



The Awareness Center, Inc.

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Mission Statement

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The history of the Jewish People is one filled with a series of traumatic experiences. Included is one topic that up until now has been taboo to discuss: Sexual Victimization (Childhood Sexual Abuse, Sexual Assault, Professional/Rabbinic Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment).

Contrary to what we might want to assume sexual violence is not limited to the gentile population it is also a Jewish issue and one that needs to be addressed. In the United States one of every three to five women, and one out of every five to seven men have been sexually abused by the time they reach their eighteenth birthday. Unfortunately, due to the fact there has been little research on this issue in the Jewish Community we do not know how prevalent it is. Most mental health providers around the world who are based in Jewish Communities will admit that they have survivors (of sexual violence) of Jewish origins as part of their caseload.

One of the major problems in discussing the issue of Sexual Violence in the Jewish Community is that doing so threatens the cultural perception of the wholesomeness of the Jewish family. The time has come to break the taboo and allow the Jewish Community to face reality and to begin the healing journey. While this process is taking place we will also be able to compile valuable statistics on the prevalence of sexual violence in our community. It is important to note that when we refer to the Jewish Community we are including everyone from the unaffiliated, Jewish Renewal, Reform, Conservative, through the Orthodox, "Charedi" and "Chasidic" communities.

It may be surprising that, despite Israel's world-leading status in treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress, the study of sexual violence in Jewish Communities around the world is still in its infancy. Over the past few years the founder of our organization, Vicki Polin (of Baltimore) has been dedicated to creating The Awareness Center, Inc. "Our dream is to create an international organization to address the issue and ramifications

of sexual victimization to both adults and children in Jewish Communities". Our current goals include the continued development of our international data base/web page; continued growth of our international speakers bureau and the development of our educational certification program for rabbis, cantors and other Jewish community leaders. □

The second phase goals include the development of self-help groups for Jewish survivors to be held in communities worldwide; and the development and implementation of our international conference on sexual violence. The third phase includes developing a healing/retreat center and on-going educational programming in Israel, the United States, and throughout the world. A long-term goal is to develop an international network of researchers.

The Awareness Center, Inc. is a tax exempt - nonprofit organization. We have an international board of directors and an advisory board made up of individuals from a variety of backgrounds all dedicated to ending sexual violence in Jewish Communities around the globe and providing help to survivors.

We are currently searching for funding for our certification program for rabbis, cantors and other religious leaders, our first International Conference, and the development of a healing retreat center. We also look forward to developing a research team, so that we can better serve Jewish communities around the world.

Our goal is to make the impossible dream, possible. But we can not do it alone. Please take the time now and become one of our financial supporters.