

Helping Campers and Families Feel Safe and Informed

Thursday, March 4, 2021



westendstrategyteam.com

Introductions



Shannon Craig Straw
Vice President



Ari Geller
COO

Shannon bio: <https://westendstrategy.com/#team/shannon-craig-straw>

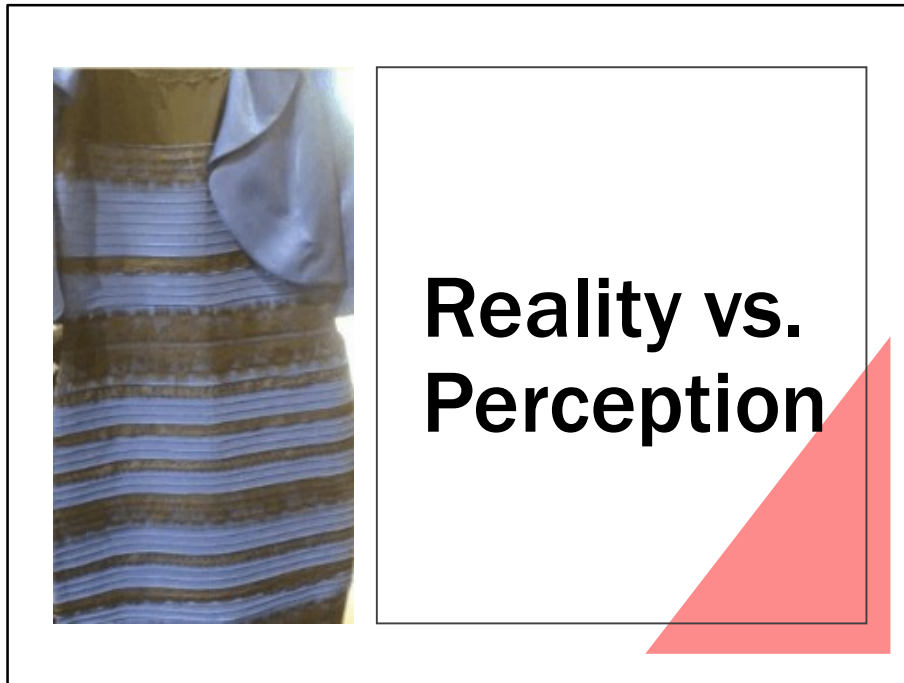
Ari bio: <https://westendstrategy.com/#team/ari-geller>

Goals for Summer 2021



- Ensure campers and staff *are* safe and *feel* safe
- Keep parents confident in their child's safety
- Have a great summer
- Motivate funders and donors to increase giving
- Set camp up for sustainability and future success

We approach everything we do in communications based on your goals. Based on the survey JCamp 180 shared with us, these are some of the goals we anticipate many camps have for this summer and those that we kept in mind as we prepared for today.



Many of us remember the intense social media debate a few years ago about this dress. It's a real dress but depending on the perception of who saw the photo – perception that is affected by a multitude of things – you might see the dress as blue and black, blue and brown or white and gold. The **reality** is you are doing everything you can to keep campers and staff safe this summer. But, how you communicate what you are doing can shape people's **perception** of whether they are/will be safe.

(More on the dress if you're curious what color it really is: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_dress)



Guiding Principle

Build and maintain trust by following through on small promises. *The single biggest predictor of a loss of trust in a crisis is the perception that you don't care.*

The reason perception is so important is that in a crisis – if someone gets sick at camp, for example, -- the biggest predictor of a loss of trust is the perception you don't care.

Before Camp Starts



DECIDE



COMMUNICATE



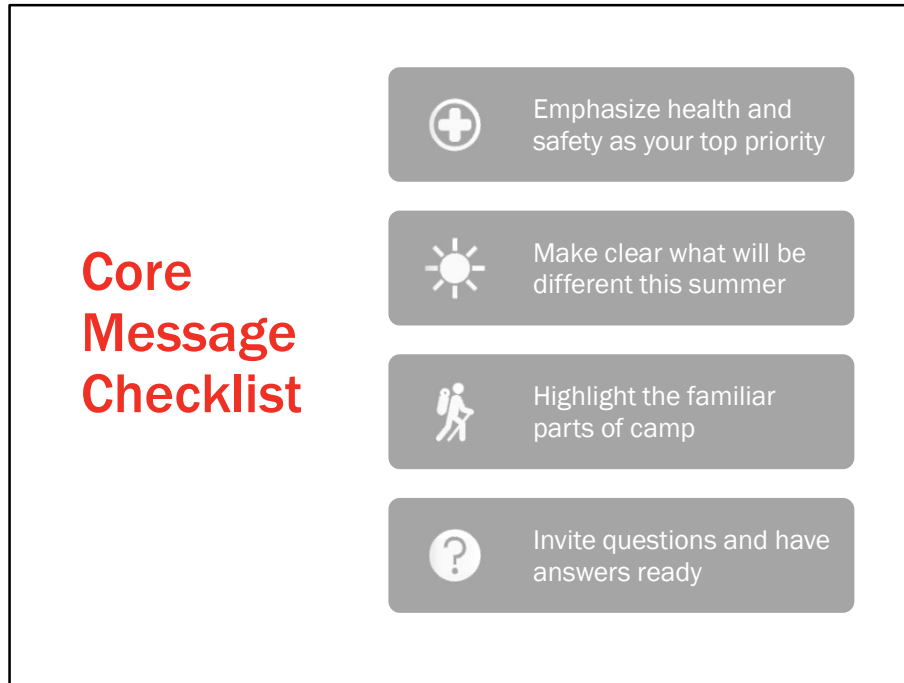
PLAN

Three things to do before camp starts:

Decide what your safety guidelines and protocols will be – will masks be required? Are there any exceptions to masks? Consider all aspects of camp (dining/living/transition/bathroom/shower). What will you do if someone breaks protocols? Note that your protocols should be what you need them to be to keep everyone safe but that means you're unlikely to make everyone happy. For example, some parents may choose to not send their child to camp if you have a mask requirement, others may not send their child if you have lax mask requirements. And the recent decisions by some governors may make your choices harder. Something to say when confronted by people upset about your protocols: "Ensuring everyone's health and safety amid the joy of camp is our number one priority, so we're implementing safety guidelines this year that we believe will give us the best chance to keep everyone healthy. We know that everyone has different risk tolerance levels and will make different choices about what's best for your family. We hope we can welcome your children back for what we know will be a safe and joyful summer."

Communicate clearly, consistently, frequently and through different means (visual/written/video) and channels (email/social media/virtual townhalls/mail).

Make a communications **plan** now for what you'll do if COVID comes to camp or if the state requirements change – we'll get into this in a bit more detail later. If you already have a crisis communications plan, be sure to pull it out and carefully review it to make sure it's up-to-date. Also be sure to review your existing waivers.



When communicating with campers, staff and family – both before and during camp – we recommend . . .

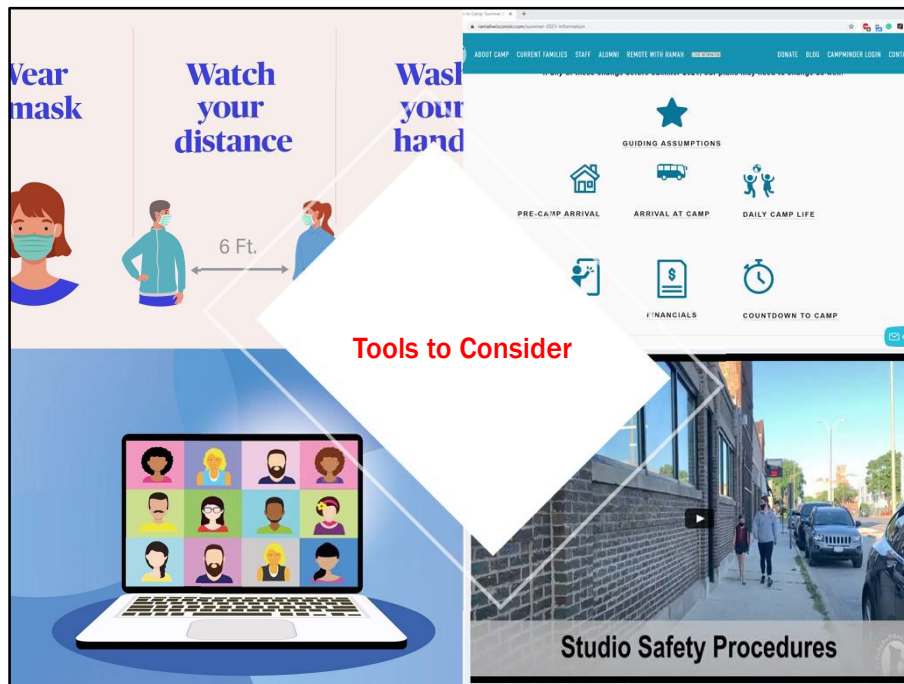
- Emphasize health and safety as your top priority
- Make clear what will be different this summer
- Highlight the familiar parts of camp that will continue – it will still feel like camp, camp is rooted in place and in a set of values
- Invite questions and have answers ready

Acknowledging the Uncertainty



- “This plan will continue to develop as we continue to follow our local health and safety guidelines.”
- “If any of these [guiding assumptions] change before summer 2021, our plans may need to change as well.”
- “The pandemic continues to change rapidly. We will adjust our planning as needed to protect the health and safety of our camp family.”

We know there is still a great deal of uncertainty about the pandemic and what state and local public health departments will require. What we know in March or April may not be the case in June or July. When you communicate your plan, you should also acknowledge the uncertainty. Here are a few ways to give yourself space to make that change. Phrases to consider include. . .



- **Visual reminders and signs** (CDC posters for camps: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/toolkits/summercamp.html>)
- **Videos that demonstrate the procedure** (Video included on the slide: <https://youtu.be/P50OGipoU2M>)
- **Landing page with a visible link** from your homepage that has all of the information, including information on enhanced staffing to help manage COVID as well as increased mental health and wellness of staff and campers (example included in the slide: <https://ramahwisconsin.com/summer-2021-information>)
- **Return to camp guide** – is there a way to integrate acknowledgement of reading the guide with your existing waivers?
- **Town halls** to share safety protocol and answer questions
- **More frequent/consistent updates from camp** – be clear about where people can find information and how frequent the updates will be. It's not uncommon for parents to repeatedly click "refresh" on the camp website or social media pages – this year it's likely to be even more common. We realize you may already feel like you communicate with parents A LOT – but this year you're going to need even more and you'll want to provide regular updates on the health of campers. This could be a regular COVID update even if (fingers crossed) all you say all summer is "no positive tests and no exposures."



Questions to Prepare for

- How will you keep my child safe?
- What are the mask requirements?
- What happens if someone doesn't follow protocol?
- What happens if another camper or a staff member gets sick?
- What happens if my child gets sick?
- When or how will I be informed if a camper or staff member gets sick?

Questions to keep top of mind as you prepare for the summer



Questions to Prepare for

- Will there be fewer campers this year? How will you decide who gets to come to camp?
- Will visitors be allowed?
- What happens to my deposit/tuition rollover if I choose to not send my child to camp?
- What happens to my deposit/tuition if camp is required to close by the local or state government?
- Are staff required to be vaccinated?
- How are you going to handle days off? (for staff)

Questions to keep top of mind as you prepare for the summer



Breakout Discussion

How are your peer camps planning to answer these questions? What protocols and guidelines are they developing?

Make a (Communications) Plan



IDENTIFY DECISION-
MAKERS



DEFINE
STAKEHOLDERS



AGREE UPON
COMMUNICATIONS
PROCEDURE



DRAFT MESSAGES
NOW FOR EACH
SCENARIO

Update/revisit plan if you already have one

- **Identify decisionmakers** – who needs to be involved in determining the final message you send? Who has veto power?
- **Define stakeholders** – who do you need to communicate with?
- **Agree upon procedures** – who drafts/edits the message? How many messages do you need? What order should different stakeholders receive information? For example, do all parents need to know the same thing? Or do parents with kids in one part of camp need to know more than parents in another part of camp?
- **Draft messages for each scenario** – give yourself a starting place now so that you don't blank piece of paper in the heat of the moment

Thing to keep in mind: often in a crisis the impulse is to give people everything you know, but as you plan, carefully consider who needs to know what and when. *Also, because an individual's health status is at the heart of many of the possible scenarios, please consult local and state public health guidelines to inform your planning.*

Scenarios to Consider



SOMEONE GETS SICK



SPREAD WITHIN CAMP



CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT
GUIDELINES

Scenarios to keep in mind as you draft or revise your crisis communications plan

Things to Remember



Cite your sources



Express empathy



Perception is as important as reality



Share the right information, not more information

- Cite your sources: You are camp experts. When relaying relevant health information, remember to cite public health authorities.
- Express empathy: acknowledge and validate uneasiness and/or fear
- Perception is as important as reality
- Share the right information, not more information – difference between the frequency of information vs. the quantity of information.

What's Next



DECIDE



COMMUNICATE



PLAN

Three things to consider doing starting this week

If you haven't already, pull out and review past crisis operational plans, health and safety waivers and forms, public health guidelines for COVID safety and camps then **decide** what your safety guidelines and protocols will be.

Review your communications calendar for the lead up to camp – or make one – are you **communicating** with campers, families and staff regularly? Are there times you could add another communication or reminder about protocols before camp?

If you have one already, pull out your past crisis communications plan to update it for this summer. If not, start making a **communications plan** – for each possible scenario, remember to identify the decisionmakers, set a communications procedure and start drafting the messages you need.



Questions?