



# **HUDDLE UP PLAYBOOK**

**25 MINI LESSONS FOR A  
HEALING-CENTERED SUMMER**



# WELCOME TO SWOOSH SUMMER ACADEMY

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## HELLO CAMP DIRECTORS!

This year marks something special: 10 years of partnership, play, and powerful leadership through Swoosh Summer Academy.

For a decade now, the Chicago Park District, Center for Healing and Justice through Sport, and Nike Social & Community Impact have come together to train and support recreation leaders across the city. That's 10 years of preparing young adults to be trusted, caring mentors for youth in play and sport programs. Ten years of creating spaces where kids feel seen, heard, safe and joyful. Ten years of making camp more than just a fun place to be, making it a place where the youth who experience it can connect to their greatest potential – both on the playing field, and in life.

And that work continues with you.

Every day your team brings the magic of camp to life. The belly laughs. The sense of belonging. The routines that bring safety and structure. The moments of challenge and growth. Every single one of these is a building block of resilience — and your rec leaders are the architects.

Healing doesn't come from one big thing. It comes from small moments, repeated consistently, by adults who care. The high fives. The games. Every connection that reminds young people that we're there for them. These are the little things that become the big wins.

This year, we hope the weekly huddles remind your team of their impact and center them in what matters most. We hope they offer connection and a little fun for you, too — because caring for each other is how we stay strong for the young people who need us.

Here's to another summer of showing up, standing strong, and doing the work that matters most.

Thank you for being part of 10 years of bringing healing centered sport experiences to life and creating the future of youth sport in Chicago.

Let's make this the best Swoosh Summer Academy yet.

**CHJS**



# THE HUDDLES

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In this guide, you'll find quick activities you can do with your staff during your weekly team meetings to remind the team about the core concepts of a healing-centered approach. Choose the huddles that work best for you and your team, or that specifically address an issue you've noticed at camp. They can be done in any order you like. In honor of our 10th year of Swoosh Summer Academy, we have upped the huddles from the 15 that were included in 2024 to 20 – that's two for each year! The new huddles focus on the magic when we combine connection, movement and the right dose of stress. You'll find an appendix in the back of the guide with some of the core brain concepts that we teach at Swoosh Summer Academy! Consistently integrating opportunities for our coaches and for our young people to get regulated through connection, movement and the right dose of stress, is the winning game plan.

# HUDDLE 1

## HAND MIX UP

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### ACTIVITY:

Have each person get a partner.

One person is partner A and one person is partner B.

Partner A should put their two hands out so that their thumbs are pointed at the ceiling and the palms of their hands are facing each other.

Now they should cross their arms so that their thumbs are now facing down and their palms are still facing each other.

Then, link their fingers and pull their arms up and under so that they have their crossed fingers in front of them.

Without touching their partner's fingers, Partner B should point to a finger for partner A to try and move it. Let them practice with a few other fingers too.

Switch roles and let partner B try to move their fingers.

### DEBRIEF:

What happened?

Were you able to do it?

Did it take longer?

Did you mess up and move the wrong finger at first?

It's normal for this to be hard because, basically, you've tricked your brain. Your brain is used to having your fingers be in one place. When you switch that around, you break the connection between knowing where your fingers are and how to move them. Your brain is wired to think your fingers are somewhere and, in this case, they are in another place.

Overwhelming stress, the kind we've all been facing over the last couple of years, changes the wiring in our brain. It causes us to be in survival mode. When we're in survival mode, we're more likely to do things we can't control- we lose our temper, lash out, feel like quitting or totally shut down. We overreact to the things that happen to us.

The good news is that, our brains can always change. Just like if we practiced moving our fingers in their new spot, if we practice being able to handle stress better, we'll get better at it. We practice being resilient to stress by moving our bodies, spending time with people who make us feel safe, and taking on small challenges.

# HUDDLE 2

## COOL IT CARDS

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### **ACTIVITY:**

Hand everyone in the huddle an index card or scrap of paper.

Ask them to think about a time when they “lost their cool”. What happened?

Pair up and tell the story of when this happened to you.

Next, I want you to think about something that calmed you down.

Chances are it wasn’t someone telling you to calm down (never in the history of calming down has anyone ever calmed down by being told to calm down).

What works best for you when you feel overly stressed, anxious, or like you’re losing your cool?

Write something that helps you calm down on the index card.

### **DEBRIEF:**

This is your cool-it card. It’s to remind you what helps when you’re feeling “dysregulated”.

Losing our cool is inevitable, especially during a long, hot, summer at camp. But, we want to be sure that we have strategies for getting ourselves back together as quickly as possible.

We also want to equip our teammates with as much information as possible to help alleviate the situation.

As camp staff, we set the tone for how the day will go. It is critically important that we practice what we preach and make sure that we stay as “regulated” as we can be.

When we start to get dysregulated, we need to know what our strategy will be to reset. That’s where cool it cards come in.

Now everyone knows what you need to reset and you can work together to help support each other when we’re having a hard time.

**KNOWING WHAT HELPS YOU REGULATE IS A PLACE TO START.  
HELPING KIDS RECOGNIZE WHAT WORKS FOR THEM IS NEXT!**

# HUDDLE 3

## “DO AS I SAY”

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### ACTIVITY:

While demonstrating, ask everyone in your huddle to put their hand up next to their face (their thumb should be almost touching their cheek).

Next, have them make an “ok” sign with their fingers. This means putting their pointer finger and thumb together in a circle with their other three fingers pointed up.

Now, move your hand to your cheek while telling them to “place their ok sign on their chin”. The vast majority of people will move their hand to their cheek instead of their chin, following what you did, not what you said.

Encourage them to look around and notice that they (and everyone else) pointed to their cheek even when you said chin.

### DEBRIEF:

What we say is not the most important way we communicate. In fact, facial expressions account for **55%** of what we communicate, tone of voice accounts for **38%** and words only account for **7%** of what we communicate.

Kids who have experienced a lot of adversity and are “dysregulated” are even more sensitive to facial expressions and tone of voice.

Our emotions are contagious. When we approach young people with a calm demeanor and tone of voice, we’re much more likely to help them get calm. If we meet them with anger, fear, or frustration, our facial expressions and tone of voice are telling them that they aren’t safe. They will only get more reactive and less rational. It will become even more difficult for them to calm down.

Young people who have lost their cool don’t need us to lose our cool with them. They need to move their bodies so that they can change their brain’s chemistry and they need to be with people who make them feel safe.

# HUDDLE 4

## WARRIOR BREATHING

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### ACTIVITY:

Have everyone in your huddle move their bodies for 15 seconds- they can do burpees, or jumping jacks; they can dance, run in place, or do high-knees. As long as they are moving at a moderate to vigorous pace for 15 seconds.

Give them 15 seconds of rest. Then have them move for 15 more seconds. They should be breathing quickly and their heart rates have likely increased.

As soon as the second 15 second is up, have everyone focus on their breathing. We're going to use our breath to try and slow our heart rate back down.

Have everyone hold their arms up and out, so their hands are parallel to their ears, palms flat, facing forward.

Take a deep breath in.

Have them slowly move their palms towards each other so that they will be in front of their face. They should try and get their hands as close to each other as possible without touching as they breathe out.

Pull arms up and back as they take another deep breath in. Breathe out slowly as they move their hands towards each other.

REPEAT FIVE TIMES

### DEBRIEF:

One of the things that happens when we have too much chaos and stress in our lives is that we lose our ability to calm our bodies down after they've been stressed.

Taking time to breathe and get in the habit of cooling down after we've been active helps train our bodies to cool down more naturally when we face stressful things off the field.

Helping slow our heart rate down and regulate our breathing helps get us out of survival mode (especially when we do it around people we trust who make us feel safe). Young people who have lost their cool don't need us to lose our cool with them. They need to move their bodies so that they can change their brain's chemistry and they need to be with people who make them feel safe.



# HUDDLE 5

## HEAD'S UP

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### ACTIVITY:

On each of three index cards, write the name of a different famous person. These should be people that are widely known, including by all the people of different ages on your team. For example: Michael Jordan, Mallory Swanson, Anthony Davis, Caitlin Clark.

Ask for two volunteers - one who will be “asking” and one who will be “answering”.

Have the asker turn around while the answerer chooses a card. They can hold up the card for everyone but the asker to see.

The asker will then ask questions to figure out who the person on the card is. They can ask any questions they want, except for “who is on the card?” or some version of that question. If the asker struggles, have someone in the huddle share a question that they would ask (knowing who the person is).

### DEBRIEF:

This game lets us focus on asking questions. Questions are important for lots of reasons:

1. They help us form relationships with kids because they signal to kids that we’re interested in them; kids feel seen and heard.
2. They help us learn about kids, which also helps us form better relationships with them.
3. They engage the smart part of the brain, which means things are more likely to be sticky when we ask questions about them.
4. Engaging the smart part of the brain means we’re not engaging our reactive or emotional brains. This means we’re getting practice at using our smart brain and making it stronger so that we can avoid going into reactive or emotional mode when we get stressed.

# HUDDLE 6

## YOGIFY CAMP

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### ACTIVITY:

Ask everyone in the huddle who and what their campers are talking about. Is there an athlete they are focused on? A dance they like to do? A singer, rapper, or band they like to listen to?

Depending on what they say, challenge them to think of a “yoga pose” that embodies that person. For example, Michael Jordan could be the “jumpman” pose. They should hold that pose-legs spread, one arm stretched up and out like your about to dunk. Really stretch that arm out, like your pulling a string through the top of your fingers, down the arm, through the shoulders and hips.

What other moves can your huddle come up with? Try to come up with 3-5 “moves” that you can turn into yoga poses. Then challenge your team to come up with some with their campers.

### DEBRIEF:

Yoga poses can be used for lots of different purposes:

First, they can help provide some consistency and structure to camp.

If you use yoga poses as a way to transition from one activity to the next, or to give kids space to calm their bodies, they become something that is predictable - a routine that helps young people feel safe.

They allow us to make sure we’re providing “cool down” time so that kids who are in survival mode all the time have a chance to practice calming their bodies down.

They are a good way to manage a group - a quick way to get everyone to freeze.

# HUDDLE 7

## ORDER UP

(FOR MEDIUM TO LARGE PARKS)

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### ACTIVITY:

Break the group into two teams.

Hand each person a piece of paper with a number on it. They can look at their number but they should not show it to anyone.

In round 1, they will try to line up as quickly as they can in numerical order.

In round 2, they will try to line up as quickly as they can in order of the way the numbers are SPELLED. (This round will be significantly more challenging.)

Be sure to distribute a mix of numbers. Remember that numerical order and the way numbers are spelled are often different (which makes round two more difficult).

For example, 6 comes before 7; but six comes after seven. Numerically, it would go 14, 15, 16, 17, 18; while in alphabetical order, it goes, eighteen, fifteen, fourteen, seventeen, sixteen.

### DEBRIEF:

Think about the way you handled the second challenge. Did you notice anything different about yourself or anyone else? Sometimes, when things get more chaotic or confusing, when the challenge increases, our protective responses start to show up. We might raise our voice or speak to someone differently out of frustration (fight). We might step back and let other people figure it out (flight). Or, we might totally shut down (freeze).

Even though we are, objectively, safe here doing this game, our brain goes on alert because of the challenge. That's what happens with young people, too. Especially ones who are used to having to put their guard up. Like if there is a lot of chaos or uncertainty in their lives.

These behaviors aren't a choice. They are our body telling us to protect ourselves. Sometimes, we can notice it and change how we respond, but that's much harder when we have to deal with a lot of other adversity.

We are quick to jump to the idea that kids do things "on purpose" but, in reality, they are often just reacting to what their brain tells them is unsafe.

# HUDDLE 8

## TEAM HANDSHAKE

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(FOR MEDIUM TO LARGE PARKS)

### ACTIVITY:

Have pairs come up with a handshake that they can show the group.

Then, have two groups of two join together and become a group of four. They should try and combine their handshakes to make one.

Keep combining groups until it's the whole team.

Have the whole group perform their park handshake.

### DEBRIEF:

Having a handshake with someone else - or a whole team - is powerful for a lot of reasons.

First, it builds our connection to camp. We get to connect with different people and have something that belongs just to us. Relationships make us feel safe and like we belong.

Second, it's a predictable way to be welcomed into camp. When kids know what to expect, then we create safer environments for them.

And third, rhythm is regulating. Every time we go through our rhythmic handshake, we're doing something that helps calm down our stress response, and helps us not be in survival mode.

A lot of kids are showing up to us in survival mode. Why not start the day with something that helps them feel safe and not so on guard?

# HUDDLE 9

## PASS THE DANCE

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### ACTIVITY:

Go around the huddle and have everyone contribute 1 dance move (a shoulder shimmy, kid n play, wobble, etc.) to the group.

Everyone should do each move as they are contributed so that you are building a dance from the individual moves.

Once everyone has contributed a move, turn on some music.

Have everyone do each move for a 4-count and transition to the next move.

Once you've been through all the moves, give a minute or two of free dance time.

### DEBRIEF:

Rhythm is soothing. Moving in rhythm is even more soothing. Moving in rhythm with other people creates a neurobiological unity and safety with a group unlike anything else.

Rhythm is soothing because it cues our brain to think that all of our needs are being met. Like we were when we were in our mother's womb. Whenever we engage with rhythm, it tells our brain- on a chemical level- that we're safe.

How do we build this into camp? How about dance breaks? The "one song rule" giving every kid the chance to opt out of what you're doing long enough to reset by listening to one song and then come back to camp. What else?

# HUDDLE 10

## LETTER C

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### **ACTIVITY:**

Have everyone sit comfortably. Bring your right hand to the top of your head and left hand to your right side. Gently guide your right ear toward your right shoulder, bending through your ribcage, using your left hand to pull your ribs toward you, creating a letter C with your spine. Look up and to the left, holding for 30 seconds. Repeat on the left side.

### **DEBRIEF:**

Our bodies hold our stress. Stretching, aligning, and moving our bodies in rhythm help us get rid of some of that stress.

It's really important to remember that we can't give what we don't have. We have to take care of ourselves too. We have to connect, move and engage in small, predictable challenges.

What are we doing to take care of ourselves? Have each person share something that gave them energy or helped them stay regulated.

# HUDDLE 11

## ATHLETE YOGA

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### ACTIVITY:

Take a few minutes to flow through some gentle yoga poses. You can do a few of your favorite poses, or you can use the “athlete” poses below.



“Serving” Pose: Reach back behind your head with your racket arm. Hold the other arm out like you’re about to throw the ball in the air. Feel the pull between the tips of your ball-throwing arm and the elbow of your racket arm.



“Fencing” Pose: Similar to warrior two pose, hold the epee in one hand, reaching it out as far forward as you can. Lunge with the same side of your body and hold.



“Swimming” Pose: Like a tree pose, stand with your feet about shoulder-width apart. Hold your two hands together and reach them high above your head as though you just dove into the water and are trying to get as far into the pool as you can.



“Ground Ball” Pose: Similar to triangle pose, lean your “glove hand” across your body toward the opposite foot as though you are reaching for a ground ball going past your non-glove side.

### DEBRIEF:

Anytime we have the opportunity to stretch and move our bodies is good for helping us regulate. Moving together as a group creates an unique neurobiological unity, which helps us feel safe.

Remember, safety is a big part of regulation- it means we don’t have to be on guard all the time. Movement releases the right chemicals into our brain to let our guard down (and helps remind our brain of being safe in the womb) and being with people we trust also allows us to let our guard down.

Regulation = Safe and Connected.

# HUDDLE 12

## COUNT OFF

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### ACTIVITY:

With a partner, stand facing each other.

- Count back and forth from 1 to 5 and keep going (return to 1 after 5).
- Now, replace the number 1 with a movement that you and your partner choose.
- Every time one of the partners is supposed to say 1, they do the movement (and don't say 1) instead.
- Replace 2 with a movement so that now, every time someone is supposed to say 1, they do the 1 movement and when they are supposed to say 2, they do the 2 movement.
- Add 3 and practice a little.
- Then add 4. Then add 5.

### DEBRIEF:

What did you notice about this activity?

*You should hear answers like this- or prompt them to think about the following:*

- Did you have the chance to connect with someone? Maybe in a way that is different (and more accessible?) because it didn't have to be too much talking?
- What about the challenge? Did you notice that it built gradually? That you got to take on a small piece at a time?
- Did you notice that it was easier if you got into a rhythm?

This activity is great because it is all built on rhythm- the rhythm you start with when you're counting 1 to 5, and the rhythm you get into when you start stringing your movements together (almost like a dance routine).

Rhythm is powerful because it helps us feel safe. It blasts us with the protective chemicals our brain needs to combat stress and helps us let our guard down. When that happens, we are better able to access our thinking brain, where we can learn. It's not an accident that the new moves you put together with your partner are easier to remember when you get into a rhythm. Your brain is primed for learning when we're regulated.

Movement, rhythm, routine, connection - all contribute to regulation.



# HUDDLE 13

## BACK-TO-BACK BREATHING

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### ACTIVITY:

With a partner, sit on the floor back-to-back (make sure that partners are comfortable touching in this way).

Each partner should sit tall and close your eyes (again, make sure this is something that is comfortable for both partners- if not, they can choose to focus on a point on the floor a few inches in front of them).

One partner will start. Inhale deeply and then exhale slowly. The other partner should try and sync their breathing to their partner's. Allow the synced breathing for 30 seconds.

Shake it out. Switch roles.

*Optional challenge: after the breathing encourage the pairs to try and stand up without using their hands, while they are back-to-back. This requires great teamwork and balance between the partners.*

### DEBRIEF:

Taking time to breathe, even if it's only a few seconds or minutes, allows us to reset. It allows us to get back into our body's rhythm.

Syncing up with another person makes you feel connected in a meaningful way, and we know how good rhythm and connection are for regulation.

What kind of intentional breathing do you like to do?

Have any been especially effective with your campers?

# HUDDLE 14

## RIVER BANK

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### ACTIVITY:

Have participants stand along a line (a line on a court or field, or really anywhere). Explain that one side of the line is the “river” and one is the “bank.”

When the coach calls river or bank, the participants have to jump to that side of the line. If they are already on that side of the line, they still have to jump (just jump straight up).

Folks who mix up the instructions go to the back of the line and a winner is crowned when they are the last one still following the instructions correctly.

Regulation Remix: Double down on regulation by following the same pattern - either during the play or after. You won't be trying to get anyone to mix up the instructions just to move in a predictable (regulating) pattern.

### DEBRIEF:

Let's talk about the amount of challenge in this game. Did it feel like good stress or bad stress? Remember, stress is not inherently bad. It's all about how much we introduce at a time. Making sure no one is “out” but just goes to the back of the line helps make sure it's not too stressful. When we stress ourselves out in the right ways, it actually helps us get better at dealing with stress- it helps us be more resilient.

The rhythm of this game can also be really regulating. How did it feel when we made all the jumping follow a pattern? Predictability and rhythm help soothe our systems.

# HUDDLE 15

## COLOR WALK

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### ACTIVITY:

The goal of this activity is to spend a few minutes walking around noticing the space around you. Ideally, this is something you can do outside, but it will work inside as well. Use color to help the participants focus on/look for certain things.

Start by doing a color check in. Go around the circle and have participants report out what color they feel most like today.

Then, challenge participants to take a walk for the next few minutes and try to notice everything they see that is that color. They can:

- Write down everything they see
- Try to remember up to 5 things that they see
- Walk with a partner and point things out to each other

### DEBRIEF:

This activity is all about being in the present. Which is an important element of regulation.

It can be hard to let go of what happened to us before we got to camp- we overslept, the train was packed and sweaty, we had a fight with our significant other, etc .. And sometimes, our body can still be holding on to something stressful without us even knowing it. When we're in a safe and connected space, getting into the present can help us let go of those things that can dysregulate us.

Regulation practices help us set a better tone with our young people. If we're regulated, they'll be regulated. And that means taking care of stress we're conscious of and the impact of stress that we might not recognize.

# HUDDLE 16

## ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS: MATCH

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### ACTIVITY:

Have players find a partner and stand back-to-back (any size group works, more people make the challenge harder).

Explain that they will be playing rock paper scissors - but this will be a full body version. That means:

- Rock: Curl down into a rock
- Scissors: Cut like an alligator chomp
- Paper: Hold hands next to face with palms facing out and yell “paper!”

On the count of three they should jump-turn around and do either rock, scissors or paper. But instead of trying to BEAT the other person, they are trying to MATCH with them.

Count down so that everyone turns around at once- watch how much celebrating each team that matches does.

You can keep the game going by building up the challenge- have the pairs partner up with another pair and see if all 4 can match.

### DEBRIEF:

This game is about changing the challenge so that it's not about a winner and a loser – it's about working together to try and accomplish something together.

You will find that when people are able to match, they often celebrate even more than they would if they won in a regular rock, scissors, paper showdown.

This is because being “in it” with someone else makes us feel like we belong. The connection to the other person makes us enjoy the win that much more.

There are two studies that illustrate the power of being “in it” or approaching a challenge together – the power of a meaningful connection with another person.

- The first is a study done with people who were about to hike up a mountain. They asked people who were going to hike it alone and those who were hiking it with a friend how steep they thought the mountain was. Those who were hiking it with a friend thought it was less steep than those who were hiking it alone.
- In the second study, they had people rate their enjoyment of eating chocolate – some who were eating chocolate by themselves, and some who were eating it with a friend. Those who were eating with a friend enjoyed the chocolate more.

Being with other people who we know and trust helps us take on challenges better (and enjoy them more). These connections also help us be more regulated and ready to take on any challenge at camp (and enjoy camp more).

# HUDDLE 17

## SHAPE RACES

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### ACTIVITY:

This game can be played with one group or you can break into multiple teams.

When you call out the name of a shape, each team will run across to the open space and form that shape by using all of the players on the team.

They can lay on the ground, stand, sit, or whatever works best.

When they are done they should call out “In Shape.” You can challenge them against their own time (if one group) or challenge them to find their shape faster than the other team.

Play 3-4 rounds adjusting the difficulty of the shape as you progress and based on what works best for the group and space.

Round 1: Circle

Round 2: Square

Round 3: Triangle

Round 4: Star

### DEBRIEF:

What did you notice about this activity?

You should hear answers like this – or prompt them to think about the following:

Did you have the chance to connect with anyone?

Did you have the chance to move your body?

What about the challenge? Did the increased challenge of different shapes feel manageable?

This activity is great because it’s got a lot of the things that we know help us feel regulated – the chance to move our bodies and the chance to connect with others.

Let’s think about ways that you might modify this game even more to give MORE CONNECTION and MORE MOVEMENT. What might you do?

Connection:

Change group sizes so that sometimes the whole group is working together and sometimes smaller groups get to connect with each other.

Challenge the group to come up with a team handshake that they have to do before they can call “in shape.”

Movement:

Groups have to run to a space further away from the start before they can start making their shape.

Teams have to do some other kind of movement to get to the space where they can make their shapes (butt kicks, high knees, grapevines, power skips, lunges).

Groups have to come up with a dance that represents the shape (instead of forming it). What is the team’s triangle dance?

The more movement and connection, the more regulated we can be at camp.

# HUDDLE 18

## WHO'S GOT THE BEAT

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(FOR MEDIUM TO LARGE PARKS)

### ACTIVITY:

Groups stand in a circle. One volunteer- who will become the “beat seeker” leaves the space so that the group can decide who is going to be the “beat keeper”.

The beat keeper will set the beat for the group – they will either clap their hands, stomp their feet, snap their fingers, slap their hands against their legs, etc.

The beat seeker comes back and stands in the middle of the circle. The group will already have started their beat.

The beat keeper will try to change the beat without being detected.

The beat seeker will try to keep the beat.

### DEBRIEF:

OK, what did you notice about this game?

Beat seekers: what helped you figure out who the beat keeper was?

Beat keepers: what helped you disguise your beat changes?

We love this game because it's good practice at getting our top camp skills – looking and listening – in shape. But I'd also love for us to think about this through a regulation lens. Why do you think we'd play this game as a way to promote regulation?

Yes! Quite literally, the BEAT! This game is all about finding a group rhythm- and then changing it and finding it again.

Patterned repetitive, rhythmic activity is soothing- both because it mirrors the sound of our mother's heartbeat, and because it's PREDICTABLE – things that are patterned and rhythmic are also predictable.

There are opportunities for control – the beat keeper gets to set the rhythm.

Safety and regulation go hand in hand- predictable things are safe; rhythmic things are safe, having some control makes us safe, connected people feel safer.

# HUDDLE 19

## FOUR CORNERS

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### ACTIVITY:

Designate 4 areas in the corners of the room (or on the court, in the space): Love it, like it, hard pass, never tried it.

Explain that you'll be asking a series of questions about different things. For each question, you're going to move to the corner of the room that matches up with how you feel about it.

Questions could be things like, How do you feel about?

- Mint chocolate chip ice cream
- Running on a treadmill
- Waking up early
- Iced coffee
- Public speaking

### DEBRIEF:

How was that activity?

Did you learn something new about someone?

This activity can give us a chance to see what we have in common with other folks around us. In this case, we used it as a way to learn some new things about our teammates. But it can also be a really helpful tool in getting feedback from the group, or for understanding how a group is doing. Changing the questions and/or the four corners can change the game entirely to give us, as rec leaders, more of the information that we might need.

What other ways might you set the game up so that you learn new things?

- Make the corners "love it, like it, dislike it, hate it" and ask about certain activities from camp or their general feelings about their experience.
- Make the corners "all the time, some of the time, every once in a while, and never" and ask them about things that they might be doing to help them be ready and regulated for camp.

Remember, asking questions to our campers is so important! It does so many good things, including helping them get regulated- because they feel more in control over their experience, they feel like they have something to contribute and because they can tell that we care about them.

Questions also help kids (and us, because it takes more effort on our side, too) spend more time using the part of their brain that is involved in learning (away from survival mode). They have more control and feel safer (trauma is the wrenching away of control when you need it the most, one of the most effective ways to heal is to be in control).

# HUDDLE 20

## EVERYONE'S IT

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### ACTIVITY:

Instruct everyone that you are playing “tag” but with some modifications

- Everyone is trying to tag everyone
- Freeze when you're tagged
- You can get back in when the person who tagged you gets tagged (if they are frozen, you are free)

We are going to play where you are not running, but moving by going “heel-toe”

Play a few rounds (or a long round if the round keeps going)

### DEBRIEF:

Ask: What did you notice about the game? Share some of these points if you don't hear them:

- It's inclusive – everyone can play
- Getting back in keeps kids engaged

I really like this game because of how it allows everyone to contribute. What did you notice about how this game helped everyone contribute?

- Getting back in means that young people aren't left out (and when they get left out, they can get distracted and start fussing at each other).
- Because you're watching the person who got you out and rooting for them to get out, you're following along the whole time – again, another way to be part of the game at all times.
- The other thing that we did here – by modifying this game so that it is played “heel-toe” we're ensuring that more young people feel like they can contribute by leveling the playing field - making it so that it's not the fittest and fastest kids that are the most successful at this game (which is usually what happens in tag games).

When we get to contribute, we feel like we belong. When we feel like we belong, we feel safe, and then we're more engaged in what we're doing (and not doing other things). These are the kinds of PRO-ACTIVE changes to games we can make to ensure that everyone feels like they are part of the activity.



# APPENDIX

## CORE CONCEPTS - THE BRAIN

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### A LOOK AT THE BRAIN

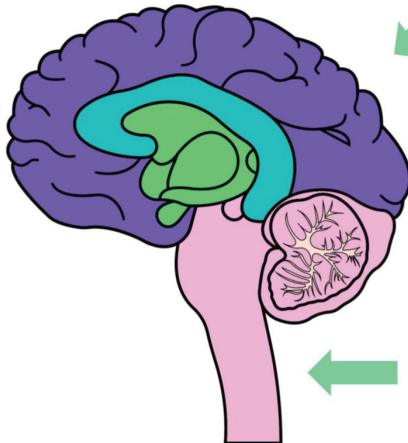
#### FRONTAL LOBES

COMPLEX  
THOUGHT

Adulthood  
(after 21-26)

**CHJS**

CENTER FOR HEALING AND JUSTICE THROUGH SPORT



#### LIMBIC SYSTEM

EMOTIONS  
INTERACTING  
WITH STIMULI

Adolescence

#### BRAIN STEM

BASIC FUNCTIONS

In utero; Early childhood

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# APPENDIX

## REGULATING ACTIVITIES TO INTEGRATE INTO CAMP

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### PLAY CATCH

Catch is a patterned, repetitive, rhythmic activity (PPRA) that athletes do with a teammate. Campers control the tempo, velocity and type of “throw.” Catch doesn’t have to be in baseball - throwing and catching any kind of ball or passing back and forth in some way (with a foot, a stick or a racquet) - counts.



### STATIONS

Incorporate activity stations to get young people moving and help campers regulate. Campers should choose their path through the stations so they control when they take on challenges that stretch them. Set stations up for sport skills, like ball handling (hands or feet), serving, wall ball, taking a specific shot, aiming at a target, etc. are great activities. Or set it up With movement activities, like jumping rope, speed ladder (which can be drawn with chalk), jumping jacks, lunges, etc.



### JUGGLING

Not the kind you do alone, but with a group - where you try to keep the ball up in the air. It’s regularly used in soccer and can be used for volleyball. It can be sport-agnostic if you bring a beach ball to camp (to work on hand-eye coordination, communication and spacing). It’s relationally rich and has patterned, repetitive, rhythmic activity.



### TALK WHEN THEY ARE READY

Give space to young people to choose when they receive feedback from you. Build structures that allow campers to tell you when they are ready to talk. It could be as simple as a code word that means not ready to talk (like pineapples) or it can be a physical space they can go when they need to regulate before engaging.



### WALL BALL

Wall ball is a skill-building activity with a lot of “touches” - throwing and catching (baseball/ softball) passing and receiving with hands (basketball, volleyball), feet (soccer), a racquet (tennis, squash) or a stick (lacrosse) - all against a wall. It’s patterned, repetitive & rhythmic and gives the camper complete control over the activity.



### DYNAMIC STRETCHING

Dynamic stretching (moving through space by engaging in different repetitive motions) - high knees, butt kicks, sliding, lunges, power skips, changing direction, grapevines, etc. - is typically used as a warm-up or cool-down, but can also be used to transition from one activity to the next or when the team or player needs to regulate. Let players take turns “calling” the moves for the team.



### WARM-UPS & COOL DOWNS

It’s not an accident that warm-ups and cool downs are full of PPRA activities that teams often engage in together. They are predictable and relationally rich. Add opportunities for players to individually get themselves ready (have some control) and these parts of the day become just as useful for the brain as they are for the body.



### RITUALS

Sports is loaded with rituals - for teams and individuals. Look for opportunities to incorporate more of both that bring more predictability, PPRA and positive interactions to the team. Things like taking the field the same way for every inning, huddling up after important moments, and having team mistake or focus rituals.

# APPENDIX

## RITUALS AND RESETS

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TYPE OF RITUAL	EXAMPLES
<b>Ready Rituals</b> How a camper gets ready for practice of a game or how we transition from one activity to the next	Basketball players having to “make” their last shot; baseball players going around the infield before tossing the warm-up ball off the field to start each inning
<b>Team Ready Rituals</b> Chance for teams or groups to bond and for everyone to contribute	The Maori All Blacks’ ceremonial Haka; pasta dinners before a race
<b>Risk-Taking Rituals</b> The thing campers do to get themselves ready to do something new	A “pump-up” mix; a special handshake with a teammate; an athlete’s mantra (I am a strong and capable person)
<b>Mistake Rituals</b> Whatever the camper can do to move on from a mistake; often something the whole team does	Saying “my bad” and pounding their chest; A softball player throwing out snaps and the team snapping back
<b>Team Celebration Rituals</b> The way a team celebrates, in the moment, or when a player achieves some kind of goal	Dumping a jug of ice water on a coach after an important win; goal celebration in soccer; throwing the coxswain into the river after a race
<b>Reset Rituals</b> How a camper calms down; restarts, or focuses through pressure	Free throw routines; volleyball team huddles between every point

# APPENDIX

## HEALING-CENTERED SUMMER CHECKLIST

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### **REGULATION:** Calm the body and brain

- ☐ Start each day with a consistent opening routine (e.g., greeting handshake, team name chant, breathing circle)
- ☐ Use patterned, repetitive, rhythmic activities (PRRA) throughout the day (dribbling, jumping, dance, etc.)
- ☐ Lead short group breathing exercises during transitions or after intense moments
- ☐ Build in movement breaks to help reset energy levels
- ☐ Notice signs of dysregulation (e.g., shutdowns, outbursts, fidgeting) and respond with calm, structured options

### **RELATIONSHIP:** Build safety and connection

- ☐ Use intentional questions to build relationships between campers and staff
- ☐ Encourage positive peer interactions through team games and partner activities
- ☐ Create rituals for connection (e.g., handshake buddies, daily huddles, end-of-day circles)
- ☐ Offer predictable routines to help kids feel safe (e.g., clear transitions, consistent daily schedule)
- ☐ Celebrate small moments of success and connection regularly

### **RESILIENCE:** Offer manageable challenges

- ☐ Design activities that are hard enough to stretch campers—but not overwhelm them
- ☐ Break big tasks into small, achievable steps
- ☐ Teach campers that discomfort is part of growth, not a sign of failure
- ☐ Celebrate effort, not just outcomes (e.g., “I saw how hard you tried!”)
- ☐ Reflect with campers on what they learned by sticking with something hard

### **REASON:** Support thinking and learning (When campers are regulated)

- ☐ Provide simple, clear instructions—especially during transitions and new activities
- ☐ Adjust expectations when campers are dysregulated—don’t expect “smart brain” behavior from a stressed-out brain
- ☐ Offer choices when possible to give campers a sense of control
- ☐ Use question-based coaching to promote reflection and engagement
- ☐ Connect activities to future goals or personal growth to increase resilience

### **REFLECT:** Grow intentionally as a team

- ☐ Hold daily or weekly team huddles to check in, reflect, and reset
- ☐ Use Coach Checks or informal conversations to reflect on your own regulation and impact- remember that we need connection, movement and manageable challenges, too
- ☐ Collect and share camper reflections (verbally, on paper, or through creative expression)
- ☐ Recognize and support teammates’ efforts with positive feedback and gratitude
- ☐ Ask for help when needed—we can’t give what we don’t have







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