

The Orthodox's Courageous Battle against the Covid-19 Induced Rise in Abuse and Addictions

Amudim records unprecedented 69% rise in new caseloads since the start of coronavirus and subsequent lockdowns.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- "[Amudim's Covid hotline saved my life](#)," Tammy, 33 and a mother of 4, expresses gratefully. For years, she endured the throes of her husband's verbal abuse, preferring to suffer in silence rather than bear the consequences and humiliation of divorce and single parenting. While her husband's behavior was intolerable at home, at least he spent the majority of his time in the office and "hanging out with the guys," as he'd succinctly portray his late nights out.



Rabbi Zvi Gluck

“

Amudim's Covid hotline saved my life”

Tammy, 33 and a mother of 4

All that changed with the beginning of Covid and subsequent lockdown that had Tammy and her four kids living a nightmare and spending 24/7 in a small house in the presence of an abusive husband and father.

“The tension at home became unbearable. He was angry, frustrated, a caged lion. We did what we could to stay out of his way and keep the peace, but no matter what we did, it was always wrong,” Tammy relives the horrors with a tremor in her voice. “Eventually, the verbal abuse turned physical. For so many years, I'd kept silent, confiding only the smallest bits and pieces to one very close friend. But I couldn't handle it anymore, and finally, on my friend's encouragement, I picked up the phone and called Amudim. The professional, caring support that I received literally saved my life. And my children's, too.”

Tammy's story, unfortunately, is not an isolated incident and is one of thousands of cases of

abuse and addiction that were once taboo in the Orthodox sector, but are gradually coming to light in a worldwide effort on part of the Orthodox community to fight them and rescue innocent victims.

One hero spearheading positive change is Rabbi Zvi Gluck, CEO and director of Amudim Community Resources, an association and crisis center combating abuse and addictions in the Orthodox sector. "We operate with encouragement and support of Orthodox rabbis who agree that unless we fight the crimes and ills of sexual abuse, neglect, domestic violence and addiction with weapons of awareness and truth, we're face community-wide disaster," expresses Gluck.

He readily admits that it wasn't long ago that few in the Orthodox world were willing to publicly discuss mental health or sensitive issues as abuse and addiction, yet Amudim is slowly causing the tide to turn. Since its inception in July of 2014, the organization had gone international with offices in New York, Florida, Ohio and Jerusalem. Fielding an average of 250 calls per day, it has assisted over 8,500 victims. When adding their family members and future generations into the equation, the organization has impacted, and continues to impact, tens of thousands. Thus Amudim is penetrating thick walls of silence and bringing painful issues to the surface to be combated on a community-wide level with the support of spiritual and community leaders and mental health professionals.

"We've seen firsthand that the Jewish community has come to terms with the painful reality that it isn't immune to contemporary threats that destroy lives," shares Humans of Judaism founder Nikki Schreiber who's been running Amudim's social media for the past two years.



Amudim awareness event1

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Throughout six years, Amudim has run hundreds of awareness events, helped thousands of clients and opened multiple offices, steadily chipping away at stigmas that prevented too many from seeking help for too long. Today, Amudim is a household name and the go-to address for organizations, rabbis, schools and individuals dealing with difficult cases. This past year alone, it has logged upwards of 83,500 calls for help, as facets of the Covid-19 pandemic sparked an unprecedented mental health crisis.

Since the global outbreak of Covid-19 nine months ago, the numbers of recorded cases of abuse within the Orthodox community have been off the charts, Rabbi Gluck reveals the dismal statistics. In just nine months Amudim has documented a 59% increase in addiction, 55% spike in domestic violence, 74% rise in sexual abuse and whopping 150% surge in mental health cases.

"It hasn't been easy keeping up with the volume of calls when our financial base was hard hit, but our case managers rose to the task even while working remotely under less-than-ideal circumstances and deluged with pleas for help," he says proudly.

In the course of 2020, Amudim launched a variety of new initiatives to help people weather the storm. Its free Covid support line, staffed by over 100 mental health professionals, handled nearly 3,000 calls during its six months of operations, and a coronavirus page on its website provides a wealth of information including a full video library of new content for both adults and children addressing the pandemic and its ramifications in a meaningful way.

With abuse cases peaking in the past months and many more still emerging, Amudim's resources are stretched to the max. Responding to an urgent community-wide need, the organization is sponsoring Unite to Heal, a 36-hour virtual benefit this Sunday and Monday, December 20-21, to fund and, hopefully expand, its activities.

With an all star line-up of over 100 rabbis, mental health professionals, organization heads, entertainers, matchmakers, athletes and other well-known voices, Amudim's Unite to Heal fundraiser promises to be a blockbuster event.

"Dozens jumped on board, appreciating that Amudim is an essential organization," enthuses event producer Yummy Schachter. "The across-the-spectrum participation in Unite to Heal speaks volumes about the importance of Amudim and the general consensus that these issues need to be discussed. The fact that over one hundred community VIPs are lending their voices to the 36 segment-36 hour livestream event will hopefully be an eye opener encouraging even more people to reach out for help and help others."

Learn more about this groundbreaking event at www.unitetoheal.com.

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