

Mental Health During Pandemic

Story Behind the Numbers

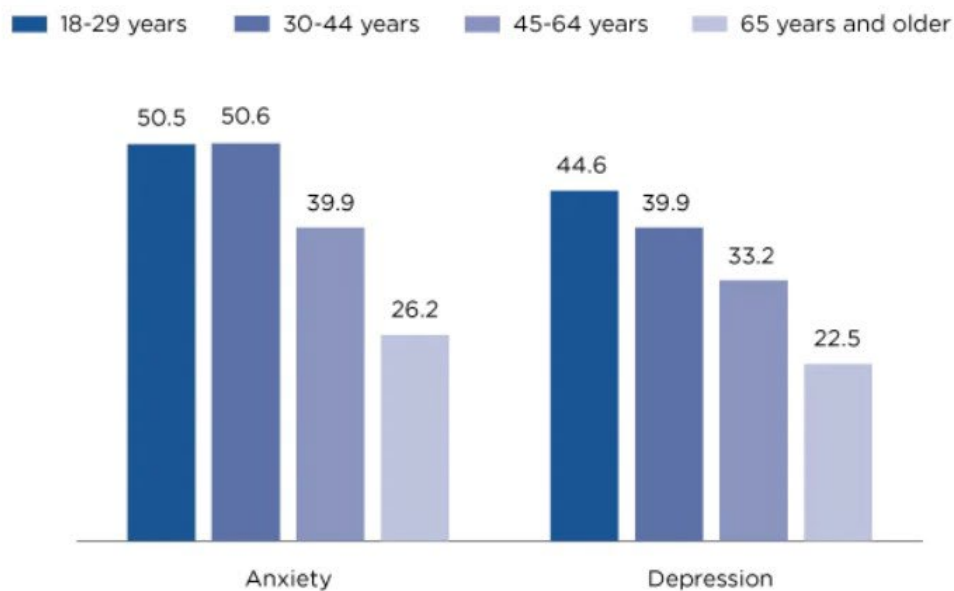
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Mental health includes our psychological, emotional, and social wellbeing. Mental health is important in every stage of our life as it affects our everyday living – how we feel, think, and act. It also helps determine how we relate to others, make choices, and handle stress.

According to new U.S. Census Bureau data, younger adults living alone were more likely than older adults living alone to report symptoms of anxiety and depression during the fall months of 2020. Figure 1 shows that Household Pulse Survey respondents aged 65 and older living alone indicated a lower rate of anxiety and depression than those in other age groups. On the contrary, people in the age ranges of 18 to 29 and 30 to 44 reported higher rates of anxiety and depression.

Figure 1. Percentage of adults living alone with symptoms of anxiety and depression by age, October/November 2020

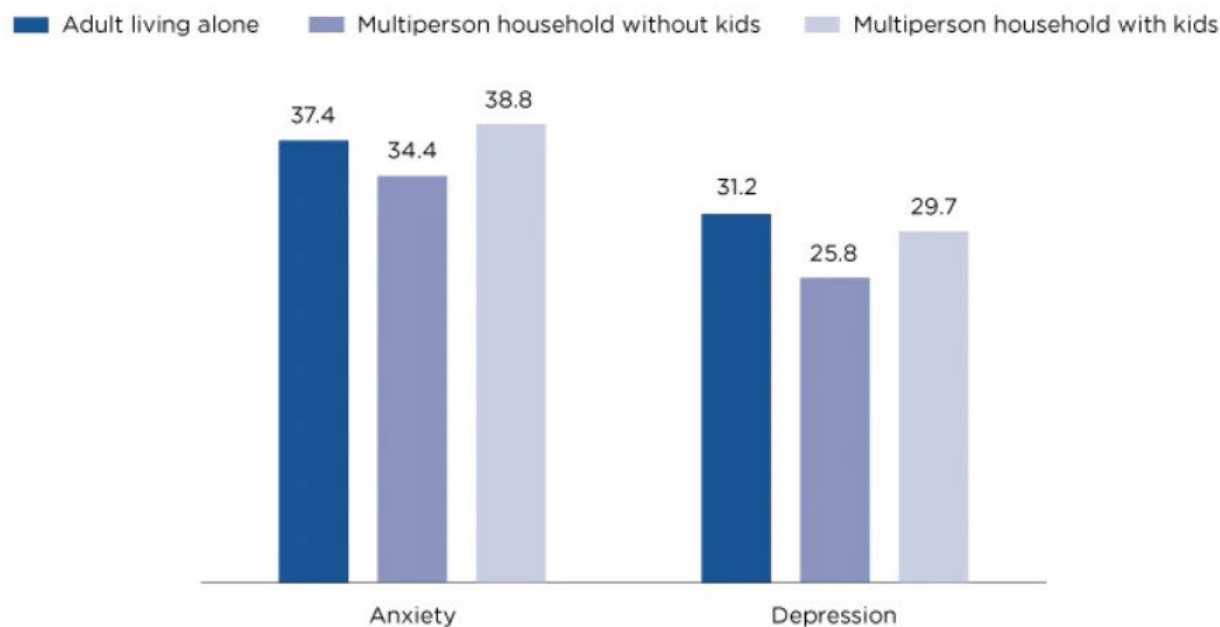


Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, 2021](https://www.census.gov/hhes/housing/owning/owning-alone.html)

Overall, about one-third of respondents (adults) stated they felt anxiety. Especially adults living alone and households with children were slightly more likely to report feeling anxious (37.4% and 38.8%, respectively) than adults living in households

without children (34.4%). When analyzed symptoms of depression, the situation by household types is similar to anxiety-related results (Figure 2).¹

Figure 2. Percentage of adults with symptoms of anxiety and depression by household type, October/November 2020



Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, 2021](https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/hhs/healthcare.html)

Financial stress such as loss of income significantly impacts mental health, particularly of people living alone. About half of Household Pulse Survey respondents living alone, who either lost or expected to lose their job and thus employment income, reported anxiety. Moreover, 44% of those people reported depression. On the contrary, 32% of people living alone who had not experienced this type of economic disruption felt anxious, and 26% indicated depression.²

Depression, anxiety, and suicide are more prevalent among the agricultural population than the population in general. Farmers, ranchers, and agricultural workers often live stressful lives due to constant and uncontrollable factors like regulation, injuries, weather, illness, and loans. Since 2020, farming communities have also been facing an unprecedented economic disruption due to the COVID-19 outbreak.³

Interacting with and supporting someone who may be developing a mental health issue or experiencing a crisis is crucial. For example, North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center provides Midwestern farmers, their families, and the community with access to resources helping manage and reduce stress.⁴ Mental Health First Aid from National Council for Mental Wellbeing is another example of help to adult participants feel confident in providing assistance and support to someone in distress.⁵

¹ U.S. Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/01/young-adults-living-alone-report-anxiety-depression-during-pandemic.html>

² U.S. Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/01/young-adults-living-alone-report-anxiety-depression-during-pandemic.html>

³ Morning AgClips: <https://www.morningagclips.com/tools-for-midwestern-farmers-to-thrive/>

⁴ North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center: <https://farmstress.org/>

⁵ Mental Health First Aid: <https://extension.purdue.edu/mhfa/>