

HOW **BOOKSTORES** CAN SUPPORT JEWISH AUTHORS & COMMUNITIES

A Guide to Standing Together
Against Antisemitism

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You Asked.

We Answered.

With Jewish authors and allies being tagged on “boycott these books” lists and Jewish authors’ events being canceled, several **booksellers have reached out to ask about ways they can support Jewish voices** in their bookstores and make sure their stores are safe spaces for their Jewish community members to gather.

To answer those questions, we’ve created a brief guide for bookstores on how to stand together against hate and promote inclusivity in their stores.

How to Make Your Store a **Safe Space** for Jewish Authors and Community Members

- Offering a safe space doesn't require adopting a specific viewpoint. Jewish people themselves are not monolithic; Jews hold a variety of opinions on all matters, including political ones, in both the US and Israel. Respecting those opinions is important, as is rejecting false binaries and absolutes. For example, opposing Hamas is not synonymous with opposing Palestinian freedom.
- Recognize the trauma, pain, and fear that many Jewish authors and community members are experiencing right now.
- Advocate for a world in which there is safety, security, and freedom for everyone—including both Israelis and Palestinians.
- Always speak from a place of empathy and choose your words with kindness. Listen to other people's thoughts and perspectives, and do your best to understand different points of view.
- Show support for Jewish voices across both religious and political spectrums.

10 Ways to **Show Support** for Jewish Voices and the Jewish Community

1.

Carry books by Jewish authors in your store

2.

Include books by Jewish authors in your newsletters and social media posts

3.

Include books by Jewish authors in your windows and displays

4.

Promote Jewish authors in intersectional displays (i.e. Women's History Month)

5.

Host events with Jewish authors and see if your community has a Jewish book fair or a Jewish Book Month celebration that you can be a partner on

6.

Make sure big book events in your store are not planned on important Jewish holidays

7.

Celebrate Jewish American Heritage Month in May

8.

Celebrate Jewish Book Month the month before Chanukah

9.

Promote books about all aspects of Jewish life

10.

Educate your staff about antisemitism and how to call it out when they see it in the store

How to Educate Your Staff about Antisemitism

Antisemitism is the oldest form of hate, but it's rarely talked about in depth. Giving your staff a deeper understanding of the history of antisemitism and how it's expressed in our society today will give them the background they need to recognize and call out antisemitism when they see it in your store. These are our recommendations:

- For antisemitism training: Project Shema (www.projectshema.org)
- For a staff-wide read to promote understanding:
 - *Uncomfortable Conversations with a Jew* by Emmanuel Acho & Noa Tishby
 - *Jews Don't Count* by David Baddiel
 - *We Need to Talk about Antisemitism* by Diana Fersko
 - *People Love Dead Jews: Reports from a Haunted Present* by Dara Horn
- For a brief background on antisemitism and how to spot it: The Nexus Project's Guide to Identifying Antisemitism in Debates about Israel here: <https://nexusproject.us/guide-to-identifying-antisemitism-in-debates-about-israel/>

How to **Educate Your Staff** about Antisemitism (*cont.*)

- To learn more about the 3 D's of Antisemitism check out this handout from the Echoes and Reflections organization:
https://echoesandreflections.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/11-02-09_StudentHandout_The-New-Antisemitism.pdf
- For more information on the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Zionism, the BDS movement: This Hey Alma explainer www.heyalma.com/israel-guide/
- For information and resources from the Jewish literary world:
 - The Association of Jewish Libraries (<https://jewishlibraries.org>)
 - Jewish Book Council (www.jewishbookcouncil.org)
 - Jewish Kidlit Mavens (www.facebook.com/groups/JewishKidlitMavens)
 - National Library of Israel (www.nli.org.il/en)
 - Yetzilah Poets (<https://yetzilahpoets.org>)
 - The Artists Against Antisemitism (www.theartistsagainstantisemitism.com)

A good litmus test: Ask yourself if you'd be upset if someone said the same thing about another minority group. If so, it's not something you should let anyone say about Jewish people either.

Hosting an Event with Security Concerns

Ideally, you should not need to alter your event protocols for events featuring Jewish authors or books. But if threatening circumstances should arise in the course of event-planning, here are some steps to consider taking. In all cases, please be sure to consult with the author and their team as you make decisions.

- Report any threats of violence to law enforcement immediately.
- Reach out to your local Jewish community centers, synagogues, or other organizations like the Jewish Federation and Jewish Community Relations Councils. These institutions typically have strong security measures in place. It may be possible to move your store's event to their locations; in any case, they are sources for advice/support.
- If you do need to relocate the event, do not immediately announce the new site. Simply continue to sell tickets and collect email addresses; notify attendees of the location on the day of the event to minimize security risks.
- Require pre-registration for the event so you can screen the audience if necessary.
- Pre-screen any and all audience questions.
- If the event is planned to be in-person, consider shifting to a virtual format and follow appropriate virtual-safety protocols, such as turning off chat functions.

A Few Questions

We've Been Asked...

Q: I want to support Palestinian voices, too. Can I do that without upsetting the Jewish community?

A: Absolutely. As long as there are no antisemitic language or tropes; no calls for the destruction of Israel; and no other instance of anti-Jewish hate involved, supporting Palestinian voices is not a problem.

Q: How can I support Jewish authors without alienating people who are supporting Gaza?

A: Recall our earlier point about false binaries. Jewish people are not the opposite of Gazans or Palestinians. Most Jewish people mourn the loss of innocent lives in Gaza. You can support all communities and enhance connections by supporting joint peace initiatives; making your store a space for respect and unity; and, if choosing to speak about the current war directly, by showing empathy for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Q: I have offended a Jewish author/Jewish community members. What can I do to fix it?

A: Offer an opportunity for a calm, collected conversation in which you invite hearing why that person/group was offended. Apologize for the action that felt harmful. Work with the person/group to find a solution that feels satisfactory to all of you. You might, for example, offer to change language used in a store communication, invite more Jewish authors to the store, promote more Jewish voices, provide education to your staff, etc.

If you have a question that hasn't been answered, please feel free to reach out to us at info@theartistsagainstantisemitism.com or info@jewishbooks.org and we will do our best to help or to direct you to someone who can.

Jewish Holidays

The Jewish calendar is a lunar one, with a leap month 7 times every 19 years (an average of every 2-3 years). This is why the dates for Jewish holidays change every year. The Jewish calendar includes many holidays, all of which begin at sundown; a single-day holiday will essentially run from sundown to sundown. We have included some of the highest-profile holidays below. For detailed information about including indications of when ritual observance may make events or other activities impossible for some Jewish authors (and readers), please consult www.chabad.org/holidays.

Holiday	2024	2025	2026
Purim	Mar 23-24	Mar 13-14	Mar 2-3
Passover	Apr 22-30	Apr 12-20	Apr 1-9
Yom HaShoah*	May 5-6	Apr 23-24	Apr 13-14
Shavuot	Jun 11-13	Jun 1-3	May 21-23
Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year)	Oct 4-6	Sept 22-24	Sept 11-13
Yom Kippur	Oct 11-12	Oct 1-2	Sept 20-21
Sukkot/Shmini Atzeret/ Simchat Torah	Oct 16-25	Oct 6-15	Sept 25-Oct 4
Chanukah	Dec 25-Jan 2	Dec 14-22	Dec 4-12

**Note: Yom HaShoah is not a religious holiday—it is Holocaust Remembrance Day.*

More Questions?

Don't hesitate to reach out to either or both of us.



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