

CORNERSTONE 2020 RESOURCE

YAY GAY! LGBTQ+ Inclusion for Camp

Elective 1

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SUMMARY:	Every Jewish camp talks about community, but are we making sure that every person in camp is not only welcomed, but embraced for who they are? In this session, you will reflect on your personal experiences at camp and examine camp policies, gaining practical tools for making our camps more inclusive to LGBTQ+ people (and everyone)! - Submitted by Mara Berde
TOPIC(S):	LGBTQ+ Inclusion; community building
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, but 12-20 participants is ideal
TIMING:	90 minutes
APPENDICES:	Handout for Start/Stop/Continue; <i>Making Mensches</i> periodic table (https://avikatzorlow.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/making-mensches-periodic-table.pdf)
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Easel or wall space for hanging papers. Flipchart paper, flipchart markers, scratch paper & pens for all participants, color copies of Making Mensches periodic table, post-it notes
SET-UP DETAILS:	Room large enough for all participants to sit comfortably in chairs and create small circles for breakout groups. Preferably an enclosed space so passersby cannot overhear conversation.

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

00:00 – 00:10 Welcome, Personal Story, Introductions (10 min)
00:10 – 00:25 Camp and Self Assessment using Start/Stop/Continue (15 min)
00:25 – 00:40 Barrage Exercise & Debrief (15 min)
00:40 – 00:50 Culture Change (10 min)
00:50 – 01:15 Taking Action (25 min)
01:15 – 01:30 Closing Circle (15 min)

0:00 – 0:10 Personal Story and introductions (10 min)

Welcome participants and thank them for attending. Share who I am and what is my personal connection to this topic. Tell story of when I was a counselor and a camper in my cabin went home early because she didn't feel truly welcomed or comfortable being her true self at camp.

Have each participant share their name, gender pronoun, camp, and why they signed up for this session. (In most sessions I wouldn't spend as much time getting to know the group, but because this is a more personal topic, it's important that participants get to know each other and that we know who is in the room.)

Briefly explain goals of this session and what we'll be covering:
Assessment of camp and self using start/stop/continue model
Uncovering what's preventing us from responding
Sharing ideas in small groups
Creating actionable things to focus on during the summer

0:10 – 0:25 Camp and Self Assessment using Start/Stop/Continue (15 min)

Introduce Start/Stop/Continue as a way of assessing our camps and ourselves. The point is to highlight things that we are already doing well (continue), notice areas where we could improve (start), and stop doing things that may inhibit positive progress towards a truly inclusive community (stop). Explain that we will be using these throughout the rest of this elective, so participants should be thorough and thoughtful.

Pass out Start/Stop/Continue chart along with Making Mensch's periodic table. Explain that each of these things can be rooted in Jewish values and using the periodic table, assign a middah or two to each box on the chart.

The chart can be done alone or in pairs. Mention that they might be sharing parts of this chart, so only write things that you are comfortable with someone else seeing.

After a few minutes of filling out the chart, have participants get with a partner and share. (We will revisit these later, so this is more about sharing and gathering ideas than coming up with solutions or ideas; we will do that in smaller groups.)

00:25 – 00:40 Barrage Exercise (15 min)

Explain:

In the previous exercise, we looked at things we would like to start doing or stop doing. At camp and in life, it can be difficult to initiate something or stop something. This exercise will help us uncover some of the personal barriers to responding or taking action. 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'll 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:

Introduction:

Define the word “Barrage” (ambush, overwhelmed, attacked, bombarded)

We’ve all been in situations where we want to respond to a homophobic comment but instead our heads are barraged with reasons for not responding. Let’s get these reasons out in the open in order to acknowledge them, and then later we’ll dive into dealing with them.

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 simple scenario** and explain that we just hit PAUSE on that situation. Now, as the counselor, what are you thinking? Why are you hesitant to respond?

People in the circle are going to cross the circle (walking past the counselor in the middle) while saying “I am reluctant to respond because....”

Anyone in the circle can cross the circle while answering this question; it’s okay if things are repeated. If there is a lull, just let people think, or the facilitator can offer one and walk through the circle.

If 2 facilitators, have 1 write the responses while the other participates. If 1 facilitator, try to 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:

Ask the person in the middle how did they 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?

Were there any responses that surprised you?

Wrap Up / Transition

Ambush activity was about recognizing personal barriers. There are other barriers to making change at camp, especially on an institutional level. Now that we have a sense of the barriers that exist, we can begin the hard work of change making, both inside ourselves as well as externally at camp.

** Possible scenarios:

A counselor walks past and hears 2 campers saying: “that’s so gay” or “you’re such a fag”

Counselors are running an evening activity for their unit that’s focused on campers cross-dressing and making fun of other genders

A counselor walks into a bunk and overhears campers asking if another camper in a different cabin is a boy or a girl

There are many, many examples like this; offer a few to the group so that they understand that these challenging moments happen so frequently at camp that we may not even notice all of them

00:40 – 00:50 Culture Change at Camp (10 min)

Change is hard. There are many barriers to creating positive culture change in our camps.

Ask participants if they have experience creating or witnessing culture change in camp.

Brief discussion about how culture change happens. It may be slow, and requires a lot of patience.

(The pace of camp is interesting though; once you’ve done something for 2 summers people will think that’s the way “it’s always been done.”) Involve various stakeholders and influencers. Start small and focus on things that you might be able to accomplish.



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00:50 – 01:15 Taking Action (25 min)

Explain that we will use the rest of our time together to dive deeper into making change. Look back at your Start/Stop/Continue charts and feel free to add anything that may have come up since you first filled it out. Using these charts, we are going to get into small groups of 4 people and help each other come up with mini action plans for how to make changes in camp.

Break up into groups and give everyone 25 minutes to work on each person's topic/program of their choosing. Make sure each person in the group gets to speak and contribute, and that it isn't dominated by one camp or person.

01:15 – 01:30 Closing Circle (15 min)

Come back together as a whole group. Have each person go around and share their takeaways, both personal and for their camp. Allow participants time to exchange contact information so the conversations can continue.

Additional Notes for Bringing it Back to Camp:

The purpose of this program is for personal learning and growth, both for the individual participant as well as how they can become change agents in their camps. The goal isn't so that participants can run or replicate this program at their camps, though it could be modified to be run during staff training.