



LEADERS ASSEMBLY 2016
PLENARY: I Belong to Jewish Camp
Design Theory Breakout: LGBTQ

Question 1: How can I build our understanding about the LGBTQ Campers & Families?

- Openness - willingness to evolve
- Research
- Text people (not in a cage)
- Commitment to a vocabulary
- Community in a cabin
- Creating partnerships
- Ask: How do we make this a better experience? (Do not make assumptions)
- Utilizing Resources (Keshet & Sojourn)
- Commitment to patience with the public
- Relationship building – Shabbat dinners, Affinity Groups, etc.
- Education for general camp community (parents, commission, etc)
- Participate in local events/create events @ camp Teen Youth Groups/Youth Groups
- Be open to learn
- Educate more on the subject matter/meet people
- Ask questions
- Listen
- Consult with local LGBTQ agencies, network with camps who have experience and Keshet
- Tell your story about LGBTQ experiences
- Acknowledge your limits and where you currently are in your understanding
- General resources within the Jewish community and general community
- Building/providing context
- Staff training from their own experiences (role playing)
- Family engagement
- Encouraging questions and conversations
- Personal stories
- Policy and sensitivity training language
- Setting the tone with culture and communication
- Learning from the experience of other organizations (bring Keshet or other trainers in to teach us)
- Supporting staff on their own identity journey and exploration
- De-gender/remove gender labels when unnecessary /dismantle hetero normativity



- Speak to families with LGBTQ members
- Understand specific Campers – Intake
- Train staff – separation of gender from sex/sexual orientation; Train Top to bottom –directors need to be involved.
- Admit what you don't know
- Talk to staff – find out who is excited about this issue

Question 2: How could I open camp and invite LBGTO Campers & Families in?

- Money
- Family Camp
- Smaller events (Shabbat dinners, pride parades, book clubs, movie clubs, etc.)
- Transparency
- Physical symbols around camp
- Make inclusion a part of mission statement
- Inclusive communication – commitment to vocabulary
- Set the Tone - loop (LGBTG symbol), branding reflects inclusiveness
- Network with JCC & other agencies to inform & invite families to consider camp
- Peer to peer advocates
- Partnering with agencies to host programs at camp (other established LGBTQ camps)
- Mentoring opportunities
- Off season program engagement to build relationships (day schools, synagogues, JCC/JCFS/JFCS)
- Open House for LGBQ
- Sharing information/events/articles geared toward this population (showing support, participating as a camp community, hosting a training, a speaker, etc.)
- Ambassador family – recruiting
- Modeling our values in public
- Showcase statement of inclusion (be explicit in who is welcome at your camp)
- Expand marketing scope
- Scrub policies/procedures for outdated verbiage
- Advocate as a camping profession (campminder example)
- Create plans, talking points
- Dismantle hetero/cis normativity (especially on forms)
- Include LGBTQ inclusion statement on website, in mission statement, etc.
- Have LGBTQ staff
- Have staff comfortable with talking about sex
- Possibility of asking kids before summer about their gender identity



- Training for the kids
- Terminology Charts
- Safe space trainings

Question 3: What is the experience I want the LGBTQ Campers & Families and our existing population to have?

- Acceptance
- Integration
- Transformative
- Safe Space
- Home base
- Judaism helped me be myself
- Camp is a place of advocacy
- Push themselves to be better selves
- Summer is defined by the experience they want to have
- My cabin is a place where I matter (bus, hotel room, yurt, etc.)
- Feel part of the overall camp community (belong)
- See our camp as safe and supportive and inclusive
- Breaking down the myths
- So what? – Viewed as just part of the fabric of the camp
- Don't feel isolated/different
- Celebrate what they bring to camp
- Respected/we care
- View camp as a partner and critical matter of their child's journey
- Continuous, ongoing conversations
- Personal connections & learning
- Provide “essence of camp” experience – openness, cared for, fun, be themselves
- Have meaningful options
- Create “big tent” feel
- Stories of acceptance & celebration
- Discussion of gender labels for all (learning something new, this conversation includes gender justice generally)
- Be open about everything
- Judaism is a safe space for ALL
- Strong and independent