

Nebraska Annual Social Survey Snapshot: Sadness and Nervousness Among Nebraska Adults

Younger and Unemployed Adults Report Worse Mental Health

By Kristen Olson & Amanda Ganshert
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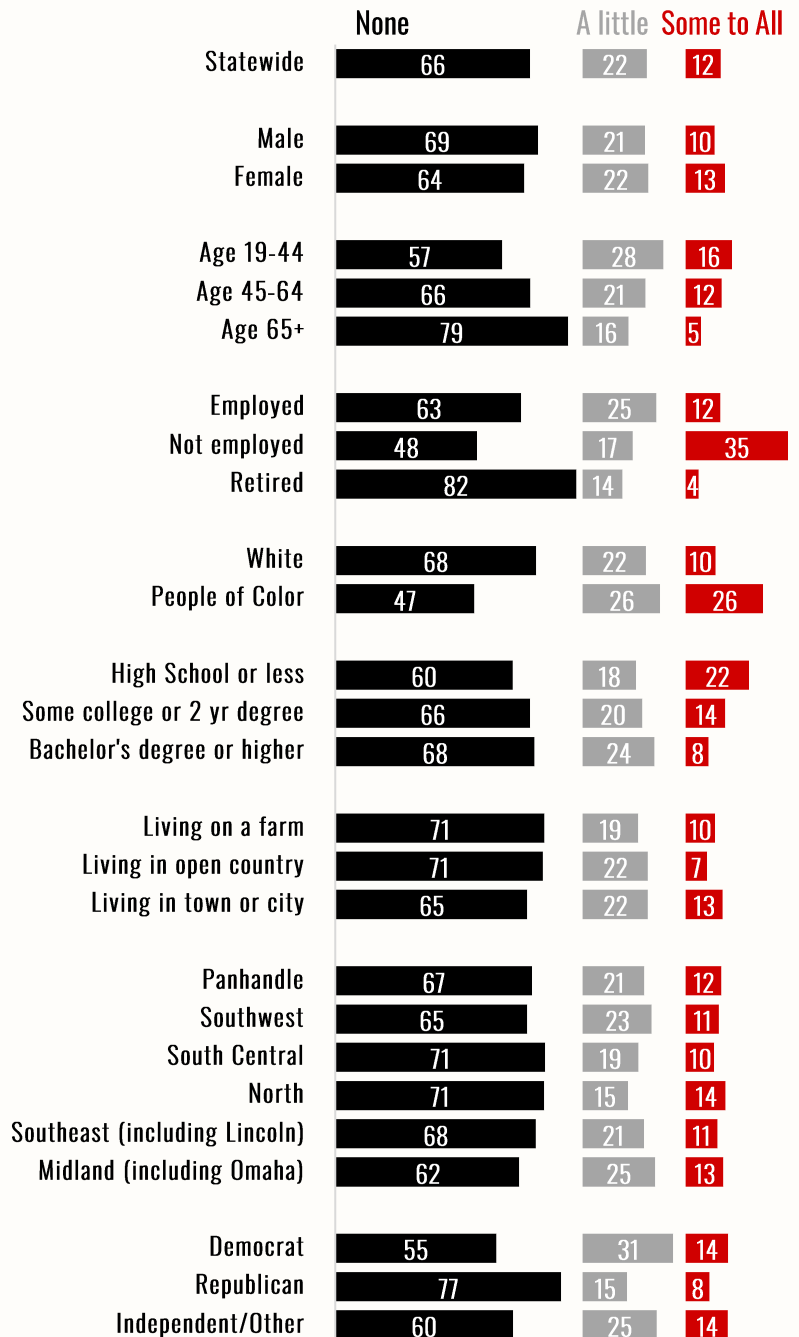
A 2023 survey asked questions to about 1660 Nebraskans about their mental health. Two of these questions – how much time the Nebraskan felt so sad that nothing could cheer them up and how much time they felt nervous during the past four weeks – are in this Snapshot report. Respondents could answer “none of the time,” “a little of the time,” “some of the time,” “most of the time” and “all of the time.” For this report, some, most and all of the time answers are combined.

Overall, 66% of Nebraska adults reported not feeling sad over the past four weeks, 22% reported feeling sad a little of the time, and 12% reported feeling sad some, most, or all of the time over the past four weeks. In contrast, Nebraska adults were more likely to report being nervous over the past four weeks – 39% reported feeling nervous none of the time, 33% reported feeling nervous a little of the time, and 28% reported feeling nervous some, most, or all of the time.

Large differences in these mental health indicators exist across age groups. Among adults aged 19-44, 57% report being sad none of the time, significantly lower than the 79% of adults aged 65 and older who report being sad none of the time, with those aged 45-64 in the middle at 66%. Of adults aged 19-44, 16% report being so sad that nothing could cheer them up some, most or all of the time, three times the 5% of adults aged 65 and older. The differences are more striking for reports of being nervous. Four-in-ten (42%) adults aged 19 to 44 report being nervous some, most or all of the time, compared to only one-in-ten (11%) adults aged 65 and older.

Similarly large differences in mental health are reported across employment groups. Respondents who are not employed – including those who are unemployed, laid off, or looking for work, in school, keeping house, or disabled – have the highest levels of feeling sad or nervous some, most, or all of the time. Among not employed adults, 35% report

During the past 4 weeks, how much of the time did you feel so sad nothing could cheer you up?



feeling so sad that nothing could cheer them up some, most, or all of the time, and 46% report feeling nervous some, most, or all of the time. Among this group, only 48% report feeling sad none of the time and only 28% report feeling nervous none of the time. In contrast, 82% of retired adults report feeling so sad nothing could cheer them up none of the time and 62% report feeling nervous none of the time, and only 5% report feeling so sad nothing could cheer them up and 9% report feeling nervous some, most, or all of the time. Employed adults are in the middle – 12% report feeling sad and 32% report feeling nervous some, most, or all of the time.

Variation also exists between racial/ethnic and education groups. About 10% of white adults reported feeling sad some, most or all of the time, compared to 26% of adults who are people of color. Similarly, 26% of white adults report feeling nervous some, most, or all of the time, but four-in-ten (43%) adults of color report the same level of being nervous. Reports of sadness are highest for those with a high school degree or less (22%), falling to 14% for those with some college, and only 8% for those with a bachelor’s degree or higher. Few differences were observed across urban and rural areas or across regions of the state.

Data Source and Methodology

The Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey (NASIS) is an annual statewide concurrent mail and web survey conducted by BOSR with multiple clients. NASIS uses an address-based sample of adults aged 19 and older (Nebraska’s age of majority), and asks adults with the next birthday to participate in the survey. The 2023 NASIS consisted of a 16-page paper questionnaire that was administered by mail with an option to complete by web to a sample of 8,000 Nebraska households. Data were collected from July to November 2023 with an AAPOR Response Rate 2 of 21.6% (n=1,725). Overall estimates have a margin of error of ±4%. Significantly different groups are reported from statistical tests with p<.05. The full methodology report can be found at <https://bosr.unl.edu/nasis>.

Who Are We?

BOSR has been conducting survey research and providing research assistance to University of Nebraska–Lincoln faculty, departments, administrative units, students, and various government agencies and non-profit organizations since 1964. Operating as a 'one-stop research shop,' BOSR develops and manages mail, web, telephone, in-person, and mixed-mode surveys with academic rigor.

During the past 4 weeks, how much of the time did you feel nervous?

