

How Do COVID-Related Isolation, Job Loss, and Stress Impact Behavioral Health?

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COVID-Related Factors Affecting Behavioral Health

- COVID infection (30 million Americans tested positive)
- Fear and uncertainty
- Grief (1/5 of Americans lost family or friend to COVID)
- Stress (family conflict, caretaking demands, requirements to work in unsafe conditions)
- Isolation
- Financial insecurity
- Job loss

COVID and Behavioral Health Symptoms

Prevalence of Behavioral Health Symptoms

(anxiety, depression, substance use, suicidal ideation)

Pre-COVID	26%
June 2020	41%
Sept 2020	43%

National surveys show behavioral health symptoms increased by more than 50% after the onset of the pandemic, continuing through Fall of 2020

COVID and Behavioral Health Symptoms

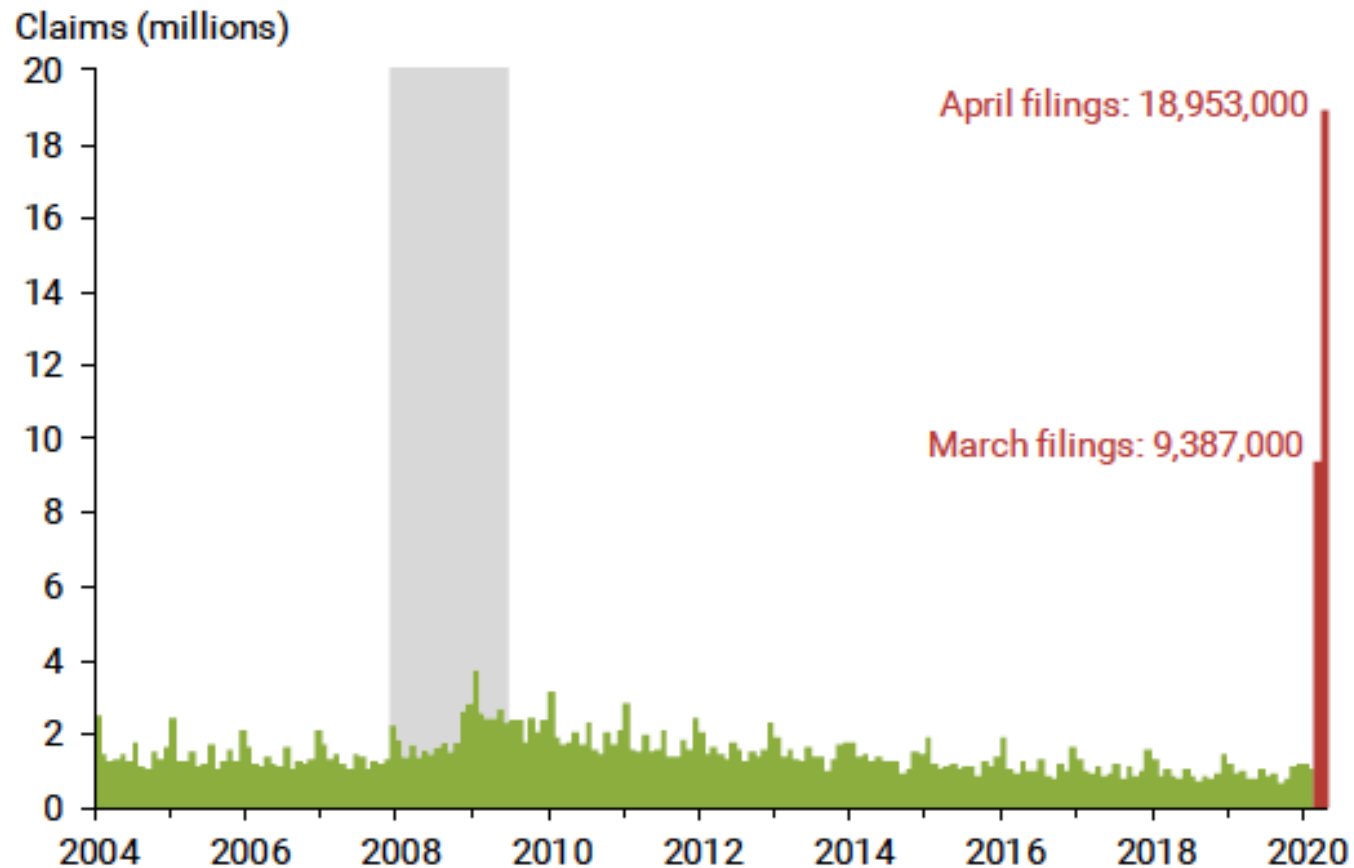
- 11% of national survey seriously considered suicide (higher rate among minority groups)
- 96% of recovering COVID patients reported PTSD symptoms
- Anxiety and depression higher among low-income adults
- Over half of those who have lost jobs report behavioral health symptoms

(Czeisler, 2020; Bo, 2020)

Staggering Number of Unemployment Insurance Filings at Onset of Pandemic

Figure 1
Monthly initial unemployment insurance claims

(Petrosky, 2020)



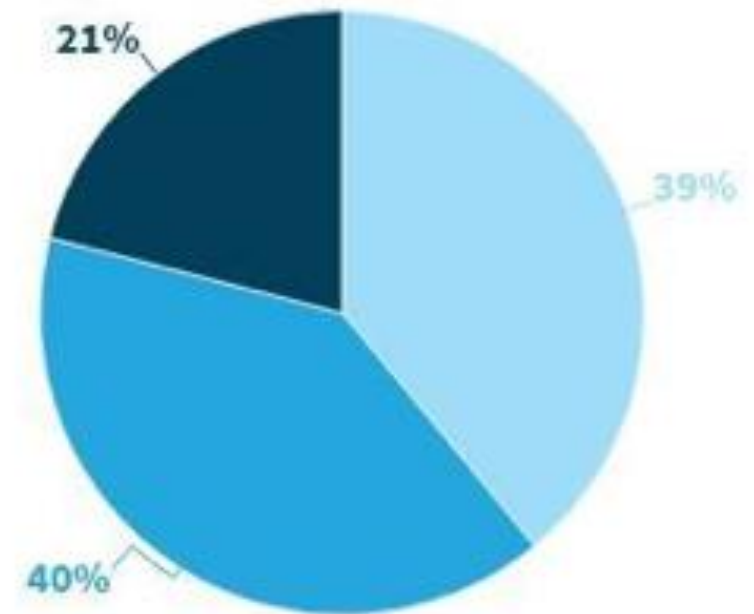
75.6 million initial jobless claims over the course of pandemic (as of January 2021)

Job Loss During the Pandemic

22% of Americans Who Lost Their Jobs During the Pandemic Remain Unemployed as of March 2021

Job Status during COVID-19 Pandemic

- Lost their Job at some point
- Never lost their job
- Was unemployed or retired at start of Pandemic



(Bizouati-Kennedy, 2021)

COVID and Unemployment

- Women and minorities most strongly affected
- Most affected industries: leisure and hospitality, food services, construction, retail, travel and transportation, personal services, self-employed
- Some sectors suffered little or rebounded quickly

(Hershbein, 2021)

Impact of Extended Unemployment

- Job loss leads to demoralization, loss of self-esteem, increased rates of depression, suicide, substance abuse
- Return to work becomes increasingly difficult as time passes
- Huge impact on earnings, in both short and long term
- Some laid-off workers never return to the labor force (especially true for women)

Unemployment and Disability Benefits

- When people cannot find work, applications surge for disability benefits
- During Great Recession of 2008, one million unemployed workers applied for SSDI and over 400,000 new beneficiaries joined disability roles

(Maestas, 2018)

Impact of Regaining Employment on Mental Health and Well-Being

- Impacts include:

increased financial security, reduced mental health symptoms, reduced substance use, higher self-esteem, and reduced health care costs

“Employment is a critical mental health intervention.”

(Luciano, 2014; Drake, 2020)



Individual Placement and Support (IPS): An Evidence-Based Practice

- 28 randomized controlled trials (RCTs) for unemployed adults with serious mental illness have found:
 - All 28 RCTs have significant outcomes favoring IPS
 - Employment rates: IPS (55%) vs. controls (25%)
 - IPS increases hours of work, wages, job tenure
- Growing evidence that IPS is also effective for other groups: people with PTSD, anxiety/depression, and substance use disorder

Summary

- COVID has adversely affected the mental health of Americans in many ways
- One key aspect of the pandemic has been the impact on employment
- Displaced workers urgently need help to regain employment, not only for financial well-being but also for their mental health