



COUNSELING  
CENTER

***THE COVID-19 EFFECT: A REVIEW OF THE  
IMPACT OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC  
ON THE MENTAL HEALTH AND  
FUNCTIONING OF COLLEGE STUDENTS.***



[https://marshall.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_e96qHLnqRhIVGT4](https://marshall.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e96qHLnqRhIVGT4)

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Please use the QR code or link to take a quick survey.

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# What will we discuss today?

- What is research and literature saying?
- Review of the current state of students' mental health during COVID-19.
- Review of Marshall University Counseling Center's COVID-19 survey and results from 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years.
- What can we do to assist students?
- Recommendations
- Resources
- Discussion
- Toolkit

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## What is the COVID Effect?

Impactful mental health, emotional, and academic effects and symptoms brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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*What Covid-19 Effects have you experienced?*

*How has life changed as a result of Covid-19?*

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“Even before the COVID-19 pandemic began, rising mental health problems in the United States had health advocates and providers worried about the need for additional support for struggling college students- and the ability of schools to provide it.”

Sontag-Padilla (2021)

- Anticipation of increased mental health concerns during the fall 2021 semester and new academic year.
- Utilization of campus counseling centers are on the rise and at some schools, higher than it has ever been.

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# Marshall University Counseling Center Utilization Data

Academic Year	Unique New Clients	Unique Returning Clients	Total Clients	Appointments
2016-2017	359 students	200 students	559 total students	3,035 appointments
2017-2018	389 students	210 students	599 total students	3,122 appointments
2018-2019	433 students	250 students	683 total students	3,755 appointments
2019-2020	548 students	384 students	932 total students	5,847 appointments
2020-2021	517 students	474 students	991 total students	6,313 appointments

**Fall 2021 data as of 10/09/21**

**New clients-** 256  
**Returning clients-** 453  
**Total clients-** 709  
**Appointments-** 2,071

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- Students have had to adjust to changes in course delivery, socializing in college, and dealing with the stress and uncertainty of a pandemic.
- Navigating college life can be stressful without a worldwide pandemic.
- Young adults have brains that are still growing, they are learning life skills, developing the necessary skills to navigate adulthood, making major decisions about the future, which are all a part of a “normal” college experience.

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- Panchal, Kamal, Cox, and Garfield (2021) point out how anxiety, depression, sleep disruptions and thoughts of suicide have increased throughout the pandemic.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and KFF.org, adults in the U.S. have reported increased mental health and substance use disorders, about 4 in 10, which is an increase from one in ten in previous years.
- Active Minds conducted a research study in September 2020 to examine the impact of COVID-19 on students' mental health and about 75% of the student respondents reported worsened mental health since the beginning of the pandemic.
- High rates of stress, anxiety, sadness, loneliness, and isolation exist, which these also increased in severity throughout the pandemic.

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- Lack of physical activity throughout the pandemic also decreased for many, which physical activity can benefit one's overall wellness and mental health.
- Social isolation, loneliness, loss, closures of work and academic settings, hypervigilance, trauma, increased mental health concerns, trauma, and suicidal ideation have also increased throughout the pandemic.

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- Holmes (2021) discussed how the mental toll the pandemic had on people cannot be underestimated.
- Mental health professionals are now trying to keep up with the demand for services even more than ever.
- Ezarik (2021) discussed how after one year into the pandemic college students were struggling with mental health and many were not seeking assistance from on campus resources.
- A study by *Inside Higher Ed* and College Pulse found that after one year of the pandemic 65 percent of students reported “fair or poor” mental health.

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***“The effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic on the mental health and functioning of Marshall University students.”***

- 2020 survey- 1,197 students participated.

***“COVID-19 One Year Later: The effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic on the mental health and functioning of Marshall University students.”***

- 2021 survey- 1,151 students participated.
- The survey was sent to all Marshall University students 18 years of age and older including part-time and full-time students, as well as undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students.

- Primary Investigator- Candace D. Layne, EdD, LPC- Director of the Counseling Center- Marshall University
- Secondary Investigator- Elijah Stevens, MA- Health Informatics Intern in the counseling center during the spring 2020 semester (2019-2020 survey)- Marshall University
- Data Analysis- Joshua Demakovsky- Doctoral Candidate, Supervised Psychologist (2019-2020 and 2020-2021 surveys)- Marshall University

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*RESEARCHERS*

- About 40% more females than males or other gender identities participated in both surveys.
- The majority of students that participated in both surveys were seniors by class rank.
- The majority of students that participated were Caucasian- about 7% minority student participation.

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## *DEMOGRAPHICS*

- **Permission to complete the research study was submitted to the Marshall University Institutional Review Board.**
- **Once permission was received, University Communications and IT was consulted with to send the survey to students enrolled during the spring 2020 semester.**
- **The first survey was sent to students enrolled during the spring 2020 semester via their Marshall University e-mail addresses on Monday, June 1, 2020. The second survey was sent to students enrolled during the spring 2021 semester via Marshall University e-mail addresses on April 26, 2021.**
- **The first survey and second surveys remained open for three weeks, and reminders to complete the survey were sent to students.**

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## *PROCEDURES*

- **How has the pandemic impacted Marshall University students?**
- **How has the pandemic affected Marshall University students' mental health?**
- **What do students need from higher education administration, faculty and staff?**
- **How can we best assist students as the campus counseling center?**
- **What can be done to continue to serve students through counseling center services throughout a pandemic?**
- **How are students functioning personally, academically, socially and in other areas of their lives?**

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***WHAT DID WE WANT TO KNOW?***



## 2019-2020 academic year

- *73% of students responded their mental health was impacted by the stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.*
- *Stress, anxiety, depression, insomnia, and difficulty focusing/paying attention are among the top student experiences as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.*
- *Almost 80% of student participants indicated they "strongly agree" and "agree" that the COVID-19 pandemic affected them adversely as students.*

## 2020-2021 academic year

- *82% of students responded their mental health was impacted by the stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.*
- *Stress, anxiety, depression, insomnia, difficulty focusing/paying attention, and loss of interest in usual activities are among the top experiences as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.*
- *Almost 82% of student participants indicated they "strongly agree" and "agree" that the COVID-19 pandemic affected them adversely as students.*

## 2019-2020 academic year

- *Social issues/anxiety, concerns about health and the health of family, isolation, mental health and mood concerns are among the top symptoms/concerns indicated by students.*
- *66 % of students indicated the change in course delivery caused additional stress.*
- *Counseling/therapy, financial support, and returning to campus/face-to-face instruction, financial assistance and more understanding from faculty and staff were in the top needs/resources indicated by students.*

## 2020-2021 academic year

- *Mental health and mood concerns, eating concerns/disorders, weight gain, lack of motivation, social issues/ anxiety, isolation are among the top symptoms/concerns indicated by students.*
- *66 % of students indicated the change in course delivery caused additional stress.*
- *Counseling/therapy, more in-person events, more understanding from faculty and staff, financial assistance, more mental programming were in the top needs/resources indicated by students.*

## 2019-2020 academic year

- *65% indicated time away from friends due to the Covid-19 adversely affected personal well-being.*
- *42% of students indicated the lack of a college atmosphere has adversely affected their college experience.*
- *39% of students indicated they had to seek counseling, or should have sought counseling, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.*

## 2020-2021 academic year

- *72% indicated time away from friends due to the Covid-19 adversely affected personal well-being.*
- *51% of students indicated the lack of a college atmosphere has adversely affected their college experience.*
- *53% of students indicated they had to seek counseling, or should have sought counseling, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.*

For the first survey in 2020, multiple one-way ANOVA's were ran to analyze if there were significant differences between groups on their level of stress associated with COVID-19 changes, personally and in relation to online classes.

- Students who did not answer, selected prefer not to answer, or gave a response indicating their gender outside of male or female have experienced the most personal stress compared to those identifying as male or female, and females have experienced more stress than males.
- Graduate Level students experienced more stress as it relates to the transition to online work compared to all the other classes, who have experienced roughly the same amount of stress. For personal stress, Graduate Level students have been faring better compared to Sophomores and Juniors. All undergraduate classes have been experiencing roughly the same amount of personal stress.

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***COMPARISON DATA***

**The researcher wanted to examine if there was a change in coping level throughout the pandemic:**

- Students ranked their coping level 5.48/10 in 2020 in comparison to 5.2/10 in 2021. This indicates a lower coping level during the second year of the pandemic during the 2021 survey than during the 2020 survey.
- To further evaluate, an independent samples t-test was performed to compare student's coping level in dealing with the transition to online classes between 2020 and 2021.
- There was no significant differences in coping level between the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years, as well as no significant differences in coping level as it relates to the transition to online classes.

# Center for Collegiate Mental Health Covid-19 Research Study

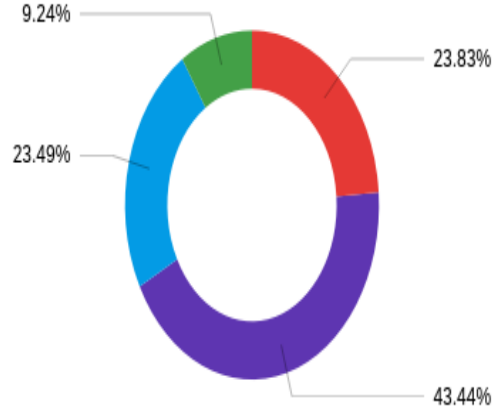
## “Covid-19’s Impact on College Student Mental Health”

- CCMH studies changes in distress from before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and immediately after.
- 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 data was compared.
- Data indicated minor changes in distress that students reported.
- “While preliminary in nature, these results suggested that the relationship between COVID and college student mental health might be more nuanced than was being reported.”

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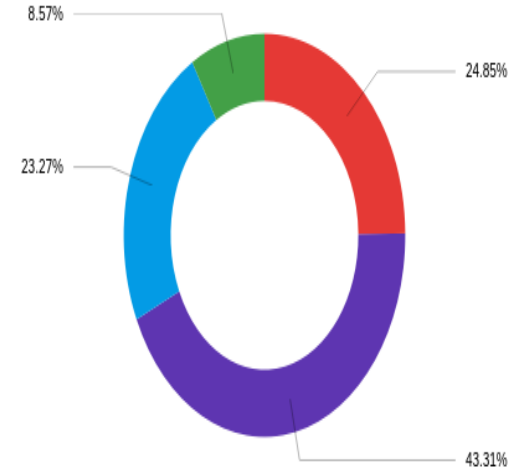
*COMPARISON DATA*

# Have you used services in the Marshall University Counseling Center?



Yes No No, I have never utilized services at the Marshall University Counseling Center.  
No, but I utilized counseling services in the community.

2020



Yes No No, I have never utilized services at the Marshall University Counseling Center. No, but I utilized counseling services in the community.

2021

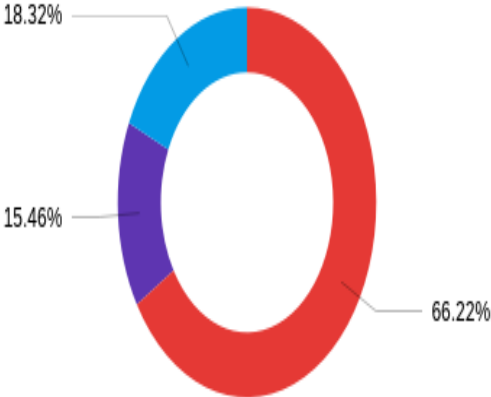
# Please indicate any other symptoms/concerns brought on by COVID-19

## Top responses from 2020 and 2021 surveys

- N/A/None
  - Social Issues
  - Sickness, health, security (those who are sick, have health problems and are worried about the health of their family members/friends)
  - Mental health- overwhelming stress, depression, anxiety
  - Loneliness
  - Mood (angry, frustrated, sad, etc.)
  - Financial concerns
  - Weight issues
  - Uncertainties about future, school and home life
  - Job security concerns
  - Issues with politics surrounding COVID and/or racism
  - Bored
  - No resources
  - Extra school-work
  - Unsympathetic professors
  - Lack of motivation
  - Time regarding how long the virus has lasted
  - Housing
  - Eating changes/Eating disorders
  - Everything
-

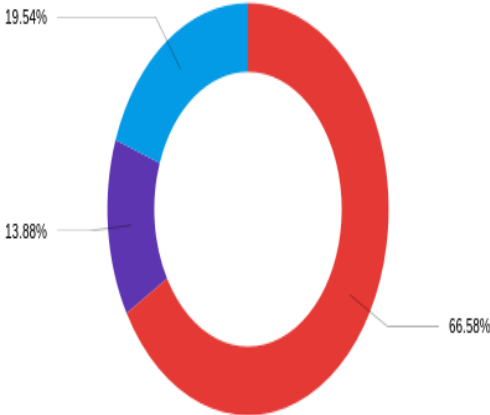


# Due to the change in course delivery, did you experience additional stress?



Yes Maybe No

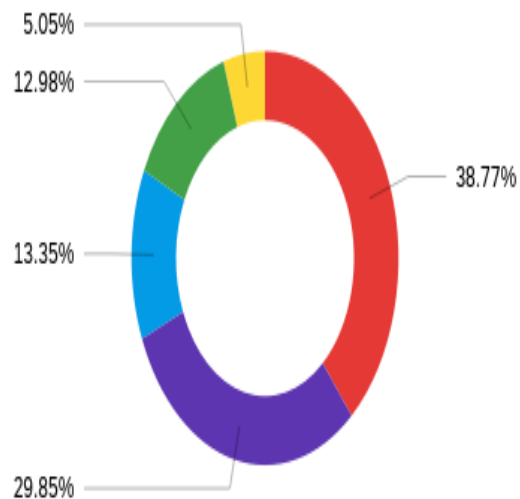
**2020**



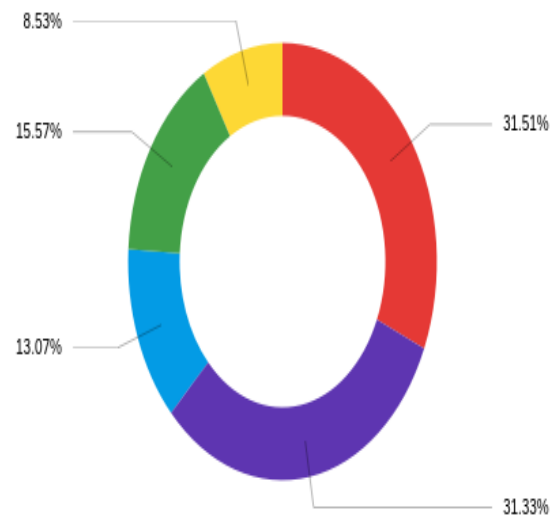
Yes Maybe No

**2021**

# Do you believe the social distancing guidelines have added an additional stressor to your life?



2020

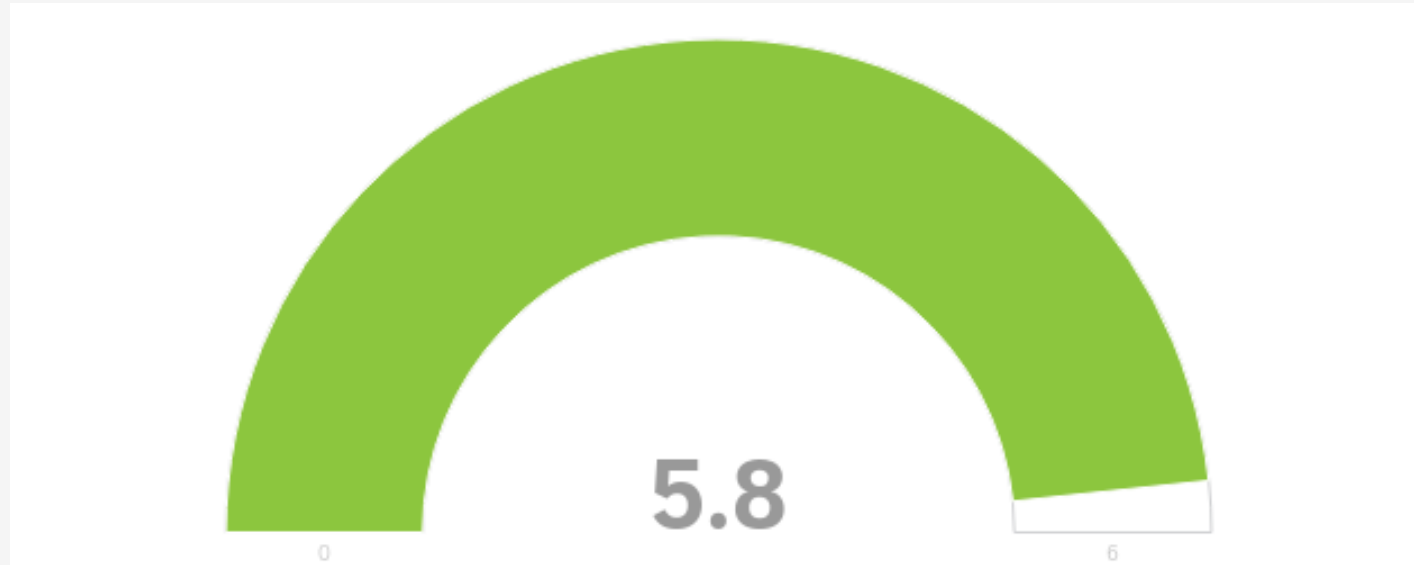


2021

Definitely yes Probably yes Might or might not Probably not Defin

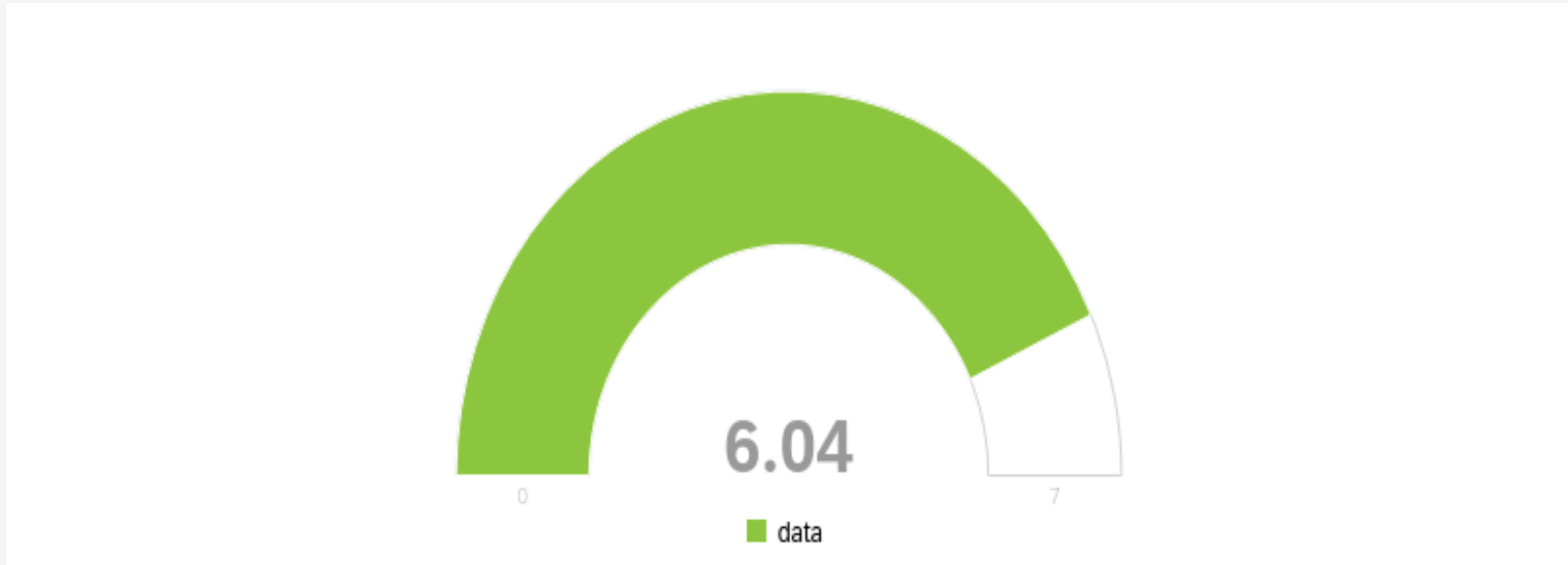
Definitely yes Probably yes Might or might not Probably not Definitely not

*On the scale provided, rate your stress level associated with the transition to online courses due to COVID-19. (Scale of 0= no stress, 10-high stress).*



**2020**

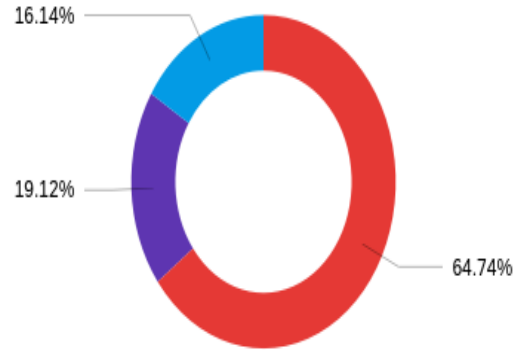
On the scale provided, rate your stress level associated with the transition to online courses due to COVID-19. (Scale of 0= no stress, 10-high stress).



**2021**

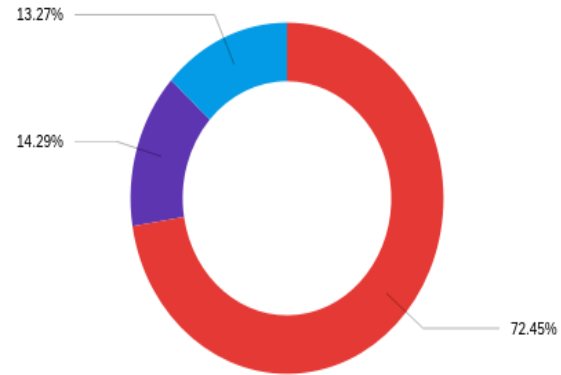
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# Has time away from your friends due to COVID-19 adversely affected your personal well-being this semester?



Yes Maybe No

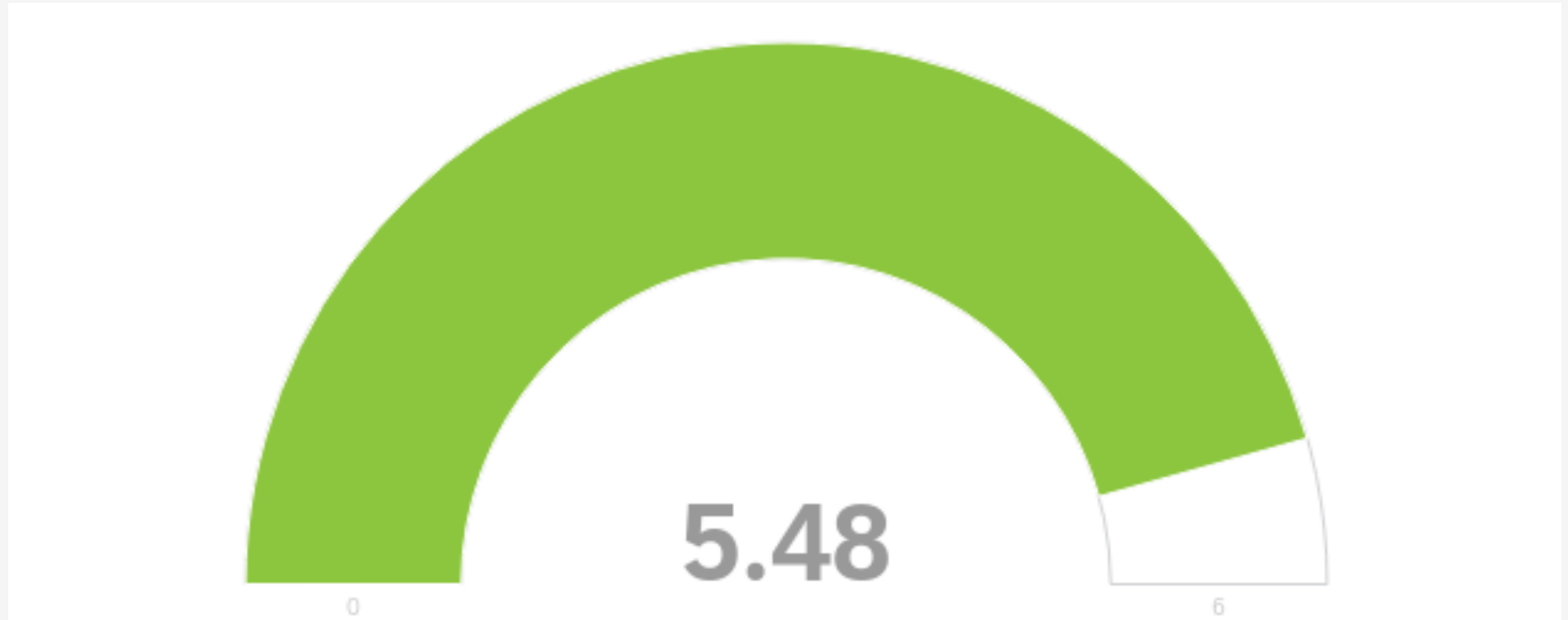
**2020**



Yes Maybe No

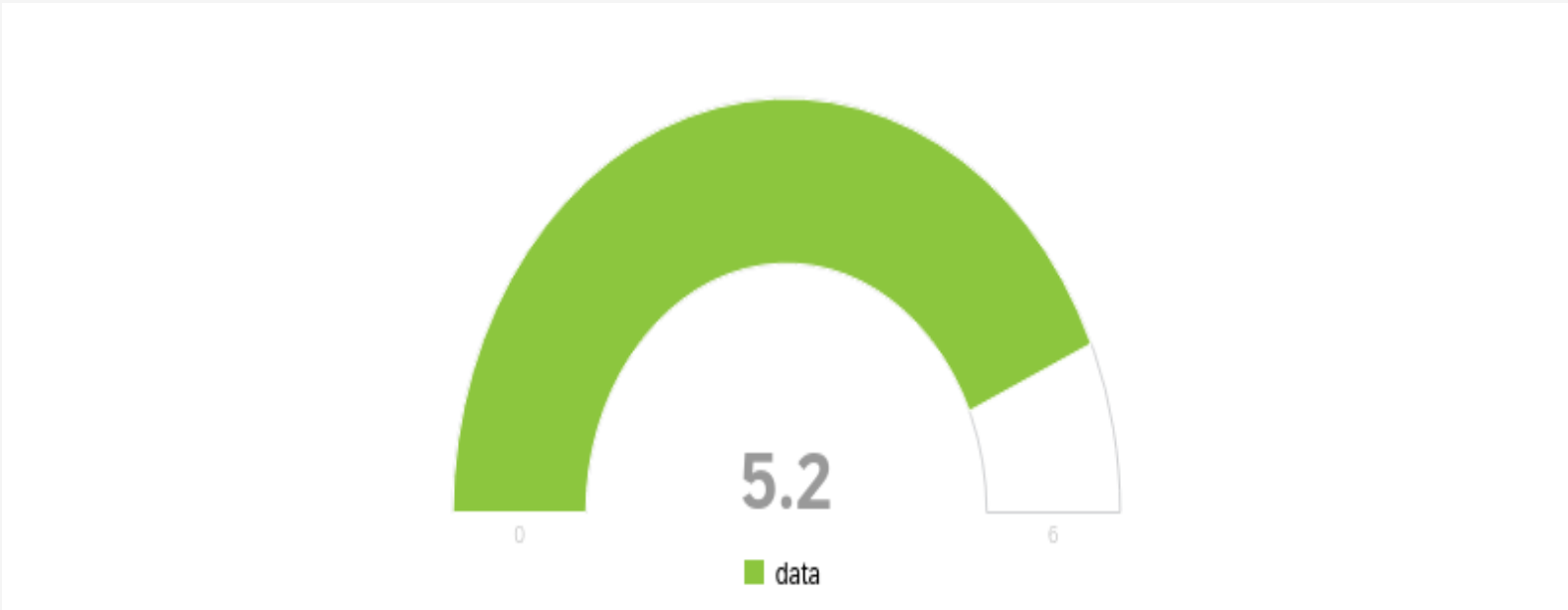
**2021**

On the scale provided, rate your personal stress level due to COVID-19. ( How well you are coping?  
0= not coping very well  
10= coping very well.)



2020

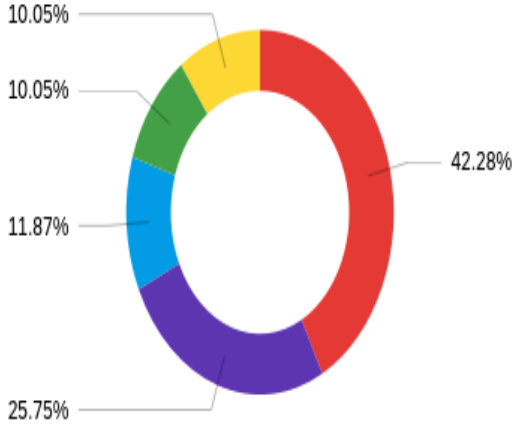
On the scale provided, rate your personal stress level due to COVID-19.  
( How well you are coping?  
0= not coping very well  
10= coping very well.)



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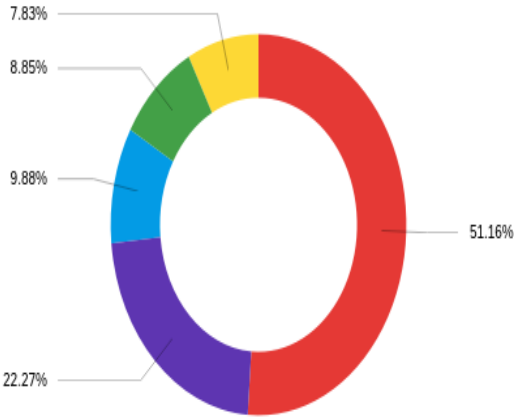
2021

# Do you believe the lack of a college atmosphere has adversely affected your college experience?



Definitely yes Probably yes Might or might not Probably not Definitely not

2020

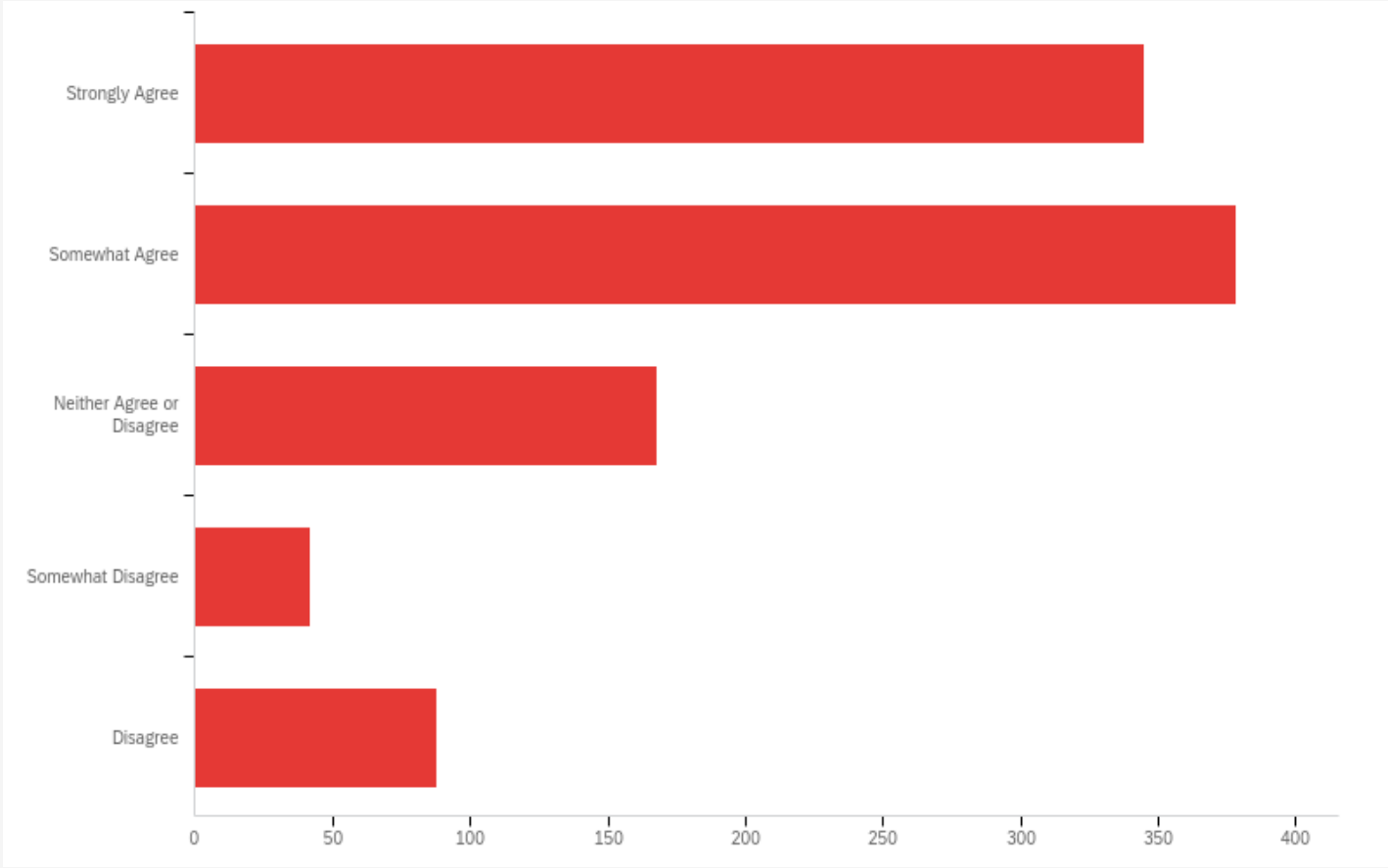


Definitely yes Probably yes Might or might not Probably not Definitely not

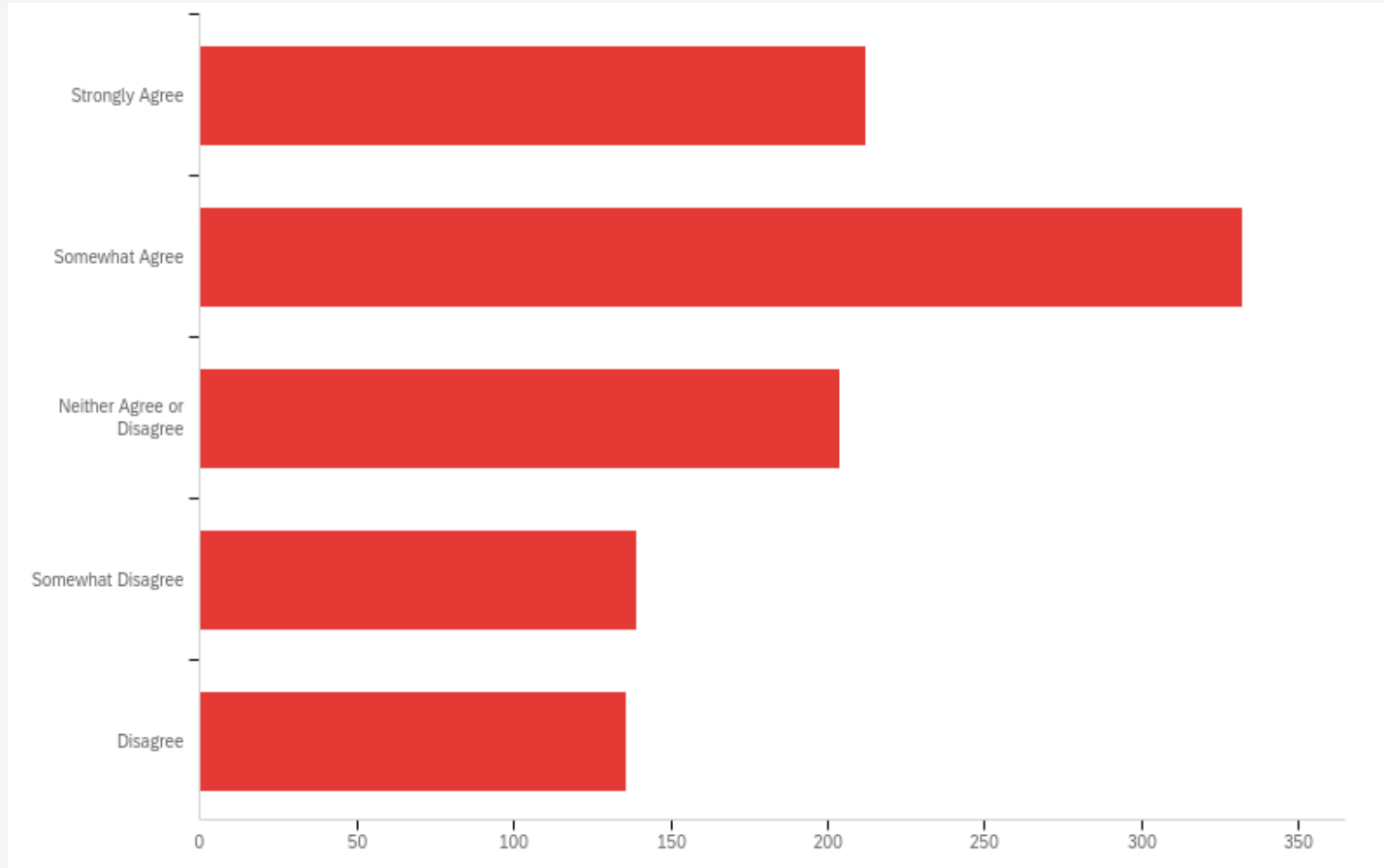
2021



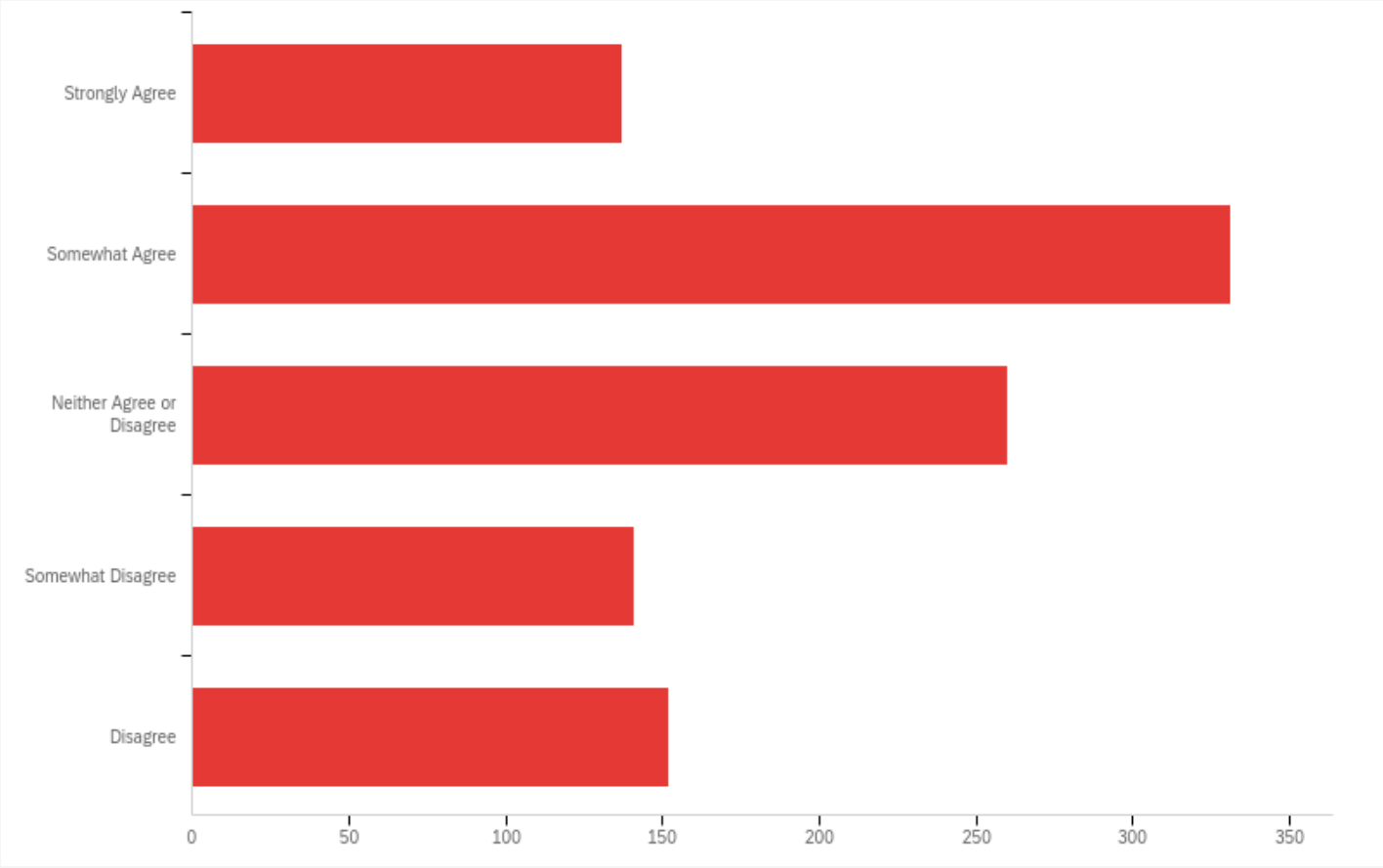
# Has the availability of the Covid-19 vaccine eased your worries about the Covid-19 pandemic?



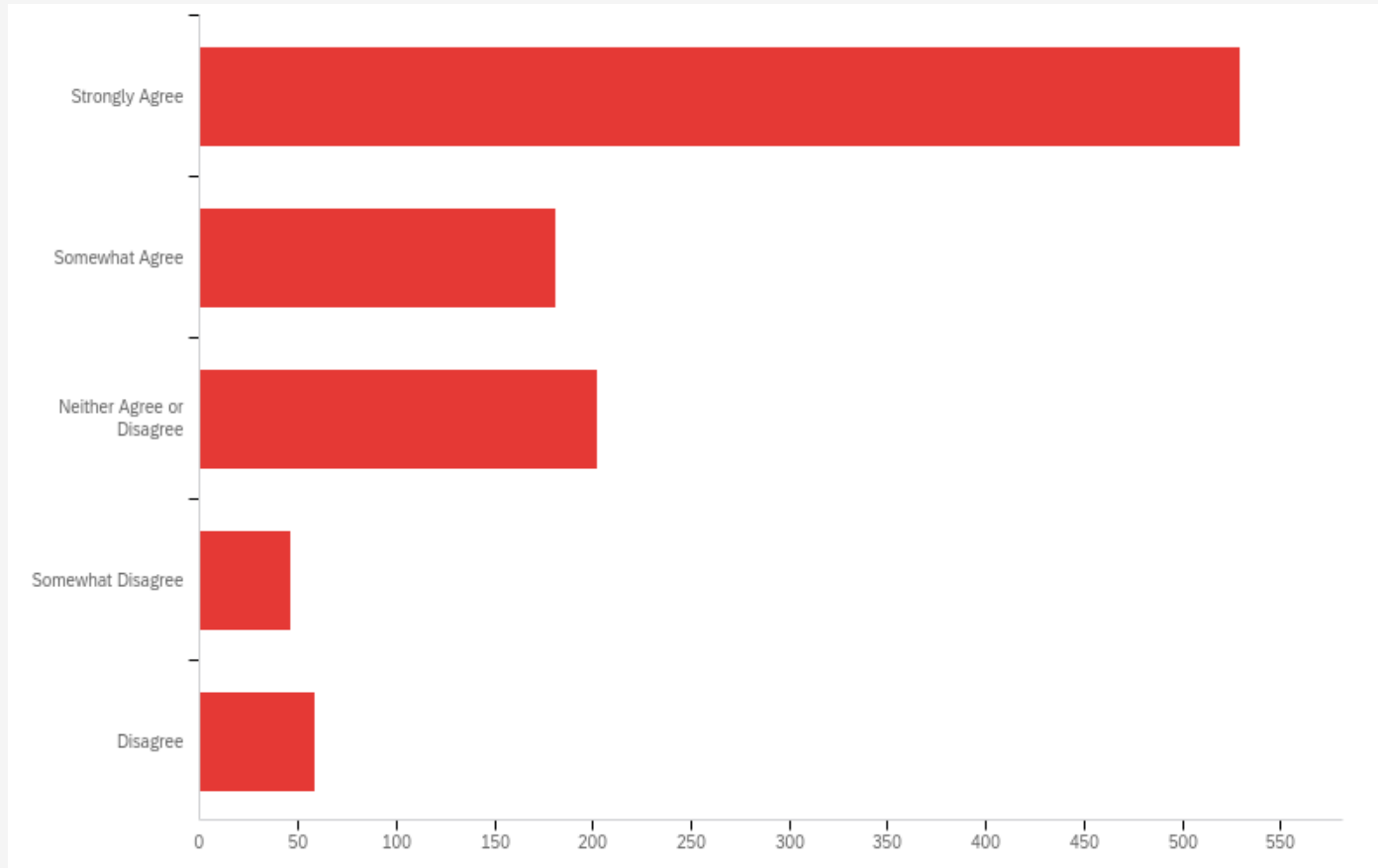
# Has the loosening of social distancing guidelines across America, in Huntington, and across campus eased your frustration about the Covid-19 pandemic?



# My stress level surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic has decreased since the pandemic began and social distancing guidelines were put into place in March 2020.



# I am looking forward to in person courses and campus activities for the Fall 2021 semester.



## *What needs and/or on-campus or community resources could assist you at this time?*

- NA/None
  - Counseling/Therapy
  - "I don't know"
  - Financial assistance
  - Return to campus/Face-to-Face Instruction
  - Stay online
  - More leniency and understanding from faculty
  - The Library
  - Better communication from faculty and staff
  - Friends
  - More in-person activities and connection of students
  - More virtual/social distanced events
-

- Results from both surveys are consistent with other research and literature concerning the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on one's mental health.
- Mental health has worsened for university and college students since the onset of the pandemic and has worsened as time goes on throughout the pandemic.
- The Covid-19 pandemic affected students adversely as students in a variety of ways.
- Changes in course delivery caused additional stress for students.

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## *RESULTS*

- Being away from friends and changes in college atmosphere caused students additional stress.
- Some stressors have been eased for students due to the Covid-19 vaccine, lifting of social distancing guidelines, and being back on campus for in person classes and activities.
- The research provides understanding about how much the pandemic has affected students and what students need to feel supported.

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## *RESULTS*

## What can we do to help students with the COVID-19 Effect?

- Increase marketing of counseling center services- send information to departments, advertise on website, increase communication with student organizations about services.
- Increase mental health resources and outreach due to the percentage of respondents that cite COVID-19 affected their mental health.
- Provide information to students about financial assistance during the pandemic.
- Provide a hybrid option to accommodate students who wish to be online and in-person for academic instruction.
- Increase online resources- support groups, workshops, online/virtual activities for students.
- Increase communication with students in each campus department. Many students indicated they wanted more communication with faculty and some felt they didn't receive enough communication and support throughout the pandemic.

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***RECOMMENDATIONS***



## What can we do to help students with the COVID-19 Effect?

- Increase and be more intentional about mental health outreach for students on campus.
- Provide programs that focus on populations that underutilize mental health services (men, minorities).
- Speak with administrators. Many higher education counseling centers are already understaffed.
- Network with other higher education mental health professionals.
- Active Minds found that students were receiving mental health and coping strategies information from their higher education institution. This is important. There are many ways to disseminate information to students.


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***RECOMMENDATIONS***

- Provide information to students about electronic apps and resources.
- Kindness Calls-Ohio State University- A simple phone call, a hello, asking someone how they are doing, if they need assistance is so helpful and can go a long way.
- Mental health information and resources on course syllabi.
- Collaboration with campus departments.
- Increase training and support for faculty and staff.

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## ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

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1. Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD)
  2. State Higher Education Policy Commissions
  3. Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH)
  4. National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
  5. Jed Foundation
  6. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
  7. National Institute of Mental Health

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***IMPORTANT RESOURCES***

***WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN  
DOING ON YOUR CAMPUS TO  
ASSIST WITH THE COVID-19  
EFFECT?***

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***BUILD A COVID-19 MENTAL HEALTH TOOLKIT***

*COVID-19  
EFFECT PLAN  
AND TOOLKIT*

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# COVID-19 EFFECT TOOLKIT AND PLANNING

*WHAT ARE THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS ON MY CAMPUS RIGHT NOW, ALMOST TWO YEARS INTO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?*

*HOW ARE STUDENTS FEELING AND FUNCTIONING ON MY CAMPUS?*

*WHAT DOES ADMINISTRATION NEED TO KNOW?*

*FREE ELECTRONIC APPS AND RESOURCES*

*SUPPORT GROUP IDEAS:*

*OUTREACH IDEAS:*

*WHAT CAN I DO TO FIND OUT WHAT STUDENTS NEED?*

*CREATIVE INTERVENTIONS:*

*COLLABORATION IDEAS:*

*HOW CAN I COLLECT DATA?*

*WHAT DO I NEED AS A COUNSELING CENTER DIRECTOR AND WHAT DOES MY STAFF NEED?*

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Czeisler, M., Lane, R., Petrosky, E.,(2020). Et Al. Mental Health, Substance Use, And Suicidal Ideation During The COVID-19 Pandemic- United States, June 24-10, 2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Weekly Rep,69. 1049-1057. Retrieved From [Mental Health, Substance Use, And Suicidal Ideation During The COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, June 24–30, 2020 | MMWR \(Cdc.Gov\)](#)

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Panchal, N., Kamal, R., Cox, C. And Garfield, R. (2021, Feb 10). The Implications Of Covid-19 For Mental Health And Substance Use. Retrieved From [The Implications Of COVID-19 For Mental Health And Substance Use | KFF](#)

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## *REFERENCES*

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