

Pandemic-related stress holds steady, but fears and frustrations rise

July 28 2020

While the issue of how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 continues to be highly politicized, a new survey by the American Psychological Association shows a consensus among Republicans and Democrats: A majority of Republicans (65%) and Democrats (88%) report that they find preventive measures like wearing masks and physical distancing are reassuring, and agree that it is stressful to be around others when they do not take these steps (66% Republicans, 87% Democrats).

Meanwhile, the unpredictability in our nation is causing stress across [party lines](#) as well. Most adults from both parties say the current amount of uncertainty in our nation causes them stress (67% Republicans, 76% Democrats), and similar proportions cite the political climate as a significant source of stress in their life (62% Republicans, 77% Democrats).

"As our nation continues to grapple with so much adversity, it is reassuring to see that we stand united on important issues that will help our nation heal," said Arthur C. Evans Jr., Ph.D., APA's chief executive officer. "The coronavirus doesn't recognize political boundaries, so our country will be best served if we come together in a bipartisan effort in this historic fight to overcome the pandemic—a common enemy."

Stress in America 2020: Stress in the Time of COVID-19, Volume Three, was conducted by The Harris Poll from June 23 to July 6; the [online survey](#) included 3,010 adults age 18+ who reside in the United States. This is APA's third "pulse check" of the nation's stress and

mental health to gauge the impact of the pandemic and civil unrest. The previous surveys were released in May and June.

Many individuals from both parties agree that people are acting as if the coronavirus pandemic is over (75% Republicans, 86% Democrats). Although two-thirds or more of Democrats (66%) and Republicans (71%) say they are confident they can protect themselves from coronavirus once the U.S. reopens, more than half of U.S. adults (58%) wish they had more information about how to keep themselves and/or their family healthy as the U.S. reopens.

While average reported stress levels related to the coronavirus have remained generally consistent over the past three months (5.7 in June–July, 5.6 in May–June, 5.9 in April–May), the proportion of Americans reporting certain [negative feelings](#) as a result of the coronavirus has increased significantly. Specifically, Americans are more likely to report feeling frustrated (40% June–July, 31% May–June, 31% April–May), scared (24% June–July, 16% May–June, 19% April–May), and angry (18% June–July, 13% May–June, 12% April–May) than they were three months ago.

"As the consistent stress endured since the start of the pandemic evolves into more intense negative emotions, we are reminded that the mental health of our nation continues to suffer severe consequences as a result of the trauma of the times," said Evans. "The path toward recovery will take time and needs to be addressed on a systemwide level by increasing access to [mental health](#) services and supports and on an individual basis through self-care."

As infection rates continue to increase in a majority of states, just under two in three Americans (66%) say getting COVID-19 is a significant source of stress in their lives, which is significantly more than said the same in May–June (61%). Furthermore, the regional representation of

this stressor seems to mirrors the spread of the virus, with the proportion of adults citing this stressor generally rising across the Midwest, South, and West (Midwest: 63% June–July, 57% May–June, 56% April–May; South: 68% June–July, 66% May–June, 65% April–May; West: 68% June–July, 56% May–June, 64% April–May), while declining in former epicenter in the Northeast (61% June–July, 61% May–June, 70% April–May).

The survey also provided updates on the state of stress related to aspects of racial injustice. Sixty percent of Americans say police violence toward minorities is a significant source of stress. This number has nearly doubled since 2016 when fewer than 36% said the same in that year's annual Stress in America Survey¹ when APA first started tracking this data point. Moreover, nearly two-thirds (64%) of Americans report the government response to the protests following the death of George Floyd as a significant source of [stress](#). On a positive note, more than three in five U.S. adults (63%) agree the current movement against systemic racism and police brutality is going to lead to meaningful change in America.

More information: Stress in America 2020: Stress in the Time of COVID-19, Volume Three. [www.apa.org/news/press/release...
ess/2020/report-july](http://www.apa.org/news/press/release...ess/2020/report-july)

Provided by American Psychological Association

Citation: Pandemic-related stress holds steady, but fears and frustrations rise (2020, July 28) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-07-pandemic-related-stress-steady-frustrations.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.