



WHAT DOES SUPPORTING ISRAEL LOOK LIKE?

PREP FOR THE SESSION

Overview

This resource explores **our relationship with Israel** through the value of **Solidarity**.

At-a-Glance:



This resource was created in partnership with Unpacked for Educators.

This resource explores the value of solidarity in our relationship with Israel. It addresses the challenge of balancing support for Israel with constructive criticism. Participants reflect on the practical aspects of expressing solidarity, including when and how to voice criticism. Through journaling and Jewish wisdom, it encourages a deeper understanding of when and how to share critical feedback within relationships. The session concludes with commitments to express solidarity effectively while navigating the delicate balance of criticism and support.



Time Estimate:

40 minutes



Materials Needed:

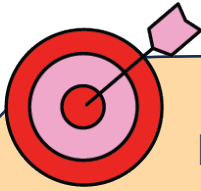
- Pen and paper for journal-writing



Best Uses:

- For teen and young adult audiences
- For an opportunity to reflect on relationships
- For small group settings with an opportunity for discussion

LET'S GET STARTED



FRAME THE ISSUE

Read the following for context:

Israel may be a place we feel deeply connected to, because of our Jewish identity, Jewish history, family and friends who call it home, and memorable visits. At the same time, we might also find ourselves disagreeing with some of Israel's policies, whether internal (ex: judicial reforms, issues of religion and state), or external (Israel's treatment of Palestinians). Navigating when and how to express our criticisms of Israel can be difficult, requiring us to balance expressing our individual values while also supporting a country we care about which is often under attack.

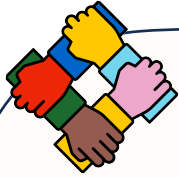
We may find ourselves wondering, can we be critical of a place and supportive at the same time?

Facilitator prompts the group:

- Think of a relationship that you value. What are three adjectives you would use to describe that relationship?
- Does being in a relationship with a place or person obligate me to share criticism when I feel they can do better? Share some examples from when you have felt this to be true.
- When might standing in solidarity mean withholding my criticism? Share some examples from when this felt right to you.

8 min





EXPLORE THE VALUE: SOLIDARITY

Read the following:

Solidarity is defined as “unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group.” It’s also a word that is used often with regard to Israel, especially in times of crisis. But what does expressing solidarity look like practically? Does it mean always agreeing with everything a country, group, or person does, or can you show solidarity and be critical at the same time? Should criticism be expressed publicly or privately? Can the way we demonstrate solidarity change based on the urgency of the situation?

Facilitator prompts the group:

- What is a time you stood in solidarity with a country, group, or person? What did that look like practically?
- Are there times when you felt hesitant about standing in solidarity? What prompted your hesitation and were you able to resolve it?
- How might you navigate the tension between standing in solidarity while still expressing important criticism? How can you navigate being supportive in a relationship in a way that feels authentic to you?

6 min



8 min



ACTIVITY

JOURNAL WRITING

Facilitator prompts the group:

Think of a friend with whom you have a deep relationship, but you don't see eye to eye on many issues. Recently, this friend has done something with which you completely disagree.

Let's explore different ways you can share critical feedback within this relationship, through some journal writing.

1. Spend 3 minutes journaling your response. Write down everything you want to say, paying attention to your emotions and how this stance or these actions have impacted you.
2. Now, pause. Spend another 3 minutes looking through what you wrote down. Underline the sections of your critical response that you would feel comfortable sharing with your friend, leaving out anything you would keep private.

Then, reflect:

- What parts of your response did you feel comfortable sharing with your friend? Which parts did you keep private and why?
- Are there parts of the private journal entry that you still might share with your friend in a different context? Would you change anything about how they are expressed?
- How can you effectively balance when to share criticism and feedback and when to just offer support in a relationship?



JEWISH ANCHOR

The facilitator should have a volunteer read through the following source:

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yevamot, 65b:

Just as it is a Mitzvah for a person to say that which will be heeded, so is it a Mitzvah for a person not to say that which will not be heeded.

כָּשֶׁם שֶׁמְצִוָּה עַל אָדָם לֵאמֹר דָּבָר
הַנִּשְׁמָע – כִּי מְצִוָּה עַל אָדָם
שֶׁלֹּא לֵאמֹר דָּבָר שֶׁאֵינוֹ נִשְׁמָע.

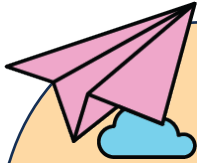
Facilitator prompts the group:

- How might you summarize this teaching in your own words?
- What is surprising about this teaching?
- How can you tell when someone is open to hearing something versus when they are not ready to be receptive?
- How might you connect this back to the tension inherent in the value of solidarity? What lessons about balancing support and criticism can we learn from this source?

7 min



5 min



PROMPT ACTION

Facilitator shares the following prompt with the participants:

Please take two minutes to respond to the following prompt in writing:

- Even though _____ is difficult for me about Israel, I can express solidarity through _____.
- As a result of this session, I will be more intentional about when I share critical feedback and when to keep it to myself in order to _____.



Facilitator prompts the group:

If you are comfortable, please pair up with another participant and take turns sharing your answers.

Then, discuss the following:

- How might you balance support and criticism in your relationships moving forward?
- How might you navigate this tension specifically in your relationship with Israel?



CLOSE WITH INTENTION

In this resource, we explored the idea of balancing support for Israel and sharing criticism through the value of solidarity. We highlighted that solidarity does not exclude criticism but it does obligate us to consider when and how to express it, with a distinction between public and private feedback. Ultimately, we can always distinguish between showing solidarity with a country and critiquing its government or policies. Being in a relationship means having difficult conversations, but it need not diminish our deep feelings of connection; ideally, it should strengthen it.



Facilitator prompts the group:

One way I'm thinking differently about solidarity after this session is

_____.

4 min

