

Holocaust line comforts

PHONE CALLS to the Horwich JCC's "Holocaust" hot line Sunday night, April 16, were divided between persons who were emotionally upset and those who wanted to discuss the program objectively. The program was "The Holocaust," NBC's four-part series on the extermination of six million European Jews during the regime of Adolf Hitler.

Expecting strong reaction to the emotionally charged program, the center set up the hot line for people who simply needed to talk to another person, those in emotional distress and those who had factual or historical questions.

About 10 persons called the hot line Sunday night, most of them about 30 minutes after the program ended, and some as late as 11:30 p.m., said Marty Levine, assistant director of Horwich.

"People were frightened and scared of what they had seen," Levine said. They were afraid that it "could happen

again, that they might be a victim, it could have been me and it still could be. There was almost a time confusion," he said.

ONE WOMAN in her 60s who called was "overwhelmed by the memories and emotions that she had put away. She had associations with friends and relatives" who had been victims and was quite scared, making a direct connection to the threatened Nazis march in Skokie. "Would people have learned from 30 years ago?" she wanted to know.

In other phone calls, people expressed the conflict between continuing to watch and feeling pain vs. turning the set off and feeling guilty for not watching.

Some parents called to ask how to deal with their children who had become upset while watching certain scenes, such as the rape scene. "People needed permission to feel confused. It's OK that their kids don't go to bed

like nothing happened." Parents can't "make it all better in 10 minutes," Levine explained.

Other persons simply needed someone to talk to. One woman, who was watching the show alone, asked if she could come to the JCC to watch. She arrived shortly after.

Several groups at the center watched the program Sunday night. One was the Teen Footlighters, a young drama group which stayed after their regular rehearsal to view the show together. With the groups were some German television people who were here to do a documentary on the American reaction to the program. They had filmed a coffee house group in the center. The Germans "visibly seemed to be quite disturbed," Levine said. "We didn't talk much."

The hot line will be in operation through Wednesday, April 19, when the series' last segment will be telecast.