

Implementing the RUMERTIME® Process with School-Aged Children and Their Mothers in

Indiana

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Abstract

This paper gives my perspective from the field of implementing the RUMERTIME® Process during a two-week family summer camp in South Bend, Indiana. As a camp counselor, I assisted in the teaching of the RUMERTIME® Process to eight African-American school-aged children and was involved with group sessions with five mothers. Results of the camp were that children had greater self-awareness and mothers learned to identify unhealthy mindsets that hindered their ability to manage conflict.

INTRODUCTION

From June 16 to 28, 2019, GCSCORED held the RUMERTIME® Family Summer Camp in Northern Indiana. For a period of two weeks, eight children ages 9 to 13 and their mothers utilized the RUMERTIME® process to gain skills for balancing socio-emotional health. A total of five families were represented. The children, 5 girls and 3 boys, met daily from 10:00 am to 3:45 pm Monday through Friday. The schedule included group and age-based learning activities, yoga, affirmations, recreational time, and emotional check-ins throughout the day. Mothers participated in hour-long group sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays for self-reflection activities and group dialogue. There were four mothers and one grandmother in attendance at the group sessions. All of the participants in the program were African-American.

As a Global Health Advocate, this camp personally resonated with my interest in promoting health equity. Compared to other areas of health, emotional health is overlooked and undermined when assessing a person's wellbeing. This camp provided an opportunity to give participants skills to find emotional balance. As a camp counselor during the program, my role was to help mental health professionals facilitate learning using the CSS® Framework and contribute to dialogue that reinforced the RUMERTIME® Process: to Recognize, Understand, Manage, Express, and Reflect your Thoughts, Interactions, Mindsets, and Emotions. My involvement was centered around teaching this process to 9-year-old campers and attending group sessions with the mothers. By providing a guide on how to take control of thoughts, interactions, mindsets, and emotions, one is able to find and resolve driving forces behind unhealthy behaviors. This creates an easy pathway to problem-solving and making choices that create socio-emotional stability.

While breaking down these five action concepts, it was amazing to see the interconnections between thoughts, interactions, mindsets, and emotions. For the three 9-year-old children that I assisted, once they understood that “positive thoughts = positive actions”, they were able to recognize when they had a negative thought, and could brainstorm how to make it into a positive one. Every morning when the children came in, they were asked to indicate how they were feeling using the Emometer, which is a scale measuring the intensity and types of emotions. At the beginning of camp, their responses were very generic, but in time, they were able to recognize their emotions and better verbalize them. This progression alone was impactful because once the children could verbalize how they were feeling, they began to uncover why they were feeling those particular emotions. Though each child came with different influences on their emotional awareness, by the end of the camp, there was ubiquitous effort to foster positive interactions.

The adult group sessions were very insightful. Naturally, the women had more life experience and trauma than the children that shaped their perceptions of themselves. Given the environment to focus on themselves, many women indicated not having taken time in their adult lives to reflect on their identity and social-emotional health. Through sharing parts of their story, they were able to understand the RUMERTIME® process in a similar manner as the children. Their stories brought forth emotions and once they identified the emotions, they began to realize that they have the power to change their thoughts, thus changing their mindsets and interactions. These women knew they could not change the past, but they now had the tools to navigate future conflict in ways that would not negatively impact their wellbeing or the wellbeing of their children.

Considering all of my observations, my main takeaway from the RUMERTIME® Family Summer Camp is that all individuals need safe spaces to assess their Thoughts, Interactions, Mindsets, and Emotions. Once done on an individual level, it impacts family dynamics, and thereafter, communities. I personally gained tools on how to better foster positive thoughts and it has had a lasting effect on how I manage conflict with others and within myself. I would love to see this program rolled out in communities that are treating negative behaviors rather than giving people resources to get to the root of their respective issues. Looking at this process through a global health lens makes me believe that it has great scalability and would be effective in a variety of settings. The mothers unanimously agreed that they would have benefitted to have these tools earlier in life, as they would have avoided developing emotionally crippling habits. By giving the children the power to control their mindsets about themselves and others, RUMERTIME® set them up to become resilient to life's challenges.