

Bronfman Youth Fellowship Executive Summary

Summary of Allegations and Findings of Fact –

On October 18, 2021, Shayna Sragovicz posted an article on Medium [<https://medium.com/@shayna99/tell-everyone-38e313990062>] about her experiences as part of the 2017 Bronfman Youth Fellowships in Israel, Inc. (the “Fellowship”) summer program.

On October 29, 2021, I was hired by the Fellowship as an independent fact finder to conduct a complete independent fact investigation into the matter. To conduct this investigation, I interviewed Shayna Sragovicz, Becky Voorwinde, Executive Director, Jon Levinsohn, 2017 Faculty member, and several other witnesses, including other fellows, the Fellowship leadership, professionals, staff, and faculty. In addition, I examined contemporaneous documents that were created at the time of the events described in the post as well as Fellowship policies and procedures in effect at the time and subsequently amended.

After a review of all the documents and interviewing the witnesses, I find the following is more likely than not¹:

1. No one related to Bronfman abused Ms. Sragovicz physically or mentally. Further, no one related to Bronfman manipulated Ms. Sragovicz or attempted to abuse Ms. Sragovicz physically or mentally in any manner.
2. The Fellowship clearly articulated the purpose of the fellowship experience on their website and promotional materials for the 2017 fellowship.
3. The Fellowship did not encourage its fellows, including Ms. Sragovicz, to experience a “community of vulnerability.”
4. The Fellowship attempted to assist Ms. Sragovicz in making her experience a success, while recognizing that during the summer experience, Ms. Sragovicz struggled to connect to the other fellows and the program itself.
5. Ms. Sragovicz’s post reflects Ms. Sragovicz’s experiences through her own eyes even though witnesses, including other fellows, did not experience the events in a similar manner.
6. There are instances when adults made well intentioned choices, but those choices negatively impacted Ms. Sragovicz’s experience and are reflected in aspects of her post.

¹ To conduct this investigation, I used a preponderance of the evidence standard, which is the applicable legal standard in a civil matter. The preponderance of the evidence standard requires that I examine the evidence based on what is more likely than not to have occurred, or 51% more likely to have occurred.

7. After January 2018, Ms. Voorwinde, in consultation with the board, created additional training for faculty and made policy changes for the program in response to some of the events involving the 2017/2018 Fellowship experience, including Ms. Sragovicz's, to: improve the structure of the program; enhance the experience of fellows during and after the program; improve the faculty and staff training; and improve emotional support for both faculty and fellows.



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