



# MY JEWISH HOME

The Core Added Value of Base for Basers

Report on 2020 Survey of Base Participants

Ezra Kopelowitz, Ph.D.

Version: July 9th



# Contents

Evaluation Goal .....	1
The Survey .....	1
Overview of Findings (Executive Summary).....	2
Detailed Findings .....	7
Base is my Jewish Home .....	7
“My Jewish Home” Means .....	7
Home is Part of a Broader Community (Jewish eco-system) .....	9
The Contrast between Base and Synagogues .....	9
What Basers Look for Elsewhere .....	10
Three Types of Engagement with Base .....	11
Strategic Planning Analysis .....	14
Core Distinction: Base as an Alternative to Organized Jewish Life .....	14
The Core “Base is my Jewish Home” Package.....	16
Defining the Boundaries of Base = Jewish Home: Who is Included? .....	17
Managing Growth .....	22
Integrating Service at Base = Home .....	29
The Relationship Between Moishe House and Base .....	33

## Evaluation Goal

Since its founding in 2015, Base has expanded to 9 locations, in 2 countries. Rabbis and their partners are establishing communities currently touching the lives of an estimated 6,000 young Jewish adults each year.

Base's leaders are now planning for the future. This report contributes to that process by offering an analysis of responses of Base participants to a survey conducted in May 2020. The overarching questions we address are:

1. What is the core added value Base brings to the Jewish lives of young adults?
2. How may rabbis and their partners adjust their practice so as to maximize the benefit for Basers and the Base communities?
3. In which areas should Base focus?
4. In which areas should a Base collaborate with other organizations?
5. How might Base recruit and mobilize the most committed Basers to sustain Base into the future?



## The Survey

In May 2020, we fielded a survey of Basers connected with all nine Bases. The list included 6,690 contacts, of whom 592 responded to the survey. Of them, 525 had participated in a Base activity since September 2019 and are included in the analysis. The larger contact list included many contacts who are not participants, such as parents, professionals who work with Base, and donors; thus, the actual response rate is likely much higher than the 9% who respondent vis-à-vis the larger contact list.

## Overview of Findings (Executive Summary)

**Our Thesis: Base's strategic development should focus on those attributes that lead young Jewish adults to regard Base as their "Jewish Home."**

Base's Mission Statement focuses on creating a "home-base" for young Jewish adults. The survey results verify Base's stated mission. **Basers regard Base as their Jewish home, which means:**

- ✚ An intimate, warm, welcoming, and inclusive (non-judgmental, pluralistic) environment
- ✚ A place where my voice is heard
- ✚ A home-like Shabbat experience with meals together are a core part of the experience
- ✚ Prayer that is inclusive, egalitarian, creative, and meaningful
- ✚ The Rabbinic couple is central to the experience of Base as a:
  - Home environment in which they feel welcome
  - A place for high-quality learning, marked by a conversation-focused experience
  - Spiritual guidance and pastoral care.

### HOME IS PART OF A BROADER COMMUNITY (JEWISH ECO-SYSTEM)

People leave and return home. And indeed, Basers describe their Jewish lives playing out in multiple contexts, including family and friendship circles integrated with participation in Jewish organizations, the most prominent of which are Base and synagogues or minyanim. In comparing Base to synagogues, Basers describe synagogues as more structured, formal, and less personal places.

**Base is My Primary Jewish Place (Primary Engagement Group):** For 24% of the respondents, Base is a warm welcoming less formal alternative than other Jewish communal spaces. They do participate in other Jewish contexts, but Base is their primary home for Jewish friendships, prayer, spirituality and intellectual growth.

**Base is One of My Jewish Places (One-Of Engagement Group):** For 47% of the respondents, Base is one of their Jewish places. They like Base for the intimate experience and intellectual experience it provides; and, will also look for Jewish involvement opportunities elsewhere such as:

- ✚ More **structured or denominational prayer services**, or a **multi-generational environment** at synagogues
- ✚ **Formal class experiences**, such as lectures on specialized topics, or **advanced Jewish learning**
- ✚ **Focused volunteering opportunities** with organizations that specialize in a particular area of service.

**Low Engagement Basers (Low)** represent 29% of respondents. They participate less frequently. Base is one of their Jewish addresses and they don't intend staying involved for the long term.

## CORE DISTINCTION: BASE AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO ORGANIZED JEWISH LIFE

An important difference between the “Primary” and the other two Base engagement groups is in the formers’ level of comfort with organized Jewish life. For the Primary Engagement Group Base is their principal Jewish place. While, the three Base Engagement Groups have similar levels of childhood Jewish affiliation and education, in college the Primary Group’s involvement in organized Jewish life dropped and they continue their relatively low involvement in mainstream Jewish institutions. Furthermore, many in both Primary Engagement and One-Of Engagement groups intend to stay involved at Base for long periods, citing their attraction to the intimate home-like environment.

This finding is important for two reasons:

- ✚ The Base=Home dynamic offers a compelling Jewish involvement opportunity to the Primary Engagement Group, many of whom are unlikely to be as involved in Jewish life through alternative venues.
- ✚ The compelling alternative that Base provides, means that Basers want to remain involved. In that Base leaders seek to maintain a focus on engaging young adults:  
**How should Base approach growing numbers of older participants?**

## THE CORE “BASE IS MY JEWISH HOME” PACKAGE

**Recommendation One:** Shabbat meals, Jewish holiday experiences, Jewish learning, social events, one-on-one meetings with the Rabbi and the Rabbi’s Partner and small group discussions are the core of Base’s offerings and enable Basers to regard Base as their Jewish Home. **For strategic planning purposes this Base = Home package must remain front and center.**

## DEFINING THE BOUNDARIES OF BASE = JEWISH HOME: WHO IS INCLUDED?

The Base = Home package means an intimate social experience at Base that includes Jewish learning, friendship, all in the context of an egalitarian community. Not all young Jewish adults entering a Base feel comfortable with the core Base = Home package, in some cases leading them to reduce their participation.

**Recommendation Two:** The strategic planning process should focus on the extent to which **differentiated environments** are desirable and possible for enabling individuals with different social and learning skills, and religious sensibilities to feel equally at home.

- ✚ **Intimate community based on strong social bonds can be difficult to access.** Strong social bonds are critical for the experience of “Base = Home;” yet, in some cases they deter participation. There are Basers who have difficulty forming friendships and feeling comfortable in the highly social environment Base offers. Whilst Base should not give up on the highly social, communal environment, there is likely room for offering venues for entry that are less “socially taxing” on those who find entering into social relationships with strangers difficult.
- ✚ **Jewish learning is central to the Base experience, yet it can also inhibit engagement.** A significant number of respondents wrote that they are not used to

engaging in Jewish learning and find the experience daunting. Other, more experienced learners wrote that the learning at Base is not geared to their needs.

✚ **The centrality of religion attracts many but alienates some.** Run by a Rabbinical couple, egalitarian religiosity is a defining feature of many of Bases' events and learning.

- **Cater to Basers with a secular orientation?** Some respondents, wrote of the challenge of the religious environment at Base, raising questions about Base's potential appeal to the many young Jewish adults who might prefer non-religious options for engagement. How strongly does Base wish to be perceived as a religious institution? Does Base wish to offer both religious and non-religious opportunities for engagement?
- **A strategy for pluralism?** Other respondents focused on the challenge of spending time with people who have different Jewish worldviews. What is the role of religious and cultural diversity at Base? To what extent do religious and cultural differences of Basers receive explicit acknowledgement? What is Base's strategy for handling such diversity?

#### MANAGING GROWTH AND SUCCESSION

Many organizations face the challenge of success, and Base is one of them. Founded to create a home-like environment based on direct social relationships with a Rabbinic couple, Bases have attracted ever-growing numbers of participants. And while welcome, this growth can potentially undermine the larger mission.

✚ **Numbers:** In the initial stages of growth, the Base rabbinic couples are easily accessible and the number of participants relatively small. As numbers of Basers grow, maintaining the Base=Home environment becomes a challenge.

✚ **Age:** A second challenge of success for an organization focused on twenty-somethings is the dynamic of age. The retention of veteran Basers raises the average age of the participants. Also, with the elapse of time, the age gap between the Rabbinic couple and younger Basers grows.

**Recommendation Three: Maintaining Intimacy.** Base has not yet focused on activating volunteers as a core element of the Base = Home strategy. **Channeling volunteer energy** will likely go a long way towards maintaining an intimate, welcoming, and inclusive environment for newcomers and veterans alike. Skilled and knowledgeable volunteers can extend the Rabbinical couples' ability to create more small group forums upon which the Base=Home dynamic depends.

**Recommendation Four: Enabling Diversity.** A central issue is the ability of Base to enable a feeling of full participation for individuals with different social and Jewish learning skills and religious sensibilities. Volunteers can lead small groups on a range of topics and geared for different groups based on age, sensibility, knowledge and interest.

**Recommendation Five: Supportive Core.** The intensive connection expressed by active veterans is a source of strength for any community, Base included. The active veterans can take on new leadership roles and serve as a source of creative and philanthropic strength for the Base community.



## SERVICE IS CURRENTLY NOT CENTRAL TO THE BASE = HOME EXPERIENCE

Service (service learning and social justice activism) is symbolically important for the Base leadership. As a synagogue is proud of its morning minyan or Talmud classes, even if only small groups participate, so Base might be satisfied with the fact that its Service work does reach a relatively small group of the most involved Basers in a meaningful way.

**Recommendation Six:** If the goal is for Service to fully integrate into the Base = Home experience, thus touching all those who participate in Base programming, then the Base strategic planning process might include the **following questions:**

1. **Incorporating Service into learning at Base:** Does current Jewish learning at Base, in all its forms, sufficiently incorporate Service themes?
2. **Systematize the approach:** Might Base as an organization systematize the approach taken to teaching and Service, choosing key themes, pedagogic practices and Service focused activities that best integrate into the Base = Jewish Home core?
3. **Integrative Base experience:** Is Service at Base in a silo reaching only a sub-group of Base participants? Does Service play out in a compartmentalized way in a manner different from than the meals and learning that happen at the Base homes? If that is the case, then there is a need to break the silos and integrate Service into the Base=Jewish Home dynamic.
4. **Vary activities:** Might Base create a greater variation of Service activities to appeal to broader sub-groups of Basers, perhaps utilizing volunteers for the purpose?
5. **Extend partnerships:** Might Base partner with social justice or service organizations, bringing Jewish learning to the partnership?

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOISHE HOUSE AND BASE

Base's leadership is currently considering an institutional partnership with Moishe House. To contribute to the decision-making process, we sought to ascertain the extent to which Basers currently are involved with Moishe House; and, the way Basers perceive the similarities and differences between the two organizations.

- ✚ 95% of the respondents are familiar with Moishe House.
- ✚ When asked about the extent to which their Jewish life plays out at Moishe House, 7% answered "to a great extent," and an additional 10% "to some extent."

Moishe House engaged Basers are social, extroverts, and comfortable in Jewish and group settings. They are active in organized Jewish life in general, and at Base in particular. They recommend Base to others and are willing to volunteer at Base. Moishe House Basers are also more active in programs at Base sponsored by another group, which we assume is Moishe House. If that is the case, then a Base-Moishe House collaboration is already under way.

**Recommendation Seven:** For Base, Moishe House is a source for involved and enthusiastic young Jewish adults. These young adults complement their Moishe House involvement through participation at Base. They describe Moishe House as a place for Jewish sociability and peer-led learning, with a similar intimate and pluralistic Jewish

experience as Base. In contrast, Base offers a higher level of professionalism, Jewish learning and organized community. **To the degree that Base and Moishe House can work to complement one another along these lines, then partnership is likely a win-win for both organizations.**



## Detailed Findings

### Base is my Jewish Home

**Our Thesis: Base’s strategic development should focus on those attributes that lead young Jewish adults to regard Base as their Jewish Home.**

Base’s Mission Statement focuses on creating a “home-base” for young Jewish adults. The survey results verify Base’s stated mission. Basers regard Base as their Jewish home.

#### **Base Mission**

*Base is the home of a Rabbinic family which serves as a home-base, a grounding point for students, young adults, and their friends. While each Base reflects the personality of the Rabbinic couple and embodies their vision for a vibrant Jewish community, every Base is committed to pluralism and is founded upon three core values: hospitality, learning, and service.*



### “My Jewish Home” Means ....

**In their written responses<sup>1</sup>, the large majority indicated that Base is serves as their Jewish home.** Basers describe that which makes Base a special place for them as including the following elements:

- ✚ An intimate, warm, welcoming, and inclusive (non-judgmental, pluralistic) environment
- ✚ A place where my voice is heard
- ✚ A home-like Shabbat experience with meals together are a core part of the experience
- ✚ Prayer that is inclusive, egalitarian, creative, and meaningful
- ✚ The Rabbinic couple is central to the experience of Base as a:
  - Home environment in which they feel welcome
  - A place for high-quality learning, marked by a conversation-focused experience
  - Spiritual guidance and pastoral care.

---

<sup>1</sup> Survey Questions: “What in your view is special about Base and what it means to you? How is it different from other places where you may find Jewish meaning and experience?” And, “What elements of Jewish meaning and experience do you seek elsewhere?”



## Home is Part of a Broader Community (Jewish eco-system)

People leave and return home. And indeed, Basers describe their Jewish lives playing out in multiple contexts, as shown in exhibit 1.

Average score: 0 = not at all, 100 = to a great extent	
Your immediate family	77
Your close friends	70
Friends and acquaintances	64
Base	64
Your extended family	62
A synagogue or minyan	61
Online groups and contacts	48
Another Jewish organization	47
Your workplace or profession	36
Moishe House	20
A JCC	19

**EXHIBIT 1. TO WHAT EXTENT WOULD YOU SAY YOUR JEWISH LIFE IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CONTEXTS?**

Basers' Jewish lives play out in the context of family and friendship circles integrated with participation in Jewish organizations, the most prominent of which are Base and synagogues or minyanim.

## The Contrast between Base and Synagogues

In comparing Base to synagogues, Basers describe synagogues as more structured, formal, and less personal places. For example:

*"Joining a synagogue can feel overwhelming and impersonal. I love the close community that Base intentionally builds and the meaningful relationships built with the rabbis and their families."*

*"Base feels much warmer and more personal than traditional Jewish outlets such as my synagogue. Rabbi Hayley and Lizzie are very friendly and welcoming and help open my eyes to the positivity and greater meaning of Judaism."*

## What Basers Look for Elsewhere

For many Basers, Base is a warm welcoming less formal alternative than other Jewish communal spaces. Base is their home for Jewish friendships, prayer, spirituality and intellectual growth.

For others, particularly those with stronger traditional backgrounds, Base is one of their Jewish places. They like Base for the intimate experience it provides; and, will also look for Jewish involvement opportunities elsewhere such as:

- ✚ More **structured or denominational prayer services**, or a **multi-generational environment** at synagogues
- ✚ **Formal class experiences**, such as lectures on specialized topics, or **advanced Jewish learning**
- ✚ **Focused volunteering opportunities** with organizations that specialize in the particular area of service

*“Prayer. I really like mechitzah prayer spaces and the special intimacy that comes with a small minyan meeting regularly. I like shul life and Base isn't that. For what it's worth I really like having these two spaces in my life, both Base and my synagogue. ...I like both Base and my shul and the way both amplifies the value of the other.”*

*“I seek more religious life elsewhere, as I sometimes don't feel I get the level of stringency that aligns with me.”*

*I seek more serious Talmud learning and particular Halachic and practical religious input from elsewhere. I also get most of my pastoral care from elsewhere.*

*“I tend to pray elsewhere and also go to more specific places for activism (ie. organizations that focus one specific cause).”*

*“As far as I can tell, Base tends to focus on Jewish learning, holidays, and socializing. If I want to go to an event about Israel, or hear a talk on a Jewish topic, it seems like Base doesn't offer that kind of programming. Then again, I'm not sure that it needs to offer that to be valuable. I don't expect any one organization to cater to everything I'm looking for.”*

## Three Types of Engagement with Base

To substantiate and refine the “Base is my Home” thesis we created three **Base Engagement Groups**.<sup>3</sup>

### 1) **Base is My Primary**

#### **Jewish Place (Primary):**

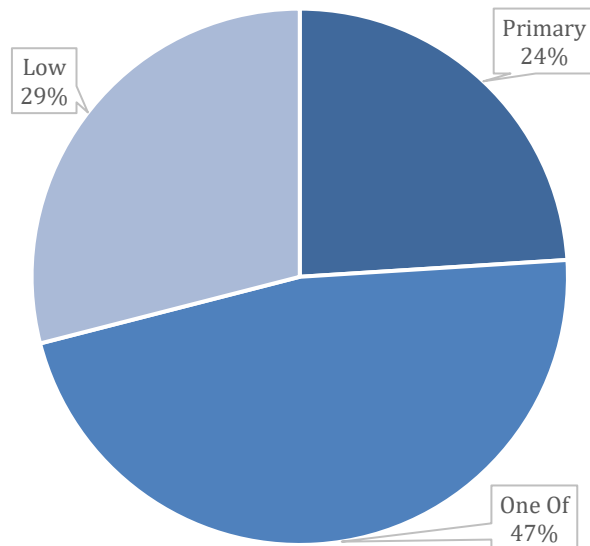
Representing 24% of respondents. High Base involvement, Base is my primary Jewish place and I intend to stay involved.

### 2) **Base is One-Of My Jewish Places (One-Of):**

Representing 47% of respondents. Moderate to high involvement, Base is One-Of my Jewish addresses and I intend to stay involved.

### 3) **Low Engagement (Low):**

Representing 29% of respondents. Low involvement, Base is One-Of my Jewish addresses, I won't be staying involved for the long term.



**EXHIBIT 2. BASE ENGAGEMENT GROUPS**

*“Base has quickly become the center of my Jewish life because it is an organization where building relationships are the central focus and jumping off point for all learning and engagement. Being (consistently) invited into someone's home for Shabbat or to learn is an incredibly meaningful gesture. It removes a barrier to connecting with others that is often present in other institutions. The hospitality, kindness, thoughtfulness, and thought that R'EBC and Matt put into this community is immense. And that is why Base Boston is so special - it reflects them, two people, rather than an organization. The larger Base movement provides the framework, but Base Boston is distinctly reflective of the people who run it and the people who participate because they find it just as special and meaningful as I do.”*

<sup>3</sup> The Engagement Groups are created from two highly correlated questions. One asks about the extent to which “your Jewish life plays out in” the context of Base. The other question asks about the respondent’s relationship to Base, offering three alternatives: “primary Jewish address,” “One-Of my Jewish places,” or no “Jewish address that is significant to me.” Compiling the scores from these two questions, those scoring highest are those who see Base as their primary Jewish address and who view Base as the place where they play out their being Jewish “to a great extent.”

**Base is My Primary Place Group** are looking for the core Base qualities of warmth, relationships, accessibility and egalitarian participation described above as informing the experience of Base as Home. They will participate in other Jewish venues but view Base as their primary Jewish place.

**The Base is One-Of my Jewish Places Group** also seek the core Base qualities but are more likely to go elsewhere for synagogue or formal or specialized learning opportunities.

**For the Low Engagement Group,** Base is a part of their Jewish lives, but as a place to attend events and not as a place that offers the holistic experience other Basers describe.

	Base Engagement Groups		
	Low	One-Of	Primary
<b>Not at all</b>	22%	0%	0%
<b>A little</b>	75%	3%	0%
<b>To some extent</b>	3%	56%	22%
<b>To a great extent</b>	1%	40%	78%
<b>NET</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**EXHIBIT 3. TO WHAT EXTENT WOULD YOU SAY YOUR JEWISH LIFE PLAYS OUT AT BASE?**

	Base Engagement Groups		
	Low	One-Of	Primary
<b>I don't have a Jewish address that is significant for me</b>	36%	0%	0%
<b>Base is One-Of my Jewish places</b>	64%	97%	0%
<b>Base is my primary Jewish address</b>	0%	3%	100%
<b>NET</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TABLE 4. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO BASE?**

*“Base is an incredibly warm and welcoming community with people from all different walks of life. I love getting to know everyone and using our commonalities to bond. It is much more approachable and warm than other Jewish places. It feels more like a home than a place to attend Jewish events. People gather to be together in a Jewish context rather than gathering just to observe Judaism.”*

We learned, not surprisingly, that the more engaged a Baser, the more committed they are to continue participating at Base for years to come.

	Base Engagement Groups		
	Low	One-Of	Primary
<b>I don't expect to continue</b>	12%	2%	1%
<b>The near future</b>	44%	29%	18%
<b>For the next few years</b>	43%	69%	80%
<b>NET</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TABLE 5. FOR HOW LONG DO YOU THINK YOU WILL CONTINUE PARTICIPATING AT YOUR BASE?**

		Base Engagement Groups				Row n
		Low	One-Of	Primary	Net	
<b>Many from Primary Group</b>	Base BKLYN (New York)	21%	38%	40%	<b>100%</b>	107
	Base MNHTN (New York)	34%	32%	33%	<b>100%</b>	96
	Based in HRLM (New York)	30%	39%	30%	<b>100%</b>	23
<b>One-Of Groups is largest</b>	Base ITHACA (Ithaca, NY)	9%	64%	27%	<b>100%</b>	22
	Base Loop (Chicago - Loop)	8%	66%	25%	<b>100%</b>	71
	Base CHI (Chicago - Lincoln Park)	17%	62%	22%	<b>100%</b>	125
	Base BRLN (Berlin, Germany)	24%	55%	20%	<b>100%</b>	49
	Base MIA (Miami)	28%	56%	16%	<b>100%</b>	32
<b>Lows largest</b>	Base BSTN (Boston)	52%	36%	12%	<b>100%</b>	33
					<b>NET</b>	<b>429</b>

## EXHIBIT 6

Comparing the Bases, we found:

- ✚ Relatively equal levels of each Base Engagement Group responding to the survey at Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Harlem – the three Bases with the highest Engagement scores.
- ✚ In contrast, at Boston the “Lows” are the largest group representing 52% of the Boston respondents.
- ✚ For all the remaining groups, the “One-Ofs” are the largest group of respondents. (The high levels of Base Engagement in the NY Bases are due in part to their long-standing history – as we see later. Basers who have been participating 3 years or more are most likely to record high levels of engagement.)

*“It’s tremendously meaningful to gather in a home, not to mention Base in Brooklyn is just a few blocks from my apartment. It makes the neighborhood feel more like home, too.”*

*“I like that when I am in Base it makes me feel like I am in a Jewish home. My parents live on the East Coast so for me it is nice to have a Jewish home in Chicago.”*

*“Base is special in its awareness, its programming and its messaging. I love that it is in a home. I love that there is spiritual learning and more traditional rituals coupled with yoga retreats and relaxed Shabbat dinners. It is a loving gathering space and its tailored for young, community-seeking Jews, which I often lack here in my life in Berlin.”*



## Strategic Planning Analysis

The coming analysis takes a deeper look at the similarities and differences between the Base Engagement Groups in order to flesh out the implications for Base’s strategic planning process.

### Core Distinction: Base as an Alternative to Organized Jewish Life

**An important difference between the “Primary” and the other two Base Engagement groups is in the formers’ level of comfort with organized Jewish life.**

The three Base Engagement Groups had similar levels of childhood Jewish affiliation and education; however, in college the Primary Group’s involvement in organized Jewish life dropped (exhibit 7).

Average (0=Never attended, 100 = Attended many times)	Base Engagement Groups		
	Low	One-Of	Primary
<b>Hillel</b>	6	72	6
<b>Chabad</b>	45	46	30
<b>Another campus Jewish group</b>	42	39	27

**EXHIBIT 7. AT COLLEGE, HOW OFTEN, IF AT ALL, DID YOU ATTEND – OR HAVE YOU ATTENDED – PROGRAMS, EVENTS, CLASSES, SERVICES, OR MEALS SPONSORED BY THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS?**

However, since college the Basers in the Primary Engagement Group are the most likely to report increasing their Jewish involvement (exhibit 8).

	Base Engagement Groups		
	Low	One-Of	Primary
<b>I have increased my level of Jewish involvement</b>	30%	43%	66%
<b>I have maintained my level of Jewish involvement</b>	51%	49%	24%
<b>I have decreased my level of Jewish involvement</b>	19%	8%	11%
<b>NET</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**EXHIBIT 8. IN THINKING ABOUT YOUR JEWISH INVOLVEMENT IN RECENT YEARS, WOULD YOU SAY THAT YOU ARE INCREASING YOUR INVOLVEMENT, MAINTAINING A SIMILAR LEVEL OR DECREASING YOUR INVOLVEMENT?**

Based on the open question and survey data analysis, we conclude that the Primary Group’s decreased involvement in college stemmed from a lack of comfort with established Jewish organizations. Their increased involvement in Jewish life since college is due to their enthusiasm for the intimate home-like environment that Base offers.

Average (0 = Not at all, 100 = to a great extent)	Base Engagement Groups		
	Low	One-Of	Primary
Base	23	79	93
A synagogue or minyan	58	70	48
Online groups and contacts	44	52	44
Another Jewish organization	45	57	32
Your workplace or profession	38	38	29
A JCC	15	21	19
Moishe House	15	26	18

**EXHIBIT 9. TO WHAT EXTENT WOULD YOU SAY YOUR JEWISH LIFE PLAYS OUT IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CONTEXTS?**

*“Base is much more comfortable and welcoming than most other Jewish spaces I interact with. I feel safe and at home there.”*

*“Base is a home away from home. I have made many meaningful friendships and connections at Base. I truly feel at ease and myself in the space, which I don't feel in most other Jewish environments. I have gone to such a variety of events and taken part in many meaningful experiences through Base. It blends real Jewish experiences with informal community.”*

While the Primary Group’s Jewish interests are similar to the Lows and One-Of groups, their relative lack of interest in established Jewish groups continues.

- ✚ **The Primary Engagement Group** are far more likely state that their Jewish life plays out at Base; and, are less likely to state that their Jewish life plays out in the other contexts.
- ✚ **The One-Of Engagement Group** were more likely to be involved in multiple Jewish venues in college and remain as involved now.
- ✚ **The Low Base Engagement Group** are involved in Jewish life in multiple venues, but at a lower level of intensity than the One-Of group (exhibit 9). They are also the least likely to report increasing their Jewish involvement.

**Implication:**  
 For the Primary Engagement Group Base is their Jewish place. They are not as attracted to other Jewish venues, and many intend to stay involved at Base. Many of the One-Of group also intend to stay involved. This finding is important in that Base leaders seek to maintain a focus on engaging young adults. How should base approach growing numbers of older participants? We return to this issue in the coming pages.

## The Core “Base is my Jewish Home” Package

For the One-Of and Primary Engagement Groups, Base is the place where most attend Shabbat meals, and participate in Jewish holiday experiences, Jewish learning and social events. Many also report one-on-one meetings with the Rabbi and the Rabbi’s Partner and small group discussions. ***This package of relationship-focused engagements with Base is what enables the experience of Base = Jewish Home.***

The Lows are less likely to opt into the full package. Besides Shabbat meals, in no other Base activities do most of the Low Engagement Group participate.

Programming that complements but, at least for most Basers, is not integral to the core Base = Jewish Home package includes: co-sponsored events, service projects, guest speakers and attending social justice events.

Column %		Index of Base Engagement		
		Low	One-Of	Primary
<b>Core of Base = Home for One-Of and Primary Groups</b>	Attended a Shabbat meal	62%	78%	90%
	Attended a Jewish holiday experience	38%	61%	82%
	Jewish learning	38%	69%	78%
	Went to a social event	28%	53%	69%
<b>Larger part of Base Experience for the Primary Group</b>	Met with a rabbi or partner one-on-one	18%	40%	59%
	Participated in a small group discussion	17%	43%	49%
<b>Complementary, but not Core to Base = Home</b>	A program co-sponsored by Base and another group	22%	47%	41%
	Took part in a service project or activity	8%	21%	36%
	Heard a guest speaker	9%	25%	36%
	Attended a social justice event	4%	17%	19%

**EXHIBIT 10. IN WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BASE ACTIVITIES HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED AT ANY POINT SINCE LAST SUMMER (2019)? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY**

### Implication:

Shabbat meals, Jewish holiday experiences, Jewish learning, social events, one-on-one meetings with the Rabbi and the Rabbi’s Partner and small group discussions are the core of Base’s offerings and enable Basers to regard Base as their Jewish Home. For strategic planning purposes this Base = Home package must remain front and center.

## Defining the Boundaries of Base = Jewish Home: Who is Included?

The following quote from a member of the Primary Engagement Group shows how the qualities of Base = Jewish Home are wrapped up with one another. For this individual, the intimate social experience at Base includes Jewish learning, friendship, all in the context of an egalitarian community. Not all young Jewish adults entering into a Base feel as comfortable with the core Base = Home package, in some cases leading them to reduce their participation.

*“The home based, small group, and meaningful learning aspects of Base are a what make it special to me. I tend to connect better to Jewish practices that are home-based rather than primarily synagogue based. As a young person without many Jewish friends where I live, Base provides that needed space for me. The intimacy of small group learning and Shabbat meals makes it easier to form real, meaningful connections, both with Base Rabbis/partners and other Basers. While other organizations, like Chabad, also offer home-based learning, I have had a hard time connecting to the less egalitarian Judaism in those spaces. The fact that Base has an egalitarian model and is home/community based is very unique and something I have not encountered outside of a college setting before.”*

The One-Of and Primary Engagement Groups **feel very comfortable** at Base. The Low Group less so.

### EXHIBIT 11. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING?

Average 0=Not comfortable at all, 100 = Very comfortable.	Base Engagement Groups		
	Low	One-Of	Primary
Walking into the Base home	71	93	96
Participating in a Base-sponsored social event, such as a Friday night dinner	73	92	95
Participating in a Base-sponsored social action/tikkun olam event	69	85	93
Participating in Jewish learning at Base	67	88	92
Approaching the Rabbi and/or partner to talk about something personal	65	83	87
Making friends at Base	63	79	81

The core characteristics of Base = Home (warmth, relationships, accessibility and egalitarian participation and engaging Jewish learning) that attract most of the One-Of and Primary Engagement groups are in some cases a source of discomfort for others. This is particularly the case for members of the Low Engagement group.

The reasons Basers give for feeling uncomfortable enable us to recognize the presence of groups that Base does not currently cater to effectively. Looks at the reasons stated for feeling uncomfortable we now map out the differing needs of Basers, and ask: **On which issues should Base seek cater to Basers who currently feel uncomfortable?**

## Intimate Community Based on Strong Social Bonds Can be Difficult to Access

The One-Of and Primary Engagement Groups have a **greater affinity for intimate Jewish community** than the Lows. During the first months of the COVID-19 crisis, the One-Of and Primary Engagement Groups sought out community and Jewish learning at higher rates than the Low group. 54% of the Primary Group and 40% of the One-Ofs received emotional support from a Base Rabbi or Rabbi's Partner during this period.

Column %	Base Engagement Groups		
	Low	One-Of	Primary
I participated in community virtually	45%	53%	60%
I participated in Jewish learning online	29%	50%	59%
I received emotional support from a Base Rabbi and/or partner via phone or online	10%	40%	54%
I looked online for resources to celebrate Passover in a meaningful way	32%	47%	54%
I looked online for ways to give back to people in need through community service	24%	24%	31%
I have been connected to vital resources to support my physical, mental, or financial health	15%	17%	21%

### EXHIBIT 12. SINCE MID-MARCH (DURING THE COVID-19 CRISES) HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING

In some cases, as the written responses indicate, Low Engagement Basers aren't seeking intimate community of the type offered by Base. Yet, in other cases, as the following two quotes indicate, there are others who have difficulty forming friendships in the highly social environment Base offers. Less "extreme" answers from members of all three engagement groups indicate that feeling comfortable socially is a challenge for many.

In thinking about why you are not totally comfortable with Base, can you briefly explain why? Low Engagement Group

*"For me the community and the private self are very different. In BASE I could not develop deep friendships that would make these events more personal for me. It is not the mistake of the organisers at all, it is rather about me who feel more comfortable keeping a distance when I am surrounded by unknown (nice) people."*

*"I have not attended many events and often feel anxiety meeting new people. Not really specific to Base"*

Whilst Base should not give up on the highly social, communal environment, there is likely room for offering venues for entry that are less “socially taxing” on those who find entering into social relationships with strangers difficult.

In thinking about why you are not totally comfortable with Base, can you briefly explain why? “One-Of” Engagement Group

*“It’s a personal preference and not an objective critique - Friday night dinners are so large and loud that they can be overwhelming. I really prefer smaller more intimate gatherings. I wonder if there are ways Base could do that - themed dinners or interest groups?”*

*“While I have made friends at Moishe House, I have not at Base, perhaps because I do not attend Base events as often as I used to though. Also, I do better in smaller groups and Base events have been larger, for at least ones I have attended.”*

The importance of venues that are less socially taxing is apparent when we read reports of other Low Engagement Basers who report the difficulty of entering into a room where most of the people there already have strong social bonds.

In thinking about why you are not totally comfortable with Base, can you briefly explain why? Low Engagement Group

*“Sometimes I feel like the more social/intimate events are occupied by a main/core group of Basers and if I came I would be out of place or intruding on something.”*

*“Maybe it’s because I haven’t gone enough but I always feel a little intimidated when talking to people. It sometimes feels like that everyone there has a deep connection with one another and I kind of feel on the fringes each time.”*

**Strong social bonds are critical for the experience of “Base = Home;” yet, as we see above, in some cases they deter participation.** Exhibit 12 shows that the Primary Engagement Group are most likely to report the different dimensions of strong social relationships at Base with the One-Of group are not far behind. In contrast, only a minority of Lows report forming Base friendships.

Column %	Base Engagement Groups		
	Low	One-Of	Primary
Spent time socially in a group or alone (outside of Base)	33%	69%	76%
Developed a deep, ongoing friendship	15%	48%	60%
Hosted people you have met at Base in your home	16%	37%	49%
Developed a work, or hobby related connection	20%	34%	43%
Dated anyone	2%	11%	18%

**EXHIBIT 13. WITH RESPECT TO PEOPLE YOU’VE MET AT BASE ACTIVITIES, HAVE YOU ...**



Jewish Learning is Central to the Base Experience, yet it can also Lead to Low Engagement  
FOR THE INEXPERIENCED, JEWISH LEARNING CAN BE DAUNTING

As the quotes (side right) show, there are members of the Low Engagement Group that want to engage with Jewish Learning but given their lack of familiarity feel uncomfortable.

In thinking about why you are not totally comfortable with Base, can you briefly explain why? Low Engagement Group

*"I don't have that much experience with Jewish learning, so it's a bit intimidating. But that's something I want to overcome with more experience. And it's always somewhat uncomfortable to 'try and make friends' at events, even as a rather social and outgoing person. But I do feel as though Base is a safe and welcoming place."*

*"I haven't attended any learning groups ever in my life, so I feel a bit inferior to start with."*

FOR THE EXPERIENCED, LEARNING WITH THE INEXPERIENCED IS FRUSTRATING

In thinking about why you are not totally comfortable with Base, can you briefly explain why? Low Engagement Group

*"As a more traditionally observant Jew, who has done quite a bit of Jewish study, I often find that the other participants are not my peers."*

*"I haven't spent so much time getting to know other folks at Base. Also, as a rabbinical student, I can feel out of place in the context of some programming which seems to be tailored for a less overall engaged audience."*

Experienced Jewish learners are also members of the Low Engagement Group. There are those who report "an engagement vibe" at Base and thus don't feel they have a place.

**Implication:**

The core characteristics that are Base = Jewish Home encourage participation but can also have the opposite effect. Strong social bonds between Basers make it uncomfortable for some to enter the conversation. Others are not used to engaging in Jewish Learning; while, there are experienced learners who report that the learning at base is not geared to their needs.

The strategic planning process should focus on the extent to which differentiated environments are possible to enable individuals with different social and learning skills to feel equally at home.



## Religion is Central, and can Attract or Alienate

Religion is at center at Base. Run by a Rabbinical couple, Bases offer events and learning that focus on the Jewish religious tradition, spirituality and sacred texts. Egalitarian religious practice is a predominating feature, appealing to all except for the small number who seek Orthodox prayer services. But they still come to Base for Jewish religious learning and other religion-based activities.

The religious emphasis at Base provokes a variety of reactions, as we see in the quotes to the right.

- ✚ **Religion:** Basers widely concur that Base is a religious setting, rather than social, political or cultural as other settings may be seen.
- ✚ **Discomfort:** Some may desire to learn about religious practice, while also experiencing some discomfort (see 2<sup>nd</sup> quote).
- ✚ **Diversity:** The last four quotes speak to the challenge of being with people who think about religion differently.

**Implication:** The quotes speak to the centrality of religion at Base. They raise the question about Base's potential appeal to the many young Jewish adults who might prefer non-religious options for engagement. How strongly does Base wish to be perceived as a religious institution? Does Base wish to be seen as offering both religious and non-religious opportunities for engagement?

Another area for attention is the role of religious diversity. To what extent do the religious differences of the Basers receive explicit acknowledgement? And if so, what is Base's strategy for handling such diversity?

In thinking about why you are not totally comfortable with Base, can you briefly explain why?

*"I guess because I don't have friends there. But I was very comfortable with religious setting - I am not religious, so I like that Base is not strongly orthodox."*

*"As a non-practicing Jew, I feel slightly alienated by Jewish religious practices, though I would like that to change."*

*"There are times when I worry that I'm not as religiously and spiritually conservative as the rabbi and the Basers."*

*"Geographic and religious cultural differences can make it harder to emotionally connect with other attendees."*

*"I wish that I felt more supported by some of my Base friends. Much of this has to do with religious values and what I see as 'only to the left pluralism,' where I'm expected to respect people's religious values but they don't respect mine (like traveling on Shabbat for the sake of community or doing a Zoom seder, when those are things I would prefer not to do but have to do because that is our friend group and otherwise we don't have the communal aspect)."*

*"The intellectual atmosphere, gender balance, and diversity of occupations has diminished. ... There has been an uptick in men, and mostly from if not formerly from men who have a slightly socially awkward if not chauvinist edge to them."*

## Managing Growth

### As the Numbers Grow, How to Preserve Intimacy

Many organizations face the challenge of success, and Base is one of them. Founded to create a home-like environment based on direct social relationships with a Rabbinic Couple, Bases have attracted ever-growing numbers of participants. And while welcome, this growth can potentially undermine the larger mission. As the following quotations illustrate, the Rabbinic couple can quickly become overextended.

In thinking about why you are not totally comfortable with Base, can you briefly explain why?

*“Base is a pretty huge, dynamic community. It creates safe spaces, but I don't see it as something that has an investment in me. I understand it's a two-way street, however I always go there to feel part of something bigger, not to feel tended to.”*

*“Sometimes there are a lot of people at an event, and I don't want to take away the rabbi's attention to discuss a personal issue when he could be socializing with others. I prefer smaller events that are more intimate.”*

*“I am a longtime but somewhat infrequent Baser, so I feel like I don't come often enough to really build a personal connection with Base leaders. They are so welcoming and friendly, but only coming to events once a month or so isn't enough for me to feel really comfortable talking about personal things. This is especially true because a lot of times the events / Shabbat dinners are so large (20+ people) that I don't really have a chance to talk to them more than a short conversation.”*

*“Base does a great job of being welcoming and forming community. At times it is slightly intimidating going to an event where there is already a group of close knit people/friend group, and breaking into that. People are very lovely and welcoming, but rightfully so, if they are there with 5 of the people from Base who are their 'community' they may not be so invested in getting to know someone who's there for the first time. And there are only 2 people in the Base Couple, so they can't be everywhere at once ensuring every single person feels included and welcome at all times.”*

Old-Timers in an Organization Focused on Twenty-Somethings

A second challenge of success for an organization focused on twenty-somethings is the dynamic of age; including, the age of the participants (first two quotes side-right) and the age of the Rabbinic couple (third quote).

In thinking about why you are not totally comfortable with Base, can you briefly explain why?

*“Sometimes I feel too old for the community Base attracts.”*

*“In my experience BASE seems to be more people in early 20s and I'm in my later 30s and not partnered so I sometimes feel like it's not meant for me.”*

*“Base has started becoming more Chabad-like where there is the rabbi family and the younger members. It used to be that we were all just a few years apart in age and our life experiences and maturity levels were more similar.”*

Managing Growth by Recognizing Diversity

The rising number of participants and their rising median age require an active management strategy for the core mission of Base = Home for young Jewish adults to succeed over the long term.

The first task is to recognize the diversity among Basers and then develop a strategy to work with each group. For this purpose, we divide Basers by the intensity of their engagement with Base (exhibit 14).

✚ **“Active Veterans”** have attended many Base events since September 2019, and have been coming to Base for at least two years, if not longer.

✚ **“New Enthusiasts”** who came to Base for the first time in the last year, and they have made more than five appearances since September 2019.

✚ **“Regulars”** have a long-time attachment to Base but have come to events recently less often than 5 times in the last few months.

✚ **“Samplers”** are recently engaged with Base but have made only 1-5 appearances since September 2019.

✚ **“Dropouts”** are long-time Basers who appeared just once or never since September.

<b>ACTIVE VETERANS -- Long-time, frequent users</b>	31%
<b>NEW ENTHUSIASTS -- newcomers, frequent users</b>	19%
<b>REGULARS -- long-time, sometime users</b>	14%
<b>SAMPLERS -- newcomers, infrequent users</b>	20%
<b>DROPOUTS -- long-time, but now infrequent</b>	16%
<b>NET</b>	<b>100%</b>

**EXHIBIT 14. ENGAGEMENT INTENSITY GROUPS**

The Bases differ in the composition of their Basers. Active Veterans are most frequent at Base Harlem, Brooklyn, Chicago-Loop and Miami, and least frequent in Ithaca and Boston, two Bases that have only recently begun functioning. For their part, Dropouts are most frequent in Brooklyn and Manhattan – the oldest running Bases.

	ACTIVE VETERANS Long-time, frequent users	NEW ENTHUSIASTS newcomers, frequent users	REGULARS long-time, sometime users	SAMPLERS newcomers, infrequent users	DROPOUTS long-time, but now infrequent	NET
<b>HRLM (New York)</b>	64%	9%	14%	5%	9%	<b>100%</b>
<b>BKLYN (New York)</b>	54%	12%	8%	7%	19%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Loop (Chicago - Loop)</b>	53%	6%	16%	14%	11%	<b>100%</b>
<b>MIA (Miami)</b>	43%	17%	10%	17%	13%	<b>100%</b>
<b>MNHTN (New York)</b>	35%	20%	14%	11%	21%	<b>100%</b>
<b>CHI (Lincoln Park)</b>	34%	10%	23%	17%	16%	<b>100%</b>
<b>BRLN (Berlin, Germany)</b>	17%	38%	4%	35%	6%	<b>100%</b>
<b>ITHACA (Ithaca, NY)</b>	5%	64%	0%	32%	0%	<b>100%</b>
<b>BSTN (Boston)</b>	4%	20%	8%	60%	8%	<b>100%</b>

**EXHIBIT 15. AT WHICH BASE HAVE YOU SPENT ANY TIME SINCE SPRING 2019?**





**Recent arrivals are younger than the veterans.** Active Veterans, Regulars and Dropouts are between 25-29 with a good number 30-34 years old. The New Enthusiasts and Samplers are disproportionately 18-25.

	Age Groups					NET
	19 to 21	22 to 25	26 to 30	31 to 35	Older than 35	
<b>ACTIVE VETERANS -- Long-time, frequent users</b>	1%	17%	55%	22%	5%	100%
<b>NEW ENTHUSIASTS -- newcomers, frequent users</b>	9%	29%	31%	20%	11%	100%
<b>REGULARS -- long-time, sometime users</b>	2%	15%	65%	10%	8%	100%
<b>SAMPLERS -- newcomers, infrequent users</b>	10%	23%	34%	23%	10%	100%
<b>DROPOUTS -- long-time, but now infrequent</b>	2%	11%	57%	23%	7%	100%

**EXHIBIT 16. HOW OLD ARE YOU?**



As would be expected, the older groups – the Active Veterans and Dropouts – are also the most likely to be married or intending to marry.

	Marital Status					NET
	Married or Living with a partner	Engaged or intending to marry someone	In a relationship	Single	Other	
<b>ACTIVE VETERANS -- Long-time, frequent users</b>	31%	11%	16%	40%	3%	100%
<b>NEW ENTHUSIASTS -- newcomers, frequent users</b>	14%	6%	26%	52%	3%	100%
<b>REGULARS -- long-time, sometime users</b>	29%	8%	15%	46%	2%	100%
<b>DROPOUTS -- long-time, but now infrequent</b>	48%	2%	7%	41%	2%	100%
<b>SAMPLERS -- newcomers, infrequent users</b>	27%	10%	20%	40%	3%	100%

**EXHIBIT 17. MARITAL STATUS**

## Working with Different Engagement-Intensity Groups

**Base is their Place.** The Active Veterans are the most intensively engaged with Base, with the 42% considering Base as their primary Jewish place with New Enthusiasts not far behind. The Dropouts, followed by the Samplers are predictably the least engaged.

	Base Engagement Groups			NET
	Low	One-Of	Primary	
<b>ACTIVE VETERANS -- long-time, frequent users</b>	5%	53%	42%	100%
<b>NEW ENTHUSIASTS -- newcomers, frequent users</b>	7%	62%	32%	100%
<b>REGULARS -- long-time, sometime users</b>	24%	61%	15%	100%
<b>SAMPLERS -- newcomers, infrequent users</b>	49%	41%	10%	100%
<b>DROPOUTS -- long-time, but now infrequent</b>	62%	28%	9%	100%

**EXHIBIT 18. ENGAGEMENT INTENSITY BY ENGAGEMENT GROUPS**



**More Comfortable:** On a related issue, Active Veterans along with New Enthusiasts are, on average, more likely to feel comfortable with engaging with Base in various ways. Samplers and dropouts are the least comfortable, overall. Given the analysis conducted above, it is likely that there are high percentages of the Samplers and Dropouts who are less comfortable with key elements of the Base experience, such as participating in large groups, Jewish learning or the religious aspects of Base.

Average: 0 = Not comfortable at all, 100 = Very comfortable	ACTIVE VETERANS	NEW ENTHUSIASTS	REGULARS	SAMPLERS	DROPOUTS
Walking into the Base home	96	95	89	76	80
Approaching the Rabbi and/or partner to talk about something personal	88	77	82	71	76
Participating in Jewish learning at Base	90	91	85	78	70
Participating in a Base-sponsored social event, such as a Friday night dinner	94	94	90	79	77
Participating in a Base-sponsored social action/tikkun olam event	90	92	83	72	76
Making friends at Base	81	79	75	71	70

**Ready to Help:** A logical way forward is to engage the most engaged Basers to help maintain a sense of intimacy that is vital to Base=Home and reduce the overall burden on the Rabbinic couple. Qualified volunteers can also contribute to diversifying engagement opportunities.

The small numbers who are currently volunteering come from the ranks of the Active Veterans. In general, a majority of all groups, other than the Dropouts are willing to volunteer (exhibit 19). The Active Veterans are most willing to help run fundraising events and work on Base’s financial sustainability. Three-quarters of the Basers are amenable to making a financial contribution, with 46% of the Active Veterans answering that they would definitely make a contribution, followed by 38% of the New Enthusiasts and smaller percentages of the other groups (exhibit 20).

	ACTIVE VETERANS -- Long-time, frequent users	NEW ENTHUSIASTS -- newcomers, frequent users	REGULARS - - long-time, sometime users	SAMPLERS -- newcomers, infrequent users	DROPOUTS -- long-time, but now infrequent
Yes, I am currently doing so	17%	9%	0%	6%	2%
Not now, but I would like to do so in the future	48%	59%	59%	53%	38%
No	12%	9%	16%	15%	30%
Not sure	23%	24%	24%	26%	30%
NET	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**EXHIBIT 19. WOULD YOU WANT TO TAKE A VOLUNTEER ROLE IN HELPING SHAPE YOUR BASE?**

Average:0=Definitely Not, 100=Definitely	Making a financial contribution of any sort	Helping run fundraising events	Participating as a “financial sustainability” team member at your Base
ACTIVE VETERANS -- Long-time, frequent users	73	53	41
NEW ENTHUSIASTS -- newcomers, frequent users	68	39	42
REGULARS -- long-time, sometime users	63	41	34
SAMPLERS -- newcomers, infrequent users	67	41	36

**EXHIBIT 20. FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS, COULD YOU SEE YOURSELF TAKING A ROLE?**

Active Veterans

*“Our Base has not asked us for a donation, so I will be happy to give a donation. I think Adam and Jessie do a really good job of providing a warm environment that makes people want to go back and contribute. There are not many organizations I would say that I want to give money to.”*

*‘To all potential donors: you are supporting an amazing organization that is shaping the future of the Jewish people on a person-to-person level. An incredibly effective investment.’*

*“I think it’s helpful to be up front about the need to support to institutions we care about, and that when you tell people that, it makes a lot of sense to donate.”*



## Implication

Base's success rests squarely on the Base = Jewish Home formula. In the initial stages of growth, the Base Rabbinic couple are easily accessible and the number of participants relatively small. As numbers of Basers grow so the challenge of maintaining the Base=Home environment becomes a challenge.

**Maintaining Intimacy:** Base has not yet focused on activating volunteers as a core element of the Base = Home strategy. Channeling volunteer energy will likely go a long way towards maintaining an intimate, welcoming, and inclusive environment for newcomers and veterans alike.

**Enabling Diversity:** A central issue is the ability of Base to enable a feeling of full participation for individuals with different social and Jewish skills and sensibilities. Volunteers can lead small groups on a range of topics and geared for different groups based on age, sensibility, knowledge and interest.

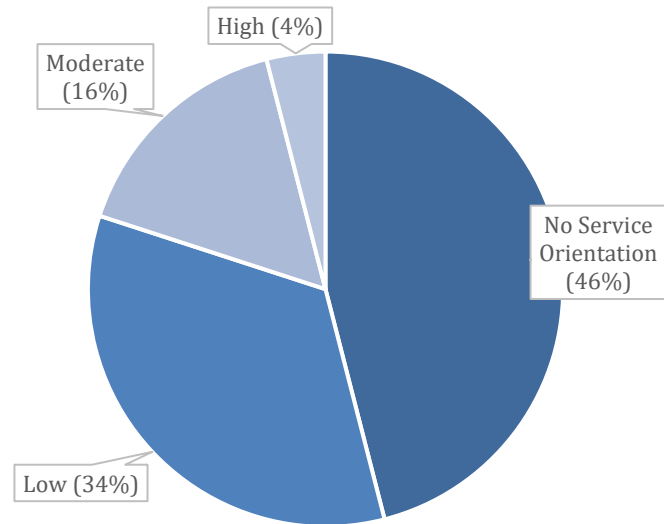
**Supportive Core:** The intensive connection expressed by Active Veterans is a source of strength for any community, Base included. The Active Veterans can take on new leadership roles and serve as a source of creative and philanthropic strength for the Base community.



## Integrating Service at Base = Home

The Base leadership considers Service (service learning and social justice activism) as a core organizational value. Faith Leener, Base’s Executive Director states: “Service is a way that we embody the values we teach.”

This section brings the survey data to inform a discussion of the place of Service at Base. **How is Service best conceptualized to speak in an authentic manner to the core dynamic of Base = Jewish Home?**



**EXHIBIT 21. SERVICE INDEX**

## Base Service Index

To understand the current level of Basers’ engagement with Service, we constructed a composite index consisting of 3 items (questions) from the survey: 1) Took part in a service project or activity at Base, 2) Attended a social justice event at Base, 3) Feel very comfortable participating in a Base-sponsored social action/tikkun olam event.

We learn that:

- 📊 **20% of Basers are either in the High or Moderate Base Service engagement categories:** 4% gave a positive answer to all three index questions, followed by 16% who answered positively for two of three.
- 📊 **The large majority are either in the Low (34%) to None (46%) Base Service engagement categories.**

	Service Engagement Groups			NET
	None	Low	Moderate / High	
<b>HRLM (New York)</b>	30%	26%	43%	100%
<b>MNHTN (New York)</b>	43%	27%	30%	100%
<b>Loop (Chicago – Loop)</b>	45%	30%	25%	100%
<b>BRLN (Berlin, Germany)</b>	43%	33%	24%	100%
<b>CHI (Chicago - Lincoln Park)</b>	45%	31%	23%	100%
<b>MIA (Miami)</b>	30%	48%	21%	100%
<b>NET</b>	45%	35%	20%	100%
<b>BKLYN (New York)</b>	44%	37%	19%	100%
<b>ITHACA (Ithaca, NY)</b>	32%	59%	9%	100%
<b>BSTN (Boston)</b>	72%	26%	3%	100%

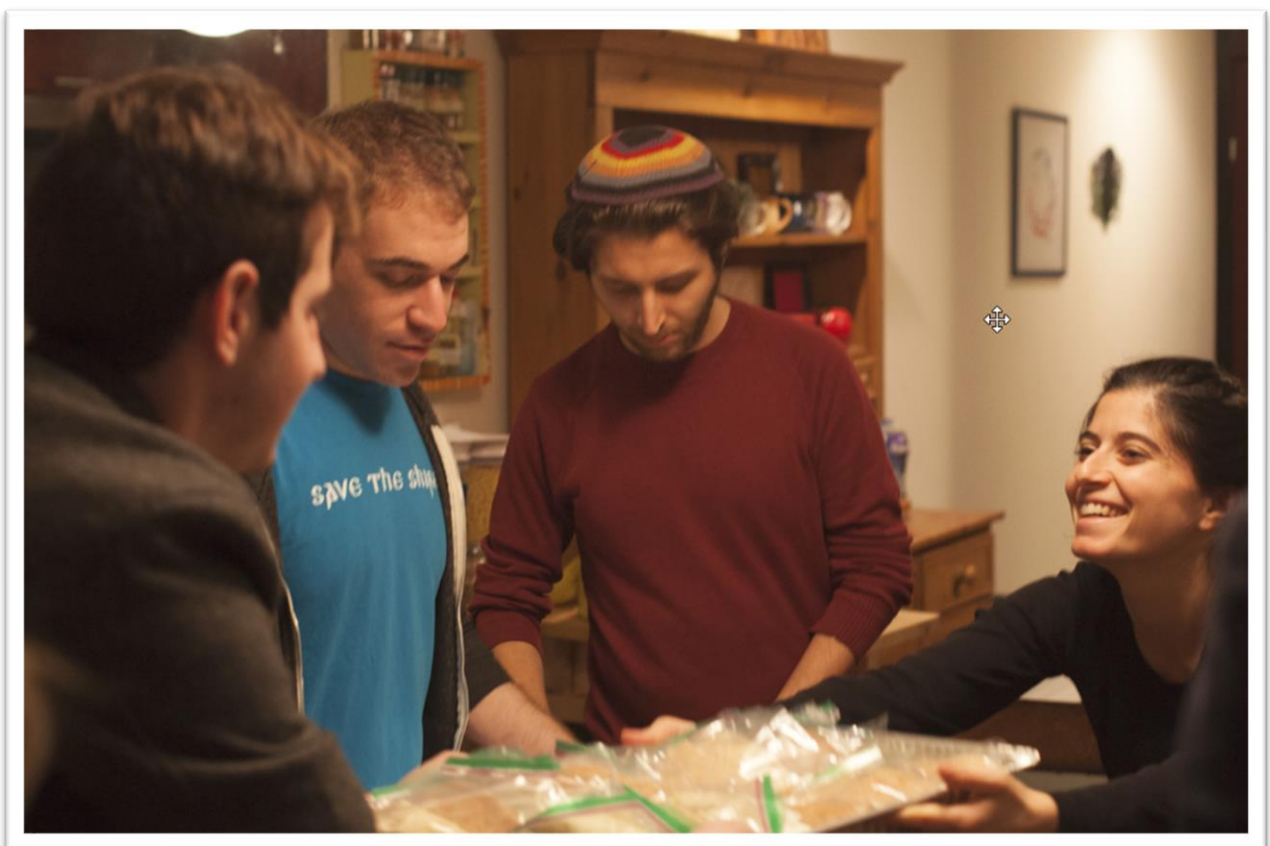
Relatively large groups of Basers report moderate/high Service engagement at Base Harlem and Manhattan, with almost none reporting a similar level at Boston.

**EXHIBIT 22. SERVICE ENGAGEMENT GROUPS BY EACH BASE**

**Service at Base currently reaches the most involved Basers.** Basers who regard Base as their primary Jewish place are far more likely to be moderately or highly engaged in Service activity (exhibit 23). The more Service engaged and are also far more likely to report developing social connections through Base (exhibit 24).

		Base Engagement Groups		
		Low	One-Of	Primary
Service Engagement Groups	High	0%	4%	10%
	Moderate	6%	18%	24%
	Low	25%	42%	38%
	None	69%	35%	27%
NET		100%	100%	100%

**EXHIBIT 23. TIKKUN OLAM ACTIVITY INDEX BY BASE ENGAGEMENT GROUPS**



	Service Engagement Groups			
	None	Low	Moderate	High
Spent time socially in a group or alone (outside of Base)	48%	64%	82%	95%
Developed a deep, ongoing friendship	26%	49%	60%	80%
Developed a work, or hobby related connection	19%	35%	50%	70%
Hosted people you have met at Base in your home	23%	37%	50%	68%
Dated anyone	5%	13%	14%	25%

**EXHIBIT 24. WITH RESPECT TO PEOPLE YOU'VE MET AT BASE ACTIVITIES, HAVE YOU ... BY SERVICE ENGAGEMENT GROUPS**

## Service is Currently not Central to the Base = Home Experience

Of the 382 responses to the question asking Basers to detail what makes Base special for them, just 8 wrote about Tikkun Olam, Social Justice, or Service. Examples appear side-right.

The second two quotes (side-right) are significant, in that these Basers evoke a sense that Service is integral to their experience of Base = Home. They perceive that alongside other key elements of the Base=Home package Service is front and center. Which leads us to ask: **Why aren't more Basers reporting that Service is a central part of their Base=Home experience?** The following are two possible reasons:

*"I love that Base provides space to do meaningful Tikkun Olam."*

*"I love the way Base merges opportunities to celebrate the Holidays, social justice, learning, and Jewish ritual, and continuously rises to meet the needs of the community."*

*"Base thinks about Jewish life in an innovative way to give our community what it really needs or values. I also love the emphasis on social justice."*

- 1) Looking for Specialization:** In explaining what they look for at organizations other than Base, several Basers wrote comments similar to the first two quotations below, which indicate that there are organizations that specialize in social change work to which they turn.
- 2) Activist Group:** The Baser writing the third quotation views Service at Base as appealing to a relatively small and activist oriented group. This individual is looking for something "quieter."

*"Other organizations I am involved with provide opportunities for volunteering, community engagement, and building inter-generational relationships."*

*"I haven't seen BASE do as much with social justice/community service, which is fine with me - I have other places to get that."*

*"In terms of Social action and tikkun olam it really depends on what it is. I struggle with this type of work in general, not just at Base because I feel like it is very hard to get the right level of nuance in these situations, and that is mostly more on the people who attend than the Rabbis themselves. Sometimes I feel these things can be to social justice warrior-y and I prefer a social justice environment that is more about quietly practicing radical action than 'being an activist.' It's hard to explain."*



## Learning and/or Doing Service

There are two basic dimensions of Service: 1) learning and 2) doing.

### Learning

For Basers to perceive Service as integral to Base=Home, discussions evoking “giving back to society,” “social justice,” or other Service themes would need to be integrated into Jewish learning at Base making it an ever-present value that Basers who participate in Base activities will encounter and are aware of. This might be the case, and we missed it, because the survey did not ask questions in this area. Or alternatively, Service themes are only directly evoked in connection with doing Service.

### Doing

As the above quotes indicate, Basers are doing social justice or community service volunteering elsewhere or might be uncomfortable with an overly activist approach of those Basers who are drawn to Service. Again, the research would need to focus on these areas to be sure that these findings are valid.

### Implication

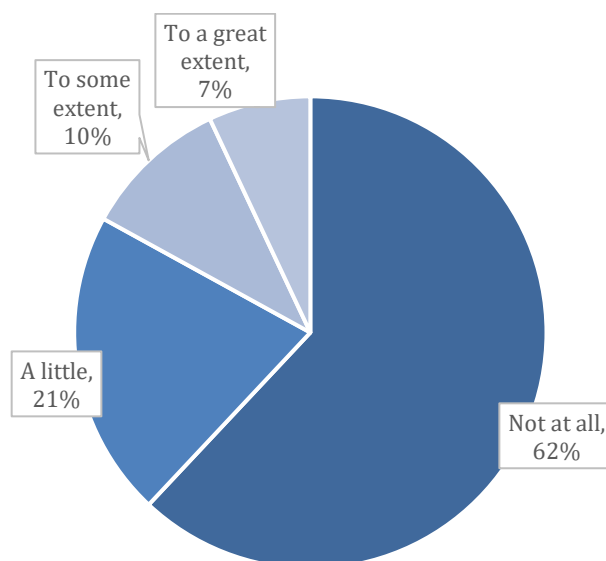
Service is symbolically and ideologically important for the Base leadership. Just as a synagogue is proud of its morning minyan or weekly Talmud classes, even if only small groups participate, so Base leadership might find value with its Service work, even if it reaches a relatively small group of highly involved Basers. However, if the goal is for Service to fully integrate into the Base = Home experience, touching most of those who participate in Base programming, then the Base strategic planning process should consider the following questions:

1. **Incorporating Service into learning:** Does current Jewish learning at Base, in all its forms, sufficiently incorporate Service themes?
2. **Systematize the approach:** Might Base as an organization systematize the approach taken to teaching and doing Service, choosing key themes, pedagogic practices and service focused activities that best integrate into the Base = Jewish Home core?
3. **Integrative Base experience:** Is Service at Base in a silo reaching only a sub-group of Base participants? Does Service play out in a compartmentalized way in a manner that is different than the meals and learning that happen at the Base homes? If that is the case, then there is a need to break the silos and integrate Service into the Base=Jewish Home dynamic.
4. **Vary activities:** Might Base create a greater variation of Service activities to appeal to broader sub-groups of Basers, perhaps utilizing volunteers for the purpose?
5. **Extend partnerships:** Might Base partner with social justice or service organizations, bringing Jewish learning to the partnership?

## The Relationship Between Moishe House and Base

Base’s leadership is currently considering an institutional partnership with Moishe House. To contribute to the decision-making process, we sought to ascertain the extent to which Basers currently are involved with Moishe House; and, the manner in which Basers perceive the similarities and differences between the two organizations.

- 95% of the respondents are familiar with Moishe House.
- When asked about the extent to which their Jewish life plays out at Moishe House, 7% answered “to a great extent,” and an additional 10% “to some extent.”



	Moishe House Engagement	
	Not at all + A little	To some extent + To a great extent
<b>Average: 0 = Not at all, 100 = to a great extent</b>		
Your immediate family	76	78
Your close friends	67	81
Friends and acquaintances	62	77
Base	61	76
Your extended family	62	59
A synagogue or minyan	57	74
Online groups and contacts	45	58
Another Jewish organization	42	68
Your workplace or profession	34	46
Moishe House	8	80
A JCC	14	39

**EXHIBIT 26. TO WHAT EXTENT WOULD YOU SAY YOUR JEWISH LIFE PLAYS OUT IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING**

		Moishe House Engagement	
		Not at all + A little	To some extent + To a great extent
Base Engagement Groups	Low	37%	16%
	One-Of	39%	63%
	Primary	24%	21%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**EXHIBIT 27. MOISHE HOUSE ENGAGEMENT BY BASE ENGAGEMENT**

**EXHIBIT 25. TO WHAT EXTENT DOES YOUR JEWISH LIFE PLAY OUT AT MOISHE HOUSE**

The Basers engaged with Moishe House to “some extent” or “to great extent “ are in general more Jewishly active, reporting higher Jewish involvement with respect to close friends, acquaintances, work-place, synagogues, JCCs and Jewish organizations (exhibit 26). They are most likely to be found in the One-Of Base Engagement Group (exhibit 27). This group is enthusiastic about Base, but also active in other Jewish organizations.

At Base, the Moishe House engaged are generally more likely to participate in Base activities as well. In particular, they are far more likely to report participating in small group discussions and a program sponsored by another group (Exhibit 28).

	Moishe House Engagement	
	Not at all + A little	To some extent + To a great extent
Attended a Shabbat meal	78%	79%
Attended a Jewish holiday experience	60%	62%
Jewish learning	62%	69%
Went to a social event	50%	58%
Met with a rabbi or partner one-on-one	39%	47%
Participated in a small group discussion	35%	55%
A program co-sponsored by Base and another group	36%	55%
Took part in a service project or activity	21%	22%
Heard a guest speaker	21%	29%
Attended a social justice event	13%	21%

**EXHIBIT 28. IN WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BASE ACTIVITIES HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED AT ANY POINT SINCE LAST SUMMER (2019)? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY**



The Moishe House engaged are more likely to have referred friends to Base, and to express interest in volunteering at Base (exhibit 29).

	Moishe House Engagement	
	Not at all + A little	To some extent + To a great extent
Yes, I am currently doing so	7%	10%
Not now, but I would like to do so in the future	49%	66%
No	17%	7%
Not sure	27%	17%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%

**EXHIBIT 29. WOULD YOU WANT TO TAKE A VOLUNTEER ROLE IN HELPING SHAPE YOUR BASE? BY MOISHE HOUSE ENGAGEMENT**



We asked the Basers who stated that they are familiar with Moshe House: **“What are the distinctions or differences between Base and Moishe House that seem most important or striking to you?”** The following are the most prominent themes:

## Professionalism

- “Professionalism. Every Moishe House event (at least the ones not partnered with Base) has had a sense of amateurism in the program planning that has never been present in any Base event I’ve been to.”

## Quality of Jewish Learning

- “Moishe Houses vary A LOT based on who lives in them and who they serve. I've been to 5-10 different ones and only one had people living in them who were able to provide substantive Jewish learning or tradition. This is what sets Base apart from that.”

## Character of Events

- “Moishe House to me seems open to anyone, while Base now has categorized their events towards certain age groups (students, young adults, etc.). Base has more religious events and events with larger groups. Moishe House is more casual with a wider variety of events.”

## Community Culture

- “Moishe House seems more socially focused, whereas Base seems to be a better-rounded community - it's not just about hanging out, it's also all the other facets of Judaism.”
- “The ages are younger at Moishe House and they are less observant and more social. Base and Moishe house are completely different and offer vastly different things. Base is a home where you know most people or feel warm there and it's just right. You never know who's going to Moishe house which is the fun part even more so when you are single.”
- “There's much stronger continuity at Base. I have seen Moishe Houses completely change in a year (not a bad thing, just people are moving to new places). I think it also helps that the Base Rabbis are close to us in age, but not exactly our peers. This allows them to facilitate community building, friendship building, and network building, without being completely in it. I love the relationships I made with the Base Rabbis and their spouses, and I appreciate how they are more than my friends, they are also mentors.”

## Implication

Moishe House engaged Basers are social, extroverts, and comfortable in Jewish and group settings. They are active in organized Jewish life in general, and at Base in particular. They recommend Base to others and are willing to volunteer at Base.

The Moishe House/Basers are also more active in programs at Base sponsored by another group, which we assume is Moishe House. If that is the case, then a Base-Moishe House collaboration is already under way.

For Base, Moishe House is a source for involved and enthusiastic young Jewish adults. At Base, the Moishe House engaged complement their Moishe House involvement, which focuses on Jewish sociability and peer-led learning, with a similar intimate and pluralistic Jewish experience; but, one that offers a higher level of professionalism, Jewish learning and organized community. **To the degree that Base and Moishe House can work to complement one another along these lines, then partnership seems like a win-win for both.**