



The Blue Dove
FOUNDATION

MENTAL HEALTH MIDDOT

Foundations of the
Jewish Community

JEWISH MENTAL HEALTH MIDDOT (JEWISH VALUES)

Jewish values, or middot, help build the foundation upon which the Jewish community stands, and we believe middot empower us to connect Jewish thought to mental wellness. Jewish literature and prayer have emphasized healing, wellness, and community for centuries, yet we often shroud mental health in a cone of silence. **To emphasize the role the Jewish community can play in promoting mental wellness, the Blue Dove Foundation focuses on the following eight middot:**

בצלם אלוהים - B'tzelem Elohim - Created "in God's Image"

All of humanity should be afforded proper dignity and respect, and living by these values can counter the shame and stigma surrounding mental illness and/or addiction.



כל ישראל ארבים זה לזה - Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh La Zeh - All Jews are Responsible for One Another

We are interconnected and must be invested in the mental wellness and overall well-being of others. We must be willing and prepared to help one another, because we all benefit.



רפואה שלימה - Refuah Shleimah - Healing and Wholeness

Judaism has a long tradition of recognizing that healing is not just physical; it is holistic, which is to say it has physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual components that are all interconnected. The Jewish tradition also emphasizes healing rather than curing. Even when mental illness is under control, healing and a return to wholeness is needed. Healing is a process that has many components, and may be a lifelong journey.



חסד וגבורה - Chesed u'Gevurah - Balancing Loving Kindness and Discernment

Too often we diagnose someone or think we know what will "fix" their situation, but when it comes to mental wellness, we need to come from a place of listening and openness. We don't want to make anyone feel like they are defined by their illness or struggle. There are times when judgment, discernment, limitations, and boundaries are essential - our skills and support come with very clear limitations.



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פיקוח נפש - Pikuach Nefesh - Saving a Life

In Jewish law, there is no greater priority than saving a life. This leads to the idea that Jewish mitzvot, or commandments, are not about restricting life but rather about enabling us to live our most meaningful lives and helping others do the same.



נושא בעול עם חברו - Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro - Sharing a Burden with One's Friend

The Torah includes a story of a special friendship between a convert named Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi. Together, Ruth and Naomi face many difficulties but are able to overcome them, because they support each other.



לפני עיוור - Lifnei Iver - Before the Blind (Inclusivity)

It is our responsibility to do our best to create communities that meet the needs and celebrate the value of everyone. Rather than looking at a disability or mental illness through the lens of handicaps, we can uphold this value by seeking to ensure all individuals are fully able to participate in the community.



תיקון עולם - Tikkun Olam - Repairing the World

Tikkun olam refers to the Jewish value of repairing the world or making the world whole again through acts of social change. Jewish thought has taken this idea a step further with tikkun hanefesh, repairing the soul. We are taught that the work of repairing the world begins with repairing the soul.



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The Gemara explains a verse in Proverbs: “If there is anxiety in a man’s heart, let him quash it.” (Proverbs 12:25) Meaning, he should share his concerns with others, thereby lowering his anxiety.
-Yoma 75a:2

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