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UNDERSTANDING HOW MENTAL ILLNESS IN A FAMILY AFFECTS A CHILD'S WELL-BEING

RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS AND SYNAGOGUES AS SOURCES OF SUPPORT, HOPE AND INSPIRATION FOR CHILDREN

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for Master of Arts in Religious Education Degree

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SUMMARY

My goal in writing this thesis is twofold. First, I hope to raise the awareness of religious school staff and the synagogue of how mental illness in a family can affect the well-being of a child. Second, I demonstrate why and how religious schools and synagogues can be sources of support, hope and inspiration for children.

The thesis is divided into two parts. Part one describes:

- how mental illness is understood by American society and Judaism;
- what our obligations are, as Jewish educators, to support children living in homes where a family member is mentally ill; and
- the kinds of experiences that Jewish educators can offer to provide these children with a safe, loving and supportive environment where they can learn and grow as individuals and Jews.

This section includes an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion and a bibliography. I have used primary and secondary source material from books, articles and the Internet, as well as conversations with people, fictional stories and tales.

Part two consists of four workshops for supplementary school staff. In these workshops teachers will:

- learn what mental illness is and how it can affect a child's well-being;
- learn how these children may behave in the classroom;
- identify the Jewish values that they want to convey to children by their actions and words;
- identify Jewish values that are helpful to support these children in their growth and development as people and Jews; and
- plan how to incorporate these values into actual classroom work.

This section includes an introductory poem; material explaining the rationale, scope, structure and educational underpinnings for the workshops; the workshops themselves; and a bibliography. I have used books, printed articles and material from the Internet concerning Jewish values, mental illness, curriculum development, classroom management and child development.

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INTRODUCTION

Children who participate in our synagogue schools, like adults, are affected by their social, emotional, physical and economic environments. Many children in our programs have difficulty connecting to and fully participating in learning activities for two basic reasons. First, they are distracted or adversely impacted by something going on in their lives either personally or with their families. Second, by themselves children have limited resources to address these problems. Living in a home where a parent or sibling has a mental disorder is one significant but largely unrecognized challenge that can impact negatively upon a child's ability to learn and participate in our programs.

In this thesis I will demonstrate why Jewish educators must reach out to support children in synagogue supplementary schools who face this particular challenge and I will suggest how we can do so. I have chosen this issue not only because I have come from such a home and, therefore, it is of interest to me, but also because I have learned that my experience is far from unique. Research studies indicate that one in five children in a class could be affected by someone who is challenged by a mental disorder and almost nobody is talking about this phenomenon.[1] Studies have also shown that Jews have one of the highest rates of mood disorders in the country.[2] My premise, therefore, is that educators need to become aware of how these children are affected by mental illness, who these children might be in our classrooms and what we can do to support them in their growth as people and Jews.

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[1] Janet Susin and Lorraine Kaplan, *Breaking the Silence Tool Kit, A How to Guide to Bring Mental Illness Education to Schools in Your Community*, http://www.btsjessonplans.org., 25.

[2] Richard F. Address, ed., Introduction to *Caring for the Soul, A Mental Health Resource and Study Guide* (New York: UAHC Press, 2003), vii.

Why is the supplementary school an appropriate venue to address this issue? Simply put, Jewish educators are in a unique position to offer support to these children because an important goal of our programs is to integrate the values of Jewish tradition into our lives. By modeling Jewish values, making ourselves available to listen to children's concerns and helping them make meaningful connections between Judaism and their lives, I believe that we can offer children positive, concrete ways to deal with the challenges that they face.

I will attempt to answer the following questions in my thesis. First, what are our obligations, as Jewish educators, to support children in our synagogue schools who are living in a home where a family member has a mental disorder? Second, how can a teacher recognize that a child needs help? Third, what can the teacher, school and the synagogue do to provide a safe, supportive environment for that child to learn, grow and reach out for further help? My thesis will address these questions in two parts. In the first part I will discuss:

- how mental illness is understood by the secular community and by Judaism;
- the prevalence of mental illness in American society today;
- what our obligations are as Jews to help these children;
- what a child is likely to experience growing up in a home where a parent or sibling is mentally ill; and
- what kinds of experiences can help these children feel better about themselves as well as support their personal and Jewish growth.

The second part of my thesis consists of a series of workshops for staff who are teaching children, ages five through thirteen, in a synagogue supplementary school. Initially the workshops will: advise staff to assume that one or more of their students may be affected by a mentally ill family member; train staff to identify the kinds of behaviors that indicate children may be facing this challenge; and provide staff with appropriate

ways to respond to these children. Then the workshops will suggest resources and activities for how teachers can convey Jewish values to support these children in their classrooms.

From the outset I want to make clear that many of the behaviors exhibited by these children are not unique to facing the challenge of living with a mentally ill parent or sibling. Similarly, many of the responses suggested may be helpful and of value to children facing other challenges or no challenge in particular. Nevertheless, I believe that it is important to address this issue because the stigma associated with mental illness has made it very difficult for children coming from such homes to get the kinds of support that they need. The support that Jewish educators give will be most effective, therefore, if we are aware of the issues that challenge these children and are prepared to address them.

PART I.

UNDERSTANDING HOW MENTAL ILLNESS IN A FAMILY AFFECTS A CHILD'S WELL-BEING

RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS AND SYNAGOGUES AS SOURCES OF SUPPORT, HOPE AND INSPIRATION FOR CHILDREN

CHAPTER I

MENTAL ILLNESS: HOW DOES AMERICAN SOCIETY UNDERSTAND IT? HOW OFTEN DOES IT STRIKE? HOW DOES STIGMA AFFECT THE FAMILY AND INDIVIDUAL?

How we understand a problem shapes how and why we respond to it. To understand why Jewish educators need to support children in synagogue programs who are at risk because a family member is mentally ill, it is important to have a basic understanding of what mental illness is from both a secular and Jewish perspective.

Causation and Prevalence

In the secular community, the term mental illness is used to identify a group of disorders that affect the brain and can cause severe disturbances in thinking, feeling and/or relating to others.[3] When these disorders are in an active phase, they can substantially diminish a person's capacity to cope with the ordinary demands of life. They may affect every aspect of functioning, including behavior, thoughts and feelings.[4]

Mental illness may be a temporary phenomenon, lasting only for weeks or months, it may occur in cyclical episodes, it may last for years, or it may last for the duration of a person's life.[5] We know that mental illness affects people of all ages, races, and religions regardless of income or manner of upbringing.[6] While we do not know exactly what causes mental illness, we know that it is not caused by a person's character.[7]

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[3] Ibid., 38.
[4] Jennifer Shifrin, *Pathways to Partnership: An Awareness & Resource Guide on Mental Illness for the Jewish Community,* 3[d] ed. (St. Louis, Mo.: Pathways to Promise: Interfaith Ministries and Prolonged Mental Illness, 1991), 2; Diane T. Marsh, Ph.D., and Rex M. Dickens, Introduction to *Troubled Journey, Coming to Terms with the Mental Illness of a Sibling or Parent* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, Inc., 1997), xxv; The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill ("NAMI," "Inform Yourself About Mental Illness," http://www.nami.org/Content/NavigationMenu (1997-2006).
[5] Address, *Caring for the Soul,* 39.
[6] Shifrin, *Pathways to Partnership,* 2; NAMI, *Inform Yourself About Mental Illness.*
[7] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* xxv.

We also know that a person's attitude and will-power have some effect on how a person responds both to the illness and treatments. For example, a person with schizophrenia may not have control over whether he experiences hallucinations, but he does have control over whether he takes his medication, as prescribed, to limit their severity and/or occurrence. Moreover, through therapy, he can learn how hallucinations affect his brain and how he can respond when they occur, notwithstanding how "real" the experience may feel at the time.

The current consensus among medical practitioners and researchers is that mental disorders are biologically based diseases that affect an organ of the body, just like cancer, lung or heart disease. In the case of mental disorders, the organ affected is the brain.[8] Heredity, a weakened immune system, viruses, extreme environmental stress and recreational drugs may be contributing factors to the onset of mental illness.[9] We know that early identification and treatment play important roles in potential recovery and, at the very least, protecting the brain from further harm related to the course of the illness.[10] Depending upon the disorder, medication and/or therapy can be extremely important in helping those with mental illness manage their disease so that they can function within the family and the world.[11] Similarly, how the affected person and his family choose to respond to this disability often makes a significant difference in how effective the treatments are in helping that person manage his symptoms, enjoy life and function in positive and meaningful ways in his community.

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[8] Victoria Secunda, *When Madness Comes Home* (New York: Hyperion, 1997), 37; Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* xxv; Susin and Kaplan, *Breaking the Silence Tool Kit,* 19.
[9] Secunda, *When Madness Comes Home,* 37-39; Shifrin, *Pathways to Partnership,* 2.
[10] NAMI, *Inform Yourself.*
[11] Rebecca Woolis, MFT, *When Someone You Love Has a Mental Illness, A Handbook for Family, Friends and Caregivers,* rev. ed. (New York: Jeremy Tarcher/Penguin, 2003), 25; Susin and Kaplan, *Breaking the Silence Tool Kit,* 19-20.

Mental illness is second only to heart disease as the leading cause of disability in this country and worldwide.[12] One in four American families is affected by mental illness.[13] While research indicates that approximately 54 million American adults, i.e., 22.1% of our adult population, suffer from a mental disorder in any given year, fewer than eight million of these people seek treatment.[14] The statistics concerning children with mental disorders are particularly disturbing because, unlike adults, they are rarely in a position to make treatment decisions for themselves. One in five children under the age of eighteen has a diagnosable mental, emotional or behavioral disorder, and up to one in ten may suffer from a serious emotional disturbance.[15] Notwithstanding these numbers, only 50% of children and adolescents who suffer from mental illness will receive treatment. This lack of treatment most often becomes apparent in poor classroom performance and poor peer relationships.[16]

It is clear, therefore, that many of the children in our synagogue programs are living in homes where a parent or sibling has a mental disorder, many of whom are not receiving treatment. For children who are growing up in homes where there is mental illness, there is often anger, fear, confusion and unanswered questions about their own well-being and value, as well as that of the ill family member. It can be comforting and supportive to these children to know and experience that they are loved and cherished by God and are also loved, valued and respected by the Jewish community, including their

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[12] Susin and Kaplan, *Breaking the Silence Tool Kit*, 9.
[13] Shifrin, *Pathways to Partnership*, 2.
[14] National Institute of Mental Health ("NIMH"), "*Statistics,*" http://www.nimh.nih.gov/healthinformation/statisticsmenu.cfm.
[15] National Mental Health Association ("NMHA"), "*Mental Illness and the Family: Mental Health Statistics,*" http://www.nmha.org/infoctr/factsheets/15.cfm.
[16] Susin and Kaplan, *Breaking the Silence Tool Kit, 25.*

teachers. This is important for all children but it is particularly important for those who live in a home where these sentiments are not expressed clearly or at all.

The Different Mental Disorders

The most prevalent and disabling of mental disorders are clinical depression, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.[17] Clinical depression is characterized by the following signs and symptoms that manifest themselves for a minimum of two weeks at a time:

- persistent sad, anxious or "empty" mood;
- feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism;
- feelings of guilt, worthlessness or helplessness; and
- loss of interest or pleasure in activities or interests that were once enjoyed.[18]

People who suffer from clinical depression may also exhibit changes in weight or appetite, difficulty sleeping, decreased energy, difficulty making decisions and recurrent thoughts of death or suicide.[19] Clinical depression affects approximately 18.8 million American adults annually, i.e., 9.5% of the population.[20]

Bipolar disorder, also known as manic depression, causes shifts in a person's mood, energy or ability to function that are more severe than the normal ups and downs that people experience in life. More than two million American adults, i.e., approximately one percent of the population age eighteen and older, have bipolar disorder in any given year.[21] The signs and symptoms for somebody in the depressed phase of the disorder are those of somebody with clinical depression. The signs and symptoms for somebody experiencing a manic episode include:

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[17] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* xxv.
[18] NIMH, "*Depression,*" http://www.nimh.nih.gov/healthinformation/depression.cfm.
[19] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* xxvii; Shifrin, *Pathways to Partnership,* 4.
[20] NIMH, "*Bipolar Disorder,*" http://www.nimh.nih.gov/healthinformation/bipolarmenu.cfm.
[21] Ibid.

- increased energy, activity and restlessness;
- excessively "high" or euphoric mood;
- extreme irritability;
- racing thoughts, talking very fast and jumping from one idea to another;
- difficulty concentrating;
- needing little sleep;
- having unrealistic beliefs in one's abilities and powers;
- exercising poor judgment. For example, this may include going on wild spending sprees or engaging in foolish business ventures;
- exhibiting significant changes in one's usual behavior;
- abusing drugs, particularly cocaine, alcohol and sleeping medications;
- provocative, intrusive or aggressive behavior;
- rapid switch to severe depression; and
- denial that anything is wrong.[22]

Schizophrenia, which affects approximately one in a hundred or 3.2 million Americans, is characterized by social, behavioral, emotional and cognitive symptoms that may impair functioning in the areas of work, school, relationships and self-care.[23] Symptoms for schizophrenia are characterized as either positive (characteristics that are present but should not be), or negative (the absence or decline of normal functions).[24] Positive symptoms include:

- hallucinations, where one senses phenomena that are not there. Hallucinations can be auditory, visual or tactile, e.g., hearing voices;
- delusions, where one misinterprets perceptions or experiences, e.g., the belief that one is being spied on by the government;
- disorganized thinking or speech, where one goes from topic to topic without any coherent connection, or answers a questions with a totally unrelated response; and
- bizarre or grossly disorganized behavior, e.g., where one wears inappropriate clothing, has poor personal hygiene or is unable to engage in basic, simple life tasks.[25]

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[22] Ibid.; Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* xxviii.
[23] Ibid., xxvi; NIMH, "*Schizophrenia,*" http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/shizoph.cfm.
[24] Ibid., xxvi; Margaret J. Brown and Doris Parker Roberts, *Growing Up With a Schizophrenic Mother* (Jefferson, N.C.: 2000), 17-18.
[25] Brown and Roberts, *Schizophrenic Mother*, 17-18; NAMI, "*Schizophrenia.*"

Negative symptoms include:

- apathy,
- inability to follow through on tasks and poor concentration,
- inability to experience pleasure or enjoy relationships,
- inability to express or feel emotions,
- withdrawal,
- deterioration of personal appearance and hygiene,
- poor reasoning and
- poor memory.[26]

Two other types of mental disorders are dementia and anxiety disorders. Anxiety disorders affect approximately 8.3 % of Americans and include phobias, panic disorders and post–traumatic stress disorder. Alzheimer's Disease, a form of dementia, affects approximately 15% of the population over the age of 65.[27]

[26] Ibid.; Ibid.; Shifrin, *Pathways to Partnership*, 5.
[27] Shifrin, *Pathways to Partnership*, 6.

How Stigma Has Affected American Families with a Mentally Ill Member

The New Oxford American Dictionary defines "stigma" as "a mark of disgrace, associated with a particular circumstance, quality or person." Published as recently as 2001, the very example of stigma that this dictionary chooses to give is "the stigma of mental disorder." Stigma is understood as society's way of protecting itself against a falsely conceived danger. Notwithstanding the diversity of people and ideas that make up our society, Americans have difficulty accepting, much less welcoming, people who look, behave or think differently from the culturally defined norm.[28] When people are fearful of or threatened by such differences, stigma operates to legitimize the humiliation, ridicule and dehumanization of those who possess the culturally determined unacceptable trait.[29] In the case of mental illness, the sources of stigma include a lack of understanding of the disorders; our culture's devaluation of any member of society who needs help and has difficulty measuring up to the high levels of expected success; and the frightening and disparaging portrayal of the mentally ill by the mass media, which leads to general fears of violent or deviant behavior, injury, or contagion.[30]

It is only in the past twenty years that American medical professionals and mental health advocates have begun to understand mental illness as a "no fault" brain disease, and to believe that many people can live meaningful and productive lives in society when they have adequate and appropriate treatment. Prior to World War II, the treatment of choice for most Americans with mental illness was to segregate them from society by institutionalizing them in psychiatric hospitals and insane asylums. Misunderstanding,

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[28] Woolis, *Someone You Love*, 15.
[29] Phyllis Vine, *Families in Pain, Children Siblings, Spouses and Parents of the Mentally Ill Speak Out* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), 227.
[30] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey*, 29.

fear, and shame about many of the behaviors exhibited by the mentally ill were the motivations underlying isolating these people.[31] During this period, families had little or no role in the treatment process and were often blamed, in whole or part, for causing the illness. As a result, many families chose to cut off contact with their mentally ill family member, and some of the mentally ill chose to cut themselves off from their families.[32]

After World War II, several factors led to the first wave of deinstitutionalizing the mentally ill. These included: advances in psychopharmacology, resulting in the control of some of the most disabling and disruptive symptoms; the development of more effective talk and behavioral therapies; the rise of the community mental health movement, led by families who were seeking more humane treatment for their loved ones; economic considerations; and the civil rights movement.[33]

A second wave of deinstitutionalization took place between 1963 and the mid 1980's. The two primary goals during this period were to transfer people from state hospitals to community-based programs and to provide early treatment for people in order to prevent or limit institutionalization of new patients. The goals were not satisfactorily achieved. The pervasive negative attitude about mental illness that existed at all levels in society made this an unpopular issue to address. As a result, insufficient funding was allocated to provide the resources for adequate community based care. In addition, many mental health professionals continued to believe that mental illness was caused by dysfunctional behavior in families. In response, many families distanced themselves from or did not cooperate with the very system of providers who were supposed to help them. Without the cooperation and support of families, whatever

[31] Ibid., 130.
[32] Ibid., 133-134.
[33] Ibid., 131.

interventions were offered were weakened if not negated.[34] All of these factors contributed to a situation where most of the mentally ill during this era ended up either among the ranks of the homeless, incarcerated or living with their families. When they lived at home, more often than not both the family unit and the person with the disorder were isolated from the community due to shame, guilt and fear.[35]

At present, the goals of mental health professionals and advocates in the United States are twofold. First, they want to develop a comprehensive, humane system of mental health care that will empower people with mental disorders to live meaningful lives in their communities. If successful, people with mental illness will be able to get the treatments that they need within their communities, they will be treated with dignity and respect, and they will have significant opportunities to contribute their talents and knowledge to the community.[36] Second, mental health professionals hope to work collaboratively with those who have mental disorders and their families in order to address all of the differing needs.[37] This approach makes sense, because it is estimated that as many as two-thirds of the mentally ill who are discharged from psychiatric hospitals following treatment return to live with their families.[38]

Community based organizations such as the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill ("NAMI") are working hard to achieve these goals. NAMI, organized in 1979, is an alliance of families, mental health professionals and consumers of mental health services. NAMI provides information about mental illness as well as local health and legal resources. It also runs support groups for individuals and family members, offers

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[34] Ibid., 131, 133.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid., 131-132.
[37] Ibid., 133-134.
[38] Vine, *Families in Pain,* 157.

programs for communities and schools to educate people about mental illness, and offers programs in schools and the community to combat stigma. NAMI now has chapters in every state.[39]

The work that NAMI does is critical, because the stigma associated with mental illness is still prevalent in our society, particularly concerning behaviors associated with the acute phases of certain disorders such as hallucinations, delusions and mania. As recently as 1986, the Department of Health and Human Services reported the following findings concerning stigma and mental illness in American society.

- Americans think that the two worst things that can happen to them are leprosy and insanity.
- When asked to rank twenty-one categories of disability from the least offensive to the most, respondents placed mental illness at the bottom of the list.
- Ex-convicts are ranked higher on the ladder of acceptance than former mental patients.
- Almost all Americans view those with mental disorders as "fundamentally tainted and degraded."[40]

The findings were consistent regardless of age, education, socioeconomic status, intelligence or geographic location of the respondents.[41]

The stigma of having a mental disorder adversely impacts not only the individual with the disorder, but also that person's family and society, including mental health professionals, law and policy makers.[42] For example, it may cause those with the disorders to refuse to acknowledge the problem or, if they do, to refuse to seek treatment in response to feelings of guilt, shame and/or fear of social isolation, economic discrimination or other forms of victimization.[43]

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[39] Ibid., 227; Woolis, *Someone You Love,* 140-141; NAMI, "*About NAMI,*" http://www.nami.org.
[40] Shifrin, *Pathways to Partnership,* Introduction.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Secunda, *When Madness Comes Home,* 302.
[43] Woolis, *Someone You Love,* 15; Susin and Kaplan, *Breaking the Silence Tool Kit,* 25-26.

When families feel shame and guilt, they often deny or hide the problem, fearing that extended family, friends and society will judge them harshly or discriminate against them and their loved one if their secret becomes known.[44] The results of denial, however, are devastating. It prevents the family from getting the help needed by both the ill member and the family which, in turn, precludes the family from coping effectively with the myriad of challenges that they must face.[45] Children who grow up in home where a family member is mentally ill often feel isolated from their peers, because they are embarrassed by and ashamed of the person's behavior or appearance and, at times, how their family copes with its problems. These children often struggle with feelings of ambivalence and guilt about wanting to protect their family and its secret on one hand, and wanting to grow up in a "normal" family on the other.[46]

It is well known that the most effective ways to combat stigma are through education about mental illness as well as exposure to and experience with those whom we fear.[47] It is painfully clear that, notwithstanding a medically enlightened view of mental illness that has begun to develop in our society, the basic social-emotional response of the community, including the synagogue community, is still negative and unsupportive. The many children in our synagogue programs who are living with mental illness in their homes need help. Judaism, through the synagogue school, can offer help and hope to these children and perhaps to their families as well. As Jewish educators, we cannot close our eyes to this problem.

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[44] Secunda, *When Madness Comes Home,* 121-122, 300; Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 59.
[45] Ibid., 300; Ibid., 31.
[46] Ibid., 59; Woolis, *Someone You Love,* 128.
[47] Woolis, *Someone You Love,* 202; Secunda, *When Madness Comes Home,* 300; Susin and Kaplan, *Breaking the Silence Tool Kit,* 9-10.

CHAPTER II

HOW BIBLICAL AND RABBINIC JUDAISM VIEW MENTAL ILLNESS

Judaism has a long history of recognizing mental illness that dates back at least as far as the Bible. The Bible limits its treatment of this subject almost exclusively to observations of the phenomenon and attributing causation to God. In contrast, the Rabbis were more concerned with how the mentally ill person fit and functioned within the community. As such, they focused on how to determine who was mentally ill and what legal consequences flowed from that determination for both the affected individual and the community.

Stories in the Bible demonstrate that its authors were unequivocally aware of mental illness in the community. The authors identified the mentally ill by several specific behaviors and observed that symptoms were generally intermittent. Like other events or illnesses for which there was no observable explanation, the authors of the Bible claimed that mental illness was a punishment from God.

One of the earliest references to mental illness appears in Deut. 28:28. It states that, "[T]he Lord will strike you with madness ["*b'shigaon*"], blindness and dismay." Taken out of context, the statement appears to be an arbitrary and harsh punishment to be executed by an all-powerful God. Read in context, I think that the statement can be understood differently. It fits in not only with people's understanding of their world, but also with the leaders' perceived needs of the community at that point in time.

Historically, Moses and the elders are addressing the entire community right before the Israelites enter the Promised Land. After reminding the people of the covenant that they just recently entered into with God at Sinai, the leaders give the people a two-

part warning. The people are told that they have free-will to choose whether or not to follow God's commandments. Whether their lives will be blessed or cursed, however, will be determined by that choice. Numerous blessings and curses are spelled out, including madness, all of which were known to people living at that time.[48] The leaders recognized the people's frailties, including the most recent Golden Calf incident, and the challenges that they faced ahead, including the fact that they would be losing Moses, their longtime leader. The blessings and curses were all part of a motivational speech to prepare the community for becoming a nation. I believe that the authors saw how mental illness affected a person's personality and ability to function, they understood it as a curse and hoped, at least in this address, to offer the Israelites a way to prevent this tragedy from happening to them.

Subsequently, the Bible includes a handful of instances where mental illness is observed in certain leaders. The classic example is King Saul. The text tells us that Saul lost his kingship because he disobeyed a direct command from God. Instead of killing all of the Amalakites and destroying all of their property, Saul spared both the life of King Agag and the best of his possessions. After this, Saul was stricken with mental illness.[49] Based upon the behavior described in the text, scholars have speculated as to whether Saul suffered from paranoid schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.[50]

The Bible describes Saul as "raving" ("*yitnabey*") when the "evil spirit" ("*ruach ra'ah*") of God gripped him.[51] The word "*yitnabey*" literally means "prophesied." The word "*ruach*" refers to a volatile mental state that that fully occupies a person's

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[48] Deut. 28:15-45.
[49] 1Sam. 15.
[50] Address, *Caring for the Soul,* 4; Shifrin, *Pathways to Partnership,* 19.
[51] 1Sam. 18:10-12.

consciousness and can be either positive or negative.[52] Thus, we learn that the Biblical authors were aware that behavior alone does not constitute mental illness. They distinguished between the ranting of a prophet and that of a mentally ill person. The Biblical authors were also aware that soothing music could reduce or totally relieve this agitated state at least until the next episode struck. For example, the text describes how Saul felt better and the "evil spirit" departed from him when David played the lyre for him.[53] These verses also indicate that people recognized that the "*ruach ra'ah*" state was not constant and that Saul could apparently not prevent the onset or severity of the symptoms. Today, however, the onset and severity of symptoms can often be controlled with medication.

The Bible also portrays people as having a general lack of compassion for those afflicted, even though the occurrence of mental illness did not appear to be unusual. For example, when David tries to escape from King Akhish of Gath, he feigns madness by concealing his good sense, scratching marks on the gate door and letting saliva run down his beard. King Akhish recognized mental illness when he saw it, instructing his courtiers to get David out of his house because he did not need yet another raving madman ("*meshuga*") in his community.[54]

The Bible also gives us an example where mental illness strikes a non-Jewish leader. Nebuchadnezzar, the ruler of Persia, had a dream that came to pass. God caused him to be driven from the community, live with the beasts of the field, eat grass like cattle, be drenched with the dew of heaven, and have his hair grow wild like and eagle and his nails grow like the talons of birds. A modern understanding of Nebuchadnezzar's

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[52] Address, *Caring for the Soul,* 3-4.
[53] 1Sam. 16:14-23.
[54] 1Sam. 21:14-16.

behavior is that he suffered from paranoia and/or melancholy.[55] After seven years of living this way, Nebuchadnezzar lifted his eyes and God restored reason to him. In response, Nebuchadnezzar publicly announced what happened to him and acknowledged that God had punished him for his arrogant behavior.[56] Notwithstanding the fact that Nebuchadnezzar was not an Israelite, the Biblical authors imply that one who recognizes God will be blessed and one who turns away from God will suffer.

While I would not like to convey to children (or others) that mental illness is a punishment from God, I think that these early Biblical references to mental illness convey a twofold message that is meaningful and relevant for Jews today. First, we do not control or understand everything that happens in our lives and the lives of those we love. Second, our role as Jewish educators is to recognize the problem, and like the story of Saul, help the person to continue to function without isolating him from the community. Our role as Jews is not to place blame or further punish the mentally ill person, because we are not God. I would argue that Judaism also requires us to provide needed supports to the families of the mentally ill.

With the development of Rabbinic Judaism in the first century of the Common Era, the Rabbis recognized mental disability as an illness. It was not considered a moral fault, nor was it understood as punishment for being evil or a sign that the person was an inferior human being.[57] The Rabbis' focus was not on how to treat mental illness, but on how to treat the mentally ill person as a member of the community. Ability to participate

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[55] Julius Preuss, *Biblical and Talmudic Medicine,* trans. and ed. Fred Rosner, M.D. (Northvale, N.J. and London: Jason Aronson, Inc., 2001), 311.
[56] Daniel 4:31, 34.
[57] Eric Polokoff, "*The Shoteh in Formative Rabbinic Literature*" (ordination diss., Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, New York, 1990), 97; Elliot N. Dorff, "*The Jewish Tradition,*" in *Caring and Curing, Health and Medicine in the Western Religious Traditions,* ed. Ronald L. Numbers and Darrel W. Amundsen (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1986), 25.

and function in the community included competency to act as one's own legal agent and whether a person was a threat to himself or others.[58] While the Rabbis placed legal limits on what those identified as mentally incompetent could do, they never sought to isolate the mentally ill from the community, ostracize them or leave them to fend for themselves.[59] On the contrary, the Rabbis' goal was to support their ability to function in the community as much as possible, based upon a core Jewish belief that every human being is created *B'tzelem Elohim*, i.e., in the image of God.[60]

There are a number of words in formative Rabbinic Literature to describe different states of emotional and mental disability, but only the word "*shoteh*" is used consistently to describe long-term mental disability that has significant legal consequences under Jewish law.[61] The term comes from the Hebrew root *shin, tet, hey,* which means to roam about, go astray, to be mad, to rage, to be demented or to be impassioned. It has been translated as "imbecile, idiot or insane."[62] In *Chagigah* 3b, the Talmud identifies three specific actions that render a person *shoteh*: (i) going out alone at night in an area where people do not usually walk alone; (ii) sleeping in a cemetery; and (iii) tearing one's garments. This definition is followed by discussion as to whether just one (Rabbi Yochanan) or all three actions (Rabbi Huna) are required to make the

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[58] Address, *Caring for the Soul,* 5.
[59] Ibid., 38; Polokoff, *The Shoteh,* 97, 98, 102.
[60] Polokoff, *The Shoteh,* 102-104; Dorff, *Caring and Curing*, 25.
[61] Polokoff, *The Shoteh* 4, 9-12.

Some of the other terms, for example, include: *marah shechorah* (black bile) referring to melancholy/depression; *tipash* or *kiseel* to describe a person with a lack of mental acuity (fool); *teruf da'at*, exhibiting a temporary state of mental distress/anguish that can render you *shoteh* for that moment or the short term; and *ruach ra'ah* (evil spirit) which the Rabbis used to mean short term emotional distress, fear of the unknown or unseen, or lack of intellectual ability.

[62] Address, *Caring for the Soul,* 46.

determination.[63] Moreover, in *Chagigah* 4a, another element is added, i.e., a *shoteh* is one who destroys all that is given to him.[64] While the Talmud leaves the question unanswered, it is clear that the determination of who is a *shoteh* is based upon already demonstrated behavior that indicated to the Rabbis that the rights and obligations of those individuals needed to be spelled out.[65] Perhaps the lack of clarity reflects the Rabbis' recognition that a case-by-case analysis of all the relevant factors was needed, rather than a formula to be applied mechanically, when a determination would affect a person's overall legal rights and responsibilities in the community.

If the Rabbis determined that a person was *"shoteh,"* then that individual was deemed incompetent to act as a legal agent in civil cases, and s/he was exempt from all obligations of Jewish law.[66] Thus, a *shoteh* cannot testify in court unless he recovers, and then only about events preceding the illness.[67] If a *shoteh* causes physical injury to another, then he is exempt from punishment.[68] Moreover, the gifts, sale and purchase of goods by a *shoteh* are not valid.[69] To protect the insane person and his family, the Talmud also requires that a Jewish court appoint trustees or guardians to conserve his property and provide for his spouse and children.[70] Jewish law also precludes the *shoteh* from fulfilling *mitzvot.* For example, the *shoteh* cannot enter into a valid marriage

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[63] Nachum Amsel, *The Jewish Encyclopedia of Moral and Ethical Issues* (Lanham, Md.: A Jason Aronson Book, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1994), 160.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Polokoff, *The Shoteh,* 97, 98; Address, *Caring for the Soul,* 5, 38.
[66] Address, *Caring for the Soul,* 5; Amsel, *Jewish Encyclopedia Moral and Ethical Issues,* 160.
[67] Preuss, *Biblical and Talmudic Medicine,* 316, citing *Tosefta Sanhedrin* 5:4 and *Gittin* 2:5.
[68] Ibid., citing *Baba Kamma* 87a; Polokoff, *The Shoteh,* 102-103.
[69] Address, *Caring for the Soul,* 48, citing *Mishneh Torah: Maimonides' Code of Law and Ethics,* abridged and trans., Philip Birnbaum (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1944, 1967, 1974).
[70] Solomon B. Freehof, *Today's Reform Responsa* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1990), 12.

contract and, if either a husband or wife becomes *shoteh* during the marriage, then divorce is not possible.[71]

In his *Mishneh Torah,* Maimonides expanded the definitions of the Rabbis in the Talmud because he believed that the Rabbis' list consisted of examples, not definitive criteria. First, he included additional behaviors, such as walking naked, throwing stones, and destroying objects.[72] Second, Maimonides believed that a *shoteh* must also have a certain mental state. According to Maimonides, the Rabbis needed to inquire whether the person had lost his rational thought and was always confused in a particular area, even if he was rational in other areas.[73] Subsequently, Joseph Caro followed Maimonides' view, while others have argued that the four enumerated acts in the Talmud remain the qualifying criteria.[74]

Just as Maimonides and Caro were willing to expand traditional understandings of mental illness based upon subsequent knowledge, I believe that Jews today must use what we now know medically about mental illness to expand the ways that we support the mentally ill and their families in our communities. One way we can do this with children in our supplementary schools is by placing even greater emphasis on the Jewish values of caring, compassion and hope, and teaching them how to incorporate these values into the ways that they treat themselves and others.

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[71] Preuss, *Biblical and Talmudic Medicine, 316,* citing *Yebamot 112b, 113b and Gittin 7:1.*
[72] Amsel, *Encyclopedia of Moral and Ethical Issues,* 160.
[73] Ibid. citing *Mishneh Torah Hilchot Edut,* 9:9; Address, *Caring for the Soul,* 5; Dorff, *Caring and Curing,* 24.
[74] Amsel, *Encyclopedia of Moral and Ethical Issues,* 181, citing the *Shulchan Aruch, Chosen Mishpat* 35:8.

CHAPTER III

OUR OBLIGATION AS JEWS TO OFFER SUPPORT AND HELP TO CHILDREN LIVING IN A HOME WITH A MENTALLY ILL FAMILY MEMBER

Why should Jewish educators be concerned with this issue when they have many other pressing needs and often see children for only limited periods of time? From a secular point of view, there is a clear and significant need to take action although there is no legal obligation to do so, except in very limited circumstances.[75] *Halacha,* however, which is traditional Jewish law, unequivocally requires Jews to help others in trouble. Admittedly, *Halacha* is not binding on Reform Jews. Nevertheless, together with our tradition's ethical and moral teachings about how to treat those in need, *Halacha* offers us guiding principles for living our lives. From a Jewish point of view, therefore, we must support and help children in our synagogue schools who are often ignored, struggling or hurting for any reason, including those who have a parent or sibling with mental illness.

Several facts establish that there is a clear need for educators to act. First, the statistics discussed, *supra,* at pages 7-10, indicate that mental illness is widespread. In fact, during an introductory exercise as part of a 2006 NFTY program to raise awareness

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[75] One example of when Americans are legally required to help another is in the area of reporting known or suspected child abuse or neglect. While the subject of child abuse and neglect is not the focus of this thesis, suffice it to say that The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, promulgated in 1974 ("CAPTA"), lists and generally defines nine categories of maltreatment of children under the age of eighteen. These include: physical abuse, physical neglect, educational neglect, emotional abuse, emotional neglect, medical neglect, sexual abuse and drug or alcohol abuse. Certain people, when acting in their official capacity, are listed as mandated reporters. When these people have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, they must contact their State Central Registrar and file a report which will then be investigated by the relevant local social services agency. Teachers, school officials, social workers doctors and nurses are among those who are listed as mandated reporters.

CAPTA further requires that each State enact specific statutory definitions of abuse and neglect, as well as reporting requirements. In New York, these laws can be found in Article 6, Sections 411-428 of the Social Services Law and Article 10, Section 1012 of the Family Court Act. The New York State Central Registrar Child Abuse and Maltreatment Hotline is (800) 342-3720.

and sensitivity about mental illness, approximately 90% of the teens acknowledged that their lives were affected in some way by mental illness.[76] Second, studies have shown that Jews have one of the highest rates of mental illness in the country.[77] Third, we know that when one member in the family suffers from mental illness every person in the family suffers, either directly or indirectly.[78] We also know that the younger a child is when mental illness strikes a parent or sibling, the greater the potential impact on that child's life.[79] Fifth, we know that from early childhood through adolescence, children really need help learning how to cope with the disruption that mental illness can cause to their lives as well as to the life of their family.[80]

The basic legal obligation that Jews have to help a person in trouble comes from Lev. 19:16 which states, "do not profit by the blood of your neighbor." This has been interpreted to mean, "[D]o not stand by idly while your brother's blood is being shed."[81] The Talmud discusses this obligation and concludes that a bystander must help a person in any kind of trouble. Indeed, you may kill a person to prevent him from killing somebody else.[82] Another example provides that a bystander must help when she sees a person drowning. If she can swim, then she must jump in and try to save him; if not, she must call another to help.[83] In other words, when Jews are aware that somebody needs help, we do not have the option of looking on and doing nothing, ignoring the person, or walking away. We must do whatever we can to help.

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[76] E-Mail conversation with Lynne Butner, social worker and Director of Youth, PSWC, NFTYSW, dated May 31, 2006. Approximately 160 teens, ages 13–18, participated in the program.
[77] Address, *Caring for the Soul,* viii.
[78] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 19, 26.
[79] Ibid., 47.
[80] Ibid., 120.
[81] Amsel, *Encyclopedia of Moral and Ethical Issues,* 195: Gunther Plaut, ed., *The Torah A Modern Commentary* (New York: UAHC Press, 1981), 896, 901.
[82] Amsel, *Encyclopedia of Moral and Ethical Issues,* 195.
[83] Ibid.

This affirmative obligation to help another was codified, clarified and extended both by Maimonides and Joseph Caro. In *Hilchot Rotze'ach 1:15* of the *Mishnah Torah,* Maimonides explains that there are two general obligations to help people in need, as well as a specific obligation to help when a murder may occur. These obligations are further codified and extended in *Chosen Mishpat* 426.1 of Caro's *Shulchan Aruch.* According to Caro, the obligation provides that even a person who withholds information that could help another violates Jewish law.[84]

Our sources are replete with examples that require us to help others in need in all aspects of life. For example, Maimonides ruled that the command in Lev. 19:18, to love thy neighbor as thyself, includes caring about both the financial well being and dignity of every other Jew as if caring for oneself.[85] Jews also have an obligation to free other Jews who are being held captive illegally or because they are Jewish.[86] Jews are not even permitted to stand by idly when it comes to lost property. When we find a lost object, the Torah requires us to pick it up and return it to its owner. If that is not possible, then we must still pick it up and hold it until the owner claims his property.[87]

Thus, the obligation to help others according to *Halacha* is broad. At the very least it informs contemporary Reform Jews how important the value of helping others is within our tradition and cultural psyche. The examples demonstrate a core Jewish value expressed in the Talmud, *Kol Areivim Zeh Bazeh*, i.e., "all Jews are responsible one for another."[88] Judaism understands this to mean that every Jew feels the pain of every other Jew; therefore, we can neither ignore the problems of others nor claim that the challenges

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[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid., 196.
[86] Ibid., 198.
[87] Ibid., 238; Deut. 22:1-3.
[88] Amsel, *Encyclopedia of Moral and Ethical Issues,* 196, citing *Shevuot* 39a.

facing others do not affect us. No matter what the situation, if a Jew is in the position to help another, he must do so.[89] In contemporary terms, we are our brother's keeper.

More recently, relying upon these traditional values, both the Conservative and Reform movements have begun to address the needs of the mentally ill and their families in their communities. In 1989, the Conservative Movement issued a formal resolution announcing their commitment to work towards welcoming the mentally ill into their congregations and reducing the stigma associated with mental illness. The resolution was the result of the Movement's recognition of the numbers of mentally ill and their impact on families in their congregations.[90] In a 1990 Reform *Responsa* to a question concerning the community's "duties" towards the mentally ill, Solomon B. Freehof wrote "we must protect and help them in any way that we can."[91]

The very term "Jew" reflects the value that being part of the community includes a responsibility to care for each other. The word comes from the tribe of Judah and connotes one who, like Judah, was willing to offer himself up to save his brother.[92] Even our liturgy reflects our belief that our individual lives are integrally connected to the entire Jewish community. For example, rarely do Jews recite prayers in the first person. Instead, we offer prayers of praise, thanks and petition in the plural. We are the Children of Israel, i.e., all descendants from Jacob. Under the most ideal circumstances, we are one connected, caring, extended family.

Given the established numbers of people affected by mental illness, I believe that we must assume that at least one child in every synagogue classroom program is

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[89] Ibid., 199.
[90] Shifrin, *Pathways to Partnership*, 9-10.
[91] Freehof, *Today's Reform Responsa, 11-12.*
[92] Amsel, *Encyclopedia of oral and Ethical Issues*, 196.

personally affected by the challenge of mental illness in some way. Once we make that assumption, then I believe that Jewish educators must see themselves as part of the child's extended Jewish family and be proactive in our support for these children. Jewish educators need to create an environment that offers children opportunities to: (i) feel safe enough to establish positive, trustworthy relationships with their peers and at least one caring, competent adult; (ii) build a deep and meaningful relationship with God; and (iii) experience a Judaism that speaks to their lives. All children need these kinds of opportunities. As such, when teachers reach out to children in the classroom who may be in trouble, they become better at recognizing and giving all children more of what they need.

CHAPTER IV

SIGNFICANT FACTORS THAT AFFECT HOW A CHILD WILL EXPERIENCE GROWING UP WITH A MENTALLY ILL PARENT OR SIBLING

How a child experiences growing up with a family member who is mentally ill depends upon three broad factors: the particular child, the family's response to the challenge of having a mentally ill member, and the supports that the child has outside of the family. Each of these factors includes a number of elements, many of which overlap. Once Jewish educators understand the impact that these factors can have on a child's life, then we can begin to know what supports and activities can be helpful to that child's personal and Jewish growth and development.

The Particular Child

A child's age, stage of development and personal capacity for resilience, as well as who in the family develops the mental disorder, are all contributing factors affecting how a particular child experiences growing up in a home where there is mental illness.[93] The younger a child is when mental illness strikes a family, the greater the chance that he will experience problems.[94] Younger children are more vulnerable for two reasons. First, young children have a limited capacity to deal with the disruption that mental illness causes to family life due to their stage of physical, emotional, social and cognitive development. They are less able to understand what is happening, they may be less able to verbalize their feelings and they are more dependent on others to care for them. Younger children are more likely to believe that their behavior caused a parent or

[93] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 47; Brown and Roberts, *Schizophrenic Mother,* 67; E. James Anthony, M.D. and Bertram J. Cohler, Ph.D., ed., *The Invulnerable Child* (New York, London: Guilford Press, 1987), 219, 225-226.
[94] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 47.

sibling's illness, yet they are frightened and confused by their inability to make the person better. Young children need a stable, reliable, responsive and nurturing presence in their lives in order to thrive.[95] Second, growing up in a home with mental illness can actually interfere with a child's social, emotional and cognitive development. Young children are dependent on others to provide them with experiences to stimulate, support, solidify and extend learning in every area of their lives. As discussed in detail below, when children miss out on learning the life skills and knowledge that usually take place in a family, it affects not only the child's ability to achieve the developmental tasks for that age, but also interferes with the child's readiness to move on successfully during the next stage of development.

In contrast, the older a child is when mental illness strikes the family, the more likely it is that she had a basic foundation of love and nurturing from at least one parent before that parent became ill or preoccupied dealing with the family member who developed a mental disorder. An older child has a greater capacity for understanding what is going on and often has more opportunities to be with others outside of the home. She is in a better position to fill in what is missing in her home, by connecting to and learning from others in normal, age-appropriate activities and experiences at school or elsewhere.[96]

Certain personality traits, as well as the kinds of supports a child has in his life, contribute to a child's capacity for resilience. More often than not, resilient children seem to display one or more of the following characteristics. These are: being stubborn, insightful, creative, or independent; having a sense of humor; showing initiative when

[95] Ibid., 47; Anthony and Cohler, *Invulnerable Child,* 226.
[96] Brown and Roberts, *Schizophrenic Mother,* 67.

dealing with people or problems; and being able to form outside attachments with relative ease.[97] The kinds of external supports that contribute to a child's capacity to build and maintain resilience include whether:

- there is a well parent in the home who is able to take an active, positive role in parenting;
- there is structure and order in the home notwithstanding the disruptions caused by having a mentally ill family member;
- there are regular opportunities for children to interact and connect with other adults and peers;
- children have opportunities to pursue interests and talents outside of the home; and
- the family remains connected to extended family, friends and community rather than becoming isolated.[98]

Who in the family develops a mental disorder also affects a child's growing up experience. If it is the caretaker parent, then the child may be deprived of the ongoing guidance, nurturing and discipline that he needs to develop competence at each stage of development. This happens either when the ill parent is literally not present for significant periods of time because she is hospitalized, or when the parent is figuratively "not there" for the child, because the symptoms of the disorder interfere with her ability to function normally. If the non-caretaker parent becomes mentally ill, then many of the family roles and routines may have to change. Children may have to assume housekeeping and/or childcare responsibilities formerly handled by parents. Depending upon the circumstances, these new responsibilities may help a child develop skills and competencies leading to greater feelings of self-esteem, they may force a child to grow up too quickly, leaving him insufficient time to enjoy and learn the important tasks of childhood, or both.[99]

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[97] Secunda, *When Madness Comes Home,* 52-55.
[98] Brown and Roberts, *Schizophrenic Mother,* 67; Anthony and Cohler, *Invulnerable Child,* 225-226.
[99] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 52, 54.

If it is a sibling who develops a mental disorder then, depending upon the ages and relationship of the children, a child can lose a role model, confidante, and ally in the family unit. Children are often not given clear information about what happened to their sibling, and the changes in behavior can frighten them. They also can feel scared that what happened to their sibling will happen to them.[100] Some children develop a "survivor syndrome." They feel guilty that they are okay and, therefore, have difficulty going forward with their own lives.[101] When a sibling develops mental illness it can also change the dynamics of the well child's relationship with his parents. For example, a child may lose time and attention that he previously had with parents, because they must tend to the needs of an ill child.[102] Moreover, sometimes parents place the hopes and dreams that they had for the ill child on another child in the family. The "replacement" child then faces a struggle to be valued for his unique self.[103]

Regardless of who develops mental illness, if the disorder is severe and the ill person either does not get treatment or gives up on it, then the experience of living in a home with that family member can be unlike other traumatic family experiences, including death or divorce. Under circumstances like these, there is no real closure to the mourning that accompanies the significant changes to the affected person and the family unit. The ill person may be physically present in the home, but otherwise may be hard to relate to or even recognize.

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[100] Ibid., 49.
[101] Ibid., 53, 55.
[102] Ibid., 41.
[103] Ibid., 53, 55.

The Child's Stage of Development

There are predictable stages of social, emotional, cognitive and physical development that children go through from birth through adolescence. The basic characteristics and developmental tasks that children are going through in our synagogue schools fall into three developmental stages: young children (ages five and six); the middle school years (ages six to ten/eleven); and early adolescents (ages eleven/twelve to thirteen).[104] When events disrupt the developmental tasks of a particular stage and domain, the impact on a child's ability to function and achieve success is cumulative. If a child is unable to successfully master the learning tasks and skills for his current stage, then he will not have the building blocks to begin and achieve the tasks and skills of next stage. As a result, the child's subsequent development will be uneven and incomplete until he has the opportunity to fill in the missing gaps in his learning.[105]

Young Children

Children who have had a good start in life will have already formed secure attachments with their parents/caregivers, they will have a basic trust in their world, they will have begun to develop a sense of autonomy and they will be curious and full of energy when they begin a kindergarten or first grade program in the synagogue.[106] Five year olds are generally trusting and affectionate. They are hungry for friends and they are testing out these relationships through play.[107] At the same time, they are still dealing with aggressive and self-centered impulses.[108] It is a time when children are working

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[104] Teresa M. McDevitt and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Child Development: Educating and Working with Children and Adolescents,* 2d ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall, 2004), 18-23.
[105] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 47.
[106] Roberta Louis Goodman, "*Developmental Psychology,*" in *The Ultimate Jewish Teacher's Handbook,* ed. Nachama Skolnik Moskowitz (Denver: A.R.E. Publishing, Inc., 2003), 92.
[107] Dorothy H. Cohen, *The Learning Child* (New York: Random House, 1972), 61.
[108] McDevitt and Ormrod, *Child Development,* 19.

hard at acquiring the social skills, behaviors and values that will help them function in the world outside their home and feel that they are valued, competent people.[109] According to Erik Erikson's theory of personal and emotional development, the major developmental task for children at this stage is to achieve a measure of independence by resolving the basic tension between initiative and guilt. Positive resolution leads to a sense of purpose in life.[110]

Young children growing up in a home where a parent is or sibling mentally ill can have difficulty developing the social skills and behaviors that will help them feel like they are valued and competent people. If a parent is depressed and cannot play with, listen to, or give her child feedback, then the child misses out on developing attachments and learning behavioral cues that will help him relate to and trust others. If a parent with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder vacillates between emotionally withdrawing and overreacting, then a young child can feel confused, hurt and frightened by the behavior. When he is about to share his excitement, insights, fears, and concerns, the child never knows if his parent will respond with a flat affect or vacant expression at one extreme, or ranting, extreme irritability, or impatience at the other.[111] If it is the former, then a young child may be confused about how to act, because he will have trouble understanding what the parent really thinks, feels and wants. The child may also have difficulty developing a sense of self worth, either because he will not be able to trust what he is hearing, or because he does not receive positive feedback for his achievements and interests. If, instead, the parent's response is volatile, abusive or incoherent, then the child may feel afraid to share, connect or be honest with his parent. Alternatively, a child may feel that

[109] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey*, 48.
[110] Goodman, *Jewish Teacher's Handbook*, 92.
[111] Brown and Roberts, *Schizophrenic Mother*, 225-26.

he is somehow responsible for his parent's distress; therefore, he is bad and deserving of punishment.

Cognitively, young children learn best by using their bodies and physical senses to explore their world and then recreate it by imitating and role-playing. Thus, they need a learning environment that encourages active, purposeful play with peers, adults and materials.[112] Children at this stage have developed a basic facility with language but, understandably, they form ideas and over generalize based on their limited perception of the world. Young children use stories of heroes, villains and role models to help them determine the limits of their power, the consequences of their actions and solidify their knowledge about the world. They interpret these stories and their experiences literally. Moreover, this is a time when children are working hard to distinguish between fantasy and reality, but their feelings color their perceptions. As such, young children need adults to help them fit their feelings and experiences into a framework that will help them to develop a healthy, positive self concept and acquire accurate knowledge of their world.[113] Young children's cognitive development may well be affected negatively when they are regularly exposed to a parent or sibling whose perceptions of events and reality are distorted because of mental illness.

If the family is socially isolated and a young child has limited opportunities to interact with peers and adults, then his ability to learn social skills and information about his world will be stunted or skewed. For example, when a parent or sibling with schizophrenia has delusions or hallucinations, it will be hard for a young child to know for sure what is real. Children desperately want to trust and believe a parent, or they may

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[112] McDevitt and Ormrod, *Child Development,* 19.
[113] Ibid.; Goodman, *Jewish Teacher's Handbook,* 92, 99; Cohen, *The Learning Child,* 66-67.

look up to and want to be just like an older sibling. As such, they may imitate the behaviors that they see, and may believe that what they are being told is really happening, unless they are given guidance and support to the contrary from other competent, caring adults. On the other hand, young children may be frightened by what a parent or sibling claims to hear or see, or they may wonder what is wrong with them that they cannot hear or see these things.

Similarly, when a depressed or schizophrenic parent does not pay attention to personal grooming habits for herself or her children, then a young child will not learn these basic skills unless another adult or sibling in the home models the appropriate behavior and helps the child develop these skills. The young child does not know how to "fix" a mom who does not bathe regularly, comb her hair or dress in clothing that is clean and appropriate. Nor does she have the skills to care for herself adequately. She may feel ashamed of, embarrassed by, or angry with her mom if children at school make fun of or exclude her from play because of the way she or her mom looks. She may feel angry or hurt by peers who reject her. She may feel abandoned by a mother who is supposed to but does not care for her. Even at such a young age, she may lose hope or feel unworthy of being able to achieve competence in her world.

Around the age of six, children are in the early stages of moral and faith development. According to Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development, children at this age do the right thing both from a sense of fairness and to serve their own interests.[114] Before children can distinguish between fantasy and reality, their views of God are based upon feelings of mystery, awe and fear. They tend to obey out of fear of punishment. Once children can distinguish between reality and fantasy, they begin to see

[114] Goodman, *Jewish Teacher's Handbook*, 95.

life as more predictable. They believe that God is a fair, caring ruler who rewards those who are good and punishes those who are bad.[115] Depending upon the disorder, its severity and other available nurturing supports, children at this stage who have a parent or sibling who develops a mental disorder may feel that God hates, has abandoned or is punishing them, or they may find that God to be a loving, comforting presence in their lives.

In short, young children who are growing up in a home where there is mental illness will face significant challenges mastering the skills and competencies of this stage, unless there are other competent and loving adults to step in and provide the modeling, guidance, support and experiences that the child needs.

The Middle Childhood Years

During the middle childhood years, from ages six to ten/eleven, the focus of learning shifts from the child's home to her larger social context. The world of school and peer relationships play a dominant role in these children's development.[116] If, however, a child has not built a secure foundation of self worth, trust and basic skills, then she is not prepared to engage with the world outside of her home. She may also be too distracted or preoccupied by the problems at home to be "present" and, therefore, benefit from these new experiences.[117]

Children during this stage of development are striving to master the skills, tools, customs and knowledge of their community and culture.[118] They learn best when the

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[115] Roberta Louis Goodman, "*Nurturing a Relationship to God and Spiritual Growth: Developmental Approaches,*" in *Teaching About God and Spirituality,* eds. Roberta Louis Goodman and Sherry Blumberg (Denver: A.R.E. Publishing , Inc., 2002), 75.
[116] Cohen, *The Learning Child,* 120; Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 49.
[117] Ibid., 49.
[118] Ibid.; McDevitt and Ormrod, *Child Development,* 20.

content is connected to the reality of their lives, when the skill has observable value for them and when the style of learning is active. What and how children at this age learn is greatly influenced by:

- their interest in the subject matter;
- feelings about their personal competencies;
- their relationship to the social group;
- events at home; and
- significant events in the general culture such as disaster, war or terrorism. [119]

Having a mentally ill parent or sibling is an "event at home" that undoubtedly influences what and how a child learns, particularly in the areas of developing competencies and building peer relationships. Just "how" that influence manifests itself depends, in part, upon the child, and largely on the additional supports that she receives.

According to Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, these children are in the concrete operational stage of development. They are capable of looking at different sources, analyzing different points of view, and making an argument supported by information when they are familiar with the topic and can rely on concrete objects to bolster their reasoning.[120]

Socially, the major thrust during this period is towards peer group life. The groups generally form along sex lines, because children are preparing, in part, for adult life according to the values and attitudes of their culture.[121] It is in these groups that children: learn the rules of games and how to navigate them; display their skills; learn new competencies; and learn to cooperate and compete with each other, testing and

[119] Cohen, *The Learning Child,* 244, 252, 253.
[120] Ibid., 139-142; McDevitt and Ormrod, *Child Development,* 21; Goodman, *Jewish Teacher's Handbook,* 89.
[121] Cohen, *The Learning Child,* 232.

stretching their intellectual, social and physical capacities.[122] While children use groups as a means for seeking increased freedom from adult authority and direction, they still need and want adult acceptance, protection and help.[123]

Erickson's theory of social and emotional development identifies the major developmental task for this age as a conflict between industry and inferiority, with successful resolution leading to a sense of competence and self-esteem.[124] Children at this stage are keenly aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and their experiences lead them to develop either a generally positive (capable worthy) or negative (inept, unworthy) sense of self.[125] Factors that play into whether a child is accepted into a group include whether he is scared to try things on his own and is overly dependent on parents or other adults for approval; whether he feels confident in himself; and whether he is competent in the academic and social skills and tasks at hand.[126]

During the years from ages six through twelve, children are developing morally along a continuum. They are trying to figure out how to act in response to:

- expectations from family, peers, friends and others;
- feelings of loyalty to family peers, friends and others;
- feelings about what is fair; and
- feelings about what is right to serve one's own interests and needs.

Children's belief in God during this time, for the most part, continues to be in a powerful authority figure who is fair, caring and consistent.[127]

Children at this stage need ongoing, numerous opportunities to: be exposed to learning experiences; practice what they have learned; and receive guidance, feedback

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[122] Ibid., 220-222; McDevitt and Ormrod, *Child Development,* 21, 562.
[123] Cohen, *The Learning Child,* 135-136, 218.
[124] Goodman, *Jewish Teacher's Handbook,* 93.
[125] McDevitt and Ormrod, *Child Development,* 396.
[126] Ibid., 562; Cohen, *The Learning Child,* 134.
[127] Goodman, *Jewish Teacher's Handbook,* 95, 99-100.

and encouragement from both adults and peers. When a child at this stage of development is living with a mentally ill family member, any or all of these opportunities may be affected.

One way that children may be affected is when the family places limits on the time that they can spend with their peers. For example, if a parent cannot shop, cook, clean or care for younger children because she is too depressed to act, or cannot follow through on tasks because she is schizophrenic, then children at this age may be expected to take on responsibilities that leave them little or no time to spend with peers outside of school.[128] Some children respond to this need by becoming super achievers at home and school. They want to help and protect their families. They may also want to escape feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. Managing these responsibilities contributes to the child's sense of competence and self worth, even if it is in areas that are different from normal peer group activities for this age.[129] Other children feel a sense of conflict between their loyalty to family needs and their desire to be with friends and/or pursue their own interests. They may take on the responsibilities out of a sense of guilt but, at the same time, feel cheated, resentful, angry or depressed about what they are missing.[130] For children who are not super achievers, having these added responsibilities can adversely affect their school performance. They may be too tired or distracted by events at home to concentrate, or school may be the one place where the child can act out feelings of anger, frustration or fear. In addition, when a family wants to keep the fact of mental illness a secret, or when the mentally ill person exhibits symptoms such as

[128] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 54, 57.
[129] Ibid., 56.
[130] Ibid., 45, 51-52; Vine, *Families in Pain,* 199-200.

paranoia, then children may not be allowed to bring friends into the home or visit the homes of other children.

A second way that mental illness in the family may affect children is when they themselves choose to limit their interactions with peers. It is likely that children at this age have already internalized the stigma associated with mental illness. They are old enough to recognize that having a family member who is mentally ill makes their home life different from, and not as good as, that of their peers. These children are trying so hard to fit in with the group that the last thing that they want is to be different, particularly in a negative way. For example, when a parent or sibling suffers from depression, schizophrenia or bipolar disorder and, as a result, dresses inappropriately, talks to people who are not present, or collects and strews junk all over the house, children at this age may feel embarrassed, ashamed or humiliated by these behaviors. They may feel terrified that peers will find out about their "crazy" parent or sibling, reject them as friends and make fun of them. As a result, some children choose not to bring friends home or talk about their families. Others are afraid to reach out and connect to peers, for fear of exposing themselves and their family to ridicule.[131] These children feel like outsiders in the world and may not feel loved and protected in their homes. They run the risk of distancing themselves emotionally from people in order to protect themselves from being hurt.[132] Whether these children self isolate or are isolated by their families, they often experience painful feelings of loneliness and abandonment.

A third way that a child's growth and development may be negatively affected by living in a home where there is mental illness is when the child's parents are unable to

[131] Ibid., 171-172, 176-177, 188; Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 59.
[132] Ibid., 58-60.

provide adequate nurturing, support and guidance for him. In order to build feelings of competence and self-esteem, children at this stage need to have an adult in their lives who is a caring, regular presence in their lives. That adult can help them process and solidify the information and skills they are learning in school or other extracurricular activities; help them evaluate and resolve challenges they face in relating to peers; guide them in how they should conduct themselves and treat others; and provide them with a safe, secure and stable home environment.

When, for example, a parent with bipolar is manic, she may be too hyperactive to be able to pay attention to what a child is saying, asking or doing. She may be too irritable and impatient to spend time helping her child learn or practice skills. She may also be acting in ways that are inappropriate or dangerous. For instance, the parent may scream at people for little or no reason; laugh when her child shows her a failing report card; buy all kinds of items on the spur of the moment that the family does not need or cannot afford; drive at excessive speeds; or refuse to take her medication. When a parent behaves this way, the child may be afraid to talk to his parent much less ask her for help with anything in his life. He may not even trust any help that his parent offers. The child may feel that his home is such an unpredictable or frightening place, that he cannot rely on his parents to care for and protect him. Such a child may feel angry or defiant. If so, he may act out at school or get involved with the wrong crowd and engage in destructive behaviors. He may look for support and affirmation on the Internet, which could be dangerous. If lucky, he may get guidance and support from a teacher, coach or extended family member.

On the other hand, if a parent feels hopeless about life, or has no energy or ability to focus and follow through on tasks, then the child will not only feel that she cannot rely on her parent to help her with anything, but she may also come to feel that life is unbearably sad and that there is little or no hope that things could be different.[133] Without help, such a child will not have the confidence to participate fully in life. She may even feel unworthy of experiencing joy and success.

Children at this stage need a parent or other close adult to give them age-appropriate information about what is wrong with their parent or sibling. Children need to know that they did not cause the illness by their behavior and they cannot cure the problem by their actions or thoughts. They also need to understand that mental illness is not contagious, like a cold or the measles, so that it is safe to live in the same home and be hugged or kissed by the person with the disorder.[134] On the other hand, when children question whether they or their future children are likely to become mentally ill, because they have learned that mental disorders "run" in families, we must honestly acknowledge this fact. At the same time, we must focus on whatever positive information we can give them to minimize their fears, including statistics about inheriting particular disorders and information about early detection and effective treatments. These children also need adults in their lives who encourage them to be themselves, and help them develop positive strategies for coping with the challenges that they and their family face.

Adolescents

The major social and emotional developmental tasks for adolescents to achieve are the formation of one's personal identity; coming to terms with one's emerging

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[133] Ibid., 61.

[134] Brown and Roberts, *Schizophrenic Mother,* 46, 101, 152; Vine, *Families in Pain,* 192, 198; Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 45.

sexuality in a world of changing sex roles, values and standards of behavior; and beginning to chart one's career path.[135] Erickson defines the task as the struggle to achieve identity versus role confusion, with the successful resolution leading to the ego strength of fidelity.[136] Peer relationships are of utmost importance during the teen years. Adolescents generally spend more than half of their waking hours with their peers and relatively little time with parents or teachers.[137]

The onset of puberty is a major physical event that occurs during early adolescence. This time of enormous change in children's bodies is exciting, puzzling and disorienting. Depending upon a child's personality and the age when the changes occur, children may feel self conscious and believe that nobody else is thinking and feeling the way they are. It is helpful for children at this age to have a relationship with an adult who can be a positive mentor.[138]

Cognitively it is a time when children have an increased ability to think logically, abstractly and hypothetically. With their new abilities and idealism, children at this age believe they have the power to challenge and change the world.[139] In terms of their moral development, it is a time when peers and the peer group are the dominant influences for children. They are capable of putting themselves in the shoes of another, and they give priority to shared feelings, agreements and expectations over individual interests. It is also a time when children seek and grow in their personal relationship to God.[140]

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[135] McDevitt and Ormrod, *Child Development,* 411; Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 49-50.
[136] Goodman, *Jewish Teacher's Handbook,* 93.
[137] McDevitt and Ormrod, *Child Development,* 22, 564.
[138] Ibid., 21-22, 397.
[139] Ibid., 21-22.
[140] Goodman, *Jewish Teacher's Handbook,* 95.

During late adolescence, from the ages of 14-18, the physical changes of puberty are completed and young people come into their adult physical appearance. This is a time when young people get conflicting messages from different sources (family, friends, society, and media) about what is good and right to do with their lives and their bodies. They believe that they are capable and entitled to make their own decisions about these matters. As such, this is the time when teens wrestle with different views to achieve their own sense of identity and explore different career paths, ultimately deciding their direction in life.[141]

Teens growing up in a home where a parent or sibling is mentally ill will have a hard time achieving the developmental skills and competencies of this stage when their opportunities to be with peers are curtailed, and when they cannot rely on at least one parent to be there, when needed, to provide information, clarification, guidance or help.

Teens' need to be out of the house with peers is critical to helping them prepare for independence and adulthood. They need to spend time with peers in a number of ways, including:

- studying and working on school projects with buddies or in groups;
- socializing and learning with peers in sports, the arts or youth groups;
- socializing in groups at parties and, as they get older dating; and
- simply "hanging out" with or talking to friends.

Teens, however, even more so than children in the middle childhood years, may be needed and expected to assume significant responsibilities in the home when a parent or sibling is mentally ill[142] When these opportunities are limited or precluded due to the family's overriding needs, then teens may feel angry, resentful or depressed. These feelings get expressed in behaviors that are either externalized or internalized. Examples

[141] McDevitt and Ormrod, *Child Development,* 22, 398.
[142] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 49-51.

of externalized behavior include poor school performance, lying, stealing, abusing drugs or alcohol, or acting in ways that are aggressive, destructive or defiant. Examples of internalized behavior include withdrawing socially, feeling depressed or anxious, and developing physical ailments such as headaches, stomachaches or eating disorders.[143]

Like younger children, teens may also choose to isolate themselves from their peers. If a teen is grieving or feels chronic sorrow for the "loss" of an important relationship with a parent or sibling due to mental illness, then she may have problems forming close relationships with peers or dating.[144] Younger adolescents may feel too embarrassed, angry or humiliated by a parent or sibling's behavior and appearance to bring friends home or even risk getting close to others. For example, it would very hard for a thirteen-year-old boy to explain to teammates that his father refuses to allow him to play softball because his father hears voices telling him that the coach is the devil in disguise. Similarly, it would be difficult for a twelve-year-old girl, who is experimenting with makeup and clothes, to have her mother show up at school looking like a bag lady. Moreover, it would be hard for any adolescent to explain to himself, much less his friends, why a parent or sibling tried to commit suicide. In short, in addition to missing out on the benefits of peer relationships that are critical to their maturing, teens who are isolated from their peers run the risk of performing poorly in school, getting in trouble with the law, or punishing themselves emotionally or physically. It would clearly be difficult, if not impossible, for teens to talk about these issues with a parent who is mentally ill, when that parent's disorder is in an acute phase or the parent is not taking medication as prescribed.

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[143] McDevitt and Ormrod, *Child Development,* 388; Brown and Roberts, *Schizophrenic Mother,* 112.
[144] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 50.

In addition, the ongoing demands that mental illness places on a family can negatively affect an adolescent's dreams and plans for an education, or career. Sometimes a teen must postpone plans for schooling or career-related work opportunities if the family is in crisis and needs his help. At other times the family needs a child to be close by in order to help out. When, where and what a teen chooses to study may be dictated by the family's needs. Moreover, when the family's emotional and financial resources have been depleted caring for a mentally ill family member, a parent may be unable to provide the encouragement, assistance and/or financial support that a child needs to go forward with her plans. For example, a child's parents may not be able to help him prepare for the SATs, fill out college applications, prepare for interviews or visit schools. There are also times when the child, himself, cannot focus on what he needs to do to go forward with his studies or career plans, because he is too distracted by or worried about the family's problems. Sometimes a teen feels too guilty to leave the family behind with all of its problems and pursue his interests, success and happiness.[145]

Living with a parent or sibling who is mentally ill can also influence a teen's dreams and plans for his/her future family life. The teen years may be a time when children are vulnerable to developing a mental disorder, or it may be a time when the symptoms begin to manifest themselves. Either way, if there is already a parent or sibling in the family with a mental disorder, then an adolescent may well be afraid that s/he will also become mentally ill or could pass the disorder on to future children. As a result, teens may be afraid to get involved in a committed relationship or have children.[146] To cope with this challenge, these teens need reliable information and support from a

[145] Ibid., 50, 53, 57.
[146] Ibid., 81-84.

caring adult to help them identify any health risks that they may face, how to minimize those risks, if possible, and how they can move forward with their lives, notwithstanding the risks.

Teens may feel that they have a responsibility to care for an ill sibling once parents can no longer do so, and this can also affect a teen's plans for his/her future. Alternatively, teens who were exposed to mental illness in their early years may have problems with trust and intimacy, because of the hurt, anger and abandonment that they experienced when parents were unable to nurture and support their growth and development. Some teens may respond by becoming self sufficient so that they feel that they do not need to rely on anybody for anything. Others become overly dependent and look to be taken care of in their relationships, seeking to make up for what they missed while growing up.[147] Here, too, teens need loving, supportive adult role models to help them recognize their self worth and build positive relationships with others.

In short, a child's stage of development, combined with who in the family develops a mental disorder and the child's capacity for resilience, are critical elements affecting how a child will respond to this challenge.

How the Family Unit Responds

The second major factor influencing how a child will fare when there is mental illness in the home is how the family unit responds to the challenge. Mental illness can consume so much time and energy that there may be too little left to fulfill the needs of other family members.[148] If the family responds in any of the five following ways, then other children in the home are likely to develop problems. These include:

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[147] Ibid., 83-84.
[148] Ibid., 51.

- denying the problem or failing to seek treatment;
- not having sufficient physical and emotional energy, as well as economic resources, to adequately care for anybody except for the ill family member;
- minimizing or eliminating connections with positive supports, such as extended family, friends and community; and
- responding to the pressures and changes in family life by physically or emotionally abusing other members in the unit.

Once the symptoms of mental illness become apparent and the family has gone beyond an initial period of shock and denial, a family can respond by seeking professional help, or continuing to deny that there is a problem. If denial persists, it can take the form of outright disavowal or tacit family agreements to keep silent. Families may remain in denial for a number of reasons. They may lack information and feel scared by the ill person's behavior. They may be embarrassed or ashamed to ask for help outside of the family.[149] They may have internalized the stigma that society associates with mental illness. As a result, they may feel too embarrassed and ashamed to even acknowledge their family has this problem. They may believe that if the family "secret" becomes known, they will be shunned by their friends and community or blamed for causing the person's illness. The denial can last for months, years or a lifetime.[150]

As long as a family remains in denial, it cannot effectively cope with the problem and everybody in the family unit suffers. The person with the disorder never gets diagnosed and treated. The family often isolates itself to avoid having to deal with explaining behaviors of the ill person. Other children not only suffer from such isolation, but also learn that open, honest communication is discouraged if not forbidden.[151] If children are punished for asking questions, or are told that what they claim to see is not

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[149] Ibid., 30-31; Julie Tallard Johnson, MSW, ACSW, *Hidden Victims, an Eight-stage Healing Process for Families and Friends of the Mentally Ill* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 7-9.
[150] Johnson, *Hidden Victims*, 9.
[151] Ibid., 9-10, 127-128; Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey*, 11-12.

really happening, then they will have difficulty sharing their thoughts and feelings with others out of fear or lack of trust. They may also have problems trusting their own perceptions. For these children, it can be like living the story "the Emperor's New Clothes,"[152] except that the truth never is acknowledged and the consequences of the silence are devastating rather than funny. They know that something is wrong but, without help and support from some source, they cannot verify their instincts; nor can they learn to cope effectively with the many changed circumstances in their family. Denial teaches fear and shame.

In most cases, having a mentally ill family member disrupts the way a family has previously operated, because it must adapt its resources to changed circumstances. While the family is usually able to continue to provide basic survival needs for all of its members, such as food, clothing, shelter and healthcare, other functions, such as meeting emotional and educational needs, advocating for family members and fostering individual and family development are often negatively affected.[153] For example, there may no longer be money for tutors, music lessons, sports equipment, camp or family vacations. Sometimes the family has to move, either because they need to be closer to the healthcare providers for the ill family member, or because they can no longer afford their living circumstances

The family's ability to fulfill its nurturing function may also be severely curtailed. There may not be time to have family meals together, tell children stories at bedtime,

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[152] In that folk tale a tailor persuades the Emperor that he has made him beautiful new clothes when, in fact, he did not create a single garment. The tailor helps the Emperor to "dress" in the new clothing, and nobody in the palace is willing to speak up and tell the Emperor that he is naked. They are afraid that they will be punished. When the Emperor goes out and parades in his "new clothes," it is a little boy who points his finger and calls out "look at the naked Emperor". It is only then that others acknowledge the truth.
[153] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 20-21; Brown and Roberts, *Schizophrenic Mother,* 88.

help children with homework, listen to children, or attend events such as team games, plays, or recitals. There may be little time or energy left to help teach and support young children with socialization skills, such as how to share with others, or deal with feelings of frustration, anger and disappointment. There may be limited time to spend teaching young children living skills such as how to eat, dress or brush one's teeth. There may not be time to help older children with homework or career plans; offer them guidance about drugs, sex, safety and the internet; or teach them living skills like driving. On a day to day basis, the family may no longer have time to sit down for a meal together and connect.[154] In addition, when the caretaker parent is mentally ill, or when there is not a well functioning adult or older sibling in the home, there can be a breakdown in previously existing routines, expectations and rules, so that the home environment is unpredictable and often chaotic.[155] When this happens, children feel out of control, because they need structure and predictability to thrive. Without it, home becomes a frightening place to be.

It is now recognized that children who live in unstable homes are more successful if they have one or more supportive adults in their lives who can nurture their emotional, social and intellectual growth.[156] The most functional families try to support opportunities for children in the family to spend time with peers, pursue their interests, and connect with extended family members for holidays and other occasions.[157] In contrast, the most dysfunctional families try to cut off most contact with the outside world, by not allowing family, friends, or neighbors into their homes and by limiting their

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[154] Ibid., 21, 39; Ibid., 89-91.
[155] Brown and Roberts, *Schizophrenic Mother*, 72.
[156] Ibid., 79-81, 263.
[157] Anthony and Cohler, *Invulnerable Child*, 225-226.

children's contacts with people outside of the home.[158] Children in families like these may feel uncomfortable and unsafe anyplace. They are afraid or lack the skills to connect successfully with peers at school.

There are also times when dysfunctional families respond to the pressures of having a mentally ill family member by physically or emotionally abusing or neglecting one or more members in the family, or abusing drugs. Contrary to the popular myth portrayed by the media, it is not common for those who have a mental disorder to physically abuse others.[159] More often, physical or substance abuse occurs when the "functioning" adult feels overwhelmed or angry and does not have adequate coping strategies to deal positively with the stresses in his/her life.[160] Emotional abuse can include name calling, constantly yelling at somebody, verbally belittling or insulting somebody, or making one member of the household a scapegoat for the family's problems.[161] When children become the targets of physical or emotional abuse, not only are whatever problems they are experiencing compounded, but there are also legal issues arising out of the State's interest in the welfare of children. While this thesis does not focus on the reporting requirements of instances of known or suspected abuse or neglect, it is important for every teacher and educator to be advised of these requirements identified, *supra,* in footnote 75, page 23.

[158] Brown and Roberts, *Schizophrenic Mother,* 79-80; Secunda, *When Madness Comes Home,* 156.
[159] Secunda, *When Madness Comes Home,* 298; Johnson, *Hidden Victims,*16.
[160] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 33.
[161] Brown and Roberts, *Schizophrenic Mother,* 86; Vine, *Families in Pain,* 212-214.

Supports a Child Has Beyond the Family

The particular mental disorder that a family member develops has less effect on children in the home than whether the symptoms are chronic, the home environment is chaotic and there are other ongoing supports for these children.[162] Outside support from school, a family's religious community and support groups or therapists also help children cope with mental illness at home.[163]

School can be helpful to children when life at home is unpredictable, frightening, confusing or unloving. School is also helpful, in contrast to home life, when it offers opportunities for positive social, emotional and cognitive learning experiences. Being in a positive school environment not only provides a child with relief from the challenges of his home life, but it also gives him a chance to be part of a more normal reality. Research is replete with real life examples about how important school was in helping children from families with mental illness to feel good about themselves and life.

School can provide children with numerous opportunities to experience a sense of achievement. It is a place where they can build self confidence, self-esteem and acquire the knowledge and skills to negotiate their world. For example, when children study history and literature they can learn that others have faced similar challenges, so they are not alone. They can learn new skills and strategies for coping with challenges. They can also learn that even heroes need help. In school, children are exposed to other role models for learning social and cognitive skills while they work on building their own identity. At school children regularly have opportunities to test reality and get appropriate feedback. School is also a place where children can make friends as well as

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[162] Secunda, *When Madness Comes Home,* 57-59; Brown and Roberts, *Schizophrenic Mother,* 67, 263; Anthony and Cohler, *Invulnerable Child,* 217, 225-226.
[163] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 119.

feel affection, love and acceptance from both peers and teachers. Through these relationships, children can learn to express their feelings, trust others and value themselves.[164] In all, school can provide an environment where children have the opportunity to thrive.

Religious school can provide these opportunities and can also help a child develop spiritually. Belief in God, together with a religious philosophy about how to care for oneself and others, are recognized ways to help people respond positively to the stresses and challenges in their lives.[165] Beginning with young children, teachers can tell stories as well as share and create experiences that help them recognize that they are not alone in this world because God and God's love are always there for us. Young children can learn through experience that God's love and presence can be felt when we take the time to listen, look around or talk to God. One way for teachers to open learning about this is by sharing stories with children. For example, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso's picture book *God's Paintbrush* describes many ways that children see and feel God's presence in the world and then asks children to share their feelings, ideas and experiences of God. Lawrence and Karen Kushner's picture book *Because Nothing Looks Like God* is similar in its approach, without including questions for children's considerations. Both of these stories can be used as a springboard for discussions and activities that help children feel that God is part of their lives, they can reach out to God in many different ways and that God can be a source of love and comfort to them even when they face frightening or difficult times.

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[164] Ibid., 58, 119; Brown and Roberts, *Schizophrenic Mother,* 149-150; McDevitt and Ormrod, *Child Development,* 27, 29, 618-620.
[165] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey,* 119.

We want to convey the same message of God's love and presence to older children, although the discussions, materials, experiences and depth of exploration will be different. For example, Jewish educators can communicate to older children and teens that Judaism does not have a single doctrinal statement defining what God is, nor can human beings fully understand how God operates. Instead, Judaism concentrates on our personal and communal relationship with God. Each of us must develop our own relationship with God by working at feeling, seeing and hearing God's presence in our lives. Whether children are learning about prayer, the Bible, Jewish history, the Jewish life cycle, holidays, ritual or ethics, teachers need to help them develop their personal relationship with God and experience God in the world so that they will be able to face life's challenges with hope, courage and the knowledge that they are not alone.

When the inevitable questions come about why terrible things happen to people, or how God could allow Hitler to kill millions of innocent people, teachers must be ready to tell children that people have different answers to these questions, share some of those answers and then share their own beliefs. When teachers share different beliefs they also need to explain how those beliefs are grounded in Jewish tradition, so that children learn that there is not just one right way to understand difficult or complex ideas. For example, I would tell children who are middle school age and older that I do not believe that God causes bad things to happen like Tsunamis and diseases that cripple or kill people we love. I would tell them that I believe that nature follows its own rules and that God does not act to contravene those rules even if what happens seems wrong or unfair. As an example I would cite the discussion in *Avoda Zara 54b* of the Talmud about how planted seeds will grow even if they are stolen. For teens I might also include the example, from

the same source, that a woman may become pregnant even if she was raped or engaged in an illicit sexual relationship. In both instances the Rabbis believed that God did not cause these "unfair" or "bad" things to happen; rather, that nature was following its own course. I would also let older children and teens know that I believe that God created human beings giving us free will, so that God did not cause Hitler to kill six million Jews to punish us for our sins. If a child were to ask whether a person who commits a crime while suffering from mental illness is acting out of his own free will, I would have to first say that there is no simple yes or no answer. We would have to explore the particular circumstances and also distinguish between legal culpability and the religious concept of free will.

I believe that when teachers are willing to let children ask questions and talk about God, and are prepared to address those questions, concerns and ideas with meaningful, relevant experiences that are based in Jewish tradition, then children will feel greater reverence for God as well as the holiness and beauty in life, notwithstanding the bad things that happen. This is important knowledge for all of us to acquire in our lives, but it is particularly helpful for those children who do not experience love and the beauty of their lives in their homes, whether that is due to the problems created by having a mentally ill family member or some other reason. Religious school teachers are in a key position to help all children acquire this knowledge.

Joining a support group or participating in therapeutic counseling is another support that children can get beyond their family. Support groups and counseling give people a chance to talk about their feelings and experiences, learn that what they are going through is not unique and acquire more effective coping skills. NAMI offers

support groups for adults, children and families. Individual and family therapy are available both privately and through social service agencies such as the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services.[166] Some synagogues offer on premises space for support groups, including those sponsored by NAMI. As part of its function as a caring community, the clergy or supplementary school office can maintain a list of referral sources. These would include local agencies, organizations and therapists who help individuals and families deal with the challenge of having a member with a mental disorder.

For children who are growing up in homes where a family member is mentally ill, Jewish supplementary schools are an ideal place to get some of the supports that may be missing or limited at home. Where their home life is unpredictable, depressing or disruptive, supplementary school can offer these children a "home away from home." They can be valued members of caring community where they receive individual, positive attention in a stable, non-chaotic environment.

[166] Marsh and Dickens, *Troubled Journey, 102, 204-107*; Address, *Caring for the Soul,* 69.

CHAPTER V

HOW TEACHERS IN SYNAGOGUE PROGRAMS CAN PROVIDE A SAFE, SUPPORTIVE JEWISH LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR THESE CHILDREN

Our supplementary schools are a ready-made community to learn and practice Jewish values that teach us how to relate to ourselves and others in supportive, caring ways. In accordance with Jewish tradition, teachers can offer and foster relationships of love and respect for children as unique individuals. Teachers can also create a secure, caring community for children where they can learn to:

- connect with and trust others;
- develop a meaningful relationship with God;
- experience hope;
- receive guidance and support;
- achieve competency in the skills and knowledge to participate successfully in the Jewish community; and
- participate in experiences that help to make their lives meaningful.

The values that would be most helpful for children coming from families where there is mental illness to experience and learn about from their teachers and peers include:

- we are created *B'tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God);
- God loves us and is always there for us;
- *Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh Bazeh* (all Israel is responsible one for another);
- *Derech Eretz* (respect);
- *Shmirat HaGuf* (taking care of one's body);
- *Shmirat HaLashon* (guarding our speech);
- *Nedarim* (keeping one's word);
- *Dibbuk Chaverim* (clinging to friends);
- *Ometz Lev* (courage);
- *Tikvah* (hope);
- *Pikuach Nefesh* (saving a life); and
- *V'ahavta L'reiecha Kamocha* (loving one's neighbor as oneself).

Some basic resources that teachers can use to find stories and activities to convey these values are as follows.

Bayar, Steven. *"Teaching Mitzvot, Values and Middot,"* in *The Ultimate Jewish Teacher's Handbook,* page 453, ed. Nachama Skolnick Moskowitz. Denver: A.R.E. Publishing, Inc., 2003.

Elswit, Sharon B. *The Jewish Story Finder*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2005.

> This book summarizes the content of 363 stories. It also lists the subjects covered by each story and the different sources where these stories can be found. An appendix groups the stories by recommended age levels. This is a great resource for stories.

Kadden, Barbara Binder and Kadden, Bruce. *Teaching Mitzvot: Concepts, Values and Activities,* rev. ed. Denver: A.R.E. Publishing, Inc., 2003.

Lewis, Barbara A. *The Kid's Guide to Service Projects. Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference.* Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1995.

http://www.ajl.org

> This is an excellent resource to obtain books and stories that reflect particular Jewish values. In the database of this website, created by the Association of Jewish Libraries, there is a list of more than 100 Jewish values. You can obtain a listing of books, by age, for each value that you choose.

Suggestions for Fostering Relationships of Love and Respect

Teachers can offer and foster relationships of love and respect for children in four basic ways. First, teachers need to treat each child with respect, kindness and caring, recognizing that each child is created *B'tzelem Elohim.* As Jewish educators, we need to convey this to children by our words and actions. Our words, tone and body language communicate what we are thinking and feeling at a given moment. Children know when teachers do not like them or are treating them without respect. For example, when a child regularly disrupts class with seemingly irrelevant questions or comments, the teacher can

demonstrate that she believes the child is created *B'tzelem Elohim* in several ways. She can give the child positive feedback for all the times when the child's responses are appropriate. At the same time she can refrain from reprimanding or punishing the child for inappropriate behavior in front of his peers. In addition, she can find a moment to speak to the child privately, try and ascertain what is going on and work out an arrangement that will satisfy the needs of both the child and the group.

Second, whether in a separate unit of the curriculum or woven throughout it, teachers must actually teach children the Jewish value of being created *B'tzelem Elohim.* For me, to be created *B'tzelem Elohim* means that each one of us is holy, precious, and worthy of respect, regardless of what we do or not do, because each of us has a spark of God within us. What I would like to convey and see others convey to children is that this spark gets expressed in a unique way for each of us. Nobody who lived before us and nobody who will live after us will be just like us. Each of us is precious and lovable for who we are because each of us is a reflection of God's voice in the world. We need to let children know that their self worth does not derive from what they look like, how smart they are, how much they achieve or how they behave. Feeling loved and respected for who we are, not for what we do, can help build a foundation of hope and self-esteem that may be lacking in these children's lives.

One way that teachers can introduce this concept is by telling stories. A story that I like to tell children to help them see that it is important to respect and care for every person or creature in God's universe is *King David and the Spider,* retold by Nina Jaffe in *Tales for the Seventh Day.* The story tells how one day David sees a spider in King Saul's court and wonders what use it can be to anybody. Before he has a chance to find

out or kill the spider, David has to flee from Saul's soldiers. He hides out in a desert cave where a spider comes by and weaves a web over the cave's opening. When Saul's soldiers reach the cave, they see the web over the entrance and think that nobody could have recently gone inside. They leave and David is saved. When David becomes king, he never forgets that every creature, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, is important even if he does not recognize or understand its importance at a given point in time. Among the messages that children can hear in this story is that just by being our own unique selves, we can help or inspire others.

What follows is a list of other stories and resources that teachers can use to help teach the value that we are created *B'tzelem Elohim.*

Stories

For Young Children

Pinkwater, Daniel M. *The Big Orange Splot.* New York: Hastings House, 1977.

> This book demonstrates how each of us is unique and we should not be afraid to be ourselves. On a block where all of the houses look the same, one neighbor encourages the others, one by one, to create the house that truly reflects who they are.

Sasso, Sandy Eisenberg. *God's Paintbrush.* Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1992.

> This picture book describes the different ways that young children see and feel God's presence in their world. It also gives concrete examples of how God's breath is in each of us and how our actions reflect God.

Shannon, David. *A Bad Case of Stripes.* New York: Blue Sky Press, Scholastic Inc., 1998.

> In this picture book, a nine-year old girl who loves lima beans will not eat them because she is afraid that her peers will make fun of her and will stop being her friend. She develops stripes all over her body. Everybody thinks she is strange and they all stay away from her. The girl is not cured until an old woman offers her lima beans, she eats them and allows herself to be herself.

Swartz, Nancy Sohn. *In Our Image, God's First Creatures.* Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1998.

> This picture book talks about the story of creation and how God gives special gifts of goodness, kindness, love, and understanding to people. It also talks about the relationship between people and God's other creatures.

For Older Children

Kimmel, Eric, reteller. *The Shepard,* in *Days of Awe: Stories for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.* New York: Viking Press, 1991.

> A shepard who cannot read or write prays to God in his own way. He is overheard by a scholarly Rabbi who criticizes the shepard's manner of prayer. The Rabbi, however, is criticized because he failed to recognize that the shepard's prayer was his own honest and deep way of connecting with God.

Texts

Older children can look at a variety of texts to prompt discussion, reflection and activities that part of what it means to be created *B'tzelem Elohim* is that we must treat ourselves with love and respect. Some examples of texts that convey this idea are:

Gen. 1:24-28. Verse 27 contains the *B'tzelem Elohim* language.

Prov. 25:16. If you find honey eat only what you need. Otherwise, you will overdo it and throw up.

Lev. 21:5. They (the Jewish people) are not permitted to make gashes in their flesh.

Ps. 16, Verses 1-2; 10-11.

> Protect me God, for I seek refuge in You. I say to God You are my Lord, my benefactor, there is none above you.
>
> You will not abandon me to Sheol, or let Your faithful one see the Pit.
> You will teach me the path of life.
> Your presence is perfect Joy...

Ps. 27:14.

> Have hope in Adonai
> Be strong and your heart will be strengthened.
> Have faith in Adonai.

Ps. 118:5.

> In distress I have called out to God.
> God answered me by setting me free.

Talmud, Pesachim 113a.

> Rav said to his son, "[d]on't get in the habit of taking drugs, leaping over . . sewers... and don't provoke serpents."

Talmud, Sanhedrin 37a.

> One who destroys a single life, the Torah considers it as if he destroyed the entire world. And one who saves a single life, the Torah considers if as if he saved an entire world...God mints all human beings with the stamp of the first man, and yet each is unique. Therefore, every single human being must say, 'for my sake, was the whole world created.'

Ethics of the Fathers, 2:15.

> Rabbi Eliezar says: 'Let other people's dignity be as precious to you as your own.'

Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim, 225:8.

> One who sees an Ethiopian, or a Gichor, i.e., one whose skin is extremely red, or a Lavkan, i.e., an albino, or a Kippayach, i.e. one whose stomach is inordinately large, or a dwarf or a Drakona, i.e., one who is covered in blemishes....recites the blessing 'Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who creates a variety of creations.'

Leviticus Rabbah.

> According to Jewish legend, one day as the great sage Hillel was leaving class a student asked where he was going. When Hillel told the student that he was going to the bathhouse to perform a religious duty, the student asked what religious duty could be performed at a bathhouse. When the student was confused how bathing could be considered a religious duty, Hillel responded, "[A]s you know, cleaning statues that are created in the image of a king is considered an important and distinguished responsibility. How much greater, then, is it my duty to care for my body that was created in God's image?"

Tale.

> Before he died, Rabbi Zusya said to his students, "In the world to come I will not be asked 'why weren't you Moses?' I will be asked 'Why weren't you Zusya?'"

Music

Nichols, Dan. *B'tzelem Elohim* Song by Dan Nichols.

> The song is on Nichols' CD "Chazak." The lyrics also appear at www.jewishrock.com/music/btzelemelohim.wma.

A third way that teachers can foster relationships of love and respect is by providing children with regular opportunities to express themselves and their feelings in a variety of age appropriate ways. For younger children this would include opportunities to share through movement, art, drama, music, telling their own stories and discussions connected to their lives. For older children this would include discussions and journaling as well as opportunities to express themselves through the arts. For both younger and older children, prayer is a way to learn and practice mindfulness that, in turn, becomes another avenue for feeling God's love, expressing ones hopes and reaching out to God for comfort. When children feel free to express what they are feeling and thinking, then they can build the trust necessary to share what is going on in their lives or ask for help when they need it.

Fourth, teachers can demonstrate care, concern and respect for children by listening carefully to them and giving them supportive feedback. Teachers need to convey that they are emotionally present when children communicate with us. Children need to know that we see and hear what they say and do, as well as what they fail to say or do, in response to questions as well as in informal encounters or activities with peers or alone. These children need to know that they matter to us as individuals and because we are connected to each other as members of the Jewish community. Whether we know it or not, teachers may serve as a "substitute family" for these children, providing guidance and support that is missing or inadequate at home.

Suggestions for Creating a Safe, Supportive and Caring Classroom Community

Teachers can help children who live with a mentally ill parent or sibling feel that they are part of a caring community in their classrooms in a number of ways. They can:

- model Jewish values of caring and responsibility;
- provide structure with clear expectations and opportunities for success;
- provide opportunities for children to learn how others have faced difficult challenges;
- provide opportunities for children to learn that everybody needs help to face challenges at different times and what sources of help, including God, are there for children to rely upon;
- teach children that there is no shame in asking for or receiving help; and
- provide opportunities for children to deepen their connection to the Jewish community and God, so that they do not feel alone and do feel that they are part of a functioning, loving and supportive "family."

Teachers can provide opportunities for children to learn about how others have faced difficult challenges in their lives at numerous points in a standard curriculum. Some of these points include learning about the holidays, learning Bible stories or studying *Tanakh* and learning about Jewish history. Once the challenges are identified in any given subject area, teachers can create experiences for children to relate those or similar challenges to their own lives. If the children do not raise the issue, then a teacher can include what it is like to live in a family where somebody is ill, either physically or mentally. By raising these challenges as examples in discussions, stories or other materials, the teacher lets children know that she is aware of these issues, they are not uncommon, talking about them is not taboo and that she is there as a resource for them.

For example, when children learn about the story of Chanukah, they learn about how the Maccabees had the courage to risk their lives, stand up and fight against the Syrians in order to continue to practice Judaism and openly maintain their belief in God. Children in American society are unlikely to have to risk their lives to stand up for

something that they believe. Many, however, are likely to face teasing, ridicule or rejection when they speak out for an unpopular cause such as mental illness.

Two contemporary stories depict challenges faced by children today in connection with the celebration of Chanukah, demonstrating their courage to share something about themselves that makes them different from their peers. In *The Fourth Candle* by Mara, eleven year-old Rachel has just moved to a town where there are very few Jews.[167] She has to convince her parents to light the menorah in the window, as is the custom, because her parents do not want to stand out as Jews in their new community. With the exception of one boy, who lives across the street, none of Rachel's classmates ask about the menorah or are willing to talk with her. Even Brad does so only because his parents have asked him to do so. On the fourth night of the holiday, when Rachel becomes discouraged about being ignored by her peers, she sees a menorah lit in Brad's window. Her courage not to be ashamed or afraid to identify herself as a Jew inspired Brad's family to acknowledge their Judaism. Teachers can ask children to continue the story and tell what happens on the remaining nights of the holiday. Children can also participate in activities where they share issues that are important enough to them to take action, or times that they have been inspired by others to act.

In the story *Jeremy's Dreidel,* by Ellie Gellman, Jeremy makes a dreidel with letters in Braille during a Chanukah crafts class. The dreidel is a gift for his father who is blind. Unlike Rachel's classmates in the first story, Jeremy's class has so many questions that Jeremy feels put on the spot. His teacher helps guide the class to show their enthusiasm and curiosity and, at the same time, give Jeremy the space to share in ways

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[167] Mara, *The Fourth Candle*, in *Chosen Tales, Stories Told by Jewish Storytellers,* ed. Penninah Schram (Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, Inc.,1995), 217.

that are comfortable to him about what it is like to have a father who is blind. As a result, the class gets to meet and question Jeremy's father. They also work out a solution for displaying the dreidels in a way that will make it possible for Jeremy's dad to participate in the festivities. This story can be used to reinforce the value that every person, regardless of any disability, is created *B'tzelem Elohim.* Depending upon the group, this story can lead to an exploration of the issue of stigma, with examples including how people respond to mental illness. The teacher can then help children connect the Jewish values of *B'tzelem Elohim, Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh Bazeh, Shmirat HaLashon* and *V'ahavta L'reiecha Kamocha,* to how Jewish tradition guides us to show respect and treat our neighbor as we would want to be treated.

These Chanukah stories can be a springboard for discussion about the different challenges that the children in the group have faced, and what has helped them have the courage to meet those challenges. Two stories that teachers can use that describe challenges of growing up in a family where a parent or sibling is mentally ill are *Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry,* by Bebe Moore Campbell, and *The Girl with the Crazy Brother,* by Betty Hyland. The first is a picture book about what it is like for Annie (about eight years old) to live alone with a mother who has bipolar disorder. Most importantly, the story shows that when Annie is upset by or angry with her mother's behavior, she can do something about it. She calls her grandmother, who listens to what Annie is experiencing and feeling. Then Annie's grandmother asks her a series of questions. By answering the questions, Annie reminds herself of all the things that she can do to help herself or get help from others when her mother's behavior makes her feel unsafe or uncared for. Children can learn about the values of *B'tzelem Elohim, Kol*

Yisrael Areivim Zeh Bazeh and *Pikuach Nefesh* which are exemplified in this story. *The Girl with the Crazy Brother* is a novel for middle school age children. It describes how a girl entering her sophomore year in high school in a new city struggles to make friends, maintain a connection with her brother and relate to her overwhelmed parents when her brother develops schizophrenia. The Jewish values of *Dibbuk Chaverim, Shalom Bayit, Shmirat HaLashon and Nedarim*, all play an important role in how the main character tries to balance the needs of her family and her own needs to have a normal teenage life.

Passover and Purim are also holidays that exemplify Jewish values that help people face life's challenges with courage. In the Passover story, the people need courage, hope and trust in God. They need courage to leave behind a familiar but bad life. They need hope, courage and trust in God to follow Moses and believe that they will reach the Promised Land and a better life. Children can learn that making changes in one's life is not always easy, but trust in God and aid from others help us build our own courage to do the things that will make our lives better. Even Moses had to learn this lesson. Moses had a speech defect and, therefore, did not think that he could be the people's leader. Moses had to trust in God, get help from his brother Aaron and have the courage to take on the leadership role.

Two other examples of this theme are the stories *Drop by Drop,* retold by Penninah Schram in *Ten Classic Jewish Children's Stories* and *Thank You Mr. Falker,* by Patricia Polacco. Both stories deal with difficulties learning to read. In *Drop by Drop,* the story describes how Akiva was ashamed that he could not read as an adult, but was afraid to begin learning so late in life. With the support and love of his wife, Akiva gains the courage to begin to study. Later Akiva becomes one of the greatest rabbis and

teachers in all of Jewish history. In *Thank You Mr. Falker,* a fifth grade girl has been pretending that she can read. When Trisha struggles and makes mistakes as she reads aloud, her classmates tease her and she feels humiliated. Trisha's teacher, Mr. Falker, puts an end to the bullying. He also helps Trisha learn to read, first by finding the ways that are easiest for her to learn and then by building on those strengths. All of these stories can open the door for children to explore the issues that we are all different, nobody is perfect, we need to have the courage to ask for help and we are all worthy of being helped.

Similarly, in the Purim story, both Esther and Mordeccai are models of courage. Mordeccai risks his life because of his belief in God and refusal to bow down to a human being, i.e., Haman. Esther risks her life when she does not follow protocol and goes to see King Ahasueros uninvited. She risks her life a second time after the King issued the decree to kill the Jews and she reveals her identity as a Jew. What gave Esther and Mordeccai the courage to act as they did when they had no guarantees of the outcome? For Mordeccai it was clearly his belief and trust in God. For Esther, the answer is not so clear. One possibility is that Esther understood that she really was part of the Jewish community, her fate would be the same as others in the community and, at that moment in time, she was the only one in a position to influence the King. Teachers can help children discuss what values might have motivated Esther and then extend the learning to their lives. Depending on the age of the children, the teacher could provide vignettes for children to discuss, or ask children to provide examples, either actual or imagined, of instances where somebody is doing something wrong and how they might respond. For example, teachers might ask what children could do if a parent was too sick or depressed

to talk with a child about an important issue or help the child with homework. By integrating into the discussion or activity the Jewish values of *B'tzelem Elohim, Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh Bazeh, Pikuach Nefesh* and O*metz Lev,* the teacher can help children realize that they are worthy of being helped, the Jewish community is a source of help and that there is no shame in reaching out for help.

In addition to the stories already mentioned, as well as the resources that teachers can check described, *supra,* on page 58, I find the following stories helpful to open or expand discussions and activities about the Jewish values of courage to face difficult challenges, reaching out for help and helping others.

Stories

From the Bible or Midrash

Num. 13-14.

> Joshua has the courage to refuse to give in to the demand of the mob and strip Moses and Aaron of their power. He also has the courage and faith in God to be ready to enter the land of Canaan, regardless of the difficulties that they saw when scouting out the land.

1Sam. 17:1-58.

> David and Goliath

Jaffe, Nina, reteller. *The Hebrew Midwives: A Midrash,* in *Wonders and Miracles: A Passover Companion.* Eric A. Kimmel, ed. New York: Scholastic Books, 2004.

> This *midrash* tells the story of the midwives Shifrah and Puah, who continued to help Jewish women deliver babies despite Pharoah's order that all newborn male babies should be killed.

Kimmel, Eric A., ed. *The Legend of Judith,* in *A Hanukah Treasury.* New York: Holt, 1998.

> This *midrash* is about how the widow Judith has the courage to devise and successfully execute a plan to kill Holofernes, the Assyrian commander, who has laid siege to the city where she lives.

Fiction

UAHC Department of Jewish Family Concerns. *The Jeweler and the Diamond,* pages 10-11 in *Al Pi Darco.* New York: UAHC, 2000.

> In this parable the king is beside himself with grief when his "perfect" diamond falls and develops a crack. Nobody can repair it. One jeweler, however, uses the crack to carve a beautiful rose into the diamond. When the king sees the diamond, he realizes that the jeweler has helped him to look at things differently. He understands that a problem or challenge can be an opportunity to learn or create something that is positive.

Holtz, David, reteller. *The Mountain and the Cliff.* Page 161 *in Chosen Tales,* ed. Penninah Schram. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1995.

> In this tale a father and son cannot continue their journey because a massive pile of rocks is blocking the narrow mountain road. The boy clears all of the rocks except for one boulder. When the boy cannot move it, his father asks him if he has really done all that he could. The boy keeps trying new strategies but is unsuccessful. Each time the boy's father asks him the same question. When the boy finally gives up and gets angry, his father tells him that the one thing he never did was ask for help and, had he done so, the father would have been glad to assist him.

Schram, Penninah, reteller. *The Rooster Who Would be King,* in *Jewish Stories One Generation Tells Another.* Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1993.

> One day the prince begins to act like a rooster. He takes off his clothes, flaps his arms like wings and refuses to eat at the table. No doctor is able to help him. An old man, however, comes and spends a week with the prince. At first the old man mimics whatever the young prince does. When the boy begins to trust him, the old man gradually models appropriate behavior which the boy copies until he is fully healed.

Thompson, Mary. *My Brother Matthew.* (Rockville, Md.: Woodbine House, 1992.

> This picture book describes what it is like for a boy to have a younger brother who was born with a disability and the changes that take place in the family's life because of Matthew's needs. It discusses feelings of embarrassment, impatience, rejection by peers and loneliness when the boy's parents need to devote so much time to his brother.

Nonfiction

Borden, Louise. *The Journey That Saved Curious George: The True Wartime Escape of Margret and H.A. Rey.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005.

> This picture book tells the story of how the authors, both Jews, escaped the Nazis, ultimately came to America, and saved the manuscript of their very first children's book.

Dinner, Sherry H., Ph.D. *Nothing to Be Ashamed of: Growing Up with Mental Illness in Your Family.* New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1982.

> This out of print book, which can be obtained on some websites like www.alibris.com, describes what mental illness is, the different types of disorders, typical reactions that children have to the behavior of family members who are mentally ill and what help is available for both children and their mentally ill family member. It is an excellent resource for young adolescents.

Frank, Anne. *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl,* ed. Otto Frank and Miriam Pressler. New York: Random House, 1991.

Lewis, Barbara. *Kids With Courage. True Stories About Young People Making a Difference.* Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, Inc., 1992.

> This book is for children ages nine through fourteen or fifteen. It describes numerous instances where children and young teens spoke up or took other action to help themselves, others or the environment despite the obstacles or lack of support that they received from others.

Talbott, Hudson. *Forging Freedom: A True Story of Heroism During the Holocaust.* New York: Penguin Young Reader's Group, 2000.

> This book, for children ages seven and up, tells the story of Jaap Penraat, a Dutch architect and industrial designer, who saved the life of 406 Jews in Nazi-occupied Netherlands during World War II.

Teachers can also help these children feel that the synagogue and religious school are places where children can feel part of a caring, functioning, supportive "extended family" away from home. I have identified three broad areas where teachers can create an environment that helps children feel that they are members of their Jewish community,

because they are given the tools to participate and meaningful opportunities to do so. They are teaching children the skills and providing them with opportunities to:

- care for their classmates and their classroom;
- participate in Shabbbat services and holiday celebrations; and
- care for the larger synagogue and Jewish communities by participating in school-sponsored *tzedakah* and *tikkun olam* projects.

When children treat each other with respect, and care for the work and property of others in the group, then they can feel that the environment is a safe place to be and that they have a stake in the group. This is so regardless of a child's skill level or personality. One way that children can begin to have a stake in their classroom and make it a safe place for all to be is for them to have rotating class "jobs" that reflect Jewish values that are being taught. Depending upon the age of the children, these tasks may include: collecting and counting *tzedakah* money, leading the class in the blessing over snack, serving snack, watering class plants, collecting recyclable class trash and any other responsibilities appropriate for children in a particular school. Younger children love having these responsibilities. Older children can help set up and clean up the classroom for the day. They can help create the "rules" for treating each other and materials. They can also create games or game questions to test knowledge and skills.

A second example of how helping each other can be built into the classroom routine is to make time for children to work in *hevruta* (working in pairs or small groups). During such work, children learn that each person sees things differently and that every person has different talents and strengths. Children discover that they learn much more if they can work cooperatively with each other. I like to use a kaleidoscope and tell a story to introduce this idea. The kaleidoscope demonstrates that just shifting the point of view ever so slightly can completely change what we see. It is not different

when people are involved. One story that demonstrates this is about Hagar, found in Genesis Chapter 21. When she no longer had any water left to give her son Ishmael, Hagar believed he would die. Not wanting to see the death of her son, Hagar placed him under a bush and closed her eyes. God's angels appeared, told her to open her eyes, and she saw a well of water. In other words, it took the help of one who was fully present in the moment and not distracted by emotions to see the well that had been there all along. The story also demonstrates that God helped Hagar by sending the angels to speak with her. Children can learn from this that God is always present for us, but we need to have our eyes and ears open to see and hear the messenger.

Yet another way that teachers can introduce children to the idea that the classroom is a safe and supportive space for all is to teach them about the *mezuzah* on the doorpost, which holds the *Shema* and *V'ahavta* prayers. When children explore the basic idea in these prayers of what it means to love God with all your heart, soul and might, then the *mezuzah* can serve as a physical reminder of how we want to act when we come together as a group in that room. I have asked children to follow my lead, stop and kiss the *mezuzah* as they enter the classroom, and remind themselves that no matter how they are feeling on a particular day, they are loved and cherished by God because they are created *B'tzelem Elohim.* As they begin to recognize this for themselves, then they can recognize that the same holds true for everybody else in the room; therefore, everybody in the group needs to be treated with respect and caring.

Two stories that can be shared with children as examples of how our actions make a difference as to whether God is felt at a particular time and place are *The Field of Brotherly Love,* retold by Barbara Diamond Goldin in *One-Hundred-and One Jewish*

Read-Aloud Stories and *The Gossip,* adapted by Molly Cone in *Who Knows Ten? Children's Tales of the Ten Commandments.* In the first story, there is a drought. Two brothers who usually split the harvest evenly each try to make sure that the other brother will have enough food to eat for the winter. At different times of the night, each brother gets up, places extra sheaves of wheat from his pile on that of his brother and, in the morning, the brothers are surprised and confused that both piles are still equal in size. The next night, the brothers realize what happened when they meet each other carrying wheat sheaves to the other brother's pile. They hug each other and God blesses the spot. As the story is told, that is the place where the holy temple was built. In the story *The Gossip,* the Rabbi advises a woman who sees no harm in telling tales about her neighbors to shake out the feathers of a pillow in the town square. When she complies, the Rabbi tells her to go back to the square and gather up all of the feathers. She tells him that this would be impossible. The Rabbi agrees and tells her that it is no different when somebody speaks unkind words about another.

The second area where teachers can create an environment for children to feel that the synagogue is a place to experience a safe, caring community is to teach them about the meaning and skills to participate in Shabbat services and holiday celebrations. Participating in the Shabbat service is an opportunity to help children feel God's presence on a regular basis, deepen their relationship with God through quiet personal reflection and learn how the Rabbis expressed their awe and gratitude for God's presence in the world and in relationship with the Jewish people. It is also a time when children can feel that they belong to a community that needs and treasures them. They can connect with others in prayer, song, study and social activities. As children learn why and how Jews

pray on Shabbat, they can participate in honors and responsibilities during the school *Tefillah* service so that they can be an integral part of what is happening both then and during and actual Shabbat service. For example, younger children can help undress and dress the Torah. They can also be on the *Bimah* and help lead a *niggun* or other song as classes enter the sanctuary. As a class, older children can help lead particular prayers, songs and readings during the school service. They can also distribute and collect prayer books and *kipot,* as well as open and close the ark during the Torah service. Older students can also prepare and act out a skit that conveys the story and messages of the weekly Torah portion.

Besides participating regularly in a school prayer service, each year the school might create its own prayer book for Shabbat, containing alternative prayers alongside of the traditional prayers. Each grade would be responsible for learning the meaning of and how to chant a particular prayer. Then each class would create their own prayer conveying those messages. Their "prayer" might be expressed in traditional form, or in a song, poem, drawing or dance. For example, first graders could learn the blessings over the challah and wine at the end of the service. Second graders might learn the *Barchu.* Third graders could learn the *Mi Chamocha,* and fourth graders could learn the *Shema* and *V'ahavta.* Fifth graders could learn the prayers for opening the ark and taking out the Torah, and sixth graders could learn the *Amidah.*

The classes would share their alternative prayers in a school service at the end of the year. A copy of the prayer book would be on display in the school office and copies would be placed with the prayer books in the synagogue sanctuary. Children would also receive copies to take home. In addition, the synagogue and school could sponsor an

annual Shabbat service where children would lead the congregation in the service that they created. Children would know that every year they would have the opportunity to learn about a different prayer in depth, they would have a chance to create their own prayer reflecting those themes and they would see how their peers interpret our liturgy. By working with their peers and the whole school towards a common goal, not only will the bonds of the community be strengthened, but children will also learn that there are many different ways to connect to God.

Similarly, as children are learning about the meaning and rituals for each holiday, there can be grade or school-wide celebrations depending upon the size of the school. The school could run workshops where children could choose either to help prepare for the school celebration, or do something for the holiday that would benefit the larger congregation. For example, children might create ritual objects, prepare skits or participate in a choir for the school celebration. Alternatively, children might: (i) learn to blow *shofar* (regulation size or small plastic ones) and be part of a *shofar* brigade for the High Holidays; (ii) create and/or decorate the *Sukkah*; (iii) prepare cards and packages for Purim *shalach manot*; or (iv) participate in a community *Seder*. The possibilities are limitless. Whatever activities are chosen, however, should meet the real needs and goals of a particular school and synagogue. They should also provide a meaningful opportunity for children to use their skills and knowledge to build a deeper connection to the synagogue community and God.

The third area for teachers to create a safe and caring environment for children to be part of is to offer them opportunities to participate in class *tzedakah* and *tikkun olam* projects. When children actually participate in activities to help others, and they learn the

Jewish values underlying why it is important to do so, then several things happen. First, they feel good about themselves, because they have helped another person. Second, children feel more competent and confident, because they have learned particular skills and options for responding to problems. Third, they see, first hand, that people need help at different times in the lives. By learning how to offer help, children can play a role in making sure that people do not feel humiliated when they receive help. This, in turn, can teach them how to ask for help when they need it. Fourth, they get to see that there are many different sources of help, so that nobody has to be alone with a problem if they do not want to be. Fifth, it is another opportunity for children to learn to work cooperatively with peers, develop close relationships with adults and peers, identify and build on their strengths and expand their interests.

One way for teachers to introduce the idea of a class *tikkun olam* project is by sharing the following story. After a bad storm that hit the east coast of Florida, hundreds of starfish were deposited on the beach. A ten-year-old girl did not want the starfish to die, so she began walking the beach and tossing them back into the ocean. A man walking on the boardwalk called out and asked what she was doing. When she told him, the man replied that she was wasting her time because many more would die than she could ever save. The girl shouted back that she could save at least some of the starfish and continued on with the task. The man walked on, thought about what the girl said and then returned to help her. Other passersby asked what they were doing and then joined their effort. All of the starfish were returned to the ocean alive.

After introducing the concept, children can be given options for age-appropriate *tikkun olam* projects. Then they can decide, as a class, what they want to do to help the

Jewish community in some way during that year. For the youngest children, the project should be concrete and connected to their own synagogue community. For example, a class could "adopt a senior" in their congregation. That person could visit the class on a regular basis, tell stories of what it was like to be Jewish when he was a child and help out during holiday celebrations. In return, the class would make sure that the senior was not home alone on holidays. They would also keep in touch with the person if he became ill. For middle school age children, the focus should be on a project that connects them to their peers and helps them build skills and knowledge about their world. For example, they could design a plan for reaching out to sick classmates or members of the synagogue. This might include e-mails, phone calls or sending cards with jokes. A different project might involve raising money or collecting materials needed by a class their age in Israel and developing an ongoing relationship with that class that involves helping each other in different ways. Early adolescents might help out in the synagogue soup kitchen. They could be "greeters" at Shabbat services, welcoming people to the synagogue and distributing materials, where appropriate. Young teens might also want to record readings for the blind, visit a local nursing home or respond in some way to an emergency situation in the world. Some excellent sources for teachers to check for ideas about *tzedakah* and *tikkun olam* projects are:

- Kadden, Barbara and Kadden, Bruce. *Teaching Mitzvot, Concepts, Values and Activities;*
- Lewis, Barbara. *The Kid's Guide to Service Projects, Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People who want to Make a Difference*; and
- http://www.ziv.org.

Children who come from a family where there is mental illness often need to experience a reality that is different from that in their home in order to begin to trust others, feel free to be themselves, and reach out and grow. By creating an environment in our supplementary schools where children feel loved and respected, as well as safe and supported, teachers can help children to fulfill this need.

CONCLUSION

What I have tried to demonstrate in my thesis is that there are a number of children in our supplementary school programs who may be facing serious challenges to their growth and development as individuals and Jews because they are living in homes where a parent or sibling is mentally ill. Teachers do not have the ability to change these children's home lives, nor is it their job to do so. What teachers and educators can do, and what I have argued that our tradition teaches us to do, is provide a safe, nurturing and meaningful learning environment where these children feel loved, cherished and respected for who they are. As educators, we can and must offer these children opportunities to: connect with peers and adults in meaningful relationships; develop an ongoing, meaningful relationship with God; feel that they are competent and valued members of the Jewish community; learn that there are many others who are facing or have faced similar challenges; and learn that there are many ways that children can obtain help and help themselves. By our actions and words, teachers must let these children know that we believe in them and support them in their efforts to be confident, competent and happy human beings.

One of the many people that I spoke to while preparing this thesis told me how her second grade teacher saved her life. Lily came from a home where there was alcoholism and possibly undiagnosed mental illness.[168] Lily's second grade teacher was not privy to the emotional abuse that was taking place in the home, but saw a child whose participation in activities and connections to peers indicated that Lily was unsure of herself. The teacher took every opportunity to let Lily know that she cared about her and believed in her absolute value as a human being. The teacher also regularly gave Lily

[168] The person's name has been changed to protect her privacy.

opportunities to shine and do things that enabled her to build confidence and joy in learning and being part of a positive group experience. Lily is now in her sixties. To this day, she can picture that teacher's face and hear her voice. Lily is filled with gratitude that the teacher took the time to make her feel valued for herself and loved. Without knowing it, Lily's teacher performed the *mitzvah* of *Pikuach Nefesh.*

As I will demonstrate in the curriculum piece of my thesis, it will not take a lot of specialized training, nor will it be an expensive proposition for a synagogue to help staff incorporate these ideas into the work that they are already doing. Once supplementary school teachers become aware of the need to help children like Lily, and are given some guidance how to meet this need within the context of the program offered by their particular synagogue, then most will want to help. I also believe that they will find it a rewarding experience, because they have the opportunity to make a very real difference in the life of a child.

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PART II.

HOW TEACHERS CAN SUPPORT AND INSPIRE CHILDREN WHO LIVE WITH A FAMILY MEMBER WHO IS MENTALLY ILL

A WORKSHOP SERIES FOR TEACHERS IN SYNAGOGUE SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Children Learn
Dorothy Law Nolte, 1982

If children live with criticism,
They learn to condemn.

If children live with hostility,
They learn to fight.

If children live with ridicule,
They learn to be shy.

If children live with shame,
They learn to feel guilty.

If children live with tolerance,
They learn to be patient.

If children live with encouragement,
They learn confidence.

If children live with praise,
They learn to appreciate.

If children live with fairness,
They learn justice.

If children live with security,
They learn to have faith.

If children live with approval,
They learn to like themselves.

If children live with acceptance and friendship,
They learn to find love in the world.

RATIONALE FOR THE WORKSHOPS

Research studies have revealed the following astonishing figures. One in five children in a class could be impacted by somebody who has a mental disorder and almost nobody is talking about this phenomenon.[169] In addition, mental illness is second only to heart disease as the leading cause of disability in this country and the world.[170] Approximately 22% of American adults, i.e. 54 million people, suffer from a mental disorder in any given year, but fewer than eight million of these adults seek treatment. Likewise, approximately one in five children under the age of eighteen have a diagnosable mental, emotional or behavioral disorder, but only 50% of children and adolescents who suffer from mental illness will receive treatment.[171] Regardless of our knowledge about or comfort level with the issue of mental illness, the fact is that many of the children in our synagogue programs are living in homes where a parent or sibling has a mental disorder and is not receiving treatment. The prevalence of mental illness in our families and its impact on the other children in the home is an issue that will not go away if ignored.

Given these facts, for the curriculum piece of my thesis I have chosen to design a pilot program of workshops for supplementary school teachers with two overarching goals. First, I hope that these workshops will raise teachers' awareness of how mental illness in a family affects children growing up in such homes. Second, the workshops will provide teachers with some tools and resources to work more effectively with these

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[169] Janet Susin and Lorraine Kaplan, *Breaking the Silence Tool Kit, A How to Guide to Bring Mental Illness Education to Schools in Your Community*, http://www.btslessonplans.org., 25.
[170] Ibid., 9.
[171] National Mental Health Association ("NMHA") *Fact Sheet: Mental Illness and the Family – Mental Health Statistics,"* http://www.nmha.org/infoctr/factsheets/15.cfm.

children who oftentimes express their reactions to the challenges at home by either behaving inappropriately or withdrawing from peers and activities. I believe that Jewish educators are in a unique position to offer support to these children, because an important goal of our programs is to integrate the values of our tradition into our lives. By modeling certain Jewish values, listening and responding to children's concerns, helping children develop a life-long relationship with God and providing them with meaningful experiences that help them feel part of a loving, caring community, teachers can create a safe and positive learning environment where these children can build a level of stability, competence, courage and hope into their often chaotic lives. Where appropriate, we can also be a resource that provides children and their families with information about mental health services and professionals in the community.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE WORKSHOPS

This pilot project consists of four workshops for teachers in a supplementary school program for children from first through sixth grades, ages 5-6 through 12-13. Due to the nature of supplementary school programs, including limited hours, limited pay and significant staff turnover, participation in the pilot program will be voluntary. Once teachers make the choice to participate, however, they will be asked to commit to attending all four workshops.

The workshops will be two hours long and will take place every other week during the fall semester. Depending upon the meeting times of the school program and other relevant factors, the workshops will take place either on a weekday evening or Sunday afternoon. I hope to have at least one teacher from every grade level participate. If possible, staff will be paid for this extra time either through money from the religious

school budget or a grant. After the pilot is completed and evaluated, I hope to be able to offer the workshop series to the entire staff as part of a staff development program.

During the first staff meeting of the year, teachers will be presented with the goals of the pilot project, an overview of the issues to be covered, a description of the activities and expectations, and the benefits they can derive by participating. The pilot project will begin by the end of the first month of school.

The first two workshops will include identifying the behaviors that indicate that something is affecting a child's ability to participate positively; recognizing and dealing with our reactions to those behaviors; identifying and implementing the Jewish values that we want to model and convey to children when we respond to these behaviors; and learning about what mental illness is and how it affects children who live in a home where a parent or sibling is mentally ill. During the second two workshops we will identify the Jewish values that are helpful to support these children in their growth and development as people and Jews. We will then explore resources and actually plan how to use these values in our classrooms in ways that will be meaningful to these children.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS FOR THE WORKSHOPS

1. There may be one or a combination of reasons that a child in a supplementary school program consistently acts out in inappropriate ways, withdraws from his/her peers, or fails to participate in age and content appropriate activities.
2. When a child is living in a home where a parent or sibling is mentally ill, the child may be acting out, withdrawing or not performing up to his/her capacity in the classroom if his/her parent(s) is (are) unable to support and nurture that child's growth.

3. In order to reach out effectively to children who are behaving inappropriately or who have withdrawn from the group and/or the activities, teachers must be able to recognize their own emotional reaction to the child's behavior and then separate that reaction from their actual response to the child.
4. Children who feel that they are loved and cherished by their family, God and their community are better able to learn and participate fully in life. By their actions and words, teachers need to help children experience and believe that they are created *B'tzelem Elohim* and are, therefore, worthy of love and respect.
5. The stigma that our society still attaches to mental illness is directed at both those who are mentally ill and their families. Children who are subjected to stigma need help so that they do not feel ashamed of themselves or their families, or afraid to develop positive relationships with their peers and other adults.
6. Teachers need to model Jewish values and provide learning experiences that create an environment where all children can:

    - regularly experience and trust that they are part of a caring Jewish community;
    - know that it is safe to reach out for help; and
    - find hope, courage, positive models and guidance to cope with their challenges and grow as people and Jews.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What kinds of behaviors might teachers observe in children at different ages in our supplementary school programs that could indicate that a child is living in a home where there is mental illness?

2. How can teachers recognize and handle negative reactions to a child's inappropriate behavior in ways that will not create a cycle of conflict with the child?
3. How can teachers convey to these children that they are created *B'tzelem Elohim* and are, therefore, loved and cherished by God regardless of how they look, how smart they are, how much they achieve or how they behave?
4. How can teachers model and convey to these children that they and the Jewish community also care about them and their well-being?
5. What are the Jewish values that we need to model and teach that will create an environment of trust where children can feel safe to be themselves, grow and reach out for help without shame or fear of rejection?
6. What kinds of experiences and materials can Jewish educators provide to help these children cope with the challenges in their lives and grow as people and Jews?

EVIDENCE OF UNDERSTANDING

1. Through lecture, discussion and questions, staff will learn about or review how children at different stages of child development may behave in the classroom when there are problems at home like mental illness. Teachers will demonstrate how they understood this material by the questions that they ask the social worker during and following Workshop 2. They will also demonstrate how they use their knowledge of how mental illness may affect child development in the lesson/project that they develop for a particular age group and present in Workshops 3 and 4.

2. By participating in role-playing activities and discussion, staff will recognize their own emotional reactions to children's inappropriate behavior in the classroom. Teachers will then explore ways to deal with those reactions so that they can respond in ways that can be helpful and supportive to the child.
3. Teachers will participate in role-playing activities, during which the group will learn to observe, raise questions and provide feedback about how our words, tone and body language can create an environment that students can trust to be safe for them to reach out for help.
4. Teachers will demonstrate their understanding of why and how certain Jewish values can be helpful to children living with a mentally ill family member through their participation in an activity in Workshop 2. In that activity teachers will first be asked to explain both the basic meaning of certain values and why each value could be helpful to these children. Once this information is posted on the wall around the room, teachers will have the opportunity to clarify the meaning and application of these values through discussion and questions.
5. Teachers will work together as a group, and then in groups by age level, to develop a lesson or project using stories, prayer or a *tikkun olam* project to convey one or more of the values identified that can be helpful in supporting children who live with a mentally ill family member. Teachers will create a resource bank to share their work.
6. Teachers will complete workshop evaluation forms at the end of each session, and an overall assessment of the series. The evaluations will ask teachers to:
    - rate each activity in the workshops in terms of its helpfulness to their work in the classroom;

- offer suggestions to make the workshops more helpful to their classroom work;
- identify what, if anything, they learned by participating in the workshops;
- identify what questions and/or concerns they still have about the material; and
- communicate the supports, training or information that they will need in order to implement their learning, on a continuing basis, in their classrooms.

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES AND ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING THROUGHOUT THE WORKSHOPS

This workshop series is a program designed for adult teachers in a supplementary school program who have chosen to participate presumably because they hope that the experience will help them to be more effective in their work with children. As such, the instructional approaches and assessment mechanisms are different than they would be for children and/or for people who are otherwise required to participate. I have tried to provide different kinds of learning opportunities within each workshop. I have also planned for people to refresh their energy by moving around, having snacks available and taking a short break.

Each workshop includes some lecture and/or discussion element as well as opportunities for questions. The workshops also include opportunities for staff to be actively involved in a learning experience that is related to their work in the classroom. At times teachers will work in small groups on a particular task. At other times they will role-play scenarios to spark discussion about effective options for responding to the behaviors and needs of children of different ages. Staff will also learn skills and practice how to critique their colleagues in ways that model Jewish values that we want to convey to children. As teachers learn to convey information to each other in respectful, supportive ways, or become more adept at doing so, they will be better able to translate

those skills into work with children. Finally, teachers will have opportunities to continue learning and sharing with each other between workshop sessions. They will have articles to read or tasks to do with opportunities to discuss and question through e-mail dialogues.

The assessment mechanisms for the workshops are informal, with the exception of the evaluation forms that teachers will complete at the end of each session. Assessment will consist of:

- observing how people participate in activities and noting the comfort, skills and/or difficulties that they have with the material in small group activities and/or in sharing with the whole group;
- noting the questions that people raise during the workshops as well as between sessions in the e-mail dialogues; and
- evaluating the final lesson/project that each grade level group creates and how the rest of the group critiques the work of their colleagues.

Participants will be given a binder at the beginning of the workshop series that includes the agenda and an evaluation for each of the workshops, articles and other materials to related to each of the workshops and a copy of Chip Wood's book, *Yardsticks, Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14, A Resource for Parents and Teachers.* A list of all of the materials to be included in the binder follows.

LIST OF MATERIALS IN THE BINDER FOR THE WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOP 1
Enduring Understandings

1. There may be one or a combination of reasons why a child in a supplementary school program consistently acts out in inappropriate ways, withdraws from his/her peers, or fails to participate in age and content appropriate activities. Teachers need to be able to recognize the kinds of behaviors that children may engage in at different age levels and, if possible, find out what is going on in the child's life that could be causing or contributing to that behavior.

2. Before teachers can reach out effectively to support and help children who are acting inappropriately or not participating fully in their program, they must first recognize any negative personal reactions they may have to the child's behavior and then find ways to separate their emotional reaction from their response to the child.

3. How teachers respond when a child consistently behaves inappropriately in our classrooms will affect the child's readiness to trust us and begin to make changes. We need to model and convey Jewish values that establish that we are a caring community; we recognize that every child is created *B'tzelem Elohim;* and that every child is worthy of being treated with respect.

Essential Questions

1. What behaviors do we typically see at different age levels in our classrooms that indicate that something is going on in the child's life that is affecting his/her participation in class?

2. How do we recognize and respond to our own negative emotional reactions to a child's behavior in the classroom?

3. What are the Jewish values that we want to model and convey to our students when we respond to inappropriate classroom behavior?

4. How can we model and convey those values?

Evidence of Understanding

1. Staff will begin to identify different behaviors that they are aware of in their classrooms that indicate that a child is not participating (fully) in the program.

2. Staff will participate in a role-playing and discussion activity to recognize their own emotional reactions to a child's behavior. Through modeling, discussion and

questions staff will learn and begin to practice how to move beyond their personal reaction and respond positively to the child.

3. Through group discussion, staff will begin to identify the Jewish values that we want to model and convey to our students when we respond to inappropriate classroom behavior.

4. Staff will participate in a role-playing activity, followed by a discussion, where the group critiques a teacher's actual response to a behavior scenario.

5. Staff will complete a workshop evaluation at the end of the session. Each of the workshop evaluations asks teachers to identify what they learned and still need help understanding, and to describe how the workshop material is -- and could be better -- related to their classroom work.

Introduction to the Workshops (15 minutes)

- As people enter the room, have them pick up name tags and binders. Participants will also be given a copy of Chip Wood's book, *Yardsticks, Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14, a Resource for Parents and Teachers.*

- Thank people for coming. Introduce self. Ask staff to introduce themselves and state the grade and ages of the children that they are teaching, as well as what other teaching or work experience they have had. Briefly review what information is in the binders and how it will be used.

- State the purpose of workshop series. Give a brief overview of the series. Ask staff to share something that they hope to get out of the workshops.

Set Induction (5 minutes)

Query: By a show of hands, how many people have ever had a child in your group who consistently:

1. waves his/her hand wildly in response to a question, and when you call on that child s/he asks to go to the bathroom or asks a question that is totally irrelevant to the issue being discussed?

2. writes on, marks up or even rips his work or the work of another child?

3. pokes, leans into or otherwise makes unwanted physical contact with another child during group meeting times?

4. seems to be daydreaming or unconnected to activities and/or her peers?

Most of us have had experiences like these as well as other experiences where one or more children in our group is behaving in a way that indicates that s/he is not participating positively in the activity. As today's agenda sheet says, we are going to look at 3 different things.

- We will identify the behaviors that we see at different ages that indicate to us that the child is not engaged or participating appropriately in the program.

- We will do a role-playing exercise where we begin to recognize our emotional responses to these behaviors and learn what to do with those feelings in the moment.

- We will do a second role-playing activity where we observe and then discuss how to incorporate Jewish values into our actual responses to disruptive or uninvolved children.

Activity 1 (25-30 minutes) Identifying the Behaviors

Directions: For the next 15 minutes (10 to work, 5 for getting material onto the grid), I would like you to identify behaviors that you have seen, either in your classroom so far this year, or in the past, that indicated to you that a child was not participating or fully participating in a class activity. Use a separate piece of paper for each incident that you identify. Describe the behavior, not your interpretations or conclusions about that behavior. Do not identify the child by name but state his/her age. For example, you might say "C, age 9, consistently calls out answers without raising her hand," rather than "C, age 9, is disrespectful to others because..." "When you are finished, tape your sheets on the grid in groups by age and type of behavior. For example, group same or similar behaviors together, e.g. calling out of turn, hitting others, daydreaming, *et cetera*. Any questions? Distribute materials and let people work.

Behavior by Age Grid

GRADE	AGE	BEHAVIORS
1	6-7	
2	7-8	
3	8-9	
4	9-10	
5	10-11	
6	11-12	

Discussion (10-15 minutes): In our sample:

- What behaviors do we see at different ages? As people to describe behaviors, help them to identify neutral rather than judgmental language to describe the behavior.
- What behaviors do we see at all ages?
- What, if anything, can we conclude from this sample about children's behavior at different ages?
- List all responses on chart paper.
- Photograph (digital) the grid so that it can be e-mailed or printed out for people to be able to have access to.

Take 5-minute break

Activity 2 (30 minutes) Role-Playing

When a child in our group consistently acts out in some way, or withdraws from the group or activities, we usually have 2 types of responses. First, most of us have some emotional reaction to the behavior or the child, whether or not we are aware of it. Second, we actually respond to the child, hoping to get the child to change or stop his/her behavior. For the next 15 minutes we will do some role-playing to explore our emotional reactions to different behaviors and what we can do to move beyond those reactions.

A. Role-playing

- Divide staff into 6 groups according to class grades if possible. If there are not enough people to do this, then divide according to broader age groupings. Ask each group to choose one of the behaviors identified on the chart. Make sure that each group has a different behavior. Give them 5 minutes to prepare to role-play the behavior and two different emotional responses to the behavior. Demonstrate an example with a volunteer. For example, C rips up his assignment when you ask to see it. The teacher may yell at C or she may make a sarcastic remark about the child. After demonstrating one example, ask the group what other feelings and responses they might have. Then let the groups prepare for their role play.

- Let each group role-play the behavior and their two responses for the entire group. Ask people to share other feelings they might have to such behavior.

B. Directed Discussion

- Query: Why is it important to recognize our feelings about children's behavior? Make sure the discussion includes: Just like the children we teach, we are human and have emotional reactions to people and experiences. Our feelings are legitimate but sometimes they interfere with our ability to act in ways that are helpful to the situation. If our goal is to help children act more appropriately, then we need to model the kinds of behavior and values that we want children to demonstrate.

- Query: So, how can we separate our emotional reaction from our actual response to the child in that moment? Give an example from the list of behaviors and reactions. What can we do with that feeling before we actually speak to the child? List responses on chart. Examples might include: count to 10, take a deep breath, exhale, create a mental image, like a stop sign, to help you recognize your feeling and separate it from your response.

C. Connection to Jewish Values

- Before we role-play how we might respond to these behaviors, let's identify some Jewish values that we would want to model and convey through our response. Give the groups 5 minutes to come up with as many Jewish values (introduce the term "*midot*") that they can think of and then list staff responses on chart paper. Make sure to include (and explain) the following.

    1. *Derech Eretz* (respect)
    2. *Shmirat Ha'lashon* (guarding one's speech)
    3. We are all created *B'tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God)
    4. The synagogue is a caring community
    5. *Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh Bazeh* (all Israel is responsible one for another)
    6. *V'ahavta L'reicha Kamocha* (you shall love your neighbor as yourself)

- After the workshop is over, the educator will provide, by e-mail, a list of all of the Jewish values that the group identified, together with a short definition and resources for further reference if a teacher wants to do additional reading on the subject. Three resources that could be included on the suggested reading list are:

    1. Amsel, Nachum. *The Jewish Encyclopedia of Moral and Ethical Issues.* Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1994.
    2. Kadden, Barbara and Kadden, Bruce. *Teaching Mitzvot: Concepts, Values and Activities.* Denver: A.R.E. Publishing, Inc. rev. ed., 2003.
    3. Telushkin, Joseph. *The Book of Jewish Values.* NY: Bell Tower, 2000.

- If possible, copies of these books can be available her in the teacher's room or the synagogue library.

Activity 3 (25-30 Minutes) Second Role-Play and Group Critique

- Now let's try out an actual response that will include dealing with our emotional reaction, and keeping in mind some of the Jewish values that we want to model and convey.

- Offer a scenario.

  Joey, age 7, bangs into Sam while they are working on an art project at a table causing Sam to mess up his drawing. Sam yells out that his drawing is ruined and pushes back. This is not the first time that Joey has done something like this.

  Ask for volunteers. If nobody volunteers, then I would act it out. What is your emotional reaction and how would you check it? What will you say and do with these two boys and with the class?

- Have the group discuss and critique the role-play. For example, what values did I try to convey? Was I respectful in doing so? Did my body language match my words? Could I have said or done anything differently? Do I speak with both boys together or separately? Do I speak with them alone or as part of the group? A child's drawing has been messed up. How does this get recognized and resolved between the two boys? What, if anything, do we want to share with the whole class about the incident?

Wrap Up (10-15 minutes)

- Ask people to complete the Workshop 1 Evaluation Form

- Assignment to be done before the next workshop:
    1. Ask people to look at 4 short articles in their binder from the website, www.responsiveclassroom.org. These include, "Power in Speech,"

"Apology of Action," Time Out, Avoiding the Punishment Trap," and "Teacher-Child Problem-Solving conferences". In addition, there is an excerpt from the book How to be a Jewish Teacher, An Invitation to Make a Difference, by Rabbi Samuel Joseph.

- Ask each group to pick one of the behaviors from the grid and plan a response to share with the group the next time. How would you check your emotional reaction? What values do you want to model and convey to the children involved? How and when would you share the incident with the rest of the group?

- Create a group e-mail list

Materials Needed

- Name cards
- Workshop Binders for each participant
- Copies of Chip Wood's book on child development for each participant
- Paper and outline for grid
- Chart paper and markers
- Digital camera
- Snack: water, tea, coffee, soda, fruit, cookies
- Prepare and e-mail out to people copies of the information that we compiled during the workshop: Behavior by Age Grid; suggestions for responding to emotional reactions; and list of Jewish values that we want to model with brief definitions and suggestions for further reading

GOALS AND PLAN FOR WORKSHOP 1[172]

The Goal of the Workshop Series

- The goal of these workshops is to help us learn to identify and create a supportive classroom environment for children who are at risk, either academically or socially, because there are problems in the home.

- We will focus, in particular, on how having a parent or sibling with a mental disorder may affect the behavior and performance of a child in your classroom.

- We will explore how we can model and convey Jewish values that can create an environment to help these children build some level of stability, competence, courage and hope into their often chaotic lives.

Why should we consider the impact of mental illness in the family on children's behavior in the classroom?

- One in five children in your classrooms may be living in a home where a family member has a mental disorder.

- Jewish tradition teaches us that all Israel are responsible for one another, i.e. *Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh Bazeh.*

Goals for Today

1. Introductions

2. We will begin to identify the behaviors that we observe in our classrooms, at different ages, which indicate that something is going on in that child's life that is affecting his/her behavior and ability to participate positively in the program.

3. In a role-playing activity we will begin to recognize our own emotional reactions to a child's behavior and discuss how to separate our personal feelings from our actual response to the child.

4. 5-Minute Break

5. We will begin to identify the Jewish values that we want to model and convey when we respond to inappropriate classroom behavior.

6. We will role-play and critique an actual response to a child's inappropriate behavior.

7. Evaluation of the session

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[172] To be included in the binder for workshop participants.

WORKSHOP 1 EVALUATION FORM[173]

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not helpful at all and 5 being very helpful to you for your work in the classroom, please rate today's activities. If you rate something "1" or "5," please explain (briefly) why

Activity One	
Creating the Behavior Grid	1 2 3 4 5
Identifying Patterns of Behavior	1 2 3 4 5
Activity Two	
Role-playing emotional reactions to classroom behavior	1 2 3 4 5
Discussing reactions and ways to handle reactions	1 2 3 4 5
Identifying Jewish Values to model in our responses	1 2 3 4 5
Activity Three	
Role-playing the "Joey" scenario	1 2 3 4 5
Critiquing the teacher's response	1 2 3 4 5

What, if anything, did you learn in today's workshop?

What, if anything, would you change about the workshop to make it more meaningful to your work? For example, what would you add to or delete from the workshop? Did some activities need more or less time? Were any of the materials or activities unclear?

What questions do you still have about the issues covered today?

Other comments

[173] To be included in the binder for workshop participants.

WORKSHOP 2

Enduring Understandings

1. How teachers respond when a child consistently behaves inappropriately in our classrooms will affect the child's readiness to trust us and begin to make changes.

2. Teachers need to model and convey Jewish values that establish that we are a caring community, we recognize that every child is created *B'tzelem Elohim*, and that every child is precious and worthy of being treated with respect.

3. When a child consistently acts inappropriately in a classroom it is helpful, although not necessary, to learn what is going on in the child's life that may be contributing to that behavior.

4. Because one in five children in the classroom may be affected by a parent or sibling who has a mental disorder, teachers need to understand how mental illness can affect children growing up in such homes in order to better understand how we can support these children in the ways that we relate to them and in the kinds of learning experiences that we create in our classrooms.

Essential Questions

1. How can teachers model and convey to students who are acting inappropriately that we are a caring community, that we will treat them with respect, regardless of their behavior, and that we believe in the worth and preciousness of every child, because they are all created *B'tzelem Elohim?*

2. What are some of the steps we can take to find out what is going on in a child's life that may be causing or contributing to his/her behavior in the classroom?

3. What is mental illness? (How is it understood today?)

4. How does the mental illness of a parent of sibling affect children growing up in the home?

Evidence of Understanding

1. Groups will role-play the incident that they worked on between workshop sessions. Teachers will discuss and critique the responses modeling respect and our belief that each of us is created *B'tzelem Elohim* by our choice of words, tone and body language.

2. Staff will discuss and identify steps that they can take to find out what may be causing or contributing to a child's behavior problems in the classroom.

3. Staff will have the opportunity to question a social worker about how children are affected growing up in a home with a parent or sibling who is mentally ill.

4. Staff will complete a workshop evaluation form.

Taking Care of Business (5-10 minutes)

- Thank everybody for the work that they did between workshops.
- Indicate that the information we began to gather last time will: be part of a Staff Resources Binder that: (i) will be kept in the staff room; (ii) people can continue to contribute to; and (iii) will get shared on line.
- Respond to any questions about today's agenda.

Set Induction (10 minutes)

Have the following question on chart paper and let somebody read it aloud.

> What kinds of questions and language do you find most helpful to hear when somebody is evaluating your work or performance?

Have people write down their responses, share them and then collect the responses to be posted on the group e-mail. For example, try to say what you saw or heard and ask a question, rather than state how you feel or draw a conclusion, e.g., "I noticed that when you spoke to Joey you did not look directly at him. Why is that?"

Activity 1 (25 minutes) Role-playing

Have groups role-play incidents and have staff critique the responses, trying to use the criteria we just identified. During the discussion, ask staff to answer the following questions.

- What values did the group try to convey? Were they successful in doing so? Why or why not?
- How were they respectful in doing so?
- How did their body language match their words?
- Are there other ways you can think of to achieve their goal?
- How and when would you share the incident with the rest of the group?

Activity 2 (15 minutes) Steps to take to find out what's going on in the child's life that may be causing or contributing to the behavior.

- Break into groups according to grade level and consider the incident that your group role-played. Identify the steps that you would take to try and find out what is going on in this child's life. Advise people to refer to Chip Wood's book, *Yardsticks,* for information about children's growth patterns and how they are reflected in their abilities in the classroom for each age. As I spend time with each group, ask questions to make sure that they are thinking about: observations of the child's behavior; speaking with the child; working out a Brit with the child; checking school records for information; talking with last year's teacher; speaking with the Religious School Director ("RSD"); and, where appropriate, meeting with both the parent and RSD.

- Pick somebody in the group to be the group recorder. The group's suggestion plan will be posted on the e-mail after the workshop. Each person will be responsible for reviewing the postings and giving feedback, suggestions or raising questions about another group's plan.

Break for 5 minutes

Activity 3 (50 minutes) Mental Health Speaker and Discussion

- Introduce social worker (5 minutes)

- Have staff take the True/False Questionnaire, "Test Your Knowledge About Mental Illness" from the NAMI materials and review responses. (See Appendix B.) Purpose: Raise general awareness about mental illness. (5 minutes)

- What is mental illness? An overview of the 7 basic types of mental disorders: schizophrenia, manic depression, major depression, panic disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, borderline personality disorder and phobias. Use handout "Definitions," taken from the NAMI Breaking the Silence Materials. (See Appendix B.) Let staff take turns reading the handout aloud. Then social worker will answer questions on this material. (15 minutes)

- Lecture with Q & A opportunities about how children are affected by growing up in a home where a parent or sibling has a mental disorder. (See Workshop Addendum, page 111, for the issues that will be covered in this segment.) (25 minutes)

Wrap Up (5 minutes)

1. Provide for unanswered questions to be posted by e-mail. They will be forwarded to the social worker and responded to.

2. Ask people to review the Fact Sheet About Mental Illness in their Binder. (See page 113)

3. Indicate that a copy of *Troubled Journey, Coming to Terms with the Mental Illness of a Sibling or Parent*, by Diane T. Marsh, Ph.D. and Rex M. Dickens, will be available in the staff room.

4. Ask staff to complete Workshop Evaluation Form 2 either at that time or on line and submit within the next 2 days.

5. In preparation for the next workshop, ask staff to be thinking about materials (ideas for stories, *tikkun olam* projects and teaching prayer) that might be helpful to children coming from a home where a family member is mentally ill, based upon challenges and needs of these children identified during the session with the social worker.

Materials Needed

- Agenda for the Workshop
- Copies of True/False Quiz and Definitions of Mental Illness from NAMI's Breaking the Silence Materials
- Outline Addendum for topics to be covered by Social Worker
- Fact Sheet About Mental Illness
- Copy of Troubled Journey by Marsh and Dickens
- Workshop Evaluation Form
- Chart paper and markers
- Snack: Water, coffee, tea, soda, fruit and cookies

ADDENDUM TO WORKSHOP 2[174]
OUTLINE OF ISSUES FOR THE SOCIAL WORKER TO ADDRESS

I. What is Mental Illness?

A. The 7 basic disorders outlined in the NAMI Breaking the Silence Materials.

1. schizophrenia
2. major depression
3. manic depression/bipolar
4. panic disorder
5. obsessive compulsive disorder
6. borderline personality disorder
7. phobias

B. Questions

II. 3 Significant Factors that Affect How a Child Will Experience Growing Up in a Home With a Mentally Ill Parent or Sibling

A. The Particular Child

1. Age and stage of development (younger v. older and different developmental needs)
2. Personal capacity for resilience
    a. personality traits (ability to form attachments to people, sense of humor, stubbornness, creativity, actively takes initiative)
    b. external supports (other adults in the home, structure v. chaos, opportunities to interact with peers and adults outside the home, opportunities to pursue interests outside the home)
3. Who in the family develops the disorder (parent or sibling)

B. The Family's Response to the Challenge (positive v. negative responses.) How the family responds to following factors.

1. Whether family remains in denial about the problem.
2. Whether family seeks treatment for individual with the disorder and support (counseling, lay support group) for others in the family.
3. Whether parents have sufficient economic resources to provide for basics and beyond for the family.
4. Whether parents have emotional and physical energy to fulfill their nurturing function for other family members.
5. Whether family remains connected to extended family, friends and/or community, or isolates itself due to fear of stigma and/or shame.

[174] To be included in the binder for workshop participants.

6. Whether parents or other siblings are overwhelmed by changes to family and respond by physically or emotional abusing one or more family members.
7. Whether one parent cannot handle the stresses and divorces or abandons his/her spouse.

C. Supports that the Child Has Outside of the Family

1. School
2. Religious community
3. Support groups and therapists

III. Resources in Your Community

A. Have social worker provide a list of community organizations and support groups that help families and individuals who are dealing with mental illness and include the hotline number for the State Central Registrar ("SCR") for reporting instances of suspected or known child abuse or neglect.

B. Briefly discuss what the SCR does and what the reporting requirements are for teachers and schools.

FACT SHEET ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS*

- Mental illness is second only to heart disease as the leading cause of disease in the United States and worldwide.

- One in 5 people will experience a severe mental illness in their lives. On average, one in five children in a class may be impacted by somebody who has a mental disorder.

- Nobody is immune to mental illness. It affects people of any age, race, religion, or income level. 35 million Americans have some form of mental illness in any given six months, including 12 million children (young children and adolescents).

- Mental disorders are brain disorders whose causes are not fully understood. It is currently believed that the brain's neurotransmitters are not functioning properly due to a chemical imbalance in the brain. This kind of imbalance is comparable to imbalances in other areas of the body that cause illnesses such as diabetes and cancer. Other factors such as heredity, stress and recreational drugs may contribute to the onset of mental illness. Research no longer supports earlier theories that family interaction and early childhood training cause mental illness.

- People who have mental disorders are not more violent or dangerous than others in the community who are suffering from a serious disease like cancer or diabetes.

- When people with mental disorders receive and follow appropriate treatment (medication, therapy and support services), they are often able to function in society and have meaningful lives.

- Without treatment, the consequences of mental illness for the individual and society are enormous. They include: unnecessary disability, unemployment, substance abuse, homelessness, inappropriate incarceration, suicide and wasted lives.

- Insurance companies provide less coverage for brain disorders than for all other illnesses.

- Stigma presents significant obstacles to people getting treatment, because it leads to social isolation, shame, guilt and fear of victimization. According to the Surgeon General's Report on Mental Illness in 2000, nearly two-thirds of all people with diagnosable mental disorders do not seek treatment.

*Information for this fact sheet was taken from www.btslessonplans.org, produced by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill ("NAMI"), and pp. 1-2, Pathways to Partnership: An Awareness & Resource Guide on Mental Illness for the Jewish Community, by Jennifer Shifrin (Pathways to Promise, St. Louis, Mo., 3d Ed., 1991).

GOALS AND PLAN FOR WORKSHOP 2[175]

Goals for today

1. We will identify language that supports positive critiquing, i.e., that helps us to learn and feel respected for our work, efforts and ideas, rather than criticized for doing a poor job, making a mistake, or not understanding something.

2. Each group will role-play the behavior incident that they prepared for today and we will critique the response helping each other model that we are a caring community, that we believe in the worth of every child because each child is created *B'tzelem Elohim*, and that we will treat each child with respect, regardless of their behavior.

3. We will work in groups by grade level to identify the steps that we can take to find out what is going on in a child's life that may be causing or contributing to his/her behavior in the classroom.

4. 5-Minute Break

5. We will learn how mental illness is defined and understood today.

6. We will begin to learn how growing up in a home with a mentally ill parent or sibling affects children.

7. Evaluation of the session.

[175] To be included in the binder for workshop participants.

WORKSHOP 2 EVALUATION FORM[176]

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not helpful at all and 5 being very helpful to you for your work in the classroom, please rate today's activities. If you rate something as "1" or "5," please explain (briefly) why.

Activity One

Identifying language that supports positive critiquing, i.e., that helps us to learn, rather than feel that we have done something "wrong" or "poorly".	1 2 3 4 5
Role-playing incidents chosen by each group.	1 2 3 4 5
Critiquing the role-plays.	1 2 3 4 5

Activity Two

Having Chip Wood's book on child development to consider in your group work.	1 2 3 4 5
Working in grade-related groups to plan how to get information about issues impacting on a child's life.	1 2 3 4 5

Activity Three

Learning about the different types of mental disorders.	1 2 3 4 5
Learning about the impact of mental disorders on the family unit.	1 2 3 4 5
Receiving a Fact Sheet about mental illness.	1 2 3 4 5
Receiving a sheet describing the major forms of mental illness.	1 2 3 4 5
Having the opportunity to question the social worker.	1 2 3 4 5

What, if anything did you learn in today's workshop?

What, if anything, would you change about the workshop to make it more helpful for your work? For example, what would you add to or delete from the workshop? Did some activities need more or less time? Were any of the materials or activities unclear?

Did you find any of the articles that you read about classroom management helpful for your work? If yes, which one(s) and why? If no, why not?

What questions or comments do you have about the issues covered today?

[176] To be included in the binder for workshop participants.

WORKSHOP 3

Enduring Understandings

1. Teachers need to be aware that at least one child in their class is likely to be living in a home where a parent or sibling is mentally ill and that this is a reality that teachers cannot change for the child.

2. Teachers can make a difference in the lives of children who live in such homes by creating a safe, nurturing, meaningful, learning environment where these children feel loved and respected for who they are. Jewish educators can offer these children the opportunity to become part of an additional "family," i.e., the Jewish community, where they have opportunities to:

    - connect with peers and adults in meaningful relationships;
    - develop a meaningful relationship with God;
    - learn and grow as individuals;
    - feel that they are competent and valued members of the community;
    - learn that there are many others who have faced or are facing similar challenges; and
    - learn that there are many ways to help oneself and/or get help from others.

Essential Questions

1. What are some of the specific Jewish values that teachers need to know and convey to children in order to create opportunities for children to feel loved and respected for who they are and to help them feel that they are part of a caring Jewish "family" outside of their home?

2. How can teachers structure a lesson, project or unit to achieve these goals?

3. What experiences and resources might teachers use, in terms of stories, prayer and *tikkun olam* projects, to convey these values in a lesson or project?

Evidence of Understanding

1. Staff will participate in an activity where they identify, define and give examples of the Jewish values that are important to know and convey to children who are living in a family where there is mental illness.

2. As a group, we will review the elements of how to structure a lesson, project or unit using the "Backwards Design" method of curriculum development.

3. Teachers will work in groups, by grade level, to begin to create a lesson or project that conveys one of the values identified. Teachers will be asked to use stories, prayer and/or a *tikkun olam* project as the vehicle for conveying the value that they choose.

4. The group will determine whether we need to bring back the social worker to respond to additional questions or for clarification about the most helpful types of experiences that teachers can provide to support the needs of children growing up with a mentally ill parent or sibling.

5. Staff will complete an evaluation form at the end of the workshop.

Set Induction (5-10 minutes)

In the last workshop, we began to learn about how living with a family member who is mentally ill can affect a child. What were some of things that stood out in your mind? What new questions do you have?

It is important for you, as a teacher, to remember 3 things when thinking about this issue.

1. You can assume that there is at least one child in your class who is living in a home where a parent or sibling has some mental disorder.

2. You cannot change the reality of that child's home life.

3. You can make a very real difference in that child's life by the way that you relate to him or her in class and by the kind of learning environment that you create in your classroom.

Activity 1 (30 minutes) Identifying Jewish Values that Can Help Support Children Living in Homes Where a Parent or Sibling is Mentally Ill

Today we are going to focus on what you can do in your classrooms to make a difference in these children's lives. We are going to begin to explore how the Jewish values posted around the room can be incorporated into your classroom work to support children who live in homes where there is a parent or sibling with a mental disorder.

I am going to pass out index cards that have the name of a Jewish value written in Hebrew, transliteration and English. These are the same values that are posted on the wall. I'd like you to do 3 things with the value you receive.

1. Explain/define it as best as you can in no more than a couple of sentences. If you need help you can look at any of the following resources:

   - Kadden, Barbara and Bruce Kadden. *Teaching Mitzvot: Concepts, Values and Activities.*
   - Telushkin, Rabbi Joseph. *The Book of Jewish Values, A Day-to-Day Guide to Ethical Living.*
   - the list of values from the Association of Jewish Libraries' website, www.ajljewishvalues.org/list

2. State why you think that this value could be helpful to a child growing up in a home where a family member is mentally ill.

3. Offer an example of a story, prayer or *tikkun olam* activity that you might use to convey this value.

4. Use a separate sheet of paper to record your responses and then tape that sheet on the wall under its corresponding value.

The following values will be posted around the room and on the index cards.

- We are created *B'tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God)
- *Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh Bah Zeh* (All of Israel is responsible for one another)
- *Derekh Eretz* (Respect)
- *Shmirat HaGuf* (Taking care of one's body)
- *Shmirat HaLashon* (Guarding one's speech)
- *Nedarim* (Keeping one's word)
- *Ometz Lev* (Courage)
- *Tikvah* (Hope)
- *Dibbuk Chaverim* (Clinging to friends)
- *V'ahavta L'reiehcha Kamocha* (Loving one's neighbor as oneself)
- *Pikuakh Nefesh* (Saving a life/soul)

There is more than one index card for each value. You can work alone or you can find somebody else in the group with the same value and work with that person. You will have 10-15 minutes to work on this. Then we will walk around, see what everybody has come up with and clarify any questions you have about these values. Any questions?

After people have had a chance to see what others have done, take comments and questions. Ask people to consider and share in a group e-mail communication any other Jewish values that they think should be added to this list.

Activity 2 (30 minutes) Elements to incorporate into a lesson, project or unit.

Short lecture, including application, of the "Backwards Design Process" a process for designing curriculum developed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe in the 1990s. (See Addendum 1, page 121, for outline of the lecture.)

Activity 3 (40 minutes) Developing a lesson, prayer experience or *tikkun olam* project that uses the "Backwards Design Process" to convey one of the values identified in this session.

- Staff will work in groups, according to children's grade level, to design a lesson or project that uses stories, a prayer experience or a *tikkun olam* project to convey one of the values identified in this session. Teachers will use the "Backward Design Process" to develop their lesson or project. Teachers will work on the lesson/project during this workshop and during the two weeks before the last workshop. Teachers will share their lesson/project with the whole group during the last workshop. The group will critique the lesson/project using the "Guiding Questions for Critiquing Presentations" included in the Binder. (See page 129.) Teachers will also use these questions to help them plan their own lesson/project.

- The goal for today will be for each group to decide their value, develop the enduring understanding, essential questions and evidence of understanding. Then decide if they want to use stories, a prayer activity or *tikkun olam* project as the means to express that value.

- A list of resources as well as the resources themselves will be available for teachers to look at during this session and during the 2 weeks between sessions. Teachers can also use materials and resources that they are familiar with.

- As people are working in groups, remind them to check their Binders for the "Guiding Questions and the article, "*Curriculum Planning: a Model for Understanding,"* by Nachama Skolnik Moskowitz taken from *The Ultimate Teacher's Handbook.* (See pages 129 and Appendix C.)

Wrap Up (10 minutes)

- Answer questions that people have about the lesson/projects that they are working on and how we will present and critique them during the last workshop.

- Indicate that the list of values we identified today, together with their definitions will be e-mailed to the group during the week.

- Have the group decide whether they want to bring back the social worker to answer additional questions during Workshop 4.

- Ask staff to complete a Workshop Evaluation Form.

Materials Needed

- Agenda for the Workshop
- Signs with values to post around the room
- Index cards with values in Hebrew and transliterated
- Paper and pencils
- Copies of the Backwards Design diagram for planning curriculum and the format for planning a lesson according to this process. (See pages 127-128.)
- List of values from the Association of Jewish Libraries site
- Copies of the Nachama Moskowitz Article on Curriculum Design (See Appendix C.)
- Resources for people to check as they work on their project (See Addendum 2, page 125.)
- "Guiding Questions for Critiquing Presentations (See page 129.)
- Workshop 3 Evaluation Form

ADDENDUM 1

PRESENTATION AND APPLICATION OF THE BACKWARD DESIGN PROCESS[177]

I. WHAT IS THE "BACKWARD DESIGN" ("BD") PROCESS

A. This is a process for designing curriculum, projects, and lessons. It is not a process by which children learn.

B. The process consists of three broad areas:

1. Identifying what we want people to understand and know at the end of a unit or lesson. This area includes Enduring Understandings, Essential Questions and formal established goals, if any.

2. Evidence of Understanding. This area includes the different types of assessment tools, both short and long-term for a unit or lesson. These help both teachers and students measure whether the learning activities and experiences helped students achieve the desired understandings and learning.

3. Learning Activities. These are the actual learning activities for a particular unit or lesson that will help students build the skills and knowledge that will enable them to achieve the desired understandings and learning.

C. Ask people to refer to the BD Materials and "Guiding Questions for Presentation Critiques" in the Binder. (See pages 127-129.) Also have this information displayed on chart paper.

1. Enduring Understandings ("EUs") These are BIG IDEAS, CORE CONCEPTS that you want children to recognize and understand. They are not facts. They are broad ideas that frame the learning in the classroom and go well beyond the classroom.

a. Example 1: When we perform *mitzvot* we strengthen our relationship to the Jewish community and to God.

b. Example 2: The *mitzvah* of *Bal Taschit* (caring for the environment), directs us to live in harmony with the earth because the earth is God's creation and people are part of that creation.

[177] This material is taken from Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighes's book *Understanding by Design,* 2d ed. (Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum and Development, 2005), Chaps. 1 and 5.

2. Essential Questions These are questions designed to help students stay focused on the big ideas as they grapple with material and experiences. They do not have simple answers, nor are they seeking a factual response. They are questions that provoke thought and further inquiry.

    a. Examples of Essential Questions: How can we become more aware of our natural physical environment when we live in a city? Why is it important for us to care for and live in harmony with our natural environment? What does Judaism teach us about our relationship to the earth? How can we act on that in our lives today?

3. Evidence of Understanding These are assessment mechanisms. They are the experiences and activities that demonstrate what children know, understand and can do by the time they reach the end of a lesson, unit or project. These experiences indicate whether children have successfully achieved the goals expressed in the "Essential Questions" that convey the EU(s). There may be a number of assessment mechanisms throughout a lesson, unit or project. Some demonstrate what information and skills that children have learned along the way. Others measure whether children have achieved the broad goals of understanding by the end of the lesson or unit.

    a. Examples (both interim and end of unit assessments): After reflecting upon their connection to their physical environment, learning about the *mitzvah* of *Bal Taschit* and identifying why it is important to care for our urban environment, early adolescents living in the City will develop a group project for the year where they perform this *mitzvah.*

4. Activities These are the learning experiences designed to help children build skills, acquire knowledge and achieve the understandings that will enable them to successfully complete the assessments. The activities are framed by "Essential Questions" that relate back to the build towards the assessment.

    a. Examples of activities: Have quote on board from Psalms 24:1 "The earth is Adonai's with all it contains, the world and all its inhabitants." Let students share the first thing that this makes them think of. Connect responses to the Jewish tradition of saying a blessing every time we see, hear or taste one of nature's wonders. Then take the group on a "silent" walk in the park where they need to identify

(on sketchpads or in their minds) as many different natural wonders as they can. When the group returns to the classroom, let them share what they observed, heard and smelled. Then students can engage in a guided text study where they determine what relevance they have for 21st century adolescents living in NYC.

II. GROUP APPLICATION TO ONE OF THE VALUES

A. Introduction As a group we will now begin to apply the BD process to developing a lesson based on the value that we are all created *B'tzelem Elohim.*

1. Acknowledge that this may be the first time many of them are using this method and it can take getting used to. This means that may make mistakes along the way but that is a good piece of what the learning process is about. Note that there are whole workshops and courses devoted to teaching this method and that the learning takes place in layers, over time, as we use the method and see the results. Take questions.

B. The Format Have the group make suggestions for each area. Some possible examples are included below.

1. Enduring Understanding(s): E.g. Each one of us is created in the image of God and is, therefore, loved and cherished by God for who we are regardless of what we do or do not do in the world. Each of us has a spark of God within us and that spark gets expressed in a unique way for each of us.

2. Essential Questions: E.g. What does it mean to be created in the image of God? What qualities would you use to describe God? Do you have any of those qualities? If God loves us for who we are regardless of what we do or do not achieve and regardless of how we behave, then how can we be thinking about children who behave inappropriately in our classrooms? If we are created *B'tzlem Elohim*, then what are the ways we can show love and respect to ourselves? When others do not treat us with respect and love, who can we turn to for help or how can we help ourselves?

3. Evidence of Understanding: E.g. Students will describe characteristics of God and identify qualities that they share or could share with God through their actions. Students will role play situations where others do not treat them with love and respect and how they can respond or get help to change that.

4. Set Induction: E.g. Have the words "*B'tzelem Elohim*" written on the board, and play or sing the Dan Nichols' song "*B'tzelem Elohim*" from his CD "*Chazak*". The song and words can be heard on the website www.jewishrock.com.

5. Activity(ies): Ask participants for suggestions using stories, prayers and/or *tikkun olam* projects.

ADDENDUM 2

RESOURCE LIST FOR TEACHERS' LESSON/PROJECT ACTIVITY[178]

For Finding Stories

Elswit, Sharon, B. *The Jewish Story Finder.* Jefferson, No. Carolina: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2005.

This new book is written by a Jewish storyteller and children's librarian in a Jewish day school in New York City. It lists 363 stories by subject and identifies the different sources where the stories can be found. An appendix groups the stories by recommended age level. This book is an invaluable resource for teachers.

www.ajljewishvalues.org

This website is maintained by the Association of Jewish Libraries. It contains a database where you can obtain a list of Jewish values by clicking on "values" in the "values field." On the main page of the database, you can search for stories by subject, value or author. You can refine your search by indicating the grade level of interest. This is also a very valuable resource for educators.

For Preparing a Lesson or Project Using Prayer

Fields, Harvey. *B'Chol L'vavcha.* New York: UAHC Press, 2001.

This book contains material to use while leading services, including many *midrashim* on the origins of the prayers.

Kadden, Barbara and Kadden, Bruce. *Teaching Tefilah: Insights and Activities on Prayer.* Denver: A.R.E. Publishing, Inc., rev. ed., 2004.

This book not only clearly explains the basics of Jewish liturgy, but also provides stories, activities and resources for all of the prayers.

Copies of different prayer books.

For Preparing a *Tikkun Olam* Lesson or Project

Kadden, Barbara and Kadden, Bruce. *Teaching Mitzvot: Concepts, Values and Activities.* Denver, Co.: A.R.E. Publishing, Inc., rev. ed., 2003.

[178] To be included in the binder for workshop participants.

Lewis, Barbara. *The Kids' Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference.* Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1995.

This book contains both simple and large-scale projects on a variety of topics and includes lots of practical and helpful suggestions.

Lewis, Barbara. *Kids With Courage.* Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1992.

Schwartz, Barry L. *Jewish Heroes Jewish Values.* New Jersey: Behrman House, 1996.

http://www.ziv.org

This is Danny Siegel's website for his *Tzedakah* organization. You can obtain a booklet describing non-profit organizations, by categories, that children may want to contribute to. The website also provides information about the *Ziv* Curriculum Guide.

BACKWARD DESIGN MATERIALS[179]

The Stages of Backward Design[180]

1. IDENTIFY DESIRED RESULTS.

2. DETERMINE ACCEPTABLE EVIDENCE.

3. PLAN LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND INSTRUCTION.

[179] To be included in the binder for workshop participants.
[180] Wiggins and McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 18, figure 2.

The BD Lesson/Project Format[181]

Enduring Understandings

Essential Questions

Evidence of Understanding

Set Induction

Activities

Materials Needed

[181] To be included in the binder for workshop participants.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PRESENTATION CRITIQUES[182]

As you plan your group lesson/project and when you evaluate the presentations of other groups, use the following questions to guide your thinking.

1. Is the Enduring Understanding ("EU") a BIG IDEA that frames the whole lesson or project about the particular value that the group has chosen to teach?

2. Does the assessment activity or series of assessments help children of that particular age recognize and understand the EU?

3. What skills or understandings do the activities ask children to learn? How are these related to the EU?

4. In what ways are the skills, understandings and activities age appropriate?

5. In what ways do the activities help children connect to their peers and/or to adults?

6. In what ways does participation in this lesson/project help build a child's Jewish competency?

7. What, if anything, in the lesson or project helps the child experience that s/he is part of a caring community?

8. In what ways does participation in this lesson/project help children build or deepen their relationship to God?

[182] To be included in the binder for workshop participants.

GOALS AND PLAN FOR WORKSHOP 3[183]

1. We will identify, define and give examples of the Jewish values that are important for teachers to know and convey to children who are living in a home where a parent or sibling is mentally ill.

2. We will learn (or review) how to plan a lesson, project or unit of study based upon the "Backward Design" curriculum process developed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. We will then apply this method, as a group, and plan a lesson based upon one of the values that we identify.

3. Teachers will work in groups, by grade level, to begin to plan a lesson or project to teach one of the values using stories, prayer and/or a *tikkun olam* project. These lessons will be shared with the group during the last workshop.

4. We will decide whether we want to bring the social worker back during the last workshop to answer additional questions or help us clarify how to use activities and materials to support the needs of children living in homes where a parent or sibling is mentally ill.

5. Evaluation of the session.

We will not take a fixed break time during this session, but refreshments will be available throughout the workshop.

[183] To be included in the binder for workshop participants.

WORKSHOP 3 EVALUATION FORM[184]

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not helpful at all and 5 being very helpful to you for your work in the classroom, please rate today's activities. If you rate something as "1" or "5," please explain (briefly) why.

Activity One

Identifying Jewish values important to know and convey to children living in a home with a mentally ill parent or sibling. (The index card activity)	1 2 3 4 5

Activity Two

Learning about the "Backwards Design" method for developing a unit, lesson or project.	1 2 3 4 5
Applying the "Backwards Design" method, together as a a group, to one of the values that we identified today.	1 2 3 4 5

Activity Three

Working in groups, by grade level, to begin to develop a lesson or project based upon one of the values identified today.	1 2 3 4 5

What, if anything did you learn in today's workshop?

What, if anything, would you change about the workshop to make it more helpful for your work? For example, what would you add to or delete from the workshop? Did some activities need more or less time? Were any of the materials or activities unclear?

What questions do you have about the issues covered today?

What accommodations might you want to implement for the children in your classroom based upon your knowledge of what can be helpful to children living in homes where there is mental illness and your understanding of the Backwards Design Process of developing curriculum?

If you would like the social worker to return, what issues/questions would you like her to address?

Other comments

[184] To be included in the binder for workshop participants.

WORKSHOP 4

Enduring Understanding

Teachers can make a difference in the lives of children who live in homes where a family member is mentally ill by creating a safe, nurturing, meaningful, learning environment where these children feel loved and respected for who they are. Jewish educators can offer these children the opportunity to become part of an additional "family," i.e., the Jewish community, where they have opportunities to:

- connect with peers and adults in meaningful relationships;
- build or deepen their relationship to God;
- learn and grow as individuals;
- become competent and valued members of the group/community;
- learn that there are many others who have faced or are facing similar challenges; and
- learn that there are many ways to help oneself and/or get help from others.

Essential Questions

1. How can teachers use Jewish values to help children feel that they are competent and valued members of a caring community?

2. How can teachers create learning experiences using stories, prayer experiences and *tikkun olam* projects to convey these Jewish values?

3. How do these values and experiences help children build or deepen their relationship with God?

Evidence of Understanding

1. Teachers will share their lesson or project with the group.

2. The group will critique the lessons/ projects using the Guiding Questions for Presentation Critiques to frame their thinking. These questions are in the Binders. (See page 129.)

3. Teachers will complete a final workshop evaluation.

4. If a need was identified in the last workshop, the social worker will return to address questions that arose as a result of preparing work for the classroom.

Set Induction (5 minutes)

Tell the story of the girl and the starfish on the beach. (See page 77.)

Every lesson or project that you are working on has the potential to make the difference in the life of a child. Every person in the group has the potential to be like one of the passersby on the beach who joined in to help save more starfish. The work that you do, the suggestions that you make when you critique others, and the respect that you show others as you do so, are all examples how we are created *B'tzelem Elohim.*

Any questions before we begin?

Activity 1 Presentation of Lessons/Projects and Critiques (90 minutes)

- Assuming that that there are 6 presentations, one for each grade, each group will have approximately 10 minutes to present and then there will be 5 minutes to critique each lesson or project. Additional comments and suggestions can be shared by e-mail after the workshop.

- When the presentations are completed, the group will participate in the *Shechechianu* blessing.

Activity 2 (20 minutes)

- Questions for the social worker if she is there. If not, move on to the Wrap Up.

Wrap Up (10-15 minutes)

- Have people complete final evaluation form.
- Questions and discussion about where to go from here. Include in this discussion what they plan to implement in their classrooms and what help they think they may need.

Materials Needed

- Agenda for the Workshop
- Final Evaluation Form
- Refreshments

GOALS AND PLAN FOR WORKSHOP 4[185]

1. Each grade level group will present their lesson/project to the entire group.

2. The entire group will critique the lesson/project using the "Guiding Questions" which we began to use in Workshop 3 to think about how we are planning a lesson/project.

3. Evaluation of the workshops and consideration of "where to from here?" What do the teachers need/want to continue this process?

4. Additional questions for the social worker if the group has decided to bring her back.

[185] To be included in the binder for workshop participants.

FINAL WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM[186]

What, if anything, did you learn from presenting your group's lesson/project?

What, if anything, did you learn from the other groups' presentations?

What, if anything, would you change about today's session to make it more helpful to your work?

What would you like to see happen next as a result of these workshops? What supports would you like to have in place to continue the work that you began in these workshops? For example, would you like to have more opportunities to work with a social worker or other teachers to share concerns about particular children? Do you want more opportunities to share and discuss meaningful learning experiences to support these children? THINK BIG.

What did you find most helpful from these workshops and why?

What did you find least helpful from these workshops and why?

What questions remain unanswered for you?

Comments or suggestions

[186] To be included in the binder for workshop participants.

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APPENDIX A

Responsive Classroom®
A practical approach to creating safe, challenging and joyful elementary schools

IN THIS ISSUE
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RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM NEWSLETTER

Power in Speech

A fifth grade teacher coaches children to assert themselves through respectful talk

by Megan Earls

One of the most valuable things we can teach students is how to assert themselves in respectful ways. In spontaneous and planned moments throughout the day, teachers can work with students to think about what they want to communicate, to examine their words, and to try new and different ways of speaking.

But who has time to let children talk, we teachers often ask, when standardized tests are upon us starting from September and many of our students are reading below grade level? Perhaps we also fear behavior problems. For many years, I thought it would be easier to keep students quiet than to negotiate a conversation, especially in the upper grades.

But when I think back on my most valuable lessons in childhood—the moments I am most proud of—they are times when I spoke up. The ability to speak up assertively and respectfully is a form of power that helps our students succeed in school and in life. If I keep the classroom silent, I'm robbing students of this power.

Despite the concerns about falling behind or, worse, inviting chaos by encouraging talk, I have found that when children

ABOUT THE TEACHER

Megan Earls taught fifth grade in New York City public schools for four years. This year, she is teaching fourth grade at PS 58 in Brooklyn. Before teaching, she worked at Fellowship of Reconciliation, leading workshops for youth on anti-racism and nonviolence theory and practice. She is particularly committed to creating a classroom where students question the way things are, imagine the way things could be, and learn to take clear, confident steps to assert themselves.

Another Teacher's Experience

See how kindergarten teacher Eileen Mariani helps children learn through meaningful talk in Chapter 3, "Ritual and Real," in

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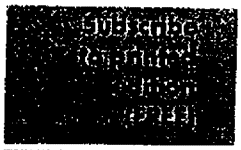

know how to talk skillfully, behavior problems decrease. I do less talking and more teaching. Students learn more each day, finding new strength in their academic and social lives as they find their voices.

the book *Habits of Goodness.*

Here are some strategies that I've found helpful in coaching talk among fifth graders in two kinds of situations: spontaneous teachable moments and planned discussions.

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Teachable moments

Students' school days are filled with moments of conflict or awkwardness that can be positively handled with the skillful use of talk. Coaching students through these times involves:

- Being alert to such moments
- Giving students an opening to "do over" using more constructive talk
- Suggesting words to students when needed and demonstrating an appropriate tone of voice

Example: The stepped-on coat

It's the end of the day, and the class is packing their bags, talking about their after-school plans. But it's getting too loud. I see Terrence and Laquasia talking loudly, possibly angrily, at each other. I flick the lights, signaling the class to stop, look at me, and listen up.

"It's too loud in here. Pack-up time needs to be calmer so everyone can get organized." I walk over to Laquasia and Terrence, who are looking upset.

"What's happening here?" I ask.

I learn that Terrence just threw Laquasia's coat on the floor. He says she had stepped on his and that's why he threw hers down. Laquasia confirms the story, but neither of them knows what comes next.

"Terrence, what other way could you respond that's respectful, but that gets your point across?"

Terrence pauses, then turns to Laquasia and says, "Oh, that's okay, Laquasia. Don't worry about it." He turns back to me, as if to say, "Is that okay?"

It is not okay, because while Terrance's response might sound respectful, it is not true to his feelings. I don't want

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students to think that being respectful means avoiding your own needs and feelings.

"I'm guessing, Terrence, that it's really not okay with you when someone steps on your coat," I say. "Watch me for a minute. Here's another way you could respond: 'Laquasia, I'm really mad right now. It's not okay for you to step all over my coat.'" In my demonstration, I make eye contact with Laquasia and use a strong voice without yelling. It's important to teach that our body language and tone of voice are just as important as the words we use.

Turning back to Terrence, I continue, "Terrence, now you can tell Laquasia what you would like her to do if this happens again. You could start with, 'Next time you see a coat on the floor, you could ...'"

Terrence repeats the prompt and finishes with two excellent suggestions: hang it back up, or bring it to him at his desk.

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Planned discussions

Children do not come to school necessarily knowing how to engage in discussions about books, ideas, or social issues. They need to be actively taught discussion skills, just as they need to be actively taught how to read, write, do math, draw, or conduct a science experiment. Some helpful strategies in this teaching include:

- Agreeing with the class on some respectful and constructive phrases to use in different discussion situations
- Modeling and reminding students to use such phrases in class discussions
- Being alert to opportunities to show students not only how to agree or disagree with each other, but how to build on each other's ideas

Example: A book discussion

It's the middle of the year, and the class is partway through our read-aloud of *Sidewalk Story* by Sharon Bell Mathus. Early in the year, we had brainstormed some constructive phrases to use in holding a book discussion. Ideas included:

- "What do you think of ..." (to ask a question)
- "I think ..." (to share an idea we're working on)

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- "I agree, and I'd like to add ..." (to add onto an idea with more evidence or further thoughts)
- "What do you mean?" "Can you say more about that?" or "So, is what you're saying ..." (when we can't follow what someone is saying)
- "I don't see it that way. What about ..." (when we disagree with someone's idea)

We had written these phrases on a big chart and had been practicing using them. On this day, the students are sharing their thoughts about Lilly, the main character in *Sidewalk Story*, and her best friend Tanya.

"Usually in starting a conversation about a book, it helps to begin with an idea you're working on or a question," I remind the class. "Who can get us started?"

Five or six hands go up. Nica offers her idea. "I think Lilly's mom is really mean. She's always yelling at Lilly."

The students think about this for a moment, and then begin to talk. "I agree, and Lilly doesn't even deserve to be yelled at," Michael says.

"That's true, but I don't think the mom's really mean. She's more like, worried," Marcos responds.

So far so good. The students are listening to each other, agreeing and disagreeing respectfully, moving the discussion along.

Then, Malek makes a comment and an excited Nica responds by saying, "No, but Lilly's mom isn't ..."

I catch Nica's eye and gesture toward our chart of respectful discussion phrases the class agreed on. Nica starts again. "I don't see it that way, Malek. What about..." The students pick up on the correction, but the interruption to the discussion is minimal and they continue easily.

Later in the conversation, Jeremy makes a comment that is too far from the story. "Tanya's mom and Lilly's mom probably had a fight or something, so that's why they hate each other."

There is no evidence of such a fight in the book. Seeing this as a chance to model how to handle such a situation in a discussion, I say, "I agree it could happen that the two mothers would have a fight. But I don't remember anything in the book that says they did. Do you?"

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"No, I guess not," Jeremy says.

At this point I want the class to see that we can use talk not only to question each other's ideas, but to build on them. So I say, "But you're getting at something here, Jeremy. The mothers don't fight, but they don't help each other out. Do you have an idea about that?"

Jeremy thinks a minute, then begins to talk about how Lilly's mom might not be helping because she doesn't want to get her own family in trouble.

I look around the circle and remind the class, "Now would be a smart time to go inside the book and see if we can get some backup for Jeremy's idea." We are quiet for a minute as we think about which scenes in the book might have what we're looking for. Jeremy sits tall, knowing the class is invested in his thinking, but also understanding that his ideas are more powerful when he expresses them accurately and without exaggeration. The class, meanwhile, has learned a way to disagree respectfully and move a discussion constructively toward more sound ideas.

Hard but necessary work

Teaching students how to talk can be hard work. When our daily schedules are accounted for down to the minute, it's hard to slow down to have these conversations. It might seem easier not to teach talk. But it's scary to think what children would miss. We need to prepare them to be respectful and assertive in their lives, and there are bigger problems they'll face than a couple of winter coats thrown on the floor or a sloppily constructed idea about a book. But those are good places to start. From those modest beginnings, children can learn to speak up in the world—inside and outside our classrooms.

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Responsive Classroom Newsletter

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Apology of Action

Teaching Children to Make Amends

It's mid-October in Carol Hofmann's fourth grade class and the children are drawing pictures of what they'll be for Halloween. Jonathan, Peter and Lee, three friends, are working together at a table with a few others. Lee draws a beautiful picture of a pirate ship with seeming ease. Peter, sitting next to Lee, looks discouraged as he struggles to create something that resembles a vampire.

After much erasing and sighing, Peter finally finishes and raises his picture triumphantly, "I did it!"

Lee takes a quick look and with a smile says, "Man that's ugly." Peter takes this as a compliment until Lee asks, "What is it?"

For a moment Peter seems confused as all eyes turn toward him. He looks across the table at his friend Jonathan who has just started wearing glasses. Peter lets out a quick, nervous laugh and announces, "It's Jonathan with his new glasses!"

Laughter erupts as Peter holds up the picture for everyone to see. Jonathan, tears welling up in his eyes, quickly stands up and walks away.

TEACHER TO TEACHER

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Carol Hofmann is a fourth grade teacher and a *Responsive Classroom* consulting teacher. She teaches at Summit Elementary, a K-6 school with about 700 students in suburban Cincinnati. Summit has been a Responsive Leadership Forum School for three years. Carol is in her fifth year of teaching and will soon receive a master's in counseling degree from the University of Cincinnati.

Scenes like this one in which children's feelings get hurt by their classmates are not uncommon in elementary school classrooms. While acknowledging that it's impossible to prevent every one of these incidents from occurring, fourth grade teacher Carol Hofmann has found a way to help students learn to stand up for themselves when their feelings have been hurt and to make amends when they have been the ones who have done the hurting.

Carol recalls a feeling she had several years ago which prompted her to try something new in her classroom. "I was tired of having kids leave school at the end of the day with hurt feelings and I was tired of feeling responsible for fixing these feelings when I wasn't even the one who caused them."

A Conversation

At the same time, while attending a *Responsive Classroom* workshop, she had a conversation with consulting teacher Chip Wood about Rules and Logical Consequences. Chip mentioned that the rule, "you break it, you fix it," could be applied to hurt feelings as well as broken objects: when a child hurts someone's feelings, they do something to help fix these feelings. Carol was excited by this notion of an "apology of action" and immediately began planning a way to implement it with her fourth graders.

"The idea behind an apology of action made so much sense to me," Carol remembers. "I could recall so many incidents from my own life when I had done something that hurt someone's feelings and when saying "I'm sorry'. didn't seem like enough. Often I would do more. I'd write a note, I'd do a favor, I'd try to make amends."

http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/ Appendix A 138f

Beyond "I'm Sorry"

While Carol feels that saying "I'm sorry" is often appropriate and needed, she also feels that it's frequently inadequate. The process Carol uses for an apology of action not only gives the children who have done the hurting an opportunity to do something to make amends but it also gives the children who have been hurt the opportunity to stand up for themselves and assert their needs.

When introducing the idea to her students, Carol begins by telling them that we all make mistakes and hurt people's feelings, sometimes intentionally and sometimes without even knowing it. What's important, she emphasizes, is that we learn to pay attention to how our actions affect others and that we learn to take responsibility for these actions.

A Class Discussion

Carol starts with a class discussion in October. She asks her students, "How many of you have ever had your feelings hurt?" All hands go up. "What types of things have you done or seen others do that hurt people's feelings?" Eager to share examples, her class generates a long list.

Laughing when someone makes a mistake

Calling someone a name

Ignoring someone during conversation in the lunchroom

Telling someone they can't play at recess

Making faces and rolling your eyes when someone is talking

Carol then asks her students to talk about how they feel when these things are done to them and whether an "I'm sorry" helps them to feel better. "Over and over, the children tell me that having those three words said to them doesn't do much to help them feel better." One child articulated it quite clearly when she said, "When someone says, 'I'm sorry', it doesn't take away the bad feelings inside."

"What would make you feel better when your feelings are hurt?" is the next question. "What if, for example, someone laughed when you made a mistake, what could that person then do to help you feel better?" She doesn't expect there to be any simple answers. Rather, what's important at this point is that the children begin to think about the question.

"You Break It, You Fix It"

Carol explains that in her classroom they'll be using the "you break it, you fix it" rule (which by now the children are very familiar with) when people's feelings get broken. "If you hurt someone's feelings, you'll have the chance to make it up to them by doing something for that person that helps to fix these feelings. We'll call this an apology of action."

In addition to learning to take responsibility for their actions, Carol wants her students to learn to stand up for themselves when they have been hurt. "Some children are afraid to speak up when someone does something that hurts them. This process encourages them to do so, which is especially important for the kids who are not as assertive," says Carol.

A Procedure

Here's how it works. In the above scenario, Jonathan's feelings were hurt by Peter. *After walking away from the table and taking some time to calm down, Jonathan approaches Peter and says, "You hurt my feelings when you said that about your picture looking like me with my new glasses." Peter apologizes and says he was only kidding. "I want an apology of action," says Jonathan.*

Sometimes children are able to ask for this on their own; at other times they need support from the teacher. Now, Peter has until the end of the day to decide upon an appropriate action.

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Choosing as Appropriate Action
The most important guideline for choosing an apology of action is that it's *related* to the hurtful behavior. Take, for instance, the time when a child had been excluded from a game and the proposed apology of action was to draw the child a nice picture. Through a brief discussion with Carol, the child responsible was able to see that this action was not related to the hurtful behavior and instead decided to invite the classmate to play with her at recess on the following day.

In October, the class generates a list of possible actions which are left on the wall all year. Many of the students use this list as a starting point, something to refer to when they're having trouble coming up with an appropriate action.

Follow-Through
In the beginning, Carol keeps track of the incidents so that she can make sure there is follow-through. "I jot down on post-it notes who owes whom what so that I can hold my students accountable. I want to send them a clear message that this is important and that I will expect them to follow through with it." As the year goes on, her students become more independent and it becomes the responsibility of the child who has been hurt to make sure there is follow-through. Still, Carol remains watchful to make sure the process is being used well. Are the children being respectful and reasonable in their requests for an apology of action? Is the giving being done in a real and generous way?

Tagger's Choice
To prevent arguments about whether or not someone's feelings were hurt, Carol uses a rule from tag games called "Tagger's Choice." This rules states that if the tagger says you've been tagged, then you have. Similarly, if someone says that you've hurt their feelings, then you have. Carol explains to her students, "Lots of times we hurt other's feelings and we don't even know it. Whether we intend to be hurtful or not, we still need to take responsibility for how our actions affect others."

It's the end of the day and Peter stops Jonathan in the hallway to tell him that he has decided to draw a picture of him and write an apology on the back. He has already talked with Lee who has offered to help make the drawing look "really cool." Peter waits for Jonathan's response. According to the class rules, the person who has been hurt needs to give their okay to the plan. Jonathan's thumbs up lets Peter know he likes the idea and the two walk together to their lockers to get ready to go home.

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Your Questions

Time-out: Avoiding the Punishment Trap

Question:
I have a dilemma about time-out. I tell my students that time-out is not a punishment, but I know it can feel like punishment when I send them to time-out for acting out. It probably doesn't help that their previous teachers may have used time-out as a punishment—and I've used it myself as punishment in previous years. What can I do to shift us all into the new mentality?

Answer:
Answer from NEFC co-founder Ruth Sidney Charney

Ruth Sidney Charney has taught children and teachers for almost 30 years. She is the author of Teaching Children to Care: Classroom Management for Ethical and Academic Growth, K-8 and Habits of Goodness: Case Studies in the Social Curriculum.

Our actions often reflect our true intentions or ingrained habits of thinking. It is important, as you suggest in your question, to start by examining our own motivations and tone as we use this procedure. What do we believe is the purpose of our classroom time-out system?

I find it helpful to remind myself that learning impulse control is a fundamental task of child development. Children are learning how to balance their own desires with the desires of the community. As they learn, they make mistakes. Indeed, we all have our moments when we start to lose control, head down a hill, and need to apply our figurative brakes. The intention of time-out is not to make children feel bad or to make them "pay" for their actions, but to help them apply their internal brakes and learn to steer themselves out of trouble.

Once we are clear that this is the purpose of time-out, it's important to help children reach the same understanding. When they realize that what we most want them to learn is self-control, they will be less likely to see time-out as punishment. Here are some ways to help students reach this understanding:

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1. **Present time-out as a way to learn to make good choices.**

   Talk with students about the purpose of time-out. I explain that time-out is one way of helping them learn to make good choices. I define "good choices" as ones that show independence, responsibility, and maturity.

   I also look for concrete, visual ways to help children understand the dilemma of wanting to have their own way on the one hand, and having compelling reasons for acting with restraint and consideration on the other.

   With primary grade children, I've often described this dilemma as the "battle between the wanna's and the gotta's." We wanna keep talking, but we gotta remember that others are working. We wanna say something mean, but we gotta think about how others would be hurt by our mean words. Children can brainstorm lots of other good examples. I talk with the children about how sometimes when you give in to the wanna's, it's okay. But sometimes there are negative consequences—people get hurt, the classroom gets too noisy, there aren't enough materials to go around, etc.

   We then talk about "using our brakes" to stop ourselves from doing the wanna's that can bring bad consequences. I tell the children that when we use our brakes, we are better able to take care of the classroom rules and act with respect and responsibility. Finally, we return to the idea of time-out as a way to learn to use brakes, to shift gears, to gain control over our impulses.

2. **Ask students what would make time-out feel less like punishment.**

   Invite students to help set up procedures that would help them use time-out as a positive way to learn. Certainly, some time-out procedures are not negotiable. For example, when the teacher tells a student to go to time-out, the student must go. And while in time-out, a student may not interact with classmates or make distracting noises.

   However, there are some procedures that students can help shape. Here are some ideas children might have (or you might suggest) for making time-out feel less punitive:

   - A different name for time-out. Students can decide whether they'd like to call time-out "thinking time," "taking a break," "taking a vacation," or some other name of their own invention.

   - A comfortable time-out place. Options may include a comfortable chair, a pillow, or a table.

- A behavior reminder. Students might want the teacher to give them a reminder of the rules and a chance to correct their behavior before sending them to time-out.

- A time-out signal. Students might prefer that the teacher use a subtle hand signal that means "go to time-out," which might draw less attention than the spoken word "time-out."

- A way to keep time while in time-out. Students may suggest that they be allowed to use an egg timer, an hourglass, or other physical time-keeping object so they feel less like they're in time-out "forever."

- A way to tell their side of the story. When told to go to time-out, students must go immediately. I tell students there's to be no arguing or explaining of what happened. But students should be reassured that they will have a chance later to explain if they want to. Children might help devise a system for indicating that they'd like to have a conference with the teacher later for this purpose. Older students may like filling out a worksheet during time-out that lets them describe what happened as well as what rule they think was forgotten.

3. **Use time-out in a calm, matter-of-fact way.**

   Children are less apt to feel punished when time-out is done in a matter-of-fact way. This includes:

   - The teacher using a quiet tone of voice to send children to time-out.

   - Using time-out democratically—for any student who needs to apply brakes, not just the same few students over and over.

   - Making sure students have practiced and are familiar with the time-out routine, from how they will be signaled to go to timeout, to how they will be released from time-out.

   - Sticking to the agreed-upon time-out routine consistently.

4. **Welcome children back into the fold after time-out.**

   Children need to know that we all feel bad at times when we lose control or make a bad choice. They need clear signals from teachers that it's okay to make mistakes, that mistakes are part of learning. They need assurance that they are still liked. I've come to realize that how children are welcomed back after time-out is a critical part of using time-out well. Some children just

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need a friendly nod or a quick validation such as "Good, I'm glad to see you're ready to join us now." Some may need a short check-in conference in which the teacher asks, "Do you know why I sent you to time-out? What do you think was going on? Do you need some help to make sure it doesn't happen again tomorrow?"

All this said, my experience has been that there are always some children who find time-out punitive no matter what the teacher says or does. For those few, time-out may not be the most suitable strategy. I don't think it's possible for any approach to work for every student all the time. However, I can keep checking my own intentions and my practices. I can keep reminding myself that time-out is one strategy to help children learn that when they go off course, they can help themselves regain control and get back on track.

Send Us Your Ideas and Questions

If you have a teaching tip or classroom activity which you would like to share or a question which you would like answered by an educator using Responsive Classroom practices, please send it to us. If you don't want us to publish your name on the website, be sure to let us know.

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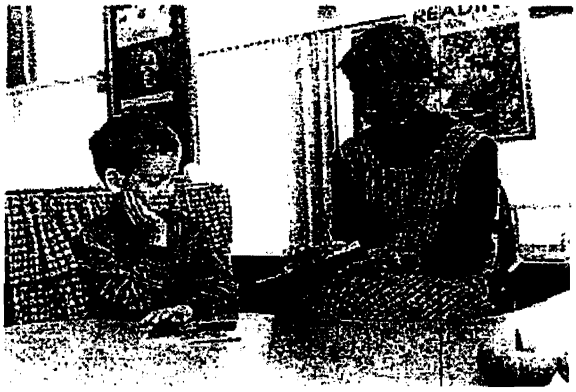
THIS ISSUE
Fall 2004

RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM NEWSLETTER

Teacher-Child Problem-Solving Conferences

Involving children in finding solutions to their behavior problems



An adapted excerpt from *Teaching Children to Care* by **Ruth Sidney Charney**

Derek was a fifth grader who was avoiding writing. Whenever we had writing time, he would ask to go to the bathroom, and there he would linger. After observing this for a week, I decided to have a problem-solving conference with him.

A problem-solving conference is a technique for addressing a specific problem that a child is having. What makes it powerful is that it invites the child into a conversation and asks for the child's take on the situation.

The conference begins with the teacher noticing the child's moods, actions, and interactions before helping the child come up with possible solutions. Conducted in a nonjudgmental way, the conference sets behavioral boundaries while giving children the opportunity for autonomous thinking.

In this article, I'll describe the basic steps that I went through in the conference with Derek. These steps are intended as

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ruth Sidney Charney has taught children in grades K–8 for over thirty years. She is a *Responsive Classroom* certified consulting teacher. She is the author of *Teaching Children to Care: Classroom Management for Ethical and Academic Growth, K–8* and *Habits of Goodness: Case Studies in the Social Curriculum.*

You can read more about problem-solving conferences in: *Teaching Children to Care* by Ruth Sidney Charney

guidelines to be adjusted to fit different situations. Some conferences take five minutes; others are spread out over several days. In some cases a conference leads to an immediate solution; in others the teacher and child need to revisit the issue several times.

One thing that is true of all problem-solving conferences, though, is that I always hold them away from the eyes and ears of the child's classmates. It's important that the student has privacy for these talks, and that the teacher and child can both focus on the conversation without interruptions.

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Step 1. Establishing what the teacher and student notice

A problem-solving conference begins with the teacher saying positive things s/he has noticed about the student—the student's interests, efforts, and goings-on. When we tell students we noticed what they've done well, we begin to establish a supportive connection, an essential step before talking about a behavior that isn't working.

With Derek, I began by saying, "I notice that you've had good ideas when we've brainstormed what we could write about. I also notice you pay attention and make helpful comments when kids share about their writing." I try to be specific in my noticings, and I name the "what," not the "why," of behaviors.

Next I say what behavior I've noticed that isn't working well. Here again, it's important to name specific, observable behaviors. I don't make judgments, interpret, or label. I simply describe, using a matter-of-fact tone.

"I notice that every writing time, you have to go to the bathroom," I said to Derek. I was careful not to say, "You want to avoid writing, so you say you have to go to the bathroom."

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By naming the behaviors rather than interpreting them, I open the door for children to take note of their actions and offer their own interpretation. They are then more likely to take responsibility for their behavior.

After I say what I notice, I ask for the child's observations. I say simply "What do you notice?" in a neutral tone.

When I posed this question to Derek, he said, "I just have to go to the bathroom a lot."

"So you also notice that writing has become a bathroom time for you?"

"Yeah."

Derek was agreeing with my observation. If he had disagreed, I might have said, "Well, I notice that you want to go to the bathroom at every writing time. You notice that it's only sometimes. Maybe we should both notice extra hard for the next few days and then come back and compare." I would have made a plan with Derek for how to remember our observations. But I also would have continued with the conference. It's possible to proceed in addressing a problem while we continue to gather data.

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Step 2. Naming the problem and the need to solve it

The next step is to help the child see why her/his behavior is a problem and to establish that the child wants to work with the teacher to solve it.

To Derek I said, "When you go to the bathroom every writing period, you lose important work time. By the time you get back, you have to hurry and often you only get about a sentence written."

"Yeah. There's not enough time."

"So your story doesn't get very far. For example, you don't have very much yet of the story you're writing now."

"Yeah. I only have the first page."

"I want you to be able to write complete stories that you can be proud of. So this seems like a problem we should work on. What do you think?"

"I guess so."

Here it's important for the teacher to express positive intent—

for the student to get along with others, have friends, enjoy and take pride in his/her work, solve math word problems, or follow directions—and to show faith that the child will make progress.

Sometimes when we ask whether a child wants to work with us on the problem, we get only a slight nod or other gesture of agreement—which is fine. We go ahead. Other times, a child refuses adamantly: "No, I don't need help!" or "No, I don't think it's a problem." If this happens, it might be useless to push ahead with the conference.

However, it's important that I state the expectations for behavior—for example, for the child to stop putting others down, to get work done, or to end aggressive behavior. I might say, "I see that it's hard to discuss this right now. I'd like to help. Let's see if the rude comments stop."

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Step 3. Understanding the cause of the problem

When the student and I agree that there's a problem (even if there's only a moderate or muffled agreement from the student) and we agree there's a need to solve it, we explore the "why" behind the problem. I suggest possible causes based on an understanding of children's need to belong, feel competent, and have choices. I'm also aware that confusion or frustration about academics may be an underlying cause. I often use "Could it be..." questions to initiate this discussion.

To Derek I said, "When I see kids go to the bathroom at a particular time every day, I think they want to avoid something they don't like or that's hard for them. Could it be that writing seems hard for you this year?"

Derek grinned and said, "Sort of. It's sort of hard."

Children don't always give a clear answer to our "Could it be..." questions. A "yeah, maybe," a slight nod, or sometimes

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a "yes" disguised as a shoulder shrug may be all we get. But those signals let us know it's okay to go on.

With Derek, I probed further to get at why writing was hard for him. As happens with many children, I needed to name several possible causes before he heard one that sounded right. "Could it be that writing is hard because you have trouble thinking of ideas? Or could it be that you know your main ideas, but you get confused about what words to use? Sometimes writers worry about the spelling or the handwriting. Could that be true for you?"

"Sometimes I can't think of the words I want," Derek replied.

Even when the cause of the behavior is very clear to me, I ask rather than assert. We gain children's confidence when we invite them to participate in the conversation. This confidence grows not because the teacher has brilliantly solved the mystery, but because the child was part of the process.

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Step 4. Generating alternatives

"Do you think we could come up with some ways to help you remember the words you need?" I said next to Derek.

It often helps to list several alternatives before seizing upon one solution. In Derek's case, we decided together that he could brainstorm a list of words before starting a story. He could try some story mapping exercises. Or he could jot down main ideas before starting to write.

Step 5. Choosing one strategy to try

The conference ends with an oral or written agreement to try one of the alternatives. With several possible strategies on the table, I asked Derek to choose one idea to try. He chose to try brainstorming a list of words.

Always, it's important that students choose an alternative that they believe will work, not one that just pleases the teacher. Over the next days and weeks, the student and teacher both take note of whether the problem they identified gets resolved. If not, they learn from the experience and return to the list of alternatives to make a better selection.

The strength of this problem-solving approach is its openness to the child's perspective and ideas. We try to see children as they really are, exploring with them what they need in order to do better at school. Ironically the correct solution is not what's most important. What's most important is inviting the child into the conversation, searching together for solutions,

and expressing faith in the child's ability to solve the problem.

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How to be a Jewish Teacher

An Invitation to Make a Difference

Rabbi Samuel Joseph

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words, more appropriate to a jurist than an instructor. Yet the phrase does reveal a truth, just as the common usage of the phrase "busted," once meaning arrested, is now common usage for "caught by the teacher." While overt acts of discipline and control make up a small part of the teacher's relationship with students, they make a major impact on students. They are a critical element in the way that students judge teachers. While there are many appropriate ways to respond to a disruptive situation, none of them include cruelty, bullying, embarrassment or other misuses of power. The teacher who responds calmly or with appropriate anger, in a manner that resolves the situation, and in a way that manifests a sense of justice, always wins in the long run. Spontaneous crisis intervention should be carefully preplanned. We'll look at some models and some guidelines later in this chapter.

Needs and Ages

All people have needs and desires. Some of these remain constant; others change and evolve as we grow. One important key to managing a good classroom is understanding and fulfilling (as well as sometimes modifying) these needs and desires. In the well-managed classroom, learning takes place because basic needs are fulfilled—and, in the best of cases, because the learning experience itself is a factor in fulfilling these needs. We want our students to learn because it fulfills their needs.

People want to be loved and appreciated. They need to feel safe and secure. They want to succeed, to feel good about themselves, and to be able to accomplish. And they want pleasure. Learning does not automatically provide for all of these needs; there are times when it involves more pain or drudgery than reward. The classroom is not the best environment for autonomy, or even for the quest for a sense of self-esteem. When students join a class, we ask them to supress some of their needs and desires for our own ease of instruction (though sometimes we rationalize it as for the good of the group). So, too, the class is often diverted from its collective desires because of the demands of the curriculum, the institution, or the instructor.

The process of deferring gratification, of delaying the fulfillment of personal desire, of compromising the self for the sake of the group is discipline. In a sense, all schools ask (and direct) students to evolve a sense of self-discipline (so that we need not discipline them). We call this adaptation of the self (and this delay of exclusively self-centered gratification) *socialization*. While it is a limiting of personal freedom, it is a noble act, because it allows for the creation of community. All schools work towards socialization. That is why raising hands and lining up are agenda items for all first grade teachers, public, private, secular, Jewish, or Catholic. This is why sharing is a big item in the management of any three-to five-year-old

learning environment. Likewise, as Jewish teachers, we are working towards training our students to delay gratification and then later fulfill their needs within the context of the Jewish community.

This means that as manager of a Jewish classroom, the Jewish teacher has two responsibilities. First, s/he must define and maintain a setting in which learning can take place with both joy and efficiency. Second, and equally important, the Jewish classroom must be a Jewish place. It must manifest both Jewish values and Jewish practice and serve as the symbolic community in which the child is being nurtured. A classroom that successfully transmits concepts and facts but fails to bond learners to the Jewish community, has not succeeded.

Students of differing ages have differing needs. The rules and practices of the classroom, the style and the intensity of the management, must shift as students grow and change.

Primary Grades. *Kindergarten through Second or Third Grade.* These children want to please their teachers. They do need to learn what it means to be in school and how a student should act. For example, they have to learn to raise their handed to ask to speak, and to get in a line before they move from one place to another. These students are usually conforming and compliant. While the desire to do well is very much part of this age group, the inability to sit still must also be reckoned with. This is also the age of squirmy little boys. The teacher of these students must present and reinforce the rules, regulations, procedures, and routines.

Middle School. *Grades Two or Three through Grades Five or Six.* By this time in their schooling the students know that there are school rules and routines, and while there may be some testing, they are programmed to conform to the rules. Most students at this age are still oriented toward pleasing teachers. The middle school affords a teacher a great deal of freedom. Because these students understand and can self-manage most of the basic classroom routines (e.g. they do go to the bathroom on their own), the teacher can focus more time directly on the learning activities and on introducing more complex programming.

Junior High School. *Grades Five or Six through Grades Nine or Ten.* WARNING! HAZARDOUS HORMONE ZONE! DANGER PUBERTY—CROSSING! When students enter adolescence they are less interested in pleasing their teachers. Much of their energy is directed towards pleasing their peers. During this period the students question authority and may resent teachers, disrupting class to gain attention. Classroom management again becomes a major part of the work. Here teachers are dealing with students who know what to do but who may be unwilling to do it. Teachers at this level may have to do much individual

counseling as the students adjust to adolescence.

Management Strategies

Classroom management is a major area of educational inquiry. Graduate schools of education teach series of courses on the topic; many trainers travel the world as proponents of various systems, and texts on the subject remain best sellers. In fact, the world of classroom management is much like the world of dieting: no one has a magic system that works for every teacher. There are fad systems that don't work. There are also basic truths that apply to every classroom. The best management system (whether utilized as a whole or assembled from various models) is the one a teacher can effectively use and stick to.

Here are three of the many models. These three, **Assertive Discipline, Instructional Management**, and **Socioemotional Climate Control**, represent three major directions in which management strategies have gone and three systems most teachers could implement.

Assertive Discipline. Lee and Marlene Canter devised assertive discipline as a way to put the power to control the classroom back in the teacher's hand. Their system, devised in the late 1970's, was designed to help reassert control over the public schools, which were then out often out of control. It was a time when many were scared of kids—especially teenagers. Assertive discipline has a big following in the secular world, and many Jewish educators have effectively adapted it to Jewish settings.

In assertive discipline, the teacher takes responsibility for and control of student behavior in the classroom. This means precisely and specifically defining acceptable behavior, clearly giving all directions and expectations, prompting students and helping them conform to these standards, and then, when necessary, consistently administering predefined disciplinary actions.

The assertive discipline model can be broken down into five basic management strategies.

Establishing and Enforcing Rules. It is the teacher's responsibility to inform students of exactly what is expected of them and what the consequences are for not meeting these expectations. It is understood that if students "know the rules of the game" they will be able to follow them. In this model, a teacher wants to define and enforce a set of rules that are realistic, reasonable, absolutely clear, and limited in number. In addition, they must be enforceable.

Issuing Commands, Directives, and Orders. Directions are another form of rule. They set expectations for the next set of behaviors the teacher desires. It is the responsibility of the teacher to precisely define what the students must (and must not) do as they work through the lesson. The

words "commands, directives, and orders" were carefully chosen to remind teachers that classroom instructions are an area in which they take responsibility for student behavior.

Utilizing Mild Desists. A desist is a way of informing a student that his or her behavior in inappropriate. A mild desist is a minor prompt that a teacher uses to inform a student that s/he is "off-task." Desists are not punishments, but ways of helping the student perform properly. This intervention allows teachers to keep a minor lack of focus from escalating into a behavior problem.

Utilizing Proximity Control. This is another form of "mild desist." It means moving close to a student who is in danger of misbehaving. By moving close to such a student, a teacher can exercise control without interrupting or embarrassing such a student. With the central authority on site, the student will need no reprimand and is likely to control his/her own actions.

Utilizing Isolation and Exclusion. In this model, isolation is considered to be the ultimate punishment. When a student is unable to control his or her behavior and has run through the sequence of mild desists and other prewarned consequences, an in-school exile from the class is considered to be an effective form of allowable punishment.

In a typical classroom utilizing assertive discipline, the class rules are clearly posted, sometimes in the form of a class Ten Commandments. These are carefully introduced on the first day of school and reviewed as necessary. Also made clear from the start is the way the teacher will enforce these rules. For example, a teacher may inform students that the first time they misbehave, their names will be written on the board; the next time a check will be added. If they repeat the behavior, they will be moved to the back of the room; further "off-task" behavior will have them removed from the classroom. Just writing the name on the board is a "mild desist" that may not even interrupt the flow of the lesson. Throughout the teaching process the teacher works hard to clarify the expectations and to influence that behavior so that no one ever comes near to violating therules.

Instructional Management. In the early 1970's Jacob Kounin defined a set of management strategies that represent a traditional liberal understanding: a lesson that motivates and involves precludes the need for discipline. He asserts and then translates into model practices the belief that by carefully planning and directing their lessons, teachers can control student behavior. He suggests nine strategies in the development and presentation of lessons that can all but eliminate major discipline problems.

Providing Interesting, Relevant and Appropriate Curriculum and Instruction. The secret to "instructional management" is to design and

present lessons that prevent inattention and boredom. Teachers must, through a knowledge of their students, present a sequence of learning activities that will involve and motivate.

Employing Effective Movement Management. Much classroom misbehavior erupts when a lesson is poorly paced and when transitions are rough. If teachers can keep "slowdowns" and "jerkiness" out of their lessons, they will very likely keep students involved.

Establishing Classroom Routines. As with assertive discipline, it is important for students to understand what is expected.

Giving Clear Directions. Poor or incomplete directions benefit no classroom process.

Utilizing Interest Boosting. Interest boosting is a form of verbal reward. When a teacher sees a signs of restlessness or boredom, the teacher "boosts" interest with a compliment or a direct involvement. This is the exact opposite response to the same behavior that in assertive discipline would evoke a "mild desist."

Providing Hurdle Help. Some misbehavior is caused by frustration. Hurdle help is when a teacher intervenes to help students overcome the difficult parts of the learning task that might prove frustrating and invite misbehavior.

Planning for Environmental Change. Every classroom has its own ecology, its own rhythms, and its own procedures. When this stability is altered, misbehavior is often the result. When a teacher carefully plans transitions, this disruption can be minimized.

Planning and Modifying the Classroom Environment. Just as a poor lesson can contribute to inappropriate behavior, so a poorly arranged classroom can invite misbehavior. A teacher is responsible for carefully adjusting the classroom environment so that it (a) maximizes learning, and (b) precludes possible distractions.

Restructuring the Situation. Sometimes an activity does not work. Rather than fighting it through (to prove that he or she is in control), the teacher can alter the activity and the situation and refocus students' attention. Rather than inviting misbehavior, this change redirects the students back into the lesson.

A classroom directed by instructional management has a basic stability but is constantly changing. The pacing and variety of activities are carefully chosen to continually engage students and keep them involved. In addition, the teacher is always monitoring and testing the lesson, ready to shift and redirect it, thereby moving the students into areas of greater involvement,

rather than forcing them to complete activities that may lead to disengagement and misbehavior. Whereas the teacher using assertive discipline is constantly patrolling the class, keeping them on task, the teacher informed by instructional management is constantly monitoring the instruction, making sure that it is continually engaging the learners.

Socioemotional Climate Management. This hybrid of techniques manifests a humanist view of the classroom and was evolved by a number of practitioners, all inspired by the work of Carl Rogers. In these strategies, the individual learner and his or her needs are considered, and the group as an entity is also involved. Simply put, these strategies see issues in behavior as opportunities for growth. Rather than preventing situations by control of the environment, or by strict enforcement, they seek to use (in a neotherapeutic way) these moments of dissonance as learning experiences. In other words, the strategy makes feelings, relationships, and behaviors part of the curriculum, rather than things that must be overcome in order to teach the curriculum.

Carl Rogers communicated three attitudinal qualities which make a difference:

Communicating Realness. It is important that a teacher present him/herself as a real person with real feelings. In order to establish real relationships with his/her students, a teacher must be honest. Feelings are an important part of that honesty. Enthusiasm and boredom are important examples of realness.

Communicating Acceptance. Students must know that teachers care about them. They need to know that regardless of their academic performance, the teacher believes in their value, their honesty, and their potential. The teacher must communicate to students his/her investment in them.

Communicating Empathetic Understanding. For the teacher-student relationship to succeed, the teacher must not only understand the student but also communicate that understanding. This is major, active listening. The teacher must not only hear and understand the student but must also make it clear to the student that s/he has done so.

When there is a bond between teacher and student—a sense of commitment, honesty, and understanding—behavior problems can be solved and learning can proceed.

Haim Ginott was a child psychiatrist who focused in two books on relationships between *Parent and Child* and between *Teacher and Child.* He believed that most behavior problems can be talked through, especially if some basic guidelines are followed. These center on creating a calm and safe dialogue and on separating the relationship with the child from the behavior

being discussed. In other words, as with Rogers, the teacher must manifest an unconditional acceptance of the student while rejecting the behavior. In simple words, s/he should tell the student, "I like you very much. I hate it when you... (*a description of the misbehavior*)." These are some of Ginott's guidelines:

Address the student's behavior. Isolate the wrong action. Do not discuss the student's character, personality, etc.

Describe the behavior. Specifically describe what the student did, why it was wrong, and the feelings it caused. Make appropriate expectations clear.

Diminish hostility. Do not entice anger or provoke defensive responses. Make the conversation as calm as possible.

Accept student feelings. Allow and accept the student's feelings. While they will not excuse the misbehavior, and will not entitle a repetition, they are an important part of who the student is.

Do not attempt to diagnose the problem, prescribe solutions, or explain. The behavior problem belongs to the student. S/he must understand it and solve it for him/herself. Allow the student time to understand your words and feelings and to respond.

Use appreciative praise. Praise students in terms of what they have done. Do not compare them to others.

Listen to their feelings. The purpose of discussing feelings and behaviors is the development of a relationship. Each conversation should enable, not discourage, the next.

Another humanist management specialist is Rudolf Dreikurs. He has been a major proponent of two ideas, **Classroom Democracy** and **Logical Consequences**. He wrote, "We can no longer run schools for the children, we have to take them in as partners, win their support. This cannot be done without introducing democratic approaches in each class."

The Democratic Classroom. This means giving students a voice in the classroom. It allows them to comment on the rules and the penalities and to take part in the decision making. It does not mean that students take control or responsibility for the classroom. It is a process of giving them a voice.

Logical Consequences. This means that a teacher does not create punishments which are designed to inflict suffering on a student; rather, s/he must respond with actions that are the "logical consequence" of the student's action. If a student's talking disrupts the class, and s/he can stop him/herself from talking, then being moved to another location is a logical response. Likewise, if a person breaks a tool through anger, they may be

limited in their use of tools. No punishment is designed to "hurt" the students, or "punish" them, but rather to teach them that their actions have consequences.

Teachers who apply insights from socioemotional management see their classroom as an active community made up significant individuals. They devote significant portions of time both inside and outside of class to the maintenance of these relationships. Feelings, understanding, and communication are important parts of these settings. They see their sense of group as being an important part of the work they do.

Planning your Classroom Ecology

Just as you will have to plan the kinds of lessons and activities that will take place in your classroom, so you must develop your own classroom management plan. You will need to decide on the rules, procedures, customs, and interventions that will make up your learning environment. Likewise, you need to plan positive steps to really meet and expand your relationship with your students. Management, like instruction, takes planning. You must preplan:

The routines or procedures. These are behaviors that occur regularly at a specific time or during a specific activity. For things that happen in the classroom on a frequent basis, having routines or procedures avoids confusion or delay. Examples: how you take attendance, how you collect *Keren Ami*, and what you do at break time.

Rules. In contrast to routines and procedures, these usually prescribe behavior in a much broader way. The reason you want to create a set of rules for the class is that you want the students to know what is acceptable behavior and what is not. In many classes the rules are posted on the wall somewhere. The list contains things such as "Be polite; no running; listen when others are speaking; raise your hand when you want to speak; and respect your fellow students."

Consequences. It is important that you remember to reward the appropriate behavior with the same energy that you use to enforce the penalties for not acting appropriately. While you cannot be a stroke machine, you can let students know that you see them following the rules with happy faces, good grades, positive notes sent home to parents, "good deed awards," and special privileges, like being first in line. It is not necessary to create elaborate incentives; your plan to reward students can be simple.

When students behave in a way that is inappropriate it is vital that you have a plan of action. There are some behaviors that you want to deter, for, if left unchecked, they would disrupt the entire class and cause a poor

APPENDIX B

Test Your Knowledge About Mental Illness

Name _____

✓True	Answer the following questions True or False:	✓False
☐	1. Serious mental illness can happen to any family.	☐
☐	2. The suicide rate for people who suffer from mental illness is 10%.	☐
☐	3. Psychopath and psychotic mean the same thing.	☐
☐	4. The great majority of people with mental illness are not violent.	☐
☐	5. Abuse of drugs and alcohol may be a way people with mental illness medicate themselves to relieve their symptoms.	☐
☐	6. Mental illness and mental retardation are the same thing.	☐
☐	7. People with mental illness can really pull themselves together and be normal if they try hard enough.	☐
☐	8. Mental illness strikes one in five people at some point in their lives.	☐
☐	9. Mental illness is a physical illness affecting the brain.	☐
☐	10. All people with mental illness live in their own world and are out of contact with reality all of the time.	☐

NAMI, Breaking the Silence 4th ed, rev (Material for High School. NAMI. 2004.

Appendix B 139a

Use the Right Words

Slang words like "psycho," "schizo" and "wacko" demean people who struggle to cope with serious, treatable illnesses. Derogatory references to people with psychiatric symptoms are as inappropriate as for any other illness or disability. Labels like "loony bin," "insane asylum" and "funny farm" are humiliating to those who require medical help from hospitals. "Hospital" or "psychiatric hospital" are preferable. Labels that equate people who have a mental illness with their illnesses (e.g. schizophrenics, manic depressives) are dehumanizing and offensive. It is better to say "a person with..." a specific condition.

"Psychotic" and "psychopathic" are NOT the same. "Psychotic" describes a period of disorientation in the course of an illness like schizophrenia, manic depression or depression. Psychotic symptoms are generally treatable with appropriate medication. "Psychopathic" describes a pattern of antisocial behavior with little remorse. Psychopathic disorders generally do not respond to medication. Schizophrenia, major depression and manic depression are the most prevalent psychiatric conditions involving psychotic symptoms.
Courtesy National Stigma Clearinghouse

Definitions

Schizophrenia – A thought disorder characterized by a false perception of reality. Typically people with schizophrenia experience auditory and/or visual hallucinations and delusions which are often paranoid in nature. Thinking can be illogical and emotions can sometimes be flat or inappropriate. Few, however, are totally out of contact with reality and symptoms are generally sporadic. Affects 1 in 100 Americans, typically between the ages of 16 and 25.

Manic Depression – (also known as bipolar disorder) An illness in which periods of mania, depression, and normal moods alternate. Mania is typically characterized by overconfidence, delusions of grandeur, racing thoughts, recklessness, and the need for little sleep. During the depressive phase of the illness the person may feel worthless, helpless, lose interest in normally pleasurable activities, sleep a great deal of the time, and think about death or attempt suicide. Affects .8 in 100 Americans.

Major Depression – Characterized by some or all of the following symptoms over an extended period of time: Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much, constant fatigue, loss of interest in usually pleasurable activities, inappropriate guilt or feelings of worthlessness, difficulty concentrating or accomplishing tasks, recurrent thoughts of death or suicide, suicide attempts. Affects 5 in 100 Americans.

Panic Disorder – Characterized by panic attacks. Results in sudden feelings of terror that strike repeatedly and without warning. Physical symptoms include chest pain, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, dizziness, abdominal discomfort, feelings of unreality, and fear of dying. Children and adolescents with this disorder may experience unrealistic worry, self-consciousness, and tension. Affects 2 to 5 in 100 Americans.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder – Characterized by repeated, intrusive, and unwanted thoughts (obsessions) and/or rituals that seem impossible to control (compulsions). Adolescents may be aware that their symptoms don't make sense and are excessive, but younger children may be distressed only when they are prevented from carrying out their compulsive habits. Compulsive behaviors often include counting, arranging, and rearranging objects, and excessive hand washing. Affects 2 to 3 in 100 Americans.

Borderline Personality Disorder – A disorder in which a person is unable to regulate emotions or control impulses. Leads to unstable relationships and self-image, self-destructive behavior, intense or inappropriate anger, and feelings of abandonment. Often accompanied by anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and eating disorders. Affects 1 to 3 in 100 Americans.

Phobias – A disabling irrational fear of something that poses little or no real danger. Fear leads to avoidance of objects or situations and can cause extreme feelings of terror, dread, and panic, which can substantially restrict one's life. Specific phobias center around particular objects (e.g., certain animals) or situations (e.g., heights or enclosed spaces). Common symptoms for children and adolescents with "social" phobia are hypersensitivity to criticism, difficulty being assertive, and low self-esteem. Affects 1 in 10 Americans.

NAMI. Breaking the Silence. B-1396 [illegible] Elementary School). NAMI 2003, 2004.

APPENDIX C

CHAPTER 24

Curriculum Planning: A Model for Understanding

Nachama Skolnik Moskowitz

Anne sat at her kitchen table, a large mug of coffee by her side. Today, she thought about her class of second semester fifth graders and their upcoming unit on Pesach. For years, she taught this class pretty much the same way. She had them make a "Ten Plagues Kit" to use at their own Sedarim at home. They visited the "matzah factory" to see how matzah was made, they did a play for the lower grades on Elijah visiting different homes during Pesach, and corresponded with a class their age in Israel to see how they celebrated the holiday. Students (and their parents) loved this particular unit — it was fun and engaging. But Anne was dissatisfied, and she wasn't quite sure why.

Many teachers plan their units pretty much the same way as Anne — they think about what worked in previous years, perhaps checking textbooks or teacher guides for ideas, or even going online and asking if "anyone has any great ideas" for the particular subject. But unit planning, and preparation for a specific class, should be more thoughtful and coherent. Anne's particular unit, while fun, has several problems, including that it is disjointed, lacks a "big idea" about the holiday, and has no depth for students in fifth grade. This chapter offers a format for planning that helps create developmentally appropriate, interesting, and engaging learning for students, no matter whether they are four-year-olds, 14-year-olds, or adults.

STEP 1: THE BIG PICTURE

Many teachers, because of time pressures, take a one-day-at-a-time stance to lesson planning. While they might have a sense of what they want to teach ("I'm in the Henrietta Szold unit," or "We're getting ready to cover the value of *derech eretz* — appropriate behavior"), they often feel that planning a specific unit up front, in detail, will take too much time. And so, each lesson is planned separately: ("I think I'll show the movie of the Torah scribe working, and then I'll give students a quill to try it themselves."). While this may seem time-efficient, it really is not. Moreover, groundwork that might need to be laid in the second lesson for what the teacher decides to do during the fourth can become a moot point.

Unit planning, rather than lesson planning, is an important beginning point to assure learning success. When a full unit is planned in advance:

- More time may be spent up front, but less is spent on a lesson-by-lesson basis. Teachers later flesh out specifics, but the broad brush strokes and the hard work of learning design will already have been accomplished.
- Learning has the potential to be coherent — with lessons building logically upon each other, and learning tied together. Anne, our Pesach teacher, has a smorgasbord of activities, with no flow from one to the other. One can only imagine what important ideas students remember about Pesach a month after her unit is concluded.
- A teacher can avoid the wistful sigh, "I wish I had done X when starting this unit, but I didn't realize I'd needed to lay that groundwork." A planned unit helps anticipate those issues.
- Supplies can be ordered well in advance of any administrative deadlines.

Anne knew that she needed to begin in a different way. She prided herself on the strong Jewish background she gained in college 20 years ago, and rarely did any new research in advance of lesson planning. This time, however, she decided to read

Taken from:
The Ultimate Teachers Handbook Appendix C 140a
ed. Nachama Skolnik Moskowitz. Denver: A.R.E. Publishing, Inc., 2003

the chapter on Passover in the holiday book her school director bought the staff last year as a "thank-you" for their commitment. She roped her husband into joining her in study ("two heads are better than one," she told him). They spent a couple of hours reading and talking, making sure they both understood the information. Anne was surprised by how superficial her knowledge of Pesach had been — basically, the facts of the story and the ritual observances gleaned from years of family Sedarim.

I write my lesson plans twice, first in pencil, then in pen. The first time through, I write down everything that I think I need to accomplish in the coming week. Then I look over what I have written and ask myself some questions. How many of the senses have I involved in a week's plans? Have I offered any opportunities for academically weak students to use their strengths? Do the students get a chance to move around?

Usually, at this point, I have to make some changes. I am still covering the same ground academically, but now I turn to my reference library for different ways to teach those lessons. I also look back over the past month's plans at this time. Have I used music, drama, food, or games in the past 30 days? If the answer is no to any of these areas, then it is time again to incorporate them into this coming week's work. Now I can write my plans in ink.

(Maura Pollak, Tulsa, Oklahoma)

There are many ways to describe the lack of epth that occurs in Jewish (and general) educaonal settings. "A mile wide and an inch deep" escribes a curriculum that:

- has no depth of meaning.
- offers a lot of often disparate information ("here are the 20 facts I'm going to test you on when the Pesach unit is done").
- includes "cute" projects that take an inordinate amount of time when weighed against the importance of what is learned (Anne's ten plagues kit is one example, as it doesn't build understanding of key ideas of Pesach).

An "iceberg curriculum" is similar, in that teachers often focus on the tips of the icebergs, ignoring the important depth of information below the surface (see figure 1).

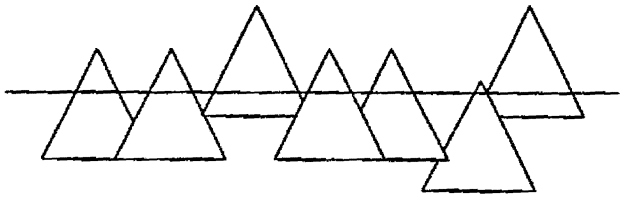

Figure 1

Anne's flitting from project to project, each not connected to the other, is a great example of a teacher jumping from tip to tip of icebergs. She taught "about" the Ten Plagues, how *matzah* is made, Elijah's significance, and how Pesach is celebrated in Israel. However, she missed a lot of depth of meaning that lay below the surface.

Note in the iceberg diagram, how the blocks of ice touch and meld into each other under the water, pointing to the possible integration of content and concepts. To gain the benefit of the icebergs, learners must go deep to uncover concepts and information lying below the surface. But that means that the teacher must also "go deep" in his or her preparation.

In her reading about Pesach, Anne was especially taken by one statement, "Why is it that so many Jews were active in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, though their own Jewish education was so minimal? Could it be that they had sat year after year at their Seder and heard the impassioned plea to "let my people go"? Could it be that these Jews took seriously the injunction, "in every generation, each person must see him or herself as if he/she personally left Egypt"?

Stirred by this idea, Anne remembered a workshop she had attended the year before on a model of planning called "Understanding by Design."[1] In this model, the beginning point is the development of an "enduring understanding," a big idea that organizes learning. Anne decided to try to develop an enduring understanding for her Pesach unit.

[1]Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design* xandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1998).

Understanding by Design began sweeping the country at the end of the 1990s. Starting with what is called "enduring understandings," this model is unique in its "backwards design process." Rather than setting a goal for learning, then creating learning activities, and finally deciding on the assessment process, UbD (as it is affectionately called) moves from the enduring understanding to the assessment (what the authors call "evidence of understanding"), and only then to the development of learning activities (see figure 2).

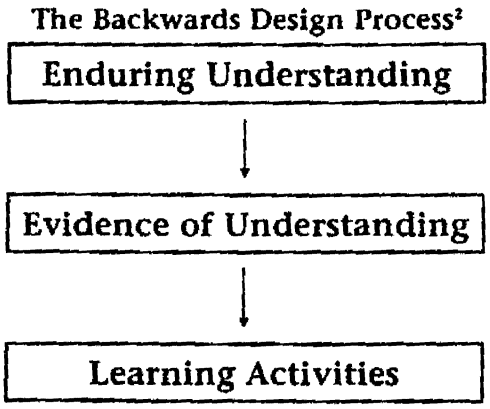

Figure 2

While it sounds rather simple, the power of good UbD units comes from attention to the backward process and to developing each stage completely before moving on to the next. A good enduring understanding (to be explained, below) can take two or more hours of study and conversation to develop. The evidence of understanding, often a performance assessment, provides a clear learning goal that students need to be able to complete successfully to demonstrate their attainment of the enduring understanding. Finally, the learning activities help prepare students for the evidence of understanding stage.

The Beginning: Enduring Understandings

Traditional curriculum development begins with the articulation of goals or objectives. An *Understanding by Design* unit has a different starting place, that of an enduring understanding (EU) . . . or a really big idea that frames learning. Because o the largeness of the EU, students will dig into one aspect of the big idea during their course of study. Over time, with multiple exposures at different ages and stages, students come to grasp the many facets of the enduring understanding.

Assume that the full circle (figure 3 below) represents the following enduring understanding:

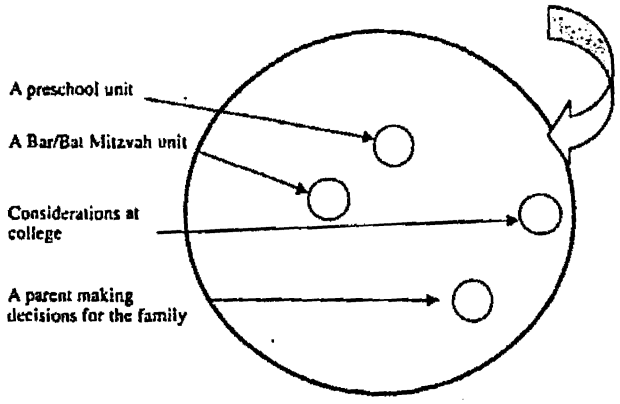

Figure 3

Attention to the ideas behind ritual observance strengthens the chain of Jewish tradition and leads to a deeper connection with *K'lal Yisrael* (the connections among the Jewish people).[3]

This is an *enduring, big idea that has lasting value beyond the classroom.*[4] A person can approach one aspect of it as a preschooler, another aspect when considering the significance of her Bat Mitzvah, another as she wonders how to observe Rosh HaShanah while at college, and yet another as a parent weighing issues of home holiday observance with his toddler. This is the meaning of lasting value.

An enduring understanding is also *the big idea or core process at the heart of a discipline.* "Discipline" here refers to the areas of study (e.g., science, math, philosophy, theology). As a core process or big idea, an EU is not a set of facts, but rather something that a professional grapples with in his her area of expertise. The following are enduring

[2]Note that this is the design, or curriculum development process. It is not the process by which students learn. When a UbD unit is taught, the starting point for students is in the learning activities, culminating in the assessment (evidence of understanding). They may be introduced to the enduring understanding at any point along the way.

[3]All enduring understandings listed in this chapter were used in curriculum developed by the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland, and are reprinted with permission.

[4]The italicized definitions of enduring understandings are taken from *Understanding by Design* (1998, 1999), with the exception of the last two, which have been added by this author.

understandings that are at the heart of a discipline; in parentheses, after each, are the names of people who might still study and consider their implications, professionally:

- Religions shape behaviors, beliefs, and values. (Clergy)
- The Jewish people is a like a reed: alone it can be easily broken, but as a group together stands strong. (A Jewish Federation leader)
- The Judaism experienced *b'shivt'cha b'vaytecha* (when sitting in your house) transmits Jewish values, beliefs, and memories. (A Jewish family educator)
- Conflicting claims of inheritance create emotionally charged tensions that are difficult to resolve. (A Middle East politician or peace mediator)

Enduring understandings are *abstract, counterintuitive, and often misunderstood ideas.* They are not facts, nor are they statements of objectives or goals. The following are not enduring understandings:

- *Sh'lom bayit* (peace in the home) is an important goal to work toward.
- The Torah is important to the Jewish people.
- Students will understand why study is important in Jewish tradition.
- Jacob prayed to God in different ways.

Enduring understandings are sophisticated statements that offer a lot of room for study and consideration.

EUs are *potentially engaging,* drawing students into discussions and arguments. Look at the bulleted list of enduring understandings at the top of this column, and note how each statement has the potential to engage students. Then, look at the list immediately above, and note how these "clunk" — they are not sophisticated ideas and therefore do not have the power to draw students into conversation with our tradition.

Anne kept in mind the characteristics of enduring understandings as she considered the big ideas of Pesach she wished her students to learn. She and her husband (who hung in with her on this discussion) talked a lot about Pesach and its central ideas. They considered the impact of Pesach in the lives of Jews throughout history, and the way it served as a master story for the actions taken to help those in need. For example, the Soviet Jewry movement in the 1960s and 70s was shaped by the values learned by Jews, who sat each year at their Seder and read the words of the Haggadah.

After a couple of hours of conversation (including some jumping up to grab their family Haggadah to check references), Anne decided on the following as her focus for her fifth grade unit: Collective Jewish memory has shaped the Jewish obligation to cherish and promote "freedom throughout the land" (Leviticus 25:10).[5]

While this was a bit bigger than Pesach itself, Anne felt that the statement could actually focus much more than just a holiday unit. Anne spent some time checking this statement against the list of characteristics of an enduring understanding. She realized that Jews who serve in political office, those who work for Jewish social justice organizations (e.g., the Religious Action Center — www.rac.org), individuals who compile new editions of the Haggadah, and historians all struggle with this idea. Anne decided that using this as the big idea, represented by a large circle (as in figure 3 above), she would focus her Pesach unit with three essential questions:

- Why is freedom so central a value to Jews throughout history and across the globe?
- How has seeing ourselves as personally having been part of the Exodus from Egypt motivated the actions of Jews throughout history?
- How does the celebration of Jewish holidays, remind us of our obligation to "proclaim freedom throughout the land"?

Carving Out the Unit

While enduring understandings give a focus to a unit in very broad terms, teachers need to delineate the specifics of a unit. The essential questions above (as developed by Anne) take one cut into the big ideas, but they are still quite broad. Anne's

[5]This enduring understanding was developed by the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland's Curriculum Department, with educational leaders of Park Synagogue (Cleveland, Ohio) for use in a fifth grade curriculum. This, and most examples for "Anne," are taken from that unit.

questions could be used to focus a unit on Chanukah or even Yom HaAtzma'ut (Israel Independence Day).

To help focus even farther, Anne needs to think about what she wants her students to *know* and be able to *do* by unit's end. In many ways, these look like objectives, but they are only one small part of the unit's focus. Anne, therefore, writes down what she wants her students to know and be able to do:

Know:

- What Jewish texts say about freedom, especially the Torah (as it describes the Exodus), and the *Haggadah*.
- The obligation of all Jews to "proclaim freedom throughout the land."
- How Pesach reminds us of the Jewish emphasis on freedom.
- Points in our history when Jews remembered that they had been slaves in the land of Egypt . . . and acted accordingly in a modern situation.

Be able to do:

- Explain the centrality of freedom in Jewish life.
- Read fluently prayers and songs from the *Haggadah* that complement the value of freedom.
- Discuss events beyond the Exodus through the lens of our people's eternal struggle for freedom.

Anne knows that there are parts of the Seder that her school director requires fifth graders to read or chant fluently; she adds them to her lists, but makes a note to ask that some of the requirements get shifted to other grade levels in future years. This clears the way for her to focus on the parts of the Haggadah that truly complement her big idea.

STEP 2: EVIDENCE OF UNDERSTANDING

When most teachers plan curriculum, they decide how to assess students *after* they decide on the learning activities. In an *Understanding by Design* unit, this is the second step of the process, creating strong coherence between the enduring understanding and the actual learning activities. The evidence of understanding refers especially to a final assessment (often an authentic or performance assessment) that pulls together student learning. But this evidence can also be collected along the way of a unit, with checks for understanding or specific facts that a teacher requires of her students.

Final Assessments

Here are a few assessment examples developed for specific enduring understandings. Note how they check a student's grasp of the big ideas.

Enduring understanding:

- Conflicting claims of inheritance create emotionally charged tensions that are difficult to resolve.

Evidence of understanding:

- Students "ghostwrite" a speech for a person opening "The Children of Abraham Café" in Jerusalem, a place where Jews and Arabs are welcome. The speech must show understanding of the historical claims of the two peoples to the land, and also be welcoming in tone. (High School)

Enduring understanding:

- Liturgical music shapes and is shaped by faith and culture.

Evidence of understanding:

- Students create a service with attention to their choices of liturgical music. They write a program for worshipers that describes the influence of the specific selections on Judaism and worship, as well as ways Jewish culture influenced music. (Middle/High School)

Enduring understanding:

- Pesach encourages us to relive the past, connects us to Jews worldwide in the present, and helps us teach Jewish values to our children.

Evidence of understanding:

- Students interview a neighbor or family friend who was not at the student's *Seder* this year. They compare their own *Seder* with that of the person they interviewed. The class charts/graphs

comparisons (what is the same and what is different) and together decide why it is important for Jews to have a *Seder* each year. (Primary)

Enduring understanding:

- Jewish families stand witness to Jewish history, transmitting memories through ritual, realia, and stories.

Evidence of understanding:

- Students create a museum exhibit of moments in Jewish history that their own family witnessed and passed along to future generations. (Middle School)

Anne realizes that creating an assessment takes her beyond current experience. To help figure out what to do for this particular unit, she turns to the Understanding by Design Handbook (1999) for a step-by-step process the authors call GRASPS[6] for the acronym that describes the steps.

Goal - Anne decides that she wants her students to demonstrate how collective Jewish memory has shaped the Jewish obligation to cherish and promote "freedom throughout the land."

Role - Many years ago, Anne saw Judy Chicago's Dinner Party, place settings representing famous people. Today, she notes that various cities have had theme-based outdoor art exhibits (e.g., Cleveland, in honor of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, provided guitars to various artists to decorate . . . and then positioned these around the city). With this in mind, Anne decides to put the students in the role of arts collective members.

Audience - The audience for Anne's students will be those coming to the art exhibit.

Situation - This will be the exhibit.

Product - Anne's fifth graders will need to pick a Jew active on behalf of the freedom of others, who lived anytime beyond the Exodus from Egypt, and create a pillow for this person to lean on during the Seder. The pillow must reflect how this person promoted "freedom throughout the land."

Standard - For this assessment, Anne decides to create a Performance Assessment Task List. This is a chart (see figure 4 below) that tells students what they need to include in their work to have completed the assessment successfully.

	Possible Points	What I think I earned	What the teacher says I earned
I picked a Jewish person who wanted freedom for others.	20		
I have a summary sheet of this person's life, and explain clearly when this person fought for freedom.	30		
My pillow shows what "cause" this person stood up for.	20		
My pillow includes *Seder* themes.	10		
My pillow was created with care; it is obvious that I put effort into this project.	10		
I include a bibliography of where I found this information.	10		
Total Points	100		

Figure 4

[6]For more information on GRASPS, see pp. 144-159 of *Understanding by Design Handbook* (Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1999).

Developing an assessment can be difficult. Wiggins and McTighe use the GRASPS system to offer a step-by-step way to create an interesting assessment. Sometimes it takes moving through all the steps to see the final product. At other times, once the role and audience are developed, the rest just fall into place.

Creating an evaluation tool (such as the Performance Assessment Task List) offers a relatively fair way of seeing if students truly grasped the enduring understanding. In Anne's case, she included the elements of her EU that she wanted to assess in the statements to which students responded. For older students, the EU can be written specifically into the grid, asking them if they showed their understanding.

Note, though, the difference between a Performance Assessment Task List and a "rubric." The latter is more detailed, offering specific behaviors needed to earn a specific grade. In the case of Anne's project, a rubric might state that to receive an A, the student must have demonstrated a clear understanding of the connection between the way our memory of the Exodus has shaped the obligation of Jews to promote freedom throughout the land. The research on the person must include at least three different bibliographic sources, and the paper must clearly state the stance of this person toward the right of people to be free. The pillow must be neatly designed and show evidence that the student took care in the execution of the project.

Needless to say, such a statement is written beyond the comprehension capabilities of a typical fifth grader. Anne's decision to write a Performance Assessment Task List was in part a result of the frustration she felt her students would have if they had to deal with a written rubric.

On-the-Way Assessments

While Anne initially focuses on the final assessment project, she also knows that there are smaller steps along the way she wishes to assess during her unit. She wants to know if students understand the idea of "collective Jewish memory" in relation to Pesach — what does it mean that each of us should feel as if we, personally, left Egypt? So, she decides that one of the assessments she will do early in the unit is a writing sample, asking students to talk about their lives in Egypt — what they did, how they felt about leaving, etc. After that, she would do a learning activity in which students begin to match up current situations to "their lives" back in Egypt (e.g., if they were tired working as slaves all day long in an unfair situation, who might *today* be tired from working in an unfair work situation?).

Some teachers include on-the-way quizzes of information to be learned (e.g., the rules of *kashrut*, important historical dates, specific places on maps, or applications of Jewish values to real-life situations). Homework can also be given and graded. They key, however, in a UbD unit, is that each assessment checks on important information and understandings that build to a student's grasp of the enduring understanding. If the assessment is superfluous, then it doesn't belong in this particular unit.

> My lesson planning extends from macro to micro. For my Saturday school class, I lay out the year on four pieces of notebook paper. Holidays, Torah portions, student birthdays, focus units that take multiple weeks, and special activities/events are listed for each session. Then each week gets its own sheet of paper. Each activity is planned to take about 20 minutes, and I always schedule one more activity than I need or may get to. This schedule is posted on the blackboard for the kids to see. Then one more sheet, my "to do" list: the materials I have to prepare and have ready for each activity. Finally there are sticky notes slapped on the Saturday sheet that serve as an anecdotal record. Notes such as, "Hannah likes to work with Shelby" and "Next time explain this more before the kids try it" go here.
>
> *(Sheila Lepkin, Denver, Colorado)*

STEP 3: LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The final step in a UbD *planning* process[1] is the development of the learning activities. These wait until the very end, for they need to prepare students in a variety of ways to handle the evidence of understanding assessment.

[1]This chapter will suggest additional steps in the process of developing a viable classroom lesson. However, the UbD model has only three steps in total.

When Anne looked at the learning activities she used before for her Pesach unit, she was dismayed. Not one of these helped prepare students for the assessment — not one helped them learn the concepts that were so crucial to considering a famous Jew's impact on the freedom of others (which was the focus of the pillow making project). And so, Anne had to start from scratch.

Simplistic as it seems, I try to ensure that each lesson has a goal that can be stated in a single sentence, and then plan an activity that will accomplish that goal. Since my classes are only 45 minutes long, I need to break subjects into fairly small bites. For instance, when we started a unit on Exodus, I introduced Rav Huna's *midrash* on four reasons why the Jews were redeemed from Egypt, one of which was that the slaves kept their Hebrew names.

To make this idea feel immediate to the students, I had the following goal: "Using name books and family histories, students will learn how their own Hebrew names preserve and reflect their Jewish heritage." It took two class periods for the students to complete their research and make their presentations, but by the end of the lesson, they did achieve the goal that I had planned.

(Dena Salmon, Montclair, New Jersey)

One of the hardest things for teachers working to create a coherent unit of study is making sure that the learning activities prepare students for the assessment, which in turn tells whether or not they "got" the enduring understanding. This demands "letting go" of past teaching ideas that might have been interesting, fun, or even challenging. The power of a UbD unit is in its coherence.

What does it mean, then, when students spend hours working on:

- honey dishes, with bees perched on the side, for Rosh HaShanah?
- creating mosaic rainbows when studying the Noah story?
- the creation of a Western Wall out of paper bags stuffed with newspapers?

It is important to think about our goals for student learning, and find ways to accomplish them. In the cases above, instead of learning about bees and honey, we can focus on forgiveness; instead of gluing colored paper onto large arches, we can learn about responsibility and promises; instead of stuffing newspapers into paper bags, we can learn about the power of a site over a people. In each of the new lessons, we can still be hands-on and creative — we just need to find the connections to the learning we really want for students.

Anne spends some time thinking about the learning activities she wants to include in this Pesach unit. She asks her school director to brainstorm with her a bit, and she hauls out some teacher guides and other resources to see what ideas might spark her planning. By the time she is done, her unit includes:

- *showing the segment of the film "Prince of Egypt" when Moses goes to Goshen and seems to be aware for the first time that the Children of Israel are slaves. Students work in small groups to discuss questions Anne gives them about slavery and freedom, as seen in the video.*
- *reading from the Book of Exodus about the life of the Hebrews under Egyptian slavery, and doing a "dance midrash" with a parent.*
- *a symbol creation activity, in which students pretend they are a committee of Israelites creating symbols of their slavery to pass along to future generations so that others remember what it was like to be without freedom.*
- *a four-station activity that focuses on the four names of the holiday.*
- *checking in the Haggadah for references to freedom (students are given stickies and asked to mark the places in the Haggadah that refer to freedom). Anne structures this in a way that the Haggadah doesn't become overwhelming — students roll dice to see what page to look on.*
- *reading the quote from David Ben-Gurion on the Jewish memory of the Exodus, and comparing it to the American/English memories of the Pilgrims' arrival in America. Students study pictures of Jews celebrating Pesach over time and around the world. Why do we have such*

memories? How have we built such memories over time? What memories do I (the student) have about Pesach and its message?

- *looking at the statement, "Let all who are hungry, come and eat," and developing a campaign to raise food and money for the local food bank.*
- *interviewing adults (family members and friends) to see what memories they have of Pesach, and what messages they think it gives us.*
- *learning/activity centers on people in our history who stood up for the freedom of others.*

Anne discovered with her husband that "two heads are better than one" when it came to brainstorming the enduring understanding; the same holds true for thinking about the learning activities. If you don't have a large repertoire of activities up your sleeve, spend time with someone who does. Think also about activity formats that worked for one unit, and can be transferred to this one. Interviews and learning centers, for example, are formats that can be used in a variety of settings.

STEP 4: LESSON PREPARATION

A teacher who moves through the UbD planning steps that Anne took will end up with a coherent, challenging, and interesting unit of study. But more needs to happen before a class is actually taught.

Calendaring

Decisions need to be made regarding how long a specific unit will take and in what order each of the lessons will happen. It is helpful to plot each unit out on a calendar, not only looking to see how many weeks are available overall, but how many sessions will be devoted to each activity. Planning this on an actual calendar is helpful, as holidays, special school-wide events, etc., need to be taken into account. Figure 5 on the next page allows an entire year of Sundays to be seen at glance, making chunking of units a bit easier.

> I always work out a schedule for myself for the year, and decide what my goals are. I study the curriculum guide, if there is one, and try to develop a timetable that will help me to accomplish my goals and complete the curriculum. I may not always adhere to the schedule that I originally devise for myself, but having it does help me to keep on track. If there is no curriculum, I do some research on my own, and find materials that I think will be appropriate for the subject that I am teaching. I also find it helpful to ask the teacher who previously taught that class for guidance and suggestions as to what worked, and what didn't, especially when I'm teaching something for the first time.
>
> *(Nancy Hersh, Chatham, New Jersey)*

Resources

Years ago, Jewish education was "resource poor." There were few materials available to teachers either to enrich personal background (especially at 11 p.m. on a Saturday night, at home, while planning for the next day's lesson), or more important, in the hands-on resources that enrich student learning (e.g., flash cards, contemporary Jewish graphics, bulletin board supplies, access to texts). While the field has a long way to go, the proliferation of Jewish computer software and Internet resources offers teachers materials that were not available in the past.

No one would dispute that locating resources and creating hands-on learning materials takes time. However, it is important to remember that our students are used to the niceties of educational supplies in their general studies classrooms. Unless such materials are also offered in their Jewish subjects, Jewish education is relegated to second class status. Taking the time to do personal research, create activity packets and instruction sheets on the computer, and finding the resources needed to illustrate learning,[8] is crucial to solid student understandings.

[8]This author vividly remembers going into a classroom in the midst of a history lesson. The teacher, who hadn't thought to bring a map, was gesturing in front of a blank chalkboard and saying, "From here in France, to here in Russia . . . " It was unclear how students, who didn't have a clear picture of Europe in their heads, assimilated that piece of the lesson.

September						
October						
November						
December						
January						
February						
March						
April						
May						
June						

Figure 5

(Reprinted with permission from *The Jewish Educational Leader's Handbook*, edited by Robert E. Tornberg. © A.R.E. Publishing, Inc., 1998.)

I don't truly develop my curriculum for the year until I get a chance to meet the children. What works with one group of kids doesn't necessarily work with another. One year, I had 16 students with 11 boys and five girls. Another year I had a class of ten with eight girls and two boys. I have a skeleton curriculum of what I'd like to get accomplished in the course of the year. But I don't fill it in until mid-September.

(Kim Lausin, Beachwood, Ohio)

Lesson Structure

Each lesson can be unique, according to the needs of the particular focus. However, each lesson must also have a purpose, as well as a discernable structure. The following steps offer one such format for teachers to follow:

Step A: Set Induction

The technical term "set induction" refers to the opening of a lesson in a way that gets students ready for the key learning. This can be done in a variety of ways, including:

- a quote written on the board that students discuss.
- a picture, photograph, or video clip that students examine for a purpose determined by the teacher.
- a teacher demonstration.
- a short activity or structured discussion between pairs of students, or small groups.
- a personal question related to the lesson's focus that students answer privately, putting the sheet away until the end of the session.

It is important that this initial part of the lesson sets the groundwork for the learning to come. A wise person once said, "Tell them what you are going to teach, teach it, then tell them what you taught." This stage of a lesson matches the first part of that quote.

Step B: Idea Development

While there are many ways to describe this step, it is really the "formal part of the lesson." So many chapters in this Handbook describe wonderful ways to engage students in learning that they seem redundant here. The key, however, is to find learning activities that prepare students with the skills, knowledge, and understandings to approach the final assessment in a thoughtful way. This part of the lesson takes the most time, and requires teacher attention to:

- flow and coherence - What sequence of activities, "telling," and questioning best develop the ideas behind this lesson?
- questions that guide learning - What high level questions might advance student thinking and learning?
- groupings - How can students be grouped for optimal learning? Which students are working well together? Which students should be separated? Can this class handle multiple groupings (pairs, foursomes, etc.) during the course of one session?
- engagement in learning - Do students understand the task before them? Are they on task? Are they working well with each other?
- learning styles - Is there enough variety in the lesson to accommodate students with different learning styles?
- issues of misunderstandings - What verbal and nonverbal clues do students give of their grasp of the material? Are they responding correctly, whether in writing, orally, or via an art form?
- smooth transitions - How will students be introduced to "next steps" in the day's activities? How can confusion be minimized?
- pacing - How much time do students need for each activity segment? Are there some students who need different tasks or reminders of timing, because of personal learning styles? Will time run out before the class has a chance to finish an activity?
- material use (and abuse) - How can classroom learning materials be best distributed in a way that minimizes chaos? What materials need to be collected before students

find "creative" ways to use them (e.g., turning worksheets into paper airplanes)? How can student work be stored so that parents can see evidence of student learning at a later time in the unit?

- bridging - How can this learning bridge to other lessons? to the home? to students' synagogue(s), school(s), or communities?
- assessment - How can student learning be assessed throughout the lesson? What kind of personal notes made by the teacher would help him/her remember comments and questions by students? How can an assessment of student learning in this session shape the planning of future lessons?

Key, however, to success of a unit based on *Understanding by Design* is the teacher's attention to the enduring understanding, with consistent "threading" of it throughout the day's lesson. Students need to be reminded *how* specific learning activities relate to the big idea so they more easily grasp the connections the teacher is working to create throughout the unit.

It is important to note that in a UbD unit, most of this middle section class time will be spent on the development of concepts. However, toward the end of a unit, the focus will shift to the assessment activity.

Step C: Conclusion

So many classes end with the ring of a bell and the teacher's cheerful, "See you next time!" Yet, at the end of the day students need to be reminded of what they were taught. Brain research teaches that a review of information immediately after it is taught helps cement learning. This can be done in a variety of ways:

- The teacher can quickly summarize the key points of the day's lesson.
- The teacher can quickly whip around the room and ask each student to offer one piece of information learned that day.
- Each student can fill out an end-of-day feedback form that includes the open ended sentence, "Today I learned _____."
- Each student, provided with three file cards, can be asked to write on each one thing learned that day. Working in groups of three to four, students share their cards to see what others learned and to correct together any misinformation.
- The teacher can stand at the door, asking each exiting student to share one piece of learning (and give a handshake).

Step D: Evaluation

Just as individual lessons often conclude with a wave out the door, so, too, units often end with the teacher's quick focus on the next task at hand. To learn and grow as a teacher, it is important to step back and evaluate successes and failures. Here are some ways to do this:

- *Reflect on student work* - Too often, student work is used simply to provide a grade for the report card, rather than serve as a window onto issues of teacher effectiveness. In studying student responses, it is important to consider what they really did learn, as well as areas of continued confusion. Not only is the question, "How might I have *taught* this better" critical, but it is also important to think about ways *now* of going back to clear up fuzzy issues in students' minds. Student work, viewed over time, also helps show growth (or lack thereof) in individual students. Remediation may be a key need of certain students.
- *Consider other directions the unit might have* taken - Experienced teachers know that what works for one class of students might not necessarily work for another. After a unit has ended, it is interesting to consider which other learning paths might have been followed. Notes placed in files will help shape the next teaching of the particular course.
- *Make note of new resources discovered along the* way - In the course of a unit, colleagues and education directors will often say, "Look what I found that meshes with what you are teaching!" Collecting these new materials creates an enriched starting point for a future teaching of the unit.

Anne found that the first time through her unit planning and teaching, things did not go as

smoothly as she would have liked. There were questions students asked that she could not answer. She found, however, over time that it became easier to respond, "I don't know, but let's figure out together where we might find that answer." It took more effort than she originally thought to shift from unit planning into the specific lessons she wanted to orchestrate. But she was also pleased with the interest of her students in the activities accomplished. A lively discussion grew out of the "Prince of Egypt" film segment, and some very quiet students excelled in analyzing the photographs of Pesach observed in various communities. The dance midrash worked well, quite to her surprise, but she gives a lot of credit for that success to the congregant who was a dancer in a "past life," and came to help her with that particular session. The students did very credible final projects. She discovered by accident that by asking for an oral and a written commentary, different students shone in each of the reporting forms; some did better orally, and some did better with writing.

Anne thought back to her previous years' lessons, filled with fun, exciting Jewish activities. But in retrospect, she realized that this year's unit was just as engaging, and that it offered students stimulating Jewish ideas to ponder. She was hooked on teaching in a way that promoted understanding, and excited about the possibilities this provided — not only to her professional growth, but to the Jewish growth of her students.

CONCLUSION

Lesson planning is hard work. Unit planning, with a focus on developing a Jewish enduring understanding is even harder. But the results are worth the effort. Students who move beyond the facts of Jewish life to the bigger ideas have a wealth of learning to draw on in a multitude of situations. And that really is what Jewish education is all about.

TEACHING CONSIDERATIONS

- Initially, plan globally — for a unit, not a particular lesson.
- Keep focused on the big ideas of Judaism.
- Study, for without personally developed deep understandings of Judaism, teachers will find themselves skipping along on the peaks of icebergs, rather than getting under the surface into the depths of our tradition.
- Work with others in the planning process; two heads are better than one . . . but three are really ideal.

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