

Grammatically, writers use semicolons to separate different parts of a sentence or a list or to indicate a pause. ***In Jewish tradition, turning points in our lives – moments of pause and renewed intention, moments of a semicolon – are holy. Rosh Hashanah and its shofar's blasts are a semicolon.***

For many, the pause the shofar offers as we contemplate the year ahead is an exciting moment, filled with hope and possibility. ***However, for members of our community struggling with mental illness and suicidal ideation, this moment of semicolon can be frightening*** as they contemplate another year of struggle in the stillness of the shofar's piercing cry.

For anyone struggling, we encourage you to see this moment of semicolon, not as a terrifying beginning to another period of challenge, but a moment of reflection and pride on how far you've come.

"A semicolon is used when an author could've chosen to end their sentence but chose not to. The author is you, and the sentence is your life (Project Semicolon)."

For loved ones of anyone struggling, do what you can to help the people you love be there to listen to the shofar next year and remember, ***All Jews are Responsible for One Another (Shevuot 39a).***



See the Full "Shofars & Semicolons: Struggling with Suicidal Ideation on the High Holidays" Resource



Download Our "Every Life Counts" Suicide Prevention Toolkit



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בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי-הו-ה אֱלֹ-הֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שְׁהַחַיֵּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְיָמֵן הַזֶּה

Blessed are You, Ado-nai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us and enabled us to reach this occasion.

“This blessing is an opportunity to do teshuvah, to return...to bring attention back to the miracle of this moment, to the realization of the blessing of being alive, conscious, and receptive.” - Rabbi Shefa Gold

CRISIS RESOURCES

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline | If you or someone you know is in immediate crisis, text or call 988. Learn more at 988lifeline.org.

Crisis Text Line | Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor 24/7. Learn more at crisistextline.org.

BeWell | A mental health initiative of the Jewish Federations of North America that is working to equip the Jewish community with tools, resources and training to support the mental health and overall well-being of teens and young adults. Learn more at jewishtogether.org/bewell.

Relief Help | An international nonprofit organization that provides mental health guidance, education and treatment recommendations for individuals in the Jewish community. Learn more at reliefhelp.org.