

Tools of Awareness and Best Practices

Breath

- Breath is such a potent way to get us into our body.
- *Elohai N'shama*- n'shama, soul, shares a root with n'shimah, breath. Our breath is our life. It is a gift! It happens even when we aren't paying attention. But when we do pay attention, we bring ourselves back to the present, this breath.

What are some ways we can use this tool to bring our campers into awareness?

- Beginning and ending sessions
- When emotionally dysregulated
- To help fall asleep and calm the mind
- Let's frame these things as invitations, or "can we try this?" Keep it safe!

Body

- *Asher yatzar*- our bodies are wondrous gifts!
- Here are some invitations into body awareness
 - Try to feel your big toe from the inside
 - Bring your awareness to where your skin meets the air
 - Bring your awareness to the very top of your head
 - Put your hands on your heart. Imagine a glowing light in your heart
 - Laughter yoga! Big deep breath, let out a laugh.
- When could we use body awareness with our campers?
 - Before meals
 - To ground before programs
 - During sports or dance- notice how amazing our bodies are!
 - During embodied moments in t'fillah- bowing, hands over eyes, etc.
 - Body scans before bed for sleep
 - Waking up mindfully, wiggling fingers and toes

Senses

- We can look and not really see. We can eat and not taste, hear and not listen. How can we engage our senses mindfully?
- Here are some invitations into sense awareness
 - Sight

- Put your hand over your eye like a binocular and focus on one spot
 - Look at one thing really closely, like a leaf or a piece of grass
 - Notice what is in front of you, then move to the left and right, until you bring all of your vision into your awareness. How far to either side can you go?
 - Where is the light coming from at this moment?
- Sound
 - What is the sound farthest away from you, can you bring that into your awareness?
 - What about the sound closest to you?
 - Can you hold all the sounds in your awareness together? Not judging them, just being present.
 - Shhhh mmmm aaa (for the shema)
 - Inviting campers to close their eyes and listen to a song or sounds.
- When could we use sense awareness with our campers?
 - Before cleaning a cabin or part of camp
 - When looking out onto a view
 - When using art, music, or a video clip as part of a program

Best practices for awareness invitations

- We have invitations into awareness as part of our heritage
 - *Ma Gadlu*- creation is so great!
 - *Ma Rabu*- creation is so diverse, and vast!
 - *Ma Tovv*- how good are our spaces
 - *Ma Nora*- how good is this space!
- Using this language helps situate it in a Jewish context. We didn't lift this from somewhere else and drop it here. It's been here!
- Tone and timing.
 - Be the energy you wish to see in the group! For awareness, a slow, steady cadence promotes relaxation.
 - Take your time!
- Frame things as invitations.
- Make sure safety comes first. Not everyone will want to close their eyes and that's okay