

Coping with COVID-19

What Americans **Need**, **Feel** and **Fear**
About the Coronavirus Pandemic



FINAL RESEARCH REPORT:
Key Findings Summary

RESEARCH BY



POWERED BY



PURPOSE

As the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, the Ad Council's research began in early April to understand:

What are Americans' needs and concerns amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and how might those needs change as the crisis unfolds?



This research study was an exploration into the ever-changing conversations, questions, and fears around the coronavirus pandemic from April-June 2020. Through social listening analysis and a regular survey (quantitative inquiry), this study sought to discover what Americans really needed at the height of the pandemic in spring 2020, in order to address the public's mental, social and economic challenges as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

For reports of individual survey findings and additional information on this research, visit [covidresearch.adcouncilkit.org](https://www.covidresearch.adcouncilkit.org)



METHODOLOGY

The findings in this report are based on a mixed-method research approach: **1) social listening; and 2) quantitative online survey**

Method 1: Social Listening

Objective: This research method sought to uncover the ongoing and dominant COVID-19 conversations taking place online across the nation in order to identify the areas of greatest need and hone in on shifting social trends.

Method 2: Quantitative Online Survey

Objective: This research method was designed to quantify the areas of greatest need as expressed by a survey of respondents representing the American public. The survey also sought to uncover how Americans were feeling amid the early stages of the pandemic (April-June 2020), what they were specifically worried about, what information they needed, where they were getting COVID-19 information, and more.

This research was also designed to validate findings from the social listening phase by clarifying the correlation and connection between the social conversation and the real-time needs of the American public.

THIS RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTED FOUR DOMINANT TRENDS ABOUT AMERICANS AND COVID-19, FROM APRIL TO JUNE 2020:



Americans' fears about their own health and the health of others (family/friends) lessened. Despite the decrease, people still largely took precautions against COVID-19.




Economic fears and financial impact decreased steadily.



While anxiety and depression spiked through the spring, gratitude remained the most dominant emotion at the outset of, and throughout, the crisis (April-June 2020).



The COVID-19 crisis not only highlighted—but also exacerbated — inequities around race and income.



AMERICANS' FEARS ABOUT THEIR OWN HEALTH AND THE HEALTH OF OTHERS (FAMILY/FRIENDS) LESSENER. DESPITE THE DECREASE, PEOPLE STILL LARGELY TOOK PRECAUTIONS AGAINST COVID-19.

Americans in general became **less worried** about some of the top health-related topics:

The health of frontline workers:

68% in April to 49% in June

People not taking COVID-19 seriously:

66% in April to 59% in June

The health of friends and family:

53% in April to 39% in June



For nearly all activities surveyed, people's perception of safety outweighed their likelihood of doing such an activity (ex. Getting a haircut, attending an indoor social gathering of 10 people or less, going to the polls to vote in a primary election, play sports with other people, exercise at a gym, ride in a rideshare, etc.).

Find past reports and additional information at
covidresearch.adcouncilkit.org



ECONOMIC FEARS AND FINANCIAL IMPACT DECREASED STEADILY.

As the financial impact lessened from April 2020 to June 2020, **financially related needs fell** significantly as well for the general population:

Affording food:

19% April to 13% June

Affording household bills:

19% April to 13% June

Affording housing:

20% April to 15% June

Access to free or reduced cost meals:

20% April to 13% June

Assistance with the cost of COVID-related treatment or testing:

19% April to 15% June

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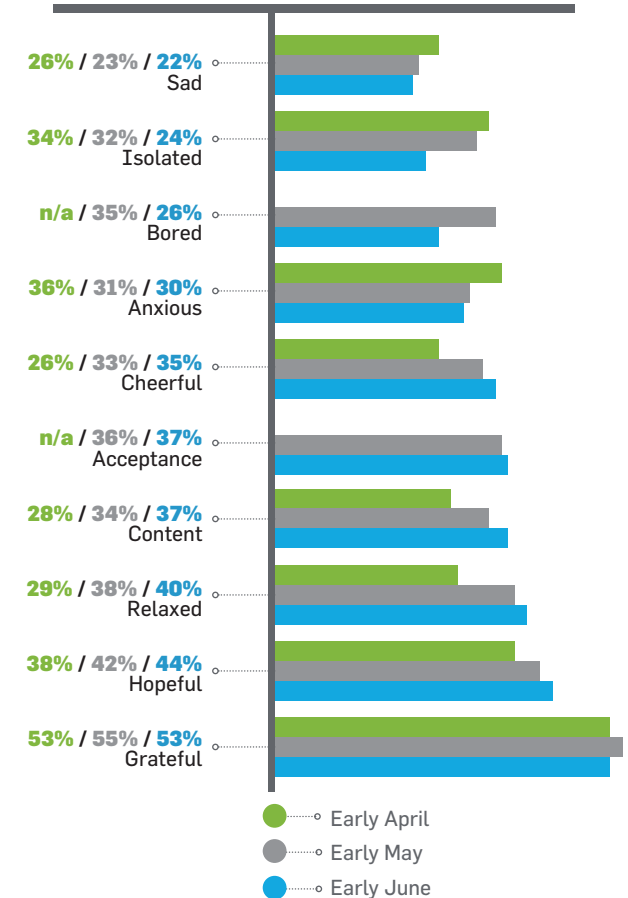
WHILE ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION SPIKED THROUGH THE SPRING, GRATITUDE REMAINED THE MOST DOMINANT EMOTION AT THE OUTSET OF, AND THROUGHOUT, THE CRISIS (APRIL-JUNE 2020).

Demographics had some impact on emotions through the spring. For example:

- People earning **under \$50k** in household income were significantly **more likely** than the highest income group (\$100k+) **to report feeling depressed, lonely, sad, bored, isolated, and tired**—while those earning \$100k+ were more likely to feel relaxed, optimistic, cheerful, or resigned.
- **African American respondents** were significantly **more likely** to report **feeling grateful, hopeful, optimistic, confident, relaxed, content, cheerful, or acceptance** than people of other races/ethnicities.
- **Hispanic respondents** were the **most likely** to report feeling **sad, tired, frustrated, lonely, irritable, depressed, anxious, angry and aggressive**.

Feelings/Emotions from April to June

In the past week, how often have you felt any of the following? (Top 2 Box)



Find further details on the response to this question, past reports and additional information at covidresearch.adcouncilkit.org



THE COVID-19 CRISIS NOT ONLY HIGHLIGHTED —BUT ALSO EXACERBATED — INEQUITIES AROUND RACE AND INCOME.

Financially, the impact has been disproportionate as well for people of color and people with lower incomes.

- One in four (27%) of Hispanic and one in five (19%) of African American respondents reported a large financial impact due to COVID-19, compared to 17 percent Asian or white/Caucasian respondents.
- In lower income brackets, one in four (27%) of people earning under \$30k and one in five (21%) of people earning \$30-49k were significantly more likely to say COVID-19 had a large financial impact than people with higher incomes (16% for people earning \$50k+).
- Hispanic (30%) and African American (24%) respondents were significantly more likely to say they needed general financial assistance due to loss of income than Asian (17%) or white/Caucasian (17%) respondents—and to report greater needs in many other categories spanning finance, health and mental health.

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About The Ad Council

The Ad Council has a long history of creating life-saving public service communications in times of national crisis, starting in the organization's earliest days during World War II to September 11th and natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy. Its deep relationships with media outlets, the creative community, issue experts and government leaders make the organization uniquely poised to quickly distribute life-saving information to millions of Americans.

The Ad Council is where creativity and causes converge. The non-profit organization brings together the most creative minds in advertising, media, technology and marketing to address many of the nation's most important causes. The Ad Council has created many of the most iconic campaigns in advertising history. Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk. Smokey Bear. Love Has No Labels.

The Ad Council's innovative social good campaigns raise awareness, inspire action and save lives. To learn more, visit AdCouncil.org, follow the Ad Council's communities on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and view the creative on [YouTube](#).



About C+R Research

C+R Research is an independent full-service marketing insights agency with 60 years of experience delivering great research, deep perspective and committed client service. C+R is nationally recognized for its best-in-class quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and expertise with specific populations, including shoppers, youth & family, multicultural consumers, business professionals, and global communities. C+R is privately held and headquartered in Chicago, IL. For additional information, please visit www.crrresearch.com.