

Paperweight Perspective

Don't add to your stress levels



BY ALAN PERRIN, TRUSTEE

Psychologists have enumerated the greatest sources of stress and triggers for mental ill health in people's lives. Many permutations exist depending

on the publication – psychological, socio-logical, medical.

THE TOP THREE HOWEVER, ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ARE:

- Death of a spouse or loved one
- Divorce
- Marriage & separation

But what is missed in many of the “searchable” lists is very key to their resolution. One potent solution eloquently expressed the stressfulness of an event as the amount of adaptation or change it requires of an average individual. The initial impact of the crisis is by every account “bad enough”, but the consequences can endure for a very long time indeed, to make progress at a personal or family

level, many adaptations and changes have to be made. And making those adaptations is, in some views, the hardest transition.

What Paperweight has resolved to do is attempt to reduce the adaptations and changes necessary by forward planning. Crisis management in all these scenarios is our forté but we would very much rather minimise our clients' stress and mental ill health by forward preparation.

As summer is around the corner, and the forthcoming calendar days' boxes have been ticked and crossed and scribbled, we see that, in a blink of an eye we will be in the footsteps of the High Holydays in September. Our shuls will resonate with

a timeless and well-loved prayer, recited with awe and respect across the entire Jewish spectrum – “Unetanneh Tokef”. It deals with deep questions of the future being unknown and emphasises that no-one can be sure what is in store in the coming year: “who will live and who will die?” it asks, without pulling punches.

This theme is an appropriate spring-board and caption for drawing attention to the need to prepare – however uncomfortable “the conversation” is. To this end, Paperweight has created a booklet that addresses many changes that come about when faced with the No1 source of stress and mental ill health: death of a spouse,

partner or loved one.

We have collated many years' interactions with newly bereaved clients and entitled the guide “It's time to have the conversation”. The focus is on getting one's affairs in as much order as possible when wits and mobility permit. It is a gentle but very comprehensive guide.

“It's time to have the conversation” is designed as a starting point and progresses through many stages. If you find yourself “on your own” meaning that there is no-one with whom you feel you can have “the conversation” then contact Paperweight and a dedicated caseworker will help you work your way through those elements of the guide that are relevant to your situation. We promise to be methodical but sensitive, understanding and reliable.

Above all we wish to relieve you of additional sources of stress at this difficult time.

For a free copy of the guide, please email chaniecooper@paperweight.org.uk or call in to our office at 89 Bell Lane, Hendon NW4 2AS.

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Meeting the Challenge of Jewish Community Welfare – A Global Initiative

Sunday 31 July, 7pm on Zoom

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For the first time, key figures in Jewish welfare provision, in cities across the world, are getting together to learn from each other. And you are invited to join the conversation.

Providing effective welfare services to Jewish communities has never been more challenging – let's discuss what is working, what isn't, and what we can do differently. We'll hear from some of the most inspiring people in this field, who are working on the frontline every day. And we want to hear from you too.

CONTRIBUTORS

Panel Chair – Lord Jonathan Kestenbaum

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