

## THE OJOTC TOOLKIT: A PRACTITIONER’S GUIDE TO TREATING ORTHODOX JEWS

This questionnaire is designed to help practitioners gather information about Orthodox Jewish patients in order to build cultural sensitivity. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list of questions to ask every patient; questions should be selected and adapted as needed at the practitioner’s discretion.

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### KOSHER/KASHRUT/KASHRUS

If you will need or want to include eating, feeding, food shopping or meal preparation in your treatment, there are a few questions that you should ask your patient to ensure that your treatment plan will not conflict with his or her ability to keep kosher.

- Do you keep kosher?
  - ✓ If yes:
    - What does keeping kosher look like for you?
    - Are there specific kosher certifications/kosher symbols that you do/do not eat?
    - Are you comfortable with eating foods that were cooked/baked/prepared/unwrapped outside of your home?
      - In a kosher establishment?
      - In a non-kosher establishment?
    - Are you comfortable buying or preparing non-kosher food for a treatment exercise?
    - Are you comfortable using cutlery and utensils that have been used with non-kosher foods in the past?
  - Are there any “fast days” coming up? Will you be fasting?

### SHABBAT/SHABBOS/SABBATH

Every week from sunset Friday through sundown Saturday, many Orthodox Jews observe the Sabbath. During this period, no “work” is allowed - this may include the use of electricity or technology, transportation other than walking, and hygiene activities, among other things. In order to understand how your patient’s observance of the Sabbath might affect treatment, there are questions to ask.

- Do you observe the Sabbath?
- What do you call the Sabbath? (patients may call it Sabbath, Shabbat, or Shabbos)
- What does the Sabbath look like for you?
- Specific questions, depending on patient’s treatment needs:
  - ✓ Do you use technology on the Sabbath?
  - ✓ Do you travel on the Sabbath?

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- ✓ Do you cook on the Sabbath?
- ✓ Do you engage in hygiene activities on the Sabbath (i.e. bathing, brushing teeth)
- ✓ Do you take phone calls/emails/texts on the Sabbath?
- Are there any upcoming Jewish holidays?
  - ✓ If yes:
    - What does that holiday look like for you?
    - How long is it?
    - Does this holiday have the same laws as the Sabbath, or does part or all of the holiday have a weekday status?

### **MODESTY/TZNIYUS**

There is a general restriction for individuals to avoid physical contact with people of the opposite sex with the exception of close relatives. Some Orthodox Jews, particularly women, also observe modesty laws related to dress and movement. In order to avoid causing your patient discomfort, there are certain questions that can help guide your treatment.

- (If practitioner is a different gender than the patient) - Are you comfortable with me treating you, or would you prefer a therapist who shares your gender?
- Are you comfortable with physical contact with the opposite gender?
  - ✓ If no:
    - Does that change if the contact is for the purpose of treatment/healing?
- Are you comfortable participating in therapy in the gym?
  - ✓ In front of patients of the opposite gender?
  - ✓ In front of patients of the same gender?
- Do you observe modesty laws?
  - ✓ If yes:
    - Are there any adjustments related to modesty that need to be made for your treatment?
      - In a public setting (i.e. therapy gym)?
      - In a private setting?
- Are there any activities you do not wish to engage in or discuss for modesty reasons?
- (If necessary) - Are you comfortable discussing sexual dysfunction? With me? With a therapist who shares your gender?