



## Elah Center Annual Report 2018

Elah Center for Coping with Loss offers help and support to anyone dealing with loss, grief, trauma, or emotional strains, and is a professional work place for therapists from various disciplines.

In 2018 we continued our efforts to offer a wide range of therapeutic services, in order to provide each client with an individually tailored form of assistance.

This report describes 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.

In 2018 more than 6,000 people received more than 100,000 hours of assistance.

### Letter from the chairman

The year 2018 was largely dominated by the execution of the two large tenders that were assigned to Elah in December 2017.

The first tender concerns a project of the Holocaust Survivors' Authority within the Ministry of Finance, which has allocated funds for the treatment of survivors. As stated elsewhere in this report, the demand in this branch of services has risen sharply.

An increase was noted in the number of clients, but even more so in the number of hours of care that we provided to each client.

To meet the high demand, Elah has eight regional managers, who together have built up a pool of around 200 freelance therapists.

The second tender was issued by the Ministry of Work, Welfare and Social Services, to coordinate four Help Centers for next of kin of people who died as a result of murder, suicide or a traffic accident. The centers were opened in December 2017, and in the current report year, we consolidated our activities. At the centers, close family members obtain different kinds of support, and can request referrals for individual, family and group therapy that is free of charge.

In line with these and other developments in recent years, it was decided at the last General Assembly to officially change the name of our foundation to "Elah Center for Coping with Loss". Evidently, we continue our efforts in the Therapy Center, where Elah offers treatment to people of all ages who encounter in emotional difficulties.

Finally, the Dutch Holocaust survivors were the reason that our organization was founded 40 years ago, a fact that we will commemorate this fall. It goes without saying that the assistance to Dutch community, our oldest and original target group in Israel, will always remain one of our main goals.

In order to be able to perform all these tasks properly, we recruited six new staff members and included them in our growing team. I would like to thank all those involved in the efforts of Elah: the members of the board, who dedicate themselves voluntarily and with great enthusiasm to their mission; Yaela Cohen and Bennie Leezer, who manage to lead the organization as a team; the staff members, who distinguish themselves by their competence, creativity and enthusiasm; the volunteers, the private donors, and all the foundations and government institutions that enable us to do our blessed work.

**Yahel Shachar**, Chairman of the Board



# Overview of activities

## **A** Therapy Center for the General Public

During our lifetime, each of us experiences (acute) difficulties or loss: the death of a loved one, divorce, dismissal, children leaving home, or the loss of physical functions or status. Sometimes we cope by ourselves, but if our sorrow 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 advice on medication for mental health problems. Elah maintains a large team of almost 300 qualified therapists, who use various treatment methods and specialize in treating 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 six clinics, or at the therapists' private clinics. Many companies and NPO's refer clients to Elah, and finance or subsidize treatment for their employees or members. To people who are not eligible for external subsidies, Elah tries to offer subsidized treatments with the help of donations from individuals and foundations.

## **B** Therapy for Holocaust Survivors

As years pass by, Holocaust survivors often grow more vulnerable, and are in need of extra help and support. In old age, people are confronted with many 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, for those whose mobility is limited, takes place at their private home. For Holocaust survivors with cognitive impairments we provide treatments using art, music or animals. In addition, we organize therapeutic and social groups, where survivors discuss topics related to their lives, past and present, in a pleasant atmosphere. 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.

The treatment is 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 tries 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.

## **C** Help Centers for Families Who Experienced Sudden Loss

The death of a loved-one is a traumatic event, especially when the loss is sudden. Due to sudden loss, surviving relatives often experience stress and internal conflict, and face a complicated process of bereavement.

Counseling and support from professionals, immediately after the loss, are beneficial to the mourning process. Commissioned by the Israeli Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Affairs, Elah coordinates regional Help Centers for families who have suffered sudden loss as a result of homicide, suicide, or a traffic accident. Family members are entitled to different forms of support, and to individual or group therapy. In the event of homicide, they are entitled to legal assistance as well.

## **D** The Dutch Community

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, they participate in social group meetings and in our national volunteer project, and attend national events.

## **E** Training and supervision

Because of Elah's experience with providing care for Holocaust survivors and people dealing with loss and grief, we are often requested to train professionals and volunteers from other organizations. Elah has an official internship program for students of social work of Tel Aviv University. Therapists from Elah often present their work at professional conferences and seminars.



**A**

**The Therapy Center**

**In 2018, nearly 600 people received more than 5,500 hours of treatment at the Therapy Center.**



**Therapy**

In 2018, around 290 clients received more than 4,500 hours of individual, relationship, or family therapy through Elah's Therapy Center. Many organizations refer members or employees to Elah, and finance or subsidize their treatment. For example, on behalf of the Ministry of Defense, Elah treats relatives of fallen soldiers; for the National Insurance Institute, Elah treats relatives of victims of terrorist attacks; for the NPO Kamiem, Elah treats parents who have lost a child due to illness; for the Michael Levin Center 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 treats employees of the Israeli Electricity Company, students of the Open University and ALS patients and their families. In addition to clients who are referred by one of these partners, people also come independently to the Therapy Center.

**Group therapy**

Over the years, Elah has developed a varied range of therapeutic groups. Some groups are conventional therapeutic discussion groups, while in other groups tools such as writing, reading of literary texts, photographs, objects or psychological cards are used to discuss personal matters. This year, Elah's therapists moderated a group for Second Generation Holocaust survivors, groups for the elderly, groups for parents who lost a child due to illness, groups for people recovering from a brain hemorrhage or cancer, and a group for refugees. In total, more than 300 people received around 1,000 hours of group therapy.

**Psychiatric support**

Elah offers psychiatric treatment and advice on the use of medicines for mental health problems.

**Crisis intervention**

Sometimes companies have to deal with emergency situations in the workplace. To prevent trauma and ensure that the staff copes well with the consequences of the incident, both at work and privately, all those concerned should get real-time counseling. Elah offers tailor made crisis intervention, based on the expectations of the staff and the nature of the event.

2018





**B**

**Therapy for Holocaust survivors**

**In 2018, more than 3,200 Holocaust survivors received over 77,000 hours of services.**

**Therapy**

Since 2011, Elah has provided therapeutic services to Holocaust survivors, funded by the Israeli Ministry of Finance's Holocaust Survivors' Authority. Due to their limited mobility, most survivors receive treatment at home. In 2018, Elah treated more than 1,600 survivors. In total we provided 45,000 hours of service to Holocaust survivors. Compared to 2017, the number of clients increased by 18%, while the number of hours of service increased by 73%. The large increase in hours of service per client shows that in general survivors need more help as they grow older.

**Group therapy**

Elah organizes therapeutic discussion groups for Holocaust survivors. These groups have a small number of participants. They share past experiences and discuss ways to deal with them. 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 the communication with companions in distress. Elah maintains a number of groups where the participants, through observation of and consultation with their peers, gain insight and learn about different models of coping. In 2018 Elah moderated 18 therapeutic groups for Holocaust survivors, in which around 200 people received nearly 8,000 hours of therapy. The number of clients rose with 9%, while a 259% increase was registered in the number of service hours registered.

**Social groups**

Elah has developed a wide range of topics suitable for social groups for the elderly and Holocaust survivors. In the groups we encourage the participants to discuss life experiences, using tools such as nature, writing, animals, drama, or music. In 2018, 74 social groups convened in more than 30 places in Israel. More than 1,100 Holocaust survivors participated in these groups and received more than 24,000 hours of service. Of the 74 groups, 10 were held in Russian. The number of participants and received hours of service showed a growth of 30%.

**Lectures for Holocaust survivors and the elderly**

Elah gives lectures and workshops to Holocaust survivors and the elderly in general, on a variety of topics such as dreams, humor, dealing with anger, the meaning of secrets in our lives, discrimination and prejudice, or grand parenting in modern times. At the invitation of welfare departments of various municipalities, Elah's therapists gave 29 lectures and workshops this year.





**C Assistance to families who experienced sudden loss**  
Up to and including 2018, we have supported over 1,000 families or 3,330 family members through our Help Centers.



**מקום לנשׁוּמָה**

**Spiritual guidance**

Since 2016, relatives of victims of homicide, suicide or traffic accidents can opt for an alternative form of assistance, the so-called spiritual guidance. The assumption of this treatment method is that in times of hardship, people feel the need to get in touch with a 'personal spiritual space', from which they can draw strength. Under the guidance of the counselor and with the help of various techniques, including poetry analysis, listening to life stories, philosophical discussions, writing, creating a personal prayer or breathing exercises, contact with the intimate inner self can be established. In 2018, around 60 people made use of this alternative treatment. The project is the result of a collaboration between the Ministry of Welfare and the Joint (JDC).

**Help centers for families who experienced sudden loss**

At the end of 2017, Elah won the tender from the Israeli Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Services to set up and coordinate aid centers that support the close relatives of victims of homicide, suicide or traffic accidents. At the help centers located in Haifa, Kfar Kana, Hadera and Jerusalem, the next of kin are supported by our therapists, or referred to individual, relationship or family therapy at the regional welfare agencies. Family members can also partake in support groups, opt for spiritual counseling, or participate in special communal activities. Family members of victims of homicide are also entitled to legal help through the Ministry of Justice.

In 2018, 371 new families, or 1,143 family members, received help through the centers. Progress was made on setting up a volunteer project for the benefit of surviving relatives.

**Individual, relationship and family therapy**

In 2018, 293 relatives received more than 4,800 hours of individual therapy through the help centers. When possible, they are referred to the regional welfare agencies.

**Support groups**

During the year under review, we moderated 23 support groups across the country for people who lost a loved one. Amongst those were support groups for parents, groups for brothers and sisters, and groups for partners. Participants partook in biblio-therapeutic groups, psycho-spiritual groups and even a cooking group. Participation in the support group enhances the ability of surviving relatives to live alongside the pain, not to surrender to sorrow and sink into despair. In total, around 200 people participated in the support groups.

**Four-day workshop**

In 2018, Elah again organized a four-day workshop for people who lost a loved one as a result of homicide, suicide or a traffic accident. The 28 participants listened to lectures, took part in creative workshops, took tours in nature and received other nourishment for body and soul. For most participants, the workshop is the first time since the incident that they leave their home for a few days. They undergo an intense and stimulating group process in which they learn that, despite the pain and the despair, they are allowed and often able to live life to the full. The workshop is organized in collaboration with and funded by the Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Services.

**Training and cooperation**

In the report year, Elah taught two groups of lawyers working for the benefit of relatives of homicide victims. A study day was organized for social workers from regional welfare agencies who provide therapy to people who suffered sudden loss. Elah is also a member of the 'Forum for Loss in Israel'. In addition, Elah has been asked again this year to undertake the organization of the international conference on loss, mourning and emotional resilience. This conference took place in January 2019 in Eilat.





**D**

**Projects for the Dutch community**

**In 2018, around 1,200 people from the Dutch community received more than 15,000 hours of assistance.**



**Holocaust Memorial Ceremony**

As an organization established by and for Holocaust survivors, Elah puts a lot of effort into the annual Holocaust Memorial Day, which is attended by hundreds of Dutch survivors and their families. This year's theme of memorial was "Together You Are Not Alone?". Six survivors lit a memorial candle. Furthermore, attendees were given the opportunity to read out loud the names of murdered family members.

In 2018 two ceremonies were held, one in Beth Chel Ha'aviv in Herzlia and the other in Beth Joles in Haifa, with a total of 400 participants.

**Therapy and psychiatric consult**

In 2018, people from the Dutch community in Israel received subsidized therapy (individual, relationship or group therapy, or psychiatric assistance) from Dutch speaking therapists. Among them 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 child survivors group and a writing group were moderated for the Dutch target group.

**Social-cultural groups**

Our social workers, assisted by volunteers, maintain a number of regional groups. These groups allow the Dutch in each region to undertake joint activities and build social networks. Eight social groups were active throughout the country in 2018. Five groups were organized in collaboration with the Dutch immigrant organization (Irgoen Olei Holland). In total, around 200 people participated in the groups.

**Volunteer work**

Elah maintains a network of 80 volunteers. They perform social, organizational and practical tasks within the organization and the community. Some volunteers visit the elderly and the sick, and provide personal assistance, others help to organize the social group meetings. There are volunteers who manage the Dutch mobile libraries, and others who transport elderly to meetings and events. All volunteers receive individual and group supervision. They attend lectures about volunteering, and discuss their work with the responsible social worker. In the report year, a total of 10 volunteer supervision groups were moderated.

**Puppet show "War Mother"**

In October, Adolphe Nysenholc performed his play "War Mother" at the Elah office in Tel Aviv. The play deals with the difficult questions and feelings of children who lived in hiding during the Second World War.

Emeritus professor Adolphe Nysenholc was born in Brussels in 1938, lost his parents and grew up with the family that hid him. He studied and taught philosophy and literature in Brussels, and later in life published an autobiography, "The child who plays with his shadow." Mr. Nysenholc also wrote a number of plays.

**Activities of "Friends of Elah" in the Netherlands**

Through the "Friends of Elah" association in the Netherlands (STEN) we took various initiatives to communicate with Dutch foundations and donors. We sent digital newsletters and were present at conferences. In October, the secretary of the STEN board, Christiaan Ruppert, paid a visit to Elah. In Israel, we gave lectures for Dutch tourists and volunteers. We also enjoyed a visit of a large group of young civil servants from the Dutch Ministry of Welfare.





## **E** Training and cooperation

**In 2018, approximately 500 professionals, students and volunteers from other organizations received training from Elah.**

### **Training of professionals and volunteers**

Because of Elah's expertise in providing assistance to Holocaust survivors and people suffering from grief and loss, we are regularly invited to train volunteers and professionals from NPO's and other organizations who work with these target groups.

In 2018, Elah staff members provided trainings for volunteers and employees of The Lone Soldier Center in Memory of Michael Levin, for volunteers of the NPO's Aviv and Latet, for Christian volunteers from the Netherlands who are temporarily staying in Israel, for students of social work, for employees of Tel Hashomer hospital, for social workers of the NPO Assaf who work with refugees, for lawyers who work with families of murder victims, and for social workers from regional welfare agencies.



### **Training of students from the University of Tel Aviv**

Since 2014, Elah has been recognized as a training institute for BA and MA students of social work at Tel Aviv University. In 2018, Elah guided four students in their fieldwork.

### **Conferences and study days**

Elah is regularly asked to present the insights and experience of the organization at professional conferences. In 2018, staff members presented Elah's therapeutic models at various conferences. In addition, Elah has organized three study days for the freelance staff working with Holocaust survivors and families who suffered sudden loss.

### **Publications and research**

With the help of PR agency Peer Levin, we published various articles in the media and gave interviews on radio and TV about the issues facing the various target groups of Elah. In addition, we sent a monthly digital newsletter (in Dutch and Hebrew), and published the Elah agenda 2018, which was co-financed by the sale of advertisements. We also distributed information material about Elah in the media and at information markets.





## Finance in NIS

Operational turnover	25,544,699
Total expenses	(23,838,845)
Net financing expenses	(42,969)
Net result	1,662,885

## Thanks to our donors

(in alphabetical order)

- Carel Abas Foundation
- Danielle Fund for Hope
- Fields of Mercy
- Frits Naftali Fund
- Gereformeerde gemeente Sliedrecht
- Goudse Stichting Joodse Arbeid
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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 donors

**We thank all our volunteers for their wholehearted efforts**

## Help Elah, support our projects

As a non-profit organization, Elah is dependent on donations from individuals and funds.

You can help by donating to the "Elah for Everyone" fund. This fund aims to provide psychotherapy to people without sufficient financial resources. The costs for therapy per session are € 70 (home therapy € 85), while € 1400 (home therapy € 1700) guarantees half a year of therapy. Every gift helps! Small amounts are also welcome.

Elah is an institution for tax-deductible donations that is recognized by the Israeli and Dutch tax authorities.

## How can you donate?

### For donations in Israel

#### By credit card:

Visit our website ([www.elah.org.il](http://www.elah.org.il)) and press "Donate Now", or call the Elah office, 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  
t.n.v. Stichting Elah Nederland, Amsterdam

## 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 or 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 the "The Elah For Everyone Fund".

**Elah** cooperates with numerous governmental and social institutions, and is awarded the annual seal of good management (nihul takin).



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### **Friends of Elah in the Netherlands (Stichting Elah Nederland)**

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### **Board of Directors**

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