



HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
KALSMAN INSTITUTE
on Judaism & Health

UJA  **Federation**
of New York

2012 JEWISH SEMINARY PASTORAL EDUCATOR CONFERENCE

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OVERVIEW

The Kalsman Institute on Judaism and Health and the UJA-Federation of New York will co-sponsor and coordinate a rabbinic seminary pastoral educator conference to explore pedagogy, advance field-building, and disseminate scholarly findings in pastoral education. The conference is scheduled for January 10-11, 2012, and will be located in New York at the UJA-Federation conference center.

BACKGROUND

Tremendous growth has been seen in the last ten years in Jewish pastoral counseling, Jewish chaplaincy, and education focused on helping future rabbis meet the needs of their communities [1]. Most rabbinical students now serve as pastoral interns in hospitals, Jewish homes for the aging, hospices, other healthcare settings, synagogues, and social service agencies. Many do this work through Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in healthcare settings throughout North America accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (www.acpe.edu). Other students hold healthcare and pastoral internships linked to a second accrediting body, the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP), and yet others hold internships supervised by their seminaries through various other models. During the course of these internships, students hone their pastoral skills, learn how to offer comfort, and learn how to be a spiritual presence for people experiencing suffering. Through coursework and fieldwork, students are immersed in the wealth of Jewish texts and sources on Judaism and health and Jewish healing. The skills

developed are vital for their service to future congregants and community members, and have increasingly become the legitimate expectation of synagogues and Jewish organizations.

PASTORAL EDUCATOR CONFERENCE DETAILS

The January 2012 Seminary Pastoral Educator Conference will include transdenominational and interdisciplinary representatives from within the Jewish community. The conference will target the broadest Jewish spectrum possible and invite faculty from each of the major Jewish seminaries, including the Hebrew Union College (four campuses), Jewish Theological Seminary, American Jewish University's Ziegler School for Rabbinic Studies, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Yeshiva University's RIETS Rabbinical Seminary, Academy for Jewish Religion, Hebrew College, Aleph Rabbinic Program, Yeshivat Maharat, and others. Seminary educators and others involved in pastoral education and Jewish spiritual care in Israel will also be present. Attendance will be via invitation only.

Representatives from a select survey of these seminaries shared early support for the conference, during which participants would be gathered together for an unprecedented transdenominational Jewish educator gathering. Additional critical attendees will be invited which might include leadership of the field of Judaism and health, gathering together select chaplains and chaplaincy educators, rabbinic and denominational leaders, behavioral health practitioners, Jewish healing center and other communal organization staff, and other key players. Please see the list of conference advisory group members in Appendix A; a full list of conference invitees will be sent out shortly.

The conference will bring together those leaders who are already making substantive inroads in pastoral training. All of the participating educational institutions have common components of their approach to pastoral education, including classes, fieldwork, and reflection. To date, however, there has never been a full and systematic dissemination or evaluation of curricula among the national players, including core and elective coursework, as well as variations in sequencing and for fieldwork. Over the past several years, the Caring Commission of UJA-Federation has conducted interdenominational roundtable discussions with local rabbinical seminaries in keeping with its priority to support professional training and development in the

area of spiritual care. In 2005, the New York area seminaries came together to share curriculum and explore strategies for enhancing pastoral training programs and internships. More recently, in 2009, a conference call was held with seminaries across the country to discuss the ‘age boom,’ its impact on clergy and congregations, and practical steps toward incorporating aging into seminary training. Several of the institutions’ pastoral care leaders—HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU—are, in addition, represented on UJA-Federation’s Jewish Spiritual Care Professional Advisory Task Force. The Kalsman Institute gathered some of the Jewish seminary educators together (HUC, JTS, AJU, RRC, and YCT) - within a larger group of Jewish and medical scholars - during a January 2011 Southern California roundtable to discuss research in the field of Judaism and health.

A need exists to explore the “art,” as opposed to the “science,” of Jewish pastoral education for all emerging Jewish leaders. This conference will explore educational theory, and pose the question, “What do pastoral educators need to know about content, as well as about motivation and learning?” Jewish seminaries can enhance how and how much students are exposed to important issues related to the special health needs of subgroups of the Jewish population, including older adults, adolescents, families and individuals encountering challenges in building their families (infertility, adoption, fetal loss, etc), special needs families, and immigrant & ethnic-minority populations. Students can be exposed to families and individuals whose health needs are disease- or issue-specific, such as teens and adults in recovery, and those with chronic and severe mental illness. Future leaders must be skilled at *bikkur cholim* (visiting the sick), have a basic understanding of how to assess family and marital issues, and how be sensitive to issues that arise around lifecycle events.

Chaplaincy training describes the in-depth study of the "living human document" [2]. This conference will thus also address the questions, “How does Jewish pastoral education explore this concept and approach it through a unique Jewish lens? How do we study the recipients of pastoral care, the providers of pastoral care, and the relationship with the holy through those relationships?” Seminary training in Judaism and health, moreover, explores how best to train students to be more comfortable around end of life and death—and to learn about the tenets of palliative care and crisis response to meet the needs around experiences of terminal illness and

sudden death. Sharing these unique approaches would be beneficial to coalescing and coordinating pastoral training across the Jewish educational world.

Pastoral arts of yesteryear were honed through mentorship and example. As is true in all areas, some rabbis are more talented than others in the raw skills of listening and advising. Preparing future rabbis for work as pastoral counselors includes specific counseling techniques and sensitivity training, as clergy need to consider the impact of their work and relationships on the lives of their congregants and community members, and the impact of the rabbinate on their personal lives [3].

Some of the seminaries, such as HUC-Los Angeles, are also centers for graduate education. At HUC-LA, alongside the Rabbinical School, there is a School of Education, training students to become educators and administrative leaders for Jewish schools, and a School of Jewish Nonprofit Management, training students to become community managers and leaders of organizations. These emerging leaders are typically first-line responders to families and individuals in crisis, serving alongside rabbis and cantors. The Kalsman Institute is exploring this new form of pastoral education, providing pastoral training for these students. This theme will be explored at the pastoral educator conference to broaden approaches and insights for other Jewish communal training programs within other seminaries and institutions. Another facet of discussion might include training or providing a form of pastoral education to lay leadership who serve congregations and healthcare centers.

There is also an ongoing sensitivity to helping all students (and faculty) learn enduring self-care strategies in order to avoid compassion fatigue and burnout. There is a need, as a part of pastoral education, to encourage and form wellness models and healthy lifestyle choices in a society that is becoming increasingly overweight and inactive [4, 5]. Educators, nonprofit leaders, and clergy are viewed as exemplars in all areas of life and can enhance wellness choices in their communities [6]. These issues will be engaged at this conference.

FRAMING QUESTIONS

Initial questions addressed by the rabbinic seminary pastoral educator conference will be:

1. What is the history of Jewish pastoral education, and how has the unique religious/spiritual/psychological role of the rabbi evolved? What is the current state of the field, and how well are we serving our communities? What is the vision for the future?
2. What are the expectations of our synagogues and organizations for rabbis and leaders serving community members who encounter illness, loss, death, and normative and traumatic suffering?
3. How can we best educate Jewish clergy and leaders to focus on the well-being of the whole person within our seminaries, organizations, congregations, and within healthcare encounters with Jewish providers?
4. How can pastoral education programs best train rabbis and educators around special health needs and populations, and how can these leaders empower their congregations to become caring communities?
5. How are enduring self-care strategies modeled and taught to help students, and later, colleagues, avoid compassion-fatigue and burnout?
6. What are approaches to incorporating wellness models onto our campuses and institutions?
7. How can we improve the capability of Jewish clergy and leaders to address the spiritual and health needs of the Jewish people?
8. How might pastoral educators help students who are resistant to pastoral work, and whose raw skills of listening and advising are less obvious?
9. How can we sustain an enduring professional community of Jewish educators, scholars, and practitioners, across the streams of Jewish life, who will continue to build the field of Jewish pastoral education?

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

1. Create an enduring professional community of Jewish educators, scholars, and practitioners, across the streams of Jewish life, who will build the field of Jewish pastoral education, and thus the field of Judaism and health.
 - a. Define the shared goals and vision for Jewish pastoral education.
 - b. Discern the critical questions facing the next phase(s) of Jewish pastoral education.
 - c. Expand and mentor emerging educational leaders.
 - d. Renew and strengthen Jewish leadership.
 - e. Invite partnership and discern differences among pastoral educators, curricula, and beliefs across the denominational spectrum.
2. Determine the opportunities and barriers to further integrate and support pastoral education within the Jewish community at large and within each seminary.
3. Exchange all pastoral education curricula, including coursework, fieldwork, and reflection opportunities.
 - a. Focus on Jewish seminaries; consider gathering and disseminating other seminaries and other non-seminary settings

4. Exchange best practices to meet common scenarios in Jewish pastoral education, including training students to:
 - a. Understand use of self
 - b. Further personal spiritual formation and theological reflection
 - c. Begin to master assessment as well as response to life cycle events and crisis management
 - d. Understand special needs in communities and families.
5. Highlight unique or new educational methods, tools, and approaches in Jewish pastoral education and explore how to advance Jewish pastoral education through new educational theory.
6. Continue to elevate pastoral education as a critical area of focus within professional development in the Jewish seminaries.
7. Further mine Jewish texts and sources for Jewish healing wisdom.
8. Catalyze research and develop criteria and evaluation methods to discern success in pastoral education including individual student growth and changes in the field that capture enhanced effectiveness of Jewish pastoral caregivers.
 - a. Produce scholarly products designed to disseminate findings and enhance the field building.

ADVISORY GROUP

1. Barbara Breitman
2. Michelle Friedman
3. David Pelcovitz
4. Mychal Springer
5. Nancy Wiener
6. Simkha Weintraub

Further detail about these advisors is available in Appendix A.

“CALL FOR PAPERS” – SUBMISSION OF QUESTIONS, THEMES, AND ABSTRACTS

The 2012 Jewish Seminary Pastoral Educator Conference (PEC) will offer a thoughtful balance of open conversation and more structured sessions. As we prepare for the conference, we are sending this rather unusual “call for papers.” We would like to ask each of you to submit a brief concept paper (300 words or less) on any of the following:

- 1) a description of themes of professional interest
- 2) thought-provoking questions about topics of professional interest
- 3) areas of practice to be explored with colleagues
- 4) a more fully thought-out paper abstract which will lead to publication
- 5) a concept paper which can lead to a conference poster presentation, for those of you who have the time and the inclination.

Collaborative submissions from teams of participants are also welcome.

Your submissions will identify key issues related to pastoral education, education theory, and pastoral care practice. These will help us better plan for the gathering and stimulate critical thinking and dialogue at the conference. Your papers and the discussions they engender at the PEC will also serve as a base for creating written materials and scholarly research that can contribute to the field of Jewish pastoral education, an articulated goal of the conference. They will do all of this, in addition to enhancing your classroom teaching and program development within your seminaries, institutions, and communities.

Papers are due on Oct. 10, 2011. They can be emailed to the advisory committee at pec@gmail.com, with the subject line "PEC=Submission." Submissions should be in Word format. Each submission should follow this format:

- a) author(s)
- b) seminary name(s)
- c) email address(es)
- d) body.

References/Notes

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APPENDIX A

Barbara Breitman, DMin, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Counseling; Director of Training, Jewish Spiritual Direction Program, Lavy M. Becker Department of Practical Rabbinics – Pastoral Counseling, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

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Simkha Weintraub, Rabbi, LCSW, Rabbinic Director, National Center for Jewish Healing and New York Jewish Healing Center, Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services