

Gender-Related Behavior and its impact on exposure and risk

General Trends

Boys

- task oriented
- increase self-esteem through action, task achievement
- compete through action: sports, games, other physical pursuits, equipment and other action oriented “stuff” (games, hockey stick, etc.)
- accuse each other of being “non-boys” –the great socializing force for boys is shame
- hazing is about “membership”: Are you a boy? Are you with us?
- proving oneself comes in the arena of proving you are tough enough to take it
- the dilemma for boys: do I own the vulnerable sides to myself, or is that weak? In other words, do I stay true to my true self or to what people think I should be?
- key question for all adolescent boys: What kind of a man do I want to be?
- key issue for boys: **respect**

Girls

- relationship oriented
- increase self-esteem through relationship
- compete through alliances and relationship: how many friends, which friends boyfriends, clothes and appearance
- the threat of loss: staying connected –girls ostracize or reject one another or threaten one another with the loss of relationship
- proving oneself comes in the arena of staying with the group or going along with your friends
- the dilemma for girls: do I stay true to myself or true to my friends, what people think I am?
- key issue for girls: **courage** (especially in relationships)
- key question for all adolescent girls: What kind of a woman do I want to be?

Activities that Address the Issues

Both Genders

- debriefing campers (2-3 minutes) routinely after activities
- group times sharing gratitude
- the Mayonnaise Jar (public appreciation, setting norms of respected and admired behavior)
- meaningful rituals (closing circle; candle lighting; camp fires)

Boys

- task oriented challenges (soccer game against the staff; adventure challenge series). Such challenges can eliminate the need for hazing.
- talking about respect (boys rap): opportunities to identify and acknowledge characteristics in oneself and others that are worthy of **respect**
- opportunities to make a contribution to the group/community and be recognized (therefore gaining one respect)

Girls

- relationship oriented activities that recognize and acknowledge **courage** (Girls' Circle; Courage Beads)
- activities that celebrate relationship (birthday ball; Point Pajama Party)

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