Creating Happier and Healthier Camp Communities

When staff and campers become fatigued, they tend to experience higher rates of illness and injury. Staff need to understand how fatigue can impact performance.

Camp is very safe! But...

- 21% of camper injuries happen during sports or games
  - Injury rate per camper is less than 1 injury per 1,000 days spent at camp

- Working without sleep mimics the effects of working under the influence of alcohol
- 25% of staff injuries occur between days 5 and 7 of a camp session
  - Fatigue and less attention to safety may play a role

Fatigue is a long-term experience that slowly worsens
- Fatigue ≠ sleepy

39% of camper injuries are to legs, ankles, and feet
- Proper footwear is critical to preventing injuries

Strategies to reduce fatigue

1. Structure time off to encourage rest
   - Consider scheduling time off so staff have a morning to sleep in after a night off

2. Incorporate shift work, especially for nurses
   - Lack of back up staff with medical training is a significant contributor to fatigue

3. Increase restful periods
   - Offer staff the opportunity to slow down during work time; when scheduling responsibilities, balance active and passive roles

4. Provide social support for staff
   - Access to peer mentors, spending time with leadership staff, and napping spaces can help mitigate fatigue

Unique considerations for camps

- Culture
  - Does your camp culture value being rested? Or is exhaustion a sign of dedication?

- Space
  - Personal space and privacy are limited at camp. How can you allow for solitude?

- Novelty
  - Camp life is very different from home. How are staff prepared for this adjustment?

- Technology
  - Access to technology is often limited at camp. How can you help staff cope?
