



YMCA Overnight Camps - Behavior/Mental Health Statement

It is the policy of the Y of the North Overnight Camp Team to support, to the best of our ability, campers' social and emotional wellbeing so they may have a successful session at camp. We aspire to create a camp community that is safe, inclusive and welcoming, and exemplifies the YMCA's core values of Caring, Honesty, Equity, Respect and Responsibility.

We recognize that campers come to us with a range of backgrounds, home experiences and history, and that this may be reflected in behavioral situations, as well as social and emotional health while at camp.

We work through situations that arise to the best of our ability, and connect with guardians as is appropriate, depending on the scope of the situation and the individual camper's needs.

Although our staff is trained to support campers through general social and emotional struggles, and minimize the occurrence of homesickness, bullying and dysregulating behaviors, there is *still* a chance that situations of this nature could arise, and additional support could be needed.

Our experience has shown that being introduced to new or "other" experiences can lead to a change in typical behaviors or responses to young people's environment. Guardians of our campers should be aware of the possibility of certain behaviors or situations occurring or presenting themselves while at camp (away from home), including-homesickness, behavioral struggles and dysregulation, isolation, bullying, anxiety, or depression.

In more severe situations, we may become aware of suicidal ideation, self-harm, eating disorders, or other mental health struggles and harmful behaviors.

Our staff is trained in a range of pre-season sessions to develop skills and techniques in managing and understanding behavioral, emotional and mental health situations that could arise during camp. As our front-line staff, they are trained at an appropriate level to support our campers' individual needs, and bring in additional support (i.e. Youth Advocate, Camp Director, etc.) when a situation becomes harmful to the individual, the group, or when it cannot be resolved.

Our Y Camping teams hold a range of compassion and expertise in certain areas, but we are not mental health professionals or social workers.

In the case that a behavioral or mental health situation creates a need for 1-1 support, excessively, we will create a plan with the guardian to find resolution.

Should a camper need support that goes beyond what we can safely provide, or should a situation escalate to a level where we can no longer safely find resolution for the camper, our Y Camps will contact the Guardian and will move towards dismissing the individual from camp. The Guardian will be expected to work with us to create an exit plan.

The above serves as an overview of how our camps help to ensure the success and safety of all our campers. If you have questions regarding further details of our procedures, or if you have concerns regarding your camper's needs, please contact the Camp Director or Program Director.