

Supporting Children, Teens and Parents

The European Council of Jewish Communities & Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
Fifth Transatlantic Zoom Session

June 16, 2021

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NJHSA Consultant

The State of Well-Being for Youth and Parents

❑ Prior to COVID-19, rising numbers of children & teens struggling with:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Suicide
- Loneliness
- Difficulties in Managing Stress, Frustration and Overwhelming Emotions
- Developing Life Skills

❑ Increased parental stress & burnout

Mental Health Pandemic

- ❑ COVID-19 has exacerbated and accelerated this crisis
- ❑ Creating a 'mental health pandemic'
- ❑ Multiple data reports demonstrate even higher rates of:
 - ❑ Anxiety
 - ❑ Depression
 - ❑ Isolation
 - ❑ Loneliness
 - ❑ Suicidal ideation in children, teens and young adults
- ❑ Drastic changes with school, social interactions and familiar routines
- ❑ Parents more stressed in helping children & balancing work/other stressors
- ❑ Decision fatigue
- ❑ Many families together for long periods with limited/no additional support

Summer

- Many see as 'great hope'
- Like the finish line we have been moving towards
- However many kids, teens and parents still stressed/worried/upset/acting out
 - Haven't been able to fully process the last year
 - Uncertain about pandemic/future/fall/work/school
 - Decision making fatigue still very present
- Summer can be a positive experience if we:
 - Understand how the human brain works
 - Respond to promote wellbeing

Amygdala "The Jumpy Superhero"

Tries to protect us at all costs, but often mistakes stress for real threats and stops the Prefrontal Cortex from getting the information it needs to help us make good choices. When the Amygdala is calm, it gives the PFC what it needs.



Prefrontal Cortex "The Smart One"

Figures out stuff for us and helps us make good, well balanced choices. The PFC also sends and retrieves memories to and from the Hippocampus. When the Amygdala is upset, the PFC cannot help us.

The Brain



Hippocampus "The Librarian"

The Hippocampus stores and recalls memories. When the Amygdala is upset, poor Hippocampus cannot store memories or properly bring them to mind.

Human Brain

- Human brain wired for survival not happiness
- Amygdala is always searching for potential harm
- Codes stress the same as a real threat
- Responding to stress of past year as a traumatic event
- Can't just shut off and look to future
- Amygdala upset for long periods of time is harmful
- Want it to settle
- Have prefrontal cortex come back online

2 Sides of the Brain

Dan Siegel, MD

Left Hemisphere	Right Hemisphere
Logical	Emotions
Language	Bodily experience
Factual Memory	Emotional/Embodied Memory

Integration of Left & Right Brain

- Want integration of Left and Right for well-being
- Connect first with the Right
 - *Naming Feelings and Experiences*
 - *Identifying Feelings in the Body*
 - *Normalizing and Validating*
- Then Redirect with the Left
 - *Problem Solving*
 - *Planning*
 - *Routines*
 - *Setting Boundaries*



Need for Integration

- Stuck in right brain
 - Caught up in feelings and acting out of them
- Going too quickly to left brain
 - Ignoring or moving away from feelings leading them to get bigger
 - Creating more harm

For Kids/Teens

- “I know it’s been a challenging year and all of us have felt stressed.”
- “ You might be uncertain about summer/camp... which makes sense.”
- “Here’s what we know...”
 - Plans
 - Routines
 - Expectations

For Parents

- Normalize and validate challenges of past year and uncertainty of future for themselves and their children
- Help plan for smaller sections of future
- Support as much routine and consistency as possible

10 things we learnt from the pandemic within the learning disabilities population

Daniel Sinclair – Youth Service Manager

Alan Weinstock – Director of Business Development and Community Services

Scene setting - background



Learning



Planning



Change



Complacency



Technology



Programme



Hybrid



Wellbeing



Kindness



Resilience



Your Learning?

Discussion – Your Learning



Video



UNPACKING: HOW JEWISH CAMPS ARE PREPARING



European Council of Jewish Communities
& Network of Jewish Human Services Agencies



MESSH: Mental, emotional, social, Spiritual health



WHAT HAD BEGUN: YEDID NEFESH



YEDID NEFESH: A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH

Overnight and Day camps receive financial and programmatic support to address MESSH holistically over 3 years:

- Supporting camps' hiring a **qualified mental health professional** on their staff
- Enhancing **counselor training**
- Developing new **wellness program/activity areas** to proactively cultivate mental, emotional, and social well-being and resiliency
- Create **publicity** and other materials to share this work with families and community members

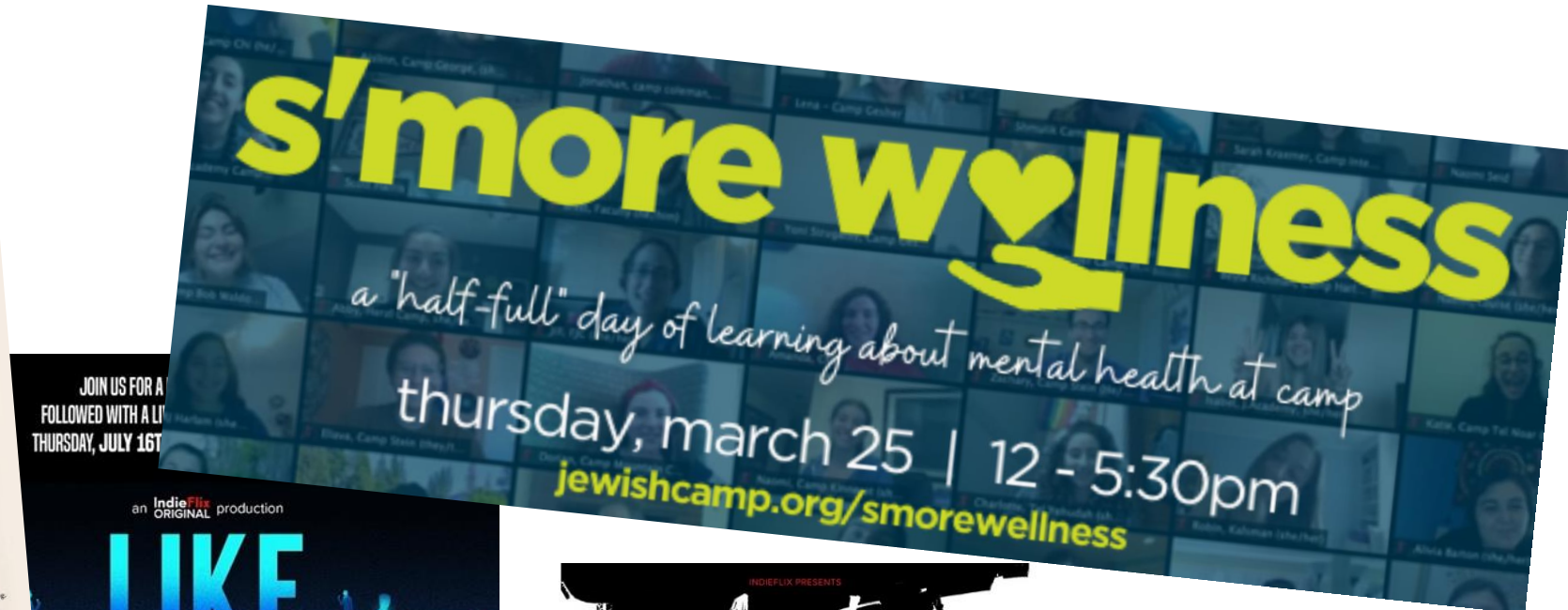
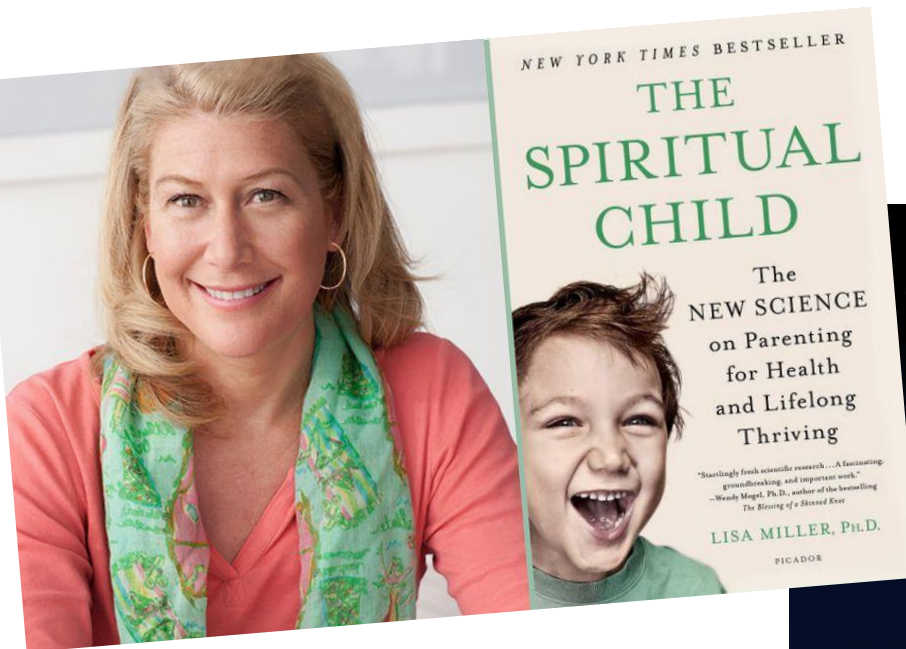


*Made possible through the generous support of
The Marcus Foundation*

ELEVATING MESSH IN 2021



CAMP PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP



ABOUT THE DOCUMENTARY

LIKE EXPLORES THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON OUR LIVES & THE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY ON THE BRAIN. WE NOW SPEND MORE TIME ONLINE THAN EVER. SO, WHAT DOES DIGITAL WELLNESS LOOK LIKE? WHAT DOES DIGITAL ADDICTION LOOK LIKE? LIKE SHARES BRAIN HACKS & TIPS TO HELP YOU CREATE BALANCE IN YOUR LIFE.



AARON SELKOWITZ
CAMP ADVOCATE



SCILLA ANDREEN
FILMMAKER & CEO OF INDIEFLIX



MAX STOSSEL
CENTER FOR HUMAN TECHNOLOGY - HEAD OF EDUCATION

INDIEFLIX PRESENTS
Angst
 RAISING AWARENESS AROUND ANXIETY

IndieFlix
 EDUCATIONAL ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM

FOUNDATION FOR JEWISHCAMP

SAVE THE DATE:
 Tuesday, Dec. 15th
 1:15-2:45pm ET

Foundation for Jewish Camp invites you to an online film screening and panel on **youth anxiety** – with a focus on thinking ahead through Summer 2021.

Reserve your seat:
www.tinyurl.com/AngstFJC



KAREN LEGMAN SEGAL
 Social Worker & Former Camper Care Director at Camp Ramah in the Berkshires



ROBBIE BERG
 Pediatric Psychiatrist, Johns Hopkins & Founding Asst. Director at URJ Sci-Tech Aca. East



DR. BETSY STONE
 Psychologist, Author, & Adjunct Lecturer at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion



CAMP PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP



WISDOM	COURAGE	WONDER
UNDERSTANDING	ZEST & WILL	REVERENCE & AWE
SENSIBLE	DISCIPLINE & WILL	LOVE
CURIOSITY	DISCIPLINE & WILL	GRATITUDE
CREATIVITY	DISCIPLINE & WILL	JOY
APPRECIATION OF OPPOSITION	PERSEVERANCE & GRIT	WHOLENESS & PEACEFULNESS

MUSSAR
for camp professionals

Healthy Mind Pursuits CAMP PRO EDITION

Healthy Mind Pursuits is based on the Healthy Mind Platter, a concept developed by Dr. Dan Siegel and David Rock to showcase the 7 activities that are the 'mental nutrients' your brain needs to function at its best.

Here are some fun (and definitely not trivial) challenges to help you pursue a healthy mind! Play along at jewishcamp.org/healthymind. Challenge completed? Tag us at [@jewishcamp](https://twitter.com/jewishcamp) and tag [#jewishcampsuits](https://twitter.com/jewishcampsuits).

TIME IN
When we quietly reflect internally, focusing on sensations, images, feelings and thoughts, we help to better integrate the brain.
activity: Reflect with **Guided Meditations** from Alison Leichter.

FOCUS TIME
When we closely focus on tasks in a goal-oriented way, we learn on challenges that make strong connections in the brain.
challenge: Spend at least 10 minutes on **Discipline Activities** in your journal.

PLAY TIME
When we are able to experience joy or creative engagement in the present moment, we help to create new connections in the brain.
activity: Spend 10 minutes on **Play Time** in your journal.

CONNECTING TIME
When we connect with others, we help to build and maintain the brain's relational capacity.
challenge: Go on a **Play Time** with a friend or family member.

SLEEP TIME
When we give the brain the rest it needs, we consolidate learning and recover from the experiences of the day.
challenge: Adapt **Camp Sleep Ritual** for yourself.

PHYSICAL TIME
When we move our bodies, we help to power up the brain in many ways.
activity: Spend 10 minutes on **Physical Time** in your journal.

DOWN TIME
When we take time to rest and recharge, we help to integrate the brain's capacity for learning.
challenge: Spend 10 minutes on **Down Time** in your journal.

JEWISHCAMP FOUNDATION FOR

with support from The Marcus Foundation & Neshamot Women's Impact Philanthropy



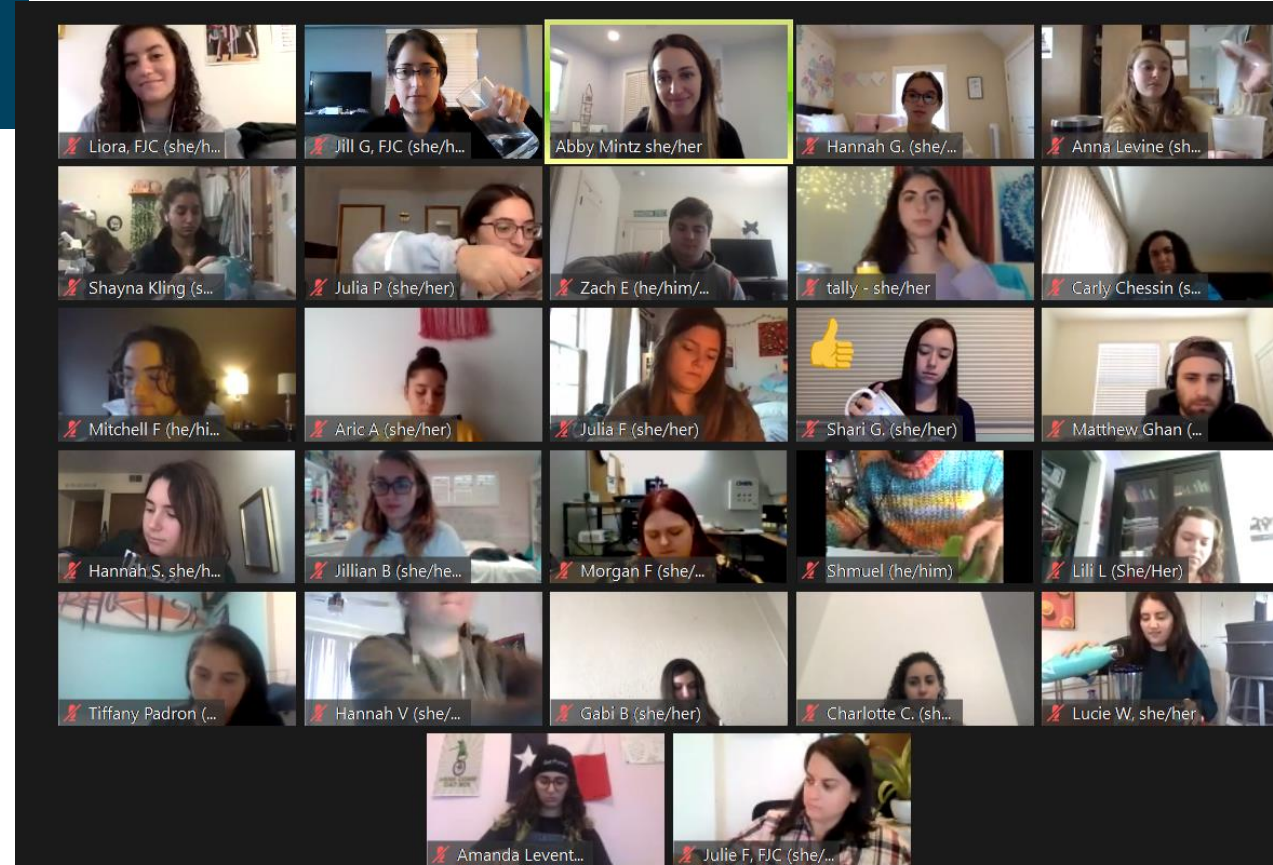
INCREASED COUNSELOR TRAINING

youth
mental health
first aid

+ MORE FOR SUMMER STAFF



47 MESSH INTERNS



STAFF SUPPORTING STAFF

WHAT DOES A STAFF LIFE COORDINATOR LOOK LIKE?

A 20 - 30 year old experienced staff member who understands the wants and needs of counselors both physically and emotionally.

This position is adaptable to fit each camp's needs
2-3 SLC's
Cohort of experienced counselors



RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Planning Fun Staff Bonding
- Planning *meaningful* Staff Bonding
- Prompting Staff check-ins
- Provide positive feedback and gratitude
- Bridge staff to other areas and resources of camp
- Mentor younger staff members
- Helping Unit Heads communicate and understand their staff better

THE HEALTHY CHALLENGE
KAYITZ
2019

PHYSICAL	SOCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> Eat regularly	<input type="checkbox"/> Make time to see a friend
<input type="checkbox"/> Eat healthy and exercise	<input type="checkbox"/> Call, email or see relatives
<input type="checkbox"/> Get preventative medical care	<input type="checkbox"/> Stay connected with non-Camp friends
<input type="checkbox"/> Rest when feeling ill or tired	<input type="checkbox"/> Reply to emails
<input type="checkbox"/> Get enough sleep	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask for help and allow others to help you
<input type="checkbox"/> Do physical activity: dance, run, play sports, sing, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain meaningful friendships while also making new ones
<input type="checkbox"/> Take breaks when needed and minimize stress.	<input type="checkbox"/> Share a fear, hope or secret with someone you trust

•MOVE•CONNECT•

SPiritUAL

- Make time for reflection and spiritual connection
- Be open to inspiration and to not knowing
- Engage in teshuva: be able to accept and to offer an apology
- Be aware of non-material aspects of life
- Identify what's meaningful
- Give tzedakah: contribute to causes in which you believe

•NOURISH•

SELF-CARE CHECKLIST

EMOTIONAL

- Spend time with people you enjoy and are important in your life
- Re-read favorite books, re-view favorite movies, allow yourself to cry and laugh
- Make time away from phones, email and internet
- Write in a journal, read and be curious
- Do something new and challenging, and create a daily camp routine

What other areas of self-care are important and relevant to you?

Staff Life
Coordinator

STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES



10 Tips, Questions, and Considerations – Staff MESH

1. Use a staff person's interview as an opportunity to learn more about how COVID has affected them and how they are managing/navigating life in a global pandemic.
 - a. Resource: A few interview questions to consider:

Have you had any in person group experience during COVID?	How has COVID impacted your daily life?
Have you experienced any COVID related loss/grief?	How can ppl around you know that you are stressed? What type of self-care can you use to help you reset?

- b. Learning: Some staff are very self-aware and some are not. There is a significant divide between these two buckets of staff.
2. Consider hiring staff for part of the season if your structure allows for this.
 - a. Learning: Many staff are not yet ready to commit to an entire season. That being said, they are ready to commit to a partial season.
 3. Things change! Surprise! Design and execute a system/series of check-ins between now (interview season) and the summer in order to keep tabs on how staff are feeling, and if their plans change.
 - a. Resource: "Staff touches" model piloted at Herzl.
 4. Give folks the gift of their own revelation. Instead of telling them all the changes, frame a conversation around this topic in a way that allows them to come to this conclusion on their own, as often as possible.
 5. Create videos of what camp will look like (from an operations standpoint) with COVID restrictions using your real staff!

Is there anything you want to share in advance with your rosh edah or yoetzet about what you might need to be successful in your role this summer?

Is there anything about your experience this past year that you'd like to make your rosh or yoetzet aware of? (for example, I spent part of the year away at school and returned home mid-year, I was in Israel for the year and had very little time at home before camp, I suffered a loss in the family recently, etc.)

Would you like to meet with a member of our staff wellness team for a one-on-one zoom call pre-summer to ask more questions or voice your concerns about Kayitz 2021?

Select one

Are there any extra general comments or concerns you have regarding the tzetvet experience for Kayitz 2021?

COUNSELOR SELF-CARE RESOURCES



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 1 RESILIENCY BUILDING <i>Refer here when... you are struggling with bouncing back</i>	 2 LAUGHING IS GOOD FOR YOU! <i>Refer here when... you need a laugh or need some jokes to tell your campers</i>	 3 PRAYERS FOR STRENGTH AND HEALING <i>Refer here when... you need inspiration</i>
 4 ALONE TIME <i>Refer here when... you feel overwhelmed with the people around you</i>	 5 MIDDOT MATTER <i>Refer here when... you feel like you aren't succeeding</i>	 6 NIGHTLY REFLECTION <i>Refer here when... you want to reflect</i>
 8 SHARING HAPPINESS <i>Refer here when... you want to share happiness and kindness</i>	 10 COLORING COUNTS <i>Refer here when... you want to relax</i>	 12 MINDFULNESS A TO Z'S <i>Refer here when... you need some reminders on how to stay emotionally well.</i>

<https://jewishcamp.org/mesh-intern-projects/>

Self Care Weekly Bingo Board!

B	I	N	G	O
I got off camp at least once this week	I had a fun one on one conversation with a camper	I participated in a fun activity intended for the campers	I visited a program area that I love	When posed with an annoying question I paused before I answered
I was conscious of how much space I was taking up in a meeting or other group setting	I accepted help when someone offered it to me	I took time to call a loved one that is not at camp	I took time to appreciate nature	I danced like nobody was watching
I checked something off my camp bucket list	I gave myself time to do something mindless	FREE TIME <small>(I took at least 30 minutes of free time a day)</small>	I took a walk by myself to reflect	I accepted feedback with appreciation
I had a snack or meal outside of camp	I offered someone who seemed like they needed it, a break	I gave myself time to learn	I genuinely laughed	I gave someone feedback constructively and with good intentions
I took a minute to recognize my hard work paying off	I had a one on one conversation with a peer I don't usually work with	I took a dip in the lake/pool/ocean	I took time for my favorite self-care activity	I had an experience that reminded me "this is why I love my job"

COMMUNICATION & UNCERTAINTY



DRAFT DRAFT DRAFT - Updated: April 16, 2021 - DRAFT DRAFT DRAFT

DIRECTOR'S BLOG

Ramah in the Rockies

Our Roadmap to Summer 2021

OUR 2021 SUMMER ROADMAP

PREFACE

Ramah in the Rockies will open its doors during summer 2021 for in-person programming.

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[Core Assumptions](#) | [Community Structure](#) | [Health & Safety](#)
[Travel](#) | [Program](#) | [Food Service](#) | [Facility](#) | [Communication](#)

With your partnership, we remain steadfast in our commitment to create a safe operating environment for both campers and staff, while continuing to deliver on our mission to create a laboratory for joyful Jewish living and learning. Since early July 2020, a dedicated and well-qualified group of lay leaders and staff have been following the science,

PARENTS AS STAKEHOLDERS



URJ Goldman Union Camp Institute (GUCI)

June 9 at 1:19 PM · 🌐



Attention Kallah Aleph parents dropping off on Tuesday!
Opening day is going to feel a little bit different this summer, but also just as exciting!
Let's come together after drop off at Bub's Burgers for a shared celebration as GUCI 2021 finally gets underway!
The second floor will be ours to share starting at 11am. Drop by and stay as long as you need!
See you there!

PARENTS: IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE!

After Drop-Off Party

LAUGH, CRY OR JUST HANG OUT!

Bub's Burgers and Ice Cream

Helping Our Children Transition Back From Quarantine

A Webinar Conversation

March 25 @7PM PST
Zoom link provided upon RSVP

With
Rabbi Paul Kipnes
Co-author of Jewish Spiritual Parenting

Dr. Lise Spiegel
Clinical Psychologist and
deToledo High School's School Counselor

Moderated By
Jordanna Flores
6 Points West Camp Director

Hosted By:

deToledo High School | 6PointsWest A URJ Summer Camp | OrAmi congregation you're home

CAMPERS: CHECKING IN

Daily Camper Check-In Form

Camper Name	Participates in activities Overall Happiness Getting along with others 1: Struggling; 2: Doing Well; 3: Excelling	Moments of Sadness		Not Eating well ✓	Poor hygiene ✓	Visited health center ✓	Tick check ✓
		Missing Home ✓	Other ✓				

שם: NAME
צב"ר: BUNK
תאריך: DATE

Camper Questionnaire

How's it going? Please circle your answer and feel free to write in any additional information you'd like your unit supervisor or camp leadership to know.

Name: Bunk: Unit:

How would you rate camp so far?

Great Good OK Poor

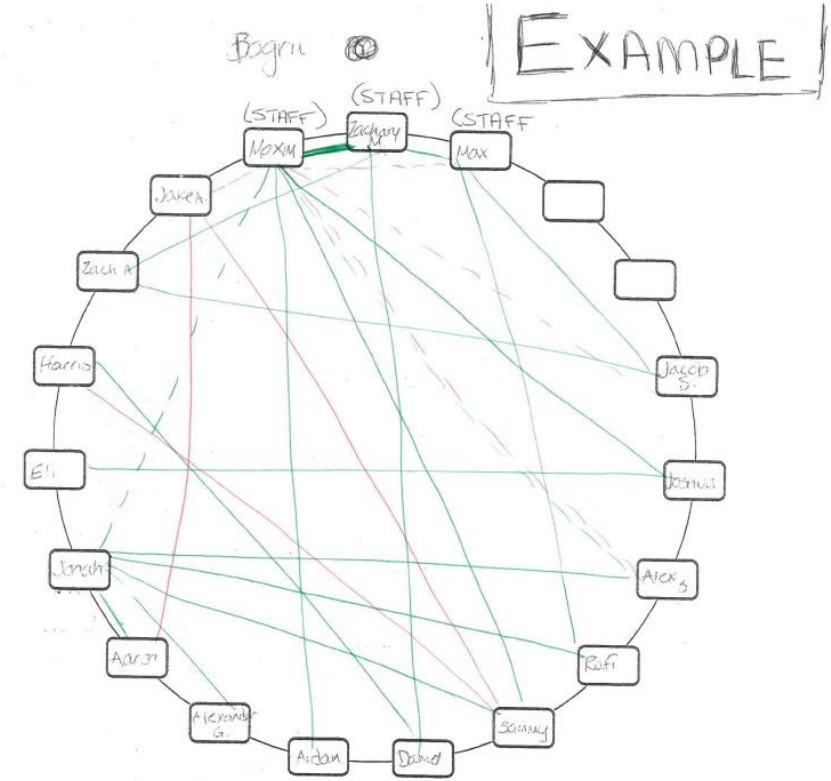
What are your top 3 favorite activities at camp?

How well are you getting along with the other campers in your bunk?

Great Good OK Poor

How are your counselors doing?

Great Good OK Poor



MENTAL HEALTH INTEGRATED INTO CAMP LIFE: LA-BRI'UT JEWISH LEARNING & RESILIENCE

INTRODUCTION TO THE LA-BRI'UT PROGRAM GUIDE

What is *La-bri'ut* all about? This program guide is for camp counselors to have a set of camp activities for Jewish values-based resilience building. *La-bri'ut* is built on five caregiving principles that support healing and resiliency for communities that experience trauma¹, such as the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. These five principles each align with a Jewish value and comprise the five modules in this program guide:

- ❑ *Sukkat Shalom* (shelter of peace) - A sense of safety
- ❑ *Ometz Lev* (inner strength) - A sense of calm
- ❑ *G'vurah* (strength/power) - Self- and communal-efficacy
- ❑ *K'hillah* (community) - Social connectedness
- ❑ *Hesed* (loving kindness) - Hope attained by reaching out to assist others

HOW WILL THESE PROGRAMS HELP MY CAMPERS?

Each set of programs helps campers gain an understanding of these values and principles for themselves and their communities through stories, activities, and exploration, all while strengthening their wellness and resilience. As a community, you will proactively strengthen their mental wellbeing while participating in fun "campy" activities.

<https://jewishcamp.org/la-briut/>



PARTNERSHIPS

CRISIS HOTLINE

Atlanta

Local Federation & JFCS partnered to extend their mental health hotline to create a dedicated crisis hotline for camp professionals and counselors at regional day and overnight camps to call for coaching, support, and connection to resources

SHARED POSITION

Portland

Human resources are a big part of camp, and hiring for summer has been extra hard this year. BB Oregon Camp & Portland's JFCS hired a shared position, "Community Care & Inclusion Director + Family & Child Therapist."

TRAINING

Philadelphia, Chicago, S. Florida

Outside organizations provide workshops during staff orientation as well as ongoing training throughout the summer. Regional partnerships for ongoing learning with college-age or teen staff is a great way to make learning stick and help folks apply these life long skills.

EXPERIENCES

Everywhere!

Proactive well-being, resilience-building, social-emotional learning, spirituality cultivation – it all contributes to sustained mental health and stronger Jewish communities. Educators on [ExperienceShuk.org](https://www.experienceshuk.org) and elsewhere visit camps to teach and play!



THANKS!

Q&A



“

May the One who is struggling to understand their own strength find their own path with the help of the world around them.

And may they never be afraid to ask for help or share their burden with others.

May they understand that strength isn't in solitude, but in reaching out when you cannot cope alone.

”



Jewish Summers. Jewish Future.



SUMMER 2021 TRIPS

NOW AVAILABLE

Hillel Summer Israel Experiences



Birthright Israel is a not-for-profit organization providing the gift of a 10-day educational group trip to Israel for Jewish young adults between the ages of 18 to 32.

Today, Birthright Israel is the largest educational tourism organization in the world that has given over 750,000 journeys to Israel.

A stylized world map composed of numerous small, light blue dots, centered in the background of the slide.

Birthright Israel



Travel Safe

While entry to Israel continues to be extremely limited, Birthright Israel participants who are fully vaccinated or recovered from COVID-19 are allowed into the country.

Apply with Peace of Mind



Commitment Free

Participants can apply for a trip with confidence to save their spot, knowing they can get back their \$250 deposit, no questions asked.

Travel Safe

We're in close contact with Israel's Ministry of Health as we innovate and develop our own protocols to keep **participants' safety** our #1 priority.

Priority Rebook

If trip is canceled due to Covid, participants will be given priority booking for a future trip.

Group Size

- We're providing smaller, more intimate group of busmates to travel alongside.
- More time will be spent outdoors and we will visit sites that abide by the high standards of Israel's Ministry of Health.



Vaccination & Testing

- **Vaccine:** Birthright Israel participants that enter Israel must be fully vaccinated with a COVID-19 FDA authorized vaccine. Travel is possible 7 days after the final vaccine has been administered.
- **Tests:** Participants must present a negative PCR COVID-19 test which was taken within 72 hours of departure and, upon arrival in Israel, take an additional PCR test as well as a serological (antibodies) test which is performed using a blood sample.
- Birthright will provide both tests for you. Documented verification of vaccine is required.
- **PPE:** Any Personal Protective Equipment required or needed will be provided for you.

Staffing

Birthright Israel is a supervised program where you travel in a group setting. Each group is led by a Tour Educator and accompanied by two staff members from the group's country of origin. Additionally, the group is accompanied by a security guard (who is also a medic) and a bus driver.

Each staff person must participate fully in Hillel's online staff training sessions.



Travel Safe Messaging



Travel Safe Messaging

Don't just watch it. Live it.

Make new memories on Birthright Israel with **CAMPUSHillel**




**TRAVEL SAFE.
TRAVEL SMART.
TRAVEL WITH HILLEL.**
[FREEISRAELTRIP.ORG/CAMPUSURL](https://freeisraeltrip.org/campusurl)
TRIP DATES HERE

MY #BIRTHRIGHT THIS OR THAT

Transport yourself to an incredible #Birthright experience through a game of THIS OR THAT. Don't forget to share and tag us @CAMPUSHANDLEHERE

EXPLORE DOWNTOWN	DISCOVER HISTORY
TEL AVIV	HAIFA
JERUSALEM	GOLAN (THE NORTH)
NAPS ON THE BUS	A GOOD NIGHTS SLEEP
FALAFEL	SHAWARMA
EDUCATIONAL	EXPLORING
TRAVEL WITH HILLEL	TRAVEL ALONE

TAG A FRIEND WHO YOU WANT TO TRAVEL WITH

[FREEISRAELTRIP.ORG/GO](https://freeisraeltrip.org/go)

MAKE NEW MEMORIES ON #BIRTHRIGHT

WITH HILLEL: BIRTHRIGHT ISRAEL

Charging converter	\$12.99
Renewing your passport	\$85.00
Water shoes (for Dead Sea)	\$9.50
Money for Souvenirs	\$100.00
Creating Travel Tik Toks	\$0.00
Traveling with your campus	\$0.00
Creating new memories	\$0.00

Total: PRICELESS



Make priceless memories.

IF YOU'RE
LOOKING
FOR A SIGN
THIS IS IT



NOW ANNOUNCING
#BIRTHRIGHT TRIPS FOR
JULY AND AUGUST 2021



תאגית-ביה"ח
BIRTHRIGHT ISRAEL

[FREEISRAELTRIP.ORG/GO](https://freeisraeltrip.org/go)



Onward Israel with Hillel offers immersive resume building internships for Jewish undergraduates in a wide variety of fields and sectors.

These transformative experiences range from 6 to 10 weeks, include housing, and are highly subsidized, most campus programs are around \$700 for the summer.

A stylized world map composed of numerous small, light blue dots, centered in the background of the slide.

Onward Israel

Planning for Summer 2021

- Onward Israel remains committed to providing a meaningful experience to every participant on summer 2021 programs.
- The summer was planned with the well-being of participants as main concern.
- Quarantine may be required upon arrival. Vaccinated and recovered participants may be able to shorten their quarantine by carrying out a serological test.
- Participants will be required to take a PCR test before their flight and another one upon arrival.



Interviewing with Mental Health In Mind



- Mental illness is very common and is not a barrier to a successful experience on the program.
- This program can be stressful; dealing with roommates, internship demands, distance from family and friends, and adapting to a foreign language/culture.
- Our goal is to determine if the candidate is well suited for this kind of experience.

Interviewing for Mental Health

Even without direct questioning, we can:

- Provide an overview of program stressors and see how the applicant responds.
- Ask how the applicant manages conflict.
- Inquire about self-care skills.
- Note any unusual responses or behaviors.



Principles of Interviewing



- Balance the need to make a decision with the desire to avoid upsetting the candidate.
- Difference between “Will the program benefit you?” and “Can you handle the program?”
- With the proper introduction and framing, most questions will be well received.
- Try to ask close-ended questions with open-ended follow ups.

Examples of Helpful Questions

- Have you ever been alone on a trip like this before?
How did it go?
- Have you ever had to deal with a difficult roommate/peer? How did you resolve it?
- Can you recall a time when you were feeling really stressed? How did you cope with it?



Self-Care Skills on the Program

- **Safe Space:** ability to set boundaries and create a physical space for relaxation.
- **Structure:** ability to manage program demands and schedule time for themselves.
- **Social support:** ability to arrange consistent contact with supportive family and friends.



Conclusion



- Mental health is common and not a disqualifier.
- Most participants with a history of mental illness do well on the program.
- The key is proper planning and support.



Hillel International

Washington • New York • San Francisco • Jerusalem