



Holding Space in Uncertainty: A Resource Guide for Educators and Group Leaders in Israel

In these harrowing days, when fear and disorientation are high, education can be a source of grounding, meaning, and connection. The crisis in Israel is a crisis for us all. Many of our children and young people on the ground, being taken care of by the incredible Tour Operators and Tour Educators, who are the heroes of our time.

יְקוּם כָּל־בְּיַד הַדָּרֵעַם - Our strength is in our peoplehood; in these challenging times lets fortify our participants sense of peoplehood by coming together to support them and model what we can do together.

This guide offers adaptable resources that group leaders can use to help participants process, reflect, and reclaim agency through Jewish learning, art, mindfulness, and music.

1. Open with Connection: Facilitated Check-Ins & Conversation

Start each session by naming the moment. Create space for participants to connect, express how they feel, or just be.

Resources:

- [Facilitating Challenging Conversations – The iCenter](#): Offers framing, prompts, and strategies for holding space.
- [I Said, I Heard, I Want – M2](#): A group reflection activity using structured listening to create space for presence, understanding, and voice.
- [What You Can Do – Resetting the Table](#): Essential reminders for facilitating challenging conversations.

2. Tap into Music: Comfort, Memory & Meaning

Music bypasses anxiety and activates memory, resilience, and spiritual connection.

Resources:

- [Music as an Educational Tool – The iCenter](#): Explore Israeli songs as entry points for identity, memory, and reflection.
- [Songs of Collective Memory – The iCenter](#): Curated music deeply rooted in Israeli and Jewish history.

- [Aya Zahavi Feiglin](#) and [Iris Eliya Cohen - The iCenter](#): Powerful Israeli voices of poetry and song.
- [How Can Beauty Help Process Pain? - M2](#): An exploration of how beauty can offer comfort, clarity, and connection in moments of pain.

3. Anchor in Visuals: Photography, History, and Identity

Resources:

- [Local Testimony Exhibit - The iCenter](#): A photo-based window into Israeli life through teen perspectives.
- [Stars in the Sky - The iCenter](#): A visual art-based storytelling resource.

4. Grounding Through Jewish Mindfulness

Support participants to return to their breath and body, even amidst external chaos.

Resources:

- [Text to Life Practice - Institute for Jewish Spirituality](#): Uses Exodus 6:9 (“they were short of breath...”) to anchor reflection and release habitual stress.
- [Tips for Getting Started with Jewish Meditation - Institute for Jewish Spirituality](#): Practical guidance for short grounding sessions.
- [The Pedagogy of Blessing - M2](#): Rituals and text-based practices to support emotional grounding and communal connection.
- [Where Can I Find Hope? - M2](#): A resource exploring hope as a practice and source of strength through story, reflection, and visual expression.

5. Jewish Learning & Trauma-Informed Tools

Resources:

- [The iCenter - Resource Library](#)
- [M2 - Resources](#)
- [The Jewish Education Project - Educator Hub](#)

Highlighted Tools:

- [A Jewish Pedagogy of Creative Well-Being - M2](#): Arts-based reflection and collaborative narrative-building.
- [Days of Gratitude - M2](#): Short-form modules fostering appreciation and resilience.



6. Grounding Through Jewish Mindfulness

Turn emotional release into collective ritual and creativity.

Ideas:

- Light a candle or name an intention aloud.
- Pair music or text with journaling or movement.
- Write a note to your future self in one month.

Resources:

- [Days of Gratitude – M2](#): Create meaningful gratitude rituals grounded in Jewish values.

Trauma-Informed Pedagogical Frameworks

Resources as orientation for all activities.

- Normalize doubt and emotional dysregulation in this moment. Help participants feel held.
- [Principles for Trauma Informed Approaches – SAMHSA](#): Safety, Choice, Empowerment, Collaboration
- Modalities: Writing for Healing, Chevruta as grounding practice, layered reflection.
- [Principles for Dialogue Facilitation – Resetting the Table](#): A guide on where to begin.

Crisis Readiness & Community Resilience Tools

These resources were developed to help Jewish communities prepare for and respond to emergencies, enhancing resilience at the individual and communal levels.

Resources:

- [Community Resilience Mapping – JReady](#): A tool to assess communal capacity and plan for crisis response.
- [The Six C’s Model for Supportive Response – JReady](#): A basic training model for offering emotional first aid.
- [Planetherapy – JReady](#): A platform offering free emotional support, guided practices, and crisis counseling access.



- [Soly AI Emotional Health Platform - JReady](#): An AI-driven mental health companion offering personalized stress-reduction tools.
- [Principles for Conducting a Supportive Conversation](#): A practical framework for empathetic and helpful communication during crisis.
- [Coping with Exposure to Trauma and Difficult Graphic Content - JReady](#): Best practices for trauma exposure.
- [Trauma & Recovery: A Recommended Protocol - JReady](#): A guide for educators and educational systems.

Educator Self-Care & Support

Group leaders also need support to continue showing up with strength and compassion.

Resources:

- [The Educators Aren't Alright: Dealing with Stress - Jewish Education Project](#): A trauma-informed toolkit for identifying and addressing secondary trauma.
- [Resilient Educator Trauma-Informed Toolkit - Crisis Prevention Institute](#) Practical tools for maintaining emotional well-being in crisis environments.
- [Educator Resilience Guide - Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education](#): Research-based strategies to build calm, attention, and connection.
- [Helping Youth After Community Trauma - The National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#): Key reminders for adults supporting youth.
- [Caring for Others When You Can Barely Care for Yourself - The Jewish Education Project](#): Caring for others when you are overwhelmed yourself.

Implementation: How to Structure the Day

- Create a structure for each day: Check-ins → grounding → creative → text.
- Rotate music, visuals, ritual, and mindfulness to serve diverse learning needs.
- Support group leaders through peer sharing and IETA webinars.
- Blend structured learning with flexible emotional support.

