



### **The Anniversary of October 7th**

The Hamas attack against Israel on October 7th was the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust, and was an extremely traumatic event for Jewish families across the world.

As many Jewish families have a personal connection to Israel, where half of the world's Jews live, and may know someone who was personally impacted, they are feeling incredibly vulnerable. This sense of vulnerability is compounded by rising rates of antisemitism and highly visible protests about the Israel-Hamas war.

As the anniversary of this date approaches, it is important for administrators and educators to prepare proactively to support their Jewish students who may be experiencing complex and traumatic emotions. JCRC Bay Area recommends the following steps to care for Jewish students during this difficult time:

#### **Plan Ahead for Physical and Emotional Safety**

- Avoid large student, club, or individual-faculty lead events
  - [The National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#) recommends sticking to a normal routine as a way to support children in times of stress
  - Instead, consider implementing opportunities for respectful remembrance and reflection on campus or in classrooms in small groups or individually
- Provide neutral spaces for students to seek support
  - Be especially mindful of posters, signs, flags or other messaging in areas where students may go for private moments of support (like nurse's office, school counseling facilities, administrator offices)
- Brief all staff about the potential for high-tension situations
  - Emphasize the importance of prompt de-escalation
  - Consider having additional adult supervision during unstructured student time (before and after school, passing periods, lunch, recess, etc.)
  - Review what [constitutes antisemitism and polarizing rhetoric](#), which staff might see or hear, as well as the school policies to address antisemitism and other hate or bullying

#### **Communicate Expectations with Educators**

- Remind educators that the emotional safety and wellbeing of their students is their responsibility, and explain how certain content can be retraumatizing on the anniversary of October 7th
  - [UNICEF](#) reminds adults to keep their own concerns separate from the way we share with children saying, "Children have a right to know what's going on in the world, but adults also have a responsibility to keep them safe from distress.... Use age-appropriate language, watch their reactions, and be sensitive to their level of anxiety ... try not to overshare any fears with your child" ([source](#))
- Clarify that, in an effort to create a climate of safety and positive wellbeing for students, teachers must prioritize safety and support of all students in their classrooms above detailed discourse about October 7th and/or the Israel-Hamas war.
  - Provide teachers with [guidelines for conducting conversations about sensitive topics](#)

- If teachers do choose to discuss this topic on October 7th it should focus on memorializing the experience and loss of the Jewish community.
- The [American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#) reminds adults “who work closely with children to filter information about the [traumatic] event and present it in a way that [a] child can understand, adjust to and handle in a healthy way” ([source](#))
  - Contextualize the current conflict as part of the modern history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and peace process.
  - Help students work through difficult conversations with compassionate active listening, focusing on discussing the ideas at hand rather than the people or person sharing the ideas.
  - [Institute for Curriculum Services](#) recommends clarifying for students that productive conversations “should be empowering, empathetic, challenging, reciprocal, and respectful,” where participants are seeking to understand each other rather than prioritizing being understood.
  - The AAP, UNICEF, The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, and more all caution against oversharing graphic descriptions of violence. These organizations also recommend that adults remind children to avoid graphic images/ videos/ sounds on the news or social media outlets.

### **Additional Resources**

- 1) [Providing Psychological First Aid: Principals and Administrators](#) and [Providing Psychological First Aid: Teachers](#) were created for schools that have experienced a traumatic event, but the content is applicable to responding to other campus issues in trauma-informed ways
- 2) This JCRC Bay Area resource on “[Guidance for Schools Regarding Student Walkouts About Israel-Hamas War](#)” is specifically for schools facing a walkout or other protest