



# Jewish Family Services



## Thoughts from Adrienne

By Adrienne Rosenberg  
JFS Director



Every crisis happens in the life of an individual can be considered major—be it the death of a family member, divorce, unemployment or any other situation where life seems out of control. In each of these situations, there are adjustments to be made, feelings to be sorted out and new life styles to be adopted. When we have to face our own vulnerability, it can definitely be a scary and helpless feeling.

Such is the case when someone suddenly finds themselves or a loved one diagnosed with a chronic, perhaps terminal health problem. All that was once taken for granted is now hid-

den amid medical needs, financial concerns, interrupted life styles and a growing awareness that what one had been able to do physically is no longer possible.

The losing control of one's body—or part of it—and becoming dependent on others as a result is not easy for most people. This is especially true in our society which values good health, independence and good looks. We do not prepare people how to discuss illness or even know to be around illness. When a friend of mine recently had a mastectomy, she commented how most people had trouble knowing what to say to her. Some even stayed away because they were so uncomfortable. Frequently, she found herself comforting them.

The fact remains that when someone finds he or she is seriously ill, that person needs support to help with the scare of feeling vulnerable, helpless and facing the unknown. Some people find others rally around when the news is first learned, but they feel abandoned as they wrestle with the emotional reactions. These reactions usually include times of feeling despair, anger that one's body has let them down and the depression, and even guilt that follow. It is now more than ever that the ill person would like to know people are there to be supportive. It is good to have people who will listen, understand, to touch and hug, to cry with, and to encourage hope and acceptance of the future.

Each person handles illness differently. Not all can be non-complainers or not be viewed as demanding and grouchy. What is also true is that it is not always possible for some friends and family members to be patient with illness, while they themselves are trying to adjust and cope with their own inner feelings about the situation and how it impacts on them.

Thus, emotional ups and downs are normal for the patient and their significant others. The challenge for both parties is to share the emotions rather than to avoid discussing what is happening. It is through this sharing that a bond and some form of acceptance mutually may occur. It is saying to each other that both sides may not like what is happening but by sharing words and feelings about the illness, neither party has to feel alone.

Sharing does not totally help us cope with an illness. It does help us feel less alone and vulnerable. Actually, sharing can bring people emotionally closer at a time of life when emotional support is crucial and appreciated. It lets one know they are still important to significant others. Certainly there are other steps necessary as one gradually learns to cope with a permanent illness or disease. But feeling secure in our relationships means we know there are others applauding us as we make the adjustments to a difficult situation.

### Directory Of Who To Call At JFS For Assistance

- Adolescent problems ..... Sandy Lewis, M.A.
- Employment or Career Issues. .... Sandy Lewis, M.A.
- Financial Assistance -Adrienne Rosenberg, MSW, ACSW
- General Counseling ..... Sandy Lewis, M.A.
- Senior Concerns ..... Laurie Gordon Harris, MSW, CCSW
- Volunteering to Help Others ..... Laurie Gordon Harris, MSW, CCSW

#### All Other Concerns

Adrienne Rosenberg, MSW, ACSW

#### ALL CAN BE REACHED BY CALLING JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES

All Services are Confidential and Provided by Professional Masters-Level Counselors.  
AT 364-6594 or 364-6596

## Dear Counselor:

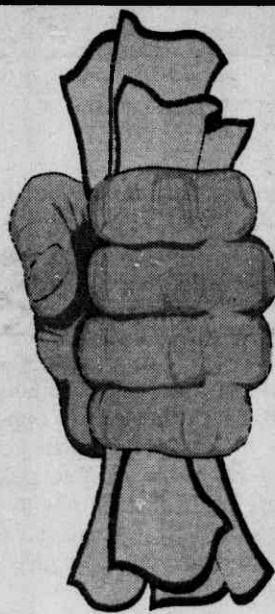
### Dear Counselor:

My 12 year old child was recently diagnosed with major emotional problems. I feel so guilty and feel I must have done something wrong to have this happen. How do I tell my family and friends? Won't they think less of me and my husband? Where do I turn in the Jewish community for support?

AEL

### Dear AEL:

When something as serious as this happens in a family, we often blame ourselves and feel ashamed. The reality is that there is much more we don't know about human behavior than we do know. Each person is an individual and reacts to things differently depending on a number of personality, environmental and genetic factors. Jews have the same problems in families as in the broader community. I believe it is better to seek help for your child and family than hide something. This is no different than hiding a physical problem your child might develop. Unfortunately, our society has not always placed these in the same light despite recent documentation of physical factors contributing to emotional problems. Yes, some people may not be understanding but certainly your rabbi and JFS are there for you to know you are not alone in the Jewish world. Perhaps as you grow in acceptance of what you do not want, you can bring understanding of this problem to others around you. I wish you luck in this difficult period of your life.



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The Charlotte Jewish Preschool

Save the Date! The Charlotte Jewish Preschool invites the entire community to our *Night of 129*

*Stars Gala* on Saturday, May 13th at 8 p.m., in Gorelick Hall at the Jewish Community Center! 129 Stars means each of our children is a STAR! The evening will reflect the silver screen era of the 1930's, and the star motif will carry throughout. We are planning a red-carpet "opening night," a replica of the famous Hollywood hillside sign, and movie star look-a-likes to mingle with our guests. Big Band music will play throughout the evening, a fabulous hors d'oeuvre and dessert buffet will be served and an Astrologer will be on hand for those brave enough to look into the future. The evening will be a wonderful social event that we hope everyone will attend!

There will be both a silent and a live auction during the evening. The silent auction will begin promptly at 8 p.m. After everyone has had an opportunity to enjoy the wonderful food and music we will have a live auction featuring a small number of our most spectacular items. Among the many exciting items available at auction will be a Sail on Lake Norman, a Kentucky Derby Party, a Gymboree Birthday, a Wheelbarrow filled with Gardening Delights, and a Day at Charlotte Polo. There will be many stand alone auction items (Jewelry, Salon Certificates, Dinners etc.) as well as theme packages - perfect for anyone searching for just the right gift. Items will be in all price ranges, but non-bidders are very welcome as this is a social event!!

Please join us, and bring your friends and neighbors to what we know will be a really fun party. Tickets are \$10 per person; reservations can be made at the office of the Charlotte Jewish Preschool. For further information, call Anne Sinsheimer at 333-7110

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