

CORNERSTONE 2021 RESOURCE

WHAT'S IN YOUR DUFFEL? DEALING WITH OUR "STUFF" THIS SUMMER AT CAMP

Fellow Elective

AUTHOR(S):	Sara Beth Berman and Sarra Alpert
TOPIC (S)	Community Building, Wellness, Jewish Text
SUMMARY	We come to camp with more than just luggage, and this year's challenges will add weight. We create space for everything at camp, including grief and its accompanying growth. Moving forward doesn't happen without honoring loss and embracing possibility, and it's a real gift to our communities to build our tools for living within that discomfort, offering true support for the weighty moments, and sharing the weight of feelings. In this session, we'll learn from past examples of people and societies that have taken the aftermath of tragedy to build exciting, imaginative new ways of being in the world, and we'll dream up ways of doing that in our own communities this summer, from art projects to text study and beyond.
GOALS:	Participants will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● feel catharsis, introspection, seen, and heard. ● be able to create a brave space for each other and share their feelings. ● know that it's okay to be upset and that Judaism has a space for them in their feelings.
AUDIENCE:	Camper age and up, no limit to audience size (breakout rooms/groups, etc. for sharing)
TIMING:	75 minutes
APPENDICES:	Text Handout: Yevamot 62b
MATERIALS NEEDED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paper, pen/cils (typing works, too), paper for journaling and drawing, markers or other art supplies (like watercolors) for vent diagrams. ● A/V setup
SET-UP DETAILS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In person, sitting around tables or in circles on the floor is good. ● Writing surfaces (the floor is fine) are also important. ● If online, Zoom or similar platform with breakout rooms.

CORNERSTONE 2021 RESOURCE

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:15 - Opener / Grabber: What's in your duffel?
- 00:15-00:35 - Texts and Discussion on Grief and Memorializing
- 00:35-00:55 - Video and Discussion on Imagination and Possibility
- 00:55-00:75 - Closing Activity: Vent Diagrams

SESSION OUTLINE:

- Grabber (15 minutes) - Jamboard Duffels: This might be a little on the nose, but we all have our own baggage that we bring to camp. We're going to jump over to a Jamboard. On the Jam, there are slides of duffel bags, and we're going to take some time to put in all of the feelings and experiences of this past year and a half on them in a color-coded manner. Afterwards, we'll reflect on our "baggage."
 - https://jamboard.google.com/d/1NZINcVH_DEsO3A1LVqwtiHqNWW5mr3CMtIHYYIOp7k2Q/viewer?f=0
 - The Key
 - Yellow - Something good you're carrying
 - Green - Something sad you're carrying
 - Blue - Something you want to talk about with your besties
 - Pink - Something you really don't want to talk about at all
 - Orange - Something you're worried about
 - Discussion
 - What did you notice?
 - How did it feel?
 - What was one particular color that was the hardest to fill out? Why?
 - ...easiest? Why?
 - What surprised you when doing this activity?
 - How could you use this at camp this summer?
- Memorializing (20 minutes): Well, this was sad:
 - Text study - Akiva's Student, Babylonian Talmud Yevamot 62b
 - Akiva's students - 12,000 pairs (24,000 people) died in a plague between Passover and Shavuot. Why did they die? From lack of respect - but also, diphtheria.
 - Discussion Questions:
 - What from this text surprised you?
 - What from this text reminds you of today's world?
 - What's different?
 - How can this text inform the way we deal with the aftermath of a terrible plague where so many people died?
 - Now, some shoes. We have two modern examples that both can be found in everyone's camp duffel. Shoes. These two shoe examples are from the



CORNERSTONE 2021 RESOURCE

1940s and last summer (1) news clip from Iowa last summer, and (2) exhibit in Hungary

- <https://who13.com/news/coronavirus/shoe-memorial-honors-over-800-iowa-covid-19-deaths/>
- <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/shoes-on-the-danube-promenade> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjFyYG-hXMo>
- Discussion questions:
 - What spoke to you from these memorials?
 - What was hard to take when looking at these two examples?
- Camp - In thinking about the story of national mourning when Akiva's students died, and the modern, shoe-based memorials - what can the space for memorializing look like for us at camp this summer? Take a few minutes in a pair - share, and then we'll come together: what would make sense in your camp this summer?
- Discussion
 - Which of the stories of loss speak to you the most? Why?
 - Which is hardest for you to engage with? Why?
 - Imagine you're your camper - how would one of these examples be compelling to them? Why?
 - What will get in your way in telling these stories this summer?
- Imagination & Possibility (20 minutes)
 - Share this quote: "I think it is healing behavior to look at something so broken and see the possibility and wholeness in it." - Adrienne Maree Brown
 - Journal for a couple of minutes on the idea of finding new possibilities in brokenness: What about that idea resonates? What feels challenging about it? When have you found new possibilities in your own life because of a hard experience or a loss of some kind?
 - Watch "Message from the Future" together: <https://mollycrabapple.com/a-message-from-the-future-ii-the-years-of-repair>
 - Discuss reactions: what resonated or brought up new questions for you?
 - Brainstorm together: what creative adaptations did we see our society embrace this year, from government to community organizations to our friends and family?
 - For example:
 - The way that Zoom services and programming allow access to synagogue life (and other programs) for folks who are normally not able to attend.
 - The mutual aid groups and other ways that people created systems to look out for each other and help to meet each others' needs.
 - Pauses on rent payments and other such ways of offering relief to those who needed it.
 - What else?
 - Next steps -- unpack at least two potential generative places to go with

CORNERSTONE 2021 RESOURCE

exploring this topic:

- Using the camp environment as a place to learn about some of those societal adaptations -- i.e. quotes up on the walls about mutual aid groups, access to synagogue, economic shifts, etc.
- Thinking about what changes you could see at camp this summer as a result of the ways you've thought and lived differently this year (i.e. I hadn't thought as much about X type of access before, and now I'll be building it into the ways I do things always).
- What else?
- Vent Diagrams (20 minutes)
 - Share this text: "The opposite of a fact is falsehood, but the opposite of one profound truth may very well be another profound truth." - Niels Bohr. Brainstorm examples of each of those categories.
 - Look at examples from the "Vent Diagrams" series online (can be found on Instagram or at ventdiagrams.com). Explain the concept of the project: "The idea of a 'vent diagram' as a diagram of the overlap of two statements that appear to be true and appear to be contradictory... Making vent diagrams as a practice helps us recognize and reckon with contradictions and keep imagining and acting from the intersections and overlaps. Venting is an emotional release, an outlet for our anger, frustration, despair -- and as a vent enables stale, suffocating air to flow out, it allows new fresh air to cycle in and through. We're trying to make "vents" in both senses of the word: tiny windows for building unity and power, emotional releases of stale binary thinking in order to open up a trickle of fresh ideas and air."
 - Project: Think about two ideas you hold that are both true, often come into contradiction with each other, and both important enough to you that you want to find a way to hold them together.
 - Put those ideas into your own vent diagram.
 - Decorate the middle section with some sort of art that represents how you think it would feel to genuinely be able to hold these ideas together. It can be literal (for example, if you believe these ideas would help people better support each other, it could be an image of people holding each other) or symbolic (for example, whatever colors bring you joy or feel inspirational to you).
 - If time, share a few of these with the group.

CORNERSTONE 2021 RESOURCE

BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP & SHIFTING TO IN PERSON:

In order to best adapt this program for in camp use I would suggest:

- Make sure you have sufficient copies of the texts to share.
- Arrange your groups with proper staff support (and maybe have your social worker / unit head present to help process any big feelings).
- If you have a chance to actually smash things - what can you break that won't be problematic? Water balloons? Everyone gets bubble wrap to pop?
- If you won't have access to A/V, then:
 - Be sure to print out the examples of the Vent Diagrams and images of the shoe memorials.
 -
 - For the "Message From the Future" video you can either:
 - Play it as audio-only (the visuals are illustrations of the words being said, so you don't necessarily have to be able to see the visuals to follow along). Since it's a little long for sitting and listening without visuals, you can give everyone paper and pen/cils and have them either draw some of the images that come to their mind as they listen or to write down key words and phrases that they want to remember.
 - Bring in a story to read in place of the video -- ideally something that helps to create this same idea of powerful possibility.

Babylonian Talmud: Yevamot 62b, Source: Sefaria		
V e r s e 9	<p>Rabbi Akiva says that the verse should be understood as follows: If one studied Torah in his youth he should study more Torah in his old age; if he had students in his youth he should have additional students in his old age, as it is stated: “In the morning sow your seed, etc.” They said by way of example that Rabbi Akiva had twelve thousand pairs of students in an area of land that stretched from Gevat to Antipatris in Judea, and they all died in one period of time, because they did not treat each other with respect.</p>	<p>ר"ע אומר למד תורה בילדותו ילמוד תורה בזקנותו היו לו תלמידים בילדותו יהיו לו תלמידים בזקנותו שנא' בבקר זרע את זרעך וגו' אמרו שנים עשר אלף זוגים תלמידים היו לו לרבי עקיבא מגבת עד אנטיפרס וכולן מתו בפרק אחד מפני שלא נהגו כבוד זה לזה</p>
v e r s e 1 0	<p>And the world was desolate of Torah until Rabbi Akiva came to our Rabbis in the South and taught his Torah to them. This second group of disciples consisted of Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yehuda, Rabbi Yosei, Rabbi Shimon, and Rabbi Elazar ben Shamua. And these are the very ones who upheld the study of Torah at that time. Although Rabbi Akiva's earlier students did not survive, his later disciples were able to transmit the Torah to future generations.</p>	<p>והיה העולם שמום עד שבא ר"ע אצל רבותינו שבדרום ושנאה להם ר"מ ור' יהודה ור' יוסי ורבי שמעון ורבי אלעזר בן שמוע והם הם העמידו תורה אותה שעה</p>
v e r s e 1 1	<p>With regard to the twelve thousand pairs of Rabbi Akiva's students, the Gemara adds: It is taught that all of them died in the period from Passover until <i>Shavuot</i>. Rav Hama bar Abba said, and some say it was Rabbi Hiyya bar Avin: They all died a bad death. The Gemara inquires: What is it that is called a bad death? Rav Nahman said: Diphtheria.</p>	<p>תנא כולם מתו מפסח ועד עצרת אמר רב חמא בר אבא ואיתימא ר' חייא בר אבין כולם מתו מיתה רעה מאי היא א"ר נחמן אסכרה</p>

- Discussion Questions:
 - What from this text surprised you?
 - What from this text reminds you of today's world?
 - What's different?
 - How can this text inform the way we deal with the aftermath of a terrible plague where so many people died?