

STRENGTH, STRESS, AND SUPPORT

A Portrait of American
Jewish Teen Well-Being

BeWELL



**Jewish
Federations**
of North America

Stanford University

PRIORITIZING JEWISH TEEN WELL-BEING

2

Dear colleagues and community,

When BeWell embarked on this groundbreaking project more than a year ago—alarmed by skyrocketing rates of teenage anxiety and historic levels of sadness and hopelessness, yet believing deeply that Jewish tradition is a powerful tool for well-being—our aim was to understand how American Jewish teens navigate the complexities of adolescence. Our inquiry was guided by the belief that understanding stressors and sources of support that are unique to Jewish teens would better position all of our efforts to create a *kehillah kedosha*, a “holy community.”

We are grateful that our research team was able to deftly shape this pioneering research, with valuable insights from our advisory group, which helps us both articulate and measure the many dimensions of Jewish teen well-being.

Today’s teens face numerous pressures: academics, social dynamics, identity formation, and the complex act of becoming. For Jewish teens, typical adolescent struggles are compounded by rising antisemitism and the aftermath of October 7—they are moving through a world where they can feel isolated, misunderstood, or under attack. These can be life-shaping challenges.

The following pages illuminate the experiences of thousands of Jewish middle and high schoolers. We are grateful that our organizational partners helped us reach so many. By offering us a glimpse into their world, these teens shared insights that can guide, challenge, and inspire us.

At the heart of the research findings lies a powerful insight: Jewish teens’ overall well-being is intimately linked to the importance they place on being Jewish. They benefit from a tradition that offers incredible courage, support, and strength. And yet their Jewish identity also heightens their awareness of—and stress about—the tensions of our times.

Jewish teens need us now. This research reveals a plea for wisdom, understanding, care, and investment. Working together, as Jewish professionals, educators, community leaders, caregivers, and parents, we have the sacred responsibility of helping teens not just cope with the world, but also feel empowered and equipped to shape it. Together we can increase hope and optimism—and build resilience.

Thank you for being a part of this vital conversation and contributing to this *kehillah kedosha*.

SARA ALLEN

Sara Allen
Executive Director, BeWell

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INTRODUCTION

American teens are facing a mental health crisis.⁴ This issue has garnered widespread attention, dominating headlines in the popular press⁵ and prompting a wave of research focusing on a number of suspected causes.⁶

Studies from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institute of Mental Health, Pew Research Center, and the American Psychological Association have consistently found high rates of depression and anxiety among teens, as well as rising rates of suicide. The Surgeon General of the United States has called this situation an “urgent public health issue” and released an advisory calling for additional resources to support American teens.¹

However, American teens are experiencing this crisis in different ways. Studies of LGBTQ+, racial and ethnic minority, and immigrant and refugee teens, as well as teens from lower-income families and those with disabilities have identified additional factors that undermine wellbeing for teens with marginalized identities.² These include increased exposure to discrimination and stigma, higher levels of chronic stress, limited access to culturally competent mental health care, and socioeconomic challenges.³

In 2022, BeWell, a national campaign founded to respond to the growing mental health crisis among Jewish youth, initiated the development of a shared conceptual framework to bring coherence to the language and concepts Jewish teen service providers use to discuss well-being and ensure that new and evolving initiatives are aligned in purpose, approach, and goals (See Appendix A: BeWell Shared Framework). The shared framework underscored the need for a deeper understanding of American Jewish teenagers. In 2023, BeWell commissioned the first national study of American Jewish teenagers to focus on well-being. The study results are summarized in this report as part of an effort to equip organizations to better understand and serve their teens.*

BEWELL BACKGROUND

BeWell builds the capacity of Jewish organizations to understand and respond to a growing mental health crisis, drawing on Jewish tradition, culture, and community to promote well-being. A national initiative of Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), in partnership with the Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies, BeWell is the only forum that unites the education and engagement and clinical worlds. BeWell sits at the intersection of prevention, preparedness, and education, building the field by increasing knowledge and resources, networking practitioners, scaling proven models and interventions, and increasing access to developmentally and culturally appropriate care and support. This effort is grounded in the belief that Jewish heritage has the power to enrich our lives and deepen our connections.

* This research was designed to explore the interplay between Jewish teens' experiences and perspectives and their overall sense of well-being, rather than diagnose mental health conditions or evaluate acute psychological distress.

Strength, Stress, and Support: A National Study of American Jewish Teen Well-Being was designed to explore how Jewish teens' communal involvement, interpersonal connections, and perceptions of themselves as Jews relate to their overall well-being.** Teens reported on their sense of well-being using the EPOCH Measure of Adolescent Well-Being, a validated scale that assesses five aspects of well-being derived from the field of positive psychology: engagement, perseverance, optimism, connectedness, and happiness.*** The survey also asked teens to pinpoint sources of stress in their lives and highlight where and with whom they find support. The findings reflect the responses of 2,489 Jewish teens who live in 49 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Beginning with an explanation of research methods, this report provides descriptive details about the teens who responded, including demographic characteristics and information about their Jewish involvement. Next, the report presents an overview of Jewish teens' well-being, including key predictors of well-being. The following sections detail sources of stress for Jewish teens and where they are finding support.

** Without comprehensive demographic data on American Jewish teens, it is impossible to know what constitutes a truly representative sample. In seeking a reasonable substitute, the research team first explored the possibility of working with a polling or marketing firm, but none had access to a large enough sample of American Jewish teens to fulfill the study objectives. Through discussions with BeWell, the research team determined that we could recruit a larger and likely more diverse sample of teens by working with BeWell's network of partner organizations. Preliminary interviews with teens affirmed the decision to work with partner organizations for recruitment, as teens indicated that they would be more likely to complete a survey if they received it from a trusted source. To recruit teens, the research team distributed information about the survey through listservs maintained by BeWell's partners, social media advertising, and respondent and parent networks. These findings therefore represent Jewish teens reached through Jewish organizational networks, including those with varying levels of Jewish organizational involvement.

*** In survey design, a validated measure refers to a question or set of questions that has been rigorously tested and shown to accurately and consistently measure the concept it is intended to measure.

While researchers have extensively documented declining teen well-being in the United States, the distinct experiences and challenges of American Jewish teens remain largely unexplored. To address this gap, we conducted a national survey of nearly 2,500 American Jewish teens, examining multiple dimensions of their well-being. The study, conducted during Spring 2024, investigated both sources of stress and systems of support, enabling us to identify key factors that enhance or diminish their overall well-being. This research revealed three key insights about Jewish teens' well-being:

KEY FINDING 1:

Teens who said that being Jewish is important to them reported higher levels of overall well-being.

Among the factors studied, teens' sense of well-being was most strongly connected to the personal importance they placed on being Jewish. This relationship was evident across all five dimensions of well-being measured in the study: engagement, perseverance, optimism, connectedness, and happiness. Teens' perceptions of how important being Jewish was to their families also showed a positive relationship with their well-being, though this association was less pronounced than the link between personal importance and well-being. Participation in Jewish teen programming exhibited a minimal, yet still positive, correlation with teens' overall sense of well-being. Teens cited the relationships they experienced with their peers in Jewish teen programs as being particularly influential in helping them feel like they could be their full, authentic selves, however, most teens felt that adults involved in Jewish teen programs had a limited understanding of contemporary teen experiences.

KEY FINDING 2:

American Jewish teens face a dual burden: They contend with the universal challenges of adolescence while also grappling with unique pressures that arise from being Jewish.

Alongside common stressors for teens like academic

performance and social dynamics, Jewish teens are experiencing heightened tension over recent geopolitical conflicts and increasingly prevalent antisemitism. Those who reported that being Jewish is important to them experienced higher levels of overall well-being but also tended to experience more stress related to Jewish-specific issues. The interplay between identity, stress, and resilience mirrors patterns observed in other minority adolescent populations, highlighting the influence of cultural identity on adolescent well-being.

KEY FINDING 3:

Jewish teens have multiple contexts and people in their lives that allow for authentic self-expression, which supports positive well-being outcomes.

Most survey respondents indicated that they feel free to be their full selves with Jewish friends and family. About half of all teens reported feeling the same sense of freedom with non-Jewish friends. When seeking advice, Jewish teens said that they were most likely to turn to friends and parents and far less likely to turn to Jewish leaders (i.e., clergy and youth program leaders).

This study sheds light on the tension at the heart of American Jewish teens' well-being, where identity centrality emerges as both a source of strength and a potential driver of increased stress. This complex portrait presents a challenge for Jewish organizations, communal professionals, and educators who work in teen-facing settings. While teen engagement strategies have focused on enhancing teens' sense of their Jewish selves, our findings suggest the need for a more nuanced approach that acknowledges the relationship between social stressors, well-being, and teens' expressed sense of Jewish importance. Supporting Jewish teens may require providing opportunities for authentic self-expression, equipping them to engage in challenging discussions, and empowering them to ask difficult questions. While the path forward is neither simple nor straightforward, this report provides empirical grounding from which innovative responses might emerge.

This study used an iterative approach to research design and data collection including: a literature review; exploratory interviews with teens in grades 7-12; and a national survey (see Appendix B: Methodology for additional details).

At the heart of the survey are two sets of questions.

Epoch Measure of Adolescent Well-being

The first set is the EPOCH Measure of Adolescent Well-Being, a 20-item questionnaire designed to evaluate the well-being of adolescents between 10 and 18 years old. This tool focuses on five key domains that play a significant role in teens' overall well-being. This measure assesses five key domains of well-being using 20 items rated on a 5-point scale. For each of the 20 items, teens were asked to select responses ranging from "Almost Never" (1) to "Almost Always" (5), or from "Not at all like me" (1) to "Very much like me" (5).

ENGAGEMENT

The capacity to become absorbed in / focused on what one is doing, as well as involvement and interest in life activities and tasks

PERSEVERANCE

The determination to stick with tasks, goals, and plans, even in the face of challenges or setbacks

OPTIMISM

Having a sense of hope and confidence about the future

CONNECTEDNESS

The presence of satisfying relationships with others, including feelings of being cared for, loved, and valued

HAPPINESS

The frequency of positive emotions and the degree of contentment with one's life overall

Dimensions of Jewish Experiences

The second set of questions asked survey respondents to describe seven dimensions of their Jewish experiences.

1 Personal Jewish Identity Centrality

The importance teens placed on being Jewish

2 Family Jewish Identity Centrality

Teens' perceptions of the importance their families placed on being Jewish

3 Jewish Friendships

Teens' estimation of how many of their closest friends identify as Jewish

4 Jewish Activities

The total number of Jewish activities teens participated in over the past three years, such as Jewish educational experiences, Shabbat observance, and Jewish holiday and lifecycle celebrations

5 Jewish Teen Program Participation

The total number of Jewish teen programs respondents participated in over the past twelve months

6 Frequency of Jewish Teen Program Participation

How often teens attended Jewish teen programming over the past twelve months

7 Perceived Adult Understanding

Respondents' perceptions of how well adults who lead Jewish teen programs understand what it is like to be a teen today

Study development began in early 2023, before the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel and the war that followed. Survey administration was planned for April and May 2024. In consultation with colleagues at BeWell, the research team decided to launch the survey on the original timeline. Between April 1st and June 7th, 2024, 2,490 teens completed the survey. Notably, as the survey went into the field, reports of encampments and protests on college campuses across the United States dominated the news cycle. As a result, the findings reported here capture teens' perspectives during a particularly tumultuous period in American Jewish life. While the study was not designed to investigate the impact of current events on teens' well-being, the research team and BeWell made a strategic decision to add an open-

ended question that would allow us to better understand how these circumstances are affecting teens. We invited teens who identified the war in Israel and Gaza and antisemitism as sources of stress to elaborate on their experiences, in their own words. The remainder of the survey was constructed as originally planned.

This report presents analyses of the survey data, supplemented by qualitative insights gathered from teens' open-ended responses. We prioritized analyses of American Jewish teens' well-being at an aggregate level to establish a baseline understanding of well-being among this understudied population. (See Appendix C: Data Analyses for additional details).

STUDY LIMITATIONS

We encourage readers to consider several key limitations when interpreting findings. First, Jewish teens who are actively engaged in Jewish activities and communities are likely overrepresented in our sample, as our primary recruitment occurred through Jewish teen-facing organizations. Our word-of-mouth recruitment efforts did reach some less connected teens—approximately 20% of respondents reported little to no formal organizational involvement. As a result, readers and researchers should exercise caution in generalizing these findings to all American Jewish teens, particularly those who are less connected to other Jewish teens.

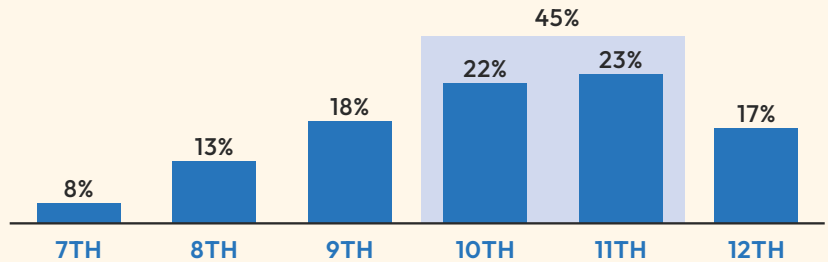
A second significant limitation arose from constraints on survey length. Initial interviews with teens indicated they would be unlikely to complete surveys requiring more than 5 minutes, which forced us to substantially restrict our questioning. This prevented us from exploring numerous potentially valuable factors affecting teen well-being. The abbreviated format also limited our use of open-ended questions, leaving us with minimal insight into the qualitative aspects of respondents' Jewish lives and their personal interpretations of Judaism's importance. These gaps in understanding present important opportunities for future research.

DEMOGRAPHICS

This section presents demographics and other descriptive information about survey respondents' Jewish lives, offering context for understanding the make-up of teens who participated and interpreting the findings about the influence of Jewish experiences on well-being.

GRADE

Almost half of respondents were 10th or 11th graders. There were fewer 7th and 8th graders relative to high school students (n=2490).



SEXUALITY

More than half of respondents (63%) identified as straight / heterosexual (n=2179).

STRAIGHT / HETEROSEXUAL	63%
MULTIPLE IDENTITIES	9%
BISEXUAL	8%
I AM NOT SURE	5%
LESBIAN	4%
DECLINE TO ANSWER	3%
QUEER	2%
PANSEXUAL	2%
GAY	2%
ASEXUAL	1%
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS QUESTION MEANS	1%
ANOTHER IDENTITY	1%

RACE / ETHNICITY

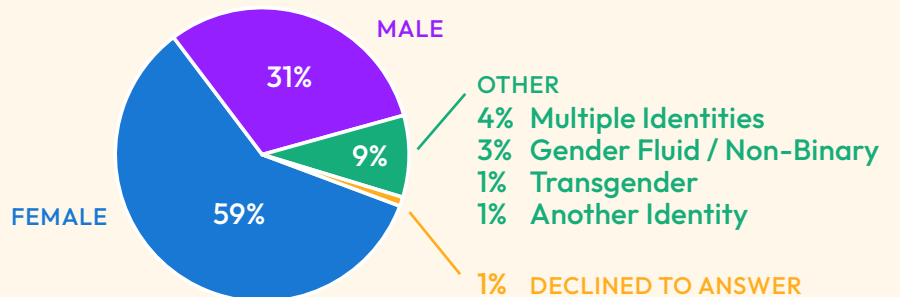
Most respondents (74%) identified as White, and 16% reported multiple racial / ethnic identities (n=2185).

WHITE	74%
MULTIPLE IDENTITIES	16%
ANOTHER IDENTITY	3%
MIDDLE EASTERN OR NORTH AFRICAN	2%
DECLINE TO ANSWER	2%
LATINO / A, LATINX, OR LATINE	1%
ASIAN/ASIAN AMERICAN	1%
BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	0.5%
AMERICAN INDIANS AND ALASKA NATIVES	0.3%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN / PACIFIC ISLANDER	0.2%

GENDER

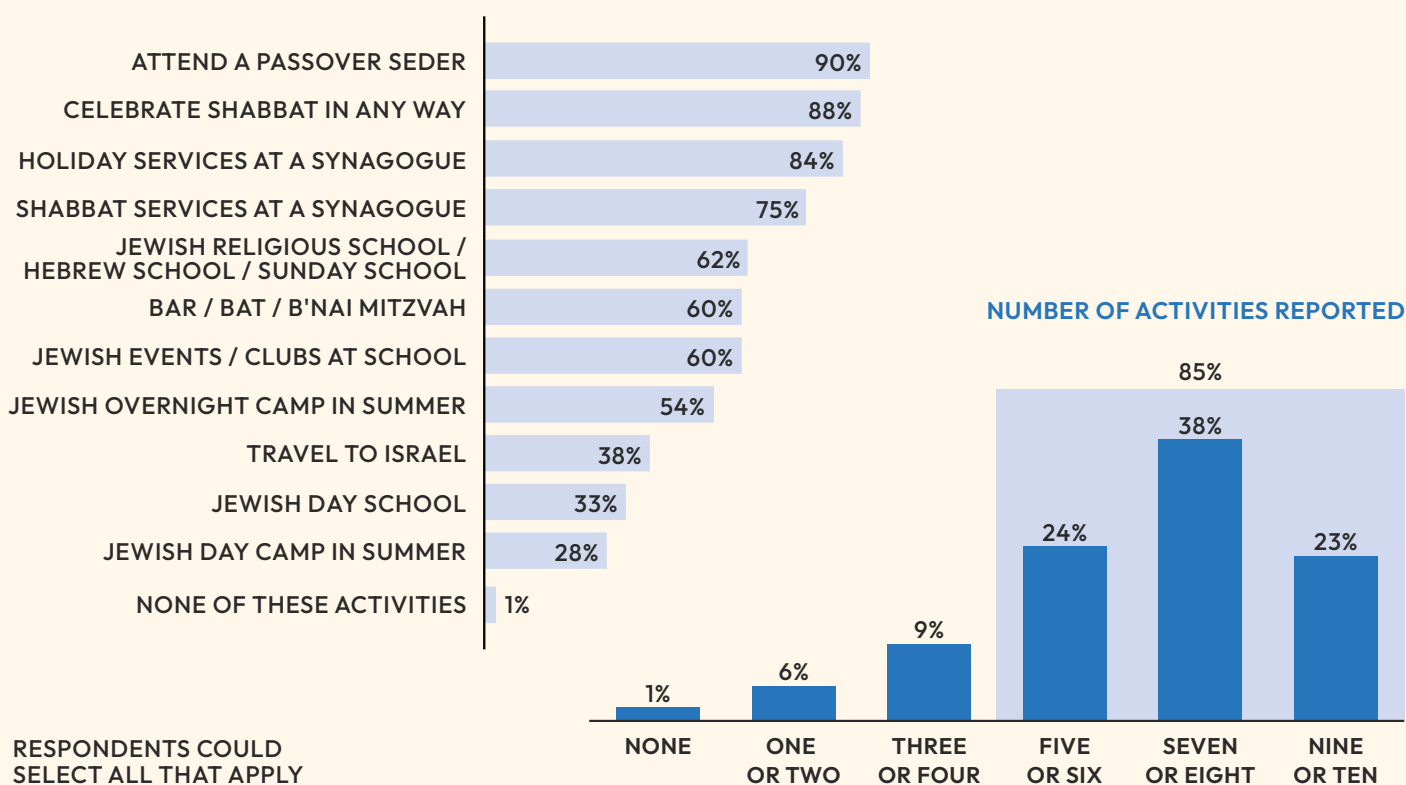
More than half of respondents (59%) were female and 31% were male.

The other (9%) reported multiple gender identities, identified as gender fluid / non-binary, transgender, or indicated that they identified in another way (n=2195).



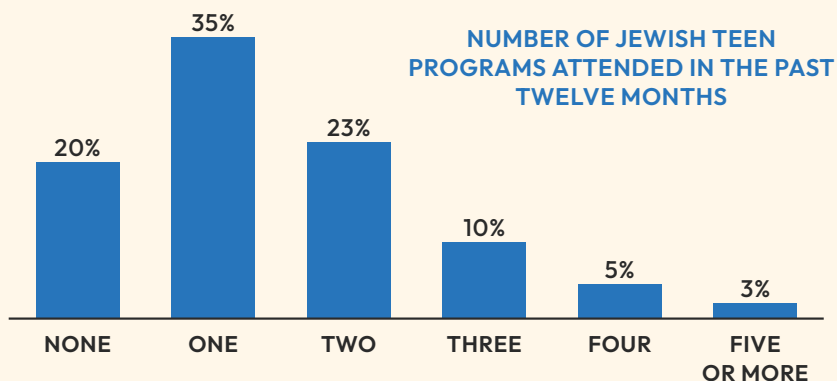
Teens who responded to the survey took part in Jewish life at relatively high rates. Most (85%) took part in five or more Jewish activities in the past three years, while just 1% did not participate in any Jewish activities. Almost all (90%) attended a Passover Seder, which is one of the most common practices for Jews.⁷ Teens reported similarly high participation in Jewish life by celebrating Shabbat (88%) or attending High Holiday services (84%) (n=2486).

"IN THE PAST THREE YEARS, HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?"



RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

For most respondents, participation in Jewish teen programming was infrequent. The largest percentage (58%) said they participated in one or two programs in the past 12 months, and another 20% did not participate at all (n=2384).

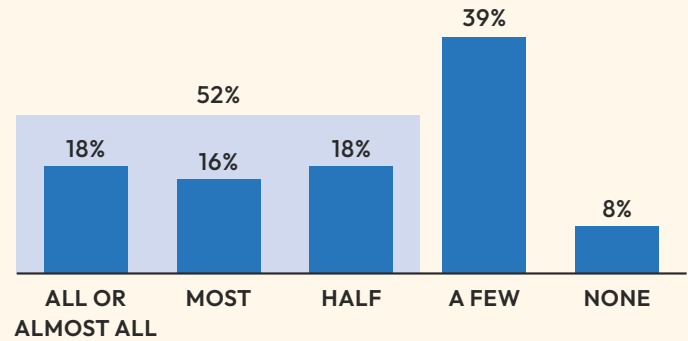


JEWISH EXPERIENCES



About half of survey respondents (52%) reported that at least half of their closest friends are Jewish, and the other 48% reported having few or no close Jewish friends (n=2488).

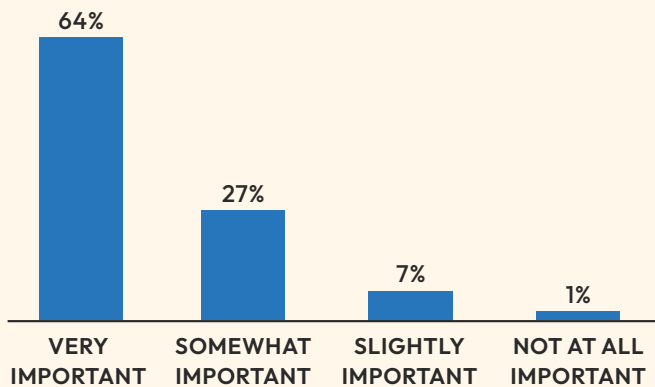
“HOW MANY OF YOUR CLOSEST FRIENDS IDENTIFY AS JEWISH?”



Most respondents said being Jewish was very important to them personally (64%) and for their families (63%). Only 1% said being Jewish was not important at all to them or their families.

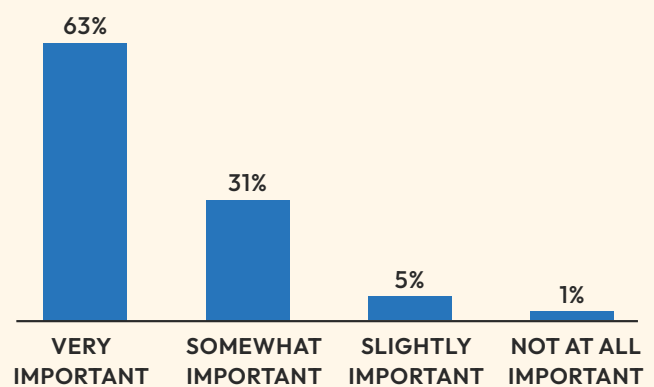
“HOW IMPORTANT IS BEING JEWISH TO YOU, PERSONALLY?”

(n=2489)



“HOW IMPORTANT IS BEING JEWISH FOR YOUR FAMILY?”

(n=2490)



FINDING 1: IDENTITY CENTRALITY 12

The data analyses pointed to three key findings about Jewish teens' well-being.*

FINDING 1:

Teens who said that being Jewish is important to them reported higher levels of overall well-being.

Adolescence is a crucial period in overall health and development. Although measuring positive emotional, spiritual, and social development is complicated, measures of well-being can serve as key indicators of healthy development. Well-being encompasses multiple dimensions of human flourishing, including emotional equilibrium, social connectedness, and a sense of purpose. Using the EPOCH Measure of Adolescent Well-Being in conjunction with seven newly developed measures of Jewish experiences, we examined which aspects of teens' Jewish experiences correlated with both overall well-being and each of the five dimensions in the EPOCH scale.

Jewish identity centrality—the personal importance teens place on being Jewish—showed the strongest statistical relationship with well-being across all five measures. Teens who reported higher levels of Jewish identity centrality also reported higher scores across all five dimensions of the EPOCH measure.

Jewish family identity centrality—teens' perceptions of how important being Jewish is to their families—also predicted greater well-being; however, the effects were less pronounced than those of teens' own Jewish identity centrality. More frequent participation in Jewish teen programming showed a minimal, yet positive, relationship with teens' well-being in terms of engagement, but not perseverance, optimism, connectedness, or happiness. Participation in Jewish programs had no effect on four of the EPOCH measures but it did exert a medium effect on teens' sense of optimism.

UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY CENTRALITY

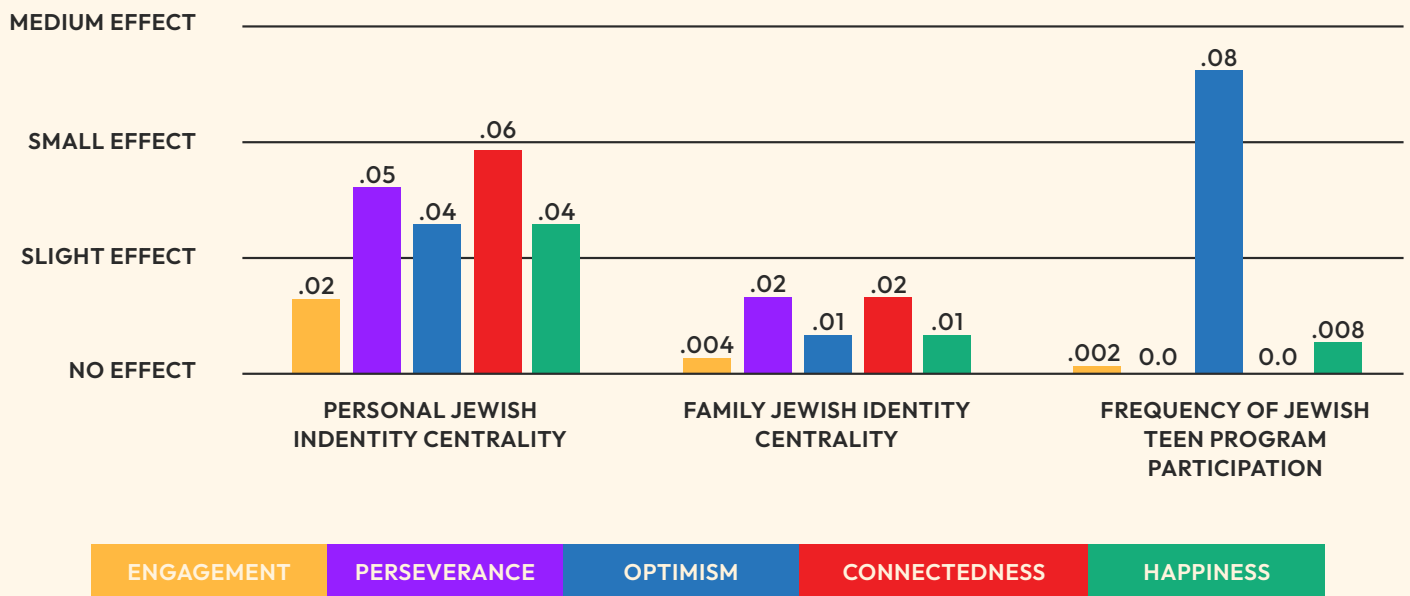
Identity centrality theory posits that individuals assign varying degrees of importance to their multiple social identities. While people possess numerous social identities—including cultural background, family status, and gender—these identities do not uniformly shape how people view themselves. Research indicates that more centralized identities tend to exert greater influence on their cognitive processes, emotional reactions, and behavioral choices. Importantly, identity centrality is measured through subjective self-reporting, distinguishing it from observable behavioral manifestations of identity that can be objectively assessed.

* See Appendix C for in-depth statistical analyses.

FINDING 1: IDENTITY CENTRALITY 13

Three of the seven aspects of teens' Jewish experiences were positively correlated with well-being.

Both personal and family Jewish identity centrality significantly predicted all dimensions of well-being assessed using the EPOCH scale. However, teens' personal identity centrality had larger effects on well-being compared to their family's identity centrality. Frequency of participation in Jewish teen programming significantly predicted optimism but not the other dimensions of well-being.



EFFECT SIZE IS MEASURED USING ETA-SQUARED AND INDICATES HOW MEANINGFUL THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO VARIABLES IS. THE LARGER THE EFFECT SIZE, THE MORE MEANINGFUL THE RELATIONSHIP.

FINDING 2: DUAL BURDEN

FINDING 2:

American Jewish teens face a dual burden: They contend with the universal challenges of adolescence while grappling with unique pressures that arise from being Jewish.

In addition to examining factors that contribute to positive well-being among Jewish teens, this study identified sources of stress that undermine well-being.⁸ Teens were presented with 21 potential sources of stress, including both well-documented universal teen stressors (like academic pressure, body image concerns, social media use, and peer dynamics) and challenges specific to Jewish adolescents, such as antisemitism and the war in Israel and Gaza.⁹ For each item, teens were asked to indicate if it caused them no, some, or a lot of stress.

A factor analysis of teens' responses to each of these stressors revealed five distinct themes: 1) School; 2) The War in Israel and Gaza/Antisemitism; 3) Relationships and Self-Image; 4) Parents; and 5) Gender/Sexuality. (See Appendix C for details about statistical analyses). Stressors related to school encompassed academic and future-oriented concerns, including grades, post-high school prospects, and pressure regarding school-based achievement. Stress about the war in Israel and Gaza/antisemitism included broader current events awareness, the ongoing conflict, antisemitism in general, and being the target of antisemitic comments or threats. Parent-related stress focused on parent-adolescent relationships, including conflicts and parental pressure. The Relationships/Self-Image theme covered a wide range of interpersonal and self-perception issues, including bullying, lack of acceptance, peer pressure, friendships, romantic relationships, body image, and social media. Finally, the Gender/Sexuality theme addressed stress around personal identity issues related to sexuality and gender.

While school-related stress was the biggest issue for

Jewish teens, they also reported nearly as much stress related to recent geopolitical conflicts and increasingly prevalent antisemitism. This finding underscores how American Jewish teens face a dual burden: They must navigate the universal challenges of adolescence while confronting elevated anxieties linked to being Jewish, particularly in the context of recent geopolitical tensions and rising antisemitism.

The prevalence of school-related concerns as a source of stress among Jewish teens is consistent with global trends.¹⁰ Survey respondents described the emotional toll of internal and external pressures to excel academically while balancing extracurricular participation. They also expressed anxiety about their future related to academic transitions and their readiness for adulthood.

Survey findings also revealed a connection between Jewish identity centrality, well-being, and stress among Jewish teens. Jewish teens who reported stronger Jewish identity centrality and greater overall well-being also experienced more stress related to school* and the ongoing conflict in Israel and Gaza.** This suggests that while Jewish identity centrality is positively correlated with overall well-being, it is also predictive of experiencing both more general and Jewish-specific stressors. The interplay between identity, stress, and resilience mirrors patterns observed in other minority adolescent populations, highlighting connections between cultural identities and adolescent experiences.¹¹

* (unstandardized B = .04, SE = .01, p = .002)

** (unstandardized B = .23, SE = .02, p < .001)

FINDING 2: DUAL BURDEN

“Nowadays, schools are much more stressful with much more competition and pressure and a collective poor mental health.”

— 11th Grader

“Since I am a straight A student, people think I am smart and that puts pressure on me to get good grades.”

— 8th Grader

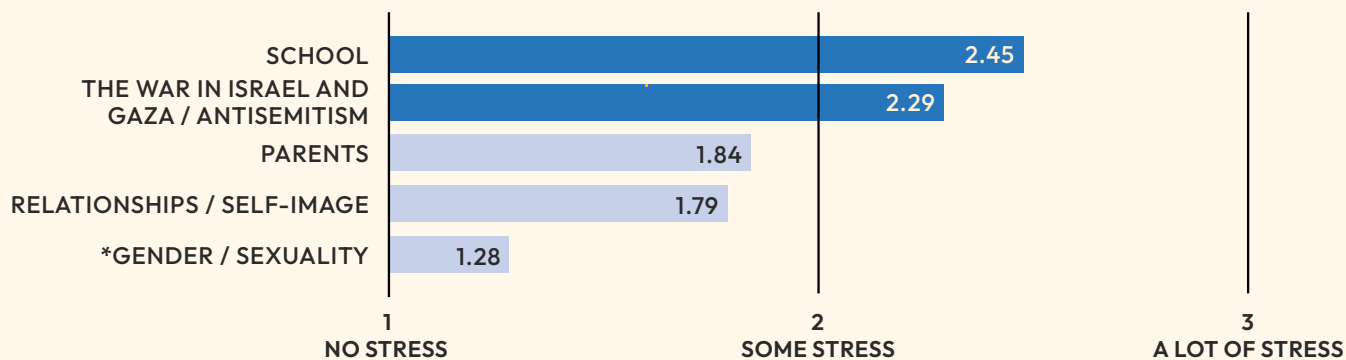
“People are always telling me to take the best classes, but also to take a bunch of extracurricular activities, and then to remember that high school should just be about having fun. That’s a lot of things to do.”

— 9th Grader

“I feel stressed that I’m going to be an adult soon even though I barely feel like I can take care of anything now.”

— 12th Grader

School-related stress was the biggest issue for Jewish teens followed closely by stress related to the War in Israel and Gaza and antisemitism.



Stress Related to the War in Israel and Gaza and Antisemitism

Teens who identified the war in Israel and Gaza or antisemitism as a source of stress were asked to elaborate on their experiences. Teens' written accounts of stress related to antisemitism and the war highlight several overlapping issues:

Concerns about Personal Safety

Many respondents expressed fear for their personal safety, including both immediate physical danger and their ability to express their Jewishness without fear of verbal attacks, social ostracism, or discrimination. Some teens recounted incidents of harassment at school and online because they are Jewish and said they feel unsafe disclosing that they are Jewish. Teens described feelings of constant vigilance and described feeling compelled to hide their Jewishness, both of which contributed to a sense of vulnerability and unease.

“Walking past students in school who I have seen chant Hamas slogans causes me stress. Trying to explain my feelings about the topic to my non-Jewish friends causes me stress. Trying to understand my feelings about the topic causes me stress. Knowing that it is safer for me to remove my Star of David necklace in public and being cautious of who I share my identity with causes me stress.”

— 11th Grader

“I worry about safety as a Jewish person. With a sister in college, I worry for her but also how antisemitism can harm me. I also am worried about the war as I have family in Israel and I worry for them.”

— 9th Grader

Social Media and Misinformation

Another concern emphasized the proliferation of misinformation, biased narratives, and antisemitic content on social media platforms. Respondents described feeling overwhelmed by what they perceived as a constant stream of hostile or misleading posts, which they view as oversimplifying complex issues. The pervasiveness of this content undermined teens' sense of safety and belonging in online communities that are often populated by their peers. Some described struggling to refute false narratives or express their own perspectives without facing backlash, both in-person and online.

“Antisemitic social media posts are constant. It's honestly the only constant thing in my life - to see me being hated on the internet just for being Jewish. When I try to post about the hostages, something I don't even believe is political and is just a social right issue, I am harassed and bullied digitally.”

— 12th Grader

“I don't even understand it fully. I just know that people at my synagogue are so pro-Israel while my peers and people on social media are so anti-Israel. All the posts I've seen are violent, angry, and scary. People's strong beliefs and lack of knowledge stress me out.”

— 11th Grader

Conflict with Friends and Feelings of Isolation

Respondents also reported feelings of isolation stemming from conflicts with friends, an inability to express themselves freely, and a pervasive sense of alienation from their social circles. Their sense of isolation was exacerbated by fears of judgment, misunderstanding, or being labeled negatively due to their political views or simply for being Jewish. Some teens reported actively concealing their Jewish identity or connection to Israel to avoid conflict or maintain friendships.

“I have been shunned by my ‘friends’ before they even knew of my political stance just because I am Jewish, and after I had told them that I was pro-Israel, they have pretended like I haven’t existed for the past six months. I’ve been trying to juggle staying friends with the people I love and being myself.”

— 11th Grader

Lack of Support

The inability to engage in constructive dialogue has left many teens feeling unsupported in their ability to process current events. Teens described struggling to find spaces where they feel empowered to ask questions and express themselves freely.

“It is hard for me to understand those who are strongly pro-Israel. It is so important to hold nuance and compassion for all, especially in times of great distress and war. I don’t feel comfortable talking to some of my friends about the conflict, because I worry they will not accept my beliefs and think I am “betraying my Jewish community.”

— 12th Grader

College Decisions and Campus Climate

Many survey respondents described experiencing anxiety about choosing a college amid the 2024 campus protests and reports of antisemitism at various institutions. They described concerns about their safety, their ability to openly identify as Jewish, and the potential for social isolation or academic discrimination. Some said they are reconsidering their college choices, weighing the quality of education against campus climates that appeared hostile towards Jewish students. Others feared future repercussions associated with participating in Jewish campus organizations or publicly supporting Israel.

“I’m going to college next year and currently watching Jewish students being body blocked and harassed for trying to attend their college classes that they pay for. They’re being attacked and told to go die. I’m debating changing my Jewish last name to a neutral name because of this so no one knows I’m Jewish by my name.”

— 12th Grader

FINDING 3:

Jewish teens have multiple contexts and people in their lives that allow for authentic self-expression, which supports positive well-being outcomes.

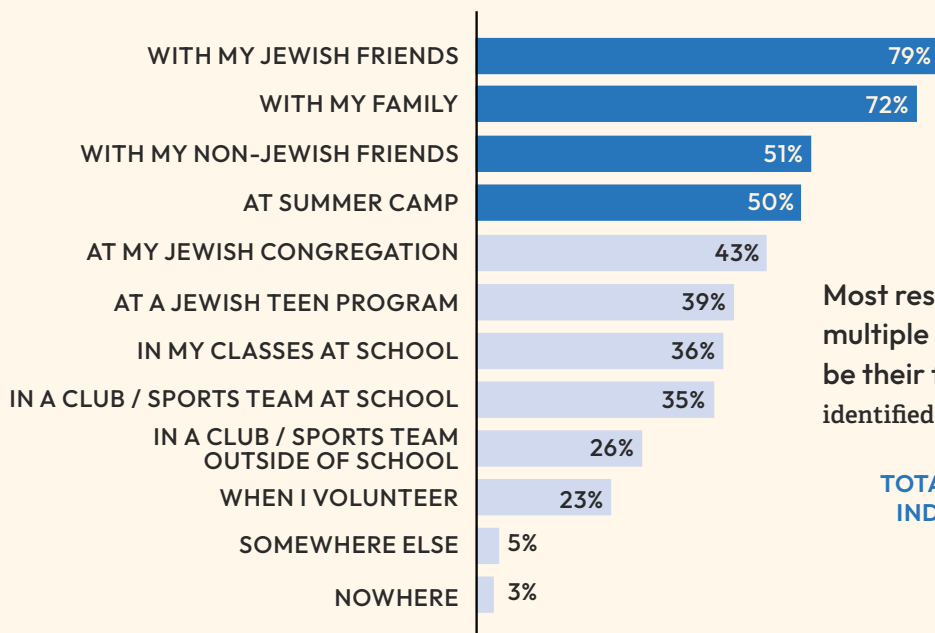
Authentic self-expression is a significant dimension of well-being in adolescents. Places and people where teens feel safe and supported to fully express themselves may serve as meaningful supports to foster overall well-being. Respondents were asked to identify environments and individuals that facilitate authentic self-expression, as well as the sources they typically consult for advice and guidance.

Most respondents said that they can be their full selves with their Jewish friends and with family (n=2479). About half of respondents felt the same freedom with their non-Jewish friends. Roughly the same number felt this way about summer camp. This suggests that American Jewish teens find strength and personal validation in close relationships, such as those within families, peer groups, and those forged at summer camp.

The majority of survey respondents (87%) identified multiple places where they feel free to be their full selves. More than one-third (34%) said that they had “six or more” places where they could be their full selves (n=2479).

Most respondents feel free to be their full selves with friends and family (n=2479).

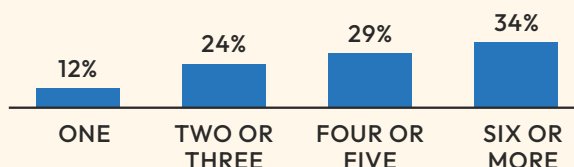
“WHERE, IF ANYWHERE, DO YOU FEEL FREE TO BE YOUR FULL SELF?”



RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

Most respondents (87%) identified multiple places where they feel free to be their full selves. More than one-third identified six or more places.

TOTAL NUMBER OF PLACES TEENS INDICATED THEY CAN BE THEIR FULL SELVES

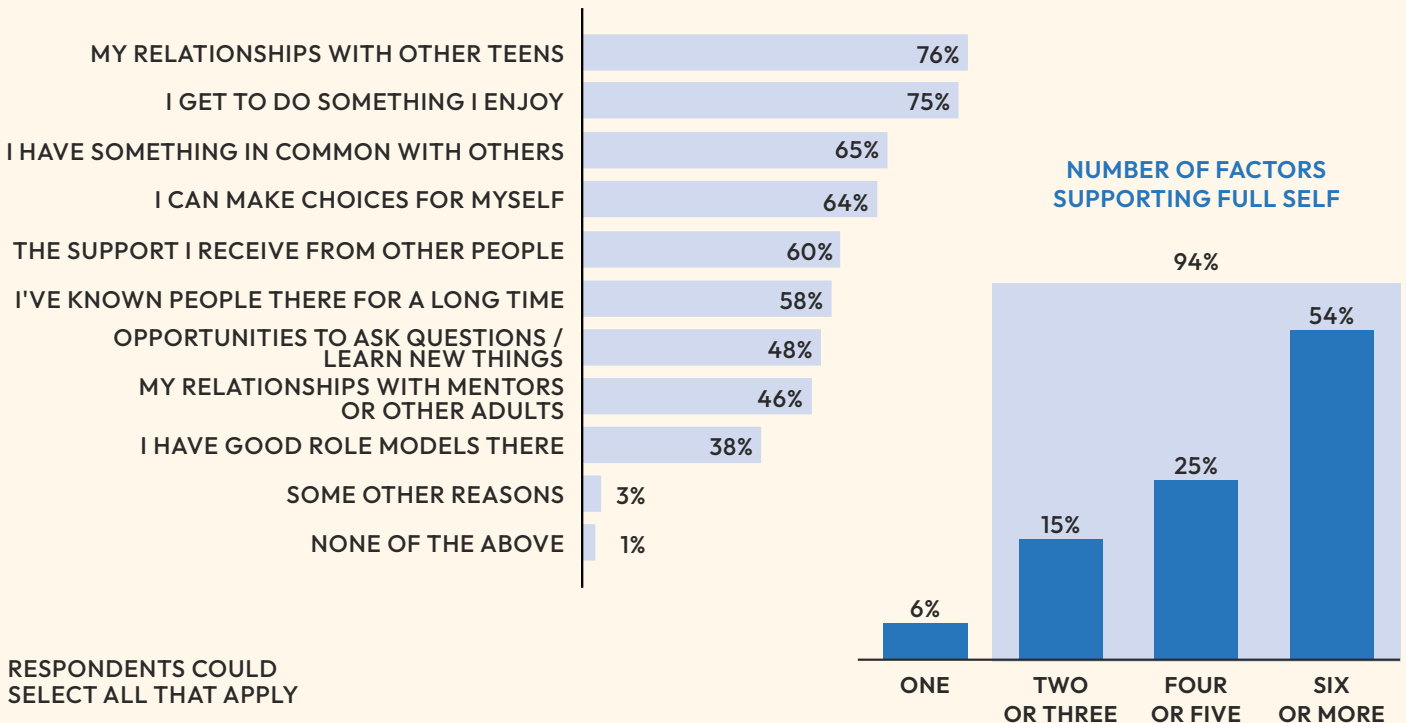


FINDING 3: FULL SELF

When asked to provide greater detail about what led them to feel that they could express themselves fully, respondents emphasized the power of relationships and a sense of autonomy. A majority of respondents (83%) selected multiple factors that contribute to their ability to be their full selves, with most identifying three or more factors.

Relationships and autonomy are keys to survey respondents' sense of freedom to be their full selves. Most (94%) identified two or more factors that contribute to their ability to feel free to be their full selves (n=2343).

“WHAT, IF ANYTHING, MAKES YOU FEEL FREE TO BE YOUR FULL SELF?”

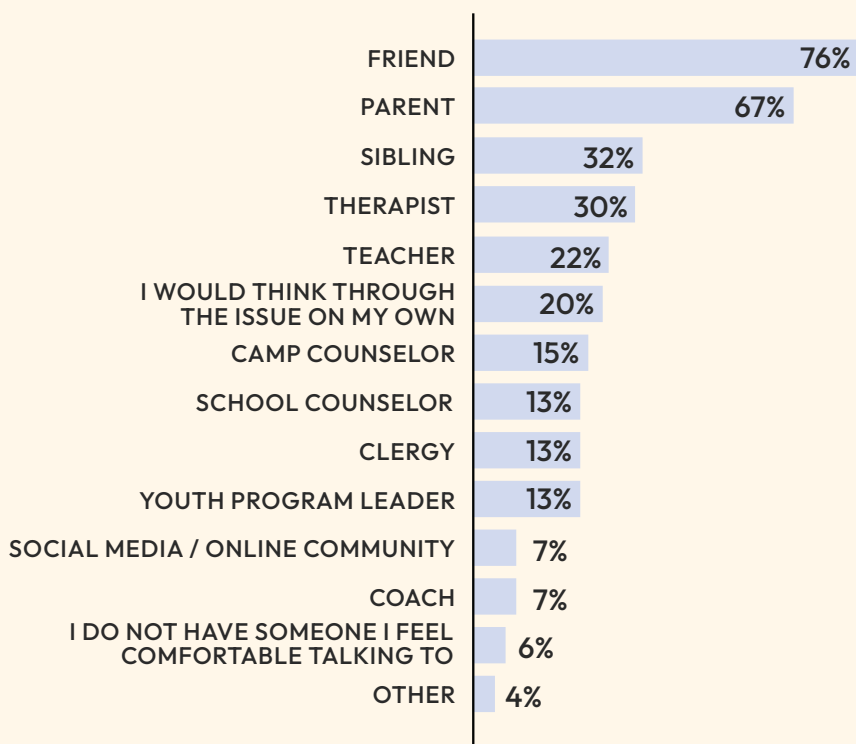


FINDING 3: FULL SELF

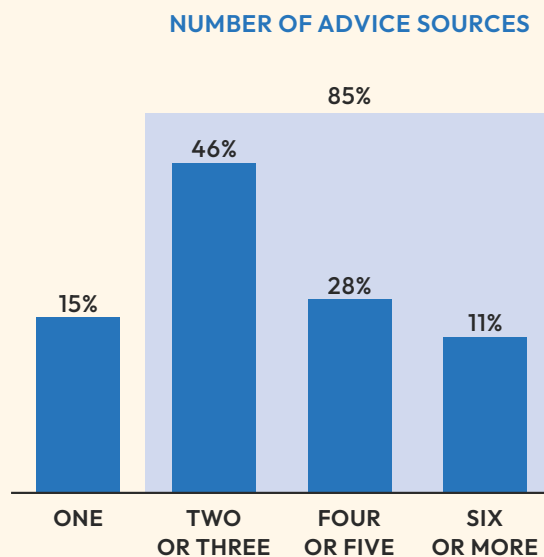
Almost every survey respondent indicated that they can turn to multiple people for advice when needed. Friends and parents were the most favored sources. Teens were far less likely to turn to Jewish leaders (clergy and youth program leaders) for advice. A small percentage indicated they have no one to turn to for advice.

Survey respondents' favored sources for advice are friends and parents (n=2338).

“WHEN YOU NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE OR YOU ARE LOOKING FOR ADVICE, WHO ARE YOU LIKELY TO GO TO?”



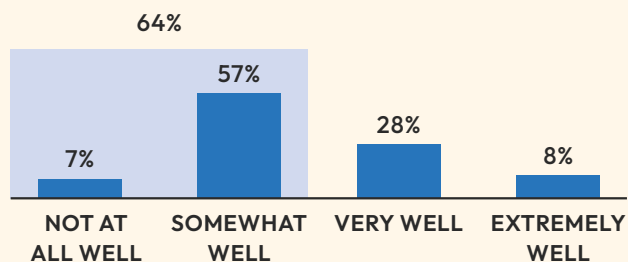
RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT ALL THAT APPLY



Most teens reported that the adults they interact with through Jewish teen programming do not have a particularly strong understanding of what it is like to be a teen today.

Most survey respondents (64%) reported that the adults they interact with at Jewish teen programs understand what it's like to be a teen today "Somewhat" or "Not at All" well (n=2062).

"THINK ABOUT ADULTS YOU INTERACT WITH AT JEWISH TEEN PROGRAMS. HOW WELL DO THEY UNDERSTAND WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A TEEN TODAY?"



Teens were invited to share, in their own words, what they wish adults better understood about their lives. Their responses included both enduring adolescent experiences and distinctly modern challenges. Many teens voiced age-old sentiments: they asserted that adults cannot fully grasp the intricacies of contemporary teen life and expressed a desire for greater autonomy, while acknowledging their ongoing development. Others highlighted generation-specific concerns, particularly the pervasive influence of social media. Some described a paradoxical relationship with digital platforms, characterizing them as potentially harmful yet acknowledging the difficulty in disengaging from them.

"We've grown up in a chaotic world so we appreciate people being upfront with us about issues they or the world is facing. Honesty is key."

— 10th Grader

"This past year my youth group hired college students as youth advisors who worked closely with us. They understand teens so well because they were in our shoes not too long ago. I wish more programs would do that."

— 12th Grader

"The amount of hate that Jewish teens are experiencing both through the media and in person is overwhelming. This overwhelm often manifests (at least for me) in a numbing state of mind that seeks to avoid the subject because the reality is too isolating and heartbreaking to acknowledge."

— 12th Grader

"The adults I have worked with at teen programs identify with teens. This leads to a relationship that is inspiring and fulfilling. There is not currently anything I wish adults working with teens better understood."

— 9th Grader

"Not everything gets better by telling an adult. There are different stigmas and insecurities. We don't want to be addicted to our phones. School is so much harder now. It's hard when you're just hounding us. We're doing our best."

— 9th Grader

Prevailing narratives frame teen mental health as a uniform crisis. This study reveals a complex landscape where sense of self, interpersonal relationships, and broader sociopolitical contexts intersect to shape Jewish teens' unique experiences of well-being. These findings illuminate three key dynamics:

FINDING 1:
Jewish identity centrality emerged as the most significant factor predicting well-being.

This was found using the EPOCH Measure of Adolescent Well-Being and a novel set of questions about teens' Jewish experiences. Teens who reported that being Jewish is personally important to them scored higher across all five dimensions of well-being: engagement, perseverance, optimism, connectedness, and happiness. Other factors, such as the importance of Jewishness in their family and frequency of participation in Jewish teen programs, were less strongly or consistently associated with well-being.

FINDING 2:
Our analyses revealed a complex interplay between Jewish identity and stress patterns.

While survey respondents reported experiencing the greatest stress related to school issues—consistent with broader adolescent populations—they reported nearly equivalent levels of stress arising from antisemitism and the war in Israel and Gaza. Analyses of both survey and open-ended response data suggest that for American Jewish teens, these sources of stress can intersect. Respondents detailed a constellation of interrelated concerns about their personal safety, distressing encounters on social media platforms, and experiences of interpersonal conflict and social isolation. Further analyses revealed that teens reporting greater Jewish identity centrality were more likely to report stress related to these Jewish-specific concerns.

This suggests that being Jewish functions as both a source of resilience and a source of stress for American Jewish teens navigating often hostile political contexts in their schools, communities, and broader society.

FINDING 3:
Respondents highlighted interpersonal relationships, and particularly those with Jewish peers, as sources of support.

Most respondents identified multiple settings—predominantly with Jewish peers, family members, and in Jewish teen programs—where they felt empowered to express their authentic selves and seek guidance. Teens were less likely to turn to Jewish professionals or clergy for such support.

This study sheds light on the tension at the heart of American Jewish teens' well-being, where Jewish identity centrality emerges as both a source of strength and a potential driver of increased stress. This complex portrait presents a challenge for Jewish organizations, communal professionals, and educators who work with teens. While teen engagement strategies have focused on enhancing teens' sense of their Jewish selves, our findings suggest the need for a more nuanced approach that acknowledges the relationship between social stressors, well-being, and teens' expressed sense of Jewish importance. Supporting Jewish teens may require providing opportunities for authentic self-expression, equipping them to engage in challenging discussions, and empowering them to ask difficult questions. While the path forward is neither simple nor straightforward, this report provides empirical grounding from which innovative responses might emerge.

APPENDIX A: SHARED FRAMEWORK OF JEWISH WELL-BEING

BeWell is a national, networked Jewish communal response created to address the growing youth mental health crisis. The organizations taking part in BeWell are supporting youth wellness using a variety of approaches, including: advocacy, education, and increasing access to direct services focused on mental health promotion and crisis prevention. This collective effort is grounded in the understanding that “Jewish culture, traditions, and organizations have the power to elevate our lives and deepen our connections to each other.” The work is driven by the belief that “by helping young people cultivate a strong sense of self, and a supportive network of role models and peers the next generation will develop the skills to build a more compassionate world.”

To Support these Efforts Both Inter- And Intra-Organizationally, We Developed a Shared Framework That Would:

Establish common vocabulary and conceptual frameworks that can serve as a reference for all stakeholders

Enable a more coherent and cohesive community response

Ensure that new and evolving initiatives are aligned in spirit, mission, and outcome

Highlight new opportunities for collaboration

With the awareness that no consensus exists around a single definition of well-being (according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), we gathered sources from the growing body of scholarship about teen well-being, drawing on recent research from the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and religious studies. We also consulted sources from the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard’s Institute for Quantitative Social Science, Stanford SPARQ,

Stanford Prevention Research Center, John Templeton Foundation, Sacred Design Lab, and Ritual Design Lab, among others (see Appendix).¹² We then conducted six hour-long interviews with Resiliency Roundtable members and reviewed programmatic documents for contextualizing purposes. Our synthesis of data from these primary and secondary sources served as a stimulus for a generative conversation with BeWell’s Resiliency Roundtable’s Steering Committee. In the spirit of BeWell, we then turned to text study to enable us to conceptualize this work using insights from ancient Jewish wisdom.

We found striking alignment between our contemporary findings about well-being and 8th-century insights from the Book of Micah. The Prophet Micah articulates the three requirements to live a good life: “... To practice discernment, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.*” (Micah 6:8). We used this helpful formulation to structure the BeWell framework, which can be used to inform directions for future research, program development, priority setting, and values clarification.

APPENDIX A: SHARED FRAMEWORK OF JEWISH WELL-BEING

QUALITIES	CAPACITIES	QUESTIONS
<p>The three qualities, drawn from the Book of Micah, should be understood as broad, intersecting, and dynamic.</p>	<p>Capacities represent more specific formulations of qualities that draw directly on social scientific literature on wellness.</p>	<p>Adapted from social scientific research, these exemplary questions illustrate some of the areas of inquiry used to explore individual or communal well-being. These questions are intended to be suggestive and are neither diagnostic nor comprehensive.</p>
<p>DISCERNMENT</p> <p>Assessment of One's Self in Relationships</p>	<p>Formulate Ability for Balanced Self-Appraisal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others? • Do I feel that I have much to be proud of?
<p>KINDNESS</p> <p>Affective Behavior Toward One's Self and Others</p>	<p>Identify Sources of Pleasure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I feel pleasure and enjoyment? • When something painful happens do I try to take a balanced view of the situation?
<p>HUMILITY</p> <p>Finding Meaning and Purpose</p>	<p>Experience Contentment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I look at the story of my life, am I pleased with how things have turned out so far? • Do I like most parts of my personality?
	<p>Cultivate Mutually Supportive Relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I have relationships in which support is mutual? • Do I feel valued by my friends?
	<p>Pursue Opportunities for Growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I approach my life as a continuous process of learning, changing, and growing? • Is it important to have new experiences that challenge how I think about myself / the world?
	<p>Cultivate a Sense of Hope</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I able to recognize that I am part of something bigger than myself? • To what extent do I foresee the eventual reduction of discomfort?

The research process consisted of four phases: a literature review, exploratory interviews, a national survey, and data analysis.

PHASE 1: Literature Review

While there is no universally accepted definition of well-being, particularly among adolescents, there is a diverse body of scholarship offering different frameworks for understanding well-being.¹³ This scholarship spans multiple disciplines including psychology, sociology, religious studies, and economics.¹⁴ Our literature review synthesized scholarship across multiple disciplines to establish a theoretical framework for understanding Jewish teen well-being. We analyzed peer-reviewed research from leading journals, government reports, and publications from research institutions. The analysis spanned multiple disciplines to enable us to identify key intersections between well-being, adolescent development, and Jewish identity formation. For source information and citations, please refer to the endnotes.

This wide-ranging scan of well-being literature surfaced several validated measures of well-being reflecting a variety of theoretical frameworks. We narrowed our consideration to measures that have been validated with adolescents specifically. This process led us to identify the EPOCH measure as our focal measure of well-being. In addition to meeting our validation criteria, the EPOCH measure aligns with BeWell's framework for supporting teen well-being. This process led us to adopt the EPOCH measure for two primary reasons: it aligns with BeWell's framework for supporting teen well-being and mental health, and among the measures we identified, EPOCH was supported with the greatest number of validation studies.

PHASE 2: Exploratory Interviews

To refine the scope and language of the survey, we conducted exploratory interviews with American Jewish teenagers (N = 13). These interviews provided valuable insights that guided survey development and distribution strategies. We used these conversations to assess the extent to which the language used in the

EPOCH framework would resonate with American Jewish teens and to identify key influences on teens' well-being. We also gauged teens' willingness to complete a survey about their well-being.

PHASE 3: Survey

We developed the survey based on insights gleaned from the literature review, exploratory interviews, and iterative feedback from BeWell and partner organizations. The survey's focal measure assesses five key aspects of adolescent well-being: Engagement, Perseverance, Optimism, Connectedness, and Happiness (EPOCH). To complement the EPOCH measure, we designed questions to capture various aspects of Jewish teens' lives, such as their involvement in Jewish life, relationships with friends and family, and perceptions of themselves as Jews.

Teens in grades 7-12 were eligible to complete the survey. Per Stanford University's Institutional Review Board (which oversaw the study), survey respondents were not required to obtain parental consent, as the survey was anonymous and posed no risks beyond those encountered in everyday life.*

The survey was in the field from April 1, 2024 to June 7, 2024. During that period, organizations supporting Jewish teens shared information about the survey with their constituents via email, social media, and in-person events. Invitations to participate were also circulated via synagogue and community lists, informal parents' and teens' groups on social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.), and elsewhere.

* This project and the consent waiver were both approved by the Stanford University Institutional Review Board, Protocol #72450. Approval letter can be provided by request.

PHASE 4: Data Cleaning

The survey was accessed 4,182 times. During the data cleaning process, we used three criteria to identify responses for exclusion: 1) the respondent indicated that they were not in grades 7-12; 2) the majority of the focal measures of well-being were missing data; or 3) the respondent identified as a parent of a teen. The final sample included 2,490 teens. Because respondents skipped questions, the number of teens included in each analysis varied. Throughout the report, “n=#” reflects the number of contributing responses.

The research team conducted a thematic analysis of open-ended survey responses and chose quotes to represent a variety of perspectives and a balance of voices. Quotes were edited for readability.

Quantitative survey data were analyzed using the R statistical computing environment. We analyzed quantitative survey data using the R statistical computing environment. The pre-registered analysis plan is available at: <https://aspredicted.org/3bpr-krsx.pdf>

Testing Epoch’s Validity

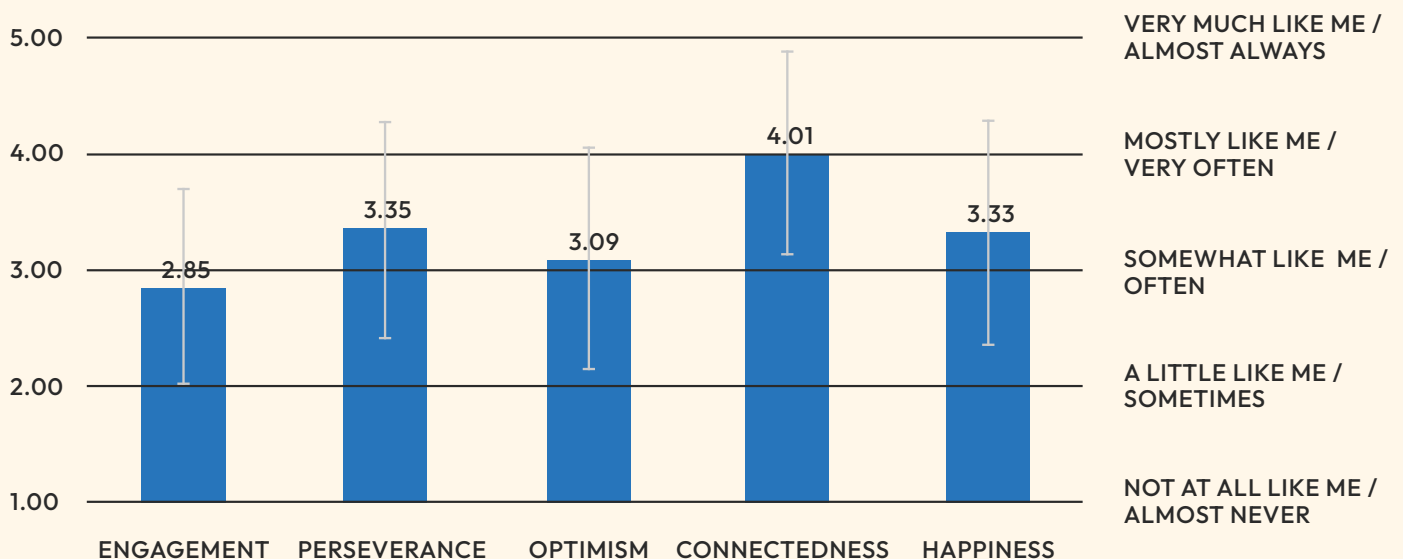
The EPOCH Measure was developed and validated through 10 studies involving 4,480 adolescents from the United States and Australia. To ensure that this measure would apply to American Jewish teens, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis examining the extent to which the 20 EPOCH items used to measure engagement, perseverance, optimism, connectedness,

and happiness mapped onto the area of well-being identified in previous research (e.g., connectedness items all mapped onto a connectedness factor).

The confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the data from teens in our sample provided a good fit to the original model, with all model fit indices indicating a good fit: comparative fit index = 0.92 (values > 0.90 = good fit); root mean square error of approximation = 0.07 (values < 0.08 = good fit); and standardized root mean square residual = 0.04 (values < 0.08 = good fit). Each EPOCH subscale also demonstrated good reliability in our sample: Engagement (alpha = 0.79); Perseverance (alpha = 0.82); Optimism (alpha = 0.82); Connectedness (alpha = 0.82); and Happiness (alpha = 0.88). These results indicate that the EPOCH measure is likely to provide a good estimate of American Jewish teens’ well-being.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS SCORED THEMSELVES HIGHEST ON THE STATEMENTS RELATED TO CONNECTEDNESS AND LOWEST ON ENGAGEMENT

These results are generally comparable to the scores reported by teenagers in other studies using the EPOCH well-being assessment tool.



Linear Regression Results for Well-Being Analyses

We conducted a series of linear regression analyses to examine the relationships between each EPOCH subscale (i.e., engagement, perseverance, optimism, connectedness, and happiness) and different aspects of teens’ Jewish identities and involvement in Jewish life. Generally, greater Jewish identification and greater

involvement in Jewish life predicted higher EPOCH scores, however, many of the effects were negligible. Teens’ personal Jewish identity centrality was the strongest and most consistent predictor of well-being, although more frequent participation in Jewish teen programming also had a medium-sized effect on teens’ optimism scores.

TABLE C1
LINEAR REGRESSION EFFECT SIZES

Jewish identity centrality emerged as the most significant factor predicting teen well-being.

PREDICTORS OF WELL-BEING	ENGAGEMENT	PERSERVERANCE	OPTIMISM	CONNECTEDNESS	HAPPINESS
PERSONAL JEWISH IDENTITY CENTRALITY	Small 0.02	Small .05	Small .04	Small to Medium .06	Small .04
FAMILY JEWISH IDENTITY CENTRALITY	.004	Small .02	Small .01	Small .02	Small .01
FREQUENCY OF JEWISH TEEN PROGRAM PARTICIPATION	.002	No Effect	Medium .08	No Effect	.008
JEWISH ACTIVITIES	.001	.002	.003	.007	.004
JEWISH FRIENDSHIPS	.001	No Effect	.006	.007	.005
PERCEIVED ADULT UNDERSTANDING	No Effect	.002	.002	.001	No Effect
TYPES OF JEWISH TEEN PROGRAM PARTICIPATION	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect

EFFECT SIZE

No Effect	Negligible	Small	Medium
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TABLE C2
LINEAR REGRESSION RESULTS

PREDICTORS OF WELL-BEING	UNSTANDARDIZED B	SE	T	P
ENGAGEMENT				
FAMILY JEWISH IDENTITY CENTRALITY	0.08	0.03	3.03	0.002
PERSONAL JEWISH IDENTITY CENTRALITY	0.17	0.02	6.73	<.001
JEWISH FRIENDS	0.01	0.01	1.77	0.08
JEWISH ACTIVITIES	0.00	0.00	1.77	0.08
JEWISH PROGRAM ADULTS	0.00	0.00	1.31	0.19
PERSEVERANCE				
FAMILY JEWISH IDENTITY CENTRALITY	0.23	0.03	7.60	<.001
PERSONAL JEWISH IDENTITY CENTRALITY	0.30	0.03	11.08	<.001
JEWISH FRIENDS	0.01	0.01	1.64	0.10
JEWISH ACTIVITIES	0.00	0.00	2.35	0.02
JEWISH PROGRAM ADULTS	0.00	0.00	2.43	0.02
OPTIMISM				
FAMILY JEWISH IDENTITY CENTRALITY	0.18	0.03	5.78	<.001
PERSONAL JEWISH IDENTITY CENTRALITY	0.28	0.03	10.18	<.001
JEWISH FRIENDS	0.03	0.01	3.58	<.001
JEWISH ACTIVITIES	0.00	0.00	2.59	0.01
JEWISH PROGRAM ADULTS	0.00	0.00	2.27	0.02
CONNECTEDNESS				
FAMILY JEWISH IDENTITY CENTRALITY	0.18	0.03	6.22	<.001
PERSONAL JEWISH IDENTITY CENTRALITY	0.30	0.03	11.75	<.001
JEWISH FRIENDS	0.03	0.01	3.86	<.001
JEWISH ACTIVITIES	0.00	0.00	4.24	<.001
JEWISH PROGRAM ADULTS	0.00	0.00	-1.82	0.07
HAPPINESS				
FAMILY JEWISH IDENTITY CENTRALITY	0.17	0.03	5.54	<.001
PERSONAL JEWISH IDENTITY CENTRALITY	0.26	0.03	9.28	<.001
JEWISH FRIENDS	0.03	0.01	3.42	.001
JEWISH ACTIVITIES	.002	0.00	2.85	.004
JEWISH PROGRAM ADULTS	0.00	0.00	0.90	0.37

APPENDIX D: UNDERSTANDING SOURCES OF STRESS

We first examined teens’ average scores on the stressors included in the survey to identify which issues caused teens the greatest amount of stress. Top stressors included both general teen issues (e.g., pressure I put on myself, my grades) and issues likely to affect Jewish teens in particular ways (the war in Israel and Gaza, antisemitism). See Table D1.

“HOW MUCH STRESS DOES EACH OF THE ISSUES BELOW CREATE FOR YOU RIGHT NOW?”

- (1) NO STRESS
- (2) SOME STRESS
- (3) A LOT OF STRESS
- (0) NOT APPLICABLE

TABLE D1
AVERAGE STRESS SCORES

TOP SOURCES OF STRESS	1	PRESSURE I PUT ON MYSELF	2.53 (0.62)
	2	THE WAR IN ISRAEL AND GAZA	2.49 (0.62)
	3	MY GRADES	2.42 (0.64)
	4	MY LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL (E.g., Getting into College / Finding a Job)	2.38 (0.64)
	5	ANTISEMITISM IN GENERAL	2.34 (0.01)
	6	CURRENT EVENTS (E.g., Politics, Climate Change, Local / National News)	2.31 (0.01)
	7	BODY IMAGE	2.06 (0.77)
	8	BEING THE TARGET OF ANTISEMITIC COMMENTS OR THREATS	2.03 (0.75)
MODERATE SOURCES OF STRESS	9	RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS	1.99
	10	DISAGREEMENTS OR CONFLICT WITH PARENTS	1.87
	11	NOT BEING FULLY ACCEPTED FOR WHO I AM	1.85
	12	PRESSURE FROM MY PARENTS	1.81
	13	BEING ON SOCIAL MEDIA	1.75
	14	DEATH OR ILLNESS OF A LOVED ONE	1.71
	15	ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS	1.70
LOWEST SOURCES OF STRESS	16	PEER PRESSURE	1.63
	17	BULLYING	1.49
	18	CHANGES IN MY FAMILY RELATED TO DIVORCE OR REMARRIAGE	1.36
	19	SEXUALITY	1.34
	20	CHALLENGES RELATED TO CORONAVIRUS CRISIS (COVID-19)	1.25
	21	GENDER IDENTITY	1.21

APPENDIX D: UNDERSTANDING SOURCES OF STRESS

To better understand these stresses, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis, a statistical technique used to identify underlying relationships among multiple variables. The factor analysis revealed that these stressors mapped onto five main factors: 1) School; 2) The War in Israel and Gaza/Antisemitism; 3) Relationships and Self-Image; 4) Parents; and 5) Gender/Sexuality. We conducted reliability analyses for each factor to examine how well the items hung together (i.e., how similarly teens responded to the different items within each factor).

Reliability is measured by alpha, with values greater than 0.70 indicating high reliability. With the exception of the School factor (alpha = 0.61), all alphas exceeded the 0.70 threshold. These results allowed us to use teens' average scores for stressors within each category in our analyses to better understand their experiences. Average scores indicated that school caused the greatest amount of stress for Jewish teens, followed by the war in Israel and Gaza and antisemitism. See Table D2.

TABLE D2
AVERAGE SCORES FOR EACH CATEGORY OF STRESS

1	SCHOOL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Grades • My Life after High School (E.g., Getting into College / Finding a Job) • Pressure I Put on Myself • ($\alpha = 0.61$) 	MODERATE STRESS (M = 2.45)
2	THE WAR IN ISRAEL AND GAZA / ANTISEMITISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Events (E.g., Politics, Climate Change, Local / National News) • The War in Israel and Gaza • Antisemitism in General • Being the Target of Antisemitic • Comments or Threats • ($\alpha = 0.79$) 	MODERATE STRESS (M = 2.29)
3	PARENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disagreements or Conflict with Parents • Pressure from My Parents • ($\alpha = 0.73$) 	MODERATE TO SLIGHT STRESS (M = 1.84)
4	RELATIONSHIPS / SELF-IMAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying • Body Image • Not Being Fully Accepted for Who I Am • Relationships with Friends • Romantic Relationships • ($\alpha = 0.77$) 	MODERATE TO SLIGHT STRESS (M = 1.79)
5	GENDER / SEXUALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexuality • Gender Identity • ($\alpha = 0.75$) 	SLIGHT STRESS (M = 1.28)

APPENDIX D: UNDERSTANDING SOURCES OF STRESS

Disaggregated Stress Analysis by Gender and Sexuality

While this study was not focused on identifying different sources of stress for different groups of teens, we disaggregated stress related to gender and sexuality according to whether teens identified as gender or sexual minorities. Although stress related to gender and sexuality was rated lowest by teens overall, we anticipated that teens who identified as gender and sexual minorities might, on average, experience greater stress in these areas compared to teens who identify in more heteronormative ways.

Disaggregated Stress Analyses: Gender

Respondents were asked to select as many gender identities as they wished to describe themselves. Answers included: a) male; b) female; c) transgender; d) gender fluid/non-binary; e) another identity (specify if you wish); and f) decline to answer.

Respondents were considered cisgender if they selected male (n = 674) or female (n = 1300). Respondents who identified as transgender (n = 25), gender fluid or non-binary (n = 74), multiple gender identities (n = 77), or another identity (n = 17) were considered gender minorities.

We conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA) comparing teens who were cisgender, gender minorities, and those who declined to answer. The ANOVA revealed a significant omnibus effect ($p < .001$), indicating that there was at least one significant difference between teens with different gender identities. To better understand where the differences emerged, we conducted Tukey post-hoc comparisons, which revealed that respondents who identified as cisgender reported less gender-related stress compared to teens who were gender minorities and teens who declined to answer. See Table D3.

TABLE D3
MEAN DIFFERENCE COMPARISONS IN GENDER-RELATED STRESS ACCORDING TO TEENS' SELF-REPORTED GENDER IDENTITY

	M DIFFERENCE	P
CISGENDER VS. DECLINE TO ANSWER	-0.88	<.001
GENDER MINORITY VS. DECLINE TO ANSWER	0.07	0.74
GENDER MINORITY VS. CISGENDER	0.96	<.001

APPENDIX D: UNDERSTANDING SOURCES OF STRESS

Disaggregated Stress Analyses: Sexuality

Respondents were asked to select as many sexual identities as they wished to describe themselves. Answers included: a) straight or heterosexual; b) gay; c) lesbian; d) bisexual; e) queer; f) pansexual; g) asexual; h) I am not sure; i) I don't know what this question means; j) something else (specify if you wish); and k) decline to answer.

Respondents were considered heterosexual if they reported that they were a) heterosexual (n = 1,371) or b) unsure about what the question meant (n = 20). Respondents were considered sexual minorities if they indicated that they were gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, pansexual, asexual, something else, or multiple sexual identities. We conducted an ANOVA comparing teens who were heterosexual, sexual minorities, and unsure of their sexuality, as well as those who declined to answer. The ANOVA revealed a significant omnibus effect ($p < .001$). Tukey post-hoc comparisons revealed significant differences for all mean comparisons except the comparison between teens who were unsure of

their sexuality and those who declined to answer. Specifically, teens who identified as sexual minorities (i.e., who identified as asexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, or queer, or who indicated multiple sexual identities or another sexual identity) reported more stress related to sexuality compared to respondents who indicated that they were heterosexual or unsure of what the question meant. Notably, teens who declined to share their sexuality reported more sexuality-related stress than teens who were heterosexual but less sexuality-related stress than sexual minority teens. Teens who were unsure about their sexuality reported less sexuality-related stress compared to sexual minority teens, but no difference in sexuality-related stress compared to heterosexual teens. See Table D4.

TABLE D4
MEAN DIFFERENCE COMPARISONS IN SEXUALITY-RELATED STRESS ACCORDING TO TEENS' SELF-REPORTED SEXUALITY

	M DIFFERENCE	P
HETEROSEXUAL VS. DECLINE TO ANSWER	-0.34	<.001
UNSURE VS. DECLINE TO ANSWER	0.20	0.09
SEXUAL MINORITY VS. DECLINE TO ANSWER	0.35	<.001
UNSURE VS. HETEROSEXUAL	0.54	<.001
SEXUAL MINORITY VS. HETEROSEXUAL	0.69	<.001
SEXUAL MINORITY VS. UNSURE	0.15	0.05

Note. Positive numbers indicate that the group listed first reported greater stress than the group listed second (e.g., in the third comparison, sexual minority teens reported greater sexuality-related stress than those who declined to answer, M difference = 0.35, $p < .001$). Negative numbers indicate that the group listed first reported less sexuality-related stress than the group listed second (e.g., heterosexual teens reported less sexuality-related stress than those who declined to answer, M difference = -0.34, $p < .001$).

The research team would like to acknowledge the contributions of those whose efforts made this report possible. First, we want to acknowledge all of the teens who took time to complete the survey and especially those who sat for interviews early in the process. This work is the result of your generosity of spirit and concern. Second, we want to thank our institutional partners at BeWell and JFNA, Sara Allen and Kate Greene, who were incredible guides throughout this process. We are also grateful to all of the organizations and individuals who promoted this research online and in person. Third, we want to extend our gratitude to Stacie Cherner of the Jim Joseph Foundation and Rella Kaplowitz of the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies for supporting this project.

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Stanford University

The research team brings together diverse expertise in Jewish studies, sociology, psychology, education, and evaluation methodology. Led by Stanford's Professor Ari Y Kelman, an expert in the social scientific study of American Jewry whose work focuses on religious knowledge transmission, the team includes Dr. Tobin Belzer, an applied sociologist whose research supports philanthropic and nonprofit initiatives across diverse faith communities; Dr. Laura Brady, a cultural psychologist with expertise in educational equity and culturally responsive research; and Dr. Alana Kinarsky, a social science researcher and evaluator whose work focuses on foundations and nonprofit organizations.

Jewish Federations

The Jewish Federations of North America ("JFNA") represents 146 Jewish Federations and over 300 Network communities that raise and distribute more than \$3 billion annually for social welfare, social services, and educational needs. The Federation movement, collectively among the top 10 charities on the continent, protects and enhances the well-being of Jews worldwide through the values of tikkun olam (repairing the world), tzedakah (charity and social justice) and Torah (Jewish learning).

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