

So Much More Than Just a Good Time: A Qualitative Look at Burn Camp

M Barr, BS, LRT/CTRS, K Marrale, BS, A Fields, RN, BSN, L Chrisco, MSN, RN-BC

Introduction

In 1982 The North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center introduced the first burn camp experience for pediatric burn survivors in the United States. Goals of camp included bringing children together who experienced burn trauma and to support the emotional and psychosocial aspects of post-burn healing. Evaluations have historically been a part of the camp review process. Although routine to collect evaluative data from campers, counselors and staff following each camp, this approach primarily addressed the fun and operational aspects of each individual camp. Staff felt that evaluations did not capture whether burn camp was beneficial to the emotional recovery of young burn survivors. The input of parents/guardians has not been routinely gathered yet it was felt they are the best people to provide input regarding the benefit of camp. A survey was created and piloted to include the parent perspective in the evaluative process.

Methods

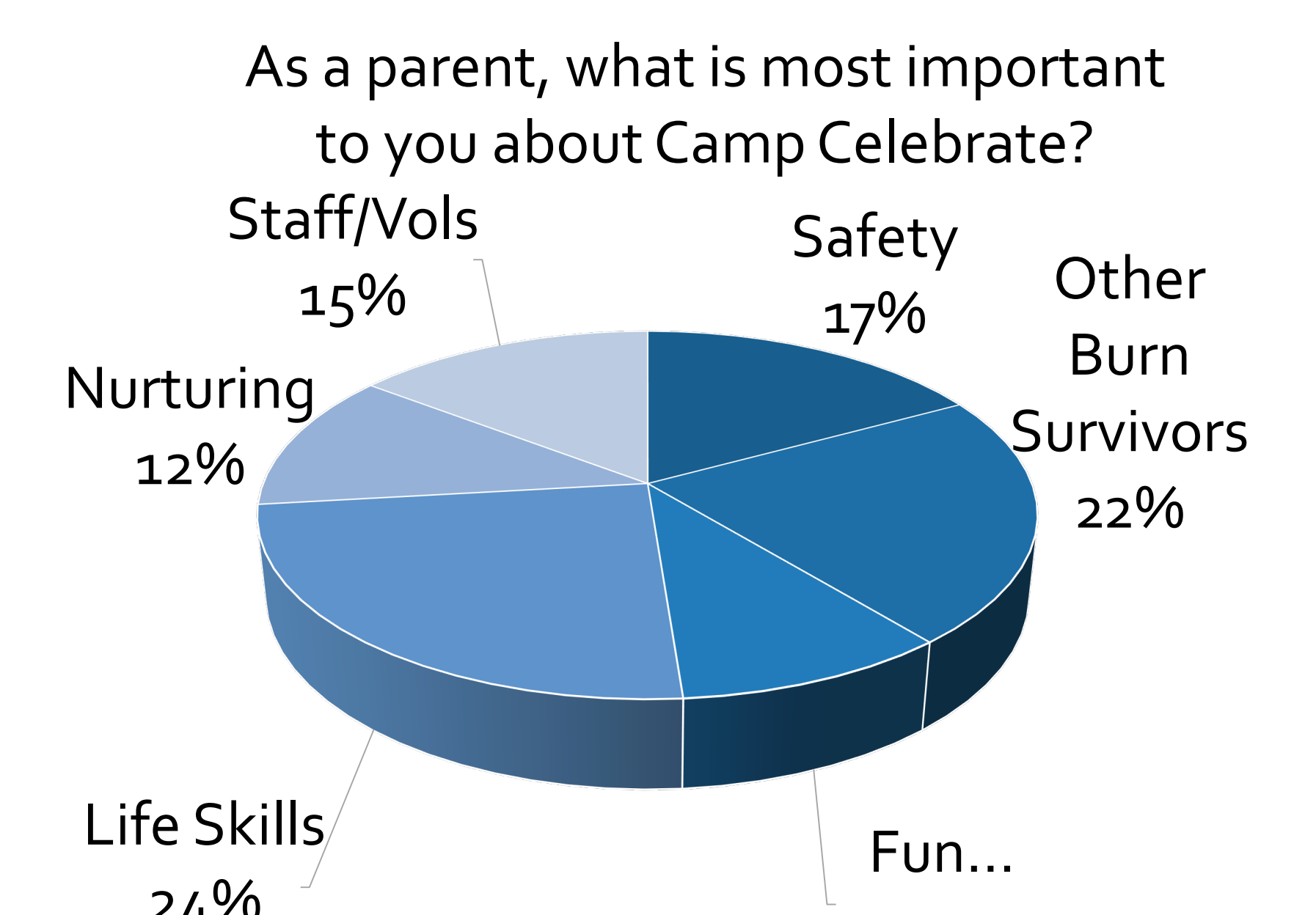
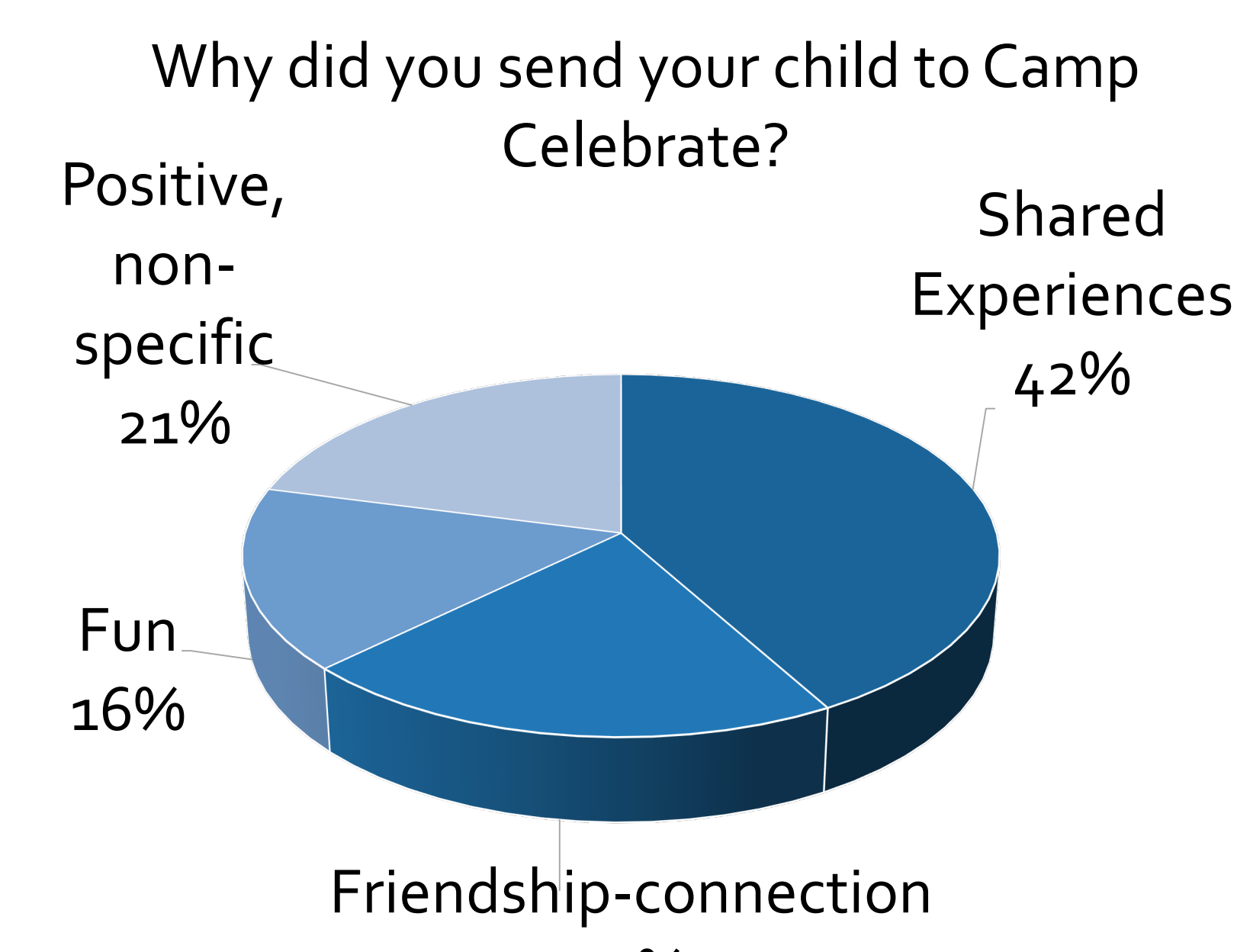
- A nine-question electronic survey was sent to the 58 parents/guardians of campers between the ages of 7-15 within the week following camp.
- Open-ended questions were used to allow for unrestricted disclosure of thoughts, feelings, praise or criticism.
- Qualitative analysis of the responses was conducted with agreement between two reviewers.

Survey Questions

1. How many times has your child been to camp?
2. Why did you send your child to Camp Celebrate?
3. Describe your child's experience at Camp Celebrate.
4. Did burn camp benefit your child in any way? Please describe.
5. As a parent, what is most important to you about Camp Celebrate?
6. Beyond this program, what do you see as a pressing need that could be addressed for burn survivors by the Aftercare Team?
7. Do you believe Camp Celebrate makes a long-term positive impact for your child?
8. Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns?
9. Name (optional)

Results

- 31 out of 58 surveys were returned (53%)
- Parent/guardian responses indicated their primary motivation for sending a child to camp was for the Shared Experiences with Other Burn Survivors



"He needed to interact with people who have been burned and see that his is not alone with his injury and other people have gone through a similar situation."

"Positive camp experience where he can interact with other kids who can relate to what he's been through"

"My child is excited to be around people that are like him. It gives him a sense of belonging"

"The camp helps to boost her self esteem"

"Child getting to interact with other burn victims"

"The support he receives from other survivors. There is no judgment of his scars"

- **97% of parents/guardians who responded believe that Camp Celebrate makes a long-term positive impact for their child**

Conclusions

- Parent responses on the evaluation survey offered valuable information regarding the benefit of Camp Celebrate 2019 for campers.
- Parents were responsive to the request to share their thoughts about their child's experience at camp.
- Camp programming will now include parent evaluation in the routine evaluation process.
- Research involving the parent perspective can help validate the belief that burn camp positively impacts the recovery of pediatric burn survivors.
- Research in this area is recommended.