

ANTI-SEMITISM: 90 WAYS YOU CAN RESPOND

IN YOUR HOME AND PERSONAL LIFE

- 1.** Educate yourself about anti-Semitism, particularly the “new anti-Semitism” (anti-Semitism co-mingled with the demonization of Israel).
- 2.** Engage Jewish friends and friends of different faiths in conversations about their experiences and thinking regarding anti-Semitism.
- 3.** Avoid using anti-Jewish language or making references to Jewish stereotypes - even in jest. Diplomatically bring such stereotypes to the attention of others when they engage in such behavior.
- 4.** Speak out against anti-Semitic jokes and slurs. Silence can send the message that such humor and derogatory remarks are acceptable.
- 5.** Learn more about anti-Semitic myths and stereotypes and share what you learn with others.
- 6.** Read news accounts and opinion pieces about both the history of anti-Semitism and its current manifestations.
- 7.** Create a discussion, study or book group to learn more about anti-Semitism.
- 8.** Start a Web-based group to discuss anti-Semitism. Include a distribution list so that participants can share information electronically.
- 9.** Regularly review a variety of news sources for information and examples of anti-Semitism. When newspaper, magazines, or television reporting seems anti-Semitic, respectfully communicate your dissatisfaction.
- 10.** If you encounter an anti-Semitic website, contact ADL and/or the site’s host carrier to complain and request that the site be taken down.
- 11.** Donate money to organizations that fight anti-Semitism.

AT YOUR CHILDREN’S SCHOOL

- 12.** Encourage teachers and other school personnel to conduct discussions regarding anti-Semitism and other forms of prejudice.
- 13.** Provide information about anti-Semitism to appropriate groups and clubs. If no such organization exists, encourage the school to start one to educate students about anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry.
- 14.** Encourage opportunities for school projects that deal with anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry, e.g., assembly programs, play performances, bulletin board and other displays.
- 15.** Suggest the school invite a speaker from an organization like your local or state human rights commission or ADL to talk about anti-Semitism at an assembly. Videotape the presentation; arrange for news coverage.

- 16.** Start an essay contest about anti-Semitism - its history, young people's experiences, their families' experiences, its current political exploitation. Arrange for the winning entries to be published in school and community newspapers and for the winners to be interviewed on local TV and radio programs.
- 17.** Hold a car wash, race, dance or other community fundraising event to fight anti-Semitism, donating the proceeds to a recognized group pursuing that mission.
- 18.** Arrange for teachers and other staff to participate in a workshop on anti-Semitism that includes (1) devising strategies for responding to acts directed against individuals and (2) developing "talking points" regarding the new, politically-charged form of anti-Semitism.
- 19.** Sponsor a "Speak Out Against Anti-Semitism" program during school hours or in the evening, during which students, teachers and others of the school community relate personal experiences and address the immediate damage and consequences of allowing anti-Semitism to go unchecked.
- 20.** Locate websites designed to counter anti-Semitism (e.g., www.adl.org) and arrange to link them to your school or school district's website.
- 21.** Sponsor a one-act play and/or short film competition where students write and produce works about anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry. Arrange for the winning writers and casts to be interviewed on local TV and radio programs.
- 22.** Encourage art teachers to develop poster contests or other projects in which students develop anti-bigotry images and messages that promote respect.
- 23.** Arrange to produce a day-long all-school forum on prejudice that includes speakers or workshops about the many forms of anti-Semitism, how to respond effectively and appropriately, and how to take pro-active measures to prevent them.
- 24.** Sponsor a public service announcement contest on the topic of combating anti-Semitism with the top entries produced and broadcast on local media.
- 25.** Sponsor a speech contest on the topic of challenging anti-Semitism and other forms of prejudice. Arrange for the winners to be interviewed on local TV and radio programs and for excerpts from their speeches to be published in local papers.
- 26.** Invite a Holocaust survivor or other person who has encountered one of the more virulent forms of anti-Semitism to speak at an assembly on that person's experience and to share thoughts on the current forms of violence against Jews.
- 27.** Organize a film and/or video series of movies that deal with anti-Semitism. Ask scholars to speak and lead discussions following the screenings.
- 28.** Encourage grandparents who have experienced anti-Semitism to speak and lead discussions in their grandchildren's classes.

29. Work with your school librarian to create a display of historical and contemporary anti-Semitic publications including books, newspapers, magazines, films, music and videos.
30. Provide materials about careers promoting diversity and fighting anti-Semitism to the school guidance counselor, to share with students interested in such opportunities.
31. Encourage your school to sponsor an “intern fair” at which groups such as ADL and other social justice organizations that hire student interns can recruit interested students.
32. Encourage English teachers and others who develop reading lists for their students—particularly for books to be read outside of class—to include titles that deal with anti-Semitism.
33. Arrange for your school to produce its own video about anti-Semitism. The production could include scripted scenes, interviews with people in the community who had firsthand experience with anti-Semitism, poetry presentations, local and other news footage.
34. Arrange for an assembly that features a panel discussion by local college and university administrators, faculty and students on “Anti-Semitism on Campus: How to Recognize It and How to Respond.”
35. Engage in peer-to-peer contact by adopting a pen pal in a Jewish community abroad that recently experienced anti-Semitism. Do Web research to learn the e-mail or actual addresses of Jewish institutions in those communities.

ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

36. Provide speakers to appear on campus that educate students about anti-Semitism today.
37. Challenge the anti-Semitic statements of professors and students.
38. Following a presentation by an anti-Semitic speaker on campus, take appropriate action:
 - ▶ Challenge the speaker during the question-and-answer period.
 - ▶ Ask the sponsoring organization to present a rebuttal speaker.
 - ▶ Encourage campus and community newspapers to publish a critique.
 - ▶ Mail or e-mail your response to as many attendees as possible.
39. Help create a faculty/student organization to combat anti-Semitism.
40. Report to the college administration and/or ADL, any incidents of anti-Semitism that violate campus diversity or harassment codes.
41. Ask local seminaries to sponsor events dealing with anti-Semitism and to organize a faculty/student group to combat anti-Semitism.
42. Organize fundraising events such as a dance-a-thon or walk-a-thon to raise funds for groups that fight anti-Semitism.

AT YOUR PLACE OF WORK

43. Encourage your company to have a “Zero Indifference” policy that specifically references anti-Semitism. Request that the policy be included wherever appropriate, e.g., core value documents, employee handbooks, and public statements regarding respect for diversity.

44. Ask your human resources department to sponsor programs about anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred and recommend use of resources such as ADL to provide material and/or conduct such programs.
45. Develop skills to respond appropriately to anti-Semitism in the workplace. This can include a range of actions, from taking a friend aside and pointing out an inadvertent anti-Semitic remark or stereotype to reporting anti-Semitic intimidation or harassment to your human resources department.
46. When appropriate, post notices about community programs or meetings dealing with anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred.
47. Organize a discussion group or brown bag lunch to talk about anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry, and to plan collective action when necessary.
48. Encourage your company to be a signatory to ads condemning anti-Semitism and other forms of prejudice and pursue other opportunities to be visible and vocal on the issue.
49. Participate, as a workplace, in a fundraising event to fight anti-Semitism. Donate the proceeds to a recognized group that pursues that mission.

AT YOUR HOUSE OF WORSHIP

50. Urge your spiritual and lay leaders to condemn anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred from the pulpit and elsewhere. Encourage such leaders to keep informed about social justice issues and to participate vocally in local, regional, national and international organizations to speak out against anti-Semitism and help to curtail it.
51. Plan community events at your house of worship that address anti-Semitism. Encourage both those of your faith and other faiths to attend.
52. Invite clergy and leaders of other religious organizations to address your congregation to discuss ways people of different faiths can join forces to combat anti-Semitism.
53. Organize opportunities for meetings between lay members of different faiths to discuss anti-Semitism and the persecution of other groups.
54. Enlist the members of your congregation and other congregations in campaigns to write elected officials and letters-to-the-editor of local newspapers and to sign petitions and newspaper ads that condemn acts of anti-Semitism and hate.
55. Invite representatives of groups that have expressed insensitive anti-Semitic views to hold a discussion with members from your congregation so you can educate them about the consequences of such remarks.
56. Create a display of historical and contemporary anti-Semitic materials including books, newspapers, magazines, films, music and videos. Organize formal and informal presentations of the display. Invite members of the community to view the display and attend the events.
57. Create a bulletin board where newspaper and magazine clippings dealing with anti-Semitism, persecution of other faiths, and other human rights violations are posted.

- 58.** Organize an interfaith retreat for young people to learn about anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry.
- 59.** Conduct an interfaith youth trip to the Holocaust museum closest to your community. Raise funds and build community awareness by sponsoring a fundraising event, such as a bake sale, car wash, or service auction.
- 60.** Start a group at your house of worship to learn more about anti-Semitism and to develop and practice skills to take action. Ally yourself with similar groups, including the regional office of the ADL in your community.
- 61.** Encourage your spiritual leaders to work within their clergy group to promote programs and activities to educate people about and fight anti-Semitism.

AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

- 62.** Monitor the records of legislators and ask them to take action on legislation that deals with anti-Semitism and hate crimes.
- 63.** Lobby public officials to take actions and make statements against anti-Semitism.
- 64.** Publicly commend government officials and legislators for taking action or making public statements against anti-Semitism.
- 65.** Communicate your support for public officials’ actions and statements against anti-Semitism by writing letters-to-the-editor of your local paper.
- 66.** Make local television media aware of officials’ actions to speak out or take political action against anti-Semitism.
- 67.** Participate in public/community and political forums to raise the issue of anti-Semitism. Encourage the press to attend and cover such events.
- 68.** Approach human rights and political groups to ask them to make visible and vocal statements condemning anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred.
- 69.** Develop online petitions both as a response to specific anti-Semitic incidents and related concerns. Submit those petitions to appropriate public officials.
- 70.** Write to the heads-of-state of countries that are experiencing anti-Semitism or when they or others in their government make anti-Semitic statements to let them know that there is a groundswell of support in fighting anti-Semitism.
- 71.** Write to commend heads-of-state when they or others in their government visibly and vocally condemn anti-Semitism or take actions to prevent its expression.

IN YOUR GENERAL COMMUNITY

- 72.** Organize “The People of (Name of Your Community) Organized Against Anti-Semitism” to pursue the ideas in this handout—and others! Encourage participation in the group from within all sectors of your community.

- 73.** Develop an e-mail distribution list to disseminate information about anti-Semitism.
- 74.** Ask community organizations, civic groups and professional associations of which you are a member to sponsor a speaker or other program on anti-Semitism.
- 75.** Organize a community-wide “Walk/Run Against Anti-Semitism” with the event’s proceeds being used to fund a community event about anti-Semitism or donated to an organization that fights anti-Semitism.
- 76.** Organize other community events such as bake sales, parades, and concerts to raise funds for communities in Europe and elsewhere that have been the targets of anti- Semitic terrorism. Publicize such events to encourage participation and alert your community to the ongoing and growing nature of international anti-Semitic violence.
- 77.** Research and make a presentation (sponsored by a local organization) on the history of your community’s involvement with anti-Semitism, e.g., anti-Semitic incidents, response to the Holocaust, and other local triumphs and defeats.
- 78.** Sponsor a “(Name of Your Community) Fights Anti-Semitism Day” that includes events and activities appropriate for all members of your community, e.g., speeches, workshops, plays, films and diversity training.
- 79.** Encourage local newspapers, radio and television stations to run a series about anti-Semitism, emphasizing its latest incarnations. Ask both your electronic and print media to cover community events that deal with anti-Semitism.
- 80.** Approach your local radio and television stations to do public service announcements about anti-Semitism, particularly the “new anti-Semitism.”
- 81.** Attend events where you have reason to believe that speakers might make anti-Semitic statements. If the speaker does make such comments, take action. For example, challenge the anti-Semitism during the question-and-answer period, ask the sponsoring organization to present a rebuttal speaker, encourage local newspapers to publish a critique, or mail or e-mail your response to as many attendees as possible.
- 82.** Ask your local bookstores and libraries to create displays of books and to develop and promote reading lists about anti-Semitism.
- 83.** Develop a petition drive for local organizations and businesses to go on record condemning anti-Semitism.
- 84.** Regularly visit websites of human rights groups and organizations such as the ADL in order to keep current on anti-Semitic incidents and organized efforts to combat them.
- 85.** Contact ADL about volunteering to monitor anti-Semitic activities on the online and in your community. When such activities occur, be vocal in condemning them; write letters-to-the-editor and speak up at meetings and in day-to-day conversation.
- 86.** Develop, produce and distribute bumper stickers and T-shirts that challenge anti-Semitism.
- 87.** Develop, produce and distribute materials that people can display on their front doors or in windows to announce that they are actively fighting anti-Semitism.

- 88.** Write letters-to-the-editor when anti-Semitic incidents take place in your community, when news stories with an anti-Semitic slant appear, when opinion pieces or political cartoons in your local paper include anti-Semitic images or language.
- 89.** Request a meeting with your local newspaper's editorial board to discuss ways to curtail anti-Semitism and encouraging them to exercise vigilance in refusing to publish material that is intentionally or inadvertently anti-Semitic.
- 90.** Be creative. Come up with your own ideas! They're likely to be the ones that are right for your community!

GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDING TO ANTI-SEMITISM

1. If the anti-Semitic incident is initiated by an anonymous aggressor or comes from an unknown source...

- ▶ Do not respond to hostile messages and do not delete them. Should illegal behavior occur, they may be needed as evidence.
- ▶ If the incident involves threats of violence, extortion, obscene messages, harassment, stalking or any other behavior you think may be a hate crime or otherwise unlawful, tell your parents, guardians or other adults. Report the incident to the police.
- ▶ If necessary, block offending e-mail addresses or cell phone numbers, and talk with your family about changing your phone numbers, e-mail addresses and screen names.
- ▶ If necessary, file complaints with e-mail services, Internet Service Providers, websites, cell phone companies, etc.
- ▶ Report the incident to school so they can make sure that the district's Internet system is not being used for the dissemination of hate messages or materials.
- ▶ When necessary, seek the support of community and school-based mental health professionals who can assist you in coping with the impact of the incident.
- ▶ Report the incident to the Anti-Defamation League, which tracks hate incidents and can provide advice, student education, and/or professional development around particular forms of bias.

2. If the anti-Semitic incident comes from a known source within the school or community, in addition to the above steps...

- ▶ Consider your relationship to the aggressor and who else is in the immediate vicinity to determine whether or not you should respond immediately or wait until later.
- ▶ If the aggressor is a friend, or someone who says he or she is "just kidding around," take a stand. Explain that the comment is offensive and not a joke to you. Ask your friend to refrain from such comments in the future.
- ▶ If the aggressor isn't someone you know well, pause and assess the safety of the situation before deciding what action to take.
- ▶ If you feel you are in danger, seek the assistance of an adult immediately.
- ▶ Keep your parents, guardians or other adult family members informed of any anti-Semitic incidents you experience.

Parts of this handout adapted from "Hate Crime or Hate Incident?," *Master Training Manual* (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 2005) and Hate Crime Laws: The ADL Approach, <http://www.adl.org/media/2143/download>.

HOW TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM

“Taking a stand” requires a commitment to take action against the anti-Semitic language and behaviors that happen in your school or community. It doesn’t necessarily mean you should jump in and directly confront every offensive remark, though that may be the most appropriate and effective response in some situations. To determine when and how to respond, ask yourself a few quick questions about who the aggressor is, your relationship with the person, and the possible safety concerns of the situation. Although there is no one right way to respond, no magic words or actions that apply to every situation, a commitment to take action and a willingness to respond in effective and appropriate ways will help you to establish school and community environments where you and others feel safe and respected. When you are faced with anti-Semitism, the guidelines below will help you choose the best and most appropriate action to take.

TO SPEAK UP NOW OR LATER; THAT IS THE QUESTION!

In some instances, it is best to speak up immediately in response to an anti-Semitic comment. Other times, it may be better to wait and speak privately to the person who has said or done something anti-Semitic. Before reacting, ask yourself these questions:

► **HOW WELL DO I KNOW THE PERSON?**

Is it a friend or someone you don’t know? If a good friend makes an anti-Semitic comment, even as a “joke,” you can feel fairly comfortable speaking up immediately. If you don’t know the person, there are other considerations to think about before deciding what action to take.

► **IS IT SAFE TO SPEAK UP IMMEDIATELY?**

Quickly assess the safety of the situation. If you know the aggressor, think about whether he or she has a history of bullying or harassing others.

Did the person engage in anti-Semitism because of a conflict or feelings of anger?

When people are feeling strong emotions, such as anger, they are less likely to hear what you’re trying to say. Is there a chance that an immediate response could escalate the situation? If you wait until after the person has had a chance to calm down, they may be more receptive to what you are saying.

Did the person intend to be offensive?

Try to determine the person’s intention. You can usually tell the difference between something said or done out of ignorance and something meant to be intentionally hurtful. If the person does not realize that the behavior is anti-Semitic, there are simple ways to let him or her know. If the intention was to be hurtful and cruel, proceed carefully. It may be better to postpone responding until you can talk the situation over with an adult family member or other trusted adult.

► **WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING AND WHO ELSE IS AROUND?**

Assess what is happening around you. Is there a large group of other people in the vicinity? Sometimes, when you immediately challenge what someone has said or done, the person

can become embarrassed or defensive. In these cases, it is more effective to wait until later to say something; however, make a personal commitment to do so. Set a time and place to talk to the person, so you don't later change your mind about responding.

► **DO I NEED HELP?**

If you are in immediate danger or are unsure how the situation can otherwise be resolved, seek the assistance of an adult or ask someone else to get help. A teacher, parent or other trusted adult can assist you in taking consistent and appropriate action against aggressor.

HOW TO TAKE A STAND¹

Whether you decide to speak up now or later or to seek the assistance of someone else or not, you can use the following simple but effective strategies to respond to anti-Semitic name-calling, stereotypes, jokes and behaviors:

1. Assume Good Intent and Explain Impact.

It's not necessary for you to shame, blame or insult someone who has made a thoughtless anti-Semitic comment. *"I know you didn't mean any harm, but what you just said hurts."*

2. Ask a Question.

Assume the person is not being intentionally offensive, and ask a simple, non-blaming question. *"What do you mean by that comment?"*

3. Interrupt and Redirect.

If you are unable to respond immediately, use this strategy to change the direction of the conversation without having to provide additional information. If the following simple statement doesn't work, consider walking away. *"Let's not go there."*

4. Broaden to Universal Human Behavior.

When people express anti-Semitic stereotypes, they are attributing a common human trait to only Jewish people and assuming that Jewish people are all exactly the same. This strategy breaks through stereotypes by suggesting that the trait applies to humankind in general. *"I think that lots of different people have that quality."*

5. Make It Individual.

The opposite technique is also successful at breaking through stereotypes. This strategy narrows the focus by suggesting the characteristic may apply to some members of a group, but not to everyone in the group. *"Are you speaking about someone in particular?"*

6. Say "Ouch!"

When you don't have the time or energy to speak up, or you aren't sure how to respond, you can say... *"Ouch, that hurt."*

¹ "How to Take a Stand" strategies adapted with permission from Leslie C. Aguilar, *Ouch! That Stereotype Hurts* (Flower Mound: The Walk the Talk Company, 2006). © Leslie C. Aguilar.