

Temple Israel



Celebrating 50 Years

## **Jewish Bereavement Support Group Wednesday's 10:30am – 12pm March 15th – May 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Experiencing the death of a loved one is something each of us, sooner or later will face. When the time comes, the Jewish community does its best to answer our needs in so many ways. We have incredible rituals that help us navigate the stages of grief and mourning. The rituals and practices of Funeral; Shiva, the first 7 days of mourning; Shloshim, the first 30 days; then Yahrzeit, the yearly anniversary and Yizkor the special memorial services that happen four times a year at our major festivals. These ritual observances help guide us on a path that helps us express and experience the emotions of grief and mourning.

Often we talk about grief as something that one must experience and then “get over”. That in some way the sadness of loss can be healed. I prefer to think of grief and loss as something we must assimilate into our lives. The image I like to us is that grief is like adding a new chair to your living room. For the first several months you constantly bang into it, and it causes great pain. After a while, you become accustomed to the chair, and don't bump into it as much. But then, every so often you will hit the chair and the pain returns full force. The pain of loss is not something that disappears over time. We learn to assimilate it into our lives. The intense pain we feel when first confronted with the death of a loved one may ease as the months and years pass. All too often there is a lingering sadness that persists.

Our tradition is keenly aware that grief and loss have permanent effects on us. We don't observe Yahrzeit for only a few years after someone dies. It becomes a permanent part of our yearly experiences.

However, healing and helpful these rituals are, sometimes people need a safe place to talk about their grief and mourning process.

Beginning March 15 we will be holding a Jewish Bereavement Support Group. Dr Carol Milstone a psychologist and Temple Israel member and I will facilitate the group. If you have experienced a loss, please join us in sharing your grief. This 8-week program will be a place where everything is safe to talk about in this open-ended support group for the bereaved. You are welcome, please join us.

There is no charge for this 8-week program, and you can join us any time.

If you are interested in joining us please call the Temple office 613-224-1802 ext 3 or email [rabbimorais@templeisraelottawa.ca](mailto:rabbimorais@templeisraelottawa.ca).

Shalom,  
Rabbi S. Robert Morais