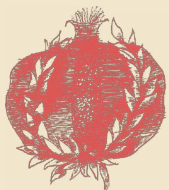




The Orchard
— GROWTH • RENEWAL • CONNECTION —

Resilience Reset

Resources for early childhood Jewish educators for when the going gets tough



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Introduction

Jewish educators were just barely emerging from the challenges of COVID, and before we could fully find our footing again, war broke out in Israel. And while we hope and pray that these are the last of our troubles, we know that there will be difficult times ahead, too.

When challenges hit, it's a lot to handle: our own feelings, working with our colleagues, supporting our families, and continuing to educate and grow healthy, happy children.

We want you to know that The Orchard is here to support you in your holy work as Jewish educators of young children — always, but especially now — as we navigate difficult times.

That's why The Orchard created this Resilience Reset: to empower you with the resources, practices, ideas, and connections you need.

In this guide, you'll find bite-size resources to help ground you, links out to longer content to explore with your team, and stories and quotes to inspire you as we work toward a brighter future.

When the going gets tough, the work that we do every day becomes that much more critical. We are so grateful for the talent, wisdom, and commitment you bring.

We are excited to keep learning and growing in our resilience alongside you.

Warmly,
The Orchard Team

“All of us, at some time or other, need help. Whether we’re giving or receiving help, each one of us has something valuable to bring to this world. That’s one of the things that connects us as neighbors--in our own way, each one of us is a giver and a receiver.”

– Fred Rogers,
a.k.a Mr. Rogers



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Resilience Reset

"The world is just so sad right now... it's hard to put on a brave face for the kids."

"I don't know if others are feeling this right now, but I have really low tolerance for petty things..."

"It's so much... people outside our field just don't get it."

Oof. Do you hear a little bit of yourself in any of these real reflections?

We get it. When hard times hit, we feel it, too.

Here's the thing: you're not alone. Whatever the challenge, we've got this, together.

This Resilience Reset is all about reminding us of all the tools we have and the people we can lean on to get through this.

To be resilient is to be like flames: able to pass on the light without diminishing our own spark. Let's bring the light.

"A candle is a small thing. But one candle can light another. And see how its own light increases, as a candle gives its flame to the other. You are such a light."

– Rabbi Moshe Davis

Practices to Increase Your Resilience

Resilience is the ability to cope effectively with past or present adversity.

Ellie Allison says, “Resilience is often described as a personal quality that predisposes individuals to bounce back in the face of loss. Resilient leaders, however, do more than bounce back – they bounce forward.”

There are lots of practices you can try for yourself and bring into your class and institution to develop resilience. Here are just a few.

For you and your team:

Asking for help helps others feel more empowered, which fuels resilience. “In preparing a research study, I asked people, ‘Of all the memories you have of school, what is one of your favorite memories that boosted your motivation, self-esteem, or dignity?’ Common answer: When you were asked to help out. To be resilient you have to feel like you are making a positive difference.”

From: [The Power of Positive Emotions: Nurturing Learning and Resilience in Young Students, with Dr. Robert Brooks — The Orchard \(theorchardece.org\)](#); see also: [Notes, Recording, and Resources – Google Docs](#)

For the children:

Remember the Mr. Rogers quote about looking for the helpers? It’s great advice for responding to children. “What do we do, practically, when a child is upset? Validate and normalize. Tell the child that a lot of us are scared, but a lot of people are trying to help.”

And remember: when kids are struggling, being the one who cares matters. “Here is a question that has intrigued Dr. Brooks since the beginning of his career: ‘What helped you be successful, when coming from adverse settings?’ The common answer? At least one adult who believed in me and stood by me. An adult from whom a child gathers strength. Very often a teacher.”

From: [The Power of Positive Emotions: Nurturing Learning and Resilience in Young Students, with Dr. Robert Brooks — The Orchard \(theorchardece.org\)](#); see also: [Notes, Recording, and Resources – Google Docs](#)

In working with families:

Communicate, even when there’s nothing new to say. As Dr. Erica Brown says, “It’s making sure that they know you’re available. You’re checking in, you’re seeing how they’re doing. So, let’s ask ourselves, are we communicating regularly? And sometimes in those small communications, we’re able to communicate a little bit more honestly than in the public communications.”

From: [Seeing Past the Present: Leadership and Vision; with Erica Brown — The Orchard \(theorchardece.org\)](#); see also: [Notes from Session 2 - Google Docs](#)

“Resilience is often described as a personal quality that predisposes individuals to bounce back in the face of loss. Resilient leaders, however, do more than bounce back - they bounce forward.”

– Elle Allison

Resilient Leadership

“Resilience, it turns out, is an inside job that begins with choosing to be resilient,” argues Elle Allison in [this article](#). “So what are the personal practices of highly resilient leaders? In large part, resilience requires leaders to take care of business — and themselves — while taking action in new realities (Allison & Reeves, 2011).”

You’ve already chosen to be resilient. To go deeper, [try this personal reflection tool from Dr. Erica Brown](#).

—> [Use this tool with your staff team](#) in pairs or small groups at a meeting, or share it with your teachers as a self-reflection tool.

Who am I?
When I am at my best as a leader, I... (type here)
What gives me light or vision in the wilderness?
What resources can guide me? (type here)
How do I deal with my feelings of vulnerability, fear, or anxiety? (type here)
How will I lead?
How has my role changed and stayed the same in this crisis? (type here)
How will I lead in this moment? (type here)

Then, consider these six practices of resilient leaders, as [shared by Elle Allison](#):

Practice 1: Engage in personal renewal.

Make time for the things that revitalize you physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually.

Practice 2: Watch your mouth.

Instead of explaining why things can’t be done, try language that fuels potential and feeds hopefulness, such as, “Let’s imagine the possibilities.”

Practice 3: Stay optimistic.

Whereas pessimistic leaders react to harsh realities by slowing down, quitting, or losing focus and energy, the same difficult information inspires optimistic leaders to action.

Practice 4: Quickly blunt the impact of setbacks.

Turn critique into positive actions.

Practice 5: Cultivate networks before challenges hit.

Resilient leaders continually work to sustain buy-in from individuals who are inspired by what the leader's organization achieves and who will gladly provide support and resources.

Practice 6: See patterns—and use insights for change.

Resilient leaders draw on diverse perspectives to make well-informed decisions that ultimately create new realities in organizations.





Mindfulness as a Tool for Resilience

When was the last time you stopped to just take a breath? Really?

When we feel stressed, it's harder – and more important than ever – to stay mindful. To pause. To breathe.

Why not take a deep breath now? [This video, taken from our session with Jewish educator Mary Passell, walks you through a one-minute breathing exercise](#) (and a lovely fall setting!) to recenter yourself.

What is mindfulness, and what are the benefits?

Mindfulness is defined differently depending on the context and whom you ask, but in general, it has to do with being present; it's the moment-to-moment awareness of one's experience without judgment. **It's about observing yourself with kindness.** This is really an internal shift, and the goal is to better understand your own thoughts and feelings so that you can respond more consciously to life.

Mindfulness meditation has proven benefits to children (and we adults), as outlined in [Psychology Today](#):

1. It can give kids the habit of focusing on the present moment and ignoring distractions.

“Our breath connects us to the world around us. To God, the divine, the universe. Our inbreath is the outbreath of the plants and the trees, and our outbreath becomes the inbreath of the plants and trees. If we think of our breath in this way, we can reach beyond ourselves, our limited sense of self and see our breath as a source of great wonder and amazement.”

– [Mary Passell](#)

2. It can teach them to stay calm in the face of life's stressful times.
3. It can create good habits for the future. When faced with life's challenges, they know they can find peace by taking a few moments to meditate.
4. It can promote happiness by lowering social anxiety and stress.
5. It can promote patience.
6. It can improve executive functions in their brain like cognitive control, working memory, cognitive flexibility, and better grades.
7. It can improve attentiveness and impulse control.

Have you seen, or felt, the benefits of mindfulness in your classroom and school?

Practices to Develop Mindfulness

There are lots of approaches to becoming more mindful, including breathing, focusing, stretching, and relaxing.

For you and your team:

There is an exercise you can use with your team to create a sense of mindfulness called the body scan technique. Read this slowly aloud with your colleagues at the beginning of a meeting to bring everyone into the room, together, in that moment.

- Take a moment, sitting quietly wherever you are, to get back into your body. And for this practice, you can close your eyes or leave them open.
- Feel your feet flat on the floor.
- Feel the air moving in and out of your nose.
- If you notice any thoughts passing through your mind, let them float away.
- Without moving them, feel and relax your feet.
- Bring your attention to your legs.
- Relax your legs.
- Pay attention to your belly.
- Relax your belly.
- Notice your lower back.
- Relax your lower back.
- Bring your attention to your shoulders.
- Relax your shoulders.
- Feel your arms, hands and fingers relaxing.
- Feel your jaw, eyes and forehead relaxing.
- Notice your whole body.



- Let your whole body relax.
- Now slowly wiggle your toes.
- Slowly wiggle your fingers.
- Gently sit up straight and comfortably in your chair.
- Now take a deep breath in, hold, and exhale slowly.
- Notice how you feel.
- Open your eyes if they were closed.

For the children:

“By learning effective emotional management strategies and meditative prayers, children can self-regulate and achieve a state of calm at any moment and can always refer to these prayers when they need them. **Reciting the Modeh Ani [“I am Grateful”] prayer daily**, also offers opportunities to reflect on the things and people in our daily lives we are truly grateful for.”

[Learn more and see an example of the Modeh Ani prayer in action here.](#)

In working with families:

Families are feeling the stress of this moment, and sharing these practices for them to bring home and practice with their children can make a difference.

Just the act of smiling sends a message to our nervous system that it’s okay for us to relax. Teach this exercise, “Smile Time,” to your class, and share it with the families to try at home.

- Sit with your legs crossed or just however is comfortable for you.
- Leave both feet on the floor and put your hands on your knees.
- Sit up as tall as you can.
- Take a big breath in.
- Breathe out.
- Think of something that makes you happy and makes you smile.
- Now, on the count of three, make your biggest, brightest smile.
- Ready? 1, 2, 3, smile!
- Look around at everyone’s beautiful smiles.
- Keep smiling for about three more seconds, then stop smiling and let your cheeks rest.
- 3, 2, 1, stop.
- Breathe in and breathe out.
- Now close your eyes.
- Think about the thing that makes you smile.
- Breathe in. Breathe out.

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

– Viktor Frankl



Investing in Relationships

How would you complete this sentence: “Communicating with parents makes me feel...”

What words come to mind? Anxious? Proud? Overwhelmed? Grateful?

Especially when things are challenging and emotions are high, it’s important to consider how, when, and what we communicate. **Building resilience means continually reinvesting in our relationships.**

When it comes to communicating with parents, our job is to demonstrate that **we are partners in the work of educating the child.**

Focusing on meaningful communication with parents allows you to answer the question above with calm, confidence, and clarity.

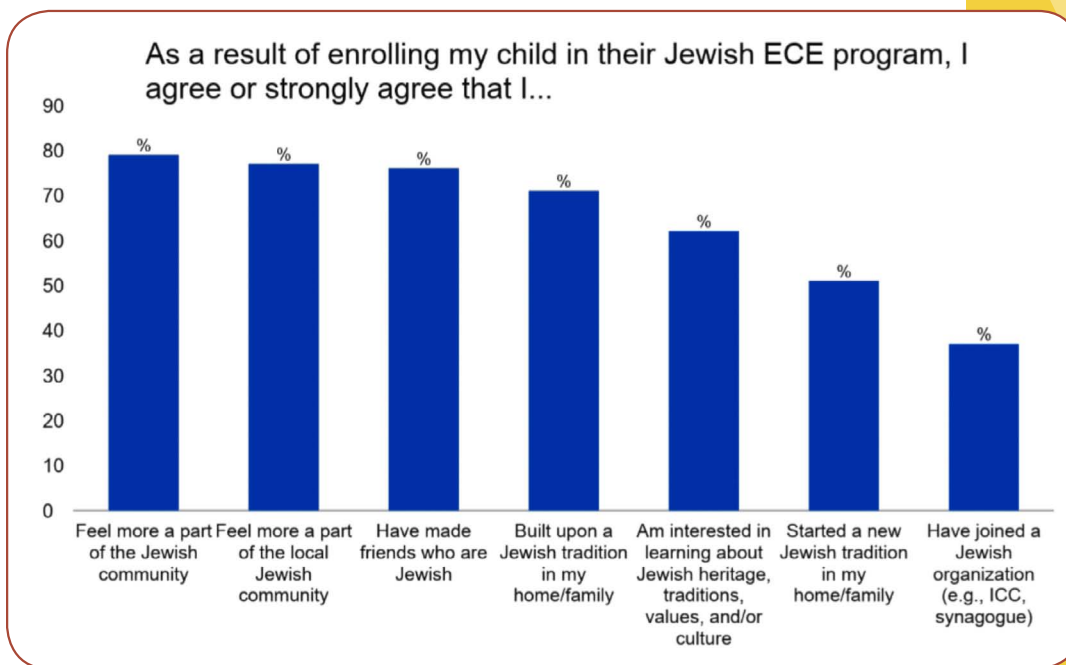
Why Parent Communication Matters

How we communicate with parents isn’t just about their connection to us, their child, and the school, but to the entire Jewish community. [According to the researchers at CASJE](#)

(Collaborative for Applied Studies in Jewish Education):

- Relationship-based engagement is the most important approach when it comes to working with families with young children
- Prioritizing relationship-based engagement can help enroll families and keep them engaged

Feeling like they're a part of a bigger Jewish community is an important reason parents enroll their children in Jewish early childhood education, and a huge benefit to their staying with those programs.



– [Research to Inform Practice; with CASJE and Child Trends](#)

When we're stressed, parents are often stressed as well. And we sometimes feel that stress from them.

But parents ultimately want to join in. They want to feel connected to their child's learning, the professionals, and the mission of the school. Surprisingly, when times are tough, it may be just the moment to focus as much on welcoming parents to the larger Jewish community as to your specific early childhood institution.

Let's ask ourselves: how are we helping parents see what's next? Religious school, day school, camps, community programming? How are we showing them we are with them on this journey?

Shared Pride, Shared Partnership: Best Practices for Parent Communication

The guidelines below, [based on research by Darim Consulting and presented in this webinar](#), provide a helpful framework for

thinking about effective communication with parents:

1. Ensure communication is child-centric (but not child-ish).

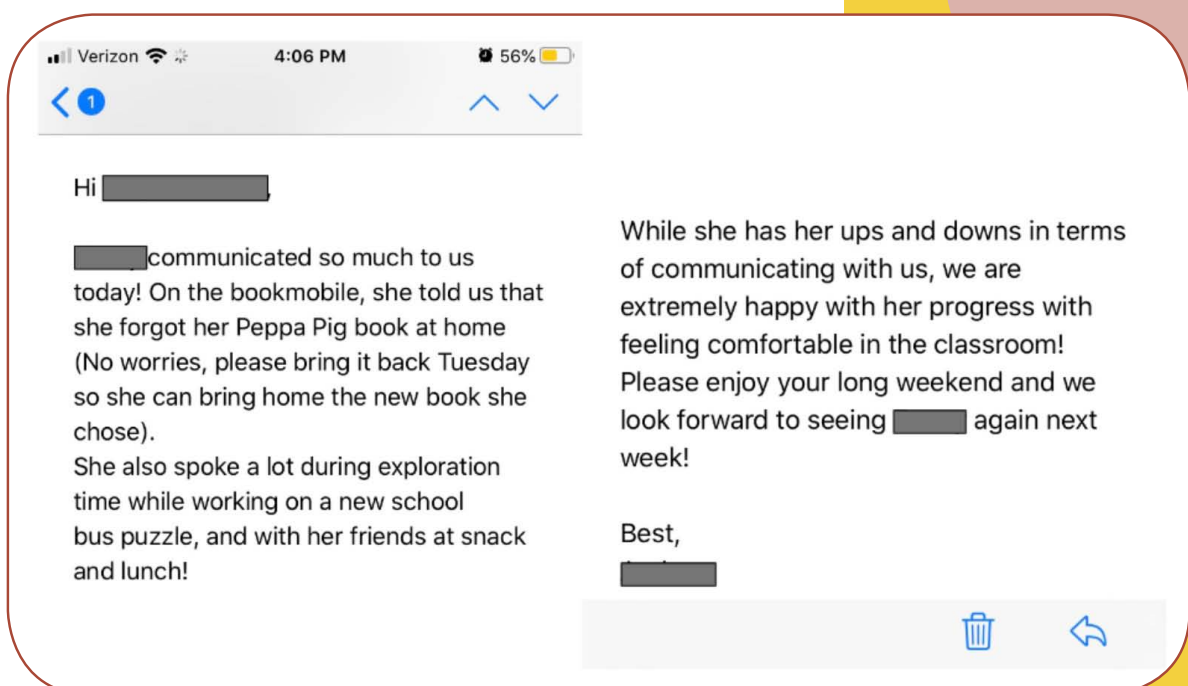
Putting the child at the center sets up the early childhood professional and the caregiver to be on the same level and the same team in service of that child and their growth. That means:

- a. Making the children the “heroes of the story.” Caregivers and teachers should be positioned as the Alfred to their Batman, the Glinda to their Dorothy.
- b. “We” is used strategically. Start your communications with “you,” talking to the caregivers. Be clear about when “we” implies the educator and the children, or the educator and the caregiver – and use both!

2. Live the mission through storytelling. A “story” is not a recap of events, or an itinerary of the day. **It’s about the developmental moment.** The bigger picture of the school’s values and mission. The point you’re at in the arc of the children’s learning. Purposeful storytelling comes back to building the relationship, and the trust, with the parent. It sets the context, demonstrates expertise, and gives a taste of that idea in action.

3. Be positive and specific. It’s the little moments that matter. Frequently (at least weekly) sharing positive, **specific examples of a child’s development shows that the teacher is noticing their growth**, and models for the parents how to practice this kind of “appreciative inquiry” at home. Do the same on the level of the class or school. It builds a sense of shared investment around that unique child and their journey, and the community/institution overall.

Consider the guidelines above. What do you notice about this example of a note home to parents?



Telling Stories

We all know and feel the value of stories. How do we decide which stories to tell? The framework storyMAKER, created by Miriam Brosseau of Tiny Windows Consulting, can help us decide what, and how, to share:

M: does this story Matter?

How does the story I'm telling demonstrate a meaningful moment in the development of this child, or reflect the values and mission of the school?

A: is it Actionable?

What will the listener do with this story, and what do you WANT them to do?

K: is it Kosher (fit) to share?

Do you have permission to share this story on a specific platform, or to specific people? Are you sharing with integrity?

E: does it evoke Emotion?

How will your listener feel upon hearing this story, and how would you like them to feel?

R: is it Readable and in the right format?

Did you check for spelling, are the links clickable, is the email skimmable?





Resilience Reset: Your Stories!

There are so many stories of resilience that have emerged from our community in the wake of Oct. 7th and the war in Israel. Here's a short and beautiful example from Rachel Pachmayr at Micah Children's Academy/Congregation Micah in Nashville, TN:

Much communication has taken place between many Jewish organizations within our area to support our Israeli families and help them find a bit of comfort and home. Schools are finding placements for children, Airbnb's are being found, rental cars, etc. It is amazing to see the swift action that can happen with big hearts!

Be Like Nachshon: Taking the Lead

Whatever your position, we can all be leaders, creating a brighter and better future for the families and communities we serve. Take some inspiration from [this beautiful midrash, shared by Lynn Fisher](#), Director of Early Childhood Education, Forest Hills Jewish Center Nursery School and Pre-K for All.



Talking with Young Children About Death

How do we talk to young children about death?

It's unavoidable. Death shows up in many ways for the children we serve. Children may encounter death through anything from a crushed bug on the playground, or through the loss of a classroom or family pet. A grandparent may pass away during the school year. Or, as with the events of Oct. 7th and the war that followed, closer family members may have felt the pain of family members, civilian and military alike, killed in the fighting.

However the subject shows up for you, this portion of our Resilience Reset provides some tools and tips for handling conversations about death.

3 Steps to Create a Language of Reassurance

Part of talking with young children about death is creating a **language of reassurance**. The following steps are a guide to talking with young children in a way that is comforting without evading honesty as summarized from this [webinar](#) with experts Rona Novick and Aviva Goldstein.

Step 1: Listening and Observing

It's important to keep in mind that children often don't always say and ask exactly what they mean. Make sure to listen and clarify before providing answers.

Relatedly, adults may bring their own assumptions to the question. Try your best to separate what things you as the adult are worrying about versus what the child may be worrying about.

Step 2: Validation

After you've listened and observed, move toward validation. In validating, you may be pushing back against an instinct to remove the pain. It's so important that young children are allowed to "be" in their feelings.

Step 3: Provide Information

During this step, it's important to tell the truth in a developmentally appropriate way. In this vein, don't ever promise something you can't deliver. Preschool children depend on adults for information — which means we have to be believable and be people of our word.

Look for the Helpers and What Helps You

For you and your team:

Identify what helps you. Stabilizing yourself will help you stabilize others. Sit alone or with your team to think about your needs in times of tragedy. What helps you? It may be going outside, listening to music, or exercising. Know those needs and communicate them to your team.

For the children:

Brainstorm ways to play a role in helping others. Sometimes, having a role to play in a tragedy can be empowering and help young children regain a sense of control. For instance, share with the children that there are children in Israel just like them who are feeling sad right now. Ask: what makes you feel better when you are sad? What could we send them to help them feel better? Options may include cards, letters, pictures, stuffed animals, etc.

In working with families:

Create routines around tragedy. Tragedy often brings uncertainty and uncertainty means a lapse in routines that young children need to stay grounded. Work with your families to create routines around tragedy. Maybe there is a book that they read with their children when someone they know dies or a routine they establish around sharing memories of the person who passed.

Meaning Making by Practicing Gratitude

Sometimes, helping a young child cope with death means learning how to make meaning. One way to make meaning out of tragedy is to practice gratitude. This is another practice that can offer moments of routine and grounding during uncertainty. There are a variety of ways that practicing gratitude with young ones can work:

Gratitude Frame

Using this [video](#) and [printable](#) from Sesame Workshop, make a gratitude frame! The picture put in the middle can be “someone special” who has helped them work through their grief, or the person that they themselves are grieving.

Gratitude Scavenger Hunt

Head outside for a scavenger hunt using this [site](#) as a guide! This offers a dynamic way for young children to think about gratitude as they explore the outdoors.

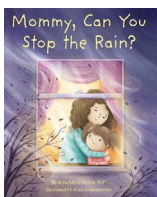
Gratitude Wall

Create a routine and capture gratitude at the same time through a [gratitude wall](#). During times of tragedy, have young children write out one or more things a day that they are grateful for and display it in their own room or a common room for the family to see.



Book Recommendations

Creating your own language around death and dying with young children can be difficult. When our own words seem to fall short, it's perfectly acceptable to turn to words that others have written! Below are a few suggestions for books to read with young children as you guide them through the death of a loved one.



Mommy, Can You Stop the Rain? by Rona Novick helps explain to young children that while parents cannot stop bad things from happening, there are ways to learn how to cope with the big emotions you feel when something frightening occurs. See more [here](#).



Where is Grandpa Dennis? by Michelle Shapiro Abraham tackles how to talk to a child about the death of someone they never met. It describes Jewish customs around death and ways to answer the questions around death that often leave adult caretakers stumped. See more [here](#).



Remember Ethan by Lesléa Newman chronicles the journey of Sarah as she tries to remember her brother Ethan, even when her parents are too sad to talk about him. Lesléa says she wrote this book to “offer comfort, help children express their feelings, and let them know they are not alone”. See more [here](#).

[Find more book recommendations from The Orchard in our Bookshop.org storefront.](#)

There are examples all around us on how to handle grief with older children! Here's a beautiful example from Alana Shlagbaum at Temple Beth Shalom in Livingston, NJ:

In a powerful show of togetherness, we gathered as a school community for a special Shabbat. We sang the triumphant words of “AM YISRAEL CHAI.” The parents, driven by their boundless generosity, came forward to contribute towards providing essential materials for Israeli soldiers in their units. As a school, we also actively participated in a global campaign to light Shabbat candles, bringing warmth and comfort into our homes. Lastly, the teachers came together and baked challah while praying for the safety of all the soldiers and hostages.



Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom

“Trauma” wasn’t always such a familiar word. Now it’s not only something we hear more about, but we’re aware of when and how trauma affects our lives.

As painful as it may be, making the concept of trauma more familiar is a good thing. When we know more about trauma and how it impacts us, we can help our communities get through it.

This Resilience Reset chapter is all about identifying and dealing with trauma. We hope these strategies – for ourselves, our teams, and the children – will carry us through difficult times with a heightened sense of compassion and care.

Definitions of Trauma

In The Orchard webinar “Recovering from the Trauma of the Pandemic” with [Dr. Betsy Stone](#), she offers the following definition of trauma:

Trauma is the response to a deeply disturbing or distressing event that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope, causes feelings of helplessness, diminishes their sense of self and their ability to feel a full range of emotion and experience.

Some important notes on this definition —

Trauma isn't always about a singular event. In the wake of Oct. 7th, some people experienced more than the initial reaction to the attack. Rather, it was experienced as a “cascading trauma,” which refers to the multiple events (such as losing loved ones in the ongoing fighting or feeling the effects of antisemitism in the wake of the war) that add up to create a larger trauma.

Trauma can be communal as well as personal. For our Israeli families and those connected to Israel in the United States, the effects of war are experienced as a communal trauma, meaning it was experienced by society at large. But it also contains personal traumas within it.

Trauma and the Brain

Dr. Stone also emphasizes the importance of understanding how trauma relates to the parts of the brain.

The front of the brain tends to be more sophisticated — the center of thinking, reasoning, self-control, and attention.

But **the back of the brain** is primitive — it's in charge of intense emotions like fear, and basic human functions like breathing and the beating of your heart.

The brain's primary job is to assess threats. Therefore, when you experience threats that turn into traumatic experiences, the back of your brain is what takes control of your body.

This leads to all kinds of complications such as brain fog, interrupted sleep patterns, and irregular eating habits.

[Learn more in this video.](#)



Trauma-Sensitive Practices

For you and your team:

Practice the steps of self-compassion. Dr. Stone outlines a three part system to help professionals who have to hold the trauma of others:

Part One: Become aware of your feelings and name them aloud.

Part Two: Validate yourself and don't attempt to strip away the feelings you are having.

Part Three: Give yourself the kindness you would give to somebody else.

For children in the classroom and their families at home:

Provide moments for empowerment and predictability. In The Orchard webinar "Trauma-Sensitive Practices During COVID-19" with Cindy Terebush, she describes how empowerment and predictability can support a trauma-sensitive classroom.

Empowerment: create routines that emphasize free choice, such as options for snack time, and respect children's choices.

Self-regulation: take care of yourself, and use techniques to support children's self-regulation (for tips, revisit our Resilience Reset email about mindfulness).

Predictability: ground children's experience, such as with a [visual schedule](#). Let children know when something out of the ordinary is going to happen.

Flexibility: remember that not all strategies will work with all children. Find strength in each child, and encourage them when they are doing well.

Find more tips and resources on creating a trauma-sensitive classroom [in this article from NAEYC](#).

Resilience Stories

Our Orchard community responded so powerfully to the traumatic events of Oct. 7th and the war that followed. We were heartened by this reflection from Patty Goldstick of the ECC at Temple Shaaray Tefila in Bedford Corners, NY:

"To offer support to parents, we sent an email acknowledging how hard and scary this is. Explained how we were making the campus more secure/safe, offered our clergy and social worker as needed. We also offered an opportunity for the parents to gather with me (ECC Director) and the Cantor in the Sanctuary right after drop off one morning that first week for a short service. We said kaddish, sang Hatikvah, offered up prayers for peace, safety and healing, and we gave them all an opportunity to share their stories/concerns. We hugged a lot and it was beautiful."



From Trauma to Healing

We think of The Orchard as a place to grow; a place of renewal; a place of connection. Here, teachers and school leaders can participate in webinars, join focused learning communities, and access resources to support inspired teaching and learning.

This Orchard that we have created together is here to help you do just that. As we navigate trauma, let us also focus on growth, healing, and shalom bayit – making (and sustaining) peace with those we love.

Rabbi Simon said: “There is no plant without an angel in Heaven tending it and telling it, ‘Grow!’”

– Genesis Rabba 10:7

Fostering Healing and Growth

In working with families:

Encourage families to make their moments of reconciliation visible. Children often see us quarrel — but young folks never see us making up. There is such value in children seeing us negotiate conflict in a very real way.

Guide families towards the values of compassion. Patience, understanding, and openness are fundamental to healing.

Inspire families to value their children's contributions. Young children love to help and can be of assistance in running the operation smoothly at home. Let them contribute in the home — in the ways they can!

In supervising staff:

Pause before reacting. It is imperative to pick carefully, who, when, how and what we are going to respond to. Some responses may require immediacy, but others can sit.

Push back against negative intrusive thoughts. When we have used up our bandwidth, such thoughts may arrive. Consider placing a flashlight and pen by the bed. Let the thoughts in but know where to put them in the meantime and when to address them.

A note on post-traumatic growth:

In the wake of trauma, some may experience a phenomenon called post-traumatic growth (PTG). PTG refers to “what can happen when someone who has difficulty bouncing back experiences a traumatic event that challenges his or her core beliefs, endures psychological struggle (even a mental illness such as post-traumatic stress disorder), and then ultimately finds a sense of personal growth.”

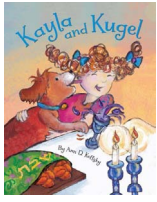
This growth might include:

- Appreciation of life.
- Relationships with others.
- New possibilities in life.
- Personal strength.
- Spiritual change.

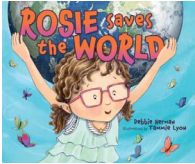
There is no one (right) way we may respond to trauma; one person may even experience both post-traumatic stress disorder AND post-traumatic growth. But [practicing emotional self-care](#) – looking for and appreciating signs of growth – can help. [Learn more about PTG in this article.](#)



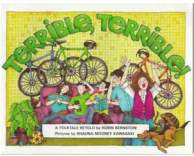
Books for Healing, Peace, and Hope



Kayla and Kugel. Kugel the dog loves Shabbat, and loves helping his human, Kayla, get the house ready! At least, he thinks he's helping... Kayla might say otherwise! In the end, everyone learns the importance of shalom bayit – peace in the home.



Rosie Saves the World. Rosie is gung-ho to perform good deeds for everyone in her neighborhood. She wants to save the world! But what about the things her family needs her to do? She's about to learn that tikkun olam, saving the world, starts in one's very own home.



Terrible, Terrible. In this contemporary take on a beloved Jewish folktale, a rabbi helps Abigail discover the wonderful aspects of her newly-blended family.

[Find more book recommendations from The Orchard in our Bookshop.org storefront.](#)

We were touched by this story of resilience from Ronnie Becher:

Right after the horror of Oct 7, our Nursery School had the privilege and honor of having a lovely Israeli boy, Ori, join our school. On the first day that his dad dropped him off, Ori asked him, "Abba, will you pick me up if the sirens sound?" What a challenging sense of reality Ori had to deal with.

Both the children and the teachers in Ori's new class, welcomed him with open arms. It was such a joy to see his happy face on a daily basis, as he integrated into the class and had a rich day filled with exploration and rich learning.

Ori's family recently returned to their home in Israel. During winter break, I was able to take a trip to Israel to volunteer. I also visited Ori in his current school and saw him happily interacting with his classmates. We are now in the process of starting a Pen Pal relationship with our 4s class and Ori's Israel class. May the children of Israel know peace and serenity in these very troubling times.

"This is how to deal with crisis. Wrestle with it, refusing to let it go until it blesses you, until you emerge stronger, better or wiser than you were before. To be a Jew is not to accept defeat. That is the meaning of faith."

– Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, z"l

Hope and Growth: Honi and the Carob Tree

A Talmud Tale Told by Peninnah Schram

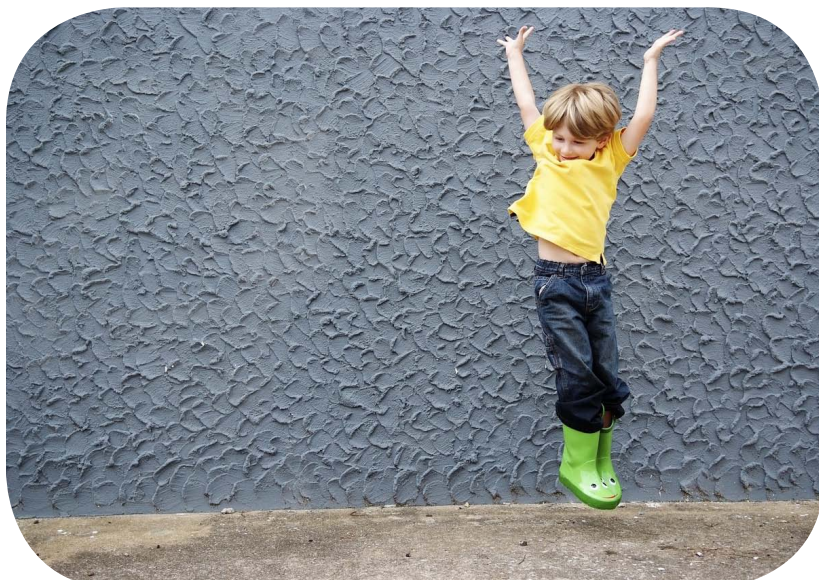
Honi the Wise One was also known as Honi the Circle Maker. By drawing a circle and stepping inside of it, he would recite special prayers for rain, sometimes even argue with God during a drought, and the rains would come. He was, indeed, a miracle maker. As wise as he was, Honi sometimes saw something that puzzled him. Then he would ask questions so he could unravel the mystery.

One day, Honi the Circle Maker was walking on the road and saw a man planting a carob tree. Honey asked the man, "How long will it take for this tree to bear fruit?"

The man replied, "Seventy years."

Honi then asked the man, "And do you think you will live another seventy years and eat the fruit of this tree?"

The man answered, "Perhaps not. However, when I was born into this world, I found many carob trees planted by my father and grandfather. Just as they planted trees for me, I am planting trees for my children and grandchildren so they will be able to eat the fruit of these trees."



***"Life doesn't get
easier or more
forgiving.
We get stronger
and more resilient."***

– Steve Maraboli



About The Orchard

Twenty-five organizations from around North America are proud to bring you The Orchard—a joint initiative that celebrates, networks, and advances the professional learning of educators in Jewish early childhood centers.

As a metaphor, The Orchard calls to mind an ecosystem in which many distinct trees produce fruit, whilst sharing resources and contributing to the greater good. A single tree, organization, or educator, is an incredible gift, but together, we can support one another.

As forest scientist Suzanne Simard explains, trees grow as part of cooperative systems, they converse, they support one another in unique ways, and they transfer nutrients to one another.

We think of The Orchard as a place to grow; a place of renewal; a place of connection. Here, teachers and school leaders can participate in webinars, join focused learning communities, and access resources to support inspired teaching and learning.



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**Thank you
for growing
with us.**