

Inclusion and Disabilities: Shining and Light *Specialty Track 2*

AUTHOR(S):	Ariella Rosen
SUMMARY:	This session explores how masks can be both barriers and openings to greater inclusion, and how Universal Design can be an effective strategy in enabling everyone to shine - <i>Submitted by Ariella Rosen</i>
TOPIC(S):	Community building, Inclusion-Disabilities
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will be able to design and implement programming that is accessible to and inclusive of the various populations at their camps, and understand their limitations as well.
AUDIENCE:	This session as a whole would be best suited for older campers or staff (ages 14 and up), though pieces of it could easily be modified for younger campers. Ideal group size is 20-60 people.
TIMING:	90 minutes
APPENDICES:	Wonder Handout, Moses Image and Text
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Device that plays music, and 2-3 songs selected (should be upbeat, fun for dancing, and if possible, songs that have some sort of special meaning or connection for the group). Cardboard or plastic masks (ideally masks that go around the eyes and at least part of the face) Blank paper Pens
SET-UP DETAILS:	Any space with room to move around will work, with access to basic AV- a speaker to connect to a music-playing device. A screen or sheet should be set up in front of a light- a good camping lantern or the light from a projector will do, with ample space in front of the screen for dancing. Chairs or benches should be set up in a circle a little further from the screen for discussion.

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

00:00-00:10 Dance Party!
00:10-00:30 Wonder Discussion
00:30-00:40 Moses and Masks
00:40-00:50 Intro to Universal Design
00:50-01:15 Doing Some Designing!
01:15-01:25 Debrief
01:25-01:30 Closing Dance Party!

Dance Party! (10 min.)

Explain to participants that we are going to start with a dance party. While the music is on, everyone can feel free to move however they want - dance, strike a pose, or even just stand or sit still and take in the music- let loose however you feel comfortable.

After 1-2 minutes of dancing, hand out masks and explain that these should be worn for the duration of the dance party. As well, anyone who wishes may go dance behind the screen at any point.

You can interact with other people during this dance party, but you do not have to.

At the conclusion of the dance party (1-2 songs), ask:

- What was your experience of this dance party? Did you feel comfortable? (Why/why not)
- Did you use the screen? (Why/why not) If yes, what impact did it have on your experience?
- How did wearing a mask change your experience of the dance party? If yes, how so?

“Wonder” (20 min.)

Read the excerpt from “Wonder” (write on flipchart and/or pass out copies for those who want to follow along). (Explain for those who may be unfamiliar the premise of the book, now also a movie: Wonder is the story of a 10-year-old boy born with craniofacial abnormalities, and his experiences in trying to find a sense of belonging in a new school.)

“For me, Halloween is the best holiday in the world. It even beats Christmas. I get to dress up in a costume. I get to wear a mask. I get to go around like every other kid with a mask and nobody thinks I look weird. Nobody takes a second look. Nobody notices me. Nobody knows me. I wish every day could be Halloween. We could all wear masks all the time. Then we could walk around and get to know each other before we got to see what we looked like under the masks.”
(Wonder, p. 73 “Costumes” R. J. Palacio)

Ask for reactions to this excerpt:

- Why do you think we had masks and a screen during our dance party?
- What are some of the “masks” you wear sometimes, or that you notice others wearing?
- When do masks help, and when are masks barriers?

Invite participants to journal on the following three questions:

- What are things that you wish others could know about you that you often keep hidden?
- What is something that you wish people would notice more readily about you?
- What is something that you would share more fully with others if you had a “mask” on?

Ask participants to share whatever they feel comfortable sharing with a partner (they are welcome to wear a mask for this if they would like!)

Invite 2-3 people to share their responses to one of these questions with the whole group [Why did we do this in a session about inclusion? EMPATHY.]

Moses and Masks (10 min.)

Show the group the picture of Michelangelo's Moses (display on the screen and/or pass around a handout).

Ask:

- Who is this?
- What do you notice about this picture?
- What assumptions can you make about this person?

Explain that it is a sculpture of Moses, capturing a moment from a story in the Torah, but that this image got it all wrong. Explain that you are now going to share the story of what REALLY happened:

Tell the story of Moses from Exodus 34:27-35 (the text is included as an appendix, but if possible, tell this as story rather than reading the text). You can follow the script below:

Imagine the scene; Moses was up on Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights getting the Torah from God. This was one of the biggest moments of all time for the Israelite people. Right after being freed from slavery, they find themselves at this huge mountain, with thunder and lightning all around, standing together, waiting to hear the word of God. It's all very intense. They heard the Ten Commandments, but now their waiting for the rest. While they waited below, impatient, Moses has been hanging out with God. After a return trip up Mount Sinai after the golden calf fiasco, it's now time for Moses to come down and rejoin the people. He's been gone over a month. He is literally glowing, with rays of light shining out from his face. The Israelites are scared- they've never seen anything like this and they step back. They are afraid to be near him. So Moses puts on a veil to cover his face. He takes it off to talk to God, and to share God's word with the people, but otherwise, he wears a mask, for the rest of his days.

Point out the horns in the picture of Michelangelo's Moses, and explain that the same word for rays of light (*keren*) also means horns. Explain that this is how the stereotype of Jews having horns came about. Seeing light and thinking they are horns- that is what happens when we make assumptions based on appearance or what we think we know about someone. Our work is all about letting everyone shine and be noticed fully for who they are.

Ask for reactions to the story.

- How does the veil help Moses? How is it a barrier?
- What would happen in our communities everyone could shine without feeling the need to cover up?

Intro to Universal Design (10 min.)

Explain that there are different strategies out there for making that possible. (Recall Stella Young's TED Talk from Session 1, and her explanation of the "social model of disability." Many impediments due to disability have to do with the way we have built our society.)

One such strategy is Universal Design.

- If anyone has heard of Universal Design, invite them to explain how they understand it.

Explain: the primary idea behind Universal Design is that if we design with the needs of those with disabilities in mind, everyone benefits.

- Ask if anyone has examples of this.
- Provide some examples as well:
 - [Nahal HaShofet](#) Inclusive Nature Park in Israel and accessible playgrounds
 - wide sidewalks
 - digital thermometer
 - the app icons on your phone
 - giant relays at camp (where each person can sign up for the task they want to do)

With each example, ask what needs are met by the design, as well as how everyone benefits

Ask participants again to consider the dance party:

- What needs might have needed to have been met? How were those needs met? How were they not met?
- If Auggie (the main character in "Wonder") had helped plan the dance party, what might he have suggested?
- How might it have looked different if you had planned it together with a camper or fellow staff who (Display the list below on flipchart paper and choose 2-3 behaviors to consider):
 - doesn't like loud noises
 - gets nervous performing in front of other people
 - requires simple, specific instructions
 - is a wheelchair user
 - is deaf
 - is easily distracted
 - would rather read a book
 - solicit the group for additional behaviors to consider

[Note: this list is composed of behaviors rather than diagnoses. Ask the group to consider why. This is a good moment to remind everyone that as Howard Blas, National Tikvah Director of the Ramah Camps likes to say, "If you meet one person with autism, you know one person with autism."]

Doing Some Designing! (25 min.)

Explain: you'll now have the opportunity to do some designing on a moment at camp when everyone is meant to be able to shine for who they are: the first day cabin icebreaker. In smaller groups, you'll have the opportunity to create an activity or ritual for your cabin community that tries to meet the following parameters:

- Gives each individual an opportunity to shine/feel like they can be or share their full selves
- Considers and meets as many different needs and modalities as possible (consult list of behaviors for guidance)
- Is fun and/or meaningful, of course!

After 15-20 minutes, combine 2-3 groups together to model (if possible) or explain their activity. Time each group for 2 minutes of modeling/explaining and 1 minute of feedback from the other group(s).

Debrief (10 min.)

- What did you find easy in your planning? What was challenging?
- What are the limits of universal design? Can you truly plan something that works for EVERYONE? If not, what do you do? (Give some examples of when certain needs might contradict one another.)
- What do we do about this challenge?
- Explain that one very important way is to include individuals with disabilities in the conversation. (“Nothing about us without us.”) Very few successfully accessible buildings, appliances, etc. that were designed with people with disabilities in mind did not include them in the process. How might you invite these voices into the designing you do this summer?

End with a return to the dance party (play 1-2 minutes of 1 song). Implement any suggested changes from earlier conversation that are possible to bring in in the moment.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

Many campers will be familiar with “Wonder,” so a deeper conversation with masks, costumes, and what we choose to share and hide could work for campers of all ages.

You can involve campers in planning some of their own programs!

The Moses story can be used in conversations about leadership, and how sometimes being a leader sometimes means standing alone, while also finding ways to connect with everyone.

Dance parties happen at camp all the time- often spontaneously. Considering different ways to allow as many campers (and staff!) as possible to bring their full selves into it can turn a basic camp activity into the highlight of someone’s summer.