



AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Report highlights

▼ Stress in America: Paying with our health

This year's Stress in America™ survey shows that stress about money and finances is prevalent nationwide, even as aspects of the U.S. economy have improved. In fact, regardless of the economic climate, money has consistently topped Americans' list of stressors since the first Stress in America survey in 2007. Here are highlights noted in this year's report (view the [complete report \(/news/press/releases/stress\)](/news/press/releases/stress) for fuller details):

- Seventy-two percent of adults report feeling stressed about money at least some of the time and 22 percent say that they experience extreme stress about money (a rating of 8, 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale about their stress about money during the past month).
- Twenty-six percent of adults report feeling stressed about money most or all of the time.
- Significant sources of money-related stress reported by Americans include paying for unexpected expenses, paying for essentials and saving for retirement.
- Thirty-two percent of adults say that their finances or lack of money prevent them from living a healthy lifestyle.
- Twelve percent of Americans have said they skipped going to the doctor in the past year when they needed health care because of financial concerns.

▲ stressful reality for lower incomes, young adults and women

- There is a gap widening between the haves and the have-nots. In 2007, average reported stress levels were the same regardless of income, but now, those living in lower-income households (making less than \$50,000 per year) report higher overall stress levels than those living in higher-income households.
- Those living in lower-income households are almost twice as likely (45 percent) as those in higher-income households (24 percent) to say that their financial situation or lack of money prevents them from living a healthy lifestyle.
- Money is a somewhat or very significant source of stress for the majority of Americans (64 percent) but even more so for parents (77 percent), millennials (75 percent) and Gen Xers (76 percent).
- Parents and younger generations are less likely than Americans overall to report being financially secure (parents: 5.0 on a 10-point scale, where 1 means “not at all financially secure” and 10 means “completely financially secure”; millennials: 4.8; Gen Xers: 4.8; all adults: 5.5).
- Women report higher levels of stress about money than men (5.0 vs. 4.3 on a 10-point scale) and are more likely than men to say they feel stress about money all or most of the time (30 percent vs. 21 percent).

Emotional support and stress

- Americans who say they have emotional support — specifically, that they have someone they can ask for emotional support if they need it, such as family and friends — report lower stress levels and better related outcomes than those without emotional support.
- Eighteen percent of those surveyed say money is a taboo subject in their family, and 36 percent say talking about money makes them uncomfortable.
- Forty-three percent of those who say they have no emotional support report that their overall stress has increased in the past year, compared with 26 percent of those who say they have emotional support.

- Forty-six percent of those who say they have no emotional support say they felt depressed or sad due to stress in the last month, compared with 32 percent of those who say they have emotional support.
- Twenty-eight percent of parents and 34 percent of millennials report feeling a sense of loneliness and isolation due to stress in the past month, compared with 24 percent of Americans overall.
- Twenty-seven percent of lower-income households say that they do not have emotional support, compared to 17 percent of those from higher-income households.
- Twenty-six percent of parents and 25 percent of millennials say that they do not have emotional support.

stress snapshot

Survey findings show that although overall stress levels appear to be trending downward since 2007, this drop is not shared equally. Women, younger Americans and parents report higher stress levels and are more likely to report have experienced at least one symptom of stress in the past month than Americans overall.

- On average, Americans rate their stress level as a 4.9 on a 10-point scale, where 1 is “little or no stress” and 10 is “a great deal of stress,” down from 6.2 in 2007. Yet reported stress levels remain higher than what Americans believe to be healthy — 3.7 on a 10-point scale.
- Forty-two percent of adults say they are not doing enough or are not sure whether they are doing enough to manage their stress, and 20 percent say they are not engaging in an activity to help relieve or manage their stress.
- The most commonly reported sources of stress include money (64 percent report that this is a very or somewhat significant source of stress), work (60 percent), the economy (49 percent), family responsibilities (47 percent) and personal health concerns (46 percent).

- The most commonly reported symptoms of stress in the past month include feeling irritable or angry (37 percent), feeling nervous or anxious (35 percent), having a lack of interest or motivation (34 percent), fatigue (32 percent), feeling overwhelmed (32 percent) and being depressed or sad (32 percent).
- Forty-one percent of adults who are married or living with a partner say that they lost patience or yelled at their spouse or partner due to stress in the past month and 18 percent of those who are employed said they snapped or were short with a coworker.

Gender, generations, parents and stress

- More women than men say that their stress has increased in the past year (32 percent vs. 25 percent).
- Far more women than men say they have lain awake at night in the past month due to stress (51 percent vs. 32 percent of men).
- Women are more likely than men to say they felt a sense of loneliness or isolation in the past month due to stress (29 percent vs. 19 percent of men).
- Millennials are more likely than other generations to say their stress has increased in the past year (36 percent vs. 24 percent of boomers and 19 percent of matures).
- Millennials are more likely than any other generation to say they have felt a sense of loneliness or isolation due to stress in the past month (34 percent vs. 24 percent of Gen Xers, 21 percent of boomers and 12 percent of matures).
- More parents than nonparents say they are not doing enough to manage their stress (31 percent vs. 20 percent).
- Parents are more likely than nonparents to report engaging in unhealthy stress management techniques, such as drinking alcohol (18 percent vs. 12 percent) and smoking (17 percent vs. 10 percent).

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