



AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

# Stress in America™

Mind/Body Health: For a Healthy Mind and Body, Talk to a Psychologist

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## Chicago Residents' Stress Still Higher than Healthy

*Money and Work Causing Significant Stress for Chicago residents, APA survey says*

Chicago, January 11, 2012 – Money and work are significant causes of stress for residents of the Chicago metropolitan area, and stress in Chicago is still higher than considered healthy, according to a survey released today by the American Psychological Association (APA) and conducted online by Harris Interactive among 276 Chicago residents and 1,226 U.S. in August and September.

Many Chicago residents still experience high stress levels, reporting an average stress level of 5.6 on a 10-point scale (compared to 5.5 in 2010). This stress level is higher than what they considered healthy (3.8 on a 10-point scale) and stress levels in Chicago have seen a small increase this year despite dipping nationally.

For more than eight out of 10 (81 percent) Chicago residents money is a significant cause of stress. More people in Chicago reported money as a stressor this year than in 2010 (81 percent in 2011; 70 percent in 2010). In fact, more Chicago residents cite money as a cause of stress than the nation as a whole (81 percent in Chicago; 75 percent of all Americans). Three-quarters (75 percent) of Chicago residents report that their work is a source of stress and nearly the same percent cite the economy (73 percent). In addition, more Chicagoans than the rest of the country are dissatisfied with their work (33 percent in Chicago; 25 percent nationally).

Most Chicagoans don't believe they are good at preventing or managing stress when they experience it, according to their survey responses. Less than one in five of Chicagoans (19 percent) said they are doing an excellent or very good job at preventing stress, and only a fourth said they do an excellent or very good job managing their stress. A high proportion of residents feel overwhelmed due to stress (44 percent in Chicago; 34 percent nationally). To manage their stress, Chicagoans report listening to music, exercising and reading, which is comparable to adults nationwide.

Lack of willpower remains the number one barrier to change for Chicago residents who decided to or were recommended to make a lifestyle or behavior change —40 percent of adults cite this as a barrier to change. This is more adults than the 27 percent nationally who said willpower was an obstacle. Forty-

five percent of Chicagoans who indicated willpower was a barrier cited needing more confidence in their ability to make changes as necessary to improve their willpower, and 42 percent believe that more time would help improve their willpower.

“The numbers of Chicago residents who are stressed about money and work is very concerning,” said Chicago-area psychologist Dr. Nancy Molitor, the public education coordinator for the Illinois Psychological Association. “And although stress levels have stabilized, they are still higher than what is considered healthy. It’s important people pay attention to this because stress can affect your physical and emotional health, especially if not managed properly.”

The national survey found that reported stress levels have stabilized from the highs of the economic crisis; however, they remain higher than what is considered healthy. Furthermore, Americans who serve as caregivers — providing care to both the aging and chronically ill — for their family members report higher levels of stress, poorer health and a greater tendency to engage in unhealthy behaviors to alleviate that stress than the population at large.

The national survey also found that people suffering from depression or obesity report higher average stress levels than the rest of the population, and are more likely to respond that they are not doing enough to manage their stress. People who are depressed or obese are more likely than the general population to try eating a healthier diet or taking other steps to reduce stress levels, but are less likely to report success when making health lifestyle changes.

To read the full report on Chicago and the United States, visit [www.stressinamerica.org](http://www.stressinamerica.org).

Stress in America is part of APA’s Mind/Body Health public education campaign. For additional information on stress and lifestyle and behavior, visit [www.apa.org/helpcenter](http://www.apa.org/helpcenter) and read the campaign blog [www.yourmindyourbody.org](http://www.yourmindyourbody.org). Join the conversation about stress on Twitter by following @apahelpcenter and #stressAPA.

## **Methodology**

The Stress in America™ survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of the American Psychological Association between August 11 and September 6, 2011, among 1,226 adults aged 18+ who reside in the U.S. In addition, an oversample of 276 adults living in the Chicago Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) was collected. MSAs are a formal definition of metropolitan areas produced by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. These geographic areas are delineated on the basis of central urbanized areas —contiguous counties of relatively high population density. Counties containing the core urbanized area are known as the central counties of the MSA. Additional surrounding counties (known as outlying counties) can be included in the MSA if these counties have strong social and economic ties to the central counties as measured by commuting and employment. Note that some areas within these outlying counties may actually be rural in nature. Because the sample is based on those who were invited and agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive online research panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. To read the full methodology, visit [www.stressinamerica.org](http://www.stressinamerica.org).

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*The American Psychological Association (APA), in Washington, D.C., is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes more than 154,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of promoting health, education and human welfare.*

### **Harris Interactive**

*Harris Interactive is one of the world's leading custom market research firms, leveraging research, technology, and business acumen to transform relevant insight into actionable foresight. Known widely for the Harris Poll and for pioneering innovative research methodologies, Harris offers expertise in a wide range of industries including healthcare, technology, public affairs, energy, telecommunications, financial services, insurance, media, retail, restaurant, and consumer package goods. Serving clients in over 215 countries and territories through our North American, European, and Asian offices and a network of independent market research firms, Harris specializes in delivering research solutions that help us - and our clients - stay ahead of what's next. For more information, please visit [www.harrisinteractive.com](http://www.harrisinteractive.com).*