October 29, 2025



Survey of General Population Young Men **National**

October 22 – 26, 2025 | n=1000 | ±3.01%

- Young men age 16 28 in the U.S. have an appetite for guidance, companionship, and success in an environment they largely deem hostile to them.
 - A big, overarching takeaway is that a basket of certain behaviors correlate with negative outcomes strongly across answers. Specifically, young men who never exercise, don't practice religion, are online at a high level, have a low social life, and are not affiliated with organized groups – are consistently reporting the worst satisfaction with their life, worst mental health, and lowest engagement with community.
- Their personal top priority is financial stability (27%) followed by mental health (17%) these
 two themes are seen throughout the survey, especially on the open-ended questions, as young
 men feel the most pressure on themselves to perform financially while keeping their mental
 health positive.
 - **Financial stability** is more important for young men age 22 28 than their younger counterparts, who are more concerned with with their career or academics.
 - Those currently in college or high school place a higher importance on education or academic success.
- Similarly, the biggest challenges facing you men today are financial stress (23%) and mental health struggles (21%).
- Young men are split in regard to whether their life is going the way they expected or envisioned it would go: 50% say yes, 46% say no.
 - Voters under age 21 are more optimistic than those age 22 28.
 - There is a drastic difference in fraternity-affiliated (61 yes, 37 no) and non-fraternity affiliated young men (37 yes, 59 no).

CYGNAL

- 53% of young men have a male mentor or role model (40% say they do not). Those who are much more likely to have a male role model include fraternity-affiliated (71% have a male role model), Republicans (64%), religious men (66%), and those with positive mental health (63%).
 - Those who are **less likely to have a male role model** include **non-affiliated** (50% do not have a male role model), high online (50%), non-religious (57%) and those with negative mental health (57%).
- Young men look most to their father (39%) for guidance followed by friends or peers (22%) or their mother (21%).
 - Those who are **non-fraternity affiliated**, high online, non-religious, and negative mental health are **more likely to not seek any guidance** and figure things out on their own.
 - Young Black men are much less likely to seek guidance from their father or peer groups, and are more likely to seek it from their mother or older brother.
- 21% are or have been a member of a college or university-affiliated fraternity (74% not), and those who are affiliated tend to be more employed, achieved higher education, regularly exercise, are less frequently online, are more religious, and have more positive mental health.
 - A majority agree that being part of a men-only group or organization helps young men grow personally (55%). Just 14% disagree and a quarter are neutral.
 - They see the main benefits of joining a men-only social organization as social connection and friendship (26%), mental health support (21%), mentorship or guidance (21%), and sense of belonging or identity (20%).



- 46% are likely to join a faith-based organization (38% unlikely).
 - Men aged 22 28, Republicans, fraternity affiliated, Hispanic and Black, more religious, and those with positive mental health are much more likely to join a faith-based organization.
- Young men are more than twice as likely to join a faith-based organization that is co-ed (65%) over one that is male-only (29%).
- In terms of their **peer's mental health**, young men are mostly likely to rate it as **fair** (34%) or **poor** (29%) rather than **excellent** (8%) or **good** (17%).
 - In a stark contrast to their non-affiliated counterparts, fraternity-affiliated men are much more likely to say good (26%) or excellent (19%).
- In terms of their **personal mental health**, young men are mostly likely to rate it as **good** (27%) or **fair** (33%) rather than **excellent** (14%) or **poor** (15%).
 - Again, fraternity-affiliated men rate their personal mental health are much better than their non-affiliated counterparts.
 - Those who are employed, in a relationship, religious, exercise regularly, and Black men are much better off in regard to their personal mental health.
- If facing a personal non-physical crisis or emergency, most would look to family members (32%) for guidance. 18% would look to friends.
 - More would choose to handle it on their own (20%) as opposed to any other option.



- Compared to before 2020 and the pandemic, young men feel their **mental health has** worsened (41%) rather than **improved** (35%) or **stayed the same** (21%).
 - Fraternity-affiliated, regular exercisers, highly social, and more religious men are some of the only groups who believe their mental health has improved rather than worsened.
 - Compared to before 2020, 36% believe they are less social and 27% say more than before. 33% say they are about the same. Again, we see fraternity-affiliated young men much more socially engaged than most every other group.
- 68% of young men spend between 1 and 6 hours online every day, and 27% spend 6 hours or more online.
 - In contrast, a plurality of young men spend 1 to 5 hours (34%) socially each week. Slightly less spend 6 to 10 hours (28%).
 - Non-fraternity affiliated, non-religious, and those with negative mental health are much less social.
- Gaming is very popular among young men: 36% spend 2 hours or more every day playing video games.
 - Three quarters game at least a few times a week.
 - Young men with positive mental health half of them are heavy gamers. Among those
 with negative mental health, 58% are heavy gamers.

CYGNAL

- Both high social and low social groups have similar rates of heavy gaming.
- 76% of young men use Al at least occasionally, with high school students, college grads, and fraternity-affiliated using it more frequently.

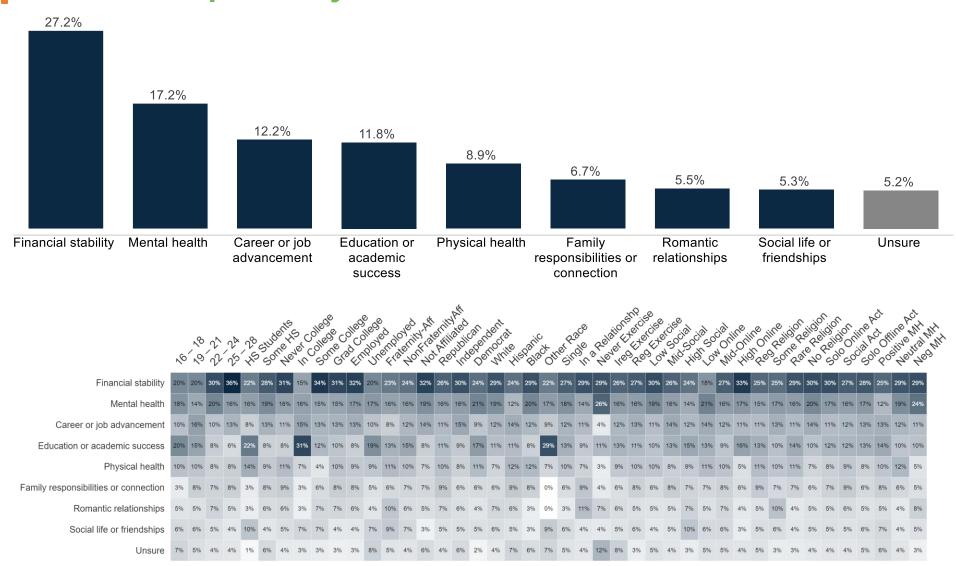
- Two-thirds of young men know people who are aggressive online but who are not aggressive in person.
- 71% believe violence is acceptable in self defense, and 54% in self defense of others.
 - Only 9% say they think violence is acceptable in response to political disagreement.
 - 17% though, in response to **threats to one's identity or beliefs**, which they separate out as distinct from a political disagreement.
 - 21% say it's acceptable in response to hate speech.
 - High school students and Democrats have a much lower threshold for violence.
 - Fraternity affiliated and Black men have a higher threshold for violence.
- 83% spend at least 1 hour on YouTube every single day, and 56% use it between 1 4 hours.
 - A significant 11% spend 6+ hours on YT every day.
 - Among those who use YT 6+ hours, 64% say life isn't going the direction they want, but those who use it 5-6 hours a day, it's 42%.



- Segmentation analysis identified two voter groups:
 - Low Alignment/Less Guided (50%) tend to be age 16 21 and are more pessimistic throughout the survey in terms of their mental health, lack of mentorship, and lack of a support system. They are less frequent exercisers, less social, less religious, less employed, less affiliated with a group, more online, heavier gamers, and view pornography more frequently. They are more likely to be single.
 - **High Alignment/More Guided** (50%) tend to be age 22 28 and are more optimistic throughout the survey in terms of their mental health, availability of mentorship, and a support system. They are more frequent exercisers, more social, more religious, more employed, more affiliated with a group, less online, less heavy gamers, and view pornography less frequently. They are more likely to be in a relationship.



Personal Top Priority





Young Man in US

- Most young men feel squeezed by rising costs and a tough job market. Many say it's hard to get ahead or even stay afloat.
 - "It feels crappy, I can't buy a house and everything's expensive."
 - "It feels like my generation got robbed of a decent adulthood. House prices are through the roof and cost of living is insanely high."
- Loneliness and lack of support are common. Many feel emotionally disconnected and say it's hard to build relationships.
 - "Being a young man in the U.S. today feels like standing at a crossroads with a
 backpack full of contradictions. There's insane opportunity, tech, AI, remote work, the
 ability to learn anything online, but also heavy pressure: rent that eats half your
 paycheck, student loans, and a constant sense that you're already behind."
 - "It can be a bit lonely, it's hard to find a romantic partner."
- Young men feel heavy pressure to succeed and meet high standards, often set by family, society, or social media.
 - "It's tough you're expected to do so much and with these new high standards it feels like you're never meeting them."
 - "There are too many expectations about this generation of men from older generations."
- Stress, anxiety, and depression are widespread. Many feel overwhelmed and say mental health support is lacking.
 - "It is a perpetual state of trauma and traumatic experiences that burden you in every single way."
 - "I think it is very depressing and lonely."

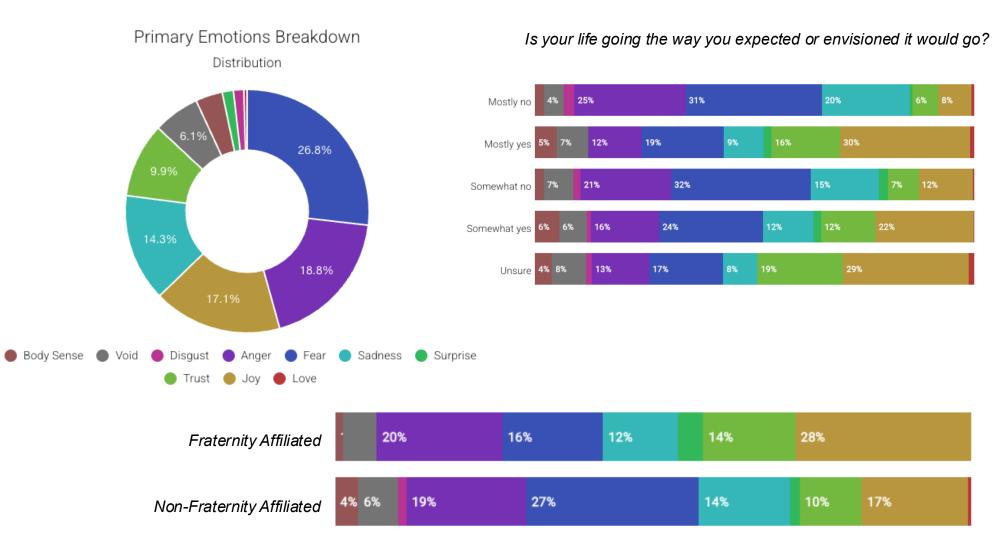


Young Man in US (cont.)

- Some face discrimination due to race, gender identity, or sexual orientation. These challenges
 add to feelings of exclusion and fear.
 - "Disheartening, being a white man feels like a lot of people hate me just on that."
 - "As a **white male, I feel safe**, but as a **transgender male, I do not**. Discrimination is high for many, but as long as I appear "normal" to outsiders, I feel okay. I do not like the direction the U.S. is going in though."
- Many are anxious about the country's future, citing political division and instability.
 - "It feels like the whole world is constantly against me."
 - "It feels like the country is going downhill."
- A minority feel grateful for freedom and opportunities, mentioning personal growth and optimism.
 - "It feels awesome and I say that because of my free will."
 - "It is an amazing time to be a young man alive in the U.S. due to the immense opportunities."
 - "I feel great, am in the best shape of my life, am getting stronger every day, and learning new things as I go."
- Conclusion: Most young men describe life as stressful, pressured, and uncertain, with financial worries and social isolation at the forefront. A few remain optimistic, valuing freedom and opportunity.

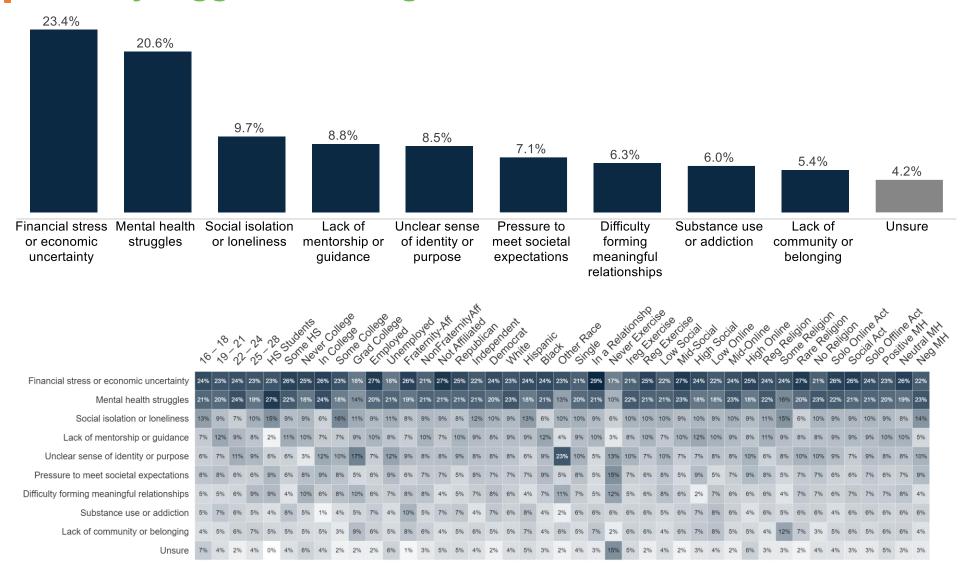


Young Man in US



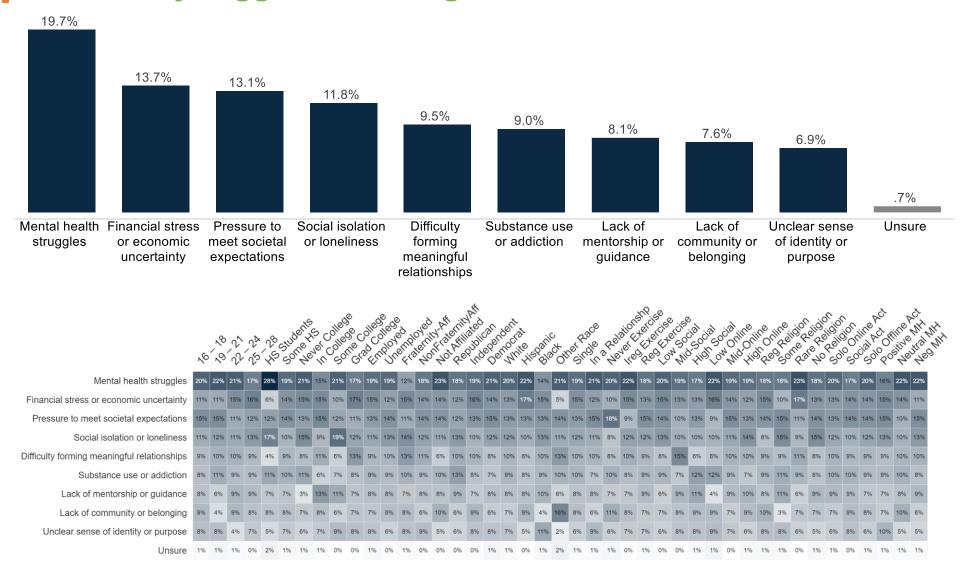


Primary Biggest Challenge



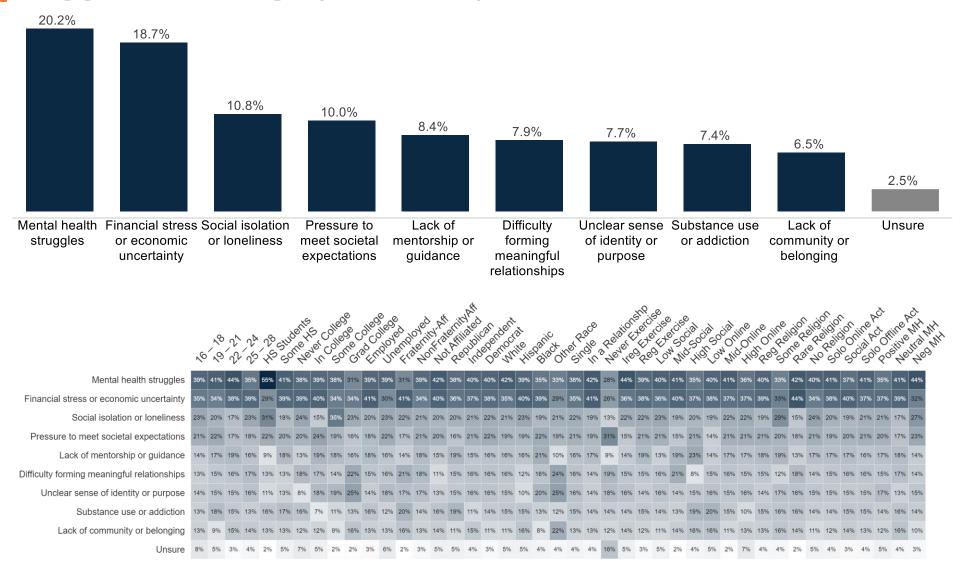


Secondary Biggest Challenge



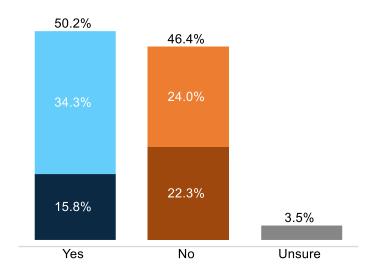


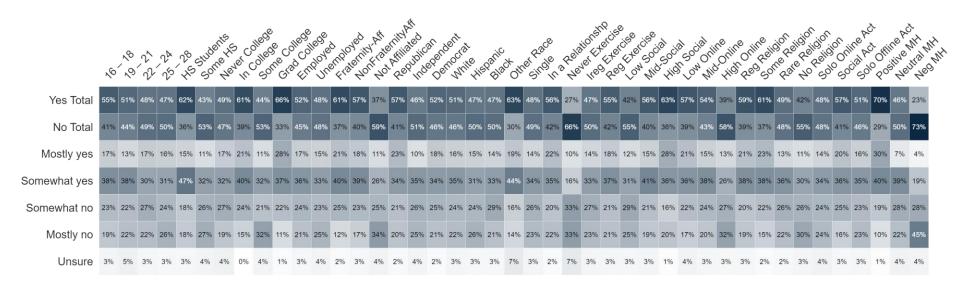
Biggest Challenge (combined)





Life Direction







As Expected Life Direction

- Many attribute their life's trajectory to setting clear goals and working hard to achieve them. They see their current situation as a result of personal effort and determination.
 - "I've **put in the work** and I'm reaping the benefits of it."
 - "I **set my mind** on goals and accomplished them."
- A significant number say their life went as expected because they made plans early and stuck to them, whether in education, career, or personal life.
 - "I **planned** to go to college and did exactly that."
 - "I have **stuck to a plan** and that plan worked out."
- **Family, friends, and mentors play a major role**. They credit their support networks for helping them stay on track and achieve their goals.
 - "Because I have had the help of my parents every step of the way."
 - "By having a great support system that brought me to this point."
- Some mention **faith in God** or a higher power as guiding their life's direction and helping them through challenges.
 - "I think me following Heavenly Father god, has a plan for me."
 - "Because God is in control."
- Several young men express satisfaction with their lives, noting that things have gone as they hoped, even if not perfectly.
 - "I'm a **simple person** with a simple life which I always wanted anyway."
- "As long as I'm enjoying my life, I see it as 'going my way." In your own words, why has your life gone the way you envisioned or expected it would go?



As Expected Life Direction (cont.)

- Some acknowledge that life didn't go exactly as planned, but they adapted, learned, and found value in unexpected experiences.
 - "Some goals took longer to reach, and a few paths I thought were right for me ended up changing completely."
 - "Life rarely follows a straight line, but with resilience and an open mind, it often leads you to places you didn't expect but still needed to be."
- Many point to specific achievements—graduating, getting a job, starting a family—as evidence that their life is on track.
 - "I graduated college and got a job."
 - "I have a beautiful wife and an amazing son."
- A recurring theme is the belief that personal choices and agency have shaped their lives.
 - "Because of the choices I made."
 - "I made all my choices and planned them."
- Conclusion: Young men who feel their lives have gone as expected mostly credit goal-setting, hard work, planning, support systems, faith, and adaptability. They highlight personal achievements and satisfaction, and see their own choices as central to their life's direction.



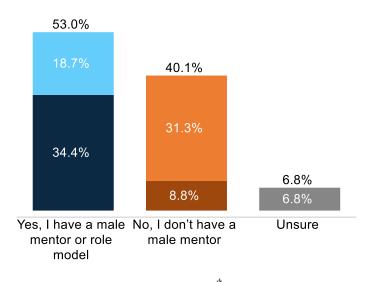
Not As Expected Life Direction

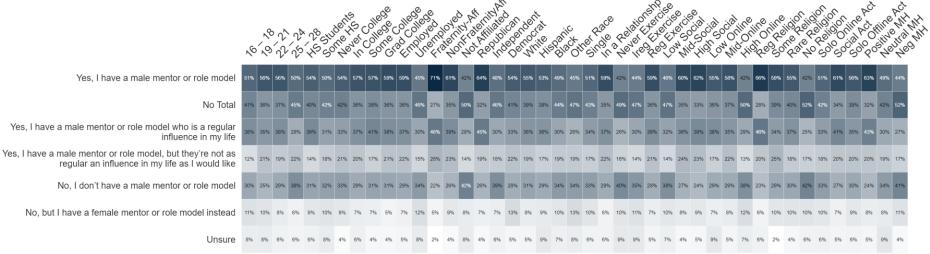
- Money issues are the most common reason for unmet expectations. Many cite
 unemployment, low wages, debt, and the high cost of living as obstacles to their goals.
 - "Because of the high cost of living I have not been able to afford everything I want and save for the future."
 - "I'm poor, without any help from my family having to build my own world from the ground up."
- Many expected to have a stable job, a degree, or a clear career path by now, but have faced setbacks like unemployment, dropping out, or market saturation.
 - "I have a degree in plant science and cannot find a job to apply it with."
 - "I was unable to find a job after college."
- Mental health struggles, addiction, and trauma are frequently mentioned as reasons for falling short of expectations.
 - "I struggle with mental health, family pressure, having to deal with financial issues, and uncertainty."
 - "I attempted suicide once in my younger teens, now I don't know what to do with my life."
- Unforeseen events—illness, family loss, relationship breakdowns, and other hardships—have derailed plans for many.
 - "Approximately a year and a half ago I developed epilepsy which wildly changed my life."
 - "I never asked for my mom to kill herself at 6 years old I never asked for my grandma to die of cancer and my grandpa to take himself out with his diabetes through depression I never asked to lose my job because of some bully I never asked to be climbing from nothing making 184\$ a check with only 2 friends that kept it real throughout it all." CYGNAL

Not As Expected Life Direction (cont.)

- Some attribute their situation to mistakes, lack of motivation, or bad choices made earlier in life.
 - "I've made so many wrong choices in life."
 - "I haven't made the wisest choices, I had a lot of pride when I was younger."
- Difficulty forming romantic relationships, losing partners, and feeling socially isolated are common themes.
 - "Never had a girlfriend."
 - "I built a family just to get cheated on."
- Many say their childhood expectations were unrealistic compared to the challenges of adult life, especially regarding independence and success.
 - "As a kid you had huge expectations and it's kinda not flowing in those expectations."
 - "When I was a kid I thought the future would be bright and exciting but now I live in fear and despair."
- Some blame external circumstances—economic downturns, lack of guidance, or societal changes—for their situation.
 - "The economy is collapsing and there are no institutions for people my age to gather besides bars and clubs."
 - "Lack of support, lack of guidance and losing motivation."
- Conclusion: Young men whose lives have not gone as expected most often cite financial hardship, career setbacks, mental health struggles, unexpected events, regret over past decisions, relationship issues, and a mismatch between youthful expectations and adult reality. Many feel unsupported by society and overwhelmed by circumstances beyond their control.

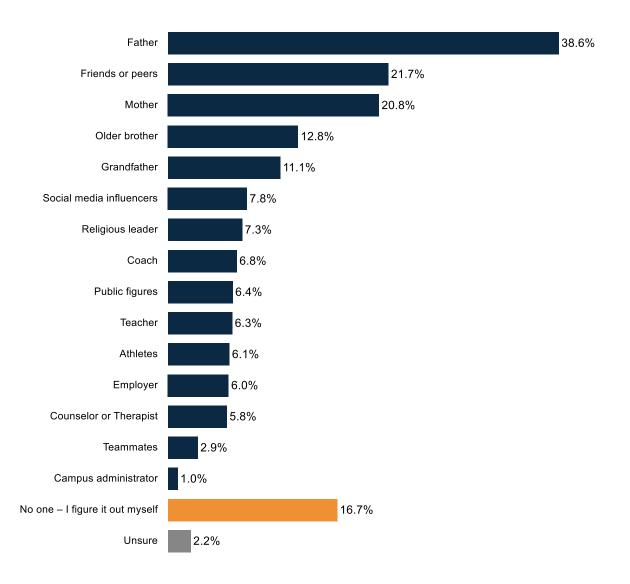
Mentorship Commonality





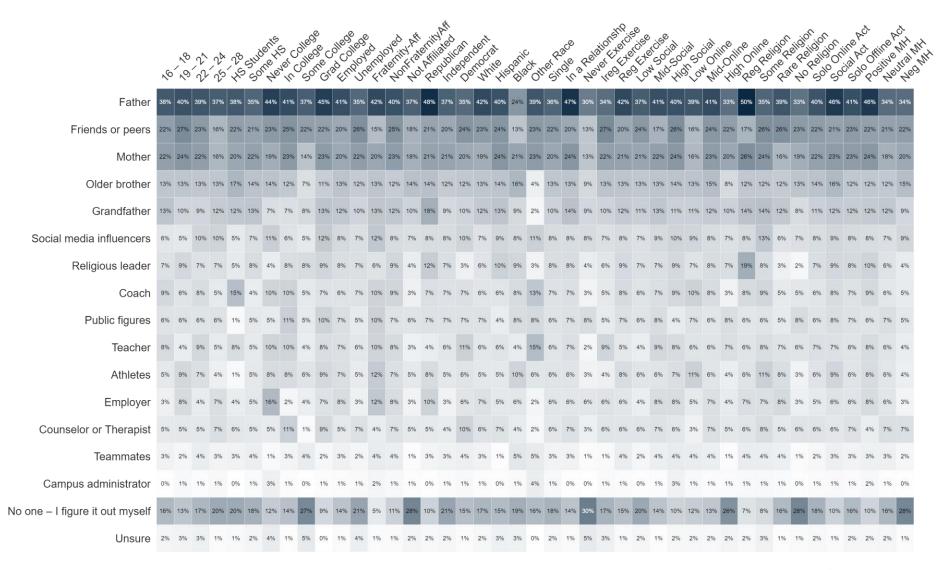


Male Guidance



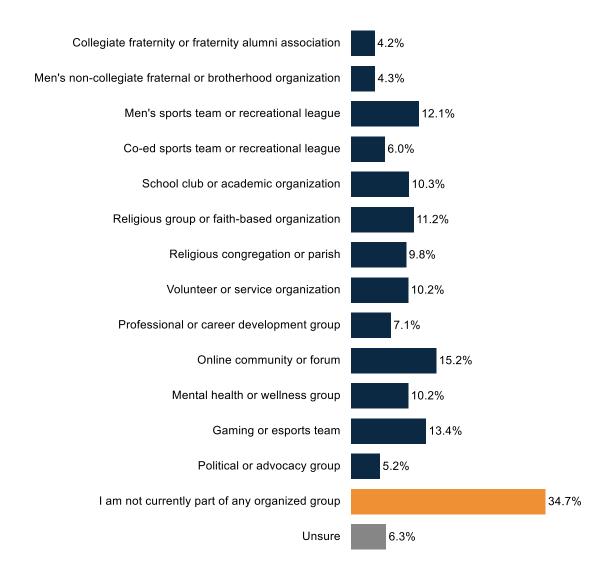


Male Guidance



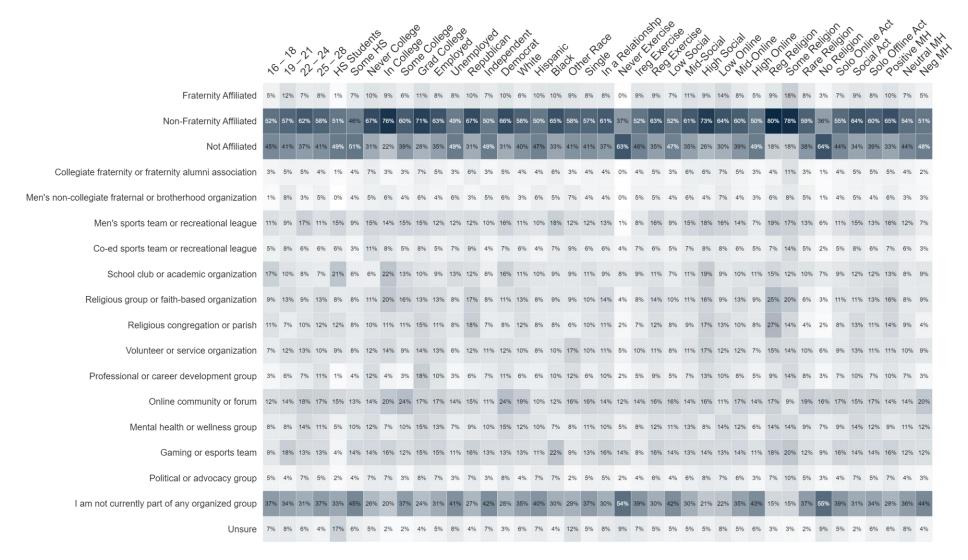


Group Membership



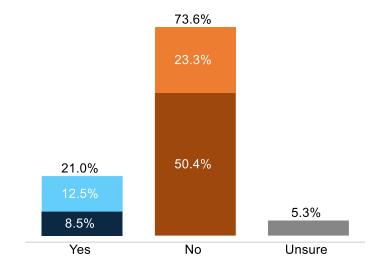


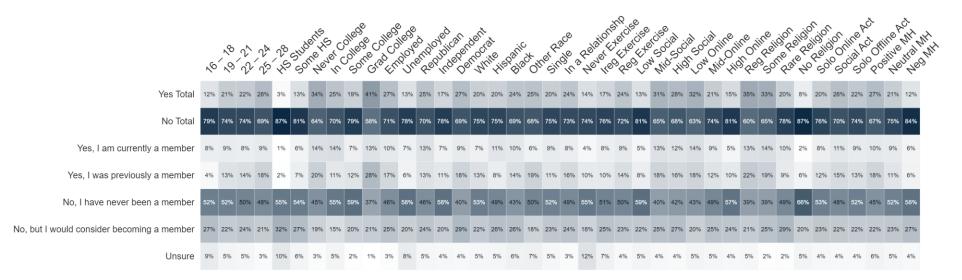
Group Membership





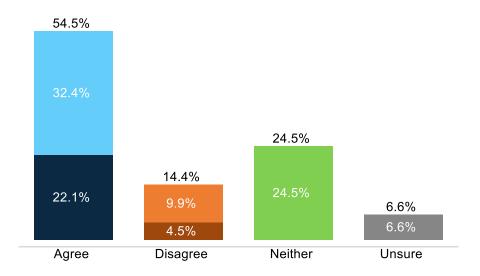
Fraternity Membership

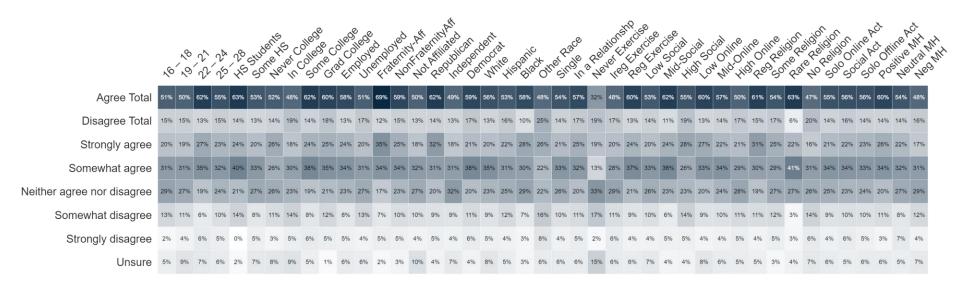






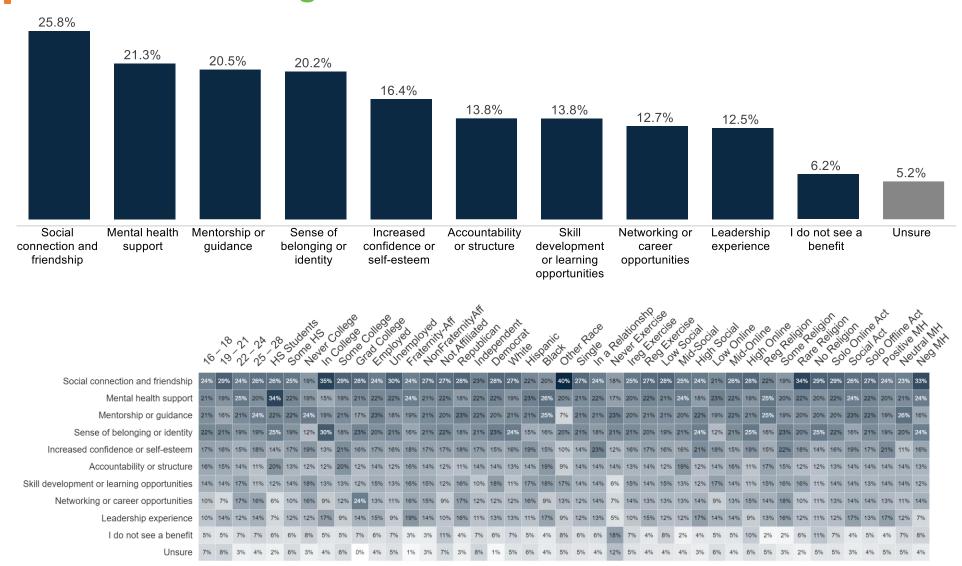
Group Growth Impact





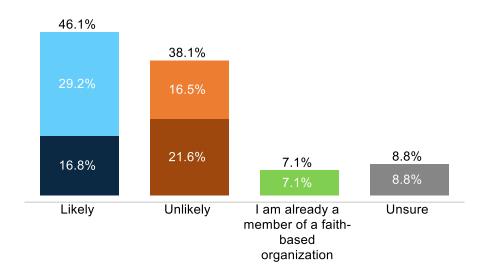


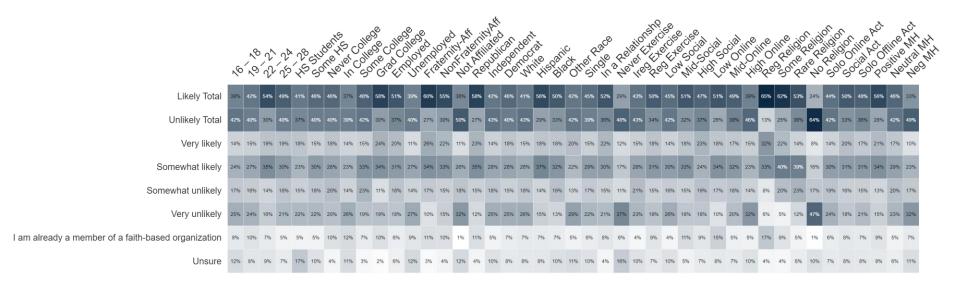
Benefits of Joining





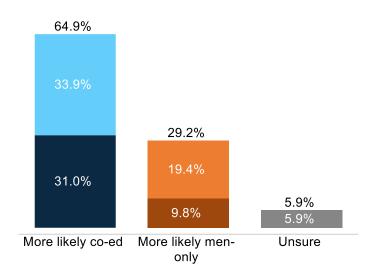
Likelihood to Join Faith-Based Org

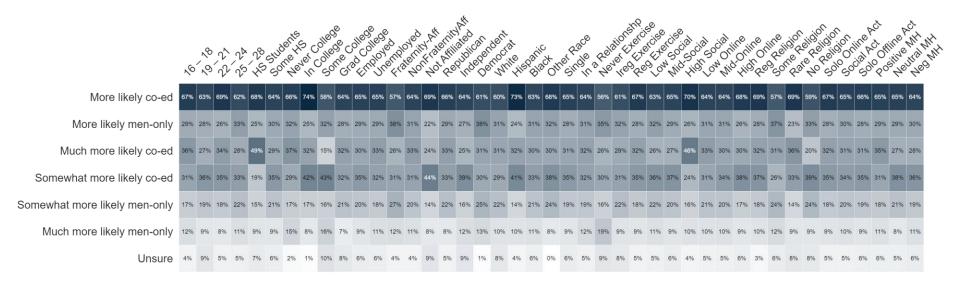






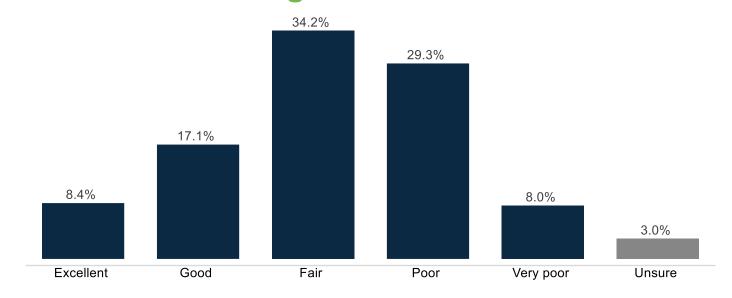
Co-Ed or Men Only Organization

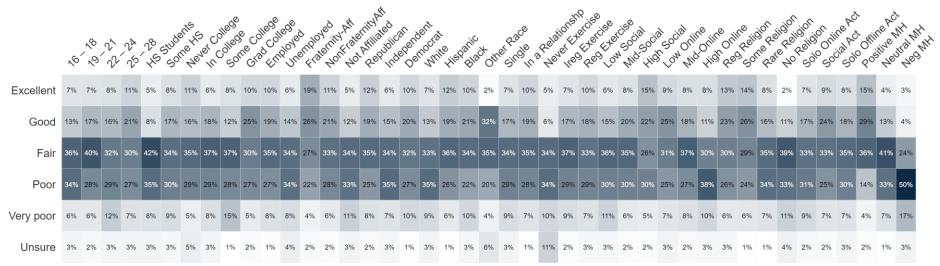






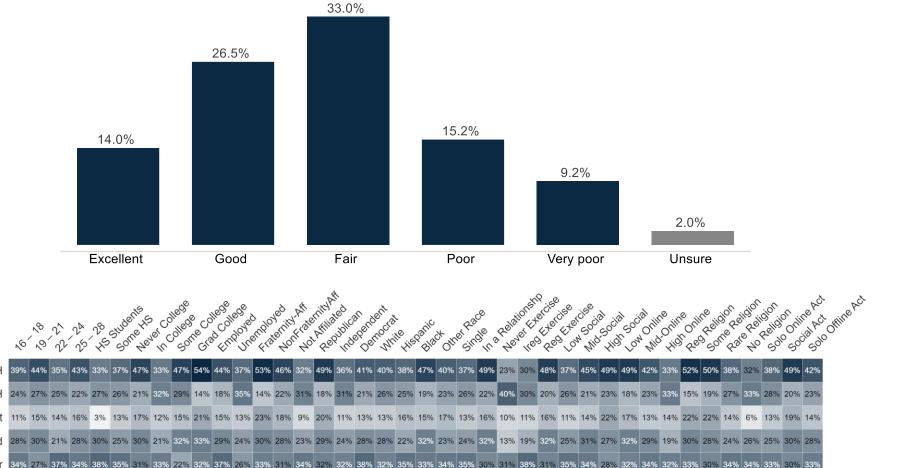
Peer Mental Health Rating





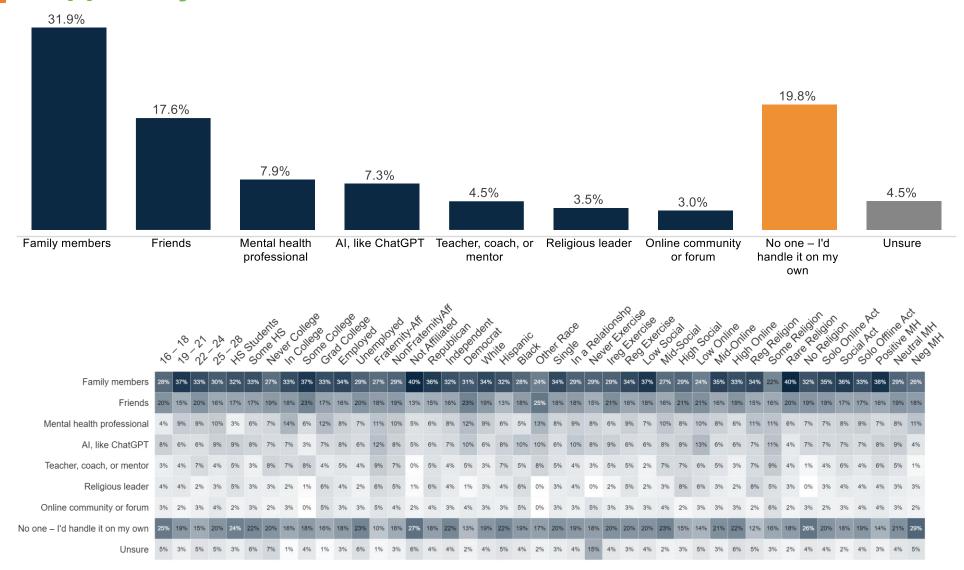


Personal Mental Health Rating



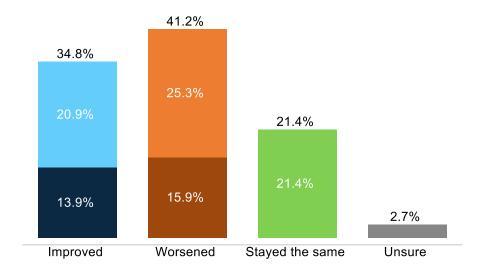


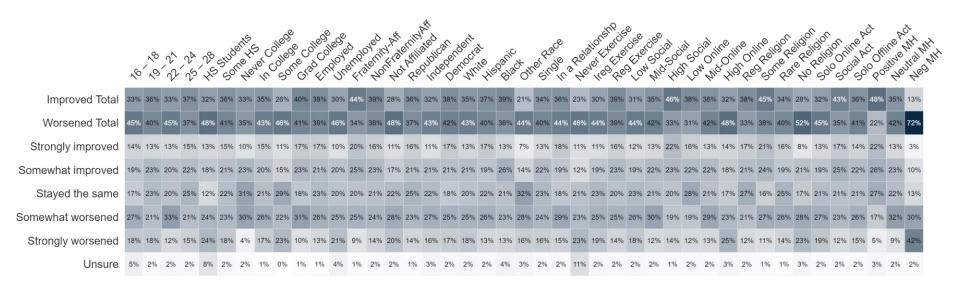
Support System Preference





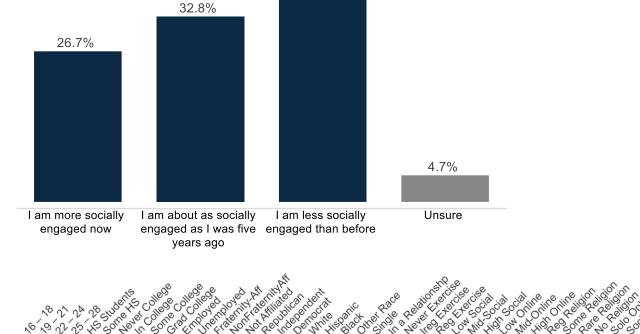
Mental Health Change



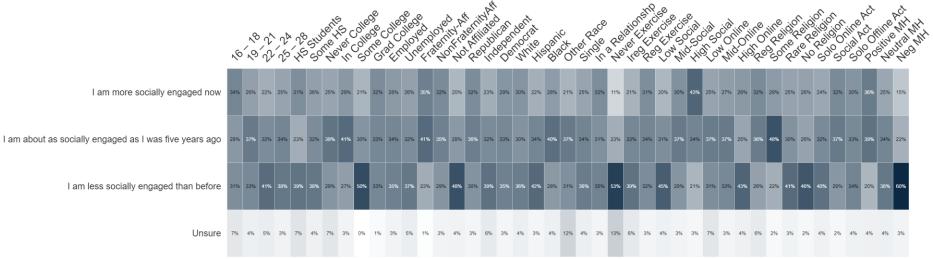




Past Social Engagement



35.8%



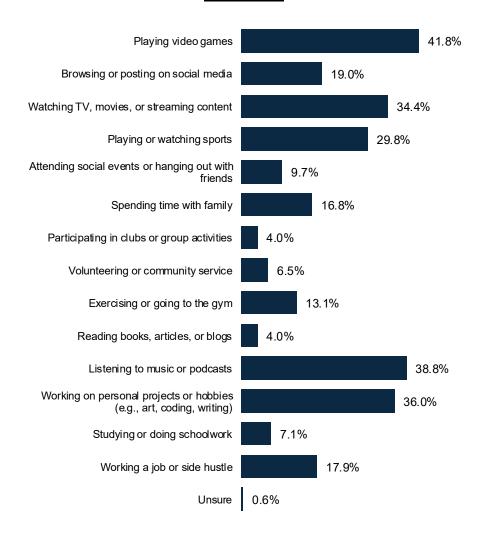


Free Time Activities

18 and Above

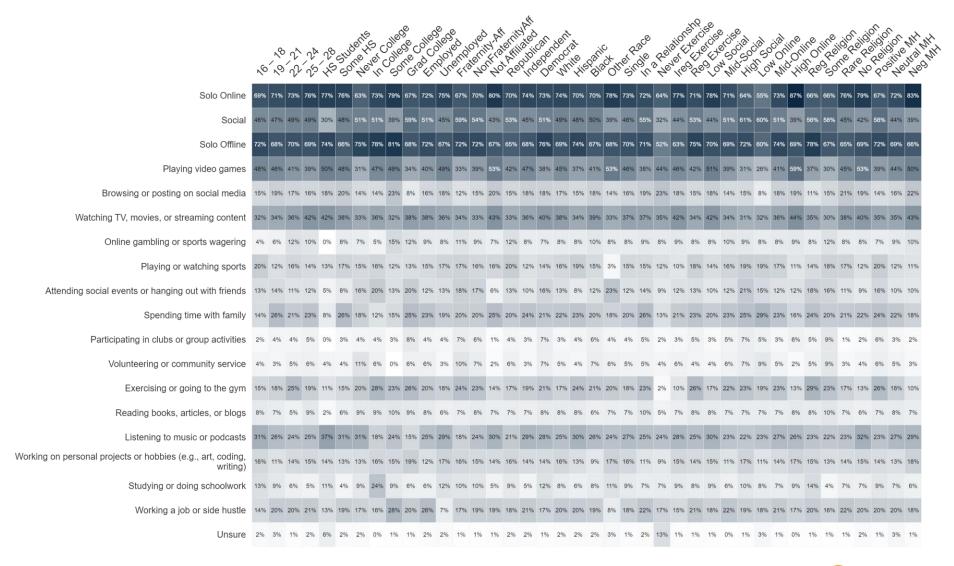
Playing video games 43.2% Browsing or posting on social media 16.5% Watching TV, movies, or streaming 36.7% content Online gambling or sports wagering 8.3% Playing or watching sports 15.1% Attending social events or hanging 12.4% out with friends Spending time with family 21.4% Participating in clubs or group Volunteering or community service Exercising or going to the gym 19.3% Reading books, articles, or blogs 7.6% Listening to music or podcasts 26.1% Working on personal projects or hobbies (e.g., art, coding, writing) Studying or doing schoolwork 8.0% Working a job or side hustle 19.0% Unsure 2.1%

Below 18



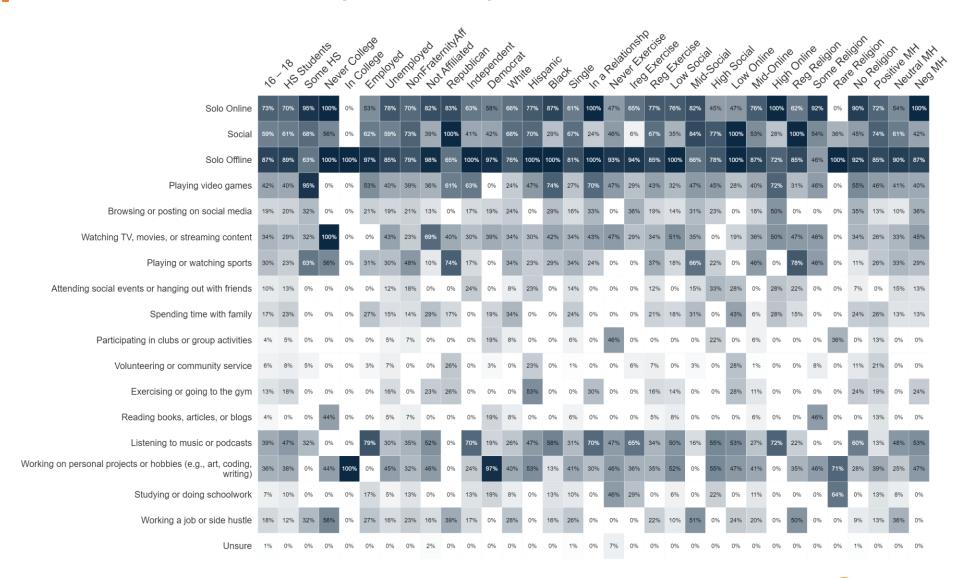


Free Time Activities (18 and Above)



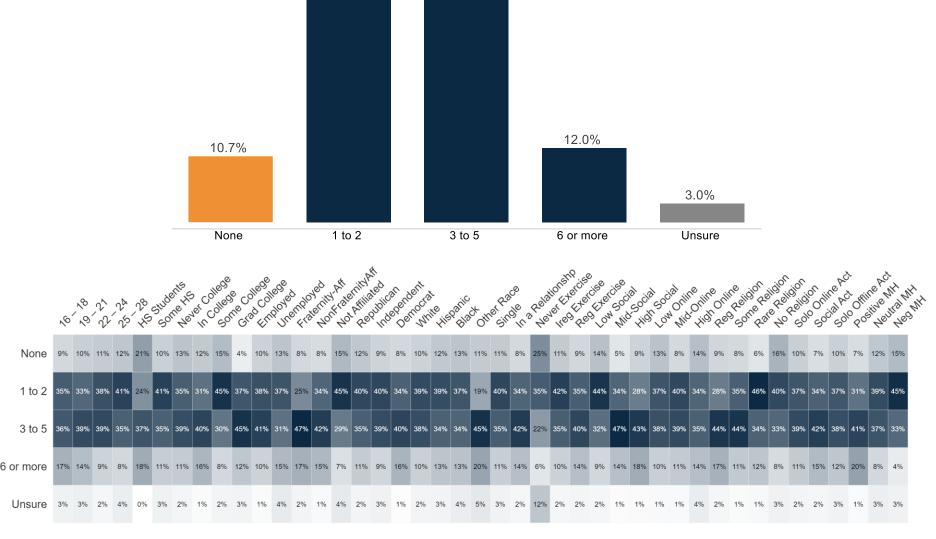


Free Time Activities (Below 18)





Close Friends Count

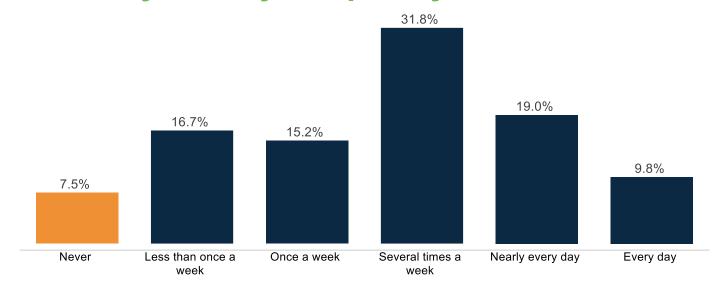


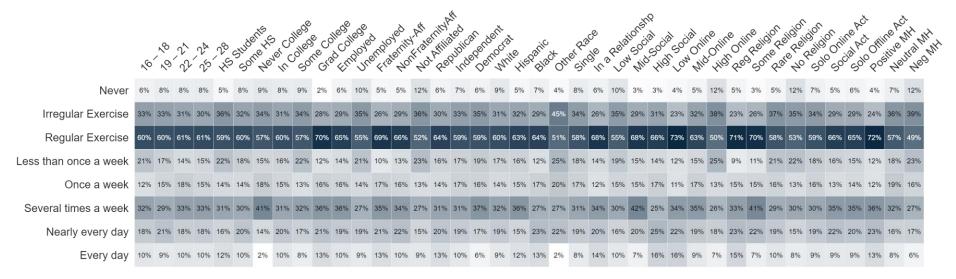
37.2%



37.2%

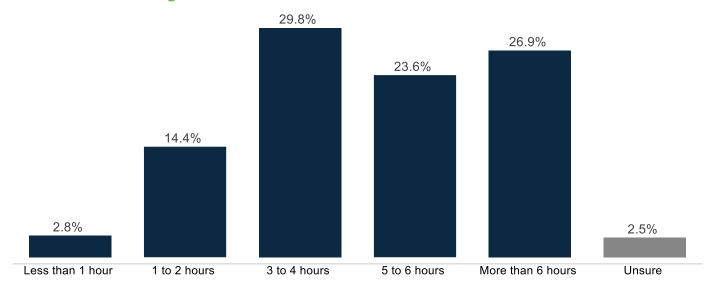
Physical Activity Weekly Frequency

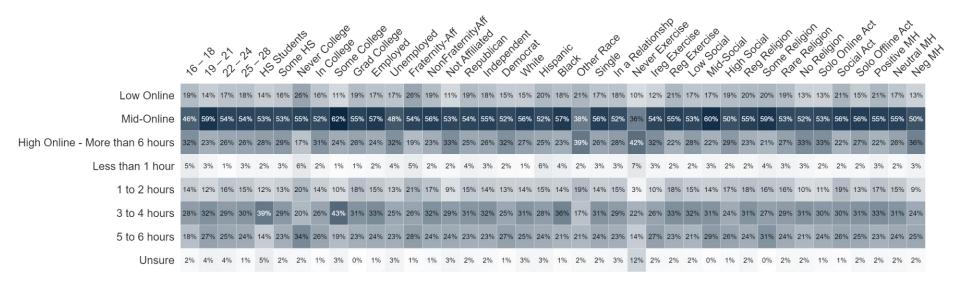






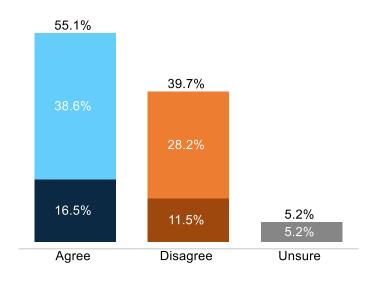
Online Hours Daily

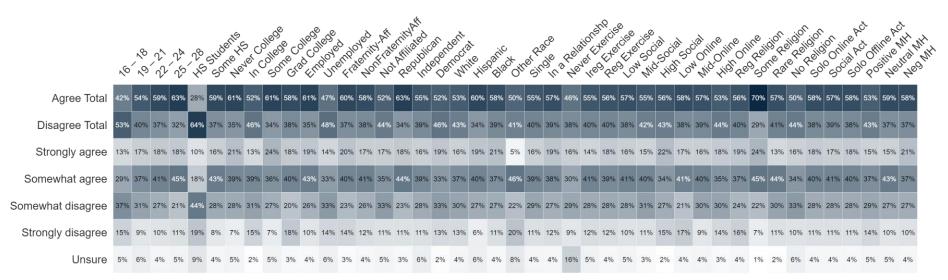






Social Media Feed

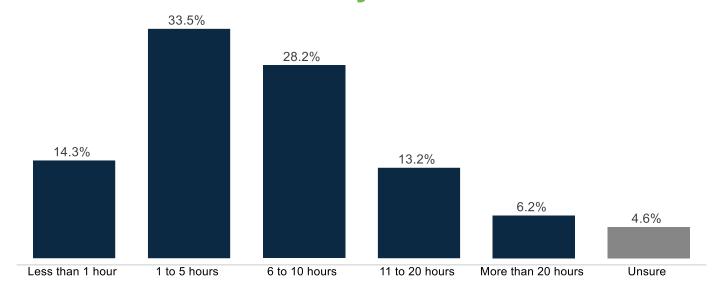


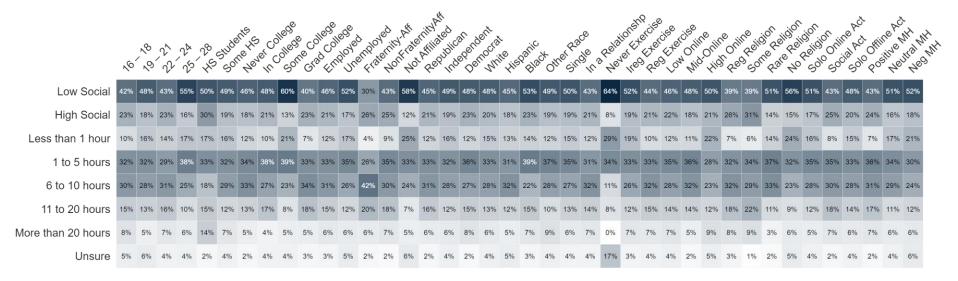






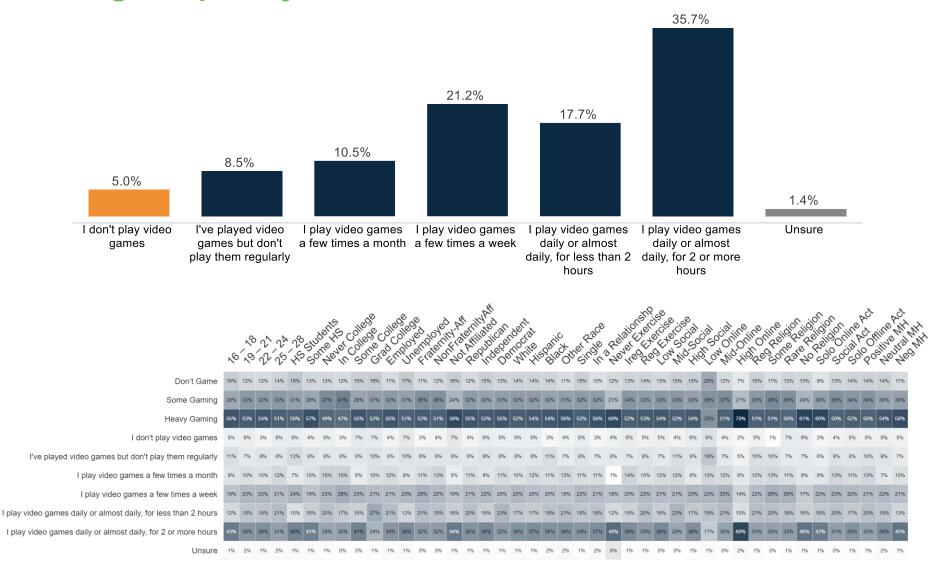
Social In-Person Hours Weekly





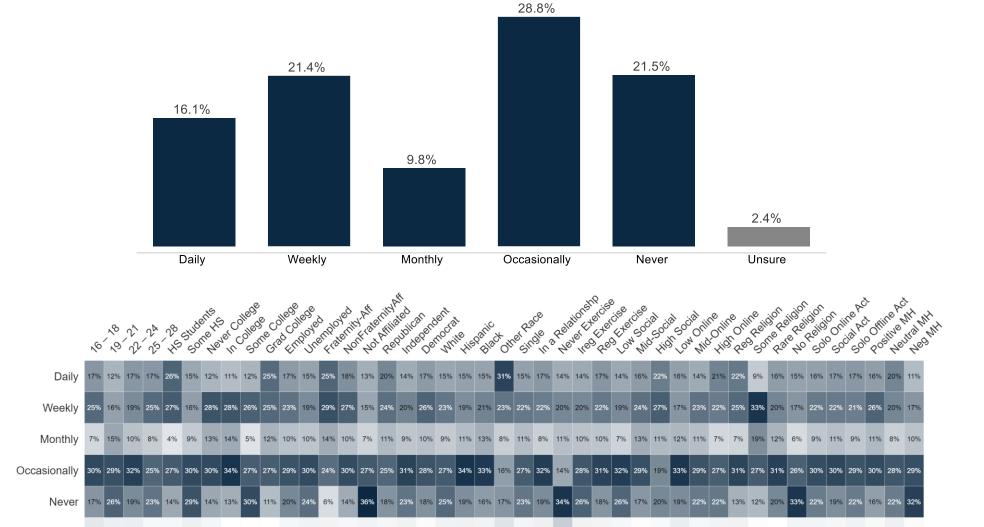


Gaming Frequency



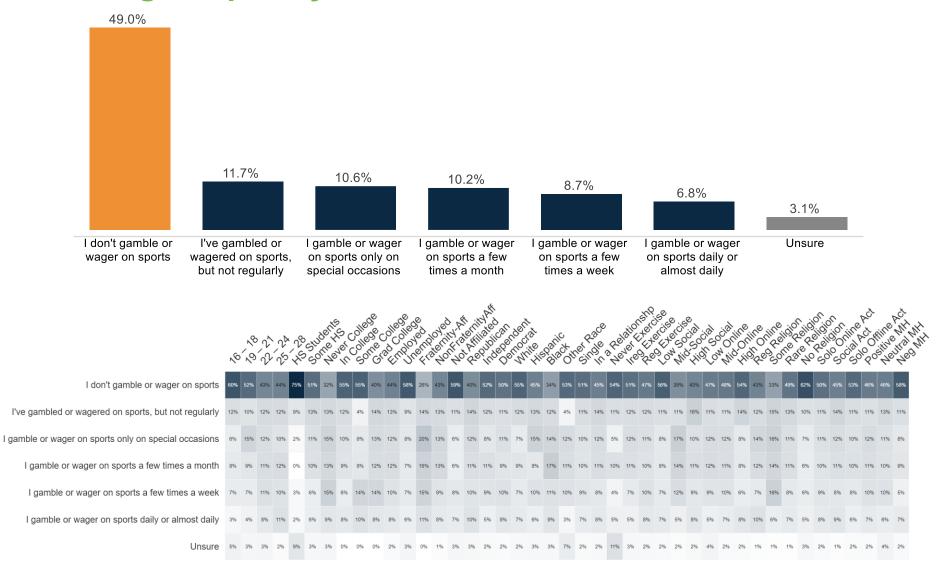


Al Usage Frequency



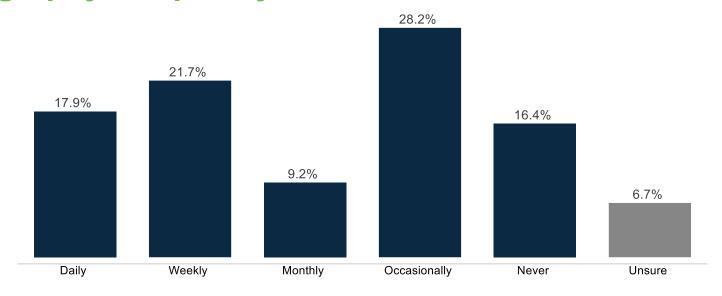


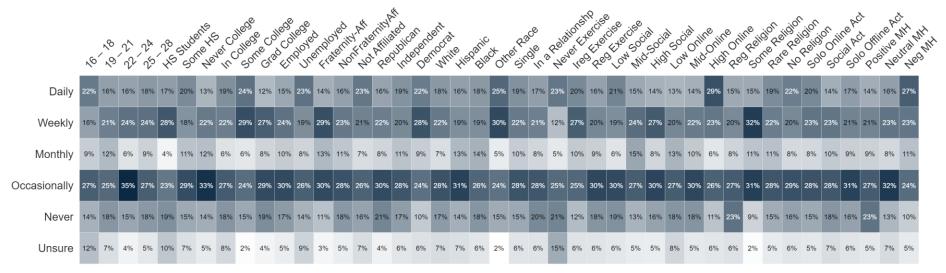
Gambling Frequency





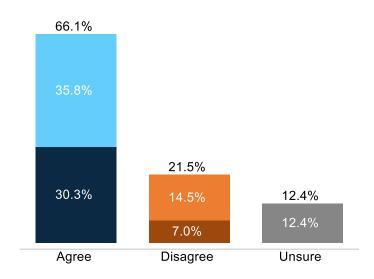
Pornography Frequency

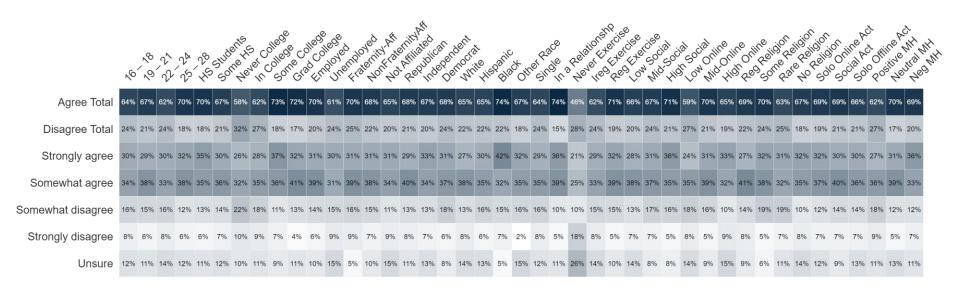






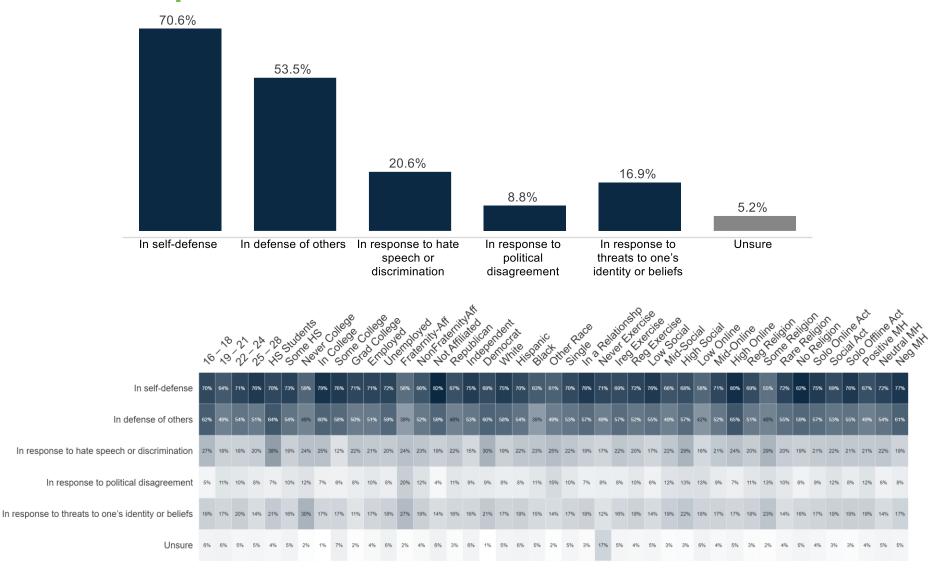
Online vs. Offline Aggression





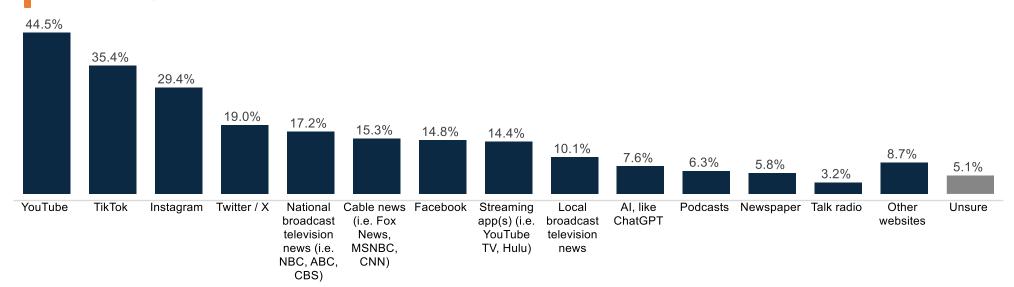


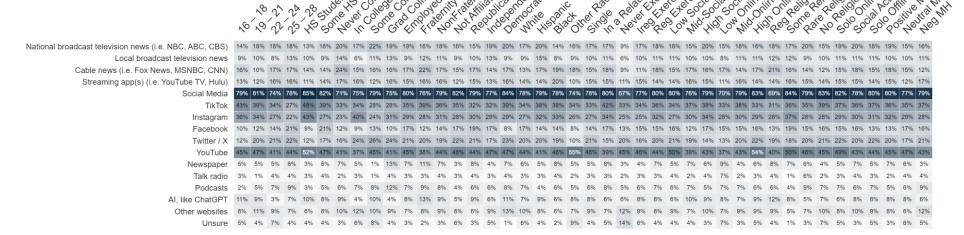
Violence Opinion





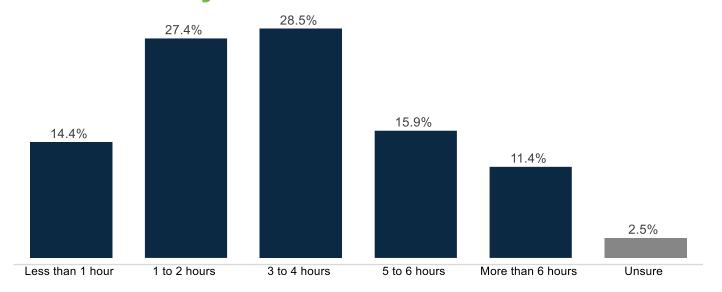
News Source

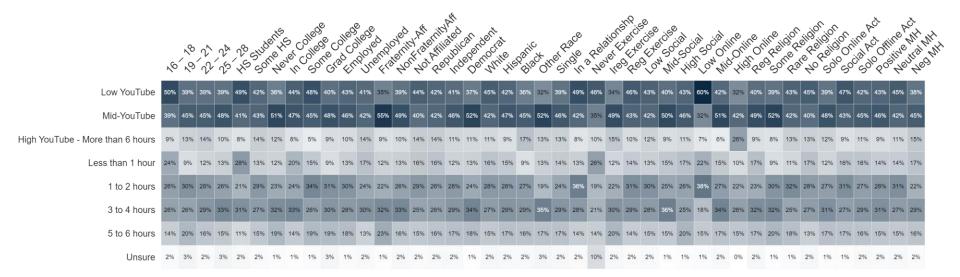






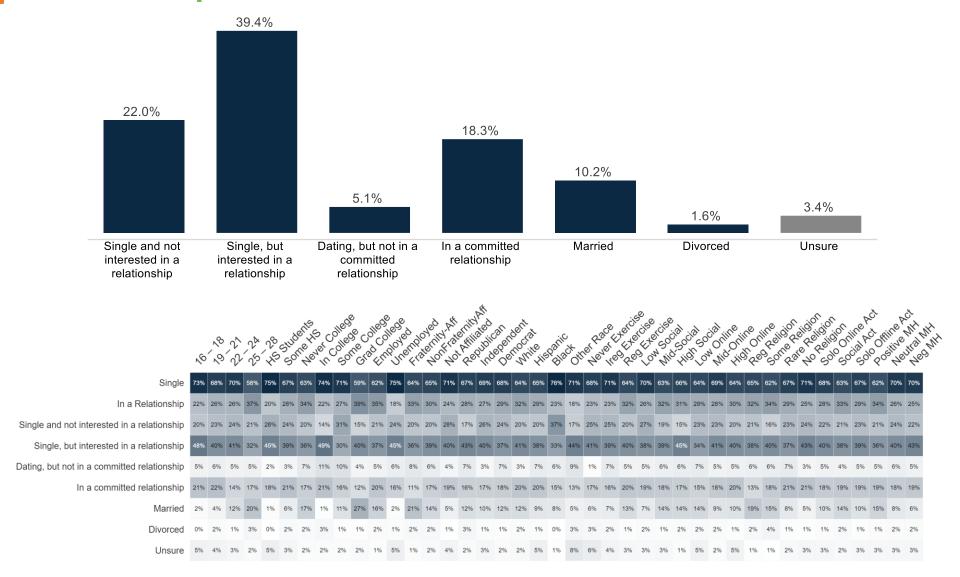
YouTube Hours Daily





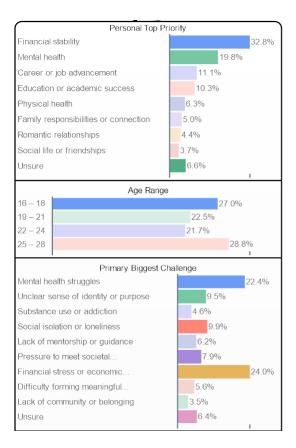


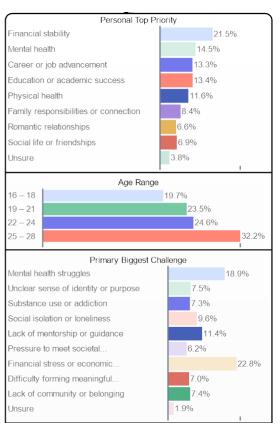
Relationship Status





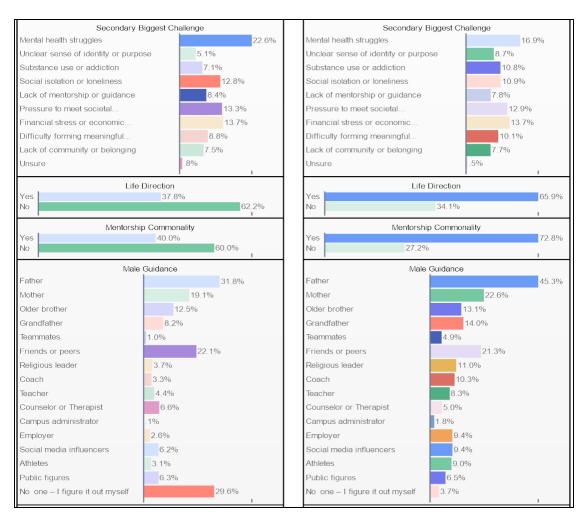
Low Alignment/Less Guided (50%)





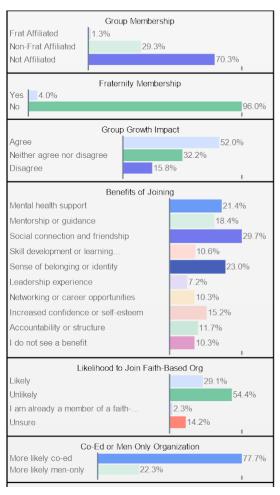


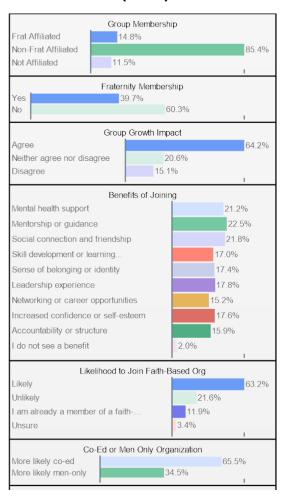
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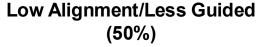


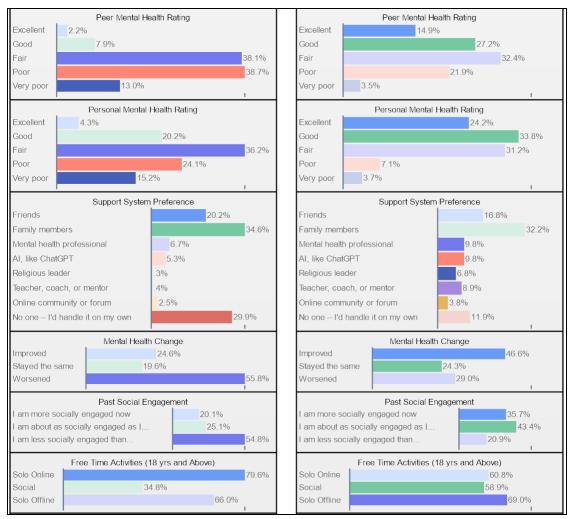
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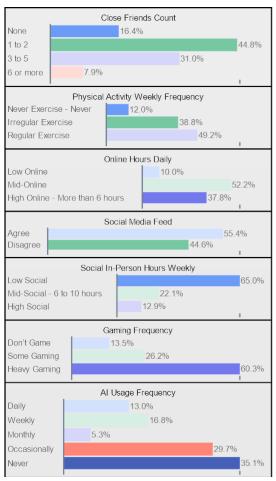


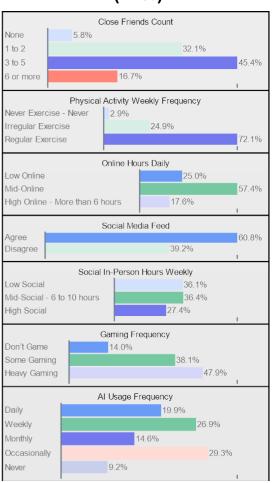






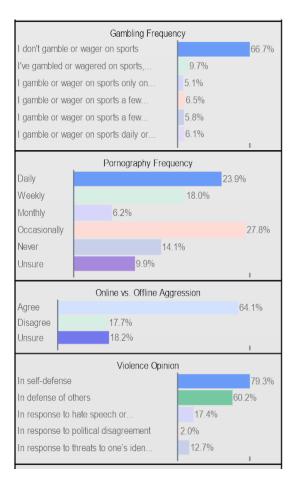
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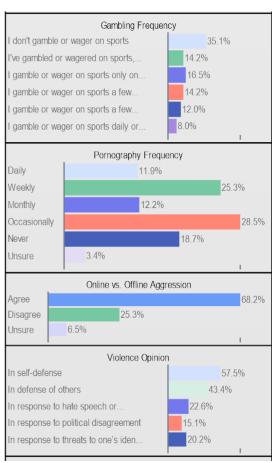






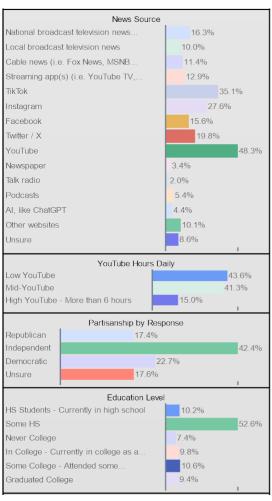
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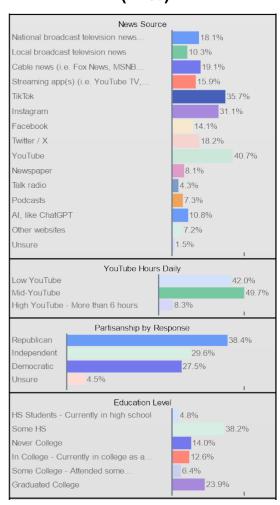






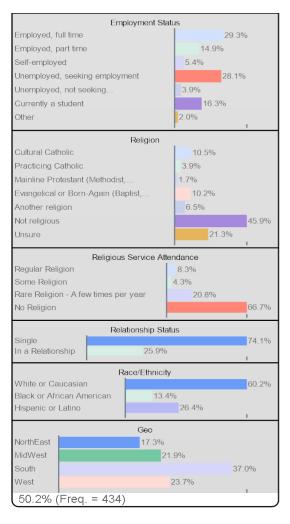
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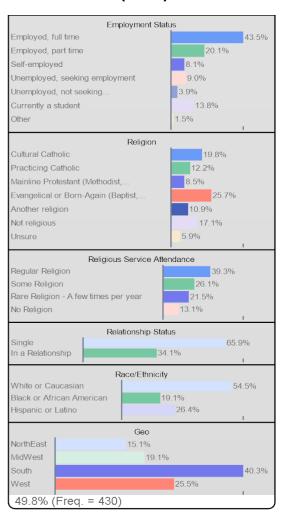






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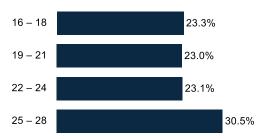




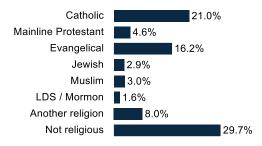


Demographics

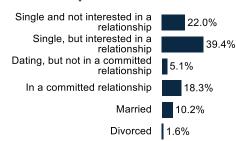
Age Range



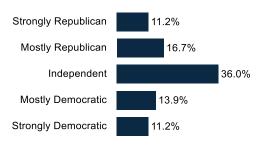
Religion



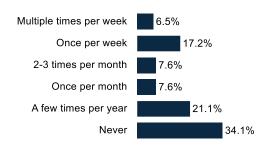
Relationship Status



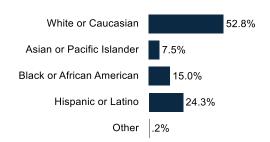
Partisanship



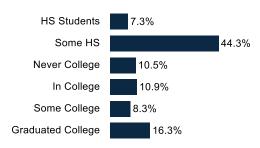
Religious Service Attendance



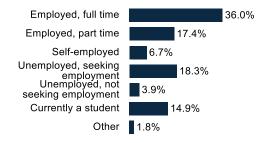
Race/Ethnicity



Education Level



Employment Status



Geo

