

# JEWISH MENTAL HEALTH MIDDOT (JEWISH VALUES)

**Jewish values**, or middot, help build the foundation upon which the Jewish community stands, and we believe middot empower us to connect Jewish thought to mental wellness. Jewish literature and prayer have emphasized healing, wellness, and community for centuries, yet we often shroud mental health in a cone of silence. **To emphasize the role the Jewish community can play in promoting mental wellness, the Blue Dove Foundation focuses on the following eight middot:**

## בצלם אלוהים - B'tzelem Elohim - Created "in God's Image"

All of humanity should be afforded proper dignity and respect, and living by these values can counter the shame and stigma surrounding mental illness and/or addiction.



## כל ישראל ארבים זה לזה - Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh La Zeh - All Jews are Responsible for One Another

We are interconnected and must be invested in the mental wellness and overall well-being of others. We must be willing and prepared to help one another, because we all benefit.



## רפואה שלימה - Refuah Shleimah - Healing and Wholeness

Judaism has a long tradition of recognizing that healing is not just physical; it is holistic, which is to say it has physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual components that are all interconnected. The Jewish tradition also emphasizes healing rather than curing. Even when mental illness is under control, healing and a return to wholeness is needed. Healing is a process that has many components, and may be a lifelong journey.



## חסד וגבורה - Chesed u'Gevurah - Balancing Loving Kindness and Discernment

Too often we diagnose someone or think we know what will "fix" their situation, but when it comes to mental wellness, we need to come from a place of listening and openness. We don't want to make anyone feel like they are defined by their illness or struggle. There are times when judgment, discernment, limitations, and boundaries are essential - our skills and support come with very clear limitations.



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## פיקוח נפש - Pikuach Nefesh - Saving a Life

In Jewish law, there is no greater priority than saving a life. This leads to the idea that Jewish mitzvot, or commandments, are not about restricting life but rather about enabling us to live our most meaningful lives and helping others do the same.



## נושא בעול עם חברו - Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro - Sharing a Burden with One's Friend

The Torah includes a story of a special friendship between a convert named Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi. Together, Ruth and Naomi face many difficulties but are able to overcome them, because they support each other.



## לפני עיוור - Lifnei Iver - Before the Blind (Inclusivity)

It is our responsibility to do our best to create communities that meet the needs and celebrate the value of everyone. Rather than looking at a disability or mental illness through the lens of handicaps, we can uphold this value by seeking to ensure all individuals are fully able to participate in the community.



## תיקון עולם - Tikkun Olam - Repairing the World

Tikkun olam refers to the Jewish value of repairing the world or making the world whole again through acts of social change. Jewish thought has taken this idea a step further with tikkun hanefesh, repairing the soul. We are taught that the work of repairing the world begins with repairing the soul.



## MI SHEBERACH HANDOUT

Read through the prayer and use the following questions to help guide you as you write your own Mi Sheberach on a topic of your choice (can be a specific topic or more broad like "mental health").

- How does this text relate to mental wellness?
- How do you or would you use this text in your community?
- In what ways does this text embody or not embody the values/middot we've discussed?

**May the One who blessed our ancestors –  
Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,  
Matriarchs Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and  
Leah –**

**bleed and heal the one who is ill:**

\_\_\_\_\_ son/daughter of

\_\_\_\_\_.

**May the Holy Blessed One  
overflow with compassion upon him/her,  
to restore him/her,  
to heal him/her,  
to strengthen him/her,  
to enliven him/her.**

**The One will send him/her, speedily,  
a complete healing –  
healing of the soul and healing of the body –  
along with all the ill, among the people of  
Israel and all humankind,  
soon, speedily, without delay,  
and let us all say: Amen!**

מִי שְׁבֵרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ  
אֲבֹרָהֶם, יִצְחָק, וְיַעֲקֹב,  
שָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל, וְלֵאָה  
הוּא יְבָרַךְ אֶת הַחֹלִים  
הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ. [Names]  
הוּא יִמְלֵא רַחֲמִים עָלֵיהֶם  
לְהַחֲלִימָם וּלְרַפְּאֵתָם  
וּלְהַחְזִיקָם וּלְהַחְיֹתָם,  
וַיִּשְׁלַח לָהֶם מְהֵרָה רְפוּאָה  
שְׁלֵמָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם, רְפוּאָת  
הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְרְפוּאָת הַגּוּף  
הַשְּׂתָא בְּעִגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב.  
וְנֵאמַר אָמֵן

# MI SHEBERACH EXAMPLES

## THE BLUE DOVE FOUNDATION'S MI SHEBERACH FOR MENTAL HEALTH

May the One who blessed our ancestors —  
Who named us Israel (Yisrael), those who “Struggle,”  
Bless and heal those among us who struggle with mental well-being.

May they acknowledge their own strength and resilience in persevering,  
May they treat themselves with forgiveness and patience,  
May they find others who share their experiences, so they know they are not alone,  
May they find help, compassion and resources when they are able to reach out for them,  
May they find others willing to reach out first when they cannot,  
And may they find inclusive and welcoming communities that will uplift and celebrate them.

May the Holy One grant us the strength and resilience to support our loved ones,  
May we find the patience and forgiveness we need for ourselves and others,  
May we find solidarity and support from other caregivers,  
May we find the capacity to listen without judgement and with the intention to help when asked,  
May we find the ability to notice when others are struggling and reach out to them first,  
And may we create communities that accept, uplift, and celebrate those among us who are struggling.

### MI SHEBERACH FOR THOSE STRUGGLING WITH WORK BURN-OUT

May you set clear boundaries with your supervisor at work.

May you take time for yourself and the things you love.

May you use your vacation time to its fullest extent.

May you separate your work life and home life.

May you find the time to get a real lunch break.

May you remember to celebrate your accomplishments.

And remember that you can't do your  
best if you aren't taking care of yourself.

### MI SHEBERACH FOR THOSE SUFFERING FROM BURNOUT

May you make yourself a priority.

May you take time for yourself.

May you find a supportive community.

May you connect with others in a meaningful way.

May you speak up for yourself when you need help.

May you find the space and peace to heal.

May you tap into your energetic self.

May you find ease and breath.

# MI SHEBERACH



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# NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

## 988 - SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

Call or text 988 // [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)

988 has been designated as the new three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The 988 Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States. The previous Lifeline phone number (1-800-273-8255) will always remain available to people in emotional distress or suicidal crisis.

## CRISIS TEXT LINE

In the US and Canada, text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor // [crisistextline.org](https://crisistextline.org)

Free 24/7 support at your fingertips. Text HOME to 741741 from anywhere in the United States, anytime. Crisis Text Line is here for any crisis. A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds, all from our secure online platform. The volunteer Crisis Counselor will help you move from a hot moment to a cool moment.

## NATIONAL DRUG HELPLINE

1-844-289-0879 // [drughelpline.org](https://drughelpline.org)

The National Drug Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7 drug and alcohol hotline that can help you start your journey towards a better future. The helpline is open to everyone. You can call the hotline to get information for yourself or a friend or family member.

## NATIONAL EATING DISORDERS ASSOCIATION (NEDA)

1-800-931-2237 // [nationaleatingdisorders.org](https://nationaleatingdisorders.org)

Supports individuals and families affected by eating disorders and serves as a catalyst for prevention, cures, and access to quality care. The NEDA Helpline (800-931-2237) is available Monday-Thursday from 9 a.m. – 9 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. EST.

## NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS (NAMI)

1-800-950-NAMI (6264) // [info@nami.org](mailto:info@nami.org) // [nami.org/help](https://nami.org/help)

The NAMI Helpline is a free, nationwide peer-support service providing information, resource referrals and support to people living with mental health conditions, their family members and caregivers, mental health providers, and the public. Helpline staff and volunteers are experienced, well trained and able to provide guidance. The NAMI Helpline can be reached Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. EST.

## TREVOR PROJECT TREVORLIFELINE

1-866-488-7386 // Text START to 678-678 // [thetrevorproject.org/get-help](https://thetrevorproject.org/get-help)

The Trevor Project provides LGBTQ youth with 24/7 crisis counseling via phone, text, and chat. Connect to a crisis counselor 24/7, 365 days a year, from anywhere in the U.S. It is 100% confidential, and 100% free.