Throughout a quarter century of life-changing work, Shalom Bayit has empowered 920 Jewish women abused by an intimate partner. It is an honor to witness their strength, courage, resilience, and determination. As we celebrate our silver anniversary, in this newsletter we reflect on the issue of POWER: how it can be misused to harm or harnessed for good; and how we can transform power into a tool for positive change.

**Our Feminist Empowerment Model, By Suzanne Amor**

At the heart of Shalom Bayit’s work is an analysis of power. That’s because domestic violence is an abuse of power: a pattern of power and control, in which one intimate partner systematically controls the other. Therefore, the most effective response to that trauma for the abuse survivor, once physically safe, is to help them reclaim what was taken away: power over their own lives.

This method is referred to as the “Feminist Empowerment Model,” long established as our field’s core philosophical approach to helping survivors of domestic violence. According to Social Impact Research from Root Cause, the Empowerment Model “is the most effective approach to provide necessary services to victims. Started by activists who offered their homes as shelters to women victims of domestic violence, this approach has evolved since the 1970s to what it is today.” Root Cause emphasizes that “High-performing organizations use the empowerment approach, which places the change agency with the victims, to help them cope with abuse, plan for safety, and develop self-esteem.”

We live in a society that awards power to men and masculinity while oppressing women and femininity. These greater systems of power can be reflected in our interpersonal relationships. For example, abuse is distinctly gendered: 90% of domestic violence in heterosexual relationships is perpetrated by men against women. To slow or stop domestic violence, we must therefore address what perpetuates the problem, examining the context of deeply held societal beliefs about men, women and power.

The Feminist Empowerment Model promotes self-determination, independence, and choice as crucial to healing from an abusive relationship in which those freedoms were not possible. It has four major components: 1) Education, 2) Advocacy-based peer counseling 3) Options and resources, and 4) Cultural competency. In this article we explore how Shalom Bayit implements these four components.

**EDUCATION**

The educational component of our work can be life-changing. Knowledge is power. When we teach teens about healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships, they can make informed choices about who they date and spend time with. When we talk to abuse survivors about common patterns of abuse, they can stop blaming themselves, feel validated, learn they are not alone, know their rights, plan for safety, make informed choices about

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**RABBIS’ CORNER: WE WON’T NORMALIZE VIOLENCE, BY RABBI YOEL KAHN**

In January after the MLK holiday, the Jewish Community Federation of the East Bay hosted an interfaith luncheon, Sharing Oaths for Solidarity and Understanding. Jewish communal leaders joined faith leaders from other traditions to build a new relationship and ask what are the oaths we need to swear to one another as we move into this new time in our history. Rabbi Yoel Kahn of Congregation Beth El, Berkeley—a member of Shalom Bayit’s Rabbinic Advisory Council—was the spokesperson for the Jewish tradition. We share his address with you here, which includes inspiring words from Martin Luther King Jr. and the prophet Isaiah, about the importance of not normalizing violence and oppression. This topic is inexorably linked to Shalom Bayit’s work to end violence and stop using power.

The Jewish tradition takes vows and the act of vending very seriously. We read in Kohelet, the biblical Book of Ecclesiastes: “When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for God takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay [Ecclesiastes 5:4].”

So it is important that we not promise that which we do not intend to follow through on; yet we are in a moment that calls for resolve and commitment. A narrative has been emerging that there is a “new reality” in our country and the values which will shape our government and our nation are not those which we value the most. So many things we find abhorrent are, we are
what to do, and ultimately take back power over their own lives.

ADVOCACY-BASED PEER COUNSELING

As opposed to a clinical model which uses psychotherapy to treat mental health disorders, Shalom Bayit uses an advocacy-based peer counseling approach. This is a short-term, specialized crisis counseling model. The “Advocacy” component is an active process of standing up for our clients’ needs and rights, connecting them to resources, problem-solving and helping them navigate systems of care. We might for instance advocate for a safety plan within a congregation, or accompany a client to a court hearing. The “peer” component values shared experience (supporting each other as Jewish women, as survivors of domestic violence) and aims to model a healthy relationship with our clients based on equal power, transparency, respect, and boundary-setting.

Advocates validate survivors’ reality, gut instincts, life goals, and strengths. As peer counselors we employ non-judgment and humility. Nonjudgmental support doesn’t mean advocates are neutral: the Feminist Empowerment Model encourages sharing our expertise and domestic violence movement perspectives, such as our core belief that no one deserves to be abused. The key is to respect our clients’ choices. It is not for us to judge, for example, whether a woman decides to stay or leave their abuser. If she stays, we support her choice, continue counseling, and encourage regular safety assessments.

Our clients are the best experts in their own experiences, life, and relationships. The Feminist Empowerment Model believes in the strength, resilience, and decision-making abilities of women and people of other marginalized genders. Rather than giving advice, telling clients what to do, or judging their choices (disempowering), our model offers information and options, then encourages clients to make their own informed choices (empowering). That in turn helps survivors believe in themselves, and trust in their own ability to take control of their lives.

OPTIONS COUNSELING & RESOURCES

Shalom Bayit infuses our peer counseling with concrete tools: information, options, resources. “Options counseling” includes teaching decision-making skills (most survivors haven’t been ‘allowed’ to make decisions, so haven’t practiced that skill) and encouraging each survivor to explore options. We also provide and refer to many tangible resources—money, jobs, housing, childcare, legal help—which are key to escaping abuse. To best coordinate resource support we partner with legal aid, pro bono financial planners, medical providers, therapists, 14 Bay Area domestic violence shelters and more. We also provide our own emergency financial assistance grants, as well as basic necessities like food and clothing.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY

The Feminist Empowerment Model recognizes that abuse survivors are more likely to seek help if they know their service provider is culturally competent and can relate to their belief system. This is an important element of a trauma-informed approach. What makes Shalom Bayit unique is that we implement the empowerment model through a Jewish lens. Our support groups utilize Jewish rituals to facilitate healing, and emphasize Jewish teachings as tools for navigating tough decisions. For instance, the value of pikkuv nefesh, the Jewish law that states that the preservation of human life overrides virtually any other religious consideration, can speak to survivors about valuing their own life and safety. Feeling supported by the Jewish tradition and by other Jewish women provides many of our clients with the courage they need to seek safety and make a change in their lives.

NOT JUST FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

The tools of our model are not just for “experts”: you too can help survivors find safety and take back control of their lives. If you know someone who has experienced abuse, here are a few empowering things you can do:

1) Toss your judgement aside. Replace judgment with unconditional love: “I’ll be there for you no matter what you decide to do.” It’s their life, their choice.

2) Listen, validate, and believe the survivor.

3) Share a helpful value. Tell them no one deserves to be abused. Share a Jewish teaching that supports their empowerment. But remember not to judge if they don’t share your belief! Just let them take it in on their own time.

4) Offer resources and options. Encourage them to call Shalom Bayit. It’s free and confidential. If they’re not ready, that’s OK too.

5) Helpers need help too—remember to take care of yourself when helping an abuse survivor. YOU can call us for support too if you are helping someone in need!

Here’s to a future where all women will feel empowered and safe in the place that matters most: at home.

RABBIS’ CORNER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

told, the new normal—so let’s “normalize” them and get over it already.

The prophet whose yahrzeit we commemorate this week, and whose life and legacy we seek to lift up, spoke about the importance of not normalizing the dysfunctional. Addressing Temple Israel of Hollywood at a Shabbat service in February 1965, Martin Luther King, Jr., preached about his refusal to ‘adjust’ to what so many others considered to be ‘the way things are’: “I must honestly say to you tonight my friends that there are some things in our world, there are some things in our nation to which I’m proud to be maladjusted, to which I call upon all people of goodwill to be maladjusted until the good society is realized. I must honestly say to you that I never intend to adjust myself to segregation and discrimination. I never intend to become adjusted to religious bigotry. I never intend to adjust myself to economic conditions that will take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few. I never intend to adjust myself to the madness of militarism and the self-defeating effects of physical violence.

“And I say to you that I am absolutely convinced that maybe the world is in need for the formation of a new organization: ‘The International Association for the Advancement of Creative Maladjustment’—men and women who will be as maladjusted as the prophet Amos who in the midst of the injustices of his day would cry out in words that echo across the centuries: ‘Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream (Amos 5:24).’ “

My oath today is to not normalize the abnormal; to not accept bigotry and discrimination as valid expressions of American ideals; to not permit subtle or blatant anti-Semitism a place in the public discourse; to not accept that we must allow the reversal of the progress we have made in these recent decades — we have made progress but not enough! I keep hearing that it’s ‘natural’—that there is a backlash as the pendulum swings in the other direction. Its not inherently so. As MLK said, “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.” It bends, my friends, because we are pulling on it.

My oath is to take to heart and realize the words of the prophet Isaiah, which we read on Yom Kippur (Isaiah 58:6-12): “Is this not the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and unite the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noontday. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls [not the builder of unnecessary ones!], Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.”

Kein yehi ratzon – so may it be. Amen.
WHAT A NIGHT TO REMEMBER. Nearly 500 people joined us on May 2nd at the Hyatt to celebrate Shalom Bayit’s 25th anniversary. Together we celebrated the strength and courage of domestic violence survivors, learned about Shalom Bayit’s 25 year history of empowering women, and honored Roselyne C. Swig, one of the first Jewish community leaders in the Bay Area to rally for Shalom Bayit and the issue of domestic violence. THANK YOU to all of our attendees, sponsors, hosts and honorary committee members, and our tireless and wonderful event committee for making the evening possible. You all helped us raise nearly $375,000 to strengthen crisis intervention services for battered women, abuse prevention education for Jewish youth, and programs that build a Jewish communal response to abuse. WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO ALL OF YOU!

Top Left: Event Chairs Patricia Lurie & JaMel Perkins; Top Center: Former State Senator Mark Leno with Honoree Roselyne C. Swig; Top Right: Host Committee Chairs Sam & Stephanie Lauter. Bottom Left: Board Chair Linda Kalinowski & Executive Director Naomi Tucker present Cissie Swig with the 2017 Changing Lives Award. Bottom Right: Shalom Bayit Board Members Jan Reicher, Abigail BloomKing, Abby Teisch, and Janet Schneider. Photos by Neeley Dessaint & Stephanie Secrest

HELP US OFFER HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS: SPONSOR A FAMILY IN NEED

Shalom Bayit’s Chanukah Adopt-A-Family Program offers a sense of security, community and hope by anonymously providing Chanukah gifts and basic necessities to women and children fleeing from domestic violence. Your participation will make the festival of lights brighter for a family in need.

To sign up to sponsor a family, contact Sarah Rothe at (510) 845-8874 or counseling@shalom-bayit.org
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In memory of Jacqueline Reed: Marilynn Kline
In memory of Milton Sigberman: Maxene Bodin
In memory of Patty Wolfe: Joanie Ciardelli | Danny Grossman
Melinda Moore | Susan Perlstein
Roberta Pickett | Abigail Milikan States
Holly Stiel | Lynn & Bruce Taylor
Juliette Valente
In memory of Lois Harriet Young-Tulin: Beth Freedman & Bonnie Feinberg
**ANNOUNCEMENTS & PROGRAMS**

**Expanding Our Reach: New Support for Russian-Speaking Jewish Community**

*Thanks to a grant from the SF-based Jewish Community Federation’s Russian Impact Grant Initiative, we are pleased to be launching a new project to provide domestic violence education, outreach, and direct support within the Russian-Speaking Jewish community. Cultural competency, language access, and comfortable community spaces are all important elements of successful abuse prevention programs. We are thrilled to be able to bring Shalom Bayit’s specialized services to the Russian community. To get involved, host an event or workshop for your group, or help spread awareness, give us a call at (510) 845-8874.*

**Introducing Program Associate, Benjamin Cook**

*We are delighted to introduce the newest member of our staff team, Benjamin Cook. Ben manages the office, provides administrative support to our programs, and is often the friendly voice greeting you on the phone! Ben studied Environmental Science at the University of Arizona in Tucson and the Arava Institute at Kibbutz Ketura, Israel. With over 10 years’ experience in community health outreach in the US and abroad, Ben brings a wealth of knowledge and passion to his work at Shalom Bayit. In Tucson Ben worked with Positively Beautiful, assisting women living with HIV/AIDS to regain independence and reclaim their identities. He is a passionate advocate for LGBT rights throughout his career, including bringing recognition of LGBT issues to the forefront in the Southern Arizona Jewish community. Ben served on the board of the Green Zionist Alliance, protecting Israel’s environment and improving Israeli environmental policies. He is excited to be part of the Shalom Bayit team and for the opportunity to work and serve in the Bay Area Jewish community. Welcome, Ben!*

**Meet our newest Board Member!**

*Kate Taffel is the newest addition to our amazing Board of Directors.* A Bay-Area native, Kate grew up in Santa Rosa and now lives in San Francisco. For the last three years Kate has been an instrumental part of our Creating Hope event committee, bringing her professional event planning talents to the table. Kate has been in the hospitality industry since 2000 when she graduated from San Diego State University with a BS in Film and New Media. She has worked at W Hotels, Starwood Resorts and most recently as the Pacific Northwest Program Director of AIPAC overseeing all events. Kate now owns a small event production business. She is very involved in the Jewish community and is an ardent Zionist and lover of Israel. Kate writes, “prioritizing my time has become important and Shalom Bayit is the place I’d like to focus on.” Welcome, Kate!

**May Our Homes be a Shelter of Peace**

*Gathering in the Sukkah & Annual Prayer for Peace in the Home

**OCTOBER 10TH, 3-5 PM**

**AT A PRIVATE HOME IN OAKLAND**

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. We tie purple ribbons on our Sukkah to mark this national reflection, to honor survivors of abuse & to note our commitment to making every home safe.

**CELEBRATE SUKKOT | ENJOY REFRESHMENTS | HONOR SURVIVORS | TIE A PURPLE RIBBON IN COMMUNITY**

**RSVP:**
For more information, accessibility details, & address please call (510) 845-8874 or email us at events@shalom-bayit.org

**Thank You to Our VOLUNTEERS**

Ellyn Beale | Lynne Belmont
Syd Biros | Judy Bloom | Marci Briskin
Sarah Burnick | Barry Cohn
Debbie Cohn | Denise Cohn
Joan Diegott | John Ebel-Davies
Shannon Edelstone
Roger Friedberger | Madalyn Friedman
Sandi Gutierrez | Emily Harris
Lucy Gold | Debra Guckenheimer
Kym Harris | Marilyn Higuera
Corinne Jaffe-Gellman | Lisa Kama
Laura Katz | Eva-Lynne Leibman
Corrine Levy | Evan Levy
Tayla Marcus | June Marinoff
Juliana Matz | Joanne Neuman
Sandy Noack | Noa Oberman
Melly Rosen | Allegra Saggeese
Alexis Schlambom | Joani Share
Lena Sibony | Joel Siegel
Risa Sparks | Devon Spitzer
Susan Sugarman | Gal Tabachnik
Kate Taffel | Kate VanZanten
Elisette Weiss

Business Line: (510) 845-8874 | Peninsula: (650) 574-7233 | Free Confidential Helpine: (866) SHALOM-7 | www.shalom-bayit.org