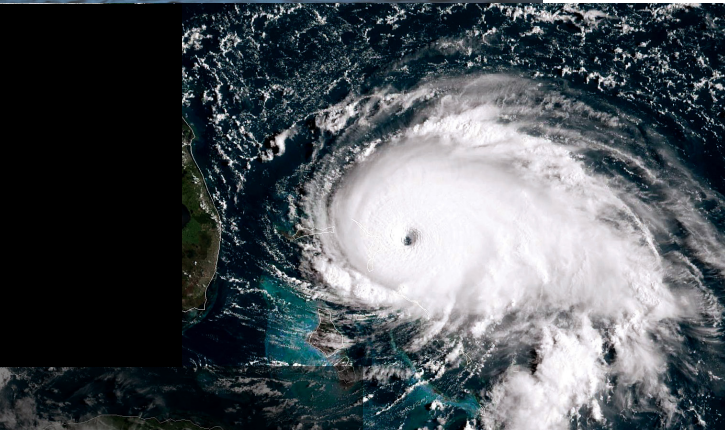




AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

STRESS IN AMERICA™ 2019





STRESS IN AMERICA™ 2019

Americans Feeling Stressed About Presidential Election, Health Care and Mass Shootings

Health care, the election, and mass shootings are significant sources of stress for Americans. While a full year remains before Americans will go to the polls in 2020, many report stress related to issues in the news, including the presidential election—which more Americans say is a cause of stress now than said the same in the lead-up to the 2016 election.

In its 13th annual *Stress in America*™ survey, the American Psychological Association (APA) finds that while overall stress levels have not changed significantly over the past few years, the proportion of Americans who say they are experiencing stress about specific issues has risen over the past year. The Harris Poll conducted this year's survey on behalf of APA from Aug. 1 to Sept. 3, 2019; the online survey included 3,617 adults ages 18 and older living in the U.S.

As political candidates continue to debate how to address key issues such as health care and mass shootings in the U.S., this year's survey results show that a majority of adults experience significant stress around these topics. Regarding the current political climate, 62% of adults say it is a source of stress. Nearly seven in 10 adults (69%) say that health care is a significant source of stress, while more than seven in 10 adults (71%) say mass shootings are a significant source of stress—up from 62% in 2018.

REPORTS OF STRESS ABOUT HEALTH CARE AND MASS SHOOTINGS NEARLY EQUAL

% reporting significant source of stress



MASS SHOOTINGS

71%



HEALTH CARE

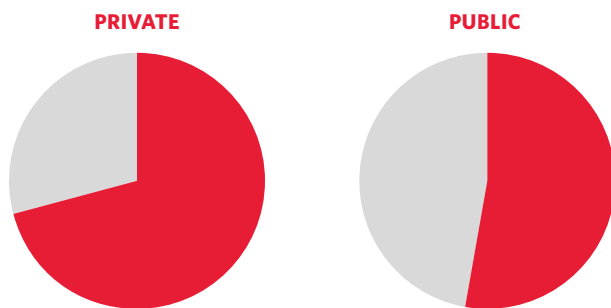
69%

HEALTH CARE IS A COMMON STRESSOR FOR AMERICANS

Many Americans say health care costs play a role in their health care-related stress. Among adults who report that they feel stress about health care at least sometimes, 64% say the cost of health care is a cause of stress, with those who are privately insured¹ being more likely than those with public insurance to say so (71% vs. 53%). Furthermore, almost two in five adults say their family has struggled to pay for health care services (38%) or that they personally have experienced this struggle (38%).

STRESS ABOUT THE COST OF HEALTH CARE*

Private vs. Public Insurance



71 percent of those with private insurance say the cost of health care causes them stress.

53 percent of those with public insurance say the cost of health care causes them stress.

*Among those who stress about health care at least sometimes.

People are not only stressed about paying for health care today; many feel stress when considering the future as well. More than half of adults (55%) worry they will not be able to pay for the health care services they may need in the future. Three in five of those with private insurance (60%) have this concern, compared with less than half of those with public insurance (48%).

The survey also finds that nearly two-thirds of Hispanic adults worry they will not be able to pay for health care services they may need in the future (65%). Nearly the same proportion of Hispanic adults worry they will not be able to access the health care services they may need in the future (64%). For White, Black and Native American adults, these are prevalent concerns as well, though not to the same extent as they are for Hispanic adults. Around half of adults from these groups worry about paying for services they may need (53% of White adults, 53% of Black adults and 49% of Native American adults), while approximately the same proportion express worry about being able to access needed health care services in the future (55% of Black adults, 52% of Native American adults and 50% of White adults).

Younger adults are also more likely to express concern than members of their parents' and grandparents' generations about both paying for and accessing health care services. Gen Z adults are the most likely to say they worry about paying for or accessing needed health care services in the future (65% each). Millennials and Gen Xers worry at nearly the same rates about paying for care in the future (64% and 61%, respectively) and accessing services in the future (59% and 58%, respectively). Older generations are less likely to express concern about paying for care in the future (49% of Boomers and 28% of older adults) and accessing necessary care in the future (45% of Boomers and 30% of older adults).

Younger adults are more likely to express concern than members of their parents' and grandparents' generations about both paying for and accessing health care services.

Finally, the survey results reveal how adults who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) feel on this big issue. LGBT adults are much more likely than non-LGBT individuals to worry about paying for (71% vs. 54%) or accessing (73% vs. 51%) health care services they may need in the future.



¹ For the purposes of this survey, the types of insurance are defined as follows: "Private insurance" refers to health insurance that a person receives through a current or former employer, a family member's employer, an individual insurance policy bought by the individual or their family, or insurance provided to students. "Public insurance" refers to Medicare, Medicaid or veteran's benefits.



MASS SHOOTINGS: MOST COMMON SOURCE OF STRESS IN 2019

Mass shootings are the most prevalent source of stress cited by U.S. adults in 2019, with a majority of all adults and those from different racial and ethnic groups saying mass shootings are a significant source of stress in their life. For both the general population and all racial and ethnic groups, the percentage of those identifying mass shootings as a stressor has increased from 2018.

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While more than six in 10 adults (62%) stated that mass shootings were a significant source of stress in 2018, this figure increased to more than seven in 10 adults (71%) in 2019. Hispanic adults are the most likely in both years to cite mass shootings as a significant source of stress (84% in 2019 and 76% in 2018), with Black adults being the next most likely (79% in 2019 and 68% in 2018). However, the percentage of Asian adults who identify mass shootings as a significant source of stress increased the most (77% in 2019 vs. 62% in 2018).

More than seven in 10 Native American adults (71%) report mass shootings as a source of stress in 2019, as do about two-thirds of White adults (66%), both of which are increases over 2018 (58% of Native American adults and 56% of White adults).

REPORTS OF MASS SHOOTINGS AS A SIGNIFICANT SOURCE OF STRESS RISES ACROSS ALL RACES

■ 2019 ■ 2018

Hispanic



Black



Asian



Native American



White



MORE SOURCES OF STRESS IN THE NEWS

Climate Change, Safety, Abortion Laws and Immigration

The proportion of adults who cite climate change/global warming as a significant source of stress has increased significantly since last year's survey, from 51% in 2018 to 56% in 2019. While one in two White adults (50%) say climate change/global warming is a significant source of stress, this issue is a more prevalent stressor for individuals from other ethnic groups, including 70% of Hispanic adults, 62% of Asian adults and 61% of Black adults.

Key issues relating to safety and security also are identified as a significant source of stress more than in previous years. Although just more than half of adults in 2017 (51%) said violence and crime was a significant source of stress, more than three in five listed this as a stressor in 2018 (61%) and say the same in 2019 (64%). Three-fifths of adults (60%) report that acts of terrorism are a source of stress for them in 2019, an increase from 55% in 2018 and 47% in 2017. And with numerous high-profile news stories of sexual harassment occurring over the past few years, more adults are reporting that widespread sexual harassment is a source of stress, with 45% identifying this as a stressor in 2019, compared with 39% in 2018.

More than four in 10 adults (44%) identify the changing abortion laws as a significant source of stress. When looking at who feels the most stressed by the change in laws, the survey finds that Americans who live at or below the poverty level are more likely than those above the poverty level to say that changing abortion laws are a source of stress (50% vs. 41%).

As it has for several years, immigration remains in the headlines and continues to be a stressor in people's lives. Nearly half of adults (48%) report that immigration is a significant source of stress in their life, and an even larger percentage (58%) wish there were more they could do to help immigrants. Immigration is a more prevalent stressor for Hispanic adults (66%) than it is for Asian (52%), Native American (48%), Black (46%) or White (43%) adults.

STRESS RELATED TO ACTS OF TERRORISM, CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON THE RISE

■ 2019 ■ 2018

Acts of Terrorism

60%

55%

Climate Change/Global Warming

56%

51%

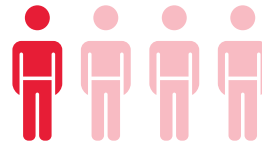
Widespread Sexual Harassment

45%

39%

AMERICANS FEELING THE IMPACT OF DISCRIMINATION

This year's survey also reveals significant increases in the number of adults who identify another source of stress in their life: discrimination. For one-quarter of adults (25%), discrimination is a significant source of stress in 2019. This proportion continues a rising trend from 2018 (24%), 2017 (21%), 2016 (20%) and 2015 (20%).

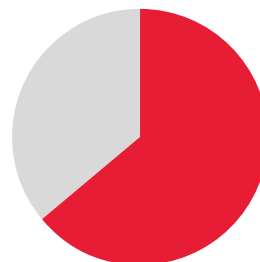


For one-quarter of adults, discrimination is a significant source of stress.

The majority of people of color (63%) say that discrimination has hindered them from having a full and productive life, with a similar proportion of LGBT adults (64%) expressing the same sentiment. When looking at the responses of people of color, this year's results represent a significant increase from 2015, the last time this set of questions was asked, when less than half (49%) said that discrimination prevented them from having a full and productive life.

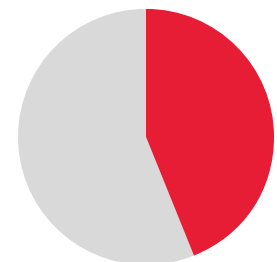
DISCRIMINATION INTERFERING WITH HAVING A FULL AND PRODUCTIVE LIFE

ADULTS WHO IDENTIFY AS LGBT



64 percent of adults who identify as LGBT say discrimination has interfered with their having a full and productive life.

ALL ADULTS



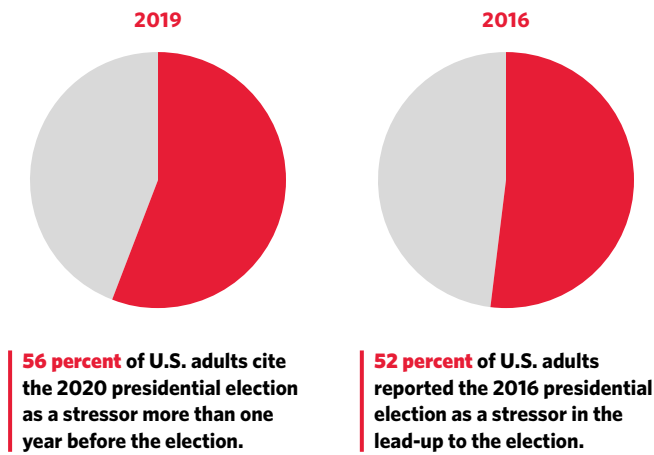
44 percent of all adults say discrimination has interfered with their having a full and productive life.

When asked how often certain acts of discrimination happen in their day-to-day life, about half of adults say they have ever been treated with less courtesy or respect than others (52%) or that people have acted as if they think they are not smart (51%). While a majority of both Black adults (68%) and Hispanic adults (58%) report that they have ever been treated with less courtesy or respect than others, less than half of White adults (44%) say the same. Similar proportions of those in each racial group say the same when asked whether someone has ever acted as if they think they are not smart (66% of Black adults, 58% of Hispanic adults and 44% of White adults).

MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT THE COUNTRY'S PRESENT AND FUTURE

As voters prepared to go to the polls in 2016, people across the country expressed feeling significant stress about that year's presidential election. When APA conducted its survey in August 2016—three months before the election—more than half of adults (52%) reported that the election was a significant source of stress in their lives. Today, more than a year before Americans return to the polls to vote for president, election-related stress is even more prevalent, with 56% of adults identifying the upcoming election as a stressor.

STRESS ABOUT THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION



More than half of Americans have said that this is the lowest point in our nation's history that they can remember.

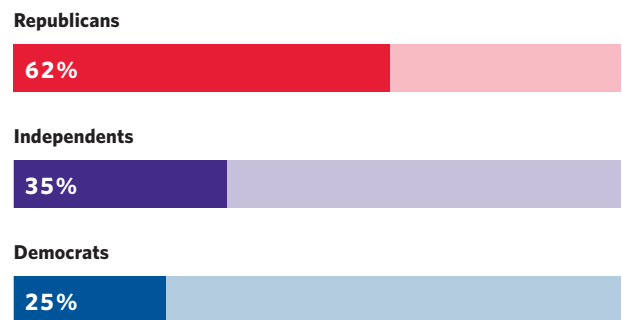
Since APA first asked in 2017 about how people feel about this point in our country's history, more than half of Americans have said that this is the lowest point in our nation's history that they can remember (56% in 2018 and 59% in 2017). This year, the same holds true, with more than half of adults (56%) agreeing with this statement. Black adults are most likely to say this is the lowest point in the nation's history that they remember (72%), but at least half of adults in all other racial and ethnic groups say the same (58% of Hispanic adults, 55% of Native American adults, 53% of White adults and 53% of Asian adults). Half of Asian adults (50%) and 45% of Hispanic adults say they feel the country is on the path to being stronger than ever; however, only around one-third of White adults (38%), Black adults (32%) and Native American adults (31%) view the country's path in the same positive light.

Additionally, U.S. adults report mixed feelings about the country's future. While fewer than two in five adults (38%) feel the country is on the path to being stronger than ever, nearly three-quarters (73%) feel hopeful about their future. Men (43%) are more likely than women (35%) to say they feel the country is on the path to being stronger than ever, while women are significantly more likely than men to say that this is the lowest point in the country's history that they remember (60% of women vs. 52% of men).

At least three in five members of every generation express that they feel hopeful about their future, though Gen Z adults (62%) are the least likely to feel this way. Comparatively, 81% of older adults and around three in four Boomers (74%), Millennials (74%) and Gen Xers (73%) feel hopeful about their future. Individuals who do not identify as LGBT are significantly more likely than those who are members of the LGBT community to report that they feel hopeful for their future (75% vs. 62%).

Individuals with different political affiliations have divergent opinions on many issues, including sources of stress and how they feel about the country's future. A majority of Democrats (71%) say the upcoming election is a significant source of stress, compared with just more than half of independents (53%) and less than half of Republicans (48%) who say the same. More than three in five Republicans (62%) feel the country is on the path to being stronger than ever, while much smaller proportions of both independents (35%) and Democrats (25%) share that optimism.

PEOPLE WHO FEEL THE COUNTRY IS ON THE PATH TO BEING STRONGER THAN EVER



People with different political affiliations differ not only with regard to their feelings on the country's path to the future but also on their feelings about the present. Nearly three-quarters of Democrats (74%) say this is the lowest point in our nation's history that they remember, while fewer than two in five Republicans (39%) view the present in the same light. The proportion of independents who regard this as our country's lowest point falls somewhere in between the two (52%).

THE STRESS OF STAYING INFORMED

The 2019 survey also provides insight into how Americans view the media. More than seven in 10 adults (72%) agree with the statement that the “media blow things out of proportion,” and more than half (54%) say that they want to stay informed about the news but following it causes them stress. In response to this dilemma, some Americans may be changing their news-following habits. Nearly two in five adults (39%) report that they have taken steps over the past year to reduce their news consumption.

When assessing how different age groups view the news, the survey finds generational differences, with around three in five Gen Z adults (61%) and Millennials (60%) saying they want to stay informed but that following the news causes them stress, while more than half of Gen Xers (55%) and half of Boomers (50%) express the same sentiment. However, just more than one-third of older adults (36%) say they want to stay informed but that doing so causes them stress.



54 percent of Americans say that they want to stay informed about the news but following it causes them stress.



More than seven in 10 adults agree with the statement that the “media blow things out of proportion.”

LITTLE CHANGE IN OVERALL STRESS LEVELS

The 2019 survey finds—as recent surveys have—that personal sources of stress and Americans’ stress levels remain relatively constant year to year.

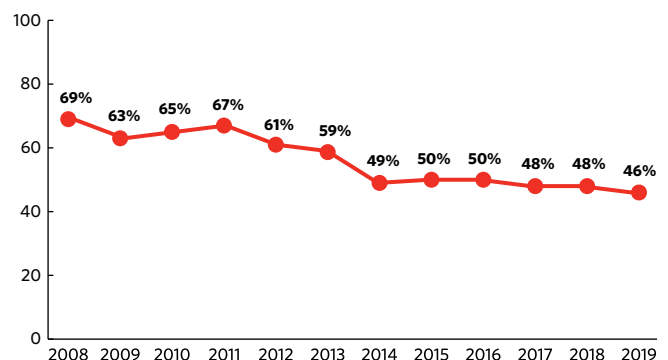
When asked about their personal stressors, around six in 10 adults identify work (64%) and money (60%) as significant sources of stress, making them the most commonly mentioned personal stressors. Adults citing the economy as a significant source of stress declined slightly from 2018 (48%) to 2019 (46%), though the proportions in both years represent a large decrease from the highest level reported, when nearly seven in 10 adults (69%) identified the economy as a significant stressor in 2008.

Although Americans believe a healthy stress level is on average 3.8 (on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is “little or no stress” and 10 is “a great deal of stress”), the average stress level they report experiencing during the past month is 4.9. Both the perceived healthy stress level and the average reported stress level are on par with the levels in 2018 (3.9 for healthy level of stress and 4.9 for average reported level during the past month). When looking by generation, Gen Z adults report the highest average stress level (5.8), followed by Gen Xers (5.5) and Millennials (5.4); Boomers and older adults have significantly lower average stress levels comparatively (4.2 for Boomers and 3.0 for older adults).

With Americans experiencing higher average levels of stress than they feel is healthy, many also feel they need more emotional support. Nearly three in five adults (59%) say they could have used more emotional support than they received in the past year, marking the highest proportion of adults who indicate this since APA first asked this question in 2014.

ECONOMY AS A STRESSOR CONTINUES TO DECLINE

Percentage of people who cite the economy as a significant source of stress



2019 STRESS IN AMERICA™

SURVEY METHODS

The 2019 *Stress in America*™ survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of the American Psychological Association between Aug. 1 and Sept. 3, 2019, among 3,617 adults age 18+ who reside in the U.S. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Data were weighted to reflect their proportions in the population based on the 2018 Current Population Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau. Weighting variables included age by gender, race/ethnicity, education, region, household income, and time spent online. Hispanic adults were also weighted for acculturation, taking into account respondents' household language as well as their ability to read and speak in English and Spanish. Country of origin (U.S./non-U.S.) was also included for Hispanic and Asian subgroups. Weighting variables for Gen Z adults (ages 18 to 22) included education, age by gender, race/ethnicity, region, household income, size of household, and employment status. Propensity score weighting was used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online. A propensity score allows researchers to adjust for attitudinal and behavioral differences between those who are online versus those who are not, those who join online panels versus those who do not, and those who responded to this survey versus those who did not. Because the sample is based on those who were invited and agreed to participate in research panels, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. A full methodology is available on request.

SAMPLE SIZE

Throughout this report, different segments of adults are discussed. Demographic sub-groups of adults include:

- Gender: Male (n=1,438); Female (n=2,164)
- Race/Ethnicity: White (n=1,203); Hispanic (n=814); Black (n=809); Asian (n=511); Native American (n=207); People of color (n=2,414)
- Generation: Gen Z adults (18–22 years old) n=343; Millennials (23–40 years old) n=1,191; Xers (41–54 years old) n=745; Baby Boomers (55–73 years old) n=1,144; Older adults (age 74 or older) n=194
- Poverty level: At or below 200% of the annual federal poverty guidelines (n=1,209); More than 200% of the annual poverty guidelines (n=2,246)
- LGBT Status: LGBT (n=355); Non-LGBT (n=3,175)
- Political Party Affiliation: Democrat (n=1,494); Republican (n=756); Independent (n=732)
- Type of Insurance: Private (n=1,699); Public (n=1,427)

STRESS IN AMERICA

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