



Inclusion

The Rabbinical Assembly has worked to ensure that all people can be included within our communities, regardless of age, physical ability, gender, sexuality, or any other factor of identity. We have passed many resolutions that aim to expand outreach and training programs so that rabbis have sufficient knowledge and understanding to work with people of all backgrounds in creating sacred spaces.

The Rabbinical Assembly has advocated for acceptance and full care for people suffering from illnesses. In a 1987 resolution addressing the AIDS crisis the RA declared that “all mitzvot making manifest Judaism’s love of all human beings and Judaism’s compassion for the sick appertain hereto with full force, including such areas as bikkur holim.” In 1992 the RA recognized the “important link between institutionalized patients and the Jewish community” created by rabbis serving as chaplains and called upon the wider community to do so as well.

The Rabbinical Assembly has a long record of support for and inclusion of LGBTQ persons in Jewish institutions. A 1990 resolution stated that “gay men and lesbians are welcome as members in our congregations,” and in 1992 the RA passed a resolution affirming that the organization would not discriminate against LGBTQ synagogues in its placement practices. In 2011 the RA reaffirmed its 1990 position and further resolved to support the extension of civil rights and marriage benefits to same-sex couples, to join coalitions and anti-bullying campaigns to help combat anti-LGBTQ discrimination, and to foster welcoming environments for LGBTQ individuals through inclusive language, appropriate inclusion of LGBTQ persons and families in lifecycle events, and the creation of safe spaces for discussions related to sexual identity.

In 2006 the Rabbinical Assembly urged its members to explore organizations and coalitions, such as USCJ’s Hazak program, Interfaith Caregivers, Faith in Action, and the Jewish Federations’ Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC) support organizations, that provide services and support for the growing needs of senior citizens. The RA encouraged Conservative organizations to “[perform] this mitzvah of g’milut hasadim on a large scale to meet the increasing needs of this growing and important segment of our population so they may reach their last days in dignity.”

In 1991 the RA encouraged members to establish educational and training programs for synagogue professionals and lay leaders to learn how to constructively interact with interfaith couples. This sentiment was reaffirmed in a 2014 resolution that called for rabbis to “welcome, counsel, dialogue and engage with interfaith couples consistent with halakhah as interpreted by the Rabbinical Assembly’s Committee on Jewish Law and Standards.”

In the 2014 “Resolution in Support of Access to Lifelong Jewish Learning for Jews with Disabilities,” the Rabbinical Assembly recognized that “people can have disabilities that are not visible including, but not limited to, autism spectrum disorders, learning disabilities, executive functioning disorders and mood disorders”; asserted that accommodations should be made to meet the needs of those with unique needs, including physical accessibility, a welcoming demeanor, and the use of person-first



language; and encouraged rabbis and congregations to increase allocations to fund such initiatives and to partner with other organizations to share resources and best practices. The resolution praised previous work done by the RA, USCJ, Ramah camps, and other Conservative organizations that strive create “welcoming communities of meaningful inclusion.” While acknowledging the progress of the past few years on these issues, the resolution asserted that “more can and must be done to build a more inclusive Conservative Movement” and encouraged the fostering of a Jewish community that “spiritually, physically and socially welcomes, includes, accommodates and supports all children and adults living with disabilities and their families by providing lifelong learning in all aspects of Jewish communal life.”