

A Neighborhood Treasure

Community is at the heart of the work of the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services. And there is no area of service where that has more meaning than in the agency's counseling centers. Fourteen in all – these neighborhood-based clinics provide mental health services for people struggling with a range of emotional and personal challenges. Most important of all, they offer a welcoming and safe place for people to confront whatever problems they face.

Ask the residents of southern Brooklyn how much they value the counseling center in their neighborhood. When they come through the doors of **The Doris L. Rosenberg Counseling Center** on Avenue X, they find caring professionals – social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists – working hand-in-hand with committed support staff who provide help with a variety of problems – such as depressive and anxiety disorders, substance abuse, parenting issues or children with attention deficit disorder.

The Center serves people of many cultures, reflective of the local community. Among the many hundreds of people helped each year are African Americans, Hispanic, and Russian-speaking people. To best serve these diverse cultures, the Center has staff who speak Spanish, Russian and even Cantonese.

"We provide a clinically rich environment," explains **Jeanne Murphy**, the Center's enthusiastic director. In addition to individual and couples counseling, group therapy is a very important treatment modality at Avenue X. Twenty groups might be going at any given time. The types of groups include adolescents with social or school phobias, adults living with mental illness, or a Spanish-speaking women's group.

Being part of the larger agency has many benefits



Jeanne Murphy, Avenue X Director

including valuable training through the JBFCS Martha K. Selig Educational Institute. The Rosenberg Counseling Center was one of the first offices to receive on-site training in CBT (cognitive behavioral therapy). Jeanne says it has been very helpful in treating the large numbers of people who come to the Center with anxiety and depressive disorders. "For these clients, the focus on behavior and on change and growth are key.

CBT teaches people to explore the impact of negative beliefs and helps them develop new coping and problem solving skills." She sees a definite difference in the progress of those clients.

The Center is committed to being a responsible member of the local community. Their community advisory committee works to find ways to improve delivery of services and is made up of representatives from outside entities like Coney Island Hospital and Amethyst Women's Center as well as other JBFCS southern Brooklyn programs, including IHB children's day treatment and Neptune Family Services. This helps better coordinate service delivery within the agency. The country's economic crisis has taken its toll on Avenue X clients. Many have lost jobs. Staff work hard to accommodate their struggles, assessing a reduced fee or helping them access health insurance.

The Avenue X office is named for the late Doris Rosenberg, an agency president who was a fearless champion for the most vulnerable in our communities. She would be proud of the counseling center that bears her name. It is a place of caring and compassion and a great source of strength and support for all who need it.

