



Training Tool Sheet for Camp Staff Spring 2006

Debriefing: What It Is and Why It's Cool!

We all wonder what our campers think about camp activities and experiences. Here are some fun and simple points to keep in mind as you "Check-In" With Your Campers!

Simple Facilitation Model: After an activity ask

- ✓ What happened? FACTS
- ✓ What now? FEELINGS (at this moment)
- ✓ What next? FUTURE (how to handle things differently and use the experience in a new situation)

What do good facilitators do?

- ✓ Help set ground rules, and assure everyone understands the purpose of facilitation is to build support, trust, and understanding
- ✓ Keep a "safe" environment to share (be clear that we'll respect each other by not laughing or making someone feel dumb for a comment—if a hurtful comment is made, nip it in the bud, by saying "hey, not now" or "remember our goal to work together")
- ✓ Help people prepare to give feedback by modeling ways to support (eye contact, nodding head, etc.)
- ✓ Actively listen and ask questions rather than telling
- ✓ Help people own and take responsibility for their share of any problem ("I" statements)
- ✓ Encourage people to look toward the future and ways to improve as well as what to do next
- ✓ Make sure closure occurs as well as set the stage for next steps
- ✓ Recognize when a deeper-than-anticipated issue with a camper occurs, get help from someone else with more skills/practice (head counselor, unit leader, etc.).

What do I do during the activity that will help me debrief and communicate?

- ✓ Develop Attending Behavior (that means to pay attention; be physically-emotionally present—stay focused on the participants and what they do/don't do; reinforce comments without judging—be yourself, so others will be themselves)
- ✓ Pay attention to non-verbal cues you send (eye contact, facial expressions, body posture, physical space—don't hang out and talk with other staff)
- ✓ Pay attention to verbal cues you send (silence, brief acknowledgement, paraphrase)

Why Process?

- ✓ Learning through experience is rich in metaphors, symbols, feelings, and typical behavior patterns (known and unknown) that campers may not realize or talk about without formal processing.
- ✓ Help campers become aware of these aspects and transfer them back to every day life.
 - Bring out similarities in "here at camp vs back at home" situations.
 - Highlight their new responses and resulting actions.
 - Help them see opportunities to use this new info.
- ✓ Sometimes they experience so many different feelings, they need help in sorting them.

Final Thoughts

Start small with some simple activity or experience. Come up with a cool name that fits your personality: “circle up”, “touchbase”, “check-in”. Campers love a chance to talk – so guide the conversation and really understand things from their point of view!

Web Resources:

<http://www.ACAcamps.org/research/>

<http://www.ACAcamps.org/research/ydo.php>

Reference:

Nadler, R.S. & Luckner, J.L. (1992). *Processing the adventure experience: Theory and practice*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.



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