

Backgrounder/Fact Sheet
**Critical Supports Program for Holocaust Survivors
Using Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed Care**

Jewish Federations often serve as the social service mainstay of the Jewish community. Linking networks of community and family services, synagogues, senior centers, independent living facilities, doctors and others, the Federation uniquely possesses a bird's eye view of Jewish life. For Holocaust survivors with complex needs, the communal umbrella is pivotal. That's why 6 Federations have been awarded grants to coordinate emergency services among Holocaust survivors to prevent and resolve crises that could be devastating to their wellbeing.

Awarded by The Jewish Federations of North America's Center for Advancing Holocaust Survivor Care, this grant program, known as **Critical Supports**, is sponsored by the federal government and uses an approach called Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed (PCTI) care. PCTI care incorporates awareness about the impact of trauma into agency programs and procedures as a way to avoid re-traumatizing survivors and promote their dignity, strength, and empowerment.

The federal government supports a PCTI approach because it avoids re-traumatization and empowers people to maintain choice in their lives. For example, a communal lunch that is trauma-informed would avoid long lines and provide survivors with empty containers to take home leftover food, thereby reducing concerns of any food waste or food shortage they may have experienced during the war. An intake form would avoid excessive questions about family health history – questions impossible for a survivor to answer if their family was murdered.

For Holocaust survivors, any emergency that threatens one's sense of safety, security, or control – such as a fall in the home or broken heating system – can pose a risk for re-traumatization. On top of this, many typical events that occur as survivors age, such as hearing loss or a hospital stay, can trigger memories of times during the Holocaust when they lost control over their lives. Exacerbating the problem, many survivors live in poverty, resulting in food insecurity, insufficient housing and utilities, lack of transportation and social isolation.

Critical Supports has two components. First, the Federation will establish a leadership council that could include doctors, social service agencies, senior centers, Holocaust survivor families and others that will develop strategies for coordinating services. Next, the leadership council will implement the strategies and distribute funds to the agencies providing the services. The majority of the funds must be applied to direct services.

Through this grant, Federations will prevent crises by offering services such as dental work, hearing aids, financial/benefits counseling, transportation, meals, home repairs and safety modifications. We will resolve emergencies by offering services such as help with rent to avoid eviction, or help with medication to avoid a health crisis. The leadership councils will decide on the strategies.

Our leadership councils are in formation and it is our hope that they will develop a solid, sustainable foundation for care coordination that will assist many populations in the future, in addition to Holocaust survivors. For more information about the federal grant program and the PCTI approach, visit www.HolocaustSurvivorCare.org.