

## FINDING 3:

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

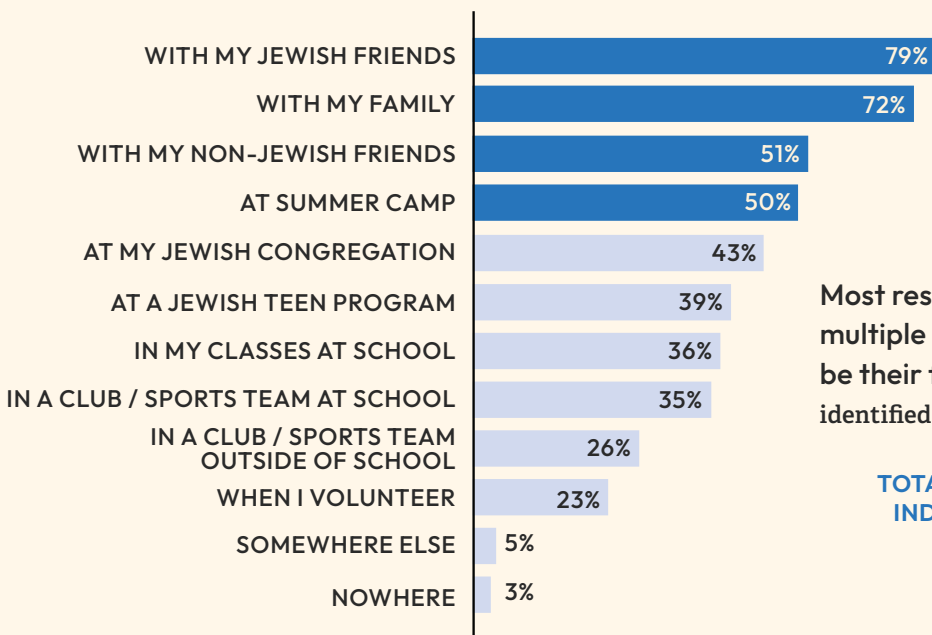
Authentic self-expression is a significant dimension of well-being in adolescents. Places and people where teens feel safe and supported to fully express themselves may serve as meaningful supports to foster overall well-being. Respondents were asked to identify environments and individuals that facilitate 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).

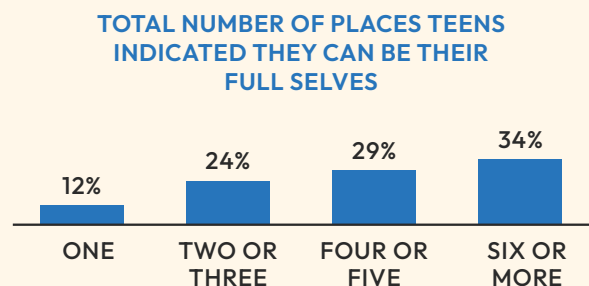
Most respondents feel free to be their full selves with friends and family (n=2479).

“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.

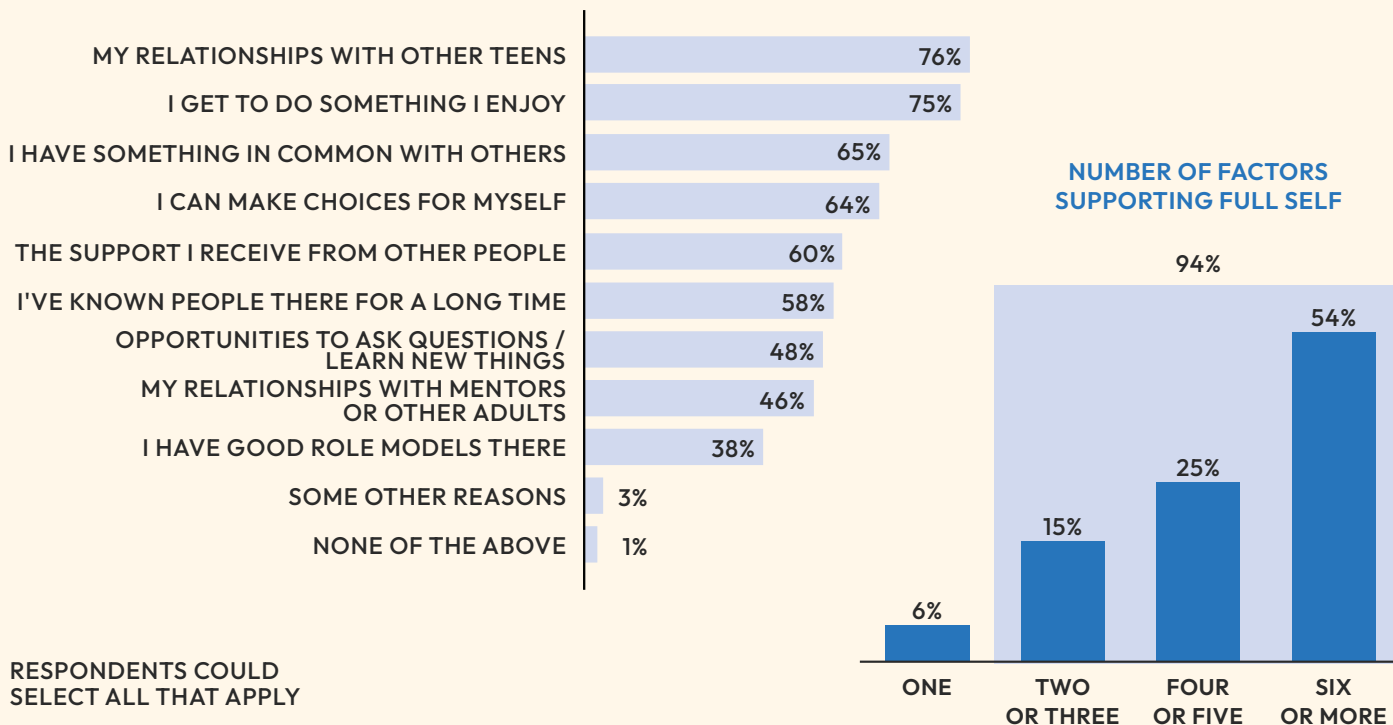


# FINDING 3: FULL SELF

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?”

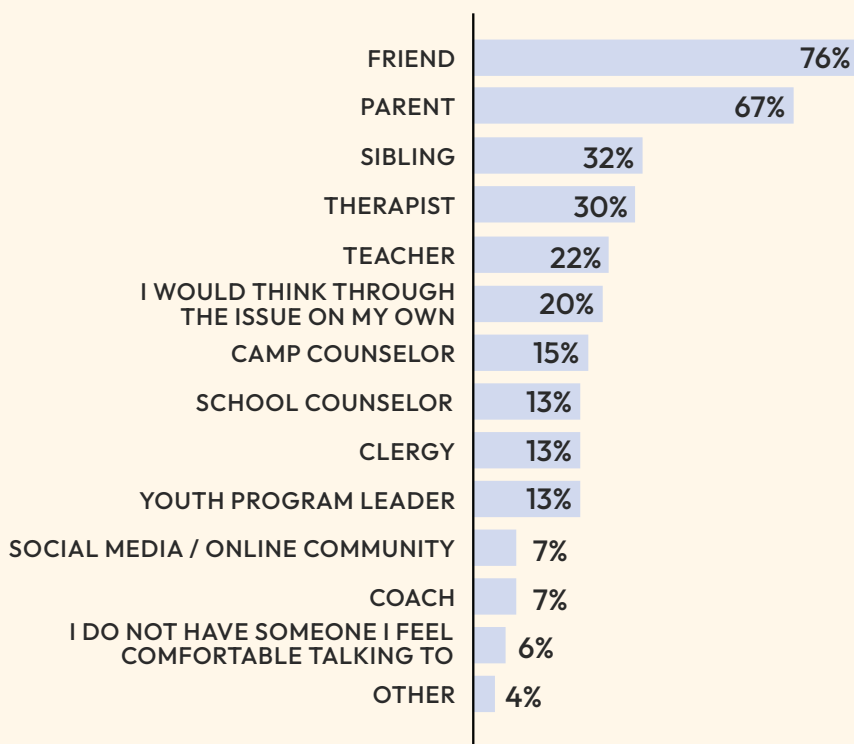


# FINDING 3: FULL SELF

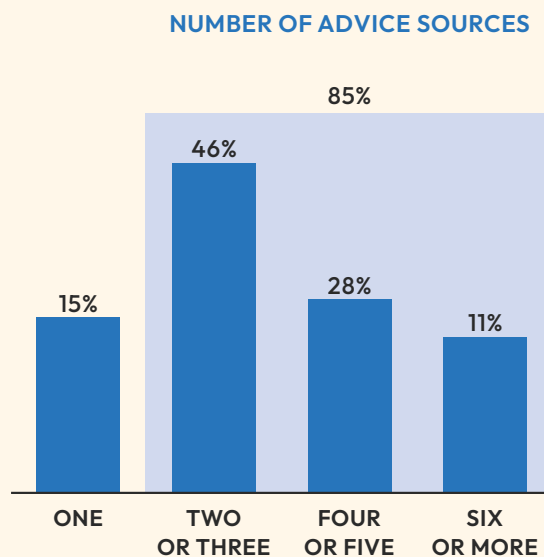
Almost every survey respondent indicated that they can turn to multiple people for advice when needed. Friends and parents were the most favored sources. Teens were far less likely to turn to Jewish leaders (clergy and youth program leaders) for advice. A small percentage indicated they have no one to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

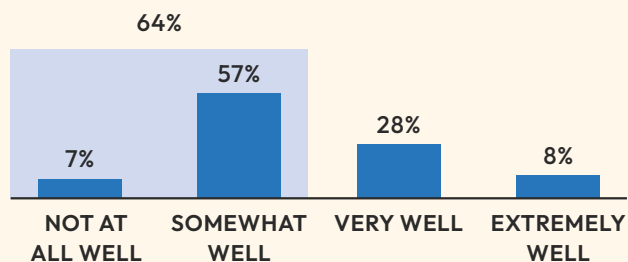


# FINDING 3: FULL SELF

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