



## Introduction

- Members of Generation Z report higher rates of anxiety than previous generations, especially in workplace settings<sup>1</sup>
- Generation Z young adults report wanting more flexibility, individuality, & connection to their values in their work experiences than previous generations, creating potential areas of conflict with supervisors<sup>2,3</sup>
- Chronic activation of the stress response system impairs learning & higher order thinking (time management, creativity, problem solving)<sup>4,5</sup>
- Supervisors could support learning & positive engagement for emerging adult staff by addressing the stress response system in the workplace<sup>6</sup>
- Occupational therapy's (OT) PEO model offers an opportunity for camp directors to approach supporting their emerging adult staff with curiosity<sup>7,8,9</sup>

## Partner Site Background & Needs

- Hidden Valley Camp (HVC) is a private, co-ed residential summer camp in Maine. They value acceptance, independence, responsibility, & creativity<sup>10</sup>
- Staff are typically 18-24 years old, from the US & abroad. Recently higher rates of staff have struggled to meet the demands of the job
- Directors requested a training for the leadership team with hands-on activities they can use with counselors during the 2-week staff training, no longer than 1.5 hours each

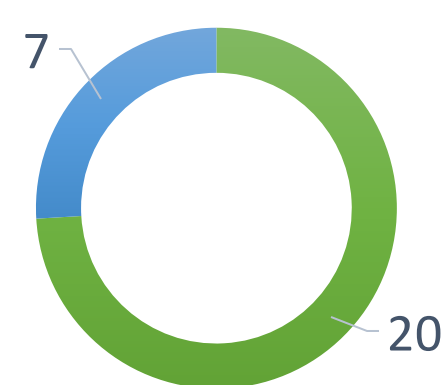
## Project Aims

This project aims to understand the professional needs of Gen Z staff. This project then proposes a curriculum to help directors identify & implement relevant supports at HVC.

## 2023 HVC Staff Survey Results

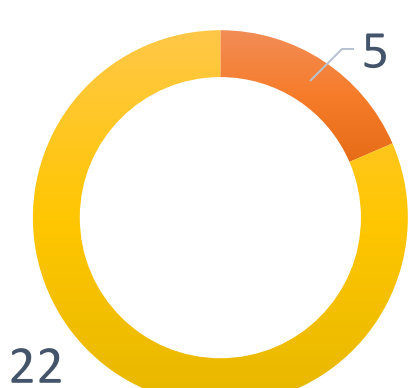
Participants: 27

Returning & First Time Staff



■ First time staff ■ Returning staff

Prior experience working with children



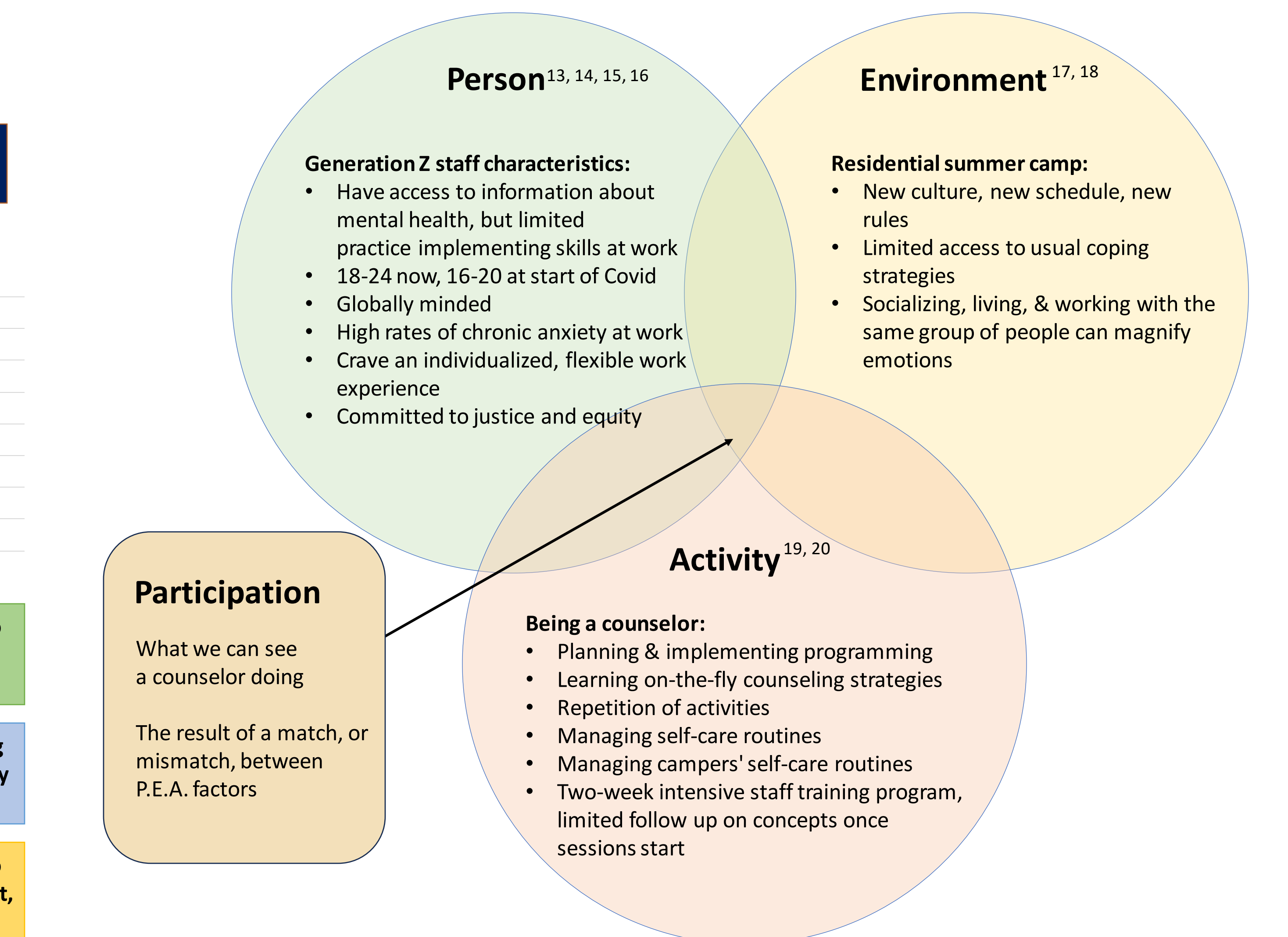
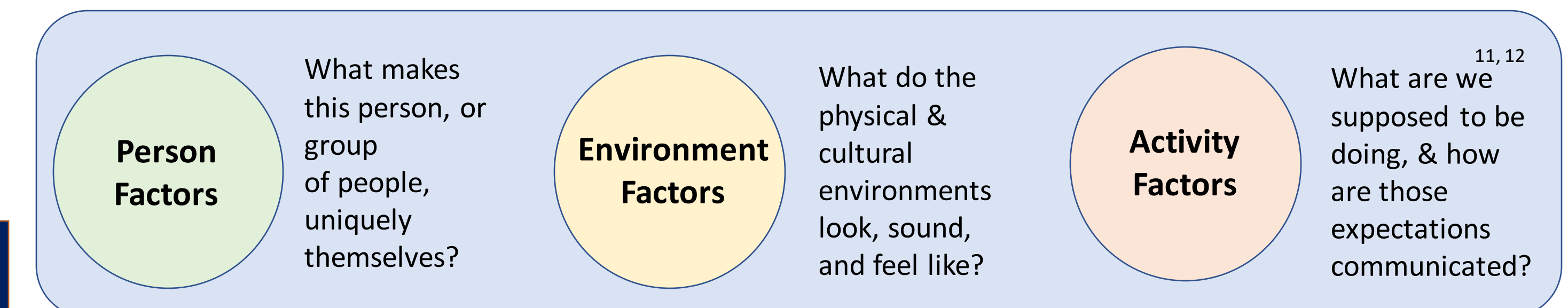
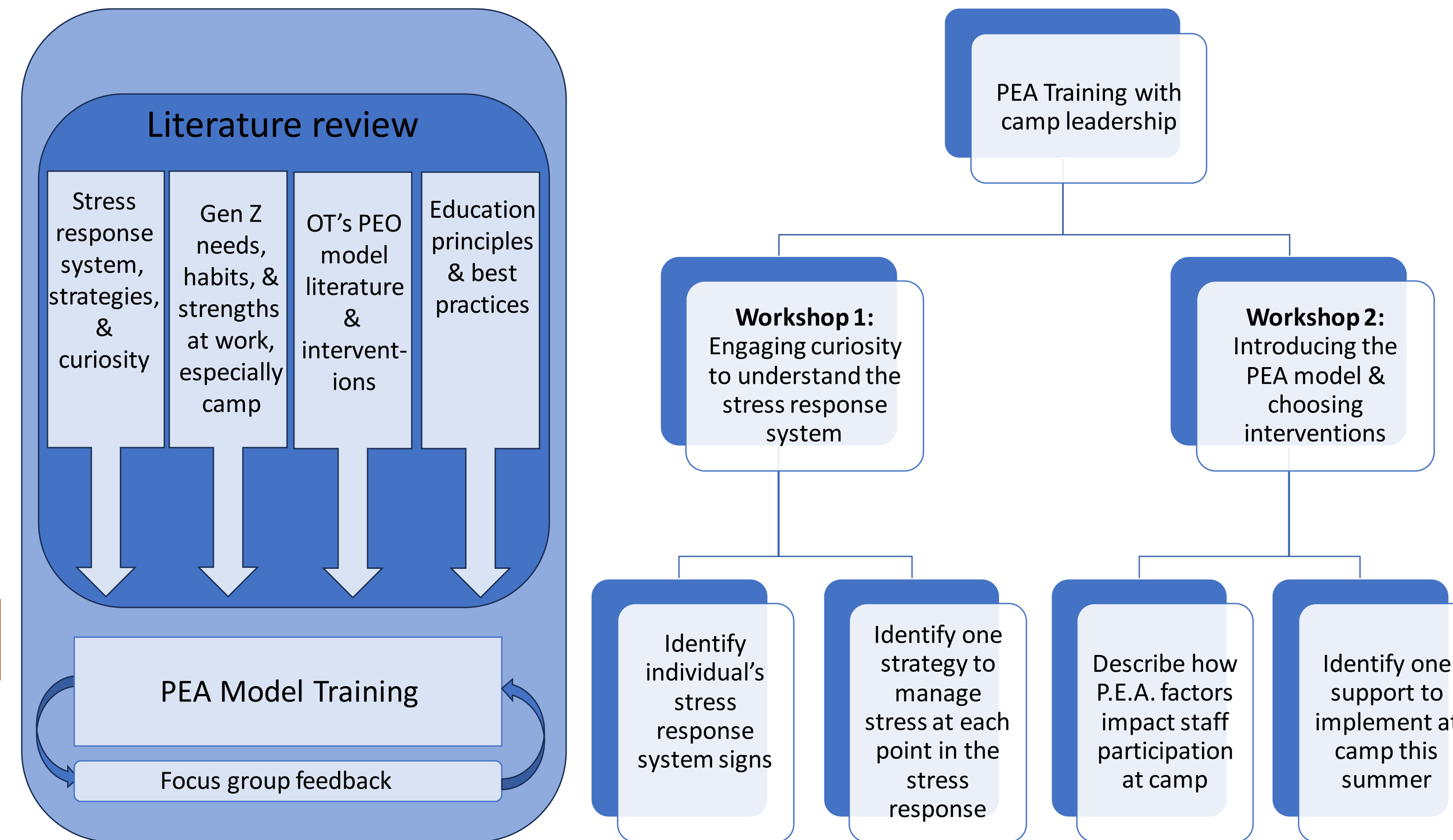
■ No ■ Yes

Themes



- "[I'd like to develop skills in] being more confident, taking on more responsibilities"
- "[I'd like training in] how to deal with challenging behavior"
- "[I'd like to develop skills in] staying calm"
- "[I'd like training in] dealing with conflict and personality clashes"
- "[I'd like to develop skills in] being able to set limits"
- "[I'd like training in] how to talk about issues and conflict, boundaries, etc."

## Curriculum Development & The P.E.A. Model



## Focus Groups & Intervention Areas

**Workshop 1 Focus Group**

- 6 participants
- 5 Gen Z
- 1 Millennial
- 6 female
- 0 male

**Workshop 2 Focus Group**

- 3 participants
- 2 Gen Z
- 1 Millennial
- 2 female
- 1 male

"It was very cool to see the different stress response categories translated into very modern coping mechanisms... often we aren't given literal examples"

"I learned that we cannot prevent stress but we can modulate how we react emotionally to that stress"

"[I learned] There are many ways to be creative about adapting environment, activity, or even people to increase effectiveness of or participation in an activity"

"[I learned] All three [P.E.A.] factors are often impacting the scenario. Determining what factor needs intervention can focus a 'problem' to determine steps to create a solution"

## Possible Interventions

**Person<sup>21, 22, 23</sup>**

- Understand individual stress triggers & tells
- Set goals for identifying, communicating, & managing stress at camp
- Reflect on goal progress regularly
- Explicitly connect camp experience to each staff member's personal vision & professional goals

**Environment<sup>24, 25</sup>**

- Build a culture of curiosity around managing stressful moments in counseling & interpersonal conflict
- Schedule opportunities for reflection on goal progress into meetings
- Create opportunities to give and receive informal feedback regularly

**Activity<sup>26, 27, 28</sup>**

- Name stress management and emotional regulation as part of the job
- Explicitly teach stress management strategies in the camp context
- Refer frequently to areas of assessment
- Communicate the expectations of the job frequently and in multiple ways (verbally & written)

## Discussion & Conclusion

- Curiosity plays a role in stress management during conflict resolution. As Gen Z continues to enter professional settings, generational differences may continue to create conflict. Further research can expand on the role of curiosity in intergenerational work relationships<sup>29, 30</sup>
- Because the biggest impact results from environmental interventions, this training is best suited to members of leadership, though individual stress management skills are relevant to employees at all levels<sup>31</sup>

This training will be conducted with the leadership team of HVC in May, 2024. The curriculum will continue to evolve based on feedback

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References:

