



SHALOM BAYIT

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2016 – Elul 5776

SUPPORT GROUPS

Are you being hurt by someone you love?

Get support from your peers in a confidential space.

Groups offered in SF, East Bay and the Peninsula. FREE and open to women coping with past or present controlling relationships. For details call our Toll-Free Confidential Helpline

1-866-SHALOM-7

Peninsula groups made possible by the Jewish Community Endowment Newhouse Fund.

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MAPPING THE SAFETY NET:

UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT SYSTEMS OF SAFETY FOR BATTERED WOMEN

NAOMI TUCKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When we think about protecting battered women, the obvious systems of safety come to mind: police, courts, restraining orders, legal remedies. These are incredibly important but are not the only instruments of protection.

Safety can be thought of in many ways: physical safety and protection from bodily harm; emotional safety; child protection; the basic human necessities of food and shelter; a longer term safety net for surviving and thriving. For women escaping domestic violence, all of these aspects of safety are important. In this issue of our newsletter, we examine systems of safety in three distinct yet overlapping categories: public, nonprofit services, and community.

PUBLIC SYSTEMS

These include the criminal-legal system remedies we most commonly think of (laws, police, courts, jails) and public support (TANF / welfare, public housing, MediCal). Here is a brief summary of public remedies for domestic violence survivors.

Legislation: These can be criminal laws (such as the laws that say assault, battery, rape and stalking are illegal), civil protections (such as domestic violence restraining orders, housing rights or laws that give battered women the right to take time off work to attend court hearings), or broader public policies (such as the federal Violence Against Women Act) that ensure funding for victim services, govern how law enforcement must respond, build safety nets, propose innovative solutions, and shift public thinking on relevant issues.

Law enforcement (police or sheriff): laws are only helpful if they are enforced. For example, a victim can obtain a restraining order, but that order is only a piece of paper – not a bullet proof vest. If the abuser violates the order that victim must rely on the police to enforce the order and keep her protected.

Criminal justice system: from judges and courts to jails and prisons, this is our country's accountability system. Its core operating principle is "innocent until proven guilty" – a value the Jewish community upholds as a central tenet of justice. However, that premise can inadvertently leave survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault with an impossibly heavy burden of proof, about a crime for which they are often the only witness. Prosecution of domestic violence cases is further complicated by gender bias in the courts, insufficient resources, lack of language interpreting, lack of training for judges, societal misperceptions about domestic violence that can affect a jury, abusers who are extraordinarily convincing and well-rehearsed manipulators, and persistent attitudes of victim-blaming.

These factors often contribute to poor outcomes for battered women in the courtroom. Although we are improving these outcomes, we still have a long way to go – and many women do not feel justice was served to them through the criminal legal process.

Civil court includes Family Court, where domestic violence survivors can file for protective orders, divorce or separation, child custody, visitation, and spousal/child support. Obtaining expert legal help can be essential to a survivor's ability to safely leave an abusive relationship. Her future hangs in the balance here, where so much is decided.

Even when we institutionalize protections, those systems are only effective if they are properly enforced. For example, although California law requires judges to consider domestic violence in making custody decisions, prevailing court opinion often lands in the camp of "but he's a great father," ignores the possibility that slamming mommy's head into a wall in front of 4-year-old Susie might be a bad parenting idea, and focuses on a parent's "right"

to their child, rather than a child's right to not experience trauma in their own home.

Fortunately, the battered women's movement's strong advocacy is creating positive changes within the family court system. But this system remains a shaky albeit needed safety net for battered mothers, who may leave an abusive relationship only to find that they risk losing custody of their children or that courts and visitation exchanges become the ex-partner's new playing field for leveraging control.

Child Protection: from Child Protective Services to the juvenile/ dependency courts, the child protection system is designed to protect children who cannot otherwise protect themselves. While there can be overlap, child abuse and domestic violence are distinct fields of expertise. One of the most important things we can do to protect kids exposed to domestic violence (and their mothers) is to train child protection agencies and social workers about best practices in response to domestic violence.

Our public safety net is absolutely vital to survivors' ability to build lives free of violence. In all these systems we have made great strides and created important protections. Yet many challenges remain: not all victims can access those protections; the systems are not always consistent; and many abuse survivors are revictimized when seeking help. We are grateful for the laws and systems in place and still continue to vigilantly advocate for changes needed to bring about true justice for battered women and their children.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS AND OTHER NON-PROFITS

Free or low-cost community-based service agencies form an important network of support. These non-governmental organizations — including hotlines, shelters, legal services, counseling, mental health services, immigration support, health care providers, food pantries, and more — can often feel safer to survivors because they are independent of “the system” and

offer distinct expertise with a compassionate interface grounded in what survivors need.

Domestic violence crisis lines are a crucial part of that safety net, providing expertise and support that battered women cannot find elsewhere. When a woman calls Shalom Bayit's helpline, for example, we focus on both emotional and physical safety. We assess danger and help craft a safety plan. We ask questions, listen to a caller's fears and concerns, provide relevant resources and options. We offer validation and non-judgmental support. We share our knowledge of options, risks and resources, to help each caller make informed decisions. These are the fundamentals of crisis intervention.

Shalom Bayit is of course also unique even within the domestic violence field, offering Jewish spiritual healing tools that serve as a guide through difficult times, helping to restore hope and healing.

“What if that person in crisis first talks to their rabbi, friend, or coworker? How can we, as a community, be part of the system of safety?”

COMMUNITY

Sometimes, calling a hotline isn't a person's first stop on the path to safety. What if that person in crisis first talks to their rabbi, friend, or coworker? How can we, as a community, be part of the system of safety?

Friends, neighbors, coworkers, clergy, their congregation, pals at a dance class or the gym or PTA, or anyone who is part of their daily life are often where a person is most likely to turn if they are in crisis. Community is where people draw values and beliefs, find solace, make friends, seek spiritual and emotional support, and make major life decisions. So how one's community responds matters greatly. *Can we be that community of support? Can we be part of the solution?*

Recently a woman told our team about the first time she reached out for help. Mustering all her courage, she confided her deep marital troubles to a trusted community leader...only to have him literally look the other way and change the subject. Though subtle, that response

silenced her — leaving her to believe that this was not a subject to bring up. She went back to feeling it was her own problem. She talked to no one for another year — enduring a constant barrage of threats, insults, and sexual violations that might have been avoided if only that first “trusted” leader had not ignored her cry for help. Finally it got so bad that a friend noticed and encouraged her to call Shalom Bayit.

Community response can shape whether a victim feels believed or judged; supported or re-victimized; emotionally strong or all alone. Community can be the spiritual support, the safe haven, the zone of healing, a place where someone feels held and believed. Day schools, religious schools, synagogues, JCCs, preschools and other Jewish institutions can help enforce restraining orders, provide safe visitation exchange locations and know when and how to make child abuse reports. Agency leaders and clergy can provide a voice of authority, prioritizing victim safety and holding abusers accountable within the walls of our Jewish institutions. Together, we can ask important questions about how

we want our Jewish values of dignity, respect and the divine spark in every human to be reflected in the personal conduct of our community members.

BE THE ONE: RESPONDING AS INDIVIDUALS

Each INDIVIDUAL response also matters. Isolation is a batterer's most effective weapon of control. Reaching out so an abuse survivor remains solidly connected to a network of support is one of the greatest safety anchors we can offer.

Abuse survivors need unconditional friendship and validation. You can listen without judging. You can offer compassion, tangible support, childcare, a place to stay, encouragement.

Most importantly, when a woman confides in you her story of abuse, you can **BE THE ONE** who believes her. ***That is perhaps the most important safety net of all.***



One person can make all the difference

THANK YOU to all who supported and attended our *Creating Hope* 24th anniversary celebration on May 17th. What a special evening! A huge *hakarat hatov* to our generous sponsors and supporters, to our wonderful event chair Jerilyn Gelt for **BEING THE ONE** to lead us and to all the host and honorary committee members who worked tirelessly to make it a night to remember. We were all so inspired by our speakers **Minouche Kandel** and **Abby Leibman**, and by *Changing Lives* award honoree **Senator Barbara Boxer**, for their fierce commitment to empowering women and girls. These three courageous leaders have done so much to make California safer for women and children — and at *Creating Hope*, challenged each of us to think and act differently. Finally, we know that all our 300 guests in the room that night join us in sending profound appreciation to Abby Leibman for courageously sharing her heart and her family's deeply personal story.

***Creating Hope* painted a vivid picture of how each one of us can**

BE THE ONE

to contribute toward a better future for women, children and families.

All that we do matters and each of our voices is amplified when we call for peace together.



Top Left: Keynote Speaker Abby Leibman, Board Member Abigail BloomKing, Brian BloomKing, Board Chair Linda Kalinowski. *Top Middle:* Natalie Saylor & Minouche Kandel. *Top Right:* Dean MacDonald & Naomi Tucker. *Bottom Left:* Members of Shalom Bayit's Rabbinic Advisory Council lead the closing with rabbinic co-chair Rabbi Susan Leider. *Bottom Right:* Abby Leibman, Linda Kalinowski, Event Chair Jerilyn Gelt, Naomi Tucker, Doug Boxer, Board Member Janet Schneider. *Photos by Larry Rosenberg*



Creating *hope* ²⁴



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SHALOM BAYIT

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starting this fall
in Palo Alto**

Support Groups also available in
the East Bay and San Francisco

*Funding generously provided by
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For more info or to sign up:
(866) SHALOM-7

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HONORARY GIFTS

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Rivka Greenberg
Desmid Bendix Lyon

In honor of Beyond Silence
Desmid Bendix Lyon

In honor of Abigail & Brian BloomKing
Elaine & Michael Kaplan
Rabbi Stephen & Dr Laurie Pearce

In honor of Shirley Bob
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In honor of Amalia Bob-Waksberg
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Judith Waksberg & Philip Genty

In honor of Robin Brown
Sandy Anderson

In honor of Shira Chester
Ronnie Caplane

In honor of Debbie & Barry Cohn
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**In honor of the Contra Costa
Jewish Day School Class of 2015**
Anne Schmitz & Aaron Kaufmann

In honor of Zephira Derblich-Milea
Ruth Derblich
Hannah Lesser

In honor of Zia's birth
Alison Jordan

In honor of Jerilyn Gelt
Rosalind & Barry Franklin
Leslie Kane & Manuel Fishman
Nancy Goldberg
Bonnie & Daniel Levitt

In honor of Miriam Gochin & Larry Baskin
Wilma & Tony Bass

In honor of Cheri & David Goldberg
Norman Schlossberg

In honor of 1st granddaughter
Jan Schmuckler

**In honor of Pat Hellmand & Steve
Gottlieb's granddaughter's birth**
Rivka Greenberg

In honor of Rivka Greenberg
Kathy Khuner

In honor of Harold & Sylvia Jacobs
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Mimi Gauss
Carolyn Power Perlstein

In honor of Ruth Levy
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from the Board of Directors

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Shalom Bayit is a beneficiary of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, a project of the Tides Center and a proud member of the San Francisco Domestic Violence Consortium



ANNOUNCEMENTS & PROGRAMS

CH...CH...CH...CHANGES...

We are delighted to welcome the following new additions to our staff this year:

Meira Albert, Events & Engagement Specialist ~ Meira obtained an MSW from Yeshiva University's Wurzweiler School of Social Work where she concentrated in Community Organization and Program Development. Before coming to Shalom Bayit, she worked for the Orthodox Union as the Community Services Associate where she consulted with synagogues on family and youth programming. Her work there sparked an interest in child abuse and domestic violence education in the Jewish community. Meira is excited to be a part of Shalom Bayit's expansion as she takes on this new position coordinating events and community programs. She is the Rebbetzin at Congregation Beth Jacob of Oakland.

Suzanne Amor, Community Outreach Program Manager ~ Suzanne received their Bachelor of Science in Community & Regional Development with a minor in psychology from UC Davis. For three years, Suzanne advocated for gender equity and social justice at UC Davis Women's Resources and Research Center by facilitating educational workshops, planning outreach events, and providing crisis intervention services. Suzanne also worked at a sexual assault and domestic violence center in Woodland, CA and therefore brings a wealth of experience to the Community Outreach position. Suzanne is passionate about cultivating a culture of anti-violence and supporting survivors of abuse.

Sarah Rothe, LCSW, Direct Services Manager ~ Sarah manages all our client services programs and provides individual and group support to those in need of Shalom Bayit's assistance. With an M.S. in Clinical Social Work from Columbia University, Sarah comes to us with nearly a decade of clinical expertise in trauma and abuse, including sexual assault, domestic violence, community violence and children exposed to violence in their homes. Since 2007 she has worked in domestic violence, family resource centers and medical settings in both NY and CA. She has worked with low-income, immigrant and disenfranchised communities including transgender, lesbian, gay, and HIV+ individuals. Sarah is thrilled to now have the opportunity to bring her work home to the Jewish community.

Welcome to our team Sarah, Suzanne and Meira!

MAY OUR HOMES BE A SHELTER OF PEACE

This Sukkot join Shalom Bayit
 in our mission to eradicate
 Domestic Violence

PURPLE RIBBON CEREMONIES

In honor of Sukkot and National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we encourage you to tie a purple ribbon onto your communal or family Sukkah to honor those who do not have a safe or permanent place to call home — and to note our commitment to making every home a safe home.



To order Purple Ribbons and blessing cards,
 contact info@shalom-bayit.org

HELP US OFFER HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS



SPONSOR A FAMILY IN NEED

Will you, your business or community group join us?

SHALOM BAYIT'S CHANUKAH ADOPT-A-FAMILY PROGRAM

offers a sense of security, community and hope by anonymously providing Chanukah gifts and basic necessities to women and children fleeing from domestic violence. Your participation will make the festival of lights brighter for a family in need.

For more info or to sponsor a family,
 contact Sarah Rothe at (510) 451-8874
 or counseling@shalom-bayit.org