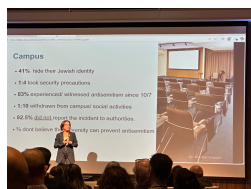


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Validating the Invisible Wounds: Healing in a Time of Antisemitism



On September 5, over 170 participants gathered at the Prosserman JCC Leah Posluns Theatre for **Validating the Invisible Wounds**, a powerful training presented by JF&CS, in partnership with a dedicated group of community mental health professionals, and generously supported by UJA.

Led by renowned psychologist Dr. Miri Bar-Halpern of Harvard University, the half-day training explored how identity-based trauma, particularly rooted in antisemitism, can profoundly impact individuals and examined how clinicians can provide meaningful, trauma-informed support.

In recent years, many Jewish clients have reported that their lived experiences were dismissed, politicized, or minimized. This workshop aimed to change that. Participants were introduced to the concept of Traumatic Invalidation, the denial or dismissal of experiences of oppression or prejudice, and explored its impact on mental health and wellbeing.

The agenda was rich with practical learning. Attendees engaged in:

- Defining what Traumatic Invalidation looks like in everyday clinical settings.
- Exploring concrete therapeutic strategies to help clients process identity-based trauma.
- Identifying signs of vicarious trauma and moral injury among Jewish clinicians.
- Creating personal burnout-prevention plans when caring for others demands caring for oneself.
- Learning how values-based activism and advocacy can be integrated into therapeutic practice in ethical, sustainable ways.

The energy in the room carried both urgency and hope. Many participants spoke afterward about feeling isolated as they witness increasing hate, and how affirming it was to be in a space that names those invisible wounds, offers tools to address them, and supports not only clients but also caregivers themselves.

One JF&CS Social Worker in attendance shared, "I want to say that as an ally to the Jewish people, I was deeply moved by the speaker's story and her work in this ever-growing, important field. I want her to know that she is not alone, and we, as allies, need to continue supporting events like this one. It is imperative."

As antisemitism continues to rise globally and locally, events like this remind us that healing begins with acknowledgment and that validation is not optional but essential.

Celebrating Our Volunteers at the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards



JF&CS proudly nominated eight outstanding volunteers for recognition at this year's Ontario Volunteer Service Awards ceremony, held at the Toronto Reference Library. A huge Mazel Tov to Mara Barell, Maxine Becker, Lily Hendler, Sharon List, Rimona Natanson, Maya Rafelman, Harold Rosenfeld and Tyler Soberano. The annual event, hosted by the Government of Ontario, shines a spotlight on the countless individuals who give their time, energy, and passion to building stronger, more compassionate communities.

During the ceremony, each honouree received a lapel pin and a certificate. These symbolize the gratitude for their unwavering dedication and the many hours they have devoted to supporting others.

For JF&CS, volunteers are the heartbeat of our work. Whether mentoring youth, visiting isolated seniors, assisting newcomers, or lending a helping hand at community events, our volunteers embody kindness, responsibility, and community care. Their commitment ensures that everyone who turns to us feels supported, seen, and connected.

The Ontario Volunteer Service Awards are especially meaningful because they celebrate continuous years of commitment and dedication. Each nomination represents not just hours of service, but years of steady care and presence. These volunteers have made our mission their own, bringing compassion and empathy into every role they take on.

Connect



Did You Know?

Fall is a busy time of year at JF&CS. We have plenty of exciting initiatives coming up, including GivingTuesday and Drive for Dreidels, so keep an eye out for the many ways you can wrap up the year with a meaningful and impactful donation.

Join the Monthly Mitzvah Makers!

JF&CS' monthly giving program. [Click here](#) for more information.

Leave a Legacy

[Click here](#) to learn about planned giving through the Gordon S. Wolfe Legacy Society at JF&CS.

We Can Help You

[Learn](#) about our programs and services.

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On behalf of our staff, clients, and community, we extend a heartfelt message to all our nominees. Your contributions inspire us daily, and this recognition is a small token of our deep appreciation.

To learn more about volunteering with JF&CS, [click here](#).

JF&CS Strategic Plan 2025-2030: Working Together, Achieving More



Jewish Family and Child Service launched a new Strategic Plan this month, guiding our operations for the next five years. This roadmap ensures that as the world changes, we remain responsive, sustainable, and deeply rooted in our mission to strengthen and support individuals, children and families. We serve the Jewish community and all others who seek support.

With a history spanning over 155 years, JF&CS has continually adapted to meet evolving needs. The challenges facing our community today, such as poverty, family violence, child abuse and neglect, and mental health, demand renewed vision and innovative solutions.

The 2025-2030 Strategic Plan was collaboratively developed, engaging staff, board members, volunteers, clients, donors and community partners to ensure that diverse perspectives shape our path forward. It introduces refreshed Vision and Mission statements and centres around four Strategic Directions, supported by twelve Operational Initiatives.

The new Strategic Directions:

1. Strengthen organizational culture and infrastructure to prepare for future growth.
2. Clearly communicate agency mandate and actively promote breadth and depth of services.
3. Evolve services and partnerships to address the changing needs of the communities we serve.
4. Enhance the financial sustainability of the organization to ensure ongoing high-quality service.

This plan is more than a document, it's a pledge: a promise that everyone who comes through our doors will find renewed hope and brighter opportunities. As the plan unfolds, we look forward to sharing progress, milestones, and stories that demonstrate the tangible impact of these new initiatives.

Thank you to everyone who contributed. Your voices, experience, and passion will make this plan a success. Together, we move forward with purpose, clarity, and compassion. Learn more about the Strategic Plan by [clicking here](#).

A Bar Mitzvah Made Possible Through Community Care



Last month, a Jewish boy in the care of another Children's Aid Society (CAS) in Ontario celebrated his Bar Mitzvah. This milestone was made possible through an extraordinary collaboration between JF&CS, the partner CAS, the Israeli Embassy, and the local synagogue, lovingly guided by our Staff Chaplain, David Nahmad.

Although the child's parents were unable to attend, the day was filled with connection and belonging. His sister joined in person, while his grandparents, and aunts and uncles in Israel participated joyfully over Zoom. The synagogue community welcomed him with open arms, as the cantor worked closely with him in advance, guiding his preparation, while congregants organized a heartfelt celebration. The afternoon was complete with food, decorations, photography, and music.

To mark his entrance into Jewish adulthood, Chaplain David attended and presented him with a suit, a tallit and a kippah, gifts symbolizing tradition, continuity, and pride. The partner CAS also played a vital role, ensuring he was celebrated and arranging for his sister's attendance.

What made the day even more meaningful was the lasting support it inspired. Following the Bar Mitzvah, members of the community reached out with offers of ongoing connection invitations for Rosh Hashanah services and Shabbat.

This Bar Mitzvah was more than a rite of passage. It was a testament to communal care, dignity, and the power of partnership, a true mitzvah in action. By coming together, we ensured that this young man experienced not only a sacred tradition, but also the embrace of a community that will continue to support him as he grows.

Annual General Meeting Highlights

JF&CS was proud to welcome board members, community members, volunteers, staff, and partners to our Annual General Meeting on September 18. The evening was an inspiring opportunity to reflect on the past year, share key accomplishments, and set the stage for the future.



The meeting opened with a welcome message, land acknowledgement, and a heartfelt prayer for the hostages from outgoing Board President, Sharon List, and CEO, Talyah Breslin. Their words set a thoughtful tone for the evening, grounding us and reminding us that even as we focus on local needs, our hearts remain with those experiencing pain and uncertainty around the globe.

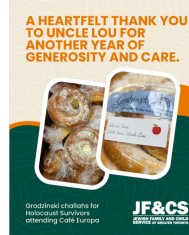
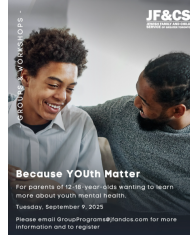
Highlights included powerful video spotlights from two JF&CS clients and a staff member, each sharing personal stories of resilience, care, and impact. Their words brought our mission to life, showing how JF&CS touches individuals and families in profound ways. We were also honoured to welcome Guest Speaker Brian Prosserman, whose inspiring remarks encouraged reflection on the power of JF&CS's unique support and the importance of standing together in challenging times.

A particularly meaningful moment was the transition in board leadership. We extended our deepest gratitude to Sharon List for her second outstanding term as Board President, and warmly welcomed Dr. Michael Minden as he steps into the role, ushering in a new chapter of vision and guidance.

The audience was treated to a moving vocal performance by Israeli singer-songwriter, Noam Hoze. His performance left attendees with a sense of unity, hope, and renewed purpose.

Thank you to everyone who joined us. Together, we move forward with renewed strength, purpose, and compassion. [Click here](#) to view our 2024-2025 Annual Report.

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