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Suggested Inclusion Principles and Values for Graduating Rabbis

Core Principle:

People with disabilities and their families have the same rights, choices, needs and gifts in their spiritual journeys as anyone else, but may need varying forms of support in order to enjoy full participation in the life of the congregation and the community.

Goals and Values for Graduating Rabbis:

1. To understand the key role that rabbinic presence and leadership can play in welcoming and including people with disabilities and their families in the life of their synagogue and community.
 - To recognize the attitudinal, architectural, and communication barriers that often impede inclusive participation.
 - To offer guidance and leadership to congregational leaders and members to enable those with disabilities and their families to participate fully in all the spiritual, educational, celebratory, and life event activities within their community.
 - To help individuals with disabilities and their families find and use their gifts in service to others within the Jewish community

2. To guide individuals, families and members of the congregation as they explore the spiritual dimensions and questions often raised by disability, whether a disability present from birth or acquired.
 - To recognize that people with disabilities, their families, and others are often impacted by historical prejudices and attitudes, as well as current assumptions about what it means to be human, that can lead to isolation and marginalization.
 - To develop an understanding of Jewish texts, traditions, and values as they relate to people with differing abilities, and be able to address spiritual and theological issues personally as well as in worship and education.
 - To utilize a “person-first” approach that enables everyone to see persons with disabilities as individuals with varying needs, wishes, and gifts.
 - To become aware of best practices within Jewish and other faith traditions that facilitate inclusion and participation.

3. To understand potential ways that rabbis and members of their communities can advocate for and help people with disabilities and their families in their search for appropriate services and supports that enable participation in the wider community.
 - To be aware of key community services and ways to help individuals and families find information.
 - To use their roles as rabbis and the gifts of other members in working with professionals, public officials, and community members on behalf of individuals and their families.