

PHH Community Bias-Related Incident - 3-28-22

Subject: PHH Community Bias-Related Incident

Dear Public Health House,

On March 6, 2022, there was an incident that occurred which is considered to be bias-related in nature. This type of behavior is directly against the University of Connecticut's values of striving to create a safe and inclusive community for all students.

A bias-related incident is an incident that negatively targets, intimidates, or threatens an individual or group due to race, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, physical, mental, and intellectual disabilities, as well as past/present history of mental disorders. This includes, but is not limited to, graffiti or images that harass or intimidate individuals or groups due to the above characteristics.

The individual(s) responsible for this incident targeted those that identify as Jewish by using anti-Semitic stereotypes and offensive verbal comments. Anti-Semitism is defined as a certain perception of Jewish people, which may be expressed as hatred toward those in the Jewish community. As well as hostility or discrimination against Jewish persons as a religious group. This can look a variety of different ways through slurs, stereotypes, microaggressions, harmful jokes, and sometimes symbols drawn.

We will be having a floor meeting on Wednesday, March 30th, at 8 PM in the Werth Forum. We expect that you will all have an active part in building an inclusive community by helping us disrupt the narrative that events such as these create about our community. We can disprove these notions of intolerance by showing up in allyship to events that uplift and support each other. Although this incident has occurred in our area, I know they do not represent who we are as a community.

This meeting is the first step to helping rebuild the trust within our Public Health House community. As you move forward in immersing yourself into the community, please keep in mind that small actions have a major impact. We can be proactive and not reactive to situations like this by making the following changes in our daily behaviors:

- Hold your peers accountable for their decision
- If you see something, say something. To your RA, or your Hall Director

- Remind your guests that you are responsible for their behavior and that you will not tolerate acts within your community

If you encounter any other bias related incidents within the community, please do not hesitate to report it through the bias reporting form: <https://dos.uconn.edu/bias-reporting-2/>.

If you have any additional information about this incident or would like to discuss this with someone you can reach out to James Walker or Jeff Benike.

Sincerely,

Werth Hall Leadership Team

Jeffrey Benike, M.S.

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