

How to Organise Burn Camps, Clubs and Other Support Programmes for Burn Survivors

Basic Principles



Action for Burns & Children



EBA

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Clubs and Other Support
Programmes
for Burn Survivors**

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Contents

Chapter 1

| | |
|--|---|
| The Guide | 3 |
| Introduction | 4 |
| Programme aims and goals | 6 |
| EBA guidelines for camps and clubs | 7 |
| Recommended policies | 9 |

Chapter 2

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Getting started | 10 |
| Fund raising | 11 |
| Preparation for camp | 13 |
| Choosing a location | 15 |

Chapter 3

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Leaders | 16 |
| Leader guidelines | 17 |
| Leader exchange guidelines | 18 |

Chapter 4

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Selecting children for camp | 20 |
| Inviting process | 21 |

Chapter 5

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Camp administration | 22 |
| Rules for the children | 23 |

Chapter 6

| | |
|--|----|
| Activities | 24 |
| Special activities to develop pscho-social skills and coping strategies | 25 |
| Examples of activities | 26 |
| A typical 1 day programme outline | 27 |
| A typical 5 day programme outline | 27 |

Chapter 7

| | |
|---|----|
| Transport | 28 |
| Insurance | 29 |
| Creating a positive environment at camp | 30 |
| Homesickness | 32 |
| Camp themes | 33 |
| Last evening | 34 |
| Evaluation and debriefing | 35 |

Chapter 8

| | |
|---|----|
| Follow up and other activities | 36 |
| Older children's programmes | 36 |
| Family programmes | 36 |
| Adult programmes | 37 |
| Training Burn injured young people to become burn camp leaders | 38 |

Chapter 9

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Useful contacts | 42 |
| Websites | 42 |
| References | 43 |
| Sources | 43 |

Available for download on the European
Burns Association website:
(www.euroburn.org)
Kit lists
Consent forms
Application forms



The Guide

This second edition of the guide has been prepared by members of the **European Burns Association (EBA) Burn Camp Committee** and others. Since the first edition was published the exchange of burn camp information worldwide has increased. There have been burn camp sessions at each European Burns Association Congress, as well as at many national burn conferences. **The International Association of Burn Camps** (www.iaburncamps.org) has also been established and organises biennial workshops.

The purpose of this guide is to provide other would-be organisers of burn camps and other support programmes with information and knowledge to assist them in setting up similar programmes. It should only be used for guidance and should be adapted in accordance.

It should be noted that the way burn camps and other similar support programmes are organised may vary from centre to centre, and country to country. At the end of the booklet is a list of contacts for individuals in a number of countries, who have experience in the organisation of such programmes, together with their specific fields of experience.

The authors are keen to learn about experiences of other burn camps and would be pleased to receive your suggestions after having read the guide or after having run a camp.

“ It’s the best! Somewhere I can be myself without being judged or laughed at.“

- Teenager

Introduction

Specialised holidays for children with specific medical diagnoses have been in existence for many years. The general philosophy behind them is not one of attempting to “make up” for what illness may have brought to children’s lives, nor to treat them as if they are “special” or different from their peer group. Rather, programmes have been designed to help children overcome the particular challenges that their experience of illness and treatment has brought them and to provide them with an opportunity to experience as many normal aspects of child development as possible. [1] Following a burn injury, patients have to cope with painful treatments, a demanding aftercare regime, as well as adjusting to their scars and the responses of others to their altered appearance. The burn camp concept was born over 20 years ago, in recognition of the fact that children with burn injuries face such additional challenges, both physical and psychological, and therefore need long-term psychosocial support away from the acute care setting. [2] Since that time, burn camps have developed around the world and indeed, are now widely recognised to contribute a valuable part of the continuing care of the burn-injured child. [3] They have also extended beyond only meeting the needs of children. There are now

well-established programmes for teenagers, adults, families and training programmes to equip young burn survivors with the skills needed to be leaders and mentors themselves.

Burn camps are therefore residential rehabilitative programmes designed to help burn survivors face the challenges of their injury, in an atmosphere of fun, support and rehabilitation. They are usually staffed by a group of burn care specialists, along with fire fighters, adult burn survivors and volunteers. Each camp programme is designed to offer participants the opportunity to challenge themselves and exceed their physical expectations with the support of their peers and the leaders. Burn camps may take place in the context of a wider “Burns Club”, providing a range of services to support the physical, social and psychological needs of burn survivors and their families, through a variety of day, residential and family activities.

Burn camps and club activities can be a great way for burn survivors to have fun in a caring setting, giving them the chance to meet others who have been burned. A range of positive outcomes have been identified from camps both in the USA and Europe. Rimmer [4] reported that children scored

significantly higher on the Rosenberg Scale for Self Esteem following a residential burn camp. Friendship and peer support are other common benefits reported by children attending camp programmes [5; 6], especially when this peer support comes from a group with whom you can share common experiences and therefore feel a sense of belonging and acceptance [7].

The benefits of being together stem from interacting with others who have been burned and who understand what it is like to be stared at and asked personal questions. Self-esteem increases through participation in confidence-building activities, surrounded by people who accept you as you are. The availability of burn team staff allows participants to work on individual goals, whether they be physical, functional, or psychosocial. Children and young people look forward to camp all year, making lifelong friends, realising they are not the only ones with a burn injury. The benefits derived from such programmes can be life-changing.

This guide aims to help any potential camp organisers think through some of the key issues to consider when setting up and running burn camp

and/or club programmes. From getting started and raising funds, establishing programme aims and selecting participants, through to recruiting and training staff, planning successful programmes and evaluating their impact. There are also suggestions for where you might go for further information. Whilst much of the guide refers specifically to programmes for children and young people, the concepts and guidelines are transferable to programmes across the age span. There is also a specific section on camps for different target populations.

“I like going to camp because it’s a week or weekend where you feel normal... fully normal properly... and you don’t have to worry about anything. “

- Young adult



Programme aims and goals

Each camp should define its own set of objectives. These may be determined by the age range of the participants, the kind of activities that will be provided and the specialist staff that will be available. Burn camp and club programmes aim to provide a unique, exciting, fun-filled and growth-enhancing experience.

More specific objectives for a children's programme might include:

- Providing appropriately challenging physical activities geared to:

Allow children to extend themselves and experience success

Build confidence

Enhance self-esteem

Develop new skills

- Helping children develop body competency
- Providing day trips and activities such as swimming, which allows children to face the public with the support of each other.
- Helping children develop social skills through teamwork challenges and shared communal environments, which can be transferred to other environments such as home and school
- Facilitating children forming friendships that can be sustained outside the camp experience.
- Encouraging children to share their experiences

of injury and rehabilitation through small group activities.

- Promoting scar management and giving children support and encouragement with their treatment
- Assisting children in developing effective coping strategies through informal and/or structured psychosocial programmes.
- Helping children work on individual goals (medical, physical, functional or psychological) aided by specialist hospital staff.
- Increasing independence and helping families to 'let go' of their child
- Enabling children to benefit from positive role models and become positive role models themselves.
- Providing an environment which promotes caring for others.
- Having lots of fun!

Burn camp programmes also seek to:

- Appropriately train all staff and volunteers.
- Encourage and support appropriate burn-injured adults to be camp leaders and positive role models for children.
- Provide appropriate training and support for suitable burn-injured young people to develop the skills to become camp leaders.

- Employ practices that ensure the health and safety of all participants.

- Identify risks and apply recommendations to minimise risk.
- Formally evaluate the work that they do.
- Maintain strong links with other hospital services including Parent Support Groups, as well as other camps/clubs, and national/international organisations addressing the rehabilitative needs of burn-injured children.
- Publicise the work of burn camps and raise finances required through a range of fundraising events, contact with appropriate support agencies and other means.
- Camp programmes for different target populations (e.g. adult burn survivors or families of burn-injured children) may have a slightly different focus.

A camp for young adults may aim to:

- develop life skills required for coping with a burn as a young adult
- facilitate the transition from the paediatric burns service to the adult burns service, including challenging physical activities to push boundaries, promote team working and build self esteem, and activities to address appearance concerns.

EBA guidelines for camps & clubs

In order to promote good practice amongst burn camp/club programmes in Europe, the EBA Burn Camp Committee developed guidelines for camps and clubs, to serve as a quality benchmark.

These are:

- 1) The Camp/Club will provide support for young burn survivors and their families, towards the recovery from burn injury by facilitating their physical, psychological and social rehabilitation.
- 2) Each Burn Camp/Club will have a written document describing how it is organised, its aims and objectives, committee membership, accounting procedures.
- 3) Each Camp/Club will have an identified Director/Chairperson who should be the contact person for the Camp/Club and should oversee the general running of the Camp/Club and its activities.
- 4) Each Camp/Club will have a general working committee, responsible for organisation, fundraising, management of accounts etc. It is essential that this committee includes staff with professional healthcare expertise from the field of burns care.
- 5) Where the Camp/Club directly involves young people in events/activities, the leadership team will include health professionals trained in the field of burns. Appropriately qualified professionals will be selected as part of the leadership team in order to meet the needs of any young person participating in an event. This may include a range from the following: Doctors / Nurses / Physiotherapists / Occupational Therapists / Social workers / Psychologists / Psychiatrists / Play Specialists / Hospital Teachers.
- 6) Leaders with other relevant skills may be included in Burn Camp/Club programmes e.g. burn survivors / fire service personnel / teachers / youth leaders. Such leaders will be given basic training in skills necessary for the care of young people with burn injuries.
- 7) Any facilities and venues used for Camp/Club events, will fulfill all legal requirements in respect of safety, instructor qualifications and insurance, applicable to the member country.
- 8) Camps/Clubs running activities for young people will have appropriate insurance cover with public liability insurance as a minimum.
- 9) Each Camp/Club will have a child protection policy in line with their National requirements.
- 10) Camps/Clubs will have a policy for ensuring all leaders are checked for suitability for working with young people in line with the requirements of their country.
- 11) There will be a minimum staff to child ratio of 1:3 on burn camp events. On other outings / family events, this may be reduced to 1:4 ratio.
- 12) Each Camp/Club that has been established for a number of years will provide appropriate training and support for suitable burn-injured young people to develop the skills to become Young Camp Leaders.
- 13) Any leader appointed guardian of children at a Camp/Club event will refrain from the use of drugs for the duration of the event.
- 14) Leaders on duty at a Camp/Club event and with responsibility for children/young people will refrain from the consumption of alcohol.

15) Camps/Clubs will develop a 'smoking policy', in consultation with the camp/activity venue.

16) Each Camp/Club will employ practices that ensure the health and safety of all participants. This will include processes to identify risks and the application of recommendations to minimise risk. Each Camp/Club will be a non-profit making body. The Camp/Club will have a policy stating how funds raised and held should be spent and audited. The general principle should be that funds are spent to benefit the young people.

17) Camps/Clubs will not exclude any young person from taking part in any camp or activity through his or her inability to pay.

18) Each Camp/Club will have mechanisms in place to ensure that appropriate information regarding each child's medical, emotional and behavioural needs will be gathered in advance of any event.

19) Each Camp will have mechanisms in place for giving feedback to Burn Services/Burn Consultants regarding individual children's progress at Camp or specific problems identified, where

requested or necessary and with appropriate respect to confidentiality.

20) Each Camp/Club will formally evaluate their events to demonstrate the value and benefits to those young people participating. Ideally both qualitative and quantitative methodologies will be used.

21) Each member organisation will submit to the European Burn Camp Committee a bi-annual report in advance of the EBA Congress summarising its activities.

The EBA encourages all burn camps/ clubs in Europe to work towards achieving these guidelines.



Recommended policies

In order to make sure that the camp operates safely and that all leaders know what is expected of them, it is important to have a set of policies/guidelines that all adults involved in club/camp activities are familiar with and agree to abide by.

These may include:

- Terms of Reference or other form of

Constitution: to outline the purpose of the organisation, how it will be run (e.g. by a committee or steering group) and the roles of key parties.

- A Finance Policy: to describe how funds are to be obtained, managed and used.

- A Safeguarding Policy: to outline how the organisation is going to protect children, vulnerable adults and workers. If the camp/club is going to work with children this will include a Child Protection Policy: to protect children and young people from neglect, abuse and exploitation.

- A Risk Management Policy: to make sure that as much as possible is done to minimise or manage the risk of anyone coming to harm without jeopardising or undermine the programme itself. This needs to describe the process for conducting risk assessments for all activities, methods of transport etc on a regular basis. This will include looking for the hazards; deciding who might be

harmed; deciding the risks (high, medium or low) to see whether existing precautions are adequate or whether more needs to be done; recording findings and what action might need to be taken.

- A policy on the recruitment, training and supervision of leaders (including an equal opportunities policy): to ensure the quality of programmes provided by appropriately recruiting, training and supervising the workers who deliver them. This will include the organisation's policy on undertaking background checks on leaders considering working with children or vulnerable adults.

- Manual Handling Guidelines: to cover situations when patients may require lifting.

- A Code of Conduct for Leaders: covering things such as smoking, alcohol, drugs, general behaviour and behaviour towards campers.

- A Personal Care Policy: designed to minimise risk and promote the principles of dignity and respect with regard to personal care procedures (including washing, bathing, creaming, changing and assisting children to use the toilet).

- Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies: to safeguard the personal information that the organisation holds on patients in their care.

- Supervision and Behaviour Management Policies:

including a code of conduct for children and young people.

- An Emergency Procedures Plan: in preparation for the eventuality of an emergency at camp.

- Incident Reporting, Complaints Policies and Reporting alleged misconduct: through which accidents or near accidents can be recorded and through which children and workers can challenge decisions or actions with which they are unhappy.

“ Many thanks from all the family -
it is great to have our old little boy
back!”

- Parent

Getting started

The prospect of setting up a burns club or organising a burn camp can for some be a daunting prospect. Although burn camps can be successful and satisfying, they can also be time consuming, and stressful, and may not be an option if funding is limited. It may be helpful initially to concentrate on organising small events. These can still give children the opportunity to share experiences and make friends, and give the organisers confidence to consider larger projects. Local activities can be organised to suit a wide range of age groups, and include families where appropriate.

Successful events do not necessarily need to be expensive – it's always worth exploiting all contacts, as it may be possible to get things 'free' or get 'special prices'.

Some suggestions for day and weekend events are as follows:

- Visiting a local swimming pool or leisure pool can be great fun, and give a boost of confidence to young people. It can also be beneficial to those who would otherwise be reluctant to go swimming alone because of body image issues.
- A day at the zoo or visiting an open farm can give children the chance to get close to the animals, including feeding and grooming. Spring is usually

a good time of year, when there are plenty of baby animals around.

- Visiting the local fire station can be an exciting opportunity for the kids. Firemen are usually eager to be involved in supporting the rehabilitation of burn-injured children.
- Organising a fun day with simple activities such as games, arts & crafts, and face painting can be enjoyable and successful.
- Holding a circus skills workshop can be good for self esteem, and give everyone the opportunity to find something they are good at.
- Planning a cycling event can be a positive experience for the whole family. Bicycles can usually be rented inexpensively, with a range of cycles suitable for all age groups.
- A Christmas party can be the highlight of the year, and give everyone a chance to dress up and hopefully meet Santa Claus.
- Staying overnight (e.g. at a museum or club house) can be a good way to introduce younger children to the idea of staying away from home with their peers.
- Family weekends can be a great opportunity for families to meet and share experiences with other families of burn injured children.

“It let's us see that we aren't alone and we can gain confidence off each other. Also, we get to overcome other personal fears. “

- Teenager

Fundraising

Running club and camp activities costs money, so you will need to think of raising funds. The task of raising funds should not be underestimated and a strong support group/committee with commitment, perseverance and stamina to manage the project is vital! Below are some ideas on how and where you can make approaches for support, especially as successful Burn Club and Camp activities are usually only made possible through sponsorship and donations towards the event.

Step 1

Before you ask for donations you will need to have organised a method of payment and have agreed bank account facilities to receive the funds.

Step 2

The Budget

You will need to prepare a well thought through budget. It is important to work out in advance what the total activity costs are as well as thinking about the time involved and potential costs of your volunteers i.e. associated expenses.

The budget can be broken down into sections which show the cost for each club activity. Always build in a minimum of 5% contingency in case of any problems.

Once you have prepared the budget it can be presented as “Sponsorship Opportunities.”

- Show the “Total Cost,” this is suitable for a large corporate or potential benefactor.
- Show a breakdown of the various activity costs - i.e. venue hire, transportation, living accommodation, activities etc.
- Some sponsors like to pay for transportation or venue hire etc.
- Work out the overall individual cost for the child at camp and offer “Sponsor a Child to go to Burn Camp”.

It is wise to ensure that your funding is fully in place before the event and certainly before you have to pay any non-refundable deposits. All sponsorship monies should ideally be banked before finally committing financially to the event. Don't rely only on promises of funds as they might not, for whatever reason, materialise and you could become financially exposed. It is a good idea to ask for written confirmation of promised funding in advance.

Nothing is worse than disappointing the children if the camp has to be cancelled.

Step 3

Promotion

A presentation pack is a very useful tool and would include:

- A brief summary of “What is a Burn Camp or Club” plus its vital role in recovery
- The event outline : where it is being held, how many children etc.
- Photographs - these may include some harsh realities but also show some happy outcomes.
- The Club/Camp's financial needs - budget.
- A statement showing your enthusiasm and commitment to the project
- A simple leaflet explaining what a burn camp is, why funds are needed and what the donations will be used for can also be very helpful for general use.

Some further suggestions:

- Previous experience of fund raising is extremely useful.
- Fund raising should start as early as possible
- It may be possible to attract sponsors for specific items e.g. t-shirts, transport, pre-camp open day...
- Fund raisers, both private individuals and companies, may be invited to visit on the same day
- Photos and a video can be very useful in explaining the concept to potential participants

Be careful to obtain permission from the campers and their parents (if under age) to use these images.

and donors.

- TV stations and local / national newspapers can be invited to attend the camp on a specific day during the camp, but be aware this can be disruptive. Again, permission to photograph / film should be obtained from parents
- The media day should preferably be organised in the middle of camp, so the children will be relaxed and ready to show off their achievements

National Lotteries etc.

To benefit from donations by major bodies such as National Lotteries, it is important the camp organisers are formally “constituted”. This includes a committee, a purpose (“terms of reference”), roles and ideally, an audited set of accounts. In some countries, to obtain funds it may be necessary to be a Registered Charity.

Step 4

Who to target

Donations can come from a number of different

sources: other charitable organisations, individuals, businesses, service clubs (e.g. the Rotary Club), school or university fundraisers, the church or faith communities, fire departments, personal contacts. An initial letter backed up by a personal telephone call is a good way to introduce yourself to the donor. This can also be reversed according to the circumstance.

Step 5

Thank you's.

Don't forget to say thank you promptly in writing to your donors/sponsors, even if the amount is small. Next time they might donate a larger sum!

Further information

A wealth of ideas and recommendations can also be found on the web. Just type in “fundraising ideas”.



Preparation for camp

Preparing for camp should start well in advance of the event. This will lessen the possibility of last minute unexpected problems arising. It is recommended that a planning timetable or project plan is used to show key events, and essential deadlines. This will ensure all parties involved are kept fully informed of the planning process. It's never too soon to start!

Suggestions for key issues to be considered in the planning process are as follows:

Booking the venue:

Ideally this will need to be done 12 months in advance. The duration of camp will vary from camp to camp – although most are around 5-7 days.

Financial sourcing and budget:

It is important to work out in advance what the total cost of the camp will be. The type of activity programme and anticipated numbers of children and staff will be dependent on the budget available. If fund raising is planned, this should start as early as possible e.g. to coincide with the booking of the centre. It may be possible to attract sponsors for specific items e.g. T-shirts, transport.

Numbers and selection criteria for children:

Deciding numbers of children will depend on available finances, the capacity of the centre, and experience of leaders in organising camp events. Determining selection criteria is essential and is covered in more detail in the section on 'selecting children'.

Camp application forms:

Application forms should be completed and signed by the parent or guardian of each child. The information provided is important both in the selection of children for camp, and in the planning of the camp programme. It is recommended that the following information is included:

- Child's name/address/age, plus details of local and hospital doctors
- Emergency contact details
- Child's ethnic background
- Special dietary requirements
- Details of family members
- Child's progress at school
- Any difficulties or concerns at home
- Child's general health
- Details of any medications/ allergies/vaccination record

- History of child's injury and treatments/surgical interventions to date
- Details of visible scarring
- After care requirements e.g. PT/OT/pressure garments/splints
- physical and mobility capabilities/ limitations

*** Copies/templates of application forms are available from the EBA Burn Camp committee.**

Age groups:

The age range of children at camp may vary from camp to camp, and from country to country. Some organisers may prefer to organise one event to include a wide range of ages. In this case it is recommended that children are divided into groups for the activities with mixed boys and girls divided broadly by age. Some camp organisers may however prefer to organise separate events for younger and older children.

Numbers and selection of Camp leaders or counsellors:

It is recommended that each group has its own leaders for the whole camp. Deciding numbers of

leaders and what skills are required is essential to the success of the camp. The ratio of hospital to non-hospital staff will also need to be considered.

Leader preparation:

It is vital that staff meet before camp to learn about the special needs of the children who have been burned and begin the process of staff team building. It is important that each child/young person is known to one of more leaders before the camp. It is useful to have social and behavioural background information regarding the children e.g. from schools.

It is recommended that there be a series of meetings of staff in the lead up to the burn camp, starting as early as six months prior to camp.

These meetings should be an opportunity to:

- Provide staff with basic training in areas that will equip them for camp e.g. how to wash and cream a burn injured child, how to manage pressure garments, physiotherapy, splinting.
- Provide basic training for staff in group behaviour and psychosocial issues (even if specific psychosocial activities are not to be included in the programme).

Plan in as much detail as possible:

- Size of groups/allocation of children to groups
- Support for any special needs of the children
- Allocation of leaders to groups
- The activity programme
- Transport arrangements
- Resource requirements
- Ground rules for adults and children
- Working shifts/rotas

It is valuable to provide staff with a resource pack summarising all useful information.



Choosing a location

In selecting the site of the burn camp, key considerations should include:

- *Travel distance:*

Ideally this should not be more than 1 – 2 hours, as children tend not to like long journeys

- *Location:*

Ideally a rural location but with easy access to a town and local places of interest. Access to water based activities (e.g. swimming pool) either at the centre or close by is also recommended

- *Accreditation of the centre:*

The risk assessment should include a check on the qualifications of the centre leaders to lead adventure activities, to ensure they are in accordance with national legislation.

- *The type of centre:*

Size of centre, number of beds. The pros and cons of shared facilities versus single group occupancy should also be considered. The safety record of the centre is an important consideration

- *Facilities at the centre:*

Various options are available. A purpose built activity centre with a good range of on-site activities and a well stocked equipment store may be preferable. Alternatively leaders may prefer to organise independent accommodation and deliver their own activity programme, with access to local

creative and adventure activity opportunities. A range of activity rooms is recommended – this may include a large room for meetings, rooms for small groups/quiet activities, art workshops for creative activities, and a games room.

- *Sleeping facilities:*

Ideally the centre should have a mix of larger and smaller dormitories for the children, which allow separation of older and younger kids, and girls and boys. Separate smaller bedrooms for leaders are recommended, which have easy access to the children's rooms.

- *Disabled access:*

Ideally the centre should be familiar with young people with special needs

- *Using the same location each year vs. using a range of centres:*

Some prefer to use the same centre as this can make planning easier, and should also give scope to vary the programme for those children who attend on consecutive years, Some however prefer to use a range of locations, in order to provide a variety of experiences for participants.

- *Good quality accommodation:*

Cleanliness and good washing/showering facilities are essential, given the care required for burned skin. Ground floor facilities are recommended.

Washbasins in rooms are an advantage. Easy access to the toilets at night is important particularly for young children and those who may suffer from bed wetting. A spare room/sick room should be available, plus a lockable room for dressings and medications.

- *Catering:*

Good catering facilities are important, with a diet principally based on healthy food. Consider whether catering is on a self-service or served basis
 .Cost of the accommodation – prices vary considerably. Consideration should be given to budget limit and whether the cost includes an activity programme

- *Transport at the centre:*

If the centre does not have suitable transport on site, alternative arrangements will have to be made by the camp organisers

- *Insurance:*

The centre should have insurance cover for all organised activities whilst the children are under their supervision. Supplementary insurance is likely to be required to cover travel and activities not organised by the centre

- *Other facilities available on site:*

e.g. sweet & souvenir shop, dvd/video, music system, disco equipment, facilities.

Leaders

Selection of suitable leaders will be crucial to the success of the camp. Not only must they have the necessary skills and qualities to work with the target age group of the programme, but they must also be able to work as a team together with the other leaders.

Basic considerations are:

Number of leaders: the ratio of children to leaders may be as high as 2:1. The higher the ratio, the more those adults can get to know all the children during the camp and cater for campers with complex needs. There should also be a balance of male and female leaders, reflecting the mix of children.

Selecting Leaders

- Primarily, leaders should enjoy being with children – they will be surrounded by them, their problems and their good and bad behaviour for several days and nights! They should be willing to participate freely in all activities, within their own physical limits.
- Some medical, nursing and therapist skill/qualification and burn care expertise amongst leaders is mandatory.
- There should be representation from as full a range as possible of professionals who work with burn-injured children.
- Ideally, there should be expertise in psychosocial issues and child behaviour amongst the leaders.
- If there are adult burn survivors who are positive role models for the children, they can be an asset for the leadership team.
- Some camps have made very useful links with their local fire service personnel.
- Leaders should cover a wide age range, be open-minded/vibrant as well as more mature/life-skilled.
- Leaders must commit themselves to attending a planning, training and team building event before the camp, and ideally participate in other club events in advance.

- Musical and artistic skills are always a valuable asset.
- It is good practice to have a Recruitment Policy for the recruitment of volunteers that includes an interview, taking up references and providing proof of identity.

In the UK and other countries it has become a legal requirement to carry out Criminal Records Bureau checks on any leaders considering working with children (under the age of 16 years) or vulnerable adults. Searches of police records can be requested for a fee.

Leader guidelines

This might include a commitment from all leaders that they will:

- undergo any required background checks.
- undergo an initial induction and training programme.
- undergo an initial trial period.
- abide by all the organisation's policies and procedures.
- receive supervision from an experienced camp leader.
- take part in evaluation and debrief sessions.

It is good practice to have a Code of Conduct for all camp leaders that might include:

- 1) being good role models for children and young people.
- 2) listening to children and young people.
- 3) not using discriminative or bad language/ abusive comments or rude actions.
- 4) not being disrespectful to anybody else.
- 5) not shouting.
- 6) not smacking or using other forms of violent or aggressive behaviour.
- 7) knowing where the children that they are responsible for are at all times.
- 8) not being made to do activities that they do not want to.

In addition to this, it is helpful to ensure that all leaders are clear on exactly what their roles and responsibilities during the camp week will be.

This might cover:

- Every leader taking responsibility for a specific group of children, to be their surrogate 'parent'.

This involves looking after all the domestic and social needs of this group, from getting ready in the morning to going to bed. This 'family' group is not necessarily the same as the activity group the leader will work with.

- A rota for supervising the children's rooms each evening until all children are asleep – the number required will vary with building lay-out/number of rooms. All leaders should be included in the rota!

- The leaders' bedrooms should be allocated so that someone is near to each of the children's rooms, so that any problem can be heard and taken care of quickly.

- Children and leaders should have separate rooms whenever possible.



- There has to be free communication amongst the leaders, so that when a problem arises it can be discussed in a professional manner. If necessary, a regular review meeting can be held each evening involving some or all leaders.

- Medication and medical files should only be accessed by qualified leaders.

- Some clear guidance and training around developing positive relationships with children and young people can be a useful adjunct to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies. This might include acceptable ways of showing affection to children; managing situations when a young

- person becomes infatuated with a leader; guidance around the personal care of children.

“It helps to talk to other parents who have been through a similar thing.”

- Parent

Leader exchange guidelines

Burn camp leader exchanges offer a useful method for sharing expertise from well-established camp programmes with colleagues from another area interested in developing a burn camp/club programme. They can also promote good practice amongst burn camps and clubs for the benefit of burn survivors.

The following guidelines will help camp leaders to gain the most from them.

There can be two kinds of leader exchange programmes:

- One-off exchange visits of visiting leaders to a host burn camp organisation.
- Long term leader exchange programmes for selected leaders of identified organisations. This may be a long-term relationship with one particular camp or involve visiting several different camp programmes.

Initial stages:

Identify and approach a suitable burn camp programme to see if they would be interested in participating/hosting a leader exchange. In identifying a suitable programme consider issues such as language, culture, aims and organisational structure (and how that relates to your own

organisational set-up), legal frameworks (e.g. insurance arrangements, criminal background checks).

- It is very important to learn as much as possible about the host camp before the exchange – its size, landscape, history, and traditions. Information on host camp leaders may be useful. It may be helpful to have photos of the camp site, photos of the host leaders and their names.

- Meeting with host camp leaders before the exchange is highly recommended.
- A language barrier is a really important problem and should not be underestimated.

Therefore...

- Visitors should learn as much as possible about their role in the host camp.
- If it helps and is possible, consider coming in pairs. In the case of an exchange visit to a foreign camp at least one of the leaders should speak a language of common communication. Otherwise it is worth considering using an interpreter.
- Cultural differences are also important so again, it is important to gather information about this and particularly about behavioural expectations and policies at the host camp.

Setting up the Exchange:

- Participants of the leader exchange programme should be recruited from the most active and dedicated staff, having experience in working with burned children and committed to developing burn camp/club programmes in their own country or region. In the case of long term leader exchange programmes each organisation should first send camp directors and key organisers and later, active camp leaders.
- It would be useful if the host camp appointed a person to take care of the visiting leaders.
- Consider whether it is better for the visiting leaders to stay in the same accommodation as the host camp leaders or separately.
- Information on camp policies and procedures, activities, games, songs can be exchanged by e-mail before the camp.
- It can be helpful if the visiting leaders bring something from their camp/culture to share with the host camp (e.g. a game, camp activity, arts/crafts project, song).

Leader Exchange Agreement:

A standard agreement between host camps and visiting leaders can be drawn up and signed by both organisations. It need not be too formal, but

should stress the aim of the exchange, responsibilities of the parties involved and serve as a reminder of joint intentions.

After the Exchange:

- After exchange visits both sides should get as much feedback as possible in the form of reports, recommendations, plans for future exchanges and joint working.

Notes about Camper Exchanges

If visiting camp leaders are considering taking campers with them to the host camp, the following points should be borne in mind:

- Usually children taken on exchange visits enjoy the camps and greatly benefit from them. It is also a great opportunity for the leaders to learn more about a host camp using the visiting campers' experience and impressions.
- Children taken on an exchange visit should not have marked psychological or physical problems, as these may prove too difficult to manage appropriately in an unfamiliar environment and the experience may end up being counter-productive for all involved.
- Taking children to a partner camp can

mean that the visiting leaders are more distracted as they have to look after their campers, and as a result learn less.

Campers often treat camp leaders whom they come with as "parents".

- A language barrier can pose difficulties for children.

It is therefore recommended that:

- Campers can communicate in the language spoken at the host camp.
- Campers are told as much as possible about their role, camp programme and activities, daily schedule, camp rules etc.
- Basing on previous experience it is recommended, if possible, to take two or more children on exchange visits.
- Leaders should not be too protective towards campers from their own country/region. Children normally mix with their peers more easily than adults expect if they clearly understand their role and the camp programme.
- Cultural differences can also pose challenges and lead to different expectations about behaviour (e.g. smoking). It is therefore important to make sure that visiting campers fully understand the rules and expectations of the host camp and are willing to abide by them.

European and international exchanges can be extremely useful for the development and promotion of good practice amongst burn camp programmes. The European Burn Association Burn Camp Committee can be a helpful resource for camps/individuals considering embarking on such a project.

Selecting children for camp

Selecting who to invite to camp is a critical task. It is time consuming but crucial to the success of the camp.

Good sources of help are:

- Burns service staff who have known the children
- In some cases, especially where the child has not had recent care in the burns unit, teachers and social workers who have known the children recently can help
- Experience has shown that children who are least well-known to the camp leaders are the ones most likely to have problems
- Some camps work with an application form/questionnaire that needs to be filled in by parents or teachers. The questionnaire includes information about burn care, general health, developmental, behavioural and psychological issues and can be extremely useful when planning how best to support a child at camp
- It is also good practice to check with the child's general doctor and/or burns consultant whether there are any current issues that the burn camp team should be aware of.

It is crucial that the camp organisers have accurate and up-to-date information about a child's physical, developmental and psychological status

prior to the camp so that all their needs can be met appropriately. This information should be shared with the particular leaders that will be looking after that child at camp on a strict need-to-know basis, in line with the camp's Confidentiality Policy.

Criteria for selection

Normally a balance in the number of boys and girls is desirable. Also the spread of ages for the camp is a fundamental decision the camp organisers must make - they should be confident that the leadership team has the skills to deal with issues and problems that a particular age group may bring. For instance, very young children may need a lot of close 'parenting', whilst older teenagers may be involved in situations typical of that age group, such as testing boundaries, falling in love. Similarly, if a child has a high level of medical needs (e.g. open wounds), the camp organisers should consider whether they have the relevant expertise (in this instance, medical and/or nursing) to manage this in the camp environment. If the nature of the child's medical needs is such that they are likely to be at significant risk within the camp environment, or unable to participate in the majority of activities, then it might be more appropriate to wait and invite them to a subsequent event.

When a child has significant problems in a particular area (e.g. behaviour), the camp organisers should carefully consider their capacity to manage these problems, whilst also safeguarding the well-being of all other children and workers. As a general rule of thumb, if the status of a particular child means that there is a high chance of this impacting negatively on others at camp (e.g. being physically aggressive to another child), then it might be best not to take this child away on camp until the problem can be better managed.

Creating the invitation list

Newly formed camps may use the register of past Burns Unit patients to trace those in the agreed age range. They will also know current out- and in-patients. Established camps will have a list of past attendees and will have a policy on whether to re-invite them. A mixture of new and 'experienced' campers may be a good policy. Suggestion: leave some vacancies for last-minute strong candidates.

"It's taught me that there are people who are worse off than me who are beautiful people inside and are not bothered - this is how I should be. "

- Child

Inviting process

| Date | Task | Note |
|----------|---|--|
| 6 months | Send out invitations asking children if children are interested. | May be time consuming. Include previous attendees. |
| 5 months | Deadline for replies. | |
| 4 months | Select children for camp from replies & send out letters confirming acceptance. | Ask parents to re-confirm interest. |
| 3 months | Deadline for parents to confirm acceptance. | Create waiting list for spare places. |
| 2 months | <p>Send detailed camp information- kit list, rules, times, dates etc.</p> <p>Send form to parents requesting: Medical requirements, allergies/ special needs Photography/media interviews permission Consent for medical treatment, etc. Parent's contact number (and alternative emergency contacts) during camp</p> | <p>Replace late cancellations with short-listed candidates.</p> <p>A recent photo of the child can also be helpful.</p> |
| 1 month | <p>Invite parents and participating children to an Open Day about the camp. This gives them an opportunity to meet the leaders and other participants/parents. Leaders may learn about any special issues affecting the children.</p> | <p>This may not always be feasible due to distances between camp and where the children live. A CD/DVD about previous camps could be an alternative, giving new families an idea of the type of activities which may be included, who the staff are etc.</p> |
| 2 weeks | Send final reminder letter- meeting times, transport arrangements, etc. | |
| 1 week | PANIC!! | (Joke!) |

Camp administration

In the lead up to the camp, it is important to set up a calendar of key tasks, to ensure all information is sent out in a timely manner and that all camp participants, both leaders and children, are kept fully informed of the camp organisation process. Realistic but firm deadlines should be set for the return of application forms/consent forms etc. as many activity centres require details of these well in advance of the camp.

It is useful to keep a documents file in the order of the planning calendar.

Such a documents file may consist of the following:

- Invite letters for leaders and children
- Camp application forms for leaders and children
- Camp leaflet
- Acceptance letters
- Camp standards/guidelines
- Risk assessment forms
- Kit list and resource list
- Leader and children's profile documents *
- Consent forms for medical treatment and photography
- Camp programme
- Leader training programme agenda and training materials

- Working lists and rotas such as:
 - Kitchen rotas (depending on the venue / catering arrangements)
 - Evening and night duty shifts / rotas for leaders
 - Children's groups lists
 - Bedroom plans
 - Activity programme
- Final letters

*N.B WITH DUE REGARD TO CONFIDENTIALITY

Examples of documents can be obtained from the EBA Burn Camp committee.

“Personally I gained a great deal of satisfaction from knowing that my scars and knowledge of life with scars have helped other children understand what they might go through in life. “

- Leader

Rules for the children

It is important to establish rules for everyone at camp based on safety and respect. A Code of Conduct for Children and Young People can set out these rules and explain what will happen if the rules are broken. This can be shared with campers and their parents before the camp so that expectations are clearly set.

An example Code of Conduct for Campers:

“The rules of the Camp are for everyone and are introduced for safety and respect.”

1. Respect:

i Treat other people – including their ideas, their property and their space – as you would like to be treated yourself.

ii Aim to be a good role model for younger campers.

X Do not shout, use discriminative or bad language/abusive comments or rude actions.

X Do not smack, hit or use other forms of violent or aggressive behaviour.

2. Safety:

i The rules supplied by the activity centre on arrival must be observed.

X Do not leave the group or Camp site without permission or supervision from the group leader.

Failure to abide by the Camp Rules may necessitate the child being removed from Camp and being sent home!

Camp organisers should also consider what their policy is on:

- smoking, alcohol and non-prescription drugs
- acceptable intimate behaviour between young people (e.g. dating, kissing, sexual forms of contact etc.).

Codes of conduct should be accompanied by a Behaviour Management Policy which sets out very clearly how instances of problematic behaviour will be dealt with. This might cover:

- No child is made to do an activity that they really do not want to but all children are given encouragement to try new things and have a go at things they find difficult.

- Whenever possible, minor silliness should be ignored as it is reinforced by attention of any kind. This may necessitate distracting or removing the attention of other children.

When behaviour can not be ignored:

On first breaking a rule, a leader should remind the

child of the rule and warn them that a consequence will follow if they continue to break it.

If the child continues to break the rule then they should be withdrawn from the immediate environment by a leader for Time Out. This involves explaining once to the child that they are being removed because they have continued to break the rule, taking them somewhere away from the attention of other children, getting them to stand/sit calmly for approx. 10 minutes whilst giving them minimal attention. If the child makes a fuss, Time Out continues until he/she has been quiet and calm for 10 minutes.

The child can then return to his/her activities.

If the problematic behaviour continues a more serious consequence may be needed (e.g. removal of privileges, withdrawal from an entire activity, additional washing up) – but in this instance one of the Camp Directors should be involved.

In exceptional circumstances, the conclusion may be reached that a child needs to be sent home. This is likely to be when a child poses a threat to the well-being of him/herself, other Campers, leaders and/or the Camp. This decision will be made by the Camp Directors, in consultation with leaders who have been working with the child.

Activities

It is recommended that children are organised into activity groups for the duration of the camp, the groups being based mostly on age, but ability/maturity can be taken into account. Occasionally it may be possible to give a choice of activities, or move children between groups temporarily. On some occasions the whole camp may take part in an activity together, such as a visit to an amusement park, bowling, skating or swimming. It may be possible for older children e.g. over 14's to be given some independence during these visits, with less supervision by leaders (e.g. meeting up at specific time points during the day)



The range of activities included in a burn camp programme will depend on a number of factors:

- Age of children
- Location of camp
- Resources available
- Physical capabilities of the children

It is recommended that a camp programme consist of a balance of activities from the following categories:

Sports: focusing on strength, mobility, motor skills, co-ordination, team work

Adventure activities: focusing on meeting challenges, overcoming fears, building confidence, learning new skills

Nature/environmental activities: focusing on education, building awareness of the environment, encouraging appreciation of the outdoors, handling fire in a positive way.

Psychosocial activities: focusing on coping strategies and self esteem

Social activities: focusing on communication, team building, social skills development.

Creative/artistic activities: focusing on creativity, confidence building and pride.

Special activities to develop psycho-social skills and coping strategies

The particular activities chosen for a burn camp programme, will depend upon the specific aims of the programme and the skill mix of the staff team. For example, camp organisers may choose to provide activities that are specifically designed to address the psychosocial issues that result from burn injuries.

A burn camp provides small steps towards increasing self-esteem and a sense of pride through learning new skills and competence. General camp activities encourage pro-social behaviour such as team building and confident communication. Also, formally and informally, children share their experiences of injury and rehabilitation, whether it be in small groups with a leader or just a chat over lunch or on the bus. In this way, children learn from each other and develop their skills in dealing with a range of tricky situations, such as being stared at, answering people's questions and coping with teasing. The camp staff are also a crucial ingredient in this process. Sometimes burn camp leaders were burned as children themselves and campers can find talking to these individuals



particularly rewarding, as they can see the sorts of positive outcomes that are possible, and also ask questions which may seem small or unimportant to a person who has never been burned.

If a camp has access to experienced psychosocial burn care professionals, they may wish to include specific activities designed to address common psychosocial issues. These might include games/activities which aim to provide solutions to such issues as other people's reactions to scars, or making a box full of positive words about oneself. Covering such issues requires a safe environment,

and opportunities to talk to an appropriately skilled member of staff privately.

Either way, it is important that the children's psychosocial issues are assessed before camp. Information can be gathered from the Burn Care Team that knows the children, as well as from parents, teachers and other carers. Within the bounds of confidentiality, the leadership team should have knowledge of significant issues before the camp. After the camp, the de-briefing or review by the leaders should include discussion of issues raised in these activities, and if/how this should be followed up with the children.

“ It’s helped me to be more confident in the way my burns look and not hide behind friends.” - Teenager

Examples of activities

| Adventure | Creative/ Artistic | Social | Nature/ Environment | Sport/ Other |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Ropes course | Making T-shirts Painting T-shirts | Games | Night Torch Flashlight Trails | Swimming |
| Canoeing | Singing | Magic | Orienteering with overnight stay in tents | Badminton |
| Horseback riding | Script writing and filming | Party games | Puppet show | Playing in the woods |
| Go-karting | Arts and crafts | Quiz | Children's farm | Volleyball |
| Rafting | Music making | Dancing | Nature hike | Gymnastics |
| Sailing | Baking/ cooking | Team building challenges | Adventure playground | Bouncy castle |
| Survival | Handicrafts | Cinema | Wildlife exhibits | Children's aerobics |
| Para-penting | Camouflage make-up | Bowling | | Fishing |
| Climbing/ abseiling | Cookouts | Disco | | Football |
| Paintballing | Theatre | Circus skills | | Basketball |
| Caving | Rap | | | |
| Diving | Body-painting | | | |
| Laser-games | | | | |

Typical 1 day programme

Timetables will vary from camp to camp and from country to country. A suggested one day programme may be as follows:

| Hour | Activity |
|-------|--|
| 07.45 | Getting up of children and tidying the rooms |
| 08.30 | Breakfast |
| 09.00 | Morning activity |
| 11.45 | End of the morning activity |
| 12.00 | Lunch |
| 13.00 | Relaxation time / "Free time" |
| 14.00 | Afternoon activity |
| 16.00 | Afternoon break |
| 16.30 | Afternoon activity |
| 18.00 | Dinner |
| 19.15 | Evening activity |
| 21.00 | Going to bed: group 1 Younger children |
| 21.30 | Going to bed: group 2 Older children |
| 22.00 | Meeting of camp leaders, evaluation of day, discussion of program for next day |

Typical 5 day programme

| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| | 08:30 Breakfast | 08:30 Breakfast | 08:30 Breakfast | 08:30 Breakfast |
| | 09: 00 Meet | 09: 00 Meet | 09: 00 Meet | 09: 00 Tidying/pack |
| | 09: 30 - 12: 00 Activity in smaller groups | Full day event Whole groups outing/ educational visit | 09:30 - 12: 00 Activity in smaller groups | 10:00 - 12: 00 Activity in smaller groups |
| 12: 00 Arrive | | | | |
| 12: 30 Lunch | 12: 30 Lunch | | 12: 30 Lunch | 12: 30 Lunch |
| 13: 00 Welcome/ unpacking/ rules | 13: 00 Free time | | 13: 00 Free time | 13: 30 Group photo |
| 14: 00 - 16:30 Activity in smaller groups | 14: 00 - 16: 30 Activity in smaller groups | | 14: 00 - 16:30 Activity in smaller groups | 14: 00 Depart |
| 18: 00 Dinner | 18: 00 Dinner | 18: 00 Dinner | 18: 00 Dinner | |
| 19: 00 Activity in smaller groups | 19: 00 Activity in smaller groups | 19: 00 Whole group activity | 19: 00 Party night | |
| 21: 00 Bed time : Younger children | 21: 00 Bed time : Younger children | 21: 00 Bed time : Younger children | 21: 00 Bed time : Younger children | |
| 21 : 30 Bed time : Older children | 21: 30 Bed time : Older children | 21: 30 Bed time : Older children | 21: 30 Bed time : Older children | |
| 22 : 00 Staff meeting | 22: 00 Staff meeting | 22: 00 Staff meeting | 22: 00 Staff meeting | |

Transport

A central meeting point for children should be selected, e.g. in front of the Burns Unit building. It is recommended that the children travel together in a group to and from the camp so they can begin to socialise. Local situations such as the distance to the camp venue, location of the camp, availability of minibuses at the camp centre will decide whether a large coach is used, or a number of minibuses. Minibuses can give flexibility at the camp when activities take place in a number of locations away from the centre.

Transport should be booked well in advance, especially when the camp takes place during the holiday period. It may be worth looking at local groups who could support the camp by providing free transport e.g. Fire Service, local school.



Insurance

It is recommended that insurance cover is taken to cover the period away at camp.

It may be provided in a number of ways:

- *Third party liability cover:*

Can be obtained through the hospital that hosts the burns service. This should cover activities away from the hospital providing they are part of the continuing rehabilitation of the children. Third party liability covers any damage caused by members of the club whilst away at camp. The hospital legal department can give advice on the type of cover provided, and should be kept fully informed regarding the nature of the burn camp programmes.

- *Extra cover:*

For accidents and damage caused to the children whilst on camp should also be considered.

- *Private commercial insurance:*

Will need to be arranged if the hospital does not provide such cover. Private insurance should be arranged on the basis of personal accident, travel, personal injury and public liability.

The activity centre should have insurance cover for all activities whilst the children are under the supervision of their activity leaders.

Camp staff should also consider insurance cover for hospital staff who may draw on their professional expertise whilst at camp e.g. doctors, nurses, therapists, psychologists.

“The children learn to feel good about themselves regardless of the scars they may have. A lot of them have very low self-esteem and lack confidence in themselves until they’ve been to Camp, where they not only learn, but are encouraged to have a go no matter what the challenge, instead of assuming or being assumed to be incapable.”

- Parent

Creating a positive environment at camp

Children hospitalised for burn injuries have faced multiple psychological challenges and these can lead to long-lasting consequences in some instances. Other issues may present themselves at camp as a result of children being away from home and outside of their normal environment. The following tips should help to prevent some of these problems occurring and give suggestions around how to manage them when they arise.

Settling in:

On the first day of the camp, children are likely to be feeling worried and insecure. It will help if you know the names of your campers before they arrive. Greet them with warmth and friendliness, show them where to store their things, which bed is theirs. Spend time with them, you will be their main source of security on the first day. It is also important to set out your expectations of your campers in each bedroom, letting them know what is acceptable and what is not allowed. Explain the limits in relation to bedtime, mealtimes, care of belongings and other routines. Review a typical day and also discuss the next activities. Remember that children with burns are first of all **CHILDREN!** They need a caring environment in which expectations are clearly stated and

reinforced. Particularly on the first day when children will not know anyone and likely to be feeling scared, introduce them to each other and get them started on a topic of conversation.

Bedtime:

The first night can be an emotional time for campers. It will help to stick to the routines and provide positive and friendly reassurance, encouraging the campers to look forward to the days to come.

Provide support:

- Listening, understanding and empathy are extremely important.
- Encourage children to share their feelings – particularly with each other – although do not pressure them to talk if they are not willing. One of the major benefits of camp is that children get to meet others who have had similar experiences. They make friends, realise that they are not alone and get to feel “normal”. Camp leaders can facilitate this process.
- Help children to see the similarities and interests they share with others (rather than the ways in which they are different). Recognising the continuities in their lives, particularly in terms of

personality can also be helpful.

- Encourage adaptive coping strategies.
- Help children identify sources of support for when they return home.

Supporting treatment:

- Encouraging children to participate in their own treatment can reduce distress and increase compliance.
- Give rewards and praise for ‘coping’ and complying.
- Increasing a child’s sense of control in a situation can improve their cooperation. For example, give children a choice between two acceptable courses of action – “Shall I cream your shoulder or would you prefer to do it?” or “Are you going to have a wash first or tidy away your things?”

Increasing independence:

Taking children away for a few days promotes their independence and can result in improvements in family relationships. Although it may be quicker, try to avoid doing things for younger children. Take every opportunity to encourage them to do age-appropriate things for themselves.

Looking after yourself:

Working with children who have had traumatic/ life-threatening injuries resulting in disfigurement can be rewarding, taxing, frustrating, exhausting, gratifying.... and many other things! To most effectively support these young people, it is important to take good care of yourself. Look after yourself, your health and your well-being. Co-ordinate time off with your co-workers before you reach the limit of your endurance. Ask for help/consultation when you feel unsure. Know yourself... what are the things that help you through tough situations, what are the things that push your buttons.

Keeping things positive:

It helps if you can keep yourself contagious and enthusiastic in everything that you do. Make your key word “let’s” be part of the group. Don’t give an “order” except in a very serious situation, and then see that it is carried out immediately and to the letter. Get things done be friendly request or through the word, let’s: Let’s get started gathering wood for the fire. Let’s be quiet so we can hear the other person. Let’s all pitch in and get the bedroom cleaned up. Keep things active and moving by being the innovator yourself. When

a camper is learning a new skill, emphasise the positive things and the progress being made; give honest praise for improvement and sincere effort, even if it falls short of your expectations. Pat them on the back when the bed is made properly; say a good word to them when a job is done especially well and keep quiet when it is average; observe your campers for anything which you can point to in a positive way. In this way they are more likely to respond to you in a positive way and the whole atmosphere is likely to be a happy one.

Campers “putting down” other Campers:

This kind of behaviour is unacceptable at Camp. It is worth speaking to your bedroom group about this and demonstrating that respect co-operation and consideration of other people’s feelings are very important at Camp. Help them to be more supportive of each other – talk to them about thanking each other and saying well done. Name-calling, teasing and put downs of any description should not be tolerated and instead dealt with promptly and calmly.



Homesickness

“Homesickness occurs to some degree in nearly everyone leaving familiar surroundings and entering a new environment.” [8]

What causes homesickness? It can be the product of a happy home life, and it occurs often in a child who misses the warmth and security that comes from a good relationship with family and friends.

Homesickness often produces regressive behavior in a child. In order to cope with the situation he/she will revert to behaviour used at an earlier age to gain attention. Sometimes a child will cry easily, wet the bed, or withdraw from others. When a child who is normally sociable and active suddenly becomes quiet, alone and disinterested in what is happening around him, this can be a sign of homesickness.

When homesickness is detected, the child must be listened to and his feelings understood. Often an understanding person, willing to listen and empathise is all that is needed. Any unusual behaviour patterns that have developed, such as bedwetting, must be dealt with matter-of-factly and not overly emphasised.

Next, the child should be kept active and interested in some part of camp life. An effort must be made to make the camper part of the group and a part of all the camp's activities so that he/she can make friends.

Homesickness is a common occurrence, and if faced with understanding and care, is just another step in the process of growing up. Parents and staff should be aware of its causes, means of prevention, and above all, its cure. The cure is simply a great deal of understanding, and willingness to help another person deal with their feelings while getting involved in the burn camp.

Tips

- During camp introductions staff can talk about homesickness and the fact that it is normal. The staff can explain that they are there to help and listen.

- In the information letter prior to camp, tell campers they can bring something with them to remind them of home - a stuffed toy, favorite pillow, picture of family.

- Consider arranging a certain time every day to call home.

- Keep active, participate

- Talk to someone – room-mate, camp leader

- Keep a diary

Camp themes

Working around a theme during the camp presents a lot of possibilities. When the children arrive at camp, they can have already been introduced to the theme and given thought to how they can develop activities around it. The party on the last evening can also be worked out around the theme.



Some ideas on themes:

- *A trip around the world*
- *Witches*
- *TV shows and Films*
- *Harry Potter*
- *The news / current issues*
- *Circus*
- *Jungle*
- *Space*
- *Time machine*

*Express yourself, there are
NO LIMITS!*

Last evening

It is worth giving some thought to activities planned for the final night of the camp. Emotions are often running high as children are feeling excited about everything they have achieved over the week, and sad at the thought of saying goodbye to the friends they have made the following day. Both campers and leaders are also likely to be feeling tired after an action-packed week of physical activities.

Many camps plan a final night party as a celebration of all that has been achieved over the course of the week. This can work well, particularly if it is well structured and related to the theme of the whole week. However, it is worth avoiding too much unstructured time or activities that arouse over-excitement, as this can lead to problems when emotions are running high and people are tired. Closing the evening with some kind of calming ceremony that celebrates everyone's achievements can be a great way to round things off. This might include a camp fire; singing a camp song; giving certificates of achievement; or even releasing balloons or sky lanterns with messages representing hopes for the future.

“Realising that you are not the only one – you always knew other people had been through it but had never met them. “

- Parent



Evaluation and debriefing

Why evaluate Burn Camps?

Establishing aims for camp programmes and formally evaluating their impact is important for a number of reasons:

- establishing evidence for the efficacy of burn camps
- securing support from hospitals
- securing financial support
- determining the relative merits of particular camp activities
- improving the rehabilitation programmes offered to burn-injured children.

Evaluation Processes

It is important to evaluate the content and process of the camp in a number of ways.

1. Standardised measures can be given before and after the camp to assess change in key areas.
2. During the week of camp it is useful for staff to meet daily to review progress. A written record can be kept of these meetings.
3. At the end of camp, both children and staff can complete qualitative evaluation forms.
4. Parents can also be asked to evaluate the impact of the camp.
5. A few weeks after the event the leaders need to meet to pull this feedback together and reflect on

how to improve things for the following year.

Children and parents can be asked for feedback via questionnaires. These should be designed with professional advice so as to provide useful feedback. Questions should be chosen in line with the camp objectives, assessing those areas that the programme aims to address (e.g. children's self-esteem, social relationships and general emotional and behavioural well-being). The questionnaires should be designed to reveal any positive benefit of the camp and provide the kind of supporting evidence which sponsors of the camp need to see. They can also provide useful information about how the programme could be improved in future years. Responses can be collated and written comments gathered into themes.

Evaluating Camps in Europe

The EBA Burn Camp Committee has developed simple tools that can be used to evaluate Burn Camps across Europe. Given constraints such as language and access to statistical support, the tools developed focus on qualitative methods that would be simple to extract data from. Data is shared and pooled across Europe using standard feedback forms.

“It gives me confidence in myself knowing there are other people who are the same as me.” - Child

Follow up and other activities Older children's programmes

The children will gain most from the camp if there is continuity and involvement in further activities; a one-week activity camp in a whole year is not enough to stay in contact and form strong, supportive relationships.

Continuity can be provided by extending the camp into a 'Burn Club' for the children and their parents, or by providing reunion events. Experience has shown that after camp a reunion for the children, together with parents, can be beneficial. At the reunion pictures, slides and videos can be shown, but the important thing is getting together again. The reunion can be made a social event, for instance, by going for a walk or a swim. The parents, brothers and sisters can meet the leaders and other children, creating a broader support network. Confidence between parents and leaders is deepened as well during this meeting.

Around Christmas or another festive occasion, a party can be organised; the style of which will depend on local traditions. One idea is to build activities around the theme of Christmas, and maybe extend the party into a weekend event. Meeting again in this festive atmosphere can be a special experience.

For older children who have attended several camps, or are above the age range for a children's camp there are alternative programmes. Some suggestions based on successful events are as follows:

- Organising a 'survival' weekend (Belgium/The Netherlands) where the young people have the opportunity to take part in challenging activities. Such activities can build confidence and self esteem, and enable the young people to support and encourage each other to take up the challenges.
- Organising a sailing trip (UK), where the young people can help crew a sailing ship on the open seas. This can be an opportunity to develop team work, trust and commitment and share the responsibility of looking after each other in demanding conditions.

Family programmes

Family programmes can be valuable for both children and parents in a number of ways:

- Opportunity to make friends and share experiences
- Confidence building and motivation
- Relaxation and having fun as a group
- Learning about how to cope following a burn injury.

- Spending quality time together as a family.

Programmes can be organised on either:

- An informal basis – with a range of semi-structured fun and creative activities
- A more formal therapeutic basis – which may include structured educational, interactive and burn specific sessions to address psychological, social and physical issues. Professionals from the relevant disciplines are essential to run such programmes.

Considerations for both types of programmes may include:

- Length of the programme
- Selection/exclusion criteria for the families
- Number of families
- Location/venue – ideally for sole occupancy of the group
- Funding/sponsorship
- Evaluation of the programme, valuable to provide evidence to support future funding

Adult programmes

Increasingly, camp programmes are being developed for adults as well (e.g., Norway, UK, the Netherlands). Some programmes have focused more on young adults and the life issues people face at this stage such as making the transition to adulthood, leaving school, integrating into the workplace/further education, developing relationships, lifestyle issues of alcohol/smoking etc.

Camp programmes for this age group can equip patients who have suffered a burn injury with skills needed for adulthood including:
Other programmes have included a broader adult

Life skills
Building confidence
Increasing independence
Improving social skills
Engaging with a peer group encountering similar issues.

age range and focused on activities that participants may be avoiding in their daily lives (e.g. swimming), as well as sharing experiences. Adult camps can also allow participants an opportunity to reflect on their experiences of injury and recovery, and consider whether they have the skills and motivation to assist in the rehabilitation of young burn survivors themselves through getting involved as a leader in a children's burns camp programme. Delivering a residential programme for this age group requires the consideration of a number of issues not encountered so commonly when working with children. This might include assessing and developing policies around the management of social issues such as the use of alcohol and street drugs during the camp; potential participants with a criminal history and the risk they may pose to others and the camp as a whole. There are also additional health factors to consider and assess, for example, pregnancy; potential participants with a psychiatric history.



Training burn-injured young people to become camp leaders

One of the great strengths of the burn camp experience is the availability of adult leaders who were themselves burned as children. During a camp, these adults are quizzed about their experiences and how they coped with the challenges they encountered as they grew up. Not only do the children learn from these valuable role models, but also the adults themselves describe gaining confidence and self-esteem from reflecting on their experiences in a way that is helpful to the young people. Once a camp has been running for a number of years, there is often a group of young people who have attended the camp in the past, but are now reaching the upper age limit. These young people have often gained much from their experiences of attending and may well have talked of their aspirations to become camp leaders “when they are older”. Training programmes have therefore been established to equip these young people with the necessary skills to take on leadership roles in future years. They are often referred to as Campers in Leadership Training (CILT Programmes), Junior Counsellor Programmes or Young Leader Training Programmes and have proven very successful. **Outlined below are some points to consider when setting up such a training programme.**

Selecting young people:

The criteria and process by which young people are to be selected to participate in the programme requires some thought.

Issues to consider include:

- Minimum number of years the young person has attended the camp as a camper
- Minimum age of the young person (high school graduate? 18+ years?)
- Personal characteristics – e.g. maturity, interest in camp activities, basic leadership skills
- Role model – is this a young person who can serve as a role model because they are held in high regard by other campers? Taking on a leadership role at camp is not for everybody, even though not being selected can be a disappointment. We apply for many things in our lifetime – we are thrilled when we are selected and have to adjust to those times when we are not.
- Is there going to be an application process where the young person presents in writing why they want to undertake the programme and what skills they bring to it?
- How will the views of leaders who have worked with the young people under consideration in the past be sought?

Where and when to run the programme:

The programme is likely to run mainly at the camp, but where geography allows, it may be possible to run training sessions beforehand. Either way it makes sense to start the application process several months before the camp to start the young people thinking. If you are not able to meet with them before the camp, then it is helpful to send them a leadership pack, and meet with them as soon as they arrive at camp. It is also important to have daily meetings with Young Leaders at camp and a final meeting at the end of the week. These daily meetings may include training sessions, as well as a chance to review progress, give feedback and address any problems that arise.

Designing the Training Programme:

The Young Leader Training Programme is likely to run in parallel to the main camp activities as this provides the Young Leaders with opportunities to practise their new skills with younger children, in a supported and supervised context. Also the venue of the main camp provides challenging activities appropriate for such a programme. Points to consider in designing the programme include:

- Appointing a Training Programme Director who can give ongoing attention to the programme.

- Defining the programme and its aims. For example,
- To provide Young Leaders with an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences of burn injury and how this may be of benefit to other children.
- To train Young Leaders in teamwork and leadership skills that will equip them for leadership roles at future camps (and in other parts of their lives).

Skills to include:

problem-solving, negotiation and resolving conflict, teamwork, organisation, balancing taking initiative with appropriate help-seeking, managing children's behaviour, listening skills.

To provide Young Leaders with opportunities to practise their skills with groups of children attending the camp, with the support and supervision of experienced camp leaders.

Defining the methods by which the training programme will meet its aims. For example, training methods may include:

1. Challenging physical activities that aim to build up both teamwork and leadership skills.
2. Group work sessions designed to help young leaders reflect on their own experiences, consider how they may be able to help others, and work further on developing leadership skills.

3. Opportunities to take on leadership roles in circumscribed activities with small groups of children attending the camp.

4. A mentoring system whereby each young leader is paired up with an experienced camp leader who monitors and gives feedback on their progress.

- Developing training materials and resources for the training programme. (See: Learning Leadership: How to Develop Outstanding Teen Leadership Training Programs at Camp. Michael Brandwein (2003) published by YMCA, USA.)
- Identifying experienced camp leaders to mentor the Young Leaders at camp.
- Defining the roles and responsibilities of Young Leaders, their Mentors and the Training Programme Director. For example:

Young leaders in their first year of training:

- are primarily there to learn and gain experience
- will take responsibility for their own behaviour and act appropriately at all times
- can be asked to help at difficult times by a Camp Leader ;but are not general dogsbodies
- will not be left alone in charge of a group of campers
- will encourage campers to behave – but will not get involved in disciplining campers

- will attend training sessions and meetings with the Training Programme Director as required
- will take on supervised responsibilities as required by the Training Programme
- will participate in evaluating the camp and Training Programme
- will not take drugs or drink alcohol at the camp.

Young Leaders in their second year of training:

- may take on increased levels of responsibility with the knowledge and approval of a Camp Leader
- may get involved in minor disciplinary matters e.g. stopping silly behaviour but will find a Camp Leader to deal with more serious matters that may require action such as withdrawing a camper from an activity.

Mentors:

- will involve their young leader in the day-to-day care of their allocated camper(s). This will progress from very limited involvement at the start of the camp through to increased responsibility around times such as getting up, meal-times, getting ready for activities, free time, going to bed etc. All responsibilities given to Young Leaders will need to be supervised during

their first year of training. By their second year, Young Leaders may take on greater responsibilities in agreement with their Mentor.

- will formally evaluate their Young Leader's skills at the end of the camp via written and verbal feedback to the Young Leader and the Training Programme Director.

The Training Programme Director:

- will oversee each Young Leader's training and development over the course of the camp, helping them to set up daily and weekly goals for themselves and following-up on these goals and leadership skills
- will meet with each Young Leader on a daily basis to provide support and encouragement, give feedback on progress and help problem-solve any difficulties
- will ensure that Young Leaders know where to find them should they experience a problem or who they can contact if the Training Programme Director is not available
- will liaise with Camp Leaders to ensure that Young Leaders are given appropriate responsibilities, review progress and problem-solve any difficulties
- will keep in touch with older campers to observe

their Young Leader potential, encourage leadership skills and develop a relationship with them

- will administer the Training Programme scheme, organise training sessions (both at camp and outside of the camp) and co-ordinate the evaluation of the scheme

Evaluating the Programme

Consider how the Training Programme is to be evaluated. This may include:

- Assessment of leadership skills via questionnaire or interview
- Qualitative feedback from the Young Leaders themselves via verbal discussion and questionnaire
- Qualitative feedback from Mentors via questionnaires on young leaders' performance when taking on leadership roles with groups of younger children.



Young Leader Training Schemes can be a wonderful addition to burn camp programmes. Well chosen, appropriately trained and well supported burn-injured young people can bring care, enthusiasm, motivation and the richness of

all that they have learned from their own experiences to the Campers they work with. They also have many fresh ideas to contribute to the development of the camp programme itself.

“I was having a hard time dealing with all this but then I look at everyone else and think... what the hell am I whining about... If they can do it, I can do it.”

- **Young adult**

Useful contacts

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Websites

European Burns Association

www.euroburn.org

International Association of Burn Camps

www.iaburncamps.org

International Burn Survivor Organisation

www.burnsurvivor.org

United States Burn Support Organization

www.usburn.org

Burn Support Groups Database

www.burnsupportgroupsdatabase.com

Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors

www.phoenix-society.org

UK based charity giving support to people with disfigurements

www.changingfaces.co.uk

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4. Kidshealth.org Homesickness
5. www.webmed.com, 14 Ways to Prevent Kids Homesickness



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