



## WOULD I MAKE A GOOD COUNSELOR?

### Why are we showing this to you?

We want you to be happy  
We want you to be successful  
We want this to be a positive experience for you

### F.T.K – For The Kids

Great counselors enjoy that kids are EVERYWHERE. You will eat with kids, share housing and restrooms with kids, teach and learn with kids...there is almost no escape. That should be something that makes you happy, and not something that bothers you. If personal time is something you need everyday, you are not going to be happy here.

You will be in our lab activities or out in the hot sun prepping campers for the zipline. You will need to be engaged in the activities, aware of safety concerns, and supporting campers achieve their possible fears of whatever activity you might be doing. Sitting by yourself, leaving the group, talking to other staff, looking at your cell phone, and anything else that is not interacting with the campers is not okay.

### Be Ready For Anything – Flexibility Is Our Middle Name

There are some days where things just go wrong. Where every well-laid plan goes wrong and we spend our day putting out (metaphorical) fires. You were awake until 2am cleaning up vomit, your partner dumped you this morning, two of your campers just got into a fist fight AND you just broke your favorite pair of sunglasses! In difficult circumstances, we may ask you to drag yourself up, put on a smile and go above and beyond what you ever thought you could do. We ask you to do this to help ensure that our campers don't know anything is wrong and to ensure that they are having the best camp experience possible. We will support you as best we can at a suitable time and our campers should never know anything is wrong!

You may find yourself doing, or even teaching, an activity that you never dreamed you'd do. Take the "we don't exactly know what it is, but you should come prepared to do it" clause seriously. Whatever it is, you need to approach it with, "Alright, let's go get it done and have fun!" If you fake it, you won't be happy. We want to see that you have enough maturity that you can deal with changes or make mistakes and recover. That you're not afraid to stand up for what you believe, in a mature and productive way and that you can handle and learn from constructive criticism.

### Children can be stressful, you NEED to be able to deal.

All of the following have happened in the last 3 summers at our programs. These are not typical or even common, but they did happen. The vast majority of kids are just fine.

- Camper urinated in their sleeping bag.
- Camper said she was the victim of physical abuse at home.
- Social cruelty – push kids out of group, being verbally and non-verbally hostile.

- Camper confided that they attempting suicide.
- Camper flaunting their sexual experiences to other campers.
- Camper was homesick and crying for 7 days despite everyone's best efforts.
- A camper stole things from other campers in the cabin.
- Camper brought contraband to camp; i.e. drugs & alcohol.
- Camper harassing other campers with inappropriate jokes or lurid suggestions.
- Camper promoted raciest ideas and raciest literature.

We do not expect or suggest you handle these type of situations on your own – we do provide extensive training and our administration staff is always available. However, we do want to make sure you are capable to maturely respond to any potential situation.

### **Relationships and summer camp are a challenging mix**

If you find yourself dating someone during the summer, be prepared to have to juggle your responsibilities for the campers, each other and the community. Your time is finite and you will not be able to give much extra time to the other person without affecting the time you can dedicate to your campers and coworkers. You must agree to spend no more time with your new love (except on your day off) than you would with the 30 other staff at camp. Your character must stand up to the test. Campers must always come first.

### **Camp is ONE community.**

You'll experience a small, tight community, which is a very rare experience in today's world. The joys (shared values and goals, mutual influence, people, belonging, home) and troubles (rumor mills, personality issues, we're stuck with each other) that go along with this will be yours to treasure and to endure.

Most people would like to think that they love strong, tight communities, but often the feeling is one of appreciation, not love. Below are a few realities of our community:

- On days off, everyone usually does things together, or in small groups. No one is left out – a community ethos. Sometimes this requires great organization, compromise, and planning, which must arise from the staff.
- When the staff is spread thin due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances, the community needs more than your already heroic contribution.
- Undoubtedly, you will find people you appreciate more and appreciate less, but you must be kind and caring to both. Time must be spent with the whole group, and not a subgroup. That is a powerful human tendency to resist, but the health of the community requires it. For the non-community minded, this is torture.
- The Staff Lounge and the Days-Off House are the main shared spaces. It is as filthy or as clean as everyone makes it. It is nice for it to be clean, and that requires constant diligent effort on everyone's part. When you see a mess you didn't create, clean it anyway.
- There are a few washers and driers for everyone. That means that the community must work on this task together. When clothes are wet and need to be transferred to the drier, the next person who wants to wash does it (set on low). If you want the drier and clothes are in it, you fold the clothes, which are not yours, and then put your clothes in.
- In day-to-day camp life, when you see that other people need a hand, you are the person to help them, because you noticed. We all do many jobs, and we help each other out.

Working at camp creates a level of closeness with other people that is unheard of in many other jobs. Every meal, every activity, almost every hour of every day is spent in the company of others. Time starts to blur and you feel like you have known people for years. In the camp world; a day is like a week, a week like a month and a month like a year! You don't have to believe me now but, some of the people you work with will become friends for life.

### **Willing to Unplug**

We live in a world that connects young people through technology and children are losing the ability to communicate and interact face-to-face. As a summer camp, we pride ourselves on our ability to revive lost arts, like; playing outside, socializing in person, completing tasks as a team and being creative with free time. We are an unplugged facility. We ask our campers to unplug during their time with us. We also ask that our staff model this behavior by leaving their phones in their room (hidden) or in the staff lounge (we have chargers!). If you cannot live without your headphones and your screen time, this may not be the job for you.

### **General characteristics of staff who work out best:**

- Lived away from home before.
- Worked with children a lot.
- See the positivity in changes. Not stuck in tradition.
- Not into gossip, grudges, anger, and talking behind other people's backs
- People describe you as someone who is warm, a people person.
- You are upbeat. You brighten people's day.
- You find the humor, even when it is hard to find, and you laugh at yourself.
- You tend to put others first.
- Wake up with the thought "What can I do today to make the campers feel special?" Go to sleep thinking "What can I do tomorrow to make the campers feel even more special?"
- Instead of children sapping your energy, they feed it.
- Positivity and Energy levels are tested when working 16-18 hour days, for six days in a row, for 8 weeks. Sprinters crash and burn by week 3 of camp and become unhappy. You can be happy running a marathon.

**Be sure to reflect. You want to live, work, and play in a place where you will be happy and successful. Make sure you will be comfortable here and please ask questions!**

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