

# Coronavirus pandemic spurring mental health crisis, especially in the young

3 June 2020



The coronavirus pandemic is taking its toll on Americans' mental health, with more than 88,000 people developing anxiety or depression as a result, according to Mental Health America (MHA), a U.S. community-based nonprofit organization.

Also, more than 21,000 Americans who completed MHA's free online [mental health](#) screening last month said they thought about suicide or [self-harm](#) on more than half of the days in May.

The numbers suggest a coming mental health epidemic, according to MHA's president, Paul Gionfriddo.

"Our May screening numbers were unprecedented," he said in an organization news release. "And what is most troubling is that the numbers—consistent with the numbers from the U.S. Government's Census Bureau—demonstrate not only that there is not yet any relief from the mental health impacts of the pandemic, but that the impacts actually seem to be spreading and

accelerating."

Considering that between 40,000 and 50,000 Americans die by suicide every year and nearly half that many reported suicidal or self-harm thinking in May, Gionfriddo said the numbers have to be "a wake-up call to policymakers to act now to prevent this."

Since the start of the pandemic, the screening found:

- At least 88,405 more cases of depression and anxiety than expected.
- More than 54,000 moderate-to-severe cases of depression and more than 34,300 moderate-to-severe cases of anxiety between February through May.
- The per-day [number](#) of depression screenings was 394% higher and the per-day number of anxiety screenings was 370% higher in May than in January.
- There's a huge toll on [young people](#) (younger than 25). Roughly 9 in 10 screened had moderate-to-[severe depression](#) and 8 in 10 had that level of anxiety.
- There are strong feelings of loneliness and isolation. The two factors accounted for 73% cases of moderate-to-severe depression and 62% of anxiety.
- More than 21,000 people considered killing themselves or harming themselves on at least 16 days during May. Nearly 12,000 had these thoughts almost daily.
- LGBTQ individuals, caregivers, students, veterans and active duty [military personnel](#), as well as those with chronic health conditions are especially hard-hit.
- The pandemic is also contributing to other mental health conditions, like psychosis.

**More information:** For more on the risk of suicide and where to get help, see the [National Alliance on](#)

[Mental Illness.](#)

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