

Synagogues & Mental Health



About Hadassah Margolis, MSW, LICSW: Hadassah is a clinical social worker and Lead Therapist at McLean’s Spirituality and Mental Health Department, where she helped develop the hospital’s first-ever Spirituality and Treatment groups. Hadassah is also a staff clinician at the Brandeis Counseling Center. With over 15 years of clinical group work experience, Hadassah uses psychodynamic, psychoeducational, and CBT approaches to engage with and advocate for clients, and find commonalities among group members. Hadassah has emerged as a leader in Massachusetts across a mashup of communities, weaving together crafters and vulnerable populations ([Got Masks MA](#)), knitters and immigrant rights activists ([Welcome Blanket Brookline](#)), local government leaders and social studies teachers ([InclusiveBrookline](#)), changemakers and farmers’ markets ([Inspo:Expo](#)). In all her work, there is a common thread; Hadassah creates civic infrastructure and makes it possible for people to transform themselves through dialogue, reflection, and common action. Hadassah is a 2020 Commonwealth Heroine and a 2019 CJP Chai in the Hub honoree.

Hadassah and Kitty Dukakis met at the 2018 CJP/Ruderman Foundation event on mental health inclusion in synagogues, and that summer they launched Spirituality and Mental Health Discussion Groups at Kehillath Israel. With Kitty’s blessing, Hadassah has developed groups, workshops, and talks at seven other area synagogues. Hadassah is now thrilled to expand her offerings of discussion groups and support groups to a wider audience to address mental health stigma, increase inclusion, and explore mental health in a holistic way. She is available for a variety of group facilitations, workshops, trainings, consultations, and speaking engagements. Hadassah offers:

- **COVIDeo Coping: Online Support Groups (10 people max; \$1000-\$1600)**

Learn more about yourself through the guidance of a trained facilitator and the collective expertise of peers in 5-8 week sessions. Topics and timing depend on synagogue and members’ need, and may include:

- 1. Loneliness— The Other Pandemic:** What does it mean to be lonely, especially during COVID-19? Learn to recognize the signs of isolation, understand its effects on our well-being, and explore how to manage it better.
- 2. Uncertainty and Loss of Control:** Come learn strategies to connect to the unknown and what might be next in a way that doesn’t feel overwhelming.
- 3. The Anxiety Coronacoaster:** Connect to your worry brain and learn strategies to manage stress and anxiety in the time of COVID-19.
- 4. Parenting in a Pandemic:** The elusive “work-life balance” is out of reach more than ever for parents. Come talk about what it means to parent “out loud” in the times of COVID-19 and share tips with peers.

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5. Self-Care in the Time of Corona. “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I?” (Hillel). What is our responsibility to ourselves right now? How do we help our loved ones while still making time for ourselves?

6. Mindfulness Matters: Join this hands-on exploration of in-the-moment skills. Sessions may include a hands-on guided imagery practice, a Choose Your Own Mindfulness Adventure (participants write their own practice), and/or virtual crafting/art circle. No artistic or meditation experience required!

7. Synagogue-Specific Support: Please reach out to Hadassah if your synagogue has other needs or ideas for support group topics.

- **1-hour Compassion Fatigue in the Time of COVID Workshop (10 people max; \$400)**
Compassion fatigue describes the emotional, physical, and spiritual distress in those providing care to another. Learn how to recognize the cumulative toll that bearing witness to others’ suffering has on us, and explore authentic self-care tools to check in with yourself as you check in on others.
- **5-week Spirituality and Mental Health Discussion Group (10 people max., \$1000-\$1250)**
How are spirituality and religion connected to mental health? Members share how spirituality is a part of their lives, and explore how spirituality and mental health impact each other. (in person or online)
- **1-hour Spirituality and Mental Health Workshop (\$400)**
A 15-minute talk about the intersection of spirituality and mental health, followed by an interactive small-group exercise based on current curriculum used at McLean. (in person or online)
- **20-minute Dvar Torah on Spirituality and Mental Health (\$200)**
Connecting the week’s parashah to the pioneering work of McLean’s Department of Spirituality and Mental Health and the need for mental health inclusion.
- **Training and Consultation (cost varies and is offered upon request)**
Guidance on best practices for lay leaders to incorporate mental health offerings in various communities. Can be one-time or ongoing, depending on needs.

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