

Volume

1

# CAMP EXPERIENCE

A PARTNERSHIP OF COMMUNITY AGENCIES WORKING  
TOGETHER FOR BRIGHTER FUTURES

REVISED February 2007.

FCSS City of Leduc, Child and Family Services – Leduc  
Neighborhood Centre, RCMP Leduc Attachment, Boys and  
Girls Club of Leduc



# Camp Experience Program Manual

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# Introduction

In 2004 the idea of developing a camp for children and youth with family violence issues was born out of a recognized need in the community.

A partnership between the City of Leduc Family and Community Support Services and Child and Family Services was developed on the basis of creating a camp program targeting these children and youth.

The need to include community partners was realized; the first meeting of the Family Violence community partnership committee took place in September of 2004.

It was immediately apparent that there was enough genuine interest in developing this opportunity further. Committee members included representation from a variety of youth serving agencies including the RCMP.

An application for funding this project was completed in the fall of 2004. Approval was granted and funding became available.

The creation of this manual would not have been possible without the direct input from all committee members.

The use of this manual is strictly in the hands of the reader; it is not and should never be intended as a step by step “how to” instructional tool.

Rather, the authors of this manual would take solace in the fact that this was utilized as a resource for communities to begin developing unique and wonderful opportunities for their children and youth.

There is a definite avoidance of using clinical jargon throughout this manual, in its stead layman terms and definitions fill the pages with colourful anecdotes and experiences that we know worked for our children and youth in our community.

You shouldn't have to wait to the last page to discover that the Leduc Camp Experience program is a success. What is contained within these pages are tried and true examples of how effective community partnerships are when the desire to achieve the outcome is filled with genuine commitment, compassion and dedication which is shared by everyone on the planning committee. There is no room for hidden agendas or self promotion.

Egos and rank aside - Experience, passion and shared responsibilities take precedence.



## Philosophy:

Camp Experience is an opportunity for children and youth living in a home where there is some form of family violence, to be able to build self-esteem and develop the necessary tools that will assist them in breaking the cycle of violence.

Camp Experience has evolved from being a sleepover to a learning process that includes elements of social recreation, education, mentoring, healthy relationships and developing community support networks.

Camp Experience is about beginnings and endings. Participants who succeed at Camp Experience will begin the journey of ending their own personal cycles of violence. Participants will begin to understand that they have the tools to make confident healthy choices that will impact their lives in a positive way.

With mainstream residential camping programs, participants have the opportunity to participate if they are willing to pay for the registration fees and in some instances find their own transportation out to the facility. Once the camp is over, they wait a full year before attending the same camp again, with new staff and new peers.

Camp Experience participants will attend the initial camp along with eight one-day modules with the same staff and the same community of peers that they had the first time they experienced Camp Experience. Participants will eventually become mentors for a new group of campers, and a cycle of healthy relationship building and support has begun.





## Inspiration

### *Recruiting the Planning and Resource Team.*

The need to include youth serving agencies from the community was apparent from the beginning. With the ground work already in the developing stages, born out of a partnership between the FCSS City of Leduc and Child & Family Services, a meeting to introduce the concept was held.

Invitations were sent out to all youth serving agencies including the schools, AADAC and the RCMP. The initial meeting was attended by a good cross section of staff from the multitude of agencies.

The concept of Camp Experience was introduced, a one day/one evening sleep over in tents somewhere close by for children and youth who come from families with a history of family violence.

It was immediately apparent which of the guests around the table thought favourably of the concept. The discussion as to why a camp out, rather than a one-day field trip ensued with great ideas and suggestions being thrown out.

There was enough energy and interest generated in this meeting to affirm that the concept of a camp for children and youth from families with a history of violence was certainly worth a closer look.

Knowing that there was a definite interest from the potential partners, the FCSS and CFSA staff began working on a funding proposal that would assist in developing the concept to an actual working model.

Monthly meetings began in January 2005 in which the groundwork for Camp Experience was laid out. As with any community committee, ours had its moments of revisiting the good and bad decisions time and time again, it seemed as though the whole concept of Camp Experience was at a stalemate.

The real issue was whether or not to proceed with the planning of Camp Experience without this manual as a guide. The committee realizing this elephant existed decided that there was more than enough experience and professionalism to be able to complete both objectives simultaneously and without hesitation.

Even though it took the committee a better part of six months to figure out what was happening, the process helped to solidify the remaining partner's commitment to the project. It was testimony to the dedication of the partnership, and bore 'revitalization' into the entire project.

Within one month the foundation to the Camping stage of Camp Experience was completed. The Screening tools were in the beginning stages, the educational components brainstormed; the Camp Experience project has left the infancy stages and was on its way to becoming a reality.

Each member of the committee had assigned themselves to the roles that were relevant to their area of expertise:

	Child and Family Services	Family Community Support Services	RCMP	Boys and Girls Club of Leduc
Screening Tools	X	X		
Educational Components	X	X	X	X
Counselling	X	X	X	
Learning Session Facilitator	X	X	X	X
Role Model	X	X	X	X
Committee Co-Chair	X	X		
Community Support Resource	X	X	X	X
On site supervision	X	X	X	X
Recreational Component				X
Camping Program				X
Banker				X
Proposal writing/application	X	X		X
Referral source	X	X	X	X
Evaluation Tools	X	X	X	X
Participant Follow Up	X	X	X	X
Final Reporting/Documentation	X	X		

Understanding each of the partner’s roles is a necessity in order for the committee structure not to fall apart. This is especially so if an individual leaves the committee and another fills the vacant chair. The co-chairs have found a particular appreciation in that delegation of tasks is that much less of burden. There are community committees in which the Chair bares the brunt of the load of responsibility, this appreciation or validation of what each committee member is capable and willing to do should be set out within the first two meetings.

## Section Two

### **Our Vision**

Our vision is to create a community where children/youth are free from family violence/bullying.

### **Our Mission**

Our mission is to decrease the impact of family violence/bullying in our community by providing a safe environment with educational activities and Community Mentors for children/youth.

### **Our Mandate**

Our mandate is to provide a healthy camp experience for our community's children.

Children who participate in Camp Outdoor Experience and the follow up workshops will be educated by Community Mentors and graduate with skills that will allow them to become future Camp Mentors. Through the workshops, the participants will become aware of new and healthy ways to communicate, relate and interact with others. They will learn skills to deal with the stress within their home or at school that is related to the family violence or bullying. They will also learn skills on how to assist others who are dealing with similar issues. Through this entire process participants are learning to become Community Mentors.

Camp Experience is an opportunity for children and youth, living in a home where there is some form of family violence, to be able to build self-esteem and develop the necessary tools that will assist them in breaking the cycle of violence.

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Camp Experience is about beginnings and endings. Participants who succeed at Camp Experience will begin the journey of ending their own personal cycles of violence. Participants will begin to understand that they have the tools to make confident healthy choices that will impact their lives in a positive way.

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## Funding

A CPEF grant was used in the development of this manual. Costs associated with the creation, printing and distribution of the Camp Outdoor Experience Manual have been covered by the CPEF grant.

The initial funding for the Camp Outdoor Experience program will come from the matching fund grants submitted by partnering agencies, community businesses and through individual donations. A grant from Community Incentives Fund was applied for; we received funding to hire a part time Camp Experience Coordinator. This person will now take on the responsibilities of researching funding opportunities and the development of the screening tools that will be utilized in creating a participant list.

The longevity of the Camp Outdoor Experience will depend upon community support. If the need is recognized and accepted at the community level for the Camp Outdoor Experience, then funding will fall into place from businesses, corporations, foundations and government at all levels.

## Screening

The consensus within the resource team was that the following community agencies would act as referral sources for potential participants for the Camp Outdoor Experience:

- Schools
- Child and Family Services
- FCSS
- Boys and Girls Club
- RCMP
- Victim Services

A basic screening form that asks why the agency is making the referral is completed and forwarded to the Camp Experience coordinator who will then make contact with the referring agency and then the family. The Camp Experience has limitations already built in such as age requirements and need assessment.

Contact with the family regarding participation in the Camp Experience program will be the responsibility of the coordinator. The decision to accept the participant or place him/her on the waiting list will be that of the coordinator as well.

A brochure explaining the Camp Experience program, along with the necessary forms requiring parental/guardian signatures will be presented to the family. It is important at this stage to mention that this resource team has decided no sibling groups will be attending the same Camp Experience Program unless an older sibling has completed the first year's training and is now a mentor.

Promoting the Camp Experience as a fun, positive learning opportunity is essential in getting the parents and participants to “buy in” to the concept. The coordinator will answer any questions the family has and will act as a liaison between the resource team and family until the Camp Experience weekend. At this point the resource team and participants will meet officially for the first time and begin their relationship building.

Sample forms of what parents will need to sign in order for their child to participate in the Camp Experience Program are below. Keep in mind that parents will want to be assured that their child’s participation is autonomous as well as anonymous.

**Camp Experience Program  
Waiver Form**

Weekend Retreat

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby give permission for my son/daughter  
\_\_\_\_\_ to attend the Camp Experience Program

**Depart:**

**Arrive:**

**Accompanied by: *(names of Resource Team here)***

I agree that my youth is being asked to abide by the guidelines of the Camp Experience Program.

I understand the Camp Experience Program staff and volunteers will be supervising the entire weekend. With full knowledge of the existence and nature of my legal rights and in consideration for the opportunities provided to my youth by the Camp Experience Program, I waive my legal right against the Camp Experience Program, its staff or volunteers for any loss, injury, or damage suffered during or by reason of participating in the program and undertake to be responsible for any hospitalization, medical and ambulance or other expenses.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Please note that any participant that does not follow the Camp Experience Program Guidelines or is a danger to themselves or anyone else on the trip parents will be contacted immediately and will be responsible to come and get your child.**

Any questions or concerns please do not hesitate in contacting the Camp experience Coordinator:

***(Coordinator’s contact information here)***



**Behavioural concerns:**

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**Allergies:**

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**OTHER CONCERNS:**

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**PARTICIPANT CONTRACT**

I would like to participate in the Camp Experience Program and enjoy the rights and privileges as a participant of the Camp Experience Program. I agree to respect the Camp Experience Program staff, volunteers and the rights of the other participants. ***I UNDERSTAND THAT THE CAMP EXPERIENCE PROGRAM IS A SAFE PROGRAM FOR ALL THE PARTICIPANTS AND IF I ACT IN A CERTAIN WAY THAT MAKES SOMEONE FEEL UNSAFE; I WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE.***

I will abide by the guidelines set by the Camp Experience Program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Youth Member**

I, the parent/guardian of the above individual, understand that my youth is being asked to abide by the guidelines of the Camp Experience Program. Should my child not abide by these guidelines, I agree to work with the Camp Experience Program to help resolve the situation. I understand that Camp Experience Program staff and volunteers will be supervising Camp Experience Program activities and programs, and that it is my responsibility as parent/guardian to ensure my child’s safety before and after stated hours of operation.

I agree that Camp Experience Program has the right to use any artwork, photographs, video and or audio of my child while participating in Camp Experience Program activities for the purpose of advertisement and promotional campaigns in the future.

I further understand that my son/daughter has my permission to attend programs or experiences offered through the Camp Experience Program. With full knowledge of the existence and nature of my legal right and in consideration for the opportunities provided to my son/ daughter by Camp Experience Program, I waive my legal right against Camp Experience Program, its staff or volunteers, and resource team members and agencies for any loss, injury or damage suffered during or by reason of participating in a Camp Experience Program or experience. I further authorize the application of emergency medical attention and undertake to be responsible for any hospitalization, medical and ambulance or other expenses.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent/guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Section Three

### The “Camping” Experience.

#### *The planning and preparation for the first Camp Experience:*

From the initial meeting, there has been valuable input from the partners as to what the first camp experience should be for the participants. It was decided that the partners take full advantage of the opportunity of spending a weekend with the participants connecting and building a foundation of trust.

The weekend experience should be planned and coordinated by one of the partnering agencies, whose primary focus is on providing safe, structured, FUN activities for the participants and committee partners. The role of the committee members not involved in the weekend’s program implementation is to be a support to the children who are having some difficulty in the transition from home to camp.

As this is the first opportunity for committee members and participants to meet each other, it is imperative that all committee partners attend the weekend. As the weekend progresses so to does the sense of community. This camp is a prerequisite for any participant to continue through to the eight week training sessions, and this is also a prerequisite to continuing on as a community partner.

In this instance the Boys and Girls Club of Leduc has taken the role of planning the weekend event as this is a primary program that they provide for the community throughout the year. Program staff has completed all the screening and background checks, and hold 1<sup>st</sup> Aid/CPR certificates and the experience of providing recreational programs is an asset for the first “Camp” Experience.

The committee decided that renting a full serviced facility complete with every amenity would serve to enhance the weekend with the participants. When looking for a facility that could be host to the Camp Experience several factors were taken into consideration:

- **Location** - the committee decided to take our participants far enough away so it truly felt like they were somewhere special and unique. We had several ideal facilities chosen, and went with the one that was available according to our schedule. A good rule of thumb is to be sure to physically visit and tour each facility before making any bookings, and if you personally know of someone who has been before, ask about the food, and the facility’s staff. You want a nice modern facility that has great food and abundant program space, however if the staff are difficult to work with or show little patience, then walk away slowly and if need be just turn and run. You will have plenty to deal with already without having the facility’s staff breathing down your neck.

- **Associated costs/expenses** - such as facility rental, catering costs if an outside caterer is brought in (*always go with the facility's cook, you can get cheaper rates sometimes*). The bussing costs and mileage expense for staff driving their own vehicle (*should always be a separate vehicle aside from the bus on site at all times in case of any emergency that may arise*). Damage deposit, program supplies, registration/participant bags, camp shirts. Long distance phone bills, cell phone bills, photocopying expenses. Insurance costs if there are any (*the Boys and Girls Club named the facility as an additional insured for the weekend, this is simply done by contacting your insurance broker a couple of weeks in advance*).
- **Kitchen**-some facilities will have their own kitchen staff which will take care of the meals and snacks for the weekend. Some camps are very well known for the menu that they provide. It is your responsibility to ask about the types of meals that they will be providing. Always check to see if they would be willing to substitute menu items due to allergies or health concerns. If the cook hesitates when asked about substituting menu items, then that could be a real concern during the weekend that you are there. Be prepared to supply your own optional menu items. Another question is whether or not the participants are expected to do the dishes. There are camp facilities that EXPECT the participants to do their own dishes under the supervision of staff. Clearing off the tables and wiping them clean should be done by participants and or staff.
- **Washroom facilities**- Are there enough washrooms (indoor) to accommodate the size of group that you are bringing? Are there showers? If so, are they private showers or walk through showers like those in some public swimming pools. How long does the hot water last? What does the water smell like? It may seem picky, however with the participants and committee partners who may have never experienced a weekend retreat at a camp before may appreciate a forewarning of what to expect. You also need to check out whether or not you should bring your own anti-bacterial hand soap for all the wash basins. An ideal facility for the first "Camp" experience should have the washrooms located in the same buildings that you will be eating in, sleeping in, and providing programs in. There are facilities that have large communal washrooms in a completely separate building from those mentioned above. It may not be a good idea to expect our participants to get out of their bunks at 3:00am and have to get their shoes on, walk outside to some other building to go to the washroom (if this is the case, a staff will have to accompany the participant especially if they are intimidated by dark strange places {who isn't?}).
- **Sleeping accommodations:** Dorm style rooms are preferable, in that it makes supervision easier, and allows for more community building between the participants and the staff. Staff should not expect to have their own room; this is after all, a camp experience. There should be at least two staff per room, for risk assessment as we all know that the chance of false allegations drops when there is more than one staff present. Participants will need to bring their own sleeping bags, favourite blankets and teddy bears. Teddy bears if they have them should be encouraged, helps lessen the home sickness and the feeling of being alone. It goes without saying that there will be no co-ed rooms, and that male staff and female staff respect the boundary as well.

- **Program space both indoor and outdoor:** When working with children and youth, you will need to have plenty of space for the sessions and recreational activities. Introducing a variety of program areas to the participants will enhance their experience and will assist in alleviating the same room, same topic, and same speaker blues. Sound checks are very important. Just because a room looks comfortable and seems to meet the requirements of the session you are about to facilitate does not mean that your participants are going to be able to hear a word you say. If you can speak in a normal tone and the person at the back of the room can hear you well, check the corners. Outdoor program space needs to be utilized to its fullest potential. There is no rule that states “all sessions must take place between four walls”. Holding a session outside will be challenging for any facilitator of any age group. Competing with nature to keep your participant’s attention is impossible unless you are facilitating an art project or meditation. Allow the participants to enjoy the moment outdoors. If they find peace and solace and feel safe, congratulations, the camp experience worked.
- **Emergency planning:** It is your responsibility to know where the facility keeps all First Aid kits (stations). Upon your initial tour of the facility make note of the following so you can take the information to your committee:
  - **First Aid Kits:** where they are kept and how accessible are they. If need be and highly recommended, bring your own. Spend the extra money to ensure that you have a fully stocked kit, including gloves and CPR masks.
  - **Exits and emergency evacuation procedure:** All staff must be aware of the camp’s procedures and evacuation drills. It is recommended that the agency staff responsible for coordinating the weekend take the role as emergency marshals, and if there is a need to evacuate, they will assume the responsibility. All staff should have a participant list on their person. Doing a quick head count is somewhat less stressful when you know exactly how many kids you have at all times.
  - **Boundaries:** All camp facilities have boundaries, some are marked and some not. Staff need to know what these boundaries are, and within the first hour of arriving at the camp, so too should every participant. Participants need to know what to do in case of any emergency, whether it is with a group or alone. Getting lost while at camp is a possibility, and so within the first hour of arriving, the “what to do if you are lost” presentation should be given. Be specific and clear as to what the boundaries are and the “what to do ifs”. Scaring the participants is not good, so be positive about the whole thing and don’t mention wild animals. Allowing Johnny to ask about UFO abductions and Big Foot is truly not a good thing if you want to prevent massive hysteria. Knowing the terrain is essential before planning any outdoor activity. Steep hills and cliffs are not conducive to playing “predator and prey”, having a participant accidentally free fall into a cavern is not a good thing. Swampy and damp areas are wonderful for mosquitoes. Gopher holes are not good for the ankles, knees, and the Achilles tendon. Walk the areas where you plan to take participants. If you don’t like the way the grass feels or the fact that ants are literally crawling up your pants, perhaps you unwittingly become a buffet for a swarm of horseflies and mosquitoes. These would be good

indicators as to whether or not you will have a successful game or activity in this particular area. Find another field if necessary!

- **Nurse or medic:** For those of you that take for granted the outdoor areas where you plan to have games and activities it is an asset to have at camp a professional in the field of medicine. Having first aid is great, but having the real deal is even better. When developing community partnerships it would be beneficial if someone from the EMT department were to get involved. It is not always possible to have access to a nurse or EMT, there is no harm in asking for volunteers, and if need be find a way to pay for the service and peace of mind.
- **Facility Liaison:** Most camps will have staff on hand to take care of the daily maintenance and upkeep of facility (*another thing to find out when making first contact*). It is still a terrific idea to have the coordinating agency identify a liaison between facility staff and partnership staff. This person should be the only one who makes requests and suggestions on behalf of the Camp Experience group. The liaison will know everything there is to know about the camp well in advance of arriving with a bus full of participants. If there is only one person, the relations between the facility and the partnership will be that much better for it.

### *What to do now that you are at camp.*

The premise as stated previously is to allow the participants the opportunity to experience a safe, structured and FUN environment in which they can begin the process of learning and developing the tools they will need to succeed in life.

This initial weekend getaway is not intended to provide everything all at once. The committee has developed eight learning modules that will emphasize and promote the learning process.

The staff of the Boys and Girls Club has planned countless weekend retreats and conferences for youth between the ages of 6-17 years. Having them plan the camp experience weekend was a natural fit. If there is no Boys and Girls Club in your community, a suggestion would be to contact any youth serving agency to ask for their assistance.

The camp structure is focused on the participant's opportunity to have fun. This begins with the boarding of the bus out to camp. Staff introduces themselves, make sure that all campers are accounted and seated on the bus, and all bags are safely stored. Name games, guessing games, and any road trip games are played to pass the time. All staff including partners should be expected to participate in making the road trip a memorable one. The committee decided that handing out disposable cameras to all participants would be a great way to capture these memories, and to promote journal writing while involved with the camp experience.

All staff and participants will receive journals to write in, a t-shirt with the logo and year, as well as other interesting items like small pocket sized flashlights or glow in the dark bracelets.

Upon arriving at the camp the Liaison will inform the facility staff of our arrival before anyone leaves the bus. Of course there will be the odd dozen or so that will need to use the restrooms. Staff will take another head count as the campers leave the bus and wait for their luggage to be unloaded. The girls go to their bunks and the guys to theirs, not to unpack, just to claim their space. *(If there is bunk beds, make sure they have safety railings and secure ladders before allowing the younger participants up top).* Claiming space can be a fun exercise, however the opposite holds true as well. First timers will be intimidated, not knowing how or where to claim space, so it is important that the staff accompany the participants at this juncture, not to mention the fact that staff will save time and a headache if they do it at this point compared to at 11:00 pm. This process should only take about 10 minutes or so, gathering every one together in the main meeting area 20 minutes after arrival allows legs to stretch and bladders to empty. Curiosity and excitement have taken over. Getting the participants together to cover the outline and expectations of the weekend should take place in a timely matter.

With everyone's attention focused on the Liaison (coordinator) the boundaries are explained in detail. Include all aspects of what is expected of the participants. Respecting each other is a priority, and this includes personal space and property. The outline of the weekend will need to be brief, give the schedule as far as lights out, wake up and meal calls. Anything after that will be lost.

Community building activities are essential if one of the goals of the weekend is to develop a sense of community. It should be mentioned here that starting off with "trust" themed games is not a good idea. Keeping it simple, fun and highly interactive with everyone participating is the way to proceed. These community building activities should only last between 15-20 minutes tops; after all, it is a Friday night! Time to get into cabin groups *(the group of people you are bunking with)* the task is come up with a skit or song for the campfire *(that has already been started outside, nothing says boredom like a fire that won't start and you are expecting people to maintain their enthusiasm).*

There needs to be a staff person who will lead and emcee the campfire. Someone who is enthusiastic and who loves to perform and knows camp songs should lead. This campfire sets the tone for the rest of the weekend. So choose your emcee accordingly and remind all staff that they need to have as much energy and be as loud and enthusiastic. Nothing sabotages a campfire more than a staff person who does not participate and sits there whining about the smoke or thinks every song is stupid so they refuse to sing it. Any staff person that has this attitude should be corrected.

A good campfire lasts about an hour. A great campfire stays lit with very little smoke and the skits along with the singing last about 90 minutes. The trick to having a smokeless fire is using dried aged wood, the harder the better. You may not have a choice when it comes to wood, so monitor how bad the smoke is and whether or not the participants are having a good time. When it is time to head back, make sure the fire is completely out. Some staff may want to come down afterwards to sit around the fire when the participants are in bed. The reality is, however, that staff will need their sleep much more so than the participants and supervising from the fire pit just isn't a good idea ... so no more fire after it is extinguished.

Before heading to the bunks, a light nutritious snack should be provided. Emphasize nutritious snacks. If you plan on sleeping at all during the weekend stay away from the sugar before bed and limit how much people drink before bedding down for the evening as well. This may sound commonplace, however experience speaks volumes.

Now is the time to get completely settled in. The atmosphere is less intimidating and more comfortable for everyone. For the most part, everyone is self sufficient in their evening preparations. All you need to do as staff is make sure everyone is in bed before lights out and. Be prepared the first evening for anything and everything from gross bodily function noises to the slightest sign of home sickness and anxiousness. Some participants will thoroughly enjoy the fact that they are not at home in their own beds while others may have the opposite emotion. Staff should be conscious of this and deal with each situation accordingly. There will be the giggling, laughing, joke telling, fake gross bodily function noises, fake snoring and real snoring. As long as it is all kept within appropriate boundaries have fun and good luck getting to sleep before midnight. Midnight is when the expectations of sleep have to be enforced, out of respect for everyone in the vicinity and for the facilitators the following day.

Saturday morning comes rather quickly. Staff should be the first up in the morning ready to proceed with the day's activities. A general wake up time happens at least 30 minutes before the kitchen expects you for breakfast. Everyone needs to be sitting at their tables (*in groups different from their campfire groups*) five minutes before the food is brought out. Using those five minutes to explain what happens directly after the meal is a good opportunity. Here is also a good time to introduce any of the facility staff that is on hand. Picking what tables get to line up first should be fun and interactive, singing the anthem the best or whatever ...you get the point.

A good rule of thumb when the food is self serve style buffet. Inform the participants that at the end of each meal the table with the most waste will be the last in line for the next one. This will help alleviate the tremendous amount of waste that occurs when individuals eat with their eyes and not their stomachs. Having staff serve the first round is also a good practice. Let the participants know that if they are still hungry after they finish what's on their plate, they can always come back for more. Staff can also monitor the veggie and fruit intake at other meals, promoting a balanced diet.

Relating again to food, always have the menu conversations with whoever is cooking, well in advance of the camp experience. Screening tools must include dietary needs or limitations for participants as well as staff. BBQ steak is most likely not going to appeal to the participants as much as spaghetti or home baked pizza may. The menu needs to be appropriate, camp facilities that offer in house catering will have the experience and expertise in this area, so no worries.

Most camp facilities require at the very lest that all dishes, utensils and glassware are cleared from the tables before anyone leaves. Have each table wipe their own table and push their chairs in before they leave to the next activity.

With the basic framework discussed for the Camp Experience weekend you have a foundation. The recreational activities, sessions and Saturday evening activity should remain simple and interactive. Building on community and trust is the theme. Trust activities should only be introduced during the first planned program module.

Time needs to be set aside for journal reflections and exploration within limits. Remind all the participants that they have cameras (with their names clearly labelled) to capture this weekend on film. All the processing of the film will be taken care of by the committee, the pictures will be given out at the first training module.

Staff has an excellent opportunity to build healthy relationships with the participants. This weekend should in no way become a staff networking retreat with the staff off doing their thing, Again, the reason for the entire process is the participants themselves.

Staff also need to journal, making notes for the debriefing meeting following the camp experience weekend. Debrief sessions are an asset for the continual growth and development of the camp experience.

Here is a sample of what our itinerary looks like for the camp experience:

**Day one:**

10:00 am arrive at start point  
 10:30 leave on the bus  
 1:00 stop for a break  
 3:30 arrive at the camp, unpack and move in  
 3:50 hall meeting for a greeting  
 4:00 games and fun  
 5:30 dinner  
 6:30 games  
 8:30 break time  
 9:00 camp fire, snack and mug up  
 11:00 good night

**Day Two:**

7:30 Wake up  
 8:30 Breakfast, games and activities throughout  
 10:00 morning session  
 11:00 participants can either hike, arts and crafts or other games  
 12:00 Lunch  
 1:00 fun challenge, team activity takes up much of the afternoon  
 5:30 dinner (Theme dinner)  
 10:00pm everyone in their cabins  
 11:00 Lights out

**Day Three:**

7:30 Wakeup  
 8:30 Breakfast,  
 9:00 Certificate of achievement, Info on next phase of program attached to certificate  
 10:00 Load the bus for home  
 12:00 Stop for a break/lunch  
 3:30 Arrive home unload bus and begin transporting participants home

## Section Four

### *Training workshops (modules)*

It was decided in the early stages of planning the Camp Experience that there needed to be more of a follow up to the weekend camp experience. The partnership developed eight 1- day training modules that would target specific areas of growth, areas that we as a partnership prioritized from a large list of possibilities.

For eight months following the camp experience we would all gather for one day and take the training together. The purpose of having the whole resource team present at the training sessions is that our relationships can continue to build from one session to the other. The resource team presence validates and encourages the relationship of trust with the participants breaking down what barriers are left for the participants to seek out any one of the resource team for support at any time.

The first seven sessions are for the participants only. This provides the opportunity for open and candid learning. Parents are invited to the final graduation ceremony at which time a discussion centered on mentoring will take place. It is a goal that some of the participants who complete all the training modules will become mentors for the next group of participants in the following year. The cycle of violence will be interrupted by a new promising cycle of healthy relationship building and positive decision making.

The training modules that this resource team will be focusing on are as follows:

- Module one: **Relationships & Friendships**
  - Trust
  - Respect
  - values
- Module two: **Communication & Conflict Resolution**
  - Problem solving
  - Anger management
  - Peer pressure
- Module three: **Health and Wellness**
  - Stress Management
  - Depression
  - Self Esteem/Body Image
  - Nutrition/Hygiene

- Module four: **Bullying**
  - Build Connections
  - Stay Safe
  - Use Authority
  - Care Enough to Make a Stand
  
- Module five: **Addiction**
  - Tobacco
  - Alcohol
  - Drugs
  - Peer Pressure
  - Healthy Choices
  
- Module six: **FUN**
  - Learn to be a Kid
  - Learn to Play
  - Creativity
  
- Module seven: **Mentorship**
  - Purpose
  - Responsibility
  - Opportunity
  
- Module eight : **Parent Involvement**
  - This week was left optional for the resource team to assess if there are any areas that need follow up. This will be the day that the parents would participate as well and celebrate in their child's achievements

It is necessary to emphasize the development of participant resiliency within each of the eight modules. Resiliency is a term applied to children exposed to severe risk factors, such as family violence, who nevertheless are able to thrive and excel. It is the ability to recover from and successfully adapt to adversity. Emmy Werner's (1989) longitudinal study of the psychosocial development of at risk children indicate that children, despite extremely unfavorable circumstances, still manage to succeed and eventually contribute to society in many positive ways.<sup>1</sup>

How is it that some children more resilient than others, despite shared risk factors? Werner's study identifies factors that foster resilience, such as the presence of a mentor (a safe adult within or outside the family) who provides consistent nurturing, support, and serves as a role model for the child. Resiliency, therefore, relates specifically to the presence of protective factors in children, which include contact with adult caretakers, support from family members, other adults, and peers, and participation in peer groups.

## Section Five

### Measurement tools:

The Camp Experience evaluation is intended for participants in the Camp and educational activities. Information collected will be used to understand how participants think and feel about these activities. The survey will help Camp Experience make the programs better. Information will be collected on how many children attended the follow-up sessions after the first camp, how many returned to the camp the following year and how many participated as camp mentors. This information may be used to make adjustments to the camp outline or presentation. The evaluation is intended for children and youth and will take about 10 - 20 minutes to complete; questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential, with no identifying information on them.

#### **A. ABOUT YOU:**

##### **1. How old are you?**

- 6 - 8
- 9 - 12
- 13 - 15

##### **2. Are you male \_\_\_\_\_ or female \_\_\_\_\_?**

##### **3. Which best describes you? Please mark only one.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Native or Aboriginal       | <input type="checkbox"/> Multiracial               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic, Latino or Latina | <input type="checkbox"/> White or Caucasian        |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Pacific Islands  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American |

##### **4. Which one of the following best describes your family?**

- I live with two parents.
- I live in a one parent family with my mother.
- I live in a one parent family with my father.
- Sometimes I live with my mother and sometimes with my father.
- I live with another guardian, relative or person(s) other than my parents.

**5. What modules did you complete?**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relationship      | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentorship      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication     | <input type="checkbox"/> Addictions      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health & Wellness | <input type="checkbox"/> Fun             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying          | <input type="checkbox"/> Wind up session |

**6. Did this Camp Experience increase your awareness of:**

- having positive relationships? Yes  No
- conflict resolution and anger management? Yes  No
- accepting yourself and managing stress? Yes  No
- Bullying and personal safety? Yes  No
- What mentorship is all about? Yes  No
- Of addiction and healthy choices? Yes  No
- Local resources for kids? Yes  No

**7. We want to know if these activities helped you learn or feel differently about you.**

Please YES or NO.

I can now...	YES	NO
Make better decisions.		
Get along with others.		
Make and keep friends.		
Deal with peer pressure		
Deal with people who are being mean or starting to fight.		
Learn how to be a leader.		
Avoid alcohol and other drugs		
Avoid trouble.		
Have a lot to be proud of.		
Learn what I can do that makes a difference.		
Learn that I can do many things.		
Feel successful in the activities I have participated		

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in.		
Know the difference between right and wrong.		
Respect other's feelings and property.		
Care about other people.		
Stand up for what I believe, even when it is not popular.		
Tell the truth, even when it is not easy.		
Know that there are people who care about me.		
Show other children where to get support.		
Become a Mentor for other children.		
Try my best and have fun.		

**8. How good a job have the programs and activities done in helping you learn more about yourself and your strengths?**

\_\_\_\_\_ Excellent    \_\_\_\_\_ Good    \_\_\_\_\_ Fair    \_\_\_\_\_ Poor

**9. How much are your parents or guardians involved in your activities or programs?**

\_\_\_\_\_ Not at all involved    \_\_\_\_\_ A little involved    \_\_\_\_\_ Involved    \_\_\_\_\_ Very involved

**10. Please answer the following for the program or activity participated in,**

**This Camp Experience program has been fun.**

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

**This Camp Experience program has been interesting.**

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

**I will apply what I have learned from this experience to my life.**

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

With the first hand knowledge and feedback of what areas need to be focused on next year, the Camp Outdoor Experience will continue to grow and evolve.

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- City of Leduc Family Community Support Services
- Child and Family Services Leduc office.
- Boys and Girls Club of Leduc

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