

Counseling Tips

General Responsibilities

- Spend time alone with the Lord every day.
- Be available to all campers.
- Be one of your group but not so thoroughly that it is difficult to tell who the cabin leader is.
- Keep your bed & belongings as neat as you expect the campers to keep theirs.
- Put the well being of the campers before your own personal desires.
- Enforce quiet time & lights out but do not use physical force.
- Dress & act so that you demand respect from those you are seeking to guide.
- Know your own physical limitations & stay within them.
- Come to camp prepared in advance by prayer, & study time in the Word to serve the Lord & to see His blessings.
- Be on time to chapel, attentive & participating in the singing.
- There should be daily sharing, praying, & planning between the senior counselor & the junior counselor.
- Abide by & cooperate with camp policies to be an example to your campers.
- Be the role model for safety throughout the camp session.

Specific Responsibilities

- On registration day arrive by 2:30 p.m. on Sunday. Greet each camper & help him get settled into your cabin.
- Be around the cabin & make the camper's parents welcome. Explain the camp environment to them.
- Supervise daily cabin clean up. Let campers do the work, but help them. Cabins will be inspected daily for health & safety purposes.
- Encourage promptness throughout the day, including lights out time.
- Make sure the cabin is clean before you leave at the end of the week & stay around until all your campers have gone home.

(adapted from Horton Haven Camp materials)

The question is not whether you will counsel, but what kind of counseling you will be doing. Here are some helpful steps:

1. Contact—Be sensitive to the camper who is trying to make a contact with you. They may be in your cabin, your team or your activity class. They may use several testing techniques. They may use a “third person” approach to save face. They may test your reactions to see if you will understand & not condemn.
2. Listen—Listen, listen, listen to what the camper says & how he says it. Listen for what they omit. Listen for their feelings. Listen for distortions. Listen for what they select to tell you. Listen for emotional overtones. They are telling you many things in addition to their words. Reflect, clarify, & summarize what they are saying. This will help them define their problem so they can see it more objectively.
3. Insight—Your job is not to solve the camper’s problems, but to help him gain insight so he can find the solutions. Counseling is not dishing out advice alone. Pray that the Holy Spirit will give your camper insight & make him ready to change. Timing is crucial. After the camper understands the problem, direct him to a verse of Scripture that is relevant to his problem. Then guide him into seeing for himself a possible course of action, rather than telling him what to do.
4. Follow-up—Encourage the camper to believe that, with God’s wisdom & power, they can solve their problems. This encouragement can begin at camp & continue as you keep in touch with them during the year.

Counseling is a process of solving problems with people, not for them.

1. Identify with your camper who has the problem, but do not become emotionally involved in his problem.
2. Be shockproof. You can disagree with what he does, but do not reject him (John 8:11)
3. Keep confidences. What your camper has told you “in confidence” is not yours to share with other campers. Using discretion you may find it necessary to discuss some things with the camp director.
4. Don’t jump to conclusions as soon as a camper begins to talk. Be careful not to treat his surface problems. Get to the root of the real problem.
5. Be careful not to identify with one side of the situation.
6. Be available to campers & approachable.

(adapted from Camp Elim materials)

Leadership

- Good cabin leading is never forced.
- Ask the Lord to keep you sensitive to His leading. Keep your ears wide open for possible leads to spiritual problems.
- Be familiar with current teen topics (new words, cars, camper activities, sports, etc.).
- Do not play preacher. Be as normal & natural as you can, praying always that the Lord will open doors of utterance to you. Col. 4:3
- Keep an attitude of prayer.
- Memorize the names of your campers. Nothing builds confidence faster than to call them by name the first day.
- Be positive in every respect around the campers; don't look for things to complain about. If you do see something that needs attention, call it to the attention of the camp director.
- Set the example of what you expect your campers to be.

Ways to Stay Healthy at Camp

- Ask the Lord to help you make wise decisions as you oversee the safety of your campers, & that He would keep you & your campers healthy & safe!
- Wash hands frequently.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Eat nutritiously or take vitamins if you don't eat properly.
- *Rest, Rest, Rest* on Saturdays & time off!
- Don't share food or drinks.
- Don't share combs, brushes, hats, or other hair items.
- You are the only one who really knows about your health. If you are sick or injured, inform the nurse.
- All camper medication including over the counter meds, prescription meds & vitamins must be turned in to the nurse upon arrival to camp. Special permission will be allowed for asthma inhalers, skin creams, etc., but check with the nurse first.
- Be aware of & refer to the nurse any camper who is vomiting, having diarrhea, or who appears ill or is unable to participate in the camp program.

(adapted from Horton Haven Camp materials)