

## **Jewish Mental Health Initiative 2020 Proposal**

CJFS is proposing the launch of a yearlong Jewish Mental Health Initiative (JMHI 2020), a collaborative effort among all Jewish institutions to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and increase access to services for mental health and wellness. In the last 12-15 months we have seen some successful but uncoordinated efforts to illuminate the impact of mental health, including drug and alcohol abuse, on our Jewish community. JMHI 2020 would be an opportunity to proactively engage people throughout the Jewish community in conversation, education, and healing. Other communities such as Charlotte and Houston have created similar programs in response to alarming waves of suicides in their communities. In Birmingham, we pride ourselves on being ahead of the curve. Let's take a proactive stance on mental health.

### **JMHI 2020 Components/Timeline:**

**Mental Health First Aid Training, Fall 2019:** Clergy and key staff training in Mental Health First Aid for Youth. Mental Health First Aid is an evidence-based curriculum designed to help laypersons identify the signs of mental health issues, intervene, and connect affected individuals and families with needed services. It is an 8-hour intensive training. Each participant will be certified in Mental Health First Aid for 3 years upon completion of the training. Leigh Cohen Long, Director of Guidance at Homewood City Schools, and her colleague, Katie Smith, former CJFS Social Worker, are trained as facilitators for the program and have agreed to conduct a 15-20-person training. Available dates: October 29, December 18, December 19

**Mental Health Awareness Shabbat, January 2020:** JMHI 2020 Kickoff with Mental Health Awareness Shabbat. All congregations would participate. CJFS would help clergy coordinate programs/speakers for Shabbat services. Tentative Date, January 10-11.

**Healing Services, Quarterly beginning March 2020:** Healing Services at the LJCC. It has been about 15 years since we, as a community, have offered healing services for the mind/body/soul in a non-denominational venue. Four services during the year would be offered on Sunday afternoon with Jewish music and readings focused on private, individual healing and spiritual rejuvenation.

**Jewish Institution Staff Trainings, March-August:** CJFS will offer interested Jewish organizations a mini version (2 hours) of Mental Health First Aid, including both youth and adult information, with the goal of getting front-line staff better attuned to signs and symptoms, when/how to intervene, and how to access help.

**Targeted Education Pieces, Monthly:** These pieces will be developed and presented as part of JMHI 2020. Each month a piece would run in print in Jewish media (potentially in DSJV, Temple physical bulletins, and CJFS email newsletter) and in condensed form in social media (potentially in agency/congregation social media sites).

**High Holidays 2020:** Clergy will speak about mental health in one of their high-holiday sermons, highlighting the importance of awareness and reduction in stigma. Marketing piece to be included in High Holiday congregational pamphlets highlighting JMHI 2020, stats, programming and resources.

**Parent/Teen Program Late Fall 2020 TBD:** Film Screening of the documentary *Angst* followed by panel discussion for Parents & Teens. Dual Screening rights allow both a daytime and evening screening. The daytime program would be at NEMJDS for students age 10 and up and their families. The evening program would be a required part of teen religious school program but also open to the whole Jewish Community. CJFS would like to explore offering the evening program at the new Sidewalk Film Festival screening/educational venue at the Pizitz.

At the end of 2020 it is our hope that our community will be more aware of the prevalence of mental health issues, more open to talking about it, and more educated in how to identify and address it. Our colleagues in other communities have found this to be the case. They also stress that one critical element of success is having one institution be the primary coordinator of the initiative.

CJFS is excited to be the organization to coordinate JMHI 2020 and hopes to have full buy-in and participation from the three synagogues, Chabad of Alabama, NEMJDS, LJCC, BJB, BHEC, and the Deep South Jewish Voice, with funding from the Birmingham Jewish Foundation to make this a true community collaborative. To be clear and transparent, while some conversations about the vision for this program have taken place to date with extremely positive response, we do not have commitments from any organizations at this time. Additionally, we intend to approach individual donors to assist in underwriting other aspects of the program, particularly the Parent/Teen Program.

**Projected JMHI 2020 Budget**

Mental Health First Aid Training	\$1000 includes workbooks, food, and presenter expenses
Community-Wide Mental Health Awareness Shabbat	\$500 includes marketing; speaker honorariums; Oneg costs
Quarterly Healing Services	\$600 includes program development, service booklets; food; marketing costs
Employee Trainings (up to 5)	\$1000 @ \$200 each
12 Educational Pieces throughout Including High Holiday insert	\$3600 includes research and development and printing for yearlong campaign
Angst Teen/Parent Program	\$1250 includes screening license fee, food, panel honorariums
CJFS Project Management	\$2400 estimated at an average of 8 hours per month from October 2019 through December 2020
<b>TOTAL PROJECT EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$10,350</b>