A (Short!) Message Guide

DISMANTLING ANTISEMITISM

How to talk about antisemitism like we believe we can end it together—so that we can

Antisemitism directly harms Jewish people, and dismantling it must be part of any vision for freedom and safety for *all* people. Use these messaging recommendations to proactively address antisemitism, respond to antisemitic incidents and accusations, and persuade audiences.

Topline Messaging Do's and Don'ts:

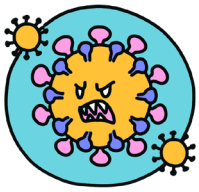
Say This:	Instead of This:	Because:
Antisemitism as machine	*Antisemitism as water ("on the rise")* *Antisemitism as disease ("virulent")*	Read more about this key recommendation in the following pages.
Antisemitism is used to generate division and fear.	*"Antisemitism is a form of hate."*	Antisemitism is not merely an irrational interpersonal problem. It is a structural and systemic problem.
Someone is using antisemitism for their own political, material, or spiritual gain.	*"Someone is/isn't an antisemite"*	Antisemitism is a not a personal trait or just about "what's in someone's heart".
Antisemitism as object: **People "use" or "fuel" antisemitism.**	Antisemitism as agent: *"The job of antisemitism is..."* *"Antisemitism has found a home..."* *"Antisemitism has reared its head..."*	Antisemitism doesn't do things on its own; talking about it this way leaves audiences feeling helpless. People are responsible for antisemitism.

Use The Right Metaphors

Much of the language in common use tells a false and damaging story that antisemitism is an inevitable, eternal problem that cannot be solved. Avoid these metaphors when discussing antisemitism:

DON'T USE: Antisemitism as Water

- x *"Antisemitism comes in **waves**..."*
- x *"Antisemitism in America **ebbs and flows**..."*
- x *"We're now experiencing a **wave** of violent antisemitism..."*
- x *"A **rising tide** of antisemitism..."*
- x *"Antisemitism is **on the rise**"*



DON'T USE: Antisemitism as Disease

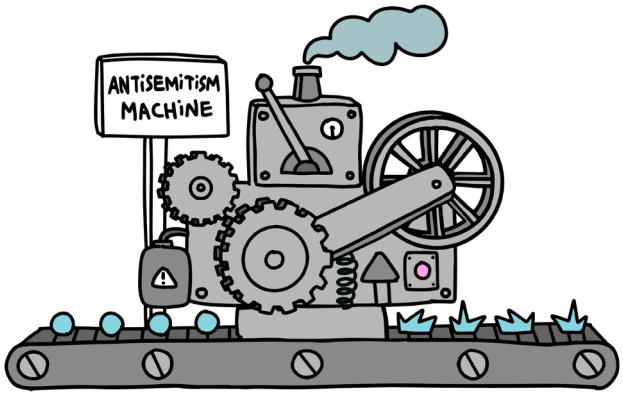
- x *"[Person] is a **virulent** anti-Semite..."*
- x *"Antisemitism has **infected** the world..."*
- x *"[Person] is **spreading** antisemitism..."*
- x *"Antisemitism has different **strains/mutations**..."*

Because: Antisemitism is not part of nature. Talking about antisemitism as inevitable or natural makes it impossible to imagine a world without it.

DO USE: Antisemitism as Machine

- ✓ *"Antisemitism is part of the machinery of division and fear created and used for specific material or political gain."*

This shows that antisemitism is a problem we can solve by shutting it down, dismantling it, or stopping it. It was built by people and is used by people for a specific purpose. And it is intrinsically connected to other struggles and must be addressed together with other struggles, like parts of a machine. While anyone can fuel it, it's those who use it that benefit most.



How to use the machinery metaphor

Talk about antisemitism as an OBJECT, but never as the ACTOR causing problems:

- ✓ *"Politicians who rely on division and fear for their power use antisemitism..."*

Talk about the EFFECTS of antisemitism and who benefits from those outcomes:

- ✓ *"[Person] is using antisemitism to generate fear and divide us against each other..."*

Differentiate between USING (deliberate, the user benefits) and FUELING (does not necessarily benefit the fueler):

- ✓ *"What [person] said could fuel antisemitism, so..."*
- ✓ *"No matter who fuels it, antisemitism always benefits those who manufacture fear to gain power..."*

Think about antisemitic tropes, stereotypes, and biases like POLLUTION: they've been pumped into our society for generations, we've all been exposed, and when we stop the source we all benefit.

- ✓ *"Like many of us, I grew up around noxious stories about Jewish people..."*

Full Narrative: Message Platform

Please feel free to copy, use, and adapt this full narrative for your purposes, no credit needed.In the version below, words intended to be used by Jewish spokespeople are in [brackets]. If you or your organization are not Jewish, simply omit the bracketed words.

Most of us believe that every person, no matter our religion, where we come from, or what we look like, deserves to live with freedom, safety, and belonging. [As Jews, we know that] whether we're walking down the streets of our neighborhoods or through the doors of our holy spaces, freedom and safety for any of us depends on the freedom and safety of all of us.

But there are some politicians who seek to build a country that's only for themselves and people like them, exploiting divisions between us and making us afraid while they hoard power and wealth. [As Jews, we know how dangerous this is:] when politicians target Jewish people and blame [us] for hard times, it leads directly to violence against [us]. Antisemitism is part of the machinery of division and fear those politicians rely on for power; the same machinery those politicians use to blame Black and brown people, people who are immigrants, people who are Muslim, and more. But whether they manufacture division and fear based on our religion, our skin color, or how long we've been here, their goal is to keep us from working together to win the things we all need to thrive.

When Jewish people join together with [our] neighbors across differences, as we have in the past, we can shut down the fear factory and protect each other. We'll show up for each other every time one of us is targeted because of our differences, and reject any politician who uses fear to divide us against each other. Together we can build a country that fulfills the promise of freedom and safety for all of us – no exceptions.

Adapting the Message Platform

You may copy and paste the narrative above freely. When adapting, follow these principles:

1. **Start with a positive statement affirming the need for freedom and safety for all people, specifically naming Jews.** It is tempting to jump into the problems, but grounding in a positive statement based on basic human needs draws audiences in and leads to greater agreement.
2. **Tell a coherent story of WHO uses antisemitism and WHY they do so.** This should include naming specific people or political movements and explaining their motivations clearly.
3. **Show how antisemitism is a threat to our country or democracy and directly connected to other forms of oppression. Use the machinery metaphor to express how antisemitism is directly related to other issues.** Acknowledge the existence and needs of Jews of color and avoid drawing artificial divides between Jewish communities and other communities.
4. **Show that antisemitism is a problem we can solve by expressing a solution rooted in working together across lines of racial and religious difference.** This may be a specific call to action relevant to your topic — the more concrete, the better.
5. **Use metaphoric language that supports this overall message.** Always avoid using the "water" and "disease" metaphors. Instead, use the machinery metaphor and always talk about antisemitism as an object — not an actor with agency of its own.
6. **End with a positive vision for the future, specifically naming Jews and including people across races and religions.** This is the most important part of the message, so don't omit it.

More language to use and avoid:

Say This:	Instead of This:	Because:
"Politician/leader is pointing the finger at Democrats/ progressives for antisemitism" or "using antisemitism as a smoke-screen"	*"Weaponization of antisemitism" "Instrumentalization of antisemitism"*	Audiences mostly do not know what "weaponization of antisemitism" means; it also implies other forms or uses of antisemitism are not dangerous or deadly. Avoid this language in all circumstances. Instead, explicitly name the purpose of using antisemitism to hold accountable those who benefit from it.
"end antisemitism" or "dismantle antisemitism"	*"stand up to antisemitism," "push back against antisemitism," "call out antisemitism"*	Audiences understand that these equivocating solutions are weak, point-less, and ineffective.
Join together across [racial; racial and religious] differences	*Jews and communities of color should join together; "Jewish/Black [etc.] community relations"*	Recommended language is intended to be inclusive of Jews of Color – make sure to read any adapted language to ensure Jews of Color are not excluded, and Jews are not presumed to be all white.
Safety	*Security*	Unlike "security," safety can refer to a range of emotional, personal, familial and communal needs, including an overall climate in a city or state.
Someone is "using" or "fueling" antisemitism	*"antisemitism on both sides," "antisemitism from the Right and the Left"*	All antisemitism is harmful, but not all instances are equal. Describe "using" and "fueling" antisemitism to highlight the harms while differentiating between those who benefit from it and those who do not.

For full messaging guidance, including more detail on these recommendations, how to respond to incidents or accusations of antisemitism, how to navigate antisemitism and Israel and Palestine, and more, see our full guide at dismantlingantisemitism.org.

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