

Resilience & Vulnerability in Holocaust Survivors & Their Descendants

How the Trauma of the Past Affects the Present

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Overview

- About Baycrest
www.baycrest.org





Baycrest Centre
for Geriatric Care

Caring for Aging Holocaust Survivors A Practice Manual

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The Holocaust Resource Program at Baycrest

<http://www.baycrest.org/about/publications/caregivers/caring-for-aging-survivors-of-the-holocaust>



Resilience

- The ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity.
- The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.
- Psychological **resilience** is **defined** as an individual's ability to successfully adapt to life tasks in the face of social disadvantage or highly adverse conditions.



Vulnerability

- **Vulnerability** is the quality of being easily hurt or attacked.
- **Vulnerability** comes from the Latin word for "wound"
- **Vulnerability** is the state of being open to injury, or appearing as if you are.



Resilience & Vulnerability in Holocaust Survivors

- Vulnerability & resilience (N. Kellerman)
- Uniqueness of each individual
 - pre-war personality
 - experiences during the war
 - post war adjustment



Aging Holocaust Survivors

- Mourning for past & present losses
- Increased contact with institutions
- Increased dependency
- “Trapped in their own memories”
- Relocation
- Impact on their families



Child Survivors

- Age 16 & under at the end of the war
- Currently in their mid seventies to mid eighties
- Hidden children
- Silenced children



Resilience & vulnerability in Child survivors

- Identity
- Pain & Loss
- Finding their voices
- Resilience throughout life
- Life achievements
- Aging
- Uniqueness of each individual



Children of Aging Holocaust Survivors

- Small family network
- Lack of previous experience with normal aging
- Need to protect their parents
- Trans-generational transmission of trauma



Areas of Difficulty

- Self
- Thought process
- Emotional
- Interpersonal



Aggravating & mitigating factors

- What makes it more difficult (aggravating factors)
- What makes it better (mitigating factors)

Programs & Services

Café Europa

- Purpose
- Format
- Funding
- Evaluation
- Challenges





Programs & Services: Apotex group

- Rationale
- Purpose
- Structure
- Themes
- Challenges



Programs & Services: Child Survivors Support Group

- Rationale
- Structure
- Themes
- Outcomes



Programs & Services: Second Generation Support Groups

- Purpose
- Rationale
- Structure
- Themes



Groups experiences

- Safe place
- Sense of being understood
- Own agenda
- Mutual support
- “Working through” & re-integrating
- Burden vs. legacy

Programs & Services (continued)

- Education
- Commemorative events
- Intergenerational activities
<http://www.crestwood.on.ca/ohp-type/holocaust-survivors/>
- Special projects: Quilting project, Precious Legacy,
- Child survivors video



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