

Advanced Techniques for Working More Effectively with Campers

Tri-State Camp Conference

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Bob Ditter

Sharing Chart: helping kids develop a more cooperative environment in the cabin.
Challenge: Many campers have a hard time sharing space, their counselor's attention, time, their things, their friends, etc. This exercise is designed to help.

Step 1: Gather the campers in a circle, establish ground rules for meeting and explain that everyone seems to need help getting better at sharing.

→Ground Rules (for all Camper Meetings):

- 1) Everyone sits in a circle in their own space.
- 2) One person speaks at a time (use a "talking stick" or similar).
- 3) When one person is talking, everyone listens.
- 4) No put downs (we respect each others opinions even if we disagree).
- 5) Counselors start, stop and run the meetings.

Step 2: Brainstorm a list with the campers of all the ways they can share. Put the chart up where everyone can see it.

Step 3: Make a chart and put every camper's name on it. Make spaces for every day for the next 5 days, with two spaces for each day (10 spaces in all). The spaces are for scores.

Step 4: Explain that twice a day the campers will meet to report anyone who has shared with them in some way. Example: "I want to thank Morris for sharing his time with me this morning during clean-up. He helped me clean my space." Morris then gets points *for the group*. →It is important to note with campers that they earn points *only when someone recognizes the sharing they did and the points are only for the group!*

→Best times to meet are usually at the end of rest hour and end of the day.

Step 5: Set a target of so many points which will earn the entire group a special activity, like a movie and popcorn in their cabin or similar. The activity is a celebration more than a reward. Only those campers that have earned points for the group can participate. (Counselors will need to do their fare share of encouraging and coaching campers to participate).

Other Techniques

"Triple Play": helping kids who don't fit in or need to make a friend.

"Be the Bigger Man!" A code of conduct for boys by boys.

"Drop the Rope!"

"Girls' Circle" A way for girls to share and build support for one another.

"...have you been Ditterized?"

Robert B. Ditter, M.Ed., LCSW

www.bobditter.com

Sharing Chart Details

[Day and Resident Camp Friendly]

- Campers earn points when they share. *The group of campers* generates the list of ways to share with the help of their counselors.
- You get a point *only when a fellow cabin mate or group mate acknowledges the sharing you have done.*
- Points are weighted. You get *double points* for sharing things like your friends, your time or effort or your personal space.
- You earn points for the group, not yourself!
- The group is working toward earning a special activity that they will **SHARE** together as friends—one that the camp can reasonably provide. Examples might include things like the following:
 - Pool party with special snacks
 - Night time movie and popcorn
 - Campfire with hotdogs and/or marshmallows
 - A special hike with lunch
 - An extra period at the Water Park or other favorite activity
 - A sleep out with other extras
- Everyone who has earned a point for the group gets to participate in the special activity. The *target points—which is the number of points needed to earn the targeted activity*—should be set by the counselors. The first target should be 1 point for each camper times 6 times the number of campers in the group. For example, if there are 8 campers, the target should be 48 points. A group can reasonably be expected to hit that target in 3 days.
- Counselors must be ready to prompt campers during the day (“hey, this would be a great time to earn a couple of sharing points for the group!”), especially if there is a camper that has not earned any points for himself after a day or two.
- Negative actions should be dealt with *separately and not be mixed in with the sharing chart.* An exception would be for a grievous offence, like if the entire group of campers destroyed camp property or broke a major camp rule. In that case, the chart would need to be re-thought. You could re-start at zero.
- A camper who has shared noticeably more than other campers might get a special privilege or special recognition, *but this should be done after the target has been reached and not announced beforehand, otherwise the competition among campers detracts from the sharing.*

Name of Camper	Day 1 AM ☑-in	Day 1 PM ☑-in	Day 2 AM ☑-in	Day 2 PM ☑-in	Day 3 AM☑in	Day 3 PM ☑-in	Total Points	
Dillon								
Derek								
Jordan								
Jose`								
Lamont								
Mike								
Rohan								

Sharing List

Games, toys
 Feelings
 Friends (double points!)
 Time (double points!)

Effort (like in clean-up) (x2!)
 Counselor’s attention (x2!)
 Clothes
 Secrets (in a good way)