



NAVIGATING A NEW NORMAL

YOUNG SINGLES

March/April 2020

To continue our exploration into how US consumers are adapting to the New Normal, we turned our attention to another audience: [YOUNG SINGLES](#).

In late March/early April, we spoke with [114 singles \(with no children\) ages 18 to 29](#) via an online survey to understand how their thoughts, feelings and behaviors are being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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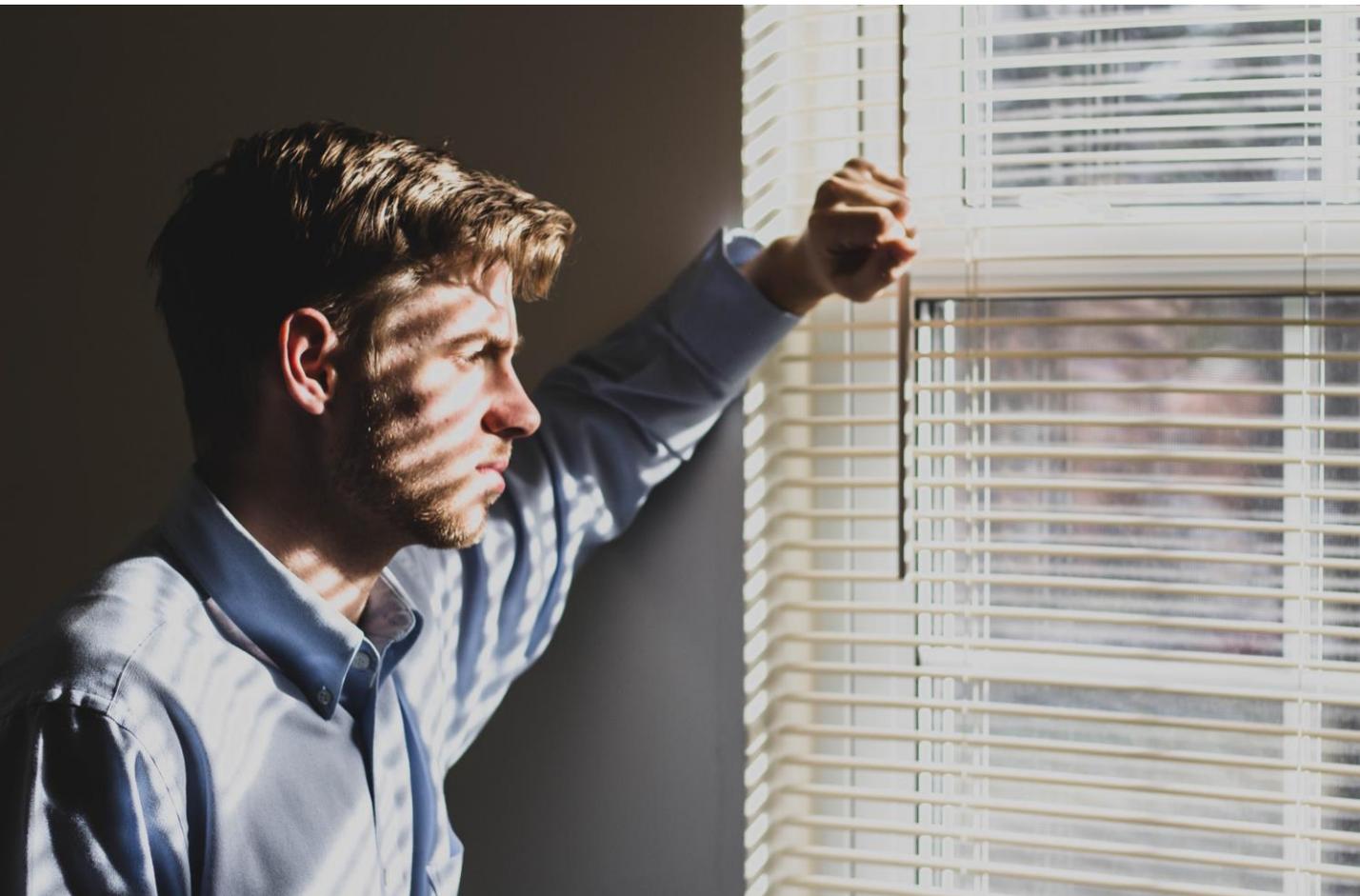
KEY TAKEAWAYS



While parents in our March survey are full of optimism, **Young Singles don't share the same glass-half-full perspective.** They are unsure about what to do with their excess down time, sad and disappointed about missing out on life, and many are struggling to adjust to living under their parents' roof again.

Like other lifestages, however, stay-at-home orders have allowed Young Singles to find time for self-care, pick up new hobbies and find new, creative ways to connect with friends.

*Learn about the **10 key insights** into this lifestage's new normal.*



1

SO MUCH TIME, SO LITTLE TO DO

With commuting time erased, social life on hold and work reduced or eliminated for many, **Young Singles are experiencing a new abundance of free time.** While this allows them time to relax, be with family and enjoy things they don't normally get to do, it also results in feelings of

both boredom and loneliness. **Loneliness is a genuine issue,** with 18% living alone and feeling completely isolated.



*"I have boredom/cabin fever -
the days seem to drag on forever."
- Female, 23, SC*

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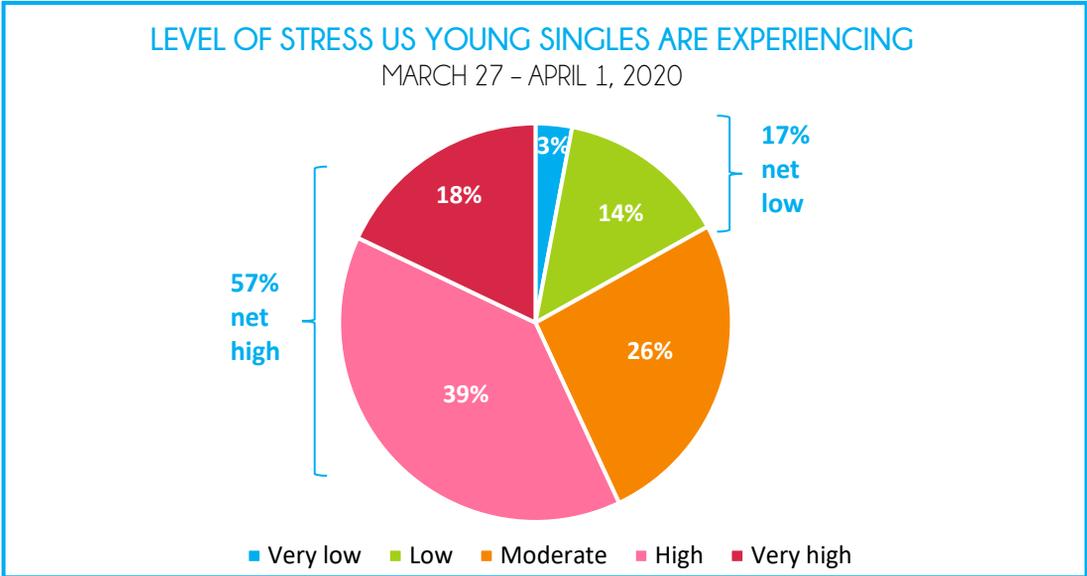
NOWHERE TO RUN (literally and figuratively)

As the weeks at home progress, anxiety is at an all-time high for Young Singles - with well over half reporting high or very high stress levels and just 17% feeling low or very low stress.

Feeling trapped is the driving force of this tension, typified by being stuck indoors and unable to escape the constant stream of unsettling news.

*"I can't look at any social media that used to be relaxing without being bombarded with people posting about coronavirus."
- Female, 20, AZ*

*"I'm so used to being busy all the time that being trapped in my house with no clear end date is stressful."
- Female, 22, MA*



3

ON HOLD AND ON EDGE

While every lifestage is struggling with uncertainty during this crisis, **Young Singles** express an acute frustration with life being on hold. At a time when they are just getting started - with schooling, graduation and career - the previous "hurry up" followed by this indefinite "wait" adds another layer to their stress.

The waiting itself has meant many Young Singles at transition phases fear they are falling behind. With school courses cut short, internships canceled and job starts postponed, they are unsure of when they will be able to get back on track.



"My work schedule is changing each week, events are being postponed and canceled and many businesses are shutting down."
- Male, 26, TN

"I was unable to complete some of my school that can't be done online, so I'm now unable to get my CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) license, which caused me to lose my job for this coming summer."
- Female, 20, CO

"I had two internships that were canceled for the summer. It would've been life changing for me. I can't finish a requirement at school. I lost all three of my jobs at school and now I'm unemployed."
- Female, 20, MA

4

HOME IS NOT WHERE THE HEART IS

While parents embrace the additional time with family, Young Singles' happiness heavily relies on socializing outside the home. With 33% living with parents now (often after having lived outside the family home prior to the crisis), the transition has been challenging for this group. They love their family, but re-entering the nest hasn't been smooth for all.

*"I miss seeing friends, family and coworkers. I'm a social person so not having my everyday social outlets are very hard. I find myself on social media a lot because of this."
- Female, 24, Washington, DC*

*"I'm under my parents' rule again...I did not see this coming!"
- Male, 25, FL*

*"I hate the lack of interaction with people other than my three family members that I live with."
- Male, 20, IN*



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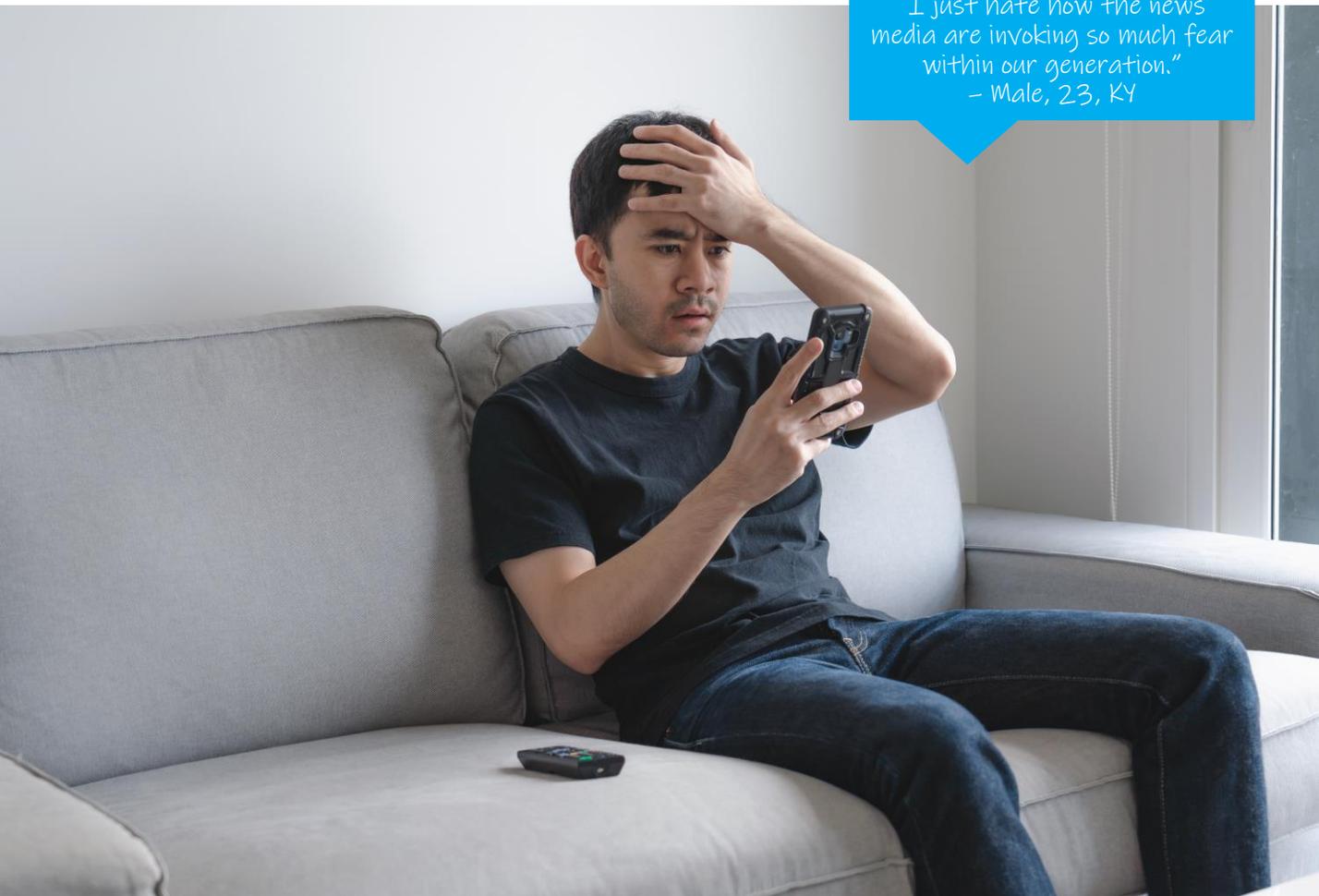
ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT ETHOS

Skepticism and distrust are in full force among Young Singles, who are disappointed in political leaders' inaction and inconsistency. They are unsure of how to navigate mixed messages and fear-inducing stories from the media.

Unlike younger lifestages, Young Singles feel as though it is their responsibility stay up to date and in the loop with what's going on in the world, so *ignoring the news is not an option.*

*"I have a lack of faith in our government to handle this efficiently."
- Female, 20, FL*

*"I just hate how the news media are invoking so much fear within our generation."
- Male, 23, KY*



6

MESSAGING MISFIRES

Good corporate intentions seem to be backfiring with Young Singles, who are frustrated by companies flooding their inboxes with (what they deem) meaningless messages of togetherness. Even worse are the shameless ploys to drive sales.

They strongly prefer companies show their humanitarian side at a time like this. Trader Joes, Chick-fil-A, Uber Eats, Chipotle, Nike, YouTube and Disney receive shout-outs for striking the right tone.

*"It seems like a big gimmick, where brands are using pathos to try to increase their number of customers."
- Female, 20, FL*

*"I don't want another email in my inbox with the subject line, 'COVID-19 Response, We Care'. I don't care that you care, I care about what you are doing."
- Female, 22, Washington, DC*

*"I think any companies still doing sponsored content with bloggers and pushing non-essential products are really tone deaf."
- Female, 28, AZ*



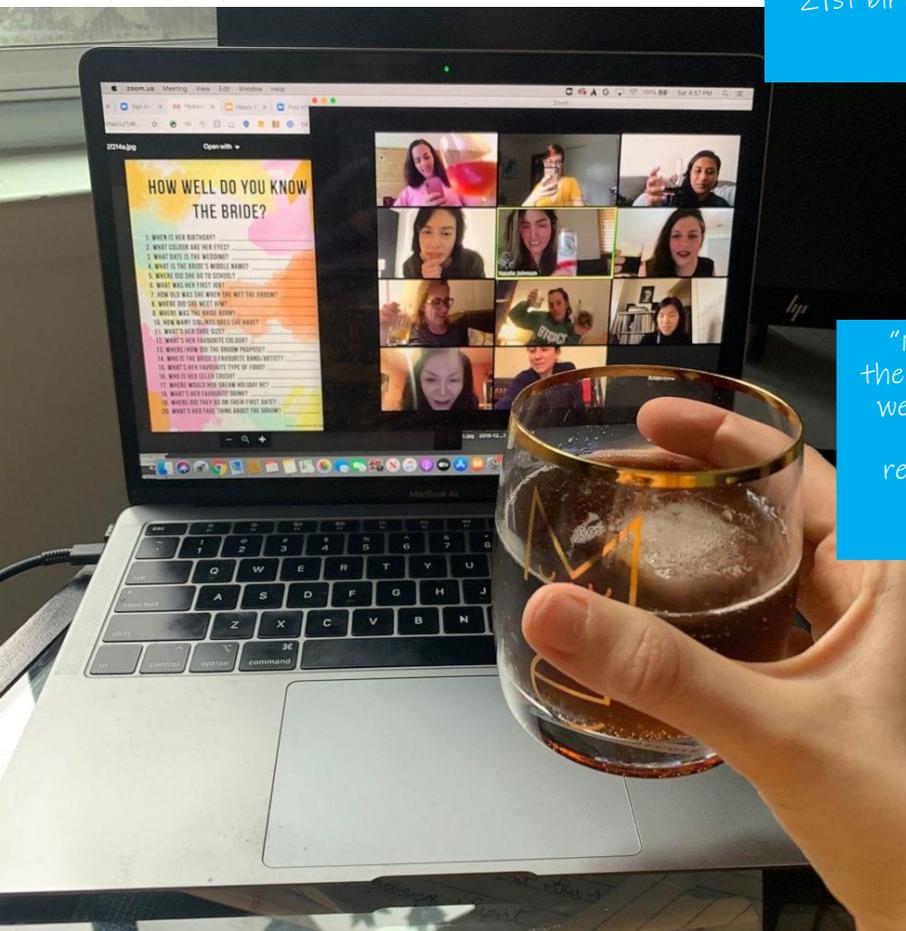
7 MISSING MILESTONES

Young singlehood is rife with life events that are of the utmost importance. From high school and college graduations and events to 21st birthdays, study abroad opportunities, bachelor parties, weddings and beyond, many of these events have been canceled or put on hold. **Sixty-two percent (62%) of Young Singles say they have postponed or canceled a personal milestone, and 82% say someone close to them has.**

However, Young Singles are trying to make the best of it by **moving these rituals to the digital world and reinventing ways to celebrate.** Picnics in the car, reverse parades and drive-by well wishes have eased the disappointment, but they haven't been able to fully replace the commemoration of these long-awaited rites of passage.

*"Graduation is being postponed until who knows when and my friends keep having 21st birthdays that we can't celebrate."
- Female, 20, AK*

*"New milestones include celebratory themed home dinners to celebrate each week of quarantine. Some milestones we haven't reached yet include reported cases (decreasing), church services, and others."
- Female, 21, TN*



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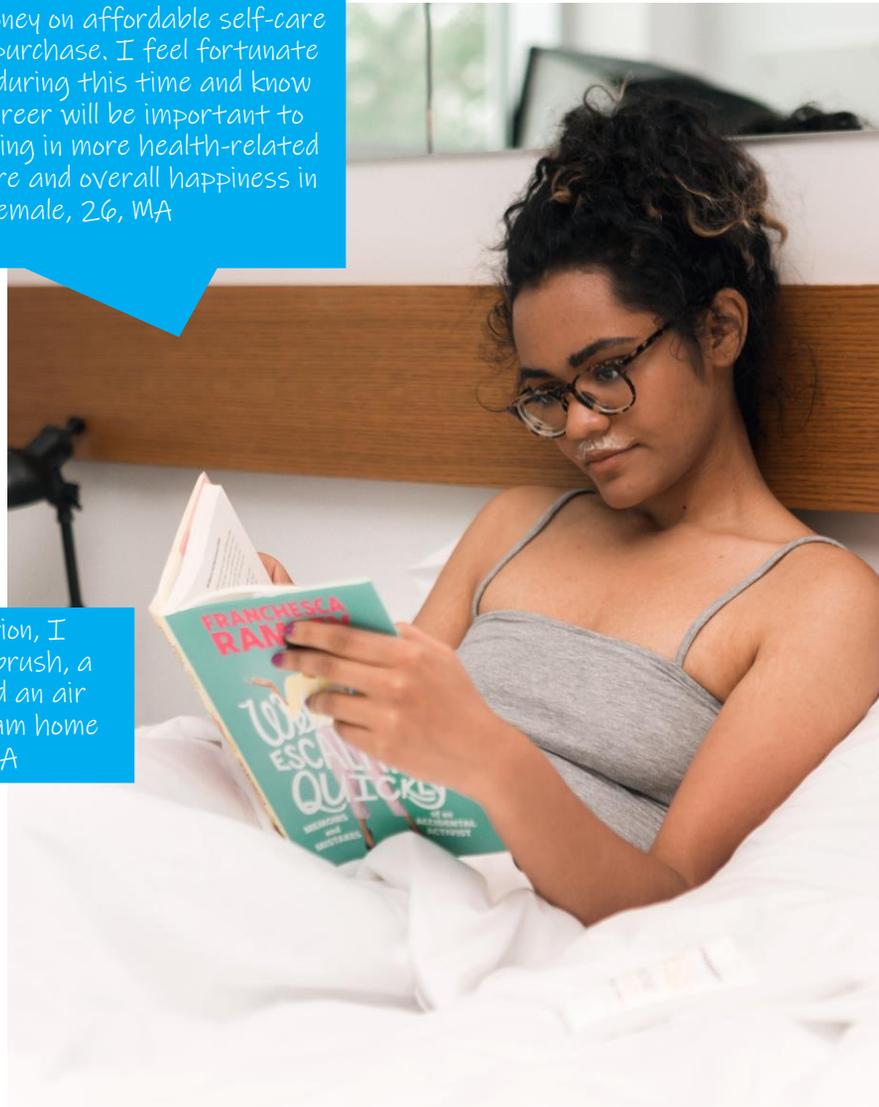
SOOTHING WITH SELF-CARE

Young Singles know they aren't at their best right now. But they also understand the importance of taking care of themselves during this time of stress. So, they are investing time and money in solutions – from vitamins and supplements to stress relief techniques to online exercise classes.

Over one-third believe they will spend more on health and wellness products as they get through the next six months. After all, while older lifestyles can “hide” at home, Young Singles will definitely be “seeing” peers through digital platforms.

“I have definitely spent more money on affordable self-care items that I wouldn't normally purchase. I feel fortunate to still have a source of income during this time and know that sustaining myself in my career will be important to prevent burnout, so I am investing in more health-related items for the purpose of self-care and overall happiness in my apartment.” - Female, 26, MA

“During this period of social isolation, I purchased a Sonicare electric toothbrush, a Billie razor subscription service, and an air purifier for the apartment since I am home more often.” - Female, 23, MA



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ESSENTIAL DELIVERIES

Though food delivery services such as Uber Eats, Postmates, GrubHub and Instacart have continued to be staples in Young Singles' lives, 49% say they will be spending less on takeout food over the next six

months. They are appreciative that their favorite restaurants are offering curbside pickup and free delivery, but Young Singles are making a conscious effort to be more penny-wise during this uncertain time.

*"A lot of delivery services are waiving delivery fees and encouraging patrons to still order delivery or carry out."
- Female, 27, IL*



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COMFORT COOKING

As many Young Singles are being forced to cook and bake at home, most are embracing it. They cite that home cooked meals are a source of comfort, a fun way to pass the time and a simple way to connect with family. Not to mention, those who are living at home are very much enjoying the comforts of their parents' home cooking.

"The New York Times has great recipes on their website. Cooking some new recipes has been a great way to temporarily distract my mind from the current craziness." – Male, 24, ID



If you're interested in learning more about Smarty Pants' ongoing [Navigating a New Normal](#) study, drop us a line at info@asksmartypants.com. Our panel of consumers ages 2-92 is ready to help keep your organization connected to your core users during this unprecedented time.

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