



CORNERSTONE 2016 RESOURCE

Inclusion and Disabilities: I am not your Inspiration, *FJC Knowledge Center Resource*

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SUMMARY:	An activity in which participants explore some of the barriers faced by individuals with disabilities through writing and speaking about their own experiences and reacting to those of others. - <i>Submitted by Ariella Rosen</i>
TOPICS:	Communication Skills, Community Building, Holidays and Celebrations, Identity, Inclusion- Special Needs, Jewish Values, Performance, Social Justice, Tikkun Olam, Writing
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will gain an understanding of how easily individuals with disabilities are not praised for true accomplishment, and are instead objectified and marginalized.
AUDIENCE:	This activity can be done with individuals of all ages, though the discussion piece about ableism will be much better grasped by older campers (14 and older) or staff. Group size can vary, but should not feel intimidating for those getting up to speak.
LENGTH:	30-60 Minutes
APPENDIXES:	Ariella ST2 Handout 1
MATERIALS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● shipping labels or tape ● Video and audio capability
SETTING:	N/A

Session Description:

- Ask participants to take a moment to write in their notebooks:
 - What is something you have accomplished in your life of which you are especially proud? Why were you proud of yourself?
- Ask for a few participant volunteers who are willing to share (no more than 3-4).
 - Gather those volunteers on the side and give those that are willing a shipping label to place over their mouth in a moment. (Participants who wish to speak without a label over their mouth are welcome as well.)
 - Invite speakers to step out of the room for 2 minutes to take a deep breath, to place the shipping label on their mouths, and to prepare their speeches.
- Address the rest of the group and explain: It is your job to welcome and appreciate the speakers. We will invite anyone who wishes to comment after each speaker.
- Ask for 4 participants who are willing to have a special role in which they will be called on a bit more in this “talkback.”
 - Bring them to the side and tell them that at least one of them will be called upon after each speech.
 - Many of the participants will be speaking a bit “differently.” Please make sure to respond with something along the lines of: “Wow, I can’t believe you were able to give a speech even though you couldn’t really talk. That’s so inspirational. It’s miraculous that you can do that.”



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- Invite speakers back, and warmly welcome them to share their moments of great accomplishment. Call on other participants to respond, making sure to call on at least one “that’s so inspirational” commenter per speech.
- After each speaker has shared, debrief with the group:
 - How did it feel to share your accomplishment? How did the response make you feel?
 - Ask the group: what did you notice about the speakers? The group’s response?
 - When have you felt silenced? Have you ever experienced a time when others focused on your barriers rather than your deeds?
 - (Give a disclaimer: The shipping labels were not meant to simulate disability, and could not do so in any sort of accurate or complete way. There is no true way to live someone else’s experience of a disability. They were simply meant to provide a barrier and a distraction.)
- Share Stella Young’s TEDTalk: “I am not your inspiration, thank you very much.” (Handout 1, Approx. 10 minutes long)
 - https://www.ted.com/talks/stella_young_i_m_not_your_inspiration_thank_you_very_much?language=en
- Ask participants for reactions to the video and debrief:
 - How does it change or not change your approach to your job as a counselor this summer?
 - What is the difference between inspiration and accomplishment? How can they as counselors enable all of their campers to truly shine?
- Offer Jewish content connection: What were the miracles of Chanukah? Suggest an alternative understanding of the miracles of Chanukah as well: A group of people who were completely discounted in their abilities rose up and overthrew reality and the dominant culture. They didn’t allow their voices or ways of expression to be silenced.
- Introduce the social justice issue of ableism (the ideology that those who are able-bodied are the standard or norm, and those who are not are different. This results in able-bodied privilege, and both subtle and blatant discrimination against those with disabilities.)
 - List some examples of ableism that happens at camp, and ways to work together to make change.

Additional Notes for Bringing it Back to Camp:

This activity can be modified in a number of ways. The Chanukah connection has been played down here, but can be elevated by more discussion on miracles and what we consider miracles in our time. This session can be used with staff as a sensitivity training to discuss how they interact with and treat campers with disabilities, and how the camp culture as a whole can embrace everyone. It can also be used to address bunk dynamics issues, especially if any sort of bullying is occurring based on a camper’s perceived differences. This activity can also show how other marginalized groups are silenced or not taken seriously. (Including people marginalized due to race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, etc.)

APPENDIXES:

ARIELLA ST2 HANDOUT 1