

Overview of Jewish and Rabbi Experiences

1

The vast majority of young Jews feel connected to a Jewish community, and nearly half desire an even deeper connection. Their connection to the Jewish community takes a variety of forms from observing holidays to doing Jewish things with Jewish friends.

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Additionally, a majority say having a relationship with a rabbi is important to them today. Even those who don't see it as important today are not writing it off for the future.

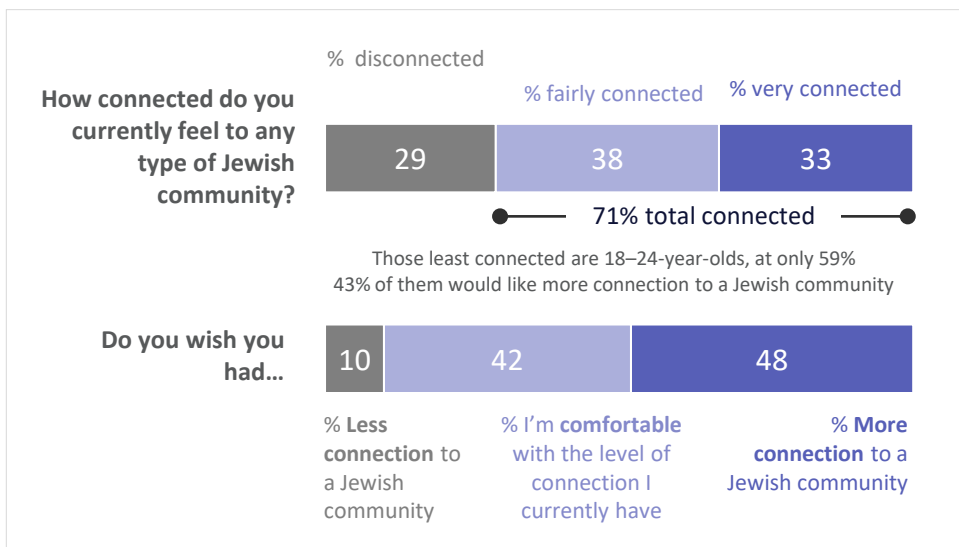
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Those who've had experiences with a rabbi say **those experiences have largely been positive.**

Young Jews largely feel connected to a Jewish community, and nearly half desire even more connection

7 in 10 young Jews feel connected to some form of a Jewish community today, with 1 in 3 feeling very connected. Encouragingly, almost half would like more connection to a Jewish community, including 1 in 3 (33%) who currently feel disconnected.

Feelings of connection to any type of Jewish community are high across denominations. Orthodox feel more connected (91%) than those who identify as Conservative (77%) and Reform (63%) and non-Denominational (75%). Notably, desire for more of a connection is very similar across denominations: 53% of Orthodox, 54% of Conservative, 52% of Reform and 46% of non-denominational Jews wish they had more of a connection to a Jewish community.



Young Jews are engaged Jewishly in a variety of different ways. Many say they actively observe Shabbat or other Jewish holidays, in addition to participating in cultural Jewish activities such as cooking or eating Jewish foods and having a group of Jewish friends with whom they do Jewish things. Notably, while 64% say they belonged to a synagogue or congregation when growing up, only 38% say they currently do. Younger Jews, aged 18-24 years old, report lower levels of involvement in a variety of Jewish activities.

Below you will see a list of things that may apply to someone who is Jewish.

For each of the following, please indicate whether or not it applies to you.

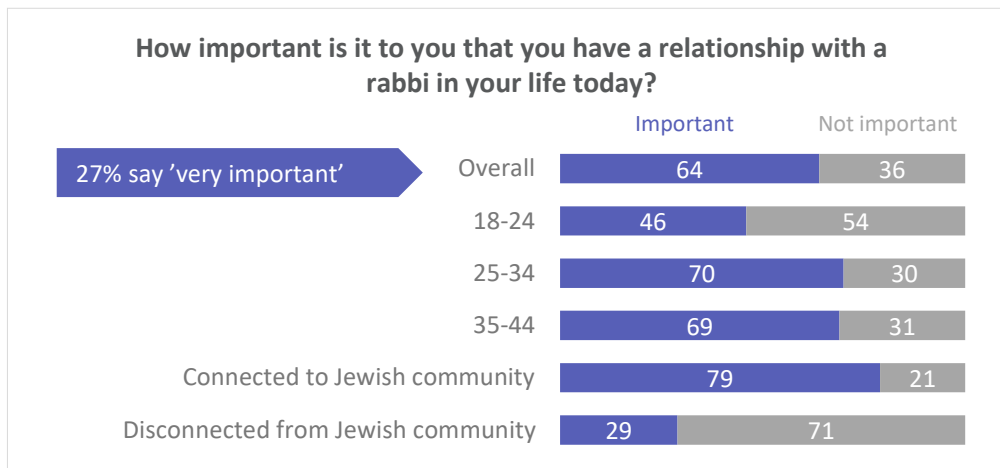


Note: We pay very close attention to make sure the data is representative. Our goal is for the numbers to be close to Pew, though they will not match Pew exactly. First, the wording of the questions is slightly different which affects how the questions are answered. Second, on any dataset, there is a margin of error which means the numbers will be close and within range but will not match exactly. Taken as a whole, the level of Jewish affiliation in this study is in line with Pew and in line with other research that has been done among young Jewish Americans.

Nearly 2-in-3 young Jews say having a relationship with a rabbi is important to them, and few have written off the importance later in life

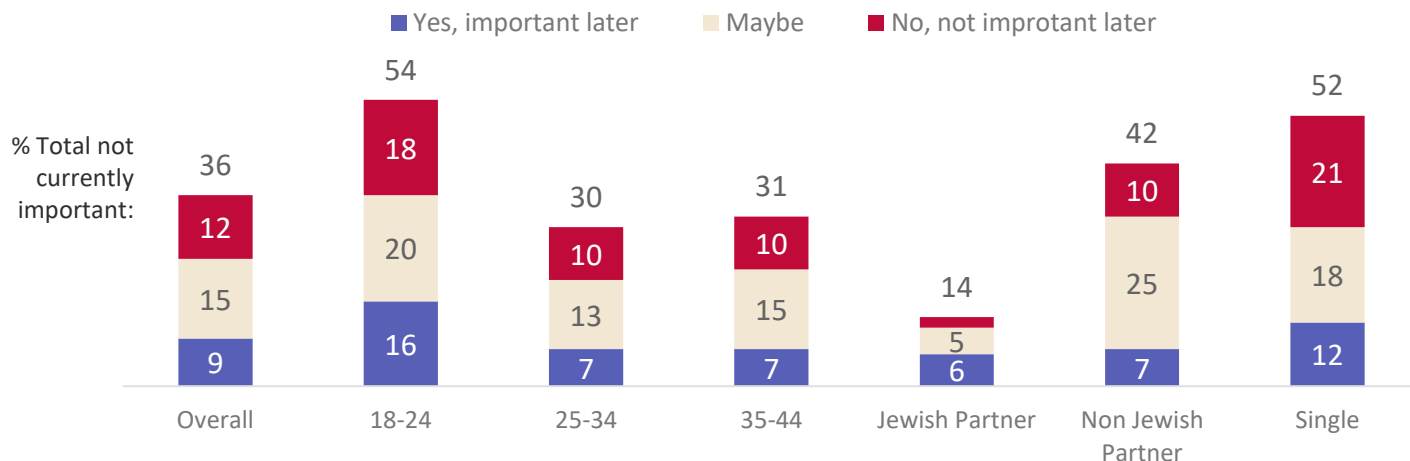
A majority of young Jews (64%) say having a relationship with a rabbi is important to them; however, younger Jews are less likely to say it is important. While most say it’s important overall, the intensity of that feeling, or the percentage who say it’s “very important,” is relatively low at only 27%, meaning that a relationship with a rabbi seems like a “nice-to-have” but not necessarily a “need-to-have” for some young Jews.

Having a relationship with a Rabbi today is more important for Orthodox (87%) and Conservative (74%) than Reform (56%) and non-denominational (66%). However, the vast majority of Reform (70%) and non-Denominational Jews (63%) who say it’s currently not important are open to it becoming more important later in life.



Among the 36% who say having a relationship with a rabbi is not important to them today, most are open to it being important to them later in life. Only a third of that group, or 12% of young Jews overall, say a relationship with a rabbi isn’t important to them now and won’t be important to them later in life. This sentiment is particularly prominent among the youngest group of Jews in our research, 18-24-year-olds, with 18% (or nearly 1 in 5) saying a relationship with a rabbi is not important to them now and likely won’t be important later. Notably, while nearly half of those in interfaith relationships (42%) say having a relationship with a rabbi isn’t important to them now, 32% of them (those who say ‘yes’ or ‘maybe’) are open to a rabbi becoming more important to them later in life.

Do you think having a relationship with a rabbi could be more important to you later in your life?

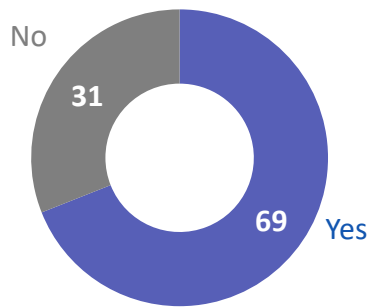


When asked at what point in their life they think they will want a relationship with a rabbi, most say when they get married or have kids. The second most frequently mentioned response is if they have a personal crisis and need help.

A majority of young Jews have had an experience with a rabbi at some point in their life

Nearly 7 in 10 young Jews have had an experience or interaction with a rabbi at some point in their life. Overall, there are not major differences by subgroup, though older and LGBTQ+ Jews are more likely to have interacted with a rabbi at some point, while those less likely to have interacted with a rabbi are younger, in Southern states and currently part of an interfaith couple.

Have you ever had an experience or an interaction with a rabbi at some point in your life?



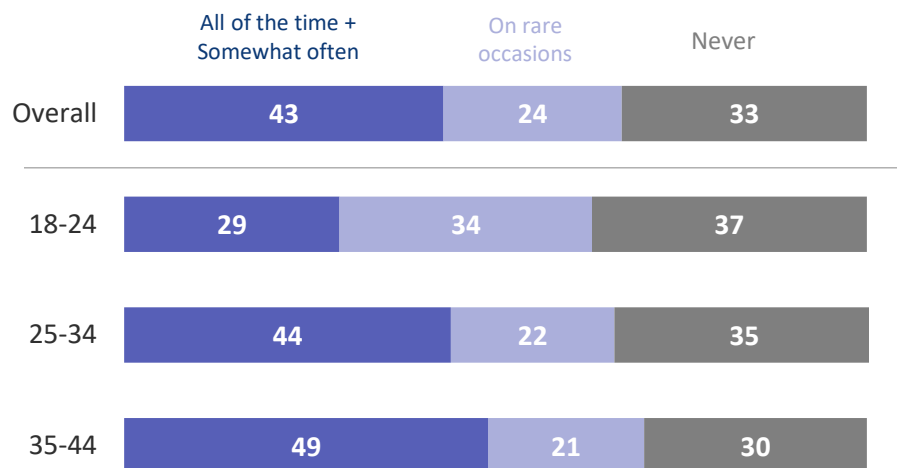
	Yes	No
Overall	69	31
18-24	65	35
25-34	67	33
35-44	73	27
LGBTQ+	78	22
City	67	33
Suburb/ Rural	71	29
Northeast	71	29
Midwest	68	32
South	66	34
West	70	30
Raised Jewish HH	75	25
Raised Interfaith HH	71	29
Jewish Partner	71	29
Non Jewish Partner	60	40
Single	71	29

52% of Jews 18-44 years old have had a rabbi in their life who knows them by name

Most young Jews interact with rabbis when they're growing up and in college

2 in 3 young Jews interacted with a rabbi growing up (67%), with 43% doing so frequently and 24% doing so only on rare occasions. Similar to lower levels of engagement in Jewish activities, generally speaking, 18-24-year-olds say they were less likely to have interacted with a rabbi when they were growing up.

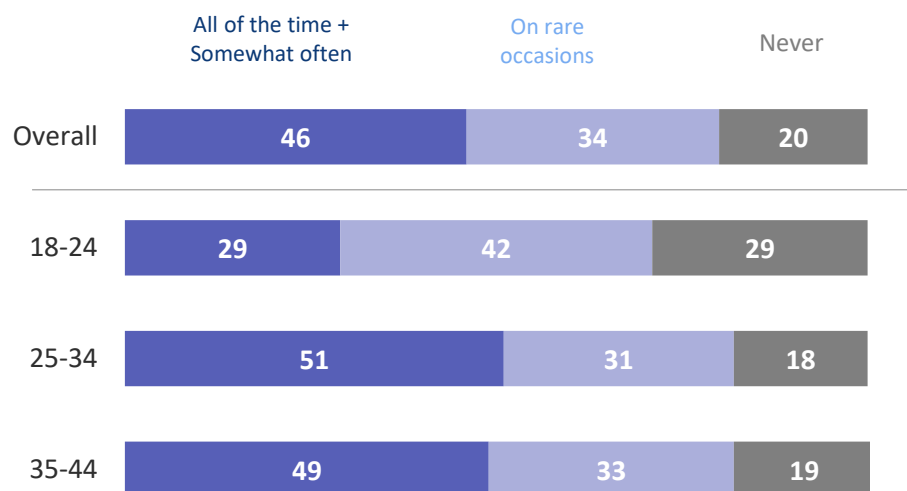
When you were growing up, how often did you interact with a rabbi?



Additionally, many young Jews are having the chance to interact with a rabbi in college. 80% of those in college or graduated from college interacted with a rabbi during that time period (in other words, 50% of all young Jews interact with a rabbi while in college). Notably, 18–24-year-old's interactions with rabbis in college are much less frequent than their older counterparts, indicating that there may be less engagement than there was with older segments of this population.

When you were in college, how often did you interact with a rabbi?

If currently in college, how much do you interact with a rabbi? (Among 63% currently enrolled or graduated from college)

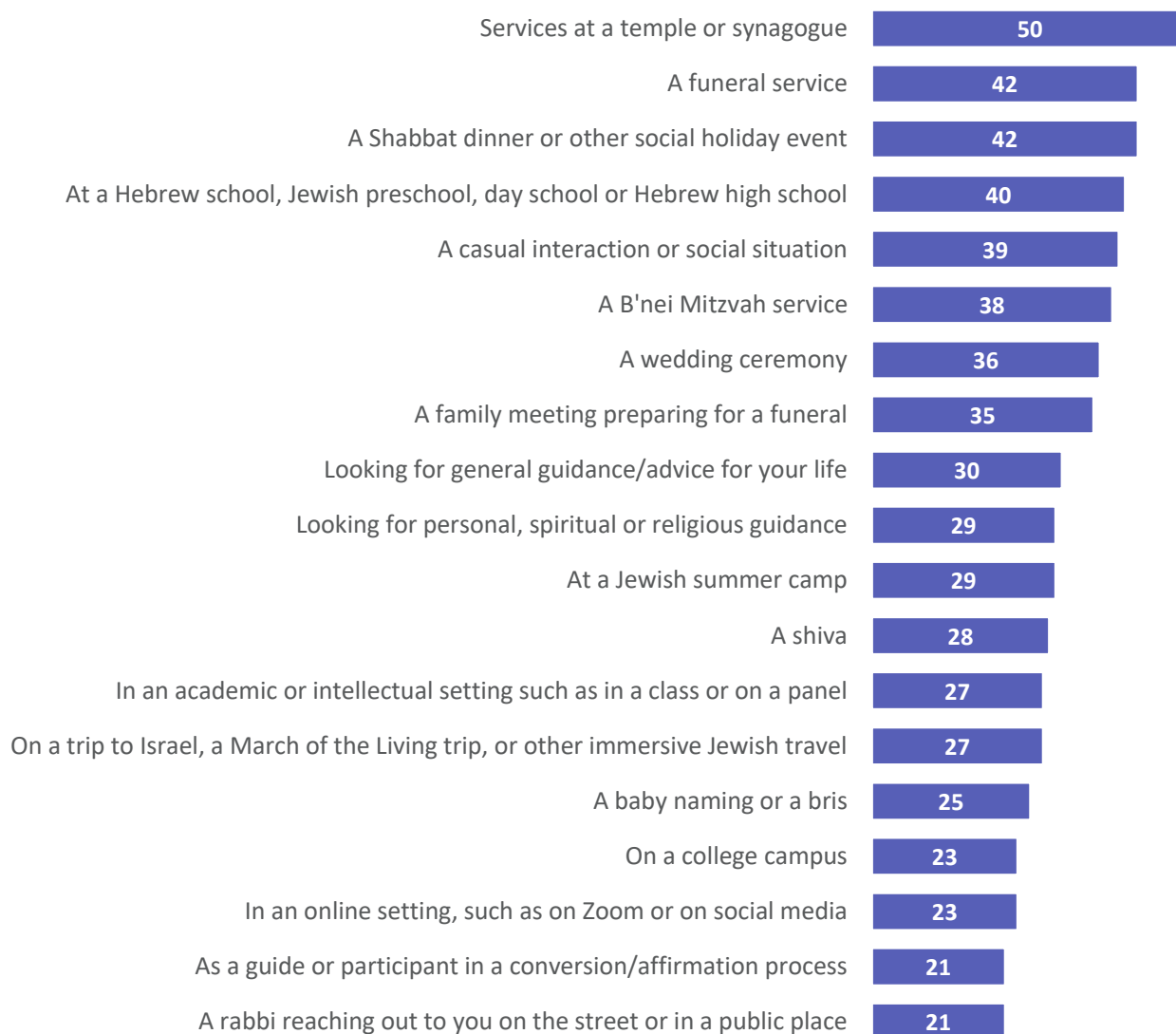


Interactions with rabbis have taken place across a wide variety of occasions, ranging from formal to informal

Young Jews' experiences with rabbis are diverse. Interactions with a rabbi at services at a temple or synagogue are the most common, followed by a funeral service, Shabbat dinner or holiday event, and educational settings (Hebrew school, day school, etc.). Less formal, casual interactions are also prominent as well.

Which of the following situations have you interacted with a rabbi?

(Asked of the 69% who had an experience with a rabbi; Multiple responses accepted)



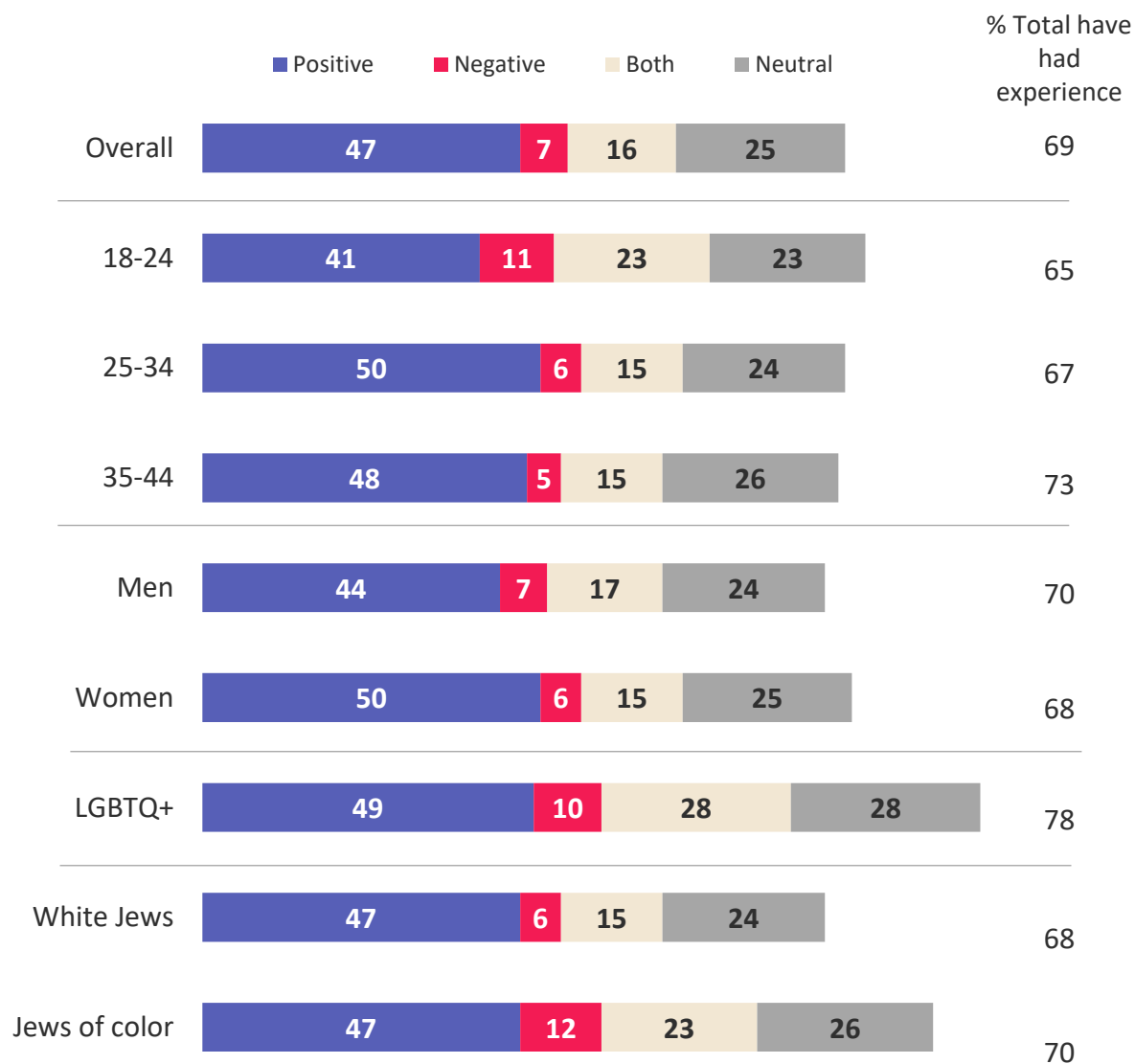
On average, respondents selected 6 different situations, indicating that 18-44-year-old Jews are having the opportunity to interact with rabbis in many different circumstances.

Most rabbi experiences have been positive for young Jews, though nearly 1-in-4 had a negative or mixed experience

The dominant rabbi experience for young Jews is positive, at 47%. Only 7% say they’ve had a truly negative experience, while 23% have had a negative or mixed experience. 18–24-year-olds Jews, LGBTQ+ Jews and Jews of color are most likely to cite a negative experience.

Thinking about your experiences with rabbis, have you ever had...

(Multiple responses allowed for those who have had an experience)



Rabbi experiences across denominations are overwhelmingly positive. Among those who have interacted with a Rabbi, 69% of Orthodox, 79% of Conservative, 73% of Reform and 63% of non-Denominational Jews have had a positive experience with a Rabbi.

Note: Because multiple responses could be selected, the numbers in the bars will not add up to the total percentage who have had a rabbi experience.

