

Reizy Itzkowitz



Comfort With Caution

We often talk about the circle of life. But what happens when people we love are faced with loss? How can we help them grieve and when can we insert the hallmarks of emunah and bitachon into our comforting words?

The catalyst for this conversation was a LINKS training session on grief led by Mr. Evan Steele that evolved into a discussion of how our own limitations when grappling with lofty topics cause us to avoid them when dealing with our children, students or clients. We wondered if it is our place to bring Hashem into the discussion, and, if so, how. We invited people who deal with these issues on a daily basis into our conference room so we could talk — really talk — about this sensitive topic in a realistic, open and growth-oriented way. We invite you to listen in on our roundtable discussion as we come full circle in our discussion.



A Roundtable Discussion

Moderator:

Devora Kuperman

Entertainer, interpreter, lecturer and writer.

Panelists:

Mr. Evan Steele, LCSW

Clinical social worker; director of Jewish Board Clinics of Boro Park and Crown Heights; Professor at Rebbetzin Bulka's New Seminary, Master of Social Work program at Long Island University.

Tsipi Falik

Noted mechaneches; teaches Iyov in high schools.

Malkie Klaristenfeld

Director of Volunteers for Project C.H.A.I. of Chai Lifeline; director and founder of Knafayim – Wings of Hope, for those dealing with perinatal loss; teaches yedias Hashem/emunah in high schools.

Sarah Rivkah Kohn

Lost her mother at age nine and is the founder of LINKS, an organization for children and teens who have lost a parent.



Devora Kuperman: When we see someone in pain, be it a divorce, a death, a child suffering, loss of *parnassah*, or even the loss of a lifelong dream — any kind of emotional pain — our first instinct is to eliminate it, or at the very least, diminish it. But sometimes, eradicating pain isn't the right thing to do...especially when we try doing so by playing the *emunah* card and such.

It says in *Pirkei Avos* that we should not try to calm someone down when he is angry. We are also told not to be *menachem* someone while he is in front of his dead. Is there ever a time to comfort someone by bringing Hashem into the picture (other than saying *HaMakom yenachem...*)? If so, who should that comforter be?

Mr. Evan Steele: I want to preface my responses by saying that my views on Torah and *Yiddishkeit* have been heavily influenced by Rabbanim and the *sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh*, as explained by the *shiurim* of Rabbi Moshe Weinberger, *shlita*, of Woodmere. I am also lucky to be a part of the NEFESH association of mental health professionals and a smaller offshoot of that group moderated by Dr. Chaim Neuhoff. We meet together at the Agudah Convention each year and he has brought in Rabbanim such as Rabbi Binyomin Eisenberger, *shlita*, who most recently has greatly influenced my outlook as well.

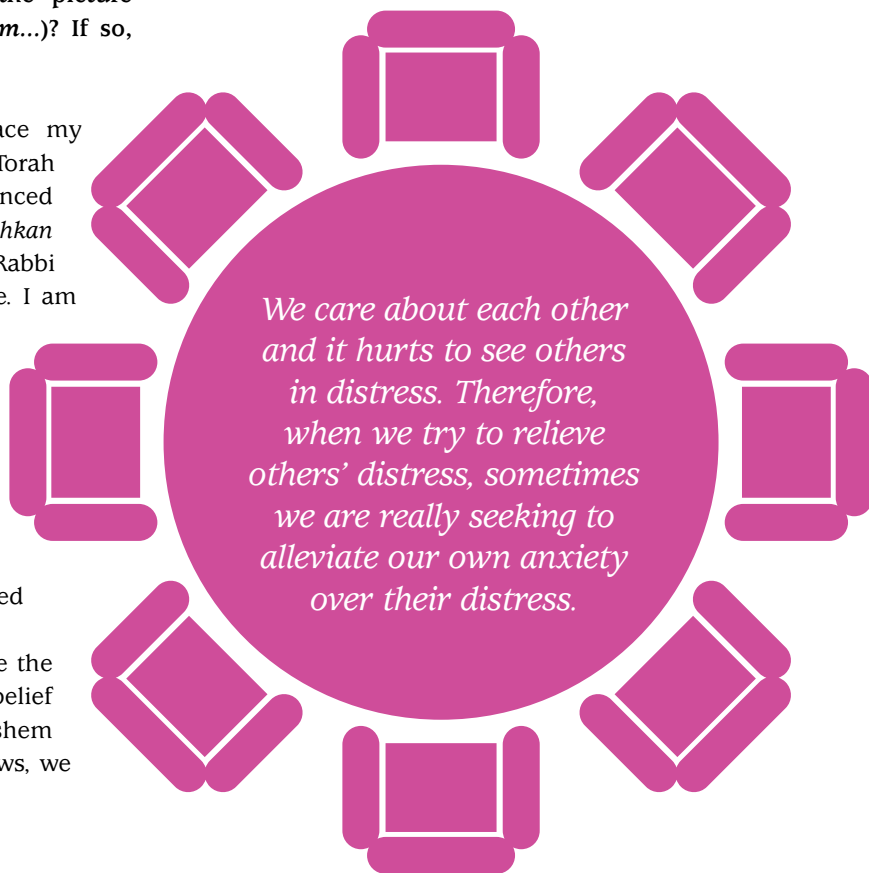
Torah and Hashem are *emes*; they are the objective, absolute truth, not simply a belief system. When we talk about bringing Hashem in, Hashem is already there. As *frum* Jews, we

know that the awareness is there. As therapists, we know that if something is sort of “in the room” and not being talked about, that is a problem. If it's there, we should bring it up, even if it is uncomfortable to talk about — otherwise it is a disservice to the client.

So, when we talk about bringing Hashem in, Hashem is already there. Hashem is everywhere. Hashem is in every living thing. Right? But

not every living thing has much awareness of Hashem. But in the *frum velt*, there's no such thing as a person not aware of Hashem. There are people who are struggling with Hashem. But whether it is positive or negative, whether it's comforting or with anger — it's there! We just have to bring it out. That is step one and it is comforting to people when we don't avoid it.

Baruch Hashem, we care about each other and it hurts to see others in distress. Therefore, when we try to relieve others' distress, sometimes we are really seeking to alleviate our



own anxiety over their distress. And if we are simply trying to get rid of our own stress or discomfort, it will make us do different things.

If your *kavanah* is pure, you will ask different questions — like, “What does this person need?” But if it bothers you, and you are in pain, you will want to make it go away, so you’ll say to people (like in some of the horror stories we talk about) something like “Where’s your *bitachon*?” or “*Gam zu l’tovah!*” When you want to say a comforting thing, be honest — who is this for? If it is for the other person, think: Does she really need to hear this right now?

Malkie Klaristenfeld: My outlook is a little bit different than where you are coming from; the type of work I do is very crisis oriented. When my new volunteers-in-training ask me, “What will I do? What should I say?” I share with them that before I enter a home that is reeling from the very first wave of shock and trauma, I put my hand on the *mezuzah* and say, “Hashem, please, I am doing Your work.” Hashem says, “*Imo Anochi b’tzarah.*”

He doesn’t say anything about what He wants from a person, nothing about belief or *bitachon*, just “I am here for you.” So just by being there as *frum*, believing people and showing our essence, it filters through. By showing that we are not afraid to be there, that in itself is how we bring Hashem into the picture.

It is mostly about us being there on the same level. It is not a doctor-client or teacher-student relationship in which the doctor or teacher has information to give. Quite the contrary, the client will teach me what *her* needs are! I follow their lead.

They are in such pain. Only Hashem can give true *nechamah*, as we say “*HaMakom yenachem...*” We give a *brachah* that Hashem help the person find the strength to be able to find true comfort. In crisis mode, that is enough!

DK: This reminds me of a cartoon of the little girl who tells her mom she will help their elderly neighbor mourn his wife. When asked what she will do to alleviate his pain, she responds, “I will help him cry.”

Tsipi Falik: Rav Pam, *zt”l*, once came to be *menachem avel* a family who had lost a child and the parents said the *Rosh Yeshivah*’s visit was the most powerful. What did he do? He just came there and sat and cried.

The best thing someone told me when I was sitting *shivah* for my husband, *zt”l*, was, “You will survive. With Hashem’s help, you will survive!” But what was meaningful was *who* said it to me. It was a woman I know whose husband collapsed suddenly at a close family *simchah* who came to say it to me, and it was exactly what I needed to hear, coming from her.

By the same token, sometimes, based on your relationship with the family, it is expected of you to say something



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meaningful. But keep it brief and don't lay it on too thick.

Sarah Rivkah Kohn: I try to be mindful of what the Baal Shem Tov said — that any *middah* we have can be used positively or negatively. The question is what about *apikorsus*? The Baal Shem Tov said, when the poor man comes to your door, you can't say, 'Hashem will take care of him.' There has to be in your mind that I am in charge here to take care of this person who has shown up on my doorstep.

In terms of when to bring Hashem into the discussion, I never want it to be a default. I want it to be a decision, and not that I was avoiding the topic, like Mr. Steele said, because of my own insecurities. I try to teach my team to look at what is helpful for the person who is suffering.

TF: Probably the worst thing is when people say, "Where is your *bitachon*?" I had two kids with metabolic issues; one was just *niftar* from COVID at the age of 39. I remember when he was 8 years old and diagnosed with diabetes on top of his protein metabolic issues; I was so distraught. I was saying, "What is he going to eat? No protein, and now no carbs? How will he survive?" And someone said to me, "Where is your *bitachon*?"

I could not believe it. Obviously, if I was going through something so difficult, I had *bitachon*. I may have had some confused feelings, but I *had* *bitachon*. People need reassurance, not a put-down. Especially if they are saying it themselves and questioning themselves, they don't need you to rub it into their raw wound.

DK: Someone once told me that you cannot use rationale to combat emotion. She said emotions are like oil and rationale is like water. The oil always rises to the top — we have to get

Gems of Chizuk

TF: I remember a young *almanah* who had kids with similar issues to mine crying to me that she was not coping. I said to her, "Did you get dressed today? Feed the kids? Dress them? Send them off to school? Yes? That means you are coping!"

We have to reassure others that they are doing what they think they are not managing to do.

MK: My great-uncle, Reb Mechel Barenbaum, *zt"l*, beloved *Mashgiach* in Hagaon Harav Moshe Feinstein's, *zt"l*, yeshivah, lost his wife suddenly at 56 years old when she was hit by a van, *lo aleinu*. During his wife's *shivah*, all the Rabbanim came to be *menachem avel* and my mother recounts the story of how he sat there, hunched over, a small person, and all the typical words of *chizuk* were being said to him: "She must have been so special, because Hashem only takes special people," "You must be strong enough to bear this, because Hashem only tests those who are," and on and on.

After the room quieted down, my uncle looked up and quietly said, "*Uber es fort tut vei* (but it still hurts badly)."

Sometimes we just have to sit with the pain and it's okay to feel it.

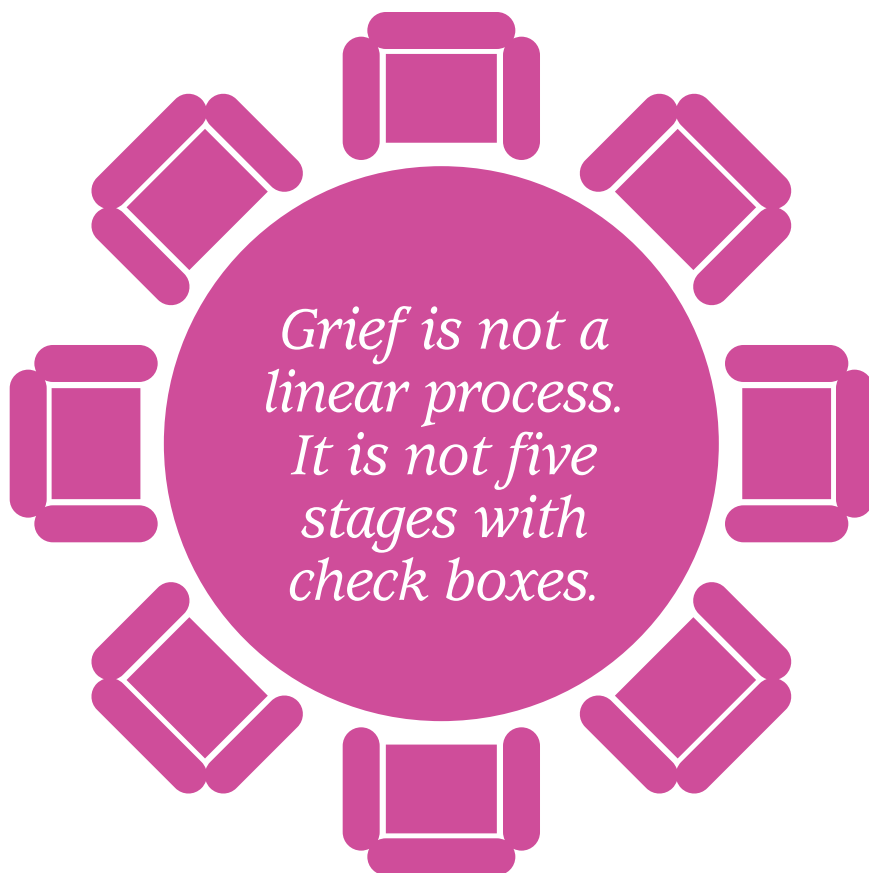
TF: When we go to be *menachem avel*, we have to know what *not* to say! You have to remember at all times, *It's not about you!* Don't talk about your feelings or ask questions to satisfy your curiosity. Remember, Iyov's friends came and sat for seven days and seven nights and said nothing!

Maybe it is more about what not to say than the correct thing to say.

ES: We have to dig deeper to hear the message of what's being said. I remember telling my kid that it's seven o'clock and time to go to bed and he said, "No, it's not seven o'clock." What he was really saying was, "I don't want it to be seven."

Listen to the unspoken message and address that.





through the oil to get to the water. Similarly, we've got to get through the emotional struggle before we can begin talking "sense."

However, people put a timetable on grief based on their own schedules. How do we know when we've "reached the water"? How do we know that a person is ready to hear about Hashem?

SRK: I would like to challenge that assumption for a minute. Why is "emotion" not sense? Why do we assume that rationale trumps emotion? I think that emotion sometimes brings us to a place a lot deeper and further, certainly in *avodas Hashem* and in general as well. If you're asking how I know if a person is in a place where she can handle *divrei nechamah*, I would say take the lead from wherever that person is — she will let you know!

I encounter people every day who put a time limit on grieving and imply things like, "You should be over it by now" based on their own schedules! Grief is not a linear process. It is not five stages with check boxes. It looks more like an image that a kindergartner draws. It goes in and out and backward and forward. Most people just need validation and not the latest *vort* you are itching to share. The assumption that emotion is secondary to logic is not necessarily a good thing.

TF: You have to be able to sense and read body language. Tread lightly; if someone tenses when you bring things up, back up and

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take a different track. A person may be more logical on some days and other days more emotional. You can't always say the right thing! People often want conflicting things from different people. Sometimes a person will bemoan the fact that no one asks about her special child, for example, and the very next day, you could get an earful about her prying, meddlesome neighbors who asked about her special child's well-being.

I recall my friend crying to me after she placed her child in a home that no one seemed to remember about her "other" child. She felt such loss, but no one checked in. She would talk to the neighbors; they would ask about the other kids but never about her "Rochele." Wasn't she her child, too? But then she would call me the next day, fuming that a neighbor asked about her. "What's it her business?" We can't always get it right; you just have to gently test the waters.

"Abnormal is normal in abnormal times" is a favorite line of mine. A person acting abnormally is perfectly normal in such a trying situation. That's a real eye-opener when we explain it to family and friends of sufferers — give them the space to process the loss. Sometimes people — especially parents — were strong for their kids in the beginning following a loss, but then the grief pops up later in what seems like abnormal ways. Not being able to properly grieve in the beginning is normal too!

ES: I think you alluded to a real problem, especially in our community, maybe even more so for men who are taught to

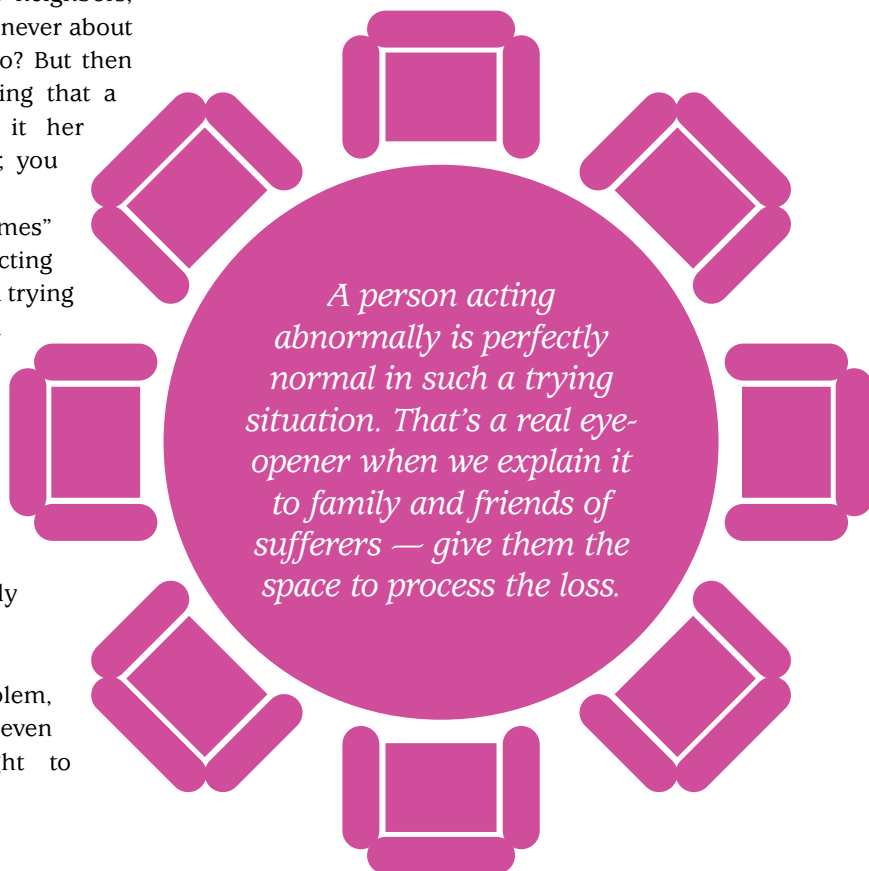
intellectualize grief and rush the grieving process. We need to sometimes slow people down. It's hard to "get better" until a person properly grieves a loss.

If you're headed into what I call "*mussar* talk" and the conversation suddenly stops — well, you know it's not good! What might be effective instead is bringing up Hashem — not *mussar*, *gam zu l'tovah* talk — just the idea of Hashem, in an

open-ended, gentle way.

As a therapist I might say, "What's going on for you about this topic?" or even, "Have others come and said to you anything about Hashem? How did that feel?" as a roundabout approach. This gives me a sense of whether they are ready for it. There is a real danger in laying it on thick, so I'll try to gauge it and proceed with caution.

MK: During a trauma, the brain does not have the capacity to process a loss immediately. I deal with



expectant mothers facing life-and-death decisions. When they're ready, they'll be looking for Hashem. I live with the belief that our Jewish sisters and brothers live a life steeped in *emunah*. They have not "checked out." We are not here to relay every *vort* we know, simply because we have the information. They will get to it, they will ask, and we will be there for them.

If they are not asking — no mother-in-law calling me will convince me that it is ever the right time for me to "talk about *emunah*" if the client herself is not bringing it up. I recall once when a woman begged me to share some of my points from my classes on *Olam Haba* after her mother's traumatic death. She was going to be alone on Shabbos and said she wanted something inspirational to hold on to. She begged and I made a huge mistake. I told her things about the *neshamah* that I usually would not say until about a year post-death. I met her months later and forced myself to ask her if I had done the right thing. After all, she had seemed to be absorbing it all, so I thought I might have gotten through. "I so was not ready to hear that then. It was too much," was her instant reply.

Again, the Torah is my guideline. Noach lost the entire world. Everybody except for seven people passed away. It was a massive tragedy. Try to think of what he was going through, and there was no *nechamah*. He tries going out and rebuilding, but it wasn't the right time and he had to go back into the *teivah* for another seven days. When he finally stepped into the world and looked around, the *passuk* says "*Vayinachem Elokim*" — and Rashi says there, what does *vayinachem* mean?

Vayinachem is a *lashon* of reframing. He was ready to form a new perspective. *Nechamah* means that he was able to reframe in his mind and say, wait one second, let me look at this a different way. People need time to process. These people are *emunah*-based people, they say *Modeh ani* every morning, they were raised by parents, they've gone to Torah schools, they know the *hashkafah*, and they don't need us to push it on them. When they are ready, they will pull it out of their own toolbox or ask for it.

ES: Can I sort of push back a little bit on the concept of time? Certainly, what you said about the brain's inability to process and think immediately following the tragedy is very profound. A person needs time to feel it. But I wonder, number one, how *much* time is enough time? I am uncomfortable with just waiting for the person to bring it up, because my thoughts are: Are we delaying bringing it up because *we* are avoiding it?

When we seem overly concerned with "how much time has passed" and "why isn't the person better?" perhaps it's because it is uncomfortable for us and brings up conflicting, embarrassing feelings for us. On the other hand, are we letting it go for too long because we are hiding behind "when they are ready, they'll come to us"? As a therapist or parent — if the discomfort is there — my job is to invite the person hurting to talk to me about it, even if it's

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hard for me. So, the second tricky part is that if I don't bring it up, maybe it will never happen.

SRK: To piggyback off that, I also think it's important to note: What sort of position do I hold here? Am I the teacher? The therapist? A trusted mentor? A married sister-in-law? It's about asking and not telling. It's important to look at the resistance we are getting when we bring up so-called "*chizuk* talk." When we do it with respect and knowing "never ask an honest question if you can't take an honest answer," that is everything! If you may not be completely comfortable with the response, if your gut reaction is going to be "I am going to fix this," then please do everyone a favor and — don't ask it! Not how they are feeling, not about Hashem... Because often the answer will be: "I am so angry at Hashem." And you have to be okay with that.

Binah Editor: What should a layperson think about all this? Is such a person ever the right person to say something meaningful? Is there guidance we can give the average person — to give them pause — about how to respond in situations when people lash out at Hashem? Some people feel they have to stand up and respond with something like, "You can't talk like that!"

DK: Let's talk about this anger for a minute.

SRK: There is a famous story that when the Yidden of the Kovno ghetto were being rounded up, they threw their *tefillin* off the cattle cars, crying out in distress, blaming Hashem. People came to tell the Kovno Rav that his people were now non-believers, and he cried out, "*Ribbono shel Olam*, this is the greatest sign of the Yidden's steadfast beliefs! They

know this is all from Hashem, that He took away their families, not the Nazis! They are the greatest *maaminim*! They are angry at the *Yachid v'ein Yechido* Who runs the world!"

Much the same way, when Yidden cry out in pain, "Why us? Couldn't He take a more deserving person to die? I know some awful people out there... they're still alive! Why does Hashem have to take the good ones?" That is a statement of the *Yud-Gimmel Ikrim* that a person has that level of conviction, that level of vengeance, that level of strength. I challenge everyone to think: Do I really believe that Hashem is orchestrating every part of my life with the same level of conviction as a grieving individual in pain? If you can come from a place of respect and acceptance of any answer, then you have a right to ask a question. If not, follow the *nichum aveilim* guidelines: Don't talk until the other person does.

TF: Rabbi Wallerstein was once moderating a group of teenagers when one girl started to *really* let loose about her anger toward Hashem during this difficult time, using some choice words. Rabbi Wallerstein proceeded to warmly and empathetically thank her. "Thank you so much! I was thinking what I could say to the group, what proof I can give of the existence of G-d... But thank you so much, because you just proved Hashem's existence!" But it's normal and common to be angry, and people hide the anger and lash out at everyone else. If we know it's normal, we can deal with it effectively without overreacting and keep it temporary until it passes, because it does.

MK: The Torah view of support is showcased in *Tanach*, in *Tehillim*. Dovid HaMelech is crying and screaming; he said: "*Keili, Keili, lamah azavtani* — Hashem, why have You forsaken me?" Read through the story of Yosef HaTzaddik. Emotions are all validated and expressed. Nowhere does it say that the emotions were wrong or that anyone had to stop crying. The Torah gives us the space, it's only the "fix-it society," like you said, Sarah Rivkah, that dispels that. But if we tell people who want to help, like neighbors and relatives, that the Torah way





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MEN'S CORNER

moderated by:
RABBI DR. MOSHE WINOGRAD

SUNDAY

Dec 6

Mar 7



PREGNANCY AFTER LOSS

moderated by:
ARIELLA BABAD, LCSW

WEDNESDAY

Oct 28

Jan 20

Mar 24



PATHWAYS

Hysterectomy

WEDNESDAY

Oct 21

Nov 11

Dec 9

Jan 6

Feb 3

Mar 3



PAINFUL CHOICES

Termination

moderated by:
RUTH GABAY, LCSW

TUESDAY

Oct 20

Nov 17

Dec 22

Jan 12

Feb 9

Mar 9



STILL A MOTHER

Monthly Support Call

moderated by:
DVORA ENTIN, LCSW

MONDAY

Dec 14

Jan 4

Feb 1

Mar 1

Mar 22



HEARTBEATS

Baby Loss

moderated by:
CHANIE DELMAN, LCSW

WEDNESDAY

Oct 21

Nov 18

Dec 23

Jan 13

Feb 10

Mar 10

Winter Series

Comfort, Clarity, and Acceptance

Oct 19

Intro: My Emotions Count: Tending to Yourself After a Loss
Dvora Entin, LCSW

Oct 26

Understanding the Crisis Experience: Dealing with the
Impact of your Loss
Rabbi Dr. David Fox, PhD

Nov 2

Divide and Conquer: Putting Blame and Guilt in its Place
Sara Miller, PhD

Nov 9

How Many Children Do You Have? Answering Difficult
Questions
Ruth Gabay, LCSW

Nov 16

The Impact of Loss on Marriage
Faigie Singer, MSN, RN

Nov 23

Factoring a New Reality Into Normal Living
Zahava Farbman, MSW, PhD ABD

Nov 30

Facts and Statistics of Pregnancy Loss: A Medical Synopsis
Dr. Victor Rosenberg, MD

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Balancing the Equation: Addressing the Fear of Starting Over
Fran McCarthy, MS, RNC

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supports emotion, they find it easier to allow their family members to grieve without trying to stop them from going through the emotions.

If I could give one word that would be appropriate to hang up in any grieving home to help guide them in how to deal with grief, that would be PERMISSION. Give your family members the space, permission and time to express and feel any emotions that they have following a loss or trauma. You also probably need clarity about who you are in the person's life. Know what your relationship is and how close you actually are. One thing that is apparent to all of us is that *emunah* has to be a foundation of the home, because a time of crisis is not the time to start teaching it. We need to reinforce our homes and schools with *emunah* from the ground up, all the time, so it filters through when needed.

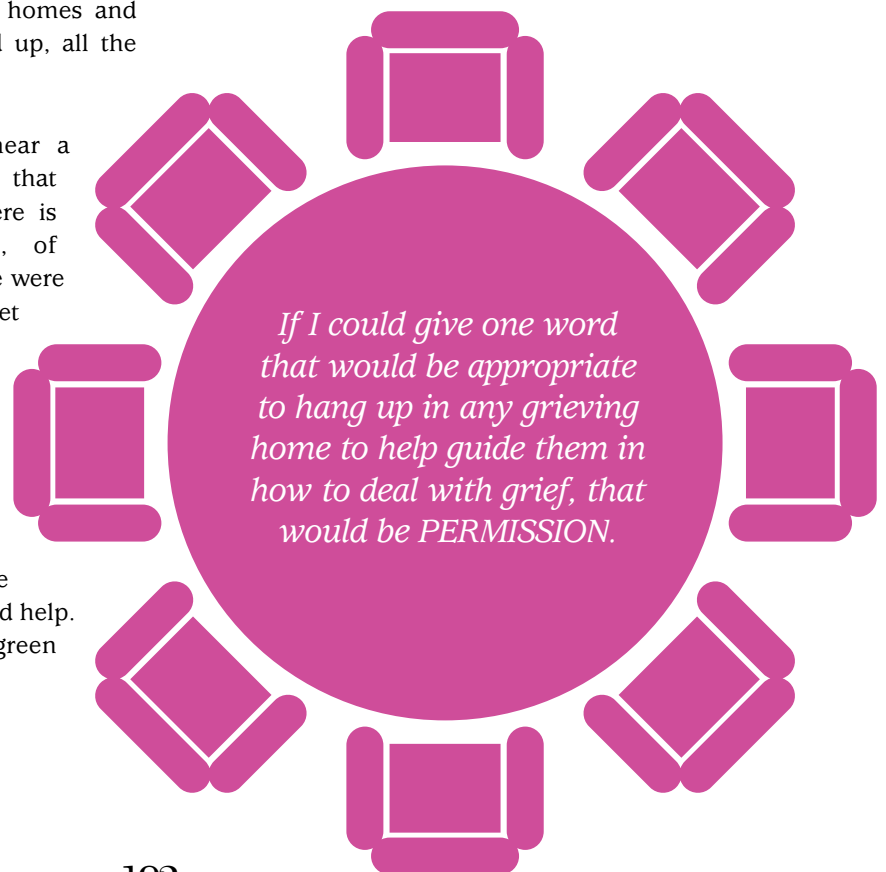
ES: We get activated when we hear a rebuttal of Torah. We have to think that perhaps if we are very defensive, there is some indication, some suggestion, of insecurity about our own *emunah*. If we were solid in our *emunah*, would we really get so upset? Do we think that the Torah is that weak that we have to come to its defense? When someone strikes out in anger, we get defensive. But if someone said the moon was made of green cheese, would we jump up with proofs? A person who lashes out at Hashem is out of reality. Empathy is the appropriate response. "*Nebach*, they need help. They think the moon is made of green cheese."

DK: Any closing words as we conclude?

MK: I experienced 19 losses, which prompted me to start my organization. My tenth loss was a stillborn baby boy the day after Shavuos, 19 years ago. This year, a day after Shavuos, I stood in the same Maimonides Hospital, where my father-in-law had just passed away from COVID two weeks before. I stood there, as they had just

opened the doors for the first time since COVID struck, letting the news of my grandson's birth wash over me.

"Hashem!" I thought as I looked at my son's healthy baby boy. "What are You trying to tell me? What is this whole circle about?" I think having gone through this I can say that being connected to Hashem is what got me through it all. Nobody fed it to me, I saw it in my parents, learned it from my grandparents, learn it with my students and children. It was a lot of self-work to be prepared for when I needed it.



Chai Lifeline: New Realities Post-COVID-19

A conversation with Rabbi Mordechai Gobioff, MSW, Chai Lifeline's National Director of Client Services

Binah spoke to Rabbi Gobioff about how Chai Lifeline responded to COVID-19 — from crisis interventions and family support services to Camp Simcha Without Borders and community resources. Normally their roster includes transportation, Shabbos packages and retreats, siblings and I-Shine after-school programs. How did corona affect them all?

Q: How did the coronavirus affect Chai Lifeline's work in the early stages?

Right away we had to figure out a way to proceed. It meant recreating our programs on every level. Since most of Chai Lifeline's interactions are face to face and either home or hospital based, they all came to a screeching halt. Immediately the importance of our Case Management model was evident. They are key to what Chai Lifeline is for a family. Their impact was felt on every level. The Case Managers reached out to their families in a very strong Zoom-based, text/email/Whatsapp-based way, to find out what the family's new needs were, besides the ongoing medical situation they were supporting.

Q: What were some of the first changes you implemented in the early stages?

Project Chai immediately launched responses to the different populations such as to the Chassidish yeshivos etc. There were videos created for the Yiddish-speaking public and interactive games scheduled. We publicized video recordings from therapists and personalized messages from popular Jewish entertainers. We had 2-3 different daily presentations on our website that garnered a lot of

excitement. Our donated arts and crafts kits arrived in time to be mailed out to hospitals and families in lockdown and continued to entertain kids throughout the summer months.

Q: What was it like around Pesach time at your headquarters?

For Yom Tov we sent meals to homes and eased expenses with financial stimulus of our own. COVID created unique job challenges, and we sought to eliminate that burden. For Chol Hamoed we usually host Big Brother & Big Sister Programs, so we connected via Zoom to maximize the facial contact between volunteers and 'their kids.' We even had creative volunteers showing up on kids' front lawns!

Q: How did Camp Simcha Without Borders operate?

It was so refreshing to see the staff jump in with the logistics. We realized that we couldn't reach most of our children with large scale events because of government restrictions. Instead, we took the best of Camp Simcha staff and counselors and sent them out to assist with the regional programming locally.

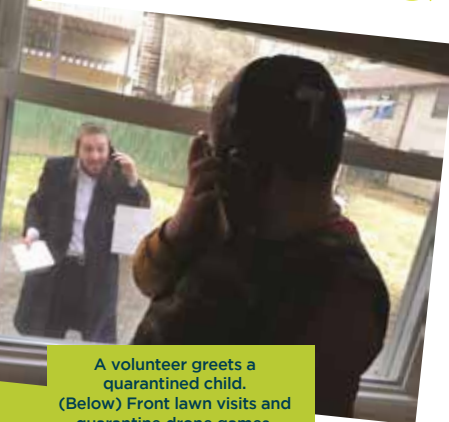
This boosted the creative energy (think drive-bys) in all our towns throughout the U.S., and this way we ended up reaching almost triple the number of kids we would cater to in a typical summer. Of course, this was all done within the guidelines of our CDC-based training.

Q: How did Project Chai support children transitioning to school in September who might have experienced familial loss due to COVID-19?

Our teacher training services covered the spectrum from Chabad to the OU, RCA to *heimishe*. We conducted over 100 training sessions in community schools for principals and teachers. On the home front we tripled our interactions as the children reintegrated. From coast to coast, as much as our families were isolated, we were all connected.

May the *Shomer Yisrael* protect us all.

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A volunteer greets a quarantined child. (Below) Front lawn visits and quarantine drone games.



A Chai Lifeline volunteer delivers meals to a hospital.

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SRK: If you notice, it's always about reigniting! We are a nation of believers; it's not about igniting. We are not starting from nowhere, though sometimes it will restart from a different place. When people shut down emotionally, sometimes they shut down their connection to Hashem, too. Sometimes they are just avoiding emotion altogether. I think it's important to point out that *davening* is not only from a *siddur*, and though it may not look like "connection" to you, Hashem knows what the relationship is like. I think it's important to realize that the *siddur* is only one tool. When it comes to kids and teens especially, we have to know that the externals, the *shuckeling* etc., are not necessarily deep-rooted, and the opposite is true as well. *Tefillah* is not always what it looks like to others.

ES: I am reminded of a story when my wife told me that I was being too hard on my 10-year-old son. I wanted to rush in and apologize when I realized she was absolutely right. But if you think about it, kids are uncomfortable when adults apologize; they squirm and look away. So, I realized I just wanted to get rid of this really yucky feeling I was left with. But my kid — he just needed to see change, for me to commit to changing my behavior, not an apology. So sometimes we have to sit with our feelings and really think: Am I just alleviating my guilt? Am I committed to changing my behavior, or is it easier just to rush in and apologize to alleviate my discomfort? I don't want to feel this way, I want my guilt to just go away... That is my takeaway. I think if we do that, we can avoid a lot of these scenarios we talked about where well-meaning people do more harm than good.

TF: When my brother Rabbi Lish was *niftar*, leaving a family of six young *yesomim*, everyone was worried about my 8-year-old nephew, who was a handful. Everyone who came cried together with the young *almanah*. "What is going to be with Leibish?!" Now he is a talented *mechanech* and everyone knows what happened to Leibish Lish! Hashem is the *Avi Yesomim*! ●



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