

Ask Miriam...

Individuals and families in the community are faced with challenging issues and concerns regarding their social, emotional and psychological health. Through the cooperation of **The Jewish World**, Jewish Family Services will offer responses.

Q. Dear Miriam,

We have three beautiful grandchildren whom we love very much.

Jewish continuity is important to us.

Our oldest grandson is ready to start school. We would like him to attend a day school in the community as we believe in this kind of an education and we would be willing to pay for it.

We are a very traditional family and would therefore like our grandson to attend the more traditional school. However, his parents are more liberal in their observances. They are not comfortable with the more traditional day school.

How can we handle this situation so that it has a positive outcome?

Conflicted Grandparents

A. Dear Conflicted Grandparents,

You have much to be thankful for. However, it would not be a good idea for your grandson to be in an environment that might cause a conflict with his family.

Your flexibility in paying or helping to pay for the school sends an important positive message.

In addition, you will have many opportunities to be Jewish role models for your grandchildren. You can offer the value added benefit to what your grandson learns in school.

Help to create an environment that challenges him to learn more.



Q. Dear Miriam,

My daughter and son-in-law have been married for two years. I sense that my daughter is unhappy in her marriage, although she has never said anything to that effect.

I notice that when they visit my son-in-law is in charge of everything. He doesn't even let my daughter be alone with us very much. It is as if he is monitoring everything she does.

She no longer seems to be joyful or spontaneous.

She does very little on her own although she used to be very independent.

How can I help her? How can I get her to talk to me about what may be wrong?

Worried Mother

A. Dear Worried Mother,

The description you are giving of your daughter's life sounds as if she may be in an abusive relationship. Abuse can take various forms and is certainly not only physical. Controlling another's behavior is a form of abuse.

The Jewish community has often remained in denial about the prevalence of abuse. This has the effect of isolating those who are being abused.

Share your concerns with your daughter from the perspective of a caring mother, but don't make accusations. If she is in an abusive relationship, she needs to feel safe so that she can make the moves to change things. Knowing that you are supportive and not critical of her may help her to reach out.

Find out the resources available to her in her community, so that you are ready when she is ready to get help.



Miriam Adler, A.C.S.W., C.S.W., is assistant director of J.F.S. She answers most frequently asked questions. Please send questions to "Ask Miriam," c/o Jewish Family Services of NENY, 877 Madison Ave., Albany, NY 12208 or e-mail jfsny@banet.net or call 518-482-8856.