

Good Example (typically the summary is shorter, unless significant explanation is needed) (1 page or so)

Camp Sequoia
Camper Behavioral Progress Report

Name:

Date of Birth: 09/05/2000

Camp Dates: 6/26/16 – 7/16/16

Evaluator:

Objective:

Andrew (15 y.o.) was interviewed June 23, 2016 to assess fit for camp and outline goals to be worked on. Both Andrew and his father suggested Andrew needed to work on managing frustration. A follow-up conversation with Andrew's mother reiterated these concerns and suggested that Andrew would benefit from enhanced interpersonal skills in which he did not feel the need to display dominance over his peers. With this information collected, we enrolled Andrew, and made a plan to work with him on his anger management skills and address his perceptions when conflicts arise.

Summary:

Andrew appeared to have no trouble transitioning to Camp Sequoia. It seemed like he was genuinely excited about the prospect of coming to camp, and intrinsically motivated to start working through some of his difficulties. His sense of humor and sociability allowed for him to quickly form relationships with peers in his division. Early on in his first week, he formed an attachment with Oliver, our behavior management director, with whom he completed his initial interview with. An early example of this was during his second day of camp, mid-way in a conversation with Oliver, he became visibly angry and proceeded to shut down. It was not clear what prompted it, but he spent about 45 minutes leaned up against Oliver without breaking eye contact. He did not say much during this time, but expressed briefly that he was disappointed that Oliver was not at the swimming pool that day. Oliver told him that it was okay that he was frustrated, that he wasn't angry at him, and that he would be there for him throughout camp if something was bothering him. Gradually, Andrew came around and was able to rejoin programming. From this point on, Oliver became the point person when Andrew was experiencing emotional dysregulation.

As the summer progressed, we were able to witness some of the behaviors his parents reported. When frustrated by another camper's instigation or perceived injustice towards him, Andrew would quickly escalate to verbal threats of violence, throwing of furniture, and attempts to attack the target of his frustration. He would typically have an outburst of this nature 1-3 times a day, with the higher frequency occurring in the first and last few days of camp. Nighttime was especially difficult as he seemed to have a lot of energy which made him especially prone to perceiving others' neutral behaviors as hostile towards him. Other sensitive times we when there was unstructured free-time in a confined space (such as the dorms) when there was a lot of other campers around. We typically had Oliver on the floor during these times to redirect him and help him more accurately perceive other's interactions with him.

Throughout the first week, it took 20-30 minutes to get him out of his periods of anger. Two of these incidents required the use of therapeutic holds, as Andrew was presenting as a risk of harming another camper. After the second use of holds, Oliver collaborated with Andrew and (via phone) his mother to outline a behavioral contract specifically to address physical

aggression and following counselors' instruction during these episodes more broadly. With a plan in place, and Andrew's motivation to remain at Sequoia strong, this marked an important turning point in his progress at Sequoia.

Going into his second week, we were able to see a noticeable change in his ability to "take space" when frustrated. The reminder of the contract and his desire to stay at Sequoia seemed to aid immensely in his ability to recognize he might make a bad decision. Although managing anger was the focus of our work, we were able to witness some behaviors seemingly related to his early traumatic experiences. These behaviors included shutting down completely seemingly unprompted, acting noticeably younger than his chronological age, or overreacting to any display of dominance or aggression from another person. At nights he would often request to talk with Oliver in which he would begin discussing some of his past experiences. The manner in which he went about presenting these experiences was not typical in that he began incorporating Oliver into these memories. He seemed to have created a narrative that Oliver was his adopted brother and presented memories to accommodate this, "Remember when we...", "You always were...", "It was tough when Mom and Dad...". This incorporation was not consistent throughout a given day, and seemed to relate to his affective state. There were times, particularly at emotionally neutral times, when he would mention that he was just joking about Oliver being his brother, but when discussing his past and during some periods of emotional dysregulation he would seem fully convinced. One such night he was very frustrated at another camper and began yelling at Oliver asking him why he left. Confused about this, Oliver gently pressed for clarification in which Andrew began crying and said "when you left for college, that's when all my problems started". These kinds of incorporations are not uncommon for individuals with a traumatic history. It is hypothesized that it's an attempt to reconcile two conflicting mutually exclusive events. For Andrew, with the addition of a new positive figure into his life, he may have had difficulty placing Oliver in the context of the negative events he experienced early on. As a result, he found a way to include Oliver and attempted to link his difficulties with emotion regulation with Oliver's departure--a simpler explanation than considering the effects of his birth parents. Seeing that confronting his incorporations in-the-moment might cause him some distress, Oliver would redirect him during these times and emphasize and praise his intrinsic resilience and positive attributes as the real component to his ability to endure hardship.

As mentioned before, by this point Andrew had made noticeable strides in his ability to follow directions when frustrated. Oliver generated some strategies that had been working to aid de-escalation and distributed them to Andrew's division staff to generalize these strategies across counselors. With the physical aggression largely extinguished, his division staff were more equipped to de-escalate him (now within 10-15 mins), provide consequences for undesired behaviors, and help him understand others' points of view so he can "make things right". He did not always enjoy those discussions, but he appeared to show a great deal of remorse when he realized his actions were not in line with his innate conscientiousness. On a few occasions, he had gone so far as to suggest how he should make things right before any consequence was given. By this point, we worked on addressing his verbal aggression and emphasized that it can make people feel just as unsafe as physical aggression. While this didn't extinguish his verbal aggression completely, it did aid in de-escalation when directly confronted with how his words were affecting others' perception of him as someone that is unsafe to be around. Contributing to this strategy was his continued strong desire to succeed at Sequoia. Framing the verbal aggression as potentially compromising this was highly effective in getting him to follow instructions, and taking responsibility for his actions.

Not uncommon for many of our campers, his third week brought about some increases in difficult behavior. Often campers will get anxious about returning home, and have difficulties regulating those emotions. This appeared to be the case for Andrew, at times mentioning: "I don't want to return to my old ways," and "I need to stay longer, I have more work to do." During this final week, he experienced a greater difficulty in moving on from a conflict or perceived injustice. On two occasions, he walked off campus out of frustration, and it took a bit of time and multiple staff to coax him to come back. Recognizing the transition would be difficult for him, we made the determination that extending into the 4th week might not be best for him, since it would mean the departure and arrival of campers in his division, and staff shuffling to accommodate changes in enrollment. Whereas those staying for six weeks could adequately adjust to this change, staying one extra week might not allow enough time, and would be compounded by the anxiety of leaving—which we had already begin seeing. Given the improvements we saw coming out of week 2, we wanted his focus to be on those accomplishments and building his confidence in his ability to maintain those gains upon returning home. In his final days at Sequoia, although his anxiety was high, there were multiple discussions on recognizing the progress he's made, and explaining how that can continue when he returned home. A lot of his anger had transformed to be directed at a single camper who had been instigating him. While his anger was out of proportion to the size of the instigation, the fixation provided the unintentional advantage of him not getting upset at other campers for similar behaviors. This allowed him to have some pretty positive interactions with his peers during his final week.

Overall, Andrew displayed a motivation to work through his problems unmatched by any of his peers. While his behavior was considered difficult and volatile at times, during the second session both campers and counselors remarked that they missed having him around. His genuine enjoyment of life, sense of humor, and inclusiveness of others made him a joy to be around. When he would have an outburst, one could see his disappointment in himself when he would come around and realize what he had done. He did not achieve complete behavioral and emotional regulation this summer. That said, he was able to make some significant strides towards managing difficult emotions, recognizing how his behavior affects others, and making good choices in heated moments to result in better outcomes. He worked extremely hard this summer, and should be very proud of the progress he has made. We set fairly high expectations for him to attend and remain at Sequoia, and he was able to put the work in and meet those expectations, a success he should be very proud of. To aid in his continued growth, the following recommendations have been made based on his work at Camp Sequoia this summer.

Recommendations:

1. Utilizing a behavioral contract marked a pivotal point in the summer for Andrew, and might be useful strategy to try at home and/or school. The contract we utilized began with his objective which was to better manage his frustration so he could remain at Sequoia for the rest of the session. This objective was mutually agreed upon and appeared effective since he had a genuine desire to accomplish these goals. The next section outlined some strategies he could use and what he could expect from the counselors. For example, "When frustrated, Andrew should ask a counselor to allow him to 'take space'. Counselors may insist needs to walk away from the situation by using the codeword [codeword]." At home or school, this could outline places he can go when he's frustrated, what supports he can use, and certain limitations. All of which should be strategies he

agrees, and feels comfortable using. The next section outlined rewards/consequences of his behavior. Since he was rewarded by the notion of staying and leaving would be a punishment, we used that as the primary motivator. Early on it might be useful to include short-term, achievable rewards to give him some experience of success so he buys into the contract more. For example, "If Andrew is able to refrain from hitting his brother on Monday and Tuesday, he can gain [special privilege] for Wednesday". These types of goals will have to be updated regularly based on his ability to complete those goals. The benefit of using such a contract is two-fold in that it allows for Andrew to know very clearly what to expect for either kind of behavior, and it puts the strain of behavior management on a system rather than his parents or teachers. The consequences and rewards come from an agreement previously made by him and his parents, if he receives a consequence for his behavior it's harder for him to perceive it as his parent/teacher being mean or unjust to him.

2. Another strategy that was useful this summer, was continuously and proactively reminding him of expectations of behavior whenever transitioning to a new activity and/or setting. This was done in a very neutral and casual tone, purposefully avoiding coming off as a warning. This would usually include some positive reinforcement about his behavior thus far and might forecast for him potential difficulties during the next activity. For example, "You're doing really well with follow directions during STEM, we're about to go to lunch. We'll just want to make sure we're staying at our table and not screaming. We may run into [instigator] at some point, and we'll want to ignore him so you don't get in trouble and give him the negative attention he wants. Sound good?" At times we'd mention his behavioral contract as well. These types of prompts seem to be effective at validating his current good behavior and making him aware of what the next activity might bring as to prime himself to make good choices if something arises, which is a difficult task once he is frustrated.
3. Andrew seems to respond very well to verbal praise in some specific domains. He strongly values ideas relating to maturity, working hard, and earning rather than receiving. As he continues to work towards broader goals of emotional regulation, utilizing positive reinforcement filtered through these lenses may prove to be helpful. For example, "I am really impressed with how you were able to apologize to him. It really showed your maturity," or "I appreciate how hard you're working at walking away when frustrated."
4. As mentioned, certain settings were more difficult for him to control his behavior. In particular, unstructured free-time in a confined space with other peers seemed to present the most difficulty. During these times, his energy level would rise, begin to overwhelm his peers, and their reactions to his behavior would be perceived as a threat which would set Andrew off. It is recommended that attempts are made to structure these unstructured time as much as possible. We would utilize drawing/coloring, origami, conversation, and asking him to help out on a specific task. Helping out, in particular, proved to be an excellent redirection strategy as he really enjoyed it, and it allowed for a lot of positive reinforcement.
5. As Andrew became frustrated, we utilized a few strategies to aid in his de-escalation. Upon recognizing him getting frustrated, we would quickly point out that he was frustrated and asked him to take space. If he would do so in these moments, we would immediately praise him for making a mature decision. If he would not, we would try a

redirect him to tell us what happened, and aim to do so in another location. For example, "Hey Andrew, I really want to know what happened so I can help fix it. Can you step outside and tell me what happened?" When he would explain what had happened, we utilized a lot of validation, seeing that it helped him feel heard and respected. We were careful about what exactly we validated, however. Recognizing that his reactions were typically over-the-top and likely due to a misperception, we utilized language to reflect that. For example, "I'd be frustrated too, if I *thought* [camper] was trying to instigate me". In this example, it's validating the root emotion (anger) without approving of the intensity, and subtly suggesting that it's a result of his perception of the situation (thinking he was trying to instigate) rather than a proven fact—something of particular focus during the debrief. Providing this immediate and basic validation usually helped him begin de-escalating. During his de-escalation, we would thank him for calming down, and framed that as a sign of maturity and progress towards his goals. If he began to get upset again, we'd reinforce the idea that we want to help him, but we can't do that when he's not in control. For example, "I really want to understand what happened and help make it right, but it's hard for me to do that when you're cursing and screaming. Can you slow down and tell me what happened?" If he was particularly resistant, we might insist on writing down his account. This forced him to pace the story to the speed at which we could write (something we could purposely slow), which allowed for an indirect way to slow him down. Other times, we'd emphasize that the verbal aggression made us feel unsafe, and this often made him remorseful if it was a counselor he particularly liked. Once calmed down and could better tolerate a discussion, we'd address the intensity of his anger and how his perception of the situation affected how he reacted. We'd aim to include some component of "making things right" so he could get practice repairing relationships and being more accountable. These strategies seemed to help reduce the time needed for de-escalation. After doing this a few times, it appeared that he believed that he was being heard, that the counselors cared, and that they would try to do what they could to help. After calmly discussing what had happened and how he'd make it up, we would try to praise him for his maturity, and come up with a plan if it happens again.

6. As recommended by his father and him during the interview, physical activities also aided in "blowing off steam". At a few points during the summer, we utilized the basketball court and weight room to allow him some release of pent up aggression. We tried to be mindful as to not reinforce his explosive behavior, but rather utilize these options when we could see his anger rising and recognizing a need for redirection and release.

Bad Example

Kyle was unable to follow expected behaviors since the day he arrived at camp. During the first evening meeting, he was rolling around on the floor, eating poster board that the counselors were working on, and misbehaving to the extent of carrying a 5 foot tall chair and when asked to lower it, he kicked it and it hit the counselor (Anna) on the chin which resulted in jaw distortion and extreme pain for the next couple of days. Kyle's behavior was very disrespectful to the extent of treating other campers poorly and instigating Jacob, even if they were just playing around, him and Jacob were constantly setting a bad example to the other new campers who then started mimicking his behavior the days to follow. Kyle on the third night was again not following expected behavior, opened the window on the third floor of the dorm and pushed out the screen of the third floor- threatening to jump out of the window. That behavior caused a ruckus throughout the entire hall and left another counselor (xxx) traumatized. A couple days later, Kyle and Jacob were running around the halls during rest hour and after being told multiple times Jacob was able to follow directions while Kyle was still running around back and forth. During his final run through between his room and Jacob's room Kyle ran head first into a counselor's (Anna) temple. Neither were checked for a conclusion but they seemed to be fine. The area in which Kyle hit, it remained tender to the touch until this day (10 days after the incident). Kyle, however, was able to be a leader in certain areas, but he understands his behavior to be manipulative towards the other campers by forming a cult called "seven". It originated from a teacher that he learned it from in school but the cult at camp sequoia was such a bad influence that other campers would be threatened to be kicked out of the group or excluded if they misbehaved in the eyes of Kyle- (Kyle himself admitted to the manipulative behavior and says he gets enjoyment out of seeing other people be uncomfortable). Kyle consistently tested the patience of other counselors and campers, he would spontaneously act out towards other campers that were not even paying attention to him. These examples given are only the worst of the memorable incidents, his behavior would seesaw between responsible and being completely defiant and in his own world. Kyle would however own up to his actions after a couple days or hours of sitting and thinking about his behavior. (Oh forgot that Kyle ran away for an hour and half about a week ago)