

Stress in America Washington, Washington DC Report

Prepared For:

The American Psychological Association

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Public Affairs and Policy

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Methodology and Sample

The **Stress in America Survey** was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of the American Psychological Association between June 23, 2008 and August 13, 2008 among 1791 adults aged 18+ who reside in the U.S. and an oversample of 250 adults aged 18+ who reside in the metropolitan Washington, DC area, including parts of Northern Virginia and Maryland. The survey averaged 26 minutes in length.

Results were weighted as needed for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income among the entire population and within the specific Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSAs) as designated by the US Office of Management and Budget. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of US population aged 18+. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to be invited to participate in the Harris Interactive online research panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

Notes on Reading this Report

This report focuses only on the views of residents within the Washington, DC area MSA and the general population.

“Metropolitan Statistical Areas” (MSAs) are a formal definition of metropolitan areas produced by the U.S. Office of Management and Budged (OMB). These geographic areas are delineated on the basis of central urbanized areas – contiguous counties of relatively high population density. Counties containing the core urbanized area are known as the central counties of the MSA. Additional surrounding counties (known as outlying counties) can be included in the MSA if these counties have strong social and economic ties to the central counties as measured by commuting and employment. Note that some areas within these outlying counties may actually be rural in nature.

Key Survey Findings

DC area residents rate their stress levels to be about the same as Americans overall, even during periods of high stress. In terms of sources of stress, they are more likely to be affected by work demands than Americans overall, and less likely to cite the economy as a source of stress. However, money is an equally significant source of stress for both DC area residents and Americans. To relieve stress, DC area residents engage in similar activities as Americans nationally with slightly more saying that they exercise or walk, read, play video games or surf the internet, and drink alcohol.

- On average, residents of the DC area metropolitan area rate their daily stress levels the same as Americans nationally (average of 6.0 on a 10 point scale vs. 5.9 nationally).

- Fewer DC area residents than Americans overall cite relationships (51% vs. 59% nationally), family responsibilities (47% vs. 58% nationally), and health problems affecting them (40% vs. 54% nationally) or their family (48% vs. 56% nationally) as significant sources of stress.

- DC area residents cite housing costs as a significant source of stress (52% vs. 47% nationally)

- In contrast to Americans overall, DC area residents mention their co-workers or boss as a daily or weekly source of stress before their spouses; nationally, Americans mention their spouse first before co-workers or bosses.

- More DC area workers than employed Americans overall say that uncertain or undefined job expectations are a significant source of stress at work (47% vs. 38% nationally)

- More DC area residents than Americans nationally say that they exercise or walk (51% vs. 47% nationally), read (48% vs. 44% nationally), play video games or surf the internet (41% vs. 37% nationally) and drink alcohol (23% vs. 18% nationally) as ways to manage stress.

Detailed Survey Findings

Perception of Personal Stress

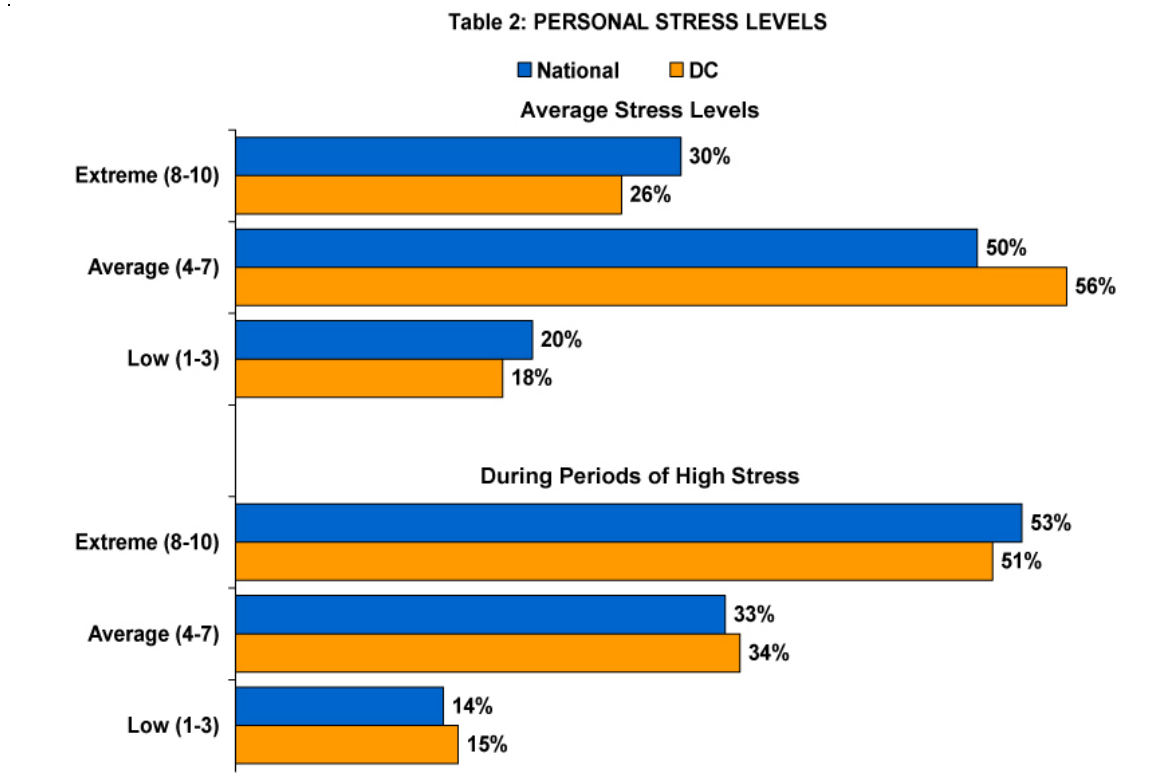
- More DC area residents feel that they are managing their stress extremely or somewhat well than Americans overall (85% vs. 81% nationally). *(Q601)*
- Similarly, more DC area residents feel they are doing enough to manage their stress (58% vs. 55% nationally). *(Q1615)*

Table 1: PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL STRESS



Q601 During the past month how well do you think you managed your stress?
Q1615 Do you feel you are doing enough to manage your stress?
Q6232 And now thinking about the past year, would you say the level of stress in your life has increased, decreased, or has it stayed the same?

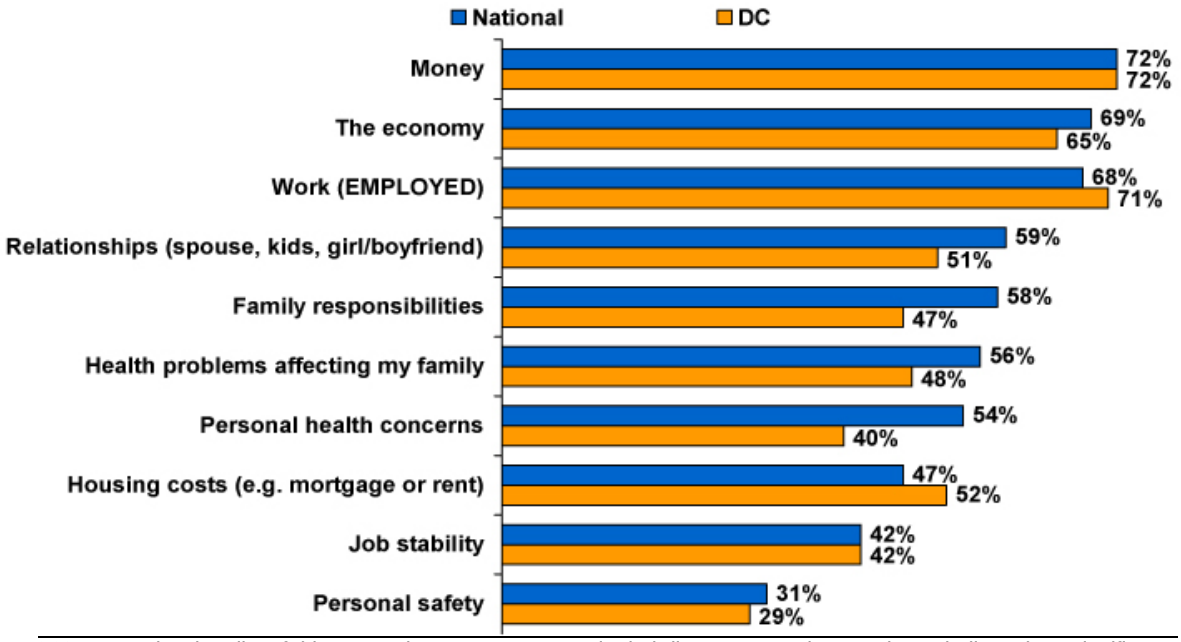
- On average, DC area residents rate their daily stress levels the same as Americans overall (average of 6.0 on 10-pt scale, vs. 5.9 nationally), but fewer give an extreme high rating of 8, 9, or 10 (26% vs. 30% nationally). *(Q605)*
- Even during reported periods of high stress, periods of time when their highest levels of stress are experienced, DC area residents give a lower average stress rating of 6.8 compared with 7.0 for Americans overall. *(Q635)*



Q605 On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means you have little or no stress and 10 means you have a great deal of stress, how would you rate your average level of stress during the past month?
Q635 During times when you experienced your highest level of stress in the past month, how would you rate your stress where 1 means you had little or no stress and 10 means you had a great deal of stress?

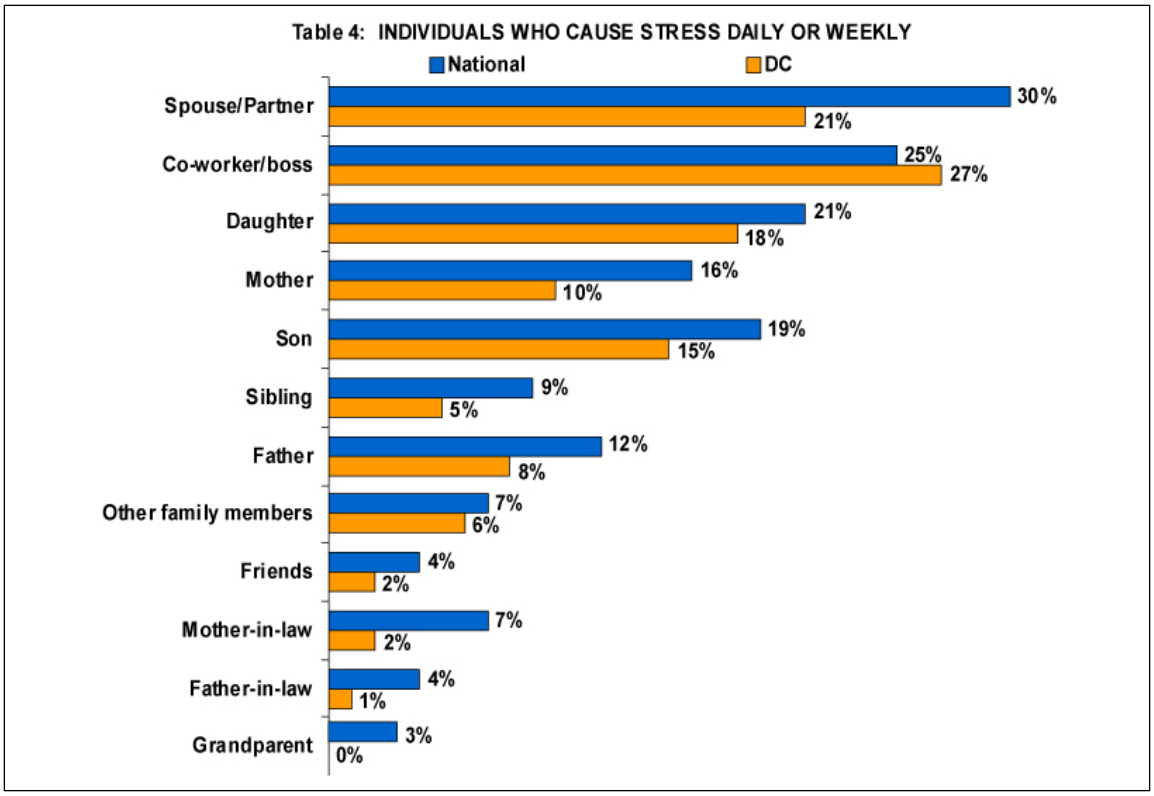
- Compared to Americans overall, fewer DC area residents cite relationships (51% vs. 59% nationally), family responsibilities (47% vs. 58% nationally), and health problems affecting them (40% vs. 54% nationally) or their family (48% vs. 56% nationally) as significant sources of stress. *(Q625)*
- DC area residents cite housing costs as a significant source of stress more than Americans overall (52% vs. 47% nationally). *(Q625)*

Table 3: SIGNIFICANT SOURCES OF STRESS



Q625 Below is a list of things people say cause stress in their lives. For each one, please indicate how significant a source of stress it is in your life.

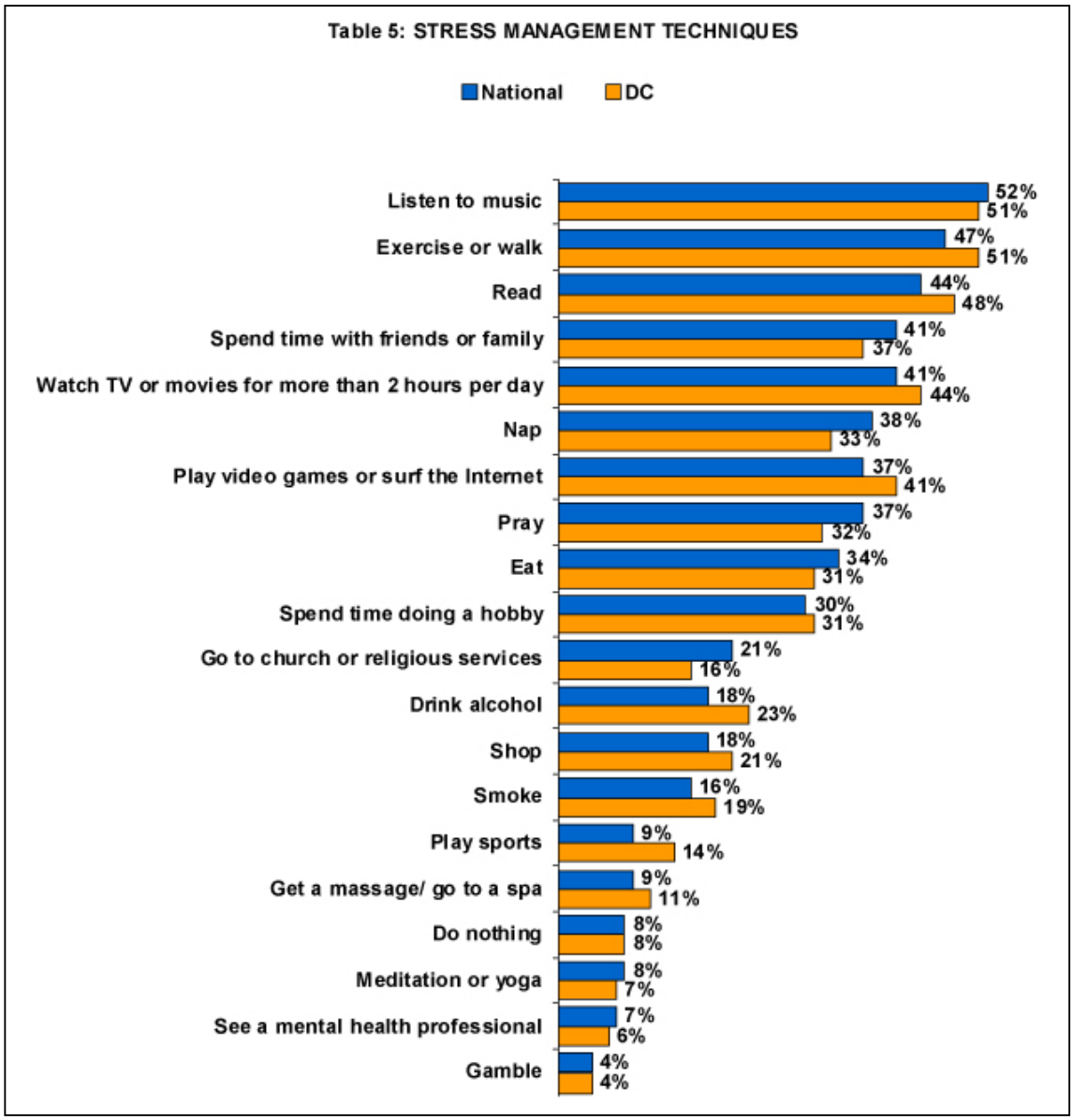
- Among Americans overall, people are more likely to say that a spouse/partner (30%), causes them daily/weekly stress more so than a co-worker/boss (25%). But, DC area residents mention their co-worker/boss (27%) as a daily/weekly source of stress before their spouse/partner (21%). *(Q1700)*



Q1700. How often do you feel the following people are a source of stress for you?

Managing Stress

- When it comes to managing their stress, DC area residents are right on par with Americans overall in terms of their responses.
- However, DC area residents also mention passive activities such as watching TV (44% vs. 41% nationally) or playing video games (41% vs. 37% nationally) are ways to relieve stress slightly more than Americans overall. *(Q970)*
- More DC area residents say that drinking alcohol (23% vs. 18% nationally), smoking (19% vs. 16% nationally) and shopping (21% vs. 18% nationally) are ways they use to manage stress.



Q965. Do you do any of the following to help manage stress?

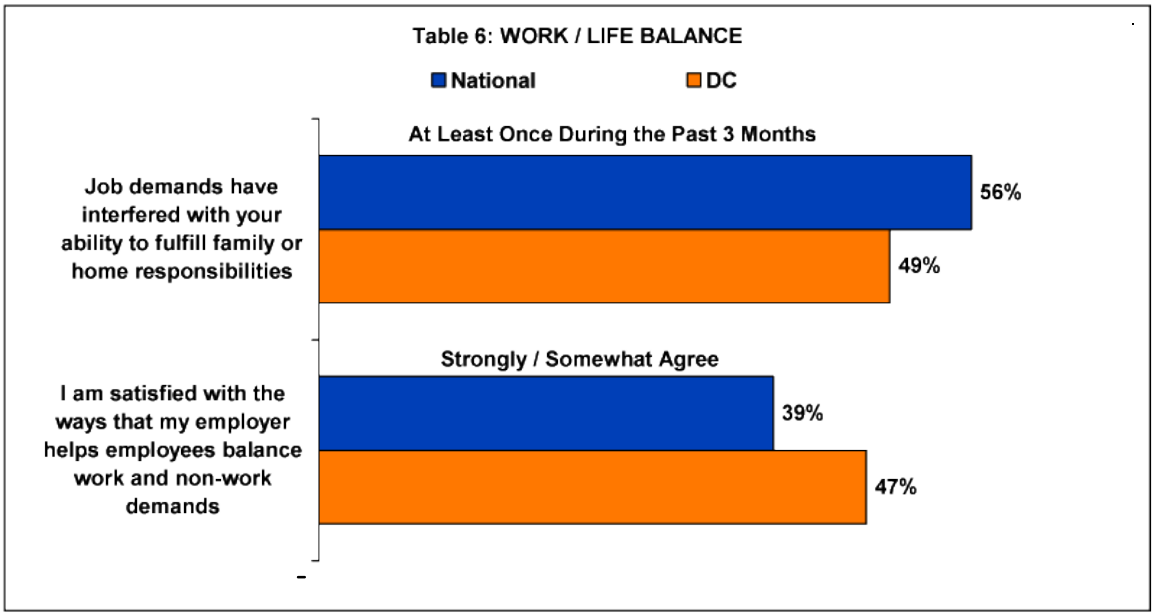
Stress in the Workplace

Workplace Environment

- Compared to employed Americans nationwide, more workers in the DC metropolitan area say that they have the resources available to manage their stress (63% vs. 56% workers nationally). *(Q905)*
- Perhaps because of this, fewer DC area workers say that they feel tense or stressed at work (33% vs. 39% workers nationally). *(Q905)*
- DC area workers also report roughly the same average daily stress level from work as employed Americans overall (4.6 vs. 4.8 workers nationally). *(Q1900)*
- More DC area workers than employed Americans overall say that uncertain or undefined job expectations are a significant source of stress at work (47% vs. 38% workers nationally). *(Q910)*

Balancing Work and Family

- DC area workers are similar to employed Americans overall when it comes to work interfering with personal time, but fewer DC area workers say that personal life interfering with work is a significant source of stress (20% vs. 26% workers nationally). *(Q910)*
- Compared to employed Americans nationwide, fewer DC area workers say that job demands have interfered with their ability to fulfill home/family duties at least once in the past 3 months (49% vs. 56% workers nationally). *(Q920)*
    - More DC area workers feel satisfied with the ways their employer helps employees balance work and non-work demands (47% vs. 39% workers nationally). *(Q1905)*



Q1905 Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.
Q920 For each of the statements below, please indicate how often each of the following has happened to you during the past three months.

Managing Workplace Stress

- One-quarter of workers in DC area (26%) and employed Americans overall (23%) report missing at least 1 day in the past year due to stress. *(Q925)*
- 6 out of 10 workers in DC area and employed Americans overall (61% DC area vs. 60% workers nationally) report losing some productivity due to stress. *(Q945)*
- Although DC area workers seem to be less stressed at work, more of them intend to seek other employment during the next year (38% vs. 32% workers nationally). *(Q1905)*