

Improv to Improve Our Camp Communities *Elective*

AUTHOR(S):	Melissa Shaw
TOPIC (S)	<i>Community Building, Group Dynamics</i>
SUMMARY	In this fully participatory elective, we will use the tools and rules of improv to help us improve our community building skills, our understanding of being in partnership with our coworkers and campers, and how the collaborative nature of improv can build our muscles in both self efficacy and community care. Through a series of games and activities, this wholly experiential workshop will help you to bring the principles of improv such as: “yes, and”, making and receiving an offering, and supporting your teammates, off the stage and into our real lives by remembering, “kol yisrael arevim zeh bazeh,” we are all responsible for one another, while having a load of fun in the process.
GOALS:	The goals of this session are to be able to identify both what self care and community care look and feel like while learning a variety of improv games that will help your teams and campers practice both asking for what they need as well as being there for one another
AUDIENCE:	This elective has been designed to work with campers of all ages. It will be up to the counselors to make the specific tweak needed to bring the activities presented here back to their different age groups ideas around which we will be discussing within the elective. But all of the games used in this session could be as fun and as effective with 9-year- olds as they would with college seniors.
TIMING:	75 Minutes
APPENDICES:	Jam Board for Intentions and brainstorm around self and community care https://jamboard.google.com/d/1lftvYL7KWss62pj8FjTypaFX9JFe5JDxcjO6TzRcwCg/viewer?f=0
MATERIALS NEEDED:	N/A
SET-UP DETAILS:	For our Zoom session a space where you have privacy and focus and the internet.

SESSION TIMELINE:

- 00:00-00:05 - Introductions, setting group intentions
- 00:05-00:10 - Brainstorm around Self Care and Community Care
- 00:010-01:05 - Groups games, improvisations and activities that illustrate both self-care and community care
- 01:05-01:15 - Reflection and making the lessons we learned “stick” at camp.

SESSION OUTLINE:

00:00-00:10- **Welcome and Intention setting** - discussion of Self Care vs Community Care
Jamboard:

<https://jamboard.google.com/d/1lftvYL7KWss62pj8FjTypaFX9JFe5JDxcjO6TzRcwCg/viewer?f=0>

00:10-00:25- **Game #1: I’m Melissa, and You’re Louis, and that’s a Beautiful thing.**

In this game everyone goes around and first simply introduces themselves with the prompt “Hi, I’m (Name).”

After we hear everyone’s name *once*, we move along to the second round where the session leader models by saying “Hi, I’m (name) and then calls on another participant and says “and you’re (someone else's name) and “that's a beautiful thing.” The session leader should stress that as this is a game of making sure the community feels seen and heard we should be paying attention to who has not had a turn yet.

We go around the circle of people until we are confident everyone has been called at least once without having to pause and ask, “who hasn’t gone?”

Discussion: How did this game feel to you as a warm up? How did you feel waiting to be called? Did you worry you wouldn’t be “remembered?” What is this game's connection to self or community care? Why is “who hasn’t gone yet?” potentially alienating?

00:25-00:45 - **Game #2 I’m Melissa and I need...**

In this game the session leader will explain that everyone is going to get an opportunity to ask the community for something they need right now. Everyone is allowed to ask for anything that Could be accomplished for them in under 30 seconds and on zoom.

(For example: podcast recommendations from everyone in the chat, or for everyone to breathe with them for 30 seconds, or jumping jacks, or compliments, etc.)

Session leader will explain that everyone should try their best in this game to meet the needs of their community members while also taking care of themselves and respecting

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their own boundaries. If a request makes you uncomfortable you do not have to participate and we can bring that feeling and the importance of those boundaries to the discussion at the conclusion of the activity.

In person this game opens up even more possibilities (high fives, group hug, etc.) The lesson stressed in this game is the importance of being able to ask for what you need and the practice of receiving from the community. The community also gets the gift of being able to give to someone exactly what they have asked for (or at least as close to it based on their ability! not everyone knows podcasts or or will want to hug, but can find their own way to give that in the moment.)

Discussion: How does this connect to what we have discussed about Self and Community Care so far? What did you like about this? Did you come up against any personal boundaries? How could this be helpful to building up Self and Community Care mindsets in our campers? How might you adapt it?

00:45-:1:05 **Game #3- “Buddies”**

This is a game designed to help participants practice “having each other's backs.”

Participants are set up into groups of four. Two participants will be “off stage” (off camera) and two will be “on stage” (on camera) The two people off camera are the “buddies” to the two people on camera and they are to help the people on stage finish their thoughts.

We will model one all together to make sure everyone feels clear on the instructions and then everyone will be put in break out rooms to do the improv in small breakout rooms. Half way through the time in breakout rooms the teams will be asked to switch roles.

We will all return to plenary to discuss how it felt and how this game could be helpful to play with campers and how we can further the discussion of both taking care of ourselves and our community.

1:05-1:15- **Reflection-** Open discussion about what worked and how you might bring these activities back to camp as well as brainstorming games you already know and use that could be tweaked to be helpful tools for being Self or Community Care.

BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP & SHIFTING TO IN PERSON:

All of the games played in this session work even better in person! When bringing it back to camp many of the games can be played in a circle inside or outside.

For “Buddies” it's nice to have a space where you can have folks “off to the side” as well as others front facing the rest of the group in session.