

# Spiritual Component of the Camp Experience: Finding a Common Ground

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# Goals for Session

Review key findings from spirituality training needs survey

Define spirituality concepts

Share ideas about where “common ground” exists around spirituality training and program

# Pause to consider....

What does “spirituality” mean to you? Spiritual development?

Do you think your definition is about the same as other camp professionals?

Is “spiritual development” a part of your camp program? Staff training?

# About the study....

- ◎ “Is There Common Ground?”- collaborative survey with Search Institute, the Collaboration for Youth, and ACA
  - > How do community- and faith-based youth workers understand their priorities and core competencies? How are these perspectives similar and distinct?
  - > Are they interested in learning together?
  - > What would be the benefits and challenges of cross-sector professional development opportunities?

# ACA Survey on Spirituality, Camps, and Youth Development

- Online Survey (modified from the original) Spr '07
- 303 camps completed
  - > 29% RAC
  - > 71% Secular
- Type of camps
  - > 64% resident
  - > 16% day
  - > 19% both
- Sponsorship
  - > 27% Indep non-profit
  - > 24% agency
  - > 16% indep for profit
  - > 29% religiously-affiliated
- Religious commitment of respondent (secular%/RAC%)
  - > Not very= 24/1
  - > Somewhat= 30/9
  - > Very= 46/90

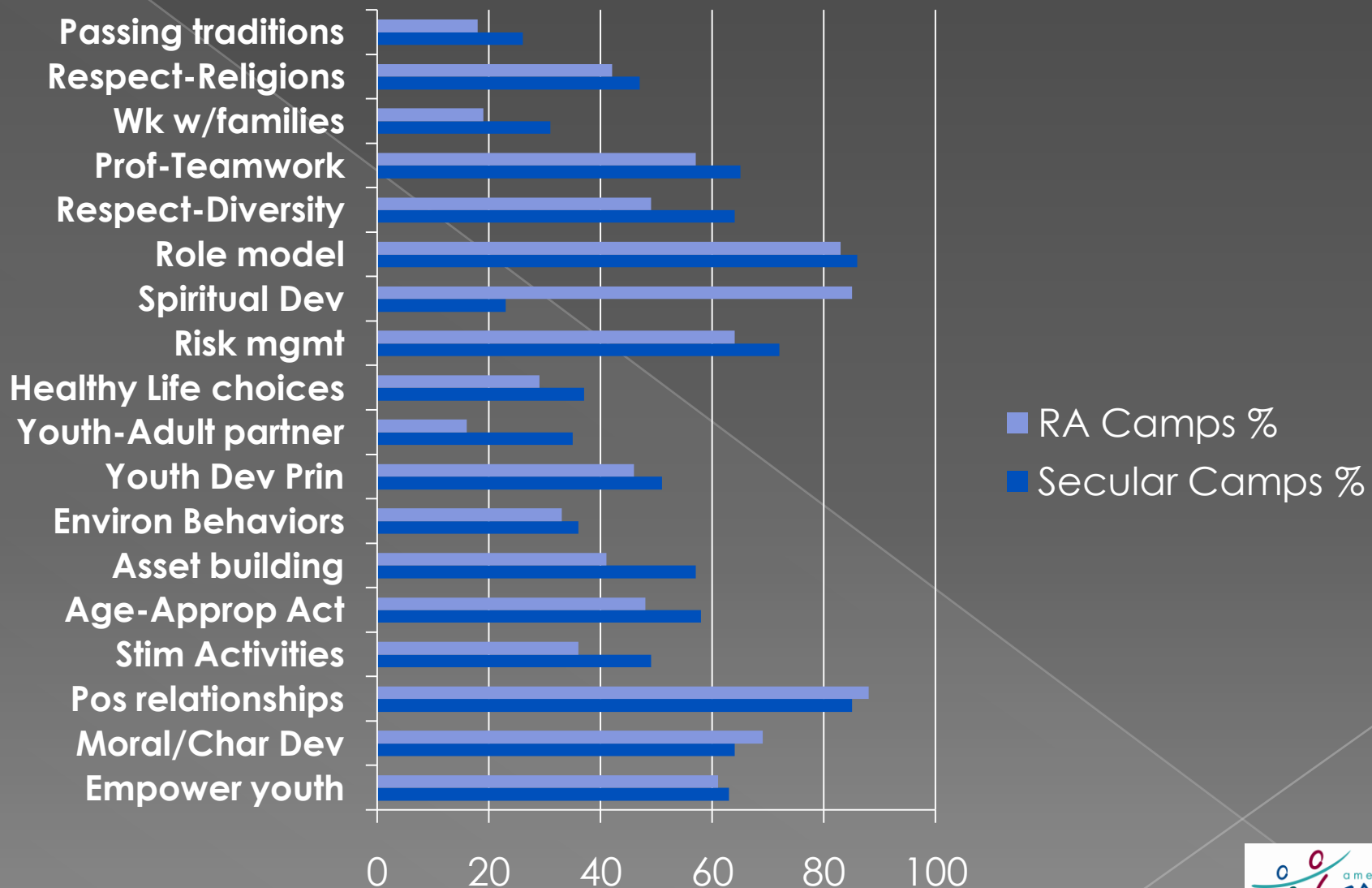
# Defining Spiritual Development

- Relationship with God/Higher Power/Jesus Christ
- Importance of/ connection through nature
- Study (religious texts)
- Instilling religious traditions, developing faith
- Promotes values, morals, ethics, character development
- Develop connections
- Personal growth
- Care- Golden Rule
- Internal self-awareness
- Respect for all things-tolerance
- Christian practices/roles
- Spiritual journey
- Christian evangelism
- Service to others
- Wonder, peace, harmony

# Top Priorities in Youth Development Dimensions

Emphasis	Total Sample (N=305)	Secular Camps (N=214)	RA Camps (N=89)
Social Development	56%	64%	37%
Emotional Development	30%	35%	19%
Spiritual Development	31%	12%	76%
Physical Development	13%	14%	8%
Cognitive Development	10%	14%	1%

# Essential Youth Work Competencies



# Differences in Competencies

Helping youth develop spiritually

- 85% faith-based camps
- 23% secular camps

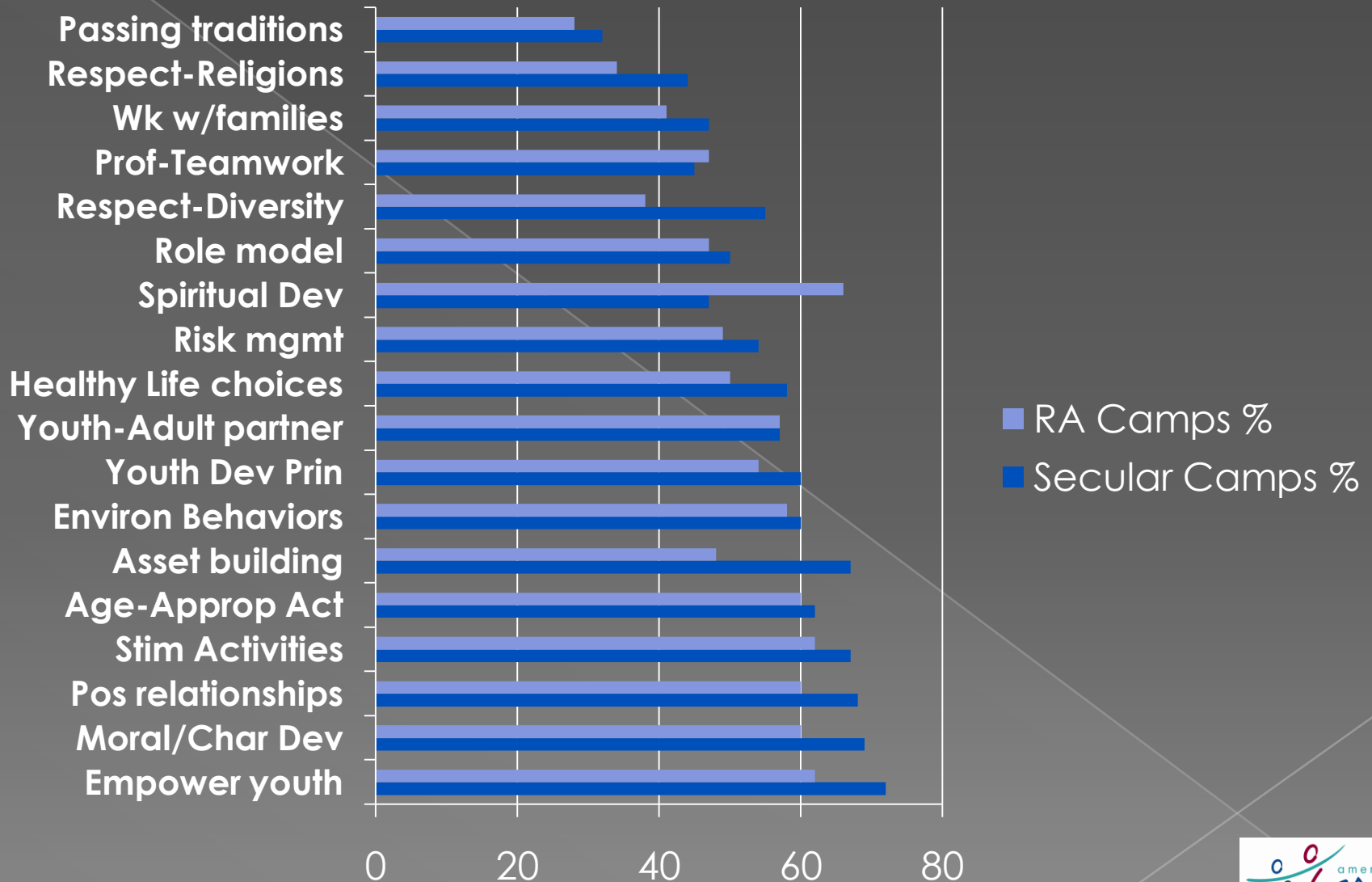
Respecting & honoring cultural & human diversity

- 49% faith-based
- 64% secular

Interacting with youth in ways that build assets

- 41% faith-based
- 57% secular

# Competencies- Desire Training



# Differences in Desired Training

Involving and empowering youth

- 62% Faith-based camps
- 72% Secular camps

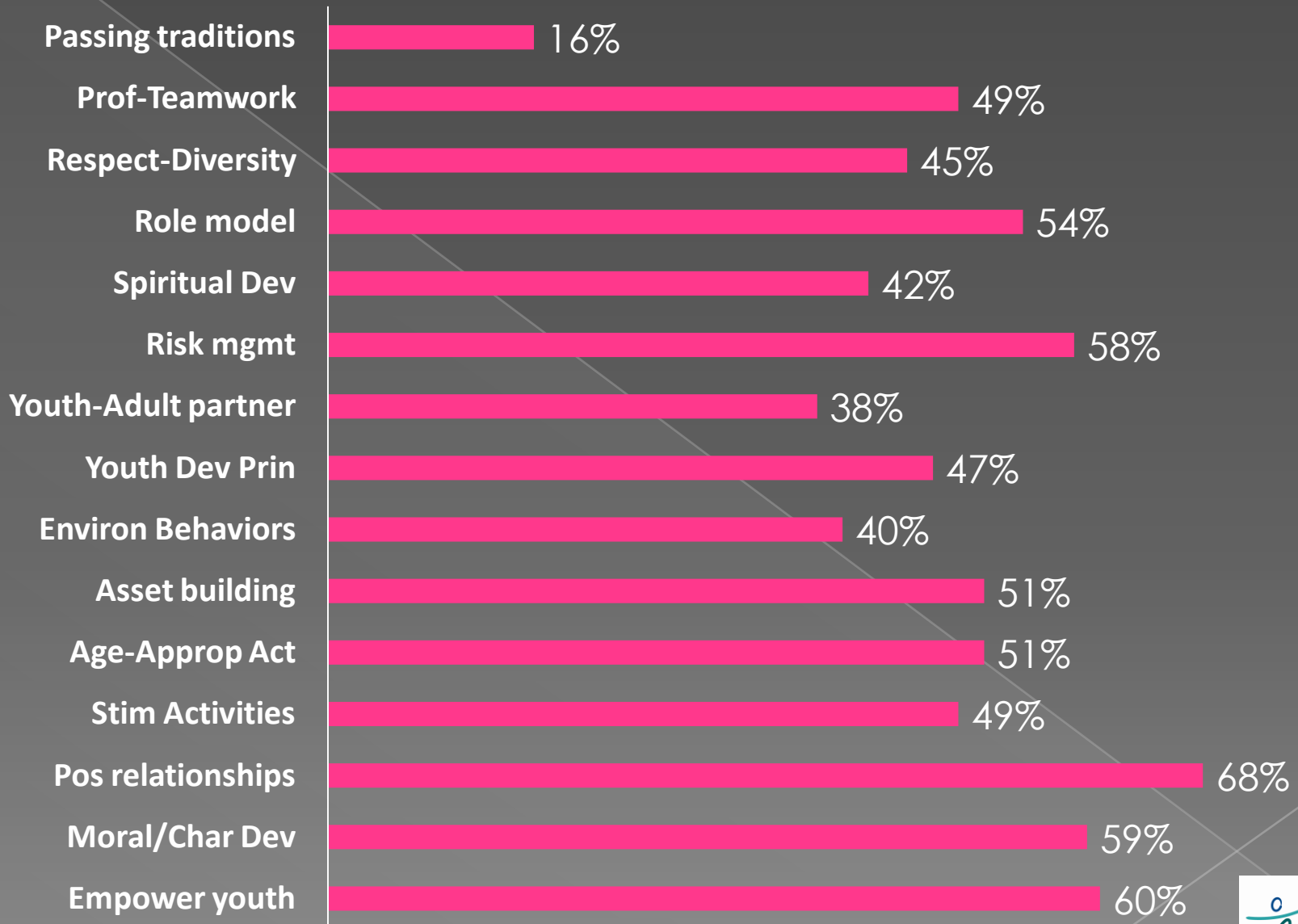
Helping youth develop spiritually

- 66% faith-based
- 47% secular

Respecting & honoring cultural & human diversity

- 38% faith-based
- 55% secular

# “Readiness for Training” (All camps)



# Camps “Readiness” for Learning: Top 5 Topics

Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth (70%)

Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model (58%)

Enhancing youth's moral and character development\* (51%)

Involving and empowering youth (51%)

Identifying risk factors in the program environment and reducing those risks (43%)

# Potential Challenges

- ◉ Exclusiveness, proselytizing, and dogmatism
- ◉ Perceived differing goals & training
- ◉ Fear of judgment
- ◉ Discomfort with religious/spiritual issues
- ◉ Potential legal issues
- ◉ Lack of mutual respect
- ◉ Too little time to get “comfortable”
- ◉ Different language (definitions)

# Potential Benefits

- Enrich the lives of youth
- Tap into unique strengths within both the secular and faith-based sectors
- Increase opportunities through shared learning and resources

# Recommendations and Action Steps

## Work Locally:

- build relationships and communicate honestly
- share knowledge
- work toward shared “ends”

## Create a shared framework for moral and spiritual development

- determine how moral & ethical development relate to spiritual & religious development
- prepare staff to facilitate this growth in campers

## Integrate discussion about staff preparation that:

- builds on a common language
- defines “successful work” with youth
- builds core competencies

# Remember who your staff and campers are...

## ◎ Millennials (born after 1982)

- > Cooperative, group-oriented
- > Tied to parents (“they are my best friends”)
  - Most protected generation
  - Model after parents
- > Accepting of diversity (religion, sexual identity, race/ethnicity)
- > Adaptable; nothing permanent
- > Doers- passionate about causes
- > Totally connected (share personal as “public”)
- > Optimistic
- > High achievement needs
- > Don’t accept “status power”- see own potential
- > Need to be challenged, tested, and guided
- > Many have a strong tie to a religious tradition- yet often want to make their own choices

# Reflection/Small Groups

- What resonated with you from this information?
- Discuss how the concept of spiritual development is/is not a part of your camp program
- Share ideas on how you might use this information with your staff

# Resources

- *Training Staff To Be Spiritual Leaders: Activities and Resources for Christian Camps – Nancy Ferguson*
- *Common Ground Report: ACA Research Website:*  
[http://www.acacamps.org/research/common\\_ground\\_study.php](http://www.acacamps.org/research/common_ground_study.php)
- *RAC Survey results:*  
<http://acacamps.org/rac/survey.php>