

No Sweeping Assumptions

About therapy

In reference to "Letters," Issue 470

Dear Editor:

I would like to weigh in regarding Sarah Rivkah Kohn's comments about the article written by Mrs. Hoffman about therapy.

Where exactly are all the "sweeping assumptions" Ms. Kohn is accusing Mrs. Hoffman of making "...that feed into a belief that [therapy] is quite damaging"? She said nothing of the sort and even emphasized how beneficial therapy can be.

The fact is that Mrs. Hoffman made some very valid and important points regarding the dangers and extremely devastating consequences of therapists "who are either incompetent or driven by personal agendas and can damage or destroy people by violating boundaries and commandeering their perspectives and decision-making."

Indeed, Ms. Kohn herself addresses the potential pitfalls in therapy, and she even gives some fantastic solutions as she explains that she interviews and monitors the therapy referrals she does, and also does a lot of therapy coaching in house, "meaning we help clients make sense of what's happening in therapy."

Regrettably, in most therapeutic situations—outside of organizations such as Ms. Kohn's, which oversees and intervenes if something is "off"—the therapist has absolutely no one to answer to, nor do concerned relatives have anyone they can turn to. Clearly, this is a recipe for disaster in the event that the therapist is dishonest, biased and so forth. And at \$100-\$200 per weekly 50-minute session, unscrupulous

therapists can make a very comfortable living by keeping their patients "in thrall" of them and constantly coming back.

Unlike other professions, there is no accountability required of therapists. Once a therapist gets his/her degree (*or not*—legally in Israel anyone can call themselves a therapist), s/he is not required to answer to *anyone*. There's no one to complain to if you suspect that your loved one is developing patient dependency or being negatively influenced in therapy. Therapists require *no* supervision and *no* monitoring by outside forces, so no one's checking if a therapist is even doing what s/he's been trained to do.

It is not enough to check a therapist's credentials, experience and references. Sadly, there are many personal accounts and articles about lives and relationships torn asunder by destructive therapy, and Mrs. Hoffman's examples are simply further proof of this.

It's out there, and as long as there is no accountability, there is very little recourse one can take in the event that you or someone you know gets entrenched in damaging therapy

R.L.

CORRECTION

The byline of the "Our Days" story "A Legacy of Devotion" (Issue 471) should have been: Musia Kaplan. Additionally the information that Rudy Meyer was the grandson of the Rav of Regensburg and had a frum uncle who encouraged him to live up to his grandfather's legacy was omitted..