

Jami matters

jamiuk.org Winter/Spring 2024

Our impact

Find out how Jami has given Joe a purpose in life

Jami & Jewish Care

Addressing the community's mental health challenge

Our services

Supporting our young people's mental health



Jami

For when mental illness and distress makes everyday life a struggle



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Welcome

We are getting ready to open a new chapter for Jami as we move closer to becoming fully integrated with Jewish Care. This is an exciting time because it means we will be able to work together to address the community's mental health challenge at a time of unprecedented need. How this will happen and the benefits it will bring are explained on pages 4–5.

This need within the community sparked a call to action by over 50 eminent Jewish psychiatrists and other doctors for people to lend their support to Jami. You can read their open letter, which featured in the Jewish press, on page 11.

Our Children and Young Person's service (pages 6–9) is now providing vital support in two Jewish secondary schools – JCoSS and JFS – and the feedback from both young people and school staff has been overwhelmingly positive. Another focus of our work has been on providing support to the community following the war in the Middle East. These horrific events and the rising antisemitism they have sparked have affected so many people, but for those already living with mental illness and distress, the impact has made life even more challenging. To find out how Jami has responded, turn to pages 12 and 13.

We recently said a fond farewell to Laurie Rackind, who has led Jami for the last 17 years. You can read Laurie's reflections on his time at the helm on pages 18 and 19.

And finally, it was wonderful to see how the community came together in many meaningful ways to mark Jami Mental Health Shabbat in January (see pages 22–23). There will be many more opportunities for the community to show its support, which is needed now more than ever before.

Louise Kermodé
Director of services



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Jami and Jewish Care to become one from April



We recently announced that Jami and Jewish Care will become one from 1 April 2024.

We caught up with Daniel Carmel-Brown, Jewish Care's CEO, to understand what this move will mean for both charities, the community and you – our supporters.

Why are the two charities fully integrating?

The Jewish community is facing a major mental health challenge, with the prevalence of mental illness, distress and trauma at record levels across all age groups.

Covid exacerbated an existing mental health emergency in our community but, unlike Covid, there is no vaccine for mental illness and distress. Addressing our community's mental health challenge will require a long-term, collective effort. The boards of both Jewish Care and Jami believe that the community will be best served through the charities taking on this challenge, together.

What benefits will the integration bring?

Fully integrating the charities will allow us to provide holistic support for people with concurrent mental and physical health needs; continuity of care for older Jami beneficiaries as and when they experience age-related illnesses; an improved 'front door'

experience for those contacting Jami; better use of shared communal facilities; and bolstered support for residents of Jewish Care's two mental health residential facilities.

Will Jami's services be affected?

All services, including recently launched support for children





and young people, and Jami's education and campaigning, will continue. Jami's approach, based around the understanding gained through lived experience, is highly innovative and one we are completely committed to. We also hope that Jami's valued volunteers will choose to continue in their current roles.

Will the Jami name remain?

That's a simple one to answer... yes! We are proud of the fantastic reputation Jami has built in the community over three decades.

What will happen with my donations to Jami?

Any donation you have made to Jami, or choose to make in support of Jami in the future, will still be used to deliver Jami's vital mental health services.

Do you have a message for Jami's supporters?

First, a big "thank you" for enabling Jami to become the leading mental health service in the community, supporting many thousands of young people and adults living with mental illness and distress over the years. Beyond that, please be assured that mental health and Jami will become one of Jewish Care's central pillars. Please keep giving as generously as you can – we need your support now more than ever.



“Jami will become one of Jewish Care's central pillars.”

Daniel Carmel-Brown,
Jewish Care's CEO

Supporting our young people's mental health

Jami's Children and Young Person's service, which began as a pilot in spring 2022, was set up to meet the growing need for mental health support among secondary-school-aged children. According to feedback from young people and school staff, it's having a very positive impact.

Our new Children and Young Person's (CYP) service has provided one-to-one ongoing support for 85 young people aged 11–18 since its start and helped a further 120 through shorter-term interventions and advocacy. Launched initially at JCoSS, the service expanded into JFS in July 2023.

Young people's one-to-one sessions with members of the CYP team, who are mental health practitioners and social workers, vary from once a week to once a month, depending on need. According to Maneesha Pathmarajah, who heads up the service: "They are very client centred. We discuss and agree on goals to work on – for example, coping strategies to manage anxiety and depression, routines, healthy eating and improving self-esteem."

Kayla Solomons, one of Jami's CYP wellbeing practitioners, has been working with Layla,* a 17-year-old student who is self-harming and struggling with an eating disorder. Kayla has created a safety plan with her client and advised her to speak to her GP because it is important that another adult is aware of what's

happening. "I'm encouraging her to do all the right things," she says.

Nicki Cohen, mental health lead at JFS, says: "The feedback we've received from students is really positive. They say that the sessions are really helping them and they feel so much better about things. The Jami staff who come to JFS are so wonderful and you can see why all the students love them. Having this amazing service, which enables us to

"The Jami staff who come to JFS are so wonderful and you can see why all the students love them. Having this amazing service, which enables us to support a greater number of young people at no cost, is phenomenal."

Nicki Cohen, mental health lead at JFS

* Not her real name

support a greater number of young people at no cost, is phenomenal.”

Having recognised the value of continuing this one-to-one support with some of the young people after they have finished school, Maneesha decided that the CYP service should be brought together with Jami’s existing service for 18–25-year-olds. “We want to be able to provide them with consistency at a time in their lives when there are so many changes happening, such as going to university, moving away from home, or starting work. Now once they get to 18, they can stay in the same system and enjoy continuity with the same

“We want to be able to provide them with consistency at a time in their lives when there are so many changes happening, such as going to university, moving away from home, or starting work.”

Maneesha Pathmarajah

Jami’s head of Children and Young Person’s service

practitioner they’ve been seeing,” she says.

Louise Tranis, JCoSS’s senior mental health lead, deputy designated safeguarding lead & deputy head of Year 11, says: “The fact that young

people have got this option with Jami is so important. Otherwise, they can go from having quite a high level of support with our school counsellors, to having nothing at all.



Children & young people

Once they leave school, we can't do any more for them. I knew one young person who was really struggling about going off to uni, but Jami was there to help them make that transition. They are in their second year now and no longer need support."

Sadly, this isn't the case for everyone. Maneesha says: "We are often the main source of support for a lot of Jami service users because statutory services aren't able to provide the appropriate support to the 18–25-year-age group. As a result, we're getting more complex cases. These young people need support, but they can't access it as they are often considered not

'unwell enough'. For those having suicidal thoughts, for example, they're often being told to just go to A&E."

One young person, who has been accessing the service for a few years now, often talks about taking their own life. "They would really benefit from specialist psychological therapy and regular contact, but they are not getting this support," she says. "They feel hopeless and helpless. They take medication as prescribed, attend all their appointments, try to include as much exercise into their week as possible, but continue to feel like nothing is changing." Their sessions together provide a space

for this young person to speak openly. Through these sessions, Maneesha has helped this young person to find new meaning in life and has supported them to achieve some of their educational goals. "I aim to help them achieve a level of hope that no one else is able to give them," she says.

As for Maneesha's hopes, she would like to see the service expand to support more young people in more schools, such as Yavneh, King Solomon and Hasmonean Boys, and to continue to help those making the transition from school to the next stage in their young adult lives.



“These young people need support, but they can’t access it as they are often considered not ‘unwell enough’. For those having suicidal thoughts, for example, they’re often being told to just go to A&E.”

Maneesha Pathmarajah, Jami’s head of Children and Young Person’s service

Yuval’s story

Twelve-year-old Yuval attends JFS. She started seeing a member of the CYP team in June 2023 because she was “struggling with trust issues and a bit of post-traumatic stress disorder”. She says: “It was making me feel like I wasn’t me anymore and I started to find things difficult with friends. I just felt sad and anxious.”

Yuval started meeting Ciara, a Jami mental health practitioner, every other week. In their sessions together, Yuval has been working with Ciara on different ways to help her manage her anxiety. These have included breathing exercises and distraction techniques she can do at home and in the classroom. They have also been looking at establishing a better bedtime routine for Yuval as sleep hygiene impacts mood and energy levels. Yuval says:

“I love going to my sessions with Ciara. They make me feel free.”

She believes the sessions are really helping her and have made a noticeable improvement in how she feels. “I am more confident and have more trust in people now,” she says. “The support I’ve received from Jami really means a lot. If it wasn’t for them, I would still be crying in my room and feeling depressed.” Instead, Yuval is feeling much better about the future and urges other young people to ask for help if they need it. With a new-found confidence, she says: “You can’t always help yourself on your own.”

Jewish mental health doctors get behind Jami

In response to new data revealing a startlingly high prevalence of mental illness, distress and trauma in the Jewish community, over 50 eminent Jewish psychiatrists and other doctors came together recently to sign an open letter urging the community to support Jami. The full letter, which highlights Jami's emphasis on lived experience and culturally sensitive services, can be read opposite. Together with Jewish Care, Jami hopes that you'll join us on the next stage of this journey.

“It's imperative that access to effective, community-based early intervention services, like Jami, is bolstered significantly and urgently, because the demand for scarce specialist NHS clinical services has become unsustainably high.”

Dr Fiona Sim, public health consultant and former chair of the Royal Society for Public Health

The full letter can be read opposite.



An open letter

Addressing the Jewish community's mental health challenge

As doctors, we have seen a significant increase in the scale and gravity of mental illness and distress in society, including in the Jewish community.

Recent data from the Institute of Jewish Policy Research tells us that **26% of the Jewish community are living with mental illness, distress and trauma**, or had done so in the three months prior to the study. And these difficulties affect **over 55% of under 25s**.

None of us can afford to ignore these stark statistics.

Jami – The Jewish Association for Mental Illness – is there for when mental illness and distress makes everyday life a struggle.

These difficulties can affect every facet of life – from thoughts and emotions to family and social connections, to financial stability. They can eradicate hope of a brighter future.

As a Jewish organisation, Jami understands the cultural nuances of those it supports. And as a charity with people involved at every level who have lived experience of mental health difficulties, Jami provides its expert support with deep empathy and without judgement.

Jami is guiding people through their mental health recovery. Jami is there for families and carers supporting somebody with mental health difficulties.

And Jami is building our collective resilience by educating community leaders.

Over 1,650 people in our community already benefit from Jami, which is aiming to significantly grow its Children & Young Person's service to meet an unprecedented need.

The time to act is now.

We implore all of those who are able to support Jami to do so as generously as possible.

Investing in supporting mental health isn't a luxury. If we are to consider ourselves a kind and just community, it's a must.

Signed

Dr Walter Abelman
Dr Danny Allen
Dr Lindsay Banham
Dr Jeremy Beider
Dr Rachel Berg
Dr Elena Boyd
Dr Ellie Cannon
Dr Alan Cohen
Dr Sarah Cohen
Prof Michael Craig
Dr Michael Crawford
Dr Melinda Creme
Dr Richard Daniels
Dr Danielle Freiburger

Dr Robert Freudenthal
Dr Julian Gertner
Dr Alexandra Getz
Dr Jon Goldin
Dr Vivienne Gould
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Dr C Nonoo-Cohen
Dr Jonathan Ornstein
Dr L Racussen

Dr Ivana Rosenzweig
Dr Abigail Roston
Dr Esther Sabel
Dr Adam Schogger
Dr Emma Shall
Dr Fiona Sim
Dr Peter Simmons
Dr Abigail Swerdlow
Dr Fiona Taylor
Dr Nadia Taylor
Dr Judith Tobin
Dr Nora Turjanski
Dr Malcolm Wiseman

Coping with conflict in the Middle East

Recognising the impact the war has had on the Jewish community's mental health, Jami has stepped in to provide much-needed support.

While the majority of us have adjusted to the ongoing conflict by managing our lives and returning to our routines, others are finding this less easy to do. For those with family and friends in Israel, living with uncertainty about when the conflict will end, and the impact on their loved ones, brings more acute pressures. For some of those already struggling with mental illness and distress, the continuing situation has caused further stress and anxiety.

Since October 2023, 26 per cent of those being

referred to Jami for the first time cited the war in Israel as a factor for seeking mental health support. These individuals had pre-existing mental health difficulties that have been exacerbated by concerns over the crisis.

During the early days of the conflict, Jami was quick to react. We hosted a support event for 50 people who were flown out of Israel during the start of the crisis. The emphasis was on creating a supportive and safe environment. Some chose to talk a little about how they were feeling; others were happy to be in

a safe space where children could play and families could get 'light touch' emotional support.

For those living in London and the surrounding areas, Jami responded to the heightened anxiety by forming a partnership with consultant clinical psychologist and trauma expert, Dr Stuart Linke. Dr Linke, together with Jami's head of education and suicide prevention, Philippa Carr, have now presented to over 1,000 people in the community, through synagogues including Stanmore and Canons Park, Woodford Forest and United

Synagogue communities in Hertfordshire, as well as organisations such as UJIA and British Emunah Fund, the *Jewish Chronicle* and Board of Deputies.

Philippa also partnered on a webinar about managing in difficult times with the CST, which launched a leaflet with community

partners called “Top Tips to Manage Your Anxiety and Maintain Psychological Wellbeing”. She has also been a regular contributor to Jewish newspapers, the Jami blog and has consulted with many organisations to offer support and guidance. The aim of all of Philippa’s work has been to help people

re-orientate themselves following news of the conflict, provide advice on how to cope with their current feelings, and offer guidance around self-care.

Jami will continue to support those who are relying on our services during this difficult time for our community.





“A centre without walls”

Jami’s hubs provide safe spaces and social connection for people with long-term mental illness and distress. However, when Hayley Aaron, Jami’s PR and communications manager, visited the Finchley and Redbridge hubs, she discovered they offer so much more.

Jami’s Finchley Hub is already busy by the time I arrive on this grey Thursday morning. However, the atmosphere inside this warm and welcoming centre feels far from gloomy. Some people are sat at tables, having a chat or just doing their own thing, while others are relaxing in comfy chairs, looking right at home.

Andrew Barbarash, Jami’s north-west area coordinator, who runs the hub, says: “It

is a place where people can be themselves. They can be emotional here – and it’s OK. But there’s also a lot of laughter; a lot of camaraderie. People feel safe here. They feel like they are part of a big family.”

Among the 40 to 60 people who attend the hub each week is Tom. He’s been coming since June 2023.

Building confidence and friendships

For the last couple of years, Tom has struggled with mental illness. However, his mental health hit rock bottom following a serious driving accident that prevented him from working. Feeling very low and at a loss about what to do each day, Tom started coming to the hub. He says: "Coming here has been very good for me. If I wasn't here, I'd be stuck at home on my own. I'm still in a state when I come, but doing the activities really helps."

Tom has discovered a love for words in the creative writing session he attends. "I've surprised myself at how imaginative I can be," he says. "Everyone loves what I

write." Bethany, who works at the hub, says: "I feel like Tom has become more open and his confidence has increased since coming to the hub. He was a bit shy when he first came here, but now he's one of the crew."

Andrew continues: "We empower people to be their true selves here. Volunteers come into the hub to run specific activities, such as art, writing and music groups, but our hope is that staff can build up hub members to run the groups themselves. The aim is to support people to become less reliant and to integrate back into the outside world. We also want to give them the confidence

to arrange their own social activities together, outside of the hub."

Every Friday, the group meets at a café in Edgware, and Sunday activities and trips to the cinema are also organised, together with monthly Shabbat dinners to increase members' sense of belonging within the community. "The hub is very peer-support led," says Andrew. "We're an open book and all support each other." Tom couldn't agree more. "I feel like I've really grown to trust everyone and they're really on my side. Jami have been most helpful and caring."



"I felt anxious before I came to the hub, but Andrew jokes that I'm now almost part of the furniture. Everybody is caring. It's like a family here. You can say as much or as little as you like."

Tom, Jami hub service user

Providing structure and support

Jami's hub at Redbridge is equally valued by its members. And it's easy to see why as I walk in one Wednesday morning to find Paul Gardner, Jami's area coordinator for East London, lovingly preparing lunch for nine of its members, plus long-term volunteer, Irene Cohen. She tells me: "The members love the warmth and atmosphere here and they feel safe. Often, their families and friends don't understand their long-term mental health problems. For some, we are their only friends."

For 61-year-old Joe, one of few members who is married with a family, attending the Redbridge and Hackney hubs gives him structure to his week. He explains: "I had a breakdown at 50 and it was the most horrendous period of my life. I never want to go back there. After it happened, I didn't know what to do with my time. I was referred to Jami and I now attend the hubs. I like coming because of the warm friendly people here. They've all become

very good friends. I enjoy the company and feel a sense of belonging. We all have mental health issues so we're all coming from the same place."

Sharon, who has learning disabilities, tells me she's been coming to the Redbridge hub for 23 years. Like many others, she also feels safe in the warm and welcoming environment that Paul and Lauren Juggler Crook, hub peer support worker, have created, together with some very dedicated volunteers. Take Steve Colman, for example. Today, he's entertaining members with a music appreciation session, which Sharon says "really cheers her up". This week's video presentation focuses on 50 moments that changed music and impacted the music industry. Steve's passion for music comes through, arousing lots of questions and engagement from hub members. "I've had a privileged life," says Steve. "And I think it's important to give back."

But aside from offering fun and interesting activities, there is so much more to the Redbridge hub. When members have an issue, they can have a private one-to-one chat with Paul or Lauren, who will provide practical advice and emotional support. Paul tells me about accompanying members on hospital appointments and how he helped one man, in particular, to clean and declutter his home, which had become virtually unliveable because of excessive hoarding and a rat infestation. "Sometimes, mental illness means that people just can't cope with day-to-day living" he says. "So, we just try to do whatever we can to help make things better."

For Tom, Joe, Sharon and so many others, the hubs and other services that Jami provides are simply life changing. "They do so much for so many people," adds Tom.



“Sometimes, mental illness means that people just can’t cope with day-to-day living. So, we just try to do whatever we can to help make things better.”

Paul Gardner, Jami’s area coordinator for East London

Laurie Rackind

Seventeen years at the helm

As Laurie Rackind steps down from his role as chief executive of Jami, he reflects on what the past 17 years have meant for him, the charity and the changing mental health landscape.



Your first connection with Jami was as a volunteer. What support did you provide?

I started volunteering for Jami in 1994. Mental health wasn't a well identified cause in the mid-90s and I was inquisitive. I'm a qualified swimming teacher and had done some coaching, so I used to give swimming lessons to all the long-standing members at Jami's day care centre. I'd also pick up my guitar, much to everyone's dismay, and do a bit of a sing song!

What took you from volunteer to the top role?

I was approached by two of Jami's trustees. What I didn't realise at the time was how motivated I would be running an organisation that had a real purpose. Nor did I think I would still be here after 17 years. But it became way more than a job.

What has been Jami's biggest challenge over the years?

Stigma. Attitudes towards mental illness and distress

“We were one of the first organisations to employ people with lived experience of mental illness and distress and that’s now the background of almost 90 per cent of our service delivery team.”

have shifted hugely. Who’d have thought that one of our service settings would be on Golders Green Road, providing one-to-one support in a place where people also eat and drink? There’s obviously been a massive shift for that to become acceptable. But while the stigma has improved around depression and anxiety, because more people are talking about them, there are other mental health conditions that are less understood by the community. That’s a problem and impacts on fundraising more than anything else.

I think most people acknowledge that mental illness is one of our biggest challenges in society. And we know that our services are lifesaving. But that doesn’t mean people will donate to our cause more generously than to others. People don’t shout about the services they receive, and I don’t blame them. But this will never change unless we get over this barrier.

We’ve come a long way, but there’s still a long way to go.

What are you most proud about?

Jami’s commitment to peer support. We were one of the first organisations to employ people with lived experience of mental illness and distress and that’s now the background of almost 90 per cent of our service delivery team. Adopting this innovative approach means that our services are provided with deep empathy and as a result are highly impactful.

What will you most miss about Jami?

The people. Their commitment, enthusiasm, and the environment we have created. It’s the staff, volunteers and people using our services that make Jami what it is.

We value the expertise, experience and capability of everybody at Jami. And the charity uses that growth mindset to really thrive. We’ve grown. We’ve

developed. And we keep doing different things.

Seventeen years is a long time to be in the same role, but every year has been different. And it’s been fantastic.

What are your hopes for Jami’s future within Jewish Care?

While we are becoming one with Jewish Care, we have in fact been a subsidiary of Jewish Care for 11 years. During that time, our organisations have worked closely together to support the Jewish community’s mental health. Fully integrating is an obvious next step and I have every confidence it will succeed. Jami has grown to support over 1,600 people each year. Recognising that the prevalence of mental illness and distress among our adults and young people is at an all-time high, I hope that our two organisations will continue to grow to meet as many of the community’s needs as possible.



**Mental health problems
aren't something you
have to cope with alone.**

STRUGGLING TO COPE?

Help is at hand.



If you need support or are supporting someone else, visit jamiuk.org/get-support or call **020 8458 2223**

For immediate help, contact Shout's 24/7 crisis text service. Text **Jami to 85258**

For free, anonymous online counselling and emotional support, visit qwell.io/jami



Jami

**For when mental illness and distress
makes everyday life a struggle**

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There are many ways to get involved and improve mental health awareness.

Volunteer



Volunteer your time and skills and make new connections, to help deliver our vital work.

Challenge yourself



Challenge yourself and have some fun while raising vital funds for Jami.

Regular Giving



A regular donation helps us to plan better and is easy for you to set up and manage.

Celebrate



Celebrate your special occasion by asking friends and family to give a gift to Jami.

Legacy



Leave a gift in your will to Jami.

Learn



Learn about how you can better support your own and others' mental health on one of our specifically designed courses.

For details on how to get involved

visit

jamiuk.org/get-involved



Jami Mental Health Shabbat brings community together

Thousands of people within the community joined forces to raise awareness of mental illness and distress, as part of this year's Jami Mental Health Shabbat on 19–20 January.

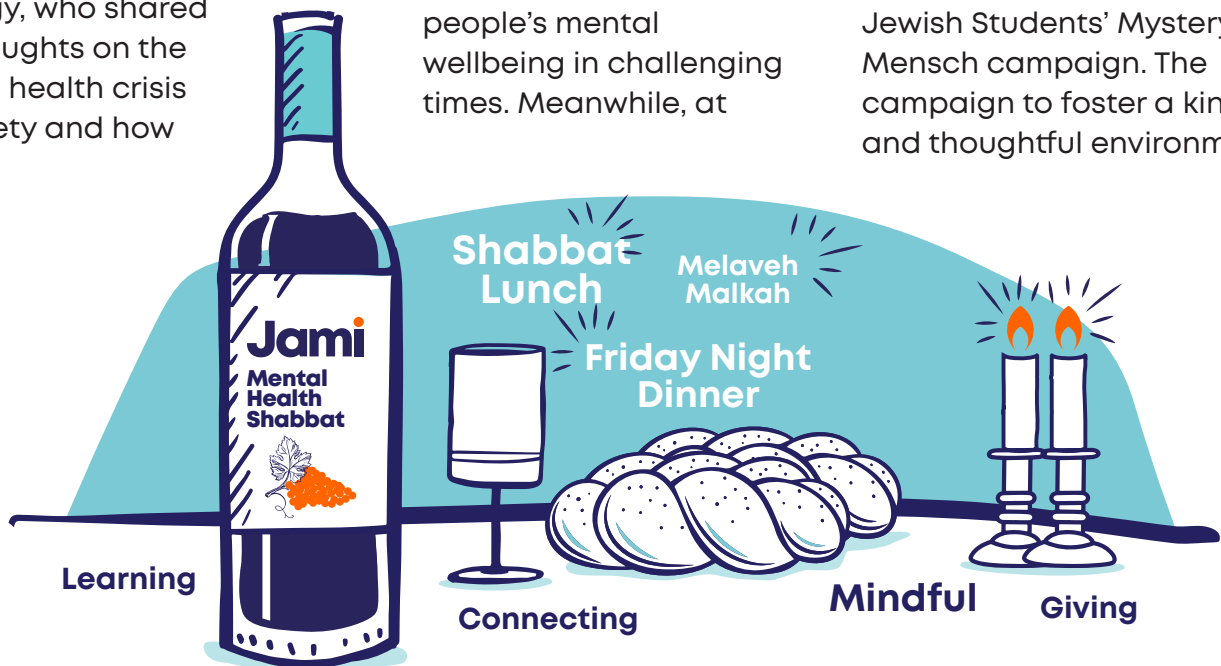
Numerous sessions focusing on mental health were held at various synagogues. These included, Western Marble Arch Synagogue, where members were joined by Maria Caulfield MP, parliamentary under-secretary of state for mental health and women's health strategy, who shared her thoughts on the mental health crisis in society and how

the government is tackling the challenges across the UK.

Rabbi Alan Garber, previously the community rabbi at Shenley United Jewish Community and now a qualified CBT psychotherapist, spoke at two synagogues in Edgware about how to strengthen people's mental wellbeing in challenging times. Meanwhile, at

St John's Wood and Mill Hill United Synagogues, Jami's head of education and suicide prevention, Philippa Carr, delivered a session alongside psychologist Dr Stuart Linke on dealing with mental health during the current crisis in Israel.

Jewish university students participated in the Union of Jewish Students' Mystery Mensch campaign. The campaign to foster a kind and thoughtful environment



during Jami Mental Health Shabbat encouraged each Jewish society member to check in with and be extra kind and helpful to another student whose name they were allocated.

Family and friends were also encouraged to get together to think about mental health with a new initiative from Jami, which provided people with resources to help them host a Shabbat meal. The aim was for hosts to ask

their guests for donations to Jami instead of gifting flowers or wine, to raise money for our mental health services in the community.

More than 75 budding bakers came together for Jami's Challah Make, led by Rebbetzens Ilana Epstein and Chanie Schochet, on the Thursday before Jami Mental Health Shabbat. Michal Oshman, head of company culture, diversity and inclusion at

TikTok Europe and author of *What Would You Do If You Weren't Afraid?* was guest speaker at the event, which took place at Mill Hill United Synagogue.

And to end the weekend on a positive note, Jami's Head Room café in Golders Green hosted an afternoon of creativity and connections, facilitated by an art therapist, which was open to everyone in the community.



***“If it wasn’t for
Jami, I wouldn’t be
where I am now.
Jami gave me hope
for life and hope
for the future”***

**More people are struggling
with mental illness and
distress than ever before.**

TOGETHER

**we can make a
life-changing difference**

**Donate today at
jamiuk.org/donate**

Jami

**For when mental illness and distress
makes everyday life a struggle**



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