

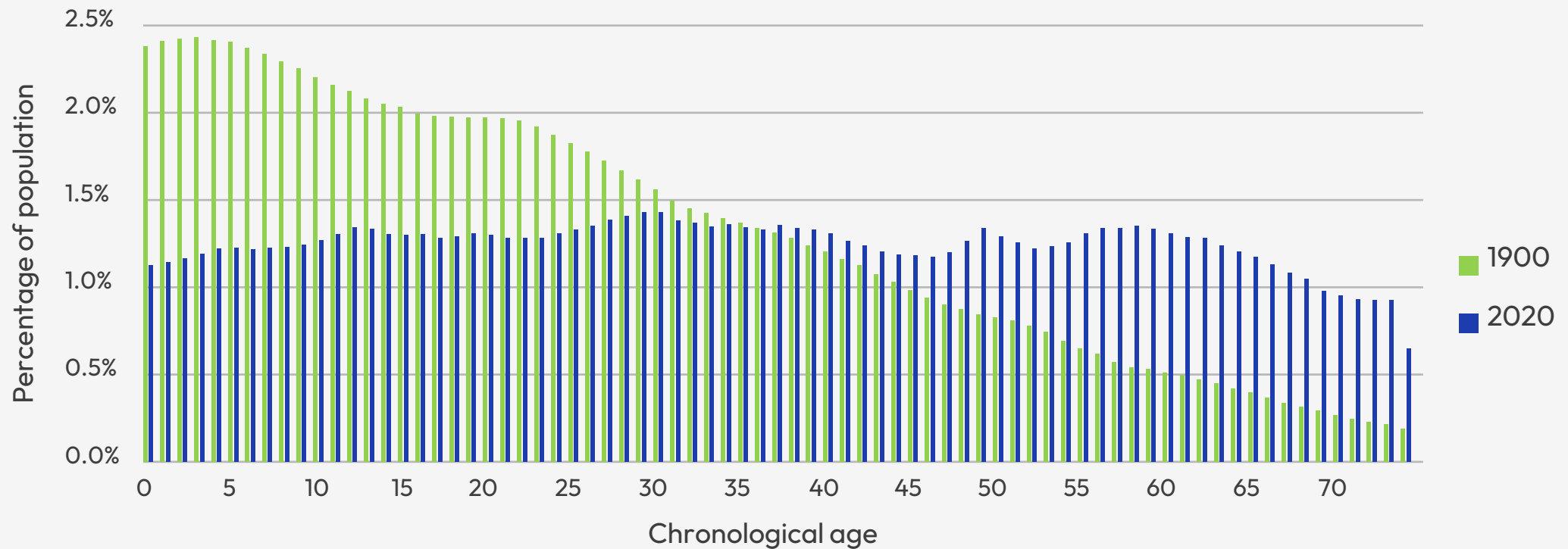


# Building the Field of Midlife Engagement



# Unprecedented Age Diversity

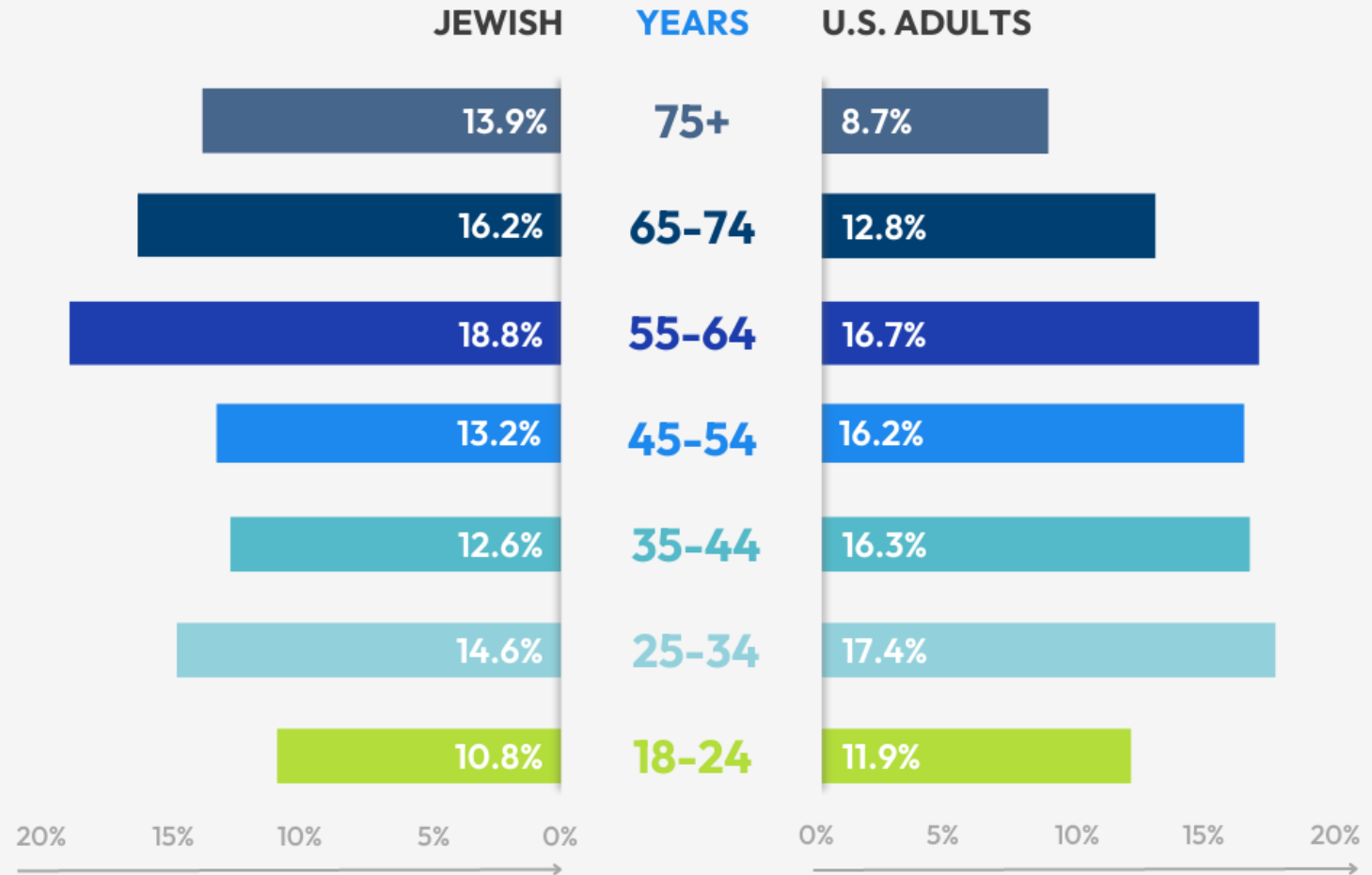
Age distribution of the US population, 0-74 years old



Age distribution of the US population, 0-74 years old, in 1900 and 2020.  
Data from the US Census Bureau population counts and estimates; analysis by Sasha Shen Johfre



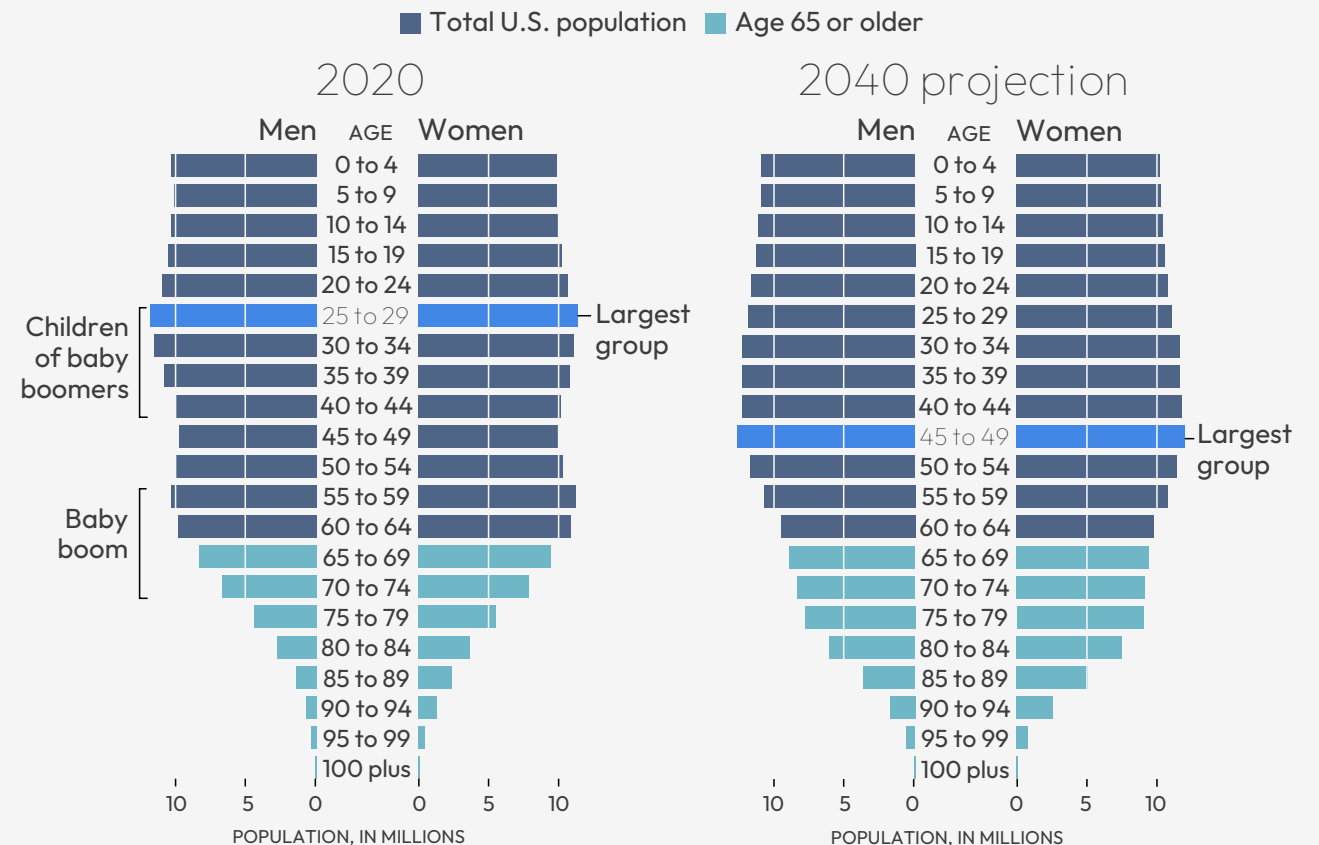
# Jewish Age Diversity





## The Aging U.S. Population

In 2020, a chart of the U.S. population shows the size of groups quickly diminishing after age 65. The largest five-year age group is 25 to 29. By 2040, the population over 65 will be much longer. The largest five-year age group will also be older – 45 to 49.



Expanded  
Longevity,  
Now and in  
the Future



# Implications

1

Biggest demographic shift in history

By 2030

1 out of 5 Americans will be 65 or over

By 2034

older adults will outnumber children for the first time in U.S. history

2

Longevity as a scientific revolution

Half of today's 5-year-olds can expect to live to the age of 100

3

Longevity as a cultural revolution

How to make meaning with more time and more vitality?



# Federation Learnings

## Community Studies and Anecdotal Evidence

# Jewish Midlife Engagement

Nearly half  
of LA's  
Jewish adults  
are 55+



Jewish involvement  
significantly  
declines with age  
in LA and Greater  
Metrowest



Adults ages  
65-74 are the  
least involved  
of any cohort



Best practices  
from Baltimore  
and New York





# Learnings from Environmental Scan

- ✓ We have not caught up with our changing demography
- ✓ Few opportunities to find purpose, connection, and enrichment in a Jewish context
- ✓ Limited program innovation - attempts surface “aging” brand sensitivity
- ✓ Declining rates of synagogue affiliation compounded the void
- ✓ Little investment



# Background on Study

To better understand the engagement opportunities and experiences of Jewish adults in this demographic, JFNA hired Benenson Strategy Group to field a national survey to over 500 Jewish adults between 55 and 74 years of age. This research was generously supported by the Sephardic Foundation on Aging.



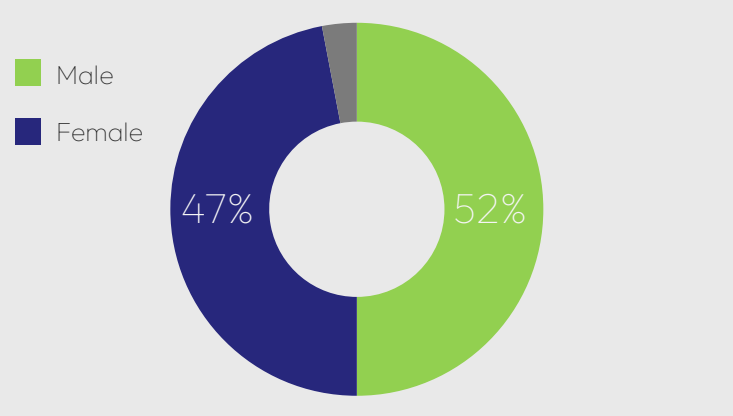
Between March 21-March 28, 2023 a 10-12 minute SMS survey was taken by 536 Jewish adults aged 55-74 drawn from a representative sample of people of Jewish descent.



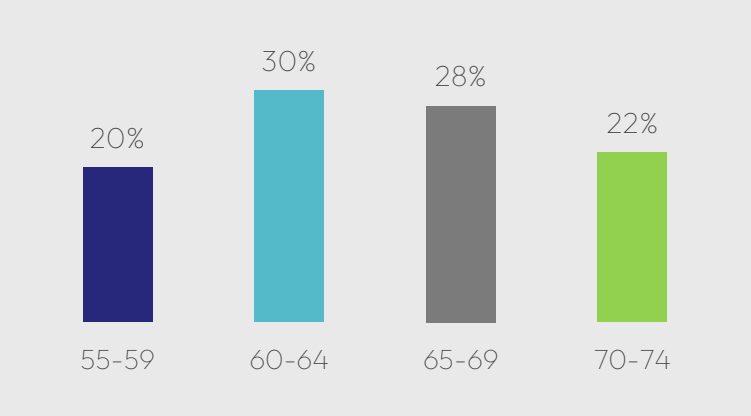


# Demographic Snapshot of Jewish adults ages 55 to 74 years old

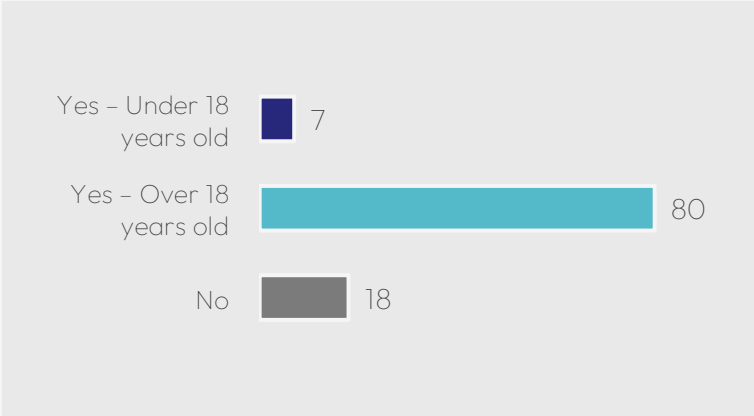
GENDER



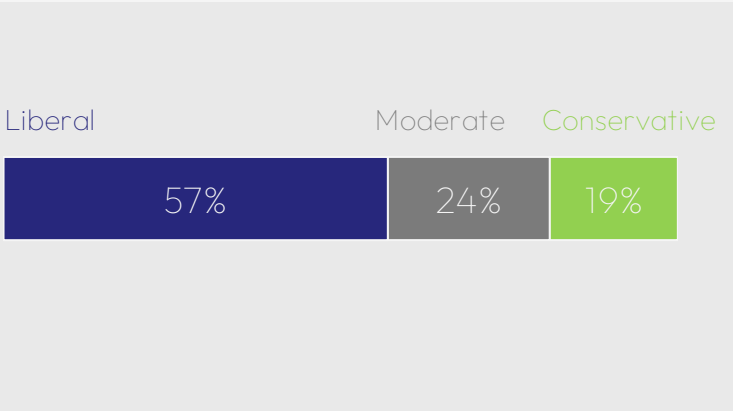
AGE



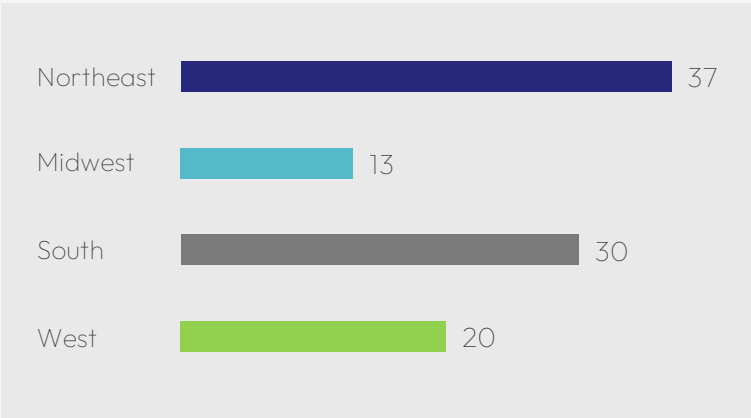
PARENT



IDEOLOGY



REGION



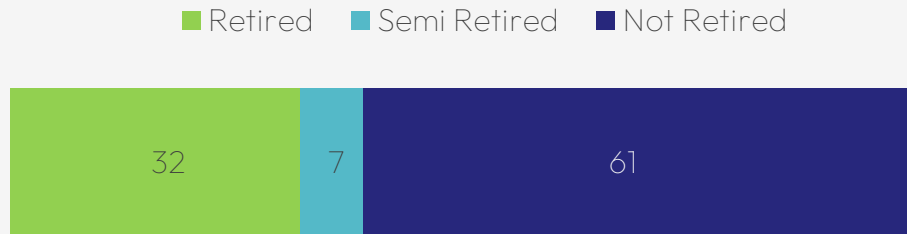
DENOMINATION

Reform	33%
Conservative	30%
Orthodox	10%
Reconstructionist	2%
Just Jewish	9%
Secular/Culturally/Ethnically Jewish	11%
Other	3%
None of the above/ not affiliated/ Post Denominational	2%



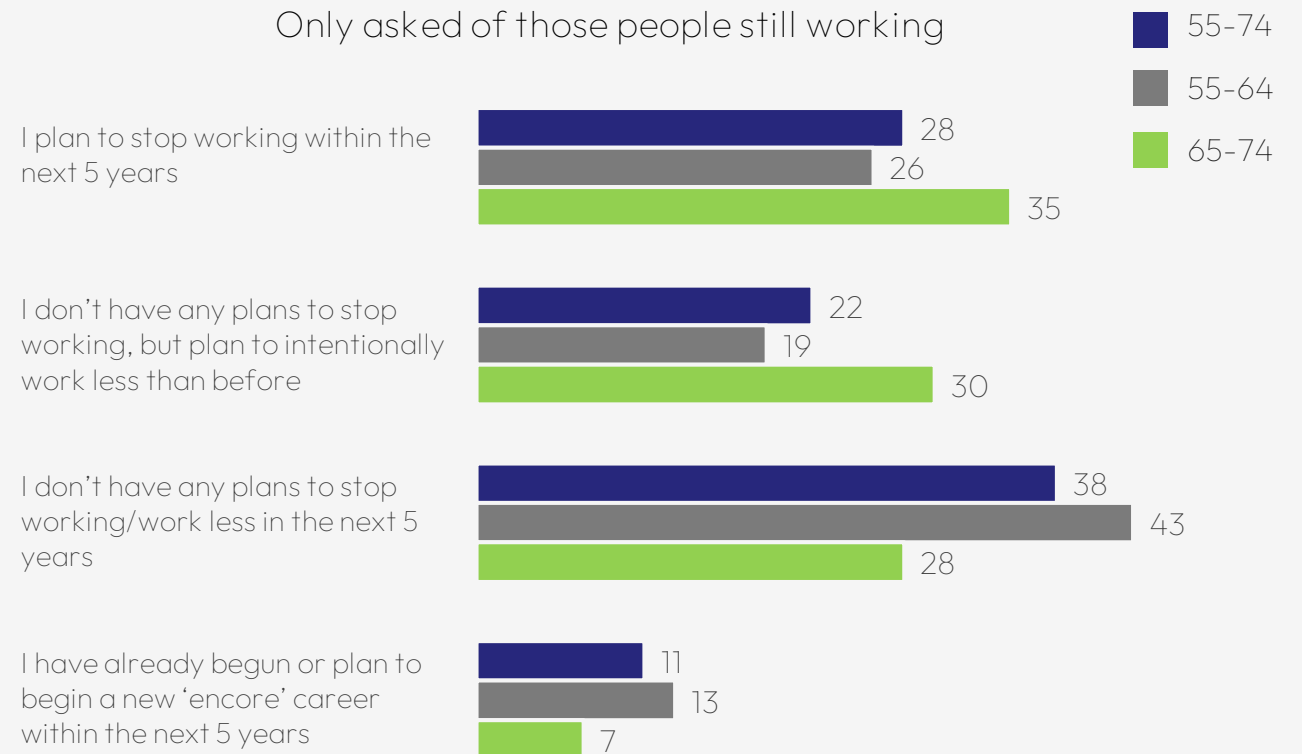
# Work and Retirement: For those still working, the relationship with work may change but they aren't stopping.

## CURRENT WORK / RETIREMENT STATUS



## CAREER PLANS IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS

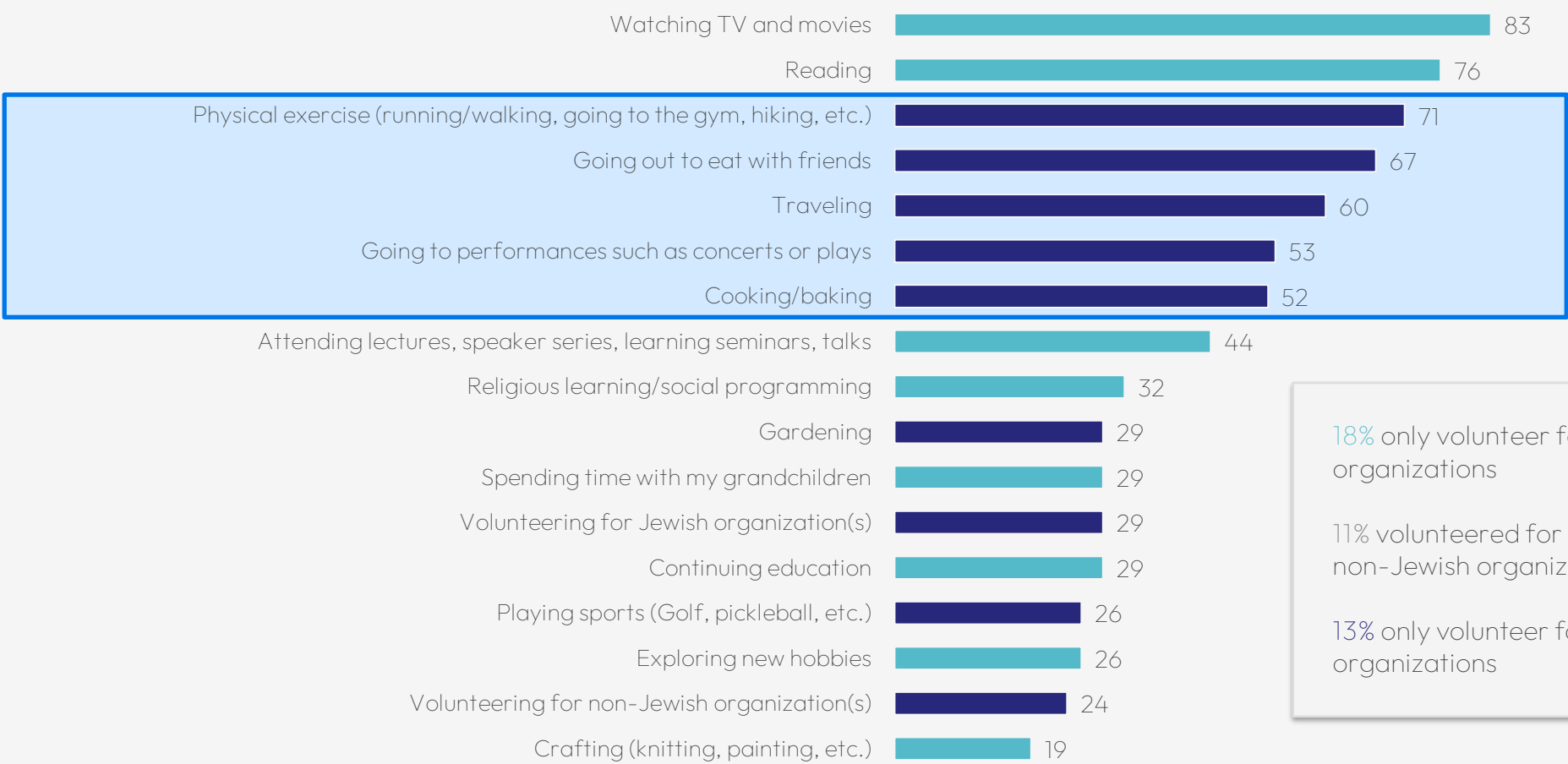
Only asked of those people still working





# Jewish adults are being physically active in their lives – they are not sitting around or isolated.

## ACTIVITIES DONE REGULARLY



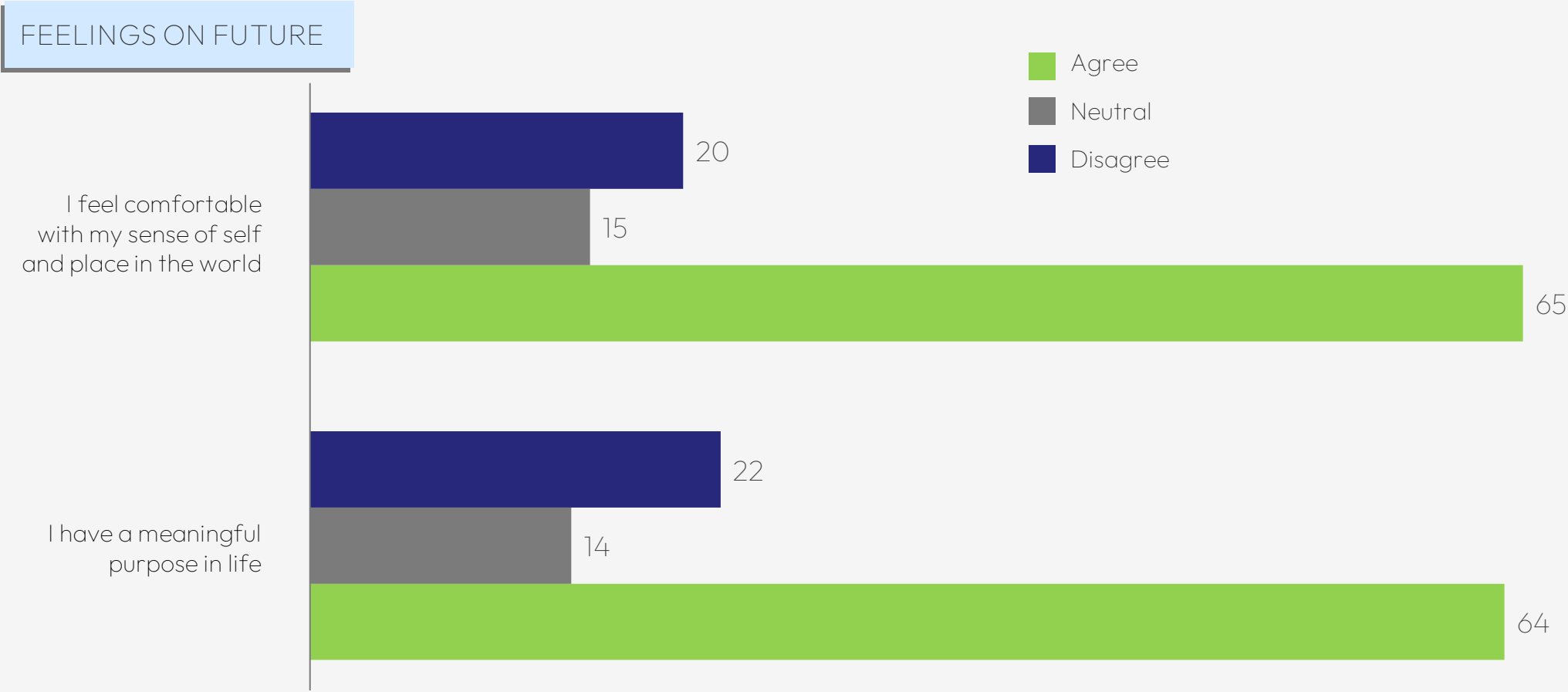
Among those who are retired, they are much less likely to participate in or attend continuing education (-9% pts), religious learning/ social programming (-7% pts), lectures, speaker series, learning seminars/ talks (-7% pts)

18% only volunteer for Jewish organizations

11% volunteered for both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations

13% only volunteer for non-Jewish organizations

Many report feeling confident and that their lives have purpose. Those engaged in their Jewish community are even more likely to feel confident.

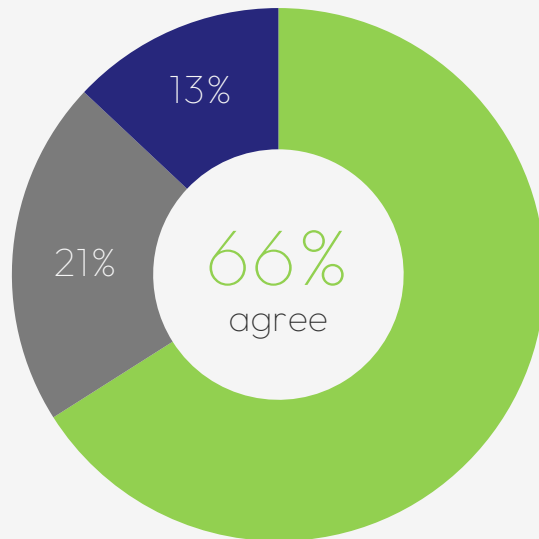


Most are excited about the next phase of life, and this is stronger for those engaged in Jewish life.

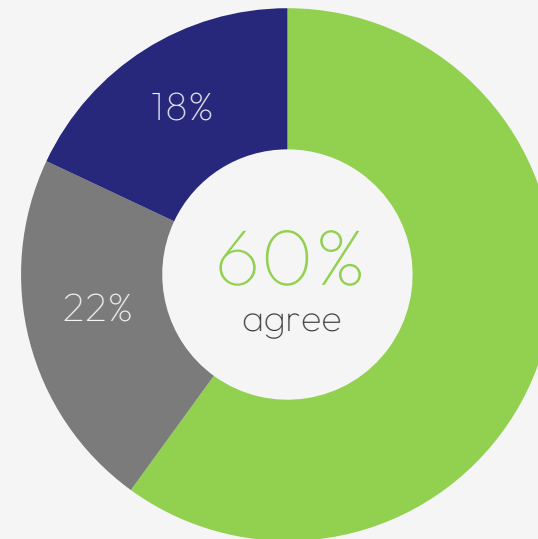


#### STATEMENTS ABOUT FEELINGS TOWARD THE FUTURE

I am excited to try new things and experience new facets of my life



I look forward to having more flexibility and freedom to do what I want



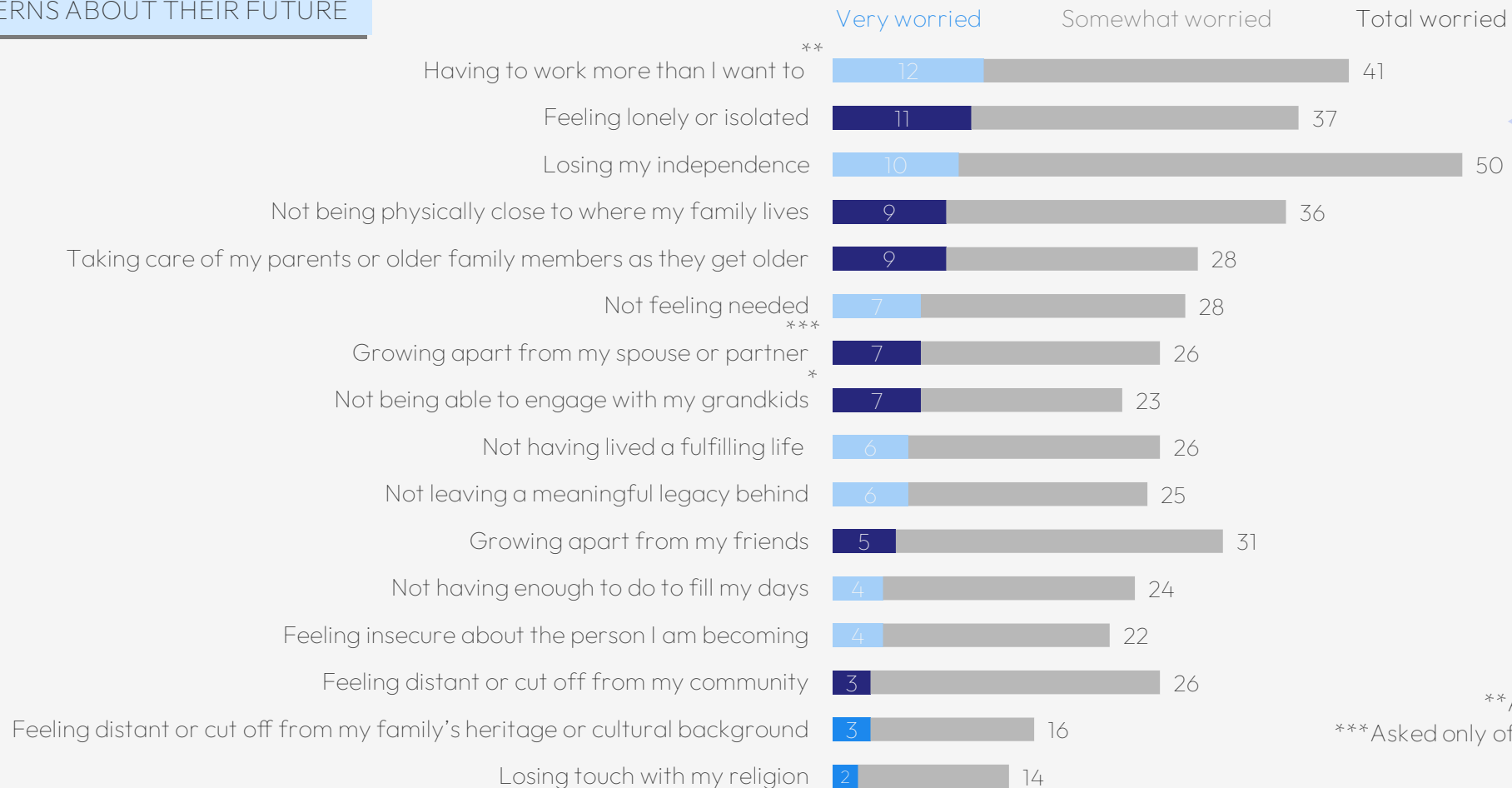
■ Agree  
■ Neutral  
■ Disagree

55-64-year-olds, women and those engaged in their Jewish community are more likely to "strongly agree" with these statements

But not all is great, as they do have some concerns and worries; fears about not being able to retire when they want or becoming isolated and growing old alone are the largest anxieties faced.



#### CONCERNS ABOUT THEIR FUTURE

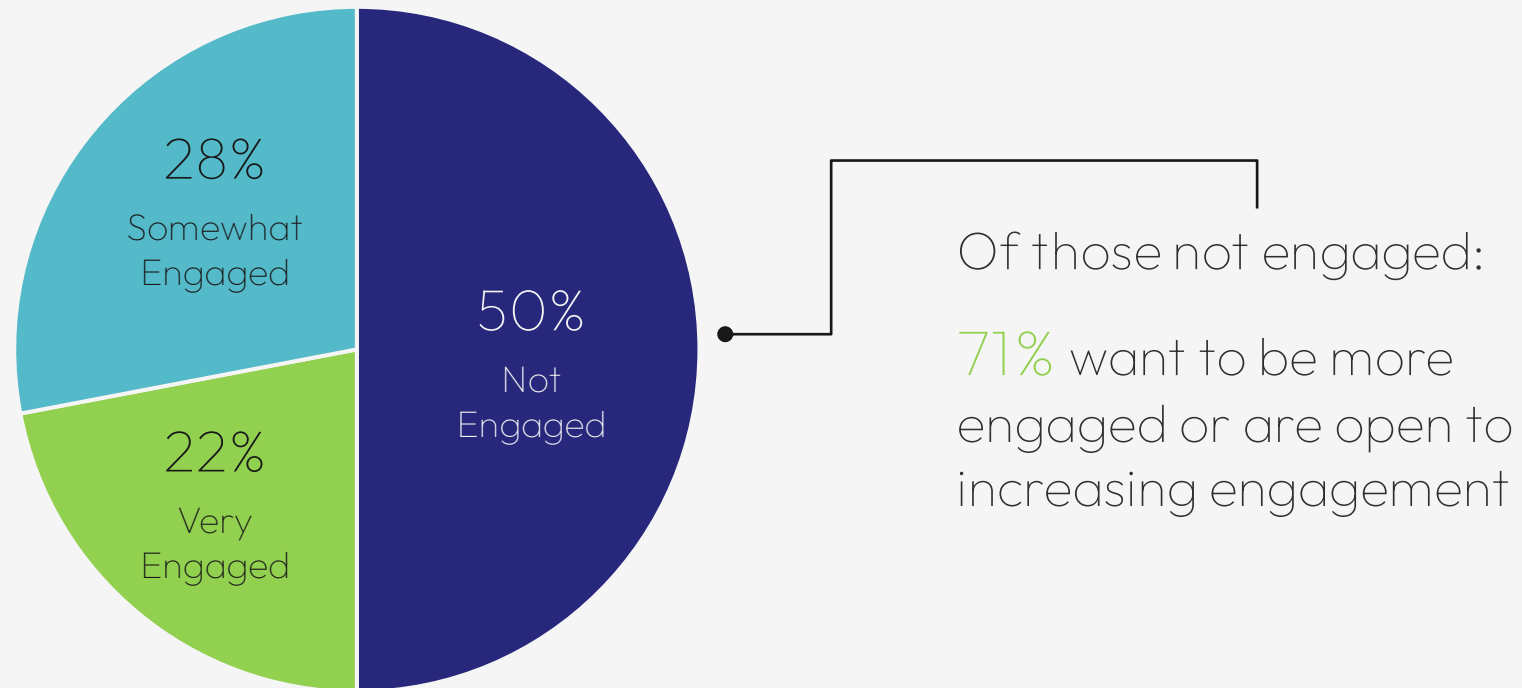


Women and those not engaged with the Jewish community are more likely to fear feeling lonely or isolated (+8% pts.)

\*Asked only of grandparents  
\*\*Asked only of those employed  
\*\*\*Asked only of those with spouse or partner



# Current Jewish Engagement

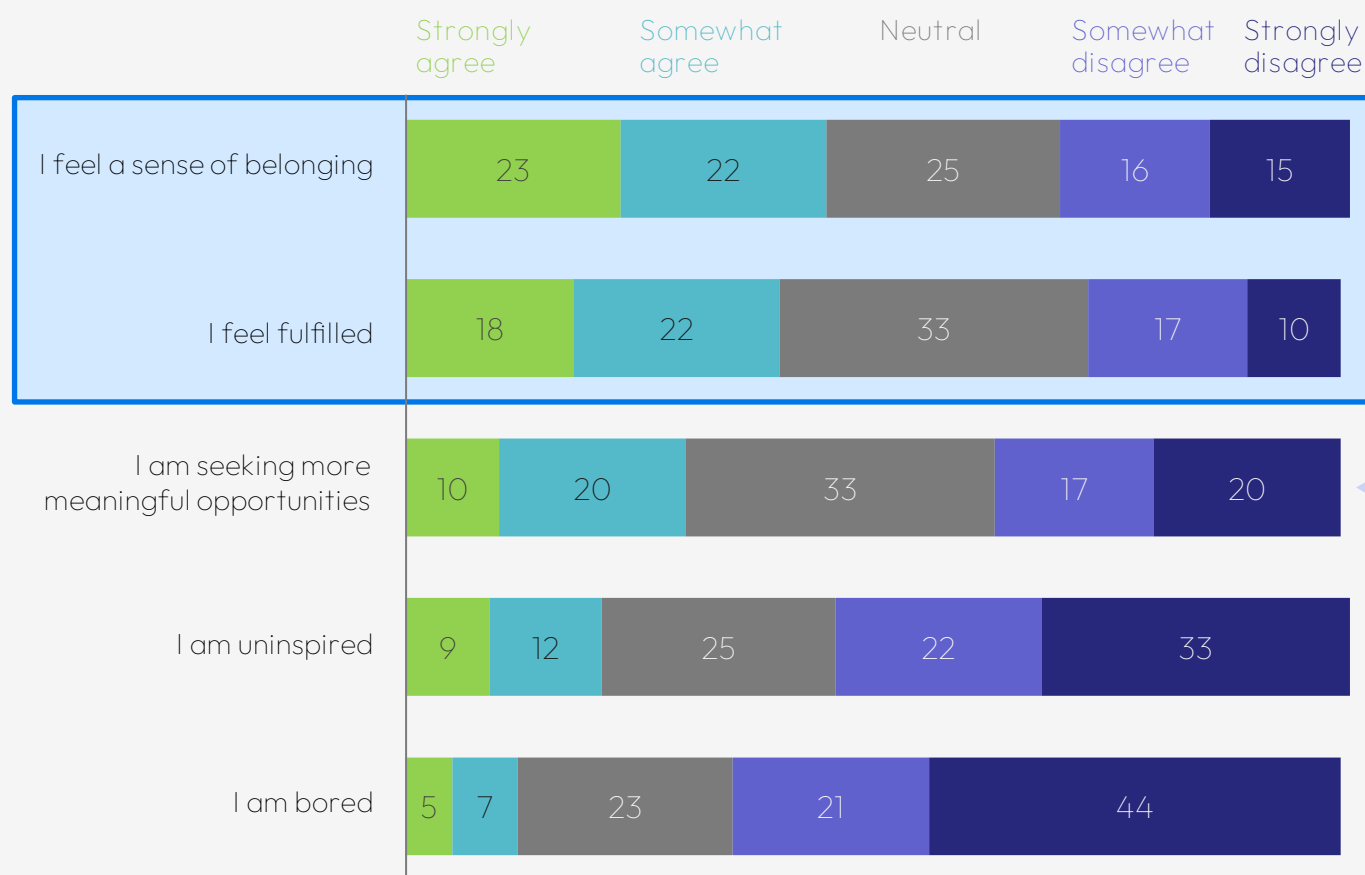


\*Based on using a broad definition of engagement and self-description

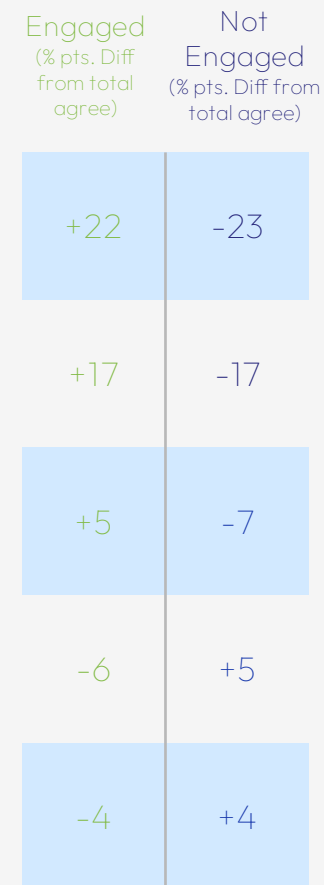
# There is a gap in a sense of belonging and fulfillment with the Jewish community among these adults.



## FEELINGS RELATED TO JEWISH COMMUNITY



55-64-year-olds, women and those engaged in their Jewish community are slightly more likely to be seeking more meaningful opportunities (+4-6% pts in total agreement)



Not surprisingly, those not engaged are much less likely to feel a sense of belonging and fulfilled with the Jewish community

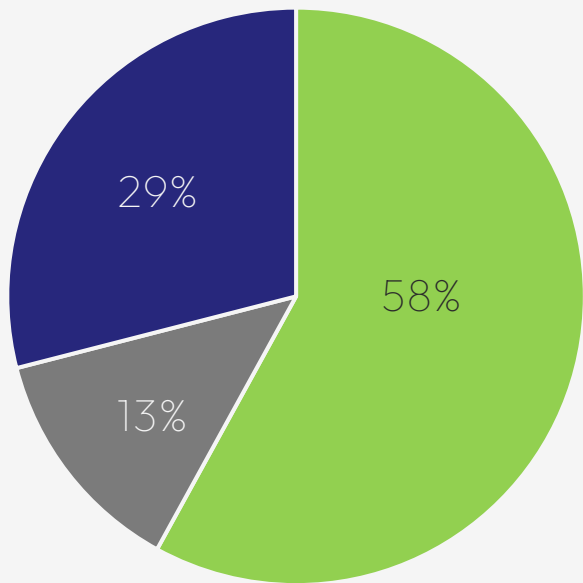


Friendships are essential. Many are not confident they'll have friends; 43% said I would like to meet other Jews. The more Jewish friends the more engaged in Jewish life.



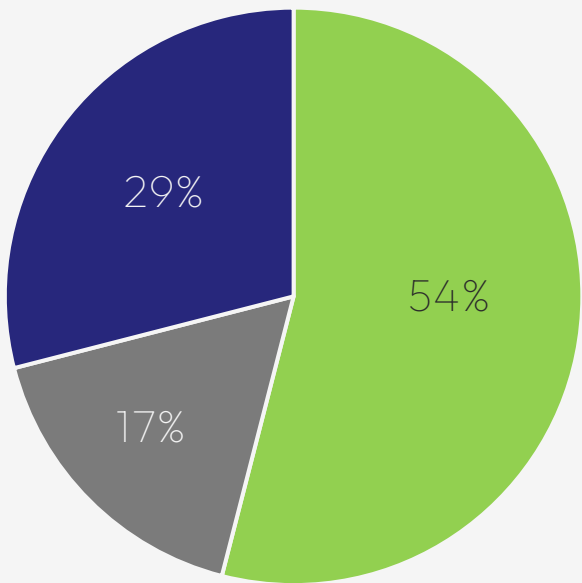
FEELINGS ON FUTURE

Women are slightly more likely to worry they will not have enough friends to do things with and to look for ways to meet people (+4% pts on both)



I am confident that I will have friends with whom to do things within my next phase of life

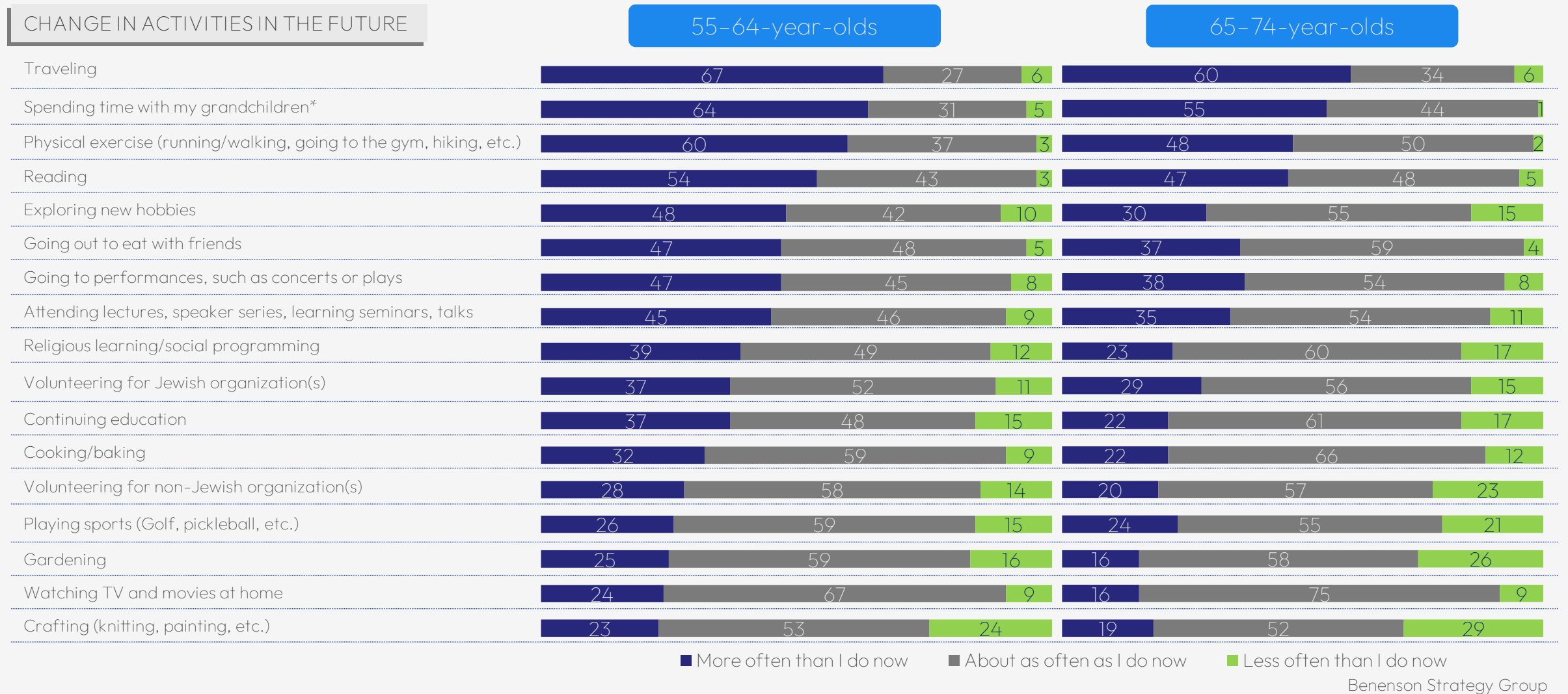
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree



Those not engaged within their Jewish community are even less confident about having friends to do things (+5% pts)

I am looking for more ways to meet other people at a similar stage of life

As they look ahead to their next chapter, most want to engage in new activities and learning opportunities, including travel, new hobbies, and social and cultural activities.





# What are they looking for?



54% are looking for more ways to meet other people at a similar life stage



43% said I would like to meet other Jews at a similar life stage in their area



Seeking opportunities to engage closer to home, at more convenient hours in the day, without driving concerns



Seeking opportunities that allow more secular or diverse expressions of Jewish identity, travel with peers, social/cultural/educational, volunteerism



# Spring 2024 Survey

Objective: Offer local Federations, local and national Jewish partner organization actionable insights that will allow them to continue to support flourishing Jewish communities in this complex time following the horrific Hamas attacks on Israel on October 7th.



February 23-March 11, 2024



Text message  
recruitment



1901 Jewish    4143 Non-Jewish



Weighted to be  
representative of  
the US population  
and Jewish  
community



This survey was funded and supported  
by The Diane & Guilford Glazer Foundation

# Areas of Exploration

## The Israel-Hamas War

- How are people feeling about the war in this moment? How have perceptions changed since October?
- How are people feeling about their ability to speak about Israel? How can we help?

## Antisemitism & Security

- How concerned are Jews now about rising antisemitism and how is this changing?
- What is changing about their behavior, if anything? What can we do to help?

## Jewish Life

- Can we confirm what we see changing in engagement in Jewish life since October 7<sup>th</sup>?
- Who is showing up? What are they doing? What are they interested in?

# JFNA Spring 2024 Research Findings

The Surge: Of the 83% of Jews who were 'only somewhat', 'not very' or 'not at all engaged' prior to October 7, 40% are now showing up in larger numbers in Jewish life

The Core: The 17% of people in the Jewish community who were already engaged at a high level say they want more from Jewish communal organizations



Midlife adults make up the largest demographic as part of this surge.

# Midlife Engagement: Why Now?

Life Stage	Surge	Core
18-34 Single	21%	17%
18-34 Married	12%	5%
18-34 With Children	2%	11%
35-54 Single	6%	1%
35-54 Married	5%	3%
35-54 With Children	16%	29%
55-74 With Children	6%	1%
55-74 No Children	25%	22%
75+	7%	11%
Total	100%	100%

Source: JFNA Israel Hamas War Sentiment Survey: March 2024

# The Post October 7<sup>th</sup> Surge



Those in The Surge 55-74 have fewer Jewish friends than most in The Core. Many in The Surge report feeling lonelier and more uncomfortable in Jewish settings.

Our research underscores what we know to be true, individuals feel most comfortable at Jewish events when:

- When you know other people there (77%)
- When someone personally invites you (51%)
- When you see yourself reflected in the people who attend (42%)

Midlife  
Engagement:  
Why Now?



# Unpacking the Midlife Core: They Need Our Support

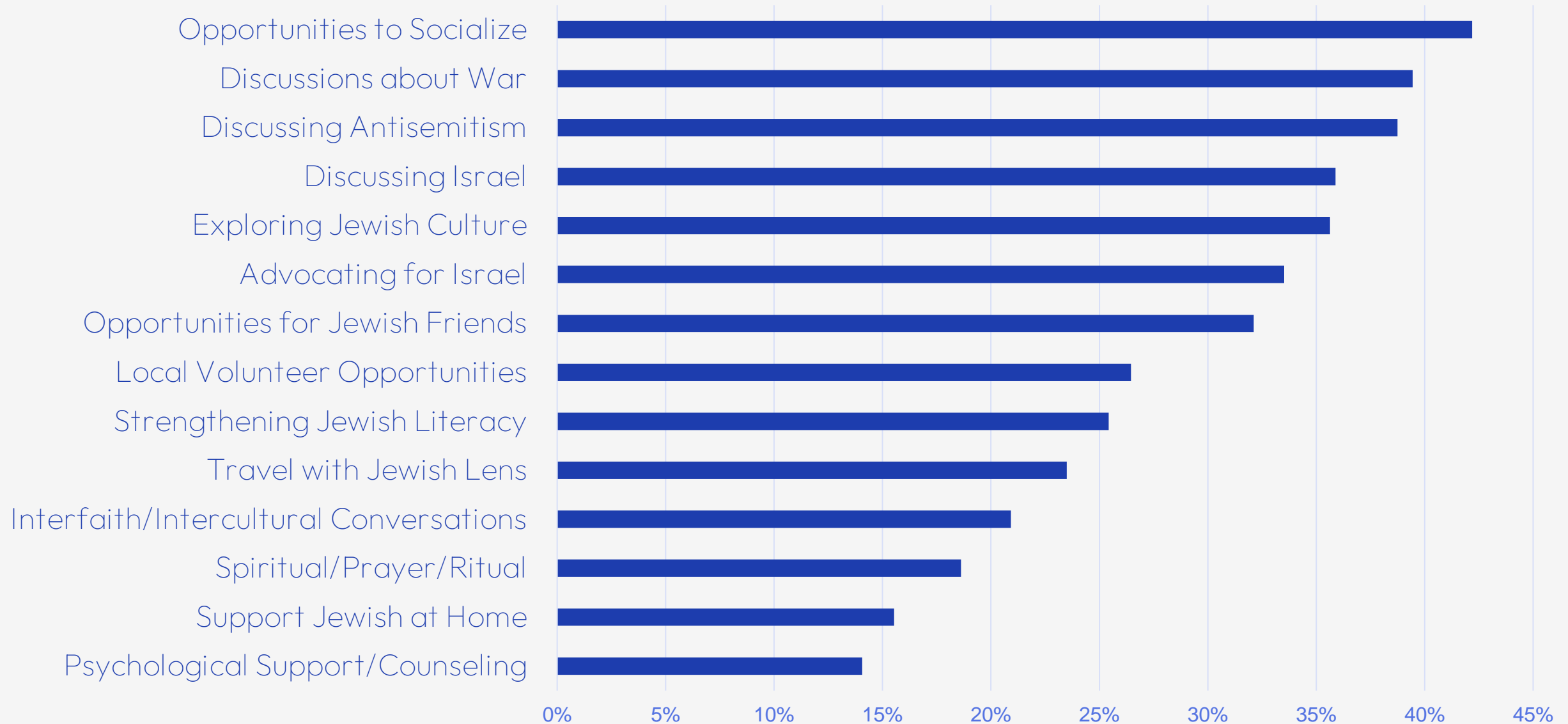
- 78% of the Core 55-74 indicate that most or all their close friends are Jewish
- 32% report feeling less distant and more comfortable engaging with the Jewish community since 10/7
- 82% say the war is emotionally affecting them a great deal vs. 58% of other Jews

# Midlife Jews significant support Israel and experience antisemitism at lower rates

- 80% of Jews 55–74 are emotionally attached to Israel
- 93% of Jewish midlife adults support Israel in the current war over Hamas compared to 88% of other Jews
- 71% of non-Jewish midlife adults support Israel in the current war over Hamas compared to 42% others
- In the past year, 19% of Jewish midlife adults have seen or experienced antisemitism in person and 69% have seen or experienced it online compared to 26% and 83% of the rest of the Jewish community



## What Jewish Midlife Adults Are Seeking Right Now





# Jewish Midlife Adult Philanthropy Trends

Out of all Jews who donated to Israel or a Jewish cause in the last 12 months, 69% of donors are 55+

This is an increase from 41% in Pew 2020



# Jewish Midlife Adult Philanthropy Trends

- Of those who already donated, 50% indicate they probably will donate again in the next few months
- Of those who did not donate, 13% indicate they probably will donate to support Israel in the next few months

# Synagogue Membership Among Those 55-74

- 54% of respondents are not synagogue members
- Of those, 77% have previously been synagogue members
- 33% of those who are not currently members indicate an openness to joining if:
  - Opportunities are tailored for midlife adults
  - Membership was more affordable for individuals without children
  - Services felt more meaningful



# The Opportunity



The largest demographic that is hungry for **content and community navigating milestones and transitions**: Work, identity, parenthood, caregiving, relocation or workforce participation



**Unique influence** on other generations



**More time and resources** to engage with Jewish life and community



**Small investment** for outsized return