



Place

SuperCamp Italy is held once a year at the Rifugio Sores hotel in the beautiful mountains of northern Italy.

Choice

I was interested in participating in camp for a couple reasons. I am interested in creating my own youth camps and running youth groups, and wanted to fully experience one as a clinician. Also I am interested in cultural diversity and how other countries address social problems. I am particularly interested in how Italy does so, as I have family in Italy and have always been fascinated by the culture.

Agency

Supercamp is a 10 day camp for kids aged 12 to 18. It is a service of Quantum Learning, which is a organization that uses cutting edge neuroscience to restructure approaches to education. Supercamp uses a holistic approach to improve a participants family relationships, grades, self-esteem and confidence.

Project Information

My position was as a team leader for eight 15-18 year old participants. I was responsible for the logistics of watching the entire (22 campers) team from 7:30am-10:30pm every day, as well as leading my group through activities, debriefing as a group afterwards, and supporting participants when they struggled.

Outcomes

My experience with the camp has directly had an impact on my current academics. I am working on projects in two different classes that are somewhat modeled off my experience in this camp. I am using group activities I experienced in the camp and the science behind their effectiveness to inform these projects.

Skills Developed

- I increased my confidence in working with this population. Initially I didn't think I wanted to work with adolescents. My ability to establish rapport and the transformation I saw these kids go through changed my mind completely.
- I increased my group facilitation skills. Because we debriefed constantly as a group I was able to improve my group facilitation and in the end, the group was largely running itself.
- I increased my knowledge of how to engage kids. Fundamental to camp is kinesthetic learning, which allows the individual to develop better memory processing through physiological experience.

Classroom Connections

Julie Ribaud's Infant and Child Development class is amazing and prepared me for working with this population.

Lessons Learned

Some aspects of Italian culture really added to the camp. The quality of food we ate was excellent, and the value of food in the culture gave participants a healthy appreciation for meal times. Also, the campers were from 12+ different countries, and I think the diversity was a tremendous strength to the camp.



Career Connections

I plan to use my experience with SuperCamp to inform the development of the camps I will create and run. I also will use what I have learned about group dynamics in my clinical work with groups.

Advice

- Think outside the box. It's a big world out there. I just started reaching out to people I knew in Italy and found this camp supervisor.
- Stay open minded. I wasn't sure that I wanted to work with this demographic, but now I'm planning on doing lots of work with adolescents in my career.
- Travel after your placement. I think because social work in the US is so much different than in most of the rest of the world, it's important for social workers to experience other cultures. Just travel, and observe how people fix problems in other places.

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