

Navigating Mental Health in Aviation: State of Mental Health In America

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Context

- Aviation as a high-stress field
 - Analogous vocations—law enforcement, fire and rescue, medical, military
- Safety culture
- Tradition of silence
- Systemic effects and impacts

Decision-makers under stress

- Seek out certainty (less tolerant of ambiguity), fast decisions
- Can experience greater conflict
- Narrow perception due to sensory overload (“tunnel vision”)
- Perception distortion and possibly sub-optimal judgment
- Decreased ability to handle complex or difficult tasks
- Focus on short-term survival goals, sometimes at the expense of long-term benefits
- Choose risky alternatives

Mental Health in America

- Increase in self-reported mental health diagnosis (American Psychological Association, released Nov. 1, 2023)
 - Age 35-44: increased from 31% in 2019 to 45% in 2023
 - Age 45-64: increased from 26% in 2019 to 36% in 2023
- Population: Prevalence of mental illness has been rising steadily since 2015 (SAMSHA)
 - 2015: 18% of population
 - 2021: 23% of population
 - ▶ That's 18 million more people, and over 50 million people total.

Stress in America

(American Psychological Association,
released Nov. 1, 2023)

- Unmanageable: One-third (33%) of adults feel stressed no matter what they do to manage their stress
- Occupational source: Almost two-thirds (64%) of working adults say work is a source of stress
- Isolation:
 - 62% don't want to burden others by discussing stress
 - 44% don't feel anyone understands
 - 52% wish they had someone to turn to for support
- Physical impacts:
 - Age 35-44: chronic illness reporting increased from 48% in 2019 to 58% in 2023

Holiday Stress in America

(American Psychological Association, released Nov. 30, 2023)

- “Happy” Holidays: 90% of respondents say that concerns cause stress at this time of the year
 - Not having enough money
 - Missing loved ones
 - Anticipating family conflict

Practitioner Pulse Survey (American Psychological Association, released Dec. 5, 2023)

- Increased symptom severity:
 - 52% seeing an increase in symptom severity of patients
- Reduced capacity:
 - 41% seeing increase in number of sessions spent treating each patient which reduces capacity for new patients
 - 56% have no new patient openings
- Delays:
 - 69% with waitlist say the average wait is **3 months**
 - 31% see average wait times longer than **3 months**