

## **SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE WAR IN ISRAEL: A RESOURCE FOR PARENTS**

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Years ago, parents had control over how information about tragic events and terrorist attacks was disseminated to our children. Now, however, our teens are on the information front lines.

Today, information comes quickly, without filters, and with little oversight. While social media is a place for teens to find connections, build community, and share their thoughts and feelings (often without adult interference), it is also a place for 24/7 news and exposure to traumatic material, which can be scary and induce fear among adolescent and teen viewers.

With the horrific situation underway in Israel right now, much of the content being shared on social media is overwhelming and disturbing. So how do we, as parents and caregivers, protect our teens and help them navigate this landscape? Here are five things to think about:

### **1. Be Safe Online**

Encourage teens to continue to use social media safely. They should never publish any personal information, like their current location, address, or phone number online. Make sure they know how to report any harassment or inappropriate content.

### **2. Know Who You Follow**

There are a lot of people sharing information; it is important to make sure teens are receiving news from credible accounts. On page 2 of **this document**, there are places BBYO recommends as excellent sources of information:

(<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PvVgVXacqRr1LqwEOqg0txSMhaYO2iiZSZmu9qZaME/edit>),

### **3. Pick Your Battles**

As the ADL has suggested, engage in conversations when and where you are more likely to have an impact.

#### 4. Empower Your Teen

Talk to your teen about what is happening and the challenges of interacting with certain types of information on social media. Looking to have a conversation but not sure how? Start here: **Talking to Children about War** (<https://www.nctsn.org/print/2719>). Make sure to leave space for teens to process their emotions. We are all hurting, but teens need to be able to share their hurt in their own time, their way, and without worrying about judgment. Be a resource, and let them know they aren't alone.

#### 5. Unplug

Taking breaks isn't just recommended, it's essential. Encourage teens to put their phone down, disconnect, and recharge their minds and bodies.

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Healing and self-care begin in moments: breathe, move, hydrate, connect, affirm, and unplug. For you and your teens, remember *you aren't alone*. And, as always, BBYO staff members, advisors, and mental health professionals are always here for your teens.