



# Mental Health Preparations for Skyline Summer Staff

*This resource is for you to use on your own or in consultation with your mental healthcare provider if you have one*

This is a resource to help you prepare for the summer ahead. Taking care of our mental health is not something that happens overnight, it takes time and practice. Practicing self-care, identifying triggers, healthy coping mechanisms, and knowing when to ask for help are all strategies that will help you with the demands of the summer camp job.

There are many stressors we face at camp, here is a list of some common stressors we face on a daily basis:

- Walking 6-8 miles per day
- Putting the needs of our camper first
- Creating bedtime and morning routines for campers
- Keeping a group of campers motivated to walk from place to place
- Occasional nights where it is difficult to get a full night's rest
- Being outside in heat, wind, rain, etc.
- Having to be flexible with changes to schedules- sometimes last minute
- Helping campers through challenges
- Helping campers work through difficult behaviors
- Living in community and working together with your peers
- Occasionally campers have accidents
- Working long days - see <https://www.campskyline.org/day> for more details

Knowing some of our stressors take a look at the categories below to start preparing for what you can do to take care of yourself this summer.



## Self Care Practices

Self care is not just bubble baths, sleep, and eating your favorite snacks. It involves making sure you eat well balanced meals, drink water, spend time with people you love, connect with your faith or spirituality, know what your goals are, and more. Take time to map out and think about what are the ways you can practice self care, what fuels you, and what are the signs you are not caring of yourself.

## Identifying Triggers

Skyline serves a diverse community of campers that includes special needs adults, campers from different socioeconomic backgrounds, campers from different social service organizations, and more. Campers bring a wide range of experiences with them to camp and like to share about those experiences. Some are good and some can be triggers that can be difficult to hear and process with our campers. Knowing your personal triggers can help you think about how to prepare if you are exposed to one of them here at camp.

## WHAT TRIGGERED ME

- |                                  |                                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. I felt excluded.              | 13. I felt like the bad guy.   |
| 2. I felt powerless.             | 14. I felt forgotten.          |
| 3. I felt unheard.               | 15. I felt unsafe.             |
| 4. I felt scolded.               | 16. I felt unloved.            |
| 5. I felt judged.                | 17. I felt like it was unfair. |
| 6. I felt blamed.                | 18. I felt frustrated.         |
| 7. I felt disrespected.          | 19. I felt disconnected.       |
| 8. I felt a lack of affection.   | 20. I felt trapped.            |
| 9. I felt I couldn't speak up.   | 21. I felt a lack of passion.  |
| 10. I felt lonely.               | 22. I felt uncared for.        |
| 11. I felt ignored.              | 23. I felt manipulated.        |
| 12. I felt I couldn't be honest. | 24. I felt controlled.         |

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## Coping mechanisms

A coping mechanism is any conscious or nonconscious adaptation that decreases tension and anxiety in a stressful experience. There are a wide variety of coping mechanisms that we all turn to, some of which can be helpful and others unhelpful in the work environment. Take inventory of your coping mechanisms and think about which ones will be helpful here at camp.

## Knowing when to ask for help

It is okay to not be okay, we all have times where we need the help of others to get through hard times. There are staff here that are available to help you and connect you to appropriate resources. If you are already seeing a therapist, please speak with them before you arrive at camp about how to continue sessions with them in the summer, making sure to ask if virtual sessions are a possibility. Review the information above with them and make a plan for the summer. If there are any goals that you have that we can help support please share those with us so we can discuss how to make space for them here at camp

