

Research Objectives

- Assess how Jewish young adults are responding to the ongoing pandemic and how they are engaging (or not engaging) with virtual programming from organizations right now.
- Understand what kinds of virtual programming Jewish young adults are seeking out right now, and why: what appeals to them about certain programs and/or organizations, what kind of needs they fill, and what it is about a program that makes it worthwhile or meaningful.
- Identify how organizations can enhance and expand virtual Jewish programming to best meet the needs of young Jews today.

Methodology

- Benenson Strategy Group surveyed 1,001 American Jews nationwide, ages 18-40, from June 29 – July 15, 2020.
- Surveys were conducted via online panel; respondents have all opted in to do research and receive invitations to the survey through their preferred method of contact. Our survey then screened respondents for self-identification as Jewish.
- Data were weighted to ensure the sample was representative of the Jewish young adult population of the United States.

Executive Summary

- COVID-19 is affecting all aspects of life for Jewish Americans ages 18-40 (personal, financial, and mental health), and they are **eager for sources of connection** to other people that they have been missing.
- One way this cohort is attempting to revive that connection is through virtual engagement, with **90% participating in at least one form of virtual engagement** since the pandemic started. And, 70% of those who have participated in a virtual event during the pandemic say that they have had at least one **worthwhile experience** doing so.
- What separates successful virtual events from unsuccessful ones is their ability to meet three key needs that are facing young American Jews right now: the needs for **community, fun, and fulfillment**.
 - ✓ While an event does not necessarily have to satisfy all three needs to be meaningful, it should satisfy at least one—and respondents gave many examples of events that satisfied all three.
- Young people are seeking out virtual activities as a way to connect and fill a void of missing things they used to do, and how participants feel during and after the event plays a key role in whether they view the event as worthwhile or meaningful. Successful virtual events can overcome Zoom fatigue and leave participants feeling good. Poorly executed events can have a negative, not neutral impact.
 - ✓ Great events leave participants feeling happy, relaxed, connected, and twice as likely to attend another event by the same or a different organization. Individuals who attend a satisfying event are also more likely to share their experience with others, explore a new ritual or practice at home, or do something differently offline as a result of that virtual experience.
 - ✓ Poorly executed or unsatisfying events leave participants feeling more tired, disconnected and frustrated, and they are much less likely to participate in another event by any organization.

Executive Summary (continued)

- While young Jews are engaging in a variety of different virtual experiences – everything from concerts to political events to lectures to trivia nights – there are **distinct needs** that many young Jews have around community, fun, and fulfillment **related specifically to their Jewishness**.
 - ✓ 70% are feeling that it is particularly important for them to connect to their Jewish identity right now, and 63% have participated in something Jewish virtually since the pandemic began.
- Overall, Jewish organizations are doing a very good job meeting young people’s needs – satisfaction numbers are high (55% very satisfied, 34% somewhat satisfied), as are intentions for repeat engagement (75% definitely or probably would attend another event).
- However, virtual engagement is not the same as in-person engagement, and organizations need to intentionally plan for virtual events rather than transplanting in-person program plans online. In addition, many virtual events fall short on issues like keeping the event fun and engaging, enabling participants to connect with each other, technological problems, or letting events go on for too long.