

News & Features

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TAP Into Freedom

A. DWECK

Feature

In just a few short weeks we will commemorate and reestablish our freedom from our oppressors and pledge our

subservience to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. In the spirit of zman cheirusenu, Mrs. Sylky Resnicoff, Mrs. Miriam Cohen, directors of the Trauma Awareness Program (TAP) and Mrs. Shaindy Gootblatt, Service Coordinator at TAP, share their incredible work in the field of trauma intervention and how they are helping members of the frum community seize the heady sense of freedom all year round.



V'ha'ir Lakewood tzahalah v'sameichah!

What Is TAP?

"The taproot is the main root of the tree. As the foundation and primary source of nourishment, it finds nutrients beneath the surface, enabling the tree to survive storms and drought, and grow to maturity. That is essentially the mission and guiding force of the Trauma Awareness Program (TAP)," explains Mrs. Resnicoff. "Our team is dedicated to offering the resources necessary to replenish essential nutrients needed to heal the wounded "inner child," so that the functional adult can thrive and, in turn, become a source of nourishment."

All TAP's's clinical work is done through licensed consultants/therapists, Jan M. Bergstrom, LMHC; Cara Weed, LCSW, CSAT; Leslie Rawlings, LCSW, CASAC; and Dr. Rick Butts, who have trained extensively in EMDR, IFS, SE, addictions

and each have been in private practice for over 20 years. To put it simply, TAP is all about empowering people, by providing awareness of the impact of childhood relational trauma and how that may be keeping them stuck in their adult life.

TAP launched two years ago to bring hope to the greater *frum* community, particularly to individuals who are struggling with emotional and mental issues. *Baruch Hashem*, the TAP team has helped hundreds of people in Lakewood and from around the world through the work of Pia Melody, and other Somatic and Attachment Theories as their primary therapeutic intervention model.

The Pia Melody Model And Other Somatic And Attachment Theorists

Mrs. Resnicoff, a life coach, spent the good part of two decades in education, outreach and program development as well as studying countless therapeutic modalities, but none of them, she laments, got to the bottom of the underlying emotional and mental health issues that people suffer from.

"Then, I discovered the cutting-edge work of Pia Melody, a preeminent authority on codependency, trauma and addiction," says Mrs. Resnicoff. "This discovery led to the founding of TAP, in an effort to introduce Pia Melody's successful methods of treatment by licensed clinicians to the *frum* community."

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TAP Into Freedom

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Who is Pia Melody and why has the TAP team dedicated their time, effort and resources to spread awareness of her findings? Pia Melody is the senior advisor at The Meadows, the leading treatment center for trauma and addiction. Her model is used at The Meadows as it successfully targets the underpinnings of mental and emotional health issues. Ms. Melody honed in on a common factor linking most of the patients at The Meadows: wounded and adaptive “inner child emotional states.” After further observation she uncovered five core issues of developmental immaturity: Self-Esteem, Boundaries, Reality, Self-Care, and Moderation.

“A parent’s job is to nurture their child,” explains Mrs. Gootblatt. “Pia Melody defines anything less than nurturing as trauma because it stunts emotional growth. It’s all about Relational Trauma and how the child was impacted. For example, a 35-year-old adult can interact as a 10-year-old in his or her relationships because of the relational trauma he or she dealt with as a child.”

The mode of intervention that TAP follows is to return to the wounded inner child and repair the experiential trauma. Only attending to those underdeveloped parts results in maturity and a balanced life as a functional adult.

TAP’s Services

TAP offers a wide array of services to their clients in their comfortable facilities. After the initial consultation that is available by a licensed clinician, clients are guided, educated and enlightened on the unique therapeutic interventions available.

“We host worldwide webinars and group therapy sessions led by leading trauma experts,” says Mrs. Cohen. “The therapists we have working for us have been trained with Pia Melody as well as Somatic Experiencing and other Attachment theorists. We aim for the highest standards for our clients.”

For those who are ready to take the plunge into the world of recovery, TAP offers Family of Origin Intensive Workshops with professional trauma therapists flown in from around the United States. Mrs. Resnicoff likens these intense workshops to surgery, where participants cut to the core of the issues that plague them in an effort to remove their emotional blockage that they may never have known existed.

One of their clients shared her personal insight into the intensive workshops. “After the workshops I

was able to connect the dots in my life in a way that I was never able to do,” she says. “It was life-changing and a jumpstart to my recovery.”

TAP has spread awareness all over the world in countries as far away as England and Australia. TAP utilizes the Healing Our Core Issues Training Institute to train therapists world-wide in the model that is based on Pia Melody’s work, so that they can offer the revolutionary methods to their clients.

“The Jerusalem Center in Israel has asked us to come in and train them in the intervention,” notes Mrs. Resnicoff. “Therapists want to stay on top of their game and offer cutting-edge techniques that will ultimately help their clients.” This has really raised the bar in our community.

The Participants

Who is making their way to the TAP office to benefit from the successful intervention they employ? People who have tried other therapies and are just plain stuck. These individuals are suffering and are on the lookout for a therapy program that will bring them the results they yearn for.

“Our spreading awareness is not about the symptoms of mental or emotional dysfunction,” explains Mrs. Cohen. “Rather, we provide education about the underpinnings of the dysfunction to guide them toward deeper recovery.”

The TAP model is a three-pronged program: Educational, Awareness and Resolution. Once a client knows the underlying reason for his challenges he can move forward on his own and repair himself. “I attended TAP’s workshop and saw how rock solid the model is,” says one client. “We all want to improve our lives and the program helps you go forward by going backwards. It is a rare and healthy view that brings you to a very happy place.”

Mrs. Resnicoff is careful to point out that repairing the inner child is without any blame to the caregivers; rather it is to better understand your childhood years and develop the emotional immaturity of these formative years. “I feel cured,” says another client, a grateful single girl. “I’m set on enrolling my future husband when I meet him! TAP makes people love and nurture themselves, a critical element in a future spouse.”

The generational trauma of Holocaust survivors is well-documented. Not only did the children of some Holocaust survivors suffer from covert trauma but even their grandchildren have felt the fallout. “We hold their hands throughout the program and coach them every step of the way,” says Mrs. Cohen. “There is a floodgate of trauma that is spilling over from these multi-generational descendants of Holocaust survivors

and we are here to help them recover.”

How to Know

If Pia Mellody refers to trauma as anything less than nurturing, how can one know if he is a victim of trauma and suffering from a wounded inner child? “Usually, a person is suffering and jumping from one symptom to the next,” stresses Mrs. Resnicoff. “They don’t know that they suffered from trauma, but they do know that something is very wrong.” Covert abuse is more common than we realize. Children need to be seen and heard, and the emotionally neglected child will grow up as an underdeveloped adult.

“Just as carbon monoxide is a silent killer and just as deadly as a raging fire, neglect is just as traumatic as overt abuse,” says Jan Bergstrom, one of TAP’s clinical consultants. Today, inner child work is a buzz word, not something that people have a grip on or an understanding of. As Cara Weed, LCSW, says, that which we do not heal in childhood we replay in adulthood. Pia’s model of inner child work and developmental immaturity and attachment is a very systematic and structured framework of recovery. TAP hopes to spread this awareness of relational trauma to the *frum* community and help more people heal.

Mind-Body Connection

Even if we forget the trauma from our childhood years, our bodies remember. People can hold the trauma in their body in different ways. That’s why TAP hosts workshops of self-help techniques to release the trauma that is locked inside.

“People with trauma are often in a flight, fight or freeze response,” explains Dr. Rick Butts. “The self-help techniques taught by specialists and integrating by our therapists get the energy flowing, open the blood

flow, and reduce tension headaches and other stored trauma. When we trust our bodies we are more centered and balanced.”

Trauma impacts a person in so many ways and levels. The arrested development of an adult who endured overt or covert abuse as a child is really suffering. When he or she gets his or her history straight and realizes that something did happen to them and it isn’t okay, he is well on the road to recovery. Mind-body self-help techniques can be healing tools that can further support the recovery and development of a person in distress or pain.

A Huge Shift

The many TAP clients attest to the huge shift they see in their lives. One of the participants recently got engaged and called to thank the TAP team. “She told us she would not have been able to get engaged without the therapeutic intervention she received at TAP,” enthuses Mrs. Resnicoff. Another participant, a woman in her 60’s, stated that her only regret was that she didn’t attend the TAP workshops earlier. Her relationship with her daughter changed overnight.

“When your own inner child is nurtured and affirmed, you can give the attachment, love and nurturing to your own children,” says Leslie Rawlings. “This woman saw that first-hand; it opened her eyes to Pia Mellody’s groundbreaking and powerful model of recovery.”

There is hope, a way out for people locked in the shackles of trauma. May *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* lead them to freedom as we usher in the *zman cheitroseinu!*

The Trauma Awareness Program (TAP) can be reached at 732-595-2TAP (2827) or by email Info@tapprogram.org. TAP is under rabbinical guidance including Rabbanim and Roshei Yeshivah.