

Chicago Longitudinal Study



COVID-19 Survey Results

Summary Report: November 2021

For more information on the Chicago Longitudinal Study

visit <https://innovation.umn.edu/cls/>

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The Chicago Longitudinal Study investigates the educational and social development of a same-age cohort of 1,539 low-income, minority children (93% African American) who grew up in high-poverty neighborhoods in central-city Chicago and attended government-funded kindergarten programs in the Chicago Public Schools in 1985-1986.

The CLS team completed a special survey of 216 participants in the summer of 2020 through the following spring. Given the raging COVID-19 pandemic and widespread social unrest that resulted, it was critically important to document and understand how these events and the nationwide lockdowns affected individuals, families, and communities. Sharing information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about how to protect oneself and others from infection also was urgently needed.

The survey was designed to be brief at no more than 15 minutes. Ample space was provided at the end for personal reflections on the pandemic and the nationwide protests to end systemic racism. Participants received a Target e-gift card of 20 dollars for completing the survey. About 13% of participants who completed the survey donated their gift cards to charitable causes such as the Chicago Urban League (7.8%), Black lives matter, St. Jude, Chicago Coalition for the homeless, Catholic Charities, Chicago Food Depository, Code Pink, and Maywood Food Banks.

Key Results

Five key results of the survey are noted below:

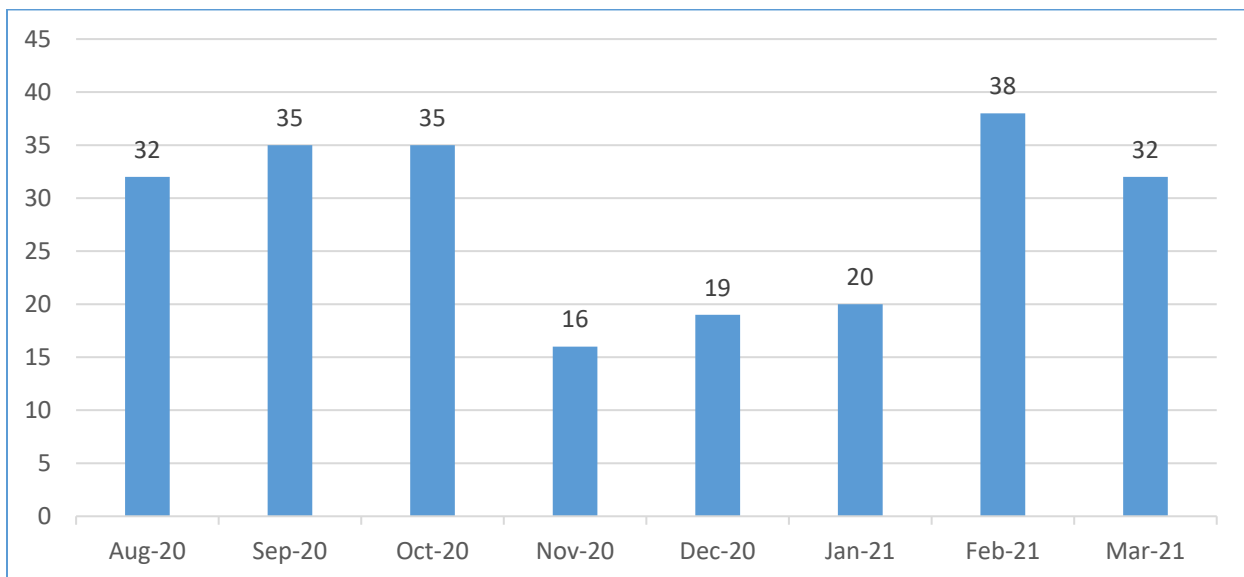
1. In general, a majority of respondents were satisfied with the government response to the pandemic with 63% being satisfied with the commitment of state and local leaders to protect public safety; and 64% were satisfied with the information received on preventing the spread of the virus. 47% were satisfied about receiving “clear messages about the dangers of the virus.”
2. A large percentage of participants reported one or more detrimental or devastating effects of the pandemic, including that they themselves (10%) or a family member (34%) received a positive diagnosis of infection (60% of their friends or neighbors did). 16% reported that a family member died from COVID-19, 15% were hospitalized, and 35% lost a job or were laid off.
3. A substantial majority of participants indicated many concerns about their well-being as a result of the pandemic including financial and employment status (79%), physical and mental health (63%-68%), and about school openings and child care (70%). 46% stated one or more positive changes in their lives that resulted from the pandemic (e.g., following better health habits, focus on career pursuits).
4. Concerning the protests against police brutality and racism, the majority of respondents were dissatisfied with the government response and/or that new policies will be effective. For example, 56% reported they DID NOT receive “clear messages that police reform is a top priority” and roughly half were dissatisfied with the strength of messages in their community that inequalities in the justice system and institutional racism must end. 67% were dissatisfied with the actions of public leaders (e.g., Governors, Mayors).

5. In describing their experiences in their community, 20% reported attending protest events and 17% participated in community safety events. Only half said the protests in their community were peaceful; and 62% saw acts of violence or damage. The most frequently mentioned personal reaction to the protests was to think about “how I can contribute to new solutions.”

Breakdown of Results

Conducted from August 14, 2020, to March 31, 2021, we invited only CLS participants who completed the in-person health exam at Northwestern University ending December 2019 (N = 301). The response rate was 72% with 206 completing the entire survey. Figure 1 shows the number of participants responding by month.

Figure 1. The number of participants responded by month



Among the respondents, 65.3% are women and 34.7% are men; 92% are Black with the remainder Hispanic. Compared to the health exam sample, more women and slightly more Hispanics completed the survey. Among the respondents, 66.7% attended the Child-Parent Center preschool program, slightly higher than the percentage (64.3%) who attended the Child-Parent Center preschool program in the original sample. At the time of the survey, participants were 40 to 41 years old, 67.1% lived in Chicago, and 93.1% lived in Illinois.

Figures 2 and 3 provide a breakdown of household composition. Nearly 75% had one or two adults present and 45% of the households had two or more children.

Figure 2. Number of adults (including yourself) living in household

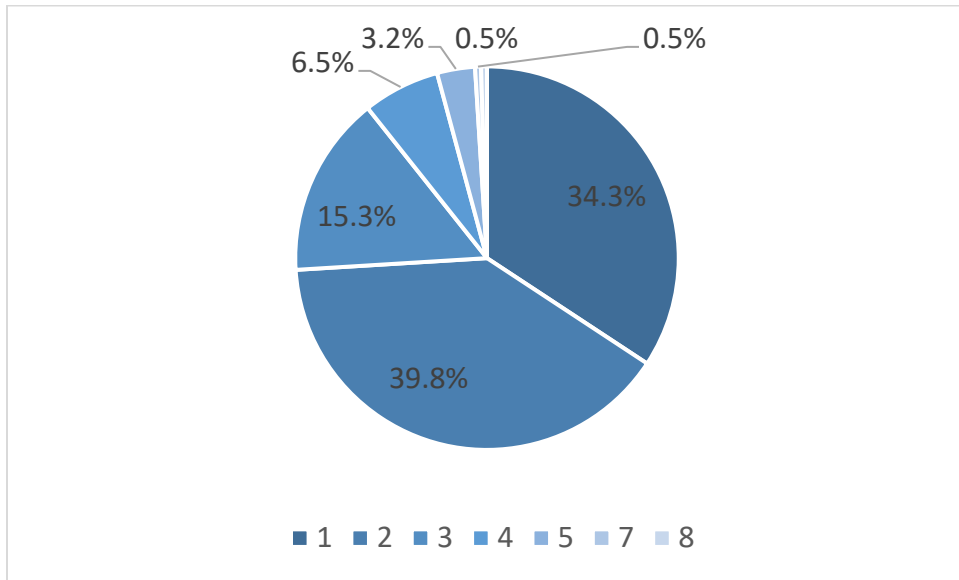
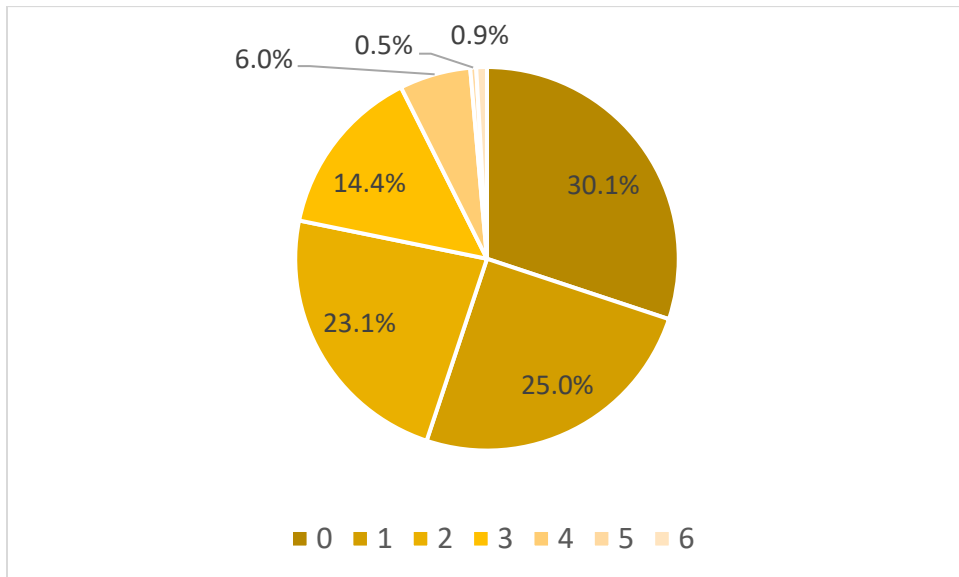
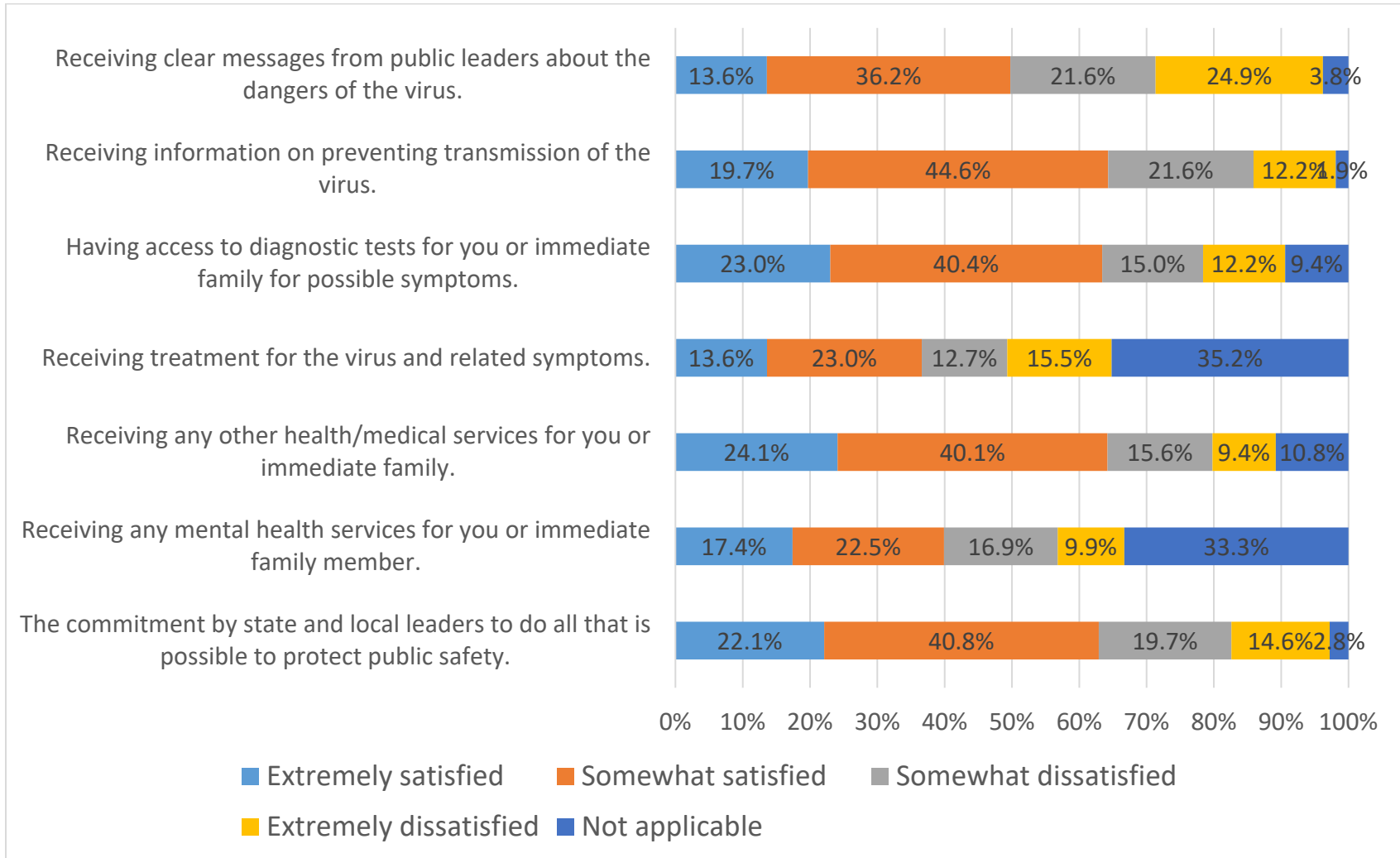


Figure 3. Number of children under age 18 living in household

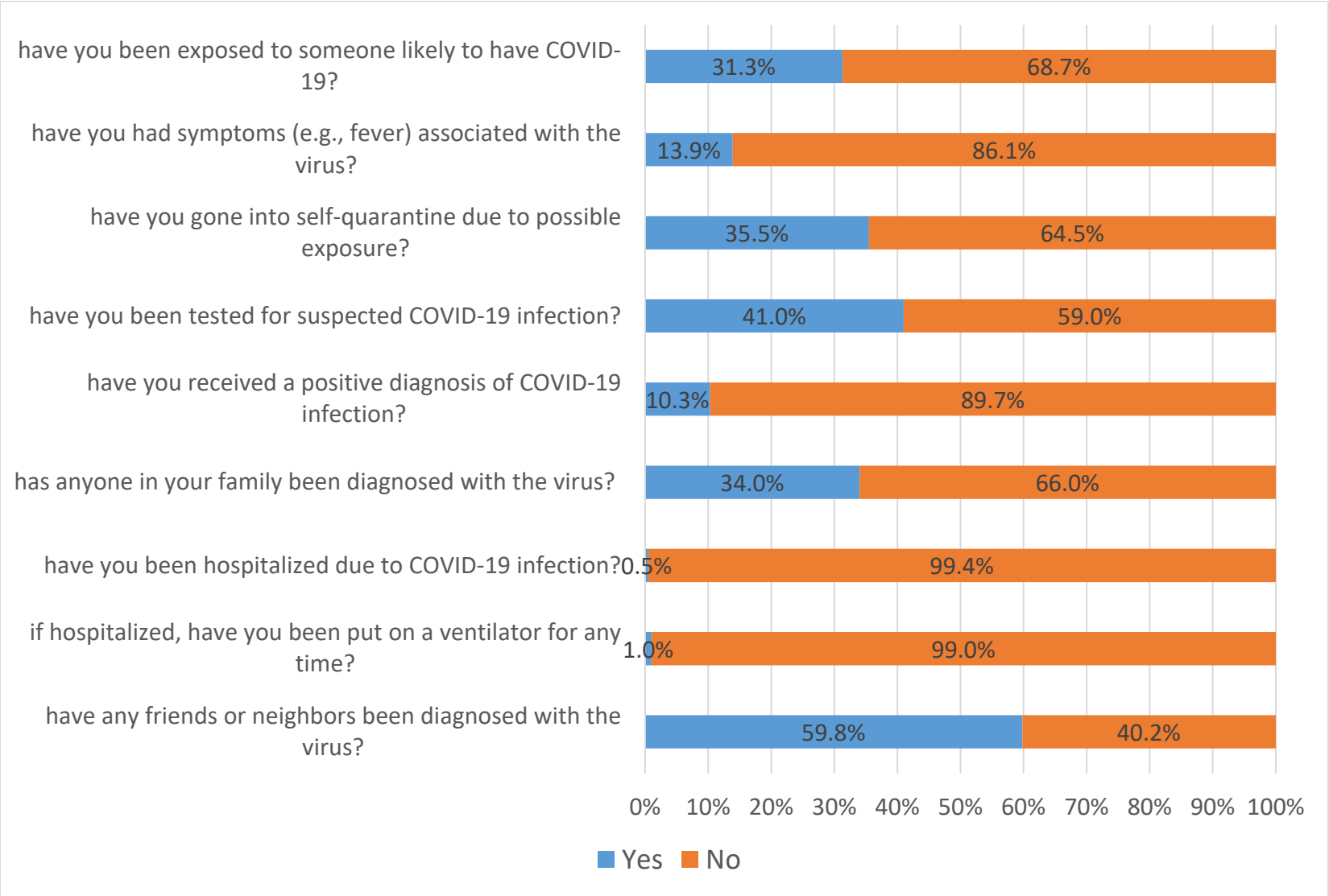


A. COVID-19 IMPACTS

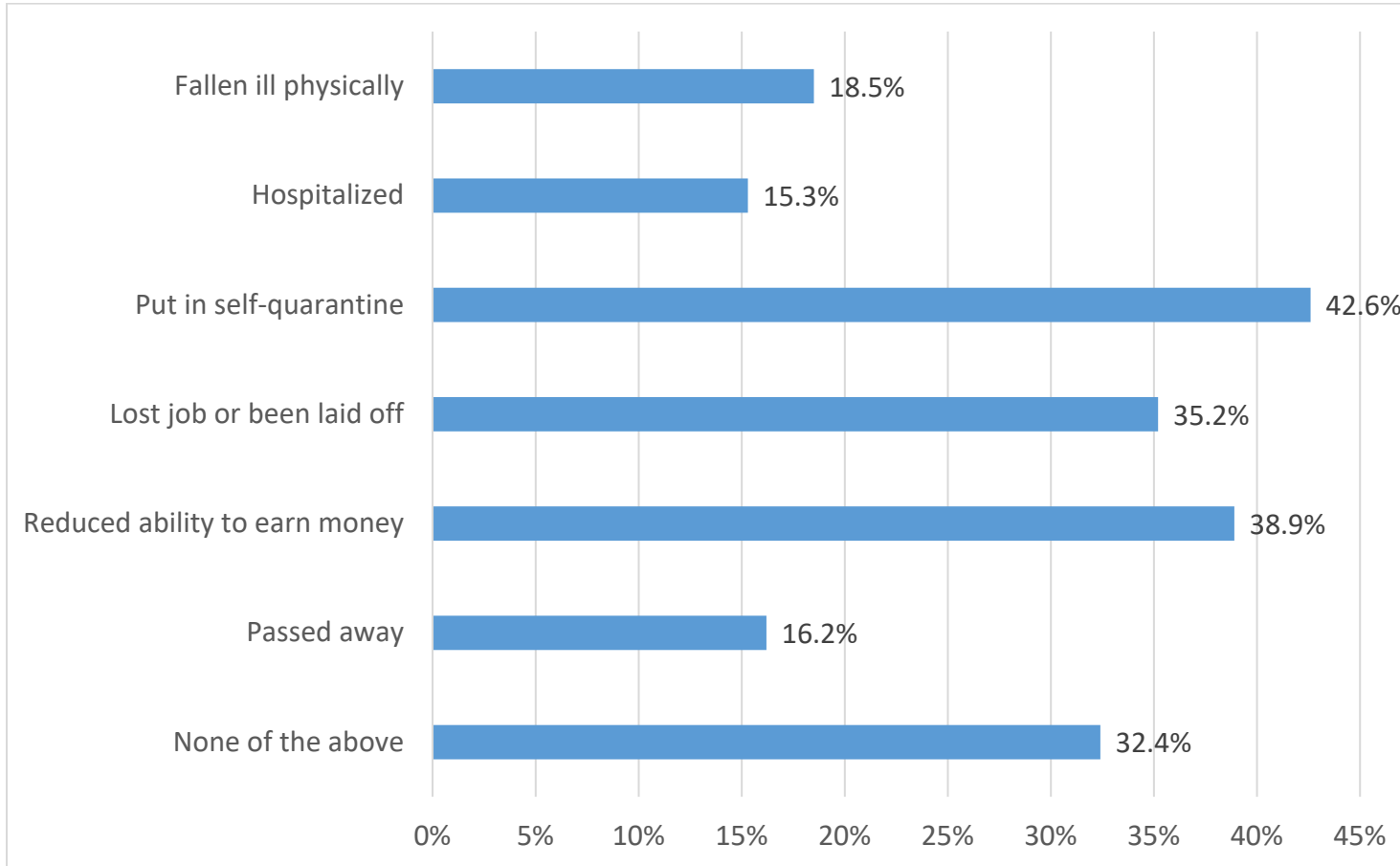
Q1. Over the PAST FEW MONTHS, how satisfied have you been with the following aspects of the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic in your community?



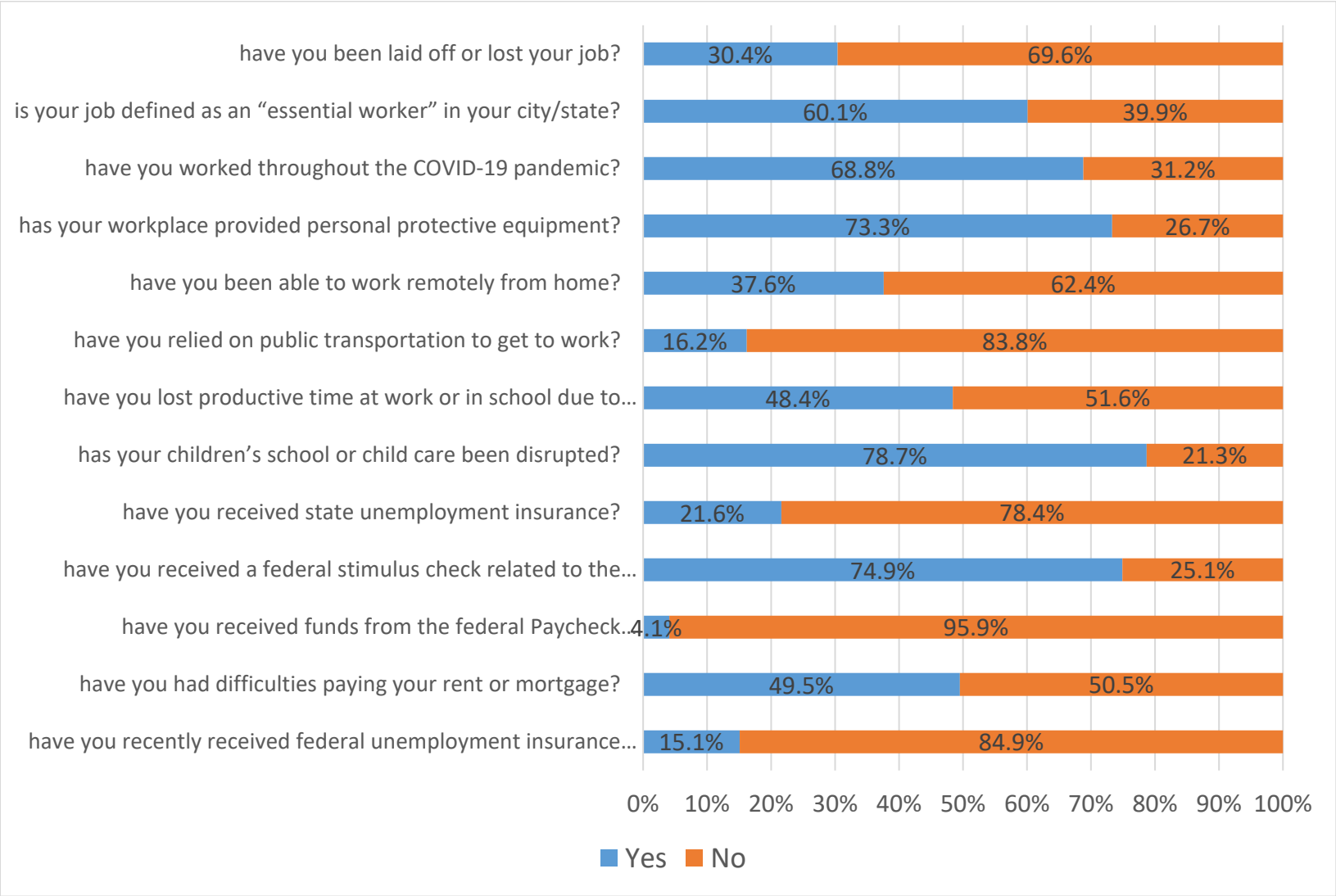
Q2. COVID-19 EXPOSURE/CHANGES. During the PAST FEW MONTHS:



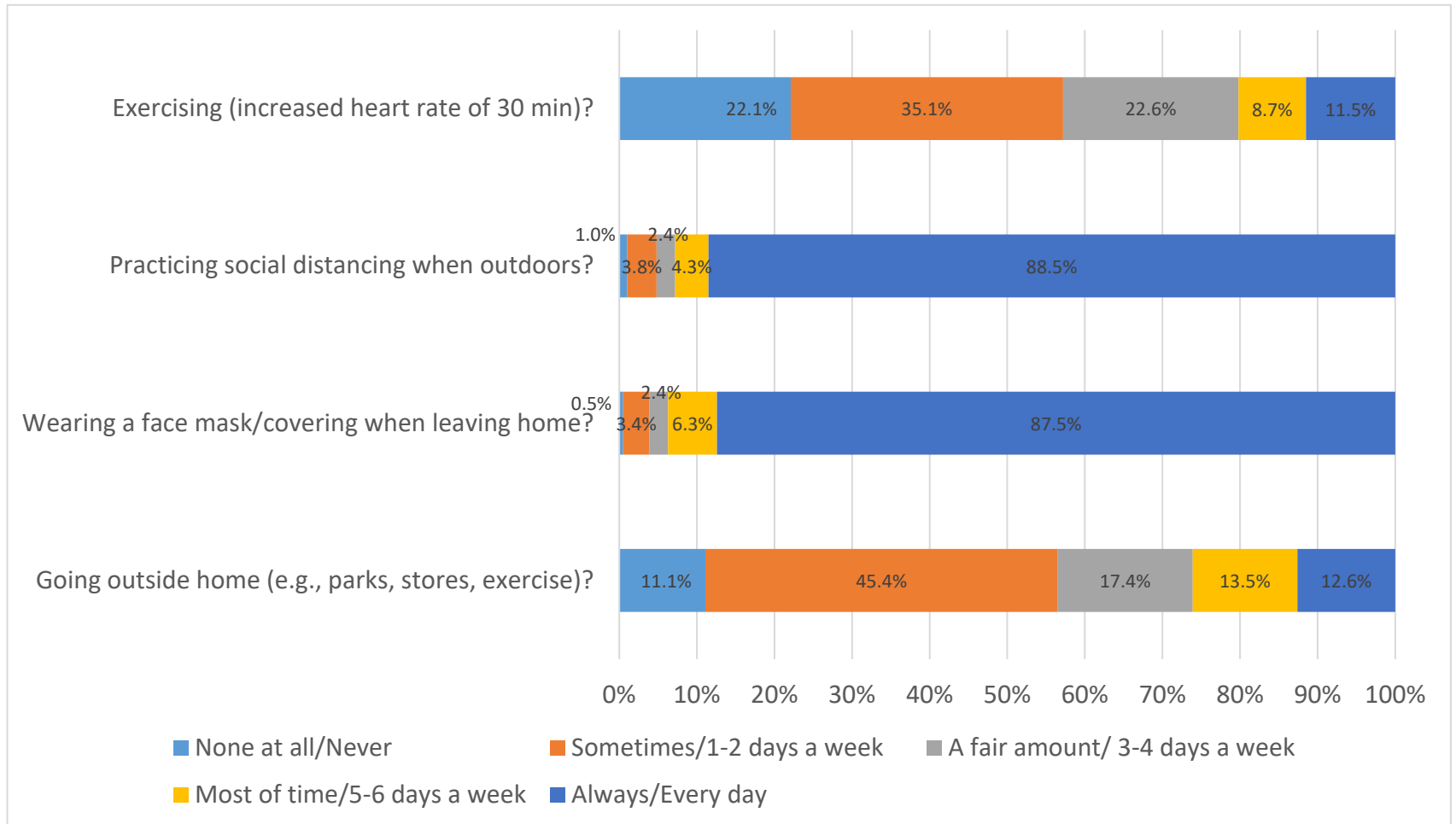
Q3. Have any of the following happened to anyone in your immediate family because of coronavirus/COVID-19? (check all that apply)



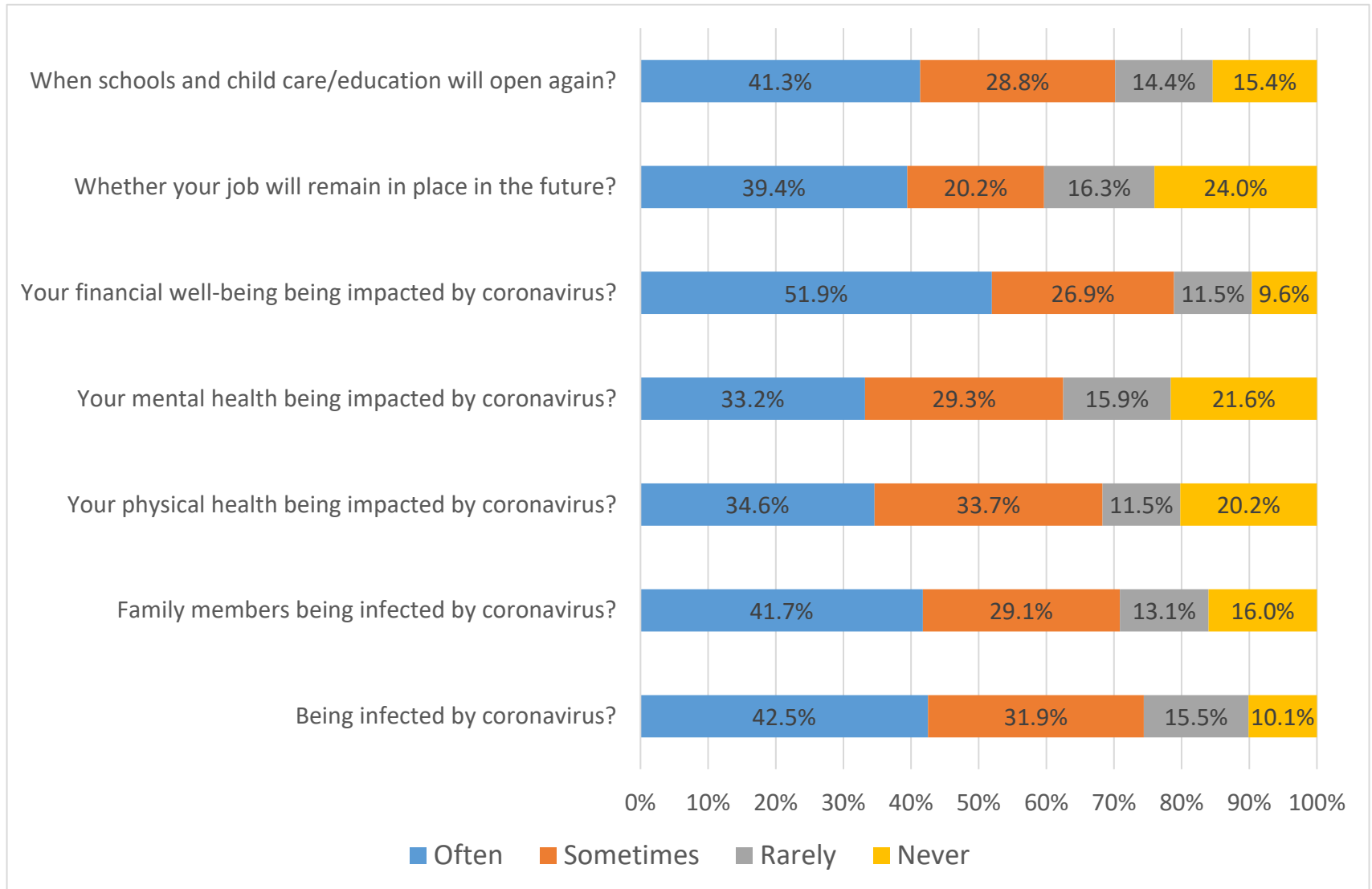
Q4. WORK/SCHOOL CHANGES. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in your state:



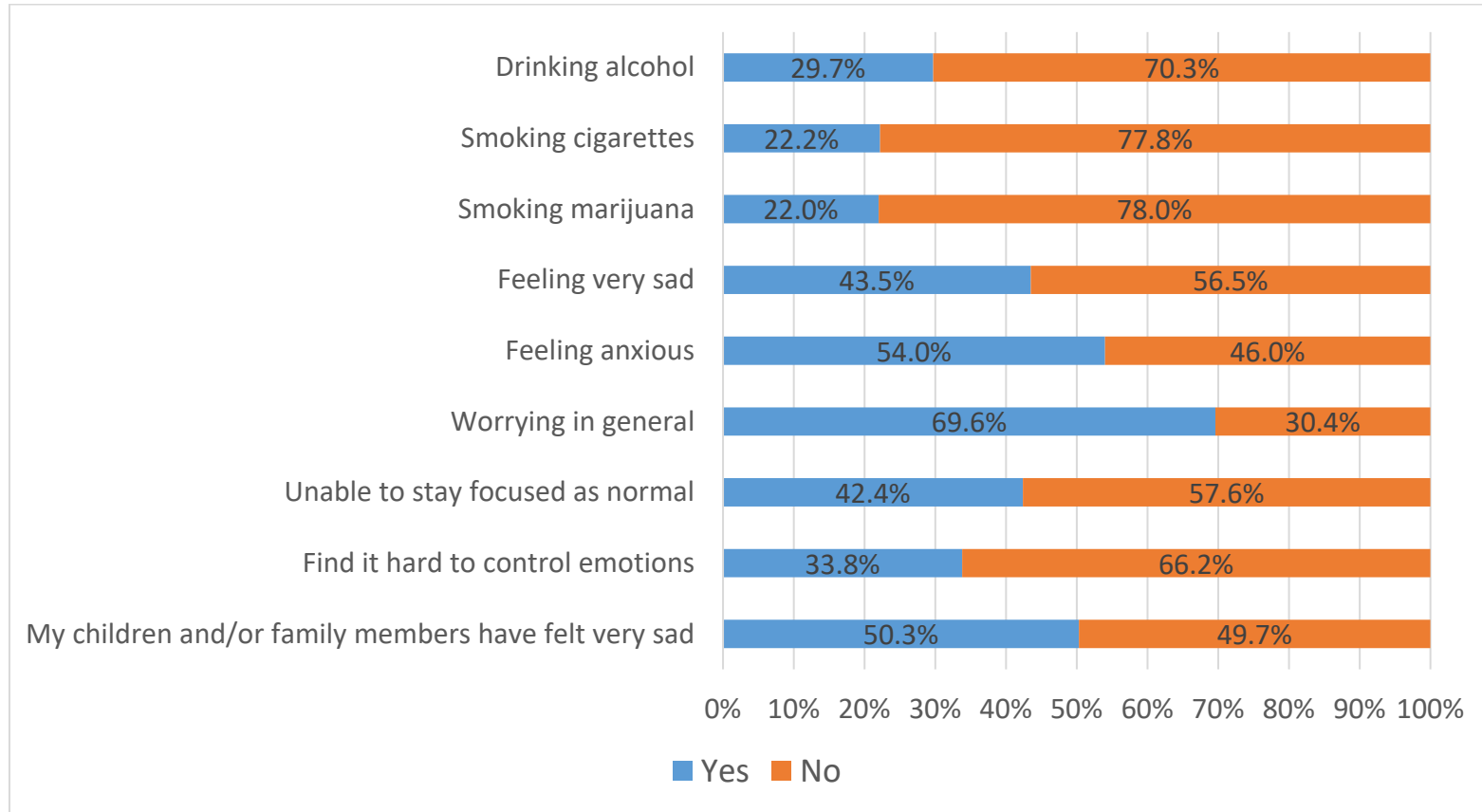
Q5. During the SHELTER-IN-PLACE ORDERS from your state, how much time did you spend:



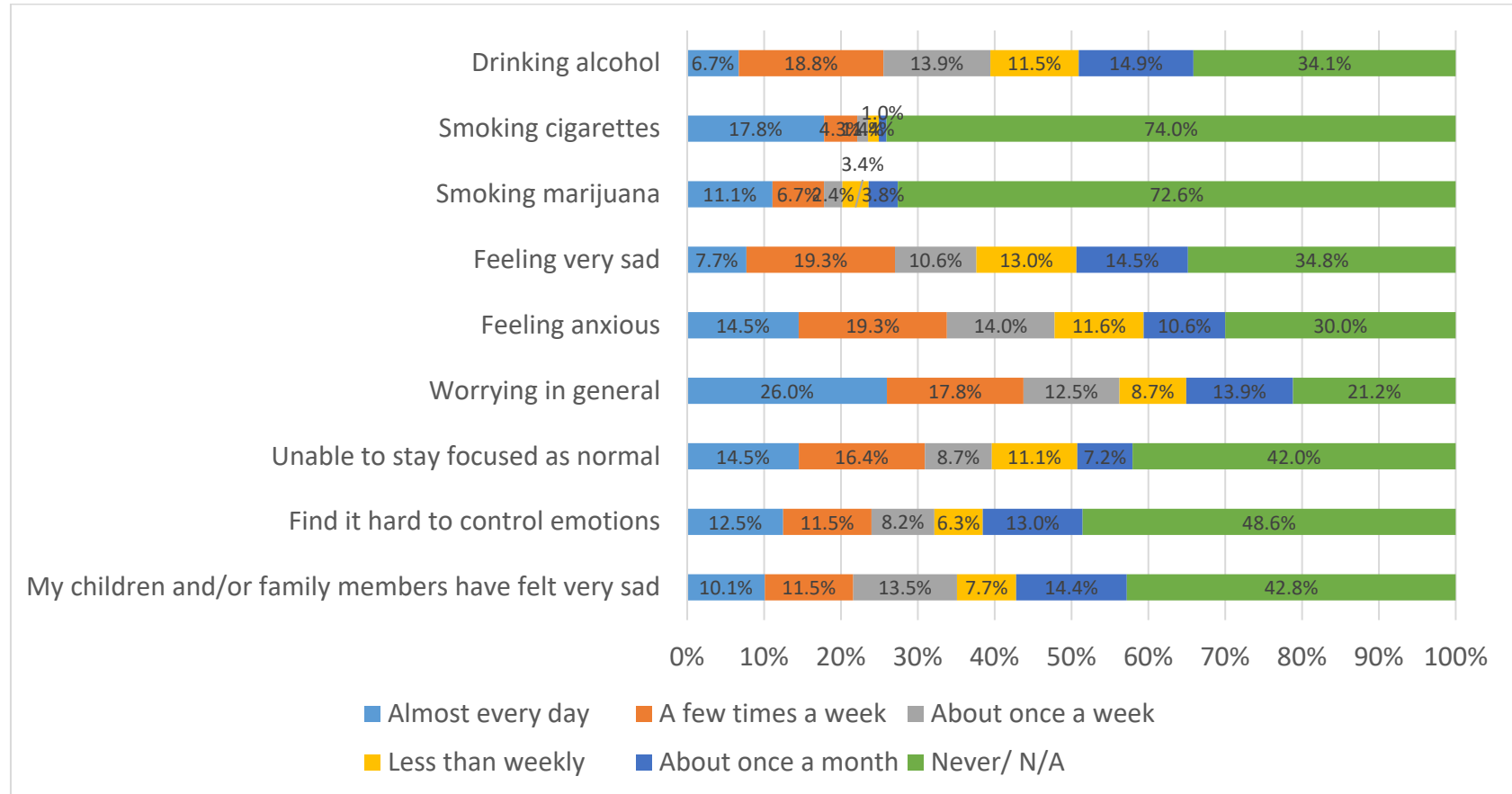
Q6. During the PAST FEW MONTHS, how worried have you been about:



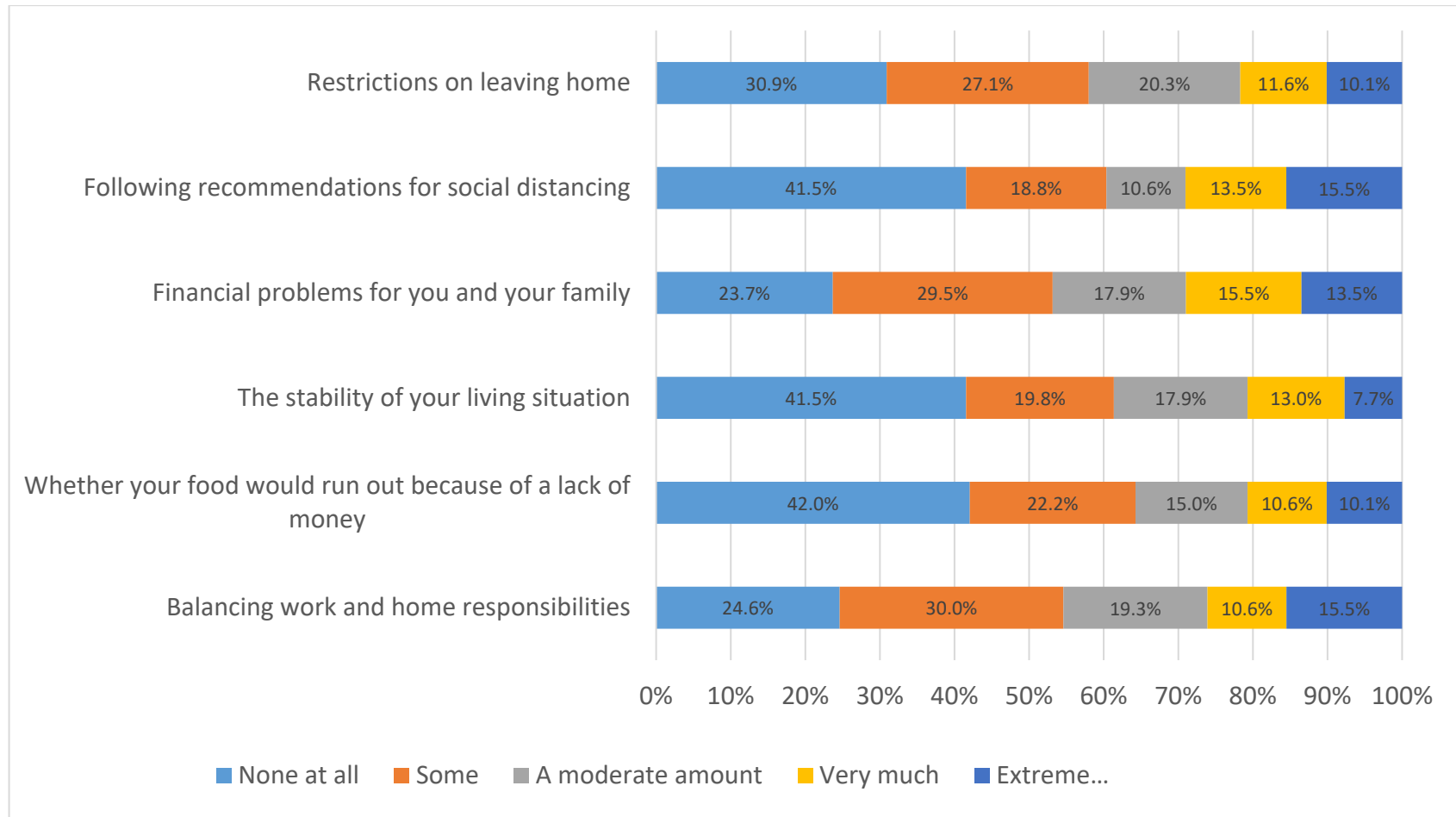
Q7. CHANGES IN HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH. These questions are about changes in health.



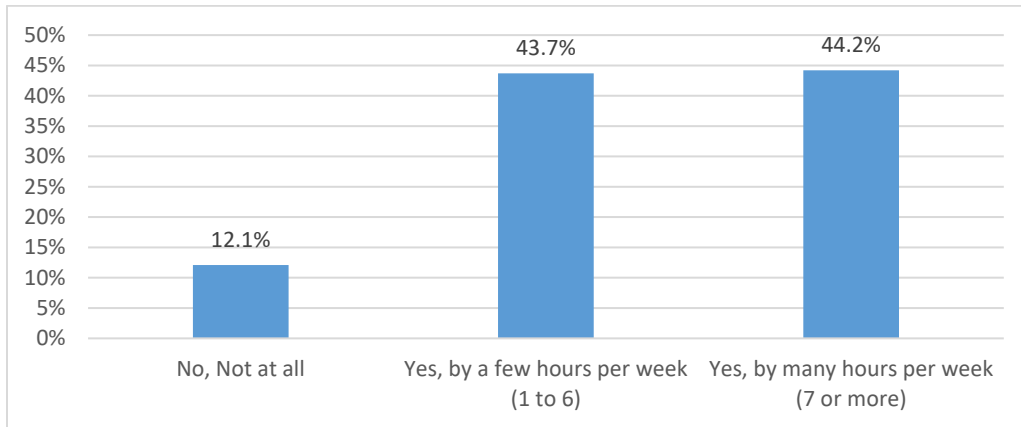
Q7. CHANGES IN HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH. These questions are about changes in health. (Conti.)



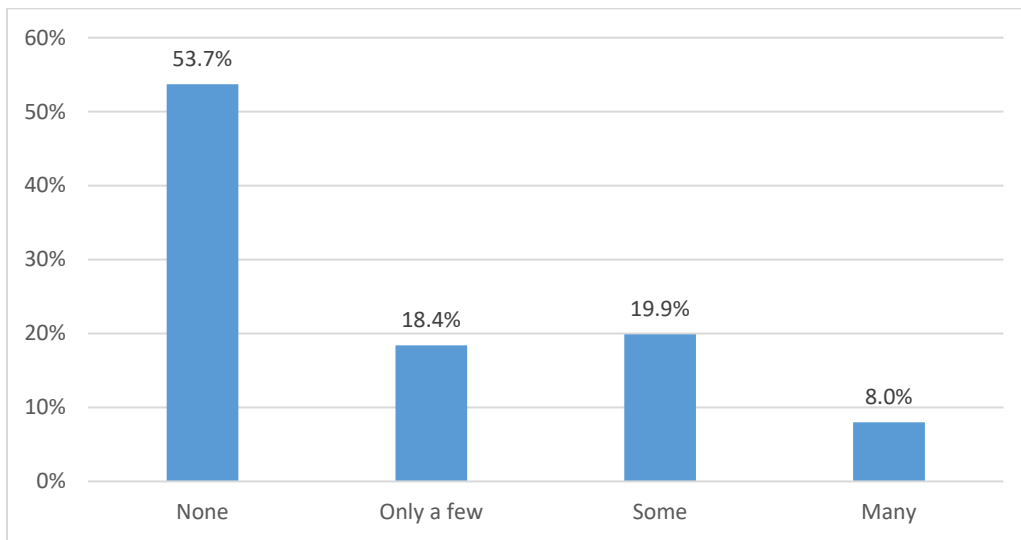
Q8. LIFE CHANGES. During the PAST FEW MONTHS, HOW STRESSFUL OR HOW MUCH DIFFICULTY have you experienced as a result of COVID-19 pandemic for the following...?



Q9. During the PAST FEW MONTHS, has the amount of time that you have used MEDIA IN GENERAL (e.g., digital media such as Netflix, or social media such as Facebook/Twitter) INCREASED?



Q10. Has the COVID-19 pandemic in your area led to any positive changes in your life?

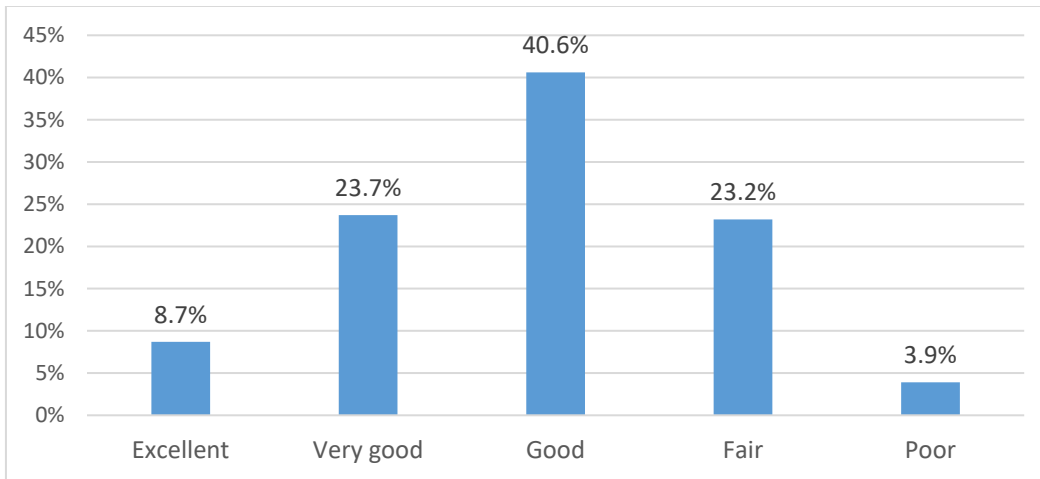


If a few or more, please specify.

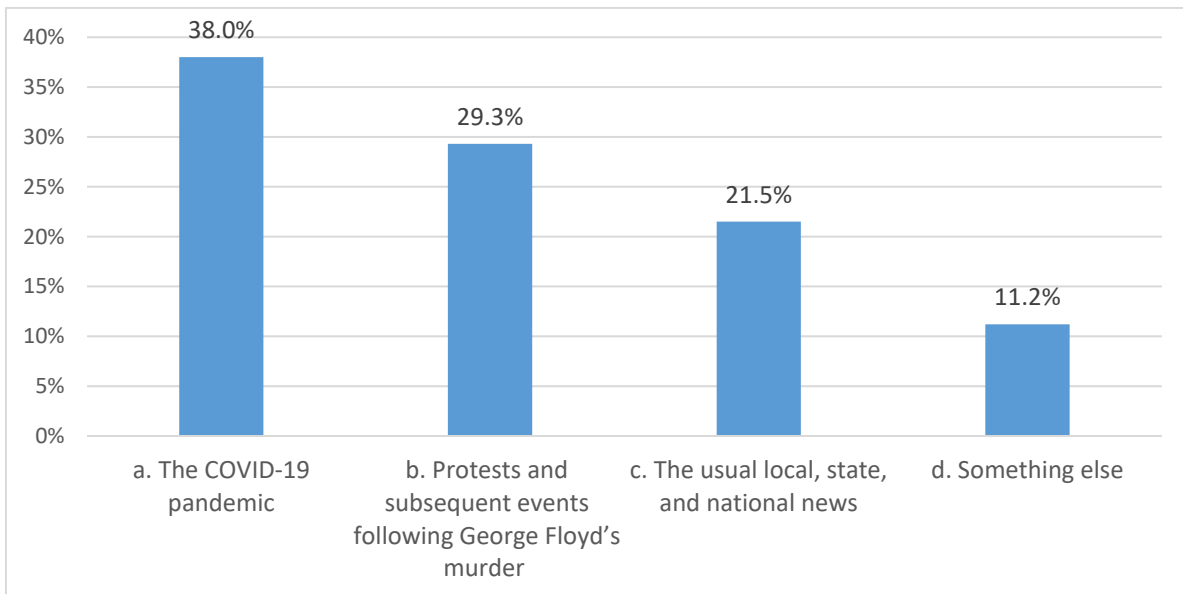
Here are some answers from those who specified any positive changes in their life.

- Spending more time with family. Taking time for self-care. Gardening.
- Being around my children more and being able to save to pay off debt.
- More exercise, elimination of credit card debt, healthier diet, participating in educational programs and seminars. Trying to convince others to vote.
- Learning better health and cleaning habits. The out pouring of support and best wishes from neighbors and others in the community. A newfound respect for teachers, first responders and all essential workers.
- Help me focus on pursuit of a new career path.

Q11. How would you describe your health in general? (Select only one)



Q12. When thinking about the type of news or media you have seen in the past few months, what have you spent the most time reading about, listening to, or watching? (check the one most true for you)

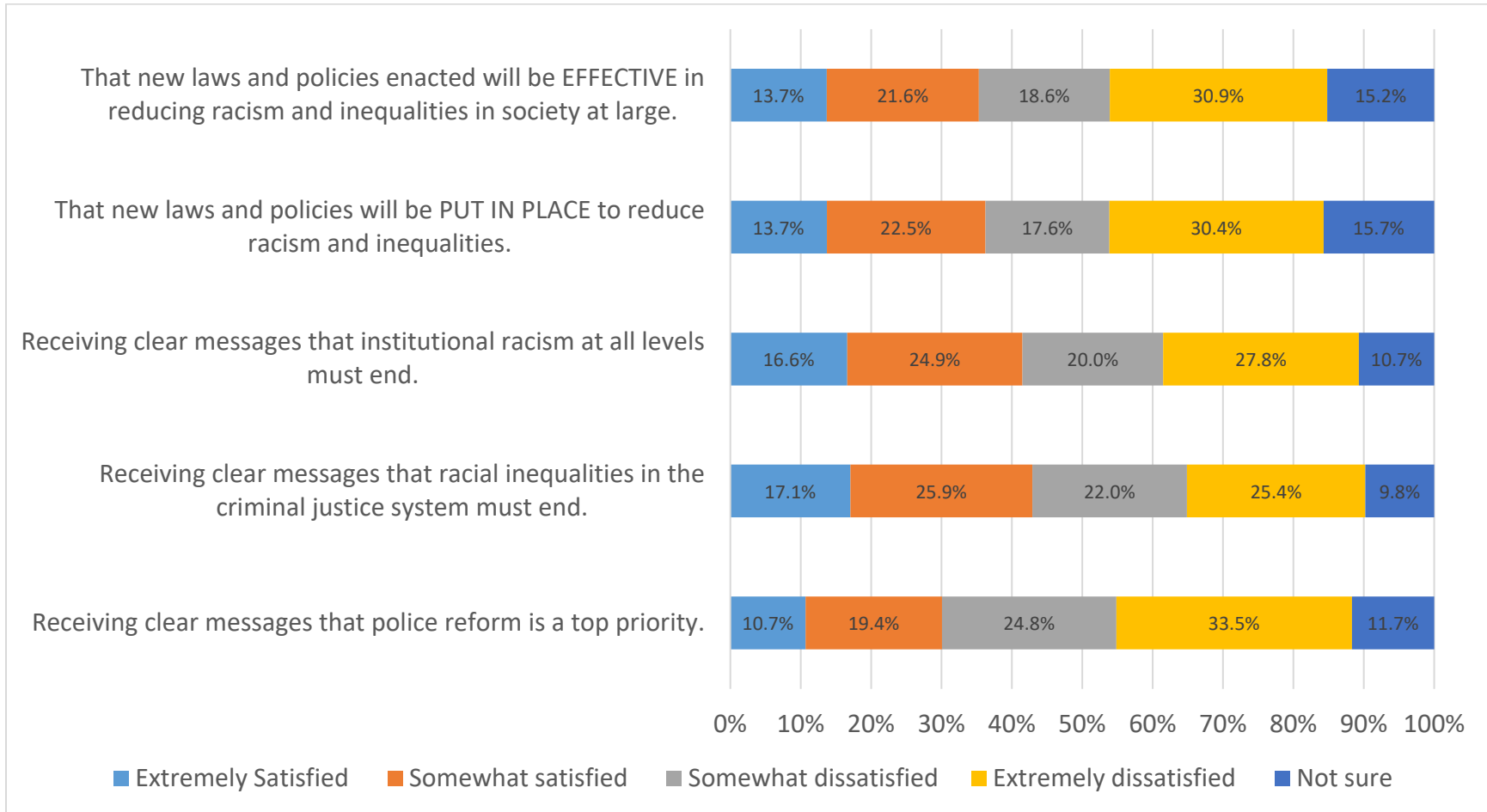


Here are some answers from those who answered “something else”.

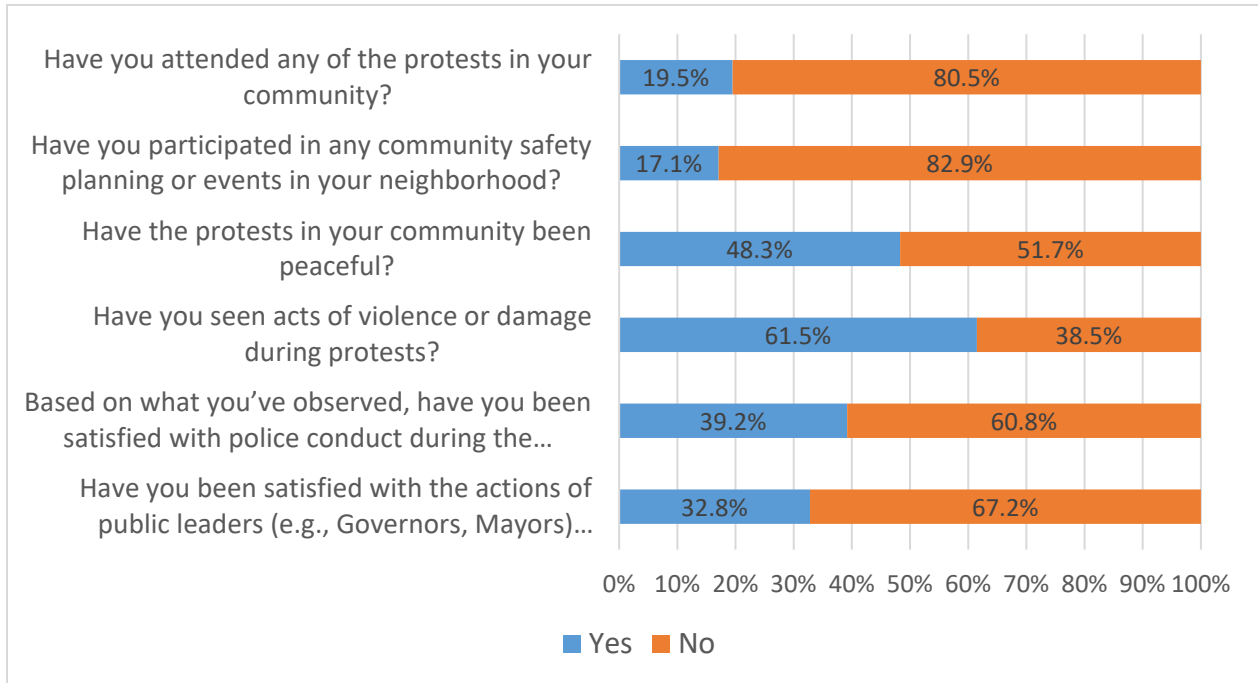
- I've disconnected from social media and news outlets almost completely.
- I don't spend a lot of time with news or media outlets. I mostly streamed shows to prevent from listening constantly negativity. I believe watch you feed your mind with it can dictate your daily mood.
- I've had an equal amount of attention on everything.

B. PROTESTS AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY/RACISM

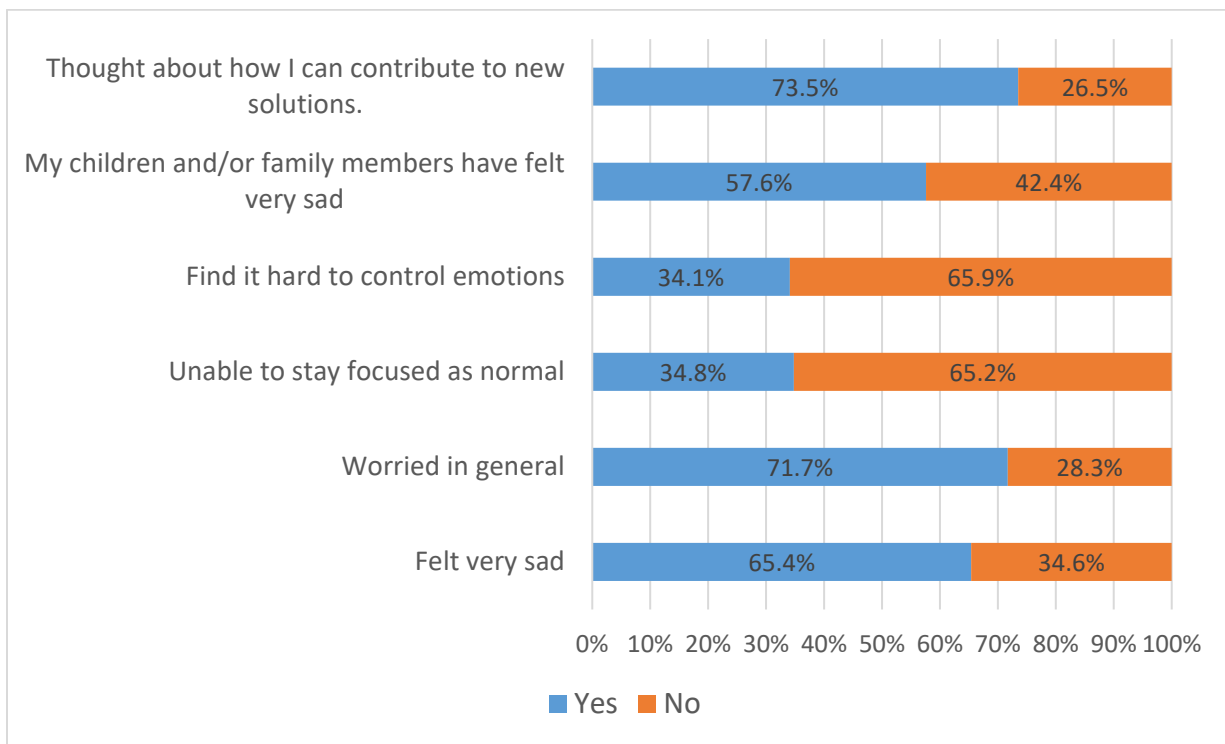
Q13. How satisfied have you been with the following regarding the protests against police brutality and racism in your community?



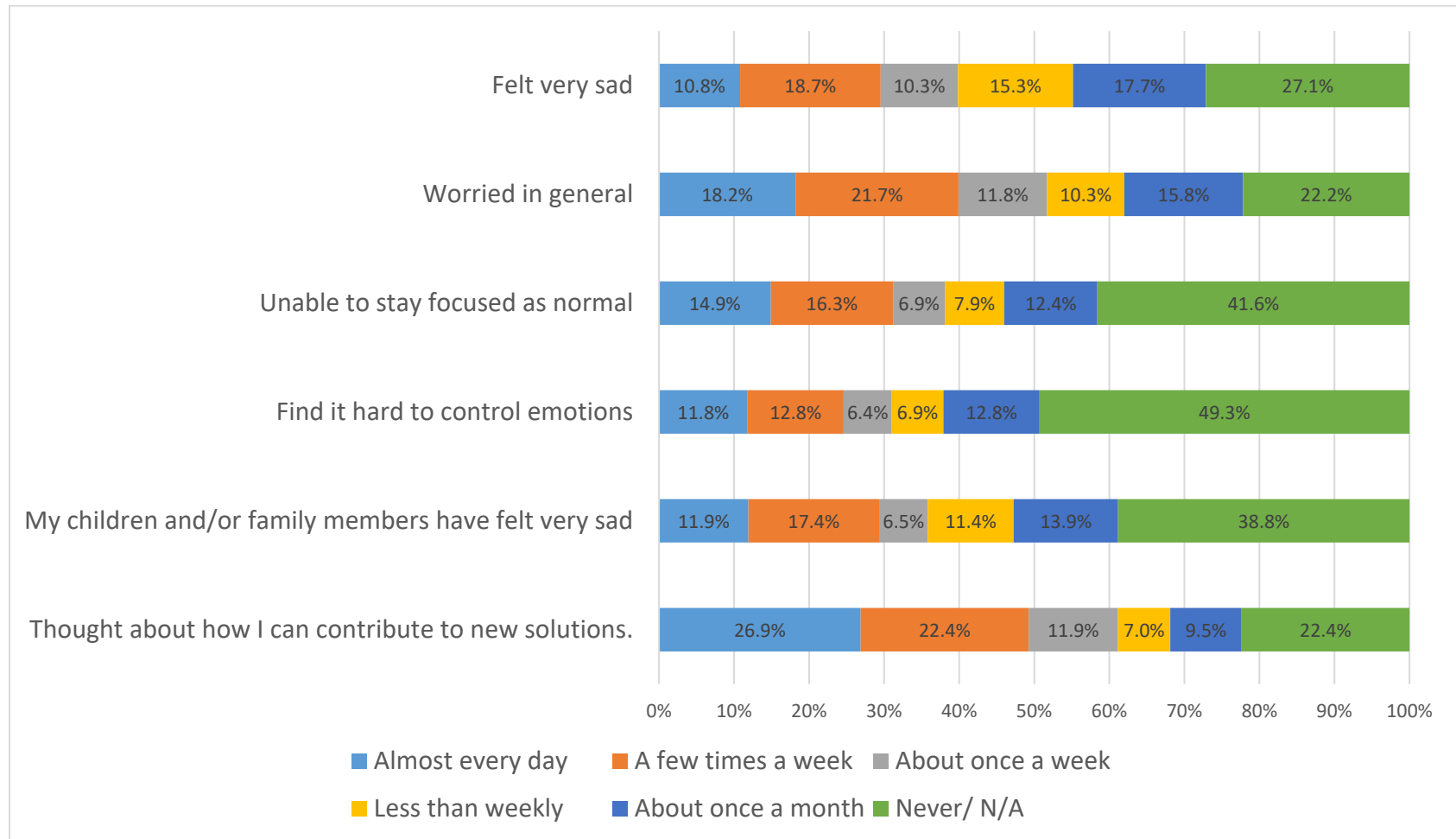
Q14. PROTESTS AND DISCRIMINATION. Describe your experiences and attitudes about the following aspects of the protests against police brutality and racism in your community?



Q15. REACTIONS TO PROTESTS. These questions are about reactions to the protests against police brutality and racism in response to George Floyd's murder and others.



Q15. REACTIONS TO PROTESTS. These questions are about reactions to the protests against police brutality and racism in response to George Floyd’s murder and others. (Conti)



Q17. Please describe anything else that concerns you about the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on you, your family and friends, or for your community. These are just a few of the answers we received.

- My parents are elderly now and because they're black, they are high risk and I am concerned about the true impact of the COVID-19 vaccine on their health.
- The mental health of my family. The lack of structured education for my children. The increase of work demands when working from home.
- Worry about the virus regarding inconsistent information. Very alarmed at the level of denial about the severity of the virus. Very disheartened in how so many persons prioritize the self in terms of want at the expense of the collective other in terms of safety. The virus is exposing where leaders and citizens prioritize energy and attention.
- I worry about being a minority and receiving the disparity of treatment that frequently happens in the hospital. It happens in the hospital I work in.
- I am unhappy that essential workers are not receiving anything for working through this. It would be nice to get a gift card, gas card, free quality meals, etc. My employer doesn't provide a good COVID-19 time-off work policy, and I work in Healthcare where I am most likely to get it. This is so unfair. You have to have bad credit, be behind on your bills, and have no funds to receive any funds/support. This is the biggest thing that stresses me out is that people who are not contributing are able to get everything. I don't have kids and my income is okay, but still not low enough. I worked too hard not to be a burden on the world and still would like some type of support during these times. I work based off of performance and have lost so much money this year. My income is reduced a lot, but not low enough.
- False information and propaganda that influence rather than inform. Spreading fear and panic to those who are easily influenced. Shutting down a Capitalist based economy, and all but directly destroying small/medium sized businesses.
- The pandemic has exposed inequalities in society. My family has remained safe, but prolonged quarantining leads to finding ways to do things that becoming increasingly risky.
- We've lost income. The extra bonus helped us with bills and food. Now it's gone we struggle with food. SNAP benefits were taken away when the bonuses were given; now everything is gone. I'm more stressed than ever and can barely pay for laundry.
- One of my concerns is how the flu season is going to impact the pandemic. I'm concerned about the effectiveness of any or all vaccines related to Covid and the Flu. Also the availability. I'm worried about the overall affects this pandemic has had on my children mentally.
- It concerns me that many Americans are narcissistic and uncaring about their fellow humans, and that it's kept the US in a terrible place with Covid. That we will all need therapy after this, and will probably have difficulty finding it. That so much had been lost forever: lives, health, livelihoods and more.
- I don't think that the media has done a good job with making people aware that Covid is a real thing. My mother who is 75 thinks it's a hoax. However, I have friends who have lost their parents. I'm also concerned that the people who would like black people to understand that Covid is real, don't seem to understand the social and economic aspects that already exist in our lives that we risk death every time we leave the house anyway. So threatening us in trying to make us stay at home because we may go outside and die is not that effective.

Q18. Please describe any thoughts or comments you have about the recent protests in Chicago and nationwide to the murder of George Floyd and racism, including next steps for your community. These are a few of the answers we received.

- I found it very upsetting that a lot of people took advantage of the protests to riot and loot. I also found it somewhat uplifting to see so many people peacefully marching and demanding positive change in the world. I think the biggest hurdle in my community to change minds is education. I feel the current education system does very little to help less well-off families. I consider the education system in Chicago a black hole that government throws money into and sees little reward. I've known teachers who make six figures in the public school system, and yet their attitude is one of complacency in their job and pessimism towards their students.
- I support protest participants and agree with the Black Lives Matter movement. What happened to George Floyd, and many others throughout the country, is an abomination. The nation must come together to make a substantial, long-lasting change. Institutional racism must be eliminated and all individuals should reflect upon their own behaviors and biases. By reflecting on oneself, and admitting to one's flaws/errors and making an effort to change, we can begin to process of change in this country. I have been fortunate to live in my community. My community began to implement the "next steps" back in March. The majority of my community has banded together. Community organizers/activists distribute clothes and food to those that are less fortunate. Programs have been developed in order for community members to check-in on one another, both in English and in Spanish. When students returned to school, school supply drives occurred. Fundraising efforts have been created to assist families in neighborhood schools who have lost their jobs. My community has made very many sacrifices and efforts to get through this trying time in our history. We will continue to navigate this dark time and will pull through.
- This is a sad time for those that are losing their lives due to police brutality. People have to find a way to get laws changed to hold those accountable. Unfortunately, this is the way society sees fit. I have been fortunate to not have my community looted and burned. I honestly haven't seen a protest except on television. I support those that want to march peacefully and understand those who are upset and angered by the mistreatment they receive from police in their communities due to their race.
- A few bad cops do not describe the entire police force. This was not a protest against racism but an excuse for people to loot and commit crimes. These are not protests at all, and it only encourages the public not to have sympathy when true racism occurs. People forget or don't ask why a police officer has to approach someone. Police don't randomly wake up and say I want to pick on this guy. The "victim" is always drunk, high on drugs and committing a crime/doing something illegal! So the police get involved but the cause is always a person committing a crime. Yes, there was excessive force. I agree on that, but the effect was looting and committing more crimes. The effect is when I hear BLM I am going to board up my house because black lives are going to loot and commit more crimes!!
- The protests were necessary, but the looting and violence was NOT OK. I believe there needs to be unity not just in my community but everywhere, and we just need to learn to love one another without seeing with our eyes first!
- I support the protests. I don't support violence but I understand that it's a symptom of racial and socioeconomic inequalities that have existed for a very long time. The broader community will never admit to these underlying problems, so I don't have much hope for things getting better.
- I don't like how Blacks are always seen as suspicious or criminal. Their humanity is rarely displayed even when their innocent. Whites, on the other hand, humanity is always shown even in alleged crimes. For example, the White 17-year-old who shot protesters in Kenosha, Wisconsin was said to be an aspiring police officer. All the things he liked and disliked were discussed. He was described as "young." A Black person would never get that. I hate it.