



Sample In-Service Training

Counselors Role Around Water

Counselors play a crucial role in supporting lifeguards around the water. When around the water, it is important that water activities are not interpreted as break time because lifeguards are present. Rather, everyone needs to be vigilant and engaged in protecting non-swimmers. By working together with lifeguards, counselors can add extra layers of protection—helping ensure that all activities are safe and appropriate, and that guards can focus their attention on guarding the pool.

Below we have created a scenario to use with your counselors at your next staff training. This scenario will help reinforce their role around the water. Read the scenario to your staff and then debrief the scenario with your counselors using the discussion questions below.

Scenario

A group of about 100 campers are attending day camp. Part of the morning programming includes open swim time in your organization's pool for the younger campers. All campers have been swim tested. The non-swimmers are required to stay in the shallow end of the pool and either be in a swim lesson or within arm's reach of a counselor. There are two lifeguards on duty as well as many camp counselors positioned throughout the pool. The counselors' primary focus is to ensure that their assigned non-swimmers are within arm's reach of them.

After some time passes, one of the camp counselors looks around and is confident in the fact that the non-swimmers they were supervising are swimming fine in the shallow end, and that the lifeguard is engaged. So they begin to chat with another counselor in the water about their plans for later that evening. While the counselor is talking, one non-swimmer drifts away from them, lifts the float rope separating the shallow end and deep end, and begins to make their way into deeper water. They begin to display surface distress before eventually falling below the surface.

Debrief Questions

1. What factors contributed to this aquatics incident?
2. How could you as a counselor have helped prevent this incident?
3. What are the responsibilities of a counselor at the pool or waterfront?
4. How can you as a counselor help support lifeguards?
5. If an aquatic incident were to happen at our pool or waterfront, what would your role be in responding?

After you discuss the scenario with your counselors, post and/or share this [one-pager on the role of counselors on the pool deck](#), waterfront or even in a central location where counselors tend to gather to help reinforce the counselor's role.