

Around the **Community** 

Touro College Graduate School of Social Work Addresses Orthodox Mental Health Professionals at Conference

Growing old and taking care of yourself and your parents at the same time were among the topics addressed by Dr. Steven Huberman, dean of the Touro College Graduate School of Social Work, at the 19th Annual NEFESH International Conference held recently on Long Island.

NEFESH was founded in 1992 to bring Orthodox Jewish professionals and rabbis together to address mental health issues facing the community.

Caregiving was but one of the many sensitive topics tackled at this year's meeting, attended by approximately 450 professionals and educators. Top experts in psychiatry, psychopharmacology, trauma, child development, chemical dependencies, psychotherapy and other areas talked over the latest advances in their fields. Forums covered such delicate ground as child abuse, depression, reproductive health, divorce, and ADHD and its impact on education, employment and marriage.



L-R: Dean Steven Huberman, Ph.D., Touro College Graduate School of Social Work, with Lisa Twerski, LCSW, and Chaim Sender, LCSW, Co-Chairs of 19th Annual NEFESH International

“The meeting managed to mix religiosity, spirituality and solutions to mental health challenges in a way that appropriately presented solutions to difficult issues facing Jewish observant communities in 2016,” said Professor Elhanan Marvit, MSW, director of administrative services at

the GSSW.

During his talk on caregiving, Dean Huberman observed the number of women in the Jewish community simultaneously taking care of elderly parents and their own young children is skyrocketing.

“This sandwich generation of

women frequently has to work outside of the home and be the primary caretakers for their own parents and kids. The stresses are enormous,” he said.

In the discussion at NEFESH, attended by rabbis, medical doctors and clinical social workers, Dean Huberman warned, “Do not try to do it alone. Do not try to be ‘Superman.’ Get a support system of other family members and spend private time taking care of yourself.”

The Dean also talked about accomplishments at Touro’s Graduate School of Social Work and Touro fellowships created for NEFESH members last year in memory of Touro’s Founding President Dr. Bernard Lander and his wife, Sarah Lander, to support those committed to serving the most vulnerable and at-risk in the Orthodox Jewish community.

“In reaching out to NEFESH members with these fellowships to help them earn their MSW degrees and become social workers, we are furthering this goal,” the Dean said.

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