



# AFFIRMING FAITH



## JUDAISM WORKBOOK

Egale

 Rainbow Faith  
and Freedom

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge that our work takes place on the traditional territories of diverse Indigenous Peoples, who have stewarded these lands for millennia. These lands, now known as Canada, are home to a rich tapestry of Indigenous cultures, languages, and traditions.

We acknowledge the enduring presence and contributions of the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples to this land, and recognize their deep connection to the territories, waters, and resources.

We acknowledge the painful history of colonization, forced displacement, and cultural suppression that Indigenous Peoples have endured, and the ongoing impacts of these injustices.

We commit to honouring Indigenous rights, supporting reconciliation efforts, and fostering meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities based on mutual respect, understanding, and partnership.

May we all work together towards healing, justice, and a future where Indigenous Peoples are empowered to thrive and flourish across Turtle Island.



# ABOUT

## Egale Canada

Egale is Canada's national 2SLGBTQI organization working to improve the lives of 2SLGBTQI people in Canada and to enhance the global response to 2SLGBTQI issues. Egale achieves this by informing public policy, inspiring cultural change, and promoting human rights and inclusion through research, education, awareness, and legal advocacy. Our vision is a Canada, and ultimately a world, without homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and all forms of oppression so that every person can achieve their full potential, free from hatred and bias.

## Rainbow Faith and Freedom

Rainbow Faith and Freedom (RFF) is a global movement to confront religious-based LGBTI Discrimination and improve the human and equality rights of LGBTI people everywhere. Decreasing and lessening the effects of religious-based LGBTI discrimination can, and will, make changing punitive laws easier and improve the lives of LGBTI people so they can be who they are, love who they want, and find safe and accepting places to practice their faith (worship).

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# 1. JUDAISM: AN OVERVIEW

## 1.1 Jewish Peoplehood

There are many elements of Judaism, but what unifies the Jewish community is a sense of belonging to a common people. Religion is only one aspect of Judaism. Jewish identity is complex, and the term Jewish can refer either to one's religion and/or to a broader culture, heritage, and ethnic identity. For this reason, it is common for people to identify as Jewish as their cultural identity while also defining themselves as non-religious, secular, atheist, or a member of another religious group. The Jewish people are a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural people who began as an ancient tribe and are continuing to build an evolving Jewish community.

Globally, this Jewish community has developed several languages, music, food traditions, religious practices, sacred texts, holidays, historical experiences, and regional customs. There are Jewish people of all races through both birth and conversion.

There are multiple regional Jewish cultures, the largest being Sephardic from Spain, Mizrahi from the Middle East, Ashkenazi from Eastern and Western Europe, and Beta Yisrael from East Africa.

The Jewish religion is monotheistic, believing that there is one G-d, and in that oneness, all things are connected.

The Jewish religion is centred around the practice of mitzvot (commandments) that provide direction on righteous living, prayer, holidays, hygiene, food, and other aspects of daily and spiritual life. The biblical commandments have been re-interpreted and re-imagined by Rabbis over the centuries to apply them in relevant ways to modern life.



One of the hallmarks of Jewish culture is the ability to question, disagree, and have a diversity of opinions and ideas.

## 1.2 Denominations

Judaism has six primary religious denominations: Conservative, Orthodox, Reform, Reconstructionist, Renewal, and Humanist. Each denomination has its own approach to what is called *Halacha* (Jewish religious law). In Canada, the Conservative movement is the largest denomination, followed by the other denominations in the order they are listed below.

1. The **Conservative Movement** attempts to create a bridge between respect and preservation of traditional Jewish religious law and the modern world.
2. The **Orthodox Movement** has the strictest interpretations of Jewish law. There are multiple subdivisions that fall under the umbrella of the Orthodox community. In Orthodox religious services, there may be separate seating for men and women.
3. The **Reform Movement** focuses on the ethical principles of Judaism rather than a strict interpretation of Jewish law, with a strong emphasis on social justice.
4. The **Reconstructionist Movement** focuses on Judaism as a civilization and the development of local democratic communities who choose their own relationships to religious law and practice, known as *Minhag HaMakom*.
5. The **Renewal Movement** introduced innovative ways to include a wider diversity of spiritual practices, such as meditation and chanting.
6. The **Humanist Movement** attempts to create a community for Jews who may be atheists or agnostic but wish to incorporate Jewish learning, holidays, and customs into their lives.





## 1.3 Important Texts

There are several sacred and important texts within Judaism. Primary among these are:

The **Torah**, also called “the Five Books of Moses” or the Pentateuch. This is the foundational text, which outlines the origin of the world and history of the Jewish people, as well as the Jewish legal code.

The books of the **Prophets** (Nevi'im) and the **Writings** (Ketuvim) describe Jewish history and the teachings

of the Jewish Prophets, as well as poetry and other wisdom literature. The Torah, Prophets, and Writings are together known within the Jewish community by the acronym “the Tanach” (Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim) and by other faith communities as the Jewish Bible, the Hebrew Bible, or the Old Testament.

The **Talmud** is a collection of rabbinic commentaries on the Torah, which act as the basis for its interpretation today.

## 1.4 Tenets

Judaism focuses on living the most ethical life during one's lifetime. There is a focus on creating more light and healing in the world through acts of justice (*tzedakah*), prayer (*tefilla*), and repentance (*teshuvah*), which together lead to the repair of the world (*Tikkun Olam*).

There is no singular understanding of the **afterlife** within Judaism. Rather, the focus is truly on working towards a present world of greater compassion, truth, and equality. The Jewish community is diverse and complex and incorporates both ancient practices and modern innovations.

Some (but not all) Jews follow a **Kosher** diet. *Kashrut*, the rules which define this diet, relate to the preparation, storage, and serving of all foods. All vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds are inherently kosher, but depending on a



person's practice, they may still need to be stored, prepared, and served in a particular way. Kashrut details which animals are permitted to be slaughtered for consumption, which parts or derivatives (such as dairy) are allowed to be eaten, under which conditions. Those who keep kosher will eat and store milk and meat products separately. One of the easiest ways to accommodate a Kosher person is to provide vegetarian or vegan options. For the eight days of Passover, there are additional rules around eating bread and most other grain-based products, and for some, this includes beans, corn, and other legumes. Further information and resources on inclusion for individuals following Kosher diets are provided in the Resources.

## 1.5 Important Celebrations and Holidays

◆ **Shabbat**, the Sabbath, is a weekly holiday that lasts from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. It is observed as a time of rest and communal prayer by Jews, and in more religiously observant communities, this may mean refraining from driving, working, writing, spending money, using electricity, cooking, or playing sports. For others, it may be spending more time with family and attending a religious service. For many, it means gathering for big celebratory meals.

There are several feast days and other days of significance throughout the year. These may be observed to various degrees by any individual or family. However, **there are five Jewish holidays of primary importance that all workplaces should note.**

### Note:

The Jewish calendar is lunar, so the date of a celebration in the Gregorian calendar can vary by up to four weeks from year to year. All Jewish holidays are observed as of sundown the day prior to the holiday itself.



◆ **Passover** is one of three “pilgrimage festivals.” A big communal meal is at the center of this springtime festival. During the meal, the story of the Jewish exodus from Egypt is recounted using a guidebook called a *Haggadah* (Telling). During Passover, there are eight days of meals served without leavened bread (bread made with yeast) as a way to connect with the Israelite ancestors who fled before their bread could rise. Passover occurs in either March or April.

◆ **Shavuot** is the summer festival commemorating when the wheat harvest would have been traditionally gathered. This holiday also celebrates the Jewish people receiving their primary sacred text, the Torah. It includes a tradition of staying up all night long to learn and study the Torah together. It is one of three “pilgrimage festivals”.

◆ **Rosh Hashanah** is the Jewish New Year, and **Yom Kippur**, the Day of Atonement, which is commonly observed by fasting for 25 hours. These two holidays are primarily spent in prayer and contemplation by those who observe them. They always occur ten days apart, either in late September or early October.

◆ **Sukkot** is an eight-day harvest holiday. It is celebrated by creating small structures outdoors where people will eat, gather, and even sleep if the weather allows, emphasizing our interconnection with nature. Sukkot is one of three “pilgrimage festivals” where, in biblical times, there would be an ingathering to the Temple in Jerusalem. Nowadays, rather than a pilgrimage, people gather in their homes with their families and community. Sukkot always occurs four days after Yom Kippur, in late September or mid-October.



Together, these five holidays fall under a special designation of *chag* (festival). Traditionally, during days designated as *chag*, work is forbidden. For the longer eight-day holidays, the first two and the last two days have a higher level of observance of a *chag*. So, with Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Shavuot, each being two-day holidays for many Jews, and Passover and Sukkot, each including four of their eight days as *chag*, there are 14 days when Jews are traditionally prohibited from working. This is in addition to the weekly observance of *Shabbat*.

There are two additional “minor” Jewish holidays that deserve mention: Hannukah and Purim.

◆ **Hannukah** is the Festival of Lights, where candles are lit each night of the eight days of the holiday. Hannukah means ‘rededication’ and celebrates the return of the Temple in Jerusalem to the Jewish community after a small group of Jewish rebels, the Maccabees, won a victory against the Hellenistic Syrians. It generally occurs in December.

◆ **Purim** celebrates the courage of the Biblical Queen Esther to save her people. It is celebrated through costume parties and revelry. It occurs in either February or March.

## 1.6 Evolution of Judaism

While the history of Judaism extends over 3500 years, most current Jewish practice is based on the evolution of Judaism that was created after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD and is generally called Rabbinic Judaism (to distinguish it from Biblical Judaism).

In 2023, the global Jewish population was close to 15.7 million, 0.2% of the world’s 8.1 billion people. Jews make up just over 2.2% of the population of North America., and 2.4% of all religious individuals in Canada. Despite having a small population compared to many other world religions, the Jewish people have



contributed significantly to human history, including being the source of the other Abrahamic religions, Christianity and Islam. They have also experienced severe discrimination and persecution throughout history, including during the Crusades in the Middle Ages, the pogroms of the 19th and 20th centuries, the Holocaust, and other experiences of antisemitism.

## The State of Israel

There is no consensus within the Jewish community on the significance of the creation of the State of Israel. Some Jewish individuals deeply support the state of Israel and its actions in the world, and some strongly criticize and condemn it.

Zionism is a movement focused on creating and supporting the State of Israel. As noted, some Jews support the Zionist movement. Others are adamantly anti-Zionist, some of whom organize in solidarity with Palestinian rights organizations. For others still within the diaspora, Israel is not part of their Jewish identity at all.

## 1.7 Sources and Suggested Resources

Additional readings and resources to support the creation of more inclusive organizations and community spaces.

### Jewish Calendars and Religious Holiday Accommodations

A guide to Shiva Etiquette (Jewish post-funeral grief practices)

<https://www.everplans.com/articles/a-guide-to-shiva-etiquette>

Beyond “Happy Holidays”: Religious Inclusivity in the Workplace

<https://integratedwork.com/culture/beyond-happy-holidays/>



JCal.com

Search site for any day and year to determine if they fall on a Jewish Holiday.

<https://jcal.com>

Simplified information on Jewish Holidays

[https://18doors.org/jewish\\_holidays\\_cheat\\_sheet/](https://18doors.org/jewish_holidays_cheat_sheet/)

## **Kosher diet**

Kosher Food: Everything You Need to Know

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/what-is-kosher#passover>

What is Kosher? (video, duration: 4:09)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYk0KeYhqYQ>

What Makes Food Kosher or Not

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/kosher-food/>

## **Antisemitism**

Antisemitism and Its Impacts (Facing History and Ourselves)

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/antisemitism-its-impacts>

Antisemitism: fighting discrimination online to offline (video, duration: 3:37)

Personal account of Antisemitic violence

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inuXmT\\_4nng](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inuXmT_4nng)

Combatting Antisemitism (video, duration: 1:27:45)

Webinar on the role of antisemitism in upholding white supremacy and how all of us can better show up in the fight against antisemitism and Palestinian rights.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1\\_UupTM4yflQLdIHt2j9aSR0MVWbsHqg1/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_UupTM4yflQLdIHt2j9aSR0MVWbsHqg1/view)



Love thy Neighbor: A Guide for Tackling Antisemitism While Committing to Justice for All (Narrow Bridge Fellows, Brown University)

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1a4-lu5-4w8kdpvs3WkN9RquqZccveUcN/view?fbclid=IwAR2-MlWQsvyjWpB\\_Bmy29XvxfC5V2yixSMdpgEKFiRFYkR-uEvN\\_eMPkBQ8](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1a4-lu5-4w8kdpvs3WkN9RquqZccveUcN/view?fbclid=IwAR2-MlWQsvyjWpB_Bmy29XvxfC5V2yixSMdpgEKFiRFYkR-uEvN_eMPkBQ8)

Making Our Movements Stronger by Resisting Antisemitism

<https://everydayfeminism.com/2017/12/stronger-by-resisting-antisemitism/>

The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism

<https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/>

The Past Didn't Go Anywhere

<https://www.aprilrosenblum.com/thepast>

Understanding Antisemitism (Jews for Racial and Economic Justice)

<https://jfrej-web-assets.nyc3.digitaloceanspaces.com/JFREJ-Understanding-Antisemitism-November-2017-v1-3-2.pdf>



## 2. JUDAISM: HISTORY AND STRUCTURE IN CANADA

In 2023, Canada had the fourth largest Jewish community in the world, and there were approximately 392,000 people in Canada who identified themselves as Jewish, representing 2.4% of the Canadian population<sup>12</sup>. All six of the major Jewish denominations are represented in Canada (Conservative, Orthodox, Reform, Reconstructionist, Renewal, and Humanist).

Most Jews in Canada live in the urban metropolitan areas of Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, and Ottawa<sup>3</sup>. These communities have a number of Jewish institutions that provide various types of services, including synagogues, Jewish community centres that provide both recreational and cultural programming, Jewish Family Services that provide social service support, and Jewish federations which do fundraising and philanthropic giving.

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1 Statistics Canada (2022). The Canadian census: A rich portrait of the country's religious and ethnocultural diversity, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221026/dq221026b-eng.htm>.

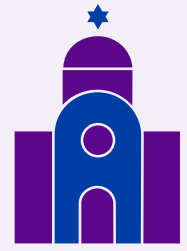
2 World Population Review (2024). Jewish Population by Country 2024. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/jewish-population-by-country>.

3 3 Statistics Canada (2023). Religion by gender and age: Census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810035302>.





## 2.1 Synagogue Structures



Synagogues are the primary source of Jewish community. There are just under 200 synagogues that serve the Jewish population in Canada. About two-thirds of Jews in Canada belong to a synagogue. There is no religious governing body responsible for all synagogues in Canada. Rather, each community has leadership structures that operate independently but often in communication with one other.

Most synagogues have professional clergy (a Rabbi and/or a Cantor) who lead religious services, as well as a Board that makes communal decisions, and often also administrative staff. In the 1970s, the Reform movement began ordaining women as rabbis and cantors. Before that, only men were allowed to be ordained in North America. The other Jewish denominations eventually followed suit; even certain orthodox communities (but not all) have ordained women in a similar role to a rabbi, but often under the title

“Maharat,” which is an acronym for ‘Leader of Jewish law spirituality and Torah.’ In 1978, the Reconstructionist movement began ordaining 2SLGBTQI students, followed by the Reform and Conservative movements. While the Orthodox movement still does not ordain 2SLGBTQI rabbis or cantors, several previously ordained Orthodox rabbis have come out of the closet. In 2012, Rabbi Lisa Grushcow became the first openly lesbian Rabbi in Canada at Temple Emanuel-El Beth Sholom in Montreal.



## 2.2 Schools and Training

Each denomination has its own Rabbinical training programs and denominational organizations that create cohesion across the denomination. Only the Orthodox sect called Chabad has a Rabbinical school to train Rabbis in Canada. The Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, Renewal, and Humanist movements all have rabbinical schools in the USA, and several have schools in Europe, South America, and Israel.

Jewish elementary and high schools are found in several metropolitan cities across Canada. These schools provide the standard provincial curriculum tailored to Jewish traditions and cultural values and follow the Jewish calendar. Instruction may be offered in Hebrew, English, or French.

## 2.3 Advocacy Groups

There are several political and lobbying groups associated with the Jewish community.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) is the advocacy agent for the various Jewish Federations across Canada. Their main goal is to promote pro-Israel advocacy efforts. On the other end of the spectrum, Independent Voices Canada (IJV) is an organization that provides Jews with a platform to advocate for peace and justice efforts that allow for Palestinian solidarity. There is no consensus in the Jewish community on these issues.



## 2.4 Resources

ALEPH Canada: Alliance for Jewish Renewal in Canada

<https://www.alephcanada.ca/about-aleph-canada>

B'NAI BRITH CANADA

<https://www.bnaibrith.ca/>

Independent Jewish Voices Canada (IJV)

<https://www.ijvcanada.org/about-ijv/>

JACS Toronto <https://jacstoronto.org/>

Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada (Jewish Foundation of Winnipeg)

<https://www.jewishwinnipeg.org/directory/jewish-heritage-centre-of-western-canada>

Jewish National Fund of Canada (JNF Canada) <https://jnf.ca/>

J Space Canada <https://www.jspacecanada.ca/who-we-are>

Mazon Canada – The Jewish Response to Hunger

<https://www.mazoncanada.ca/how-we-help-2021>

New Israel Fund Canada <https://nifcan.org/>

Shoresh – Canadian Soil, Jewish Roots <https://shoresh.ca/>

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) <https://www.cija.ca/>

Women of Reform Judaism <https://wrj.org/>



# 3. JUDAISM: HISTORIC AND CURRENT STANCES ON 2SLGBTQI IDENTITIES

In the last 60 years, there have been great strides made in the acceptance of 2SLGBTQI individuals within the Jewish community. As with any other issue, there is no consensus or single approach to these issues, and many differences are based on variations between denominations.

Before the 1960s, it was challenging to find places within the Jewish community in which 2SLGBTQI Jews could feel safe and included. Jewish Biblical texts have been used to discriminate against 2SLGBTQI Jews and others who consider these texts part of their sacred documents.

Starting in the mid-1960s, the Reform movement began a path toward full 2SLGBTQI inclusion. This was followed by the Reconstructionist movement in the mid-1980s and the Conservative movement around 2006-7. Positional changes included allowing the officiation of 2SLGBTQI weddings, ordination of 2SLGBTQI clergy, and social justice advocacy for the rights of 2SLGBTQI people broadly. Within Orthodox communities, however, there remains far less acceptance and inclusion overall. This said, there have been significant attempts within Orthodox communities to eliminate bullying and abuse of 2SLGBTQI individuals.

Regardless of a movement's official position, an individual 2SLGBTQI person's experience within a specific community will largely depend on the acceptance and understanding of the leadership of that particular community.



## 3.1 2SLGBTQI Jewish Inclusion Timeline

The following table provides a snapshot of the evolution of 2SLGBTQI inclusion across Jewish communities over the past 60 years.

1965	The organization <a href="#">Women of Reform Judaism</a> officially supports the decriminalization of homosexuality in the USA.
1972	Beth Chayim Chadashim is founded on June 9, 1972, in Los Angeles as the first LGBT Congregation in the world. In 1974, they are approved as a Reform Congregation.
1977	The <a href="#">Central Conference of American Rabbis</a> (CCAR), the Reform movement's Rabbinic Association, adopts a resolution called "Human Rights for Homosexuals," calling for legislation decriminalizing homosexual acts between consenting adults and an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians.
1977	<b>B'nai Kehilla, an LGBTQI Synagogue in Toronto, evolves out of Ha'Mishpacha, a queer Jewish community group.</b>
1978	Allan Bennett becomes the first openly gay rabbi in the USA.
1984	The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College becomes the first Jewish Seminary to endorse the ordination of LGBTQI Rabbis and Cantors by passing a non-discrimination admissions policy.
1988	Rabbi Stacy Offner becomes the first lesbian rabbi hired by a mainstream (Reform) congregation, Shir Tikvah, in Minneapolis.
1990	The Reform movement creates a policy of full religious inclusion for LGBTQI members and clergy.
1993	The Reconstructionist Jewish Movement Commission issues <a href="#">Homosexuality and Judaism: The Reconstructionist Position</a> , a comprehensive statement on LGBTQI inclusion.



<b>1996</b>	The Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Rabbinical Association of the Reform Movement, and the Union for Reform Judaism each pass <a href="#">resolutions</a> in support of same-sex civil marriages.
<b>1996</b>	Keshet, an LGBTQIA Jewish advocacy and education organization, is founded.
<b>1999</b>	Rabbi Steven Greenberg who was ordained by the orthodox rabbinical school Yeshiva University publicly comes out as the first Orthodox gay rabbi.
<b>2000</b>	The Central Conference of American Rabbis officially supports their clergy who choose to perform same-sex weddings.
<b>2000</b>	<b>Kulanu is founded as a Toronto-based Jewish LGBTQI group, originally deriving from a campus-based group. In 2018, it transitions into the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre LGBTQ Initiative.</b>
<b>2003</b>	Rueben Zellman becomes the first openly transgender student accepted to the Reform Rabbinic Seminary at Hebrew Union College. He is ordained in 2010.
<b>2003</b>	The Reform movement produces a resolution actively including bisexual and transgender people in its statement of support.
<b>2003</b>	A Conservative movement committee <a href="#">approves a rabbinic ruling</a> stating that a transgender person's sex status under Jewish law is changed by "sex reassignment surgery."
<b>2003</b>	Svara, a queer-centered yeshiva (religious school) is founded by Rabbi Benay Lappe.
<b>2004</b>	The Society for Humanist Judaism passes a resolution in support of same-sex marriage and divorce.
<b>2005</b>	The Renewal movement ordains its first gay rabbi, Rabbi Eli Cohen.



<b>2006</b>	The Conservative movement creates a religious legal document (Responsa) that allows for the respect of same-sex relationships (but not marriage) and the acceptance of gay and lesbian students in their seminaries.
<b>2006</b>	Rabbi Elliot Kukla becomes the first transgender rabbi ordained within the Reform movement.
<b>2007</b>	The Conservative seminary, the Jewish Theological Seminary, begins to admit openly LGBTQ students.
<b>2007</b>	Joy Ladin becomes the first openly transgender professor to teach at an Orthodox University, Stern College for Women at Yeshiva University.
<b>2008</b>	<b>Ga’ava (Pride), a student-run LGBTQI community group is founded in Montreal.</b>
<b>2010</b>	Eshel, an organization to support LGBTQI Orthodox Jews, is founded.
<b>2011</b>	Rabbi Rachel Isaacs becomes the first openly lesbian rabbi to be ordained by the Conservative movement. In 2014, Rabbi Mikie Goldstein becomes the first Conservative gay male Rabbi.
<b>2012</b>	The Conservative movement in the USA supports their clergy performing same-sex weddings.
<b>2012</b>	The Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America declares that it no longer supports reparative (“conversion”) therapy.
<b>2012</b>	<b>Rabbi Lisa Grushcow becomes the first openly lesbian rabbi in Canada at Temple Emanuel-El Beth Sholom in Montreal.</b>
<b>2014</b>	The Reform Movement’s Rabbinical Association (CCAR) joins a lawsuit challenging North Carolina’s ban on same-sex marriage, the US’s first faith-based challenge to the ban.



<b>2015</b>	Abby Stein, who had been ordained as a rabbi by an ultra-orthodox seminary, comes out as transgender.
<b>2016</b>	The Conservative movement's Rabbinical Association (RA) passes a "Resolution on the Rights of Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming People".
<b>2019</b>	Daniel Atwood becomes the first openly gay Orthodox person to be ordained as a rabbi; he is ordained by Rabbi <a href="#">Daniel Landes</a> .
<b>2022</b>	The Conservative movement rules that it is permissible to use non-gendered language in religious services to call people up to take certain roles or honours.
<b>2022</b>	Orthodox Yeshiva University students <a href="#">win on appeal a discrimination lawsuit</a> filed in 2020 against their university for refusing to allow an LGBTQ+ student club.

## 3.2 Community organizations

There are a number of 2SLGBTQI Jewish organizations, some that span all of North America, such as Keshet, Svara, and TransTorah. Others are smaller or more locally focussed, such as the Nonbinary Hebrew Project, and the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre LGBTQ Initiative, which creates community programming on 2SLGBTQI issues in Toronto. Many post-secondary campuses across Canada also have Jewish LGBTQI student groups.

## 3.3 Pro-Israel at Pride in Canada

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) has been very involved with Pride celebrations and political issues across Canada for many years. Their presence, and the presence of other pro-Israel organizations, at Pride events has been controversial, as they have been criticized for promoting Israel's approach





to LGBTQI civil rights while demonizing Palestinian culture as homophobic to justify the continued occupation. This pattern has been labelled “pinkwashing” by social justice activists.

## 3.4 Further Reading

### 2SLGBTQI Position Statements

#### *Conservative Movement*

Transgender Jews and Halakhah, Rabbi Leonard A. Sharzer MD (PDF)

<https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/halakhah/teshuvot/2011-2020/transgender-halakhah.pdf>

#### *Humanist Movement*

Society for Humanistic Judaism Supports Marriage Rights of Same-Sex Couples

(Web Page) <https://shj.org/organize/social-justice-issues-and-resolutions/marriage-equality/>

Yeshiva University Pride Alliance vs. Yeshiva University Court Documents

<https://fingfx.thomsonreuters.com/gfx/legaldocs/zjpqjyxbvx/12152022yeshiva.pdf>

#### *Reconstructionist Movement*

Homosexuality and Judaism: The Reconstructionist Position (PDF)

[https://www.reconstructingjudaism.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/commission\\_on\\_homosexuality\\_report\\_1992\\_-\\_ocr.pdf](https://www.reconstructingjudaism.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/commission_on_homosexuality_report_1992_-_ocr.pdf)

Reconstructing Judaism – Public Statements and Positions by Topic (Web Page)

<https://www.reconstructingjudaism.org/positions-by-topic/>



Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association: Resolution - Fuller Acceptance of Gay And Lesbian Jews In Our Community (PDF)

<https://therra.org/resolutions/gays-&-lesbians.pdf>

Resolution In Solidarity with and Affirming The Rights of Transgender, Non-Binary, and Gender Non-Conforming People March 2017 (PDF)

<https://therra.org/resolutions/transgender-resolution.pdf>

RRA Resolution on Gender Identity 2013 (PDF)

[https://therra.org/resolutions/rra\\_transgender-resolution-rra-adopted-3-12-2013.pdf](https://therra.org/resolutions/rra_transgender-resolution-rra-adopted-3-12-2013.pdf)

RRA - Proposed Resolution on Gender-Inclusive Language in RRA Documents, Guidelines and By-Laws (PDF)

<https://therra.org/resolutions/resolution-on-gender-neutral-and-inclusive-language.pdf>

Stances of Faiths on LGBTQ+ Issues: Reconstructionist Judaism (Web Page)

[Stances of Faiths on LGBTQ Issues: Reconstructionist Judaism - Human Rights Campaign \(hrc.org\)](https://www.hrc.org/campaigns/stances-of-faiths-on-lgbtq-issues-reconstructionist-judaism)

## ***Reform Movement***

LGBTQ Rights and Position of the Reform Movement (Web Page)

<https://rac.org/lgbtq-rights-and-position-reform-movement>



# Queer Jewish Organizations and Resources

Keshet-LGBTQ+ Jewish Advocacy and Education (Website)

[www.keshetonline.org](http://www.keshetonline.org)

Queer Jewish Incubator located at the Miles Nadal JCC, Toronto (Website)

<https://www.mnjcc.org/qji>

Svara - Queer Talmud Learning Community (Website)

<https://svara.org/>

The Non-Binary Hebrew Project (Website)

<https://www.nonbinaryhebrew.com/>

Transtorah (Website)

<http://www.transtorah.org>

## ***Resources for LGBTQ+ Orthodox Jews***

Eschel Parent Retreat (Website)

<https://www.eshelonline.org/>

JQY - Jewish Queer Youth (Website)

<https://www.jqyouth.org/>

Orthogays - Resources for Gay & Lesbian Orthodox Jews (Website)

<http://www.orthogays.org/>

## ***Books on Judaism and LGBTQ issues***

The 8 Genders in the Talmud (Web Page)

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-eight-genders-in-the-talmud/>

Wrestling with God and Men Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition (Book)

<https://uwpress.wisc.edu/books/2576.htm>



## 3.5 Sources and Suggested Resources

2018 Survey of Jews in Canada – Final Report (PDF)

<https://www.environicsinstitute.org/docs/default-source/project-documents/2018-survey-of-jews-in-canada/2018-survey-of-jews-in-canada--final-report.pdf>

Canada – Jewish Encyclopedia (Article)

<https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/3957-canada>

Congregation B'nai Kehillah of Toronto (Web Page)

<https://search.ontariojewisharchives.org/Permalink/accessions25707>

Feminism 101: What is Pinkwashing? (Web Page)

On Israel, Palestine, and the political positioning of LGBTQI issues.

<https://femmagazine.com/feminism-101-what-is-pinkwashing/>

Gay and Once Divorced, A Canadian Rabbi Broadens... (Article)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/12/world/canada/rabbi-lisa-grushcow-montreal.html>

Jewish Institutional LGBTQ Beginnings in Toronto (PDF)

[https://www.kulturacollective.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/BnaiKehillah\\_MF.pdf](https://www.kulturacollective.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/BnaiKehillah_MF.pdf)

Judaism and Homosexuality: A Brief History (Article)

<https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/2016-06-02/ty-article-magazine/.premium/judaism-and-homosexuality-a-brief-history/0000017f-e6a5-dc7e-adff-f6adec1f0000>

Keshet: For LGBTQ Equality in Jewish Life (Website)

[www.keshetonline.org](http://www.keshetonline.org)



Landsmanshaft and Jewish Mutual Benefit Societies of Toronto (Web Page)  
<http://www.billgladstone.ca/landsmanshaft-and-jewish-mutual-benefit-societies-of-toronto/>

LGBT Clergy in Judaism (Web Page)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT\\_clergy\\_in\\_Judaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_clergy_in_Judaism)

Meet Ottawa's first openly gay and first female rabbi (Article)  
<https://broadview.org/rabbi-elizabeth-bolton-interview/>

Rabbi Allen Bennett – Oral History (Web Page)  
<https://lgbtqreligiousarchives.org/oral-histories/allen-bennett>

Rabbi Andrea Myers – Twitter  
<https://mobile.twitter.com/rabbiandrea>

Rabbi Dr. Aviva Goldberg – Contributor (Article)  
<https://xtramagazine.com/contributor/rabbi-dr-aviva-goldberg>

Stances of Faiths on LGBTQ Issues: Orthodox Judaism (Web Page)  
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/stances-of-faiths-on-lgbt-issues-orthodox-judaism>

Stances of Faiths on LGBTQ Issues: Reconstructionist Judaism (Web Page)  
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/stances-of-faiths-on-lgbt-issues-reconstructionist-judaism>

SVARA Strategic Plan (Web Page)  
<https://www.flipsnack.com/svarayeshiva/svara-s-strategic-plan.html>

The Canadian Way: Interview with Canadian rabbis Michael Dolgin, Leigh Lerner, and Dow Marmur (Web Page)  
<https://reformjudaism.org/reform-jewish-life/jewish-life-israel-and-around-world/canadian-way>



Timeline of LGBT Jewish History (Web Page) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_LGBT\\_Jewish\\_history#cite\\_note-12](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_LGBT_Jewish_history#cite_note-12)

Toronto's largest Jewish LGBTQ group takes new form (Article)  
<https://thecjn.ca/news/canada/torontos-largest-jewish-lgbtq-group-takes-new-form/>



# 4. JUDAISM: DOS AND DON'TS



## **Do provide flexible bereavement allowances.**

When an immediate family member of a Jewish person dies, there is a seven-day period of mourning, where an individual is traditionally prevented from working.

## **Do train all staff to recognize and respond to antisemitism.**

Have clear and simple processes for addressing and reporting incidents if they occur.

## **Do follow trauma-informed practices.**

Acknowledge and recognize the impacts of individual and intergenerational trauma resulting from antisemitism.<sup>4</sup>

## **Do account for Kosher dietary restrictions.**

If serving food, offer options that are free of pork, shellfish, and that do not mix meat and dairy products together. Vegan and vegetarian options tend to be more accessible to people who keep Kosher. Be sure to also consult the person on any additional needs they may have regarding shared kitchens or other communal spaces.

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<sup>4</sup> To learn more about trauma-informed organizational practices, check out The Connecticut Women's Consortium's Guide to Building Trauma-Informed Practices and Organizations at:

<https://shorturl.at/cgIST>



# Don't

 **Don't schedule events on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur or the first two nights of Passover.**

If events are scheduled on those days, create a plan that allows Jewish staff or participants to be absent without penalty.

 **Don't interrogate or missionize a Jewish person.**

Be thoughtful about asking an individual person to represent their faith or to educate you or others on their faith – this should be entirely voluntary and optional.

 **Don't generalize.**

Never assume all Jews are from any particular race or background or have a specific set of ideas or allegiances.

