

# Mental Health Assessment 2021

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# Mental Health Needs Assessment

- Collaboration of Task Force with the Center for Social Research at Framingham State University to conduct a study of Lexington residents
- Electronic and hard copies of questionnaire available – ensure that all residents in Lexington had access
- Assistance in completing the questionnaire was made available
- Copies of the questionnaire were available in Chinese for those for whom English is not a first language

# Demographic Composition of Respondents

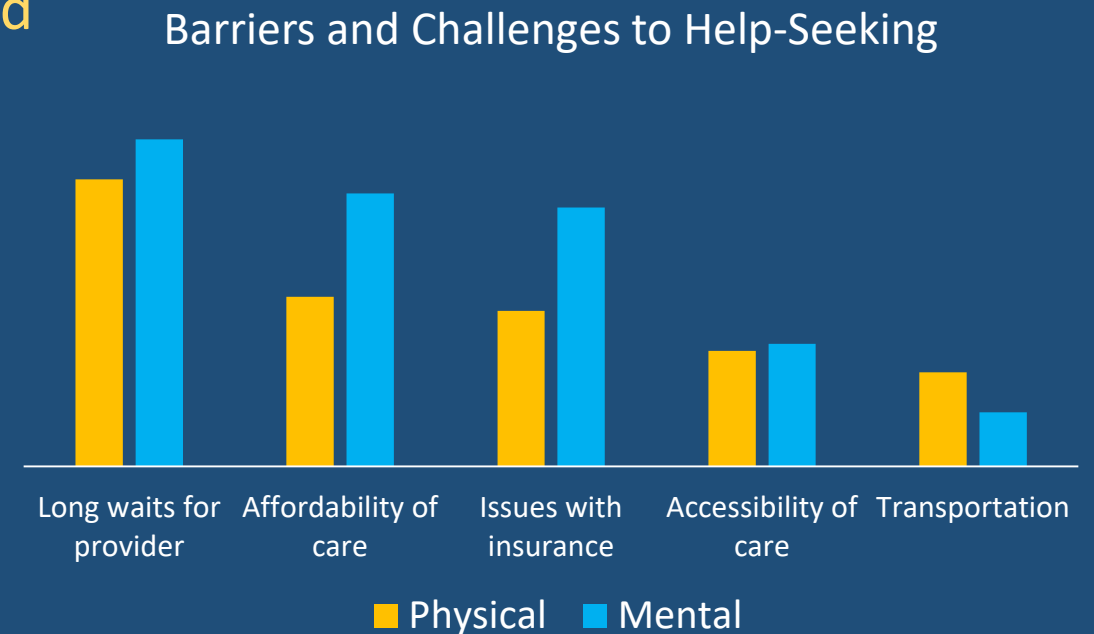
- N = 1016 adults
- Respondents represented a cross-section of Lexington population
  - Sex/gender
  - Sexual orientation
  - Age
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Education
  - Income
  - Languages spoken
  - Living arrangements

# Overview of Key Findings

- Almost all respondents have health insurance
- Self-assessments of physical and mental health were good
- Strong correlation between physical and mental health assessments
- Common physical health problems
  - Cancer
  - Endocrine disorders
  - Heart disease
  - Digestive issues
- Common mental health problems
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - ADHD

# Overview (continued)

- A sizeable number of residents say they take prescription drugs
- Drug/substance use, however, is generally low
  - Alcohol most commonly used substance
  - Recreational drugs least commonly used
- Barriers/challenges to help-seeking
  - Long waits for a provider
  - Affordability of care
  - Issues with insurance
  - Accessibility of care
  - Transportation



# Summary of Findings Regarding Overall Health

Physical health was assessed as better than was mental health,  
but mental health status was assessed as more stable.

	Physical health	Mental health
Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social and recreational activities</li><li>• Participation in hobbies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-care</li><li>• Completion of daily role obligations</li></ul>
Sources of help	Health care professionals	Family/friends
Challenges to help-seeking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Long waits</li><li>• Transportation</li><li>• Finding time to seek help</li><li>• Locating provider</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Embarrassment</li><li>• Fear of stigma</li><li>• Lack of knowledge about how to seek help</li></ul>

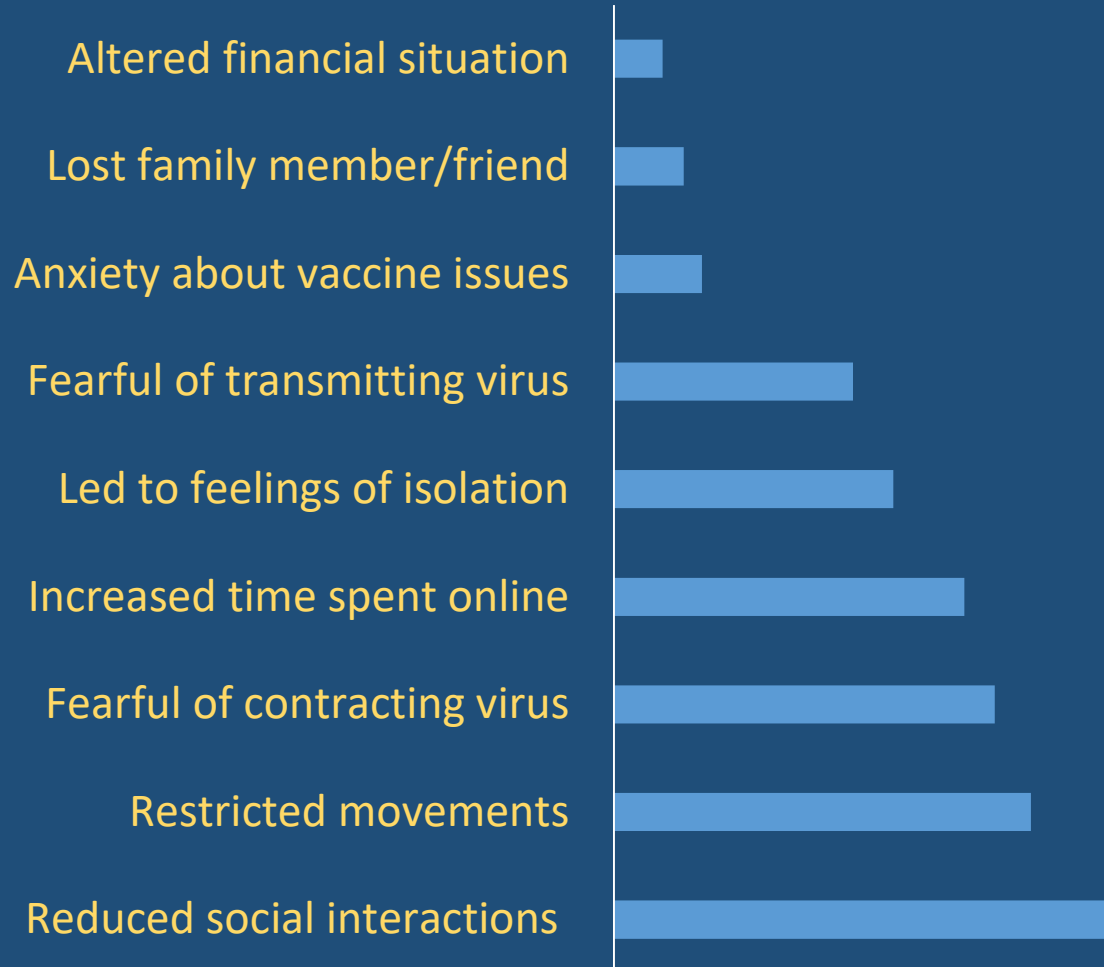
# Stress

Most respondents identified (mild to moderate) stress as a concern

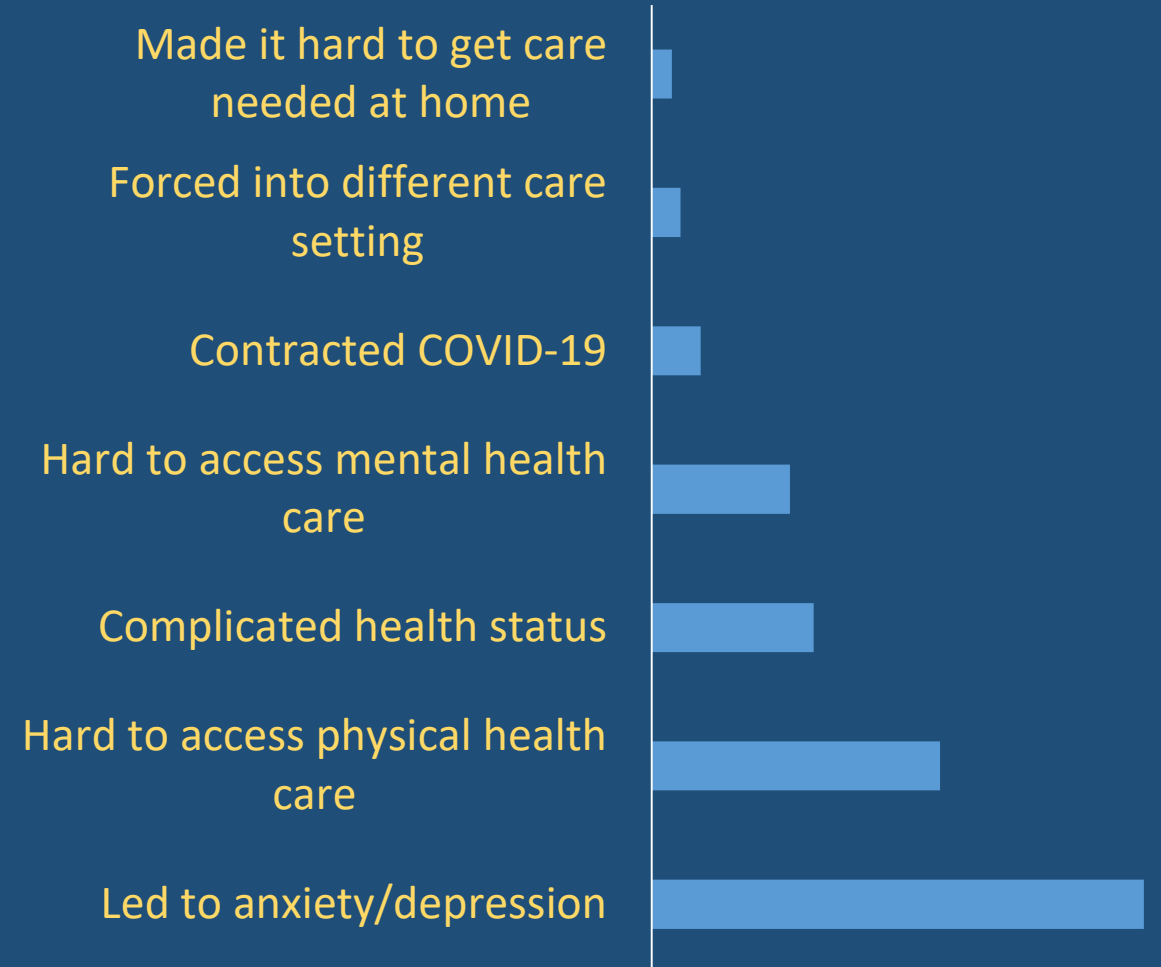
- Greatest sources of stress
  - Current social/political events
  - Concerns about the future
  - Effects of COVID pandemic on their lives
- Factors causing less stress
  - Having health insurance
  - Feeding their family
  - Cultural differences/language barriers
- Coping with stress
  - Talking with others
  - Exercising/engaging in physical activities
  - Employing stress management techniques
  - Participating in personal/individualized activities
  - Ignoring it

# COVID

## Socio-Personal Responses



## Health-Related Responses





# Findings of Note

- Age distribution skewed toward the older respondents
- Education distribution skewed toward greater education
- There were fewer Asian/South Asian respondents compared with their percentages in the population
- Help-seeking
  - Cultural differences/language barriers
  - Navigating health system
  - Mental health challenges
  - Transportation
- Substance abuse, sleep, self-injurious behaviors were not significant problems.
- Stress, however, was a significant issue.
- Physical and mental health status were highly correlated.

# Recommendations

- Greater outreach, based on
  - Age differences
  - Race/ethnicity differences
  - Cultural differences
  - Language barriers
  - Educational differences
- Provide greater education
  - Help-seeking
  - Interpreting medical information
  - Adherence to medical recommendations
  - Insurance programs
  - Navigating the health care system
  - Transportation options
  - Coping with stigma
- Provide programming
  - Physical and mental health needs
  - Stress reduction
  - Stigma reduction
  - Link between physical and mental health
- Integrate Town departments and groups
  - Department of Human Services
  - Mental Health Task Force
  - Recreation
  - Education
- Promote the Mental Health Task Force website
- Repeat this study