Client Project

(Apr 4, 2024 - 7:30am)

**Hi everyone, welcome and thank you for participating today. This focus group is facilitated by College Pulse, a research firm that studies the opinions of college students across the United States. My name is Dr. Deb Mashek; I will be the primary moderator. I will be asking questions, facilitating discussion, and managing our time. The purpose of our conversation today is to learn more about how college students think about the conflict in Israel and Gaza.This focus group is part of a study being conducted by College Pulse in partnership with a research team that studies education.Our call today will last 60 minutes. Due to the time constraint I may need to move us along to the next question at various points, however there will be time for additional comments and questions at the end. We ask that during this focus group you abide by the following ground rules: First, there are no wrong answers to any of the questions, so please share openly about your opinions and experiences.Second, what is said here, stays here. It is critical that we all honor each other’s privacy by holding in confidence everything that is said here today.Finally, please keep in mind that your experiences and perspectives are likely different from those of others. Please be respectful, speak one at a time, and be curious about our differences.If you agree to these three ground rules, please give me a thumbs up. Excellent. Thank you all so much. Before we get started, we would like to remind you that we will be recording this focus group session. By participating, you are consenting to being recorded and for the recordings, including your responses, to be used for research purposes. Your identity will remain confidential, however, if at any time you wish to no longer be recorded, you may leave the focus group by exiting the call. Any questions before we get started? OK, let’s begin! If you’d like me to repeat a question at any point, just let me know.**  (00:00:02 - 00:03:16)

**Deb:** This is a focus group facilitated by College Pulse which you might already know is a research firm that specializes in understanding the experiences and opinions of college students in the U. S. And my name is Doctor. Deb Mashek. I'm our moderator today. My job is to ask questions, facilitate discussion, and also keep us on time to make sure that everyone's out of here by, I I don't know what coast you're on. I'll say eleven thirty eastern.

**Deb:** Our conversation today is focused on deepening understanding.

**Deb:** Of students' experiences around the conflict in Gaza and Israel, and it's part of a study being conducted by College Pulse in partnership with a research firm or researchers who study education. And it's gonna take us about sixty minutes. And due to the time constraint, there might be times when I need to move us along, but I'll let you know. Other than that, just feel free to have a real deep, authentic, genuine conversation with me, with each other about these topics. And to facilitate that, I'm gonna suggest we adopt three guidelines, and I'm gonna read through these, and then ask just for a thumbs up if you feel that these are something that you can get behind. The first one is that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions, so I invite you to share as openly and honestly and with as much specificity as you can muster. That way we can really understand, your perspectives and your experiences. Number two, what is said here stays here. It's critical that we honor everybody's privacy and confidentiality by not sharing what somebody else said or, you know, trying to.

**Deb:** Relay that, other than in the research context. And then finally, keep in mind that it's highly likely that your experiences and perspectives differ from other people's in the room, and so I ask that we engage each other with respect. We listen carefully. We speak one at a time. So if that all sounds good, can I get a thumbs up?

**Deb:** Okay. Excellent. Thank you all so much.

**Deb:** Before we get started, I just wanna remind you that the conversation is being recorded and that this recording is used for research purposes only, and we honor your confidentiality every step of the way. It's critically important to us. So I wanna emphasize that. But if at any point you decide that you would rather not be recorded, you can exit the conversation by just up in the top right hand corner there. There's an exit button.

**Deb:** Are there any questions before we get started?

**Deb:** Okay. Excellent. So a couple reminders. One, I'll be asking the questions, but, really, if you have follow-up questions you wanna ask of somebody else or you wanna build on what somebody else said, please feel free to make this a conversation. And, you're welcome if you choose to to identify your school or something else, but I'm not gonna ask you about that. That's totally up to you. So your choice about how if you want to reveal anything that's quasi self identifying like that. Is that good? Okay. So this first question, we're just gonna go around the room, make sure everybody's voice, gets here, which is how do you obtain information about Israel and the conflict in Israel and Gaza?

**[Q1] How do you obtain information about Israel and the conflict in Israel and Gaza? To what extent do you actively seek out information vs. passively receive information? Are there particular sources you turn to? What sources do you find most trustworthy? [Mary: Drop prompts into chat]** (00:03:16 - 00:10:56)

**Deb:** And to what extent do you find yourself actively seeking out information versus passively receiving it? And, Participant 1, I'm gonna start with you if you're willing only because you're in the the top left corner of my screen.

**Participant 1:** So I'm someone who reads the New York Times a lot. So I get some information from there and then just also from people around me. Like, a lot of people have pretty strong opinions about the conflict. So, yeah, listening to them and seeing what they think.

**Deb:** And when you're listening to them, so, like, the people around you, are there particular people or sources that you find especially trustworthy?

**Participant 1:** Well, it's mainly just my peers. So, like, college classmates or, like, friends I've had just, like, yeah, because those are the people that I talk to most.

**Deb:** Yeah.

**Participant 1:** So yeah.

**Deb:** And, so, like, of that friend group or of those classmates, are.

**Participant 1:** Okay.

**Deb:** There, like, certain people you're like, I believe or I believe what they're saying or they're trustworthy or, like, that person not so much. And you don't have to name names. I'm just curious if there are different quality of sources for you.

**Participant 1:** Yeah. Well, I'd say usually, like, I listen to everybody because, I mean, they're all coming from somewhere.

**Participant 1:** So, yeah, I do have friends who are Jewish, and I have friends who are not Jewish as well. So it's interesting to see.

**Participant 1:** The dichotomy there as well. I wouldn't really say that I would I see, like, one of them as more trustworthy or not more trustworthy because they're all, like, they're all getting information from, like, different places, and they all have, like, pretty strong opinions.

**Deb:** Great. Thank you. Participant 2, how about you?

**Participant 2:** Hi.

**Participant 2:** I also read the New York Times a lot, like the Washington Post, I also read, Times of Israel a lot.

**Participant 2:** And I also, like, I hear from my peers, but I also have a lot of friends who are in Israel and a lot of friends who are in the army in Israel, so I hear, like, what their firsthand stuff is, but also I recognize that they're, like, living a certain experience, so I like to get other perspectives as well.

**Deb:** And so for your friends who are in Israel, are you talking with them or following them on social? Kinda how's that information coming in for you?

**Participant 2:** If it's, like, close friends, then we talk, like, a lot.

**Participant 2:** But, yeah, there's a lot of people who I just I, like, see their Instagram stuff, I guess, who are people, like, friends from high school who I'm not so close to necessarily.

**Deb:** Great. Thank you. And, Participant 3, how about you?

**Participant 3:** Yeah. I also read the New York Times.

**Participant 3:** I listen to the daily whenever it's an episode.

**Participant 3:** Can you hear me?

**Deb:** There's some background noise, but it sounds like it's passing. So go ahead.

**Participant 3:** Okay.

**Deb:** And continue.

**Participant 3:** I can hear that too.

**Participant 3:** And then I also hear from my peers. I see a lot on Instagram as well.

**Participant 3:** I don't always actively seek out information about it, honestly.

**Participant 3:** And then I also get some from my parents because I'm Jewish, and they are too. And so sometimes I'll hear from them. And when it comes to, like, trustworthiness, I'd say I I do trust, like, the New York Times and everything. I like how they do an episode on, like, what's happening in Israel, and then they'll do an episode what's happening on Palestine. Like, I feel like I get a good picture from it. From my parents, I take it more with a grain of salt because they're more on the pro Israel side. So I I like listening to them, but that's not, like, my main source of information at all.

**Deb:** Yeah. And then you mentioned Instagram. I'm curious if there are particular accounts or kinda influencer perspectives or thought leaders that you're drawn to there.

**Participant 3:** It's more just friends that are, like, reposting things, and it's usually, like, an infographic or something. So I use it more to, like, figure out that something's going on, but it's kind of hard to, like, draw conclusions from it because it's Instagram. And, like, I I don't always have the time to, like, oh, what source is this coming from? Like, is this, like, a reputable place?

**Deb:** Yeah. Yeah. That makes sense. Okay. Thank you. Participant 4, how about you?

**Participant 4:** Yeah. So I haven't been super, like, active about looking for information on the conflict. So my primary exposure has been through, like, Instagram, social media.

**Participant 4:** I also have, like, friends that will post, like, stories with, you know, like, infographics and, like, that kind of stuff on the conflict.

**Participant 4:** And then other than that, like, I I kind of like to watch videos about, like, people talking about it. So, like, YouTube, if I'm gonna go look for, like, you know, an actual story or, like, someone to describe what's happening.

**Deb:** So I'm curious with the YouTube videos.

**Deb:** Are people sending this to you? Are you going into YouTube and and searching? And then how do you decide, like, this one's worthy of your time versus this one? Because I'm.

**Participant 4:** Yeah.

**Deb:** Sure there's also some crazy, stuff. You know? Like, how do you.

**Participant 4:** Right.

**Deb:** Decide what's trustworthy there?

**Participant 4:** Yeah. I usually just look them up myself.

**Participant 4:** So, yeah, it's definitely hard because you don't really know sometimes you know before you click on it, like, oh, this is the perspective this person is gonna have. For example, like, if I see a video with Ben Shapiro in the thumbnail, I'm kinda like, okay. I know what the perspective is gonna be. But a lot of times, I just, like, watch it, and I just try to think in my head, like, what kind of bias could this person have? Because I like getting both perspectives, so I usually watch, like, stuff from both perspectives.

**Deb:** And intentionally seeking that out, it sounds like. Thank you. And, Participant 5, how about you?

**Participant 5:** I feel like I get most of my information from Instagram, just, like, depending on who's posting what. A lot of my friends, post, like or, like, repost news articles or post, like, a podcast or something.

**Participant 5:** And, normally, I just kind of, like, glance at it, but don't really go into detail.

**Participant 5:** But then a lot I feel like most of my information would be the New York Times too because I follow them on Instagram, and then I also get the notifications on my phone about it. So I feel like that's just where I get all my information, The New York Times and then Instagram. And then we also.

**Participant 5:** At my college, there's been some protests a lot lately. So, like, people walking to and from the protest are talking, and sometimes I, like, listen in to hear what they're saying to kinda get more information.

**Deb:** And so it sounds like the New York Times ones, you've set up a scenario where that the feed's coming to you, and then some of the Instagram and happening to listen in on a conversation is more of that passive, like, right place, right time. Okay.

**Participant 5:** Yeah. It's very passive. I don't, like, go out and actively look for anything. It's just whatever comes to me.

**Deb:** Yeah. Yeah. That makes sense. And, Participant 5, if you don't mind, I'm gonna have you start the next question because you you started to touch on it already, which is how has the conflict.

**[Q2] How has the conflict in Israel and Gaza affected your experience on campus, if at all?** (00:10:56 - 00:22:33)

**Deb:** In Israel and Gaza affected your experience on campus, if at all? So you mentioned there are protests. You're there. What else?

**Participant 5:** It's definitely.

**Participant 5:** A little strange because I wouldn't say it's necessarily hostile, but there's definitely some moments where like, when there's a protest. Like, I have a lot of friends who are Jewish, and they have their own opinions of the conflict. And I see sometimes on social media people posting, like, opposing views of it. So it definitely.

**Participant 5:** Isn't, like, a very kind situation sometimes at the protest. There's a lot of, like, negativity around them, and a lot of people, like, yelling, but not necessarily yelling at, like, people I feel like they should be yelling at, yelling at, like, people that are just walking and passing by that have no idea what's going on.

**Participant 5:** So it's definitely.

**Deb:** Can.

**Participant 5:** A little.

**Deb:** You?

**Participant 5:** Hostile.

**Deb:** Yeah. So I was gonna pick up on that word hostile. Hostile for whom?

**Participant 5:** For, like, a bystander, I think. Because sometimes the protests are, like, outside a classroom.

**Participant 5:** There was one of my friends, she was in a class, and, the class had to be canceled because they couldn't hear the professor because it was so loud outside.

**Participant 5:** And then I, one time, was tabling for an on campus organization in the student union, and our table was, like, completely blocked because there was a protest.

**Participant 5:** Going on. So it almost, like, makes me feel negatively towards the situation even though I don't really know that much about the situation. But just because it's, like, negatively affecting things in my daily life, it gives me almost a negative viewpoint of it.

**Deb:** Yeah. Thank you.

**Deb:** Who else? How has, the conflict affected your experience on campus, if at all?

**Participant 3:** I can go. Because,

**Deb:** Thank you,

**Participant 3:** Honestly,

**Deb:** Participant 3.

**Participant 3:** I hear a lot online about certain colleges and how it's a hostile environment, but I haven't really encountered that at my school. Maybe because it's small. It's like a small liberal arts college, so it's very, like, tight knit community. But and we do have protests. Like, we had a pro Palestine protest two nights ago, but it was because we had a congressman on campus, and they went and kind of were going and speaking to him. So I feel like everything that's happened is very productive. Like, they're never going and targeting Jewish students, and, like, I've never felt threatened in any way at all.

**Participant 3:** And everything is always like a conversation. Like, sometimes we'll see Jewish students and, like, pro Palestinian students, like, speaking, and it it doesn't get hostile here. So I don't know if it's maybe because it's, like, a smaller school environment, but I've also felt very lucky that, like, we haven't had to deal with any violence or, like, threats or anything like that.

**Deb:** And in those cases, we are seeing Jewish and pro Palestinian students in conversation. Is your sense that those are those conversations just bubble up naturally? Are they hosted and facilitated by, like, an interfaith group or anything like that? Kinda what's the origin story as best as you know about those conversations?

**Participant 3:** Yeah. I think it varies. Like, I've heard that there's been some, like, passionate conversations in the library with two students that, like, I don't know, ran into each other. And then there's also, like, a pro Palestine group that has a lot of Jewish students in it. And maybe it's because we have, like, a lot of varying viewpoints, like, within Jewish students that it helps to, like, facilitate those conversations.

**Deb:** Great. Thank you. We're gonna talk more about the bearing viewpoints a little bit later too so that I'll I'll pick up on that theme.

**Participant 3:** Okay.

**Participant 1:** I would echo a lot of what Participant 5 said. So, like, at my university, I feel like it's very polarizing. Like, there's a lot of people with very different views that and they're, like, pretty passionate about their views. Like, we have a lot of protests, pretty big protests. It's a pretty big university. So, I guess it makes sense that there would be more diversity of opinions and more people who, like, express a certain opinion. But yeah, there's been a lot of contention between like for example the protesters and the university administration, especially lately, because.

**Participant 1:** They, like, I agree with the idea of some, like, bystanders are, like, a little bit unhappy because they feel like the protesters are, like, disrupting.

**Participant 1:** Things. Like, they disrupted, like, certain university events or, like, career fairs or, like, they stand outside restaurants and they yell at you.

**Participant 1:** But, yeah. So then there's been yeah. Lately, there's been some drama around that where, like, the university is like, essentially, what the protesters want is they want the university to, like, stop giving money to Israel in whatever way. And then, yeah. So there's just a lot of, like, like, unhappiness on both sides, I feel like. And it's pretty polarizing to the point where it's a little bit hard to talk about it because you don't know if somebody is going to be mad at you for something that you said.

**Deb:** I'm curious there as you're describing you know, some people are frustrated. Some people are having a it like, it feels like you don't wanna talk about it because someone might be mad. Are you observing what you're seeing? Are you describing what it's been like for you?

**Participant 1:** Kind of a little bit both. Like I know a lot of.

**Participant 1:** Like some people are like they're, like, not super happy because of the protests. Like, they don't wanna like, just because it kind of disrupts their way of life. Like, for example, you have, like, university buses, and then the buses get diverted or things like that. So then it makes people just because it, like, interrupts.

**Participant 1:** Their things, which is what the protests are trying to do. They just want the like, to get attention. So it kind of makes sense. But then it's also, like, if you were to talk to anyone about it without being super close, they're not really gonna say anything about the conflict because they don't really know where you stand, and you don't know where they stand. So then without knowing that, it's a little bit hard to be the first one to express your opinion because it might be different than the other person, and then it could cause arguments.

**Deb:** Yeah. Yeah. Which is in contrast to how Participant 3 was describing.

**Deb:** On.

**Participant 1:** Yeah.

**Deb:** Her on her campus. Yeah. And I'll just, yeah, point out that for this conversation, feel free to express your opinion so we can engage them. Let's see. Who else? Participant 2?

**Participant 2:** I can yeah.

**Deb:** Thank you.

**Participant 2:** I feel like my campus is a little bit in between what people have been describing. So I would say we're definitely not hostile. Like, there hasn't been anything directed at, like I mean, I guess there's been, like, a few instance people have heard of, but nothing, like, no nothing, like, violent, nothing really, like, lasting or hostile.

**Participant 2:** Mostly just, we had like, the most recent thing was that we had, like, a few protests, but but nothing, like, you guys were describing, like, very nonviolent, and also, like, not loud, like, not, like, disrupting things tremendously, Cause we have like a big field, so that's usually where people do the protests, but they're not, it's not like in your class really. So it's kind of just like you walk by and it's like a little uncomfortable, but it's not, it doesn't feel so threatening. And last thing was that there was a the student union had a vote that wasn't it wasn't directly, like, divesting from Israel. It was, like, divesting from Boeing because Boeing supplies weapons. So it's kind of like a two steps removed, and they did pass it, and a lot of the senators were, like, trying to argue that it wasn't related to Israel at all, which I don't think was true necessarily. So that was kind of like, I think that was the most, like, interaction that there had been between, like, the two sides or whatever we're calling them because, like, yeah, like, Jewish students felt like their voices weren't being heard and the fact that they were saying that this vote would, like, hurt them. And then the other side was saying, like, it's not really related to you, but the the, like, supporters who showed up, it was very clear, like, by what they were wearing and what the signs they were holding that, like, obviously, it was about Israel, not not really about Bowen. So that was, like, the most, like, dramatic thing we had, which is great. Like, it's really hasn't been so bad.

**Deb:** Okay. Yes. I'm hearing some social examples, some, kind of the protest examples, what's going on in student government. I also and, Participant 4, I wanna hear from you too, but I'm also curious if, you're noticing it in classrooms at all. But, Participant 4, how about you jump in and share what you're observing.

**Participant 4:** Sure. Yeah.

**Deb:** Or.

**Participant 4:** I.

**Deb:** Experiencing,

**Participant 4:** Mean.

**Deb:** I should say. Sorry.

**Participant 4:** No. Yeah. I mean, honestly, I don't think my, like, personal life has been affected at all. Like, I'm a biology student, so it's not a topic that comes up in most of my classes.

**Participant 4:** And I don't have a lot of friends that, like, openly really talk about it. There have been protests on my campus, but to my knowledge like, it's kind of the same as other people are saying. Like, there's hearsay here and there. Like, oh, there was a fight between these people. But, yeah, I I I haven't personally been impacted. Like, I haven't felt like, oh, I couldn't get to class because there were protesters on campus. Like, they were protesting, like, two days ago, and they were just like, it was a pro Palestine protest, and they were just, like, silently holding signs. Like, they weren't disrupting anybody.

**Participant 4:** And there was also a big sort of, like, Israel event, although I it wasn't, like, pro Israel. It was kinda like a cultural festival. But, anyways, so, yeah, I don't I don't personally think in my classes that I've been personally impacted, but I do know that there have been, like, a few scuffles here and there.

**Deb:** K. Thank you. How about any examples pop up for you of ways that your classroom experience has been.

**Deb:** Influenced by this?

**Participant 5:** I don't think my classroom has really been influenced besides my one friend that, had to, like, leave her classroom because it was so loud. But, like, in my classroom, I feel like everyone's there to learn and not talk about the conflict. None of my professors have ever brought it up. None of my friends when I'm in class bring it up. It's usually, like, outside of class that you hear about stuff or, or, like, engage in anything.

**Deb:** Okay.

**Deb:** Okay. So the next question is a long one. And if you want me to repeat it, feel free to ask.

**Deb:** Oops. I have to toggle this little thing. Okay.

**[Q3] Data from our research suggests that nearly one-third of non-Jewish students say they would not want to be friends with someone who supports the existence of Israel as a Jewish state. Why do you think they might believe this? To what extent do you think the opinion is a function of this specific issue vs. a general challenge with being friends with people who see the world differently?** (00:22:33 - 00:32:20)

**Deb:** So data from our research suggests that nearly one third of non Jewish students say they would not wanna be friends with someone who supports the existence of Israel as a Jewish state. And what what insider why do you think they might believe this?

**Participant 5:** By they, do you mean, like, other students?

**Deb:** Yeah.

**Participant 5:** Believe.

**Deb:** So,

**Participant 5:** This or.

**Deb:** Yeah, so that one third of non Jewish students who who on this, it was a self report instrument. They said I would not wanna be friends with someone who supports the existence of Israel as a as a Jewish state. So that they there, like, why do you think they believe it is that that thirty three percent of students, non Jewish students who hold that view.

**Participant 1:** So I think, well, personally, for example, like the leader of, like, the pro Palestine movement, kind of, Like for example, recently she posted something on social media that was a video of.

**Participant 1:** Just like violent things happening in, like against Palestinians. And then she was like, yeah, she was like, I'm well, this is a little controversial because it's kind of like threats of violence because she was like threatening violence against Zionists. So that was a little controversial. But I do think maybe it's a similar sentiment among the thirty three percent where they're like, it's just so horrible that if you support this, you must be a bad person.

**Deb:** And so this was the leader of the pro Palestinian movement on campus.

**Participant 1:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Deb:** If you're comfortable, can you share a little bit more about what she was she was threatening or she was feeling threatened? Like, say a little bit more.

**Participant 1:** Oh.

**Deb:** About the situation.

**Participant 1:** So okay. I think the quote was like she was like, I wish death to all Zionists or something like that. So then the university actually sent out an email about that and was like, death threats are not okay.

**Participant 1:** So yeah, there's it's a pretty dramatic conflict at my university, I would say. But yeah, I do think that relates to the maybe the people like where they just think it's so horrible that if you support it you must also be horrible.

**Deb:** Yeah. So I was gonna say, so connect that to the I don't wanna be friends with you. It's.

**Participant 1:** Yeah.

**Deb:** Like if you would support what was in that video or.

**Participant 1:** Exactly.

**Deb:** Endorse yeah. Okay.

**Participant 2:** Yeah. I think I can build on that. I think that it's exactly what Participant 1's saying. It's kind of the idea that for that one third, it's hard for them to realize that someone can both, like, be a Zionist and believe in Israel and also, like, a, disagree with what Israel's actions and also, like, still not be happy that Palestinians are dying. Like, I know that I've this has come up for me a little bit because, there are people who I kind of feel like they're not willing to believe that I would hold, like, both opinions and could both be, like, upset about what's happening in Gaza, but also still believe in Israel. And I think that, like, some people, like, can't hold those, can't, like, see how someone could hold those two viewpoints. So then they just they assume that, like, all Zionists are, like, believe it's good to be, like, killing people and, like, agree with what the government's doing. And then and then their conclusion is that they're, like, not a good person and wouldn't wanna be friends with them.

**Deb:** Right. So that if you believe a, you also believe b and therefore c.

**Participant 2:** Right. Which.

**Deb:** Kinda.

**Participant 2:** I.

**Deb:** Logic.

**Participant 2:** Is not which I is true for some people. Like, some people, it is like, yeah, they believe in Israel. They believe in everything the government's doing. Like, I'm not going to say that there's no one who believes that, but I think that for most people it's considerably more nuanced.

**Deb:** Thank you.

**Participant 5:** I think there's also maybe, like, some sort of herd mentality that goes along with it too. Like, someone with all their friends, or, like, if one, like, really significant figure, like what Participant 1 was saying with, that, like, one really important figure that's saying this, a lot of people just kinda follow along. So that could also be where the thirty three percent comes from. Like, maybe individually, those people, like, if they were to be exposed to different viewpoints or if they were to, like, have a real, like, conversation with someone, then it might not be as deep as maybe they're just, like, expressing.

**Deb:** Yeah. So.

**Deb:** You're I think you're starting to touch on something there about, like, the difference between public expression and personal belief. I'm wondering if you can go into that a little bit more.

**Participant 5:** Yeah. I've I definitely think that especially when it comes to protests on campus or, I guess, really anywhere, there's gonna be a herd mentality that comes with that. There's gonna be a sort of, like, follow the crowd that comes with that. So if everyone on campus is shouting that they hate Israel.

**Participant 5:** And that they wish death, then you're just gonna kinda follow along with that because you don't wanna step out of line and also because there's, like, a sense of power that comes from everyone being united. It doesn't matter if, like it almost, like, doesn't matter if you don't, like, one hundred percent believe in what you're uniting against. It's just, like, that power that comes from being united for one common cause.

**Deb:** Yeah. Which can be so powerful.

**Participant 3:** I don't know if I have a ton to add to this one, but I guess I'd say, like, I do sympathize with people who don't feel like they can be friends with someone who supports Israel just because, like, even if you're a Zionist and you don't agree with everything that's happening, I think there is like an inherent part to Zionism that's like, because Israel settled on, like, Palestinian land and, like, there's, like, an inherent violence, I guess, to Israel.

**Participant 3:** And, of course, like, now you can kind of say, like, you don't support that. Like, what's going on? But I think the term itself, like, has a lot of history.

**Participant 3:** That we weren't alive for that can be, like, really hurtful and traumatic to some people.

**Participant 3:** Whose, like, livelihoods were affected by it. So, like, I I do understand if.

**Participant 3:** Someone doesn't wanna be friends with, like, supporters of Israel.

**Deb:** I'm curious if you think like that that sounds like I don't wanna be friends with that person. Do you think it's specific to this issue, or is this anytime there's a a big difference in world view that people would say, I I wouldn't wanna be friends with them.

**Participant 3:** I don't think it's specific. Like like you're saying, I think things are so polarizing now in politics, and I've also had to have the experience of, like, I don't know, sharing my own views. Like, if a friend were to be a Trump supporter, like, I can't be friends with them. So, like, since I understand, like, that instance and that maybe someone supporting.

**Participant 3:** An entity that is, like, taking away people's rights in some way, like, you can't be friends with them. So I think, like, it also translates to this situation. Did that answer the question?

**Deb:** Yeah. That's really helpful. Thank.

**Participant 3:** Okay.

**Deb:** You.

**Deb:** Participant 4, do you wanna jump in on this one?

**Participant 4:** Yeah. So the original question is why would those people feel like they can't be friends with someone who's pro a pro Israel like state?

**Deb:** Yeah. Yeah. Like, why might why might be why might they believe that they won't wanna be friends?

**Participant 4:** Yeah. I mean, I think it's kind of a combination of the stuff that's been mentioned so far. Like, part of it is just them lumping that person in with, like, their idea of Zionism because, you know, just saying, I want Israel to be its own nation, its own state, doesn't necessarily mean you also believe Palestine shouldn't be free. But because that seems to be an opinion of a lot of those people, I think that's why, like, they're sort of just assuming in their head, if you believe that, therefore, you must be anti my belief. But then I'd also echo what Participant 3 said. Like, if you are, you know, someone who has family in Palestine or somehow emotionally linked to this conflict, you know, you don't owe someone your friendship if they believe something that's gonna be really hurtful to you. So, yeah, I would just say it's a combination of either just assuming if someone believes something, they are against you or just being so, like, emotionally, you know, involved in a situation. You don't wanna have to be friends with that person.

**Deb:** And that that emotional heaviness.

**Deb:** Makes sense too.

**Deb:** Okay. So this next question is about.

**[Q4] How do your views about Israel or the conflict in Israel and Gaza compare to those of your friends? How closely aligned are your and your friends' views about Israel or the conflict? How has the conflict affected your relationships with your friends, if at all?**  (00:32:20 - 00:46:21)

**Deb:** These friends. So how do your views about Israel or the conflict in Israel and Gaza compare to those of your friends? So how closely aligned are your views with your friends' views?

**Participant 5:** Most of my friends are pretty neutral about it. I have, like, a few friends that are really pro, Palestinian, but, like, most of my friends share the same viewpoints as me in terms of, like, being neutral about it or, like, not knowing enough information to really form an opinion on it.

**Participant 5:** And we also don't talk about it that much. I can't say it's, like, a real topic of conversation between me and my friends. So, like, anytime it does come up, it's usually just like a, oh, yeah. Like, I don't really know too much about that, but did you see the protests that happened yesterday? But it's never, like, too in detail of a conversation to really form opinions based off of what they say.

**Deb:** Yeah. I'm curious if it so if not coming up in conversation, if you have a sense of why it might not be coming up because it could be lack of it, you know, like, not I don't feel informed enough to have a conversation or it doesn't feel relevant or there could be a lot of other reasons. I'm curious. What's your sense of why why it's not a conversation?

**Participant 5:** I don't know. I feel like there's, like, various factors that go into it. Like, some people might not wanna talk about it.

**Participant 5:** Some of my friends too, like, just genuinely don't know enough about it to have a conversation about it. So, like, if we see a protest outside, it's like, oh, like, I wonder what's going on there. And then it's, like, just like a brief, like, oh, they're just they're having a protest about so and so. And then we just kinda, like, move on from it.

**Participant 5:** But no one's, like, so polarized enough on their viewpoints that it turns into, like, a real big discussion.

**Deb:** Thank you.

**Participant 2:** I would say that my viewpoints a lot like, most of my friends are in the same, like, religious community as me and have the same experience of, like, family and friends in Israel. So I think that definitely most of us have a similar viewpoint, but there I think there are like nuances in how much we agree or disagree with like various actions of like Israel. But, I think overall, we have, like, the same broader viewpoint. But, like, within my close friends and then some of my friends.

**Participant 2:** Who are not Jewish, I haven't really talked about it with them so much. I have there are a few who, like, there was, like, a protest where we I, like, didn't know what side they were on, and then we, like, show up, and it's like, oh, you're over there, and I'm over here. But we're still we're still friends, but I don't know if we're gonna, like, discuss it. Like, we both saw each other. Like, we both know, like, what position we were in, like, that we both care about it enough to, like, go to this protest or go to the senate vote.

**Participant 2:** So but it hasn't, like, changed our relationship. I just I I don't think it's gonna be, like, a central, like, topic. But, yeah, I I think I don't have the most, like, diverse perspective from my friends, which I recognize.

**Deb:** So a couple follow ups there. One, you said most of your friends have the same general perspective, but then there's some nuance around that. So I'm curious if you can go into that a little bit more. And then I'll.

**Participant 2:** Yeah.

**Deb:** And I'm just gonna ask this other one. That way you can go whichever way you want. And then in the case of the friend who was at the protest or the was it the.

**Participant 2:** Yeah. It.

**Deb:** The government?

**Participant 2:** Was the senate vote. I think.

**Deb:** Yeah.

**Participant 2:** I also started a protest, but.

**Deb:** Yeah.

**Participant 2:** Yeah.

**Deb:** And so that was pretty recent because.

**Participant 2:** Yeah.

**Deb:** You mentioned it just recently happened, what, last week.

**Participant 2:** It.

**Deb:** Or two.

**Participant 2:** Was,

**Deb:** Weeks.

**Participant 2:** Like, two.

**Deb:** Ago.

**Participant 2:** Weeks ago.

**Deb:** I'm curious, like, what do you want to come out of that? Like, do you wanna talk with her.

**Deb:** About it? So those are.

**Participant 2:** Yeah.

**Deb:** Two two follow ups.

**Participant 2:** I would wanna talk to her because I also know that she's Jewish, so I'm more.

**Participant 2:** Intrigued by those perspectives in some ways. Whereas, like, if someone's, like, if someone's Palestinian or has family in Gaza, then I completely see why their perspective is the way their perspective is. And I think they're as equally, like, entrenched in their viewpoint as I would be in mine. So I think we can share, like, like, sorrow, I guess, but we're not gonna change each other's mind. Whereas I think it's interesting someone who either, like, has no emotional connection and is then choosing a side or someone who's, like, choosing the side that I, like, think wouldn't be, like, the natural one for them to choose, I guess.

**Participant 2:** So I would be interested to talk to her about it, but I don't know, like, if we will. Like, I'm not necessarily gonna bring it up if she doesn't, I would say. And then the first part oh, like nuance within my friend's perspective, I think, I think some people I don't know. Honestly, most of us have the same belief. I think most people don't really agree with, like, what Israel's government has been necessarily doing. But also a lot of my friends have, like, more friends in the army than I do. So I think that it's, like, their main concern is just, like, their friends' safety in a lot of ways.

**Participant 2:** Whereas I have a lot of friends in the army, but they're not combat. So I'm not so, like, worried about their actual, like, lives. Whereas I have a lot of friends who have friends who are, like, fighting in Gaza.

**Participant 2:** So I think, yeah, that influences their view a lot.

**Deb:** Yeah. And what is the the most immediate concern.

**Participant 2:** Yep.

**Deb:** As a frame for that? Thank you.

**Participant 3:** I can go.

**Participant 3:** I guess out of my friends I have a lot of Jewish friends, and we all happen to have a similar view.

**Participant 3:** And I think we're all not Zionist, which it's hard to tell if that's coincidence or, like, if our when we were, you know, watching this conflict together, if our views kind of just converge. So, like, as Participant 2 said, it like, I do recognize that, like, I'm surrounded by the same viewpoint, but I do encounter a lot of, like, pro Israel viewpoints when I go to religious services because I go to Chabad on campus, which is the more, like, religiously conservative group, like, Jewish group. So when I go, like, sometimes I'll hear students there talking about Israel, and it's, like, a lot more conservative than my views are. But they're not really in my close circle, so.

**Participant 3:** We haven't really conversed about it. And I don't think, like, religious services are, like, the best time to talk about that either. So yeah.

**Deb:** Yeah. That's interesting that the different spaces that you're in, noticing different kinds of variability.

**Deb:** Of perspective there.

**Deb:** And let's see. Participant 4 and Participant 1, either of you wanna jump in on this?

**Participant 4:** Yeah. So the question was if our views are, like, similar to our friends, like, the people around us.

**Deb:** Yeah. Kinda how do they compare your views? How do they compare with your friends? And I think, you know, there's a kind of a sub question in there too about if your friendships have been affected at all.

**Participant 4:** Yeah. Okay.

**Participant 4:** I mean, I haven't talked about the conflict really with a lot of my friends either just because it didn't you know, it's kind of a deep topic to just sort of bring up in discussion, but, also, I do think there is, like, a pervasive, like, people don't wanna talk about it because they don't know what side of the fence people are on. They don't wanna, you know, make people upset. But, I mean, the one friend I have talked about it with, we're kind of both in the same boat where we sort of see both sides of it, and we sort of take a more nuanced perspective to it. But I would say a lot of the other people around me that I haven't talked to are, like, very pro Palestine. And, you know, I wouldn't say I'm as on the extreme end as some of them are. But, yeah, I wouldn't say my friendships personally have really been affected by it, because as I said, like, I I don't discuss it with most people.

**Deb:** Yeah.

**Deb:** Thank you.

**Deb:** And, Participant 1, how about you?

**Participant 1:** Yeah. I think I'm probably pretty similar to Participant 4 and Participant 5. So like I have, like, I have a couple friends who are pretty pro Palestine, and then everyone else is, like kind of like not particularly on one side or the other. Like either in that they just don't care enough or that they don't know enough about what's going on.

**Participant 1:** Or yeah, like personally, sometimes I don't feel qualified to discuss it with people who are like super, or like, they hear a lot about the conflict, and they obviously know a lot more or have, like, personal experiences, to discuss. So, yeah, I'd say.

**Participant 1:** It hasn't really affected my friendships. Like most of the conversation is just like around like what is happening at our university. Like because there are so many protests and stuff. Just, like, talking about what happened versus, like, your actual opinions towards it.

**Deb:** So one of the things that and this is gonna be kind of a follow-up question for everybody that comes up for me when with Participant 1's description, is I was talking to another group, and they were sharing stories where people didn't have information but had really strong opinions. So there was, like, this almost this disconnect of the degree to which they were informed, but also how tightly they were holding their perspectives. I'm curious if you've seen that or because all of you, I'm hearing a lot of nuance in what you're saying And so I'm just noticing that difference with another group. I'm.

**Deb:** Wondering if you have any sense making there.

**Participant 5:** Maybe with, like, the protests that go on.

**Participant 5:** I think that's the only way that I would notice it is if, like, someone's walking to class and doesn't really know too much about the conflict, and then there's, like, a protest that goes on outside, and they just, like, hop in.

**Participant 5:** I know, like, one or two of my friends have done that before, and that's, like, how their viewpoints change just because they, like, hop into a protest.

**Participant 5:** But that's, like, really the only instance I can think of.

**Deb:** And that gap gets back to your herd mentality insight too.

**Participant 4:** Yeah. I feel like it's not always, like, lack of information that makes you hold so fast to a viewpoint, but rather, like, only being exposed to one viewpoint. Because at least in my experience, it's like the more I get into an issue, the more I hear both sides, the more I realize that, like, finding an objective truth is really hard. So I do think, you know, like, yeah, if someone's only been going to, you know, pro Palestine or pro Israel events, that's gonna make them a lot more defensive of that view than maybe if they had, like, information from both sides, whether that information is, like, biased or not. But yeah.

**Deb:** It's a good point. Thank you.

**Deb:** So a couple of you have shared that you're Jewish, and I don't wanna make assumptions about the others in the room. But I'm curious, if you're not Jewish, what you've noticed about if you know if you have Jewish friends and what you've noticed about their experiences of friendships or their relationships.

**Deb:** That's a bit of a theory of mind question, but how's it like for others on your campus?

**Participant 5:** I have one friend who's Jewish, and she's posting on her story a lot. I don't really see her as much anymore, but that's not because of the conflict. That's just, she's a senior. So and I'm a junior, so, we just we don't see each other as much. But I do notice that she posts a lot of, Zionist viewpoints, like, on her story. And so I don't wanna, like, assume what her, I guess, opinion is of the conflict, but she does post a lot of, things that could be seen as hurtful to someone else on the other side of the conflict. And she posts a lot of, like, really brutal, like, reposts of news stories, like, brutal stories of, like, families being killed or, like, some stuff like that. And it's a little bit uncomfortable to look at. So I have noticed that I haven't been, like, watching her stories on Instagram as much, but.

**Participant 5:** That's the only thing that I can really think of. And then my other friend who's also Jewish, she we just don't really talk about it. I don't know what her viewpoint is. I think she's similar as me where she doesn't really have, like, a set in stone opinion of anything.

**Participant 5:** But.

**Participant 5:** Yeah.

**Deb:** K. So our last question is a big one. Best.

**[Q5] Best case scenario, how should the conflict in Israel and Gaza be resolved?**  (00:46:21 - 00:52:37)

**Deb:** Case scenario, how should the conflict in Israel and Gaza be resolved?

**Deb:** Best case scenario.

**Participant 4:** I mean, I'll go.

**Deb:** Thank.

**Participant 4:** I'm.

**Deb:** You.

**Participant 4:** Not I'll be honest. Like, I'm not the most informed about the conflict. I'm not, like, the most up to date. But, I mean, my main thing is just that I would like a resolution that ends people getting killed.

**Participant 4:** But more than that, because this conflict's been going on for many years, and, you know, every time it seems to sort of be coming to a conclusion, it kind of ramps back up again. So I I do think the best conclusion would be, you know, some kind of compromise where, you know, Palestine can be free and Israel can have its own, you know, nation.

**Participant 4:** So I guess I would say that's the best outcome. Whether or not that is feasible, I don't know. But I think a compromise such as that would be the the best way to please everybody.

**Deb:** Thank you.

**Participant 5:** Yeah. I completely agree with that. I feel like compromise just as long as people aren't being killed anymore.

**Participant 5:** But I don't know if, like, that's totally possible, but definitely some side where everyone gets, like, a little bit of what they want.

**Deb:** And prioritizing.

**Deb:** Life, I'm hearing.

**Participant 1:** Yeah. I agree with that.

**Participant 3:** No.

**Participant 1:** Oh, sorry.

**Participant 3:** You go ahead. Don't worry.

**Participant 1:** Yeah. I was just gonna say, I agree with what's inside. Just like.

**Participant 1:** If like, I feel like definitely like people stop killing each other and also maybe like stop hating each other or like, just like, I don't know.

**Participant 1:** I feel like there's some.

**Participant 1:** Like bad blood from like all sides sort of like, yeah, maybe it's a little naive, but just like if people get along, I feel like it.

**Participant 1:** Would work out a lot better.

**Deb:** Do you see any.

**Deb:** Pathways to helping people stop the hating part?

**Participant 1:** I don't know. I feel like because it's just so like there's so much history behind it that it's a little bit difficult. And also because people have grown up like believing things their entire life, it's also pretty difficult. So.

**Participant 1:** Yeah, yeah, I don't know how like, this is, like, ideal scenario. Maybe they would, but I do think maybe it's not possible for, like, everything to be resolved like that.

**Participant 3:** I agree with everything that's been said, and I think.

**Participant 3:** People, like, need to listen to each other more because, I mean, like, my parents are very pro Israel, but I understand because they've faced, like, so much antisemitism in their lives and, like, also lived closer to the holocaust, so it's, like, more real for them. And so, like, I do understand that perspective, although I don't, like, have the same beliefs.

**Participant 3:** But then when it comes to, like, what to do, maybe, like, a two state solution, but I also don't even know how much I believe that, like, a Jewish state is the right thing to do. Just like it's supposed to stop antisemitism, but, like, antisemitism has only, like, grown in the years since Israel has, like, existed.

**Participant 3:** So I don't even know if that's the right solution for protecting Jewish people. But.

**Participant 3:** Yeah. So I I don't have an answer.

**Deb:** Yeah. Thank you.

**Participant 2:** I would say, like, short term, and then I'll do long term, I guess. But short term, like, I'd like, the best would be if somehow, like, Israel could get rid of Hamas without killing more Palestinians, but I I don't think that's possible. So I think the, like, actual best case scenario is if just, like, Hamas doesn't regain control in Gaza, which I don't really know how they can make sure that doesn't happen. But, like, if the PA had control, then, like, they could be, like, more of their own government. And, I do think that there have been actions from, like, settlers in the West Bank that are really, really, really unhelpful to, like, resolution, which, like, is frustrating because a lot of those people are, like, religious Jews that hold similar, like, religious beliefs to me. But I I think that they're very, like, problematic with how they've been, like, instigating things, which I'm just like, why are you doing that? So I think if they could stop doing that, that would be also very helpful. And then, like, long term, like, I don't know. It's very tricky. Like, I also wish that there was some way that everyone could live peacefully and have land, like, have a region. Like, I don't want everyone to be like, I don't want all of the Palestinians to be kicked out. Like, I think that they should they it's also their land. But I don't know the best way to, like, make that all work.

**Deb:** Yeah. Across all of your responses, I'm definitely feeling the this is complex and we don't know.

**Deb:** Feeling.

**Deb:** Okay. So those are all of my questions for you. And so now we turn to if you have any questions.

**OK, everyone. That concludes today’s focus group. What questions do you have for me? Thank you so much for your time today. The insights you shared here will really help us understand the views of students on campus. My colleagues and I appreciate your participation. In the next 24 hours, you will receive an email with follow up information, including instructions on how to receive your incentive, a quick followup questionnaire, and contact information if today’s conversation brought up any thoughts or feelings you would like to share with College Pulse. Again, thank you for your participation. You may now exit the call.**  (00:52:59 - 00:55:46)

**Deb:** Okay. So hearing none, I'll just say thank you so much for for being here and for sharing, and I guarantee that what you shared today, how you shared it will absolutely inform our understanding of how college students are experiencing and thinking about the conflict. So thank you for that.

**Deb:** In about the next twenty four hours, you are going to receive an email with some follow-up information. One piece there is how to activate your incentive.

**Deb:** Another piece, there's a a really short couple open ended questions just so you can bubble up any other thoughts that you might be having, perspectives. And then, also, if today's conversation kicked up for you, any emotions or thoughts that you would like some support in thinking through, there are some resource numbers in that email as well. K? So I'm gonna stick around for a couple minutes if anyone wants to stay behind and ask me something in private. Otherwise, you are free to go, and I'm so grateful for your time today. So have a a fantastic Thursday.

**Participant 2:** Thank.

**Participant 3:** Thank.

**Participant 2:** You.

**Participant 3:** You.

**Deb:** Bye,

**Participant 5:** Thank.

**Participant 4:** Thank.

**Deb:** Guys.

**Participant 5:** You.

**Participant 4:** You.

**Participant 3:** I was just curious that, Okay. If this gets, like, published anywhere, if we'd be able to, like, get the link to it or something. I'd.

**Deb:** That's.

**Participant 3:** Just be curious to read it.

**Deb:** Yeah. That's a great question. So we're doing, like, twelve of these groups, and then we're looking for themes across them. And some of the groups have both Jewish and non Jewish students like your group did. Some of the groups have, you know, Jewish students. And we're gonna be looking at how different, you know, different student body groups are experiencing this. What I don't know is what the researchers are planning to do with it. I.

**Participant 3:** Okay.

**Deb:** Know they.

**Deb:** I imagine they'll be publishing it somewhere. So what I'm gonna do is, if you're comfortable giving me your last name, I can.

**Deb:** Make sure that they know that you're interested and and ask them to please relay any publications to you.

**Participant 3:** Thank you. That would.

**Deb:** Does.

**Participant 3:** Be.

**Deb:** That.

**Participant 3:** Awesome.

**Deb:** Feel okay? Okay.

**Deb:** Okay. Okay. And I know, College Pulse has contact information for you because that's how they, you know, emailed you and invited you in. So I will pass this along with that request.

**Participant 3:** Thank you so much. I'd.

**Deb:** Yeah.

**Participant 3:** Just be.

**Deb:** My.

**Participant 3:** Really.

**Deb:** Pleasure.

**Participant 3:** Interested to see.

**Deb:** Right.

**Participant 3:** Yeah.

**Deb:** I know. It's there are so many interesting questions and perspectives. So to get to to understand what's coming out of it, I would I'm definitely interested as well.

**Participant 3:** Yes. Okay. Well, thank.

**Deb:** Okay.

**Participant 3:** You. Have.

**Deb:** Thank.

**Participant 3:** A.

**Deb:** You.

**Participant 3:** Good day.

**Deb:** A pleasure to meet you. Bye bye.

**Participant 3:** Bye.