LONELINESS AND THE WORKPLACE

2020 U.S. Report

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Cigna®

LONELINESS AND THE Workplace

JANUARY 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As a country, we're seeing the epidemic of loneliness intensify. Today, three in five Americans (61%) classify as lonely, according to results from our latest research based on the responses of more than 10,400 adults in the U.S. This represents a 7-percentage point increase in loneliness in America from our groundbreaking 2018 survey. As a global health service company with a comprehensive approach to health and well-being that looks across physical, mental and social needs, we take this uptick in loneliness seriously. That's because when examining the different issues affecting the one in five adults in the U.S. who suffer from a mental health condition,[1] they share a consistent part of the pathology: loneliness. Given the connection between loneliness and mental health, and that we spend so much of our life at work – approximately 90,000 hours over our lifetime,[2] in fact – this year's survey results have motivated us to expand our focus to include loneliness in the workplace. This is especially timely because research has found mental health issues to be among the top causes of long-term sick leave.[3] If we want to increase mental wellness overall, it is crucially important that we come together to combat loneliness in the workplace. The survey revealed that:

> Americans who feel as though they work less than they want, have poor relationships with their coworkers, or they do not have a good work-life balance, are lonelier.

> More than one out of ten lonely workers say their work is often (most of the time or always) lower quality than it should be.

> On average, lonely workers say that they think about quitting their job more than twice as often as non-lonely workers.

The good news is that along with these findings, we've identified some ways we can make a difference. Among them:

> Employees report feeling less lonely when they can be their true selves at work and when their employers promote good work-life balance.

> When employees feel that technology helps them make meaningful connections with coworkers, yet is not perceived as a replacement for in-person interactions, they are less lonely.

At Cigna, our goal is to improve connectivity at work – not only because it's good for businesses across the country, but because it's good for the tens of millions of people who work at them. If we're successful at reducing loneliness, we may help increase their mental wellness, and ultimately their overall health, as well. That's a winning strategy we can all agree on. To learn more about the survey, our efforts to drive greater connection at work and across society, and our existing programs to help address loneliness, please visit Cigna.com/CombattingLoneliness.

Sincerely,

Douglas Nemecek, M.D., MBA
Chief Medical Officer for Behavioral Health, Cigna

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[1] *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2016.*

[2] *Peppercorn, S. (2019, July 26). Why You Should Stop Trying to Be Happy at Work. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved January 7, 2020 from https://hbr.org/2019/07/why-you-should-stop-trying-to-be-happy-at-work.*

[3] *Muramatsu, K., Fujino, Y., Kubo, T., Otani, M., & Matsuda, S. (2019). Relationship between treatment and period of absence among employees on sick leave due to mental disease. Industrial Health, 57(1). doi: 10.2486/indhealth.2018-0055*

LONELINESS AND THE WORKPLACE: 2020 U.S. REPORT

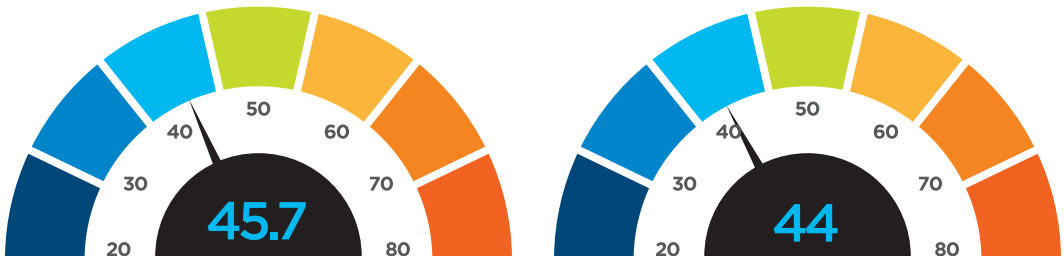
On behalf of Edelman and Cigna, Ipsos conducted an online survey between July 16 and August 2, 2019, to examine Americans' feelings of loneliness. The survey features a national sample of 10,441 adults ages 18 and over. Using survey questions based on UCLA's Loneliness Scale, one of the most referenced and acknowledged academic measures used to gauge loneliness, this report shows exactly how widespread loneliness is in America, and how these feelings differ across various demographic groups. Total average loneliness scores were also created across different demographic groups to gauge which populations are most susceptible to experiencing feelings of loneliness. The index stipulates that the higher the score, the lonelier people are.

At a time where we can do everything from grocery shopping to online dating through our phones, and remote work is no longer a privilege reserved for small startups, are Americans feeling more isolated? As journalists and mental health professionals alike have noted, in 2019, loneliness reached "epidemic" status.[1] Of a possible total loneliness score of 80, the current average loneliness score in America is 45.7, up from 44 in 2018. Loneliness is defined as a score of 43 or higher on UCLA's Loneliness Scale. Currently, 61% of Americans have a loneliness score of 43+, compared to 54% in 2018. Throughout this report, where a data point does not include a percent sign (e.g., 45.7, 42.4) it represents a loneliness score from 20-80 on the UCLA Loneliness Scale. Higher scores indicate that respondents are lonelier, and lower scores indicate that respondents are less lonely.

The study's questions assess respondents' subjective feelings of loneliness, social isolation, health, work performance and other factors, and all data reflects these self-reported feelings.

NATIONAL RESULTS

Total average loneliness score in America



[1] *Health Resources & Services Administration. (2019, January 10). The "Loneliness Epidemic". Retrieved from https://www.hrsa.gov/enews/past-issues/2019/january-17/loneliness-epidemic.*

Key Indicators of Loneliness Have Increased Across the Board

Compared to 2018, there has been an uptick in the number of respondents who identify with a series of negative mood statements, including:

> **Fifty-eight percent of respondents say they always or sometimes feel like no one knows them well, up four percentage points from 2018 (54%).**

> **More than half (52%) report sometimes or always feeling alone, up six percentage points from 2018 (46%). Those reporting that they feel left out has seen a similar increase from 2018 (52%, up from 47%).**

> **Half (49%) always or sometimes feel as though they lack companionship (2018: 43%). Similar numbers report they always or sometimes feel isolated from others (48% vs. 43% in 2018) and that their relationships with others are not meaningful (47% vs. 43% in 2018). Nearly half (45%) say they sometimes or always feel that they are no longer close to anyone (2018: 39%).**

> **More than six in 10 (61%) always/sometimes feel their interests and ideas are not shared by those around them, up three percentage points from 2018 (59%).**

For all 11 statements, which are used to calculate the overall loneliness score, there has been a statistically significant increase overall from 2018.

Loneliness and Personal Relationships

Are Americans fulfilled by their personal relationships? Three-quarters (77%) report having close relationships that provide them with a sense of emotional security and well-being. Those with higher income levels, married people, those age 65+ and those with higher educational attainment – namely, a graduate degree – are most likely to feel this way.

However, nearly four in 10 (38%) agree with the statement, "I feel that I do not have close personal relationships with other people." Additionally, one in three (34%) do not think other people respect their skills and abilities, and a quarter of Americans believe there is no one who shares their interests and concerns.

Furthermore, how people feel about their personal relationships is a key driving force in how lonely they feel. For example, those who do not feel they have close relationships that give them emotional security and well-being have an average loneliness score of 57, nearly 15 points higher than those that do (42.3).

When looking at a series of relationship statements, those who disagree with the following report particularly high loneliness scores:

> "There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need it." (57.2)

> "I have close relationships that provide me with a sense of emotional security and well-being." (57)

> "There is a trustworthy person I could turn to for advice if I were having problems." (56.9)

> "There are people who enjoy the same social activities I do." (56.8)

Frequency of, and Satisfaction with, In-Person Interactions Leads to Less Loneliness

The frequency of one's in-person interactions is a key indicator on how lonely they are. For example, those who interact with people daily have an average loneliness score of 41.1, nearly 20 points lower than those who never interact with other people (60.4). Nearly all (94%) of those who never have in-person interactions have a loneliness score above 43.

Respondents who report engaging in daily social interaction continue to be significantly less likely to say that they sometimes or always feel there is no one they can turn to (a 46-percentage point difference between "daily" and "never"), feel no longer close to anyone (47-percentage point difference), lack companionship (45-percentage point difference) and other negative mood indicators. However, even those who have daily in-person interactions report slightly higher levels of loneliness in a variety of ways when compared to 2018.

While the frequency of in-person interactions strongly correlates with loneliness levels, it is also important to take into account a person's satisfaction with the amount of interactions they have. Those who feel their amount of in-person interaction is just right have an average loneliness score of 41.6, compared to those who want less (49.2) or are hoping for more (52.1). Since loneliness has increased across the board from 2018, all of these scores are statistically higher from 2018, but the pattern holds true.

INTERACTION LEVEL	2018 AVG	2019 AVG	2018 % ABOVE 43	2019 % ABOVE 43
More Than Desired	47.6	49.2	67%	78%
About Right	40.1	41.6	39%	46%
Less Than Desired	50.6	52.1	78%	83%

Loneliness Based on Health

As in 2018, those reporting to be in fair or poor overall health exhibit more signs of loneliness than those in better health. Currently, 21% of respondents describe their overall health and well-being as fair/poor, up slightly from 19% in 2018. When looking at average loneliness scores, those in excellent, very good or good health have a loneliness score of 43.5, compared to 54.2 for those in fair/poor health. This gap is similar to 2018 (10.9 points; 41.9 for excellent/very good/good vs. 52.8 for fair/poor); however, regardless of self-reported health level, loneliness scores have increased across the board.

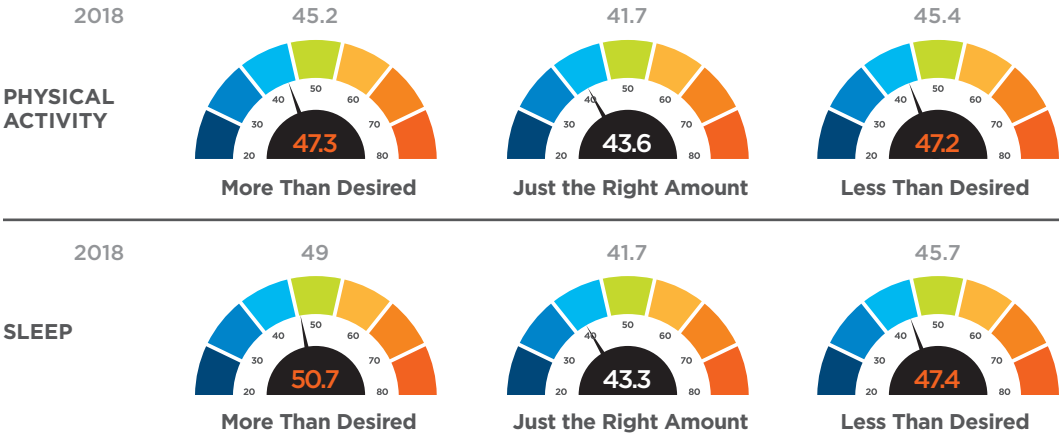
One's mental health has a larger impact than physical health on average loneliness, a trend we also saw in 2018. Currently, those who rate their mental health as fair or poor have an average loneliness score that is more than 12 points higher than those who report excellent, very good or good mental health. Those less optimistic about their mental health have an average score of 55.2 (2018: 54.5), compared to 42.7 – under the threshold of 43, which is considered "lonely" – for those who are more positive (up slightly from 41.6 in 2018).

On the other hand, there is about an eight–point difference in loneliness scores depending on physical health. People reporting fair or poor physical health have a score of 51.5 (up from 49.6 in 2018), versus 43.3 for those who report excellent/very good/good physical health (also up from 2018's 41.6).

Regardless of how people rate their own health, it is once again important to consider balance: those who are content with the amount of physical activity and sleep they are getting are less lonely than those getting more or less than they desire. While those getting as much sleep and physical activity as they need report slightly higher levels of loneliness compared to 2018, they still feel less alone (by anywhere from three to seven points) than those dissatisfied with their levels of sleep and exercise.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SLEEP

Balance is important



Are Men Getting Lonelier?

In 2018, men and women reported roughly the same levels of loneliness – in 2018, 53% of men had a loneliness score above 43 (average: 43.8) and so did 54% of women (average: 44.2). This year, however, nearly two-thirds of men (63%) have a loneliness score above 43, compared to 58% of women. Their average scores are also slightly higher (46.1 vs. 45.3 for women). While both groups report slightly higher levels of loneliness from 2018, it seems men may be feeling a greater sense of isolation.

Nearly two-thirds of men (64%) say they always or sometimes feel their interests and ideas are not shared by those around them, compared to 59% of women. By comparison, men and women shared this sentiment equally in 2018 (59% each). Half of men (49%) also say they always or sometimes feel their relationships are not meaningful, compared to 44% of women. While the percentage of women who share this view increased by two percentage points, the percentage of men jumped by six points.

The data shows one other possible explanation for the isolation felt by men: the work environment. While majorities of employed men and women agree, equally, that they are satisfied with their relationships at work and that there is a sense of intra-office camaraderie, men report slightly higher levels of isolation or abandonment. One in three (32%) employed men agree that they feel abandoned by coworkers when under pressure, compared to 23% of employed women. They are also more likely to report feeling alienated from coworkers (32%, compared to 25% of women), and men are particularly more likely to report feeling a general sense of emptiness when at work (41%, compared to 29% of women).

Though men are slightly more likely to report having a best friend at work (60% vs. 56% of women) and to spend time socializing with colleagues outside of work (51% vs. 44%), they agree in larger numbers that they have to hide their true selves at work (43% vs. 34%).

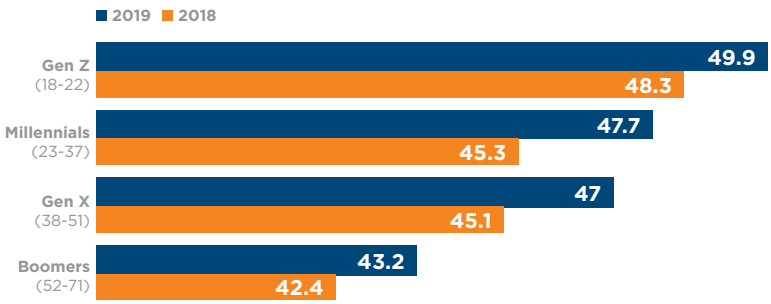
Retirees, Older People Less Lonely; Older Workers Also Happier in Their Work Environment

As reported in 2018, retirees are the least lonely group by employment status. They are the only ones where a majority do not have an average loneliness score above 43 (45% do; average score: 41.9). Loneliness increases slightly among employed people and homemakers (each have average scores of 45.6 and 45.5 respectively), followed by students (49.3). Three-quarters (77%) of unemployed people have an average loneliness score above 43, and their score is highest among all groups (51.1). Though all groups have seen an increase in their average loneliness score from 2018, homemakers and retired people have seen the smallest increase, less than one point each.

As retirees tend to be the least lonely, it is perhaps not surprising that Baby Boomers and the Greatest Generation feel less alone than younger generations. For example, members of the Greatest Generation have an average loneliness score that is ten points lower than Gen Z, and Boomers are seven points lower.

GENERATIONS *2019 VS. 2018*

All generations experienced significant increases in loneliness over the last year, but younger generations remain more lonely



Boomers (and older) are most likely to feel there are sometimes/always people they can talk to, turn to and who really understand them. On the other hand, more than seven in 10 Gen Z respondents (73%) sometimes or always feel alone, shy (72%) or that no one really understands them well (71%).

For older generations that are still employed, a similar pattern emerges regarding workplace sentiments: Baby Boomers are less isolated and more fulfilled by their work than Gen Z and Millennial respondents.

Gen Z respondents are more than twice as likely than Baby Boomers to say they often feel abandoned by their coworkers when under pressure at work (42% and 18%, respectively) and that they often feel alienated by their coworkers (40% and 18%, respectively). A majority of Gen Zers in the workplace (54%) often feel emotionally distant from the people they work with, compared to a quarter (28%) of Baby Boomers. A similar number (55% of Gen Z) report feeling disconnected from others at work, while just 27% of Baby Boomers agree.

Despite this disconnect, younger employees are more likely to say they have a best friend at work and that they socialize and spend time with colleagues outside of work. Despite this sense of camaraderie in and out of work hours, 54% of Gen Z respondents feel the need to hide their true selves when they go to work (compared to 47% of Millennials, 39% of Gen Xers and 26% of Baby Boomers).

There Is a Correlation Between Job Tenure and Loneliness, with New Employees Feeling More Alone

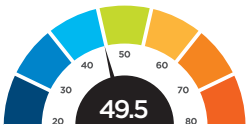
When looking at mood indicators by job tenure, newer employees – those who have been in their current position for less than six months – are most likely to report a lack of companionship. Nearly two-thirds (64%) feel this way always or sometimes, and the sentiment diminishes the longer someone has been at their current job. For example, there is a 24-percentage point difference between those who have been at their job less than six months and those who have been there 10 years or more.

Similar numbers of those that have been at their position less than six months (67%) or less than a year (62%) say they always or sometimes feel alone – another metric that improves with length of tenure at a job. Generally, employees at their current job for 10 years or more are the least likely to report feeling alone, left out or isolated in some way.

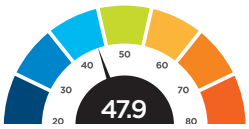
Most new employees report a lack of closeness, with 60% of those less than six months in saying they always or sometimes feel they're no longer close to anyone, and 65% feeling isolated from others (compared to 39% of those with tenure of 10+ years). These employees have an average loneliness score (49.5) that is significantly higher than those in their job for six months to under a year (47.9), 1-3 years (47.3), 3-5 years (45.1), 5-10 years (45.3) and more than 10 years (43.2).

TENURE

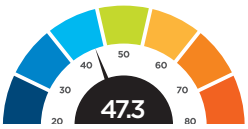
Loneliness decreases as job tenure increases



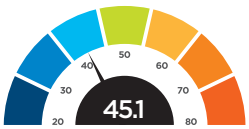
Less Than 6 Months



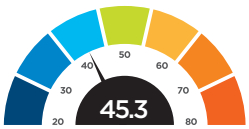
6 Months — Less Than a Year



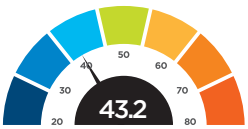
1 Year — Less Than 3 Years



3 Years — Less Than 5 Years



5 Years — Less Than 10 Years



More Than 10 Years

Satisfaction with Work Relationships and Companionship Makes for Happier Workers

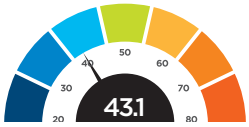
A clear majority (83%) feel their relationships with coworkers are excellent, very good or good (including 43% saying excellent or very good). A similar number (80%) report feeling satisfied with the relationships they have at work. Most (52%) somewhat agree with this sentiment, while just a quarter (27%) strongly agree that they are satisfied with work relationships. Similarly, three-quarters agree that they have social companionship at work (74%) or a sense of camaraderie in their workplace (75%). Furthermore, 71% report having a group of friends at work, and 58% say they have a best friend.

Though most feel a sense of belonging and friendship in their workplace, more than one in three report feeling a general sense of emptiness (35%) or disconnection from others (37%) when they are at work, and 39% feel the need to hide their true self when they go to work.

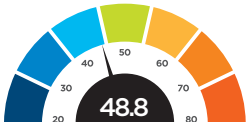
Although those with a best friend at work report less loneliness, 74% would not be more likely to leave their current employer if their best friend left. A majority (55%) also would not leave even if they felt disconnected from their colleagues, potentially opening them up to greater workplace loneliness.

"BEST FRIEND" OR CLOSE FRIEND AT WORK

Those who have a best friend are less lonely but most aren't more likely to leave if the friend does



58% have a "best friend" or close friend at work



42% do not have a "best friend" or close friend at work

74% are NOT more likely to leave their current employer if their "best friend" at work left.

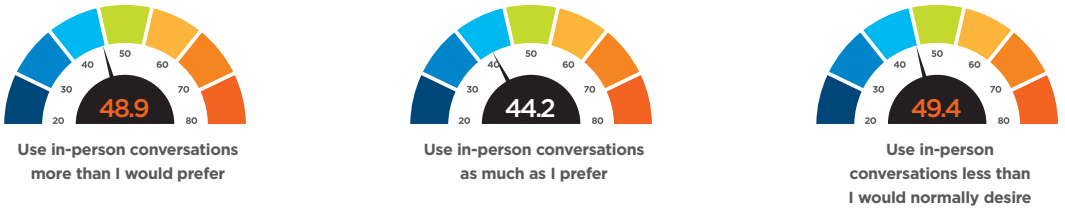
Satisfaction with In-person Interactions at Work Correlated with Lower Loneliness Score

One in 10 employed Americans (11%) say they never interact with people through in-person conversations or meetings at work. Most (61%) get in-person interaction for less than an hour to up to two hours per day. Regardless of the length of time spent interacting face-to-face, three quarters (72%) report they are satisfied with the amount. The remaining quarter are split evenly between feeling that they interact with people in-person at work more than they would prefer (15%) and less than they would desire (13%).

People getting the right amount of in-person interaction at work, by their own standards, are less lonely (44.2) than those either craving more interaction (49.4) or hoping for less (48.9).

COMMUNICATION METHODS

Satisfaction with in-person interaction levels translates to lower loneliness score



The impact that technology has on in-person interactions is mixed. While 60% agree that using technology at work helps them feel more connected and establish meaningful relationships, 56% acknowledge that it reduces the in-person interaction they have.

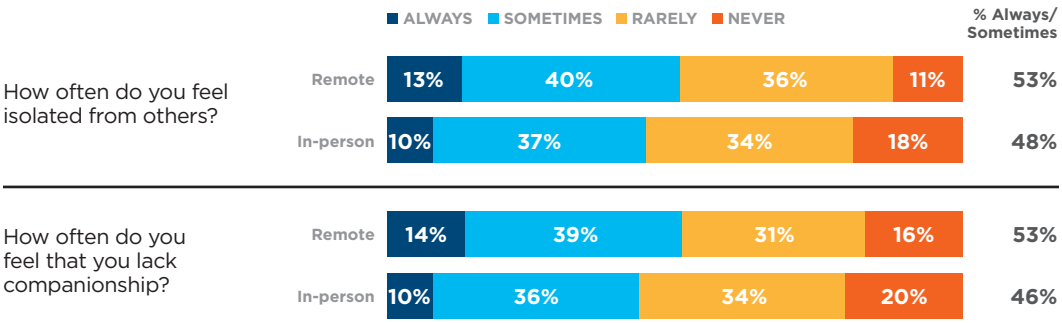
Type of Work Environment Impacts Loneliness

Forty percent of employed Americans work in an in-person office environment, while 10% work in remote, virtual or home office environments (and another 4% have a sales job where a significant portion of their time is spent out of the office).

Though remote workers are no more likely to say they always or sometimes feel left out, they are more likely to report feeling that their relationships with others are not meaningful. More than half (54%) of remote workers always or sometimes feel this way, compared to 45% of those who work in an in-person office environment. Remote workers are also more likely to say they always or sometimes feel alone (57% vs. 52% of non-remote workers), lack companionship (53% vs. 49% of non-remote workers) and feel there is no one they can turn to (46% vs. 43% of non-remote workers).

REMOTE VS. IN-PERSON — NEGATIVE STATEMENTS

Remote workers are more likely to feel isolated



Regardless of work environment, all employed Americans display varying degrees of loneliness, indicated by an average score of 43 or higher. Those whose jobs may inherently limit daily personal interaction – research (48.4), remote workers (46.8), clinical workers (46.5) and out-of-office sales (46.5) – all report higher levels of loneliness, along with skilled labor workers (46.4) and those in the service industry (46.7).

Those who work in an in-person environment (44.6) and in K-12 education are the least lonely by type of work environment. Interestingly, there is a difference between K-12 education and higher education, with the latter reporting higher levels of loneliness (43.8 vs. 47, respectively). Higher education workers also admit greater feelings of isolation, with 54% always or sometimes feeling isolated from others, compared to 42% of K-12 education workers who feel the same.

Frequent Telecommuting and Dissatisfaction with Remote Work Both Breed Loneliness

Three in 10 (31%) employed Americans report working from home or telecommuting frequently (defined as always or multiple times a week), and another 15% do sometimes (once a week to once a month). Like the difference between remote and in-office workers, those who telecommute frequently are lonelier, with an average score of 47.3, than those who work remotely just sometimes (45.1) or rarely/never (44.7).

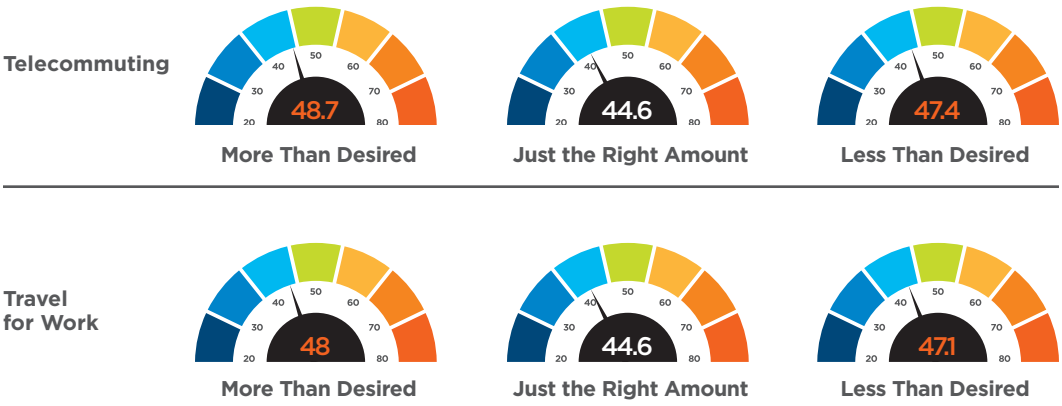
Frequency of telecommuting also has a greater impact than the type of office environment when it comes to feeling left out. Fifty-eight percent of frequent telecommuters report always or sometimes feeling left out (compared to 49% of people who rarely or never telecommute). A majority (54%) always or sometimes feel no longer close to anyone, compared to 42% of people who rarely or never telecommute.

Though telecommuters report being lonelier than those in an office setting, sentiments toward telecommuting are perhaps a more accurate indicator of loneliness. Those who say they telecommute just the right amount for them have a loneliness score of 44.6 – on par with people who rarely or never work remotely. On the other hand, people who telecommute more than they want (48.7) and not as much as they'd like (47.4) are both significantly lonelier.

In a similar pattern to telecommuting, workers who are satisfied with the amount they have to travel for work have a lower average loneliness score (44.6) than those who travel for work more (48) or less (47.1) than they would like.

TELECOMMUTING AND WORK TRAVEL

Satisfaction with remote work and travel correlates with lower loneliness scores



Loneliness Is More Prevalent Among Entertainment Industry and Gig Economy Workers

When looking at how loneliness scores vary across industry, those in entertainment – music, publishing, film, sports, etc. – have the highest average score (48), followed by those in the personal care field (47.3) or agriculture/industry, including automotive, food and beverage, etc. (46.8).

Six in 10 (62%) Americans in the entertainment industry agree they always or sometimes feel alone, and 54% report feeling they are no longer close to anyone. Even more, 69%, say they always or sometimes feel that no one really knows them well, including 25% who always feel this way. In contrast, 51% of those in business services – the least lonely industry (average score of 44.8) – sometimes or always feel alone, 40% feel they no longer are close to anyone and 60% always or sometimes feel that no one really knows them well.

By business type, sharing, or gig economy workers, are the loneliest across the board, with an average score of 48.9. However, they comprise just 3% of employed Americans. The next loneliest are those who own their own business (46.8) and people at a publicly traded company (46.1), followed by people at family-owned (45.8) or privately owned (45.3) businesses, government (45.1) and nonprofits (44.4). Looking at a series of negative mood statements, three-quarters (75%) of sharing economy workers always or sometimes feel that people are around them but not with them, statistically higher than all others by business type, with the exception of business owners (67%).

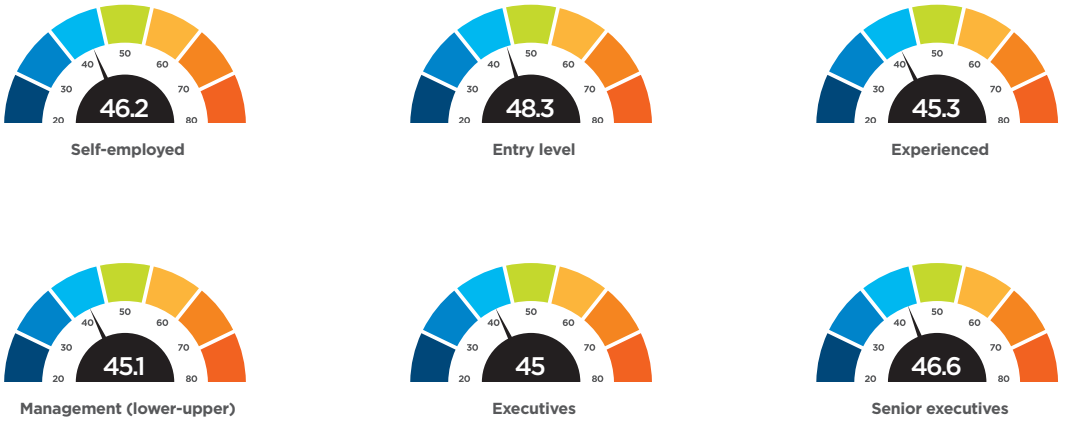
It's Lonely at the Top – and the Bottom

Entry-level and senior executives are the two most likely groups to report always or sometimes feeling there is no one they can turn to (51% and 57%, respectively), not feeling close to anyone (53% and 56%) and that no one really knows them well (65% and 70%). Those who are more experienced than entry-level workers (experienced, management-level, etc.), but not in a C-Suite position are generally more content across the board.

This pattern extends to average loneliness scores, with entry-level employees reporting the highest (48.3), followed by senior executives (46.6). Non-C-suite executives are the least lonely (45).

POSITION/LEVEL

Entry level and senior executives are loneliest by position



Hours Worked and Business Size Do Not Impact Loneliness

Unlike job position, work environment or tenure of employment, the number of hours worked does not have an impact on loneliness. Those who work fewer than 40 hours per week and those who work 41-80 say they feel alone, left out, no longer close to anyone, etc., in similar numbers. People who work 40 hours or less have an average loneliness score of 45.7, compared to 45.2 for those who work 41-80 hours.

Aside from those who are their organization's only employee, the size of one's company has no bearing on their loneliness score. Those who are their organization's only employee have an average score of 47.1, compared to 45.5 for small businesses, 45.2 for medium-sized and 45.4 for large companies. Similar to hours worked, this is not a driving factor of a person's level of feeling alone, isolated or misunderstood.

Loneliness in the Workplace Affects Different Demographic Groups

In addition to tenure, position level and generation, loneliness in the workplace affects certain racial and ethnic groups differently. Though all ethnic groups say they feel equally included in the social aspects at work (seven in 10 or more agree), Hispanic and African American workers feel a greater sense of loneliness in the workplace.

For example, both Hispanic and African American workers agree in higher numbers that they feel abandoned by coworkers when under pressure at work (37% and 30%, respectively, vs. 25% of whites). They often feel more alienated from their coworkers (39% and 30%, respectively, vs. 26% of whites), and they report feeling more emotionally distant at work (47% and 43%, respectively, vs. 36% of whites). Hispanic workers are also 15 percentage points more likely than white workers to agree that they feel themselves withdrawing from the people they work with (47% vs. 32%).

Though these feelings are prevalent within the confines of work, outside of work, Hispanic and African American workers are actually more likely to agree that they socialize with colleagues (53% and 57%, respectively; white: 45%).

When looking at workers by education status, there are very few significant differences based on satisfaction with their work environment or levels of loneliness in the workplace. Those with a college degree or higher are more likely to feel a sense of camaraderie in their workplace and that they have social companionship and a group of friends at work, but overall, workers with different levels of educational attainment feel roughly the same levels of loneliness (or lack thereof) at their job. Those with a high school education or less, however, are more likely to agree that they do not find their work meaningful (39% vs. 29% of those with a graduate degree).

Income level appears to be a bigger driver of workplace loneliness than education. Low-income workers (defined as those with a household income under $25,000) are most likely to report negative thoughts about their workplace, including often feeling alienated from their coworkers, withdrawing from the people they work with, feeling emotionally distant from their coworkers and feeling isolated when they are with their coworkers. Though a majority of low-income workers agree that they are part of a group of friends, and even have a best friend at work, they are significantly less likely to agree than middle- and high-income workers.

Productivity Levels and Desired Workplace Benefits

Most employed Americans consider themselves to be more productive than their peers. Nearly half (49%) say their productivity all or most of the time is higher than most workers who have a similar type of job and another 32% feel they are more productive some of the time. Just one in 10 feel their productivity is lower than their peers all or most of the time (10).

For the most part, a majority feel they are able to concentrate enough on their work. Just 22% say they do not concentrate enough on their work all or most of the time and an equal number (20%) feel this way some of the time. But most (58%) disagree, saying it's only a little bit or none of the time that they have a hard time concentrating.

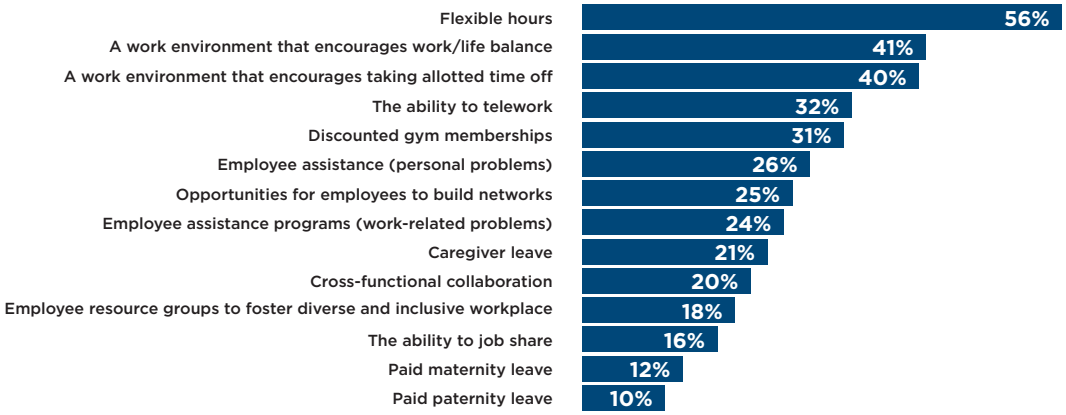
Though workers are prioritizing productivity and concentration, there are indications that Americans are working during times they shouldn't be – namely through illness or stress. Three-quarters say they did not take any days off in the past month due to illness, and even more (83%) have not taken any days off due to stress. Meanwhile, on average, people spent three days in the past month thinking about quitting their job, and more than four days dreading going to work.

When it comes to cultivating a better workplace environment, flexible hours are the most appreciated workplace benefit; 56% say they have utilized them, or would utilize them, at their workplace. This is followed by steps to create a cultural shift. Forty-one percent want a work environment where employees are encouraged to have a work-life balance, and an equal number (40%) want a place where they are encouraged to use their allotted paid time off.

Paid paternity leave (10%) and paid maternity leave (12%) are at the bottom of the list of benefits employed Americans report either having used or are willing to use.

COMPANY BENEFITS

Flexible hours are the most common benefit that are used/would be used

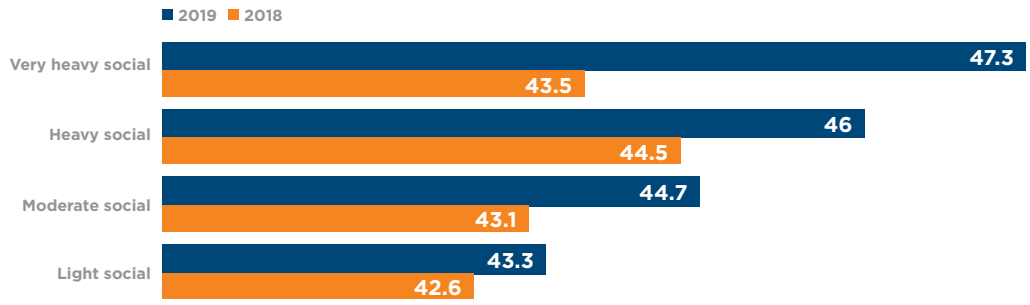


Heavy Social Media Usage Has a Greater Impact on Loneliness than in 2018

Is social media taking a greater toll on our society? In 2018, a slight majority (53%) of very heavy social media users had a loneliness score at or above 43, compared to 47% of light users. Now that gap has widened to more than 20 percentage points; more than seven in 10 (73%) very heavy social media users are considered lonely, versus 52% of light users. Similarly, in 2018 there was just a one-point difference in average loneliness scores between very heavy users (43.5) and light users (42.6), whereas there is now a significant difference of four points (47.3 for very heavy social media users vs. 43.3 for light).

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE *2019 VS. 2018*

Differences in loneliness based on social media usage are more pronounced than in 2018, due to an increase in loneliness among very heavy users



Not only are very heavy social media users significantly more likely to feel alone, isolated, left out and without companionship than those using these platforms less, but these negative sentiments have become more pervasive in the past year. For example, two-thirds (64%) of very heavy social media users report always or sometimes feeling alone, compared to 45% in 2018. Sixty percent always or sometimes feel no longer close to anyone, up 17 percentage points from 2018 (43%). Very heavy social media users have seen double-digit increases from 2018 on every single negative sentiment, except sometimes or always feeling their interests and ideas are not shared by those around them.

Caregivers Show Greater Signs of Loneliness Than Non-Caregivers

One in three Americans (32%) report being the primary caregiver to a friend or family member of any age, either as the sole caregiver or sharing the responsibility of primary care. While they spend time caring for others, there are signs that someone should be caring for them, too. People playing the role of primary caregiver are more likely to report that they lack companionship, have no one to turn to, feel alone, left out and isolated. In all but one case, half or more caregivers feel these situations always or sometimes apply to them (feeling there sometimes or always is no one they can turn to is the only one where fewer than 50% agree). The feelings most prevalent among caregivers include:

> **Always or sometimes feeling no one knows them well (64% vs. 56% of non-caregivers).**

> **Always or sometimes feeling interests and ideas are not shared by those around them (64%; a nearly equal number, 61%, of non-caregivers agree).**

> **Always or sometimes feeling that people are around them but not with them (63% vs 57% of non-caregivers).**

Two-thirds of caregivers are considered lonely, with a score above 43, compared to 58% of those without a primary caregiving responsibility. At 46.8, the average loneliness score for caregivers is higher than non-caregivers (45.4).

LONELINESS AND THE WORKPLACE: 2020 U.S. REPORT

Regional profiles

Atlanta, GA (Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA)

Atlanta residents are around as lonely as other Americans. Fifty-nine percent of Atlanta residents are considered to be lonely, compared to 61% of the national population. The average loneliness score for Atlanta is 45.9, similar to the national average of 45.7. However, Atlanta residents have gotten lonelier since 2018. Their average loneliness score has increased from 43.5 in 2018 to 45.9, and there has been a nine percentage point increase in the number of Atlanta residents considered to be lonely (was 50% in 2018).

Nationally, the percentage of Americans who sometimes or always feel alone is up six percentage points from 2018 (52% vs. 46%); similarly, the percentage of Atlanta residents reporting the same is slightly, but not significantly, higher than in 2018 (53% vs. 47%).

Mental health and overall health are shown to impact loneliness scores. Atlanta residents who describe their overall health as excellent, very good or good have an average loneliness score of 42.3, while those who report fair/poor overall health have an average loneliness score of 56.3. The percentage of Americans reporting good mental health or better is down five points from 2018 (76% vs. 81% in 2018). In Atlanta, there is a small, but not significant, four point decrease (75% vs. 79% in 2018). Nearly one-quarter of Americans (24%) and Atlanta residents (25%) say their mental health is fair or poor.

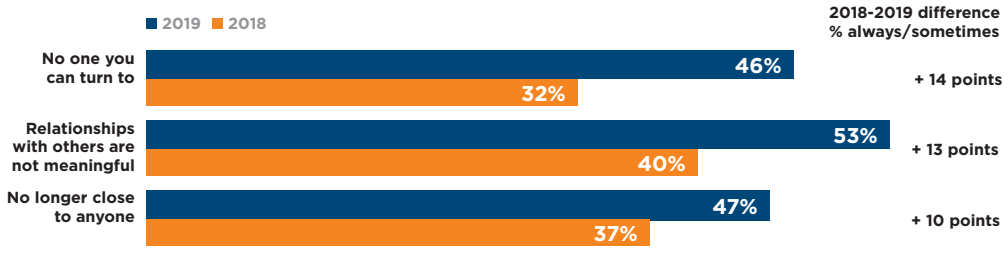
The survey also found:

> Over the past year, Atlanta residents have seen significant increases in the following loneliness indicators:

- Sometimes or always feeling that there is no one to turn to: up 14 percentage points (46% vs. 32% in 2018).
- Sometimes or always feeling that their relationships with others are not meaningful: up 13 percentage points (53% vs. 40% in 2018).
- Sometimes or always feeling that they are no longer close to anyone: up 10 percentage points (47% vs. 37% in 2018).

ATLANTA - LONELINESS INDICATORS *2019 VS. 2018*

Largest changes in loneliness sentiments since 2018



> Looking at the same three sentiments at the national level, there are also significant increases from 2018 – but not nearly as large as in the Atlanta region.
  - Nationally, Americans who report sometimes or always feeling that there is no one to turn to increased six points (compared to 14 percentage points in Atlanta).
  - Americans reporting sometimes or always feeling that their relationships with others are not meaningful experienced a four point increase nationally since 2018 (compared to 13 percentage points in Atlanta).
  - The percentage of Americans nationally who say they sometimes/always feel that they are no longer close to anyone increased six points since 2018 (compared to 10 percentage points in Atlanta).

Workplace Loneliness in Atlanta

When compared to national indicators of loneliness in the workplace, employed Atlanta residents do not show significant differences. For example, in Atlanta 25% of employed residents feel they have excellent or very good work-life balance (32% nationally); another 49% say they have a good work-life balance (40% nationally).

> Nearly eight in 10 (81%) of employed Atlanta residents feel satisfied with their relationships at work (80% nationally).

> Seven in 10 (73%) of employed Atlanta residents agree that they have social companionship at work (74% nationally).

> More than one in three (38%) of employed Atlanta residents feel the need to hide their true self when they go to work (39% nationally).

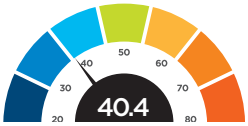
One notable exception is that Atlanta residents are less likely than other Americans to say that they have a "best friend" or close friend at work (47% in Atlanta, 58% nationally).

In-person Interactions and Loneliness

In general, Atlanta residents who do not have daily in-person interactions have an average loneliness score that is 10.1 points higher than those who have daily meaningful in-person interactions. Balance is important, though, and Atlanta respondents who get too much or too little in-person social interaction have an average loneliness score that is 12.6 points higher than those who receive just the right amount.

ATLANTA

Balancing in-person social interactions is important



Just the right amount of in-person social interaction

Too much or too little in-person social interaction

Chicago, IL (Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI)

Chicago residents are as lonely as the national population. Sixty percent of Chicago residents are considered to be lonely, similar to 61% nationally. The average loneliness score for Chicago is 45.2, equal to the national average of 45.7. Fifty-two percent of Americans nationally and Chicago residents sometimes or always feel alone.

The survey also found:

> In Chicago, as well as nationally, mental health and overall health are shown to impact loneliness scores. Chicago residents who describe their overall health as excellent, very good or good have an average loneliness score of 42.8, while those who report fair/poor overall health have an average loneliness score of 51.3.

> Chicago respondents describe their personal mental health similarly to other Americans. Nearly one-quarter of Americans and Chicago residents (24% nationally, 22% in Chicago) say their mental health is fair or poor.

> Chicago residents do not report significant differences in loneliness indicators when compared to the national population. In fact, all Chicago loneliness indicators are within zero to three percentage points of the national loneliness indicators.

Workplace Loneliness in Chicago

Chicago residents are more likely to say that their work-life balance is fair rather than good when compared to the rest of the country. While Chicago residents report excellent, very good and poor work-life balance in line with the rest of the U.S., they are less likely to report good work-life balance (30% in Chicago, 40% nationally) and are more likely to report fair work-life balance (31% in Chicago, 21% nationally).

When compared to national indicators of loneliness in the workplace, employed Chicago residents do not show significant differences. The largest differences, while not significant, are:

> Just over seven in 10 (74%) of employed Chicago residents feel satisfied with the relationships they have at work (80% nationally).

> Forty-six percent of employed Chicago residents report that they feel like they need to hide their true self at work (39% nationally).

> Four in ten (41%) employed Chicago residents say they do not find their work meaningful or fulfilling (34% nationally).

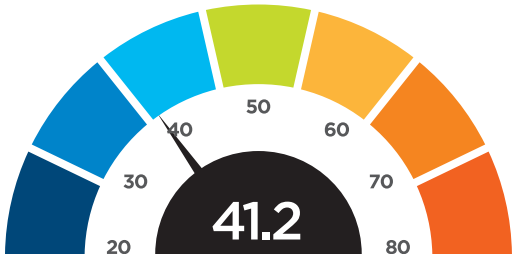
> More than four in 10 employed Chicago residents (45%) agree that they are not able to leave their work at work (39% nationally).

In-person Interactions and Loneliness

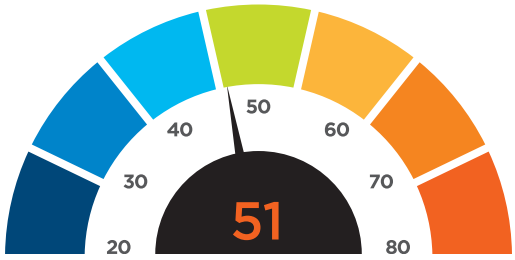
Chicago residents who do not have daily in-person interactions have an average loneliness score of 49.3, compared to 41 for those who have daily meaningful in-person interactions. Additionally, respondents in Chicago who get too much or too little in-person social interaction have an average loneliness score that is 9.6 points higher than those who receive just the right amount.

CHICAGO

Balancing in-person social interactions is important



Just the right amount of in-person social interaction



Too much or too little in-person social interaction

Denver, CO (Aurora-Lakewood, CO)

About two-thirds of Denver residents (65%) are considered to be lonely, comparable to 61% of the national population. The average loneliness score for Denver is 46.8, similar to the national average of 45.7. However, Denver residents have a significantly higher average loneliness rating than those in New York, St. Louis, Minneapolis, Tampa, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

Since 2018, Denver residents have gotten lonelier, mirroring the national trend. Their average loneliness score has increased from 43.5 in 2018 to 46.8, and there has been a dramatic 14-percentage point increase in the number of Denver residents considered to be lonely (was 52% in 2018). Nationally, the percentage of Americans who sometimes or always feel alone is up six percentage points from 2018 (52% vs. 46%). In Denver, the change is larger: nine percentage points (50% vs. 41% in 2018).

Denver residents who describe their overall health as excellent, very good or good have an average loneliness score of 45, while those who report fair or poor overall health have an average score of 51.1. While Denver residents have gotten lonelier in the past year, there has been no significant decline in their reported mental health. On the other hand, the percentage of Americans reporting good mental health or better is down five points from 2018. One-quarter of Americans (24%) and Denver residents (25%) say their mental health is fair/poor.

The survey also found:

Over the past year, Denver residents have seen significant, double-digit changes across half of the loneliness indicators, with the most drastic changes occurring in:

> Sometimes or always feeling left out: up 15 percentage points (58% vs. 43% in 2018).

> Sometimes or always feeling isolated from others: up 13 percentage points (55% vs. 42% in 2018).

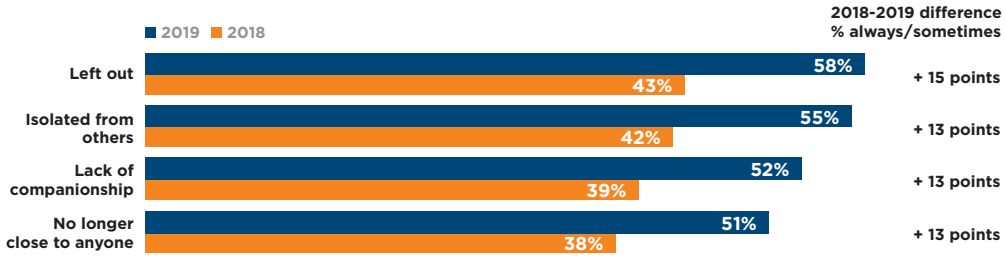
> Sometimes or always feeling that they lack companionship: up 13 percentage points (52% vs. 39% in 2018).

> Sometimes or always feeling no longer close to anyone: up 13 percentage points (51% vs. 38% in 2018).

> Looking at the same sentiments at the national level, there are also significant changes from 2018 – but not as large as the double-digit changes in Denver region.

DENVER - LONELINESS INDICATORS *2019 VS. 2018*

Largest changes in loneliness sentiments since 2018



Workplace Loneliness in Denver

When compared to national indicators of loneliness in the workplace, employed Denver residents show many significant differences. Moreover, Denver's indicators of workplace loneliness are higher than numerous other regions for certain indicators.

Notable differences include:

> Denver residents are more likely than other Americans to say that they often feel disconnected from others at work (45% in Denver, 37% nationally).

- They are also more likely to feel this way than New York, St. Louis, DC, Minneapolis, Richmond and Pittsburgh residents.

> They are more likely than other Americans to experience a general sense of emptiness when at work (43% in Denver, 35% nationally).

- This is significantly more than those in New York, Nashville, Atlanta, Minneapolis, Richmond, Tampa, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

> Denver residents also are more likely to not find their work meaningful or fulfilling (41% in Denver, 34% nationally).

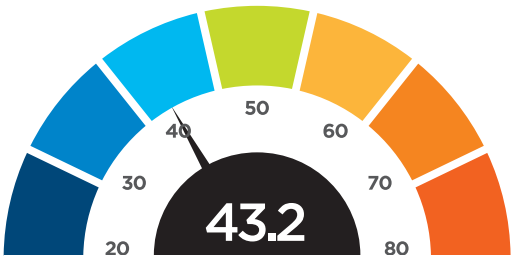
- This is more likely to be reported in Denver than in Nashville, Atlanta, Minneapolis, Richmond and Philadelphia.

In-person Interactions and Loneliness

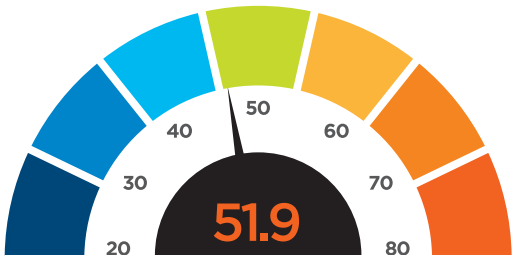
Denver residents lacking daily in-person interactions have an average loneliness score that is 7.5 points higher than those who have daily meaningful interactions (50.2 vs. 42.5, respectively). Similarly, Denver respondents who get too much or too little in-person social interaction have an average loneliness score that is 8.7 points higher than those who receive just the right amount.

DENVER

Balancing in-person social interactions is important



Just the right amount of in-person social interaction



Too much or too little in-person social interaction

Hartford, CT (West Hartford-East Hartford, CT)

Fifty-eight percent of Hartford residents are considered to be lonely, with a loneliness index score of 43 or higher, on par with the national average (61%). The average loneliness score for Hartford (45.3) also matches the national average (45.7). Hartford residents have not gotten significantly lonelier since 2018, when their average loneliness score was 43. The number of Hartford residents considered to be lonely also is statistically unchanged from 2018 (from 55% to 58%). Nationally, the percentage of Americans who sometimes or always feel alone has increased six percentage points from 2018 (52% now vs. 46%), but the change in Hartford is not significant.

The survey also found:

> There is a more than 10 point difference in average loneliness scores between Hartford residents who describe their overall health as excellent, very good or good (42.7) and those who report fair or poor health (53).

> An equal number of Hartford residents say their mental health is fair or poor (24%) as compared to the national average.

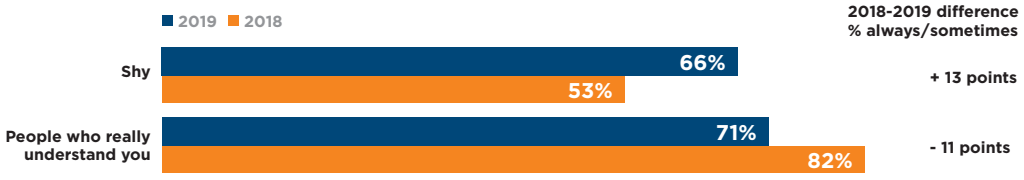
> Over the past year, Hartford residents have seen two significant changes in loneliness indicators:

- More say they sometimes or always feel shy (up 13 percentage points).
- Fewer report sometimes or always feeling that there are people who really understand them (down 11 percentage points).

> Looking at the same two sentiments at the national level, there are small changes (2-3 point differences), but not as large as the shifts seen in the Hartford region.

HARTFORD - LONELINESS INDICATORS *2019 VS. 2018*

Largest changes in loneliness sentiments since 2018



Workplace Loneliness in Hartford

More than one in three (36%) employed Hartford residents feel they have excellent or very good work-life balance, similar to 32% nationally; an equal number (40%) say they have a good work-life balance both in Hartford and nationally.

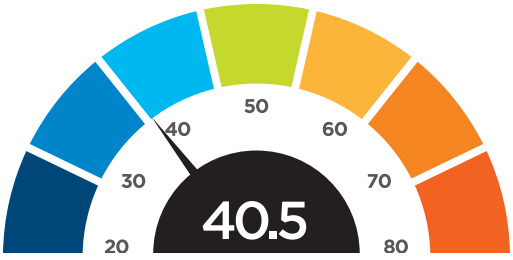
Looking at indicators of loneliness in the workplace, employed Hartford residents show no significant differences compared to the national average.

In-person Interactions and Loneliness

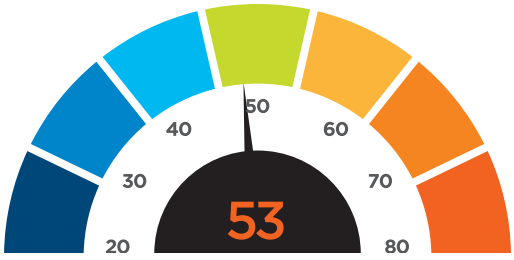
Hartford residents who have daily meaningful in-person interactions have an average loneliness score of 40.5, compared to 50.6 for those who do not have daily interactions – a difference of 10.1 points. In this case, however, the bigger difference between loneliness scores is seen when looking at the reported balance of interactions. Hartford respondents who feel they get too much or too little in-person social interaction have an average loneliness score that is 12.5 points higher than those who receive just the right amount.

HARTFORD

Balancing in-person social interactions is important



Just the right amount of in-person social interaction



Too much or too little in-person social interaction

Houston, TX (The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX)

Sixty-two percent of Houston residents – and 61% of Americans – are considered to be lonely. The average loneliness score for Houston is 46, similar to the national average of 45.7. Houston residents have not gotten significantly lonelier since 2018. Their average loneliness score has shifted from 45 in 2018 to 46 now, but the percentage of Houston residents considered to be lonely has not changed (was 60% in 2018).

Nationally, the percentage of Americans who sometimes or always feel alone is up six percentage points from 2018 (52% now vs. 46%), and the percentage of Houston residents reporting the same is up five percentage points from 2018 (53% now vs. 48% in 2018; at the regional level, this increase is within the credibility interval).

The better one's health is, the less lonely they are – both in Houston and overall. Houston residents who describe their overall health as excellent, very good or good have an average loneliness score of 44, while those who report fair/poor overall health have an average loneliness score of 54.4.

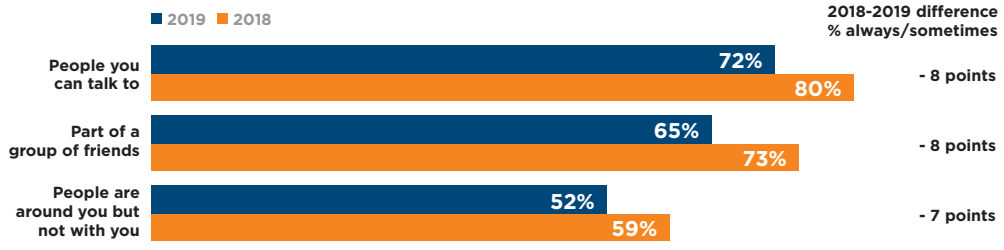
The survey also found:

> Over the past year, Houston residents have seen only one statistically significant change in loneliness indicators, although two other indicators shifted nearly the same amount:

- Sometimes or always feeling that there are people you can talk to: down eight percentage points (72% vs. 80% in 2018).
- Sometimes or always feeling part of a group of friends: down eight percentage points (73% in 2018 to 65%; within the credibility interval).
- Sometimes or always feeling people are around you but not with you: down seven percentage points (59% in 2018 to 52%; within the credibility interval).

HOUSTON - LONELINESS INDICATORS *2019 VS. 2018*

Largest changes in loneliness sentiments since 2018



Workplace Loneliness in Houston

In Houston, 43% of employed residents feel they have an excellent or very good work-life balance (significantly higher than the 32% nationally); another 41% say they have a good work-life balance (40% nationally). When compared to national indicators of loneliness in the workplace, employed Houston residents show some significant differences, including:

> Houston residents are more likely than Americans as a whole to say that there is no one at work they can share personal thoughts with if they want to (47% in Houston, 35% nationally).

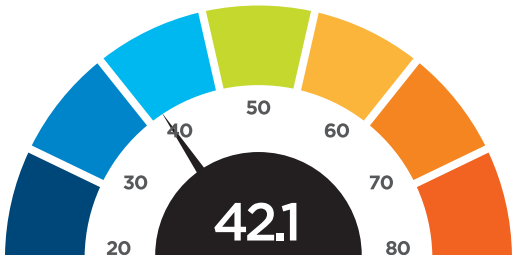
> They are also more likely to say that their company's values do not align with their own (44% in Houston, 32% nationally).

In-person Interactions and Loneliness

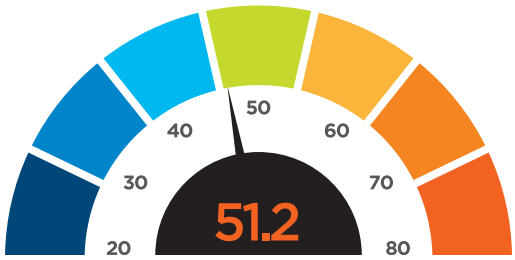
Houston residents who do not have daily in-person interactions have an average loneliness score that is 8.7 points higher than those who have daily meaningful in-person interactions. Desired levels of interaction have a similar effect: Houston respondents who report geting too much or too little in-person social interaction have an average loneliness score that is 9.1 points higher than those who receive just the right amount.

HOUSTON

Balancing in-person social interactions is important



Just the right amount of in-person social interaction



Too much or too little in-person social interaction

Los Angeles, CA (Long Beach-Anaheim, CA)

Los Angeles residents are around as lonely as other Americans. Sixty percent of L.A. residents are considered to be lonely, compared to 61% of the national population. The average loneliness score for L.A. is 45.9, similar to the national average of 45.7. The shift in LA residents who sometimes or always feel alone (51%, up from 44%) is similar to the shift seen at the national level (52% now vs. 46%).

However, L.A. residents have gotten lonelier since 2018. Their average loneliness score has increased from 43.4 in 2018 to 45.9, and there has been an eight percentage point increase in the number of L.A. residents considered to be lonely (was 52% in 2018).

Mental health and overall health are shown to impact loneliness scores. L.A. residents who describe their overall health as excellent, very good or good have an average loneliness score of 43.5, while those who report fair/poor overall health have an average loneliness score of 54.8. The percentage of Americans reporting good mental health is down five points from 2018 (76% vs. 81% in 2018), yet there has been no statistical change in L.A. residents' self-reported mental health from 2018.

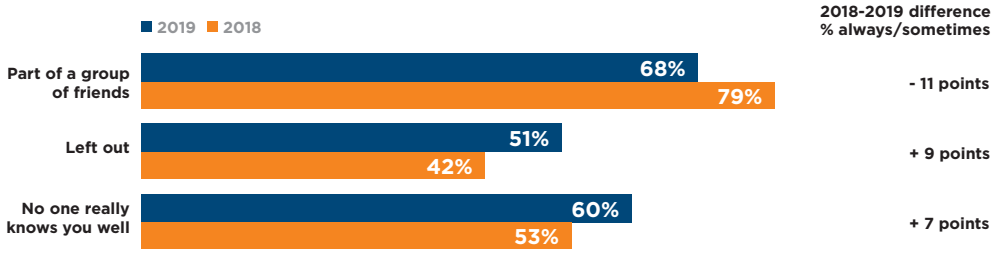
The survey also found:

> Over the past year, L.A. residents are less likely to say they sometimes or always feel part of a group of friends (down 11 percentage points) and that there are people they can talk to (down eight percentage points).

> They are also more likely to report sometimes or always feeling left out (up nine percentage points) and that no one really knows them well (up seven percentage points).

LOS ANGELES - LONELINESS INDICATORS *2019 VS. 2018*

Largest changes in loneliness sentiments since 2018



> Looking at these sentiments at the national level, there are also significant increases from 2018 (ranging from 3-5 percentage points) – but not nearly as large as in the L.A. region.

Workplace Loneliness in Los Angeles

When compared to national indicators of loneliness in the workplace, employed L.A. residents show little significant differences. For example, in L.A., 33% of employed residents feel they have excellent or very good work-life balance (32% nationally); another 39% say they have a good work-life balance (40% nationally).

Yet there are a few measures where L.A. residents are slightly less optimistic than average, including:

> Sixty-nine percent of people in L.A. feel as though there are people at work who take the trouble to listen to them, compared to 76% nationally.

> 65 percent of people in L.A. feel as though they are part of a group of friends at work, compared to 71% nationally.

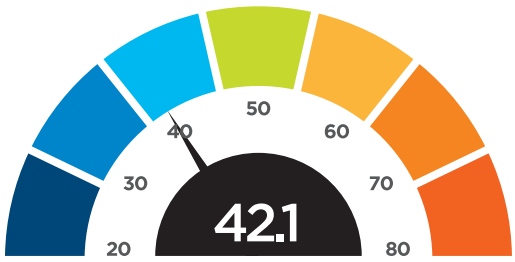
> People in L.A. are more likely (41%) to feel as though they are not able to leave work at work than the national population (39%).

In-person Interactions and Loneliness

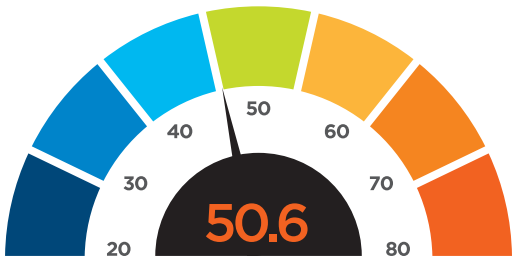
A lack of daily in-person interactions makes for lonelier L.A. residents (average score: 49.7) than those who interact with people each day (41.4). Similarly, L.A. respondents who report either too much or too little in-person social interaction have an average loneliness score that is 8.5 points higher than those who believe they have just the right amount.

LOS ANGELES

Balancing in-person social interactions is important



Just the right amount of in-person social interaction



Too much or too little in-person social interaction

Minneapolis, MN (St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI)

There are fewer lonely people in Minneapolis. Fifty-three percent of Minneapolis residents are considered to be lonely, compared to 61% nationally. However, there is no significant difference between the average loneliness score for Minneapolis (44.4) and the rest of America (45.7).

Even though Americans have gotten significantly lonelier since 2018, Minneapolis residents have not. Their average loneliness score has changed only slightly, from 42.3 in 2018 to 44.4 now, but there has been a insignificant six percentage point increase in the number of Minneapolis residents considered to be lonely (was 47% in 2018).

Mental health and overall health are shown to impact loneliness scores. For example, Minneapolis residents who describe their overall health as excellent, very good or good have an average loneliness score that is nearly 15 points lower than those who report fair/poor overall health (41.7 and 56.4, respectively). The percentage of Americans reporting good mental health or better is down five points from 2018 (76% vs. 81% in 2018), but in Minneapolis, it remains statistically unchanged (77% vs. 81% in 2018). Currently, 24% of Americans and 23% of Minneapolis residents say their mental health is fair or poor.

The survey also found:

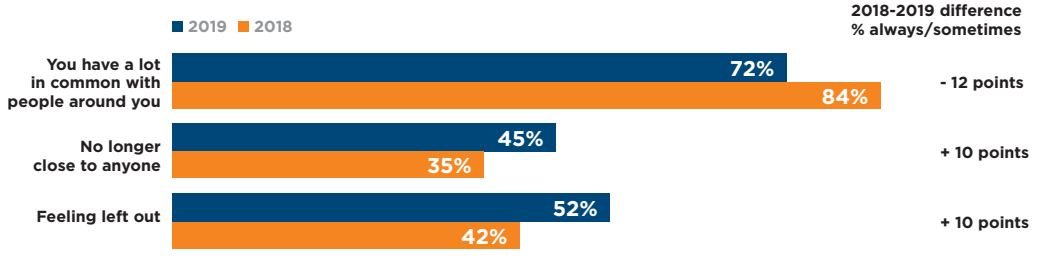
> Over the past year, Minneapolis residents have seen a few significant changes that could indicate deeper feelings of loneliness:

- Sometimes or always feeling that they have a lot in common with the people around them: down 12 percentage points.
- Sometimes or always feeling no longer close to anyone: up 10 percentage points.
- Sometimes or always feeling left out: up 10 percentage points.

> The same three sentiments also changed at the national level, but not nearly as much as in the Minneapolis region (3-6 percentage point changes at the national level).

MINNEAPOLIS - LONELINESS INDICATORS *2019 VS. 2018*

Largest changes in loneliness sentiments since 2018



Workplace Loneliness in Minneapolis

Employed Minneapolis residents seem to connect more with their coworkers than other Americans, according to the following workplace loneliness indicators:

> Minneapolis residents are less likely than other Americans to say that they are withdrawing from the people they work with (21% in Minneapolis, 36% nationally).

> They are also less likely to say they feel disconnected from others at work (26% in Minneapolis, 37% nationally).

> More Minneapolis residents agree that they have social companionship or fellowship at work (82% in Minneapolis, 74% nationally).

In addition to indicating that they have better connections with coworkers, they also are less likely to agree that they cannot leave their work at work (23% in Minneapolis, 39% nationally).

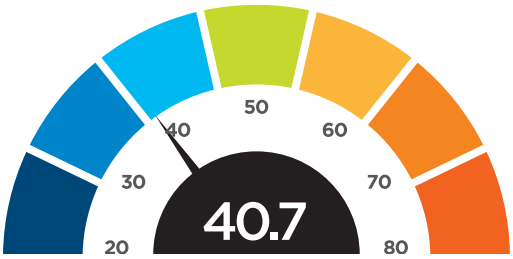
In spite of these differences, though, Minneapolis residents and other Americans report similar work-life balance evaluations: 36% of employed residents feel they have excellent or very good work-life balance (32% nationally). Another 37% say they have a good work-life balance (40% nationally).

In-person Interactions and Loneliness

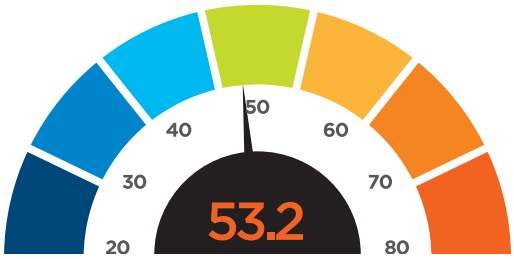
Minneapolis residents who do not have daily in-person interactions have an average loneliness score that is 8.6 points higher than those who have daily, meaningful in-person interactions. In contrast, there is a more than 12 point difference when looking at the desired amount of interactions.

MINNEAPOLIS

Balancing in-person social interactions is important



Just the right amount of in-person social interaction



Too much or too little in-person social interaction

Nashville, TN (Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN)

Nashville residents are as lonely as other Americans. Fifty-five percent of Nashville residents and 61% of the national population are considered to be lonely (the difference between the two is not statistically significant). Unlike Americans as a whole, Nashville residents have not gotten significantly lonelier since 2018. Their average loneliness score has changed only slightly from 43.9 in 2018 to 45.5 now (virtually identical to the national average of 45.7). Furthermore, the percentage of Nashville residents considered to be lonely is unchanged from 2018 (54% in 2018).

Although the percentage of Nashville residents reporting that they sometimes or always feel alone is 11 percentage points higher than 2018 (56% vs. 45% in 2018), this change is within the credibility interval for the region. There is, however, a significant change at the national level (from 45% to 52%).

Nashville residents who describe their overall health as excellent, very good or good are significantly less lonely than those reporting fair/poor overall health (42.8 vs. 53.7, respectively). While the percentage of Americans reporting good mental health or better is down five points from 2018, there has been no significant change in Nashville. The same number of Americans (24%) and Nashville residents (23%) report having fair or poor mental health.

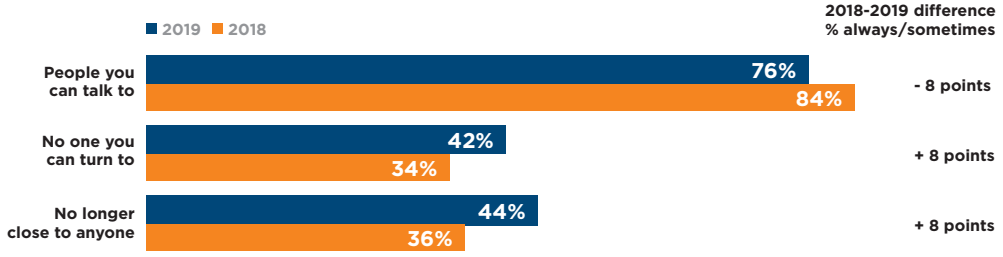
The survey also found:

> Though overall loneliness has not increased for Nashville residents, there have been significant changes on the following indicators of loneliness:

- Fewer saying they sometimes or always feel that there are people they can talk to (down eight percentage points).
- More saying they sometimes or always feel that there is no one they can turn to (up eight percentage points).
- More saying they sometimes or always feel no longer close to anyone (up eight percentage points).

NASHVILLE - LONELINESS INDICATORS *2019 VS. 2018*

Largest changes in loneliness sentiments since 2018



Workplace Loneliness in Nashville

When compared to national indicators of loneliness in the workplace, employed Nashville residents show few significant differences. The only significant difference is:

> Nashville residents are less likely to say that they are not able to leave their work at work (29% in Nashville, 39% nationally).

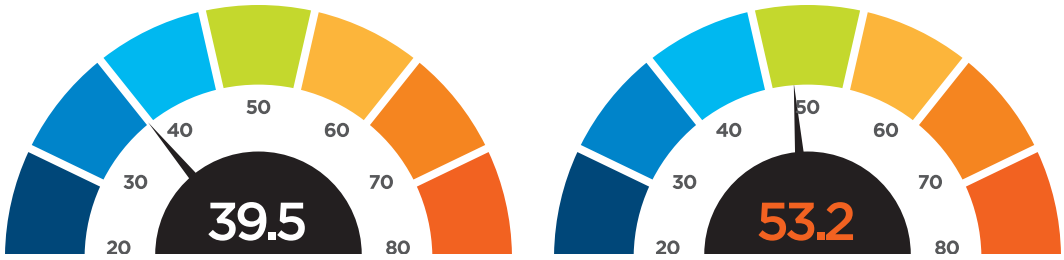
> Nashville residents are no more likely to report having a good work-life balance (72% in Nashville say good or better, the same percentage seen nationally).

In-person Interactions and Loneliness

Nashville residents who do not have daily in-person interactions have an average loneliness score that is 10.2 points higher than those who have daily meaningful in-person interactions. The gap widens to 13.7 points when looking at perceived balance of social interactions. Those who report having just the right amount of in-person social interactions are less lonely.

NASHVILLE

Balancing in-person social interactions is important



Just the right amount of in-person social interaction

Too much or too little in-person social interaction

New York, NY (Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA)

A majority, 59%, of New York-area residents are considered to be lonely, similar to 61% of the national population, although New York's average loneliness score (44.8) is lower than the national average (45.7).

As Americans have gotten lonelier since 2018, so have New Yorkers. Their average loneliness score has increased from 43.6 in 2018 to 44.8 now, and there has been a five point increase in the number of New York residents considered to be lonely (was 54% in 2018). Those in New York follow a similar pattern to all Americans when it comes to feeling alone. Nationally, the percentage of Americans who sometimes or always feel alone is up six points from 2018 (52% vs. 46%); in New York, it is up four (51%, from 47%).

For New Yorkers, there is a more than 10-point difference in average loneliness scores, based on health status. Those who describe their overall health as excellent, very good or good have an average loneliness score of 43.1, compared to 53.3 for those who report fair/poor overall health. In New York, fewer are reporting to be in good or better mental health (77% vs. 83% in 2018), which mirrors the national trend (76% vs. 81% in 2018). Nearly one-quarter of Americans (24%) and New Yorkers (23%) say their mental health is fair or poor.

The survey also found:

> Over the past year, New York residents have seen significant increases in the following loneliness indicators:

- Sometimes or always feeling that there is no one to turn to: up five percentage points (42% vs. 37% in 2018).
- Sometimes or always feeling that they are no longer close to anyone: up five percentage points (46% vs. 41% in 2018).
- Sometimes or always feeling isolated from others: up five percentage points (46% vs. 41% in 2018).

> Looking at the same three sentiments at the national level, the increases seen from 2018 match New York (each with a five percentage point increase).

NEW YORK - LONELINESS INDICATORS *2019 VS. 2018*

Largest changes in loneliness sentiments since 2018

Workplace Loneliness in New York

In a few cases, employed New Yorkers seem slightly happier with their coworkers than Americans as a whole, including:

> Agreeing there are people at work who take the trouble to listen to them (81%, compared to 76% overall).

> Agreeing there is someone at work they can talk to about their day-to-day work problems (79%, compared to 76% overall).

> Feeling included in the social aspects of work (75%, compared to 72% overall).

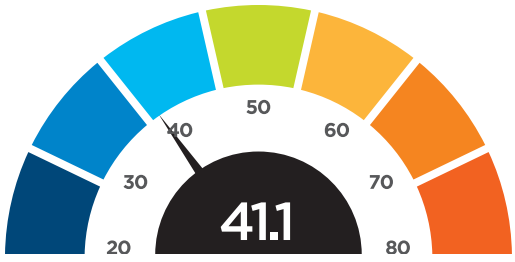
However, when it comes to satisfaction with workplace relationships, social companionship at work and indicators of loneliness on the job, New Yorkers are in line with the rest of America.

In-person Interactions and Loneliness

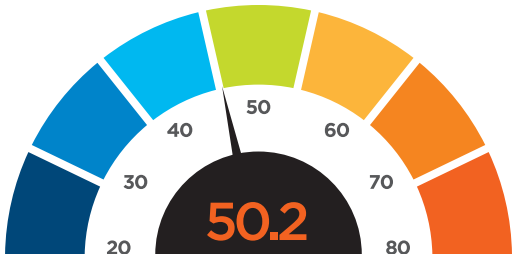
In general, New York residents who do not have daily in-person interactions have an average loneliness score that is 8.4 points higher than those who have daily meaningful in-person interactions (49 and 40.6, respectively). Similarly, New York respondents who get too much or too little in-person social interaction have an average loneliness score that is 9.1 points higher than those who self-report receiving the right amount.

NEW YORK

Balancing in-person social interactions is important



Just the right amount of in-person social interaction



Too much or too little in-person social interaction

Philadelphia (Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD)

Philadelphia residents are less lonely than other Americans, though a majority still report a loneliness score of 43 or higher. Fifty-six percent of Philadelphia residents are considered to be lonely, a significant difference compared to 61% of the national population. The average loneliness score for Philadelphia is 44.7, lower than the national average of 45.7.

Compared to 2018, the change in Philadelphia's loneliness rating is insignificant. Their average loneliness score has increased from 43.2 in 2018 to 44.7, and though there has been a shift in the number of Philadelphia residents considered to be lonely (from 49% to 57%), this is within the credibility interval. However, more Philadelphia residents report feeling sometimes or always alone (51% vs. 41% in 2018), and this increase is larger than the national average (a six percentage point change).

Philadelphia residents who describe their overall health as excellent, very good or good have an average loneliness score of 42.3, while those who report fair/poor overall health have an average loneliness score of 53.6. The percentage of people from the Philadelphia area reporting excellent, very good or good mental health has not significantly decreased from 2018. Currently, nearly one-quarter of Americans (24%) and Philadelphia residents (24%) say their mental health is fair or poor.

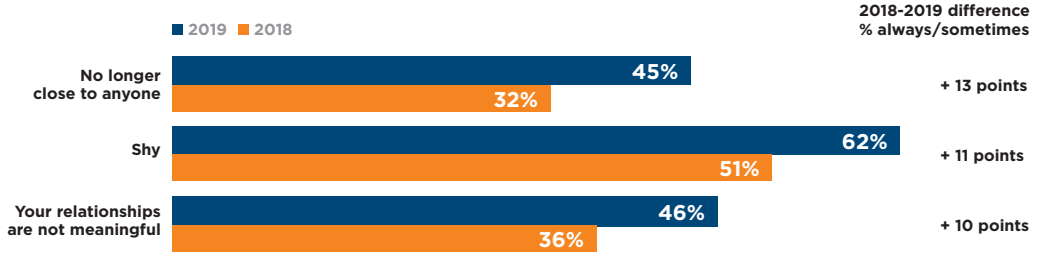
The survey also found:

> Compared to the 2018 survey, Philadelphia residents have seen significant changes in the following loneliness indicators:

- Sometimes or always feeling no longer close to anyone: up 13 percentage points (45% vs. 32% in 2018).
- Sometimes or always feeling shy: up 11 percentage points (62% vs. 51% in 2018).
- Sometimes or always feeling that their relationships are not meaningful: up 10 percentage points (46% vs. 36% in 2018).

PHILADELPHIA - LONELINESS INDICATORS *2019 VS. 2018*

Largest changes in loneliness sentiments since 2018



> Looking at the same three sentiments at the national level, there are also significant increases from 2018 – but not nearly as large as in the Philadelphia region.

- Americans reporting sometimes or always feeling no longer close to anyone experienced a six point decrease nationally since 2018 (compared to 13 percentage points in Philadelphia).
- Nationally, Americans who report sometimes or always feeling shy increased three points (compared to 11 percentage points in Philadelphia).
- The percentage of Americans nationally that say they sometimes/always feel that their relationships are not meaningful increased four points since 2018 (compared to 12 percentage points in Philadelphia).

Workplace Loneliness in Philadelphia

When compared to national indicators of loneliness in the workplace, employed Philadelphia residents do not show many significant differences. For example, equal numbers of Philadelphia residents and all Americans say they have excellent or very good work-life balance (32 each), and majorities in both places agree that they have social companionship at work.

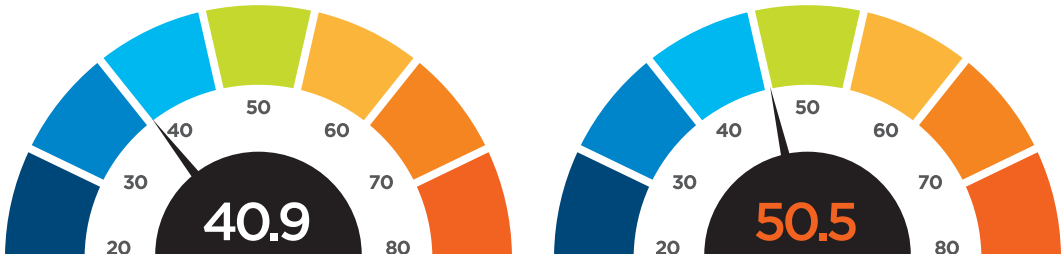
Philadelphia residents, however, are significantly less likely to feel satisfied with their relationships at work (74% vs. 80% nationally), and fewer report having a best friend or a very close friend at work (51% vs. 58% nationally).

In-person Interactions and Loneliness

The frequency and reported balance of in-person interactions have equal impacts on the loneliness of Philadelphia residents. Those without daily in-person interactions have an average loneliness score that is 9.3 points higher than those that do (49.8 vs. 40.5). Those who feel they have more or less interactions than desired also have a score that is 9.6 points higher than those who receive just the right amount.

PHILADELPHIA

Balancing in-person social interactions is important



Just the right amount of in-person social interaction

Too much or too little in-person social interaction

Phoenix (Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ)

Phoenix residents are as lonely as other Americans. Sixty-one percent of Phoenix residents are considered to be lonely, the same proportion as the national population. The average loneliness score for Phoenix is 46.6, similar to the national average of 45.7. Unlike Americans as a whole, Phoenix residents have not gotten much lonelier since 2018. Their average loneliness score has increased (albeit insignificantly) from 44.9 in 2018 to 46.6 now.

Nationally, the percentage of Americans who sometimes or always feel alone is up six percentage points from 2018 (52% vs. 46%). Phoenix mirrors the national trend here: the percentage of Phoenix residents reporting the same is up seven percentage points from 2018 (56% vs. 49% in 2018).

Better mental and overall health are shown to positively impact loneliness levels for Phoenix residents. Those who describe their overall health as excellent, very good or good have an average loneliness score of 43.7, while those who report fair/poor overall health have an average loneliness score of 55.8.

The survey also found:

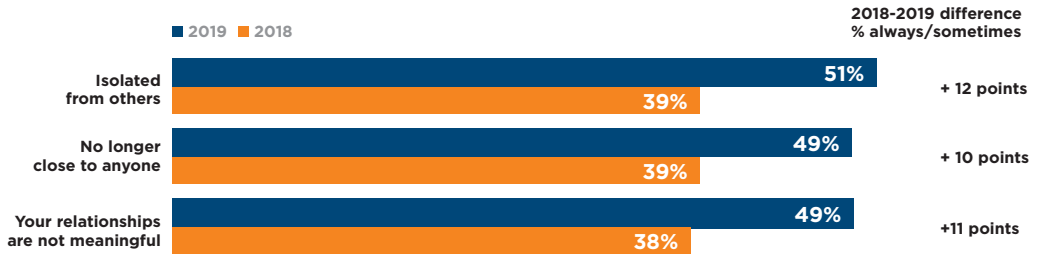
> Over the past year, Phoenix residents have seen significant changes in the following loneliness indicators:

- Sometimes or always feeling isolated from others: up 12 percentage points (51% now vs. 39% in 2018).
- Sometimes or always feeling no longer close to anyone: up 10 percentage points (49% vs. 39% in 2018).
- Sometimes or always feeling that their relationships are not meaningful: up 11 percentage points (49% vs. 38% in 2018).

> Looking at the same three sentiments at the national level, though there were significant increases, they are not as large as in Phoenix (4-6 percentage points, compared to 10-12).

PHOENIX - LONELINESS INDICATORS *2019 VS. 2018*

Largest changes in loneliness sentiments since 2018



Workplace Loneliness in Phoenix

When compared to national indicators of loneliness in the workplace, employed Phoenix residents are less likely to say they often feel alienated by their coworkers (20% in Phoenix, 29% nationally). However, they are also less likely to agree that technology in the workplace helps establish meaningful connections to their coworkers (48% in Phoenix, 60% nationally).

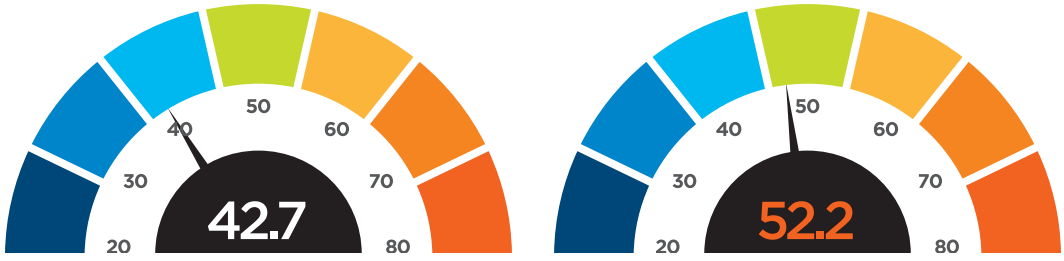
While there is not a significant difference between Phoenix and the rest of Americans who report a good work-life balance, there is a nine percentage point difference between those in Phoenix reporting a fair/poor work-life balance (37%) and other Americans (28%).

In-person Interactions and Loneliness

Phoenix residents who do not have daily in-person interactions have an average loneliness score of 51.2, compared to 41.6 for those that do have daily meaningful interactions. Phoenix respondents who get too much or too little in-person social interaction have an average loneliness score that is 9.5 points higher than those who receive just the right amount.

PHOENIX

Balancing in-person social interactions is important



Just the right amount of in-person social interaction

Too much or too little in-person social interaction

Pittsburgh, PA (New Castle-Weirton, PA-OH-WV)

Pittsburgh residents are less lonely than Americans as a whole. While 54% of Pittsburgh residents are considered to be lonely, indicated by a loneliness score of 43 or higher, 61% of Americans report the same. However, the difference in average loneliness scores between Pittsburgh (44.3) and Americans as a whole (45.7) is not statistically significant.

Unlike other Americans, Pittsburgh residents have not gotten significantly lonelier since 2018. Their average loneliness score has hardly changed (was 43.7 in 2018), and total loneliness remains statistically unchanged (was 51% in 2018). Though Pittsburgh mirrors the national trend in terms of the number of Americans who sometimes or always feel alone – a four percentage point increase in Pittsburgh, and six points nationally – this does not represent a significant shift at the regional level.

Mental health and overall health are shown to impact loneliness scores. Pittsburgh residents who describe their overall health as excellent, very good or good have an average loneliness score that is more than 10 points lower than those who report fair or poor overall health (41.8 vs. 52.7, respectively). Although the percentage of Americans reporting good mental health or better is down 5 points from 2018, there was no significant change in Pittsburgh. Nearly one-quarter of Americans (24%) and 21% of Pittsburgh residents say their mental health is fair or poor.

The survey also found:

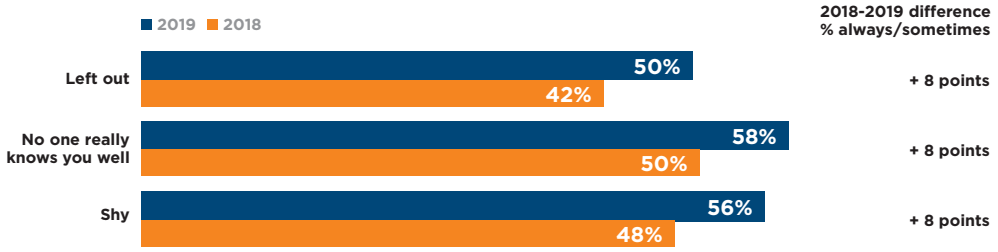
> Pittsburgh residents have not seen any significant changes in loneliness indicators.

> However, the negative mood indicators with the highest increases from 2018 include:

- Sometimes or always feeling left out: up 8 percentage points (from 42% in 2018 to 50%).
- Sometimes or always feeling that no one really knows them well: up 8 percentage points (from 50% in 2018 to 58%).
- Sometimes or always feeling shy: up 8 percentage points (from 48% in 2018 to 56%).

PITTSBURGH - LONELINESS INDICATORS *2019 VS. 2018*

Largest changes in loneliness sentiments since 2018



Workplace Loneliness in Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh residents seem to connect more with their coworkers than other Americans. We see this in a few different ways:

> Pittsburgh residents are less likely than other Americans to say that they feel emotionally distant from the people they work with (28% in Pittsburgh, 39% nationally).

> They also are less likely to often eat lunch at their desk alone (38% in Pittsburgh, 54% nationally).

> Moreover, they are more likely than other Americans to report having social companionship at work (82% in Pittsburgh, 74% nationally) and to feel included in the social aspects of work (83% in Pittsburgh, 72% nationally).

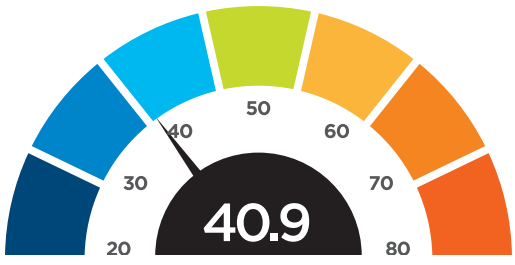
In Pittsburgh, 31% of employed residents agree that their work life spills into their personal life more than preferred, while more employed people (42%) report the same nationally. This significant difference is not reflected in perceptions of work-life balance, though: Seventy-two percent of Americans and 76% of Pittsburgh residents describe their work-life balance as good or better.

In-person Interactions and Loneliness

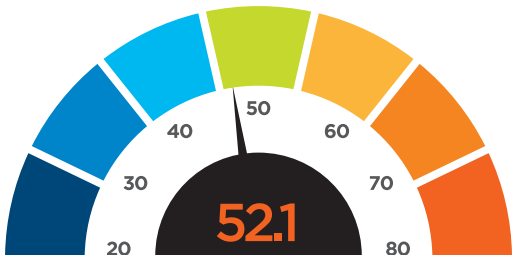
Pittsburgh residents who do not have daily in-person interactions have an average loneliness score that is 11.9 points higher than those who have daily meaningful in-person interactions (51.1 vs. 39.2, respectively). Similarly, Pittsburgh respondents who report having too much or too little in-person social interaction have an average loneliness score that is 11.2 points higher than those who receive just the right amount.

PITTSBURGH

Balancing in-person social interactions is important



Just the right amount of in-person social interaction



Too much or too little in-person social interaction

Richmond, VA

Richmond residents are as lonely as the national population. Fifty-nine percent of Richmond residents are considered to be lonely, similar to 61% nationally. The average loneliness score for Richmond is 45.4, equal to the national average of 45.7. Nationally, the percentage of Americans who sometimes or always feel alone is 52%; the percentage of Richmond residents reporting the same (51%) is not significantly different.

The survey also found:

> In Richmond, mental health and overall health are shown to impact loneliness scores. Richmond residents who describe their overall health as excellent, very good or good have an average loneliness score of 42.6, while those who report fair/poor overall health have an average loneliness score of 55.4.

> Richmond respondents describe their mental health similarly to other Americans. Nearly one-quarter of Americans (24%) and Richmond residents (23%) say their mental health is fair or poor.

> Richmond residents do not report significant differences in loneliness indicators when compared to the national population.

- The largest difference, although still within the credibility interval, is five percentage points. Seventy-two percent of Americans always or sometimes feel that they have a lot in common with the people around them, while 77% of Richmond residents agree.

Workplace Loneliness in Richmond

Reported work-life balance in Richmond is similar to that in the rest of the United States: Twenty-six percent of employed residents feel they have excellent or very good work-life balance (32% nationally) and another 40% say they have a good work-life balance (40% nationally). Despite this similarity, Richmond residents are less likely to say that they are not able to leave their work at work (29% in Richmond, 39% nationally).

When compared to national indicators of loneliness in the workplace, employed Richmond residents show some other significant differences, including:

> Richmond residents are less likely to report feeling alienated by coworkers (19% in Richmond, 29% nationally).

> They are also less likely than other Americans to say that they do not have a manager that advocates for them (22% in Richmond, 33% nationally).

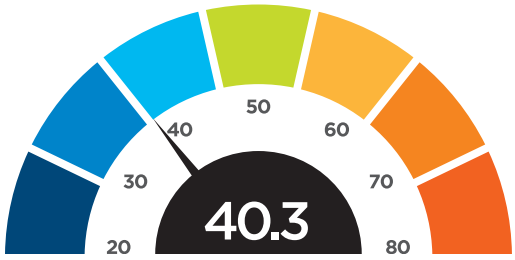
In-person Interactions and Loneliness

Richmond residents who do not have daily in-person interactions have an average loneliness score that is nearly 10 points higher than those who have daily, meaningful in-person interactions.

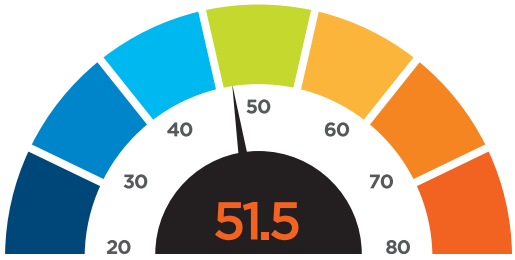
In addition, Richmond respondents who feel they get too much or too little in-person social interaction have an average loneliness score that is 11.2 points higher than those who receive just the right amount.

RICHMOND

Balancing in-person social interactions is important



Just the right amount of in-person social interaction



Too much or too little in-person social interaction

St. Louis, MO-IL

There are significant differences in loneliness levels between St. Louis residents and the American public as a whole. Fifty-three percent of St. Louis residents are considered to be lonely, compared to 61% nationally. The average loneliness score for St. Louis is 43.9, lower than the national average of 45.7.

Nationally, the percentage of Americans who sometimes or always feel alone is 52%; the percentage of St. Louis residents reporting the same (48%) is not significantly different. St. Louis respondents describe their personal mental health similarly to other Americans. Nearly one-quarter of Americans (24%) and St. Louis residents (23%) say their mental health is fair/poor.

However, overall health ratings do impact loneliness scores. St. Louis residents who describe their overall health as excellent, very good or good have an average loneliness score of 41.9, while those who report fair/poor overall health have an average loneliness score of 50.7.

The survey also found:

> St. Louis residents are less likely than the national population to feel that there is no one they can turn to (33% in St. Louis, 42% nationally).

> They are also less likely than the national population to feel that their relationships with others are not meaningful (40% in St. Louis, 47% nationally).

ST. LOUIS - LONELINESS INDICATORS *ST. LOUIS VS. NATIONAL*

Largest changes in loneliness sentiments

Workplace Loneliness in St. Louis

Reported work-life balance in St. Louis is similar to that in the rest of the United States: 31% of employed residents feel they have excellent or very good work-life balance (32% nationally) and another 40% say they have a good work-life balance (40% nationally).

When compared to national indicators of loneliness in the workplace, employed St. Louis residents show some significant differences. Notable differences include:

> St. Louis residents are more likely than other Americans to say that there is someone at work they can talk to about day-to-day work problems (85% in St. Louis, 76% nationally).

  – This also is significantly higher than percentages reported in Los Angeles, Atlanta, Denver, Houston, Tampa, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Phoenix and Chicago.

> Moreover, they are less likely than other Americans to say that there is no one at work to share personal thoughts with (28% in St. Louis, 35% nationally).

> Those in St. Louis are more likely than other Americans to find their manager or supervisor to be supportive of them (90% in St. Louis, 82% nationally).

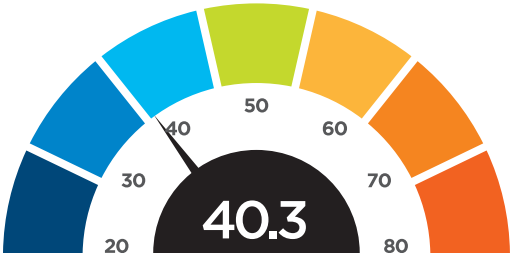
  – They also are more likely to report this than residents of Los Angeles, Nashville, Denver, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

In-person Interactions and Loneliness

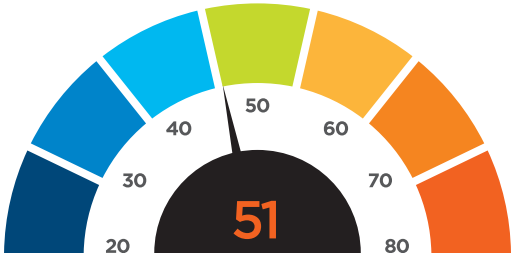
In general, St. Louis residents who do not have daily in-person interactions have an average loneliness score that is seven points higher than those who have daily meaningful in-person interactions (47.5 vs. 40.5, respectively). Balance of personal interactions has a slightly larger impact. St. Louis respondents who get too much or too little in-person social interaction have an average loneliness score that is 10.7 points higher than those who receive just the right amount.

ST. LOUIS

Balancing in-person social interactions is important



Just the right amount of in-person social interaction



Too much or too little in-person social interaction

Tampa, FL (St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL)

Fifty-five percent of Tampa residents are considered to be lonely – slightly, but not significantly, below the national average (61%). The average loneliness score for Tampa is 44, a significant difference from the national average of 45.7.

However, Tampa residents have gotten lonelier since 2018. Their average loneliness score has increased 2.5 points from 41.5, and there has been a 14 percentage point increase in the number of Tampa residents considered to be lonely. The percentage of Tampa residents reporting they sometimes or always feel alone is up seven percentage points (from 39% to 46%), mirroring the average overall increase of 6 percentage points.

Mental health and overall health are shown to impact loneliness scores. Tampa residents who describe their overall health as excellent, very good or good have an average loneliness score of 42.2, while those who report fair/poor overall health have an average loneliness score of 52. The percentage of Americans reporting good mental health or better is down five points from 2018, but there has been no significant shift among Tampa residents. While 24% of Americans say their mental health is fair or poor, just 19% of Tampa residents agree.

The survey also found:

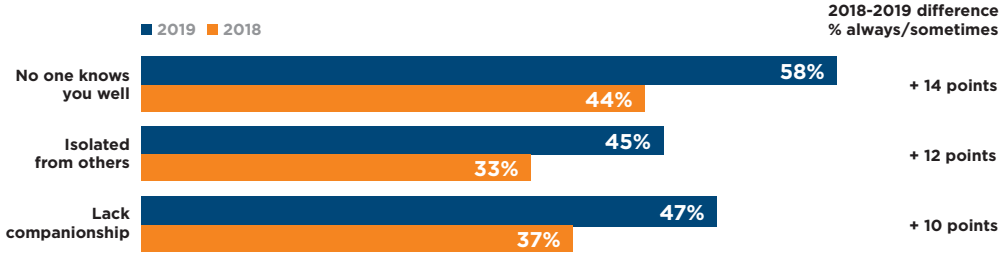
> Over the past year, Tampa residents have seen significant changes in the following loneliness indicators:

- Sometimes or always feeling no one knows them well: up 14 percentage points (58% vs. 44% in 2018).
- Sometimes or always feeling isolated from others: up 12 percentage points (45% vs. 33% in 2018).
- Sometimes or always feeling that they lack companionship: up 10 percentage points (47% vs. 37% in 2018).

> These double-digit shifts are larger than the changes at the national level, which range from 4-6 percentage point increases.

TAMPA - LONELINESS INDICATORS *2019 VS. 2018*

Largest changes in loneliness sentiments since 2018



Workplace Loneliness in Tampa

When compared to national indicators of loneliness in the workplace, employed Tampa residents show some significant differences. For example, in Tampa, 37% of employed residents feel they have excellent or very good work-life balance (32% nationally).

Other notable differences include:

> Tampa residents are less likely than other Americans to say that they experience a general sense of emptiness at work (25% in Tampa, 35% nationally).

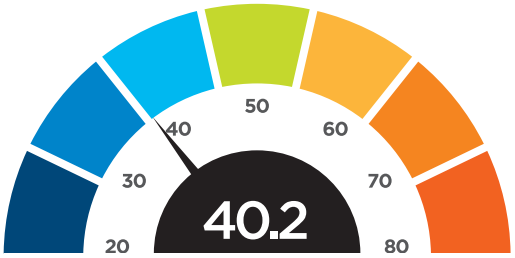
> They are more likely than other Americans to say that their company is contributing to the greater good (89% in Tampa, 80% nationally) and that their workplace is diverse (87% in Tampa, 77% nationally).

In-person Interactions and Loneliness

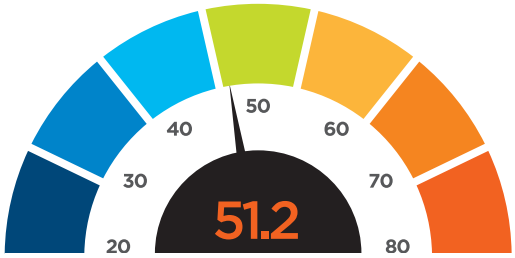
In general, Tampa residents who do not have daily in-person interactions have an average loneliness score that is 9.1 points higher than those who have daily meaningful in-person interactions. Those who report too much or too little in-person social interaction have an average loneliness score that is 11 points higher than those who receive just the right amount.

TAMPA

Balancing in-person social interactions is important



Just the right amount of in-person social interaction



Too much or too little in-person social interaction

Washington, DC (Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV)

Washington-area residents are just as lonely as other Americans. Sixty percent of DC residents are considered to be lonely, on par with 61% of the national population. The average loneliness score for DC is 45, similar to the national average of 45.7.

DC metro residents have not gotten significantly lonelier since 2018. Their average loneliness score has increased from 44.1 in 2018 to 45, and the number of people considered to be lonely is statistically even with 2018 levels (57%). While the percentage of Americans who sometimes or always feel alone has increased, the number of DC residents reporting the same has remained relatively steady (48% vs. 51% in 2018).

Washington-area residents who describe their overall health as excellent, very good or good have an average loneliness score of 43.7, while those who report fair/poor overall health have an average loneliness score of 52.3. The percentage of people in the area reporting good mental health has stayed the same from year to year (81% in 2018, 79%), while fewer Americans are reporting good mental health (76% vs. 81% in 2018). Nearly one-quarter of Americans (24%) and one in five DC residents (21%) say their mental health is fair or poor.

The survey also found:

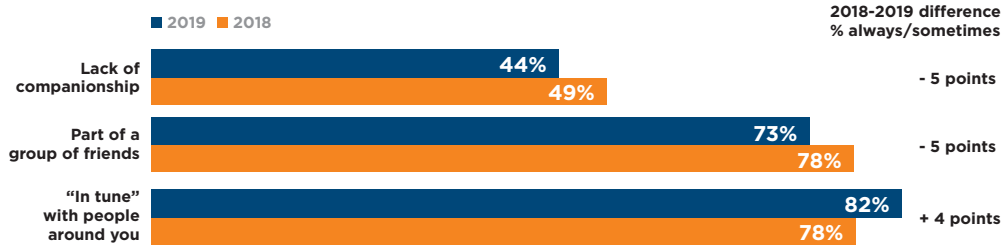
> Over the past year, DC residents have not seen any significant changes in loneliness indicators.

> The biggest changes (though all within the credibility interval) are with the following:

- Sometimes or always feeling lack of companionship: down five percentage points (44% vs. 49% in 2018).
- Sometimes or always feeling "in tune" with the people around them: up four percentage points (82% vs. 78% in 2018).
- Sometimes or always feeling part of a group of friends: down five percentage points (73% vs. 78% in 2018).

WASHINGTON, DC - LONELINESS INDICATORS *2019 VS. 2018*

Largest changes in loneliness sentiments since 2018



Workplace Loneliness in DC

When compared to national indicators of loneliness in the workplace, employed DC residents do not show significant differences. The only measure where DC residents differ from overall respondents is on whether the use of technology in the workplace reduces in-person interactions. DC residents are less likely to agree (48%, compared to 56% nationally).

There are slight, but not significant, differences between DC and other Americans on two other measures of workplace loneliness:

> Eighty percent of employed DC residents agree they have social companionship at work (74% nationally).

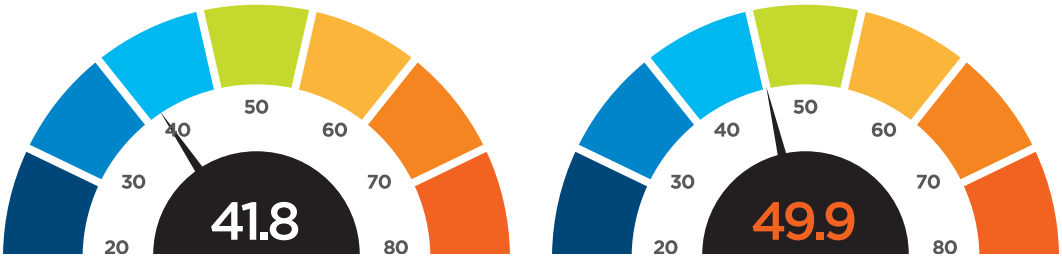
> More than two in five (43%) employed DC residents feel the need to hide their true self when they go to work (39% nationally).

In-person Interactions and Loneliness

DC residents who do not have daily in-person interactions have an average loneliness score of 48.8, compared to 40.8 among those who have daily meaningful in-person interactions. Respondents in the nation's capital who get too much or too little in-person social interaction have an average loneliness score that is 8.1 points higher than those who receive just the right amount.

WASHINGTON, DC

Balancing in-person social interactions is important



Just the right amount of in-person social interaction

Too much or too little in-person social interaction

APPENDIX

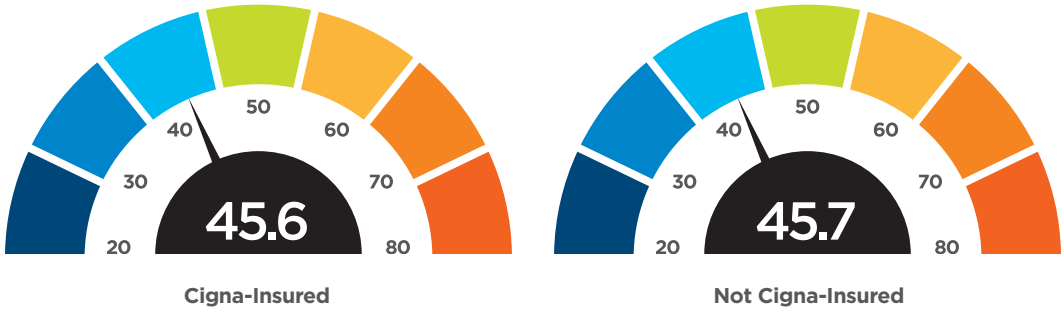
Appendix: Loneliness Among Cigna Customers

Four in 10 (42%) respondents receive their primary health insurance through a current or former employer. Another 23% use Medicare, 18% are on an individual plan that is fully paid for by them or someone in their household, 16% receive Medicaid and 5% have their primary health insurance provided through the military. Eight percent of respondents report that they are uninsured, though that number is higher among younger generations (12% of Gen Z, 10% of Millennials) than older (5% among Baby Boomers).

Among those who have health insurance, 7% are Cigna customers. When looking at loneliness scores among Cigna customers, there is zero difference between them and the rest of the population. Sixty-two percent of respondents insured with Cigna have a loneliness score above 43, identical with the population overall (61%). The average loneliness score for Cigna customers, non-Cigna customers (45.6) and all respondents (45.7) is statistically the same.

CIGNA

Average Loneliness Score: Cigna-Insured



About the Study

These are the findings from an Ipsos poll conducted July 16 – August 2, 2019, on behalf of Edelman and Cigna. For the survey, a sample of 10,441 adults ages 18 and over from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii were interviewed online, in English. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of ±1.1 percentage points for all respondents surveyed.

The study's questionnaire is based on the UCLA Loneliness Scale, a 20-item questionnaire developed to assess subjective feelings of loneliness or social isolation. An index was created based on these 20 statements, which include a balanced mix of positive (e.g., How often do you feel outgoing and friendly?) and negative (e.g., How often do you feel alone?) statements, and respondents were assigned a loneliness score based on their responses to these questions. Higher scores indicate increased loneliness. Individual respondent scores were combined to obtain a total average loneliness score both nationally and across different demographic groups.

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from Ipsos's online panel, partner online panel sources and "river" sampling and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2016 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, region, race/ethnicity and income.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online nonprobability sampling polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following (n=10,441, DEFF=1.5, adjusted confidence Interval=2.6).

About Ipsos

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Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. We serve more than 5,000 clients across the world with 75 business solutions.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos has been listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

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