

AJP Membership Survey Report 2024

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Introduction

The mission of the Association of Jewish Psychologists (AJP) is “the scientific and professional home of Jewish psychologists and our allies whose primary focus is Jewish culture, ethnicity, religion, including issues of antisemitism.” As such, the organization sought to understand its membership’s characteristics, concerns about Jewishness, and wishes to become involved in program development.

The membership survey was sent out on April 9th, 2024, and informed participants that:

“AJP continues to grow rapidly, and we would like to build our organization with your input in order to better represent the membership. Gathering information from the membership will assist in the development of better-informed programs and resources. This Survey does not identify or collect your personal information, and your identity will remain confidential. The survey should take about **5 minutes to complete**. Its results, in the form of aggregate statistics, will be summarized and shared with AJP’s membership.

Please take the time to complete the Survey by **April 16, 2024.**”

Methods

The following survey included both closed-ended questions to assess identities, as well as open-ended questions to allow participants to express their concerns and interests on several key topics. Some of the items were written based on categories from the US Census, Pew Research, APA, My Jewish Learning and Survey Monkey. Other items were written by the survey development team.

The survey link was emailed to 745 AJP members. The time frame was immediately prior to the period in which campus protests evolved into encampments during the April of 2024.

Results

165 total responses were returned. Not all respondents answered all the questions.

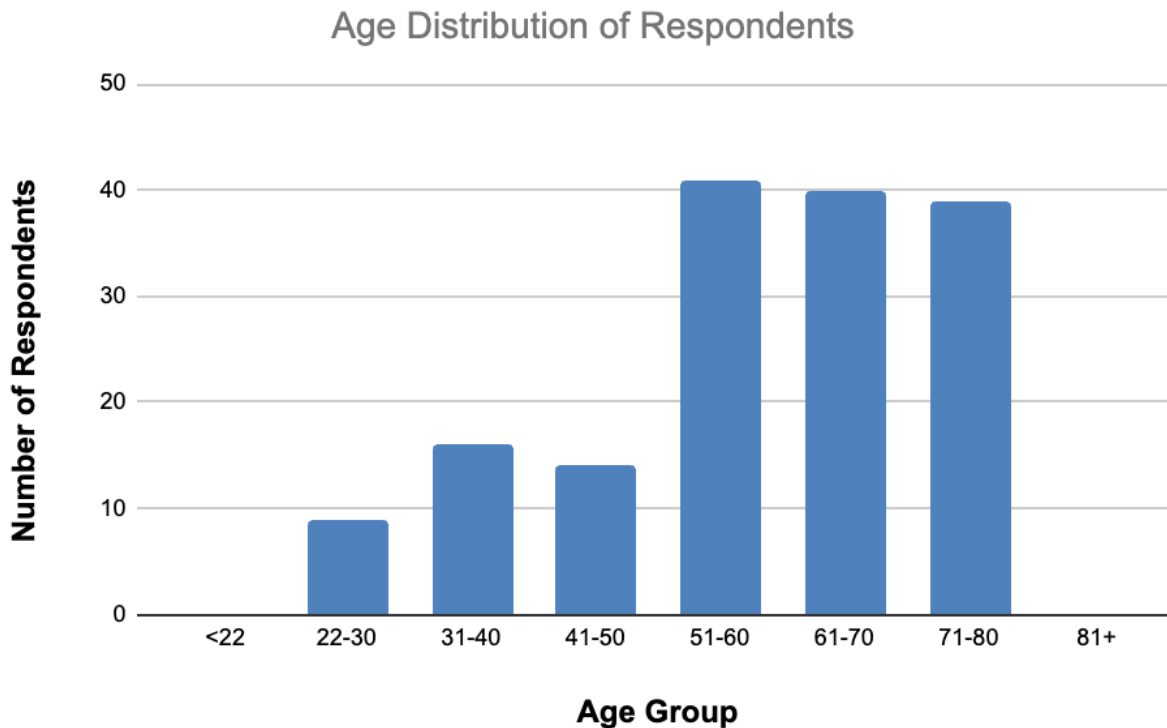
Identity Self-categorization

Categorical data was analyzed using MS Excel Frequencies function.

Personal and Cultural Identity.

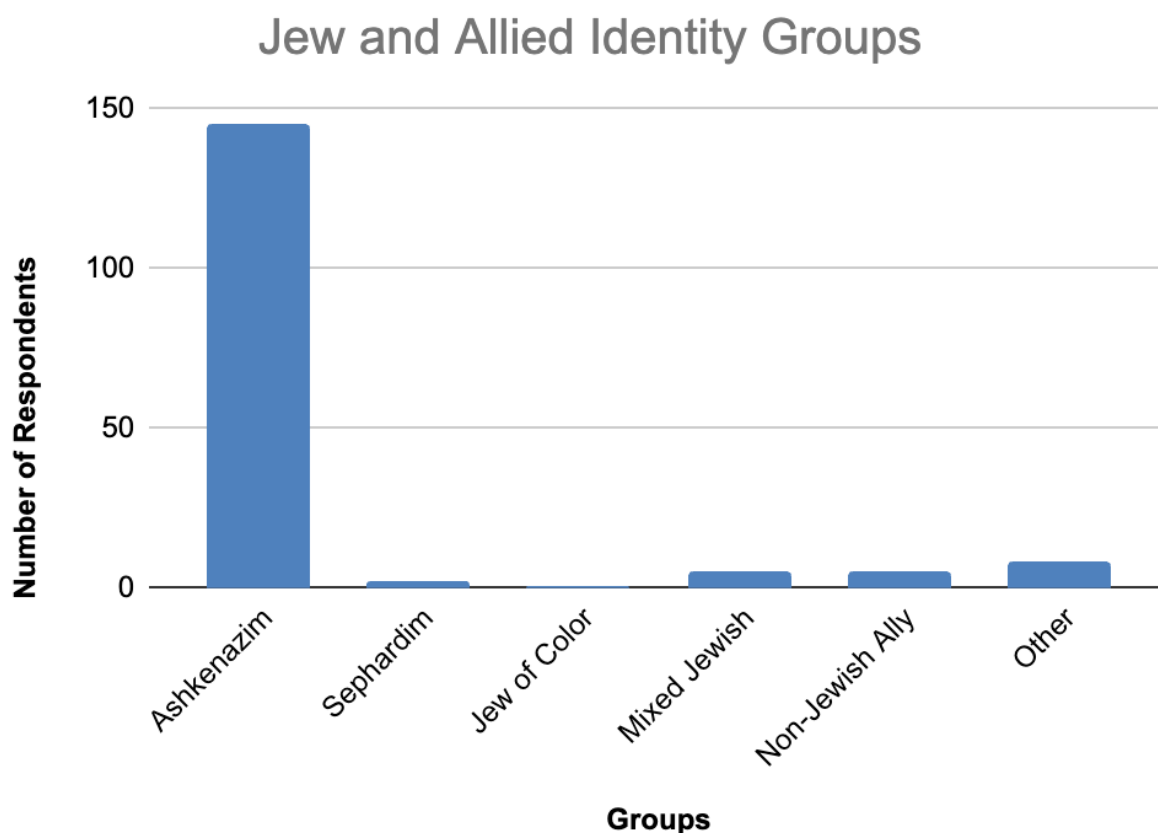
Survey participants were asked about gender in a non-binary format. Of the 164 individuals who responded, 67% identified as female and 33% male.

159 individuals responded to the question about age group. Almost half (n=79) indicated that they were 61+ years old. The distribution is illustrated in the figure below.



For ethnicity we used the current US census categories, along with options for multiple ethnicities and “other.” Of the 148 responses to this question 84% identified as White/Caucasian; 1.4% Hispanic and 1.4% multiple ethnicities and 14% identified as other. When asked to describe “other” respondents identified themselves as Jewish (n=10) and Jewish mixed with other ethnicities (n=3).

We asked further about Jewish identity and found individuals described themselves as belonging to the following groups (see Figure below; n=166). No respondents identified as Ethiopian Jews or Jews of Color. Among those who identified as other respondents included answers such as Christian Ally, Convert and Puerto Rican Jew.



Finally, we asked about subgroups of religious practice. Of the 150 respondents the denominations identified were: 35% Reform, 25% Conservative, 14% Orthodox and 6% Reconstructionist. 18% identified as culturally Jewish or no religious practice and 1% as Jewish allies.

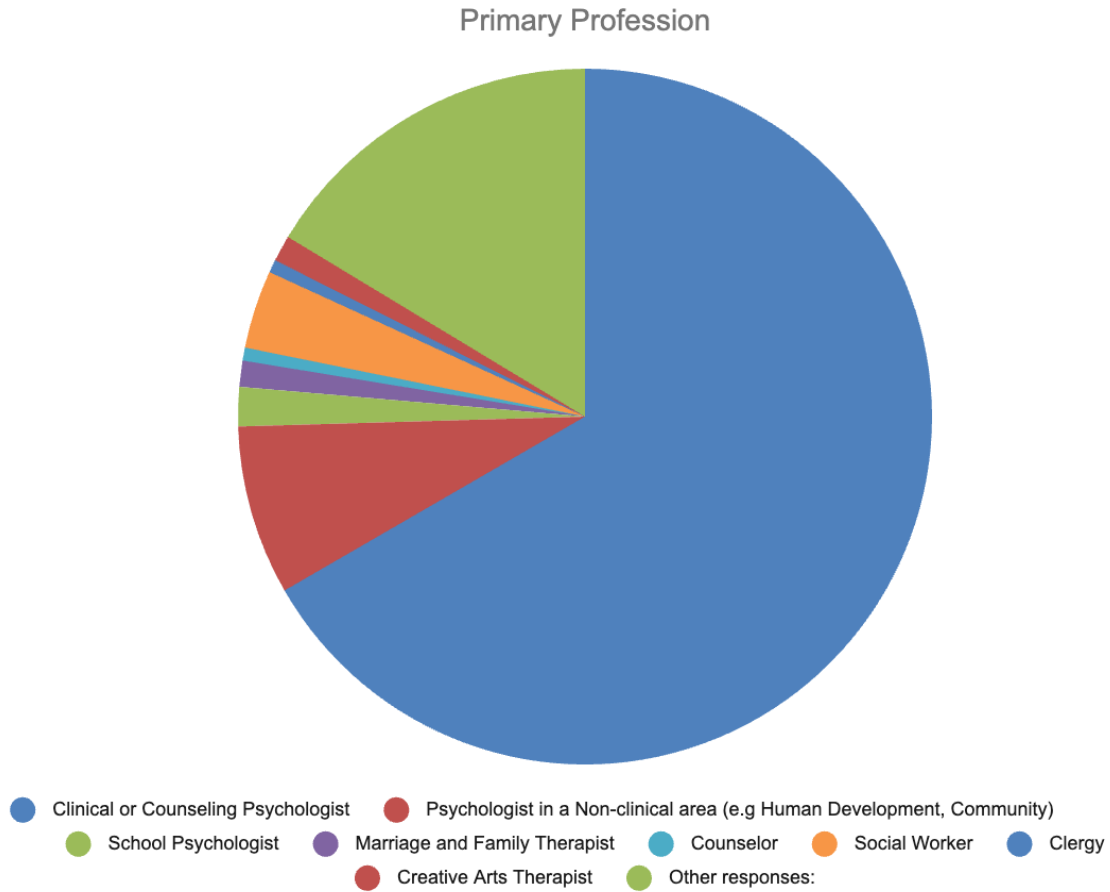
Professional Identity

Sixty-seven percent of respondents identified as either a Clinical or Counseling Psychologist. Another 8% identified as psychologists in other areas. The distribution is in the figure below. Additional responses from 16% of individuals were variable, some students, teachers, psychoanalysts and individuals from outside of psychology.

APA membership was indicated by 69% (n=116). CPA membership was 3%. Twenty-two percent of respondents included additional organizations with the most common answers being state association and school psychology organizations.

For workplace settings, 55% indicated private practice (n=163). The next largest category was institutions of higher learning for 17% of members. The figure below indicates all groupings.

Of the individuals who marked 'other' (9%) some answers included non-profits, military work and retired.

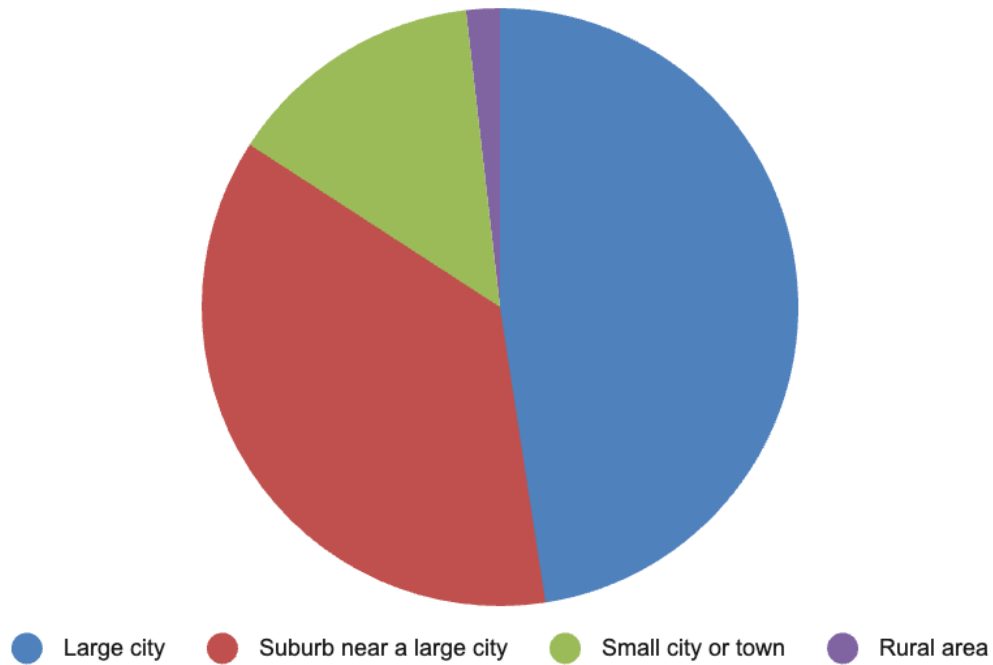


Community Identity

The majority of respondents were from the U.S. (86%). Thirteen percent were from Canada. 2 other individuals indicated residence in Europe. Total N of responses to this question was 164.

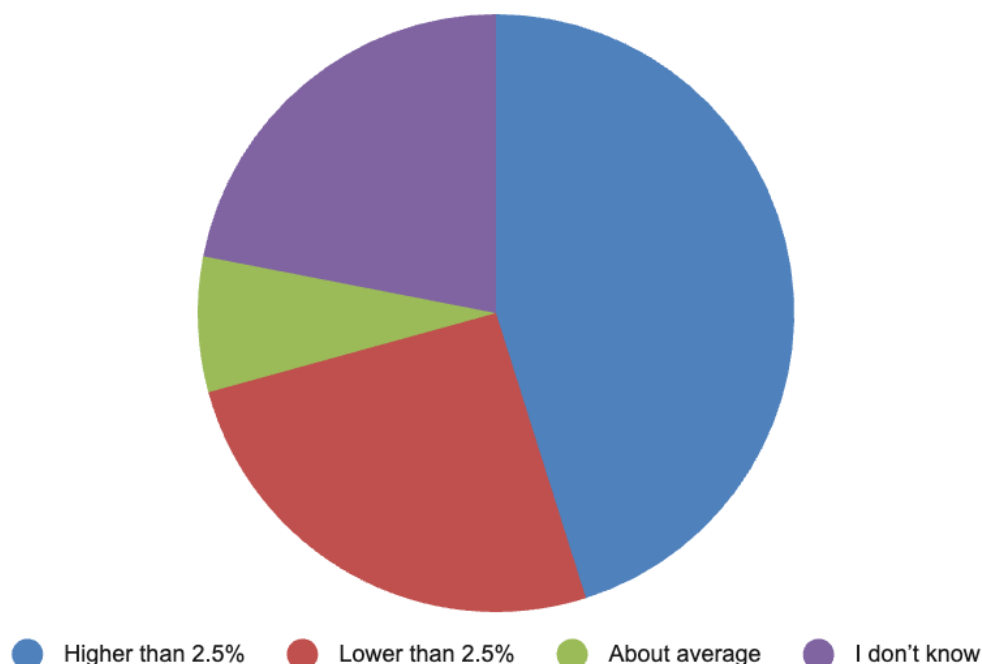
Most individuals who responded lived in urban areas 48% (n=164). The next largest living area indicated was suburban (37%). The distribution is depicted in the figure below.

Residential Area Type



Additionally, respondents were asked to estimate whether their community was above or below the 2.5% average for Jewish populations in North America jurisdictions. 164 individuals responded to this question with the responses indicated below.

Perceived Proportion Jewish in Community



Open-ended Questions Regarding Community Involvement

What Jewish organizations are you aware of in your community (i.e. synagogues, Chabad, Hillel on Campus, Jewish Community Center (JCC), Jewish Family and Career Services, Israeli Consulate, Jewish non-profit organizations)?

N= 155

Most members listed a range of organizations, including religious institutions, as well as community centers, services, and schools. Over 30 respondents indicated “all of the above”. It is likely that the size of the community (see demographics) is correlated with the number of organizations and services. In Canada, for example, half of the Jewish population resides in the greater Toronto area, with its numerous organizations.

3 respondents indicated that “there are none”.

Sample quotes:

1. "I live in the Upper West Side of Manhattan; it is very Jewish with everything you listed. Synagogues, Chabad, Hillel on Campus, Jewish Community Center (JCC), Jewish Family and Career Services, Israeli Consulate, Jewish non-profit organizations."
2. "All of the above, however I am unaffiliated."
3. "In Chicago, there are all of these services available for people who want them."

4. "I primarily reside in a suburb of NY, where there are every denomination of Jewish synagogues. There is a JCC in the neighboring town."
5. "Synagogues, Chabad, JCC, The Ark, To Protect Our Heritage Political Action Committee, Stand With Us, AIPAC."

Organizations in which respondents participate or have a leadership role

N=130

Most respondents belong to an organization/ synagogue or community center. In addition, respondents provided examples of the leadership and volunteer committee contributions (Council/ Board members/ volunteer teacher).

Sample quotes:

1. "Board Member Temple Adath Yeshurun, past leadership roles as a Ritual Vice President at Temple Beth El, and Jewish Federation Committee member."
2. "I am a member of our Modern Orthodox synagogue and a parent of a high school sophomore at a Jewish Day School. In the past, I have served in leadership positions but do not at this time."
3. "Houston Hillel - I am on the Board. SFA Hillel - faculty advisor."
4. "I am a member and on the board of Mt. Zion Temple. I attend events at many synagogues and the JCCs."
5. "I am active and hold a leadership position in my synagogue. I am a Board Member of the ADL and am a participant in JFCS (Jewish Family and Children's Service) projects."

Open-ended Questions Regarding Current Issues

Respondents were asked about current issues with the following question: "Please tell us more about what topics and the issues important to you about Jewish experience? (you don't have to write your thoughts about all of these)." They were given the opportunity to write about 10 issues from antisemitism to the role of Jews in psychology.

Due to the open format and overlap in the interpretation of questions, responses to these questions ranged from an N 132 (antisemitism) to N of 55 (Jewish life). Qualitative data was analyzed for thematic content, and described with assistance from Chat GPT and was checked for accuracy with the raw data and edited for relevance.

Antisemitism

Members of AJP are "deeply concerned" about the rising levels of antisemitism, describing it as "terrifying, frightening, and being "very scared," that appear to be widespread and socially acceptable and are being observed across college campuses, professional organizations and within broader political and social movements.

There are significant concerns about antisemitism and its current normalization in academia (e.g. “I retired early...entrenched antisemitism at all levels”) and its presence in professional organizations, including those organizations that purport to advocate for sustained EDI frameworks”. Members expressed concerns about their personal safety and well-being, particularly its direct impact on their children, from “feeling isolated” to “currently relocating due to antisemitism in my children’s school.” Members expressed concerns about the emotional and psychological toll on Jewish individuals, their Jewish identity, and feeling pressured to conceal being Jewish. Members would like advocacy and support such as “providing Jewish students support during precarious times”, and “teaching children and adolescents on how to deal with antisemitism.”

Sample quotes:

1. “I am appalled at how it has become mainstream to hate Jews”.
2. "I'm very concerned about Jews being... excluded from DEI spaces..."
3. “Worried about medical providers that are antisemitic and how this could affect how they care for Jewish patients”.
4. “We are currently experiencing anti-Israel and antisemitism in our public schools and universities”.
5. “After 50+ years of teaching/writing about the Holocaust, it is ‘surreal’ to be where we are. But that’s where we are. The many survivors I know are less surprised.”

Jewish Connection

Responses of AJP members suggest that Jewish connection includes a deep sense of heritage and history, with many seeking to maintain and strengthen their ties to Judaism and the Jewish community despite varying levels of religious observance or geographic dispersion. Some members find solace in keeping with Jewish traditions, while others are reconnecting with their Judaism. Many are seeking support and solidarity with other Jews, particularly now in light of increasing antisemitism with some struggling to find those connections.

Sample quotes:

1. "I feel more connected than ever to my Jewishness, and find myself gravitating toward Jewish people, organizations and institutions."
2. "I have needed Jewish connection more now than ever. I've been actively seeking out different Jewish communities and groups in order to create a social circle of folks I can be safe with."
3. "While I have always been ‘Jewishly’ connected, I have seen how this has polarized Jews. Some have sided with the left and are pulling further away from Judaism while others have become more identified with being Jewish and finding their communities."

Jewish Identity

AJP members' responses suggest Jewish identity includes a deep sense of belonging to Jewish culture, religion and heritage, solidarity and resilience amid rising antisemitism. Their answers reflect a diversity of experiences, including differences in religious practice, level of

engagement, and cultural background but a common thread of seeking connections with other Jews, both for support and deepening one's understanding and engagement with Jewish identity. Their deep-seated connection to Jewish identity is accompanied by concerns about its preservation and challenges posed by antisemitism.

Sample quotes:

1. "I display my Judaism more strongly now, even though I am more scared to."
2. "Strong and proud to be Jewish."
3. "My Jewish identity remains strong, despite what is going on. I attend services daily and study Talmud and Jewish Law just as I have done previously."
4. "As a part educator I am concerned that the manner in which Jewish identity is taught and transmitted in mainstream (non-orthodox) communities is devoid enough meaningful information and depth."
5. "I am more connected to being Jewish, though also more on guard about identifying myself as Jewish."

Jewish life

Jewish life includes engagement in religious, cultural and community activities.

Sample quotes:

1. "Because of the rise in antisemitism, more important than ever."
2. "I am an atheistic (secular) Jew who treasures the ideas and values of Judaism."
3. "I am in a Klezmer band to help spread Jewish culture."
4. "I would like to connect with others, especially around Shabbat, holidays and life events."
5. "Important to Jews for our identity and to know who we are. It is also important to get a sense of community."

Concerns about Israel

Respondents expressed a strong sense of personal connection with Israel, with some respondents having family or professional ties. Members are concerned about Israel's security, political stability, and global perception. Many expressed worries about rising antisemitism, the portrayal of Israel in media and academia. Some members expressed concerns about the internal political dynamics and the humanitarian impact of military actions. In addition, there is anxiety about the global disinformation campaign against Israel and the erosion of support from international communities. Several members worry about their families who live in Israel.

Sample quotes:

1. Concerned about the survival of Israel and the safety of its inhabitants."
2. "I am horrified by the misinformation about Israel and the hate toward Israel and Jews."
3. "Extremely concerned about Israel, Israelis, Israel's worldwide perception, civilian deaths in the Gaza Strip."
4. Gravely concerned about the global disinformation about Israel and not defining and describing Hamas as terrorists and sexual abusers."

The Role of Jews in the Profession of Psychology

Respondents expressed pride about the historically significant contribution that Jews have made to the foundations and advancements of psychology. They expressed significant concerns about rising antisemitism within the profession, feeling marginalized and silenced, and the possibility of diminution of Jews in the field. Members would like education, research and advocacy initiatives that celebrate Jewish contributions to psychology; incorporate Jewish perspectives and acknowledge the need to combat antisemitism. Recognition of Jewish contributions to the profession of psychology is critical amid rising antisemitism and perceptions of exclusion.

Sample quotes:

1. "A rich history, reflected in psychologists' standings; promotion of scientific evidence-based interventions; academic and field diverse impact for the common good in societies; resilience building in the face of adversity."
2. "After graduate school I became more and more aware of how many people we studied were Jewish - and how that was never mentioned."
3. "Amazing. Understated."
4. "These are enormous! It is interesting that in the context of us trying to bring out the diversity of contributions of psychologists from marginalized cultures that we always try to hide the fact that Jewish people were some of the creators of some of the best parts of psychology."
5. "I am very concerned about the 'decolonization' of psychology and the way in which the primarily marginalized, 'othered' Jewish originators are now being lumped together as 'white' 'privileged' 'colonizers'."

Experience of Jewish Students in Schools and Colleges

Survey respondents are extremely concerned as Jewish students face widespread antisemitism, discrimination, hostility, and violence in educational institutions that go unpunished, resulting in feelings of unsafety, marginalization, and psychological distress (including stress, fear, and potential internalized self-hate), with inadequate institutional response and support. Some members reported negative personal experiences on campuses, and many expressed the importance of raising awareness about antisemitism by providing education on Jewish history and identity to combat prejudice and discrimination.

Sample quotes:

1. "Antisemitism on university campuses is rampant. Students express antisemitic views freely and openly without punishment from the universities."
2. "As a professor, I see the violent hatred on university campuses, and I am afraid for Jewish students."
3. "I have children in college or looking at colleges and am very aware of the antisemitism on college campuses."
4. "My son is a college freshman, and I worry about his physical safety, but also how antisemitism might color his own identity."

5. "This is terrifying, sad, and a big source of stress for me. I worry about my own kids, their friends, and the generation of Jewish students."

The Role of Jews in the Profession of Psychology

Respondents recognize and appreciate the historic role that Jews have played in psychology but are presently concerned both about the future and their diminishing impact. Some expressed the challenge of balancing Jewish identity and their professional role in a climate of growing antisemitism. Many respondents expressed the need for increased awareness about Jewish contributions to psychology and combating antisemitism.

Sample quotes:

1. "There have been many prominent Jewish psychologists."
2. "Well now we get to be the bad objects because once a society has been infected with this kind of anti-Semitic vitriol and narrative, there's no going back and I believe it's naïve to think otherwise. 2000 years of history does not lie."
3. "We need to remain active in speaking out against antisemitism in psychology, academia and medical settings, and providing education."
4. "Yes, and what is our role in DEI and cultural diversity training?"
5. "How to educate APA and its non-Jewish members."

Member Needs and Participation

In this section members indicate their interest in types of programs from AJP and willingness to volunteer for different committees.

What Types of Programming would you like AJP to Provide? (e.g. continuing education programs, networking opportunities, in-person events).

In their responses (N= 97), members of AJP expressed strong interests in diverse programming to meet their needs and wide-ranging interests. Those aim to support their professional development growth goals, community engagement offerings, and advocacy efforts that are impactful in their communities. Areas of sought after programming include continuing education (CE) prospects, networking organized hybrid events; diverse support groups, and tailor-made advocacy training (like those offered in some other professional organizations). Such programs will aim to address the professional needs of the AJP membership and provide a platform for combating antisemitism. In addition, this type of avenue will likely promote Jewish contributions to psychology and other mental health disciplines. Likewise, respondents emphasized the importance of varied programming formats, reflecting the need for flexibility and accessibility to accommodate different preferences, geographic locations, and time zones.

Sample quotes:

1. "All of the above. Can you provide or guide us to groups doing research?"

2. "All the above, except the in-person, unless there is a hybrid component."
3. "Continuing education programs and networking opportunities would be valuable to me. I also welcome the opportunity for psychologists to be involved in legislative activities-- fighting for those things which we deem important."
4. "I would advocate for 'difficult' conversations of the kind suggested above, and which go beyond discussions of 'trauma', intergenerational and otherwise."
5. "Networking, online and in person. Have courage to push back against anti-Jewish actions."

What Role do you Hope AJP will Fulfill?

Survey respondents reported a variety of roles they would like the organization to promote, including education and advocacy, providing community for networking and support, professional development and research and scholarly contributions. They envisioned it as a hub for research and scholarly contributions, promoting and supporting studies related to Jewish psychology, antisemitism, and other relevant topics. This includes fostering collaboration among Jewish researchers, providing funding and resources for research, and highlighting the work of Jewish psychologists.

Sample Quotes:

1. "Provide a place for Jewish folks to share experiences, for researchers to network, for troubleshooting issues that Jewish clinicians, faculty, and students are facing because they are Jewish."
2. "Provide research and voice for Jewish issues."
3. "We need to remain active in speaking out against antisemitism in psychology, academia and medical settings, and providing education."
4. "Raise consciousness on how hatred, discrimination, and antisemitism impact physical and emotional health."
5. "A voice for Jewish psychologists and related fields that helps us advocate for our needs and maintain our place in this important work."

Opportunities- where members would like to help the most:

The top choices for members' involvement (N=109) were: Campus Support Groups; AJP Partnership with Non-Jewish Allies; Education, and research.

AJP Activity	Number of Responses
#1 Campus Support Groups	27
#2 AJP Partnership with Non-Jewish Allies.....	21
#3 Education.....	17
#3 Research.....	17
#4 AJP Partnership with Outside APA	7
#4 Student/Early Career Group.....	7

#5 AJP/APA Partnership	5
#6 Keshet-AJP Journal.....	4
#7 Communication.....	3
#7 Newsletter.....	3
#7 Publications.....	3
#8 AJP/APA Convention Program.....	2
#8 Membership.....	2
#9 AJP Fundraising for Antisemitism Research Grants	1
#9 Finance.....	1
#9 Listserv	1
Website.....	0

Summary

The first AJP survey was developed in order to provide a benchmark for members in terms of demographics, identities, concerns, and goals for involvement. The survey was conducted in April 2024 at which time membership total was 745. About 22% responded to the survey (n=165). The survey respondents tended to be older, with the majority of them over the age of 60. Individuals primarily identified as White/Caucasian. Others identified as Hispanic/Latino, mixed ethnicity or identified themselves as Jewish Non-White. With regards to respondents' religious practices, the denominations identified were Reform, Conservative, Orthodox and Reconstructionist (in order of size). About 20% of respondents identified as culturally Jewish without religious practices. A few respondents identified as Jewish allies.

In terms of professional identity, about 60% of respondents indicated their primary work setting was in health care delivery; the next largest group, at 20%, were psychologists in higher education. Less than 10% identified as psychologists in other areas. The vast majority of respondents live in cities or suburbs. Most respondents also live in areas that have higher than the 2.5% population of Jews, the estimated average in population percentage in North America. Respondents were primarily from the US; some were from Canada and few from Europe. Many people indicated membership and leadership roles in Jewish religious and community organizations.

The survey queried respondents about several topics including their experience of antisemitism, Jewish connection, Jewish identity, and concerns about Israel. They generally felt a strong Jewish identity and connection that has been strengthened during recent times. They expressed significant worries about Israel, as well as the humanitarian impacts of recent military activities. There is concern about misinformation in the conflict and how that may contribute to antisemitism. Of significant concern for the respondents is rising Jew Hate and worry about the impacts on their daily lives. Another notable area of concern was for Jewish students on campus, who they see as lacking both physical and identity safety. The inadequate institutional response and lack of support was of concern as it interferes with their ability to attend to their studies and socialize at college.

Respondents also shared their perception of Jewish experience in the field of Psychology. They expressed pride about the historically significant contributions Jews have made to the foundation and advancement of psychology. They expressed concern about the rise of antisemitism within the profession, marginalization and silencing of Jews, and potential loss of Jewish voices in the field of psychology.

Survey respondents indicated that they have a strong interest in AJP programming in order to engage their Jewish identity by providing CE credits, engaging in advocacy efforts, and in networking with others. Hybrid learning formats, community building and affiliation were all identified as desired activities. Flexibility in program formats and accessibility accommodations were preferred, considering geographic locations and time zones. Members identified opportunities to make contributions to AJPs committees and undertakings. The top choices for involvement were campus support groups; AJP partnership with non-Jewish allies; education and research.

The respondents provided useful information to guide organizational growth and direction and should be utilized in intervals as AJP develops.

Take-Aways

- 1) Numerous participants are very active in their local Jewish communities, which may provide avenues for cultivating partnerships with AJP.
- 2) Although the sample was not homogenous, diversity is limited. Future initiatives should include broadening the diversity of membership in terms of both age and ethnicity.
- 3) With future growth the organization may benefit from broadening professional representation from multiple career settings. Such expansion may help strengthen alliances and collaborative undertakings with other organizations.
- 4) Members were deeply concerned about the state of antisemitism and the negative impact it has had on them, their families, communities and the field of psychology. This concern should remain a focus of AJP in terms of efforts and programming, directly working on sustained solutions that restore a sense of safety and belonging.
- 5) It is important for AJP to be involved in ongoing efforts to understand Jewish identity and promote cultural competence in professional training and continuing education.
- 6) For EDI initiatives in organizations to be truly comprehensive and advance competencies, it must include representation that addresses antisemitism.
- 7) Based on respondents' feedback, AJP can play a significant role in developing educational resources, networking opportunities and advocacy efforts, commensurate with its Mission Statement.