



Inclusion Resource Quick Start

**Helping Clubs and Members Bring Inclusionary Practices
to Their Clubs and Synagogues**

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**by
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Inclusion Resource Quick Start

Mission Statement

We believe that all individuals are made in God's image, B'tzelem Elohim.

Our goal is that Men's Clubs, members and synagogues will create an environment that makes all **underserved communities** feel welcomed and embraced in the Jewish community. Our core targets are the clubs, members, clergy, and synagogue leaders whom we want to applaud for their work and encourage to improve their adoption of **inclusion** practices and policies.

Definitions

INCLUSION: The process, practice, or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized; a commitment to welcoming, respecting, accepting, institutionally supporting, and valuing diverse identities and communities of people.

DIVERSITY: Describes differences and similarities of age, gender, race, nationality, education, socio-economic status, ability/disability, and sexual orientation. Inclusion seeks out the value of the diverse community, respecting and appreciating the differences where everyone can perform to their full potential in congregational life.

MARGINALIZATION: The treatment of a person, group, or culture as secondary, unimportant, inferior, or abnormal compared with those who are in the dominant group.

SOME UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES:

- a. Individuals with mental and/or physical health challenges
- b. Jews of Color
- c. LGBTQIA+ individuals
- d. Non-traditional families

Steps to Being Inclusive: One Club/Synagogue/Member at a Time

1. Work with or establish a Diversity and Inclusion Committee and identify a chairperson for each local Club to expand inclusion opportunities in areas that we have identified as underserved community priorities.
2. Seek rabbinic support, such as:
 - a. a public statement of support from clergy.
 - b. an inclusion-themed sermon during High Holidays.
 - c. identifying to all that *Mi Sheberach* prayers are for **all** needing healing, more than *body and soul*. In other words, we should consider mental and physical healing needs as a part of our regular *Mi Sheberach* prayers.
3. Place welcoming language on synagogue websites, preferably on the home page.

4. Identify existing inclusionary practices at our Clubs and synagogues, keeping in mind that our identified underserved communities may have already created their own infrastructure and organizations and may be searching for cooperation and partnership to fight larger problems, such as racism, antisemitism, and misogyny, for example.
5. Meet with clergy and lay leadership at the synagogue and club level to discuss Inclusion.
6. Inform FJMC International along with the region leadership about activities, so new and better ideas can be distributed to local Clubs.
7. Review written materials and bylaws, for example, of Clubs and synagogues to ensure they contain inclusionary verbiage.
8. Write and implement a policy statement for Men's Clubs and synagogues to be inclusive in club and synagogue membership and activities.
9. Submit applications for inclusion for Torch Award, Quality Inclusion Club Award, etc. for recognition of your work in this area.
10. Publicize inclusion positions and activities in the general and Jewish local media and in social media.
11. Engage the entire synagogue membership in dialogue that improves the connection between members in need of support and synagogue life.
12. Train Clubs and synagogue members to be leaders about the nature of inclusion and welcoming people, including diversity and sensitivity training from outside organizations, identifying already available resources for this purpose.
13. Support B'nai Mitzvah for children with learning and other disabilities by reaching out to their families to welcome them within their comfort level into the synagogue's regular program or alternative options and connect them to parents who have already been through the experience.
14. Campaign for the inclusion of young people with mental or physical challenges into religious school, social events, and youth groups.
15. Integrate children and adults with special physical and mental challenges into the regular service as much as possible.

Programs

1. Conduct HMV (Hearing Men's Voices) sessions on inclusion of one or more of the communities we have identified, such as mental and physical wellness modules, including addiction, discussing our own challenges and those of others we know.
2. Create a brunch/event to describe the purpose of this inclusion effort; discuss the various communities on which we are focusing.
3. Create a unique Club inclusion program and inform others.
4. Create inclusionary practices for religious activities.
5. Create inclusionary practices for other activities.
6. Invite an outside inspirational rabbi, who has personal or aligned experience with any of the identified communities or an author/speaker to address the issues of our identified underserved communities; provide access to other Clubs and synagogues via a national Zoom or similar broadcast arranged for this purpose.
7. Encourage ourselves to conduct, at our synagogues, special Shabbatot addressing each of our identified underserved communities; for instance, identify a weekend and have a congregant speak Friday night, the rabbi on Saturday morning, and a support group at *Havdalah*.
8. Integrate Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion Month (JDAIM; February), Juneteenth, Pride Month; add meaningful volunteer programs on MLK Day and other recognition events onto your calendars and run appropriate programs celebrating these events.
9. Meet with clergy, lay and educational leaders and synagogue staff for the purpose of designing specific strategies that have a strong likelihood of success for members of our identified underserved communities.
10. Involve USY Chapters in inclusion activities.
11. Ensure that Men's Clubs' Shabbatot create the opportunity to teach about welcoming and embracing underserved communities.
12. Establish programs to create dialogue with underserved communities.

Final Thought

Keep in Mind – Our goal is to change the culture of our synagogues to create an environment that makes all of us, no matter our unique identities and needs, feel welcomed and embraced in our Jewish Community.