



Mental Health Needs – Kibbutz Be'eri

Background

A year and a half after the worst disaster to strike Israel and Kibbutz Be'eri, the kibbutz community continues to adapt to life in temporary housing at Kibbutz Hatzerim. Approximately 700 members are now living in Hatzerim, 200 have returned to live and work in Be'eri, while around 250 remain dispersed across the country. Before relocating to Hatzerim, the community endured nearly a year of challenging living conditions in a hotel by the Dead Sea. Every member of the kibbutz is grappling with the trauma of October 7th—coping with grief, loss, and an unimaginable emotional upheaval. Beyond the direct impact of the attack, the prolonged displacement—first in the hotel and now in temporary housing—has compounded stress, anxiety, and emotional strain. Despite being a cohesive and resilient community determined to rebuild its home, the magnitude of the tragedy cannot be ignored. The need for comprehensive mental health support is critical at every level.

Government Support

- During the evacuation, all kibbutz members received direct grants from the National Insurance Institute.
- Every kibbutz member present in Be'eri on October 7th was granted official recognition of "temporary disability" and all the legal benefits associated with this status.
- Each kibbutz member is entitled to funding for eight mental health therapy sessions annually.
- The government covered the cost of hotel accommodations during the evacuation period and a daily stipend of 200 NIS per person.
- The government funded the construction of the temporary housing complex in Hatzerim, covering the cost of the structures only.



Mental Health Support Needs

As outlined above, the primary form of government-funded mental health support is subsidies for eight therapy sessions per year. This level of assistance is insufficient to address the community's diverse and complex needs. It does not provide adequate support for the formal and informal education systems, nor does it offer tailored solutions for children, teenagers, and the elderly. Following an in-depth needs assessment, we have identified additional essential mental health interventions that must be implemented:

"Embraced by the Community" (\$150,000) – A year-long program designed for Be'eri, developed based on actual needs emerging from the community. The program includes weekly support for key community members, workshops, seminars, activities, and cultural and educational events tailored to different groups. The goal is to process, acknowledge, and integrate both personal and collective grief into the fabric of daily life.

"My Wave" (\$90,000) – A group-based trauma therapy program for teenagers, using surfing as a therapeutic tool. Many teenagers struggle to engage with traditional talk therapy and respond better to experiential and sometimes challenging activities that integrate therapeutic work. This program will support six groups of 15 participants each, providing them with a meaningful, activity-based approach to healing.

Rehabilitative Instructor for the Elderly (\$30,000) & **Trauma-Sensitive Employment for the Elderly** (\$35,000) – The elderly population was among the most severely affected by the October 7th attack and its aftermath. Many lost close friends who were murdered during the assault. Additionally, the prolonged stay in the hotel presented further challenges related to mobility, isolation, cognitive stimulation, and physical activity. These initiatives aim to strengthen and support senior community members by providing a dedicated rehabilitative instructor and structured employment opportunities to assist in processing trauma and restoring a sense of purpose and routine.



"We Are All Be'eri"
R.A. 580791960

Workshops & Support Groups for Bereaved Families (\$15,000) – Bi-weekly workshops and group therapy sessions led by professional trauma and grief therapists. These meetings provide a structured and supportive space for families to process loss, share experiences, and develop coping strategies in a communal setting.

We sincerely appreciate your willingness to support Kibbutz Be'eri's healing journey. The road to recovery is long, but with partners like you, we are confident that we will emerge stronger - rebuilding our kibbutz and restoring our community.