

May 22, 2020

OneTable was about to embark on a full impact study with Benenson Strategy Group (BSG) when COVID-19 hit. In consultation with the Research Advisory Board, OneTable pivoted to a shorter, faster survey. We wanted to know: How is the OneTable community coping during this crisis? OneTable engaged BSG to field a pulse check survey to our community, and Sacred Design Lab and Designing Empathy to dive deep with journal entries and focus groups for a small sub-group of participants. These two studies were separate, but complementary.

This resulting report is very informative and presents a picture of how challenging the virus has been in the lives of young adults. Nearly two thirds of survey participants (65%) know someone who has contracted or died from the virus.

As can be expected during a crisis, there is an increased awareness of, and positive feelings toward, participants' religious identities. Particularly important is their strong sense of being Jewish, and of incorporating Shabbat into their lives more regularly.

The report also raised some important questions for us: What resilience underlies our community's feelings of luck and gratitude? What else are they grieving? We need to identify these sources of loss to help us understand what more OneTable can offer them.

All of this just underscores to us the value — and implicit message of fostering a Jewish identity — OneTable is bringing to people's lives. We are so thankful that these participants shared with us so generously, and we are eager to share what they've taught us in their own words.

Signed,
Dr. Barbara Schneider, on behalf of the OneTable Research Advisory Board



ONETABLE

SHABBAT TOGETHER



Coronavirus Impact Study



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About This Project

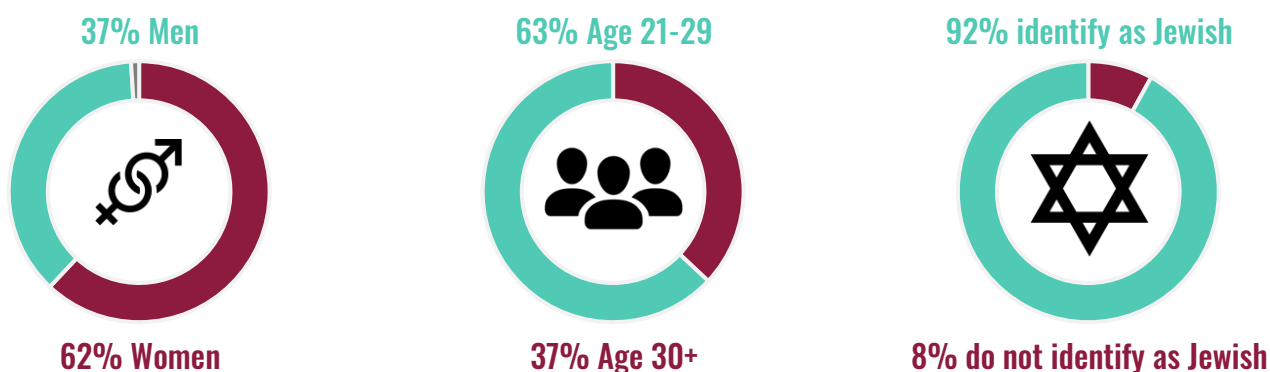
The purpose of this research is to understand how the ongoing coronavirus crisis is affecting the OneTable community. Specifically, we set out to do the following:

- ✓ Map out the **physical, social, and emotional impact** of the pandemic on OneTable users, and explore concerns around their health, job status, and the state of the economy.
- ✓ Learn about how OneTable users are **creating, using, and thinking about ritual** in their day-to-day lives right now (both secular and religious).
- ✓ Assess the role OneTable is currently playing or can play to **support its community and meet their needs for community and connection during this crisis**.

Methodology

Benenson Strategy Group conducted a 10-minute online survey of past OneTable hosts and guests between April 26 and May 13, 2020. All respondents had attended or hosted at least one OneTable dinner in the past year. Respondents were offered either a \$5 gift certificate or a chance to win a \$50 gift certificate as an incentive. Invitations were sent to 49,399 users, and 1,229 completed the survey.

Responses were weighted to be representative of the entire universe of individuals who have used OneTable in the past year. The gender, age, and geographic distribution of survey respondents were similar to OneTable's overall userbase, and minor weights were used to adjust the survey responses to fully match OneTable's audience; more significant weights were used to account for higher response rates among more engaged OneTable users, such as repeat guests and hosts.



OneTable hosts and guests offered similar perspectives on how they are doing during the pandemic and how they are celebrating Shabbat, and the results presented throughout this report include both hosts and guests, weighted to be representative of OneTable's total audience. Notable differences between groups are highlighted in the report.

1

The coronavirus pandemic is taking a toll on OneTable's community, with users feeling anxious, lonely, stressed, and overwhelmed. They **miss their friends, family and communities**, as well as the **routines** that help provide structure and meaning to their lives.

2

At the same time, OneTable users are feeling **newfound gratitude** for the relative health and comfort that many have held onto during this crisis. Two-thirds say they feel lucky, and three-quarters say they are feeling a greater appreciation for what they have in life.

3

In this challenging time, OneTable guests and hosts have been **celebrating Shabbat more than before the pandemic**—not only because it makes them feel connected to being Jewish, but because it **helps them deal with their feelings of loneliness and disconnection** during this crisis.

4

But there is a **tension in what users want from Shabbat**: they miss and want to connect with far-away friends and family, but they're also tired of endless video chats that can feel more like work than like a celebration.

5

Most already feel OneTable is doing a good job, but to continue to support users, OneTable should take a **two-pronged approach** and look for ways to both support **meaningful in-person Shabbat** and to help users plan **virtual Shabbat celebrations that feel like more than just another Zoom call**.

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Mindset: COVID-19 and the OneTable Community



COVID-19 is affecting the OneTable community in a highly personal way.

The pandemic is affecting OneTable participants in personal ways. **4%** say they have contracted the virus themselves, and nearly **two-thirds (65%) say they know someone personally who has.**

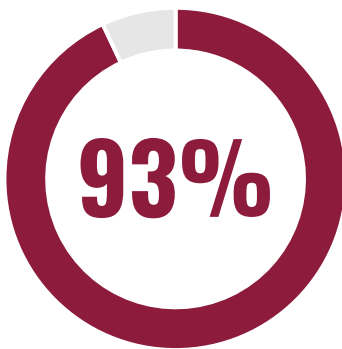
Beyond health, the pandemic has been extremely disruptive to OneTable users' home and work lives. **One in four OneTable users are living somewhere other than where they normally live** because of the virus, including even higher shares of those from the New York area and women under 30. Additionally, **one in four OneTable users have been furloughed, have had their hours or wages reduced, or have been laid off due to the virus.**

Among those still working, **93%** are working from home due to the coronavirus; among users who are students, **81%** have transitioned to online classes.

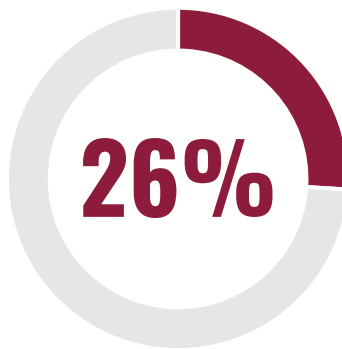
65% say they know someone personally who has contracted the coronavirus

4% say they have contracted it themselves

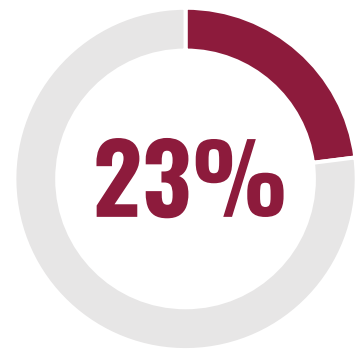
Coronavirus Impact at a Glance



are working from home due to the coronavirus



have been laid off, furloughed, or had their wages or hours reduced



are currently living somewhere other than their normal living situation

17% are living with their parents or other family

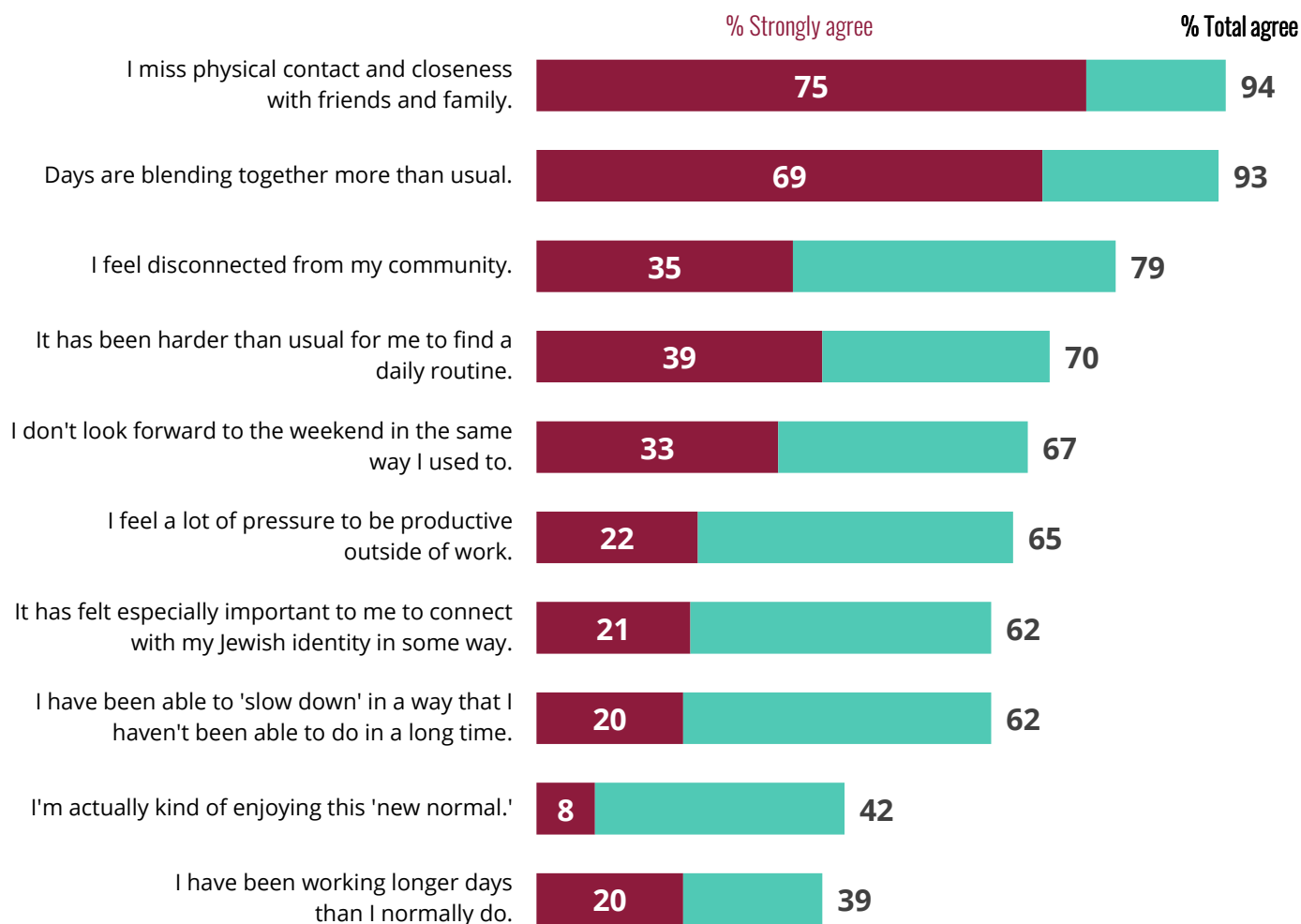
OneTable users' anxiety and stress are rooted in feelings of isolation and disorientation.

OneTable users not only miss their friends, families, and communities, but also the everyday routines that give structure to their lives. Across a range of attitudes we explored, the most widely and strongly felt was the feeling that **"I miss physical contact and closeness with friends and family,"** with 94% of users agreeing (75% strongly). In a similar vein, more than three in four agree that **"I feel disconnected from my community."**

Alongside these feelings of isolation, many of OneTable's users are also struggling with the sameness and lack of routine under quarantine. Large majorities feel that their **days are blending together;** they're finding it harder than usual to find routines; and they aren't looking forward to the weekend in the same way they usually would.

Agreement with attitudes about life during coronavirus over the past few weeks

Among all OneTable users

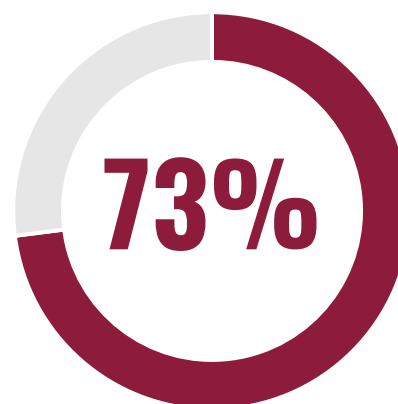


COVID-19 has disrupted users' lives, but many are also counting their blessings and finding reasons for gratitude.

While OneTable users are clearly feeling the impact of the crisis, they are **also feeling thankful for their own relative health and comfort in this moment of uncertainty.**

When presented with a list of words to describe how they're feeling, **68%** said that **"lucky"** describes them—even more than words like **"stressed"** (64%), **"frustrated"** (65%), or **"exhausted"** (51%). And on an open-ended basis, many users said they felt **"grateful"** at this moment.

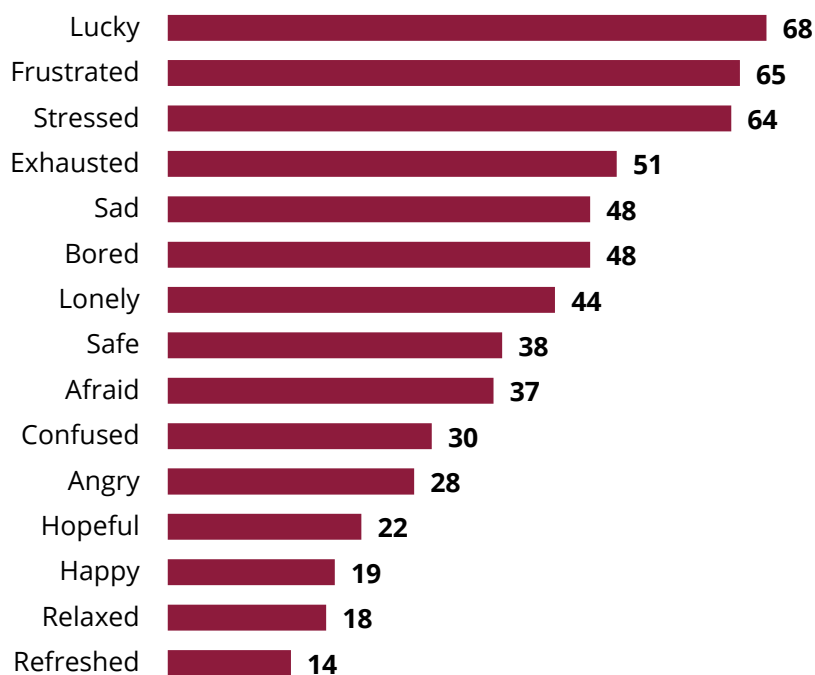
Where there is a silver lining, it is that many have found occasions for a **mindset centered on gratitude** even during this difficult time. Despite the pandemic, much of the OneTable community is focusing on what they have to be thankful for.



OF ONETABLE USERS SAY THEY ARE FEELING A GREATER APPRECIATION FOR WHAT THEY HAVE IN LIFE

How well does each word describe how you personally have been feeling over the last few weeks?

% NET 4-5/5 "describes how I'm feeling" among all OneTable users



"I taught myself to make challah. Seriously, this was a foreign concept to me until recently. I have become more self-reliant and independent. I stopped caring so much what other people think. I've prioritized my needs and values, and friendships. I have found just which aspects of specific Jewish communities serve me and my needs—for instance which rabbis "get it" and which remain clueless (so many). I've improved my push up and plank form. I've taken amazing walks. In many ways, I'm free."

"I am lucky to have a job, a comfortable home, food. I feel really blessed."

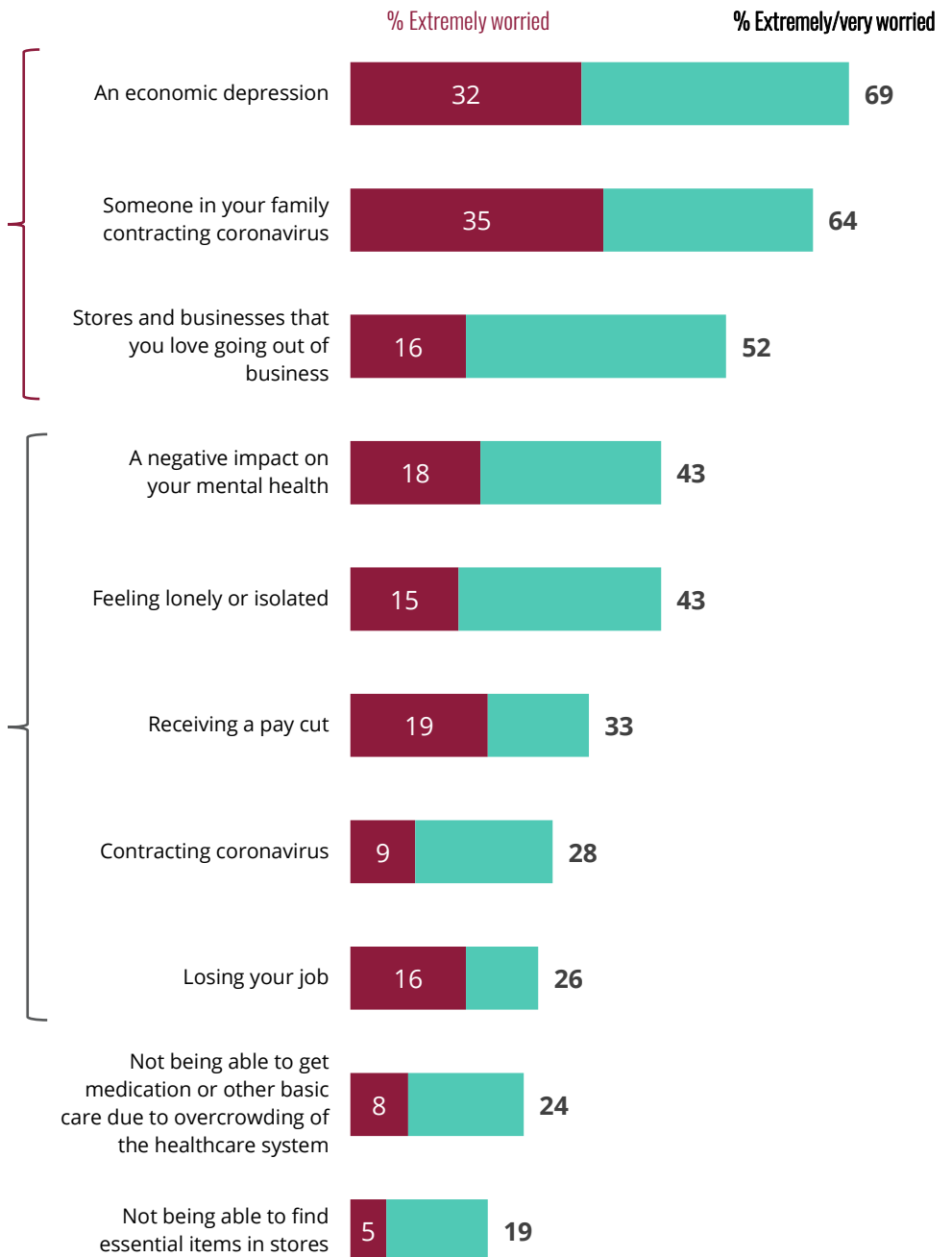
OneTable users are most worried about what COVID-19 means for the people they care about—not themselves.

How worried are you about the following coronavirus-related issues?

Among all OneTable users

Although OneTable users have felt the personal impacts of COVID-19, the things that worry them most are its impact on the people around them, not just themselves: family members getting sick, stores and businesses closing, or an economic depression that affects us all.

By contrast, personal worries—both physical and emotional—don’t command the same intense concern. These more personal worries are real, but users are much more focused on the risks facing the people around them.



The OneTable community does not believe this crisis is ending anytime soon.

Three-in-four respondents say it will be six months or more before life goes back to “normal” after the coronavirus—if it ever goes back to normal. Women, and especially women 30 and older (83%), are even more pessimistic. And **the vast majority of respondents across the OneTable population believe the worst is yet to come** in terms of the impact on society as a whole.

The OneTable community knows that the isolation, disruption, and dislocation caused by COVID-19 will be part of our lives for months or years. **With no return to normalcy in sight, users need support as they adapt to the fundamental changes in their lives and find ways to deal with the stress, anxiety, and exhaustion of life in this crisis.**

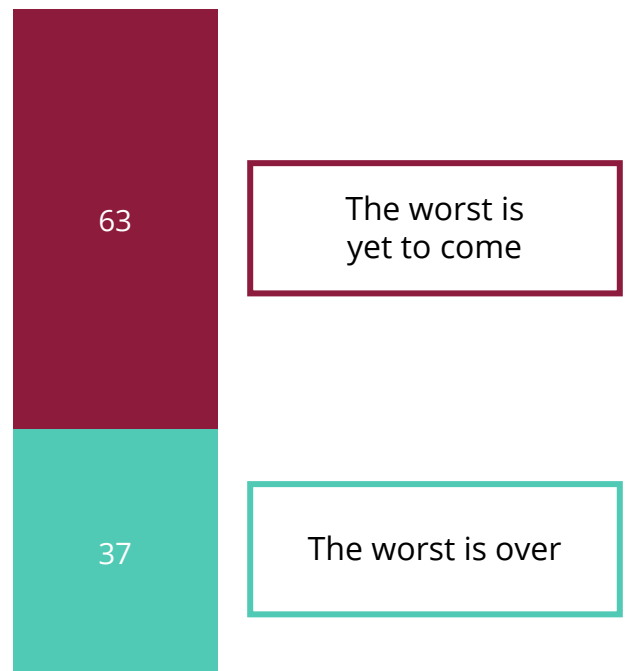
How long do you think it will be before life goes back to 'normal' after the coronavirus?

Among all OneTable users



When it comes to the impact that the coronavirus has had on our society as a whole, which comes closer to your view?

Among all OneTable users



Shabbat in Isolation, and OneTable's Role



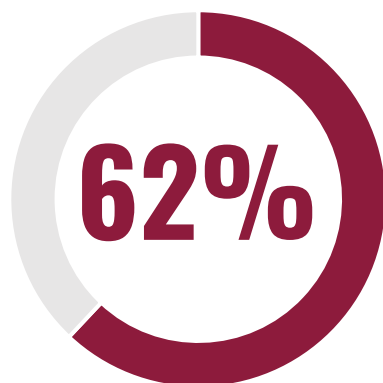
Many OneTable users are feeling a deeper connection to their Jewish identity during COVID-19.

For many of OneTable's hosts and guests, Jewish identity, culture, and engagement can be a source of comfort. **Six in ten respondents agreed that "it has felt especially important to me to connect with my Jewish identity in some way"** over the past few weeks. While this feeling is particularly pronounced among highly-engaged hosts (67%), it isn't exclusive to them—even one-time guests and those who rarely celebrate Shabbat say that connecting with Jewish identity has felt important during the pandemic (64% and 53% respectively).

However, the intensity of this feeling is relatively low, as **just 21% of users overall strongly agree** with this statement. This means that while most users feel attracted to or interested in Jewish life during this time of stress and crisis, they **may not seek it out on their own** as a source of comfort and meaning.

OneTable and other Jewish organizations have an opportunity to show how Shabbat can help people to connect with loved ones; to feel part of a wider Jewish community; and to disconnect from the work week and transition into the weekend.

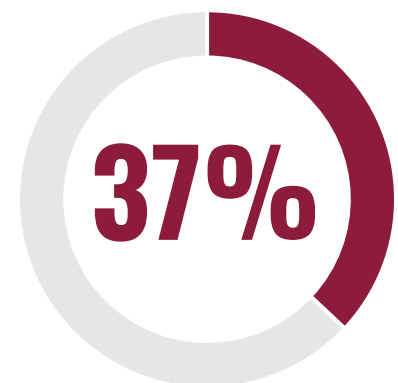
Connecting with Jewish identity and experiences during coronavirus



OF ONETABLE USERS AGREE THAT IT HAS FELT ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO ME TO CONNECT WITH MY JEWISH IDENTITY IN SOME WAY OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Since being confined to a physical space... I've connected with Judaism in new, surprising ways, from incorporating Havdalah into my weekly ritual to hosting my first seder—making it meaningful, educational, and more relevant for myself and my non-Jewish roommates."



OF ONETABLE USERS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN A JEWISH EXPERIENCE THEY WOULDN'T HAVE OTHERWISE BECAUSE OF THE CORONAVIRUS

Users of all kinds have been celebrating Shabbat more often since the start of social distancing.

OneTable users report a marked increase in Shabbat observance during the pandemic. While just over half of users said they celebrated Shabbat at least once or twice a month before the pandemic, **66% say they have observed at least once or twice since the crisis began**, and a full third are celebrating every week—nearly twice as many as before the pandemic.

This uptick is clear among both hosts and guests. Hosts celebrating every week have gone up from 21% to 41%; among guests, the increase is from 19% to 33%. And of all those who have celebrated Shabbat in some way since social distancing started, **nearly one-quarter have used OneTable to plan or support their dinner(s).**

Before the coronavirus pandemic began, how often did you have Shabbat dinner, through OneTable or otherwise?

Among all OneTable users

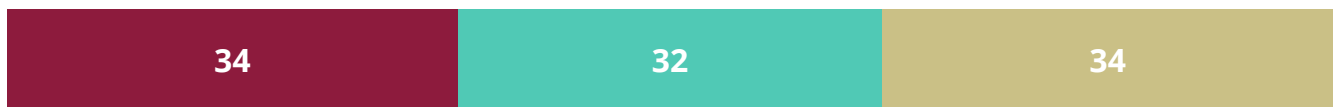
■ Every week ■ Once or twice a month ■ A few times a year ■ Less than once a year



Have you had Shabbat dinner or celebrated Shabbat in some way since social distancing because of the coronavirus started?

Among all OneTable users

■ Every week ■ Once or twice ■ Not at all



AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE CELEBRATED SHABBAT DURING THE PANDEMIC,

22% HAVE USED ONETABLE

TO SUPPORT OR PLAN THEIR DINNER, INCLUDING

30% OF PAST ONETABLE HOSTS AND 20% OF PAST ONETABLE GUESTS

OneTable users are finding diverse new ways to observe Shabbat, but they miss the ways they used to celebrate.

OneTable users are finding multiple ways to celebrate Shabbat during the pandemic, relying on both in-person and remote Shabbat dinners. Of those who have celebrated Shabbat during the pandemic, **68% have done so with others in person** since the coronavirus started, while **47% have celebrated over video chat or by phone**.

Those who **routinely celebrated Shabbat** before the virus struck have been **more likely to do so in person** during the pandemic, while **less frequent observers have done more virtual celebration**.

How did you celebrate Shabbat? Among users who have celebrated Shabbat during the pandemic

		MEN	WOMEN	<30 yrs	30+ yrs	SHABBAT MONTHLY+	SHABBAT <MONTHLY
With family, friends, or roommates that I currently live with	68	58%	73%	70%	63%	77%	51%
With family or friends over video chat or by phone	47	52%	44%	44%	52%	44%	52%
With myself at home	23	32%	17%	24%	21%	26%	18%
I celebrated Shabbat in another way	8	6%	9%	4%	15%	7%	9%

But across the board, they feel that **Shabbat during the pandemic just isn't the same**. In-person and remote celebrations during quarantine are filling important needs, but OneTable users still miss the energy, connection, and ritual of Shabbat before the virus struck.

How did your Shabbat experience in the last few weeks compare to your usual Shabbat experiences? Open-ended responses

“Shabbat was much quieter. I usually host or go to large meals, and it just didn't feel the same only being with my roommate.”

“With days blending together, it took some more effort than usual to notice and celebrate Shabbat.”

“It felt poorer. It didn't feel enriching, and it felt lonely.”

“It felt extra special to be connecting to something when there is so much uncertainty in the world. It felt nice to ground myself in something that other Jewish people worldwide are doing.”

Shabbat is fulfilling needs to slow down and connect with friends and family that go beyond the pandemic.

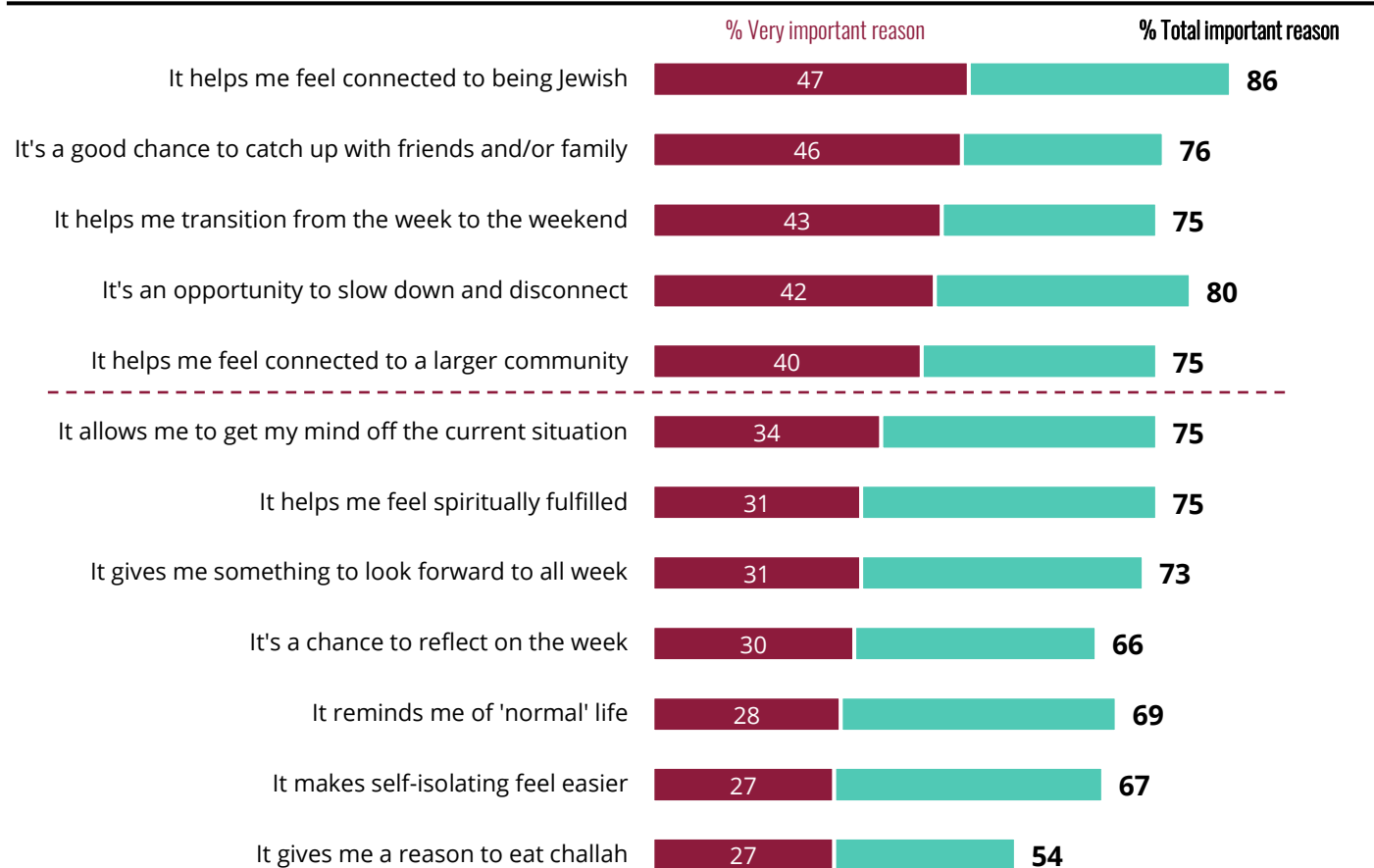
Why have they felt drawn to Shabbat? Largely to combat the exact feelings of loneliness and disconnection from family and friends that the pandemic has created. After helping them feel connected to being Jewish, the three most intensely-felt motivations to celebrate Shabbat were **to catch up with friends and family; to transition from the week to the weekend; and to slow down and disconnect.**

Importantly, these motivations to celebrate Shabbat speak to needs that predate the pandemic. **There is much less resonance to celebrating Shabbat specifically because of coronavirus**, with relatively few users strongly agreeing that reminding oneself of 'normal' life or making self-isolating easier are important reasons to celebrate Shabbat right now.

What this shows is that Shabbat is a powerful tool for connection and reflection right now, but not simply because of this uniquely challenging time. **The universal reasons for celebrating Shabbat—the ones that mattered years ago and will matter years from now—remain most important.**

Reasons to celebrate Shabbat during the pandemic

Among all OneTable users



Users' longing for connection is focused on those they already care about, not meeting new people.

These motivations to celebrate Shabbat also line up with what the OneTable audience wants and needs from their Friday nights right now. In particular, their highest priority for their Friday nights during the pandemic is connecting with a partner, friends, or family, which they identify as one of the most important reasons to celebrate Shabbat.

Notably, users are far more interested in connecting with the people they care about than they are in meeting new people. Guests are more likely than hosts to say they want to meet new people, but it is far from top-of-mind for either group.

In general, what are you looking for in your Friday nights during the coronavirus pandemic?

Among all OneTable users

		HOSTS	GUESTS
I want to connect with my partner, friends or family	72	77%	71%
I want to feel connected to my Jewish identity	53	57%	52%
I want to set aside time to do something for myself	50	52%	50%
I want to meet new people	24	16%	25%
I want to learn something new	22	21%	22%

OneTable users have not necessarily lost interest in new connections and relationships during this challenging time. But by and large, **they are responding to our new reality by seeking out familiar comforts**—the people and rituals that they know and love.

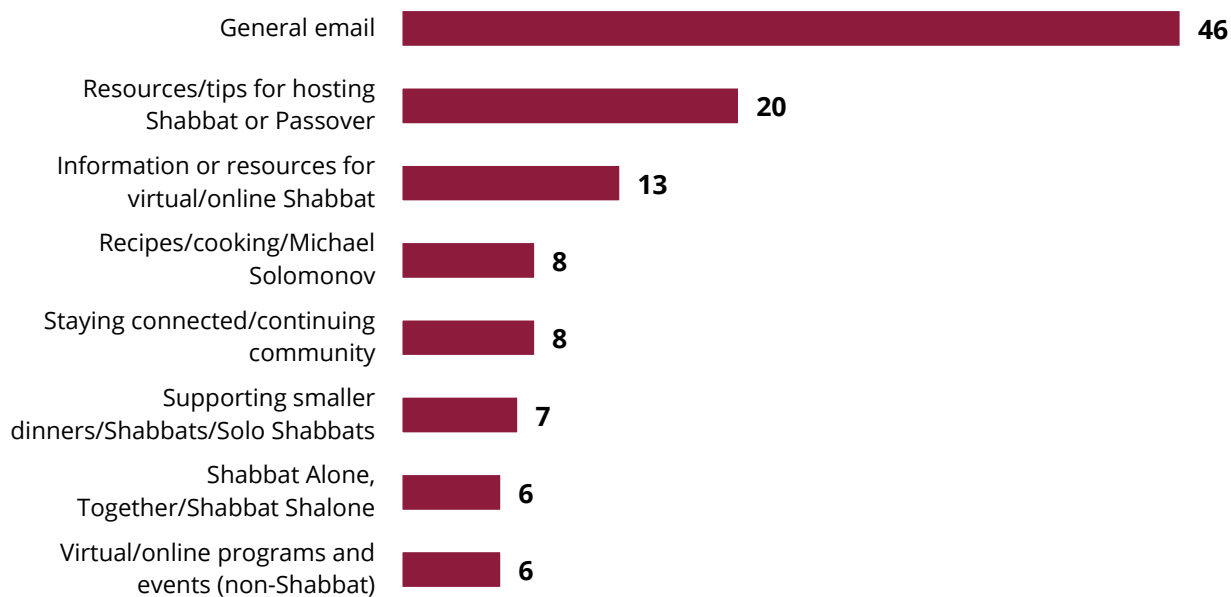
OneTable’s outreach with resources to support Shabbat during COVID-19 is getting through to many users.

Even in a hectic time full of crowded inboxes, OneTable is reaching many of its users. 68% of hosts and 54% of guests who participated in the survey say they have seen communication from OneTable about how they’ve been handling the coronavirus. Many are even familiar with specifics of what OneTable is doing to help facilitate virtual Shabbats and provide other resources for social isolation—including some specific events, such as the collaboration with Michael Solomonov.

68% OF HOSTS
54% OF GUESTS **HAVE SEEN COMMUNICATION FROM ONETABLE ABOUT HOW THEY’RE HANDLING THE CORONAVIRUS**

What did you see? What stood out? Please be as detailed as possible.

Open-ended responses among those who had seen communication



Responses with less than 5% not shown

“Emails and constant alternatives for those who still want to maintain a sense of normalcy... It definitely serves as a reminder that Judaism can be flexible.”

“I saw that they’re continuing to support virtual dinners, which is really great to see. They’re adjusting to support people in this difficult time—a lot of other support networks aren’t running right now.”

“I’m seeing a lot of Zoom programming [from OneTable]. But it’s hard to replace the in-person interactions that make me love OneTable.”

Most feel OneTable is already doing a good job, but there are unmet needs that call for a two-pronged approach to supporting both in-person and remote Shabbat.

84% of users say that OneTable has been doing an “**excellent**” or “**good**” job offering support, information, or events throughout the pandemic, including 87% of past hosts and 83% of past guests.

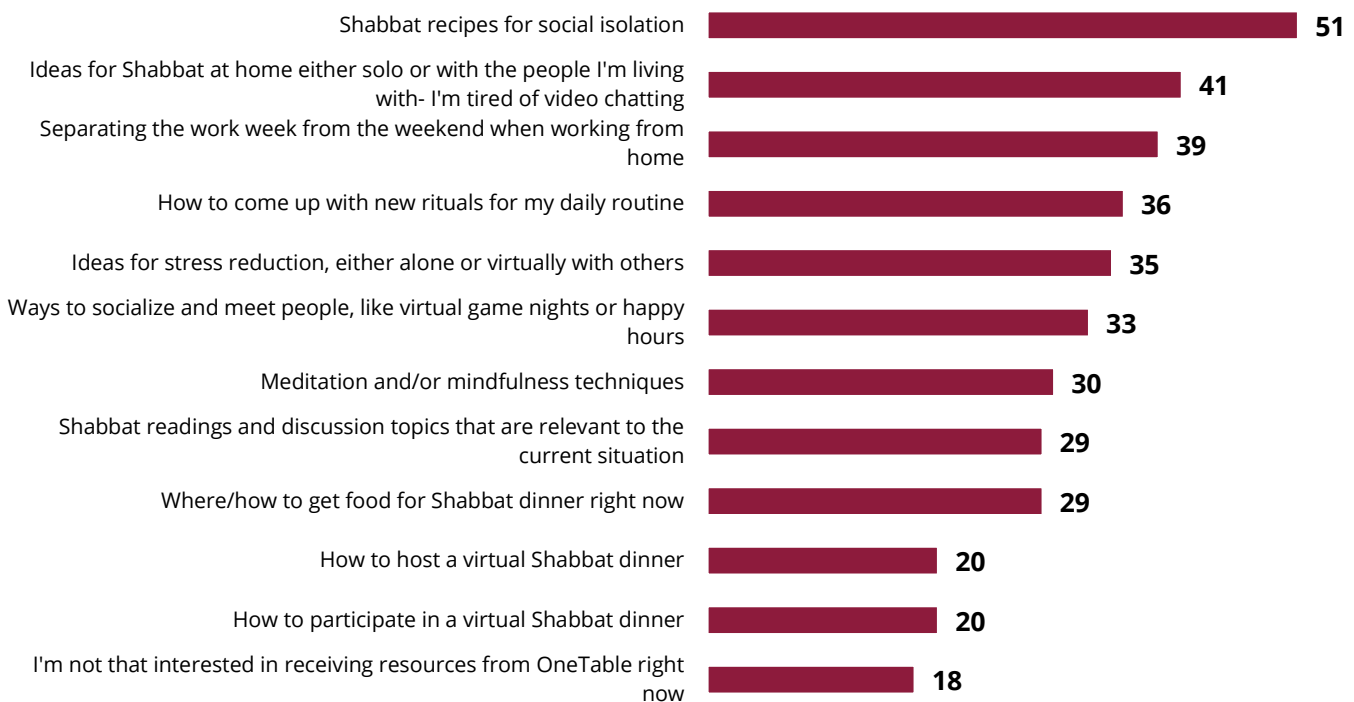
PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

There’s a **tension** among OneTable’s users: they miss their family, friends, and community and want to find a way to connect with them, but they are tired of video chats. OneTable has an opportunity to take a **two-pronged approach**:

- ✓ Offer tips and ideas for making an **in-person, at-home Shabbat** alone or with those they live with **more meaningful and worthwhile**, even if users cannot be with all of their friends.
- ✓ For those seeking Shabbat with others outside their home, **help them design or plan virtual Shabbat dinners that feel like more than just another Zoom call**—which, for many, has work associations that they’re specifically trying to take a break from.

Topics/resources users want to receive from OneTable right now

Among all OneTable users, multiple responses allowed



“I think if OneTable is able to help people in isolation create intentionality and routine, that would be so helpful.”

“As someone who doesn’t use my phone or computer on Shabbat, it has felt lonely. Ideas for rituals to fill my time in fulfilling ways without technology would be great.”

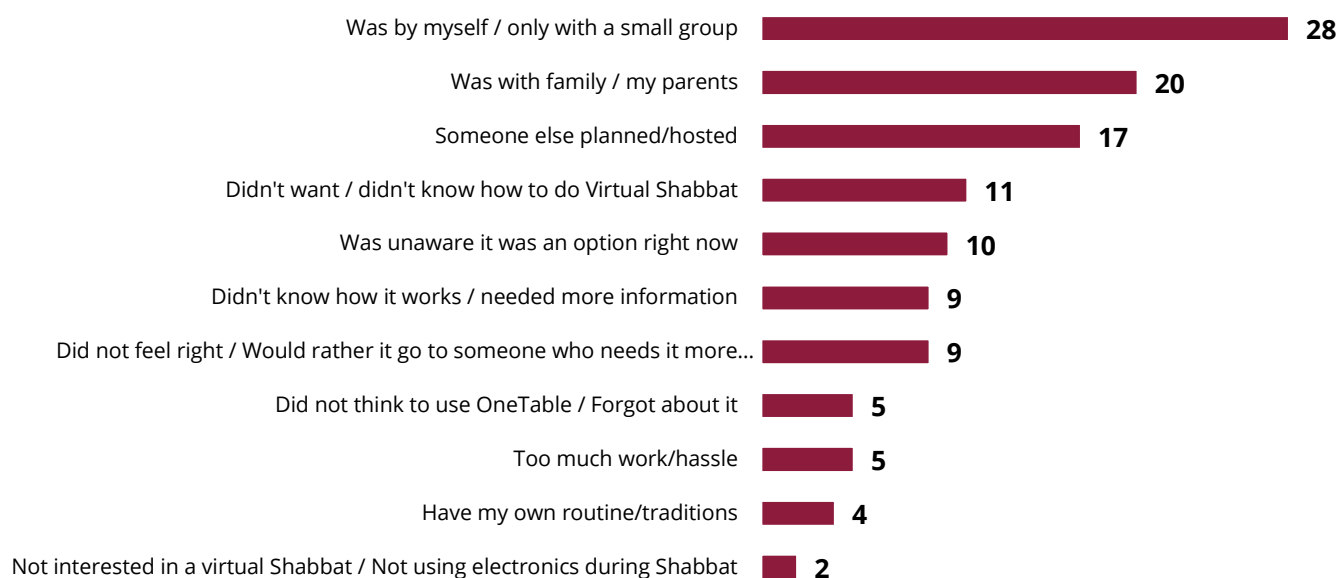
Those not already using OneTable to support Shabbat during the pandemic have questions about whether and how the program would work for them right now.

While many OneTable users are celebrating Shabbat during the pandemic, most have not used OneTable to do so—often simply because **they do not realize it's an option**. Many don't know if they qualify; aren't sure how OneTable would work if they're celebrating as a couple or family rather than hosting; or are worried about taking funds from those who may need the resources more.

To reach a wider range of users, OneTable should look to **clarify how OneTable can support Shabbat at home, not just virtual celebrations**, and highlight examples that users can relate to.

What went into deciding not to use OneTable to support or plan your dinner?

Open-ended responses among users who celebrated during the pandemic but did not use OneTable



“Since I am at home with my parents, I do Shabbat with them. I spend so much time on video calls for work that the last thing I want to do on a Friday is join a video Shabbat. I would rather get my parents to take a pause at the end of the work week than join a call.”

“It's just me and my boyfriend at home right now, so I didn't want to use OneTable funds during the pandemic. I would love to organize something afterwards, but it doesn't seem right to use these funds when I am not together with my friends right now.”

“I have been spending Shabbat dinner with family, so I have not typically been the one paying for the food. I normally love OneTable because it helps me to host and attend Shabbat dinners when I am fully supporting myself and could use the help. Right now, I feel bad taking that from others who might need it more.”

“I don't know how I could use OneTable or how it would work... when I'm home by myself, or how I would feed other people at all.”