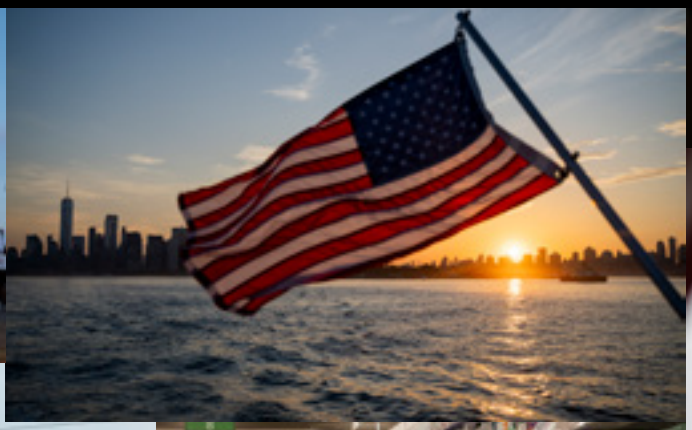
AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

STRESS IN AMERICA™ 2026

The stress of uncertainty



OCTOBER 2026

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STRESS IN AMERICA™ 2026

The stress of uncertainty

Stress has become the backdrop of American life.

As people across the United States navigate another year marked by economic pressures, political tension and global uncertainty, stress remains a constant in daily life. Nearly 8 in 10 adults (77%) said that the cost of living – the necessary costs of day-to-day life such as rent, mortgage, groceries, child or family care and transportation – is a significant source of stress in their lives, making it the most frequently cited source of stress.

Nearly 8 in 10 adults (77%) said that the cost of living was a significant source of stress.

But the American Psychological Association's latest *Stress in America*™ survey–conducted online by The Harris Poll on behalf of APA–suggests something beyond elevated stress alone: Many adults appear to be growing accustomed to it.

Rather than expecting stress to ease, many adults appear to be adjusting their expectations around it. Nearly three-quarters (72%) agreed that "stress is just something I have to live with." Similar numbers said bad news no longer shocks them (72%) and that they have become accustomed to living with uncertainty (68%).

That sense of resignation may be shaping how people view their future. More than one-quarter of adults (28%) said they have little to no control over their future, a notable increase from 23% in 2025. Over half (52%) no longer expect life to feel stable, and 53% said it is difficult to imagine a time when their lives will be less stressful.

Stress is becoming the new normal for many U.S. adults

% who somewhat or strongly agreed with the following statements

In addition, the survey asked where a "normal" level of stress should fall on a 10-point scale. U.S. adults placed it at 4.4, yet they rated their own current stress level at 5.2. In other words, the average U.S. adult is living with stress that exceeds what they consider normal.

This year's survey also documented a continuing trend: people are increasingly turning to AI for connection and support, with nearly half of AI users said to have ever:

- Engaged in conversations with AI as a friend (49%)
- Discussed their relationships with it (49%)
- Used AI in a role comparable to a mental health professional (47%).

Overall stress levels have remained steady but substantial. More than 1 in 5 adults (22%) reported very high levels of stress (8+ on a 10-point scale), consistent with findings from 2025 (20%). The burden is not shared equally, however. Latino/a/e adults (24%) reported high levels of stress compared with White (20%), Black (18%) and Asian (17%) adults.

While the majority of adults said they were confident they could cope with change (82%) and believed they had healthy ways to manage stress (80%), the survey found that stress negatively affected nearly every dimension of daily functioning, which may suggest many may be overly optimistic about their ability to cope.

Six in 10 adults (60%) reported that stress had at least somewhat affected their sleep, while nearly as many reported impacts on their optimism about the future (59%). Half or more said stress had at least somewhat negatively affected their mental and emotional well-being (56%), motivation (55%), ability to focus (52%), physical health (51%) and productivity (50%). Across the board, these findings suggest that stress was not confined to isolated moments of anxiety but had become woven into many aspects of everyday life.

Younger adults reported feeling these effects particularly strongly. Adults ages 18–29 were significantly more likely than older age groups to say stress had at least somewhat affected their productivity (38%), motivation (36%) and sense of optimism about the future (35%). These findings indicate that younger adults may be experiencing stress not only as an emotional burden but also as a barrier to pursuing goals, maintaining focus and planning for the future. Together, these findings paint a picture of a population that is increasingly viewing stress as an unavoidable part of modern life. For some groups, these feelings are even more pronounced.

Caregivers[1] were more likely than non-caregivers to agree that stress is simply something they have to live with (76% vs. 69%) and that they have become accustomed to living with uncertainty (72% vs. 65%). Caregivers also were more likely than non-caregivers to no longer expect life to be stable (57% vs. 49%). Adults identifying as LGBTQ+ adults and younger adults ages 18–29 expressed similar worries, pointing to heightened concerns among some groups as they contend with an uncertain environment. Nearly three-quarters of adults identifying as LGBTQ+ (73%) said they do not expect life to feel stable, compared with 50% of non-LGBTQ+ identifying adults. Younger adults ages 18–29 also were more likely to express uncertainty about the future, with 61% saying they do not expect life to feel stable.

Throughout this year's survey, sandwich caregivers[2] emerge as a population in need of support. Across the nation, more and more adults find themselves stepping into this particularly challenging role as they are expected to meet the needs of America's rapidly growing older population, including the majority of adults in their 40s[3] (54%). And the signs of strain are beginning to show. Sandwich caregivers reported heightened levels of stress, widespread emotional exhaustion and a sense of being so focused on meeting immediate demands that planning for the future feels out of reach.

Against a backdrop of persistent uncertainty and ongoing societal challenges, many adults appear to view chronic stress as something to be managed rather than overcome. In response, many seem to be recalibrating their expectations, shifting from hopes of returning to stability toward learning how to live amid ongoing uncertainty. Stress is no longer being experienced as an interruption to everyday life. For many U.S. adults, it has become part of the baseline.

WHAT'S STRESSING OUT U.S. ADULTS MOST — AND WHY IT MATTERS AHEAD OF ELECTION DAY 2026

Financial pressures and concerns about the future of the nation continue to dominate the stress landscape, highlighting the extent to which questions about affordability, financial security and the country's direction are weighing on people's minds. Ahead of the 2026 midterm elections, these findings offer important context on the concerns U.S. adults are carrying with them into the broader political environment.

Of these issues, the cost of living stands out as the single most frequently cited stressor. More than three-quarters of adults (77%) identified it as a significant source of stress, reflecting the ongoing challenge of balancing everyday expenses amid

1 "Caregiver" is characterized as an individual who is providing paid or unpaid long-term care to a family member or friend with an episodic, permanent or temporary condition who needs help taking care of themselves. This does not include basic duties of parenting.

2 "Sandwich" caregiver is characterized as an individual 1) who is providing paid or unpaid long-term care to a family member or friend with an episodic, permanent or temporary condition who needs help taking care of themselves; and 2) who also is the parent or guardian, for at least 50% of the time, of one or more people under the age of 18 who lives in their household.

3 Horowitz, J. M. (2025, August 27). More than half of Americans in their 40s are sandwiched between an aging parent and their own children. *Pew Research Center*. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2026/08/27/more-than-half-of-americans-in-their-40s-are-sandwiched-between-an-aging-parent-and-their-own-children/

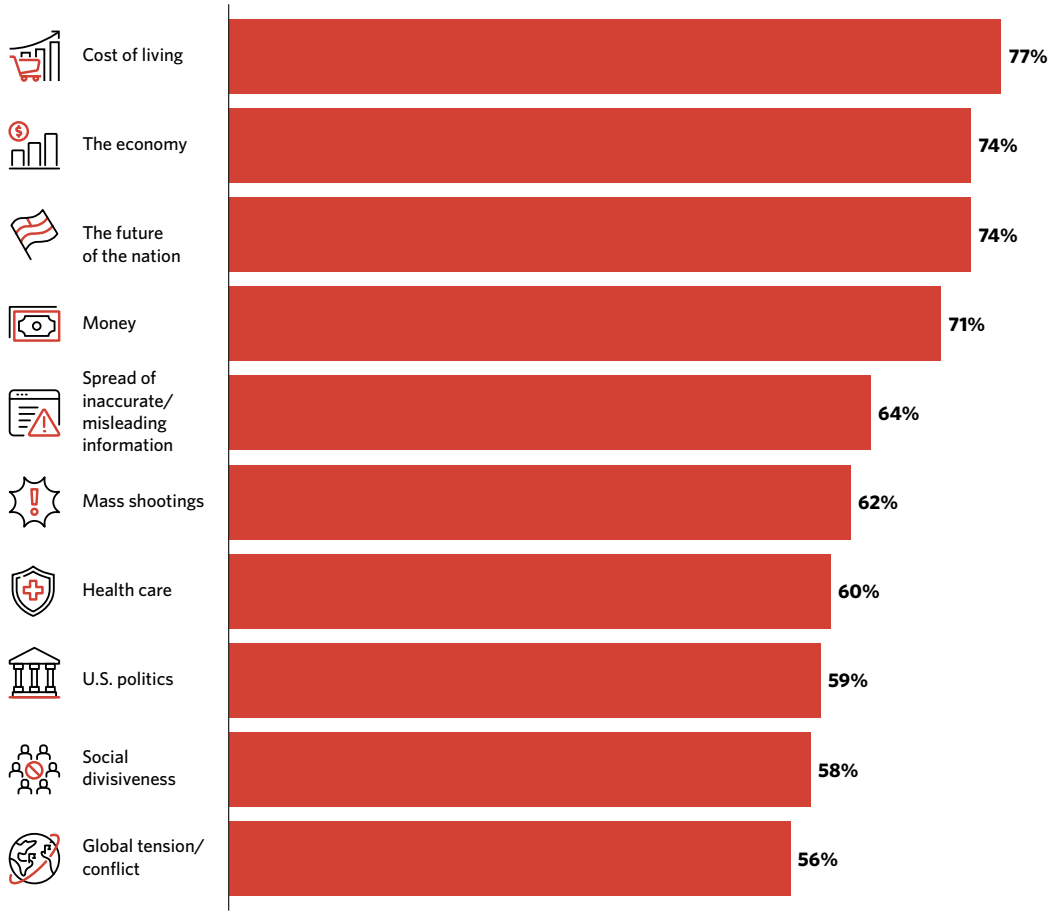
lingering economic uncertainty. The economy in general also remains a top-cited source of significant stress. After climbing sharply from 64% in 2023 to 73% in 2024, the economy has remained a significant source of stress among three-quarters of the population, reaching 75% in 2025 and 74% in 2026. The consistency of these findings indicates that concerns about economic stability remain deeply embedded in the daily lives of many across the nation.

Financial stress extends beyond perceptions of the broader economy. More than seven in 10 adults (71%) reported that money is a significant source of stress, an increase from 63% saying the same in 2023. Together, these patterns paint a picture of a population grappling not only with national economic conditions but also the practical realities of paying bills, managing expenses and planning for the future.

The pressures U.S. adults face are not solely financial. Health care (e.g., access, affordability, finding time for appointments, etc.) remains a prominent stressor; six in 10 adults (60%) identified it as a significant source of stress in their lives. The rise in health care-related stress parallels growing anxiety about personal well-being. Compared with three years ago, adults were more likely to report stress related to their physical health (59% vs. 50% in 2023), health problems (55% vs. 49%) and mental health (55% vs. 46%).

Stress in America 2026's significant stressors

% who rate each as a somewhat or very significant source of stress



For some groups, health care-related stress is particularly acute. Caregivers, whose responsibilities often place them in regular contact with health care systems, were more likely than the general population to identify health care as a significant source of stress (67%). Among sandwich caregivers, that figure climbed to 82%. Women also were significantly more likely than men to cite health care as a major stressor (63% vs. 57%); that figure rose among women under the age of 35 (70%) and Asian women (72%). The number of women to report violence and crime as a significant source of stress also was elevated compared with men (56% vs. 50%), especially among Black (67%) and Latina/e women (70%).

Health care-related stress is particularly acute among sandwich caregivers

% who rate health care as a significant source of stress

Yet financial and health pressures are only part of the story. Many adults also reported stress tied to the nation's political and social climate, which is important context before Election Day. Concerns about the future of the nation (74%) rank alongside economic issues as one of the most often cited sources of stress facing adults across the nation, reflecting uncertainty about the forces shaping both individual lives and the broader national landscape. A large number of U.S. adults continue to report somewhat or very significant stress related to national and global issues, including U.S. politics (59%), global tensions (56%), the spread of misinformation (64%), mass shootings (62%) and social divisiveness (58%).

These pressures do not affect all groups equally. LGBTQ+ adults were significantly more likely to report somewhat or very significant stress across a range of issues compared with non-LGBTQ+ adults, including health care (75% vs. 58%), U.S. politics (71% vs. 58%) and violence and crime (61% vs. 52%).

Latino/a/e adults likewise were significantly more likely to report stress across several issues tied to public safety, global events and national policy. They were significantly more likely than other major racial and ethnic groups to report somewhat or very significant stress related to global tension and conflict (65%, compared with 58% of Asian adults, 54% of Black adults and 52% of White adults). Stress related to violence and crime was also more frequently reported among Latino/a/e adults (72%) compared with 63% of Black adults, 62% of Asian adults and 45% of White adults.

Immigration stands out as another area that Latino/a/e adults were much more likely to say was a somewhat or very significant source of stress. Nearly two-thirds (64%) cited immigration as a significant stressor, compared with 47% of Asian adults, 40% of Black adults and 33% of White adults. When compared across age groups, concerns about immigration were especially prevalent among adults ages 18–29, with over half (51%) stating immigration is a significant source of stress in their lives. These differences illustrate how broader political and societal issues can be experienced differently across communities, shaped by personal circumstances, identity and lived experiences.

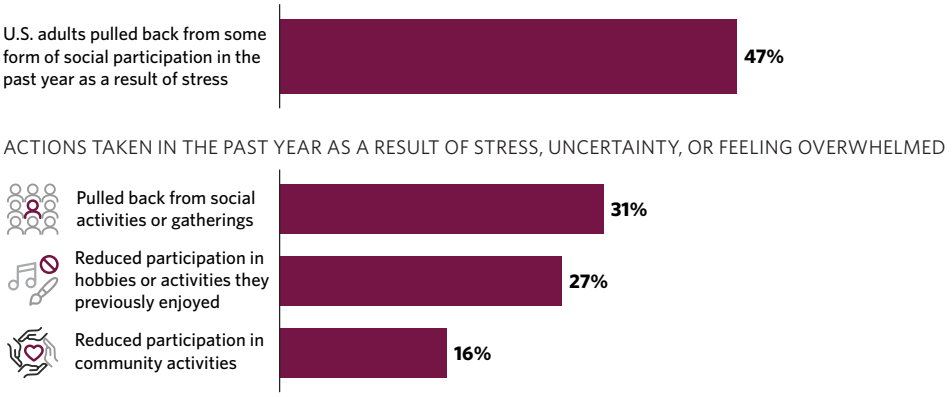
Taken together, these findings reveal that U.S. adults are entering the 2026 election season feeling pressure from multiple directions. Rising costs, economic uncertainty, health care challenges and concerns about the nation's future are all contributing to stress across the nation. While the specific issues weighing on people vary across demographic groups, many adults share a sense that the forces shaping their daily lives remain difficult to predict and even harder to control.

AS STRESS BECOMES HARDER TO ESCAPE, U.S. ADULTS ARE RETREATING FROM PARTS OF EVERYDAY LIFE.

The effects of chronic stress extend well beyond how people feel. For many adults, stress has begun to shape how they spend their time, engage with their communities and participate in daily life. While most have not given up on relationships, civic involvement or the issues they care about, many feel increasingly stretched for the emotional and mental bandwidth needed to stay fully engaged.

As stress accumulated, many adults reported pulling back from activities that once provided enjoyment, connection or support. Nearly half (47%) said they had pulled back from from at least one form of social participation over the past year as a result of stress, uncertainty, or feeling overwhelmed. This included avoiding social activities or gatherings (31%), stepping away from hobbies and activities they once enjoyed (27%), and disengaging from community activities (16%).

Nearly half of U.S. adults are withdrawing from social participation



This retreat from everyday life as a result of stress was especially common among groups already reporting high levels of stress. More than seven in 10 LGBTQ+ adults (71%, compared with 45% of non-LGBTQ+ adults) reported withdrawing from at least one form of social participation. The same was true for a majority of Latino/a/e adults (55% vs. 45% of Asian adults, 44% of White adults and 43% of Black adults), young adults ages 18–29 (62% vs. 51% of those 30–45, 47% of those 46–61 and 29% of those 62–80) and caregivers (55% vs. non-caregivers 41%). For these groups, stress appears to be limiting their participation in many of the activities that foster connection, belonging and community involvement.

Latino/a/e adults report higher rates of social withdrawal

% who withdrew from at least one form of social participation in the past year

The pull to withdraw extended beyond social activities. More than one-third of adults (37%) reported disengaging from the broader world around them. Nearly three in 10 (28%) said they had avoided watching or reading the news, while about one in five (21%) reported avoiding engagement with political or societal issues altogether.

Women were more likely than men to report avoiding the news (32% vs. 23%). Younger adults ages 18–29 were especially likely to seek distraction or escape in response to stress, with 42% reporting they chose comfort, distraction or escape over productivity, compared with 34% of adults ages 30–45, 32% of those ages 46–61 and 19% of those ages 62–80.

Yet these behaviors did not necessarily signal apathy. In many cases, adults appeared caught between a desire to stay engaged and a struggle to manage the emotional toll of doing so. Half of adults (51%) reported feeling too emotionally drained to stay engaged with everything happening in the world. At the same time, nearly two-thirds (63%) believed that getting involved in their community, social issues or politics could make a meaningful difference in their future.

Several groups were especially likely to report feeling emotionally exhausted. More than seven in 10 adults ages 18–29 (71%) said they felt too drained to stay engaged, compared with 62% of adults ages 30–45, 46% of adults ages 46–61 and 31% of adults ages 62–80. Similar patterns emerged among LGBTQ+ adults (69% vs. 49% of non-LGBTQ+ adults), caregivers (61% vs. 45% of non-caregivers), sandwich caregivers (65%), Latino/a/e adults (57% vs. 50% of Asian adults, 48% of Black adults and 47% of White adults) and women (55% vs. 47% of men).

Among young adults, emotional and social withdrawal is accompanied by a diminished sense of belonging. Half of adults ages 18–29 (50%) reported feeling that their relationships were not meaningful, significantly higher than adults ages 30–45 (39%), 46–61 (30%) and 62–80 (18%). These findings suggest that many younger adults may be struggling not only with stress itself, but also with maintaining social connections that could serve as a support system, often helping people cope with it.

The tension between wanting to remain engaged and having the capacity to do so may be particularly consequential for social connection. About half of adults reported at least sometimes feeling isolated from others (51%), left out (49%), or lacking companionship (48%).

LGBTQ+ adults were significantly more likely than non-LGBTQ+ adults to report feeling isolated (69% versus 49%), left out (69% versus 47%) and lacking companionship (72% versus 45%) at least sometimes. Caregivers reported similar challenges, with at least sometimes feeling isolated (61%), left out (58%) and lacking companionship (53%) all significantly higher than non-caregivers.

As many adults responded to stress by stepping back from social activities, hobbies, community involvement and engagement with the wider world, the very relationships and experiences that might help buffer against stress appeared increasingly difficult to sustain. What emerged was not a population that had stopped caring, but one that often felt too overwhelmed to remain fully engaged in all the areas of life that matter most.

AS SOME U.S. ADULTS RETREAT FROM SOCIAL INTERACTION, A SIMILAR PROPORTION REPORT REGULARLY TURNING TO AI FOR CONNECTION AND GUIDANCE.

As social withdrawal and emotional exhaustion became more common, many U.S. adults reported turning instead to artificial intelligence for support. What began as a tool for answering questions and improving productivity appeared to be taking on a much broader role in people's lives, with adults relying on it to navigate decisions, process emotions, manage stress and even address needs traditionally met by friends, family members or health professionals.

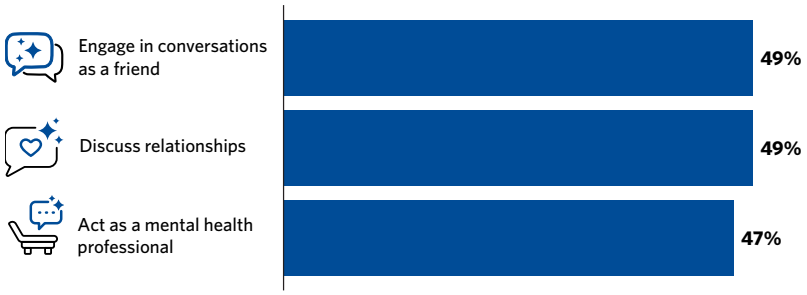
AI use increased significantly in 2026. Seven in 10 adults (70%) reported they had ever intentionally used AI, up from 62% in 2025.

Many adults reported using AI to help navigate everyday decisions and challenges. Among those who had used AI, nearly two-thirds reported they had ever used it to help make day-to-day decisions (65%) or organize their thoughts (63%). Others reported having ever turned to AI for health information and guidance, including getting input on treatments (62%), self-diagnosing health concerns (60%) and discussing their physical health (59%).

AI also appeared to be serving social and emotional functions for some adults. Nearly half of AI users reported that they had ever engaged in conversations with AI as a friend (49%) or discussed their relationships with it (49%). A similar proportion (47%) reported ever using AI in a role comparable to a mental health professional, such as obtaining a second opinion on suggestions by a therapist or practicing therapeutic exercises. One in 10 AI users reported that they rely on AI more than they rely on friends and family for advice. Together, these findings suggest that many adults were using AI not only to answer questions or complete tasks, but also to organize thoughts around experiences and seek emotional support.

How U.S. adults are using AI for connection and guidance

% of AI users who reported they had ever used AI for the following purposes



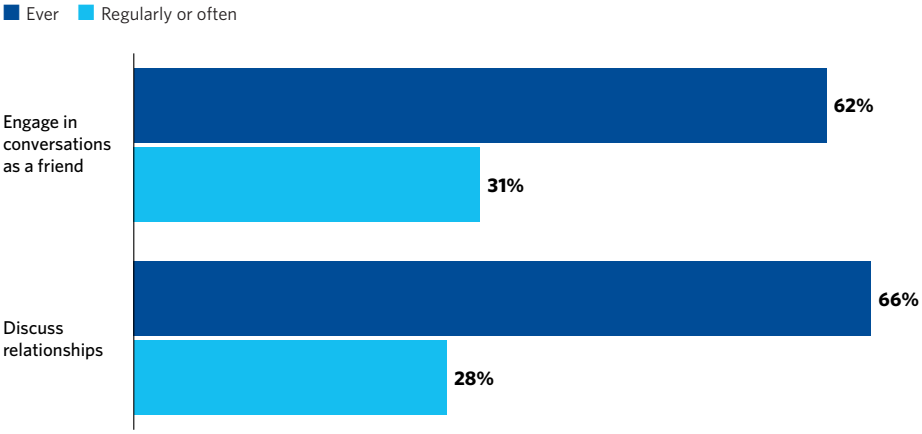
For some, these behaviors moved beyond experimentation into routine use. More than one-quarter (26%) reported regularly or often using AI to organize their thoughts and 22% to make day-to-day decisions. One in five reported regularly or often discussing their day-to-day lives with AI (20%), and a similar proportion engage in conversations with AI as a friend (22%).

Health care and emotional support emerged as another important area of use. About one in five AI users reported regularly or often discussing physical health issues with AI (21%), obtaining input on treatments (20%), discussing mental health (18%), discussing relationships (18%) or self-diagnosing (17%). Nearly one in six (16%) AI users said they regularly or often used AI as a substitute for a mental health professional.

Several groups stood out for their higher levels of AI use. Adults ages 18–29 were significantly more likely than older adults to report regularly or often using AI as a mental health professional (26% compared with 20% of adults ages 30–45, 8% of adults ages 46–61 and 3% of adults ages 62–80). They also were especially likely to regularly or often turn to AI for forms of belonging and connection, including engaging in conversations with AI as a friend (31%) and discussing relationships (28%).

Young adults are turning to AI for connection

% of adults ages 18–29 who use AI for the following



Differences also emerged across racial and ethnic groups. Black adults were significantly more likely to regularly or often use AI than other groups to discuss relationships (27%), compared with 19% of Latino/a/e adults, 15% of White adults and 14% of Asian adults.

Meanwhile, sandwich caregivers appeared to be among the heaviest AI users overall. Nearly half reported using AI regularly or often to help organize their thoughts (48%) or make day-to-day decisions (44%), while more than one-third (34%) reported regularly or often using AI in the role of a mental health professional. Nearly a third (32%) said AI helped them process stress or emotions.

Overall, AI users more commonly reported positive outcomes from using AI for personal support, advice or conversation than negative outcomes (51% vs. 29%). For some adults, AI appeared to provide meaningful emotional support. About one in five users reported that AI gave them support when they needed it (22%), while 18% said it had affirmed their thoughts, feelings or decisions.

At the same time, some users reported drawbacks. Approximately one in 10 (12%) noted concerns related to dependence on AI, 9% said it contributed to feelings of disconnection from others and 8% reported problems stemming from misguided advice.

Young adults were especially likely to report that AI had affected them, both positively and negatively. Two-thirds of adults ages 18–29 (66%) reported some positive impact from AI use, compared with 58% of adults ages 30–45, 42% of adults ages 46–61 and 29% of adults ages 62–80. They also were the most likely age group to report negative effects (40% compared with 34%, 19% and 18%, respectively).

Among its positive effects, adults ages 18–29 were more likely than older adults to report that AI helped them develop healthy coping skills (23%, compared with 16% of adults ages 30–45, 13% of adults ages 46–61 and 8% of adults ages 62–80). At the same time, they were also more likely to report that AI made them feel worse about themselves (12%, compared with 8%, 4% and 2%, respectively).

Other groups reported distinct effects as well. Black adults were the most likely to report that AI helped them feel less alone (22%, compared with 15% of Asian adults, 14% of Latino/a/e adults and 10% of White adults). Black adults also reported feeling emotionally dependent on the technology at the highest rate (16%, compared with 14% of Asian adults, 11% of Latino/a/e adults, and 10% of White adults).

These emerging uses of AI reflect a broader shift in how some adults are responding to ongoing stress, uncertainty and social isolation. For some, AI appears to supplement sources of advice, connection and support that have traditionally come from friends, family members or professionals. For others, its growing role raises questions about dependence, disconnection and the place technology may increasingly occupy in meeting emotional and social needs, as well as safety concerns about whether AI is offering the right advice in place of professionals.

WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES U.S. ADULTS BELIEVE ARE PREVENTING THEM FROM ACHIEVING THEIR DREAMS?

As stress and uncertainty become increasingly embedded in daily life, many U.S. adults reported feeling less certain about their ability to shape their future. More than one in four adults (28%) said they had little to no control over their future, up from 23% in 2025. For some, that uncertainty appeared to be influencing not only how they viewed the future, but whether they planned for it at all.

Over the past year, one in four adults (26%) have put their futures on hold, with 17% reporting they stopped planning for the future and 16% reporting delaying major life decisions, such as changing careers, purchasing a home or having a child, because of stress, uncertainty or feeling overwhelmed. These behaviors were particularly common among younger adults. About one-third of adults ages 18–29 (34%) and ages 30–45 (34%) reported delaying future planning, compared with 24% of adults ages 46–61 and 13% of adults ages 62–80.

Several groups were especially likely to report putting plans on hold. More LGBTQ+ adults reported delaying major life decisions relative to non-LGBTQ+ adults (37% versus 25%). Latino/a/e adults were more likely than other racial and ethnic groups to say they stopped planning for the future altogether (32% compared with 25% of Black adults, 23% of Asian adults and 22% of White adults). Among sandwich caregivers, the effect was particularly pronounced: 43% reported delaying future planning, including 27% who had delayed major life decisions and 22% who had stopped planning for the future entirely.

Four in five adults (79%) identified at least one obstacle preventing them from achieving their dreams or goals for the future.

For many adults, these decisions appeared connected to a broader perception that significant barriers stand between them and their goals. Four in five adults (79%) identified at least one obstacle preventing them from achieving their dreams or goals for the future. Economic challenges emerged as the most common barrier, reported by more than half of adults (53%). These challenges included economic instability (33%), debt (28%) and concerns about job security (18%). These findings mirror the broader financial concerns that dominated adults' sources of stress throughout the survey.

Economic instability was especially likely to be reported by Latino/a/e adults. More than two in five (42%) identified economic instability as a barrier to achieving their goals, compared with 34% of Asian adults and 30% of both Black and White adults.

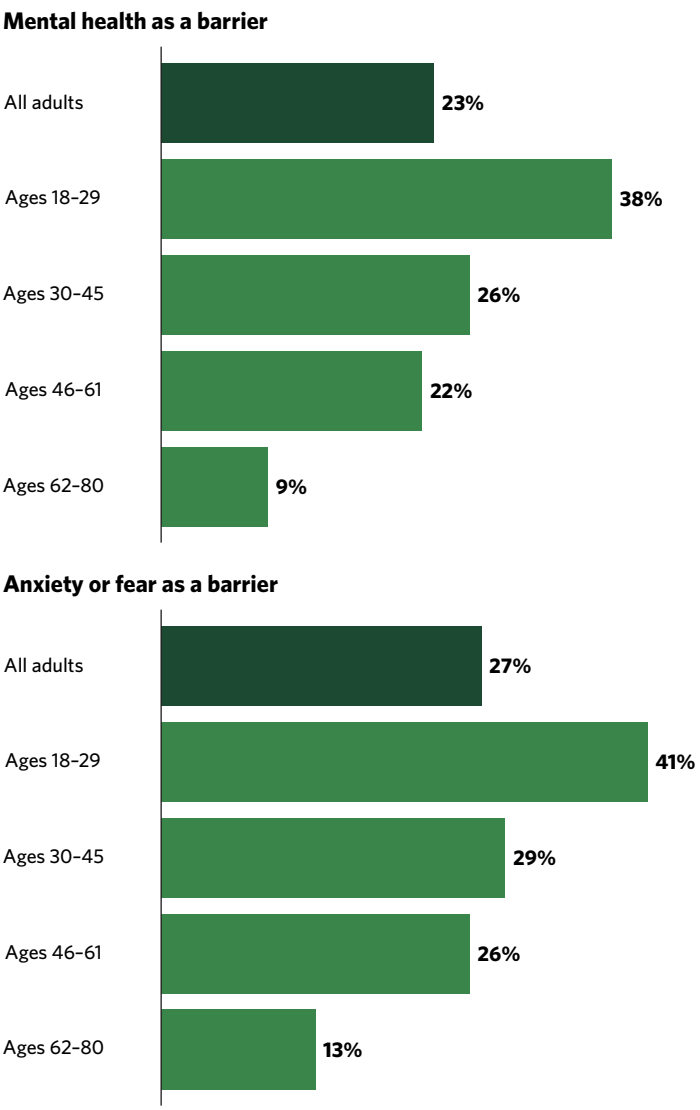
Health-related challenges also emerged as a significant obstacle. Two in five adults reported some type of health barrier standing in the way of their goals, including physical health concerns (23%) and accessing necessary health care for themselves or their families (13%).

Health-related barriers also weighed heavily on caregivers, especially sandwich caregivers. Nearly three in five sandwich caregivers (58%) and 48% of caregivers overall reported health-related barriers, with more than one-third of sandwich caregivers (36%) identifying their mental health as a major obstacle.

In addition to financial and health challenges, one-third of adults (33%) cited personal challenges, including anxiety or fear (27%) and lack of confidence (19%) as barriers standing in the way of their future. More than one-quarter (26%) specifically identified uncertainty about the future as an obstacle to achieving their goals.

Mental health and anxiety are bigger barriers for younger adults

% who identified the following obstacles to achieving their dreams or goals



These personal barriers were especially common among younger adults. While 23% of adults overall identified mental health as an obstacle, that figure rose to 38% among adults ages 18–29, compared with 26% of adults ages 30–45, 22% of adults ages 46–61, and 9% of adults ages 62–80. A similar pattern emerged for anxiety and fear. More than two in five young adults ages 18–29 (41%) identified anxiety or fear as a barrier, compared with 29% of adults ages 30–45, 26% of adults ages 46–61, and 13% of adults ages 62–80.

For many adults–especially younger adults–these challenges appeared to contribute to a growing sense that progress itself had become harder to achieve. Nearly three in five (59%) agreed that they were doing everything "right" and still falling behind, while more than half (56%) reported lowering their expectations for what they could achieve in life. Two-thirds of adults ages 18–29 (66%) reported lowering their expectations for what they could achieve, compared with 57% of adults ages 30–45, 54% of adults ages 46–61 and 46% of adults ages 62–80. Similarly, more than two-thirds of adults ages 18–29 (69%) and ages 30–45 (66%) agreed that they were doing everything "right" and still falling behind, compared with 58% of adults ages 46–61 and 46% of adults ages 62–80.

This recalibration extended beyond adults' personal lives to their perceptions of society more broadly. More than 2 in 5 adults (45%) believed their generation would be worse off than their parents' generation, while only 30% expected their generation to be better off. Similarly, 58% did not believe future generations would inherit a better world than the one they inherited.

Generational differences emerged here as well. A closer look revealed that about two-thirds of adults ages 46–61 (67%) and ages 62–80 (66%) did not believe future generations would inherit a better world than they did. And nearly one-quarter of adults ages 18–29 (24%) believed their generation was much worse off than their parents' generation, compared with 17% of adults ages 30–45, 18% of adults ages 46–61 and 9% of adults ages 62–80.

These findings suggest that many adults are navigating a future that feels increasingly uncertain. Financial pressures, health care challenges, anxiety and broader societal concerns continue to stand in the way of long-term goals and future planning. Yet despite reporting significant obstacles and lowering expectations, most adults (72%) still feel they have at least some control over their future. In that sense, many people appeared to be adapting to stress, even as they questioned what may be possible for themselves and future generations.

CONCLUSION

Everyone will experience stress, adversity, and unexpected challenges for different reasons and at various stages of life. Psychology defines **resilience** as the process of adapting well in the face of these adversities, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress, such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. Developing the skills to navigate such experiences can help people adapt and recover from setbacks as they come.

Building resilience is like building a muscle. It takes time, effort, and intentionality. Focusing on the four core components of resilience can help you develop the skills to navigate life's challenges and adapt to adversity:

- **Prioritize meaningful connections** – build relationships with empathetic, trustworthy people who can offer support during difficult times. Connecting with friends, family members or community groups can help you feel less alone.
- **Take care of your physical and emotional well-being** – regular exercise, adequate sleep, proper nutrition and mindfulness practices can help you manage stress and strengthen resilience. Avoid relying on alcohol or other substances to cope with difficult emotions.
- **Practice healthy thinking** – try to keep challenges in perspective, recognize unhelpful thought patterns and develop a more balanced view of difficult situations. Accepting that some things cannot be changed can help you focus on what you can influence.
- **Set realistic goals and find purpose** – work toward meaningful goals through small, consistent steps. Helping others, volunteering or contributing to your community can also foster a sense of purpose and strengthen your connections.

You may not be able to change a difficult situation. However, you can take steps to focus on what you can control and manage your response. Resilience doesn't mean avoiding stress, because learning to overcome difficult periods is normal. Resilience involves thoughts, behaviors and actions that can be learned and developed over time.

Working with a licensed mental health professional such as a psychologist can help you develop appropriate strategies to manage stress and face uncertainty with confidence. If you find yourself struggling to cope or having difficulty with life's daily challenges, consider seeking support from a licensed mental health professional.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted online in the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of the American Psychological Association among 3,132 adults ages 18+ who reside in the U.S. ("national sample"). In addition, oversamples allowed for increased totals by race/ethnicity: 801 Black, 803 Latino/a/e and 827 Asian. The total sample also included 72 individuals who identified as only Native American or Alaskan Native/Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, which falls below the standard threshold for reporting (n≥100). For Latino/a/e adults, interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. The survey was conducted July 29 – August 24, 2026.

Data is weighted where necessary to reflect its proportions in the population based on the March 2025 Current Population Survey (CPS) by the U.S. Census Bureau, PEW NPORS 2025 (for frequency of internet use and political party affiliation) and PEW 2023 (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 in English and Spanish. Country of origin (U.S./non-U.S.) also was included for Latino/a/e and Asian subgroups.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys.

The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the Gen Pop 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 ± 4.4 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.
- The sample data for the Latino/a/e sample is accurate to within ± 5.0 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.
- The sample data for the Asian sample is accurate to within ± 4.6 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.
- The sample data for the young adult (age 18-29) sample is accurate to within ± 5.7 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 post-survey weighting and adjustments.

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To Cite This Report:
American Psychological Association (2026).
Stress in America™ 2026: The stress of uncertainty.

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