with AIDS and the community's responses. There are numerous other examples of plays for living, questionnaires, and videos developed for use in programming that have enriched the practice of JFLE. A more recent trend, used effectively by New York Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, is the adoption of expressive techniques of art and movement.

STRUCTURE OF JFLE

The JFLE of 1997 looks very different from the first groups offered in 1972. With increased funding constraints and the growing stress on reimbursable services, JFLE's ability to produce only limited income has resulted in structural changes. Most agencies no longer have a full-time position of JFLE Director. In some JFS agencies, this position has been replaced by several individual project directors whose work is funded through specific grants or endowments; elsewhere, JFLE responsibilities have been dispersed among all staff members. Some JFLE programs still stand alone, and others are grouped within outreach or community services rubrics.

Nonetheless, JFLE is still a vital part of the JFS agency. A 1993 survey done by AJFCA found that 92 percent of JFS agencies offered one-session JFLE programming and 80 percent offered multi-session series. JFLE continues as a major marketing and outreach piece, as the collaborative arm with other Jewish institutions, and as one method, along with counseling, that can help strengthen Jewish individuals and families and assure Jewish continuity. It continues as a series of definable topics that often are on the cutting-edge of service to Jewish families and as the one agency service in which all members of the community can participate and explore their Jewish identity, and make it part of their family and community life.

Recent service trends have increased the value of JFLE. It is a tool to further inter-agency collaboration. JFLE can also play an important role in the increased interest in Jewish family education. There have always been strong links between JFLE and Jewish education: JFLE can provide the "family systems" piece and can help fuse Jewish values and family practices (see the article by Weber in this issue). As more community agencies and synagogues embark on their own Jewish family education programs, JFS agencies, through JFLE services, are a natural resource.

For the past 25 years, JFLE has been an important element of the JFS agency. With the ever-increasing complexity of Jewish families and their need to find a place within the community, JFLE will continue to be a vehicle that provides programming to all Jewish individuals and families, that is innovative and creative, and that helps strengthen Jewish individuals and thus the larger community.

OVERCOMING DENIAL
The Challenge of Homelessness and Substance Abuse in the Jewish Community

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Over the past 25 years, Jewish Family Service agencies have stood at the forefront of combatting the Jewish community's denial of the existence of homelessness and substance abuse within our community. JFSs have led and shaped the Jewish community's evolving response to meeting the needs of its vulnerable individuals and families.

For the better part of its history on the continent, the Jewish community of North America publicly denied the existence of most social ills within it. How often did one hear lay and professional leaders of the community declare that "Jews don't drink or use drugs," "Jewish men don't beat their wives," "Jewish parents don't abuse or neglect their children," "There are few Jewish poor or homeless people," and many similar myths? Whether out of fear of fueling anti-Semitism or due to feelings of shame associated with admitting that "the people of the Book" who were destined to become "a light onto the nations" were as blemished as the rest of humankind, the Jewish community engaged in collective denial and self-deception in the face of a reality that it could not acknowledge and with which it did not want to deal.

Such was the general picture until the late 1960s and the early 1970s, when a combination of forces coalesced to jar the Jewish community from its collective denial and encouraged it to look at itself in a more open and honest way. These forces included Jewish communal pride ignited by Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, the spirit of the American civil rights movement, the passion of the anti-Vietnam War movement, the energy generated by the blossoming women's movement, the growing public revulsion at the criminal excesses of Watergate, and new public funding opportunities created by the emerging Great Society anti-poverty and community mental health programs (Feldstein 1995/96; Martin, 1990).

Since then, the Jewish community has acknowledged the many problems it faces: poverty and homelessness, alcohol and chemical abuse, gambling, family violence, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, teen pregnancy, and more. The community's willingness to admit to the existence of these social ills has been influenced by a number of factors, such as the realization by community leaders and major donors that their own sons and daughters are affected by one or more of these conditions, or an embarrassing media expose requiring the Jewish community's response. To its credit, each new revelation has been accompanied by an organized communal and institutional response. It is as though, once having decided to take off the blinders, the Jewish community grew determined to mobilize its significant organizational strengths and allocate substantial resources to confront the challenge.

This article discusses how Jewish Family Service (JFS) agencies throughout North America have addressed the problems of substance abuse and homelessness within their Jewish and general communities.

COMBATING POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS

"If there is a needy person among you, one of your kinsmen in any of your settlements... do not harden your heart and shut your hands against your needy kinsman. Rather, you must open your hand and lend him sufficient for whatever he needs... For there will never

cease to be needy ones in your land" (Deuteronomy 15:7–11).

"It was written in the 13th century that, if a community lacks a synagogue and a shelter for the poor, it is first obligated to build a shelter for the poor" (Sefer Hasidim; cited in Torczyner, 1992).

Until the 1930s and the establishment of government public assistance programs, providing financial relief to poor Jews was a top priority of JFS agencies. Increasingly, there have been calls in recent years for JFS agencies to again recognize and meet the needs of poor Jews in their communities. As Benjamin R. Sprafkin, then-executive director of the Philadelphia JFS, wrote in 1973, "The Jewish Family Service agency should revive some of its own past. Once known as a source of help and strength, it should again provide help on a crisis basis as well as on a preventive one" (Sprafkin, p. 208).

Many Federations and their affiliated JFS agencies indeed took up the challenge of the explosive increase in the number of homeless individuals and family units during the 1980s. Their ability to react was made easier by the emerging availability of both public and private funding sources to fund new programs and services.

In 1983, in response to estimates that there were between 1,000 to 3,000 Jews (predominantly psychologically impaired or elderly) among the New York City's projected homeless population of 35,000 to 75,000 (*Social Work Almanac,* 1995; UJA-Federation, 1990), the UJA-Federation of New York created a Task Force on the Jewish Homeless to bring together a consortium of agencies to develop and coordinate programs for Jewish homeless adults and families. Using both public and philanthropic funding, the collaborating organizations created a sequence of services that included outreach, case management, emergency cash assistance, temporary and permanent shelter, vocational services, advocacy, and referral and linkage to medical, mental health, and legal services. The Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services (JBFCS) was designated to implement and coordinate the case management component with the other services provided by the network of agencies. At the urging of then-Mayor Edward Koch, the synagogue community extended the effort by establishing shelter beds and food programs. This construct established the framework for the far-reaching set of homelessness prevention and homeless service programs under Jewish auspices that exist in the New York metropolitan area today.

In the mid-1980s, the Los Angeles Jewish Federation also established a Task Force on the Homeless in response to the identification of scores of Jews among the homeless population of that city. The Task Force requested that the JFS agency reach out to and place homeless Jews in hotels until more permanent housing could be secured. The JFS then established a Homeless Family Shelter that accommodated up to eleven family units at one time. The shelter is funded by a combination of government, Federation, and foundation support (King, personal communication, 1997).

In Dallas, the Social Action Committee of Congregation Shearith Israel initiated "a citizen-based effort to help solve the problem of homelessness" (Sundel & Newman, 1993). The result was the founding in June 1986 of the Dallas Jewish Coalition for the Homeless, Inc. (DJCH) by representatives of 21 synagogues and Jewish organizations. Aiming to establish a single project with a broad constituency that would have a real impact on the lives of homeless people, the DJCH developed a child care program for the children of homeless families living in the Downtown Dallas Family Shelter that would free parents to focus their attention on job training and employment. As a measure of its value and impact, the DJCH has received "national, state, and local recognition as an innovative citizen-based community response to problems of homeless families living in shelters" (Sundel & Newman, 1993, p. 76).

While these and similar efforts were being made in Jewish communities throughout the United States, the organized Jewish community of Montreal embraced an anti-poverty model created by the McGill University School of Social Work. Project Genesis was established in 1975 to combat Jewish poverty and is primarily funded by the Montreal Federation and Allied Jewish Community Services. Throughout its history, Project Genesis has focused its attention on a wide range of issues, including welfare rights, homelessness, low-cost housing, crime prevention, discrimination in housing, and other community concerns. Project Genesis's success in securing change has led to its replication in other communities in North America and in Israel (Torczyner, 1992).

TAKING ON ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

As recently as 1993, Arlene Kahn and Arthur J. Frankel (p. 99) suggested, "There is a commonly held belief that Jews do not have problems with alcohol or drugs....Yet, the reality is that there have always been Jewish alcoholics and drug users." A growing body of evidence reveals that Jews are indeed well represented among substance abusers (Frankel & East, 1996; Hofstein, 1973; Kahn & Frankel, 1993; Rosen, 1989).

Despite some distinctive features of alcohol and drug use among Jews, the problem may be too complex to be dealt with by the Jewish community alone. More than two decades ago, Hofstein (1973, pp. 236–237) recommended, "Priorities must be established based on the maximum utilization of whatever government resources are available....To the extent such resources become available, Jewish agencies should participate but avoid duplicating services which are already available through government resources."

In the 1970s and 1980s, many Jewish family agencies across the country heeded Hofstein's call. In New York, beginning in 1971, a number of agencies mobilized to address the problem. Their individual and collective efforts created drop-in centers and "crash pads" for drug-involved runaways and "street people," substance abuse prevention and early intervention services for American-born and Soviet emigre Jewish adolescents, and a set of drug-free outpatient counseling, day treatment, and residential substance abuse treatment programs.

Among the most significant developments that occurred during this period was the founding of the JACS (Jewish Alcoholics, Chemically Dependent Persons, and Significant Others) Foundation in 1979. JACS was created by a lay group of Jews in recovery who were outraged by the pervasive denial and lack of Jewish services for members of the Jewish community in recovery. With the encouragement of the New York Federation's Commission on Synagogue Relations and the financial support of UJA-Federation, private benefactors, foundations, and most recently JBFCS, with which it merged in 1995, JACS has grown to become *the* international resource for Jews in recovery. JACS maintains a data bank of information about substance use and abuse among Jews. It provides information about and referrals to available treatment options and support services to members of the Jewish community. JACS also offers training to rabbis and other human service professionals and conducts spiritual support workshops and retreats for Jews pursuing recovery.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Jewish communities in other parts of the country were also responding to increasing drug and alcohol use by Jews. The Jewish Family Service in Cincinnati brought together representatives of local Jewish educational institutions, the Jewish Community Center, and several synagogues to launch a Family-Teen Project offering healthy alternatives to adolescent/family substance abuse. It began by generating a weekly series of articles in the local Jewish newspaper, the *American Israelite*, and then offered other written materials, peer group discussion and counseling, meetings about drug and alcohol use with parents and teenagers, and consultation with rabbis, religious schools, and community groups (Drucker, 1982).

In 1982, the Executive Director of Jewish Family Service Association of Cleveland began an educational effort to combat the Jewish

community's denial of the problem of alcohol and chemical use among Jewish families and developed a comprehensive substance abuse treatment program under JFSA auspices (Levey, 1986). Similarly, in 1985, the JFS of Southern Middlesex County, New Jersey, created a Task Force on Addictive Behaviors, which has since produced a videotape entitled "Jewish Addiction: When *L'Chaim* Is Not to Life." The Task Force also undertook a national needs assessment to measure Jewish professionals' attitudes about Jewish addictions (Frankel & East, 1996) and established a state-wide group of Jews in recovery called the New Jersey Forum For Jews in Recovery (Kahn & Frankel, 1993).

On the West Coast, the Jewish community was also addressing the challenge. In December 1986, Walter Ruby reported in *Hadassah* magazine on a comprehensive Jewish community-wide effort to fight substance abuse. The Los Angeles effort combined programs initiated by the Federation, Jewish Family Service, JACS, and other agencies under the framework of Project L'CHAIM, which set the pattern for similar initiatives in Jewish communities throughout the country.

The historic migration and resettlement in the United States of more than 200,000 Jews from the former Soviet Union during the past decade has generated growing concern and focused increased attention on the prevalence of alcohol and drug use and misuse within the emigre community (Frankel & East, 1996; Galperin, 1996; Kagen, 1997).

CONCLUSION

Motivated by the Jewish values of *tzedakah, gemilut hasidim, and tikkun olam* and encouraged by the prospect of available public funding streams to complement and supplement Jewish philanthropic funds, Federations and JFS agencies throughout the United States and Canada have led many local Jewish communities to "come out of the closet" and replace denial with a communal sense of responsibility for helping the most vulnerable members of society. It has been a difficult process, but one that has made the Jewish community more resilient and its institutions stronger.

The coming days will test the measure of the community's resolve and its organizational strength. The monumental changes and profound consequences generated by the recently enacted Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 will confront Federations and JFS agencies throughout the United States with a major "reality check." I hope that they prove up to the challenge.

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