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The Impact of Summer Camp Experiences on Young Adults with Down Syndrome: A Case Study

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THE IMPACT OF SUMMER CAMP EXPERIENCES ON YOUNG ADULTS WITH
DOWN SYNDROME: A CASE STUDY

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management

by
Hanna Paige Fotsch
May 2019

Accepted by:
Dr. Jasmine Townsend, Committee Chair
Dr. Stephen Lewis
Dr. Barry Garst

Abstract

Background: The purpose of this research was to examine the impact of an inclusive camp setting on young adults with Down syndrome, with a specific focus on personal growth and meaningful friendships. The aim of this exploratory case study was to describe the experiences of returning young adult campers in depth and examine the impact of Camp PALS on their personal growth and meaningful friendships over time using the 5 C's of Positive Youth Development. **Method:** Data were collected from ten returning campers between the ages of 21-29. A narrative case study design was utilized and included observations and semi-structured interviews. **Results:** Findings suggest that inclusive, residential camps can promote positive outcomes for individuals with DS. **Conclusion:** This study indicates that Camp PALS promotes personal growth and meaningful friendships through the promotion and evolution of the 5 C's of Positive Youth Development. Implications for research are discussed.

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I would like to start by thanking my committee chair, Dr. Jasmine Townsend. She has been an incredible teacher, mentor and supporter. I am so grateful that I've been able to work with her every semester for the past two years as a research/teaching assistant. She was always the first person I wanted to go to when I needed to talk, and she always had a box of tissues ready when I needed to cry. She helped bring me back down to earth when I got overwhelmed and stressed, and she always challenged me to be the best version of myself. She continues to be one of my role-models and her strength, dedication and passion inspire me every day. I would have never made it through this without her. I would also like to thank my other committee members. Thank you to Dr. Stephen Lewis, who taught me that data is a story to tell. He introduced me to the world of qualitative analysis and we worked together to give individuals with Down syndrome a voice to tell their stories—something that was so important to me. He was always there when I needed to schedule last minute meetings and was so supportive throughout this arduous process. He has a kind, patient and caring personality and I am grateful to have had him as a teacher/mentor. Thank you to Dr. Barry Garst, who helped guide me from the very beginning when I was putting my study together and searching for a theoretical foundation to support it. I feel so honored to be working with someone who is so knowledgeable and esteemed in his field and whose research I cited many times in my study! I couldn't have asked for a better committee.

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Lastly, I would like to thank my family. Thank you to my brother, Zev, who is always there to make me laugh and is so supportive of his younger sis. Thank you to my mom, who fiercely supports me in the pursuit all of my dreams. I am who I am because of her. She taught me to listen to myself and encouraged me to pursue my passion. She has helped me get through the stress, tears and frustration of grad school and she is always there to cheer with excitement and happiness when I reach important milestones. She is my rock. Thank you to my dad, who is watching over me in heaven, and who I know would be so proud of me. He always wanted the best for me and encouraged me to set the bar high for myself. He knew what I was capable of and helped me realize it too. I love you all so much.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Down syndrome (DS) is the most common form of intellectual disability, occurring anywhere from 1 in 500 to 1 in 1,000 births (Frid, Drott, Lundell, Rasmussen, & Annerén, 1999). The life expectancy of individuals with DS continues to increase. It has been calculated that over the last 50 years, the average life expectancy of individuals with DS has increased by 0.94 years per calendar year, with the current average life expectancy being 60 years old. As the medical field becomes more advanced, it is expected that they will live as long as the general population within the next generation (Bittles & Glasson, 2004). Due to this increase in life span, there is a need for research examining well-being in all life-stages. Kiefer (2008) suggests that, “well-being can be defined in terms of an individual’s physical, mental, social and environmental status with each aspect interacting with the other and each having differing levels of importance and impact according to each individual” (p. 244). The construct of social well-being is particularly critical to examine in the young adult population in the transition stage from school to post school (Mcintyne, Kraemer, Blacher, & Simmerman, 2004).

The transition period for adolescents with intellectual disabilities tends to take much longer than that of their typically-developing peers and families and caregivers identify this as a time characterized by feelings of turmoil, stress, and confusion about available services. This can prove to be especially difficult to deal with and young adults with DS often experience transition-related challenges in major life areas, including leisure and interpersonal relationships (Foley, Dyke, Girdler, Bourke, & Leonard, 2012).

Individuals with intellectual disabilities also follow a unique developmental curve, oftentimes still requiring youth services, even though their chronological age prevents them from doing so. In other words, young adults with intellectual disabilities continue to require the structured support promoted by youth services to help reach their psychosocial potential well into their adult years (Beresford, 2004). It is generally believed that camps can provide a structured, supportive environment that encourages social exploration and personal growth, and the components of the youth development model in camp settings align well with the goals and needs of young adults with DS in this complicated phase of life.

Summer camps have traditionally utilized the Positive Youth Development model to promote positive identity, social competence and independence (Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2007). Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a strength-based perspective that posits that young people thrive in their adolescent years based on their assets (Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005). Camps are one of the resources widely available to individuals DS to ease the transition period between adolescence and young adulthood. Garst, Browne, and Bialeschki (2011) describe the camp experience as, "...a way for young people to explore and search for an authenticity often missing in other parts of their lives that contributes to their healthy transition into adulthood" (p. 73). Supportive relationships with staff and peers fosters social and individual growth, which are key contributors to overall well-being. According to the American Camp Association's National Youth Development Outcomes study, individuals who attend camp experience growth in a variety of areas including self-esteem, peer relationships,

independence, friendships skills, values and decisions, and social comfort (Oates, Bebbington, Bourke, Girdler, & Leonard, 2011). Much can be gained from the summer camp experience, including internal and external assets. Internal assets include positive values, social competence, and positive identity; while external assets include empowerment and support (Henderson, Whitaker, Scanlin, & Thurber, 2007). The addition of these assets positively impacts the individual's social and mental status, thus improving social well-being.

While overall personal growth is an important construct to examine, meaningful friendships (or lack thereof) also play a key role in the lives of young adults with DS. There are many factors that can have a negative impact on social well-being and maintenance of friendships in this particular population. Due to the need for structured resources and often times the need for support from family, young adults often experience less social interaction and opportunity for friendships than they did during school years. External factors that contribute to this issue include access to community support and parents' lack of availability to provide transportation (Foley et al., 2014). It is important to examine the construct of friendships because it can make the difference between a successful integration into the community versus isolation from the community. Unfortunately, maintenance of friendships from school years is difficult due to the decreased opportunity for daily social interactions (Foley et al., 2014). In a study examining what makes a good life for young adults with DS, it was indicated that friendships contribute to feelings of acceptance and self-esteem, which contribute to overall well-being (Scott, Foley, Bourke, Leonard, & Girdler, 2014). Friendships are

identified as being extremely important for individuals with DS (Jobling, Moni, & Nolan, 2000), and these relationships are continued through encouraging each other and regularly participating in activities with one another (Seale & Pockney, 2002). Because camps foster social development and peer-to-peer relationships, friendships can be developed and sustained in this specific type of environment.

The purpose of this study was to examine the impacts of an inclusive residential camp that serves young adults with Down syndrome, ages 18-30, on personal growth and meaningful friendships. This study was conducted to highlight the importance of continued programming for individuals with DS transitioning into young adulthood and how it helps in the formation of identity and promotes social well-being.

Specific Aim:

The aim of this study was to describe the experiences of young adults with Down syndrome in an inclusive residential camp setting and how it impacts their personal growth and friendships as conceptualized by the 5 C's of Positive Youth Development.

Definition of Terms

Dimensions of Friendships: similarity between individuals, proximity, context in which transcendence occurs, companionship, reciprocity, trust, loyalty, stability, and support (Matheson, Olsen, & Weisner, 2007)

Inclusive Camps: Serves as a place in which individuals with and without disabilities can participate together in a least-restrictive environment (D'Eloia & Price, 2018)

Exclusive Camps: Serve individuals that fall within a certain category (i.e. individuals with disabilities only) (D'Eloia & Price, 2018)

Social Well-Being: feelings of social integration, acceptance and social contribution (Keyes, 1998)

ID/DD: intellectual deficit/developmental delays (Frid et al., 1999)

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of an inclusive residential camp on young adults with Down syndrome. The constructs evaluated included personal growth and meaningful friendships. Considering the overall lack of research in these specific areas, there was a need to review the literature that does exist and expand the breadth of knowledge. The topics under review include: 1) an overview of Down syndrome, 2) an overview of camps and its benefits, and 3) theoretical frameworks.

Down syndrome

Among the population with intellectual deficits and developmental delays (ID/DD), Down syndrome (DS) is the most common (Frid et al., 1999). DS is characterized by an extra 21st chromosome and is often passed down maternally, with incidences increasing dramatically with maternal age (Hultén et al., 2010). With advances in the medical field (such as genome analysis), it is becoming more common for individuals with DS to live as long as the general population, and this will become even more prevalent within the next generation (Bittles & Glasson, 2004) (NICHD, 2017). Taking this longer life span into consideration, it is important to ensure that individuals with DS have the opportunity to live life to the fullest, including the chance to experience optimal social well-being (McGuire & Chicoine, 2006). One of the major challenges to that element of well-being for young adults is the transition to adulthood. This study examined young adults with DS who were between ages 18-30 who were in this important phase of life.

Transition to adulthood. Life transitions can be difficult. They involve some type of change, which often brings discomfort and requires a period of adjustment, and involves the struggle with autonomy and the establishment and maintenance of friendships outside of the support of school (Foley et al., 2012). The transition to adulthood can be particularly challenging for individuals with ID/DD. This is due to the impact it has on major life areas, including interpersonal relationships (Foley et al., 2012). This period of imbalance can be very confusing and stressful, and may require the reformation of meaningful relationships and self-identity in relation to friends and family (Erikson, 1982). Self-identity can continuously change throughout the lifespan, and friendships and interpersonal relationships remain integral to the concept of self by allowing the individual to see themselves in relation to their peers and society (Morrison & Burgman, 2009). In order to thrive during this period of transition, individuals with DS often require the continued support of youth services that were once provided during the adolescent years, although their chronological age often prevents them from doing so, as they ultimately age out of these programs. This study examined a program that is specifically meant to support young adults who age out of other services.

Social functioning. Social functioning plays a fundamental role in overall well-being for individuals of all abilities. The way we are able to interact with others helps shape our sense of self in relation to the world and people around us. Individuals with DS tend to be more sociable than other groups with ID/DD and in particular, have a proclivity to show kindness and warmth toward others. This may be in compensation for other domains of functioning that are not as strong (Fidler, Hepburn, & Rogers, 2006).

Individuals with DS portray a welcoming energy, easily form relationships with others and tend to have the ability to communicate positive affect better than individuals with other forms of ID/DD (Fidler, 2005). Taking this into consideration, it can be presumed that social opportunities provide many benefits for this population, including increased self-esteem and well-being (McGuire & Chicoine, 2006). This study examined social interactions between individuals with DS and their peers, and how it impacts social functioning and meaningful friendships.

Meaningful friendships. The dimensions of friendships are commonly defined as similarities between one another, proximity, companionship, reciprocity of actions, stability, loyalty, trust and support (Matheson, Olsen, & Weisner, 2007). While there is some literature highlighting the types of friendships experienced by individuals with ID/DD in general, there is very limited information focusing on the friendships experienced by young adults with DS specifically. Much of the literature available highlights the barriers and negative experiences (Foley et al., 2014), with little to be said on the positive relationships that occur. It is common for friendships to change in the post school years, and the pressure to stay in touch and make an effort to maintain any meaningful connection becomes ever-present. Maintenance of friendships beyond the support of the school environment can be increasingly difficult, as less opportunities for social interactions are readily available. For individuals with DS, this is partially due to the fact that many friendships are facilitated by their parents and supported by the structure of school throughout their school-age years (Oates et al., 2011). Due to the decrease in easily accessible social opportunities beyond the school years, adults with DS

tend to identify mere acquaintances, family members and caregivers as “friends”. This may be a result of fewer chances to engage with same-age peers (Watt, Johnson, & Virji-Babul, 2010). Fewer opportunities for socialization can be the result of lack of transportation, less availability of resources, lack of programming and feasibility. Although this may be the case, friendships remain highly important as they provide feelings of inclusion, increased self-esteem and overall acceptance, particularly for individuals with intellectual disabilities (Scott et al., 2014; Seale & Pockney, 2002). There are many ways through which meaningful friendships and personal growth can be studied, and camps that promote the former for individuals in the post school years is among them.

Camps

Camps have been established all over the country to serve both youth and adults alike with unique experiences outside of the school and work constructs. Types of camps can include adventure camps, day camps, overnight camps, and specialty camps, including camps for individuals with disabilities. There are also exclusive camps and inclusive camps. Exclusive camps are solely for individuals that fall within a certain group or category (i.e. individuals with Down syndrome only), while inclusive camps involve the participation of individuals with and without disabilities (D’Eloia & Price, 2018). When included in an inclusive setting, individuals with disabilities can be provided with the opportunity to form and maintain new friendships (Fryxell & Kennedy, 1995). The camp experience can be especially instrumental to the individuals transitioning into adulthood and Garst, Browne, and Bialeschki (2011) state that camp

can be, "...a way for young people to explore and search for an authenticity often missing in other parts of their lives that contributes to their healthy transition into adulthood" (p. 1). Camps are meant to be a positive experience and can provide many benefits for those who participate.

Benefits of Camps. Camps can be beneficial to its participants at the holistic level, resulting in growth in the social, behavioral, cognitive and spiritual domains, to name a few (Garst et al., 2011). According to Thurber et al. (2007), camps can promote multiple developmental outcomes through the various unstructured and structured activities they provide in a fun, new, and stimulating setting. Camps can also provide the opportunity for social growth and friendship among campers and staff through increased self-efficacy and providing positive social situations (Thurber et al., 2007). According to the American Camp Association (2006), campers can benefit from emotional and physical support, and can be involved in the camp experience in meaningful ways that promote personal growth. Among individuals with disabilities, the impact lies greatly within the ability to experience supportive relationships and a sense of belonging. Garst, Browne, and Bialeschki (2011) suggest, "When supportive relationships through group living with peers and the presence of caring adults are combined with setting characteristics such as sustained experiences, deep friendships with peers and adults are formed" (p. 6). This fosters a sense of belonging and feelings of connectedness (Garst et al., 2011). Inclusive camp environments are built to create an environment where those experiences are possible for individuals with and without disabilities.

Inclusive Camps. Inclusion has become much more mainstream, in both the school and community settings. It is important for inclusion to continue to move beyond the educational realm and more into community settings so there are abundant opportunities for individuals with disabilities to engage in social interactions with their typically developing counterparts (Carr et al., 2002). According to Disability World (2015), inclusive summer camps are programs where youth with and without disabilities engage with each other in a least-restrictive environment that promotes maximum participation regardless of ability. Camps, as an inclusive leisure context, can dismiss common stereotypes (Bedini, 2000; Devine & Lashua, 2002; Devine & Wilhite, 2000), increase self-determination (Dattilo, Williams, & Cory, 2003), develop meaningful friendships (Kalyvas & Reid, 2003), and learn important life skills (Place & Hodge, 2001). The goal of many inclusive camps is to provide a sense of belonging for individuals with disabilities in relation to their peers (D'Eloia & Price, 2018). When the roles between individuals with and without disabilities are balanced, friendships created can be mutually beneficial (Matheson et al., 2007).

Inclusive experiences can be very important for individuals with and without disabilities to have, and are especially advantageous when positive skill development and social reciprocity are present (D'Eloia & Price, 2018). Supportive relationships between staff and campers with and without disabilities are essential to a positive camp experience and allow for positive and meaningful interactions (American Camp Association, 2005). With that being said, there are studies that suggest that inclusion is not always the answer. Devine and O'Brien (2007) suggest that there can be both positive and negative

experiences associated with inclusive camps. Positive experiences include the formation of genuine relationships and overall acceptance of individuals with disabilities, and negative experiences include feelings of forced friendships. Devine and Lashua (2002) also highlight that positive experiences are only present when the standards are achievable to all involved. This opposing view forces us to look more specifically at the authenticity of relationships formed and personal growth experienced, and if it transcends the camp experience. This study focused on the relationship between an inclusive camp experience and personal growth and meaningful friendships.

Positive Youth Development

Youth development, which stems from the more general concept of human development, connects particularly well with the outcomes of camp. PYD involves a more positive, strength-based approach, replacing the deficit-based view of youth that dominated the developmental sciences in the past (Bowers et al., 2010). Benson, Scales, Hamilton, and Sesma (2006) suggest that, “central to the theory of positive youth development are conceptions of the developing person, the contexts in which the person is embedded and the dynamic interaction of the two” (p. 903). In other words, development involves the interaction between the person and environmental context in which they are placed. Positive youth development involves the preparation of individuals for a successful transition into adulthood by providing supports and opportunities that aid in personal growth (Henderson et al., 2007). Using strategies to promote positive youth development involve creating opportunities that can improve developmental and long-term outcomes that are necessary to experience successful

adulthood (Gambone, Klem, & Connell, 2002). Among the many outcomes of positive youth development, physical and cognitive learning, social relationships, and positive values and identity are among the most prominent (Gambone et al., 2002). One approach, the 5 Cs Model, offers a way to more closely examine the possible growth of camp participants, as research has indicated that camps provide the necessary experiences, settings, structures and activities to promote positive development (Garst et al., 2011).

The Five C's of Positive Youth Development highlight the strengths of individuals, rather than the deficits. The Five C's include: Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character and Caring, and these constructs are linked to the outcomes of positive youth development (Roth & Brooks-gunn, 2003). Competence is defined as a positive view of one's actions in domain specific areas, including social (interpersonal skills) and cognitive (decision-making abilities). Confidence is defined as an overall sense of self-worth and self-identity in relation to the surrounding world. Connection is defined as positive bonds with people that are reciprocal in nature; in other words, both parties are contributing to the connection. Character is defined as a sense of morality and respect for societal rules and the display of appropriate behaviors. Caring is defined as the ability to be sympathetic and empathetic toward others (Lerner et al., 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). The 5 C's offer a way of conceptualizing and measuring elements of Positive Youth Development, further providing a better understanding of personal growth (Geldhof, Bowers, & Lerner, 2013).

Summary

Little available literature highlights positive friendships among individuals with DS. Continued support is necessary, especially as they transition into young adulthood. Inclusive camps can provide that support and continue to provide opportunities beyond school years. In lieu of the gap in the literature describing the specific experience of young adults with Down syndrome in an inclusive camp setting, this study will examine the impact of a diagnosis-specific residential camp that specifically serves young adults with Down syndrome, ages 18-30, focusing specifically on personal growth and meaningful friendships.

Chapter 3

Methods

Methodology

Qualitative research involves examining phenomena in a natural setting, and attempting to make sense of the meaning and interpretation people assign to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Qualitative studies aim to develop a holistic account of the question under analysis and involves multiple perspectives to outline a larger picture (Creswell, 2014). An exploratory case study, specifically utilizing a narrative approach, was most appropriate for this study. The focus of case study research is often on an actual entity, such as an individual, group, organization, specific program, or community, is circumscribed by time and space, and is separated from a larger context (Creswell, 2015). Looking in-depth at the case of interest by collecting multiple sources of evidence provides deep insight into the *how* and *why* (Yin, 2014). By collecting multiple sources of data, whether through observations, interviews, or documents, one is able to provide a thorough description of the case being studied (Creswell, 2015). The analysis of this data allows for themes to emerge and generalizations can be made about the case (Creswell, 2015). More specifically, an exploratory case study investigates phenomena that lack preliminary research (Streb, 2010).

Using the narrative approach as part of qualitative methodology gives the researcher an opportunity to tell a story about the personal experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2015). Narrative research can shed light on individual experiences, and participants' perceptions of themselves within a place or environment (Creswell & Poth,

2017). Camp PALS, a residential week-long inclusive camp was the case examined in this study, along with the individual experiences of the camp participants who are ages 18-30 with Down syndrome. The experience was bound by a 7-day time frame on a specific college campus. The study was exploratory in nature, due to the fact that the constructs in question, personal growth and meaningful friendships, have not been studied extensively for this age group in this specific population. Sources of data collection in this study included semi-structured interviews and observations.

Setting

PALS was founded in 2004 to create immersive experiences where individuals with Down syndrome, ages 12-30, and their peers have fun, grow as individuals, and develop transformative experiences. The PALS goals are to create extraordinary programs full of fun and memories, establish an open space where friendships and second families are formed, foster close connections and a sense of belonging, built around quality people who are caring and accepting, and enable an encouraging environment that allows all people involved to become the best version of themselves (PALS, n.d.). The PALS model, is applied in the all of the programs offered and embraces the following program characteristics:

One-to-one: one-on-one pairings are based on similar interests, age, personality and location. The personal bond of pairings helps both participants and volunteers step out of their comfort zones, challenging them to try new things at our programs. This unique relationship encourages all to keep in touch throughout the year.

Peer-to-peer: similarly-aged pairings help participants and volunteers feel more comfortable with one another. Staff are all individually chosen for their ability and eagerness to affect social change. They form a strong social network for

future recruitment. The youthful attitude and excitement from the volunteer staff contributes to age-appropriate and exciting programming.

Residential: All of our camp programs take place in a dorm-like atmosphere. This type of location allows a fully integrative and immersive experience. The college atmosphere also allows for growth and independence and the downtime in dorms between activities is when friendships form.

Camp PALS is a one-week residential camp for individuals with Down syndrome and volunteers aimed at fostering independence, personal growth and building new, transformative friendships (PALS, n.d.). These meaningful friendships are meant to be made with camp volunteers, and references to “friends” and “friendships” throughout this chapter refer to those individuals. The camp has a combination of structured and unstructured time where the campers can engage in a variety of activities, including, but not limited to: field trips to explore the surrounding areas, on-site games such as Olympics and Minute-to-Win-It, trivia nights, exercise and dance groups, and a camp-wide dance. This varies from location to location, depending on city and age group. All camps are hosted by University campuses around the country.

Participants

In a narrative case study, the researcher must select one or more individuals who are willing to provide information and are able to shed light on the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Utilizing a purposeful approach often results in samples that are consistent with the aims of the study in question (Durdella, 2018). Participants in this case study included young adult campers, ages 18-30, attending Camp PALS at the New York and Baltimore locations. Participants in this study were purposively recruited for interviews based on the following criteria: 1) were returning campers who have

previous experiences with camp PALS to draw from; 2) had the ability to verbally respond to conversational prompts with volunteers and the PI in meaningful ways. Camp administrators identified returning campers to ensure meeting criteria 1. Criteria 2 was evaluated using an observation template (Appendix B). Using comparison-focused sampling, multiple cases were examined in order to look at uniqueness or commonalities among the results (Durdella, 2018). In order to collect data in extensive detail, the sample size was small and included four individuals from New York City and 6 individuals from Baltimore, resulting in ten participants total. This allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact of PALS on this sample of campers.

Data Collection

Prior to the camp start dates, all legal authorizing representatives of camper signed a consent form, and all campers signed an assent form, allowing the researcher to take observation notes from all assenting campers and conduct interviews with select participants. Observations and interactions throughout the week guided the purposive sampling of participants according to the inclusion criteria listed above. Observations included descriptive notes that may involve chronologies and descriptions of events at set times. In addition, there were reflective notes, which included problems and highlights of each experience and involved preliminary themes noticed by the researcher (Creswell, 2015). Observations and interactions with campers were carried out in the days leading up to the interviews, and participants were purposively chosen and asked to participate in the interview portion of the study. Interviews occurred during unstructured time, in a quiet space. The researcher communicated with staff to schedule interviews at

appropriate times of day. Interviews were audio recorded, and comprised of open-ended questions that prompted discussion about the camper's experience with personal growth and meaningful friendships as outlined in the interview guide found in Appendix A. Interview questions were developed utilizing the 5 C's of Positive Youth Development as a guiding framework. Once the interviews began, questions pertaining to each category were asked in a natural way and probes were utilized, if necessary. By asking the questions, the goal was to elicit responses that addressed the participants' lived experience of the 5 C's in the following ways: connection with and caring about their friends, how confidence and character have been impacted by the overall camp experience, and how the inclusive camp setting and interactions with friends influences their social competence.

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

To analyze the data, interviews were transcribed verbatim. The data analysis began with transforming the transcribed interviews and recorded observation notes into coded data that is meaningfully organized (Durdella, 2018). The organized and coded data then gave insight into the larger themes at play (Durdella, 2018). The data from this study was analyzed using the constant comparison method. The researcher was required to look for patterns in each case and patterns across all cases and relate them back to the central research question (Durdella, 2018). Initial coding was based on categorization of how the cases fit in with the components of the 5 C's. The researcher looked at individual transcripts first, and then followed by looking across transcripts to see how the cases tied in to the overall themes of personal growth and meaningful friendships. The researcher

made note of any relevant data that did not fit neatly into the categories under study. The researcher engaged in multiple processes to evoke understanding of her own biases, values and experiences that contributed to the research (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Reflective journaling took place before, during and after observations and interviews describing initial thoughts and experiences. A committee member reviewed the journal entries, along with the initial codes from the data analysis in order to gain insight on areas that needed improvement and an external reviewer examined emerging categories.

Chapter 4

Article

Manuscript

Examination of Personal Growth and Meaningful Friendships within the Context of an
Inclusive Camp for Young Adults with Down Syndrome

Abstract

Background: The purpose of this research was to examine the impact of an inclusive camp setting on young adults with Down syndrome, with a specific focus on personal growth and meaningful friendships. The aim of this exploratory case study was to describe the experiences of returning young adult campers in depth and examine the impact of Camp PALS on their personal growth and meaningful friendships over time using the 5 C's of Positive Youth Development. **Method:** Data were collected from ten returning campers between the ages of 21-29. A narrative case study design was utilized and included observations and semi-structured interviews. **Results:** Findings suggest that inclusive, residential camps can promote positive outcomes for individuals with DS. **Conclusion:** This study indicates that Camp PALS promotes personal growth and meaningful friendships through the promotion and evolution of the 5 C's of Positive Youth Development. Implications for research are discussed.

This article will be submitted to:

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Keywords: *camp, Down syndrome, inclusive camps, personal growth, positive youth development, meaningful friendships.*

Introduction

Imagine you are on a boat cruising along the Hudson river with all of your closest friends. Taylor Swift's *Welcome to New York* is playing over the speakers, people are dancing, catching up with one another, and some are just enjoying the sea-like breeze. The Statue of Liberty feels like it's within arm's reach and the city skyline is sparkling in the sunlight. In a few hours, the singing continues at a karaoke bar in Korea Town to cap off the evening. Fast forward a few weeks, and imagine another group gathering at a local Baltimore brewery, tasting flights of beer, playing foosball, and dancing and singing to the music overhead. These experiences capture a day in the life at Camp PALS. Some people are surprised that this is what camp looks like for people with Down syndrome (DS). Warm energy surrounds you, smiles and laughter are everywhere, and fun and exciting age-appropriate experiences happen throughout the week. Individuals with DS are encouraged and supported to live their best lives. It is impossible to be in this environment without grinning from ear to ear. The happiness is simply contagious.

After being immersed in a day of camp activities, I was ready to learn more from the campers about their experiences. Because I have worked with this population in this setting before, I had to situation myself as biased, and it was important to be cautious about superimposing my voice over those of the campers. In fact, one of my main goals was to give them a chance to use their voices, so I sat back and let them tell me their stories.

Down syndrome (DS) is the most common form of intellectual disability, occurring in about 14 out of 10,000 births, resulting in about 6,037 births per year (Parker

et al., 2010). It is characterized by an extra 21st chromosome and is often passed down maternally, with incidences increasing dramatically with maternal age (Hultén et al., 2010). Over the last 50 years, the life expectancy of individuals with DS has increased, with 60 years old being the current average life expectancy, and it is expected that they will live as long as the general population within the next generation (Bittles & Glasson, 2004; NICHD, 2017). Due to this increase in life span, there is a need for research examining the well-being of individuals with DS in all life-stages. Kiefer (2008) suggests that, “well-being can be defined in terms of an individual’s physical, mental, social and environmental status with each aspect interacting with the other and each having differing levels of importance and impact according to each individual” (p. 244). The construct of social well-being is particularly critical to examine in the young adult population in the transition stage from school to post school (Mcintyne, Kraemer, Blacher, & Simmerman, 2004).

Young adults with DS often experience transition-related challenges in major life areas, including leisure and interpersonal relationships (Foley, Dyke, Girdler, Bourke, & Leonard, 2012). In general, young adults with intellectual disabilities continue to require the structured support promoted by youth services to help reach their psychosocial potential well into their adult years (Beresford, 2004). It is believed that camps can provide a structured, supportive environment that encourages social exploration and personal growth (ACA, 2018), and the components of the youth development model in camp settings align well with the goals and needs of young adults with DS in this complicated phase of life.

Summer camps have traditionally utilized the Positive Youth Development model to promote positive identity, social competence and independence (Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2007). Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a strength-based perspective that posits that young people thrive in their adolescent years based on their assets (Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005). Garst, Browne and Bialeschki (2011) describe the camp experience as, "...a way for young people to explore and search for an authenticity often missing in other parts of their lives that contributes to their healthy transition into adulthood" (p. 73). According to the American Camp Association's National Youth Development Outcomes study, individuals who attend camp experience growth in a variety of areas including self-esteem, peer relationships, independence, friendship skills, values and decisions, and social comfort (Oates, Bebbington, Bourke, Girdler, & Leonard, 2011).

While overall personal growth is an important construct to examine, meaningful friendships (or lack thereof) also play a key role in the lives of young adults with DS. Due to the need for structured resources and often times the need for support from family, young adults often experience less social interaction and opportunity for friendships than they did during school years. External factors that contribute to this issue include access to community support and parents' lack of availability to provide transportation (Foley et al., 2014). It is important to examine the construct of friendships because it can make the difference between a successful integration into the community versus isolation from the community. Unfortunately, maintenance of friendships from school years is difficult due to the decreased opportunity for daily social interactions (Foley et al., 2014). In a study

examining what makes a good life for young adults with DS, it was indicated that friendships contribute to feelings of acceptance and self-esteem, which contribute to overall well-being (Scott, Foley, Bourke, Leonard, & Girdler, 2014). Friendships are identified as being extremely important for individuals with DS (Jobling, Moni, & Nolan, 2000), and these relationships are continued through encouraging each other and regularly participating in activities with one another (Seale & Pockney, 2002). Because camps foster social development and peer-to-peer relationships, friendships can be developed and sustained in this specific type of environment.

Social Functioning of Individuals with Down syndrome

Social functioning plays a fundamental role in overall well-being for individuals of all abilities. The way we are able to interact with others helps shape our sense of self in relation to the world and people around us. Individuals with DS tend to be more sociable than other groups with ID/DD and in particular, have a proclivity to show kindness and warmth toward others. (Fidler, Hepburn, & Rogers, 2006). Although deficits in speech, language and communication are common, individuals with DS portray a welcoming energy, easily form relationships with others and tend to have the ability to communicate positive affect better than individuals with other forms of ID/DD (Fidler, 2005). Social opportunities provide many benefits for this population, including increased self-esteem and well-being (McGuire & Chicoine, 2006).

Meaningful friendships. There is little research highlighting the friendships experienced by young adults with DS. Much of the literature available highlights the barriers and negative experiences (Foley et al., 2014), with little to be said on the positive

relationships that occur. It is common for friendships to change in the post school years, and the pressure to stay in touch and make an effort to maintain any meaningful connection becomes ever-present. Maintenance of friendships beyond the support of the school environment can be increasingly difficult, as less opportunities for social interactions are readily available. For individuals with DS, this is partially due to the fact that many friendships are facilitated by their parents and supported by the structure of school throughout their school-age years (Oates et al., 2011). Due to the decrease in easily accessible social opportunities beyond the school years, adults with DS tend to identify mere acquaintances, family members, and caregivers as friends. This may be a result of fewer chances to engage with same-age peers (Watt, Johnson, & Virji-Babul, 2010). Fewer opportunities for socialization can be the result of lack of transportation, less availability of resources, lack of programming and feasibility. Although this may be the case, friendships remain highly important as they provide feelings of inclusion, increased self-esteem and overall acceptance, particularly for individuals with intellectual disabilities (Scott et al., 2014; Seale & Pockney, 2002). There are many ways through which personal growth and meaningful friendships can be studied, and camps that promote the development of these constructs for individuals in the post school years is among them.

Camps

Camps have been established all over the country to serve both youth and adults alike with unique experiences outside of school and work. Types of camps can include adventure camps, day camps, overnight camps, and specialty camps, including camps for

individuals with disabilities. There are also exclusive camps and inclusive camps. Exclusive camps are solely for individuals that fall within a certain group or category (i.e. individuals with Down syndrome only), while inclusive camps involve the participation of individuals with and without disabilities (D'Eloia & Price, 2018). When included in an inclusive setting, individuals with disabilities can be provided with the opportunity to form and maintain new friendships (Fryxell & Kennedy, 1995). In addition, the camp experience can be especially instrumental for individuals seeking a healthy transition into adulthood (Garst, Browne, & Bialeschki, 2011). Camps are meant to be a positive experience and can provide many benefits for those who participate.

Benefits of Camps. Camps can be beneficial to its participants at the holistic level, resulting in growth in the social, behavioral, cognitive and spiritual domains, to name a few (Garst et al., 2011). According to Thurber et al. (2007), camps can promote multiple developmental outcomes through the various unstructured and structured activities they provide in a fun, new, and stimulating setting. Camps can also provide the opportunity for social growth and friendship among campers and staff through increased self-efficacy and providing positive social situations (Thurber et al., 2007). According to the American Camp Association (2006), campers can benefit from emotional and physical support, and can be involved in the camp experience in meaningful ways that promote personal growth. Among individuals with disabilities, the impact lies greatly within the ability to experience supportive relationships and a sense of belonging. Garst, Browne, and Bialeschki (2011) suggest, “When supportive relationships through group living with peers and the presence of caring adults are combined with setting

characteristics such as sustained experiences, deep friendships with peers and adults are formed” (p. 6). This fosters a sense of belonging and feelings of connectedness (Garst et al., 2011). Inclusive camp environments are built to create an environment where those experiences are possible for individuals with and without disabilities.

Inclusive Camps. Inclusion has become much more mainstream, in both the school and community settings. It is important for inclusion to continue to move beyond the educational realm and more into community settings so there are abundant opportunities for individuals with disabilities to engage in social interactions with their typically developing counterparts (Carr et al., 2002). According to Disability World (2015), inclusive summer camps are programs where youth with and without disabilities engage with each other in a least-restrictive environment that promotes maximum participation regardless of ability. Camps, as an inclusive leisure context, can dismiss common stereotypes (Bedini, 2000; Devine & Lashua, 2002; Devine & Wilhite, 2000), increase self-determination (Dattilo, Williams, & Cory, 2003), promote the development of meaningful friendships (Kalyvas & Reid, 2003), and teach important life skills (Place & Hodge, 2001). The goal of many inclusive camps is to provide a sense of belonging for individuals with disabilities in relation to their peers (D’Eloia & Price, 2018). When the roles between individuals with and without disabilities are balanced, friendships created can be mutually beneficial (Matheson et al., 2007).

Inclusive experiences can be very important for individuals with and without disabilities to have, and are especially advantageous when positive skill development and social reciprocity are present (D’Eloia & Price, 2018). Supportive relationships between

staff and campers with and without disabilities are essential to a positive camp experience and allow for positive and meaningful interactions (American Camp Association, 2005). With that being said, there are studies that suggest that inclusion is not always the answer. Devine and O'Brien (2007) suggest that there can be both positive and negative experiences associated with inclusive camps. Positive experiences include the formation of genuine relationships and overall acceptance of individuals with disabilities, and negative experiences include feelings of forced friendships. Devine and Lashua (2002) also highlight that positive experiences are only present when the standards are achievable to all involved. This opposing view forces us to look more specifically at the personal growth experienced and the authenticity of relationships formed, and if it transcends the camp experience.

Positive Youth Development Model

Youth development, which stems from the more general concept of human development, connects particularly well with the outcomes of camp. Positive Youth Development (PYD) involves a more positive, strength-based approach, replacing the deficit-based view of youth that has dominated the developmental sciences in the past (Bowers et al., 2010). Benson, Scales, Hamilton, and Sesma (2006) suggest that, "central to the theory of positive youth development are conceptions of the developing person, the contexts in which the person is embedded and the dynamic interaction of the two" (p. 903). In other words, development involves the interaction between the person and environmental context in which they are placed.

Personal growth. PYD involves the preparation of individuals for a successful transition into adulthood by providing supports and opportunities that aid in personal growth (Henderson et al., 2007). Among the many outcomes of PYD, physical and cognitive learning, social relationships, and positive values and identity are among the most prominent (Gambone et al., 2002). The 5 C's Model offers a way to more closely examine the possible growth of camp participants, as research has indicated that camps provide the necessary experiences, settings, structures and activities to promote positive development (Garst et al., 2011).

The Five C's Model of Positive Youth Development. The Five C's of PYD highlight the strengths of individuals, rather than the deficits. The Five C's include: Competence, Connection, Caring, Character and Confidence, and these constructs are linked to the outcomes of PYD (Roth & Brooks-gunn, 2003). Competence is defined as a positive view of one's actions in domain specific areas, including social (interpersonal skills) and cognitive (decision-making abilities) domains. Connection is defined as positive bonds with people that are reciprocal in nature; in other words, both parties are contributing to the connection. Caring is defined as the ability to be sympathetic and empathetic toward others. Character is defined as a sense of morality and respect for societal rules and the display of appropriate behaviors. Confidence is defined as an overall sense of self-worth and self-identity in relation to the surrounding world (Lerner et al., 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). The 5 C's offer a way of conceptualizing and measuring elements of PYD, providing a better understanding of personal growth (Geldhof, Bowers, & Lerner, 2013).

The purpose of this study was to examine how returning campers in an inclusive camp setting described their lived experiences with the 5 Cs of PYD and how attending camp over the years impacted their overall personal growth and meaningful friendships.

Methods

Methodology

An exploratory case study, specifically utilizing a narrative approach, was most appropriate for this study. The focus of case study research is often on an actual entity, such as an individual, group, organization, specific program, or community, is circumscribed by time and space, and is separated from a larger context (Creswell, 2015). Looking in-depth at a case by collecting multiple sources of evidence provides deep insight into the *how* and *why* (Yin, 2014). By collecting multiple sources of data, whether through observations, interviews, or documents, one is able to provide a thorough description of the case being studied (Creswell, 2015). The analysis of this data allows for themes to emerge and generalizations can be made about the case (Creswell, 2015). More specifically, an exploratory case study investigates phenomena that lack preliminary research (Streb, 2010).

Using the narrative approach as part of qualitative methodology gives the researcher an opportunity to tell a story about the personal experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2015). Narrative research can shed light on individual experiences, and participants' perceptions of themselves within a place or environment (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Camp PALS, a residential week-long inclusive camp was the case examined in this study, along with the individual experiences of the camp participants who were ages

18-30 with Down syndrome. The experience was bound by a 7-day time frame on two specific college campuses. The study was exploratory in nature, due to the fact that the constructs in question, personal growth and meaningful friendships, have not been studied extensively for this age group in this specific population. Sources of data collection in this study included semi-structured interviews and observations.

Setting

PALS was founded in 2004 to create immersive experiences where individuals with Down syndrome, ages 12-30, and their peers have fun, grow as individuals, and develop transformative experiences (PALS, n.d.). The PALS goals are to create extraordinary programs full of fun and memories, establish an open space where friendships and second families are formed, foster close connections and a sense of belonging, built around quality people who are caring and accepting, and enable an encouraging environment that allows all people involved to become the best version of themselves (PALS, n.d.). The PALS model is applied in the all of the programs offered and embraces the following program characteristics:

One-to-one: one-on-one pairings are based on similar interests, age, personality and location. The personal bond of pairings helps both participants and volunteers step out of their comfort zones, challenging them to try new things at our programs. This unique relationship encourages all to keep in touch throughout the year.

Peer-to-peer: similarly-aged pairings help participants and volunteers feel more comfortable with one another. Staff are all individually chosen for their ability

and eagerness to affect social change. They form a strong social network for future recruitment. The youthful attitude and excitement from the volunteer staff contributes to age-appropriate and exciting programming.

Residential: All of our camp programs take place in a dorm-like atmosphere. This type of location allows a fully integrative and immersive experience. The college atmosphere also allows for growth and independence and the downtime in dorms between activities is when friendships form (PALS, n.d.).

Camp PALS is a one-week residential camp for individuals with Down syndrome and peer volunteers aimed at fostering independence, personal growth and building new, transformative friendships (PALS, n.d.). These meaningful friendships are meant to be made with fellow campers and camp volunteers, and references to “friends” and “friendships” throughout this chapter refer to those individuals. The camp has a combination of structured and unstructured time where the campers can engage in a variety of activities, including, but not limited to: field trips to explore the surrounding areas, on-site games such as Olympics and Minute-to-Win-It, trivia nights, exercise and dance groups, and a camp-wide dance. This varies from location to location, depending on city and age group. All camps are hosted by University campuses around the country.

Participants

In a narrative case study, the researcher must select one or more individuals who are willing to provide information and are able to shed light on the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Utilizing a purposeful approach often results in samples that are consistent with the aims of the study in question (Durdella, 2018). Participants in

this case study included young adult campers, ages 18-30, attending Camp PALS at the New York City and Baltimore locations. Participants in this study were purposively recruited for interviews based on the following criteria: 1) returning PALS campers 2) ability to verbally respond to conversational prompts with volunteers and the PI in meaningful ways.

Camp administrators identified returning campers to ensure meeting criteria one. Criteria two was evaluated using an observation template (Appendix B). Using comparison-focused sampling, multiple cases were examined in order to look at uniqueness or commonalities among the results (Durdella, 2018). In order to collect data in extensive detail, the sample size needed to be smaller and included four individuals from Camp PALS NYC and seven from Camp PALS Baltimore, resulting in eleven potential participants. While eleven interviews were completed, only ten were used for analysis. One interview was not usable due to the poor recording quality. According to Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006), if the purpose of a study is to understand common experiences among similar individuals, 6-12 interviews are enough to reach saturation of data. This sample size of ten allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact of PALS on its returning campers.

Data Collection

Prior to the camp start dates, all legal authorizing representatives of campers signed a consent form, and all campers signed an assent form, allowing the researcher to take observation notes from all assenting campers and conduct interviews with select participants. Observations and interactions throughout the week guided the purposive

sampling of participants according to the inclusion criteria listed above. Observations included descriptive notes that involved chronologies and descriptions of events at set times. In addition, there were reflective notes, which included problems and highlights of each experience and involved preliminary themes noticed by the researcher (Creswell, 2015). Observations and interactions with campers were carried out in the days leading up to the interviews, and participants were purposively chosen and asked to participate in the interview portion of the study. To be clear, observation and reflective notes were used solely to help in purposively sampling participants.

Interviews occurred during unstructured time, in a quiet space. The researcher communicated with staff to schedule interviews at appropriate times of day. Interviews were audio recorded, and comprised of open-ended questions that prompted discussion about the camper's experience with personal growth and meaningful friendships as outlined in the interview guide found in Appendix A. Interview questions were developed utilizing the 5 C's of PYD as a guiding framework. Once the interview began, questions pertaining to each category were asked in a natural way and probes were utilized, if necessary. By asking the questions, the goal was to elicit responses that addressed the participants' lived experience of the 5 C's in the following ways: connection with and caring about their friends, how confidence and character have been impacted by the overall camp experience, and how the inclusive camp setting and interactions with friends influences their social competence.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data began when I created memos and journal entries at camp, eventually taking into account how the interviews connected to my observations and personal experiences in this setting. After interviews were transcribed verbatim, salient quotes were organized into meaningful units by utilizing a structural a priori pragmatic coding process (i.e., purposeful coding into the 5 C's) (Durdella, 2018; Carspecken, 2013; Saldana, 2015). The data analysis process was broken down into the following steps: 1) camper responses were organized into the appropriate C category; 2) salient quotes from each C were highlighted; 3) a table was created for each C which included columns for salient quotes, objective claims related to the quote, and subjective claims related to the quote. The objective claims were based on direct participant statements, while the subjective claims originated from an interpretive cultural lens (Carspecken, 2013). During this process, data were categorized by meaningful connection to each C, rather than weighting the interview question the response was originally connected with. This pragmatic approach allowed the researcher to focus on the targeted phenomena (connection to 5 C's) while making full use of the participant responses, even when the narratives strayed from connecting directly to initial researcher prompts. During the final stage of analysis, I analyzed quotes within each category at a deeper level, comparing identified implicit and explicit statements to existing literature, and personal observations before synthesizing into more formal findings. I worked closely with another member of the research team as a trustworthiness measure through all stages of analysis, and we were able to negotiate final coding and analysis to 100% agreement.

Findings and Discussion

Ten interviews were completed and ranged from seven to twenty minutes in length, depending on the expressiveness of each camper. Camper ages ranged from 21-29 years old and they had been attending camp for an average of 7.4 years. According to the findings of this study, campers' lived experiences at camp aligned with each of the 5 C's. Early on, it was evident that there was an overlap of the C's, and many responses could be sorted into multiple categories. Participant responses, as they related to each of the 5 C's, were organized and summarized below. Findings were congruent with existing research and suggest camps can promote positive outcomes and give participants with DS the opportunity to experience personal growth and create and maintain meaningful friendships.

Table 1. Supportive Quotes for the 5 Cs of PYD

5 C	Quote	Objective Claims	Subjective Claims
Competence (social/cognitive)	“I have to figure out their personality, what to joke around a lot and so that would turn up into our friendship and so that, that bar of our interests and our hobbies to create a little profile inside my head of what they are like and so that's how I create the friends”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have to figure out a person's personality, humor and interests to determine if I can create a friendship with them. • I create mental profiles of potential friends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am good at figuring out who is compatible with me • I seek out friendships with people who have a sense of humor and similar interests as me • I'm analytical • Friendship is nuanced • I like to joke around with my friends • A person's hobbies and interests can serve as an indicator of who they are • Making friends is an intentional process • Competent at making friends
Connection	“I know Camp PALS isn't about judging people for they, for who they are, and camp PALS is, is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS isn't about judging people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no judgment at Camp PALS

	about, making friendships and building and building relationships with friends and we are all close and a family together.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS is about making friends and building on those relationships • Everyone at camp is close, like a family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS plays a big role in fostering the creation of friendships • I feel like my friends at camp are my family • I feel close to all of my friends • I can be who I am at Camp PALS • Deep connection to camp (people and place) • Sense of belonging/membership • Camp is central to my life
Caring	“I do care about them a lot. If I see them have the problem, I always ask them like permission to hug them, tell them everything’s be ok, and I try to calm down tell them give me deep breaths, everything’s going be ok, and I always give a little rub a little hug, needs someone to cry onto, and that’s what friendship is all about.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I care about my friends a lot • I recognize when my friends are having a problem • I help them feel better through verbal encouragement and by providing emotional support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I show my friends that I’m there for them by reassuring them it’s going to be ok • I understand social boundaries • I am compassionate • I am skilled at supporting friends when they need it • Caring for campers’ emotions; awareness of boundaries; supportive
Character	“It helps me grow um very independently like um well I move in with a roommate and that kind of helps me be more independent and that also kind of helps me be um calm down a little bit, not get mad, cause we don’t like being sad here at camp, we like being happy.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp has helped me grow into a very independent person • I live with a roommate which also helps me be more independent • Living with someone also helps me calm down, because there are times outside of camp when I get mad and sad • At camp, I am happy because at camp we do not like to be sad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp has helped me grow as a person • Camp has helped me become more independent • My roommate also goes to camp • Living with someone helps me control my temper • Sometimes I get sad and mad when I am not at camp • I am aware of my emotions • Independent, able to control my emotions; camp has helped me grown as a person

Confidence	“I know what my potential is with all the people and that’s kind of settling in my mind, make me more interesting than less.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know what my potential is when I am at camp • I feel at peace with who I am at camp • I am more of an interesting person at camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am more confident in myself at camp • The people at camp lift me up and encourage me • I feel at ease when I think about who I am at camp • Camp gives me the freedom to be the truest version of myself • Confident in ability to be more outgoing at camp; confident expressed as pride
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Competence (Social/Cognitive)

Campers demonstrated the use of interpersonal skills to make friends and communicate with others. The campers viewed their actions in the social domain as positive, and highlight Camp PALS as one of the reasons they are able to experience growth in this area (see first row in Table 1). Campers were able to demonstrate social and cognitive competence when they described how and when they decided it was appropriate to comfort others, make new friendships, and when it was important to communicate with other campers or their peer-counselors. Cognitive and social competence often overlapped, as campers were able to demonstrate cognitive competence through social engagement and experience. Campers seemed easily able to identify personal strengths that facilitated friendship development and maintenance of camp friendships. Responses seemed to indicate the following elements as facilitators connected to camp friendships: feelings of empowerment, being able to be yourself, not feeling judged, and mutual acceptance. The ability to express and receive love from others, the ability to provide support and comfort, feelings of importance and validation,

mutual fun, the ability to stay connected via technology, being remembered from year to year, and overcoming nervousness and other constraints also seemed to be facilitators. Overall, the campers described themselves as competent in making and maintaining connections at camp and communicating with others—whether it be communicating their own needs, offering comfort or encouragement to others, or socially connecting.

The findings associated with this C (competence) are parallel with literature describing individuals with Down syndrome as a more sociable group among individuals diagnosed with ID/DD (Fidler, Hepburn, & Rogers, 2006). Thurber et al. (2007) state that camps can provide the opportunity for social growth and friendships among campers and staff through increased-self-efficacy and providing positive social situations. This in particular seemed evident in the campers' responses. In relation to Positive Youth Development, Gambone, Klem, & Connell (2002) describe the many positive outcomes as physical and cognitive learning, social relationships, and positive values and identities. These claims posit that social and cognitive competence can be facilitated through the strong use of interpersonal and decision-making skills in the context of camp, which campers often expressed within their abilities to make and maintain nuanced friendships with others. This manifested through operationally defining friendships (*“um, being a friend is being, being who you are and accepting that you have a differences like you have disabilities like me.”*), how to enact friendship when a friend needs support (*“I usually tell them calm down, uh, speak up, advocate for yourself, cause um I been to camp I been to 4 years of college and I took um I took self-advocacy uh classes and I*

learned how to use your voice, to, um, stand up for who you are.”), and presenting insight towards creating friendships (see Table 1 for supporting quote).

Connection

There was a strong sense of connection in the Camp PALS community. Sense of belonging/membership and new and old connections with other campers and peer counselors are recurring themes. Campers feel like Camp PALS is family to them, and tend to feel the sense of coming home when they are at Camp PALS (*“When I grew up, since I love being in Camp PALS, this is my life being here, with, I love the people.”*; *“This is my life home. I love being camp every day, this is my life...I’m glad everyone here to make me happy and proud every time I see them.”*). They feel a deep connection to the camp setting as well, which seems to facilitate their deep connections with friends and peer counselors (*“Um, well at Camp PALS you don’t have to pick a favorite friend or peer counselor because here at Camp PALS we focus on friendship and make friends with everyone.”*). Campers feel at ease when connecting with others, and are eager to maintain friendships and create new ones. When campers discussed relationships with their peer counselors, there was a sense of mutual respect and trust. Many discussed how Camp PALS allows them to see past their disability (*“People love me for who I am and people really take me seriously and accept who I am because you don’t really, you don’t want to really define your disability as weakness like Down syndrome, Autism, like different disabilities in the world. Like the key is fairness to everyone.”*). Connectedness outside of camp was evident, with many campers using their cell phones and social media to stay connected. Overall, camp is a central part of the campers’ lives.

These findings challenge the current literature, which focuses on negative experiences and barriers when it comes to friendships and reciprocal connection, such as lack of resources, programming and feasibility (Scott et al., 2014; Seale & Pockney, 2002). Thurber et al. (2007) state that camps can provide an opportunity for social growth and friendships. Furthermore, *inclusive* experiences can be very important for individuals with and without disabilities to have, and are especially beneficial when positive skill development and social reciprocity are present (D'Eloia & Price, 2018). Supportive relationships between staff and campers with and without disabilities are essential to a positive camp experience and allow for positive and meaningful interactions (American Camp Association, 2005). When the roles between individuals with and without disabilities are balanced, friendships created can be mutually beneficial (Matheson et al., 2007). Although individuals without disabilities are counselors at Camp PALS, they are meant to be peer counselors. The counselors are charged with looking after the safety of the campers, but they are largely there to experience everything *with* their camper as a peer and friend. Campers appear to feel a strong connection with their peer counselors and feel a sense of membership among other campers and counselors at Camp PALS.

Caring

There was a strong sense of compassion among the interviewed campers. They described themselves as affectionate with their friends, encouraging, supportive when it is warranted, and extremely perceptive of emotions (“*Um, at Camp PALS, um, I just um for me, um, I open up my heart to people that I really care about. Through words, through motions, through feelings, what are you feeling? Just tell people what you really*

feel.”). Many of the campers value genuine friendship and have a strong desire to be there for their friends (“*Um, for me, I am very loyal and I am an important part as being a jokester because I like making people um I like making people um people smile and like making people laugh.*”). Caring appears to be a very important part of friendships and is valued by each camper. Many discussed that it is important to look out for each other and expressed appreciation when that was reciprocated (“*I care, especially from the heart, I say that you’re more than a friend, you’re more than a best friend. To me, all of my friends from Camp PALS are like brothers and sisters, cause they respect me, everyone here, all the female campers, feel like sisters to me cause they show me mutual respect.*”). There was also an awareness of boundaries, for example, gauging when it is appropriate to comfort someone versus when it is not and the best way to offer comfort (see Table 1 for supporting quote). Campers highlighted their emotional intelligence, their ability to be sociable and friendly, and their desire to be compassionate toward others. Overall, campers appeared to care deeply for each other’s emotions and were eager to support and encourage their friends.

Camper responses in relation to this C continue to align with the literature, which also highlights the compassionate nature of individuals with DS and the benefits of the camp setting where this can be promoted and encouraged. Fidler (2005) suggests that individuals with DS portray a welcoming energy, easily form relationships with others and tend to have the ability to communicate positive affect better than individuals with other forms of ID/DD. Because there is little literature highlighting meaningful friendships among young adults with Down syndrome, it is worth investigating why

camps can facilitate and promote caring among friends. According to Garst et al. (2011), camps can be beneficial to its participants at a holistic level, resulting in growth in the social, behavioral, cognitive and spiritual domains. The American Camp Association (2006) suggests that campers can benefit from emotional and physical support, and can be involved in the camp experience in meaningful ways that promote personal growth. Camp PALS provides an emotionally and physically supportive environment, giving the campers the opportunity and confidence to demonstrate the ability to be both sympathetic and empathetic toward their peers and to take action to support their friends.

Character

Character development was evident among the campers. Many mentioned that camp positively influenced behavior and were able to reflect on past behavior patterns and the positive change that has occurred over the years in the context of camp (“*Um, actually I used to be a shallow person, but now, with all these wonderful faces um it makes me more like wonderful.*”). Some campers have learned the concept of teamwork and enjoy encouraging others during camp events (“*Um I am really proud of the Olympics, um, I am like having fun or with trying to encourage the whole team and that kind of thing try cheer everybody up and that kind of thing if they are having downs and stuff.*”). Campers explained that they are able to work well with and respect others and many felt confident in the behavior that they display at camp (“*I proud of how I’m acted because I love, I love, I am very, I am very kind, I’m loving. I’m very huggable and I’m also lovable because I love um making new friends.*”). Character and caring tend to overlap and many of these appropriate behaviors involve caring for and showing respect

toward others and communicating when it is necessary. Camp PALS is described as playing an instrumental role in many of the campers' lives and they credit camp with helping them become more mature (*"Um, once I got to Camp PALS, um Camp PALS really changed my life because I learned new skills over the past summers. Like relationship skills, being part of a team, and just having fun and it's ok to be silly wherever you are. The point is to have fun with your friends."*). Campers highlighted their experience with personal growth in the camp setting. Emotion regulation was also recognized by campers as something that has been positively impacted by camp (see Table 1 for supporting quote). Overall, campers described themselves as more independent, mature, and compassionate (*"Um, I'm flexible and dependent, most chill person ever that I've met and I also have like vibes, down to earth, sometimes I can be like my true self, what's on the inside, not what's on the outside."*). Many campers expressed how proud they are to be who they are and how they see their diagnosis of DS in a positive light.

These findings show that self-identity can continuously change throughout the lifespan, and friendships and interpersonal relationships remain integral to the concept of self by allowing the individual to see themselves in relation to their peers and society (Morrison & Burgman, 2009). The ability to reflect on behavior and the process of maturing are very much intertwined with the development of our self-identity. Seeing ourselves and our behavior in the context of camp allow campers to see themselves in relation to others and their environment. Garst, Browne, and Bialeschki (2011) state that camp can be, "...a way for young people to explore and search for authenticity often

missing in other parts of their lives that contributes to their healthy transition into adulthood” (p.1). According to Henderson et al. (2007), Positive Youth Development, which often occurs within the context of camp, involves the preparation of individuals for a successful transition into adulthood by providing supports and opportunities that aid in personal growth. Character is defined as a sense of morality and respect for societal rules and the display of appropriate behaviors (Lerner et al., 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). In this case, Camp PALS is a place in which campers experience growth of character and learn how to work together, how to respect each other and how to reflect on the way they behave.

Confidence

Confidence among the campers was evident in the context of camp (“*Um, three words that describes how I feel is confident, endless, and beautiful because, because there’s a lot of beautiful spirits here and that’s because without them, I wouldn’t be alive today.*”). It seems that outside of camp, confidence is not as strong, and that camp provides opportunities and experiences that bring forth a sense of pride (“*Just experience with all the people that help boost up my confidence and also my self-esteem because outside of this it’s the opposite.*”). While at camp, the campers feel proud of who they are, embrace their unique qualities, and don’t let disability define who they are (“*Camp PALS is a place where you’re not being judged. And they really love kids with Down syndrome, or teenagers, or adults because here at Camp PALS we are a close knit family together and we really want um they really want campers to grow strong. What I mean by growing strong, like making better choices for yourself.*”). In fact, many campers express

that they are proud to have Down syndrome (*“Um the past ten years at camp, it feels like, it feels like um pleasant to me, of having disabilities like me, like having Down syndrome.”*). Campers highlight their ability to be a great friend, to be compassionate, and to communicate well with others. Many see themselves as social and feel that they have a voice at camp (*“To myself and my friends are um, inspiring and friendly and I’m a social butterfly and love to hang out.”*). Campers felt a strong sense of belonging and many of the campers see Camp PALS as a family, seeing their experiences as some of the best they have had in their lives. Campers encourage each other and value being encouraged by others. Overall, confidence was expressed as pride and bravery (*“I love when uh I acted so much, it feels like, that I am so intelligent and brave at the same time.”*).

The way we are able to interact with others helps shape our sense of self in relation to the world and people around us. Social opportunities provide many opportunities for individuals with DS, including increased self-esteem and well-being (McGuire & Chicoine, 2006). Camps provide the opportunity to form and maintain new friendships, promoting social opportunities for campers (Fryxell & Kennedy, 1995). More specifically, inclusive camps can help dismiss common stereotypes (Bedini, 2000; Devine & Lashua, 2002; Devine & Whilwhite, 2000), increase self-determination (Dattilo, Williams, & Cory, 2003), develop meaningful friendships (Kalyvas & Reid, 2003), and learn important life skills (Place & Hodge, 2001). Devine and Lashua (2002) highlight that positive experiences are only present when the standards are achievable to all

involved (both individuals with and without disabilities). This forces us to look more specifically at the authenticity of relationships formed and personal growth experienced.

Additional Discussion

This study aimed to gain an understanding of personal growth and meaningful friendships in the lives of young adults with DS in the context of an inclusive camp setting. Below, findings, in addition to related literature and theory, are discussed.

Personal Growth

Many campers were able to reflect on how attending camp has changed their lives. The campers highlighted how camp has positively influenced their behavior, how it has helped them gain relationship and communication skills, and how being at camp has helped them feel more independent. Garst et al. (2011) suggest that camps provide the necessary experiences, settings, structures and activities to promote positive development. Participant's experiences with confidence and character in the context of camp seemed to have the greatest impact on their personal growth. Gambone et al. (2002) identify positive values and identity as prominent outcomes of positive youth development. Findings suggest that Camp PALS creates an environment where campers are confident in who they are, and it is a place where they understand and build on their personal values and character.

Meaningful Friendships

The participants in this study provided compelling narratives about the importance and significance of the friendships they experience in the context of Camp PALS. Sense of belonging and membership are recurring themes, with many of the

participants calling Camp PALS family. Participants care deeply for each other's emotions and were eager to support and encourage their friends. One of the aims of Camp PALS is to allow the campers and counselors the opportunity to build new, transformative friendships (PALS, n.d.). The PALS model involves one-on-one pairings between campers and volunteers that are based on mutual interests, age, personality and location. The common ground between camper and volunteer is meant to create a personal bond and help the participants step out of their comfort zone and try new things together at a PALS program (PALS, n.d.). When the roles between individuals with and without disabilities are balanced, friendships can be mutually beneficial (Matheson et al., 2007). Camper experiences with social competence, connection and caring seemed to influence their ability to create and maintain mutually beneficial and meaningful friendships with their peers at camp.

Limitations and Recommendations

Peer counselors, new campers and campers who did not have strong expressive skills were screened out, and future researchers may want to consider including them. It is also important to acknowledge the influence of research bias in this study. I was a previous peer counselor at Camp PALS, and my experiences during that time heavily influenced my interest in doing a study on this topic. In order to keep bias from influencing the findings, I recorded my feelings in a reflexive journal prior to, during, and after data collection and a committee member made external checks during all phases of data analysis. With all things considered, however, having in-depth knowledge of this population and the experience of being at camp as a peer counselor could be beneficial,

as I had insight and context that an external researcher may not have had, when analyzing camper responses.

Conclusion

This aim of this study was to take a close look at Camp PALS, and if it impacted the personal growth and meaningful relationships of returning campers. Because this study was exploratory in nature, it is more of an introduction of what the 5 C's look like for an individual with DS going to camp. Due to the lack of research in this area, this study sought to provide foundational information on the benefits of inclusive camps on personal growth and meaningful friendships in the lives of young adults with DS. The preliminary findings from this study indicate that Camp PALS promotes personal growth through the promotion and evolution of the 5 C's of PYD, and provides its young adult campers with the opportunity to form meaningful, authentic relationships. Future research has the potential to uncover additional benefits of inclusive camps for young adults with DS.

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Chapter 5

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to examine the impact of an inclusive camp setting on young adults with Down syndrome (DS) and their experiences with personal growth and meaningful friendships. I partnered with Camp PALS, whose aim is to provide experiences in which young adults with DS create meaningful relationships with each other and their typically developing peers, foster a sense of belonging in an inclusive setting, and promote personal growth through fun and novel experiences (PALS, n.d.). This exploratory case study described the lived experiences of young adults with DS who were returning Camp PALS campers and examined the impact of camp on their personal growth and meaningful friendships over time.

There is a lack of literature highlighting the personal growth and meaningful friendships experienced by young adults with DS. Because DS is the most common form of intellectual disability, it is worth exploring these concepts. Young adults often experience challenges during this time of life and often require a structured environment, and could benefit from the structure and support of the camp environment. Summer camps traditionally use the Positive Youth Development (PYD) model and aim to promote positive identity and social competence. The 5 C's focus on strengths related to competence, connection, caring, character and confidence and were used to conceptualize the abstract concepts of personal growth and meaningful friendships.

Summary of Major Findings

The 5 C's. Overall, many of the campers described themselves as competent in making and maintain connections at camp and communicating with others. They expressed being able to communicate their own needs, offer comfort and encouragement to others, and socially connect. Findings show that camp is a central part of the campers' lives and many identified the people at Camp PALS as a family. Campers appeared to care deeply for one another and were eager to support and encourage their friends at camp and described themselves as more independent, mature and compassionate because of camp. Confidence was expressed as pride and bravery and there was a major sense of belonging/membership to the PALS community.

Meaningful friendships. The participants in this study provided compelling narratives about the importance of the friendships they experience in the context of camp. Camper experiences with social competence, connection and caring seemed to influence their ability to create and maintain meaningful friendships with their peers.

Personal Growth. Many campers were able to reflect on how Camp PALS has positively impacted their lives. Character and confidence appeared to have the strongest ties with personal growth and many campers were proud of their behavior and who they have become as a person (i.e. less dramatic, less angry, more accepting of self, kind, compassionate). Campers also reflected on their growth with relationship building, teamwork and interpersonal skills.

This findings of this study suggest that Camp PALS provides the experiences necessary for young adults with Down syndrome to experience personal growth and meaningful friendships.

Challenges

While I was very excited to conduct this research, it did not happen without some incredible challenges along the way. I experienced a major personal loss over the summer, which impacted the way I was able to function before, during, and after data collection. Once I got to the first data collection site in New York City, I found it to be fairly easy to conduct observations and interviews because it was a pretty small group. In Baltimore, however, the camp was more than double the size and it was much more difficult to navigate. I barely had any guidance from staff at this site and I had to scramble around to observe different groups as they scattered through the field trip sites. The aquarium was particularly difficult, because everyone went their own way and it was really dark and hard to see. I ended up just clinging on to different groups and doing the best I could to hop into random conversations without being disruptive. Personal issues impacted my energy in the observations and interviews, and I was not as focused as I could have been when recording observations, conducting interviews, and writing in my reflexive journal.

Eventually, when I was able to transcribe my interviews and it was time for data analysis, I realized that the data was much more answer driven because responses did not necessarily correlate with my original prompts; however, every answer aligned with a C. It took a lot of time for me to get through the analysis, as I didn't realize how much depth

and interpretation was required. Once I got into it, it wasn't as cut and dry as I thought it would be and I had to get some clarification before I felt more confident to go through the rest of the data.

Limitations

Due to the nature of semi-structured interview questions, there were answers that did not align with a prompt, which is a chance for error in data. It was evident pretty quickly that a lot of campers at each site had strong expressive skills. I really wanted to interview everyone, but I knew it was not feasible. I originally had eleven interviews, but had to throw one away due to the recording being inaudible. I selected this camper because he appeared to have strong expressive skills and was a returning camper of many years, but once we sat down for the interview, he got nervous and spoke too quickly to the point where I could not comprehend what he was saying. I asked him to slow down a few times but he did not seem to understand what I was asking. He was very excited to participate in the interview as evident by his facial expressions and body language (he was smiling, laughing and enthusiastically using hand gestures) so I found it to be unethical to discontinue the interview. New campers and campers who did not have strong expressive skills were screened out for this study, but should be considered for future research. It would also be interesting to interview the peer counselors to see if the friendships are truly mutual, because they are just as much participants in the camp as the campers are.

It is also important to consider that campers who are willing to spend a week away from their families may be more independent than other individuals with DS.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Interview Protocol

Obtain assent from interviewees and inform them that the interview will take approximately 15-20 minutes. Assure confidentiality.

Time of Interview:

Date of Interview:

Interviewer:

Corresponding Construct	Questions:	Participant response:
Connection	<p>Can you tell me about your friends at camp?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many friends do you have at camp? • How easy is it for you to make friends at camp? • Why do you think that is? • How often do you stay in touch with friends outside of camp? • In what ways do you stay in touch? <p>Describe how camp has influenced your ability to make friends.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you look for in a friend? • Have you found that here at camp? <p>Describe how you are as a friend to others at camp.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you tell me more about that? 	
Caring	<p>Can you tell me how you show others that you care about them at camp?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it through words? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If so, can you tell me about that? • Is it through actions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If so, can you tell me about that? 	

	Can you tell me about a time when you showed a friend at camp that you care about them?	
Character	<p>Can you tell me about a time that you were proud of how you acted (behaved) at camp?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who were you with? • Were you engaging in a specific activity? • Do your friends at camp influence your behavior? • Can you tell me more about that? 	
Social Competence	<p>Can you tell me about a time at camp where you communicated really well with others?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who was it with? • Do you feel like it is easier for you to talk to people at camp? • Do you feel like you are more outgoing at camp? • Can you tell me more about that? 	
Confidence	<p>Can you tell me about a time at camp when you felt really confident?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the specific activity or interaction that made you feel this way? • How has it helped you grow as a person? • Did it make you feel like you belonged? 	

Appendix B
Observation Protocol

Name of Activity:	
Description of Activity:	
Length of Activity:	
Number of Participants:	
Conversion prompt (for PI to evaluate interaction capability): How long have you been coming to camp? What's your favorite thing about camp?	
Descriptive Notes (descriptions, quotes)	Reflective Notes (feelings, reactions, initial interpretations, speculations)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Space: 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activities:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participants:	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interactions:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conversation:	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Researcher (personal) <p>Behavior:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional information:	

Appendix C

Data Analysis Tables

Data Analysis PHASE II

5C-Competence (social/cognitive)

Salient Quote	Subjective Claims	Objective Claims
<p>I have to figure out their personality, what to joke around a lot and so that would turn up into our friendship and so that, that bar of our interests and our hobbies to create a little profile inside my head of what they are like and so that's how I create the friends. [how easy is it for you to make friends at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am good at figuring out who is compatible with me • I seek out friendships with people who have a sense of humor and similar interests as me <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I'm analytical</i> • <i>Friendship is nuanced</i> • <i>I like to joke around with my friends</i> • <i>A person's hobbies and interests can serve as an indicator of who they are</i> • <i>Making friends is an intentional process</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affective factors: humor; friendship involves joking around • <i>Competent at making friends</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have to figure out a person's personality, humor and interests to determine if I can create a friendship with them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I create mental profiles of potential friends</i>
<p>Uh, yes, yes. Um, learning their language and learning their learning styles and personalities. [easier to talk to people at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important for me to learn about a person so I can figure out how to communicate with them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>People are nuanced</i> • <i>I can figure out people</i> • <i>I can navigate diversity in a camp setting</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Competent at high context communication with campers</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I learn how the other person learns and communicates so that it is easier for me to communicate with them.
<p>Um because it actually is, I know what my potential is with all the people and that's kind of settling with my mind, make me more interesting than less. [can you tell me why you're more outgoing at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel more relaxed when I know what my potential with people is • I think I'm more interesting when I know what my potential is with others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It's easier for me to gauge others at camp</i> • <i>I'm self-reflective</i> • <i>Camp friends are interested in me</i> • <i>I can let my guard down at camp</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know what my potential is with others • It makes me more interesting vs less

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affective factors: peacefulness; it's calming to be around kindred spirits • <i>Competent at understanding the perspective of other campers.</i> 	
<p>The key is, to making friends here at Camp PALS is to accept who you are in life and make and try to know each other a little bit better. [how has camp influence your ability to make friends]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I accept who I am. • I make friends because I am happy with who I am. • People at Camp PALS accept who they are. • <i>I value mutual interest and respect in friendships</i> • <i>Competent at making friends</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key to making friends is accepting who I am • The key to making friends is to try and get to know each other a little better
<p>[do you feel like you find honesty in friends at camp] Yes, I do, yes. [can you tell me more] Um, what I mean about that, you should always like meet with your counselor or new people, you should really be honest, like it's like the ability to speak your mind.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am able to speak my mind with my counselor and new people • It is important to be honest with counselors and new people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I understand social filters</i> • <i>I value openness in friendships</i> • <i>Friends can talk about anything</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Competent at open communication/competent at making friends</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being honest involves the ability to speak your mind • I am honest with my friends at camp.
<p>Um, hmmm, well, when I first started camp in 2006, um I used to be a very shy person, but I, but I overcame my shyness. [do you feel like you're more outgoing at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am outgoing because of Camp PALS. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I have grown socially</i> • <i>I have agency over my constraints</i> • <i>Shyness can be a constraint to making friends</i> • Affective factors: shyness; it's difficult to be outgoing when you feel shy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was very shy when I first started camp. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the years, I overcame my shyness
<p>Um, I like making new friends, makes me happy and enjoy myself a little bit more, get to know them, and finding and making new ones that makes me so happy. [how easy is it to make friends at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have fun finding new friends • <i>I can successfully navigate the friendship-making process</i> • Affective factors: joy; making friends brings happiness into my life • <i>Competent at self-improvement; competent at making friends</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I enjoy making and getting to know new friends, it makes me happy.
<p>Yes, I do, I text them, or Facetime. [how do you stay in touch with camp friends]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I keep in touch with my friends. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am tech-savvy</i> • <i>I know how to sustain distance friendships</i> • <i>My cell-phone is an important facilitator in maintaining camp friendships</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I use various forms of social media to talk to my friends.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Competent at maintaining distance friendships; competent at technology</i> 	
<p>Yes. Of course, um friendship is really important to my life because I will love my friends to treat me right, don't call me any names. I am who I am today, and, I really like my life and really love my friends too. [do you feel like you can find the friends you are looking for at camp PALS?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love when my friends are nice to me • I am who I am because of my friends • <i>People outside of camp don't always treat me right</i> • <i>People outside of camp call me names</i> • <i>The normal social constraints I face aren't present at camp</i> • <i>Competent at identifying healthy boundaries</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship is important in my life • I love when my friends treat me well and don't call me names • I really like my life • I really love my friends
<p>Of course, um, to myself and my friends are um, inspiring and friendly and I'm social butterfly I love to hang out. [can you describe how you are as a friend to others at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am inspiring and friendly to others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My friends inspire me • <i>I value unstructured time with friends</i> • <i>I am social with many people</i> • <i>Friendship comes easy to me</i> • Affective factors: inspiration; friends inspire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am competent at making friends • I am competent at being social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am outgoing and love to hang out • I am inspiring and friendly to others
<p>[do you stay in touch with friends from camp PALS] Yeah, Facebook, text message. [how often?] A lot of times</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I keep in touch with my friends a lot <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am tech savvy</i> • <i>Technology is a facilitator to maintaining friendships</i> • <i>I am diligent about maintaining my friendships</i> • I am competent with technology • I am competent at maintaining long distance friendships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I use Facebook to stay in touch with my friends from camp • I text my friends from camp to stay in touch
<p>I feel more confident; I have more voice for them to communicate with them. [how easy is it for you to make friends at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp makes me feel more confident • Camp makes me feel like I have a voice to communicate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am less confident in making friends outside of camp</i> • <i>The camp setting empowers me to connect with others</i> • <i>I have less of a voice when I'm not at camp</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affective factors: empowerment; the camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using my voice helps me communicate with friends and makes me feel more confident

	<p>setting empowers me to make friends more easily</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am competent at communication 	
<p>Yeah. Because um people knows that I've been very, more outgoing, and loving and caring people that know who I am. [do you feel like friends at camp influence your behavior]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who know me like my personality • <i>Camp friends know the real me</i> • <i>I feel empowered by my camp friendships</i> • Affective factors: love; I can expressive my love to camp friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am competent at making friends • I am competent at understanding the perspective of other campers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who know me know that I'm outgoing, loving and caring
<p>Yeah. I communicate with CM, cause sometimes she can be like you know, um, not doing well, but she, whenever, I'm with my counselor, to talk things out with her, I feel more confident. [when you communicated well with others]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I talk to my friends to make them feel better • I am good at talking to my counselor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am competent with communication • I am competent at recognizing the feelings of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I communicate well with my friend and counselor at camp • Communicating with my counselor makes me feel more confident
<p>I can talk with the phone, or go on my um, um my um iPad and uh, talk when they ask me to do. [how do you talk with friends outside of camp?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like to keep in touch with my friends outside of camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am tech savvy</i> • <i>Technology is a facilitator for maintaining camp friendships</i> • I am competent with technology • I am competent at maintaining friendships outside of camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I use my phone and iPad to talk to my friends • Outside of camp, I talk to my friends when they ask me to
<p>I love when I talk to each other, if there's me when I'm so happy when I see others face to face [who are you with when you feel like you can really communicate?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love talking to my friends at camp • Being with my friends makes me so happy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I value face to face communication</i> • Affective factors: joy; speaking directly with friends brings me happiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am competent with communication • I am competent at making friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It makes me happy to see my friends face to face at camp • I love being able to communicate with others at camp

<p>When I grew up, since I love being in Camp PALS, this is my life being here, with, I love the people. * But when I um, when I grew up, like not like being a baby, I now, I grew up. I've been a young adult, young adult, and I always been in my life, been in Camp PALS, make new friends, and all that. [how has camp PALS helped you grow as a person?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS has helped me grow up • Camp PALS has helped me make new friends • Part of my identity is being at Camp PALS • <i>Camp PALS is an important element in my life narrative</i> • I am competent at making friends • I am competent at self-improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love the people I get to be with at Camp PALS • Being at Camp PALS is a big part of my life • I have grown up into a young adult • Camp PALS has given me the opportunity to make friends and has done that for most of my life
<p>Good. Um, I've been really good at making friends um when I was a little girl I'd get nervous but now I'm not nervous anymore. [is it easy for you to make friends at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am confident in my ability to make friends at Camp PALS • I did not used to be as good at making friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I have grown socially</i> • <i>Nervousness can be a constraint to making friends</i> • <i>I have overcome constraints</i> • I am competent at making friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am really good at making friends at Camp PALS • When I was little, I used to get nervous, but now I'm not nervous anymore when I want to make friends
<p>My phone, I've been texting them, I've been calling them, that kind of stuff, and it's great to hear them again. [how often do you stay in touch with your friends from camp?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like to stay in touch with my friends from camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I'm tech savvy (OR – I'm competent with using technology to stay in touch)</i> • <i>I know how to maintain friendships</i> • <i>I value my camp friends</i> • I am competent with technology • I am competent at maintaining friendships outside of camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I use my phone to text and call my friends from camp • I enjoy to hear from my friends again once we are outside of camp
<p>Yes, um, when I was friends with them, um, since last year and the last two years, I treat them as friends, like all the time it's like the greatest feeling, and, um, some of them, one of them is like treating me not as a friend but um I'm trying to encourage them to be my friend. [can you tell me how you show other people you care at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I want to be friends with people, even if they are not nice to me sometimes • I treat everyone at camp like friends • It's a great feeling to have a lot of friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I'm tolerant</i> • <i>I'm skilled at being a friend</i> • Affective factors: friendships bring about optimal emotions • I am competent at being a friend • I am competent at recognizing the way others treat me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having friends is the greatest feeling • I encourage people to be my friend, even if they are not treating me as a friend
<p>Yes, with my words. I sometimes get agitated a little bit but not too much</p>		

<p>just me explaining myself [a time you communicated well with others] [who were you with?] My counselor and a friend</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am good at communicating with my words <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I'm articulate</i> • <i>I'm expressive</i> • I am competent at communication • I am competent at emotion regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I communicate through words • Explaining myself helps me feel less agitated when I'm feeling upset • I communicate well with my counselor and my friend
<p>Easier to make friends... I make them comfortable I, I give hugs and I love um spending time with them, I like making new friends by um telling them to have fun and, and (pause) I would say don't worry we will have fun. [does camp PALS make it easier to make friends?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love being a good friend to others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am skilled at being an intentional friend</i> • <i>I am good at encouraging others</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am affectionate</i> • Affective factors: love and fun; I'm able to express my love in camp friendships; fun is an important element in friendships • I am competent at making friends • I am competent at expressing affection when appropriate (verbal/physical) • I am competent at being a friend • I am competent at comforting others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is easier for me to make friends at Camp PALS • I make friends at camp by spending time with them, helping them feel comfortable and encouraging them.
<p>Uh yeah like uh if I need help with something, or if I um just want to talk to just say hello or if I want to um I need to take medicine, yeah. [do you feel like it's easier to talk to people at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel like it's easier to talk to people at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am at ease at camp</i> • <i>I understand the nuances of communication</i> • <i>I am able to ask for what I need</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am competent at communication with others • I am competent at recognizing my needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I communicate when I need help with something or if I just want to have a conversation
<p>Um text, facetime, group chats, um there's a little message on uh snapchat. It's like our life outside of Camp PALS so it makes it more interesting outside. [how often do you stay in touch with camp friends]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is fun for me to stay in touch with my friend outside of camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I'm tech savvy</i> • <i>I actively maintain friendships throughout the year</i> • <i>I integrate my outside life with camp friendships through multi-modal communication</i> • I am competent with technology • I am competent at maintaining friendships outside of camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have many ways of staying in touch with my friends from camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because we are outside of camp, staying in touch is more interesting

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am competent at communicating with others 	
<p>I hope they are like chilled, relaxed kind of guys and gals who want to do anything, but maybe look each other like relationship like. Like maybe on and off boyfriend girlfriend stuff. [what do you look for in a friend]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships in general are important to me • I think about making friends and having a relationship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I like friendships to be comfortable and relaxed</i> • <i>I consider the potential for romance when meeting new people</i> • Affective factors: feeling relaxed; good friends are “chill” with each other • I am competent at recognizing the qualities of other people • I am competent at making friends who I am compatible with • I am competent at understanding the nuances of relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I look for friends who are flexible and open to different experiences • I sometimes look for romantic relationships when I make friends
<p>Actually most campers don’t verbally understand when other campers says. I’m only one camper here have a full language set like adult and so all the campers so we get along very well. [a time where you communicated well]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am really good at understanding people • It helps me get along with people • <i>Communication skills are a barrier for some campers</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am articulate</i> • <i>I am proud of my communication skills</i> • I am competent at understanding others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am competent at communicating with others • I am competent at being expressive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes it is difficult to understand what other campers are trying to verbally express • I understand the campers because I have the ability to understand what they are saying <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My ability to communicate makes me feel like an adult • I get along well with other campers because I understand them when they talk to me

<p>I do care about them a lot. If I see them have the problem, I always ask them like permission to hug them, tell them everything's be ok, and I try to calm down tell them give me deep breaths, everything's going be ok, and I always give a little rub a little hug, needs someone to cry onto, and that's what friendship is all about. [probe question for showing friends you care at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I show my friends that I'm there for them by reassuring them it's going to be ok • <i>I understand social boundaries</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am compassionate</i> • <i>I am skilled at supporting friends when they need it</i> • <i>I'm an affectionate friend</i> • I am competent at being a friend to others • I am competent at recognizing boundaries • I am competent at supporting others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I care about my friends a lot • I recognize when my friends are having a problem • I help them feel better through verbal encouragement and by providing emotional support
<p>Yes, it make me feel happy and I can't say anything bad to it because that's why I'm here and having fun with my new friends. Some friends I actually know from last year, they do remember me, and I love it. [is it easier to talk to people at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's easier for me to talk to people at Camp PALS and it makes me feel really happy • I have nothing bad to say about camp • <i>My friendships continue from year to year</i> • Affective factors: joy: camp friendships bring joy • I am competent at making friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm here to talk to and have fun with my new friends • I still have friends from last year, and I love the fact that they remember me
<p>Yes. Because I love joining with someone, and hanging out with my counselor, hanging out my friends, I like to do a little bit of both cause I really love it and some people like um treat me right, respect me, and don't say bad things to me cause if they say it behind my back and someone didn't tell me last minute, I will get depressed. [do you feel like you are more outgoing at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel like I'm more outgoing at Camp PALS • I love hanging out with people • It makes me happy when people are nice to me <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I get sad when people talk behind my back • <i>There are different kinds of friendship</i> • <i>I have experience with feeling disrespected</i> • I am competent at being social • I am competent at being a friend to others • I am competent in understanding the nuances of friendships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love hanging out with my counselor and my friends • It is important for me to be with people who treat me with respect and who don't talk behind my back • It makes me feel depressed when people talk behind my back.
<p>Yeah. Um, being a friend is being, being who you are and accepting that you have a differences like you have disabilities like me. [how are you as a friend to others at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am confident with who I am • <i>Camp friends have common ground</i> • <i>Having a disability can be a unifying characteristic</i> • I am competent in understanding that people are different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a friend to others involves accepting who you are • Accepting who you are involves accepting that you are different
<p>Um, they been, I care about them deeply, I know how they feel, I usually help them out with problems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I care a lot about other campers at Camp PALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am a problem-solver</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I care about other campers deeply

<p>like friend problems or camper, new camper problems, I usually help them out. [how do you show others you care at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am a mentor to other campers</i> • Affective factors: empathy; my empathy is a facilitator to camp friendships • I am competent in recognizing how other people feel • I am competent at problem-solving • I am competent at being a friend to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I help them out with a variety of problems they may be having, whether it's a friend problem, or a new camper having a problem
<p>I usually tell them calm down, uh, speak up, advocate yourself, cause um I been to Camp I been to UBC for 4 years of college and I took um I took self-advocacy uh classes and I learned how to use your voice, to, um, stand up for who you are. [do you show that you care through words or actions?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I show other campers that I care about them through encouraging them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel more confident about encouraging others after my four years at college • <i>Advocacy is a form of caring</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am educated</i> • <i>I am a self-advocacy mentor</i> • I am competent at being a friend to others • I am competent at advocating for myself and others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I show other campers I care by encouraging them to stand up for themselves • The self-advocacy class I took at college gave me the tools to use my voice and stand up for who I am • I encourage other campers to advocate for themselves and to use their voices
<p>I feel much um, protective of my, my behavior, I feel like more than confident, since um Camp PALS, feel, _____, I feel nervous to meet new friends, but over the years I feel accomplish to speak up and, and make new friends, so yeah. [a time that you were proud of how you behaved]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS helps me feel proud of how I act • <i>Camp has empowered me to speak up</i> • <i>Making camp friends has boosted my confidence</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I can overcome social constraints</i> • Affective factors: nervousness; nervousness is a constraint, but not a barrier to making camp friends • I am competent at being self-aware • I am competent at making new friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel a sense of pride when it comes to my behavior • Camp has helped me feel more confident • Over the years, camp has helped me feel less nervous to speak up and make new friends • I feel accomplished because I have the courage to make new friends

Overall Summary: These campers demonstrate the use of interpersonal skills to make friends and communicate with others. The campers all view their actions in the social domain as positive, and highlight Camp PALS as one of the reasons they are able to experience growth in this area. Overall, there appears to be more social competence because of camp, but campers were able to show cognitive competence when they describe how and when they decide it is appropriate to comfort others, make new friendships, and when it is important to communicate with other campers or their counselors. *Campers seemed easily able to identify personal strengths that facilitated friendship development and maintenance of camp friendships. However, these strengths*

seemed difficult to apply outside of the camp setting/camp friendship circles; responses seem to indicate the following elements as facilitators connected to camp friendships: **feelings of empowerment**; being able to be yourself/not feeling judged; ability to be seen as who you really are/strengths are recognized and admired by others; mutual acceptance; ability to express and receive love from others; ability to provide support and comfort; feelings of importance/validation; mutual fun; the ability to stay connected (via technology) and to be remembered from year to year; overcoming nervousness and other constraints. Overall, many of the campers described themselves as competent in making and maintaining friends from camp and communicating with others—whether it be communicating their own needs, offering comfort or encouragement to others, or socially connecting.

Normative Evaluative Claims: The subjective and objective claims in this section parallels literature describing individuals with Down syndrome as a more sociable group among individuals with diagnosed ID/DD, who have a proclivity to show warmth and kindness toward others. According to Fidler, Hepburn, & Rogers (2006), this strength in the social domain may be in compensation for other domains of functioning that are not as strong, such as expressive language and motor skills. There is also a connection to the camp literature, as Thurber et al. (2007), state that camps can provide the opportunity for social growth and friendship among campers and staff through increased self-efficacy and providing positive social situations.

Gambone, Klem, & Connell (2002), describe the many outcomes of Positive Youth Development as: physical and cognitive learning, social relationships, and positive values and identities and the most prominent. These claims, which demonstrate social and cognitive competence through the strong use of interpersonal and decision-making skills in the context of camp, help us conceptualize and measure the development and growth experienced by individuals who attend Camp PALS.

5C Connection

Salient Quote	Subjective Claims	Objective Claims
<p>I will say, um, that you guys are having so much fun and I'm glad being here, so glad to meet everyone here, like at camp, this is my life being with you. [how do you show people you care through words]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am encouraging to others that I care about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am positive • I feel great about being here • Being here is a big part of my life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I feel a deep connection to camp; camp is central to my life</i> • Affective factors: fun; I feel connected to settings where people have fun <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Connection to camp (people); sense of belonging/membership</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am happy to meet everyone at Camp PALS • I'm happy to be at Camp PALS

<p>When I grew up, since I love being in Camp PALS, this is my life being here, with, I love the people. * [growth as a person]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp has been a big part of my personal growth • Camp plays an instrumental role in my life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love my friends at camp • <i>I feel a deep connection to camp; camp is central to my life</i> • <i>Connection to camp (place and people) (feeling of belonging/sense of membership) through love</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love being at camp • I love the people at camp
<p>This is my life home. I love being camp every day, this my life... I'm glad everyone here to make me happy and proud every time I see them. [do you feel like you belong at Camp PALS?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud to have a home at Camp PALS • Camp plays a huge role in my life (<i>deep connection</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel like I belong here • <i>Affective factors: connection expressed by love, joy, and pride</i> • <i>Connection to camp: place and people</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS is like home to me <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love being at Camp PALS • Everyone here makes me feel happy and proud
<p>There is a girl that I know from last year and also a counselor and a camper um who is here also in New York... Um I seen them last year San Fran and um it was like the best thing ever I can see them um and I have fun with them [can you tell me about your friends at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I've made friends over the years at Camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My friendships continue from location to location • I love seeing friends from previous years at camp • I've been able to maintain connections with my friends from previous years • I feel a deep connection to the people at camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know people from previous years that are here at camp • I have fun with my friends that I've made over the years at Camp.
<p>Good. Um, I've been really good at making friends um when I was a little girl I'd get nervous but now I'm not nervous anymore. [is it easy for you to make friends at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have overcome my nervousness associated with making friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am more outgoing • I am confident in my ability to make friends • I did not used to be as good at making friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp has helped me overcome insecurities related to making new friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am really good at making friends at Camp PALS • When I was little, I used to get nervous, but now I'm not nervous anymore when I want to make friends
<p>My phone, I've been texting them, I've been calling them, that kind of stuff, and it's great to hear them again. [how often do you stay in touch with your friends from camp?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am good at staying connected with my friends outside of camp • My phone is a main way for me to keep in touch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I text and call my friends when we are not at camp • It is great to hear from them

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I enjoy staying in touch with my friends • Talking to my friends outside of camp makes me happy • Connection to friends from camp 	
<p>Um, yes. Her name is _____. She's a, um, counselor and um the first time I met her was at San Fran last year and it's like she's like my best friend, uh, we've been texting a lot, so. [can you tell me about a time at camp that you showed a friend you cared about them?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My counselor and I stay connected outside of camp • I maintain my friendships outside of camp • I maintain my friendships from camp over the years • My counselor means a lot to me • Connection to friends and counselor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My counselor is my best friend • I use my phone to stay in touch with my counselor • We talk a lot
<p>Um I been like (pause)... the greatest feeling that I have time with them and I been having laughs and laughter and having a fun time with them like every, every day and night and like we having fun, we dance and that kind of thing. [do you feel like it's easier to talk to people at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I feel at ease when I am at camp</i> • It is easier for me to be social at camp • I can let loose at camp and be myself • I love the time I spend with my friends at camp • I enjoy laughing and dancing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel connected to my friends at camp • Deep connection with friends and camp through laughter and fun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a fun time with my friends at camp every day and every night • We laugh and dance together • It is a great feeling to be with my friends at camp
<p>I call my friends and we text and also I like snapchat and also facetimeing. Oh... and sending GIFS.[how do you stay in touch with your friends outside of camp?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am tech savvy</i> • Technology and social media plays an important role in my connectedness with my friends outside of camp • I use my cell phone to stay in touch with my friends • I like to stay connected with my friends outside of camp • Connection with friends from camp through technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I use my phone to call and text my friends outside of camp • I use social media to stay connected with my friends outside of camp
<p>Ok, I have lots of friends, uh they are pretty cool, um, I have lots of friends [can you tell me about your friends at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am social • I am popular at camp • I am good at making friends • Connection with friends from camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a lot of friends • I think my friends are pretty cool
<p>Oh yeah, some of them are campers, counselors [can you tell me more about your friends?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I value relationships with my peers and my counselors • I maintain connections with my peers and my counselors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of my friends are campers, and some are counselors

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection with friends and counselors 	
<p>UM, I keep in touch, like a lot... all the time. Yeah.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I maintain connection with my friends outside of camp • I talk to my friends a lot outside of camp • I have good communication skills • Connection with friends from camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I keep in touch with my friends outside of camp all of the time
<p>Yeah. Sometimes outside maybe not so much when I'm not at camp. At camp it kinda makes me feel like um it's always two people in the world the same thing as me. And then after that I figured out that's not. Here I am more comfortable here. Because I, I have lots of more friends like me around like dozens of them. And I get to talk to them and I like that a lot. I like being around friends like me. [do you feel like you belong when you are at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometime I feel like I belong when I'm not at camp, but not as much as I do when I'm at camp • I feel like I belong at camp because there are people like me • I can relate to my friends and they can relate • I like being with people I can relate to • I don't feel isolated at camp • I'm more social at camp • I feel like when I'm at camp, people understand me and I understand them • Deep connection to camp (people and place) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging/membership • Deep sense of understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel like I belong at camp • When I'm not at camp, I don't feel like there are as many people like me • I am comfortable at camp • I have a lot more friends like me at camp • I like getting to talk to my friends who are like me • I like being around my friends who are like me
<p>Um, my friends at camp uh I've known them for a long time just like ___ there's a bunch of other guys here as well and also girls and they have given me the best experience my life has been so far at Camp PALS. [can you tell me about your friends at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have maintained connections with my camp friends for a long time • I am very social at camp • The friendships I have at camp are a big, positive part of my life • Deep connection to camp (people and place) • Camp is central in my life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I've known my camp friends for a long time • I am friends with guys and girls at camp • My friends at camp mean a lot to me <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The best experiences of my life so far have been at Camp PALS
<p>Um text, facetime, group chats, um there's a little message on uh snapchat. It's like our life outside of Camp PALS so it makes it more interesting outside. [how often do you stay in touch with camp friends]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is fun for me to stay in touch with my friend outside of camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I'm tech savvy</i> • <i>I actively maintain friendships throughout the year</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have many ways of staying in touch with my friends from camp • Because we are outside of camp, staying in touch is more interesting

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I integrate my outside life with camp friendships through multi-modal communication</i> • Connection to friends outside of camp 	
<p>Um, definitely QH. He's my counselor this week. [specific person you communicated really well with]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am capable of communicating really well with others • I feel comfortable communicating with my counselor • Connection with my counselor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I communicate really well with my counselor
<p>Um, we have a mutual respect and trust for each other. [how so? (to probe answer above)]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I communicate really well with my counselor because I respect him • I communicate really well with my counselor because I trust him • I am more open with people I trust and respect • Connection with friends and counselors through communication • Foundation of trust and respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My counselor and I have mutual respect and trust for one another
<p>Uh yes, yes. Especially outside of this, there's times I want to, to go off the deep end and I do things that can ruin my life. But here, I may have those feelings and emotions, but at least there's always someone I can put my head on them for confidence. [does PALS make you feel like you belong]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I sometimes feel depressed when I am not at camp • I don't always feel like the best version of myself outside of camp • At camp, I sometime still feel low, but there is always someone there for me • I feel like I can reach out for help when I need it at camp • I feel like I can depend on the people at camp • My friends at camp help me feel confident <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My friends at camp encourage me • I know when to reach out for help when I need it at camp • Deep connection to camp (people and place) • Camp is central to my life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp makes me feel supported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel like I belong at Camp PALS • Outside of camp, I sometimes feel like I can do things that will ruin my life • At camp, sometimes I have negative emotions, but there is always someone I can lean on for confidence

<p>I know Camp PALS isn't about judging people for they, for who they are, and camp PALS is, is about, making friendships and building and building relationships with friends and we are all close and a family together. [can you tell me why it's easy to make friends]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no judgment at Camp PALS • Camp PALS plays a big role in fostering the creation of friendships • I feel like my friends at camp are my family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel close to all of my friends • I can be who I am at Camp PALS • Deep connection to camp (people and place) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging/membership • Camp is central in my life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS isn't about judging people • Camp PALS is about making friends and building on those relationships • Everyone at camp is close, like a family
<p>Um, well at Camp PALS you don't have to pick a favorite friend or peer counselor because here at Camp PALS we focus on friendship and make friends with everyone. [can you tell me about a specific time at camp where you showed someone you cared]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't feel like I have favorites at camp • I see everyone as my favorite at camp • I am friends with everyone at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am open to being friends with anyone at camp • Deep connection to friends at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging/membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At camp PALS, the focus in on friendship with everyone • I don't feel like I have to choose between campers and peer counselors when I make friends
<p>Because people love me for who I am and people really take me seriously and accept who I am because you don't really you don't want to really define your disability as weakness like Down syndrome, Autism, like different disabilities in the world. Like the key is fairness to everyone. [can you tell me more about why you are more outgoing at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't see my disability as a hindrance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't let my disability define me • I feel supported by the people at camp • I feel respected by the people at camp • I am more outgoing at camp because I can be myself • Everyone should be treated fairly, no matter what their abilities are • Deep connection to camp (place and people) • Camp is central in my life • Camp allows me to connect with who I am 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People at Camp PALS love me for who I am • People at Camp PALS accept me • You shouldn't define people by their disability • We should treat everyone fairly, no matter what
<p>Um, KC had matched me and S up and after that we became really fast friends with each other because we like so many things, we have so many things in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is easy for me to communicate with my counselor • I feel comfortable with my counselor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I became fast friends with my counselor • We have a lot of things in common

<p>common. [can you tell me why it's easy to communicate with your counselor?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My counselor is my friend • I share things in common with my friends at camp • Deep connection to people at camp 	
<p>Camp PALS is a place where you're not being judged. And they really love kids with Down syndrome, or teenagers, or adults because here at Camp PALS we are a close knit family together and we really want um they really want campers to grow strong. What I mean by growing strong, like, making better choices for yourself. [do you feel like you belong when at camp PALS]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can be myself at Camp PALS • I feel loved when I am at camp • I feel supported at camp • I feel like I can reach my full potential at camp • I understand the benefits of camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand how camp impacts other campers too • I want my friends to reach their full potential • I feel like I've grown as a person because of camp • Camp is central to my life • Deep connection with camp (people and place) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging • Camp fosters growth • Camp allows me to be myself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS is a place where you are not being judged • The people at Camp PALS love people with Down syndrome • We are a close knit family at Camp PALS • Camp PALS is a place to grow strong and make good choices
<p>Um, I know some of Camp PALS friends, from last year, this year I love them both and they inspire me a lot. [can you tell me about your friends at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have maintained connections with my friends from camp over the years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am social at camp • I make new friends at each camp I go to • Deep connection to people at camp • Camp is central to my life (the people inspire me) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of my camp friends are from last year and some are from this year • I love my friends • My friends inspire me
<p>Yes, um my friend E, my counselor, and she's the best counselor, this her first year at Camp PALS this year. She's amazing and she always perky and she always play jokes on me sometimes, make me laugh and all and she's great counselor to be with and she make me feel like any person have Down syndrome make you feel good. [when you communicated really well with someone at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My counselor is my friend • My counselor makes me feel good about myself • I look up to my counselor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like people who have energy and make me laugh <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel comfortable communicating with my counselor • Deep connection with peer counselor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think my counselor is the best counselor • My counselor is always perky and makes me laugh • My counselor makes me feel good and it doesn't matter to her that I have Down syndrome

<p>Yes, it make me feel happy and I can't say anything bad to it because that's why I'm here and having fun with my new friends. Some friends I actually know from last year, they do remember me, and I love it. [is it easier to talk to people at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is easy for me to talk to people at camp • I feel comforted when people remember me from last year • I remain connected to my friends from last year • When I'm having fun, it's easier for me to talk to people • Deep connection to people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel happy at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't have anything bad to say about camp • I'm here to have fun with my new and old friends • There are people I know from last year, and they remember me <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love it when people remember me from last year
<p>Yes. Because I love joining with someone, and hanging out with my counselor, hanging out with my friends, I like to do a little bit of both cause I really love it and some people like um treat me right, respect me, and don't say bad things to me... cause if they say it behind my back and someone didn't tell me last minute, I will get depressed. [do you feel like you are more outgoing at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel like I'm more outgoing at Camp PALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love hanging out with people • It makes me happy when people are nice to me • I feel respected at camp • I get sad when people talk behind my back • Deep connection to friends (campers and counselor) • Sense of mutual respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love hanging out with my counselor and my friends • It is important for me to be with people who treat me with respect and who don't talk behind my back • It makes me feel depressed when people talk behind my back.
<p>Yes, it will always be belong to me. Cause it's really in my heart, I watch YouTube videos of last years and all, and Camp PALS Baltimore make me feel like a different person than who I am and that make me feel grateful and kindness to others. [does camp make you feel like you belong]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel a deep sense of belonging when I am at camp • I like to reminisce on the previous years of camp • I feel like a different person because of camp • Camp plays an integral role in my life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have grown as a person because of camp • Camp is central to my life • Deep connection to camp (place and people) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging/membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS has a special place in my heart • I watch YouTube videos of past years of camp • I feel grateful for camp
<p>Sure, um I have a lot of friends um goes to Camp PALS um it's a very awesome because I just love them as much and then I do interact with the kids um making new friends that are at Camp PALS, and yeah. [can you tell me about your friends at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am popular • I stay connected with my friends from Camp PALS over the years • I like to make new friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am very social • Deep connection to people at camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a lot of friends at Camp PALS • I love my friends at Camp PALS • I interact with the new campers and make new friends, too

<p>Because that, it make me feel part of special of being a Camp PALS family. [why do you think it's easy to make friends at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is easy for me to make friends at Camp PALS • I feel like I belong at Camp PALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel at ease at camp • Camp plays a special role in my life • Camp is central to my life • Deep connection to camp (people and place) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging/membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's easy for me to make friends because I feel like I'm part of a special family at Camp PALS
<p>Because um that um my people from Camp PALS, it's more than like a family to me. [why do you feel like it's easier to talk to people at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is easy for me to talk to people at Camp PALS • I feel comfortable at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel welcomed at camp • Camp is central to my life • Deep connection to people at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging/membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS is like family to me
<p>Um the past ten years it feels like, it feels like um pleasant to me, of having disabilities like me, like having Down syndrome. [how has camp impacted your life over the past 10 years]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the years, Camp PALS has helped me accept who I am • Camp PALS has helped me grow as a person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I see Down syndrome as a positive thing • I don't see my disability as a hindrance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp is central to my life • Camp has helped me accept who I am 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since I started going to camp, I started seeing having Down syndrome as a pleasant thing
<p>Yeah, I feel like Camp PALS is my family. [does camp make you feel like you belong]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel like I belong at Camp PALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel welcomed at Camp PALS • I feel comfortable with my Camp PALS friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp is central to my life • Deep connection to the people at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging/membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS is my family
<p>I care, especially from the heart, I say that you're more than a friend, you're more than a best friend. To me, all my friends from Camp PALS are like brothers and sisters, cause they show me respect like my actual sisters I have in real life they don't, they don't even show</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS is like family to me <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't always feel respect outside of camp, even from my own family members • I value mutual respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My friends at camp are more like family to me <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I care about them from the bottom of my heart

<p>me respect but um everyone here, all the female campers, feel like sisters to me cause they show me mutual respect. [how do you express that caring through the heart]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I care deeply for my friends at Camp PALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I appreciate the way my friends treat me at Camp PALS • I appreciate relationships that are reciprocal in nature • Camp is central to my life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep connection to the people at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging/membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My friends at camp are like siblings to me • My friends at camp respect me more than my actual family sometimes • There is a sense of mutual respect among my friends and I at camp
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Overall Summary: There is a strong sense of connection in the Camp PALS community. Sense of belonging/membership and new and old connections with other campers and counselors are recurring themes. Many campers feel like Camp PALS is family to them, and have maintained many friendships from camp over the years. Campers tend to feel the sense of “coming home” when they are at Camp PALS. Campers feel a deep connection to the camp setting, which seems to facilitate their deep connections with friends and peer counselors. They feel at ease when connecting with others and are eager to maintain friendships and create new ones. When campers discuss relationships with their peer counselors, there is a sense of mutual respect and trust. Many campers discussed how Camp PALS allows them to see past their disability. Connectedness outside of camp was evident, with many campers using their cell phones and social media to stay connected to their friends outside of camp. Overall, camp is a central part of the campers’ lives.

Normative Evaluative Claims: There is little research highlighting connection and friendship among young adults with Down syndrome and their peers. Most of the research highlights the barriers to friendship and reciprocal connection. Although this may be the case, friendship remains highly important, as it provides feelings of inclusion, increased self-esteem and overall self-acceptance, particularly for individuals with intellectual disabilities (Scott et al., 2014; Seale & Pockney, 2002). Thurber et al., 2007, state that camps can provide the opportunity for social growth and friendships among campers and staff through increased self-efficacy and provide positive social situations.

Among individuals with disabilities, the impact lies greatly within the ability to experience supportive relationships and a sense of belonging. Garst, Browne, & Bialeschki (2011) suggest, “When supportive relationships through group living with peers and the presence of caring adults are combined with setting characteristics such as sustained experiences, deep friendships with peers and adults are formed” (p. 6). This fosters a sense of belonging and feelings of connectedness (Garst et al., 2011). Furthermore, *inclusive* experiences can be very important for individuals with and

without disabilities to have, and are especially advantageous when positive skill development and social reciprocity are present (D’Eloia & Price, 2018). Supportive relationships between staff and campers with and without disabilities are essential to a positive camp experience and allow for positive and meaningful interactions (American Camp Association, 2005). The goal of many inclusive camps is to provide a sense of belonging for individuals with disabilities in relation to their peers (D’Eloia & Price, 2018). When the roles between individuals with and without disabilities are balanced, friendships created can be mutually beneficial (Matheson et al., 2007).

Although individuals without disabilities are counselors, they are meant to be “peer counselors”. The counselors are charged with looking after the safety of the campers, but they are largely there to experience everything *with* their camper as a peer and friend.

5C Caring

Salient Quote	Subjective Claim	Objective Claim
<p>I do care about them every day. I love when everyone getting to know me so much, and I’m glad that everyone knows that I’m a super girl, that I have along with everyone, it makes me so happy every day. [showing friends you care about them] [also put in confidence category]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am a compassionate friend</i> • I appreciate reciprocal relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am social and personable • I am easy to get along with • <i>Affective factors: joy</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Caring for others makes me happy; the recognition I get from caring for friends makes me happy</i> • <i>Caring for all campers</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I always care about my friends • My friends know that I’m a super girl <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I get along with everyone • Getting along with everyone makes me happy
<p>Yeah, I have other people, and be kind to people, help people when they get hurt, help them. Sometimes I help with cheers I help anybody sometimes that be rude to me. [do you feel like you are a good friend to others while at camp?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am compassionate</i> • I understand when someone needs support • Sometimes people are rude to me at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like to help others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am mature • <i>Caring for campers’ emotions</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am kind to others • I help others when they are hurt or down • I cheer people up, even if they are not being nice to me

<p>Yes, um, when I was friends with them, um, since last year and the last two years, I treat them as friends, like all the time it's like the greatest feeling, and, um, some of them, one of them is like treating me not as a friend but um I'm trying to encourage them to be my friend. [can you tell me how you show other people you care at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am compassionate</i> • I maintain connections with my friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am emotionally intelligent • I have the maturity to treat people like my friends, even if they are not reciprocating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am encouraging</i> • <i>Caring for people who don't care about me</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes people at camp don't treat me as their friend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have maintained friendships over the past two years • I encourage people to be my friend no matter what • It is a great feeling to treat everyone as friends
<p>Um I am really proud of the Olympics, um, I am like having fun or with trying to encourage the whole team and that kind of thing try cheer everybody up and that kind of thing if they are having downs and stuff [can you tell me about a time at camp where you were really proud of how you acted?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am encouraging to others • <i>I am compassionate</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am cheerful • I am supportive • I recognize when people are feeling down • <i>Caring for my team; caring for their emotions</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I encourage my teammates • I try to cheer people up when they are down • I like having fun with my friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is fun for me to encourage others
<p>Easier to make friends... I make them comfortable I, I give hugs and I love um spending time with them, I like making new friends by um telling them to have fun and, and (pause) I would say don't worry we will have fun. [does camp PALS make it easier to make friends?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love being a good friend to others • <i>I am skilled at being an intentional friend</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am good at encouraging others</i> • <i>I am affectionate</i> • I care about my friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for campers' emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is easier for me to make friends at Camp PALS • I make friends at camp by spending time with them, helping them feel comfortable and encouraging them.
<p>I care about all my friends and I love everyone at camp, I, when, the other kid started be upset or crying, I'll hug them. [how you show other people you care about them at camp?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am perceptive to emotions • <i>I am compassionate</i> • I am good at offering comfort <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for campers' emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I care about all of my friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love everyone at camp • If I see someone is upset, I will offer them a hug
<p>I just give them a high five, fist pump, or like a pat on the back or something. Sometimes in words. [how do you show others you care]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I care about my friends at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am perceptive to emotions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am encouraging</i> • Caring for campers' emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I show my friends I care through actions and words
<p>I care, especially from the heart, I say that you're more than a friend, you're more than a best friend. To me, all my friends from</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS is like family to me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My friends at camp are more like family to me

<p>Camp PALS are like brothers and sisters, cause they show me respect like my actual sisters I have in real life they don't, they don't even show me respect but um everyone here, all the female campers, feel like sisters to me cause they show me mutual respect. [how do you express that caring through the heart]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't always feel respect outside of camp, even from my own family members • I value mutual respect • I care deeply for my friends at Camp PALS • I appreciate the way my friends treat me at Camp PALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I appreciate relationships that are reciprocal in nature • Caring for deeply for campers' emotions; appreciative of reciprocated relationships and respect experienced at camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I care about them from the bottom of my heart • My friends at camp are like siblings to me • My friends at camp respect me more than my actual family sometimes • There is a sense of mutual respect among my friends and I at camp
<p>Um, for me, I am very loyal and I am an important part as being a jokester because I like making people um I like making people um people smile and like making people laugh. [how do you show others you care at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humor is an important part of my friendships • I show my friends that I care by cheering them up • Caring for campers' emotions through humor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am a very loyal friend • I like to make people smile and laugh • Having a sense of humor is very important to me
<p>Um, at Camp PALS, um, I just um for me, um I open up my heart to people that I really care about. Through words, through motions, through feelings, what are you feeling? Just tell people what you really feel. [so can you tell me how you show people you care at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have emotional depth • I want to be open with my friends • I want my friends to be open with me • It is important for me to be there for my friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for campers' emotions and being open about emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wear my heart on my sleeve with people I really care about at camp • I show them I care through words, emotions and feelings • I like to find out what they are feeling
<p>Oh, I care about all of them. Because I love all of them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My friends at camp mean a lot to me • Caring for my friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I care about all of my friends at camp • I love all of my friends at camp
<p>If they are shy, you can help them, if somebody has a disability, like um if they can't speak or if they are deaf, the important thing is to be nice. [is it easier to talk to people at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I look out for my friends at camp • I am sensitive to the needs of my friends at camp • I care about the people at camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important for me to be nice to the people at camp, no matter what their situation is

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important for me to support the people at camp • Caring for campers' needs and emotions; supporting friends 	
<p>I do care about them a lot. If I see them have the problem, I always ask them like permission to hug them, tell them everything's be ok, and I try to calm down tell them give me deep breaths, everything's going be ok, and I always give a little rub a little hug, needs someone to cry onto, and that's what friendship is all about. [probe question for showing friends you care at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I show my friends that I'm there for them by reassuring them it's going to be ok • <i>I understand social boundaries</i> • <i>I am compassionate</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am skilled at supporting friends when they need it</i> • Caring for campers' emotions; awareness of boundaries; supportive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I care about my friends a lot • I recognize when my friends are having a problem • I help them feel better through verbal encouragement and by providing emotional support
<p>Um, they been, I care about them deeply, I know how they feel, I usually help them out with problems like friend problems or camper, new camper problems, I usually help them out. [how do you show others you care at camp]</p> <p>I usually tell them calm down, uh, speak up, advocate yourself, cause um I been to Camp I been to UBC for 4 years of college and I took um I took self-advocacy uh classes and I learned how to use your voice, to, um, stand up for who you are. [do you show that you care through words or actions?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am very perceptive of other people's emotions • I am able to comfort my friends at camp • I am supportive to my friends at camp • I am very self-aware • I am confident in using my voice • I encourage others to use their voices • Encouraging campers' emotions and supporting them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I care deeply about my friends at camp • I am perceptive to how they feel and I help them out • I will help my existing friends and my new friends if they have a problem • I encourage them to use their voices and advocate for themselves when they need something • I am able to calm them down <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I learned how to advocate for myself and like to share that skill with others

Overall Summary: There is an incredibly strong sense of compassion among these campers. They are affectionate with their friends, encouraging, supportive when it is needed, and extremely perceptive of emotions. There is also an awareness of boundaries, i.e., when it is appropriate to comfort someone vs. when it is not and the best way to offer comfort. Many of the participants value genuine friendship, and have a strong desire to be there for their friends. They are able to put a range of emotions into context and recognize if there is a need or want for comfort. Caring appears to be a very important part of friendship and is valued by each camper. Many of the campers discussed that it is

important to look out for each other and appreciate when that is reciprocated. The theme of “family” continues to be present. Campers highlighted their emotional intelligence, their ability to be sociable and friendly, and their desire to be compassionate toward others. Campers appear to care deeply for each other’s emotions and are eager to support and encourage their friends.

Normative Evaluative Claims: The subjective and objective claims continue to align with the literature highlighting the compassionate nature of individuals with Down syndrome and the benefits of the camp setting where this can be promoted and encouraged. Fidler, 2005, states that individuals with Down syndrome portray a welcoming energy, easily form relationships with others and tend to have the ability to communicate positive affect better than individuals with other forms of ID/DD. Because there is little literature available highlighting meaningful friendships among young adults with Down syndrome, it is worth investigating why camps can act as a vessel to promote caring among friends. According to Garst et al., 2011, camps can be beneficial to its participants at a holistic level, resulting in growth in the social, behavioral, cognitive and spiritual domains. The American Camp Association, 2006, states that campers can benefit from emotional and physical support, and can be involved in the camp experience in meaningful ways that promote personal growth. Among individuals with disabilities, the impact lies greatly within the ability to experience supportive relationships and a sense of belonging. Garst, Browne, & Bialeschki, 2011, suggest, “When supportive relationships through group living with peers and the presence of caring adults are combined with setting characteristics such as sustained experiences, deep friendships with peers and adults are formed” (p. 6). This fosters a sense of belonging and feelings of connectedness (Garst et al., 2011).

Caring is defined as the ability to be sympathetic and empathetic toward others (Lerner et al., 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Camp PALS provides an emotionally supportive environment, giving the campers the opportunity and confidence to demonstrate the ability to be both sympathetic and empathetic toward their peers and to take action to support their friends.

5C Character

Salient Quote	Subjective Claim	Objective Claim
<p>I’m so proud of myself because when I, um, speak in clearly, I really do, I also be positive in my life. Being in my super nice to everyone [can you tell me about a time you felt confident about yourself] (not sure about this one, but could this be considered appropriate behavior too?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am an optimistic person • It makes me feel good to treat others with kindness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have strong expressive skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It makes me feel proud when I speak clearly with others • I am a positive person • I am nice to everyone

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It makes me feel proud when people understand me • Positive, kind, happy when people understand me 	
<p>Yeah, I have other people, and be kind to people, help people when they get hurt, help them. Sometimes I help with cheers I help anybody sometimes that be rude to me. [do you feel like you are a good friend to others while at camp?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am compassionate</i> • I understand when someone needs support • Sometimes people are rude to me at camp • I like to help others, even if it is not reciprocated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am mature • Compassionate, mature, supportive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am kind to others • I help others when they are hurt or down • I cheer people up, even if they are not being nice to me
<p>Um, when I was like probably eighteen, twenty or twenty-one, I been to Chicago and when I'm twenty-two and it feels like I'm mature now, I live by myself in a group home so I'm mature enough to do it. [how has camp helped you grow as a person]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am independent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like to travel • Camp has helped me grow up • Camp has helped me become independent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am self-sufficient • I am mature enough to live on my own, outside of my own home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent, mature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel more mature now • I live in a group home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel independent • I'm mature enough to live in a group home
<p>Um I am really proud of the Olympics, um, I am like having fun or with trying to encourage the whole team and that kind of thing try cheer everybody up and that kind of thing if they are having downs and stuff [can you tell me about a time at camp where you were really proud of how you acted?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am a good teammate • I work well with others • I want my teammates to succeed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have the ability to understand when my teammates are feeling down <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team player 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud of myself when I participate in the PALS Olympics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have fun and encourage my teammates • If a team member if feeling down or discouraged, I cheer them up
<p>Um I am like kind to others um I am a little bit competitive a little bit if it were the teams but I am perfectly fine with teams too. [can you tell me how you show others you care about them at camp?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I show others I care by being kind to them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I enjoy friendly competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like to win • I work well with teams despite my competitive nature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kind to others, team player 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can be competitive if we are involved in a team competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am perfectly fine with being a team player • I am kind to others

<p>I am funny, I am honest and I follow the rules all the time, um, I... yeah. [how would you describe yourself as a friend to others?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My sense of humor plays a big role in my friendships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am aware of boundaries • I value honesty • Honest, funny 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am a funny friend • I am an honest friend • I follow the rules
<p>I proud of how I'm acted because I love, I love, I am very, I am very kind, I'm loving, I'm very huggable, and I'm also lovable because I love um making new friends [can you tell me about a time you were proud of how you acted?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud of my interpersonal skills • I am proud of my social skills • I am proud of my friendship making skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am a very compassionate person • I am an approachable person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am confident • Social, compassionate, approachable, confident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am very loving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am very kind • I am very huggable • I am very lovable • I love making new friends
<p>It helps me grow um very independently like um well I move in with a roommate named S and that kind of helps me be more independent and that also kind of helps me be um calm down a little bit, not get mad, cause we don't like being sad here at camp, we like being happy. [how has camp helped you grow as a person]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp has helped me grow as a person • Camp has helped me become more independent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My roommate also goes to camp • Living with someone helps me control my temper • Sometimes I get sad and mad when I am not at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am aware of my emotions • Independent, able to control my emotions; camp has helped me grown as a person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp has helped me grow into a very independent person • I live with a roommate which also helps me be more independent • Living with someone also helps me calm down, because there are times outside of camp when I get mad and sad • At camp, I am happy because at camp we do not like to be sad
<p>Um actually I used to be a shallow person, but now, with all these wonderful faces um it makes me more like wonderful [do your camp friends influence behavior]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp has positively influenced my behavior • Camp has positively influenced my opinions about things and people • The people at camp have a positive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I used to be a shallow person • Seeing the wonderful people at camps makes me feel wonderful

	<p>influence on me as a person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I used to be more judgmental • The people at camp help me be less shallow • Camp has resulted in improved behavior, campers positively influence me 	
<p>It makes me grow um independence uh having time with your friends, have the time of your life and uh uh look forward. [how has camp helped you grow as a person]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp has helped me grow as a person • I have the time of my life with my friends at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel more independent when I'm at camp with my friends • Being with my friends and having the time of my life at camp makes me look forward to the future • Camp has helped me grow, independent, future oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp has helped me become more independent • I have the time of my life at camp • I have time with my friends at camp
<p>Yes. Um, once I got to Camp PALS, um Camp PALS really changed my life because I learned new skills over the past summers. Like relationship skills, being part of a team, and just having fun and it's ok to be silly wherever you are. The point is to have fun with your friends. [can you tell me about the friends you have at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS changed my life for the better <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have strong interpersonal skills because of Camp PALS • I have maintained the skills that I've learned over the past summers at camp • I feel at ease to be my silly self at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I enjoy having fun with my friends at camp • I've learned to form and maintain relationships over the years at camp • I've learned how to be a member of a team because of camp activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS has changed my life • I have learned the concept of teamwork at camp • I have learned about relationship skills at camp • I learned that it's ok to just have fun and be silly at camp • The point of being at camp is to have fun with your friends

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good at maintaining friendships, team player, strong interpersonal skills 	
<p>From the past couple of years at Camp PALS I was a drama queen but I learned how to stop being a drama queen. And just push aside and don't think of the negative things but only think of the positive things. [can you tell me about a time you were proud of how you behaved at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud of my behavior at camp • Camp has helped my change my behavior for the better • Camp has helped me become a more optimistic person • Optimistic, camp has resulted in improved behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I used to be a drama queen at camp • Camp helped me learn not to be a drama queen • Camp helped me to think more positively and push the negative thoughts aside
<p>Because people love me for who I am and people really take me seriously and accept who I am because you don't really you don't want to really define your disability as weakness like Down syndrome, Autism, like different disabilities in the world. Like the key is fairness to everyone. [can you tell me more about why you are more outgoing at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't see my disability as a hindrance • I don't let my disability define me • I feel supported by the people at camp • I feel respected by the people at camp • I am more outgoing at camp because I can be myself • Everyone should be treated fairly, no matter what their abilities are • Outgoing, proud of who I am, important to me treat others fairly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People at Camp PALS love me for who I am • People at Camp PALS accept me • You shouldn't define people by their disability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We should treat everyone fairly, no matter what
<p>Um, for me, it's very easy. For some people I know it's kinda hard because it really defines people's personalities. If they are shy, you can help them, if somebody has a disability, like um if they can't speak or if they are deaf, the important thing is to be nice. [is it easier to talk to people at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One's ability to talk to people defines his/her personality • I like to help people communicate if it is not as easy for them • It is important that I am nice to everyone, no matter what their abilities are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can tell when someone needs support • Helpful to others, kind, supportive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is very easy for me to talk to people at camp • For others, it is not as easy • If someone is shy, you can help them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If someone has a disability, the important thing is to be nice

<p>I felt very confident over the past years um I'm really do feel confident about myself but I've learned for my family here at Camp PALS, they really um help me to not be so dramatic about things. [time at camp that you felt confident about yourself]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel confident in the fact that camp has helped me grow as a person • I feel proud of my behavior • I am open to learning new things • I am open to change • I used to be dramatic about things, and now I'm not because of my family at camp PALS • I am self-aware of my previous and current behavior • Camp has helped me grow as a person; proud of my behavior, open-minded to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I've felt very confident about myself over the past few years at camp • I learn from my Camp PALS family • They help me be less dramatic about things
<p>Um, I um I think the original directors thought for the past years, they thought I was very dramatic at first, when I think a lot and I know they noticed about behaviors and my actions, but um, in the upcoming years, I really change, I learning not to be so dramatic in the world and the original directors really helped me get through it and everyone at Camp PALS is very important to me. [how as camp helped you grow as a person]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am able to reflect on my negative behaviors and actions from the past • I am open to change • I have changed over the many years I've attended Camp PALS • It means a lot to me that the directors at camp thought I was capable of positive change • I have grown as a person because of the people at camp PALS • Reflective, open to change, grown as a person because of camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The original directors of camp thought I was very dramatic at first • When I think back on it, I know they noticed my behaviors and actions • In the years moving forward, I made a change and learned to be less dramatic • The directors really helped me get through that time in my life • Everyone at Camp PALS is very important to me
<p>I will care about Camp PALS because they Camp PALS would change me from who I am from this moment cause I Camp PALS like telling me don't be afraid of who you really are and don't worry, don't worry about people have Down syndrome because people inside out there make me feel great and powerful cause who I am for this Camp PALS really adores me and make me so excited. [how do you show others that you care about them at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS has changed me for the better • I am at ease with who I am because of camp • I feel accepted at camp • I am confident because of camp • Camp has helped me see that I am not 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am who I am in this moment because of Camp PALS • At camp, they tell me not to be afraid of who I really am and not to worry • At camp, they tell me not to worry about having Down syndrome

	<p>defined by my disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I care about the people at camp because they care about me • Confident, proud of who I am, changed for the better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At camp I feel great inside and out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At camp I feel powerful • At camp I feel adored • It makes me so excited to experience all of these things at camp
<p>I love Camp PALS, and Camp PALS like is make me wow it make me happier and it changed my entire life before my parents, and my family. Camp PALS changed me and my parents because the everything they do for me makes me happy, excited and enjoy it. [how you show friends at camp you care... not sure where to put this, it stumped me]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everything Camp PALS does for me makes my family and I happy • Camp has played an instrumental role in my life and my family's life • When I am happy, excited, and enjoying my time at camp, that makes my family happy • Happy, camp is instrumental in my life overall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love Camp PALS • Camp has changed my entire life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp makes me happy • Camp has changed me and my family because everything they do makes me happy and excited <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I enjoy camp
<p>Yes, um, I proud of myself my acted like um I speak people polite and every time I do something I say excuse me, um saying, sometimes a little something is okay, and I really love that. [a time at camp where you were proud of how you acted]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud of my behavior at camp • Being polite to others makes me feel good • I am proud of myself when I can successfully offer comfort to others • I recognize when other people are not okay • Proud of my behavior, polite, proud of myself when I can comfort others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud of how I act at camp • I speak politely to people • I really love making sure everything is ok with my friends at camp
<p>My friends really, really happy for me, about my behave this year because they are so happy, the counselors really helpful and look at me like I acted this week and make me feel happy and cheerful and I will love Camp PALS, Camp PALS really helps me and through the way. [do you feel like friends at camp influence your behavior?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My friends at camp positively influence my behavior • Camp PALS helps me through life's events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My friends and counselors at camp are proud of my behavior • My counselors are my role models • I am a positive person • I am confident in my behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My friends are happy about my behavior this year • The counselors are so helpful to me <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp makes me happy and cheerful • I love Camp PALS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proud of my behavior, positive 	
<p>Yeah. Um, being a friend is being, being who you are and accepting that you have a differences like you have disabilities like me. [how are you as a friend to others at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am confident with who I am • <i>Camp friends have common ground</i> • <i>Having a disability can be a unifying characteristic</i> • Proud of who I am 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a friend to others involves accepting who you are • Accepting who you are involves accepting that you are different
<p>I feel much um, protective of my, my behavior, I feel like more than confident, since um Camp PALS, feel, _____, I feel nervous to meet new friends, but over the years I feel accomplish to speak up and, and make new friends, so yeah. [a time that you were proud of how you behaved]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am feel a sense of pride when it comes to the way I behave • I am more outgoing because of my years as a camper • I have experienced personal growth because of camp • I used to be shy and nervous when I tried to make new friends • I have grown socially • Proud of my behavior, outgoing, personal growth because of camp, more social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am extremely confident in the way I behave since I started going to Camp PALS • I used to be nervous to make new friends, but over the years I have become more confident to speak up and make new friends
<p>I grow that my parents are very fortunate parents of me when I was when I was born with Down syndrome and I feel more than fortunate girl that I became with all my friends and family who loves me.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My parents are very proud of me • My parents embrace my Down syndrome diagnosis • I feel lucky to be so loved • I am proud of who I am • Proud of who I am 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel fortunate that all of my friends and family love me

Overall Summary: In this section, campers highlight their experience with personal growth in the camp setting. Many have mentioned that camp positively influences behavior and are able to reflect on past behavior and the change that has occurred over the years. For example, some campers have learned to be less dramatic, the concept of teamwork, to control their anger and negative emotions, and many have credited camp with helping them become more mature. The campers explain that they are able to work well with and respect others and many feel confident in their behavior that they display at

camp. Character and caring tend to overlap and many of these “appropriate behaviors” involve caring for and showing respect toward others, along with communicating at the appropriate time. Camp is described as playing an instrumental role in many of the campers’ lives. Campers describe themselves as more independent, mature, and compassionate. Many campers express how proud they are to be who they are and how they see their diagnosis of Down syndrome in a positive light.

Normative Evaluative Claims: The transition to adulthood can be particularly challenging to individuals with ID/DD. Self-identity can continuously change throughout the lifespan, and friendships and interpersonal relationships remain integral to the concept of self by allowing the individual to see themselves in relation to their peers and society (Morrison & Burgman, 2009). The ability to reflect on behavior and the process of maturing are very much intertwined with the development of our self-identity. Seeing ourselves and our behavior in the context of camp allow campers to see themselves in relation to others and their environment. Garst, Browne & Bialeschki, 2011, state that camp can be, “...a way for young people to explore and search for authenticity often missing in other parts of their lives that contributes to their healthy transition into adulthood” (p.1). According to Henderson et al., 2007, Positive Youth Development, which often occurs within the context of camp, involves the preparation of individuals for a successful transition into adulthood by providing supports and opportunities that aid in person growth.

Character is defined as a sense of morality and respect for societal rules and the display of appropriate behaviors (Lerner et al., 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). As we evolve, our character evolves. As we continue to discover our sense of morality, decide how we want to show our respect toward societal rules and display appropriate behaviors in specific contexts, we grow as people. These elements of who we are do not remain stagnant, and opportunities or challenges help us continue to grow. In this case, Camp PALS is an experience in which campers learn how to work together, how to respect each other and how to reflect on the way they behave.

5C Confidence

Salient Quotes	Subjective Claims	Objective Claims
<p>I do care about them every day. I love when everyone getting to know me so much, and I’m glad that everyone knows that I’m a super girl, that I have along with everyone, it makes me so happy every day. [showing friends you care about them]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am a compassionate friend</i> • I appreciate reciprocal relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am social and personable • I am easy to get along with • I am confident in who I am 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I always care about my friends • My friends know that I’m a super girl <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I get along with everyone • Getting along with everyone makes me happy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Confidence in how other campers see me (“super girl”)</i> 	
<p>I love when uh I acted so much, it feels like, that I am so intelligent and brave at the same time. [can you tell me about a time at camp that you were really proud of yourself and how you acted?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud of the way I act at camp • I have confidence in myself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I believe in my strengths • Camp gives me courage • <i>Confidence in intellect; confidence as bravery</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love how I act at camp • I am both intelligent and brave
<p>I’m so proud of myself because when I, um, speak in clearly, I really do, I also be positive in my life. Being in my super nice to everyone [can you tell me about a time you felt confident about yourself]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am confident at camp • It makes me feel good when I am able to communicate clearly with others • It makes me feel good to be optimistic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am an optimistic person • It makes me feel good to treat others with kindness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have strong expressive skills • It makes me feel proud when people understand me • <i>Confidence expressed as pride</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud of the myself when I am at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I speak clearly when I am at camp • I am positive when I am at camp • I am nice to everyone at camp
<p>This is my life home. I love being camp every day, this my life... I’m glad everyone here to make me happy and proud every time I see them. [do you feel like you belong at Camp PALS?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel a profound sense of belonging at camp • I feel proud when I see my camp family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp is plays a monumental role in my life • I feel like I will be a part of the PALS family for life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence in friendships; confidence expressed as pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS is like my home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love being at camp every day • Seeing my friends at camp makes me happy and proud
<p>Um I am really proud of the Olympics, um, I am like having fun or with trying to encourage the whole team and that kind of thing try cheer everybody up and that kind of thing if they are having downs and stuff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am a good teammate • I work well with others • I want my teammates to succeed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in the Olympics makes me feel confident • I am encouraging to others

<p>[can you tell me about a time at camp where you were really proud of how you acted?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have the ability to understand when my teammates are feeling down • Confidence in ability to be a good team player; confidence expressed as pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I try to cheer people up when they are down • I like having fun with my friends • I am happy to encourage others
<p>Um, when I was like probably eighteen, twenty or twenty-one, I been to Chicago and when I'm twenty-two and it feels like I'm mature now, I live by myself in a group home so I'm mature enough to do it. [how has camp helped you grow as a person]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp has helped me grow as a person • I am confident in my ability to live on my own • I feel like I've grow up over the past few years • Confident in ability to be independent, confident in maturity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am more mature now • I am mature enough to live in a group home, away from my family
<p>I proud of how I'm acted because I love, I love, I am very, I am very kind, I'm loving, I'm very huggable, and I'm also lovable because I love um making new friends [can you tell me about a time you were proud of how you acted?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud of my interpersonal skills • I am proud of my social skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud of my friendship making skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am a very compassionate person • I am an approachable person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am confident • I am warm and friendly toward others • My positive energy attracts people • Confidence expressed as pride; confident in interpersonal skills; confidence in friendships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am very loving • I am very kind • I am very huggable • I am very lovable • I love making new friends
<p>I'm very confident um meeting counselors and shake their hands... Meeting counselors shaking their hands um I like uh doing secret handshakes [can you tell me about a time you feel confident about yourself]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am very confident when I meet new people • I am a social person • I like to have unique connections with the counselors • The counselors are my friends • The counselors make me feel confident about myself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am very confident when I meet new counselors • I like meeting them and shaking their hands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like to do secret handshakes with the counselors

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence in social connections • Confident as a result of camper-counselor connection 	
<p>I am sometimes silly, sometimes emotional, sometimes um silly, I think I said that already, and um, oh yeah I'm a good friend. Sometimes if they forget something, like a water bottle I give it to them or if they forgot like their lacrosse stick, I give it to them. [describe how are as a friend to others at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am multi-dimensional • I care about my friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I value humor • I experience a range of emotions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am kind to others • I recognize when my friends need support • Confident in ability to be multi-dimensional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can be silly sometimes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can be emotional sometimes • I am a good friend to others
<p>Um, flexible and dependent, most chill person ever that I've met and I also have like vibes, down to earth, sometimes I can be like my true self, what's on the inside, not what's on the, on the outside. [how are you as a friend to others?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am a great friend to others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am self-aware • I am multi-dimensional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have great personal qualities • I am confident in who I am <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I value what's on the inside, not the outside • Confidence in ability to be a good friend, confident in ability to be multi-dimensional, confident in personal qualities; • Confidence expressed as pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am flexible • I am a dependable friend • I am relaxed and down to earth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I give off chill vibes • I am true to myself
<p>Uh sure, activity is definitely the beach. I am mostly relaxed. Cause everything around water is my mind it sleeps so I can look toward the positive vibes. [a time during the week that you were proud of how you acted]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud of how I act at camp • I feel proud of myself when I am calm and optimistic • I feel a connection to the outdoors • Confident expressed as pride; confident in behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud of myself when we go to the beach • I am mostly relaxed at the beach • The beach makes me feel peaceful and positive
<p>Um actually I used to be a shallow person, but now, with all these wonderful faces um it makes me more like wonderful [do your camp friends influence behavior]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My friends at camp influence my behavior in a positive way • I used to be more superficial • I now value deeper connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I used to be a shallow person • Seeing the wonderful people at camps makes me feel more wonderful

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp has positively influenced my behavior • Camp has positively influenced my opinions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I used to be more judgmental • The people at camp help me be less shallow • I am able to reflect on my past behavior • Confident in positive behavior; confidence expressed as pride 	
<p>More than home, yes. I am more outgoing here than at home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp gives me the opportunity to come out of my shell • I don't always feel like I can be outgoing outside of camp • I feel more at ease at camp • Confident in ability to be more outgoing at camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am more outgoing at Camp PALS than I am at home
<p>Um because it actually is, I know what my potential is with all the people and that's kind of settling with my mind, make me more interesting than less. [can you tell me why you're more outgoing]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am more outgoing at camp than I am at home • I am more confident in myself at camp • The people at camp lift me up and encourage me <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel at ease when I think about who I am at camp • Camp gives me the freedom to be the truest version of myself • Confident in ability to be more outgoing at camp; confident expressed as pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know what my potential is when I am at camp • I feel at peace with who I am at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am more of an interesting person at camp
<p>Um, the three words that describes how I feel is confident, endless, and beautiful because, because there's a lot of beautiful spirits here and that's because, without them, I wouldn't be alive today. [tell about a time you felt confident about yourself]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp makes me feel confident in who I am • There are times outside of camp where I do not feel confident • The people at camp give me the courage to be myself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel confident in myself • I see myself as beautiful <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a lot of beautiful spirits at camp • Because of them, I wouldn't be alive today

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because of the people at camp, I wouldn't be who I am today • Confidence in myself at camp, confidence expressed as bravery 	
<p>Um no. Just experience with all the people that help boost up my confidence and also my self-esteem because outside of this it's the opposite. [was there a specific time where you felt confident]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside of camp I have low self-esteem • Camp makes me feel confident in who I am • The people at camp help me feel at ease • Confident in myself when at camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The people at camp help boost my confidence and self-esteem • Outside of camp I do not have confidence or high self-esteem
<p>Uh yes, yes. Especially outside of this, there's times I want to, to go off the deep end and I do things that can ruin my life. But here, I may have those feelings and emotions, but at least there's always someone I can put my head on them for confidence. [does PALS make you feel like you belong]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I sometimes feel depressed when I am not at camp • I don't always feel like the best version of myself outside of camp • At camp, I sometime still feel low, but there is always someone there for me • I feel like I can reach out for help when I need it at camp • I feel like I can depend on the people at camp • My friends at camp help me feel confident • My friends at camp encourage me • I know when to reach out for help when I need it at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident in my relationships at camp, confident in my ability to express my needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside of camp, there are times I want to be self-destructive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At camp, I will sometimes experience negative emotions, but there is always someone that I can lean on for confidence
<p>Um, for me, I am very loyal and I am an important part as being a jokester because I like making people um I like making people um people smile and like making people laugh. [how do you show others you care at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a sense of humor is important to me • I enjoy making other people happy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I use my sense of humor to make my friends happy • It is important for my friends to have a sense of humor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am a very loyal friend • I am a jokester and like to make people laugh • I like making people smile • I like making people laugh

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I show my friends that I care by making them smile and laugh • Confident in my ability to be a good friend, confident in ability to make others happy 	
<p>I felt very confident over the past years um I'm really do feel confident about myself but I've learned for my family here at Camp PALS, they really um help me to not be so dramatic about things. [time at camp that you felt confident about yourself]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp has made me feel more and more confident over the years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I learn a lot of life lessons from my family at Camp PALS • Camp PALS has helped me make positive changes in my life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I used to be dramatic about things • Confidence expressed as pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel very confident about myself • I've learned from my family at Camp PALS • My family at Camp PALS has helped me be less dramatic
<p>Everybody makes me confident here at camp PALS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't always feel confident outside of camp • Confidence in myself at camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone at Camp PALS makes me feel confident
<p>Camp PALS is a place where you're not being judged. And they really love kids with Down syndrome, or teenagers, or adults because here at Camp PALS we are a close knit family together and we really want um they really want campers to grow strong. What I mean by growing strong, like, making better choices for yourself. [do you feel like you belong when at camp PALS]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can be myself at Camp PALS • I feel loved when I am at camp • I feel supported at camp • I feel like I can reach my full potential at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand the benefits of camp • I understand how camp impacts other campers too <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I want my friends to reach their full potential • I feel like I've grown as a person because of camp • Confidence expressed as pride, confidence in person growth, confidence in friendships at camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS is a place where you are not being judged • The people at Camp PALS love people with Down syndrome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are a close knit family at Camp PALS • Camp PALS is a place to grow strong and make good choices
<p>Yes. Of course, um friendship is really important to my life because I will love my friends to treat me right, don't call me any</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to me that people treat me with respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship is really important in my life

<p>names. I am who I am today, and, I really like my life and really love my friends too. [do you feel like you can find the friends you are looking for at camp PALS?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside of camp, I get called names sometimes • I feel like I can find the friends I'm looking for at camp • Friendship helps me shape my identity in the context of the world around me • My friends treat me with respect at camp • I am happy with my life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence in friendships at camp • Confidence expressed as pride • Confidence in intellect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love when my friends treat me right and don't call me names • I am who I am today because of my friends • I really like my life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love my friends
<p>Of course, um, to myself and my friends are um, inspiring and friendly and I'm social butterfly I love to hang out. [can you describe how you are as a friend to others at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My friends inspire me • <i>I value unstructured time with friends</i> • <i>I am social with many people</i> • <i>Friendship comes easy to me</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence in friendships at camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am outgoing and love to hang out • I am inspiring and friendly to others
<p>I will care about Camp PALS because they Camp PALS would change me from who I am from this moment cause I Camp Pals like telling me don't be afraid of who you really are and don't worry, don't worry about people have Down syndrome because people inside out there make me feel great and powerful cause who I am for this Camp PALS really adores me and make me so excited. [how do you show others that you care about them at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS has changed me for the better • I am at ease with who I am because of camp • I feel accepted at camp • I am confident because of camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp has helped me see that I am not defined by my disability • I care about the people at camp because they care about me • Confidence in who I am because of camp, confidence in friendships at camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am who I am in this moment because of Camp PALS • At camp, they tell me not to be afraid of who I really am and not to worry • At camp, they tell me not to worry about having Down syndrome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At camp I feel great inside and out • At camp I feel powerful • At camp I feel adored • It makes me so excited to experience all of these positive emotions at camp
<p>Yes, um, I proud of myself my acted like um I speak people polite and every time I do something I say excuse me, um saying, sometimes a little something is okay, and I</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud of my behavior at camp • Being polite to others makes me feel good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud of how I act at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I speak politely to people

<p>really love that. [a time at camp where you were proud of how you acted]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud of myself when I can successfully offer comfort to others • I recognize when other people are not okay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence in my behavior because of camp; confidence in my ability to comfort others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I really love making sure everything is ok with my friends at camp
<p>I'm proud of myself that I did do something I love like art and crafts, it makes me like if I do something I feel, I do it at the same time and it feels like I feel proud, I am, for this moment, for the Camp PALS, I love it. [specific time where you felt proud]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain activities at camp make me feel confident in myself • I love engaging in activities in which I can feel proud of myself • Confident in myself because of activities in camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud of myself when I do arts and crafts at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am proud of the moments I get to experience at camp and I love it
<p>Um, I feel confident at Camp PALS, cause Camp PALS is important to my life, because it's made me feel like, awesome um it's I've never come, the first thing I have to say is I've never been in Baltimore before cause uh Baltimore I've never been to cause ___ cities and it looks beautiful and I really love it, it makes me feel so great, I so happy I be here today.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS plays a big role in my life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp PALS has allowed me to travel • I really love seeing new places <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It feels great to experience new things • Confidence expressed as pride, confident in ability to be independent because of camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel confident at Camp PALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp is really important in my life • I've never been to Baltimore until this camp • It makes me feel so great to be here • I'm so happy to be here
<p>I feel more confident; I have more voice for them to communicate with them. [how easy is it for you to make friends at camp]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is easy for me to make friends at camp • I am not as confident outside of camp • Camp allows me to feel more confident to use my voice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't always feel confident in my communication skills outside of camp • Confident in my ability to make friends; confident expressed as pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel more confident at camp • I feel more confident to use my voice at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My communication skills are stronger at camp
<p>I usually tell them calm down, uh, speak up, advocate yourself, cause um I been to Camp I been to UBC for 4 years of college and I took um I took self-advocacy uh</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I show other campers that I care about them through encouraging them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I show other campers I care by encouraging them to stand up for themselves

<p>classes and I learned how to use your voice, to, um, stand up for who you are. [do you show that you care through words or actions?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel more confident about encouraging others after my four years at college • <i>Advocacy is a form of caring</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am educated</i> • <i>I am a self-advocacy mentor</i> • Confidence expressed as pride, confident in advocating for others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The self-advocacy class I took at college gave me the tools to use my voice and stand up for who I am <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I encourage other campers to advocate for themselves and to use their voices
<p>I feel much um, protective of my, my behavior, I feel like more than confident, since um Camp PALS, feel, _____, I feel nervous to meet new friends, but over the years I feel accomplish to speak up and, and make new friends, so yeah. [a time that you were proud of how you behaved]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am feel a sense of pride when it comes to the way I behave • I am more outgoing because of my years as a camper • I have experienced personal growth because of camp • I used to be shy and nervous when I tried to make new friends • I have grown socially • Confidence expressed as pride; confidence in social abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am extremely confident in the way I behave since I started going to Camp PALS • I used to be nervous to make new friends, but over the years I have become more confident to speak up and make new friends
<p>Yeah. Because um people knows that I've been very, more outgoing, and loving and caring people that know who I am. [do you feel like friends at camp influence your behavior]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who know me like my personality • <i>Camp friends know the real me</i> • <i>I feel empowered by my camp friendships</i> Affective factors: love; I can expressive my love to camp friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence in friendships at camp; confidence in how others at camp see me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who know me know that I'm outgoing, loving and caring
<p>Yeah. I communicate with CM, cause sometimes she can be like you know, um, not doing well, but she, whenever, I'm with my counselor, to talk things out with her, I feel more confident. [when you communicated well with others]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I comfort my friends at camp when I think they need it • I am able to recognize when my friends are not doing well • I comfort people by communicating with them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I communicate with my friends when they are not doing well • When I am able to talk things out with my counselor, I feel more confident

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I find it easy to communicate with my counselor • My counselor makes me feel good about myself • Confidence in my ability to comfort others; confident in my ability to connect and communicate with my counselor 	
<p>I feel like um, very unique person, I, I'm an artist person, I'm very artist and loving girl that I am. [time at camp you felt confident about yourself]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I embrace my unique qualities • I am a creative person • I am confident in who I am • Activities that involve creativity make me feel confident • Confidence expressed as pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel that I am a very unique person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am an artist • I love the girl that I am
<p>Yeah. This, the letters. Cause I been writing a lot of letters over the Camp PALS years. [specific activity that makes you feel confident] (congrats project)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing the congrats letters is my favorite activity at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I enjoy writing • I like to tell expecting parents all about me • Confidence expressed as pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel confident when I write letters to parents expecting a child with Down syndrome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have written many congrats letters over the years at camp
<p>Um the past ten years it feels like, it feels like um pleasant to me, of having disabilities like me, like having Down syndrome. [how has camp impacted your life over the past 10 years]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel confident in who I am because of the last ten years at camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't see Down syndrome as negative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I do not let my disability define me • I accept who I am • Camp has changed my perspective on Down syndrome • Confidence expressed as pride; confidence in having Down syndrome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have been going to camp for ten years • Camp allows me to view my Down syndrome in a pleasant way

Overall Summary: Confidence among the campers was extremely evident in the context of camp. It seems that outside of camp, confidence is not as strong, and that camp provides opportunities and experiences that bring forth a sense of pride. In the context of camp, campers feel proud of who they are, embrace their unique qualities, and don't let

Down syndrome define them. In fact, many campers express that they are proud to have Down syndrome. Campers highlight their ability to be a great friend, to be compassionate, and to communicate well with others. Many see themselves as social and feel that they have a voice at camp. There was an overwhelming sense of belonging and many of the campers see Camp PALS as a family and see their experiences as some of the best they have had in their lives. Campers encourage each other and value being encouraged by others. This encouragement seems to promote confidence among the participants. Overall, confidence is expressed as pride and bravery.

Normative Evaluative Claims: The way we are able to interact with others helps shape our sense of self in relation to the world and people around us. Social opportunities provide many opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome, including increased self-esteem and well-being (McGuire & Chicoine, 2006). Camps provide the opportunity to form and maintain new friendships, promoting social opportunities for campers (Fryxell & Kennedy, 1995). More specifically, inclusive camps can dismiss common stereotypes (Bedini, 2000; Devine & Lashua, 2002; Devine & Whilhite, 2000), increase self-determination (Dattilo, Williams, & Cory, 2003), develop meaningful friendships (Kalyvas & Reid, 2003), and learn important life skills (Place & Hodge, 2001). Devine and Lashua, 2002, highlight that positive experiences are only present when the standards are achievable to all involved (both individuals with and without disabilities). This forces us to look more specifically at the authenticity of relationships formed and personal growth experienced. According to camper responses, it appears that the inclusive camp setting provides campers with the opportunity to form meaningful, authentic relationships and promotes personal growth through the promotion and evolution of the 5 C's.