COVID-19 and Mental Health:
What We Are Learning from www.mhascreening.org
June 1, 2020

Paul Gionfriddo
President and CEO
Mental Health and COVID-19: More Than 88,000 Impacted by Anxiety and Depression

- Since the beginning of the worry about COVID-19 in mid-to-late February, there have been at least 88,405 additional positive depression and anxiety screening results over what had been expected (using November 2019-January 2020 average as a baseline).
- There have been 54,093 additional moderate to severe depression and more than 34,312 additional moderate to severe anxiety screening results from late February through the end of May.
- The per day number of anxiety screenings completed in May was 370% higher than in January, before coronavirus stress began. The per day number of depression screens was 394% higher in May than in January.
- These impacts on mental health are more pronounced in young people (<25): roughly 9 in 10 are screening with moderate-to-severe depression, and 8 in 10 are screening with moderate-to-severe anxiety.
Mental Health and COVID-19: Thoughts of Suicide & Self-Harm at Epidemic Levels

- “Loneliness and isolation” is cited by the greatest percent of moderate to severe depression (73%) and anxiety (62%) screeners as contributing to mental health problems “right now.” These percentages have been steady since mid-April.
- Despite a dramatic jump in screeners in May (more than 211,945 versus 69,626 in April), severity continued to track equal to or higher than our pre-pandemic baselines.
- In May 2020, 21,165 depression screeners reported thinking of suicide or self-harm on more than half of days to nearly every day, with 11,894 reporting these thoughts nearly every day.
- Special populations are also experiencing high anxiety and depression, including LGBTQ, caregivers, students, veterans/active duty, and people with chronic health conditions.
- This isn’t just affecting people with anxiety and depression, but other mental health conditions, too. Among psychosis screeners in May, more than 16,000 were at risk, and the percentage at risk (73%) also increased.
MHA Screening (www.mhascreening.org): Nearly 5 Million Completed Screens

- Depression (PHQ-9)
- Anxiety (GAD-7)
- Bipolar (MDQ)
- PTSD (PC-PTSD)
- Youth Screen (PSC-YR)
- Parent Screen (PSC)
- Alcohol and Substance Use Screen (CAGE-AID)
- Psychosis Screen (Ultra-High Risk) (PQ-B)
- Eating Disorders
MHA Screening

- Began in April 2014.
- Access to screening tools is free and anonymous at www.mhascreening.org.
- Most screeners voluntarily give de-identified demographic data.
- Screeners are young, (63% < 25 years), female (72%).
- Help-seeking population (74% positive).
- Otherwise representative of the population.
In May, Per Day Anxiety Screenings Increased by 370% over January
In April, Per Day Depression Screenings Increased by 394% over January
More Than 34,312 Additional Screeners Have Anxiety Since COVID-19 Pandemic

Excess Moderate-to-Severe screening results above the Nov-Jan 3-month average (2606 moderate, 3689 severe)
More Than 54,093 Additional Screeners Have Depression Since COVID-19 Pandemic

Excess Moderate to Severe Depression Screens above the previous 3-month average (10,867 moderate to severe)
April Anxiety Screeners: The Main Things Contributing to Mental Health Problems Right Now? Loneliness/Isolation #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness/Isolation</td>
<td>3337</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Trauma</td>
<td>2547</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>2491</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Probs.</td>
<td>2121</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Events</td>
<td>1728</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Probs.</td>
<td>1454</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grief</td>
<td>1336</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=5,525, scoring moderate to severe 4/13-4/30, “Choose up to 3”
May Anxiety Screeners: The Main Things Contributing to Mental Health Problems Right Now

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number of Responders</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness or isolation</td>
<td>15934</td>
<td>62.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past trauma</td>
<td>12219</td>
<td>47.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship problems</td>
<td>10540</td>
<td>41.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronavirus</td>
<td>9326</td>
<td>36.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current events (news, politics, etc.)</td>
<td>7542</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grief or loss</td>
<td>6489</td>
<td>25.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Problems</td>
<td>6315</td>
<td>24.63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=25,643, scoring moderate to severe 5/1-5/31, “Choose up to 3”
April Depression Screeners: The Main Things Contributing to Mental Health Problems Right Now? Loneliness/Isolation #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness/Isolation</td>
<td>6492</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Trauma</td>
<td>4230</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Probs.</td>
<td>3885</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>2874</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grief</td>
<td>2453</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Probs.</td>
<td>2128</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Events</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=8,989 scoring moderate to severe, collected 4/13-4/30, “Choose up to 3”
May Depression Screeners: The Main Things Contributing to Mental Health Problems Right Now

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number of Responders</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness or isolation</td>
<td>32910</td>
<td>72.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past trauma</td>
<td>20931</td>
<td>46.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship problems</td>
<td>20100</td>
<td>44.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronavirus</td>
<td>13703</td>
<td>30.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grief or loss</td>
<td>12413</td>
<td>27.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Problems</td>
<td>10142</td>
<td>22.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current events (news, politics, etc.)</td>
<td>9868</td>
<td>21.77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=45,335, scoring moderate to severe 5/1-5/31, “Choose up to 3”
Screeners Are Not “Worried Well”: Depression Severity Higher In March-May v. Jan-Feb

Depression Screeners, Percent Moderate to Severe

- Jan: 75.00%
- Feb: 80.00%
- Mar: 85.00%
- Apr: 80.00%
- May: 75.00%
More Than 21,000 People Considered Self-Harm or Suicide in May

Suicidal/Self-Harm Thinking

- Nearly Every Day
- More Than Half the Days
- Total Number, Half to Nearly Every Day
Young People in May Still Disproportionately Experiencing Depression and Anxiety

Percent Moderate to Severe

Depression
Anxiety

"11-17" "18-24" "25-34" "35-44" "45-54" "55-64" "65+"
Psychosis Screening: Screeners at Risk and Severity Up in May 2020
Special Populations: Positive for Depression and Anxiety

- Vet/Active Duty
- New/Exp Mom
- Caregiver
- LGBTQ
- Trauma Survivor
- Student
- Other Health Condition

Depression and Anxiety Levels:
For More Resources

• For MHA COVID-19 resources: https://www.mhanational.org/covid19
• For other mental health COVID-19 resources: https://psychhub.com/covid-19/
• To take a free mental health screen: https://screening.mhanational.org
Contact Us

Mental Health America
500 Montgomery Street
Suite 820
Alexandria, VA 22314

Facebook.com/mentalhealthamerica
Twitter.com/mentalhealtham
Instagram.com/mentalhealthamerica
Youtube.com/mentalhealthamerica
pgionfriddo@mhanational.org
@pgionfriddo