

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.

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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

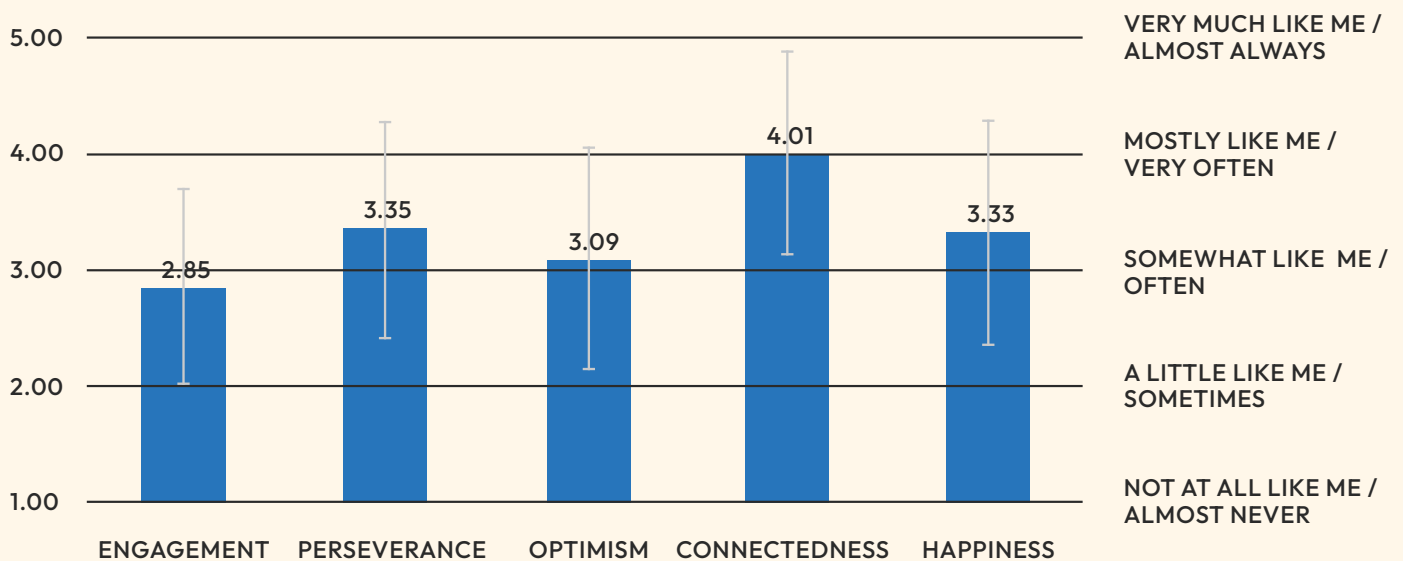
The EPOCH Measure was developed and validated through 10 studies involving 4,480 adolescents from the United States and Australia. To ensure that this measure would apply to American Jewish teens, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis examining the extent to which the 20 EPOCH items used to measure 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 • ($\alpha = 0.77$) • Peer Pressure • Being on Social Media 	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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