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Conceptualizing Success in Therapeutic Wilderness Experiences: The Creation and Maintenance of Instructor-Participant Relationships

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Conceptualizing Success in Therapeutic Wilderness Experiences:
The Creation and Maintenance of Instructor-Participant Relationships

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Honors Thesis

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REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

In this study, I examine the relationship created between instructors and clients during therapeutic wilderness experiences. Many researchers have studied wilderness therapy, its effectiveness, and the participants who go through the programs, but very little research has been done on the instructors themselves. By understanding the role that the instructors play and how they conceptualize that role, more will be known about the relationship-building process, how the instructors affect the young adults they work with, and wilderness therapy as a whole. The specific areas examined in this study included how instructors envision their role, how they build and maintain relationships with their clients (or students), and how they conceptualize success in their relationships with their students.

The natural environment fosters social interaction and growth for children and families (Huttenmoser, 1995, as cited in Louv, 2008), which may be why over 10,000 youth in the United States each year seek therapeutic treatment through the non-traditional means of wilderness therapy (Russell, 2003). Wilderness therapy calls upon clients to leave behind videogames, Internet access, and the comforts of home, to participate in a process that takes them out of their comfort zone and challenges them to think in new ways about themselves, their situations, and those around them. These non-traditional interventions are thought to appeal to adolescents' needs for high amounts of activity and perceived risk (Kelly & Baer, 1971). Wilderness therapy is used most among the youth population of this country. Most research has been conducted with youth in their teenage years (Bandoroff & Scherer, 1994; Russell, 2003; Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002).

As explained in a meta-analysis by Hattie, Marsh, Neill, and Richards (1997), outdoor and adventure based programs have been used since the 1950s with adjudicated youth,

psychiatric patients, and those in the managerial field. In 1941, Kurt Hahn, the father of modern adventure education, designed the first Outward Bound program for the Blue Funnel Shipping Line, with the purpose of reducing lives lost due to the sinking of ships in the Atlantic Ocean. The month-long course was meant to cultivate physical fitness, resourcefulness, initiative, independence, and self-reliance. Due to the success of his original program, Hahn established Outward Bound schools throughout the world. Outward Bound remains one of the premier adventure programs that uses the wilderness setting to cultivate its core values: compassion, excellence, integrity, inclusion and diversity (for more information, see www.outwardbound.com).

Although these programs have been utilized for sixty years, little research has been done to identify or explore why therapeutic wilderness experiences create positive outcomes for youth. There is a great deal of variation between wilderness therapy programs, but researchers have highlighted some factors that allow the most success for clients. One best practice identified by Russell and Phillips-Miller (2002) is the establishment of a nurturing therapeutic alliance between the participant and the staff. This type of relationship with a therapist or instructor has been shown to “create a desire for change” in the youth participants (p. 433).

Wilderness therapy programs allow for participants to create new, positive relationships with adults, including therapists and instructors (Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002; Sklar, Anderson, Autry, 2007; Becker, 2009; Taniguchi, Widmer, Duerden, & Draper, 2009). Positive relationships with adults are crucial to the development of adolescents who may be experiencing shifting relationships in the context of their home life (parents and relatives), peers (friends and romantic partners), the work place (employers and co-workers), and school (Darling, 2005). For example, research in the field of mentoring has shown that mentoring relationships are important

to youth because mentors serve as consistent positive adult role models in adolescents' lives (Britner & Kraimer-Rickaby, 2005). The purpose of this study, therefore, was to investigate the relationship that develops between instructors and their participants and the role that instructors play while on therapeutic wilderness expeditions with youth.

Wilderness Therapy Defined

One of the challenges in wilderness therapy research is variation in nomenclature. In addition to the term wilderness therapy, adventure education, and outdoor behavioral healthcare are used to describe these types of programs. Put simply, wilderness therapy uses traditional counseling techniques and adventure-based activities in an outdoor setting (Davis-Berman & Berman, 1994). In an attempt to integrate the many constructions of wilderness therapy, Russell (2001) provided the following description of the ideal wilderness therapy program:

The design of the program should be therapeutically based, with the assumptions made clear and concise, in order to best determine target outcomes and evaluate the effectiveness of treatment (Bandoroff & Scherer, 1994). The careful selection of potential candidates should be based on a clinical assessment and should include the creation of an individual treatment plan for each participant (Davis-Berman & Berman, 1994). Wilderness therapy utilizes outdoor adventure pursuits and other activities, such as primitive skills and reflection, to enhance personal and interpersonal growth (Kimball & Bacon, 1993)... At the conclusion of the program, staff should work with the appropriate professionals in the follow-up environment to help the client maintain any progress that has been made as a result of treatment. (p. 76)

Wilderness therapy often refers to other outdoor programs that are benefits based, meaning that the programs seek specific outcomes for the participants beyond simply leisure and enjoyment (Taniguchi et al., 2009).

Outdoor behavioral healthcare (OBH) is a more recent term, prompted by the need to explain the wider range of therapeutic programs available to youth that incorporate the wilderness and traditional treatment. Wilderness therapy is considered a therapeutic modality,

like family systems therapy, whereas OBH is a type of treatment program typified by a “wilderness challenge model that is appealing to parents and resistant adolescents unwilling to commit to treatment” (Russell, 2003, p. 356).

Adventure education shares the common features of wilderness settings: groups of fewer than 16 participants, activities that are physically and/or mentally challenging (such as white water rafting or climbing to the summit of a mountain), problem solving and decision making as a group, trained and non-intrusive leaders, and a duration of two to four weeks (Hattie, Marsh, Neill, & Richards, 1997). Adventure programs consist of many of the same elements as wilderness therapy, but are not limited to use by those seeking treatment. In Hattie et al.’s (1997) meta-analysis of previous research on adventure programs, the participants included students and adults, some of whom were seeking to resolve issues such as substance abuse or behavioral disorders, but also management personnel, looking to improve their leadership abilities. Adventure programming is typically facilitated by leaders who have training in outdoor programming, whereas in OBH programs, the facilitators have been trained in counseling, social work, psychology, human development, or another related area (Russell, 2003).

Adventure programming is geared at providing physical challenges away from a person’s typical environment but, unlike wilderness therapy or OBH, the focus is not on the treatment of a social, emotional, or behavioral problem (Hattie et. al, 1997; Russell, 2003). Participants in wilderness therapy are often enrolled because they have chosen to avoid a different sort of residential treatment (Russell, 2003). The overlap between adventure programs and wilderness therapy or OBH programs is substantial, especially in programming methods, but it is the needs of the clients and the type of training and qualifications the facilitators possess that leads to a difference in nomenclature. For the purposes of this paper, I will refer to the treatments offered

in an outdoor setting by trained therapists or wilderness instructors as wilderness therapy, thus encompassing OBH and wilderness therapy, but not adventure programming.

Uses of Wilderness Therapy Programs

Wilderness therapy programs vary, but a common focus emerges: challenging individuals physically and emotionally to create positive change (Sachs & Miller, 1992). Some programs are designed to meet the treatment needs of youth with histories of substance abuse, whereas other programs are intended to meet the needs of participants with a variety of social or psychological disorders, such as schizophrenic mood disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder, depression, and Oppositional Defiant Disorder (Hattie et al., 1997; Ferguson, 1999; Russell, 2003). In a study of 12 participants, Russell and Phillips-Miller (2002) identified five thematic reasons for participants to seek wilderness therapy interventions: “school problems (n= 12/12), drugs and alcohol (n=10/12), resistance to other forms of counseling and treatment (n=9/12), suppressed anger and emotions (n=8/12), statement from client saying they ‘needed help’ (n=7/12)” (p. 422). Russell’s (2003) study of seven Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare programs included 858 adolescents between the ages of 16 to 18, 29% of whom had been diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, 26% substance disorders, and 15% depression disorders. Other adolescents who participate in wilderness therapy programs may not have a specific diagnosis; rather they have simply exhibited problem behaviors that have led to referrals to the programs by the judicial system, parents, or custodial authorities (e.g., foster parents, social workers, Department of Children and Families; Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002).

Wilderness therapy has been integrated in the treatment strategies for some youth populations. Lambie et al. (2000) studied a community treatment program in New Zealand which utilizes a wilderness therapy component as its cornerstone. Harper and Scott (2006)

analyzed a model provided by a program in Canada which integrated therapeutic wilderness experiences into the care of adolescent clients with mental health needs. The model, which was referred to as “therapeutic outfitting” because of the combined usage of wilderness experiences and adolescent mental health agencies, involved taking the youth clients and their therapists on wilderness trips. The intervention was meant to provide a unique experience for the clients and therapists that would strengthen the therapeutic alliance. Additionally, therapeutic outfitting focused on building new interpersonal skills for the youth participants; these skills would be integrated into their daily lives outside of their wilderness experiences (Harper & Scott, 2006).

Sachs and Miller (1992) analyzed another program that incorporated wilderness therapy into their services for youth. Adolescents who were identified as behaviorally disordered and were charges of the Illinois Department of Mental Health took part in a three-day modified wilderness experience with the goal of increasing self-efficacy and reducing verbal and physical aggression. The growth of the participants in this wilderness experience was compared to the control group, which received relaxation training and reduced academic commitments, while the experimental group hiked, camped, participated in spelunking, trail making, trust exercises, and team-building initiatives. Cooperation was modeled for the youth during the wilderness experience by the adult leaders on the trip. Sachs and Miller indicated that the cooperative behaviors of the participants increased but reduced after the one-month follow up; the control group did not experience as significant of an increase in cooperation. The aggressive behaviors of the experimental group were not reduced significantly, but the focus of the expedition was based on increasing cooperation, not decreasing aggression.

A growing number of programs have been designed to bring families into the wilderness therapy model, as family involvement is shown to increase effectiveness of therapeutic

interventions with youth (Bandoroff & Scherer, 1994; Harper et al., 2007). Bandoroff & Scherer (1994) analyzed one such program, Family Wheel. Family Wheel was created to supplement the work of adolescents in a standard wilderness therapy program, by allowing parents to join their children for a four day expedition after the youth completed a 21-day program. The parental supplement was meant to help parents understand the intervention that their children went through, as well as to teach families new strategies for overcoming conflict.

Outcomes in Wilderness Therapy

Youth who participate in wilderness therapy come into the programs for different reasons, but there are similarities in the expectations that the programs have for their participants. According to Russell (2001), the physical accomplishment of finishing a wilderness therapy program builds an adolescent's sense of self and inspires them for the future. By increasing their physical well-being, participants' emotional health is also affected. Many believe that if they complete a wilderness program, they can complete other challenges in their lives. For some, completing wilderness therapy is just the beginning of their developmental journey. Participants also hope to gain perspective on past behaviors and decisions (Russell, 2001).

Multiple studies have shown the effectiveness of wilderness therapy programs for the treatment of behavioral and emotional issues. In a study by Russell (2003) of 100 OBH programs, the behavioral and emotional symptoms of participants were reduced according to self-reported scores and parent scores after treatment. Based on the 12-month assessment in the same study, the participants either maintained their therapeutic progress or continued to improve. Results also showed that females were as receptive to OBH treatments as males.

Families who participated in Bandoroff and Scherer's (1994) study of the Family Wheel program, which integrated family involvement at the end of a wilderness therapy expedition,

reported learning more effective communication and negotiation skills, as well as a greater understanding of the individuality of the family members. In addition, the adolescents reported fewer legal problems. Ninety two of the participants reported they were “mostly or very satisfied” with the Family Wheel program (p. 195).

Lambie et al. (2000) reported that none of the 14 adolescent sexual offenders in the program had re-offended two years after completing their treatment. The program included three wilderness experiences ranging from four to six days and formal counseling. Besides ending their offending behaviors, the participants also reported increased self-esteem and empathy. The reduction of youth offending was an outcome in another study, by Wilson and Lipsey (2000). Their meta-analysis suggested a correlation between therapeutic wilderness intervention programs and reduced delinquency rates in adolescents (p. 11).

Hattie et al.’s (1997) meta-analyses of adventure education programs did not include programs with a formal counseling aspect. Although Hattie et al. reported adventure programs to be more effective than other educational programs in increasing self-esteem, with an effect size of .26 as compared to .19, the “overall results are similar to the effects of many classroom innovations” (p. 70). The areas of personal development that had the highest effect size post-adventure program were independence, confidence, self-efficacy, self-understanding, assertiveness, internal locus of control, and decision making. Adventure programs have been shown to reduce recidivism for up to one year after program completion for juvenile delinquents (Castellano & Soderstrom, 1992, as cited in Hattie et al., 2007).

Although this type of intervention is used frequently with at-risk-youth, most of the research has been collected from limited samples, where the majority of the participants are from the upper middle class (Bandoroff & Scherer, 1994), primarily Caucasian (Bandoroff & Scherer,

1994; Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002; Harper, Russell, Cooley, & Cupples, 2007), and significantly more males than females (Bandoroff & Scherer, 1994; Hattie, Marsh, Neill, & Richards, 1997; Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002; Harper et al., 2007; Russell, 2003). Research must be conducted with a more diverse sample to measure the effectiveness of wilderness therapy on a wider population.

Differentiating Aspects of Wilderness Therapy Programs

Therapeutic wilderness experiences are distinct from traditional therapies in many ways. Research has identified the role of natural consequences, physical and emotional stresses, the importance of the group, and the instructor-client relationship as unique to these types of programs (Bandoroff & Scherer, 1994; Ferguson, 1998; Hattie et. al, 1997; Lambie et al., 2000; Russell, 2003; Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002; Sklar, Anderson, & Autry, 2007; Taniguchi et al., 2009). Therapeutic wilderness experiences require participants to be responsible for their own supplies and the natural consequences that youth experience if they do not care for themselves magnify the importance of self-care. The outdoor setting causes additional physical and emotional stresses for youth who are not used to such conditions. For many, the necessity of being part of a group in wilderness therapy causes unique opportunities for youth participants. Finally, the instructor-participant relationship allows youth to experience healthy relationships with positive, caring, non-familial adults for a specific, sometimes extended, period of time.

Natural Consequences

Although wilderness therapy is distinct in the sense that it is performed in different settings than traditional psychotherapy, it is set apart by other factors as well. One aspect of wilderness therapy that has been shown to be effective with adolescents is the promotion of self-efficacy through task accomplishment, which is made necessary by the natural consequences of

caring for oneself and the group in the wilderness (Russell, 2003). In an outdoor setting, the costs of not taking responsibility for oneself are clear to the individual and to the group in cases such as misreading a map, setting up a tent incorrectly, or not caring for their own food and water supplies. By managing their daily living tasks, participants gain a sense of accomplishment necessary to building self-efficacy (Russell, 2003).

Physical and Emotional Stresses

Physical and emotional stresses, which are unavoidable in wilderness therapy, are believed to “challenge the maladaptive social behaviors of problem youth” (Bandoroff & Scherer, 1994, p. 176). Participating in outdoor activities can be physically taxing, as programs include a variety of hiking, rock climbing, canoeing, and caving (Hattie et. al, 1997). The demands of group living situations also contribute to the challenge of wilderness therapy (Russell, 2003). Such programs also afford participants an opportunity away from their home environments and time to develop behaviors and attitudes in a new setting (Ferguson, 1998; Lambie et al., 2000). By employing therapeutic practices in an outdoor setting, youth are pushed beyond their usual limits and behavioral change can occur.

Importance of the Group

Wilderness therapy is also distinctive in that it promotes group unity and development because of the group living situation. Group living includes daily maintenance tasks such as cooking and cleaning, processing of group conflicts, and psycho-educational group counseling sessions, depending on the program, in addition to the adventure programming such as hiking, canoeing, and rock climbing. By building healthy relationships in their therapy groups on wilderness expeditions, participants develop models for friendships outside of the program (Russell, 2003). As a lack of social skills is evident in many developmental disorders (Erdlen &

Rickrode, 2007) and peer influence has one of the greatest effects on adolescent drug use (Russell, 2003), social habits developed through wilderness therapy assist students in making positive changes in their lives. Additionally, Hoyer related the group development theories of “Stages of Change” by Prochaska and DiClemente and of “Small Group Development” by Tuckman and Jenson to the Outward Bound program model that most therapeutic models follow (2004). Group development is intentional and purposeful in therapeutic wilderness experiences.

The Instructor-Client Relationship

The meaningful relationships formed between instructors and participants have been noted as a particular strength in wilderness therapy (Russell, 2003; Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002; Sklar, Anderson, & Autry, 2007; Taniguchi et al., 2009); these relationships are the focus of this study. In a study by Russell & Phillips-Miller (2002), 12 out of 12 participants cited the relationship with the counselors and leaders as being different from those they had with past therapists. Some of the reasons the participants cited were that the counselors would “just ‘sit and talk,’ work with students on issues surrounding substance abuse, and ‘provide metaphors relating to personal issues’” (p. 423). The less formal style of wilderness therapists and instructors is a crucial but under-researched topic. Russell (2003) discussed the 24-hour availability of wilderness therapy staff to the students due to the structure of wilderness therapy programs. Instructors, and in some cases therapists, are available to the participants for the entirety of the intervention and live the same lifestyle as the adolescents. In Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare treatments and wilderness therapy programs, there must be both licensed counselors or therapists and wilderness instructors or guides. Although these instructors may not be clinically trained, they can still create unique and meaningful relationships with participants. Many clients entering into wilderness therapy programs have tried other forms of counseling,

which forces therapists to overcome adolescents' former experiences and hesitations to change (Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002).

Taniguchi, Widmer, Duerden, and Draper (2009) identified eight common attributes in wilderness instructors after interviewing 35 at-risk adolescent boys who participated in a therapeutic wilderness program. The attributes included "ambitious, service oriented, hard working, possessing identified goals, interested in others, unselfish with their time, fun loving and a sense of perceived freedom to accomplish whatever they wanted to do" (p. 18).

Additionally, 83% of participants in the study identified their relationships with the instructors as significant to their enjoyment of the program. All 35 participants were asked "... you've named a lot of activities that you've done and that you've like. What do you think it is about these activities that makes them enjoyable for you?"; the youth answered that it was the adults that were facilitating the programming that made the experience enjoyable (p. 18).

Instructors can play an important role through the process of transference (Hill, 2007). Transference is "a powerful medium in counseling to explore unresolved relationship issues with others" (Peterson & Nisenholz, 1995 as cited in Hill, 2007, p. 341). The time spent with wilderness instructors and the intensity of the experience may lead to transference issues being concentrated on those instructors, as opposed to in a more residential setting where there are larger numbers of staff (Hill, 2007). Wilderness therapy programs permit participants to become engaged in working through issues of transference as they emerge. Compared to traditional therapy, where a client may see a therapist once a week for an hour, participants on a 21-day expedition spend about 330 waking hours with their instructors. This is the time equivalent of six and half years of therapy (Newes & Bandoroff, 2004).

Newes and Bandoroff (2004) point to the connection between Bandura's theory of modeling and the ability of instructors to model positive behaviors for their participants. Because the participants and instructors meet the same challenges while on the expedition, instructors are able to model positive reactions to difficulties. The authors theorized that the accessibility and innate behavioral lessons that come from instructors in the therapeutic wilderness setting make participants more likely to trust the instructors.

Gilbert, Gilsdorf, and Ringer (2004) studied how the principles of Gestalt, Narrative, and Psychodynamic group-based therapies could be integrated into therapeutic wilderness experiences. Gestalt therapy consists of three principles: *awareness* of the present circumstances, people, and situation and how receptive they are to change; *experimenting* with elements of the self and ways of interacting with others; and *process directivity*, meaning that therapy is a process rather than the answer to a problem. Process directivity is especially important to the role of instructors, because it puts the client in a place to understand the therapist as a real person and allows for self-discovery for the client. The process-directive style also recommends that therapists facilitate the personal exploration of their clients.

Narrative therapy focuses on seeing behaviors, rather than the individual, as the problems, (Gilbert, Gilsdorf, & Ringer, 2004). With this approach, therapists (or instructors) do not believe themselves to be experts, rather they work to deconstruct the issues clients face and how their lives are affected. Narrative methods also prescribe highlighting the positive in the life of a client; graduation and other recognitions of success for participants in wilderness therapy could be considered to be influenced by these methods (Allen-Newman & Flemming, 2004). Psychodynamic group-based therapy focuses on the mental representations and avoidance of anxiety of the clients, as well as the leader's experience as a part of the group. This type of

therapeutic practice focuses especially on how the instructor influences the rest of the group (Gilbert, Gilsdorf, & Ringer, 2004).

Researchers interested in mentoring relationships also have investigated how strong, consistent relationships with adults influence adolescent development. As defined by the MENTOR/ National Mentoring Partnership (2003) in Darling (2005), mentoring “brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support, and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee” (p. 177). Mentors are non-related adults who are able to provide youth with positive relationships, which ideally foster the feelings of mutuality, trust of others, and empathy. These positive relationships can cause protégés to challenge their views of themselves, to be more successful in other relationships, regulate their own emotions, and cope with stress. The role modeling that is provided in mentoring relationships enhances identity development and cognitive development through conversation (Britner & Kraimer-Rickaby, 2009). Mentoring has been shown as an effective measure in improving the lives of many special populations, including juvenile offenders, pregnant and parenting adolescents, youth with disabilities, and those who have been abused or neglected; however, not all mentoring programs are equally as effective, and they can even be detrimental if best practices are not followed (Britner, Balcazar, Blechman, Blinn-Pike, & Larose, 2006).

One aspect of the mentoring literature that seems particularly salient when applied to therapeutic wilderness experiences is the importance of shared activities. In many wilderness programs, youth spend extended time with instructors living the same lifestyle, participating in the same activities, and even eating the same food, so it is reasonable to identify these as shared activities. In research on mentoring programs, shared activities are considered “one of the glues that holds successful mentoring relationships together as the relationship moves from the

meeting of strangers toward intimacy” (Darling, 2005, p. 183). Time spent in activities with a mentor may help an adolescent create new leisure habits or learn new skills. Activity-focused mentoring fills a unique need in the lives of youth, especially those with fewer supports in the home (Darling, 2005). Keller (2005) also discussed the growth that can result from “simple experiences of fun and enjoyment” that enhance the relationships between mentors and adolescents (p.87).

In a meta-analysis of mentoring programs and programs with “mentor-like qualities” that provide support for adolescents who have been committed of a crime, trained mentors were more effective at reducing recidivism rates than mentors in an unstructured setting (Blechman & Bopp, 2005, p. 457). Skills training was deemed more cost-effective and recidivism reducing than unstructured counseling or unstructured mentoring. One consideration in such programs that target special populations is the effect of increased exposure to other deviant youth, which may lead to re-offending (Blechman & Bopp, 2005).

There has been an increased awareness of the ethical issues surrounding wilderness therapy and similar practices, including the special relationships that are created between the instructors and clients. The Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Industry Council (OBHIC) was formed in 1996 to bring legitimacy and oversight to an industry victim to stigmatization (Russell, 2003). Due to deaths and accidents that occurred in some programs, policymakers have asked for more documentation from outdoor programs (Hattie et al., 1997). The creation of the OBHIC has led more states to develop standards for facilities that offer OBH. In a survey of 100 OBH sites in 2003, 88% have received licenses from state agencies and 57% are nationally accredited (Russell, 2003). The unique role of wilderness instructors was also examined in regards to confidentiality and boundaries. Becker (2009) pointed out that:

Wilderness therapy allows adolescents to experience therapists and other adults in ways that are very different from what is normally experienced in more traditional therapies. Clients often view wilderness therapists as more human and trustworthy than the authority figures encountered in schools, juvenile justice systems, or traditional outpatient therapies. (p. 55)

This new relationship with instructors and therapists allows for a new therapeutic relationship to occur in through these programs. The strong therapeutic alliance that is possible in this setting may also raise questions of ethics, boundary issues, and confidentiality that may be breached due to the often informal manner of counseling and the orientation towards group disclosure (Becker, 2009). Research on mentoring has shown that self-disclosure by adolescents is common in the developed stages of the relationships and that the youth may share things that are increasingly meaningful (Keller, 2005).

The Present Study

The majority of the research on wilderness therapy has been conducted using programs that belong to the Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Industry Council. Although this research is necessary to support the field of outdoor behavioral healthcare, it is crucial to complete research on a wider array of existing programs to ensure the safety of participants. Little empirical evidence exists for programs that do not belong to the OBHIC (Becker, 2009). By extending the research to include a more diverse group of programs, more could be learned about what is effective in wilderness therapy and the efficacy of programs could be analyzed. This research may allow more programs to join the OBHIC and therefore provide more oversight for these programs and their staff and participants.

Although many researchers have noted that the relationship created between instructors and clients is unique in therapeutic wilderness experiences (Russell, 2003; Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002; Sklar, Anderson, & Autry, 2007; Taniguchi et al., 2009), little research has

explored this relationship. It is crucial to learn more about these relationships, as they are an integral part of the therapeutic wilderness experience. By learning more about the role that instructors play in the experience and how they create relationships, it will be possible to better serve the needs of the youth who participate in these programs. Additionally, it is necessary to continue exploring whether or not wilderness therapy is effective and if it is, how and why is it effective? In this study, I investigated how instructors built and maintained relationships with their participants, how instructors conceptualized the relationships with the participants, and how they knew they are successful in these tasks. By examining this unique connection, this study adds to the body of research on the subject of wilderness therapy and therapeutic wilderness experiences by providing models of successful instructing, and guiding programs and instructors in the services they provide to their participants.

METHODS

Procedure

Although each wilderness program is distinctive, the wilderness program that I sampled, like many other programs, follows the Outward Bound model. This wilderness program has one, five, and 20-day programming in the summer. It caters specifically to the needs of at-risk-youth in the State of Connecticut, primarily between the ages of 13 and 17. Students must be referred to the program, although any adult who is important in the life of the adolescent can serve as the referring agent. Many of the students come to this program from foster homes, group homes, or are referred through the “Families with Service Needs” program. One day programming is geared towards groups that already exist (such as adolescents living in a group home), whereas five and 20-Day expeditions bring together students from all over the state who do not know each other, except by chance. The extended courses are single-sex in terms of participants but often include both male and female instructors. The 20-day expeditions include camping, backpacking, completion of high and low ropes courses, canoeing, rock climbing, community service projects, and an 8.5 mile “marathon.” Five day expeditions include camping, backpacking, and completing elements of the low and high ropes courses. Once students have been on an expedition, they are able to participate in the follow-up programming throughout the rest of the year, until the following summer. The follow-up programming can include hiking, camping, backpacking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, rock climbing, ropes courses, animal tracking, canoeing, rappelling, and community service.

Sampling

In this study I used purposeful sampling in order to reach the specific population that I wished to study (Richards & Morse, 2007). It was necessary for me to target a group of

individuals who had the experience of building rapport with students in a therapeutic wilderness experience. I chose to sample seasonal staff members from a wilderness program where I had previously interned and then worked during the winter, spring, and summer of 2009. The program has a strong reputation throughout the state and is supported financially by the State of Connecticut. The program follows the Outward Bound model, similar to most therapeutic wilderness programs that have been the subjects of research. Becker (2009) also explored the difference between therapy and therapeutic experiences, a difference that is relevant to the current study. Although the program where the instructors in my sample worked does not consider itself a “wilderness therapy” program, the experience could be considered therapeutic. Becker included a chart that was adapted from Russell’s 2001 article on wilderness therapy that made distinctions between wilderness therapy and wilderness experience programs. Based on this chart, the program where the instructors in my sample worked has some characteristics that are unique to wilderness therapy and some that are common to all wilderness experience programs.

Additionally, I had a positive working relationship with the staff members. The sample was limited to those who had been instructors on at least one 5 or 20- day expedition in the last five years. This criterion was used to ensure that those who participated in the study had had recent, significant experience with young adults in the field of therapeutic wilderness experiences.

Participants for this study were recruited after receiving approval from the wilderness program, University of Connecticut Institutional Review Board, and Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) Institutional Review Board. During the summer of 2009, staff members at the wilderness program were given the opportunity to circulate their contact

information in a pamphlet which was distributed to all staff members that year. Using the copy of the pamphlet that I obtained as a member of the summer 2009 staff, I emailed the members of the 2009 staff who had instructed five and 20-day expeditions. Based on my previous knowledge of the staff, I knew which seasonal staff members fit into that category. I explained the study and the opportunity for them to participate. Included in the email were the information sheet and the flyer for recruitment. Fifteen of the 26 seasonal staff members were contacted to participate. Those who were interested in the study were asked to contact me by phone or email in order to schedule an interview.

Data Collection

From October 2009 to January 2010, I conducted in-person interviews with five participants who were all living in the area at the time. I also conducted four phone interviews with participants who lived too far away to interview in person. The interviews took place in private locations such as offices and homes in order to protect the identities of the participants and the students from the wilderness program. In the case of phone interviews, the participants were asked to choose a private location so the interview would not be overheard. All of the interviews were recorded and later transcribed.

Consent procedure. At the beginning of each interview, participants read and signed the consent form as well as a background information sheet. In the case of phone interviews, I emailed the forms to the participants prior to the interview, and they sent the completed forms back to me. With the permission of the participants, the interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder.

Interview guide. The interview guide (Appendix A) was created to gather the most information from the participants about their experience creating and maintaining relationships

with their students. The questions were open-ended and concentrated on the specific experiences of the instructors. When broad answers were given, the participants were probed to give more specific examples, so as to avoid answers that were generalizations.

Interview technique. When interviewing participants, I covered all of the topics in the Interview Guide, although it did not always require going through every question. Based on previous interviews, I was able to change some of the questions I asked to make them easier to understand for the participants and to encourage more specific answers. In addition, new questions evolved based on the interviews with other participants; for example, gender was a popular topic during the interviews, so it was necessary for me to add a question about the role of gender. If the participants used language that was specific to the wilderness program and would not be understood by those outside of the organization, such as abbreviations or nicknames, they were asked to explain their terminology during the interview. Interviews ranged from twenty minutes to an hour and twenty minutes, although most were around 45 minutes. Each participant was given a \$10 gift card at the completion of the interview, or by mail in the case of participants who had phone interviews.

Transcription. I recorded and transcribed the interviews using Digital Voice Editor 3.0. During the transcription, notes were made of laughing, thoughtful pauses, mumbling and other similar responses. In all transcripts, the names of the participants and the people they referred to, including students and fellow staff members, have been changed to protect the identities of those associated with the wilderness program. Although the transcriptions of each interview were completed word for word, the excerpts and quotes in the following chapters have been edited for grammar in order to make them more readable (i.e., the deletion of “er,” “um,” and “ah”).

Data Analysis

During each interview I took notes, which were helpful when beginning more formal analyses. Because the interviews were often spaced days and weeks apart, it made it possible for me to transcribe gradually and begin my initial analysis before the interviews were complete. By transcribing and making notes about the interviews during the research process, I was able to modify the way I asked some questions and even ask new questions based on the responses of other participants.

I used the data analysis software NVivo 8 to code the data using a line-by-line free node scheme. The interviews were coded over about three weeks. Next, I connected similar codes and created categories and themes for the data. I changed the grouping of the codes to fit the evolution of the data and my analysis. It was clear to me that I could analyze many different subtopics in the creation of instructor-student relationships, but I focused on the conceptualization of the instructor role and the conceptualization of success.

In my study, my data and results were reviewed by my supervisor and discussed at length, as she had completed research projects similar to mine. I also discussed my results with my peers who were also completing their Honors thesis in Human Development and Family Studies.

Participants

Nine individuals – four men and five women – participated in my study (see Table 1 for information about the participants). They ranged in age from 19 to 31. Their level of experience also ranged from one season and only one five-day course to over seven years and multiple 20-day courses at the wilderness program. Another variation between the participants was the amount of experience at other outdoor programs. Four of the participants had worked at other therapeutic outdoor programs. Many of the participants also identified having formative

experiences in an outdoor setting during their youth, although only one of the participants had been a student at the wilderness program. In terms of education, some of the participants had completed college degrees, including in the field of Recreation Management, others were currently working towards Bachelor's degrees, including in Outdoor Education, and the remaining participants had completed some college courses but had not completed a degree.

Table 1

Information about Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Race	Education	Participant at Wilderness Program	Length of Employment
1 Adam	23	Male	White	BA- American Studies	No	1 summer
2 Stacy	31	Female	White	BS- Recreation Management	No	4 summers, 5 off seasons
3 Jaime	29	Male	Left Blank	Some College	Yes (not the program in this study)	2 summers, 1 off season
4 Kyle	30	Male	White	Some College	No	7 summers, 3 off seasons
5 Jocelyn	24	Female	White	BS- Recreation, Parks, Tourism; Art Education	No	1 summer, (5 years in the field)
6 Kerry	19	Female	White	Currently in college	No	2 summers
7 Nigel	30	Male	White	Currently in college	No	1 summer, (2 seasons in the field)
8 Amanda	20	Female	White	Currently in college	No	3 summers

9	Angie	25	Female	White	BA- Outdoor Leadership	Yes	8 summers, Employed full-time at another program.
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Limitations

This study was limited to recruiting participants from the 2009 seasonal staff of one wilderness program. Including participants from other therapeutic wilderness programs could have provided more varied information regarding rapport building; however, the wilderness program included in this study was similar to others in the reported literature (Becker, 2009; Hattie et al., 1997; Russell, 2003; Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002; Sachs & Miller, 1992) and provided an accessible population.

It is likely that there is a selection bias in this study, because those who had positive experiences as instructors may be more likely to contact me and participate in the study. Additionally, the timing of the interviews was a factor. Recruiting participants and completing interviews over the summer when all of the instructors were available might have led to a higher number of participants and possibly interviews that reported more recent first-hand accounts of interactions with students, as opposed to reflections on their experiences. However, delay in IRB approval prevented me from doing this. Although, asking instructors about their jobs after they had time to process the past summer, as I did, may have allowed my participants to be more reflective.

As an interviewer who knew all of my participants, it is likely that my status as an instructor at the wilderness program influenced this study. In some ways, the participants may have felt more comfortable contacting me to schedule an interview as well as being interviewed by someone they knew. The relationship that I had with the participants may have deterred them

from sharing certain experiences, especially regarding other instructors or incidents I had also been involved with. Due to my inexperience as an interviewer, I may have missed some opportunities to ask questions or I may have spent too much time on questions that were not relevant. On the other hand, my relationship with the participants and knowledge of their previous experiences may have made it easier for them to confide in me. As I had shared many of the same experiences and had even been present for some of the instances that the instructors shared, many seemed glad to be given the chance to share more about their experiences. Additionally, I knew a great deal about the wilderness program and its general policies, so I was able to spend more time discussing the instructor-student relationships as opposed to the general operations of the program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between instructors and clients in therapeutic wilderness experiences. In this study, I investigated how instructors conceptualized the relationships they have with their students and the instructor's role as a part of the group while on expedition. The participants in this study reported that instructing is not only professionally rewarding, but also rewarding on a personal basis. The successes of instructors' relationships with students can be conceptualized formally, in the form of graduation or verbal accolades, but also in informal ways, such as pro-social body language and successful completion of tasks. Interviews for this study yielded an incredible amount of data on a variety of topics within relationship-building in therapeutic wilderness experiences, but given the research questions that originally guided this study, the focus of this discussion will be on the instructor role and the conceptualization of success in relationships with students.

Conceptualizing the Instructor Role

An important first step in understanding the relationship between instructors and clients in therapeutic wilderness experiences is recognizing how instructors themselves conceptualized their jobs and the bonds they create with their students. One of the first questions that I asked participants was "what words other than instructor would you use to describe what you do at the program?" By asking instructors directly what other words they would use to describe their job, their conceptualizations of their roles became clearer. After the participants in this study were asked to use other words to describe their job in an explicit question, they used words throughout their interviews in place of *instructor*. These terms guided me in further questions. Table 2 shows the terms that each participant used to describe his or her role as an instructor. The two most common terms used to describe the role of the instructor were role model and teacher. This

Observer	X		1
Outdoor Motivator		X	1
Parent		X	1
Secretary	X		1
Story teller		X	1
Student	X		1

Providing Positive Adult Contact

Many instructors conceptualized their role as providing positive adult examples in the lives of their students. Instructors perceived the negative relationships many of their students had with adults and worked to overcome them by being positive, forgiving, consistent, and empathetic. By acting as positive adult role models and spending time with their students, they were able to provide attention, nurture, and hear the needs of their students. Many instructors downplayed the difficulty of this task, but highlighted its importance to the development of trust in their relationships with the students. While teachers, parents, and parole officers provide one sort of role model, instructors reported that part of their job was showing the students that there are adults who care, have a sense of humor, and hold others to high standards. Adam, a first time instructor, articulated the importance of the relationships that are developed during expeditions: “I think that’s what the kids get a lot out of in the first place is just dealing with someone on a normal level.”

Bridging the age gap. Instructors showed their students that adults are people too and taught students new ways to interact with adults. Instead of highlighting the differences between the adolescent participants and the young adult instructors, instructors reported working to show students that adults are not as different from students as they may think. Jaime, an instructor with experience at many wilderness programs across the country, expressed this sentiment:

(What) I always try to do with students is show them a different way to be, and act, and react. I think that shows them that adults are human beings too. As a kid, adults are a different, different race, a different species. (students may believe)... ‘adults don’t have feelings, they’re just people who tell me what I’m supposed to do next or what I’m not supposed to do next.’ (I try to) show them that we’re fallible, show them that we make mistakes.

Stacy, another experienced instructor, described a similar opinion:

I think they get to see adults in a different light... That can be an authoritarian person that can be a disciplinarian. I don’t like those ways of thinking about it, but toeing the line and being the boundary holder. And then, not holding grudges and moving on. And you know the next moment having fun and reengaging with them as a person. Not seeing their behaviors as the person that they are, but just as behaviors. Not judging them, not taking something that they’ve done or said and making decisions based on those things. Just seeing them for what they are and moving on. I don’t think they get to see adults have fun and be silly very often. And I hope that they see that and hope that’s something that they will hold onto. Being an adult doesn’t mean that you’re a stuffy, old, boring, lame person. I hope that they get consistency, that they feel a sense of consistency from instructors that um maybe they don’t get other places.

Providing consistency. Consistency in instructing was also highlighted in Jocelyn’s interview. Both instructors strove to provide consistency for their students, as the adults in their lives may not have provided stable support:

Part of it is giving them the consistency, we are the mentors and the role models that they need. And I think that’s something that they see, “hey maybe not everybody is screwed up. Maybe not everybody in the world is going to screw me over. There are people who are going to help. There are people that I can trust and lean on.”

Instructors realized that many of their students had been failed by the adults in their lives and see themselves as ambassadors for all adults in the lives of their students. By providing an example of an adult who is empathic, forgiving, imperfect, and interested in the development of the student, instructors bridged the age gap. For some students, instructors provided a one-of-a-kind adult role model. This exposure to positive adults allowed students to build relationships with adults in a new way. Instructors worked hard to set a positive example for their students by treating their students and themselves with respect. Students were encouraged by this modeling

to treat each other and their instructors in the same way. Kyle reported that by being positive and holding themselves to high standards, instructors inspired and gently pushed students to do the same:

So in trying to be the best people that wilderness instructors can be, they try to be consistent. They hold themselves to high standards. And I think for a student to be able to have consistent interactions with somebody who holds themselves to high standards, and somebody who is very intentional and tries to be very responsible with their interactions with their students, I think it can build a sense of competence in relationships and it can role model high self-care standards to the students.

Jocelyn also stressed the importance of positive adult contact in instructing. She believed that the troubled home lives of her students caused them to need adults who would treat them well and be present in their lives:

I think a lot of them get a mentorship, like an older brother, relationship or kind of a partnership that they may or may not have at home....We give them the consistency, we are the mentors and the role models that they need. And I think that's something that they see, 'hey maybe not everybody is screwed up. Maybe not everybody in the world is going to screw me over. There are people who are going to help. There are people that I can trust and lean on.'

Kerry related the standards set by instructors to those set by others in her life that she looked up to:

I think having someone that is really invested and that cares about them, is something new. I think it is really powerful, even myself, I've had teachers that I look up to, coaches, or my professors in school that I really respect and I want to do well, not just for myself, but for them. And so I imagine that maybe that's how these kids feel about us as instructors.

Instructors placed a great deal of importance on the relationships they built throughout the expedition. They worked to provide a new glimpse into the world of adults, especially for students who had not had positive relationships with adults in the past. Because of the positive adult contact that the students make while on expedition, instructors believe that the students would be more able to build relationships with adults in their everyday lives. The negative

stereotypes students may have of adults were broken using humor, consistency, and compassion. Instructors treated their students with respect and expected the same in return.

Connections to the literature. Participants' reflections on the importance of these positive relationships echo similar ideas presented in the literature (Russell, 2003; Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002; Sklar, Anderson, & Autry, 2007; Taniguchi et al., 2009). The relationships instructors build while on expeditions provide models for appropriate relationships outside of the wilderness programs (Russell, 2003). One of the roles of instructors discussed in the literature was allowing the participants the opportunity to work through unresolved relationship issues (Hill, 2007). In one study (Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002), researchers recognized that students felt that instructors made a difference in their wilderness experience by "just 'sit[ting] and talk[ing],'" which illustrates the importance of positive adult contact to the youth (p. 423). According to instructors and the literature, positive adult contact allowed students the opportunity to see adults in a new way, develop positive relationships and resolve issues from their past.

Equalizing Role

Instructors mentioned working hard to create relationships that were balanced and non-authoritarian, and some even created friendships with their students; instead of putting themselves above their students, the instructors wanted to have an equivalent status to them. Instructors accomplished this by sharing information about themselves and therefore creating an ethos of personal safety in the crews. Instead of creating relationships similar to those that their students have with teachers, parents, or social workers, instructors shared their own experiences with their students and in some cases expected their students to do the same. Kyle explained the importance of instructors striving for an equalized position with his desire to learn from his

students, “If you’re going to make this your job, your profession and your lifestyle, you’re going to learn more from your students than they’re going to learn from you. You’re not a student, you don’t know it all.”

Sharing with students. Instructors discussed the importance of sharing with their students as a way of conceptualizing their role as equals to the students. They gave many examples of interactions with their students in which they shared their own experiences and knowledge. Instructors believed that sharing such information gave students a reason to respect them. Instructors wanted students to understand where their instructors came from and why they made decisions the way they did. Instructors who had worked on fewer courses were more likely to mention sharing their experiences with students during their interviews than instructors with more experience.

Adam, who instructed one 5-day course in 2009, mentioned sharing knowledge with his students while on course: “I tried to teach the kids stuff that I know. I read a lot of books and stuff and I’ll talk to them about things that I know or that I’ve read about or other experiences that I’ve had.” Nigel mentioned sharing his life experiences with his students as a first step to building relationships during expeditions:

Relating to them, as youth they might deal with feeling lost at times and it’s reassuring to them to let them know, that you’re a human too and you’ve been through that too. I think that’s huge in developing a relationship. Respecting their voice and their opinions. Not talking over them, letting them speak their minds, and letting them know you understand what they’re saying, I think is huge.

Others mentioned sharing as a way to take the focus off the student, as students may be expected to share about themselves in other settings outside the expedition. Instructors found sharing to be a good strategy to take pressure off of the students. It can be comforting to students to hear the stories of the instructors, instead of always having to share their own thoughts and

experiences. Amanda reported the importance of sharing in her interview because many students regularly see therapists and are used to having to disclose certain information. She theorized that when she and other instructors share, it helped the students understand them as instructors:

A lot of students are probably coming out of years or what feels like years of therapy and counseling and sessions with, you know, sort of the 'sessions mentality' where you have to do all of the talking. You're the person under the microscope and I think students feel more comfortable when an instructor shares something that's important to them and sort of brings that to the table too. As well as trying to draw as much from them as possible, giving some of that back, so they can understand you better.

Kyle also stated the importance of sharing and letting the students dictate what they are comfortable sharing, rather than automatically expecting them to disclose unlimited amounts of information:

Some students I end up having real close relationships with and just feeling comfortable and finding an environment where they trust me and I trust them, so we can personally share with each other. And with some, I feel like I can share my experiences, my personal life experiences with students. When, you know? When those relationships happen, but like, again it's, it's the student who dictates that comfort zone. If the student chooses to be vulnerable with me and decides to share a personal experience or a personal story or what they're experiencing right then on a personal level, then I know like 'Ok, we have a one to one relationship' as opposed to an instructor to student relationship.

Many instructors made sharing a part of how they built relationships with students because they framed it as a part of basic relationship building. Kerry reported that she began relationships with her students casually, by giving information about herself and allowing the students to share, and by using humor:

I think there's a lot to be said for the first interactions between you and a student. And just letting them put their guard down, letting them know that it's a safe space. I talk to them personally, like on their level, make a couple jokes, you know... the way to start any relationship.

To these instructors, the sharing that occurred as an instructor differed very little from the sharing in some of their other relationships. This way of conceptualizing the instructor role, as

someone who builds a normal relationship with their students, reflects back to the idea discussed previously, that part of the instructor's role is to create the type of relationship with an adult that can be replicated outside of the wilderness program and with other people in the students' lives.

Balance in instructor-student relationships. Although instructors conceptualized sharing as an integral part of developing an equal relationship with their students, finding a balance in that sharing was crucial to keeping the relationships professional and productive for the sake of the students. Instructors emphasized the comfort level of the students because it changes from course to course and student to student. The wilderness program stressed that focus must always be on meeting the safety needs of the students and treating the students equally, as well as maintaining the safety of the instructors. Based on this credo, instructors sought to find a balance between being the students' friend and being viewed as an adult in a leadership role. It was never the instructors' goal to take the focus completely off the student or to tell students everything about their lives, but rather to find a balance and use examples from the instructor's lives to support the student through the challenges of the expedition and – ideally – their lives.

Angie had very few regrets in her many years of instructing, but she reflected on the difficulty she occasionally had creating a balance in how much she shared with her students. When asked if she would change anything about her experience as an instructor she said, "I don't believe that there's been any major instances that I would change completely but I wish I would have had shared more or less information." This sentiment reflects the necessity of reaching a balance that is unique to each course and each student.

Although Stacy supported sharing as a way of taking the focus off the student and helping the student see the instructor as an adult who cares for them, she also stressed the

importance of finding a balance in disclosing personal information to a student. She mentioned sharing different things with specific students:

I know I share, but I'm really careful with how much I share as far as personal information. In certain situations with certain students I will share more vulnerable things that I think will be helpful for them to hear. But, I don't want to share anything that's going to take the focus off of them and onto me. Or something that will make them uncomfortable around something or give them ammunition to you know... hold some information against me or use it in a harmful way.

Creating a balance with students in how much instructors share also involved protecting the integrity and emotional safety of the instructors themselves. Jaime explained that although instructors may desire to be a student's friend, it is important for the instructor to maintain some boundaries:

Because when you meet kids, you want to be their friends, you want them to like you, just like any other human being on this planet. You meet somebody, you want them to like you. And sometimes that can be dangerous because then you let them push boundaries and do things that you're not comfortable with.

Instructors as peers, guides, and friends. Balance was particularly important because of the tendency for instructors to perceive their role as peers, guides, and friends of their students. Eight out of the nine participants in this study reported acting as a peer, guide, or friend throughout their interview, which is a much less formal conceptualization than some of the other terms used, including "instructor," "facilitator," and "guardian." The most experienced instructor, Angie, focused her definition on "teacher, guide, mentor, and guardian," which suggests a much more formal conceptualization of the instructor role, as opposed to the instructors with less experience. She said:

I think (what students get out the relationship with the instructors) depends on the students, some people need and accept a relationship more fully. You have kept them safe, could've been a guardian, could be a little bit of mentoring. You've shared information and helped them process the things they've thought about. And then some of them need the fun, playful friendship. It can be a number of different things.

Younger instructors especially, including Kerry and Amanda, highlighted the peer and friendship aspect of relationship building. The younger instructors could not avoid the fact that they were closer in age to the students than most of the other instructors. But, instead of seeing age as a barrier to their success, they were aware of this opportunity to build on their relationships with students. Kerry perceived her closeness in age as a strength, rather than a weakness, “I’m younger than a lot of the other staff and sometimes for kids, they have an easier time seeing a closer companionship or I can relate to them on a student level.” Amanda shared a similar sentiment. She strove to connect on a friendship level, but cultivate a sense of respect as well.

I try in the beginning to be super open with a student. In terms of what I expect and also in terms of what I hope they’ll give me. Like, as a friend. But I try to um cultivate sort of like a respectful, um, not necessarily peer interaction, because it’s hard to cultivate that like powerful peer interaction if and when like there is a problem, but I try to create like a sense of true respect for people.

Minimizing the sense of authority. For many instructors, part of creating a balance with students involved minimizing the sense of authority they had over the group. This is similar to the more informal conceptualization of instructors as peers, guides, and friends. Rather than appearing as authoritarian leaders, instructors believed it was more important to be approachable, trustworthy, and diplomatic.

Jaime looked up to a co-instructor who showed students a new form of authority when the students threw a bag of garbage into the woods while on expedition. Instead of developing an authoritarian relationship, this former instructor found it more important to appear approachable and accessible. Jaime’s co-instructor, Danny, solved the dispute by meeting the basic needs of his students and showing them a new, positive way to meet their own needs:

So what he did is... he asked the boys very calmly, ‘hey can you go get what you threw in the woods?’ And they hung their heads and went to go get it. And they were totally

prepared to get yelled at, because that's what they know from authority figures. And they brought the trash bags back and they brought them up to Danny, Danny took both the trash bags and put them both in his pack. And then he said, 'hey, bring your packs here.' And he took more food out of each of their packs and put it in his own pack, lightening the students' loads.

Jaime admired his co-instructor because instead of punishing the students for their misbehavior, Andrew helped the students achieve a higher level of personal comfort. Danny showed these students that adults are capable of being compassionate, even when in leadership roles.

Jocelyn used her sense of humor to help her students see her as more than an authority figure. She believed that humor was also used to build trust between her and her students:

I think that's where my humor comes in, like, "yes, I'm your instructor but I'm a total goofball." I think that's where it's almost that informal aspect that the kids need. With instructors, there's that trust, the rapport, and initiative that because a lot of the time they are in Children and Family Services. In their lives have all that formality, their case manager, their case worker, who they're going to meet all dressed up in their suits and ties. I, on the other hand, am going to be wearing the same t-shirt for twenty days.

Instead of authority, Amanda highlighted the importance of diplomacy and involving students in decision-making in her interview.

I think there's something about being sort of diplomatic and seeing things all the way through that you have to use as an instructor. I use this skill even in my everyday life as well, rather than being overly opinionated or overly stubborn, which I can be. And at this program and as an instructor, you're always encouraged to allow your students to try things before you tell them that it's wrong or it's not going to work as well and let them see if it's going to work. And having the patience and the diplomacy to allow students to try and to allow other options to be put on the table before you make decisions or before a decision can be reached sort of democratically.

In many of the interviews, instructors stressed the importance of not appearing authoritarian, but rather searching for a balance between being a friend and being an authority figure.

Creating fun. Instructors perceived creating opportunities for their students to have fun as part of their role. All nine participants discussed the role of fun, humor, and games, especially in the early stages of relationship building. Fun was used to help students get to know

each other and the instructors. Instructors used fun as a way of minimizing the social threat of being a part of a crew. It was used to encourage students to open up to the experience and take risks in their relationship building. By being goofy and silly and encouraging their students to do so, instructors modeled a behavior that is atypical in the adult world. Instructors showed their students it is acceptable to be an adult *and* be playful. This provided a new sort of role model, compared to many of the other adults in the lives of these at-risk youth. The goofiness that instructors described also allowed students to be more connected to their own need for fun and to downplay the effects of the strenuous physical work they were required to do while hiking, canoeing, and rock climbing. Adam gave examples of how he and his co-instructors kept his crew inspired and distracted from the physical work they were doing while on course:

We played a lot of games with them. We would play games while we were hiking too because they didn't like that very much, but they were good hikers so they went quick. We would play Zen counting and tell riddles, and stuff like that so, just keep things interesting and so we weren't just marching them along.

Instructors identified humor as a way to connect with their students. Jaime believed that it had to be done gradually, so as not to overwhelm the students at first:

And when I get out into the woods, the woods are a great place to just let loose and be weird and goofy. I let my hair down, I start sticking it all up. I play goofy games, show them that it's ok to sing badly, show them that it's ok to burp, and you know... be natural...But, it takes a while, you need to meet them where they're at and they need to be comfortable with you first. Because if you just come at them with that they won't identify with you. To them you are some strange, crazy, woodsperson that they will never connect with, so you need to create that connection first, then slowly let them show them that it's ok to just be ridiculous. Because, if you can't laugh at yourself, then you can't be happy.

Stacy also created fun on her courses in order to build relationships with her students and break the ice:

Fun and laughter is really key for me too. If interactions are work and they're not enjoyable or they're not comfortable or fun, then people in general are less likely to want

to interact. I've found fun and laughter are the fastest way to draw people together and create relationships.

Instructors were able to share their natural selves with their students while on expedition in order to build positive relationships. Jocelyn perceived her use of humor as a way of accentuating the positive in the lives of her students for the duration of the expedition.

My personality tends to lean to the humorous side of things, and I don't want to say that I can be comic relief, but with youth, especially the kids in these types of programs, sometimes have no humor and no joy in their lives and they kind of need that, you know "everything is going to be ok" and kind of being that comfort. So the first thing that I tend to do is be a little humorous or a little goofy and that just sort of shows relief and trust in some of the students.

Instructors identified many factors that contributed to their relationship with students. They attempted to help their students conceptualize them as equals, while also providing some sense of moderate authority. By sharing their own experiences and stories, creating a balance between the role of friend and authority figure, and using humor, instructors were able to meet the basic needs of their students. After the basic needs of their students were met, instructors adjusted to meet the specific needs of each individual and the entire group. Based on the testimonies of the participants in this study, the students on each course guided the amount of autonomy students were given, how much instructors disclosed, the amount of humor and fun that was infused into the course, and the tempo at which these elements were utilized throughout the course.

Connections to the literature. The intent of the instructors to establish themselves as equals to their students reflects many of the studies on wilderness therapy. The emphasis that instructors placed on sharing as a part of their relationship-building with their students relates to the connections that Gilbert, Gilsdorf, and Ringer (2004) made to Narrative, Gestalt, and Psychodynamic group-based counseling. All three theoretical frameworks stipulate that

therapists are seen as equals rather than authority figures and that therapists recognize their own role in the group. Particularly, Gestalt therapy recommends that in order for therapy to have the most meaning, “the therapist needs to be present as a real person” (p. 36). By sharing their experiences and knowledge, instructors were able to engage their students in way that reflect Narrative, Gestalt, and Psychodynamic group-based counseling. The balance created by instructors in therapeutic wilderness experiences also reflects the question of boundaries posed in Becker’s (2010) article on ethical considerations in wilderness therapy. The balance that instructors talked about creating was in line with the recommendations made by Becker, which included reflecting throughout the process on the role of the instructor.

The instructors’ effort to create fun for their students reflected Taniguchi et al.’s (2009) findings that instructors provide positive experiences through humor while on expeditions. Like the instructors in my study, Taniguchi et al. recognized that the fun-loving attitude of instructors “was more than just humor, but was a relational asset, which bonded the boys to their coaches and guides” (p. 20). The sharing of joyful experiences was also highlighted in the mentoring literature on building positive relationships (Keller, 2005). Based on my findings, instructors in this study believed in the importance of fun as well.

Role Modeling

Instructors were able to role model practical ways of being. Instructors reported talking about the way they treat people and following through on those standards. The way that instructors take part in the same lifestyle as their students has been credited with being a unique and successful aspect of therapeutic wilderness experiences, and instructors in this study highlighted it as an important part of their jobs. Instructors in this study broke the mold of gendered, standard adult-youth relationships, and interacted positively with others. As role

models, they recognized how accountable they were to their students and that they must behave and communicate accordingly. Role modeling was distinct from providing positive adult contact in that role modeling ideally involved teaching constructive behaviors, whereas positive adult contact exposed students to adults who were encouraging of their personal development.

In some cases, instructors saw themselves as role models first and foremost. One such instructor was Adam. He conceptualized his role as an instructor as “someone to look up to so that they can try the ridiculous stuff that we make them do and be successful at it.”

When instructors understood the example they can set for their students in the short time they are together, they took it seriously. Jaime described the accountability that instructors experience, especially in resolving disputes:

Being an instructor, your connection with a student is finite. If in that moment, you can role model a different way of being, uh being polite, being caring, being honest, being respectful, no matter how much you're being disrespected. I think even a glimpse of that in those moments can provide one glimpse out a window that says 'you know what... the world I live in isn't the only world there is. The interactions that I have aren't the only way to interact.'

Similarly, Kyle noted the importance of role modeling positive communication and the possible effect it can have on students:

Instructors hold themselves to high standards. I think for a student to be able to have consistent interactions with somebody who holds themselves to high standards, and somebody who is very intentional and tries to be very responsible with their interactions with their students, I think it can build a sense of competence in relationships and it can role model high self-care standards to the students.

Kyle also discussed the importance of role modeling a range of positive behaviors, especially to male students, who may have very rigid gender stereotypes. The example of masculinity that Kyle strove to set would ideally give his students the incentive to try out more compassionate behaviors.

I think we can give permission to male students to be sensitive individuals, to be caring individuals, to be introspective and to put down a tough guy image. To not be held by a handle of machismo that our society tends to hold males to and so I think role modeling that and I can also be tough. I can carry heavy things, I can weather fierce elements, I can challenge myself in difficult conditions. I can not back down from a challenging interaction, so I can also be tough, but it doesn't mean that I can't be sensitive, compassionate, caring, etc. So I think that as a male it's important that those things be role modeled, so as to give permission to every male student, to live within whatever spectrum of being a human being that they want to live and that they don't have to have labels...It's not about macho or pansy or gay or straight, it's about being a human being.

Instructors also experienced the sense of being under a microscope as role models. They had to be very aware of their behaviors because students held them accountable as well. Both Nigel and Amanda, who were first time instructors during the 2009 summer season, discussed accountability. Nigel stated that "Good modeling is huge. Because they will look to you for answers and if you slip up, they notice everything." Amanda added that being accountable was something that her parents instilled in her, as they were also instructors at a therapeutic wilderness program:

It's what I always try to do in my personal life and when I got to the program, it definitely helped in terms of being a good role model for the students because you hold yourself accountable for things, then you show you're willing to apologize for something that you've done wrong or take responsibility when maybe you've made a decision that you know, wasn't the most beneficial.

Instructors who were students at this program or had a similar therapeutic wilderness experience served as role models by sharing their own strategies on succeeding during the expedition. This ability was unique to those who had been through a wilderness program, and other instructors, especially Amanda, noted how much they looked up to those with that experience.

I think some of the most powerful student- instructor relationships are between instructors that have had more experiences, so um, I watched one instructor work a couple summers ago on base camp staff and he had actually come through this program as a student. And when a student was having a hard time, he'd be like, 'when I was on course...' and I think here the students see an instructor come out the other side say

‘yeah, I had a hard time with this, but you can overcome it.’ That’s a huge thing for a student to see and say ‘ok, this person’s cool, this person did this and it’s true, I want to be like that person and accomplish what I’m here to accomplish.’

Participants in this study embraced the task of being a positive role model for their students. As role models, they challenged gender stereotypes, provided examples of positive conflict resolution, and showed students they were capable of accomplishing difficult tasks. Instructors who had been students were able to provide a special form of role modeling because they have experienced the same struggles as the students and are able to explain some of their strategies for overcoming them. Instructors in this study perceived role modeling as one of their main tasks and one of the most effective ways to positively influence their students.

Connections to the literature. A great deal of literature points to the importance of well-trained mentors in the lives of adolescents; based on their accounts, instructors in this study considered themselves to fill that sort of role for their students (Blechman & Bopp, 2005; Britner et al., 2006; Britner & Kraimer-Rickaby, 2009). Taniguchi et al. (2009) found that instructors become role models for their students by being “ambitious, service oriented, hard working, possessing identified goals, interested in others, unselfish with their time, fun loving and a sense of perceived freedom to accomplish whatever they wanted to do” (p. 18). Newes and Bandoroff (2004) connected Bandura’s theory of modeling to outdoor instructors in their 2004 article. According to the participants, the coping and communication skills that instructors model on a day to day basis are intentional and reflect the importance of mentoring and role modeling found in the literature.

Instructors as Learners

When I asked the participants in this study what advice they would give beginning instructors, the answer was usually the same: “ask questions.” Instructors constantly attributed

what they learned to other staff members, programs, and lessons from their students. They gave importance to the process of asking questions and admitting that they did not always have all of the answers. They leaned on each other for solutions and support. Kyle even mentioned part of his role as being learning about himself while on course, “I’m often personally challenged to put myself in new situations and learn about myself, more and more and more. There’s just a vast wilderness within each one of us, as cheesy as it is.”

Instructors highlighted the importance of never ceasing to improve. They believed that there are always alternative ways to deal with situations, improve the instructor model, and improve their relationships with students. More experienced instructors discussed the importance of the information they were able to impart on their co-instructors and the importance of being cognizant of how that information is shared. Just as instructors strove to avoid being authoritarian with students, they avoided being authoritarian with each other. By using the knowledge of other instructors, they were able to improve their own skill sets. Even experienced instructors advised asking questions and gave credit to their co-instructors in their own learning experience. Adam advised being open to new lessons from every aspect as an instructor; he said: “Always keep an open mind, you know, learn something everyday.” Stacy admitted that it was helpful to recognize weakness and seek out help from anyone who will offer it.

My biggest piece of advice would be to ask questions... of peers, staff members, just like being able to say... ‘I don’t have all the answers and I would like to know more about this. Help me.’ Be an active participant in growth throughout the process of continuing to seek what you need as an instructor.

Jaime revealed that he once thought he knew more than he did, but with experience, he learned the value of asking for help. He worked with instructors who helped him realize there is more to instructing. Jaime also believed that the learning involved with instructing never ends:

When I was 23 I thought I had this down. I was like ‘I’m the best instructor, I can facilitate anything, I can make works group together!’ A year later, I was in a space where I was like ‘wow, I don’t know anything’ because I was working with people who were my mentors. And I idolized them, watching them work was masterful. There’s no finish line in this. And we always shoot for ideals and we fall short over and over again and that’s ok. As long as you keep yourself honest and you carry yourself with a self-respect and a respect for others and realize that everyone has something to teach you.

Amanda stressed the importance of asking questions and not being afraid to make mistakes. Much of outdoor education is based in experiential learning, and to Amanda, instructing was no different.

Don’t think you’re going to mess it up. Just give it a shot. So then if you really don’t know, ask for help, be honest about it. Like you know I don’t know how to deal with this specific situation, so I go to someone and I ask them, you know, how would you deal with this. Or, “I just heard a student say this, and I really want to approach it, but let’s bounce a couple ideas off each other before I do this, before I get tongue tied and sound like an idiot.” It’s a process. You have to keep trying to perfect the art. Keep trying, don’t give up, ask for help. It’s a very supportive community as instructors, I think.

Kerry expressed an admiration for her co-instructors and gave them credit for their knowledge and experience.

I think, I mean in the future I’m just going to keep building up the foundation that I’ve been building. I’m working with other instructors who are do this full time. Or they went to school for Outdoor Education and I didn’t. So I feel like I’m constantly learning from them.

Instructors also give credit to the lessons they learned in their jobs as contributing to their lives. The constant learning and desire to improve fed back into the instructors’ identities. The human interaction that occurs as a part of therapeutic wilderness experiences allowed instructors to build on their ability to communicate, resolve conflict, and share emotions on a day to day basis. The instructors’ desire to improve reflects the results of Taniguchi et al.’s (2009) study, in which the youth believed that the instructors were, among other factors, ambitious, hard working, and goal-oriented.

The Influences of Co-Instructors

In the discussion of learning, it was natural to transition to a discussion of the role of co-instructors in therapeutic wilderness experiences and how instructors conceptualized their role as a team member. As previously mentioned, instructors adopted a philosophy of continuously learning, and they thought that some of their greatest teachers were other instructors. On certain days, instructors were not able to give one hundred percent, so it was important to develop a positive relationship with co-instructors so they were able to support each other. Stacy found it possible to renew herself while instructing, with help from her co-instructors:

I'll tell my co-instructors, 'I'm not in it today, I'm not on top of my game' and I'll step back. And usually, when I can step back and observe and recollect myself and take a break, take a breather, I can come back a little more prepared and with energy.

Nigel also stressed using co-instructors as a resource when feeling worn down during expeditions:

Be aware of what your needs are as an instructor, whether its personal needs, emotional needs. Lean on your co-instructors when you have to, because we can only help in certain times, being aware of your own needs in order to be successful.

By being aware of personal needs, instructors sought support from their co-instructors and brought more success to the crew. According to some instructors, the stress of the job could bring about special skills, and instructors were able to witness one-of-a-kind interactions and discover things about themselves and others. Amanda witnessed instructors dealing with situations even though they did not seem to know what they were doing at the time. She revealed the importance of instincts and risk-taking in this field:

I was amazed by what you find in everybody when you're out in those stressful situations. In the students and in other instructors who were like, 'I had no idea what I was just doing.' Some interactions were amazing, just perfect. And you'll find that it will happen all the time, people will say that to you, you'll say it to others. I just think that there's something about this program and about being an instructor and about getting to know your students and having an instinct for it. That often times, you can't put words on that stuff.

Co-instructors could also reveal a different point of view, build on the diversity of the crew, and provide a varied learning experience for students. The instructing teams allowed for different perspectives on issues of gender, race, and socio-economic status, and give students an opportunity to bond with different kinds of people. Jaime perceived co-ed instructor teams as ideal because of the diversity of conversations that can take place when both genders are present and multiple perspectives can be upheld:

My ideal is always to have co-ed instructor teams. This summer I had the chance to work in a co-ed instructor team and I was begging the directors to make that happen because I think it's really important to engage kids in that conversation. Working all boys crews and having a female co-instructor to bring that perspective because it's such a different world, a different mindset, a different way of being. To have someone who can speak to that to those kids is crucial.

Stacy generalized the lessons she learned from her co-instructors at another wilderness programs to the program where she currently works and to her daily life:

A lot of tools that I learned there in just working with people in general, in just working with students, and conflict resolution, and group dynamics work, initiative kind of stuff, like creative uses of groups, of groups being together.... I got to work with, I don't know, 50 instructors over the course of time if not more and I got to learn those little ideas from everybody.

Instructors conceptualized their roles in a variety of ways. There were many terms that applied to what they do, from shepherding to role modeling to mentoring to serving as a friend. Instructors varied in the amount of ownership they took over a crew. Participants in this study highlighted many tasks as a part of relationship building, including finding a balance in their relationship with students, using humor, learning from other instructors, and relying on their co-instructors. Based on their accounts, it is evident that instructors conceptualized their role differently based on the individual needs of each crew and student and made adjustments throughout their courses. These findings reflect the literature that exists on wilderness therapy as

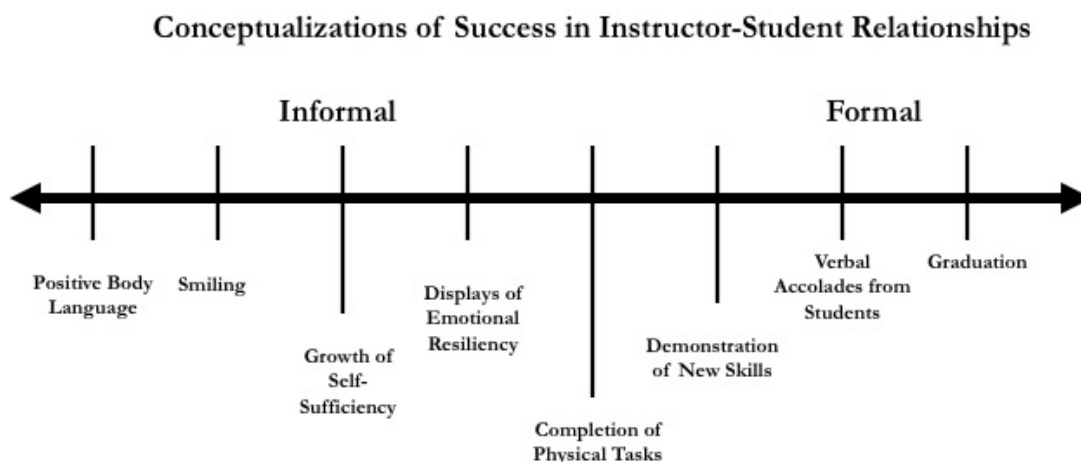
well as counseling and mentoring perspectives, but it also exposes new topics to be researched, such as the influence of co-instructors and instructor learning.

Conceptualizing Success in Instructor- Student Relationships

Based on the experiences of the instructors in this study, success in instructor- student relationships exists on a continuum of how much a student grows, achieves, and experiences while on expedition. This continuum is depicted in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

Conceptualizations of Success in Instructor-Participant Relationships



At times, success could be obvious to instructors and was then conceptualized formally. Success was measured formally when students graduated from a course or when students recognized their own growth, especially verbally sharing the changes they made or the positive experiences they had. Instructors also believed that success can be conceptualized informally, or in smaller, less obvious ways of measuring. Informal conceptualizations of success included positive body language (e.g., eye contact, posture, turning to the person who is speaking), smiling, when students demonstrated the skills they were taught and worked together as a group.

According to the instructors' testimonies, a lack of the formal conceptualizations of success did not signify a lack of success. Instructors mentioned informal conceptualizations of success, which were more present throughout the expeditions and created a feeling of renewal amongst instructors. Informal conceptualizations were more relationship-based and instructors may not always have picked up on these successes if they were not truly connected to their students and the growth they experienced.

Informal Conceptualizations of Success

A big success is when they graduate. But, when you're out on the course, we're not thinking of the graduation date, we're thinking of whatever is in that moment and that day and how we can be successful that day with the kids. So, I think it's important to focus on the present in, you know, the small successes that come with working with kids. – Nigel

Informal conceptualizations of success were a variety of signs conveyed by students to their instructors and others outside the program. Based on instructors' descriptions, some of these signs included seeing progress even when students did not graduate or realizing the progress of students after they returned to the program, self-sufficiency in students, and when students showed that they have learned something.

One informal conceptualization of success came in the form of seeing progress in students, their relationships, and their ability to accomplish tasks. This sort of progress could happen somewhat quickly or it may have been seen during the follow-up season or with outside interactions with students. Jaime gave an example of a time he considered his group successful that fits well into the informal conceptualization. Although part of the success was that the students have completed physical tasks, it was the emotions that they experienced that proved to instructors the success in their relationship building:

Seeing them get to a space in their own head where they're saying 'there's absolutely no way I can move past this space mentally or physically' and then just being there in some way just to slowly support them through that process. Whether it's hiking up Bear

Mountain as they're crying the whole way and then seeing them on top of a mountain that's the highest mountain in the state, or seeing them deal with bugs. Seeing them deal with dirt! And day one, when they don't even want to sit down in the dirt and come day 20, they're covered in dirt and they're smiling all about it. Dealing with 20 days of rain, to the point where at the end, they're just like, 'yep... it's raining again. You know what? This is what the world is throwing at me, and it's not gonna change, the only thing that's gonna change is my attitude, you know?'

The examples that Jaime gave illustrated the changing attitudes of his students and therefore informal success in his relationship with those students.

Kerry witnessed progress in her students as they took on the responsibilities of making breakfast and breaking down camp before the instructors were awake, in hopes of impressing her and her co-instructor. This ownership and sense of responsibility was informal proof that her students valued her as an instructor and the relationship that they had created:

One experience, just, seeing that the kids were so excited to show us what we'd taught them and that they could do it. Um... and that they were capable. It was neat. And to know that everything that we told them wasn't going in one ear and out the other. They internalized it.

Nigel also witnessed the growth in the self-sufficiency of a group, which is also evident of progress and informal success:

I enjoy getting to the point within the rhythm of the group where the group, the students are self-sufficient. They know the tasks, they know what has to be done and they start to break away from the leader having to be there all the time. And instructing them to the point where they can you know, they know the routine, so I think it's exciting to see when the group breaks away and matures a little bit.

Progress in this way shows instructors that they have taught their students well and that their students want to succeed as well. This sort of investment was an informal conceptualization of success.

Angie, the most experienced instructor, believed strongly in the importance of informal successes. She shared many examples of success that fit into this category.

I think sometimes it's as basic as when you have successfully completed the day and um your children are asleep and they're fed and they're safe and everybody's is accounted for. That is the best when you can push them to those limits that I was talking about and overcome and succeed and have them articulate what they did and how they're going to do things differently in the future and that's really successful. It can be kind of typical that emotional growth is just expression, having them complete something that they've never done before. Having them walk all day long can be really successful. Or saying how they felt in a moment of anger or frustration can be really successful, they may not do that all the time.

Stacy felt that she was able to see more progress in her students than the average instructor, because she worked the follow-up seasons in the fall and could watch the progress of her students over time. Informal successes may have taken time to occur, but they were still successes in instructor-student relationships. One student in particular experienced a great deal of success and shared it with Stacy, who had not realized how much progress the student had made while on course.

I was lucky enough to work those falls that he came out on and um just to see his progress from the course and to watch that in follow-up, course after course after course. And see him become better at socializing and being involved in what was happening and also talk about his memories that I didn't necessarily think that were any big deal for him but moments when 'Stacy do you remember when?' and I was like... 'wow! I had an impact on him.'

Another informal conceptualization of success in the instructor-student relationship was when students created connections, primarily with the instructor, but also with others in the group. These connections were illustrated by the use of pro-social body language and sharing of emotions. Nigel focused a great deal on this aspect of informal success in his interview; he cited body language and eye contact as proof of a student trusting their instructor.

I think body language is a big part. I think they are emotionally less defensive around an instructor once they've gained a sense of trust with them. They're more willing to ask questions. A lot of kids don't ask questions, because you know they're nervous or afraid that the instructor will say it back to them, you know, if it's like something simple like tying a knot or something so. I think when a student isn't afraid to ask questions, it's a good sign. Also, eye contact, I think is a big part, with younger adults, especially males.

You can tell a lot by the way their eye contact is and whether they look at you when they talk or they're staring at the ground.

Amanda had a similar feeling of success when her students showed their first signs of informal success in the form of a smile.

It probably sounds cliché, but I often feel successful when I catch students smiling because it can be rare. Occasionally, on course, just to see a student smile, especially a student who hasn't been smiling, I definitely feel successful when students recognize what they've done.

These physical illustrations of connection between a student and an instructor were fairly universal but were important to instructors, who looked for any sort of proof that they are getting through to their students.

There are very few 20-day courses at this wilderness program in which all of the students graduate. Students must complete the physical elements of the courses, but also follow the rules and standards of behavior for the entirety of the course in order to graduate. So, instructors took it upon themselves to create ways to help students who are unable to graduate find a sense of success while they are on expedition. When the needs of students were met on an expedition, even if they were unable to make it through the entire 20-day course, it was an informal sign of success. The small successes, in the form of connections and progress, allowed instructors to feel a sense of success in their relationship even though the student was not able to reach the formal success of graduation.

One student who Stacy reflected on in her interview found the course extremely challenging and was not able to graduate. Stacy's involvement with that student, however, still left her with a feeling of success, especially because of the feedback of her co-instructors.

I think that one student stayed until day... 17 of 20 days and afterwards, when we debriefed it all my co-instructors said, 'he wouldn't have stayed if you hadn't pulled him along.' So I felt like it was a success because I think that he was an easy kid to give up on, because he was so obnoxious and frustrating to deal with. And I think that I had a

connection with him and believed in him enough to support him to that point. So, I feel like that was a success, even though he didn't graduate.

The ability of instructors to conceptualize successes informally was crucial because formal successes occurred less often. These small successes allowed instructors to feel like they were doing their job, which helped to renew their spirits, especially on 20-day courses with few breaks from the students.

Formal Conceptualizations of Success

Formal conceptualizations of success were easier for instructors and students to see, but they occurred less frequently. Formal conceptualizations of success in instructor-student relationships included when students were able to complete the 5- or 20-day courses and graduate, or when students told instructors that they had experienced something positive. Students also may have shared what they learned and experienced with other people in their lives. These reflections allowed instructors to see what had been important to students throughout the course. Instructors recognized that graduation is a main goal of the program, but they also were aware that not all students are able to graduate. They felt a great deal of pride in those students who were able to graduate and were challenged by the emotions associated with students who did not.

Nigel shared that one of his most positive experiences as an instructor was seeing his students reach the point where they were prepared to graduate.

One of my most positive experiences from this past year was seeing them, not all of them, but seeing the kids who graduated. Getting them to the point where they were ready to graduate, because it's a long 20 days and you don't know which ones are going to make it and which ones aren't going to make the cut. So I was excited to see them make it all the way to the end.

Instructors perceived themselves as successful when their students told them how important the experience was to them. Although the students may not have attributed this

importance to the instructor-student relationship, instructors derived a sense of success from such testimonies. Adam received a positive testimony from his students on a one-day course that helped him to realize how successful he was on that day in creating a positive experience for those students:

There was a one-day group that came in and said that whenever they got together, they would fight and make fun of each other and all kinds of stuff... The day we worked with them, they really got along and accomplished all the initiatives that we had planned for them. It felt like a really big day for them and they got a lot out of it.... just knowing that they had this issue, and that doing what I did helped it and actually prevented it was powerful.

One of Jaime's students at a follow-up session reflected on how being at the wilderness program changed him, and Jaime found a great deal of success in his story:

Somebody this weekend said 'I'm a better person when I'm here.' I think there's a huge difference when kids get to a place where they're moving past what they perceive as their limits or potential and push past that in some way.

Amanda heard from a student months after the completion of a course and was encouraged by the fact that the student had seen her as a role model and took the time to reach out to her:

I got an email from a student looking for advice, looking for an open ear from someone. And they had come to me. And I think that was a really powerful, eye-opening experience, to have them say, 'look you were a really good role model for me and I only knew you for a couple days. If you want to talk to me, that would mean a huge amount to me.' And so we sort of kept up a little bit of a conversation, I gave only as much advice as I could. I feel like I made a big difference and I think that that really, really hit me.

When instructors heard statements like this, they were encouraged and although it may be rare to hear these sorts of positive reviews, they have an impact on the instructors. It is possible that the rarity of these sorts of statements made them even more worthy and created an even bigger sense of success.

Jocelyn took pride in seeing her students share what they had learned with their parents and found a sense of success from seeing the pride they possessed after the course.

When they see their parents or their relatives or whoever is supporting them on the outside, they will see what they've learned, and along the way they've like sent letters or they've had contact, so there's been like that verbal change or written change but they haven't been able to physically demonstrate, like "look what I can do! I have successfully learned how to survive by myself and I'm going to show you and this is why it's important for me to know this." And it's not like they're a robot spitting off this information, but they're proud of themselves, and that's what rewarding about being an instructor.

Through therapeutic wilderness experiences, both students and instructors gained a sense of success. Instructors conceptualized success informally and received validation from small factors, such as seeing their students smile. Larger, more formal successes, such as hearing students reflect on how much their expeditions meant to them also contributed to the overall success an instructor yielded from a course. The feelings of success that instructors experienced based on their encounters with students fed back into their ability to create positive relationships with other students. The creation of these positive relationships assisted not only the students but also the self-concept of the instructors.

Connections to the literature. Like the instructors in this study, research in the area of wilderness experiences has pointed to the importance of both small successes and larger successes for youth in therapeutic wilderness experiences. The growth of confidence (in the self and in social situations), willingness to trust, physical strength, skill development, and the ability to cope with negative life events as reported by participants in Sklar et al.'s (2007) study can be considered informal conceptualizations of success. The most notable example of a formal conceptualization of success, graduation, was connected to the narrative method of therapy (Gilbert et al., 2004). The authors theorized that graduation or another "structured celebration" is important in order to encourage the future success of the participant (p. 99). The successes, both informal and informal, that instructors and clients experience in therapeutic wilderness experiences have been shown to be important in the literature.

Facilitators and Barriers to Success in Instructor-Student Relationships

Many factors contributed to how instructors experienced success in their relationships with students. Instructors implied different levels of ownership over their interactions with students, their roles, successes, failures, and changes in the students. They also named differences and similarities in race, gender, and age, as well as other members of the group, co-instructors, or people in their students' lives outside of the wilderness experience.

Ownership. In talking about their experiences with students, some instructors used language that stressed the importance of their own actions, behaviors, and attributes. For the sake of this study, I will refer to this sense of personal responsibility as ownership. During the interviews, instructors took ownership over both successes and failures. Amanda, a 20-year old instructor, exhibited ownership in her discussion of decision-making as an instructor:

But on the day to day basis, little decisions can have big effects on people. You never know what's going to be the straw that breaks the camel's back. So, for one kid canoeing down this rapid is the highlight of the 20-Day and so when he doesn't get to do it, he goes berserk. And you know, I don't have the power to do anything to fix that for him. And it's really challenging when you see that there's a situation that's like just kind of like literally, you can't change it. There's nothing that you can say that would change this person's opinion either. So there were challenging moments where it's hard to see a solution that's going to make everyone happy.

Jaime's understanding of his own role exhibited ownership through his sense of responsibility for his own actions and how that influenced his students and his ability to create relationships:

I feel like if I'm going to meet them where they're at, then they're more likely to engage with me. And as far as planting the seeds go... until I'm at a place with another person where we've connected I don't feel like those seeds can be planted or those ideas or ideals that we shoot for with communication and connection with other people can be discussed.

Kerry described building a positive relationship with a student based on an initial interaction that lasted throughout a 5-day expedition:

I was the only one that she really like you know, listened to. She was a student who um, she was tough and like didn't want to be there and didn't really care. I think the only reason I had the best relationship with her was because of that initial interaction. Because she thought it was funny that I stubbed my toe and had to get a Band-Aid. It was a production and she thought it was funny. And that's how we became friends.

Instructors also gave examples of instances when they took ownership for negative experiences. By internalizing unsuccessful interactions with students, instructors recognized that they could play a negative role and that they had responsibility for those interactions and many other aspects of instructor- student relationships. Jaime and Stacy, two of the instructors with the most experience, took ownership for negative instances on their courses, especially when students left the course and did not graduate. Stacy believed that she had not done enough to help a student stay on course. And, although she reported that she did not take ownership for that situation at the time, her awareness and reflection on the situation exhibits negative internalization:

In the end, he ended up leaving course and I think that I had in my efforts to give him opportunities and chances and show him that I was different than some other people he had interacted with, I don't think I succeeded at that. I think that, I helped push him away instead of insuring that he made course. I don't know that he would have made it through the course anyway, but instead of being a player that was neutral or that helped him stay, I might have been a person that corroborated his situation in the past and he was able to leave blaming it maybe in part on me, instead of taking ownership for the situation.

Similarly, Jaime regretted allowing a student who negatively affected the other members of the group to stay on course, because the amount of time spent supporting that student prevented the growth and opportunities of other students. Jaime thought that had he removed the overpowering student earlier, he could have improved the experience for the other students.

I look back on that and wonder often, how would my course have been different had he been removed earlier? This is not a therapeutic program, we could not support him [the overpowering student] with the one on one he needed and it affected the crew definitely. When we did finally remove him, the shift in the group dynamic was noticeable, almost instantaneous. One of the younger kids started singing for the rest of the course. The

whole 13, 14 days before that, he was just trying to look up to this kid and be as tough as he was. As soon as he (the overpowering student) was gone, he felt like he could finally be himself. I often wonder if the kids felt safe to be themselves and I wish I had taken different actions earlier on to help them be that way.

Amanda, one of the youngest instructors, recognized her own power in communication.

By recognizing her role in contributing to conflict with students, she displayed ownership over a negative situation.

A lot of times, it's little stuff, like changing the tone of my voice, or using a different word, because students pick up on little things when they're ready to be provoked. Or when they're on the defense, they hear everything.

When instructors took ownership over their role in the relationships they built with students, they took responsibility for both positive and negative interactions. This awareness was crucial in building successful relationships because it prevented students from being blamed but also allowed instructors to take credit for the things they do well.

Building autonomy. Many instructors attributed importance to the growth of the autonomy of the group itself. They worked to help students create relationships among themselves, rather than only between the instructors and the students. By highlighting the importance of the group and their cohesion, instructors took the focus off themselves and avoided the “rock star mentality.” Jaime and Kyle, who had worked together on multiple courses, both stressed the importance of group autonomy. Jaime perceived the student to student relationships as highly important:

I said to Kyle the other day... if two weeks from now, a kid can't remember my name, but they remember the experience and they remember their crewmates, then I've done my job...when you become an instructor early in this line of work, it's easy to get into like this rock star mentality 'I'm the center of attention, all of you pay attention to me, and I know what's best, and we're gonna have a blast!' [The ideal is] when it's either self-fulfilling highlights or peer fulfilling highlights within their crewmates.

Kyle reflected on the importance of building the autonomy of the group as a way of facilitating success when he reported that he was only a part of the process and certainly not the most important part of the group experience:

So now they can communicate more effectively, they can be more sensitive to people's shortcomings or strengths. So ultimately it's culminating a successful experience. And why was it successful? Because of their interactions with themselves and each other. Not because of my interactions with them, I'm there to guide them along... Sometimes you have moments of group cohesion and high functioning crews. But, it's not always tangible whether or not your input has been a part of that... I'm trying to support the crew's process, the crew's organic process. So, I don't feel like it's my product. I feel like I'm a part of a final product.

The growth of the autonomy of the crew could also include the crew taking more responsibility for themselves and the necessary survival tasks such as cooking, setting up and breaking down camp, and collecting water.

Age-based differences. Instructors considered age differences to be a facilitator of success. The youngest instructors, Kerry and Amanda, focused the most on age as a factor in relationship building. By giving credit to their proximity in age to the students, both instructors considered age to be a facilitator of success. Kerry and Amanda highlighted age as a strength, because it allowed them to bond with their students and seem more approachable, although it was something that concerned them in creating a voice as a leader in the group.

Kerry told a humorous story about a time when her age was questioned by a student. After that experience, she was less open about her age with her students:

My first year I would tell them how old I was. I remember I had to go pick up one kid and drive him to the doctor and he like got in the passenger seat and I went to go drive the van away and he's like 'Are you even old enough to drive this thing?' And I was like, yeah I am. He's like 'how old are you?' and I used to say, 'how old do you think I am?' And then they would guess and eventually they'd be like 'You're 18? You're barely older than I am.' And they'd be around 16 and I'd think, 'wait this is awkward' and I stopped doing that. And now I just let them guess and see how old I am and I say 'yeah, around there.'

Amanda had the experience of instructing students who were only a few years younger than she and worried about how that affected their respect for her.

They don't necessarily know that I'm as close in age, but it was one of the things that I worry about sometimes. You go on a course with someone who's 16 or a couple days away from 17, and I sort of wonder, 'do they know that I'm only 3 years older? Like how much can they respect me?'

Gender differences. Instructors attributed differences between students and themselves to gender. Gender acted as both a barrier and a unifier for instructors and students. Instructors perceived students' beliefs about gender to cause them to be hesitant in relationship building with instructors. They also recognized their own conceptualizations of gender differences as a factor that could both unite or divide the relationship building process with their students. Many instructors admitted feeling challenged by courses when the students were of the other gender. Angie, the instructor with the most experience at the program, discussed the different approaches she took based on the gender of the group she instructed:

All people are different and I believe that we have gender roles for a reason. And our students are taught them. So being a female on a male course is much more challenging for me and I use a different style working with males than being in an all female group as a female instructor.

Nigel found it easier to work with male students, although he only worked with female students on one-day programming. Nigel also had a unique experience in that he had female co-instructors on both of his courses:

It might be a little easier for me working with males, because I can bond with them on that level. It's important to note that a lot of the students have father issues or parent issues, so that can come into play when they're trusting you out in the wilderness. So I think you really have to be aware of your role as a male, especially around females, whether they've had father issues or parent issues, I think it's good to be conscious of that all the time.

Both Stacy and Amanda raised the issue of females in authority. These examples are particularly interesting because Stacy and Amanda believed that the experiences some of their

students had with female authority figures led to the difficulties they had in building relationships with those male students. Instead of believing it was their own fault for the struggles in these relationships, the two women named their students' beliefs about gender as the barrier to their relationship.

Stacy focused a great deal on gender differences during her interview and had experienced negative relationships with male students at other wilderness programs. Her previous experience contributed to her belief that her students' own thoughts on gender sometimes acted as a barrier to their relationship. She talked about how challenging it was to build relationships with male students:

I think it's harder because people come in with experiences in life that pre-filter or pre-color a situation and I think that a lot of male students have had a lot of interactions and challenging situations with female authority in their life.

Amanda reported that many of her students struggled with female authority figures, including female parole officers:

I remember the third day on one of my courses there was a conversation about how much they hated female parole officers. You know, I just overheard and I said "why's that? What difference does it make?" And they were like, "you know..." They don't want to engage in those types of conversations. You can tell that they have that wall up and it definitely gets into how they think of me as you know, as like more of a peer, but also how they see me as a sort of authoritative instructor.

Racial differences. Only one instructor, Stacy, mentioned race as influencing her relationships with students. Race, like age or gender, could bring students and instructors together or it could cause tension. Instructors mentioned how personal histories and past relationships become evident in the relationship building process and for one of Stacy's students, it seemed that race was a factor.

I had a student as a Course Director my first summer, who was a black student and um... I believe from the beginning, he was sabotaging himself and I think that he didn't want to stay on course... I think there were some racial issues. And I think that me being a white

woman, I think that he didn't trust me from the beginning and it was a very tenuous situation to gain his trust and to earn his trust.

By recognizing the roles of gender, sex, and race in instructing, instructors saw both differences and similarities between themselves and their students.

Students' willingness to participate. Instructors reported investing a great deal of themselves in the relationships that they tried to create with their students. They believed a barrier to these relationships was when the students did not want to have a relationship with their instructor and communicated that by avoiding participating in group activities. Kerry, the youngest instructor interviewed for this study, mentioned that the greatest barrier she experienced with students was their lack of willingness to participate:

Sometimes it's challenging to work with students um who don't necessarily want to be at the wilderness program. And trying to find ways to open them up to the experience. I think the type of student I like to work with the least is not the students who cause the most trouble or complain all the time or is an outcast from the other students, but students who are just totally indifferent or apathetic to it and just don't care. That's the most challenging for me.

Instructors experienced many facilitators and barriers to success in their relationships with students. Many instructors took a great deal of ownership for the good and bad aspects of their relationships and even internalized the issues they had with students. Age served as a facilitator to success, gender was both a facilitator and a barrier, and one instructor experienced race as a barrier to the success of her relationship with a student. An absence of desire to participate in the wilderness program was a barrier to success for another instructor. The barriers and facilitators of success contributed to instructors' experience of both formal and informal conceptualizations of success in therapeutic wilderness experiences.

Connections to the literature. The awareness of these facilitators and barriers continues to connect the philosophy of the instructors in this study to various theories of therapy.

Psychodynamic group-based therapy calls for therapists to be especially cognizant of their own role in the group dynamics (Gilbert et al., 2004). The ability of instructors to recognize how they contribute to the relationships they create with students is crucial to the success of the individuals and group. Some instructors described their relationships with students as having been influenced by the previous relationships of the students, especially some of the students who had more negative experiences. What the instructors described is similar to transference, which is when clients in therapy work through unresolved issues with people who were not originally involved. Hill (2007) discusses the possibility of transference in wilderness therapy.

Professional and Personal Success for Instructors

A theme that ran throughout the interviews of the participants was the overlap that occurred between the jobs and personal lives of instructors. Instructors related the skills they used in their jobs to the way they interacted with others outside of the wilderness. Additionally, there was a great deal of overlap between what was important in their personal lives and what was crucial to being a successful instructor. The success that instructors found in their jobs carried over into their personal lives. Many reported that it was easier to fulfill tasks as an instructor when aspects of their personal lives were in order. When instructors took time to renew, they perceived themselves as more successful at work and found relationships with students easier to create and maintain.

Instructors reported that they were involved in the field because they found it personally fulfilling. Not only did instructors believe that they were helping their students develop, but they also believed that they achieved personal growth through their jobs and the relationships they created.

Jaime found working as an instructor fulfilling and a process that allowed him to change and grow. He placed a great deal of emphasis on the value of change during his interview.

I often say that I do this work for selfish reasons. I get fulfillment... I feel like a better person for doing this work. And I find it to be constant learning on how to interact with other humans. I feel like the day I stop changing is the day I stop trying to better myself... is the day I've given up. There is no end in life training.

Amanda also found instructing challenging and personally rewarding.

I mean, I love instructing. I think it's really, really challenging you know to be on point and to you know, it's a stressful environment for the student, but it's as stressful for the instructors to have you know, maybe like 10 or 12 angsty kids biting at your ankles is really challenging. In the rain, in the dark... But I think it's really, really satisfying. I would say that I have really enjoyed it in the sense that I think it's given me a lot to work with students. And you know, to build myself up for myself and to sort of work on things for me for the students that come. I think it's been really for me, really satisfying.

Angie was surprised by how successful instructing made her feel and worked as an instructor year-round because of the satisfaction she received from the job.

(I was surprised by) my own growth. My own success. Acknowledging my ability to be successful in this field is surprising and anything that my students say is always very surprising.

Jocelyn was never surprised by the success she found in instructing, but found the work extremely rewarding, even though she was met with challenges along the way.

It's, it's what I wanted to do all my life, it kind of runs in the family... and you have me as an art teacher, which is also an instructing position and whether it's outdoors or it's art, instructing is my passion. Just being able to introduce children to new ideas or new behaviors or new I don't know, like whatever, new culture. Instructing is what I was born to do, what I will always do. Whether I'm leading trips in the wilderness, or running a program like this one, that's what I'll always do.

Instructors also expressed how their personal lives reflect back on their ability to be successful in their jobs. When instructors were at a positive place in their personal lives, they were more able to connect with their students. Based on the observations of the participants in this study, being an instructor in a therapeutic wilderness program was not something that

individuals can succeed at unless they were available enough to make connections with those they were surrounded by each day.

Kyle reflected on the importance of not only meeting the needs of his students, but also having his own needs met.

It's really hard to provide for somebody else's needs when your own needs have not been met. That's personally valuable to instructors. Those unique instructors who are able to put themselves aside and fully put everything into their crew or the individuals on their crew, they're constructed differently than I am.

Stacy believed she was better at building rapport and instructing in general when she was able to fulfill her own personal needs as well.

I think in an ideal situation, when I'm at my best and I'm confident and um... comfortable in where I am in my individual life, I'm better at it in creating relationships. Because I'm more open and honest and able to be more actively involved in it...I think that it takes a certain amount of patience and love for myself to be an instructor. Because it's so easy to find all the ways that I fail at it or I think that I fail at it. And, so I think that um it is a very humbling position. And there must be a certain amount of gentleness, internal gentleness to maintain, to continue instructing. At least for me. For me it's been hard not to compare myself to other instructors, because as a person I bring what I bring and I bring a lot of things and I don't bring some things. I've worked hard over the years to give myself permission to not be everything to everyone. And if I haven't connected with certain kids, it's ok and I'll keep working at it and I'll keep trying to do something differently and try to build a better repertoire, but I'm only one person.

The connection that instructors experienced between their personal and work lives created a relationship between the skills they used, their personal well-being, and their own fulfillment. Instructors strengthened their ability to connect with their students by caring for themselves outside of work. The personal fulfillment they received from the success they experienced in their jobs contributed back into the strength they brought to their jobs. More research should be completed on this subject in order to learn more about how instructors can be supported in their profession, as very little research exists on this specific topic.

Conclusion

In previous studies, the relationship between instructors and adolescents in therapeutic wilderness experiences was recognized as unique and integral to the success of the programs and their participants, but there was little information available about the instructor-client relationship. This study identified the ways that instructors conceptualize their relationship with their students, from the role of peer and friend to mentor and teacher. Instructors conceptualized their role as providing positive adult contact, creating an equal role with their students, role modeling, and learning from both students and co-instructors. Instructors created relationships with students on a case by case basis; no two clients or groups required the same amount of sharing, humor, or authority. This conceptualization reflected past studies on wilderness therapy as well as on young adult mentoring (Britner & Kraimer-Rickaby, 2005; Darling, 2005; Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002; Taniguchi et al., 2009). Because of the role that instructors play, this study contributed to the literature on mentoring and providing positive adult contact for at-risk-youth.

Through the creation of relationships with their students, instructors were able to conceptualize successes both formally and informally. Informal successes, like positive body language, occurred frequently throughout expeditions and renewed instructors. Formal successes were more often found at the end of an expedition, in the form of graduation or verbal accolades from students. Both informal and formal successes showed instructors that they had created positive relationships with their students. Many facilitators and barriers to success played into instructor-student relationships, including gender, age, and race. Wilderness expeditions do not exist in a vacuum, rather in the context of the lives of the students and the instructors, so none of those factors could be discounted in relationship-building. Instructors expressed varied levels of

ownership over many aspects of their relationships with students, even negative interactions. Instructors gained a great deal of personal success from the relationships they created with their students and the skills they build while on expedition.

Implications

Prior to this study, there was very little research on the relationships created between instructors and students in therapeutic wilderness experiences. This study has contributed to the literature on this subject by revealing what instructors think about their role, what makes it difficult, and how instructors can positively influence the lives of their students. By learning more about how instructors interact with the participants, more can be learned about the entire therapeutic process. The results of this study could be used by wilderness programs in their staff training, by providing a model of how to build relationships and providing issues to be aware of in instructing (such as age, race, and gender). Parents of adolescents could also use the results from this study to help them decide if a wilderness therapy program might be something that their child would benefit from, based on the instructors explanations of what they contribute to the experience and what they believe students will gain from the experience.

Instructors could use this information to prepare for their work with youth. Beginning instructors would surely benefit from the conceptualization of the instructor role and how much it can change over time and between courses. Instructors would also benefit from a greater understanding of the informal and formal conceptualizations of success. By knowing more about the barriers and facilitators of success, instructors could highlight their own strengths. The participants in this study attributed some of their greatest lessons to their co-instructors and if instructors place an emphasis on the knowledge of the instructors they work with and those in

this study, they may be able to further develop their own skills working with youth in the therapeutic wilderness setting.

Suggestions for Further Research

Further research on the subject of instructor-client relationships should include the perceptions of the clients on their relationships with instructors. Because the students from the program in this study are a high-risk population, including them in this study was impractical. Youths' perceptions would add a great deal to this field of research. Including a more diverse population of instructors from many different programs who had worked with more diverse student populations also is important for further research. It is my hope that the relationships between instructors and students will be studied further in order to contribute to the body of research on wilderness therapy and to help bring professional recognition to those who make instructing their living.

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APPENDIX A**Interview Guide**

What brought you to the Wilderness School?

What other experiences prepared you to work with participants?

Tell me what you did as a staff member. What is unique about what you did compared to other instructors?

What words other than “instructor” would you use to describe what you do at WS?

What are the skills/ abilities that you use as an instructor that you use elsewhere in your life?

What do you bring from your life outside WS to your job as an instructor?

How do you create relationships with your students?

What was one of your most positive experiences working with your students at WS?

What was one of your most negative experiences in your work with students?

What was one of the most challenging experiences you had as an instructor?

When have you wished you did something differently regarding your students?

When have you felt successful as an instructor?

What surprised you most about your experience?

What do you think surprises the students about the experience? Examples?

What do you think students get out of the relationship with instructors?

If you were to write a book about how you develop rapport with students, what would the titles of the chapters be?

How do you feel about your entire experience as an instructor? What would you do differently/ the same in the future?

What advice would you give to someone who is starting as a WS instructor?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experiences as an instructor at the Wilderness School?

How does your gender affect your relationship with your students? (*This question was added after receiving IRB Approval based on the content of the interviews.*)