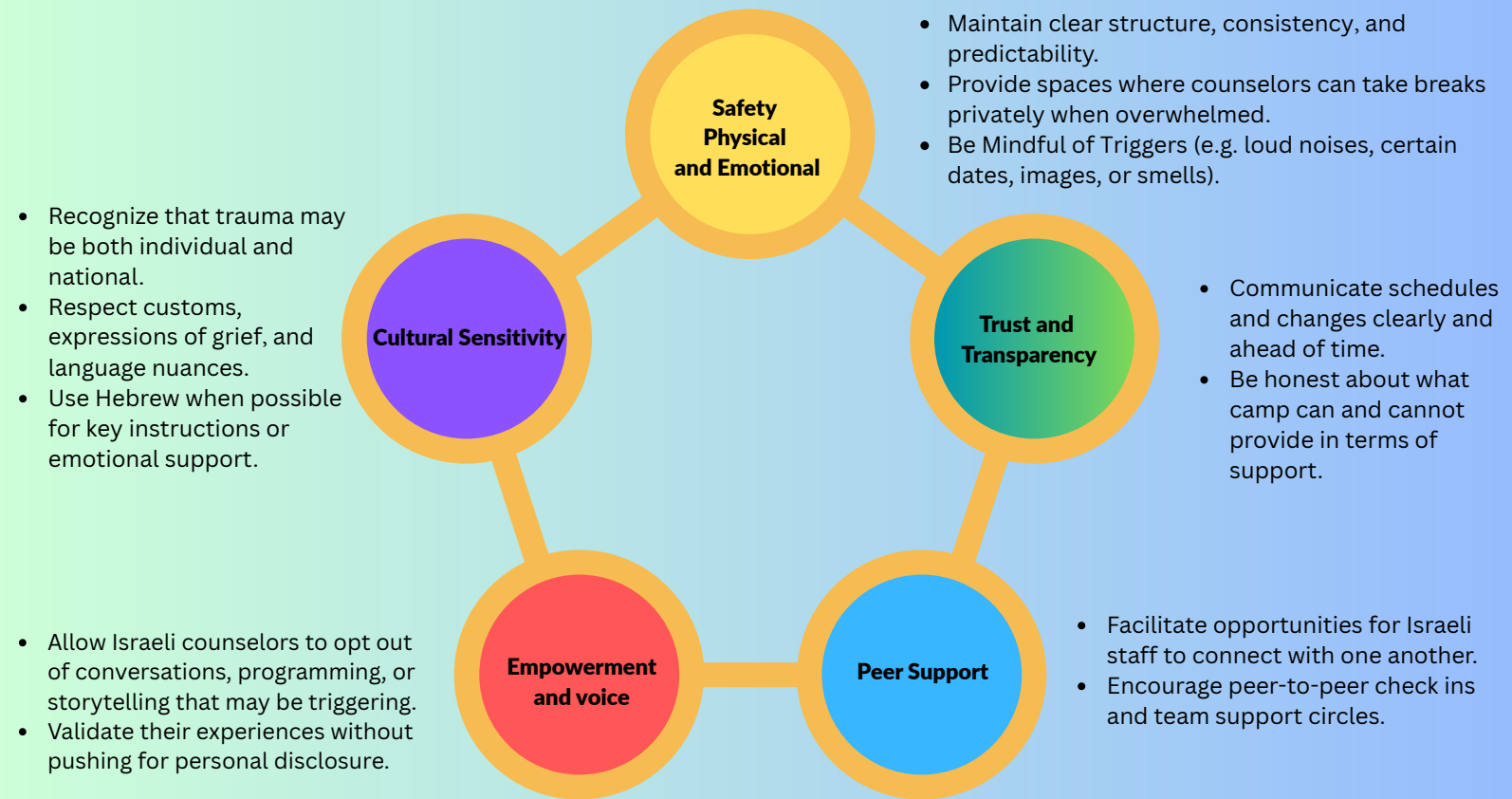


WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A TRAUMA INFORMED CAMP?

To foster a safe, compassionate and supportive environment for all staff and campers by applying trauma-informed principles in a camp setting



What To Say / What Not To Say

- Ask opened-ended questions.
- Allow each counselor to tell their story in their own time.
- Let each staff member know you are open to listening.
- Don't assume you understand what they are feeling.

Tips for Camp Leaders

- Have a wellness coordinator or designated point-person for emotional support.
- Normalize use of calming tools (e.g., breathing techniques, fidget items, nature walks).
- Hold weekly check-ins with Israeli staff to discuss their wellbeing.

Specific Things to think about

- 4th of July - Fireworks: This often triggers Israeli staff, fireworks can sound like explosions. Best practice is to prepare staff beforehand and have a space away from fireworks they can go during program.
- Prepare counselors for if/when campers will ask what they did in the army. This can be done by having a conversation to prep the questions and let them think of an answer they feel comfortable giving.
- Many may be coping with loss, fear for family, or survivor's guilt. Avoid assumptions. Offer compassionate listening.
- Avoid any military activities unless pre-cleared.
- If your camp does daily services, be mindful of the Mourners Kaddish. For some Israeli's the only time they say this prayer is at a funeral. This can be triggering for them.

Being trauma-informed isn't about fixing anyone — it's about creating a space of understanding, compassion, and flexibility where healing and growth are possible.

For more information and support reach out to Debbie Locketz, LICSW at debbie@corementalwellness.com
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