

Dear Limmud friends,



“Talking with Torah?” is my way to share with you the work that I do with a group of people during the year. Our group is called “Talk and Torah”

We aim to provide a safe space for people to talk about their lives, and it is also a safe space for people to study Torah with people they trust. It means we can be taking care of our mental well-being while doing a *mitzvah* and going to a study group. I myself am engaged in a perpetual battle with depression. We should all have access to psychological healing, in informal settings, without having to pathologise ourselves or seek medical help, although medical help can be - helpful. A good book, a walk, something creative, random acts of kindness: they are all healing, sometimes. I initiated this group having felt healed by a similar group called YourSpace which runs at Caritas Anchor House in Canning Town.

We have ground rules which are about respect and discretion. What is talked about in the room stays in the room, unless the speaker tells you it's ok to share it elsewhere (there is a tradition in Jewish study that one should give people credit for their insights if we pass them on – so you see that there is a tension, here, that we are managing) We are flexible about how long we talk about Torah and how long each of us may talk about a personal story.

Our group is currently all women, but that doesn't have to be the case. Our members are from different backgrounds and hold different religious beliefs.

We have to work on respect and tolerance, because we sometimes disagree about correct behaviour as well as about beliefs.

The group is very valuable to its members, personally, because of the mutual psychological support and intellectual challenge.

I'd like to see more groups starting up, like this one, and that is one reason I'm leading a “taster” session at Limmud this year.

I'm a co-leader of the group. The other leader is a trained counsellor. That is very useful. I recommend, if you want to lead a group like this, that you enquire about supervision or training.

Talking with Torah
Leonora Samuel

Useful links:

Your Space
Caritas Anchor House, 81 Barking Road
London E16 4HB
www.caritasanchorhouse.org.uk

AGIP

The former leader of Your Space recommended this for training and supervision, but I never attended any sessions there.

<https://agip.org.uk/>

You can always contact me via the contact form on my website.

<http://mrs-samuel.yolasite.com>

Or you can leave a voicemail on my landline
020 8202 8021