

## Coping with COVID-19: How Young People Use Digital Media to Manage Their Mental Health

### Fact sheet: Mental health, digital health practices, and social media use among Hispanic/Latinx U.S. teens and young adults (age 14–22)

This fact sheet presents data from a nationally representative survey of more than 1,500 14- to 22-year-olds in the U.S., conducted in September–November 2020 by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago, on behalf of Common Sense, the California Health Care Foundation, and Hopelab. The complete survey findings, methodology, quotes from participants, and text of the questionnaire are available [here](#).

#### Many U.S. Hispanic/Latinx youth (age 14–22) face serious health concerns:

- As of September–November 2020, 19% of Hispanic/Latinx youth had a coronavirus infection themselves or in the family, twice as high as White youth (9%).
- 24% of Hispanic/Latinx youth have taken on more family responsibilities since the start of the pandemic, compared to 14% of White youth. However, Hispanic/Latinx youth are more likely than White youth to have felt emotionally closer to family members since the start of the pandemic (33% vs. 26%).
- 12% of Hispanic/Latinx youth are at risk for problematic substance use; however, 70% of Hispanic/Latinx youth abstain from alcohol or drugs.
- 37% of Hispanic/Latinx youth report symptoms of moderate to severe depression, up from 25% in 2018.
- 44% of female Hispanic/Latina youth report symptoms of moderate to severe depression, compared with 29% of male Hispanic/Latino youth.

#### 93% of Hispanic/Latinx youth have used digital tools for health purposes, including seeking health information online, using a health-related app, connecting to a provider, or finding others online with similar health concerns.

- 86% of Hispanic/Latinx youth have looked for health information online, and the top topic is COVID-19.
- 67% of Hispanic/Latinx youth have used a health app, and the top topic is fitness.
- 39% of Hispanic/Latinx youth have looked online for others with similar health concerns.
- Female Hispanic/Latina youth are more likely than their male peers to use digital tools for mental health, including searching online for information about depression, stress, and anxiety (67% vs. 41%) and using a health app for depression (12% vs. 4%).

#### 43% of Hispanic/Latinx youth have used telehealth services to connect with providers online.

- 89% of Hispanic/Latinx youth who have connected with a provider online found it "very" (36%) or "somewhat" (53%) helpful.
- 50% of Hispanic/Latinx youth who have not yet connected with a provider online are "very" (10%) or "somewhat" (40%) interested in doing so.

#### 67% of Hispanic/Latinx youth "often" (27%) or "sometimes" (40%) encounter racist content online.

- Female Hispanic/Latina youth are more likely than their male peers to say they see racist content "often" (32% vs. 19%).
- More Hispanic/Latinx teens (age 14–17) encounter racist content "often" now than those who did in 2018 (27% vs. 13%).

#### However, many Hispanic/Latinx youth have positive opinions about social media, especially during the pandemic:

- 46% of Hispanic/Latinx youth say social media helps them feel better when they are depressed, stressed, or anxious (39% say it makes no difference, and 15% say it makes them feel worse).
- The majority of Hispanic/Latinx youth say social media is "very" or "somewhat" important for getting inspiration from others (68%), expressing themselves creatively (65%), feeling less alone (61%), and getting support or advice when needed.
- During the coronavirus pandemic, the majority of Hispanic/Latinx youth say social media has been "very" or "somewhat" important for staying connected to friends and family (89%), keeping informed about current events (83%), and helping learn how to protect themselves and others from the virus (82%).

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