

CORNERSTONE 2019 RESOURCE

Deconstructing (and Addressing) Anti-Semitism *Evening Experience*

AUTHOR(S):	Jonah Canner and Caroline Rothstein
SUMMARY:	In this session, we will explore what anti-semitism looks like and how it works through art, storytelling, and critical conversation. - <i>Submitted by Jonah Canner and Caroline Rothstein</i>
TOPIC(S):	Anti-Semitism, Jewish identity
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	The goal of this session is for participants to feel equipped to recognize and speak about anti-semitism in a responsive but non-reactionary way - both at camp and beyond - in order to help create positive change for Jewish communities and the diaspora at large.
AUDIENCE:	Up to 50 people, any age
TIMING:	75-90 minutes
APPENDICES:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link for Caroline Rothstein's poem "When I Ask My Friend..." (below) • 5-Year Anti-Semitism Journey Map • Antisemitism Evening Experience Handout
MATERIALS NEEDED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pens/writing utensils • Projector/speakers/AV • Chart paper • Markers
SET-UP DETAILS:	Concert-style seating either with rows of chairs, or rows on the ground.

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

Opening

- Welcome everyone to the session.
- There are a lot of conversations about Anti-Semitism happening right now. Some of them are happening in irresponsible ways that are not rooted in an analysis of what Anti-Semitism is, what it does, what its function in society is, and how it impacts us as Jews as well as other people.

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- At the end of this session we hope you will feel more comfortable having and even leading these conversations. Two things we see as essential for that are for you to have:
 - 1) A willingness to show up for hard conversations about Anti-Semitism (and more)
 - 2) A commitment to remain present, open, and available for challenging answers.
- 5 year Anti-Semitism journey map activity
 - Start with some collective breathing
 - Say: *Everyone, I want you to think back to five years ago, that would be May of 2014. Think back to what the kinds of things you were thinking about at that time. When you place yourself back there, in what ways were you thinking about or talking about Anti-Semitism? Were you thinking or talking about it? What were your reactions to hearing about it, hearing others talk about it?*
 - Say: *Take five minutes on your own to look back at your own understanding of and relationship with thinking about anti-semitism over the last five years*
 - Give out Journey Map sheet:
 - How has your understanding of anti-semitism changed?
 - What major events in the world have influenced or shaped your thinking?
 - What questions have you been asking and how have those questions changed?
 - What have you noticed about how conversations about anti-semitism have changed during this time?
 - What questions about Anti-Semitism are most present for you right now?
 - Call everyone back together and say: *We're going to hold onto those maps for now and come back to them but we wanted to start by taking a look at exactly how significantly these conversations, at least the public conversations, have changed over these last five years.*

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Poem

- Several days after “Charlottesville,” the most public Nazi and White Supremacist rally in 40 years, Caroline Rothstein (co-facilitator and co-creator of this session) wrote a poem in reaction to what had happened, as well as her long-term thoughts and feelings about Anti-Semitism in the United States of America.
- Caroline performs her poem "[When I ask my friend: What happens if I Tweet: Our President is a terrorist. And she says: You may experience repercussions...people get their hackles all up when you say the word terrorist and you do things with the Jews.](#)" (If this session is being done elsewhere, feel free to either use a link of Caroline’s poem from [Facebook](#) or [YouTube](#), or replace her poem with another poem or piece of art about Anti-Semitism).
- Invite participants to take a deep breath. Feel free to close your eyes if that feels comfortable and ok. Check in with your body: What are you feeling? Where are you feeling it?
- Invite participants to take 2 minutes (1 minute each) to share their feelings with a partner.

What Is Anti-Semitism?

- Mini Lecture style grounding in “What is Anti-Semitism?”
- Overall: Anti-Semitism is a cyclically operating oppression that has plagued the Jewish diaspora for millennia. While it has never gone away, we are currently living amidst a particularly public flare-up of Anti-Semitic sentiment both in North America and abroad. Most of us do not know how to talk about it or how best to respond.
- Erasure is the cost of whiteness.
- Jewish communal identity is older than the categories of race.
- Cyclical nature of Anti-Semitism.
- Anti-Semitism is about maintaining status-quo power structures by positioning Jews as a buffer people.

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- Some Anti-Semitic tropes include characterizations of Jews that can seem and even feel complimentary which can make it hard to spot.
- Four I's - Ideology, Institutional, Interpersonal, Internalized.
 - Unique thing re: Anti-Semitism as an ideology is that is paradoxical and intentionally/consistently morphing.
 - Focus on Internalized - turn to the group and ask for things that they notice inside themselves that the suspect or wonder are examples of internalized Anti-Semitism
- Processing/debriefing in small groups:
 - Are you noticing/learning anything new? If so, what?
 - Are you noticing/learning anything that you've heard/considered before? If so, what?
 - Are you noticing/learning anything that is making you uncomfortable? If so, what?
- Discussion/processing together as a large group:
 - What are some of thing takeaways and things you noticed in your smaller groups?
 - What are some things that are clear?
 - What are some of your lingering questions?

Closing

- Rearticulate the analysis of what antisemitism is and what was discussed in this session.
- Provide resources for further learning:
 - [Skin In the Game: How Anti-Semitism Animates White Nationalism](#) - Eric Ward
 - [The Past Didn't Go Anywhere](#) - April Rosenblum
- Name why participants are now equipped to lead this session at camp and beyond:
 - 1) Willingness to do it/show up
 - 2) Won't/didn't stop at the easiest or most familiar answer
- Thank everyone for being there.



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ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

- We ask that you please not lead this session without first reading the following resources:
 - [Skin In the Game: How Anti-Semitism Animates White Nationalism](#) - Eric Ward
 - [The Past Didn't Go Anywhere](#) - April Rosenblum
- For the mini-lecture section of the outline, instead of a mini-lecture we recommend handing out this article to read and discuss together:
 - [The Historic Roots of Anti-Semitism and how they play out today](#)