Using Expressive Therapy to Address Psychosocial and Medical Issues for Children with Diabetes

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Objectives

1. Provide a brief overview of Expressive Therapy and its benefit to children with special healthcare needs.

2. Review the development and implementation of “Camp Kudzu, the Musical!”

3. Examine how this experience contributed to my professional development.
The use of art, music, dance/movement, drama, poetry/creative writing, play, and sandtray within the context of psychotherapy, counseling, rehabilitation, or health care.
Empirical Support

- Existing research shows that art, in any form, has physical, cognitive, psychological, and social benefits for children. These benefits increased when art was applied in a therapeutic way that encouraged self-expression (Brogdon, 2011).


- Music therapy allows families in pediatric palliative settings to experience "opportunities for self-expression, choice and control, and interpersonal connections" Lindenfelser, Hense and McFerran (2012).
Camp Kudzu is located in Georgia.

Camp Kudzu serves about 600 kids with T1D each summer at residential camps.

Three summer sessions include specialty programs like CKTM.

Staff is made up of 265 volunteers (health care professionals and counselors).

Camper Experience
**Development**

- **Structure?**
  - Campers spend morning and evening sessions in rehearsals and choose from a variety of traditional camp activities in the afternoon.

- **Staff Support?**
  - Identified experienced Kudzu counselors with backgrounds in music education, theatre, and dance.

- **Facilitating Creative Expression?**
  - Musical program had its own registration.
  - Pre-camp planning session/skills assessment.
  - Lyric writing, script input, song and character choices.
Camp Kudzu, The Musical!

Original Script: Guided by camper concerns and interests identified in a preplanning session.

- Year 1: Educational Focus
- Year 2: Psychosocial Focus
- Year 3: Community/Support Focus
Camp Kudzu,
The Musical!

Juice box and some crackers
Low bg- got my snackers
Whoa- I'm still falling
It might be time to gluc me maybe?

Hey I just bolused
And this is crazy
Blood sugars thirty
So gluc me maybe?
“I felt like the girl in the show was me!” - 8 year old camper

“I like how the main character was able to learn from his friend, who understood diabetes better. That’s what camp is. I wish I’d had a friend like that when I was diagnosed.” - 14 year old camper

“I wish my brother could come see the show so he’d see how much stuff I have to deal with.” - 12 year old camper and cast member

“It offers campers an awesome opportunity that they might not get otherwise. Parents might not be as willing to send their kids to a regular musical theater camp that doesn't know anything about their diabetes.” – Staff member and former camper
Professional Development

Skill Building:

1. Program Development
2. Mentoring and Supervising
3. Personal Leadership Style:

   Collaborative: Encouraged staff input, but had final say over the decision-making process.

   Promoting: Motivated and inspired while being responsive to others.
1. Thinking critically and creatively are key to handling unexpected problems.

2. Enhancement and Improvement of Program - planning to include a post-session evaluation survey this year.

3. Effective Leadership- an effective leader must delegate, set priorities, and make difficult decisions while remaining available and approachable to her staff.
Self:
Competency 2: Self-reflection
Competency 4: Critical Thinking

Others:
Competency 5: Communication
Competency 9: Developing Others Through Teaching and Mentoring

Wider Community:
Competency 11: Working with Communities and Systems


Thank you!