

Guide to Camp Basics

This guide consists of general things to consider when designing a trauma-informed camp environment. The goal of camp is always to meet the needs of campers and their families.

Logistics

Determine who your camp is going to serve and how long camp is going to be. Ensure you have a location that is able to accommodate your needs.

Clearly design and plan each day of camp ensuring:

- Physical activity occurs every 2 hours

- Protein rich food is provided every 2 hours

Ensure all supplies needed to execute camp are ready and available.

Water bottles, snacks and sensory items should be accessible at all times.

Staffing

Ensure you have enough staff/volunteers to meet the needs of campers and families.

All staff should have a trauma-informed mindset and understand the goal of camp.

Identify staff who are capable of meeting the trauma related/ emotional needs of campers.

Staff intentionally connect and engage with campers.

Staff provide a balance of both structure and nurture.

Campers

Campers should be immersed in a supportive environment where they feel heard, valued and seen.

Campers are taught multiple regulation strategies and gain an understanding of what is happening in their brains and bodies.

Campers are given voice and allowed to practice making choices and compromises.

Play should be incorporated into every activity.

Caregivers

Staff responsible for training caregivers provide trauma-informed tools.

Caregivers can connect to each other as well as the trainer(s).

Caregiver training is a supportive, judgment free environment.

Caregivers can ask questions and problem solve real-life situations.

Caregivers are given an opportunity for respite.