

The Summer Camp Society

SPRING RETREAT 2024



DIVING IN, & MAKING WAVES

Schedule

TUESDAY, APRIL 2

- 2:00pm Arrival
- 3:30pm Retreat Kickoff
- 4:15pm Hot Take Debates, Group Forming, & More
- 6:30pm Dinner
- 7:30pm Deep Dive Intros
- 8:30pm Social

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3

- 7:30am Energizers
- 8:00am Coffee Talk
- 8:30am Breakfast
- 9:30am Deep Dives 1
- 1:00pm Lunch & Chillville
- 2:30pm Large Group Session
- 4:00pm Option Block 1
- 5:30pm Option Block 2
- 6:30pm Dinner
- 7:30pm Large Group Session
- 9:00pm Late Night Hangs

THURSDAY, APRIL 4

- 7:30am Energizers
- 8:00am Coffee Talk
- 8:30am Breakfast
- 9:30am Deep Dives 2
- 1:00pm Lunch & Chillville
- 2:30pm Large Group Session
- 4:00pm Option Block 3
- 5:30pm Option Block 4
- 6:30pm Dinner
- 7:30pm Connection Circles
- 8:30pm Variety Show

FRIDAY, APRIL 5

- 7:30am Energizers
- 8:00am Coffee Talk
- 8:30am Breakfast
- 9:30am Shareout Showcase
- 11:30am Closing Ceremony
- 12:30pm Grab & Go Lunch



For those flying in, we'll do our best to help coordinate chances to share rental cars, rides, etc.

We recommend:

- Arriving at Newark no later than 12:00pm
- Departing from Newark no earlier than 4:30pm



Introducing Deep Dives

Deep dives are designed to give you a small group community to dive deep with. Facilitated by some of our experts, groups will meet by seven hours to discuss where camps can go and how they can get there. Each participant will leave with a project custom made for their camp.

- **Operationalizing DEIJ with Simone Gamble (with support from Grace El-Fishawy)**
- **Staff Training with Paige Moffett and Nelson Strickland**
- **Neurodiversity with Erin Ross, Kristin McMaster, and Maggie Mitchell**
- **All Things Day Camp with Drew Hodge**
- **Mental Health Supports in 2024 with Allison Klee**

You can choose your deep dive in advance OR when you get to the retreat and learn more.

Once you've chosen your track, get ready to

DIVE DEEP!



DEEP DIVE SESSIONS



Operationalizing DEIJ - Simone Gamble (supported by Grace El-Fishawy)

Since 2020, camps have made a renewed commitment to DEIJ efforts at their camps in order to create a more equitable and inclusive camp experience. However, many individuals and organizations struggle with translating good intentions into sustainable action. This deep dive will discuss how camp leaders can build the foundational structures needed for our DEIJ efforts to be impactful. This workshop is designed to equip participants with the skills and strategies needed to stay accountable to our DEIJ efforts and embed them in both culture and policies.



All Things Day Camp - Drew Hodge

One of the things that Day Camp does best is maximize our time and make a lot out of a little. We're bringing that same mentality to this deep dive. We're going to use the skills and knowledge of the group to plan and develop actionable plans for not just camp but your camp. From culture to choice to staff training and back again. Bring your successes, failures, questions, and concerns and let's learn from them together.

DEEP DIVE SESSIONS



Mental Health Supports in 2024 - Allison Klee

One of the biggest opportunities we have as summer camp leaders is to provide a space that supports camper and staff mental health. In a world that is fast-paced and product-driven, camp can be an important outlet for people to slow down, check in with themselves, and find a sense of belonging which directly intervenes with mental health struggles.

In this deep dive, you will get an opportunity to learn about mental health practices, trauma, healing centered care, and more. The projects we will focus on are training our staff in supporting camper mental health, and creating templates and plans to support any mental health crises that may arise in summer 2024. We will also talk through ways we can "screen" our staff and campers for their needs as they relate to mental health.



Staff Training - Paige Moffett and Nelson Strickland

Come innovate, ideate, and imagine how staff training can be even more impactful, more effective, and more exciting! We'll be exploring and working on the following:

- Helpful systems & tools to plan and organize staff training.
- Pass the mic: Let's talk about delegating and involving the team in more facilitation.
- Level up some age-old staff training classics like the camp tour or pool safety.
- Move your staff training to do's forward with peer collaboration.



DEEP DIVE SESSIONS



Neurodiversity - Erin Ross, Kristin McMaster, and Maggie Mitchell

Kids with autism are told so often “you’re doing it wrong.” They are bombarded with behavior, speech, and occupational therapy, constantly doing the work to “better fit” our narrow standards for society. Our take on neurodiversity at camp is that we can change the world to fit our kids and stop changing our kids to fit the world, and we want to empower all camps to do the same. We’ll deconstruct behavior, explore better approaches to the most challenging ones, and help you design your personalized Neurodiversity Blueprint. You will leave with tangible skills and a plan that will both make your program and facility more inclusive, and inspire your staff to create more spaces where everyone belongs.



PARTICIPANT-LED SESSIONS

The Emotional Changemaker - Grace El-Fishawy

This session will explore how our emotions impact our ability to enact equity and justice related changes in the camp setting. Formatted as a restorative justice style circle, this session will prepare camp leaders to be more emotionally informed and effective change makers at their camps this summer.

This Could Have Been an Email: The Importance of Collaborative and Effective Communication - Leslie Zukrow

How many times have you been asked a question that the person could have easily found the answer to in their email? Or sat through a meeting that could have just been an email? This workshop is for you. We will discuss the importance of collaborative and effective communication and how to foster this at your camp.

Finding Consensus - Dex Gilden

Through activities and conversation, participants in this workshop will explore strategies for group decision making that feel truly collaborative. This workshop is perfect for camp leaders who are tired of making decisions alone or feeling like their team's decision-making process is unproductive.

Harnessing Camp Magic for Happier and Healthier Kids - Chelsea Irys Rendlen

Research from top institutions (Columbia University, Harvard, Yale) proves that the magic of summer camp (increased independence, exploration, and connection) leads to happier, healthier kids. This workshop will explore how to bring the benefits of camp to kids year-round.

PARTICIPANT-LED SESSIONS

From Theory to Practice: Incorporating Brain Science into Your Camp Staff's Toolkit - Jacqueline McDonough

Elevate your camp's impact with our workshop, tailored for attendees dedicated to integrating trauma-informed practices and MESH (Mental, Emotional, and Social Health) strategies, grounded in brain science. This session delves into the brain science behind camper behaviors, providing attendees with the insights and tools necessary to train their staff in responding with empathy and effectiveness, thereby fostering meaningful connections.

SenSo-Eco Model: How Kids Teach Kids How to Be Kids! - Dave Leveille

Discover the innovative approach to managing behavior building towards a diverse and inclusive community. Dave and Jennifer Leveille's Social Sensory Economic Model (SenSo-Eco) advocates for special needs children and parents. This model uses effective strategies to manage behavior while promoting collaboration and participation in age-appropriate behavior for neurodiverse individuals.

Boardgames and Belonging - Bradley Henry

I've had a lot of experience using board games to build cohesion and inclusion within a bunk, and I thought it might be interesting to use the elements of introducing a board game to folks as a means of looking at how belonging and inclusion might be operationalized in a tangible sense.

Amplifying Voices, Shaping Futures: Queering Camp Culture with Youth-Led Change - Emma Makdessi, Rel Antosca

Last summer turned up the heat with campers leading a protest, cool right?! We didn't just read their list of demands - we listened to them, heard their concerns, and shared how they could work with us to make THEIR camp experience better. This session zeroes in on the magic of blending youthful zest with camp traditions. How do we shake up the norm and embrace a camp culture where feedback shapes the future? It's about crafting spaces where every camper feels empowered to speak, act, and lead. Let's chat about turning camp into a vibrant hub of inclusion and innovation, where every voice is not just heard but is a driving force. At Outright, we call that queering it up!

PARTICIPANT-LED SESSIONS

“Who Would Have Thought? Not Me”: Combatting Imposter Syndrome - Sami Eron & EmJ Juszczuk

Join Sami and EmJ in an immersive workshop designed to take down the intrusive thoughts that come with having imposter syndrome. Through a mix of interactive discussions, practical strategies, and some personal reflection, participants will learn to build their confidence and combat thoughts of self-doubt.

Artmaking & Storytelling: An Entryway to Your Camp's Road to Fostering Belonging - Janette Martinez

How can we meet our staff and campers' call to discuss big topics surrounding DEI that are important to them, but do it in a way that is authentic to where our individual camps are in their DEI journeys?" Together we will wrangle with this question and discuss and ideate on meaningful meeting agendas, activities, or events that we could then bring into our programs to foster belonging and meaningful conversations around meaningful DEI topics.

Ethical, Enchanted, and Empowered: How to Teach Adolescents About Spirituality and Self-Discovery - Chelsea Irys Rendlen

Many adolescents use tarot, astrology, dream analysis, and other mystical tools as a means of self-discovery and spiritual exploration. This workshop will explore how to ethically and effectively teach adolescents about these tools in a way that empowers them to explore their spirituality safely and with intention.

Visioning into Reality - Murph Hammer

In this hands-on workshop, learn about the power of a well-thought-out vision and how it will make your camp even better. And then learn the steps to implement your vision at your camp! Super fun, probably a little silly at times.

Thank You!

