



WHOSE JOB IS IT TO ADDRESS ANTISEMITISM?

PREP FOR THE SESSION

Overview:

This resource explores **antisemitism** through the value of **responsibility**.

At-a-Glance:

This resource explores the value of responsibility and the impact we can have on the world. It asks participants to consider how we prioritize different responsibilities and why we might feel called to address some issues over others. Through listening to podcast excerpts, participants reflect on how to balance dependence and independence when solving problems impacting their communities and whether or not antisemitism is a Jewish problem to solve. The session concludes asking participants to share how their view of responsibility has changed as a result of this session.



Time Estimate:

40 mins



Materials Needed:

- Copies of the Venn Diagram handout linked [here](#)

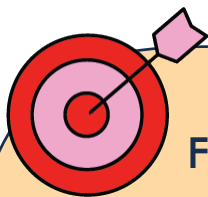


Best Uses:

- For teens, students on campus, or young adults
- Can be facilitated virtually or in-person

LET'S GET STARTED

5-7 min



FRAME THE ISSUE

In the aftermath of the October 7th Hamas attack on Israel, many progressive Jews felt abandoned by their left-wing allies. Many felt a sense of “existential loneliness” in the face of silence or apathy from people whose causes they have spent years supporting. To quote Los Angeles Rabbi Sharon Brous:

“The clear message from many in the world, especially from our world – those who claim to care the most about justice and human dignity – is that these Israeli victims somehow deserved this terrible fate.”



Others felt it through the silence online from influencers and actors who chose not to condemn the atrocities of Hamas, and from coworkers and classmates who did not check in, and avoided the issue.



Facilitator prompts the group:

- Should the Jewish community expect support from non-Jewish allies in the wake of terror attacks or antisemitism?
- What type of support were you looking for post October 7th? What type of support did you receive?



EXPLORE THE VALUE: RESPONSIBILITY

There are many different places where we feel responsibility for in our lives. These can include our families, friends, jobs, and Jewish identity. It can also extend outwards to issues facing our own communities as well as global problems impacting the world at large. With so many competing issues pulling on our time, how do we determine how to prioritize our responsibilities? When is it our responsibility to address problems in our communities and when does that responsibility belong to others?

Facilitator prompts the group:

- As it relates to combating antisemitism, do you feel a responsibility to do something? If so, what? If not, why not?

JEWISH WISDOM

Facilitator prompts the group:

Listen to the following excerpt from the Unpacked podcast “Wondering Jews with Mijal and Noam” (Dr. Mijal Bitton & Dr. Noam Weissman) on “Antisemitism: Will Jews always be the other?” (Season 1, Episode 2).

Excerpt: (17:15-19:20)

Mijal: ...I think I'm saying that generally I am nervous, or I disagree with the attitude that makes us feel like we have no agency in making things better.

Noam: But see, Mijal, I'm gonna push you on this now. Let's use racism. Is it the black community's job to end racism from people who are white, who have whatever hangups they have or implicit biases they have or whatever issues? Is it the black community's job? Or is it the white community's job to say, you know what we're gonna do? We're going to make sure that we teach the history of racism in our schools. We're going to make sure that we teach the history of slavery in our schools. We're going to teach the history of Jim Crow to the American audience in the schools. We're going to teach a history of apartheid in our schools, and we're going to learn the history very clearly. And so it might be, to use an ed psych term, internal locus of control.

20-30 min





*Our internal locus of control can be to go to these major private schools across the globe, in major public schools across the globe and say, hey listen, we really think you need to be teaching about this in your schools. **But then it's the school's job to do it, not the Jewish community's job to solve this.***

*Mijal: Yeah, I think what you asked is provocative. I don't know if I would ever say it's this community's job to end racism or xenophobia against it. And at the same time, if you think about the civil rights movement in America, **and if you think about the leadership and the heroism of civil rights warriors who really reshaped America, even though it shouldn't have been their burden, right, they led movements and they were able to change things.** So I think if they kind of said, well, this is never gonna change, then things might not have changed. **So I think we need to walk this fine line between internalizing kind of victim blaming and between putting ourselves in a place in which we feel we have no agency.***

Then, reflect:

- What were some of the opinions shared by Mijal & Noam on whether or not Jews have a responsibility to address antisemitism?
- What was something you strongly agreed or disagreed with?
- In your opinion, whose responsibility is it to address antisemitism?
- Connect this back to our previous discussion: When should we be dependent on others to address our problems, and when should it be our responsibility?



ACTIVITY

Facilitator distributes handout.



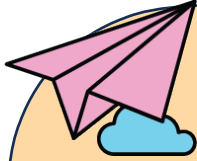
Thinking about combating antisemitism in your school, community or online (pick one), indicate where you feel you have a role to play and where you think allies to the Jewish community are better suited to play a role.

Then, pair up with a chavruta (partner) and share your Venn diagrams.

Discuss:

1. What are the benefits to taking responsibility for antisemitism ourselves?
What are the risks?
2. What are the benefits to relying on others? What are the risks?

5 min



REFLECT AND PROMPT ACTION

In this resource, we explored the idea of solving antisemitism through the value of responsibility.

Facilitator prompts the group:



- One way I'm thinking differently about the responsibility I have to combat antisemitism after this session is _____.
- One way I'm thinking differently about what roles allies can play in combating is _____.
- As a result, one next step I might take is _____.