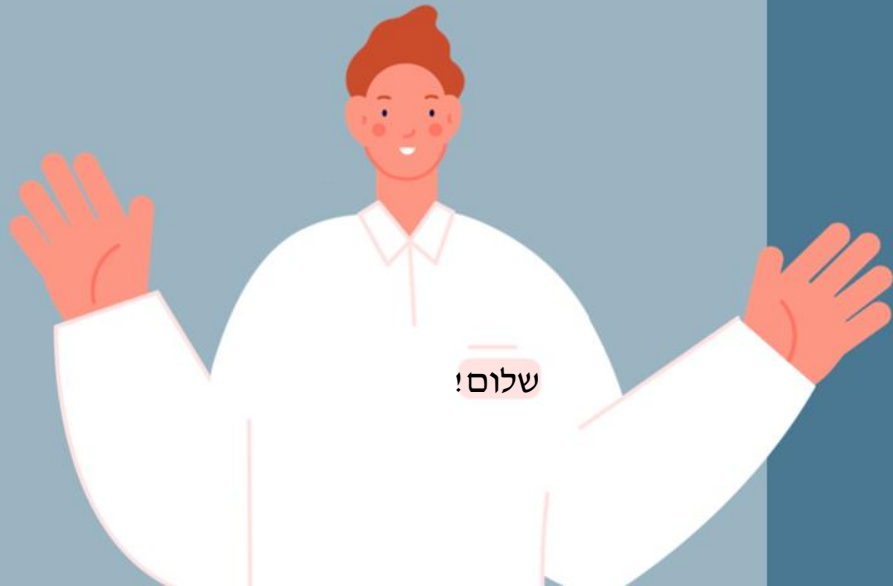


Challenges, Traditions, and Strategies in Providing Financial Assistance for the Jewish Community

PowerNet 2023 Conference
Presenter: Meital Siva-Jain



OUTLINE



- INTRO
- CHALLENGES
- TRADITIONS
- STRATEGIES
- QUESTIONS

This workshop uses Jewish teachings to address present-day challenges in providing financial relief.

You will learn:

- ❑ The challenges in providing financial assistance
- ❑ Jewish views and traditions on financial assistance
- ❑ Strategies and resources to address those challenges

LEARNING GOALS



- ❑ A not-for-profit organization serving the Edmonton community since the 1950s.
- ❑ *Tikkun Olam*, heal the world.
- ❑ Inclusive Services: Edmonton Healing Centre (counselling services), Holocaust Survivor Support Program, Home Support Services, and Outreach Services specializing in newcomers and seniors support.

JFS resides on Indigenous land in Treaty 6 territory. Land occupied, traveled, and cared for by Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. It is the ancestral territory of many indigenous peoples including the Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota and Dene.



Jewish Family Services Edmonton

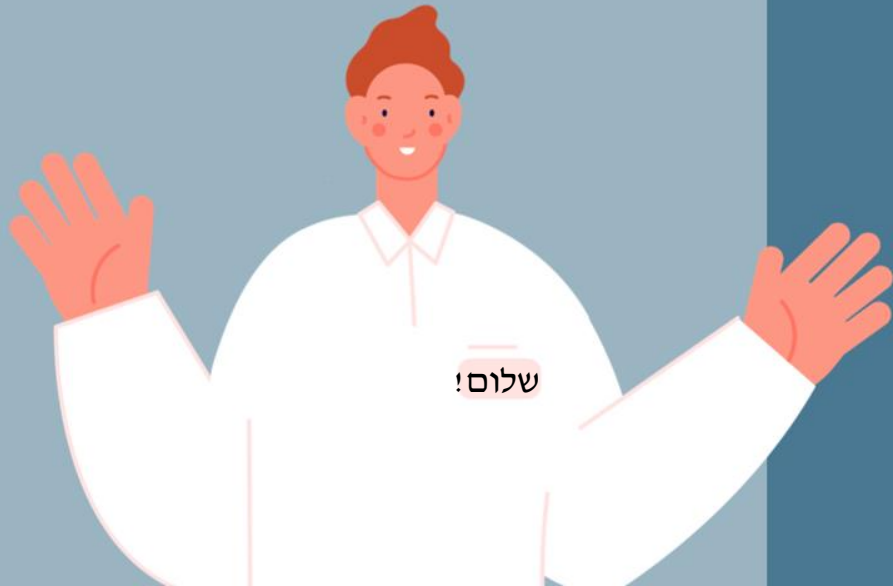




BACKGROUND

- 2021 - Team discussions on challenges
- 2022 - Sending a survey to local rabbis about Jewish perspectives
- Participants: Chabad of Edmonton and Rabbah Gila Cain from Temple Beth Ora Reform Judaism synagogue.
- September 13, 2022 - workshop at the Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies (NJHSA) Case Management & Financial Assistance Affinity Group.

CHALLENGES



What might be the challenges in *asking* for financial relief?



- **Shamed** asking for money
- **Embarrassed** to speak about their finances
- **Guilty** of their circumstances
- **Vulnerable** due to not having control over their request
- **Concerned** about their privacy within the Jewish community

What might be the challenges in *providing* financial relief?

- **Stressed** by intruding into the client's life
- **Judgmental** about the client's decisions, lifestyle, and history
- **Stressed** by anticipating hostility from the client
- **Concerned** that the client misuses the support system



TRADITIONS



PIRKEI AVOT

"Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah said: ... Where there is no bread, there is no Torah; where there is no Torah, there is no bread" (Mishnah, Avot 3:17).

How do you understand it?
How can you implement it in your practice?

מִסְכֵּת אָבוֹת

רבי אלעזר בן עזריה אומר, אם אין תורה, אין דרך ארץ; אם אין דרך ארץ, אין תורה. אם אין חכמה, אין יראה; אם אין יראה, אין חכמה. אם אין דעת, אין בינה; אם אין בינה, אין דעת. אם אין קמח, אין תורה; אם אין תורה, אין קמח.
(משנה, פרקי אבות ג:יז)

SHULCHAN ARUCH

The Shulchan Aruch is a 16th C. book of Halacha, written in Tzefat by R' Yosef Karo.

This is the most widely accepted book of Jewish law ever written.



Illustration from Brockhaus and Efron Jewish Encyclopedia (1906–1913), Wikipedia

SHULCHAN ARUCH

Every city in which Israelites dwell must appoint charity Gabbaiim,—well-known and trustworthy men who should go about and collect from each one what he ought to give and what he has been taxed. This money they should divide among the poor once a week before the Sabbath, giving each one enough to suffice him for seven days. This fund is called Kuphah. The community should also appoint other Gabbaiim to collect, day by day from every household, donations of bread and other victuals, or fruit, or money. This should be distributed among the poor daily towards evening, to each one enough food for the day. *And this is what is called Tamhuy.*

We have never seen or heard of a Jewish community that has no Kuphah, but in some places it is not customary to maintain a Tamhuy.

Rabbi Yosef Karo, Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah (siman 256)

כל עיר שיש בה ישראל, חייבים להעמיד מהם גבאי צדקה אנשים ידועים ונאמנים, שיהיו מחזרים לגבות מכל אחד מה שהוא ראוי ליתן ודבר הקצוב עליו, והם מחלקים המעות מערב שבת לערב שבת ונותנים לכל עני מה שיספיק לו לשבעה ימים, וזו היא הנקראת קופה. וכן מעמידים גבאים שלוקחים בכל יום ויום מכל חצר וחצר פת ומיני מאכל או פירות או מעות ממי שמתנדב לפי שעה, ומחלקין את הגבוי לערב בין העניים, ונותנים ממנו לכל עני פרנסת יומו וזהו הנקרא תמחוי. מעולם לא ראינו ולא שמענו קהל מישראל שאין להם קופה של צדקה, אבל תמחוי יש מקומות שלא נהגו בו.

שולחן ערוך לרבי יוסף קארו, יורה דעה רנ"ו



SHULCHAN ARUCH

What does the text tell us about financial support in Jewish communities?



Illustration from Brockhaus and Efron Jewish Encyclopedia (1906–1913), Wikipedia

MAIMONIDES' LADDER OF TZEDAKAH

- Tzedakah comes from the Hebrew word Tzedek which means righteousness, fairness, or justice.
- Providing support to those in need is based on social justice
- The community is responsible to support those in need in a dignified and respectful way.
- Maimonides listed eight virtues of tzedaka; what do you think is the highest level of supporting someone in financial need?



A 1000 Shekel Banknote – Maimonides



MAIMONIDES' LADDER OF TZEDAKAH

The donor gives cheerfully, but less than is appropriate.	
The donor gives graciously and sufficiently after being asked for tzedakah.	
The giver does not know who receives the tzedakah and the recipient does not know the identity of the donor.	
Enabling a person to become self-sufficient and not have a need for tzedakah, by providing him/her with a job or other means of financial support	
The giver gives begrudgingly and less than needed	
The giver knows to whom the tzedakah was given, but the recipient does not know the identity of the donor.	
The giver gives directly to the recipient before being asked for tzedakah.	
The recipient knows who donated the tzedakah, but the giver does not know who received it.	

STRATEGIES





STRATEGIES

- Understand the relief process and be as transparent with the client as possible
- Work with the client as a team to facilitate change, set realistic goals
- Reassure the client of confidentiality policies
- Be aware of your biases; do not give or prevent assistance based on your bias
- Maintain a professional, nonjudgmental approach
- Be kind

QUESTIONS



THANK YOU

