Unique Needs of the Second Generation: A PCTI Perspective

YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN'S HEBREW ASSOCIATION OF BOROUGH PARK (AKA THE BORO PARK Y)

ELLIE KASTEL, LMSW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; MALKY HERTZ, MSW, SOCIAL WORKER; JERI MENDELSOHN, LCSW, CONSULTANT

It All Started With a Question

- Post-pandemic, at the Boro Park Y, located in the heart of Brooklyn's large Hasidic community,
- Older adults, aged 60+, asked, "Why don't you offer anything for me?"
- Boro Park has one of the largest populations of Holocaust Survivors in the United States. Boro Park Y's program for Holocaust Survivors, Club Nissim has served the community for close to 30 years, with close to 300 participants and proudly, has been a JFNA-funded program.



Employing a PCTI Perspective to "answer the question"

- The Boro Park Y team began identifying "who" was asking the question –
- The Answer – Children of Holocaust Survivors
- Using the PCTI approach that the program learned through our participation in JFNA's Echo Cohort, we began to work **collaboratively** with the children of Survivors to understand their experiences and develop a program tailored to their needs that was **strengths-based**, focusing on strengths and resilience.

A New Program, Club 2G, was launched

A limited pilot, discussion and activity groups, along with a few trips. In our JFNA Figtree Grant, we estimated serving 75 children of Survivors.

Literally hundreds of people came, eager, "sold out," at capacity.

And the Boro Park Y faced new questions and concerns – The children of Survivors had some very challenging behaviors, difficulties in emotional regulation, attentional deficits, had problematic relationships with their families and peers. We needed to learn and **to understand the trauma.**

Intergenerational or Transgenerational Trauma

Transmission of the psychological impact of traumatic events across generations including through behavioral patterns, beliefs, and even through biological changes.

Begins when a group collectively experiences a horrific event, such as the Holocaust, abuse, discrimination, natural disasters, racism, and war that may lead to anxiety, depression, and PTSD among the people directly affected. *Claire Gillespie, health.com*

Subsequent generations may inherit trauma and those health conditions. "It can be silent, covert, undefined, surfacing through nuances and inadvertently taught or implied throughout someone's life from an early age onward," *Melanie English, PhD*

The Science is Evolving

- Complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors.
- It is important to discuss risk as well as **resilience**. While trauma can increase the risk of negative outcomes, it also highlights the importance of resilience and coping mechanisms - the value of PCTI and its demonstrated efficacy.
- Many teams of researchers are exploring "How Does the Remote Past Get Under Our Skin."

Research on Transgenerational Trauma in Children of Holocaust Survivors

- 1966 – Canadian Researchers, Vivian Rakoff et. al. recorded high rates of psychological distress among children of people who survived the Holocaust. *(American Psychological Association. The legacy of trauma)*
- A survey published in 2017 of 190 adult children of Holocaust survivors found that about 18% reported having generalized anxiety disorder (GAD). Among those, nearly 14% reported having depression, and 7% reported having PTSD. *Dr. Rachel Yehuda, Department of Veteran's Affairs*

Ongoing exploration regarding epigenetic changes as a cause for generational trauma

Epigenetics, the in-utero environment, early experiences, and the parent-child relationship play key roles determining risk and resilience.

A study published in 2016 found that Holocaust Survivors and their children were more likely to have changes in their FKBP5 gene than others. FKBP5 is a gene identified as a “stress gene” linked to anxiety, depression, and PTSD.
Yehuda R, Daskalakis NP, Bierer LM et al. Holocaust exposure induced intergenerational effects on FKBP5 methylation. Bio Psychiatry. 2016:80 (5):372 -380

Signs of Transgenerational Trauma

A lack of self-worth
Anxiety
Depersonalization – feeling detached from yourself and surroundings
Depression
Emotional numbness
Impaired life skills (e.g., critical thinking, decision-making, or managing your time)
Feeling socially isolated, having negative thoughts, or losing interest in hobbies.

Acknowledging Resilience & Purpose

- Significant numbers of children of Holocaust Survivors demonstrate resilience and achieve important accomplishments, often displaying high levels of educational and economic success.
- Whether on an extraordinary journey or, relatively unmentioned, children of Holocaust Survivors building meaningful lives highlights the enduring strength and perseverance of the second generation.





Examples of successful children of Holocaust Survivors

- Dr. Rachel Yehuda - **Rachel Yehuda** (born 1959) is a professor of psychiatry and neuroscience, the vice chair for Veterans Affairs in the Psychiatry Department, and the director of the Traumatic Stress Studies Division at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. She also leads the PTSD clinical research program at the neurochemistry and neuroendocrinology laboratory at the James J. Peters VA Medical Center. In 2020 she became director of the Center for Psychedelic Psychotherapy and Trauma Research at Mount Sinai.
- 36 Members of the Holocaust Human Rights Center Memory Keeper Speakers, Jewish leaders in Westchester County, NY, all of whom are children of Survivors.



Ezra, age 70

- A teacher, athlete, father, and grandfather
- A son of “Shanghai Jews”, whose parents separately endured intense hardship escaping Nazi persecution in labor camps as well as travelling through Russia.
- His mother arrived in Shanghai with her husband and young son who were both killed in the bombing of Shanghai.
- His mother met and married his father in Shanghai and then, immigrated to the US where Ezra was born.

Risks and Resilience

- Ezra says, “Nothing I could do could satisfy my parents. Nothing could please them. They were always angry with me. We had a very distant, conflicted relationship.”
- “I acted up in school, was attention-seeking; had friends that my parents did not approve of.”
- “So important to me to have solid relationships with my kids. To be there for them.”
- “Sometimes I find myself so irritable, critical, and even angry. I have lost jobs and friendships. Struggled in my marriages.”

Etty and Tzlil

- Two unmarried women, each are children of Holocaust Survivors, spend a great deal of time together. They share a difficult relationship, with loud, public verbal battles, periods of estrangement, difficulty cultivating separate peer relationships apart from each other.



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA-NC

When there is no room on the bus

- Libby, the daughter of Holocaust Survivors, was closed out of the Club 2G trip to the Philadelphia Flower Show. Registration was first-come, first-served. She met disappointment with fury and tears – "I'm always left out. I'm never chosen," She returned to the Y with her husband to fight with the Executive Director.



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC

- We hear stories of children being raised by highly over-protective parents – children being unable to engage in independent actions. “One day, I spoke with friends for a few minutes and didn’t walk immediately home from school only to arrive home to find my parents had called the police.”
- Fears of mingling with others: “I’ve never been outside of Boro Park.”
- “The nightmares!” Children being frequently awakened by a parent’s screams and cries.
- Relationships defined by physical and/or verbal abuse.

Informed by our participants – other voices

To Address the Challenges

- Employ PCTI Strategies of cultural humility and culturally responsive practices, building trust & transparency, peer support, and safety.
- Safety – Creating a predictable and safe environment, both physically and emotionally
- Peer support – Encouraging clients to connect with others who have similar experiences
- Transparency & Trust – Ensuring clients understand the process and building a foundation of trust
- Cultural humility and culturally responsive practices – Considering cultural, historical, and gender issues



The Young Men and Young Women's Hebrew Association

Welcome to Boro Park and the Y

- A presentation by Ellie Kastel, Executive Director, Young Men and Young Women's Hebrew Association of Boro Park
- Description of the neighborhood, the demographic composition, a history of post-WWII Boro Park
- Leading the agency towards the future
- Incorporating PCTI practices
- The importance of cultural humility in leading the Boro Park Y


MILLER'S
Family Wear
JEWELRY FOR
ALL OCCASIONS
Maimonides
MEDICAL CENTER


ONE WAY
Judaica CORNER
Judaica CORNER
Siddurim | Sefarim | Stam | Songs
4301
Nova Open
Open
Maimonides
MEDICAL CENTER
PEDIA


New York Sightseeing
New York Sightseeing
© YOSSI GOLDBERGER





An Overnight Trip to Sleepy Hollow, NY: "A Whole New World"

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-ND

PCTI Strategies in Developing the Overnight Trip – Malky Hertz

- Empowerment – Developed in response to stated needs of participants who frequently asked to have the opportunity to "go away," "have fun," "relax."
- Safety – To provide on-site staffing with familiar leaders, to carefully plan programs recognizing the physical and health needs of participants, to use our professional network, requesting assistance and support from the area's JCC Health and Wellness program.
- Cultural Humility – The proposed destination had to have acceptable Kashruth trusted by the population, places for prayer.
- Transparency – Registration and procedures needed to be shared through multiple modalities: print, electronically, discussion.
- Peer Support – Meaningful opportunities for interaction using novel activities, games, special excursions, and meals.



Resilience

- Most participants are multi-generational caregivers – some still have aging parents and extended family as well as care for spouses, children and grandchildren daily .
- Most have limited opportunities to cultivate interests, hobbies, physical activities such as exercise and yoga.
- Programs were designed for exploration, interaction, and relaxation with opportunities for **choice**.





Presentation by Malky Hertz

CLUB 2G

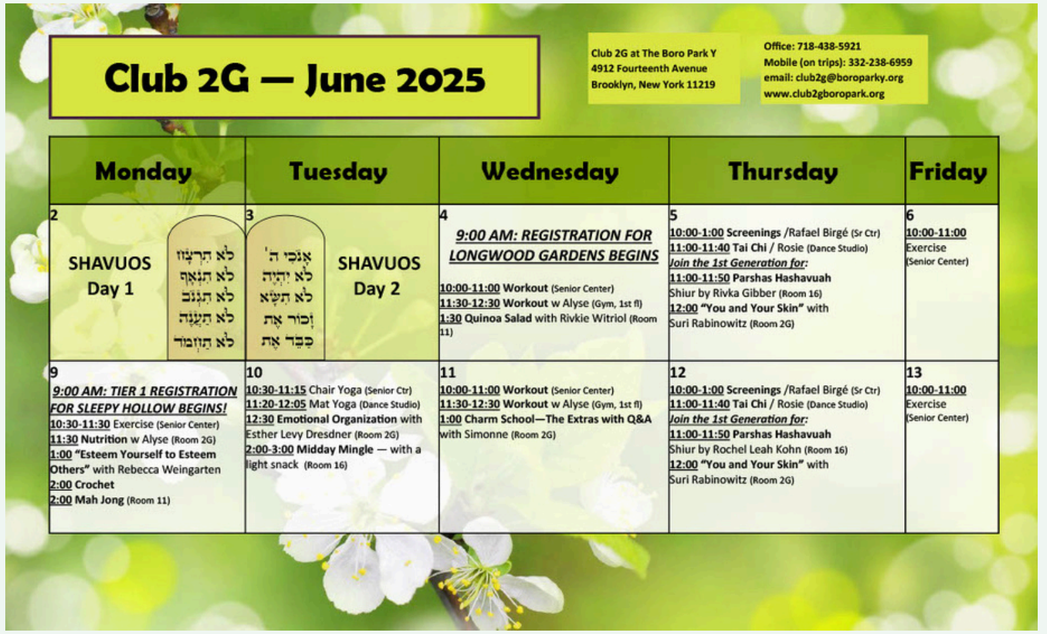
A PCTI Approach



OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The program combines a mix of educational and recreational elements

- Lectures
- Games
- Excercise
- Cooking
- Crochet Classes



Club 2G — June 2025

Club 2G at The Boro Park Y
4912 Fourteenth Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11219

Office: 718-438-5921
Mobile (on trips): 332-238-6959
email: club2g@boroparky.org
www.club2gboropark.org

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 SHAVUOS Day 1 לֹא תִרְצָח לֹא תִנְאָף לֹא תִגְנֹב לֹא תַעֲנֶה לֹא תַחְמֹד	3 SHAVUOS Day 2 אָנֹכִי ה' לֹא יִהְיֶה לֹא תִשָּׂא זָכוֹר אֶת כַּבֵּד אֶת	4 ***9:00 AM: REGISTRATION FOR LONGWOOD GARDENS BEGINS*** 10:00-11:00 **Workout** (Senior Center) 11:30-12:30 **Workout** w Alyse (Gym, 1st fl) 1:30 **Quinoa Salad** with Rivkie Witriol (Room 11)	5 10:00-1:00 **Screenings** /Rafael Birgé (Sr Ctr) 11:00-11:40 **Tai Chi** / Rosie (Dance Studio) ***Join the 1st Generation for:*** 11:00-11:50 **Parshas Hashavuah** Shiur by Rivka Gibber (Room 16) 12:00 **"You and Your Skin"** with Suri Rabinowitz (Room 2G)	6 10:00-11:00 Exercise (Senior Center)
9 ***9:00 AM: TIER 1 REGISTRATION FOR SLEEPY HOLLOW BEGINS!*** 10:30-11:30 Exercise (Senior Center) 11:30 **Nutrition** w Alyse (Room 2G) 1:00 **"Esteem Yourself to Esteem Others"** with Rebecca Weingarten 2:00 **Crochet** 2:00 **Mah Jong** (Room 11)	10 10:30-11:15 Chair Yoga (Senior Ctr) 11:20-12:05 Mat Yoga (Dance Studio) 12:30 **Emotional Organization** with Esther Levy Dresdner (Room 2G) 2:00-3:00 **Midday Mingle** — with a light snack (Room 16)	11 10:00-11:00 **Workout** (Senior Center) 11:30-12:30 **Workout** w Alyse (Gym, 1st fl) 1:00 **Charm School—The Extras with Q&A** with Simonne (Room 2G)	12 10:00-1:00 **Screenings** /Rafael Birgé (Sr Ctr) 11:00-11:40 **Tai Chi** / Rosie (Dance Studio) ***Join the 1st Generation for:*** 11:00-11:50 **Parshas Hashavuah** Shiur by Rochel Leah Kohn (Room 16) 12:00 **"You and Your Skin"** with Suri Rabinowitz (Room 2G)	13 10:00-11:00 Exercise (Senior Center)



Club 2G — June 2025

Recreational Day Program for Second Generation Survivors is supported by a grant from JFNA.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
16 ***9:00 AM: TIER 2 REGISTRATION FOR SLEEPY HOLLOW BEGINS*** 10:30-11:30 Exercise (Sr Ctr) 12:00 **More about Sourdough** Workshop with Esther Levy Dresdner (Room 11) **Limited availability—register in advance!** 2:00 **Crochet** w L Silber (Room 2G) 2:00 **Mah Jong** (Room 11)	17 10:30-11:15 Chair Yoga (Senior Ctr) 11:20-12:05 Mat Yoga (Dance Studio) 12:30 **Emotional Organization** with Esther Levy Dresdner (Room 2G) 2:00-3:00 **Midday Mingle: The Jewish Armchair Traveler takes you to Portugal** with Rebecca Weingarten (Room 16)	18 **GARDEN PARTY** at Dyker Heights Golf Club **Registration in person at the front desk!**	19 10:00-1:00 **Screenings** /Rafael Birgé (Sr Ctr) 11:00-11:40 **Tai Chi** / Rosie (Dance Studio) ***Join the 1st Generation for:*** 11:00-11:50 **Parshas Hashavuah** Shiur by Rivka Gibber (Room 16) 12:00 **"The Gut Connection"** with Suri Rabinowitz (Room 2G)	20 10:00-11:00 Exercise (Senior Center)
23 ***9:00 AM: TIER 3 REGISTRATION FOR SLEEPY HOLLOW BEGINS*** 10:30-11:30 Exercise (Sr Ctr) 11:30 **Nutrition** w Alyse (Room 2G) 1:00 **"Esteem Yourself to Esteem Others"** with Rebecca Weingarten 2:00 **Crochet** w L Silber (Room 2G) 2:00 **Mah Jong** (Room 11)	24 **Election Day at the Y** 10:30-11:15 Chair Yoga (Senior Ctr) 11:20-12:05 Mat Yoga (Dance Studio) 12:30 **"The power of Tehillim"** Shiur by Peydouth Fleischer (Room 11) 2:00 **New Horizons: "Catch Me If You Can"** (About a masterful young con man. Based on a true story) (Room 16)	25 10:00-11:00 **Workout** (Senior Center) 11:30-12:30 **Workout** /Alyse (Gym, 1st floor) **9:00 TRIP: Longwood Gardens LIMITED AVAILABILITY — MUST REGISTER IN ADVANCE!**	26 **Rosh Chodesh Tammuz** 10:00-1:00 **Screenings** /Rafael Birgé (Sr Ctr) 11:00-11:40 **Tai Chi** / Rosie (Dance Studio) ***Join the 1st Generation for:*** 11:00-11:50 **Parshas Hashavuah** Shiur by Peydouth Fleischer (Room 16) 12:00 **"The Gut Connection"** with Suri Rabinowitz (Room 2G)	27 **Rosh Chodesh Tammuz** 10:00-11:00 Exercise (Senior Center)
30 10:30-11:30 Exercise (Sr Ctr) 1:00 **"Esteem Yourself to Esteem Others "** with Rebecca Weingarten 2:00 **Crochet** w L Silber (Room 2G) 2:00 **Mah Jong** (Room 11)				

Programs are subject to changes and/or cancelations!
For the Men's Program — See the Newsletter!

SLEEPY HOLLOW OVERNIGHT TRIP

MOTIVATION:

- Members requested it
- We wanted to bring the program to a new level
- It would be a good way to see if there were gaps in services that we should be considering



SLEEPY HOLLOW OVERNIGHT TRIP

PCTI Strategies in Developing the Trip

- Empowerment
- Safety
- Cultural Humility
- Transparency
- Peer Support
- Trust
- Respect

THE RESULT













CAREGIVER PROGRAM

The Need:

- 2G's unique experiences
- Lack of education
- The Holocaust generation's increasing needs

The Program:

- Focus on education and resources
- Acknowledges the cultural aspects involved in caregiving
- Creates opportunity for support and connection