



Concerns of bullying, harassment and discrimination for Jewish high school students in relationship to escalating violence and conflict in Israel and Gaza

In an era of global connectivity, exacerbated by the pandemic, in which many students find themselves online and engaged on digital platforms, there is an increased risk of online hate, violence, discrimination, harassment and bullying surrounding the escalation of conflict between Israel and Gaza.

You are not alone, no matter how disconnected and dispersed we might be right now by circumstance. We, too, have been where you are, in a position of being bullied and harassed for our Jewish and/or Israeli identity or connection. We are stronger together and it is our sincere hope that we can support and empower you in the face of polarizing, hateful messaging and one-sided, biased information.

You do not have to be an expert on the Arab-Israeli conflict and it is not your responsibility to comment, debate, or offer educational sessions on the I/P conflict. You have the right to determine whether or not you want to engage. This should not be an expectation by your peers, and here are some one-liners to set that boundary:

- I don't feel that I have enough information to comment on this situation.
- I have friends and family in Israel, and my biggest concern right now is their safety and well being. This is not a theoretical situation for me, but incredibly personal and close to home, with grave consequences. I don't have the emotional capacity to engage in dialogue right now. [Addition: I can recommend these resources: _____.]
- Each Jewish individual has a unique and diverse relationship with Israel, and I cannot speak for all Jewish people.
- I would like to have a dialogue about this topic in the future, but at the moment, my emotions are too heightened to have a conversation about the conflict, as this affects me on a deeply personal level. Could I reach out to you when I feel more at ease? I am glad you feel I am someone you can talk to.

When you see peers sharing one-sided, biased information or resources and statements that are factually incorrect or misrepresent Jewish identity or experience, you deserve to be heard and listened to, in a respectful, equity-seeking way if you choose. Here are some thought-provoking one-liners that may support better conversations:

- I would be interested in having a discussion if you are committed to seeing and hearing my perspective, but I am not interested in having a conversation with someone who is committed to misunderstanding/dismissing my point of view or identity.
- I love that you are fighting for a social justice cause, however some of the posts you shared contain information that is incorrect and if shared could be harmful, both in terms of further stigmatizing Jewish/Israeli identity as well leading to real life violence. From what I know, I think that you're a person committed to sharing helpful and honest information. Do you have a moment to speak?
- I feel that this information is purely one-sided, has many historical inaccuracies, and does not reflect the truth of the situation, nor any nuance. Infographics can be really challenging, because several thousand years of history, attachment to the land, and religious, ethnic, cultural and traditional identity cannot be supported in 15 lines or less.

Bridging the peace gap requires demonstrating that most Jewish people around the world are committed to maintaining a Jewish, democratic homeland in Israel and are deeply committed to human rights, freedoms and equity for all. The majority of Israelis and Jews in diaspora are in favour of a two-state solution, are in favour of peace, and believe Palestinians should have the right to self determination.

- Like myself, the majority of Israelis and Jews in diaspora are in favour of a two-state solution, actively work towards peace, and believe Palestinians should have the right to self determination. I do not accept that Palestinian self determination should have to come at the expense of Israeli self-determination. Human rights should be available to all. Do you agree?
- I appreciate that you are sharing information on this critical topic. Whenever I share information, I ask myself the following questions (1) could this be harmful to a group and am I contributing to a dangerous situation for anybody? (2) am I sure that this information is correct, and have I checked that the information cited is accurate before amplifying? (3) what vested interest do I have in sharing only one side of a conflict?
- Are you directly impacted by the conflict or are you a Western, Canadian person who is not impacted and will face no consequences based on these actions? If the latter, what is your intention when sharing this info and why would you choose to share a side that uplifts and supports one group over the other?

Turning the tables:

- Not all Jewish people are Israeli, but 92% of Canadian Jews describe Israel as 'essential to their identity,' and 47% of the world's Jews do live in Israel, so I hope this helps to provide some perspective. Do you feel confident speaking on behalf of all Canadians?
- It's important to separate the actions of a government from the actions of its civilians. You wouldn't hold citizens in other countries, such as Americans in America, responsible for the actions of their leaders, why do you feel differently about Israel and Israelis?

Resources on Instagram (TikTok resources to be developed by CIJA soon)

@jessicaeburke	@cijainfo	@awiderframe	@bassemeid
@blackjewishmagic	@adiel_israel	@muhammadzoabi98	@ilanawols
@rootsmetal	@rudy_israel	@itsallgavi	jewishunpacked