

2016

Identity Awareness Through Outdoor Activities for Adolescents with Serious Illnesses

Ann Gillard

The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.cortland.edu/reseoutded>



Part of the [Environmental Education Commons](#), and the [Leisure Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gillard, Ann (2016) "Identity Awareness Through Outdoor Activities for Adolescents with Serious Illnesses," *Research in Outdoor Education*: Vol. 14 , Article 8.

DOI: 10.1353/roe.2016.0005

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.cortland.edu/reseoutded/vol14/iss1/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Cortland. It has been accepted for inclusion in Research in Outdoor Education by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Cortland. For more information, please contact DigitalCommonsSubmissions@cortland.edu.

Identity Awareness Through Outdoor Activities for Adolescents with Serious Illnesses

Ann Gillard, Ph.D.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to (1) identify which activities in a seven-day outdoor-based program most related to adolescents' identity awareness and (2) investigate potential changes in participants' identity awareness. Seventy-four adolescents aged 16–18 with serious illnesses (e.g., cancer, sickle cell disease) answered an open-ended question about a time during the program when they “discovered who they were,” and completed an 11-item identity awareness scale. Results showed that structured activities (e.g., night climb, fire council) and unstructured activities (e.g., personal reflection, talking with others) most related to participants' identity awareness, and that identity awareness increased some or a lot for nearly all participants. Implications for practice and research are discussed.

Keywords: identity, adolescents, illness, outdoor, mixed methods

Ann Gillard, Ph.D., The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp

Address correspondence to Ann Gillard, Ph.D., The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, 565 Ashford Center Road, Ashford, CT 06278, E-mail: ann_gillard@gmail.com, Phone number: 860-429-3444

Introduction

A major task of adolescence for the transition to adulthood is identity development. One important contemporary scholar of adolescent and emerging adult identity is Jeffrey Arnett, who defines identity as “individuals’ perceptions of their characteristics and abilities, their beliefs and values, their relations with others, and how their lives fit into the world around them,” (Arnett, 2012, p. 160). Arnett’s work expands on Erik Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development through the lifespan (1959), which viewed adolescence as a “psychosocial moratorium,” when young people try out possible selves as part of their identity formation (Erikson, 1968). However, Erikson’s theory has been criticized for its rigidity and failure to include people other than able-bodied White middle class college students in the United States (e.g., Arnett, 2006; Sorell & Montgomery, 2001).

While there has been some research on identity in youth with disabilities and illnesses, such studies focused on “illness identity,” rather than on a more general or personal identity. Further, youth programs and specifically outdoor-based programs often aim to influence identity development by providing adolescents with opportunities for personal exploration or identity awareness. However, identity awareness in the specific population of adolescents with serious illnesses is rarely examined in research on outdoor-based youth programs. The purpose of this study was to better understand identity awareness for adolescent participants with serious illnesses in an outdoor program and how program activities and elements might have influenced identity awareness.

Adolescent Identity Development

Identity development in adolescence involves forming a stable and viable identity with which to make commitments to markers of adulthood such as career choices, romantic relationships, and family (Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005). While much of the active “work” of identity development occurs during emerging adulthood, adolescence is a distinct time for identity awareness and exploration (Arnett, 2006; 2012). Identity exploration can be described as a process of “sorting through various identity elements in an attempt to identify a set of goals, values, and beliefs to which one will commit” (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Weisskirch, & Rodriguez, 2009, p. 131). Waterman (1990; 2015) described identity as consisting of exploration and commitment dimensions, and of intrinsic motivation, which is important to well-being (Waterman, 2007). The notion of “identity awareness” can be

used to describe the initial stages of identity formation and was the focus of the present study.

Identity awareness has been shown to occur for most adolescents participating in self-defining leisure activities (Coatsworth et al., 2005), and found to be a mediating mechanism for participation in extracurricular activities (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003). Extracurricular activities and youth programs offer opportunities for specific identity work such as personal exploration and strengthening of self-knowledge and sense of self (e.g., Dworkin, Larson, & Hansen, 2003; Fredricks et al., 2002). Analyzing developmental experiences across a variety of youth contexts (e.g., organized activities, unstructured free time, classroom time, etc.), Hansen, Larson, and Dworkin (2003) found that experiences in organized activities were the most effective context for promoting the development of identity exploration and reflection, among other outcomes. However, there appear to be differences across youth experiences in how identity is experienced (Hansen, Skorupski, & Arrington, 2010). More research is needed about qualities or settings of youth programs that relate to identity.

Identity in Outdoor Programs

One setting for adolescent and young adult identity development is the outdoors, such as camps and outdoor programs. Research on youth, adolescent, and emerging adult identity in camps has found that camps can promote achievement and sense of accomplishment (Holman, McAvoy, Rynders, & Goldenberg, 2003), positive identity (Henderson, Whitaker, Bialeschki, Scanlin, & Thurber, 2007; Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2006), identity-supportive interactions (Dahl, Sethre-Hofstad, & Salomon, 2013) and identity development (Johnson, Goldman, Garey, Britner, & Weaver, 2010). Research on adolescent wilderness and outdoor programs has found identity-related outcomes such as increased self-confidence and new self-perceptions (Duerden, Taniguchi, & Widmer, 2012), and positive sense of identity and purpose in life (Norton, Wisner, Krugh, & Penn, 2014). For most of these studies, identity was one of several outcomes identified from outdoor youth programs.

However, some research has specifically focused on identity in outdoor youth programs. For example, participants in an adventure recreation program experienced a progressively positive impact on their identity processing and development when contrasted with the comparison group (Duerden, Widmer, Taniguchi, & McCoy, 2009). In a study of a ship-based adventure program, Kaly and Heesacker (2003) explored the potential for

adventure-based programs to affect identity development. In a study of a wilderness program for adolescents with depression, the search for identity and the development of the true self were notable opportunities for participants (Norton, 2010). Further research found that this wilderness program contributed to students' positive sense of identity and purpose in their lives (Norton & Watt, 2014). These and other studies point to the strong potential for identity development in outdoor youth programs.

While several studies have explored identity in outdoor programs for youth in general, disability- and illness-specific residential camps can also have an impact on related outcomes such as social acceptance (Devine, 2015), and self-esteem (Dawson, Knapp, & Farmer, 2012; Devine & Dawson, 2010). As Dawson et al. (2012) found, memorable elements of an oncology camp included supportive community, normalizing experience, positive recollection of their camp experience and memories of specific activities. Still, more research is needed to better understand how outdoor youth programs have potential to influence identity awareness for youth with illnesses.

Identity for youth with serious illness

While opportunities for identity development through outdoor youth programs often aim to be inclusive of all youth, opportunities are limited for youth with serious illnesses to participate in outdoor programs due to a lack of alignment between their medical needs and the availability of sufficient medical care in outdoor settings (Kiernan, Guerin, & MacLachlan, 2005). Yet, for young people living with serious illnesses, the opportunities for identity development found in the outdoors could be important for their well-being. Growing up with risk factors from missing school and socialization opportunities, combined with high levels of illness-related stress and uncertainty mean that positive identity development is a crucial protective factor for youth with serious illness (Stam, Hartman, Deurloo, Grothoff, & Grootenhuis, 2006). Additional dimensions of complexity and difficulty exist for youth struggling to fit in with peers, adjust to difficult life events, and navigate the discordance between society's perceptions of youth as healthy and the lived experiences of illness (Beckwitt, 2014). Adolescents with serious illness experience these difficulties in addition to the normative tasks of development.

One type of identity development that exists only for youth with serious illness is illness identity development. Illness identity is one dimension of illness representation and relates to symptoms attributed to illness and

illness labels (Law, Tolgyesi, & Howard, 2014). Strategies for normalizing illness and managing identity can be parts of efforts toward social comparison for adolescents with chronic illness (Heaton, 2015). Working toward normalization can be an important strategy to accept reality while preventing illness from dominating their lives (Van Staa, Jedeloo, Latour, & Trappenburg, 2008). However, it is important to note that several studies about identity have shown little or no differences in outcomes between adolescents with and without serious illness (e.g., Lugasi et al., 2013; Luyckx et al., 2008; Pinquart & Pfeiffer, 2015; Snelgrove, 2015). Authors of these studies similarly suggested that identity development processes might be similar for youth with and without serious illness due to general adolescent development tasks and progression. Further, a common desire for adolescents is striving for “normalcy,” whether that normalcy is within or outside the context of illness. Still, opportunities for identity development through outdoor-based youth programs are typically unavailable to youth with serious illnesses.

To summarize the literature, while there has been much research on identity for adolescents, and some research on identity in outdoor youth programs, very little research has examined how youth with serious illness might experience identity awareness through outdoor programs. The specific purposes of this study were to (1) identify which activities in a seven-day outdoor-based program most related to identity awareness in a group of adolescents with serious illnesses and (2) explore potential changes in program participants’ identity awareness. Findings from this study could inform future research and practice.

Methods

Setting

The study setting was Hero’s Journey (operated by The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp), a free outdoor adventure-based camp program for youth aged 16-18 living with serious illnesses such as hemophilia, sickle cell, HIV/AIDS, cancer, and metabolic disease. Groups of 12–15 youth participated in each of the five sessions of Hero’s Journey. Identity awareness was one of several intended outcomes of Hero’s Journey. Other outcomes included tenacity, competency, exploration, and friendships. Given participants’ developmental stage and focus on the hero’s journey metaphor (Campbell, 1949), programming for identity awareness was a top priority. To support programming, medical care involved careful screening and preparation before the program, supervision by two nurses and staff trained in working

with adolescents with chronic illnesses, and careful adaptations of activities to ensure appropriate levels of challenge for all participants.

Major activities included training in wilderness first aid and search and rescue, teambuilding, backpacking, and outdoor living. Specific activities included personal challenges such as climbing a tower and ziplining at night (the “night climb with zip line”), self-awareness activities and ceremonies, journaling, and solo time. In 2015, Hero’s Journey served 74 adolescents aged 16–18 with illnesses. All participants’ parents and caregivers provided study consent for all participants. All but two participants assented to completing surveys on their last full day.

Qualitative data collection and analysis

To examine which Hero’s Journey activities related to participants’ identity awareness, an open-ended question was included in the survey: “Identity is defined at The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp as ‘discovering who I am.’ Please describe a time at Hero’s Journey when you discovered who you are.” Data were analyzed utilizing a modified version of the constant comparative method (Dupuis & Smale, 2000; Corbin & Strauss, 2014). This process first involved open coding of the written responses to identify conceptual categories related to identity awareness during the program. Two coders open-coded the data and came to agreement on all codes. Second, axial coding involved comparing emergent patterns across participants to identify common patterns in the data. Third, selective coding involved identifying substantive codes to conceptualize the empirical findings about development of identity awareness during the program. Fourth, theoretical coding involved organizing concepts and patterns into a central explanatory category about aspects of the program that affected identity awareness. Finally, emergent patterns and their relations were compared and linked with empirical and theoretical constructs in the literature. Conversations were held with the two program coordinators to describe the activities comprising the themes and to better understand the purpose of the activities mentioned by participants.

Quantitative data collection and analysis

Quantitative data were also collected. To examine potential changes in participants’ identity awareness, an identity scale was created. This 11-item scale included six adapted items from the Youth Experiences Survey 2.0 tool (YES 2.0; Hansen & Larson, 2005) and five adapted items from the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP; Search Institute, 2013). Items related to identity were chosen from these scales because compared to other items

that measured goal-setting, positive community relationships, or stress for example, the items chosen for this study most closely reflected the concept of “identity awareness” as discussed earlier.

The YES 2.0 tool was created by Hansen and Larson in the early 2000s as a self-report instrument to inventory high school-aged students’ developmental experiences in an organized youth activity, such as an extracurricular activity or community-based program (Hansen & Larson, 2005). The YES 2.0 has strong evidence of scale reliability and validity (Hansen et al., 2003; Hansen et al., 2010; MacDonald, Côté, Eys, & Deakin, 2012). One study on a burn camp utilized the YES 2.0 and found that participants credited the camp experience with helping them with identity formation and reflection, improved social interactions, and increased initiative (Rimmer et al., 2012).

The YES 2.0 items focus on positive developmental experiences within personal development (including “Identity Work”) and interpersonal development, and on negative experiences. Only the Identity Work scale (i.e., identity exploration and identity reflection sub-scales) was used in the present study and items were modified from “this activity” to “Hero’s Journey” to focus participants on the overall program experience rather than on their most recent activity in the program.

The DAP was created as a self-report instrument in 2004 by the Search Institute (Search Institute, 2013). The DAP items focus on external assets (support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time) and internal assets (commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, positive identity) of youth in grades 6–12 (Wilson-Ahlstrom et al., 2014). The DAP has been shown to be highly reliable and valid among samples of American youth (Search Institute, 2013) and youth in other countries (Scales, 2011). A longitudinal study of urban youth in a wilderness program used the DAP and found the largest increases immediately after the program in the areas of Positive Identity, Use of Time, and Learning (Norton & Watt, 2014). Only the Positive Identity scale (i.e., personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose, and positive view of personal future) was used in the present study. See Figure 1 for DAP and YES 2.0 items used in this study.

Other adaptations to the scales included changing the item stems and response categories. Given that Hero’s Journey participants were asked to share their beliefs about the effect that the program had on their identity awareness at the end of the program, the stem to these items read: “How much, if any, has this session at Hero’s Journey changed you?” The wording of this stem came from the American Camp Association’s Youth Outcomes Battery (2011), which has good reliability and validity (Sibthorp, Bialeschki, Morgan, & Browne, 2013). Response options were: decreased

(-1), did not increase or decrease (0), increased a little (1), increased some (2) and increased a lot (3). Adapting the stems and response categories in this way prompted participants to specifically reflect on changes attributable to their Hero's Journey experience. The identity scale in this study had very good reliability ($\alpha = .893$).

Quantitative data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, reliability assessments, and principal components analysis (PCA). The PCA was chosen instead of factor analysis because the study explored scale performance in a new context where the scores were unpredictable and thus deemed an empirical summary of the data set (i.e., PCA) rather than a theoretical solution warranting factor analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

This study applied an exploratory and concurrent mixed methods research approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2010) to explore the concept of identity awareness across both data types. Seventy-two of 74 participants answered all survey questions in this study.

Results

Qualitative data

Analyses of qualitative data revealed the central explanatory category (Corbin & Strauss, 2014) of *structured and unstructured activities related to identity awareness*. Several common responses emerged for each activity type.

The most frequently reported structured activity related to identity was the night climb with zip line ($n = 24$). A participant shared:

I discovered who I was after reflecting on the week as a whole after the night tower climb and zip line to the "unknown." I realized for the first time I truly believed in my future and am hopeful of my potential. I know now that I have the potential to not only help others, but help myself and be my own hero. My priorities and perspective was shifted greatly. I have been reminded of the lovely simplicities of life. I know now that my priorities are to merely follow my bliss and learn to be selfish along with selfless. I am a caregiver, courageous, determined, and stubborn. Most of all, I have the potential to be not only a hero to others, but a hero to myself . . . eventually.

Another participant wrote:

A time at Hero's Journey when I discovered who I was was when I climbed the tower and zipped off. Crossing that abyss was very scary

for me so at the top along the zip line and at the end I completely broke down. Which was something I used to have a lot of trouble doing. Seven years since I was diagnosed and all the feelings held in came rushing out. I knew who I was. I knew my feelings.

According to the program coordinators, in the night climb with zip line activity, participants climbed a tower that represented their physical and emotional challenges faced in daily life for which there were no clear solutions. At the top of the tower, participants had a deep conversation with the program coordinator to identify that which they wished to leave behind as they moved into the unknown or “abyss” of their next stage of life. Participants then practiced courage by jumping off the top of the tower into the dark, zip lining down to where the counselors and other program participants were waiting to greet them after this typically cathartic experience.

Other structured activities commonly reported were the nightly fire council ($n = 10$) and key ceremony ($n = 9$). Each night, the fire council encouraged participants to share their answers to a meaningful question and reflect on the day. A participant explained:

At the fire in the remote campsites [backpacking trip] I found out that I have a deep, strong leader inside of me that didn't really come out. I also found out that I am a really hard working, determined individual that really has changed over the number of days and I really have accepted that person that I am. I feel after Hero's Journey that I will bring that person into the outside world and benefit from it by using around friends, family, and strangers so that I can really become a better person.

Another participant wrote:

During fire chat when we talked about our fears and coping mechanisms. I think those link a lot to how I handle situations and cope with problems. Since I had to think about it (which I had never really done before) I was forced to come to terms with my reality and know myself much better.

In the key ceremony, staff described positive attributes of each participant's character and provided a word or phrase that embodied the description. One participant shared, “The time I discovered who I was at Hero's Journey was the key ceremony. I never knew I had a ‘guardian’ in me. I truly believe that I care for the people I'm surrounded by.” Another participant wrote, “I felt as though I discovered myself when my counselors chose

words and traits to describe me.” The fire council and key ceremony activities gave participants opportunities to identify and reinforce meaningful and positive personal characteristics about themselves.

Second, while not specific activities, participants reported identity awareness in unstructured activities through personal reflection ($n = 23$) and through communication with other participants and counselors ($n = 14$). A participant explained how Hero’s Journey provided the opportunity for personal reflection:

I recently had been making changes in my life about who I am, and I sort of used HJ [Hero’s Journey] to observe my newfound attitude and see if it is truly healthy for me and makes me happy. Though there may be a thing or two I can still work on, overall HJ has helped me to “discover” that the new me I created before HJ is the good me.

Another participant wrote:

At camp while I was talking with a counselor and he mentioned to me about making a wrong assumption. He thought that I was the typical, ‘tough football jock’ because he looked me over and saw the athlete in me. But while sharing stories about me or just saying things from the heart, he realized that I was really caring and had a sensitive side. By him saying this, it made me acknowledge this also. I have always been like that around others, but never noticed me making that change. On the field I am the tough jock that may bend but won’t break. But in everyday life, I am sensitive and caring for others.

Another participant discussed communication:

When I was in the patrol group [backpacking group] is when I discovered who I was the most when I became closer to my friends and had conversations with them I haven’t had with anyone else and I was able to be open with them and talk about personal things and have their positive feedback to help me through what I was going through and to have me know it’s okay to be who you want to be no matter who that is.

One participant wrote, “My fellow participants helped me realize things about myself that I would have never recognized without them.” For these participants and others sharing similar experiences, Hero’s Journey provided experiences for both internal reflection and external sharing. One to

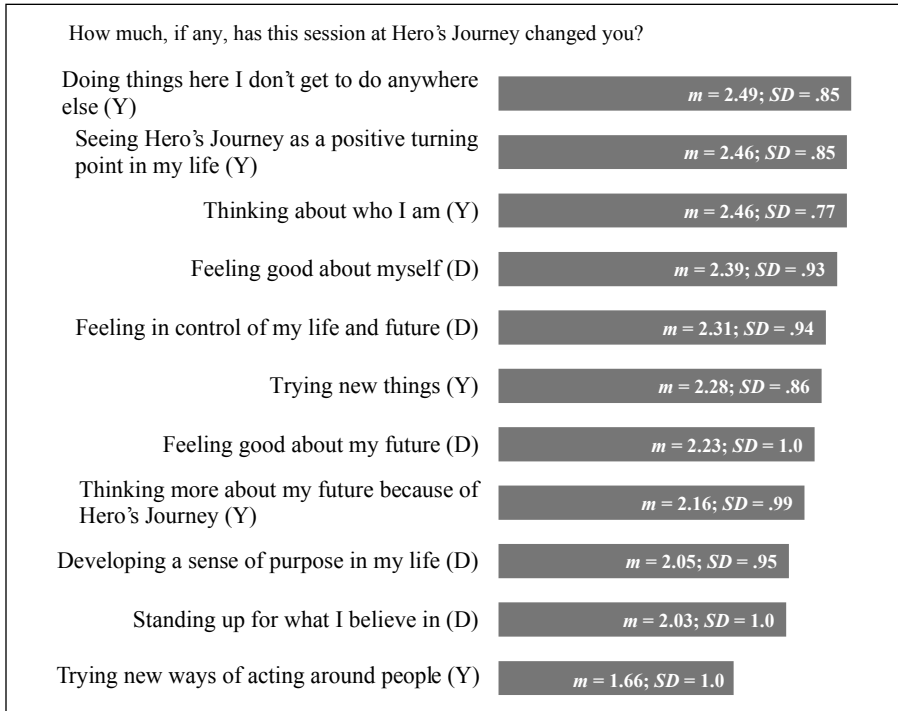


Figure 1 Means and standard deviations of identity scale items with YES 2.0 (Y) and DAP (D) items included.

Note: Scale response categories were -1 (decreased), 0 (did not decrease or increase), 1 (increased a little), 2 (increased some), and 3 (increased a lot).

four participants each described nine other activities at Hero's Journey, but there were no discernable patterns in responses.

Quantitative data

Principal component analysis was conducted on the 11 items with orthogonal rotation (varimax). One component comprising all 11 items explained 50.47% of variance, with all items loading above .40. The YES 2.0 and DAP scales were not separate components in this sample and appeared to measure the same construct of identity. The mean score for all participants was 2.23 ($SD: .68$) on a scale of -1 (decreased) to 3 (increased a lot), indicating that identity awareness increased some or a lot for nearly all participants. See Figure 1 for all means of identity scale items. Eighty-five percent or more participants reported increases for every scale item.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify which activities in a seven-day outdoor-based program most related to adolescents' identity awareness and investigate potential changes in participants' identity awareness. Qualitative data analysis revealed identity awareness-related activities while quantitative data analysis confirmed that change. This study showed that participants' identity awareness increased and related not only to the structured activities of the night climb with zip line, fire council, and key ceremony, but also to self-reflection and interacting with others.

Notably, the three structured activities (e.g., night climb with zip line, fire council, key ceremony) took place at night when participants concentrated on what they thought about themselves and their experiences both in life and at Hero's Journey. Additionally, identity awareness was experienced through internal and external processing but not through specific activities. Certainly, the structured and unstructured activities of Hero's Journey allowed space for these types of processing to occur, but this theme seemed to transcend specific activities.

This research contributes theoretical links between activities and the developmental process of identity awareness. By asking participants to report on a time at Hero's Journey when they discovered who they are, data revealed common patterns and a central explanatory category emerged. In this study, the explanatory category was *structured and unstructured opportunities for identity awareness*. However, it is not enough to simply have opportunities for identity awareness in a program. Participants should also demonstrate growth or improvement in identity awareness. This study showed participants reported their identity awareness increased, and used analyses of qualitative data to peer into the "black box" of programming. The black box refers to the mechanisms and contexts within a program that are foundational for developmental outcomes to emerge (e.g., Ewert, 1983; Mainieri & Anderson, 2015; Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2010).

Certain types of program contexts and settings have been shown to provide developmentally appropriate fit to individual young people and to enhance youth development (e.g., Eccles & Gootman, 2002). This study builds on the work of Hansen, Larson, Yohalem, and others in examining how organized activities can promote identity awareness and other youth outcomes. For example, in organized activities such as camp, Manieri and Anderson (2015) found in their study of a teen leadership program that key elements of the program connected to camper outcomes were program structure, group bonding, and camp context. Henderson, Powell, and Scanlin (2005) found important camp components to be: contact and lead-

ership from trained staff and the supportive relationships they provided, program mission and structure, accountability, outcome assessment, and skill building opportunities. Specific to illness-related camps, Dawson et al. (2012) found that oncology camp elements important to participants were supportive community, positive recollection of the camp experience, and memories of specific activities. In the present study, participants tied similar concepts to their increases in identity awareness. The present study contributes to the evidence base of important program features designed to promote positive youth outcomes such as engaging activities, opportunities for building relationships, and reflection.

Implications for practice

This research contributes to the field because of its inclusion of a population of adolescents with serious illnesses who increased their identity awareness in an intensive residential outdoor-based program. Compared to their peers and because of health-related concerns, adolescents with serious illnesses typically have fewer opportunities for outdoor-based challenging experiences in which identity awareness can occur. The research conducted with Hero's Journey demonstrates that given developmentally appropriate and medically-supported activities and opportunities, adolescents with serious illness can experience identity awareness through outdoor programming.

The structured program activities of the night climb with zip line, fire council, and key ceremony appeared to be major drivers of identity awareness. Program staff should continue these activities, consider how these activities contain essential program features that drive participants' identity awareness, and integrate similar features (e.g., emotional and physical safety, reflection) into other program activities. Structured and unstructured opportunities for internal and external processing can potentially magnify or serve as the main conduit for identity awareness.

Implications for research

Exploring which program elements relate to developmental outcomes such as identity awareness is an area for future research. More research is needed to better understand links between activities and youth outcomes, and to further explicate processes within identity development for similar populations in similar settings. Given the exploratory nature of this study, further investigation of identity for youth with serious illnesses in outdoor programs is warranted.

The study's identity awareness scale was adapted from two psychomet-

rically strong identity scales and found to be psychometrically strong in a population of youth with serious illnesses in an outdoor program. Further use of these scales in other youth settings would be beneficial. Additionally, use of an open-ended question about identifying times during the program when participants experienced an outcome yielded rich and diverse responses from participants. Similarly worded questions could be used in other research aiming to connect program processes to youth outcomes.

Still, limitations to this study exist. One limitation is that the data were self-reported, which means participants might have aimed to be socially desirable in their answers, had limited introspective ability, or answered with different ideas about what “identity awareness” meant to them. Another limitation is that the data were cross-sectional and collected at the end of an intense residential experience when euphoria could have been a factor in inflating responses. If data were collected at another time frame, results might vary. Future studies should collect identity awareness data over multiple time points to see if and how changes occur as participants become more removed from the activities. Other studies could examine other populations with disabilities, similar programs but with different activities, or use observations or other methods to assess identity awareness.

Conclusions

This study investigated identity awareness at a wilderness-based program in a population of adolescents with serious illnesses and found that participants’ identity awareness increased and related to the specific activities of the night climb with zip line, fire council, and key ceremony, and to self-reflection and interacting with others. One strength of this study included collecting multiple types of data to better understand the concept of identity awareness. Another strength is that this study used psychometrically strong tools to explore identity awareness. This research contributes to the field of youth development and outdoor recreation and education because of its inclusion of a population of adolescents with serious illnesses who increased their identity awareness in an intensive residential outdoor-based program.

Special thanks to Ashley Boyd, Greg Yeager, and James Sibelle.

References

- Arnett, J. J. (2006). Preface. In J. J. Arnett & J. L. Tanner (Eds.), *Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century* (pp. 3–20). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Arnett, J. J. (2012). *Adolescence and emerging adulthood (5th Ed.)* New York: Pearson.
- Beckwitt, A. E. (2014). Childhood cancer camps: Their role in adults surviving childhood cancers lives. *J Pediatr Oncol Nurs*, 31(1), 34–40. doi:10.1177/1043454213515335
- Campbell, Joseph. (1949). *The hero with a thousand faces*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Coatsworth, J. D., Sharp, E. H., Palen, L. A., Darling, N., Cumsille, P., & Marta, E. (2005). Exploring adolescent self-defining leisure activities and identity experiences across three countries. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 29(5), 361–370.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2014). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory (4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2010). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Dahl, T. I., Sethre-Hofstad, L., & Salomon, G. (2013). Intentionally designed thinking and experience spaces: What we learned at summer camp. *Learning Environments Research*, 16(1), 91–112.
- Dawson, S., Knapp, D., & Farmer, J. (2012). Camp war buddies: Exploring the therapeutic benefits of social comparison in a pediatric oncology camp. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, 46(4), 313–325.
- Devine, M. A. (2015). The role of a disability-specific camp in promoting social acceptance and quality of life for youth with hearing impairments. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, 49(4), 293–309. doi:http://js.sagamorepub.com/trj/article/view/6240/5492
- Devine, M. A., & Dawson, S. (2010). The effect of a residential camp experience on self esteem and social acceptance of youth with craniofacial differences. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, 44(2), 105–120.
- Duerden, M. D., Taniguchi, S., & Widmer, M. (2012). Antecedents of identity development in a structured recreation setting: A qualitative inquiry. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 27(2), 183–202. doi:10.1177/10743558411417869
- Duerden, M. D., Widmer, M. A., Taniguchi, S. T., & McCoy, J. K. (2009).

- Adventures in identity development: The impact of adventure recreation on adolescent identity development. *Identity*, 9(4), 341–359.
- Dupuis, S. L., & Smale, B. J. A. (2000). Bittersweet journeys: Meanings of leisure in the institution-based caregiving context. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 32(3), 303–340.
- Dworkin, J. B., Larson, R., & Hansen, D. (2003). Adolescent's accounts of growth experiences in youth activities. *Journal of Youth & Adolescence*, 32(1), 17–27.
- Eccles, J. S., Barber, B. L., Stone, M., & Hunt, J. (2003). Extracurricular activities and adolescent development. *Journal of Social Issues*, 59(4), 865–890. doi:10.1046/j.0022-4537.2003.00095.x
- Eccles, J., & Gootman, J. A. (Eds.). (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Erikson, Erik H. (1959). *Identity and the life cycle*. New York: International Universities Press.
- Erikson, Erik H. (1968). *Identity, youth and crisis*. New York: W.W. Norton Company.
- Ewert, A. (1983). *Outdoor adventure and self-concept: A research analysis*. Eugene, OR: Center for Leisure Studies, University of Oregon.
- Fredricks, J. A., Alfred-Liro, C. J., Hruda, L. Z., Eccles, J. S., Patrick, H., & Ruan, A. M. (2002). A qualitative exploration of adolescents' commitment to athletics and the arts. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 17(1), 68–97.
- Hansen, D. M., & Larson, R. (2005). *The Youth Experience Survey 2.0: Instrument Revisions and Validity Testing*. Retrieved from http://youthdev.illinois.edu/?page_id=189
- Hansen, D. M., Larson, R. W., & Dworkin, J. B. (2003). What adolescents learn in organized youth activities: A survey of self-reported developmental experiences. *Journal of Research on Adolescence (Wiley-Blackwell)*, 13(1), 25–55.
- Hansen, D. M., Skorupski, W. P., & Arrington, T. L. (2010). Differences in developmental experiences for commonly used categories of organized youth activities. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 31(6), 413–421.
- Heaton, J. (2015). Use of social comparisons in interviews about young adults' experiences of chronic illness. *Qualitative Health Research*, 25(3), 336–347.
- Henderson, K. A., Bialeschki, M. D., Scanlin, M. M., Thurber, C., Whitaker, L. S., & Marsh, P. E. (2007). Components of camp experiences for positive youth development. *Journal of Youth Development* Retrieved

- September 1, 2016 from http://campspirit.com/wp-content/themes/CampSpiritTheme/pdf/academicjournals/ComponentsCamp_from_JYD.pdf
- Henderson, K. A., Whitaker, L. S., Bialeschki, M. D., Scanlin, M. M., & Thurber, C. (2007). Summer camp experiences: Parental perceptions of youth development outcomes. *Journal of Family Issues*, 28(8), 987–1007. doi:10.1177/0192513x07301428
- Holman, T., McAvoy, L., Rynders, J., & Goldenberg, M. (2003). Outcomes—consequences—values of an integrated wilderness adventure program. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 25(3), 353.
- Johnson, S. K., Goldman, J. A., Garey, A. I., Britner, P. A., & Weaver, S. E. (2010). Emerging adults' identity exploration: Illustrations from inside the “camp bubble.” *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 26(2), 258–295. doi:10.1177/0743558410376832
- Kaly, P. W., & Heesacker, M. (2003). Effects of a ship-based adventure program on adolescent self-esteem and ego-identity development. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 26(2), 97–104.
- Kiernan, G., Guerin, S., & MacLachlan, M. (2005). Children's voices: Qualitative data from the ‘Barretstown studies’. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 42, 733–741. doi:10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2003.05.003
- Law, G. U., Tolgyesi, C. S., & Howard, R. A. (2014). Illness beliefs and self-management in children and young people with chronic illness: A systematic review. *Health Psychology Review*, 8(3), 362–380.
- Lugasi, T., Achille, M., Blydt-Hansen, T., Clermont, M. J., Geoffroy, L., Legault, L., . . . Bell, L. E. (2013). Assessment of identity and quality of life in diabetic and renal transplant adolescents in comparison to healthy adolescents. *J Clin Psychol Med Settings*, 20(3), 361–372. doi:10.1007/s10880-012-9344-x
- Luyckx, K., Seiffge-Krenke, I., Schwartz, S. J., Goossens, L., Weets, I., Hendrieckx, C., & Groven, C. (2008). Identity development, coping, and adjustment in emerging adults with a chronic illness: the sample case of type 1 diabetes. *J Adolesc Health*, 43(5), 451–458. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2008.04.005
- MacDonald, D. J., Côté, J., Eys, M., & Deakin, J. (2012). Psychometric properties of the youth experience survey with young athletes. *Psychology of Sport & Exercise*, 13, 332–340. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2011.09.001
- Mainieri, T. L. & Anderson, D. M. (2015). Exploring the “black box” of programming: Applying systematic implementation evaluation to a structured camp curriculum. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 38(2), 144–161. doi:10.1177/1053825914524056
- Mainieri, T. L. and D. M. Anderson (2015). Exploring the postcamp civic outcomes and supporting program features of the Teens Leading & Con-

- necting Program. *Journal of Park & Recreation Administration* 33(2), 54–72.
- Norton, C. L. (2010). Into the wilderness—a case study: The psychodynamics of adolescent depression and the need for a holistic intervention. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 38(2), 226–235.
- Norton, C. L., & Watt, T. T. (2014). Exploring the impact of a wilderness-based positive youth development program for urban youth. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 37(4), 335–350.
- Norton, C. L., Wisner, B. L., Krugh, M., & Penn, A. (2014). Helping youth transition into an alternative residential school setting: Exploring the effects of a wilderness orientation program on youth purpose and identity complexity. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 31(5), 475–493. doi:10.1007/s10560-014-0331-y
- Pinquart, M., & Pfeiffer, J. P. (2015). Solving developmental tasks in adolescents with a chronic physical illness or physical/sensory disability: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 62(3), 249–264.
- Rimmer, R. B., Pressman, M. S., Takach, O. P., Bay, R. C., Croteau, R., Hansen, L. D., . . . Caruso, D. M. (2012). Burn-injured adolescents report gaining multiple developmental benefits and improved life skills as a result of burn camp attendance. *Journal of Burn Care & Research*, 33(4), 552–560.
- Scales, P. C. (2011). Youth developmental assets in global perspective: Results from international adaptations of the Developmental Assets Profile. *Child Indicators Research*, 4(4), 619–645.
- Schwartz, S. J., Côté, J. E., & Arnett, J. J. (2005). Identity and agency in emerging adulthood: Two developmental routes in the individualization process. *Youth & Society*, 37(2), 201–229. doi:10.1177/0044118X05275965
- Schwartz, S. J., Zamboanga, B. L., Weisskirch, R. S., & Rodriguez, L. (2009). The relationships of personal and ethnic identity exploration to indices of adaptive and maladaptive psychosocial functioning. *International Journal of Behavioural Development*, 33(2), 131–144.
- The Search Institute. (2013). *Developmental Assets Profile: Technical Summary*. Retrieved from <http://www.search-institute.org/surveys/DAP>
- Sibthorp, J., Bialeschki, M. D., Morgan, C., & Browne, L. (2013). Validating, norming, and utility of a Youth Outcomes Battery for recreation programs and camps. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 45(4), 514–536.
- Snelgrove, R. (2015). Youth with chronic illness forming identities through leisure. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 47(1), 154–173.
- Sorrell, G. T., & Montgomery, M. J. (2001). Feminist perspectives on Erik-

- son's theory: Their relevance for contemporary identity development research. *Identity*, 1, 97–128.
- Stam, H., Hartman, E. E., Deurloo, J. A., Groothoff, J., & Grootenhuys, M. A. (2006). Young adult patients with a history of pediatric disease: Impact on course of life and transition into adulthood. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 39, 4–13. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2005.03.011
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2007). *Using multivariate statistics.*, 5th ed. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon/Pearson Education.
- Thurber, C. A., Scanlin, M. M., Scheuler, L., & Henderson, K. A. (2006). Youth development outcomes of the camp experience: Evidence for multidimensional growth. *J Youth Adolesc*, 36(3), 241–254. doi:10.1007/s10964-006-9142-6
- Van Staa, A., Jedeloo, S., Latour, J., & Trappenburg, M. (2008). A normal life with an unhealthy body: Self-identity in adolescents growing up with chronic illness. *Pediatrics*, 122(1), 226–226.
- Waterman, A. S. (1990). Identity from a social constructivist perspective. *PsycCritiques*, 35(11), 1056–1057. doi:10.1037/030574
- Waterman, A. S. (2007). Doing well: The relationship of identity status to three conceptions of well-being. *Identity*, 7(4), 289–307.
- Waterman, A. S. (2015). What does it mean to engage in identity exploration and to hold identity commitments? A methodological critique of multidimensional measures for the study of identity processes. *Identity*, 15(4), 309–349.
- Wilson-Ahlstrom, A., Yohalem, N., DuBois, D., Ji, P., Hillaker, B., Weikart, D. P., & Forum for Youth Investment. (2014). *From soft skills to hard data: Measuring youth program outcomes. Second Edition*. Retrieved from http://forumfyi.org/files/soft_skills_hard_data_0.pdf
- Yohalem, N., & Wilson-Ahlstrom, A. (2010). Inside the black box: Assessing and improving quality in youth programs. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 45(3/4), 350–357. doi:10.1007/s10464-010-9311-3