



## MENTAL EMOTIONAL SOCIAL HEALTH (MESH) UPDATES FOR STAFF

**By: Debbie Locketz, Assistant Camp Director and Director of Camp Care, LICSW**

Dear Staff,

The Mental Emotional, Social Health (MESH) and wellbeing of our camp community is something we care deeply about and have taken a lot of time to think about over the past several years, specifically this year. For our campers, we ask a lot of background questions prior to them coming to camp. We have 1:1 phone conversations and make success plans in order for all our campers to have a positive camp experience. For you our staff, it is equally important for your summer to be successful.

Part of staff support is making sure that you are prepared and supported as you provide MESH support to campers. There will be training during staff camp on mental health, managing challenging behaviors, restorative justice and trauma informed care. We are providing Youth Mental Health First Aid training for all the Rashei Eidot (unit heads) and their S'ganim (assistant unit heads) who then can model best interventions. In addition to unit leadership, we also have a Camp Care staff member assigned to each unit to provide ongoing training and support as you need it during the session so that you are never the sole person responsible for managing the mental, emotional, and social health of your campers. We know you can't learn everything in advance of camper arrival, so ongoing support is critical to camper wellness and your own!

While our summers in Oconomowoc are filled with fun and excitement, they also can be stressful. How we all manage our physical and mental health differs for everyone. Some have really good coping skills, and all of us are still growing in these skills. Some seek outside providers (therapist, psychologists) to help manage mental health and daily living concerns others are more private about their needs. Wherever you fall on this spectrum we want you to know that we are here for you this summer. We will talk more about healthy self-care during staff camp specifically geared towards camp living and working. If you see an outside therapist and feel the need to continue to speak to them over telehealth throughout the summer, please know that we support you. If you need a quiet place to connect with your provider, we will provide this. We ask that you schedule sessions at a time that does not affect your role at camp. You will have an hour off each day which would be a good time to schedule any sessions.

Some of the ways we can support your MESH at camp include:

- Daily optional (but highly encouraged) survey of how you are doing
- Accommodations to allow you to continue meeting with therapist virtually as needed
- Staff Program Coordinator to provide opportunity for fun, engagement, and self-care activities
- MESH content at staff meetings
- Individual Support: We have formed a MESH Team with varying degrees of training/experience in clinical practice and pastoral care you can request to meet with individually based on the type of support you are seeking
- Group Support: an opportunity to give and gain support from others in our community on a weekly basis. We don't ever want you to feel alone in how you're feeling/doing.

We care deeply about the mental health of everyone in our community and are committed to making sure you receive the support you need.

We are so excited to spend the summer together.

*Debbie's (she/her/hers) goal is to create a space where every camper can be successful at camp. She works on the OSRUI professional staff team year-round, and in the summer leads the OSRUI Camp Care team, which helps problem solve camper and staff concerns as they arise by working with campers, staff, and parents.*