

**Impacts of Bully Prevention Training on
4-H Camp Counselor Performance**

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**AEC Masters Project Summary
Fall 2018**

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Introduction

The 4-H Youth Development program is the nation's largest youth development organization that focuses on experiential learning within non-formal settings. 4-H uses a learn-by-doing approach to help youth gain the knowledge and skills they need to be responsible, productive citizens. (4-H Impact, n.d., para. 3). Youth experience 4-H through multiple delivery methods including but not limited to, community clubs, in-school clubs, school enrichment program, and residential camping programs. They complete hands-on projects in program areas such as health, science, agriculture, and citizenship in a positive environment where they receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles (4-H is a Community, n.d., para. 2). 4-H Agents and youth development specialists, manage the implementation of these programs through the planning, recruitment, screening and training of adult and teen volunteers who assist in the delivery of the county 4-H programs.

Florida 4-H residential camp programming is designed for all youth ages eight to twelve. Camp is a self-standing 4-H delivery mode and is often times a youth's first introduction to the 4-H program. Older youth have the opportunity to participate in the camp experience in a leadership role by attending as either a counselor in training, junior counselor, or senior counselor. Counselors, both junior and senior, are youth who are 14 years old or more with prior camp experiences and complete substantial training in order to supervise other youth in the camp setting. County Extension agents oversee the recruiting, screening, and training of all camp volunteers, including teen volunteers (aka camp counselors). (Baltzell et al., 2014.) 4-H Camp Counselor training incorporates many different areas of information, such as camp policies and procedures, 4-H policies and procedures, best management practices, camp scenarios, ages and stages of youth, and bullying prevention.

One study showed that 85% of all bullying behaviors occurred in front of others (Craig & Pepler, 1997). Youth who bully others tend to exhibit a host of risk behaviors, including alcohol consumption, smoking, and other anti-social behaviors (Gulemetova, Drury, & Bradshaw, 2011). Youth who witness bullying tend to also be fearful and have no clear ideas of how to intervene. As a result, they often have feelings of guilt or even participate in the bullying behaviors (Salmivalli, Voeten & Poskiparta, 2011). These concerns, with proper training, can be addressed through all concepts and influences of 4-H positive youth development. These findings support the need for 4-H Camp Counselors to be prepared to identify types of bullying and to conduct preassessments through observation to make themselves aware of the “being and doing” characteristics of their campers that may be targeted by bullies. Through providing this service to our youth, 4-H can bridge the gap in education, skills and knowledge of dealing with bullying behaviors and subsequently decrease the frequency of bullying occurrences.

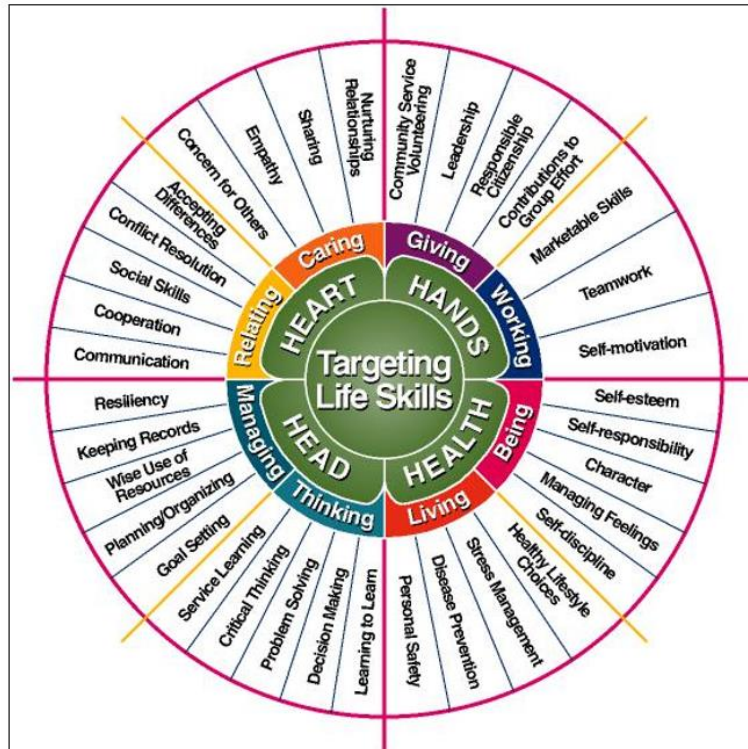
Providing an experience alone does not create experiential learning. Experiences lead to learning if the participant understands what happened, sees patterns of observations, generalizes from those observations and understands how to use the generalization again in a new situation. (Jordan & Norman, 2006). Therefore, simply placing camp counselors in a residential camping situation with no training will not create experiential learning as they will not understand nor be able to identify what has happened within that experience. Through immersing camp counselors in intensive camp counselor training, the 4-H Agent can facilitate activities where each teen works through steps 1-4 of the Experiential Learning Model (Experience, Share, Process, & Generalize). This training then prepares the teen Camp Counselors for step 5, to apply what they have learned to a new situation...county camp week.

Conceptual Framework

4-H Agents are entrusted with two professional appointments, positive youth development and volunteer development. The unique position of 4-H Camp Counselors, a teen volunteer position, aligns with both of these appointments due to the requirement of counselor training which includes development of leadership and problem-solving skills. Life Skills are those competencies that assist people in functioning well in the environments in which they live (Norman & Jordan, 1996). These competencies are combined to a four-category structure for the “Targeting Life Skills Model,” to fit the four-category structure of the 4-H pledge. These competencies include: Head (knowledge, reasoning and creativity competencies), Heart (personal/social competencies), Hand (vocational/citizenship competencies), and Health (Health/Physical Competencies).

Figure 1: Life Skills Wheel

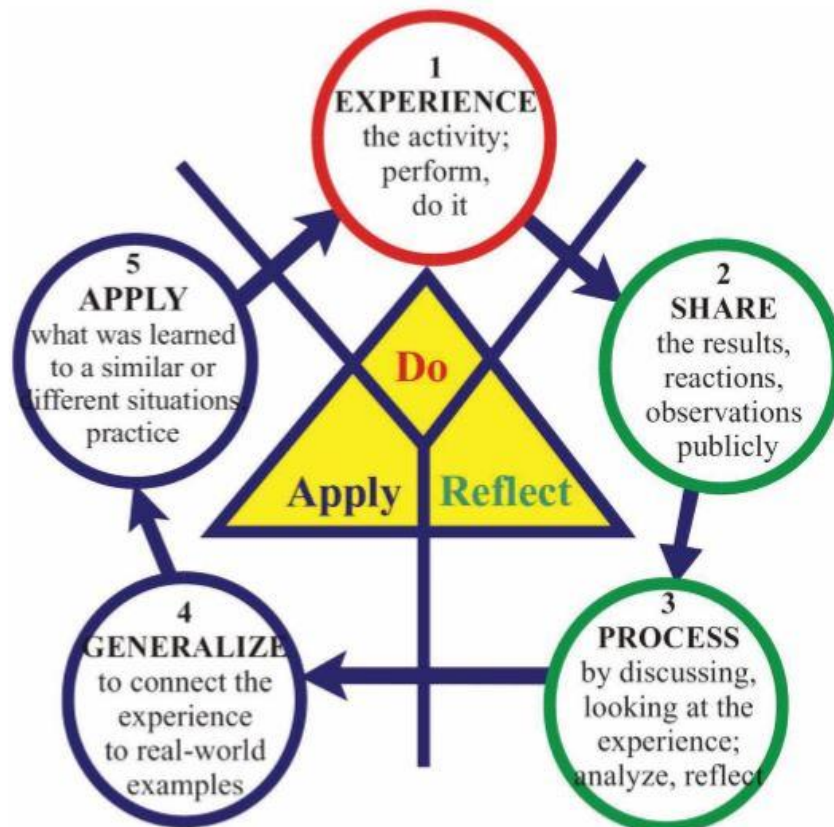
Targeting Life Skills Model for 4-H



In conjunction with the Targeting Life Skills Model by Hendricks (1998), 4-H has modified the original experiential learning model by Kolb (1984) to include five specific steps in achieving experiential learning and obtainment of life skills. These steps include:

- (1) **Experience** the activity—perform or do it.
- (2) **Share** the experience by describing what happened.
- (3) **Process** the experience to determine what was most important and identify common themes.
- (4) **Generalize** from the experience and relate it to their daily lives.
- (5) **Apply** what they learned to a new situation.

Figure 2: *Experiential Learning Model*



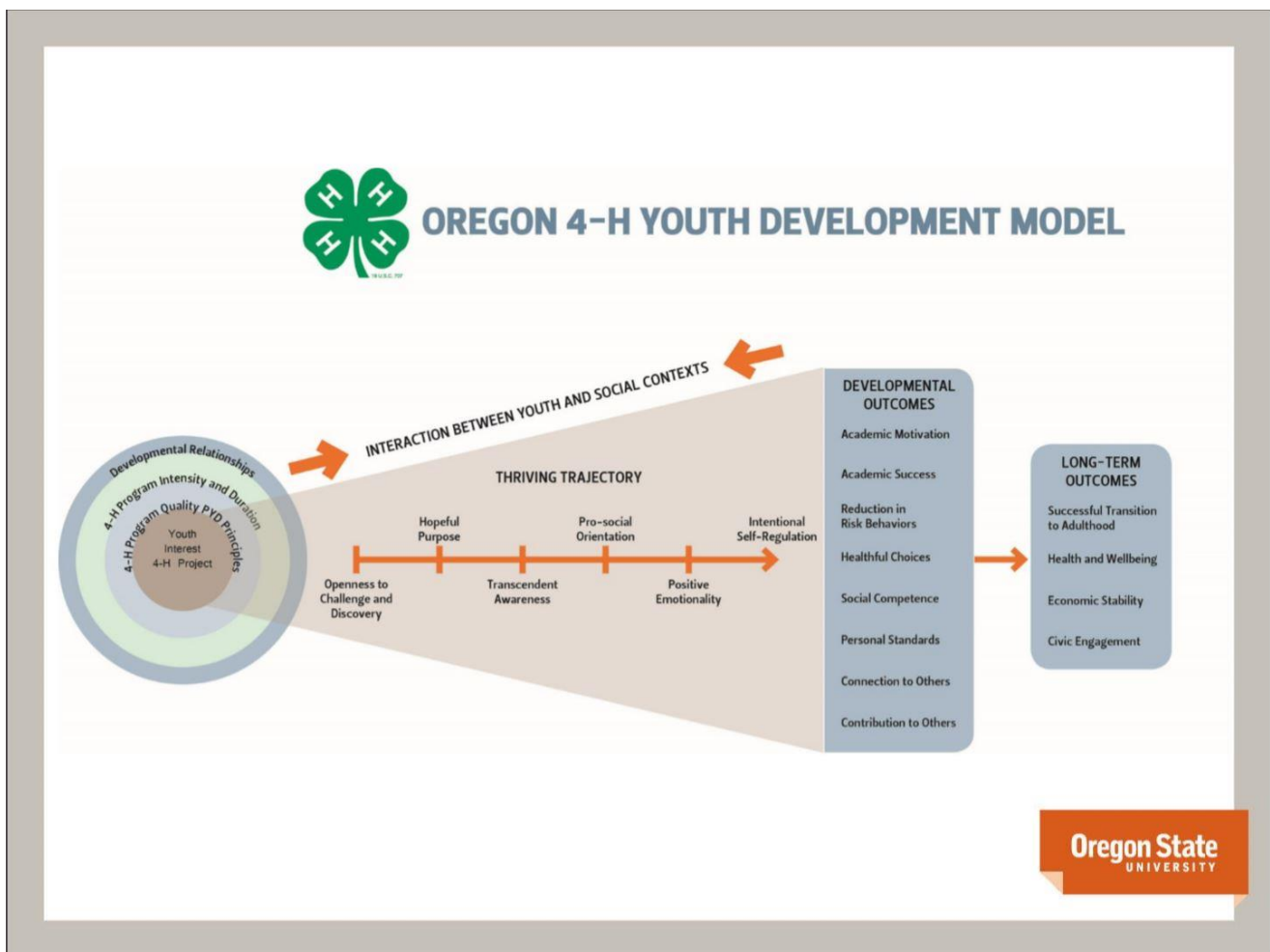
Furthermore, pivotal to the positive development and growth of youth into competent, caring adults is the concept of thriving. A thriving orientation reflects a young person who is on a path toward healthy development into adulthood. (Arnold, 2018). Mary Arnold of Oregon State University suggests that this path into adulthood begins with a “spark” within each youth. According to Benson and Scales (2009), a spark is different from a mere leisure activity in that (1) sparks create actions that not only contribute to the benefit of the young person but also the larger society; (2) sparks provide the intrinsic fuel for a young person’s growth in knowledge and skill; and (3) sparks enhance a young person’s networks as he or she encounters others with similar sparks, as well as adults with expertise who can facilitate learning and opportunities for engagement. The potential for the ignition of sparks in youth are high when the intentional positive youth development programming efforts of 4-H and the influence of positive adult or teen volunteers to youth relationships are combined in programs such as residential camping.

The Trajectory to Thrive model developed by Oregon State University (Figure 3) supports the benefits of youth-adult partnerships and experiential learning. Arnold connects 4-H contexts with outcomes by utilizing the six indicators for a thriving trajectory, developed by Search Institute (2014a): Openness to challenge and discovery; a hopeful purpose, transcendent awareness, pro-social orientation, positive emotionality, and intentional self-regulation. If 4-H programming excels in the developmental contexts (youth program engagement, developmental relationships, Positive Youth Development Programs) surrounding the spark within a youth, then the youth will exemplify the indicators along the thriving trajectory which can lead to the developmental outcomes of the 4-H program. By asking purposeful questions based on the six developmental indicators, a counselor training program could determine if the training provided

fulfilled any of the developmental indicators for Trajectory to Thrive based on the individual testimony of the youth completing the training and survey.

The Trajectory to Thrive model includes “Program Intensity and Duration,” which can relate to delivery methods utilized within 4-H. Residential camping has a high level of program intensity by immersing youth in multiple 4-H project areas (shooting sports, STEM, citizenship, outdoor exploration, expressive arts, etc.) and a high duration period of nearly 100 hours in a one week’s time span (Monday 10am-Friday 10am).

Figure 3: Trajectory to Thrive Model (Oregon 4-H)



Literature Review

A study was performed on a group of 4-H camp counselor alumni, from a 20-year period, to evaluate the impact of the 4-H Camp Counselor experience on youth development (Brandt & Arnold, 2006). One set of questionnaire items focused on the Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1996) and asked the participants to rate on a scale of one to five how much being a camp counselor helped them to develop each life skill item. The top three life skills were leadership, teamwork, and contribution to a group effort. Each of these three life skills are utilized by counselors in the residential camping setting as they lead their cabins, work with co-counselors to solve problems, and contribute to the overall safety and success of their county camp week. With regards to personal development, alumni self-reported that being a camp counselor contributed more to the development of their self-confidence and transferable skills (Brandt & Arnold, 2006). Based on the responses received in this study, involvement in a camp counselor program does have a long-term, positive impact on the lives of participants and this correlates directly with the goal of 4-H to develop youth into caring, productive citizens.

Awareness of bullying occurrences has become more prevalent with recent studies and media coverage. Often these cases focus on the victims of bullying situations, however, problems lie not only for those that are targets of bullying behaviors, but also for observers and for the youth who bully others (Allen, Lewis, & Roper, 2012). This encompasses every individual, youth and adult that are near a bullying occurrence. Many youth professionals, parents and community members are working together to create inclusive communities, but there is a gap in education, skills and knowledge of how to deal with bullying behaviors. (Allen, Roper, & Lewis, 2012.) Findings from the 2011 National Education Association's Nationwide Study of Bullying (ESP) show that bullying takes many forms, with school staff reporting that

verbal (59%), social/relational (50%), and physical (39%) forms were of greater concern in their school than was cyberbullying (17%), bullying was often targeted based on a student's weight (23%), gender (20%), perceived sexual orientation (18%), or disability (12%) (Bradshaw, Wassdorp, O'Brennan, & Gulemetova, 2011). Prevention is key in decreasing or eliminating these bullying occurrences and the negative effects it forces upon our youth and adults.

As a result of increased bullying awareness and occurrences, curriculum has been developed to educate and provide intervention methods for educators and youth. One of these curriculums utilized by Florida 4-H is the BE SAFE curriculum developed by Michigan State University Extension. Youth professionals who receive bully prevention training are more likely to intervene and feel safer in their environment than professionals without training (Bradshaw, et al., 2007). Only 27% of staff and 42% of teachers in a national survey reported ever being involved in bully prevention efforts and more than half stated a need for additional training in how to intervene (Bradshaw, et al., 2011). Alabama Extension performed research on evaluating the BE SAFE curriculum, specifically in the school setting for grades 5-11. The results from their research showed a statistically significant increases in youths' knowledge of how to help someone being bullied and how to be an ally, however, they also reported a limitation that because youths did not have a substantial time frame for applying the skills they learned, statistically significant changes were not demonstrated (Duke & Norton, 2017).

Additionally, 4-H strives to reduce youth's risky behavior and increase their healthy living choices. Bullying is now a risky behavior high on 4-H professionals' radar, especially as it relates to programming efforts and awareness. The University of Georgia conducted a study to determine if participation in 4-H extracurricular activities and events had a positive impact on 4-H youth's bullying beliefs and behaviors. One objective of the study was to "determine which

4-H events had the greatest impact on member's confidence level and ability to approach bullying from a proactive perspective" (Duncan, Fuhman, & Johnson, 2016). This objective included questions such as (1) 4-H Event that gives confidence to member to respond to a bullying situation (2) 4-H activities that increase confidence to speak out against bullying; and (3) 4-H activity that increased confidence to ignore a bullying situation and not let it affect them when being bullied. The 4-H residential camping program was ranked 3rd on the list as a 4-H Event that gives confidence to members to respond to a bullying situation, ranked 4th as a 4-H activity that increased confidence to speak out against bullying, and ranked 4th as the 4-H activity that increased confidence to ignore a bullying situation and not let it affect them when being bullied. This study suggests 4-H participants view bullying negatively and 94% give credit to 4-H for shaping their belief of bullying and increasing their self-confidence. The results of the study also showed that one of the main 4-H activities that fostered this gain in confidence was participation in leadership activities (Duncan, Fuhman, & Johnson, 2016). 4-H residential camping, for teenage camp counselors, is considered a leadership activity.

Purpose and Objective

Camp Counselors (ages 13-18) are the front line and first responders in the cabins during 4-H residential camp week. They take on responsibility of eight youth ages twelve and under for nearly one hundred hours during camp. Therefore, to be effective at crisis management, these teens need to be educated, trained, and well equipped to handle any circumstances that arise. The objectives of this study were:

1. Camp Counselors will identify bullying behavior as measured by a pre/post counselor training survey.

2. Camp Counselors will successfully intervene in bullying situations by utilizing strategies from the BE SAFE curriculum as measured by post camp skills application surveys.

Methods

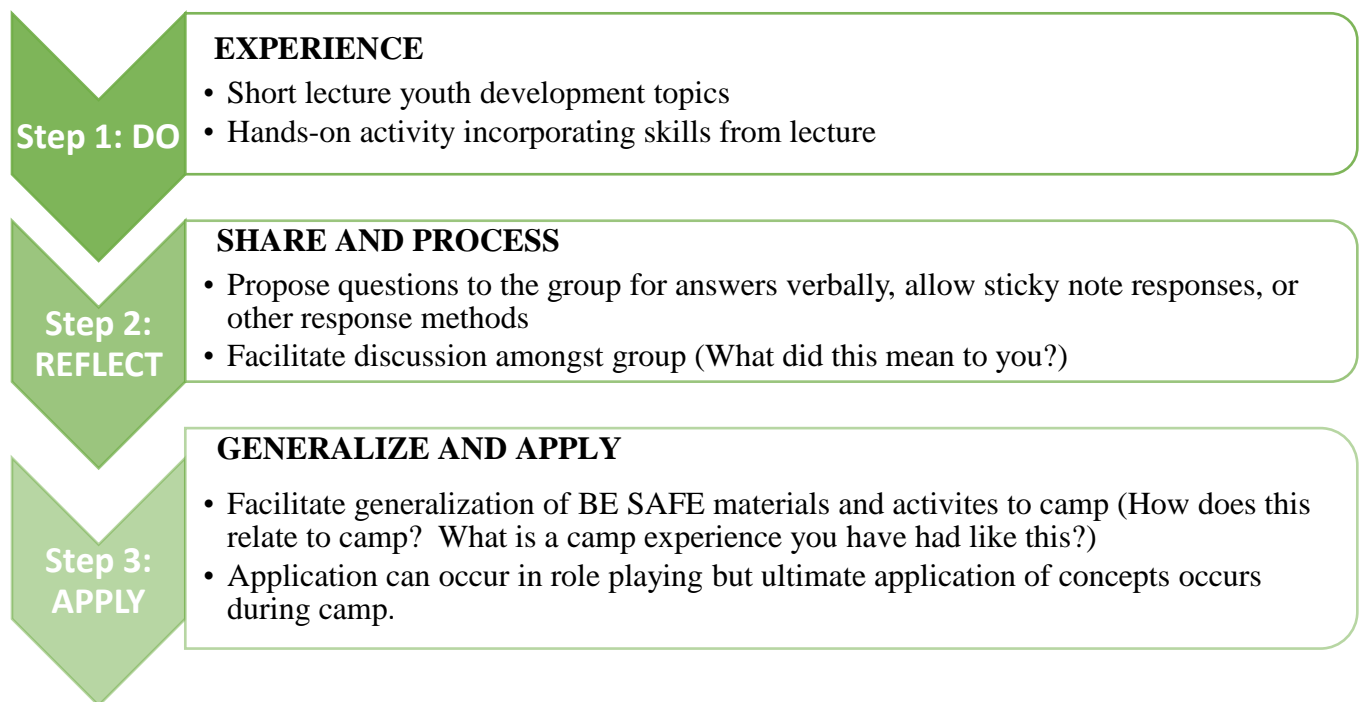
Description of the Training

This project will focus on evaluation of the BE SAFE curriculum, by Michigan State University Extension. Specifically, this project will evaluate the effectiveness of utilizing lessons from the curriculum within the Camp Counselor Training program. Be SAFE focuses on education and prevention of bullying, bias, harassment and other hurtful behaviors – as well as providing suggestions for intervening when young people are affected by these issues (Michigan State University Extension, 2013). For this training, the 4-H Agents chose five lessons from the curriculum based on the targets of diversity, bully behavior identification, and bullying prevention and intervention strategies. The lessons and activities included: exploring bullying types and why people bully, defining bystanders and allies in bullying scenarios, moving from bystanders to allies and actions for allies. Through correct education and implementation of this curriculum, camp counselors should be able to identify bullying and go from bystanders to allies in a bullying situation during their county camp week. Additionally, this knowledge is transferable to other areas of their lives such as school or work involving peers.

The Walton and Holmes County 4-H Agents delivered a one-day, 6-hour training, for junior and senior camp counselors. These Agents planned the agenda and prepared experiential learning activities that incorporated the curriculum being taught. The primary curriculum utilized was the BE SAFE Curriculum from Michigan State University Extension. Participants listened to short lectures on topics including camp policies and procedures, 4-H policies and procedures,

best management practices, camp scenarios, ages and stages of youth, and bullying prevention. Bullying prevention topics utilized from BE SAFE were: Exploring Bullying (What Makes Bullying Real for You), Understanding Differences (Who am I), From Bystanders to Allies (Speaking Up & Standing With: Skills for Being an Ally). After the topics were taught, youth then participated in hands-on activities that required them to incorporate what they learned, involved answering questions about roles, responsibilities, solving scenarios, and teamwork activities to improve communication amongst the group. After these activities, youth were given the opportunity to reflect on what they had learned and share their thoughts with the group. Each of these activities gave youth the opportunity to progress through the Experiential Learning Model's steps Do (Experience), Reflect (Share, Process), Apply (Generalize, Apply).

Figure 4: 4-H Camp Counselor Training- Experiential Learning Model Modification



Description of population

The population for this project were 22 teenagers from Walton and Holmes counties. The age range was 14 to 18 years of age. Eight participants were male (36%), and fourteen participants were female (64%).

These youth were screened and selected by the 4-H Agents based on their counselor application, interview, and community service requirements by the following method:

1. Completed camp counselor application packet.
2. Interview with the 4-H Agent and panel of volunteers (1-2 additional adults with experience in the 4-H camping environment).
3. Leadership community service hours (as group leaders during 4-H workshops or day camps or from other service organizations such as church or school clubs).

These teens varied in counselor and camp experience and were given the role of Junior or Senior Counselor based on their 4-H Agent's assessment of their leadership qualities and abilities exemplified in working with youth. Three Camp Counselors from Calhoun county whom did not participate in the Walton/Holmes training were given the post camp survey to compare similarities or differences in experience.

Table 1: Counselor Population Demographics

Counselor Population			
Age	Male	Female	Jr or Sr Counselor
14	1	0	Jr (1)
15	2	6	Jr (2), Sr (6)
16	3	6	Sr (9)
17	1	1	Sr (2)
18	1	1	Sr (2)

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used during the screening, training, and evaluation process for 4-H Camp Counselors: (1) Camp Counselor Training Pre/Post Survey; and (2) Skills Application Post Camp Survey. The surveys were developed specifically for this program evaluation utilizing the Qualtrics web-based survey tool to create the format of each survey and for data collection. In addition to basic demographic information, the surveys targeted three main areas: (1) 4-H camp policies and procedures; (2) 4-H Camp Counselor roles and responsibilities; and (3) BE SAFE curriculum evaluation and utilization (bullying prevention). Prior to conducting the study, the questionnaire was reviewed and assessed by a panel of experts who evaluated the instrument for construct and face validity. The panel consisted of state Extension faculty from the University of Florida. IRB approval was obtained May 18, 2018.

After the training concluded, the Camp Counselor Training Pre/Post Survey was printed and distributed as a hard copy in person to each potential camp counselor. This instrument was created to evaluate the teen's knowledge before and after the training and their intention of utilizing the skills learned at training for county camp week. The instrument consisted of a total of 7 questions. Two were quantitative question blocks (9 questions each): 18 items used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *Agree*, 5 = *Strongly agree*). The remaining 5 items were demographic, and experience related (years in 4-H, years as a counselor, age, gender, ethnicity).

When county camp week concluded, the Skills Application Post Camp Survey was delivered to camp counselors with a link to the online Qualtrics survey. This survey was utilized to evaluate the teen's application of skills learned from training and their opinion on which skills were utilized most or perceived as most important for county camp week. This instrument

consisted of 13 quantitative and qualitative items. Of these, two were a 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *Agree*, 5 = *Strongly agree*), one item was a ranking scale question from 1-10 related to topics utilized most from training, three items were open ended questions requiring teens to answer qualitatively with their opinions on strategies and topics they utilized most during the week of camp and believed to be most important for camp. The remaining items were demographic, and experience related (years in 4-H, years as a counselor, age, gender, ethnicity).

Data Collection & Analysis

The Camp Counselor Training Pre/Post Survey was distributed after the teens completed the training. Twenty-two surveys were completed with a 100% response rate.

The Skills Application Post Camp Survey was distributed four weeks after camp counselors returned home from their county camp week. This wait period was intentional to give youth an extended time to reflect on their experience and provide meaningful feedback on the application of skills learned during training and utilized for camp week. The survey was made available via an online Qualtrics link to twenty-one camp counselors from Walton and Holmes counties whom participated in the Camp Counselor Training Pre/Post Survey. 1 counselor who attended the training and completed the pre-post survey did not attend camp and was therefore removed from the population for the Post-Camp survey, decreasing the population to twenty-one. The response rate for the Skills Application Post Camp Survey was 76% (n = 16).

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were utilized to analyze the data. Frequencies and descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data related to the effectiveness of the trainings including general camp knowledge and the BE SAFE curriculum in relation to real life experiences at camp. Content analysis was used to analyze the open-ended items.

Results

Objective 1: Camp Counselors will identify bullying behavior as measured by a pre/post counselor training survey.

When asked to evaluate their knowledge on bullying related to the BE SAFE training, camp counselors reported:

- 91% of respondents ($n = 20$) could identify types of bullying defined in the Be SAFE curriculum during camp.
- 95% of respondents ($n = 21$) could compare and contrast different types of bullying.
- 100% of respondents ($n = 22$) could identify differences in others based on their “being” (physical features) and “doing” (skills).
- 100% of respondents ($n = 22$) could explain differences between bystanders and allies in a bullying situation.
- 100% of respondents ($n = 22$) could demonstrate strategies to move from bystander to ally in a bullying situation.

Objective 2: Camp Counselors will successfully intervene in bullying situations by utilizing strategies from the BE SAFE curriculum as measured by post camp skills application surveys.

When asked to evaluate their use of the BE SAFE training, camp counselors reported:

- 71% ($n=10$) felt confident in abilities to resolve conflicts that arose amongst campers.
- 73% of respondents ($n = 11$) analyzed situation to keep campers safe and secure.
- 73% of respondents ($n = 11$) provided a Safe, Affirming, Fair Environment for campers.
- 79% of respondents ($n = 11$) identified types of bullying defined in the Be SAFE curriculum during camp.
- 80% of respondents ($n = 12$) compared and contrasted different types of bullying.

- 73% of respondents ($n = 11$) identified differences in others based on their “being” (physical features) and “doing” (skills).
- 80% of respondents ($n = 12$) identified bystanders and allies in a bullying situation at camp, 13% ($n=2$) neither agreed/disagreed.
- 73% of respondents ($n = 11$) moved from a bystander to an ally in a bullying situation.

Table 2: Counselor Training Strategies Utilized Most

When asked to identify strategies from training counselors utilized most:

everything	publicly calling out bullying
scheduling	how to interact with the campers
everything	a way to ensure I got to know my camper
verbal strategy	being quick eyed and quick minded in situations
to make new friends	the way to talk to kids and how to get them to listen
maintaining my composure	keeping a positive attitude when dealing with a negative camper/situation

Table 3: Counselor Training Strategies Utilized Least

When asked to identify one thing from training counselors did not use at camp:

timing showers	softening statements to address bullying
keeping cabin clean	how to work against bullies, since I did not witness any
bullying or name taunting	identifying bullying types because there was no bullying

Conclusion

Due to the limitation of prior studies, this study provides additional evaluation of the curriculum through direct implementation of the BE SAFE curriculum when teen’s face real life scenarios. This expansion of prior research provided the “Apply” level of Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model (1984) through giving teen camp counselors the opportunity to utilize the bullying prevention strategies in real life situations experienced during their week at 4-H

residential camp. In accordance to the camp counselors' self-assessments and ranking of utilizing skills related to strategies taught from the BE SAFE curriculum, survey data supports the need and positive outcome of preparation through education. Implementing a bully prevention element into training efforts is a strong defense for 4-H Camp Counselors to identify bullying and safely intervene to provide a safe, affirming, fair environment as describe in the BE SAFE curriculum.

Post-camp survey results demonstrate the knowledge gain in bullying awareness, identification, intervention strategy use and identification of differences amongst campers and themselves. When given the opportunity to answer open ended questions about strategies they utilized most from training, counselors listed strategies that directly correlate with the lessons taught during Camp Counselor Training. This demonstrates that not only did the counselors gain knowledge in awareness and identifying the BE SAFE strategies but they also were cognizant of their own utilization of these strategies when give the opportunity to "Apply" it in the real life situations of camp week. These findings provide strong justification for youth professionals to implement bullying curriculum in environments where youth interact with their peers for short (day camps, workshops, etc) or long terms (residential camps). The skills obtained through such training can be transferable and utilized in other areas of their lives where youth must interact with peers (school, church, home, etc).

Based on the strategies utilized least on the post-camp survey, some unanticipated outcomes or assumptions can be made: (1) a weakness in a portion of the BE SAFE training used for counselors, (2) an insecurity in the youth when faced with utilizing certain intervention strategies, and/or (3) apprehension in declaring certain acts as bullying. Upon further investigation of data from the Post Camp Survey, 60% (n=9) of counselors reported they did not

observe any bullying during camp week which could be the reason for low ranking and low utilization of some intervention strategies. However, further interview questioning would be needed to discern the exact reason behind the counselors' responses.

Recommendations

Practitioners

For novice practitioners, a curriculum such as BE SAFE is easy to implement and has provided the desired positive youth development outcomes our 4-H camp cluster intended. The curriculum outlines multiple lessons including the skills targeted, time required for the lesson, materials, script and facilitation questions. Since bullying impacts all involved (adults, victim, bully, bystanders), implementation of BE SAFE would be useful in any environment where teens, mentors, and/or adults oversee supervision efforts. This could include but is not limited to, 4-H day camping, 4-H club activities, 4-H Camp Staff trainings, youth organizations (Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA, etc) and after-school programs (sports teams, school clubs, WINGS, etc).

All youth professionals should familiarize themselves with such bullying prevention curriculum as BE SAFE, either through independent training or within a county or district training event. After youth professionals have obtained the curriculum and training, hosting volunteer trainings on BE SAFE strategies would be ideal in strengthening volunteer awareness, confidence, and ability to utilize bullying intervention strategies on the club and county programming level. Furthermore, either Youth Professional led or Volunteer led workshops should be provided annually at a minimum for teens to obtain the skills outlined in this study that are transferable and utilized far beyond the 4-H setting. Through intentional training on bullying awareness, identification, and intervention strategies, all programs involved in youth

development can have the ability to create safe, inclusive environments for youth to thrive without the negative influences of bullying.

Future Research

Due to some survey results not strongly supporting counselors utilizing certain intervention strategies, training alternatives could include implementing other focus areas within the BE SAFE curriculum such as: (1) Understanding Differences: Take a Stand, (2) Our Emotional Intelligences: Creating a Space for Feelings, or (3) From Bystanders to Allies: Moving to Circles of Support. Practitioners would need to compare evaluation results annually to determine which focus areas are most crucial for counselors within the camp environment and modify the counselor training agenda and curriculum accordingly. Additionally, due to the term “bullying” being subjective based on the observer’s perspective, some youth may not feel confident in definitively labeling certain behaviors as bullying and thus need further training and exposure to comparing and contrasting scenarios of peer interactions.

Upon further review of question structure, some questions did not supply adequate responses to the target objective. For example, the rank order question gave youth the option to rank skills/strategies from 1-10 (1 most important and 10 least important). The results ranged drastically and did not properly identify whether the teen’s felt the skills ranked as 10 were still important to their success. Therefore, these questions would provide better data if reformatted to a 5 point Likert scale of (strongly agree to strongly disagree or very frequently to never) while still evaluating the ten skills/strategies from the original question.

Expansions to this study may include follow up interviews or surveys to those camp counselors selected for leadership roles in other camps such as Marine Camp, which enrolls youth from all Florida counties. These camps often require camp counselors to rely heavily on

previous training and camp experience to resolve conflict amongst campers they have never interacted with before. Counselors for open enrollment are selected on a referral basis from 4-H Camp Staff and the 4-H Camp Residential Director as they observe the counselors throughout their perspective county weeks for desirable leadership traits.

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