

4 One of your cousins keeps pouring wine for the nephew who's just returned from rehab....

Almost all families and friendship circles include members who have struggled with addictions—and these same families often include members who seem oblivious to the person in recovery who should not be encouraged to drink.

If your seder guest is comfortable discussing his/her recovery with you, ask in advance how the person would like sobriety to be handled at the seder table. One option might be to offer guests as many bottles of grape juice as you do

finally your daughter takes over the reading....

Limited vision, dyslexia, stuttering, aphasia following strokes, learning disabilities, lack of fluency in English—all can cause guests who are asked to read from the *haggadah* to feel incompetent and/or deeply embarrassed. It's wise therefore to inquire before the ritual begins if guests would like to read, and assign pages accordingly.

Also, try to offer guests ways to participate that don't involve reading. Singing, distributing the matzah with *charoses*, and clearing the dishes can all be valued contributions.

half an hour to improvise a ramp so he can get inside, and then there's little space for the wheelchair to move from room to room....

We say, "Let all who are hungry come and eat," maintaining the Jewish tradition of graciously welcoming unexpected guests at the seder table...but in a situation like this, it's difficult to be fully welcoming. Even a hastily created ramp may cause a person in a wheelchair to feel as if he/she is inconveniencing others and/or becoming an unwanted focus of attention.

In this instance, find out in advance if any of the guests have particular needs, and prepare accordingly. A ramp can be put in place before people arrive. And although it isn't easy with a houseful of people, a few pathways can be cleared for a wheelchair to move freely and have ample room at the seder table.

Other adjustments can be made for guests with different disabilities. Seat a hearing impaired individual near the seder leader. If a visually impaired individual is coming, make a large-print copy of the *haggadah* and guide him/her to the seat with the best lighting. Just don't forget what any person with a disability wants: to be recognized not for his/her disability, but for who he/she is as a person.

Taking care to make each guest feel at ease and valued ensures that our Pesach celebrations are meaningful and sweet for all. □

There is no way to avoid the sad and complicated feelings at holiday times after the death of a loved one....

Yet, the structure of the seder reminds us that we can move from sorrow to joy.

wine; another might be holding an alcohol-free seder in the spirit of affirming this person's journey from the wilderness of addiction to the freedom of sobriety. Here it's important to inform guests in advance of the no-wine rule so they will not expect wine, joke about the lack of wine, or bring wine as a gift. However, when you do so, keep in mind Judaism's teaching, "A person who publicly shames his neighbor is like someone who has shed blood...when someone is shamed the color leaves his face and he becomes pale" (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Bava Mezia). To avoid embarrassing the person, do not mention him/her by name. The idea is to make the person feel comfortable at the seder—which hopefully will set the stage for a closer relationship to you at this challenging time in his/her life.

5 In an attempt to include everyone's voice in the seder, you ask people to take turns reading around the table. When it's your daughter's boyfriend's turn he panics and stumbles over the words...awkward silences... until

And, as thrilling as it is to hear a young child join in the reading for the first time, wait until a private moment to praise his/her fluent reading when other children are struggling with reading.

6 Your sister-in-law unexpectedly brings her father to your house...in his wheelchair. It takes you

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- For a Reform *haggadah* with gender-inclusive language, traditional and innovative blessings, Miriam's Cup, and women's voices, order *The Open Door: A Passover Haggadah*, edited by Sue Levi Elwell, art by Ruth Weisberg: <http://ccarpres.org/>
- To add a contemporary context to the Passover seder, download the Darfur-oriented "Passover Companion" produced by Congregation Beth El of Sudbury, Massachusetts: www.bethelsudbury.org/uploads/56PassoverCompanion5768.pdf
- To engage young children: <http://urj.org/educate/holidayhappenings/>
- To involve children of all ages in Passover, visit "The Jewish Parent Page": <http://urj.org/educate/parent/>
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