

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Angel Brownawell: 202.336.5955, abrownawell@apa.org
Kate Kelley: 202.336.5898, kkelley@apa.org kkelley@apa.org.

APA Poll Finds Economic Stress Taking a Toll on Men

Middle-Aged Men Stressed about Work, Money and the Economy

Seven out of Ten American Workers Affected by Employers' Cost-Cutting Measures

Washington DC, May 7, 2009 - Economic pressures are having an increasing impact on men aged 35 to 54, according to a new survey by the American Psychological Association (APA). Growing numbers of middle-aged men are reporting significant stress related to work, money, housing costs and job stability. The poll was conducted online by Harris Interactive between April 8 and 10, 2009, among 2,160 adults.

Among the 45-54 age group, 81 percent of employed men report work as a significant source of stress, compared with just 68 percent of employed women. While the number of women aged 45-54 reporting stress related to money has dropped since September 2008 (from 83 percent to 78 percent), the percentage of men in this age group reporting stress related to money has risen considerably during that same period (from 78 percent in September to 86 percent now).

Psychologist Dr. Katherine C. Nordal, executive director for professional practice at the APA, said, "While women are typically more likely to report stress than men, we are seeing that economic pressures like money, job stability and work are having a significant effect on many men. For the first time, the numbers of men in some age groups reporting stress related to certain economic factors have surpassed those of women of the same age, while at the same time the numbers of women reporting stress due to those factors have gone down slightly."

Among 35-44 year olds, the number of men reporting money as a significant stressor also surpasses that of women (88 percent vs. 77 percent). Job stability is a growing concern among males in this age group as well, with 71 percent reporting this as a significant stressor, a jump from 57 percent last September. Almost two-thirds of men age 35-44 (65 percent) report stress related to housing costs.

The survey also found that actions taken by employers to reduce costs are having a far reaching impact on Americans. Nearly seven in ten (68 percent) employed Americans report that their employers have taken steps such as putting a freeze on hiring or wages, laying off staff, reducing work hours, benefits or pay, requiring unpaid days off or increasing work hours in the past year as a result of the weak economy. Not surprisingly, people who have been hit with multiple employer-driven cost-cutting actions are most likely to report stress related to economic factors (for example, 86 percent facing four or more actions report work as a significant stressor, vs. 63 percent whose employers have not taken any action as a result of the economy.) And regardless of whether or not they have already been affected by employer actions, 43 percent of Americans report that are concerned that layoffs will affect their household.

"For many people their job is closely tied with their sense of purpose and self-identity. When they perceive that their work is under threat or fear being unable to meet the basic needs of their family, stress can intensify," adds Dr. Nordal, "With many layoffs hitting middle-aged men, it is not surprising that increasing numbers of men are reporting stress related to economic factors."

The American Psychological Association has developed resources to help people manage their stress related to the economic downturn.

The following articles are available at [www.APAHelpCenter.org](http://www.apahelpcenter.org) <<http://www.apahelpcenter.org/>> :

- * Managing your Stress in Tough Economic Times
- * Coping with Job Loss
- * Staying Resilient Through Tough Economic Times
- * Dollars and Sense, Talking to your Children about the Economy

"What is most important is that we learn to manage our stress and don't rely on unhealthy behaviors such as drinking, smoking and sedentary activities as a response to stress. Being active, eating healthy and spending time with supportive friends and family all serve to keep stress levels in check," said Dr. Nordal, "And if you still find yourself overwhelmed you may want to talk to a psychologist to help develop strategies to manage your stress."

Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of the American Psychological Association between April 8-10, 2009 among 2,160 US adults aged 18 and older. Results were weighted as needed for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income to be representative of the US population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

Copies of data tables referenced in this survey are available on request.

#

The American Psychological Association (APA), in Washington, DC, is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes more than 150,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of promoting health, education and human welfare.