

CREATING A SAFE SPACE FOR DIALOGUE ON HATE: **A GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

In recent weeks, there has been a disturbing surge in hate crimes across New York State. The increase in antisemitic incidents and threats against Islamic communities, especially online, is deeply concerning and calls for a collective response. As we approach Thanksgiving and families come together, we have a real opportunity to make meaningful progress to stop the spread of hate.

Parents, we want you to engage your young adult children in a conversation about not participating in online spaces fostering hate. By engaging in open and honest conversations with our children and loved ones, we can help foster an environment of understanding, inclusion, and respect.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR PARENTS TO HELP THEM HAVE THESE IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS:

DON'T BE AFRAID TO ENGAGE

First and foremost, be willing to engage in the conversation. Adopt a mindset of openness, understanding, and empathy. Actively listen to others' perspectives. This approach is crucial for assessing emotions and creating a safe space for dialogue.

SHOW THEM THAT YOU ARE LISTENING

Demonstrate respect for others' thoughts and feelings and create a sense of engagement. Instead of questions with simple yes/no answers, opt for open-ended questions that encourage elaboration and deeper discussion. Observe nonverbal cues like facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice to gauge emotional state.

CREATE A SAFE SPACE TO SPEAK FREELY

Foster open and honest conversations, especially when discussing sensitive topics. Always approach the conversation with a non-judgmental attitude and avoid criticism or personal attacks. Create a supportive atmosphere where individuals feel safe to share their perspectives freely.

CORRECT MISINFORMATION

The internet (and society as a whole) is filled with misinformation, so ask questions about where your children or loved ones are getting their information and be sure to correct any misinformation. Use the conversation as an opportunity to educate your loved ones about the importance of online safety and trusted sources.

BE HONEST ABOUT YOUR VIEWS AND THOUGHTS

Openly discuss your stance on these complex issues and acknowledge the pain and challenges they present. Express your concerns about the causes and consequences of hate, while recognizing the importance of understanding and respectful dialogue. Use these conversations as an opportunity to reinforce your family's values and the importance of inclusion and acceptance.

ALLOW FOR MULTIPLE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION AS AN OUTLET OF EXPRESSION

Individuals express their thoughts, emotions, and experiences in a variety of ways. People have different communication preferences and providing a variety of options can foster more inclusive and meaningful interaction. For example, some teens may feel more comfortable texting than talking.

ALWAYS REINFORCE THAT THEY BELONG

Consistently demonstrate and communicate they are valued, accepted, and an integral part of the family. Create an environment where they feel safe, supported, and respected, and where their contributions are recognized and appreciated. Regularly express your love and acceptance for the individual, regardless of their actions or beliefs. Always provide a foundation of security and belonging, fostering a sense of self-worth.

