

What's Hidden Besides the Afikomen?

Gib a Keek! (Take A Look)

by Nicci Meadow

An Additional Symbol to add to the Seder Table of contemporary struggles we overcome or are in the process or overcoming.....but/and often hide

Preparation Instructions: Place a small assortment of washed green, red, seedless, seeded grapes - some loose, some still on the vine - into a small bowl and cover it with a plate. Then turn the bowl over so the grapes are hidden (the bowl will be upside-down and the grapes will now be resting on the plate). Place the bowl on the table next to the Seder Plate. There should be at least enough grapes for everyone at the Seder to have one or two.

Don't tell anyone about the upside-down bowl or what's inside it. If anyone asks, let them know it's for the seder- and you can add that there's really no "right" time or "right" place to talk about it-, but all will be revealed later on.

When: During the Seder- after the blessing and eating of the Matzah (before the Bitter Herbs/Maror), the leader or Delegated Speaker points to the upside-down bowl and says:

"What else is different about this night from all other nights- this Seder from all other Seders?"

There's been an upside-down bowl on the table throughout our seder, right next to the beautiful seder plate. It's been in plain sight, but what's inside has been hidden. The bowl isn't very beautiful, it doesn't really match the décor of the table, especially upside down. If you asked what it's doing there, we told you - in hushed tones - that we'd talk about it later, to just ignore it, and that there was really no good time to talk about it, no right place, but we would. Basically, we all agreed not to talk about it though some of us may have tried

a little harder to find out. Some may have even peaked and then told others or decided it was best to keep it to themselves.

It's now time to share what's been hidden yet in front of us this whole time. And it's not the afikomen."

Leader lifts up the Bowl or asks someone else to revealing the grapes and says:

"This assortment of grapes symbolizes the many things we keep hidden. There are things, many of us, have kept hidden - from our friends, acquaintances, and even family. It is not easy to reveal or talk about some things - like mental illness, domestic violence, alcoholism, drug abuse, job loss and financial troubles, childhood trauma, an eating disorder, sexual assault, homelessness, failing memory, sometimes even our religion- just to name a few. For many, there is fear of judgment, or shame. Sometimes there's a stigma associated with what we are hiding. "Stigma" is not a Jewish word. *Shonda* is. In Yiddish, *shonda* means disgrace or shame. For some people, there is also fear and the reality of discrimination - on the job, at school, in health care, in the congregation. For others, these subjects are just considered private matters.

So, for whatever reason, we/they keep these things under cover, hidden like the grapes tonight, until for some reason, it comes out, it's revealed, or we finally decide to tell people we think and hope we can trust. These common table grapes symbolize the struggles or challenges of people we know and love. But when we find out what's been hidden, do they - do we - seem different to you? Do you wonder why some are red or green? How to tell which is sour, which sweet? Which ones have seeds? Do we ask why or what happened? If some were grown with pesticides or in good organic, soil? Which were genetically modified? Why some are loose and others still attached to the vine? Yet, in the words of Gertrude Stein, a grape is a grape is a grape.

So, pass the grapes around and everyone take one or two recognizing that most of us have hidden something at some time and that it takes courage to reveal our truths. We'll say the prayer and then enjoy the grapes."

Prayer for Grapes:

Bharuch ata Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam borei p'ri ha'eitz.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the tree.

What's Hidden Besides the Afikomen? Legislative Advocacy You Can Do for Mental Health Parity in Massachusetts Passover 2020

Mental Health Continuity of Care

What's the problem?

Consumers seeking mental health treatment and support go to great strides to develop a trusting relationship with their providers. Having someone you can trust is extremely important to accomplish the work and gain the tools to manage one's health and well-being. Unfortunately, current law provides for very limited "continuity of care" when a clinician is no longer in an insurer's network (e.g., you or your employer changes insurance plans or your provider drops out of the network).

What this bill will do

This bill will allow consumers to continue to see their providers and improve their mental health. It will not incur any additional costs for the insurance industry. Everyone wins: insurers only have to pay providers their in-network rates and consumers do not pay higher co-pays.

Contact Your Legislator: To find out Who that is: Call (617) 722-2000 and ask that they connect you or go to <https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislatorMembers>

If you Live in Framingham or Ashland, please contact Sen. Karen Spilka: Senate President Karen E. Spilka: Phone: 617-722-1640 or email her at Karen.Spilka@masenate.gov

What to Say: I'm calling to ask the Senator/Representative to support **H.907/S.555 Continuity of Care for Mental Health Treatment**. If you are a constituent, tell them. Also say why you personally care about this bill or "It's hard to find a therapist with whom you click, and once we do, starting over with a new one can set someone's health backwards. Limited networks have increased the likelihood of this happening." Can I count on the Representative/Senator to call Health Care Financing and

leadership to move this bill to the floor this session? Thank you. [When you speak with your Representative, add: please include the Continuity of Care provision in the House's Health Care Bill.] I look forward to hearing back from the Representative/ Senator.

Mental Health Parity for Disability Insurance Policies

What's the problem?

When individuals with short- and long-term disability policies seek wage replacement benefits because they can't work due to a psychiatric condition, a majority of insurance companies limit benefits. The insurers deny people with mental health disabilities benefits altogether or terminate benefits after one to three years while people with physical disabilities get the benefits until retirement age – even though people with psychiatric disabilities paid the same premiums as others. This discrimination is based on outdated images of mental illness as untreatable and disrespect for the professionalism of mental health professionals.

What will this Bill do?

H. 908 and S.615 will ban private disability insurers in Massachusetts from discriminating against persons with psychiatric disabilities in their policies. This bill typically has died in the Joint Financial Services Committee of the Massachusetts legislature. With telephone calls to your representatives and the Financial Services Committee, we have a much better chance of moving the bill and stopping the insurance industry from discriminating in employer-sponsored disability policies.

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If you Live in Framingham or Ashland, please contact Sen. Karen Spilka: Senate President Karen E. Spilka: Phone: 617-722-1640 or email her at Karen.Spilka@masenate.gov

Also Contact: James Murphy, Chair of the Financial Services Committee at James.Murphy@mahouse.gov or (617) 722-2220 and request that next

session, the Bill be reported out of the Financial Services Committee favorably. If you live in Weymouth of Hingham (Precinct 2), tell him that you are a constituent.

What to Say: I'm calling to ask that **H908/S. 615 (Mental Health Parity for Disability Policies)** be reported favorably next year out of the Joint Committee on Financial Services. Currently, wage replacement insurers discriminate against people with psychiatric disabilities and deny or prematurely terminate their benefits merely because the disability is based on a mental health condition. This causes extreme financial hardship and sometimes reliance on government benefits, even though many workers have paid premiums for years. We are all really just one trauma away from a mental health problem that could result in our inability to work." I have friends, family members, and colleagues with mental health challenges, and given the statistics, I bet you do too. Can I count on the Representative/Senator to help get this bill out of the Joint Committee on Financial Services next year? Thank you. I look forward to hearing back from the Representative/Senator.

Calls only take a minute and you don't have to be an expert. Aides and legislators rarely ask questions about the content of the bill.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ADVOCACY!!!!

NOW KVELL A LITTLE- Tell a Friend!

For more information or to volunteer, call Susan Fendell, Esq.,
Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee, 617-338-2345 x129 or
email at sfendell@mhlac.org