



Mental Health America Attitudinal Survey October 2006

Part I: Findings on Stress In America Executive Summary

Mental Health America
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About Mental Health America

Mental Health America (formerly known as the National Mental Health Association) is the country's leading nonprofit dedicated to helping ALL people live mentally healthier lives. With our more than 320 affiliates nationwide, we represent a growing movement of Americans who promote mental wellness for the health and well-being of the nation – everyday and in times of crisis.

About the Survey

The “Mental Health America Attitudinal Survey” was conducted by International Communications Research, an independent research company. Interviews were conducted via telephone and the Internet from October 10 to November 1, 2006 among a nationally representative sample of 3,040 respondents age 18 and older. The poll has a margin of error of +/- 1.75%.

“Part 1: Findings on Stress in America” is the first in a series of releases from the Mental Health America Attitudinal Survey. In the next few months, Mental Health America will release additional survey findings addressing the stigma surrounding mental illness, veterans, holiday pressures and stress, perceptions of America's health care systems, doctor-patient relationships and more.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

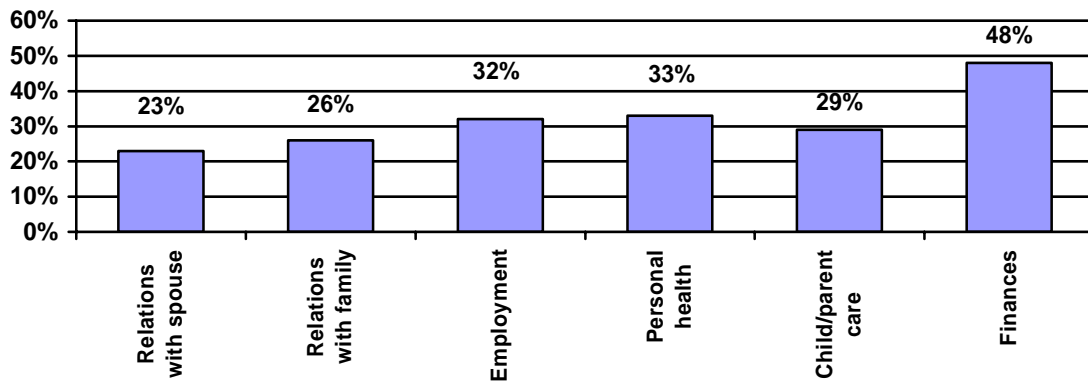
This summary provides details on the mental health status of survey respondents and analyzes significant differences between specific sub-segments including overall stress, stress factors, actions taken to deal with stressful issues and views on chronic stress.

Stressful Aspects of Life

Thinking about your life right now, please tell me which aspects of life are particularly stressful for you?

Life Stressors

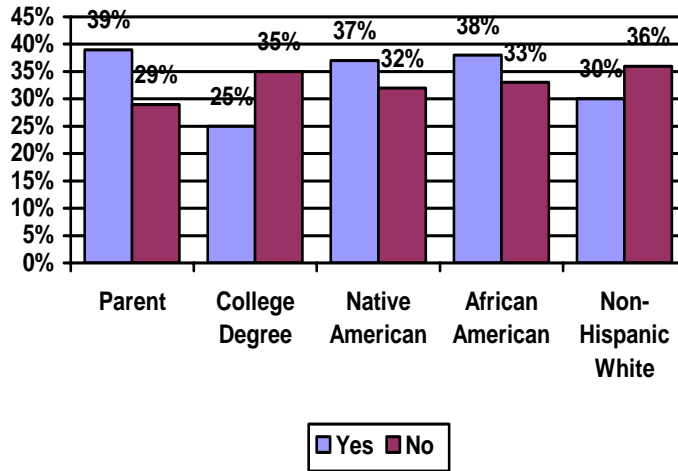
Overall, finances were noted most often as a current life stressor. Health and employment follow as the next most common sources of stress.



Stressed Americans

The overall primary demographic factor associated with stress is being a parent. Native Americans and African Americans report significantly greater stress than Non-Hispanic Whites.

Those without a college degree report substantially more stress than those with a college degree.

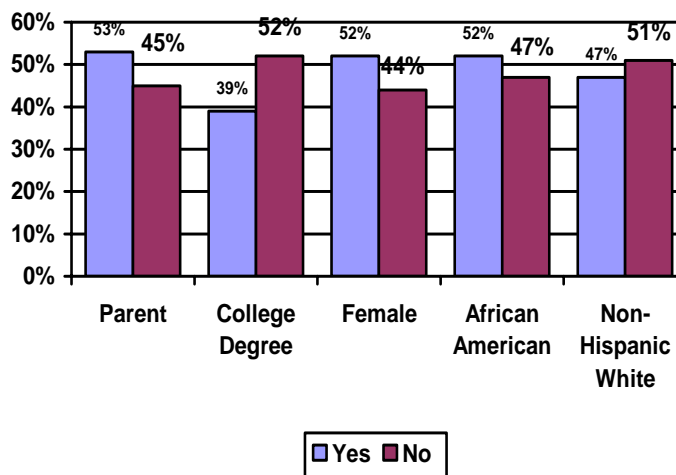


Findings for selected sources of stress are shown below.

Stress from Finances

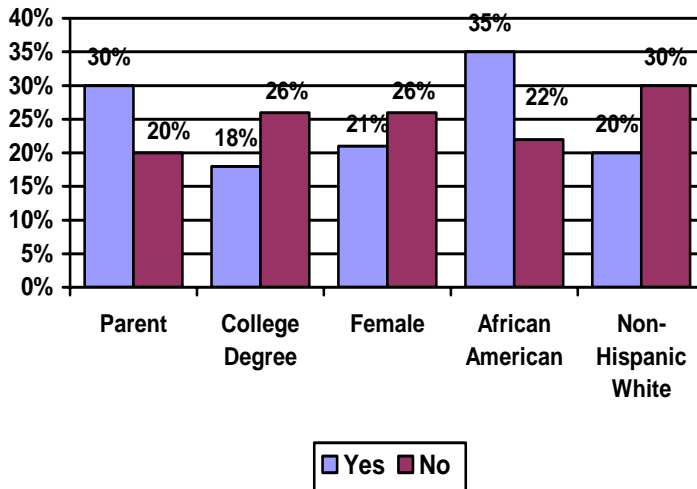
Parents, women and African Americans report the highest levels of finance-related stress.

Education made a difference in whether finances were a stressor or not – over 50% of respondents with less than a college degree noted financial stress.



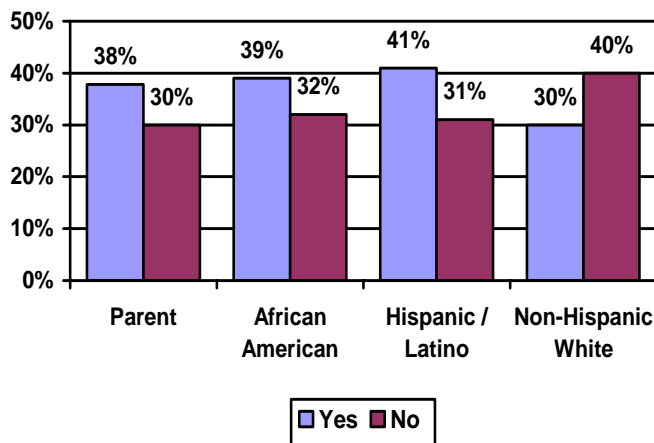
Stress from Relationships with Spouse/Significant Other

African Americans report the greatest stress from relationships with their spouse or significant other.



Stress from Employment Issues

Hispanics/Latinos, African Americans and parents report the highest levels of stress on employment issues, whether on-the-job stress or due to lack of work.

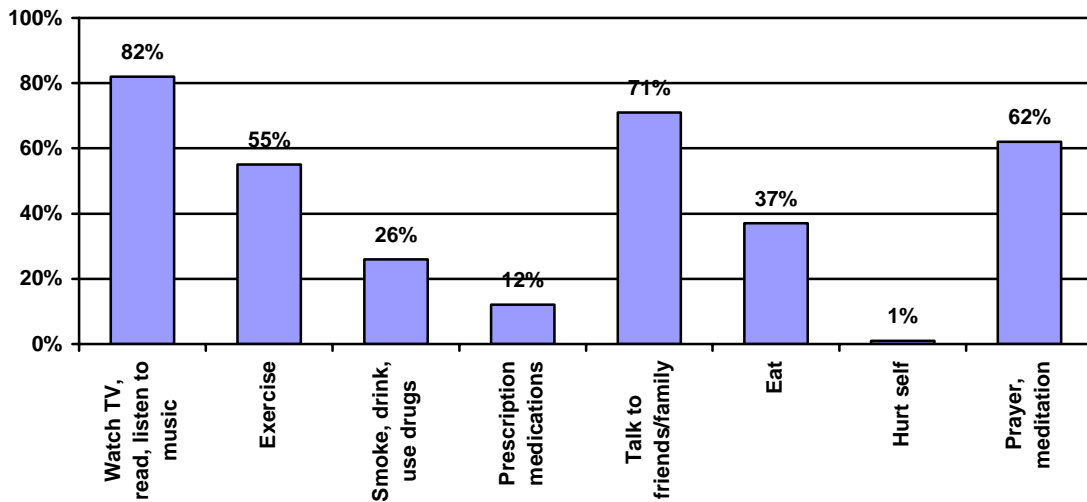


Behaviors to Deal with Stressful Issues

Which of the following do you do generally when you feel stressed out or anxious?

General Population

Overall, 82% of respondents stated they watch TV, read or listen to music when they feel stressed. This was followed by talking to family and friends (71%) and prayer or meditation (62%).



Totals By Ethnicity

Native American and Non-Hispanic White respondents were more likely to engage in unhealthy coping skills for stress. 30% of Native Americans and 28% of Non-Hispanic White respondents noted they smoke, drink or use drugs when feeling stressed out. Asian respondents were least likely to smoke, drink or use drugs to cope.

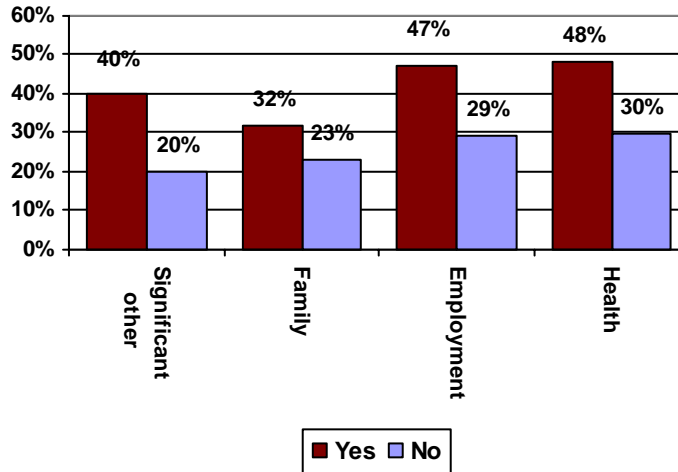
Female respondents were significantly more likely than men to use eating as a coping skill for stress.

African American respondents were far more likely than the other groups to use prayer or meditation as a way to deal with stress and/or anxiety.

	Total	Native Americans	African Americans	Hispanics / Latinos	Asians	Non-Hispanic Whites
Watch TV, read, listen to music	82%	84%	84%	86%	88%	81%
Talk to friends / family	71%	76%	65%	75%	77%	71%
Prayer, meditation	62%	64%	82%	60%	51%	59%
Exercise	55%	67%	56%	59%	70%	52%
Eat	37%	41%	33%	37%	38%	38%
Smoke, drink, use drugs	26%	30%	24%	23%	17%	28%
Prescription medications	12%	13%	8%	10%	7%	13%
Hurt self	1%	1%	1%	*	4%	*

Totals by Personal Experience with a Mental Illness

Persons with personal experience with a mental illness are far more likely to report stress than those without such personal experience. This increase in stress is primarily related to relationships with significant others and family. Increased stress was also found regarding employment and health.



Persons with personal experience with mental illness are more likely to report using cigarettes, alcohol or drugs to relieve stress, as well as prescription medications, talking with family, eating, and to a lesser degree (though more than those without experience with mental illness), cutting or other self-harm.

