Hamas launches terror attack in Israel;
Israel responds with bombing Gaza.

U.S. suicide rates reach all-time high.

Economic uncertainty reigns in 2023.

Nowhere is safe in Gaza: South Africa accuses Israel of genocide.

Teen depression rose sharply.

People in their 20s aren’t supposed to be this unhappy.

FEAR AND ANGUISH amid a rise in anti-Semitism.

RECESSION hits much of the world.

GUNMAN KILLS 19 in Lewiston, Maine, shooting spree.

Russia’s war in Ukraine grinds on.

How can we help one another in times like these?

The power of community for healing...
Climate change. Inflation. War. Anti-Semitism. Anxiety. Depression. Overdoses. Suicides. These were just some of the biggest stories over the past year. If 2022 saw an upsurge in crises, it was merely a preview. Since the beginning of 2023, the news media have bombarded us with horrific stories and images that seem to have gotten worse. In January alone, gun violence killed more than 2,500 Americans. In October, Hamas killed 1,200 Israeli citizens and kidnapped 240. The attack led to the deaths of more than 22,000 Palestinians, at least 500 Israeli Defense Force soldiers and 57 police officers. (By the start of 2024, those numbers had surged.) No wonder the levels of stress and anxiety have continued to soar.

As one headline put it: 2023 — The year that just couldn’t catch a break.

The attack on Israel in particular — and the continued fighting — left an impact that can’t be overstated. Mixed and conflicting views have added to a general, ongoing sadness. Regardless of where one stands, Jews around the world are facing the biggest catastrophe since the Holocaust. If ever there was an appropriate time to address the connection between our mental health and our faith, this is it.

So how can we help one another in times like these? The Blue Dove Foundation has some suggestions.

First, take a break from social media and the news. Connect with your community. Reach out for help if you need it. You can find more resources and strategies on our website. We’d like to highlight one we recently created that we feel is apropos right now: A Jewish Guide to Supporting Individuals through Traumatic Death. Although not written specifically for this tragedy, it responds to the needs born from it.

We at Blue Dove follow the Jewish middah, or value, of kol Yisrael arevim zeh la zeh – all Jews are responsible for one another. It’s a Talmudic phrase most often used as a call to action. A symbol of the responsibility we should feel for the well-being of others. It is also a sign of unity and strength, and it reminds us we are never truly alone in our struggles.

The power to heal comes from our community.

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More than 111,000 died from a drug overdose between April 2022 and April 2023. At least 70% involved fentanyl and other synthetic opioids. An estimated 31% of all adults will experience an anxiety disorder at some point in their life.

Anxiety is the most common mental disorder in the United States, affecting 43 million adults.

Anxiety disorders affect nearly one-third of adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18. There are 4.5 million children in the United States diagnosed and living with anxiety. 6 million adults have panic disorders.

American Psychological Association - Stress in America 2023

Almost 800 million people worldwide suffer from mental health disorders.

45% of U.S. adults ages 35-44 and 50% of U.S. adults ages 18-34 were diagnosed with a mental illness in 2023.

1.7 million U.S. adults attempted suicide. More than 50,000 died by suicide — more than any other year.

In the United States, 12.3 million adults seriously thought about suicide. 3.5 million adults made a plan. Globally, suicide accounted for 1 in 100 deaths, with roughly 20 attempts for each death.

The constant stress of discrimination can have long-term physical health effects over time, such as inflammation, an increased heart rate, higher cortisol levels, decreased immune function and higher blood pressure.

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Explore the connections between Judaism and mental health at the Blue Dove Foundation’s Resource Library.

Scan the QR code for articles, downloadable activity sheets, videos, podcasts and more about Jewish holidays and concepts, and the ways Judaism addresses mental illness.

A sampling of Blue Dove webinars produced in 2023:

#QuietingTheSilence: Voices of Resilience
Hosted a Mental Health Awareness Month program in partnership with the Wellness Institute and BeWell in May.

#QuietingTheSilence: Jewish Responses to Traumatic Death
Organized a Mental Health Awareness Month program with the Shomer collective in May, highlighting our new resource guides.

#QuietingTheSilence: An Open Conversation About Suicide
Hosted a program for National Suicide Prevention Month in September.

Collaborations throughout 2023
We have partnered with these organizations and so many more!

#QuietingTheSilence: Voices of Resilience
ARIELLE ZORGER

#QuietingTheSilence: Jewish Responses to Traumatic Death
BeWELL

#QuietingTheSilence: An Open Conversation About Suicide
bbyo

The Arthur M. Blank Foundation | The Breman Foundation
The Hirsch Legacy Fund | The Kinschner Family Foundation | The Marcus Foundation
The Weinstein Foundation | The Zalik Foundation
The power of community for healing...

The Blue Dove Foundation was created to spark conversation and provide educational resources about mental illness and addiction within the Jewish and greater communities. We appreciate all our partners who provide financial support, contribute to our content and collaborate on programming each year.

As we continue to grow, we look forward to deepening those partnerships and expanding into new ones.

CONNECT WITH US

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thebluedovefoundation.org/donate

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The Blue Dove Foundation
Transforming the way the Jewish community understands and responds to mental health and addictions