



# Trends, Challenges & Opportunities For Camp

Tom Rosenberg  
President/CEO, American Camp Association

# Core Services



## ▶ Accreditation

- ▶ Recognized by Courts as national minimum standard
- ▶ 70 yrs of external peer review
- ▶ YSO Professionalization Trends

## ▶ Professional Development:

- ▶ Camp Director Certificate
- ▶ Assistant Director Certificate
- ▶ Middle Manager Certificate
- ▶ New Director Orientation
- ▶ National and Regional Conferences
- ▶ Continuing Education Credits

## ▶ Advocacy

- ▶ Camp Cultural Exchange (Shlichim)
- ▶ Child Protection Improvement Act
- ▶ Regulatory relief

# Core Services



- ▶ Empirical Research
  - ▶ 5 Yr Camper Outcomes
  - ▶ LIT/SIT Outcomes
  - ▶ 5 Yr Staff Outcomes
- ▶ Evaluative Research
  - ▶ Customer Satisfaction
  - ▶ Benchmark Outcomes
  - ▶ Staff Satisfaction
- ▶ Research Symposia
- ▶ Journal of Youth Dev Camp Issue

# Who Are We



- ▶ Independent Camps
- ▶ Girl Scouts
- ▶ Boy Scouts
- ▶ YMCA, YWCA, JCCA
- ▶ FJC
- ▶ Boys and Girls Clubs
- ▶ Lions, Kiwanis
- ▶ 4-H
- ▶ Faith Based Camps
- ▶ STEM Camps
- ▶ School Camps
- ▶ University Camps
- ▶ Parks & Rec Camps



^ Number  
^ Quality  
^ Value

- ▶ Mentorship
- ▶ Day Camp Conference
- ▶ Non-Profit Management Conference
- ▶ Camping Magazine
- ▶ CampLine Risk Management Journal
- ▶ Healthy Learning Publishing
- ▶ Camp Director Hotline
- ▶ Knowledge Center



# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Context for Camp



- **Less In-Person Social Time** (Pew 2015)

- Just 25% of teens spend time with friends in person (outside of school) on a daily basis.
- 49% of teens say text messaging is their 1st choice of platform for communicating with their closest friend. Avg teen today checks their phone > 80 x a day.
- Fully 57% of teens ages 13 to 17 have made a new friend online, with 29% of teens indicating that they have made more than five new friends in online venues. Most of these friendships stay in the digital space; only 20% of all teens have met an online friend in person.

# Mental Health Crisis



More Screen Time → Less In-Person Social Interaction

→ More Loneliness, Depression and Worse

iGen is at the forefront of worst mental health crisis in decades - rates of teen depression and suicide have skyrocketed since 2011.

- ▶ Teens are now lonelier than at any time since 1991
- ▶ 50% more teens in 2015 demonstrated clinically diagnosable depression (vs 2011)
- ▶ The teen suicide rate **TRIPLED** among girls ages 12 to 14 and increased by 50% among girls ages 15 to 19 since the 1950s.
- ▶ The number of children and teens hospitalized for suicidal thoughts or self-harm **DOUBLED** between 2008 and 2015

# Alarming iGen Trends



- ▶ **iGen-ers are growing more slowly than previous generations:**
  - ▶ Emotional maturity has declined - 18 y.o. act like 15 y.o. and 13 y.o. act like 10 y.o.
- ▶ **Less Opportunities for Positive Risks and Personal Growth**
  - ▶ Less Likely To Go Out Without Their Parents Than Previous Generations
  - ▶ iGen Teens Are Less Likely To Date
  - ▶ iGen Seniors Are Less Likely To Obtain Driver's License
  - ▶ iGen Teens Are Less Likely To Work When Not In School
  - ▶ iGen Parents Keep A Closer Watch Over Teens These Days.



# Alarming iGen Trends

- ▶ iGen Teens are physically safer than ever, yet are more mentally vulnerable.
- ▶ iGen Teens are more risk averse than previous generations.



# Camp is the Panacea



- ▶ Safe Human Powered Adventures
- ▶ Immersive Social Environment
- ▶ Mentored by Non-Parent Young Adults
- ▶ Authentic Caring Relationships
- ▶ Positive Risk Opportunities
- ▶ Encouraged to Push Comfort Zones
- ▶ Building Confidence
- ▶ Developing Self-Esteem
- ▶ Relaxing and Becoming More Mindful

# Readiness for 2040



- ▶ Work Will Be Market-Driven and User Centered
  - ▶ Highly Problem-Driven, Ambiguous and Volatile
- ▶ Work Will Be Data and Metrics Driven
  - ▶ Frequent measurement, quick feedback, constant improvement and learning
- ▶ Work Will Be Interwoven With Learning
  - ▶ Frequent Adaptation, Ability to Learn New Skills, Constant Learning
- ▶ Work Will Be Grounded In Relating
  - ▶ Collaborative, Team-driven, Collegial and Inclusive
- ▶ Work Will Be Modularized and Recombined
  - ▶ Problem Solving, Flow Design, Extensive Coordination and Synthesis

# Readiness for 2040



▶ Highly Compensated Work Has Shifted To Fields That Leverage:

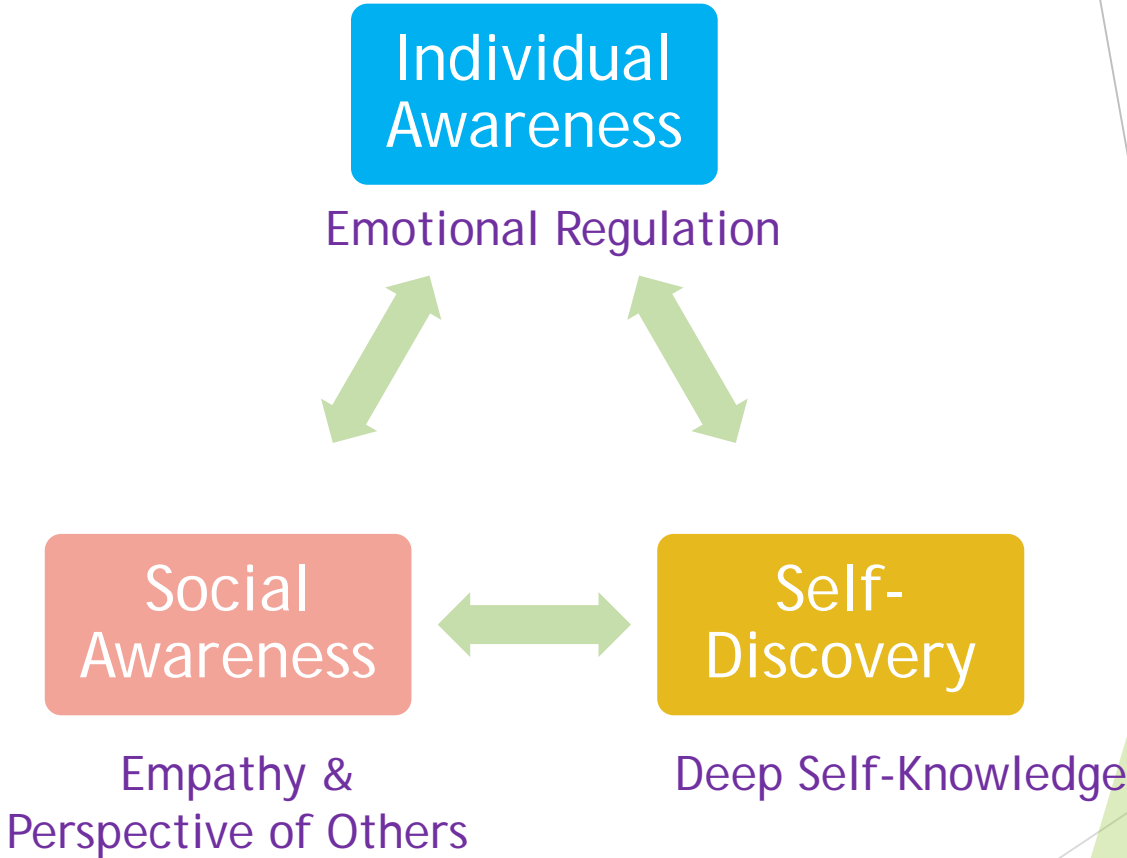
- ▶ Human Emotions
- ▶ Uniquely Human Capacities and Practices
- ▶ Relationship Cultivation
- ▶ Decision-Making
- ▶ Artistic Thinking
- ▶ Creative Production
- ▶ Novelty Generation
- ▶ Human-Centered Economy

# 2040 Competencies



- ▶ Developing A Strong Inner-Self Resilient, Reflective and Able to Develop Positive Connections and Relationships.
- ▶ Social Emotional Skills
  - ▶ Sensing, Interpreting and Communicating Information About the World and Other People
- ▶ Executive Functions
  - ▶ Decision-making, Focus and Attention, Memory, Relationships, Physical and Mental Health, Life-Long Learning

# Core Social Emotional Skills



# 2040 Competencies



## ▶ Deep Self-Knowledge

- ▶ *Confidence about what you know, but confidence in what you don't know and a desire to figure it out.*

## ▶ Individual Awareness & Emotional Regulation

- ▶ *Recognizing ones own emotions, understanding triggers, shift to balanced, productive emotional states. Deep breathe, think, get it done.*

## ▶ Social Awareness & Empathy

- ▶ *Learning to build social relationships of all kinds to support learning, collaboration and innovation. Learning to fail. Admit to mistakes and Ask for Help. Where others feel accountable for supporting you in your learning and collaboration.*

## ▶ Thrive in Ambiguity & Uncertainty

- ▶ *Adaptability, Resourcefulness, Balancing Confidence with Humility*

# Emerging Criticality of Camp

## ▶ Learn Anything, Anywhere

### ▶ Create A Learning Ecosystem at Camp That Supports Curiosity.

- ▶ Learning to Give and Receive Feedback
- ▶ Cultivating Mentorship
- ▶ Growing Skills and Fueling Passions
- ▶ Learning to Reflect on Learning Process, Goals Strengths and Weaknesses
- ▶ Always Asking Questions





# Cultivate Inclusive Community



- ▶ Learning Creative Problem Solving Through Diverse Communities
- ▶ Practice Inclusion and Emotional Safety Where Campers Feel They Can Collaborate Openly and Take Risks Without Negative Consequences.
  - ▶ Sharing Responsibility
  - ▶ Focusing on Team
  - ▶ Creating Trust and Psychological Safety
  - ▶ Practicing Coaching Others & Problem-Solving
- ▶ Learning To Make Friends
  - ▶ Communicating Clearly Across All Levels
  - ▶ Practicing Active Listening
  - ▶ Managing Non-Productive Emotions and Shifting to More Productive Emotional States
- ▶ Learning To Take Initiative & Self-Advocate
  - ▶ Negotiating and Championing Ideas
  - ▶ Being Proactive and Autonomous
  - ▶ Experimenting With New Skills, Ideas and Opportunities

# Practice the Art of Thinking Differently

- ▶ Diversify Thinking Through Practice of Collaboration
- ▶ Willingness to Take Risks & Try Unconventional Ideas
- ▶ Reflecting on Thinking and Problem-Solving Approaches
- ▶ Learning to Build Off of Other's Ideas
- ▶ Learning To Synthesize Ideas Into Deeper Understanding
- ▶ Practice Solving Problems
  - ▶ Thinking Analytically & Critically to Break Down Problems
  - ▶ Approaching Problems as Learning Opportunities



# Implications



- ▶ Staff Training With Social Emotional Learning At Its Center Is Key
- ▶ Teaching Staff To Ask Meaningful, Respectful Questions That Help Campers' Curiosity Unfold and Confidence Grow.
- ▶ Creating a Camp Environment That Supports Diverse Learning Where Productive Social Interactions Thrive.
- ▶ Creating Camper-Staff Relationships That Foster Openness, Trust, Safety, Self-Discovery and Positive Risk Taking.
- ▶ Camp is Where Campers & Staff Develop and Practice Social Emotional Skills. Practicing Community Engagement and Develop An Aspirational Vision of Themselves.

# S.T.E.M. at Summer and School Camps

Oceanography  
Photography  
Engineering Design  
Virtual Film Coding  
Reality Game Making  
Physics Printing Math  
Biology Robotics Chemistry  
Astronomy  
Marine



# CPIA & J-1 Visa & Staff



- ▶ **Child Protection Improvement Act**
  - ▶ Establishes a voluntary national criminal history background check system and criminal history review program for certain individuals who, related to their employment, have access to children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes.
  - ▶ House bill passed May 22<sup>nd</sup>
  - ▶ Senate bill passed Oct 16<sup>th</sup>
  - ▶ House and Senate Leaders actively discussing best path forward. ACA is very optimistic.
- ▶ **Buy American Hire American Executive Order and Camp Cultural Exchange Visas (J-1)**
  - ▶ Camp Counselor Category
  - ▶ Summer Work Travel (camp) category
  - ▶ White House Strategy
  - ▶ Congressional Strategy
- ▶ **Seasonal Staff Recruitment Challenges**
  - ▶ Task Group
  - ▶ 5 Year Staff Study

THANK YOU  
[trosenberg@acacamps.org](mailto:trosenberg@acacamps.org)

