

A person with dark hair is laughing heartily, their eyes are closed, and their mouth is wide open in a joyful expression. They are wearing a dark-colored t-shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

A NETFLIX ORIGINAL DOCUMENTARY

CRIP CAMP

A DISABILITY REVOLUTION

DISCUSSION GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the *Crip Camp* discussion guide. Whether you are someone interested in disability issues, a community activist, or someone interested in the film, this guide provides a framework for fostering discussion and action after viewing *Crip Camp*. It is our hope that these discussions and actions will advance your understanding and interest in disability and accessibility.

Crip Camp depicts a multifaceted look at people with disabilities at a particular time and place. Some were born with a disability, others interact with the community through friends, family or colleagues and others acquire a disability later in life. No matter what your relationship is with the disability community, we are thankful you are interested in *Crip Camp*.

Community-led screenings and conversations have the ability to elevate and amplify diverse voices in the disability community, build capacity for advocacy and activism, and provide space for people to connect and share their stories.

Thank you for joining the conversation!

ABOUT THE FILM

In the early 1970s, teenagers with disabilities faced a future shaped by isolation, discrimination and institutionalization. Camp Jened, a ramshackle camp “for the handicapped” (a term no longer used) in the Catskills, exploded those confines. Jened was their freewheeling Utopia, a place with summertime sports, smoking and make-out sessions awaiting everyone, and campers experienced liberation and full inclusion as human beings. Their bonds endured as many migrated West to Berkeley, California — a hotbed of progressive activism where friends from Camp Jened realized that disruption, civil disobedience, and political participation could change the future for millions.

Co-directed by Emmy®-winning filmmaker Nicole Newnham and film mixer and former camper Jim LeBrecht, this joyous and exuberant documentary arrives the same year as the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, at a time when the country’s largest minority group still battles daily for equality and the freedom to exist. *Crip Camp* is executive produced by President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama; Tonia Davis and Priya Swaminathan; Oscar® nominee Howard Gertler (*How to Survive a Plague*) and Raymond Lifchez, Jonathan Logan and Patty Quillin; LeBrecht, Newnham and Sara Bolder produce.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

SUGGESTED OPENING STATEMENT

Before you start, tell the audience why they're here. Below is a suggested statement to help encourage audience input from the beginning.

Crip Camp is about reclaiming and celebrating your identity, telling your story, and discovering the power of community.

The film can be used to build an understanding of disability rights and justice, foster safe conversation and healthy discussions, amplify the voices and political leverage of a marginalized community, and build bridges between people who share very similar or different backgrounds.

We can all relate to elements in the film, whether it's the joy of feeling accepted, coming-of-age stories, the thrill of an approaching summer, or the courage to voice your beliefs.

We are here today to engage in a meaningful and honest discussion about what living with a disability was, is, and will be in the coming years. Today, 1 in 4 U.S. adults have some type of disability. *Crip Camp* is one disability community story. There are thousands more, led and told by people with all kinds of disabilities, ethnicities, genders, class backgrounds, and more. The issue affects many of us, whether directly or indirectly.

Let's watch, listen and discuss...

PRE-SCREENING (OPTIONAL)

These questions prior to the screening are optional, but, like the opening statement, can be helpful for priming the audience and getting people thinking about the topic. You can also use the questions to gauge how the audience is thinking about the issue before watching the film and after – and use them as a tool to evaluate any perception or sentiment change.

- What is the relationship between pride, identity, and culture?
- What comes to your mind when you think of disability? How would you define it?
- What is your current experience with disability? Have you, or someone you know, ever had a lived experience with disability? If yes, what impact did it have on you?
- How is disability currently portrayed by the media? What stories are, and are not, being told?
- What do you know about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)? What has the ADA been successful in doing for people with disabilities and the movement in general? What has it missed?
- How do disability rights intersect with other social issues and causes? Where is there overlap and where are there gaps?
- On a broader note, what is the future of the disability rights movement? What are the major issues today and looking ahead?
- What do you hope to learn by watching the film?

Following this discussion, play the film in its entirety for your audience and continue the conversation with the questions below.

POST-SCREENING

Film Reflections

- Let's reflect on the film. What impact did it have on you? How do you feel after watching the film?
- What was the film's key message? What was it trying to convey to the audience? Do you think that message was conveyed successfully or not?
- Which characters did you find most compelling in the film? Who resonated with you and why?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Were you able to see yourself or someone you know in the film's storyline?
- What kinds of disability culture and diversity did you see depicted in *Crip Camp*?

- Why is it necessary to have a disability activist community?
- Why was the camp such a freeing and revolutionary experience for the campers? How did it empower them?
- How do you understand the word 'crip' after watching *Crip Camp*?
- How does the community, as depicted in *Crip Camp*, facilitate the relationship between pride, identity, and culture?
- What stories and perspectives are missing from the film?
- Did you experience any shift in thinking on disability or disability rights? If so, what was it? What part of the film provoked that?
- What is the next battle in the fight for disability rights?
- How have the actions of the disability community/disability activists changed the ways we all live?

The Broader Issues

- Have you noticed parts of your community that aren't accessible? How can we all advocate for change?
- As you saw, everyone contributes to disability activism in different ways. How can you advocate for disability rights in your community? Your state? The country?
- Are disability rights human and civil rights?
- If you do not have a disability, how can you be an ally to the disability community?
- What are some ways accessibility benefits everyone?
- How can we ensure that issues that matter to people with disabilities have representation – politically, in the media, elsewhere?
- **For community activists:** How can *Crip Camp* and its impact campaign help advance disability rights?

TIPS FOR MODERATING A DISCUSSION

Below are tips for moderating a discussion to help promote an engaging and productive conversation.

As witnessed in the film, consensus may not be reached on any single issue or question. That's okay. We encourage each discussion to be inclusive of people and differing viewpoints.

GET PREPARED

- As the event organizer, you are playing the role of moderator. Make sure to watch the film in advance so you are well prepared to guide your group through the discussion.
- Make an effort to ensure that the discussion is inclusive, accessible, and respectful to the community.
- Determine your goals for the conversation. Why are you hosting this event? What do you hope to achieve with this discussion? Are you partnering with someone or an organization to host? What are the desired outcomes or action items that will stem from the discussion?

CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE

- Before the discussion, identify your audience. Who will be in the room? What are their backgrounds? Why might they be here? Do any have a disability? Are any from underrepresented or intersectionally marginalized communities? How can they benefit from this discussion?
- As much as you can, tailor your questions and conversation to accommodate the audience and make room for their voices to be heard.

MODERATING IN MODERATION

- Remember that a moderator is a facilitator, not a lecturer. Open the floor by introducing a question or theme and then step back to encourage the group to fill that voided space with conversation.

- Ask people to speak one at a time and to state their name before responding (for people who need auditory cues to know who is in the room).
- If ASL interpreters are present, remind people not to speak too rapidly so that interpreters can keep up.
- If there is a microphone, make sure everyone uses it, even if they say they don't need it. Offer to help hold the microphone if it's difficult for someone.
- Keep an eye on your audience dynamics. Who is speaking? Is someone taking over the conversation? Is someone hesitating to speak?
- If the conversation becomes one-sided, redirect the discussion or a question to a quieter individual (without demanding a response). As much as you can, ensure that all voices have the opportunity to be heard.
- Thoughtful reflection sometimes takes time. Listen to what participants have to say and allow your audience time to respond. Don't interrupt or allow others to interrupt.
- If the conversation becomes heated, or inappropriate, firmly step in and announce a pause. Remind the audience of the goals of the conversation. This can help re-ground the group, and diffuse tension.
- Recognize that participants will have distinct and personal perspectives. That is why they are here – to share their views.
- Acknowledge that people have biases. Avoid shaming or disparaging anyone for their views or correcting anyone's language; instead treat any inadvertent or unaware comments as teachable moments.

STARTING THE DISCUSSION

- Have the audience introduce themselves. Participants should state their name, their affiliation (if applicable), their interest in the film, and why they are participating. If time allows, consider having the audience share a fun-fact about themselves as an icebreaker.
- Tell the audience why they're here. Introduce the opening statement to prompt the audience to start thinking and conversing about disability.
- Following the initial thought starters, begin the conversations with the discussion questions, prior to screening the film.

WHO IS WHO IN *CRIP CAMP*?

Jim LeBrecht, the film's co-director, is a film sound mixer and Camp Jened veteran. In his early life, he felt like his disability was something that he needed to overcome.

Judy Heumann co-founded Disabled In Action in 1970 and has been one of the most galvanizing leaders of the disability rights movement ever since. A past camper and counselor at Camp Jened, Judy served as Special Advisor on Disability Rights for the US State Department.

Denise Sherer Jacobson grew up in the Bronx, spent summers at Camp Jened, and earned a master's degree in human sexuality. A *Crip Camp* story consultant, she is currently writing a book about Camp Jened.

Lionel Je'Woodyard worked as a counselor at Camp Jened, where he had his first exposure to people with disabilities and Vietnam War-era counterculture. He hails from Mobile, Alabama.

Neil Jacobson met his wife, Denise Sherer Jacobson, when they were adolescents at Camp Jened, and they later welcomed a family. After earning a master's degree in computer science, Neal worked as a bank vice president.

Ann Cupolo Freeman got to experience her version of Woodstock while attending Camp Jened. Later, in the Bay Area, she worked at the Center for Independent Living and participated in the historic 504 Sit-In.

Joe O'Connor, a former Camp Jened counselor, was briefly intimidated by the idea of supervising so many individuals with disabilities — until he realized they were as rambunctious as other teens.

Corbett O'Toole befriended numerous Camp Jened alums who became affiliated with the Center for Independent Living upon moving to Berkeley, California. A writer and activist, she helped sustain the 504 Sit-In after a contingent traveled

from San Francisco to Washington, D.C. to pursue meetings with members of the Carter administration.

HolLynn D'Lil's reporting for Ms. Magazine inspired her book *Becoming Real in 24 Days: One Participant's Story of the 1977 504 Demonstrations*.

Dennis Billups attended a demonstration at the 50 United Nations Plaza Federal Office Building at the behest of his sister. When he finally left, weeks had passed, and he was on his way to the nation's capital with fellow 504 protest leaders.

Evan White is an Emmy-winning journalist who embedded with protestors during the 504 Sit-In, then questioned Secretary Joseph Califano about his refusal to meet with the delegation dispatched to Washington, D.C. At the end of a national technician's strike, his broadcast updates on the demonstration aired on every ABC station.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Nicole Newnham (Writer, Director and Producer) is an Emmy-winning documentary producer and director, four-time Sundance Film Festival alumnus and five-time Emmy-nominee. She has recently produced two virtual reality films with the Australian artist / director Lynette Wallworth: the breakthrough VR work *Collisions*, which won the 2017 Emmy for Outstanding New Approaches to Documentary, and *Awavena*, featured at the World Economic Forum in Davos and at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival.

Nicole co-directed *The Revolutionary Optimists*, winner of the Sundance Hilton Sustainability Award. She also co-directed and co-produced the acclaimed documentary *The Rape of Europa*, about the Nazi war on European culture, for which she was nominated for a WGA award and shortlisted for an Academy Award. With Pulitzer-prize winning photographer Brian Lanker, she produced *They Drew Fire*, about the Combat Artists of WWII, and co-wrote the companion book, distributed by Harper Collins.

A 1997 graduate of the Stanford Documentary Film Program, Nicole lives in Oakland with her husband Tom, and two sons, Finn and Blaine.

Jim LeBrecht (Writer, Director and Producer) has over 40 years of experience as a film and theater sound designer and mixer, author, disability rights activist and filmmaker.

Jim started his career in the theater, working as the resident sound designer at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre for 10 years.

In 1989 he found a new home at the Saul Zaentz Film Center where he started out as an apprentice and worked his way up the ladder to become a sound designer, mixer and sound supervisor.

In 1996, LeBrecht founded Berkeley Sound Artists (BSA), an audio post production house. He quickly found a home in the documentary and independent film community.

LeBrecht and BSA's credits include some notable films. Just some of the titles that have garnered acclaim are *The Blood of Yingzhou District*, which won the Academy Award for short documentary in 2006, *Minding The Gap*, *Unrest*, *The Force*, *The Island President*, *The Waiting Room*, *The Kill Team*, *Daughter From Danang*, *The Cockettes*, *We Were Here*, and *Audrie and Daisy*.

Jim co-authored *Sound and Music for the Theatre: the art and technique of design*. Now in its 4th edition, the book is used as a textbook all over the world.

Jim's work as an activist began in high school and continues to this day. Jim is currently a board member at the Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund, which works for the rights of the disabled through education, legislation and litigation.

LeBrecht lives in Oakland, California and is married to *Crip Camp* producer Sara Bolder.

Sara Bolder (Producer) spent twenty years as a film and sound editor, working on *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*, *The English Patient*, *Terminator 2*, *The Horse Whisperer*, *Quiz Show*, *Mrs. Doubtfire* and many other films. She won Golden Reel Awards from the Motion Picture Sound Editors for Best Sound Editing for *Jurassic Park* and *Saving Private Ryan* and was nominated for 9 other films.

Feeling the pull of her activist youth, Sara changed careers and spent the next fifteen years as a fundraiser at various non-profit social justice organizations including Death Penalty Focus, Progressive Jewish Alliance (now called Bend the Arc), and MoveOnPAC. She has also worked as a Development Consultant, specializing in fundraising and organizational development with small to mid-size social justice and arts organizations.

Sara was a 2018 Sundance Producing Summit Fellow.

Priya Swaminathan and Tonia Davis (Executive Producers) serve as co-heads of Higher Ground Productions, Barack Obama and Michelle Obama's production company, in partnership with Netflix. President and Mrs. Obama formed Higher Ground to produce powerful stories to entertain, inform and inspire, and to lift up new, diverse voices in the entertainment industry. The company's slate of upcoming projects includes a wide range of fiction and non-fiction signature productions for all audiences including scripted, unscripted and documentary series, as well as full-length features and documentaries. Sundance-award winning documentary *American Factory* is the first title from the company's slate to premiere on the streaming service in August 2019.

Swaminathan was previously director of development at Annapurna, where she oversaw the studio's film development slate and developed and produced fiction and documentary projects for filmmakers including Spike Jonze, Bennett Miller and George Clooney. In addition to producing Showtime's *Very Young Girls*, Swaminathan has also produced documentaries for MTV and ESPN.

Davis previously oversaw development for TV and film productions at Chernin Entertainment and served as an executive producer on the Amy Schumer comedy *Snatched*, as well as on the original musical *The Greatest Showman* starring Hugh Jackman. Davis previously worked for Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, where she played a key role in the production of their recent live-action feature remakes, including *The Jungle Book* and *Beauty and the Beast*.

Howard Gertler (Executive Producer) is a producer whose credits include David France's *How to Survive a Plague*, which premiered in competition at Sundance 2012 and was released by IFC Films/Sundance Selects; in addition to an Academy Award nomination, the film collected New York Film Critics' Circle, Peabody, IFP Gotham, IDA and GLAAD Media Awards. In addition to being an Oscar nominee, he's both an IFP/Gotham and Film Independent Spirit Award winner, the latter of which he won for producing John Cameron Mitchell's *Shortbus*, which premiered in the official selection in Cannes. With See-Saw Films, he produced Mitchell's

adaptation of Neil Gaiman's *How to Talk to Girls at Parties*, released by A24. Recent projects include Rhys Ernst's Sundance '19 debut feature *Adam*, produced with James Schamus, John Cameron Mitchell and Bryan Weller's scripted musical podcast *Anthem* (with Topic Studios), and (as executive producer) Nicole Newnham and Jim LeBrecht's documentary *Crip Camp*, with Higher Ground Productions and Netflix.