

L-G-B-T How Do You Spell Community? *Elective 2*

AUTHOR(S):	Mara Berde
SUMMARY:	This session provides tools for making camps more inclusive of LGBTQ+ individuals (and every person), starting at the cabin level and the progressing to think about our camps as a whole. - <i>Submitted by Mara Berde</i>
TOPIC(S):	Community building; LGBTQ+ inclusion
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think critically about LGBTQ+ inclusion at their camp and the role they can play in creating a more inclusive camp community • Gain practical tools for how to make camp more inclusive to LGBTQ+ individuals • Share with and learn from their peers
AUDIENCE:	Counselors or leadership staff, any size group up to 40. Certain activities are replicable for campers, particularly in a cabin setting.
TIMING:	90 minutes
APPENDICES:	Camp & self assessment tool; camps mission statements; role play scenarios
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Flipchart paper, flipchart markers, scratch paper & pens for all participants, color copies of Making Mensches periodic table, post-it notes, easel or wall space for writing on flipchart papers.
SET-UP DETAILS:	Room large enough for all participants to sit comfortably in chairs and create small circles for breakout groups. Preferably an enclosed room so passersby cannot overhear conversation.

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

00:00 – 00:10	Personal Story & Introductions (10 min)
00:10 – 00:20	Empathy & Evaluation Exercise (10 min)
00:20 – 00:45	Making Mensches: Priorities Exercise (25 min)
00:45 – 01:05	Take Action: Speak Up (20 min)
01:05 – 01:20	Take Action: Camp Programs & Culture Change (15 min)
01:20 – 01:30	Closing Circle (10 min)

Personal Story & Introductions (10 min)

Share personal connection to this topic; story of when I was a camper and also a counselor.

Have each participant share their name, preferred gender pronoun, camp, and why they signed up for this session. Why is this topic compelling to you?

(In most sessions, I would not devote as much time to getting to know the group, but because this is a more personal topic, it is important that participants get to know each other and that we know who is in the room.)

Empathy and Evaluation Exercise (10 min)

Pass out self-assessment tool and give participants a chance to answer questions. This should be done individually and at their own pace. Once everyone is done, brief group discussion on their reactions and what they think the purpose of this exercise was.

Making Mensches: Priorities Exercise (25 min)

At camp we talk a lot about community, but what does that actually mean? We must understand it in order to create it.

- How do we define community? What are some other words for community? (Family, group, team, clique, sorority/fraternity, etc.)
- If we assume that in order to have a place in a community one must feel **safe** and **comfortable**, how do we ensure that?
- Physical safety and comfort, emotional safety. In order to create the feeling of emotional safety, we need to have a **set of shared values** and recognize that each person brings unique qualities that come together to create our team.

Distribute the Making Mensches periodic table. PDF version here:

<https://avikatzorlow.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/making-mensches-periodic-table.pdf>

- Each person take personal time to look at periodic table and choose their top 5 values that can be used to create community at camp specifically (versus their top 5 personal values)
- After they've had a couple minutes to look at it alone, divide into groups of 6 people, look at the Making Mensches table and decide as a group about their core cabin values. The group must come to a consensus about their top 3, 5, 7, making sure that there is at least 1 from each category represented.

- Write the top 3, 5, 7 in each of the three concentric squares. (See below)
- The process is what's important and it should inspire a conversation among the group.
- After each group is done, come back together and have each group present their top 3, as well as talk about their process (was it easy, challenging, etc.?).

Discuss how this can be used in your cabin with campers.

Mention other ways to use Making Menschens periodic table to create cabin identity and pass out handout of "creating cabin identity" activity.

Program Share: Building Cabin Community

Get back into small groups and share other ideas for how they've created a real sense of community in their cabins in the past. After a few minutes, share any ideas with the big group. Write ideas on flipchart paper so that they can be collected and emailed to the group after the session.

Take Action: Speak Up (20 min)

Have group spend a minute thinking about situations with their campers that they witnessed and "let slide" (didn't take action), such as name-calling, teasing, hazing, or derogatory comments. Think to themselves why didn't they act?

Before can just speak up, we have to understand what are our barriers to taking action. Have a few people share a situation (not the why), and use one of those as the prompt for this activity.

Ambush Activity

This activity will help us to uncover the myriad reasons why we hesitate to speak up. It will allow us to hit "pause" when we encounter a situation that requires that we make a quick decision. Our decision to speak or not to speak, and what to say, will have implications; this can be a stressful moment, so here we'll "pause" it and gain some tools for how to determine the best course of action. It will help us to think logically and not respond from a place of emotion, so that we can create the best possible response and the best opportunity for education.

Activity Instructions

- Define the word "Ambush" (barrage, overwhelmed, attacked, bombarded)
- In these moments, you might feel "ambushed" with reasons for not responding (or for being reluctant to respond.) Let's get these out in the open in order to acknowledge them and know how to deal with them in the next activity.
- Have everyone stand in a circle. Ask for one volunteer to stand in the center (this person has the easiest job, they simply stand there and represent everyone.) Everyone around them is like their brain, firing ideas about why not to respond.
- Present a very short and simply scenario [Ex: a counselor walks past and hears 2 campers saying: "that's so gay; you're such a fag..."] and explain that we just hit PAUSE on that situation. Now, as the counselor, what are you thinking? Why are you hesitant to respond?
- Each person in the circle may cross the circle (walking past the "every counselor") while saying "I am hesitant/reluctant to respond because..."
- Anyone in the circle can cross the circle while answering this question; it's okay if things are repeated.
- If 2 facilitators, have 1 write while the other participates. If 1 facilitator, try do capture the answers on a flipchart/paper while also (if needed) prompting them with new reasons for being reluctant to respond.
- After a few minutes, stop and debrief.

Debrief Questions:

- How did it make the educator in the middle feel?
- How did it feel to say these things aloud?
- Why did we do this? (To understand why we let those moments pass us by; why do we hesitate?)

Now that we have explored what prevents us from taking action, let's go back to those scenarios that might require us to take action.

Role Play Scenarios

Break up into small groups (5 people) and distribute scenarios handout. Give each group about 10 minutes to work through scenarios and then come back together as a whole group to ask questions and debrief.

Take Action: Programs & Culture Change (20 min)

Intro: Now that we have looked at building cabin community and speaking up during those important moments at camp, the next level of taking action is creating change in camp programming and camp culture. As Cornerstone Fellows you will all be creating programming and be seen as leaders in your camps, so it's possible to create change in your camp programs and culture. You also have a direct connection to the camp director (and also your Liaison) who can help support you in these endeavors.

Brainstorm some common camp programs that you believe could be improved or simply made more inclusive of LGBTQ+ individuals. Perhaps the program itself isn't problematic, but the culture is (for example, many camps have dances and that's great because dancing is fun! But if there's pressure for boys to ask girls to the dance, how can we shift this paradigm to make the dance more inviting to LGBTQ+ campers AND to campers who are simply not interested in bringing a "date" to the dance.

Using the list that was just generated, write each idea on a flipchart paper and hang around the room like a "gallery walk." Give participants a few minutes to walk around and write their ideas, questions, and comments on the papers.

Once they have responded on the papers, have participants stand by one topic or program that they would like to dive deeper into. Each group can take about 5-10 more minutes to re-invent that program. They will then share it back with the whole group.

Culture Change 101

Changing the culture of a camp is very hard and slow. Discuss ideas for how to start this process at camp.

- Determine who are the stakeholders. Get their buy-in. Get help from various groups of people within camp. Frame programs as a "pilot program". Don't be afraid to fail. Start small.

Closing Circle (10 min)

Each participant will be given an opportunity to share a final thought with the group. What did they learn? What will they be bringing back to camp? What did they hope to get out of this session that was not accomplished?

Pass around a sign-up form so people can opt-in to being on a group email or Facebook group to share ideas and resources.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

The Making Mensch priorities exercise can be used with campers of any age to create a set of shared cabin values. The other sections are intended for staff training and are not necessarily intended to be replicated for campers.

SET UP NOTES:

The following graphic should be drawn on flipchart papers by facilitator, before the program. Each group of 6 will be using their own chart; will need multiple copies based on how many participants.

