



## **NATAL: To Live Again**

*Israel Trauma and Resiliency Center*

**A Safe Place  
NATAL's Interactive Online Portal**

## OVERVIEW

**A Safe Place - NATAL's Online Digital Portal** is an educational, platform designed to provide resiliency, prevention, and empowerment skills for students living in Israel and are at risk for developing PTSD. Safe Place was developed in 2014, in collaboration with Israel's Center for Educational Technology and Ministry of Education with the support of Boeing International Inc.

**Safe Place intends to reach over 50,000 students across Israel in the next two years.**

The constant threat - Israelis are always in a state of high alert, decades of living in constant state of whether having to endure thousands of rockets launched into Israel, or going through waves of terror, such as random stabbing across the country,. Each new threat is re-traumatizing for the Jewish and Arab sectors.



**Studies show 70% - 90% of children living in Israel's conflict zones exhibit at least 1 symptom of Acute Trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).**

Safe Place offers tools during times of emergency as well as routine. This program invests in children - in the Jewish and Arab sector - who will be Israel's future citizens, leaders and policy makers, to ensure a more stable future.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES & OVERVIEW

**The goal is to provide teaching staff and children around Israel with:**

- Help to manage and cope with stress in all of its forms, to include bullying, school participation and other stressors.
- Psycho-education tools to help understand the underlying causes of PTSD and the identification of symptoms.
- Support systems to cope with acute anxiety and stress.
- Psycho-education tools to cope with PTSD related symptoms.

This program takes place in schools across the country at the elementary, middle, and high school level, led by a member of NATAL's community outreach team. Over the course of 4-6 workshops, teachers and students together learn about trauma, stress reactions, relaxation techniques and resiliency building via a range of online psycho-educational lesson plans, interactive presentations and group discussions.

## SAFE PLACE IN ROUTINE & EMERGENCY

During conflict, Safe Place can serve as a virtual classroom, as schools often close to extended periods of time. Safe place enables teachers to communicate and provide assignments, preserving a sense of normalcy and structure. During times of calm, it serves as a place to learn preventative skills to be effectively practiced during future emergencies and an effective tool for everyday anxieties. Critically, Safe Place can be utilized as a helpful tool in helping children and youth navigate the transition back to routine after a state of emergency has ended – a period that is both emotionally difficult and often very confusing.

More than ever before, our kids need to know how to cope with threatening or embarrassing messages, whether face to face or electronically, and how to manage the pressures of social media. One of the greatest challenges children now face, is dealing with offenders, not only in their schools and neighborhoods, but also through the World Wide Web; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Safe Place offers a secondary benefit of teaching children how to manage and identify stress resulting from daily situations such as exams, home life and social pressures. Via understanding how every person differs in how they react to stressful situations, a greater degree of tolerance and acceptance of the "other" is fostered in the students, paving the way for greater class and school cohesion.

Safe Place seeks to offer a portal filled with positive massaging, tools for resiliency, and in turn provide strength, and ultimately, hope.

## THE IMPACT

Safe Place is the only school-based program of its kind that teaches children and youth about the prevention and identification of psychological trauma with relevance for a range of potential emergency situations. The Israel Center for Educational Technology has been instrumental in making the technological aspect of Safe Place as impactful as possible with young people, and as youth are naturally drawn to the internet it intentionally uses its online presence to generate and drive interest. Safe Place is accessible from mobile phones and personal tablets making its programming available for all participating schools and students regardless of how many computers a school may have. Safe Place strengthens children's resiliency to future trauma, provides coping tools to manage stress in all forms.

## PROGRAM EVALUATION & SUSTAINABILITY

Questionnaires are given to students and the teachers at the beginning and end of the program to assess knowledge regarding trauma symptoms, resiliency and tools learned and to gauge comfort level of those using the portal and its impact. A follow-up evaluation takes place 3 months after the conclusion.

Data is collected through the Safe Place portal, using analytic and demographic information to gain insight on how and when the portal is being used and which sections are most visited. All questionnaires for students are designed to protect anonymity and privacy.

**NATAL is proud to announce the integration of the program by Israel's Ministry of Education, ensuring the program's sustainability and expanding our reach across Israel.**

The goal is to be fully integrated into every school, training teachers to be “in-house experts”, including counselors and educational staff who serve as emergency response coordinators.