

# Communicating about (Day) Camp in the Time of COVID-19

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Wednesday, April 29, 2020



# Introductions



**Matt Dorf**  
President



**Ari Geller**  
COO



**Shannon Craig Straw**  
Vice President



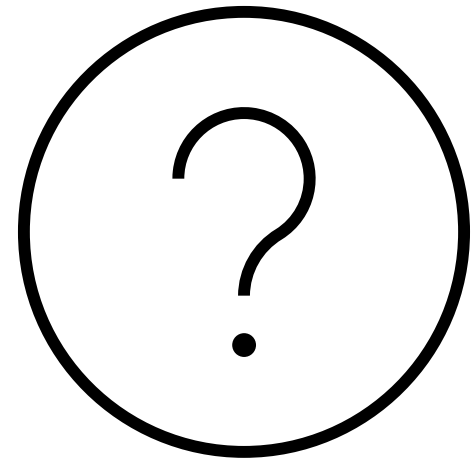
# Guiding Principle

Build and maintain trust by following through on small promises. *The single biggest predictor of a loss of trust in a crisis is the perception that you don't care.*



# Guiding Question

What would reasonable people appropriately expect a reasonable camp to do in this situation?





# Goals

- Maintain positive ties to campers, families and alumni
- Motivate funders and donors to increase giving
- Set camp up for sustainability and future success



# Know Your Audience

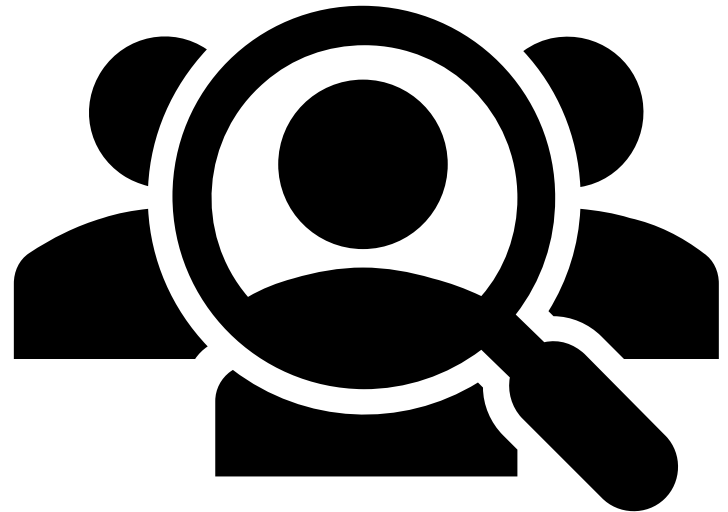
- Who are they?
  - Campers
  - Parents and families
  - Staff (seasonal and yearlong)
  - Funders and donors
  - Partner organizations





# Know Your Audience

- Where are they?
  - Geographic location
  - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram?
  - Email, snail mail, phone?





# Develop Your Core Message

- What's your decision?
- Why is that your decision?
- How did you make your decision? What sources and issues did you consider?
- Is there a commitment you can make to your community?





# Questions to Answer If Camp is Open

- How will you keep my child safe?
- What happens if another camper or a staff member gets sick?
- What happens to my deposit if I choose not to send my child to camp?
- Will there be fewer campers this year? How will you decide who gets to come to camp?
- My kid has asthma. Are they allowed to attend camp?
- How does taking on the risk of opening camp align with your values?



# Questions to Answer If Camp is Closed

- What happens to my deposit? Will I get a refund of tuition paid to-date?
- Can I apply payments already made to 2021?
- Can I donate my tuition back to the camp?
- My camper received a scholarship. Can that be applied to next year?
- What are the consequences of camp being closed this year?



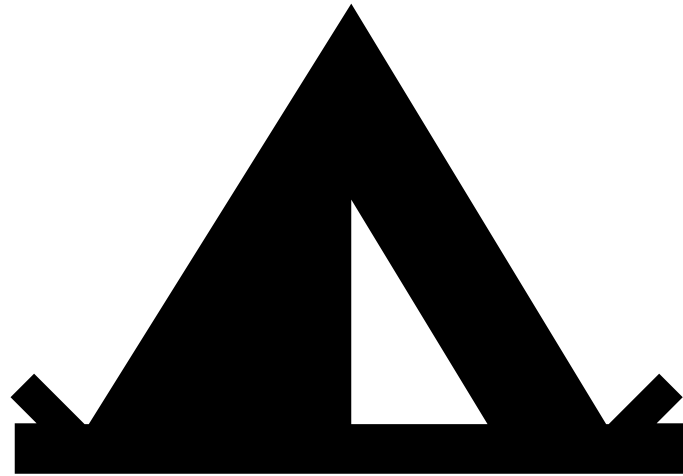
# Questions to Answer If Camp is Closed

- Will there be virtual camp?
- What about a shorter session?
- How can campers stay connected this summer?
- When is registration for 2021?
- What are the 2021 session dates?



# Think Local

Remember what is true in your area,  
may not be true in other parts of the  
country.





# Cite Your Sources

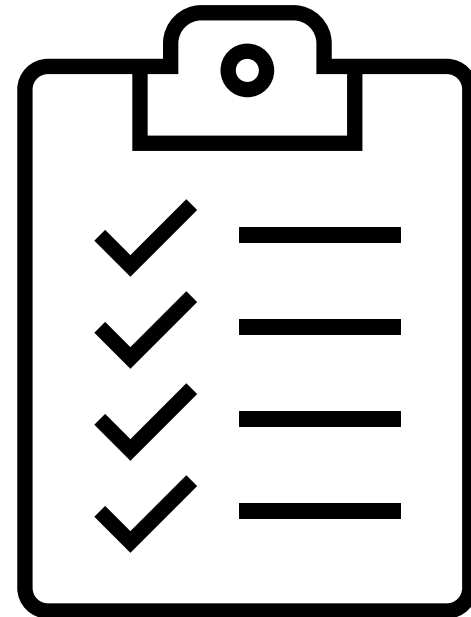
You are camp experts. When relaying relevant health information, remember to cite public health authorities.





# Acknowledge the Unknown

Admit you're still figuring out all of the details and commit to additional communications.



# Express Empathy

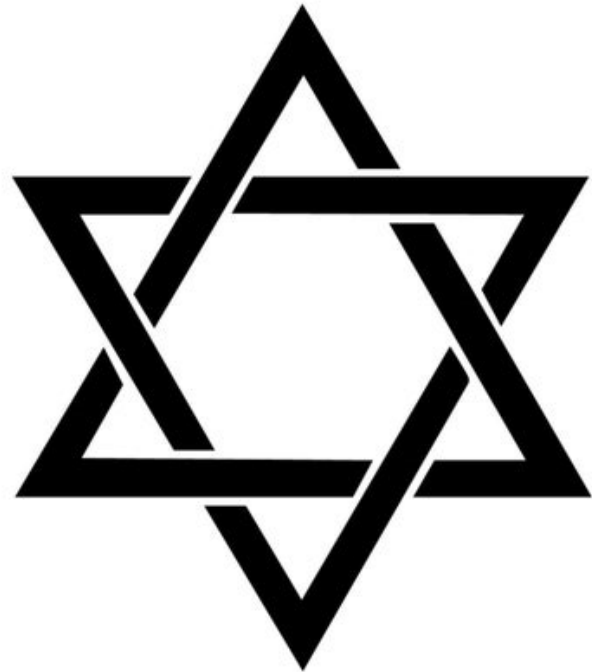
Acknowledge and validate your audience's feelings.





# Communicate Your Values

Share how your values informed your decision.



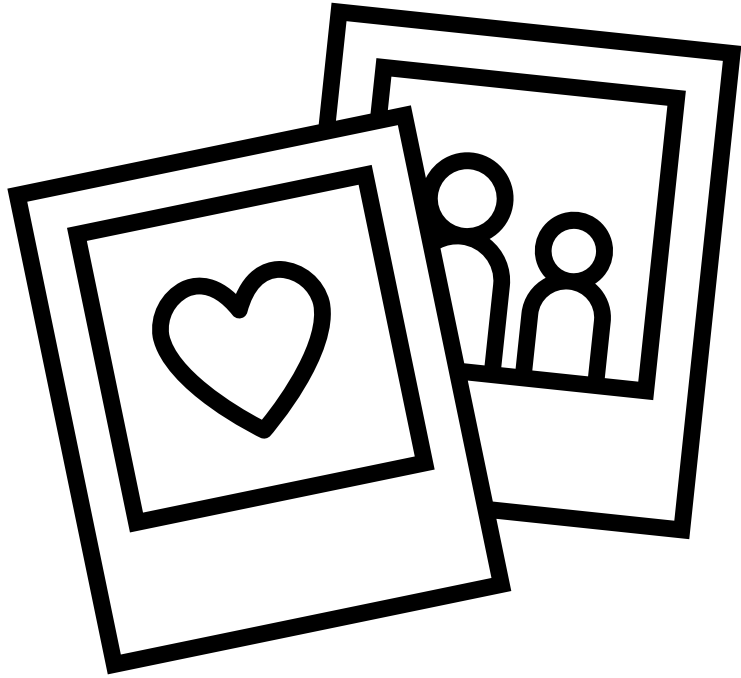




# Recall the Past, Hope for the Future

“The new normal is not the new future.”

-- Jacob Cytryn,  
Camp Ramah Wisconsin





# Communicating your Decision

- Letter for parents and families
- Message for campers (e.g., video)
- Communication for staff members
- Language for website
- Social media posts
- Answers to anticipated questions
- Appeal for funders
- Message for alumni
- Follow-up message



# Using a Video

- Choose your messenger carefully – pick someone well-known to campers (e.g., beloved counselor)
- Acknowledge and validate feelings
- Close with a camp memory
- Include camp photos if you're able
- Don't worry about production quality – a video filmed on your phone is better than no video



# Sample Video Script

*Customize as needed*

My heart breaks to share that we are not able to have camp this summer.

I wanted nothing more than for all of us to come together for [reference your most meaningful moments, e.g., Shabbat, Havdalah, Maccabiah Games]

As sad as I am today, I know that our community will come together again.

As we say at [reference a well-known story or common experience at camp]

Zoom is no substitute for camp and still we're inviting you to come together with your bunk mates, counselors and village leaders later this week. Please watch for emails with more information.