

APA PRESS RELEASE:

New Poll: COVID-19 Impacting Mental Well-Being: Americans Feeling Anxious, Especially for Loved Ones; Older Adults are Less Anxious

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Nearly half of Americans (48%) are anxious about the possibility of getting coronavirus, COVID-19, and nearly four in ten Americans (40%) are anxious about becoming seriously ill or dying from coronavirus, but far more Americans (62%) are anxious about the possibility of family and loved ones getting coronavirus. This is according to a new national poll released today by the American Psychiatric Association (APA).

More than one-third of Americans (36%) say coronavirus is having a serious impact on their mental health and most (59%) feel coronavirus is having a serious impact on their day-to-day lives. Most adults are concerned that the coronavirus will have a serious negative impact on their finances (57%) and almost half are worried about running out of food, medicine, and/or supplies. Two-thirds of Americans (68%) fear that the coronavirus will have a long-lasting impact on the economy.

“The stress and anxiety caused by the pandemic can and is having an effect on people’s physical and mental health,” said APA President Bruce Schwartz, M.D. “During this time, it is important to do what we can to maintain self-care and manage the stress. I would suggest this for everyone coping at home as well as those who are still in their workplaces by necessity, especially the health care professionals on the front lines of this pandemic.”

Most Americans (68%) feel knowledgeable about coronavirus and preventing its spread. Americans are evenly split on whether people are overreacting or being overly cautious when it comes to coronavirus. About four in ten adults (39%) feel people are overreacting and nearly the same number do not feel that people are overreacting. Just roughly 21% are uncertain. About one in three adults is concerned about not being able to access tests and health care if needed.

Most people report that, despite the high levels of anxiety resulting from coronavirus, they have not yet felt significant behavioral impacts. Only 19% report having trouble sleeping, 8% have been consuming more alcohol or other drugs/substances, and 12% say they have been fighting more with partner or loved ones (because of being stuck at home together). Slightly more, nearly one in four people (24%), say they have had trouble concentrating on other things because they are thinking about coronavirus.

The poll also indicated a high level of uncertainty. About one in five adults said they were neutral on many issues, such as feeling knowledgeable about coronavirus and current guidelines, about whether people are overreacting, and about the current and potential impacts of coronavirus on their health and finances.

“The poll highlights both the anxiety caused by the pandemic and the need for clear, consistent communications on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19,” said APA CEO and Medical Director Saul Levin, M.D., M.P.A. “In the disruption COVID-19 is causing, everyone needs to make sure they are taking the time to take care of their own physical and mental health, alongside with their families, friends and work colleagues. Social isolation can be prevented by taking the time to use social media, letters, or simply the phone to communicate with loved ones and friends, particularly those we haven’t been in touch with over the years as we would have liked. Together, we will get through this.”

These findings are from an American Psychiatric Association-sponsored poll conducted online via a Porter Novelli PN View: 360 survey using Engine’s online CARAVAN® Omnibus survey. The surveys were collected from a nationally representative sample of 1,004 adults during the period March 18-19, 2020. The margin of error is +/- 3.1% at the 95% confidence level.