



95% of College Students Report Negative Mental Health Symptoms Due to the Pandemic

Almost Half (48%) Say Mental Health Effects Have Affected Their Education

April 12, 2021 (Seattle, WA)- According to a new survey from BestColleges.com, 95% of undergraduates nationwide have experienced negative mental health symptoms as a result of circumstances caused by COVID-19. Nearly half (48%) of college students who learned remotely over the past year believe their worsened mental health has directly affected their education.

Click here for more information:

<https://www.bestcolleges.com/research/college-mental-health-impacts-from-covid-19/>

“College years are a pivotal time for young adults as they pursue their chosen academic field and have the opportunity to gain independence and learn more about themselves” said Melissa Venable, Ph.D., Education Advisor for BestColleges.com. “As schools make plans to return to normal operations this fall, they should do all they can to support students as they experience a range of mental health concerns.”

Almost half (46%) of student respondents experienced social isolation and loneliness; increased anxiety (45%); and struggles with laziness, focus, and routine (44%) due to the pandemic. Other significant pandemic-related challenges include loss of sleep (40%), decreased physical activity (39%), and unhealthy eating habits (39%).

The state of students’ mental health has impacted their academics, with 52% reporting they have experienced difficulty completing homework, and 33% saying the pandemic challenged their ability to maintain a required GPA. Students’ broader college experience has also suffered, with 56% struggling to participate in class, meet people, and develop relationships.

With changes implemented by colleges across the country over the past year, students were unable to participate in typical on-campus social activities including sporting events (51%), school traditions (49%), and social groups including sororities and fraternities (43%). With less going on at school, significant pandemic-related changes to students' lives include increased screen time (56%) and more time indoors (46%).

To deal with ongoing stressors, self-care is popular among college students with nearly all (98%) reporting they are taking care of themselves at this time. The top three forms of self-care students engage in include hobbies such as reading or crafting (52%), physical exercise (44%), and activities outdoors (38%).

Nearly all students surveyed (97%) reported an impact to their lives outside of school. About 1 in 5 students experienced the death of a friend or family member (21%), 26% experienced financial difficulties, and 25% saw a decrease in household income in the past year. Despite hardships caused by the pandemic, 54% of student respondents feel hopeful due to increased COVID-19 testing and the ongoing rollout of vaccines.

"Students have felt the effects of the pandemic in every aspect of their lives — academically and socially, at home, and at work. It's encouraging to know that the majority are optimistic about the future," added Dr. Venable.

Methodology

The survey was conducted from February 24th to March 3rd of 2021. Student respondents were fielded by Lucid LLC. Survey participants included 702 college students nationwide that experienced remote learning over the past year. Respondents were 18-25 years of age, enrolled at a college or university, and pursuing an associate or bachelor's degree. The respondents for the survey were screened by various quality checks, including systems like Relevant ID, and responses were manually reviewed to ensure consistency and accuracy.

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