



## Responding to Harassment, Discrimination or Anti-Semitism on Campus - Fall 2015

### **What should I do if I or my child experiences an incident on campus?**

If you personally experience anything on your campus that makes you feel uncomfortable as a Jew, from anti-Israel rallies that are intimidating, to blatant acts of anti-Semitism, you should take the following steps. Every incident is different but in general:

1. **Report it to the school administration and local authorities immediately.** Students may be reluctant to file an official report for many reasons, but ultimately very little can be done by the school if nothing is reported. It is also important to provide any kind of evidence with the report including pictures, videos, audio recording, names of witnesses, etc.
2. **Write down the details of what happened so you will remember them.** It can be very stressful and emotional to experience any kind of discrimination. People can easily forget details over time, so it is important to write down exactly what happened as soon as possible after an incident. When writing down your personal account, do not post it on the web or write it on any digital platform where others could have access.
3. **Talk to your friends, tell them what happened.** You will find the comfort of friends to be the best help in lifting your spirits after experiencing something like this. It also can prove to be the best way to share with your campus community how these incidents can hurt and impact other students. Start by talking with your closest friends and then, after some time has passed, consider sharing your experience and feelings with a wider audience by posting a well thought-out blog post or article in your school newspaper. Be very thoughtful if you are considering posting on social media. We never know how it will be shared and what the discussion in the comments section will generate.
4. **Connect with different audiences for different action steps.**
  - **WRITE A LETTER TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, RELEVANT FACULTY**
    - Remember to stay as positive as possible and not include any accusations or generalizations in any letter you write to an official or other campus professional.
    - Share your personal feelings on the incident and any follow-up taken.
    - Request a specific action to be taken if you do not feel like appropriate action was taken previously.
  - **SHARE THE STORY WITH THE LEADERS OF YOUR JEWISH COMMUNITY ON CAMPUS AND IN THE COMMUNITY**
    - The Jewish community is strongest when we are united. You can take on a powerful role within the community, both on campus and beyond, by sharing the story in a way that ensures everyone is on the same page with what happened and what YOU think the reaction and follow-up should be.
    - You can share your story in many ways – by email, blog post, public speaking, etc. Work with your Hillel leaders and other Jewish professionals on your campus to discuss the best way to do this. You might find contacting your local Jewish Federation, ADL or other group to be helpful as well.

***If you hear about an incident from a victim, especially if the incident occurred recently, follow the steps above if the victim has not.***

## **What should I do if I hear about an incident on my campus?**

If you hear about an incident from a third party, you still can be helpful in ensuring it's properly handled and the campus and general community get accurate information. Again, every incident is different in the details and in range of severity, but here are some basic things you can do:

1. **Learn more from as close to the source as possible.** Getting the full, accurate story of what happened is often just as important as reporting the incident. If you are motivated to act or feel outraged at what you hear, it is your responsibility to first ensure you have all the facts. You will find that in situations when something has happened on a campus, you will have a strong influence simply by acting as a reliable source of factual information.
2. **Speak to other students.** You should connect with others to continue your investigation of the facts of what happened and to share your concern. It is important that if you think the incident is significant, you let the other members of your campus community know that. You may also find the general reactions and attitudes of your fellow students helpful in developing your own action plan.
3. **Connect with different audiences for different action steps.**
  - **WRITE A LETTER TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, RELEVANT FACULTY**
    - Remember to stay as positive as possible and not include accusations or generalizations in any letter you write to an official or other campus professional.
    - Share your personal feelings on the incident and the follow-up taken or needed.
    - Request a specific action to be taken if you do not feel like appropriate action was taken previously.
  - **SHARE THE STORY WITH THE LEADERS OF YOUR JEWISH COMMUNITY ON CAMPUS AND IN THE COMMUNITY**
    - The Jewish community is strongest when we are united. You can take on a powerful role within the community, both on campus and beyond, by sharing the story in a way that ensures everyone is on the same page with what happened and what the STUDENT(S) involved think the reaction and follow-up should be.
    - You can share your story in many ways – by email, blog post, public speaking, etc. Work with your Hillel leaders and other Jewish professionals on your campus to discuss the best way to do this. You might find contacting your local Jewish Federation, ADL or other group to be helpful as well. **Share the story with the leaders of your Jewish community on campus (and in the local Jewish community, if applicable)** – it is okay to tell someone you are going to look into their questions and get back to them. (Just remember to do so.) They are talking to you because they trust you and because of their relationship with you – not because they expect you to be an Israel expert.
  - **CONNECT WITH OTHER PARENTS**
    - The community of parents can be a powerful voice for the administration to hear from. You and your parents can be helpful ambassadors to connect with other parents.
    - You should let other parents know not only what happened, but what you are doing as a result and what you would hope they consider doing as well.
    - Emphasize that the collective voice of all the Jewish parents is very powerful.