

THE SUMMER CAMP SOCIETY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
CAMP STOMPING GROUND:

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AT CAMP CURRICULUM

A guide to implementing restorative practices with youth to foster a supportive and equitable space for them to thrive.



Stomping Ground
Inspiring Radical Empathy.



WELCOME

Kids need restorative justice now more than ever.



Restorative justice offers us an alternative to the traditional methods of behavior management and discipline that are often punitive, and do not always get to the root of the real conflict or what kids are actually needing.

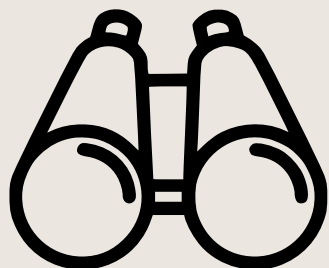
Restorative justice practices build connections and offer the tools to respond to harm in a way that allows us to better connect with one another, ensure all voices in a community are heard, and holds people accountable for any harm they may have caused.

In a time where youth are facing so many different challenges, it is imperative we center their needs and find ways to authentically connect with them and build trust. Restorative justice gives us that opportunity.

Thank you for being a part of this movement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

& WHAT TO EXPECT



DEFINITION & OVERVIEW

What is RJ & video



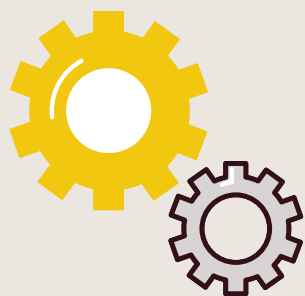
HISTORY OF RJ

Historical context and relation to racial justice movement



RJ & CAMP

Why RJ and camp just make sense together



CIRCLE TEMPLATE

Circle definition and how to implement restorative circles at camp



3 TYPES OF CIRCLES

Community building, embers circles, & conflict circles



CIRCLE LOGISTICS

Circle agreements & components



FACILTIATOR GUIDE

Role of facilitator & best practices



ABOUT KLEE

Let's keep the conversation moving forward!



BUILD YOUR TOOLBOX

Books, articles, podcasts, etc. to continue your learning

RJ OVERVIEW

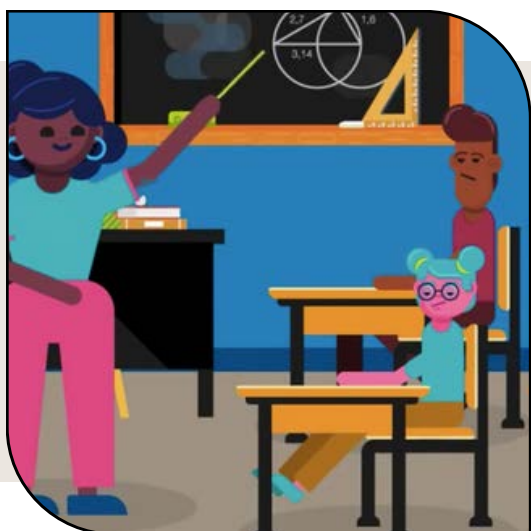


What is it? (Klee's terms)

In simple terms, an approach to responding to conflict that allows all voices to be heard, reduces future harm, and builds stronger, more equitable communities.

What is it? (*fancy* terms)

"In the abstract, a restorative approach understands 'justice' as requiring the repair of the relationships upset by an offense; it seeks to address the violation in collaboration with the offender, revalidating the shared values that underlie agreed-upon standards of behavior" (Okimoto et al., 2022).

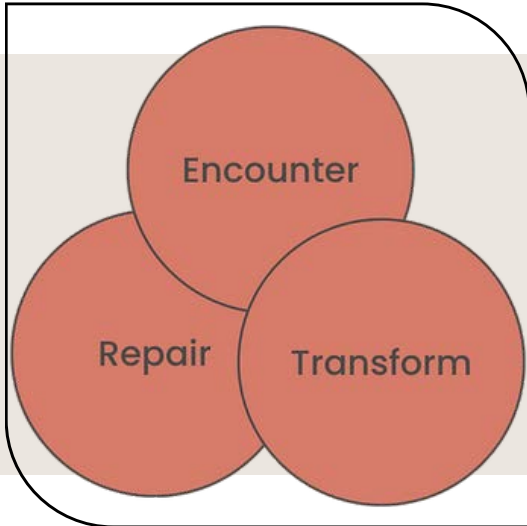


Introductory video

Click photo to watch!



HISTORY OF RJ



Overview

RJ is an ancient and innovative practice that started in indigenous cultures around the world. Came to U.S. in 1970s to address crime in alternative ways and combat inequities in criminal justice system.

RJ & Racial justice

RJ has the power to dismantle inequities, especially with youth. Currently, youth of color are punished and involved with the criminal justice system at a disproportionate rate compared to white youth. RJ is an alternative that builds more equity into programming with youth and folks of all ages.

"Restorative justice programs that address racial and ethnic disparities use data to target disproportionalities, extend eligibility to people with prior offenses, avoid subjective criteria and seek out facilitators and program leaders who represent the youth and communities they serve" (First Step Alliance, 2022).



Video: Slavery to Mass Incarceration

Click photo to watch! Racial justice and restorative justice are inextricably linked. You cannot have one without the other.





What does camp have to do with it?

The alternative is harmful:

- African American students are suspended at a rate of 8%, which is twice as much as white or Hispanic students who amount to a much larger proportion of the population (Hall et al., 2021).
- Suspensions and expulsions make students more vulnerable to coming in contact with the criminal justice system (McCarter, 2016).
- Data suggests that the more severe the discipline, the more likely students are to have poor academic performance, not show up to school, and misbehave (Alvarez, 2021)

At the present time, the ACA and other camp programs do not have comprehensive data to track this information as it relates to summer camps, but anecdotally the statistics and data that are true about schools in the U.S. are representative of summer camps as well.

As a leader in the summer camp industry, you have the opportunity to rewrite this script.

RJ AT CAMP

Restorative circles: a conversation tool that helps to address conflict, foster relationships, and build community.



3 Types of Circles:

1. **Community building circles:** help build relationships and prioritizes building a sense of belonging and connection in a relationship and/or group
2. **Embers circles:** Intention to foster authentic relationships and allow participants to practice self-reflection
3. **Conflict circles:** Address harm in a community by bringing together all parties of a conflict and coming up with agreements to move forward

In order for conflict circles to be effective, there must be community circles built into the program as well so participants feel more comfortable and familiar with the circle process when it comes to discussing difficult or sensitive topics in conflict circles. In a way, community circles prepare us for conflict circles.

CIRCLE TEMPLATE

All circles typically follow the following format and have multiple rounds. A round begins with the facilitator asking a question, sharing first, and then passing to their left or right. It is considered best practice to change the order of circle passing each round (either counter-clockwise or clockwise) to change up who shares directly after the facilitator.

Opening round: Check-in/Ice breaker. This is a way to orient everyone to circle and get comfortable sharing. [Check out this resource for awesome circle check-in questions!](#)

Round two: Question relating to theme of circle. For instance, if addressing a conflict such as stealing you may start by asking, "What does honesty mean to you?"

Round three: Another question relating to theme

Round four: Another question (if needed) relating to theme

Closing round: Usually wrapping circle up. Possible questions to ask:

- Does anyone have anything they would like to share that they haven't been able to?
- How did you feel about circle today?



COMMUNITY BUILDING CIRCLES

Help build relationships and prioritize building a sense of belonging and connection in a relationship and/or group.



Build them into your schedule.

At Stomping Ground, community building circles also known as "check-in" circles happen after breakfast and after lunch each day. This builds repetition and helps kids get more comfortable with the process of circles when more difficult things come up. Community building circles are also great to do after activities to debrief how things went.

What do they sound like?

Community building circles help address needs in the group, announcements, and allow kids to give feedback to staff and overall systems of camp. Helpful questions to ask:

- Can everyone share one thing that's going well? One thing that they would like to see change?
- How is everyone feeling right now?
- What did you all make of that activity?
- Does everyone feel ready for what's coming next?



Video: What is the hidden curriculum?

Community building circles help elevate the voices of quieter kids at camp or those who do not always get an opportunity for their voice to be heard. Also, they help outline the hidden curriculum of various spaces at camp. Click image to the left to watch a video about what the hidden curriculum is.

COMMUNITY BUILDING CIRCLES



Community building circles have the potential to accomplish multiple goals as outlined above.

EMBERS CIRCLES

Intention is to foster authentic relationships and allow participants to practice self-reflection.



Build them into your schedule

At Stomping Ground, embers circles happen each night before bedtime. The intention is for campers to connect with one another and reflect on the day. They usually happen in a cabin-size group of 10-12 campers.

Read the room.

Embers circles are a great opportunity to address any group conflicts that may be happening in the group. Use this opportunity to address any conflicts or group dynamics you may be sensing. This may include talking about bullying, gossiping, leaving kids out, homesickness, etc.

Check out this awesome resource guide that has circle prompts for conflicts such as gossip, bullying, stealing, grief and loss, etc!



Get creative.

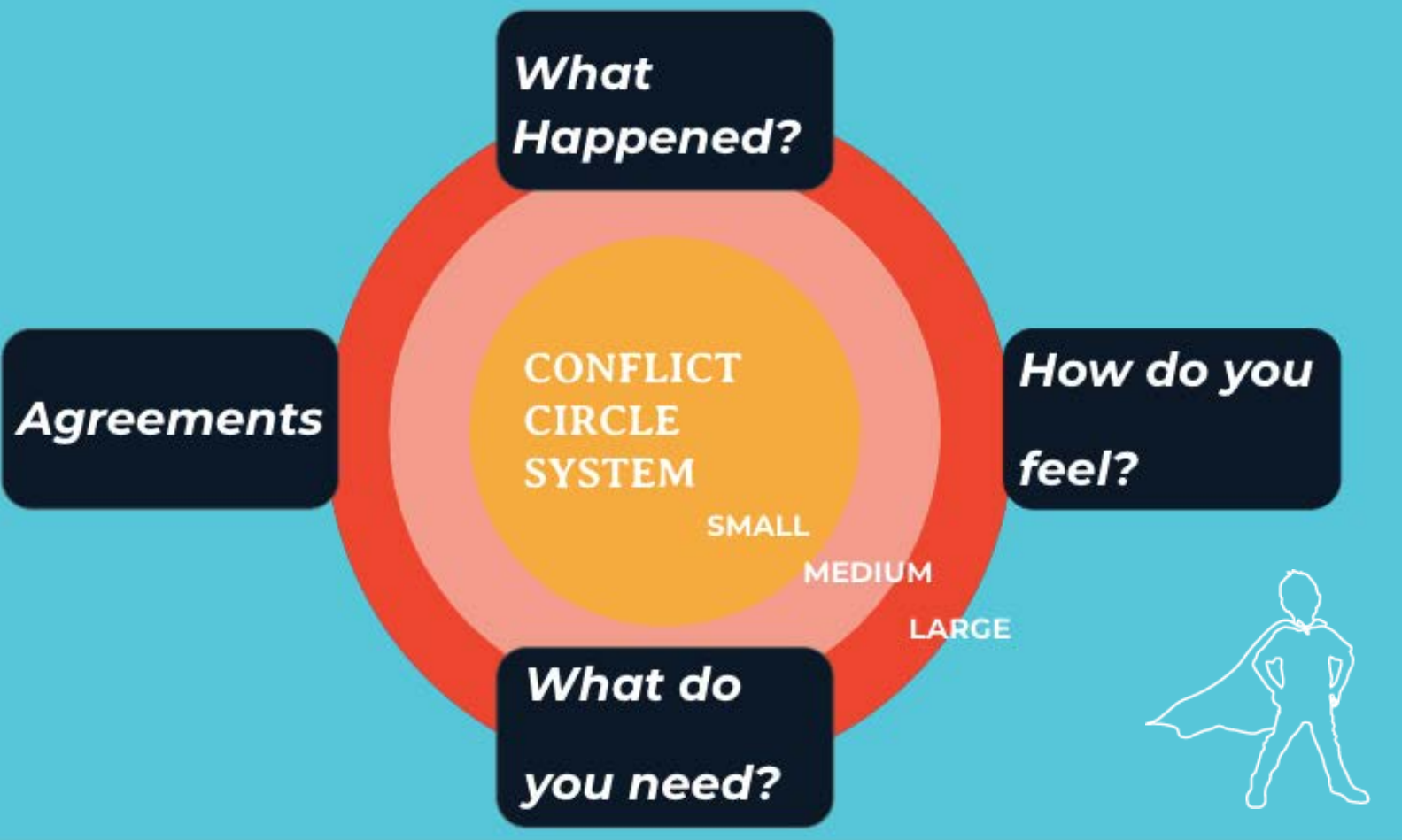
Embers circles allow for creative ways of communicating. This may be asking campers to draw a picture, share a song with them, read a story, go on a nature walk, lay outside and look at the stars, etc.

Chances are your programs have a similar practice at the end of the day. The importance is to adapt the ritual to a circle format to build these practices into your program. This way, when conflict arises, which is inevitable, your campers and staff will be used to the circle process.



CONFLICT CIRCLES

Address harm in a community by bringing together all parties involved in a conflict and coming up with agreements to move forward.



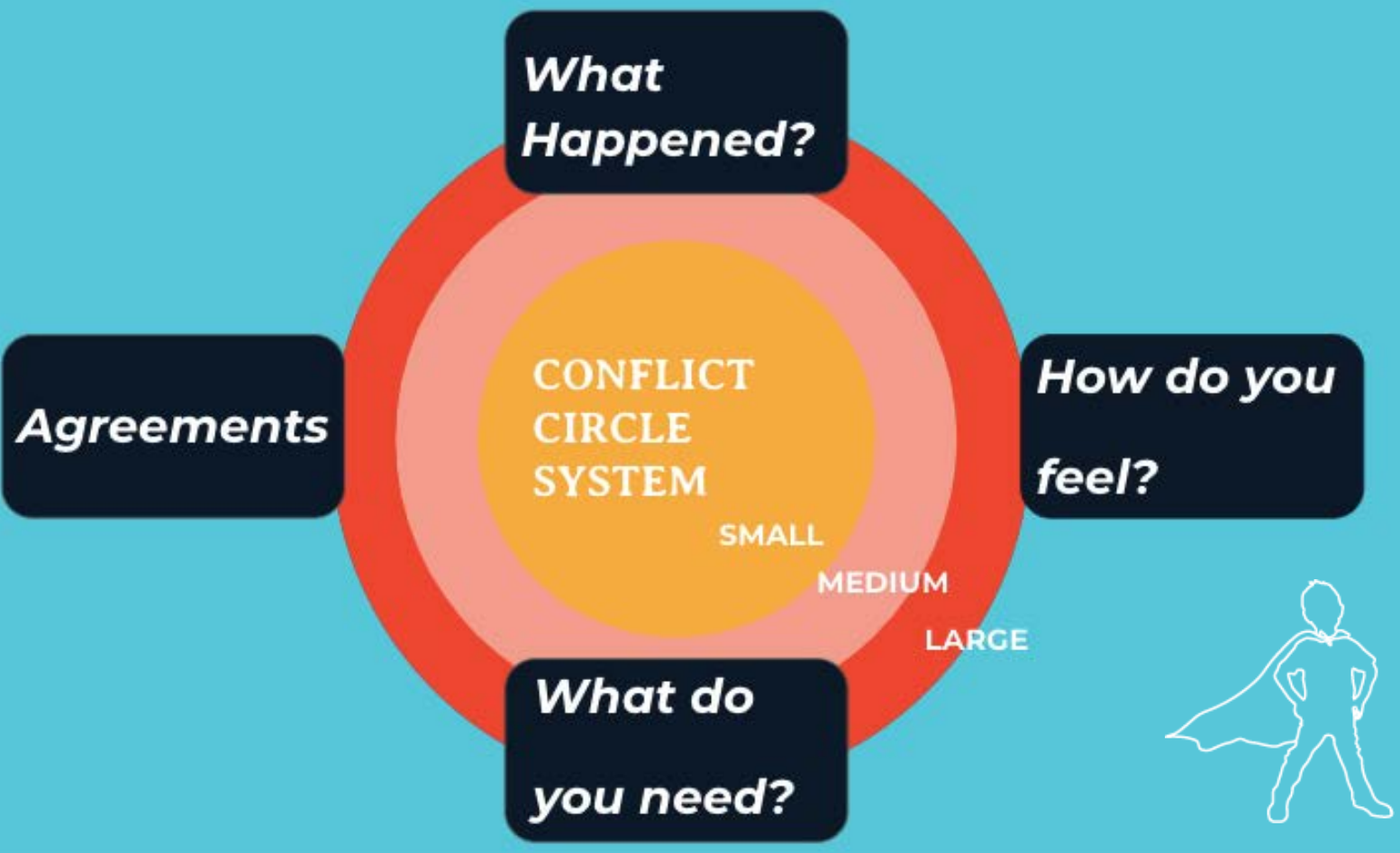
Guiding questions:

- What happened?
- How do you feel?
- What do you need?
- Set agreements

These questions are not a script, but rather a guide. You may ask the same question more than once, return to the first question, and not follow the order exactly as it is showed here. Remember, conflict mediation is a *circle*, and not linear.

CONFLICT CIRCLES CONT.

Address harm in a community by bringing together all parties involved in a conflict and coming up with agreements to move forward.



The small, medium, large circles refer to different levels within the system:

1. **Small level circle:** Camper or staff in conflict with another camper or staff speaks directly with them using circle process.
2. **Medium level circle:** Camper or staff in conflict may ask a peer to HELP them facilitate a circle with who they are in conflict with. This could include a camp counselor or another camper.
3. **Large level circle:** Usually heavier conflicts and many people involved. Large level circles are facilitated by members of the executive council. This is made up of folks well trained in circles or conflict mediation. At camps, these are usually village directors and camp directors.



"One metaphor I use for mediation is that it is a wall, and the goal is to get on the same side of the wall, and look at it together. Sometimes to do this each side has to take turns 'visiting' the other side of the wall. People may decide to stay on their side of the wall, but it helps to understand that the wall is not a forever wall, it can be crossed, circumvented, or even brought down. I will also encourage people to stop 'building the wall' by looking for additional places of discontent."

-Adrienne Maree Brown, Emergent Strategy

Circles are hard. And they will not always be perfect. Sometimes you may return to a circle if the agreements made do not work. Sometimes people may walk away from circle if tensions are too high to engage in restorative conversation. The importance is to trust the process and have a team of trusted individuals also invested in the work to have your back when you need support.



CIRCLE AGREEMENTS

These agreements are helpful to review before any type of circle, and most important when it comes to conflict circles.

1. **Circles are voluntary** - each party should be made aware of the circle and the conflict prior to agreeing to meet
2. **One mic** - Only one person speaks at a time. Everyone gets equal opportunity to share.
3. **"Vegas" rules** - What is said in circle stays, what is learned leaves. This rule honors confidentiality.

Facilitator should share these with the group before circle rounds and then ask if anyone would like any other agreements to be made before beginning circle.

CIRCLE COMPONENTS

These can be used for all types of circles, but especially important for conflict circles:

- A talking piece to be passed around to indicate who is sharing
- Ritual/routine (build these into your program's structure)
- Circle keeper/facilitator
- Center piece
- Everyone seated in circle at equal level

Talking piece



Centerpiece

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Circle facilitators, also known as circle keepers, are responsible for upholding circle agreements, facilitate conversation using guiding questions, and ultimately maintain the power of the circle. This means interrupting participants if they are not following circle agreements and redirecting them. As noted, circles are voluntary. This means participants can pass when it gets to be their turn. It is up to facilitator's discretion to redirect the group if almost all members are passing.

When it comes to conflict circles, a facilitator and participants are the most successful when they have already built trust with one another. Without that trust, circles will be less effective. Depending on the conflict, it is up to the facilitator to reflect on their own identity and relationship with others to determine if they are the best person for the job. Some questions to consider:

- Do I have power over this person in this situation?
- Will this person feel comfortable discussing this conflict with me based on my race, gender, age, etc.
- Do I have any bias that would impact my ability to be a successful circle keeper?





Let's keep the work moving forward.

Allison Klee (she/her/hers) is currently pursuing her master's degree in social work at SUNY Brockport.

She has worked with [Camp Stomping Ground](#), since 2016 and has fallen in love with the community, the vision, and – most of all – each camper she had a chance to interact with. This experience led to her interest in implementing restorative practices into more youth-centered spaces. As a result, Allison facilitates Restorative Justice training for professionals in the childhood development field such as camp directors, teachers, mental health counselors, along with other consulting work. You can also hear more about her work with restorative justice on the podcast, “Inspiring Radical Empathy.”

Allison also works as community ambassador for [540WMain, Inc.](#), a nonprofit focused on antiracist education and consulting.

If you would like to talk more about possible staff trainings or other consulting services please email allison149@gmail.com

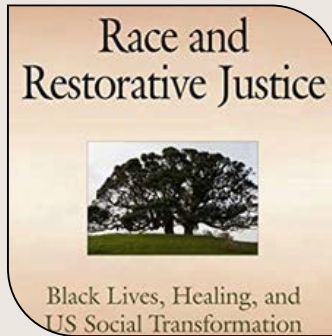
FUTURE LEARNING

RJ requires ongoing learning and a dedication to self-reflection.



ARTICLE

[CLICK HERE: WHAT IS RJ FOR YOUNG PEOPLE](#)



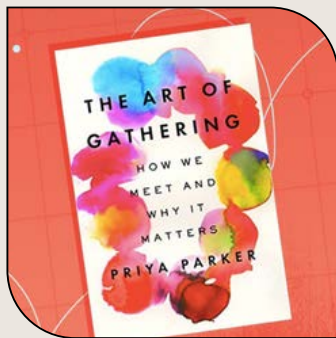
BOOK: RACE & RJ

[CLICK HERE: THE LITTLE BOOK OF RACE AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE](#)



BLOG

[CLICK HERE: CIRCLES AT SG](#)



BOOK: THE ART OF GATHERING

[CLICK HERE: LEVEL UP THE WAYS YOU GATHER AT CAMP](#)



PODCAST

[CLICK HERE: UNLOCKING US PODCAST - DR. GINWRIGHT'S 4 PIVOTS OF REIMAGINING JUSTICE & OURSELVES](#)



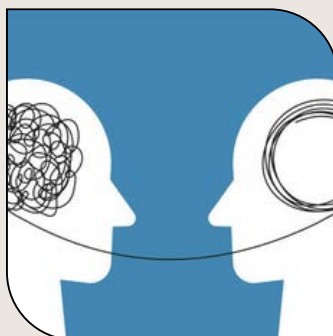
ARTICLE

[CLICK HERE: WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT? BY FANIA E. DAVIS](#)



VIDEO

[CLICK HERE: RJ IN OAKLAND SCHOOLS.](#)



ARTICLE

[CLICK HERE: EMPATHIC LISTENING](#)



VIDEO

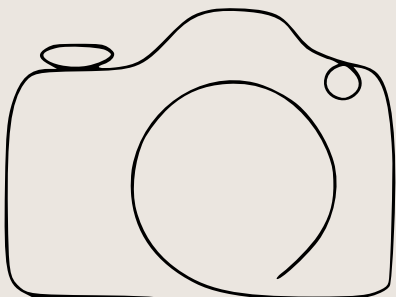
[CLICK HERE: KATY HUTCHISON AT TEDx](#)



PHOTO

CITATIONS:

Camp Stomping
Ground - located in
Saratoga Springs, NY.



PHOTOGRAPHER:
JADE GREENE

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