

Americans express worry over personal safety in annual anxiety and mental health poll

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The results of an annual poll conducted by the American Psychiatric Association show that 70% of U.S. adults say they feel anxious or

extremely anxious about keeping themselves or their families safe. While the number is lower than what was reported during the early onset of the pandemic in 2020, it is 6% higher than in the past two years.

This survey is complemented by the Healthy Minds Monthly series APA conducts with Morning Consult. Each month, among other questions, the poll asks about levels of anxiety around current events. In the past month, the percent of adults who say they feel very anxious about gun violence has increased 5 percentage points to 42%.

Overall, nearly two-in-five adults (37%) say they feel more anxious than they were this time last year, which is higher than in 2022 (32%) but lower than in 2021 (41%) and 2020 (62%). About half (45%) of adults say they were feeling about the same as the previous year. About one-third (30%) of adults said they have talked with a [mental health care](#) professional about [mental health issues](#) before, a slight uptick from 2022 (+4).

On several key issues:

- 70% were anxious about keeping themselves or their families safe.
- 68% were anxious about keeping their identity safe.
- 66% were anxious about their health.
- 65% were anxious about paying bills or expenses.
- 59% were anxious about the [impact of climate change](#) on the planet.
- 50% were anxious about the opioid epidemic.
- 45% were anxious about the impact of emerging technology on day-to-day life.

"Even as we end the [public health emergency](#), people remain anxious about their safety," said APA President Rebecca W. Brendel, M.D., J.D.

"Ongoing stress about our basic needs can lead to other negative mental health effects. The impact of this stress means that psychiatrists will need to continue work with the communities they serve, the larger mental health field, and policymakers to ensure those who need care can access it."

Care and treatment

The poll asked several questions about mental health treatments involving previously banned substances, such as cannabis, psychedelics, and ketamine. Half of U.S. adults expressed familiarity with the treatments, and 43% said they were unfamiliar, with younger people more likely to say they knew about these treatments. Half of adults say they would be likely to consider a mental health treatment involving cannabis or marijuana, while a majority say they are unlikely to consider a treatment involving psychedelics (59%) or ketamine (56%).

Two-thirds (68%) of American adults say that children and teens have more [mental health problems](#) than they did a decade ago. Over half of parents say they are concerned about their children's use of technology (59%) and mental state (55%), and 31% said they'd had difficulty scheduling appointments for their children with [mental health professionals](#).

Views on mental health

The majority of American adults believe a person's mental health has an impact on their physical health (78%), that untreated mental illness has a significant negative impact on families (78%), and that untreated mental illness has a significant negative impact on the economy (64%). One in three (34%) adults say they would not vote for a candidate for elected office who had been diagnosed with a mental illness, which is up 7%

from 2022.

"The majority of the public understands something we've been saying for a long time: your mental health is about your health," said APA CEO and Medical Director Saul Levin, M.D., M.P.A. "It's contingent upon us as a field to continue to spread that message, and that those who are experiencing mental health concerns aren't alone and that there are ways to receive help."

This poll was conducted April 20–22, 2023, among a sample of 2,201 adults. The analysis also tracks data from a poll conducted between April 23–24, 2022, among a sample of 2,210 adults. Results from the full surveys have a margin of error of plus or minus 2–3 percentage points.

The analysis also tracks data from an APA-sponsored [online survey](#) conducted between March 26–April 5, 2021, among a sample of 1,000 adults 18 years of age and older. The equivalent margin of error is +/-3.1 percentage points.

Provided by American Psychiatric Association

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