You Belong Here: Practices in Creating a Welcoming Community,
Elective 2

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SUMMARY:	A tight knit camp culture is part of why campers and staff return to camp year after year and being new to a staff or community can be difficult. This program explores the ways camp can be a more socially inclusive space for newcomers and current members. - *Submitted by* Melissa Shaw and Natalie Rothstein
TOPIC(S):	Staff, Community
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	This session will be successful if participants leave feeling like they have an understanding of what exclusion might look like for new staff and how to make newcomers feel like they belong!
AUDIENCE:	Camp staff of all ages- group of at least 10 people.
TIMING:	90 minutes.
APPENDICES:	None.
MATERIALS NEEDED:	-3 by 5 notecards -flipchart paper -markers
SET-UP DETAILS:	Large space with chairs in a circle (1 chair per participant) – be sure to have extra chairs to make sure everyone has a chair.

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

Timeline
Welcoming - 5 minutes
Opening Activity - 20 minutes
Creating Exclusion Activity - 30 minutes
IALAC - 15 minutes
Endorsements and Introductions - 15 minutes
Closing - 5 minutes

Outline

Have the following passage written on post it paper hanging in the room to refer to throughout the session:

Kol yisrael arevim zeh bazeh
כל ישראל ערבים זה לזה

"All of Israel (all Jews) are responsible for each other."
Talmud, Shevuot 39a

Welcoming - 5 minutes
As people enter - welcome them to the space enthusiastically and facilitators introduce themselves to them.

Opening Activity - 15 minutes
Name game – Have everyone stand in a circle and explain the game. The first person (a facilitator) will point and introduce themselves "hi, I'm Melissa" and points to Natalie and then Natalie says," Hi, I'm Natalie" – and points to the next person until everyone has had a chance to introduce themselves and the last person points back to Melissa. Melissa says, "Hi, I'm Melissa and you're Natalie. And that's a wonderful thing" and go through the circle again in the same order as the first round. You can do more and more rounds and keep adding positive statements and people can do different ones from other people in that round like: "I'm glad you're here" or "You are awesome" or "You belong here".
- Discuss and unpack activity:
  - What was that like?
  - What did that feel like?
  - How did your feelings change throughout the activity?
  - What did you notice as we added in more positive statements?

Creating Exclusion - 30 minutes
This activity is about modeling what it feels like to feel like an outsider or excluded. Camp has so many amazing rituals, special languages and inside jokes. For new folks, that can be really overwhelming, especially if they aren't being clued in. Start the activity by sending someone out of the space. While they're out, everyone in the room creates a language or ritual that the person outside of the room doesn't know. When the person comes in, they have to decode what's going on. You can do this a few rounds if that feels helpful to expand the purpose of the activity.
- Discuss and unpack/chart activity:
  - What's it like to be an outsider?
  - What was it like to watch the outsider figure out the code?
  - What did this bring up for you about your own experiences of feeling excluded?
  - What does exclusion: Look like? Feel like?

IALAC - 15 minutes
This is storytelling activity. This activity models how the reduction of resilience and increased damage happens over time of feeling excluded and makes it harder for someone to feel included. The facilitator will tell a story that narrates the experience of a new staff member feeling excluded. You start with a card called IALAC and hold it up in front of the group as you tell the store. Each time the staff member experiences a discouraging moment, you rip a piece off of their IALAC card. Every day they wake up with a full new card but on the 3rd or 4th day, they wake up with a card that's already ripped. For example, "Natalie arrived at camp for her first summer on staff. She walked into a room of staff in the main common area and nobody noticed her walk in or acknowledged her presence (rip a piece off the card). She then went an introduced herself to someone and they said hello and then turned their back to her and continued in their conversation (rip a piece off the card). She then went to dinner and sat down next to the assistant director who hired her and they started having a nice conversation. The assistant director had to go deal with something, understandably, and then Natalie was left alone again (rip a piece off the card). The cards will keep being ripped through the day and be a whole new card at the beginning of day 2 and by day 3, Natalie wakes up with her card already with a rip. IALAC= I am lovable and capable.

Have participants write down the following on both sides of their IALAC card. Offer taking notes to brainstorm before writing on card might be helpful for some people.
- Side 1: Things we need from others to feel seen and heard
- Side 2: How we add value to communities

Endorsement and Introductions - 15 minutes
Partner A and Partner B – 3-4 minutes with partners. Partner A, tells Partner B, some really pertinent things that if you wanted other people to know about you, what would you want them to know about you. Mix and mingle all the partner pairs meet and introduce each other's partners to the other pairs for 2-3 minutes and do a few rounds of the mix and mingle.

Closing Discussion Points
- Quotes about belonging.
- Experiences and perspective (newness and (not) belonging when not new)
- What are you taking away?
- If there's time, you can have participants share IALAC cards with the group

Quote to share with participants to think about as they leave:

"Belonging is being accepted for you. Fitting in is being accepted for being like everyone else. If I get to be me, I belong. If I have to be like you, I fit in." -Brene Brown

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

All of these activities could be done on their own and don't necessarily have to be part of the entire program.