

## URJ Ethics Accountability: Sharing Our Progress - August 2023

The URJ recognizes that transparency must include effective communication with victims/survivors and the greater community, and we want to share our progress as we continue to implement and uphold our commitment to ethics accountability. On the [URJ Ethics Accountability webpage](#), you will find a highly detailed [Ethics Accountability Progress Report](#) that fully reports our commitments, what has been accomplished, and the next steps we plan to take.


Our work to date has prioritized safety and protection within our URJ spaces. We have made great progress focusing on abuse prevention; staff, volunteer, and lay leader training; implementing formalized background check procedures; ensuring harmdoers are not rehired or permitted access into URJ spaces; and expanding, formalizing, and publicizing reporting protocols, especially at camps and in youth spaces. This work is described in more detail in our Progress Report. At the same time, there are benchmarks we had hoped to meet by now that we have not yet met, particularly those related to our work directly with victims/survivors of past harms.

In partnership with Dr. Guila Benchimol and Dr. Alissa Ackerman, renowned experts and facilitators in the field of restorative justice, we have begun the implementation of our survivor-centric [Roadmap to Accountability](#). Current phases of our efforts have turned to the critical work of healing and restoration for our community, with a focus on the victims/survivors who have been harmed in our URJ spaces through all types of abhorrent abuse, harassment, discrimination, and misconduct, lack of reporting protocols, lack of responsiveness, indifference, isolation, and other compounded harms. We will continue to provide regular updates to our Progress Report.

The URJ also recognizes the importance of Movement-wide protocols that reflect our values and ensure safe, equitable, inclusive, and respectful environments and is exploring collaborations with CCAR, ACC, HUC-JIR, congregations, and all Reform Movement partners. As part of our work, the Ethics Task Force's Congregations work team led the work of the URJ North American Board to contact every URJ congregation to encourage and support them in crafting and adopting a congregational ethics code.

Finally, as our last formal update on our plan progress was shared six months ago, we realize that our communication has left many victims/survivors and other community members unaware of the work that is happening. We acknowledge that the great harm done in the past is further compounded by this lack of communication and we are truly sorry for the exacerbated pain. **We recognize the critical importance for the URJ to communicate with greater clarity, care, and consistency, and we are committed to doing so.**

Going forward, the Progress Report will be updated on a regular basis so that victims/survivors and members of our community remain informed. We hope that these updates will provide further clarity and reassurance for how deeply we are prioritizing our ethics accountability work and, in particular, our commitment to restorative justice.



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