

## CORNERSTONE 2019 RESOURCE

### Inclusion and Disabilities: Building a More Accessible World for All (Part1)

*Specialty Track*

<b>AUTHOR(S):</b>	Ariella Rosen
<b>SUMMARY:</b>	In this session, participants will explore how to set up welcoming and inclusive community by getting to know one another in different types of tents. They will learn about universal design and workshop ways they can implement this idea. - <i>Submitted by Ariella Rosen</i>
<b>TOPIC(S):</b>	Inclusion and disabilities, Community-building
<b>LEARNING OBJECTIVE:</b>	Participants will gain concrete ideas for ways they can improve the inclusion culture at their camps. They will be able to articulate how it feels to be excluded, as well as ways that program design can minimize these feelings.
<b>AUDIENCE:</b>	Participants ages 14 and up, ideally staff-aged. Group size up to 30.
<b>TIMING:</b>	90 minutes
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	None
<b>MATERIALS NEEDED:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Camping tent</li> <li>• Sukkah (a pop-up Sukkah is relatively easy to store, but you could also make your own by draping branches across a materials that can function as walls!)</li> <li>• Chuppah (4 poles and a cloth like a sheet, tallit, etc works great)</li> <li>• Tarp</li> <li>• Blankets (and furniture, boxes, or other objects to drape the blankets over)</li> <li>• Markers</li> <li>• Flipchart</li> <li>• Paper</li> <li>• Tape</li> <li>• Koosh balls</li> <li>• Playdough</li> <li>• other fidgets</li> <li>• children's books</li> </ul>

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### SET-UP DETAILS:

This session should be held in a large room, or an open space outdoors  
With space between each, set up the following structures:

- Camping tent
- Chuppah (poles with fabric like a tallit attached to the tops-okay to have it leaning against a wall)
- Sukkah (pop up Sukkah, or any structure with branches on top)
- Tarp tied to the wall, poles, or whatever else is available
- Blanket “fort”

[If the weather is nice, do this outside and include a well-shaded tree]

At the various entrances to these tents, place the following signs (more than one sign if there is more than one entrance):

- Enter with confidence
- Enter with humility
- Enter by introducing yourself to whoever else is inside
- Enter with a dance move
- Enter backwards
- Enter singing a song
- Enter ready to share a fun fact
- Enter slowly
- Do not enter

Inside the tents, tape a piece of paper with the following corresponding instructions:

- Camping tent: Take a break, have some quiet time. [Place playdough, koosh balls, markers, and paper inside.]
- Chuppah: Gather 4 people to hold the poles, and fit as many people inside as you would like. Share something that you love about your camp community.
- Sukkah: Take turns sharing what others can do for you to help you be at your best.
- Tarp: Discuss: What’s your favorite thing to do on a rainy day?
- Blanket fort: Read a bedtime story! [Place children’s books inside.]
- Tree: Stretch together! Ground your feet, and reach to the sky. Share one way you want to “stretch” yourself.

Flipchart: Write one thing that you bring into this space that helps make it better.

### SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

Welcome to Our In-TENT-ional Community [00:00-00:20]

Mah Tov Reflections [00:20-00:40]

Universal Design Intro and Sculpture Garden [00:40-01:05]

Universal Design Workshop [01:05-01:20]

Debrief [01:20-01:30]

### Setting up the space:

Throughout the large space, set up the various types of structures:

Camping tent

Chuppah (okay to have it leaning against a wall)

Sukkah

Tarp

Blanket “fort”

[If the weather is nice, do this outside and include a well-shaded tree]

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Flipchart: Write one thing that you bring into this space that helps make it better.

### **Welcome to Our In-TENT-ional Community (20 min.)**

Ask participants to gather outside and wait to be invited to enter. When ready, welcome the group and ask them to consider two main questions: How do you enter a space? What do you bring in with you?

Participants will be greeted by a sign that says "Welcome to Mah Tovv: Our In-TENT-ional Community!"

When they enter, participants will have the opportunity to move freely through the tents and follow the instructions for how to interact with one another in each space.

After 10 minutes, invite the group to gather back together in the chairs.

After introductions and establishing group norms, unpack and debrief:

- How did it feel? What did you notice?
- What tents felt easy to enter? Why? Difficult to enter? Why?
- Who is this activity best designed for? Who is left out?

### **Mah Tovv (20 min.)**

Share the words "Mah Tovv Ohalecha Ya'akov Mishkenotecha Yisrael." "How wonderful are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, Israel." Explain that these words are found both in daily morning prayers, and in the Torah as part of a portion that is often read during camp season (Parashat Balak). Give a little bit of background on the story (with texts available for anyone who wants to read it).

Discuss:

Why would Balak bless the Israelite camp in particular as opposed to the community as a whole? What made their camp so special? (Some might be familiar with a teaching that says that each tent's entrance faced a different way, so they were able to respect one another's privacy. Discuss if that comes up.)

Journal (5 min tops):

What would someone notice about your camp if they looked down from a distance? What would they praise? What is not yet praiseworthy?

Share with a partner.

Invite 2-3 people to share in the larger group.

### Universal Design (25 min.)

- Introduce the concept of Universal Design. Many impediments due to disability have to do with the way we have built our society. The primary idea behind Universal Design is that if we design with the needs of those with disabilities in mind, everyone benefits. Mah Tov=Universal Design, with a Jewish twist. Camp is in many ways a collection of individual tents, and we want as many people as possible to feel empowered to enter. How do we do that?
  - Give examples. ([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)

### Sculpture Garden Activity

Ask participants to get into groups of 4-5, and to think of a time you felt like a space wasn't for you- where you did not feel welcome or did not know how to be a part of the experience. How did it feel?

After hearing everyone's story, decide as a group to act out a freeze frame of one person's story. After taking turns with each group, invite all of the "excluded" individuals to hold their same pose in the middle of the room. Ask each group to brainstorm how to redesign the experience in the story so that the person in the middle would not have been made to feel that way, and that would be beneficial to everyone in that scene.

One by one, ask each group to invite back their excluded individual from the middle with an explanation of what changes they made. Ask the excluded individual to give their input- is this a solution that would work? If not, how else could this experience be redesigned?

Note: Universal Design only works as a concept if we keep in mind "nothing about us without us." Invite anyone who might potentially be excluded to be part of the planning process!

### Universal Design Workshop (15 min.)

Ask participants to choose one of the structures in our In-Tent-ional Community, and work in groups to make the experience there even better.

Consider the following questions (written on flipchart paper):

- What needs were not met by this activity?
- How might it have looked different if you had planned it together with a camper or fellow staff who (choose one):
  - 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

Design a new experience for this structure that:

- 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!

[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.”]

Ask each group to share with the larger group. Praise ideas by responding “Mah tov!”

### **Debrief (10 min.)**

Which tent reflects your vision for what inclusion can be at your camp? Go to it now.

Review inclusion tools from this session: offering participants choices, respite space and fidgets, concept of universal design, setting up a welcoming space at the beginning of camp

What is the difference between designing FOR and designing WITH?

What is an example of Mah Tov that you hope to bring with you to camp this summer?

### **ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:**

- Set up tents or various structures when teaching about Mah Tov (the prayer or in the Torah in Parashat Balak).
- Consider the guidelines for Universal Design when doing any program planning at camp.
- Generate a bunk conversation about the activities they want to do, and how they can make sure they are activities that everyone in the bunk will enjoy and be able to do well. Encourage campers to speak only for themselves and not for others, but to make sure that everyone’s voice is included.