Dear friends,

The tragic events of October 7th have left a profound impact not only on Israeli society but on the global Jewish community. In these trying times, NATAL has remained steadfast in providing vital mental health support and fostering resilience.

Our efforts extend far beyond routine and emergency work. We are cultivating partnerships and planting seeds of resilience in communities across Israel through initiatives like career coaching for trauma survivors and resilience programming in boarding schools.

Our pioneering work on compiling a textbook documenting Innovative Treatment Models for Communities in Hostage Situations represents a beacon of hope amidst darkness. This invaluable resource will ensure the lessons learned and therapies developed by selfless mental health professionals are preserved for generations to come.

While the road ahead is undoubtedly challenging, your steadfast support enables us to nurture the healing and encourage the empowerment that our people so desperately need. Together, we are an unbreakable force, united in our pursuit of restoring hope and fortifying the tenacity of the Jewish nation.

I humbly invite you to review our mid-year report and bear witness to the profound impact of our collective efforts. May the work highlighted in these pages inspire you as it has inspired us – to persevere, to heal, and to emerge from these trials stronger than before.

With profound gratitude,

Maayan Aviv
Executive Director
American Friends of NATAL

We are cultivating partnerships and planting seeds of resilience in communities across Israel through initiatives like career coaching for trauma survivors and resilience programming in boarding schools.
NATAL continues to build a stronger, more resilient society, capable of facing and overcoming the challenges posed by trauma.

- **45,000+** Helpline calls since October 7
- **400+** Mental Health Professionals
- **10 Million** Israelis
- **168** Helpline Volunteers
- **2,000+** Weekly Patients
- **4,000+** Hours of Community Interventions
- **500,000+** Lives touched by NATA L
1. **Innovative Treatment Models for Communities in Hostage Situations:**
   **A Textbook by NATAL’s Research & Evaluation Unit**

   NATAL is creating a comprehensive textbook documenting innovative mental health treatments developed over the past six months for individuals, families, and communities impacted by hostage situations. In collaboration with Bar-Ilan University, NATAL aims to compile theoretical, clinical, and research materials to form an integrative body of knowledge on trauma interventions during emergencies. The publication will cover various topics, including emergency management, systemic interventions, individual and family therapies, and unique aspects of hostage mental health treatment. By sharing this knowledge, NATAL seeks to enhance professional practices, support those on the front lines of trauma care, and influence national policies for future resilience. The project involves a structured submission and review process, culminating in a publication and a conference to foster further professional development. Through this invaluable resource, NATAL seeks to advance professional knowledge, foster resilience, and enhance mental health care practices in Israel.

2. **Training for Senior IDF Officers Working with Families of Hostages**

   NATAL is addressing the urgent need for specialized psychological support for families of hostages. Leveraging their extensive expertise, NATAL’s mental health professionals have partnered with the Ministry of Defense and National Insurance Institute to offer a comprehensive training initiative for senior IDF officers. This program, launched in April 2024, aims to equip officers with the necessary skills to support both civilian and military families grappling with the unthinkable reality of living with family members held hostage. This initiative provides crucial training and guidance to ensure these officers can effectively assist families during this traumatic period. By enhancing the capabilities of IDF officers, NATAL aims to provide a beacon of hope and healing, helping families navigate their darkest hours with resilience and support.

3. **Psychotherapy Program Specializing in Bereavement and Loss:**
   **NATAL’s Multidisciplinary Trauma Studies Center in Collaboration with Bar Ilan University**

   As Israel faces a mental health crisis exacerbated by recent events, NATAL is committed to training a new generation of trauma specialists. NATAL’s Multidisciplinary Trauma Studies Center, in collaboration with Bar Ilan University, has launched an innovative psychotherapy program specializing in bereavement and loss. Building on 17 years of expertise in PTSD prevention and treatment related to terror and war, this new program addresses the urgent mental health crisis following October 7th by focusing on both death-related and ambiguous losses, such as missing persons and non-death related losses like displacement and physical injury. The curriculum, led by Israel's top trauma experts, includes specialized sessions for at-risk populations, ensuring therapists are equipped to handle diverse and complex trauma scenarios. NATAL aims to expand the pool of trauma-trained professionals, offering scholarships to ensure financial barriers do not impede access to this essential training. With a goal to enroll 35-40 students per semester, this program represents a vital step in addressing Israel’s mental health needs and supporting future practitioners in their critical roles.
4. Resilience Programming for Boarding Schools

NATAL is launching a comprehensive Resilience Programming initiative tailored for boarding school staff, who are pivotal in supporting at-risk and vulnerable youth in Israel. Amidst growing trauma and uncertainty, this program aims to equip educational and dormitory staff with the skills to foster resilience in their students while managing their own burnout and compassion fatigue. The program includes targeted training for youth village managers and educational staff, focusing on resilience routines, emergency response, and self-care. Through experiential teaching methods and expert-led sessions, staff will learn to provide psychological first aid, identify youth in distress, and create supportive environments. By establishing peer support groups and embedding resilience practices, NATAL’s initiative seeks to enhance coping mechanisms, prevent secondary trauma, and ensure staff retention. With a robust framework of ongoing support and evaluation, this program is designed to strengthen the preparedness and well-being of both students and staff in boarding schools across Israel.

5. Career Coaching & Professional Development for Nova Festival Survivors

NATAL has launched an innovative Career Coaching & Professional Development program in collaboration with youth centers across Israel, aimed at supporting young survivors of the Nova Festival massacre and residents of combat zones as they reenter the workforce post-trauma. This comprehensive initiative provides trauma-focused employment coaching based on a unique model developed by NATAL, delivered through local youth centers to ensure accessible support. Participants will benefit from personalized career guidance, group discussions to bolster personal resilience, community-building activities, and tailored assistance in career advancement and educational integration. The program addresses the urgent need for stability and purpose among young Israelis affected by the traumatic events of October 7th, helping them overcome the challenges of post-trauma employment and academic functioning. With the support of dedicated coordinators and expert coaches, this program aims to restore a sense of normalcy and empower participants to achieve their career and personal goals. By strengthening personal resilience and community ties, NATAL aims to improve the quality of life for these young individuals, promoting stability and hope amidst ongoing adversity.

6. Matnasim – Resilience for Communities

In collaborations with The Organization of Community Centers, NATAL is initiating “Matnasim – Resilience for Communities, Resilience for Life,” a transformative program designed to support community resilience in the wake of the October 7th attacks. In providing critical mental health support and training to professionals working at resilience centers across Israel, the program seeks to empower these critical support professionals and help their communities cope with trauma and rebuild a sense of normalcy and safety. By focusing on both individual and community-level healing, the program offers group activities to enhance personal resilience and ongoing support groups to strengthen social cohesion. Leveraging years of expertise in trauma processing and community engagement, this collaborative effort ensures that Israeli communities can not only recover from immediate traumas but also build a robust foundation for future challenges.
Returning to the front lines, I found myself reliving past traumas from Operation Protective Edge (2014). Thanks to NATAL, I feel a sense of correction, of growth, I was able to rebuild trust in my team and commanders. Thank you for being available for me 24/7, even as I’m on the front lines. — A NATAL PATIENT WITH PTSD THAT WAS RE-TRIGGERED AFTER OCT. 7

After the October 7th tragedy, I became the sole caregiver for my brother’s children, whose parents were killed, in addition to my own two children NATAL has been guiding me on how to support them, helping us navigate this immensely painful and challenging time as a family. — A PATIENT IN THE CLINIC

NATAL’s work with the families of the Gaza hostages is deeply impactful and emotionally challenging. Each case is incredibly intense, requiring professionals to adapt their treatment modalities to provide the best care possible. Often, we work with the entire family unit, recognizing the collective trauma they are experiencing. This means treating patients in their own homes or in hotels for evacuees, creating a familiar and comfortable environment for healing. One poignant example is a therapy session in a cemetery for a mother mourning the loss of her hostage child. These moments underscore the profound sensitivity and dedication needed to support these families through such harrowing experiences.
Dear Friends,

All of Israel is experiencing the profound impact of sustained conflict: ongoing battles, continuous casualties, unresolved hostages, and hundreds of thousands displaced with uncertain return prospects. These enduring challenges demand innovative responses.

NATAL’s mission is to ensure comprehensive support for civilians and reservists affected by the ongoing conflict, striving to ensure every individual in need receives appropriate care. This encompasses tailored therapies, group interventions, and community-based initiatives.

The NATAL model categorizes trauma response into four phases: routine, emergency, return to routine, and growth. Presently, we find ourselves in an intermediate phase. While some are resuming elements of normalcy, the emergency persists unlike past shorter conflicts in Israel. This dynamic creates an “emergency routine” where daily life for many continues amidst ongoing threats and displacement.

Our response strategy combines immediate measures like our Helpline with sustained efforts such as extended therapeutic interventions like EMDR and neurofeedback. We’re expanding our therapist network and service locations to enhance accessibility and reach.

At NATAL, we embrace a worldview where recovery and growth are possible even amid severe trauma. We believe in uncovering inner resilience and navigating new paths towards meaningful lives, acknowledging that life may never return to its pre-trauma state. This ethos is ingrained in our approach, celebrating resilience and hope among all those we serve.

With your help, we are committed to supporting individuals and communities in their journey towards healing, emphasizing not just survival but thriving despite adversity.