

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: COVID-19 and Youth Mental Health

A recent COVID Response Tracking Study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago indicates the coronavirus pandemic has taken a harsh toll on the mental health of young Americans. This ongoing study is conducting nationally representative longitudinal research to understand Americans' beliefs, mental health, and outlook before, during and after the coronavirus outbreak.

Survey responses indicate adults under 35 are especially likely to report negative feelings or experience physical or emotional symptoms associated with stress and anxiety. A majority of Americans ages 18 through 34 — 56% — say they have at least sometimes felt isolated in the past month, compared with about 4 in 10 older Americans,

25% of young adults rate their mental health as fair or poor, compared with 13% of older adults, while 56% of older adults say their mental health is excellent or very good, compared with just 39% of young adults. In the midst of the pandemic, young adults are navigating life transitions such as starting college and finding jobs, all without being able to experience normal social activities that might be especially essential for people who are less likely to have already married and started their own families. Some young people are just beginning their adult lives amid a recession, and older members of the group are already experiencing their second.

The study found that younger Americans also consistently show higher rates of psychosomatic symptoms, like having trouble sleeping, getting headaches or crying, compared to older adults.. The likelihood of experiencing such symptoms decreases with age. The results are surprising because people who are considered most at risk normally report more mental health symptoms, and older adults are more likely to become seriously ill from the coronavirus. The numbers also contrast with data regarding younger people gathering for large parties, seemingly unafraid of the risk pose by the virus. One possible explanation could be that young adults have less experience dealing with a public health crisis. This experience facing a pandemic is completely new for most younger adults.

Young adults also face constant exposure to social media, which could make negative feelings about the virus even worse. The survey found that frequently watching, reading or talking about the virus is consistently linked with higher rates of negative mental health symptoms.

The survey found 67% of young adults, but just 50% of those older, say they have at least sometimes felt that they were unable to control the important things in life. And 55% of 18 to 34 year olds say they have felt difficulties piling up too high to overcome, compared with 33% of older adults.

NORC at the University of Chicago is an objective non-partisan research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. To learn more about the COVID Tracking Study and other NORC research endeavors please visit <https://www.norc.org/Research/Projects/Pages/covid-response-tracking-study.aspx>

To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the COVID-19 Epidemic and its correlation to increased mental illness, alcohol and substance use at www.safeglencove.org.