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Stress in America™ 2025

A crisis of connection



Years of societal division may be taking a toll

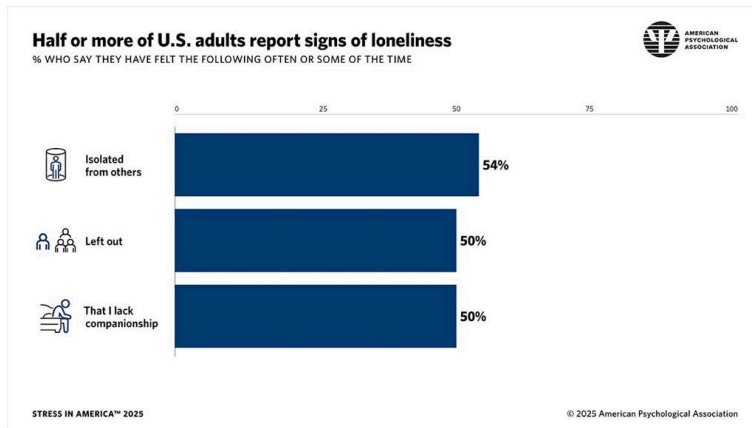
In a time when relationships are increasingly recognized as central to meaning and well-being, APA's latest [Stress in America™ survey](#) (</pubs/reports/stress-in-america>) revealed that societal division in our nation is a significant stressor for many U.S. adults.

In the survey—conducted online by The Harris Poll on behalf of APA among more than 3,000 U.S. adults ages 18 and older—62% of U.S. adults reported societal division as a significant source of [stress](#) (</topics/stress>) in their lives.

[DOWNLOAD THE FULL REPORT \(PDF, 1.06MB\)](#) [↗](#)
(</PUBS/REPORTS/STRESS-IN-AMERICA/2025/FULL-REPORT.PDF>)

[More Stress in America](#)

Beyond this concern about societal division lies a deeper, more pervasive emotional strain: loneliness. Half of adults in the U.S. reported feelings of emotional disconnection, saying they have felt isolated from others (54%), felt left out (50%), or have lacked companionship (50%) often or some of the time, suggesting loneliness may have become a defining feature of life in America. And the impact of societal division on loneliness is a stark reminder of how deeply external stressors can shape internal experiences. It's not just about disagreement—it's about disconnection.



(/pubs/reports/stress-in-america/2025/infographic-loneliness-general)

[View a full-size version with detailed description of the signs of loneliness infographic \(/pubs/reports/stress-in-america/2025/infographic-loneliness-general\)](/pubs/reports/stress-in-america/2025/infographic-loneliness-general)

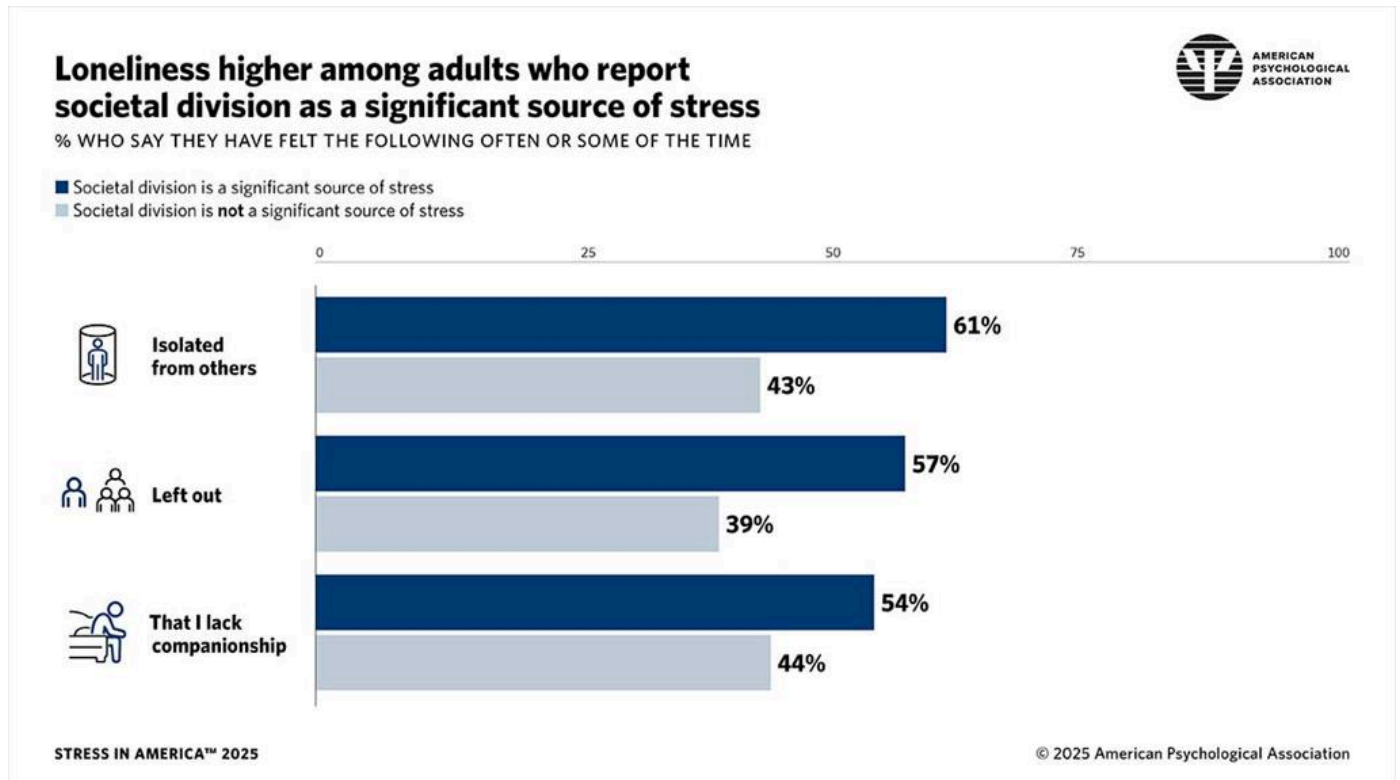
- 2025 Stress in America survey questions (PDF, 222KB) [↗](/pubs/reports/stress-in-america/2025/survey-questions.pdf)
- 2025 Stress in America topline data (PDF, 560KB) [↗](/pubs/reports/stress-in-america/2025/topline-data.pdf)
- Poll reveals a nation suffering from stress of societal division, loneliness [↗](/news/press/releases/2025/11/nation-suffering-division-loneliness)

Does societal division deepen loneliness?

The emotional toll of societal division extends far beyond political frustration—it's deeply personal, and for many, profoundly isolating. Adults who reported societal division as a significant source of stress in their lives were not only more likely to feel emotionally strained, but also more likely to experience loneliness. Adults' levels of loneliness were based on their responses to how often they felt isolated from others, left out, or that they lacked companionship—hardly ever, some of the time, or often.¹

Among adults who said division in the nation is a significant source of stress, 61% said they often or sometimes feel isolated compared with just 43% of those who did not consider division

a significant source of stress. This suggests that the stress of living in a divided society may be amplifying emotional isolation, leaving many feeling more alone in their experiences.



(/pubs/reports/stress-in-america/2025/infographic-societal-division)

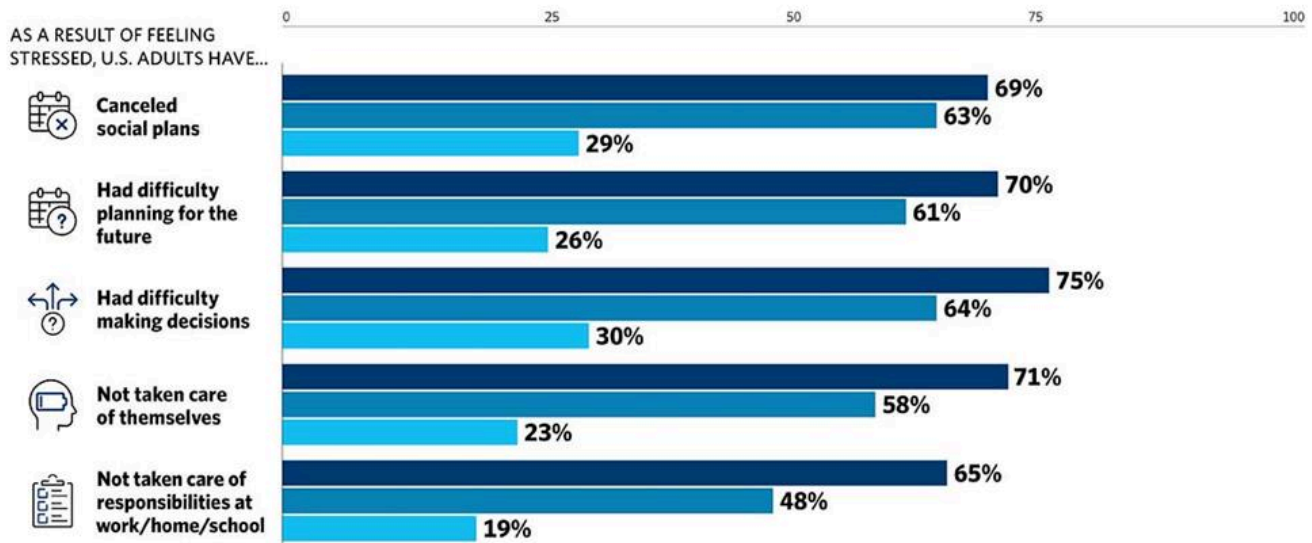
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The impact of loneliness on health and well-being

According to survey results, the emotional strain caused by loneliness and societal division doesn't exist in isolation—it often coincides with signs of declining health and unhealthy coping behaviors. Although more research is needed to fully understand these relationships, survey data revealed a troubling pattern: There is significant overlap between those who felt disconnected or lonely and those who struggle with their physical and mental well-being.

Loneliness and unhealthy behaviors

■ High loneliness ■ Moderate loneliness ■ Low loneliness



STRESS IN AMERICA™ 2025

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Adults who reported high levels of loneliness were significantly more likely to also be experiencing chronic health issues (/monitor/2019/05/ce-corner-isolation), especially depression, anxiety disorders, and chronic pain. Overall, 80% of adults with high levels of loneliness said they live with chronic illness, compared with 66% of those with moderate loneliness levels and 68% with low loneliness levels.

The physical toll was also evident. More than four in five (83%) of those stressed by societal division reported experiencing at least one physical symptom of stress in the past month—much higher than those not significantly stressed by societal division (66%). These symptoms included:

- Feeling nervous or anxious (42% vs. 29% of those not stressed)
- Fatigue (40% vs. 29%)
- Headaches (39% vs. 29%)

The majority of U.S. adults are more stressed about the country's future than they used to be

Concerns about the future of the country are weighing heavily on the minds of three-quarters of adults, who reported they are more stressed about the country's future than they used to be. A similar percentage (76%) said the future of the nation is a significant source of stress, a figure that has remained steady since just before the 2024 election (77%).

For younger adults and parents, the impact is even more profound: Nearly two-thirds of those ages 18–34 (63%) and more than half of parents (53%) said they have considered relocating to another country due to the state of the nation.

When asked to choose words that represent America today, the most commonly selected terms were a mix of hope and disillusionment:

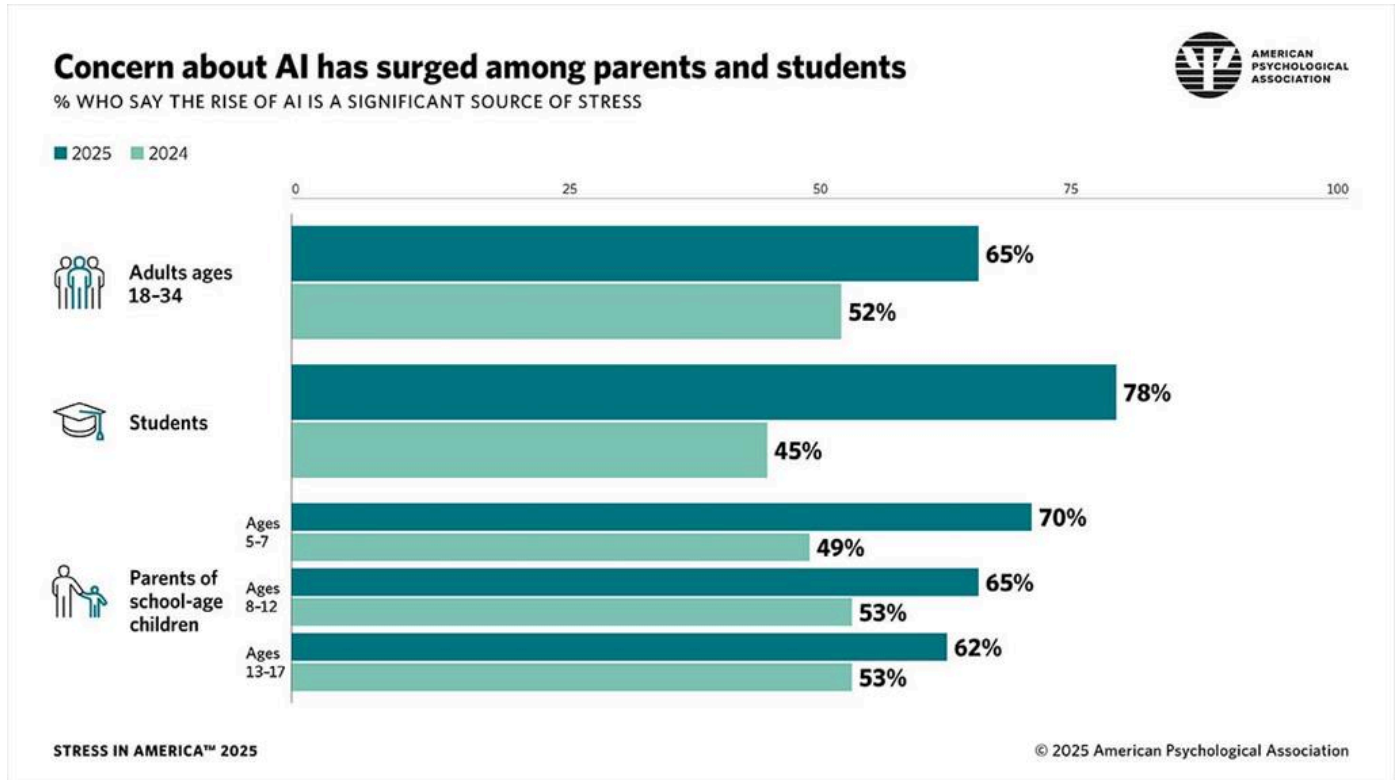
- Freedom: 41%
- Corruption: 38%
- Opportunity: 37%
- Division: 36%
- Hope: 35%
- Fear: 32%

Rapidly advancing technology introduces new stressors, while mainstays remain steady

While overall stress levels among adults have remained relatively consistent with previous years—averaging five out of 10²—stress related to the spread of inaccurate or misleading information and the rise of artificial intelligence has spiked.

Both stressors have seen significant increases since 2024: 69% of adults cited the spread of inaccurate or misleading information as a major source of stress (up from 62%), and 57% said the same about the rise in AI (up from 49%). These numbers reflect a growing unease about the reliability of information and the implications of emerging technologies on daily life, work, and society at large.

A closer look at specific groups revealed even sharper spikes in concern, particularly around AI. Young adults ages 18–34 were among the most affected; 65% reported stress related to AI, up from 52% just a year ago. The increase was also notable among adults ages 35–44 (59% vs. 52%), employed individuals (60% vs. 51%), and both women (58% vs. 49%) and men (55% vs. 49%).



(/pubs/reports/stress-in-america/2025/infographic-ai-concerns)

[View a full-size version with a detailed description of the concerns about AI infographic \(/pubs/reports/stress-in-america/2025/infographic-ai-concerns\)](/pubs/reports/stress-in-america/2025/infographic-ai-concerns)

Despite obstacles, American resilience holds

Even in the face of mounting challenges—economic uncertainty, societal division, mental health struggles—people in the U.S. continue to demonstrate a remarkable sense of resilience. Despite the fact that around a quarter of adults (26%) are not sure or do not think they will achieve their dreams or goals in life and more than four in five (85%) cited obstacles that stand in the way, a strong majority of adults remain hopeful about their ability to build a fulfilling life; 84% said they believe they can still create a good life, even if it looks different from past generations.

Beyond personal aspirations, many adults also reported feeling a sense of responsibility in shaping the broader future of the country. Sixty-five percent said they feel personally responsible for helping to shape the nation’s future—a sentiment especially strong among parents (72%),

compared with 61% of nonparents. This sense of civic duty was paired with optimism: 73% of adults expressed confidence that they can help shape the country's future for the better.

Taken together, these findings paint a picture of a population that, while burdened by stress and uncertainty, continues to hold fast to hope, agency, and a belief in progress—both personal and collective.

Footnotes

¹ Respondents' levels of loneliness were measured using the UCLA Three-Item Loneliness scale. Responses were given a numerical value of 1-3 to determine a respondent's total Loneliness Score, which was then bucketed into three groups, High (a score of 7-9), Moderate (a score of 5-6), and Low (a score of 3-4).

² Respondents were asked to rate their average level of stress during the past month on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 meant they had "little or no stress" and 10 meant they had "a great deal of stress."

Methodology

The 2025 *Stress in America*[™] survey was conducted online in the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of APA among 3,199 adults age 18+ who reside in the U.S. ("national sample"). In addition, oversamples allowed for increased totals by race/ethnicity: 800 Black, 809 Latino/a/e or Latinx, and 800 Asian. The total sample also included 81 individuals who identified as only Native American or Alaskan Native/Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, which falls below the standard threshold for reporting ($n \geq 100$).

For Latino respondents, interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

The survey was conducted August 4-24, 2025.

Data was weighted where necessary to reflect its proportions in the population based on the March 2024 Current Population Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, PEW NPORS 2024 (for frequency of internet use and political party affiliation), and PEW 2021 (for language use). Weighting variables included age by gender, race/ethnicity, education, region, household income, frequency of internet use and political party affiliation to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

Latino/a/e adults also were weighted for acculturation, taking into account respondents' household language as well as their ability to read and speak English and Spanish. Country of origin (U.S./non-U.S.) also was included for Latino/a/e or Latinx and Asian subgroups.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris' surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian

credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within ± 2.5 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

- The sample data for the Black sample is accurate to within ± 4.9 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.
- The sample data for the Latino/a/e or Latinx sample is accurate to within ± 5.2 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.
- The sample data for the Asian sample is accurate to within ± 5.1 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate—including, but not limited to, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and postsurvey weighting and adjustments.

This survey included data quantifying loneliness using the UCLA Three-Item Loneliness Scale. Adults' levels of loneliness were based on their responses to how often they felt isolated from others, left out, or that they lacked companionship—hardly ever, some of the time, or often. Responses were given a numerical value of 1–3 to determine a respondent's total Loneliness Score, which was then bucketed into three groups, High (a score of 7–9), Moderate (a score of 5–6), and Low (a score of 3–4).

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