

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.**

Expressive Therapy

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).
- Wilkström (2005) discovered commonly expressed themes of "powerlessness, fear, and longing" in children's expressive art.
- 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 Background



- 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](#)

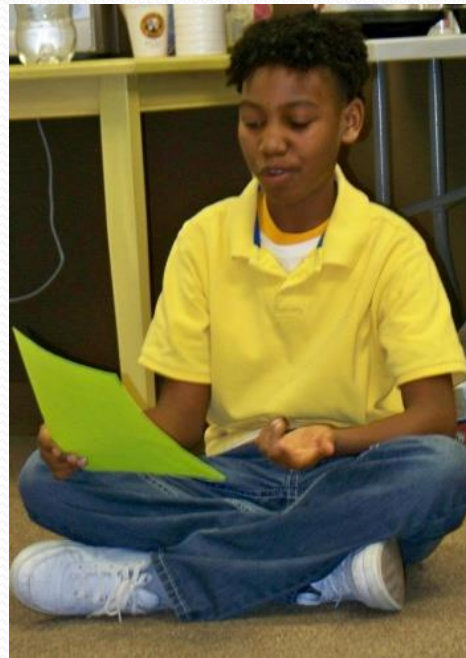
Development

- 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!

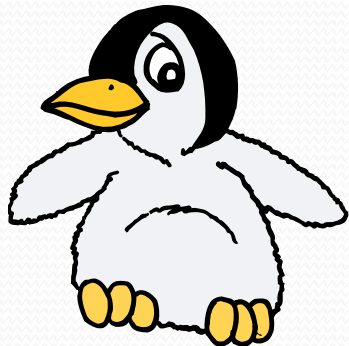
Original Script: Guided by camper concerns and interests identified in a preplanning session.

- 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?**

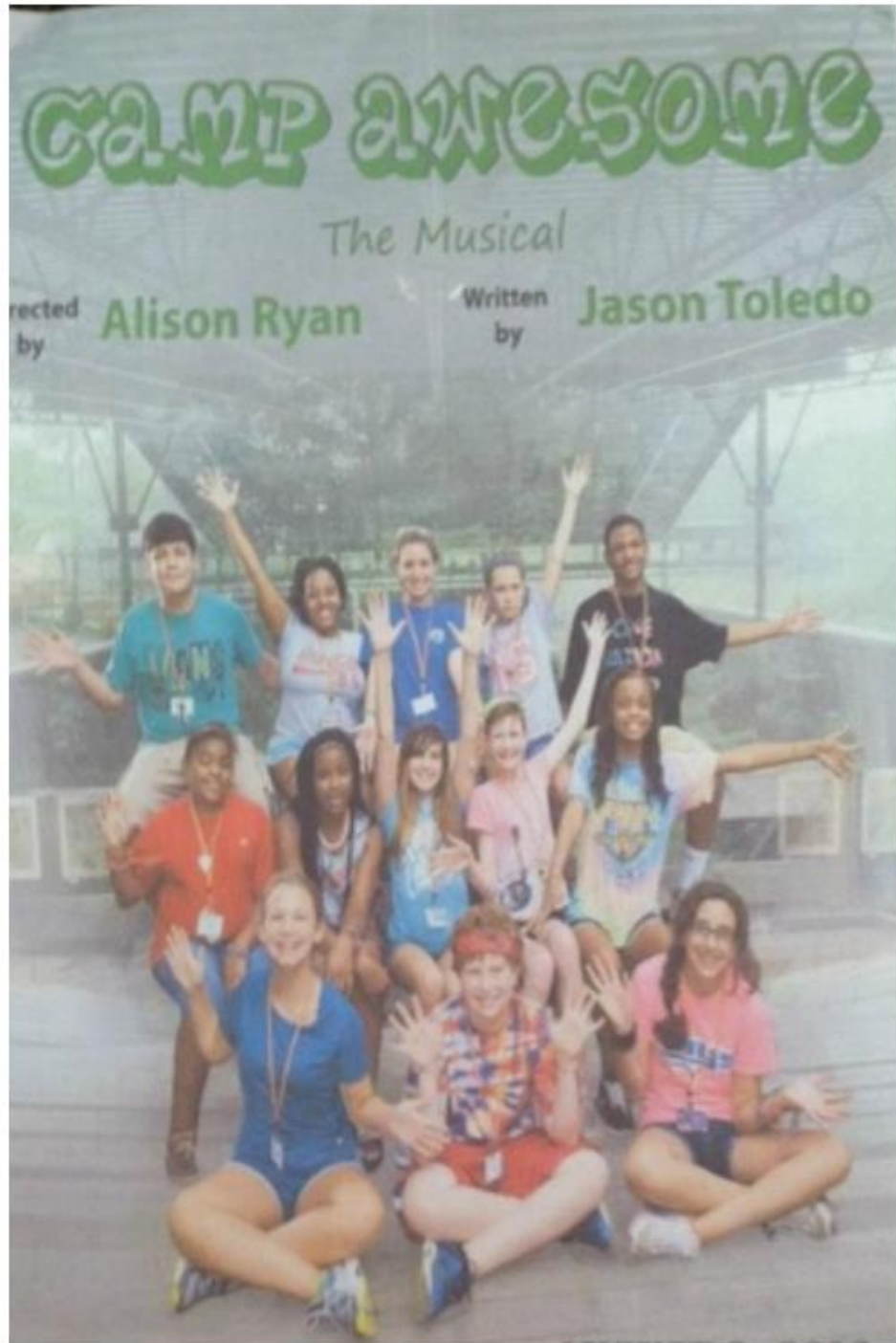


**Hey I just bolused
And this is crazy
Blood sugars thirty
So gluc me maybe?**









Feedback



“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.

Professional Development

Self-awareness and Reflection:

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.

MCHB Core Competencies

Self:

Competency 2: Self-reflection

Competency 4: Critical Thinking

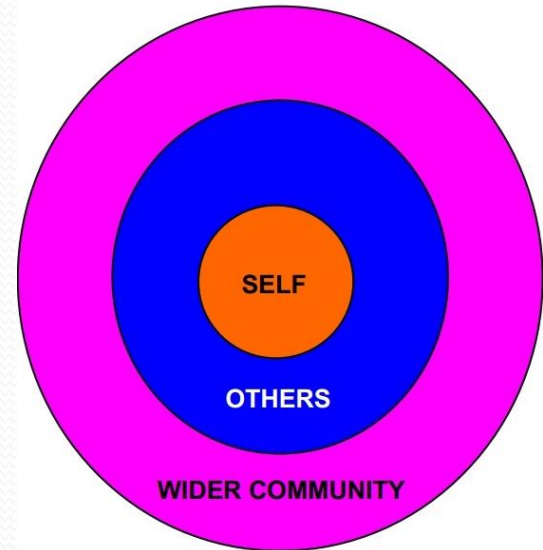
Others:

Competency 5: Communication

Competency 9: Developing Others Through Teaching and Mentoring

Wider Community:

Competency 11: Working with Communities and Systems



References

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Thank you!

