

Americans say they are more anxious than a year ago; baby boomers report greatest increase in anxiety

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Americans' anxiety levels experienced sharp increases in the past year, according to [new national poll](#) released today by the American

Psychiatric Association (APA).

Respondents were asked to rate their anxiety on five different areas: health, safety, finances, relationships and politics.

This year's national anxiety score – derived by mean scores on a 0-100 scale, is 51, a five-point jump since 2017. Increases in anxiety scores were seen across age groups, across people of different race/ethnicity and among men and women. By generation, millennials continued to be more anxious than Gen Xers or baby boomers, but baby boomer's anxiety increased the most with a seven-point jump between 2017 and 2018.

While more Americans are anxious than last year in all five areas (health, safety, finances, relationships and politics), the greatest increase was in anxiety about paying bills. Nearly three-quarters of women, nearly three-quarters of young adults (18 – 34) and nearly four in five Hispanic adults are somewhat or extremely anxious about paying their bills.

Women are more anxious than men, and also had a greater increase in anxiety than men between 2017 to 2018. When asked to compare their anxiety to the previous year, more than half (57 percent) of women 18-49 years reported being more anxious, compared to 38 percent of men the same age. Older Americans also see this gender gap – 39 percent of women 50 and older and 24 percent of men 50 and older say they are more anxious now than this time last year. Overall, nearly four in 10 people (39 percent) say they are more anxious than they were last year.

Other findings from the poll:

- People of color are more anxious than Caucasians (11 points

higher on the anxiety index)

- Americans expressed nearly equal concerns about health, safety and paying bills, with somewhat less concern about politics and relationships.
- People with Medicaid are more anxious than people with private insurance.

"This poll shows U.S. adults are increasingly anxious particularly about health, safety and finances. That increased stress and [anxiety](#) can significantly impact many aspects of people's lives, including their mental health, and it can affect families." said APA President Anita Everett, M.D. "It highlights the need to help reduce the effects of stress with regular exercise, relaxation, healthy eating and time with friends and family."

Mental Health and Stigma

The poll also looked at attitudes and perceptions about mental health and treatment. The vast majority of Americans believe a person's [mental health](#) impacts their physical [health](#) (86 percent, up from 80 percent in 2017). Three-quarters of American say untreated mental illness has a significant impact on the U.S. economy. About half of U.S. adults say there is less stigma against people with mental illness than 10 years ago. However, more than one-third say they would not vote for a candidate for public office who had been diagnosed with a [mental illness](#), even if the candidate received treatment.

These findings are from an APA-sponsored poll conducted online using ORC International's CARAVAN Omnibus Survey. The surveys were collected from a nationally representative sample of 1,004 adults during the period March 22-25, 2018 and from a similar [poll](#) of 1,019 [adults](#) in April 20-23, 2017. The margin of error is +/-3.1 percentage points.

Provided by American Psychiatric Association

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