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# Investing in Mental Health to Support Our Workforce

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August 19, 2021

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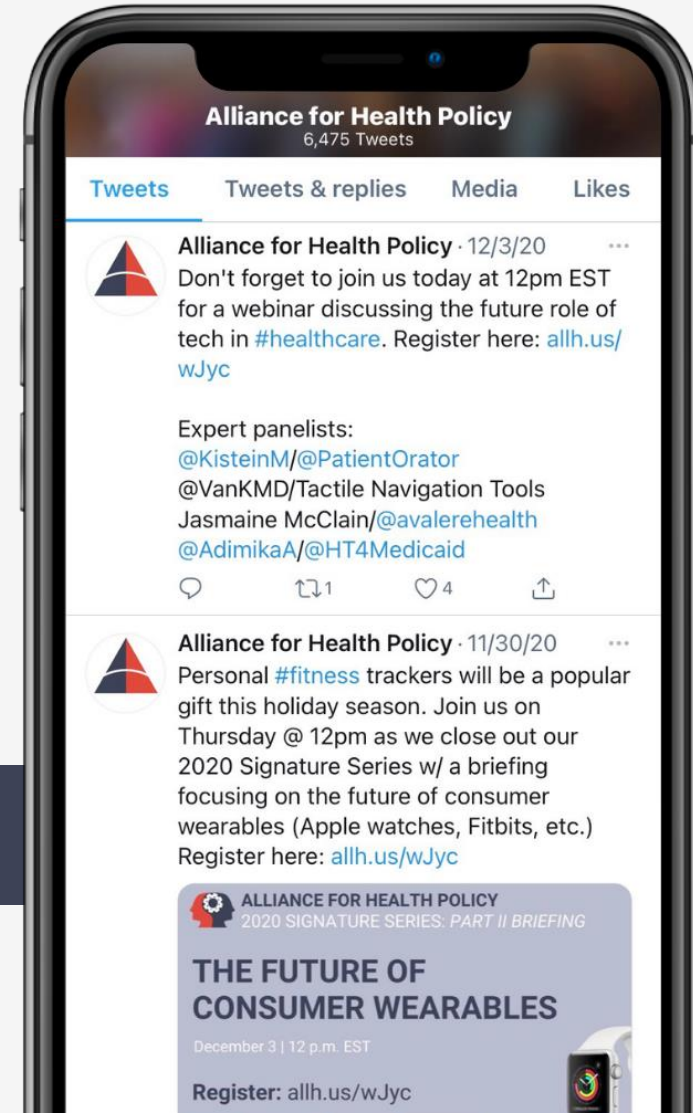


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**Kana Enomoto, M.A.**  
Senior Expert  
McKinsey & Company



@McKinsey



# Investing in Mental Health to Support Our Workforce

August 19, 2021

# Employers have begun taking action to better support employee mental health, but significant opportunity remains

Employees are **struggling with mental health challenges**, and COVID-19 has intensified the impact

**~9 out of 10**

employers say **COVID-19 is affecting workforce well-being and/or productivity**<sup>1</sup>

**~1 out of 3**

employees indicate **burnout is one of their top 3 challenges** during the pandemic<sup>2</sup>

Employers are beginning to **take action** and prioritize employee mental health

**71%**

of employers report making **some or significant investments in mental health**<sup>1</sup>

**~4 out of 10**

employers report appointing a C-Suite, EVP, or SVP leader focused on behavioral health<sup>3</sup>

However, there is **significant opportunity to better support** employee mental health

**70%**

of employees report **challenges** accessing counseling or similar support services<sup>4</sup>

**Only 27%**

of frontline employees (51% of all employees) rate employer offerings as good or very good<sup>4</sup>

1) 2020 McKinsey Employer Health Benefits Survey; 2) 2020 McKinsey Women in the Workplace research; 3) 2020 McKinsey Behavioral Health Employer Survey; 4) 2020 McKinsey Consumer Behavioral Health Survey

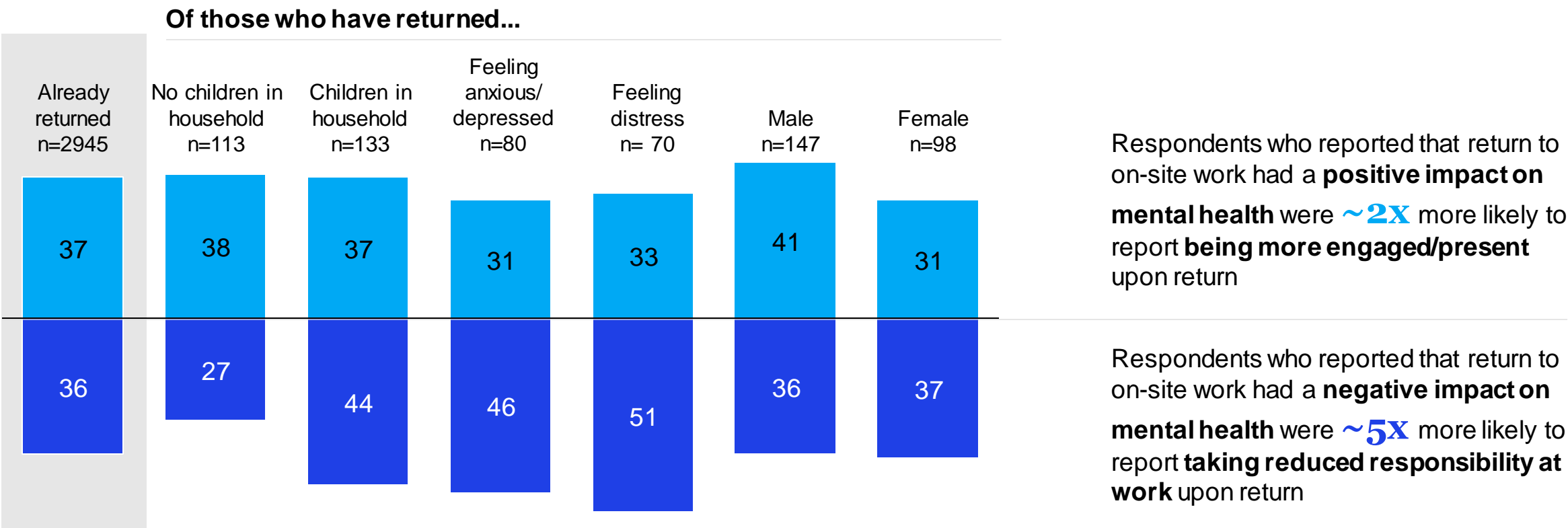


# Employees are reporting that returning to on-site work has impacted their mental health

■ Somewhat or significant positive impact ■ Somewhat or significant negative impact

## Reported impact of going back to work in pre-COVID-19 environment on mental health

% respondents working remotely immediately after the pandemic began who have returned on-site



# Panelists



**Beth McGinty, Ph.D.**

Director  
Center for Mental Health and Addiction Policy  
Research, Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg  
School of Public Health

 @JohnsHopkinsSPH



**Jonah C. Cunningham, MPP**

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*Moderator*





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## **Beth McGinty, Ph.D.**

Director,  
Center for Mental Health and Addiction  
Policy Research, Johns Hopkins  
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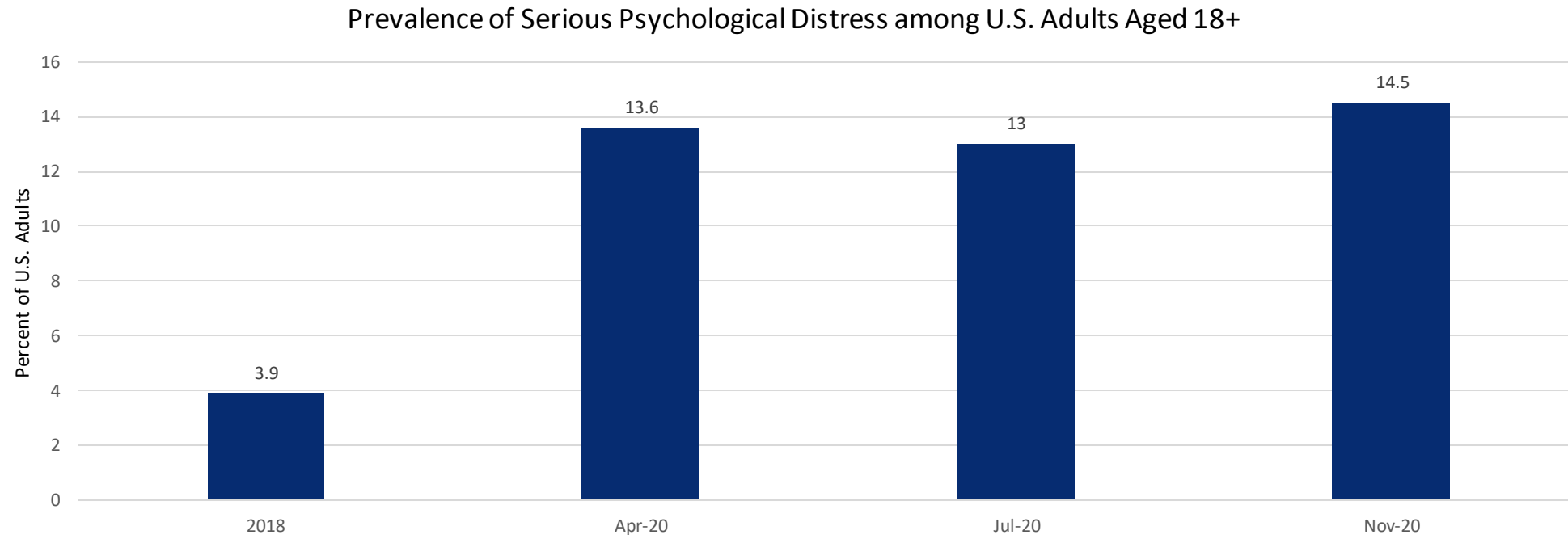
# Mental health during COVID-19 – implications for the workplace

Beth McGinty, PhD, MS



# COVID-19 and Mental Health

## Increases in psychological distress, anxiety, depression symptoms during COVID-19 pandemic



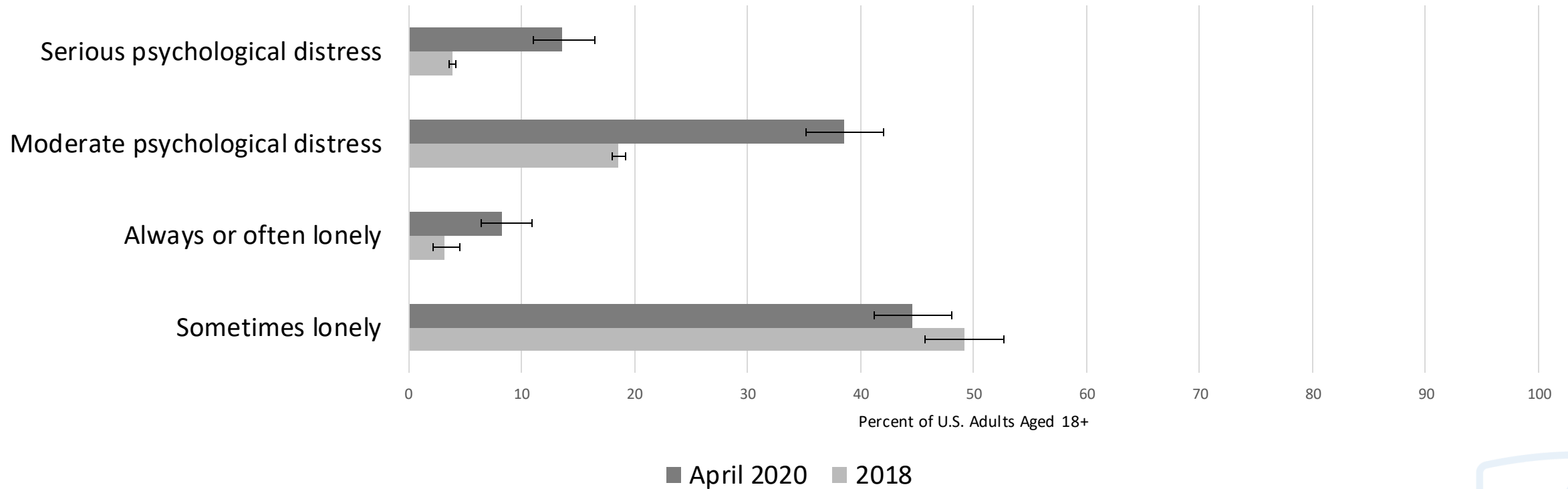
McGinty EE, Presskreischer R, Han H, Barry CL (2020). Psychological distress and loneliness reported by US adults in 2018 and April, 2020. *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, 324(1): 93-94.

McGinty EE, Presskreischer R, Anderson KE, Han H, Barry CL (2020). Psychological distress and COVID-19 related stressors reported in a longitudinal cohort of U.S. adults in April and July 2020. *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, 324(24): 2555-2557.



# COVID-19 and Mental Health

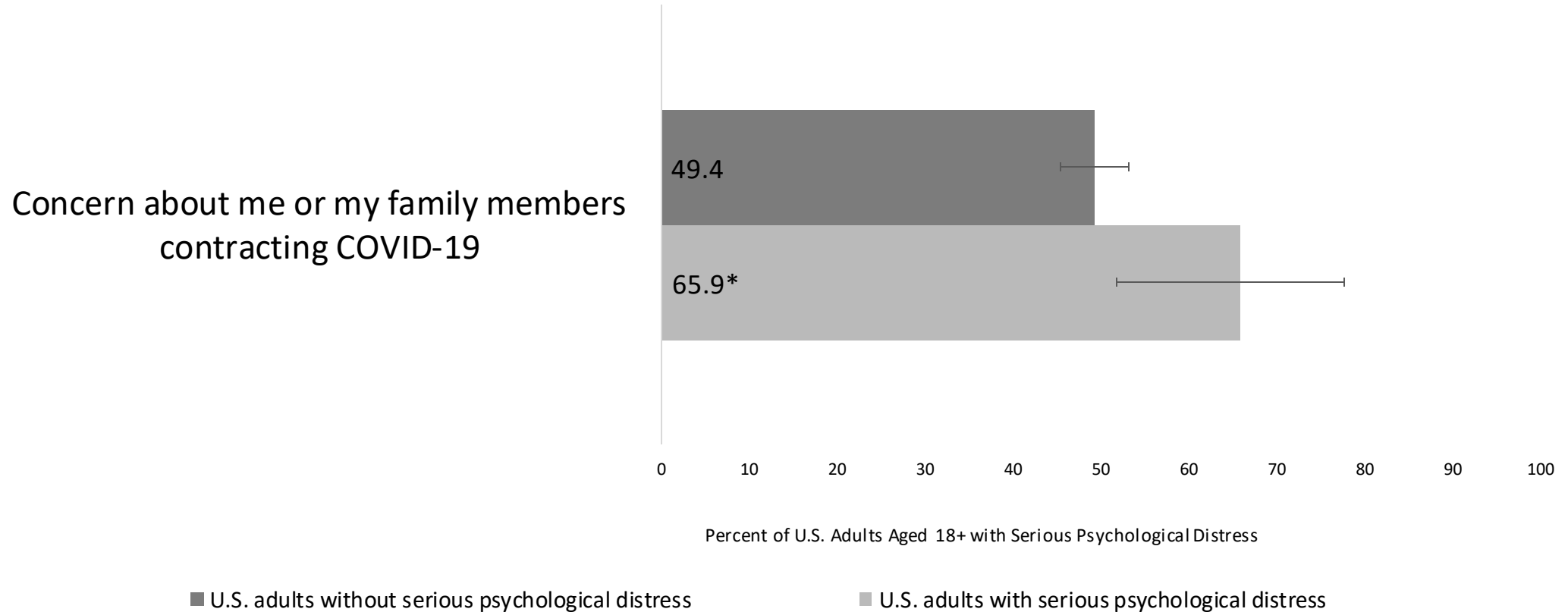
## Drivers of declines in mental health during COVID-19 – loneliness?



McGinty EE, Presskreischer R, Han H, Barry CL (2020). Psychological distress and loneliness reported by US adults in 2018 and April, 2020. *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, 324(1): 93-94.

# COVID-19 and Mental Health

## Drivers of declines in mental health during COVID-19 – fear of virus?

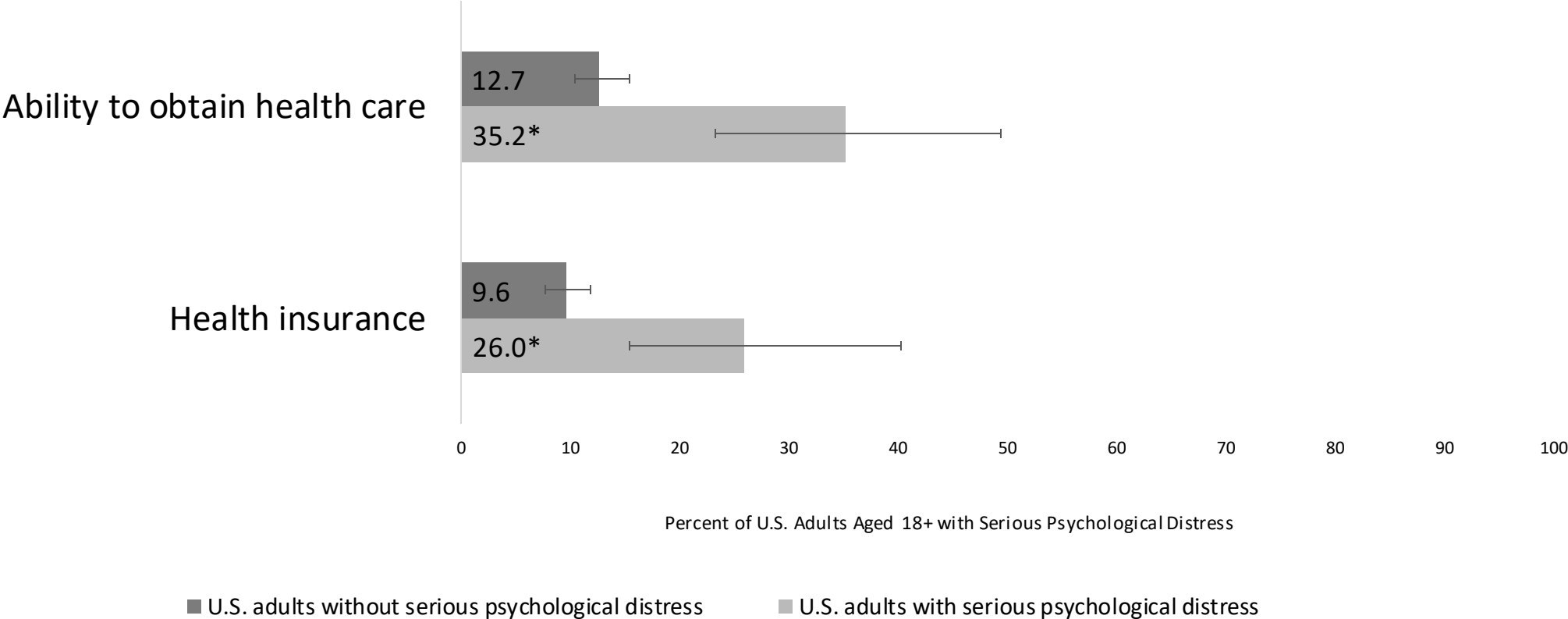


McGinty EE, Presskreischer R, Anderson KE, Han H, Barry CL (2020). Psychological distress and COVID-19 related stressors reported in a longitudinal cohort of U.S. adults in April and July 2020. *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, 324(24): 2555-2557.



# COVID-19 and Mental Health

## Drivers of declines in mental health during COVID-19 – health care access?

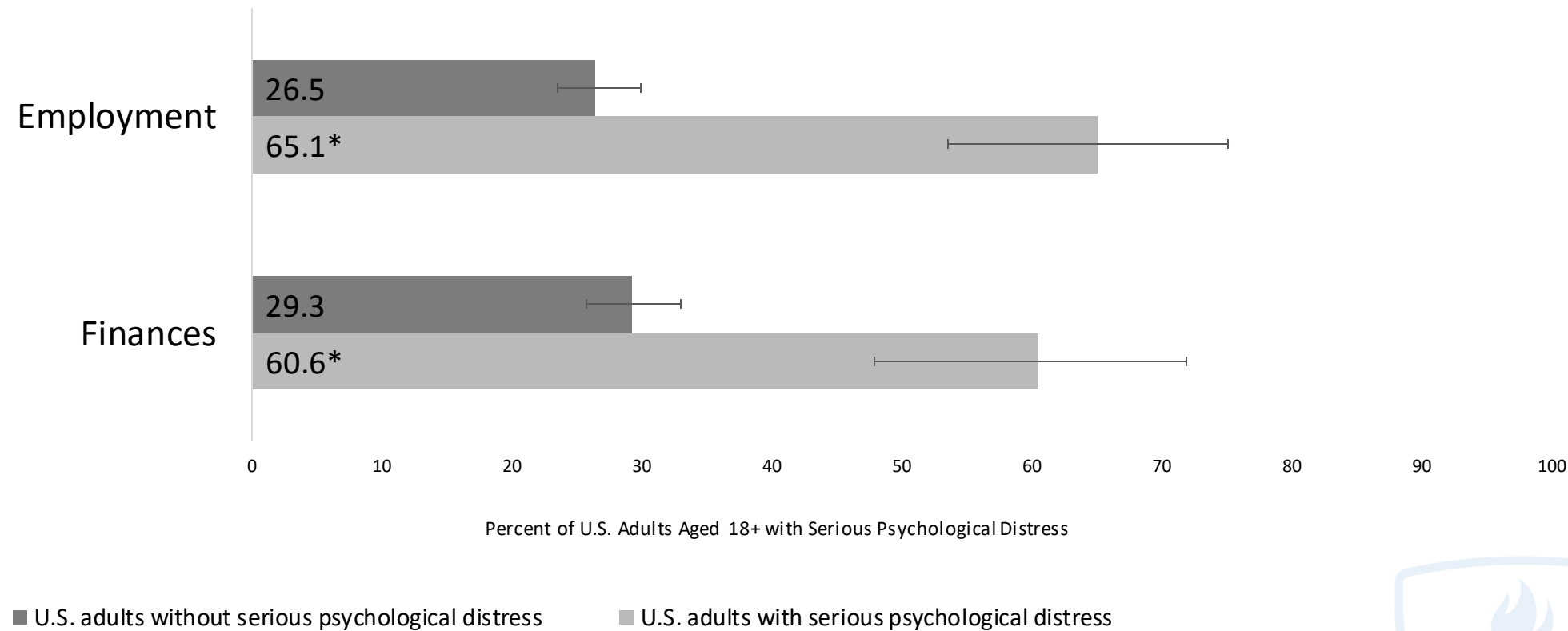


McGinty EE, Presskreischer R, Anderson KE, Han H, Barry CL (2020). Psychological distress and COVID-19 related stressors reported in a longitudinal cohort of U.S. adults in April and July 2020. *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, 324(24): 2555-2557.



# COVID-19 and Mental Health

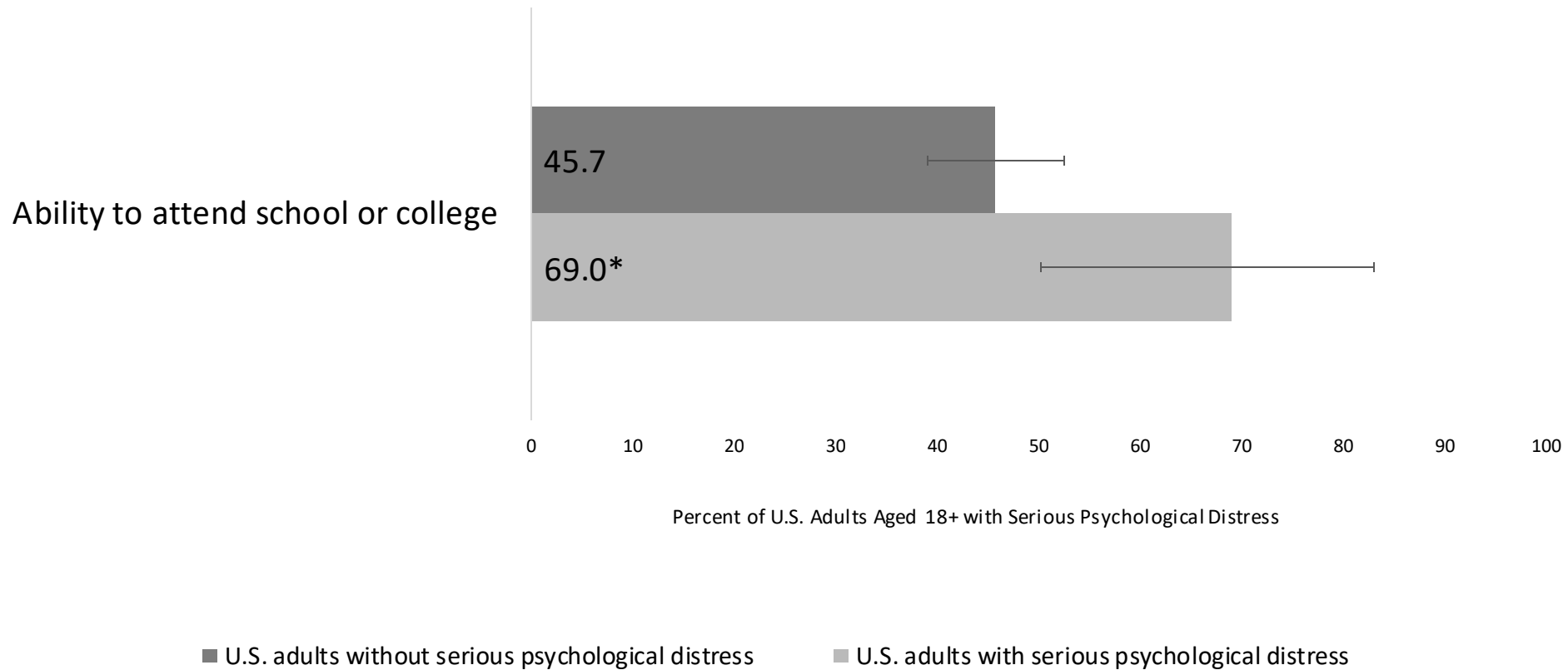
## Drivers of declines in mental health during COVID-19 – employment & finances?



McGinty EE, Presskreischer R, Anderson KE, Han H, Barry CL (2020). Psychological distress and COVID-19 related stressors reported in a longitudinal cohort of U.S. adults in April and July 2020. *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, 324(24): 2555-2557.

# COVID-19 and Mental Health

## Drivers of declines in mental health during COVID-19 – education?



McGinty EE, Presskreischer R, Anderson KE, Han H, Barry CL (2020). Psychological distress and COVID-19 related stressors reported in a longitudinal cohort of U.S. adults in April and July 2020. *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, 324(24): 2555-2557.

# COVID-19 and Mental Health

- Additional drivers of declines in mental health during COVID-19:
  - Childcare, other caregiving challenges
  - The stress of essential work
  - Uncertainty about the future
  - Co-occurring stressors related to racial justice
- Research shows similar increases in anxiety and depression symptoms among youth.

## Other research on this topic:

1. Williams et al (2020). Do Americans face greater mental health and economic consequences from COVID-19? Comparing the U.S. with other high-income countries. <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2020/aug/americans-mental-health-and-economic-consequences-COVID19>.
2. Czeisler ME et al (2020). Mental health, substance use, and suicidal ideation during the COVID-19 pandemic – United States, June 24–30, 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*; 69: 1049–1057. [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm?s\\_cid=mm6932a1\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm?s_cid=mm6932a1_w)
3. McQuaid et al (2021). The burden of loneliness: implications of the social determinants of health during COVID-19. *Psychiatry Research*, 296, 113648.
4. Kantor, BN and Kantor, J (2020). Mental health outcomes and associations during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 11: 569083.
5. Horigian et al (2021). Loneliness, Mental Health, and Substance Use among U.S. Adults during COVID-19. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 53 (1): 1–9
6. Holingue C. et al (2021). Mental distress during the COVID-19 Pandemic among U.S. adults without a pre-existing mental health conditions: findings from American trend panel survey. *Preventive Medicine*, 139: 106231.
7. Holingue C. et al (2020). Mental distress in the United States at the Beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic. *American Journal of Public Health*, 110 (11): 1628.
8. Patrick SW et al (2020). Well-being of parents and children during the COVID-19 pandemic: A national survey. *Pediatrics*, 146(4): e2020016824
9. And others!



# Conclusions

- ▶ Acute distress during COVID-19 may transfer to longer-term psychiatric disorders or exacerbate existing conditions.
- ▶ Many of the COVID-19 stressors driving increases in poor mental health still exist as of August 2020.
- ▶ Many drivers of psychological distress during COVID are socioeconomic; they go beyond loneliness, social isolation, fear of the virus. These drivers of distress may linger post pandemic.
- ▶ **Implications for the workplace?**
  - ▶ Mental health services, ranging from wellness to referral (and insurance coverage of) clinical services
  - ▶ Employment and income-related changes are significant stressors; fear around job loss, power dynamics in which employees may feel that they must choose between their job and their health/safety, other critical elements of their lives (childcare, children's education)



@HealthyAmerica1

**Jonah C. Cunningham, MPP**  
Government Relations Manager  
Trust for America's Health



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# Federal Response to Mental Health for Workforce Support



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## Federal Role in Mental Health



Funding and technical assistance



Regulations and protections



Research and surveillance



Insurance coverage (e.g. Medicare/Medicaid)



Provides services to some populations (e.g. veterans)



## Relevant Federal Agencies & Departments



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA)



Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)



Department of Labor/Department of Education





## Federal Response to COVID-19



Increased flexibility for providers



Support for social determinants of health



Investments in existing programs and new ones



Surveillance and research





## Future Opportunities



Continuing new programs and flexibilities



9-8-8 transition



Continued surveillance of trends



Novel interventions



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# Thank you!

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## **Chatrane Birbal, MPA**

Vice President, Government Relations  
HR Policy Association



# Mental Health Index

## U.S. Worker Edition

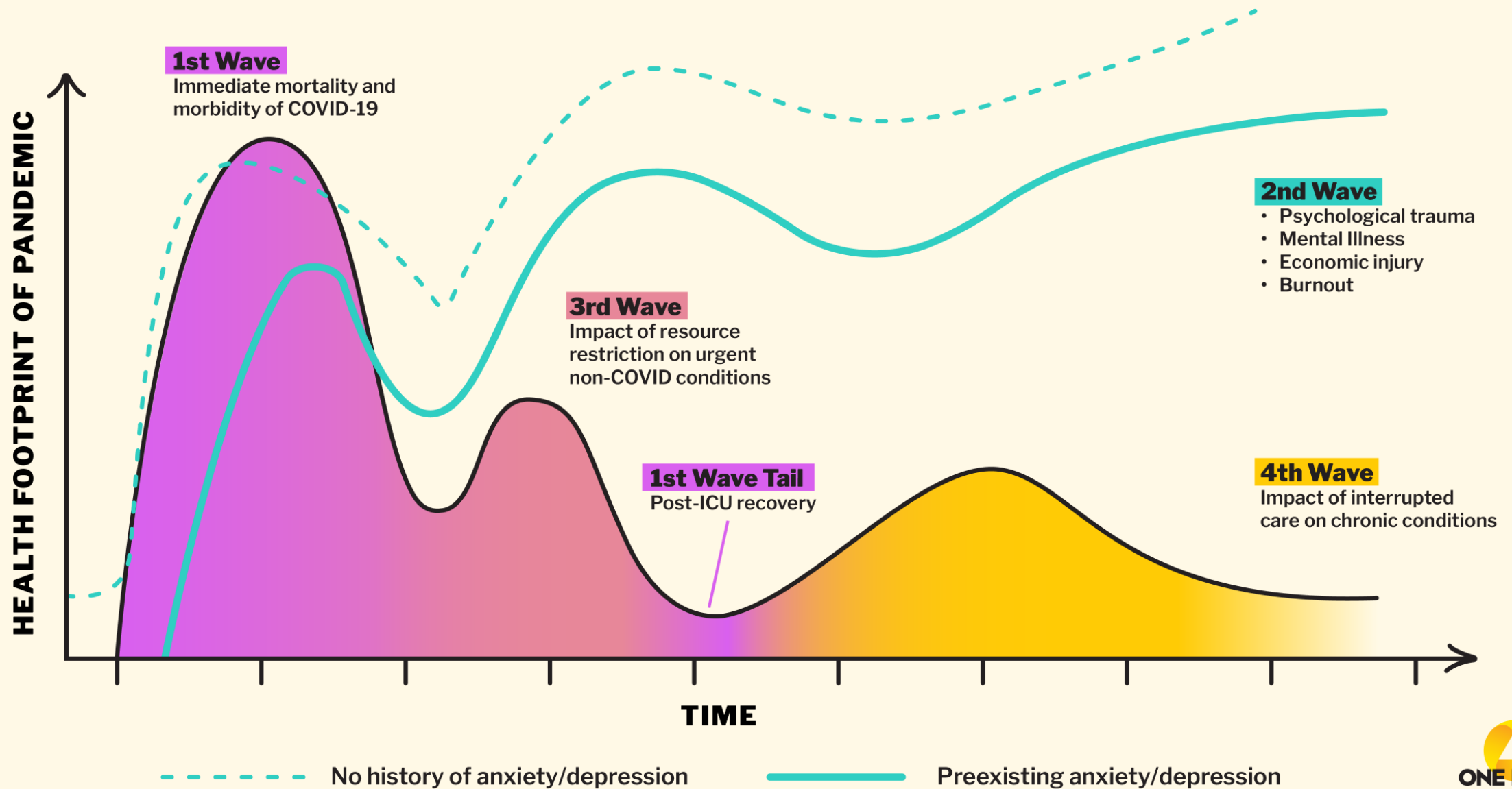
### July 2021 Update



#### Methodology:

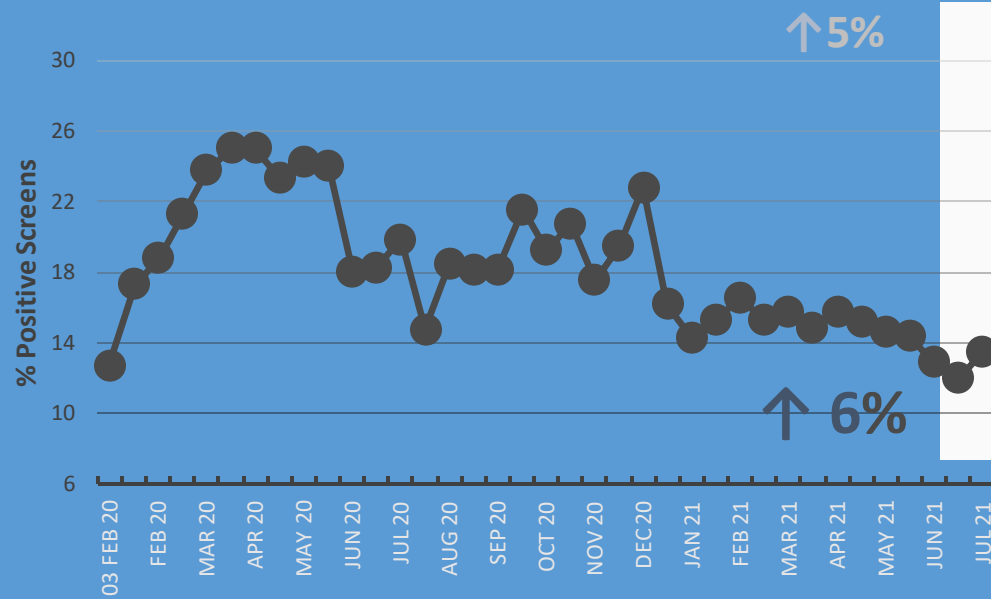
- Dozens of large US corporations using the Total Brain Platform
- Weekly randomized selection of up to 500 assessments
- Statistical control for cohort effect

# COVID-19 IMPACT TIMELINE

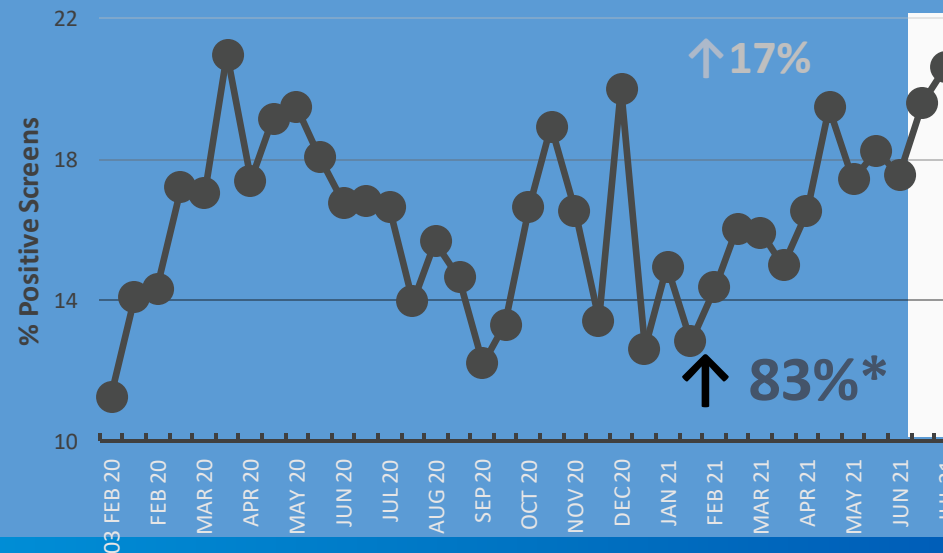
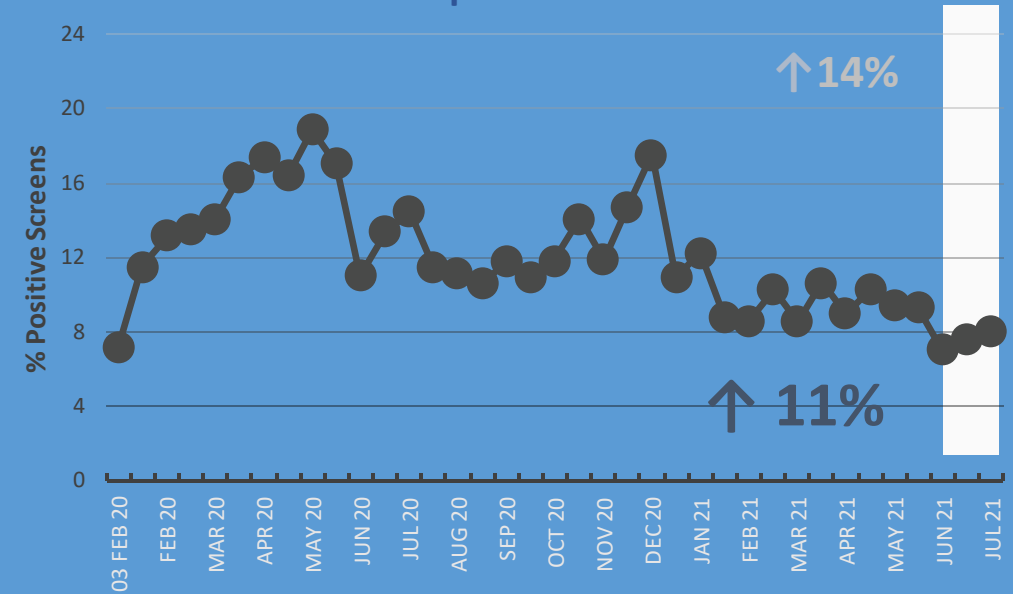


# MHI July-21: Key Risk

## General Anxiety Disorder (GAD)



## Depressive Disorder

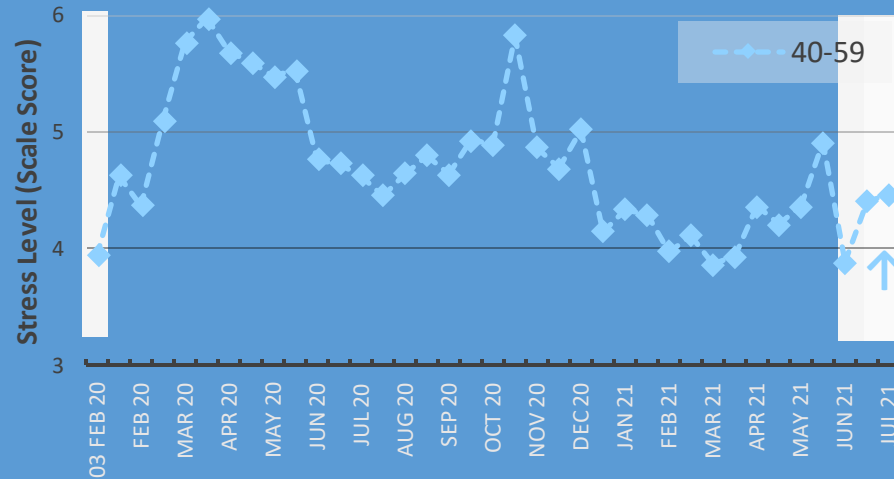


# MHI July-21: Worsening in 40-59 Year Olds



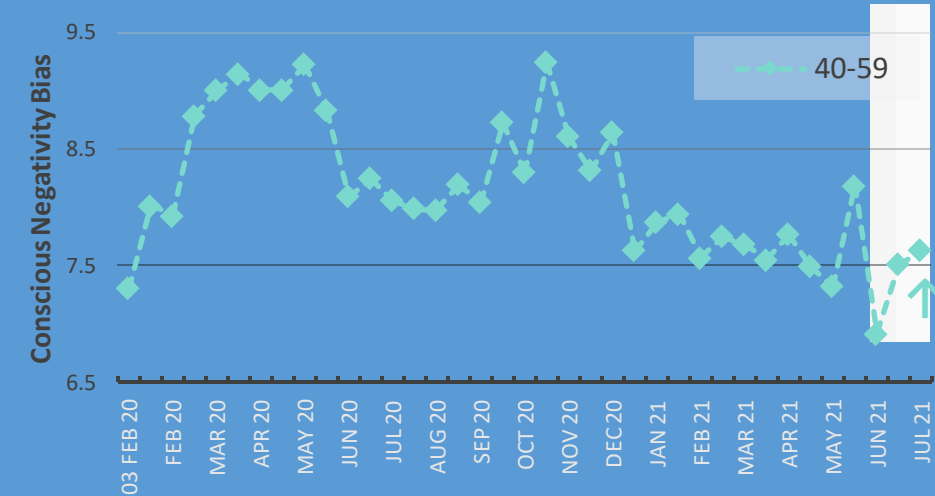
## Stress

15% (trend) higher in the last month in 40-59yrs  
13% (trend) higher than pre-pandemic in 40-59yrs



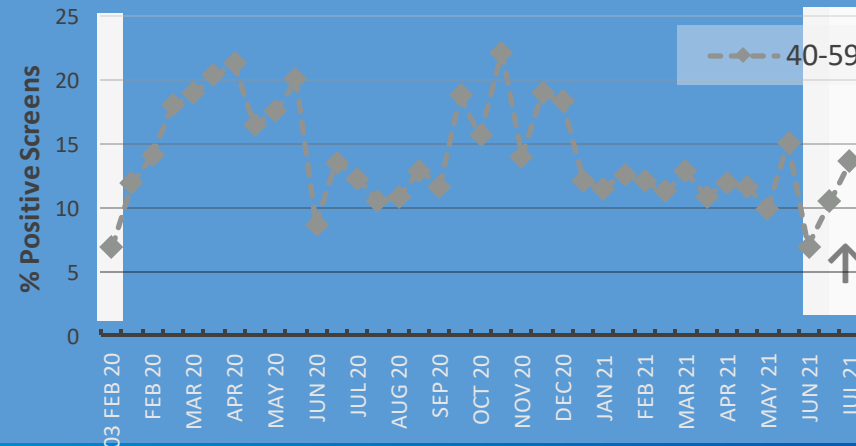
## Conscious Negativity Bias

10% (trend) higher in the last month in 40-59yrs  
(although not different to pre-pandemic)



## General Anxiety Disorder

94% (trend) higher in the last month in 40-59yrs  
98% higher than pre-pandemic in 40-59yrs



# Workplace Resources and Ecosystem of Support

## Supporting Mental Wellness

Employees want resources to support their mental health at work. These are the top three resources they want, according to a survey of 1,500 full-time workers in the U.S.



**1** Mental health training.



**2** Clearer information about resources that are available.



**3** A culture that is more open about mental health at work.

### Colleagues & Peer Support

#### Leadership & Company Culture:

- Leadership supports mental health
- Manager to support them if they have a mental health condition

#### Company Resources:

- Work accommodation or flexible work arrangement
- Know procedure for getting support
- Mental health training & open culture

Source: Mind Share Partners' *Mental Health at Work 2019 Report*.

# Employers are Offering More Mental Health Benefits

- Starbucks is giving employees and their family members 20 free counseling sessions a year.
- Target is expanding its offering of online mental health resources.
- PwC is offering employees access to well-being coaches.
- SoFi is giving employees and select family members up to six therapy sessions.
- Kickstand Communications is providing employees with a more flexible schedule.
- Salesforce has started offering employees a series of articles and webinars on emotional health, as well as a meditation app, in addition to other benefits.
- Power Home Remodeling, a remodeling company, reduced the copay charge for therapy visits.
- TransferWise is giving employees a 50% discount on mindfulness apps like Headspace.
- Clearcover is hosting a digital roundtable session with a mental health counselor.
- EY is offering its employees 24/7 resources through its program EY Assists, which connects employees to healthcare professionals.
- Merit, a platform for digital credentials, is offering workers access to a service that lets employees talk with wellness coaches.
- Benecard, a prescription benefit company, is offering employees free access to a mindfulness app for three months.

A [recent survey](https://www.businessinsider.com/companies-offering-more-mental-health-benefits-amid-coronavirus-2020-4) of 256 companies by the nonprofit employer group the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions found that 53% of employers are providing special emotional and mental health programs for their workforce in the wake of the pandemic. <https://www.businessinsider.com/companies-offering-more-mental-health-benefits-amid-coronavirus-2020-4> Sep 10, 2020

## Business Group on Health



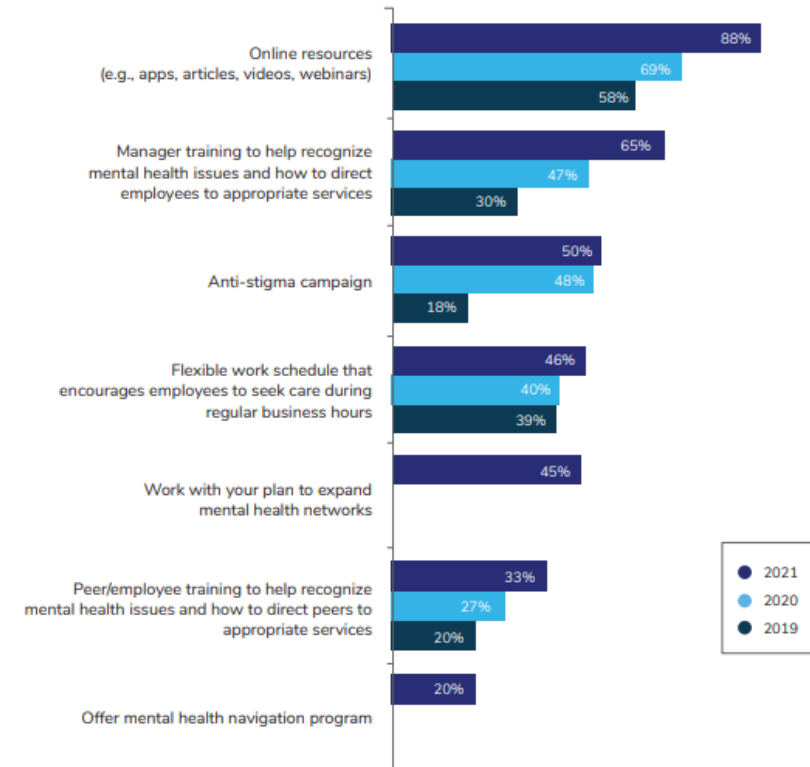
The 2021 Large Employers' Health Care Strategy and Plan Design Survey solicited information about employer approaches to health care and benefits in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, providing a window into leading ways that employers are addressing COVID through their benefit plans, programs and overall workforce strategy outlook. <https://www.businessgrouphealth.org/en/resources/2021-plan-design-survey-executive-summary>

### 4.

#### Mental health stays in the spotlight

Already an area of acute focus, employers have doubled down on mental health and emotional well-being. A benefit of this development has been less stigma associated with, and more acceptance of, mental health issues.

Figure 5: Large Employers' Mental Health Offerings, 2019-2021



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# Upcoming Events

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AUG  
25

COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence in Geographic Areas of Need

- 12 pm – 1 pm ET

AUG  
31

10 Years of Medicare Payment Reform: Lessons Learned and Considerations for the Future

- 12 pm – 1 pm ET

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