

ANXIETY AND DESPAIR, LACKING CONFIDENCE AND CLARITY

Negative Emotions Dominate

Educators most often report experiencing “anxiety” (64%) and “despair,” (55%) while least often reporting “confidence” (14%) and “clarity,” (12%) signifying a widespread need for support in these challenging times (exhibit 9).

The educators also perceive their learners sharing their own negative emotions (exhibit 10). Learners – at least in the minds of their Jewish educators -- find this novel and disturbing set of events confusing, unfamiliar and unsettling. Asked to name up to 3 emotions felt by their learners:

- ❖ **Negative Emotions Dominate:** 60% cited “confusion,” followed by anger (46%), despair (39%), concern for physical safety (37%), concern for emotional wellbeing (30%), “feeling isolated” (29%) and alienation (28%).
- ❖ **Identification and Solidarity:** The intensely negative/ambivalent emotions (cited above) mix in, and the broader analysis shows, drive identification with Israel (46%) and solidarity (43%).
- ❖ **Positive Emotions are Low:** Emotions such as curiosity (17%), hope (16%), feeling connected (15%) and “clarity” (4%), which often are the goals for educators and drive identification and solidarity with Israel, are in this case low on the list of what they perceive their learners experiencing.
- ❖ **Indifference is Low:** Notably just 10% cite “indifference,” which in “normal” times is a primary challenge for Jewish educators. The fallout from October 7th makes indifference a luxury.

Exhibit 9. In your role as a Jewish professional in these difficult times, which of the following feelings do you frequently experience? Check all that apply

Educators’ Emotions	%
Anxiety	64%
Despair	55%
Solidarity	50%
Supported professionally	38%
Confusion	37%
Isolation	36%
Hope	36%
Insecure professionally	20%
Clarity	14%
Confidence	12%

Exhibit 10. In the post-October 7th context, what, in your opinion, are the dominant emotions your learner/constituents are expressing at this point in time that as a Jewish professional you need to consider? Select up to 3 choices

Learners’ Emotions, as reported by the educators	%
Confusion	60%
Identification with Israel	46%
Anger	46%
Solidarity	43%
Despair	39%
Concern for physical safety	37%
Concern for emotional well being	30%
Feeling isolated	29%
Alienation	28%
Curiosity	17%
Hope	16%
Feeling connected	15%
Antipathy towards Israel	13%
Indifference	10%
Clarity	4%

"My greatest challenge is setting aside my anxiety when I enter the classroom. I am able to set aside my anxiety since post-Oct. 7 and teach my 2nd and 3rd grade students. It is emotionally exhausting. I have also deeply listened to my students and acknowledged their feelings. I've also been honest and let them know when I don't know the answer to one of their questions."

Confident Educators are More Likely to Express Positive Emotions

Regardless of the educators' level of confidence, a majority report emotions of "anxiety" and "despair." However as seen in exhibit 11 the more confident an educator is the less likely they are to express feelings of "anxiety," "despair," or other negative emotions, and are more likely to express positive emotions. For example, those who "strongly" or "very strongly" agree that they "feel able to take on this important role" are far more likely to report feeling emotions such as "solidarity," "hope," feeling "supported professionally," "clarity" and "confidence."

Exhibit 11. In your role as a Jewish professional in these difficult times, which of the following feelings do you frequently experience? Check all that apply

	I feel able to take on this important role		
	Very strongly agree + Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree + Disagrees
Anxiety	60%	66%	75%
Despair	52%	60%	59%
Isolation	33%	40%	42%
Confusion	30%	41%	52%
Insecure professionally	14%	20%	35%
Solidarity	58%	48%	37%
Hope	45%	33%	27%
Supported professionally	43%	40%	26%
Clarity	20%	12%	4%
Confidence	20%	8%	3%

Teaching to curiosity

- "Creating a curriculum for Israel Education that keeps pace with the ever changing details of the matsav [situation] while inspiring curiosity and not fear."

Focusing on the Positive

- "We try to build on the positive things children can do - pray, fundraise, bear witness, learn and strengthen their Jewish identities."

Doing good for the world

- "What we do need to start pushing collectively is ways to bring out Jewish joy authentically... maybe more stories of Jews doing good things in the world, more ways for teens and educators to be together in a way that's not just responding to the dumpster fire that's happening around them."