

# The CELEB Program

*Sal Sherut l'Nitzolei Shoah BaBayit*

A Basket of Services for Homebound  
Holocaust Survivors

Operational Guidelines





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**JDC Israel Eshel**  
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## Introduction

As of 2018, the children and youth who survived the Holocaust in Europe and currently live in Israel are approximately 85 years old.

As Holocaust survivors age, there is a greater need to provide special services to those among them who have become homebound for health or social reasons. The expectation is that the number of homebound survivors will increase in coming years.

The physical and mental trauma experienced by Holocaust survivors is clearly discernible and even intensifies among those aged eighty and up, an age at which the signs of functional decline tend to increase. For this reason it is necessary to develop services tailored to the unique needs of Holocaust survivors that are confined to their homes.

In recent years, Jdc-Israel Eshel (hereafter: Eshel) has worked with government offices and local authorities to develop diverse services for this worthy and vulnerable population.

The CELEB program (basket of services for homebound Holocaust survivors) is an example of a program whose goal is to help homebound Holocaust survivors receive the support and assistance they need. The services are provided by volunteers and professionals who come to survivors' homes, review their situation and report back. They also bolster various skills, strive to alleviate their loneliness, and give their lives new meaning.

At the center of this program are social workers at local municipalities and program liaisons who strive to create an individually tailored 'service suit' for each survivor.

This document is the result of joint efforts of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Social Services, Eshel, welfare directors at local authorities,

Associations for Older Adults, and the program liaisons in various towns. It aims to provide tools and knowledge for field workers throughout the program's development and implementation. The knowledge formulated may also promote the development of services for other homebound populations.

A special thank you to Tami Meroz of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services; and to Maggi Gad and Limor Margalit of Eshel, who developed the program.

The program's dissemination will enhance the professional knowledge of the program liaisons and operators and benefit the Holocaust survivors who receive these services.

**Yossi Heymann**  
**CEO, Eshel**

The increased life expectancy and focus on developing services within the community, alongside the functional decline that increases with aging, has amplified the need to develop a special solution for Holocaust survivors who are confined to their homes.

Since 2009 the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services has acted to initiate, fund and operate unique services for Holocaust survivors, in addition to those they are entitled to receive as senior citizens.

These designated services are provided regardless of income and do not require recognition by social services despite being offered at a significantly reduced cost.

As of 2012 the Ministry has added the option of social supporters to its wide-ranging basket of services. The social supporters visit the homes of homebound survivors, regardless of the reason for their confinement to their homes. The goal of the program is to retain and strengthen various abilities such as social, motor, and cognitive skills, and to improve the emotional state of the survivors. This service aims to enable these senior citizens to continue aging with dignity within the community, while alleviating their loneliness and giving meaning to their lives.

The service is currently offered in 45 local authorities. The service basket now includes more services and is more professional, and we consider this program to be of the utmost importance in caring for the welfare of Holocaust survivors.

I would like to thank JDC-Israel's Eshel for their collaboration in developing solutions for Holocaust survivors in general and for this service in particular, which was developed together with Tami Meroz, the national director of Holocaust survivors at the Government of Israel's Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services.

**Galit Mevorach, Director of Older Adult Services**  
**Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services**



# Chapter 1: Background

## A. Rationale

As of 2018 there are some 220,000 Holocaust survivors living in Israel. Their average age, 85, is often marked by significant decline in all aspects of life: state of health, physical and cognitive functioning, and their emotional and social condition. Following the general rise in life expectancy, also among Holocaust survivors, and the increased desire to live independently within the community (as appose to institutions), the number of homebound Holocaust survivors has grown. Their declining functional ability results in decreased ability to receive services within the community such as accessing the social clubs, *Mofet* and *Café Europa*, which were established specifically for Holocaust survivors.

The CELEB program aims to help this population cope with its limitations, which are typical of people who are homebound, and make services accessible to them in their own homes. The services are provided while taking into account and being sensitive to their unique characteristics and needs.

## B. Uniqueness of Holocaust Survivor Care

Holocaust survivors have an especially complex and difficult time coping with the challenges of old age, because this is when memories and traumas from the Holocaust rise to the surface. So long as the survivors were busy with mid-life challenges such as employment, raising a family, and caring for children, and as long as they were in good health, they had protective mechanisms, energies and mental skills to repress their past.

However, as the aging process progresses, defense mechanisms weaken and become less resilient. Moreover, the losses that accompany old age are associatively connected to memories from the Holocaust - illness, weakness, loss of functional ability, loss of family and friends, and a sense of loneliness. These may cause a new outbreak of fears and anxieties from the past, the painful opening of scars and wounds, resurfacing of traumas

(re-traumatization), and the emergence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms (Dr. Doron Sagi, 2017).

This conclusion is supported by research that points to the problems Holocaust survivors have in coping with various age-related processes. Processes that anyone growing old experiences, such as losing loved ones and declining physical functional ability, carry heightened traumatic significance for survivors. Consequently they are more vulnerable at this period in their lives (Kahana, Harel & Kahana, 2005).

This is why it is so important to develop different intervention methods to improve the wellbeing of aging Holocaust survivors, and tailor the solutions to their needs.

### **C. The Program**

The program offers a basket of services provided on the municipal level by social supporters (paid or volunteer), in line with the needs of the survivors who choose to participate. An individually tailored program with a number of services from the overall basket is created for each survivor, according to his or her needs and abilities, and dependent on the total budget allocated to the program.

### **D. Goals**

To provide social services either within or outside the home according to the abilities of the Holocaust survivor, while encouraging or enabling capable survivors to return to social club activities outside the home:

1. Retain and improve cognitive, social, emotional and physical skills.
2. Acquire knowledge and skills to make the most of leisure time at home as independently as possible.
3. Alleviate loneliness.

### **E. Aims**

1. Improve the emotional wellbeing of homebound Holocaust

- survivors through contact with a social supporter (who is not responsible for the survivor's physical wellbeing). This provides survivors with a sense of vitality, strengthens their social skills, reduces their feelings of loneliness, and increases their sense of purpose in life.
2. Monitor and supervise the survivor's situation once a week, review the state of the home, locate problems and crises, and if necessary – refer to the program liaison or the welfare department's social worker for further care.
  3. Utilize the community to expand the survivor's social network and support.

## F. Target Audience

Homebound Holocaust survivors who have difficulty with their cognitive, emotional, social, or physical functional ability and are prevented from integrating into existing community-based social services.

**Definition of Holocaust survivors for the purpose of this program:** Anyone who lived under Nazi occupation during World War II (survivors of camps and ghettos, hiding places, false identity, partisans, veterans, those disabled by war, and immigrants from North Africa).

**Definition of homebound for the purpose of this program:** A person who seldom leaves his or her home (due to physical, cognitive, social, or emotional difficulties) to make use of community services.

**Kahana, B., Harel, Z. & Kahana, E. (2005),** *Holocaust Survivors and Immigrants: Late Life Adaptations*. New York: Springer.

**Sagi, Doron (2017),** Innovations and Challenges in Gerontology and Geriatrics: Belated Holocaust Influences in Research and Therapy. *From a lecture by Dr. Sagi Doron at Amcha, Be'er Sheva.*



# Chapter 2: Program Development Process

## A. Program Implementation

The program is delivered to welfare departments and other relevant players in the field of aging at local authorities by the Ministry of Social Affairs' regional inspectors and an Eshel representative. The local authority's older adult department initially conducts a mapping of the target audience. If there are at least 25 Holocaust survivors who the professionals estimate will be interested in participating in the program – the Steering Committee can be convened.

## B. Convening the Steering Committee

Representatives of the program partners will participate in the Steering Committee: a representative of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services (Regional Inspector for Older Adults), a representative of Eshel (director of Holocaust survivor programs), and a representative of the local welfare department (usually the director of the Older Adult unit). If the welfare department decides to hand the running of the program over to an operating entity, the entity's representative will be included in the Steering Committee. Additional participants may be added in accordance with the decision of the local welfare department together with the Steering Committee members.

Topics to be discussed in the Steering Committee:

1. Defining the responsibility of each of the program partners.
2. Selecting a relevant program model according to the initial mapping carried out (25 / 50 / 100 survivors).
3. Criteria for selecting program participants and the methods of recruiting them.
4. Mapping of existing services.

## C. Program Liaison

The program liaison is in charge of the ongoing operation of the program; adapting the content provided to Holocaust survivors; and training and mentoring the social supporters.

The scope of the liaison's role is determined according to the model selected:

- 25 participants – 25%
- 50 participants – 40%
- 100 participants – 75%

Criteria for selecting a program liaison:

1. Social worker / gerontologist.
2. Experience working with older adults, experience working with Holocaust survivors is an advantage.
3. Experience leading a team (preferably experience in managing and activating volunteers).

Skills: self-motivator, interviewing skills, analysis and evaluation, capable of handling emotionally complex content.

## D. The Role of the Liaison

1. Receiving data on survivors from the local welfare department.
2. Creating local and regional collaborations to efficiently locate social supporters (paid or volunteer) and pool resources (budgetary and professional).
3. Initial visit to the homes of the Holocaust survivors applying for the service, and filling out an intake form to determine their suitability for the program and to map their needs.
4. Recruiting and screening social supporters, and confirming their aptness for the role.
5. Determining work procedures for the social supporters and assigning them to their activities while assessing the compatibility of each social supporter and Holocaust survivor pair.
6. Training, ongoing mentoring, and rewarding the social supporters.

7. Accompanying the social supporters on their first visit to the survivor's home. (It is recommended that this takes place after the initial training is completed. In exceptional cases, activity can begin during training, based on the liaison's judgment).
8. Making a monthly telephone call to the survivor to ascertain satisfaction with the service basket provided by the program through the social supporter. In the event that the conversation cannot take place directly with the survivor, it should be held with the family member defined as the survivor's main contact person at the onset of the service.
9. Meeting with the survivors in their home once every quarter. It is important to try and involve the main contact person in these meetings.
10. Holding a telephone call or a personal meeting once a month with each of the social supporters and providing ongoing solutions to problems and needs that arise during the program.
11. Holding group training meetings for the social supporters once every quarter to discuss dilemmas and challenges, and for general enrichment.
12. If the local authority the liaison is acting for has a volunteer unit, the liaison should work in collaboration with its representative and pass on the list of volunteer social supporters in order to insure the volunteers.
13. The liaison must confirm there is insurance for the paid social supporters.
14. Receiving monthly reports from the social supporters regarding activities, and managing and preserving the information regarding ongoing activities.
15. Gathering, summarizing, and presenting ongoing reports to the program director and the steering committee.

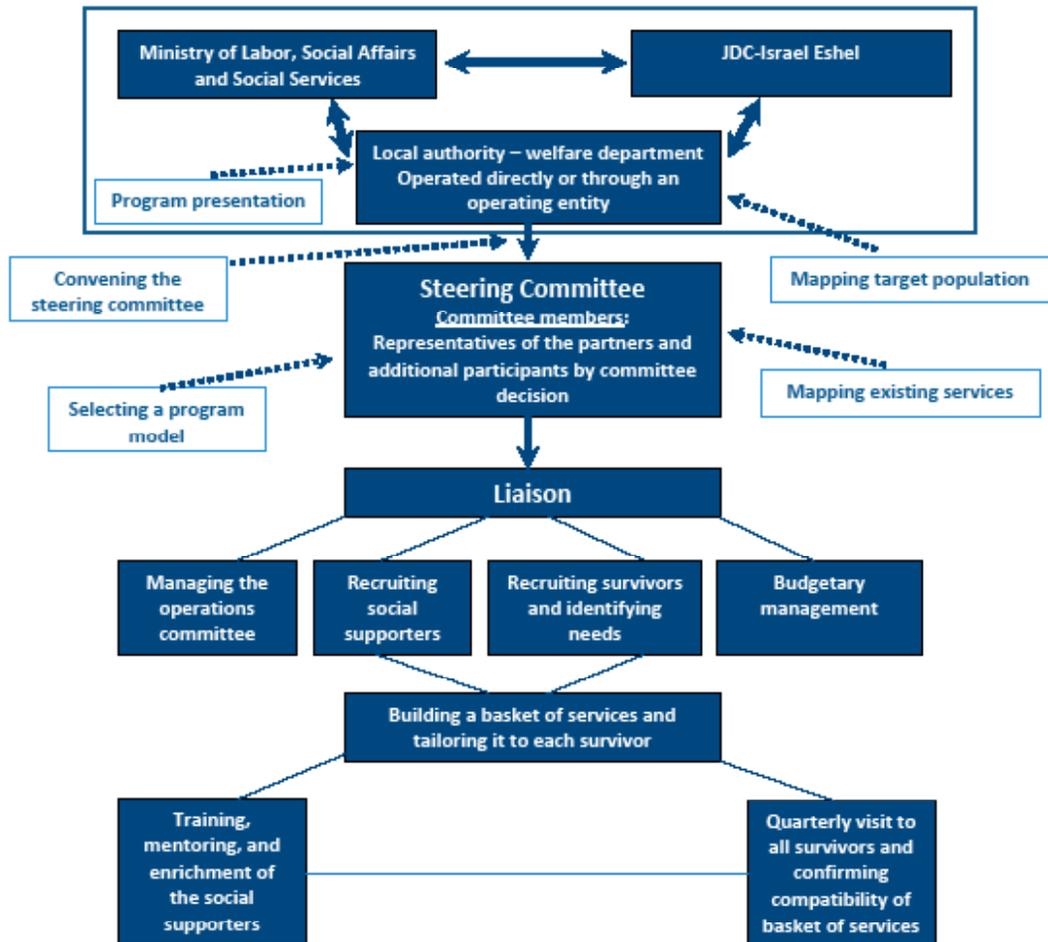
## **E. Liaison Training and Mentoring**

Once the liaisons are selected, it is necessary to train them and provide ongoing mentoring. The liaison's knowledge and abilities in the field of old age and volunteering should be examined and the training adapted accordingly. Steering committee members may be consulted since they too have experience and knowledge in these fields.

The liaisons should be familiarized with the following as part of their training:

- The unique aspects of the older adult population.
- Understanding the physiological, social, and psychological processes related to old age.
- Familiarity with the unique aspects of Holocaust survivors.
- Managing local collaborations and harnessing partners.
- Processes of recruiting, screening, and training social supporters.
- Understanding the social supporters' perspectives, needs, and the difficulties they face.
- Identifying signs of burnout among social supporters.

## Diagram: CELEB program development and operational process





# Chapter 3: Program Operation

## A. Recruiting Survivors and Identifying Needs

In accordance with the decisions reached by the steering committee regarding division of roles for recruiting Holocaust survivors:

The welfare department is responsible for preparing an updated list of Holocaust survivors who expressed willingness to have their names forwarded to the operating entity in order to examine their suitability for the program.

The liaison will telephone each survivor applying for the program to arrange an initial visit (if necessary, the social worker caring for the survivor can contact him or her directly).

On the initial visit the liaison should prepare the intake, which assists with:

1. Arriving at a decision regarding which survivors will be integrated into the program (if necessary, the steering committee can be consulted).
2. Identifying needs of the survivors selected for the program and building an individually tailored basket of services for them.

After the visits are conducted and relevant data gathered regarding those chosen for the program, content must be found that is compatible with their needs. A basket of services provided by the social supporters will then be formulated and adapted for each participant, taking into account budgetary constraints.

## B. Who is the social supporter?

To be a social supporter, it is necessary to be above the age of 18 (men and women). The required traits are: responsible, serious, reliable, giving, and highly sensitive to the needs of Holocaust survivors.

Volunteer social supporters must commit to an entire year of activity and be available for at least two hours each week. Paid social supporters will commit to being available in accordance with their work agreement.

Every social supporter applicant will be interviewed by the program liaison.

During the interview the liaison will assess the applicant's skills and abilities and coordinate expectations.

The social supporter will be paired with one or more Holocaust survivors based on both the social supporter's profile and the program participant's profile. The purpose of the social supporter's visits will be defined ahead of time by the liaison according to the survivor's specific needs. For instance: keeping them company in the home, providing focused solutions based on the social supporter's profession such as painting, playing music, studying, accompaniment when leaving the house and the like.

There are two groups of social supporters in the program:

**Paid** social supporters, who have relevant professional skills (occupational therapist, exercise instructor, hair dresser, musician etc.)

**Volunteer** social supporters who have experience and skills in the various fields included in the basket of services (conversation, accompaniment when leaving the house, reading newspapers, cognitive games, dance, music, singing, exercise etc.)

The social supporter's role includes:

- Conducting house visits on a pre-determined frequency.
- Reporting once a month to the liaison regarding the content that came up during the meetings and the Holocaust survivor's needs. Unusual cases must be reported immediately.
- Participating in the training program and mentoring.

## C. Recruiting, Training, and Mentoring Social Supporters

### Recruitment

At this stage the level of activity is determined by the steering committee, and a number of recruitment channels for paid or volunteer social supporters are used:

- Municipal volunteer unit (to recruit the volunteer social supporters).

- Collaboration with student scholarship programs.
- Collaboration with academic institutes in programs such as: social work, occupational therapy, nursing, physiotherapy. The students will visit the survivors' homes as part of their professional training according to their institute's guidelines.
- Advertising for professionals in fields such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy, physical education, handicrafts.

Topics that should be included in the social supporter's initial interview:

- Examining the level of motivation to participate in the program.
- Ability to commit to a full year of activity.
- Coordinating expectations regarding role and tasks (frequency of meetings, participation in mentoring meetings, reports).
- Skills, abilities, and additional emphases that can assist with successful pairing.

### **Training**

The social supporters will be trained independently in each town. The program liaison is responsible for the training. It is recommended that the social supporter is trained before commencing activities.

Recommended training content:

- Familiarity with older adults, and particularly Holocaust survivors.
- Guidelines on entering a survivor's home (what to avoid, what to expect, what to look out for).
- Defining the social supporter's role and boundaries.
- Familiarity with the municipal and national services available to Holocaust survivors.
- Policies for reporting and updating.

### **Supervision and mentoring**

Guidance and enrichment of the social supporters are vital components, and the liaison and social supporters can discuss the professional and

personal processes taking place in their work. This contributes to expanding the knowledge relevant to their fields of activity. The guidance is a direct continuation of the training process and includes in-depth knowledge, tools, and skills, according to the needs that surface during activity. Training, which is a way to reward the social supporters, enables peer learning; sharing experiences, issues, and dilemmas; and joint thinking. At the same time it meets the needs of the social supporters and contributes to their personal growth.

Group guidance meetings for the social supporters is held once a month. Participation in the meetings is mandatory for all volunteer social supporters and is a condition for being accepted into the program. Paid social supporters are invited to participate in these meetings but they have no obligation to do so.

#### **Purpose of the meetings**

- Enables the liaison to maintain ongoing contact with the social supporters while creating a binding and supportive framework.
- Sharing difficulties, challenges, and successes.
- Enriched content that will be helpful when working with the survivors. Enrichment content is varied and can be provided by the liaison or by social supporters with relevant professional skills, such as exercise instructors, occupational therapists, music therapists and the like.
- It is important not to limit the meetings to conveying content and providing knowledge. Time should be made for sharing experiences, venting, consulting and peer learning.

## **D. Adapting a Basket of Services for each Survivor**

After the initial visit of the social supporter and liaison to the survivor's home, and in accordance with the intake form, a specific basket of services should be structured for the survivor in accordance with his or her needs, abilities, and preferences.

Guidelines:

- Combine a number of services for each survivor.
- When the services the survivor prefers are only provided by paid social supporters, note that the meetings may be less frequent due to budgetary considerations.
- As long as there is a budgetary plan that takes these aspects into consideration, the survivors will receive solutions to their needs. There is nothing to prevent setting different meeting frequencies for different survivors, based on the liaison's judgment.

The liaison's quarterly visit is meant to determine changes that took place in the survivor's condition in order to adapt the basket of services accordingly. If necessary, additional parties can be involved (welfare department, health funds, NGOs for actualizing rights etc). A quarterly-visit form should be completed during this meeting.

The frequency of paid social supporters is determined by the basket of services tailored for each survivor, and is in addition to the social supporter who visits the survivor once a week.

There are various ways to increase the frequency of meetings of paid social supporters while efficiently utilizing the budget, such as:

- Examine the option of setting up a small group of between two and four survivors who live in the same building or street and can participate in joint activity.
- Provide the social supporters with practical professional tools by having a paid social supporter train volunteer social supporters so that they can employ this knowledge in their work with the survivors.







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