

### Mental Health and Wellness, *Specialty Track 2*

<b>AUTHOR(S):</b>	Natalie Rothstein
<b>SUMMARY:</b>	The session focuses on mental health and wellness for staff members in terms of taking care of their own wellness and supporting other staff members. Staff will learn about ways to make sure they put their air mask on first to then show up for their community and campers. - <i>Submitted by Natalie Rothstein</i>
<b>TOPIC(S):</b>	Mental Health, Staff Wellness
<b>LEARNING OBJECTIVE:</b>	Participants will hopefully leave this session feeling more prepared to prioritize their wellness at camp and outside of camp to be the best staff members they can be.
<b>AUDIENCE:</b>	Camp staff, ideal group size around 20 but can be facilitated with a larger group.
<b>TIMING:</b>	90 minutes.
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	Two Mindsets Handout, Story of Hagar
<b>MATERIALS NEEDED:</b>	-paper for writing -pens -3x5 notecards (1 per participant)
<b>SET-UP DETAILS:</b>	The setting for this session should be private and there should be chairs set up in a circle with a flip chart situated between 2 chairs for facilitator note taking.  Have questions for text study written out on large paper for everyone to see.

#### SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

Total Session Time: 90 minutes  
 Introduction- 5 minutes  
 Put on Your Air Mask First- 20 minutes  
 Self-Care Conversation and Text Study- 25 minutes  
 Two Mindsets – 20 minutes  
 The Importance of Self Compassion – 15 Minutes  
 Closing – 5 minutes

### **Introduction- 5 minutes**

If this is a continuation of a prior session, regroup and reiterate the safer space guidelines and offer an opportunity for any questions that came up after session 1. If this is a first time for the group to be together, go over the safer space guidelines (included at the bottom) and brief introductions with the group.

### **Self-Care Conversation and Text Study- 25 minutes**

This segment is about the importance of self-care and also uses a text study to model self-care. Name for the participants that the purpose of the text is to understand the dissonance between taking care of yourself and also taking care of others.

Text study about the story of Hagar (10-15 minutes) Provide context to the story before sharing the handout.

- Have participants break into groups of 2-3 (depending on group size)- hand each participant the “Story of Hagar” handout. Give the participants 3-4 minutes to reach through the text. Have them discuss the questions in their groups.
- Bring the whole group back together and ask:
  - What are alternative ways to view Hagar in this story?
  - What can you take away from this story?
- Share the following thoughts about the text:
  - Sometimes it can be natural for first thoughts to be critical of Hagar, how could she neglect her child at the beginning? She is being neglectful and avoiding being a parent.
  - It’s easy to not notice Hagar is in pain and has her own problems when you see her child is suffering.
  - Hagar needs to take care of herself so she can show up for her child.
  - We all have challenges and all need to learn how to cope.
  - This transitions to put your air mask on first.

### **Put on Your Air Mask First- 20 minutes**

This conversation is imperative to help remind staff that in order to show up as a counselor to the camp community, other staff and campers, it’s so important to take care of themselves. Share the following example:

- Most of you have likely been on an airplane. When you’re on a plane and going over the safety protocol, the demonstration always mentions, put your air mask first before assisting others. Do you know what I’m talking about? (wait for response from the group). Why do you think that is (give them a moment to think)? Because if you’re not able to breathe, how can you help someone else breathe?
- That being said, if you’re not taking care of yourself, how can you take care of other people? It is so important as a camp staff member to put your air mask on first so that you can take care of your wellness and then show up for your community. Your patience and ability to be present are much better if you’re making space to take care of yourself.
- Have the participants answer the questions below. Ask them 1 question at a time and let them write down their answers. Take some time to reflect independently on these questions and write down:
  - When was a time that you neglected your wellness at camp?
  - What did that feel like before, during and after?
  - How did that impact your ability to do your job and show up for your community?
  - What do you think prevented you from taking care of yourself?
- Group discussion to discuss the following:
  - What’s the barometer of when you can and cannot put your needs aside?
  - What are challenges of having needs while also needing to take care of someone else?
  - How can camp culture promote the importance of taking care of your needs?

### Self-care at Camp Discussion (10-15 minutes)

- Defining self-care: Self-care is taking time to take care of yourself by doing things that make you feel good and promote your wellness. What actually qualifies as self-care can truly vary and examples include: taking a shower, taking a nap, getting enough sleep, going for a swim, going for a walk with a friend, meditating, watching a movie and more. Self-care looks different for everyone!
- Self-care has a direct correlation to helping promote resilience. When self-care is made a priority, that can help prevent burn out. Self-care is intentional time put aside for yourself to restore.
- Self-care is so important to help promote resilience, prevent burnt out and maintain your wellness. There are so many great ways to practice self-care at camp that take little tools and short amounts of time.
  - What are ways you practice self-care?
  - What are things you think you could do for self-care at camp?
- Share the concept of **hitbodedut**- which translates to solitude and the idea of interior seclusion for prayer and meditation – although Judaism does not generally recommend that one withdraws from the community, this practice can be seen as a time to connect to G-d alone and provide self-care and healing by taking time to: complain, cry, express gratitude – if something going on for you is important to you then it's important to g-d, this process can help turn pain into an act of love and not holding it to yourself, creates closeness and intimacy with g-d. This is not a replacement to therapy but a form of self-care through catharsis and reflection.
- Give each participant a 4 by 6 notecard to write down
- Provide examples of how people can practice self-care at camp:
  - Take 5 minutes in the morning to stretch.
  - Take 2-3 minutes before you get out of bed or once you get into bed to express gratitude.
  - Use your free time to take a nap.
  - Use your free time to exercise.
  - Use your free time to do an arts and crafts project.
  - Do yoga during your free time with a group of friends.
  - Take an extra-long shower during free time
  - Sit in a quiet spot and read a book.
- Give everyone a notecard and have them write down 5-10 things they can do for self-care at camp. This is something they can keep for the summer as a reference when they're feeling a need for self-care. Another step would be for participants to reference specific times in their days that they could practice self-care.

### Two Mindsets- 20 minutes

This segment discusses the concept derived by Carol Dweck PhD about the two mindsets- Fixed Mindset and Growth Mindset. The two mindsets directly connect to how people endure adversity. The fixed mindset often finds people getting stuck in obstacles and makes it hard to grow and move on. The growth mindset helps people to move forward and gain skills through difficult experiences.

- Share with the group that these are two important mindsets to be aware of and that practicing from a growth mindset can help them be a stronger staff member and can also help to prevent burnout. Lead the group through the diagram reading through the fixed mindset first and then the growth mindset.
- Ask the participants to share a typical challenging scenario at camp and have the group apply the fixed mindset and the growth mindset to the scenario. Do this with 4-5 scenarios and help the group talk through them and recognize the positives of the growth mindset.
- Share the idea of radical acceptance: **Accepting the things you cannot control** – This connects to the growth mindset and is an incredibly helpful message to keep in mind at camp and outside of camp.

### **The Importance of Self Compassion- 15 minutes**

Share the following ideas with the participants: Self compassion is an important tool connected to self-worth. As staff members, it's important to reach for your potential to be the best YOU that you can be. Expectations and goals help you to get there. However, when you don't give yourself room to not be perfect, that can lead to being hard on yourself and impacts your self-worth. We need to give ourselves room to make mistakes by practicing self-compassion. Self-compassion is directly connected to improve our self-worth. When our self-worth is strong, our resilience and our ability to value our own wellness increases in a meaningful way.

- What is self-compassion? Self-compassion is being kind to yourself and having compassion towards yourself rather than the alternative of beating yourself up about something you've done.
- Self-compassion is taking ownership while also being compassionate towards yourself.
- Self-compassion helps you not to isolate yourself from others.
- Self-compassion is recognizing that you're human and you make mistakes and that it is impossible to be perfect.
- Examples of self-compassion:
  - You're leading an arts and crafts activity making watercolors to hang up throughout the bunk. As you walk to pour the cup of dirty water paint water into the sink, you trip and spill it all over yourself. You have two choices:
    1. Yell at yourself and tell yourself you're such an idiot and you ruin all of your clothes.
    2. Take a deep breath and tell yourself, you're human and that the dirty water will wash out of your shirt.
  - Which of the options is more productive? Which is more kind to yourself?
  - You co-counselor at swimming asked you to cover their activity period and you forgot to go down to the swim area. 10 minutes into the activity period, someone found you frantically to get you down to the swim area. You have two choices:
    1. Beat yourself up over this. You are always so forgetful, and you let down your co-counselor and all of the campers. You're a terrible counselor.
    2. Remind yourself that you can be forgetful and you're working on it but at the end of the day, you're human and this isn't a reflection that you don't care. You can talk to your Unit Head about strategies to help you remember things more.
  - Which of the options is more productive? Which is more kind to yourself?
- Practicing self-compassion is a more productive way to help you move forward rather than stewing in a mistake. This can be more complicated depending on the gravity of the situation.
- When you beat yourself up about something, campers see that. How can you model self-compassion for campers?

### **Closing- 2-5 minutes**

Go around in the circle and have each group member share one word that represents what they are feeling at the end of this session.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

### Safer Space Guidelines Activity

The creating a safe space arts and crafts activity can be done on its own during staff training to hang for camper's arrival or during the first few days of camp to help campers connect and create a sense of emotional/physical safety in their cabins.

- Safer Space Guidelines
  - This is a judgement free space
  - Using "I" Statements
  - Privacy
  - Ask clarifying questions
  - Self-regulate and self-care ((i.e. it's ok to step outside)
  - Facilitator is available after
  - It's ok to be raggedy

Participants will each be able to make a poster outlining the guidelines for a safer space. During this activity the group will come up with guidelines for creating a safe space and all create their own poster with all of the guidelines listed. Participants will have a poster board, construction paper, and markers to make their posters colorful and decorative. They will be able to keep their posters and use as a tool to hang in camp cabins or camp spaces. Note: facilitator can pre-make one as an example if they'd like

### Self-Care Activity- Lavender Pouch Making

#### Lavender Pouch Making

##### Materials

- 1 pouch
- 1/8 cup (2 tablespoons) of lavender
- ¼ cup (4 tablespoons) of rice
- 1-2 drops essential oil (optional)

First write with a permanent marker on your pouch whatever you would like. In a small bowl, mix the dried lavender with the rice. If you'd like a stronger lavender scent, stir in a few drops of lavender essential oil. Using a small spoon, carefully add the lavender mixture into your sachet. Tie the pouch closes with a double knot to keep it from opening. Enjoy for calming and wonderful self-care! These pouches can also be used as a Havdalah Spice Bag.