



Zachter Family
National
Trauma Center

THE WAR IN ISRAEL: SPECIAL ISSUES FOR HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

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“October 7th, which was a sacred Jewish holiday, became the deadliest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust. It has brought to the surface painful memories and scars left by a millennium of antisemitism and the genocide of the Jewish people.”

– President Joe Biden

Since October 7th, the safety and security that Jews have slowly built up since 1945 was shattered. For Holocaust survivors and their descendants, the response of the world is feeling eerily like déjà vu.

Intergenerational Trauma:

Intergenerational trauma occurs when a trauma undergone by an individual affects subsequent generations. The Jews are unique in that we are constantly rewriting the book on trauma. Generations of persecution starting with the Egyptians and culminating in the Holocaust have led to strong identity markers and character traits embedded in our psyche. **Resilience defines who we are as a nation.**

For descendants of Holocaust Survivors who grew up hearing stories of persecution, genocide and racial dehumanization, October 7th and its subsequent events have set off alarm bells.

Seemingly innocuous interactions may trigger intergenerational trauma:

- **Fear:** (Listening to university presidents not condemning genocidal slogans in Congress: “Is this the start of another Holocaust?”)
- **Paranoia:** (Does this non-Jew that I am talking to secretly wish I was dead?)
- **Trust issues:** (Can I trust my neighbors, government, media? These were all institutions that turned against Jews during the Holocaust.)

Our world views, values and feelings of safety may have been turned upside down. Some of us are re-examining our core belief system. As much as we wish otherwise, we cannot go back in time. This is our new reality.

How to cope during this time of uncertainty:


- **Recognize and accept** your feelings as normal responses to extreme and upsetting circumstances.
- **Talk to a loved one** who can listen without dismissing you.

HALT:

Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired



- **HALT.** If you are feeling more anxious than usual, check in with yourself to see if you are **Hungry, Angry, Lonely** or **Tired**- addressing this first may lessen symptoms of anxiety.
- **Return to Routine.** Try maintaining a sense of normalcy with a daily routine.
- **Limit** the time that you spend hearing and watching graphic media accounts of the war in Israel as much as possible.
- **Balance** your media exposure with positive and inspirational news features about unity and resilience during the war.
- Try some **grounding exercises** like deep breathing or using your five senses (smelling essential oils, feeling the wind on your face or savoring a piece of chocolate).
- **Explore Jewish history.** Review all the times that the Jews were in danger and how they prevailed each time (The Romans, Greeks, Ottomans, Spaniards and Germans are just a few examples of nations that tried and failed to destroy us.)



Remind yourself of the many ways that 2023 is different than 1945.

“
Though this doesn't
make it feel
less scary..
”

Technology:

- For worse but also for better, there are no hiding the deeds of Hamas. Unlike the Nazis, their evil is on display.
- We are able to communicate with our loved ones in Israel and have accurate information on the war.
- We are harnessing the powers of technology to fight back, send aid and promote the truth.

We have Israel and the IDF:

- Unlike during the Holocaust, Jews today have a country that welcomes them openly, no questions asked.
- Israel has an army that has state of the art weapons and defense.
- Jews are united to help each other. **We are not alone.**

There is access to support:

- Whether it is physical or emotional support, there are many organizations offering their services.
- Although the anti-Israel crowd seems loud, there are many governments, reporters and people around the world who are supporting us unlike in the 1940's when most governments were quiet and did not condemn Nazi Germany.



**We are a resilient nation who
has stood the test of time
and will continue to do so!**

**For Survivors, 2nd and 3rd generation in need of
additional support and information, please reach out to:**

trauma@ohelfamily.org

Note: This resource was designed to appeal to a broad spectrum of individuals. To maximize the benefit of this resource, use the tools that resonate with you the most.