

The Effect of Anti-Semitic Events on a Jewish Reform Community

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Abstract

This research project focuses on measuring emotional reactions to national anti-Semitic events while exploring the nature of the significant influences on Jewish identity, faith, future, community, loss, and fear during the Covid-19 pandemic for some of the members of a Reform Jewish Synagogue in Georgia. Eight individuals gathered as an online group for six sessions to discuss their Jewish identity, nature of faith, future concerns, the importance of community, experience of loss, and current fears. During the years preceding the pandemic, there were two major anti-Semitic events, a hate march in Charlottesville in 2017 and the Pittsburgh terrorist attack at the Tree of Life synagogue in 2018. It was observed by this author that both of these events created at the time, a general sense of stress, nervousness, and anxious behavior. The central research question was whether these historic events continued to be a concern two years later, in the midst of a pandemic. The other primary concern was that there could be other factors affecting congregants at this time.

Eight individuals gathered as an online group for six sessions to discuss their Jewish identity, nature of faith, future concerns, the importance of community, experience of loss, and current fears. It was found that younger individuals mentioned their Jewish identity more often and were more expressive of the Pittsburgh and Charlottesville events than older individuals. In contrast, the mention of thoughts about the Holocaust was uniform across all ages. In the session on faith the mention of thoughts about God were found to occur more frequently by older individuals. Thoughts about faith seemed to be connected to thoughts about being strong, along with mentions of Pittsburgh and the Holocaust.

The session on the future revealed a positive relationship between words of hope and children while the connection to one's work status was mixed, in that those between low and high work status had mentioned words of hope fewer times than those at the extremes.

Thoughts about American Jewry in this session were positively related to thoughts about change as were the words Jewish and Jew to the elicitation of thoughts about the Holocaust.

During the session on community, it was found that there was a positive relationship between those who had experienced a recent trauma to more thoughts about being together. In the session on loss, those with recent trauma expressed more thoughts about being affected, affect, or affecting. The words anger and angry were positively related to thoughts about Pittsburgh and Charlottesville. The session on fear revealed thoughts about anxiety or anxious being positively related to Pittsburgh and the Holocaust.

Collectively, these results suggest that thoughts about recent anti-Semitic events and even the Holocaust were on individuals' minds during the pandemic, from being strong to concerns about anxiety. In addition, there was a positive relationship between thoughts about the future related to work and children.

This study points to the need for more research to be done with larger samples and the use of instruments that measure the degree of one's concerns about these issues, to understand whether these relationships are generalizable to other Jewish populations and possibly other groups.

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Statement of the problem

No matter how comfortable we as Jews may feel today, it only takes a small group of people (and a large group of people to sit idly by) to turn everything on its head. (Salama, 2020)

Anti-Semitic acts like genocide, hatred and discrimination have been documented throughout our history. As a result of the consequences of such acts, extensive studies were done over the years, producing various diagnostic categories and potential treatments to deal with anti-Semitic traumatic challenges. The idea that anti-Semitism ended with the Holocaust is far from the truth. There are ample indications that Jews are becoming increasingly vulnerable as the wave of antisemitism keeps growing, especially in the last decade, and particularly during the challenging year of 2020.

As a student in the New York Hebrew Union College (HUC/NY) Doctor of Ministry Program, the one subject that drew me and challenged me most, was the subject of trauma, and more precisely the study of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It may be that the study of trauma touched me due to my former career as a Colonel in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). It may be that this issue is imprinted in me deeply, due to lovingly being raised by my Holocaust survivors' grandparents. It most definitely influenced my choice of final Demonstration Project and research. Throughout my studies I have been wondering about the effects of a "national trauma" on people, more distinctively the effects of Jewish trauma, American trauma, and Israeli trauma. The Jewish trauma is an ancient one, while the national American trauma is relatively new, as a result of, atrocities such as 9/11. The Israeli trauma, though relatively "young" in years, has known the massive trauma of ongoing wars and endless terror attacks.

As a rabbi leading an American congregation, as a liberal religious man, father, son, brother and friend, I worry that there is a growing trend on anti-Semitism globally. I ask myself how this generational, ongoing Jewish trauma is expressed in our lives today. The anti-Semitic terror events of Charlottesville and Pittsburgh shook-up all the American Jews, as well as non-Jews around the world. The Jewish People have known a history of being persecuted and haunted; it is in our DNA. The trauma of the Holocaust will never dissipate. The trauma of 9/11 changed the world and generations ahead, forever. The trauma of anti-Semitic terror attacks in Charlottesville and Pittsburgh, opened a fearful collective Jewish memory of persecution, and traumatic psychological effects were noted immediately after the event, and for years to come.

Other scholars have theorized that oppression and suffering have become integral to Jewish identity and the lived experience of American Jews. Ophir (2000) suggested that Jewish identity is intricately tied to the position of the people as victims who have suffered great loss. The call to “never forget” the Holocaust in some ways complicates the emergence of the Jew from this role. (Daniel et al, 2018)

I chose my research to focus on measuring traumatic reactions to national anti-Semitic events and to explore the influence on the Jewish identity of the members of a community in a Reform Congregation, in Augusta, Georgia. As a result of these current events, I believe the need for pastoral counseling help is increasing.

Where is the need?

I first felt a slight shift in existential security within my congregation, right after the Charlottesville event, in August 2017. It was not expressed verbally, nor overly dramatic; it was a slight wave of uneasiness that I sensed, from members coming to the synagogue.

When the Pittsburgh terror attack happened at the "Tree of Life – Or L'Simcha" synagogue, in October of 2018, this uneasiness was quickly upgraded to verbal expressions of stress, nervousness, and anxious behavior. Congregants and non-congregants alike contacted me day and night (at the time), asking for help while dealing with various anxieties and concerns, that came up after these two events. Young and old, men, women and youth, all showed anxious conduct and the need for counseling.

My research will attempt to measure the influence of the Charlottesville and Pittsburgh events, on members of a congregation, as an ongoing Jewish trauma, on six different issues, all relevant to measuring the state of anxious conduct exhibited by members in the congregation. This survey will allow me to understand and execute the best assistance possible to those in need.

My goal is to understand how these two events re-shaped participants' fear, faith, sense of community, future, loss, and identity. I wish to evaluate how they see their children and grandchildren's future within the Jewish faith; is their American identity cracking as a result of an increased wave of anti-Semitism in America? The need for individuals to seek pastoral/psychological/professional counseling is a relevant and acute issue. The need for counseling has increased in the last year, exacerbated to the COVID-19 global pandemic, which has resulted in a massive global traumatic response. In addition, there is the recent explosion of racism and the birth of the Black Lives Matter movement. People all over the world are exhibiting signs of anxiety. Some individuals in our communities will seek psychiatric professional help, others will seek pastoral professional help, each for their own personal reason and preference.

Background of the issue

Modern antisemitism that exists today is globally characterized by the accusation of Jews, who carry a transgenerational history of guilt, without basis or expectation of escape. This technique of guilt turned the hatred of Jews into a political tool for various groups and even conflicting political views, creating unintelligible and sometimes paradoxical collaborations. Antisemitism has been the Jewish People's generational trauma, leading to anxious conduct on numerous levels (Angelos, 2019). Herman (1992) notes that traumatic events have a lasting influence on emotional changes, on cognition and memory. (Herman, 1992, pg. 34)

The Holocaust

The Holocaust is a major event in the history of the Jewish people in modern times, an event that has put all human, and Jewish existence, to a test that is beyond itself. The Holocaust has tragically tested all values, beliefs, and ethics, and often left them wanting, bruised and worthless. No theory, explanation, logical analysis, historical understanding, or socio-economic interpretation could ever lead to a complete understanding of a most horrific occurrence, of the total existential phenomenon or of the indescribable experience and explanation of the Holocaust (Rubinstein, 1996).

Rubinstein (1996) notes in his book, that the Holocaust overshadows the past, the present and even the future of the Jewish people, and there is no experience that is not derived from it, its consequences and our attempt to understand it. The final solution to the problem of the Jewish people resulted in the destruction of the entire Jewish culture, mass destruction, the undermining of the beliefs of the God of Israel, and the serious violation of human ethical values which were founded on human nature. The tragedy of the Jewish people has been, and still is, alive with us, even after most Holocaust victims have passed away, and

even after the search for murderers (those who remain alive) becomes irrelevant. Fackenheim (1970) believes that despite the Holocaust being a turning point for faith in the history of the Jewish people, many aspects can still be seen as reinforcing faith in the God of Israel (Fackenheim, 1970).

The fact that the Jewish people survived the Holocaust, that Jews were hiding, fleeing, seeking identity change, and overcoming many obstacles, is indicative of the existence of a providence, or a divine plan. Moreover, if one can speak of "achievements" after the Holocaust, the greatest achievement is reflected in the establishment of the State of Israel, which is an exceptional event in every respect. After two thousand years, the Jewish people return to their land, revive the language of their ancestors and establish a state. Fackenheim (1978) saw all these events as an expression of an immense divine plan, that we know little about. (Fackenheim, 1978).

The most poignant question about the Holocaust, which has put the Jewish faith and its ethical derivatives to the test, was asked by the author, Richard Rubinstein (1996) questions how Jews can believe in the Almighty and benefactor God, after Auschwitz. Rubinstein is trying to examine the possibility of the Holocaust, in the light of the omnipotence of God. He asserts that God set the punishment for the sins of the Jewish people and imposed it on Hitler and his army to deal with. He further implies "a celestial purpose" and expression of divine powers in the extermination camps, that is seen by the believer as an unbearable and unacceptable possibility. For this author, even before that, before the Holocaust, various catastrophes, persecutions, or injuries to the Jewish people could be explained as punishment for the sins of the people. Even though innocent people were hurt, the Jewish theology could not be explained in the same way, and by the same means, after the Holocaust. The implicit conclusion is that the belief in God must be discontinued, and the existence of a meaningless life must be accepted, as a basic condition. This perspective

suggests that there are no sacred purposes in Jewish life and the choice of the Jewish people, because we live in a world that is indifferent to Jewish existence. After the Holocaust, there is no meaning to the search for grand moral values. These pessimistic and serious conclusions could have led to the conclusion that it is no longer necessary to grasp Jewish identity, to believe in Jewish existence, or to continue the tradition of Jewish faith, which is not the case. Both Fakenheim and Rubinstein present us with food for thought, all while the ongoing effects and impressions of the trauma of the Holocaust continue to be detected in great grandchildren, a fourth and fifth generations of Holocaust survivors.

9/11

While the 9/11 disaster was not antisemitic in its essence, it is a prime example of a national traumatic event as a single and once-in-a-lifetime event that is beyond comprehension, hence cannot be described except under headings such as: an event beyond imagination, away from any reality, unimaginable, one that there is nothing comparable to it. Terror events have, by their unnatural character, such impact that wears away all measures of safety and security. (Herman, 1992, pg. 33). These vicious attacks have escalated in complexity in the last two decades, to inflict the most harm possible on victims. Neria asserts (2012) that various studies on the subject revealed that the 9/11 attacks were directly associated with PTSD symptoms in the general U.S. population, a decade and two decades after the event.

The psychological sequelae of the 9/11 attacks have not been limited to PTSD.

Although we focused this review on PTSD, there is also a considerable body of research that was conducted in the first 10 years after 9/11 in which it has been shown that other mental health problems have developed in association

with the WTC attacks, such as depression, generalized anxiety disorder, and complicated grief. (Neria et al, 2012)

Charlottesville

In 2017, a neo-Nazi and white supremacist rally took place in Charlottesville, Virginia, between the dates August 11 to August 12. On August 12, a white supremacist by the name of James Alex Fields Jr, rammed his car into a crowd of opposing protesters, half a mile farther from the rally site, killing Heather Heyer and wounding 19 additional people.

Pittsburgh

In 2018, the Jewish community in Squirrel Hill, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, experienced the deadliest attack on a Jewish community in American history. On October 27, 2018, a mass shooting occurred at the Tree of Life – Or L'Simcha Congregation, killing eleven people and wounding six. The attack took place during the Shabbat morning services.

Red Cross team was professional. We are trained and experienced in disasters, shootings, even in houses of worship. However, this was the first in a synagogue. And no one had that experience in America. (Bernstein, 2018)

Literature Review

Theological Perspective

The Liberal tradition in Judaism has tried to establish human values based on man being an autonomous, intelligent creature who knows well to distinguish between good and evil, a person who accepts the laws of morals and religious values and commandments out of voluntary acceptance of God's rule.

The bible is filled with traumatic events and stories. Take for example the story of Joseph, (The Book of Genesis, 37:1-36) he suffered an immense trauma! His brothers ignored and rejected him, and he never knew why, his father spoilt him and never properly prepared him for life. At the height of this horror, his father sends him straight into his brothers' death trap. For a moment, Joseph believes his brothers will murder him, or he will die of hunger and thirst, only to discover that they "only" sold him into slavery. Joseph's intuition guides him towards what later we learn in psychological research. In order to heal, he must obtain the fragments of his life story from his brothers. Giving his brothers a hard time initially after they finally met in Egypt, did not happen only to punish his betraying family but also to acquire his life story, the story of his trauma. By demanding to lock up his younger brother Benjamin he simulates his own loss. When Joseph puts more pressure on his brothers, he finally hears the last missing piece in his life puzzle:

And thy servant my father said unto us: Ye know that my wife bore me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said: Surely he is torn in pieces; and I have not seen him since; and if ye take this one also from me, and harm befall him, ye will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.
(Genesis 44: 27-29).

At that point Joseph burst in tears publicly and exposes his identity to his brothers. Now when he has his life story in hand, he can finally meet his father and close this traumatic cycle.

An additional horror story is of course the binding of Isaac (The Book of Genesis, 22:1-19). Isaac is portrayed as an innocent man, fearful and socially awkward. He does not appear to be a central player in his life story but merely goes along with what comes up on his path and is pretty much content with his life. Although he becomes a wealthy man by

professionally digging wells, the general impression is that Isaac's life is limited and directed inward and that he generally has no contact with society around him. I have always understood the Biblical depiction of Isaac's personality as a direct result of being the victim of an unimaginable trauma: to almost be sacrificed in a state of extreme helplessness, furthermore when the man binding him to be sacrificed is his own father. We can assume the experience was followed by withdrawal, fear, and passivity to life around him. One of the known phenomena of traumatic experience is passivity, fearful anxieties, and social withdrawal (Van der Kolk et al, 1996).

Nearly all figures mentioned in the Torah encountered events that created post traumatic experiences. For example, the story of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis, 18-19), is a story of a sullied society gone rouge, presenting immense corruption, greed and at the end intense sexual violence, which resulted in destruction of place and people, aside from a few survivors that managed to relocate. The story of the Exodus from Egypt (Exodus, 12) was a classic post traumatic experience, where the newly liberated Israelites expressed inability to adjust, and kept asking to go back.

Psychological Perspective

A deliberate terror/terrorist attack caused by a person and/or a political organization is defined as a traumatic incident with unique characteristics compared to other traumatic events such as natural disasters, accidents, abuse, and acts of violence such as rape, or robbery (Merrell, 2013). This is because it is a planned event, which aims at creating national paranoia, inflicting physical harm, injury and killing as many as possible, based upon ideological background. Exposure to a terror event undermines the basic values shared by all people, relevant to the ability to trust in humanity, order, and logic in human activities. This is of great importance, both in the relationship to victims and treating them. An additional

aspect that is unique about exposure to a terror event, is the victim's difficulty in providing a causal reference event, and personal meaning (Van der Kolk, 1996, pg.197-198). A soldier, for example, can link an injury with the need to protect the homeland, while if a victim of terror is injured, the incident will be difficult to attributing the rational for the event. Thus, the victim may develop acute mental reactions such as, feelings of injustice, anger, frustration, helplessness and, in extreme cases, post-traumatic reactions.

The trauma literature shows that victims of terror attacks exhibit extreme mental distress compared to victims of other traumatic events such as natural disasters and road accidents. Internal coping resources when dealing with stress include personal resources like focused control, self-esteem, and optimism as well as demographic variables such as age, years of schooling, country of origin and previous experiences in dealing with stress situations (Herman, 1992 pg. 34).

Van der Kolk et al, (1996) notes that the disorder of PTSD is a consequence of past experience. He observes that, "...unlike other forms of psychological disorder, the core issue in trauma is reality. It is indeed the truth of the traumatic experience that forms the center of its psychopathology, it is not a pathology of falsehood or displacement of meaning, but of history itself". (Van der Kolk et al, 1996, pg.6). Van der Kolk continues,

A people's trauma as opposed to private individual trauma is not independently dealt with, hence remains uncared for on a national personal level. When memories of a trauma remain unprocessed, traumatized individuals tend to react to even a subtle reminder of the experience as a conditioned stimulus for the re-experiencing of frightening

feelings and perceptions belonging to the past. Repression, dissociation and denial are phenomena of a social as well as individual consciousness. (Van der Kolk et al, 1996, pg.29)

Similar to the ability of individual patients who are suffering from PTSD to seek and receive treatment and necessary help from legal authorities such as the courts, medical and social institutes, people suffering from collective national/religious persecution or terror, tend more often to reach out to available clergy in their area for counseling. This is especially true for people who feel shame in their anxiety and would not reach out for professional psychological care, or those who cannot afford to pay or feel unable to use the availability of free counseling. Levine (2013) asks us how are the memories of brutalization and cruelty stored at the social or national level? Do nations need a history of trauma to forge a sense of national community that creates a sense of belonging and security? (Levine, 2013 pg. 37-39).

Herman (1992) notes that a psychiatric syndrome, following overwhelming stress may occur after an interval of more than thirty years, is described in Holocaust survivors. He notes five nuclear symptom complexes emerge: depressive reactions; anxiety states; somatic complaints; subjective intellectual impairment; and contact abnormalities. Subjects who had experienced persecution during their childhood exhibited contact abnormalities of an aggressive type three times as often as survivors who had suffered an identical trauma as adults. (Herman, 1992).

Denial, Dissociation and Repression

Although the concepts of repression and dissociation were used interchangeably by Freud and others with regard to traumatic memories, there is a fundamental difference between them. Repression reflects a vertically layered model of mind:

what is repressed is pushed downwards, into the unconscious. The subject no longer has access to it. Only symbolic, indirect indications would point to its assumed existence. Dissociation reflects a horizontally layered model of mind: when a subject does not remember a trauma, its "memory" is contained in an alternate stream of consciousness, which may be subconscious or dominate consciousness, e.g., during traumatic re-enactments (Janet, 1894). (Van der Kolk & Van der Hart, 1991, p. 437-438).

Denial is a defense where unwelcome reality is disavowed. The term refers to a keeping out of conscious awareness any aspects of external reality that, if acknowledged, would produce anxiety. While a component of denial can be found in the operation of most defenses, McWilliams (1994), observes that denial as a primitive defense is a defensive bedrock. The refusal to mourn for a dead child while ignoring the suffering of another, refusal to seek medical help to avoid bad news, the simple refusal to feel emotions or acknowledge their meaning (McWilliams, 1994 p. 105-106.).

Howell, (2005) suggests that, "Dissociation is a human solution to the terror of dissolution of selfhood." Dissociation can refer to the experience of automatic segregation of any group of mental or behavioral processes from the rest of an individual's psychic activity. Dissociation can manifest as spacing out, psychic numbing, depersonalization and derealization that can exist on a continuum, varying in degree (Putnam, 1997). Howell (2005; Howell & Itzkowitz, 2016) refer to dissociation as psychologically defensive. Dissociation can protect against unbearable affect or memories, occurring contextually or triggered by context, activated as an automatic response to immediate danger or an overwhelming environment (Van der Hart, Nijenhuis & Steele, 2006), Dissociation is primarily adaptive, yet can be maladaptive when it no longer occurs in a traumatogenic context. Dissociation differs from repression, which is both motivated and defensive. As dissociation does not have to be

motivated, it can arise spontaneously, in a moment of trauma often resulting in trance.

(Howell, 2005 p.147).

Kellerman (2001) compares the long-term effect of the Holocaust horrors to an atomic bomb that keeps polluting everyone who is exposed to it, directly and indirectly. Those who survived and were able to start a new life in different countries will never forget the trauma, the separation from family, and death. "Like an atomic bomb that emits long-range radioactive radiation long after it has exploded, the horrors of the Holocaust continue to pollute anyone exposed to them in one way or another". (Kellerman, 2001 pg. 197)

A natural practice of people as they grow older is to think back on their lives, taking score of what they have accomplished so far. Kellerman, (2001; Herman, 1992; Erickson, 1980; Lifton, 1980; and Van der Kolk, 1987), these authors note that such natural human process in Holocaust survivors may cause resurgence of traumatic memories and pain, leading to depression, anxiety and guilt. "This life-summary process is often fraught with mechanisms of denial and repression that the survivor uses to continue to function despite the burden of the traumatic past". (Kellerman, 2001 pg. 203).

Traumatic Experience in the Child and the Adult

In his extensive research and writings, Henry Krystal, (1978) documented a distinction of experience in processing trauma between adults and children. From Krystal's perspective, the discrepancy mainly stems from the developmental stage a person was at the time of a traumatic experience, and hence his/her ability or lack of ability, to process a traumatic event.

In infantile trauma the child becomes overwhelmed or flooded with intolerable and excessive emotion...resulting in a state of utter helplessness. In adults, traumatic experiences may initially result in an uncomfortable feeling of anxiety and

helplessness, however unlike the child they can anticipate the danger and respond by blocking the emotions before they become overwhelming (Krystal 1978 pg. 47).

Lifton (1976) extensively researched trauma in survivors of Hiroshima, natural disasters and the Vietnam war and wrote in his book *Symbolization Theory of Trauma* (1976) about his theory regarding five major manifestation of traumatic disturbances: the death imprint, the death guilt, the psychic numbing, the impaired relationship, and the transformation for a new meaning in life (pg. 47- 48).

Horowitz (1986) suggests that until such time that the traumatic event can be fully incorporated into a person's life, it will keep being active in the memory and may repeat bringing up images of traumatic events. (Horowitz, 1986, as cited in Herman, 1992, pg. 51, 199).

When communities are struck by terrorism, the experience is likely to differ from one resulting from natural disasters. Natural disasters are usually limited in time and space and are often expected, therefore enabling coordination of rescue efforts, sheltering, and deployment of medical services. By contrast, when terrorism strikes, it usually occurs randomly and unexpectedly regarding a place and time. These differences can affect psychological outcomes among populations which are highly exposed to terrorist acts. In addition, the emotional, social, and political effects of terrorism are likely to be widespread. They may affect large communities and influence not just how entire nations cope with the impact of such events, but also how they respond to similar threats in the future. (Neria et al, 2012)

Neria et al suggest that ongoing stresses play a crucial role in the course of disaster-related PTSD symptomatology, whether those stresses result from the direct effects

of the disaster itself or from non-disaster-related events experienced in the aftermath of an event such as 9/11. (Neria et al, 2012)

Findings from nationwide studies have pointed to substantial and enduring emotional reactions across the United States after the 9/11 attacks, suggesting that the effects of this high-impact national trauma were not limited to the communities directly affected and, in fact, were comparable across groups with both direct and indirect exposure to the attacks (Silver et al., 2005). Van der Kolk observes that, “Societies that have been massively traumatized have followed roughly similar patterns of adaptation and disintegration...” (Van der Kolk et al, 1996, pg.3).

Levine (2015) writes about an experiment in mice who were exposed to the neutral scent of Cherry blossom, followed by an aversive electrical shock. It was noted that the mice froze in fear later, when the scent was presented alone, without the shock. What was astonishing in the experiment was the fact that this same response of fear showed through at least five generations of offspring of the original tested mice. When these offspring were exposed to other neutral smells, there was no response, just as had been the case for their great-great-grandparents (Levine, 2015 pg. 163-164).

Rachel Yehuda (2018) one of the leading researchers on the neuro- biological effects of generational trauma and particularly on the children of Holocaust survivors, describes symptoms of generational anxiety and depression expressed in individuals whose parents experienced the trauma prior to becoming parents. Yehuda notes these children reacted to their parent’s traumatic memories as if they were their own. (Bar-On, 1990; Coles 2011; Lehrner, 2018; Lifton, 1980; Yehuda, 2018), all speak about generational transfer of traumatic memories that have the power to disturb the present of one’s life by connecting to unconscious traumatic memories.

We must not ignore, in our psychoanalytic practice, the impact of our ancestral history, especially if our ancestors have suffered, for their anguish can return and haunt us. It is the anguished return that of traumatic experience that repeats itself across the generations and affects the way the next generation is perceived. (Coles, 2011, pg. xiv).

To know one's ancestral past benefits unlocking repetitive and destructive patterns of behavior, the aspect of generational traumatic transference is as old as the Bible and in fact is mentioned in the Book of Deuteronomy as the sins of the forefathers are visited unto the third and fourth generation. Numerous psychoanalytical researchers, among them (Bar-On, 1989; Chaitin, 2000; Herman, 1992; Lifton, 1980), discuss their work with Holocaust survivors and their children. The substantial work of these authors validates the understanding that mental distress has its roots in early trauma (Coles, 2011; Erikson, 1980).

Niederland (1968), notes that psychiatrists who were engaged in rehabilitating survivors (of the Holocaust and other forms of persecution) spoke against the false notion that the suffering ended when the Nazi concentration camps ceased to exist. At the time, American and German doctors disregarded the intensity of survivors' traumatic experience as they did not comprehend the intensity of the issue.

Herman (1992; Lifton, 1980; Kellerman, 2001; McCann and Pearlman, 1990); as well as, numerous others, have observed equivalent psychiatric issues detected in survivors of trauma in various countries as documented by (Niederland, 1968). Survivors exhibit symptoms that include depressive mood, tendency to withdraw, apathy, angry outbursts, feelings of helplessness, lack of interest, survivors showed symptoms of an acute guilt complex, severe anxiety, insomnia, nightmares and terror, paranoia and additional psychotic disturbances.

Bar-On and Chaitin (2001) speak about the emotional impairment of parents to care for their children during the Holocaust and the influence on parenthood of the survivors after the Holocaust. Parenthood during the Holocaust is the story of what people transmitted to their children under the most extreme circumstances, and how the children who survived the war developed their own concepts of parenthood out of the void or the bits and pieces with which they were left. (Bar-On, D., Chaitin, 2001; Bar-On, D., 1995; Bar-On, D., 1990; Bar-On, D. 1989).

Trauma and PTSD in the Literature

One hundred years ago, in 1889, Pierre Janet published *L'Automatisme Psychologique*, his first work to deal with how the mind processes traumatic experiences. Janet claimed that vehement emotions interfere with proper appraisal and appropriate action. Failure to confront the experience fully leads to dissociation of the traumatic memories and their return as fragmentary reliving experiences: feeling states, somatic sensations, visual images, and behavioral reenactments. A century later, Janet still provides an unsurpassed framework for integrating current knowledge about the psychodynamic, cognitive, and biological effects of human traumatization. Van der Kolk, B.A. Brown, P., and Van der Hart, O. (1989. p. 365).

Although PTSD symptoms have been documented for centuries, not until 1980 did the American Psychiatric Association officially add PTSD to the third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-V, 2013).

Trauma and Stressor Related disorders include disorders in which exposure to a traumatic or stressful event is listed explicitly as a diagnostic criterion. These include reactive attachment disorder, disinhibited social engagement disorder,

posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), acute stress disorder and adjustment disorder. (DSM-V, 2013).

The current revival of interest in the role of overwhelming experiences on the development of psychopathology has stimulated a fresh look at how memories are stored in the mind and continue to affect day to day perceptions and interpretations of reality. Over a century ago, the very foundation of modern psychiatry was laid with the study of consciousness and the disruptive impact of traumatic experiences. Struck by the observation that some memories could become the nucleus of later psychopathology, Charcot and Janet at the Salpêtrière, and William James in the U.S. devoted much of their attention to studying how the mind processes memories. They recognized, on the one hand, the flexibility of the mind, and on the other, how certain memories became obstacles that kept people from going on with their lives. William James wrote in 1880: "the new conceptions, emotions . . . which evolve [in the mind] are originally produced in the shape of random images, fancies, accidental outbursts of spontaneous variations . . . which the outer environment simply confirms or refutes, preserves or destroys." At the same time the psychologists and psychiatrists around the turn of the century were fully aware that some memories are not evanescent and that ". . . certain happenings would leave indelible and distressing memories—memories to which the sufferer was continually returning, and by which he was tormented by day and by night" (Janet 1919/25, 589) in Van der Kolk and Van der Hart, (1991 p.425).

Bessel Van der Kolk observes that, "...since the creation of the diagnosis of PTSD, it has become clear that long-term effects of trauma are numerous and complicated." (Van der Kolk et al, 1996, pg. 184). He continues by saying, "Traumatized patients experience current stressors with an intensity of emotion that belongs to the past, and

that has little value in the present.” (Van der Kolk et al, 1996, pg.188).

Culture may in many ways be viewed as a protective and supportive system of values, lifestyles, and knowledge, the disruption of which will have a deleterious effect on its members. During social and cultural upheavals, drastic changes occur in people’s expectations, “the meaning of life,” and communal values. (Van der Kolk et al, 1996, pg. 400)

Herman (1992; Van der Kolk, 1996; Erikson, 1980; and Fisher, 2017), each writing from their own theoretical perspective, observe that victims of trauma are often left with a myriad of symptoms and reactions without being able to connect and identify them as memories. Some develop chronic expectation of danger, intrusive fear and dread, chronic shame and self-hatred, hopelessness, and helplessness among many other phenomena. In the early days of trauma treatments patients were encouraged to talk about their trauma and feelings used as a healing therapy.

Fisher notes she believes treatment must include addressing the effect of the traumatic past (Fisher, 2017).

I have long believed that trauma treatment must address the effects of the traumatic past, not its events. Being able to tolerate remembering a horrific experience is not as important a goal as feeling safe right here, right now—or being able to reassure oneself that the racing of the heart is just a triggered response, not a sign of danger. (Fisher, 2017, pg. 21).

Methodology

This project is a qualitative research study, utilizing a focus group, aimed at exploring and measuring the influence of the current social trend of anti-Semitism in America on

congregants' lives and their daily behavior. This research was created with the purpose of addressing the increased anxious conduct detected in the community of this Reform synagogue.

Leavy (2017) notes that qualitative research is aimed at exploring and learning from social phenomena the meaning people ascribe to certain situations and events. This method includes the significance of people's subjective experiences in order to explore and understand changes in social behavior among other purposes. (Leavy, 2017).

Focus Group

Sensing (2011) mentions in his book that focus group interviews relating to specific themes are enriched by the group's interactive discussion, contributing to the collection of richer data than if individuals were interviewed separately. Discussion is prompted by members of the focus group reacting and interacting with other members' responses. The group's response to specific questions produces data from various points of view (Sensing, 2011).

A focus group of eight participants was solicited and formed in order to research the phenomena of participants' anxiety, within a Reform Jewish congregation, as a result of the anti-Semitic events of 1) Charlottesville and 2) Pittsburgh, as well as 3) the effect of the phenomenon of the history of Jewish anti-Semitic trans-generational trauma.

I chose to utilize qualitative research as it is effective to obtain cultural information locally. My interest is in the human aspect of the subject and needs for perspective treatment.

Participants

The focus group was composed of eight members, 4 men, 4 women of various ages, all are long standing members of their congregation. The group members were solicited by

an announcement made to the congregation in the weekly information posting (see appendix). Sensing (2011) notes that selecting people with a broad range of perspectives increases comprehension of a project. Hence it is recommended for a qualitative research to choose people of various ages, gender, marital status, employment, etc. The author suggests that the researcher must maintain a neutral stance throughout the meetings, avoiding interjection of personal feelings and opinions. It is important to remember that background, upbringing, and perspective have an affect on the way people view the world. (Sensing, 2011)

Procedure for data collection

The group met at scheduled times over the Zoom application due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The focus group met six times, during the months of July and August of 2020. Each meeting was 90 minutes long. Meetings were videoed with the consent of the participants and transcribed afterwards for data recording. Each meeting was dedicated to a specific subject. During these meetings, the questions asked of participants were descriptive questions, behavioral questions, opinion questions, and feeling questions.

The consent form (see Appendix C) for consent agreement was filled by participants at the beginning of the focus group's first meeting and included in the final paper.

The subjects are: 1) Identity, sense of self - Jewish, American, and the changes that have occurred as a result of anti-Semitic events 2) Faith, the perception of faith as stronger, or weaker after traumatic anti-Semitic events 3) Future, as Jews, for the participants and the next generations 4) Community, sense of Jewish community, general community, and the relation between them 5) Loss, is that generational Jewish loss part of our DNA, is that good/bad 6) Fear, what are my greatest fears and why

All meetings were transcribed and analyzed for the data of this research with the consent of all participants.

Results

Data Analysis

The findings in this project are a reflection on the statements and words of the participants from each of the six focus group sessions. There was a different theme for each session ranging from Identity to Fear. The goal was to envision the information obtained from the participants of these sessions. A three-stage hierarchical analysis of the data was used in this study to discover the most significant cognitive responses elicited by subjects in the form of keywords. The first stage of analysis was to get a sense of the subjects thought elicitations using Word Clouds. A series of Word Clouds of varying levels of depth were conducted ranging from the top 50 keywords of a session to that of the top fifteen keywords spoken by subjects in each session. These 15 keyword Word Clouds are presented at the beginning of the analysis for each session. From these basic keyword overviews the top keywords counts related to the research focus of the paper and session themes for each subject were recorded in MS-Excel along with the demographic survey data about each subject for all six sessions for further analysis.

The second stage of the data analysis was to conduct a correlation analysis for each session using Statistical Analytic System (SAS) software on the Excel data. The correlation probabilities were reviewed for each keyword pair in the data set. It was observed that significant relationships were present for demographic data to demographic data, demographic data to session keywords, and keywords to keywords.

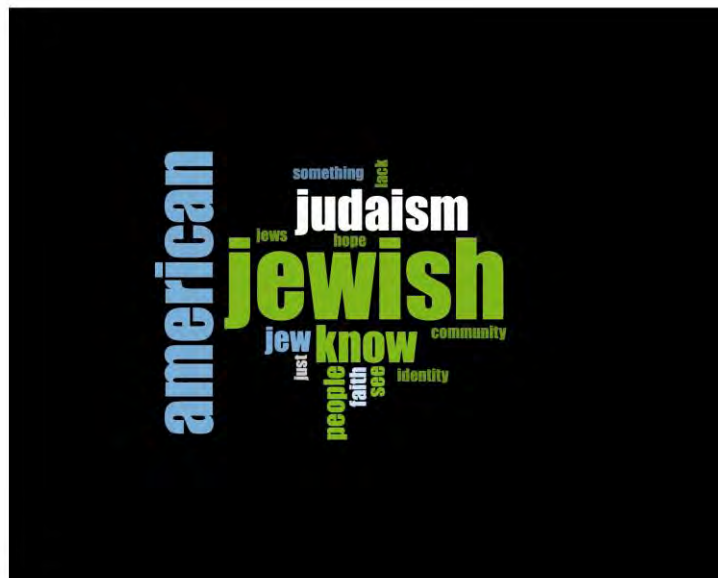
The final stage of this analytic analysis was done by taking the most relevant of these significant keyword pair relationships and investigating them further using graphic visualization and regression trend analyses.

Analysis for Survey Questions

Session One

Figure 1A

Session 1 Word Cloud



The Word Cloud below for session 1 on identity Word Cloud contains 15 of the top keywords elicited. Related this session's theme the word Jewish, American, and Jew/Judaism stand out.

Figure 1B

Correlations and Correlation Probabilities for Session 1

Multivariate																
Correlations																
	Age	Work Status	Independences	Social/Family Connection	Health status	Religion Yes=1	Education	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Single	Live With Trauma recent	Temple Member	Holocaust 1	Pittsburgh 1	Charlottesville 1
Age	1.0000	-0.8477	-0.0733	0.0000	0.3234	-0.1222	0.4108	-0.2505	0.1222	0.7090	-0.4645	-0.2505	0.3841	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Work Status	-0.8477	1.0000	0.0372	0.0000	-0.0985	0.2607	-0.2844	0.3307	-0.2607	-0.5586	0.3352	0.3307	-0.5343	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Independences	-0.0733	0.0372	1.0000	0.0000	-0.3780	0.1429	-0.5547	0.2928	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	0.2928	-0.2928	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Social/Family Connection	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Health status	0.3234	-0.0985	-0.3780	0.0000	1.0000	-0.3780	0.5774	-0.7746	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	-0.7746	-0.2582	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Religion Yes=1	-0.1222	0.2607	0.1429	0.0000	-0.3780	1.0000	-0.2182	0.4880	-1.0000	0.1429	0.1429	0.4880	0.2928	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Education	0.4108	-0.2844	-0.5547	0.0000	0.5774	-0.2182	1.0000	-0.4472	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	-0.4472	-0.1491	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Married	-0.2505	0.3307	0.2928	0.0000	-0.7746	0.4880	-0.4472	1.0000	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	1.0000	0.0667	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Divorced	0.1222	-0.2607	-0.1429	0.0000	0.3780	-1.0000	0.2182	-0.4880	1.0000	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.4880	-0.2928	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Widowed	0.7090	-0.5586	-0.1429	0.0000	0.3780	0.1429	0.2182	-0.4880	-0.1429	1.0000	-0.1429	-0.4880	0.4880	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Single	-0.4645	0.3352	-0.1429	0.0000	0.3780	0.1429	0.2182	-0.4880	-0.1429	-0.1429	1.0000	-0.4880	-0.2928	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Live With Trauma recent	-0.2505	0.3307	0.2928	0.0000	-0.7746	0.4880	-0.4472	1.0000	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	1.0000	0.0667	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Temple Member	0.3841	-0.5343	-0.2928	0.0000	-0.2582	0.2928	-0.1491	0.0667	-0.2928	0.4880	-0.2928	0.0667	1.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Holocaust 1	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Pittsburgh 1	-0.0038	0.1570	-0.2454	0.0000	0.4132	0.2454	0.3749	0.0152	-0.2454	-0.2454	0.4885	0.0152	-0.1372	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Charlottesville 1	-0.5955	0.6266	-0.1076	0.0000	0.0949	0.3946	0.1644	-0.1716	-0.3946	-0.1076	0.7534	-0.1716	-0.4166	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Synagogue 1	-0.5146	0.4384	-0.0510	0.0000	0.1348	0.0510	0.3892	-0.1741	-0.0510	-0.4587	0.7645	-0.1741	-0.6615	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Jewish Identity 1	-0.3169	0.0000	-0.3086	0.0000	0.4082	-0.6172	0.2357	-0.6325	0.6172	-0.3086	0.6172	-0.6325	-0.2108	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Religion 1	-0.7469	0.6827	-0.4364	0.0000	-0.2887	0.4364	0.0000	0.2981	-0.4364	0.4364	0.2981	-0.4364	-0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Flag 1	0.1584	0.0000	-0.3086	0.0000	0.2041	0.3086	0.7071	-0.2108	-0.3086	0.3086	0.3086	-0.2108	-0.2108	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Jewish American American Jewish 1	-0.1948	0.5052	-0.2153	0.0000	0.5697	0.2153	0.3289	-0.0630	-0.2153	-0.2153	0.5229	-0.0630	-0.4413	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Congregation 1	0.2839	-0.0763	-0.4880	0.0000	0.2582	0.4880	0.7454	-0.0667	-0.4880	0.2928	0.2928	-0.0667	0.0667	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
	0.5418	-0.3788	-0.3352	0.0000	-0.0985	0.3352	0.5120	0.0763	-0.3352	0.5586	-0.3352	0.0763	0.3307	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
The correlations are estimated by Row-wise method.																
Correlation Probability																
	Age	Work Status	Independences	Social/Family Connection	Health status	Religion Yes=1	Education	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Single	Live With Trauma recent	Temple Member	Holocaust 1	Pittsburgh 1	Charlottesville 1
Age	<.0001	0.0079	0.8630	1.0000	0.4345	0.7731	0.3120	0.5496	0.7731	0.0489	0.2462	0.5496	0.3475	1.0000	0.9928	0.9928
Work Status	0.0079	<.0001	0.9302	1.0000	0.8164	0.5329	0.4947	0.4236	0.5329	0.1501	0.4170	0.4236	0.1726	1.0000	0.7104	0.7104
Independences	0.8630	0.9302	<.0001	1.0000	0.3559	0.7358	0.0781	0.4816	0.7358	0.7358	0.7358	0.4816	0.4816	1.0000	0.5580	0.5580
Social/Family Connection	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	<.0001	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Health status	0.4345	0.8164	0.3559	1.0000	<.0001	0.3559	0.1340	0.0240	0.3559	0.3559	0.3559	0.0240	0.5370	1.0000	0.3089	0.3089
Religion Yes=1	0.7731	0.5329	0.7358	1.0000	0.3559	<.0001	0.6036	0.2199	<.0001	0.7358	0.7358	0.2199	0.4816	1.0000	0.5580	0.5580
Education	0.3120	0.4947	0.0781	1.0000	0.1340	0.6036	<.0001	0.2666	0.6036	0.6036	0.6036	0.2666	0.7246	1.0000	0.3602	0.3602
Married	0.5496	0.4236	0.4816	1.0000	0.0240	0.2199	0.2666	<.0001	0.2199	0.2199	0.2199	<.0001	0.8754	1.0000	0.9714	0.9714
Divorced	0.7731	0.5329	0.7358	1.0000	0.3559	<.0001	0.6036	0.2199	<.0001	0.7358	0.7358	0.2199	0.4816	1.0000	0.5580	0.5580
Widowed	0.0489	0.1501	0.7358	1.0000	0.3559	0.7358	0.6036	0.2199	0.7358	<.0001	0.7358	0.2199	0.2199	1.0000	0.5580	0.5580
Single	0.2462	0.4170	0.7358	1.0000	0.3559	0.7358	0.6036	0.2199	0.7358	<.0001	0.2199	0.4816	1.0000	0.2416	0.2416	0.2416
Live With Trauma recent	0.5496	0.4236	0.4816	1.0000	0.0240	0.2199	0.2666	<.0001	0.2199	0.2199	<.0001	0.8754	1.0000	0.9714	0.9714	0.9714
Temple Member	0.3475	0.1726	0.4816	1.0000	0.5370	0.4816	0.7246	0.8754	0.4816	0.2199	0.4816	0.8754	<.0001	1.0000	0.7460	0.7460
Holocaust 1	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	<.0001	1.0000	1.0000
Pittsburgh 1	0.9928	0.7104	0.5580	1.0000	0.3089	0.5580	0.3602	0.9714	0.5580	0.5580	0.2416	0.9714	0.7460	1.0000	<.0001	0.7610
Charlottesville 1	0.1193	0.0964	0.7998	1.0000	0.8231	0.3333	0.6973	0.6846	0.3333	0.7998	0.0309	0.6846	0.3045	1.0000	0.6474	0.6474
Synagogue 1	0.1919	0.2772	0.9046	1.0000	0.7502	0.9046	0.3405	0.6801	0.9046	0.2530	0.0272	0.6801	0.0740	1.0000	0.3837	0.3837
Jewish Identity 1	0.4444	1.0000	0.4571	1.0000	0.3153	0.1030	0.5742	0.0924	0.1030	0.4571	0.1030	0.0924	0.6163	1.0000	0.6474	0.6474
Religion 1	0.0332	0.0621	0.2797	1.0000	0.4881	0.2797	1.0000	0.4732	0.2797	0.2797	0.2797	0.4732	1.0000	1.0000	0.6272	0.6272
Flag 1	0.7079	1.0000	0.4571	1.0000	0.6278	0.4571	0.0489	0.6163	0.4571	0.4571	0.4571	0.6163	0.6163	1.0000	0.8204	0.8204
Jewish American American Jewish 1	0.6439	0.2016	0.6086	1.0000	0.1405	0.6086	0.4264	0.8821	0.6086	0.6086	0.1836	0.8821	0.2738	1.0000	0.0362	0.0362
Congregation 1	0.4956	0.8574	0.2199	1.0000	0.5370	0.2199	0.0338	0.8754	0.2199	0.4816	0.4816	0.8754	0.8754	1.0000	0.2039	0.2039

The Session 1 correlation chart, Figure 1B, suggests that it would be of interest to look at the relationship of age to Jewish Identity ($p < 0.0332$, negative and significant) and education to Jewish-American Identity ($p < 0.0338$, positive and significant). The relationship of a subject's recent trauma experience(s) to their perspective on historic events of the Holocaust ($p < 0.7460$, negative and not significant), Pittsburgh Synagogue shootings ($p < 0.3045$, negative and not significant), or the Charlottesville Demonstrations ($p < 0.0740$, negative and somewhat significant) were of interest as well; however, the results are not clear due to the limited number of individuals reporting recent trauma and the mix of elicitations to these events by those individuals.

Figure 1C

Age to Jewish Identity Session 1

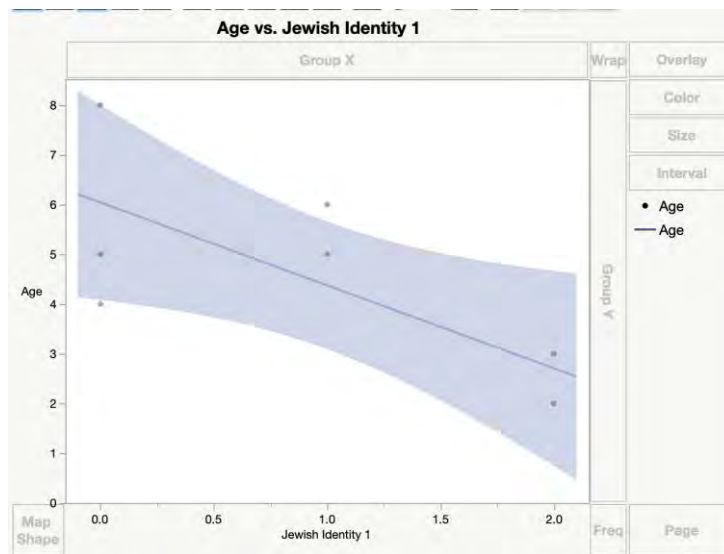


Figure 1C shows that Jewish identity is stronger as an overall trend line amongst younger and some late middle age individuals than older individuals.

Figure 1D

Education Level to Jewish Identity Session 1

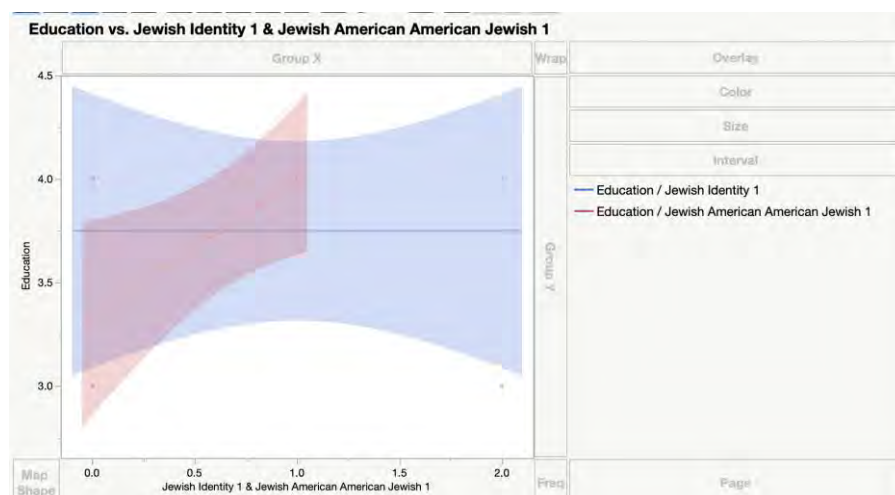
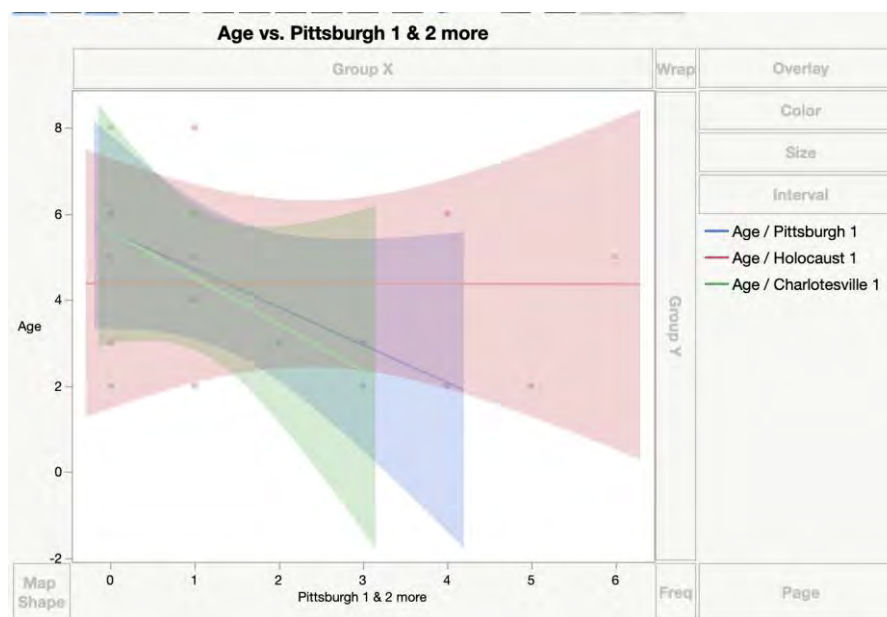


Figure 1D indicates that the effect of education level on Jewish identity in general was uniform (blue area), while one's level of education had a limited positive effect on the one who expressed a Jewish-American or American-Jewish identity (red area).

Figure 1E

Age to Pittsburgh, Charlottesville and Holocaust Session 1



In Figure 1E younger individuals were more affected by Pittsburgh (blue area) and Charlottesville ((green area) events than other individuals, while the effect of the Holocaust (red area) was uniform across all ages.

Figure 1F

Recent Trauma to Pittsburgh, Charlottesville and Holocaust Session 1

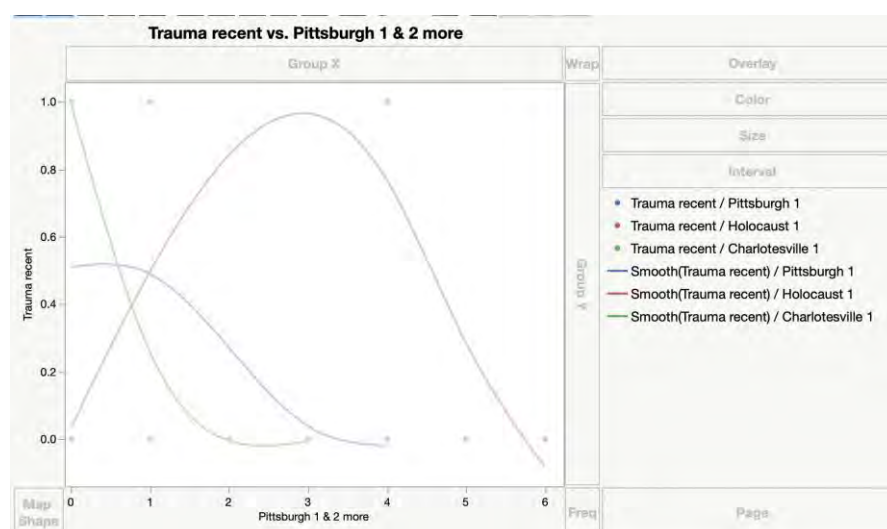


Figure 1F seems to suggest that of the three individuals who had experienced recent trauma, one was mildly affected by Pittsburgh (blue line) and another strongly affected by the Holocaust (red line).

*Reflection on session No. one of focus group, subject: Identity***Figure 1G**

Key words.

Key word	Count in doc.	P. #1	P. #2	P. #3	P. #4	P. #5	P. #6	P. #7	P. #8
Holocaust	28	4	1	1	1		6	1	5
Pittsburgh	25		1		1	3	1	1	4
Charlottesville	19	1		1		2	1	1	3
Synagogue	19	1		3	1				3
Jewish identity	18	1			2	2	1		2
Religion	17	2	3	1		4	2	1	3
Flag	16						8		6
Jewish American, American Jew	14	1	1			1	1		1
Congregation	12	2	3			3	1		

Key words mentioned in the session included: Pride, Identity, Jewish, American, 9/11, Flag, Self-determination, Weakness, Anti-Semitism, Israel, Rights, Fear, Worry, Caution, Threat, Holocaust, Minority. Statement: I am a Jewish American, I am an American Jew, America is my home, my Jewish identity is who I am, American ahead of Israel but Jewish is ahead of American,

Prominent phrases were: Judaism as a religion, and America, as nationality, I'm always a Jew but I may not always be an American, Judaism as our binding agent, vigilant, Jew as a scapegoat, Worry, Judaism is a way of life.

Personal identity:

When considering the generational transfer of Jewish trauma, I noticed that the Jewish identity overcomes the American sense of identity, especially for those who grew up as first-generation Americans after their grandparents fled the pogroms in Europe.

Four participants identified themselves as Jewish-American:

“I’m a Jewish American.” (#1 @ 0:14:16) “I’m proud to be Jewish ... I put being an American ahead of Israel but being Jewish is ahead of American.” (#4 @ 0:21:00) “Jewish and American.” (#7 @ 0:35:04) “I feel more Jewish than American.” (#3 @ 0:26:28)

Three participants identified themselves as American Jews:

“I see myself as an American Jew...” (#5 @ 0:15:51) “I’m American Jewish...” (#6 @ 0:30:17) “I consider myself American Jew. (#8 @ 0:36:25)

One participant noted her identity is both:

“I’m neither an American Jew or Jewish American, I’m both.” (#2 @ 0:22:52)

When discussing the Jewish identity part, participants noted their Jewish identity was more than just a faith:

“...she was trying to make me understand that I’m always a Jew but I may not always be an American...” (#2 @ 0:22:52)

“...my Judaism is never religious... to me being Jewish is, it’s just in my bones. (#3 @ 0:26:28)

“...you know you can go anywhere in the world and if you find a Jewish community there, you know that you’re home.” (# 4 @ 0:58:42)

“You’re born Jewish, you are Jewish, it’s not so much a choice.” (#3 @ 0:51:36)

“Jewish identity in general is that we can be together as a Jewish People without being together, because of the diaspora we are all over the world, we can be everywhere, and we can be nowhere at the same time.” (#8 @ 1:05:14)

“Judaism is our binding agent.” (#8 @ 0:36:25)

I was surprised to hear about the aspect of Jewish shame concerning famous Jewish criminals caught in crime, as one participant put it:

“...as a People we are very humiliated, embarrassed when anybody of our faith does something wrong. We take it personally and I remember feeling that way after Bernie Madoff got caught.” (#3 @ 0:51:36)

When discussing the future of practicing or following Judaism in the next generations, four participants expressed hope yet definite uncertainty:

“I believe some will be following the path of Judaism, some I’m not so sure... I can only hope.” (participant #1@1:28:18)

“I don’t know... I hope they will, but I don’t know.” (Participant #2@1:28:48)

“I’m hoping they have the strength from their religion to be able to help them survive life.” (Participant #6@1:30:09)

“I hope that whether in 10 or 50 years we’ll just be Jews without any negative connotations to it.” (#8@1:37:26)

One participant referred to Jewish lineage as significant for her because:

“...all I can do is request that he (my son) understand his Jewish history and not lose it, for himself, because that is his lineage.” (#7 @1:34:17)

Another participant expressed the importance of preserving Jewish history:

“What is so important to me is that my children know the story of the Holocaust and that they keep that going.” (#3 @ 1:38:54)

I did not find any evidence or display of fear nor anxiety in the first session about identity. on the contrary, the manifestation of anti-Semitism or post-traumatic events evoked in participants increased sense of their Jewishness, along with interest in their own identity. The events of Charlottesville and Pittsburgh did not cause reports of anxious traumatic response, in the present, yet I believe that I observed an increased awareness, vigilance, and caution in all the participants’ lives. Participants remarks such as: “...strength in my Judaism comes from its history, its longevity, Judaism is a way of life, Judaism’s weakness being the same as American where there’s lack of acceptance, strengthen the notion that Jews in America are not afraid to follow their faith, yet there is a vigilance, caution and heightened awareness to the fact we are of the Jewish faith and can be a target for some people.” (#1 @ 1:11:25)

I observed no growing fear or desire on the part of participants for immigration to Israel, nor interest in abandonment of American identity and assimilation. I did not find traumatic memories that arose in the light of the Charlottesville and Pittsburgh events that affected their identity. What I observed in the participants, to my surprise, were moderation, clarity, determination, and fluent thought. The sense of identity that appeared in the meeting is one of an American-Jewish identity, where I thought I would find a more Jewish-American identity. Perhaps, the changes that appear in the transcript, belong to a current change in the political climate and do not necessarily stem from anti-Jewish revelations that happened after Charlottesville and Pittsburgh. The Jewish identity expressed in this focus meeting of a stable and proud Jewish identity, based on the synagogue as a center that preserves the liberal identity determination.

The desire to maintain the sense of cultural Jewish identity in future generations was expressed as uncertain, yet greatly wished for by all. Six participants with children and grandchildren expressed hope that the next generations will at least observe the core values of Judaism.

The motif that most characterizes this focus session, which to me is fascinating, I would call identity in a trap or identity as a pendulum. The identities are mixed in definitions that move on the scale of the Jewish American. This current identity is shaped and constructed by various circumstances such as migration, persecution, teasing, ridicule, and alternatively other larger traumatic events such as the Holocaust, 9/11, Charlottesville or Pittsburgh.

The Jewish and American identities live almost as one without a clear-cut definition to distinguish them accurately. However, while unspoken, I did recognize the classic Jewish motif of the "persecuted Jew" covered in proud American patriotism.

I observed in the focus group Two components that seem to be integral parts of the Jewish-American identity package, in which boundaries between the beliefs and values of the Jewish religion and the American national values appeared to have disappeared. The two belief systems, religious and national, have merged into one. These American Jews appear to have assumed many liberal American values which I believe are in fact also Jewish values, and not only that, but they assume these are the important values of Judaism.

The strong and unquestionable need that was expressed in this session by all the participants, was for participation in a religious Jewish community life of any kind that preserves the Jewish identity. The identity of this focus group appears to be either that of a persecuted or proud Jew. It is a Jew with a religious character in the face of an evolved American identity.

In this focus group, I observed these statements:

“I’m a member of this congregation for the past 12 years, I grew up in Atlanta, GA, and I see myself as an American Jew.” (Participant # 5 @ 15:51)

“There’s one thing I think strengthen the Jewish community is how close and how bonded we are... there is a lot of innocence you need to conform, you need to be part of it... it also gives us an extra sense of closeness that you know you can go anywhere in the world and if you find a Jewish community there, you know that you’re home.” (Participant # 4 @ 58:42)

“I see Judaism’s weakness being the same as American where there’s this lack of acceptance. There’s a lack of openness of allowing and of just seeing people for who they are. So, I think it’s an extreme weakness on both sides of that fence.” (Participant # 7 @ 1:16:27)

When I listened to the group’s discussion of identity, I found myself considering the impact of generational transfer of Jewish trauma. I noticed Jewish identification overcomes the identification as an American for this group. especially for those who reported that they grew up as first-generation Americans after their grandparents fled the pogroms in Europe. Memories from the home they grew up in, were shared. Stories of their grandparents being persecuted because they were Jews, conduct of their grandparents and parents reflected the presence of the “persecuted Jew” in their family background are held in memory in their family stories. New York City and Atlanta were noted by participants as the two major settlements where Jews were encouraged to express Jewishness over Americanness. Folks did not need to hide the fact they were Jews, there was no fear of anti-Semitism prevalent as it is today, for this group. “I was brought up in a family that was conservative and went to a congregation that had 2000 families, was Bar Mitzvah there and grew up through the JCC where we had our sports teams and that was where my social was...” (Participant #6 @ 0:30:17)

Regarding the notion of Jews being a minority, six participants in this focus group grew up surrounded by Jewish life in New York state and Atlanta. Those who didn't, expressed their experience of growing up as a minority: "As far as my identity, to me it's being a minority in a majority Christian state of South, and the Bible belt and below the Bible belt, as far as I know I was the only Jew in my high school. I wouldn't hide my Judaism but it is certainly not something I would advertise or volunteer the information if not requested, you know... Identity in general is kind of tricky with Jews because you know, are we an ethnicity, are we a nationality, are we a religion, are we a race, are we a combination of all of those? There's no clearly defined answer to any of that, we all come from different backgrounds that I think Judaism is our binding agent, no matter where we've been or where we go."

(Participant #8 @ 0:36:25)

Seven participants shared a feeling of a collective shared Jewish fate, of the lack of choice in belonging to the Jewish People, if you are born a Jew then you are a Jew.

"You're born Jewish, you are Jewish, it's not so much a choice... The strength that I see in Judaism is that culturally we really push for success, as a People we are very humiliated, embarrassed when anybody of our faith does something wrong." (Participant #3@0:51:36)

My own thought as I listened, as related to the theme of identity explored in this session, is that the impact of the Jewish trauma, of the past 200+ years is ingrained in the collective memory of all participants of this group.

I observed that the closer the acknowledged trauma was in the individual's history, to the now living generations, as related by family stories that recounted awareness of the pogroms Jews experienced in the 1800's in Russia, leading all the way to the Holocaust in Europe, the stronger the primary Jewish identification is. These events were pure Jewish trauma. Then for the group came the trauma of 9/11, which was an American pogrom all the

way. I experienced the group members, as American Jews, who were already carrying the pogrom trauma in their DNA, as hit hard once again without even knowing or realizing that the 9/11 pogrom may have stimulated their collective traumatic memory, shaking their Jewish-American / American-Jewish identity.

9/11 as a historic moment for these participants was followed in significance by the more recent events of Charlottesville and Pittsburgh. Added to these events in importance, was the fear of generated by the subsequent evolution of the Black Lives Matter movement, COVID- 19 pandemic, and the then pending American elections... based on these observations I believe that the need for acknowledging and treating traumatic and post traumatic experiences will expand greatly in the coming years.

Session Two

Figure 2A

Word Cloud of top 15 Keywords elicited during Session 2



A Word Cloud of the top 15 Keywords mentioned by subjects in Session 2 on faith is given in Figure 2A. Those words that stand out are Faith, God, People, Believe, People and Suffering.

Figure 2B

Correlations and Correlation Probabilities for Session 2

Multivariate																					
Correlations																					
Age	1.0000	-0.8477	-0.0738	0.0000	0.3324	0.4108	-0.1227	-0.3535	0.1222	0.7090	-0.4845	-0.2525	0.3841	0.0000	-0.2682	0.7670	-0.3760	0.8883	0.1426	-0.2686	-0.1434
Work Status	-0.8477	1.0000	0.0072	0.0000	-0.3535	-0.2844	0.2507	-0.2207	-0.5886	0.3332	0.3307	-0.3341	0.0000	0.0085	-0.3268	0.3812	-0.3731	0.1727	-0.0277	-0.0871	0.1138
Independence	-0.0738	0.0072	1.0000	0.0000	-0.3760	-0.6547	0.1425	0.2028	-0.1429	-0.1429	0.3255	-0.2205	0.0000	-0.4851	-0.4785	-0.2266	0.1158	-0.2448	-0.2420	-0.5419	-0.4894
Social/Family Connection	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Health status	0.3324	-0.3535	-0.3760	0.0000	1.0000	0.5774	-0.5740	0.7716	0.3750	0.3750	0.3750	-0.2758	0.0000	0.2125	0.7534	0.6642	0.1543	0.1718	-0.0724	-0.1508	0.5774
Education	0.4108	-0.2844	-0.6547	0.0000	0.5774	1.0000	-0.2182	-0.4742	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	-0.1181	0.0000	0.0424	0.8540	0.2241	0.2673	0.3780	0.2941	0.3482	0.6687
Religion Yes=1	-0.1227	-0.2507	0.1425	0.0000	-0.3750	-0.2182	1.0000	-0.4880	-0.0000	-0.1429	-0.1429	0.4880	0.2958	0.0000	0.0581	-0.4743	-0.4283	-0.2203	-0.2488	-0.1387	0.3419
Married	-0.3535	0.3307	0.2028	0.0000	-0.2748	-0.4472	0.4880	1.0000	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	0.0000	0.0587	0.0000	-0.2687	-0.3344	-0.3838	-0.3187	-0.1308	0.2335	-0.0883
Divorced	0.1222	-0.2507	-0.1429	0.0000	0.3750	0.2182	-0.4880	-0.4880	1.0000	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.4880	-0.2958	0.0000	-0.0581	0.1743	0.4283	0.2203	-0.2488	0.1387	-0.3419
Widowed	0.7090	-0.3307	-0.1429	0.0000	0.3750	0.2182	-0.1429	-0.4880	-0.1429	1.0000	-0.1429	-0.4880	-0.2958	0.0000	-0.0581	0.1743	0.4283	0.2203	-0.2488	0.1387	-0.3419
Single	-0.4845	-0.3307	-0.1429	0.0000	0.3750	0.2182	0.1429	-0.4880	-0.1429	-0.1429	1.0000	-0.4880	-0.2958	0.0000	0.0581	0.0348	0.5484	-0.3486	0.0881	-0.3004	0.3419
Live With	-0.2525	0.3307	0.2028	0.0000	-0.2748	-0.4472	0.4880	1.0000	-0.4880	-0.4880	0.0000	0.0587	0.0000	-0.2687	-0.3344	-0.3838	-0.3187	-0.1308	0.2335	-0.0883	0.2437
Trauma recent	0.3841	-0.3341	-0.2686	0.0000	-0.2686	-0.1301	0.3535	0.0587	-0.3535	0.4880	-0.2508	0.0587	1.0000	0.0000	-0.0581	0.2919	-0.4842	0.3848	-0.1681	0.2335	-0.2781
Temple Member	-0.2525	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Faith 2	-0.2682	0.0085	-0.4851	0.0000	0.2125	0.4743	0.0581	-0.2507	-0.0581	-0.2791	0.8071	-0.2687	-0.0381	0.0000	1.0000	0.1147	0.4486	-0.1948	0.6882	-0.3788	0.7762
God, godliness 2	0.7670	-0.3268	-0.4785	0.0000	0.7534	0.6642	-0.1543	-0.1718	0.0724	0.6687	0.6256	0.1544	0.2576	0.0000	0.1347	1.0000	0.1385	0.5560	0.0383	0.1254	0.3424
Belief believing believe 2	-0.3760	0.3812	-0.2420	0.0000	0.6642	0.2481	-0.4783	-0.3835	0.4283	-0.0887	0.5484	-0.3838	-0.4843	0.0000	0.4486	0.1620	1.0000	-0.3758	0.3883	-0.5054	0.1296
Affect affected 2	0.8883	-0.0731	0.1166	0.0000	0.1543	0.2673	-0.2335	0.3187	0.2203	0.6832	-0.3454	-0.1187	0.3984	0.0000	0.1348	0.5560	-0.3758	1.0000	-0.2227	0.1116	0.0000
Strong strength 2	-0.2686	0.1158	-0.2448	0.0000	0.1158	0.3780	0.2448	-0.2182	-0.2448	0.0881	-0.3716	-0.1158	0.0000	0.0682	0.1385	0.3865	-0.2227	0.1116	1.0000	-0.2227	0.0681
Pittsburgh 2	-0.1434	-0.0871	-0.0277	0.0000	-0.1434	-0.0871	-0.0277	0.0000	-0.1434	-0.0871	-0.0277	0.0000	-0.1434	-0.0871	-0.0277	0.0000	-0.1434	-0.0871	-0.0277	0.0000	-0.1434
Suffered suffering suffer 2	-0.1508	-0.0881	-0.0280	0.0000	-0.1508	-0.0881	-0.0280	0.0000	-0.1508	-0.0881	-0.0280	0.0000	-0.1508	-0.0881	-0.0280	0.0000	-0.1508	-0.0881	-0.0280	0.0000	-0.1508
Holocaust 2	-0.1494	0.1138	-0.1454	0.0000	0.1494	0.0881	-0.0280	-0.1494	0.0881	0.0000	-0.1494	0.0881	0.0000	0.0682	0.1385	0.3865	-0.2227	0.1116	0.0000	-0.2227	0.0681
Struggle struggling 2	-0.1874	0.0021	0.0048	0.0000	-0.1874	0.0021	0.0048	0.0000	-0.1874	0.0021	0.0048	0.0000	-0.1874	0.0021	0.0048	0.0000	-0.1874	0.0021	0.0048	0.0000	-0.1874
The correlations are estimated by Row-wise method.																					
Correlation Probability																					
Age	1.0000	0.8477	0.0738	0.0000	0.3324	0.4108	-0.1227	-0.3535	0.1222	0.7090	-0.4845	-0.2525	0.3841	0.0000	-0.2682	0.7670	-0.3760	0.8883	0.1426	-0.2686	-0.1434
Work Status	0.8477	1.0000	0.0072	0.0000	-0.3535	-0.2844	0.2507	-0.2207	-0.5886	0.3332	0.3307	-0.3341	0.0000	0.0085	-0.3268	0.3812	-0.3731	0.1727	-0.0277	-0.0871	0.1138
Independence	0.0738	0.0072	1.0000	0.0000	-0.3760	-0.6547	0.1425	0.2028	-0.1429	-0.1429	0.3255	-0.2205	0.0000	-0.4851	-0.4785	-0.2266	0.1158	-0.2448	-0.2420	-0.5419	-0.4894
Social/Family Connection	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Health status	0.3324	-0.3535	-0.3760	0.0000	1.0000	0.5774	-0.5740	0.7716	0.3750	0.3750	0.3750	-0.2758	0.0000	0.2125	0.7534	0.6642	0.1543	0.1718	-0.0724	-0.1508	0.5774
Education	0.4108	-0.2844	-0.6547	0.0000	0.5774	1.0000	-0.2182	-0.4742	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	-0.1181	0.0000	0.0424	0.8540	0.2241	0.2673	0.3780	0.2941	0.3482	0.6687
Religion Yes=1	-0.1227	-0.2507	0.1425	0.0000	-0.3750	-0.2182	1.0000	-0.4880	-0.0000	-0.1429	-0.1429	0.4880	0.2958	0.0000	0.0581	-0.4743	-0.4283	-0.2203	-0.2488	-0.1387	0.3419
Married	-0.3535	0.3307	0.2028	0.0000	-0.2748	-0.4472	0.4880	1.0000	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	0.0000	0.0587	0.0000	-0.2687	-0.3344	-0.3838	-0.3187	-0.1308	0.2335	-0.0883
Divorced	0.1222	-0.2507	-0.1429	0.0000	0.3750	0.2182	-0.4880	-0.4880	1.0000	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.4880	-0.2958	0.0000	-0.0581	0.1743	0.4283	0.2203	-0.2488	0.1387	-0.3419
Widowed	0.7090	-0.3307	-0.1429	0.0000	0.3750	0.2182	-0.1429	-0.4880	-0.1429	1.0000	-0.1429	-0.4880	-0.2958	0.0000	-0.0581	0.1743	0.4283	0.2203	-0.2488	0.1387	-0.3419
Single	-0.4845	-0.3307	-0.1429	0.0000	0.3750	0.2182	0.1429	-0.4880	-0.1429	-0.1429	1.0000	-0.4880	-0.2958	0.0000	0.0581	0.0348	0.5484	-0.3486	0.0881	-0.3004	0.3419
Live With	-0.2525	0.3307	0.2028	0.0000	-0.2748	-0.4472	0.4880	1.0000	-0.4880	-0.4880	0.0000	0.0587	0.0000	-0.2687	-0.3344	-0.3838	-0.3187	-0.1308	0.2335	-0.0883	0.2437
Trauma recent	0.3841	-0.3341	-0.2686	0.0000	-0.2686	-0.1301	0.3535	0.0587	-0.3535	0.4880	-0.2508	0.0587	1.0000	0.0000	-0.0581	0.2919	-0.4842	0.3848	-0.1681	0.2335	-0.2781
Temple Member	-0.2525	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Faith 2	-0.2682	0.0085	-0.4851	0.0000	0.2125	0.4743	0.0581	-0.2507	-0.0581	-0.2791	0.8071	-0.2687	-0.0381	0.0000	1.0000	0.1147	0.4486	-0.1948	0.6882	-0.3788	0.7762
God, godliness 2	0.7670	-0.3268	-0.4785	0.0000	0.7534	0.6642	-0.1543	-0.1718	0.0724	0.6687	0.6256	0.1544	0.2576	0.0000	0.1347	1.0000	0.1385	0.5560	0.0383	0.1254	0.3424
Belief believing believe 2	-0.3760	0.3812	-0.2420	0.0000	0.6642	0.2481	-0.4783	-0.3835	0.4283	-0.0887	0.5484	-0.3838	-0.4843	0.0000	0.4486	0.1620	1.0000	-0.3758	0.3883	-0.5054	0.1296
Affect affected 2	0.8883	-0.0731	0.1166	0.0000	0.1543	0.2673	-0.2335	0.3187	0.2203	0.6832	-0.3454	-0.1187	0.3984	0.0000	0.1348	0.5560	-0.3758	1.0000	-0.2227	0.1116	0.0000
Strong strength 2	-0.2686	0.1158	-0.2448	0.0000	0.1158	0.3780	0.2448	-0.2182	-0.2448	0.0881	-0.3716	-0.1158	0.0000	0.0682	0.1385	0.3865	-0.2227	0.1116	1.0000	-0.2227	0.0681
Pittsburgh 2	-0.1434	-0.0871	-0.0277	0.0000	-0.1434	-0.0871	-0.0277	0.0000	-0.1434	-0.0871	-0.0277	0.0000	-0.1434	-0.0871	-0.0277	0.0000	-0.1434	-0.0871	-0.0277	0.0000	-0.1434
Suffered suffering suffer 2	-0.1508	-0.0881	-0.0280	0.0000	-0.1508	-0.0881	-0.0280	0.0000	-0.1508	-0.0881	-0.0280	0.0000	-0.1508	-0.0881	-0.0280	0.0000	-0.1508	-0.0881	-0.0280	0.0000	-0.1508
Holocaust 2	-0.1494	0.1138	-0.1454	0.0000	0.1494	0.0881	-0.0280	-0.1494	0.0881	0.0000	-0.1494	0.0881	0.0000	0.0682	0.1385	0.3865	-0.2227	0.1116	0.0000	-0.2227	0.0681
Struggle struggling 2	-0.1874	0.0021	0.0048	0.0000	-0.1874	0.0021	0.0048	0.0000	-0.1874	0.0021	0.0048	0.0000	-0.1874	0.0021	0.0048	0.0000	-0.1874	0.0021	0.0048	0.0000	-0.1874

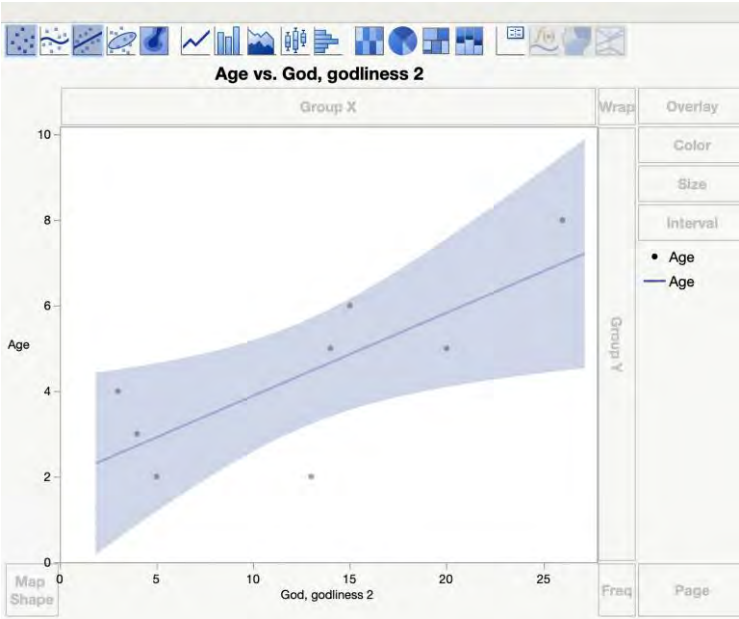


Figure 2C shows that there is a positive relationship between one’s age and those eliciting the word God and/or Godliness.

Figure 2D

Bar chart of Suffered, Suffering, and/or Suffer to Independence for Session 2

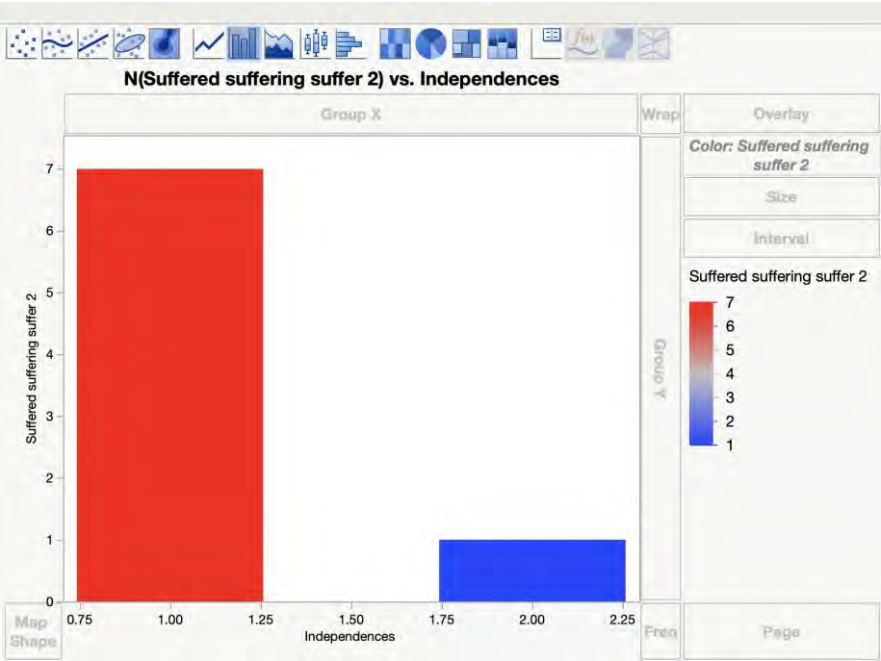


Figure 2D shows that there is more suffering by those who say they are independent than those stating they are not completely independent (coded 1 vs coded 2 if not fully independent).

Figure 2E

Trend line of Faith to Religion and/or Religious for Session 2

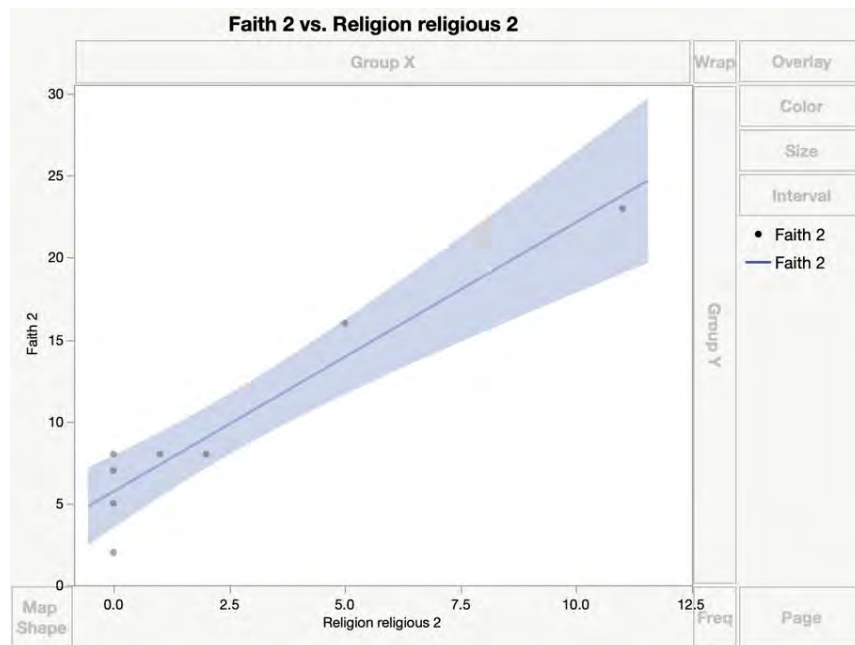


Figure 2E shows that there is a positive relationship between those eliciting the word faith to the word religion and/or religious.

Figure 2F

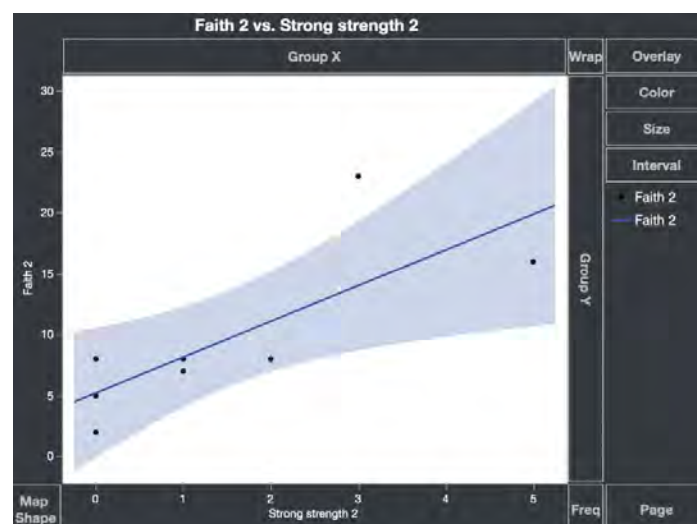


Figure 2F shows that there is a positive relationship between those eliciting the word Faith to the word Strong/strength.

Figure 2G

Trend line of the word Faith to the word Pittsburgh for Session 2

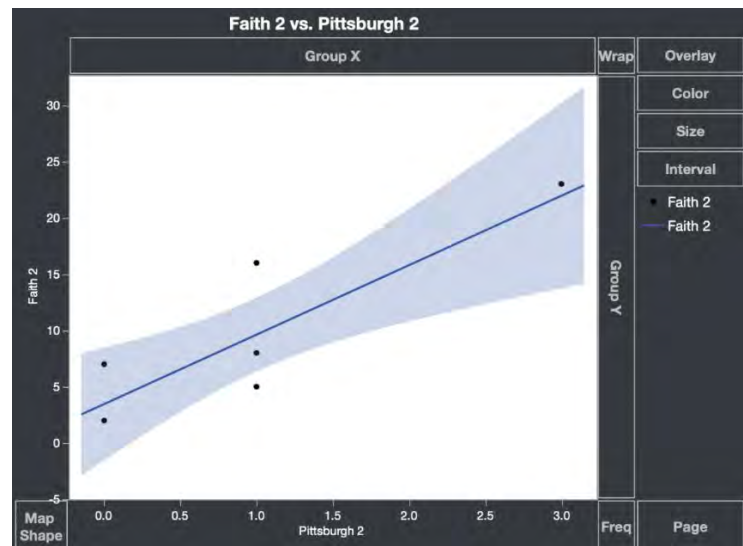


Figure 2G shows that there is a positive relationship between those eliciting the word Faith to the word Pittsburgh.

Figure 2H

Trend line of words Affect/Affected to the word Holocaust for Session 2

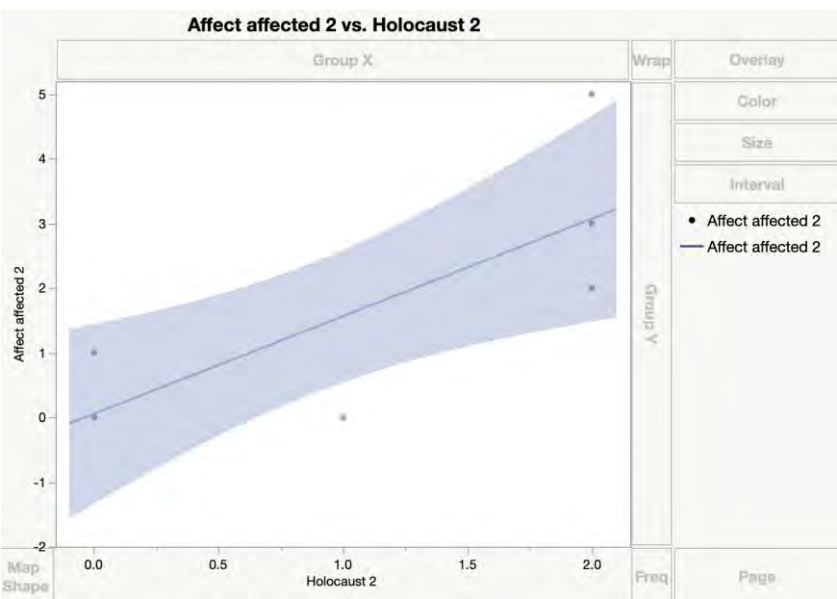


Figure 2H shows that there is a positive relationship between those eliciting words of being affect/affected to the word Holocaust.

Figure 2I

Column chart of Affect/Affected to Suffered, Suffering, and/or Suffer to for Session 2

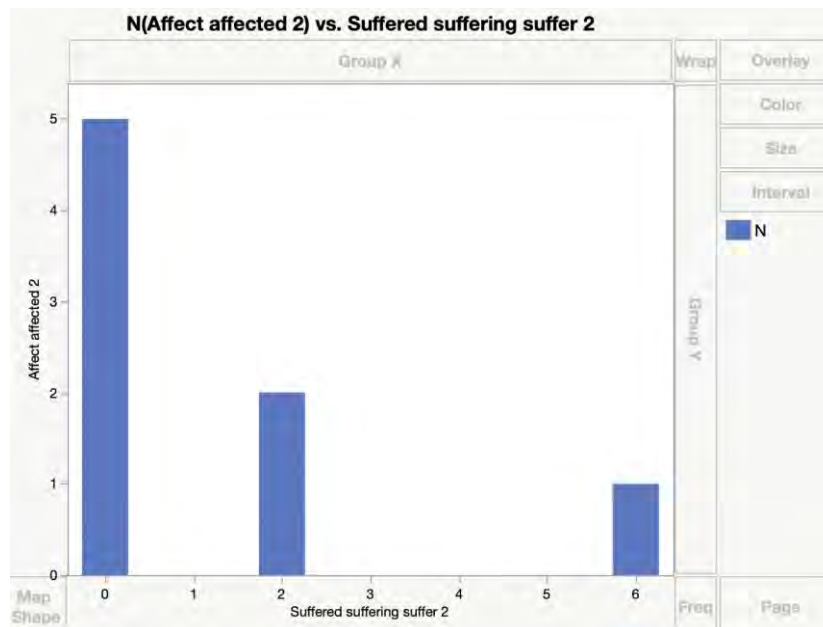


Figure 2I shows that there is a negative relationship between those eliciting words of being affect/affected to that of suffered/suffering/suffer.

Reflection on session No. two of focus group, subject: Faith

Figure 2J

Key Words

Key Word	Count	P. #1	P. #2	P. #3	P. #4	P. #5	P. #6	P. #7	P. #8
	In doc								
Faith	144	16	5	8	7	8	8	2	23
God, godliness	124	15	26	14	5	4	20	3	13
Belief, believing, believe	56	2	1	8	4	1	8	2	9
Feel, feeling	38	8	9	6		1	2	5	1

Religion, religious	23	5				2	1		11
Affect, affected	22		3	2		5		1	
Strong, strength	19	5			1	1	2		3
Pittsburgh	16	1	1	1		1	1		3
Suffered, suffering, suffer	15			2				6	2
Holocaust	13	1	2	2		2			
Struggle, struggling	10			1	1	6	1		1

Key words mentioned in the session included: Faith, Belief, Holocaust, Pittsburgh, 9/11, Struggle, Suffer, Strength, Affect, Religion, God.

Key phrases mentioned in the session included: having faith in God is believing he's still there without any evidence that he is, we have a tendency to call upon God when I'm in trouble, I can't blame God I blame the people, My higher power is always there, my God is everywhere, when I see acts of terror or genocides my faith is strengthened, I don't feel that these attacks affected my faith in terms of my Jewishness, I think the faith has definitely been challenged.

I found that participants of the focus group separated the concept of faith to personal faith and religious faith/belief, two different aspects of the same idea. I feel great empathy for the participants' expression of self-spirituality. I observed a strong expression of clear and sincere belief.

"To me faith is trust. And there's trust in people, and there's trust in God." (#2 @ 0:19:37)

“I don’t believe in God, I don’t think there is a need for that, I have my own faith, my own spirituality.” (# 7 @ 0:41:43)

For the group the statement of belief in the self allows me the thought that believing in one’s inner self is the embodiment of the image of God within. This statement makes me feel that indeed this participant feels the divinity as an integral part within him:

“religion is a belief, to me, in God, and faith is a belief in myself... you don’t need religion to have faith but you need to have faith in order to have religion.” (#8 @ 0:11:39)

During the discussion, the concept of shame came up, related to generational, collective transfer of “Jewish guilt” from traumatic events in Jewish history such as pogroms and the Holocaust. Participants noted that whenever a Jewish person commits a serious crime or offense that is largely covered by the media, they feel ashamed that a Jew committed it. They take it personally. There is an inner transferred expectation in Jews to “behave” in order to avoid embarrassing other fellow Jews, and to avoid drawing negative attention, and avoid collective persecution and/or violent consequences as a result of a crime committed by a Jewish person.

“...individual hate, it doesn’t really affect my faith, but what does is the embarrassment I have when somebody who is Jewish commence a horrible offence, Bernie Madoff or Jeffery Epstein.” (# 5 @ 0:47:59)

“I take it personally when a Jewish person does something wrong.” (# 3 @ 1:02:53)

“...we have a lot of collective suffering as a People.” (# 8 @ 0:51:11)

“I don’t feel guilt, it’s their guilt I didn’t do anything it was their guilt, but you know, the fact that they were Jews yea, that kind of makes it, it’s almost like its someone from your family that did something.” (#2 @ 0:54:52)

When the discussion came to referring to current events of the recent year, the COVID-19 pandemic, the events regarding Black Lives Matter, and the latest elections chaos, I noticed that all eight participants expressed great loss of trust in humanity during this past year, not in God or their religious faith.

“I don’t blame him I blame humanity.” (# 6 @ 0:27:42)

“...people choosing to do awful things you know, this takes away from that but I have faith he pointed us in the right direction and we just need to follow that.” (# 4 @ 0:32:45)

“...some of the thoughts that are going on in people’s minds being more caring about their own pocketbook than they are about a person’s life.” (# 6 @ 0:59:27)

I especially identified with a remark made by participant # 7. They spoke about their concern regarding people keeping quiet while atrocities are happening around them. This kind of behavior also bothers me greatly.

“I find it very difficult just from my life, to even think that there is something that is there, and that remains silent while all those things were happening.” (#7 @ 0:41:43) “I think I lose faith in the other people and especially those who keep quiet, who remain quiet and don’t speak up.” (# 7 @ 0:46:13)

When discussing anti-Semitic events and terror attacks like the Holocaust, 9/11 and Pittsburgh, I found the expressed loss of faith in people, in humanity, was strong in this group. I believe that this focus group was strongly affected by events of the recent year such as Black Lives Matter, COVID-19 pandemic, and the American presidential election struggle.

“You know, the things that happened in all those places were things that people did. Now, we say that God gave a brain and hoped we use it but he gave us free will. And all of those

things, I can't blame God, I blame the people that were doing the things that they did." (# 2 @ 0:19:37)

"I don't blame Him I blame humanity." (Participant #6 @ 0:27:42)

"I believe in God I believe that he's there I believe what he wrote in the Torah its I have faith that he set us up to live their lives and for the world to be a good place, if people, people choosing to do awful things you know, this takes away from that but I have faith he pointed us in the right direction and we just need to follow that." (#4 @ 0:32:45)

"I do not believe in God in the way the Torah and our childhood... because it's just too inconsistent with the reality I find.... the last 3.5 years has made me dislike people There is just so much suffering and I cannot reconcile that with a God that has power to change this... and yet I do believe in some force, some power that this did not just happen by accident. (#3 @ 0:35:44)

"...my relationship with God, so that's actually good but I question humanity." (#5 @ 1:14:32)

"...as far as faith and God, we make our own trouble God doesn't." (#2 @ 0:54:52)

I fully identify with participant #8's statement about the self: "...my faith is that I stay a good person to everyone around me. It doesn't have anything to do with God, it's my faith, my personal faith." (#8 @0:11:39), as this is one of the most significant traits I follow in my personal life.

When participant #3 spoke about her perspective in relation to all the suffering in the world, it truly hit home with me since I empathize with this suffering. "...it's not a great rub for a lot of people, there is so much suffering in this world!! There is just so much suffering and I cannot reconcile that with a God that has power to change this. (#3 @ 0:35:44)

Figure 3A

A word cloud on a black background. The word "think" is the largest and most prominent, rendered in a light blue, sans-serif font. Surrounding it are various other words in different sizes and orientations. "holocaust" is in white, bold, sans-serif font, positioned to the left of "think". "congregations" is in white, bold, sans-serif font, positioned to the right of "think". "going" is in a bright green, bold, sans-serif font, positioned above "think". "american" is in a bright green, bold, sans-serif font, positioned above "going". "grow" is in a bright green, bold, sans-serif font, positioned to the right of "going". "person" is in a bright green, bold, sans-serif font, positioned to the right of "grow". "jew" is in a bright green, bold, sans-serif font, positioned below "going". "years" is in a bright green, bold, sans-serif font, positioned below "think". "change" is in a bright green, bold, sans-serif font, positioned to the left of "years". "america" is in a bright green, bold, sans-serif font, positioned to the left of "years". "like" is in a bright green, bold, sans-serif font, positioned to the left of "years". "see" is in a bright green, bold, sans-serif font, positioned to the left of "years". "things" is in a bright green, bold, sans-serif font, positioned to the left of "years". "happen" is in a bright green, bold, sans-serif font, positioned to the left of "years".

Chart 3B

[illegible]

The Session 3 on Future correlation chart 3B, suggests that it would be of interest to look at the relationship of Hopefully to Work Status ($p = < 0.0274$, negative and significant), and Grandchildren/children ($p = < 0.0243$, positive and significant); Holocaust to Education ($p = < 0.0422$, positive and significant) and Jewish/Jew ($p = < 0.0333$, positive and significant); Jewish/Jew to Think ($p = < 0.0140$, positive and significant), Future ($p = < 0.0201$, positive and significant), and Understanding/understand ($p = < 0.0330$, positive and significant); and American Jewry to Future ($p = < 0.0062$, positive and significant) and Change ($p = < 0.0085$, positive and significant).

Figure 3C

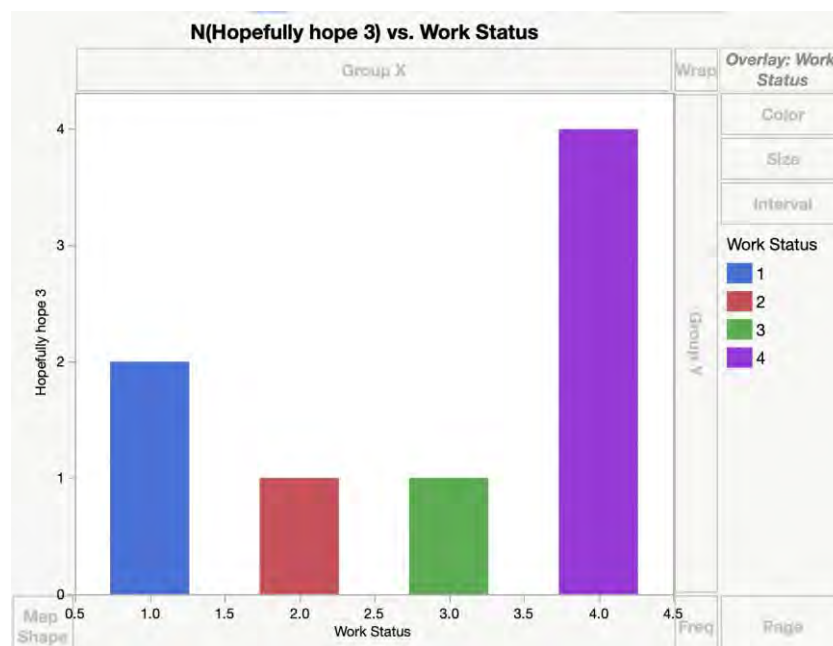


Figure 3C shows that there is a stronger relationship between those eliciting words about hopefully/hope to high work status and low work status than those of moderate work status. Is this a reflection of middle status worker feeling stuck while those on either extreme are more hopeful?

Figure 3D

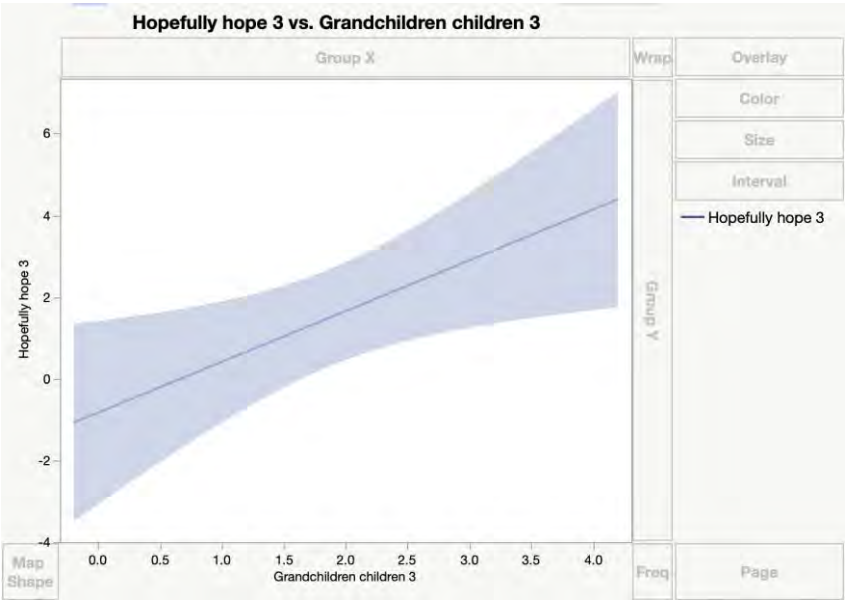


Figure 3D shows that there is a positive relationship between those eliciting words of hopefully/hope to grandchildren/children. This seems to suggest and those who mention children express more words of hope in this session about the future.

Figure 3E

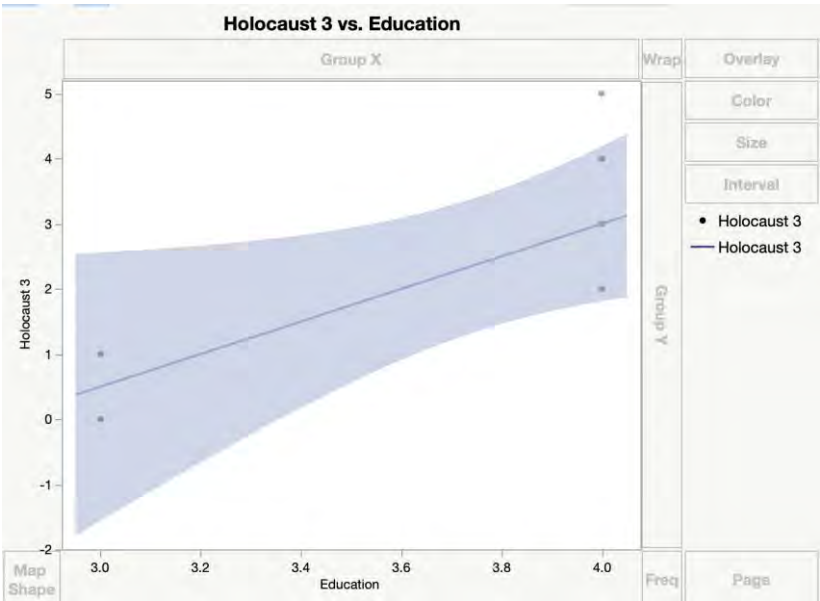


Figure 3E shows that there is a positive relationship between those eliciting the word Holocaust to one's level of education.

Figure 3F

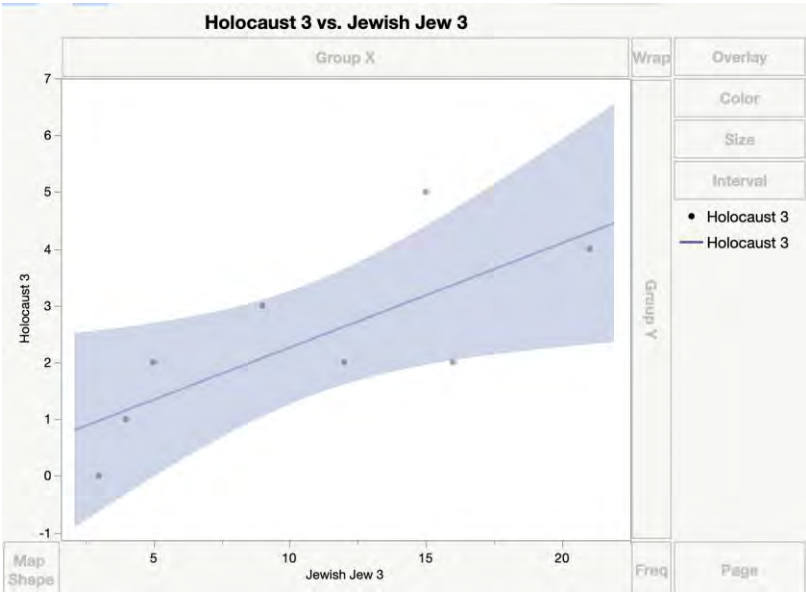


Figure 3F shows that there is a positive relationship between those eliciting the word Holocaust to the words Jewish/Jew. Thus, fewer thoughts about the word Jewish or Jew are related to fewer cognitive responses about the Holocaust.

Figure 3G

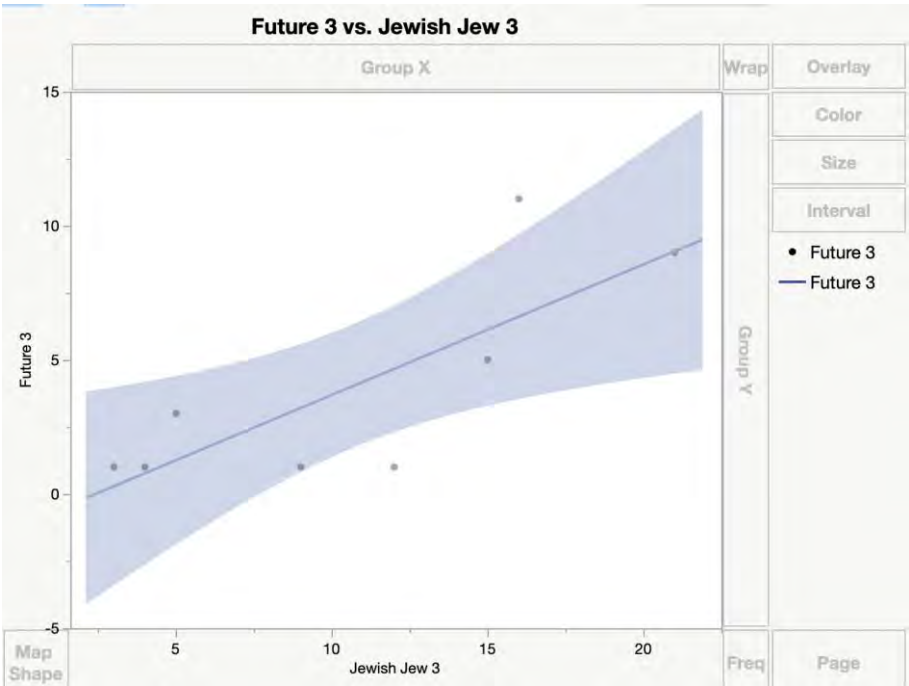


Figure 3G shows that there is a positive relationship between those eliciting the words Jewish/Jew to a cognitive response related to the future. Thus, it may be said that thoughts about being Jewish or a Jew were related to more thoughts about the future. We do not know from this keyword chart the exact nature of those future thoughts; however, Charts 3H and 3I suggest it may be about one's level of understanding and the possibility of change for American Jewry.

Figure 3H

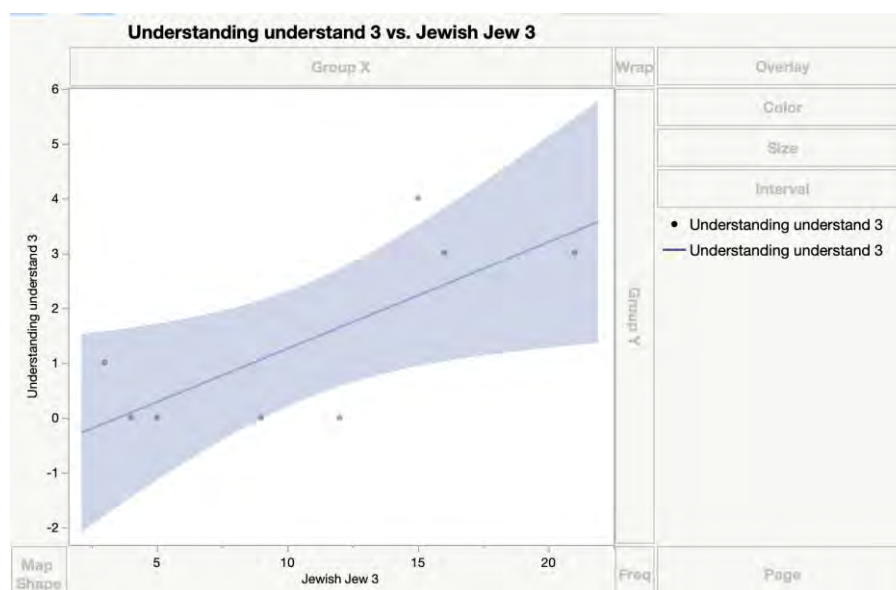


Figure 3H shows that there is a positive relationship between those eliciting the words Jewish/Jew to a cognitive response related to understanding/understand. Thus, it may be said that thoughts about being Jewish or a Jew were related to more elicitations the words understanding or understand.

Figure 3I

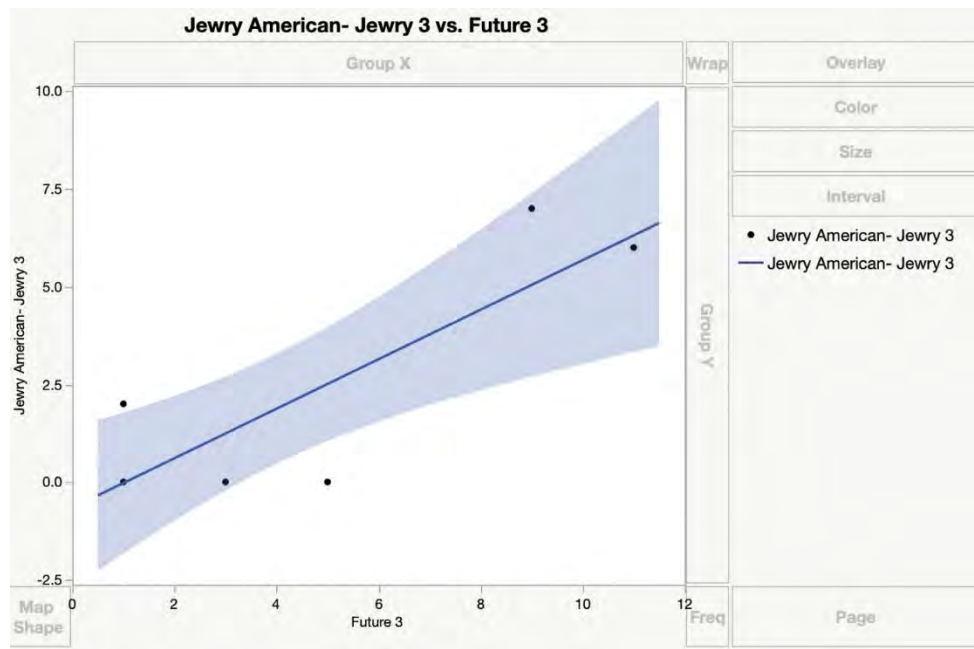


Figure 3I shows that there is a positive relationship between those eliciting the words Jewry American - Jewry to a cognitive response related to the word “Future”.

Figure 3J

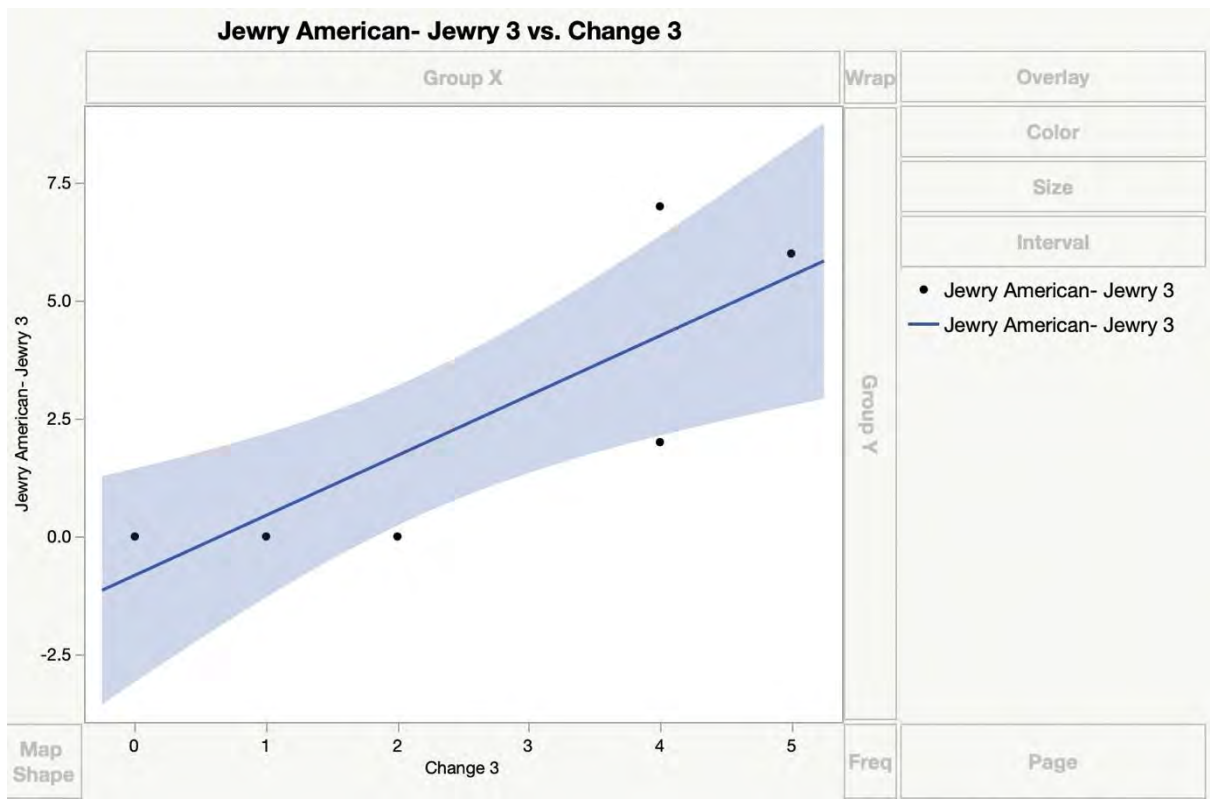


Figure 3J shows that there is a positive relationship between those eliciting the words Jewry American - Jewry to a cognitive response related to the word “Change”. Thus, it may be said that thoughts about the words Jewish or Jew were related to more thoughts about the word change.

Reflection on session No. three of focus group, subject: Future

Figure 3K

Key words

Key word	Count in Doc.	P. #1	P. #2	P. #3	P. #4	P. #5	P. #6	P. #7	P.#8
Jew, Jewish	110	16	9	12	3	15	5	4	21
Think	102	13	4	17	2	11	12	4	33
Future	51	11	1	1	1	5	3	1	9
Children, grandchildren	25	4	2	2	2	3	1		1
Jewry, American Jewry	21	6						2	7
Holocaust	21	2	3	2		5	2	1	4
Change	19	5		2		1	1	4	4
Grow, growing, growth, grown	14			3	2	5	1	2	
Hope, hopefully	13	6	2	2		1	1		
Worry, worried, worries	13	1	1	4		2	2		
Understand, understanding	12	3			1	4			3

Key words mentioned in the Session included: Jewish, Think, Tuture, Children, Grandchildren, American Jewry, Holocaust, Change, Growth, Hope, Worry, Understand.

Key phrases mentioned in the Session included: I hope that in 10 years we can go back to temple, I vividly remember my mom saying that you find a nice Jewish girl and get married and be fruitful and multiply, some of the faith that has been there in the past our young people are not as committed to, I think there's going to be more attacks on Jews in the future, I feel that we should never take our freedom for granted.

The future is something prophetic in which we aim, expect, and wish for certain things to happen, where we project our heart's desire. This focus group discussion about the future seems appropriate and promising. Yet, when looking into some of the participants future expectations for the next decade or two, I can detect uncertainty and lack of clarity which suggest post traumatic experience.

We must remember that the year 2020 was filled with so many life changing events, these sessions were held before the presidential elections. The result as well as events that came after the elections, have certainly contributed even more to the collective anxiety, uncertainty and primal fear of survival.

I observed that these participants lives reflect their experiences in the present yet are built upon their history and their family's history. I also observed expressions during the discussion, I felt participants hidden concern and at times even worry, for the future their children and grandchildren expect to have. I also observed expressions of uncertainty in regard to growth, concerns about conversion and how to conserve their faith. For the most part, they still see themselves as Jews 10 years ahead. However, they can not guarantee the same for their children and grandchildren. The feeling I had when I explored the future with this focus group is, they carry a sense of guilt, a sense of failure to secure their faith for the

next generations. The previous generations managed to convey their uniqueness. It seemed to them that the next generation does not embrace the transferred tradition. I found myself asking them: so, what are you doing to change it? Do you want to change it at all? The unexpressed thought I had for them was: if you are uncertain about your children's future, get up and act upon it right now because in 50 years it will be too late.

I was especially saddened to hear what participant #3 said: "...if I move, I want to bring my grandchildren to synagogue and I'm pretty sure that my daughter will not allow that to happen. I want to see somebody in my family carry it on and I'm not so sure that that's going to happen and that kind of breaks my heart." (#3 @ 0:11:48)

All eight participants of this focus group expressed dissatisfaction with the sharp move which forced them to practice their faith by technological means instead of gathering in person, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, yet all participants expressed adaptation to the situation in the present.

"I think the concept of congregations is always going to be here, I don't think that will ever change but I do think that congregations do have to innovate, and they have to transform with the times... I think the core idea of congregating in person will never change it will probably be infused with more technology and fused with the traditional way of doing things." (#8 @ 0:56:48)

"I think the structure of synagogues hasn't changed in 100 years. As a result, we are noticing their format is NOT fitting the kids of today. To grow we must adapt. So, I feel even though we will always need human personal interaction reaching out to congregants as we are now through online abilities will be necessary." (#7 @email)

"I think there will be a change, but I agree with many who said we still need the synagogue, and we still need the in person gathering." (#1 @1:08:22)

I'm "just sorry that the corona virus made us be only virtual rather than getting together in the temple. Because it's not the same." (#2 @0:36:56)

Two participants expressed great certainty regarding their own personal future religious growth without hesitation.

"For me it's more of an existential thing, like as I'm on the back side of life I think that my relationship with God will continue to grow. (#5 @ 0:18:22)

"I mean for myself at least in 10 years I only see it growing more and more." (#4 @0:32:04)

When discussing the fear of the loss of future observance of Judaism, five participants clearly expressed anxiety of an unknown future, what even felt like an insecure future for them and their families. Examining their response to an apparent growing fear of current events and the blatant rise of white supremacy, I found myself recalling Holocaust survivors' stories of the time before all hell broke loose in Germany. I personally feel the reflections of this focus group may represent American Jewry's reluctance to admit something very ill is happening in the United States these days.

"I think there's going to be more attacks on Jews in the future and I think I'll be a bit more guarded to my religious identity, I think I'll be a bit more careful with strangers I'm talking to, at least in America". (#8 @ 0:34:15)

"It's not the big Holocaust issue I'm worried about, it's the things that we don't see, it's my child not getting a job because he's Jewish, its equality for who we are, equal opportunities." (#6 @ 1:02:45)

"I honestly do believe that something like the Holocaust can happen again... I think that under our current administration I have felt more threatened than I have ever felt before... I really feel that we can be undermined as a People". (#3 @ 0:45:06)

“I don’t think the Holocaust can happen again, do I think that there are elements in this country that would love to round up Jews and blacks and Mexican and Muslims and you know, quarantine us from the rest of society, yea, do I think will it happen, no, because I trust our American society... I could be wrong, just like Jewish people in Poland and Russia were wrong about Hitler and Stalin.” (#5 @0:50:12)

“...we’ve got a reality that we’re going to have challenges and every generation is going to have challenges and it scares me because I can see some of the faith that has been there in the past our young people are not as committed to.” (#6 @ 0:28:10)

When I brought up the issue of moving to the state of Israel, all eight participants noted they have no intention to immigrate to Israel, unless the situation in the United States became absolutely dire. This focus group brought me the understanding that American Jewry, for the most part, consider Israel as their safety net, as an insurance policy, should something happen, and they have to flee. I clearly saw the persecuted Jew syndrome surface in this discussion.

“I’m not worried about American Judaism or being a Jew... I feel we’re about in the same position we’ve been for years. I think it got better once we had the state of Israel.” (#2 @0:41:25)

“I know the safety net is there.” (#5 @0:50:12)

“The past definitely influences the present there’s no doubt about that, and how does the present improve the future, the greatest example of all three is the Holocaust. The Holocaust in the past influences the present... it created the state of Israel.” (#1 @1:08:22)

“America has been around 250 years, America is very very young, Judaism is 4000 years old, America is 250 years old, it’s almost like, America is a very lucky country because as Americans we did not have to experience the things that Israelis do.” (#8 @ 0:56:48)

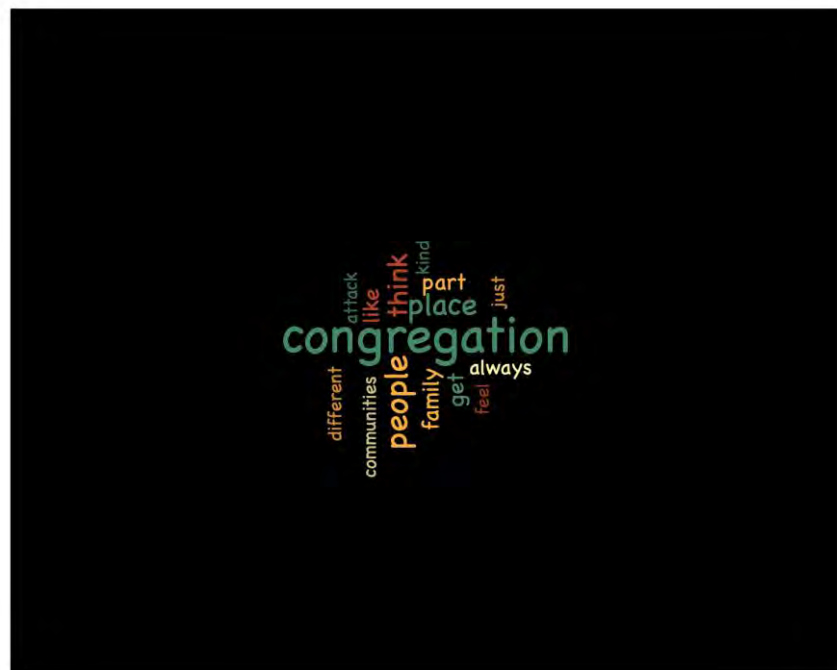
One curious and hopeful remark mentioned by participant #5 drew my attention to current events. This session took place prior to the elections and their results. In his remark I read so much hope for a positive change and reassurance, I also read into it an enormous pride of the possibility of having a Jewish man officially in the White House, a collective Jewish sigh of relief and satisfaction that “one of us” is so successful.

“Kamala Harris, her husband is Jewish so it’ll be interesting to see whether that plays any role.” (#5 @ 1:07:09)

Session Four

Figure 4A

Word Cloud of top 15 Keywords elicited during Session 4



Session 4 on Community Word Cloud Top 15 Keywords – The top keywords mentioned that

stand out are Congregation, People, Place, Attack, Kind and Family.

Figure 4B

Correlations and Correlation Probabilities for Session 4

Multivariate																										
Correlations																										
	Age	Work Status	Independence	Social/Family Connection	Health status	Religion	Yes-1	Education	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Single	Live With	Trauma recent	congregations	congregation 4	People 4	Feeling feel 4	family 4	Community 4	together 4	Jewish 4	Synagogue 4	Belonging belong 4	identity 4	
Age	1.0000	-0.8477	-0.0733	0.0000	0.3234	-0.1222	0.4108	-0.2505	0.1222	0.7090	-0.4646	-0.2506	0.3841	0.3589	0.3029	0.2074	0.3589	0.3029	0.2074	0.1941	0.1654	-0.0502	-0.4060	-0.3259	0.5314	0.1464
Work Status	-0.8477	1.0000	0.0372	0.0000	-0.0983	0.2607	-0.2844	0.3037	-0.2607	-0.5586	0.3352	0.3307	-0.5343	-0.2932	-0.4977	0.0412	0.2647	0.1464	-0.0391	0.5486	0.0386	-0.1338	0.2421	-0.1338	0.2421	
Independence	-0.0733	0.0372	1.0000	0.0001	-0.1780	0.1429	-0.1847	0.2628	-0.1429	-0.1429	0.2628	-0.2628	0.2628	-0.6470	-0.4406	-0.3266	-0.1287	0.0862	-0.3119	0.0449	-0.2585	-0.2585	-0.2585	-0.2585	-0.2585	
Social/Family Connection	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
Health status	0.3234	-0.0983	-0.1780	0.0000	1.0000	-0.3780	0.5774	-0.7746	0.3780	0.3780	-0.7746	-0.2582	0.9045	0.0614	0.5854	0.4788	-0.3853	-0.3381	0.3380	0.3822	0.4528	0.3372	0.2688	0.2688	0.2688	
Religion Yes-1	-0.1222	0.2607	0.1429	0.0000	-0.3780	1.0000	-0.2182	0.4880	-1.0000	0.1429	0.4880	0.2928	-0.4103	-0.3603	0.6848	0.1980	0.0387	0.2194	0.4037	0.7412	0.4037	0.7412	0.4037	0.7412	0.4037	
Education	0.4108	-0.2844	-0.1847	0.0000	0.5774	-0.7746	1.0000	-0.4472	0.2182	0.2182	-0.4472	-0.1441	0.6570	-0.2588	0.4345	0.2426	-0.3438	-0.4410	-0.3438	0.1192	0.3369	0.1192	0.3369	0.1192	0.3369	
Married	-0.2505	0.3307	0.2628	0.0000	-0.7746	0.4880	-0.4472	1.0000	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	1.0000	0.0667	-0.9031	-0.4488	-0.1943	0.1521	0.0814	0.2604	-0.0919	-0.5076	-0.1169	0.3109	-0.1169	0.3109	
Divorced	0.1222	-0.2607	-0.1429	0.0000	0.3780	-1.0000	0.2182	-0.4880	1.0000	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.4880	-0.2928	0.4103	0.3603	0.6848	-0.1990	-0.0387	-0.2194	0.4037	0.7412	-0.2588	0.2688	-0.2588	0.2688	
Widowed	0.7090	-0.5586	-0.1429	0.0000	0.3780	0.1429	0.2182	-0.4880	-0.1429	1.0000	-0.1429	-0.4880	0.4880	0.2628	0.5488	-0.1585	0.0954	0.2780	0.1501	0.2140	0.7090	-0.2585	0.2688	-0.2585	0.2688	
Single	-0.4646	0.3352	-0.1429	0.0000	0.3780	0.1429	0.2182	-0.4880	-0.1429	-0.1429	1.0000	-0.4880	-0.2628	0.3847	-0.2581	-0.2421	-0.1090	-0.3575	-0.3119	0.0449	0.4447	-0.2585	0.2688	-0.2585	0.2688	
Live With	-0.2506	0.3307	0.2628	0.0000	-0.7746	0.4880	-0.4472	1.0000	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	1.0000	0.0667	-0.9031	-0.4488	-0.1943	0.1521	0.0814	0.2604	-0.0919	-0.5076	-0.1169	0.3109	-0.1169	0.3109	
Trauma recent	0.3589	-0.2932	-0.2585	0.0000	-0.2582	0.2628	-0.1491	0.0667	0.2628	0.4880	0.2628	0.0667	1.0000	0.0623	0.6178	-0.4309	-0.0342	0.1357	0.8128	-0.3884	-0.2525	0.3841	-0.2525	0.3841	-0.2525	
congregations	0.3029	-0.2932	-0.2585	0.0000	0.3045	-0.4103	0.3570	-0.3931	0.4103	0.5470	0.3847	-0.9931	0.0623	1.0000	0.4454	0.3533	0.2462	-0.1865	-0.0700	0.2024	0.5028	0.4980	0.0232	0.4980	0.0232	
congregation 4	0.3029	-0.2932	-0.2585	0.0000	0.3045	-0.4103	0.3570	-0.3931	0.4103	0.5470	0.3847	-0.9931	0.0623	1.0000	0.4454	0.3533	0.2462	-0.1865	-0.0700	0.2024	0.5028	0.4980	0.0232	0.4980	0.0232	
People 4	0.3589	-0.2932	-0.2585	0.0000	0.3045	-0.4103	0.3570	-0.3931	0.4103	0.5470	0.3847	-0.9931	0.0623	1.0000	0.4454	0.3533	0.2462	-0.1865	-0.0700	0.2024	0.5028	0.4980	0.0232	0.4980	0.0232	
Feeling feel 4	0.2074	0.0412	-0.3266	0.0000	0.5854	-0.6848	0.4345	-0.1943	0.6848	-0.1585	-0.3423	-0.1943	-0.4309	0.3533	-0.0496	1.0000	0.5747	-0.2705	-0.2700	0.5525	0.3388	0.1929	0.5196	0.1929	0.5196	
family 4	0.1941	0.2947	-0.3266	0.0000	0.4788	-0.1590	0.2426	0.1521	-0.1590	0.0954	-0.1090	0.1521	-0.0942	0.2462	-0.3263	0.5747	1.0000	-0.3266	0.2700	0.4228	-0.2700	0.7912	0.6796	0.7912	0.6796	
Community 4	-0.1654	0.1484	0.0862	0.0000	-0.3553	0.2097	0.3438	0.0614	-0.3553	0.2790	-0.3575	0.0614	0.1357	-0.1865	0.0954	-0.2705	-0.3266	1.0000	0.2969	-0.0208	-0.1786	0.0521	-0.6361	0.0521	-0.6361	
together 4	-0.0502	-0.0391	-0.3119	0.0000	-0.3391	0.2184	-0.4410	0.2824	-0.2184	0.1501	-0.3119	0.2824	0.8128	-0.0700	0.5380	-0.2700	0.2700	0.2969	1.0000	0.0579	-0.0350	0.3459	-0.1310	0.3459	-0.1310	
Jewish 4	-0.4060	0.5486	0.0449	0.0000	0.3550	-0.4037	-0.3426	-0.0919	0.4037	-0.3119	0.0449	-0.0919	-0.3884	0.2024	-0.1141	0.5525	-0.2700	0.2969	0.4228	1.0000	0.4865	0.1465	0.4865	0.1465	0.4865	
Synagogue 4	0.3372	0.2688	-0.2585	0.0000	0.3372	-0.1132	-0.1132	-0.1132	0.3372	-0.1132	-0.1132	-0.1132	-0.1132	0.3372	-0.1132	0.3372	-0.1132	0.3372	0.3372	0.3372	0.3372	0.3372	0.3372	0.3372	0.3372	
Belonging belong 4	0.5314	-0.1338	-0.2585	0.0000	0.4528	0.2688	0.1192	-0.1169	0.2688	0.7090	-0.2588	-0.1169	0.3841	0.4309	0.2707	0.1829	0.7312	0.0521	0.3459	0.1459	-0.4059	1.0000	0.4206	1.0000	0.4206	
identity 4	0.1464	0.2421	-0.2585	0.0000	0.3372	0.2688	0.1192	-0.2003	-0.2003	-0.2003	-0.2003	-0.2003	-0.2114	0.0232	-0.0232	0.5196	0.8796	-0.2561	-0.1310	0.2458	-0.2561	0.4206	0.4206	0.4206	0.4206	
The correlations are estimated by Row-wise method.																										
Correlation Probability																										
	Age	Work Status	Independence	Social/Family Connection	Health status	Religion	Yes-1	Education	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Single	Live With	Trauma recent	congregations	congregation 4	People 4	Feeling feel 4	family 4	Community 4	together 4	Jewish 4	Synagogue 4	Belonging belong 4	identity 4	
Age	1.0000	0.0079	0.8930	1.0000	0.4345	0.7731	0.3120	0.5496	0.7731	0.0489	0.2462	0.5496	0.3475	0.3827	0.4658	0.6222	0.6450	0.8955	0.8780	0.3171	0.4250	0.1753	0.7293	0.1753	0.7293	
Work Status	0.0079	1.0000	0.9302	1.0000	0.9164	0.3529	0.4947	0.4236	0.3529	0.1501	0.1770	0.4236	0.1729	0.4935	0.2994	0.9228	0.4944	0.7256	0.8267	0.1582	0.8676	0.7520	0.9536	0.7520	0.9536	
Independence	0.8930	0.9302	1.0000	1.0000	0.3559	0.7358	0.0781	0.4816	0.7358	0.7358	0.7358	0.4816	0.4816	0.1606	0.2748	0.4298	0.4267	0.8762	0.4521	0.9160	0.4758	0.1595	0.8044	0.1595	0.8044	
Social/Family Connection	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	0.3559	0.7358	0.0781	0.4816	0.7358	0.7358	0.7358	0.4816	0.4816	0.1606	0.2748	0.4298	0.4267	0.8762	0.4521	0.9160	0.4758	0.1595	0.8044	0.1595	0.8044	
Health status	0.4345	0.9164	0.3559	0.3559	1.0000	0.3559	0.1342	0.0280	0.3559	0.3559	0.3559	0.0280	0.5070	0.1020	0.8853	0.1274	0.2322	0.3459	0.4158	0.3867	0.3385	0.2599	0.4141	0.2599	0.4141	
Religion Yes-1	0.7731	0.3529	0.7358	0.7358	0.3559	1.0000	0.6036	0.2199	0.6036	0.7358	0.7358	0.2199	0.4816	0.3127	0.3764	0.0820	0.7068	0.8256	0.8016	0.3213	0.7885	0.5195	0.8344	0.5195	0.8344	
Education	0.3120	0.4947	0.0781	0.0781	0.1342	0.6036	1.0000	0.2866	0.6036	0.6036	0.6036	0.2866	0.7246	0.1515	0.8896	0.2820	0.5621	0.4044	0.2740	0.4061	0.7885	0.7917	0.4812	0.7917	0.4812	
Married	0.5496	0.4236	0.4816	0.4816	0.0280	0.2199	0.2866	1.0000	0.2199	0.2199	0.2199	0.0280	0.8754	0.1021	0.2646	0.6447	0.7182	0.8481	0.3334	0.8296	0.1101	0.7828	0.4535	0.7828	0.4535	
Divorced	0.7731	0.3529	0.7358	0.7358	0.3559	0.6036	0.2199	0.6036	1.0000	0.7358	0.7358	0.2199	0.4816	0.3127	0.3764	0.0820	0.7068	0.8256	0.8016	0.3213	0.7885	0.5195	0.8344	0.5195	0.8344	
Widowed	0.0489	0.1501	0.7358	0.7358	0.3559	0.6036	0.2199	0.6036	0.7358	1.0000	0.7358	0.2199	0.4816	0.3127	0.3764	0.0820	0.7068	0.8256	0.8016	0.3213	0.7885	0.5195	0.8344	0.5195	0.8344	
Single	0.2462	0.4170	0.7358	0.7358	0.3559	0.6036	0.2199	0.6036	0.7358	0.7358	1.0000	0.2199	0.4816	0.3127	0.3764	0.0820	0.7068	0.8256	0.8016	0.3213	0.7885	0.5195	0.8344	0.5195	0.8344	
Live With	0.4236	0.4236	0.4816	0.4816	0.3559	0.6036	0.2199	0.6036	0.7358	0.7358	0.7358	0.2199	0.4816	0.3127	0.3764	0.0820	0.7068	0.8256	0.8016	0.3213	0.7885	0.5195	0.8344	0.5195	0.8344	
Trauma recent	0.3475	0.1729	0.4816	0.4816	0.3559	0.6036	0.2199	0.6036	0.7358	0.7358	0.7358	0.2199	0.4816	0.3127	0.3764	0.0820	0.7068	0.8256	0.8016	0.3213	0.7885	0.5195	0.8344	0.5195	0.8344	
congregations	0.3827	0.4658	0.1606	0.1606	0.1020	0.3127	0.1515	0.0280	0.3127	0.3127	0.1606	0.3744	0.0280	0.8853	0.1021	0.2646	0.6447	0								

Figure 4C

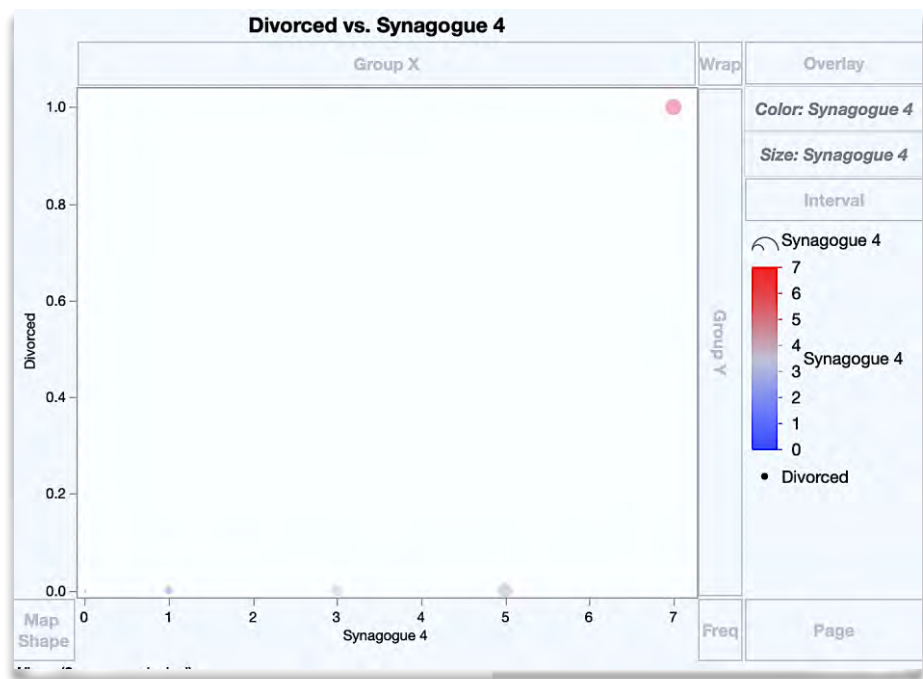


Figure 4C shows the significant positive relationship of divorced to synagogue is driven by one individual saying the keyword synagogue 7 times. The others who mentioned synagogue multiple times in the range of 1 to 5 times, were not divorced.

Figure 4D

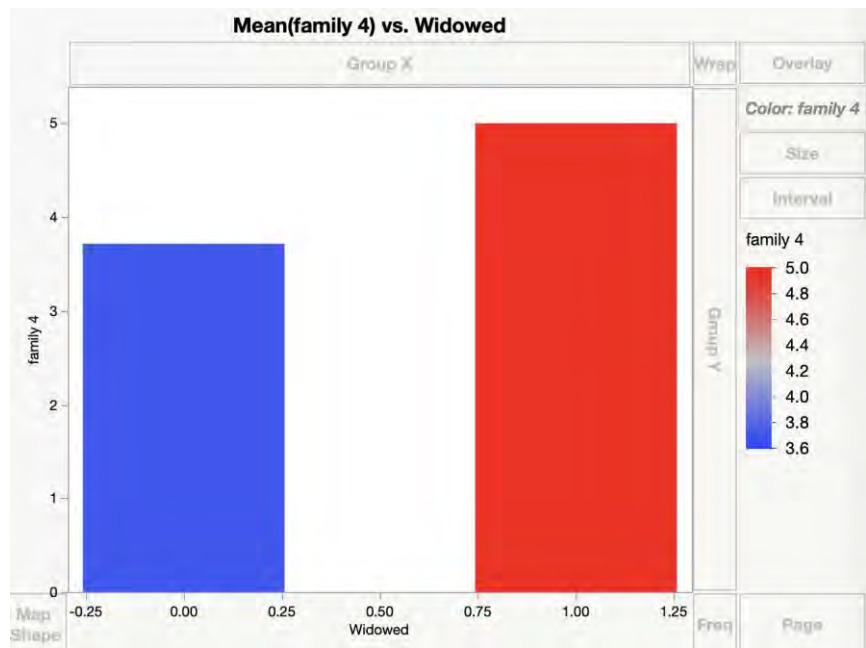


Figure 4D shows there was one person who was widowed who mentioned the keyword family more (a mean value of 5) than the average number of mentions of keyword family (a mean value of 3.5) by those not widowed.

Figure 4E

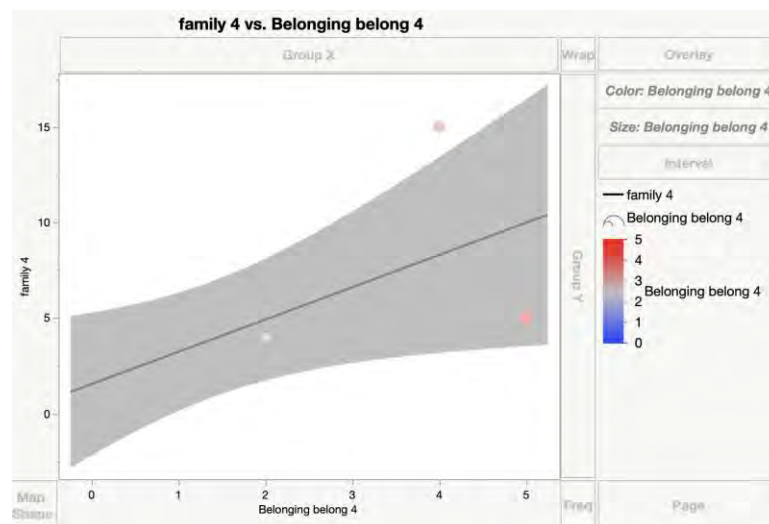


Figure 4E shows that among those who mentioned belonging we see a positive relationship to the keyword family. Belonging to a family may be important to at least half those in focus group session 4.

Figure 4F

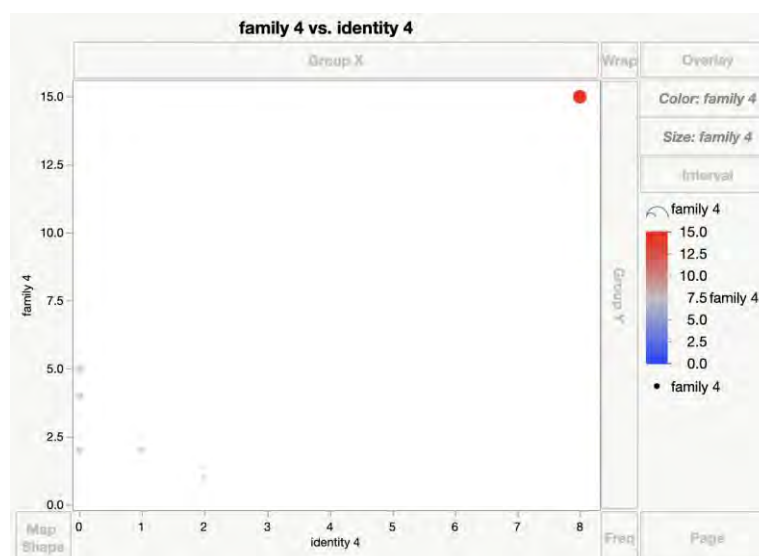


Figure 4F shows that for 3 individuals there are mentions of both the keywords of family and identity. For one individual this relationship was very strong. This suggests that at least for some individuals their identity is linked to thoughts about family.

Figure 4G

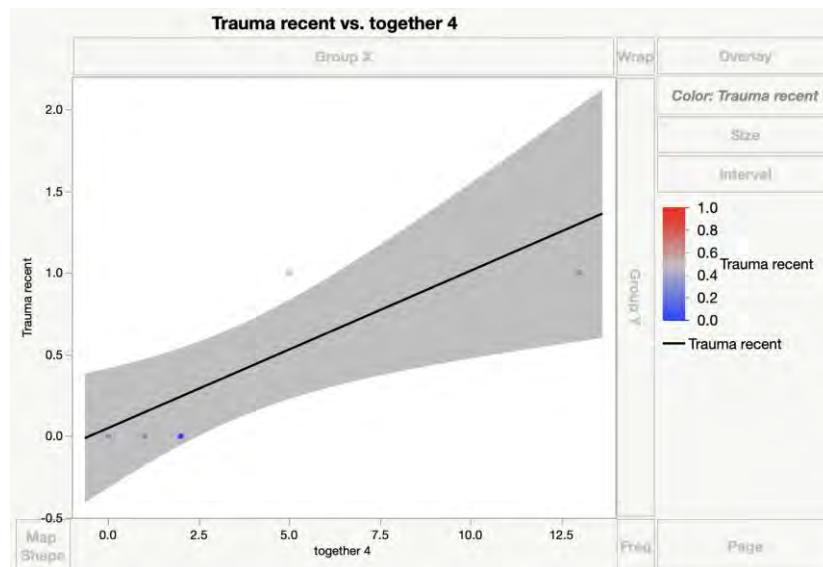


Figure 4G shows that of the significant keyword relationships for session 4 the most interesting may be that of trauma and together. Those who had a recent traumatic experience and mentioned the keyword together, elicited the keyword together more than those without a recent traumatic experience. This may imply that their recent trauma led to a need to express thoughts about being together with others.

Figure 4H

Key words

Key word	Count in Doc.	P. #1	P. #2	P. #3	P. #4	P. #5	P. #6	P. #7	P. #8
Congregation, congregations	145	6	24	21	8	4	13		20
People	98	9	18	15	15	9		2	5
Feel, feeling	51	2	3	13	2	4	12	1	2
Family	40	1	5	2	4	2	15		2
Community	39		7	4	8	10		5	1

Together	29	5	5	1	13	1	2		
Jewish	23		1	3	3	1	3	2	2
Synagogue	18	1		7	3				5
Belong, belonging	17		5		2		4		
Identity	13	2					8		1

Key words mentioned in the Session included: Congregation, Congregations, People, Feel, Feeling, Family, Community, Together, Jewish, Synagogue, Belong, Belonging, Identity

Key phrases mentioned in the Session included: congregation is kind of like the family you choose, there is a need for people to be in contact with other people, it's being together with the people, our congregation represents Judaism, the values of Judaism is what drives me.

The strongest impression I received from this session and the discussion about community, congregation, congregants, and the need to belong, is that all eight participants belonged to a congregation for the purpose of togetherness. They are congregating with likeminded Jewish believers, for the need to socialize safely and peacefully as human beings not necessarily as Jews.

“...it's not only a place of worship it's a place of fellowship, it's a place of healing, it's a place of spiritual growth, it's a place of peace and it has been all those for me.” (#1 @0:08:26)

“Congregation to me is like a family.” (#4 @0:16:03)

“So, community I think of as a place for support, friendship, a place to fit in.” (#7 @ 0:19:07)

“I think congregation is kind of like the family you choose instead of the family you are born with... Congregation is like a small, isolated culture.” (#8 @ 0:20:20)

“I see our congregation as a family. When I talk about family I talk about a place where I give of my heart to...” (#6 @ 0:23:33)

Throughout the session I felt participants need to preserve what was, what we used to have, and the great hope that soon we could all go back to personally meet and hug again at the services in the synagogue. This notion is common among people, globally now, after a year’s worth of the COVID-19 pandemic. The expressions in this focus group of personal distress and isolation are the same as those heard daily in every media.

“...here we are with an epidemic where the only treatment that we have and the way to contain this is for people to stay away from each other. Yet even with the threat of people getting sick or dying, they still congregate because there is a need for people to be in contact with other people... other than electronically.” (#2 @ 0:07:00)

“I think it’s kind of a classic example of when the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, you add up a bunch of congregants you don’t just get a congregation you get something more than a congregation.” (#8 @0:40:53)

I was impressed by how well this focus group bonded and felt safe to speak their mind even though they all come from somewhat different backgrounds. They are bonded by their faith, yet they hold the utmost respect to differences in opinions. they made me feel that they, as representatives of congregation and as individuals, practice the values of Judaism, even if they relate them at times to American values, or human values. The congregation for them seems to be a code of ethics or DNA of belonging, the need to belong is very strong even when they cannot define it in words.

“...the congregation itself is a building, period. What makes it something that we treasure, is the congregants, it’s the people there, it’s being together with the people... you can’t think of a congregation without thinking of its people.” (#2 @0:30:15)

“...my relationship with the congregation is kind of like my relationship with my covenant with God, there’s really no separation between the two, the only difference is the congregation is made up from a bunch of people with different backgrounds and different locations in the world, but we all have communal faith, and we all believe in the same thing.” (#8 @0:40:53)

“...we’re trying to find where we fit in and where we belong it’s the most important part of it is just finding a place where you, that you feel comfortable.” (#4 @0:16:03)

“...being Jewish is very important to me and I feel that being in the synagogue, I’m one part of a tiny little circle and the circle keeps getting bigger, that our congregation represents Judaism.” (#3 @ 0:34:40)

“...the congregation to me, the values of Judaism is what drives me and my wife... it teaches me how to deal with people, relationships, seeing both sides of things, not being judgmental, all these things are values I get from being part of the congregation.” (#6 @ 0:36:20)

When we touched upon the discussion of fear and hesitance due to anti-Semitic attacks, participants reacted and referred to the security changes that were made at the congregation a few weeks prior. The changes included a new sitting arrangement at the sanctuary, for a maximum security purpose. I was aware at the time that some congregants were somewhat hesitant about it, but I did not know the extent of stress this move had caused the members of this focus group and was surprised to know how strongly they felt about it.

“...when I was coming to the temple here and they were herding us to one side of the congregation, that sadness just hit me hard ... my whole mentality went back to the day of being herded to the cattle cars...” (#6 @ 0:51:42)

“When we first came to the congregation and we were all sitting on one side my first reaction was this is nice we’re all close to each other.... and then I started to think about why we are sitting like this and I knew it was to protect us... and then for some reason my thought went to the congregation in Pittsburgh... that shooter killed the heart of that congregation.” (#2 @ 1:00:27)

“...this is part of our narrative. We are people who are always under attack... we always have a feeling of defending our, whether it’s our land or our identity, we’re always defending something and preventing attack.” (#8 @ 1:03:06)

“...you go anywhere in the world throughout history the Jews were always in their own communities living together in very limited interactions with outside communities.” (#4 @ 0:49:23)

“I don’t go to the temple and sit there and think oh could we be attacked, I don’t dwell on that, no, but I think we were made to be aware of it.” (#1 @ 0:45:30)

Session five

Figure 5A

Word Cloud of top 15 Keywords elicited during Session 5

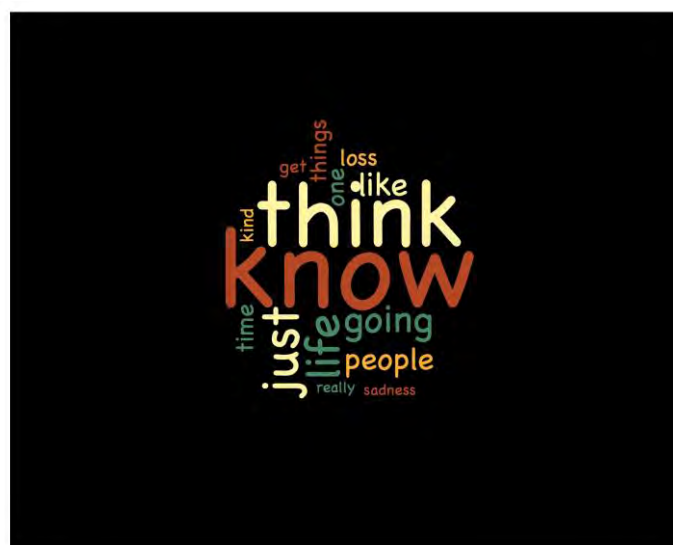


Figure 5B
Correlations and Correlation Probabilities for Session 5

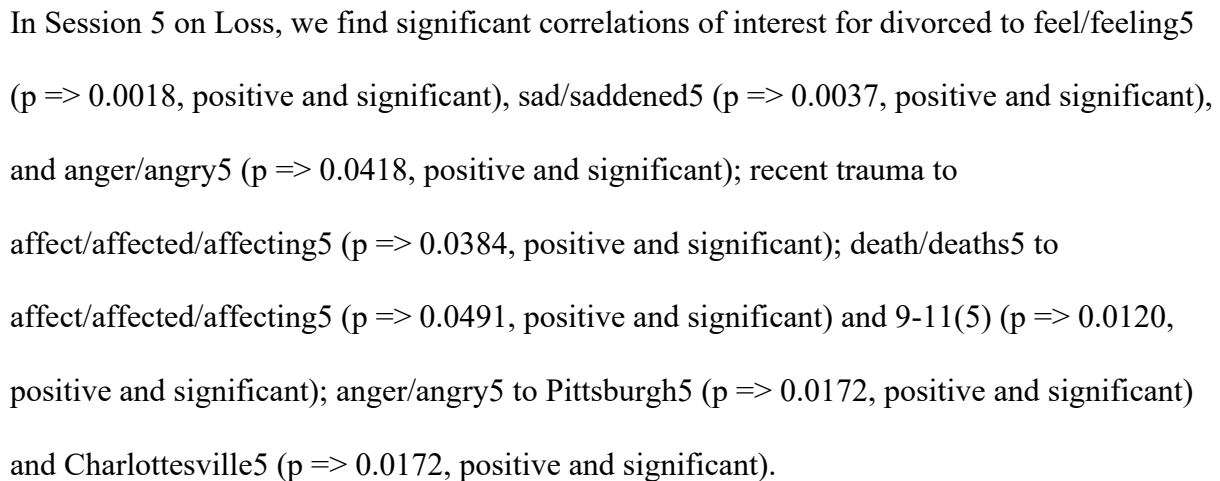


Figure 5C

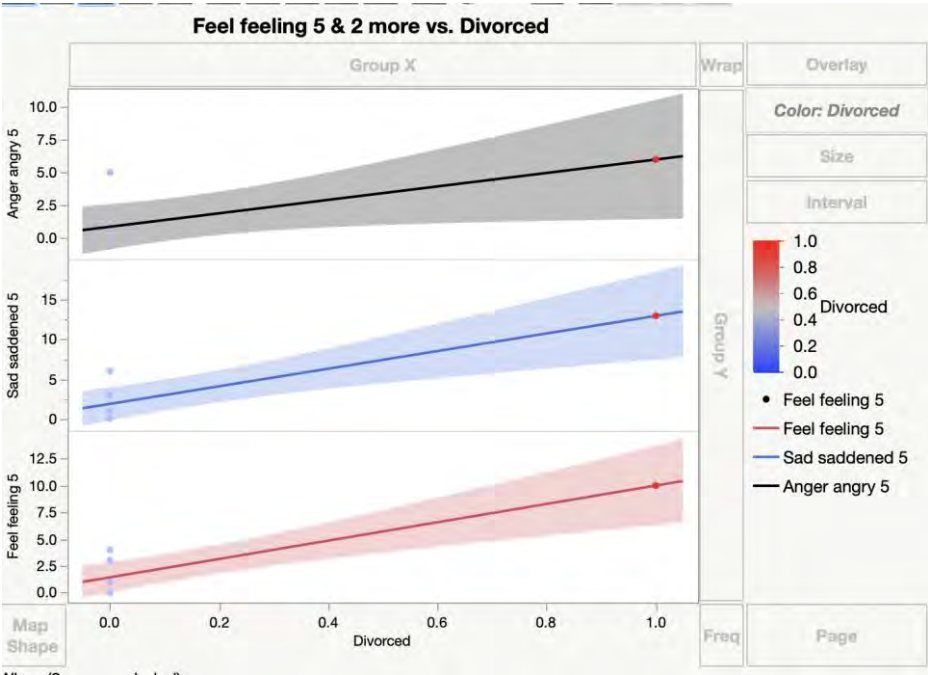


Figure 5C shows that Divorced Individual #3 had strong emotions of angry, sad, and feeling as shown in these comparative graphs.

Figure 5D

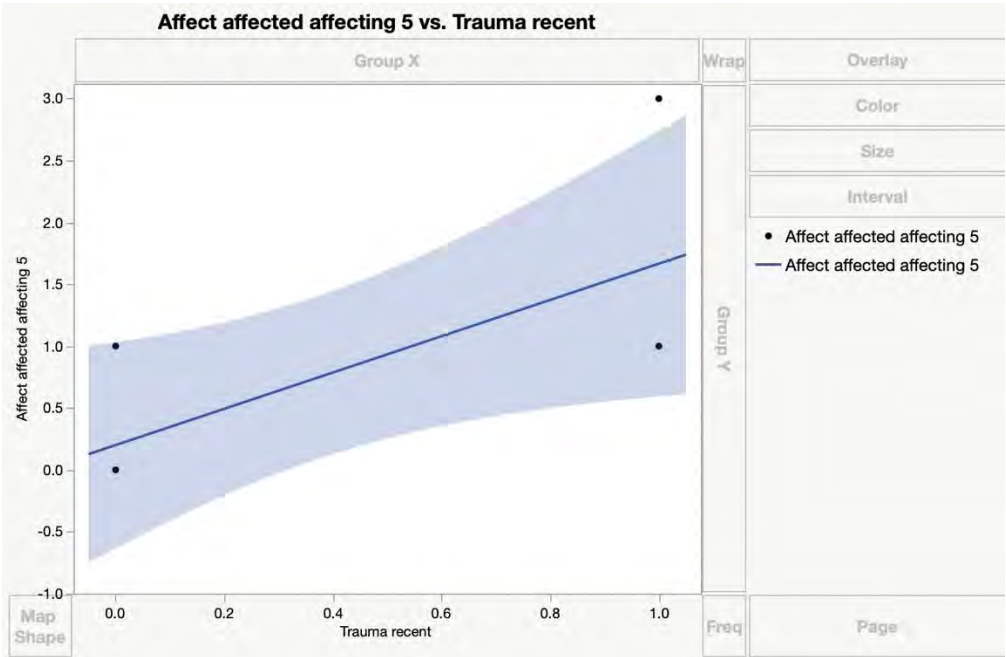


Figure 5D shows There is a significant positive relationship between trauma and being affect/affected/affecting keywords.

Figure 5E

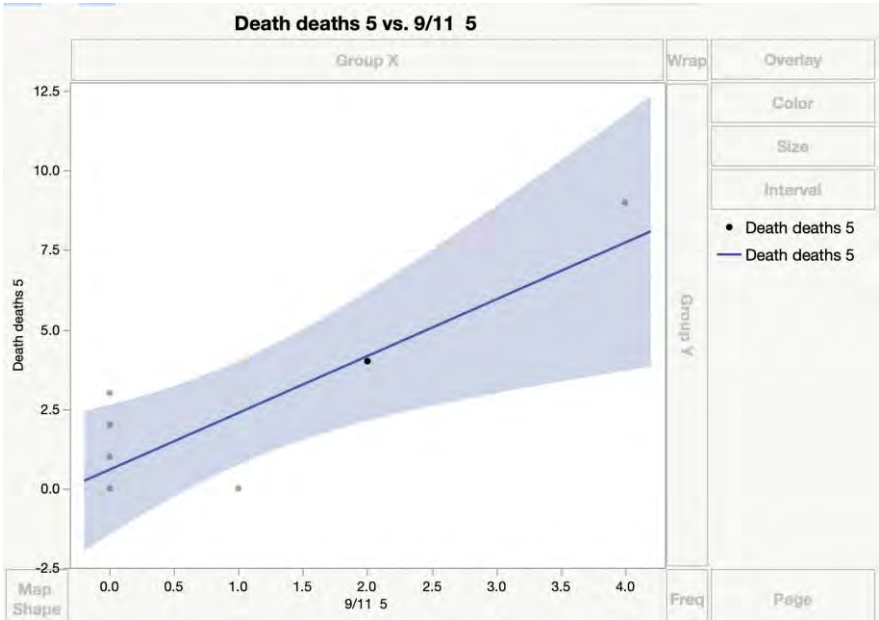


Figure 5E shows There is a significant positive relationship between the keywords death/deaths and mentions of 9-11.

Figure 5F

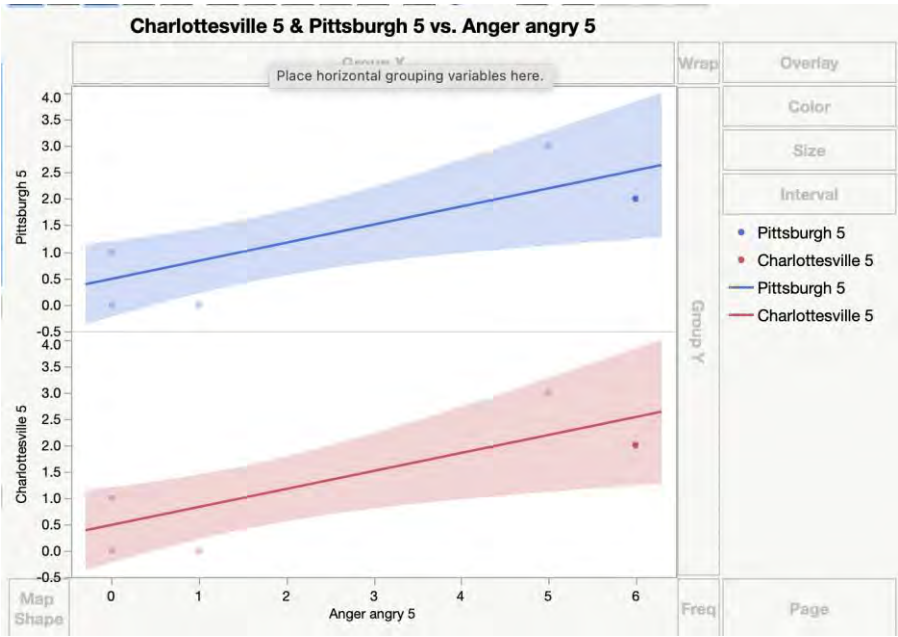


Figure 5F shows A significant relationship between keywords of anger/angry and mentions of Pittsburgh and Charlottesville as shown in these comparative graphs.

Reflection on session five of focus group, subject: Loss

Figure 5G

Key Words

Key word	Count in Doc.	P #1	P. #2	P #3	P. #4	P. #5	P. #6	P. #7	P. #8
Loss	52	6	3	4	1	3		1	7
Feel, feeling	30			10	1	3	1	4	1
Sad, saddened	27	3		13		3	6		1
Family	23	2	1		1	4	4	2	1
Death, deaths	22	9		4			3	1	2
God, godliness	21					4	1		2
Affect, affected, affecting	15	3	1		1		1		
Anger, Angry	13			6	1	5			
Pittsburgh	13	1	1	2		3			1
Charlottesville	11	1	1	2		3			1
9/11	11	4		2	1	1			

Key words mentioned in the session included: Loss, Feel, Feeling, Sad, Sadness, Family, Death, Deaths, God, Godliness, Affect, Affected, Affecting, Anger, Angry, Pittsburgh, Charlottesville, 9/11

Key phrases mentioned in the session included: We have to educate our children to be accepting of others, its shock, its sadness, a life lost is a severe loss, fear that it could have been me, my reaction to something as big as 9/11 was to do something.

I found this session about loss was extremely difficult for participants in the focus group. It had an immediate impact on participants, remembering family members who have passed away and dealing with the experience of bereavement.

“I think the initial reaction is the same, its shock, its sadness.” (#1 @0:08:25)

“If it’s on tv I see it, I’m sad and I’m over it in a pretty quick amount of time. When it’s an individual or a congregant or it’s a family member, that duration to finally accept the fact that you lost somebody, it’s a time element.” (#6 @ 0:19:02)

“When I referred to reactions of a loss experience during a national event as opposed to personal loss, such as American soldiers being killed overseas, I tried to explain the Israeli notion of national bereavement for each and every fallen soldier. I found that participants reaction to such loss involved anger and sadness but was not expressed as personal loss....my primary feeling is a horrible waste of a life.” (#3 @ 0:10:55)

“...for a soldier its different.” (#5 @ 0:13:56)

“Someone who died in an accident at home is different from a soldier who died overseas.”
(#4 @0:15:54)

“...on the side of soldiers, I guess when someone dies overseas, making sure that I live in a way that is worthy of the sacrifice that they made.” (#4 @0:46:01)

When discussing loss of victims from terror attacks such as 9/11 and white supremacy attacks such as Charlottesville and Pittsburgh, I found participants of the focus group

expressed a deeper sadness and anger than for a fallen soldier, as well as the need to be proactive afterwards as a coping mechanism.

“For Charlottesville, for the Holocaust, for Pittsburgh its anger that those things happen or that God allowed those things to happen.” (#5 @ 0:13:56)

“9/11, Charlottesville, the Holocaust, the loss impacted me not so much emotionally although sad, more so how can I educate people so that it doesn’t happen again.” (#5 @0:57:02)

“...if you have an unnatural death like when someone dies in a hate crime, I’m not even shocked anymore because I know it’s coming it’s just a matter of time when’s the next one going to happen.” (#8 @ 0:20:38)

“...the shocking horror of Charlottesville and Pittsburgh, of sudden deaths and today it’s not only soldiers its policemen and when I hear that it just breaks my heart.” (#1 @0:31:08)

“But my reaction to something as big as 9/11 was to do something.” (#3 @0:36:40)

“The fact that antisemitism was involved made it personal. Pittsburgh affected me more because it was an attack on a group of people who gather to pray as they always did.” (#2 by email)

When discussing how we cope with loss and how we move forward I found that participants referred mainly to memories of loved ones and ways to conserve happy memories of the departed.

“You mourn the dead, but you celebrate the life... I think you can overcome a loss with joy.” (# 8 @ 0:40:45)

“I guess when dealing with loss I look more to religion, you know, you make sure the memories of the loved one are a blessing.” (#4 @0:46:01)

In this focus group, I observed participants expressing their pain over their losses in life. I felt sensitive to the appearance of fear of future terror events, an issue that was explored in this session:

“...fear that it could have been me, that could have happened here, it could have happened to us.” (#4 @ 0:15:54)

“I’m kind of disappointed with humanity and wondering where is God, why is God allowing this to happen...why is it so common in America.” (#8 @0:20:38)

“...terror attacks, I don’t think they necessarily change my life course because to some extent, I expect them now, but it does change my mindset.” (#8 @ 1:01:19)

“I’ve become an advocate in a lot of different areas because I feel like when there are senseless deaths there are things that we can do and as an individual, I do those things.” (#7 @1:04:06)

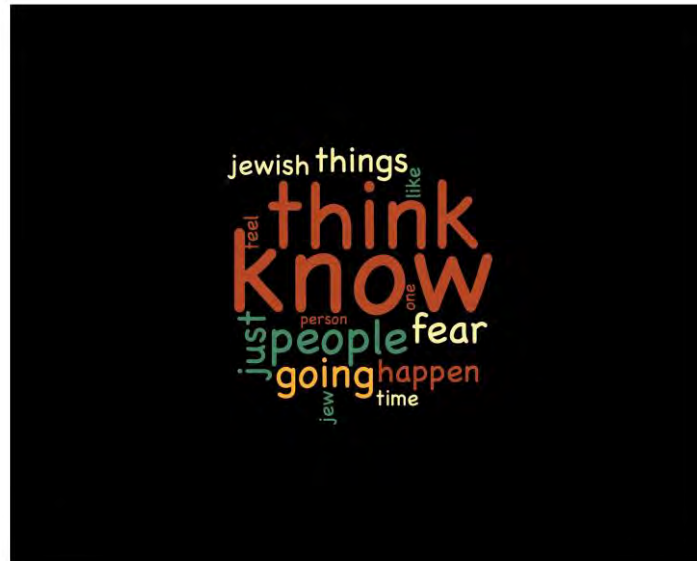
“...more security in places of worship would be the obvious response to preventing loss.” (#8 @ 1:04:37)

“...we need to be aware; education helps.” (#1 @ 1:07:05)

Session Six

Figure 6A

Word Cloud of top 15 Keywords elicited during Session 6



The Word Cloud for Session 6 on Fear shows familiar words such as Know and Think along with other words like Fear, People, Going, Jewish, and Happen among the top words mentioned.

Figure 6B

Correlations and Correlation Probabilities for Session 6

Multivariate																															
Correlations																															
	Age	Work Status	Independences	Health status	Education	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Single	Live With Trauma	recent Jewish	Jew	Jews	Jewishness	6 Fear	fears feared	6 Fearful	6 Anxiety	anxious	6 Attack	attacks attacked	6 American	6 Family	6 Orthodox	6 Faith	6 Holocaust	6 Charlottesville	6 Pittsburgh			
Age	1.0000	-0.8477	-0.0733	0.3234	0.4108	-0.2005	0.1222	0.7090	-0.4645	-0.2505	0.3841	0.2968	0.5164	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	0.1975	0.4463	0.6555	0.6848	0.4007	-0.8477	1.0000	-0.0965	-0.2844	0.3307	-0.2607	-0.5586	-0.5343	
Work Status	-0.8477	1.0000	0.0372	-0.0965	-0.2844	0.3307	-0.2607	-0.5586	-0.5343	0.3307	-0.2607	-0.5586	-0.5343	0.3307	-0.2607	-0.5586	-0.5343	0.3307	-0.2607	-0.5586	-0.5343	0.3307	-0.2607	-0.5586	-0.5343	0.3307	-0.2607	-0.5586	-0.5343		
Independences	-0.0733	0.0372	1.0000	-0.3780	-0.6547	0.2928	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429		
Health status	0.3234	-0.0965	-0.3780	1.0000	0.5774	-0.7748	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780	0.3780		
Education	0.4108	-0.2844	-0.6547	0.5774	1.0000	-0.4072	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182	0.2182		
Married	-0.2005	0.3307	0.2928	-0.7748	-0.4072	1.0000	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880	-0.4880		
Divorced	0.1222	-0.2607	-0.1429	0.3780	0.2182	-0.4880	1.0000	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.1429		
Widowed	0.7090	-0.5586	-0.1429	0.3780	0.2182	-0.4880	-0.1429	1.0000	-0.1429	-0.1429	-0.4880	0.4880	0.4880	0.4880	0.4880	0.4880	0.4880	0.4880	0.4880	0.4880	0.4880	0.4880	0.4880	0.4880	0.4880	0.4880	0.4880	0.4880	0.4880		
Single	-0.4645	0.3307	-0.1429	0.3780	0.2182	-0.4880	-0.1429	-0.1429	1.0000	-0.4880	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928	-0.2928		
Live With Trauma	-0.2505	0.3841	0.2968	-0.5343	-0.5343	-0.5343	-0.5343	-0.5343	-0.5343	1.0000	0.0067	-0.5834	-0.5834	-0.5834	-0.5834	-0.5834	-0.5834	-0.5834	-0.5834	-0.5834	-0.5834	-0.5834	-0.5834	-0.5834	-0.5834	-0.5834	-0.5834	-0.5834	-0.5834		
recent Jewish	0.5164	-0.7767	-0.3161	0.3801	0.5267	-0.5693	0.7759	0.1437	-0.0862	-0.5693	0.0382	0.3719	1.0000	0.9076	0.0812	-0.0601	-0.2393	0.1092	0.2110	0.6978	0.1868	0.3140	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	0.1975	0.4463	0.6555		
Jew	0.5072	-0.6343	-0.3097	0.4096	0.4730	0.6346	0.8405	0.3097	-0.2212	-0.6346	0.0302	0.6161	0.9076	1.0000	0.0892	-0.0278	-0.1332	0.2323	0.0278	0.8129	0.3097	0.4028	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	0.1975	0.4463	0.6555		
Jews	0.1480	0.0043	-0.1975	-0.6555	-0.6848	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	1.0000	0.0912	-0.3168	0.4656	0.3205	-0.2082	0.4611	0.3848	0.4007	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	0.1975	0.4463		
Jewishness	-0.2405	0.0043	-0.1975	-0.6555	-0.6848	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	0.0912	1.0000	0.0814	-0.3408	0.3205	-0.2082	0.4611	0.3848	0.4007	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	0.1975	0.4463		
6 Fear	0.0043	-0.1975	-0.6555	-0.6848	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	1.0000	-0.2045	0.4728	-0.1952	-0.4050	-0.5533	0.6798	0.9477	0.1868	0.3140	0.5072	0.1480	0.6555	0.6848		
fears feared	-0.2405	0.0043	-0.1975	-0.6555	-0.6848	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.3168	0.4656	-0.2045	1.0000	-0.1567	-0.1232	-0.0599	-0.1637	0.6798	0.9477	0.1868	0.3140	0.5072	0.1480	0.6555		
6 Fearful	0.0892	-0.0278	-0.1332	0.2323	0.0278	0.8129	0.3097	0.4028	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	-0.1975	-0.6555	0.0892	1.0000	0.0814	-0.3408	0.3205	-0.2082	0.4611	0.3848	0.4007	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	0.1975	0.4463		
Anxiety	-0.2393	0.1092	0.2110	0.6978	0.1868	0.3140	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	-0.1975	-0.6555	-0.6848	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	1.0000	-0.2045	0.4728	-0.1952	-0.4050	-0.5533	0.6798	0.9477	0.1868	0.3140	0.5072	0.1480	0.6555		
attacks attacked	0.0892	-0.0278	-0.1332	0.2323	0.0278	0.8129	0.3097	0.4028	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	-0.1975	-0.6555	0.0892	1.0000	0.0814	-0.3408	0.3205	-0.2082	0.4611	0.3848	0.4007	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	0.1975	0.4463		
6 American	-0.2393	0.1092	0.2110	0.6978	0.1868	0.3140	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	-0.1975	-0.6555	-0.6848	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	1.0000	-0.2045	0.4728	-0.1952	-0.4050	-0.5533	0.6798	0.9477	0.1868	0.3140	0.5072		
Family	0.0892	-0.0278	-0.1332	0.2323	0.0278	0.8129	0.3097	0.4028	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	-0.1975	-0.6555	0.0892	1.0000	0.0814	-0.3408	0.3205	-0.2082	0.4611	0.3848	0.4007	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	0.1975	0.4463		
Orthodox	-0.2393	0.1092	0.2110	0.6978	0.1868	0.3140	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	-0.1975	-0.6555	-0.6848	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	1.0000	-0.2045	0.4728	-0.1952	-0.4050	-0.5533	0.6798	0.9477	0.1868	0.3140	0.5072		
Faith	0.0892	-0.0278	-0.1332	0.2323	0.0278	0.8129	0.3097	0.4028	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	-0.1975	-0.6555	0.0892	1.0000	0.0814	-0.3408	0.3205	-0.2082	0.4611	0.3848	0.4007	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	0.1975	0.4463		
Holocaust	-0.2393	0.1092	0.2110	0.6978	0.1868	0.3140	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	-0.1975	-0.6555	-0.6848	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	-0.8477	-0.4007	1.0000	-0.2045	0.4728	-0.1952	-0.4050	-0.5533	0.6798	0.9477	0.1868	0.3140	0.5072		
Charlottesville	0.0892	-0.0278	-0.1332	0.2323	0.0278	0.8129	0.3097	0.4028	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	-0.1975	-0.6555	0.0892	1.0000	0.0814	-0.3408	0.3205	-0.2082	0.4611	0.3848	0.4007	0.5072	0.1480	-0.2405	0.0043	0.1975	0.4463		
Pittsburgh	0.4007	-0.3843	-0.2901	0.6882	0.3974	-0.8885	0.0857	0.7804	0.4326	-0.8885	0.1777	0.6252	0.3140	0.4028	0.6252	0.3140	0.4028	0.6252	0.3140	0.4028	0.6252	0.3140	0.4028	0.6252	0.3140	0.4028	0.6252	0.3140	0.4028		

The correlations are estimated by Row-wise method.

Correlation Probability																															
	Age	Work Status	Independences	Health status	Education	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Single	Live With Trauma	recent Jewish	Jew	Jews	Jewishness	6 Fear	fears feared	6 Fearful	6 Anxiety	anxious	6 Attack	attacks attacked	6 American	6 Family	6 Orthodox	6 Faith	6 Holocaust	6 Charlottesville	6 Pittsburgh			
Age	<.0001	0.0079	0.8630	0.4345	0.3120	0.5496	0.7731	0.0489	0.2462	0.5496	0.3475	0.4753	0.1901	0.1995	0.7266	0.5579	0.9919	0.6392	0.2677	0.8962	0.0611	0.3253	0.0079	<.0001	0.8630	0.4345	0.3120	0.5496	0.7731		
Work Status	0.0079	<.0001	0.9302	0.8164	0.4947	0.4236	0.5329	0.1501	0.4170	0.4236	0.1726	0.4274	0.4274	0.4274	0.9156	0.7087	0.6730	0.6441	0.1679	0.6594	0.3636	0.3473	0.0079	<.0001	0.9302	0.8164	0.4947	0.4236	0.5329		
Independences	0.8630	0.9302	<.0001	0.3559	0.0781	0.4816	0.7358	0.7358	0.4816	0.4816	0.2859	0.4556	0.4556	0.4556	0.9309	0.5686	0.5043	0.4108	0.4251	0.8788	0.4927	0.5338	0.0079	<.0001	0.9302	0.8164	0.4947	0.4236	0.5329		
Health status	0.4345	0.8164	0.3559	<.0001	0.1340	0.0241	0.3559	0.3559	0.0241	0.0241	0.5370	0.5370	0.5370	0.5370	0.9309	0.5686	0.5043	0.4108	0.4251	0.8788	0.4927	0.5338	0.0079	<.0001	0.9302	0.8164	0.4947	0.4236	0.5329		
Education	0.3120	0.4947	0.0781	0.1340	1.0000	0.2666	0.6036	0.6036	0.2666	0.2666	0.7246	0.7246	0.7246	0.7246	0.9309	0.5686	0.5043	0.4108	0.4251	0.8788	0.4927	0.5338	0.0079	<.0001	0.9302	0.8164	0.4947	0.4236	0.5329		
Married	0.5496	0.4236	0.4816	0.0241	0.2666	<.0001	0.2199	0.2199	0.2199	<.0001	0.8754	0.8754	0.8754	0.8754	0.9309	0.5686	0.5043	0.4108	0.4251	0.8788	0.4927	0.5338	0.0079	<.0001	0.9302	0.8164	0.4947	0.4236	0.5329		
Divorced	0.7731	0.5329	0.7358	0.3559	0.6036	0.2199	<.0001	0.7358	0.7358	0.2199	0.8754	0.8754	0.8754	0.8754	0.9309	0.5686	0.5043	0.4108	0.4251	0.8788	0.4927	0.5338	0.0079	<.0001	0.9302	0.8164	0.4947	0.4236	0.5329		
Widowed	0.0489	0.1501	0.4816	0.3559	0.6036	0.2199	0.7358	1.0000	0.7358	0.2199	0.8754	0.8754	0.8754	0.8754	0.9309	0.5686	0.5043	0.4108	0.4251	0.8788	0.4927	0.5338	0.0079	<.0001	0.9302	0.8164	0.4947	0.4236	0.5329		
Single	0.2462	0.4170	0.7358	0.3559	0.6036	0.2199	0.7358	0.7358	<.0001	0.2199	0.8.																				

In Session 6 on Fear, we find significant correlations of interest with Education level to Attack/Attacks/Attacked6 ($p \Rightarrow 0.0190$, positive and significant); Anxiety6 to Holocaust6 ($p \Rightarrow 0.0142$, positive and significant) and Pittsburgh6 ($p \Rightarrow 0.3253$, positive and not significant); Fear, fears, feared, fearful6 to Work, ($p \Rightarrow 0.0412$, negative and significant) and Anxiety6 ($p \Rightarrow 0.0018$, positive and significant); Charlottesville6 to Pittsburgh6 ($p \Rightarrow 0.0223$, positive and significant);

Figure 6C

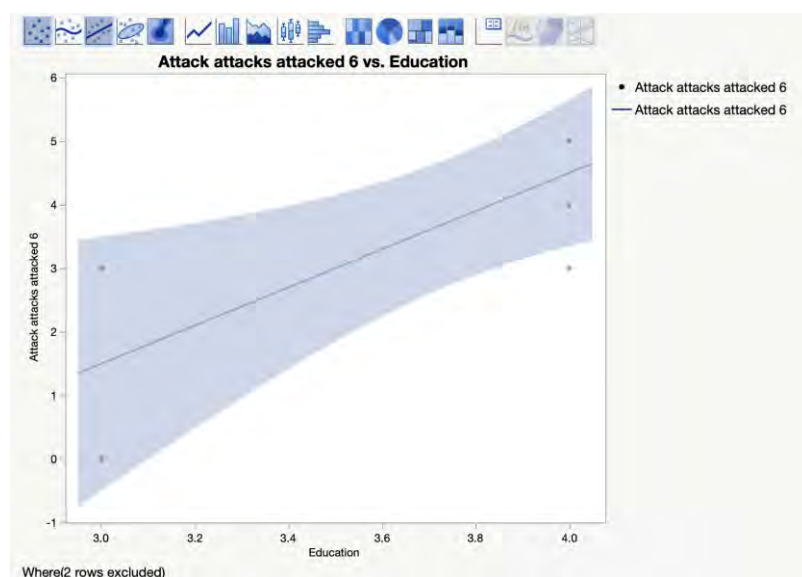


Figure 6C shows there is a positive relationship between attack/attacks/attacked and Education. The higher one's education the more times the words attack, attacks, or attacked were elicited.

Figure 6D

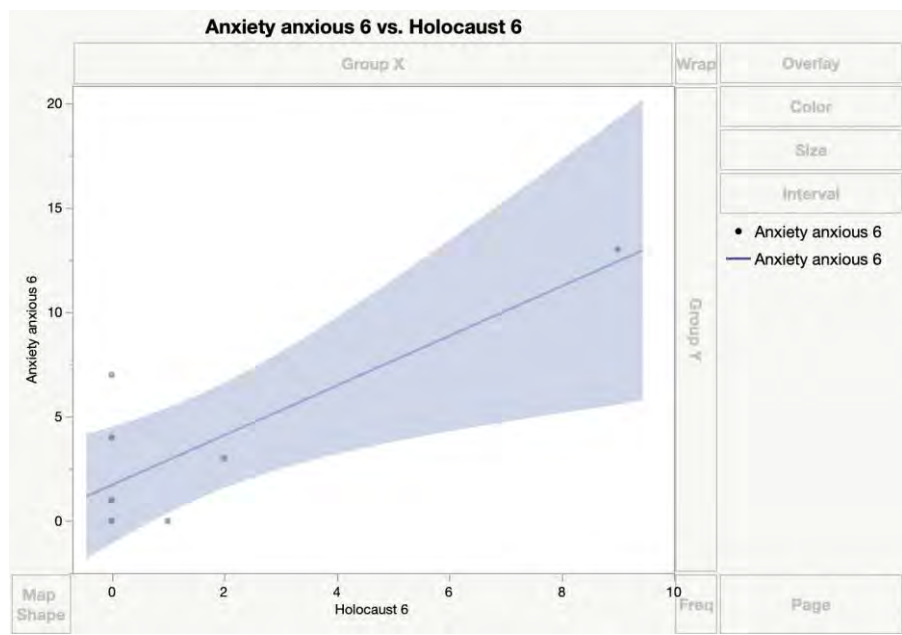


Figure 6D shows There is a positive relationship between keywords anxiety/anxious to eliciting the word Holocaust for 3 individuals.

Figure 6E

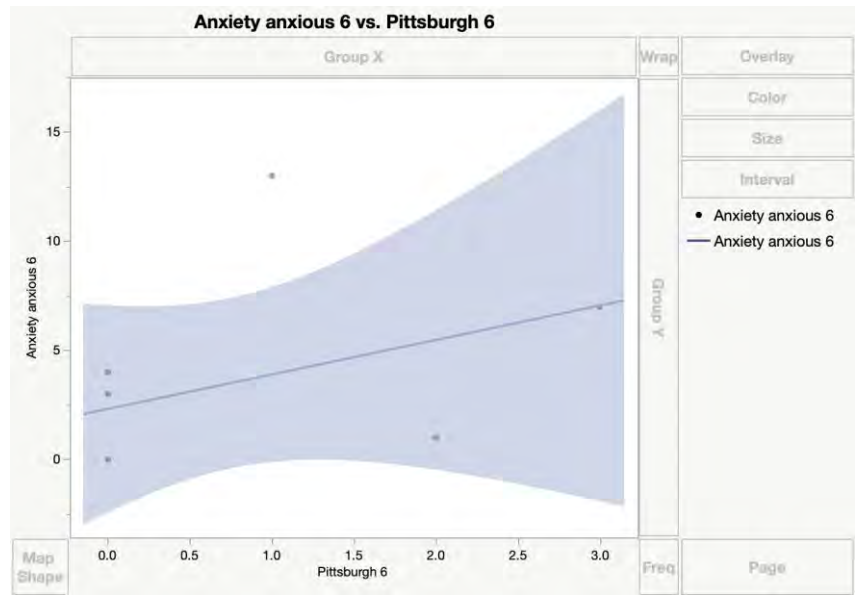


Figure 6E shows for three individuals who stated keywords anxiety/anxious there was a positive increase in elicitations of the word Pittsburgh.

Figure 6F

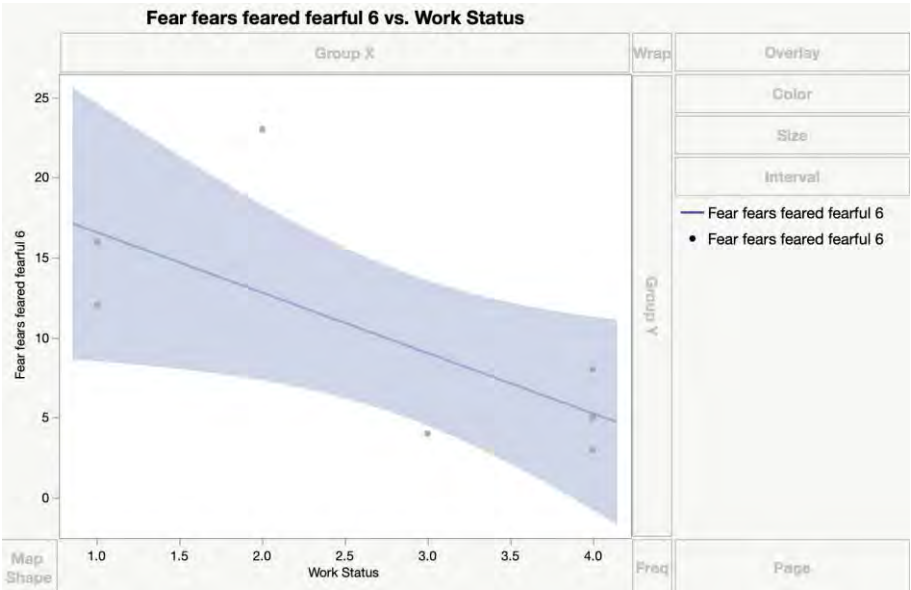


Figure 6F shows There is a negative relationship between the eliciting of keywords Fear/Fears/Feared to one’s Work status.

Figure 6G

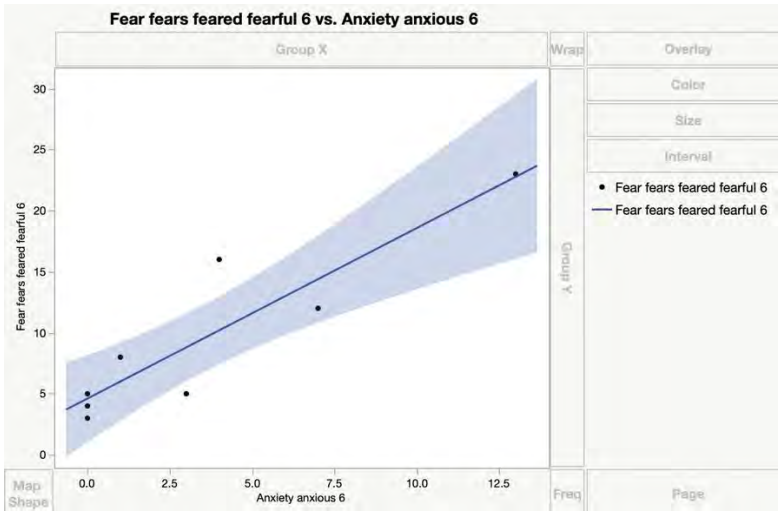


Figure 6G shows there is a positive relationship between the eliciting of keywords Fear/Fears/Feared6 to Anxiety6.

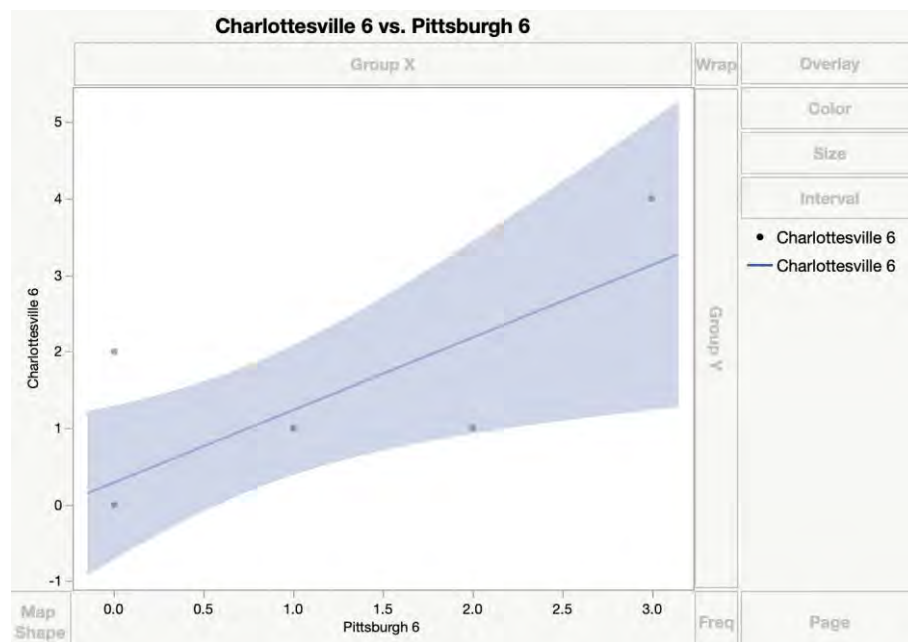
Figure 6H

Figure 6H shows There is a positive relationship between mentions of Charlottesville6 to mentions of Pittsburgh6.

Reflection on session six of focus group, subject: Fear

Figure 6I

Key words.

Key word	Count in doc.	P. #1	P. #2	P. #3	P. #4	P. #5	P.#6	P.#7	P.#8
Jew, Jews, Jewish, Jewishness	147	10	32	22	8	29	2	3	16
Fear, fears, feared, fearful	111	16	12	23	3	5	5	4	8
Anxiety, anxious	37	4	7	13		3			1
Attack, attacks, attacked	34	4	5	3	3	5	5		5
American	29	6		2	3	10	1	1	1

Family	21	4	3	1	4	5		4	
Orthodox	20		4	1	1	1			3
Faith	15	5	2		1	2	1		
Holocaust	14			9		2		1	
Charlottesville	11		4	1			2		1
Pittsburgh	11		3	1					2

Key words mentioned in the Session included: Jew, Jews, Jewish, Jewishness, Fear, Fears, Feared, Fearful, Anxiety, Anxious, Attack, Attacks, Attacked, American, Family, Holocaust, Charlottesville, Pittsburgh.

Key phrases mentioned in the Session included: the Holocaust could happen again, being Jewish, that fear may be imbedded all the time, we never know what tomorrow is going to bring, Holocaust mentality, I don't think that we are protected.

I feel that the sixth session for this focus group marked the strongest expression of anxiety and existential fear, among all participants. This fear seems to barely scratch the surface of participants reality, while conducting life as proud American Jews. It is semi hidden and ignored, or repressed for the most part, due to the expressed disbelief that "this could happen to us" - the experience of growing anti-Semitic attacks in America.

"...I'm thinking, wow the Holocaust could happen again or we could be in wars... is that anxiety or is that fear?" (#3 @0:13:21)

"I'm not really afraid to go somewhere and that anything can happen to me as a Jew because I'm a Jew ... Now, we may come to a time in this country when we may have to have anxiety and fear because we are Jews in the US..." (#2 @0:19:08)

"life is uncertain, we never know what tomorrow is going to bring and there are very disturbed people in this world." (#1 @ 0:21:15)

During the discussion about fear and especially about Jewish fear and its origin, I observed all participants, including those who were not born in America, expressed growing up in the shadow of constant warnings to be careful.

“I think the motif of fear in our faith is thinking about history, what was done in the past.”

(#1 @ 0:15:43)

“...I call it the Holocaust mentality... all my friends, we’re always taught to be careful be careful be careful, we heard that so much...I feel that maybe because of the Holocaust and pogroms and everything else that happened in ancient history...I think its culturally carried down from generation to generation as part of our upbringing, part of our own sociological upbringing in Jewish community.” (#3 @ 0:33:22)

“...what I think is enough crap happened to Jews that it fundamentally changed out thought processes and modified our DNA because we were always on such high alert.” (#5

@0:50:39)

I noticed an existential fear all participants experienced and expressed to some extent. A fear that has been prolonged through Jewish generations and that has met a current frightening reality in America, referring to the systematic racism and events of Black Lives Matter, as well as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These recent events floated hidden generational transferred trauma that is showing up as post traumatic experience in this focus group.

“...I felt the Holocaust could happen again. It’s not like I live in mortal fear of it, you know... it’s a little bit of a concern that we should never take our freedom for granted.” (#3

@1:02:46)

“...what scares me about the future is the unknown. The possible turmoil, away from religion...” (#1 @ 1:05:33)

“...my fear is that we continue to live in, it will get worse, where it’s hard to believe anything and we will continue to grow apart not only politically but culturally and religiously...” (#5 @1:07:40)

“... we’re all going to continue being attacked but once we lose our solidarity as a people, we stop being human beings and we become animals.” (#8 @ 1:08:30)

“...my anxiety or fear is not so much because I’m Jewish but because of what’s happening, I’m talking about my nation now, US, I have a fear of the anarchy, the rioting and all that...” (#2 @ 1:09:30)

“...let me turn my back on Judaism in the name of self-preservation, and that we’re a small enough nation that it would be harmful to us and our future...” (#4 @ 1:11:23)

The strongest statement regarding past Jewish denial in Germany, in comparison to our present events, came from participant # 7 who said it directly and blatantly:

“It’s time we as Jews look at our role in the rise of Hitler. Did we not excuse his behavior and hatred because we felt he was just all talk? We put our pocketbooks first instead of that of humanity. And it is happening again today.”

Discussion

Discussion of Results

Revealing the essence of a series of focused group discussions is almost always a challenge for the researcher. The approach taken in this study was not unlike the experience of peeling an onion. It was a hierarchal process of looking at each session as a whole by creating word clouds of multiple depths to identify keywords used by participants. These

keywords were then recorded by session number as counts for each participant, along with their basic demographic profile information. The next layer of analysis was to run correlations on the data by session. Based on the theme of the session and keyword relationships to other variables, a series of more detailed examinations were taken to determine whether there was a significant positive or negative relationship among keyword pairs. Finally, essential quotes from that sessions participants were presented along with the author's reflection.

There were several exciting findings revealed through this process. In Session 1 on Identity, it was found that one's Jewish identity was more frequently mentioned by the younger participants, figure 1C. This pattern was also seen with regard to mentions of Pittsburgh and Charlottesville, while mentions of the Holocaust were uniform across all ages, Figure 1E. One's recent experience of trauma had a positive effect on mentions of Pittsburgh and the Holocaust but not on Charlottesville. In Session 2 on Faith, it was found that age had a positive impact on mentions of God and Godliness, Figure 2C. Those who consider themselves independent mentioned the words suffered, suffering, and suffer more than those not living independently (Figure 2D). The extent to which the greater population of synagogue-affiliated individuals shares these findings would need more study.

In Session 3 on Future, it was found that those who were middle-status workers expressed fewer words of hope or hopeful, Figure 3C. Perhaps they felt stuck in their situation while those on either extreme were more hopeful? Figure 3D about hope and children suggests that those who mention the word children also express more words of hope. This finding suggests that further research regarding family affiliation could be another area for future inquiry.

Figure 3G shows a positive relationship between those eliciting the words Jewish/Jew to a cognitive response related to the future. Thus, it may be said thoughts about being Jewish or a

Jew were related to more thoughts about the future. We do not know from this keyword chart the exact nature of those future thoughts; however, Figures 3H and 3J suggest it may be about one's level of understanding and the possibility of change for American Jewry. It should be noted that a Pew Research Center (2008) study indicates that fundamental sociological trends with regards to whether or how one continues their childhood religious identity going forward suggests that change is likely and, more likely than not, that response will be somewhat negative among those raised Jewishly relative to their identification as a Jew in the future (p. 30).

For Session 4 on Community, there is a significant positive relationship between keywords belonging or belong to family, Figure 4D. It was also found that the relationship between family and identity was positive and significant, Figure 4E. These findings suggest a solid link between family connections to one's identity and a sense of belonging for at least specific individuals. Adams and Marshall (1996, p. 432) state:

It may be that others have said that family membership is foundational to who we are as a person. The individual is an essential unit within the group, just as the family, school, and community are a living part of the individual. Actions by or within either affects the other; therefore, we can state the following proposition:

4. An individual's personal or social identity not only is shaped, in part, by the living systems around the individual, but the individual's identity can shape and change the nature of these living systems.

However, the most interesting significant keyword relationships may be that of trauma and together, Figure 4G. Those who had a recent traumatic experience and mentioned the keyword together, elicited the keyword together more than those without a recent traumatic

experience. This finding may imply that their recent trauma led to a need to express thoughts about being together with others.

In Session 5 on Loss, we find the relationships of interest where recent trauma to affect/affected/affecting was positive and significant (Figure 5C), anger/angry to Pittsburgh positive and significant (Figure 5E), and Charlottesville positive and significant (Figure 5E). These findings suggest a connection between one's feelings in the context of loss is connected to the experience of recent trauma, allowing for one's sense of anger over Pittsburgh and Charlottesville's events.

Finally, in Session 6, which was on Fear, we find significant relationships of interest with the keywords Anxiety to Holocaust, that are positive and significant (Figure 6C). Fear, fears, feared, fearful to Work status, which was significant and negative. Thus, the lower one's work status, the higher was one's fear (Figure 6E). The relationship of fear, fears, feared, fearful to anxiety was positive and significant, reflecting a connection between one's fear and their anxiety (Figure 6F). In this session, it was found that elicitations of the keywords Charlottesville and Pittsburgh were significant and positively related to one another (Figure 6G). This result may suggest that participants made a solid connection to Charlottesville and Pittsburgh's events when fear is discussed.

All of these findings suggest the need for more research on how one's sense of identity, faith, the future, community, loss, and fear are shaped by the experience of life in a global pandemic and the major transitions one faces during such times. Some of the change individuals experienced appear to be connected to past trauma. While at other times, new anxieties were created in the presence of major life changes unexperienced prior to the pandemic.

Limitations

This research was conducted in the year 2020 which mandated significant changes in data research and collection, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial focus group meetings were planned to be conducted in person, where all eight participants could interact directly. All six sessions ended up being conducted electronically, on the Zoom application. Participants expressed dissatisfaction of not being able to meet each other in person for this purpose.

My personal involvement at the commencement of the focus group research was challenged by the importance of dealing with my son's health and treatments in Israel, while I was in the United States. This dilemma challenged me immensely both emotionally and psychologically.

This research was conducted prior to the American elections and the inauguration of President Biden and Vice President Harris. It was also conducted prior to the January 6th events. I believe that if this research were conducted today the results would be very different.

Concluding Thoughts

For this writer, this research project flooded me with numerous reservations that are not easy to resolve. From my perspective, the information shared by the focus group emphasized even more the conflicts that we are facing, and which are not easily answered.

On the question of identity, the participants' obvious struggle, difficulty, and reflection, indicates to me there is an inner struggle to define one clear identity between several identities that were expressed during the sessions. I am not certain I would define the participants as having a Zionist tendency, Zionism is seen by them as a rescue solution,

should it be needed - an undefined insurance policy. In the years 1850-1924 more than two million Jews immigrated to North America, while only a few immigrated to Palestine. The vast majority of American Jews did not identify with the Zionist movement at all, and I find this to be the same situation today. I find the issue of identity has not changed; it has intensified even though the State of Israel exists.

About faith, which I define as an individual dynamic aspect, I did not detect any guilt or doubt in the participants' essence of faith. A definite need for faith was expressed by participants which completes the gap in the identity motif presented in this work. I am a Jewish American or alternatively an American Jew, but I believe, hence it covers any gap that may exist in my faith.

When it come to the future, it is shrouded in uncertainty. A bright future is optional and desired, yet the unknown and reluctance to face frightening reality bring up a notion of denial, a questionable identity, faith, and education. The unknown brings about helplessness or ignorance and denial. I would suggest the importance of actively taking responsibility, as well as the need to preserve a distinguishable identity that allows for the construction of an American Jewish identity out of strength instead of denial.

The aspect of community among participants of this focus group is mixed and creative. The general notion expressed by participants is one of a strong community that is constructive and has the capability of preserving an existing situation, that would hold and provide a solid foundation for the continued formation of Jewish community in the United States.

I would recommend doing this study again, researching Jewish community in the United States with an emphasis on a Southern Reform community. Ideally, I recommend a

longitudinal study, repeating this study both in the near future, and again in a few years down the road.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Group Facilitation Promotion

The following is the rabbi's article announcing the study in the July newspaper:

Brief Survey conducted by Rabbi Shai.

In partial fulfillment of the degree of Doctor of Ministry from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, I am conducting a survey of congregants of various ages. The survey is intended to identify the spiritual needs of members, and it could serve as a basis for creating other programs for temple members. The information gathered will be held in the strictest confidentiality. Rabbi Shai will guard information collected and the identities of all participants by substituting a code number for each name. Upon request, information gathered about the temple's needs will be reported by Rabbi Shai to individual participants.

This experience is an opportunity to explore issues that one might never have thought about.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this project, which I hope will greatly benefit the congregation.

The following is the announcement read by the Rabbi on the Friday night before the study:

Rabbi Shai is conducting a survey of congregants, of various ages, in partial fulfillment of the degree of Doctor of Ministry from Hebrew Union College Institute Religion. This important survey is intended to identify the spiritual needs of members, and it could serve as a basis for creating programs for temple members.

The information gathered will be held in the strictest confidentiality. The rabbi will guard information collected and the identities of all participants by substituting a code number for each name. Information gathered about the temple's community's needs will be reported to the congregation, or upon request to individual participants.

Taking the survey should be an interesting experience and an opportunity to explore issues that one might never have thought about.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this project. Please see Rabbi Shai if you are willing to participate.

APPENDIX A1*Survey Volunteers Needed by Rabbi Shai*

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Ministry from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, I am conducting a survey of Temple congregants from various age groups.

The survey is intended to identify the spiritual needs of members, and may serve as a basis for creating new Temple programs. The information gathered will be held in strict confidentiality. I will personally guard the information collected and the identities of all participants by substituting a code number for each name. Upon request by individual participants, I will provide the data gathered about the temple's needs that is collected during this study.

This experience is an opportunity to explore issues that one might never have thought about.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this project which I hope will greatly benefit the congregation.

APPENDIX B**Information used for recruitment to participate in a research study on Jewish Trauma and its effects after anti-Semitic events of Charlottesville and Pittsburgh.**

This is a study measuring the effects and influence of traumatic, anti-Semitic terror attacks, on Jewish congregants in Augusta, Georgia.

The study will consist of six group meetings, a 90-minute video-taped discussion on relevant topics concerning prolonged traumatic symptoms detected in members.

The purpose of this study is for the completion of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

In order to guarantee anonymity of person and information, all identifying factors of the participants will be removed. The information gained from these interviews will be treated as protected information and will be used for research purposes only.

The participant is free to withdraw from the study at any time and will be informed of the results of the study if they choose.

Name of Participant _____ Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

Age _____ Gender _____ Married/Single/Divorced/Widowed _____

Number of children _____ Education _____ Occupation _____

Financial status _____ Years of congregational membership _____

Define yourself religiously _____

Please specify preferred contact information:

Phone: _____ Email: _____

APENDIX C**Consent Form**

Code name and # _____

I consent to participate in this survey study.

This is a survey study conducted in collaboration with the rabbi and the synagogue. The survey is intended to identify the spiritual needs of members and it could serve as the basis for creating other programs for temple members.

The rabbi and the investigator will guard information collected and the identities of all participants will be kept anonymous by substituting a code name and number for your name. Your name will only appear on this consent agreement, which will be removed before the data is tabulated. All materials will be anonymous and held in confidence by this investigator. Please be as truthful as possible and answer all questions.

This study is a requirement for the degree of Doctor of Ministry and is done under the supervision of Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, Doctor of Ministry Program. The investigator, Rabbi Shai Beloosesky, can be reached at 706-691-5988 or at shaiyfata@gmail.com Information gathered about the temple's community needs will be reported by the rabbi, this investigator, to the congregation, or upon request to individual participants.

Name of participant _____

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

APENDIX D**Demographic Survey****Table Showing Collection Form as Given to Participants**

Demographic Data Collection Form	Code #:
Date of Birth:	
Please circle the most appropriate entry.	

Age	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90 or older	Leave Blank
Work Status	Full time work		Part time work		Semi - retired		Fully retired		
Economic Status	Totally Independent		Mostly Independent		Dependent on others		Need financial assistance		
Social Network	Many cordial connections with family & friends		Some connections with family & friends		Very little connections with family & friends		No social connections		
Health Status	No serious health challenges		Some health challenges		Critical health challenges		Terminally ill		
Religion	Very important aspect of my life		Indecisive		Not a major force in my life		Atheist		
Education	PhD or Master's Degree		Bachelor's Degree		Associate Degree		High School Education		
Marital Status	Married		Single		Widowed		Divorced		
Living status	Live with my immediate family		Live with extended family		Live with a friend		Live alone		
Experience of recent trauma	None		Some		Moderate		Intense		
If single...	Dating		In a relationship		Not dating		Not in a relationship		

Temple Member?	Yes	No			
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APPENDIX E

First Group Session, Subject: Identity

Opening prayer: Psalms, Chapter 108

Opening monologue: Identity is the definition of man himself; the way man chooses to present himself to the world. Identity is the complex of external features such as: skin color and eye color. Identity is also the inwardness that a person is born with, or acquires during his or her life, such as: humble or stubborn, traits that one is born with, as if belonging to a family, to a nationality.

Man has various, simultaneous, identities. S/he is a son and a brother at the same time, or a granddaughter and an aunt at the same time. Some parts of our identity change over the course of life: son turns a grandfather, granddaughter turns a mother, etc. We have personal identity elements like our attributes, things we love and prefer. There are group identity elements that are giving us a sense of partnership such as: family, or national identity. Every person emphasizes some of their identity elements at a given time in life. National identity is a component that determines one's affiliation with one's People, on the basis of common ethnicity origin, tradition, history, culture, symbols and shared values. And a sense of connection, identification and mutual guarantee that exists between them. Religious identity is a group-identity based on a sense of belonging to a national-cultural origin group.

Purpose: Mapping the identity of group participants and examining the effect of traumatic events on their identity, back then and now. Was their identity influenced or changed by these anti-Semitic terror events?

Meditation: “Then David the king went in, and sat before God; and he said: 'Who am I, God, and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me thus far?’” (Chronicles, 17:16)

Questions for participants discussion:

1. Define what is your Jewish identity and what is your American identity

The Tikvah or the American Anthem?

2. Where are the strengths and weaknesses of each identity?

3. How did the events of Charlottesville and Pittsburg personally affect you and your family?

4. How are the Charlottesville and Pittsburg events different from 9/11 and the Holocaust, as far as influencing factors of your personal identity?

5. How do you see your identity 10 years from now, and your children and grandchildren's identity?

Second Group Session Subject: Faith

Opening prayer: Psalms chapter 86

Opening monologue: In Rabbi Kook's article "The Luminaries of Faith"

(page 70), the rabbi defines the concept of belief: "Faith is not emotion nor mind, but the more fundamental self-discovery of the essence of the soul." This definition

A ?requires an explanation: What is emotion? What is common sense? What is a soul person has feelings in the heart, and thoughts in the mind. But faith is not a mere sense of the belief, nor is it an understanding of the mind that one uses to understands the belief. Faith is the soul itself; it is a deeper and more powerful inner and spiritual aspect. Although the soul activates the mind and emotion, it exists even before them.

What does "the soul exist before emotion and mind" means? It means man projects his emotions even without words. The circle of light and the circle of darkness: To illustrate the relation between faith and knowledge, I like to use the image of a person standing under a streetlight at night. The circle of light beneath the light is the realm of knowledge, of things that can be clearly seen. outside the strong light circle is a wider circle of faint light, and beyond it an even wider circle of darkness. These

circles symbolize what a person cannot know for sure. How should one relate to these circles?

One way is to ignore the circle of darkness, to claim that darkness holds nothing relevant for us and until light reaches and we can see what is there, it is empty, and we are not interested.

The second way is to try to find out what is in the dark anyway. The light doesn't get there, but there are other ways. You can try to grope in the dark, listen, smell, hear testimonials from people who have come back and so on. It is possible that based on the data obtained we can formulate a certain opinion about the things that are in the dark.

Purpose: Understanding participants' faith in light of the anti-Semitic events of Charlottesville and Pittsburg, discuss the changes that occurred in their faith, doubts that came up, has their faith strengthen or weakened after the events.

Meditation: "Create me a clean heart, O God; and renew a steadfast spirit within me." (Psalms 51)

Questions for participants discussion:

1. What is faith for you and what is your personal faith?
2. What are the foundations of your religious faith and how do you maintain it?
3. Did the anti-Semitic events of Charlottesville and Pittsburgh weaken or strengthen your faith? for example: I hold a strong faith in God and felt his absence in Charlottesville and Pittsburg, am I risking myself by coming to worship God at my synagogue, will God be there with me

4. Are you facing a crisis of faith as a result from current the COVID-19 pandemic and how is this different from the anti-Semitic terror attacks?

Third Group Session Subject: Future

Opening Prayer: Psalms, chapter 110

Opening Monologue: A dictionary definition for future is the part of a timeline that has yet to happen. That is, the place in a time-space where all events that have not yet happened, are. In this sense the future is the opposite in its meaning to the past (time and events that have already happened). In terms of the chronological timeline, the future and the past are both at the polar ends of the present which are the events that are happening now. Is it in our hands or are we at the mercy of others and at the mercy of outer forces?

Purpose: Defining future goals? Is it possible? Is there a future in the here and now and how is it expressed?

Meditation: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of God.” (Malachi 3:23)

Questions for Participants Discussion:

1. Where do you see yourself 10 years from now regarding your religious identity?
2. The status of American Jewry has been strengthening since the late 40’s. Do you feel the American Jewry is still strong or has it weakened after the anti-Semitic events of Charlottesville and Pittsburgh?

3. How do you see the American Jewry operating and functioning 10 and 20 years ahead, will the concept of congregating in synagogues remain or will the concept of faith take its respectful place online?

4. Are you concerned of the future, do you feel we are onwards to improving our future and can we influence its creation at all?

Fourth Group Session Subject: Community/Congregation

Opening Prayer: Psalms, chapter 84

Opening Monologue: A community or congregation is a self-organized body, with a network of personal connections and establishments, run by personal communication patterns which serve as a center for meaning and affinity. Why do people need a community? Some of the reasons people gather in communities/congregations are the need for social support, a space for self-assuredness, building relationships, emotional connections, recognition, acceptance, support and caring.

Purpose: Explore and discuss whether the current structure of community/congregation is the ultimate one, the desired one and does it answer the need of its members after the traumatic events of Charlottesville and Pittsburgh

Meditation: "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." (Psalms 22:23)

Questions for Participants Discussion:

1. What does a community or a congregation mean to you?

2. What are you contributing and what are you benefiting from the congregation and how would you define the relationship you have with the congregation?
3. A congregation as a target for terror attack... can anything be done to prevent it and what can we do differently?
4. After the traumatic events of Charlottesville and Pittsburgh the psychological aftermath was harsh. Do you feel this was a rational response or was also it a prolonged generational PTSD response that caused such trauma?

Fifth Group Session Subject: Loss

Opening Prayer: Psalms, chapter 132

Opening Monologue:

“Whether an individual copes with a significant loss or death in a positive and constructive rather than in a negative or destructive manner depends on the types of coping mechanisms used and the quality of support being given. There are two major psychological responses by individuals when adjusting to loss: (1) the use of coping mechanisms; and (2) emotional reactions. If we wish to help friends and loved ones in time of sorrow, we need to understand how these are expressed by them”
(Moor, R. (2019), File HEG223, FamilyCare America, Inc., University of Nebraska-Lincoln)

Purpose: To understand feelings accompanying us when we face loss. What do members of the congregation need most from the community during a time of loss and how do we create a supportive environment for one in loss.

Meditation: “for how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?” (Esther, 8:6)

Questions for participants Discussion:

1. What is the difference between a personal loss of a family member or a friend and the loss of victims of a terror attack such as Charlottesville and Pittsburgh?
2. How do you overcome a loss, on a personal level/national level/religious level? The Holocaust, 9/11, Charlottesville and Pittsburgh among many other traumatic events have already happened, and we are still here... how do we do it?
3. How much does loss affect your life and change your planned life course?
4. What can we, as individuals and as a community, do to prevent loss from religious/national terror?

Sixth Group Session Subject: Fear

Opening Prayer: Psalms, chapter 102

Opening Monologue: The definitions of fear and anxiety are quite different. Fear is an unpleasant emotional and physiological sensation that at times is experienced in humans and animals, caused by exposure to a dangerous or threatening external stimulus. For example, fear of facing a dangerous animal. Anxiety is a psychological condition in which a person feels physical and mental turmoil, stress and worry, due to a thought that something bad is about to happen. Thought can be a real or imagined threat or danger, consciously or unconsciously, and a person feels helpless against it. When I read the definitions, I realized that fear and anxiety are two different things even though we are used to confusing them.

Fear is caused by something external that affects us such as war, earthquake, dangerous person or animal. In contrast, anxiety is something psychological that affects us because of real or imagined danger where we do not know how to deal with. People usually think that fear is a smaller thing and anxiety is when fear is greater, but these are two different things caused by diverse reasons.

Purpose: To understand the weak and challenged points in my congregants, causing fear, and try and address these points in order to dismantle them.

Meditation: “The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whoso putteth his trust in God shall be set up on high.” (Proverbs, 29:25)

Questions for Participants Discussion:

1. To what extend does the motif of fear exist in your faith and what scares you in the personal and congregational aspect?
2. Do you recognize in yourself (in your DNA) traditional fears which are not present reality based, such as past persecution in comparison to the events of Charlottesville and Pittsburgh?
3. What scares you in the coming future?
4. What were your immediate fears right after 9/11, Charlottesville and Pittsburgh?
5. Are you a target for a terror attack because you are American or because you are a Jew?