

# SPACE AUDIT CHECKLIST AND ACTION PLAN

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Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC) mental health interns Elisheva and Eve find it important that camp is a place where everyone can thrive. As previous campers and staff members, we know how awesome camp is, but we also know that even the most amazing place can always be improved. Mental, Emotional, Social, and Spiritual Health (MESSH) is the notion that everyone has mental health the same way everyone has physical health. It is important that camp is an inclusive and understanding environment that accommodates everyone's needs. It is vital that camp settings provide a healthy environment for people with different mental, emotional, social and spiritual needs. This checklist ensures that camp settings are implementing these accommodations. This would help camps become more inclusive towards everyone's needs. It has the potential to cause a lot of change in how camps view MESSH and hopefully will have a positive impact for all types of campers and staff.

1. Do campers have the right to pass if they do not feel comfortable discussing or engaging with a topic?  
 **Yes**       **Maybe / Sometimes**       **No**
2. Do staff and supervisors have the right to pass if they do not feel comfortable discussing or engaging with a topic?  
 **Yes**       **Maybe / Sometimes**       **No**
3. Do campers feel comfortable openly expressing different aspects of their personal identity?  
 **Yes**       **Maybe / Sometimes**       **No**
4. Do staff and supervisors feel comfortable openly expressing different aspects of their personal identity?  
 **Yes**       **Maybe / Sometimes**       **No**
5. Are campers able to Take-5 (take a 5-minute break) when they are feeling overwhelmed at an activity period?  
 **Yes**       **Maybe / Sometimes**       **No**
6. Are staff and supervisors able to take-5 when they are feeling overwhelmed at an activity period?  
 **Yes**       **Maybe / Sometimes**       **No**
7. Are there spaces provided around activity areas (benches, gazebos, tents, etc.) where people can take-5?  
 **Yes**       **Maybe / Sometimes**       **No**

8. Do campers know what they can do when they feel overwhelmed?
- Yes       Maybe / Sometimes       No
9. Does your camp allow campers to physically distance themselves from the group, from a safe distance and dependent on the age of the campers, when they need some space?
- Yes       Maybe / Sometimes       No
10. Does your camp have helpful resources and staff that are up to date on the best ways to approach and include all members of their community experiencing MESSH challenges?
- Yes       Maybe / Sometimes       No
11. Do campers feel they are encouraged to ask for help?
- Yes       Maybe / Sometimes       No
12. Does your camp have resources in place to support campers' MESSH needs?
- Yes       Maybe / Sometimes       No
13. Do campers, of all ages, understand the MESSH resources available to them, as well as processes and procedures, when, and who to turn to for different kinds of help?
- Yes       Maybe / Sometimes       No
14. Does your camp educate all age groups on self-care and how to cope with stress at camp?
- Yes       Maybe / Sometimes       No
15. Do staff members and supervisors feel they are encouraged to ask for help? Do they understand processes and procedures, when, and who to turn to for different kinds of help? Does your camp have resources in place to support them?
- Yes       Maybe / Sometimes       No
16. Do the supervisors and administrators offer space and have proper language to discuss MESSH in a positive and constructive way?
- Yes       Maybe / Sometimes       No
17. Does your camp highlight and celebrate different Jewish identities within camp?
- Yes       Maybe / Sometimes       No
18. Does your camp provide inclusive MESSH programs and resources for all members of the Jewish community? i.e. LGBTQ+, People of Color, Interfaith families, people with disabilities.
- Yes       Maybe / Sometimes       No
19. Does your camp have programming dedicated to tikkun olam (repairing the world) and tikkun hanefesh (repairing the soul)?
- Yes       Maybe / Sometimes       No
20. Is your camp able to provide appropriate support for all members of the community dealing with MESSH challenges? (If not, are you connect to resources outside of camp to refer to?)
- Yes       Maybe / Sometimes       No

## **PART 2: CAMP ACTIONS AND FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS**

After completing this survey, tally up the amount of questions that you checked the “yes” box for. This will help give insight into what further steps you can take in order to improve the social and emotional spaces in your camp setting.

### **CREATING A COMFORTABLE SPACE**

If you answered yes to questions 1-4 it shows that that your camp is respectful of everyone’s comfort levels. For those who checked no, consider what ways you can make camp a more comfortable space. One of these ways could be doing an emotional check in for campers and staff before the start of a program or meeting. Provide a disclaimer if the subject being discussed could be triggering. For people who checked either yes or no, try to remember that we don’t know the emotional experience someone has before they come to camp.

### **THE RIGHT TO TAKE BREAKS**

A take-5 is the opportunity for campers and staff to take a 5-minute break at an activity period, evening program, or even during camp wide programs such as maccabiah/color war or banquet. If you answered yes to question 5-9, it shows that your camp has implemented the idea of a take-5 in some form or another. It also shows that your camp is a safe space that understands certain topics, activity periods, or days can be overwhelming. It allows campers and staff the space to feel overwhelmed and the right to remove themselves when they feel this way. For camps that checked no, try to come up with ways to create that safe space for campers and staff. Consider implementing a brit or contract that will allow campers and staff to sign that they have the right to not participate for a few minutes if it would be detrimental to their mental health.

### **RESOURCES, EDUCATION AND DESTIGMATIZING**

If you checked yes on question 10-16, then your camp values destigmatizing mental health. It actively works towards educating the camp community on the importance of discussing and taking care of one’s mental health. There are resources put in place to help campers and staff with their mental health the same way that there are doctors and nurses on camp. If you checked no, consider discussing with the camp community the importance of one’s own mental health. If you checked yes or no, please make sure to advertise the different resources that the camp has and make sure that both campers and staff are aware of it.

### **CELEBRATING DIVERSITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY**

If you checked yes on question 17-18, then your camp is aware of the different Jewish identities that can exist. Your camp community actively works towards creating a space where many different types of Jewish identities can thrive and is aware that there is no correct way to be a Jew and all intersecting Jewish identities are valid. If you checked no, consider ways to highlight and enhance the different voices in the Jewish community

### **MENTAL HEALTH AS A JEWISH VALUE**

If you checked yes on question 19, your camp is aware that caring for your mental health is a Jewish value since it involves Tikkun Olam and Tikkun Hanefesh. The idea of repairing the world involves breaking barriers and stereotypes, actively seeking justice and educating others is a core tenant of Tikkun Olam and is directly linked to mental health. If you checked no, consider creating more social justice-based programs and continuing to advocate for different mental health accommodations.

## **PROPERLY ACCESSING RESOURCES**

If you checked yes to question 20, your camp could provide staff and campers with the resources they need without taking advantage of it. The culture of your camp understands how serious mental health and does not abuse the rules put in place to properly care for everyone's mental health. If you checked no, work towards destigmatizing mental health so that it can become a conversation taken seriously. Make it evident to both campers and staff that mental health is equally as important as physical health. Try to implement these rules without people abusing them or using them as an excuse.