

New Vision Wilderness Youth Trip Summary

Youth Name: [REDACTED]

Program Attendance Dates: Pre-Workshop [REDACTED]; Excursion: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Overall Experience Summary

[REDACTED] came into the program with a limited level of resistance but remained quiet throughout the beginning portions of the program. As the program progressed, it became apparent that [REDACTED] did have a certain level of anticipation about going on the program and was excited to attend. He had stated throughout the program that he was looking for an experience that would break the monotony of his summer and give him something fun to do. During the Pre-Workshop, [REDACTED] was engaged on a very limited level. He demonstrated very little emotional affect and only performed a limited amount of social interaction until the very end of the Pre-Workshop. His breaking point seemed to be when we did the low ropes challenge courses and he was forced to interact with his peers on a deeper level. It was our sense that there was a certain level of hesitancy to interact with his peers due to the large age difference. However, going through the low ropes challenge course seemed to break down the age barrier and he then began to interact more with his peers.

[REDACTED] was very invested in the remainder of the program. When it came to the Excursion portion of the program he was excited and seemed to anticipate the idea of pushing himself while in the wilderness. His level of affect was minimal and he tended to minimize experiences, even when his excitement could clearly be seen. [REDACTED] demonstrated overall affect suppression throughout a lot of the program. Situations in which it was apparent he was excited or stimulated, he minimized and did not show emotional attachment to the event. He had excellent interactions with peers and had excellent leadership when in these types of roles. [REDACTED] ability to take the leadership role was limited in the beginning parts of the program and it took extensive amounts of staff prodding for him to step into that role. Once in the role of leader, [REDACTED] did effectively lead the group, whether it was on trails and mapping or in helping his peers in the cook group. Although he clearly attempted to suppress any level of emotional excitement about his attendance on the program, by the end he was openly discussing that he enjoyed the trip. He seemed fascinated by the solo experience and also wanted to be pushed more in the realm of backpacking and wilderness skills. This had the potential of being an activity that [REDACTED] could really utilize to help support him considerably in his recovery process.



Key Moments

There were two key moments that stood out within his program. The first resided in the Pre-Workshop day, when [REDACTED] was clearly attempting to *not* interact with his peers and was suppressing any level of affect attachment to his program. As the challenge of the ropes course became increasingly greater, [REDACTED] stepped to the plate and started to become involved with peers, however, only when forced to. As he was put into more vulnerable situations, he started to connect stronger with his peers and began to open up. It seemed, from that point on, that he was more interactive with each of them. It appeared to break some of his barriers with trust when he was pushed through certain exercises that required high levels of trust in his teammates within the low ropes challenge course. After this trust was formulated, [REDACTED] was extremely interactive with his peers, specifically toward the end of the day, and he seemed to show a certain level of attachment to two of the kids in particular, who were in the program.

The second key moment seemed to occur during [REDACTED] solo experience. [REDACTED] was extremely interested in doing the solo and seemed to be interested in the challenge that it presented to him. We had set [REDACTED] up to be somewhat of a strong leader in the program due to his age, and we challenged him to push his solo time longer than that of the other group members. He was extremely interested in this and seemed up for the challenge. He had stated that his solo was an opportunity for him to spend time reflecting on some things he needed to be thinking about in his life. He clearly stated that some of the decisions he had made over the span of the last year or two were things that he needed to spend time thinking about. He also stated that there was a lot of emotional strife related to his family that he wanted to spend time processing through. In addition, on his solo, there was an individual session that seemed to break down some of the barriers for [REDACTED] emotionally. This included access to a lot of emotions related to his mother and the cancer that she continues to battle through. [REDACTED] surfaced many feelings of affection paired with potential loss of attachment. (This will all be described in further detail in the report of his individual sessions.)

Behavior and Emotional State

[REDACTED] had zero acting out behaviors throughout the program. In fact, he demonstrated a high level of tolerance and patience toward peers, who were extremely frustrating at times. Overall, his behavior was quite good and, among many positive things overall, [REDACTED] was supportive to his peers and helpful with staff.

[REDACTED] emotional state was more of a concern. Not in that he was volatile in any way, but he seems to suppress a certain amount of his affect. This may pair with some of the experiences he's had throughout his lifetime and a lot of the emotional hurts that he's experienced, but it is clear that [REDACTED] has affect suppression to a degree that seemed to carry through many different experiences. It was visible on several occasions that [REDACTED]



would become extremely excited and once he noticed he was excited he would shut down the emotional state that he was in. This was concerning to this therapist, due to the fact that it showed a certain level of dissociation that he experienced both with positive emotion and with negative emotion on several occasions throughout the program. This is something that any therapist working with ██████ needs to consider, which is that he certainly has a high level of emotional dissociation that occurs regularly.

Group Involvement

██████ was involved in all the group that occurred. In the beginning of the trip he was much more restricted, but as his trust levels rose he became much more involved. He was very resistant to completing any of the group worksheets. His resistance was very passive, but even when asked to move forward he would resist completing the work without being verbally combative.

In several of the family groups ██████ seemed to be able to identify with several of his peers struggles with their families. He became more open when several group members shared about their parents use of alcohol and drugs. He did not share a lot, but he did open up more than he had been!

Solo Summary

As stated above, the solo experience seemed to be a highlight for ██████ in his program. ██████ was openly interested in the solo and asked many questions going into this portion. He seemed genuinely intrigued by several of the challenges that we offer to the boys, however, the only challenge that he was willing to accept was that of being able to do an extended solo, which included staying in the darkness. Rather than displaying anxiety or fear that many of the other boys did in the solo portion of the program, he was clearly anticipating this experience. ██████ had an excellent solo site and he completely embraced it. He put in extensive effort into building a shelter right off the bat. This was surprising due to the ongoing affect suppression that he'd shown with other challenges and throughout the other portions of the program. He was proud of the structure he built *and* of the effort he put into his shelter. In fact, one of the only pictures he was willing to give us, the staff, was one of him standing next to his shelter. ██████ had stated that his intention on his solo was to process through some of the things that were currently going on his life. This related to his dad's ongoing struggles with alcoholism, as well as fears related to his mother's cancer and how long she may live. ██████ was given several worksheets and he put very minimal effort into filling out any of these. In fact, all of the worksheets that he was given that needed to be completed while on his solo, he did not complete. His emotional processing, however, did appear to be at a deep level, as was noted when I checked up on ██████ on his solo. During this time, he went quite deep in his thoughts and he was able to explain what he had been thinking about and processing over the span of that hour or two. One of the key



moments in the solo session was the individual therapy session when [REDACTED] was able to go into a deeper level. (This is discussed in the next section.)

Individual Therapy Intervention

[REDACTED] had been resistant throughout much of the program with discussing much with me, specifically knowing that I was a therapist. His resistance toward having a therapist involved was obvious, so we discussed his resistance at a deep level. We processed through the number of people who he had intervene in his life and the number of therapists he had had. [REDACTED] reported that five or six therapists had intervened with him throughout his lifetime. It was a struggle being able to accept the accessing of the private portions of his life. We processed through this and, as we did, his level of resistance began to lessen. When asked about what [REDACTED] felt his primary dilemma at this point in time was, he clearly stated that it was his mother's illness. As we talked, [REDACTED] went into a deeper level of emotional discussion than we had seen throughout most of the entire program. He was able to discuss specific emotions related to his sadness and fear about his mother's illness and her potential death. He clearly stated that on several occasions in his life he had experienced abandonment with his mother for long periods of time and that he found himself conflicted now due to the fact that he has anger towards this abandonment that had occurred in the past and fear of loss of love in his life due to his mom's illness.

[REDACTED] clearly described an internal dynamic that was conflicted; part of him was extremely angry with his mom and another part of him was extremely sad about potential loss of his mother figure. He processed through this at a deep level without me going very deeply into it. I did not push him and he wanted to talk through it. He stated that he had been processing this throughout the day on his solo, but that he was open to sharing what he was thinking about. He talked about abandonment emotionally that he has experienced throughout his life, both related to his mom and his dad. We started to pair that up with his inability to show emotion throughout the Wilderness program and in other areas in his life when this happens. As [REDACTED] was identifying this, he seemed to be able to recognize that he has developed this pattern as a form of protection; when emotions start to get overwhelming he shuts them down, due to his experiences with abandonment and his inability to have emotional experiences with his family members. At this point, [REDACTED] and I discussed the potential for us doing some internal somatic work - helping him identify his emotions within his body and being able to try to process through them if he'd like. [REDACTED] was open to doing this type of work and wanted to move forward. As we did the somatic exercise, [REDACTED] was able to identify that two primary areas of somatic struggle were his eyes and his heart. Both of these were related to grief related to his mother. In his eyes, he had depicted a metaphor of a dam and in his heart he was only able to do general shape development. Both of these depicted a high level of sadness and potential hurt that are related to his mother's illness. [REDACTED] was not able to move fully through this process, to be able to resolve



some of the somatic triggers, however, the identification seemed to bring him a certain level of relief and we processed through his fear of starting to cry and being able to let some of the tears go. We discussed the ability for men to be able to process emotionally to the level of being able to experience tears, that it's difficult for many men that have grown up in a situation similar to [REDACTED]'s. He was encouraged to spend some time on his own to try to be able to get into the process of experiencing that emotion at that level.

Upon completing that work, [REDACTED] was relieved to be able to have identified emotions within his body, and we discussed his ability to start to identify other emotions that were there, whether it was anger or other things. [REDACTED] was able to clearly see the connection between emotions and his body, which seemed to open up a doorway for him. He seemed somewhat stimulated and excited by this experience. [REDACTED] was able to discuss through some of his sobriety issues and struggles. He was very proud of some of the sobriety that he's been maintaining. He does report that he is continuing to struggle with the alcohol use, however, he is very proud to maintain that he has clean UA's and that he has not been smoking marijuana. We processed through some of his struggles with being able to maintain this, and also we connected some of his emotional issues and struggles with his active use of alcohol. We framed it up so that he was able to utilize his somatic cues to be able to identify times when he's more likely to use alcohol, to be able to help him maintain sobriety in a better way.

Critical Incidence

[REDACTED] had no critical incidents to report on this program.

Recommendations

1. [REDACTED] clearly shows certain levels of emotional dissociation. Any therapist that works with [REDACTED], needs to have a certain level of understanding related to dissociation and trauma victims. Due to the high level of emotional trauma that [REDACTED] has experienced throughout his lifetime, any therapeutic work with him would have to be extremely slow and would have to be done in a way that would prevent any level of dissociation.
2. Due to the complex nature of [REDACTED]'s ongoing trauma related to emotional attachments throughout his lifetime and abandonment, he would be a strong candidate for EMDR therapeutic intervention. Any therapist that utilizes EMDR would have much better success at working [REDACTED] through his emotional dissociation and being able to help him move away from his trauma related to attachments.
3. [REDACTED] doesn't have a very strong understanding about his cutting behavior and needs to be educated regarding the cutting process. He seemed to understand a certain amount of the discussion that we have related to his ongoing emotional



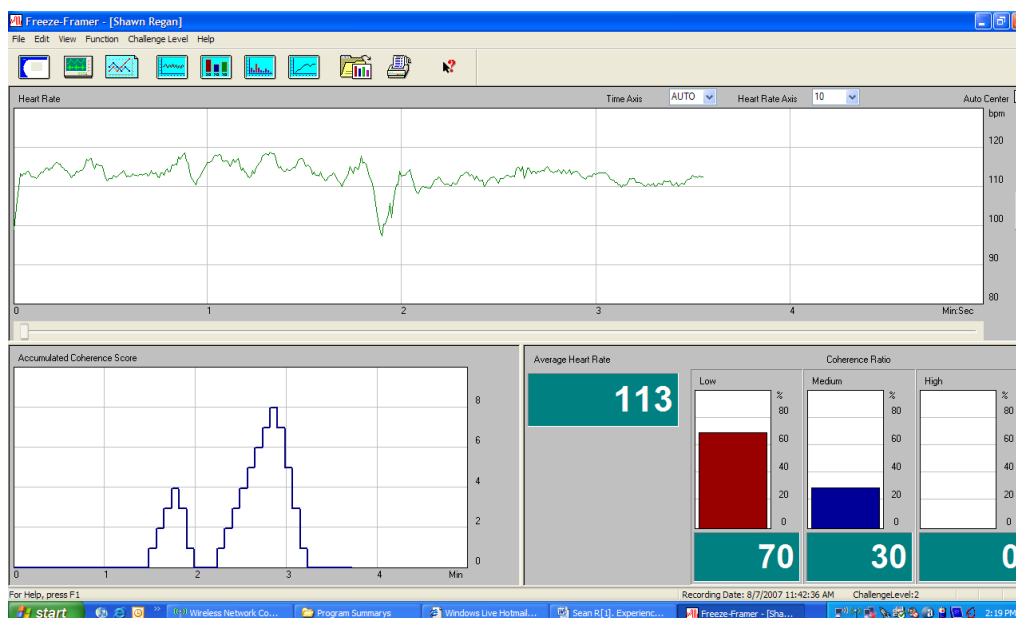
disconnectedness and his desire to get connected. Alcohol and drugs have been a form of dissociation for him, as well as cutting behaviors, and he needs to be educated on understanding his own internal triggers and the emotional benefits that he's been sustaining by cutting and other types of destructive behaviors.

4. ██████ seems on the edge of being able to be open about his attachment struggles with his mother. Any therapist should certainly start there and work with that emotional attachment issue that has been there since early childhood. This would have to be worked very slowly and processed at a very slow rate. ██████ will want to move through the process quickly, however, he will dissociate before he's able to complete the work or be able to actually work through the emotional states that need to be processed through for him to heal.

5. ██████ does not have a very clear understanding of alcoholic family dynamics. As we began to discuss them, he seemed to be extremely intrigued and was able to identify some of the aspects of his family. Anybody working with ██████ should certainly spend the time working through AODA family dynamics and process through the impacts that AODA family dynamics have had on him in his life. ██████ has resorted to scapegoating behavior commonly in the past, and he was able to identify that in some of our limited discussion. This should be explored further.

Heart Math Pre Test

During his pre test ██████ demonstrated a 70% disturbance in his nervous system, and 30% of stabilizing. He showed 0 coherence at a high level (0 Green) His line clearly depicted his tug of war of stress in his nervous system.



Heart Math Post Test

After the program attendance, [REDACTED] was able to clearly demonstrate his new found stress skills.

For the first minute of making no effort the blue line in the lower left showed multiple blips of his brain showing efforts to stabilize. Minute 2 he reflected on his solo, and minute 3 he implemented his new stress management skills. The Green line became less agitated and he instantly was able to switch to a balance cortex and limbic system. End result, 40% activation 45% stabilization and 16% full coherence in the brain!

