

Wednesday WeBelong Monthly:



Oy Vey: Being Jewish in the Workplace



What is Judaism?

Judaism can be described as:

- A religion
- A race
- A culture
- A nation

Judaism focuses on the relationships between:

- G-d and mankind
- G-d and the Jewish people
- The Jewish people and the land of Israel
- The Jewish people and human beings

Signs and Symbols

There are many traditional symbols you may see in Jewish households or synagogues. Some of these items are religiously required or have a deep religious significance, and some are merely customary.



Mezuzah, tzitzit, and tefillin are reminders of the commandments



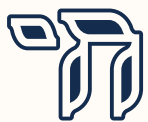
The menorah (candelabrum) is the ancient universal symbol of Judaism



The Jewish star (Magen David) is a modern universal Jewish symbol



Jews wear a skullcap (yarmulke) as a pious custom



Chai, found on jewelry, is the number 18, which is a favorable number

The Rise of Antisemitism

The term antisemitism was coined only in the nineteenth century, but anti-Jewish hatred dates to ancient times and has a variety of causes.

Middle Ages

Government policies, customs, and laws segregated Jews from the rest of the population.

19th Century

Political emancipation lifted many restrictions, but anti-Jewish laws were still present.

20th Century

Nazism emerges; Jews are viewed as a separate and dangerous "race."

The Rise of Hatred

Europe had a vibrant and mature Jewish culture.

The American Jewish Yearbook placed the total Jewish population of Europe at about **9.5 million**.

This number represented **more than 60%** of the world's Jewish population, estimated at a total of **15.3 million**.

By 1945, after the Holocaust, most European Jews — **two out of every three**—had been killed.

Most of the surviving remnants of European Jewry decided to leave Europe. Hundreds of thousands established new lives in Israel, the United States, Canada, Australia, Great Britain, South America, and South Africa.

The Rise of Hatred in the Media

Contemporary antisemitism manifests itself in various forms, such as GIFs, memes, vlogs, comments, and reactions, such as likes and dislikes, on social media platforms.

And hatred adds up.

In the United States, we have seen a 34% increase in antisemitic incidents from 2020–2021.

The Result of Hatred

Because of antisemitism and its rise, there is fear of indicating and being Jewish.

- Jews are consistently the most targeted religious community in the U.S.
- Antisemitic incidents are being reported at record levels.
- Jewish institutions are vulnerable targets
- Jews are regularly targeted because of their actual or perceived support for Israel and Zionism
- Extremists and antisemites perpetrate deadly violence against Jews

Call to Action

Educate

- Make sure you include antisemitism as part of that training. To get started, we recommend addressing what the roots of antisemitism are, what it looks like today, and how to include this awareness in the workplace.

Support and Review

- Ask for dietary restrictions of all employees and provide accommodative options.
- Create a Jewish Employee Resource Group
- Adapt dress code or required attire
- Provide non-religious holiday schedules, including floating holidays

Call to Action

Learn

- What terminology is appropriate and not appropriate?
- What can and should be asked?
- How to avoid “inadvertent” anti-Semitism

And remember...

There is not just one type of Jew, and there is no wrong way to be a Jew.