

Invisible Baggage: When Loss Breaches the Camp Bubble,
Elective

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SUMMARY:	We will explore the different kinds of loss that find their way onto our campgrounds, and discuss how to appropriately approach grief and loss within the safe, supportive, and sacred space that is camp.
ABC GOALS:	<p>Affective: Participants will feel....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validated in their experiences of loss in and out of camp More comfortable discussing loss with their campers when it comes up during normal conversation That camp is a safe space in which to explore their relationships to loss and grief <p>Behavior: Participants will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer tools and techniques to support their colleagues and campers through loss at camp Identify signs of grief when they are expressed in the camp bubble Create a safe space for their colleagues and campers to explore their relationships with loss and grief <p>Cognitive: Participants will know...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few of the traditional Jewish rituals around loss How to engage with loss at camp in a way that feels appropriate to grief and camp The importance of validating and safely engaging with grief at camp
AUDIENCE:	Any size and any age
TIMING:	60 minutes
APPENDICES:	Engaging with Grief in the Camp Bubble.pdf FJC Grief at Camp.pptx
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Take-home worksheet of things to say or not say Piece of butcher paper Sticky notes Large sharpie for headings Sharpies or markers

SET-UP DETAILS:

Chairs set up in a large circle

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:05 - Getting settled in
- 00:05-00:10 - Introductions, setting group norms
- 00:10-00:25 - Sticky note activity
- 00:25-00:30 - Tell my story
- 00:30-00:40 - Ways to engage with grief at camp
- 00:40-00:45 - Quick review of handout
- 00:45-00:60 - Questions?

SESSION OUTLINE:

00:00-00:05 - Getting settled in

- This is a sacred space so we want to allow folks to come in and be in the right mindset to focus on this tough subject
- Instrumental music playing

00:05-00:10 - Introductions, setting group norms

- Creating safe space for all of us to be raw and vulnerable

00:10-00:25 - Sticky note activity

- “When I think about loss at camp, I think about....”
 - Specific losses
 - Names
 - Situations
 - Objects
 - Concepts
- Ask participants to write their answers on individual sticky notes, and to put their sticky notes on one big piece of butcher paper.
 - Give them a few minutes for this.
- Once all the sticky notes have been placed, ask the participants to organize them into categories however they see fit.
 - See what comes out of this!
 - The point of this part of the exercise (which you will reveal to them later) is that loss looks a lot of different ways and can be seen on the surface as one thing while it may, in fact, be very different. Hopefully this part of the activity will allow them to see that things can be perceived a lot of different ways.

CORNERSTONE 2022 RESOURCE

- What are the categories that came out of each section? Write the title on that section of the butcher paper.
 - Some ideas if they need:
 - Living Beings
 - Sacred Spaces
 - Feelings and Functions
 - Objects and Ideas
 - Other Losses
- Review some of the submissions on each board
 - Conflict in Israel / war / global tragedy / natural disaster
 - Loss of friendships and changing relationships over time
 - Fires at camp
 - A family member or friend dies in one's home community, either during or before camp
 - A member of the camp community dying, either in or out of camp
- Explain that these are all very valid losses, but we are going to focus on Living Beings since in my experience, these tend to come up most at camp

00:25-00:30 - Tell my story: Marla's death – July 31, 2002

00:30-00:40 - Ways to engage with grief at camp

- Show PowerPoint slide: Ways that loss can be expressed in the camp setting
 - Homesickness is huge!!
 - Acting out
 - Keeping to oneself
- Way to validate and hold space for the loss, while allowing camp to bring comfort
 - Using Jewish tradition to guide us through this
 - If the loss occurs within camp community OR If loss happens at home or in home community while someone is at camp OR If loss took place in the past
 - Alternative Shiva
 - Covering mirrors or other sports in the bunk or camp with pictures
 - Designating a specific time for sharing stories and memories
 - This can be with the bunk, with a specific friend, with a counselor, with a higher staff member
 - Not everyone may know the person who died, and even if they did, they may not have had the same relationship or feel the same loss
 - Creating a support group within camp for anyone who was affected
 - When Marla died, I was the only one in my age group who had known her well and I felt completely alone afterward
 - When my parents showed up at camp, I bawled into their arms because no one else had supported me at camp. It wasn't because they didn't want to, but because they had no idea I was grieving



CORNERSTONE 2022 RESOURCE

- What could it look like to offer a support group throughout the summer to meet regularly for anyone who is grieving for a loss, maybe unbeknownst to other people?
- Memorializing the person who died – show Marla’s garden

00:40-00:45 - Quick review of handout

- Handout will cover some “dos” and “don’ts” of responding to grief
- This is for them to take with them, but we will go over a couple quick highlights

00:45-00:60 - Questions?

- This is an opportunity strictly for questions that can impact the entire group. Any personal stories should be saved for a conversation during a meal or break!

BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP:

If you know of a particular loss that impacted that camp community, ask a variety of people who may have experienced the loss differently to be part of the conversation – maybe even a short panel discussion at the end of the program.