



40 Years of Social & Therapeutic Activity

Elah Center Annual Report 2019

Elah Center for Coping with Loss offers help and support to anyone dealing with loss, grief, trauma or emotional distress, and constitutes a professional work environment for therapists of various disciplines.

Letter from the chairman

At the time of writing, we find ourselves in the midst of the coronavirus outbreak, a virus that, unfortunately, will continue to accompany us in the future. Like the rest of the world, we find ourselves in an unprecedented situation, that is testing our strengths. Fortunately, in these times of change and uncertainty, the flexibility, creativity, and dedication of our team come to the fore. The association has made every effort to meet the needs of various client groups, despite the unusual circumstances. First of all, Elah opened a hotline for people who feel stifled by the long-term isolation and need a listening ear (once or more often). In addition, we were able to adapt and secure our infrastructure, and in many cases switch from in person counselling to internet counselling. Finally, we are devoting ourselves to the development of new and flexible long term aid strategies and working models, that will allow us to respond to a changing society and changing work conditions.

This year, Elah celebrated its 40th anniversary. As for any association, it is important for us to look back, and to remind ourselves why Elah came to be, and how the organization has developed over the years. This perspective encourages and even obliges us to continue building an organization that

will stand strong for many years to come.

To paraphrase the statesman and general Yigal Allon: "An organization that does not know its past has a poor present and an unclear future."

The central event of the 40th anniversary was the festive gathering in Tel Aviv, attended by hundreds of staff members, colleagues, friends and partners. Through a series of short lectures, we tried to present to our guests the various fields of activity that Elah is involved in, and to reflect on the inner strength of the organization. It is clear that the celebration has strengthened our internal bonds, as well as the bonds with external friends and partners.

Finally, I would like to thank all those actively involved in the activities of the Center: Yaela Cohen and Bennie Leezer, who as a team take care of the management, the staff members (both employees and freelancers), the dedicated volunteers, the private donors, funds and government agencies, and the members of the executive board and the audit committee. All these different individuals enable Elah to do her blessed work.

Yahel Shachar, Chairman of the Board

In 2019 we continued to offer a wide range of therapeutic services, enabling us to provide each client with an individually tailored plan of assistance.

This report includes Elah's activities for the benefit of Holocaust survivors in Israel, the operations of the Help Centers for people coping with loss, the services of the Therapy Center, and the activities for the Dutch community in Israel.

The year 2019 was marked by the 40th anniversary of Elah, or in other words, forty years of psychosocial assistance. More than 250 guests, employees, volunteers and professional partners came to Tel Aviv to celebrate the anniversary. Among the Dutch guests were the director general of the Dutch Ministry of Welfare, the Dutch deputy ambassador in Israel, and the chairman of the Elah Nederland Foundation. Among the Israeli guests were the deputy general director of the commemoration department of the Ministry of Security, and officials of the Ministry of Welfare.

In 2019 Elah developed a new branch of work. It concerns the acute intervention and emergency care in companies. Workplace accidents can have a major impact on employees. Experience shows that rapid intervention by mental health workers is essential to process events and to prevent the development of post-traumatic stress syndrome.

Elah took the lead in organizing the third triennial Conference on Loss, Grief, and Resilience, that was held in Eilat at the beginning of the year and was attended by over 500 mental health workers and non-professional participants.

In January 2019 we opened a new clinic in Tel Aviv, followed two months later by the opening of a new clinic in Hadera.

Under the aegis of PR agency PeerLevin we launched a new website, that offers updated information on all of Elah's activities.

In 2019 a total of 6,800 people received more than 160,000 hours of care.

Overview of Activities

A Therapy Center for the General Public



B Therapy for Holocaust Survivors



C Help Centers for Families Who Experienced Sudden Loss

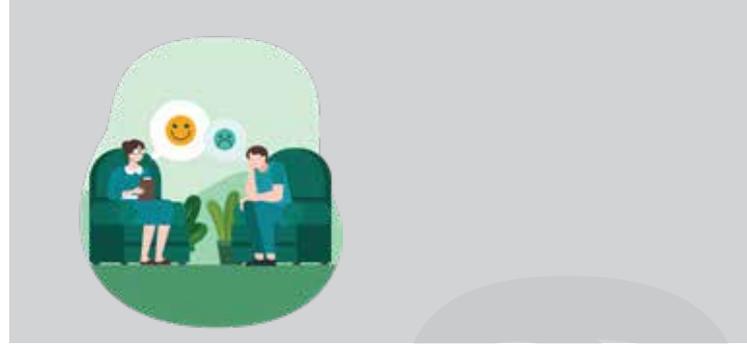


D The Dutch Community



E Training and Supervision





The Therapy Center

In 2019, nearly 400 people received more than 6,000 hours of treatment at the Therapy Center.

During our lifetime, we all experience (acute) difficulties and loss: the death of a loved one, divorce, dismissal, children leaving home, or the loss of physical functions or status. Often we are able to cope by ourselves, but if our pain and hurt turns into distress and anxiety, it is advisable to seek help.

Psychotherapy is suitable for people of all ages and backgrounds. Our therapists help clients to identify the problems, to process painful feelings and to tackle difficult situations, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life. Therapy can be short-term or long-term, individually, with a partner or with other family members. Elah also provides psychiatric help and gives advice on medication in the case of mental health problems. Elah employs a large team of qualified therapists, who use various treatment methods and specialize in helping people who experience loss or crisis. Sensitivity, reliability and professionalism characterizes the work of our therapists. We receive clients nation-wide, either in one of Elah's clinics, or at the therapists' private clinics. To people who are not eligible for external subsidies, Elah tries to offer subsidized treatments with the help of gifts from donors and foundation through the 'Elah for Everyone' fund.



Therapy

In 2019, 381 clients received more than 5,800 hours of individual, couple, or family therapy through Elah's Therapy Center. Many organizations refer members or employees to Elah and finance or subsidize their treatment. On behalf of the Ministry of Defense, Elah assists relatives of fallen soldiers; for the National Insurance Institute, Elah treats the relatives of victims of terrorist attacks; for the NPO Kamien, Elah counsels parents who have lost a child due to illness; for the Michael Levin Centre for Lone Soldiers, Elah treats lone soldiers before and after military service; for the NPO Tsa'adiem Ktaniem, Elah treats families of children with Duchenne or Becker disease; for the Israeli Ministry of Public Security, Elah treats police officers and firefighters. Elah also offers counseling to employees of the Israeli Electricity Company, students, ALS patients and their families, employees of the Israeli probation service, and carers and clients of the Caregivers Foundation.

Group therapy

Over the years, Elah has developed a wide range of therapeutic groups. Some are conventional therapeutic groups, while in other groups tools such as writing, reading of literary texts, photographs, objects or psychological cards are used to open up and discuss personal matters. In 2019, Elah's therapists moderated a group for Second Generation Holocaust survivors, as well as a group for relatives of people who died as a result of bereavement. In total, 20 participants received 102 hours of group therapy.

Psychiatric support

Elah offers psychiatric treatment and advice on the use of medicine in case of mental health problems. In 2019, 68 clients received this service. (104 hours of counseling).



Therapy for Holocaust survivors

In 2019, over 5,100 Holocaust survivors received over 131,000 hours of services.

As the years pass by, Holocaust survivors often grow more vulnerable and increasingly dependent on external care and support. At an older age, they are confronted with multiple losses: the loss of a partner and sometimes of a child, the loss of friends, and the loss of physical and cognitive functions. When it comes to Holocaust survivors, these confrontations can cause a sudden recurrence of painful memories of the war, which manifest themselves in feelings of sadness, despair and loneliness. In these cases, psychological counseling can offer relief.

The treatment of Holocaust survivors takes place at their private homes (for those whose mobility is limited) or in one of the Elah clinics.

For Holocaust survivors with cognitive impairments we provide treatments using art, music or animals.

In addition, we organize therapeutic and social groups, in which survivors discuss topics related to their lives, past and present. These groups help alleviate feelings of loneliness and improve the psychological well-being of the participants. The service is provided in retirement homes, day care centers and clubs throughout the country.

All treatments are funded by the Holocaust Survivors' Rights Authority of the Israeli Ministry of Finance. To Holocaust survivors who are not eligible for funding from the Ministry, Elah strives to offer subsidized treatments with the help of donations from private donors and foundations.

Family members of Holocaust survivors who are in need of therapy can turn to Elah's Therapy Center.

Group therapy

Elah organizes therapeutic groups for Holocaust survivors. Each of these groups has a limited number of participants, who usually meet once a week. They share experiences, support and encourage each other, and discuss ways to deal with the past in the present. The groups are held nation-wide, in retirement homes, day care centers and clubs for the elderly.

People who have experienced traumatic disturbances of their life-cycle often benefit from contact with companions in distress. In Elah's support groups, participants acquire new insights, and learn new coping strategies, through the interaction with other group members.

In 2019 Elah moderated 8 therapeutic groups for Holocaust survivors, in which 88 people received over 4,200 hours of therapy.



Individual, relational and family therapy

Since 2011, Elah has provided therapeutic services to Holocaust survivors, funded by the Israeli Ministry of Finance's Holocaust Survivors' Authority. Due to impaired mobility, most survivors receive treatment at home.

In 2019, Elah treated 1,888 survivors.

In total we provided 51,000 hours of service to Holocaust survivors.

Lectures for Holocaust survivors and the elderly

Elah offers lectures and workshops for Holocaust survivors and the elderly in general, on a variety of topics such as dreams, humor, anger-management, the meaning of secrets in our lives, discrimination and prejudice, or grandparenting in modern times. In 2019 our therapists gave 40 lectures in retirement homes, day care centers and clubs for the elderly.

Social groups

Elah entertains a wide range of social groups, focused on topics that reflects the interests of the elderly/Holocaust survivors. In the groups we encourage participants to discuss life experiences, using tools such as nature, writing, animals, drama, or music.

In 2019, 235 social groups convened at various different locations in Israel. More than 3,100 Holocaust survivors participated in these groups, and received more than 75,000 hours of service. About 10% of the groups were held in the Russian language.

This rapid rise is the result of the widening of the treatment options by the Israeli Ministry of Finance's Holocaust Survivors' Rights Authority.



Help Centers for Families Who Experienced Sudden Loss

In 2019, we absorbed 320 new families in our Help Centers. In total we supported 3,107 relatives.

The loss of a close relative can be a traumatic event, especially when death is sudden, violent, and unnatural. Apart from sadness, anger and bewilderment, surviving relatives often have feelings of powerlessness, and even depression. They face a complicated process of bereavement.

Counseling and support from professionals, from the early stages of mourning onwards, are crucial to help families recover from the shock and grief, and to find strength and resilience.

Help Centers

At the end of 2017, Elah won the tender issued by the Israeli Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Services, to set up and coordinate Help Centers, that support the close relatives of victims of criminal homicide, suicide or traffic accidents. At the Help Centers, located in Haifa, Kfar Kana, Hadera and Jerusalem, next of kin are supported by social workers and therapists, and sometimes referred to individual, couple or family therapy. Family members can also partake in support groups, or opt for spiritual counseling, or participate in special communal activities. Family members of victims of criminal homicide are also entitled to legal help through the Ministry of Justice.

Individual, couple and family therapy

In 2019, 509 relatives of victims received individual, couple or family therapy. part of those clients were referred to the regional welfare agencies, but others were cared for by Elah staff members, who specialize in counseling after traumatic loss and bereavement.

Support groups

During the year under review, across the country we moderated 34 support groups for people who lost a loved one as a result of criminal homicide. Some of the support groups were focused on parents, others on brothers and sisters, or partners of the victims. Participation in a support group enhances the ability of surviving relatives to cope with the pain, and to overcome despair. In total, 297 people participated in the support groups. In addition, we organized 'Open House Meetings', gatherings for relatives who suffered loss, each meeting has its own subject and group facilitator.

מקום לנשמה

Spiritual guidance

Since 2016, relatives of victims of criminal homicide, suicide or traffic accidents are offered an alternative form of assistance, called spiritual guidance. The assumption of this treatment method is that in times of hardship, people want to search for and address their own inner spiritual resources, from which they can draw strength. Under the guidance of the counselor, and with the help of various techniques like poetry analysis, listening to life stories, philosophy, writing, personal prayers or breathing exercises, contact with the intimate inner self can be established. In 2019, 72 people found relieve through this new approach. The project, originally a joint project of the Ministry of Welfare and the Joint (JDC), has been taken over by Elah.



The Dutch delegation visits the Help Center in Kfar Kana



The Dutch Community

In 2019, about 1,100 people from the Dutch community received 17,000 hours of care and assistance.

The Elah Center was established in 1979 by and for the Dutch community in Israel. To this day, the Dutch community is entitled to subsidized individual and group therapy. All through the country, Elah maintains social groups for the Dutch. In addition, we coordinate a nationwide volunteer project, and organize and celebrate events.

Holocaust Memorial Ceremony

As an organization established by and for Holocaust survivors, Elah extensively prepares and observes Holocaust Memorial Day, each year. The ceremony is attended by hundreds of Dutch survivors and their families. In 2019, the focus of the memorial was on the importance of photographs of Holocaust victims. As usual, 6 survivors lit a memorial candle. Furthermore, attendees were given the opportunity to read out loud the names of killed family members. In 2019, two ceremonies were held, one in Beth Chel Ha'avir in Herzlia, the other ceremony in Beth Joles in Haifa, with a total of 400 participants.

Therapy

In 2019, clients from the Dutch Israeli community received subsidized therapy (individual, couple or group therapy, or psychiatric assistance), from Dutch speaking therapists. Amongst the clients were Holocaust survivors, men and women of the Second Generation, partners and grandchildren of survivors, and Dutch people without Holocaust-related problems.

Group therapy

In the year under review, a bibliotherapy group, a film group, a group for child survivors, and a writing group were moderated for the Dutch target group. In total 266 clients participated in group therapy and received 5,455 hours of service.

Social groups

Assisted by volunteers, social workers of Elah maintain a number of regional groups. These groups allow the Dutch in each region to undertake joint activities and build social networks. In 2019, 8 social groups were active throughout the country. Of these, 5 were organized in collaboration with the Dutch immigrant organization (Irgoen Olei Holland). In total, the participants received 2,900 hours of service.

Volunteer work

Elah coordinates a network of 84 volunteers, who in total spent 5,184 hours on volunteer work. The volunteers perform social, organizational and/or practical tasks within the organization and the community. Some volunteers visit the elderly and the sick, and provide personal assistance, others help prepare the group meetings. Also, some volunteers manage Dutch mobile libraries, while others drive elderly participants to meetings and events. Whatever their contribution, all the volunteers receive individual and group supervision. They attend lectures, and discuss their experiences with the regional social worker. In the report year, a total of 5 volunteer supervision groups were moderated, receiving a total of 330 hours of supervision.



Activities of 'Friends of Elah' in the Netherlands

Through the "Friends of Elah" association in the Netherlands (STEN) we took various steps to communicate with Dutch foundations and private donors. We sent out digital newsletters, and volunteers presented Elah at several information fairs. To raise the awareness of our 40th anniversary, we advertised and published articles in the Dutch media. The chairman of the STEN participated in the celebrations in Israel and travelled around the country to visit Elah staff members, external partners and sites. In the summer of 2019 we invited our volunteers in the Netherlands to a joyful anniversary celebration in the centre of The Netherlands.



Training and Supervision

Sharing our knowledge and experience with the next generation of therapists, has become one of Elah's main goals

Because of Elah's expertise in the field of traumatic loss and grief, we are often invited to instruct professionals and volunteers from other humanitarian and welfare organizations. Our therapists frequently present Elah work models at professional conferences and seminars. Furthermore, Elah has an official internship program for students of social work of Tel Aviv University.

International Conference on Loss, Grief and Resilience

For the third time, Elah was actively involved in organizing the triennial international Conference on Loss, Grief and Resilience. 504 people from Israel and abroad participated, colleagues, external partners, and private people. The driving force behind the conference, held in the southern town of Eilat, is the Forum for Loss and Mourning, which consists of representatives of various ministries and foundations, including Elah.

Conferences and Study days

Elah is often requested to present the insights and experience of the organization at professional conferences. In 2019, staff members presented Elah's therapeutic models at various conferences. In addition, Elah organized 3 study days for the freelance staff working with Holocaust survivors and families who suffered sudden loss.

Training of students

Since 2014, Elah has been recognized as a training institute for BA and MA students of social work at Tel Aviv University. In 2019, Elah supervised 5 students in their fieldwork. In addition, 3 psychotherapy students did an internship at Elah. Finally, we organized 3 meetings for theologians and christian students from the Netherlands, who met with Holocaust survivors in Israel, and learned about their life and treatment. A total of 71 people attended these meetings.

Training and Supervision

In the report year, Elah trained volunteers and employees of the Michael Levin Centre for Lone Soldiers, staff members of the NPO Assaf (aid organisation for refugees), Dutch volunteers doing short term volunteer work in Israel, lawyers working for the benefit of relatives of murder/homicide victims, and social workers and spiritual counsellors from regional welfare institutions.

Company crisis intervention

Workplace accidents can have a major impact on employees. Experience shows that rapid intervention by mental health workers is essential to process events and to prevent the development of post-traumatic stress syndrome. In 2019 counsellors of Elah were called to provide emergency care in 6 companies. They convened 14 meetings, with a total of 73 participants.

Training of spiritual counsellors

In partnership with the psychological department of the Ministry of Education, Elah developed a special course for spiritual counsellors called "For the Spirit".

PR and Research

Under the aegis of PR agency Peer Levin, we wrote and published various articles in the Israeli press, and gave interviews on radio and TV about issues concerning the various target groups of Elah. In addition, we issued our monthly digital newsletter (in Dutch and Hebrew), and published the Elah 2019 agenda, that was partly financed by the sale of advertisements. We also distributed information about Elah on social media and on information markets. Finally, in 2019, we launched our new website, that provides the latest information about the organization.





Finance in NIS (in thousands of shekels)

Operational turnover	29,417
Total expenses	(29,352)
Net financing expenses	(60)
Net result	5



Help Elah, support our projects

As a non-profit organization, Elah is dependent on donations.

You can help us and our clients by donating to the "Elah for Everyone" fund. This fund aims to provide psychotherapy to people without sufficient financial resources. The costs of therapy are \$80 per session (home therapy \$100), while \$1600 (home therapy \$2000) guarantees half a year of therapy.

You can also help by donating to the "Danielle Fund for Hope". Donations to this fund will be used to give suicide prevention therapy to young adults.

Every gift helps! Any amount is most welcome.

Elah has been recognized by the Israeli and Dutch authorities as eligible to receive tax-deductible donations.

Tax deductible donation from the USA, Canada, or the UK, can be made through our profile at the JGive platform via our website.

How can you donate?

For donations from Israel

By credit card:

Visit our website www.elah.org.il and press "Donate Now", or call the Elah office at 03-6910921

Per bank transfer:

Transfer your gift to: Bank Hapoalim, branch 641, account number 225220 or IL 15 012 641 0000 0002 252 20 SWIFT: POALILIT

By check:

Send an (Israeli) check in the name of Elah to our office: Yigal Alon 157, office 941, Tel Aviv 6744365

For donations from the Netherlands

IBAN No. NL75ABNA0550509615 in the name of Stichting Elah Nederland, Amsterdam

For donations from the USA, Canada, or the UK

Please use our profile at the Jgive platform: <https://www.jgive.co.il/new/en/ils/external/charity-organizations/524>, or donate via our website: www.elah.org.il

Thanks to our donors

(in alphabetical order)

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- Fields of Mercy
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- Stichting Collectieve Marorgelden Israël
- Tel Aviv Municipality
- The Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport
- The Israeli Ministry of Finance
- The Israeli Ministry of Health
- VEG Oldebroek
- and many other private donors from the Netherlands and Israel

We thank all our volunteers for their full commitment and support

About Elah

Elah Center Coping with Loss is an NPO that provides professional psychosocial assistance to the general public. Everyone experiences losses during their lifetime: the death of a loved one, divorce, dismissal, children who leave home, the loss of bodily functions, loss of status etc. In all these cases, Elah can offer help.

Elah was founded in 1979 by and for immigrants from the Netherlands and was the very first organization in Israel to provide psychosocial assistance to Holocaust survivors. Over the years, we have expanded our field of activity and by providing individual and group therapy, psychiatric counseling and a wide variety of social activities, we have helped thousands of people who experienced loss, mourning, trauma or personal difficulties.

Elah has six branches across the country and works with a growing team of qualified therapists who are familiar with different treatment methods and specialize in treating people who have experienced loss or crisis. Sensitivity, reliability and professionalism characterize the work of our therapists.

Elah strives to make psychosocial assistance accessible to everyone and to subsidize treatment for those who cannot afford it through 'Elah For Everyone Fund' with the help of donations.

Elah cooperates with numerous governmental and social institutions and is awarded the annual seal of good management (nihoel takien).



2019

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Internal Auditor

BDO Ziv Haft

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מרכז אלה - להתמודדות נפשית עם אבדן

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