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NATIONAL: RELATIONSHIPS WEATHER THE PANDEMIC

Few report love life changes during the outbreak

West Long Branch, NJ – Most American relationships are weathering the change in circumstances created by the coronavirus outbreak and half expect that their relationship will be even stronger once it is over. According to a national *Monmouth (“Mon-muth”) University Poll* of people currently in a romantic relationship, the vast majority report that key aspects of their relationship remain unchanged from where they stood before the pandemic hit.

Among Americans who are currently married, living with a partner or otherwise in a romantic relationship, 59% say they are extremely satisfied with that relationship and 33% are very satisfied. Another 4% are somewhat satisfied and just 1% are either not too or not at all satisfied. The number who are extremely satisfied (59%) is similar to past national polls (57% in 2017 and 58% in 2014). The number who are only somewhat or not satisfied (5%) is about half of prior levels (11% in 2017 and 12% in 2014). Married partners (64%) are more likely to be extremely satisfied than unmarried partners (47%), but there are no significant differences by gender, age, or race.

“It isn’t surprising that so many people are satisfied in their relationship. Our relationships are a key source of stability, and when the world feels uncertain, having your partner there to be your rock is assuring,” said Dr. Gary Lewandowski, professor of psychology at Monmouth University whose research and writing focuses on romantic relationships.

The vast majority (74%) of Americans with a romantic partner say their relationship has not changed overall since the coronavirus outbreak. Specifically, at least 7 in 10 report that the outbreak has not affected how often they argue (70%) or changed their sex life (77%). Among those who do report an outbreak-related change in their relationship, more report a positive rather than negative effect. This

includes those who say that their overall relationship has gotten better (17%) rather than worse (5%); that they get into fewer (18%) rather than more (10%) arguments now; and that their sex life has improved (9%) rather than worsened (5%).

Lewandowski explained, “It’s likely that couples are noticing little change because there is a combination of factors at play. The extra demands on the relationship from managing work-life balance, home-schooling kids, and generally dealing with a global pandemic are balanced out by more quality time with the ones we love. A couple steps back, another few forward, leaving us very close to where we started. Our relationships are amazingly resilient.”

One area where relationships are creating a bit of a burden for some is by adding to the daily stress of dealing with the pandemic. Most (59%) say their relationship has no impact on their daily stress in the present situation, but 26% say it increases their stress given everything else they have to deal with. Another 14%, though, say their relationship actually decreases their daily stress level during the current public health crisis.

Looking ahead, half of all Americans in a relationship expect that their relationship will emerge stronger after the outbreak, including 28% who expect it will have gotten a lot stronger and 23% who expect it will have gotten a little stronger. Another 46% predict that their relationship will not change because of this situation and just 1% expect it will be weaker afterwards.

“Peoples’ optimism about how the outbreak will affect their relationship long-term is encouraging. Although the results likely represent some overconfidence by respondents, research shows that optimism benefits relationships. In fact, as long as couples have at least one optimist, both partners enjoy higher relationship satisfaction, even when one partner is less hopeful. Optimists handle life’s rough patches better, which is certainly helpful given the current situation,” said Lewandowski.

On the whole, married partners are less likely to report a change in any of the relationship issues asked about in the poll when compared to unmarried partners, regardless of whether those unmarried partners currently cohabit. One specific area of difference finds that unmarried partners (22%) are more likely than married partners (12%) to say that their relationship has helped decrease their daily stress level during the pandemic, while they are equally as likely to say it has increased their stress (23% unmarried and 26% married).

There are few notable gender differences in the coronavirus outbreak’s impact on relationships. One minor exception is that women are a little more likely than men to report that their relationship has changed their daily stress level. This gender difference, though, has been on both sides of the equation – 29% of women have increased stress because of their relationship versus 23% of men, while 17% of women have decreased stress versus 12% of men. Men (55%) are slightly more likely than women (46%) to expect that their relationship will have gotten stronger after the outbreak is over.

Younger adults tend to be a little more likely to say their relationship has been impacted in some way by the pandemic when compared to middle aged or older adults. However, at least half in all groups say there has been no change in any of the current relationship issues measured in the poll. It should be noted that younger adults (52%) are more likely to be in an unmarried relationship than the average couple (28%).

“Overall, these results suggest that the global pandemic may not be as bad for relationships as many have feared. Instead, it seems similar to what research showed following 9/11. Our relationships may become stronger and even more important than they already were,” said Lewandowski.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from April 30 to May 4, 2020 with 808 adults in the United States. The results in this release are based on 556 individuals who are currently in a relationship – of which 72% are married, 15% are living with a partner, and 12% are in a non-cohabitating romantic relationship – and have a +/- 4.2 percentage point sampling margin of error. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

[Q1-21 previously released.]

22. Which of the following best describes you: married, living with a partner, never been married, widowed, divorced, or separated? [If NEVER MARRIED/WIDOWED/DIVORCED: Are you currently in a romantic relationship with someone?]

TREND:	May 2020	Jan. 2017	Dec. 2014
Married	48%	50%	52%
Living together	10%	10%	7%
In a relationship	8%	10%	11%
No relationship	32%	29%	28%
(VOL) No answer	1%	1%	1%
(n)	(808)	(801)	(1,008)

[The following questions were asked only of those currently in a relationship; n=556, m.o.e.=+/-4.2%]

23. How satisfied are you with your current relationship – extremely, very, somewhat, not too, or not at all satisfied?

TREND:	May 2020	Jan. 2017	Dec. 2014
Extremely satisfied	59%	57%	58%
Very satisfied	33%	31%	30%
Somewhat satisfied	4%	9%	8%
Not too satisfied	0%	1%	2%
Not at all satisfied	1%	1%	2%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	1%	1%
(n)	(556)	(566)	(749)

24. Would you say your romantic relationship has gotten better or worse since the coronavirus outbreak, or is it about the same? [Is that a lot or a little better/worse?]

	May 2020
A lot better	10%
A little better	7%
About the same	74%
A little worse	4%
A lot worse	1%
(VOL) Don't know	4%
(n)	(556)

25. Do you and your partner get into arguments more often, less often, or about the same as you did before the outbreak? [Is that a lot or a little more/less often?]

	May 2020
A lot more often	1%
A little more often	9%
About the same	70%
A little less often	9%
A lot less often	9%
(VOL) Don't know	2%
(n)	(556)

26. With everything else you have to deal with during this outbreak, does your relationship increase or decrease your daily stress level, or does it have no impact on your stress? [Does it increase/decrease your daily stress a lot or a little?]

	May 2020
Increase a lot	10%
Increase a little	16%
No impact	59%
Decrease a little	5%
Decrease a lot	9%
(VOL) Don't know	1%
(n)	(556)

27. Would you say your sex life with your relationship partner has gotten better or worse since the coronavirus outbreak, or is it about the same? [Is that a lot or a little better/worse?]

	May 2020
A lot better	5%
A little better	4%
About the same	77%
A little worse	2%
A lot worse	3%
(VOL) Don't know	9%
(n)	(556)

28. After the outbreak is over, do you think your relationship will have gotten stronger or gotten weaker, or will it not have changed? [Is that a lot or a little stronger/weaker?]

	May 2020
A lot stronger	28%
A little stronger	23%
Not changed	46%
A little weaker	1%
A lot weaker	0%
(VOL) Don't know	2%
(n)	(556)

[Q29-43 previously released.]

METHODOLOGY

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from April 30 to May 4, 2020 with a national random sample of 808 adults age 18 and older. This includes 285 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 523 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone, in English. Telephone numbers were selected through random digit dialing and landline respondents were selected with a modified Troidahl-Carter youngest adult household screen. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. The full sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information (ACS 2018 one-year survey). Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and Dynata (RDD sample). The key results in this poll release are based on a subsample of 556 individuals who are currently in a relationship. For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 4.2 percentage points (unadjusted for sample design). Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

<i>DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>	
<i>ALL ADULTS Self-Reported</i>	<i>IN A RELATIONSHIP Self-Reported</i>
28% Republican	31% Republican
38% Independent	39% Independent
34% Democrat	30% Democrat
49% Male	52% Male
51% Female	48% Female
29% 18-34	29% 18-34
33% 35-54	37% 35-54
37% 55+	34% 55+
63% White	65% White
12% Black	9% Black
17% Hispanic	17% Hispanic
8% Asian/Other	9% Asian/Other
69% No degree	66% No degree
31% 4 year degree	34% 4 year degree

<i>MARGIN OF ERROR</i>			
		<i>unweighted sample</i>	<i>moe (+/-)</i>
<i>TOTAL IN A RELATIONSHIP</i>		556	4.2%
<i>RELATIONSHIP TYPE</i>	<i>Married</i>	422	4.8%
	<i>Not Married</i>	134	8.5%
<i>GENDER</i>	<i>Male</i>	288	5.8%
	<i>Female</i>	268	6.0%
<i>CHILDREN IN HOME</i>	<i>Yes</i>	203	6.9%
	<i>No</i>	351	5.2%
<i>RACE</i>	<i>White, non-Hispanic</i>	374	5.1%
	<i>Other</i>	166	7.6%
<i>COLLEGE GRADUATE</i>	<i>No degree</i>	248	6.2%
	<i>4 year degree</i>	307	5.6%
<i>AGE</i>	<i>18-34</i>	113	9.2%
	<i>35-54</i>	248	6.2%
	<i>55+</i>	193	7.1%
<i>INCOME</i>	<i><\$50K</i>	127	8.7%
	<i>\$50 to <100K</i>	177	7.4%
	<i>\$100K+</i>	221	6.6%

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Monmouth University Poll -- NATIONAL -- 5/21/20

		TOTAL	GENDER		CHILDREN IN HOME		RACE		COLLEGE GRAD	
			Male	Female	Yes	No	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth	No degree	4 yr degree
22. Which of the following best describes you: married, living with a partner, never been married, widowed, divorced, or separated? [IF not married/partner: Are you currently in a romantic relationship with someone?]	Married	48%	49%	47%	62%	43%	52%	40%	45%	57%
	Living together	10%	12%	9%	18%	7%	10%	11%	11%	8%
	In a relationship	8%	10%	6%	4%	10%	6%	12%	8%	8%
	No relationship	32%	27%	37%	15%	39%	31%	36%	35%	25%
	[VOL] No answer	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%

		AGE 3-WAY			INCOME		
		18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
22. Which of the following best describes you: married, living with a partner, never been married, widowed, divorced, or separated? [IF not married/partner: Are you currently in a romantic relationship with someone?]	Married	32%	57%	54%	35%	50%	67%
	Living together	19%	10%	3%	12%	9%	8%
	In a relationship	15%	7%	3%	7%	12%	6%
	No relationship	34%	24%	39%	46%	28%	19%
	[VOL] No answer	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%

		TOTAL	RELATIONSHIP TYPE		GENDER		CHILDREN IN HOME		RACE	
			Married	Not married	Male	Female	Yes	No	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth
23. How satisfied are you with your current relationship - extremely, very, somewhat, not too, or not at all satisfied?	Extremely satisfied	59%	64%	47%	59%	59%	57%	60%	61%	57%
	Very satisfied	33%	30%	43%	32%	34%	35%	33%	32%	35%
	Somewhat satisfied	4%	4%	7%	5%	4%	4%	5%	5%	4%
	Not too satisfied	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
	Not at all satisfied	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%	2%	0%	0%	2%
	[VOL] Dont know	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%

		COLLEGE GRAD		AGE 3-WAY			INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
23. How satisfied are you with your current relationship - extremely, very, somewhat, not too, or not at all satisfied?	Extremely satisfied	59%	60%	56%	58%	64%	64%	56%	61%
	Very satisfied	34%	32%	40%	33%	27%	28%	39%	31%
	Somewhat satisfied	4%	6%	1%	6%	6%	4%	4%	6%
	Not too satisfied	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
	Not at all satisfied	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	2%	0%	1%
	[VOL] Dont know	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%

Monmouth University Poll -- NATIONAL -- 5/21/20

		TOTAL	RELATIONSHIP TYPE		GENDER		CHILDREN IN HOME		RACE	
			Married	Not married	Male	Female	Yes	No	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth
24. Would you say your romantic relationship has gotten better or worse since the coronavirus outbreak, or is it about the same? [Is that a lot or a little (better/worse)?]	A lot better	10%	9%	12%	10%	9%	8%	11%	6%	14%
	A little better	7%	7%	10%	6%	9%	10%	6%	6%	10%
	About the same	74%	78%	64%	72%	76%	74%	74%	80%	67%
	A little worse	4%	2%	10%	5%	2%	4%	4%	4%	5%
	A lot worse	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	[VOL] Dont know	4%	5%	3%	5%	3%	3%	5%	3%	3%

		COLLEGE GRAD		AGE 3-WAY			INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
24. Would you say your romantic relationship has gotten better or worse since the coronavirus outbreak, or is it about the same? [Is that a lot or a little (better/worse)?]	A lot better	9%	11%	16%	9%	4%	11%	8%	12%
	A little better	7%	9%	8%	9%	5%	4%	7%	11%
	About the same	74%	73%	66%	75%	81%	76%	75%	72%
	A little worse	4%	3%	7%	3%	2%	5%	5%	2%
	A lot worse	1%	2%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	[VOL] Dont know	5%	3%	2%	2%	7%	2%	4%	1%

		TOTAL	RELATIONSHIP TYPE		GENDER		CHILDREN IN HOME		RACE	
			Married	Not married	Male	Female	Yes	No	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth
25. Do you and your partner get into arguments more often, less often, or about the same as you did before the outbreak? [Is that a lot or a little (more/less) often?]	A lot more often	1%	2%	0%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%
	A little more often	9%	8%	12%	9%	10%	11%	8%	7%	14%
	About the same	70%	70%	70%	69%	70%	68%	71%	74%	62%
	A little less often	9%	10%	7%	10%	7%	12%	7%	9%	10%
	A lot less often	9%	8%	10%	8%	9%	4%	12%	7%	11%
	[VOL] Dont know	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	1%

		COLLEGE GRAD		AGE 3-WAY			INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
25. Do you and your partner get into arguments more often, less often, or about the same as you did before the outbreak? [Is that a lot or a little (more/less) often?]	A lot more often	1%	2%	0%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%
	A little more often	8%	12%	12%	9%	8%	12%	8%	8%
	About the same	70%	68%	62%	71%	74%	67%	71%	69%
	A little less often	8%	11%	10%	10%	7%	7%	11%	11%
	A lot less often	10%	6%	14%	6%	8%	10%	7%	11%
	[VOL] Dont know	2%	1%	2%	3%	2%	3%	1%	0%

Monmouth University Poll -- NATIONAL -- 5/21/20

		TOTAL	RELATIONSHIP TYPE		GENDER		CHILDREN IN HOME		RACE	
			Married	Not married	Male	Female	Yes	No	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth
26. With everything else you have to deal with during this outbreak, does your relationship increase or decrease your daily stress level, or does it have no impact on your stress? [Does it (increase/decrease) your daily stress a lot or a little?]	Increase a lot	10%	10%	8%	9%	10%	12%	8%	7%	15%
	Increase a little	16%	16%	15%	14%	19%	17%	15%	19%	12%
	No impact	59%	61%	54%	64%	54%	57%	60%	57%	62%
	Decrease a little	5%	5%	7%	4%	7%	5%	5%	6%	4%
	Decrease a lot	9%	7%	15%	8%	10%	8%	10%	10%	8%
	[VOL] Dont know	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

		COLLEGE GRAD		AGE 3-WAY			INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
26. With everything else you have to deal with during this outbreak, does your relationship increase or decrease your daily stress level, or does it have no impact on your stress? [Does it (increase/decrease) your daily stress a lot or a little?]	Increase a lot	10%	8%	9%	10%	10%	12%	7%	8%
	Increase a little	15%	17%	16%	17%	15%	13%	21%	15%
	No impact	60%	57%	50%	58%	68%	59%	57%	62%
	Decrease a little	3%	9%	8%	6%	2%	6%	5%	6%
	Decrease a lot	10%	8%	16%	9%	3%	9%	9%	9%
	[VOL] Dont know	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%

		TOTAL	RELATIONSHIP TYPE		GENDER		CHILDREN IN HOME		RACE	
			Married	Not married	Male	Female	Yes	No	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth
27. Would you say your sex life with your relationship partner has gotten better or worse since the coronavirus outbreak, or is it about the same? [Is that a lot or a little (better/worse)?]	A lot better	5%	3%	9%	6%	3%	8%	3%	5%	5%
	A little better	4%	2%	8%	3%	4%	4%	4%	3%	5%
	About the same	77%	81%	66%	79%	75%	76%	78%	80%	75%
	A little worse	2%	1%	5%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%
	A lot worse	3%	2%	5%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	5%
	[VOL] Dont know	9%	10%	6%	5%	13%	6%	10%	8%	6%

		COLLEGE GRAD		AGE 3-WAY			INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
27. Would you say your sex life with your relationship partner has gotten better or worse since the coronavirus outbreak, or is it about the same? [Is that a lot or a little (better/worse)?]	A lot better	5%	4%	8%	5%	2%	5%	3%	7%
	A little better	4%	4%	3%	7%	2%	5%	3%	4%
	About the same	76%	79%	74%	76%	82%	77%	79%	76%
	A little worse	3%	1%	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%	1%
	A lot worse	3%	2%	4%	4%	1%	4%	2%	4%
	[VOL] Dont know	8%	10%	8%	6%	11%	5%	11%	7%

Monmouth University Poll -- NATIONAL -- 5/21/20

		TOTAL	RELATIONSHIP TYPE		GENDER		CHILDREN IN HOME		RACE	
			Married	Not married	Male	Female	Yes	No	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth
28. After the outbreak is over, do you think your relationship will have gotten stronger or gotten weaker, or will it not have changed? [Is that a lot or a little (stronger/weaker)?]	A lot stronger	28%	28%	29%	28%	29%	29%	28%	26%	33%
	A little stronger	23%	19%	32%	27%	17%	27%	20%	21%	25%
	Not changed	46%	50%	37%	42%	50%	43%	48%	51%	40%
	A little weaker	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
	A lot weaker	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
	[VOL] Dont know	2%	2%	0%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%

		COLLEGE GRAD		AGE 3-WAY			INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
28. After the outbreak is over, do you think your relationship will have gotten stronger or gotten weaker, or will it not have changed? [Is that a lot or a little (stronger/weaker)?]	A lot stronger	32%	22%	37%	24%	25%	36%	22%	30%
	A little stronger	21%	25%	30%	25%	14%	22%	23%	24%
	Not changed	45%	48%	32%	47%	58%	41%	54%	40%
	A little weaker	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
	A lot weaker	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
	[VOL] Dont know	1%	4%	0%	1%	3%	1%	1%	3%