



Elah Center Annual Report 2021



The Elah Center for Coping with Loss offers help to people dealing with traumatic loss. The Elah Center works with a large team of experienced therapists, and offers various forms of therapy and treatment

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From the Chairman

The year 2021 was marked by social and organizational challenges, and by our continued development and growth. We were confronted with the lingering Corona crisis, and the saddening fact that over 10,000 Israeli families lost close relatives to the pandemic. In light of this, we initiated a project with the aim to give psychological support to relatives of Corona victims. Through a crowdfunding campaign, we raised over NIS 660,000, all designated for this specific target group.

After seventeen intense and very productive years, Yaela Cohen has stepped down from her role as co-CEO. Honoring Yaela's decision, the board opted for a new management structure. Since January 2022, Bennie Leezer is the acting CEO of the organization and he is assisted by a professional management team: Marina Shtark is the Clinical Director and manages the Therapeutic Center; Rona Ackerman is Director of the Crisis Intervention, Resilience and Life Counseling department; and Margo Moyal is the Director of the Help Centers. Yaela continues to head our Dutch Community department. I would



Shai Schellekes

like to thank Yaela for her enormous and unique contribution to the organization, and wish the new management a lot of success.

In August our beloved staff member Dr. Shai Schellekes, who joined Elah at its early beginnings and supervised many staff members professionally, passed away. Shai will be missed dearly.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in the activities of the Elah Center: Bennie Leezer and the professional management team, all the staff members (employees and freelancers alike), our dedicated volunteers, our donors, our partners in government agencies, the many organizations we work with, and finally the members of the executive board and the audit committee. All of them together enable us to do our blessed work and assist thousands of people.

Yahel Shachar, Chair

212,685

Treatment hours

7,972

Clients

2021 in numbers

130

Volunteers

300

Groups

6

Clinics

53

Permanent
employees

383

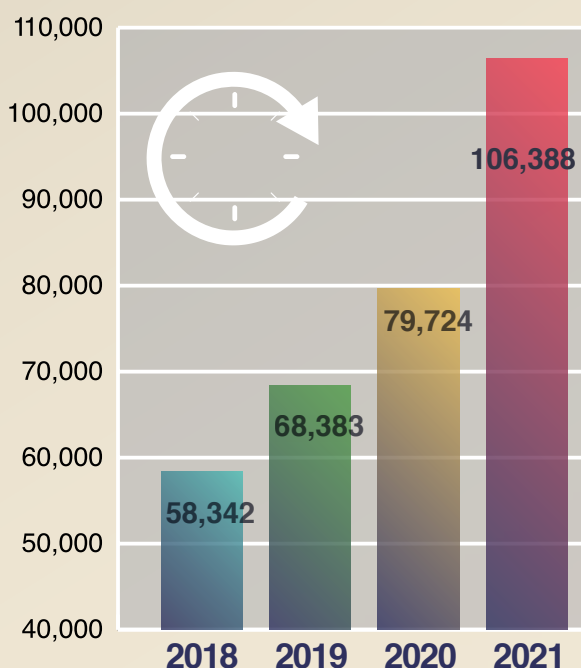
Freelancers

⚡ **37%**

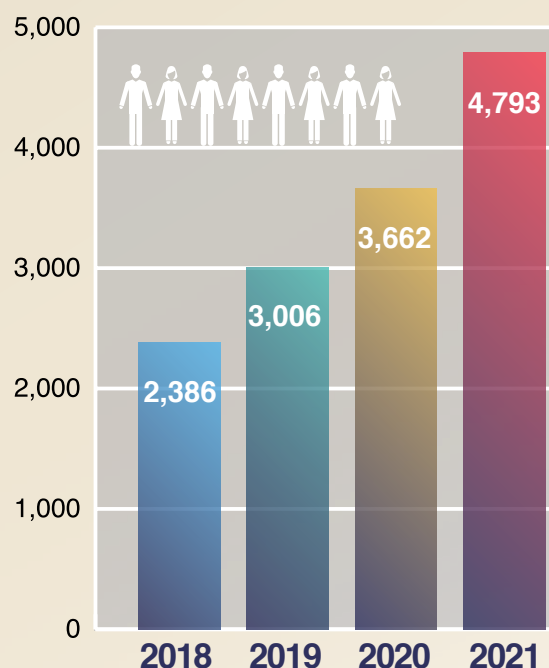
39,987,000

Turnover NIS

Hours of Treatment



Clients



Special Projects

Support for Relatives of COVID Victims

In June 2021 we launched a special project for the relatives of COVID victims, offering them immediate assistance (10 sessions of individual, couples, or family therapy) without charge. We set up a special Helpline for information and registration, that was operated by our own staff members.

The project was a joint initiative of the Elah Center and the Shtrasberg family, in memory of Channa Shtrasberg, who died as a result of the virus. To finance it we launched a crowdfunding campaign (assisted by JGive and BBDO) and collected NIS 660,000. The proceeds have been designated for the care of this particular group of clients.

In 2021, **167** clients received a total of **1,301** hours of treatment. We opened **5** support groups with a total of **39** participants, who had a total of **51** meetings and **461** hours of treatment

The Therapeutic Center

Everyone experiences difficulties or loss during their lifetime: the passing of loved ones, divorce, depression and anxiety, questions about sexual orientation and identity, the loss of physical or cognitive functions, or difficulties with social interaction. The Therapeutic Center is the general department within Elah where we provide services to people of all ages and backgrounds, who come with a variety of questions and problems.

People in need of psychological support can contact the Therapeutic Center privately. Other clients are referred to us by their employers (such as the Ministry of Defense, the National Insurance Institute, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Jewish Agency, the Ministry of Immigration, the National Electricity Company, the Kamim Foundation for parents who have lost a child to an illness, and the Israeli Railways), who partially or fully subsidize treatment.

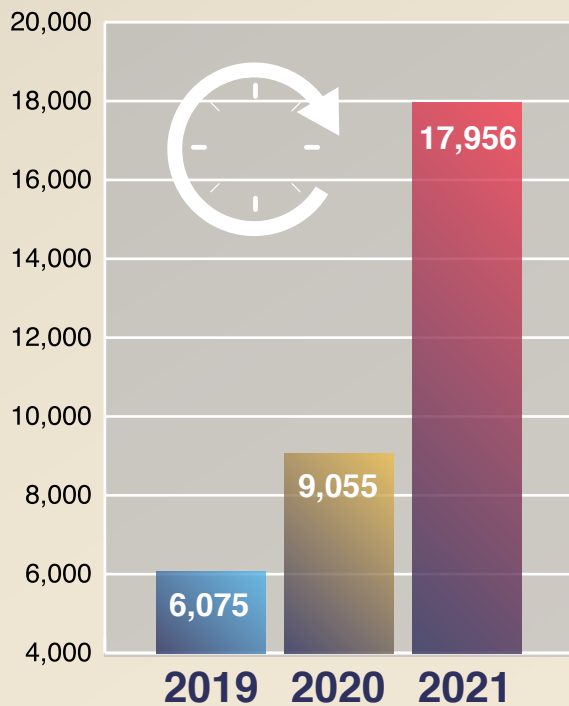
During 2021, we saw an increase in requests for support, and the number of group activities almost doubled compared to the previous year. We have expanded our professional network and strengthened existing ties with other organizations. This has led to a significant increase in the number of treatment referrals and activities.

In 2021 Elah subsidized therapy sessions to the extent of NIS 2,460,557

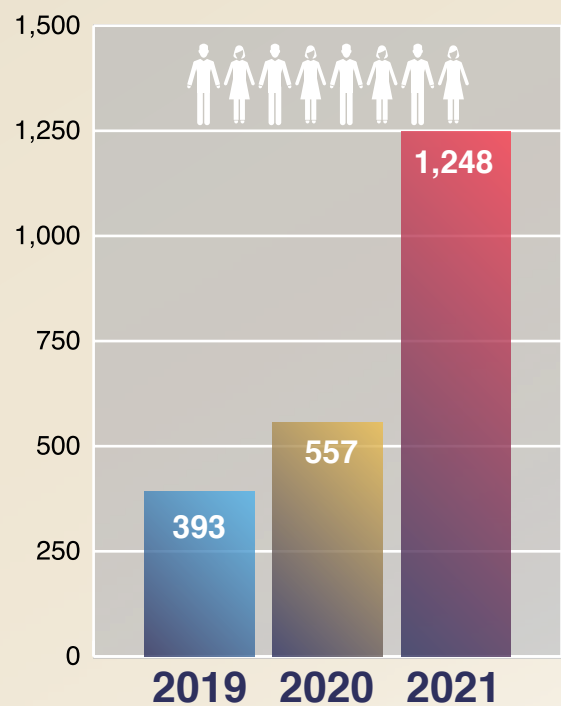
In addition to individual, couples and family therapy, we supervised 17 therapeutic groups in 2021, including support groups for families who lost a loved one to COVID, groups for widows and widowers, and groups for parents who lost a child due to illness, or after an advanced pregnancy.

We facilitated 17 groups with a total of 148 participants, who received a total of 156 meetings and 1,445 hours of treatment

Hours of Treatment



Clients



Unacknowledged Loss

The Therapeutic Center treats many people who experience traumatic loss that goes unacknowledged. These are cases of traumatic loss such as acute illnesses or fatal accidents at home, for which no government-funded care exists. In the Therapeutic Center we are aware of the importance of rapid intervention after traumatic loss. Part of our fundraising efforts is aimed at enabling the treatment of relatives of unacknowledged loss.

The passing of a family member is always a painful experience, and when death occurs under traumatic circumstances, coping becomes even more difficult. Sudden loss can provoke strong reactions in relatives and cause symptoms of post-trauma.

In 2021 we assisted **81 clients** who experienced traumatic, unacknowledged loss. They received a total of **1,445 hours** of subsidized treatment

Spiritual Care

A new and fast-growing form of treatment at the Elah Center is called 'Spiritual Care'. The underlying assumption of this method is that in times of hardship, when existential questions present themselves, people like to address their own inner spiritual resources, from which they draw strength, meaning, hope and healing. Under the guidance of a counselor, and with the help of various techniques like poetry analysis, listening to life stories, philosophy, writing, personal prayers or breathing exercises, contact with one's inner strengths can be established.

The Elah Center has a team of **30 therapists** who are specialized in 'Spiritual Care'.
In 2021, **265 clients** received a total of **3,525 hours** of 'Spiritual Care'

Psychiatric Consultation

The Elah Center offers psychiatric treatment as well as advice on medications for psychological problems.

In 2021, **69 clients** received a total of **148 hours** of psychiatric consultation

Help Centers for Families that Experienced Traumatic Loss

The passing of a close family member is a shocking and sometimes traumatic event, especially when the loss is sudden and unexpected, and the cause of death is violent and unnatural. Counseling and support from professionals, from the early stages of the mourning process onwards, proves to be essential for the coping process.

Since 2017, the Elah Center has coordinated the Help Centers for psychological support of close relatives of victims of homicides, suicide and traffic accidents. The Help Centers, located in Kfar Kana, Haifa, Hadera and Jerusalem, are funded by the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security, and offer affected families free counseling services, individual, couples, or family therapy or 'Spiritual Care'. Family members can also join support groups.

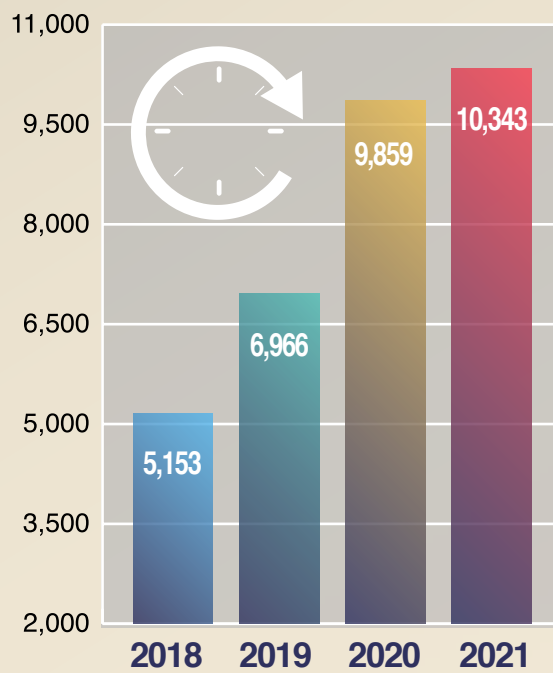
In addition, the Help Centers have established a volunteer project. In 2021, we opened two training groups for volunteers from the Help Centers in Jerusalem and Hadera, in which 20 volunteers participated.

A total of 2,579 family members are supported at the Help Centers.

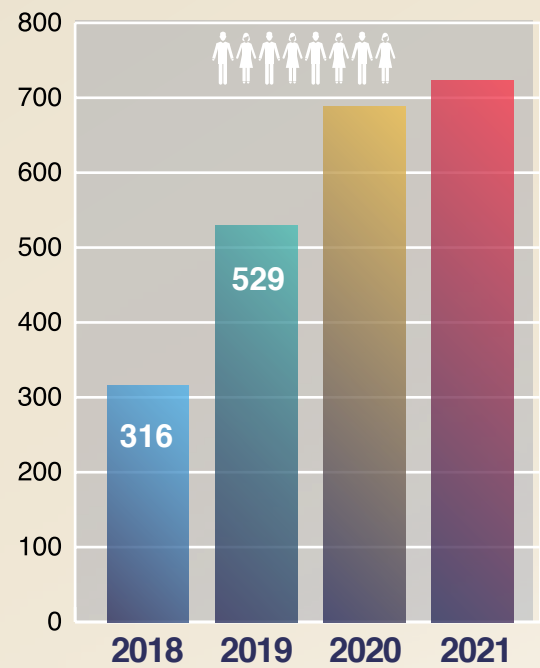
In 2021, 334 new families, comprising 1,466 family members, received counseling in the Help Centers. 723 people received 10,343 hours of therapy. We facilitated 39 online groups in which 339 people participated during a total of 4,544 hours



Hours of Treatment



Clients

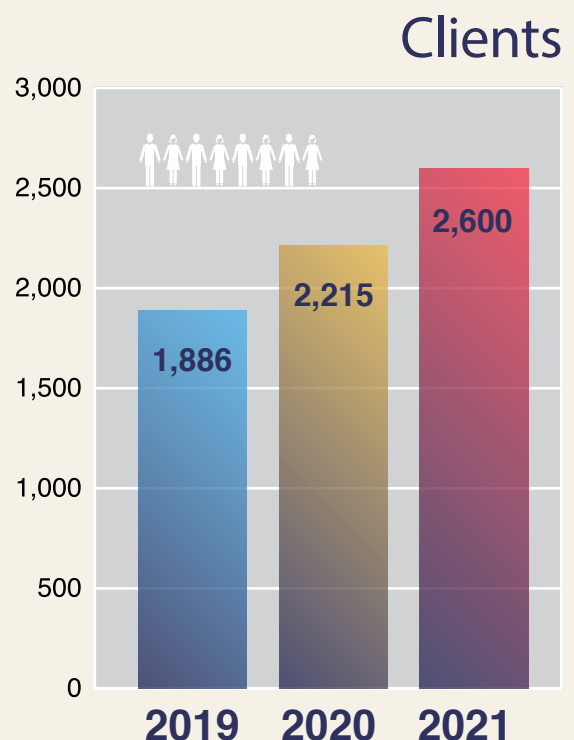
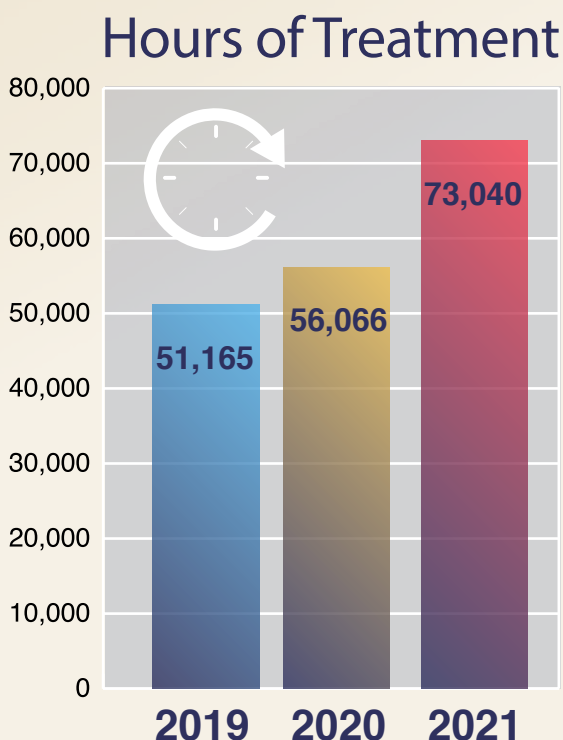


Holocaust Survivors

The Elah team consists of professional, experienced and dedicated therapists, many of whom specialize in supporting Holocaust survivors. In case clients are physically limited or housebound for other reasons, the treatment will be given at home. Holocaust survivors with cognitive impairments are offered a variety of creative therapies, including art, music, or animal therapy. In addition, Elah organizes social-therapeutic groups for survivors. These groups, funded by the Holocaust Survivors' Rights Authority of the Israeli Ministry of Social Equality, meet in homes for the elderly, day care centers and clubs across the country. The ultimate goal of all forms of treatment is to alleviate feelings of loneliness and social isolation, to acquire coping strategies and to find joy and meaning in life, despite age-related difficulties and the feeling of loss.

Due to the Corona pandemic, 2021 remained a year of increased loneliness, fear, and mental distress for many survivors. People were unable to leave their homes or receive visitors, activities in day care centers and clubs for the elderly were constantly cancelled, and if meetings were allowed to take place, many elderly people were afraid to participate. As a result, many survivors requested increased individual help and support. Thanks to the continuing support and the flexibility of the Holocaust Survivors' Rights Authority, we were able to continue the treatments most of the time, even over the phone or via Zoom. In order to accommodate the clients, we were also allowed to divide weekly one hour sessions into two half hour sessions per week, thus providing more continuity.

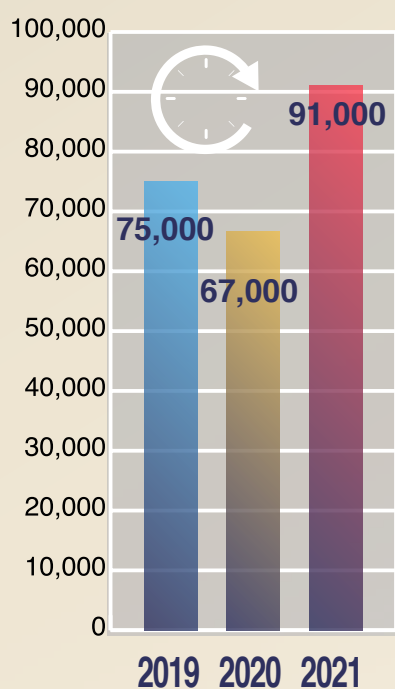
In 2021, 5,169 Holocaust survivors received a total of 166,390 hours of treatment and support services



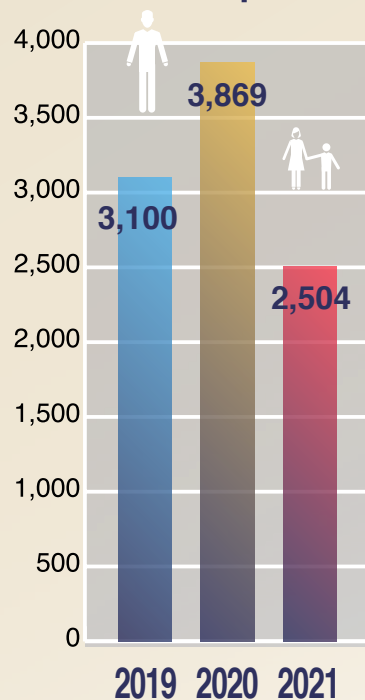
Social groups

Due to the Corona pandemic, during 2021, group activities were limited and no new groups were opened. The groups that were able to meet, spent an increased number of hours together.

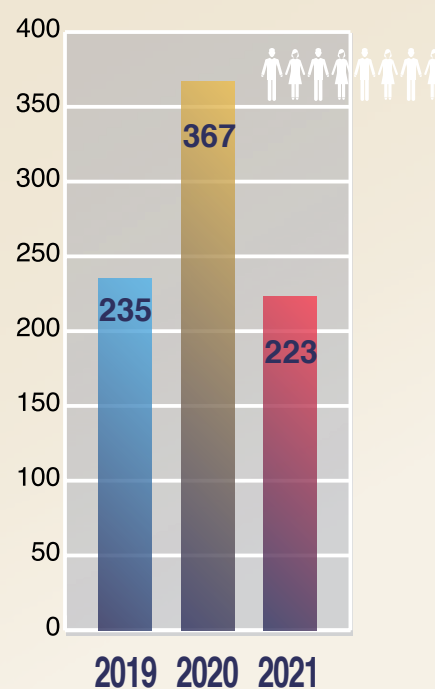
Hours of Treatment



Participants



Groups



The Dutch Community

The Elah Center was founded in 1979 by and for Dutch people in Israel. Ever since, the Dutch community has been an important target group, entitled to individual and group therapy, and other support services at reduced rates. The subsidized treatments are made possible in part by donations from the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, which has been an important partner of the Elah Center over the years.

In 2021, around 700 Dutch people received more than 8,000 hours of treatment and other support services

Individual, couples and family therapy

In 2021, Dutch people of all ages received subsidized assistance (individual, couple, or family therapy or psychiatric advice) in Dutch or Hebrew. Among them are Holocaust survivors, their partners, children (second generation) and grandchildren (third generation), but also Dutch people without Holocaust-related problems.

Group therapy

In 2021 we facilitated a Dutch-speaking group for child and baby survivors.

Social groups

Assisted by volunteers, social workers from the Elah Center facilitate social groups in all parts of Israel. These groups enable the participants to build social networks, engage in group activities and provide mutual help and support.

In 2021 we facilitated 6 social groups



Volunteers

Volunteers of the Elah Center help within the organization and the community in various ways. Some volunteers make home visits to the elderly, assist with small chores or accompany their elderly companions to doctor's visits, other volunteers help with the preparation of social activities, and still others maintain the mobile libraries with Dutch-language books. All volunteers receive individual and group supervision from the accompanying social worker and attend lectures on aspects of volunteering.

In 2021 we facilitated 8 volunteer groups

Holocaust Memorial Day

As an organization dedicated to helping survivors, Elah is committed to the annual National Holocaust Remembrance Day. Due to COVID restrictions, we could not meet indoors in 2021. Instead, we organized an online Zoom commemoration. Six survivors were filmed on video and interviewed about their wartime experiences, focusing on the topic of social networks in times of hardship. About 500 people took part in the online commemoration.

Evaluation for Dutch Foundations

At the request of the Keren Mejoechedet and the Jad Davids Fund, we have started making home visits and writing reports. In 2021, 8 home visits were made and reports were written.

Activities of 'Friends of Elah' in the Netherlands

With the help of the "Friends of Elah" association in the Netherlands (STEN), we maintained intensive contact with our Dutch partners, volunteers, donors, and supporting funds. We started a social media campaign and sent out a monthly digital newsletter in Dutch.



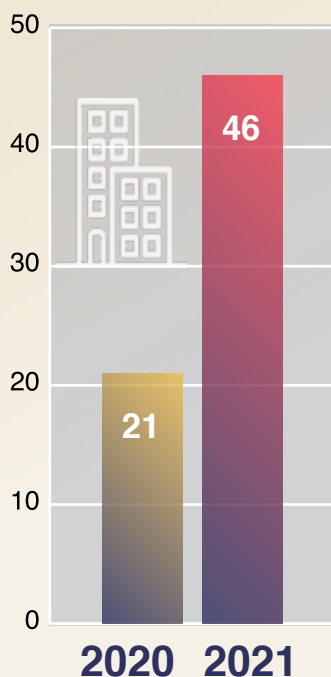
Crisis Intervention

Workplace accidents, exposure to life-threatening situations, dramatic incidents among colleagues, or stressful work routines can undermine the mental health of employees. Nowadays there is a growing awareness about the importance of protecting and stimulating the personal resilience of employees, and the collective resilience of an organization.

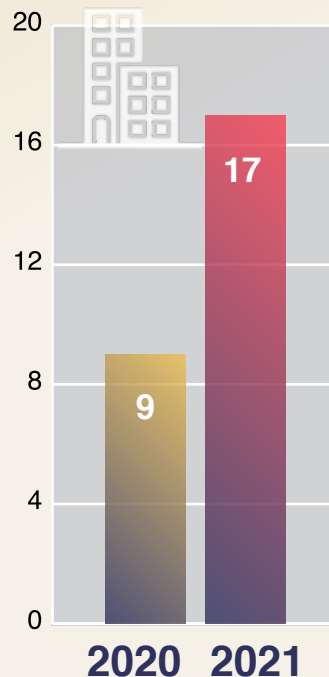
The field of resilience and emergency interventions has expanded considerably. In 2021, we assisted 63 companies. In 17 companies we practiced crisis intervention (one or several meetings), while in 46 companies we focused on the development of resilience during recurring meetings. In total, over 500 people participated in crisis counseling.



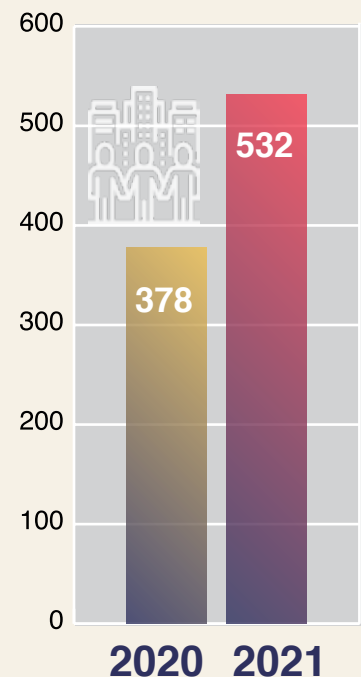
Resilience



Crisis intervention



Participants



Training and Supervision

Because of our experience in coping with grief and loss originally in relation to Holocaust survivors, Elah is often invited to instruct professionals and volunteers from other welfare institutions.

The Elah Center is recognized as a training institute for BA and MA students in social sciences from Tel Aviv University and for various psychotherapy courses. We were also actively involved in the training course 'People and Mind' for 'Spiritual Care' therapists, that was given at Rambam College.

In 2021 we mentored **18 students** of social work, 'Spiritual Care' therapists and psychotherapy interns, who together received **394 hours** of supervision. Knowledge-sharing activities have also grown. **55 professionals** took part in programs under Elah's supervision or one-off additional trainings. They received a total of **321 hours** of training

Lectures, study days and conferences

Elah is often invited to give lectures to the general public, for specific groups and for colleagues, both live and online. The lectures relate to our areas of work: traumatic loss, dealing with crisis and anxiety, supporting Holocaust survivors and their descendants. Elah staff members also present their work at professional conferences and seminars.

In 2021 we gave 19 lectures, which were attended by 411 participants. The lectures were held at places like the Fliman Hospital, the regional council of Ma'ale Adumim, the Adi Center in Nazareth and the Open University.

Conference on Loss, Grieving, and Spiritual Resilience

In October 2021, an online conference was held on loss, grief and resilience. The conference, which was co-organized by Elah, consisted of lectures and workshops by leading professionals from Israel and abroad. A number of Elah's therapists gave talks: Dalit Ashuri and Rona Ackerman spoke about the online discussion group for grieving grandparents they facilitated; Dina Dror addressed the relationship between grief and religion; Yaela Cohen and Marina Shtark addressed the current topic of loss because of COVID; Omer Hayut described the exceptional case where client and therapist share a common loss through the death of a fellow therapist (in memory of our colleague Dr. Shai Schellekes); finally, Shira Cohen, Yona Dvir, and Einav Ben Meir presented the lecture 'Am I my brother's keeper?'

Holocaust and Israeli Society Conference

An interdisciplinary conference was held in early March on the long-term impact of the Holocaust on Israeli society. The conference was co-organized by Elah and opened by co-director Yaela Cohen.



Elah and the (Social) Media

On our Facebook page we posted 79 messages about Elah's activities. We have almost 4,000 followers and received a total of 60,000 comments (comments, shares, likes). In all, we reached 3.5 million people, of whom 2.2 million were new contacts. The Hebrew and Dutch newsletter is sent to more than 8,000 addresses every month.

In 2021 we opened a YouTube channel.

Articles from and about the Elah Center have appeared in various newspapers (Yediot Achronot, Maariv, Israel HaJom, Ynet), and staff members have been interviewed on radio and television.

Our website was reviewed, updated, and translated to Arabic. The aim is to keep our clients and donors informed about new developments in the organization, to introduce new employees, and to present articles relevant to our work. You can visit our website at www.elah.org.il



מרכז אלה - להתמודדות נפשית עם אבדן



Thanks to our Donors

(in alphabetical order)

Arkin Family Foundation

Beracha Foundation

Checkpoint

Clara Mendes Fonds

Danielle Fund for Hope

Frits Naftalie Fonds

Fondation Pour la Memoire de la Shoah

Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation

Israeli Estates Committee

Joods Algemeen Steunfonds

Joseph and Christina Kasierer Foundation

Machseh Lajesoumiem

Matav

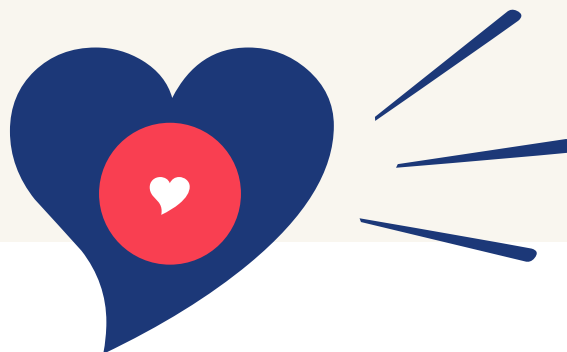
OPC Energy Ltd

Tel Aviv Municipality

The Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

The Israeli Ministry for Social Equality

The Israeli Ministry of Health



And many other private donors from the Netherlands and Israel
We thank all our volunteers for their commitment and support

Help Elah

support our projects

As a non-profit organization, Elah is dependent upon donations.

- You can help us and our clients by donating to the “Elah for Everyone” fund. This fund aims to provide psychotherapy to people with insufficient financial resources. The costs for therapy per session are € 80 (home therapy € 100), while € 1,600 (home therapy €2,000) guarantees half a year of therapy. Every gift helps! Small amounts are most welcome.
- Elah is recognized by the Israeli and Dutch tax authorities for tax-deductible donations. Tax deductible donations from the USA, UK, or Canada can be made through our page at Jgive. USA donors can also donate through PEF Israel Endowment Funds.

Every gift helps! Any amount is most welcome

Tax deductible donations from the USA, Canada, or the UK, can be made through our profile at the JGive platform via our website

How can you donate?

For donations in Israel

By credit card:

Call the Elah office at +972-3-6910921.

Visit our website (www.elah.org.il) and press “Donate Now” or go directly to our donation page at Jgive: <https://www.jgive.com/new/he/ils/charity-organizations/524>

By cheque:

Send an (Israeli) cheque in the name of Elah to our office:

Yigal Alon 157, office 941, Tel Aviv 6744365

For donations from the Netherlands

IBAN No. NL75ABNA0550509615, Stichting Elah Nederland, Amsterdam

For donations from abroad

By creditcard:

Visit our website (www.elah.org.il) and press “Donate Now” or directly go to our donation page at Jgive: <https://www.jgive.com/new/en/usd/charity-organizations/524>

By bank transfer:

Transfer your gift to: Bank Hapoalim, branch 730, account number 225221 or

IBAN: IL 500 12 780 000 0000 225 221 Swift code: POALILIT

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 and 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 'Elah For Everyone Fund' with the help of donations.

Elah cooperates with numerous governmental and social institutions and is awarded the annual seal of good management (nihoel takien).

Board of Directors

Yahel Shachar, chair
Amos van Raalte, treasurer
Amiram Klein CPA, secretary
Sarit Sandomirsky-Tromp,
vice-chair
Mary Ben Sinai, member

Board of Directors

Hans Vuijsje, chair
Marco de Bock, treasurer
Christiaan Ruppert, secretary
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Audit Committee

Avi Omessi CPA, chair
Eli Cohen CPA, member

Internal Auditor

Hanit Amar CPA
BDO Ziv Haft

Committee of Recommendation Friends of Elah

Mr. **Edward Asscher**, president of Royal Asscher Diamond
 Mr. **Menno ten Brink**, rabbi of the Liberal Jewish Community of Amsterdam
 Mr. **Gijs Cremer Eindhoven**, entrepreneur
 Mr. **René Glaser**, director of Glaser Public Affairs
 Mr. **Jaap Rosen Jacobson**, owner of Panta Holdings
 Mr. **Ronald Leopold**, director Anne Frank Foundation
 Mrs. **Sonja Manheim**
 Mr. **Salo Muller**, physical therapist, journalist and publicist
 Mr. **Philip van Tijn**, director
 Mrs. **Gerdi Verbeet**, director, former chairman of the House of Representatives

Friends of Elah in the Netherlands (Stichting Elah Nederland)

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ANBI number: 8142 78 103



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מרכז אלה - להתמודדות נפשית עם אבדן



Registration number 580040947