

# HeartAction Resource Manual Table of Contents

Overview of Learning Chapters.....	3
------------------------------------	---

## Introduction

-What is Heart Action?.....	6
-What is Jewish Service Learning?.....	6
-Goals and Structure of the Heart <b>Action</b> Program.....	7
-Program Logistics and Guidelines	
-Assessing Community Needs.....	9
-Recruitment.....	9
-Senior Populations and Facilities.....	10
-Logistics and Transportation.....	12
-Roles and Responsibilities	
-Coordiators.....	14
-Facilitators.....	15
-Using the Heart <b>Action</b> Resource Manual.....	17
-Planning a Reflection Session.....	18
-Snapshots of Service Project.....	24
-Using the Manual with High School-age Participants.....	27
-Using the Manual with Middle School-age Participants.....	28
-Ongoing Leadership Development.....	31

## Learning Sections

Section 1 – Orientation: <i>Kehillah</i> (Community).....	33
Section 2 – Understanding the Experience of Aging.....	46
Section 3 – <i>Gemilut Hasadim</i> : A Call to Compassionate Action.....	60
Section 4 – Learning to be a Good Listener.....	73

Section 5 – <i>Hiddur P'nai Zaken</i> (Valuing the Elderly).....	84
Section 6 – Building Trust.....	96
Section 7 – Social Issues and Public Policy Matters Facing Seniors.....	108
Section 8 – Death and Loss.....	125
Section 9 – <i>Chochma</i> (Wisdom).....	135
Section 10 – Making Service a Part of Your Life.....	145

Appendices

Appendix A – Marketing and Recruitment Materials.....	154
Appendix B – Tips and Ideas for Working with Seniors.....	159
Appendix C – Reflection Resources.....	166
Appendix D – Resource Organizations and Websites.....	172
Appendix E – Senior Facility Audit.....	173
Heart <b>Action</b> Resource Manual Hebrew Texts.....	175
Acknowledgements.....	188

# HeartAction Resource Manual – Learning Sections Overview

The HeartAction Resource Manual is designed to both introduce students to the central Jewish values related to service to the elderly and to teach core skills related to volunteering. Below you will find an overview of the different learning chapters in this manual. The chapters alternate between Jewish values and skills, and are designed to fit with the flow of the HeartAction program and introduce different concepts at appropriate times. However, facilitators should feel free to mold the learning resources to the needs of individual groups.

## 1. Orientation: *Kehillah* (Community)

**Themes:** Since Biblical times Jewish history is replete with accounts of the ability a community has to effect change. Working together as a *kehillah* (community) is both transformative for the individuals involved and a powerful way of impacting the community at large. The sources and exercises included in this section are designed to generate discussion and to foster openness to coming together in meaningful ways with new people toward a common goal.

**Objective:** To orient participants to the HeartAction program by exploring how powerful our impact can be on our local communities through service in the context of *kehillah* (community).

## 2. Understanding the Experience of Aging

Part of beginning to build a relationship is opening up to the world of another person in a compassionate and empathic way, recognizing shared experience as well as circumstances that differentiate one another. The following sources can help participants begin to learn more about growing older and to reflect upon these experiences in light of their youth and their own growth.

**Objective:** To explore some challenges and rewards of aging and to recognize the richness of experience that seniors and young people have to offer each other.

## 3. *Gemilut Hasadim*: A Call To Compassionate Action

**Themes:** *Gemilut hasadim* is a core Jewish value. It forms the ethical basis for society and for humanity's past and future. To engage in *gemilut hasadim* in the world, it is essential to reach out to others as volunteers and to engage in the work of social justice.

**Objective:** To help participants understand the Jewish values of *hesed* and *gemilut hasadim* and their importance in Jewish life.

#### **4. Learning to Be A Good Listener**

**Themes:** One of the most important skills in building healthy relationships is active listening. Through these texts, participants are challenged to explore aspects of communication and reflect on their own current listening practices.

**Objective:** To strengthen the ability to listen and to respond thoughtfully and empathically.

#### **5. *Hiddur P'nai Zaken* (Valuing the Elderly)**

**Themes:** Jewish tradition emphasizes our responsibility to care for and honor the elderly, and there is substantial opportunity to fulfill this. In this section, we examine sources to gain understanding of how to fulfill this biblical and rabbinic value. We also look at the mutual nature of relationships between the young and old.

**Objective:** To understand the Jewish value of *hiddur p'nei zaken* and to explore how to behave according to this value.

#### **6. Building Trust**

**Themes:** A central element of Jewish service learning is the mutuality of service relationships. This is not about simply “giving,” but also about receiving and letting yourself be transformed by the experience. These texts and exercises are designed to facilitate discussion and reflection on current experiences of trust and explore the challenges and power of building trust in an intergenerational context.

**Objective:** To give participants tools to build trusting relationships with each other and with seniors.

#### **7. Social Issues and Public Policy Matters Facing Seniors**

**Themes:** There are many current social and public policy issues that challenge advocates for the elderly. The articles here present an overview of several pressing issues and encourage further learning and involvement in social action.

**Objective:** To develop awareness of social justice issues relevant to seniors and to imagine ways to respond to these issues.

#### **8. Death and Loss**

**Themes:** Spending sustained time with the elderly may involve facing death in a new way. These text discussions help develop the ability to discuss death more comfortably and gain awareness about the many ways of understanding it. They also encourage participants to not avoid conversations about death with residents, but rather to approach them in an openhearted way. It is also important to understand loss when

working with the elderly, who have likely lost loved ones, friends, and their own independence, health, and material possessions.

**Objective:** To explore some Jewish understandings of dying and loss and to enable participants the opportunity to explore their own understandings and feelings.

### **9. Chochma (Wisdom)**

**Themes:** A strong association between old age and wisdom is expressed throughout Jewish tradition. The rabbis of the Talmud use the Hebrew word “*zaken*” to mean both “old” and “wise.” Our tradition understands that wisdom is not merely the accumulation of knowledge and experience, but reflects an ongoing engagement in life and learning to the extent of one’s abilities. Part of our responsibility in the Jewish community is to ensure that the elders in our time are treated with respect and offered opportunities for learning and doing. This section includes texts on how we define wisdom; on the association between wisdom, leadership and old age; and how we can express our appreciation of and respect for the wisdom of our elders.

**Objective:** To begin to define wisdom and to explore the Jewish understanding of the relationship between wisdom and old age.

### **10. Making Service A Part of Your Life**

**Themes:** These sources begin to put the community service experience into the context of a lifelong understanding of one’s responsibility to “the other.” The Deuteronomy text is included to encourage participants to actively translate *Torah* into their lives, and recognize that we need to be active readers of our tradition and find ways to make old principles relevant today.

**Objective:** To understand commitment to community service and social justice as expressions of Jewish life.