

SUMMER CAMP STAFF WORKING SAFE WITH MINORS



North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists
Youth & Young Adult Ministries

WORKING WITH MINORS...

- It's a CALL
 - It's a PRIVILEGE
 - It's a RESPONSIBILITY
 - It's a COMMITMENT
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- Because our society is filled with pain, problems, and lawsuits caused by improper conduct of individuals working with children and youth, it is imperative that those working with minors have meaningful guidelines for conduct in order to protect both themselves and those under their care.

ABUSE IS DEFINED AS:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect

PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Physical injury as a result of hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, or otherwise harming a child.

SEXUAL ABUSE

- Any situation where a child is used for sexual gratification. This may include indecent exposure, fondling, rape, exploitation through prostitution or exposure to pornographic material.
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EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Any pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth, including constant criticism, threats and rejection.

NEGLECT

- Failure to provide for a child's basic needs.
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UNDERSTANDING THE FACTS

- Campers arriving to your camp may already be victims of abuse.
- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be the victim of abuse before age 18.

www.acacamps.org/resource-library/child-abuse-prevention-resources

WHAT A YOUTH CAMP PROFESSIONAL TEAM
SHOULD BE LIKE...

(Group discussion)

INTERACTING WITH...

- Minors
 - Parents
 - Co-workers
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INTERACTING WITH PARENTS

- Be Attentive
 - Be Positive
 - Be Alert
 - Approach them at the cabin's door to greet them
 - Get acquainted with the parent and the camper
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INTERACTING WITH **MINORS**

- Supervision
 - Discipline
 - Touch
 - Communication and Boundaries
 - Email / FB / Social Media
 - Child Abused Awareness
 - Reporting Child Abuse
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SUPERVISION

- Provide appropriate supervision at ALL times
 - Under NO circumstances allow yourself to be alone with one child. Always, have two people when talking to a child. This protects the child as well as protects the adult from possible allegations.
 - If a counselor needs to talk to a camper (alone), make sure that it is done in a public place (witnesses).
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SUPERVISION

- If you are dealing with a challenging camper, call for back-up so that the other staff can supervise your group while you deal with the challenging camper.
 - A staff member who encounters a particularly difficult child will seek the assistance of supervisor or administrative staff.
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DISCIPLINE

- Counselor may NOT, under any circumstances, hit a child.
 - Ask for help when feeling frustration with a camper.
 - In all dealings with campers, counselors should strive to *respond* as opposed to *react* to children.
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TOUCH

- When touching a minor, do so on the hand, shoulder, or upper back;
 - In the company of other adults;
 - Never in a place on a child's body that is normally covered by a bathing suit, unless for a clear medical necessity, and then only with supervision from another adult;
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TOUCH

- Affirm children with appropriate touching by keeping hugs brief and “shoulder-to-shoulder” or “side-to-side.”

*Always keep hands at (not below) the shoulder level.
For kids who like to sit on laps, encourage them to sit next to you.*

CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS

- We cannot be too careful in the area of sexual abuse. Even the appearance of wrong or a false allegation can cause irreparable damage to the reputation of the accused staff member and the camp. All staff members must avoid doing anything that could be interpreted as sexual abuse.
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CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS

- Child abuse includes, but is not limited to, any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult or of a third person.
 - The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced, whether or not the child has consented.
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IF A CHILD IS ABUSED

- Believe them! Stay calm and limit the discussion.
 - Support them, tell them that it was good they shared with you.
 - Report the incident or any suspicions of abuse to the Camp Director and the authorities.
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FAILURE TO REPORT

- Failure to report frequently results in additional crimes.
 - Failure to report can cause the camp to lose the respect and confidence of its supporting churches and local community.
 - Failure to report can place the camp and the Conference in a weak ethical and legal position.
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COMMUNICATION & BOUNDARIES

- A staff member will under no circumstances share a bed or sleeping bag with a camper.
 - Counselors will set limits with children who “cling” or hang on them.
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COMMUNICATION & BOUNDARIES

- Do NOT:
 - Share personal information with campers.
 - Write personal notes.
 - Comment on personal appearance in an inappropriate way (“beautiful, sexy or hot”).
 - Buy campers gifts.
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COMMUNICATION & BOUNDARIES

- NO:
 - Texting with campers
 - Private emailing with campers
 - Asking campers to be their “social media” friend

These activities have resulted in accusations of inappropriate interaction with campers.

CO-WORKERS

- No Dating “Minor” Staff

(under 18 years of age)

(Discuss your Camp Staff Policy)



Have a wonderful Summer!!
