# JEWISH STUDENTS & FACULTY
# UNIVERSITY RESOURCE GUIDE
## ENSURING JEWISH INCLUSION & SAFETY

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**PROJECT SHEMA**

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# OUR APPROACH

## Nurturing Understanding

The word s*hema* comes from the Hebrew word "to hear," and it's this concept that guides everything we do. We are a team with diverse identities who have invested our lives in uplifting vulnerable communities

Listening with curiosity and compassion is at the center of our relational engagement approach. Our goal is to help others understand Jews' stories, identities and lived experiences.

## Antisemitism is a systemic bigotry impacting all of us

We are all socialized into anti-Jewish ideas and must do the work to unpack these bigotries and act as allies. These biases show up everywhere, including in mainstream society and sometimes in Israel & Palestine discourse. When these bigotries and biases become normalized, Jews become dehumanized and isolated in society and Jewish people face collective risk.

**All of us have a responsibility to disrupt antisemitism wherever it appears, even and especially when it is our peers who are perpetuating anti-Jewish harm.**

We also recognize how antisemitism fuels white supremacy, undermines democracy, and divides efforts toward equity and progress.

### A paradigm shift in this critical moment

We recognize that there are some people with malice toward Jews in every movement. We need new ways to engage peers who don't wish to harm the Jewish people, but may accidentally perpetuate anti-Jewish harm. This shift requires relationships and nuance. We have to transcend binaries, demonstrate allyship, and call out all dehumanizing language, including about Palestinians, Muslims, and Arabs.

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# INTRODUCTION

This past year has been incredibly challenging for Jews across the globe, including students and staff on campus. Regardless of intent, in the aftermath of October 7th, we've seen a surge of anti-Jewish rhetoric and action, often unnoticed and unchecked. Consequently, **ideas which undermine collective Jewish safety and inclusion are being mainstreamed.**

We as a community acutely understand that this spike in antisemitism is not an aberration, but a time-tested, historical pattern that occurs whenever society's social fabric frays. And, it's usually made worse when conflict emerges between Israel and Hamas regardless of our feelings about the conflict.

## ENGAGING EFFECTIVELY

This resource is designed to **guide Jewish students & faculty** on how to effectively engage school administrators, campus partners, and your respective peers on the anti-Jewish harm that is being mainstreamed in order to **effect systemic change** across campus institutions.

# THE HARMFUL NARRATIVE
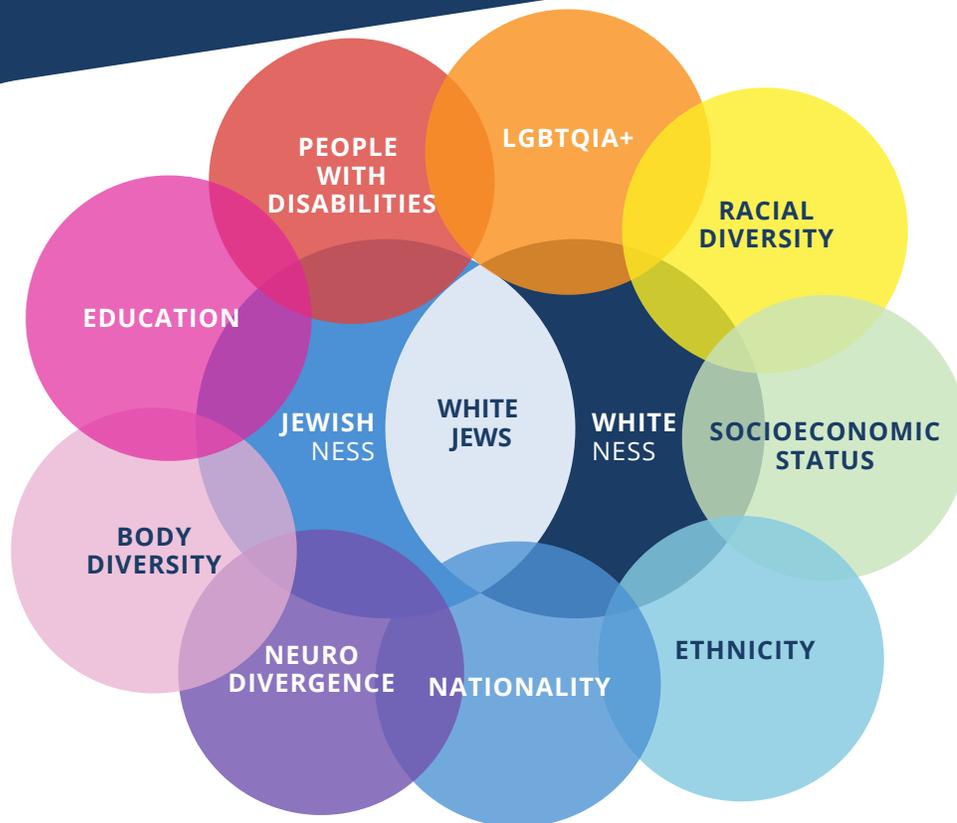
## UNDERMINING JEWISH INCLUSION AND SAFETY

Some are pushing an inaccurate and harmful narrative about the Jewish people. This narrative leverages binary thinking, dividing the world into the powers of good and evil. **Those who push this false binary want us to believe that the state of Israel, the world's only Jewish state, and all who support its existence, represent evil.** This feeds into the ancient antisemitic lie that Jews are responsible for, or are the prime example of, all the world's wrongs.

## This narrative, and the rhetoric and actions that manifest from it, is incompatible with Jewish inclusion and safety

In this false narrative, Israel is defined as a white, European colony and, **Zionism is defined as racism, colonialism, and white supremacy**, rather than a movement for **Jewish liberation and national self-determination** in some portion of our ancestral homeland and a response to millennia of anti-Jewish oppression. This inaccurate narrative belies Jewish history to **justify the goal of dismantling Israel** rather than changing Israeli government policy or establishing an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel.

## This narrative relies on the erasure of Jewish identity by flattening Jewish identity into whiteness.

# JEWISHNESS & WHITENESS

**PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

**LGBTQIA+**

**RACIAL DIVERSITY**

**EDUCATION**

**JEWISH**NESS

**WHITE JEWS**

**WHITE**NESS

**SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS**

**BODY DIVERSITY**

**NEURO DIVERGENCE**

**NATIONALITY**

**ETHNICITY**

## Why many Jews are racialized as white

Many of us have European ancestry, are racialized as white, and have made choices to gain the safety and privileges associated with whiteness. This level of access is the exception to the rule, though, for the Jewish world today and historically.

## Conflating Whiteness & Jewishness

The problematic assumption that all Jews are white is often compounded by the belief that whiteness and Jewishness are inseparable. Not only does this erase the existence & history of Jews of Color around the world (and the majority demographic in Israel), **people often use this to dismiss antisemitism**

## Accelerating antisemitism

For many, whiteness is associated with power and oppression, and ancient, deeply ingrained anti-Jewish ideas cast Jews as too powerful & untrustworthy. **Flattening our identity into whiteness therefore accelerates antisemitism** by enabling false narratives to easily spread. This narrative leads to the **demonization**, **exclusion**, and **isolation** of most Jews

# THE HARMFUL NARRATIVE

## UNDERMINING JEWISH INCLUSION AND SAFETY

## This narrative leads to the demonization, exclusion and isolation of most Jews

Those pushing this narrative **equate concepts like Zionism and white supremacy,** hoping to make it **socially acceptable to argue that the world's only Jewish state shouldn't exist.**

In this binary framework, Jews who simply support Israel's right to exist (aka Zionists), even those who vehemently disagree with Israeli government policy, are considered akin to white supremacists. In this context, **the word "Zionist" is explicitly used as a pejorative, which has the intended targeting effect of placing almost all Jews outside the community of the good**, undeserving of allyship and protection. It then becomes acceptable to demonize Jews in Israel and harass Jews in the diaspora because of their perceived connection to Israel. This dehumanizing framework leads to exclusion, isolation, and ultimately **enables individual & collective violence against Jews.**

## THIS INACCURATE NARRATIVE
## NORMALIZES VIOLENCE AGAINST JEWS

Since this narrative casts Israel as an illegitimate, European colony, its **proponents argue Israel must be fully dismantled** ('decolonize Palestine'). This leads to the justification of horrific violence, where people refuse to hold Hamas accountable for the acts of October 7th.

They see this **violence as justified resistance to white colonial oppression.** Any challenge to this view is treated as an attack on the rights of Indigenous communities. We can assume a future attack intended to "decolonize" the land (destroy the state of Israel) would be justified as well.

THE ONLY WAY
TO ACHIEVE **LITERAL
DECOLONIZATION** IS
THROUGH MASS ACTS OF
# VIOLENCE
AGAINST ISRAELI JEWS OR ROUGHLY
## HALF THE JEWS
## ON EARTH

There is
no space or
society Jews will
feel safe or be safe in if
violence against Jews is tolerated

**Normalizing violence also threatens democracy**

We should be wary of the normalization of violence against innocent civilians in pursuit of political goals, which poses a direct threat to democratic societies.

# HOW THESE HARMFUL IDEAS ARE SHOWING UP ON CAMPUS

Its important to view these individual ideas as part of a **single connected story undermining Jewish inclusion and safety**, not disconnected phrases

# Globalize the intifada

**The Second Intifada** refers to a period of violent terrorist attacks, including bus bombings against civilians in Israel. Therefore, Jews may hear this as a glorification of those terrorist attacks and a call for the replication of such violence, or simply a call for **global movement to destroy the world's only Jewish state**. Intentionally or not, this rhetoric **promotes violence against Jews** by suggesting that all Jews are legitimate targets of violence based on the actions of the Israeli government.

# Decolonization by any means necessary

"Decolonization by any means necessary," or any variation of that phrase, **justifies the violence of October 7th** and **violence against Jews in Israel in general.** Characterizing Jews/Israelis as colonists also **erases Jews' connection to their ancestral homeland**

Most Jews understandably hear this as a **threat to collective Jewish safety** given its normalization of violence and its call to remove colonists (Jews/Israelis) from the land
**Justifying violence against Jews is antisemitism**

# From the River to the Sea

While not every person who chants this hopes for the elimination of the state of Israel, taken literally, this language and image, for many, **describes a single state of Palestine existing in all the land of current Israel and Palestine** (from the Jordan river to the Mediterranean Sea). This is **understood by most Jews as a call to end the state of Israel**, a future only possible through violence.

# Zionism is racism & colonialism

Describing Zionism as racism and describing Israelis as (European) colonizers **erases Jewish history and diversity**, and **dehumanizes Israelis** – those who fled persecution, the survivors of genocide or refugees of ethnic cleansing in the Middle East, and their descendants.

# WHAT THIS SOUNDS LIKE
and what Jews hear

**01** "We need a global movement"

**02** "To dismantle the world's only Jewish state"

### "Globalize the intifada"



### "Decolonize the land"



### "Free Palestine from the river to the sea"





Transparency & history show
ZIONISM =
COLONIALISM
RACISM
APARTHEID
WAR CRIMES
GENOCIDE

### "Zionism is racism and colonialism"

**03** "Return the land to the *real* Indigenous population"

**04** "Because Israel is a white supremacist, colonial project"

# A CONNECTED STORY

## not simply isolated language

It is paramount to see each example not as disparate, disconnected ideas, but as a single, connected story.

**Some people are calling to globalize the intifada, to decolonize the land, and free Palestine from the river to the sea because Zionism is racism & colonialism.**

Therefore, they argue, Zionists are racists, support white supremacy & must be confronted. This excludes almost all Jews from the community of the good. Taken together, this leads to Jews being **demonized**, **dehumanized**, and **excluded**, sowing the seeds of, and tapping into, anti-Jewish sentiment that has historically led to violence.

# UNDERSTANDING
# JEWISH IDENTITY & ANTISEMITISM

## 01 WHO ARE THE JEWISH PEOPLE?



SKIN COLOR
RELIGION
LANGUAGE
CULTURE
HISTORY
MANY ETHNICITIES
ALL RACES
NATION

### what people **assume**

Most people **think of** Jews as a **white, religious community.**

### who we **are**

- **Jews identify as a people or nation,** now and long before there was a religion called Judaism.
- Many Jews do not consider themselves to be religious.
- Jewish people are **multi-racial and multi-ethnic,** with diaspora communities **all over the world.**
- Jews **originate from the Land of Israel,** but were expelled and turned into a largely diasporic people as a result.

## 02 WHY THIS PERCEPTION?

### Erasure of a complex identity

Despite the prevailing social constructs around race and identity, Jews are often and primarily categorized by non-Jews as a religious group, erasing the complexity of our identity. This ignores how the Jewish diaspora has been shaped by a history of expulsions and persecution, leading to the dispersion of Jewish communities across nations worldwide.

### Safety through assimilation

In the U.S., many Jewish immigrants actively sought safety through assimilation into whiteness (changing names, adapting cultural practices, etc.). Images of Jews in media & popular culture are typically centered around white Jews. This centering of one Jewish narrative erases the complexity, beauty, and diversity of our global peoplehood.

# UNDERSTANDING
# JEWISH IDENTITY & ANTISEMITISM

**03**

## WHAT IS CONTEMPORARY ANTISEMITISM?

MOST THINK ANTISEMITISM IS ABOUT **RELIGION**
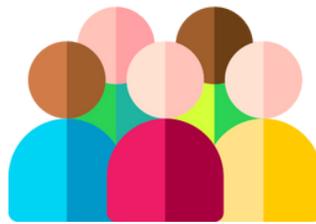
BUT ANTISEMITISM IS ABOUT **PEOPLE**

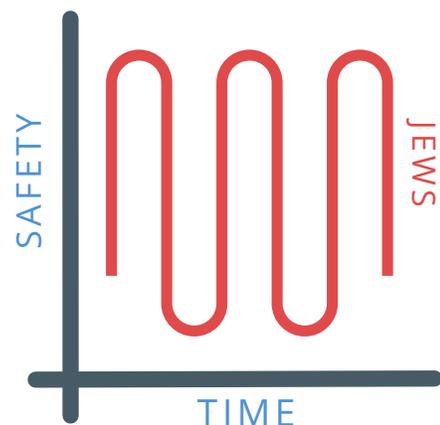Jews are typically attacked for **who we are**, not how we pray.

### CONTEMPORARY ANTISEMITISM IS TYPICALLY ANTI-JEW, NOT ANTI-JUDAISM

**04**

## HOW DOES ANTISEMITISM WORK?

**JEWISH SAFETY CAN CHANGE RAPIDLY**

- **Antisemitism functions differently than other systemic bigotries**, which are typically fixed in a given society.
- There are many examples of Jews living safely and thriving in a society, only for this status to shift rapidly, leading to systemic violence and even expulsions.
- **Throughout Jewish history, skin color & status have not guaranteed safety in any society.**

SAFETY

JEWS

TIME

# STOPPING THE CYCLE OF ANTISEMITISM



SAFETY

TIME

**STAGE 1**
DEMONIZATION & DEHUMANIZATION

**STAGE 2**
EXCLUSION & ISOLATION
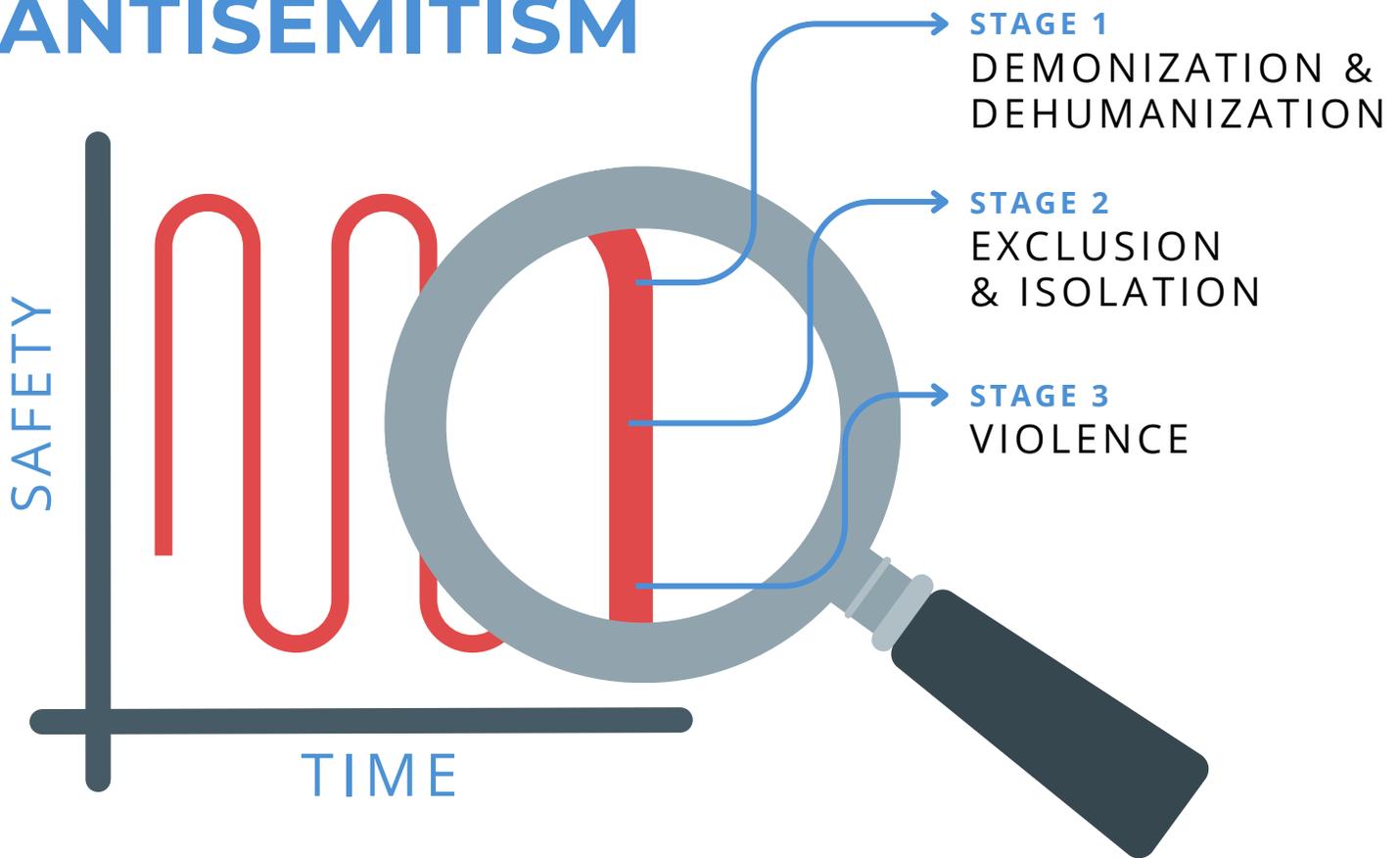
**STAGE 3**
VIOLENCE

## ANTISEMITISM CAN COME FROM ANYWHERE

Because antisemitism is so adaptable, elements of all three of these stages come from the far left or far right. White supremacists may demonize Jews as a non-white group that is trying to replace the US' white population while the far left may demonize Jews by treating them as exemplary of white supremacy

## OUR GOAL IN COMBATTING ANTISEMITISM

Whether from the right or the left, these examples undermine individual and collective Jewish safety while also destabilizing the environment of pluralism & inclusion that serve as the bedrock of our educational institutions

**Allyship with the Jewish people means working to stop this cycle**

# WHO WE SHOULD ENGAGE
## (AND WHO WE SHOULDN'T)

### Effectively leveraging our time, energy and communication

## 01

### USING BINARIES?

If this person is using a binary framework that allows for empathy with Palestinians but **prevents them from empathizing with the Jewish people's trauma, and individual and collective rights**, and you should not engage.

## 02

### INADVERTENT HARM?

If someone has empathy for both Jews & Palestinians but **leverages anti-Jewish ideas** in support of Palestinian justice, we should continue the conversation in order to address these harms.

## 03

### FOCUSED CRITICISM?

If the person is limiting their criticism to Israeli political leaders or real government actions that harm Palestinians and **is not expressing ideas that undermine Jewish inclusion and safety,** share your genuine empathy for Palestinian suffering.
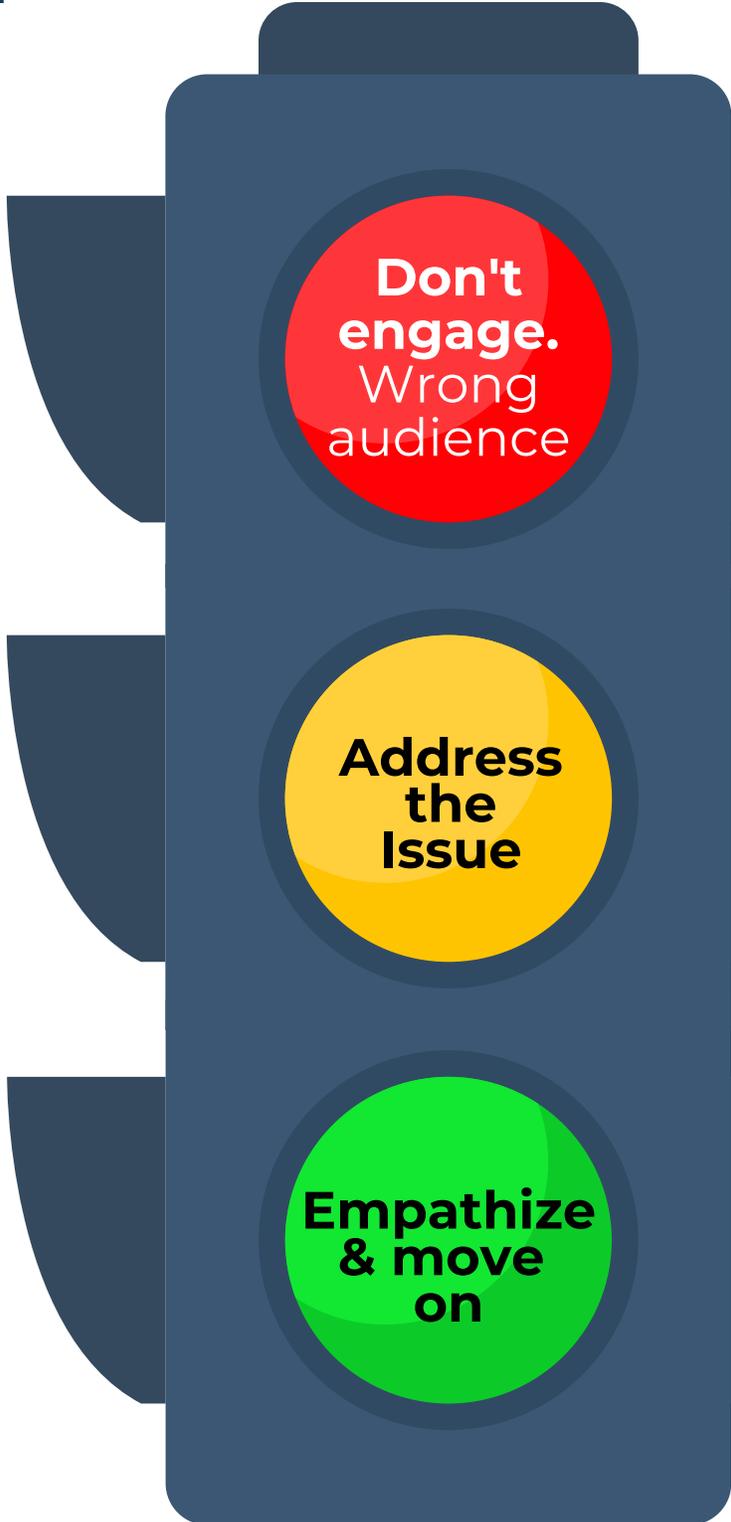
**Don't engage.** Wrong audience

**Address the Issue**

**Empathize & move on**

# Engagement Priorities

## Be strategic with time & maximize impact

## WITH ADMINISTRATORS

### ACTIONS

- Share our **tailored antisemitism resource** with administrators, DEI professionals, student life staff, or any other staff responsible for fostering an inclusive environment on campus.
- Ask them to meet and discuss the ideas outlined in the guide.
- Work with them to implement the changes our community needs.

### REMEMBER

Addressing these challenges must be understood as a **long-term process**.
Our goal is to ensure that administrators **prioritize** these **systemic changes.**

## WITH PEERS

### ACTIONS

- Working with your Jewish peers, and leveraging our audience framework and conversation guide above, identify a list of people to engage with one on one
- Focus on helping them understand the specific harmful narrative outlined above
- You can share our guide for your peers with them to help them better understand
- Ask people to help our community address this concern with the university

### REMEMBER

We're not necessarily trying to convince people who vehemently agree with the false and harmful narrative outlined in this guide. Our goal is to help the broader community understand how that story not only **undermines Jewish inclusion and safety,** but also how **antisemitism is connected to other bigotries** and serves as a fundamental threat to our democracy and movements for justice.

# Conversation Goals

## Funnel (top to bottom)

- **Story of Them**
- **Story of Self**
- **Story of the Jewish People**
- **Explaining Antisemitism**
- **Clarify & Verify**
- **Address Hard Questions**

## 01 FOLLOW THE ENGAGEMENT FUNNEL

**The funnel is about building trust & empathy.** The goal is to build relationships and establish trust by the sharing of our personal narratives through **Story of Them** & **Story of Self. Story of the Jewish People** and **Explaining Antisemitism** humanizes Jews and our concerns by fixing an often inaccurate perception of Jewish identity and antisemitism, including experiences on school grounds today.

## 02 PRACTICE EMPATHY

**Demonstrate genuine empathy for** Palestinians and their experiences. Name & honor the real **harm Palestinians are experiencing** in this conflict.

## 03 CLARIFY & VERIFY

**Don't assume** the intentions of others.

What does someone mean when they say, "Zionism," for example?" How we respond to a particular criticism will depend on answers to these and similar questions.

## 04 REMEMBER THE GOAL

Your goal is to **slow the spread of harmful ideas**, not win a debate.

# GUIDING QUESTIONS

## Using the funnel

**Story of Them**

**Story of Self**

**Step One**
Build Personal Trust

Story of The Jewish People

**Step Two**
Humanize Jews & Our Concerns

Explaining Antisemitism

**Clarify & Verify**

**Step Three**
Navigate Challenging Issues

**Address Hard Questions**

## 01 Story of them

- How are you doing right now?
- How has 10/7 and the ensuing war personally impacted you?
- Are you personally connected to anyone in Israel or Gaza?
- How do you feel about the campus environment over the past year?

## 02 Story of self

- How has October 7 and the ensuing war personally impacted you?
- Do you feel campus has been welcoming to and protective of Jewish students and faculty?
- Have you personally experienced antisemitism since the war's outbreak?
- Have you had any experiences that made you feel alone or isolated, or that you couldn't show up fully as a Jewish person

## 03 Story of the Jewish People

- How have the events of 10/7 & the war activated the Jewish community's collective trauma?
- How does a history of systemic violence impact our sense of psychological & physical safety?
- How does our history of persecution inform our connection to and strong belief in Israel's existence as a homeland for the Jewish people?

**Story of Them**

**Story of Self**

**Step One**
Build Personal Trust

**Story of The Jewish People**

**Explaining Antisemitism**

**Step Two**
Humanize Jews & Our Concerns

**Clarify & Verify**

**Address Hard Questions**

**Step Three**
Navigate Challenging Issues

**Emphasize** how labeling Jews as "white" erases the diversity of the Jewish people, particularly non-Ashkenazi Jews of color, and overlooks the fact that a majority of Israelis are descendants of Jews from the Middle East and North Africa.

**Explain** how referring to Jews/Israelis as colonizers or Israel as a "colonial" entity erases the Jewish peoples' ancestral connection to the land and demonizes and dehumanizes Israelis and Jews who support them.

## 04 Explaining Antisemitism

- Jews should not be held responsible for the actions of the Israeli government
- Antisemitism is connected to other bigotries and serves as a fundamental threat to our democracy and movements for justice
- Portraying the state of Israel, the world's only Jewish state, and all who support its existence, as representations of evil feeds into the ancient antisemitic lie that Jews are responsible for, or are the prime example of, all the world's wrongs
- The problematic assumption that all Jews are white erases the existence and history of Jews of Color, and identifies Jewishness and whiteness (associated with power and oppression) as the prime co-evils that must be dismantled, which accelerates antisemitism by enabling false narratives to easily spread
- Jewish safety can and has changed rapidly regardless of skin color and status

**Note:** reference page 13 & 14 for a guide on explaining Jewish identity & antisemitism
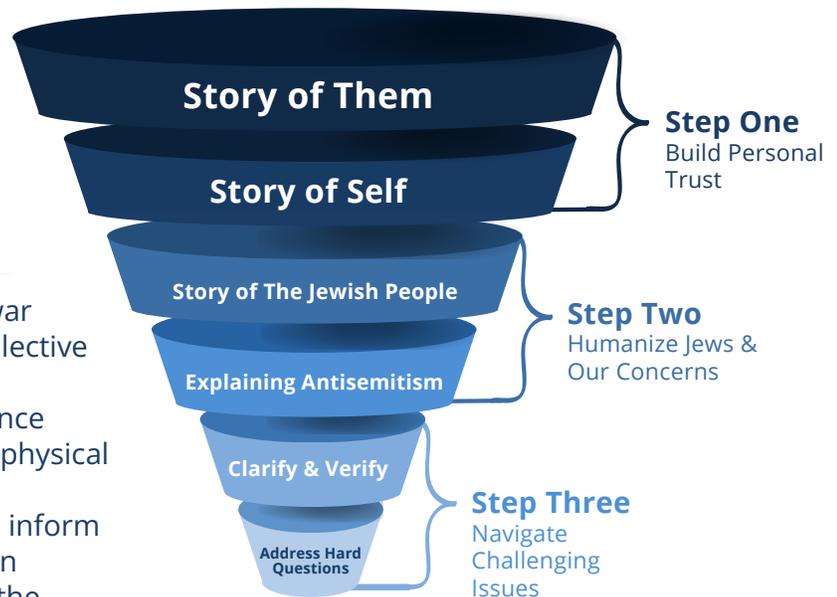
# ENGAGEMENT FUNNEL

## OFFLINE

### Two Simple Rules

**Take everyone through the funnel**
When engaging someone on these issues for the first time, start at the top. In relationships when you've each previously shared your stories, you may still want to remind them

**Follow the funnel in every conversation**
While you don't need to spend too much time at the top of the funnel with someone you've engaged before, don't assume they remember the key ideas and context

## ONLINE

### A Little More Complicated

**With people you know, move online to offline**
Interpersonal dialogue is always better, though a public response is sometimes necessary

**Follow the funnel order, wherever you enter**
The "Story of the Jewish People" should always precede "Explaining Antisemitism"; etc.

**Your goal and audience are always the same**
Nurture empathy & slow down the ripple effect

# HAVING PRODUCTIVE DIALOGUE
## and speaking across differences

**01**

### Disagree without debating

- **Name your concerns** about how violence against Jews is normalized when our community is isolated or targeted on campus.
- It is important that we **all advocate for Palestinians**, and that we do so in a way that honors the reality of the conflict and does not **accidentally perpetuate harm** against Jews.

**02**

### Speak to the impact of their language and share your concerns

- Share the concerns that Jews have about the **real harm** language can cause.
- Ask them to **understand** the ways in which certain language can be used to **demonize** or **justify harm** to Jews

**03**

### Ask for nuance & empathy

- Ask them to **differentiate** the actions of the Israeli government or military from the Israeli people.
- Name that **demonizing** or **attacking Jews** for the actions of the Israeli government is antisemitism and is unacceptable.
- Request that they **condemn antisemitism** and **recognize the harm** caused by the problematic language they use.
- Ask them to **empathize with the Jewish people**. Help them to understand that Jews are going to support both the Israeli and Palestinian people right now.

# BEFORE
## ENGAGING IN 1:1 CONVERSATIONS

### HAVE A PLAN

It's important to have a plan before you go into any sensitive conversation, especially in this moment.

In order to successfully use the information provided in the pages of this tool kit, we encourage you to use this checklist - along with the worksheets and conversation guides that follow - to engage in meaningful 1:1 conversations.

**01**
### REFLECT
Use the **Story of Self** and **Story of The Jewish People** worksheets to reflect on the things you want to convey in each conversation.

**02**
### PLAN
**Reflect on the conversation guide** that best represents the person you're meeting. Take note of things you want to say specifically to that person, based on what you know to be true right now.

**03**
### ENGAGE
When possible, **meet in person.** If not, a virtual face-to-face conversation is best. Use the conversation guide to help you navigate the dialogue.

**04**
### RESTORE
**Take time to process** your conversation, and replenish your mental and emotional energy.

**05**
### FOLLOW UP
**Touch base** after the conversation in whatever ways make sense.

# OTHER
# HELPFUL TIPS

### 01 Show you care
Jewish faculty should check on their Jewish students to let them know you are there for them and you care about their safety, so they feel both safe and seen. Consider offering periodic "office hours" with Jewish students & their families.

### 02 Provide trusted reporting mechanisms
Students and faculty may be reluctant to report incidents out of fear of backlash, exacerbating the issue, or having their concerns be dismissed. Ask administrators to provide a trusted, confidential, and perhaps anonymous means by which students and faculty can safely report incidents.

### 03 Use Professional support
If you experienced a hate-related incident, speak to a trauma-informed school counselor or social worker.

### 04 Leverage affinity spaces
Though not all people process similarly, some Jewish students & faculty may find it preferable and safer to share their emotions with members of their own community. Create a Jewish student, Jewish faculty, or Jewish student-faculty collective that meets periodically to foster community & reinforce mutual support.

### 05 Organize together
You are not alone and you don't need to do this work alone. In fact, you will be more impactful doing this intentionally, strategically, and with your peers

### 06 Learn on your own
Sharpen your own knowledge and conversational skills so you feel better equipped to handle sensitive interactions with your peers.

### 07 Engage Campus Jewish institutions
Seek guidance or support from trusted campus Jewish institutions.