



# How To Talk With College Students Experiencing Antisemitism On campus:

## Tip Sheet For Parents

When students meet with their parents virtually, or come home for the holidays they may still be carrying a great deal of anxiety, stress, fear or even trauma about the current war in Israel and Gaza and the increasing incidents of antisemitism on college campuses. These feelings of being overwhelmed, can interfere with their daily academic and social engagements on campus. Here are some helpful tips to help you talk with your college age children:

### Regulate/Check In With Yourself

- Check in with yourself before having any conversation. Try not to have a discussion when you are feeling overly stressed/anxious. Your own reactions, although understandable, can heighten your child's tension.
- If you are stressed, try grounding exercises that commonly work for you (i.e. deep breathing, meditation, a walk outside). This will allow you to co-regulate and to use your calm presence to calm them.
- Self compassion. Find a support person for yourself to help you through these stressful times.

### Listen

- Actively listen with full attention. Put away your phone, turn off the television. Do not offer solutions or try to solve problems unless asked.
- Allow students to voice their feelings. Voicing feelings can reduce emotional distress.
- No unsolicited advice. This can indicate that you are learning from them about their new reality. This will strengthen open communication from their viewpoint, not yours.
- No judgment is called for despite your own feelings and reactions. It conveys respect and may promote openness.

### Empathize

- Do not talk too much.
- More listening! Be guided by them to achieve a balance. Make space for their experience. Remember that students are in the center of the crisis.
- Avoid talking about how their crisis is impacting you. Do not ask them to carry your burden and aim for all adults in the family to follow this guide.

### Validate

- Remind students that their feelings are a normal reaction to an extreme situation and that they are not alone. It may be helpful to remind students that they are supported by a very strong Jewish community. This community has historically faced adversities with strength, fortitude and resilience and will continue to do so.

### Agency

- Encourage thinking about next steps. This can create a sense of agency in a situation where they may feel helpless.
- Help them build support on their campus when they return to school. ( i.e. Jewish friends/allies, University Life Office, Hillel, Chabad). Ask them what helps their friends.