Tips for Counselors of a Sleepaway Camper with Hearing Loss

Hearing aid and cochlear implant technologies do wonders, but there are still some accommodations needed to help campers with hearing loss achieve their full potential at camp.

Understand/Get to Know Your Camper
Recognize His/Her Unique Needs
Each camper will have personal preferences when it comes to maximizing hearing and ensuring optimal communication. We suggest a meeting with the camper to find some common ground where you can help be an advocate for him/her.

Facilitate Communication at Camp
• Keep Background Noise to a Minimum
  When you are addressing the group, background noise makes it difficult to hear, so try to choose a quite spot.
• Enunciate Your Words
  Speak naturally without exaggerated lip movements, but be clear and easy to understand.
• Address the Campers by Name
  This will help your camper with a hearing loss know you are speaking to him/her and follow the flow of the conversation.
• When You Address the Group
  Make sure your camper with hearing loss is close enough to understand the instructions. Be sure that he/she understood the directions by asking follow-up questions to the group (i.e. “What are we doing first?”). It is also important that you do not single out campers with a hearing loss.
• Demonstrate the Activity
  Help campers understand directions with a demonstration.
• Face Campers
  Make sure campers can see your face clearly before speaking. Avoid holding anything in front of your mouth or turning your back away from the group when talking.

Other Things You Can Do
• Inform Others
  Inform the people that matter: the umpire/referee, instructors, and possibly some teammates. Whoever you think could help make accommodations for the camper.
• Report Concerns
  If you notice your camper with hearing loss asking “what” or needing more repetition than usual, check the campers equipment/batteries as they may not be working properly.
• Help Build Self-Advocacy
  Encourage your camper to explain their hearing loss to their friends. Allow them to answer questions if other campers ask what is on their ears.
• Help Assist During Water Activities
  Create a plan with your camper for water activities. The plan should include establishing a designated storage area near water activities and ensuring that your camper uses waterproof gear when applicable.
  Give directions before camper takes out his/her listening device(s) and then use signals to instruct when swimming.
• Help Guide Camper During Morning/Evening Routines
  Make sure camper carefully stores listening device(s) at night and charges batteries overnight if applicable. Remind them to put sunscreen and bug spray on before putting their listening device(s) on.

Please do not:
- Get hearing aids wet
- Chew gum as you talk to campers
- Single out campers with hearing loss

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