

# **DISABILITY SPECIFIC CAMP EXPERIENCE: RESULTS OF A NATIONAL STUDY.**

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# BACKGROUND

- ▶ Camp experiences provide unique opportunities for campers with disabilities
  - ▶ Community building
  - ▶ Experience social acceptance
  - ▶ Increased sense of quality of life
  - ▶ Increased perceptions of competence in skills (e.g., social, independent living, leisure)
  - ▶ Decreased feelings of social isolation

# PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

- ▶ To examine the impact camps may have on social acceptance, camp connectedness, friendship skills, and perceived competence among youth with various disabilities.



# THEORETICAL FRAME OF STUDY

- ▶ Social capital theory (Coleman, 1990)
  - ▶ created when social ties are formed between individuals who have equal power among and share a common interests
  - ▶ Relays on one agency (i.e. specialized camp),
  - ▶ With specific purpose (i.e. to build acceptance, competence, friendships with peers)
  - ▶ And the goal is for the outcome generalized to other contexts or experiences (i.e. friendship development outside of camp ([Glover & Hemingway, 2005](#)))

# METHOD



- ▶ 2013 summer with 19 different specialized camps across the U.S.
- ▶ Campers ages 8 –18
- ▶ Social Acceptance Scale (Devine, 1997), Friendship, Perceived Competence, and Camp Connectedness subscales of the Camps Youth Outcomes Battery (ACA, 2011)
- ▶ 1 week post camp and 12 weeks follow-up point.
- ▶ Compared current perceptions to camp.

# RESULTS

- ▶ Did engagement in camp have impact on social acceptance, friendships, perceived competence, and camp connectedness immediately following and 12 weeks post camp experience ?



# DATA ANALYSIS

- ▶ .05  $p$ -value as the level of significance
- ▶ N = 135 post camp
- ▶ N = 96 follow-up
- ▶ Independent sample t-tests
- ▶ Repeated Measures Analysis of variance (changes over time) for:
  - ▶ Gender
  - ▶ Number of years campers attended camp
  - ▶ Disability typology

# FINDINGS

## SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE

- ▶ Social Acceptance & Gender
  - ▶ Social acceptance decreased for female campers from post camp to 12 week follow-up ( $p = .050$ ; MS 116.78;  $F = 3.46$ ;  $N = 51$ )
- ▶ Social Acceptance & Disability
  - ▶ Social acceptance decreased for campers with Cranial Facial Anomalies, muscular dystrophy, & other physical disabilities from post camp to 12 week follow-up ( $p = .022$ ; MS = 129.57;  $F = 5.410$ )



# CAMP CONNECTEDNESS

- ▶ Camp Connectedness & Gender
  - ▶ Camp connectedness decreased for male campers from post camp to 12 week follow-up ( $p = .046$ ;  $MS = 116.62$ ;  $F = 3.804$ ;  $N = 45$ )
  - ▶ No change was found for disability or number of years campers attended camp

# FRIENDSHIP SKILLS

- ▶ Friendship Skills & gender attended camp
  - ▶ Friendship skills increased for all campers post camp to 12 week follow-up; males ( $p = .034$ ; MS 121.25;  $F = 3.952$ ;  $N = 45$ ); female ( $p = .046$ ; MS 115.63;  $F = 3.412$ ;  $N = 51$ )
- ▶ Friendship Skills & Disability
  - ▶ Friendship skills increased for campers who had diabetes and arthritis post camp to 12 week follow-up ( $p = .029$ ; MS 117.32;  $F = 3.533$ )

# CONTINUE FRIENDSHIP SKILLS

- ▶ Friendship Skills & Number of years attended camp
  - ▶ Friendship skills increased for campers who attended camp 4 or more years from post camp to 12 week follow-up ( $p = .027$ ; MS 117.25;  $F = 3.527$ ;  $N = 42$ )

# CONCLUSIONS/LESSONS TO SHARE

- ▶ Connect with disability specific organizations, park and recreation agencies, school systems, parents for carry-over of skills learned
- ▶ Focus on generalization of social acceptance constructs such as equal status, feelings of belonging, and principles of inclusion
  - ▶ Female campers and campers with disabilities that may have stigma attached

# CONTINUE LESSONS

- ▶ Focus on generalization of connectedness constructs such as decision-making, problem solving, sense of belonging, & choice-making
  - ▶ male campers



# CONTINUE LESSONS

- ▶ Promote constructs connected to friendship skills such as developing, building and sustaining friendships
  - ▶ Create forum for continued friendship post camp
- ▶ Market the value of return attendance at camp as a means for friendship skill development
  - ▶ Governing bodies consider development of models based on findings

# FUTURE STUDIES/WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

- ▶ *Social support and social comparison in illness* constructs need further testing
- ▶ Social Treatment Model for Disability Specific Camp Industry
- ▶ “Follow-on Program” Testing & Model Development