Personal Reports from UVM Students to Jewish on Campus

Student 1: "As a survivor myself, I felt isolated. When I came back to campus this fall, I didn't hang my Mezuzah on the wall outside my door because of fear of antisemitism."

Student 2: "I wore a Jewish-identifying necklace every day until I began to feel unsafe at UVM due to antisemitic rhetoric on campus and on social media as well as personal antisemitic messages that I received. Antisemitism on campus has caused my mental health to decline and has caused multiple anxiety/panic attacks, and I no longer wear Jewish-identifying items as I feel unsafe."

Student 3: "If it were not for the immense support I have gotten from UVM Hillel staff and students, I would have left UVM a long time ago and never returned. I genuinely considered transferring over the summer, going as far as to meet with a college coach and re-open the Common App. I talk to my Jewish friends at colleges all over the New England area, and they are all appalled that I am still here. My mental health has suffered immensely, and the various antisemitic incidents on campus and online have left me suffering with feelings of loneliness, depression, and hopelessness. I am tired of feeling scared on my own college campus. I am tired of feeling anxious to wear my Star of David. I am tired of being scared to mention my Judaism or connection to Israel to people in my college classes, afraid that they will cut all contact with me if they find out who I truly am. I want to feel like I am a part of this college, but I feel more disconnected from each antisemitic incident that occurs. Jewish students on campus deserve better, and we deserve to feel safe."

Student 4: "When people ask me what it's like to go to college, I always tell them it was a culture shock. But I don't mean living by myself or that Vermonters say "*creemees*" instead of "soft-serve." I mean that I had to learn what it means to stop expressing my identity and to live in fear because I'm Jewish. I've heard my classmates yell slurs at other Jews and I've seen them march through downtown chanting antisemitic things. I'm terrified of what would happen if they knew more about me. But what scares me the most is that I know there's nothing I can do about it, because every time I try to ask the administration to even denounce antisemitism, they dismiss me."

Student 5: "Antisemitism at UVM has become so pervasive that I've become numb to it. When Israel is brought up in class and I automatically tense up, afraid to make any motion that suggests I have some sort of connection to the country, when I walk past posters every day that seek to exclude me as a Jew from otherwise inclusive spaces when I am forced to choose all the time between my progressive identity and my Jewish identity, it hardly even fazes me anymore. This is simply the unfortunate reality of being a Jewish student at many colleges in the U.S. What I feel particularly makes UVM stand out negatively is the administration's complete apathy in the wake of numerous reported acts of antisemitism on campus. It's very upsetting to attend a university whose entire ethos is their image as a progressive and tolerant school when Jewish students have been trying to tell them for years now that this is not the case and have gone ignored."

Student 6: "I could not concentrate on my finals last year. Everywhere I turned people were posting and talking about Israel and how terrible Israelis were. Dealing with the misconceptions and rumors about my people while checking in on my close family who spent their days in bomb shelters took a toll on my well-being. I just sat in my room feeling too paralyzed to move for days even after my last final."

*Students asked that their names be withheld to protect their identities.

If you are a Jewish student on campus who was asked to shed a part of your identity in order to be accepted, know that you are not alone. Jewish on Campus is here as a resource to help guide you to take action on campus.