Counselor- and Leader-in Training Programs at American Camp Association Camps: Results from the 2017 CIT/LIT Program Survey

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1   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the fall of 2017, a survey was administered to ACA member camps to better understand the counselor- and leader-in-training programs offered to adolescent campers. The survey was subdivided into four major sections: (1) program descriptions; (2) the training provided to CIT/LIT participants; (3) program outcomes; and (4) camp descriptives. Of the 404 administered surveys, 194 (48%) individuals returned usable data. Therefore, these results represent 194 different CIT/LIT programs.

The average CIT/LIT program served approximately 40 adolescent campers each summer. The participants tended to be 15-17 years old, they were predominately female (60/40 split), and most were former campers (approximately 85%). CIT/LIT participants attended their program for one to four weeks and they generally paid a reduced fee to attend, as their labor offset some of the camper fees. Participating camps indicated that they view CIT/LIT participants as campers, rather than staff members, and the primary focus of their programming was to train future camp staff. Unsurprisingly, CIT/LIT participants spent approximately 63% of their time working with younger campers.

The training of CIT/LIT participants can be summarized as follows. Typically, dedicated individual(s) facilitate the program and support the CIT/LIT's growth and development. CIT/LIT participants received various forms of mentorship during their time at camp. Mentoring often occurred by shadowing or co-leading with more experienced staff. Participants reported using experiential teaching techniques to prepare their CIT/LITs to teach campers in developmentally appropriate ways. Of the 18 potential training activities listed, the five most frequently selected activities were: (1) providing individual verbal feedback to the CIT/LIT participant; (2) reviewing the camp's policies and procedures; (3) using role plays and scenarios as teaching tools; (4) using returning staff to provide mentoring support to the CIT/LIT participant; and (5) having the CIT/LIT meet one on one with a senior staff member or the CIT/LIT program director.

Reported outcomes of participation in a CIT/LIT program can be subdivided into three distinct categories: technical skills, intrapersonal skills, and interpersonal skills. Survey respondents indicated that experience working with younger campers was the most important technical skill-based outcome of their CIT/LIT program. Gaining personal responsibility was the most important intrapersonal outcome, while learning compassion and caring was chosen as the most important interpersonal outcome. In general, respondents reported interpersonal learnings as the most important outcome of participating in their CIT/LIT program. The decision-making opportunities typically offered to CIT/LIT participants were predominantly task-related, and the eight distinct types of decision-making opportunities offered to CIT/LIT participants were: (1) planning responsibilities; (2) being a role model; (3) working with and helping campers; (4) leadership responsibilities; (5) choosing work-related tasks; (6) offering opinions; (7) making decisions; and (8) progressive decision-making responsibilities.

Respondents reported viewing CIT/LIT participants as campers; however, they saw the role of the CIT/LIT program as a means to train future staff. These findings prompt two questions: (1) What are the affordances and limitations of viewing CIT/LIT participants as

campers? and (2) Does this view limit the leadership and personal development opportunities available to CIT/LIT participants?

Finally, developmentally appropriate programming that provides participants the opportunity to make meaningful decisions has the potential to promote positive youth development (e.g., Akiva & Petrokubi, 2016). While participants reported offering their CIT/LIT participants opportunities to make meaningful decisions, some of them, like menu planning, did not appear meaningful. Ensuring that decision-making opportunities are developmentally appropriate and truly incorporate the CIT/LIT's voice and opinion will increase the likelihood that growth and development are fostered.

Counselor- and Leader-in Training Programs at American Camp Association Camps: Results from the 2017 CIT/LIT Program Survey

2   INTRODUCTION

A survey was administered to American Camp Association (ACA) affiliated camps in December of 2017 to better understand the counselor-in-training (CIT) and leader-in-training (LIT) programs offered to adolescent campers. Participants were recruited via two separate channels. The Camp Business Operations (CBO) participants were recruited through the Camp Business Operations survey that was conducted by Readex Research in the fall of 2017. The survey was sent to a systematically identified stratified sample of ACA camps. As part of the CBO survey, respondents were asked to provide their email address if they were interested in participating in this CIT/LIT study. Three hundred twenty-four usable email addresses were collected via the CBO survey. The participants (N= 80) in the second survey, Enrollment survey (ES), were enlisted through two distinct processes: the weekly email newsletter (ACA Now) or through a direct email sent to all member camps (~3000) in the fall of 2017. In total, 404 individuals were invited to complete this survey. Two hundred twenty-one individuals submitted surveys, but after cleaning and screening the data, 194 surveys were usable, a 48% response rate. The 194 completed surveys represented 194 different CIT/LIT programs across the United States. Of the 194 completed surveys, 151 individuals were recruited through the CBO survey and 43 were recruited through the ES.

The survey was subdivided into four major sections: (1) program descriptions; (2) the training provided to CIT/LIT participants; (3) program outcomes; and (4) camp descriptives. The results of the survey are summarized using these sections as guides. In addition, the reported results are the combined data from the CBO and ES participants unless otherwise specified.

3   PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

For the camps participating in this study, the number of campers who took part in a CIT/LIT program in 2017 ranged from two to 152, with the average being approximately 38. In this instance, camps who completed the CBO survey (N= 150, M=40.71, SD= 34.49) reported hosting a significantly higher number of CIT/LIT participants (t (189)= 2.53, p= .01) than those respondents who completed the ES (N= 41, M= 26.22, SD= 24.09).

Program duration was of interest in this study. Half of the programs lasted between one to four weeks (see Figure 1), with approximately 25% one to two weeks in length and the other 25% were three to four weeks long. Participants who selected *Multiple Years* (N= 17), were asked to further describe their CIT/LIT program (see Figure 2). The multi-year programs can be categorized into four main types. Some programs allow their participants to enroll in a CIT/LIT program multiple times. These types of programs may get successively longer over time; however, that is not always the case. Nor was it apparent in the provided descriptions if participants had opportunities for more challenging work assignments in consecutive years. The second type of multi-year programs was progressive, so the CIT/LIT participants had to

complete the first year of the program before they could graduate to the next level where they would be given increased responsibility. The third type of program was also progressive, but the unequivocal focus was preparing the CIT/LIT participant to assume a camp counselor role. The final type of program was a summer and beyond program. These programs offered activities and training throughout the school year, often on weekends, that complemented or built upon the curriculum introduced during the summer.

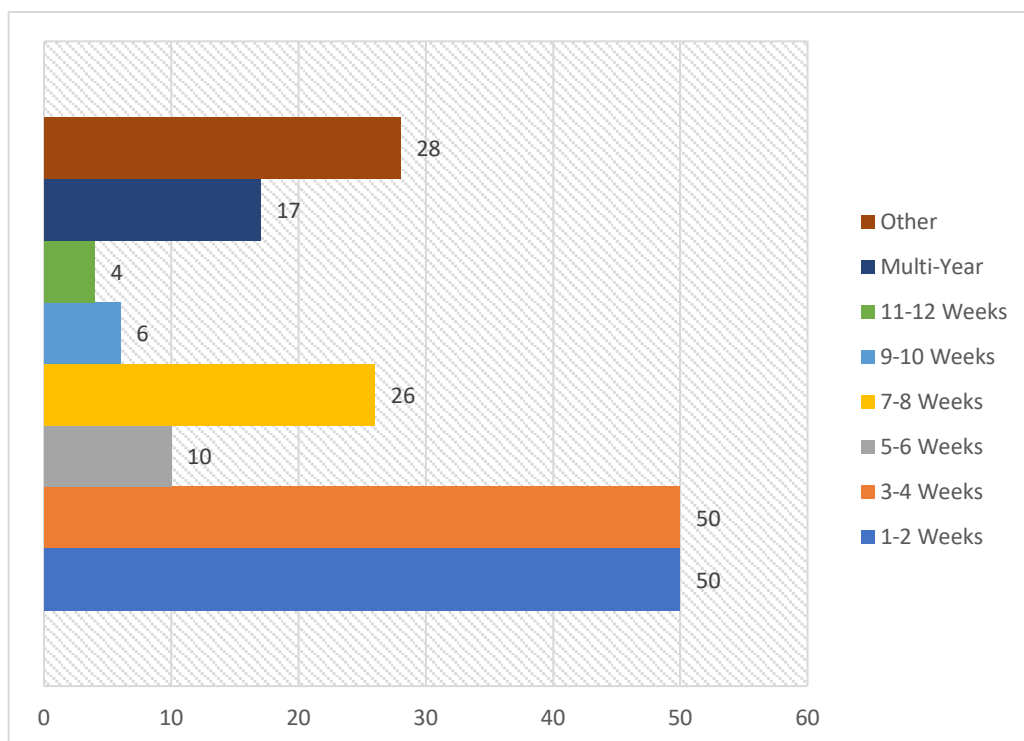### 3.1.1   FIGURE 1: DURATION OF CIT/LIT PROGRAM

Figure 1. The duration of participating camps' CIT/LIT programs. The listed numbers indicate how often each individual response was selected.

The respondents who selected *Other* (*N*= 28), were asked to describe the duration of their program. When analyzing the provided responses, they can be grouped into four distinct categories. Often, the duration of their program fell out of the bounds of our prescribed categories. For example, a program might be two to four weeks long. For others, their camps offered both CIT and LIT programs, and each differed in length. Camps also offered various levels of CIT/LIT programming, and the length of time a participant spent at camp depended on their level within the program. Finally, some programs were year-round and coupled summer programming with activities or events throughout the school year.

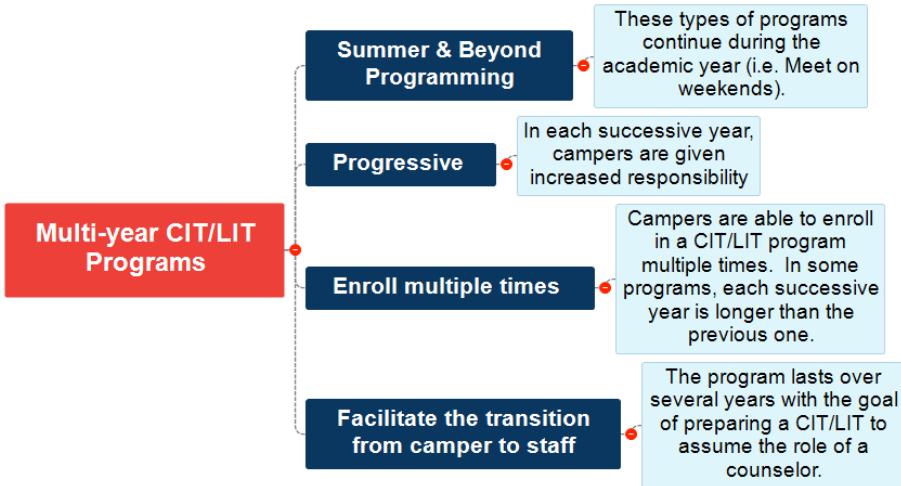### 3.1.2   FIGURE 2. THE TYPES OF MULTI-YEAR CIT/LIT PROGRAMS

Figure 2. The four types of multi-year (*N*= 17) CIT/LIT programs described by participants.

Participants were asked to identify the ages of their CIT/LIT participants (see Figure 3). Based on the provided data, CIT/LIT programming was provided most frequently to campers aged 15-17.

3.1.3   FIGURE 3. CIT/LIT PARTICIPANT AGES

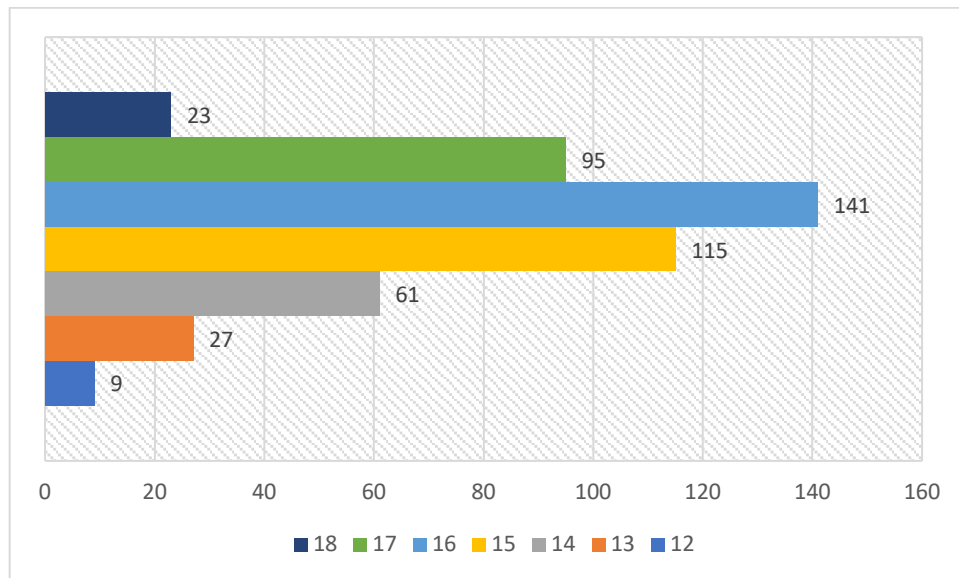*Figure 3.* The ages served by participating CIT/LIT programs. The listed numbers indicate how often each individual response was selected.

Respondents were asked about the compensation structure of their CIT/LIT programs. Of the various compensation models outlined in the survey, the option used most frequently by participating organizations was that CIT/LIT participants were not compensated for their work

around camp but paid a reduced camper fee (see Figure 4). This fee structure was employed by 45% of participating organizations. The next most frequently mentioned fee structure was that CIT/LIT participants were not compensated and paid the standard camper fee. This option was selected by 23% of respondents. Of the 184 responses, only 16 participating programs paid their CIT/LIT participants, with 15 of the 16 programs offering their CIT/LITs a nominal stipend.

As many of the participating CIT/LIT programs charged a fee for attending the program, camps were asked whether they offered scholarships to CIT/LIT participants. Of the 177 individuals who completed this question, 123 (63%) indicated that they offered scholarships, while 54 (28%) did not. The percentage of CIT/LIT participants who applied for scholarships to offset the cost of attendance ranged from 0 to 100 percent, with the average being 24% ($SD=$ 24.74). Of the individuals who applied for scholarships, the percentage who eventually received scholarships ranged from 0-100%, with the average being 24% ($SD=$ 25.79). These data indicated that across these CIT/LIT programs, approximately 25% of CIT/LIT participants applied for scholarships, while around 25% of those who applied received financial assistance to attend the program.

Participants were asked to indicate on a sliding scale how their CIT/LIT participants were viewed by the camp, ranging from campers (0) to staff (100). The mid-point of the scale (50) indicates that CIT/LIT participants are viewed equally as a camper and a staff member. The combined results ($N=$ 181, $M=$ 38.76, $SD=$ 26.89) were closer to the camper end of the spectrum. However, the mean score of ES participants ($N=$ 42, $M=$ 47.00, $SD=$ 25.52) was significantly higher (t (179)= -2.29, $p=$ .02) than that of the CBO participants ($N=$ 139, $M=$ 36.27, $SD=$ 26.89). Therefore, CBO respondents viewed their CIT/LITs more like campers than their ES counterparts. When examining these results, CIT/LIT participants were more likely to be viewed as campers. This view is supported by the data offered for the previous compensation question. Since CIT/LIT participants are viewed as campers, it is only logical that they were asked to pay a fee to participate in the program.

Respondents were asked to indicate the primary focus of their CIT/LIT program ranging from youth development (0) to train future staff members (100). The mid-point of the scale (50) indicates that the program has a dual focus of promoting youth development while training future staff. When combined, the results ($N=$ 182, $M=$ 61.43, $SD=$ 20.89) were above the midpoint of the scale and closer to the train future staff end of the spectrum; therefore, CIT/LIT programs were seen by participating camps as a vehicle for preparing future staff members.

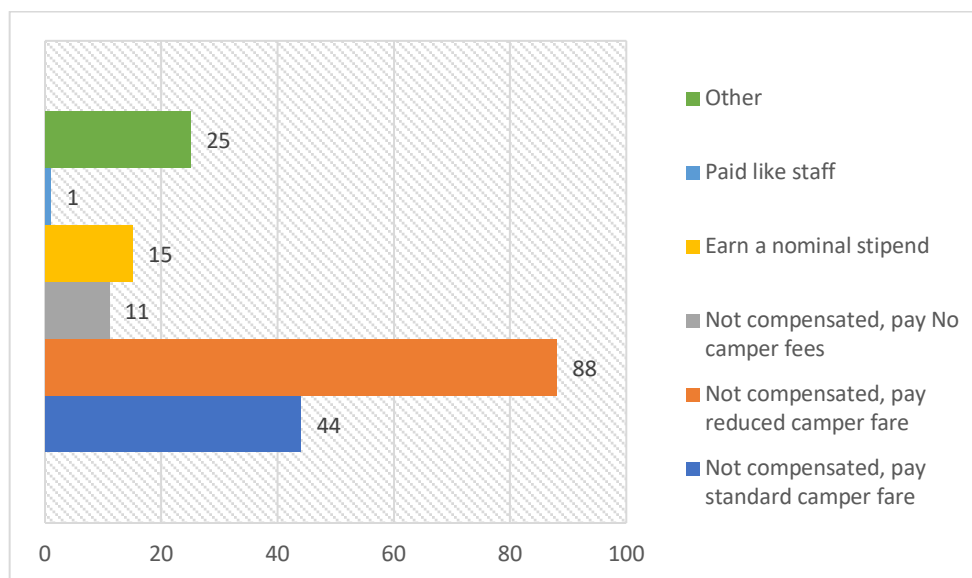### 3.1.4   FIGURE 4. COMPENSATION STRUCTURE OF CIT/LIT PROGRAMS

Figure 4. The compensation and fee structure used in the CIT/LIT programs. The listed numbers indicate how often each individual response was selected.

Respondents were asked to pinpoint the percentage of time their CIT/LIT participants spent working with younger campers from 0% to 100%. The results (N= 174, M= 62.53, SD= 23.56) indicated that approximately two-thirds of CIT/LIT participants' time was spent with younger campers. The mean score of ES participants (N= 40, M= 70.20, SD= 25.00) was higher than that of the CBO participants (N= 134, M= 60.25, SD= 22.71), and this difference was statistically significant (t (172)= -2.38, p= .02). Considering previously reported findings that the primary focus of CIT/LIT programs was preparing future staff, it is only logical that working with younger campers is a large part of these CIT/LIT programs.

Across these data, there was approximately a 60/40 split between female and male CIT/LIT participants (see Figure 5). However, a small percentage of participants were identified as gender non-conforming.

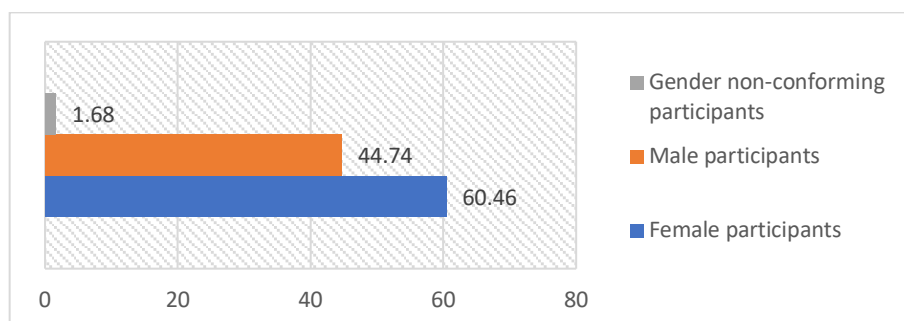3.1.5   FIGURE 5. CIT/LIT PARTICIPANT GENDER

Figure 5. The gender delineation of CIT/LIT participants (in percent).

Participating camps were asked to identify the racial makeup of their camper population (see Figure 6), and then asked to comment on whether their population of CIT/LIT participants

mirrored their camper demographic. The qualitative responses to whether the CIT/LIT racial demographic mirrored their camper population can be subdivided into four distinct categories. The most popular answer was "same," "no difference," or "about the same," which was offered by 22 (48%) individuals. When further analyzing these 22 responses, 21 of the 22 indicated that the majority of their camper population is white; therefore, these programs primarily served white CIT/LIT participants. Of the 46 responses, 33% noted that their CIT/LIT programs served a greater percentage of White participants. That is, their camper population was more racially diverse than their CIT/LIT program participants. Others noted that racial demographic information was not recorded, so they could not answer this question. Finally, some participants noted that the racial makeup of their CIT/LIT participants changed from year to year. In sum, based on these data, it appears that CIT/LIT programs primarily served a white population.

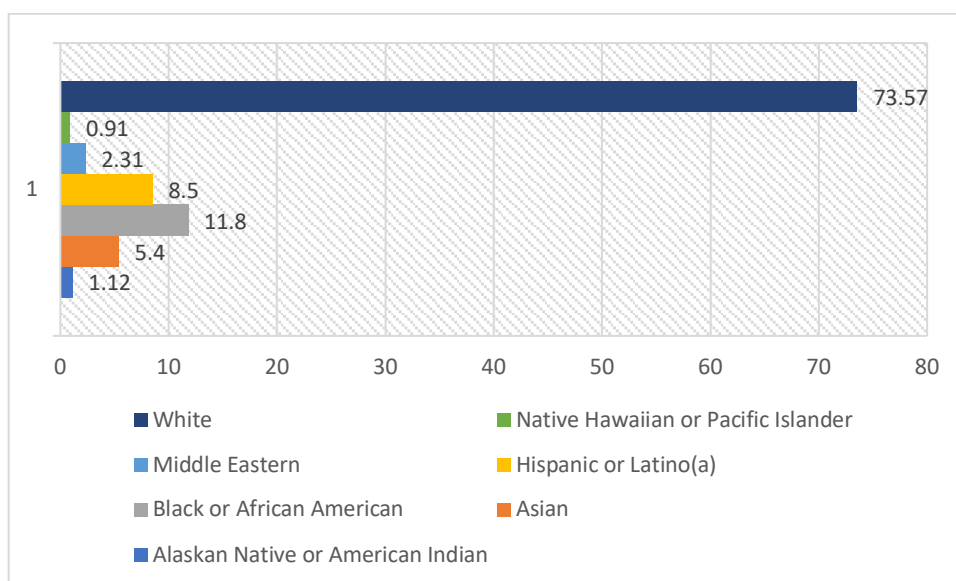### 3.1.6 FIGURE 6. RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS OF CAMPER POPULATION

Figure 6. The racial demographics of the camper population of participating camps (in percent).

Participants were asked what percentage of their CIT/LIT participants were hired within two years as camp or activity staff. Results indicated that approximately 58% ($N= 176$, $M= 57.88$, $SD= 27.45$) of CIT/LIT graduates were eventually employed by the camp. In a follow-up question, participants were asked to identify the primary reason why CIT/LIT participants were not hired. Of the three provided responses, 47% noted that the CIT/LIT participant chose to do something else, 21% indicated that positions were unavailable for all applicants, and 23% selected the other response. When analyzing the *Other* responses, five main themes emerged. Several respondents indicated that both responses in tandem better described the reasons for why CIT/LITs did not work at camp. Other programs had processes in place (e.g., a summative evaluation) that assessed the individual CIT/LIT's readiness to be hired as staff. In this instance, those CIT/LITs who were not hired did not pass the requisite evaluations. While this process was institutionalized in some programs, others relied on the judgment of program staff (e.g., the

CIT/LIT director) to assess participants' employability. Some participants, after completing their CIT/LIT program, realized that they were not interested in working as a camp counselor and chose not to apply. A small group of camps in this sample relied solely on volunteer counselors; therefore, former CIT/LIT participants in these programs could volunteer to work at camp, but they were not paid to do so. The fifth and final reason was that participating programs targeted younger adolescents, so they were not old enough to work at camp within the two-year timeframe demarcated in this question.

Five possible prerequisites for participating in a CIT/LIT program were articulated (see Figure 7). Of the 191 valid responses, only 29 (15%) programs did not have any prerequisites for their CIT/LIT programs. For those camps with prerequisites, completing an application was the most common. In fact, 67% of respondents required an application be completed before a CIT/LIT would be enrolled. The next most common perquisite was completing a formal interview (44%). Being a former camper or asking the director were not that common and marked infrequently. An *Other* response category was provided, and the resulting data can be classified into six groupings. Some camps have specific age or grade requirements for their CIT/LIT participants. For example, a camper must be 16 years old or they need to be a rising junior in high school. Others require that a potential CIT/LIT participant provide letters of recommendation or be endorsed by a former camp counselor. On the other hand, some programs are invitation only, and invited participants are determined either by lottery, the recommendation of a camp counselor, or via committee. A few of the multiyear programs noted that the first year of the CIT/LIT program was open enrollment, but participation in ensuing years was contingent on the CIT/LIT's performance. And finally, some camps required that their CIT/LIT participants completed specific training(s) (e.g., staff training) before they could participate.

3.1.7   FIGURE 7. CIT/LIT PROGRAM PREREQUISITES

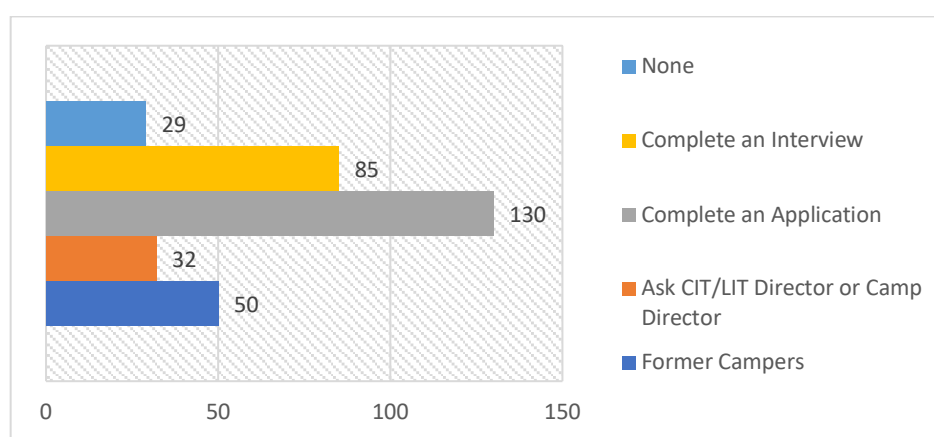*Figure 7.* The prerequisites required for participation in CIT/LIT programs. The listed numbers indicate how often each individual response was selected.

The final question in this section asked participants to identify the percentage of CIT/LIT participants who were former campers. Data ($N= 126$, $M= 85.99$, $SD= 15.37$) indicated that approximately 85% of CIT/LIT participants were former campers.

3.2 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

As the goal of this project was to better understand the CIT/LIT programming offered to adolescent campers, the data from this section allow us to form a general picture of participating CIT/LIT programs. CIT/LIT programs are offered to approximately 40 adolescents campers each summer. The participants are usually between the ages of 15-17 and their program is usually one to four weeks in length. The CIT/LIT participants generally pay a reduced fee to attend, as the labor they offer to camp offsets some of their camper fees, although around 25% of CIT/LIT programs charge the standard camper fees. The majority of programs had scholarship monies available for CIT/LIT participants. Unfortunately, the process of obtaining financial assistance was not assessed in this survey. Participating camps indicated that they view CIT/LIT participants as campers, rather than staff members, and the primary focus of their programming was to train future camp staff. To this end, CIT/LIT participants spend approximately 63% of their time working with younger campers. On the surface, these findings are interesting, and they beg the question whether there is congruency between viewing CIT/LITs as campers and seeing their programs as staff training vehicles. What are the affordances and limitations of viewing CIT/LIT participants as campers? And, more importantly, does this view limit the leadership and personal development opportunities available to CIT/LIT participants?

Finally, approximately 85% of CIT/LIT participants were former campers. In addition, the CIT/LIT programs represented here tended to have more female participants than male participants by a 60/40 split. Approximately 58% of CIT/LIT participants were eventually hired as camp or activity area staff. For those individuals who were not hired, participants identified two main factors that contributed to that decision. Either the camper chose not to pursue camp-related employment, or the camp did not have positions available, and therefore was unable to offer the former CIT/LIT participant employment. Data from this sample indicated that CIT/LIT programs were primarily populated by white participants. Camps utilizing their CIT/LIT programming to offer leadership development opportunities for adolescent campers should ensure these opportunities are available to as many participants as possible, particularly underrepresented groups. Specifically targeted attempts to recruit more diverse CIT/LIT participants may be necessary to increase participation of racial and ethnic minorities.

4 CIT/LIT TRAINING

A series of 11 questions inquired about the training offered to CIT/LIT participants. To begin, participants were asked, on a sliding scale, to indicate the focus of their CIT/LIT training program ranging from skill specific (0) to developmentally focused (100). The mid-point of the scale (50) indicates that the training offered a mix of skill specific and developmentally appropriate training components. The results ($N=$ 176, $M=$ 67.78, $SD=$ 19.17) were closer to the developmentally focused end of the spectrum. This approach trains CIT/LIT participants to interact and instruct younger campers in developmentally appropriate ways.

Participants were asked to indicate the teaching methods used during their CIT/LIT training program ranging from lecture (0) to experiential (100). When tallied, the results ($N=$ 176, $M=$ 74.85, $SD=$ 17.11) were closer to the experiential end of the spectrum. These data

suggest that the formal training offered to CIT/LITs by participating camps is characterized by experiential teaching methods, like scenarios or role plays or having the CIT/LIT participant participate in a mock day of camp, rather than lecture-based methods during formal training activities.

Respondents were asked to indicate the level of personalization of their CIT/LIT program ranging from formalized (0) to customized (100). The results (N= 173, M= 36.65, SD= 24.46) were closer to the formalized end of the spectrum, which suggests that the CIT/LIT programs offered by participating camps use a more formal, or standardized, curriculum whereby each participant is ushered through a similar curricular and programmatic progression instead of experiencing customized programming that is tailored to meet their personal or developmental needs.

Participants were asked to select the training components that are included in their CIT/LIT training program from a list of 18 options (see Figure 8). The five most frequently selected training components were: (1) providing individual verbal feedback to the CIT/LIT participant; (2) reviewing the camp's policies and procedures; (3) using role plays and scenarios as teaching tools; (4) using returning staff to provide mentoring support to the CIT/LIT participant; and (5) having the CIT/LIT meet one on one with a senior staff member or the CIT/LIT program director. An *Other* response was provided, and thematic analysis distilled the 40 responses into four categories: (1) intrapersonal skills development; (2) interpersonal skills development; (3) technical skills training; and (4) community development experiences. As for intrapersonal skills, CIT/LIT participants were taught self-management, self-regulation, and/or behavior management techniques. The interpersonal skills taught during training ranged from leadership classes to professional development opportunities (e.g., practice job interviews). The technical skills covered often depended on the tasks associated with the CIT/LIT program. Examples include outdoor skills (e.g., backpacking), job-related skills (e.g., how to operate power tools or dishwashing equipment), child development theory and practices, and for religiously affiliated programs, ministry training. To foster community among CIT/LIT participants, programs hosted events and experiences, like teambuilding activities or off-camp trips.

For these respondents, the majority of programs queried had a dedicated individual who worked with CIT/LIT participants. Of the participating camps, 140 (72%) had a CIT/LIT program director. Participants were also presented with an *Other* response choice and asked to describe who manages their CIT/LIT program. Fifteen individuals selected this answer, and when analyzed, the responses centered on three themes. Some CIT/LIT programs were managed by another full-time staff member (e.g., the assistant director), while others relied on two full-time staff members to co-manage the program. On the other hand, multiple camps noted that they hired an individual to facilitate the CIT/LIT program. This individual was described as the CIT/LIT program leader or the CIT/LIT counselor. Based on the qualitative descriptions, it appeared that these individuals were solely dedicated to the CIT/LIT program. The question used in this survey asked whether the camp had a CIT/LIT program director, but it did not investigate the duties or responsibilities of this position. At this point, all we can confidently state is that most of the participating camps employed a CIT/LIT program director.

A group of four questions further assessed the training regimen of CIT/LIT programs. Participants were asked whether their CIT/LIT participants were required to complete training activities before arriving at camp. Of the 174 responses, 126 (65%) reported that CIT/LIT participants were not required to complete training activities, like online modules, before beginning their formal training at camp.

Participating camps were asked whether CIT/LIT participants had the opportunity to shadow exemplary staff as part of their training or orientation. When combined, 142 (73%) of participating organizations indicated that their CIT/LIT programs utilized shadowing as a component of the CIT/LIT training progression. An important caveat to note is that this question did not ascertain the frequency or time involved in this developmental interaction, it only asked whether it occurred. Unfortunately, the quantity and quality of these interactions are not known.

Respondents were asked whether CIT/LIT participants had the opportunity to co-lead activities or programming with more experienced staff members. The response to this question was overwhelmingly "Yes," with 160 (83%) of the participating organizations indicating that their CIT/LIT programs had participants co-lead with more experienced staff members. However, this question did not assess the frequency or length of time a CIT/LIT co-led with more experienced peers, did not determine how CIT/LIT participants were transitioned to working independently, nor were the requirements of the co-leaders assessed (e.g., formal meetings). All we can conclude from these data is that co-leading with more experienced peers seems to be a vital component of the CIT/LIT training progression.

Participants were asked whether their CIT/LITs received formal mentorship during their program. Of the 174 valid responses, only 85 (44%) indicated that their program offered formal mentorship to their CIT/LIT participants. Participants were provided an *Other* option and invited to describe the mentoring offered to their CIT/LIT participants (see Figure 9). Respondents proceeded to describe the formal and informal mentoring offered to their CIT/LIT participants, identify the individual providing the support, as well as delineate the frequency with which these developmental interactions occurred. Most mentoring support offered to CIT/LIT participants was offered by the CIT/LIT program director/supervisor, but other full-time staff members also mentored CIT/LITs. The frequency of these meetings ranged from twice daily to every other week, and the discussions consisted of a formal exchange of feedback, coaching and skill development, and just having fun and getting to know each other. Often, the formal mentor was assigned to the CIT/LIT participant.

Summer counselors were also responsible for mentoring CIT/LITs. The mentoring in these interactions occurred both formally and informally. For example, a CIT/LIT would informally check-in with the counselor at the end of the day to discuss goals for the next day or areas for improvement. Some programs formalized this process and made it a standard part of the CIT/LIT curricular progression. More formal interactions would likely occur at the end of a camp session when the counselor would provide the CIT/LIT with a written performance evaluation. Some camps used near-peer mentors to support CIT/LITs. These individuals were usually in the CIT/LIT program as well but were further along in the program. CIT/LIT participants were regularly assigned to work with experienced activity area leaders who were tasked with teaching them the skills necessary to run that activity. In these interactions, the

CIT/LIT learned how to teach and facilitate a specific skill. Finally, camps offered their CIT/LIT participants formal classes on topics like leadership development and communication. These classes often occurred daily during one of the activity periods. Of note, camps did not usually rely on only one of these mentoring methods. They often used multiple methods to mentor their CIT/LITs, with the most popular combination being the CIT/LIT leader as well as a counselor.

4.1   CIT/LIT TRAINING SUMMARY

The training of CIT/LIT participants can be summarized as follows. Usually dedicated individual(s) facilitate the program and support the CIT/LIT's growth and development. CIT/LIT participants receive various mentorship during their time at camp and the frequency of these interactions ranges from daily to bi-weekly. Mentorship is received from the CIT/LIT program director or lead counselor, other full-time staff members, activity area instructors, seasonal counselors, near peers, and through formal class sessions. The focus of the CIT/LIT training is primarily to prepare the CIT/LIT to teach campers in developmentally appropriate ways. The teaching techniques tend to be experiential, where CIT/LITs learn about their roles and responsibilities through hands-on experiences. In this sample, most programs used a formalized curriculum. Therefore, CIT/LITs were ushered through a similar curricular and programmatic progression. The five most frequently selected training activities were: (1) providing individual verbal feedback to the CIT/LIT participant; (2) reviewing the camp's policies and procedures; (3) using role plays and scenarios as teaching tools; (4) using returning staff to provide mentoring support to the CIT/LIT participant; and (5) having the CIT/LIT meet one on one with a senior staff member or the CIT/LIT program director. Other salient components of CIT/LIT training included shadowing exemplary staff and co-leading with more experienced peers. Unfortunately, the nature of these interactions was not assessed in this survey. Lastly, CIT/LIT participants were not usually required to complete training, like online modules, before arriving at camp.

5   CIT/LIT PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Respondents were asked to indicate, on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *not important* (1) to *very important* (5), which skills were important outcomes of participation in their CIT/LIT program. The 24 skills were grouped into three distinct areas: technical skills (e.g., public speaking or teaching skills); intrapersonal skills (e.g., self-confidence or open-mindedness); and interpersonal skills (e.g., conflict resolution skills or compassion and caring). Of the eight technical skills, participants indicated that experience working with younger campers (*N*= 169, *M*= 4.55, *SD*= .71) was the most important outcome of their CIT/LIT programs, while gaining certifications, like First Aid or CPR was the least important (*N*= 158, *M*= 1.80, *SD*= 1.19). For the 10 intrapersonal skills, gaining personal responsibility was the most important outcome (*N*= 169, *M*=4.75, *SD*= .52). On the other hand, spiritual outcomes were reported as the least important (*N*= 170, *M*= 2.18, *SD*= 1.50). Since not all the camps in this sample were affiliated with a religious organization, this finding is not surprising, although this outcome might be

higher if only religiously affiliated camps were surveyed. Regarding the interpersonal outcomes, learning compassion and caring was chosen as the most important outcome (N= 168, M=4.73, SD= .51), while developing facilitation and debriefing skills was selected as the outcome of lowest importance (N= 169, M= 3.64, SD= 1.03). Of the three types of outcomes, intra- and interpersonal outcomes seemed more important than learning specific technical skills. Of the technical skills, gaining experience working with younger campers was selected from that group as the most important. This further corroborates the notion that CIT/LIT programs are pipelines for developing future staff. When taking the average of the 10 intrapersonal outcome means (M= 3.84) and the six interpersonal outcome means (M= 4.39), the importance of interpersonal outcomes becomes apparent.

Participating camps were asked whether CIT/LIT participants had opportunities to make meaningful decisions. Of the 160 responses, 68% (N= 132) of participating organizations indicated that their CIT/LIT participants made consequential decisions, while 8% indicated that their participants did not get to make meaningful decisions and another 7% did not know. Responses to the *Other* option were varied and could be grouped into two broad types: a task or an ongoing responsibility. During the data analysis process, a task was defined as a specific work assignment that the CIT/LIT was asked to complete. Tasks could occur daily, for example, activity area lesson planning, but they have a definite beginning and end. On the other hand, an ongoing responsibility was an assignment given to a CIT/LIT participant that had no set beginning and end. For example, helping the counselor take care of a cabin of campers throughout a camp session. When examining the data, the CIT/LITs were primarily asked to complete specific tasks. When examining the data classified as ongoing responsibilities, the CIT/LIT was usually under the tutelage of a counselor or a more senior staff member; therefore, we cannot infer how much autonomy the CIT/LIT experienced in the process.

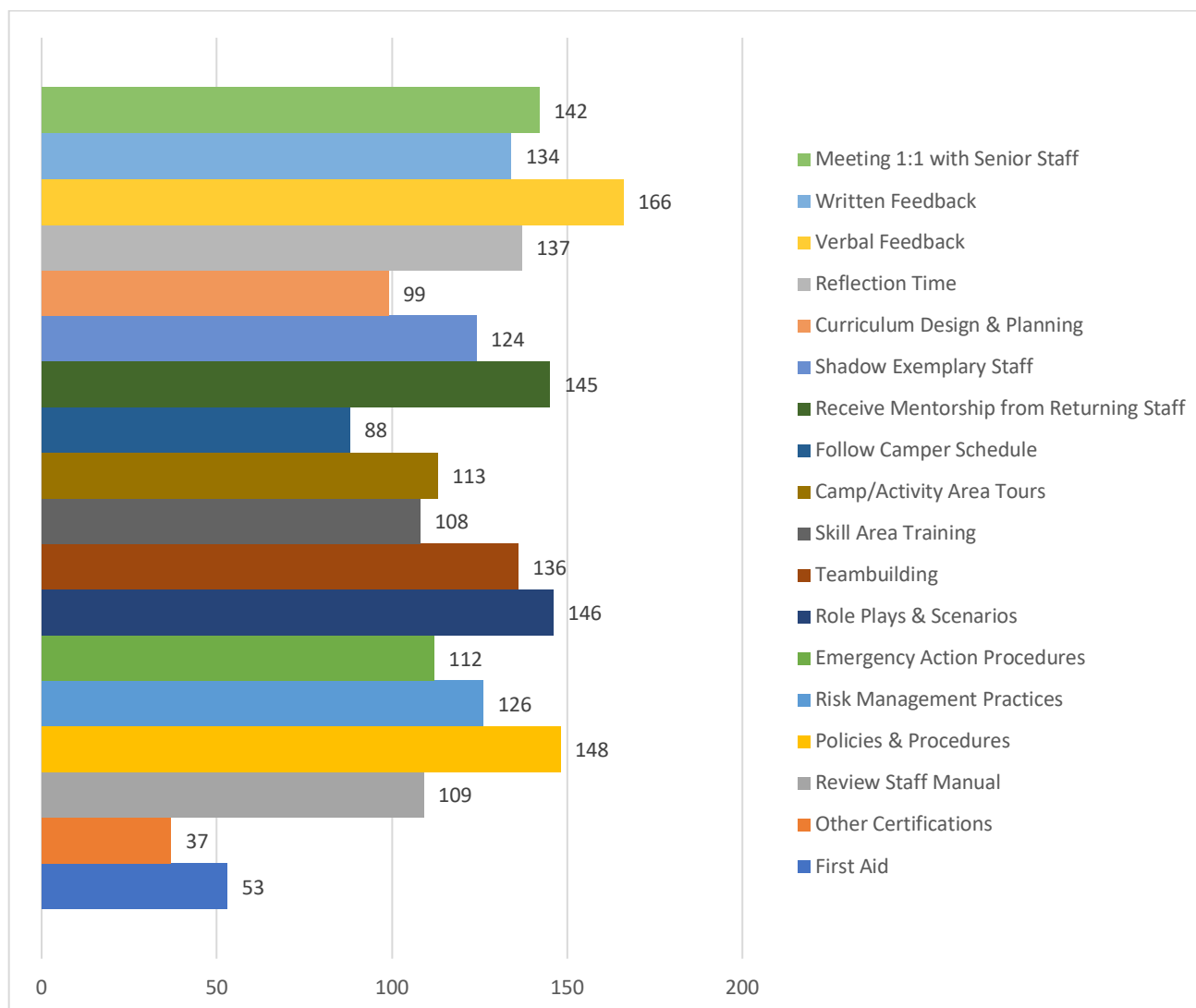### 5.1.1 FIGURE 8. CIT/LIT TRAINING COMPONENTS

Figure 8. Participants selected the training components employed in their CIT/LIT program from a list of 18 possible choices. They selected as many as were applicable. The listed numbers indicate how often each individual response was selected.

When analyzing the meaningful decisions offered to CIT/LIT participants, eight distinct types of decisions emerged: (1) planning decisions; (2) personal conduct decisions (e.g., being a role model to younger campers); (3) decisions made while working with and helping campers; (4) leadership decisions; (5) choosing work-related tasks; (6) offering opinions; (7) making decisions; and (8) progressive decision-making responsibilities. As evidenced by this list, the decision-making afforded to CIT/LIT participants often occurred in settings where they were working with younger campers, although some were given opportunities to plan segments of their CIT/LIT program. Each of the eight types of decisions is further explained below.

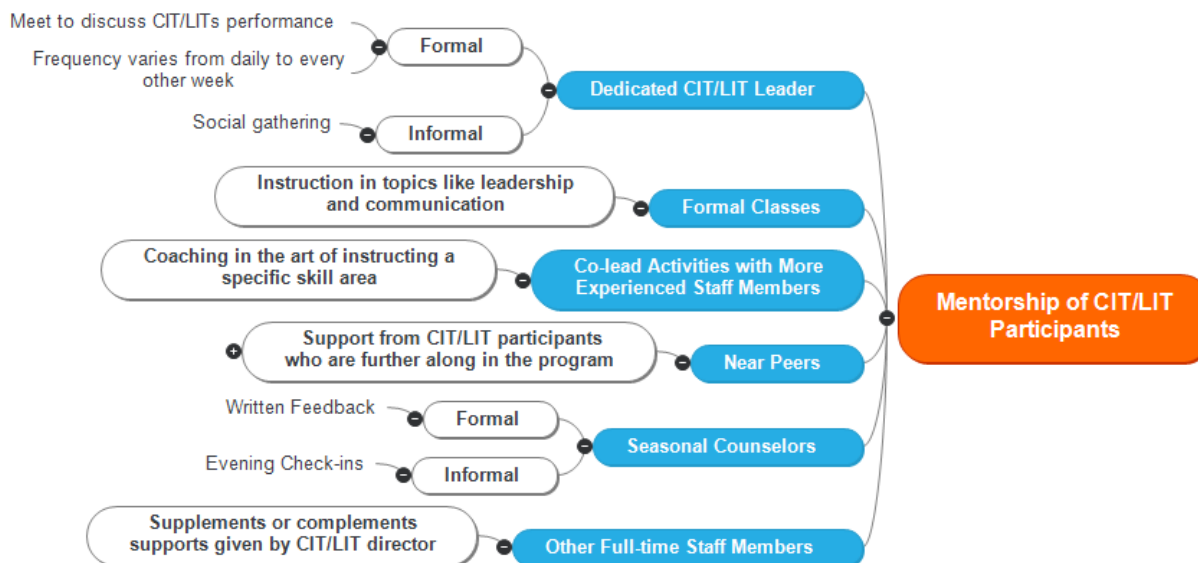### 5.1.2 FIGURE 9. THE MENTORSHIP OF CIT/LIT PARTICIPANTS

Figure 9. A description of the mentorship provided to CIT/LIT participants.

As for planning decisions (1), the CIT/LITs were tasked with either planning activities for campers or planning a segment of their program (e.g., a banquet or an overnight camping trip). Personal conduct decisions (2) were made individually and involved displaying appropriate attitudes and actions in the presence of younger, more impressionable campers. As one respondent noted, "In every interaction they have with a camper…what they say, how they act, what they do is a formative meaningful decision for someone who looks up to them!" Working with campers (3) provided many decision-making opportunities, such as, selecting a behavioral management technique to address a camper who was acting out. While multiple respondents noted that working with campers was a venue where their CIT/LIT participants made meaningful decisions, they also noted that CIT/LITs were usually paired with a more senior individual, like a seasonal counselor. The level of autonomy and support offered by the seasonal counselor as well as the way in which the situation is managed will likely influence the CIT/LIT's perceptions about the decision-making opportunities afforded them. For example, while a full-time staff member or a counselor may think a particular responsibility provided the CIT/LIT participant with the opportunity to make meaningful decisions, it would be worthwhile to assess if the CIT/LIT participants perceive them as instances where they made meaningful decisions.

CIT/LIT participants are provided opportunities to make meaningful decisions when they are in leadership roles or given leadership responsibilities (4). One participant noted, "Participants work collaboratively to design and lead [an] all-camp evening program daily." In these situations, the CIT/LITs were provided the opportunity to experiment with finding and using their leadership voice. In addition, CIT/LITs were occasionally allowed to select the individual or the activity area where they would like to apprentice (5). By doing this, camps are promoting autonomy, which should increase motivation for the task (Ryan & Deci, 2002).

CIT/LIT participants also offered opinions about camp- or program-related matters (6). As one respondent noted, "CITs are given many forums for feedback on camp programs and

opportunities to design and improve current activities." While some programs allowed their CIT/LITs to make decisions (7), for example, when they are working underneath a counselor in a cabin, the exact nature of these interactions needs further investigation. As one participant stated, "they make these decisions under the guidance of others." How this decision-making process is facilitated ultimately determines whether it is perceived as meaningful by the CIT/LIT. One individual mentioned that decision-making opportunities are progressive (8), that is, as CIT/LIT participants advance, they get to make increasingly difficult decisions. This approach seems appropriate, especially for multi-year CIT/LIT programs. As camps evaluate their CIT/LIT programs, ensuring that the decision-making opportunities afforded to CIT/LIT participants are developmentally appropriate will increase the likelihood that they will lead to participant growth. While these decision-types are useful for classification, it is important to note that most CIT/LITs made decisions across these eight categories during their programs.

TABLE 1

Outcomes of Participating in a CIT/LIT Program (CIT/LIT Participants Gain):

Technical Skills	Combined	Intrapersonal Skills	Combined	Interpersonal Skills	Combined
Certifications	M=1.80 SD=1.19	Self-Confidence	M= 4.59 SD= .62	Practical leadership	M= 4.65 SD= .57
Experience working with younger campers	M= 4.55 SD= .71	Personal responsibility	M= 4.75 SD= .52	Conflict resolution skills	M= 4.42 SD= .78
Employment-related skills	M= 3.45 SD= 1.29	Spirituality	M= 2.18 SD= 1.50	Communication skills	M= 4.62 SD= .59
Public speaking skills	M= 3.16 SD= .98	Flexibility	M= 4.21 SD= .84	Facilitation & debriefing skills	M= 3.64 SD= 1.03
Activity/Athletic skills	M= 2.51 SD= 1.00	Open-mindedness	M= 4.39 SD= .72	Experience working with diverse campers	M= 4.24 SD= .91
Nature-based skills	M= 2.71 SD= 1.13	Awareness of social justice issues	M= 3.05 SD= 1.18	Compassion & caring	M= 4.73 SD= .51
Teaching skills	M= 3.60 SD= 1.11	Awareness of personal privilege	M= 2.91 SD= 1.25		
Planning skills	M= 3.73 SD= .94	Self-awareness	M= 4.29 SD= .84		
		Self-discovery	M= 4.16 SD= .90		

		Identity development	M= 3.88 SD= 1.07		

Note. Items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from not important (1) to very important (5).

5.2 CIT/LIT PROGRAM OUTCOMES SUMMARY

Outcomes of participation in a CIT/LIT program can be subdivided into three distinct categories: technical skills, intrapersonal skills, and interpersonal skills. Of the eight technical skills, participants indicated that experience working with younger campers was the most important outcome. For the 10 intrapersonal skills, gaining personal responsibility was the most important outcome, while learning compassion and caring was chosen as the most important interpersonal outcome. When comparing the mean scores across these three categories, respondents reported interpersonal outcomes as the most important outcome of participating in their CIT/LIT program. Of the 160 responses, 68% (*N*= 132) of participating organizations indicated that their CIT/LIT participants made consequential decisions, while 8% indicated that their participants did not get to make meaningful decisions and another 7% did not know. When analyzing the descriptions of the meaningful decisions offered to CIT/LIT participants, they were predominantly task-related and had a specific beginning and end. When analyzing the meaningful decisions offered to CIT/LIT participants, eight distinct types of decisions emerged: (1) planning decisions; (2) personal conduct decisions (e.g., being a role model to younger campers); (3) decisions made while working with and helping campers; (4) leadership decisions; (5) choosing work-related tasks; (6) offering opinions; (7) making decisions; and (8) progressive decision-making responsibilities.

6 CAMP DESCRIPTIVES

Participants were asked four descriptive questions about their camp. Of the five camp types, independent non-profit (29%) was the most frequently selected option closely followed by agency (e.g., 4H, BSA, CFUSA, JCCA, YMCA) camps. Respondents were given three choices as to camp type: (1) day; (2) overnight; and (3) both. Of the 163 responses, 38 (20%) indicated that they were day camps, 88 (45%) noted they were overnight camps, and the remaining 35 (18%) offered both types of programming.

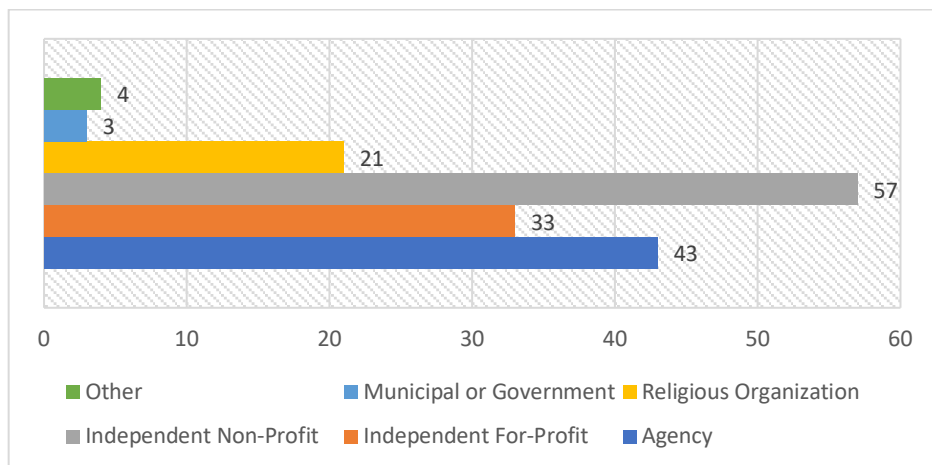### 6.1.1 FIGURE 10. PARTICIPATING CAMPS' OWNER OR AFFILIATION

Figure 10. The owner or affiliation of participating camps. The listed numbers indicate how often each individual response was selected.

Camps from 36 different states completed this survey (Alaska= 1; Arizona= 2; Arkansas= 2; California= 20; Colorado= 3; Connecticut= 4; Florida= 2 ; Georgia= 2; Illinois= 6; Indiana= 1; Iowa= 3; Kansas= 2; Kentucky= 1; Maine= 6; Maryland= 2; Massachusetts= 8; Michigan= 4; Minnesota= 6; Missouri= 1; Nebraska= 1; New Hampshire= 9; New Jersey= 7; New York= 15; North Carolina= 5; Ohio= 3 ; Oregon= 3; Pennsylvania= 11; Rhode Island= 4; South Carolina= 1; Texas= 3; Utah= 1; Vermont= 3; Virginia= 7; Washington= 7; West Virginia= 1; and Wisconsin= 8), with camps headquartered in California and New York providing the greatest number of responses.

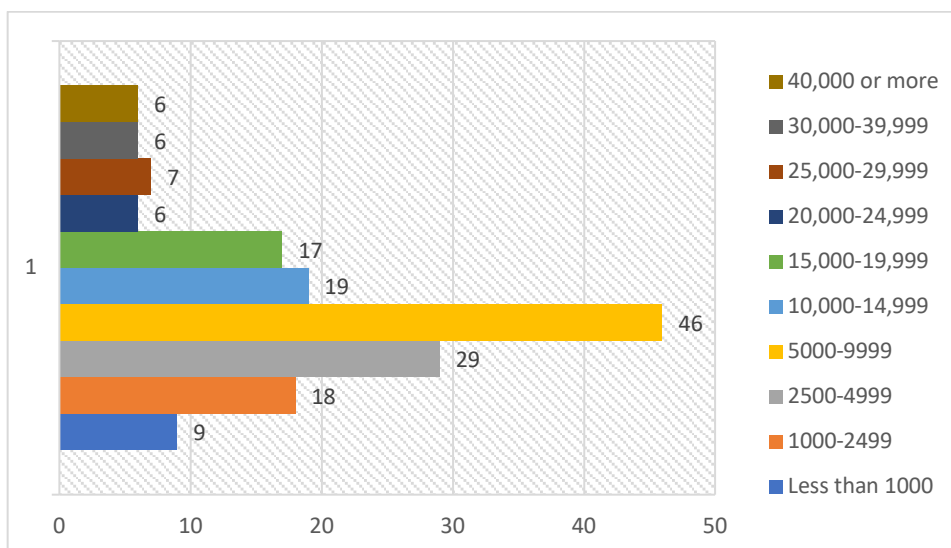## 6.1.2   FIGURE 11. ANNUAL CAMPER DAYS OF PARTICIPATING CAMPS

Figure 11. The reported annual camper days of participating camps.

Participants were asked to indicate the annual number of camper days recorded by their camp (see Figure 11). A camper day is defined as each day each an individual

camper/guest/client spends on site at the camp, even if it is only part of the day. This number is the cumulative count of campers/clients/guests hosted in 2017 (e.g., 100 campers x 5 days= 500 camper days). Twenty-four percent of respondents (*N*= 46) indicated that their camp recorded between 5000 and 9999 camper days in 2017. The next most frequently selected response was one tier lower, 2500-4999, which was selected by 29 (15%) participants.

7   CONCLUSION

This study was initiated to better understand the CIT/LIP programming offered to adolescent campers. Our results indicated that the average CIT/LIT program served approximately 40 adolescent campers each summer. The participants tended to be 15-17 years old, they were predominately female (60/40 split), and most were former campers (approximately 85%). CIT/LIT participants attended their program for one to four weeks and they generally paid a reduced fee to attend, as their labor offset some of the camper fees. Participating camps indicated that they view CIT/LIT participants as campers, rather than staff members, and the primary focus of their programming was to train future camp staff. CIT/LIT programs targeted multiple technical, intra-, and interpersonal outcomes, but data showed that the interpersonal outcomes (e.g., developing compassion and caring) were the most important. Most respondents reported that their CIT/LIT participants made meaningful decisions; however, additional studies should investigate the CIT/LIT participants' perceptions about the decisions made at camp.

References

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