

# 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,**

*I am a widow with grown children. We always had the seders at our home and family members came home. Last year, the first year after my husband died, I carried on the tradition, but now the work seems overwhelming. My children are not available to help get everything ready, but they want me to have the holiday celebration. I feel responsible and at the same time resentful that all of this falls on me. What can I do?*

***Frustrated and Pressured***

## **A. Dear Frustrated and Pressured,**

Family traditions do change when there is a change in the family constellation. I am assuming that you always came through for your family and shouldered the lion's share of the work preparing for holidays. You need to step back and give up some of the responsibility. You can let them know you will only be able to pull the holiday celebration together if everyone takes care of some of the work. This does not mean that your children will step forward to do this. You might need to maintain that position and go to a community seder or be with friends.

The next holiday, they will know you are serious about needing help in the preparation.

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## **Q. Dear Miriam,**

*We are aging parents of a developmentally disabled adult. She has lived in our home her whole life and we have been able to care for her needs. We are con-*

*cerned about her Jewish religious and cultural life when we are no longer able to provide for her. There are a number of services in the community that can help us with physical care, but we have not found a specific program for religious and cultural needs.*

*Are there any Jewish services available in our community?*

***Concerned Parents***

## **A. Dear Concerned Parents,**

This is an issue of a concern in our community. There are no specific Jewish services available for families.

Various institutions and programs in our community make an effort to respect religious and cultural practices, but unless there is an advocate, the results are not consistent. There are families in our community who are caring for adult children with disabilities. This has been a hidden population in the Jewish community. As the population ages, there will be many families dealing with similar issues.

This is a community issue. We need to start by having families who are concerned identify themselves and be willing to help explore and develop services.

I urge families to get in touch with Jewish Family Services so we can begin to understand the magnitude of the problem and take steps.

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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 [jfsneny@banet.net](mailto:jfsneny@banet.net) or call 518-482-8856.