

APA Stress in America survey: US at 'lowest point we can remember'

November 1 2017



Credit: George Hodan/public domain

Nearly two-thirds of Americans (63 percent) say the future of the nation is a very or somewhat significant source of stress, slightly more than perennial stressors like money (62 percent) and work (61 percent), according to the American Psychological Association's report, *Stress in America: The State of Our Nation*.

More than half of Americans (59 percent) said they consider this the lowest point in U.S. history that they can remember—a figure spanning every generation, including those who lived through World War II and Vietnam, the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

When asked to think about the nation this year, nearly six in 10 adults (59 percent) report that the current social divisiveness causes them [stress](#). A majority of adults from both political parties say the future of the nation is a source of stress, though the number is significantly higher for Democrats (73 percent) than for Republicans (56 percent) and independents (59 percent).

"We're seeing significant stress transcending party lines," said Arthur C. Evans Jr., PhD, APA's [chief executive officer](#). "The uncertainty and unpredictability tied to the future of our nation is affecting the health and well-being of many Americans in a way that feels unique to this period in recent history."

The most common issues causing stress when thinking about the nation are health care (43 percent), the economy (35 percent), trust in government (32 percent), hate crimes (31 percent) and crime (31 percent), wars/conflicts with other countries (30 percent), and [terrorist attacks](#) in the United States (30 percent). About one in five Americans cited unemployment and low wages (22 percent), and climate change and environmental issues (21 percent) as issues causing them stress.

Adults also indicated that they feel conflicted between their desire to stay informed about the news and their view of the media as a source of stress. While most adults (95 percent) say they follow the news regularly, 56 percent say that doing so causes them stress, and 72 percent believe the media blows things out of proportion.

"With 24-hour news networks and conversations with friends, family and

other connections on social media, it's hard to avoid the constant stream of stress around issues of national concern," said Evans. "These can range from mild, thought-provoking discussions to outright, intense bickering, and over the long term, conflict like this may have an impact on health. Understanding that we all still need to be informed about the news, it's time to make it a priority to be thoughtful about how often and what type of media we consume."

The survey also found that 51 percent of Americans say that the state of the nation has inspired them to volunteer or support causes they value. More than half (59 percent) have taken some form of action in the past year, including 28 percent who signed a petition and 15 percent who boycotted a company or product in response to its social or political views or actions.

Among general findings, as is the case every year since the survey began, women reported significantly higher stress levels than men (5.1 vs 4.4 on a 10-point scale, where 1 is "little or no stress" and 10 is "a great deal of stress"). Black and Hispanic men also reported a significantly higher average [stress level](#) (4.8) than white men (4.2).

This year's survey showed no significant differences in stress across the country's four regions, with the East reporting a stress level of 4.7, and the South, Midwest and West all reporting stress levels of 4.8. The regions do differ, however, in their sentiments about the future of the nation: Adults in the West (70 percent) were more likely than those in the South (63 percent), East (60 percent) and Midwest (56 percent) to consider the future of the [nation](#) as a somewhat or very significant source of stress.

More information: www.stressinamerica.org/

Provided by American Psychological Association

Citation: APA Stress in America survey: US at 'lowest point we can remember' (2017, November 1) retrieved 6 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-11-apa-stress-america-survey-lowest.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.