

Pesach Tikvah's Training Institute Celebrates Five Years with Certificate Ceremony

On Thursday, June 19th, Pesach Tikvah hosted a certificate ceremony for participants in the Pesach Tikvah Training Institute. It was an exceptional evening of appreciation and unity for Pesach Tikvah's staff of skilled, dedicated, compassionate psychotherapists. The ceremony took place at held at Pesach Tikvah's 5309 Family Center in Borough Park. The 5309 Family Center is one of Pesach Tikvah's many outpatient mental health centers, which provide sophisticated and culturally-sensitive therapy, psychiatry, peer support, case management, and other mental health services for the frum community.

The Training Institute at Pesach Tikvah is a NYS licensed CEU (Continued Education Units) granting Educational Certification to its therapists. This unique program attracts the finest therapists, who aspire to secure employment at Pesach Tikvah, thereby gaining access to the Training Institute. The mission of the Training Institute at Pesach Tikvah is to expand and augment its therapists' skills and knowledge so that they can treat their clients in the most specialized, focused, and optimal way. Founded in 2020, the Institute has successfully trained hundreds of therapists in numerous disciplines, such as CBT, DBT, Loss and Grief, Eating Disorders, Play Therapy and many more. Following each training, the therapists participate in ongoing group and individual supervision, facilitated by the top professionals who have presented them. Trainings are free-of-charge for Pesach Tikvah's therapists, thus ensuring that every Pesach Tikvah therapist may receive the most advanced expert instruction.

This year, the Training Insitute of Pesach Tikvah offered its therapists twelve training sessions, all presented by prominent experts, a number of whom were world renowned.

At this year's closing event, the director of the Training Institute, Lea Scharf, LCSW, presented Honorary Certificates to therapists who had successfully completed a series of trainings.

After bestowing the certificates, Lea Scharf addressed the therapists, elaborating on the growth and expansion of the Institute during the five years of its operation. The fifth anniversary of this outstanding institute was celebrated, and therapists who had attended trainings for the full five years – and are now supervisors – were commended and applauded.

The keynote speaker of the event was Tali Arieff, LCSW, RPT. As an experienced play therapist, she encouraged Pesach Tikvah's therapists to train to work with children. She described what working with children is like, and why it is so important. Tali Arieff also discussed how to move from clinical work to private practice. She advised the therapists on the business side of practicing therapy. Her talk was a refreshing look into the world of a successful expert therapist.

The Institute event highlighted the advancement opportunities within the organization available to Pesach Tikvah's therapists. Pesach Tikvah's Executive Director, Yerachmiel Stern, has created an environment that fosters professional excellence and advancement. His emphasis on acknowledging serious and outstanding work has resulted in a workplace where employees feel appreciated and seen at every level.

Pesach Tikvah thanks the event's organizer, Lea Scharf, LCSW, as well as its Executive Director Mr. Yerachmiel Stern, LCSW. Everyone is looking forward to more years of excellence in professional trainings at Pesach Tikvah.

Therapists Who Received Certificates

Solomon Shloima Berkovitz, MSW

Aliza Biberfeld, MSW

Sara Blank, LMSW

Racheli Brickman, MSW
Dina Eisen, MSW
Sabrina Feit, MSW, CASAC - T
Molly Horwitz, MSW
Aryeh Kugel, MHC - LP
Shaindy Litchfield, LMSW
Pessy Neuwirth, MHC - LP, CASAC - T
Shanit Oxenhoren, SWI
Freida Schwartz, LMSW
Blima Schwebel, MSW
Akiva Sharf, LMSW
Feigy Weinstock, LCSW
Fayga Zellermaier, LMSW

Therapists Who Have Attended the Institute for Five Years

Rivka Amrami, LCSW
Sarah Gold, LCSW
Esti Kahan, LCSW
Gitty Kahan, LCSW
Moshe Aryeh Kushner, LCSW
Brocha Martin, LCSW
Miriam Plutchok, LCSW
Tzippy Preil, LCSW
Hendy Roth, LCSW
Elana Schwartz, LCSW
Shaindy Stiel, LMHC
Feigy Weinstock, LCSW
Rivky Weiss, LCSW

New Crown Heights Center Designed by Prestigious Architect

We're pleased to announce that construction will soon begin on a new Pesach Tikvah center in Crown Heights. The upcoming Family Center will allow us to expand our programs and better support the individuals and families who turn to us for care.

The new center, located in a brand-new building, is being designed by Fernando Fisbein Architect, with a focus on creating a calm, respectful, and caring environment. The design reflects our commitment

to dignity and healing, using natural materials and thoughtful spatial planning to support the well-being of clients and staff alike.

Throughout the interior, walls will be lined with warm plywood paneling, adding texture and a sense of comfort. A terrazzo floor will run continuously through the space, creating a quiet, cohesive backdrop. Natural light from floor-to-ceiling windows brings a sense of openness while preserving privacy. The new facility will feature both small consultation rooms for one-on-one conversations and larger spaces that accommodate group programs.

Fernando Fisbein Architect is a Brooklyn-based architectural studio working on spatial systems that allow for meaningful dialogue, innovation, and inspiration. His studio strives to generate positive architecture – exploring how the creation of environments inspires lasting intellectual, sustainable, and social engagement. Their projects are a result of a deep collaboration with their clients and intensive research.

Focus On: Gitty Kahan, MSED, LCSW, Simpatico Co-director

Each month, we feature an unsung hero of Pesach Tikvah – someone who contributes something indispensable to the organization. This month, we spoke with Gitty Kahan, MSED, LCSW about her work and changing role at Pesach Tikvah.

Q: What is your position at Pesach Tikvah?

A: I've been the co-director of Simpatico for four years. Bruchy and I built the program from scratch and brought it to where it is today. It's amazing the way it expanded and grew to what it is now.

Q: What was your favorite project that you did at Simpatico?

A: What spoke the most to me was finding mentors for children who needed extra support, and seeing that the connection works. It was great to see how the child would progress and flourish. I liked seeing the parents relieved and happy by that. Even when the child was struggling at home, they would have somebody to talk to. Being able to contribute to all those families who need the support spoke to me the most. Obviously we had the large projects, but somehow the smaller ones are what I felt the most

connected to.

Q: How did you start at Pesach Tikvah?

A: I started as an intern and then a therapist in 2019. I was there two years before I started at Simpatico.

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

A: It has a great atmosphere. I have lots of wonderful colleagues. There is amazing leadership. It's just a wonderful place to be part of. I'm proud and honored to be part of Pesach Tikvah.

Q: Can you tell me about the position you are moving into?

A: Moving forward, as of now, I'll be doing supervision in the 926 Family Center and I'll be running a parenting group.

Q: What are you looking forward to at Pesach Tikvah?

A: Continued contributions to the clinic and to the community. To continue to contribute is an honor for me.

Q: Do you have any final thoughts on Simpatico as you move into a new role?

A: Co-directing Simpatico was an amazing experience. I really loved every moment of it. I'm sad to be leaving but also looking forward to new beginnings. I know there is an amazing team now who will continue helping a lot of people. I trust everybody there to continue with our original vision. I'd like to thank Bruchy Endzweig for being an amazing partner and the team for being such great workers, for bringing Simpatico to where it is, and continuing on with it.

A great thanks goes out to Gitty Kahan 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.

Pesach Tikvah Makes Strong Showing at Neshuma Conference

Pesach Tikvah was a sponsor and preeminent attendee of the 2025 Neshuma Conference. It is the annual conference for Chassidishe/Charedi mental health professionals. Last year we represented strongly, and this year we did it again, reflecting that Pesach Tikvah is, and has always been, the original

and most influential Chassidishe/Charedi mental health provider.

Pesach Tikvah supervisor Tzudek Stern was on the Suicide, Stigma, and Connection: Reframing the Clinical Conversation panel. In his presentation, he opened by acknowledging that suicide is a profoundly difficult topic — even for seasoned clinicians — and that in our frum communities, it's often wrapped in silence, stigma, and uncertainty. He emphasized that this conversation isn't just technical or diagnostic; it's emotional, cultural, and deeply human. Suicide is not new, nor is it solely a mental health issue. Rather, it reflects a collapse across multiple domains: emotional pain, cognitive rigidity, spiritual disconnection, and relational loss. He spoke about how many clinicians feel underprepared — despite being on the front lines — and how our discomfort is often structural, rooted in how we were trained to assess and refer but not to sit with suicidal pain in a calm, grounded way. Using frameworks like CAMS and Joiner's Interpersonal Theory, he highlighted that suicide isn't driven by diagnosis alone, but by experiences of burdensomeness, thwarted belonging, and a breakdown in executive functioning. He reframed the language we use — from “committed suicide” to “died by suicide” — and emphasized that our role is not to control our clients, but to stay present, even in uncertainty. He concluded by inviting all of us to step into this space with humility and growth, knowing we don't need to be perfect — just willing to stay connected. Dr. Tzudek J. Stern, Ph.D., ABSNP is a licensed psychologist and clinical neuropsychologist practicing in New York and New Jersey. Holds a diplomate in school neuropsychology. Dr. Stern conducts neuropsychological evaluations. His clinical work spans a broad range of emotional, behavioral, and neurodevelopmental conditions, with particular expertise in mood and anxiety disorders, OCD, ADHD, self-regulation, and family stressors including marital conflict and divorce.

Also, several Keshet Connection staff members attended the Neshuma conference, where they presented our work and generated significant interest within the mental health field. They made valuable connections with other agencies, and we extend our thanks to the staff who participated.

Good News from Pesach Tikvah Programs

We hope everyone is having a great summer. Thank you to every staff member for your indispensable contributions. There is so much inspiring work happening at Pesach Tikvah right now!

Clinics:

- 640: Welcome to new clinician Tehilla Estrin, LMSW.
- 640: Welcome to new clinician Chani Heisler, LMSW.
- 926: Welcome to Basya Ritholz, who will be helping with Insync.
- 926: Mazal tov to Sara Katz on the birth of a baby girl and passing her licensing exam!
- 5309: Rikki Kagan, who's been with us for about a decade including admin and clinical, is leaving and we'll miss her very much!
- 5309: A new therapeutic art group (two groups, one for kids and one for teens) is forming. It will launch in August. They are taking referrals. Contact Pessy Neuwirth at pneuwirth@pesachtikvah.org.

School Satellite Program: The Yeshiva Satellite Program has continued through the summer serving the community.

Senior Services:

- Senior Services hosted an event at the Hobby House for Holocaust survivors.
- Senior Services hosted a group therapy event for seniors.

Kesher Connection: Kesher Connection welcomes Rivka Freund, Maggie L. And Benjamin L. C. as new care managers.

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

ICF:

- A 14th person is moving in. All beds will be full.
- The ICF is celebrating one staff member who has been with them for 25 years.

CORE: Pearl Ostreicher attended the Annual CORE Conference held in Albany, July 15. The conference brings together CORE providers from across NY state as well as OMH officials and MCO's. It's a wonderful opportunity to represent Pesach Tikvah and to greet all the individuals one communicates with throughout the year via email, in person.

CFTSS/Simpatco:

- Welcome to Goldy Berger and Peri Kepecz.
- Simpatco has four successful groups running in the Gloria Harrari Simpatco Program, and this is what each is doing:
- Siblings of cancer patients: A licensed therapist runs this group for children whose siblings have a diagnosis of cancer. Many have parents who are in and out of the hospital for extended periods. Some of them have moved from Israel to the US for treatment, so they're missing their families. Some of their fathers are still in Israel working. There's a big acculturation piece for them as well as processing the trauma. Two of them have recently lost a sibling to cancer. This group is really allowing clients who don't have a safe space to process their ongoing trauma in a safe environment. It's a healing place where they get to walk in and smile. For this hour or two, they just get to be children with an adult who is present, focused, supportive, and attentive.
- Russian and Ukrainian children: These two groups are for children who recently moved to the US. They meet weekly and enjoy the safe space of art therapy. They are using art as a way to process their acculturation process. Several of the participants are refugees from Ukraine.
- Women's group: Single mothers meet for peer support. The leader is a widow who moved to the US, so she brings her experience. They use art to help them process.