



CORNERSTONE 2016 RESOURCE

Owning Our Narratives: Writing & Performance (Session One), *Specialty Track 1*

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SUMMARY:	In session one of “Owning Our Narratives: Writing & Performance,” participants will begin to learn how to use spoken word poetry as a tool for storytelling, self-expression, and community building at camp, as well as explore what it means to have ownership - <i>Submitted by Caroline Rothstein</i>
TOPICS:	Camp-wide/Large Group Programs, Communication Skills, Community Building, Global Jewish Community, Historic Jewish Figures, Holidays and Celebrations, Identity, Jewish Culture, Jewish History, Jewish Text, Jewish Values, Life Cycle Events, Performance, Social Justice, Spirituality, Storytelling, Team Building, Teen Programs, Theater, Writing
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	The goal of the first session of “Owning Our Narratives: Writing & Performance” is to provide participants with a basic comfort level in writing narratives and stories both about other people and events, as well as about one’s self.
AUDIENCE:	This can be used for any size group, any age, and any camp role! Adjust the content accordingly!
LENGTH:	60-75 Minutes
APPENDIXES:	- Story Tabloid, Headline RUBRIC.doc - Story Tabloid, Headlines.doc
MATERIALS:	- Print outs of “Story Tabloid / Headlines” - I encourage participants to create their OWN “Story Tabloid / Headlines” based around Jewish stories from history and spiritual texts. - Pens / writing utensils and paper for each participant
SETTING:	I want to be able to have participants sit in chairs that are in a circle.

Session Description:

- Invite participants to find a seat in the circle and each have a writing utensil, paper, and clipboard.
- Caroline hands out blank index cards to every participant and asks everyone to write down anything they don’t feel comfortable sharing aloud that they want Caroline as the facilitator to know. If there is nothing to say, participants can write, “I don’t have anything to say.” They will not be shared with anyone else. (2 minutes)
- Caroline will collect the cards at the end of today’s session from every participant.
- Begin session.
- Caroline hands out
- Caroline welcomes participants, introduces herself (brief bio/background), shares her pronouns, and shares specialty track goal and three-session agenda, as well as session one agenda (5 minutes)

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- Workshop goal: learn how to use spoken word poetry as a tool for storytelling, self-expression, and community building at camp; explore what it means to have ownership in telling our own personal and communal narratives.
- Specialty track agenda:
 - Session one: looking at storytelling, sensationalizing, and what it means to tell other people's narratives. Introduction into writing.
 - Session two: what it means to share our own stories – deeper into writing; introduction into performing.
 - Session three: what it means that we are a people of storytelling – Pesach, “the mouth speaks” – and dive deeper into performing.
- Session one agenda:
 - Opening welcome
 - Brief discussion on storytelling – both in Jewish context, and not/otherwise
 - Exercise / activity on Tabloids & sensationalism in storytelling
 - Writing activity
 - Sharing
 - Closing
- Bring up confidentiality / asking questions / if need to leave = ok / available after
 - Name safer space, versus safe space – the intention is that this can be a safer space.
 - Ground rules that will be in place throughout the track – all three sessions
- Begin opening activity and ice-breaker (8 minutes):
 - Ask participants to share their name, their pronoun, why they chose this track, and one thing for which they're grateful today.
- Transition into storytelling discussion (10 minutes):
 - Ask participants to consider:
 - What does it mean to tell a story?
 - What are we specifically taught about story telling as Jews?
- Transition into interactive writing exercise:
 - Ask participants: In the context of storytelling: What is sensational? What is authentic and real? (5 minutes)
 - Caroline lays out tabloid headline sheets in the center of the circle. (5 minutes)
 - Ask participants to stand up and start walking around and reading the headlines.
 - Ask participants to pick one from which they want to expound upon and write – feel free to write it down on in case multiple people want to use one headline.
 - Transition into writing prompt (20 minutes on this section):
 - Take this tabloid headline, and write the story that accompanies the headline?
 - Ask volunteers to share what they've written (5 minutes)
 - Ask participants – where have you seen these narratives and storylines before?
 - Do they recognized these stories? If so, which ones? (5 minutes)
 - Reveal where additional headlines come from in Jewish history and texts



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- Transition into second writing prompt (20 minutes on this section):
- Ask participants stand up and pick a headline that resonates with a real thing that they've had happen in their life, or in the life of someone they know – it can be a stretch, or metaphorical.
 - Challenge themselves to expose something of themselves – their own humanness.
 - Consider – what emotions are at the root of this story? If it weren't sensationalized, what are people feeling?
- Ask everyone to write the story of that headline that is real in the context of their life or the lives of people directly around them, or to whom they are connected.
 - Note: there will not be a sharing element with this prompt today. They will revisit this for themselves in the next session.
- Transition into the closing exercise. (5 minutes)
- Ask participants: what's one thing you are clear on after today's session; what's one that that is still lingering?
- Caroline thanks everyone from coming.
- Another note from Caroline: make sure participants bring today's writing back with them to the next session; she can collect it for safekeeping, or they can hang on to it and bring it back.
- Caroline asks each participant to pass in their index cards as they leave.

Additional Notes for Bringing it Back to Camp:

I encourage participants to create their OWN "Story Tabloid / Headlines" based around Jewish stories from history and spiritual texts! The writing exercises work as their own workshops - either the tabloid writing about the tabloid and/or the personal writing about the tabloid headlines can all be done on their own, or in conjunction with one another.



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APPENDIXES:

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