

WELCOME TO VICTORY JUNCTION: A RESOURCE GUIDE TO PREPARE YOUR
CAMPER FOR CAMP

by

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(Under the Direction of Laura McKee)

ABSTRACT

Children and adolescents with chronic health conditions deal with a variety of unique challenges and stressors physically, emotionally, and socially. Camps that are specifically designed for these children can provide many protective factors in order to buffer the risks often accompanied with their illnesses. Although camps have many benefits, they can be stressful and often present a challenge for many children who struggle with homesickness. Research reveals the importance of preparing children for stressful experiences. By focusing attention on easing parental and child anxiety through preparation, camps can optimize protective factors and promote positive outcomes. This paper will review literature on four main topics: (a) challenges facing children with chronic illness; (b) benefits of camp for these children; (c) effectiveness of preparation for stressful experiences; and (d) predictors and prevention of homesickness. Lastly, a resource guide made specifically for Victory Junction, a camp for children with chronic illnesses, is introduced.

INDEX WORDS: chronic illness, camp, homesickness, preparation

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this clinical project to the many campers and counselors at Victory Junction that made such a huge impact on my life. I am forever changed because of this camp. It is my hope that this resource guide empowers Victory Junction campers and families, helping them transition into camp and have the greatest time of their lives.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Before reviewing the literature specifically related to the camp experience and the impact camp has on children, it is important to understand more about the population of children with chronic illness who are served by special camps. This background will set the stage for the conceptual model and present the importance of this area of research.

Challenges of Chronic Illness.

Chronic illness is defined as a health condition that lasts three months or more, affects a child's normative activities (i.e., school attendance, extracurricular activities,), and requires frequent hospitalizations, home health care, and/or extensive medical care (Compas, Jaser, Dunn, & Rodriguez, 2012). Examples of chronic illness include cancer, diabetes, heart disease, asthma, and spina bifida. Many chronic illnesses will last for the entirety of an individual's life. Chronic health conditions are typically characterized by three qualities: they are prolonged in duration, do not resolve spontaneously, and are rarely cured entirely (Compas et al., 2012). Van Cleave, Gortmaker, and Perrin (2010) estimate that as many as 1 in 4 children and adolescents suffer from a chronic illness (as cited in Compas et al., 2012). Children and adolescents with chronic health conditions deal with a variety of unique challenges and stressors physically, emotionally, and socially. These include physical differences, negative body image, social isolation, impaired emotional functioning, and developmental issues.

Physical differences. Many chronic conditions result in physical differences. These differences can be a result of congenital malformations (e.g., smaller limbs), deformities from

trauma (e.g., amputations), medication side effects (e.g., balding), or manifestations of the disease (e.g., spine curvature) (McCarthy, 2015). Another physical difference resulting from the presence of chronic illness includes the use of equipment that may not be discreet (McCarthy, 2015). Examples of such visible equipment include braces, nasogastric tubes, oxygen tanks, and insulin pumps. Furthermore, some children with chronic conditions may have physical challenges such as incontinence, seizures or scars that result in body differences (McCarthy, 2015). These physical differences have an impact on the child's body image, and often result in poor perception of self.

Negative body image. Children can see themselves as different when they are comparing their bodies and abilities to those of typically-developing or “healthy” peers. In a meta-analysis of 330 studies on differences between the body image of children with and without chronic illness, Pinquart (2013) found that youth with chronic illnesses evaluate their bodies less positively than their healthy peers. Children with visible physical differences are also more likely to experience stigmatization and other teasing, which negatively impacts their body image (Pinquart, 2013). These differences and the child's poor self-esteem can affect daily functioning. Children may go to great lengths to conceal their differences (McCarthy, 2015) or may display depressive symptoms or poor self-care as a result of their negative body image (Pinquart, 2013). Children's self-perceptions have also been related to attitudes towards their disease and medical adherence (Odar, Canter, & Roberts, 2012). Physical differences and poor self-esteem are in and of themselves two major challenges of children with chronic illnesses; however, they can also have a major impact on the child's social and emotional development.

Social isolation. Unfortunately, social isolation and/or diminished socialization tend to be consequences of chronic illness for several reasons. Children and adolescents may be isolated

from their peers because of their physical differences, extended hospitalizations, frequent medical treatments, or inability to participate in normative activities (e.g., community sports) because of medical needs or restrictions (McCarthy, 2015). Another common cause of social isolation and loneliness is the lack of peers for children with chronic conditions who are going through similar challenges (Meltzer & Rourke, 2005). Even children and adolescents who don't have observable or physical differences may feel uncomfortable disclosing their illness or treatments, which may prevent them from finding peers who share their condition (McCarthy, 2015). In addition to ensuring these youth receive necessary medical care, it is also imperative that they have the socialization that typically-developing youth have. Lack of these experiences can affect the child's social identity (Allsop, Negley, & Sibthorp, 2013) and personality (Harris, 1995).

Impaired emotional functioning. In addition to social isolation, youth with chronic conditions may also struggle with impaired emotional functioning. As mentioned earlier, children with chronic illness may have visible effects of the illness on their physical bodies that can lead to bullying and social isolation. In addition, some children may have differences that affect their cognitive functioning (McCarthy, 2015). This diminished functioning can lead to decreased socialization and self-esteem as well. Additionally, children with chronic illnesses report more internalizing and externalizing symptoms. These include higher incidences of depression, anxiety, behavioral issues, and post-traumatic stress than their typically-developing peers (Moola, Faulkner, White, & Kirsh, 2014).

Developmental issues. The last domain of challenges this paper will discuss are developmental issues. Youth diagnosed with a chronic illness may experience a different developmental trajectory than their typically-developing peers as a result of their

hospitalizations, diminished social, physical and academic experiences, and medical treatments (McCarthy, 2015). Some children may be delayed in physical development as a result of their medical treatments or time spent away from normative activities. For example, Luca et al. (2013) found that some children being treated for acute lymphoblastic leukemia displayed motor difficulties. Other children may meet physical developmental milestones but miss out on opportunities to gain life skills (McCarthy, 2015). Children and adolescents with a chronic condition often face challenges in every domain of their lives as a result of their medical needs. They have a unique set of challenges to be addressed. One current resource many of these children have the opportunity to utilize is summer camp specifically designed to meet their medical needs.

Camp.

Summer camp for children and adolescents with chronic conditions (“camp”) varies greatly depending on the diagnoses the organization serves, activities offered, and availability in different parts of the world. Many children who are diagnosed with a chronic illness are not able to attend a typically-developing summer camp because of their unique medical needs. However, many different camping associations are dedicated to providing camp experiences for these children including SeriousFun Children’s Network, Diabetes Education and Camping Association (DECA), Children’s Oncology Camping Association-International (COCA-I), and a number of camps within the American Camp Association. Allowing children with chronic illnesses a chance to participate in a normative summer camp experience offers many benefits despite some challenges, such as homesickness.

CHAPTER 2

STATEMENT OF RATIONALE

The purpose of this paper is to review the literature related to camp and the role of preparation in reducing the negative experience of homesickness. Although there is little research specifically examining the role of preparing children for camp experiences, it is beneficial to look at the research about preparing children for other stressful encounters (i.e., medical procedures and court). A conceptual model, shown in Figure 1, has been developed from a review of the literature related to children with chronic illness, camp, and preparation for stressful experiences as well as the utilization of family stress theory, attachment theory, and the risk and resilience framework.

It is important to consider the positive outcomes camps provide, as they can be associated with the child's increased hope and health-related quality of life (Spieth & Harris, 1996; Woods, Mayes, Bartley, Fedele, & Ryan, 2013). The protective factors that a camp experience offers buffer the risks that often accompany the diagnosis of a chronic illness and promote resilience in the child's life.

Hope can be defined as a motivational state that is based on a sense of goal-directed energy and planning of ways to meet goals (Snyder, Irving, & Anderson, 1991). Woods et al. (2013) evaluated children's hope pre- and post- week at camp and found that there was a significant increase from before to after camp. Hope is important for how the child or adolescent views his illness and is associated with decreased depression and anxiety in the child (Woods,

Mayes, Bartley, Fedele, & Ryan, 2013). Woods et al. also found that post-camp levels of agency-related hope significantly predicted post-camp health-related quality of life.

Health-related quality of life is defined as the subjective and objective impact of dysfunction associated with an illness or injury or medical treatment (Spieth & Harris, 1996). Spieth and Harris (1996) report four "core" QOL domains: disease state and physical symptoms, functional status, psychological functioning, and social functioning. The positive camp outcomes, such as socialization, independence, and disease knowledge provide campers resources that protect against the impact of their chronic illness on their physical, psychological, and social functioning.

The literature review that follows has been organized in accordance with the conceptual model and will include (a) a discussion of the role a positive camp experience has in child outcomes; (b) consideration of a common negative camp experience; (c) the importance of preparing children for stressful experiences; and (d) predictors and prevention of homesickness. This review and model will summarize the current literature, emphasize the gaps, and provide a framework for future research.

Following the literature review, a resource guide developed to prepare children and families for camp is presented. This guide was created in collaboration with Victory Junction to serve the needs of their campers and families.

CHAPTER 3
CONCEPTUAL MODEL

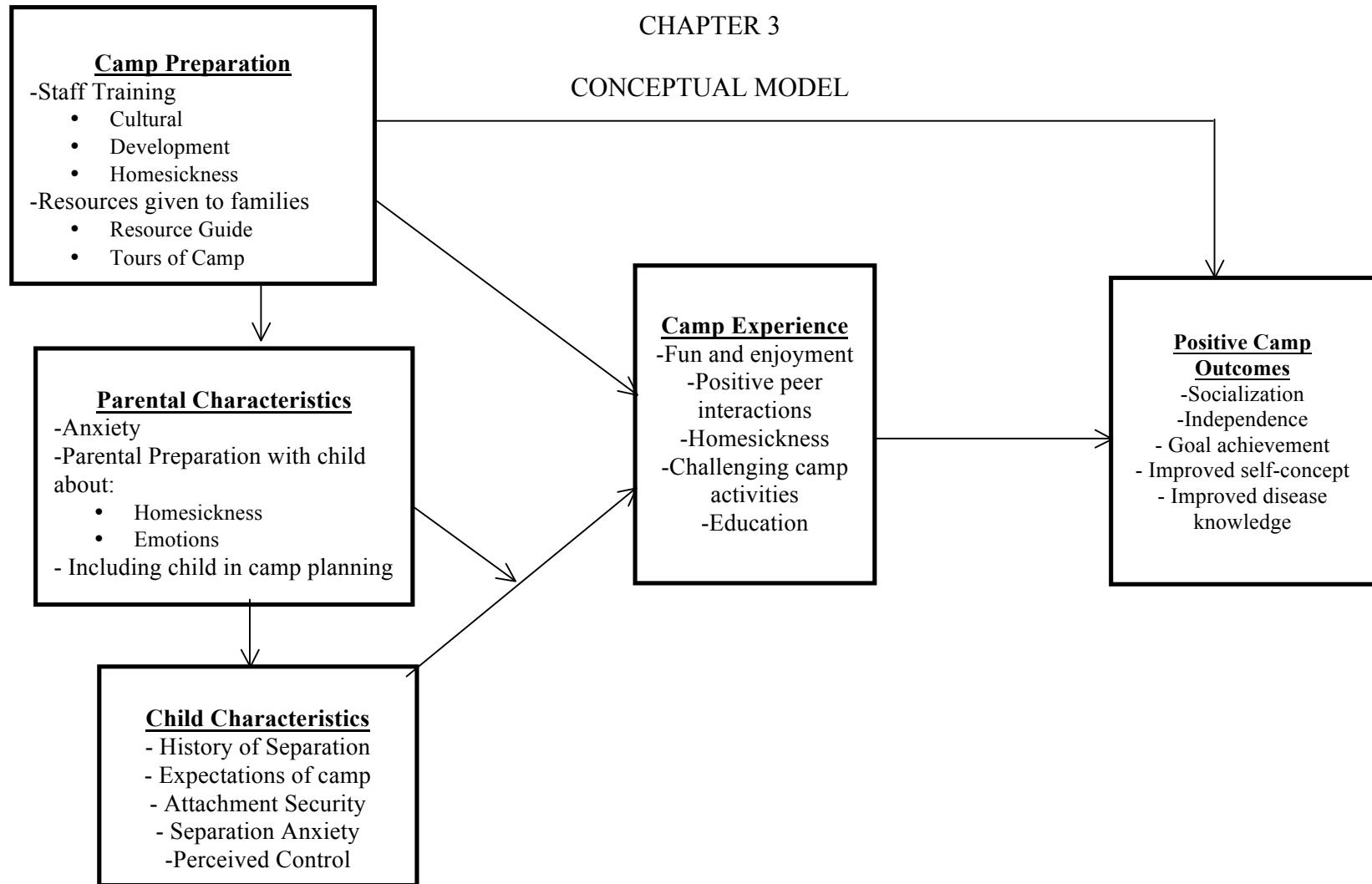


Figure 1. Conceptual framework: A model depicting factors associated with positive camp outcomes for children with chronic illness.

CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL LENSES

Risk and Resilience Framework.

In order to view this topic through a theoretical perspective, the risk and resilience framework will be utilized. The study of resilience has emerged from many different disciplines including epidemiology, medicine, and public health; however, some of the first studies involved children who functioned competently, socially and emotionally, despite their exposure to adversity (Patterson, 2002). Resilience, then, can be defined as doing well in the face of adversity (Patterson, 2002). The concept of risk goes hand in hand with resilience. A risk is any elevated probability of a less than desirable outcome (Wright et al., 2013). Resilience can be seen as overcoming many risks, thriving after a traumatic event, or avoiding negative outcomes after adversity. Resilience depends much more on the context of the adversity and the availability of protective factors than individual qualities (Ungar, 2012; Wright et al.). Protective factors can be defined as factors that help buffer the effects of risk factors (Wright et al.). The experience of these protective factors is cumulative (Ungar, 2012). Thus, the more protective factors a child experiences, the more resilient he is likely to be in the face of risk.

Children with chronic illness experience many challenges, detailed earlier, that could ultimately put them at risk for more negative trajectories. For example, social isolation and negative body image can put children at risk for depression (Pinquart, 2012). However, these risk factors can be buffered by protective factors including individual and family characteristics (Wright et al., 2013). Camps designed specifically for children with chronic illness can also act

as protective factors. First, new relationships with peers and trusted adults other than primary caregiver(s) can become a new resource for the child (Ungar, 2012). These new peer relationships provide a community for the child and help improve illness knowledge and management. Next, camp can impact the youth's identity by helping her realize and focus on her strengths instead of weaknesses. A camp experience also gives children some control in their life as they begin to achieve goals or become independent in their care. The child can then go home feeling like he or she can manage challenges when they arise. Lastly, camps offer children a chance to feel like they belong. For many children, camp is the only time they get during the year to see and commune with other children who are going through similar experiences. This sense of community can be a buffer against feelings of isolation (Ungar, 2014). Camp can provide a host of protective factors that can help buffer current and future risk factors and promote resilience in the child's life. Below, a more detailed review of literature shows more protective factors camp experiences offer.

Family Stress Theory.

Another theory the current model draws upon is the family stress theory, or the ABC-X model. Reuben Hill (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983) developed this model to describe the processes families go through when adapting to stressful situations. Appendix A depicts this model. A, the stressor event, interacts with B, the family's resources, and C, the family's perception of the stressor to produce stress within the family. The family can either cope positively to resolve the stress or negatively to create a crisis.

This theoretical framework has informed both the conceptual model and resource guide in several ways. First, camp staff members are increasing the family's resources by providing them a guide to both lessen the stress of transitioning to camp and providing the family a way to

perceive and begin to understand the culture of camp. A resource guide also empowers parents to discuss camp and homesickness with their child, which in turn provides the child resources to cope successfully with the separation experience. Additionally, a positive experience at camp provides the child the resources to cope with the stressors of his illness. Children gain a community of friends, disease knowledge, and coping skills by participating in a camp designed to fit their needs.

Attachment Theory.

John Bowlby's attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) suggests that attachment is a deep emotional bond that connects two people characterized by specific behaviors, such as proximity seeking when distressed. Bowlby found that attachment impacts subsequent development in children and is important when considering relationships between parents and children.

The parent-child attachment relationship predicts how well a child is able to cope with a separation. If a child has an insecure attachment relationship with their parent, she is more likely to experience homesickness while at camp (Thurber & Sigman, 1998). This relationship will be discussed in more detail later on.

CHAPTER 5

LITERATURE REVIEW

Child Characteristics

Many different characteristics of children are useful to examine when predicting their camp experience, specifically homesickness. Predictors of homesickness include history of separation, attachment security, anxiety, expectations of camp, and perceived control (Kingery, Peneston, Wormuth & Rice, 2012; Thurber, Patterson, & Mount, 2007). Certain characteristics of children and/or lack of experiences put the child at risk for experiencing more severe feelings of homesickness.

History of separation. Children's past experiences are significant predictors of their experience of homesickness. Thurber and Sigman (1998), for example, examined the experiences of boys during an overnight summer camp and found that little previous experience away from home and little or no previous experience at the camp predicted homesickness. Experience with separation is valuable as it provides opportunities for the child not only to practice separation from their caregiver, but also to practice coping with any negative emotions they may experience while away. Types of separation experiences also shape expectations of future separations. If early separations are traumatic, such as hospitalization or foster placements, expectations for future separations may be negative (Thurber & Walton, 2007). This is particularly applicable to the population of children with chronic illness, as they have likely had many hospitalization experiences. A child's expectations for camp can predict the likelihood of feelings of homesickness.

Expectations of camp. Another powerful predictor of homesickness is the belief that homesickness will be severe or expectations that camp or the new environment won't be positive (Thurber & Sigman, 1998). If a child believes that camp is going to be terrible or that he is going to miss home a lot, he may be creating a self-fulfilling prophesy. Additionally, parents who make early pick-up deals with their children give their child a home-related thought to dwell on. This promise may increase the likelihood that the camper will experience homesickness (Thurber & Malinowski, 2000).

Attachment security. An additional risk factor associated with homesickness is an insecure attachment relationship with the child's primary caregiver (Thurber & Sigman, 1998). Children and adolescents with an "anxious-ambivalent" attachment style are the most likely to experience separation anxiety when away from home (Thurber & Walton, 2007). These children may not experience a consistent and sensitive caregiver response to their distress and may think that they aren't worthy of others' attention or love (Thurber & Walton, 2007). Brumariu and Kerns (2008) examined whether attachment patterns relate to social anxiety in children. They found that lower attachment security and higher ambivalent attachment were related to higher social anxiety. Furthermore, studies have shown that social anxiety is related to poor peer relationships (Brumariu & Kerns, 2008). Thus, children who have an insecure attachment are also unlikely to have as many positive peer interactions as children with secure attachments. Secure attachment, alternatively, is associated with independence and an increased likelihood of exploring new environments and socializing with others (Thurber & Walton, 2007). Exploration and socialization are likely to help the securely attached child adjust to her new environment, allowing her to gain the most out of her camp experience.

Separation anxiety. Homesickness and separation anxiety share the same theme of experiencing anxiety concerning a separation experience; however, there are important differences between the two (Stroebe, Schut, & Nauta, 2015). Homesickness includes preoccupying thoughts about home and things about home, rather than just people, which are the focal points in separation anxiety disorder (Thurber, Sigman, Weisz, & Schmidt, 1999). Children who have been diagnosed with separation anxiety disorder may be more likely to experience homesickness at camp. The American Psychiatric Association (2013) describes separation anxiety disorder as having a possible manifestation of becoming homesick “to the point of misery when away from home” (as cited in Stroebe, Schut, & Nauta, 2013, p.158). However, not all children with separation anxiety will experience homesickness while away as there are many other factors involved, including perceived control.

Perceived control. Perceived control is the belief that a child can determine his emotions and behaviors, influence his environment, and produce his desired outcome (Wallston, Wallston, Smith, & Dobbins, 1987). Low perceived control is a risk factor for homesickness (Thurber & Walton, 2007). Related to low perceived control is low decision control. Decision control is how much input one has regarding important decisions. Both low perceived control and decision control may impact whether a child or adolescent feels control in her camp experience (Thurber & Walton, 2007). For example, a child involved in camp selection and planning would likely feel more decision control than a child who feels forced to go to camp.

Parental Characteristics

Parental expression of emotion and behavior have an impact on the child’s characteristics, such as anxiety levels, and the child’s camp experience. The steps parents take to

prepare their child for the camp experience also moderates, or provides a buffer, if the child's characteristics put him at risk for feelings of homesickness.

Anxiety. According to contagion theory (Thompson, 2009), a child often adopts her caregiver's level of anxiety. If a caregiver is extremely anxious, then the child is more likely to experience those worries. Kingery et al. (2012) examined the relationship between parents' worries and children's anxiety as risk factors for homesickness during camp. They found that greater parental anxiety was related to the child's homesickness during camp as well as to more symptoms of social and separation anxiety in their children, which were, in turn also associated with higher levels of homesickness (Kingery et al., 2012). Parents who explicitly express their anxiety or ambivalence are also likely to contribute to their child's experiences of homesickness (Thurber & Walton, 2007). For example, a parent that says "Have a great time at camp. I don't know what I'll do without you" is expressing anxiety over the separation. This will likely lead to more homesickness as it focuses the child's attention on the separation and the purported inability of the caregiver to cope with the separation (Thurber & Malinowski, 2000).

Parental preparation. There is little research specifically documenting how parental preparation leads to a more positive experience for campers. However, there is much research on how preparation leads to less anxiety during a stressful experience in the hospital. Given that the hospital and camp are both unfamiliar environments that often require separation from the caregiver, much can be extrapolated from research in the hospital to the camp context. Beginning in the mid-1970s, studies began to demonstrate the positive effects preparation programs had on children's responses to hospitalization and surgery (Mahan, 2005). The goal of preparatory information is to reduce the child's anxiety regarding an event by providing them with realistic expectations that produce less anxiety than the unknown would (Claar, Walker, & Barnard,

2002). Some of the key elements of effective programs include (1) conveying information to the child in a developmentally appropriate manner, (2) encouraging the expression of feelings about the event, (3) inviting the participation of parents and other family members, and (4) establishing a trusting therapeutic relationship with staff members (Mahan, 2005). Since then, many studies have demonstrated the benefits of preparing children for stressful events. Kolk, van Hoof, and Dop (2000), for example, examined differences between children who were prepared for venipuncture versus those who were not prepared and found that prepared children displayed less distress before and during the procedure. In another medically-based study, Hatava, Olsson, and Lagerkranser (2000) found that preparation for children undergoing an Ear Nose Throat operation alleviated fears and led to greater parental satisfaction. Parents who prepare their child for their camp experience will likely see similar results, namely, reduction in the child's worries, fears, and anxiety. Additionally, parents who prepare their children can help buffer the effects of the risk factors that make children vulnerable to homesickness (Thurber & Malinowski, 2000).

Homesickness. Parents who discuss homesickness with their child provide an opportunity for the child to discuss anti-homesickness strategies with their caregiver (Thurber & Malinowski, 2000). These discussions also help validate and normalize the experience of homesickness. Helping the child understand the length of camp, discussing strategies to help when homesickness (i.e., writing letters, participating in fun activities, holding a comfort item), and arranging time away from home to practice are all great ways to help reduce or even prevent feelings of missing home while at camp (Thurber & Malinowski, 2000).

Emotions. Another discussion for parents to have with their children prior to camp includes discussing the other emotions they may experience at camp including fun, fear, and making new friends (Thurber & Malinowski, 2000). Discussing the positive emotions will allow

youth to begin to look forward to their experience. It is still important to discuss the more negative emotions prior to camp as this promotes positive coping while away. For example, talking with the child about what to do or who to go to when she is scared will promote her independence when she is able to overcome that fear. Providing the child with both resources and ways to perceive emotions will lead to successful coping.

Including child in camp planning. As mentioned earlier, children who feel forced to go to camp are more likely to experience more severe homesickness (Thurber & Walton, 2007). Including the child in camp planning will help her feel like she has more control over her camp experience, thus lowering the likelihood of her missing home while separated. Thurber and Malinowski (2000) suggest including the child in camp planning first when suggesting ways to prevent homesickness. Some practical ways parents can include their child in camp planning is talking about camp frequently, giving the child the opportunity to pick out clothes or bedding for camp, and allowing the child to participate in decisions about which camp to go to.

Camp Preparation

There are specific trainings and resources that camp directors can provide to influence parental anxiety, parent and camper preparedness, the child's camp experience, and ultimately the positive camp outcomes. Camp directors play a vital role in being able to create the protective factors a week at camp is capable of providing. Tyrrell (2015, p.1) states "the odds of a successful experience are greater when staff are well prepared to deliver and campers are well prepared to attend."

Staff trainings. Caring for campers requires many different skills including inclusivity, caring, motivation, and warmth. Camps that provide extensive trainings regarding culture, child

development, and homesickness help prepare their staff and ultimately provide a more positive camp experience for all participants involved.

Cultural. Tyrrell (2015) emphasizes the importance of including cultural training for any staff members or volunteers that will be working with campers or families. Campers come from all different backgrounds, and it is important the counselors provide a culture of inclusion and acceptance in order for campers to reap the benefits of socialization and positive relationships. Camps must clearly communicate what they expect of counselors and volunteers in terms of dress code, appropriate behaviors, and acceptable conversation topics (Tyrrell, 2015).

Developmental. It is extremely important that both counselors and volunteers are familiar with the psychosocial development of their campers in order for them to appropriately work with their campers, promote independence with scaffolding, and help them achieve their goals. For example, counselors need to know when to empower their campers into pushing past their limitations and when their campers truly need assistance. Counselors who are able to find this balance will maximize the potential for both goal achievement and independence while at camp. Camps can also provide tips for counselors on talking with their campers to facilitate debrief at the end of each day (American Camp Association, 2013). Providing counselors with this developmental training leads to better camper care, physically and emotionally, contributing to more positive outcomes (Warren, 2011).

Homesickness. Counselors are the primary figure in a camper's life while they are away from home. Thus, campers are likely to seek counselor care when they are missing home. Thompson (2012) states that the most effective thing counselors can do when a camper is homesick is to create a fun and social environment for the child. Counselors who are able to

successfully distract their camper may be able to help camper cope with their feelings of missing home. Thompson terms this feeling “homesick and happy.”

Resources to families. For campers to have a positive camp experience, camp staff must prepare them for the unknown by giving them the tools and information needed to succeed. Familiarizing families with tours and detailed information reduces the unknown, and in turn will reduce their anxiety.

Tours of camp. Giving families and campers an opportunity to visit camp is one way to promote mastery of and familiarity with the camp prior to attending. Thurber & Walton (2007) suggest that camps familiarize campers who are at risk for homesickness with the camp facilities by inviting parents and children to tour the camp prior to arrival. If campers and their families are unable to visit camp, it is extremely important to provide them with as much information as possible about camp, activities, and camp culture through a guide.

Resource guide. One of the easiest ways to provide resources and coping techniques for children prior to attending camp is to share as much knowledge about the camp as possible (Tyrrell, 2015). Reducing the gap between returning campers and new campers empowers participants. Resource guides can include information on the activities of camp, emotions campers may experience, ways to prevent homesickness, and conversation prompts for parents to use with children prior to camp attendance. By focusing attention on easing parents’ worries prior to camp through provision of information and preparation, camps can reduce homesickness through both pathways of parental and child anxiety.

Camp Experience

A child’s camp experience is going to have a direct impact on the protective factors and positive outcomes gained from their week. If a child is experiencing severe homesickness, it may

limit their participation in camp programming, limit social interactions, and preoccupy their thoughts. However, lower feelings of homesickness or successful coping with those feelings allows the child to experience fully the benefits and protective factors a week at camp is able to provide.

Fun and enjoyment. Summer camps, regardless of population, are great opportunities for children to simply have fun. There are enjoyable games, chances to experience new, challenging activities, and memorable evening entertainment. As stated before, children with chronic conditions are often excluded from extracurricular activities or sports because of their medical needs. However, at many medically-based camps these children are given the opportunity to experience camp and the associated fun activities without the limitations of their illness. This is made possible with adaptive equipment and availability of trained medical staff. Additionally, many children enjoy being able to escape their normal lives and routines for a novel experience (McCarthy, 2015). A camper at one rheumatologic disorder camp stated that camp was the first time she was able to “forget about her diagnosis and just be able to be a normal teenager and have fun” (E., personal communication, July 2015). Summer camps give children a place where they can be a kid, have fun, and forget their identity as a patient (McCarthy, 2015).

Challenging camp activities. Because camp provides children an opportunity to participate in activities that are novel and challenging, it gives them the ability to master new tasks and develop new skills (McCarthy, 2015). Many activities at camp allow children to push past their real or imagined limitations (Békési et al., 2011). For example, in challenge-by-choice adventure programming (programs where campers choose how high the swing goes, how difficult their climbing course is, etc.) children are given the chance to push past their physical

limitations by using adaptive equipment. Children who aren't able to walk are able to climb a 55-foot tower. In the same activity, children can also push past their self-imposed limitations by having their peers and counselors encourage them while climbing. Achievement in these activities improves children's self-confidence and self-concept, teaches them to trust themselves, reduces anxiety of unfamiliarity, and builds positive coping skills (McCarthy, 2015). Additionally, campers get to experience what it is like to be recognized for their strengths and not their weaknesses (Békési et al., 2011). Experiencing success and encouragement empowers children and helps them overcome their fears, including those related to their illness (McCarthy, 2015). This also extends into their lives outside of camp. Woods, Mayes, Bartley, Fedeles, and Ryan (2013) found that youth with chronic diseases were more confident in their ability to identify strategies and achieve goals after camp.

Positive relationships. Another example of children achieving their goals is with “cabin chat.” Many camps have a time during the day where campers can sit down and talk with their counselors and peers. This time is unique and special in that, for many campers, it is the first time they are able to talk about their illness and have their peers understand what they are going through. Having positive interactions with their peers and overcoming challenges together leads to a tight community and close friendships (socialization). The community built through camp experiences is different than the community children and adolescents may have outside of camp. Their friends at camp have similar backgrounds, experiences, and challenges that bond them together (McCarthy, 2015). As stated earlier, for many children summer camp is the first time that they are able to meet someone who is like them. They may have never met someone who looked like them, took the same medicine, or wore the same equipment as them. When children are offered the occasion to learn social skills from their peers and participate in this community,

they often experience empowerment and feelings of inclusion (Cushner-Weinstein et al., 2007). Campers are able to be free from judgment regarding their condition because every other camper also has a challenge (McCarthy). This community of similar peers often enhances children's self-esteem (McCarthy). At a gastrointestinal disorder camp, one adolescent girl stated "when you're diagnosed, everyone tries to figure out what's wrong with your body, but here at [camp] I realized how beautiful and strong my body really is" (E., personal communication, July 2015). Camp gives kids a chance to view their bodies in ways that they are strong instead of ways that they are weak. This protective factor leads to children and adolescents having improved self-perception and self-concept (Békési et al., 2011; Kiernan, Gormley, & MacLachlan, 2004; Odar et al., 2012; Wellisch, Crater, Wiley, Belin, & Weinstein, 2006). These improvements come from meeting others that look like them (Cushner-Weinstein et al., 2007; Odar et al., 2012) and being able to participate in an enjoyable normative childhood experience (Odar et al., 2012). Importantly, improvements in self-perception have been related to improved medical adherence (Burkhart & Rayens, 2005). Thus, promoting resilience related to their health-related quality of life.

Education. Another benefit of camp attendance is improved disease knowledge and management, coming from both formal and informal education (McCarthy, 2015). Formal education includes any sessions that the camp has planned. Nicholas, Williams, and MacLusky (2009) evaluated formal group sessions at an asthma camp and found that after a week at camp, campers demonstrated more knowledge, application of knowledge, and independence in care. Informal education includes knowledge, skills, or techniques that campers gain from their peers. They may talk with their peers about specific ways they cope with or manage their illness, or campers may observe how their peers manage their illness and learn skills through social

learning. Nicholas et al. (2009) provides an example of campers with asthma discussing their triggers and giving each other practical advice to help manage their illness. Both informal and formal education are providing these children with resources to be able to cope with the physical and emotional aspects of their illness. Although many experiences at camp, like education, are positive, some campers may also experience a more negative experience of homesickness.

Homesickness. Homesickness can be defined as “the distress or impairment caused by an actual or anticipated separation from home (Thurber et al., 2007, p.2)” and is very common within the camp environment. Many children experience homesickness regardless of how many times they have been away from home. While many children just have an acute longing or preoccupation with thoughts of home (Thurber et al., 2007), 10-20% of campers report severe enough homesickness to prevent them from participating in camp activities (Thurber et al., 1999). Although the experience of homesickness is often negative, many children are able to cope successfully with these feelings, leading to more independence and self-confidence (Thurber & Malinowski, 2000). If children are able to be resilient and cope with homesickness at camp, utilizing their resources (i.e., coping plans, counselors, peers) they will be more likely to experience enhanced protective factors.

Limitations of Existing Literature

There is a large gap in the literature pertaining specifically to preparing children and families for summer camp. Although the positive impact of preparation has been demonstrated in other contexts, there are few studies that have specifically examined the impact or benefits of providing children and families with prior information or preparation prior to their camp experience.

Implications for Future Interventions

As demonstrated in this review, summer camp can have many benefits for children with chronic illness including socialization, hope, and normalization. However, many children have difficulties at camp. These challenges include homesickness, experiencing new emotions, and transitioning into camp (e.g., check-in). As demonstrated in the literature on preparation, providing information and preparation reduced children's anxiety for stressful experiences. These two research areas can be connected in order to inform families and guide future research. Providing information to children and families prior to their camp experience can help prepare the child for what a camp experience may be and give parents the resources to further prepare their children.

CHAPTER 6

CLINICAL PROJECT: WELCOME TO VICTORY JUNCTION RESOURCE GUIDE

In an effort to address the needs of new campers and their families as they prepare for sending their camper to Victory Junction, I have developed “Welcome to Victory Junction: A Resource Guide to Prepare Your Camper for Camp” for families to be distributed by Victory Junction (Appendix E). My goal for this clinical project is to create a resource that will (1) provide information and prepare campers for their camp experience, (2) give parents a resource to assist in conversations about camp with their child, and (3) reduce the frequency of experiences of homesickness at camp. Ultimately, my hope is that Victory Junction can use this guide to provide new camper families with preparation, education, and resources to facilitate positive coping as the camper transitions into camp. I have worked closely with my collaborating organization to ensure that this guide fits the needs of their organization and families and promotes their goal of providing a positive camp experience.

Collaborating Organization: Victory Junction

Victory Junction, a part of both SeriousFun Children’s Network and American Camp Association, is a year-round residential camp in Randleman, North Carolina, serving children and adolescents with chronic medical conditions and serious illnesses by providing “life-changing camp experiences that are exciting, fun and empowering” in a medically-sound environment (“About,” 2015, para. 1). Victory Junction is different than other camps in that it gives youth with serious medical conditions the opportunity to participate in a camp experience that would otherwise be denied to them. Victory Junction is “where children, whose lives are

filled with limitations and boundaries, face fun challenges and discover how resilient they are” (“About,” 2015, para. 2). Some illnesses that Victory Junction serves includes severe burns, cerebral palsy, diabetes, heart disease, sickle cell disease, cancer and a range of physical disabilities.

I was introduced to Victory Junction during the summer of 2015 when I worked as an Adventure Program Counselor. After working the summer with the staff of Victory Junction, I knew that I wanted to continue to be a part of their team as they serve the amazing children and families. I contacted Jacob Byrd, a program manager, and expressed my desire to work with the camp for my clinical project. I presented my idea of creating a handbook for campers and families and described how it would help in preparing campers, especially new families. Jacob presented the idea to the Victory Junction Operations Team consisting of the program team, medical team, volunteer coordinators, facility managers, food service staff, and barn staff. They decided that a resource guide would be a beneficial addition to their organization and agreed to work with me on developing the resource guide to meet their specific needs. Notes from our conversation regarding the development of the guide can be found in Appendix A.

Project Description and Development

After collaborating with Jacob Byrd, program director at Victory Junction, and identifying the areas of information and topics for the resource guide, I compiled two separate resource guides, one made for caregivers and one for campers. The camper guide is designed to be used as a book for parents to go through with their camper. It is my hope that these guides will assist parents in facilitating conversation about camp. This resource guide includes information about how parents play a vital role in preparing their child for camp. It includes topics of conversation, as well as prompts and resources, to empower parents in this preparation.

This information was compiled and adapted from *The Summer Camp Handbook* (2000) and resources provided on the American Camp's Association website. Jacob Byrd helped decide what information to include that best supported Victory Junction's needs.

After giving parents the information about camp preparation, I provided tips for arrival day as well as a few ideas for how the rest of the family could spend the week while their camper is away. Additionally, I provided prompts and questions for parents to ask when the week of camp is over in order to assist their camper in processing camp.

The camper resource guide is structured similarly, however includes different information. The main goal of this guide is to give the camper as much information about this unknown place as possible. It includes a number of pictures in order to give the child a visual of what camp looks like and the campers that go to camp. To begin, the guide details the arrival day process by listing the steps of check-in. Steps that are more stressful for some campers, like check and long waits are included, as well as less stressful steps such as driving through the beautiful gates of Victory Junction. The guide then moves into the week of camp. Each activity that Victory Junction provided is listed with information and pictures. Next, the book moves into emotions the camper may experience while at camp, both positive and negative. The book provides ideas as to how the camper may cope with the more negative emotions such as fear or missing home. Next, the guide lists out the rules of camp, including no bullying. Lastly, the guide refers campers to who they can go to if they need help at any point during the week. Jacob Byrd helped decide what information to include that best supported the campers that Victory Junction serves. Below is the outline for the material included in both resource guides:

I. Parental Resource Guide

A. Preparation for Camp

- 1.Homesickness Preparation and Prevention

- B. Week of Camp

- 1.Arrival Day and Check-in Process

- 2.Intentional Use of Time

- C. Reunion and Debriefing

- II. Camper Resource Guide

- A. Arrival Day and Check-in Process

- B. Average Day at Camp

- C. Camp Activities

- D. Emotional Preparation

- E. Camp Rules

- F. Counselor and Staff Support

Both the parent and camper resource guides were assessed by a readability tool to determine the average reading level of the text and information. It is important for the resource guide to be at a reading level low enough so that families of all backgrounds gain from utilizing it. The majority of the information in both resource guides falls at a middle school reading level or below. There are only a few pages that are in the high school range. These have been approved by Victory Junction. In collaboration with Victory Junction and my committee, the decision to have the child's resource guide around the same reading level as the parents was made. This is justified as the child resource guide is meant to be reviewed with the parent, not the child reading solely by himself.

In communicating with Jacob Byrd regarding the collaborating organization's needs, the handbook would be most beneficial in a pdf format (J. Byrd, personal communication, January

26, 2016). I have suggested to Victory Junction that it may be beneficial to have several printed versions available during arrival day for campers who are in need of additional preparation or who aren't coping well during check-in. This resource guide has been submitted to Victory Junction in both electronic and print-based forms.

Feedback and Revisions

After developing an initial draft of the resource, Jacob Byrd and the program team at Victory Junction reviewed the handbook and provided feedback. Their suggestions and revisions can be found in Appendix B. I incorporated their changes which included re-wording some terms and sentences, changing logistical information (i.e., schedule), and adding to the rules portion.

Regarding the camper book, Jacob Byrd requested that I change "Victory Junction Gang Camp" or "Victory Junction Camp" to simply "Victory Junction." He also recommended that I use the word "lice" instead of the previously used camp-term "hairy yeti." Additionally, Mr. Byrd suggested a rewording of the unit leader description to "You will meet your Unit Leader. A Unit Leader is a counselor that supports all 4 cabins in your unit color. In addition to your counselors, your Unit Leader is here to support you." Another wording edit Mr. Byrd suggested was to use gender-neutral terms when describing the unit nurses. He suggested I use "they" instead of "he" or "she."

Regarding the parent resource guide, Jacob Byrd suggested that I change the wording on a few different pages and adding content in a couple of places. First, Mr. Byrd suggested that I add a reminder or suggestion for parents to read the entire acceptance packet and any other materials that Victory Junction provides. This resource guide was not able to include every detail of information that parents need (i.e., medical information, packing lists). Reminding parents to read the other materials is a great way to emphasize the information that isn't included in the

guide. Next, Mr. Byrd re-phrased the page on “gaining independence.” I edited his rewording to simpler sentences for reading ease. He also re-phrased one of the slides on “missing home.” The term “missing home” was intentionally used in both books as opposed to “homesickness” to match the terminology used at Victory Junction. Lastly, Jacob Byrd recommended that I add a page at the end telling families to share their camp experiences.

Additionally, Victory Junction requested several changes with the appearance of the guides to match their brand standards. Throughout this process of revision and feedback, my major professor, Dr. Laura McKee provided a countless number of suggestions to improve both the parent and child’s resource guide, including softening language, adding descriptors, and wording changes.

After approval from my major professor, committee, and Victory Junction, the final version of “Welcome to Victory Junction: A resource guide to prepare your camper for camp” will be sent to Victory Junction in PDF and publisher format. The hard copy and web-based versions will be available for Victory Junction as well. Victory Junction will distribute electronic copies to campers and families during the acceptance process. I have also suggested that Victory Junction make available a hard copy for arrival day. The final version of the handbook can be found in Appendix D.

Reflections and Future Directions

Jacob Byrd, on behalf of Victory Junction, has expressed enthusiasm about this resource. Other program directors and medical staff have also told me their excitement towards having a resource guide for campers and families. They believe that this guide will be another way that Victory Junction promotes a positive camp experience. I have thoroughly enjoyed being able to work with Victory Junction and Jacob Byrd. I have deepened my understanding of camp and

homesickness. Through researching camp preparation and homesickness and working with Jacob Byrd and my committee, I have gained insight, knowledge, and skills that will help me move forward in my career as a child life specialist and implementing child life services in a camp setting. Such knowledge and skills includes (a) the predictors of homesickness; (b) the numerous ways children can be prepared for a camp experience; and (c) the resources available to camps, campers, and their families.

In the future, seeking feedback from experienced Victory Junction campers and families would be beneficial. Parents know their children best and would have great suggestions as to what to include in a resource guide. They also have had a camp experience at Victory Junction and would be able to offer valuable input. This resource could be adapted to be used with many different camps. The majority of children, no matter if they have a chronic illness or not, will experience homesickness at some point while at camp. This resource guide could be utilized in other settings as well, such as hospitalization or long separations from home.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Children with chronic illnesses have a unique set of challenges in life and are at risk for physical, social, emotional, and developmental issues. Summer camps designed for their populations can help alleviate some of these stressors, teach coping strategies, and promote resilience in their lives. Victory Junction Camp is one organization that serves many of these populations in ways that many other camps in the United States do not have the capability of doing. Camp provides many benefits for children but also can be stressful for some children. I have created a resource guide for campers and families in order to provide information and prepare campers for what they may experience at camp. By providing this resource, Victory Junction can better serve their campers and facilitate positive coping during the week of camp.

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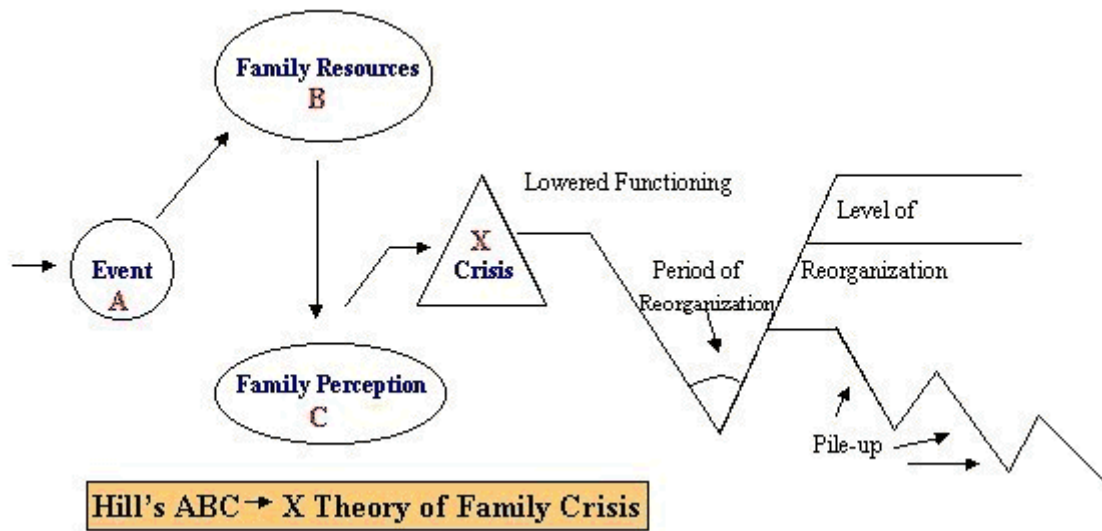
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APPENDIX A

REUBEN HILL'S ABC- X MODEL



APPENDIX B

CONVERSATION REGARDING CLINICAL PROJECT

Victory Junction – Assistant Program Director Conversation Regarding Clinical Project

Monday, August 24, 2015 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

As a part of my Master's program here at UGA I get to complete a clinical project for an organization related to child life. I would absolutely love to do something for Victory Junction and am writing to see if there is anything that y'all would like or need. One idea that came to my mind was a prep book. This would be a kind of "welcome to camp" book that goes through the week at camp beginning with driving through the gates, to check-in, to meeting your cabin, to activities throughout the week. I am unsure if you already have a resource like this because I am unfamiliar with the camper registration/approval process.

I am really open to doing anything if you could think of a resource that you would like. Let me know if this is something that interests Victory Junction and we can move along in the process.

Thursday, August 27, 2015 (Jacob Byrd to Lauranne McMillan)

I brought your email up to the team in a meeting yesterday. We really liked your idea, and think this could be very beneficial to our families.

If you will give me a little bit of time to do some planning around this, and I will get back to you with some more specifics and get you what you need to work on a project like this.

Love the idea, and can't wait to see how this will work.

Monday September 28, 2015 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

Hi Jacob,

I just wanted to check in to see if there is anything that I can begin on for the project. I know y'all have been busy with weekends lately! I am hoping to get started on it before the end of the semester, but no worries if there isn't anything I can do at this time.

Tuesday, September 29, 2015 (Jacob Byrd to Lauranne McMillan)

As far as the project. I am still liking the idea of a prep book that could be catered to first-time campers. VJ has formed a relationship with a local community college and we have interns that help with graphic design. I would imagine if you want to start with an outline of things covered in this guide, then we can start forming the info, and lastly begin to incorporate designs. There are some specific marketing and image standards we have for our organization that I'd need to check with our marketing department to ensure our protocol is followed.

Thank you so much!

Tuesday, January 26, 2016 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

Clinical Project:

1. I have finally received the necessary go ahead on my end. Here are my thoughts of how we should proceed, but please let me know your input. I will have my official proposal meeting at the end of February or beginning of March with my committee where I will share with them my plan for the book as well as the theoretical background as to why I think this is an important tool. I will also give them an introduction into what VJC is all about. I can send you this proposal in both word and PowerPoint format when I am finished.
2. I saw the email announcing that VJC hired a CCLS! This is super exciting. I would like to welcome him to camp and also ask if he would be interested in sharing his input throughout this process.

3. So next steps suggested from my committee here:
 - a. I need to come up with a general plan to send over to your team outlining what I was planning to include.
 - b. After reviewing this general outline, I would like your input on what you think should definitely stay, what can be cut, and anything that you may want added.
 - c. For my proposal I also need information regarding the following:
 - i. Format of book: would VJC rather have a hard copy, e-book, or web-based guide? Or multiple versions?
 - ii. Review and Revisions: throughout the process of creating this book what would be the best way for VJC to review and suggest revisions? Would you like an evaluation form to critique the book or have more conversation-type feedback?
4. Lastly, do you think that it would be beneficial to have a family that has been coming to VJC to also review the book? I am unsure if this would be allowed because of camp's policies of contact outside of camp. Let me know your thoughts on this. My committee would love it if we were able to have a parent or camper input!

Tuesday, January 26, 2016 (Jacob Byrd to Lauranne McMillan)

Good afternoon Lauranne,

Thanks for the update on the project. I will take this update to our Operations Meeting on Wednesday and we can hash out some of the final details.

I still like the direction of where this is headed. I have thought of some additional things that might be beneficial as families look over a guide to what Victory Junction, and even “camp” is about. Basically in the last few weeks I have had the epiphany of things I’d like families to know about before camp. I read some interesting articles more along the philosophy side of the tangible outcomes of camp.

- Expectation guide to campers on what camp will be like. Perhaps telling what are some emotions they might feel, things they might see, experiences and ways they can choose to grow. The personal and social growth.
- A guide to parents that talk about helping their child gain independence and what ways they can “prep” not only their child, but themselves while their child is away. Perhaps an encouragement for the parents to spend time together, a mini retreat, bonding activities they might draw parents closer together instead of worrying all week.
- A guide for when campers should go to someone for help. How we treat each other at camp. We value each camper and their background, how we are against bullying culture, what bullying may look like. How to get help if they need it. Judgment free zone and respecting other backgrounds.

With these items, I see a correlation between camp and Child-Life. The “full-circle” of what the experience of camp is. Pre, during, and post camp resource. I see this similar to what might happen in the hospital (forgive me, as I could be wrong).

I would think the best format would be a PDF version that we could eventually send to families that are accepted at camp. That way, our staff could provide feedback once it is submitted.

Ultimately if it’s a publication that will be sent to families (which that would be the final goal) it

would have to be properly branded with our image and follow the “VJ Brand Guidelines” that is typically given to our marketing department. I see this is more of a last step, as the information is the important part of the document.

An evaluation form would work just fine. An area on what things might need to be added, subtracted, and overall comments.

Having a seasoned family to provide insight and suggestions would be beneficial. I will see if that’s a route we’d like to go once we talk about it during the meeting tomorrow.

I hope I didn’t overwhelm you with all of my thoughts.

Tuesday, January 26, 2016 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

This is wonderful!!

I will get started in the coming weeks and send you an initial outline by February 15. I can’t wait to see what comes of this. I am very excited!

Tuesday, January 26, 2016 (Jacob Byrd to Lauranne McMillan)

I should hopefully have the last feedback notes after the meeting tomorrow. Where I can follow up with you once more. Our “Operations Team” includes Program, Medical, Volunteer, Facilities, Food Service, Barn, and Facilities. So there should be some valuable input from them as well.

Monday, March 14, 2016 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

Hi Jacob!

Hope you have been well the last few weeks! I have officially proposed my project to my committee and they have approved. I can now start in full speed working on the book.

I am writing to ask if you would have a chance to meet this weekend if you are going to be at the family weekend. I am coming to volunteer and thought that it would be great if we were able to

spend a few minutes either before or after the weekend if you have some spare time. No worries if you don't... I realize I am asking super last minute. Let me know and I can bring what I have outlined so far!

Thank you!

Monday, March 14, 2016 (Jacob Byrd to Lauranne McMillan)

Of course!

I'll be here this weekend. We can find some time on Friday or Saturday night to talk about it. So if you want to bring what you have outlined I think that will work just fine.

Thanks so much and see you Friday!

Saturday, March 19, 2016 (In-person conversation between Jacob Byrd and Lauranne McMillan)

I presented my outline of information to Jacob Byrd. He approved the outline. We set dates and deadlines. He answered my questions about readability and marketing.

Tuesday, March 22, 2016 (Jacob Byrd to Lauranne McMillan)

Good Morning Lauranne,

We had discussed on Saturday night that I would send you the Acceptance Packet for our campers. This is the 2015 version, and I imagine some changes in the information will happen as we revise the 2016 (which we haven't completed yet). This will end up working well as the new information that you are researching and writing will can be input into the packet. This packet was completed prior to some of our marketing tweaks, so the entire 2016 packet will have a different look.

It has been awhile since I have reviewed the acceptance packet, but looking over it, there is a pretty detailed breakdown of arrival day. There is also a small section on bullying. However, put

your own unique spin in bullying, prevention, and tactics that we discussed that may not be already in that section. One thing we may have hit on was preparing a camper to encounter a diverse population of peers they will meet. I think it would be beneficial to touch on the diversity (language, appearance, religion, behaviors, and personal opinions) that is present at camp. We then can touch on the culture of camp is an inclusive atmosphere where all is welcome. Again, I'm thrilled to see what comes of this awesome project. Thank you so much for wanting to devote time and skills you've acquired with your Child Life Specialist training to make the information campers and families get prior to camp best preps the families for this amazing experience.

Tuesday, March 22, 2016 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

Thank you so much! There will be some overlap from what I was planning to include. Just let me know what I should delete once I send over my drafts. I think that the acceptance packet and this book will work well together.

I will send you my first copy as soon as I am done. I was hoping that would be by today since I said Monday/Tuesday, but I think that it may be next Monday/Tuesday before we start our back and forth. Sorry about that. The last couple of days after arriving back have flown by. I don't think that we will have a problem aiming for mid April for completion regardless.

Thanks again!

Lauranne

Tuesday, April 5, 2016 (Jacob Byrd to Lauranne McMillan)

Lauranne,

Everyone really enjoyed the camper prep book. It looks great! Attached you will find some of the feedback [Appendix B] we gathered from our Operations Team. In the draft, you will also

see my note where I mentioned that the arrival process will be a bit different than it was last summer. It isn't set in stone yet, but there will be some changes that will affect the step-by-step process you have outlined.

I'm working on the parent part. Stay tuned!

Tuesday, April 5, 2016 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

Hi Jacob,

Thank you!

A few clarifications –

1. What would you like the title to be? My thoughts were something along the lines of “Welcome to Victory Junction! What to Expect as a Camper at Victory Junction” for campers and “Welcome to Victory Junction! How to Best Prepare Your Camper for a Week at Victory Junction” for parents. What are your thoughts?
2. Would you like me to use the word “lice” instead of “hairy yeti?”
3. What format should I be sending to you in order for marketing to be able to edit with ease? Is there a specific program they use? Would they like me to put more design/color or leave it more blank/white for them to work with?

Thank you Jacob!

Warmly,

Lauranne

Tuesday, April 5, 2016 (Jacob Byrd to Lauranne McMillan)

Great questions. I'll do my best to clarify.

1. Either of those titles are fine. The basic principle behind the marketing lingo is to discontinue use of “Victory Junction Gang Camp” “Victory Junction Gang”, and

“Victory Junction Camp”. It’s perfectly find to have “camp” as a describing verb, but make “Victory Junction” stand alone when referring to our brand name. A hybrid between the two could be something like “Welcome to Victory Junction: A Resource Guide to Prepare your Camper for Camp”

2. Yes. Let’s use the term “checking your camper’s hair for lice”. That way, there isn’t any confusion to what we are actually looking for.
3. You can send it in the program you were creating it in. Was is PowerPoint, or Publisher?
I’m still waiting for the marketing piece of feedback. One thing that I imagine will be in the feedback is using one, or both of our our 2 approved fonts for publications. They are Garamound and Century Gothic.

Tuesday, April 5, 2016 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

Great!

I was using iBooks author, however I think I may switch to another program made by Adobe.

Both are able to export to .pdf. Sounds good! I will go ahead and start changing the fonts.

Thanks

Wednesday, April 13, 2016 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

Hi Jacob,

I just wanted to check-in and see if you have had the chance to look at the parent book? I have also made edits to the camper version and can send that your way for a last look before marketing?

Thank you!

Lauranne

Thursday, April 14, 2016 (Jacob Byrd to Lauranne McMillan)

Hey Lauranne,

I'm finishing up edits on the parent book. Sorry for the delay, we have been ridiculously slammed these last 2 weeks with things.

If you want to send the updated camper pack, I'll send it on over to Emilie.

Thanks

Thursday, April 14, 2016 (Jacob Byrd to Lauranne McMillan)

Attached is the feedback for the parent prep book [Appendix C]

Thursday, April 14, 2016 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

No worries!! I hope this hasn't added too much stress to you!

Thank you for those edits! I will get the parent book back to you by Friday or Monday.

I will be sending you the book through GoogleDrive since it is too big to send over the UGA listserv. After sending a copy to my committee they suggested I add a few more things. If y'all do not want them in there, that is totally okay!

- Added to the "Missing Home" camper section: writing letters home to your family about all the fun things you are doing at Victory Junction
- Cabin Row – find the bed that your counselor picked out for you
- About Me page – my committee suggested adding this page to the end of both the camper and parent book. Is this okay with y'all?

I also changed the background colors. If needed, I can send a version with white backgrounds.

Thank you so so much!!!

Warmly,

Lauranne

Tuesday, April 19, 2016 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

Hi Jacob,

I am about to send an invitation on google drive for the updated parent book.

Some additional edits suggested from by major professor:

- Edits on the “Gaining Independence” page – rephrased the last sentence
- Added a page to the scale activity to help parents “debrief”
- Soften the language on the early pick-up page

A question: would you prefer for me not to use the words “their,” “them,” etc.? For example, “Talking about camp often with your child will get your camper excited for THEIR experience!”

Technically, “their” is incorrect grammar. Would you rather me use “him” or “her?”

Thank you!!

Warmly,

Lauranne

Monday, April 25, 2016 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

Hi Jacob,

I know that y’all are extremely busy at camp as the summer is drawing near. I am writing in hopes to get an update on where marketing is with the book. I would love to be able to have it finalized by the beginning of next week and definitely need it finalized by Wednesday (May 4) at the latest.

Thank you!

Warmly,

Lauranne

Monday, April 25, 2016 (Jacob Byrd to Lauranne McMillan)

Hey Lauranne,

I submitted it all last week to Marketing. They were out of the office late last week and returned this morning. I will follow-up right now and see if there is a deadline for when they can have it reviewed.

Monday, May 2, 2016 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

Hi again,

I am so sorry to bother you. I just wanted to send a reminder for you to forward to marketing. I need the finalized book by this Wednesday. Thank you so so much to everyone at VJ that has been a part of this. I hope this has not added an extreme amount of work or stress.

Thank you Jacob!!!

Kindly,

Lauranne

Monday, May 2, 2016 (Jacob Byrd to Lauranne McMillan)

Hey Lauranne. I'm meeting with Emilie today. She said she has it ready, I'm just waiting for her to send it.

Hang tight

Monday, May 2, 2016 (Jacob Byrd to Lauranne McMillan)

Here you go Lauranne! I'm sorry that there was a delay.

From: Emilie Mortensen

Sent: Monday, May 02, 2016 5:03 PM

To: Jacob Byrd <jbyrd@victoryjunction.org>

Subject: RE: Review

Hi there,

Below is a dropbox link with access to a few helpful files. One is a publisher file that is used for our Camper Acceptance packets. She can use the format and place her content within the file or recreate parts. I would really like to see her front page match the style of the front page of the acceptance packet.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/fru44jcv0pr47ig/AACzexkM4qEFyGnnKfNopaIza?dl=0>

If she could, please change the background of the pages to white and use utilize color within her details and content on her pages. Colorful accents, headers, etc. paired with a white background matches our branding style as well as makes it easier for people to read the document (especially for any readers who are color blind).

I placed a hot air balloon graphic that we use frequently into the Dropbox folder as well. She can use this for pages that she feels need additional color.

She can use Adobe Garamond Pro for her titles if she would like to add variety as well (just making sure she knows that there are options!).

Here are the brand colors, just in case they are different than what she currently is using:

Red:

CMYK 1/84/94/0

PMS 292

RGB 106/177/225

Yellow:

CMYK 1/19/100/0

PMS 116

RGB 251/198/10

Green:

CMYK 40/0/100/0

PMS 375

RGB 166/206/57

Blue:

CMYK 57/15/0/0

PMS 292

RGB 106/177/225

Tuesday, May 3, 2016 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

Hi Jacob,

Here is the updated Camper Book with Emilie's suggestions.

If the two of you could give me final approval by tomorrow morning, I would be extremely grateful.

Thank you!!

Lauranne

Tuesday, May 3, 2016 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

And here is the parent book!

Thanks,

Lauranne

Wednesday, May 04, 2016 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

Hi Jacob,

Here are updated versions for print. I realized I needed to add a blank page to the end to that the “About the Author” ended up on the correct page. I also added a logo to the back page. I’m unsure if this matches with brand standards though.

The version without the blank pages (the one sent yesterday) would be used for electronic sending.

Thanks,

Wednesday, May 04, 2016 (Jacob Byrd to Lauranne McMillan)

Hey Lauranne,

I've been at a training all day yesterday and today. My cell service is not strong and I'm having difficulty seeing the attachments on my phone.

With your last packet everything looks good to go. As far as the ones you just made, I'm sure it will be just fine. Thank you for making the corrections suggested by Marketing. This is going to be so helpful to our families. You've done a great job on this project as I am sure your grade will reflect. Even if we find we need to correct a bit later (even a year down the road) we can easily made adjustments as necessary. Thank you for your hard work and dedication and I apologize for the delays you experienced on our end.

Hope you have a fantastic day. Let me know if you need anything.

Wednesday, May 04, 2016 (Lauranne McMillan to Jacob Byrd)

Hi Jacob,

Thank you thank you thank you!!!

It was no issue at all. I have truly enjoyed being able to create this for y'all. I will send over .pdfs and Publisher formats of all versions later this week. Thank you for all of YOUR hard work and dealing with my hundreds of emails. I am so grateful!

APPENDIX C

CAMPER BOOK INITIAL FEEDBACK

Draft Feedback for Camper Prep Book

Thank you so much for this draft. We really enjoyed reading it, and really see it beneficial to helping our campers transition to camp. We have had an Arrival Day planning and logistics, so some of this information will change steps. It's not set in stone yet, but there will be some differences comparing last summer's

Title Page: "Victory Junction" is the appropriate title that follows the brand standard. The words "Gang" and "Camp" can be taken out. There are a few instances (schedule at a glance page) that uses "VJC". You can either use Victory Junction or VJ.

Step 3: Operations discussed that there might want to be a re-wording around the term "hair yeti" and calling it what it is. Perhaps re-wording to let a camper know that counselors will check hair with a q-tip to make sure they are free of.

Step 4: You will meet your Unit Leader. A Unit Leader is a counselor that supports all 4 cabins in your unit color. In addition to your counselors, your Unit Leader is here to support you.

Step 5: The Unit Nurses or volunteer nurses are both genders. In the paragraph where you mention “her”. You can just replace it with a general term that avoids limiting the position to just female. Perhaps something like “you and your family can tell your nurse everything they need to know to best take care of you during camp”.

Here is the schedule template for Summer 2016:

7:35-8:20am: Pole Position

8:30: Breakfast

9:30-11:50am: Activity Area Rotations

12:00pm: Lunch

1:00-2:30pm: Recharge

2:30-2:50pm: Cabin Cleaning (sentence about taking pride in Victory Junction and your cabin by keeping clean)

3:00-4:05pm: Activity Area Rotations

4:10pm: Snack

4:35-5:40pm: Activity Area Rotations

6:00pm: Dinner

7:00-8:05pm: Evening Entertainment

8:10pm: Head back to your cabins

(8:10-9:00pm: Oldest Camper Activity)

9:30pm: Lights Out

Rules Page: In addition to some of the camp rules. You could mention that campers will have the opportunity to play an active role and help create rules for your specific cabin during Cabin Constitution.

Unit Leaders:

Jake Andrews

Meghan Murphy

Jordan Horn

Rebekah Holland

APPENDIX D

PARENT BOOK INITIAL FEEDBACK

Parent Prep Book Feedback

Slide 3: I would put a sentence that references them to read the entirety of the acceptance packet. They will find detailed information about camp (arrival dates, packing list, template schedule of the day, etc). You could just mention about encouraging the parents to read all materials sent to them before camp. It contains useful information that will be used as resources before camp begins (in addition to this lovely book ☺)

Slide 4: Maybe we could try wording with something like this.

Camp is truly a transformational experience. At Victory Junction, our summer program is designed to empower our participants. We feel that campers holistically grow during their week at camp. Through intentional programming, campers have the opportunity to learn and further develop their independence. Example; campers take an active role in making sure the cabin is cleaned on a daily basis, or choose to try new vegetables at meals, or even choose to perform on stage for Stage Night. Our trained counselors will always be able to provide additional assistance when needed.

Homesickness slides: We typically refer to “homesickness” as missing home. You may choose to use “missing home” as opposed to homesickness. Also a reassurance that our counselors are trained to handle a camper who is missing home.

A contributing factor to missing home could also be.

- Feeling that your camper is missing something really important (family vacation, family event, etc)

Slide 15: Maybe mention that some parents choose to pre-write letters for their campers. This option is better than mailing letters because camp is a short week, and letters mailed on Monday or Tuesday will not make it to the camper in time.

Slide 16: Might settle some nerves for parents if we included “Our full-time staff are actively involved in campers that are missing home. If this issue become a more severe case, you will be contacted by a member of our full-time staff to discuss plans. In rare situations, it may be determined the most effective solution would be to come pick up your camper.

Loving the way this looks. I was thinking of an ending page to have some closure and not just ending with reunited, but I am stumped to what it would be. Perhaps how Victory Junction can mean so much to a camper and his experience will be unique to the year he comes. But I was thinking something that kind of sums up everything. Also, we’d love to hear camp stories from both campers and parents. If you have any great stories about how camp had a positive impact on your camper, we’d love to hear about it.

APPENDIX E

WELCOME TO VICTORY JUNCTION: A RESOURCE GUIDE TO PREPARE YOUR CAMPER FOR CAMP

Camper Resource Guide:

Google Drive - <http://tinyurl.com/CamperResource>

Issuu - <http://tinyurl.com/VJCamper>

Parent Resource Guide:

Google Drive - <http://tinyurl.com/VJParentResourceGuide>

Issuu - <http://tinyurl.com/VJParent>