



SCENARIO #1

While looking at recent Instagram posts, you notice that a student at your school has posted an image of a Star of David and a raised middle finger with the caption “Damn Jews.” You notice that the post has close to 100 “likes,” some by people you know.

1. If you saw this post from a friend at your school, how might you react?
2. If you saw this post from an acquaintance in your school, how might you react?
3. If you saw this post from someone at your school that you don't know, how might you react?
4. Do you think our relationships (e.g., friend, acquaintance, stranger) influence the way we respond to situations like the one in this scenario? Explain why some relationships may make it more difficult to speak out against certain types of behavior.
5. Who has a responsibility to respond to this post? Someone who is Jewish? Does it matter? Explain.

DISCUSSION NOTES:

SCENARIO #2

Students at your school decide to form a diversity club to promote mutual respect and offer a safe-haven for all students who want to openly celebrate what makes them diverse. You join the club, which meets weekly to share ideas, plan events, and discuss issues facing the school community. You notice that the group never discusses the concerns that may be affecting Jewish students. You have mentioned that you have heard insensitive and hurtful jokes and comments about people who are Jewish, but the general response has been, “It’s not that big a deal. Other groups have it a lot worse.”

1. In addition to what you have already done, what are some other ways that you might help the group understand that Jewish students should be represented in discussions about “diversity,” and that the club should be open to discussing the concerns of all students, including Jewish students?
2. If you still feel you are not being heard, what else might you do?
3. What message is sent to Jewish students specifically if the issue of antisemitism is not included in the topics to be addressed? What message is sent to students in general if this topic is not included?
4. Who has a responsibility to raise this issue with club members—a Jewish student, a non-Jewish student, or both? Explain.

DISCUSSION NOTES:

SCENARIO #3

There have been several recent incidents of anti-Jewish graffiti in your community targeting businesses owned by Jews. These displays include red paint and anti-Israel statements such as “From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free” and “Zionists are not human”. While local authorities are working to respond to the incidents and the graffiti is removed as quickly as possible, the problem persists.

1. What are some possible reasons why graffiti like this might suddenly be appearing? Why would it be important to uncover what is behind such displays of hate?
2. What impact do displays like this have on the groups being targeted? What impact does it have on the community at large?
3. Who in the community is responsible for addressing this issue?
4. What are some possible actions that individuals in the community can take to not only address the graffiti but also the underlying anti-Jewish sentiment?

DISCUSSION NOTES:

SCENARIO #4¹

Recently there has been an increase in white supremacist propaganda on school campuses in your community. Flyers and social media posts have been seen with slogans like “Fight white genocide” and “Jews will not replace us.” Then came a report of harassment against a group of African American students at your high school. A group of unknown white young men approached them shouting, “White people are the best thing that happened to the world” and “We built modern civilization.” The students ignored the comments and walked away, but the harassers followed them and continued to berate them with racist and white supremacist taunts. The incident was captured on video by one of the students and went viral on social media. School leaders immediately denounced the incident as “racially charged” and sent an email to students and families emphasizing the importance of diversity and inclusion. They also invited community members to a town hall meeting to discuss the incident and safety at school.

1. What do you think is causing a rise in white supremacist activity in U.S. communities like this one?
2. How do incidents like this affect the target group? How do they affect others in the community?
3. Do you think the response of school leaders was appropriate? Was it enough?
4. What could students do in response to this bias incident? Which student groups should take the lead?

DISCUSSION NOTES:

¹ This scenario adapted from Arbo, Elina (2018, December 10). Students of color harassed outside Butler by Columbia sophomore spewing racist, white supremacist rhetoric. Columbia Spectator. Retrieved from columbiaspectator.com/news/2018/12/10/students-of-color-harassed-outside-butler-by-columbia-sophomore-spewing-racist-white-supremacist-rhetoric.