

Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health

Problem Statement

COVID-19 pandemic causing:

- Unemployment, economic instability, and loss of stable housing
- Social and physical isolation
- Food insecurity

Resulting in:

- Increase presentation of psychological distress – including anxiety, depression and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Leading to “deaths of despair”
- Increases in violence or suicide
- Increase in domestic violence/child abuse

Proprietary and Confidential. Do not distribute. Peterson, Steve et al. "Projected Deaths of Despair During the Coronavirus Recession." Wall Street Trust, May 6, 2020. [WallStreetTrust.com](#)

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40% of US Adults Reported Struggling with Mental Health or Substance Use (CDC)

Issue	Percentage
Anxiety/Depression Symptoms	31%
Trauma/Stressor-Related Disorder Symptoms	26%
Started or Increase Substance Use	13%
Seriously Considered Suicide	11%

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CDC Morbidity and Mortality Report

"More than **2 in 5 US residents** report struggling with mental or behavioral health issues associated with the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, including anxiety, depression, increased substance use, and suicidal thoughts."

- 31% reported symptoms of depression and/or anxiety
- 13% reported starting or increasing substance use
- 11% reported contemplating suicide

Symptoms disproportionately affected certain groups:

- 74.9% of those age 17-24 reported depression and/or anxiety
- 51% of those aged 25-54 reported depression and/or anxiety
- 52% of Hispanic responders reported depression and/or anxiety
- 54% were essential workers
- 66% were unpaid adult caregivers
- 66% had less than a high school diploma

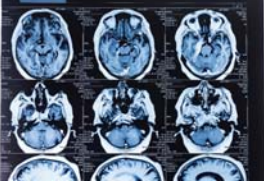
Proprietary and Confidential. Do not distribute. Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, June 24–30, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/curres/69/e6/mm6906a1.htm>

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COVID, Depression, and Death

Most affected:

- Preexisting mental health conditions
- Young adults aged 18-24
- Low-income individuals
- Persons of color
- Persons with Asian ethnicity
- Those close to someone who suffered or died from COVID




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https://www.sciencedirect.com/article/pii/S096398282030001

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Impact of COVID-19 on “Deaths of Despair”

According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Across the United States, more people are dying from so-called ‘**deaths of despair**’— suicide, drug and alcohol poisoning, and alcoholic liver disease—than at any other point in recorded history.”¹

The COVID pandemic is predicted to cause 75,000 “deaths of despair.”²



1 www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s0916-deaths-of-despair.html. 2 https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/16/health/covid-19-mental-health.html. Proprietary and Confidential. Do not distribute.

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Contributing Factors

Loneliness and Social isolation

- High risk for suicide

Job Loss and Income Insecurity

- Increased depression, anxiety, distress and low self esteem

Worry and stress leading to Depression and Anxiety

- Women > Men (57% vs 50%)
- Difficulty sleeping and/or eating
- Increases in Alcohol consumption and substance use

Homelessness and fear of eviction

Food Insecurity

Burn out of Front-Line worker

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https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/16/health/covid-19-mental-health.html. Proprietary and Confidential. Do not distribute.

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Children and Adolescents during COVID Mental Health Concerns


- Factors contributing to CA vulnerability:
 - Developmental age and stage
 - Educational status
 - Presence of special needs
 - Intrafamilial violence
 - Overuse of the Internet and social media
 - Pre-existing MH condition
 - Social and Economic inequality
 - Home confinement and uncertainty
 - Parent/guardian isolation because of a COVID infection



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ER visits related to MH concerns April – October 2020 versus 2019 (CDC)



Ages 5 – 11	↑	24%
Ages 12 – 17	↑	31%

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Jan 24, 2021 – New York Times

New York Times: Surge of student suicides pushes Las Vegas schools to reopen

"Firmly linking teen suicides to school closings is difficult but rising mental health emergencies and suicide rates point to the toll the pandemic lockdown is taking."

- 18 suicides over 9 months of closure – double the 9 in the previous year
- March 16 – June 30: **6 suicides**
- July 1 – Dec 31: **12 suicides**
- Youngest was **9 years old**
- One student left a note saying he had: *"nothing to look forward to"*



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Jesus Jara – Clark County Superintendent

"I feel **responsible**, They're all **my kids**.

When we started to see the uptick in children taking their lives, we knew it wasn't just the COVID numbers we need to look at anymore.

Kids are googling '**how to suicide**.' You get the alerts – **you get four or five a day**.

We **have to** find a way to put our hands on our kids, **to see them, to look at them.**"

They've got to start seeing some movement, some **hope.**"

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Jan 26, 2021 – CNN

"4 teen girls charged in Walmart stabbing death of 15-year-old girl streamed on Facebook Live" — Lake Charles, Louisiana

Attackers were 12, 13 and 14 years old

"Saturday's killing was the **third homicide** in Calcasieu Parish within a six-month period **involving children**. **The youngest child involved in one of the slayings was 11**. The oldest was 16."

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Adverse Outcomes – Suicidality & Violence

Lessons from the Past:

- SARS outbreak in China in 2003 saw suicide increase in older people in China.

Concerning Spike in Gun Sales:

- Gun sales in the US have significantly increased during the COVID-19 pandemic
- In March 2020, more than 2.5 million firearms were sold, including 1.5 million handguns. This is an 85% increase in gun sales from March 2019 and the highest total ever recorded.

Suicidality & Violence:

- Individuals who buy handguns have a 22-fold higher rate of firearm-assisted suicide in the first-year vs those who don't purchase a handgun.
- Domestic violence and child abuse are being underreported, most likely due to sheltering in place and schools not being in session.

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COVID-19 and Substance Use

An Individual's Experience

Those who already struggle with substance abuse

Those who already struggle with MH problems

Those who start to misuse substances

Those who start to develop MH problems

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SUD and MH Related Factors

Human Centered Impacts

Barriers to Connect with Peer Supports, 12 step meetings

Break in access to BH Care & Rx

Isolation from Community & Family

Increased Triggers

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Substance Use

Reported Levels of Use

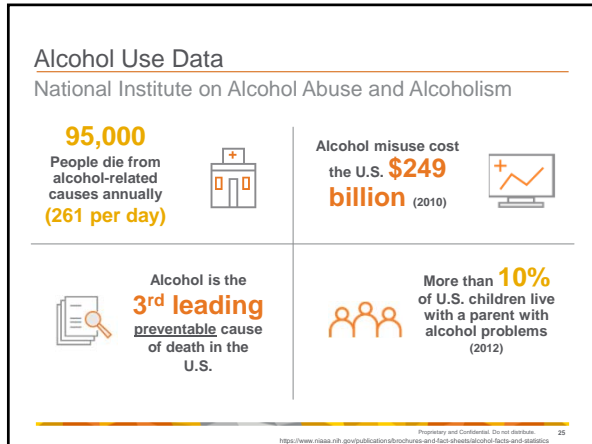
1 out of 4 binge drinking at least once in the past week

1 out of 5 prescription drugs for non-medical reasons

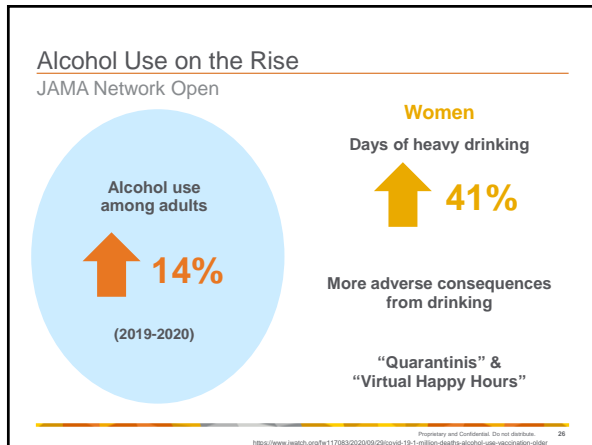
1 out of 7 illicit drugs

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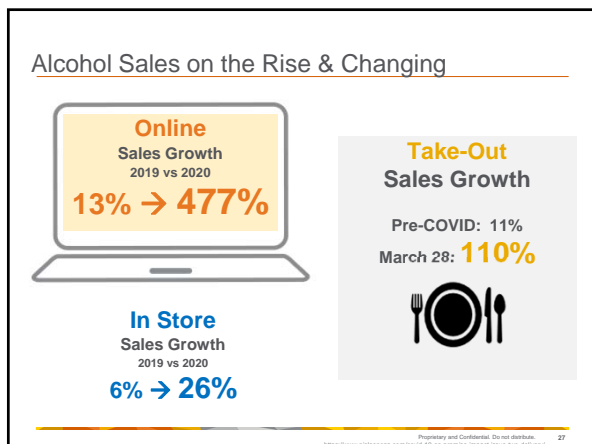
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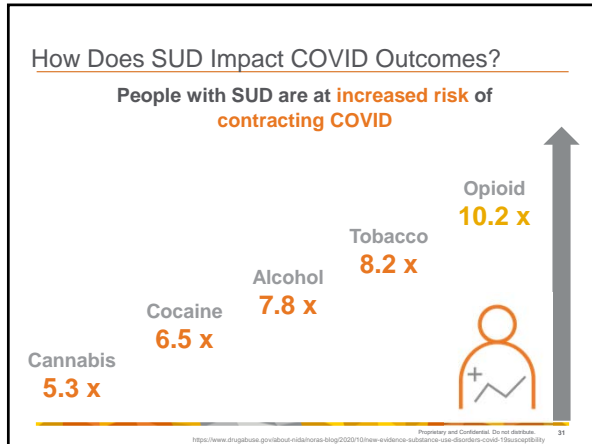
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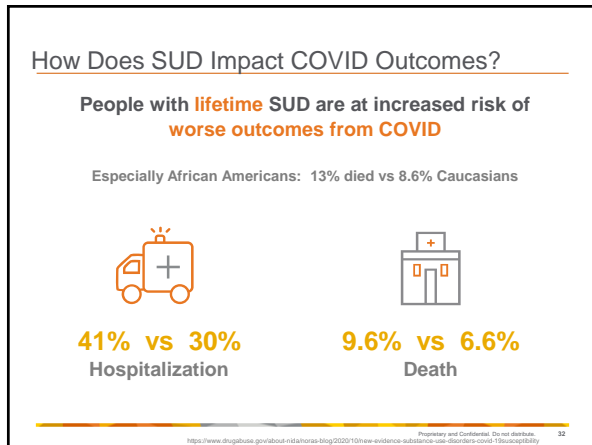
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Complex Factors Related to SUD

Medical

- Chronic substance use can **weaken the body & immune system**, increase susceptibility to infection
- Slowed breathing from opioids or damaged **lungs** from smoking can lead to low blood oxygen, impacts **brain and heart function**

Behavioral


- Interact with others to obtain substances (**break social distancing**)
- Reluctant to seek care because of **stigma**
- May receive **sub-standard care** or be rejected for care
- Delayed care** can increase risk of adverse outcomes

Proprietary and Confidential. Do not distribute. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/about-us/factpages/blog/2020/10/new-evidence-substance-use-disorders-covid-19-susceptibility>

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African Americans

- Although African Americans misuse opioids at similar rates to Caucasians, there is a **disproportionate** number of **COVID-19** diagnoses among **African Americans**
- As a result of **social, health and economic disparities**, African Americans have **higher rates of comorbidities** that increase susceptibility to COVID:
 - Hypertension
 - Diabetes
 - Cardiovascular disease
 - Kidney disease




Proprietary and Confidential. Do not distribute.
<https://www.thoughtco.com/about-relationships-blog/2020/01/new-evidence-suggests-race-disparities-covid-19-susceptibility>

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How Can We Mitigate the COVID MH and SUD Challenges?

- Identify those at risk
- **Strengthen community prevention & intervention strategies**
- Enhance wellness and harm reduction approaches
- **Address health inequity, SDOH, and disparities**
- Improve connections to supports and engagement with services through telehealth & digital tools
- **Integrate behavioral and physical health services**



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<https://www.rockwell.com/digital-healthcare-systems-and-consumer-behavior-impact-mental-health-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-behavioral-health>

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