

HAVE SELF AWARENESS

- Know yourself before you ask others to share knowledge about themselves.
- Reflection questions:
 - What do I bring to the group?
 - What surprises or challenges me?
 - What behaviors am I most familiar or comfortable with?
 - What behaviors challenge me?

BE CLEAR AND UP-FRONT ABOUT EXPECTATIONS AND BOUNDARIES FOR THE GROUP

- Create cabin rules to guide your sessions
- Do this at the beginning of the first Zoom call with your cabin
- Do this together with your cabin, rather than impose rules upon them
- See Rules and Regulations document)

LISTEN MORE THAN YOU SPEAK (80/20 RULE)

- Learn to be comfortable with silence
- Facilitate discussion by giving campers space to speak and be heard
- Develop the discussion further with open-ended questions
- Facilitate so that campers only speak one at a time.

EMPOWER CAMPERS TO SPEAK UP

- Create space to understand the world from the view of your campers.
- Remember that the discussion is not about you, as the facilitator.
- Give campers space to speak and be heard.
- Ensure and maintain a safe space for discussion.

HAVE EMPATHY

- Treat participants with compassion and respect.
- Remember that sharing thoughts, struggles, fears, and triumphs takes a lot of courage.
- Validate participant's comments.

LISTEN TO HEAR, NOT TO RESPOND

- Do not try to control the conversation.
- Remember that, when we control conversations, we tend to manufacture it into something that is not authentic to the rest of the group.
- Focus on really listening to your campers rather than working to make a "great" conversation.
- Remember that this is a conversation, not a lesson. A scripted, manufactured lesson defeats the purpose of the conversation.

FOCUS ON ASKING QUESTIONS RATHER THAN SHARING YOUR OPINION

- Remember that the conversation does not belong to you, it belongs to your campers.
- Remember that this is a conversation built around you listening, not a lesson built around you offering guidance or making the moment teachable.
- Ask open-ended questions if the discussion gets side tracked. While we need to be comfortable with silence, that silence may also stretch on for too long. Open-ended questions help bring the conversation back to the campers.
- Recognize that sometimes it's okay to let a conversation evolve organically in a different direction than you initially planned. Give space for conversation that is helpful and seems to be important to the participants.

DEVELOP AN AWARENESS FOR BARRIERS TO LEARNING

- Remember that we each learn in a different way.

- Use “thumb scale check-ins” (thumbs up for “I got what’s going on,” side thumb for “I sort of get it,” thumbs down for “I’m lost”). This is especially helpful for skill sessions like dancing, baking, etc. to support kids as they learn a new skill.

PROVIDE SUFFICIENT TIME AND SPACE FOR PARTICIPANTS TO GATHER THEIR THOUGHTS AND CONTRIBUTE TO DISCUSSIONS.

- Be aware that, when you ask a question, you are asking a camper to share a piece of themselves. They may have never thought about the topic and will probably need time to develop their answer.
- Ask campers to write down their answer on paper. This can be in the form of words, phrases, pictures, or any way that helps them process the question.

ASK FOR CLARIFICATION IF UNCLEAR ABOUT A PARTICIPANT’S INTENT OR QUESTION.

- Ask campers to elaborate if you are not sure what a camper has said. This helps the camper articulate their view and adds to the conversation. It also allows the group to get to a deeper understanding of the person and of the group.

SPEAK CLEARLY

- Narrate what’s happening, even if it seems clear to you. Things might seem clear in your mind, but they might not be to the other campers. Speaking slowly and clearly and giving specific directions will help the group stay together and understand what is going on.

HELPFUL TIPS FOR ZOOM

- Ask participants in the physical meeting room to say their name before speaking.
- Check in with the Zoom participants at different points for any comments or questions.

MANAGE CONFLICTS FROM THE START

Have at least 2 staff members on the call at all times.

HOW TO FACILITATE GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FOR YOUTH WORKERS)

- Make sure that all staff members turn on their screen as soon as the first camper logs in. This avoids an awkward situation of having one staff member alone with a camper in the chat.
- Monitor both the text chat and camper audio.
- Interrupt tensions as soon as they materialize with a comment along the lines of “Hey just want to pause for a minute. Let’s talk this through.”
- Mute people or stop video if anything ever gets inappropriate.

END A CALL WITH GRATITUDE AND CLARITY

- Thank the staff member for leading.
- Tell campers what’s happening for the rest of the day.
- Offer a clear, unambiguous ending to the call.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

See Small Group Facilitator Training materials at y2am.org/SmallGroups