



PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alpert JFS Staff Present “Understanding and Caring for the Aging Holocaust Survivor” to Registered Guardians and Professional Colleagues at National Guardianship Association Webinar

WEST PALM BEACH, FL – July 1, 2021 – Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service (Alpert JFS) professionals Pam Wiener; RG, Ph.D., Director of Guardianship, Eva Weiss, M.Ed, Ed.S, Holocaust Care Manager; and Michael Gans, MSW, LCSW, Ph. Dc, HonoringLife™ Program Director recently presented "Understanding and Caring for the Aging Holocaust Survivor" at a National Guardianship Association webinar.

An estimated 67,000+ Holocaust survivors are residing in the United States who are at least 75 years old, with more than half of them at least age 85 years of age. They suffered unimaginable trauma, which has affected their aging process. Many in this identified group have very specific thoughts and beliefs, which reflect the trauma they endured. Increased understanding of the special needs of a Holocaust Survivor plays a critical role in the Guardian-Survivor relationship.

The presentation included what a guardian for a Holocaust Survivor should take into consideration when making decisions. Participants learned the history of the Holocaust, the definition of "Holocaust Survivor," about immigration and resilience, normal aging vs. the aging Survivor, family dynamics/trauma, and when a Holocaust Survivor is a ward. Attendees heard a case example, received resources, and were eligible for an hour of continuing education credit from the Center for Guardianship Certification.

“Being able to share knowledge and information with colleagues from around the country broadened all our perspectives,” said Weiss.

“Their questions were insightful and the group seemed interested and appreciative,” said Wiener.

Prior to joining Alpert JFS, Dr. Wiener was elder care and crisis manager of the West Palm Beach Housing Authority, and managing director of its non-profit, Pine Ridge Holistic Living Center. She is a past president of the Partnership for Aging of Palm Beach County, and serves on the organization’s board. Additionally, Wiener served on the Advisory Council of the ADRC of the Treasure Coast and the Palm Beaches. She holds an undergraduate degree from Adelphi University, a graduate degree from the University of Texas/Arlington, and a doctorate from the State University of New York at Albany. The tri-lingual Wiener has worked in Israel, New York, Texas, Maine, California and Florida.

Ms. Weiss, a native of Lvov, Russia, is the daughter of Holocaust survivors. She has Master’s and Specialist degrees from the University of Florida, and is certified in Social Learning Family Therapy and Gerontology. Weiss has more than 20 years’ experience providing clinical and administrative services to families and elder. She has presented nationally and internationally.

Mr. Gans is presently completing his Ph.D. studies focusing on Holocaust trauma, the transmission of transgenerational trauma, LGBTQ+ issues, and how to most effectively provide clients with culturally competent, person-centered, trauma-informed care. He co-created and directed the I-witness Holocaust Field School, in which university students explore

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ways in which the Holocaust is memorialized in Central Europe and build understanding of how the lessons of the Holocaust are still relevant today. Alpert JFS' HonoringLife™ program, funded by the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) educates professional caregivers in the delivery of culturally competent care and series to Holocaust survivors and their families.

Established in 1974, Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service is a nationally accredited service provider for children, adults, seniors, and Holocaust survivors. The non-profit, non-sectarian organization is a trusted leader, with a team of nearly 200 highly skilled professionals delivering high-quality care to community members. Alpert JFS works to ensure the well-being of children and families, independence of older adults and quality-of-life for individuals with disabilities. For more information, visit AlpertJFS.org or phone 561-684-1991.

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