

Orthodox Jewry: Community, Connection, Understanding & Orthodox Jewish Singles

May 2, 2022



<http://nishmaresearch.com>



Nishma Research Orthodox Jewish communal studies are discussed at the Orthonomics podcast.

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Introduction and Methodology

Introduction

This is the eleventh communal study done by Nishma Research since 2016. We usually ask respondents about their marital status and often compare marrieds' responses with those of single individuals (as well as those divorced or widowed) for selected questions. However, we have not, to date, conducted a deeper and broader exploration of the specific issues facing single individuals. The goal of this study was to explore these issues. This is being done as part of a broader exploration of the extent of communal connections among many groups ... single individuals and others.

Sponsorship

The following research, analysis, findings and conclusions were developed by Nishma Research, an independent firm, as a service to the community. Nishma Research is currently celebrating its seventh (*shmittah* / Sabbatical) year since its founding and is doing all communal research this year on a *pro bono* basis. Our goal remains to research and fully share we we learn, with a focus on topics that have not to date been adequately explored in the community.

Methodology

We reached the public through: (1) emails to individuals who have opted to participate in our Orthodox respondent panel; (2) Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) and National Council of Young Israel rabbis, who informed their synagogue members of the survey; and (3) social media to reach more single individuals.

This survey was conducted February 13 to March 7, 2022, with 913 Orthodox respondents. Among them are 335 single individuals (38% of respondents who indicated their marital status). Part of this report (the section titled "Orthodox Jewish Single Individuals" starting on page 14) is based on the responses of these 335 single individuals.

Footnotes detail the survey questions upon which data and charts are based, provide the number of respondents, and describe any methodologies or approaches taken in the analysis.

There is no census nor any opt-out research among singles that would inform the representativeness of our sample. Thus, we present this as an opt-in survey covering issues that to date are unexplored. Additionally, open-ended questions are helpful in understanding the respondents, and we see them as a valuable "qualitative addition" to quantitative data. This report has samples of verbatim responses to three broad questions. In addition, a 45-page document, with over 1,000 verbatim responses, is available at <http://nishmaresearch.com/social-research.html>.

Thank You

Nishma Research wishes to especially thank Rabbi David Schwartz, president of PORAT (People for Orthodox Renaissance & Torah) for his role in spurring this research, and Prof. Sylvia Barack Fishman of Brandeis University for her work in analyzing the data and hundreds of respondent comments and preparing a report on key actionable insights for shuls and organizations (see pages 31-32). Both also provided input to the research design, as did Guila Benchimol, Loren Berman, Rabbi Michael Broyde, Rabbi Eitan Cooper, Rabbi Steven Gotlib, Ilana Kelman, Sarah Robinson, and Becky Schwartz. We thank you all, as well as those who helped get the word out to the singles community. Your interest in and enthusiasm for this topic is most appreciated.

Contact

Nishma Research continues to conduct research on issues that are important to the Jewish and Orthodox community. We welcome feedback, questions, and suggestions.

Mark L. Trencher – Email: mark@nishmaresearch.com
West Hartford, Connecticut – May 2, 2022

Summary of Key Findings (Page 1 of 3)

Why was this study conducted?

It was done for two reasons. First, previous research has shown that sense of community is at the top of the list of things that Modern Orthodox Jews value; and we suspect it's high up on the list among Haredi as well. We wanted to get a sense of how that might have changed during the pandemic – do people still feel strongly connected to the community? – and whether their definition of “their Orthodox community” has changed.

Additionally, after some of our past surveys we've gotten emails from people who are single, asking “what about us?” They have always been included in our surveys and we can break out their responses, but we have never really addressed the issues that are specific to being single in the Orthodox community. We felt the time had come to do that.

Before we get into people's sense of connectedness, how are we doing overall? Aspects of this issue have been asked in the past, but have things shifted during the pandemic?

86% say that their “Orthodox Jewishness” is a very important part of their lives. Additionally, most people are upbeat: two-thirds feel financially comfortable, and three-fourths are happy with their family life. But, while two-thirds are happy with their social life, a majority only *somewhat* feel that way. So that might be the result of the pandemic.

You refer to the “Orthodox community.” Has the way people view or define their community changed?

One's community used to be largely local, consisting of the shul, the school if one had children there, local rabbis or other individuals, a community center or other local organizations. That has changed in recent years. Now, while the local shul is still at the top of the list of what people include in their Jewish community, half the people mention shuls elsewhere as being part of their community and more than 40% mention *online* Jewish groups, programs or social media. Right behind the local shul, many people mention individuals such as Jewish friends, teachers, religious or community leaders. Individuals' relationships are clearly a very important component of what people view as their Jewish community.

Have people's connections to the community remained strong through the pandemic?

84% agree that they feel connected to their overall Jewish community, with 45% fully agreeing; it's clear that people feel strongly connected to their overall Jewish community. While we don't have trend data, a mini-survey that we did before Shavuot 2021 showed a slightly lower of connection, so it may have rebounded since then, as we emerge from the pandemic.

Has shul attendance changed?

Shul attendance has sharply declined from pre-pandemic levels. Now, 53% say they go to shul every Shabbat morning or almost every Shabbat, compared to 84% when we asked this question in 2017. Other research and observation makes it clear that shuls are aware that getting people back in is a challenge.

In terms of connection, people have strong positive relationships with their shul: 94% feel welcome, 81% say their shul cares about them, and 66% say their shul has programs for people like them.

Do some groups feel more connected while others feel less connected?

We suspected, and our results confirmed, that Orthodox Jews overall feel strongly connected to their community. But what we really wanted to find out in this study is whether there are groups that feel more connected and whether there are groups that feel less connected, and who they are.

We developed a single metric – an Index of Overall Communal Connection (from 0% to 100%) – based the responses to a number of questions (described in the footnote on page 12). For the community overall, the index was 77%, which indicates that the average communal connection level is pretty good.

In addition to looking at the community, we looked at 17 sub-groups and we found some interesting variations. The range was from high levels of 80%+ for Haredi Jews, marrieds and those age 50+, to a low of 69% among single individuals.

Summary of Key Findings (Page 2 of 3)

While 69% is moderate and not indicative of a high level of disconnection, the gap between singles' and marrieds' sense of connection (12%) was the largest among all of the demographic sub-segments examined.

Further, among the single individuals, communal connection drops over time. Males have less connection at age 40+, while females have less connection at age 30+.

These findings provided a segue into the second part of the study, which is a deeper exploration of the lives of Orthodox Jewish single individuals.

Turning to the findings on Orthodox single individuals, let's start with their personal goals. Is marriage high up on the list?

Yes, marriage is in fact the top goal, although far fewer than 100% say this is a goal of theirs. Overall, 63% of the single individuals say that marriage is one of their top goals, but this was followed very closely by achieving overall happiness (59%), personal growth (58%), and finances (52%).

We also found differences between men and women. For example, men more often cite marriage as a goal, as well as religious growth, while women more often cite overall happiness, personal growth, and helping others as goals.

Goals shift over time. While marriage is a top goal, it drops a bit for females age 40+, while remaining the top goal for males. Finances are more important for both genders at ages 40+, rising to #1 for females. Religion is quite important to males under age 30 but declines thereafter.

We would expect dating to have been more difficult during the pandemic. How much dating is going on these days, and what approaches are people taking to get dates?

While we don't have trend data, the pandemic may well have had a significant impact, as about half the respondents say they have been doing *no dating at all or close to none*. Only one-fourth say they have been dating an average of once a month or more. But a majority expect to be more active over the next few years.

In terms of the approaches people take, they draw on a variety of

resources. At the top of the list over the past three years are online Jewish dating sites or apps, which is more prevalent among Modern Orthodox than among the Haredi. This is consistent with an overall societal trend of people interacting more virtually.

Looking to the future, respondents expect to rely much more on Jewish community events and gatherings, and they expect that to be their top dating resource over the next year or two.

What are people looking for in a dating partner or a potential spouse?

We asked respondents to assess a list of 27 characteristics and tell us which were the most important ones to them in a dating partner or potential spouse. At the top of the list were being respectful of others, honesty, compassion and kindness.

The only characteristic rated as significantly more important by males is physical appearance. Females rate several characteristics as more important than do males, including financial situation and income, profession, and ambition.

Females are a bit more selective; on average, females rated 8.4 of the 27 listed attributes as "must have," compared to 6.5 by males.

Turning back to the dating process, there is a fair amount of discussion about the use of and value of *shadchanim*, matchmakers.

While there are some strong pro and con views (as illustrated by the sample verbatim comments on page 23), about two-thirds say they would "somewhat recommend" the use of *shadchanim*.

Other issues that we hear about relate to the amount of investigation that some people undertake before going on a date (respondents lean toward the view that there is a bit too much of it), as well as the role of parents (single individuals are split on whether parents should be more or less involved, while marrieds, presumably comprise more of parents, want to be more involved).

Summary of Key Findings (Page 3 of 3)

Bottom line, do people think the Orthodox world's dating system is working well?

Extremely few respondents rate the overall dating system as working well. **With a low average rating of 4.7 out of 10, it inarguable that the dating system is rated quite poorly.** Singles (4.2) feel more negative than marrieds (5.0); females feel even more negative (4.0) than males, and negative views increase with age (3.6 for those age 40+). Every stakeholder group in this system agrees that it is not working!

Are there any other aspects of the lives of single individuals, or their dating, that the study explored?

There are many complaints about the observation that there are more single females than males. While this study did not explore this issue, it is important and noteworthy (see page 26). There is much speculation about the reasons (male/female couple age differences affected by community growth rates, those leaving Orthodoxy, and others). This remains an issue to be explored.

In our research, we believe strongly in asking open-ended questions, to get a better understanding of what is on respondents' minds. In this survey we asked a few key questions:

- **What is holding you back from finding a spouse?** – People often mention difficulties in meeting people (including their location), as well as in finding the “right” person, personal traits or circumstances that they see as making them less desirable and having other priorities.
- **What advice would you give to those who are dating?** – The advice most often given is to not give up on the search, to keep an open mind (i.e., to not rule people out too quickly) and be patient, and to stay honest but reasonable (and flexible) as to who you are and what you are looking for.

- **How can shuls and organizations better address the needs of single individuals?** – Ideas include more interaction and listening, better inclusion as members and in the variety of shul activities, creating Shabbat and other social events and meeting opportunities. In addition to the verbatim responses, this report contains an analysis of this issue done by Professor Sylvia Barack Fishman, Brandeis University with support from PORAT (People for Orthodox Renaissance and Torah); see pages 31-32.

Are there other issues for future study?

It had been our intention to include in the survey some questions dealing with topics of sexuality and intimacy. However, the majority of respondents seemed unwilling to get into that topic in much detail, so that remains something we might do in the future.

Will there be next steps?

See the summary of “Responding to the Realities of Single Modern Orthodox Jews” (pages 31-32), which provides recommendations to shuls and other Orthodox institutions relating to the realities of unmarried Modern Orthodox Jews. Information about the full PORAT report and a June 2022 online webinar discussing this topic will be available at <http://poratonline.org>. PORAT and Nishma Research plan to actively disseminate this information.

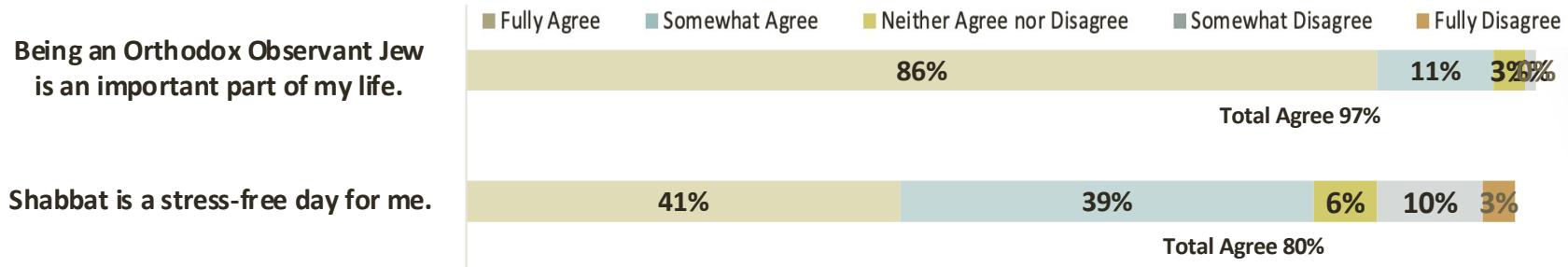
Any concluding thoughts?

We are often asked what changes as a result of communal research. In the case of this study, the research provides guidance to shuls and organizations on how to better address the needs of single individuals. We believe this will have positive benefits, and we look forward to that. Finally, our research is community driven. If there is an aspect of the Orthodox world you would like to see better researched, go to our website (<http://nishmaresearch.com>), navigate to the contact screen, and drop us a line. We love hearing from people in the community.

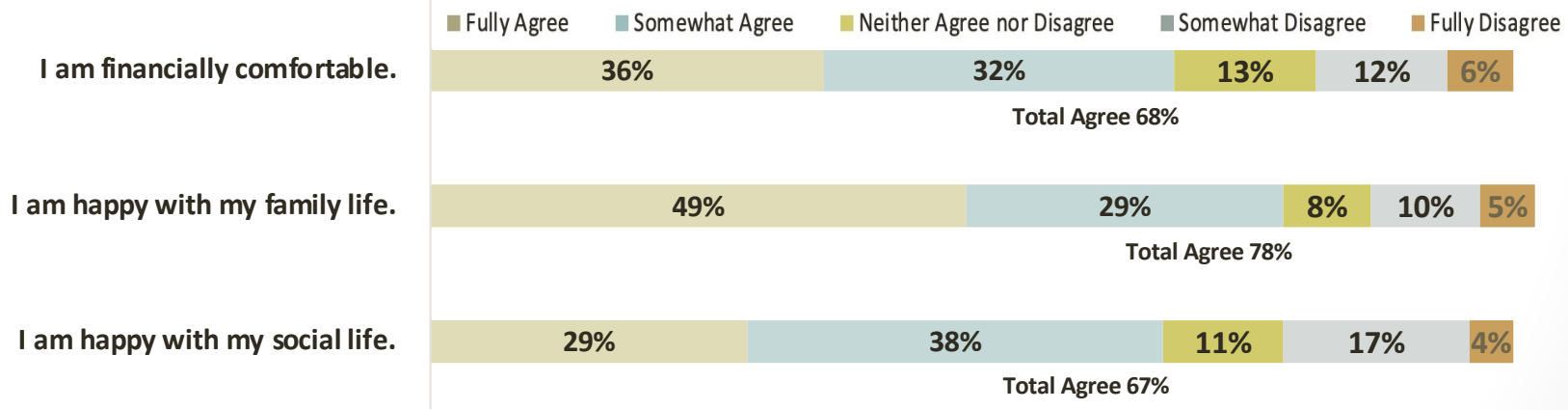
Orthodox Jewry: Community, Connection, Understanding

The Importance of Being an Orthodox Jew & General Levels of Happiness

86% of respondents agree fully that being an Orthodox observant Jew is an important part of their life, with the vast majority (80%) either fully or somewhat agreeing that Shabbat is a stress-free-day for them.*



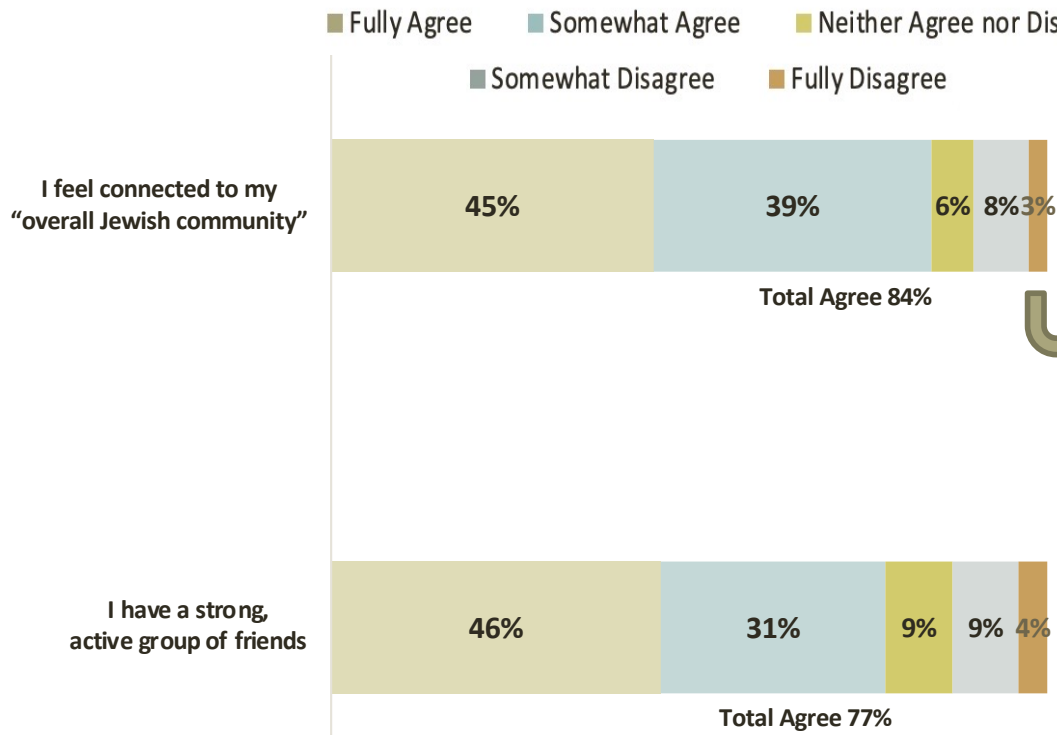
Respondents are generally financially comfortable and happy with their family and social life; the latter showed the lowest level of full agreement (29%).



See Q16 in Appendix III – Survey Questionnaire. While some of the data in this report are for all survey respondents combined, the “overall figures” do not purport to represent the entire Jewish community (Modern Orthodox, Haredi, men and women, all ages, marrieds and singles, etc., many of which vary from each other with respect to the data being presented). Rather, the value of the overall data are as a baseline, and the subsequent comparisons – particularly for singles, but also for other subgroups will generally be more meaningful. n (number of responses to the survey question) = 821.

* This was asked because it had been noted that Shabbat is more a source of stress among singles individuals. Indeed, the results supported that theory, with 20% of single individuals and 9% of marrieds noting that Shabbat had some elements of stress.

Connections to Community and Friends – 45% of respondents agree fully that they feel connected to their overall Jewish community (84% either fully or somewhat agree); and nearly as many say they have a strong, active circle of friends (77% either fully or somewhat agree). People see a wide array of organizations (local and distant), individuals and groups as all being a part of their “overall Jewish community.”

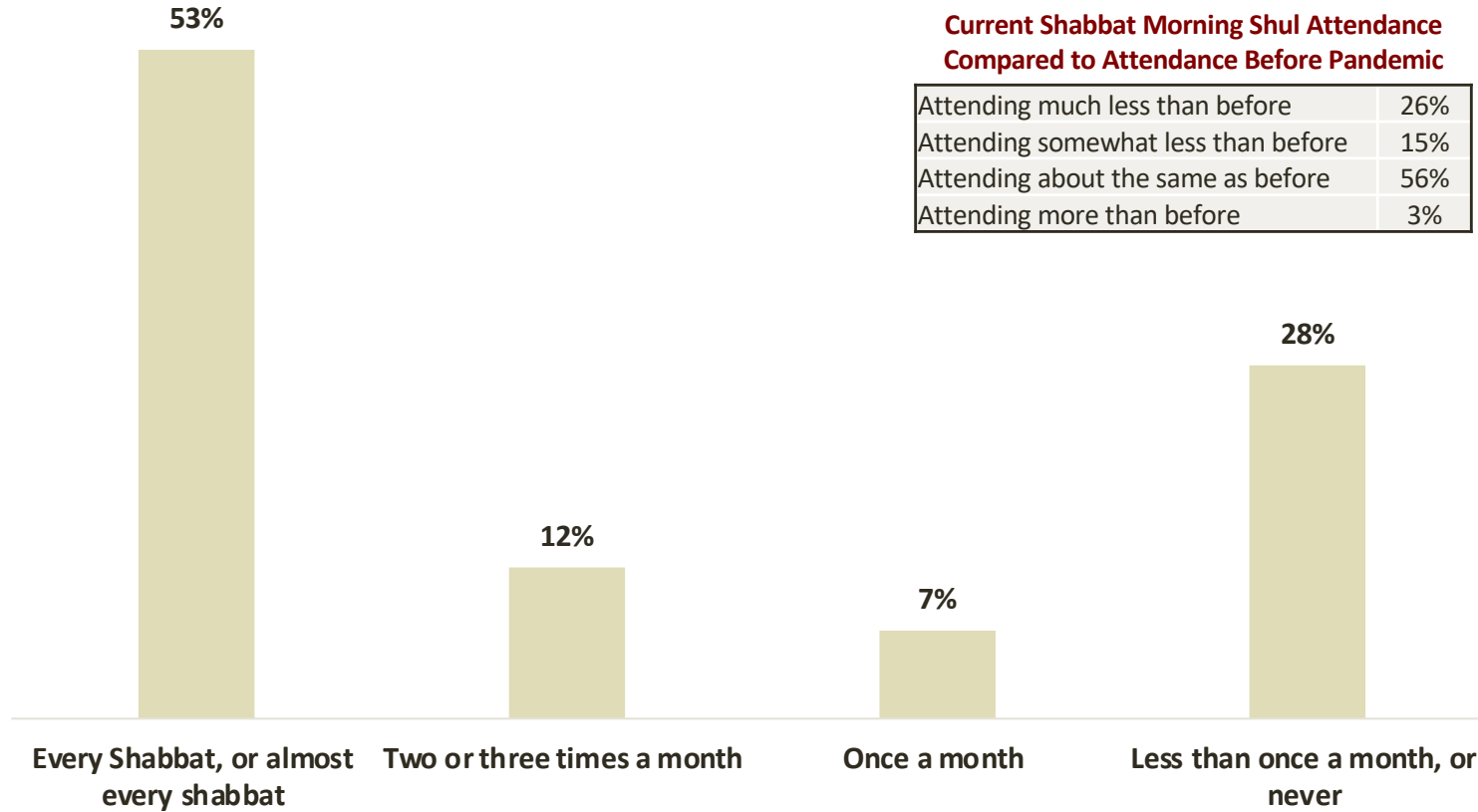


A Broadened Definition of "The Overall Jewish Community"

Local shul(s)	93%
Individuals – Jewish friends, teachers, religious or communal leaders, etc.	90%
Local Orthodox organizations, e.g., day school/yeshiva, Chabad, non-profit, etc.	76%
Shul(s) elsewhere	49%
Online Jewish groups or programs, social media groups, etc.	43%
Broad (e.g., national) Jewish organization(s)	40%
Local non-Orthodox organizations, e.g., school, Moishe House, JCC, Hillel, non-profit	39%
Social groups, meetups, clubs, etc. that may be social and/or Jewish-themed	37%

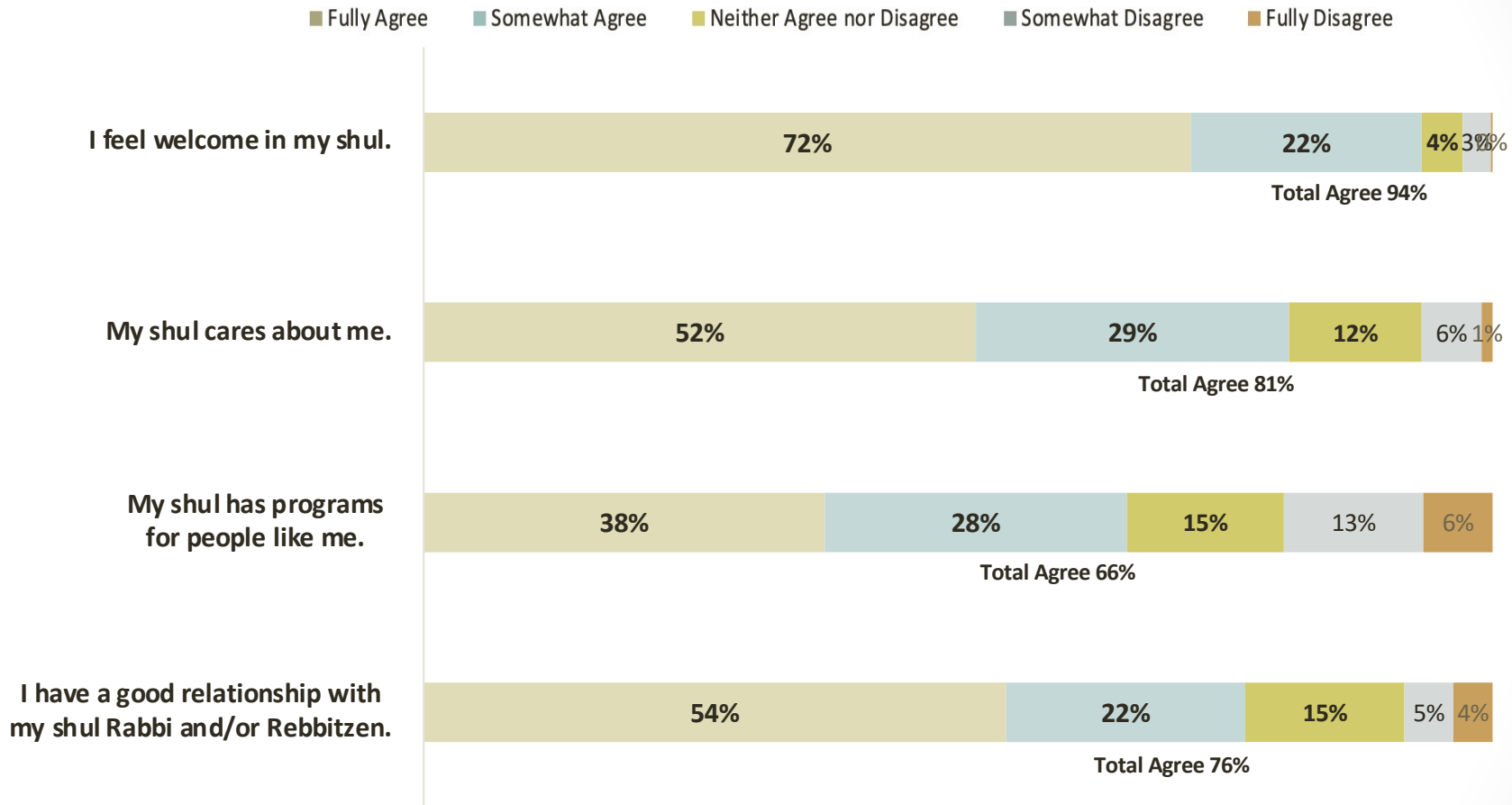
See Q14-15 in Appendix III – Survey Questionnaire. n = 841 (Q14, components of overall Jewish community) and 827 (Q15, connection to community and friends).

Connections to Shul: Attendance – The vast majority (86%) have a shul that they consider to be their primary shul, and a majority of all respondents (53%) attend shul every, or almost every, Shabbat. However, attendance has declined, as 41% say they are attending less now than before the pandemic.



See Q12, Q10, Q11 in Appendix III –Survey Questionnaire. n for Q12 (have a primary shul) = 867; n for Q10 (frequency of shul attendance) = 877; n for Q11 (current shul attendance compared to before pandemic) = 875.

Connections to Shul – Respondents have strong positive relationships with their shul: 94% feel welcome there, 81% say their shul cares about them, and 66% say their shul has programs for people like them.

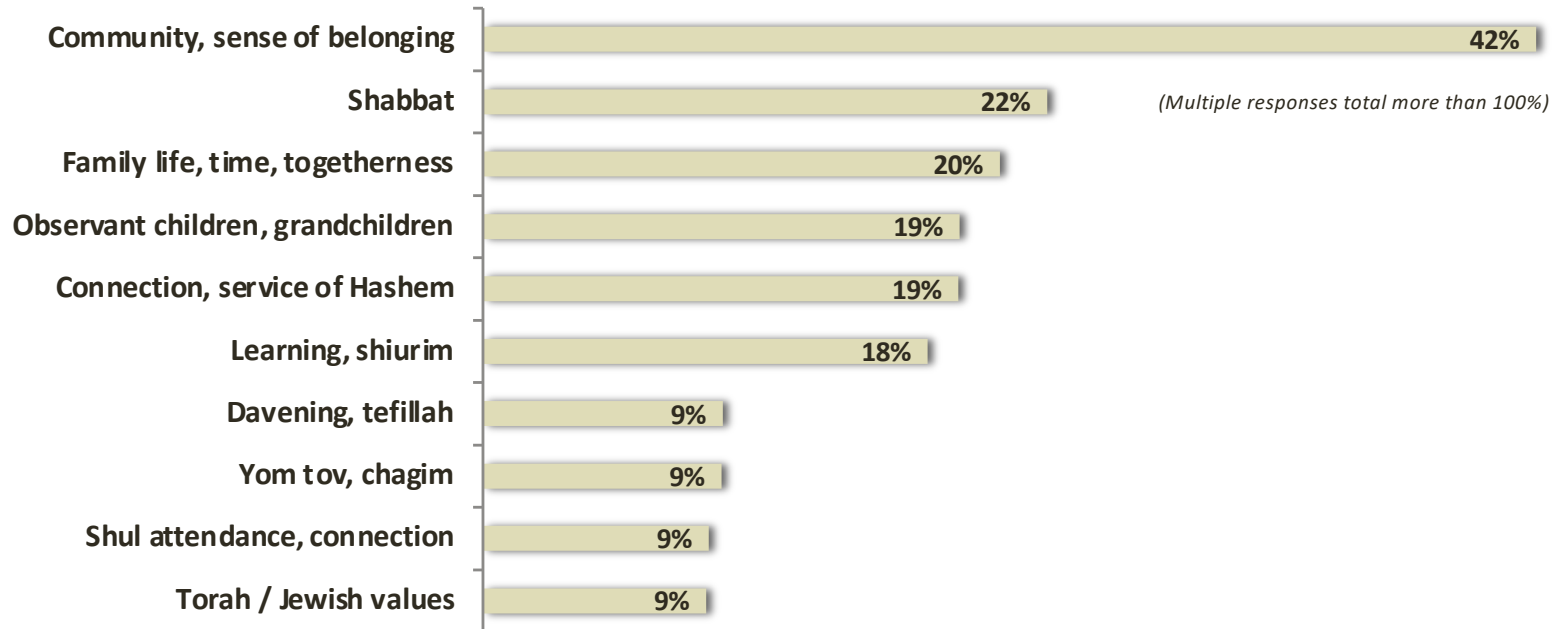


See Q13 in Appendix III –Survey Questionnaire. N = 573.

Communal Connection: Overall Importance and Current Assessment

What gives the most satisfaction, joy or meaning to your life as an Orthodox / Observant Jew?

(Source: The Nishma Research Profile of American Modern Orthodox Jews, September 2017)

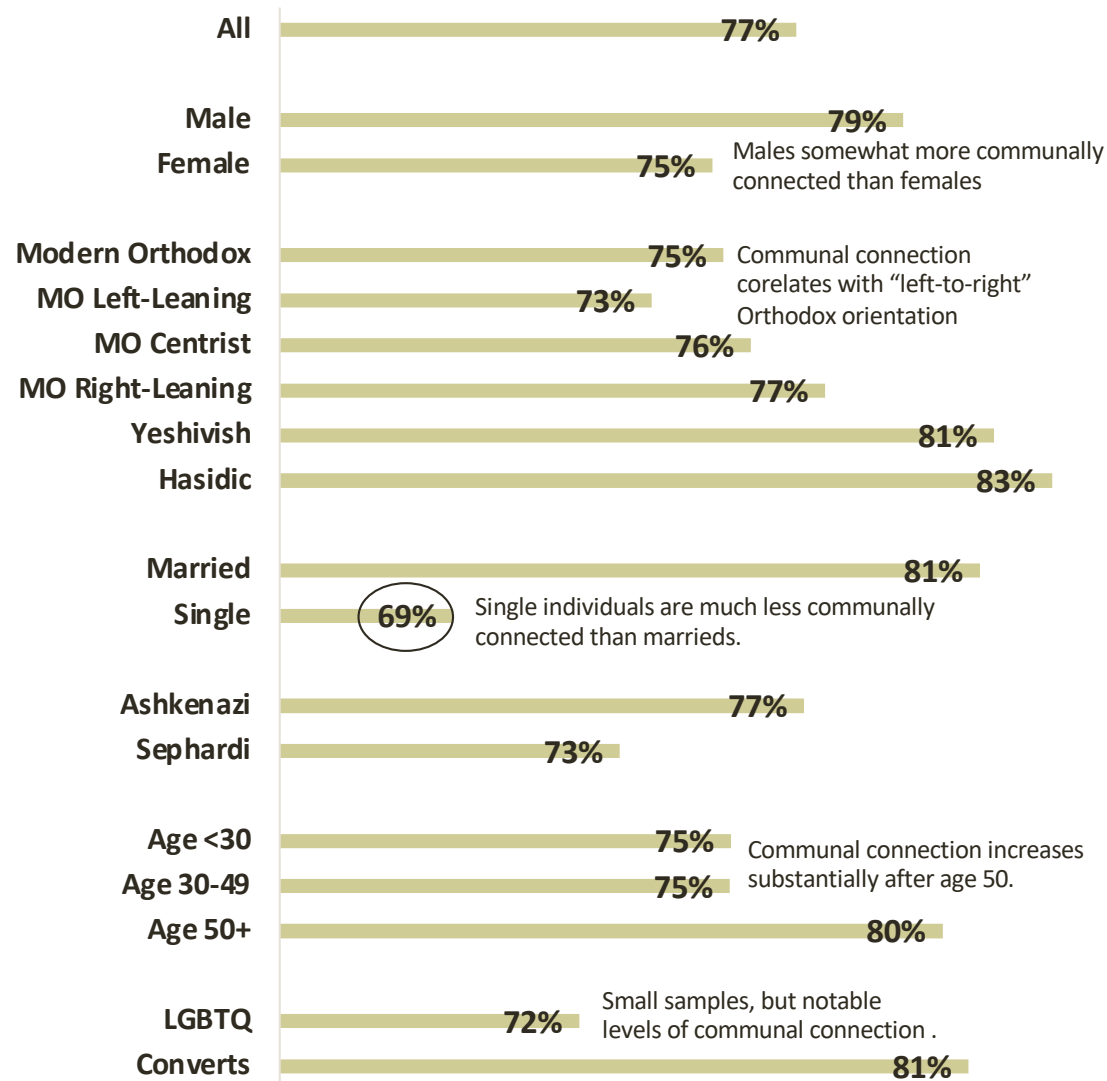


Our current survey respondents overall (all respondents combined) feel well-connected.

*** Index of Overall Communal Connection 77%**

* The Index of Overall Communal Connection is a weighted average based on selected questions: Q12 (whether they have a primary shul), the four items in Q13 (shul connection), and the first item in Q15 (communal connection). For items in Q13 and Q15, a weighted score was constructed with weights of 1.0, 0.7, 0.5, 0.3 and 0 for the five response options, respectively. The measure thus scales from 0% (all totally disagree) to 100% (all totally agree), and is based on all of the responses (not only a “top two box” type of survey metric), as follows: Index of Overall Communal Connection = (60% \times Q15)+(40% \times Q13), which is then reduced by 0.1% for every 1% of a group without a primary shul (many, and perhaps most, attend a number of shuls, but we want to reflect a slight loss of communal connection arising from not having a primary shul). The Q13 figure is the average of the four items in this question. Q13 is assigned a slightly lower weight in recognition that the shul is also included as one of the items in Q15. We recognize that the importance of connection to shul vs. other communal entities varies. Our goal is to create a single, albeit subjective, measure of a group’s sense of communal connection, that will allow us to explore the differences among the demographic groups.

Index of Overall Communal Connection: Where is it Stronger and Where is it Weaker?



With our index of connection ranging from 69% to 83%, it appears that most Orthodox Jews have at least a reasonably strong connections to their community.

Given the diversity of the community, its many, often cohesive, sub-groups, the variety of shuls and leaders, we believe that many people gravitate toward communities and shuls that meet their needs, i.e., they find their community.

Still, there are some notable differences in connection among the groups examined.

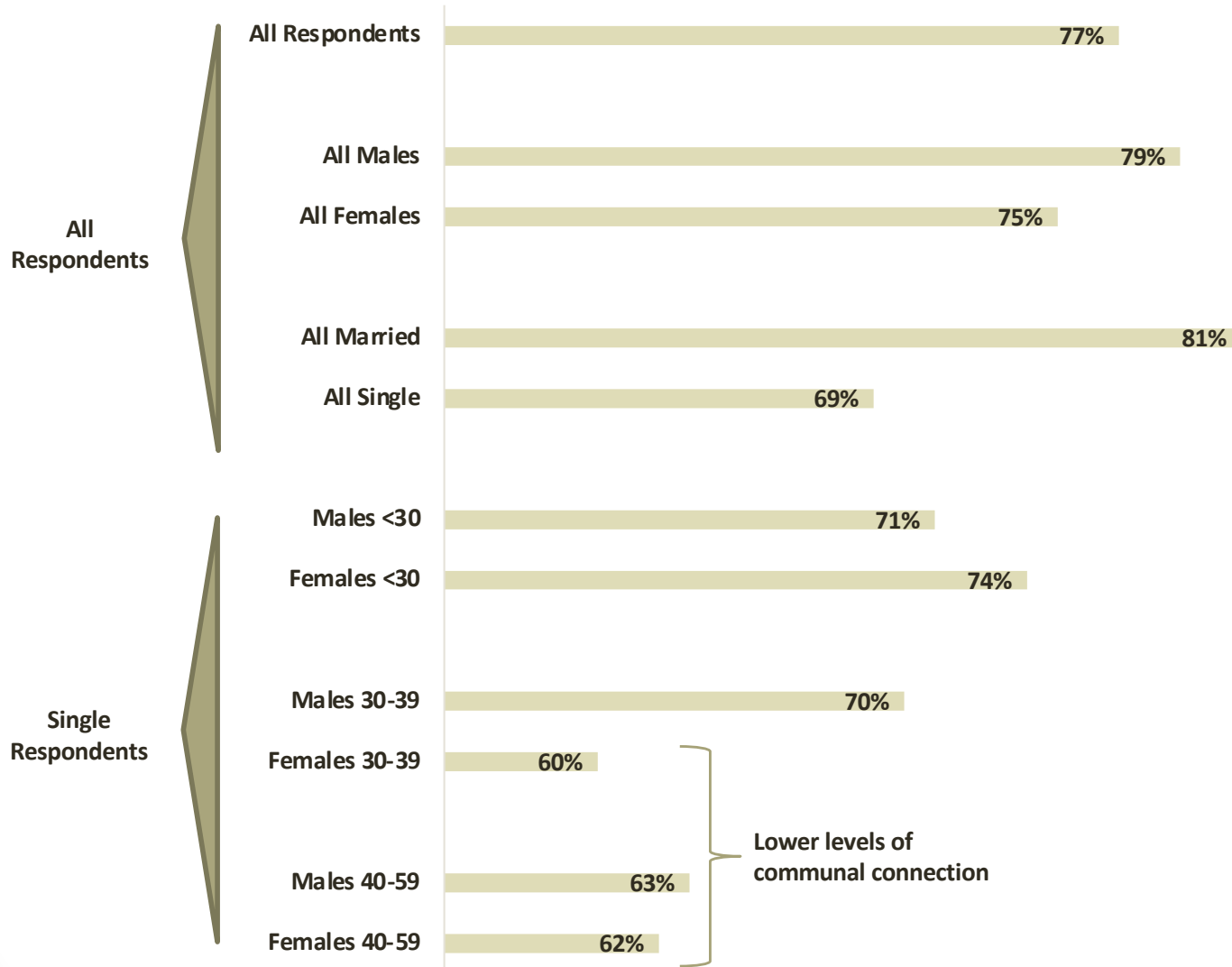
- Single individuals have the weakest communal connection among all groups measured.
- Strongest communal connections are found among the married, Haredi (both Yeshivish and Hasidic), and those age 50+.
- Overall, the difference between marrieds and single individuals is the largest within any segmented demographic group.

On this note – the lower level of communal connection among single individuals – let us proceed to the substantial section of the survey dealing with the lives and experiences of these single individuals.

Orthodox Jewish Single Individuals*

* Among 335 Orthodox single individuals who responded to the survey, 80% were Modern Orthodox and 20% were Haredi. The survey report findings are primarily representative of the Modern Orthodox. While the number of Haredi respondents is smaller, a supplementary report on the Haredi segment will be available in June 2022.

Index of Overall Communal Connection: Variations Among Single Individuals, by Gender and Age

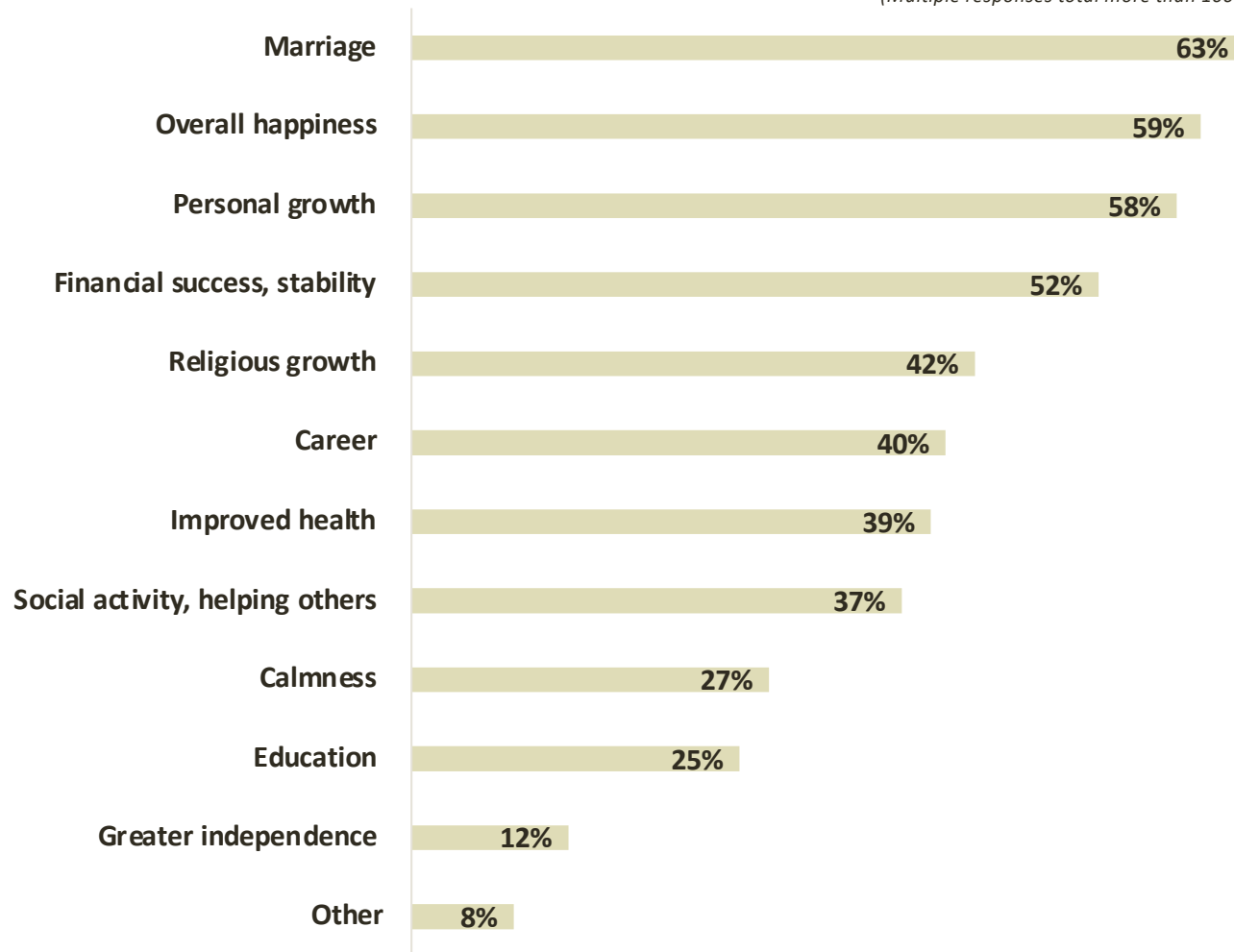


- As previously shown, our index of overall communal connection (a metric devised by combining responses to various questions) is:
 - All 77%
 - All Married 81%
 - All Single 69%
- This chart explores the drop-off in connection among singles, by gender and by age.
- Males have a drop-off in sense of communal connection at age 40+, while females have a sharp drop-off in sense of communal connection at a younger age of 30+.

n = Males <30 - 55, Females <30 - 92, Males 30-39 - 22, Females 30-39 - 43, Males 40-59 - 20, Females 40-59 - 50.

Top Personal Goals of Single Individuals – Marriage is cited as the top personal goal (by 63% of respondents), followed by overall happiness (59%), personal growth (58%) and financial success/stability (52%).

(Multiple responses total more than 100%)



- Males more often cite as their goals: marriage (71% vs. 60%), religious growth (47% vs. 41%), health (44% vs. 37%), and education (31% vs. 21%),
- Females more often cite as their goals: overall happiness (65% vs. 48%), personal growth (62% vs. 48%), social activity / helping others (40% vs. 29%), and calmness (29% vs. 22%).
- There are differences by age as well. Many of the goals drop in importance over age, including marriage (77% for ages 18-29; 72% for 30-39, 43% for ages 40+). Some become more important, including health (27% / 41% / 50%), calmness (19% / 21% / 39%), and social activity / helping others (33% / 35% / 43%).

See Q17 in Appendix III –Survey Questionnaire. n =271. The questions in this section were asked of those who are single, divorced, separated or widowed. See Appendix I – Respondent Demographics for information on the makeup of this group, as well as comparisons to those who are married.

Top Personal Goals of Single Individuals, by Gender and Age

Single individuals' goals shift somewhat over time.

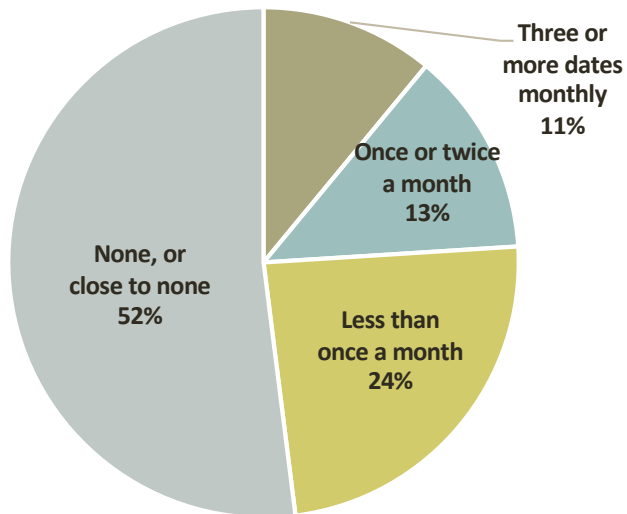
- Marriage is a top goal; but it drops a bit for females after age 40, while remaining the top goal for males.
- Finances are more important for both genders at age 40+, rising to #1 in importance for females.
- Religion is quite important to males under age 30 but declines thereafter.

(Multiple responses total more than 100%)

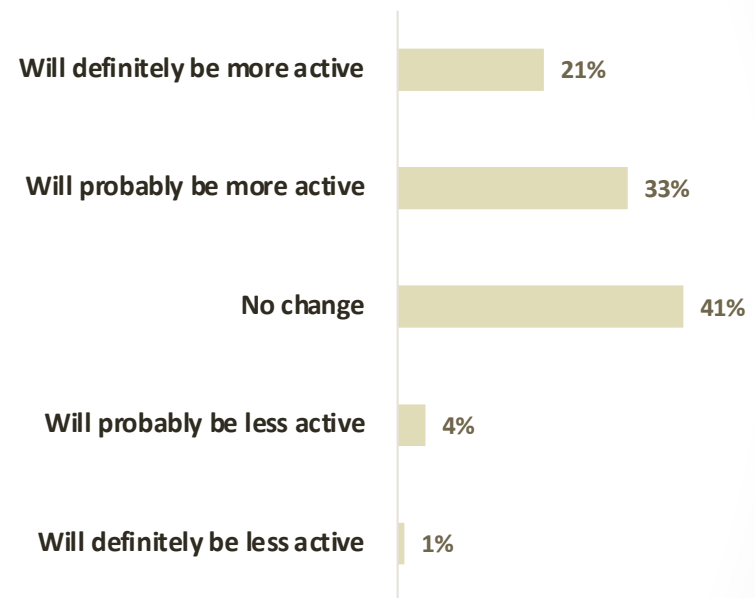
Rank	All Single Individuals	Females			Males		
		Under 30	30 to 39	40 to 59	Under 30	30 to 39	40 to 59
1	Marriage 63%	Marriage 77%	Marriage 73%	Finances 63% ↑	Marriage 78%	Marriage 72%	Marriage 77%
2	Happiness 59%	Growth 76%	Growth 70%	Happiness 59%	Religion 55%	Growth 70%	Finances 71%
3	Growth 58%	Happiness 65%	Happiness 65%	Marriage 57% ↓	Growth 53%	Happiness 65%	Career, Happiness 59%
4	Finances 52%	Finances 46%	Finances 58%	Social 48%	Education, Career, Finances 45%	Finances 58%	
5	Religion 42%	Religion 44%	Religion 43%	Growth 46%		Religion 43% ↓	Health 53%
6	Career 40%	Social, Education 36%	Career, Health 40%	Health 44%	Happiness 43%	Career, Health 40%	Calmness 41%
7	Health 39%			Career 37%			Growth 35% ↓

Dating Incidence – About half are doing no dating or close to that, and the rest are not doing much dating, perhaps a result of the pandemic. Among those who are dating, most have been doing so for between 2 years and 15 years. Looking forward, a majority (54%) say they will be more active dating over the next few years.

How much dating are you currently doing, on average?



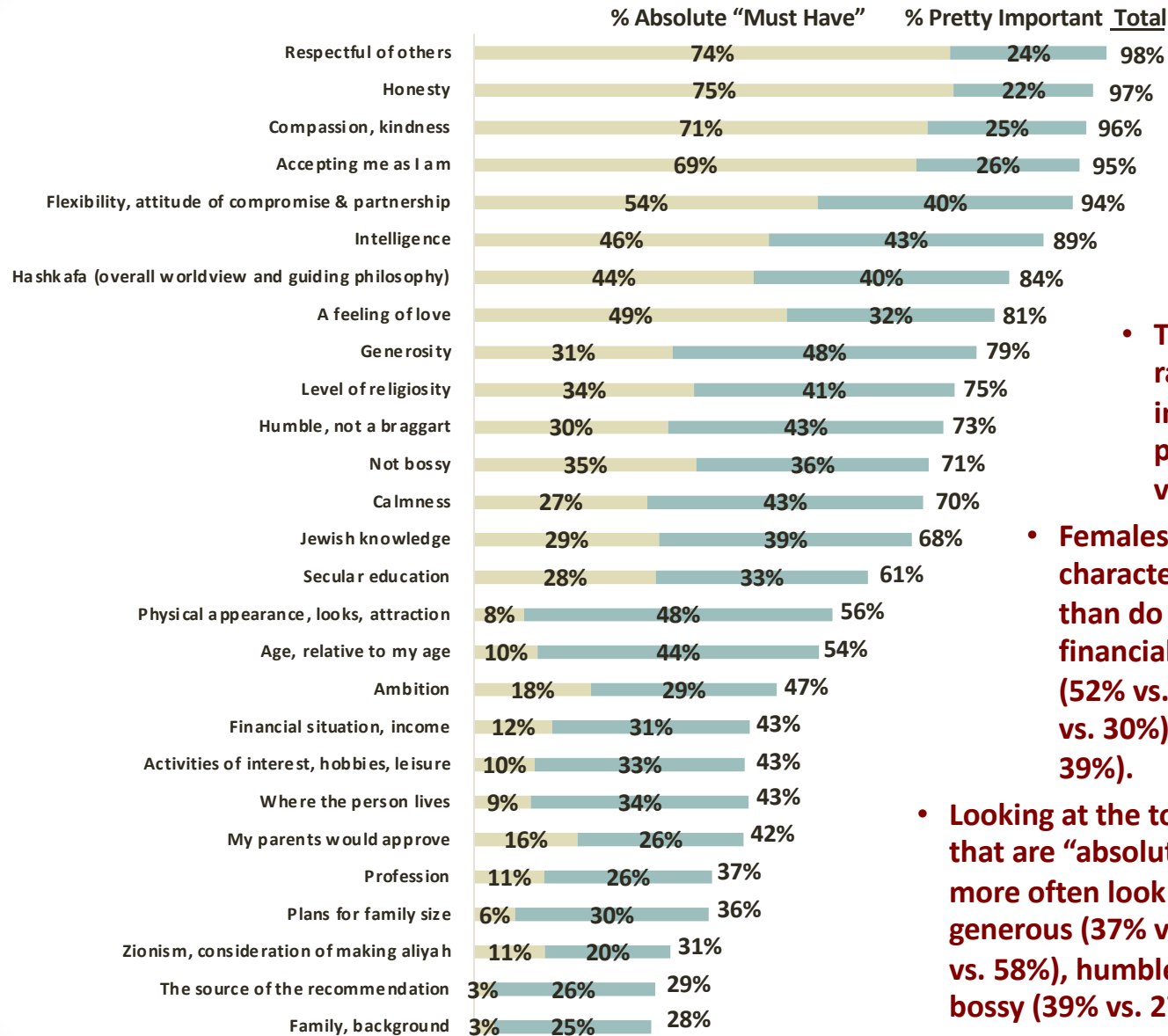
Will your amount of dating change over the next few years?



How Many Years Have You Been Dating? (the 20 th to 80 th percentiles)	
All respondents	2 years to 15 years
Divorced or Separated	<1 year to 12 years
Widowed	<1 year to 5 years

See Q18-20 in Appendix III –Survey Questionnaire. n = Q18 (how much dating) = 280; Q19a (how long dating) = 163; Q19b (how long dating since divorce/separation) = 49; Q19c (how long dating since widowed) = 11; Q20 (change in amount of dating) = 255.

What People Look For in a Dating Partner / Potential Spouse



- Respondents most often look for a respectful, honest and kind person (96%+).

- The only characteristic rated as significantly more important by males is physical appearance (67% vs. 50%).

- Females rate a number of characteristics as more important than do males, including financial situation and income (52% vs. 40%), profession (41% vs. 30%), and ambition (51% vs. 39%).

- Looking at the top response choice (those that are "absolute must haves"), females more often look for someone who is generous (37% vs. 18%), respectful (82% vs. 58%), humble (38% vs. 16%), and not bossy (39% vs. 27%).

See Q26 in Appendix III –Survey Questionnaire. n = 189.

What People Look For in a Dating Partner / Potential Spouse: Shifts by Gender and Age – With a few exceptions, there is general consistency in what people are looking for.

(Lists top 10 attributes cited by 40% or more as “Must Have”)

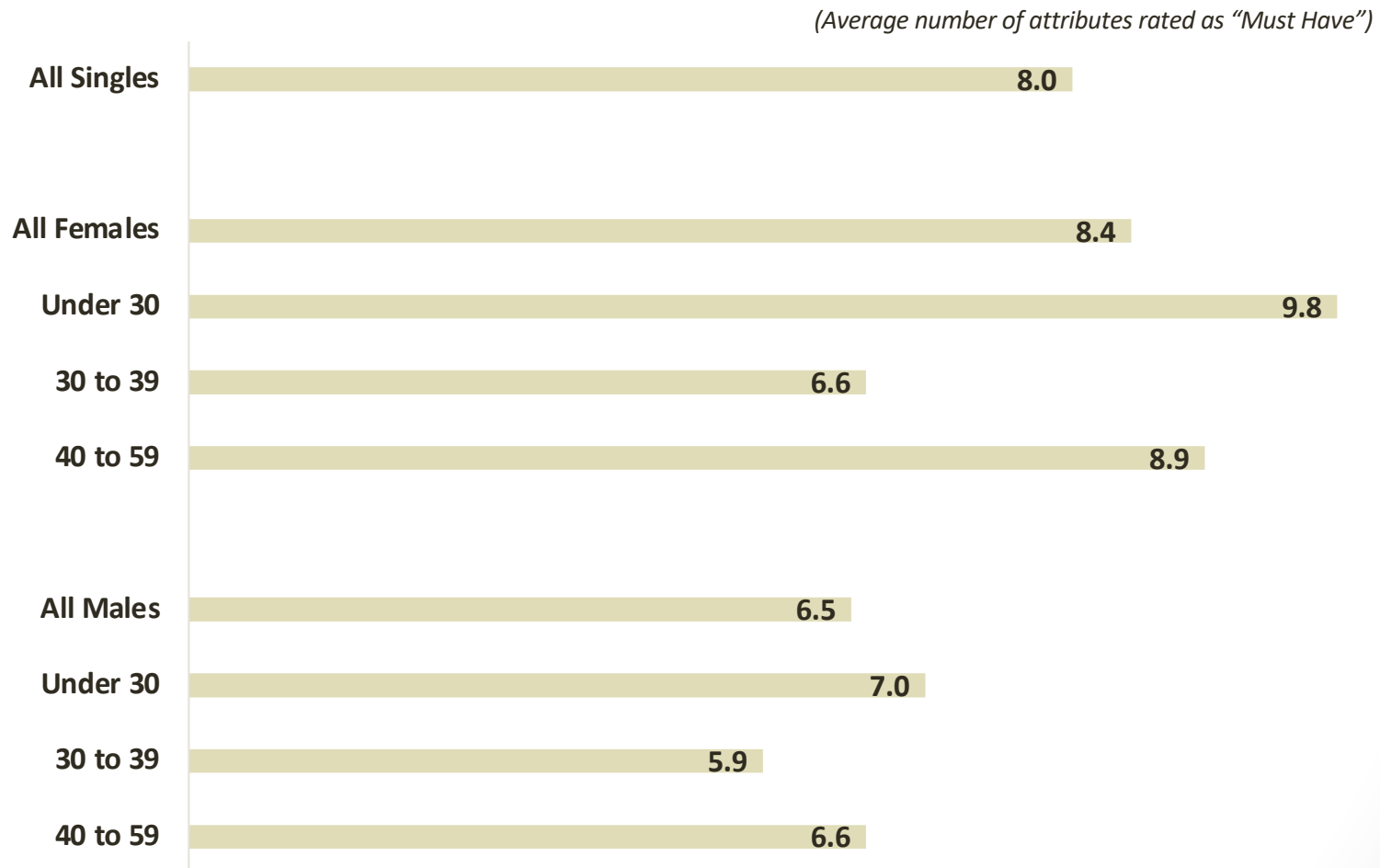
Rank	All Single Individuals (% “Must Have”)	Females			Males		
		Under 30	30 to 39	40 to 59	Under 30	30 to 39	40 to 59
1	Honest 75%	Kind 87%	Respectful 81%	Honest 90%	Accepting 66%	Accepting, Honest 75%	Respectful 70%
2	Respectful 74%	Respectful 82%	Accepting 78%	Respectful 84%	Kind 61%		Honest 67%
3	Kind 71%	Honest 78%	Kind 69%	Kind 77%	Respectful 59%	Flexible, Respectful 50%	Kind 60%
4	Accepting 69%	Accepting 70%	Honest 66%	Accepting 74%	Honest 58%		Flexible, Love, Intelligent 50%
5	Flexible 54%	Flexible 69%	Flexible 50%	Flexible 65%	Intelligence, Hashkafa 52%	Love 44%	
6	Love 49%	Hashkafa 61%		Intelligent 55%		Intelligent 41%	
7	Intelligent 46%	Love, Religiosity 57%		Love 52%	Religiosity 49%		
8	Hashkafa 44%			Not bossy 48%	Love 46%		Not bossy, Calm, Jewish Knowledge 40%
9	Not bossy 35%	Jewish knowledge 48%					
10	Religiosity 34%	Humble 44%		Humble, Generous 42%			

There are a handful of attributes where we find differences between Modern Orthodox and Haredi:

- Modern Orthodox more often seek intelligence (51% vs. 30% among Haredi) and secular education (36% vs. 5% among Haredi).
- Haredi more often seek hashkafah (75% vs. 34% among MO), religiosity (64% vs. 26% among MO), Jewish knowledge (52% vs. 22% among MO), and not being bossy (53% vs. 29% among MO).

n = 144 for Modern Orthodox and 44 for Haredi. Given the small sample for Haredi, the differences listed above are those of 20 or more percentage points.

How Selective are Single Individuals? – On average, respondents rated 8 of the 27 listed attributes as “must haves” (females averaged 8.4 “must haves” vs. 6.5 for males, with younger females being most selective).



Dating Approaches – Jewish dating sites and apps, and community events are the top two approaches used to meet people for dating, followed by the use of *shadchanim*. Looking forward, these will continue to be the main resources, with more reliance on community events (not surprisingly, given the pandemic).

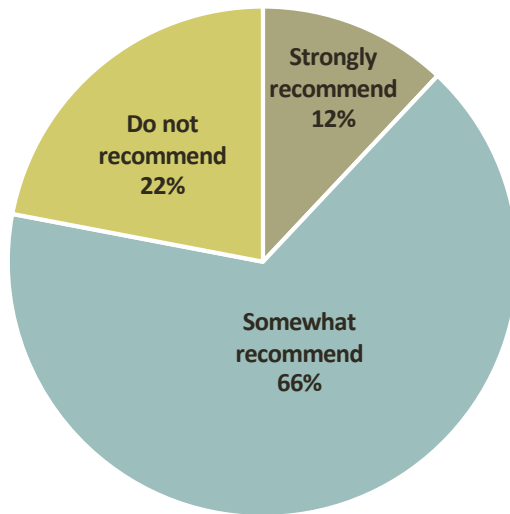
	Approaches Used In Past 3 Years		Approaches Planned on in Next Year or Two	
	% Using *	Rank	% Citing *	Rank
Online Jewish dating sites or apps	43%	1	51%	2
Jewish community events, gatherings	30%	2	58%	1
<i>Shadchanim</i> (matchmakers)	29%	3	39%	3
Other social gatherings	25%	4	29%	4
Jewish social media	21%	5	9%	7
Blind dates	19%	6	19%	6
Taking the initiative in asking people out	14%	7	25%	5
Non-Jewish dating sites or apps	14%	8	8%	8
Non-Jewish social media	7%	9	3%	9

See Q21 and Q23 in Appendix III –Survey Questionnaire. n = 271 for Q21, and 95 for Q23.

* % Using (past use of the approaches) is defined as those responding “Often” plus 50% of those responding “Sometimes.” % Citing (future planned use of the approaches) is the percentage of respondents checked this approach (respondents were limited to checking their top three). Given the different language, the percentages past vs. future are not comparable, although the rankings are generally consistent and seem to comport with pre- vs. post-pandemic environments.

Assessment of *Shadchanim* (Matchmakers) – Two-thirds of respondents “somewhat recommend” the use of *Shadchanim*, but generally advice some discretion. They are seen as a way to broaden contacts and options.

**Recommendations Relating to
Use of *Shadchanim***



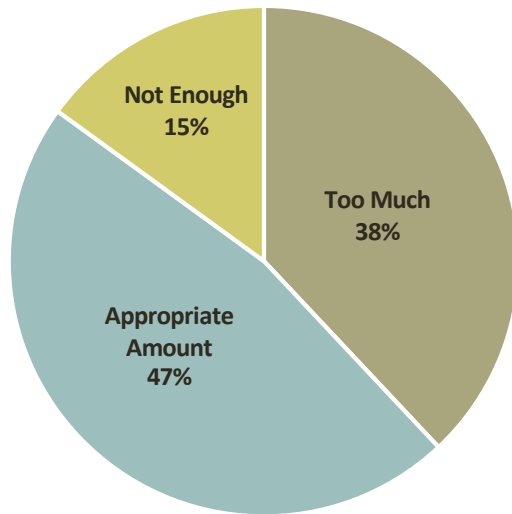
Sample Verbatim Responses

- *Sometimes they're good at what they do and sometimes they do a terrible job and their suggestions don't make sense*
- *They do not listen to my needs and only have men who are within the typical frum mold, not anyone creative or deep/free thinkers.*
- *I think it can be helpful to get outside perspectives and suggestions from people who have experience making successful matches and judging what makes a successful match. I do not think it needs to be the exclusive approach.*
- *Access to more possibilities, a guide in the process, can be a go between if needed.*
- *I am Chassidish, being that our community does not socially mix between genders, instructions are the only way to meet people for the purpose of dating. The shadchanim know how to work the system the right way for optimal results. Good Shadchanim only obviously*
- *In my experience, shadchanim are very good for increasing your pool of contacts. However, if you're out of the box in a way that isn't easily expressed on a shidduch resume or online profile, that's a potential barrier. Additionally, in my experience, the range of Jews that use shadchanim are a certain subset of Orthodox Jews, so if you're not in that subset, using shadchanim may not be a fruitful endeavour.*
- *I have not had much success but feel they are more serious options than online*
- *Gives you more options to broaden your range of opportunities*
- *I've only used shadchanim from SawYouAtSinai, most users on that site are in NY unfortunately, there was a small handful in my city.*
- *They are good for ultra orthodox but I never met anyone suitable.*
- *An intermediary in the early stages of dating allows for more transparency for more religious people. Not for me, the saw you at Sinai people only had guys that weren't normal, one had mental issues, the other 2 I met were way too old*
- *There's a handful of Shadchans that I trust. Most I wouldn't rely on because they never listen.*
- *I think that it is a good idea to get your name out there. at the end of the day it is Hashem that it is th Ultimate match maker but we have to do our part.*
- *It helps connect people, but there are plenty of issues with the shidduch system*
- *The matches often don't feel personally selected/on target. This isn't completely the matchmaker's fault as they are limited by what available (not enough Jewish observant men in this age range). But occasionally they have ended up being good suggestions.*

See Q22 and Q22a in Appendix III – Survey Questionnaire. n = 145 for Q22 (recommendation) and 108 for Q22a (number of verbatim responses). Sample verbatim responses, where shown in this report, are selected using a random sorting algorithm, and they are presented without any editing.

Extent of Pre-Dating Investigations – A plurality (47%) say that the amount of investigation that some people do before dating or setting up people with dates is appropriate, while a substantial minority (38%) say it is too much.

Views on the Amount of Investigation That Some People Do Before Dating



Sample Verbatim Responses

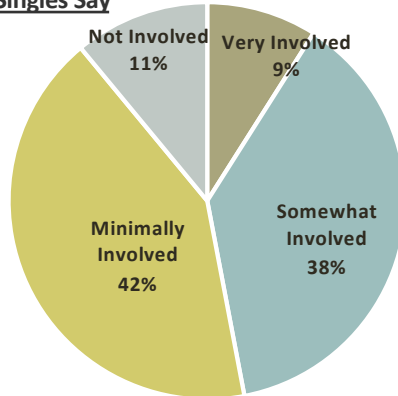
- *It really depends on the situation. But when people care more about stupid things than the investigation starts getting pointless.*
- *If someone doesn't seem to exist it does make me skeptical. Even if you don't use platforms like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, someone my age with no LinkedIn is a huge red flag about their lack of future professional ambitions. Or if you are from a small community and several people from the community have never heard of the person or their family.*
- *I don't do that much research myself, but it's helpful to know some things about the person so that you're not blindsided by huge aspects of who they are.*
- *It's semi random who actually gets along - check some basic demographics and meet up. No need for more.*
- *The purpose of research calls should be just to confirm that the person isn't an ax murderer and that the values generally match up. Matters of personality are too hard to judge from afar, and should be looked into on a date if everything else is in order.*
- *I believe all Reference Checking should be deferred until after the third or fourth date. Today, too many people use reference checking as a shortcut, and they dispose of the shidduch suggestions if a reference doesn't pick up the phone or doesn't have the answers to all of the questions. How do you expect my chevrusa to know EVERYTHING about my family if all we do is Talk Torah? Why not ask me about my family myself??*
- *I think that background research is very important!*
- *people need to change their focus a little and ask more important questions that can impact life down the road as apposed to the minute details of life unless they are a person that cares for that*
- *In some ways to much, in other ways not enough. Dating is something that to too many people is something that there is unmitigated license to lie and unmitigated desperation to marry off the women.*
- *There is a huge difference between the more modern approach and the more yeshivish approach.*
- *I know based on the matches suggested by the SYAS shadchannim that they clearly do not even read my profile, let alone potential matches.*

See Q24, 24a in Appendix III – Survey Questionnaire. n = 253 for Q24 (amount of investigation) and 90 for Q24a (number of verbatim responses).

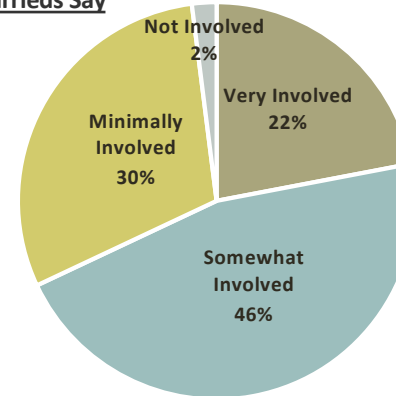
Parental Involvement in Dating – Almost half (47%) of singles want their parents to be very or somewhat involved in their dating, but a majority (53%) want parents minimally or not involved. Perhaps not surprisingly, married (presumably comprised of more parents) want more parental involvement (68% very or somewhat involved).

How Involved Parents Should Be in Their Children's Dating

What Singles Say



What Marrieds Say



Sample Verbatim Responses

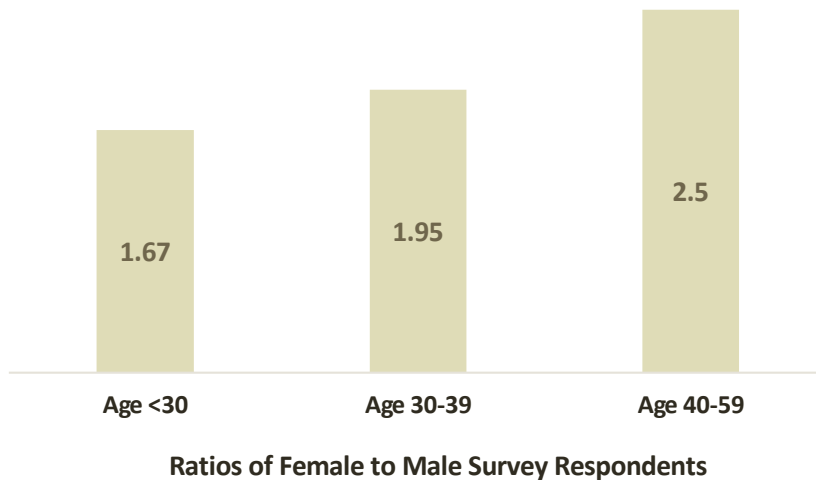
- *In terms of actually screening prospects, I have just seen far too many cases in which the parents are not on the same page as their children, and the children suffer as a result. Perhaps in other communities where they get married much younger it's necessary*
- *In high school (when relevant) and college, there should be parental support, but it should decrease over time. By my age (39), a person should be independent but also factor in close family relationships.*
- *There are many people (like converts, BTs... but not exclusively) who don't have parents who can help. It would be good if that is something people on the other end (shadchanim, potential dates) would take into account*
- *As a female without many male friends or female friends with male friends, having my parents cast a wide net is appreciated*
- *Involved when relevant. For example, a close friend of mine has parents with relevant connections, i.e. they have friends with eligible sons and they actually tried to set her up with a nice guy with a lot of potential. My parents, on the other hand, don't know any nice religious guys in my age range that aren't my cousins, so they should definitely not be involved.*

Sample Verbatim Responses

- *Guidance and counsel where requested. But, to the extent there are particular issues of concern — ie, dating non-Jews — parents should be more involved.*
- *I also think it depends on how old the child is, and how comfortable the child feels with this involvement.*
- *The choice is not the parents' even if they think it is. Children decide*
- *This assumes dating at a younger age. As the child gets older, it's often sensible for parents to reduce their involvement*
- *When I say that parents should be involved, I mean that parents can be important resources for psychological and emotional support.*
- *I believe that we should check the family out before dating commences*
- *Emotionally healthy parents are the most natural advocates for their children. Other than children who would be resentful, parents can help the children by providing a (relatively) more objective voice in an emotionally-laden process.*
- *It is unfortunate that the current environment has so declined in terms of natural interaction among young people of different genders that it is necessary for family to intervene to get shiduchim going, even to the point of hiring people to facilitate interaction.*

See Q25, 25a in Appendix II I– Survey Questionnaire. n for Q25 (parental involvement) = 265 singles and 513 marrieds, and n = 247 for Q25a (number of verbatim responses);

The Ratio of Females to Males



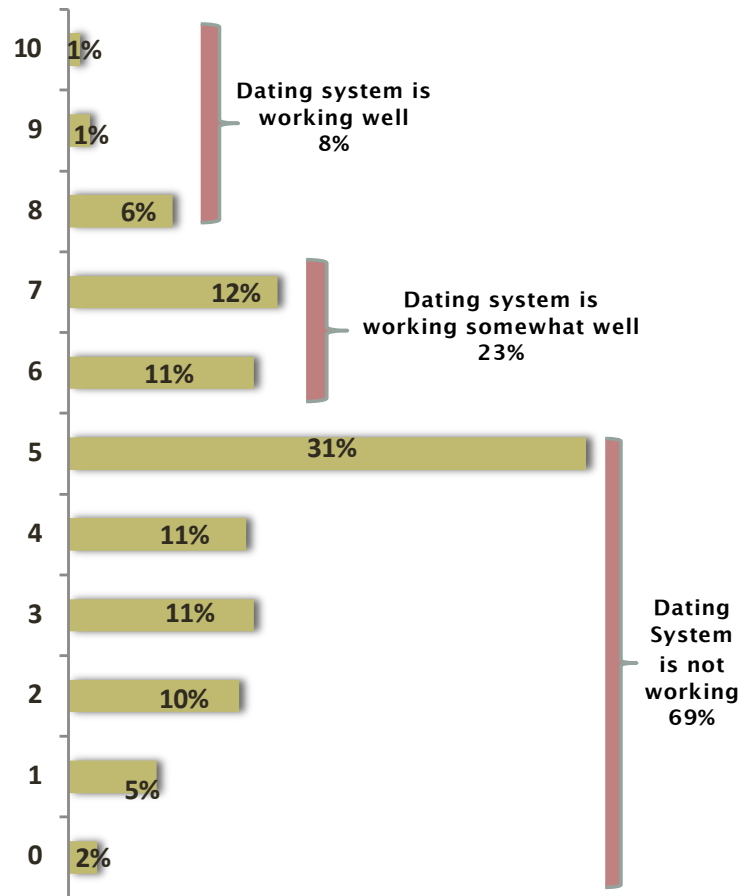
- **Conventional wisdom is that there are more single females than males and the disparity grows among older single individuals.**
- **The ratios of our respondents is offered simply to highlight this; in the case of our opt-in survey, it may well be that single women were more motivated to respond to the survey.**
- **It has been speculated that more men leave Orthodoxy. While this disparity is often bemoaned – and certainly worthy of note – there is little data on its extent or causes.***

n = Males <30 - 55, Females <30 - 92, Males 30-39 - 22, Females 30-39 - 43, Males 40-59 - 20, Females 40-59 - 50. groups for ages 30+ have smaller samples of n<30.

* See "Date-onomics: How Dating Became a Lopsided Numbers Game," a book by Jon Birger that explores the female/male ratios among Mormons and Orthodox Jewish singles. One theory the book posits is that the mismatch between the numbers of women and marriage age-appropriate men is a function of the age gaps between men and women and the community's rapid growth. The book explains this.

The Orthodox World “Dating System” – Is It Working? – There is wide agreement that the Orthodox world’s dating system isn’t working. Only 8% of all respondents (single and married) rate the overall dating system as working well, and more than two-thirds (69%) give the system mediocre-to-poor ratings.

(All respondents)



- On a scale of 0-to-10, the dating system gets an average rating of 4.7. In the world of 0-to-10 satisfaction ratings, these figures are abysmal.
- Females rate the dating system more poorly than males, and the negativity gets worse with age.
- Haredi rate the dating system somewhat better than Modern Orthodox.

Overall Assessment of the Orthodox World’s Dating System				
	Working Well (8-10)	Working Somewhat Well (6-7)	Not Working (0-5)	Average Rating
All Respondents	8%	23%	69%	4.7
All Singles	6%	19%	75%	4.2
All Marrieds	9%	25%	66%	5.0
Single Males	8%	27%	64%	4.7
Single Females	5%	14%	81%	4.0
Single Age 18-29	10%	25%	65%	4.8
Single Age 30-39	4%	20%	76%	4.0
Single Age 40+	1%	11%	88%	3.6
Modern Orthodox	3%	15%	82%	3.9
Haredi	14%	32%	54%	5.2

See Q27 in Appendix III – Survey Questionnaire. n = 714. Question text: Looking at the current Orthodox world “dating system” – its processes, resources, how we go about things, etc. – how effective is it in helping people find spouses? Please rate the current dating system on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 = the current system is totally not working, to 10 = the current system is working extremely well.

What Is Holding People Back From Finding a Spouse? (Sample Verbatim Responses) – Respondents often mention difficulties in meeting people (including their location), as well as in finding the “right” person, personal traits or circumstances that they see as making them less desirable, and having other priorities.

- *There isn't much of a space for people who don't fit into concrete boxes or find themselves in the middle (e.g. fully to the right or not at all religious, or currently don't wear pants but potentially would)*
- *I don't want to be married right now.*
- *Knowing where to look. But also am I truly ready or is it just expected that at my age I should be ready so all the dates I go on aren't good because I'm not in a place for them to be good? Unclear*
- *I cannot find a man who is serious about marriage. I have been sexually assaulted on first dates several times, when I told the guy I am interested in dating, not hooking up. It is also hard to find a man serious about Yiddishkeit. They look frum on the outside, but barely keep any mitzvot*
- *Location.*
- *My age. I am [75+] years old and comfortable as I am.*
- *Location, and becoming more observant more recently, and therefore having a smaller network to draw from and knowing less about this world.*
- *I am older and have recent health issues that would interfere.*
- *Age and health issues - I'm not "prime material"*
- *I don't want one. Remaining single while offering various types of help, paid or unpaid, to already existing Jewish families and children, related or unrelated, is an emerging full-fledged and valid means of supporting the Jewish community.*
- *my mazel it has not been the right time for me yet. additionally my faly situation. im slightly older, divorced parents and can lose a few pounds.*
- *As a transgender BT, I think that most of the people I would be able to date are still in the closet, or even if they are out, not yet independent enough to stand up to their families and chose to be with me despite disapproval. The insularity of the community affords little space to LGBT Orthodox Jews to figure out who they are and what they want, as a BT I have the benefit of already doing much of that work before I entered the Orthodox community. I don't think FFBs will start catching up to me in terms of maturity and independence for another few years, so I have to be patient.*
- *Haven't found the right person yet*
- *My family and my mom*
- *Ratio orthodox men:women, ageism, small pool of people in a given city*
- *In my 20's: not being pretty enough, being too outspoken and too educated, lacking some magical flirting ability other people seemed born with In my 30's: the men progressively not being good marriage material, not being pretty enough In my 40's: the men wanting women in their 30's and not being good marriage material*
- *I don't have a lot of friends so I don't come to dating with much support. So I can't take as much risk with being hurt, because I won't have necessarily have someone to confide in. Also it's really hard to find someone who is self aware, communicates openly, and has a healthy self esteem. I would rather stay single forever than be with someone who's totally out of touch with their emotional world, or closed, or puts other people down. I would just be miserable with someone like that. I believe most men are capable but don't learn how.*
- *Not being in New York*
- *Finding out where they went to kindergarten and all the external nonsense that's going on nowadays. Also there's no natural way to meet. Everything is separate this and separate that. Fat and other attitude to have created the Shidduch crisis which doesn't have to exist*
- *Yes Tall and curvy build Less common hashkafa*
- *Bureaucracy of setting people up and how it takes forever, guys saying no for dumb reasons and being unwilling to go on a first dat*
- *People over 35 and never married arw viewed as flawed in the Orthodox Jewish world*
- *I do not want to biologically have children.... I have a hard time meeting people who are open to not having kids, and sometimes that is the only thing we have in common, which ultimately does not make us compatible. I also refuse to date anyone who is politically conservative/right-wing/republican, and although I live in an overall liberal city, the majority of ModOx people, especially in larger communities, still tend to lean that way.*
- *I'm not looking. Enjoying being single way too much*
- *Isolation. There's also the emotional side of things. Still having feelings for an old boyfriend, some anxiety about opening up to a new person, and just being generally constrained by my overall life circumstances.*

This page and the next two pages contain a sample of the verbatim responses. A 45-page document, with all 1,000+ verbatim responses, is available at <http://nishmaresearch.com/social-research.html>.

Advice For Those Who Are Dating (Sample Verbatim Responses) – The advice most often given is to not give up on the search, to keep an open mind (i.e., to not rule people out too quickly) and be patient, and to stay honest but reasonable (and flexible) as to who you are and what you are looking for.

- *Seek and create a full life for yourself as an individual; don't view yourself as incomplete until you find the person you'd like to have at your side.*
- *Give people a chance. I disliked my husband the first four times I met him*
- *Be kind to yourself and others*
- *2. Work on your middot and live your values in every interaction. 3. Be aware that as a single you are in a vulnerable position and some people may try to take advantage of you. Don't sacrifice your well being or your self respect in order to get a date.*
- *Keep an open mind, think about whether you can live with that person permanently as they are now*
- *Don't rush into anything because of peer pressure. It's okay to wait. BUT be reasonable and open to new ideas.*
- *Be open minded, patient and empathetic. Finding yourself is most important*
- *Not sure if this question is "To people who are dating somebody at this point" or "to people who are dating around until they find somebody to be steady with", but assuming that it's the latter, my advice would be to do things that are important to them, be it Jewish social action or photography. You'll be happier because you're doing things you love, and you'll meet more people who love doing the same things you love. Then you can decide based on your criteria whether the people that you meet should fall in the "friends" category or the "dating material" category.*
- *Find someone who's on the same religious wave length as you.*
- *BE HONEST, and do NOT be judgmental.*
- *Be open to meeting people even if the people making the suggestion may not seem to reflect your views -- they may still know what's good for you.*
- *Be honest with yourself.*
- *Ignore marriage pressure, even from your partner. Do what is best for you.*
- *Find someone with shared goals*
- *Throw out your lists*
- *Give it a chance*
- *Parents should check if the other side is normal. First dates should be to see if values can add up. After that, play for chemistry*
- *Every person has depth. Try to find it.*
- *Don't give up.*
- *Be yourself and listen to yourself.*
- *take your time*
- *To consider the qualities like kindness and good character more than qualities like being cool or dazzling.*
- *Trust your gut don't waste each other's time when you know you're not interested just because someone tells you to give everyone a chance*
- *Depends on the age. Why do you want to marry? For young people, is the partner a suitable co-parent? Do your parents like your choice of mate? For people my age, is the partner a good companion? Do your kids like your choice of mate?*
- *Find someone who makes you laugh and treats you the way you deserve to be treated.*
- *Meet through Your school, friend and community connections*
- *be honest with yourself chose someone who is as intelligent as you chose someone who is genuinely nice religion is fluid- have some ground rules but be flexible*
- *Discuss common goals, approaches to money, parenting philosophies, etc.*
- *Don't let other people make your decisions.*
- *Be both clear about what is important and open minded to options you might not have thought of/considered*
- *Be yourself. Do not get married cuz that's what everyone else is doing.*
- *Take your time and honor your own needs throughout the process. Don't stress too much about dating... remember, you're looking for someone who appreciates you for who you are, so you don't need to put on a show.*
- *Settle*
- *Look for someone who you think as a bit better than yourself.*
- *Be realistic, be demanding on important things and not fussy about less important matters.*
- *Read "Eishes Hayil" before dates to put things into perspective and drop attachment to superficial characteristics.*
- *Really get to know one another. See how your friends and family react to them. See how they act in a petty argument. Pay attention to pink and red flags.*
- *Don't expect perfection, marriage is about helping each other grow in every way, not what the other person is going to do or give you. What are you willing to give?*

See Q28 in Appendix III – Survey Questionnaire. n =441 verbatim responses provided by all respondents.

How Shuls & Organizations Can Better Address the Needs of Single Individuals (Sample Verbatim Responses) – Ideas include more interaction and listening, and better inclusion as members and in the variety of shul activities, creating Shabbat and other social events and meeting opportunities.

- *Finding out if the person is interested in meeting and keeping them in mind. Introducing singles in more subtle ways.*
- *Create more shabbos meal opportunities. Shabbos and yomtov are the loneliest times to be single.*
- *More actual modern orthodox shadchanim who are normal*
- *More events and activities. Invite singles for meals.*
- *The only role should be to make introductions. If a pair meets and like each other, then the organization should stay out of it. The pair should go out and get to know each other without any pressure/input from a matchmaker or other organization to decide whether to go out again.*
- *Create more single programming. Provide resources for single people to suggest their programming-activities requests and the shul will need to act on them*
- *Ask the community you're trying to help for their thoughts.*
- *Think positive especially when asked for information!*
- *Need to make singles feel included and not like second class citizens to married couples. Singles need to be included on shul boards, programming committees etc*
- *Single oriented events, shiurim that include, but need not be exclusively for, singles.*
- *Seriously dismantle focus on superficialities (appearance!), labels, and ridiculous lists of requirements and credentials. Focus on two only: halachically Jewish and superior character.*
- *focus groups have events with other synagogues or organizations in the area*
- *Organise social happenings and let nature do the rest. Do not push in any direction. Let them be*
- *Acknowledge the community, offer singles programming to encourage meeting and remind families to host singles for shabbat etc*
- *Programming for young people is key because that's what will keep them in the Jewish community. Otherwise they'll turn to the secular world*
- *Informal interactions, moving away from shidduch*
- *Singles of all ages need to have regular activities/groups/events/trips/shabbat meals/shabbatonim--not just the 20s-30s.*
- *Stop redting a shidduch for nonsense reasons. In out-of-town communities, we already know each other. Stop saying we should date just because of physical proximity and nothing else. My shul regularly has shadchanim just throw whatever at the wall to see if it sticks. Listen to people's desires, for example I wanted someone else politically liberal and getting suggested active Republicans was just pointless.*
- *Treat singles like full participants in the community. Enable singles to develop activities that they want within the community. Include singles in leadership roles.*
- *Try to create an atmosphere of energy and enthusiasm for the singles in the community, let them be active in chessed and helping the community, instead of feeling bad that they're not married. Get rid of the stigma and negative associations*
- *Honestly, I'm sick of feeling like I'm in a meat market at shul. I don't know how to fix that though.*
- *Normalize and integrate single individuals into the community/shul as full-fledged, equally respected and valued participants. Encourage the community to acknowledge extended singlehood as a valid option. Just like in many other interpersonal situations, chilling out about something clears out unnecessary anxiety and often unlocks opportunities previously unseen. I am satisfied and proud of my contributions of assorted household support and childcare that I provided to large Jewish families over the years. I think that an individual's voluntary prioritizing the wellbeing of Jewish progeny in general over their specific genes can be a positive phenomenon. If utilized and organized inventively, a lower child-adult ratio in the community can help improve overall well-adjustment, reduce substance use, and promote mental health among children, thus creating stronger and healthier communities in the future.*
- *Make sure they are noticed, from simple "good shabbos" to invitations to people thinking of them.*
- *The board should decide that they want to make this a priority, and then the rabbi should have conversations with individuals to solicit their thoughts. So pe people might want invitations to meals with families, while others might want programs that allow them to meet other singles. It may depend on whether there's a large pool where a person might not have already met everybody.*

See Q30 in Appendix III – Survey Questionnaire. n = 384 verbatim responses provided by all respondents.

See additional insights on how shuls & organizations can better address the needs of single individuals, on pages 31-32.

Appendix I – An Excerpt from “Responding to the Realities of Single Modern Orthodox Jews” – A PORAT (People for Orthodox Renaissance and Torah) Report, by Professor Sylvia Barack Fishman, Brandeis University



Responding to the Realities of Single Modern Orthodox Jews

The following is a summary of ten policy recommendations that were developed in a PORAT (People for Orthodox Renaissance and Torah) Report*. The recommendations deal with: (a) the general situation and treatment of singles; (b) enhancing singles' dating opportunities; and (c) Jewish educational programs designed to improve interactions between Orthodox men and women, and between single individuals and the rest of the community.

Most of these recommendations require minimal resources, and if Jewish institutions implement them, the lives of thousands of members of our Orthodox community will be improved in significant ways.

1. Offer meaningful roles for single men and women, put them in leadership positions, and integrate them into synagogue life.
2. Treat single Jews respectfully as adults, with friendship, in social interactions.
3. Eliminate the "singles tax" by giving singles the same financial breaks offered to families (i.e., singles should pay half of what couples pay for events). Don't charge separately for every singles event. Instead, fund events for diverse single groups in the same way that family activities are funded.
4. Create reliable arrangements for befriending children of single, widowed, or divorced persons sitting alone.
5. Don't make all activities exclusive to one age, gender, or lifestyle status. Some programs aimed at specific segments are fine, but the default should be that programs are open to congregants/members of all ages and marital status.
6. Create activities with content appropriate for single, divorced, or widowed persons in differing age groups.
7. Create and seek to participate in city-wide or regional gatherings and events for singles, so that singles from different geographical areas have opportunities to meet each other.
8. Discourage singles from writing job-qualification-style lists of requirements and resumes, and encourage them instead to get to know the whole person.
9. Create "organic," "natural" opportunities for men and women to interact with each other, in co-ed settings.
10. Educational programing is needed at several levels: school-age girls and boys on how to understand and feel comfortable with each other; teens on healthy interactions—and how to recognize and react to inappropriate behavior; and adults on realistic expectations and a sense of their own responsibilities in social situations. This is an opportunity for shuls, high schools, Jewish colleges, Orthodox organizations at secular colleges, and other organizations to work together.

* The full report will be available in mid-May 2022, and an online webinar on this topic will be conducted in June 2022. Both the report and information on the webinar will be available in mid-May 2022 at <http://poratonline.org>. Also available at this website is a recording of a program "When Things Don't Work Out as Planned: Single Heads of Household in the Orthodox Jewish Community" (December 2021).

Appendix II – Respondent Demographics

Demographic Summary (Page 1 of 2)

How Respondents Identify Within Orthodoxy			
	All (n=898)	Married (n=555)	Single (n=335)
Modern Orthodox	75%	73%	80%
Haredi (Yeshivish or Chasidic)	25%	27%	20%

Gender			
	All (n=898)	Married (n=555)	Single (n=335)
Male	44%	50%	33%
Female	55%	49%	65%
Non-Conforming	1%	<1%	2%

Age			
	All (n=890)	Married (n=555)	Single (n=335)
18-24	12%	4%	25%
25-29	16%	13%	21%
30-34	14%	15%	13%
35-39	11%	13%	6%
40-49	17%	19%	13%
50-59	11%	13%	8%
60+	19%	23%	14%
Median	38	42	33



How Respondents Identify Within Modern Orthodoxy			
	All (n=676)	Married (n=404)	Single (n=267)
“To the left” ... Liberal M.O.	43%	39%	48%
“In the center” ... Centrist M.O.	38%	39%	37%
“To the right” ... More stringent (<i>machmir</i>) Centrist	19%	22%	15%

Marital Status			
	All (n=890)	Married (n=555)	Single (n=335)
Married	62%	99%	
Living With a Partner	<0.5%	1%	
Single	26%		69%
Single, with fiancé or dating someone to whom will get engaged	3%		9%
Divorced or Separated	7%		17%
Widowed	2%		5%

- The median age of divorce or separation = 40
- Among singles, 8% have had an engagement broken

Demographic Summary (Page 2 of 2)

Educational Level			
	All (n=766)	Married (n=494)	Single (n=272)
H.S. or less	5%	5%	6%
Some college	10%	8%	12%
4-Year Degree	28%	24%	35%
Postgrad/ Professional	57%	63%	47%

- Among those who attended college, 38% attended a “Jewish college”; 41% of marrieds and 33% of singles.

Personal Annual Gross Income	
	Single (n=213)
Under \$40,000	37%
\$40,000-\$69,999	24%
\$70,000-\$99,999	17%
\$100K - \$139.9K	14%
\$140K - \$199.9K	4%
\$200K or more	4%
Median	\$57K

- We did not ask this of marrieds, as we felt they would often provide household income.
- But a comparison can be made to Nishma’s late 2021 survey on the cost of Orthodoxy, which showed a median per person gross income among marrieds of \$89K.
- So, singles earn 36% less than a couple’s per person earnings, and reliance on a single income clearly presents greater challenges.

Where Respondents Live			
	All (n=769)	Married (n=497)	Single (n=272)
United States	89%	89%	89%
Israel	8%	8%	8%
Other	3%	3%	3%

Where U.S. Respondents Live (Areas With 4% or More of Respondents)			
	All (n=647)	Married (n=423)	Single (n=225)
New York City	33%	30%	37%
– Manhattan	11%	7%	19%
– Brooklyn/Queens	18%	19%	15%
New Jersey	16%	22%	6%
Maryland	9%	8%	11%
Mass./Conn.	8%	7%	8%
Illinois	6%	5%	8%
California	5%	5%	5%
Florida	4%	4%	4%
Pennsylvania	4%	4%	3%

- The largest differences between where married and singles resided were Manhattan (many more singles, presumably in the Upper West Side) and New Jersey (many more marrieds).

Appendix III – Survey Questionnaire

Survey Questionnaire (Page 1 of 6)

ORTHODOX JEWRY: COMMUNITY, CONNECTION & UNDERSTANDING
AKA “The Singles Survey”) – Questionnaire Finalized February 13, 2022

* = response required; ☐ = question asked of all respondents

INTRODUCTION

This survey is aimed at the entire Orthodox community, all persons age 18+. We want to better understand the connections that people feel to the community, and what our shuls, other organizations and individuals can do to strengthen the binds among us and between us.

Within this survey there is a section of questions specifically aimed at – and focusing on the experiences of – those who identify as single. The report of findings will provide new data on the singles community and proposals to better meet their needs.

We are therefore making a special effort to get a sizable response from single individuals. You are encouraged to share this survey link with other Orthodox individuals, and especially single individuals whom you may know.

The survey takes about 8-10 minutes to complete if you are married; and about 12-15 minutes if you are a single individual. There are only a few questions (in the first section) that require a response (they are indicated by an asterisk), but we hope you will respond as fully as possible.

Nishma Research, an independent research firm with the mission of providing quality research to the Jewish community, is donating the work and resources to conduct this survey. The survey is completely confidential and anonymous. The findings will be made freely available and downloadable, and there will be instructions at the end of the survey for how you can get the full report. If you have any questions, contact Mark Trencher at mark@nishmaresearch.com.

DEMOGRAPHICS PART 1

*☐Q1. How do you identify Jewishly?

- Orthodox Jewish
- Non-Orthodox or not Jewish [Display message & terminate: Sorry, you do not qualify to take this survey. We do surveys of all of the Jewish community, but this particular survey is addressed to the Orthodox segment. You may close this web browser window or tab to exit the survey. Thank you.]

*☐Q2. Which of the following most closely describes how you identify within Orthodoxy?

- Modern or Centrist Orthodox
- Yeshivish / Litvish / Agudah
- Chasidic, including Chabad

ASK IF Q2 = MODERN OR CENTRIST ORTHODOX:

Q3. Where do you see yourself within Modern or Centrist Orthodoxy?

- “To the left” ... Liberal Modern Orthodox
- “In the center” ... Centrist Modern Orthodox
- To the right” ... More stringent (machmir) Centrist Orthodox

*☐Q4. What is your age?

- 18 to 20
- 21 to 22
- 23 to 24
- 25 to 29
- 30 to 34
- 35 to 39
- 40 to 49
- 50 to 59
- 60 to 69
- 70 or older

*☐Q5. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-conforming or would rather not say

*☐Q6. What is your current marital status?

- Married
- Single
- Single, but have a fiancé or dating someone with whom I’m relatively sure I’ll get engaged
- Divorced or Separated
- Widowed
- Living with a partner

Survey Questionnaire (Page 2 of 6)

ASK IF Q6 = DIVORCED OR SEPARATED:

Q7. At what age were you (first) separated or divorced? [NUMERIC ENTRY]

ASK IF Q6 = SINGLE, DIVORCED, SEPARATED OR WIDOWED

Q8. Have you ever been in an engagement that was broken?

- Yes
- No

Q9. In this survey, we want to explore the sense of connection felt by people in many Orthodox groups. Please check all groups below, in which you identify as a member.

- Ashkenazi
- Sephardi
- Mizrahi
- Émigré from Russia or other former Soviet state
- Jews of Color
- Latin American
- LGBTQ+
- Person with disability
- Convert to Judaism
- Recent (in the past 5 years) baal teshuvah (became Orthodox)
- Other Orthodox sub-group – Please describe [SMALL TEXT BOX]

CONNECTION TO SHUL

Q10. How often, on average, do you currently attend Shabbat morning services in shul?

- Every Shabbat, or almost every shabbat
- Two or three times a month
- Once a month
- Less than once a month, or never

Q11. How does your current Shabbat morning shul attendance compare to what it was before the pandemic? Are you attending ...

- Much less than before
- Somewhat less than before
- About the same as before
- More than before

Q12. Is there a shul that you consider to be your primary shul?

- Yes
- No

ASK IF Q12 HAS A PRIMARY SHUL = YES AND Q10 ATTEND = AT LAST ONCE A MONTH

Q13. Do you agree with these statements?

- I feel welcome in my shul.
- My shul cares about me.
- My shul has programs for people like me.
- I have a good relationship with my shul Rabbi and/or Rebbitzin.

Response Scale:

- Fully Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Fully Disagree

CONNECTION TO BROADER JEWISH COMMUNITY

Q14. When you think more broadly of everything that is part of your “overall Jewish community,” which of the following do you see as parts of that community? Please check all that apply.

- Local shul(s)
- Shul(s) elsewhere
- Local Orthodox organizations, such as a day school/yeshiva, Chabad House, non-profit, etc.
- Local non-Orthodox organizations, such as a school, Moishe House, JCC, Hillel, non-profit, etc.,
- Social groups, meetups, clubs, etc. that may be social and/or Jewish-themed
- Broader (e.g., national) Jewish organization(s)
- Online Jewish groups or programs, social media groups, etc.
- Individuals – Jewish friends, teachers, religious or communal leaders, etc.

Q15. Do you agree with these statements?

- I feel connected to my “overall Jewish community” (made up of the various components listed in the preceding question).
- I have a strong, active group of friends.

Response Scale:

- Fully Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Fully Disagree

Survey Questionnaire (Page 3 of 6)

JEWISH SATISFACTION & JOY

Q16. Do you agree with these statements?

- Being an Orthodox Observant Jew is an important part of my life.
- Shabbat is a stress-free day for me.
- I am financially comfortable.
- I am happy with my family life.
- I am happy with my social life.

Response Scale:

- Fully Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Fully Disagree

OVERALL GOALS OF SINGLE INDIVIDUALS

ASK IF Q6 = SINGLE, DIVORCED, SEPARATED OR WIDOWED

Q17. What are your top personal goals over the next few years? Please check up to your top 5 goals.

[RANDOMIZE ORDER]

- Marriage
- Education
- Career
- Religious growth
- Personal growth
- Greater independence
- Financial success, stability
- Improved health
- Calmness
- Overall happiness
- Social activity, helping others
- Other – Please describe [SMALL TEXT BOX]

DATING SECTION INTRODUCTION

DISPLAY IF Q6 = SINGLE, SINGLE WITH FIANCE, DIVORCED, SEPARATED OR WIDOWED

The following questions ask about dating approaches, activities and attitudes.

If any questions are not relevant to you, just skip them.

DATING INCIDENCE

ASK IF Q6 = SINGLE, DIVORCED, SEPARATED OR WIDOWED

Q18. How much dating are you currently doing, on average?

- Three or more dates monthly
- Once or twice a month
- Less than once a month
- None, or close to none

ASK IF Q6 = SINGLE

Q19a. For how many total years have you dated? [NUMERIC ENTRY]

ASK IF Q6 = DIVORCED, SEPARATED

Q19b. For how many total years have you dated, since you became divorced or separated? [NUMERIC ENTRY]

ASK IF Q6 = WIDOWED

Q19c. For how many total years have you dated, since you became widowed? [NUMERIC ENTRY]

ASK IF Q6 = SINGLE, DIVORCED, SEPARATED OR WIDOWED

Q20. Do you think the amount of dating you do will change over the next few years?

- Will definitely be more active
- Will probably be more active
- No change
- [OMIT IF Q18 DATING = NONE OR CLOSE TO NONE] Will probably be less active
- [OMIT IF Q18 DATING = NONE OR CLOSE TO NONE] Will definitely be less active

DATING APPROACHES

ASK IF Q6 = SINGLE, SINGLE WITH FIANCE, DIVORCED, SEPARATED OR WIDOWED

Q21. To what extent over the past few years have you used the following approaches to meet people for dating?

- Jewish community events, gatherings
- Other social gatherings
- Blind dates

[Continued on next page]

Survey Questionnaire (Page 4 of 6)

Q21. (Continued)

- Taking the initiative in approaching people, asking them out
- Shadchanim (matchmakers)
- Online Jewish dating sites or apps
- Other Jewish social media
- Online Non-Jewish dating sites or apps
- Other Non-Jewish social media

Response Scale:

- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Haven't done this

ASK IF Q6 = SINGLE, SINGLE WITH FIANCE, DIVORCED, SEPARATED OR WIDOWED

Q21a. Have you over the past few years used any other approaches to meet people for dating? [OPEN-ENDED]

ASK IF Q21 USE OF SHADCHANIM = OFTEN, SOMETIMES OR SELDOM

Q22. You indicated that you have used *shadchanim* (matchmakers). Do you recommend that people use their services?

- Strongly recommend
- Somewhat recommend
- Do not recommend

ASK IF Q22 IS ANSWERED

Q22a. Why do you say that? [OPEN-ENDED]

ASK IF Q18 CURRENT DATING = LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH, OR MORE; OR Q20 AMOUNT OF DATING CHANGE = MORE ACTIVE

Q23. Which of the following approaches do you plan to most rely on over the next year or two? Please check up to your top three preferred approaches.

- Jewish community events, gatherings
- Other social gatherings
- Blind dates
- Taking the initiative in approaching people, asking them out
- Shadchanim (matchmakers)
- Online Jewish dating sites or apps
- Other Jewish social media
- Online Non-Jewish dating sites or apps
- Other Non-Jewish social media
- Other(s) – Please describe [SMALL TEXT BOX]

ASK IF Q6 = SINGLE, SINGLE WITH FIANCE, DIVORCED, SEPARATED OR WIDOWED

Q24. What would you say about the amount of investigation that some people do before dating or setting up people with dates, i.e., looking into family, background, personal details, etc.? Is there ...

- Too much investigation
- An appropriate level
- Not enough investigation

ASK IF Q24 IS ANSWERED

Q24a. Is there anything you would add on this? [OPEN-ENDED]

Q25. How involved should parents be in their children's dating, e.g., by advising, networking, supporting, helping find dates, etc.?

- Very involved
- Somewhat involved
- Minimally involved
- Not involved

ASK IF Q25 IS ANSWERED

Q25a. Is there anything you would add relating to this? [OPEN-ENDED]

WHAT YOU SEEK IN A DATING PARTNER / POTENTIAL SPOUSE

ASK IF Q18 CURRENT DATING = LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH, OR MORE;
OR Q20 AMOUNT OF DATING CHANGE = MORE ACTIVE
[Q26 WAS SPLIT INTO TWO QUESTIONS DUE TO ITS LENGTH]

Q26. When you consider whether or not to go out with a person, or whether to continue dating a person, how important to you are the following factors?

[RANDOMIZE ORDER]

- A feeling of love
- Accepting me as I am
- Activities of interest, hobbies, leisure
- Age, relative to my age
- Ambition
- Calmness
- Compassion, kindness
- Family, background
- Financial situation, income

[Continued on next page]

Survey Questionnaire (Page 5 of 6)

Q26. (Continued)

- Flexibility, attitude of compromise % partnership
- Generosity
- *Hashkafa* (overall worldview and guiding philosophy)
- Honesty
- Humble, not a braggart
- Intelligence
- Not bossy
- Physical appearance, looks, attraction
- Plans for family size
- Profession
- Respectful of others
- Secular education
- The source of the recommendation
- Where the person lives
- Zionism, consideration of making aliyah

Response Scale:

- Absolute “Must Have”
- Pretty Important
- Somewhat Important
- Slightly Important
- Not really important to me

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF DATING

Q27. Looking at the current Orthodox world “dating system” – its processes, resources, how we go about things, etc. – how effective is it in helping people find spouses? Please rate the current dating system on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 = the current system is totally not working, to 10 = the current system is working extremely well. Please drag the slider to the appropriate position on the scale.

ADVICE AND FINAL THOUGHTS

Q28. What is the most important advice, if any, you would offer to people who are dating? [OPEN-ENDED]

ASK IF Q6 = SINGLE, DIVORCED, SEPARATED OR WIDOWED

Q29. What do you think are the main factors holding you back from finding a spouse? [OPEN-ENDED]

Q30. What suggestions do you have for shuls or Orthodox community organizations regarding actions or programs they could undertake to better address the needs of single individuals? [OPEN-ENDED]

DEMOGRAPHICS: PART 2

Q31. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?

- High school graduate or less
- Some college
- Four-year bachelor’s degree
- Postgraduate or professional schooling/degree (e.g., master’s, doctorate, medical, law)

ASK IF Q31 = SOME COLLEGE OR MORE

Q32. Did you attend a “Jewish college” (such as Yeshiva University, Stern College, Touro, etc.) or a non-Jewish college?

- Jewish college
- Non-Jewish college
- Both

ASK IF Q6 = SINGLE, SINGLE WITH FIANCE, DIVORCED, SEPARATED OR WIDOWED

Q33. What is your personal annual gross income?

- Under \$40,000
- \$40,000 to \$69,999
- \$70,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$139,999
- \$140,000 to \$199,999
- \$200,000 or more
- Would rather not say

Q34. Where do you live?

- United States
- Israel
- Canada
- United Kingdom
- France
- Other – Please enter [SMALL TEXT BOX]

Q35. What are the first three digits of your zip code? ___ __ _

Survey Questionnaire *(Page 6 of 6)*

OPT-IN AND REQUEST RESULTS

Q36. Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts. Your response is very important to us.

- Please check here to get a summary of the survey findings.
- Please check here if you are OK with getting occasional (not often) invitations to research in the Jewish community.
- [IF Q6 = SINGLE, SINGLE WITH FIANCE ETC., DIVORCED, SEPARATED OR WIDOWED]
We may do a brief follow-up survey dealing with intimacy and sexuality. Please check here if you would like to participate in that survey.

IF ANY BOX IN Q326 IS CHECKED:

Please enter your email address. Your email will be totally confidential. It will not be used for any other purposes and will not be attached to your survey responses.

[SMALL TEXT BOX, E-MAIL FORMATTED]

SHARING OF SURVEY LINK

Feel free to share the survey link: <http://bit.ly/Nishma-Ortho-Connections>

We encourage you to share this survey with family, friends, colleagues, social media, etc., and especially with single individuals. This survey will close Sunday, March 13, at 10:00 pm Eastern Time.

You may now close this browser window or tab to exit the survey. Thank you!

END OF SURVEY

About Nishma Research

- Nishma Research was founded in 2015 with the purpose of informing the Jewish community through communal and organizational studies. “Nishma” means “we listen” – and our mission involves conducting research on topics that will promote greater listening among the diverse strands of the Jewish people.
- Nishma is a full-service research firm that supports synagogues, schools, community organizations, and other researchers. We conduct custom research, data collection, analysis, and presentations employing quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Nishma has conducted 12 communal studies and 13 proprietary studies for Jewish organizations (five shuls and eight other organizations).
- Prior communal studies include: (1) a 2016 survey of people who have left Orthodoxy (“off the *derech*”), across all segments of Modern Orthodox and Haredi Jewry; (2) a 2017 broad demographic and attitudinal profile of American Modern Orthodoxy; (3) a 2019 study of the future of Modern Orthodoxy as it confronts challenges and opportunities emanating from its interaction with secular society; (4) a 2019 study that explored the motivations, challenges and religious journeys of *Baalei Teshuvah*; (5) an early 2020 study of the political views of Orthodox Jews; (6) a mid-2020 study of the health, emotional, financial and religious impacts of the pandemic; (7) a 2020 post-election survey that identified the key issues that drove voting decisions across the Orthodox community; (8) an early 2021 study of the broad U.S. Jewish Community’s views on the pandemic and COVID-19 Vaccines; (9) a mid-2021 study co-sponsored by Chevra Hatzalah, which more deeply explored COVID-related views, particularly vaccine adoption and hesitancy in the Haredi (Hasidic and Yeshivish) communities; and (10) a late 2021 study on The Finances of Orthodoxy, which broadly explored the issue of the cost of a frum life, financial as well as attitudinal, among Modern Orthodox and Haredi Jews. In addition, a 12th communal study (“Perceptions and Actions Relating to Antisemitism Across the Orthodox Community”) is currently being prepared for release in May-June, 2022.



- Nishma Research is more a “labor of love” than a business. It has funded 80% of its studies to date, as a service to the community, and makes all communal research reports and findings available free to the public. We appreciate the opportunity to share our findings, which we have presented and discussed at 57 venues (30 shuls and 27 other venues) since 2016. Findings are also shared, with discussions with communal experts, at the Orthonomics Podcast.