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**Life at home during the pandemic: study by the  
USC Center for the Digital Future and Interactive Advertising Bureau  
finds differences in behavior and views between men and women**

While many Americans agree that the coronavirus is changing life at home on an unprecedented scale, men and women report significant differences in their views and behavior, according to the first comprehensive study of the social and cultural impact of the pandemic conducted by the USC Center for the Digital Future and the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB).

“Broad social and cultural evolution in the American home is occurring with extraordinary speed,” said Jeffrey Cole, director of the Center for the Digital Future in the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. “We are finding some changes in work, school, and social connection that previously took months or years are now taking days.”

“More specifically, we are also seeing many differences between how men and women are experiencing life during the pandemic – especially in their levels of concern about the effects of the coronavirus, what they miss, and what they enjoy,” said Cole.

The [overall findings](#) released April 29 in the Center’s study, “The Coronavirus Disruption Project: Living and Coping During the Pandemic,” revealed many changes in views and behavior – both positive and negative – since the pandemic and safer-at-home restrictions began. Among the reported changes: altered sleep schedules; increased loneliness and anxiety; relaxed restrictions on children’s behavior; unhealthy trends in eating, consumption of alcohol and marijuana; reduced exercise; improved relationships; benefits to working at home; and plans to spend more time with family when the pandemic is over.

## **Life at home: differences between men and women**

Looking more closely at the study's findings about life at home reveals some sharp differences between men and women and how they are experiencing the pandemic.

### **What do you miss during the pandemic?**

The study found that overall, large percentages of Americans miss many activities because of home confinement during the pandemic, especially such routine aspects of daily life as dining in restaurants, visiting friends and relatives, or working out at a gym.

The study also found distinct differences between the views of men and women about the types of activities they miss. For example, when asked what they miss "a lot," women are more likely than men to miss shopping in brick-and-mortar stores (39% women vs. 30% men), visiting with close friends and relatives outside the home who they saw regularly (56% women vs. 47% men), and having set routines in their lives (36% women vs. 29% men).

Men are more likely than women to miss "a lot" several entertainment activities, including watching or listening to live sports (41% men vs. 16% women), or going to movies (26% men vs. 21% women).

However, large percentages of men and women alike said what they missed the most was freedom to do what they want and go where they please (67% women and 67% men).

### **What do you enjoy during safer-at-home restrictions?**

Americans also reported several aspects of life they enjoy during safer-at-home restrictions, especially activities to which they can devote more time, such as participating in hobbies or catching up on video viewing.

When asked what they "enjoy a lot," women are more likely than men to report more time to catch up on chores and other responsibilities (31% women vs. 25% men), and more time for reading (33% women vs. 24% men). Men said they enjoy a lot telecommuting (18% men vs. 13% women) and more time for sex and intimacy (25% men vs. 20% women).

But men and women in roughly equal percentages said they enjoy increased personal time during the pandemic: 28% of men and 29% of women said they enjoy a lot "more time to be by myself at home."

## **Concerns about the pandemic**

The study reported many concerns about the pandemic, including several issues that concern women more than men: concerns about obtaining food and essential supplies (65% women vs. 52% men), the risk of disease when going to the store or running errands (71% women vs. 61% men), worries about the facilities and provisions at their local hospitals (54% women vs. 48% men), and having spent money to adjust to life during the pandemic (51% women vs. 43% men).

## **Gap in loneliness and anxiety**

Loneliness and anxiety are increasingly affecting many Americans since the pandemic began; overall 37% said they are lonelier, and 61% said they are more anxious. Women are more likely than men to say they are lonelier (41% women vs. 34% men).

Women are also more likely than men to report increased anxiety (67% women vs. 56% men).

## **Views about relationships at home**

In spite of the unexpected confinement of millions of Americans because of safer-at-home restrictions, Americans said their relationships are improving, with 35% saying their relationship with their spouse or partner is better, and 45% saying their relationships with their children are better.

However, men and women have different views of their relationships at home. Men have more positive views than women about their relationships with their spouses or partners: 41% of men and 31% of women said their relationship with their spouse or partner is better since the pandemic began. Only small percentages of both men and women said their spousal relationship is worse (10% men vs. 15% women).

Men are also much more likely than women to have positive views about their relationships with their children since the pandemic began: 55% of men said their relationship with their children is better, compared to 39% of women.

Very small percentages of men and women said their relationship with the children in their household has worsened since the pandemic began (5% men vs. 9% women)

## **Coronavirus Study: Methodology**

The findings in the Coronavirus Disruption Project are based on an online survey conducted in English during the week of April 6, using a sample of 1,000 respondents from an online panel. The sample is representative of Americans aged 18 and above from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The margin of error is plus or minus three percentage points.

The study explores seven major themes: daily life, personal beliefs, working at home, online education, media and entertainment, shopping behavior, and political views.

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