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A CLINICAL APPROACH TO KESHER

A brief perusal of the resources available to teachers on the public domain shows a wide array: from downloadable quizzes, homework assignments, to classroom teaching materials. It goes without saying that the overall strength of the class will be directly proportional to the general well being of the teacher. The more stressed a teacher is, the more stressed the class may be. The more stressed the class, the more stressed the teacher -- thus continues the vicious cycle of classroom dysfunction. There appear to be few resources available for the support of our teachers. It is the dysfunctional classroom that turns-off so many promising but sensitive students, to learning.

According to an article published in the February 2007 edition of the National Education Association's monthly magazine: "Every job has its challenges, but teaching has its own special mental and emotional stressors. High-stakes testing, crowded classrooms, 'a lack of support from administrators and low morale' are mentioned often...Because teachers have so much responsibility but increasingly little say over what goes on in their classrooms, they're at risk for feeling inadequate or concerned that they're not doing enough for students...As rewarding as teaching can be, combine the pressure kids may bring to school from unstable home environments with teachers' personal desire to do their best, and you've got a work environment that's a perfect incubator for emotional intensity, stress, and anxiety - even depression...Teaching is emotional work...There are times when the pressure to put your best face forward for students, while enduring other sources of stress, is enough to crumble the most dedicated educator's resolve."

The KESHER School Program of Project YES, a division of Agudath Israel of America provides a unique one-of-a-kind service to teachers and school management alike. The KESHER provider is a licensed social worker or psychologist who gives the teacher an opportunity to express difficulties and frustrations he or she experiences in the classroom. Even in schools where teachers enjoy the best relationship with their employers, teachers will often be anxious about sharing these matters with a principal or colleague, out of concern that they may be silently judged as a less effective or inadequate teacher. The provider encourages teachers' personal development by helping them develop a plethora of different communication skills and knowledge of different therapeutic skills for appropriate implementation in a classroom.

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Project Y.E.S. is a division of
Agudath Israel of America
Community Services, Inc.
and is dedicated in memory of
R' Shloime Horowitz ז"ל.

Our telephone services hotline
is dedicated by Reuvain and
Mordechai Eissenberg and
Raizel Harrar ז"ל to their parents
R' פנחס בן ראובן
and R' זאווטיל בת ר' מרדכי.



The following topics are commonly discussed with KESHER providers:

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- Range of learning levels in class-room
- Teasing and bullying
- Eating or talking in class
- Students who "don't care"
- Child who constantly looks sad or unhappy
- Teacher who occasionally feels sad or empty
- Student who freeze-up on tests
- Aggressive child with temper or anger
- Student without friends
- Child who doesn't want to daven
- A teacher who dislike a student
- A child who is grieving a severe personal loss
- Child who lacks focus and is easily distracted
- Teachers who feels anger or hostility towards student(s)
- Student who seeks inappropriate attention
- How to reach out to children in need without sacrificing an entire class
- Child who make derogatory comments about classmates, parent(s), or family members
- Children who divide time living with a religious and anti-religious parent

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