

Camp Susquehanna 2019



HANDBOOK

“Reach For The Stars”

Campers - June 14-18
Counselors - June 13-18
Leaders In Training - June 11-18

Camp Westmont
81 Spruce Lake Road
Poyntelle, PA 18454

*Camp Susquehanna is a program of The
Burn Prevention Network*

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Camp Susquehanna Volunteer Handbook

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Introduction

We welcome you as a counselor/volunteer to Camp Susquehanna!

Thank you for your interest in helping young burn survivors become stronger and more confident young people. If you have never participated in a burn camp before, we feel certain that this will be one of the most rewarding experiences you will ever have. We appreciate your willingness to volunteer as we know that you have given up your own time to contribute to the camp experience of others.

Camp Susquehanna (CS) came into being following a lecture in 1994 to the Lancaster Sertoma club by Alan Breslau, burn survivor and founder of the Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors. The club presented him with a *Service to Mankind Award* and asked him what they could do to help burn survivors. Alan immediately suggested that they establish a camp for burned children. The Sertomans decided then and there that they would do so in the memory of M Elvin Byler the Sertoman's founder who died as a result of burn injuries sustained in a private plane crash. Camp Susquehanna was born! The first camp was held on the beautiful campus of Franklin and Marshall College with eight children that very same summer.

The inaugural Camp was a very "full on" program packed tightly with fun activities and outings, directed by Richard Friedman, Lee Walp, Cindy Thomas and Alan & Delwyn Breslau with enthusiastic support from the Sertoma members and the Fire Service. Alan and Delwyn remained closely involved with the annual summer camp until their emigration to New Zealand in 2003.

In 2016, Camp Susquehanna came under the auspices of the Burn Prevention Network (BPN), whose mission is to provide burn injury prevention education to and advocacy for those at greatest risk.

The following material is vital to a successful camp experience for our campers. Please take the time to read and fully understand the material enclosed. It is important that these rules are followed to the letter. It will help protect you, the BPN, and Camp Susquehanna, and will ensure that the campers will have a safe, positive camp experience.

Any counselor/volunteer who fails to abide by the rules and regulations set forth herein, will be subject to removal from camp. Rules and regulations are to include, but are not limited to, those outlined in this staff handbook.

Most of the material in this handbook will not be reviewed at camp. Please take the time to read and understand the materials before you arrive at camp. You will be required to sign a contract verifying that you know the material herein.

Mission Statement

Camp Susquehanna is dedicated to providing burn injured children with opportunities to face social and physical challenges, develop self-esteem and enhance a positive attitude while encouraging a healthy independence. It is a safe place for healing, a place to share feelings about painful experiences, perhaps for the first time. Life skills training combined with many fun activities in a family type setting, ensure that the burn injured child enjoys an extremely special experience without feeling different or alone.

Goals

The goals to be met by this camp experience include, but are not limited to:

1. Build self esteem
2. Provide freedom for experimentation and growth, outside the expectation of a society based on conformity and physical appearance.
3. Provide a social network for children who have had similar experiences
4. Provide an atmosphere of support, acceptance and love
5. Teach the value of responsibility for personal and group actions
6. Provide “purely fun” physical recreation which enhances “formal” physical efforts
7. Provide activities that give children a sense of “conquering” and accomplishment
8. Teach skills and coping strategies for dealing with staring, questions and bullying
9. Introduce campers to dynamic role models by including adult burn survivors as counselors and volunteers
10. Increase public awareness of the burn issue and increasing public recognition and acceptance of burn survivors.

Staffing Resources

The Leadership Team is comprised of:

Breck Artz, MS

Breck Artz is a Therapist with Catholic Charities Intensive Day Treatment Program in Lancaster, PA. There she works with children and adolescents with significant mental health diagnoses within the school/program settings while working extensively with their team to decrease behaviors so that they may return to a less restrictive environment. Breck is also the part time Student Ministries Leader at Church of God of Landisville. She has her Master's degree in Child, Youth, and Family Studies with a specialization in Youth Development. Breck has been a part of Camp Discovery-Pennsylvania (a specialized camp for children with chronic dermatological conditions) since 1998 and has been on their director team since 2002. These experiences have led her to Camp Susquehanna as part of leadership team overseeing camp programming. She has been involved with Camp Susquehanna since 2014.

Jessica Banks, BSE

Jessica Banks is the Prevention Education Director and Camp Liaison for the Burn Prevention Network. She has a Bachelor's degree with dual certification in Elementary and Early Childhood Education from Millersville University. She worked in Early Care Classrooms and Administration for 18 years before joining the staff of the Burn Prevention Network in 2006. She runs all programming for BPN, and holds the PA State Levels I&II Certification as a Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention Specialist.

Liz Dideon Hess, LCSW

Liz Dideon Hess is a psychotherapist specializing in burn, trauma, and caregivers. Prior to working in private practice, Liz spent 13 years as the clinical social worker at Lehigh Valley Health Network's Regional Burn Center where she provided mental health counseling, support group facilitation, and oversaw peer support programs for pediatric and adult burn survivors. Liz has been a burn survivor since 2003 and has been involved with Camp Susquehanna since 2004.

Marcia Levinson, PT, PhD, MFT

Marcia Levinson retired as an Associate Professor at Thomas Jefferson University, in the department of Physical Therapy. Her specialty is pediatrics, with a Master's degree in family counseling, a Master of Science degree in Pediatric Physical Therapy and a Doctorate in Clinical Child Development. Presently she works clinically as a PT in Early Intervention and teaches in the professional development program for Early Intervention therapists in the city of Philadelphia. Marcia has served as one of the directors of Camp Susquehanna since 2002.

Jennifer Nagle, RN, BSN, CCRN

Jennifer Nagle graduated in 1999 from Widner University with a Bachelors degree in nursing and has worked as a critical care nurse at Lehigh Valley Health Network's, Regional Burn Center since 2003. Jenn has been involved with Camp Susquehanna since 2006 and the LIT leader since 2013.

Steven Schneider, CFPS

Steven Schneider is a retired Fire Chief and currently works for a large fire protection service provider. He is the Lehigh Valley Health Network, Regional Burn Center's Liaison to the Fire Service. Steve has been involved with Camp Susquehanna since 2014 and the LIT leader since 2015.

Camp Nurses

Camp nurses are experienced nurses specializing in burn care and the management of burn patients. You will learn more about these individuals during orientation.

Everyone in these specified roles will be identified to you at the Orientation Meeting on the first night of camp

Staff Acceptance Criteria

- All Camp Susquehanna counselors and programmers will be involved as unpaid volunteers.
- Counselors and programmers must be at least 21 years of age. First preference is given to adult burn survivors, who in many instances provide inspirational and positive role models for the campers, returning staff and those who have a special contribution to the camp; e.g. nurse, therapist, psychologist, etc.
- Application process:
 - A Camp Susquehanna counselor application form must be completed
 - Applicants must obtain a criminal history background check and child abuse clearance
 - If applicant has not lived continuously in Pennsylvania for the past 10 years, an FBI fingerprint clearance will also be required.
 - Anyone convicted of a felony will not be accepted
- Staff will be interviewed by phone or in person by a member of the Camp Susquehanna Leadership Team. Counselors will then be selected based on their merits and references at our discretion.
 - As a camp volunteer, you represent the camp before, during and after the season.
 - How you behave is a reflection on both you and the camp, especially when you are at camp, wear camp clothing outside of camp and posting on social media sites.
 - How you behave in public spaces, whether the internet or on the street, enhances or erodes your reputation as a person and as a youth development professional.

- The Camp Susquehanna Leadership Team reserves the right not to accept you if your online or offline behavior at any time, before, during or after camp is a cause for serious concern about your judgement and professionalism.
- Staff will be required to attend the camp orientation program held at Camp Westmont the afternoon/evening of Tuesday, June 13, 2019.
- Counselors and programmers will be required to sign the Camp Susquehanna *Counselor Behavioral Contract*

Staff Policies & Expectations

Counselors and programmers are the key to a successful camp program. Ask yourself, “Am I doing this for the good of the kids?” If not, then don’t do it!

1. Staff will understand and embrace the mission, goals and rules of Camp Susquehanna as well as the rules of Camp Westmont.
2. Staff will have a clearly defined role at camp and will be expected to commit to that role for the entire duration of camp.
3. Staff will bunk with their assigned bunkhouse group and lead and participate in all activities with their group.
4. Rule of Three: Never allow yourself to be alone with a camper. It may seem overly strict, but it is extremely important and a fundamental rule that protects you, the campers, CS and the BPN. If it is not immediately feasible to have another adult with you, at least be sure that another camper is present. When disciplining a camper, always be sure to have another adult with you.
5. Your whereabouts should be known by others at all times. At no time should you be using your car for any activities during the duration of camp, unless prior approval has been granted by the Leadership Team. You are not permitted to leave camp grounds without approval from the Leadership Team.
6. Be respectful and thoughtful in your comments regarding other staff and campers. Never say anything derogatory about other people. Volunteers are always to use proper language in the presence of campers. Camp policy forbids profanity, vulgarities and language demeaning to others. If you don’t agree with a person you work closely with, try to talk it out amongst yourselves, away from the campers and if needed, include a member of the leadership team.
7. Overt demonstrations of affection in anything other than a tone of platonic friendship is prohibited at camp. We understand that camp is a social environment, but appropriate behavior is expected at all times.
8. Sexual harassment is “unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, slurs, jokes and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.” Our goal at CS is to maintain an environment free of sexual harassment. If you have a concern, please contact a member of the leadership team immediately. All

- reports of sexual harassment will be kept confidential and will be promptly investigated. Leadership will take the appropriate action against anyone found to have engaged in sexual harassment, up to and including discharge from camp.
9. Be a model for good behavior; wait your turn, share, be polite and don't complain. Be all the things you want your campers to be. Volunteers will enthusiastically participate and contribute to the camp program.
 10. Be aware of the language your campers are using with each other. You are responsible to let the leadership team know about any bullying, negative language, or issues that you become aware of as soon as possible.
 11. Be familiar with each day's agenda at the beginning of each day. It will be your responsibility to get your campers to all events and activities on time.
 12. Never give preferential treatment to a camper or group of campers. Treat all campers the same. DO NOT do favors, give gifts or money, etc., to any campers.
 13. None of us has all the answers. If you are having problems dealing with a camper, our expectation is that you will ask for help from the Leadership Team and/or other counselors.
 14. As volunteers at Camp Susquehanna, you will receive information about the campers directly under your supervision. Be aware of the sensitive nature of camper information and maintain your camper's privacy by not sharing this information with other people outside of camp or at camp unless instructed to do so by the leadership team.
 15. Volunteers who work with adolescent campers need to be aware of the tendency of this age to become "infatuated" and develop hidden romantic fantasies. Bearing this in mind, back rubs, excessive hugging, sitting on laps, etc. are not acceptable behaviors.
 16. Never touch a child without asking permission, unless in the case of clear and present danger to the child.
 17. Never touch a camper in a place that is normally covered by a bathing suit. If a camper needs attention to one of those areas, please escort the camper to the nurse.
 18. Understand that inappropriate sexual conduct with or physical abuse of a camper is illegal and will be reported to the appropriate authorities. In addition, it can have severe emotional and psychological effects on that camper that can last a lifetime and have severe consequences for the welfare of the camp.
 19. Do not invite any guests without prior approval of the Leadership Team. This includes your children and any other family or friends.

20. Volunteers are not allowed to text, email, skype or be friends with campers or the parents/gaurdians of the campers on any social media outside of the Camp Susquehanna Facebook page. If it is discovered that a volunteer is doing any of the aforementioned behaviors, he/she may be prohibited from volunteering at camp in the future.
21. Electronics, such as MP3 players, iPod, etc. should not be brought to camp.
22. Cell phones should be used as little as possible. We expect the campers to “unplug” for the week of camp and we expect our staff to model this behavior. When absolutely necessary, cell phones should only be used at night when campers are in bed with supervision by other staff. If you are using your phone or any electronic equipment inappropriately, the camp Leadership Team has the authority to remove the equipment from your possession.
23. Possession or use any alcoholic beverage, tobacco products or illegal substances during camp is not acceptable at camp and will result in the leadership team asking you to leave.
24. Firearms, weapons or explosives are not allowed on camp grounds at any time.
25. Assist with closing the camp and packing all camp related materials as necessary.
26. Counselors will be expected to participate in a camp evaluation at the completion of camp. Your feedback helps us improve the camp experience for campers and volunteers!
27. HAVE FUN!

Talking Effectively With Your Camper

1. Be positive. You will get better results from campers by rewarding their good behavior than by punishing their bad behavior.
2. The most important part of counseling is listening. In fact, you may never know how great it feels to some children just to have someone listen to them. “Being there” can be one of the best ways to help some children release their frustrations and gain a better understanding of themselves. Try not to give too much “advice”.
3. Praise in public and give constructive criticism in private. If there is a discipline problem that needs to be addressed, do it away from other campers and never embarrass a child in front of the other campers. But remember, don’t let yourself be alone with a child. Even if you just pull a child several yards away from the group, take another adult with you to witness what is said between you and the camper.

4. Remember that campers already have parents. We are not at camp to be parents to our campers. We are not there to provide campers with a new set of moral values. Camp Susquehanna is a privately run camp whose policy is one of total acceptance of any/all persons without regard to age, religion, race, creed, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ability to pay, handicap or disability. Respect each other and your campers by not discussing your personal beliefs at camp. Their parents will appreciate your cooperation.
5. Prior to camp, all campers will be signing a "Behavior Contract." Your campers will know what is expected of them. Please make sure they uphold their end of the bargain. If you have a camper who is not respecting others and is not following the behavior guidelines he/she agreed to, discuss with the Leadership Team.
6. With the exception of group sharing sessions, DO NOT discuss your "personal" life with campers.
7. While with the campers, talk about things that are of interest to them. Make activities fun and interesting for them. Be attentive and engage your camper!
8. Some of you may be counselors to teenagers. These young people may be experiencing a lot of anxiety about their sexuality and body image. Our experience has been that the wave of relief of getting to know other teens "in the same boat" has resulted in some interesting and open discussions about sex, dating and other emotional issues of dating and peer relationships. Our teens have generally become close friends, staying in touch throughout the year. When they get to camp, they don't stop talking. Their counselors have the rare and exceptional opportunity to be a part of this precious world. Discussing relationships and sex are a natural and healthy part of the recovery process and of growing up. Please use common sense though, and facilitate these discussions so that they don't become something we wouldn't want their parents to know about!

Discipline Procedure

Please report all discipline concerns or counselor/camper contract violations to the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team will handle each "report" on an individual basis and reserves the right to send a camper home. The Leadership Team also reserves the right to dismiss a counselor/volunteer and/or deny their return in subsequent years

Abuse Procedures

As camp staff, you are considered a "mandated reporter" and must follow state regulations regarding reporting incidents of abuse or neglect. The following rules will apply to ALL reports or incidents of abuse and/or neglect in which you may be involved. The most likely scenario is that a child will report to you an instance of abuse or neglect that took place at home. You may also hear a camper report

something that occurred at camp between campers. It is possible that you may hear a report of an incident regarding another staff member. **In ALL cases, you must make a member of the Leadership Team aware immediately.**

For our purposes, abuse is any physical pain or harm, or any sexual behavior, including touching, talking, kissing and/or the more subjective area of mental abuse, such as intimidation or yelling at a camper. Some campers may use non-verbal means of communicating problems and staff should be aware of physical signs of abuse such as bruising and scarring that is not readily explainable. You are not required to have proof of abuse, only a suspicion that inappropriate touch or abuse or neglectful behavior may have occurred.

What to do if you learn of a possible abuse situation:

1. **YOU MUST TELL!** If a camper says, "I want to tell you something that I can't tell anybody," you need to clearly understand that some things you cannot keep confidential because it is illegal to do so. All reports of abuse should be made directly to the Leadership Team. Do not tell anyone else.

Do not tell the camper that it isn't important or not to worry about it. Tell the camper that you must report it, but that you promise not to tell anyone else.

2. The Camp Leadership Team will file a report with the appropriate county authorities.
3. At camp, there will be no cover-ups of abuse or "looking the other way." If you do anything that might be considered abusive, it will be reported.
4. **Never allow yourself to be alone with a camper!** This is to protect you, the campers, the BPN and the camp itself. If you see another staff member stray from the group with one child, please remind him/her to have another person with them or return to the group. Even if you are in sight of your group, if they can't hear what you are saying if you were to whisper, you need another adult to witness what is being said between you and the camper.

Camper Acceptance Criteria

An eligible camper must be at least 7 years old and must have sustained a burn injury severe enough to have been hospitalized. Returning campers and burn survivors 18 to 22 years old may apply to become Leaders in Training.

Any child who is otherwise eligible may be denied acceptance to camp if he/she has a severe physical, emotional, behavioral or mental handicap such that Camp Susquehanna volunteer staff are unable to provide adequate care for the child. Campers who continually disrupt camp activities to the point that other campers are affected negatively by his/her actions may not be eligible to return to camp. Any applicant who may pose a threat to themselves or any other person will be denied acceptance to Camp Susquehanna.

The BPN reserves the right to limit the number of campers it accepts to Camp Susquehanna in any given year in order to maintain a quality camp experience for the campers. When possible, a limit will be set before applications are mailed and potential campers given notice of such a limit.

Rules That Will Be Reviewed With Campers By the Leadership Team

1. Due to our shared sleeping bunks, these are the bunkhouse guidelines:
 - a. Lights Out time will be announced daily. Campers and counselors are expected to be in their bunk with their lights completely out at this time.
 - b. Entering/exiting the bunk house and using the bathroom quietly is required.
 - c. Keep your belongings in one neat location.
 - d. Do not touch anyone else's belongings without his/her permission.
2. At the pool or waterfront, no pushing others into the water, no rough housing, running or disobeying Camp Westmont's lifeguards.

***Counselors will review all remaining policies mentioned in camper contract during camper orientation.**

Safety Procedures

Camp Admittance:

No one will be admitted to Camp Susquehanna without the knowledge of the Camp Leadership Team.

Fire Procedure:

1. If a fire occurs inside a structure, get everyone out.
2. If the fire alarm sounds, everyone should exit the building as quickly as possible. Make sure all your campers are with you!
3. Once outside, counselors should do a head count. If all campers are not accounted for and it is safe to re-enter the building, one counselor should take another look inside. If it is dangerous to re-enter, do not go back inside.
4. Once outside and in a group, have group sit quietly together. Count heads once again. It is imperative to keep everyone as quiet and as calm as possible.
5. Remain together until the "All Clear" is given by the Camp Leadership Team.

Lost Camper Procedures:

1. Notify Camp Leadership Team immediately.
2. Camp Leaders will assign staff and initiate search.

3. If the missing camper has not been found within 20 minutes, the Camp Leadership Team will notify the proper local authorities and the child's parents.
4. Once the child has been located and the Camp Leadership Team feels there is no further threat of the camper becoming "lost" again, camp programming will resume. At the Leadership Team's discretion, the child may be sent home.

Accident Emergency:

1. For non-head injuries or injuries that do not inhibit mobility, report to Camp Nurse.
2. Senior medical camp staff will be responsible for administering first aid on the scene and contacting further appropriate medical personnel.
2. Should transportation be necessary for an injured camper, the most qualified medical staff will stay with the injured camper. The Camp Leadership Team will be promptly notified.
3. For serious head and spinal injuries - do not move, find medical personnel to evaluate injury and call 911.
4. An Accident Report form will be completed by a Camp Nurse for all health care, first aid and emergency care for injuries requiring professional treatment. A copy will be filed with camp records at the BPN and a copy will be provided to the parent/guardian.

Health Care Policies

1. All campers will be inspected by a registered nurse for head lice and pink eye, prior to the commencement of camp. Upon checking in, your camper, regardless of his/her age, will need to give all medications, over the counter or prescriptions, to the camp nurse.
2. Remember that our first goal is for campers to have a safe and healthy camping experience. If at any time, you suspect that a camper is having a health problem, seek immediate help from the nursing staff.
3. Counselors will be informed of the background information about the children in their care who have special physical and/or medical needs, including allergies, medications, dressings and pressure garments. If you feel you need extra help with dressings etc., which may be out the realm of your expertise, don't be embarrassed to ask our nurse/counselors for help.
4. Some campers may be wearing pressure garments. The garments are to be worn 23 hours per day, unless other specifications have been given by the parents. If there is a conflict as to when pressure garments should be worn, consult a Camp nurse.
5. Burned skin is extra sun-sensitive. Sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 should be applied when the campers are going out into the sun. Campers with "fresh" burns/scars will be pinkish and should also wear protective clothing such as a T-shirt and hat. Exposure to sun can lead to itching and

inflamed scars. Consult with a nurse if there is any objection from child. **Be sure that your camper re-applies their sunscreen AT LEAST every 90 minutes.**

6. If your camper does not have sunscreen or bug spray, the Camp Susquehanna's nurse will have these supplies with them at all times.

Burns And The Special Needs of Burn Survivors

For those of us who are not burn survivors or burn center staff, a brief overview of burn care terminology and descriptions may be helpful towards providing for our camper's special needs.

Most people think of burns in terms of degrees: First, Second and Third. The medical community often categorizes burns in terms of thickness (full or partial thickness). The following chart will help you to understand how burns are classified.

Degree	Surface Appearance	Healing Time
First (Superficial)	dry, red, no blisters (like sunburn)	2 - 5 days with peeling no scarring, may discolor
Second (Partial Thickness) on	moist, red blisters	5 - 35 days, depending thickness, may scar
Third (Full Thickness)	dry, charred, leathery	grafting necessary, may take months to heal, moderate to severe scars

Terms You May Hear At Camp:

Contracture: Tissue that has tightened between two joints, resulting from scar tissue. You may see this in children who cannot fully extend an arm or who do not have full flexibility in their hands.

Debridement: Removal of dead tissue from the wound surface.

Expander: A device worn under the surface of non-burned skin. This device expands the existing skin, making a large section of skin available for skin graft surgery. This device often has the appearance of a large bulge under the skin. The expanders are sometimes mistaken for tumors or a goiter.

Graft: Non-burned skin taken from the burn patients, which is placed on the burned area and heals to leave a scar.

Hypertrophic Scarring: The enlargement of scar tissue. The overgrowth of skin cells that form raised scars.

Keloid: Another word for extra thick scar tissue. Keloid scarring extends beyond the boundary of the wound.

Pressure Garments: A skin tight, strongly elastic garment worn under the camper's clothing to minimize a burn survivor's scarring. They are generally worn 23 hours per day and **must**

be washed and air dried daily. Most children will not be allowed to swim in them because the chlorine damages the elastic. Pressure garments are extremely expensive and fragile. These garments are custom made for each child, so it is extremely important to keep the right garments with the right camper and to be gentle when helping a camper with his/her garments.

Burns Last Forever: What Happens To Children When They Are Discharged From The Burn Unit?

After the initial hospitalization, burn survivors face a period of physical, social and psychosocial rehabilitation. The extent of each depends on the severity of the burn injury and on the individual. The need for ongoing care and sometimes multiple reconstructive surgeries, creates years of built-in setbacks and progress points with accompanying “roller coaster” emotional experiences for the burn survivors and their families and friends.

Some of the major physical, psychological and social issues facing a burn survivor.

Physical:

1. Painful exercises and wearing splints to regain simple function
2. Avoiding dependency on pain medications
3. Not being able to perform normal day to day functions
4. Wearing hot, uncomfortable pressure garments
5. Dealing with itching, stiffness, excessive body heat and perspiration
6. Returning to work, school, family and friends with a new appearance and physical limitations
7. Blisters, open wounds and the constant care of those wounds.

Psychological/Social

1. Learning to accept and love themselves in their new appearance and function
2. Dealing with fear, anger, guilt, frustration, and the insecurity of rejection from peers
3. Re-affirming pre-burn relationships and sometimes being rejected
4. Fear of being perceived as handicapped, ugly, evil or different from the general public
5. Fear of new relationships
6. Anger and frustration at the lack of knowledge and understanding by the general public
7. Coping with sadness and depression at the sudden drastic changes in their lives, disfigurement, dependence on others, etc.
8. Feelings of “it’s all my fault” or “it’s all someone else’s fault”
9. When young children return to school from lengthy hospital stays, they are often so far behind they must stay back a grade. Therefore, their friends advance and they don’t. This creates the need to make all new friends with students who are younger, at a time when the child’s confidence is at an all-time low. This is frustrating and frightening, and many times has a lasting negative effect on the child’s self-image.

10. Campers may have nightmares, flashbacks, and other post-trauma symptoms.

Homesickness Myths

- MYTH Homesickness goes away after three days or so,
- FACT Without special interventions, homesickness can get worse and worse.
- MYTH It only happens to little kids.
- FACT Homesickness affects people of all ages in all positions at camp. People just differ in how effectively they can cope.
- MYTH Homesick children show up at the nurse.
- FACT Homesick children are no more likely to show up at the nurse than anyone else at camp.
- MYTH Homesick campers are easy to spot.
- FACT About 50% of the most homesick children go undetected by counselors.
- MYTH Talking about it makes kids homesick.
- FACT Talking about it makes it less scary, easier to understand and more normal.
- MYTH It happens for all the same reasons.
- FACT There are common risks factors, but different children are homesick for different reasons. Don't assume.

Dealing with Homesickness

Homesickness is a very normal reaction to being away from the comforts and routines of family life. So if you think a camper may be homesick, the first and most important factor in ensuring your camper's success is to let him or her know it is normal. Let your camper know that you have full confidence that despite a little homesickness, camp will be an incredible experience.

Prevention is the Best Medicine

Planning activities that help the campers get to know other campers and showing them around the camp grounds helps campers get familiar with the facility and the people and makes them feel more at home. Often such activities can help prevent homesickness.

Break the Ice

Ice-breakers and get-to-know-you games provide campers and staff with a way to get to know the likes and dislikes, skills, talents, attitudes and personalities of the people that they will be spending time with during their stay.

Raise Campers' Comfort Level

Tell campers absolutely everything that they need to know about their camp stay. Tell them about what will happen on the first day, what their daily schedule will be like, when they will have free time, when their bedtime is, what time they have to get up and when they will take their showers. Make sure to take them on a tour of the camp and show them where everything is.

Establish Ground Rules

Make sure everyone is on the same page as far as cabin rules, camp rules, acceptable behavior and what the consequences are if any of these norms are broken. Sometimes having campers come up with some of their own ground rules will raise their comfort level too.

Keep'em Busy

During down time, campers tend to think about home and focus on the fact that they aren't there. Rest hour, early morning and before bedtimes are times when campers get homesick because these are times when they are used to being with their families. Try to keep their minds on other things.

Set Goals

If you find yourself with an unhappy camper, one of the keys to curing the ailment is to set attainable goals, both for the camper and for yourself. The goals may be as simple as making an agreement with the camper that they need to stop crying until dinnertime. You may ask a camper to try to remember three times during the day that they smiled and then tell you about these times.

Ask for Help

The great thing about volunteering at CS is that you are never alone. The Leadership Team is there to support you along with the rest of the counselors. They are ready and willing to help. Keep in mind that experienced staff has handled these kinds of problems before and they might have some good ideas to get your camper through the next hour or day. Sometimes it helps to have someone else in camp that understands the situation and can talk to your homesick camper.

Give a Little Extra TLC

Homesick campers might just need a little extra care. Spend a little extra time with them or ask another counselor to take a special interest in the camper. At first the

camper may cling to this newfound friend, but little by little, the camper will become more independent and join in activities with the cabin group.

Share

At times, campers just want to know that they belong. Share a funny story about when you were a camper or share a secret that helped you not feel homesick. Have them share some things about their lives too. Ask them about school, their sports team or activities that they enjoy. Keep them talking and thinking about anything and show interest in them. Sometimes, you just have to share a smile to help your campers feel better.

What To Bring

Aside from our closing banquet, camp is casual and comfortable (and sometimes messy!). Please plan accordingly when you pack.

***WE ARE HIGH IN THE MOUNTAINS, SO CAMP CAN BE RATHER COLD IN THE MORNING AND THE EVENING, PLEASE BE SURE TO PACK SWEATSHIRTS, LIGHT JACKET AND LONG PANTS!**

Our theme this year is REACH FOR THE STARS! If you have anything fun that fits the theme, (to wear, decorate the cabins, etc!) feel free to bring it along!

Clothes:

- T-shirts
- Pants
- Light Jacket
- Socks
- Undergarments
- Sleep Wear
- Outfit for closing banquet (optional semi-formal)
- Shorts
- Sweatshirt/Sweater/Sweat Pants
- Raincoat
- Set of old cloths to get dirty/stained
- Swim Suit (one piece for girls mandatory)

Bedding/Bath:

- Pillow
- Bath towels/washcloths
- Beach towel
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Feminine hygiene products
- Hair dryer
- Sunblock
- Sleeping bag (or sheets and blanket for twin bed)
- Soap
- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Comb/brush
- Lotion

Other Items:

- Camera (Cellphone not to be used)
- Sneakers
- Board games to play with cabinmates
- Hat
- Medications
- Flip-flops
- Goggles
- Fishing equipment

COUNSELOR BEHAVIORIAL CONTRACT

I Will:

- Participate fully in the program
- Be responsible for my own behavior
- Be respectful of camp staff, property, Camp Westmont's staff and campers
- Know where my campers are at all times
- Follow all scheduled times, including curfew and wake up
- Follow the Rule of Three and make every effort to not be alone with a camper
- Only use my cell phone when absolutely necessary and never in the presence of campers.
- Understand and be familiar with all material in the CS Handbook.

I Will Not:

- Use profane or abusive language.
- Divulge any confidential information.
- Use an iPod, mp3 player, iPad or other electronic devices. If I am using one of these devices I understand that a staff member will take the device until the end of camp or I may be asked to leave.
- Endanger the safety or well-being of myself or others.
- Leave camp premises/program location without permission from CS Leadership Team.
- Disobey policies and the rules of Camp Westmont or Camp Susquehanna.
- Be friends with a camper on Facebook or social media and if I am currently friends with a camper, I will "unfriend them" when camp is over.
- Participate in hazing or pranking other people
- Sell, give, deliver, possess or use drugs, alcohol or tobacco products.
- Possess dangerous or unauthorized materials such as weapons.

Camp Susquehanna's Leadership Team reserves the right to send a counselor home from camp if his/her behavior is in violation of this contract or whose actions are detrimental the best interests of the camp. Camp Susquehanna's Leadership Team also reserves the right to revoke the right of a volunteer from returning to Camp Susquehanna at any time.

I have read, understand, and agree to this Code of Conduct.

Counselor's signature: _____ Date: _____

CAMPER BEHAVIORIAL CONTRACT

I Will:

- Participate fully in the program
- Be responsible for my own behavior
- Be respectful of camp staff, Camp Westmont's staff and other campers
- Follow directions
- Respect the environment and camp property
- Be aware of my impact on others in the bunk house by keeping my area clean and my belongings in their designated location. I will also respect lights out times and be quiet when other people are resting.
- Hand over my cell phone to Camp Susquehanna leadership at the start of camp and expect to receive it back on Sunday at the end of camp.

I Will Not:

- Use an iPod, mp3 player, iPad, cell phone or other electronic devices. If I am using one of these devices I understand that a staff member will take the device until the end of camp.
- Endanger the safety or well-being of myself or others.
- Leave camp premises/program location without permission from my counselor.
- Disobey policies and the rules of Camp Westmont or Camp Susquehanna.
- Participate in hazing or pranking other people
- Sell, give, deliver, possess or use drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products.

Camp Susquehanna's Leadership Team reserves the right to send a camper home from camp if his/her behavior is in violation of this contract or whose actions are detrimental the best interests of the camp. Camp Susquehanna's Leadership Team also reserves the right to suspend a camper from returning to Camp Susquehanna at any time.

I have read, understand, and agree to this Code of Conduct.

Camper's signature: _____ Date: _____