

# Handi\*Camp

## Staff Training Manual

### DAY CAMP



Handi\*Camp is a ministry of  
**Handi\*Vangelism Ministries International**  
PO Box 122, Akron PA 17501-0122  
717.859.4777 / hvmi.org / HandiCamp@hvmi.org



© 2022rev by H\*VMI.  
This manual is for training use by Handi\*Camp.  
Request permission before duplicating any contents.

# INTRODUCTION

---

## Your purpose

*JUST THINK – by Roy Lessin*

You're here not by chance, but by God's choosing.  
His hand formed you, and made you the person you are.  
He compares you to no one else – you are one of a kind.  
You lack nothing that His grace can't give you.  
He has allowed you to be here at this time in history  
to fulfill **His special purpose for this generation.**

## Mission/Vision Statements

H\*VMI exists to share the compassion of Christ by walking alongside individuals facing life's challenges and equipping others to do the same. H\*VMI provides support, programs, resources and training so the people we serve may be included as growing and serving members of the Body of Christ.

## H\*VMI Program Areas

### DISABILITY

- **Discipleship** – for people with disabilities of all ages living in rehab centers, residential facilities, nursing homes or the community
- **Handi\*Camp** – for children, youth and adults with physical and/or intellectual disabilities
- **PIP** – for parents of children with disabilities

### GRIEF

- **BASIS** – for bereaved parents and their families
- for people grieving over many types of losses such as the loss of a spouse, parent, sibling and other significant people; divorce; employment; health

### TRAINING & EQUIPPING

- for **Individuals**, the **Church** and the **Community**, locally and around the world, in areas such as disability; grief; mental health; abuse; divorce

## History of Handi\*Camp

Handi\*Camp began in 1974 under the direction of Tim Sheetz, founder of H\*VMI. With only one week of camp, we ministered to ten children who had a variety of physical disabilities. In 1975, Handi\*Camp was held at two locations, and a third location was added in 1976. As the

camp program continued to grow in number of weeks and campers, the need to further expand our focus became apparent as well. In 1982 we added a week for children with intellectual disabilities. By the end of the eighties our campers were growing older, so in 1990 we held our first *Young Adult Bible Conference* (now *Bible Conference*) for adults with physical disabilities. In 2021, in response to pandemic limitations and changes, the first Day Camp program was instituted. Handi\*Camp has continued to expand and grow through God's great faithfulness and through the ministry of its staff members. We continue to strive to provide a fantastic, Christ-centered camping experience for everyone who attends!

## Handi\*Camp Program Groups

*For campers whose diagnosis is a PHYSICAL disability and who are at or near age level academically:*

- *Seekers:* For children who have completed Kindergarten through 5th grade.
- *Discoverers:* For youth who are in middle or high school.
- *Young Adult Bible Conference (YABC):* Young adults who have the potential to be in college, careers and/or independent living situations. (ages 20s and 30s)

*For campers whose diagnosis includes an INTELLECTUAL disability:*

- *Adventurers:* For children who have completed Kindergarten through age 12. (mild or moderate level)
- *Voyagers:* For youth and young adults ages 12-21. (mild or moderate level)
- *Explorers:* For youth and young adults ages 12+ who benefit from additional support for learning, communication and/or behavior. (moderate to severe level)
- *Challengers:* For adults ages 21+. (mild or moderate level)
- *Conquerors:* For young adults ages 21+ who are at or near their peer level socially and emotionally. (mild level)

## Influence of Handi\*Camp

Camp is a place where many campers, guests and staff members make important decisions for the Lord: **salvation, dedication to Christian living and/or full-time Christian service.** God's Word speaks of the influence "camp" can have on the lives of those who attend. And so do countless personal testimonies and camping "experts!"

- *Camp is a place for teaching.* "Now when He saw the crowds, He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to Him, and He began to teach them." (Matthew 5:1-2)
- *Camp provides a rest from the busyness of life.* "Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, He said to them, 'Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.'" (Mark 6:31)
- *Campers can learn from the example of staff members and through a variety of teachable moments.* "One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of his disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.'" (Luke 11:1)

## Philosophy of Handi\*Camp

We believe each person is uniquely created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27) with physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual needs. If a camper, guest or staff person struggles with security in any of these areas, it will affect all of the other areas. One of the most ideal ways to develop a whole person approach to ministry is through a carefully planned camping program. Each staff member needs to maintain balance in these areas personally in order to play a key role in ministering to *all* of these parts in the life of a camper!

- *Physical:*
  - Each camper needs the security of knowing necessary physical care will be provided. Staff can provide physical security by doing an excellent job caring for physical needs.
  - At camp, *everyone* has the opportunity to participate and not just be a spectator. A person with a visual impairment can swing a bat and race around the bases, a person using a wheelchair can take a leisurely canoe ride and a person with an intellectual disability can be taught how to fish.
  - Staff can provide for this need by actively and attentively providing support during camp activities, enabling them to succeed.
- *Intellectual:*
  - Each camper needs the security of understanding what is going on in the surrounding environment.
  - At camp, schedules, teaching times and activities are adapted to maximize the camper's ability to learn new skills and Biblical truth.
  - Staff can provide intellectual security by helping a camper understand what is happening and be able to contribute throughout the day.
- *Social:*
  - As a social being, each camper needs the security of friendship with other campers, guests and staff.
  - At camp, each camper discovers a new environment with new people, ideal for making new friends and discovering new talents and abilities.
  - Staff can provide for this need by encouraging and/or setting up situations where appropriate interactions with others can take place.
- *Emotional:*
  - As an emotional being, each camper needs the security of unconditional acceptance.
  - At camp, each camper can feel comfortable, safe and fully accepted in a caring, Christian environment.
  - Staff can provide emotional security by sharing in the excitement and enthusiasm of camp, listening attentively to what a camper shares and fostering positive interactions with others.

- *Spiritual:*

- As a spiritual being, each camper needs the security of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- At camp, each camper learns spiritual Truth through planned and unplanned times in the day. Introduction to God's plan of salvation and encouragement for Believers to grow closer to Him are two key areas of spiritual emphasis.
- Staff can provide for this need by learning to share Truth in various ways suitable to ability level of each camper. That Truth can be used by the Lord to lead that person to salvation, spiritual growth and opportunities to serve Him!

➤ WHAT ARE THE FIVE "PARTS" THAT ARE PART OF OUR GOD CREATED MAKEUP?

*LIKE ME - by Emily Kingsley*

I went to my Dad and said to him, there's a new kid who's come to my school.

He's different from me and he isn't too cool.

No, he's nothing at all like me, like me, No, he's nothing at all like me.

He runs in a funnyish jerkyish way, and he never comes first in a race.

Sometimes he forgets which way is first base,

And he's nothing at all like me, like me, No, he's nothing at all like me.

He studies all day in a separate class, and they say that it's called "Special Ed."

And sometimes I don't understand what he's said,

And he's nothing at all like me, like me, No, he's nothing at all like me.

His face looks kind of different from mine, and his talking is sometimes so slow.

And it makes me feel funny and there's one thing I know;

He is nothing at all like me, like me, No, he's nothing at all like me.

And my father said, "Son, I want you to think when you meet someone different and new

That he may seem a little bit strange, it's true,

But he's not very different from you, from you, No, he's not very different from you."

Well I guess, I admitted I've looked at his face; when he's left out of games he feels bad.

And when other kids tease him, I can see he's so sad.

I guess that's not so different from me, from me, No, that's not very different from me.

And when we're in music, he sure loves to sing, and he sings just like me, right out loud.

When he gets his report card, I can tell he feels proud.

And he's not very different from me, from me, No, he's not very different from me.

And I know in the lunchroom he has lots of fun; he loves hot dogs and ice cream and fries.

And he hates to eat spinach and that's not a surprise,

Cause that's not very different from me, from me, No he's not very different from me.

And he's always so friendly; he always says, "Hi," and he waves and he calls out my name.

And he'd like to be friends and get into a game,

Which is not very different from me, from me, No, I guess that's not different from me.

And his folks really love him. I saw them at school, I remember on Open School Night –  
They were smiling and proud and they hugged him real tight,  
And that's not very different from me, from me, No, he's not very different from me.

So I said to my dad, Hey, you know that new kid? Well I've really been thinking a lot.  
Some things are different ... and some things are not ...  
But mostly he's really like me, like me, Yes, my new friend's a lot like me.

## Objectives of Handi\*Camp

As camp staff, you have a part in creating a godly, loving, caring environment where campers can thrive on exciting, fun, new experiences! We want campers to leave camp with good memories, with new Truths from God's Word and with new or deepened friendships. You have the opportunity to help accomplish these things through:



- *Evangelism:* Faithfully, clearly sharing the Gospel so campers have the opportunity to respond to Jesus Christ as their own, personal Savior. We want to see campers come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of their lives and to grow in their knowledge of His Word.
- *Discipleship/Growth:* Helping campers grow in their Biblical knowledge so they can face life's challenges with a better understanding of God's Word and how it applies to their own lives.
- *Life Coaching:* Being a source of godly Truth for every camper who wrestles with God's purposes in allowing his disability. Striving to encourage each camper to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading, recognize God's plan and purpose in life and seek God's will for the future.
- *Working as a team:* Doing your part as a caring staff member, working together to accomplish our mission. We expect our staff to be unified in, dedicated to and focused on ministering to our campers and one another.
- *Ministry to family:* Providing quality care in order to give a respite opportunity to caregivers. Handi\*Camp also creates an initial connection with families so that an ongoing ministry can take place beyond camp as fulltime staff continue offering Discipleship programs year-round.

➤ WHICH OBJECTIVES DO YOU FEEL WILL BE YOUR "STRENGTH?"

➤ FOR WHICH ONE(S) WILL YOU MOST NEED GOD'S STRENGTH? PRAY NOW AND ASK FOR THAT!

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

---

## General Policies

Handi\*Camp hires staff members who have a passion to honor and serve the Lord. Staff members are expected to be godly examples of dedication, a positive spirit, Christ's love and encouragement to the entire camp community. Complying with the policies listed below is for the betterment of camp and its programs and should be as "unto the Lord." They are in place to help maintain a focus on the campers and on the purpose of ministry. Behavior inconsistent with a life dedicated to serving the Lord will be addressed as necessary.



- **FACILITIES:** Staff members are expected to be good stewards of the facilities and resources provided while serving at camp; and helping campers to do the same.
- **GUESTS:** Permission for guests, including family or friends, must be obtained from the Camp Director **prior to arrival**.
- **PHONE CALLS:** Family and friends may call the camp phone numbers for emergency situations. Cell phones need to be kept in a non-ring mode (silent or vibrate) and may not be used for incoming or outgoing calls, texting or other personal use during *any* part of the camp day unless directly related to a camp need or when given special permission from camp leadership for an emergency situation. Calls must go to voice mail and may be responded to at a later time.
- **DRESS CODE:** As representatives of Handi\*Camp and for the sake of our testimony to campers, parents, host families, and each other, everyone's attire and personal hygiene is expected to be neat, clean and appropriate. This policy applies to men and women and includes weekend/off-hours if staying with a host family.
  - Casual, conservative clothing (jeans and shorts, etc.). Shorts must be mid-thigh or longer.
  - Shirts must be long enough on the bottom and high enough on the top so that they are not revealing when bending over. No bare midriffs!
  - Underwear and undergarments, including straps, must be under clothing and not showing!
  - NOT PERMITTED: Tank tops, racerback or spaghetti strap tops; tight-fitting shirts or shorts; clothing or accessories with potentially offensive or eccentric logos, words or pictures.

**If an outfit is seen as "questionable," it will be brought to the staff member's attention. We ask that you be sensitive to and willing to respond positively to the concern.**

- **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS:** Personal relationships must not interfere with camp responsibilities or ministry to campers. Staff must maintain a good testimony in relationships with members of the opposite sex. Two unrelated

people of opposite genders (staff and staff or staff and camper) should never be alone in a secluded area together. While we believe it is not in all situations inappropriate, in order to be sensitive to various cultures represented at camp, and/or the social awareness of our campers, we ask that all staff, including married couples, abstain from public displays of affection.

## Opportunities to Provide Feedback:

Staff have the opportunity to fill out evaluation forms following Staff Orientation and after the end of the time at camp. Honest feedback is immensely valuable as the fulltime staff continues to seek ways to improve and grow the ministry of Handi\*Camp. If there is a serious concern, problem or unsafe condition, please go to your supervisor or someone on the fulltime staff so it can be addressed right away.

## Emergency, Health and Safety Procedures

---

### Emergency Procedures

#### Code NOAH: (severe weather)



*Thunderstorm:* If thunder can be heard, lightning is too close for outdoor activities. Be prepared to stop all outside activities, move to a designated location and listen for instructions from leadership staff.

#### Code ADAM: (missing camper)

##### *Do NOT:*

- Leave a camper unattended at any time!

##### *DO:*

- Supervise campers at all times.
- Be aware of where your assigned camper is at all times.
- Notify the activity leader if a camper will be late to, not attending, or changing a scheduled activity.
- Use the radio to check on location if a camper fails to arrive within 10 minutes of the start time of an activity. If no reply, repeat. If still not located, use appropriate code for missing camper.
- Call code IMMEDIATELY if a camper is KNOWN to be missing.
- Listen to instructions. The Camp Director will organize a search. Health Care staff should respond to the code and help as needed.

➤ WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO HELP AVOID A MISSING CAMPER SITUATION?



## Code LUKE: (medical – emergency or non-emergency)

### Do NOT:

- Move someone who has had a severe fall; an injury resulting in paralysis or unconsciousness; nearly drowned; fainted; become overheated; has a severe cut or burn; or has a possible fracture.

### DO:

- Call code and state “emergency” or “non-emergency.”
- Explain the situation and follow any directions given.
- Wait for help to arrive.



### CONSIDERED EMERGENCY

- Any sign of potential severe injury such as large or deep cuts, suspected muscle sprain/strain, broken bones, etc.
- Any bleeding, including nosebleed.
- Tooth knocked out.
- Allergic reaction to bug bite or sting.
- Choking.
- Any fall or hard bump (head or other body part) whether there is an observable injury or not. *A nurse must make an assessment and give treatment.*
- Any injury, even if considered “minor,” such as small cuts, abrasions, slivers, splinters, rashes, etc.
- Any direct exposure to blood or other infectious material.
- Any sign of seizure activity.
- Any change in mental status: *confusion, speech not making sense.*
- Any suspected child/adult maltreatment or abuse.
- Any injury incurred in performance of job.

*Any staff member directly involved in an incident involving, but not limited to, any of the above, will be asked provide documentation using a Physical Incident Report. That report will be provided by and submitted to the Health Care Manager.*

### REPORTABLE OBSERVATIONS (no code)

*IMMEDIATELY report the following to the Health Care Manager:*

- Any unusual or abnormal behavior.
- Any sign of illness such as fever, headache, sore throat, inflamed eyelids or drainage from eyes, ears or nose.
- Any redness, marks, grooves or other signs of pressure on the skin.

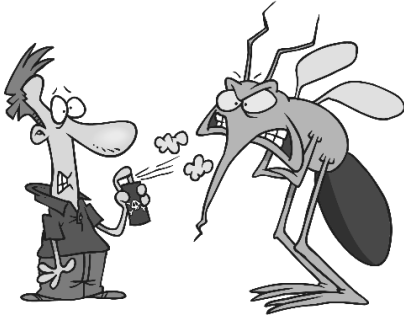
- Any unsafe condition, practice or activity that may lead to a camper or staff accident.
- Any occurrence of diarrhea.

## Code CAIN: (behavioral incident)

- Any severe agitation: *yelling, hitting, kicking, biting, spitting, head banging.*
- Any extreme anxiety: *overwhelming unwarranted fear, change in concentration level, panic.*

*Any staff member directly involved in an incident involving, but not limited to, any of the above, will be asked provide documentation using a **Behavioral Incident Report**. That report will be provided by and submitted to the Health Care Manager.*

## Bug Bites and Tick Prevention



Bug repellent must be used when participating in outdoor activities. Avoid heavily wooded or tall grassy areas.

**NOTE:** If you find a tick, unattached OR attached, call for a nurse to assess and assist. (Code Luke – non emergency)

### *Applying bug repellent:*

- DO NOT spray inside or while in an enclosed area.
- DO NOT spray onto the face.
- DO NOT apply on camper's hands, near eyes or around mouth.
- TO APPLY to face, spray on your hands first. Then rub on face. Use sparingly on ears.
- DO NOT apply bug repellent over cuts, wounds, or irritated skin.
- DO NOT put on too much bug repellent. Use just enough to cover exposed skin and clothing.
- DO NOT use under clothing.
- Be sure to wash your hands and the camper's hands before eating to remove bug repellent.

## Exposure Control Plan

In accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Blood borne Pathogens Standard, 29 CFR 1910.1030, Handi\*Camp has developed and will follow an Exposure Control Plan. This plan is maintained in the health care area. Questions may be directed to the Handi\*Camp Health Care Manager/Exposure Control Coordinator.

*Potential risk of exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials based on staff position:*

- **Category A: HIGH EXPOSURE RISK**
  - Lead Staff Supervisors, Counselors, Support Staff, Activities Staff
- **Category B: MODERATE EXPOSURE RISK**
  - Health Care Staff, Housekeeping Staff
- **Category C: LOW EXPOSURE RISK**
  - Camp Director, Assistant Camp Directors, Bible Teaching Staff, Food Service Staff, Facilities Manager

*Tasks associated with potential exposure:*

- **Lead Staff Supervisors, Counselors, Support Staff, Activities Staff:**  
Providing personal care and hygiene including assistance in toileting; changing diapers and/or sanitary napkins; cleaning bedpans or urinals; cleaning up blood or other potentially infectious materials; clearing tables.
- **Health Care Staff:**  
Performing invasive procedures; treating open wounds; providing first aid; cleaning bedpans or urinals; cleaning up blood or other potentially infectious materials; giving injections; assisting with personal care.
- **Housekeeping Staff:**  
Cleaning sinks and toilets; emptying trash; cleaning up blood or vomit.
- **Camp Director and Assistant Camp Directors:**  
Cleaning up blood or other potentially infectious materials; clearing tables; assisting with cleaning tasks.

## Universal Precautions

This policy is a requirement of the Federal and State Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and must be followed by each staff member. [cdc.gov]

**Hand Hygiene:** Proper hand washing is the most effective means of preventing cross-infection of disease. Wash your hands whenever you:

- Change a diaper or help with toileting.
- Before beginning or after completing any first-aid.
- Make contact with blood or other potentially infectious material.
- Make contact with broken skin, such as a rash or open wound.

- Begin to serve food or eat a meal or snack.
- Prepare to feed a camper and after you finish feeding.
- Finish an elective such as fishing, boating or crafts. Finish cleaning tasks or have handled garbage.
- Have coughed, sneezed, blown your nose or assisted a camper or guest with like tasks.
- Remove disposable gloves.



### Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Disposable gloves are a type of PPE and are to be used whenever there is a potential for contact with blood or body fluids, potentially infectious materials or items soiled by such materials. Gloves are stocked in restrooms and the infirmary. Gloves are to be used **ONLY ONCE**, then removed and disposed of properly.

#### *Wear PPE whenever you:*

- Clean up urine, feces, vomit, blood or other bodily fluids OR when cleaning any items that have been soiled with these materials. (*bedpans, urinals, diapers, sanitary pads*)
- Handle laundry soiled by any bodily fluids or materials.
- Assist someone using the toilet, a bedpan or urinal.
- Change diapers or sanitary pads.
- Feed someone without using utensils.
- Provide treatments or other medical care.
- Provide care and have a cut, sore or rash on your hands.
- Perform cleaning tasks.
- Are uncertain whether the situation requires gloves. If in doubt – WEAR THEM!
- Note: A staff member is considered exposed even if personal protective equipment (PPE) such as disposable gloves were worn.

**Exception: EMERGENCY care** for someone who is bleeding should never be delayed because gloves are not readily available!

## Safe handling and disposal of potentially contaminated materials:

Contaminated items containing blood or bodily materials (diapers, soiled chucks, sanitary napkins, etc.) must be disposed of properly by placing them in a GALLON SIZE PLASTIC BAG and tied closed *before* being placed in the trashcan.

## Abuse/Maltreatment Information and Policy

---

### Staff Behavior with Campers:

- Staff may NEVER be alone with a camper in any location.
- Another staff member MUST be present when providing personal care (changing, helping in the restroom, etc.).
- Do not linger around camper who is tending to needs independently. Supervise while maintaining privacy.
- CHECK and make sure you do not leave a staff member alone with a camper when leaving an activity area.
- Report anyone missing from a scheduled activity to the activity's leader.
- If spending one-on-one time with camper, always be in a public area in full view of others. Avoid seclusion for any reason.
- Practice self-control. Do not overreact when difficult situations arise.
- Never physically harm or punish a camper. DO NOT hit; strike; push; spank; isolate without proper supervision; require sit-ups or running laps; or anything similar.
- You MUST tell your lead staff member when you feel stressed or are having trouble with a camper. The leadership staff is here to help and to arrange a break if necessary.
- Do not give back rubs, hug for an extended time or do anything that may be misinterpreted by others.

➤ WHAT PRECAUTIONS DO YOU NEED TO TAKE TO AVOID ANY ACCUSATIONS OR APPEARANCE OF MISCONDUCT?

### Definition of Abuse:

- "Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation"; or
- "An act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm."  
(*childwelfare.gov*)

## Types and Signs of Abuse:

[medicalnewstoday.com]

**Physical abuse:** Intentionally hitting or otherwise physically harming by: burning or scalding; suffocating; holding under water; shaking; throwing; hitting; biting; non-consensual tickling; excessive pinching; slapping; tripping; deliberately inducing illness; forcibly restraining in a stressed position; withholding sleep, food, or medication; or any other physical harm.

**Emotional abuse:** Consistently saying things and behaving in a way that conveys inadequacy, being unloved or worthless through: not allowing expression of views and opinions; ridiculing; silencing; frequently shouting at or threatening; mocking the way they are or how they try to communicate; giving the “silent treatment”; telling them they are “no good” or “a mistake”; or preventing normal social interaction with peers and others.

**Sexual abuse:** Any act that forces or entices a child to participate in sexual activities even if the child does not understand what is happening and there is no force, violence, or even contact. Such activities may include: rape; oral sex; touching outside of clothing; rubbing; inappropriate kissing; getting a child to watch sexual acts, images, videos or other material; telling dirty jokes or stories; forcing or inviting a child to undress for sexual gratification; “flashing”; encouraging behavior that is sexually inappropriate; grooming or preparing for future abuse or activity. Sexual abuse usually involves someone the child knows. Often, the child will be told to keep the relationship a secret and may be threatened with something bad happening if telling anyone.

**Neglect:** When a parent or caregiver persistently fails to meet basic physical and psychological needs resulting in impairment of health or development by: not providing appropriate food, clothing or medical care; locking a child in a room or closet; not providing adequate shelter; abandonment or exclusion from the family home; placing or leaving in a situation in which they might experience emotional or physical danger or harm; leaving a alone for a long time or so that they experience harm; or not responding basic emotional needs. Long-term effects of neglect include loneliness, isolation, and low self-esteem.



## How to Respond if Abuse/Maltreatment is Suspected:

- Do not get angry or act surprised about what you see or hear.
- Listen calmly and carefully, note behavior and believe what is shared.
- Immediately seek out a fulltime staff member.
- Be aware that you will often experience strong negative feelings. Do not, by your actions, expressions or words, show judgment toward the abuser or the child.
- Do not ask probing questions of the abuser or the child. Your immediate responsibility is to report the information you have received.

## Camp Procedure for Suspected Abuse/Maltreatment:

- Do NOT discuss situation or information with fellow staff members or campers.
- **MANDATORY REPORTING:** As a staff member in regular contact with children and/or adults with disabilities, you are a mandatory reporter. If you know of or suspect abuse has occurred (camper to camper, staff to camper, or staff to staff), you must *immediately* notify the Camp Director and, as required by law, report the incident by calling:
  - **For incidents involving people 18 and under:** 1-800-932-0313
  - **For incidents involving people with disabilities over 18, contact PA Adult Protective Services:** 1-800-490-8505
- If someone shares with you about an incident or abuse, *immediately* report the information you have received to the Camp Director and make the required reporting call. Then, carry on the camp routine as usual.
- You will be asked to write an incident report describing what was witnessed.
- The accused staff member will immediately be suspended from all responsibilities.
- The accused staff member will meet with the Executive Director of H\*VMI and the Camp Director and an investigation will take place.
- The outcome of the investigation will determine what further course of action, if any, may be taken regarding ongoing employment at camp.
- H\*VMI's Executive Director will disseminate information to the staff as appropriate. Any information shared in these meetings is confidential.
- If the press becomes involved, do not answer any questions. Refer them to H\*VMI's Executive Director.



➤ WHAT ARE YOU REQUIRED TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE OF NEGLECT?

## PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

### A Typical Day

- All staff should **wear a staff shirt** on Mondays.
- Staff should be ready to **warmly and enthusiastically greet** arriving campers, families and friends.
- Camper Check-In / Name Tags / Elective Choice
- **Involve campers in available activities** once the registration process is completed.
- Welcome Activity
- Elective 1
- Chapel / Bible Time



- Lunch
- Free Play / Board Games / Coloring
- Elective 2
- Snack Shop
- Group Activity
- Review Time / Closing Prayer
- Camper Pick-Up

### *Mealtimes*

- Follow any dietary restrictions/limitations, especially noting allergies! Nametags will be coded if there is a dietary concern. Be sure you are aware of any restrictions/allergies BEFORE serving food or beverage to a camper. The special diet coordinator (SDC) will bring alternate items as needed.
- Model good manners.
- Fulltime or veteran staff members will be available to help staff learn the specifics on how to feed campers needing that type of assistance.
- Be aware of a staff member who has not eaten and offer to relieve/assist with feeding so everyone has an opportunity to enjoy the meal.

### *End of Day*

- Do NOT put wet or soiled clothing in camper's bag. Place it in a plastic bag and give it to the person picking up the camper.
- Make sure the camper has all personal items, mobility equipment, crafts, prizes or take-home items from the day.
- Stay with families through the checkout process and departure. Make sure they have all belongings and that they sign out with a nurse.

### *Helping During Activities:*

Handi\*Camp provides the opportunity for campers to participate in a wide variety of activities and "traditional" camp experiences. A variety of elective activities are planned so that each camper can develop abilities and pursue interests.

#### *Apply sunscreen:*

- Water resistant sunscreen of 30 SPF or higher must be used during all outdoor activities where there is the potential for prolonged exposure to the sun.
- Apply sunscreen generously. Cover *any* bare skin: neck, back, face, ears, tops of feet and legs. *Thoroughly* rub into the skin. It takes approximately 15 minutes for skin to absorb the sunscreen and to be protective. If you wait until camper is in the sun to apply sunscreen, the skin will be unprotected and burn.
- Reapply sunscreen at least every two hours or if excessively sweating (if staying out in the sun).
- Before eating, thoroughly wash your hands and camper's hands to remove all sunscreen.



### Safety:

- Camp leadership does all they can to ensure that activities are conducted safely. Please listen to and follow directions. If any rules or instructions are unclear, ask the activity leader to explain them again.
- Any camper using a wheelchair must wear a restraint during any active game.
- Bring any safety concerns to the Activities Coordinator directly.

### Encourage and Assist:

- Campers take their cues from staff. Show enthusiasm and model appropriate behavior for every activity. Help make each activity as fun as you possibly can!
- Set aside competitiveness. Winning is never the primary goal. Focus on helping campers enjoy the activity. Encourage accomplishments along the way. (Example: A craft may not look like the sample, but if the camper enjoyed being able to create something unique, that's important!)
- If an activity is not going well, do all you can to make it as successful as possible "to the end." Once the activity time is over, bring your concerns privately to the activity leader so things can be improved. Also advise the Activities Coordinator so the concern is followed-up.
- Stay with the camper(s) you are assigned to help for the duration of the activity. Use the time to help, to encourage, and to develop one-on-one friendships with the campers.
- If an activity becomes too frustrating for your camper, take a short break or walk and then return. Be sure to let the activity leader know where you are going. Stay within sight of others.
- When the activity is over, you and the camper should help to clean up or put away any supplies that were used.

### Special Tips:

*In all things, allow and encourage campers to be as independent as possible. The staff member's role is to assist, not to do it for a camper.*

- ***Hand over hand:*** Use for campers with limited or no use of their arms/hands. Maintain as much contact as possible with items being used in the activity. Place your hand over the camper's and guide in any activity such as painting, writing, tossing a ball, holding a baseball bat, moving a game piece, etc.
- ***Set up for success:*** Find ways to help camper achieve the goal. For example, have the guest "toss" a basketball and you "help" it go into the basket. Or when painting, have the camper hold the brush and you move the project back and forth to help "paint." Masking tape works well to keep things from moving while trying to trace, paint, draw or write.
- ***Give choices:*** Hold up options of things to do, such as 2-3 board game choices; or a box of markers when picking a color; and allow the camper to choose. Elective choice picture cards are available for those who are non-verbal, whose speech is difficult to understand or who have difficulty making choices without visual cues.

- HOW CAN YOU BE A GOOD HELPER DURING ACTIVITIES?
- WHAT MIGHT DISTRACT YOU FROM BEING ENTHUSIASTIC AND CAMPER FOCUSED?
- WHAT CAN YOU DO TO OVERCOME THOSE DISTRACTIONS?

## Life At Camp

---

### Teamwork

Each staff member and volunteer has an integral role in the ministry of Handi\*Camp. As part of the summer staff team, you are expected to:

- Be a positive, encouraging and serving part of the team.
- Serve to the very best of your ability.
- Come alongside others to help them be successful in serving.
- Fulfill your ministry responsibilities first, then take time to notice how you might be able to help in other ministry areas as well.
- Staff members are jointly responsible for impacting the camper's physical, intellectual, social, emotion and spiritual needs. Work together to create a camp environment for the good and growth of each camper. Work together to make camp successful and enjoyable for ALL!



- WHAT ARE THREE SPECIFIC WAYS YOU CAN HELP AND/OR ENCOURAGE YOUR FELLOW STAFF MEMBERS?

### Maintaining Your Personal Devotional Life



The key to having a fruitful ministry and living a Spirit-controlled life is to maintain a strong spiritual life, even while at camp. In order to be strengthened and renewed for each new day, staff members need to find opportunities, even if brief, to spend daily quiet time with the Lord. *Know* that you cannot serve in your own strength alone. God will use you in incredible ways as you maintain a strong relationship with Him.

#### *How does that happen?*

- **Spend time in His Word.** His Word gives life, renews us on the inside and helps us have victory over sin. Even Jesus found time in a busy schedule to slip away and spend time with His Father. Find those moments.
- **Take time to pray.** Continually, constantly through your day. Prayer helps you gain God's perspective on situations, provides the power you need and brings you into alignment with God's will for the moment.

- **Confess sin quickly.** The main hindrance to a close walk with God is unconfessed sin. Maintain a clean heart before the Lord and a forgiving, joyful spirit toward others.

**Ephesians 5** lists some helpful principles:

- **Verse 1:** Strive to be an imitator of Him.
- **Verse 15:** Be careful to walk in God's sphere, knowing that He is the One who gives guidance through the pitfalls of life.
- **Verse 17:** Understand the will of God and strive to be an imitator of Him.
- **Verse 18:** Be filled with the Holy Spirit, and make a daily, conscious decision to be controlled by Him.
- **Verse 20:** Always give thanks for all things, and be ready when difficulties come by having a mindset of thankfulness.
- **Verse 21:** Be subject to others in an attitude of service, out of reverence for God.

➤ WHAT IS SOMETHING SPECIFIC YOU WILL DO TO MAINTAIN A CLOSE WALK WITH THE LORD?

## Biblical Conflict Resolution

*The following policy has been adopted by the Board of H\*VMI/Handi\*Camp in issues regarding conflict resolution. If you need help or support dealing with a conflict, you are to go to your supervisor. Please listen carefully during Orientation for who that person will be during your service at camp.*

As people reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we believe that we are called to respond to conflict in a way that is remarkably different from the way the world deals with conflict.<sup>1</sup> We also believe that conflict provides opportunities to glorify God, serve other people, and grow to be like Christ.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in response to God's love and in reliance on his grace, we commit ourselves to respond to conflict according to the following principles:

**Glorify God** — Instead of focusing on our own desires or dwelling on what others may do, we will rejoice in the Lord and bring him praise by depending on his forgiveness, wisdom, power, and love, as we seek to faithfully obey his commands and maintain a loving, merciful, and forgiving attitude.<sup>3</sup>

**Get the Log out of Your Eye** — Instead of blaming others for a conflict or resisting correction, we will trust in God's mercy and take responsibility for our own contribution to conflicts—confessing our sins to those we have wronged, asking God to help us change any attitudes and habits that lead to conflict, and seeking to repair any harm we have caused.<sup>4</sup>

**Gently Restore** — Instead of pretending that conflict doesn't exist or talking about others behind their backs, we will overlook minor offenses or we will talk personally and graciously with those whose offenses seem too serious to overlook, seeking to restore them rather than condemn them. When a

conflict with a Christian brother or sister cannot be resolved in private, we will ask others in the body of Christ to help us settle the matter in a Biblical manner.<sup>5</sup>

**Go and be reconciled** — Instead of accepting premature compromise or allowing relationships to wither, we will actively pursue genuine peace and reconciliation—forgiving others as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us, and seeking just and mutually beneficial solutions to our differences.<sup>6</sup>

By God's grace, we will apply these principles as a matter of stewardship, realizing that conflict is an assignment, not an accident. We will remember that success in God's eyes is not a matter of specific results, but of faithful, dependent obedience. And we will pray that our service as peacemakers will bring praise to our Lord and lead others to know His infinite love.<sup>7</sup>

As evidence of our desire to resolve conflicts as peacefully as possible, any claim or dispute arising from or related to employment or the services rendered on behalf of Handi\*Vangelism Ministries International or Handi\*Camp shall be settled by mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with The Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, a division of Peacemaker Ministry (complete text of the Rules is available at [www.Peacemaker.net](http://www.Peacemaker.net)). The proceedings for such dispute resolution shall be held in Akron, Pennsylvania unless otherwise agreed to by the parties in writing. Judgment upon an arbitration decision may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction. The parties understand that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising from employment or the services rendered, and expressly waive our right to file a lawsuit in any civil court against one another for such disputes, except to enforce an arbitration decision.

Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 5:9; Luke 6:27-36; Gal. 5:19-26.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 8:28-29; 1 Cor. 10:31-11:1; James 1:2-4.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. 37:1-6; Mark 11:25; John 14:15; Rom. 12:17-21; 1 Cor. 10:31; Phil. 4:2-9; Col. 3:1-4; James 3:17-18; 4:1-3; 1 Peter 2:12.

<sup>4</sup> Prov. 28:13; Matt. 7:3-5; Luke 19:8; Col. 3:5-14; 1 John 1:8-9.

<sup>5</sup> Prov. 19:11; Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 6:1-8; Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:29; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; James 5:9.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. 5:23-24; 6:12; 7:12; Eph. 4:1-3, 32; Phil. 2:3-4.

<sup>7</sup> Matt. 25:14-21; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:18; 1 Peter 2:19; 4:19.

*Adapted from [The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict](#). ©2003 by Ken Sande. All Rights Reserved. Copyright Peacemaker Ministries. Used with permission. [www.Peacemaker.net](http://www.Peacemaker.net)*

➤ WHAT STEPS SHOULD YOU TAKE IF YOU ARE IN CONFLICT WITH SOMEONE?

## Evaluations

Fulltime staff meet weekly to discuss blessings, areas of strength and areas for growth regarding each staff member. That discussion forms the basis for summer staff member's individual evaluation time. Evaluations are typically done at the midpoint and end of a staff member's time at Handi\*Camp. Those serving fewer than two weeks may only have one evaluation. Evaluations are led by the staff member's immediate supervisor and one other fulltime staff member.

The evaluation process is not meant to intimidate or to be a cause for stress. It is designed to encourage staff by pointing out ways their God-given gifts and abilities are being used; to give tips to help them become even more effective in serving others; and to address any areas of concern with the goal of providing opportunity for growth. At the end of the evaluation, both parties will sign off on the form and a recommendation will be made regarding the potential for future service with Handi\*Camp. Forms are kept on file in the camp office and may be used to provide information in response to outside reference requests on the staff member.

*NOTE: If a situation arises at any time which could potentially harm a camper, guest, staff member or staff unity, it will be brought to the immediate attention of the necessary staff member, regardless of whether it is a designated evaluation time or not.*

## Serving Campers

---

### Respect

*“For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb.  
I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.  
My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret,  
And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;  
Your eyes have seen my unformed substance;  
And in Your book were all written, the days that were ordained for me,  
When as yet there was not one of them.” Psalm 139:13-16*

Each camper is the Lord’s unique creation and is to be treated with love, dignity and respect. Be an example and a role model to the campers of how to treat one another with love, as God has loved you.

### *Beatitudes for Special People*

Author Unknown

*Blessed are you who take time to listen to difficult speech, for you help us to know that if we persevere we can be understood.*

*Blessed are you when, by all things, you assure us that what makes us individuals is not our particular disability or difficulty but our God-given personhood which no handicapping condition can confine.*

*Blessed are you who stand beside us as we enter new and untried ventures, for our unsureness will be outweighed by the times when we surprise ourselves and you.*

*Blessed are you who ask for our help and realize our giftedness, for our greatest need is to be needed.*

*Blessed are you who help us with the graciousness of Christ, for often we need the help we cannot ask for.*

*Blessed are you who never bid us to “hurry up” and more blessed are you who do not snatch our tasks from our hands to do them for us, for often we need time rather than help.*

*Blessed are you who walk with us in public places and ignore the stares of strangers, for in your friendship we feel good to be ourselves.*

*Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for your understanding and love have opened doors for us to enjoy life to its full and you have helped us believe in ourselves as valued and gifted people.*

## Gleanings

Counselors and Support Staff have the opportunity to glean information on their camper(s) prior to their arrival. Take this time seriously in order to prepare yourself for the ministry ahead. The more prepared you are, the more you can focus on providing the best possible experience at camp.

*CONFIDENTIALITY: Staff must maintain strict confidentiality of any information regarding campers. Specifics of a camper’s health, behavior or care needs should never be shared in front of other campers, guests or staff members. It also includes all conversations and communications with family/friends not connected with camp. If a staff member is helping to provide care, only share information that is absolutely necessary. Give the privacy you would expect if you were in a similar situation. Staff members will be asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement stating adherence to this policy.*

While gathering information, remember the following:

- Counselors are primarily responsible for planning for the care of the assigned camper(s). They should share gleaned information with Support Staff as needed.
- Don’t “pre-judge” abilities or behaviors based on this information. Get to know the campers in the camp setting.
- Make a list of any unanswered questions or of anything that is unclear. Ask the nursing or fulltime staff to help answer those questions.
- If any questions remain, make note to ask the parent, caregiver or camper upon arrival.
- Review the completed Gleanings Form with someone on the fulltime staff.
- KEEP the Gleanings Sheet for reference throughout the week.

*NOTE: Since the Gleanings Form contains CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, do NOT leave it where it can be found by others. TURN IT IN at the end of the week to the Health Care Coordinator so it can be shredded!*

## Providing Physical Care

No camper is unlovely, but some of the necessary personal care tasks may be. Never give the impression that the care is a burden to you. Assure the camper that you are here to serve and to do whatever is helpful.

- Serve with the humility and love that Jesus showed during His last supper with the disciples. (John 13:2-17)
- Always remember the importance of communication while serving a camper. Pay attention to “unspoken” language, so you can recognize and attend to needs or detect any discomfort being felt.
- In all things, put the camper first. Show how precious that person is in the sight of the Lord and to you.

➤ HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF YOU NEEDED SOMEONE TO CARE FOR YOUR PHYSICAL NEEDS?

➤ WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP MAKE CAMPERS FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH YOU CARING FOR THEM?

## Assisting with Daily Needs - General Guidelines

- Encourage campers to be as independent as possible. Give guidance as needed, be patient if things aren't going as fast as you may like and challenge them to do things as able.
- When assisting campers with dressing, start with the most spastic (tightest) arm or leg first. Joints should be well supported to help control movement. Putting *your* hand up through the sleeve/pant leg, holding the arm/leg and guiding it back through is often helpful.
- Campers **MUST** wash hands before eating and after using the bathroom or participating in activities.
- If camper is incontinent, diaper areas must be kept clean, especially following bowel movements. Clean thoroughly each time the diaper is changed.
- **SOILED** items should be rinsed in the toilet while wearing gloves. Place them *a plastic bag and send home at the end of the day.*

➤ WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT DOING OR HELPING WITH PHYSICAL CARE?

# Feeling Comfortable Around People with Disabilities

---

## Autism

### *Our campers with Autism:*

- May have significant problems making eye contact and developing facial expressions.
- Have a hard time establishing friendships with peers.
- Have limited interest in activities or play.
- Lack empathy. People with autism may have difficulty understanding another person's feelings, such as pain or sorrow.
- Were delayed in learning to talk. As many as 40% of people with autism never speak.
- Often repeat over and over a phrase they have heard previously.
- May exhibit stereotypical behaviors such as rocking or hand flapping.



### *How to Help:*

- Give cues to start conversations. Help them continue a conversation, after it has begun, by asking questions.
- Take interest in their interests. People with autism are often preoccupied with certain topics like insects, video games, names of cars, etc. Use those interests as motivators.
- Learn or develop a routine and stick with it. They thrive on sameness!
- Be sensitive to loud volume or over-stimulation in activities. They may need to take frequent, quiet breaks.
- Let them initiate touch.

## ADD/ADHD

### *Our campers with ADD/ADHD:*

- Are often inattentive to details or have difficulty paying attention.
- May seem to not listen when spoken to directly.
- Have difficulty organizing or completing activities.
- Are easily distracted by what is happening around them.
- Frequently forget the schedule or what is expected.
- May fidget/squirm restlessly or talk excessively.
- May blurt out answers before questions are completed or interrupt others.

### *How to Help:*

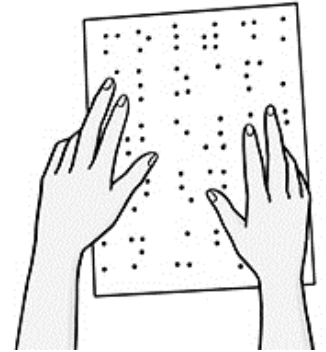
- Break down “things to do” into smaller, achievable parts.
- Allow opportunities for appropriate movement.
- Provide a copy of the schedule.
- Use verbal cues to help them know when to listen and when they can share.
- Sit in a place away from windows, doors or other potential distractions.



## Blindness or Visual Impairment

### *Our campers who are blind or visually impaired:*

- May have been born with reduced sight while others may acquire an eye condition that deteriorates with age. Others may lose their sight in an accident, or because of a disease like diabetes or arthritis.
- Rely on senses other than sight to perceive the world around them.
- May need special lighting, larger print, magnifiers, special glasses, Braille or other “tactile” ways of learning.
- May use a guide dog or cane to get around independently.



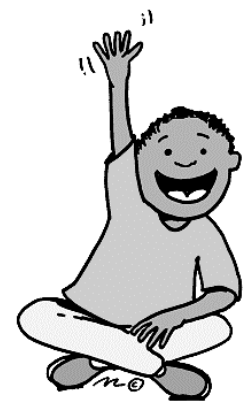
### *How to Help:*

- Identify yourself until they can learn your voice.
- Get their attention by saying their name first. Speak directly to them using a normal tone of voice, as blindness does not affect hearing. Be sure to mention when you are leaving.
- Let them take hold of your arm if assistance is needed in getting from place to place. This will let them walk slightly behind you, and the motion of your body tells them what to expect. Ask if verbal cues would be helpful, like mentioning when there are steps, curbs, uneven terrain, doors or other obstacles.
- Assist on stairs by guiding a hand to the banister.
- Guide their hand to the back or seat of a chair when finding a place to sit.
- Communicate details of what others are doing in the room. Use words to paint pictures of what others are seeing and/or activities taking place.
- Provide a barrier free walking path. Orient them to new surroundings and help them learn the way around. Soon, they may be able to find their way independently. Be aware that moving chairs, tables and other objects in the room without warning can be dangerous.

## Down Syndrome

### *Our campers with Down syndrome:*

- Have an extra chromosome that causes a congenital birth defect.
- Have distinct physical features, which *may* include; short and stocky stature, slanted eyes, short and pudgy hands and feet and an enlarged tongue.
- May have heart defects which will affect activity levels.
- Commonly have problems with eyesight or hearing.
- May have speech that is difficult to understand.
- Have an intellectual disability that may be mild or severe.
- May have early onset Alzheimer’s or dementia.



### *How to Help:*

- Be familiar with how people with intellectual disabilities learn best.

- Take care and supervise activities as there may be spine and neck instability associated with Down's. Please, no rough activities.

## Cerebral Palsy (C.P.)

### *Our campers with C.P.:*

- Are affected by a non-progressive birth defect that impacts muscle control and coordination making even very simple movements difficult.
- Will have very stiff muscles (spasticity) or very poor muscle tone (seemingly floppy).
- Have uncontrolled movements (startle reflex) and possible problems with posture, balance, coordination, walking, hearing, vision, speech and/or swallowing.
- Are prone to seizures and problems with breathing, bladder/bowel control and oral hygiene.
- Have a wide range of abilities depending on which part of the brain is affected. The impact of C.P. may be very mild and barely noticeable. Or, there may be a profound/severe impact physically and/or intellectually. CP may impact the ability to communicate by voice, walk, use hands or learn at grade/age level.

### *How to Help:*

- Don't make sudden moves or loud, unexpected noises. Warn them of impending loud noises or of people approaching from behind.
- Watch for signs of seizure activity.
- Use extra caution if walking on uneven terrain.
- Pay attention to special instructions for eating in order to prevent choking or aspiration (food getting into lungs).

## Deafness or Hearing Impairment

### *Our campers who are Deaf or hearing impaired:*

- Cannot understand or have trouble understanding speech through the ear. Hearing loss may range from mild to profound and can be caused by damage to the ear, improper development, disease, heredity or age related factors.
- May have been born deaf/hearing impaired or may have an acquired hearing loss. Some hearing loss is degenerative.
- May speak, speech-read (aka. lip-read) and/or use Sign Language.
- May not consider English as their first language. Even if they do not have an intellectual disability, they may have difficulty reading or comprehending things in English.
- Often use an interpreter to help facilitate comprehension and communication.
- May use hearing aids.



### *How to Help:*

- Gently tap them on the shoulder or wave your hand to get their attention before speaking.
- Look directly at those who speech-read. Speak at a moderate rate and tone, and make sure your face is well lit.
- Speak directly to the person, even if an interpreter is present. If an interpreter is not available, communicate through use of body language, gestures, miming or writing.

## Emotional Disturbance/Disability

### *Our campers with Emotional Disturbance/Disability:*

- Are affected by one or more of the following: an inability to maintain healthy relationships, inappropriate types of behaviors or feelings, a general mood of unhappiness or depression, physical symptoms of fear, and/or schizophrenia.
- Often have associated mental health or severe behavior issues.
- May be diagnosed with the following: anxiety disorders, bipolar disorders, conduct disorders, eating disorders, OCD, and psychotic disorders.
- May require behavior strategies to help them with daily life tasks.
- May be perceived as simply “bad” or “unruly.”
- May have a history of abuse.

### *How to Help:*

- Do not take behaviors personally. Acting out is often not against you. It is a reaction to a situation or their environment.
- Keep rules and activities simple and clear.
- Reward positive behaviors with praise and/or high fives.
- Be a friend, not a disciplinarian.
- Allow for breaks when needed.
- Keep expectations clear and consistent.
- Stay calm and ask for help if needed.

## Epilepsy/Seizures

### *Our campers with Epilepsy/Seizures:*

- Have nerve cells in their brains that can become mixed up or too active.
- May have seizures that result in staring into space, blinking eyes quickly, feeling afraid or dizzy, or falling down and shaking.
- Cannot control their seizures. Similar to a sneeze, they cannot be stopped once started.
- May be nervous or anxious to do certain activities due to risk of a seizure.
- Usually take medication that can stop the seizures from happening.

### *How to Help:*

- Be aware of a camper's potential "triggers" for seizure activity. Take precautions to avoid situations and/or activities that are potential triggers.
- Keep alert for any changes in behavior or for warning signs that are known to precede seizure activity. *Note: Triggers, warning signs, special precautions, etc. are listed on camper applications, if applicable.*
- Remain calm and reassure others who are nearby. Keep crowds away.
- Call (or designate someone to call) Code LUKE for immediate nurse assistance.
- Help the person lie down comfortably on his/her side to prevent choking on saliva. Do NOT leave the person alone.
- Clear the area of hard or sharp objects that could cause injury. Place something soft under the person's head or rest it in your lap. Do NOT put anything in the mouth or physically restrain in any way.
- When the seizure is over, tell what has happened and help reorient to the surroundings.
- Provide an opportunity to rest.

## Muscular Dystrophy (M.D.)

### *Our campers with M.D.:*

- Have a progressive, degenerative, hereditary disease causing muscles to weaken, eventually leading to death.
- May not be able to make facial expressions, control arm movements or use fine motor skills due to poor muscle tone.
- May have problems with breathing due to weakened muscles around the lungs and/or posture due to weakened core muscle strength.
- Tend to tire quickly.
- May struggle with emotional issues due to the progressive nature of the illness and the resulting restrictions placed on lifestyle.



### *How to Help:*

- Realize there is a physical *and* an emotional component to this disability. Be aware there may be times of feeling depressed or discouraged with situations.
- Encourage independence as much as possible, but be aware that deterioration in muscle mass will impact the ability to get around and to perform daily tasks. For veteran campers, be aware that abilities may not be the same from year to year at camp.
- Give full, proper support when doing lifts or transfers.
- Pay extra attention to protect camper from exposure to those who are sick.

## Spina Bifida

### *Our campers with Spina Bifida:*

- Have a congenital birth defect involving the development of the spinal cord and its protective covering, causing permanent damage to the nerves and spinal cord. Spina Bifida literally means “split spine.”
- Have varying degrees of paralysis and feeling, occurring below the point of spinal damage affecting the legs, feet and/or arms.
- Have smaller proportioned legs or feet.
- Frequently have bladder or bowel problems and typically have a special routine for taking care of these matters.
- Often have hydrocephalus.

### *How to Help:*

- Because there is little or no feeling in limbs, you need to use extra care to protect legs and feet from injury. This is *especially* important if doing a transfer.
- Make sure toes are flat (not curled) when putting on shoes.
- Make sure they are not sitting on any foreign objects as they may not be able to feel if something is out of place.
- Help maintain the normal bowel/bladder routine. In some situations a nurse may help with these needs. In many cases the camper is independent and may need minimal help from you.



## Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

### *Our campers with Traumatic Brain Injury:*

- Have had a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that disrupts the normal function of the brain. Common causes include motor vehicle accidents, a fall, or being struck by/against an object.
- Have an injury that can result in problems with thinking, processing, memory, movement, vision or hearing. They may also experience personality changes or depression.
- Are often impacted for the rest of their lives.
- Have a shortened attention span and impulsivity. Some may show aggression.
- Have difficulty or are unable to read or write.
- Have difficulty comprehending or remembering new material.
- Can often have disorganized thoughts.
- Often experience a great reduction in social skills.

### *How to Help:*

- Realize the physical and emotional components may lead to periods of depression or discouragement. Listen, affirm and encourage through your patience, words and actions.
- In a teaching situation, sit close to the leader/teacher to reduce distractions.
- Divide work or tasks into smaller sections.
- Keep a consistent and predictable routine.
- Use a written schedule or visual chart to help reduce confusion throughout the day.
- Allow extra time for responses or for activities to be completed.
- Keep good eye contact when asking a question to help with understanding.

## Hydrocephalus

### *Our campers with Hydrocephalus:*

- Have a condition caused by an imbalance between how much cerebrospinal fluid is produced and how much is absorbed into the bloodstream.
- Typically have a shunt (a hollow tube) that drains the excess fluid away from the brain and into the heart or abdomen.
- May have an unusually large head and a thin scalp with easily visible veins.
- May have learning challenges or vision problems.
- May exhibit physical symptoms of irritability, drowsiness, unstable balance, poor coordination or seizures.

### *How to Help:*

- Protect the head from bumps or injury.
- Have camper wear a helmet if they have one.
- Watch for signs the shunt may be malfunctioning. Signs include: sudden changes in behavior, persistent headache, forceful or projectile vomiting, seizure activity, or change in breathing/pulse rate. Report any of these to the nurse immediately!

## Speech/Language Impairment

### *Our campers who are non-verbal or speech impaired:*

- Do not necessarily have a cognitive impairment.
- Desire to talk and interact with you and those around them as anyone else would.
- Have ways to express their thoughts and feelings through facial expressions and body language rather than through spoken word.
- Are generally patient as you work to understand what they are trying to express.

### *How to Help:*

- Find a quiet place to talk and give complete attention to the conversation.

- Assure them that you want to know what is being said and that you desire to learn how best to communicate.
- Learn their method(s) of communication, especially their expressions for “yes,” “no” and “I don’t know.”
- If applicable, encourage the use of a communication board. Become familiar with its use yourself. If writing is an option, keep a note pad and pen handy.
- Ask questions one at a time.
- Use a regular tone and volume of voice.
- Ask to repeat if you do not understand what was said.
- Ask for help from someone who might be more familiar with how they communicate.
- Purpose to include in group conversations. Even though thoughts cannot be verbalized quickly or easily, what they have to share is still valuable.
- Do not pretend to understand something. Ask them to repeat until you *do* understand. If you’re not *sure* you understood, ask questions to verify what you think you heard.

➤ REMINDER: WHEN YOU FIND OUT YOUR CAMPER’S DISABILITY, READ THE PERTINENT SECTIONS!

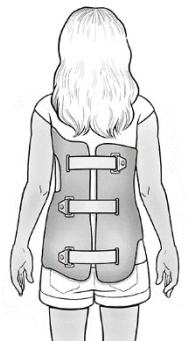
## Equipment Use and Care

---

### Body Brace:

*A back brace is a device designed to limit the motion of the spine in cases of fracture or in post-operative fusions, as well as a preventative measure against some progressive conditions such as scoliosis.*

This molded brace fits around a camper’s trunk and is secured with Velcro straps. Make note of how it is worn *before* removing it for the first time. Follow instructions as to what hours it needs to be worn. Keep the brace clean and dry.



### Cane:



*A cane can help redistribute weight from a lower leg that is weak or painful, improve stability and provide tactile information about the ground to improve balance. Canes are made of wood or metal and have a rubber tip. Canes may have one, three or four “feet” depending on how much support is needed. The more feet, the more support.*

A person will hold the cane on their stronger side. Helpers should walk on the side *opposite* the cane, which typically is the weaker side.

## Crutches:

A crutch allows people with weak leg or trunk muscles, paralysis or other disabilities the benefits of upright posture and lets them maneuver in places they cannot go with a wheelchair. Types of crutches include **Axillary, Forearm or Platform**. They are usually made of wood or metal with detachable rubber tips.



- Be sure all parts, such as wing nuts, are tightened.
- Check crutch tips regularly for uneven wear. Replace when necessary.
- Ask the camper how best to help.
- *To go up a step/curb*, stand behind or to the side, hold the belt/waistband and support the arm. For a shorter person, give support under the arms. Camper should step up with stronger leg first. Push down on crutches and bring up weaker leg. Some people may put both crutches up on step and “hop” up with both feet.
- *To go down a step/curb*, face the camper, place one hand on the waist and the other on the shoulder, or for someone shorter, put both hands under the arms. Typically crutches go down first, then the weaker leg followed by the stronger leg. Others may put both crutches down, then “hop.”

## Helmet/Protective Headgear:



Protective headgear reduces the risk of head injury for patients with developmental disabilities, hydrocephalus, seizure disorders, poor balance or equilibrium and those prone to self-injurious behaviors such as head banging.

Make sure camper wears this device as instructed in application information, or when engaged in active sports.

## Orthotics:

Orthotics are designed to support, control, guide, limit and/or immobilize an extremity, joint or body segment. They are typically made of molded plastic, metal, elastic or any combinations of these materials, secured with Velcro or buckle straps.



Orthotics worn on the lower limbs specifically support weak or paralyzed legs, ankles or feet. Most common types include **AFOs (Ankle-Foot Orthotics)** or **KAFOs (Knee- Ankle-Foot Orthotics)**. These orthotics slide into the camper’s shoe.

- Unlace shoes fully so foot and brace will slide in easily.
- Be sure the toes are flat, not curled!
- When helping camper put on long leg braces, lying on the bed may be helpful.
- Leg braces may have “locks” at joint locations. Joints may be locked or unlocked depending on the activity and/or preference of the camper. Be especially aware of this when assisting with a transfer.
- When helping a camper sit or stand, check for stability before letting go.



- Keep orthotics clean and dry. Wipe any sand or dirt off immediately. Do not allow them to get wet.
- Take note of how tightly braces are strapped BEFORE removing them for the first time by noticing the “ridge” on the Velcro straps.
- Tell the nurse if you notice any reddened areas on the skin caused by pressure.

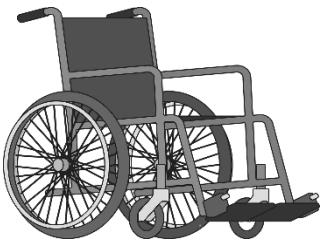
### Walker:



*A walker is used to give maximum support or stability while walking. Walkers may have rubber tips, wheels or a combination of both.*

Help someone only if necessary. Do so by following slightly behind and to the weaker side. Place your hand under the belt to help control forward motion. Your other hand on the walker to help stabilize it and keep it from rolling away.

### Wheelchair:



*Wheelchairs are used by people for whom walking is difficult or impossible due to illness, injury or disability. It can help provide functional independence or help to conserve energy when long distance walking is not feasible.*

Ask any questions about the chair, positioning, charging instructions (for electric chairs) *before* the person dropping off the camper leaves.

Take note of how a camper is positioned in the chair *before* you take the person out for the first time. Proper positioning is vital for maintaining safety and helping camper with good posture.

- Make sure hands, arms, feet and legs are away from wheels. Make sure limbs do not get caught when going through doorways or tight places. Feet should always be on footplates, if applicable.
- Notice how feet are positioned on footplates, arms on armrests and head in headrest.
- Pay attention to side supports, pommel (used to separate legs), tightness of seatbelt, shoulder harness and other straps.
- Look to see if there are pillows or cushions that are in a specific position.
- A seatbelt and any other straps must be worn/fastened at all times. During active games, a restraint must be worn by those who only have a seatbelt.

Help with proper care of the wheelchair.

- Report any loose or broken parts to the Camp Director immediately. Be sure the handgrips are firmly attached.
- Do not allow the chair to get wet!

- Dry or clean all parts/cushions immediately should they become wet or soiled.
- Protect from extremes in temperature. Open carefully if cold. Do NOT park in direct sunlight. If you must do so, cover with a blanket or towel to protect from direct exposure.
- Never sit in or ride on anyone's chair. It is only to be used by its owner.

Proper handling of the wheelchair will keep you and the user safe.

- *Open a wheelchair* by pressing on the seat rails, not the upholstery, until the seat is flattened.
- *Close a wheelchair* by pushing the heel loops forward and folding up the footplates. Grasp and lift the seat upholstery from the center front and back. When the wheelchair is nearly closed, tuck the upholstery down and finish closing it using the armrests.
- *Push a closed wheelchair* by tipping it back on its large wheels until the chair is at its balance point.
- *To push through sand or a grassy field*, inform the camper that you will be tipping the chair; use the tip bars to tip it back to its balance point on the large wheels (about a 30 degree angle); move through rough terrain; then return the chair to the ground slowly, again using the tip bars.
- **TURN OFF THE CHAIR (if electric) and LOCK THE BRAKES** before transferring someone in or out of a wheelchair or whenever you step away from the chair.
- *To park*, pull the chair back 4-6 inches so the front wheels point forward, making the chair more stable. Did we say... lock the brakes?
- *To go up/down a ramp*, use caution as the ramp may be slippery, especially if wet or a smooth surface. Go DOWN – BACKWARDS, using your body against chair to help slow descent. GO UP – FORWARD, keeping your body behind the wheelchair.

## Lifts and Transfers

---

### Proper Lifting Techniques

Learn how to lift properly to avoid injuring yourself or endangering the campers.

- **KNOW YOUR OWN LIMITS!** If you do not feel completely comfortable lifting a camper, ask a veteran or leadership staff person for help. **Do not attempt to lift** someone who is too heavy for you to handle safely.
- Good posture and strong stomach muscles will help prevent injury to your back.
- Do not lift more than **35% of your body weight**.
- Stand close to the object being moved and **move it toward your body** rather than away from it. **Keep it as close to your hip level as possible** in order to maintain balance and use the large muscles of your hips, legs and arms, not your back.

- Keep your back straight. Bend your hips and knees, not your back, and place one foot slightly ahead of the other.
- If bending your back is absolutely unavoidable, bend before lifting and keep your back bent *in the same position* as you straighten your hips and knees.

➤ WHAT ARE YOUR LIMITS FOR LIFTING SOMEONE?

## Determining Type of Lift

- Consider the camper's size.
- Consider the amount of space and equipment that is available.
- Consider the camper's ability to use arms and legs; any spastic, weak, limp or paralyzed muscles; limits in joint movement; sitting balance; and ability to follow directions.
- Consider your strength and the strength of fellow staff member(s) helping you.

## Basic Tips

- Remember to check to see where supportive/positioning equipment belongs (pillows, sidepieces, special headrests, separators between legs, etc.). Take careful note so you can put it back properly once camper returns to the chair. If unsure how to remove or release any of these pieces of equipment, ask a veteran or leadership staff member for assistance.
- Always TURN OFF THE CHAIR (if electric) and LOCK THE BRAKES!
- Remove wheelchair parts to allow clear access during the transfer. (Example: armrests, foot pedals)
- Remove camper's seatbelt and any other restraining straps. Make sure someone steadies the camper once these are removed. Do NOT walk away. Someone with unstable sitting balance may tip over!
- **When helping a camper transfer onto a toilet**, undo pants before beginning the transfer. If possible, have the camper push up on the armrests so you can pull down pants or have another staff member present help you with this part of the process.
- Be sure camper is positioned in wheelchair correctly and safely – bottom back in comfortable position on the seat. Place the camper's arms on the armrests, feet on the foot pedals, and head on the headrest. Straighten the person's back to make sure he/she is comfortable. Fasten the seatbelt.

## Types of Lifts and Transfers

### Assisted stand pivot:

*This lift is used to help a camper of average size who can bear weight on legs. It allows one staff member to transfer camper between a wheelchair and a chair or toilet.*

- Position wheelchair at 45% angle and as close as possible to your destination.
- TURN OFF THE CHAIR (if electric) and LOCK THE BRAKES!
- Take off arm rest, foot pedals, etc.
- Stand facing front with camper's feet between yours.
- Use your knee to support the camper's knees.
- Grab waistband/belt. Slide camper as far forward on the seat as possible.
- Rock gently. On the count of three, assist to a standing position.
- Pivot.
- Make sure camper's legs are against the seat.
- Gently and slowly lower to a sitting position. Remember to keep your back straight and bend with your hips/knees.



### One-Person Arm Carry:

*This lift is used for a light camper who cannot bear weight on legs.*

- TURN OFF THE CHAIR (if electric) and LOCK THE BRAKES!
- Slide one of your arms under the middle of the camper's thighs.
- Put your other arm behind the camper's back.
- Camper should put arms around your shoulders.
- Bend with your hips and knees, keep your back straight, and lift as you would a small child.
- Lower onto the transfer destination. Remember to keep your back straight and bend with your hips/knees.



### Side-to-Side Two-Person Lift:

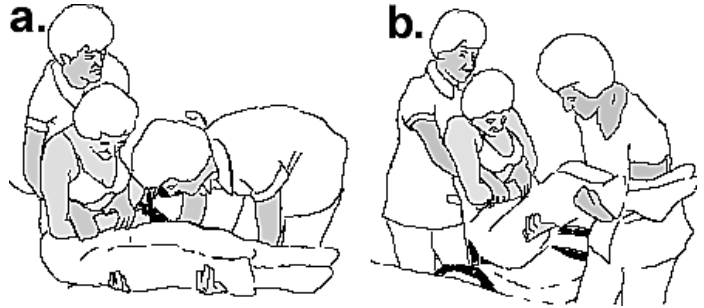
*This lift is used for a camper who is too heavy for a one-person lift, but NOT for a camper with weakness in the shoulders.*

- TURN OFF THE CHAIR (if electric) and LOCK THE BRAKES!
- Two lifters should stand on either side of camper.
- Each lifter should use the rearward arm to come under camper's arm. And grasp the wrist. The lifter's palm should face down.
- The lifter's other arm should be placed under the camper's upper thigh. Be certain to give adequate support to camper's buttocks.
- Designate one lifter to count. When both lifters are ready and on the count of three, lift together. Move the camper to the destination. Lower carefully, remembering to keep your back straight and bend with your hips/knees.

## Top-Bottom (Front-Back) Two-Person Lift:

*This lift is used for a camper who is too heavy for a one-person lift and who needs maximum support for weak joint or muscle tone.*

- TURN OFF THE CHAIR (if electric) and LOCK THE BRAKES!
- The stronger lifter should lift the top and the other the legs.
- Help camper fold arms across chest.
- The lifter at the top should reach under the camper's arms and lock hands around the wrists. (Note: If the camper has very poor muscle tone, grasp around the chest instead of wrists.)
- The lifter on the bottom should come in from the front or from the side and grasp the camper's legs **above** the knees, under the thighs.
- The person on the top counts. Check to see if your helper is ready. Then, on the count of three, lift together. Move the camper to the destination. Lower carefully, remembering to keep your back straight and bend with your hips/knees.



## Assistive Lift Devices:

Some campers may use assistive devices in transferring. If these pertain to your camper, a veteran or leadership staff member, familiar with the device, will assist you in learning how to use it. Be sure to follow instructions for use carefully and completely for the safety of the camper and yourself. These devices may include:

- A sliding or transfer board.
- A mechanical lift with sling.
- A transfer belt.

## Needs of Campers with Intellectual Disabilities

---

### Definition

An intellectual disability is diagnosed before the age of 18. Other terms include “cognitive disability” and “mental retardation.” A person with an intellectual disability has **significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and in adaptive skills.**

These skills in the camp setting may include:

- communicating with others
- taking care of personal needs (dressing, bathing, going to the bathroom)
- health and safety

- social skills (manners, knowing the rules of conversation, getting along in a group, playing a game)
- reading, writing

### *Intellectual Disabilities:*

- May be genetic, such as Down syndrome or Fragile X syndrome; OR caused by environmental factors, such as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.
- Cause challenges leisure activities; social and communication skills; and activities of daily living.
- Are NOT a disease and are NOT contagious.
- Are NOT a mental illness.
- Cannot be “fixed.” However, most children and adults with an intellectual disability CAN learn to do many things. It just takes more time and effort.
- Make each camper unique in:
  - degree of disability
  - social skills
  - gifts, abilities and talents
  - emotional and spiritual maturity
  - likes, dislikes, preferences
  - life experiences
  - daily activities at home – school, job or supportive work environment

## Tips for Serving People with Intellectual Disabilities

Although learning may be a challenge for most of our campers who have an intellectual disability, they will surprise you with their enthusiasm and understanding! You can enhance their learning experiences by remembering that campers with intellectual disabilities:

- Are PEOPLE who can become our friends.
- Are CONCRETE LEARNERS who think about things they can actually see or touch.
- May have a SHORT ATTENTION SPAN or be EASILY DISTRACTED.
- CAN LEARN new information and skills.
- CAN DO MANY THINGS, but may need adaptations for some activities.
- Can COMMUNICATE in various ways.

➤ HOW MIGHT EACH OF THESE AREAS BE A CHALLENGE IN THE CAMP SETTING?

*You serve us best by entering OUR world:*

***Respect us as individuals... and FRIENDS!***

- Use PEOPLE FIRST language. (Example: Jon has Down Syndrome.)
- Treat us in an age appropriate manner. Speak respectfully; not condescendingly. Never use a “baby voice.”
- Figure out likes and dislikes... and share in life WITH me!

***LEARN TO COMMUNICATE with me:***

- Do not refrain from talking with us even if we don’t communicate verbally.
- Realize we may understand more than we can communicate.
- Figure out how we each get our point across on our terms.
- Ask others if you don’t understand.
- Realize we may say things “out of the blue.”
- Listen, even if we repeat ourselves fifty times.
- Guide us in knowing how to interact socially.
- Allow extra time for us to process and respond.

***Share day-to-day life:***

- Simplify tasks and create opportunities for success.
- Model what is expected.
- Provide praise.
- Plan for and go at our pace, not yours.
- Don’t just do it “for me.” Set me up to be successful “on my own.” Give the least amount of assistance needed to accomplish a given task, such as verbal prompts or tactile prompts.

***Help us have fun!***

- Prepare us for change in activity or routine.
- Role play new situations so I know what to expect.
- Give choices, but limit how many options there are.
- Give instructions in the spot where you want us to follow them.
- Remember, this is vacation!
- Find a way to get us involved in whatever is going on.
- Enjoy things WITH us.

***Help me be successful in what you ask me to do:***

- Stick with the schedule. Routine works best!
- Limit “down time.”
- Make all instructions clear and concise. Give them one at a time.

- Redirect our attention to appropriate activity when we get distracted.
- Use simple words and sentences.
- Check for understanding.
- Give reminders.

## Bringing Out the Best in Your Campers

---

Each staff member should model and help each camper exhibit behaviors that honor the Lord, promote friendships, are age appropriate and fit the situation at hand.

Realize that we are more alike than different. Sometimes we act out, hurt the people we love or do things we regret for various reasons. When your camper is misbehaving, put yourself in the other person's shoes to figure out what might be wrong. Show the same patience and care that you would want to receive from your own friends.

### *Start here*

When you meet your camper...

- Discard "reputation"
  - *Allow camper to start fresh each day!*
- Don't excuse – set expectation
  - *Inappropriate or inconsiderate behavior is never acceptable. A "disability" is no excuse for actions **that are within a person's ability to control**. Set expectations and enforce them.*

A camper may act inappropriately for a number of reasons. They could be:

- Seeking attention or love
- Not aware of or not understanding the rules
- Dealing with their emotions: frustrated, scared, stressed, homesick, bored
- Trying to communicate something but not sure how to do so appropriately

A camper who doesn't speak or who has trouble expressing thoughts, may appear to be misbehaving. Really, you may be misunderstanding those "bad" behaviors. Instead of always thinking of what the camper should do differently, think of what *you* should do differently to help the situation.

## Supportive Discipline

### *Adjust expectations.*

*Make your expectations age and situationally appropriate.*

### *Position yourself.*

*Sit strategically; walk closer to someone not acting appropriately.*



*Catch their eye and refocus.*

*Use that “teacher” or “parent” look.*

*Give appropriate touch.*

*A touch on the shoulder; a pat on the back.*

*Take a break.*

*A short walk; pull back to a different seat; do a different activity.*

*Wait a minute.*

*Sit quietly until calm returns or camper is ready to listen.*

*Take the camper’s mind off the issue.*

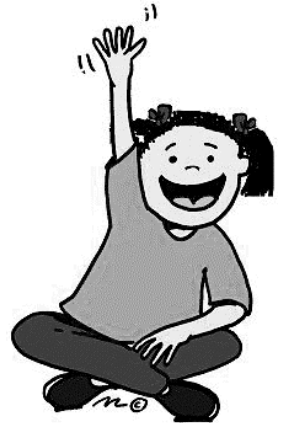
*Change topics; talk about something positive from the day.*

*Make it fun.*

*Make a race or game out of something in order to reach the goal.*

*Ask for help.*

*Veteran staff, another camper, a special friend or leadership staff may have tips or a different kind of relationship that elicits a better response.*



## Corrective Discipline

*Be firm, but calm.*

Acknowledge, but correct.

By filling in the blanks in the following guideline, you will be sure to respond wisely instead of reacting impulsively:

“I understand that you (acknowledge campers feelings and position), but I (state rule, your need or the problem). Maybe we can (work together so each of you can get what you want).”

*Be consistent and don’t give up.*

As you set expectations and follow through with rewards and/or discipline, your time with your camper will be more successful. Sometimes the process needs to be repeated, but take the opportunity to reflect the Lord’s grace and patience.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *Handi\*Camp staff and campers are prohibited from taking the following actions against any camper: deprivation of food, isolation, subjecting to corporal punishment or abusive physical exercise of any kind as a means of punishment.*

*Follow Up with Assurance*

Always be sure to praise successful changes in behavior, no matter how big or small they are. Remind the camper that you expect good behavior and when that doesn’t happen, it makes

you sad. BUT, assure the camper that God's love is unconditional. Lord willing, God's grace will give *you* the ability to demonstrate that same unconditional love as well.

## Needs and Challenges of Social Interaction

---

Each camper needs acceptance, interaction, fellowship and friendship. But some may have difficulty finding appropriate ways to interact socially and meet those needs.

### How to Help

You can help campers grow in their ability to interact socially by:

- *Modeling appropriate social behavior* in your interactions with others. Be cautious of the appropriateness of your *own* topics of conversation, teasing, practical joking and physical touch.
- *Addressing any inappropriate behavior*. Point it out when it happens and follow through by explaining what a "better choice" would have been. *Example: "It was not appropriate for you to interrupt David when he was talking. Next time you need to wait for him to finish talking before you ask your question."*
- *Meeting the need for physical touch*. Appropriate touch at Handi\*Camp includes a handshake, a side-to-side hug or a quick pat on the back, hand or shoulder.
- *Encouraging and helping campers communicate* with one another. Set up situations where campers can sit together and interact.



### Conversation "Etiquette"

- Help each camper learn to communicate and interact with others properly. This may involve learning to maintain proper distance, starting conversations, asking questions and focusing on others.
- When starting a conversation, ask about safe topics such as interests and events in the other person's life.
- If a camper does not respond, repeat or restate your comment or question in another way. Do not give up. If it is still challenging, help put the other person at ease by continuing the conversation yourself.
- If a camper continually repeats the same thoughts, redirect with a specific question. If camper responds on a totally different topic, redirect back to the original topic OR switch to the new topic yourself.
- If a camper asks you a personal or embarrassing question or makes an inappropriate remark, be honest. Say, "That's private," or "That's not appropriate for me to share with you."

- Do not allow a camper to interrupt your conversation unless it's a true emergency. Say, "I'm talking with Anna, now. When I'm done, I will come and talk to you." Be sure to follow through by going to talk with that person.
- When a conversation has gone on for an extended amount of time, or it becomes necessary to move on to another activity, be honest. Say, "I've enjoyed talking with you, but we need to go now." If you feel comfortable and are able, offer a later date to spend more time together. Please be sure to keep any promises you have made.

Adapted from: Interacting with People who are Mentally Retarded; Bethesda's National Christian Resource Center; 1-800-369-INFO.

## Spiritual Life at Camp

---

"If you are paralyzed, you can still 'walk' with God.  
 If you are blind, you are nevertheless able to 'see' the light.  
 If you are deaf, you are still able to 'hear' the Word of God.  
 And even if you are mentally handicapped, you can have the mind of Christ."

*~ by an H\*VMI ministry staff member*

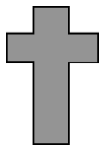
### Foundation

In order to fulfill the spiritual objectives of Handi\*Camp, it is important that each camp staff member be a growing, praying member of the Body of Christ. Staff members are expected to have:

- A working knowledge of the Bible.
- A recognition that it is vitally important to study and apply God's Word.
- An understanding of doctrinal Truth based on Scripture.
- A realization that prayer is key to tapping into God's power to accomplish all that He desires at camp/conference.
- A lifestyle pleasing to the Lord and obedient to His Word.
- A consistent Christian testimony in relationships and in daily interactions with others.
- An understanding that everything they do and say will have a lasting impact on the lives of the campers.

### Purpose and Plan

The overall purpose of Handi\*Camp is to use the camping experience as an opportunity for evangelizing and discipling campers toward faith and maturity in Christ. Leading campers to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and guiding them to know, love and obey the Lord Jesus is a wonderful privilege and awesome responsibility. There are many planned and unplanned opportunities to present God's Truth at camp. The following times are specifically set aside in the schedule for spiritual instruction:



**Chapel:** All campers, guests and staff will gather in a large group for a special time of worship and Bible teaching. Everyone will have an opportunity to participate through singing, Scripture reading and memorization, skits and other creative worship and learning activities. Staff will assist campers as needed so they can be successful and actively involved.



**Small Group Time:** Campers will be assigned to a small group immediately following Chapel. Each group will have a leader who facilitates review and working through review and application activities and/or discussion.

Do not rely *solely* on the structured times of spiritual instruction! Each staff member should be sensitive to the many opportunities throughout each day to share Biblical Truth and thoughts about the Lord. **Teachable moments** are a part of every camp day and should reinforce and build upon the teachings presented.

- Be ready to give an answer or make an application of Biblical truth when opportunities arise.
- Be careful not to become overbearing when sharing Truth with a camper, but allow the Holy Spirit to work and He will bring the opportunities to you.

## Building Spiritual Relationships

It is vital that we invest time in building spiritual relationships with campers. These relationships will help prepare the soil of their hearts and point them to Christ. What does a spiritual relationship look like? In a spiritual relationship we:



1. **MODEL OPENLY.** *Does the camper see Christ in you?*

Campers are constantly watching the camp staff around them. They check to see if what you **say** matches what you **do** in real life. What you do will always shout louder than what you say!

2. **BUILD RELATIONSHIPS MEANINGFULLY.** *How does the camper know you really care?*

A spiritual relationship must include love. The campers are not merely “potential conversions.” They are precious individuals who are of great worth to God.

3. **SHARE TRUTH CONSISTENTLY.** *When does the camper hear you talk about God?*

A spiritual relationship must also include Truth. Do the campers know you are a Believer? Do you talk about your faith naturally and openly? Or, would someone wonder what you believe? Is there enough evidence to “convict” you of belonging to Christ?

4. **LISTEN AND RESPOND TO QUESTIONS CAREFULLY.** *Do you give honest, age-appropriate and ability-appropriate answers?*

The Bible tells us to be ready to give the reason for our hope. We are to do so with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). How carefully do you listen to campers? When you

respond, is it with gentleness and respect? Are you willing to admit when you don't know the answer yourself? Would campers feel free to come back and ask you more questions?

5. **CHALLENGE APPROPRIATELY.** *Do you deal with Truth consistently?*

Challenging appropriately isn't attacking or preaching. It is gently and carefully pointing out what God says. When you hear untruth or unbiblical thinking, do you appropriately challenge it with truth?

We want to be able to say with Paul, "**We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the Gospel of God but our lives as well.**" (1 Thessalonians 2:8)

## What is the Gospel?

God's Word defines the Gospel for us in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4:



"I want to remind you of the **GOSPEL** I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this Gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as first importance: that **CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS** according to the Scriptures, that he **WAS BURIED**, that he **WAS RAISED ON THE THIRD DAY** according to the Scriptures."

**The Gospel can be summarized in one sentence:**

*Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead. This is the Good News!*

## Sharing the Gospel with Campers

### *Pray First*

- Ask God to prepare your campers to receive the Good News about Jesus. (Acts 16:14)
- Ask God to prepare you to communicate effectively with them. (Colossians 4:4)
- Depend on the Holy Spirit who provides conviction of sin and the desire to turn to Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:9-10)

### *Share the Gospel Clearly and Simply*

When sharing Christ with campers, **avoid abstract terminology** such as:

- "Ask Jesus into your heart."
- "Ask Jesus to be your Savior."
- "Trust in Jesus."

Instead, choose words that are **easier to understand** such as:

- "Being a part of God's Family."
- "Becoming best friends with Jesus."



### *Explain or Rephrase Hard-to-Understand Words*

- **Sin/Sinner** – being bad; doing, saying and thinking wrong things; doing what I want to do instead of what God wants me to do. Use examples they will understand such as forgetting God, not helping or taking something that does not belong to you.
- **Forgive** – God makes everything all right between you and Him. God promises that He will never punish us. He says He will forget all about the wrong things that we have done.
- **Savior** – Your own special Friend who died to keep you from being punished by God for your sins.
- **Arose** – Jesus died and came alive again because He is the Son of God and He can do anything.
- **Punishment from God** – Not being allowed into God’s home in Heaven when we die; being kept from being with God forever.
- **Heaven** – A real place where God’s Home is. Jesus is there. All is beautiful and right. There is no sickness, death, sin or anything else bad there. **Note:** *Some campers may be afraid of going to heaven because they think they must leave their families and familiar things and go right away. Emphasize that we can be part of God’s family now. Then someday later, we can go to heaven. Don’t spend a lot of time talking about heaven.*

### *Share the Gospel Biblically*

Campers need to know that the Gospel is **God’s message** rather than your own opinion. Use your Bible to show them that you are saying GOD’S words and not your own. Even if you are reading verses off a paper, always keep a Bible present to show them where the verses come from.

Use an accurate, easy to understand translation. The New Century Version (NCV) is written on a third grade level. It is especially helpful when working with campers who have difficulty reading or who have learning problems. Most Bible materials used at Handi\*Camp are written based on this version or the International Children’s Bible (ICB).

**KEY VERSES for sharing the Gospel:** *Show the camper the verses. If the campers can read, help them read and mark the verses in their own Bible.*

- **Romans 3:23** – “Everyone has sinned and fallen short of God’s glorious standard.”
- **Romans 5:8** – “But God shows His great love for us in this way: Christ died for us while we were still sinners.”
- **John 1:12** – “But to all who did accept Him and believe in Him He gave the right to become children of God.”
- **Acts 16:31** – “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved...”

## *Give Campers an Opportunity to Respond Individually*

It is our job as camp staff to present the Gospel to our campers and to give them an opportunity to respond. Remember, when leading a camper to Christ the camper must:

- Recognize NEED of salvation. *Sin separated you from God.*
- Know the WAY of salvation. *Christ died for your sins and rose again.*
- RECEIVE God's gift of salvation. *Trust Christ to save you from your sins.*

**Make your sharing a one-on-one, eye-to-eye conversation.** Don't ask campers to raise their hands for a "decision" or to come forward. Rather, talk individually with campers *individually* and ask for a response.

**Help the camper to focus by finding a quiet place to talk privately** where you won't be interrupted. However, never be in a secluded place. To avoid any suggestion of impropriety, make sure another camp staff is nearby.

**Don't pressure the camper.** It may not be God's timing. Deal with each camper individually. Give your undivided attention and allow adequate time for the Holy Spirit to work.

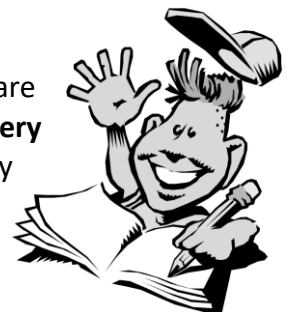
**Help the camper pray** a prayer of acceptance. Ask one question at a time. (Example: "Do you know that you sin? Then tell God that right now.") If possible, have the camper pray out loud. If necessary, help them know what to say. If a camper is non-verbal, give a reminder that God can hear our thoughts. After your question is answered, give a moment of "quiet" so camper can speak thoughts to God.

[Adapted from Sharing Christ with Kids: © 2007 BCM International]

## **Spiritual Characteristics of Campers with Intellectual Disabilities**

*Campers who have intellectual disabilities are as needful and capable of responding to God as others are.*

The campers who may need the most adaptation to understand the Gospel are those who have intellectual disabilities. Studies indicate that only **five of every one hundred people** with an intellectual disability are so challenged that they are not able to understand the basic plan of salvation. But, God has NO LIMITS!



### *People with Intellectual Disabilities:*

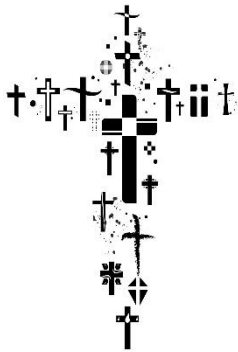
- Are needful and capable of understanding the Gospel.
- Have a simple faith in God and trust what others say.
- Often understand more than they can show.
- Will often have fewer or simple, yet genuine, expressions of their faith.
- Can understand, learn and memorize in their “own way.”
- Will not forget something once they finally “get it.” It’s in there “for good!”
- Respond in God’s time, not yours.
- Have spiritual gifts to utilize in the Body of Christ.

### *You can be God’s instrument to share His Truth as you:*

- Demonstrate the love of Christ simply, abundantly, and unconditionally.
- Teach Biblical Truths and concepts that correspond to their mental age.
- Explain the meaning of Bible verses and words, simply and often.
- Teach not just Bible story facts, but also explain the principle behind the facts.
- Help them relate God’s Word to daily life.

## Assurance in Christ

### *In Christ, I Am ...*



**Significant**, because I am the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13), the light of the world (Matthew 5:14), a child of God (John 1:12; 1 John 3:13), a branch of the true vine (John 15:5), a personal witness for the Lord (Acts 1:8), God’s temple (1 Corinthians 3:16), a member of Christ’s body (1 Corinthians 12:27), a minister of reconciliation for God (2 Corinthians 5:17-18), God’s co-worker (2 Corinthians 6:1; 1 Corinthians 3:9), a saint (Ephesians 1:1), God’s workmanship (Ephesians 2:10), a citizen of heaven (Philippians 3:20; Ephesians 2:6), chosen and appointed to bear fruit (John 15:16) and raised up and seated with Christ (Ephesians 2:6).

**Accepted**, and am Christ’s friend (John 15:15), joined to the Lord as one spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17), a member of Christ’s body (1 Corinthians 12:27), a part of God’s household (Ephesians 2:19), a fellow citizen with all the saints (Ephesians 2:19), complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10), justified (Romans 5:1), bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20), made righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21), adopted as God’s child (Ephesians 1:5), given direct access to God through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:18), redeemed and forgiven of all my sins (Colossians 1:14) and may approach God with boldness and confidence (Ephesians 3:12).

**Secure**, because I am a child of God (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26-28); assured that all things work together for good (Romans 8:28); free from condemnation forever (Romans 8:1); free from



any charges against me (Romans 8:33); hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3); confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected (Philippians 1:6); born of God and protected from the evil one (1 John 5:18); established, anointed and sealed by God (2 Corinthians 1:21); given the Holy Spirit as a pledge and guarantee of my inheritance to come (Ephesians 1:13-14); delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:13); given a spirit of power, love and a sound mind, instead of a spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1:7); able to do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13); able to find grace and mercy in time of need (Hebrews 4:16); and not able to be separated from the love of God (Romans 8:35).

## Spiritual Gifts

God's Word teaches that every Believer, regardless of "disability," has been given at least one spiritual gift. God desires to use these God-given gifts to edify and serve the Body of Christ. If the campers you work with are already Believers, help them go to the "next step" in identifying their spiritual gift. Give them opportunities throughout the week of camp to begin exercising that gift. *For more on "Spiritual Gifts," read 1 Peter 4:10, Ephesians 4:12-13, Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12.*

## Beyond Camp

***"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving." Colossians 2:6-7***

The importance placed on the campers' spiritual lives does not end when they leave camp. The Disability Ministries' team seeks to disciple and minister to campers and their families and/or caregivers throughout the year. Program opportunities include:

- Correspondence Bible lessons.
- One-on-one visitation.
- Group Bible clubs and studies.
- Encouraging local church involvement.
- Training churches so they can welcome and include people with disabilities.
- Sending letters, birthday and Christmas cards.
- Phone call buddies.
- Weekly e-mail devotions.
- An all-family picnic.
- Parent support groups.

Summer staff volunteers and others within the community assist in these programs. If you are interested in learning how you can volunteer in one of these programs, please speak with someone on fulltime staff.



# CONCLUSION

---

As you enter this summer of ministry, remember that our purpose for being here is to serve wholeheartedly as individuals and collectively as a team. We serve the King of kings and the Lord of lords as we serve campers, guests and fellow staff members.

You will soon find that the Handi\*Camp program can be draining, tiring, stretching, rewarding and fulfilling, all at the same time. Do all you can to keep yourself strong for the task at hand. Remember the God Who has called you to this ministry. Remember God's faithfulness to you in the past, and draw on His power as you wake up to face each new day ahead.

You are here for a reason, by His design, for this time.  
He has a plan to use you to make an eternal impact on the lives of others.  
He will use you greatly.  
He will not give you anything that you cannot handle.  
He will grow you as a person and refine you as His servant.  
GOD will do things through you that you never imagined!

So GO... serve... in His name... with His power... for His purpose.

*"You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth,  
And called from its remotest parts  
And said to you, 'You are My servant,  
I have chosen you and not rejected you.  
Do not fear, for I am with you;  
Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you, surely I will help you,  
Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'"  
Isaiah 41:9-10 (NASB)*