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This article is published with the intention of providing information about ELEM's work.

Many of the Survivors of the Massacre at the Rave Party Need Mental Support: "They're at Risk of Experiencing Anxiety and Depression"

Among the many young people who turned to ask for help are survivors of the terrible massacre at the outdoor rave party in Re'im. The ELEM Israel's CEO, Tali Erez: "Many of them say that they felt like sitting ducks."

Written by Stav Namer

Among the many young people who turned to ELEM to ask for help are survivors of the terrible massacre at the outdoor rave party in Re'im. The nonprofit's CEO, Tali Erez: "Many of them say that they felt like sitting ducks."

The war that broke out 17 days ago hurts the youth, who find it hard to cope with the difficult events. Since Saturday, October 7th, there has been a dramatic uptick of hundreds of percents in the number of young people seeking mental health assistance from various qualified agencies.

Tali Erez, ELEM Israel's CEO, commented yesterday in a conversation with "Maariv" about the complex challenge that the youth are forced to deal with: "Before the war, it was very clear what the definition of 'risk' was - various situations such as dysfunctional homes or youth in prostitution, and this state of war expanded this definition significantly - because the youth and young people who survived the massacre in the south, or the rave party, or simply decided not to go at the last minute and survived because of that - are also at risk. What will happen to them? They, too, are at risk of self-harm, anxiety, depression and a risk of substance abuse. Basically - it doesn't matter if it's sexual abuse or terrorism."

Erez also emphasized that, "Since the beginning of the war, the high, dramatic increase in those seeking help online now includes young people who experience anxiety from being alone at home during alarms (due to rockets being fired into Israel – ELEM USA), or who are in abusive homes during this time, in addition to teenagers who simply need someone to talk about the situation."

According to her, dozens of youth come every day to the spaces opened by ELEM across the country: "They don't necessarily need someone to take care of them, but only to sit with them and create a safe space for them where they can talk about what they are going through and feeling."

Erez notes that among the hundreds of victims who were slaughtered at the Re'im rave party were also three members of ELEM's staff: "It took a long time until they were located. Another volunteer who lived in Kibbutz Be'eri perished along with all her family members. This disaster hit and touched all of us personally and professionally."

She also says that, "In one of the spaces we opened in the areas hosting evacuated families from the Gaza Envelope, the work of the youth to process what they've been through has begun. At first they don't speak, then they simply unload about a mix of events. Later, there is a hollow look in their eyes."

This is the moment when they understand what they went through. There are young people who come from a large and spacious house and suddenly live in the same room with the rest of the family. There was a heartbreaking instance in which one of the teen boys who were evacuated from the Gaza Envelope laid down on the floor and did not stop crying.”

“We reach out to these youth with humility and the knowledge that we will never understand what happened to them, but we can only try to help and give them back their strength. We are actually trying to help them deal with the feeling of being a victim. Many of the survivors of that outdoor rave party said that they simply felt like sitting ducks.”

In addition, due to the security situation, ELEM has opened a hotline for counseling, support and assistance. You can contact ELEM’s anonymous chat at yelem.org.il.