Social Justice Specialty TrackSession 1

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| **AUTHOR(S):** | Sarra Alpert |
| **SUMMARY:** | In these sessions, we’ll be exploring a series of activities and perspectives about what it means to be in solidarity with others. How do I genuinely learn from others about what they’re experiencing, what they need, and how I can support them? How have Jews stood up for and with other communities in the past? How can Jews come together with other communities to stand up for social justice now and how are we doing that already? *– Submitted by Sarra Alpert* |
| **TOPIC(S):** | Social Justice, Tikkun Olam |
| **LEARNING OBJECTIVE:** | Fellows will gain new tools and activities for social justice activities that focus on how communities and individuals come together, stand up for each other, and support each other, especially in the current political moment. |
| **AUDIENCE:** | Most activities are designed for older campers (13 and up) or staff. Some activities can be adapted for younger groups. |
| **TIMING:** | This full set of sessions covers several hours’ worth of material. Smaller sections are broken out into separate activities in the Knowledge Center, as well. |
| **APPENDICES:** |  |
| **MATERIALS NEEDED:** | Chart paper, markers, journaling paper, handouts, glasses cutouts (link in outline), assorted art supplies, something to play music from (a phone with a good speaker is fine), A/V setup for a laptop projection if possible (can be adjusted to do without) |
| **SET-UP DETAILS:** | Space with enough room to have everyone in a circle. Also need some room to move around (can move within and around the chair circle) and will need walls for posting texts. Some activities involve A/V but can be done without, if needed. |

**Session Timeline & Outline:**

**Track Session 1: What do you need?**

1. **Trigger Activity - Seeing Each Other:**

* Put on some slow-paced music and ask everyone to walk around the room/area at a leisurely pace, making as much eye contact as possible.
* When the music stops, get into a pair with whomever you’re currently holding eye contact with (or find a partner if you weren’t currently holding eye contact with anyone).
* Hold eye contact for 10 more seconds (leader will tell them when time is up).
* Then introduce yourselves to each other, sharing your name and one of your favorite things.
* Repeat this at least six more times (or if you have time, you can do it as many times as there are people, so that everyone has a chance to meet everyone else this way. By later in the game, people will be consciously seeking out those people they haven’t partnered with).
* Come back together and discuss: what felt uncomfortable about this? How did you push through that discomfort to stay present in the moment? How did you see differently than you might have otherwise? How did you feel differently after your encounter than you might have felt otherwise?

1. **What Do You See?**

* Ask everyone to close their eyes and imagine that they’re coming by themselves to a big event where they’ll be new - where they’ve never been to the physical space and don’t know most of the people who will be at the event.
  + What are the things that they look for when they arrive?
  + What are things they might notice that would make them feel more or less welcome in that space, more or less included, more or less safe, and/or more aligned with people or more different from them?
* Give everyone a pair of paper glasses (example [here](http://www.canstockphoto.com/set-of-glasses-15429658.html)). Ask everyone to write (on the glasses) their responses to the questions above.
* Get into pairs. Walk each other through that space as if your partner was wearing your glasses - what would they see? Discuss with each other:
  + What items on your glasses were different? How does it shift your perspective to see what someone else is looking for?
* Come back together. Ask a few people to share something that they look for and something that could be done to help them feel more welcome or accounted for in a given space - whether that’s something that the host location or organization can do in advance or something that the average person at the event can do on their own.

1. **Bearing Witness:**

* Study and discuss the attached text study on Moses’ moment of “seeing the Israelites’ burdens” differently.

1. **Hunting for Access:**

* Read and discuss this article: <http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/addressing-racial-bias-is-a-form-of-jewish-engagement/>
* Start with a pre-written list of identity factors that impact someone’s experience in the world. For example: race, ethnicity, family makeup, class background, ability, gender, sexual orientation, etc.
* Split into small groups and go on a virtual scavenger hunt, mentally going through your own camps (and/or camps you’ve visited) to note examples where those camps are doing especially well at building an accessible and inclusive space or not doing well at it. Keep in mind what it would take for someone to feel that they see themselves (and the various aspects of their identity) addressed and represented, in addition to the more evident elements of making actual activities and spaces directly accessible. Also keep in mind to try and think about what's not there (e.g., posters of Jews that don’t all appear to be white), and what is.
  + *Note: If doing this activity with more time, this would be great as an actual scavenger hunt where teams move around the camp environment looking for items to add to their lists.*
* Come back together. Watch the following clip from African-American activist and author James Baldwin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6WlM1dca18>. Baldwin is pointing toward the impact of how institutions behave (regardless of what they claim to believe).
* Discuss:
  + What do you think about that?
  + How have you seen that play out in your own experience?
  + What are some examples of what you identified in the scavenger hunt that point toward a difference between your camp’s beliefs and the day-to-day experience there?
* Finally, share some examples of what demonstrates congruence between what a camp says it believes and how it behaves and also ideas for how to improve areas that are lacking.

1. **New Vision:**

* End this session by describing together an ideal camp environment where people can walk in and find what they’re looking for through their glasses.
* You can also make a list of people’s individual commitments to actions they’re going to take to address something they now understand differently, now that they see it through someone else’s eyes.