



“A PROFOUND IMPACT”

Results of a Survey of Past Tikvah Staff

*A Publication of the **Leadership Commons***

ABSTRACT

Over 400 respondents describe the experience of staffing a Ramah program for campers with disabilities, and the impact it has had on their lives.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Note from the National Ramah Commission.....	3
Executive Summary.....	4
Introduction	9
Perceived Impact	11
Disabilities Awareness and Attitudes.....	11
Personal Growth	11
Life Choices: Career, Volunteer and College.....	12
Relationship Building	13
Camp-Wide Impact	14
The Experience of Staffing Tikvah.....	15
Rewarding and Challenging	16
The Social Experience	17
Support & Preparation.....	18
Interest in Further Staff Development.....	19
Inter-relatedness of Constructs	21
Jewish Identity & Engagement.....	22
Jewish and Inclusion Outcomes.....	23
Comparing Tikvah and Non-Tikvah Staff.....	24
Israel Engagement	25
Social Impact.....	25
Works Cited.....	26
Appendix A: Respondent Characteristics.....	28
Summary of Responses Using Alumni Data	29
Appendix B: Comparison of General Respondent Characteristics on Cohen Survey	32
Summary of Responses Using Tikvah Data	33
Appendix C: Factor Analysis.....	34

A Note from the National Ramah Commission

January, 2018

Shalom,

When Herb and Barbara Greenberg founded Ramah's first Tikvah program nearly fifty years ago, they could never have imagined a day when children and young adults with disabilities would be meaningfully included at all Ramah overnight camps and day camps.

In our travels across North America to see Ramah camps and Tikvah programs in action, we have observed firsthand and heard from so many people about the powerful impact of Tikvah programs on both campers with disabilities and neurotypical campers.

We have also heard from current and past staff members just how influential the experience of working with Tikvah can be. This experience has impacted their lives in a multitude of ways, including choices of profession, attitudes toward people with disabilities, involvement in the Jewish community and in Jewish life, and more. We have so much to learn from our current and past Tikvah staff members.

We are therefore pleased and appreciative that our colleagues and friends at The William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education, including lead researcher Debbie Singfer and Davidson researchers Dr. Jeffrey Kress and Dr. Abigail Uhrman, have undertaken a study of nearly 400 Ramah staff members who have worked for one or more of the programs of the National Ramah Tikvah Network. We hope you will find the study enlightening. We invite you to share any thoughts or comments with us.

Sincerely,

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Executive Summary

In the spring of 2017, the William Davidson Graduate School of Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary, in conjunction with the National Ramah Commission, conducted a survey of those who had staffed a Tikvah Program (or a similar program for campers with disabilities) at a Ramah overnight camp. The study emerges from prior research that suggests that the camp experience in general, and work with campers with disabilities in particular, can have a positive impact on staff members. Our goal was to expand upon previous work and to explore the perceived impact of, and opinions about, staffing a Tikvah program (Blas, 2010; Cohen, Miller, Sheskin, & Torr, 2011; Kress, 2010).

Tikvah contact lists were provided by the National Ramah Commission, which compiled this information with input from the individual camps. The survey was disseminated via email to 1,117 respondents in an online format. There were a total of 410 respondents to the survey, with a response rate of 36.7%. Some of these respondents gave consent for their responses to be linked with their responses to a general survey of Ramah staff conducted by Steven M. Cohen.

In the survey and in this report, we use the term Tikvah to include the various initiatives related to disability and inclusion across the Ramah camps¹. Significant findings are noted when applicable.

¹ Participants received this instruction: *Note that we use the term "Tikvah" to refer to the variety of inclusion/special-needs programs offered at Ramah*

General Results

Overall, respondents felt that working as a Tikvah staff member impacted their lives in various ways, including their awareness and consideration for individuals with disabilities, opening themselves up to others who are different than them, and making long-lasting impressions in their personal and professional lives.

Respondents also felt that the Tikvah program contributed greatly to the overall camp experience both for campers and staff, although respondents expressed a need for more training both prior to and during the summer sessions.

Impact on Self

Respondents report that having staffed a Ramah Tikvah program influenced their lives in a variety of ways. In fact, a substantial number (44%) considered the impact of the experience to be so great that they would describe it as "life-changing." A majority also found the experience to be "inspiring" (60.3%) and "eye-opening" (53.2%). Roughly eight out of ten respondents said they gained an appreciation for what life has given them (83%) and report having become a more patient person (81%) as a result of staffing Tikvah.

Disabilities Awareness and Attitudes

Ninety-six percent of the respondents said that they gained an awareness of issues having to do with inclusion of individuals with disabilities, even beyond the camp setting. Ninety-one percent of respondents

Camps. We realize different camps may use different terms (e.g., Amitzim, Breira).

reported an increase in their comfort level with individuals with disabilities. Close to 80% reported learning more about issues of access to Jewish education for individuals with disabilities.

Life Choices: Career, Volunteer and College

A majority of the respondents reported that the experience of staffing Tikvah informed important choices they made about their futures. By their own report, being a Tikvah staff member influenced two-thirds of the respondents' commitment to volunteer work; over half of respondents' professional work and choices of charitable choices; and for close to half, choice of their area of college major.

Over half of all respondents said that they are currently employed in a position where they work with people with disabilities (54.3%). Similar numbers report engaging in volunteer or community advocacy work with people with disabilities (52.9%). Close to a third report being a member of an inclusion committee at a synagogue, camp, day school, or other Jewish educational setting.

Relationship Building

Roughly two-thirds of the respondents have maintained relationships with other Ramah staff members (68.6%). The experience of being a Tikvah staff member also seems to provide a lasting community of those engaged in this work, with 62.5% of respondents reporting ongoing relationships with other Tikvah staff members (62.5%). Nearly 40% of the former Tikvah staff members have maintained relationships with the campers they worked with.

Camp-Wide Impact

Nearly all the respondents agreed that the Tikvah program enhanced the camp experience for campers (95.8%), and the majority agreed that it enhanced the experience for staff overall (89.2%). Eighty-one percent of the respondents said that Tikvah helped forge deep, meaningful relationships between Tikvah campers and other campers in their Ramah camp.

Rewarding and Challenging

The adjectives most commonly endorsed (from a list provided on the survey) to describe the Tikvah staff experience were "rewarding" and "challenging." About two-thirds (65%) of the respondents said that being a Tikvah staff member was "fun."

At the same time, however, a sizable minority of respondents chose adjectives that illustrate the difficulties that go with this sort of work. For example, 30% found the experience to be "overwhelming" and about one-quarter of the respondents found it "frustrating."

The Staff Social Experience

Close to half of the respondents (45%) reported that their main social group was primarily other Tikvah counselors. More than a third of the respondents felt that non-Tikvah staff didn't really understand their Tikvah work, and about one-quarter of respondents felt isolated from non-Tikvah staff.

Support and Preparation

Overall, seven out of ten respondents said they felt prepared for their role. A larger number, 90%, said that they knew who to turn to if they experienced a problem.

Training during staff week was reported to be the most common form of preparation, with just over two-thirds of the respondents taking part. Fewer respondents (50%) participated in ongoing training and support meetings throughout the summer. Preparation during the off-season is far less common, with only 19% reported taking part in such an experience.

Interest in Further Staff Development

More than half of the respondents indicated that they would like more training during staff week, and nearly half said that they would like more ongoing training and support throughout the summer. Notably, while only 19% of the respondents partook in training in the months before the summers, almost three-quarters of the respondents said that they would have liked more of this (73.1%), with half interested in seminars linked to existing retreats, and 41.1% interested in webinars.

Results by Role

Respondents were asked to identify their role in which they staffed at the camp. Some differences in results were evident.

The Tikvah Experience

Tikvah bunk counselors (in comparison with Tikvah staff overall) were more likely to describe their Tikvah experience as exasperating, lonely, isolating, overwhelming, and frustrating when compared with the general respondent population, but they also more likely to consider it eye-opening. Meanwhile, *roshei edah* (division heads) found the Tikvah experience to be significantly more challenging and overwhelming than other respondents. Teachers found the Tikvah

experience to be significantly harder and less social than the general respondent population, however they also found it less isolating when compared to the rest of the respondents.

The Staff Social Experience

Overall, bunk counselors felt that non-Tikvah staff didn't understand the work they did significantly more than the general respondent population as well as those in other roles (50% vs 36.8%). Similarly, bunk counselors felt significantly more isolated from those who were not designated as "Tikvah" staff than those in other roles (34% vs 23.5%). Activity specialists, however, were significantly *less* likely to feel that non-Tikvah staff didn't understand the work they did with Tikvah campers when compared with other respondents (18.9% vs 36.8%).

Support and Preparation

Bunk counselors felt significantly less prepared for their role than those in other roles and the overall general respondent population (60.4% vs 71.2%); this could be because they participated significantly less in training in the months before camp than those in other roles. Similarly, activity specialists participated significantly less in all training and development activities when compared with other groups and the general respondent population, including training in the months before camp, training during staff week, ongoing training and support meetings, special seminars and retreats, and webinars. Roshei Edah, however, participated significantly *more* in training during the months before camp, special seminars at training retreats, and webinars throughout the year.

Results by Year of Attendance

While the broad range of responses by year were largely representative of the general respondent population, there were some significant differences that emerged. The analyses were based on three time-span groupings: 1999 or earlier; 2000-2010; 2011-Present.

The Tikvah Experience

When asked to use different words to describe their experiences as a Tikvah staff member, respondents from 1999 or earlier reported their experiences as significantly less fun and less social than those in other years; however, they also found it significantly less lonely and overwhelming.

Respondents from 2000 through 2010 reported their experiences being significantly less lonely than the general respondent population (3.3% vs. 5.1%)

Respondents who attend Ramah as a Tikvah staff member between the years of 2011 and 2015 found their experience to be significantly *more* lonely and isolating than those in other years.

Support and Preparation

When asked if they participated in any training or development activities both during the summer or after, respondents from both 1999 or earlier and 2000 through 2010 reported attending significantly fewer seminars and webinars than the general respondent population. In contrast, respondents from the most current summer of 2016 reported significantly higher numbers of attendance at special seminars at training retreats and webinars

throughout the years than respondents in other years.

Jewish Identity and Engagement

While the Tikvah survey did not address Jewish behavioral or attitudinal outcomes, Dr. Steven M. Cohen conducted a survey in spring 2016 that aimed to gather information on how alumni of Ramah camps were engaged in Jewish life. Those who self-identified as Tikvah staff on that survey were asked if they would be interested in also responding to a survey of Tikvah staff (the current study); of those who agreed and subsequently responded to the Tikvah survey (n=239), their responses from both the Cohen survey and the Tikvah survey were linked. The following results look at the data from that subset of respondents.

Jewish and Inclusion Outcomes

When looking at the interplay between Jewish Engagement (a composite index of various items from the Cohen survey relating to engagement in Jewish life) and the Tikvah experience, how involved and engaged in one's Jewish life has no relationship with how Tikvah staff members experienced their summer working with people with disabilities. Similarly, Jewish engagement had no bearing on the overall camp experience for Tikvah staff.

It is interesting to note however, that 73.6% of the respondents said that Tikvah was a self-expression of their Jewish identity. A weak positive correlation was found between seeing Tikvah as an expression of Jewish identity and Cohen's overall Jewish engagement index

Similarly, a positive relationship was found between Tikvah as a self-expression of one's Jewish self/identity and how important Judaism was in respondents' lives. That is to say, the more important Judaism was in respondents' lives, the more they felt that Tikvah was an expression of their Jewish self/identity.

Comparing Tikvah and Non-Tikvah Staff

Overall, there were far more similarities than differences between those who were

Tikvah staff and those who were regular Ramah staff in a variety of outcomes related to Jewish outcomes. For example, looking at the Jewish Engagement Index that was created by Professor Steven M. Cohen, there were no significant differences between Tikvah staff and non-Tikvah staff—both factions seem similarly engaged in Jewish life and observance overall.

Introduction

It is natural to think of camp in terms of a place where children and young adolescents go for fun and, hopefully, educational experiences. It is perhaps less common to think about camp as a place where thousands of Jewish teens and young adults go to work (and have fun and, hopefully, learn) over the summer. Yet, no camp could function without a cadre of individuals who are at the age in which they are actively exploring issues of identity. It should be no surprise, then, that benefits of camp have been found not only for campers (e.g., Cohen et al., 2011; Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2007) but also for staff members (e.g., DeGraaf & Glover, 2002). Of course, “staff” is a broad heading that encompasses distinct roles (e.g., activity specialist, bunk counselor) and even differences within these (e.g., swim staff and art staff; bunk counselor for 6-year-olds and bunk counselor for 14 year-olds) that are likely to color experience.

This study focuses on one segment of staff of Ramah camps – those who worked with campers with disabilities². Over the past two decades, with momentum building in recent years, camps have increasingly welcomed campers with disabilities. Individual camps – in the Ramah system and elsewhere – differ in the population of individuals with disabilities they serve (e.g., individuals with autism, or attention deficit

² This term is used in line with the definition included in the Americans with Disabilities Act as “a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an

disorder) and in the structure of the programs they offer. In some camps, campers with disabilities are integrated with other campers for all or most of the day. In others, intersections are less frequent. Research has pointed to a variety of benefits of the camp experience for campers with disabilities (Blas, 2010; Fullerton, Brannan, & Arick, 2000) as well as for the camp more broadly, including staff (Gilmore, 2016; Schleien, Ray, & Green, 1997).

Staff roles at camp have evolved to address the needs of campers with disabilities. Many camps employ an inclusion coordinator, often someone well-trained and highly skilled (Shefter, Uhrman, Tobin, & Kress, 2017) who may oversee staff working with campers with disabilities. At the same time, many of the staff with the most contact with campers with disabilities are adolescents and young adults whose preparation is relatively minimal (often incorporated into pre-camp “staff week” along with other training topics). The responsibility of these staff members varies with the structure of each camp’s program. Some may be a one-on-one shadow assigned to a particular camper while others may be a counselor in a bunk of campers with disabilities. And, activity specialists, educational staff, etc. work with campers with disabilities as well.

Little is known about the experience of staff members who work most closely with campers with disabilities. In the spring of

impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.” (“A Guide to Disability Rights Laws,” 2016)

2017, the William Davidson Graduate School of Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary, in conjunction with the National Ramah Commission, conducted a survey of past Tikvah staff of Ramah overnight camps across the country. The study emerges from research that the camp experience in general, and work with campers with disabilities, can have a positive impact on staff members. Our goal was to expand upon previous work and to explore the perceived impact of, and opinions about, staffing a Tikvah program (Blas, 2010; Cohen et al., 2011; Kress, 2010).

Tikvah contact lists were provided by the National Ramah Commission, which compiled this information with input from the individual camps. The survey was disseminated via email to 1,117 respondents in an online format. There were a total of 410 respondents to the survey, with a response rate of 36.7%. Details about the make-up of the respondents is included in Appendix A. Some of these respondents gave consent for their responses to be linked with their responses to a general survey of Ramah staff conducted by Steven M. Cohen.

In the survey and in this report, we use the term Tikvah to include the various initiatives related to disability and inclusion across the Ramah camps³. Significant findings are noted when applicable. In most cases, separate analyses were conducted looking at both years of attendance, as well as the role respondents occupied (bunk

counselor, rosh edah, etc.) during the summer sessions to see if there were any notable differences in results; relevant findings in the differences among year and role are present throughout this report, and a description of the sample of respondents can be found in Appendix A.

Inferences of impact are of course limited. The respondents are a self-selected group, and we do not know the degree to which they represent their non-responding Tikvah peers. As such, this report should be seen as highlighting the possibilities of “a profound impact” of staffing a Tikvah program.

Finally, the Davidson research team would like to express their gratitude to Rabbi Mitch Cohen, Howard Blas, Nancy Sheff and the rest of the National Ramah office for their input into this project and assistance in developing out contact lists. We also grateful to Dr. Steven M. Cohen for his help in coordinating our work with Ramah alumni survey.

³ Participants received this instruction: *Note that we use the term “Tikvah” to refer to the variety of inclusion/special-needs programs offered at Ramah*

Camps. We realize different camps may use different terms (e.g., Amitzim, Breira).

PERCEIVED IMPACT

“This program...has a profound impact on so many who attend and work in the camp”

Respondents report that having staffed a Ramah Tikvah program impacted their lives in a variety of ways, as shown in detail in Table 1. In fact, a substantial number (44%) considered the impact of the experience to be so great that they would describe it as “life-changing.” A majority also found the experience to be “inspiring” (60.3%) and “eye-opening” (53.2%). Impact was seen by respondents in a variety of arenas.

Disabilities Awareness and Attitudes

Ninety-six percent of the respondents said that they gained an awareness of issues having to do with inclusion of individuals with disabilities, even beyond the camp setting. Close to 80% reported learning more about issues of access to Jewish education for individuals with disabilities.

Ninety-one percent of respondents reported an increase in their comfort level with individuals with disabilities.

Personal Growth

The perceived impact of the Tikvah staff experience went beyond disability-related outcomes and encompassed a broader sense of personal growth (see Appendix C for a detailed review of how the construct of Personal Growth was calibrated and measured.) For example, more than eight out of ten respondents said that they gained a sense of responsibility for others, an appreciation for what life has given them, an increase in patience, and better teamwork skills. Three quarters report that the experience taught them “not to sweat the small stuff.”

While overall personal growth was high for respondents over the summer, respondents who staffed a Ramah Tikvah program in more recent years (2011 through current) had somewhat less positive gains in personal growth when compared with those who attended years or decades ago

Table 1: Perceived Impact on Attitudes and Personal Growth

<i>As a result of my work with Tikvah:</i>	<i>% ‘Strongly Agree’ or ‘Agree’</i>
I gained an awareness of issues having to do with inclusion of individuals with disabilities, even beyond the camp setting	95.8%
My personal comfort level with individuals with disabilities/special needs increased	91.0%
I gained a sense of being responsible for others	88.0%
I gained an appreciation for what life has given me	83.4%
I became a more patient person	81.1%
I learned to work better with others as part of a team	81.0%
I gained an awareness of issues having to do with access to Jewish education for people with disabilities/special needs	79.3%
I learned not to "sweat the small stuff" and focus on what is really important	74.6%

(1999 or earlier). Regarding role, while not statistically significant, activity specialists saw noticeably less personal growth than those staff members who occupied other roles such as bunk counselor, one-on-one disability specialists, roshei edah and teachers, who all reported high levels of personal growth as a result of their work with Tikvah.

Many participants (70%) work with Tikvah as an expression of their Jewish self/identity. While intriguing, this response raises questions about the nature of the connection between Tikvah work and Judaism.

Life Choices: Career, Volunteer and College

As shown in Table 2, a majority of respondents reported that the experience of staffing Tikvah informed important choices they made about their futures. Being a Tikvah staff member influenced

two-thirds of the respondents' commitment to volunteer work; over half of respondents' professional work and choices of charitable choices; and for close to half, choice of their area of study in college. Of course, the degree of *actual* impact of the experience is not clear; it is certainly possible that these respondents –

who self-selected into Tikvah work – were on the pathway independent of Tikvah work. Regardless, many respondents do associate their Tikvah experience with their vocational and avocational choices.

The sample included large numbers of individuals who are engaged with individuals with disabilities directly or through organizational involvement. Over half of all respondents said that they are currently employed in a position where they work with people with disabilities (54.3%). Similar numbers report engaging in volunteer or community advocacy work with people with disabilities (52.9%). Close

“I THINK THE TIKVAH PROGRAM IS AN INCREDIBLE THING AND I AM FOREVER THANKFUL THAT RAMAH HAS IT. I’VE BEEN INVOLVED WITH TIKVAH CAMPERS SINCE I WAS A YOUNG CAMPER AND THEY HAVE DEFINITELY HELPED SHAPE ME INTO WHO I AM TODAY. I THINK EDUCATING CAMPERS AT A YOUNG AGE ABOUT TIKVAH AND PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT AND I LOVE THAT THE TIKVAH PROGRAM HELPS FACILITATE THAT.”

Table 2 Perceived Impact on Life Choices

<i>My past experiences as a Ramah Tikvah staff member have influenced my:</i>	<i>% ‘Strongly Agree’ or ‘Agree’</i>
Choice of my volunteer work	62.8%
Choice of my professional work	55.9%
Choices I make when making a donation	51.5%
Choice of study in college or graduate school	47.2%

to a third report being a member of an inclusion committee at a synagogue, camp, day school, or other Jewish educational setting. This latter number likely underestimates actual participation rates because such committees are far from ubiquitous and many respondents may be left without opportunity to serve on them.

Roshei Edah said their past experiences influenced their choice of professional work (88.3% vs 55.9%) and their choice of study in college or graduate school (68.4% vs 47.2%) significantly more than those in the general respondent population. One-on-one disability specialists said their past experiences influenced their choice of professional work (39.4% vs 55.9%) and

“I FULLY CREDIT MY EXPERIENCE AS A TIKVAH COUNSELOR AND ROSH EDAH FOR MY DECISION TO BECOME A PHYSICIAN. MY EXPERIENCES AS A 15- AND 16-YEAR-OLD CAMPER DOING ACTIVITIES WITH TIKVAH REALLY JUMPSTARTED MY LONG-TERM INTEREST IN BEING AN EDUCATOR...THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE TIKVAH EXPERIENCE IS HOW I CAME TO BE A PEDIATRICIAN.”

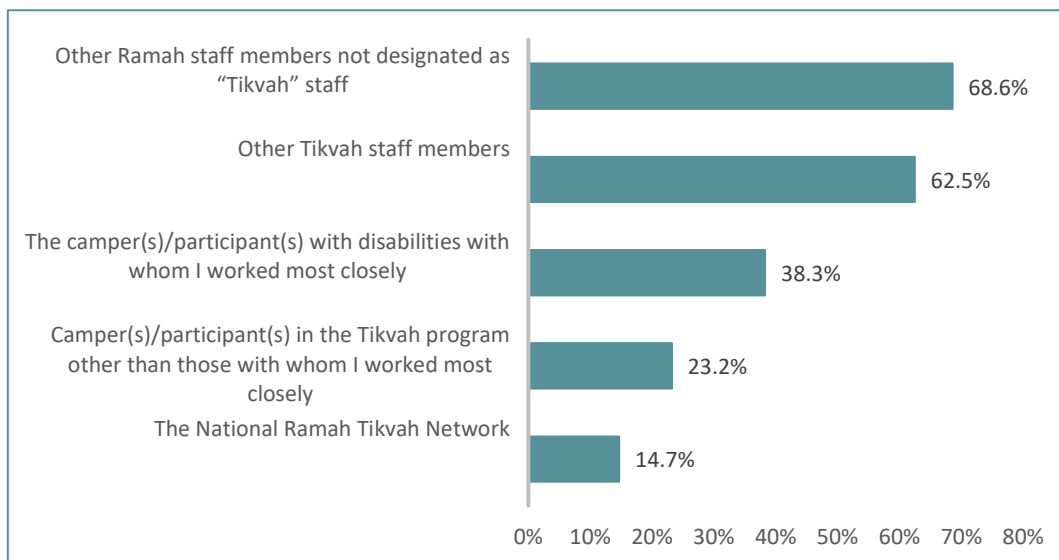
their choice of area of study in college or graduate school (23.4% vs 47.2%) significantly less than those in the general respondent population. The reasons for this are not clear.

Tikvah staff members in 2011 through 2015 were significantly less likely to have chosen professional work (2011-2015: 46.4% vs. General Population (GP): 55.9%) or college/graduate school choice (2011-2015: 37.3% vs. GP: 47.2%) based on their experiences when compared with the general respondent population.

Relationship Building

Camps are rightly lauded for their ability to forge deep, lasting relationships. This was found to be the case for Tikvah staff

Figure 1 Perceived Impact on Relationships



members as well. As shown in detail in Figure 1, roughly two-thirds of the respondents have maintained relationships with other Ramah staff members (68.6%). The experience of being a Tikvah staff member also seems to provide a lasting community of those engaged in this work, with 62.5% of respondents reporting ongoing relationships with other Tikvah staff members (62.5%). Nearly 40% of the former Tikvah staff members have maintained relationships with the campers they worked with.

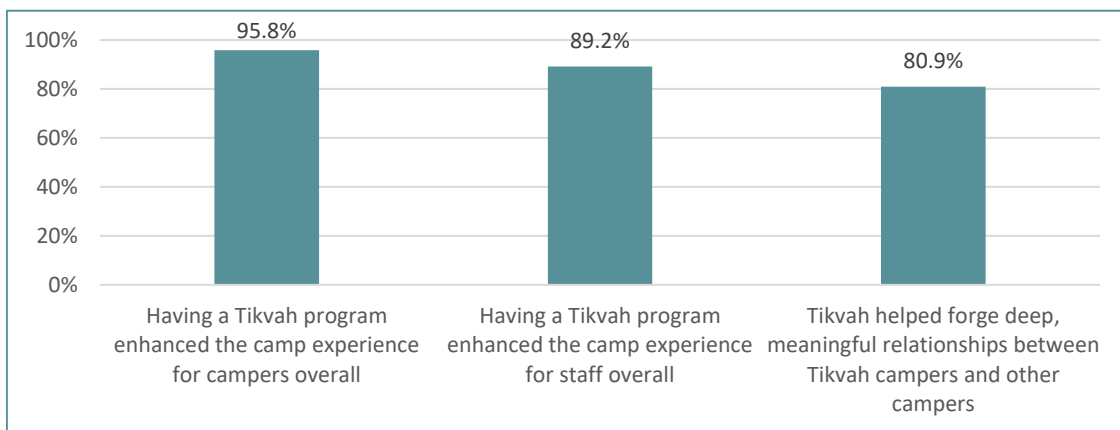
campers, and the majority agreed that it enhanced the experience for staff overall.

“THIRTEEN YEARS LATER, AND I AM STILL VERY CLOSE WITH A NUMBER OF MY TIKVAH CO-STAFF. I ALSO STILL SEE SOME OF MY OLD CAMPERS AROUND THE CITY AND AM SO GRATEFUL TO BE ABLE TO SPEAK WITH THEM AND KEEP UP-TO-DATE ON THEIR LIVES.”

Camp-Wide Impact

Finally, while most of the survey’s impact items focused on the individual staff member, participants were also asked about the impact of Tikvah on camp life more generally. As shown in Figure 2, nearly all the respondents agreed that the Tikvah program enhanced the camp experience for

Figure 2 Perceived Impact on the Camp Experience



The Experience of Staffing Tikvah

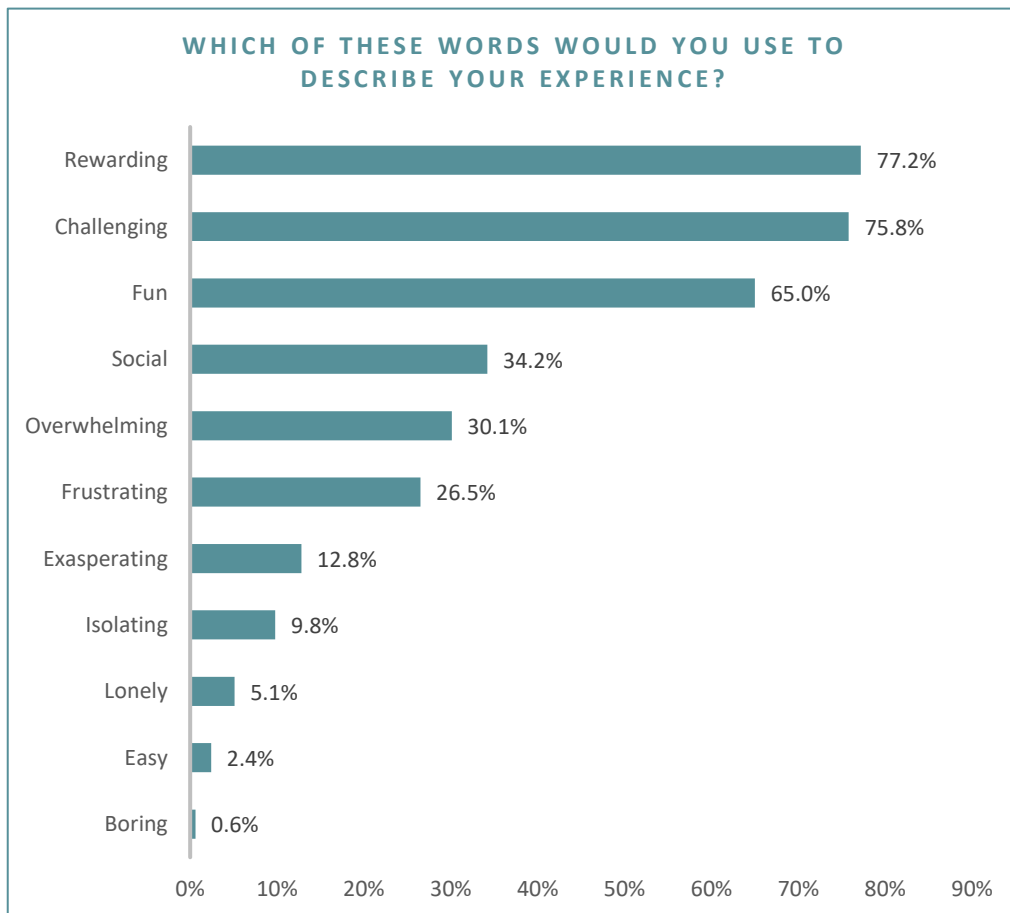
“It was truly eye-opening to live with Tikvah campers for two months. You grow a true appreciation and understanding for their daily struggles. You admire their appreciation and pleasure from simple thing. You witness the heartbreak that sometimes comes with feeling different. You’ll learn to focus on the

strengths of people and accept their weaknesses. And you laugh. A lot. Together. It’s a beautiful opportunity and I would do it again all over if I had the chance.”

“THE SENSE...IS THAT THE TIKVAH PROGRAM MAKES THE CAMP ITSELF A BETTER PLACE. CAMPERS HAVE BECOME MORE RESPECTFUL AND MORE WELCOMING THANKS TO THE GROWING ROLE OF TIKVAH IN OUR CAMP.”

As the numbers of campers and staff involved in Tikvah programs continue to increase, it is important to learn about the experience of being a Tikvah staff member, its rewards and challenges and perceptions of how it can be improved. Overall, eighty-eight

Figure 3 Descriptors of Staff Experience



percent of respondents said that if they had to do it over again, they would be a Tikvah counselor again (with less than 4% saying they would not, with the rest undecided). This suggests that the challenges experienced were, for most respondents, overshadowed by the positive elements.

Rewarding and Challenging

As shown in Figure 3, the adjectives most commonly endorsed (from a list provided on the survey) to describe the experience were “rewarding” and “challenging.” About two-thirds (65%) of the respondents said that being a Tikvah staff member was “fun.”

At the same time, however, a sizable minority of respondents chose adjectives that illustrate the difficulties that go with this sort of work. For example, 30% found the experience to be “overwhelming” and about one-quarter of the respondents found it “frustrating.”

The respondent’s position at camp also played a role in their perceptions of their

“BEING A TIKVAH STAFF MEMBER IS A CHALLENGING JOB, BUT IT IS ALSO REWARDING AND A LOT OF FUN”

“THE ONE SUMMER I WAS A BUNK-STAFF IN THE TIKVAH PROGRAM WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT AND PAINFUL SUMMER OF MY LIFE. REWARDING IN MANY WAYS, BUT SHOCKINGLY DIFFICULT IN OTHERS.”

experience. Bunk counselors, as a group, also found the experience to be more exasperating, lonely, overwhelming and frustrating as compared to other groups. Roshei edah, for their

part, found the work to be more challenging and overwhelming than did others.

Years of attendance also yielded interesting findings; respondents from 1999 or earlier reported their experiences as significantly less fun and less social than those in other years; however, they also found it significantly less lonely and overwhelming. Respondents from 2000 through 2010 reported their experiences being significantly less lonely than the general respondent population (2000-2015: 3.3% vs GP: 5.1%). Respondents who attend Ramah as a Tikvah staff member between the years of 2011 and 2015 found their experience to be significantly more lonely and isolating than those in other years.

Table 3 The Social Experience

<i>To what extent do you agree that as a Tikvah staff member:</i>	<i>% ‘Strongly Agree’ or ‘Agree’</i>
My social group was mainly other Tikvah counselors	44.7%
I felt that non-Tikvah staff didn’t really understand, or “get,” the work I did as a Tikvah staff member	36.8%
I felt isolated from staff members not designated as “Tikvah staff”	23.5%

The Social Experience

Because the model of inclusion differs among camps (with some camps leaning toward full inclusion while other running programs that are more self-contained), there is no “norm” for the extent to which Tikvah staff are integrated with others. To some extent, the Tikvah staff constituted a distinct cohort within the camp. For example, close to half (45%) reported that their main social group was primarily other Tikvah counselors. Sizable minorities experienced more acutely the separateness that can accompany the Tikvah staff experiences. More than a third of the respondents felt that non-Tikvah staff didn’t really understand their Tikvah work, and about one-quarter of respondents felt isolated from non-Tikvah staff.

Not surprisingly, activity specialists, whose work generally spans the entire camp, felt less isolated than the overall set of respondents, and less likely to feel that their work was not understood. They were less likely to report feeling overwhelmed or frustrated. In contrast, bunk counselors, by far the largest group of respondents, generally felt less understood and more isolated than the overall group of respondents. One-on-one disability specialists reported feeling significantly less exasperated than the general respondent population when working with Tikvah; they also found it significantly easier.

Corroborating much of the data above, the overarching constructs of Overall Camp Experience and Staff Challenges (see Appendix C) showed similar results. Bunk counselors, roshei edah and teachers were far more likely to have positive attitudes about how Tikvah enhanced the overall camp experience than those who were one-on-one disability specialists or activity specialists. However, when asked about the challenging aspects of working with Tikvah, roshei edah and bunk counselors reported far higher rates of challenging experiences than those in other roles.

“...TIKVAH STAFF ISOLATION...CAN BE CHALLENGING AT TIMES...I DON’T THINK THAT TIKVAH STAFFERS NEED ANY EXTRA SPECIAL VALIDATION. HOWEVER, THEY SHOULD BE APPRECIATED FOR THEIR WORK, JUST AS ALL CAMP STAFF SHOULD BE.”

Support & Preparation

“As a Tikvah support staff member, I lived for the moments of natural inclusion. More often than not, I was facilitating social interactions and inclusion, but the moment when I found myself sitting back and watching my campers...were the best moments.”

The preparation and ongoing support of camp staff are perennial challenges. Time for these activities is short and the degree of information and skills needed by camp staff is vast. Staff working with campers with disabilities have an even larger array of preparation and support needs related to the specifics of their role.

Overall, seven out of ten respondents said they felt prepared for their role. A larger number, 90%, said that they knew who to turn to if they experienced a problem.

Interestingly, Tikvah staff were recognized as camp-wide resources, with 57% of the respondents reporting that people throughout their camp turned to them with questions or to seek guidance. Roshei Edah seemed to be particularly sought-after resources.

Training during staff week was reported to be the most common form of preparation, with just over two-thirds of the respondents taking part. Fewer respondents (50%) participated in ongoing training and support

meetings throughout the summer. Preparation during the off-season is far less common, with only 19% reported taking part in such an experience.

Again, one’s role was relevant to these findings. Bunk counselors were significantly less likely than others to report feeling prepared for their Tikvah work. Patterns of training differed as well, with bunk counselors tending to receive their training during staff week, and roshei edah more likely than others to have participated in training during the off-season. One-on-one disability specialists (OOO) reported being slightly more knowledgeable about who to

turn to when they experienced a problem than the general respondent population (GP), as well as those in other roles (OOO: 97% vs. GP:91.1%). Activity specialists participated significantly less in all

training and development activities when compared with other groups and the general respondent population, including training in the months before camp, training during staff week, ongoing training and support meetings, special seminars and retreats, and webinars.

Year of attendance was also relevant to the findings. While still a fairly low percentage, the most recent cohort of staff members in 2016 were significantly more likely to feel

“I THINK THAT THE WORK OF ALL COUNSELORS AND STAFF MEMBERS THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER IS HIGHLY VALUED AND CAMP WOULDN’T WORK WITHOUT EVERY PIECE.”

Table 4 Perceived Preparation and Support

<i>To what extent do you agree that as a Tikvah staff member:</i>	<i>% 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree'</i>
I knew who to turn to if I experienced a problem	91.1%
I felt prepared for my role	71.2%
People throughout camp turned to me with questions/to seek guidance	56.6%
I felt that my work was considered by camp leadership to be of higher value than that of other staff	26.4%
I felt that my work was considered by camp leadership to be of lower value than that of other staff	6.5%

that their work was considered to be of lower value by camp leadership than that of other staff when compared to those in other groups and the overall respondent population. Staff members from 1999 or earlier were significantly less likely to have felt that they were sought out for guidance and questions when compared to the general respondent population as well as those in other years (1999 or earlier: 41.2% vs. GP: 56.6%).

Interest in Further Staff Development

More than half of the respondents indicated that they would like more training during staff week, and nearly half said that they would like more ongoing training and support throughout the summer. Notably, while only 19% of the respondents participated in training in the months before the summers, almost three-quarters of the respondents said that they would have liked more of this (73.1%), with half interested in seminars linked to existing retreats, and 41.1% interested in webinars.

Respondents were asked about specific topics and venues for staff training and networking throughout the year (Table 5). One-third of the respondents said that they would like webinars of topics related to inclusion of those with disabilities in the Jewish community. One-quarter of the respondents expressed interest in in-person get-togethers of Tikvah staff members in major cities.

When asked if they participated in any training or development activities both during the summer or after, respondents from both 1999 or earlier and 2000 through 2010 reported attending significantly fewer seminars and webinars than the general

respondent population. In contrast, respondents from the most current summer of 2016 reported significantly higher numbers of attendance

at special seminars at training retreats and webinars throughout the years than respondents in other years.

“[MAKE] WEBINARS AND SESSIONS OPEN TO ALL COUNSELORS. IT CAN SHOW COUNSELORS THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUSION.”

Figure 4 Participation and Interest in Staff Development Activities

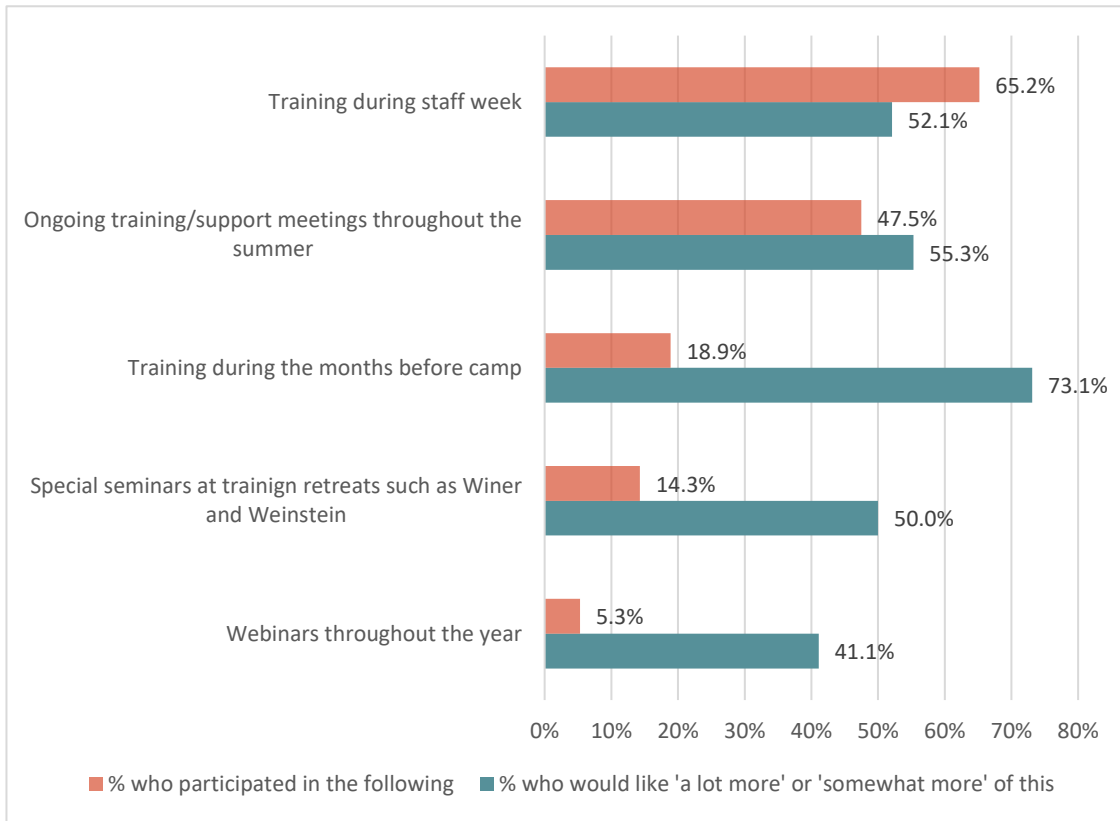


Table 5 Areas of Interest

	% Interested
Webinars about inclusion of people with disabilities in the Jewish community.	32.4
Webinars about issues of diversity and inclusion in the Jewish community, other than those related to disability.	30.1
An online community/network for Tikvah staff members from all Ramah camps.	28.9
In-person get-togethers of Tikvah staff members in major cities.	26.3

Inter-relatedness of Constructs

Through the process of data reduction, a factor analysis was conducted in an effort to see what overarching concepts, themes or constructs could be found by grouping together like items in the survey (a more robust description of the results can be found in Appendix C.) The factor analysis conducted yielded 4 factors, which were measured on a “high” and “low” scale:

- *Personal Growth with Inclusion* — includes items related to awareness of, comfort with and responsibility of those with disabilities.
- *Overall Camp Experience* — includes items related to enhancement of the camp experience for staff and campers.
- *Tikvah Staff Challenges* — includes items related to the challenges of staffing Tikvah.
- *Role Knowledge/Preparation* — includes items related to confidence staff had in the knowledge of and preparation for their role.

Significant relationships were found among these constructs. Respondents who scored highly on the Personal Growth index also scored highly on the Overall Camp Experience index ($p=.202^{**}$)⁴; those respondents who were highly aware of and comfortable working with those with individuals with disabilities were also significantly likely to have a highly positive camp experience.

Similarly, high scorers on the Personal Growth index were also high scorers on the Knowledge and Preparation index

($p=.117^*$), signifying a relationship between being comfortable around individuals with disabilities, and understanding one’s role in helping them.

⁴ **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Jewish Identity & Engagement

“As a teenager who was somewhat disillusioned with camp at times, Tikvah was a place where I felt I could find more meaning in Judaism, camp, and my relationships”

-Survey Respondent

The Tikvah survey did not, with minor exception, address Jewish behavioral or attitudinal outcomes. However, Dr. Steven M. Cohen conducted a survey in spring 2016 that aimed to gather information on how alumni of Ramah camps were engaged in Jewish life. Those who self-identified as Tikvah staff on that survey were asked if they would be interested in also responding to a survey of Tikvah staff. The emails of those who responded affirmatively were added to the contact list for the Tikvah survey. The Tikvah survey forms of those individuals included a question about whether their responses could be matched – while maintaining

confidentiality of the responses - with the data they provided in the Cohen survey.

This left us with various subsets of respondents (Figure 5):

1. Respondents to the Tikvah survey for whom we have Jewish outcome data from the Cohen survey (n=239)
2. Respondents to the Tikvah survey for whom we do not have Jewish outcome data from the Cohen survey (n=171)
3. Respondents to the Cohen survey who indicated that they staffed Tikvah, but were not matched with the Tikvah survey (n=543)
4. Respondents who indicated on the Cohen survey that they did not work at Tikvah (n=5,356)
5. Respondents who skipped the question on the Cohen survey asking whether they worked at Tikvah, and therefore their status is unknown (n=3,242)

A total 239 total respondents were found

to have matched between the two surveys. The following analyses explore:

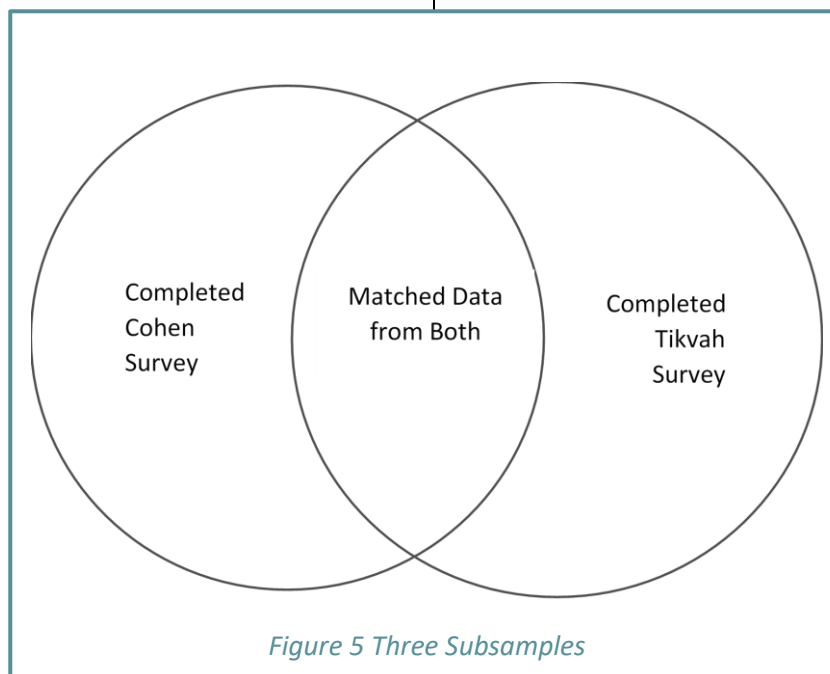


Figure 5 Three Subsamples

- a) Engagement in Jewish life of these 239 Tikvah staff members (assessed in the Cohen survey) and how it relates to their work with inclusion and diversity in the camp setting (addressed in the current survey)
- b) Differences between Tikvah and non-Tikvah staff

Jewish and Inclusion Outcomes

To compare outcomes in the Jewish and Inclusion arenas, composite scores were used based on factor analyses of both data sets. For the Cohen survey, the Jewish Engagement/Identity scale was used. For the current survey, composite scores were made for Overall Perceived Impact and Overall Assessment of the Experience.

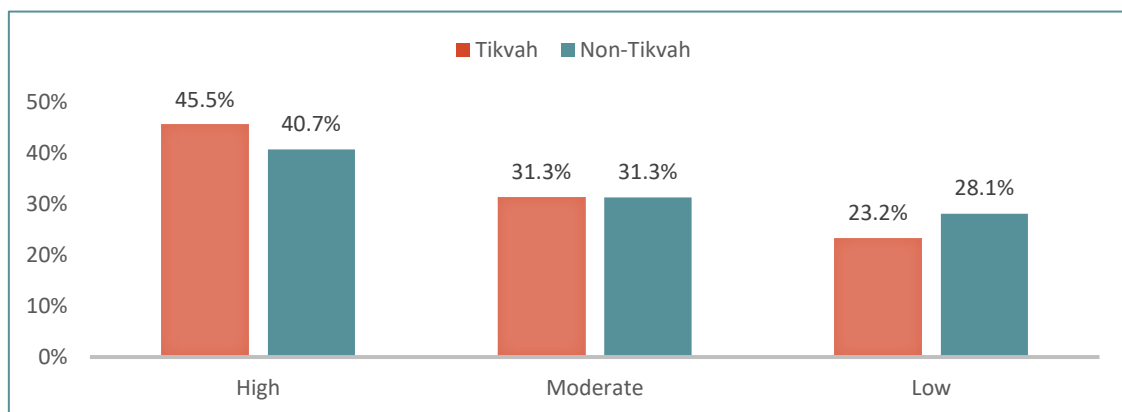
In an effort to see if there was any interaction between the level of Jewish engagement and how staff members experienced Tikvah and working with people with disabilities, correlation tests were run on both sets of data. No significant correlations were found between Jewish engagement and Tikvah staff members' personal growth or camp

experience. That is to say, how involved and engaged in one's Jewish life has no relationship with how Tikvah staff members experienced their summer working with people with disabilities. Similarly, Jewish engagement had no bearing on the overall camp experience for Tikvah staff.

It is interesting to note however, that in the current Tikvah survey, a question was asked of respondents if they felt that Tikvah was an expression of their Jewish self-identity; 73.6% of the respondents said that, yes, it was. When this specific item was correlated to the Ramah alumni survey index of Jewish engagement, there was a significant, though weak, positive correlation. That is to say, the more engaged in Jewish life the respondents were, the more they felt that Tikvah was a self-expression of their Jewish identity.

Similarly, a positive relationship was found between Tikvah as a self-expression of one's Jewish self/identity and how important Judaism was in respondents' lives. That is to say, the more important Judaism was in respondents' lives, the more

Figure 6 Jewish Engagement Index



they felt that Tikvah was an expression of their Jewish self/identity.

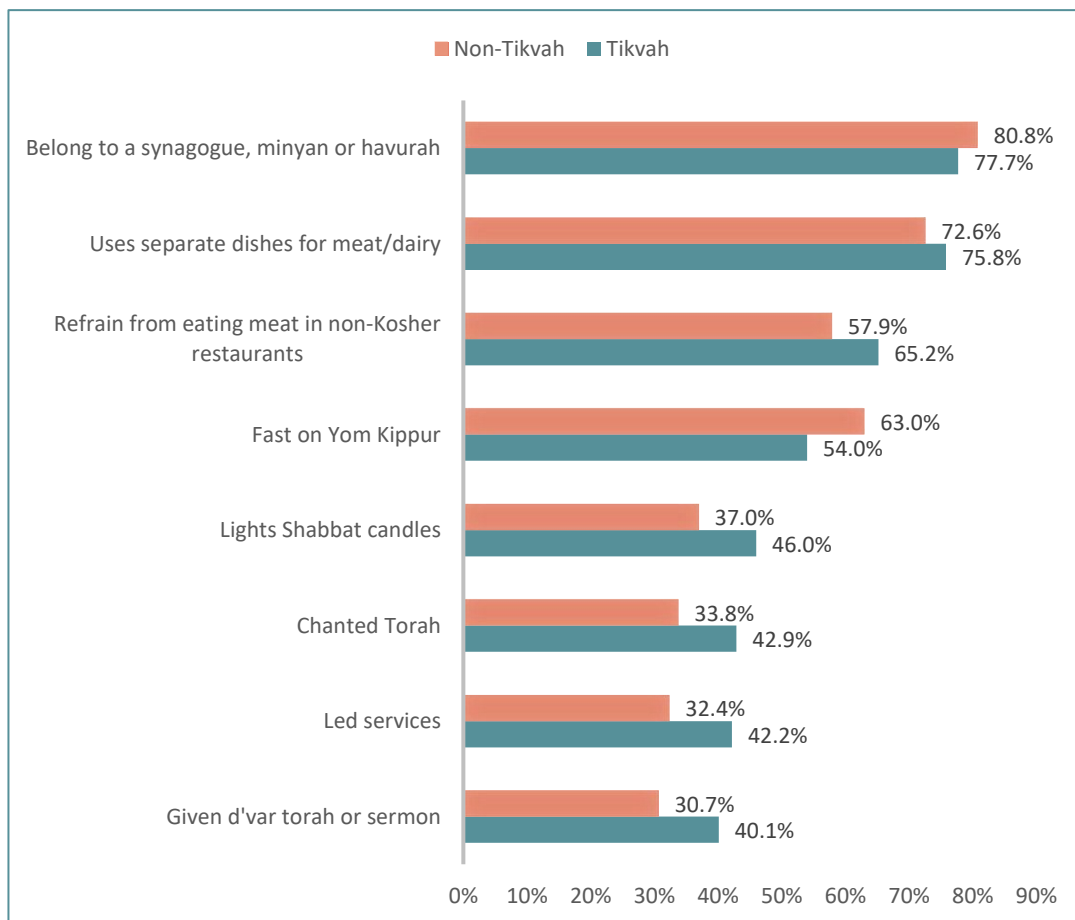
Comparing Tikvah and Non-Tikvah Staff

Setting aside attitudes related to Tikvah and inclusion, it is possible to use data from the Cohen survey to compare those who identified as Tikvah staff and those that indicated that they did not work at Tikvah (those who omitted that question were not used in these analyses)⁵. A comparison of general respondent characteristics is

included in Appendix B. Overall, there were far more similarities than differences between the groups in a variety of outcomes related to Jewish outcomes. For example, looking at the Jewish Engagement Index that was created by Professor Steven M. Cohen (Figure 6), there were no significant differences between Tikvah staff and non-Tikvah staff—both factions seem similarly engaged in Jewish life and observance overall.

- Those who were Tikvah staff were slightly more likely to be employed by a

Figure 7 Jewish Ritual Observances



⁵ The overall results of the Cohen survey are reported elsewhere; this report will address only

those items in which the Tikvah respondents differ from those positively identified as non-Tikvah (3xxx)

congregation or a Jewish organization than those who were not Tikvah staff (46% vs. 37%).

- When looking at items involving Jewish observance (Figure 7), it is interesting to note that there were no significant differences in ritual observance between those were Tikvah staff and those who were non-Tikvah staff. Tikvah staff members were generally more likely to engage in general ritual observance such as lighting Shabbat candles, chanting Torah, leading services, giving d’var Torahs, and refraining from eating non-kosher meat than those who were not Tikvah staff.

Israel Engagement

Respondents were asked a series of questions on Israel, and overall, Tikvah staff members tended to be more engaged with

Israel than non-Tikvah staff members (Table 6).

- Tikvah staff members were more likely to currently live or have lived in Israel, but non-Tikvah staff were slightly more likely to visit more.
- Emotional attachment to Israel was even across both groups.
- Tikvah staff were slightly more likely to have participated on a birthright trip (be it while in college, or after) than non-Tikvah staff.

Social Impact

- When asked how many of their close friends were people they met at Ramah, those who were Tikvah staff were more likely than non-Tikvah staff to have forged deeper, more long-lasting friendships than those who were not Tikvah staff.

Table 6: Israel Engagement

	Tikvah	Non-Tikvah
Have you ever been to Israel		
Yes, I live(d) in Israel.	51.8	40.9
Yes, I have visited 3 times or more.	28.0	37.0
Yes, I have visited once or twice.	17.9	18.8
Never	2.2	3.2
How emotionally attached to Israel are you?		
Very attached	63.4	65.8
Somewhat attached	30.0	28.3
Not very attached	4.7	4.9
Not at all attached	1.9	0.9
Have you ever participated in a Birthright trip?		
Yes	16.8	10.2

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APPENDIX A: RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Respondents were asked to identify any and all of the Ramah Tikvah programs that they staffed at any point. Nearly 30% of the respondents reported staffing the Tikvah program at Camp Ramah in New England; this was followed by roughly 19% who staffed Tikvah at the Wisconsin location, and about 17% at Camp Ramah Darom.

<i>Camps that Tikvah Members Staffed</i>	<i>%</i>
Camp Ramah in the Berkshires	7.8%
Camp Ramah in California	14.6%
Camp Ramah in Canada	7.3%
Camp Ramah Darom	16.8%
Camp Ramah in New England	27.8%
Camp Ramah in Northern California	0.7%
Ramah in the Rockies	3.7%
Camp Ramah in the Poconos	8.5%
Camp Ramah in Wisconsin	18.5%

When asked at which location they had staffed most recently, one-quarter of the respondents reported Camp Ramah New England, followed by 18% who staffed Tikvah at the Wisconsin location.

<i>Most Recently Staffed Tikvah Camp</i>	<i>%</i>
Camp Ramah in the Berkshires	7.9%
Camp Ramah in California	13.6%
Camp Ramah in Canada	6.3%
Camp Ramah Darom	15.6%
Camp Ramah in New England	24.8%
Camp Ramah in Northern California	1.0%
Ramah in the Rockies	4.0%
Camp Ramah in the Poconos	8.6%
Camp Ramah in Wisconsin	18.2%

Survey respondents were asked to identify what role they had served in their most recent Tikvah position—the majority of the respondents were bunk counselors (38.3%), with another 16% who indicated that they were in a one-on-one support role working directly with campers with disabilities. Twelve percent of the respondents were activity specialists.

<i>Most Recent Staff Role</i>	<i>%</i>
One-on-one support	16.3%
Bunk Counselor	38.3%
Rosh Edah	10.0%
Teacher	6.3%
Activity Specialist	12.2%

Nine out of the ten respondents reported being from and living in the United States.

<i>Permanent Residence</i>	<i>%</i>
USA	88.0%
Canada	4.6%
Israel	5.4%

Respondents were asked to identify the most recent year in which they staffed a Tikvah; while the years provided were self-reported, brackets were created in an effort to analyze the information based on concise time frames. The following is a breakdown of the year-brackets that were analyzed:

<i>Most Recent Year Staffed Tikvah</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
1999 or earlier	74	18.0%
2000 through 2010	90	22.0%
2011 through 2015	127	31.0%
2016/current	100	24.4%

Summary of Responses Using Alumni Data

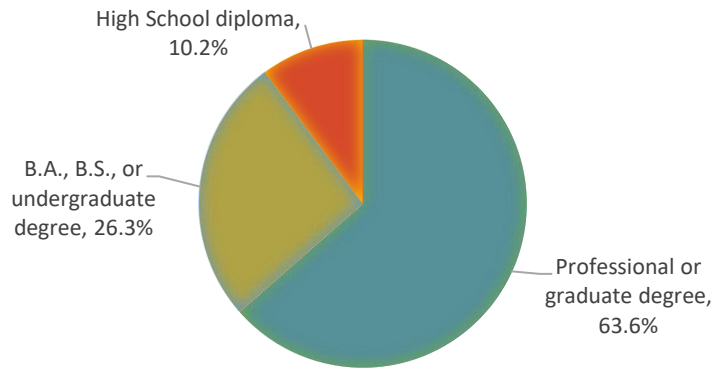
Below is a brief look at some of the characteristics of the Tikvah staff as they responded to the **alumni survey**.

Respondent Demographics

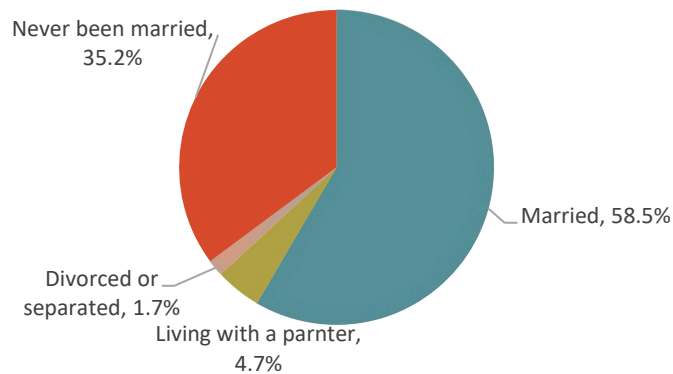
- Over half of the 239 respondents to the Tikvah survey were female (59.1% Female, 40.5% Male).
- Just over two-thirds of the respondents were in their twenties, and over a quarter of the respondents were 50 and over.

	<i>Age</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
19 and under	5	2.1%
20-29	82	34.9%
30-39	45	19.1%
40-49	38	16.2%
50-59	36	15.3%
60 and over	29	12.3%

- Two-thirds of the respondents have some professional or graduate degree; 26.3% have a bachelor's or undergraduate degree and 10.2% said their highest level of education is a high school diploma.

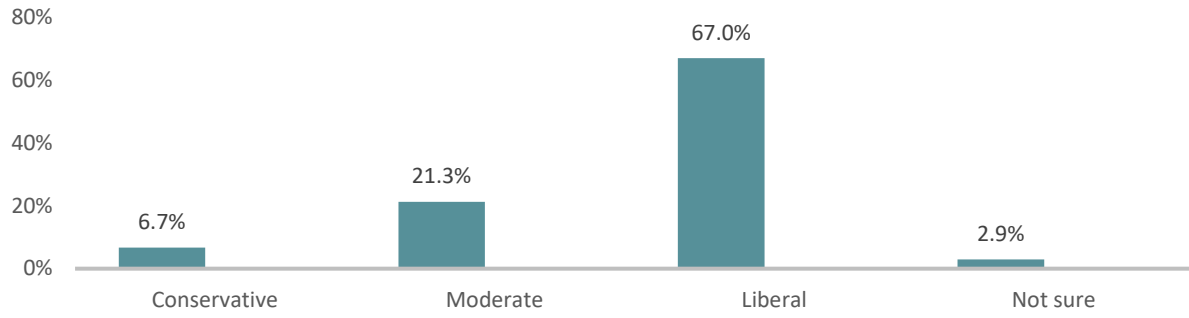


- Over half of the respondents said they are married, and an additional 4.7 percent are living with a partner. Thirty-five percent of the respondents have never been married. Less than two percent of the respondents are divorced or separated. Of those who said they were married, 57% said their spouse had attended a Ramah camp as a camper or staff member.



- Based on their responses to the alumni survey one year ago, nearly half of the current Tikvah respondents said that they ascribed to liberal political views.

IN GENERAL, WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR POLITICAL VIEWS AS:



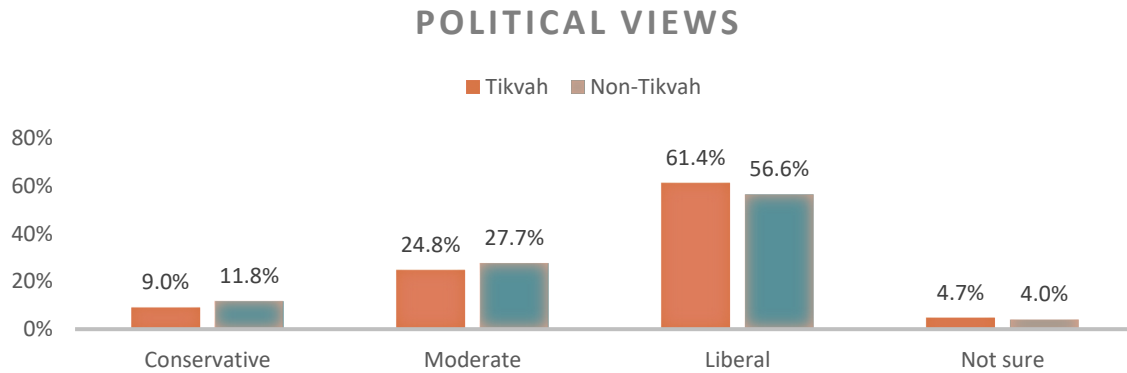
APPENDIX B: COMPARISON OF GENERAL RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS ON COHEN SURVEY

While overall, the general populations were similar, there were some differences worth noting. Those who were said they were Tikvah staff tended to be younger, with roughly 40% being in their twenties, while more non-Tikvah staff were older. Over half of the non-Tikvah respondents were over 40 years of age.

Also worth noting, those who said they were Tikvah staff were less likely to have children, but were more likely to have met their spouse through Ramah in some manner or another. Similarly, Tikvah staff members were more likely than non-Tikvah members to have spouses that attended or worked at Ramah.

	Tikvah Staff (n=543)	Non-Tikvah Staff (n=4,813)
Gender		
Female	58.5%	59.4%
Male	41.1%	40.4%
Age		
19 and under	3.6%	6.6%
20 to 29	39.5%	21.6%
30 to 39	17.5%	16.5%
40 to 49	13.7%	16.9%
50 to 59	13.6%	17.4%
60 and over	12.1%	21.0%
Denomination Raised In		
Conservative	81.0%	81.4%
Orthodox	7.8%	8.6%
Reform	4.5%	4.4%
Current Denomination		
Conservative	61.5%	62.5%
Orthodox	8.7%	10.9%
Reform	3.0%	5.3%
Highest Educational Degree		
High School Diploma	11.6%	9.5%
B.A. or B.S. Undergraduate Degree	28.3%	27.8%
Professional or Graduate Degree	59.7%	61.0%
Have children	48.3%	63.4%
Meet spouse through Ramah		
Yes (at camp, at Ramah event, through Ramah friends, or some other way)	50.6%	41.9%
No	49.4%	58.1%
Spouse attended Ramah	56.3%	40.4%

- When asked their political views, Tikvah staff tended to be slightly more liberal.



Summary of Responses Using Tikvah Data

The following are some demographic data from the current Tikvah study worth noting that are specific to these 239 respondents and how they compare to those who *did not* match with the alumni survey.

- The respondents who matched to the alumni survey had a higher incidence of respondents who attended Ramah 1999 or earlier, while those who did not match more often attended between 2011 or 2015.

Years of Last Ramah Attendance

	Matched (n=228)	Non-Matched (n=162)
1999 or earlier	30.7%	1.9%
2000 through 2010	27.6%	16.7%
2011 through 2015	25.9%	42.6%
2016/current	15.8%	15.8%

- Respondents who said they were willing to be matched were more likely to be bunk counselors or teachers when compared with the non-match group.

Role

	Matched (n=239)	Non-Matched (n=171)
One-on-one support	10.9%	24.0%
Bunk counselor	40.2%	35.7%
Rosh Edah	12.6%	6.4%
Teacher	8.8%	2.9%
Activity specialist	9.2%	16.4%

APPENDIX C: FACTOR ANALYSIS

Through the process of data reduction, a factor analysis was conducted in an effort to see what overarching concepts, themes or constructs could be found by combining together similar individual survey items. The factor analysis yielded four construct (factors):

TIKVAH SURVEY

Personal Growth with Inclusion

Gained: greater awareness of inclusion, more comfort with people with disabilities, greater responsibility for others, greater appreciation for lot in life, greater patience, learned not to “sweat the small stuff”, greater teamwork, greater understanding of access to Jewish education for individuals with disabilities.

Overall Camp Enhancement/Experience

Tikvah enhanced: camp experience for campers overall, camp experience for staff overall; Tikvah forged deep meaningful relationships; Tikvah is expression of Jewish self /identity.

Tikvah Staff Challenges

Social group was mainly other Tikvah counselors; felt isolated from non-Tikvah staff; felt that non Tikvah staff didn't get my job.

Role Knowledge/Preparation

I felt prepared for my role; I knew who to turn to if I had a problem; People throughout camp turned to me for guidance.

Once the factors were identified, the constructs were created to be defined by ‘high’ and ‘low’ quantifiers; that is, all items that were found to belong to a certain construct were combined and high scores indicated higher responses to individual items (subsequently combined), while lower scores indicated lower scores on individual items (subsequently combined). Note that in the Tikvah Staff Challenges construct, individual items tended toward more isolating experiences for Tikvah staff, so a high score on this construct could be considered more negative. The following analysis is a general look at these overarching concepts.

Based on the table below, the majority of the respondents indicated that they had a high level of personal growth when it came to working with people with disabilities. Similarly, 84.6% of respondents had positive attitudes about the overall camp experience and Tikvah’s enhancement of it. Eighty-two percent of the respondents had felt prepared and knowledgeable about their role overall. Thirty-one percent of respondents found that being a Tikvah staff member could be isolating and hard to understand.

Tikvah Survey Constructs

	High	Low
Personal Growth with Inclusion	87.0%	13.0%
Overall Camp Enhancement	84.6%	15.4%
Tikvah Staff Challenges	31.1%	68.9%
Role Knowledge/Preparation	82.0%	18.0%

The William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education is the largest multid denominational school of Jewish education in North America, granting master's and doctoral degrees and providing professional development to educators currently in the field. Drawing upon cutting-edge thinking in both Jewish and general education, its pedagogy emphasizes experiential education, is informed by best practices and new developments in teaching, and engenders leadership in a variety of educational settings. The Leadership Commons is a project of The William Davidson School dedicated to building educational leadership that works together to create a vibrant Jewish future.

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