

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD THROUGH THE CANCELLATION OF CAMP

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We know many of you have some tough moments ahead as you navigate this new reality with your kids. Our hearts go out to all of you. It's natural for parents to want to ease the pain and discomfort that our children experience. In this case, as with so much related to this pandemic, we are not in control of the circumstances and we are not able to fix it or make it go away. What we can do is to show up to actively support and comfort our children, our friends, and ourselves. Modeling how we cope with challenging circumstances is a powerful teaching tool for our kids. There is no perfect way to parent right now. Your presence and love is the best possible offering

TAKE A MOMENT FOR YOURSELF

In order to be there for our kids, it's important to take a moment to allow ourselves to feel our own reaction to this news. By identifying and labeling our own feelings we can be aware that while some of our feelings may align with our children's, others may not. Sharing the news that camp has been canceled in a calm and simple manner gives our kids the space and permission to express how they are feeling without worrying that it may upset us.

BE PRESENT WITH THEM

Give your child the space and permission to feel however they are feeling. Let them cry, sulk, stomp, retreat, and cry some more. Just be with them without offering solutions. You might say something like, "I know this is not the news you were hoping for and I'm so sorry that you won't get to have the camp experience you were counting on." Save the conversation about creative opportunities and ideas for the summer for another day. For now, let them know that however it is they are feeling is a normal and appropriate reaction to these circumstances.

BE PATIENT

Some children will react right away while others may take more time to process. Some may not have much of a reaction right now, and that's okay too. Your child may temporarily show a lack of motivation for schoolwork or other responsibilities. They may display behaviors they previously outgrew. Be patient with them. While there is no linear path through coping with a loss, with time they will regain their balance.

FOLLOW THEIR LEAD

Ask your child what they need from you. "I know this is hard. What do you need from me right now? How can I help?". This allows them to take the lead and gives them some control over how you can help. Offering to talk about things when they are ready and continuing to check in over time is helpful. "I understand that you don't want to talk about it right now. That's ok. I'm here for you whenever you need me."

SHOW EMPATHY FOR THE LOSS

We may be pulled to put this loss in perspective and to highlight how much we have to be grateful for in a time of great suffering in the world. While true, that there are greater losses in life being reminded of this is not likely to be helpful to your child at this moment. Resist the urge to offer them the silver linings right away. The time will come to look ahead and re-group when they are ready.

ENCOURAGE CONNECTION WITH CAMP FRIENDS

Offering support and feeling supported by others gives kids a sense of control in a time when they have little control. Giving preference to technology that allows kids to see each other's faces over texting and social media is important. Monitoring our own social media use in response to this news and helping our kids notice if taking breaks from social media allows them to prioritize their own needs and not take on the feelings of others may be useful.

RE-BUILD THIS WORLD WITH COMPASSION AND KINDNESS

In time, when you feel they are ready, you can remind them of our Jewish value that out of the darkness comes light. You can gently encourage your kids to think about ways they can contribute to the Ramah community, things they can do for one another, or together for others.

With time and love (and maybe with a few skills they've picked up at camp along the way) our kids will display their resilience and will cope and heal from this loss.

If you are concerned about the intensity or duration of your child's reaction. Please reach out directly to a mental health professional in your area or contact a member of our camper care team.

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