

Mikveh Starter Toolkit

Module Overview

Module 1: Developing Your Mikveh Roadmap



Essential Questions:

- *What assets and limitations are we starting with?*
- *What opportunities and barriers might we face?*
- *How might our full community be represented and engaged in our initiative?*
- *What are the core values to guide and ground us through this process?*
- *What is the need or gap we seek to fill in the community? Why is this initiative necessary?*

Activities:

- *Practice a grounding, visioning exercise*
- *Write a personal kavanah, intention*
- *Watch a webinar, "Launching Lessons: New Mikveh Initiatives Worldwide"*
- *Create a list or map of community stakeholders*
- *Conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis*
- *Learn about the 7 Principles of Community Mikveh*
- *Brainstorm a list of guiding values*
- *Watch four short video tours of other community mikva'ot*
- *Write a 9-word personal vision statement*
- *Conduct 5+ stakeholder interviews*

Outcomes:

- *Personal kavanot, intentions*
- *List or map of community stakeholders*
- *Shared understanding of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats*
- *Bank of possible core guiding values*
- *Personal vision statements*
- *Prioritized next steps*
- *Initial input from community stakeholders*

Module 1 Expert Consultant



Kathryn Klibanoff, principal of 2K Consulting, is a Minneapolis-based consultant with more than 30 years of experience in strategic planning, project management, and content marketing. She brings planning, development, and writing skills to non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and multinational corporations. Kathryn currently serves as project manager for Maayanot Community Mikveh of Minnesota, an emerging mikveh and member of the Rising Tide Open Waters Mikveh

Network.

Module 2: Building a Mikveh Vision for Your Community

Essential Questions:

- *What might our core values look and feel like in practice?*
- *What challenges or gaps exist in our community? How do we know?*
- *What are our desired impacts in the community?*
- *How will we know we achieved our goals?*

Activities:

- *Watch webinar, "Creating a Mikveh: From Vision to Reality Part 1"*
- *Read and add to Anita Diamant's vision "Why I Want a Mikveh"*
- *Values alignment discussion*
- *Values-based visioning*
- *Write a problem statement*
- *Gather data (statistics and stories)*
- *Define your unique solution to this problem*
- *Define measurable outcomes*
- *Complete one-pager pitch template*

Outcomes:

- *Defined core values*
- *Clear examples of how values will align with practices*
- *Problem statement with supporting data*
- *Solution statement with measurable, desired outcomes*
- *One-pager pitch document*

Module 2 Expert Consultant



Naomi Malka (she/her) is the managing director of The Soul Center, a progressive Mikvah within a home for Jewish mindfulness in Baltimore, MD. She was the director of the Adas Israel Community Mikvah in Washington, DC for over 15 years. Naomi trained as a Mikvah Guide at Mayyim Hayyim in Newton, MA and was a founding member of the Rising Tide network. She is also the creator of Tevila b'Teva: immersion in nature, a program that introduces outdoor immersion to Jewish summer camps. Naomi developed an award-winning program called "Bodies of Water," to introduce kids ages 10+ to learn about Mikvah as a tool for positive body image and healthy decision making from a Jewish perspective. She earned a masters in Jewish Music from the Jewish Theological Seminary in 2000 and a BA in Sociology from UCLA in 1991.

Module 3: Developing Your Leadership & Governance Structure

Essential Questions:

- Which mikveh model(s) feel most exciting and doable?
- Which leadership and governance model(s) feel exciting and doable?
- How will decisions be made about this initiative?
- How might we best utilize a board, advisory committee, and/or staff?
- How might our values inform how we work together?

Activities:

- Watch webinar, "Creating a Mikveh: From Vision to Reality Part 2"
- Read "Joys and Oys" of mikveh models
- Explore first steps to launch a new 501c3
- Discuss and design your initiative's financial model
- Read example mission statements, bylaws, and budgets
- Brainstorm leadership structures and recruitment plans
- Complete your midway feedback survey
- Schedule a check-in meeting with the Director of Rising Tide

Outcomes:

- Clarity around the mikveh model your community is pursuing
- If relevant, launch process of establishing 501c3 and/or securing a fiscal agent
- Definition of financial model
- Definition of organizational structures: governance, rules/bylaws, and work distribution
- Launch leadership recruitment efforts

Module 3 Expert Consultant



Dara Weirnerman Steinberg is a trusted partner to nonprofits and philanthropists. In 2019, she founded Steinberg Consulting, which serves clients across the US. Dara works with foundations and high-net-worth donors to develop philanthropic strategy and impactful giving programs. She also works with nonprofits on their strategic and organizational challenges. Bringing in the best from across sectors (business, nonprofit, and behavioral science), Dara is committed to boards and professionals having the resources they need to perform their roles well and to successfully fulfill their mission.

Over the past twenty-two years, Dara has held staff and consulting roles for a variety of nonprofits, focusing on their strategy, development, and operations. For nearly a decade, she held senior positions at Lippman Kanfer Family Philanthropies, guiding their grantmaking and working closely with grantees. She has worked with social service, arts, education, religious institutions, and healthcare organizations.

Dara earned her MBA from Fordham University and BA from Smith College. She is a published poet and produced playwright. Originally from New Jersey, she lives with her husband and sons in Northeast Ohio.

Module 4: Mikveh Design & Construction

Essential Questions:

- *What do we want our mikveh space to look and feel like?*
- *What does Jewish tradition teach us about the construction of mikva'ot?*
- *What does a mikveh design and construction process entail? What are the different construction methods and their pros and cons?*
- *How might we best identify, prepare for, and collaborate with architects, Halachic advisors, builders, etc.?*

Activities:

- *Watch webinars, "Mikveh Building Best Practices" and "Intro to Mikveh Construction Halacha"*
- *Determine which construction model your team will pursue*
- *Explore example mikveh architectural plans*
- *Gain a basic understanding of halachic oversight of the construction process (this includes your one-pager resource)*
- *Consider the value of "Hiddur Mitzvah," and watch the webinar "Art and Mikveh"*
- *Learn the basics in making your mikveh accessible*
- *Begin to assemble your mikveh construction team*
- *Create your mikveh site checklist (must-have's, nice-to-have's, etc.)*
- *Draft your mikveh design and construction outline*

Outcomes:

- *Defined priorities and decision-making criteria for your mikveh site*
- *Clear next steps for assembling your construction team, exploring mikveh sites, and launching new construction plans*
- *Resource to share with architects, Rav HaMakshir, designers, etc.*

Module 4 Expert Consultant



Rabbi Joshua Heller is the Senior Rabbi of Congregation B'nai Torah in Atlanta, and the Founding President and Rav HaMachshir of MACoM (Metro Atlanta Community Mikvah). Rabbi Heller has 19 years of experience in Mikveh construction and maintenance, and consults regularly on these topics with communities around the world. He is regarded as an expert in Jewish Law within the Conservative movement, having served for over 15 years as a member of its Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, including a current term as chair of its Rites and Rituals Subcommittee. Heller is also a thought leader in issues related to the impact of technology in Jewish life, having written much of the Conservative movement's guidance on virtual participation in worship. He has also done extensive work in the area of Eruvin. Rabbi Heller was

ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1999, after graduating Magna Cum Laude from Harvard University with a degree in computer science.

Module 5: Raising Awareness & Capital

Essential Questions:

- *What fundraising strategies might we pursue together?*
- *How might we foster widespread community buy-in?*
- *What are our goals and priorities around communication and community education/engagement?*

Activities:

- *Watch webinars, "How to Cultivate Community Buy-In & Funding For Your Mikveh Initiative" and "Exploring & Shifting the Mikveh Landscape"*
- *Study mikveh storytelling tips*
- *Prepare your own mikveh stories*
- *Define your target audiences*
- *Learn the basics of mikveh communications*
- *Explore education models and offerings*
- *Draft your fundraising and engagement plan*

Outcomes:

- *Compelling mikveh stories*
- *Basic communications strategy*
- *Fundraising and engagement plan*

Module 5 Expert Consultant



Rachel Eisen, Chief Operations and Advancement Officer at Mayyim Hayyim, first discovered Mayyim Hayyim when she brought a group of college students on a field trip to learn about mikveh and ritual innovation. Rachel grew up in New York and Maryland, and has an extensive background in the Jewish communal field. Previously, she was the Senior Engagement Associate at Brown RISD Hillel in Providence, RI. Rachel holds dual master's degrees from Brandeis University's Hornstein Program in Jewish Professional Leadership and Near Eastern & Judaic Studies and a BA in History and Jewish Studies from Vassar College. She has also studied at the

Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, the Shalom Hartman Institute, and Hebrew College. Rachel is a co-founder of Mentoring for Equity, a national initiative to connect women-identified Jewish communal professionals in mentoring relationships in order to help close the gender leadership gap and work toward gender equity in the Jewish non-profit sector. In 2021 she was selected for UpStart's Change Accelerator, JWJ's Jewish Communal Women's Leadership Project, and Schusterman Family Philanthropies' Leading from Within Fellowship. She volunteers with the Gender Equity in Hiring Project and sits on the New England Regional Council and New Gen Leadership Committee at the New Israel Fund. Rachel lives in Dedham with her husband, Nathan.

Module 6: Behind the Scenes: Logistics, Guiding and Scheduling

Essential Questions:

- What might staffing look like at your new mikveh?
- What infrastructure, tools, technology and materials might support the day-to-day operations at our mikveh?
- What will the process look like to schedule and facilitate immersions?
- How might we recruit, train, and sustain a strong cohort of Mikveh Guides?

Activities:

- Explore models of mikveh staffing
- Learn about the role of Mikveh Guides
- Read about recruiting, training, and supporting Mikveh Guides
- Explore example Mikveh Guide materials
- Review best practices and guidance for mikveh maintenance
- Listen to audio recording presentation, "Maintaining a Clean, Sparkling Mikveh"
- Learn about immersion scheduling logistics
- Brainstorm ideas for measuring impacts and capturing stories
- Draft your Mikveh Operations & Logistics Blue Print

Outcomes:

- Draft questions and preferred software for your immersion intake form
- An outline of your mikveh staff and organizational chart
- List of priorities, supplies, and next steps for mikveh maintenance
- Recruitment plan for Mikveh Guides
- Ideas and systems for gathering stories and measuring impacts

Module 6 Expert Consultant



Aki Yonekawa, Interim Program Manager at Mayyim Hayyim, is a Jewish educator and camp enthusiast. Originally from Los Angeles, she moved to Cambridge to work at Gann Academy and experience the seasons everyone is always talking about. She has spent her life enjoying celebrating the Jewish calendar and making Jewish life fun and interesting for others. In addition to experiential education and traditional text study, she is interested

in embodied Jewish practices which is what brought her to Mayyim Hayyim. Aki studied Art History at Occidental College and has an MBA in Non-Profit Management and an MAEd, both from American Jewish University. She participated in the Pardes Experiential Educators Program, has learned Torah with SVARA, and is currently in the Classic Talmud Program at Yashrut. She is a faculty member at Brandeis Collegiate Institute and the Foundation for Jewish Camp's Cornerstone Fellowship.