

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY LONG BEACH RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Camps - Bullying Prevention

Camp Staff Members:

BULLYING is any intentional hurtful act, committed by one or more persons against another. Bullying occurs when there is an imbalance of power between a bully and a victim.

The main types of bullying include:

Physical - punching, hitting, shoving, stealing personal things, or getting into someone's personal space when asked not to.

Verbal - name calling, hurtful teasing, taunting, unwanted nicknames, gossiping

Relational - exclusion, humiliation, blackmailing, manipulating friendships

Who are the “**bullies**”? Bullies are often smart, popular, well-liked, and have good social skills. They may look like leaders and be liked by counselors and other campers, but bullies lack empathy. The “**victims**” on the other hand show some vulnerability that makes them easy targets. As a counselor, you need to be aware of those kids that may be left out or have a difficult time fitting in or making friends. Sometimes, a victim of bullying may in turn bully others.

As a **camp staff member**, your role is to be a **hero!** You need to discuss camper rules and role model the behavior that you ask them to follow. Let campers know that bullying is unacceptable and won't be tolerated. Do not play favorites with some campers since that would show them that it is okay to “exclude” others. Bullying usually occurs in places when counselors are not around, so it is important to make bullying a regular topic of discussion with your campers on a weekly basis at a minimum, so they know you take it seriously. Emphasize the importance of valuing each participant and their unique contributions.

When a camp staff member observes bullying of any kind, they must intervene by stepping in and separating the children involved. Inquire with all parties about what happened to determine the facts of the situation. **Support the victim**, Assure the children that you will look into the incident and report any bullying behavior to your leadership team immediately. Teach your campers to be a real “caring” community and to let you know when they see someone left out, teased, or upset by someone else. Teach campers the difference between 1) **reporting**: getting kids out of danger and into safety and 2) **tattling**: telling on others with the intent to get someone in trouble. When a camper reports that he or she is being picked on, support him or her and keep an eye on the situation. Find opportunities to pair that camper with a supportive peer and to encourage their participation in group activities.

When you **role model** to your campers that you want them to be heroes themselves and step in to help another camper or find a counselor when there is a bullying problem, you have done a great job! Campers follow your actions much more than they follow your words. Make camp a place where everyone feels valued by how you bring everyone together.

Camp staff members must report all instances of bullying or suspected bullying immediately to their camp director.