

## Ohel Offers Resilience Resources to Navigate Challenges

Ohel Kestenbaum Family International Children's Services reminds schools and families about its original social-emotional offerings during Mental Health Awareness Month.

*(Courtesy of Ohel)* Over the last several years, Ohel Children's Home and Family Services has developed original learning resources for preschool through grade school students to proactively build their emotional health and wellness. These represent Ohel's commitment to creating ongoing tools to help children grow their resilience, identify their strengths and learn how to navigate their emotions. Mental Health Awareness Month is the ideal time to learn more and implement these resources.

### Learn About Resilience

Ohel works globally with many schools to share the power of resilience, and believes that preparing children for challenging times throughout their lives is essential. Dr. Carly Namdar is Ohel's resilience programs coordinator and collaborates with schools to ensure that resilience—the ability to navigate through life's ups and downs—is part of the curriculum, encouraging teachers to bring the concept front and center.

"When children are resilient, they can understand and talk about their emotions, achieve more academically and maintain better relations with family and friends," said Dr. Namdar. "We all have challenges, and growing resilience at a young age helps children

become equipped and empowered for the future. Social-emotional skills are actually a greater predictor of academic success than IQ, and in today's climate it's essential to integrate these life skills into the school day."

One trend Dr. Namdar often sees is people mistaking resilience for toxic positivity. She says that resilience doesn't mean we go through life without feeling or acknowledging struggles – it's the opposite. "Resilient people feel many emotions," added Dr. Namdar. "Teaching resilience allows parents and teachers to build strong children, with an emphasis on their agility and ability to remain flexible to adjust to the challenges they may face"

Following are a few other little-known facts about resilience:

- Just as our resilience can change over time, resilience can vary by situation. Some children may demonstrate greater strengths and resilience in some areas over others, such as socially versus academically.
- Resilience is not predetermined. We are not born with a set amount of resilience. Resilience is a muscle that we can exercise and build.
- Resilience helps us to regulate the emotions that often accompany adversity. A

resilient person has a toolbox ready, so they are not overwhelmed by life's challenges. They learn how to manage and cope with the emotions they experience.

- Resilience can help us transform our challenges into opportunities for growth.

### Leverage Resources

Dr. Namdar said that building resilience is really a parallel process and the best way to build resilient children is for teachers and parents to model resilient behavior. She concluded, "Our resilience can change over time as we experience adverse events or trauma. It's not a 'one and done' process. Adults have the privilege of helping children grow and develop, and it's important to bring resources into both the classroom and the home to enjoy the process and journey together."

"Inner Space: My Resilience Workbook," is Ohel's new space-themed experience where elementary school-aged children learn about resilience through fun, easy to understand and do, hands-on activities and critical thinking exercises.

Ohel donated over 95,000 copies of this book to children in Israel, all coping under different circumstances: children displaced from their homes, others residing within the foster care system, some whose parents are fighting

on the front lines, immigrants from Ukraine and Ethiopia waiting in absorption centers, and students in schools all across Israel.

Danit Tayri, director of counseling at North Shore Hebrew Academy at Cherry Lane, lauded Ohel's workbook:

"Ohel's team has created a masterpiece. 'Inner Space: My Resilience Workbook' has taken the complex research that has been done on trauma and resilience and transformed it into an excellent workbook for elementary school children. Each page targets another piece of the children's emotional development, building inner strength and resilience. Our teachers enjoy using the workbook and our students look forward to their engaging weekly lessons. I highly recommend it!"

"I Feel That Way and That's Okay" is a picture book to help preschool-aged children understand their emotions and to understand how emotions can be experienced inside their bodies.

Mushky Tuvel, principal of Magen Israel School, highlighted the importance of Ohel's publication by saying, "We want to teach our children not only to recognize their feelings but to embrace them, creating

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## From High School to Seminary and Yeshiva

Two short-term therapy groups help high school seniors prepare for their transition to Israel.

By Ahuvah Fried, LCSW, and Max Kirshblum, LSW

A great many 12th graders are currently feeling the mixed bag of emotions that come with the reality of graduation and closing their high school chapter. Happiness, sadness, excitement, fear or all of the above, even at the same time, are common feelings that may come up for some.

When it comes to the choice of what to do after high school, some choose to go to college, others try to find a job or learn a trade, and for many Orthodox Jews, this is the time to take a gap year and study abroad, most commonly in Israel.

Going to Israel is considered to be an incredible once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It's a time to ask questions, learn about yourself and your heritage, make new friends, and experience independence. While the anticipation of this experience is exciting, it can also be pretty anxiety-provoking. In recognition of these challenges, psychotherapy groups tailored specifically for these young women and men offer invaluable support and guidance.

It is completely normal to feel unsure of how to navigate certain aspects of going to Israel, even the ones that people may not have even thought about yet. Questions like, "Who am I going to spend Shabbos with? I don't have any relatives in Israel!"; "I have gone to summer camp before and I have been fine, but why am I feeling so nervous about going away for the year?"; "I am going to miss my parents ... and my Amazon account!"; "I don't know people who are going to my seminary/

yeshiva, what if I don't make any friends?"; "I've never had a roommate before! I need to go to sleep early! What if my roommate likes to be up all night?!"

These are some of the topics that will be discussed in Collaborative Minds Psychotherapy's upcoming virtual therapy groups for high school seniors going to seminary and yeshiva. Through open dialogue, guidance, and the support of their peers, these groups will offer practical advice on maintaining healthy boundaries, resolving conflicts, and persevering through social anxiety. Participants will learn strategies for staying organized, implementing healthy study habits, and managing their time effectively—a crucial foundation for success in both spiritual and personal realms.

By equipping participants with practical skills, fostering social connections, and promoting emotional well-being, these groups can help pave the way for a successful and fulfilling experience abroad—one characterized by growth, resilience, and meaningful connections.

Ahuvah Fried, LCSW, and Max Kirshblum, LSW, are the personable and professional therapists of Collaborative Minds Psychotherapy LLC who will be facilitating these exciting groups for high school seniors going to Israel next year. Both Ahuvah and Max specialize in adolescent mental health and are especially passionate about helping teens navigate the ups and downs of this life-changing experience. For more information about these groups, email [intake@collaborativeminds.net](mailto:intake@collaborativeminds.net) or visit [www.collaborativeminds.net](http://www.collaborativeminds.net).

resources to your school or community. Ohel's dedicated team is available to provide training and consultation on implementing these resources in schools.

Visit [www.ohelfamily.org/resources](http://www.ohelfamily.org/resources) to download the workbooks and related teacher editions. For more information, visit [ohelfamily.org](http://ohelfamily.org) and follow Ohel on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

### Ohel Offers Resilience

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a foundation for understanding and compassion that will last a lifetime. Ohel's resources are here for just that!"

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Facilitated by  
Ahuvah Fried, LCSW



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## VIRTUAL GROUP HIGH SCHOOL TO SEMINARY

This group is for girls in their senior year of high school who will be attending Seminary next year in Israel.

Topics that will be covered include:

- CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) skills to manage social anxiety
- Social skills
- Living away from parents for the first time
- Staying organized and implementing healthy life and study habits
- Navigating living in a dorm and with roommates
- Maintaining healthy boundaries and relationships
- Navigating mental health challenges in Seminary

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Facilitated by  
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**SUNDAYS**

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**1:00 PM–2:00 PM**

6 WEEK SESSIONS



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## VIRTUAL GROUP HIGH SCHOOL TO YESHIVA

This group is for boys in their senior year of high school who will be attending Yeshiva next year in Israel.

Topics that will be covered include:

- CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) skills to manage social anxiety
- Social skills
- Living away from parents for the first time
- Staying organized and implementing healthy life and study habits
- Navigating living in a dorm and with roommates
- Maintaining healthy boundaries and relationships
- Navigating mental health challenges in Yeshiva

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