



# Mental Health, Stress and Resilience

Parade/Cleveland Clinic  
Healthy Now Survey

September 2021



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# Survey Objectives

This media deck provides insights into research that explores the current mental health landscape in the United States to:



Understand the state of mental health during this moment in time – a time when people saw a glimpse of life returning to “normal” and then had restrictions again due to a rise in cases and new variants



Explore the link between mental health and physical health



Identify what is working to foster resiliency during this time



Drive a conversation and media attention around the importance of ongoing and continuous mental health management

# Methodology

Parade Media and Cleveland Clinic partnered with an independent global market research provider to conduct a quantitative, online survey of 2,219 Americans, 18 years of age or older, living in the continental United States. The total sample is representative of the U.S. population in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, region, education and income. The online survey was completed between August 30 and September 13, 2021. The margin of error for the total sample at the 95% confidence level is +/- 2 percentage points.

Additional distinction in the data based on the following demographics have been called out:

## Resiliency

- **Resilient:** Defined as rating their mental health high (4 or 5) before the pandemic, during quarantine/lockdown for your state, after lock down/quarantine in their state was lifted and now (Q1) AND agreeing (somewhat or strongly) with the statement: "I've been able to maintain a strong mental/mental state in the midst of the pandemic." (Q13). (N=798)

## Impacted by COVID

- **Impacted by COVID:** Defined as having personally had COVID-19 or having a friend/family member have COVID-19 (D5). (N=1,427)

## Gender

- **Male** (N=1,021)
- **Female** (N=1,198)

## Generations

- **Generation Z:** Those born from 1997 through 2003. (N=236)
- **Millennials:** Those born from 1981 through 1996. (N=607)
- **Generation X:** Those born from 1965 through 1980. (N=584)
- **Baby Boomers:** Those born from 1946 through 1964. (N=702)

# OVERALL KEY TAKEAWAYS

# Key Takeaways

#1

**COVID-19 has turned a spotlight on the importance of mental health, destigmatizing it as a taboo topic.**

- In 2018, 68% strongly agreed that mental health was just as important as physical health. Today, this has jumped 14 percentage points to 82%.
- Nearly half of Americans (46%) said that celebrities/public figures speaking out helps them.
- 39% feel empowered to share their own mental/emotional health struggles following a celebrity or public figure speaking out.

#2

**Despite the pandemic's hardships, Americans grew emotionally - creating a newfound sense of inner strength.**

- 33% stated that the pandemic taught them to be more empathic toward others.
- 65% agreed that the pandemic has made them feel more connected to their family/friends than ever before.
- 30% of Americans stated they felt more kindness from strangers, family and/or friends since the easing of the COVID-19 restrictions.
- 74% believe that because of the pandemic, they are more confident that they can handle any challenges life throws at them.
- 80% feel confident that they can handle living through another pandemic.

# Key Takeaways

#3

**However, the pandemic continues to have an adverse impact on Americans' mental health.**

- Before the pandemic, 70% of Americans ranked their mental health as strong. Today, only 62% feel they have strong mental health.
- Americans are more likely to feel stressed, anxious and/or depressed during the pandemic now compared to Fall 2020 (60% in 2021 vs. 50% in 2020).
- For more than half of Americans, as COVID-19 cases rise, so does their anxiety, depression and/or stress.

#4

***The Top Habits of Resilient People: Resilient Americans\* have deployed effective coping techniques.***

- Resilient Americans are more likely to have a strong support system (88%), have close friends/family they feel they can confide in (66%), make getting adequate sleep a priority (64%), make eating healthy a priority (58%) and use exercise as a means to cope with stress/depression/anxiety (44%).

Key Finding #1:  
**COVID-19 has turned  
a spotlight on the  
importance of mental  
health,  
destigmatizing it as a  
taboo topic.**





# Mental Health is more of a priority now compared to 2018.

More Americans today strongly agree that **mental health is just as important as physical health**, compared to 2018.



# Pop culture has helped to destigmatize mental health.



**46%** of Americans said that **celebrities/public figures speaking out** helps them.



**Celebrities and public figures speaking out** about mental health have had the **strongest impact** on **Millennials** and **Gen Z adults** compared to other generations, with 63% and 57% stating it helps them.

(vs. 46% of Gen X, 30% of Baby Boomers)



**39%** feel empowered to share their own mental/emotional health struggles **following a celebrity or public figure speaking out.**

**Further, Millennials are most likely to take action following a celebrity or public figure speaking out about their struggle.**



**63%** of Millennials are **likely to check on their friends and family** following a celebrity speaking out.

(vs. 51% of Gen Z, 42% of Gen X, 24% of Baby Boomers and 42% of average Americans)

Key Finding #2:  
**Despite the  
pandemic's  
hardships, Americans  
grew emotionally -  
creating a newfound  
sense of inner  
strength.**



# Despite pandemic hardships, Americans displayed empathy, learned positive coping behaviors and increased their desire to give back.

33%

of Americans stated that the pandemic taught them to be **more empathic toward others**.

32%

of Americans reported that they **learned positive coping behaviors** to handle stress/anxiety.

30%

of Americans agreed that the pandemic **increased their desire to give back and help others**.

# The pandemic brought people closer together.



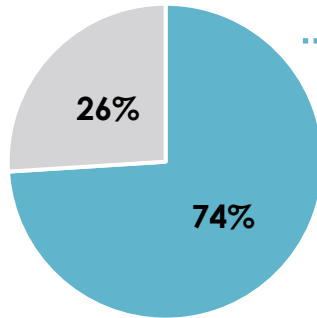
Nearly **two-thirds** (65%) agreed that the pandemic has made them feel **more connected to their family/friends** than ever before.



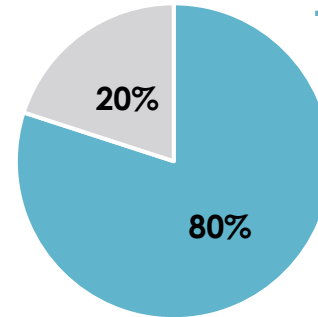
**3 in 10** Americans (30%) stated they **felt more kindness from strangers, family and/or friends** since the easing of the COVID-19 restrictions.

# Most Americans gained confidence to handle any of life's challenges - even living through another pandemic.

74% of Americans believe that because of the pandemic, they are **more confident that they can handle any challenges life throws at them.**



80% of Americans feel **confident** that they can **handle living through another pandemic.**



Key Finding #3:

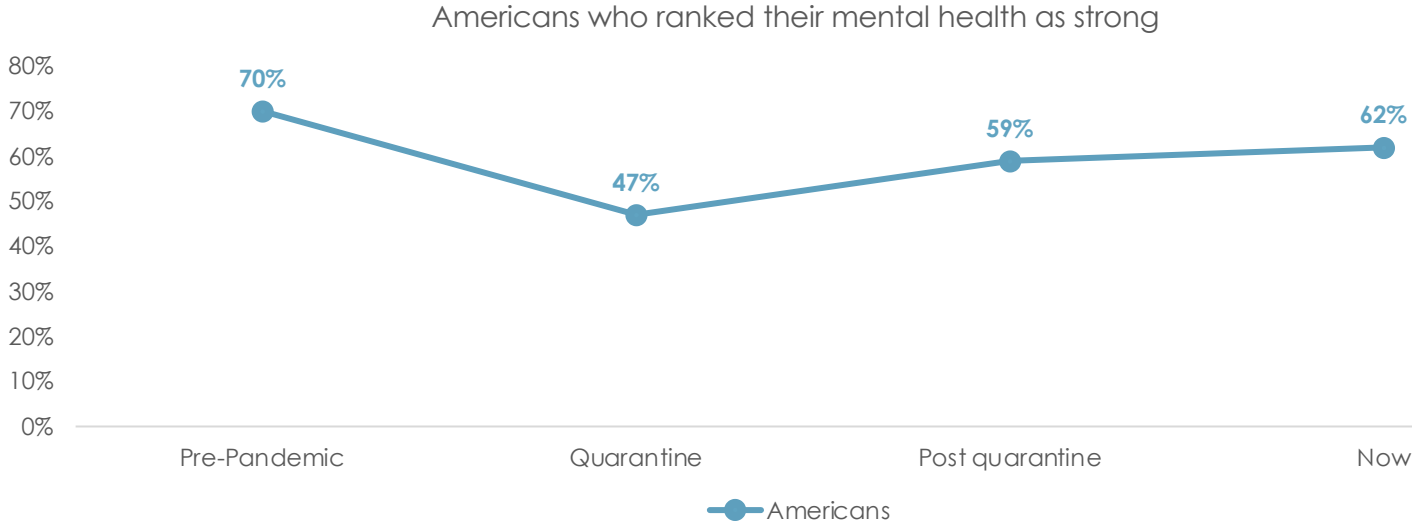
**However, the  
pandemic continues  
to have an adverse  
impact on  
Americans' mental  
health.**





# Americans experienced a large drop in their mental health strength amid the pandemic.

70% of Americans ranked their mental health as strong before the pandemic, dropping to 47% during quarantine and rising back up to 62% today.



Q1: On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is "excellent" and 1 is "poor" how would you rate your mental/emotional health during each of the following periods of time over the past two years? (Total N=2,219)

# Americans' stress, anxiety and/or depression has grown since Fall 2020.



Americans are **more likely to feel stress, anxious, and/or depressed during the pandemic now** compared to Fall 2020.

Q5: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements as they relate to your mental health/emotional well-being during the pandemic? (Total N=2,219; Impacted by COVID-19 N=1,427)  
Q9: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (Total N=2,219)

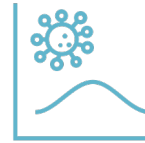
# The impact of COVID-19 is still top of mind for consumers.



**72%** of consumers are worried that the **new variants** will force us into lockdown.



Over **two-fifths** feel that the **recent rise in COVID-19 cases** (41%) and the **discovery of new COVID-19 variants** (41%) has made their **mental/emotional health worse**.



**56%** of Americans feel like their **anxiety, depression and/or stress rises** as **COVID-19 cases rises**.



The **discovery of new COVID-19 variants** is more likely to have a **severe negative impact on men's mental/emotional health than women's** (50% vs. 40%).

# As a result of COVID-19 and other struggles, Millennials and Gen Z adults feel like their generation has experienced greater challenges.

77%

of Millennials...

76%

of Gen Z adults...

...believe their generation has experienced greater challenges, specifically related to mental/emotional health, than other generations.

Q15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (Total N=2,219; Millennials N=607; Gen Z N=235; Gen X N=584; Baby Boomers N=702)

# Millennials are more likely than other generations to feel stressed, anxious and/or depressed during the pandemic, despite their strong social support system.

75%

of Millennials agreed that they've been **feeling more stressed, anxious and/or depressed during the pandemic.**

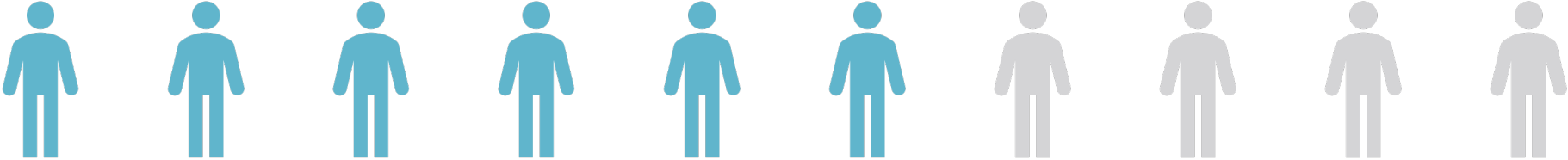
(vs. 68% of Gen Z, 63% of Gen X and 45% of Baby Boomers)



However, **four-fifths (80%)** also agreed that **they've had a strong support system** to help them through the pandemic.

(vs. 62% of Gen Z, 74% of Gen X and 79% of Baby Boomers)

# Because of this, Millennials and Gen Z feel like the pandemic stress made it more difficult to advance within their careers.



More than **6 in 10 Millennials** (65%) and **Gen Z adults** (64%) agreed that the stress **from the pandemic made it more difficult for them to advance** within their careers.

(vs. 44% of Gen X, 22% of Baby Boomers and 50% of Americans)

# Millennials also reported the highest rate of burnout at work.

**65%**  
of Millennials reported feeling **burnt out at work** because of the pandemic.

vs.

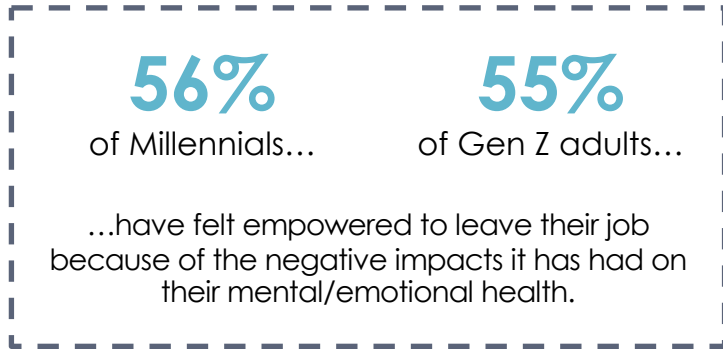
**52%**  
of Gen Z adults

**51%**  
of Americans

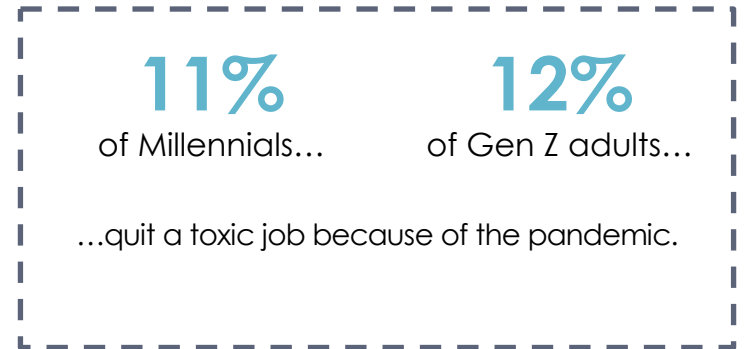
**48%**  
of Gen X

**31%**  
of Baby Boomers

# However, compared to other generations, Millennials and Gen Z feel most empowered to leave their jobs.



(vs. 37% of Gen X, 26% of Baby Boomers and 40% of Americans)



(vs. 5% of Gen X, 2% of Baby Boomers and 6% of Americans)



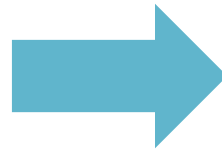
Key Finding #4:  
***The Top Habits of  
Resilient People:  
Resilient Americans\****  
have deployed  
effective coping  
techniques.



\* Resilient Americans are those who reported having strong mental/emotional health prior to, during the pandemic and now.

**Just about one-third of Americans are resilient. Further, individuals who are older, identify as male, earn higher incomes, and are partnered are more likely to be resilient.**

Less than **4 in 10** Americans (36%) are resilient.



**45+**

Nearly **three-quarters** (70%) of those who are resilient are **45 years of age or older**.



Further, **37%** of individuals from **high income households** (\$100,000+) are resilient.



**Two-thirds** (66%) of resilient individuals are **married** or in a **domestic partnership**.



**Women** are **less likely than men to be resilient**, with 58% being not resilient (compared to 42% of men).

\* **Resilient Americans** are those who reported having strong mental/emotional health prior to, during the pandemic and now.

S1: What is your date of birth? (Total N=2,219; Resilient Americans N=798)

S2: What is your gender? (Total N=2,219; Resilient Americans N=798)

S10: Please indicate your annual household income before taxes. (Total N=2,219; Resilient Americans N=798)

D1: What is your marital status? (Total N=2,219; Resilient Americans N=798)

# Resilient Americans' effective coping techniques include not being afraid to lean on others, adequate sleep, healthy eating, and exercise.

Resilient individuals\* are more likely than the average American to:



Have a **strong support system** to help them get through the pandemic. (88% vs. 76%, respectively)



Have close **friends/family they feel they can confide in**. (66% vs. 61%, respectively)



Make getting **adequate sleep** a priority. (64% vs. 51%, respectively)



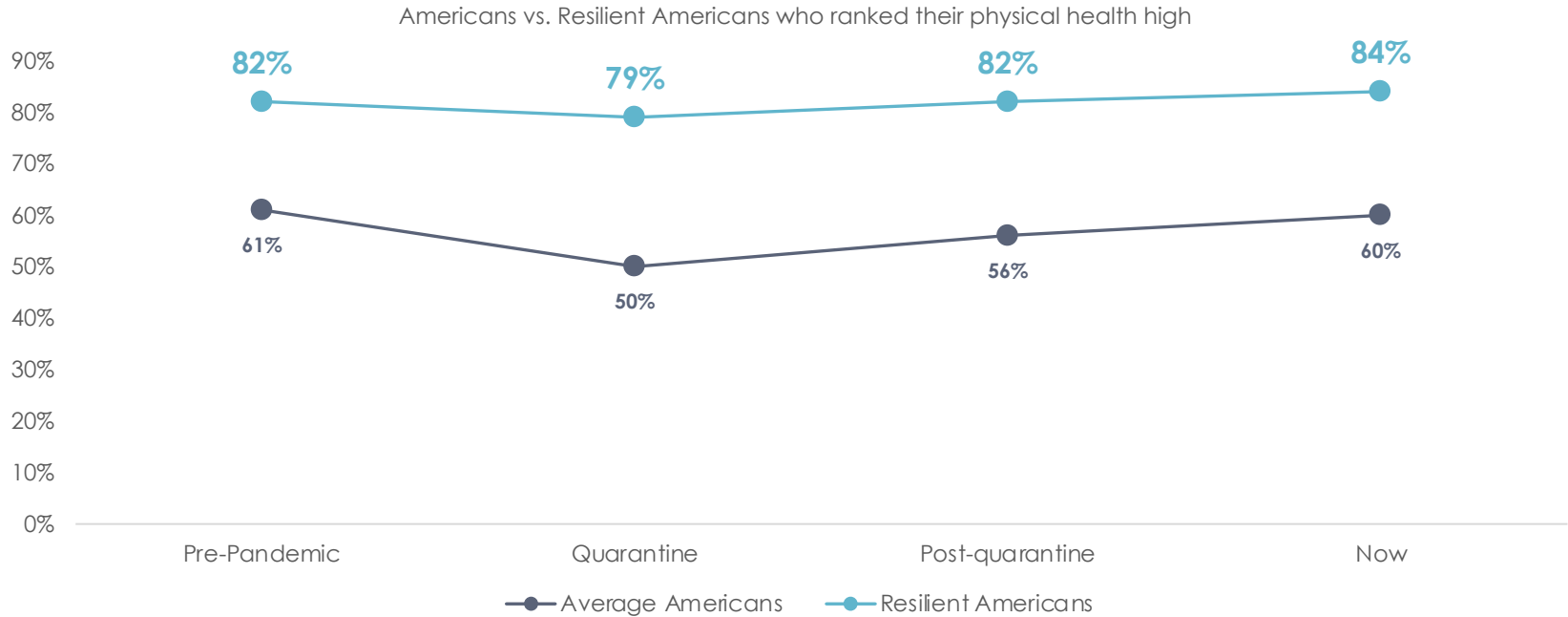
Make **eating healthy a priority**. (58% vs. 48%, respectively)



Use **exercise** to cope with stress/depression/anxiety during the pandemic last year. (44% vs. 43%, respectively)

\* Resilient Americans are those who reported having strong mental/emotional health prior to, during the pandemic and now.  
Q4: Which of the following statements are true for you? Select all that apply. (Total N=2,219; Resilient Americans N=798)  
Q5: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements as they relate to your mental health/emotional well-being during the pandemic? (Total N=2,219; Resilient Americans N=798)  
Q10: Which, if any, of the following activities did you do to cope with stress/depression/anxiety during the pandemic last year? (Total N=2,219; Resilient Americans N=798)

# Resilient Americans\* reported higher levels of physical health than general Americans throughout each period.



\* Resilient Americans are those who reported having strong mental/emotional health prior to, during the pandemic and now.

Q2: On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is "excellent" and 1 is "poor," how would you rate your physical health during each of the following periods of time over the past year and a half (Total N=2,219; Resilient Americans N=798)

**Further, resilient individuals\* are significantly less likely to feel more stressed, anxious and/or depressed during the pandemic, compared to general Americans.**

**33%**

of resilient  
individuals...

vs.

**60%**

of general  
Americans...

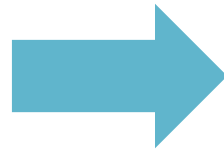
...agreed with "I've been feeling more stressed, anxious and/or depressed during the pandemic."

# APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

## Those impacted by COVID-19

More than **6 in 10** Americans (64%) have been directly impacted by having or someone in their close family/friend group has had COVID-19.

This group is **more likely** than the average American to report **being worse off** when it comes to their **social life**, **despite reporting higher levels of having a strong social support system**.



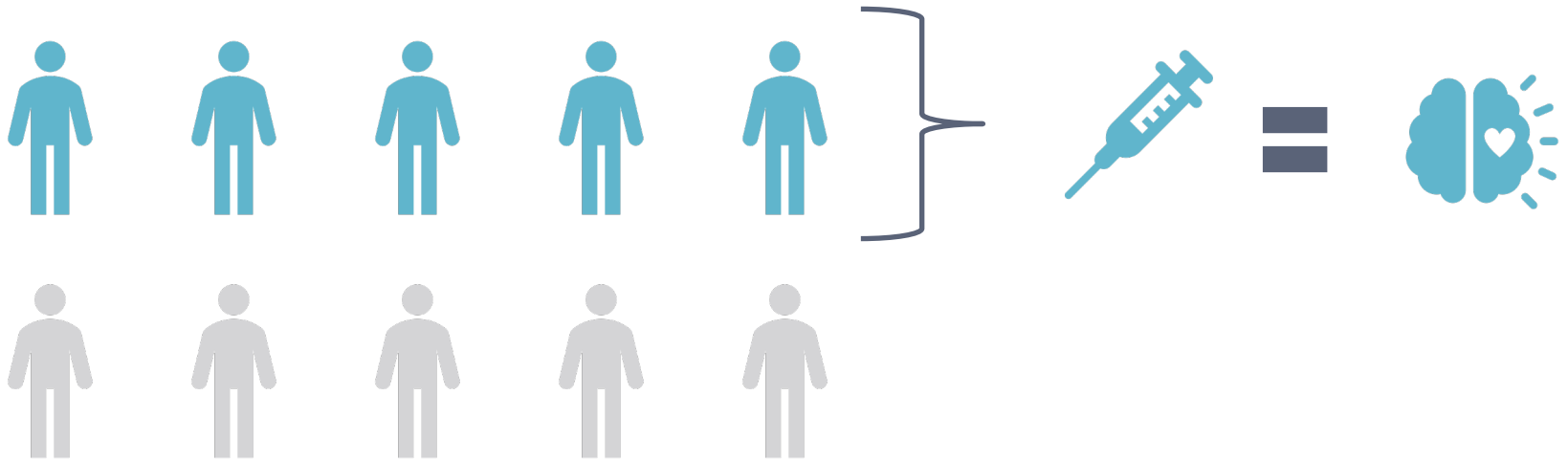
Nearly **4 in 10** (38%) stated their **social life** was **worse** now than it was pre-pandemic (compared to 34% of average Americans).



Conversely, nearly **8 in 10** (79%) stated that **they had a strong social support system** to get them through the pandemic (compared to 76% of average Americans).

## Additional Data Points

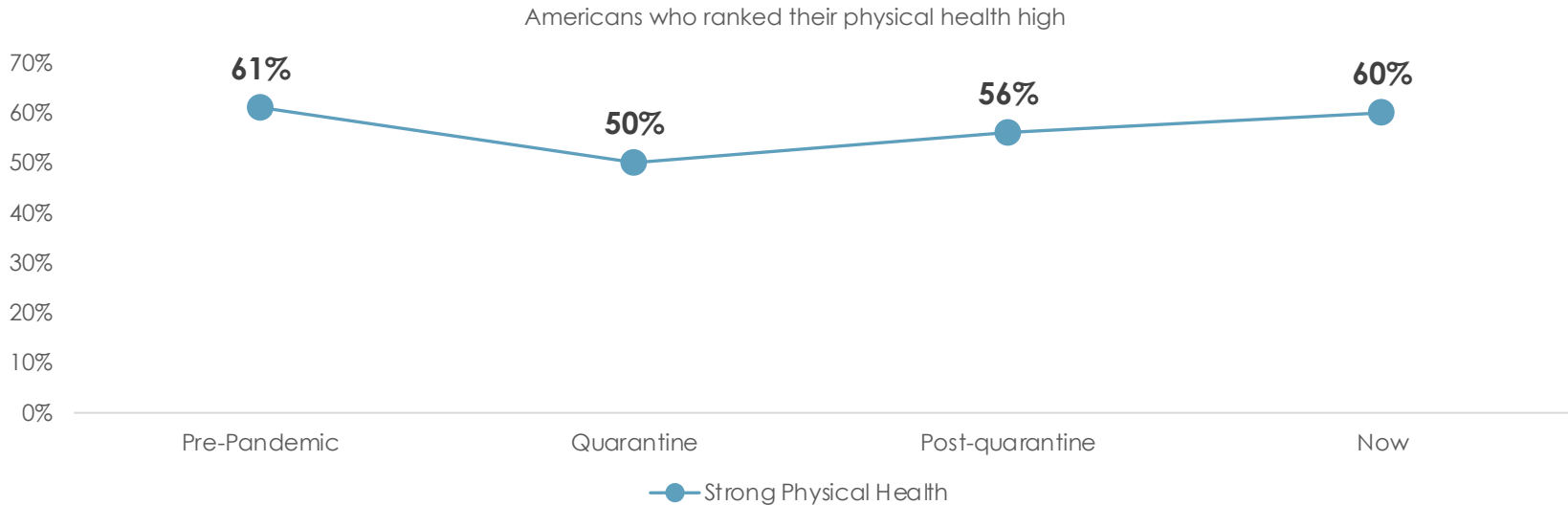
More than half of consumers (52%) stated that the **availability of the vaccine improved their mental/emotional health.**





## Additional Data Points

The pandemic initially had a **significant negative impact** on Americans' **physical health**, but it has since largely **rebounded**.



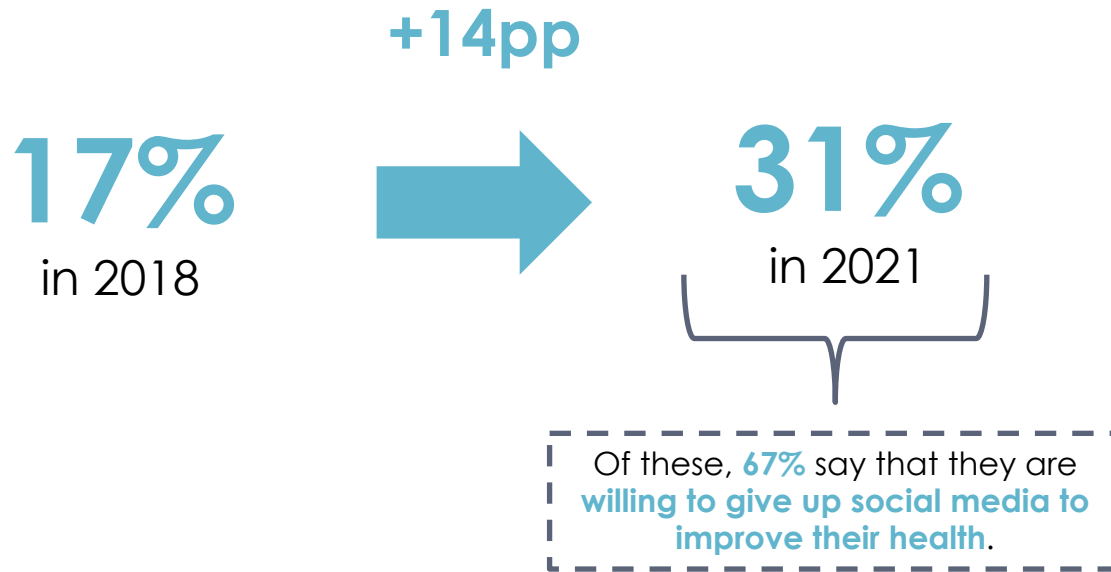
## Additional Data Points

Over **three-fifths** (63%) of Americans agreed that **they've needed to take a break from news and/or social media** to help reduce stress and/or anxiety – a 6 percentage point increase from 2020.



## Additional Data Points

Compared to 2018, **more** Americans are likely to believe that **giving up social media will improve their mental/emotional health.**





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