Learning at Camp? Disease-Management Programming and Why It’s Critical

Rationale for Disease-Management Programming

 ✓ Most children living with chronic health conditions will go on to experience disease or treatment effects into adulthood.
 ✓ There is preliminary scientific evidence that disease-management programming at health-specific camps can increase positive outcomes and decrease negative outcomes.

Sample Outcomes

 ✓ Disease knowledge (e.g., name of conditions and medications)
 ✓ Disease management skills (e.g., swallowing pills, doing injections, pain management)
 ✓ Self-management knowledge (e.g., nutrition, exercise, sleep, emotions)
 ✓ Self-management skills (e.g., cooking, exercise, coping, stress management)
 ✓ Emotional, social, or physical symptoms (e.g., anxiety, blood sugar, isolation)
 ✓ Advocacy/assertiveness (e.g., asking for accommodations, expressing healthcare wishes)
 ✓ Healthcare transition skills (e.g., ability to order prescriptions, make appointments)

Programming Ideas

 ✓ Games to learn disease information (Jeopardy, Family Feud, etc.)
 ✓ Practice times with nurses to learn how to swallow pills and do injections
 ✓ Cooking sessions with healthy foods and education about the nutrients (e.g., anti-inflammatory smoothies)
 ✓ Guest speakers (e.g., massage therapists, yoga instructors, sports medicine)
 ✓ Skits and role plays for practicing advocacy/assertiveness
 ✓ Q & A sessions with health professionals and young adult role models
 ✓ Essential oil education and opportunities to make take home items (e.g. roller balls)
 ✓ Kudos at meal times for kids who do their own injections for the first time
 ✓ Education and discussion about emotional ups and downs of living with a chronic disease, facilitated by a mental health professional
References


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