integrity and Responsibility. See Figure 1 for overall counselor characteristic rankings.

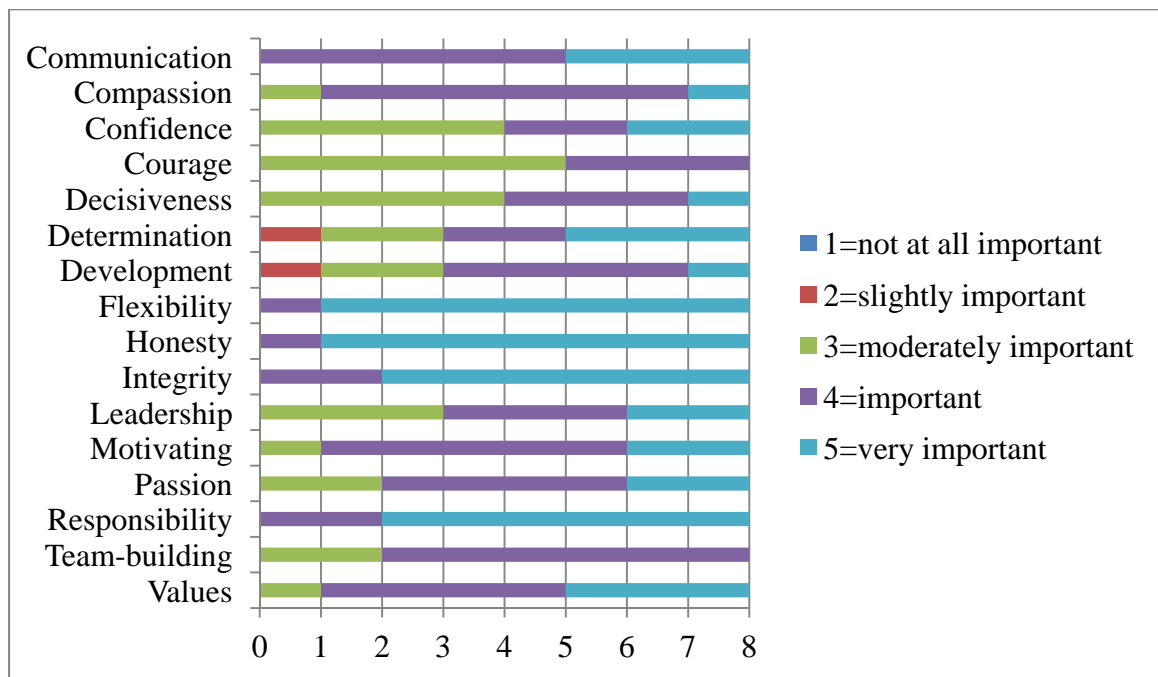


Figure 1. Rating Importance of Counselor Leadership Characteristics

### Question Two: Rating Leader Characteristics

The second question asked participants to rate the level of importance of 16 leadership characteristics in a good leader. The most important leadership characteristics of a good leader were Honesty and Integrity followed by Leadership, Responsibility, and Values, and then Passion and Communication. See Figure 2 for overall leader characteristic rankings.

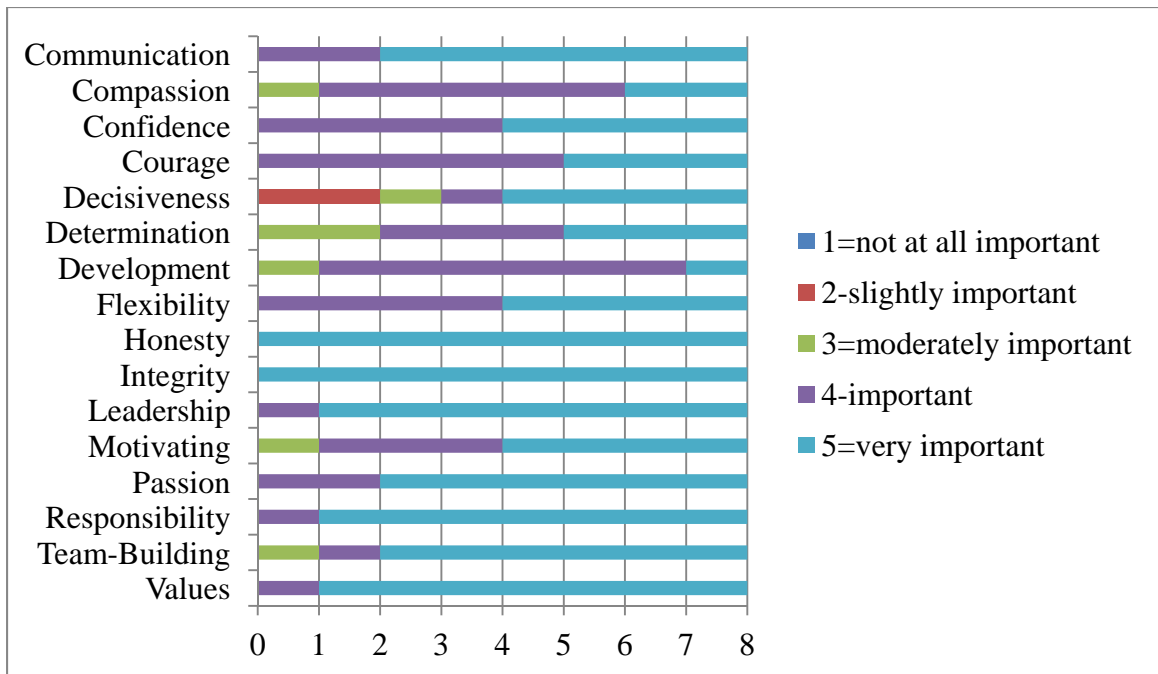


Figure 2. Rating Importance of Leader Characteristics

### Comparison of Counselor and Leader Characteristics

Questions one and two rated the same 16 leadership characteristics. Figures 3 through 18 compare how the camps rated the importance of each characteristic for counselors and leaders. Overall, the leadership characteristics with the most similar ratings between counselor and leader characteristics were Compassion, Honesty, and Responsibility followed by Determination, Integrity, and Motivating. The other 10 characteristics Communication, Confidence, Courage, Decisiveness, Development, Flexibility, Leadership, Passion, Team-Building, and Values differed more greatly between the two comparison groups.



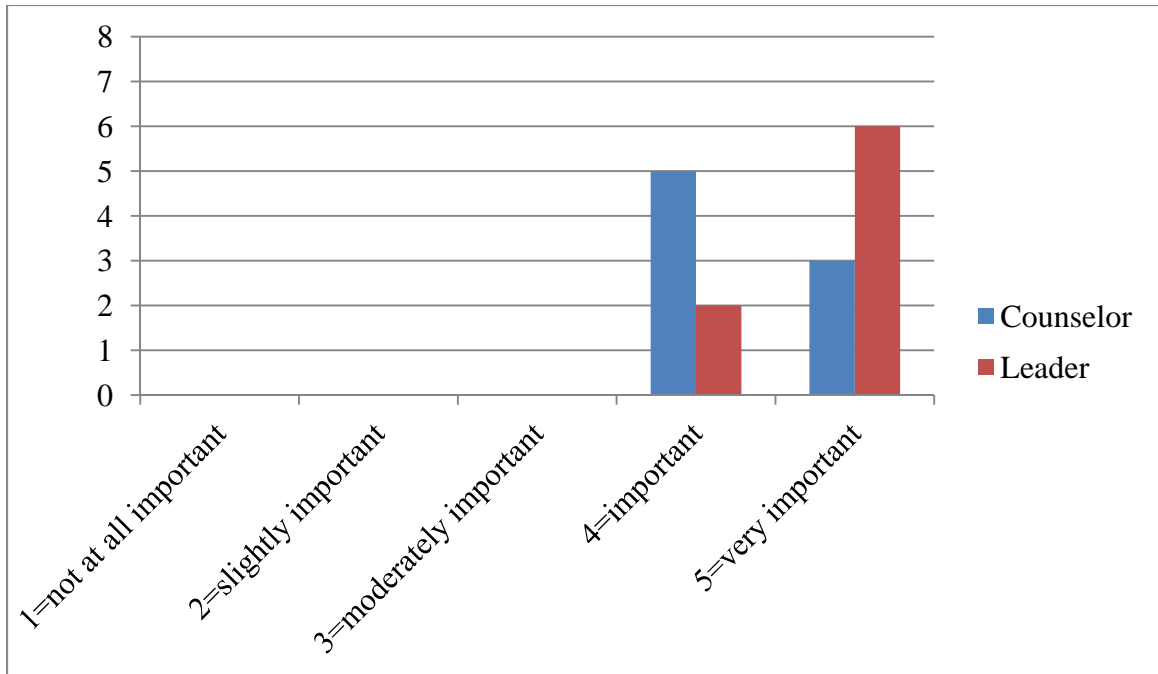


Figure 3. Importance of Communication

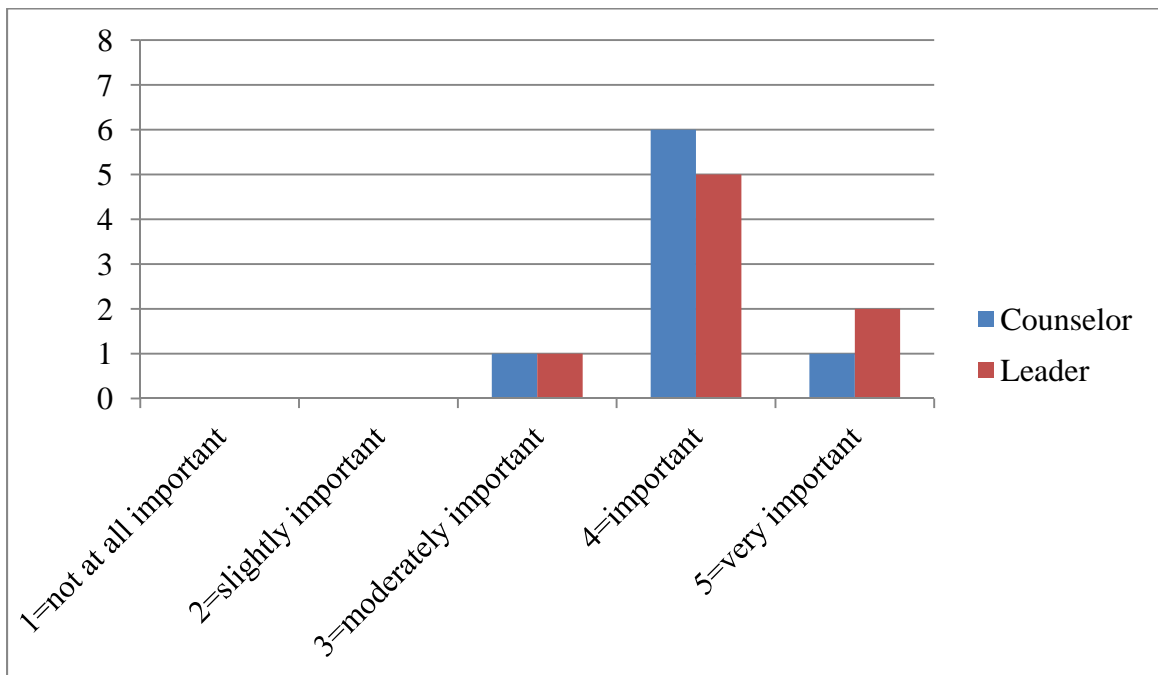


Figure 4. Importance of Compassion

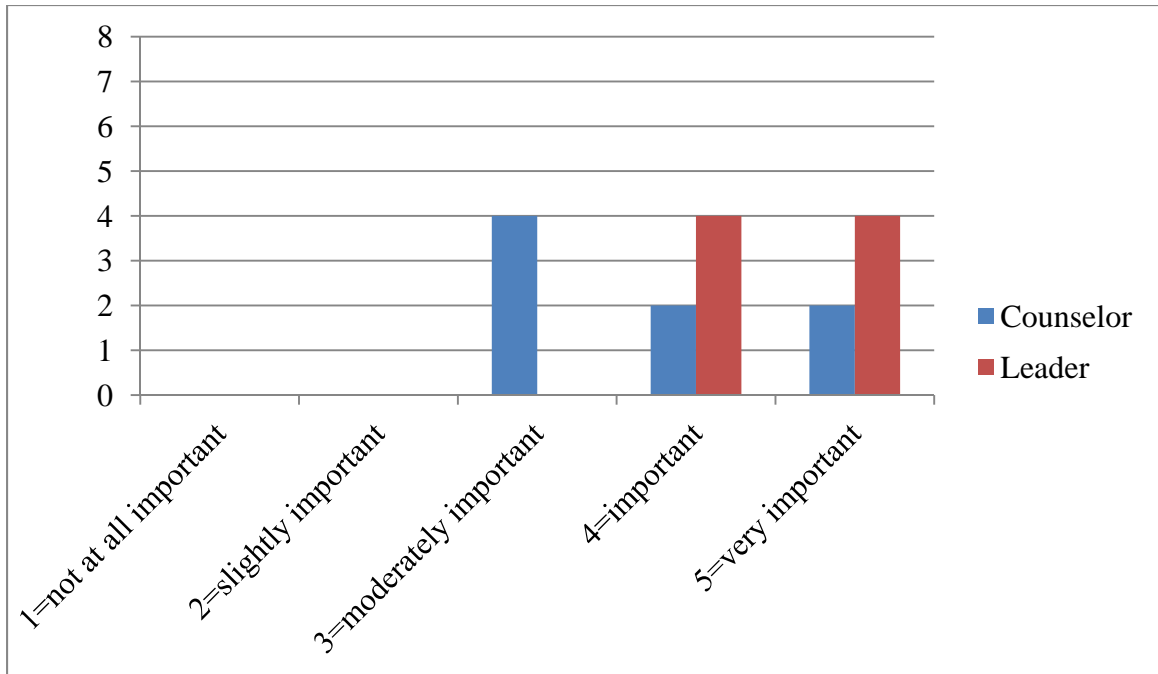


Figure 5. Importance of Confidence

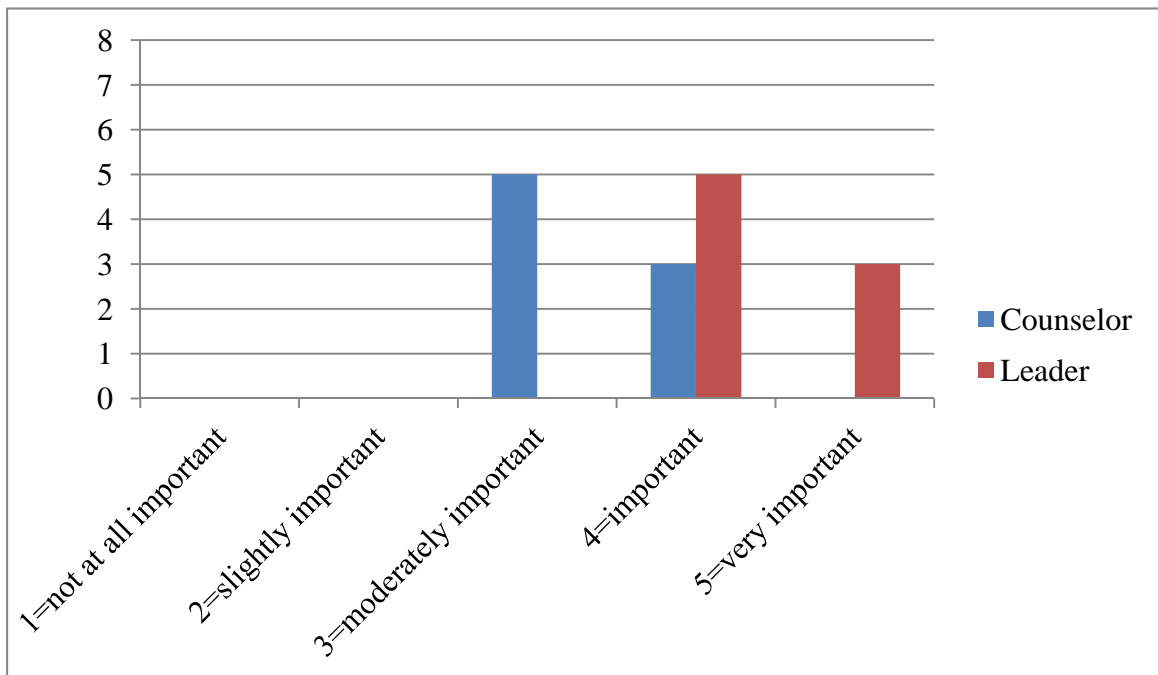


Figure 6. Importance of Courage

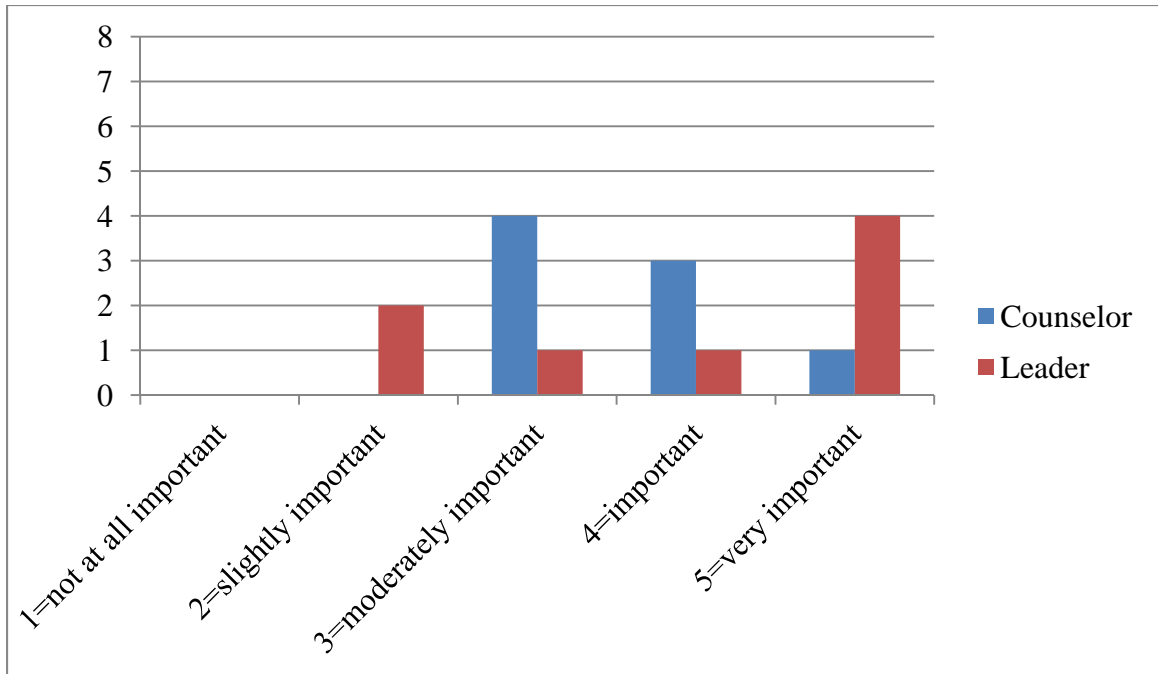


Figure 7. Importance of Decisiveness

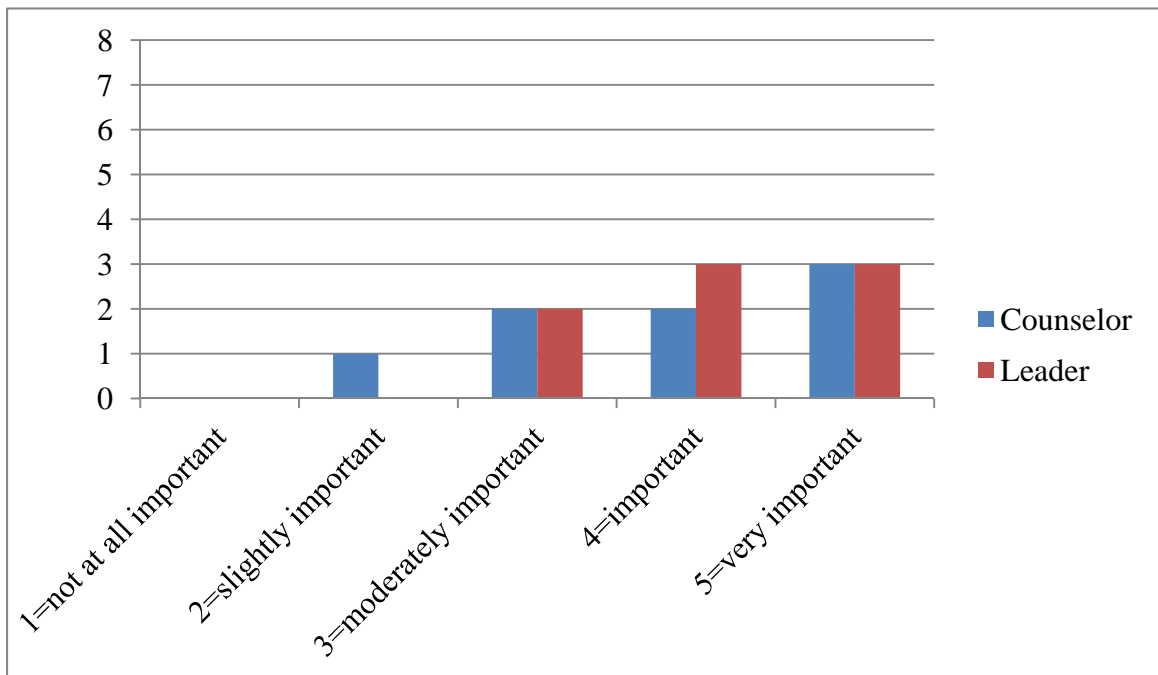


Figure 8. Importance of Determination

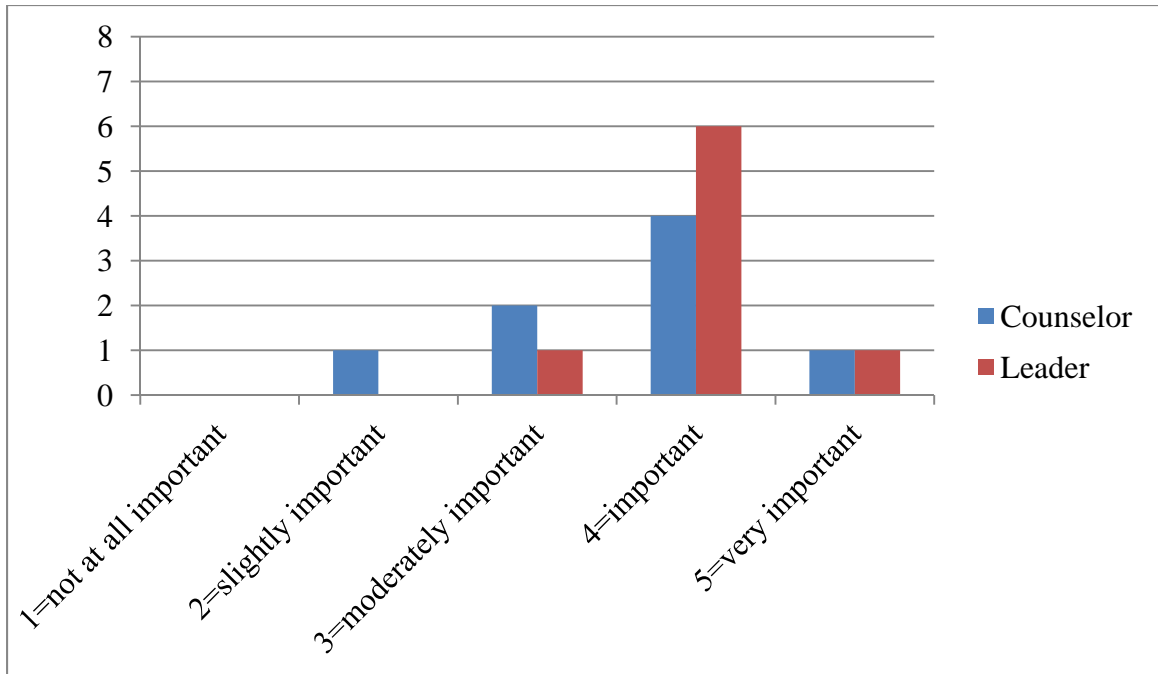


Figure 9. Importance of Development

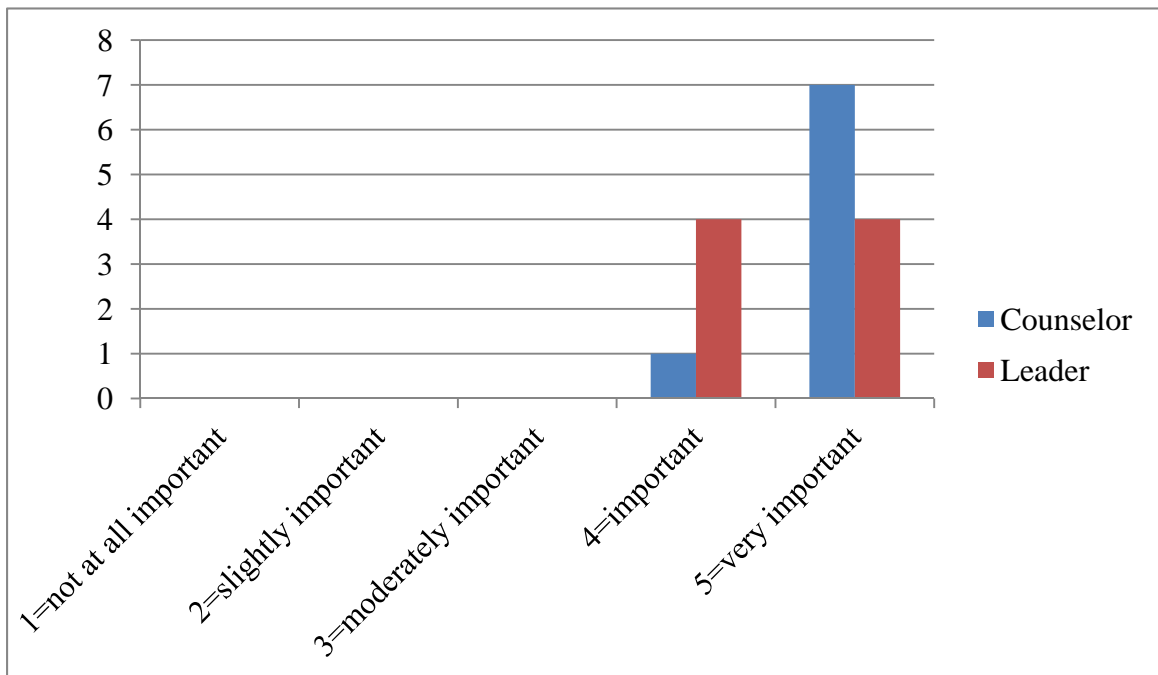


Figure 10. Importance of Flexibility

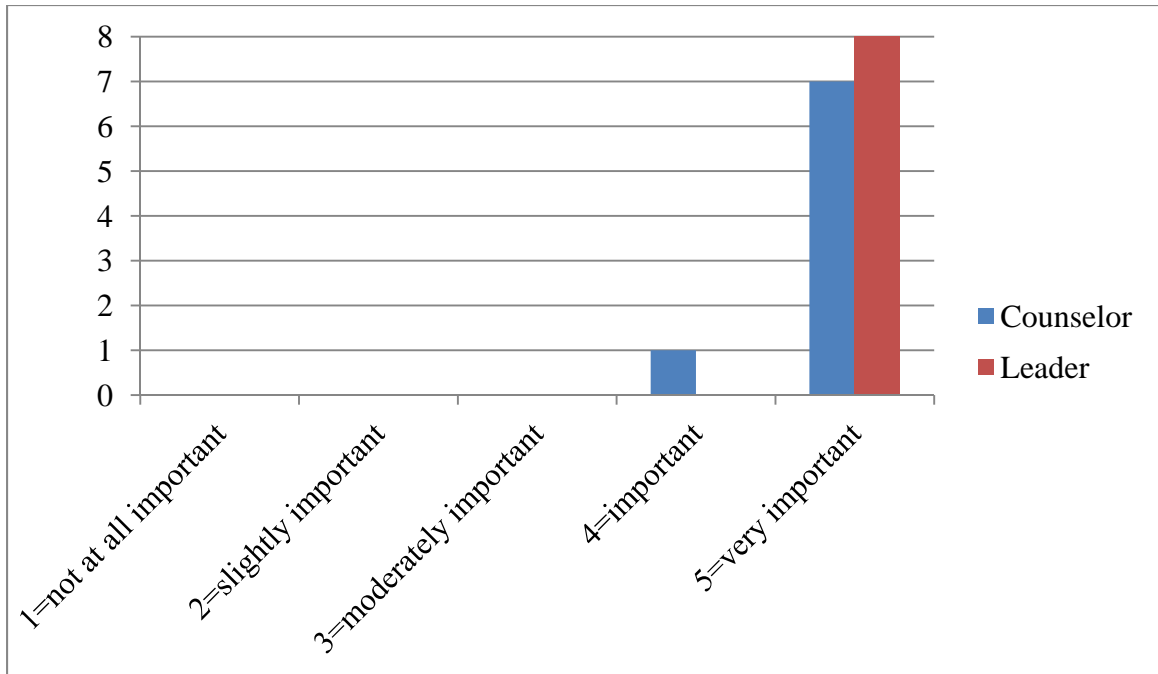


Figure 11. Importance of Honesty

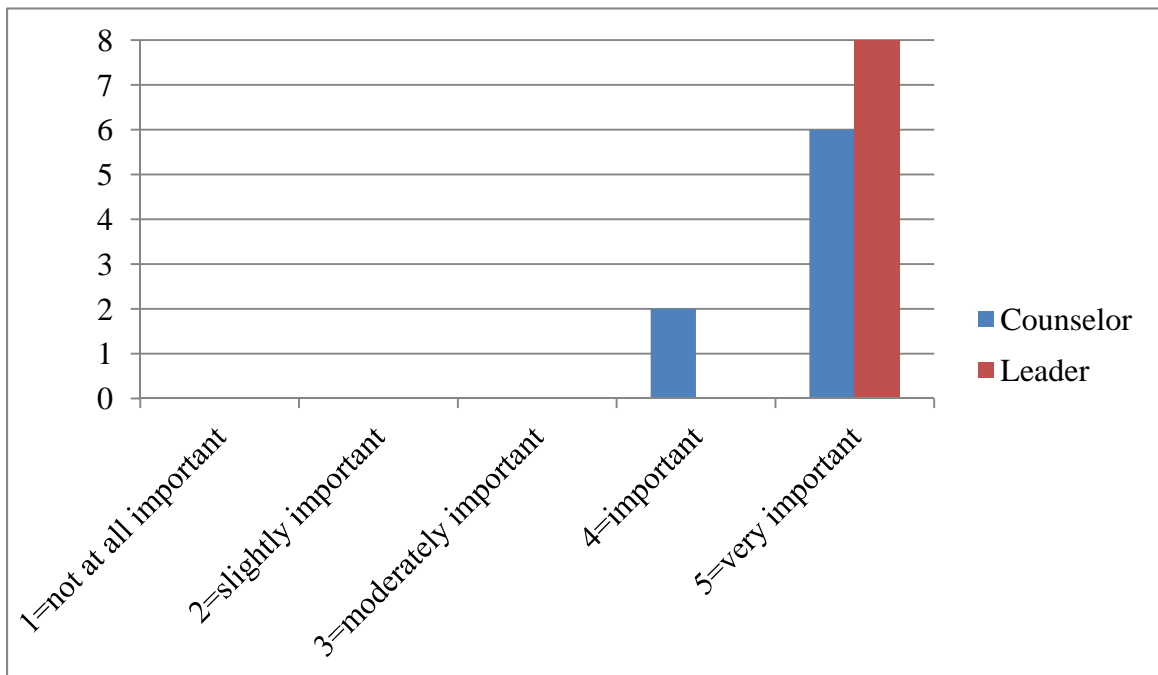


Figure 12. Importance of Integrity

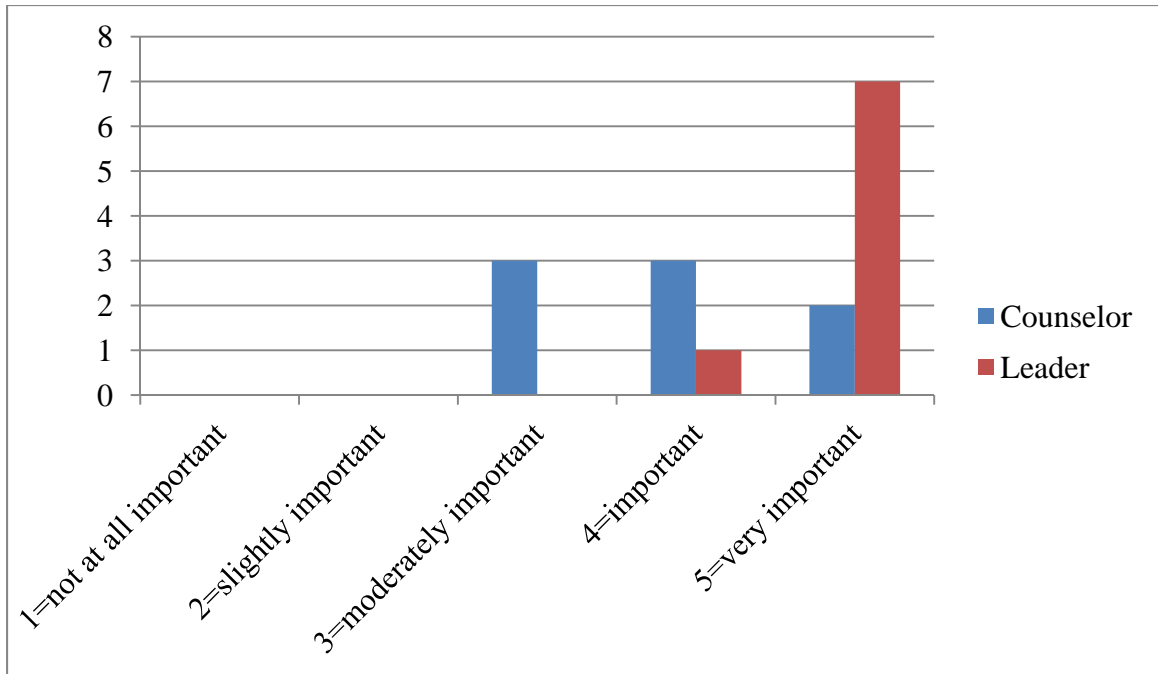


Figure 13. Importance of Leadership

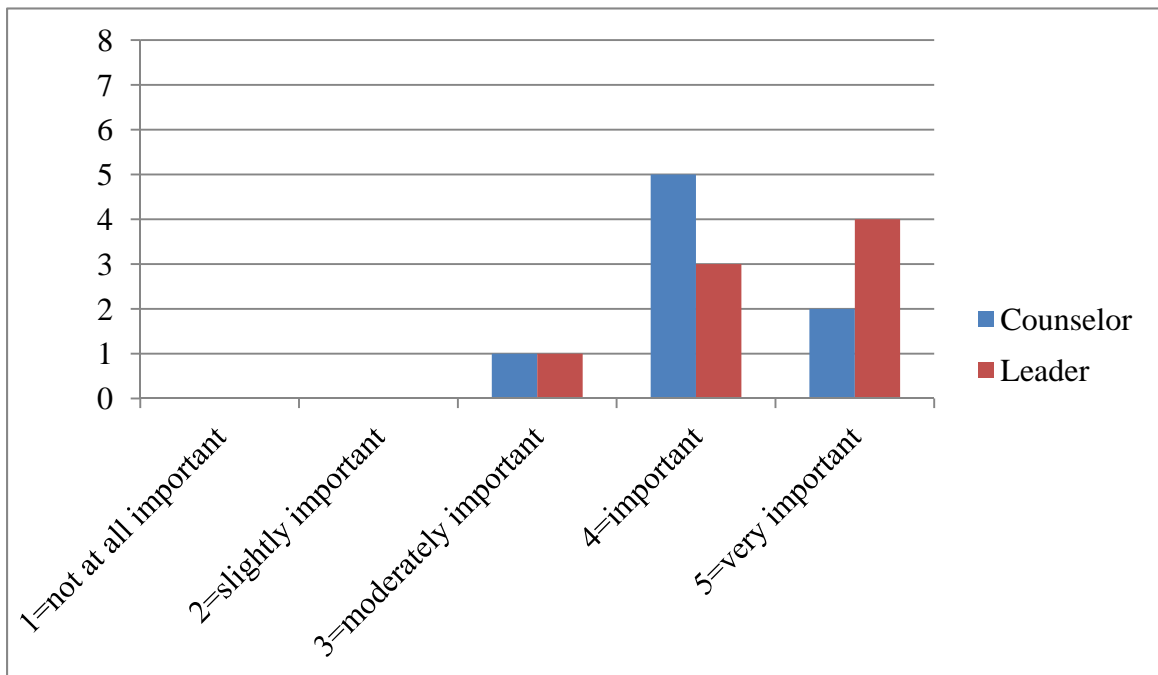


Figure 14. Importance of Motivating

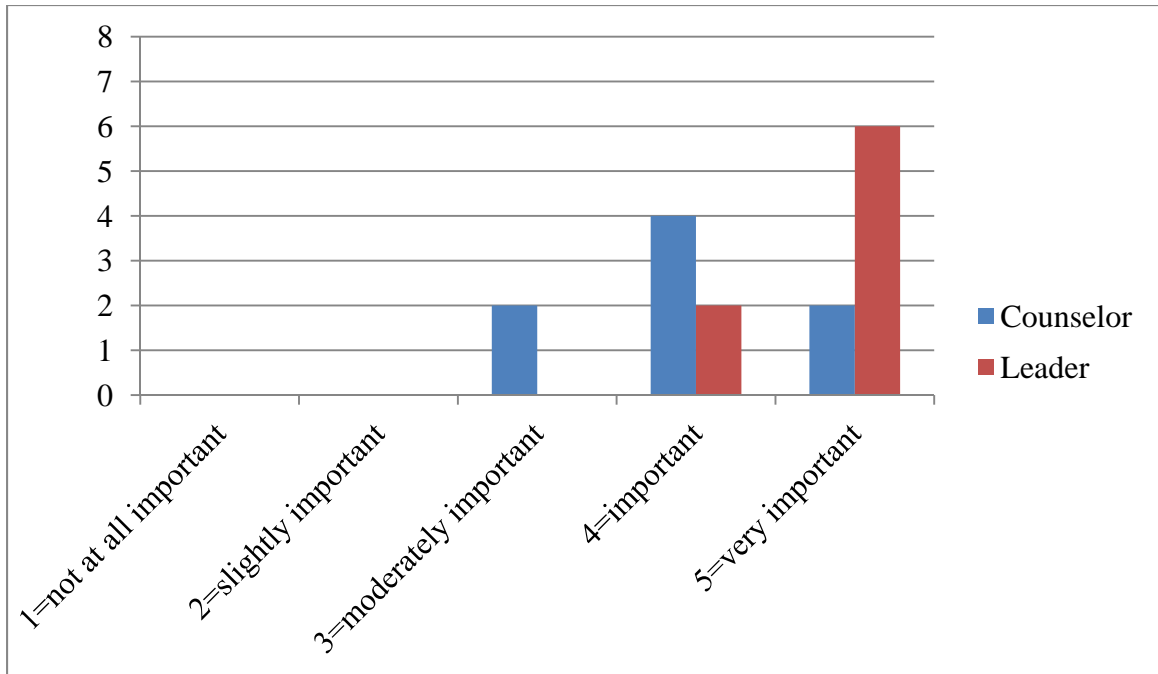


Figure 15. Importance of Passion

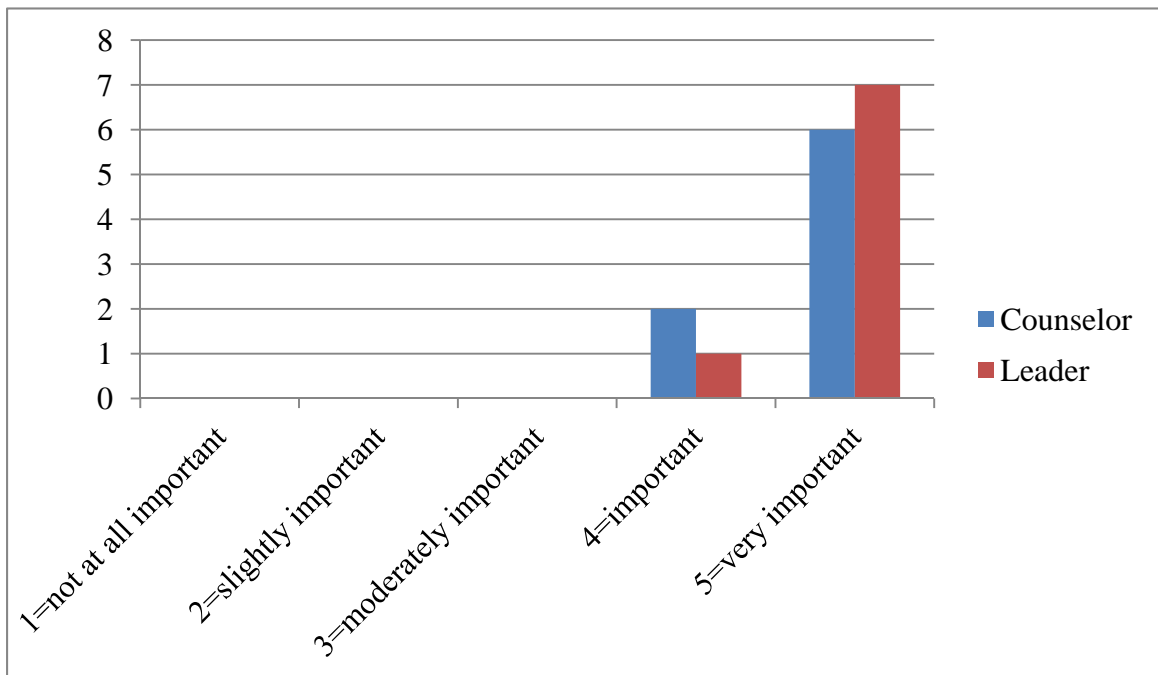


Figure 16. Importance of Responsibility

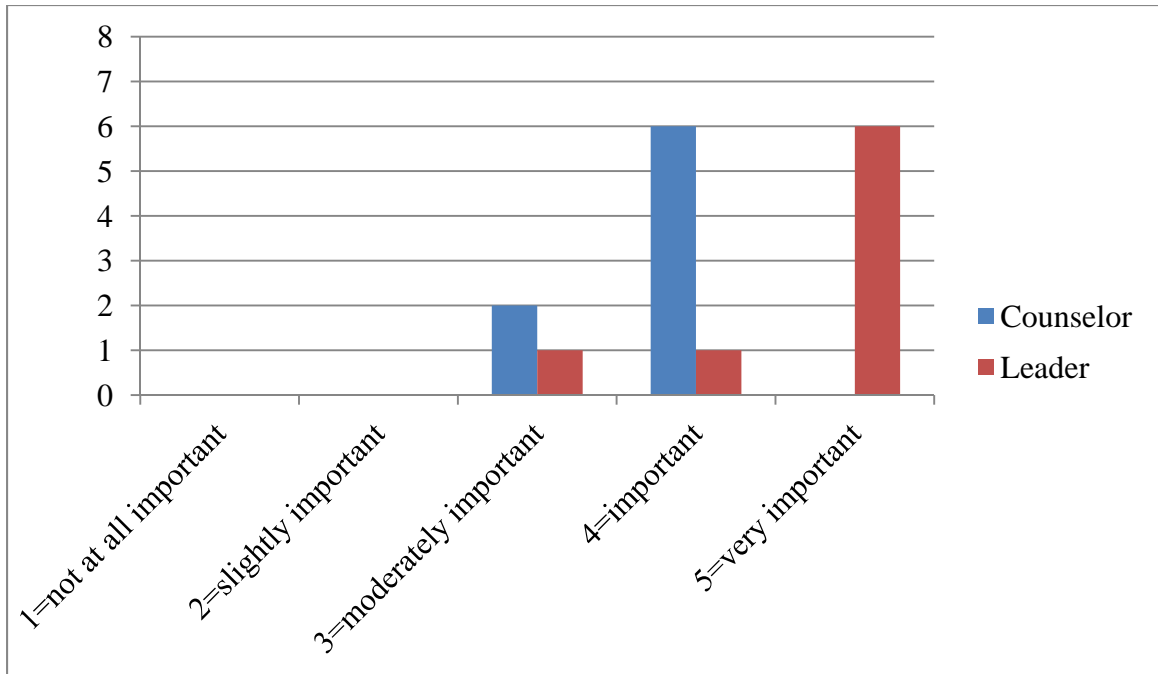


Figure 17. Importance of Team-building

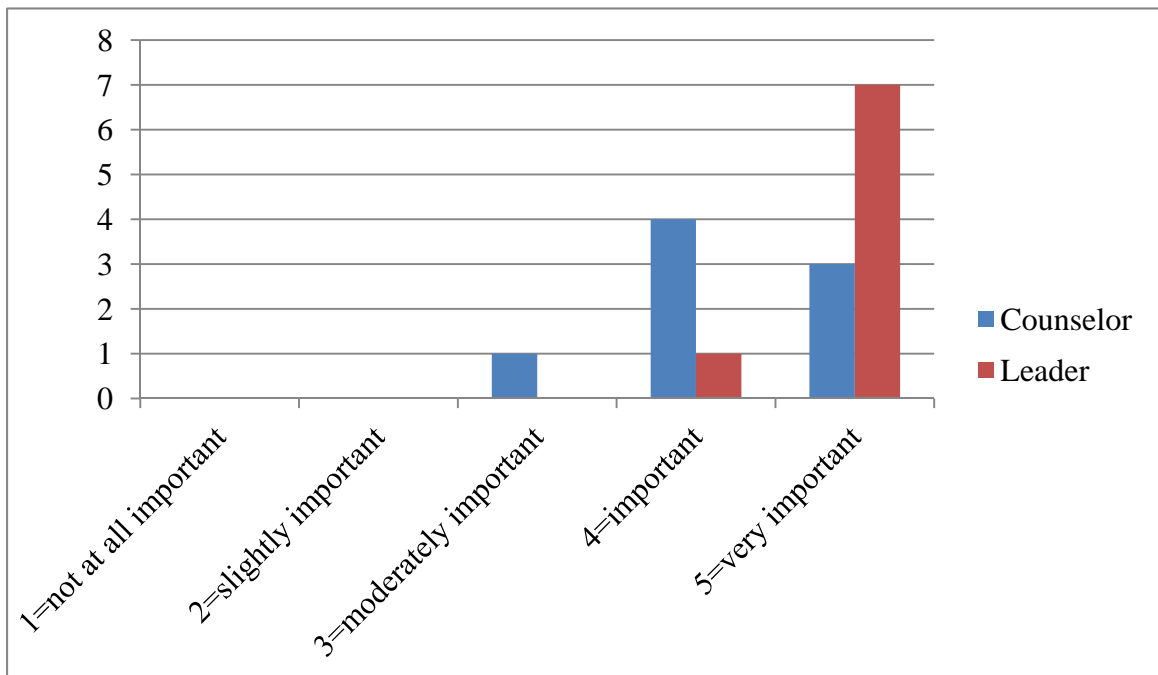


Figure 18. Importance of Values



### Question Three: Staff Training Activities

Question three asked for examples of specific activities the camps used in staff training in order to teach leadership skills. The responses were divided into six categories of staff training: leadership, team-building, counselor duties, situational training, working with campers, and service. Figure 19 shows the six staff training categories. Table 3 shows the responses within each staff training category.

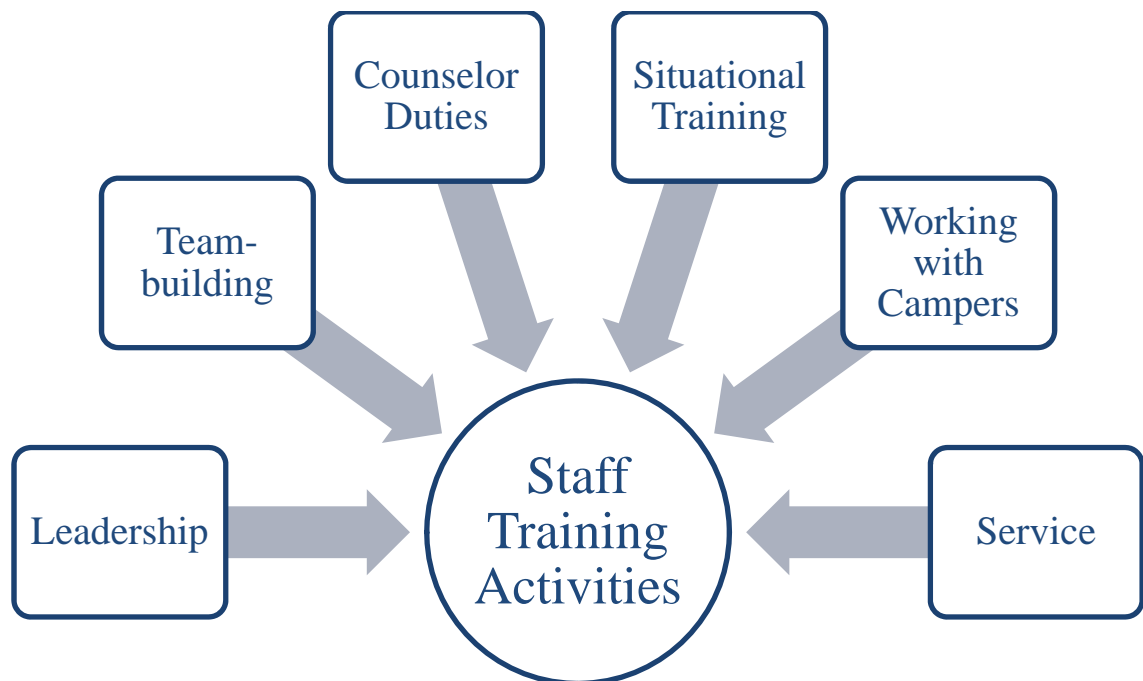


Figure 19. Activities to Teach Leadership in Staff Training

Table 3. Responses within Staff Training Activity Categories

| Category   | Responses  |
|------------|--|
| Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• assign a different person to lead each task</li><li>• each staff member leads one of the training hikes and each leads an activity to demonstrate how it's done</li><li>• kapers [cleaning chores] with different leaders</li><li>• leadership lesson</li><li>• small tasks that must be completed</li><li>• so many of the qualities are already present (their personality and how they were brought up), and we then reinforce that (i.e., integrity, honesty, values, and courage)</li></ul> |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Team-building        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boundary Breaking</li> <li>• low ropes course/team builders</li> <li>• paired with another staff member that they don't often work with</li> <li>• problem solving (e.g., canoe building)</li> <li>• staff training throughout the Spring plus one full week before camp starts</li> <li>• team building (e.g., staff training caving trip, and exercises for communication)</li> </ul>   |
| Counselor Duties     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all volunteer staff attend a weekend training to prepare them for service at camp</li> <li>• cookouts</li> <li>• creek hopping</li> <li>• emergency procedures</li> <li>• First Aide/CPR training</li> <li>• one week of summer staff training</li> <li>• scheduling</li> <li>• specific job or programming training that help build the confidence, motivating, responsibility</li> <li>• tripping</li> <li>• two week Foundation Camp where they are trained and equipped to serve at camp</li> </ul> |
| Situational Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behind Closed Doors (i.e., staff role play as campers)</li> <li>• clientele is wide and varies much in age and camping experience</li> <li>• family camp</li> <li>• open house</li> <li>• role play scenarios of familiar or likely camp situations</li> <li>• Teacher Training (i.e., role play and feedback sessions)</li> </ul>  |
| Working with Campers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-2-3 Step Discipline</li> <li>• behavior management</li> <li>• how to connect with our camper population</li> <li>• offer workshops on presentations to groups and public speaking</li> <li>• present and discuss the characteristics of the many age groups we serve</li> </ul>   |
| Service              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all Leadership principles are derived from the truth of God's Word</li> <li>• service</li> <li>• teaching from God's Word the Bible</li> <li>• work projects for people in need</li> </ul>  |

#### Question Four: Teen Program Activities

Question four asked for examples of specific activities the camps used in teen programs in order to teach leadership skills. The responses were divided into six categories of teen leadership training: leadership, team-building, counselor duties, situational training, reflection, and service. Figure 20 shows the six categories. Table 4 shows the responses within each teen leadership program category.

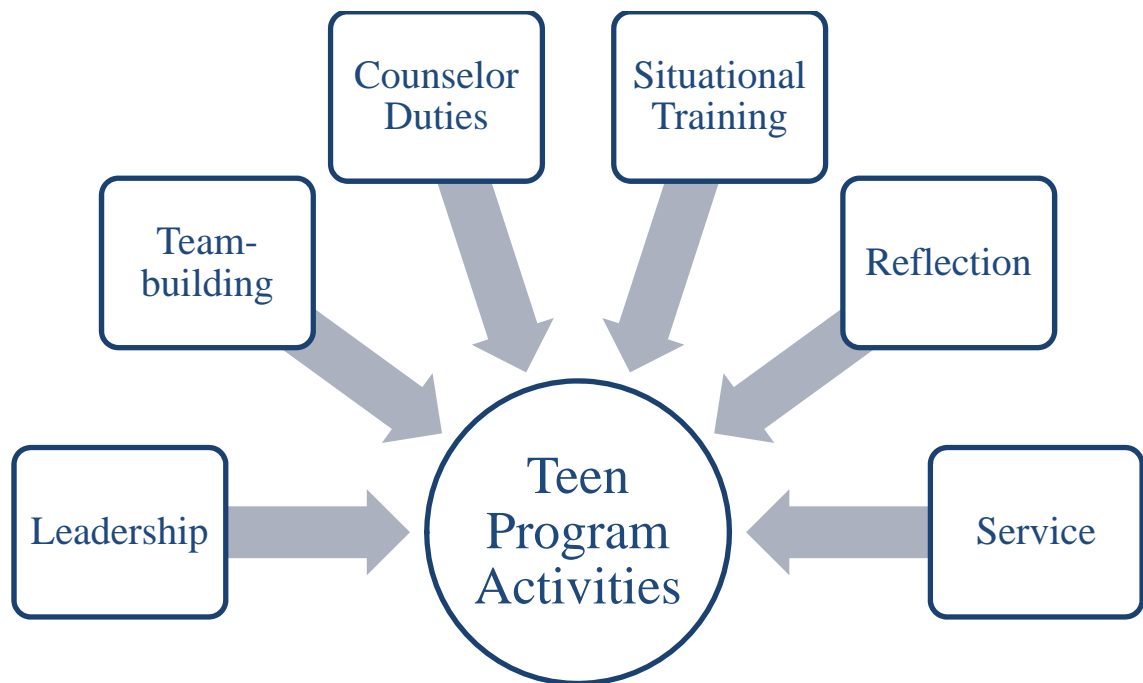


Figure 20. Activities to Teach Leadership in Teen Programs

Table 4. Responses within Teen Program Activity Categories

| Category   | Responses  |
|------------|--|
| Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• getting others to participate</li><li>• implementation of the Patrol Method youth leadership curriculum of the Boy Scouts of America</li><li>• kapers with different leaders</li><li>• Leader of the Day (i.e., teens take turns leading peer group like the counselor does)</li><li>• Leadership is Influence (i.e., influence is making a difference in someone's life)</li><li>• leadership lesson</li><li>• one week of National Youth Leadership Training</li></ul> |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Team-building        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• group work projects</li> <li>• low ropes course</li> <li>• problem solving (e.g., canoe building)</li> <li>• teaching through the Challenge Course elements</li> <li>• team building (e.g., staff training caving trip)</li> </ul>  |
| Counselor Duties     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• behavior management</li> <li>• cleaning up</li> <li>• cooking</li> <li>• cookouts</li> <li>• creek hopping</li> <li>• emergency procedures</li> <li>• First Aide/CPR training</li> <li>• job skills training (e.g., maintenance facility tasks and garden/horse assistantships)</li> <li>• programming areas, as everyone must work together for success</li> <li>• scheduling</li> <li>• tripping</li> </ul> |
| Situational Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• open house</li> <li>• teacher training followed by immediate opportunity to apply skills while teaching games with younger campers</li> <li>• trying new things and being positively encouraged</li> </ul>  |
| Reflection           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create an atmosphere of learning that we hope encourages them to think and learn and, hopefully, inquire about future staff positions</li> <li>• many of these elements are taught in our chapel sessions and reinforced then through small group discussions and living daily life at camp together</li> <li>• one on one evaluation</li> <li>• SMART goal training</li> </ul>                               |
| Service              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by humbling oneself and seeking the needs of others the individual then becomes effective at impacting other people's lives</li> <li>• service, service, service</li> <li>• the core of Servant Leadership is getting the individual to take their eyes off of their own needs and place them on the needs of others</li> </ul>   |

### **Comparison of Staff Training and Teen Program Activities**

Questions three and four each asked for specific activities the camps use to teach leadership skills in their staff training and teen programs. Five of the six categories were

the same for staff training and teen leadership training: leadership, team-building, counselor duties, situational training, and service. The sixth category of each was different: working with campers or reflection. From the camp responses, it was concluded that the staff training focused more on teaching staff how to work with, relate to, and respond to campers. On the other hand, the teen leadership training focused more on personal and group reflection.

Two camps stated that the teen programs did not cover subjects in as much detail as staff training. One camp stated that they had no “teen” program for preparing campers to become counselors. One camp described the progression of its teen programs was from being an aide or assisting into leading. This difference was attributed to the desire of camps to train staff to do their daily jobs and their desire to develop future leaders in the participants of their teen leadership programs.

#### **Question Five: Goals of Teen Programs**

The fifth question asked for the goals of the teen leadership programs. This question prompted a variety of answers. The variations were attributed to the difference in the missions of each camp’s supporting organization. The diverse youth and community organizations have some similar core values but have different focuses. They want to give youth the opportunity to develop as leaders and individuals, but have different agendas that influence the way they teach. Table 5 shows the responses from the eight camps.

Table 5. Goals of Teen Leadership Programs

|   |
|---|
| To prepare young men to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.       |
| To produce high quality counselors where their focus is safety, fun and education. I also want them to develop self-confidence and awareness. |

|   |
|---|
| We have very minimal staff and no “teen” program as such. In our activities we try to create an atmosphere of learning that we hope encourages them to think and learn and, hopefully, inquire about future staff positions.  |
| To make strong youth leaders that then creates strong Troops and Venture Crews when they get back home.   |
| To develop soft and hard skills so our young leaders will succeed in the workplace. To have our teens become mentors and teachers for our younger campers. Each teen leader can create and reach personal and professional goals.   |
| Service. Have them work side by side with our staff to see firsthand how to impact people’s lives.  |
| To give students a chance to serve behind the scenes, learn about what it takes to work at camp, and develop in a small group of students - team work, flexibility, confidence, communication, compassion, and to serve in a Christ-like way – representing Jesus and pointing people to Him. |
| Our teen leadership programs (“helpers”) try to develop a sense of responsibility and consistency. The Helpers are washing dishes, assisting in the kitchen and assisting the counselors in cabins.   |

### **Question Six: Counselor Skills in Teen Programs**

The sixth question asked what counselor skills the camps teach in their teen leadership programs. The responses were divided into five categories of counselor skills: working with campers, communication, counselor duties, critical thinking, and leadership. Three of the categories coincided with the categories for questions three and four about activities used to teach leadership skills: working with campers, counselor duties, and leadership. The communication and critical thinking skills could be skills taught in the context of other activity categories such as situational training and team-building. The sets of categories were related, but because two relate to activities and one relates to skills, they could not be compared directly. Figure 21 shows the five categories. Table 6 shows the activities in each counselor skill category.

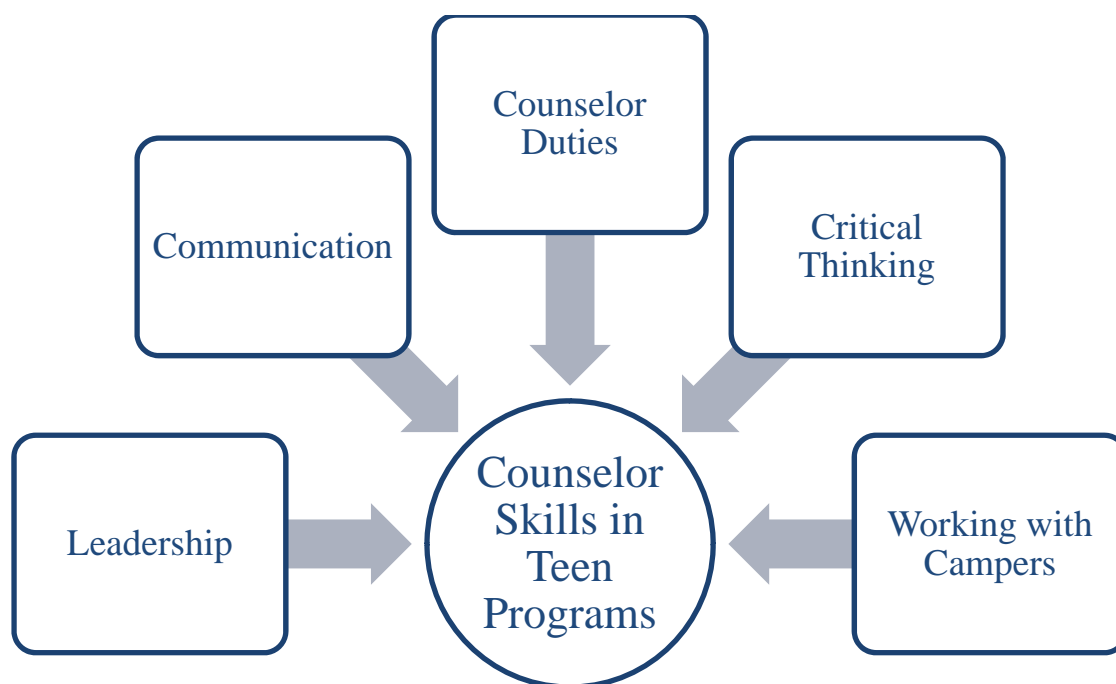


Figure 21. Counselor Skills Taught in Teen Programs

Table 6. Activities for Counselor Skills in Teen Programs

| Category          | Activities  |
|-------------------|---|
| Leadership        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• acting kindly and for the benefit of others</li> <li>• compassion, integrity, and responsibility</li> <li>• encourage and lead those that are counseling</li> <li>• leadership of activities</li> <li>• leading by example</li> <li>• looking out for and acting on the behalf of those younger and less able than yourself</li> </ul> |
| Communication     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adult interaction</li> <li>• communication</li> <li>• effective listening</li> </ul>   |
| Counselor Duties  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• basic camping skills</li> <li>• Bible teaching</li> <li>• camp schedule</li> <li>• emergency procedures (Interns only)</li> <li>• First Aid/CPR/AED training (Interns only)</li> <li>• organizational skills</li> <li>• time management</li> </ul>   |
| Critical Thinking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conflict resolution</li> <li>• foreshadowing events</li> <li>• problem solving</li> <li>• seeing and anticipating the needs of those around us</li> </ul>  |

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|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
|                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• team building</li> </ul>  |
| Working with Campers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• behavior management</li> <li>• camper characteristics by age</li> <li>• classroom management</li> <li>• effective teaching</li> <li>• giving instructions in steps</li> <li>• helpers who show enough maturity can plan and lead occasional activities with a counselor present</li> <li>• how to call a group to attention</li> <li>• promoting positive behavior (e.g., use names and recognize positive behavior)</li> <li>• Teacher Training (i.e., camp curriculum I.P.A. (Instruct, Practice, Assess))</li> </ul> |

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Additional comments focused on leading by example and methods of teaching counselor skills. They stated that leaders cannot try to teach in one way and act different; they must know the materials well enough to live them. Methods of teaching included modeling behavior and leadership, and mentoring. Other methods include first-hand demonstrations, one-on-ones, and challenging staff throughout the summer. Summer camps noted that training doesn't end at staff training. Instead, training is an ongoing process throughout the summer, and in some cases for years, as staff members grow and consistently invest in others.

### **Summary**

In conclusion, the study related which leadership characteristics Midwestern summer camps think are important. Camp leaders rated the importance of these characteristics highest: Compassion, Honesty, Responsibility, Determination, Integrity, and Motivating. The study also showed activities the camps use to teach leadership skills as well as what counselor skills they focus on in their teen leadership programs. Camps responded that they teach leadership skills by team-building activities, situational training, training for counselor duties, reflection, and service. Teen leadership programs



focused on these counselor skills: leadership, communication, critical thinking, and working with campers. Furthermore, the study results showed the goals of each teen leadership program. The variety of goals for teen programs included encouraging learning, developing life skills, engaging in service work, and being mentored by staff.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **Overview**

The purpose of this study was to determine what leadership characteristics summer camps think are important for leaders and counselors. Another goal was to establish how leadership characteristics are taught within teen leadership programs. The major findings showed that the importance of leadership characteristics varied among camps. Furthermore, teen program goals differed, and while the activities used to teach leadership and counselor skills varied, leadership programs taught similar skills.

#### **Limitations**

The sample group consisted of camp directors or program directors from 29 summer camps within approximately a 130 mile radius of La Crosse, WI. The sample size was based on the number of summer camps located within the research area. The research area limited the number of camps available to study. It also did not have an evenly distributed amount of camps from the various sponsoring organizations. Sponsoring organizations included church-based groups of an assortment of denominations, and youth groups such as Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the USA, and YMCA.

Sending surveys toward the end of the summer had positive and negative effects. The positive outcomes were that the summer programs were still fresh in the minds of the

directors who responded. The negative outcomes were that directors were busy with camp responsibilities and some camps were no longer in session.

### **Implications**

The survey results showed similarities and differences between the importance of leadership characteristics for counselors and leaders. The most important leadership characteristics for counselors and leaders were similar. Camp directors can focus on developing the same skills and use the same training activities to achieve positive results in counselor responsibilities and leadership skills within their staff. The activities camps use to teach leadership skills in staff training and teen programs were similar.

Additionally, teen leadership programs teach the same counselor skills that staff members learn at pre-camp training. Camp directors can modify staff training techniques and information for teen participants rather than creating an entirely separate curriculum.

However, the goals of teen leadership programs vary greatly among summer camps. Regardless of the strategies camps use to teach counselor and leader skills in their teen programs, the program goals affect the outcome of the program. Camp leaders can align the different aspects of staff training and teen leadership programs to their overall camp philosophy and specific program goals.

### **Recommendations**

After analyzing and reviewing the results of the survey, there are several recommendations for summer camps. Additional recommendations are for leadership programs within schools. Furthermore, many recommendations for future studies in this area are proposed. Some suggestions are to change aspects of the survey. Additional suggestions relate to data collection and result analyses.

## **Recommendations for Summer Camps**

One suggestion for summer camps is to prioritize the leadership characteristics they think are most important. During staff training and teen leadership programs camps should include explicit information and offer opportunities to practice skills for those characteristics. Camps should determine what activities and strategies will best support the development of those leadership characteristics.

A second recommendation for summer camps is to identify their goals for teen leadership programs. Camps should emphasize those objectives within the counselor and leader skills they teach. They can individualize the skills they teach for each leadership characteristic to align with their program goals.

## **Recommendations for School Leadership Programs**

One suggestion for school leadership programs is to identify the goals of the program. Also, they should identify specific leadership characteristics that are important to develop in youth. Important leadership characteristics might be similar to those that are important to camp leaders. School programs can focus on developing those specific characteristics and align them with their program goals.

A second suggestion for school leadership programs is to identify specific skills for each leadership characteristic. In order to achieve positive results, schools need to focus on tangible skills and provide opportunities for youth to develop the leadership characteristics. Rather than desiring a leadership quality, planning and teaching explicit skills will support youth in identifying words and actions that exemplify the desired leadership characteristics.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

In reference to the survey questions one and two, one camp suggested that the term “development” be “mature” or “maturity”. That suggestion implies that the term “development” might be too broad or ambiguous to be considered a leadership characteristic. For future research, the term “development” should be more clearly defined. The term “maturity” might be clearer and more suitable in the context of leadership characteristics. However, the term “growth” might also be used to indicate consistent change and improvement.

One suggestion is to break down questions three, four, and six into categories similar to the ones made when analyzing the research data. For question three the categories might include leadership, team-building, counselor duties, situational training, working with campers, and service. For question four the categories might include leadership, team-building, counselor duties, situational training, reflection, and service. For question six the categories might include working with campers, communication, counselor duties, critical thinking, and leadership. These categories would provide specific areas for the camps to focus their answers. The specific categories would prompt more detailed responses as to what skills camps teach and what kinds of activities they use to teach each skill.

In addition to asking what counselor skills the camps teach in their teen leadership programs in question six, a recommendation is to ask what leadership characteristics the camps teach. This would relate to questions one and two, but more clearly pinpoint what characteristics the camps aim to teach the teen participants. The answers might be less qualitative like questions one and two which could be influenced by the bias of the

person completing the survey. The results then would more concretely show which leadership characteristics the summer camp as a whole organization feels is important for training leaders.

A third recommendation is to study more specific groups of camps according to the type of youth organization that sponsors their activities and philosophy. This might narrow the responses to questions and provide a more definite example of what and how the different types of teen leadership programs teach. Although the sponsoring youth organizations have similar core values in terms of preparing future leaders, their approaches to camp, leadership, and leadership training are different.

A fourth suggestion for future research is to look more into the goals of the teen leadership programs of each camp in relation to the goals of their sponsoring youth organization. Whereas the summer camps listed similar activities for staff training and teen leadership programs, the specific counselor skills they shared and the overall goals of their teen programs differed. The influence of sponsoring youth organizations might direct the leadership programs in different philosophical directions, whether or not it can be seen in the types of activities the camps list.

A fifth recommendation for future research is to relate the camp and teen program goals to what the camps specifically teach in staff training and teen programs. The categories made when analyzing questions three and four about activities to teach leadership skills and question six about counselor skills were dissimilar. Part of the reason might be that two questions asked about activities to teach skills while the other asked only about skills. It would be beneficial to see if any categories can be related to

determine whether the camp goals are being reached through the activities they present in their programs.

A final suggestion for future research is to interview or survey the instructors and participants of the teen leadership programs. This would assess whether what teen participants experience and perceive to be learning coincides with what the camp provides that participants experience and learn. Although the summer camps have goals and certain activities to teach leadership skills, this extra measure could determine to what degree they are achieving their goals.

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APPENDIX A  
COVER LETTER



Dear Camp Director,

I am a student at UW-La Crosse completing my Masters in Education. I am also the Leadership Director at a summer camp, after having worked as Waterfront Director and Lifeguard the past 5 summers. I would appreciate your help in providing information for my Master's thesis.

You have been specially chosen to complete this survey. The survey only requires 15 minutes of your time. The research is being conducted in order to learn more about the leadership and counselor characteristics of teen leadership programs at Midwestern summer camps.

The survey is attached. If you choose to participate, please send your answers via email by Friday, August 3, 2012.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,  
Hannah Walleser

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

## Informed Consent

I have been informed that:

- The purpose of this research is to investigate the leadership and counselor characteristics of teen leadership programs at Midwestern summer camps.
- This study will take approximately 15 minutes.
- I can withdraw from the research once the participation has begun. There will be no consequences of withdrawing or declining.
- There are no foreseeable risks or effects of participating in this study.
- My responses are confidential.
- Results from the study will be presented in a grouped format where individual responses are not identified.

Questions regarding this research can be directed to the principle investigator Hannah Walleser (walleser.hann@uwlax.edu). Questions regarding the protection of human subjects may be addressed to the UW-La Crosse Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (608-785-8124 or irb@uwlax.edu).

Do you consent to complete this questionnaire?

☐ yes      ☐ no

## APPENDIX C

### SURVEY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the leadership and counselor characteristics of teen leadership programs at Midwestern summer camps.

1. How important are these characteristics in a good counselor?

|                | 1=not at all important | 2=slightly important | 3=moderately important | 4=important | 5=very important |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Communication  |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Compassion     |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Confidence     |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Courage        |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Decisiveness   |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Determination  |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Development    |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Flexibility    |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Honesty        |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Integrity      |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Leadership     |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Motivating     |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Passion        |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Responsibility |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Team-building  |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Values         |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |

2. How important are these characteristics in a good leader?

|                | 1=not at all important | 2=slightly important | 3=moderately important | 4=important | 5=very important |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Communication  |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Compassion     |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Confidence     |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Courage        |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Decisiveness   |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Determination  |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Development    |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Flexibility    |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Honesty        |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Integrity      |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Leadership     |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Motivating     |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Passion        |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Responsibility |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Team-building  |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |
| Values         |                        |                      |                        |             |                  |

3. What are some specific activities you use in staff training to teach leadership skills?

4. What are some specific activities you use in teen programs to teach leadership skills?

5. What are the goals of your teen leadership programs?

6. What counselor skills do you teach in your teen leadership programs?