



התכנית לחינוך משפטי קליני ע"ש אלגה צגלה
The Elga Cegla Clinical Law Program
برنامج للتعليم القانوني الإكلينيكي على اسم ألفتانغلا

הקליניקה לזכויות ניצולי שואה ואנשים בזקנה
Holocaust Survivors and the Elderly Rights Clinic
عيادة حقوق الناجين من الكارثة والمسنين

"Students Home Visits"

Project Summary, 2018-2019

'Students Home Visits' is an innovative collaboration between the Faculty of Law and the School of Health Professions of Tel Aviv University and supported by the Dean of Students.

Law students and Physical Therapy students work together to improve the quality of life of older people who live in poverty. This project is based on our understanding that old age is a multi-dimensional social phenomenon that calls for the development of interdisciplinary responses.

Project Partners:

Tel Aviv University:

- The Dean of Students, The TAU Social Impact Initiative
- Faculty of Medicine, The School of Health Professions - Department of Physical Therapy.
- Faculty of Law, The Legal Clinic for the Rights of Holocaust Survivors and the Elderly.

In the Community:

- The Municipality of Tel Aviv – Jaffa, Social Service Department.
- Day Centers for the elderly located in Jaffa and southern Tel Aviv.

Students who participated in the project:

- 8th year physical therapy students who chose to participate in 'Social Physical Therapy' Seminar by Merav Bar Yoav, physical therapist and Hila Vitek, occupational therapist. The course requirements included 30 hours of practical work, as described in this paper and an academic paper.
- 8nd-3rd year law students who, as part of a year-long academic class, took part in the Clinic for the Rights of Holocaust Survivors and the Elderly, directed by Att. Yael Havassy-Aharoni and Att. Nadav Dishon.

Project Structure:

Lectures: The physical therapy students gave lectures on safe environment in day centers and clubs for the elderly in southern Tel Aviv - Jaffa. The lectures provided information and guidelines regarding safety and prevention of falls, as well as answers to participants' questions.

Home visits: The students worked in teams composed of a physical therapy student and a law student. The teams arrived at the homes of elderly people who are in contact with the social services department but do not participate in community activities. The purpose of the visits was to 1) assess the needs for maximum safety at home, 2) identify legal and environmental problems, 3) to provide assistance in these areas. Each team carried out two home visits with each elderly person or couple.

The first home visit was to acquaint the students with the elderly residents and to gather information. The physical therapy students toured the house and asked the elderly about their way of life and medical condition. During this visit, they filled a form regarding the safety of each room.

The law students conducted structured interviews dealing with a variety of social rights - income, allowances, housing, nursing and care hours, and more. After the visit, the students returned to the professional instructors for information processing and formulated recommendations for the next steps. The physical therapy students prepared an assessment report and recommendations for improving the home environment, and the law students began a process to examine if the elderly person is fully utilizing his rights.

During the second home visit, the physical therapy students presented their recommendations to the elderly on how to improve house safety. The municipality provided funding for the implementation of these recommendations. The law students gave information regarding rights and legal issues that they found relevant at the first home visit, assisted in the utilization of rights, and proposed to continue the legal work and representation regarding various legal issues.

Summary of Activities

Physical Therapy Students:

Lectures: The physical therapy students gave lectures in five centers for the elderly located all in Jaffa and southern Tel Aviv, for over 220 elderly men and women. The lectures provide information about risk factors that can cause falls and recommendations for reducing the risk of falling such as physical activity, safe home environment, and more. Some of the lectures ended with exercises for strengthening, guiding regarding the correct way to stand up after sitting and adjusting the height of walking sticks. The participants expressed great interest in the lectures and the impact and

significance to them was clear. The directors of the clubs and day centers expressed their satisfaction and gave very positive feedback on the lectures and expressed hope for continued cooperation.

Home visits: The students visited nine elderly men and women, eight of whom fell at least once in the past year, some of them at home. In each home, at least one safety hazard was identified. During the second visit, every elderly person received a detailed recommendation report and the students went over all the recommendations with them. A copy of this report was submitted with the approval of the elderly person to the social worker for a follow-up and implementation.

Frequent Recommendations:

- Home environment: Installation of handles in the shower and toilet, anti-skid rugs in the shower, soap dispenser in the shower, sofa / bed lift, distress button, lighting repair, securing loose electric cables on the floor.
- Personal/Medical: closed shoes, drug sorter, hearing and vision examination, referral to a physical therapist.
- Interpersonal: connection with the municipal volunteer unit, encouragement to go to day centers.

Law Students:

Law students visited elderly people in significant financial distress and many of them were unaware of their full rights. During the visits, a comprehensive examination was conducted regarding utilization of their rights and information was provided on various topics.

The following are some examples from the visits:

- A visit to the home of the elderly couple, "A" and "S", revealed that although S is entitled to a long-term care benefit, which grants discounts on municipal property taxes, electricity and water bills, they do not utilize these rights. During the second home visit, the law student dealt with entitlement to discounts of more than 1,500 NIS a year. Later, the Clinic applied to various bodies for retroactive entitlement to discounts.
- "P" lives on social security pensions in a public housing apartment. P's apartment has no electricity due to a debt to the electric company. In addition, a review of various documents found in her home revealed that she has been making monthly payments for years to cover an old debt to Halamish, the public housing company responsible for the apartment in which she lives. However, she does not know how much she has paid and what is left of the debt. In addition, the rent for the apartment went up several months prior to the student visit, and it does not fit with her financial situation. Since the student visit, the Clinic has been legally

representing P. The Clinic helped P to apply for legal aid in order to receive a court order that will determine a monthly payment and reconnect her to electricity. During an examination of P's debt to Halamish it was revealed that a year ago the Court's secretariat wrote a letter saying that "P" has paid off her debt but no one informed her of this, therefore she continued to pay. Halamish has made it difficult for the Clinic to receive full information regarding P's account. The Clinic's staff has met with Halamish's Chief Financial Officer and is currently awaiting further information.

- A lives in a public housing building run by a governmental company. During the first home visit A showed the students that there is a big hole in the roof through which birds fly into the building. As a result, the upper floor of the building is covered in bird feces which are both a nuisance and a health hazard. The tenants have been complaining about the matter to the company and the building maintenance unit, but no one has come to fix the problem. The students who visited the building reported that the building is filthy and has been neglected. A conversation with the Department of Social Services revealed that the issue with maintenance in the building has come up several times yet they did not receive an answer. The Clinic addressed the company in charge of the building but also did not receive an answer. Only after further inquiries, including a direct call to the district director, the problem was solved; the building was thoroughly cleaned and the roof was repaired. The Clinic will continue monitoring the building and is planning a follow-up visit soon.

This project will continue in the next academic year, with a larger group of students and we will be able to visit a growing number of people. In addition, we hope to integrate an environment aspect to the project in which all participating students will tour the neighborhood and try to identify hazards and obstacles that prevent older people from participating in the neighborhood's community life.