

Young Adults Experiences of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Perceived Relationship Effects

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INTRO
The COVID-19 pandemic has been stressful for many and has brought changes that challenged romantic relationship. Our focus was to understand **young adults' relationship experiences** during a global pandemic.

- PARTICIPANTS & PROCEDURES**
- Young adults reported **how COVID-19 affected their romantic relationships**.
 - Participants **completed questionnaires** before (*n* = 85) and after the two-week workshop (*n* = 69) and three (*n* = 71) and six months later (*n* = 72).
 - Participants averaged 22.7 years of age, most were female (83.5%) and fewer than half were White (43.5%).
 - We conducted thematic analysis on participants' written responses (Braun & Clark, 2012).

INITIAL FINDINGS
Participants described their romantic relationships as **improved (39%), worsened (25%), or unaffected (17%)** by COVID-19 (Figure 1).

- Of the changes identified, the most common were (Figure 2)
- time together (32%)
 - communication (12%)
 - support (11%)
 - could not be coded or no response (19%)

More than half of young adults' romantic relationships were unaffected or improved during COVID-19. Changes in time spent together, communication, and support were most common.

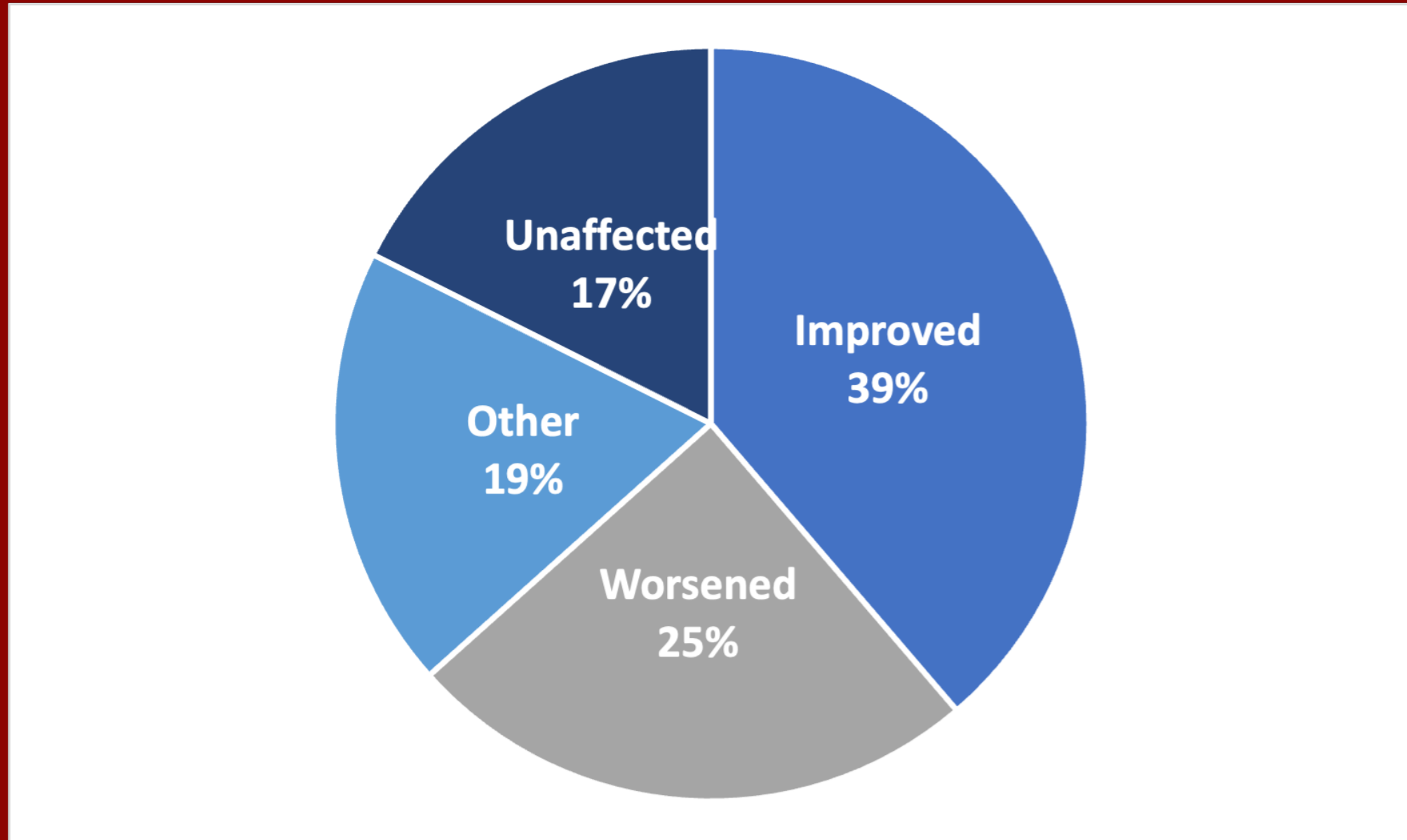


Figure 1. Young Adults' Perceptions of the Effects That COVID-19 Had on Their Romantic Relationships

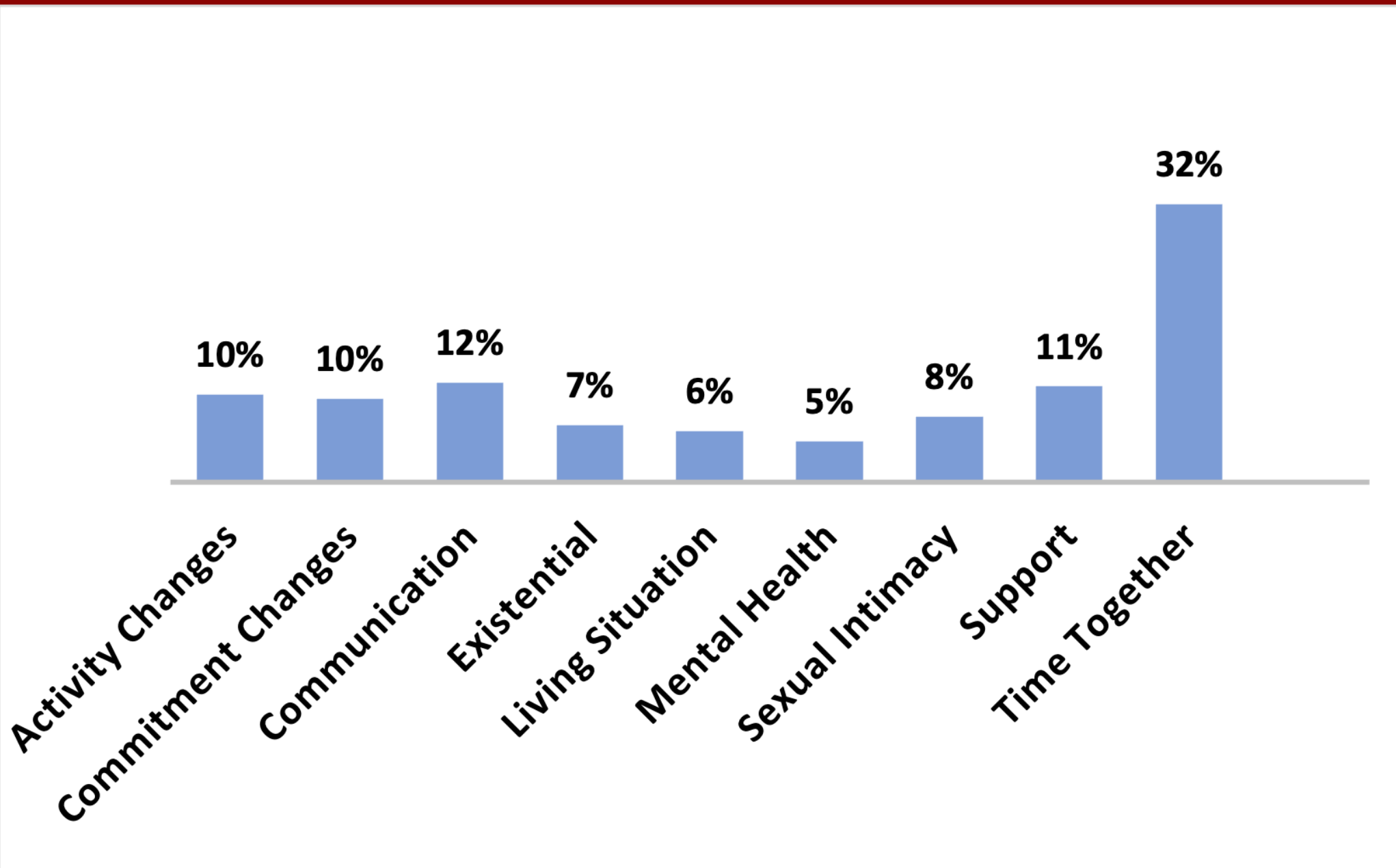


Figure 2. Young Adults Most Frequently Reported Experiences During COVID-19

INITIAL FINDINGS

Time Together: "It has been nice to spend the pandemic with my partner. We have been supporting each other through this time and keeping each other company."

Communication: "This pandemic has actually made my relationship stronger...We communicate a lot more than before and understand each others boundaries."

Support: "I found that we have become more supportive of each other. We have had more time to talk about the future and plan what our next steps are."

DISCUSSION
Although the pandemic was stressful for people and their relationship, some **reported unexpected benefits** that ultimately fostered a sense of closeness and support with their partner.

REFERENCES
Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol. 2. Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 57–71). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004>

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