

Counselor Group Skills

- 1.) Get together with your Co-counselor(s) and/or Junior Counselors, CITs, etc., *before you meet with campers*. Determine all of the following:
 - a.) When the meeting will occur.
 - b.) How long it will last.
 - c.) Who will start the meeting, and what exactly they will say.
 - d.) What the theme of the meeting will be.

- 2.) Be clear about the theme of the meeting and *stay on task!*
The theme could be any one of the following:
 - a.) Introductions—names, who’s new, etc.
 - b.) What are the rules around here?
 - c.) Bunk agreements.
 - d.) Assign clean-up jobs
 - e.) Getting ready for an over-night.
 - f.) Discussing a bunk problem.

- 3.) Have campers sit in a circle, *not on their bunks*, each camper in his or her own space. The idea is for campers to participate fully, without distractions. Help campers avoid hanging on one another during the meeting, since this, too, keeps campers from participating fully.

- 4.) Adults should sit across from one another, not side by side. Not only does this give you greater exposure to the children by spreading you out among them, it allows you to signal one another during the meeting.

- 5.) One person speaks at a time. For younger or more impulsive children, use a pine cone, sea shell or similar object (*not a stick or a stone*) to hold while talking. The person with the object speaks. The *counselor always controls the object*, giving it out and then getting it back after each turn.

- 6.) Give campers pebbles or poker chips or something similar to use when they take a turn to speak. Each child gets a pre-determined number of “turns,” which the counselors decide. Every time a camper speaks, he or she uses one of their pebbles, thereby avoiding one or two children from dominating the meetings.

- 7.) Keep meetings brief and on track. Shorter, more frequent meetings are better than longer, less productive ones.