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The Lev Hasharon Mental Health Medical Center (<https://www.lev-hasharon.co.il/?lang=en>) is a government mental health hospital serving the Sharon area (Ra'anana to Hadera and everywhere in between) affiliated to the Faculty of Medicine of Tel Aviv University.

**Since 2017, the hospital has operated a large, pioneering, supra-regional system for the treatment of sexual trauma and complex trauma, the only one of its kind in Israel,** which includes 4 clinics, 2 day-hospital programs and 5 full hospitalization programs, in addition to a research unit and a training unit. The most complex cases of complex post-traumatic stress disorder are referred for treatment to Lev Hasharon as a tertiary center, a national leader in this field. In addition to the clinical division, the training unit of the trauma division of LHMC teaches all the medical teams in Israel and trains them to open specific units for sexual trauma. LHMC also developed a certificate study program to train therapists from all medical and mental health professions in sexual trauma and complex trauma, in collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine of Tel Aviv University

In addition to trauma, Lev Hasharon specializes and excels on a national level in other fields of specialization: addictions, treatment resistant depression and advanced technologies, forensic psychiatry and psychogeriatrics.

The October 7<sup>th</sup> Disaster caught the State of Israel unprepared for mass trauma on such an extensive scale, and the traumatic events are still ongoing. There are still hundreds of families whose loved ones have been kidnapped or are missing, hundreds of thousands have been displaced from their homes and the war in Gaza is far from over.

Immediately after the Hamas massacre, the Medical Center received a mandate from the Ministry of Health to take charge of the mental health needs of the entire population of the uprooted communities from the South (and later North) of Israel, currently housed in the Sharon region – some 7,500 souls spread over 25 hotels & locations. Many of these citizens experienced severe direct trauma of terrorism, bereavement, loss and rape, or have family members who are abducted, missing or dead, and now also face the experience of being refugees who don't know if they will ever return to their homes.

Dozens of hospital employees (therapists and admin staff alike) including key personnel were immediately diverted to treat this unprecedented number of trauma victims. Within days we established intensive clinics in the grounds of the Shfayim Kibbutz Hotel, housing the members of Kibbutz Kfar Aza, one of the hardest hit kibbutzim. Many volunteers were recruited to work in cooperation with the staff of municipal welfare departments, resilience centers and various non-profits in the field.

The training unit of Lev Hasharon's trauma division very quickly organized professional training days for the treatment of trauma and also conducted ongoing training of the hospital's treatment teams, volunteers, resilience centers and associated therapists to enable them to treat the evacuee population in the most professional manner and hopefully to reduce the secondary traumatization of the therapists.

All the above is, of course, in addition to Lev Hasharon's ongoing work with patients and clients in our hospital wards, day hospital programs and clinics.



Not surprisingly, we are witnessing an increase in emotional distress in our existing patients, and in increase in the number of new admissions and referrals from the local population from Netanya and the Sharon area, who are also suffering acute mental distress resulting from the terror attacks and the war. All this, in combination with the existing knowledge from the professional literature about the psychological consequences of mass trauma, requires us to redouble our efforts to provide professional and accurate mental health solutions on a number of fronts simultaneously and for an extended period.

The needs in the field of mental health in Israel are now skyrocketing. Firstly, in the light of the severe lack of public mental health services and the systematic starvation of the public mental health system by successive Israeli governments over decades and secondly, after years of the Corona crisis and the political instability in Israel.

### **The current vision of the Mental Health Center according to the circumstances**

In our estimation the national crises will lead to another massive increase in the demand for mental health services as follows:

- **Increase in the victims of trauma and complex trauma**, some of whom will need specialized treatment that can only be carried out in a tertiary center.
- **An increase in manifestations of trauma**, ie avoiding school (school phobia), eating disorders, addictions, drug use & treatment resistant depression.
- **An increase in the needs of people already treated in the mental health system**, as a reaction to the reality of the war.

**In these critical times for the mental health of huge sections of the Israeli population, our role, as a tertiary center leading the field of complex trauma treatment on the national level, is to expand our existing therapeutic activity to enable us to provide tailored treatment to the many victims who need it.**

**We also urgently need to expand the activity of the training center and to build a training and guidance center for professional staff** to provide suitable solutions for each level of the community according to their need (teachers, counsellors, doctors, nurses, welfare services, mental health professionals from HMOs and from non-profit organizations).

This national mission requires strategic partnership with donors from Israel and abroad in order to focus on the development of direct and indirect treatments for trauma and the expansion of the trauma treatment training center, and in other important projects:

1. **Psychedelic clinic** - Lev Hasharon's Integrative Psychedelic Clinic is the first public clinic of its kind in Israel. We urgently need to expand it to provide dedicated treatment to the Nova Party victims, some of whom were under the influence of psychedelic substances at the time of the disaster.
2. **Construction of an Art Therapy center.**  
After years of successfully integrating our patients with the local community through the medium of art, we understand the value of artistic expression to assist patients' recovery, and decided to establish an Art Therapy Center to help the victims of the war as well as mental health patients in the local area. Art breaks down barriers and enables suitable integration of trauma victims into society, and creates meaning for all the participants in the project. Lev Hasharon's current projects connect students from local colleges, artists, school pupils and patients who create and display their art. The new Art Therapy Center will provide a safe "recovery space" to foster creation and interpersonal connections as well as a small gallery to display the results.

3. **Expansion of a trauma-focused marital and family therapy clinic.** The trauma-focused family therapy clinic is the first of its kind in the public health system in Israel. The clinic currently treats 35 couples and families, and we urgently need to hire additional professionals to enable us to treat more families from the surrounding area.
4. **Expansion of the day-hospital treatments** for trauma related to the terrorist events and associated youth morbidity: school phobia and treatments for adolescent addiction.
5. **Expanding day care for trauma** from civilian trauma to the trauma of terror victims and war veterans.
6. **Construction of a training center for trauma intervention and treatment.** This training center will include modular training courses for professionals in the fields of education, welfare, medicine, health related professionals and mental health professionals.

We hope you will consider partnering us on one of these important projects, and would be happy to provide more detailed information on request.

Yours sincerely

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