

This writing sample is the preface to a pre-staff training module I created for the onboarding of our incoming Camp Outright staff.

Dear Camp Outright 8.0 Staff,

We are so excited you will be joining us at camp this summer! This is a pre-staff training for you to do before you arrive to camp.

At Camp Outright, we get to provide magical spaces for queer and trans youth to explore, play, & become their best selves. Thank you for being a part of this incredible work! **The beauty about camp is that it provides the space for all of us to bring all of ourselves. But in order for this to happen, it is essential for us to show up for one another in community.**

At Camp Outright, we believe in solidarity. What this looks like at camp is a commitment to a shared stake in equitable & liberated spaces for Queer and Trans youth.

As a community at camp, we bring our different experiences & different identities with us. It is important that we recognize how power and privilege plays out within our identities and it's important for us to be intentional about the ways we show up. This is a necessary part of being in community, especially in the context of a traditional summer camp structure, which is so often speckled with -isms- that do harm and hinder the opportunity of connecting in our most authentic selves.

We must name that Camp Outright exists in this context. With a history of racism, transmisogyny, classism and ableism that gets all too easily perpetuated even within the queer and trans community and within summer camp cultures. In order to create a community that can hold our youth, we need to name these contexts as a reality & work towards dismantling them.

Because our staff training during camp is packed with information about all you need to know about camp including logistics, emergency protocols and, of course, facilitating important dialogue about building community, we'd like you to take the time to do this important, individual work before camp. We want you to arrive to camp readily prepared with a jumping off point. This is critical so that we can engage in important discourse about the ways we can guide our youth to treat one another with care in intentional & informed ways.

We are so excited you are all a part of the Outright community! Because you're here, you have the opportunity to model a healthy queer and trans community for our youth. In order for it to feel supportive & the magical possible, we are asking you to do this work with us, together.

This is huge important work. This is revolutionary work.

The more honestly and fiercely we do this work, individually and together, the deeper, more caring and stronger our community will be. At Camp Outright, our wish is to show to youth that there is a community that will catch them. That we are a community that truly sees them for who they are and for one week, can deeply care for and about them. When we think about community care and support, it is important to model the essential reciprocal nature of care. That when you put care into your community, it is waiting to meet you right back. When you have a strong community, it can't be torn apart and can work together.

Oftentimes people use the analogy of a [bubble] to talk about summer camp. But we believe this perpetuates the notion that camp is separate from the "real world" or the "outside" world. Implying, that the power dynamics & oppression outside of camp doesn't get in.

But maybe camp is a different kind of bubble. Maybe instead of a Utopia, it's an incredible opportunity to take part in a nourishing system of care.

There is oh so much more to be said. But we'll let you dig in. Thank you for being a part of the team this summer.

We cannot wait to meet you!

Heck Yeah!

Noa & Team