



Resources for Child Safety

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DEALING WITH ACCUSATIONS GUIDANCE

This is general guidance and does not constitute legal advice. When someone in your congregation has been accused of any type of harassment or misconduct, there are slightly different considerations to take into account depending on the ages of the complainant and/or alleged perpetrator. This guidance is most applicable to adolescents, teens, and adults.

- Please review the [Boundary Crossing Complaint Between Minors](#) guidance for information on how to deal with complaints from a minor against another minor.
- Please review the [Boundary Crossing Complaint Between Adults](#) guidance for information on how to deal with complaints from an adult against another adult.
- Please review the [Boundary Crossing Complaint by a Minor](#) guidance for information on how to deal with complaints by a minor against an adult.

There are some differences in interviewing alleged perpetrators and victim/survivors or witnesses.

- Please review the [Interview Guidance - Victim/Survivor](#) sheet for information on how to conduct an interview with an adolescent - adult victim/survivor or witness.
- Please review the [Interview Guidance - Alleged Perpetrator](#) sheet for information on how to conduct an interview with an adolescent - adult alleged perpetrator.

BEST PRACTICES

- Follow mandated reporting laws in your state.
- Maintain documentation and records of all related meetings in a confidential location.
- Maintain anonymity of all parties involved within the congregation.
- Be open minded and consider all possible explanations; do not dismiss the complainant or immediately assume guilt of the alleged perpetrator.
- Don't make any promises.
- Be transparent about the process and any next steps with all relevant parties.
- Create an infraction progression procedure for congregants that details what actions may be taken at various levels of offense and how repeat offenses may be handled.
- Identify relevant training that may be offered to perpetrators on a case by case basis.
 - Training on topics such as anti-harassment, bullying or hazing, behavior guidelines, consent, rape culture, etc. Please [click here](#) for a list of potential training resources.
- Pre-determine appropriate consequences for a variety of situations/scenarios up to and including suspensions or permanent bans from specific events or the congregation.
- Debrief all complaints/allegations after the fact to determine if there are any areas of improvement for the synagogue.
 - Ask, "What could the synagogue have done or put in place to have prevented this or reduced consequences?"
- Be prepared to assist in facilitating or guiding t'shuvah as appropriate.
- The ideal solution includes all parties involved being able to safely and comfortably continue to be a member of the congregation.
 - This will not always be possible.
- Develop and publish an anti-harassment policy that applies to congregants.
- Host and advertise a complaint line (email address, phone number, Microsoft or Google form, etc).

