

A Loss Worthy of Grief:

Jewish Approaches to Bringing Comfort After Miscarriage, Stillbirth, and Neonatal Death



Thursday, April 23, 2009
 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM
 UJA-Federation of New York
 130 E. 59th Street, NYC 10022

For:
 • Rabbis, Cantors,
 • Chaplains,
 • Jewish Communal Social Workers,
 • Early Childhood Educators
 based in synagogues, schools and JCCs

Conference Schedule

9:00 – 9:30am	Registration and Refreshments
9:30am	Greetings Paul Levine, LCSW, Vice President and CEO, Jewish Board of Family & Children's Services Roberta Leiner, LCSW, Managing Director, Caring Commission, UJA-Federation of New York
9:45 – 10:00am	Overview of Day Rabbi Stephanie Dickstein, LMSW, Spiritual Care Coordinator, JBFCS Shira Ruskay Center
10:00 – 10:45am	Keynote Address Rabbi Yamin Levy and Dvora Levy, LCSW "Losses Worthy of Grief: Personal, Professional and Jewish Perspectives" Rabbi Levy, author, <i>Confronting the Loss of a Baby: A Personal and Jewish Perspective</i> . Vice President, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School. Dvora Levy, LCSW, Clinical Social Worker, Sephardic Bikur Holim, Brooklyn, NY and private practice
10:45 – 11:00am	Break
11:00 – 11:30am	From Conception to ? A Medical Perspective on Pregnancy Loss Janet Stein, MD, Vice Chairman, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Beth Israel Medical Center, Clinical Practice in High-Risk Obstetrics
11:40am – 1:00pm	Workshops
1:00 – 1:40pm	Lunch Networking and resources tables
1:40 – 2:40pm	Best Practices/What Helps? Moderator: Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW, Rabbinic Director, JBFCS Peer/Mutual Support Perry-Lynn Moffitt, co-author of <i>A Silent Sorrow – Pregnancy Loss: Guidance and Support for You and Your Family</i> • Rabbi Laurie Katz Braun, writer. Peer Counselors, Pregnancy Loss Support Program, National Council of Jewish Women - New York Section Hospital-Based Program Nancy Berlow, LCSW, Coordinator, Pregnancy and Infant Loss Program, North Shore University Hospital, Manhasset, NY • Ruth Gabay, LCSW, Senior Social Worker and Co-Director, Perinatal Bereavement Program, Beth Israel Medical Center, New York, NY Care Through the Synagogue Community Sara Hurwitz, <i>Madricha Ruchanit (Religious Mentor)</i> , serving with the Rabbinic Staff, Hebrew Institute of Riverdale, Bronx, NY
2:45 – 3:15pm	Next Steps Rabbi Richard Address, D.Min., Director, Department of Jewish Family Concerns of the Union for Reform Judaism
3:15 – 3:30pm	Closing Ritual Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin, Founder, Pregnancy Loss Support Program, National Council of Jewish Women – New York Section; author of <i>Tears of Sorrow, Seeds of Hope: A Jewish Spiritual Companion for Infertility and Pregnancy Loss</i>

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Workshops (11:40am – 1:00pm)

1. Pastoral and Supportive Care in the Days and Months after the Loss

How can you help the various members of a family, as individuals and as a unit, as each face the immediate aftermath of this loss?

Perry-Lynn Moffitt (see Best Practices) • Rabbi Mollie Cantor, Pediatric Chaplain, The Mount Sinai Kraves Children's Hospital, NY, NY

2. Helping Families with Young Children

How do we help the school and community when a family or staff member loses a pregnancy? How can we support families in their school and community, including understanding the different needs, unveiling the secrecy, what to say, how to follow up and access resources?

Valerie Rubin, LCSW, Program Social Worker for the Pregnancy Loss Support Program, National Council of Jewish Women – New York Section and School Social Worker at YBH of Passaic-Hillel, Passaic, NJ • Geula Zamist, MS, Director, Nursery School, Westchester Jewish Center, Mamaroneck, NY

3. The Presence of the Lost Pregnancy/Infant throughout the Lifespan

What are the ways in which a pregnancy loss has an impact on the individual, family and community throughout the lifecycle? How might these losses resurface during life-review work?

Rabbi Simon Hirschhorn, Psychoanalyst and Rabbi, Hebrew Home at Riverdale, focusing on Spirituality and End-of-Life. • Rabbi Edythe Held Mencher, LCSW, Associate Director, Department of Jewish Family Concerns of the Union for Reform Judaism, Psychotherapist

4. When Pregnancy Ends Too Early: Ritual and Liturgical Responses to Miscarriage from the Matriarchs to Today

How has ritual and liturgy been used to respond to miscarriage? How can ritual affect the healing process for individuals and families? *Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin (See Closing Ritual)*

5. Dialogue about Funeral, Burial and Mourning Practices

Although some believe that “there is no mourning for a baby who dies before 30 days”, there are many ways in which rabbis engage families in practices associated with neonatal death and mourning. We will explore some of the ritual and halachic approaches being used in our communities.

Rabbi Stephanie Dickstein, LMSW, JBFCS, author of, “Responsa on Stillbirth and Neonatal Death,” for the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards • Rabbi Shira Stern, D.Min., BCC, Founding Director, Center for Pastoral Care and Counseling, Marlboro, NJ • Rabbi Yamin Levy (See Keynote)

6. Mourning, Celebrating, Remembering and Forgetting: Grieving Loss When Another Baby Survives

Pregnancy loss during or soon after a multiple pregnancy places unspeakable emotional burdens on parents. How does one best support these families? How might we begin to understand our reluctance to enter into their reality?

Susan Kraemer, PhD, Consultant, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, New York-Presbyterian Hospital, Clinical Psychologist, private practice • Rabbi Nancy H. Wiener, D.Min., Clinical Director, Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Center for Pastoral Counseling, Adjunct Full Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling HUC-JIR, NY

7. Clergy Support Group

An opportunity for rabbis and cantors who have experienced pregnancy/neonatal loss to share stories, journeys and explore how this may affect pastoral care and performing lifecycle rituals.

Rabbi Mychal Springer, Associate Dean, Rabbinical School, Jewish Theological Seminary, Chair, Professional & Pastoral Skills, Supervisor, NAJC • Nancy Berlow, LCSW (See Best Practices)

Collaborating Organizations

- Academy for Jewish Religion
- BJENY/SAJES
- Dept. of Studies in Jewish Pastoral Care, HealthCare Chaplaincy
- FECS
- Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion
- Jewish Theological Seminary
- National Association of Jewish Chaplains
- NY Board of Rabbis
- Sid Jacobson JCC
- The JCC in Manhattan
- The Pregnancy Loss Support Program of The National Council of Jewish Women, New York Section
- The Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support Program at North Shore University Hospital – Manhasset
- The Rabbinical Assembly
- Union for Reform Judaism – Dept. of Family Concerns
- Westchester Jewish Community Services
- Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School

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