

## Suggestions for Using ACA Facilitation Tools in Staff Training

**Facilitation**, sometimes called processing or debriefing, helps create an atmosphere where campers are encouraged to process feelings and behavior, resolve conflict, and to gain both confidence and skill in decision making. Additionally, facilitation exercises help campers develop a sense of belonging.

The **facilitation tool-kit** contains four related documents (one overview and three handouts) to help you and your staff use group processing as a means to achieve your camp's mission and goals. The overview is designed to give you and your staff background about what "facilitation" is. The three handouts have practical examples and steps to learn how to use facilitation effectively. Facilitation can be a challenging process to learn, but when your counselors "get it" the results are phenomenal. Here is one way you might use these materials to implement the training ideas.

**Getting Started:** Read the "facilitation overview" article to gain some background and use it as an outline to explain the concept to your counseling staff. Put a copy of it in the proactive behavior management section of your staff manual. In addition, distribute the three handouts as separate pieces of paper, so staff can write on them and add their own varieties. The handouts are:

**Debriefing in a Nutshell:** What Is It and How Will It Help Me?

This handout gives a three-step process to follow with a camper group.

**Ways to Debrief:** Give Me Some Choices!

This handout provides examples of how to structure a camper group discussion so it is fun and has variety.

**Getting Discussions Started:** Questions to Ask Campers

This handout gives examples of questions to use to accomplish different goals.

**Opportunities for Practice:** This skill will take some practice . . . learning the best questions for different ages, how to handle a smart aleck remark, and how to end the discussion before the campers are tired of doing it. The goal is to leave the campers curious and wondering what you might do differently next time. So take advantage of the activities occurring during staff training to model the skill and allow staff to practice facilitating.

One way to introduce the practice is to give a few top-notch returning staff a day or two notice that you'd like them to lead a few small group circles testing out the ideas after an orientation activity. Then a few days later, ask additional staff to take turns facilitating at different points following orientation activities. As staff feel more comfortable with the skill, plant a person to give a smart aleck remark, so as a group they can brainstorm the best ways to respond, and together they can create examples of possible comments and ideas for how to respond.

**Extending the Learning:** As an in-service training session about two weeks into camp, ask counselors to write down their favorite questions (ones on the list or new ones they have developed) on index cards and add them to a camp-wide list. A poster in the staff lounge is a great place to keep the concept visible and encouraged. In addition, ask them to give examples of issues or comments that came up in which they were unsure how to handle, so you can discuss how to solve the challenge together. Be sure to keep it light, so they will feel comfortable talking . . . try phrases like "Oh my! I'm glad they didn't say that to me!" "You've got to be kidding, what did you say after that?" You might start the discussion with an example from your own experience to model that we can all get into sticky situations.

