

## Hotline Case Study: Missing Parent and Inhaler

A camper arrived at camp without his inhaler. When his cabin was planning a hike, the medical staff called home to request that the inhaler be dropped off at camp. The camper's mother claimed she did not know what an inhaler was. After the medical staff explained, she agreed to bring it to the camp within 15 to 20 minutes.

Several hours passed, but the mother did not arrive with the inhaler, and the camp was unable to reach her. Later, a staff member overheard the mother talking to the camper on the phone, instructing him on what to say if CPS came to camp.

The staff grew concerned about the camper's safety at home and attempted to contact individuals listed on the camper's health form. They were informed that the camper's grandmother was supposed to pick him up the next morning. However, the grandmother's phone number listed on the form was out of order, and they were unable to reach her.

In response, the camp nurse filed a report with CPS, but CPS informed her that they would not be investigating. When the camp director reached out to CPS earlier in the week for guidance, CPS advised her to contact local authorities.

The camp decided to keep the camper until the end of the session. They planned to reach out to their local law enforcement, with whom they have established relationships. Additionally, they planned to send an email to the caseworker and call on Monday.

The camp remained concerned that the camper is experiencing neglect at home.

### **Policies and Risk Management — Questions to Consider**

- Does the camp have a policy and procedure to check health history forms and confirm medications as campers are checking in?
- Does the camp have a consent to treat form in case they need to provide a medication not sent to camp with a camper?
- Does the camp have a medical doctor they can contact for medical or medication questions during their sessions (including weekends) with they are unable to reach parents?
- What policies and procedures do the camp have in place for supporting campers who have caseworkers?
- Does the camp have a relationship with a social worker or mental health professional they can access as a resource throughout their season, even on the weekends?
- Does the camp have relationships with local law enforcement?
- What policies and procedures does the camp have in place to release campers early?
- What support does the camp have in place for staff after dealing with emotionally difficult situations?

- **Staff Training — Questions to Consider**

- Are staff trained to recognize and act on signs of abuse and neglect?
- Does camp leadership know the protocol for communicating with parents?
- Has the leadership team been trained in protocols for working with caseworkers?
- Have staff been trained in the camp's policies and procedures for early release of campers? And the protocols for releasing campers to others besides a parent?
- Have staff been trained in contacting CPS? Local law enforcement?
- Is anyone on staff trained to provide initial emotional support to those affected by traumatic incidents while awaiting professional services?

## **Key Takeaways**

Know your camp clientele and the resources available to you. Having relationships with professionals outside of camp who can support camp leadership is pertinent. Having, knowing, and practicing policies and procedures will allow camp leaders to manage difficult situations more seamlessly.

## **Resources**

- [Child Abuse Prevention Resources](#)
- [Child Abuse Reporting Phone Numbers by State](#)

## **Webinars to Consider**

- [Mental Health at Camp for Leadership Staff](#)