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changing the conversation
about mental health

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89% of College Students Are Experiencing Stress or Anxiety as a Result of COVID-19, According to Nationwide Survey of Students

But students are showing signs of resiliency, with 78% feeling optimistic about future

Washington, D.C. – New survey data from Active Minds, the nation’s leading nonprofit organization promoting mental health awareness and education for young adults, found that college and high school students’ mental health continues to be negatively affected by the pandemic, with **one-in-four students** reporting that their depression *significantly increased*.

“An uncertain fall semester has continued to impact students’ mental health across all demographics,” said Laura Horne, chief program officer of Active Minds. “Students are dealing with major uncertainty, grief, and disruptions to their routines and lifestyles and it is deeply affecting their mental health.”

While students are still struggling, there is also a lot of hope. They are relying on each other, as well as institutional resources, to help them get through this difficult time. **Two-thirds of students** reported an increase in supporting others with their mental health. Students are also proving to be resilient in the face of adversity. **Seventy-eight percent** of students feel optimistic or hopeful about their school-related goals and future job prospects.

“Students are struggling right now, yes. But what we are also seeing from students is a renewed sense of hope and optimism for themselves, for their peers, and for the future,” said Horne. “They are harnessing the power of peer networks and reaching out to lend support during this difficult time.”

Of the college students who responded to the Active Minds’ Student Mental Health Survey, **89%** said that COVID-19 has caused them stress or anxiety, **78%** felt loneliness or isolation, and **almost half** (48%) have experienced a setback in finances. High school students are not faring any better. **Eighty percent** of high school students surveyed have experienced stress or anxiety as a result of the pandemic and **76%** have felt loneliness or isolation since March.

COVID-19 isn't just affecting students' mental health. **Fifty-six percent** of students responded that their daily level of physical activity has decreased or significantly decreased – a large shift away from this form of self-care.

“While traditional coping methods, such as physical activity, in-person therapy, or time with friends are perhaps more difficult for students, we saw that they found new ways to connect and get the help they need,” said Amy Gatto, senior campus program manager for Active Minds. “Social media and texting have a bad reputation, but when used well these types of virtual connection points between students are vital to supporting their overall mental health – especially during times of social distancing.”

Sixty-eight percent of students have benefitted from virtual interactions with friends via calls, texting, social media, or emails. Being at home has also helped students cope by spending time with their pets (54%) and receiving increased familial support (40%). **Twenty-seven percent** of students have also relied on virtual mental health support, such as virtual counseling, virtual support groups, and texting support to cope with the pandemic.

The results mentioned in this release are part of a larger project, which surveyed students from high school to graduate and professional degrees. Review the full report [here](#).

About Active Minds: Active Minds is the nation's leading nonprofit organization supporting mental health awareness and education for young adults. Active Minds has a presence on over 800 college, university, and high school campuses nationwide, and is powered by a robust Chapter Network, the nationally acclaimed Send Silence Packing® exhibit, and inspiring Active Minds Speakers. The organization is dedicated to ending the silence and changing the conversation about mental health for everyone. To learn more, visit www.activeminds.org.

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