**Adith Israel Torch Award Submission – 2021**

**Title:** Mental Wellness During the Pandemic

**Category:** Health and Wellness

**Description:** Adath Israel Brotherhood has organized and provided a webinar series dealing with mental illness, substance abuse and other related topics. This included lining up speakers applicable to each session and establishing a means for attendees to participate either via break-out sessions or via Q&A. Webinars were open for other synagogues/clubs to participate including ones outside our region.

**Program Detail:**

1. **“Quieting the Silence - Overcoming the Challenges Presented by Mental Illness and Caring for Our Community”**

**Date: 7/22/20**

**Number of Attendees: 66**

**Program Description:** This was a 40 minute presentation by the director of the Blue Dove

Foundation Gabby Spatt covering the work of her organization in educating and helping people deal with mental illness and included her personal account of its impact on her own family. This was followed by break-out rooms for attendees to discuss the challenges of mental illness and how it’s affected their own lives and to come up with a personal prayer from each group. The sessions followed to some degree, HMV program format.

1. **“Releasing the Bounds of Shame – Depression Anxiety”**

**Date: 8/19/20**

**Number of Attendees: 54**

**Program Description:** This consisted of an initial presentation by the author of the book “Releasing the Bounds of Shame” in which he describes his life-long struggles with anxiety leading to depression and addiction. He related his own journey to recovery and the various avenues he sought to find help. A Q & A followed.

1. **“Women Coping with Covid”**

**Date: 10/13/20**

**Number of Attendees: 47**

**Program Description:** This was a joint program between Adath Israel Brotherhood, Sisterhood and Jewish Family Service of Cincinnati dealing with the unique challenges for women posed by the pandemic for their family and professional/work lives. The format of the program consisted of a panel discussion moderated by psychiatrist Gary Katz. The panel included marriage and family therapist Bette Levy Alkazian, social worker Leslie Brody and Wyn Garfinkle Hillel president at University of Louisville. Following a presentation by each panelist there was a Q/A session.

1. **“Community Rabbis Coping with Covid”**

**Date: 2/18/21**

**Number of Attendees: 35**

**Program Description:** Program consisted of a panel of rabbis in various roles including the Senior Rabbi Moshe Smolkin at Adath Israel, a pulpit rabbi from New Rochelle, NY, a hospital chaplain, a rabbinical student and the chaplain for the Cedar Village retirement community. Panelists all related their efforts to maintain religious and pastoral care at a time of social distancing and quarantining. Experiences related by the panelists were both compelling and revealing about how clergy cope with the realities of the pandemic including sharing some novel approaches taken.

**Self Assessment:** The program overall was successful in helping provide education on mental wellness topics through sharing experiences of the speakers. It provided an opportunity for attendees to share their own experiences and to hear others speak on issues that they have been dealing with personally in their own lives including family members.

**Impact:** The program provided a focal point for our club and larger synagogue community at a time when social distancing prevented normal social interaction. Essentially, besides serving as an important vehicle for educating people about this vital topic of mental health, it allowed our club to play an important leadership role in our community demonstrating that we are still a viable organization in spite of the limitations placed on us by the pandemic.

Participation was very good from both our community as well as the entire Cincinnati area. Also, we had some participation from even outside our region.

**FJMC: Briefly explain how the program supports the FJMC mission of Involving Jewish Men in Jewish Life and how the program relates to and/or supports one or more elements of the FJMC tagline: Leadership, Innovation, Community. more elements of the FJMC tagline: Leadership, Innovation, Community:**

Adath Israel Brotherhood has taken the lead in rolling out the Imagine life parlour discussion program. WE have had 4 sessions that have been joined by many FJMC members nationally

We have brought Rabbi’s together and provided a foundation as a partner in the one of our programs. We check all 3 boxes; a program that took the lead and became leaders in FJMC, innovated new and provocative programming. The community came in the form of inclusion of the young kids, Community Rabbis and the FJMC community shared in these programs.