


Responding with care to those in need

A resource to help Jewish leaders and advocates identify community members in need and guide them toward help.



Reaching out to those in financial distress

Once you've determined a family or individual may be in need, it's important to reach out and have a conversation, both to share options for assistance and show your support.

Identifying the right person to reach out to

It's important to select the right person to initiate the conversation.

- Does someone at your organization have training in providing counseling on sensitive matters?
- Is there someone with a trusting personal relationship with the individual or family?
- In a school setting, is there a teacher or guidance counselor who has a strong relationship with the child or family?

Begin conversations from a place of empathy

Reaching out to a family that has stopped attending services or school and saying, "We've missed seeing you!" shows them that they're still valued members of the community.

If a person has fallen behind on dues or tuition, oftentimes they expect a reprimand rather than a caring conversation. "We've noticed that you've fallen behind on your dues — is there anything we can do to help you manage your payments?" is a good way to open an empathetic discussion.

Don't rush things

Some people might open up immediately, while others may be resistant to talking. An invitation to open the conversation may not lead to an immediate discussion, but if you give people space, progress may be made down the road. Let them know you understand that this is a difficult topic to discuss and lead with the acknowledgment that this must be a difficult time for them.

Ask key questions

When they're ready to open up, do your best to understand the extent of their financial situation.

- Does their spouse/partner know the extent of their financial trouble?
- Are they in need of emergency assistance, about to be evicted or foreclosed on?
- Are they out of crisis but in danger of sliding into financial vulnerability?

Outline the help your organization can provide as they begin the process of seeking assistance (dues abatement, counseling services, scholarships) but stress that the Jewish community and its social service agencies offer a larger range of services as well. Don't worry if you don't have many financial resources to offer — your referral is enough to help a family get on track!

If you or someone you know needs help, CJP's Warmline will connect you with compassionate resources and support.