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The Women's Rabbinic Network (WRN) supports survivors and looks to a future in which our Reform Movement and the Jewish world writ large are environments of safety and equity that honor the holiness of each human life. Following brave disclosures by those who have survived sexual harassment, assault, abuse, and misconduct, our Reform movement continues to reckon with these painful truths, and WRN has continued to advocate for accountability, *teshuvah* (repentance and repair), and transformation. We now share updates on the growing list of investigations into past and current misconduct, harassment, and abuse, as well as WRN's recommendations and vision for a Reform movement that is truly equitable and safe for all.

In the last months, three of our Reform Movement partner organizations -- Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Union for Reform Judaism, and Central Conference of American Rabbis -- and at least three individual synagogues have undertaken independent, lawyer-led investigations into the past and current misconduct of clergy, faculty, staff, and other leaders. Each of these institutions has engaged expert law firms to investigate and report on individual cases and systemic problems, and WRN recognizes the significance of this critical step. While the investigations vary in scope, all of these endeavors are investigating some combination of individuals, cultures, and systems that have allowed perpetrators to harass, abuse, and harm colleagues, students, congregants, and community members.

WRN has been in ongoing conversation with each of our three partner organizations that are undertaking investigations. Based on our expertise in this area and feedback from WRN rabbis and members of the broader Jewish community, we have offered guidance to the leadership of each partner organization on how they can best support survivors and all those who choose to report. The WRN supports these processes as an important step toward accountability, and we strongly encourage anyone who has experienced, witnessed, or has knowledge of sexual or gender-based harassment, discrimination, abuse, or assault to share your story with the relevant investigation(s).

To support survivors and witnesses who wish to connect to the ongoing investigations, file ethics claims, or share their stories in ways that further healing, we have created and launched an important new website (www.WRNresources.org) which includes information that has been shared publicly about all current investigations, videos from experts who offer advice to those who are considering sharing their story, and spiritual resources for survivors who are working to heal their souls. Our website continues to evolve and grow.

We cannot emphasize enough how important it is to come forward to any of the relevant investigations, even if you just have a small amount of information or even if it is second-hand information.

Updates:

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion: This investigation, led by the law firm [Morgan Lewis](#), is looking into instances of “sexual misconduct, harassment, or discrimination based on sex (including gender, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation) or any other harassment or discrimination by HUC-JIR faculty, staff, and/or affiliates,” at any HUC location, campus, or off-site assignment or event. The investigation will also “determine whether the responses to such complaints, if any, were appropriate.” This investigation has a broad scope and includes any past incident at HUC, at an HUC event, or involving HUC faculty or staff, whether a complaint was filed at the time or not.

HUC held a conference, “Moral Injury and Soul Repair,” in June and invited WRN’s Executive Director, Rabbi Mary Zamore, to give a case presentation relating to the broad moral injury experienced by women rabbis and others which was caused by sexual misconduct in the Reform movement. Rabbi Zamore discussed the lasting, collective moral injury of having been ordained by someone known to have engaged in sexual misconduct. [Read her remarks here.](#)

On July 26th, HUC and Morgan Lewis announced that the deadline for getting in touch to share information will be August 16th (extended from the original date of August 1). Anyone with information to share can contact the team at HUC-JIRInvestigation@morganlewis.com.

Union for Reform Judaism: The URJ has engaged the law firm [Debevoise and Plimpton](#) to lead its investigation. The scope of this investigation includes abuse, harassment, assault, and discrimination under any of URJ’s auspices, whether or not a complaint was filed in the past. Importantly, this includes anything experienced or witnessed at URJ summer camps and youth programming. In its announcement, URJ committed to listening to the investigation’s findings “and [acting] on the recommendations, no matter how painful.” The scope of the URJ investigation is quite large given the numbers of people engaged in their institutions and programs each year, therefore their investigation remains open for survivors or others to share their stories or information. In the meantime, URJ leaders have told WRN that they are committed to providing periodic updates on this process to as broad a network as possible in order to ensure transparency and accountability as well as publicizing the investigation widely.

Anyone with information to share can contact the team at URJInvestigation@debevoise.com.

Central Conference of American Rabbis: CCAR’s current investigation is being conducted by the law firm [Alcalaw](#). The scope of the CCAR’s formal investigation primarily focuses on the CCAR ethics process, and Alcalaw, on behalf of the CCAR, is requesting that people report any “information about the CCAR’s handling of any previously filed ethics complaints.” The ongoing examination of both the ethics code and the handling of past ethics complaints is an important step toward accountability and repair. This work builds on the significant revision of the ethics code that the CCAR has undertaken over the last decade. In addition to reports relevant to the primary focus of the investigation, the CCAR leadership has shared with WRN that they continue to invite reports from those who did not engage in the ethics process and those who have experienced other misconduct or discriminatory behavior in any interactions with the CCAR. All of this information is critical to making this investigation a success and will be considered as the CCAR decides on its next steps in this process of *teshuva*.

We feel compelled to note that the responsibility for creating safe, respectful spaces is not limited to the leadership of the CCAR. Rather, it is incumbent upon all CCAR members to promote a culture of safety. While a great number of people have shared with WRN stories of sexual harassment, abuse, assault and discrimination, too many of those individuals, especially rabbis, chose not to file an ethics complaint, in part because they fear significant, negative repercussions for both their professional futures and personal/professional relationships. Therefore, in addition to the critical work of institutional *teshuva*, we call on our colleagues and fellow CCAR members to actively join us in dismantling the silencing culture that undermines the efficacy of the ethics system. The first step is to ensure CCAR members encourage reporting and support the survivors who bravely come forward with their stories.

On July 29th, CCAR announced that the deadline for getting in touch to share information is August 27th. Anyone with information to share can contact the team at ccar@alcalaw.com.

WRN’s Vision for a Safe Reform Movement

As we continue advocating for those who have survived abuse, harassment, assault, and discrimination in our movement, WRN acknowledges and applauds the steps toward accountability that our partner organizations have taken and are taking, including their important, ongoing investigations. We believe our community can and must be one of safety and respect. To that end, we look forward to our Reform movement partners committing to and continuing their work toward fulfilling the following:

1. Commit to a full, independent review of past complaints brought to the institution to ensure justice was appropriately carried out and, where needed, rectify unresolved complaints. For example, where applicable, this should include, examining past settlements and releasing survivors from silencing contracts, like non-disclosure agreements.

2. Following receipt and review of any investigative findings, commit to the highest level of transparency that is legally available by publicly naming the types of abuse that are discovered and the extent of the problems uncovered.
3. Commit to holding those found to be predators and enablers accountable by either creating or reinforcing a clear system of professional and religious accountability.
4. Commit to ensuring that both individual members and institutions as a whole will engage in a survivor-centered, trauma-informed *teshuva* (repentance and repair) process.
5. Commit to providing clear information about how survivors can access any available supports and resources for healing. If such resources are not currently available from the institution, undertake a review to determine what new resources and support could feasibly be offered by the institution.
6. Commit to a full safety and respect climate survey to evaluate institutional culture and put into place the policies, standards, and processes to ensure safety for all, including the on-going promotion of a feedback-rich and retaliation-free environment to support a safe and respectful culture.

Many of us, women rabbis and so many others of all genders, have spent the last few months with tender hearts and aching spirits. The Women's Rabbinic Network honors all those who have survived sexual misconduct within and beyond our movement, all those who have felt silenced, and all those whose trust was broken by those charged with our collective safety. WRN supports survivors, and we call upon our movement partners to continue doing the difficult and necessary work to account for past failings, engage in *teshuva*, and transform our movement.