

## **PARTNERSHIP FOR SAFER SCHOOLS FACT SHEET**

### **WHAT IS THE PARTNERSHIP FOR SAFER SCHOOLS?**

The Partnership for Safer Schools aims to promote health and safety in Orthodox Jewish Day Schools through education and training, policy review and development, and community building efforts. The program's overarching goal is to guide the formalization of procedures and training into daily school operations in order to enhance school-based efforts that promote healthy, safe environments and protect children and youth.

### **WHY WAS THE PARTNERSHIP FOR SAFER SCHOOLS CREATED?**

The Orthodox Jewish community has demonstrated a deep commitment to keeping children healthy and safe. Thanks to the efforts of different segments of the community – including schools – that important commitment has resulted in heightened awareness and expanded actions. New initiatives such as this one help to build and strengthen the community's safety net. The Partnership for Safer Schools is especially important as it transforms knowledge acquired into policies and systems that not only promote, but sustain, health and safety.

### **OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS**

- School administrators, teachers and staff gain a heightened understanding of their roles and responsibilities – including legal obligations – to intervene if students are engaging in or experiencing unsafe or unhealthy behaviors;
- Concepts of safe and healthy relationships are weaved into school structure, philosophies and policies;
- Communication between administrators, teachers and staff is enhanced;
- Participating schools ensure their position as model institutions that are in the forefront of building and sustaining a coordinated effort to protect and provide for their students.

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Individuals at all layers of the school community – administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and students – engage in education and training that addresses healthy relationships, handling accusations or disclosures of unhealthy or unsafe behavior, and corresponding legal responsibilities. Additionally, administrators are supported as they review, develop and implement policies that promote and provide for the health and safety of their students.

### **PROGRAM COMPLETION**

At the end of first year activities, participants and schools are awarded Safer School certificates of completion. Additionally, participants receive a letter of congratulations to publish in newsletters or send out to families, and are acknowledged in an ad in the Chicagoland Jewish press.

### **SAFER COMMUNITIES**

The Partnership for Safer Schools is part of the JCFS Partnership for Safer Communities Initiative which aims to strengthen the capacity of all Jewish institutions to respond to abuse.

### **QUESTIONS?**

Betsy Lazerow ([betsylazerow@jcfs.org](mailto:betsylazerow@jcfs.org)) 847-745-5430



## The Origin and Impact of the “Orthodox In-Service”

eJP

October 2,  
2015

*By Joseph Lenti*

Twenty years ago, the Orthodox Jewish community in Chicago's West Rogers Park neighborhood was growing significantly, but Orthodox individuals and families made up a relatively small proportion of the client population at the local Devon Office of Jewish Family and Community Service. Social worker Carole Spreitzer, then director of the JFCS office on Devon Avenue (in the heart of the Orthodox community), suspected that the local Jewish community might be unaware of the availability of services for its individuals and families. She shared this hypothesis with Michael Kane of the adolescent outreach program [Response Center](#), and with Hadassah Goodman, an Orthodox colleague at JFCS. Their subsequent conversations led to exploratory meetings with local rabbis and day school principals.

With the support of JFCS executive director Martin Langer, Spreitzer and Goodman invited colleagues from local agencies and the [Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago](#) to a meeting to discuss ways to reach out to the Orthodox community. Many accepted the invitation, including representatives of JFCS and Jewish Children's Bureau (the two agencies merged to form what today is known as [Jewish Child & Family Services](#), or JCFS), [Jewish Vocational Service](#), [SHALVA](#), Council for Jewish Elderly (now [CJE SeniorLife](#)), [The Ark](#), [Response Center](#), the local Bernard Horwich [JCC](#), and [Associated Talmud Torahs](#) (representing Orthodox Jewish schools). At the meeting, the decision was made to meet regularly as a group of agency professionals serving clients in the Orthodox community. The group was initially known as Federation Inter-Agency Professionals Serving the Orthodox Community. Today the group is known simply as the Orthodox Network.

Within the group, professionals could get to know one another and develop trusting relationships. They could seek to identify the barriers which prevented Orthodox individuals, families, and communities from engaging Federation agency services, and to suggest and develop strategies to remove those barriers. In addition, they would share resources and improve the effectiveness of interagency partnerships and referrals.

The group's signature initiative grew out of a proposal by Rabbi Leonard Matanky, congregational rabbi and educator, to introduce agency staff to Orthodox schools and institutions. The proposal was embraced and JFCS provided a small budget for an all-day in-service.

The planners of the in-service hoped to make a positive impact on the Orthodox community and on the participating agency professionals. Orthodox institutions would come to recognize that area Jewish agencies were making efforts to engage and promote greater understanding, engagement with, and support of Orthodox families in the local community. Orthodox individuals would grow to see the agencies as safe places to seek needed services from culturally-sensitive professionals. Through learning about the culture of the Orthodox community, agency professionals would make fewer erroneous assumptions about Orthodox clients and would listen to and engage them more sensitively and effectively.

The first Orthodox in-service day took place on April 29, 1996. Fifty professionals from Federation-affiliated agencies participated in the all-day immersion program. The program included bus and walking tours of neighborhoods, organizations, synagogues, homes, and businesses in the Orthodox community. Participants visited several day schools, a kosher restaurant, stores that cater to the Orthodox community, and a *mikveh*. In preparation, the planning committee had approached each prospective tour stop to explain the in-service goals and objectives and seek their agreement to host. On the day of the tour, participants were welcomed at each venue. Site directors spoke to the visitors, describing each site's role and function in the community, introducing and/or clarifying unfamiliar terminology, and answering questions. Hosts reported their enthusiasm to be able to explain their mission and purpose.

The in-service also included didactic elements. Rabbis provided an overview of the faith commitments and daily rhythms established by the Torah and Jewish law, and an Orthodox woman described the challenges and joys of Orthodox life. Participants learned about keeping kosher, *Shabbat*, Torah study and day school education, the importance of *mikveh*, and community involvement. Throughout the day, participants had the opportunity to ask questions and actively engage in learning.

The great success of the first all-day in-service established a model for a continuing series of impactful biennial trainings. Over the years, new agency professionals and administrative staff have had regular opportunities to learn about Orthodox life. For their part, Orthodox individuals and communal leaders have developed a stronger sense of trust and comfort in seeking services from the participating agencies.

Since its inception, the Orthodox In-Service has brought together professionals from diverse agencies and religious backgrounds both among the program's participants, and in the group planning the program. The In-Service is an evolving program, a theme with variations. For example, the In-Service has recently emphasized a clearer understanding that there are diverse Orthodox Jewish communities (plural) in the Chicago area. The positive reputation of the In-Service has led to the recent development of related community education initiatives. The central office of a home improvement company slated to open a new, large franchise store in Skokie, Illinois heard about the Orthodox In-Service and requested a training to increase its staff's cultural competence, in order to better engage and serve Orthodox Jewish customers. A full-service grocery chain seeking to open a store with a large variety of kosher offerings requested Orthodox customer service training for its managers, coordinated through the Orthodox Network. The Orthodox Network has also recently initiated a series of "awareness and education forums" to focus on specific areas of concern (addictions, technology, etc.) when serving Orthodox Jewish clients.

Adam Weg, a social work clinician at the JCFS Peterson office, participated in the fourteenth Orthodox In-Service in May 2014. He reflected that the experience "helped me to increase my fluency and competence with matters of importance in the Orthodox Jewish world. Visiting the Orthodox Day Schools, for instance, made more tangible a milieu that I experience second-hand all the time in clinical work with my clients. I was particularly struck by the enthusiasm and passion of the educators that I observed. I also appreciated the tour's interest in exposing participants to diversity and difference within the Orthodox communities."

What began as informal conversations about ways to better engage and serve Orthodox individuals has grown into trainings and collaborations that inform professionals, improve cultural competence, and strengthen the links between social service professionals and the Orthodox Jewish communities of metropolitan Chicago.

*Joseph Lenti, LSW, a graduate of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and Chicago State University, serves as a clinician at Jewish Child & Family Services in Chicago, Illinois. His clinical and research interests include empathy and intersubjectivity, child development, intercultural communication, loss and grief, mindfulness, and therapeutic gardening and cooking.*

# THE ORTHODOX NETWORK

Invites You to Attend

## Awareness and Education *Sexuality and Gender Identity* *and the Orthodox Jewish Communities*

*A forum of learning and discussion for communal professionals and leaders*

Featuring:

**Rabbi David M. Rosenberg**, Orthodox Community Liaison, [JCFS](#)

**Kayleigh Eisenstein**, Outreach Prevention Specialist, [RESPONSE](#)

**Amy Steinhauer**, LCSW, CST, [Psychotherapist in Private Practice](#)

**Date:** Monday, May 16, 2016

**Time:** 8:45 a.m. Coffee and refreshments  
9:00-11:00 a.m. Program

**Place:** [Abe and Ida Cooper Center](#), JCFS  
6639 North Kedzie Avenue, Chicago, IL

**R.S.V.P.:** Rabbi David M. Rosenberg, Orthodox Community Liaison, JCFS  
[davidrosenberg@jcfs.org](mailto:davidrosenberg@jcfs.org), 773-467-3926

Marilyn Siegel, LCSW, Director of Adult and Family Services, JCFS  
[marilynsiegel@jcfs.org](mailto:marilynsiegel@jcfs.org), 773-516-5543

The Orthodox Network is a collaboration of social service providers in Jewish agencies who work in partnership to improve services to the Orthodox community in metropolitan Chicago.

Co-sponsors:



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Invites You to Attend

## The First Clinical Forum

### *Working Collaboratively to Address Clinical Issues in the Orthodox Jewish Communities*

*A multi-disciplinary case presentation featuring:*

Rabbi Gershon Schaffel, Rabbi, [Young Israel of Skokie](#)

Rabbi Avrohom Moller, Superintendent of Education, [Associated Talmud Torahs](#)

Ed Reed, LCSW, Director of Clinical Training, [Jewish Child & Family Services](#)

**Date:** Monday, May 8, 2017

**Time:** 8:45 a.m. Registration and Coffee  
9:00 a.m. -11:30 a.m. Program

**Place:** [Abe and Ida Cooper Center](#), 6639 North Kedzie Avenue, Chicago, IL

**CEUs:** 2.5

**Info:** Rabbi David M. Rosenberg, [davidrosenberg@jcfs.org](mailto:davidrosenberg@jcfs.org), 773-467-3926  
Marilyn Siegel, LCSW, [marilysiegel@jcfs.org](mailto:marilysiegel@jcfs.org), 773-467-3825

**R.S.V.P.:** click [here](#) or visit

[https://JCFS.formstack.com/forms/orthodox\\_network\\_registration](https://JCFS.formstack.com/forms/orthodox_network_registration)

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Co-sponsors:



Chai Lifeline  
MIDWEST

cje SeniorLife  
Jewish values for positive aging



SHALVA



Partnering with the Jewish United Fund in serving our community

# Orthodox Network Forum #10: Suicidality and the Orthodox Jewish Communities

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Monday, November 13, 2017

## Resources

### Organizational/Educational Resources

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org) and [afspil.org](http://afspil.org) (Illinois Branch),  
<https://afsp.org/about-suicide/>, <https://afsp.org/take-action/bring-prevention-school/>

Elyssa's Mission <http://elyssasmission.org/> Signs of Suicide Program <http://elyssasmission.org/sos-signs-of-suicide-prevention-program/>

CJE SeniorLife <https://www.cje.net/>

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - "Promoting individual, family, and community connectedness to prevent suicidal behavior; strategic direction for the prevention of suicidal behavior," 2013 <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/5275>

Suicide Prevention Resource Center <http://www.sprc.org/>

### Emergency Resources

**Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

**Crisis Text Line 741-741** <https://www.crisistextline.org/>

**911**

### Suicide and the Orthodox Jewish Communities

Dr. Benzion Twerski, Ph.D., "Understanding Suicide—When Someone Wants to End it All," January 14, 2009 <https://www.vosizneias.com/25702/2009/01/14/new-york-understanding-suicide-understanding-suicide-when-someone-wants-to-end-it-all/> (visited 11/15/17)

"Was 2016 the 'Worst' Year for Ultra-Orthodox Suicide and Overdoses?" By Josh Nathan-Kazis, January 2, 2017 <http://forward.com/news/358204/insiders-warn-of-an-epidemic-of-suicide-and-overdose-on-the-ultra-orthodox/> (visited 11/15/17)

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Mission Statement (12/18/2014):

The Orthodox Network is a collaboration of social service providers in Jewish agencies who work in partnership to improve services to Chicagoland's Orthodox community. This is accomplished by:

- Offering professional education;
- Identifying emerging issues; and
- Networking and sharing resources.

Tag Line (12/18/2014):

The Orthodox Network collaborates to improve services to the Orthodox community.

We will use these on fliers for upcoming programs and other materials as appropriate.

The committee will continue to meet to talk about membership ideas and expectations.



***Save the  
Date***

# **THE ORTHODOX NETWORK**

**ANNOUNCES THE 16TH**

**One Day Training  
For**

**Agency Staff**

**About**

**The Orthodox Jewish Communities**

***Program will include lecture, discussion,  
and community walking and bus tour***

**May 10, 2018**

**8:00 am – 5:30 pm**

**REGISTRATION MATERIAL TO FOLLOW IN March**

Co-sponsors (click on logos to visit organizational websites):



**Chai Lifeline**  
MIDWEST

**cje SeniorLife**  
Jewish values for positive aging



**SHALVA**  
Giving voice to the unspeakable...  
responding to domestic abuse in Jewish homes.

Partnering with the Jewish United Fund in serving our community

## **Agency & Program Contacts**

Chai Lifeline: Keren Bider  
CJE SeniorLife: Raquel Corre  
JCA: Beth Fishman  
JCARES/Project Shield: Betsy Lazerow  
JCC Chicago: Wendy Singer  
JCFS: Breena Freid  
JCFS: Ed Loew

JCFS-Virginia Frank CDC: Joni Crounse  
JVS Chicago: Jeffrey Blumenfeld  
REACH: Debbie Cardash  
RESPONSE: Debbie Mier  
SHALVA: Rochel Ray  
The ARK: Vicki Hass

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# *The Orthodox Network*

## *One Day Training About Orthodox Jewish Communities*

Wednesday, September 28, 2016

8:00-8:20	Registration and light breakfast-Cong. Adas Yeshurun 3050 W. Touhy Ave.Chicago
8:20-9:30	Welcome: Rabbi David Rosenberg, Overview of Orthodoxy: Rabbi Joseph Ozarowski, Didactic Discussion: Rabbi Zev Cohen or Rabbi Gershon Schaffel: Cong. Adas Yeshurun 3050 W.Touhy Ave. Chicago
9:30-9:45 -	Questions and Answers
9:45-10:05	Ed Loew, Tour of Sanctuary
10:05-10:15	Break and board bus to Chicago Rabbinical Council: 2701 Howard Ave., Chicago
10:30-10:50	Tour Chicago Rabbinical Council, Beis Din, with Rabbi Reiss: 2701 Howard Ave., Chicago
10:50-11:00	Board Bus to Hebrew Theological College: 7135 N. Carpenter, Skokie
11:15-11:45	Hebrew Theological College (Skokie Yeshiva): 7135 N. Carpenter, Skokie <i>Visit high school program and post high school Study Hall</i>
11:45-12:30	Lunch at HTC
12:30-12:45	Bus to Chicago Chesed Fund: 7045 N. Ridgeway Ave. Lincolnwood,
12:45-1:15	Tour Chicago Chesed Fund: 7045 Ridgeway Ave. Lincolnwood, tour Food and Clothing Pantry
1:15-1:30	Bus to Veitzener Cheder, 2620 W.Touhy, Chicago to begin walking tour <i>(NOTE: The bus tour ends at this point. Personal belongings should be taken off the bus)</i>
1:30-2:30	Walking Tour along Touhy Avenue, highlighting Hat Box, Gentle Wind Florist, Congregation Mikor Chaim,Kesher Stam, Congregation Atereth Yehoshua, North Shore Bakery and Heritage Russian Jewish Congregation and Chicago Mitzvah Campaign
2:30-2:45	Tour Ohel Torah Center-Sephardic Cong. 2929 W.Touhy Ave., Chicago
2:45-3:00	Break
3:00-4:00	Woman's Presenter- Mrs. Laura Marder/Evaluations
4:00-4:10	Walk to Mikvah, 3110 W. Touhy Ave.,Chicago
4:10-5:00	Mikvah
5:00	Return to Cong. Adas Yeshurun 3050 W. Touhy, to pick up your car
5:10-5:30 -	Optional tour of kosher kitchen

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