

CORNERSTONE 2017 RESOURCE

Inclusion and Disabilities

Specialty Track 1

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SUMMARY:	This session is dedicated to understanding the concept of ableism and exploring how you can remove obstacles to inclusion at camp. - <i>Submitted by Ariella Rosen</i>
TOPIC(S):	Removing accessibility barriers, understanding ableism as it manifests at camp
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will leave with concrete ideas about how to remove obstacles to participation at camp for campers with disabilities, and with a greater awareness of how to notice those barriers.
AUDIENCE:	Ideal age range: 15 and up. Ideal group size: 20-40.
TIMING:	90 minutes
APPENDICES:	[Handout 1 (Stranger Game Instructions), Handout 2 (Scavenger Hunt Behaviors), Handout 3 (Ableism Cards)]
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Flipchart paper and markers, popsicle sticks, bucket, tape, copies of handouts, fidgets (koosh balls, Play-doh, etc.)
SET-UP DETAILS:	Any largish indoor space. Chairs set up in a circle, with plenty of room to spread out on the sides of the room. Before participants enter, scatter popsicle sticks around the room (approx. 1 per participant), some in plain sight and some more hidden.

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

- 00:00-00:10- Welcome and Introduction**
- 00:10-00:30- Stranger in a Strange Land Game**
- 00:30-00:50- Popsicle Stick Scavenger Hunt**
- 00:50- 01:00- Do Not Place a Stumbling Block**
- 01:00- 01:15- Ableism at Camp**
- 01:15-01:30- Debrief**

Welcome (10 min)

Welcome everyone to the specialty track. Go around and share name, camp, and pronouns. Establish communal norms:

- Fidgets are available for anyone who would like at any point
- Anyone is welcome at any time to stand up and take a break
- Agree upon confidentiality

Disclaimer 1 (if applicable): As an able-bodied person, it can be complicated to speak for and about a group which is not a part of my identity. It is important to bring in voices from the disabilities community as much as possible, and to have the humility to know that I cannot fully speak for the experience of having disability.

CORNERSTONE 2017 RESOURCE

Disclaimer 2: We may accidentally use language and/or make assumptions that are hurtful. Assume good intentions. Mistakes are okay, as are gentle corrections!

Strangers in a Strange Land Game (adapted from Sarra Alpert) (20 min)

Split participants into two groups, and send them to opposite sides of the room. (Groups should be far enough apart so that they are unable to hear each other or even see clearly what the other group is doing, but close enough that you can easily switch people between them.)

Give each group the instructions listed in Handout 1. (Instructions for both groups are identical, but the customs are not. Each group should not know anything about what the other is being told.)

Repeat the instructions and make sure they are understood (customs should not be written down).

Then give each group a very basic discussion question – i.e., go around and describe something like an average day at school, discuss your thoughts on a recent world event, etc.). They should start talking, keeping to their new society customs.

After a few minutes of conversation, start moving people from one group to the other. Do not give any instructions either to the person you're switching or to the groups as a whole about how they should handle the new people or handle being in a new group. Let them make their own spontaneous decisions about their response.

Let the conversation continue for about 5 minutes. In that time, not everyone needs to be moved, and about half of each original group should remain in place.

Bring the group back together and discuss:

- For those who switched groups: how did you feel when you came into the new group?
- What were the barriers to your participation? Did you remove them? If so, how?
- For everyone: How did the group react as a whole to having a new person in the circle? Did anyone try to explain your group's customs to the new people? If not, how did you react to those who didn't "get" what was going on around them? How did you think the group was "supposed" to act in relating to a new person who didn't know your customs?
- What are customs or norms that you encounter regularly that are never explained (at camp, in the Jewish world, and in the world at large)?
- It says 36 times in the Torah to love the "stranger." How might we have done that better in this game?
- In what ways is this activity as a whole successful in terms of inclusion? In what ways does it fall short?
- Who might struggle in an activity like this, and how might it be modified?

Popsicle Stick Scavenger Hunt (20 min)

Explain: There is one popsicle stick per person hidden in this room. No one may pick up more than one and every single popsicle stick must be found and thrown into the bucket in order for us to win. In order for this to work, we also need 2-3 volunteers for an alternative role. If you are interested in having that role, please come speak to the facilitator.

For those interested in the alternative role: Their job is to make sure that each popsicle stick is actually found and that all end up in the bucket. The game cannot end until you say so. They can offer advice or guidance to any other participant. They can use all parts of their bodies, but cannot actually touch any of the popsicle sticks.

CORNERSTONE 2017 RESOURCE

Give every participant a slip of paper with one of the following behaviors written on it (Handout 2). They must embody the instructions on the paper for the duration of this activity.

Behaviors:

- You move slowly and get distracted easily, but do well when you are given clear, simple instructions.
- Do not bend your fingers.
- You are a new Israeli camper, and you still have trouble understanding instructions given in English.
- You had a deeply hurtful experience with a scavenger hunt a few summers ago, and as a result, do not want to participate. (If someone puts you at ease, pick up a popsicle stick.)
- You are super competitive and want to win as fast as possible.
- You prefer having a lot of personal space, and therefore avoid crowded parts of the room.
- You are feeling nervous about the talent show tonight, which is consuming all of your energy.
- You like being helpful.
- You won't go anywhere without your best friend (identify someone in the group to be your best friend).
- Your feet may not touch the ground for the duration of this activity.

Once all popsicle sticks have landed in the bucket, come back together and discuss:

- Disclaimer about simulating disability. In activities like this, we may create conditions by preventing use of hands, feet, etc. This is not ever about experiencing having a disability – there is no way to recreate that experience in its entirety. Point out language on the behavior slips. At no point was anyone “given” a disability.
- Who were the last people to complete the task? Why?
- How did you support others in completing the task?
- What defined success in this activity?
- What was challenging about this? What felt easy?
- What did you notice about it that felt similar to other team challenges you've done? What did you notice that felt different?

Do Not Place a Stumbling Block (10 min.)

Reveal text on flipchart paper:

“You shall not insult the deaf, or place a stumbling block before the blind” (Leviticus 19:14)

- What are your initial reactions to these words? Rephrase it in your own words.
- Why do you think this mitzvah (commandment) needed to be given?
- In what way did this activity create obstacles?
- In that way did it remove obstacles?
- (Things to note: alternative roles, the group couldn't win without everyone's success and helping one another succeed, equalizing conditions by preventing the use of certain body parts, etc.)
- Introduce the concept of ableism (with definition written on flipchart paper):

“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.”

How does the concept of ableism connect to the verse from the Torah?

CORNERSTONE 2017 RESOURCE

Ableism at Camp: A Day in the Life (15 min.)

What are examples of ableism at camp? Discuss examples from the list below.

Scenarios based on real examples from camps:

- You know that Maccabia breakout is about to happen, and camp culture dictates that this is kept secret from the campers at all costs. You have a camper on the autism spectrum who struggles with unanticipated changes in the schedule. What is the obstacle and how can you remove it?
- The Shabbat songs that your camp sings are all in Hebrew. One of your campers has trouble processing language, specifically auditory stimuli. What is the obstacle and how can you remove it?
- Free time at the end of the evening activity is everyone's favorite time of day. Campers are permitted to roam around camp, as long as they are back by curfew. What is the obstacle and how can you remove it?
- Your language for speaking to your campers includes words and phrases like: "guys..." "everyone must participate – no excuses," and "why can't you just..." What is the obstacle and how can you remove it?

Invite one participant to act out a typical day at their camp in detail, beginning with waking up and continuing through each step of starting their day.

Each time a participant recognizes a potential obstacle to participation by another individual, ask them to yell "michshol!" and stop the conversation to point it out. (If done right, the group will have interrupted the process so many times, the actor will barely make it past breakfast before time in this activity is up.) Explain that identifying the obstacles is an important first step. Over the next two sessions we'll develop tools and skills to remove them.

Debrief (15 min.)

Review the various activities from the session. What tools did you notice that can help in creating more inclusive programming? What are other tools you can think of?

(Answers may include: alternative roles in an activity, fidgets, multiple modalities, leveling the playing field, no one can win until everyone does, etc.)

Who are others at camp who can be your allies in fighting ableism?

Give everyone a card (Handout 3) and ask them to answer the question on the back. Make sure their name is on their card and return it to the facilitator.

Do a final go-around with everyone sharing one word that represents what I'm feeling/thinking about right now.

Lehitraot, see you next time!

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

Modify capture the flag by requiring everyone to find their own flag. Create a "michshol" course, an obstacle course that models accessibility and inclusion using the tools above. Act out "Ableism: A Day in the Life" as part of staff training to raise everyone's awareness of potential barriers. Bring ableism into conversations and activities at camp about social justice.