Client Project

(Apr 3, 2024 - 1:30pm)

(00:00:01 - 00:00:55)

**Deb:** My name is Deb Mashek, and I'm the facilitator for today's session. I'll be asking the questions, encouraging some discussion, and and keeping us on time, hopefully. As I think you already know, this this session is facilitated by College Pulse, which is a research firm that focuses on the experiences and opinions of college students. The the purpose of our conversation today is to learn about how college students think about the conflict in Israel and Gaza, so that's our our broad topic. And it's part of a study being conducted by College Pulse in partnership with researchers who study education. And we're shooting for sixty minutes today, and I will do my best to to keep us right on time. And that means that I might need to move us along at some point during the the conversation. So, you know, I'll signal that. But other than that, just feel free to talk, to share your opinions as openly as you're comfortable doing.

(00:00:57 - 00:01:59)

**Deb:** I have a couple suggested ground rules here, so I'm gonna read those and then ask for a a thumbs up if if everyone's feeling okay with this. So the first one is there are no right or wrong answers, obviously. So share your opinions, your experiences as openly as you feel comfortable doing so. Number two is that what's said here stays here. So, a deep request to honor each person's privacy and confidentiality by by not sharing beyond the group. And then the the third suggested ground rule here is that we anticipate that your opinions, your perspectives are gonna differ from those of others so that we engage with curiosity, obviously, with respect, and, and speak one at a time. That way we can really hear what everybody's saying. So thumbs up if that works for you. Excellent. And we just lost somebody. Let's see. I'm gonna see if Tech Person 1 can help us get that person back.

(00:02:06 - 00:02:12)

**Deb:** Tech Person 1, if you're able to hear me, can you step back in, please?

(00:02:14 - 00:02:19)

**Tech Person 1:** Hi. We lost Participant 1. She's trying to rejoin because of the camera issues at the moment.

(00:02:19 - 00:02:20)

**Deb:** Okay. Great.

(00:02:24 - 00:02:28)

**Deb:** So we're gonna hang it tight for just a second in case we can get Participant 1 back.

(00:02:33 - 00:02:35)

**Deb:** Hey, Participant 1. Welcome back.

(00:02:36 - 00:02:38)

**Deb:** Did you hear the ground rules I was proposing?

(00:02:42 - 00:03:29)

**Deb:** Okay. So the third one is just that, we're expecting variability in perspectives and so inviting or asking that everyone engage with curiosity as well as respect and and speaking one at a time. And so do those all sound good? Okay. And just so you know, everybody else also gave the thumbs up, so we're all on on the same page there. Before we get started, a reminder that this conversation is being recorded and that the re or that this information, the recording could be or is only being used for research purposes. And I want you to know that your confidentiality is held in in highest regard there, for those research purposes. And your if at any point you wish to no longer be recorded, you can leave the the focus group if you like. So are there any questions before we get started?

(00:03:32 - 00:04:28)

**Deb:** Okay. So let's begin. And if you would like me to repeat any questions at any point, just let me know. I know some of these are are on the long side. It's a okay to interact with each other to build off of what somebody said or, take issue with it or ask them a follow-up. And it's it's your choice if you would like to share any identifying information like what school you go to or anything like that, but it's totally up to you. So the first question is about where you're getting information about, Gaza and Israel. So how do you obtain information about Israel and the the conflict in Israel and Gaza? To what extent do you actively seek out information versus passively receive it? Are there particular sources you turn to? So just tell me a bit about your information consumption as related to the conflict. And I'm gonna ask everyone just to, one at a time, share share a quick overview. And, Participant 2, you're the first position on my screen. Do you mind going first?

(00:04:29 - 00:04:30)

**Participant 2:** Of course. Yeah.

(00:04:29 - 00:04:30)

**Deb:** Thank you.

(00:04:30 - 00:04:41)

**Participant 2:** So the first one that comes to mind is I get a lot of daily notifications from New York Times. And so I primarily, I'm getting updates from that, on.

**[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]** (00:04:41 - 00:13:38)

**Participant 2:** More breaking news. And then also, it although it may not be the most accurate, I think social media and Instagram, a lot of updates and posts there that are from friends or just also, like, new news outlet, accounts. I see a lot of information from there.

**Deb:** And which sources are you feeling are particularly trustworthy?

**Participant 2:** I personally like to trust, the New York Times. I just felt like it's, been stable enough for me to, like, hear things from them, and I've been reading them for a while or, like, throughout high school and college. So I I'm just used to their format more.

**Deb:** Yeah. And and both the first one, like, getting the the news feeds and also social media, those are both, like, information coming into you versus you necessarily seeking it out. Is that accurate?

**Participant 2:** Yeah. Well, more than the news, I I check, like, my app every day and stuff.

**Deb:** Okay.

**Participant 2:** But since I am getting those updates, I guess, it's unless I'm not really seeking it out, it is coming to me.

**Deb:** Yeah. But you set up the updates, I guess. So that that makes good.

**Participant 2:** Yeah.

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

**Participant 3:** I feel like I'm pretty similar. I also get, like, updates from New York Times. But I feel like for me, I actively try to avoid news, but I probably hear stuff every day from, like, social media or from my friends. But then a lot of times what happens is, like, someone will tell me something, and I'm just, like, not I'm like, I can't believe that. So then I'll go and, like, seek it out, and, normally, that'll be, like, New York Times or just, like, articles.

**Participant 3:** But I feel like it's kind of the same where it's like, I don't really look out for this stuff, but when I come into, like, a fact, I'll go do research because it's just there's just a lot of information about everything right now.

**Deb:** Yeah. Can you share a little bit about your motivation for trying to avoid news?

**Participant 3:** Yeah. I think I cry. I'm a very emotional person, and it's really heartbreaking what's, like, happening.

**Participant 3:** So it's like, for me, I don't even wanna have to like, it's hard because on campus, it's like we have protesters every day, and they're pretty active. So it's a lot to even see, like, people who have been affected by these things. It's like, I already am dealing with a lot of stuff that it's hard for me to, like, think about these, like, tragedies, but, obviously, like, I can't ignore it. So when I hear certain things, it's like, oh my gosh. Like, let me go do research or, like, learn more, but trying to, like, prioritize myself and, like, my health.

**Deb:** Yeah. That makes good sense. And then you also mentioned the if you hear something, going and seeking out more information on it, what what's the motivation there for you?

**Participant 3:** I think a few things. Like, I think.

**Participant 3:** There is the whole thing of being, like, ethical consumer and stuff. So for me, people will be like, oh, you shouldn't shop here or whatever because of this. And I'm like, I don't wanna believe that because I like shopping here or something.

**Participant 3:** But I I do try to be more whatever, but also too, like, I work because I also, like, donated some money. So So it's like someone will say something, and I'm like, no way that's true. And then it's true, and I'm like, well, damn. Like, that's really sad. Like, I guess I can't donate to, like, this fund or whatever. So but I just try to avoid it, but, like, I feel like I'm kind of a sucker where it's, like, when I find out about certain things, I just kinda have to act. Like, I can't ignore it.

**Deb:** Right. Yeah. Thank you. That was really helpful. Participant 4, how about for you?

**Participant 4:** Yeah. So for me, I mostly follow the news on, social media like Instagram and also a few other news channels like, Al Jazeera. I try to award NYC times because I feel like they are hiding the fact that what's happening.

**Participant 4:** On in Israel or Palestine. So I feel like, they're not showing that true picture. So I try to avoid.

**Participant 4:** The West media most of the time. And I also follow, some Instagram reporters like Mortazadeza, where he, like, reports whatever is happening on ground, and I feel like that's more realistic.

**Deb:** Yeah. I'm curious if there are other social media accounts that that you value or find trustworthy.

**Participant 4:** Like, that's the only account I could think of, but there are, like, the other accounts as well, but I'm not able to recollect their names right now.

**Deb:** Okay. Yeah.

**Participant 4:** Yeah.

**Deb:** And in the case of the one you shared, the reason you like it is because it's on the ground.

**Participant 4:** Yes.

**Deb:** Reporting.

**Participant 4:** I feel.

**Deb:** Okay.

**Participant 4:** Like yeah. Yes.

**Deb:** Great.

**Participant 4:** I.

**Deb:** Thank.

**Participant 4:** Feel like.

**Deb:** You.

**Participant 4:** It's more true. Yeah. That's what I yeah.

**Deb:** Yeah. More immediate. Like, there's something.

**Participant 4:** Yeah.

**Deb:** That this.

**Participant 4:** Yes.

**Deb:** Person is saying it.

**Participant 4:** Mhmm.

**Deb:** Thank you. K. And, Participant 5?

**Participant 5:** I think for me, I do get breaking news notifications from the BBC and the New York Times. But often, if I, like, see something and I I'm interested in it, I will do more research and go to other more, like, long form articles. So, like, sometimes I read The New York Times and they're, like, long form analysis or The Washington Post and foreign affairs.

**Participant 5:** And that's, like, primarily if I'm interested in something that's happening and wanna gain more information and or gain another opinion.

**Participant 5:** I don't really have social media, so I don't primarily have to get my news from, you know, from newspapers rather than people who are on the ground.

**Deb:** Yeah.

**Participant 5:** Yeah.

**Deb:** And I'm curious.

**Deb:** If other people are referring you to sources. So separate from social media, but, like, friends or family sending you pieces or anything like that?

**Participant 5:** Yeah. Definitely, family. I think my parents will often send me, like,

**Deb:** Sorry.

**Participant 5:** Card.

**Deb:** Just a second. The siren in the background is knocking out your audio. We'll give it a second. Okay. Could you say that it share that.

**Participant 5:** Yeah.

**Deb:** Again?

**Participant 5:** Sure. I'd I'd say my parents often send me articles about things that happened and that that they think I should read, mostly breaking news. I also get, like, friends who have read something or read an opinion of someone else who they agree with and sort of wanna share, and then I they'll send me those articles. A lot of sort of non, like, Western sources, like French news sources, like AFP. People read a lot of those. I have a friend who reads a lot of those and will send me those articles, which I think is a good alternative viewpoint as well.

**Deb:** Great. Thank you. And, Participant 1, how how's your information consumption looking?

**Participant 1:** I feel like I.

**Participant 1:** I'm gonna say a lot of the things that Participant 4 was just saying. I am mostly like a TikTok.

**Participant 1:** User for my information. I try and follow and that's I know that that sounds controversial. I don't.

**Deb:** We and we welcome that. Yeah.

**Participant 1:** I don't usually, like, follow, like, what just, like, comes on to my explore page. I follow very specific people that live in the areas that I would like to know more about.

**Participant 1:** I don't.

**Participant 1:** Know his specific handle, but there's someone who's like, their TikTok name is Yacine and then some emojis and then Gaza and then some more emojis. But I don't That's, like, my main source, and it's, like, talking about, like he'll be, like, at the hospitals in, like, very on the ground, and that's the kind of stuff that I.

**Participant 1:** Am interested in and that I dash believe.

**Participant 1:** Sorry. I don't mind my cat.

**Deb:** Hi, kitty.

**Participant 1:** I I don't really.

**Participant 1:** I'm not really inclined to trust the things that Western media puts out there because, I I mean, who's funding that? So yeah.

**Deb:** Yeah. So, yeah, like a a dual appreciating that proximity to the to the situation.

**Participant 1:** Yeah.

**Deb:** Great.

**Participant 1:** I would love to I want to know the information from the people that are, a, experiencing it, or, b, not profiting from me receiving some kind of information that way.

**Deb:** Yeah. That makes.

**Participant 1:** Yeah.

**Deb:** Good sense.

**Deb:** Okay. So.

**[Q2] How has the conflict in Israel and Gaza affected your experience on campus, if at all?** (00:13:38 - 00:30:40)

**Deb:** Next question is how has the conflict in Israel and Gaza affected your experience on campus, if at all?

**Deb:** How's it been for you?

**Deb:** And whoever feels like jumping in is welcome to kick us off here.

**Participant 1:** I can start.

**Deb:** Thank you,

**Participant 1:** Okay.

**Deb:** Participant 1.

**Participant 1:** My campus is in the middle of New York City, and it's been a it usually is a very open campus. It's open to anyone who wants to come in. It's gated, but the gates are always open.

**Participant 1:** And for the first time in our campus' history, the gates were closed to outsiders due to Palestinian protests, which is kind it's, like, not.

**Participant 1:** The biggest deal. However, it's.

**Participant 1:** It's very disheartening when you see that the only time that the campus is willing to take some kind of.

**Participant 1:** Action is to keep protesters outside of the campus from protesting.

**Deb:** So what what has that been like for you?

**Participant 1:** Well, I mean, I was here during the whole.

**Participant 1:** Twenty twenty George Floyd situation, and.

**Participant 1:** I was also protesting. And there was a completely different.

**Participant 1:** Feel.

**Participant 1:** From my administration as there is right now. And you can.

**Participant 1:** You can absolutely tell that it's because.

**Participant 1:** My administration is directly responsible and benefiting from Israel's.

**Participant 1:** Part.

**Participant 1:** In genocide.

**Participant 1:** And it I mean, how it makes me feel personally, like, why did I even come here?

**Deb:** Can you say more about that? For me, that brings up the word sense of belonging.

**Participant 1:** Yeah. I mean, yes, there are many people who.

**Participant 1:** I feel.

**Participant 1:** Are, like, willing to learn and listen and educate themselves about the actual issue that's going on.

**Participant 1:** It's really hard to.

**Participant 1:** Walk by.

**Participant 1:** A large portion of the campus who.

**Participant 1:** Are not willing to do that.

**Participant 1:** And those are the people that are given a voice, or those are the people that are published in The New York Times, and those are the people that are shown.

**Participant 1:** Worldwide.

**Participant 1:** And those voices are amplified because those are the people that have all this money. And that's that's really disheartening because that's what makes me feel like I don't belong.

**Deb:** And just so I am not making assumptions about.

**Participant 1:** Mhmm.

**Deb:** What you mean by what the actual issue is or who those people are or those voices, would you feel comfortable giving some specificity there?

**Participant 1:** Sure.

**Participant 1:** My school is.

**Participant 1:** Very.

**Participant 1:** I go to Columbia University, which donates so so much money to every kind of.

**Participant 1:** Terrible industry that you can think of because we rely on the backs of so many, wealthy Zionist donors.

**Participant 1:** And those people have children that go to our school, And those people have opinions that they welcomely and rightfully can have. However, that becomes a problem when you hold on to that opinion so intensely that you aren't willing to educate yourself further.

**Participant 1:** To maybe see the.

**Participant 1:** Incorrectness or.

**Participant 1:** Fertility in your stance.

**Deb:** K. Thank you for going into that a little deeper.

**Participant 1:** Mhmm.

**Deb:** I appreciate it.

**Participant 1:** Yep.

**Deb:** Who else can share about what what the experience on campus has been like for you?

**Deb:** Participant 2?

**Participant 2:** Yeah. I would love to kind of bounce off of, Participant 1’s point. Similarly, I can have, although I go to a school in a rural setting, so kind of the opposite of New York City, there has been, like, a lot of division on campus, I would say, and that and that's what's really affected us for the most part. And primarily also because of our administration's responses, and dealing with things just kind of in a way that students, are very unhappy with. Like, there's been a lot of division also. I think, like, they even created, like, a government class for this term on the conflict issue of Israel Palestine that, like, everyone was signing up for because they wanna voice their thoughts. There were many vigils held on campus where I was with friends there, and mourning the loss of many people with. And then kind of the big event that happened on our campus, was, like, we have protesters outside our president's, like, administration building, and two of them, like, decided to stay overnight there, like, prop up a tent, and were proceeded to get arrested later that night for criminal trespassing, which a lot of people like, there's been so many news articles, that were affecting of people that I personally didn't know them, but, a lot of people were very angered because it was silencing them in a way. It was taking away their free speech rights, things like that. And so I think it's become manifest into a lot of, like, anger and a lot of, like, division to the point where some people are even, like, those who aren't wanting to, like, share their opinions about their stances on the issue are so scared to say something because of being controversial on campus and things like that. But that's primarily, like yeah.

**Deb:** Oh, I was just gonna ask. So those examples you gave, do those feel more like you observing others, or is that describing your experience? Like, feeling silence and the feeling anger and feeling like it's risky to share a perspective.

**Participant 2:** I feel like I have it's been more of my friends, more than, like, have been act impacting me directly.

**Participant 2:** And so I've been really present with them being a listener, hearing their stories, and things like that. But, and also sharing. I mean, I I do sympathize with the anger of the administration. I do think that they could have done, like, so many things that were better. Like, they've even had, like, a guard, a security, officer standing outside the building. Like, it it just seems like there's been this disconnect between the administration and the student body, and that's kind of universal, like, even for people who were directly, like, friends of the people being arrested or just like the student body itself were kinda being left out.

**Deb:** Yeah. Thank you.

**Deb:** Participant 3 or Participant 4 or Participant 5?

**Participant 5:** I.

**Deb:** Thank you.

**Participant 5:** Can go next. I was just gonna say that for me, I'd say I'd sort of describe the experience as sort of stressful, seeing protests on campus. I go to school in, like, an urban area as well, and so seeing a lot of people on campus, both students and people coming from outside to protest, seeing police, seeing media come in to sort of, observe and, you know, report on what's happening, and seeing that many people on campus has sort of been really stressful and been sort of it's weird to, like, try and sort of manage that along with everything else that sort of adds to the stress of your day. It it it's not as normal it's not really a normal college experience, obviously. It's what, like, my a professor in one of my class described as what happened during nineteen sixty eight. He said on college campuses, it's exactly the same thing that is happening now. And I think the fact that, often, I felt and I think a lot of other people have felt that they can't talk about it. It's not very much, like, covered in classes. You talk about it with your friends. I've talked about it with my friends. But in open spaces, I think a lot of people feel like they're gonna be canceled or silenced if they do talk about it. So I only had one class where we for two hours, we sat there and we talked about the conflict. And I think it was a great way to sort of, you know, get your opinions out there, but also sympathize with other people and understand that it's sort of weird that something that's so big that is happening in the world and people feel like they can't talk about it because it becomes so politicized, which is just adds to the stress of it all. Yeah. That's sort of been my experience, especially during the fall semester and sort of less.

**Deb:** And I'm curious that that sense of stress with having other people on campus or feeling like.

**Participant 5:** Now.

**Deb:** You have to edit and can't talk about it necessarily, especially the other people on campus, what feels stressful about that?

**Participant 5:** I think just looking out, like, my window every day and seeing a group of people with flags and all that noise and the police cars surrounding them is just it's such a weird experience. And it's I think the fact that if it was, like, once and it, like, went away, it would be fine. But the fact that it's every day and it's recurring, And I I do sympathize, like, with what's happening, and I do understand. But at the same time, it's hard to go about your normal day when you have to, like, find a different way to get to class where you have to go through, like, everything that's happening. And there have been sort of some a few, like, violent incidents on campus. There have been arrests, and having to, like, just go through that and deal with that as part of your daily routine is sort of unnerving for me.

**Deb:** Yeah. And the phrase you said of, it's not a normal college experience. Like, that those are very different things. Thank.

**Participant 5:** Yeah.

**Deb:** You. Participant 3 or Participant 4?

**Participant 3:** I can add on, because there was two things that you said that made me think. The first thing is about, like, censorship.

**Participant 3:** On my campus, there was an incident where there was a professor who basically he taught, like, a computer science class, and he connected what what he was teaching to, like, what was happening in Gaza. And it was like like, this is how technology is being used. So, like, be aware, like, as an engineer, like, you know, what you're working for. And I thought it he did it really well. And he, like, he did it, and he said, like, this part of the class isn't required, so you don't have to, like, stay. And then the admin, like, yelled at him, and then, like, they sent an email to everyone and was like, this is ridiculous. Like, we're so sorry. And it was just crazy to me because I was like like, I think my university is, like, known for free speech, and then for them to do that and he didn't do it in, like, a disgraceful way at all. So that really frustrated me because it's like the administration is literally pushing censorship.

**Participant 3:** But I guess, like, in another sense, like, I agree with what you were just saying is, like, it isn't a normal college experience. Like, one thing that I have, like, mixed feelings on this, and I know like, I saw a post, on, like, my university's thing, and people were talking about, like, how this is, like, ridiculous. But one thing that, like, some of the protesters have done is played, like, like, audio of, like, air strikes. And I don't know. Like, just it's, like, kind of, like, where everybody walks and stuff. So it can be a bit like, it's, like, loud. And, like, for people with PTSD, it's really it can be a lot. And, like, I personally, you know, did not come from, like, the best home environment. And, like, when I first started, it was like I got really anxious because it, like, reminded me a lot of stuff that I didn't wanna think about. But then, like, the more that I've heard it, I've been like, oh, well, I guess, like, I shouldn't be, like, comparing it to myself because, like, this is happening, like, every day all the time in that other country. But I think, like, that just kind of shows, like, it isn't a normal experience because, like, we've have to, like, change where we walk, which is, like, it's fine. Like, I'm not really, like, complaining about the protest, but I'm more, like, acknowledging that, like, things are changing because of it. And, like, I know people have complained about, like, mobility issues because, like, this gate is being blocked, but, like, realistically, you can go, like, a different way.

**Participant 3:** But so, like, I don't know. I have I have, like, mixed feelings on it because on one hand, I'm like, I think it's good that people are protesting, but, also, like, this is actually, like, impacting students. And the administration is just not really, like, finding, I guess, like, creative solutions or more so just saying, like, you shouldn't be doing this or, like, whatever, and I just don't think that's fair either.

**Deb:** Thank you. A couple just quick to make sure, again, I'm not making assumptions about what you're saying. In the engineering class, what was the was the professor taking a position?

**Participant 3:** No. I don't like, the thing is online, but the professor pretty much was just like.

**Participant 3:** Like, I guess some people perceived it too, but he was more so saying, like, this is what's happening. Because I think, like, it's a fact that there's, like, way more deaths in Gaza than Israel, and he's like, there's, like, this many people being killed. Like, he wasn't really saying, like, whatever, but he was, like, just kind of being, like, this is technology kills people. As an engineer, like, you need to be conscious of what you're working on because this is what's happening. He wasn't really like, oh, like, Israel is doing this or, like, Gaza is doing like, he was saying, these are the things that are happening, but not like, oh, this person is in the right. This is in the wrong. It's more like, as an engineer, you're in the wrong if you're working on products that are doing this. But I don't even think he said, like, you're in the wrong, but more, like, implied, like, being.

**Deb:** Right.

**Participant 3:** Conscious of, like, what you're doing with your degree.

**Deb:** Yeah. Yeah. And you're pointing out that feeling conflicted, like, you can see some different angles on all of this, is very salient too. And, Participant 4, how about for you? How has the conflict affected your experience?

**Participant 4:** Yeah. I think I agree with both Participant 5 and Participant 4, what they just said. So I feel, like, more stressful and powerless because the only thing we could do right now is just spreading awareness. And when we are not able to, like, spread awareness because of the, management or the university, they don't have, like, the policies. So I feel, like, more powerless, not able to, like, participate in the protest. So these are, like, just silent protests. We are not doing anything. I feel like there is no need of any, cops or anything of that sort. So they should allow us to be, like, spread awareness in a, like, a peaceful manner. Yeah. That's what I think.

**Deb:** So powerless is a pretty big word. I'm wondering if you can go into that a bit more about what that what what's.

**Participant 4:** Powerless.

**Deb:** Bringing.

**Participant 4:** In.

**Deb:** That.

**Participant 4:** The sense,

**Deb:** Up.

**Participant 4:** Like, we would just want to, like, spread awareness and to show, like, what's actually happening there instead of the West media where it's, like, silencing the people's voices. Like, they are, like, shadowing and saying, like, this is not what actually happening, and they're, like, showing something else. So I want to, like, go out and, make like, spread the actual news that's happening there. Yeah. That's what I feel.

**Deb:** Yeah. Thank.

**Participant 4:** Yeah.

**Deb:** You.

**Deb:** So this next question has a little bit of data behind it. Data from College Pulses.

**[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?** (00:30:40 - 00:45:50)

**Deb:** Research shows 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 I'm curious to hear your thoughts on why do you think they might believe this.

**Deb:** And I'm happy to repeat this one because this is that really long one I said. So a third of a third of non Jewish students say they would not wanna be friends with someone who supports the existence of Israel as a Jewish state. Why do you think they might believe this?

**Participant 4:** So I think it's because of the media, what they have been paired up by the media. They have been, like, thinking in the way what they are seeing, and they don't know the actual history of the Israel or the Palestine. Like, actually, like, Israel has, like, occupied the Palestinian land. So I feel like they don't know the actual actual reasoning behind it. So that's why they are behaving like this.

**Deb:** So how would that connect to not wanting to be friends?

**Participant 4:** So, like, you make friends with people who have, like, the same thought process or the people who think the same way. So I think because of which, they don't want to be in friends because there might be conflict, and they cannot be friends with the people who they have, like, conflicts.

**Participant 4:** All, like, day to day, I guess. Yeah.

**Deb:** Yeah. Do you think that's related to this issue in particular, or is this about differing world views on other issues also?

**Participant 4:** I think it's more regarding this issue, I guess. And.

**Participant 4:** There might be, like, cases which.

**Participant 4:** Can be, I guess. Maybe. But I feel like this is the major issue.

**Deb:** Yeah. I'd be curious. What is it about this issue? Just if anyone else wants to chime in also. So, let me go back to the top of the the question about what do you make of that statistic that a third of non Jewish students say they would not wanna be friends with someone who supports the existence of Israel as a Jewish state?

**Deb:** Participant 4, am I reading correctly that you might want to come in here? I'm looking at your face, but I don't want to pressure you either.

**Participant 3:** I'm, like, trying to think what to say because, like, I understand that's a statistic for sure, and I I think for me, I think it's more of, like, the different world views thing. Because, like, for me, I'm not really interested in being friends with somebody who supports Trump. Like, it's like that for me. Like, I would not want to be around people who are just, like, because I think it has to do with, like, disagreeing with, like, fundamental.

**Participant 3:** Basic ethics. And it's like when people.

**Participant 3:** Are, like, really supporting something that I'm like, that's like, I don't know. I feel like I was raised, like, right from wrong. And I don't like, I'm not like, yes. There is nuance for sure, but I think what's happening right now is, like, very obviously, like, this is wrong. And it's like, I'm not trying to be friends with somebody who's just gonna be, like, completely, like, in support of something that's wrong. Like, if they were receptive to, you know, changing their mindset or something or, like, hearing it out or, like, even if it's like, well, like, my family is from there or something like that. Like, maybe I'd be open to, like, being friends with somebody. Like, I think I probably do fall into that statistic because it's like, I don't understand how you can defend what's happening, and I don't wanna be constantly arguing with somebody who's doing like, it's I I don't know. Like, I was in a long term relationship with somebody who was, like, a Trump supporter, and it was just a nightmare because it was constantly me being, like, explaining, like, dude, like, this is not okay. Like, how? And I it was just like it's just tiring to be like, oh my gosh. People actually, like, think like this. I'm like, I I don't need that energy.

**Deb:** And so just a follow-up on that. So the idea that there's something that's so obviously wrong or that there's that, ethical or moral piece, How.

**Participant 3:** Yeah.

**Deb:** Would you how would you characterize what the the morality, ethical, or the thing that's obviously wrong?

**Participant 3:** I think with this case, it's like the death tolls are just insanely unequal.

**Participant 3:** And it's just, like, heartbreaking what's happening.

**Participant 3:** And I think I don't know. I don't know that much about the history. I tried to, like, educate myself. But even I remember when I was, like, in sixth grade or whatever and we learned about, like, Israel and, like, the whole conflict and stuff, I remember being like, this is so interesting. Because, like, for me I don't know. Like, I do a lot of, like, Native American studies too, so I think it's, like, it's very it's hard for me to think about like just like power and like power dynamics and how it's I think really hard to see that.

**Participant 3:** There's always one type of people like, people with money always win, I guess. And then.

**Participant 3:** It's sad that so many people are, like, literally dying, like kids, etcetera. I don't know. Like, it's just sad, and then it's just, like I just feel like.

**Participant 3:** I just don't get it. Like, I I just feel very, like, disappointing with, like, what's or, like, sad, I guess, about what's happening. Like, I don't I don't know nowhere near an expert or anything, but it's more so just, like, I don't understand why these people are, like, defending something when, like, there's literally, like, kids dying.

**Deb:** Yeah. Thank you.

**Participant 2:** I just had a question. Like you said, so a third of non Jewish people said they would not be friends. So, like, that would mean kind of, like, seven the other seventy percent ish would or, like,

**Deb:** Yeah. Like, sixty six percent said they would.

**Participant 2:** Okay.

**Deb:** Consider it or that they would or I can't remember how the item.

**Participant 2:** Okay.

**Deb:** Was scaled exactly.

**Participant 2:** Okay. I just thought that was just an interesting breakdown. I guess I'm thinking similarly to Participant 4 and Participant 3 of, like, I think that they just.

**Participant 2:** People with the similar views and worldviews would hang out in different spheres. So I don't know if it's like, oh, they just are deciding to not be friends. They just, like, simply maybe aren't in the same spaces on campus, to the point where they would, like, be hanging out or choose to.

**Participant 2:** But I think it's also an interesting to note, like, the flip of that statistic of, like, there are some people who are, like, probably just indifferent and they would still befriend, like, that other sixty six percent.

**Deb:** And so you think that just to make sure I got that. So I love that you just flipped the statistic and said, what about the other angle? But so that those people who were saying I'd I'd be open to being friends, that that would come out of.

**Deb:** What was the word you used? Like, they like, they weren't.

**Participant 2:** I'm forgetting.

**Deb:** That basically like, maybe they don't really understand the situation is why they would.

**Participant 2:** I think.

**Deb:** Choose.

**Participant 2:** Oh,

**Deb:** To.

**Participant 2:** I.

**Deb:** Be.

**Participant 2:** Said.

**Deb:** Friends.

**Participant 2:** Indifferent.

**Deb:** There you go. Yeah. It's.

**Participant 2:** Yeah.

**Deb:** Like there was a great word there. Yeah.

**Participant 2:** Yeah. Yeah. I think they just either are.

**Participant 2:** Overlooking maybe just seeing, like, more to a person than just one view and, like, one stance that they have. But, then I think, like, the thirty three percent notes, like, kind of, how that that one worldview could also bleed into so many different ways that a person lives their life, like, because of just one belief. Like, that does affect, how a person goes out their day, the decisions they make, and, like, the the, people that they advocate for and the things they stand behind. So, I think the that's what those thirty three percent of people are recognizing.

**Participant 2:** That, one view could also like, that makes a big difference to how a person presents themselves.

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

**Deb:** Participant 1?

**Participant 1:** Yeah. Could you repeat the question for me?

**Deb:** Of course. Yeah. 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 why do you think they might believe this? And I'm also curious, like, do you think it's is it something special about this topic, or is this just in general? It's hard to be friends with people with different world views.

**Participant 1:** Yeah. Okay. So I I kind of wanted to talk a little bit about the question, which I will start with why I wanna do that. So I feel like.

**Participant 1:** It is very specific to this issue.

**Deb:** Yeah.

**Participant 1:** Because I feel like.

**Participant 1:** One of the ways that Western media.

**Participant 1:** Has tried to obscure this issue is by making it so polarized, which makes it harder to talk about, which makes everybody uncomfortable, which makes it even more hard to talk about, etcetera, etcetera. And a way that.

**Participant 1:** Advocates for Palestine have tried to counter that obscurity of Western media has been to paint.

**Participant 1:** Every single Jewish person that is currently on the planet as the villain.

**Participant 1:** And I think that that has had.

**Participant 1:** An even bigger effect on making this topic uncomfortable.

**Participant 1:** And making it like, trying to push it down and not talk about it than what was intended.

**Participant 1:** Because, yes, there are very, very clear villains in this.

**Participant 1:** Genocide.

**Participant 1:** However, there are also people that are villains by ignorance and forced ignorance, and.

**Participant 1:** I keep going back to, like, fertility.

**Participant 1:** And I think that the way that.

**Participant 1:** They are being cast as such intense, horrible.

**Participant 1:** People is not going to have any kind of positive benefit on.

**Participant 1:** Them maybe possibly potentially changing their opinions or, like,

**Deb:** Can.

**Participant 1:** Having.

**Deb:** You specify who the the they and the them are there?

**Participant 1:** Yes.

**Participant 1:** In this case, I'm speaking people that are, pro Israel, where.

**Participant 1:** The.

**Participant 1:** A lot of the current.

**Participant 1:** Media is if you just go on to Google, it's going to be very, like, as neutral as possible. But if you go on to, like, your advocate or, like, your.

**Participant 1:** New left pages. It's all going to be very, like, attack language, very villainizing. And I think that, yes, the neutral New York Times articles that don't really give you any new information or, like, try and minimize things as much as possible. I also think that those cause.

**Participant 1:** Just as much harm as the things in the other direction.

**Participant 1:** That.

**Participant 1:** Cause people that maybe could flip their stance, the small margin of people that.

**Participant 1:** Could, to completely shut down and lock themselves off on the issue. And I think that that is a very Israel Palestine specific problem.

**Deb:** So the villainizing is villainizing.

**Deb:** Israelis or.

**Participant 1:** Yes.

**Deb:** Jews or Palestinians.

**Deb:** Or everybody?

**Participant 1:** Not well, I mean, everybody. But I'm talking, like, specifically the, like, pro Israel, like, rich Zionist.

**Deb:** Okay.

**Participant 1:** Population and the very intense scrutiny that they are getting right now. And the their reaction from their already.

**Participant 1:** Frail.

**Participant 1:** Perspectives from certain historical events that have happened to Jewish people.

**Deb:** K. Thank you. And, Participant 5, do you wanna chime in on this one, or would you like to be first on the next question or both? Those are both allowed. Yeah.

**Participant 5:** Well, I was just gonna say with this question, I think you you sort of mentioned whether it could be, like, applied generally or just applied to this situation. And I do think that it can just really be applied to this situation in the sense that the right I think a lot of people, the one third, when they were thinking about the fact that they don't wanna be friends with a person who believes in the right for Israel to exist as a Jewish state, sort of meant it in the direction that they don't believe that it should exist if it encroaches on the rights of Palestinians in this case. And so that goes to, like, the core of human rights and, like, moral issues. And I think it's very difficult to be friends with someone who doesn't respect basic human rights. But I also think that sixty six percent maybe perhaps didn't apply to the situation or maybe, you know, it sort of is a difficult like, if you're applying it generally, I don't think.

**Participant 5:** I think it's much more difficult to sort of agree with the statement if you're just to say like, just saying it as a general statement. But if people are thinking about it in the context of this conflict, then I would understand where they're coming from sort of more generally.

**Participant 5:** That's just my sort of view.

**Deb:** Yeah. And you're bringing up some good points about and that echoes some of what Participant 1 was saying too about the framing.

**Deb:** Like, if it's a basic human rights issue.

**Deb:** That makes good sense. Okay. So, you're you're and if you're up for it, I'm gonna ask you.

**[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?**  (00:45:50 - 00:54:31)

**Deb:** To start this next one, which is how do your views about Israel or the conflict in Israel and Gaza compare to those of your friends? So how what are you noticing about how closely aligned you and your friends are, and how has the conflict affected your relationships, if at all?

**Participant 5:** I would say that, like, all of my friends have the same views as me, and, like, we all have very similar sort of viewpoints both on the conflict and on, like, our attitude towards the protests. I I I actually don't think I have disagreed with, like, a single person. I've had a lot of conversations with my friends on the conflict and of on how newspapers have sort of reported on the conflict and our, like, disagreements with the way that a lot of news outlets have responded to what's going on. I I haven't had a disagreement with anyone who I haven't been a friend with. I have had disagreements with classmates who I don't know as well.

**Participant 5:** But, yeah, I I think we're all very aligned, so I don't have, like, any sort of.

**Deb:** Okay.

**Participant 5:** Disagreements with that.

**Deb:** Thank you. How about for others? What are you noticing in your friendships?

**Participant 3:** I think I've cared a lot less than my friends, which sounds different from what I've been saying. But, like, I do care about what's happening, and it's like I said, it's heartbreaking, I feel like. But I don't know. For me, I'm from a very, like, low income area in the US, and, like, there's a lot of problems in the states already. And I think for me, with my friends, I've kind of been, like, this horrible, like, I wanna do what I can, but I'm way more focused on everything else. And it's kinda crazy to me that, like, nobody cares about, like, like, there's so many, like, native people who don't have power in the states. And, like, there's so much, like, stuff like that. And it's just, like, stuff like that isn't talked about. Like, there's even in my community, it's, like, we have so many, like, deaths every day, and it's just nothing is being done. So for me, it's like, why is nobody, like, caring about those issues? But this has been, like, really, like, heavily protest and everything.

**Participant 3:** So I think with my friends, they kind of are like, this is not like, my friends are very, very, like, activist, I feel. So I feel like they're always posting every day, like, this is what's going on, blah blah blah. And I'm like, like, I'm not annoyed that they're posting. I just kind of been like, like I said in the beginning, like, I'm kind of just trying to drown it out because I have bills. Like, I work like, I worked at Starbucks, and now everyone hates Starbucks. And I sometimes go to Starbucks, and then this lady yelled at me. Like, I was on a a trip for school, and she was, like, the admin, and she was so annoying because we were in Mexico for, like, a school trip. And she's like, you got Starbucks? And I was like, yeah. I did. And she just, like, lost. I mean, she went to Walmart, so then I just decided to be annoying back. And I feel like this has to do with, like, the framing where it's like, if you're gonna call someone a villain, like, they're not gonna listen to you. And, like, when she did that to me at the Starbucks, I was like I I got it for free because I've worked there. So I'm like, at this point, I'm just gonna go even more just to spite you because you really irritated me, but I think, like, there has been, like, conflicts there. Well, just with that one lady, she was, like, really annoying. But, like, I think in general, like, I I do, like, have the same ideas as my friends, but I just don't have the same level of caring or, like, activism or anything.

**Deb:** Yeah. And I'm hearing the, the question about why is this issue so salient when there are other things happening.

**Deb:** In our backyard too. Thank you.

**Deb:** Participant 2 or Participant 1 or Participant 4?

**Participant 1:** Sure. I can go.

**Participant 1:** I think as a black woman, you have to pick your friends very carefully, and you realize that from the second that you pick a friend incorrectly in middle school, and you get burned for it.

**Participant 1:** I.

**Participant 1:** Have.

**Participant 1:** I am able to talk politics very in-depth with all of the people in my life, And we have very similar, like, social standpoints, mostly economic standpoints.

**Participant 1:** I can respect differences to, like, a.

**Participant 1:** A minute amount. Like, what.

**Participant 1:** Brand of.

**Participant 1:** Marxist are you kind of difference. But outside of that, I'm very.

**Participant 1:** Rigid in my friendships.

**Participant 1:** And, yeah, I mean, I just don't have the mental energy.

**Participant 1:** To educate the people that I'm supposed to be growing with. That's not really where I care to spend my time and energy.

**Deb:** Mhmm.

**Participant 1:** So I would just weed them out.

**Deb:** Yeah. So the people you invite to be close to you are gonna be in a fairly narrow range of perspectives. Is that.

**Participant 1:** Yeah.

**Deb:** Almost like an active self care, it sounds like?

**Participant 1:** Absolutely.

**Deb:** Thank you.

**Participant 2:** Yeah. For me, it's kind of been, like, I have, like, two different types of, like, friend circles, I guess. And it's crazy because they're kind of both on different sides of the issue. So, I think there's, like, a a good set of other of my friends that we've have really been supportive of. A lot of us are involved in, like, our economics, our government programs here on campus. So we're going to visuals. We're going to a lot of, like, these advocacy things and activism that's happening on campus.

**Participant 2:** And but then I'm also, like, also part of, this, like, interfaith group on campus. And in there, there's been just interesting conversations, Primarily, a lot of it's been kind of helping some people also sympathize and realize, kind of the hurt that the Jewish community on campus has been having as well that I think other people are are, not paying as much attention to as well. So I've been kinda seeing both sides of it, with, like, these two groups on campus, and getting just awareness from both sides, I think, has been.

**Deb:** And how has it been for you shifting between those.

**Participant 2:** Helpful.

**Deb:** Those almost feel like different lenses that you've shifted around in. How's that been?

**Participant 2:** It's been, like, really challenging, honestly. I think, I don't like to, like, switch my persona or just I don't wanna be, like, fake in in front of those people and stuff, but I think we've been having very rich conversations. And, personally, because those those are issues that are affecting, like, those people's families and their culture. And, even though that's something I personally am, like, not not of my culture, I think that it's been what's best is, like, a lot of my friends have been there to listen, have been there to help out what's needed from us. And so that's, like, kind of the role that we've become to play for those things.

**Deb:** Yeah. Thank you. Participant 4, are you are you there? Do you want in on this one?

**Deb:** So I'm gonna ask this last question realizing that we might get to hear from one or two of you, which is not as in-depth as I would love to go, but I I do wanna ask it, which is best case scenario, how should the conflict in Israel and Gaza be resolved? Small question for five minutes left. Right?

**[Q5] Best case scenario, how should the conflict in Israel and Gaza be resolved?**  (00:54:44 - 00:58:11)

**Deb:** Dream scenario. What happens?

**Participant 1:** Okay. I'll go first because I feel like mine's a quick answer.

**Deb:** Thank you, Participant 1.

**Participant 1:** I don't really think.

**Participant 1:** That there is a dream scenario that I can that I can give.

**Participant 1:** Ideally, people would stop dying. And I would love for the people that are involved in the genocide and the overall conflict to.

**Participant 1:** Especially the people who do not have a voice currently to have some kind of voice in.

**Participant 1:** The final states that are that happen.

**Participant 1:** But I don't think it's for me or really us to say.

**Deb:** Thank you.

**Participant 5:** Mine is also just short. I think I would agree with Participant 1 and also say that I think giving the Palestinian people the resources to start creating their own government and having their own independence and making sure that independence isn't encroached on by Israel and keeping tabs on that and making sure that Israel doesn't get the support, in order to keep sort of bullying the Palestinian people would be the best case scenario, and making sure that they get to stand on their own two feet is a scenario that has not happened yet, but I think would be the ideal situation out of this conflict.

**Deb:** Thank you. So similar to Participant 1, empowering the voices, but also empowering the action and sovereignty.

**Deb:** Thank you. Participant 3 or Participant 2, do you want in on this real quick?

**Participant 2:** Yeah. I just wanna reiterate. I think the end of death or, like, no more deaths, no more killings, I think that that would be the ideal situation on both sides, and just a strive for peace, like, as close as we can get to it.

**Deb:** Thank you.

**Deb:** Participant 4, are you there? You want in on this one?

**Deb:** Yeah. Just step away.

**Deb:** Okay. So the that concludes my questions, and I wanna give you a chance if you have any questions for me.

**Deb:** Okay. So thank you so much for your time today, and I I guarantee these perspectives, feeling about this issue. So I'm so grateful.

**Deb:** In the next twenty four hours, you're gonna receive an email, and and that will be how to activate your incentives.

**Deb:** But also a quick follow-up, just a couple of questions. If you have any additional thoughts that you haven't had a chance to share, you could do that there. And there's contact information too. So if today's conversation has kicked up any reflections or thoughts or feelings that you would like to to process with somebody else, there'll be contact information in that email. So I'm gonna stick around for a few minutes if anyone does have questions or things they'd like to to talk about. But other than that, you're you're welcome to exit using the x in the top right corner of the platform. And I'm so grateful to you all. Thank you.

**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.**  (Not answered)

**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.**  (Not answered)