

Beit Daniella Annual Report 2022

Our Growth

- 16** students attend Beit Daniella (full capacity)
- 58** graduates of Beit Daniella returned to their communities so far
- 19** applicants on the waiting list



Music is an important therapeutic tool to many of our students...



...and for some, it is cooking! Even students who find that difficult must share in the responsibility of cooking meals at Beit Daniella, as food preparation is considered a basic functional life skill.

Our Stories

Of Rooftops and the Ripple Effect

This is not a personal story of one of Beit Daniella's students. This is the personal story of a friend of one of Beit Daniella's students...and how Beit Daniella saved her life. Witness the ripple effect.

It was a cold Thursday morning. Rather than having our management meeting at our usual spot on the deck, we found that the social worker's caravan office was empty. To stay warm, we held our meeting there. Halfway through the meeting, the door creaked open slowly and there was our social worker Ileel visibly shaken, seeking refuge.

"Ileel, are you OK?" we asked and sheepishly, she answered. "Not really."



Ileel proceeded to tell us what had just happened to her. One of our students, T. who suffers from an eating disorder, had just returned to Beit Daniella after a brief hospital stay due to a relapse. That morning, T. ran to Ileel frantically, shoving her phone into her hand, yelling, "Help Ileel!! My friend is on the roof of a building, ready to jump. I am trying to convince her not to but she is not listening to me. Please, please speak to her."

Ileel grabbed the phone and tried...but the friend was unresponsive, her mouth tightly shut. T. got on again, desperately trying to persuade her friend to speak with Ileel, with her friend

stubbornly refusing. So Ileel quickly switched gears, opened her virtual tool box and pulled out her best DBT (Dialectical Behavioural Therapy) skills...

At the beginning of this year, Beit Daniella sent *all* of its staff members to a DBT (Dialectical Behavioural Therapy) training course given by the leaders in DBT in Israel, Machon Ofek. As DBT is the therapeutic language of Beit Daniella, it was important to us that ALL staff members learn and practice DBT skills- therapeutic and non-therapeutic alike. A part of the course was dedicated to simulations and the simulation that our staff found most difficult was this one: *You are told that there is a teen on a rooftop, ready to jump. How do you react? What do you say to him/her?*

True to its dialectical nature, DBT demands from its proponents two opposing approaches: Radical acceptance in the feeling realm - to understand and validate the teen in his desire for suicide - to accept the emotion. On the other hand, in the realm of action the push-towards- change element. But how can you validate the need to take one's own life when it goes against every grain in your body?? Isn't validating the same as endorsing? How does one flip that to action and protection?

On that cold Thursday morning, Ileel was put to the test. Ileel understood T's friend's agony deeply and provided her with essential validation for her unbearable suffering. The insight and empathy Ileel reflected back to her somehow made T's friend's suffering real and tangible to her, releasing her from the need to make it real through the act of jumping. As her tension levels eased, Ileel coaxed her back gently from the edge. But it didn't stop there.



Superhero social worker Ileel Barash with one of her accolades

The friend suddenly realized, *"But if I don't jump, I will have to be hospitalized again after a suicide attempt. Being in the psych ward is worse than dying!!"*

Ileel refocused her on the here and now, *"The hospital may or may not happen- we will deal with that later. Now, what can I do to make you feel better? I am with you 100% and I am not going to leave you".*

While Ileel was on the phone with her, she co-opted other staff members. They called the police and as they did not have contact info for the girl's parents, they called the hospital where she had been and they contacted the parents.. and she came safely home.

Ileel modestly shares, "I am so grateful that I had the skills and the ability to help her, but I also know that it could have easily ended up very differently. This was an extremely humbling experience. I pray for our youth and I encourage the population at large to understand what youth are facing these days. Equip yourself with mental health awareness so that you can identify danger and secure the help that is needed to draw our teens back from the edge."

This is how we grow - Our Program

As a young organization, we are constantly looking to become more effective at our mission. We thus identify and embrace challenges, adapting ourselves to rise to them. Below are two such challenges we faced, along with the adaptations that we made in response.

This, my friends, is how we grow.

Semester System

Challenge: As struggling teens need Beit Daniella at any point during the year, Beit Daniella has always operated as a revolving door program, with each student coming and leaving at a different time. However, as Beit Daniella's goal is to integrate students back into school systems that work on an academic year, the timing can be challenging. For example, if a student of ours is ready to go back to school in March (especially relevant to those who need a different school than the one from which they came), schools are simply unwilling to accept our students at an advanced stage of the year.

Response: We have moved to a semester system, while still allowing for exceptions. The bulk of our students are accepted at the beginning of September for the first semester and at the end of February for the second semester. That way most students "graduate" Beit Daniella in the summer, in time to start the first semester of a new school year in September; or they "graduate" in February so that they can start the second semester in February at a new school.



Working hard in one of our converted-stables-classrooms.

Levels System

Challenge: Our students love Beit Daniella so much that they do not want to leave. For most of our students, Beit Daniella is the first place where they feel they belong, where they have a peer group, where they feel they are growing and moving forward. They have nature, horses, dogs, great food, personalized studies and an incredibly dedicated staff. Who would want to leave that??

Response: The goal of our program is to help our students to move forward to become more functional within society, to move beyond the stage of needing a protected framework. In order to keep them moving forward in that direction rather than backward, we have integrated a behavioral levels system which reflects increased levels of functioning that accompanies them until the final goal of integration. The more functional and responsible students become in their behaviors, the more freedom, privileges and opportunities they receive. For example, at the beginning levels when their functioning is low, they may require supervision during certain activities or in certain areas of our campus.



While at the advanced levels, they can earn the opportunity to take a therapeutic dog from our kennel home with them for the weekend!

Emphasizing positive reinforcement of healthy behaviors, this system is widely used in youth psychiatry wards and therapeutic institutions. Our customized levels program not only serves as a barometer of their success, it is a constant reminder that Beit Daniella is a temporary boost in their recovery process and that leaving to the wider world is the goal.

One of our students reaping the benefits of the levels system - To each their animal...and their book

Another Response: The Alumni program allows Beit Daniella's students to continue to receive a bit of its magic weekly, even once they leave. The chasm between Beit Daniella and community life can be sharp and this program eases that transition (See below)

Alumni Program (Bogrim)

As an additional service in the continuum of care, Beit Daniella's weekly alumni program is designed to ease the transition from the close care that our students receive at Beit Daniella to the independence of normative community life.

The weekly afternoon program consists of a support group, dog therapy, and a meal prepared and eaten together. This affords them a sense of community in which they can safely share experiences from school and the challenges that they face socially or emotionally. At the same time, it provides the alumni with the opportunity to identify what they need to help them succeed in the coming week. With the aid of the group leader, they define individual goals for the coming week.



"The highlight of the week" is how alumni describe returning to Beit Daniella for their weekly program

Currently 17 graduates attend. Students join the group a month before they are to leave Beit Daniella and participate on average 4 to 6 months after they leave. Although we don't impose any cut off time, as the graduates become more integrated within normative life, they feel the group is less relevant and naturally stop feeling the need to attend.

This is how we develop - Our Strategic Development

Transition

This year, we were very occupied with the transition from a starting organization to a more established organization. How can we consolidate and solidify our model, our operation and organization so that we are in a position to scale?

Running the day to day at Beit Daniella is fraught with pressure and difficult decisions - the frightening responsibility of teens who are constantly challenging the limits of life and death. This requires intense zoom-in from our therapeutic staff. Whereas our strategic-administrative staff are occupied with development and growth - Zoom out. To scale you need both in one person - an experienced therapeutic professional who could hold both perspectives at the same time. This person would be a support and guide for the on-the-ground staff in dealing with the intensity of what they face and the responsibility that they carry. At the same time he/she would need to bridge the gap between the micro running of the day to day and the macro - Beit Daniella's vision of scaling and expansion to fill a national need.



*Welcome to our new star,
Haim Yagen, Therapeutic
Services Manager*



Full circle: In 2018 Hadassa and Sarah Malka first sat in this office at Eitanim Hospital, to share their idea and vision for Beit Daniella with Prof. Yoav Kohen, the head of Eitanim's children and youth hospital, to ask him for guidance and professional support. Prof. Kohen immediately offered his full support, volunteering to be the head of our steering committee. In the photo above we are proud to be in his office again, this time with Dr. Kohen guiding us through the next leap - the process of Ministry of Health recognition as a Tipul Yom.

To this end, we were extremely fortunate to find veteran team leader and manager Haim Yagen, a clinical psychologist who was instrumental in building Ogen Kehilati, a Kfar Noar for kids at risk, that is comprised of a continuum of therapeutic services. The multi-talented Haim officially joined our staff at the beginning of December. It is our hope that in 2023, Haim will be able to steward this important transition that will enable us to actualize Beit Daniella's vision of opening up branches to serve the critical national need for therapeutic-rehabilitative day centers.

Government Funding

Ministry of Health

One of Beit Daniella's major challenges from the beginning has been to enlist the support and partnership of government bodies. Since opening our doors as a private organization in 2019, we have been consistently working towards that goal. Each year, we have enlisted another government body.

- 2019 Project Hila, Ministry of Education.
- 2020 Ministry of Education, Special Education Division (Kita Nafshit)
- 2021 Kranot Bituach Leumi.
- 2022 We have been applying ourselves to our most ambitious partnership yet, gaining recognition from the Ministry of Health as a Tipul Yom.

Tipul Yom (Outpatient Day Program) & the Ministry of Health

Tipul Yom is a Ministry of Health funded medical outpatient day program designed for patients who require a more intensive program than ambulatory clinics in the community, in the hopes of preventing them from needing inpatient hospital care.

The extant Tipulei Yom for youth are hospital based/linked. Community based Tipul Yom do not exist. As a community focused holistic rehabilitation program, we do not fit the hospital- based model that the Ministry of Health has supported until now. With the guidance of our steering committee, we are playing a delicate game of trying to meet those requirements while at



Brainstorming with the Ministry of Health's Chief psychiatrist for Youth, Dr. Yuval Raveh. Seated, Dr. Yuval Raveh, Dr. Jennie Goldstein and Prof. Yoav Kohen, Beit Daniella steering committee members, Noa Sharama, Beit Daniella's clinical manager. Standing; Sarah Malka Eisen, Beit Daniella's Co-Director

the same time, not compromising our efficacy, our mission and our unique model. Moving bureaucracies is a gargantuan task. However, if we can succeed the Ministry of Health funding, channeled through Kupot Holim (National Health Funds, would cover most of our budget and also provide an infrastructure that would allow us to scale across the country.

If/when we do succeed in gaining recognition, ***we will be the first of our kind - a community based rehabilitative model for youth.*** An added benefit is that we will set a precedent which will open up the possibility of funding for other community based, critically needed mental health services.

Ministry of Education

In tandem, we are working towards the same precedent setting change within the Ministry of Education. As mandatory education for teens is the law, a prerequisite for opening up a day program is- a Ministry of Health Tipul Yom - is providing within it, a Ministry of Education approved and funded school program. Although there are Ministry of Education funded school program within hospitals, there is no Ministry of Education infrastructure for providing classes in day facilities within the community.



School is serious...except for Purim when we rock and roll!

Creating such an infrastructure involves the Ministry of Education drawing up new guidelines and approving new budgets. This radical change goes against the grain of a highly regulated and entrenched bureaucracy such as the Ministry of Education. Moving the higher echelons in a Ministry that is already limping is indeed challenging. However, we have built relationships with like minded, idealistic and dedicated professionals within the Ministry who have put the harrowing state of the youth at the front and center and they are willing to fight for Beit Daniella with the powers that be.