



# NAVIGATING A NEW NORMAL

SENIORS 65+

April 2020

For the April wave of the [NAVIGATING A NEW NORMAL](#) study we turned our attention to those most at risk during this health and economic crisis: [SENIORS 65+](#).

We surveyed [93 U.S. men and women ages 65 and older](#) to understand their perspectives on the pandemic and how their lives are being impacted.

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## THE SENIOR SCENE

The wisdom, resourcefulness, empathy and resilience of American seniors are proving to be invaluable assets during these difficult times. While they are among the most vulnerable on a health and loneliness front, many seniors are powering

through with the coping skills, traditional pastimes and big picture perspective that age has afforded them.

*Learn about the 8 key insights driving these core takeaways.*

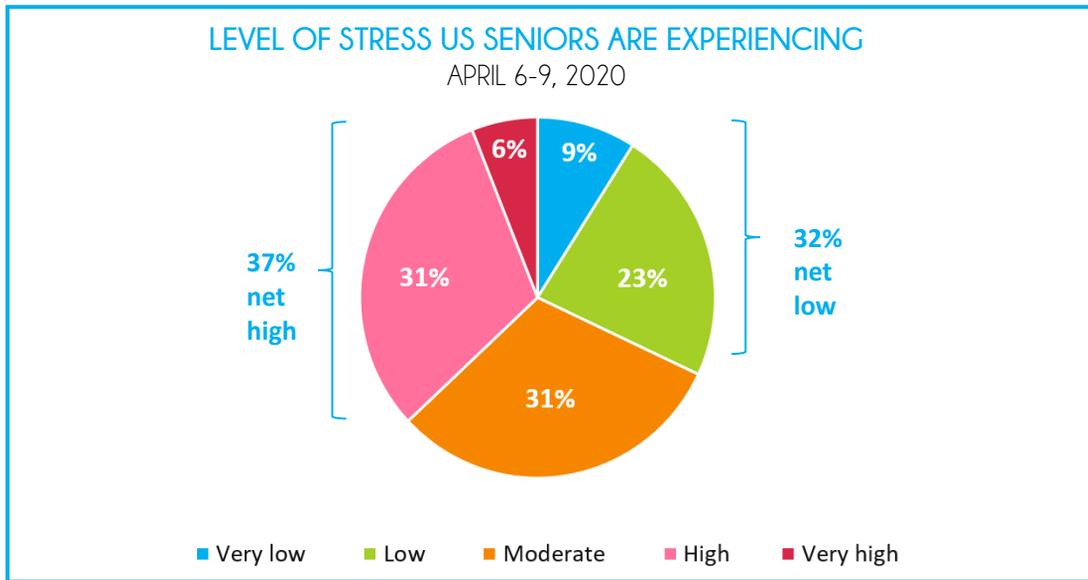


# 1

## BEEN THERE, DONE THIS

While seniors are not exempt from worry, they are less stressed about COVID-19 than their younger counterparts. They've lived through wars, recessions, natural disasters, global disease outbreaks, personal tragedies and more, and they are confident they will weather this storm as well. Some, in fact, think that the national reaction is an over-reaction.

Overall, 32% of seniors say their stress levels are low or very low - nearly twice the number of young singles who feel that same way (17%). Likewise, just over a third of seniors feel high or very high levels of stress at the moment, compared to over half of young singles.



*"By this time in one's life, a graduate of the school of hard knocks and bangs, one has learnt that under all situations, don't panic!"*  
- Male, 70, CA

*"I am doing what I need to do to deal with it. You live long enough you deal with crises of all types. You deal with them. This is another. You deal with it by doing what you need to do."* - Male, 67, NY

*"There is no substitute for life experience. Though the circumstances may be different, at our age we have weathered many crises and traumatic experiences and come out the other side."* - Female, 66, OH

# 2

## SENIOR SOUND-OFF

Seniors are very outspoken and quick to place blame for the pandemic. Overall, they believe the crisis could have been avoided or minimized if the US or Chinese governments had taken a different approach. And while some are balking at the volume of precautions, others are angry that younger generations are not approaching the crisis with enough caution to help the country resume normalcy.

*"As a whole, my generation is respectful in following safety guidelines and they are concerned about the welfare of others. Many young people feel they are indestructible, and they fail to listen to experts who warn them of the dangers of their cavalier attitudes."  
- Female, 67, KY*

*"I am upset with China for not telling the truth."  
- Male, 80, CA*



*"I feel that our country did not act fast enough. I truly believe we had ample warning in early January to prepare but it wasn't taken seriously by our administration which cost many lives."  
- Female, 68, NC*

# 3

## FAUCI FANCLUB

Many seniors are turning to familiar TV news sources like CNN and Fox News for COVID-19 information. But they are cautious about what to believe, and they are frustrated by inconsistent messages.

Seniors are reserving their strongest respect and attention for the leaders

whom they deem to be the most experienced and reliable, namely state governors and Dr. Anthony Fauci. Both have emerged as senior "heroes" during this time. Seniors 65+ appreciate their candor, level headedness and seniority, and believe they have the nation's best interests in mind.



"I'm listening to Dr. Fauci, the main expert, and everything he says because of his many years of expertise. We should all listen to what he says." - Female, 68, NC

"Governor Cuomo is very informative. When he speaks, I feel as if he's talking directly to me about what to do and how to go about my life." - Female, 72, NY

"Our governor does an amazing daily hour on TV to share updates, policies, state actions, encouragement to flatten the curve. He is 100% focused on fighting the disease, not on politics." - Female, 68, KY

# 4

## TRICKLE DOWN WOES

Many seniors are already retired and aren't feeling the personal financial impact of a slowing economy. But they are very concerned about unemployment numbers and what they could mean for their adult children and even their grandchildren. They fear how a deep recession will impact the stability of those they love most, and they feel powerless in changing the economic tide.

*"I understand what we are doing to save many lives, but the economic cost and time to revive our economy may be long, along with much more natural debt that will need to be addressed by my children and their children."  
- Male, 68, CA*

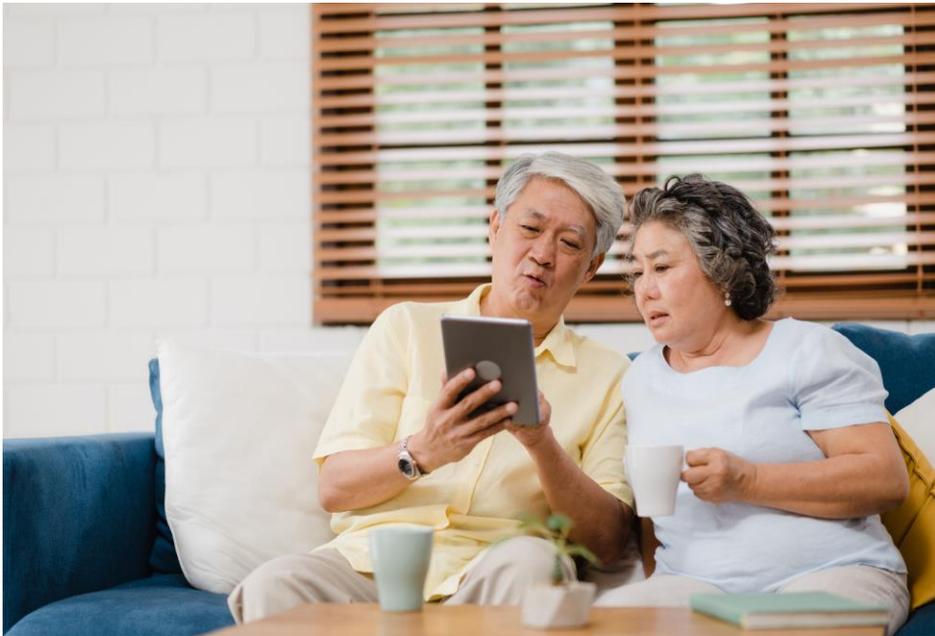


# 5

## SO CLOSE, YET SO FAR

Like other lifestages, seniors are feeling the loss of face time with family and friends. While many have chosen to live near their children (and grandchildren) for the emotional and physical connection, *social distancing has meant that their geographical proximity is no longer relevant.*

While some seniors report enjoying more time with their spouses, *most miss seeing their children and, especially, their grandchildren.* Contrary to the perceptions that seniors need to be cared for, many say *they want to be the helpers. They miss providing support* through cooking, changing diapers and giving big hugs.



*"My son and his wife gave birth to our first grandchild, a boy, on March 18th and although they live close by we will not be able to even meet our grandson for months."  
- Female, 70, IL*

*"My birthday was March 15th and that was the last time I saw my grandchildren. I will see them on Easter but only from the car and will not be able to hug them."  
- Female, 75, IN*

# 6

## THE GOLDEN YEARS ON HOLD

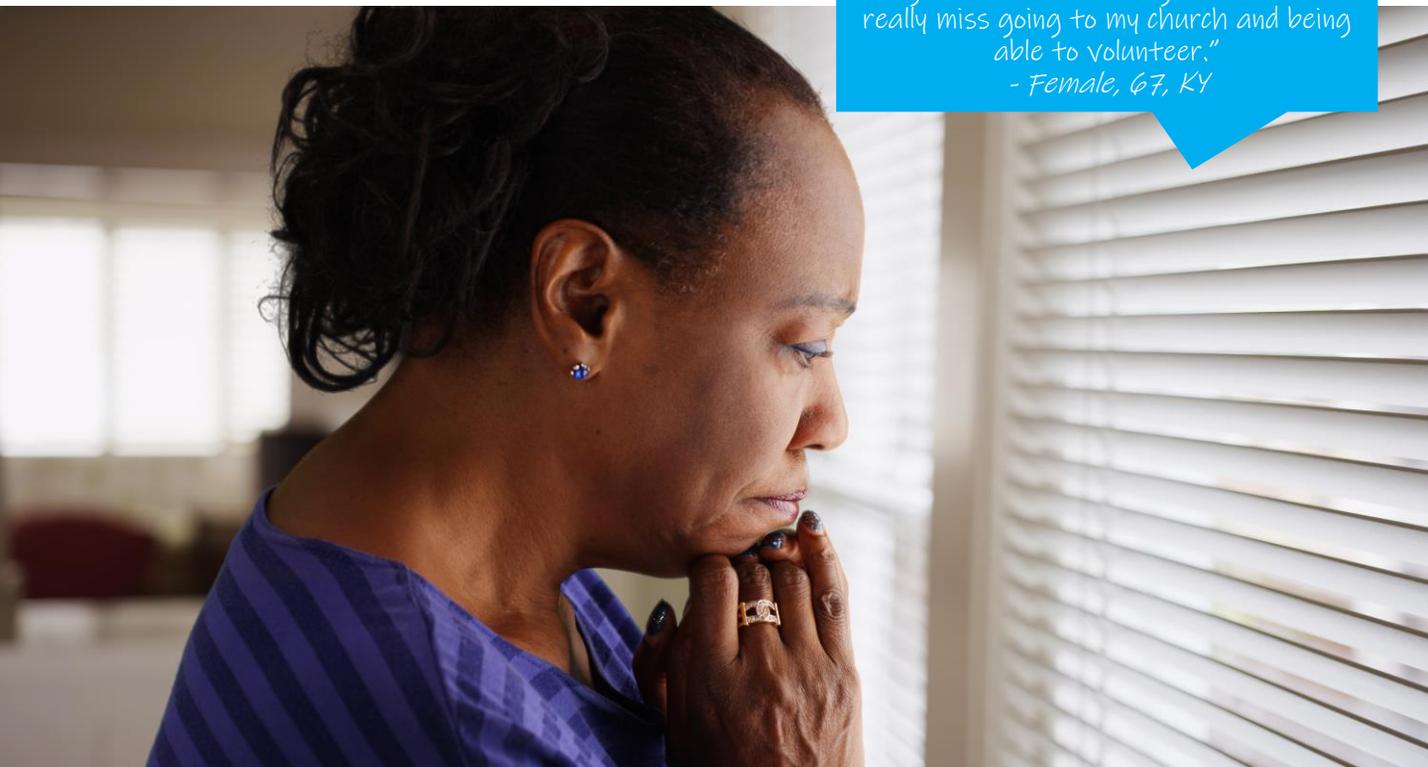
Like all lifestages, seniors are wistful about the activities they have had to postpone due to COVID-19. In particular, they are frustrated that many of the joys of retirement - like community activities and travel - won't be a part of their foreseeable future.

Two out of three seniors say they have had a major event or occasion disrupted, and 81% say it has happened to someone close to them. Seniors are eager to get back to their "second halves" of their lives and lament the extra time they now have on their (washed) hands.

*"The worst part is that we are travelers and now have had to cancel three trips, two Bar Mitzvahs and seeing friends and family."  
- Female, 68, NJ*

*"My oldest daughter is having her first child and we had planned a baby shower for out of town family and friends. We will try to do a virtual shower by having everyone send gifts ahead to her and then watch on Zoom while she opens them."  
- Female, 66, OH*

*"I have been retired for 8 years so my being at home a lot is a given - but I do really miss going to my church and being able to volunteer."  
- Female, 67, KY*



# 7

## SAVORING SIMPLICITY

As many seniors are using new tech platforms that push them into 2020, they are simultaneously embracing the fact that the world is joining them in a return to simpler times.

Those who are 65+ welcome the

slower pace and the nation's refocus on family, home and faith. They are delighted that their preferences for handwritten letters, yard work, board games, walking, gardening, cooking, voice communications, etc. are valuable once again.

*"The best part of being home more is finding pleasure in the simpler things."*

*- Female, 75, NJ*

*"The best thing is sharing simple time with my husband and taking time to smell the roses."*

*- Female, 73, PA*



*"I'm in a different mood and pace - more relaxed with fewer choices."*

*- Male, 70, CA*

*"I am relaxed without the normal rush of life, and I'm happy others are too."*

*- Male, 83, PA*

# 8

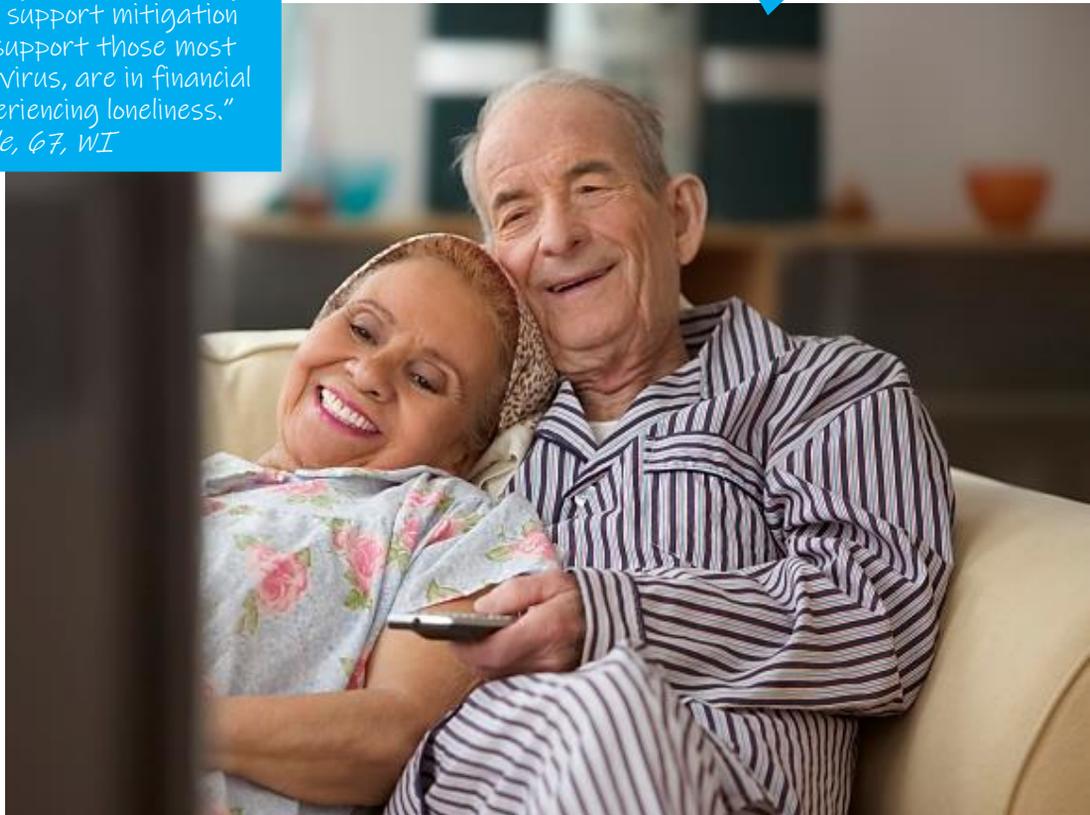
## STRAIGHT TALK WANTED

Seniors appreciate communications from companies that **acknowledge the crisis without being self-serving**. They welcome messages that focus on keeping customers safe and/or how their business can support

families and communities...as long as it doesn't seem opportunistic. Like other adult segments, **seniors have an authenticity meter that is quite finely tuned**.

*"Actually, I have found it somewhat annoying that all companies seem to be trying too hard. Every ad on TV seems to have been adapted for the Covid-19 situation. I am not the type to be swayed away from my current suppliers or providers because of 'timely messages'."  
- Female, 71, NJ*

*"I welcome messages that encourage behaviors that support mitigation behaviors and support those most affected by the virus, are in financial distress or experiencing loneliness."  
- Male, 67, WI*



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If you're interested in learning more about Smarty Pants' ongoing [Navigating a New Normal](#) study, drop us a line at [info@asksmartypants.com](mailto: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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