

Pesach Tikvah Instrumental in New Language Regulation for Therapist Testing

Until now, native Yiddish-speaking therapists taking the LMSW and LCSW exams have had to take the exams in English without any language accommodations. With the help of Pesach Tikvah's Director of Data Analysis Yisroel Len, our Executive Director Yerachmiel Stern, and State Assemblyman Sam Berger, therapists whose native language is not English will now be allowed to have special accommodations when taking the LMSW and LCSW exams.

Sam Berger represents Yisroel Len's Assembly District, District 27, which encompasses Pomonok, Electchester, Kew Gardens Hills, College Point, and Whitestone. He has a specific interest in creating legislation around mental health care, and has proposed and passed several laws pertaining to it. Sam Berger is known for having created Gittel's Law, a law that protects mental health patients. By hashgocho protis, he is Yisroel Len's chevrusa. Yisroel Len suggested to him that he meet with Pesach Tikvah to discuss current issues in mental health care. He met with our Executive Director, Yerachmiel Stern.

As a result of that meeting, Berger proposed legislation that would allow non-native English speakers to have extra time for translation and a dictionary when taking the state's LMSW and LCSW licensing exams. At the time of the proposal, every other state in the nation had such accommodations. Berger's legislation brought New York State up to par. As a result of his proposing this bill, the State Education Department incorporated these regulations without the bill having to pass through the state assembly.

A great thanks goes out to Yisroel Len, Yerachmiel Stern, and Sam Berger for creating regulations that allow more Yiddish-speaking therapists to pass the LMSW and LCSW exams and ultimately serve the community.

CORE Made an Exemplary Report to OMH

On May 20, CORE program manager, Pearl Ostreicher, and CORE IPS Employment Specialist, Julien Saka, met with OMH IPS team to discuss how employment services are being implemented at Pesach Tikvah's CORE program.

CORE reported on their clients who have been linked to training programs such as food preparation, bookkeeping, and cyber security. They reported on clients' resumes and websites having been updated, and they reported on benefits counseling has provided. Lastly, the successful launch of a small business by a CORE client was reported.

OMH expressed appreciation for the update and for the opportunity to learn how this initiative is being implemented on the ground. Pesach Tikvah's CORE program is among a handful of programs statewide that have been awarded the IPS Employment grant. They are excited to bring the benefits of employment support to the clients they serve.

Focus On: Hendy Roth, LCSW, Director of CCBHC

Each month, we feature an unsung hero of Pesach Tikvah – someone who contributes something indispensable to the organization. This month, we spoke with Hendy Roth, LCSW about her work. In this special edition of "Focus On," we will discuss Pesach Tikvah's groundbreaking CCBHC NYS Designation and its launch in July.

Q: What is your position at Pesach Tikvah?

A: I am the CCBHC Program Director.

Q: What is CCBHC?

A: CCBHC is short for Certified Community Behavior-

al Health Clinic. CCBHC is a client- centered holistic treatment model, offering 9 core services at Pesach Tikvah to best meet our client's needs within the clinic. This is an expansion of the more traditional clinic model we're used to which offers outpatient therapy, outpatient psychiatry, and therapeutic groups.

The nine core services are Crisis Services, Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Use Services, Person-and-Family-Centered Treatment Planning, Community-Based Mental Health Care for Veterans, Peer Family Support and Counselor Services, Targeted Care Management, Outpatient Primary Care Screening and Monitoring, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (PRS), Screening, Diagnosis, and Risk Assessment.

Staff may recognize some of these services as already offered by Simpatico, Keshet Connections (Health Homes) and CORE and we continue to offer the same quality services within those programs.

Q: Who is eligible for CCBHC services?

A: Anyone who receives outpatient clinic services at our four clinic locations: 5309 Family Center, 4111 Family Center, 926 Family Center, and 640 Family Center are eligible. This excludes youth enrolled in School Based Satellites and Simpatico/ CFTSS. The CCBHC services operate within the clinic, and clients receiving outpatient services at our clinics can access whichever services best fit their needs.

Q: When did the process of becoming a CCBHC begin for Pesach Tikvah?

A: It started as a federal grant awarded in 2020 and 2022, and Pesach Tikvah was one of the first agencies to be awarded this grant. Since we got our first federal CCBHC grant in 2020, we've been working towards this goal of becoming a state-designated CCBHC demonstration, which is what this roll-out of CCBHC is.

The initial grants allowed us to hire more staff including psychiatrists, expand supervision, provide trainings, and launch Hearts and Minds (our OASAS Addiction Services and Supports Program).

Then, in September 2024, we were one of only 12 agencies in New York State awarded a CCBHC State Designation. It was a very competitive application process and is a prestigious designation because it changes what we can do, allowing us to support the therapists and the clients in new ways. For example,

CCBHC allows us to have a Dietician on staff to work with clients with Celiac disease, high blood-pressure, Diabetes, and a nurse on staff to coordinate the physical health component, paving a pathway for clients to integrate physical health care and mental health.

Q: When did you start working at Pesach Tikvah, and what did you start as?

A: I was first hired as a supervisor in Health Homes in 2018 and a therapist in the clinic. Over the years I held different positions including Assistant Director of Health Homes, Clinical Supervisor and CCBHC.

Q: What do you like about working at Pesach Tikvah?

A: This is an easy one. Pesach Tikvah truly has a warmth of its own. There are shared values, and a sense of community and family. Over the years of working here and through this project I've spoken with people at every layer of the organization, and I continuously see the warmth and care. I'm also very grateful to every clinical and administrative staff member who've offered feedback and suggestions on how best to support our staff and communities we service.

Q: Who is collaborating with you on transforming the clinics to CCBHCs?

A: I work closely with the clinic directors including Aron Zev Herbstman, the Clinical Director of Williamsburg, and Yerachmiel Stern, our Executive Director, who has been a driving force behind making CCBHC happen. Additionally, I have a team I work closely with, including Isser Rosenberg- CFO, Yisroel Len- Director of Data Analytics, Sabrina Feit- Partnerships Coordinator, Sara Leah Newman- InSync lead and Leiby Weinreb- Accounting Manager who have been integral in the transition.

Q: In addition to clinic directors, who will be implementing CCBHC?

A: Since our clinics are becoming CCBHCs, it'll be all clinic staff, starting at the front desk and moving through intake staff, therapists, psychiatrists, and billing staff.

Q: What are you looking forward to most about CCBHC and the future of Pesach Tikvah?

A: So much! CCBHC NYS designation offers more robust service options, all accessible within Pesach Tikvah. Therapists are excited when they hear about

it and want to get involved, which is exciting. We had a meeting about CCBHC in Borough Park and the staff suggested creating women's exercise and stretching classes and boys' sports groups. Then at a staff meeting in Williamsburg there were suggestions of types of Peer Supports that would be helpful and the role of Targeted Care Management. We already offer quality therapy, psychiatry and groups, and the expansion to CCBHC builds on that foundation.

Q: How do you see the community benefitting from CCBHC?

A: Nine core services will be offered under one entity, and that is priceless. A client being able to get counseling through Hearts and Minds, psychiatry, groups, individual therapy, nutrition, peer support, Targeted Case Management and Care Coordination all within the clinic is very valuable. All four clinics are CCBHCs, so if you go to any of our locations, both therapists and clients can access quality wrap-around support.

If you would like to be part of our CCBHC roll-out in any way, or have ideas or suggestions, reach out to hroth@pesachtikvah.org. We're always happy to hear your thoughts and feedback.

A great thanks goes out to Hendy Roth for her dedication to Pesach Tikvah, and the vital work she does. Would you like to suggest an unsung hero of Pesach Tikvah for next month's newsletter? Email ckurtz@pesachtikvah.org to make a suggestion.

Weekly Yiddish Class Launches

A weekly Yiddish class for therapists has begun. For ten weeks, a cohort of Yiddish learners is gathering on Teams to learn the nuances of Chassidische Yiddish. The class is being taught by a respected linguist who is fluent in multiple dialects of Yiddish. (He can even differentiate between the Yiddish expressions and syntax used in Williamsburg and Borough Park.) Many of the therapists attending are already familiar with Yiddish but want to know the nuances of Williamsburg Yiddish. The teacher is focusing on expressions and phrasing that might be used between therapist and client. This course is a great opportunity and everyone attending is really enjoying it.

Training Institute Held Loss and Grief Training

Dr. Abby Nathanson, DSW taught a training on loss and grief on May 6th. She focused on the difference between grief and depression, and the differences in treatment. She differentiated between grief and PTSD as well. People sometimes get stuck in grief when there is trauma that needs to be addressed – trauma doesn't allow the natural process of grief to happen. She emphasized that grief is not just about death – it is any kind of loss.

Therapists had this to say about the training:

- "I found that the practical skill building and methods for identifying treatment types were invaluable."
- "This training gave me the foundation for understanding how grief works and the best responses."
- "I felt a marked increase in my knowledge of grief and loss treatment strategies."
- "This training helped me understand the goal when working with grief."

A great thanks is due to Lea Scharf and Gitty Applebaum for coordinating this excellent training.

Construction Begins on New Crown Heights Center

Construction will soon begin on a new Pesach Tikvah center in Crown Heights. The center will house CFTSS activities to start and will develop into a full-fledged outpatient clinic. The new center's architect is focusing on creating a calm, respectful, and caring environment. Natural materials and thoughtful spatial planning will support the well-being of clients and staff. The new facility will include one-on-one counseling rooms and rooms for groups. We look forward to the development of the Crown Heights center and thank everyone involved in this project.

Good News from Pesach Tikvah Programs

We hope everyone enjoyed a beautiful Shavuot. Thank you to every single staff member for your valuable contributions. There is so much great work happening at Pesach Tikvah right now!

Clinics:

- 926: Mazal tov to Sara Katz for passing her licensing exam!
- 926: Mazal tov to Esther Kahan on her engagement!
- 926: Mazal tov to Rivka on the birth of twin baby girls!
- 926: Mazal tov to Sabrina Feit on graduating!
- 5309: Several interns are graduating. Mazal tov!
- 5309: Care management is being hosted for Borough Park clients who don't qualify for Keshet Connection.
- 5309: Goodbye to Lizzy Hamoy. We'll miss her!
- 5309: Mazal tov to front desk staffer Lior Elnatanov on acceptance into a PsyD program!
- 640: 640 welcomes new staff.

School Satellite Program: A great thanks goes out to Rabbi Grunwald, Avrumi Mermelstein, and the amazing therapists of the School Satellite Program for an excellent school year.

Senior Services:

- Holocaust survivors: There was an event for Holocaust survivors on May 28th. It was a beautiful luncheon at Park Manor. A choir came to sing for the survivors, and Sarah Blima Gestetner told a Chassidische story. It was very well attended. All of the attendees received hand mixers for making cheesecake.
- Holocaust survivors: A sizeable group of Holocaust survivors came to Pesach Tikvah to make cheese braids for Shavuot. Each took home her braid to bake. Following the baking class, Rochie Weinberger taught a painting class. Everyone loved the classes and wants to come back again.

- Seniors: Social worker Malky Gestetner, LCSW led a group therapy session for seniors. The subject was self-compassion.

Keshet Connection:

- The Keshet Connection program has completed its second survey for its Critical Transition Grant and reported great success in the hospital transition program with 54 referrals and 34 successful enrollments.
- Welcome Ami Birenbaum, a new intern in the program.
- All the care managers in the children's program deserve a huge shout out for adapting to the new face-to-face guidance and are doing great with the new requirements.

COMHAB: COMHAB is experiencing continued success. Thank you to Diana Masri for her ongoing efforts.

ICF: The ICF had a training on teamwork for direct care staff, professional, and administrative staff. It was a big success. A great thanks goes out to the organizers and participants, especially Yerachmiel Stern, Joe Bistricher, Chani Shindler, and Izzy Trosper.

CORE: Thank you to Pearl Ostreicher and her amazing team for ongoing successful work serving the community.

CFTSS/Simpatico:

- Welcome Peri Waldman to the team. She is doing the onboarding for providers.
- Mimi Friedman will be working on marketing and groups.
- CFTSS is creating interesting programs for the summer to serve children in all five boroughs.