

Communicating Effectively About Mental Health

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

1:00 – 2:00 pm ET / 10:00 – 11:00 am PT

This event will be recorded. The recording will be available on publichealthcollaborative.org tomorrow.

All attendees are automatically muted upon entry.



Save the Date: PHCC's First-Ever Virtual Conference



Insights to Practice: A Conference to Inspire Public Health Communications

Wednesday, March 26, 2025
1pm - 4:45pm ET / 10am - 1:45pm PT

Sign up for the PHCC newsletter to be the
first to register!

Closed Captioning

If you'd like to use closed captions: Hover over the “More” button on the bottom of your Zoom screen.

- Live closed captioning is being provided by AI Media.

Meet Today's Experts



David Brown

*Farmer, Communications
Professional, and Mental Health
Advocate*



Catherine K. Ettman, PhD

*Assistant Professor,
Department of Health Policy
& Management
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg
School of Public Health*



Mervin Dino, MPH

*Assistant Commissioner,
Community Health
Chicago Department of
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Alisha Warren, LCSW

*Assistant Commissioner,
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Chicago Department of
Public Health*

Don't Forget to Use the Chat!

Add your questions to the chat throughout the webinar. We'll do our best to get to all of them, but if we don't get to yours, we will repurpose your pressing questions for future webinars, resources, and PHCC Academy courses.



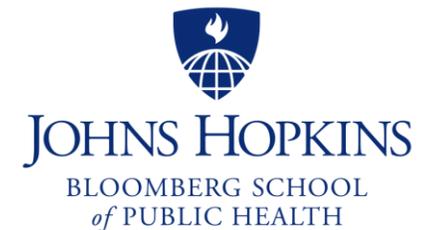
Population mental health, wealth, and policy: lessons learned from the CLIMB Study and more

Catherine K. Ettman, PhD

Assistant Professor, Department of Health Policy and Management

Public Health Communications Collaborative

February 25, 2025



- I. **Mental health in the U.S.**
- II. Assets and mental health
- III. Leveraging policy for change

Language

Mental Health The successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and the ability to adapt to change and to cope with adversity.

Mental Illness The term that refers collectively to all mental disorders, which are health conditions characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.

Mental Health Problems Signs and symptoms of insufficient intensity or duration to meet the criteria for any mental disorder.

“ Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community... Mental health is more than the absence of mental disorders.

”

- World Health Organization

Why care about mental health?

Poor mental health is common

Poor mental health is costly

Poor mental health can influence other health outcomes

Why communicate about mental health?

Mental health can unite us

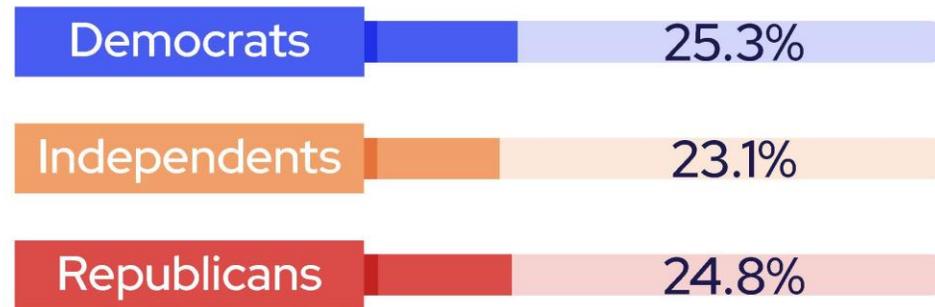
Mental health is bipartisan

Things in our control can change mental health

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1 in 4 U.S. adults screen positive for depression



The impact of depression:

Affected **over 22.5 million** U.S. adults in 2022¹

Costs the U.S. **more than \$326B** each year²
(2020 dollars)

¹ SAMHSA ² Greenberg PE et al, 2021

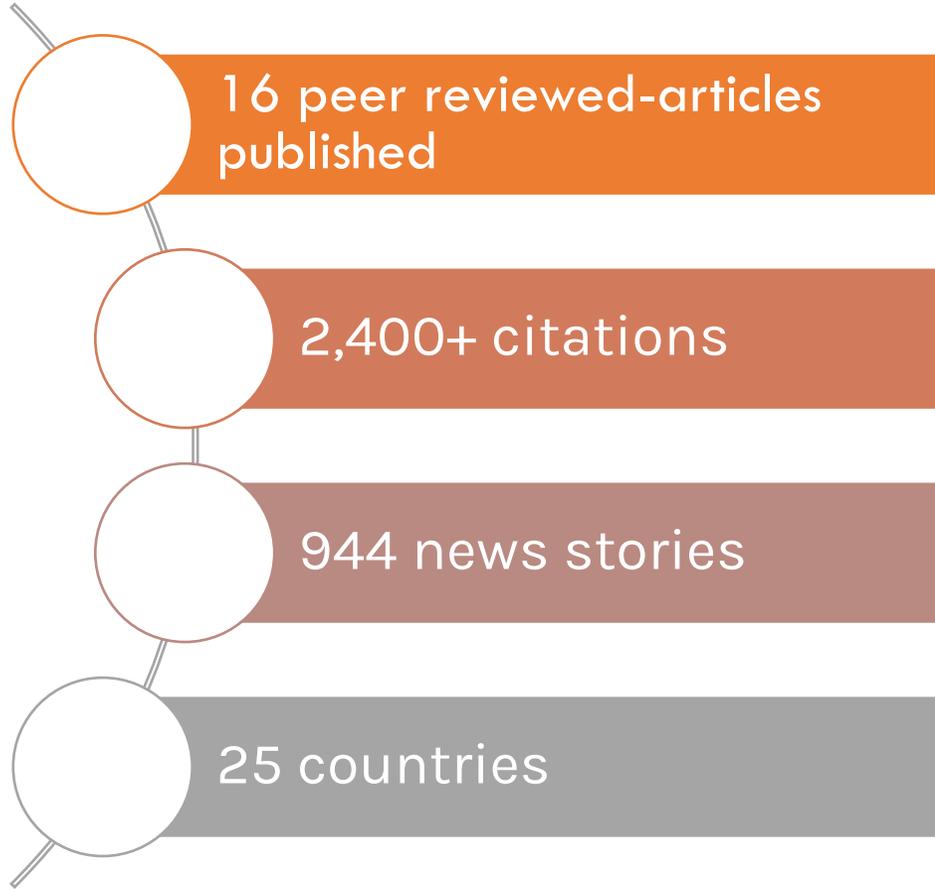
The COVID-19 and Life Stressors Impact on Mental Health and Well-being Study (CLIMB)

Nationally representative sample of U.S. adults ages 18+ years, 8 years (N=3,011)

NORC at the University of Chicago AmeriSpeak Sample

Original questionnaire, based on validated screeners

CLIMB Study snapshot: 2021-2024



VOGUE

POLITICO

THE HILL

U.S. News & WORLD REPORT

THE BALTIMORE BANNER

The Miami Herald

USA TODAY

CNN

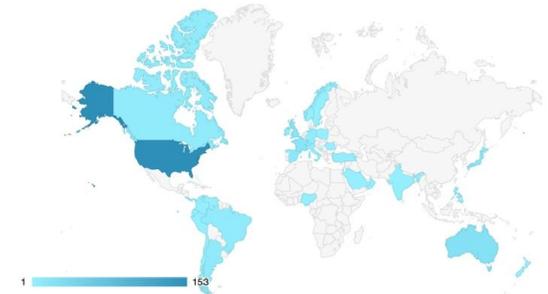
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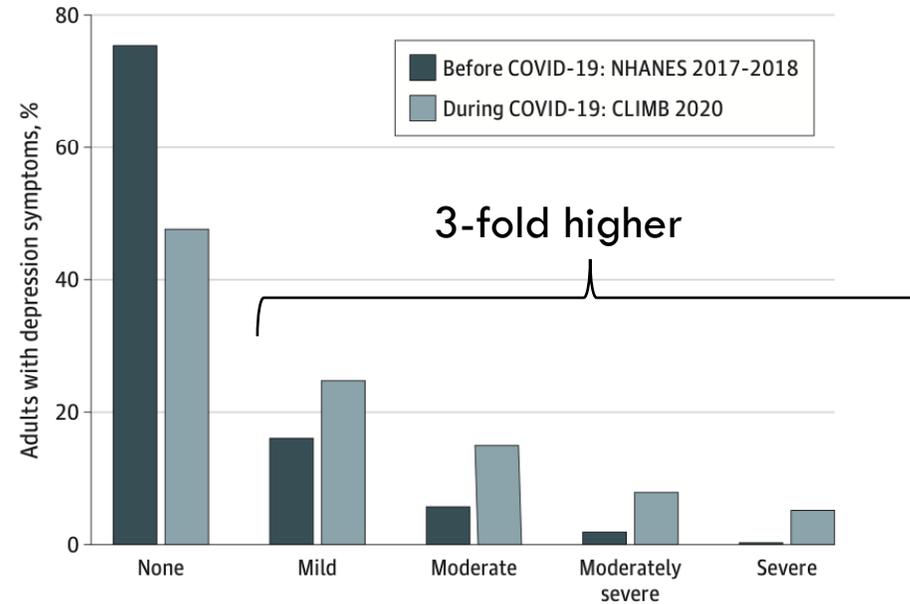
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npr



Depression symptoms in U.S. adults before and during the COVID-19 pandemic

Figure. Depression Symptoms in US Adults Before and During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic



Before COVID-19 estimates from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) from 2017-2018. During COVID-19 estimates from the COVID-19 and Life Stressors Impact on Mental Health and Well-being (CLIMB) study collected from March 31 to April 13, 2020. Depression symptoms categories calculated using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9: none (0-4), mild (5-9), moderate (10-14), moderately severe (15-19), and severe (≥ 20). Percentages weighted to the population of noninstitutionalized US adults aged 18 years or older.

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62%
Unmet Mental
Health Care Needs



38%
In Treatment

Nearly 2 in 3 adults (62%) with symptoms of depression had not seen a mental health care provider in the past year



Image from <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/how-to-care-for-your-childs-cast/>



JOHNS HOPKINS
BLOOMBERG SCHOOL
of PUBLIC HEALTH

Center for Mental Health
and Addiction Policy

1 in 3

The number of people who
know someone who has
died of drug overdose.

*Kennedy-Hendricks A, et al.
Experience of Personal Loss Due to Drug Overdose
Among U.S. Adults. JAMA Health Forum, 2024.*



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BOLD SOLUTIONS FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

- I. Mental health in the U.S.
- II. Assets and mental health**
- III. Leveraging policy for change

“[f]or unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance:
but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath”

- Matthew 25:29

The rich get richer and the poor get poorer



During Covid-19, financial assets were associated with lower depressive symptoms

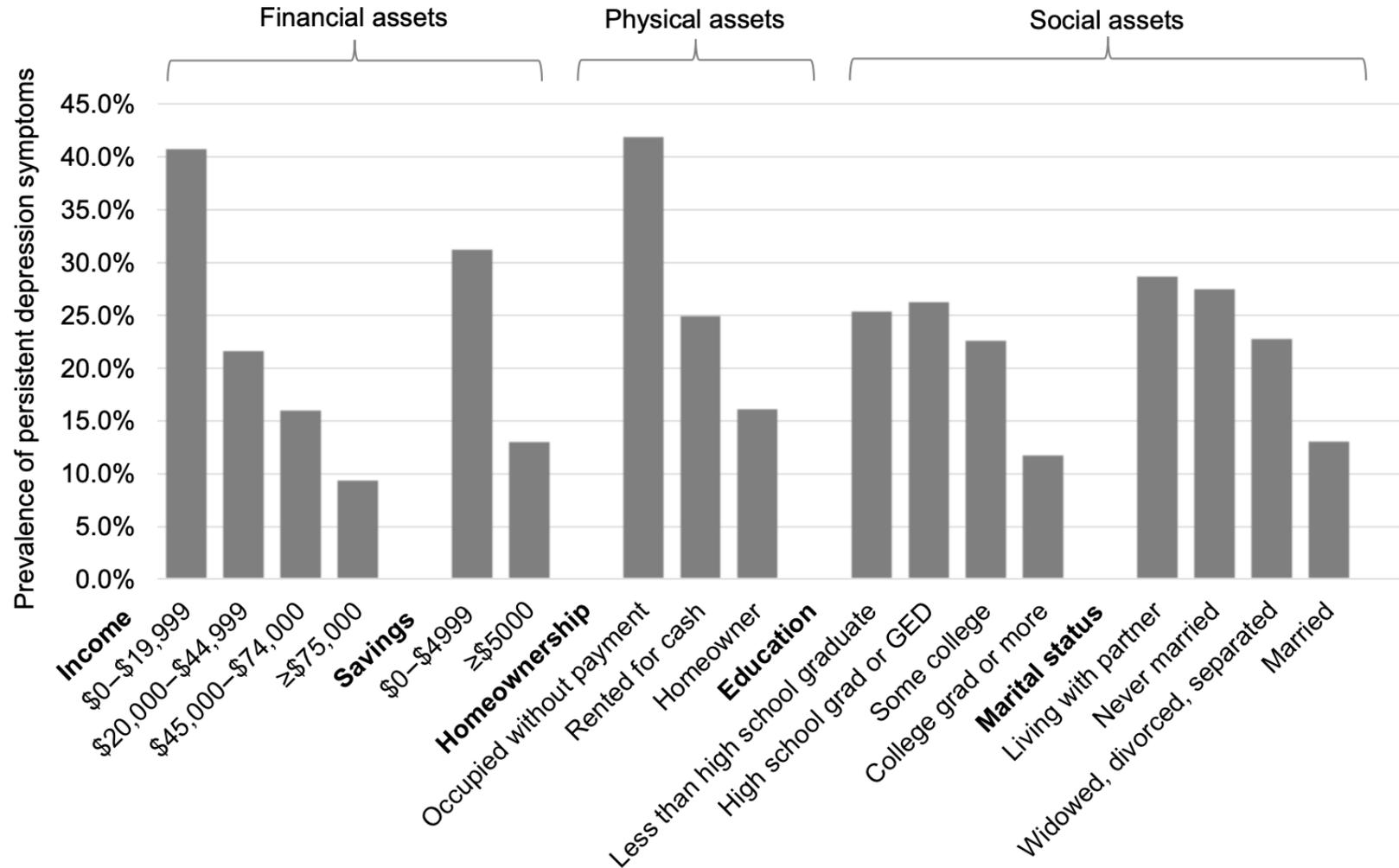
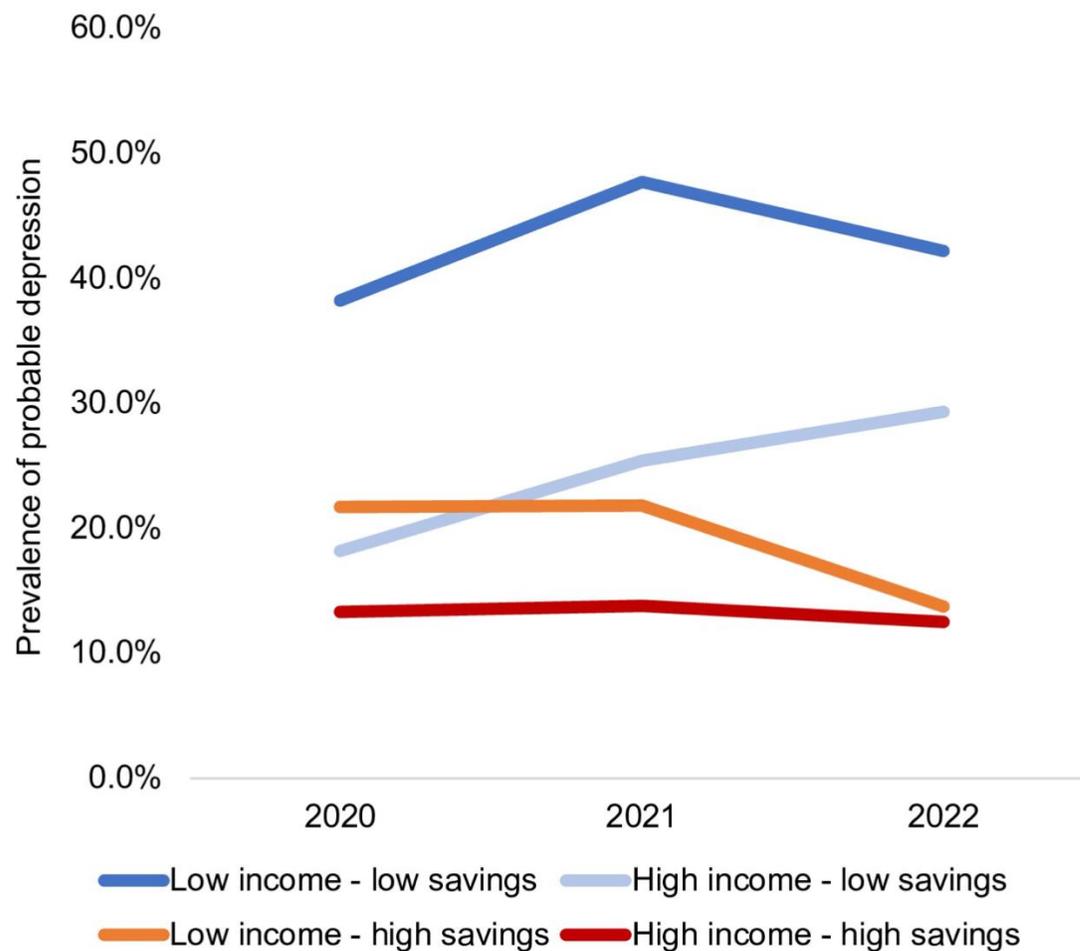


Fig. 1. Prevalence of symptoms of persistent depression in March and April 2021 (T2) by financial assets, physical assets, and social assets in March and April 2020 (T1). Note: T1 assets reported. Symptoms of persistent depression defined as presence of PHQ-9 score of 10 or greater at T1 and T2. GED, graduate equivalency degree/general educational diploma. Percentages weighted using T2 survey weights.

Prevalence of probable depression over time, by asset groups



Having \$10,000 more in individual income is associated with lower symptoms of anxiety and depression

C.K. Ettman et al.

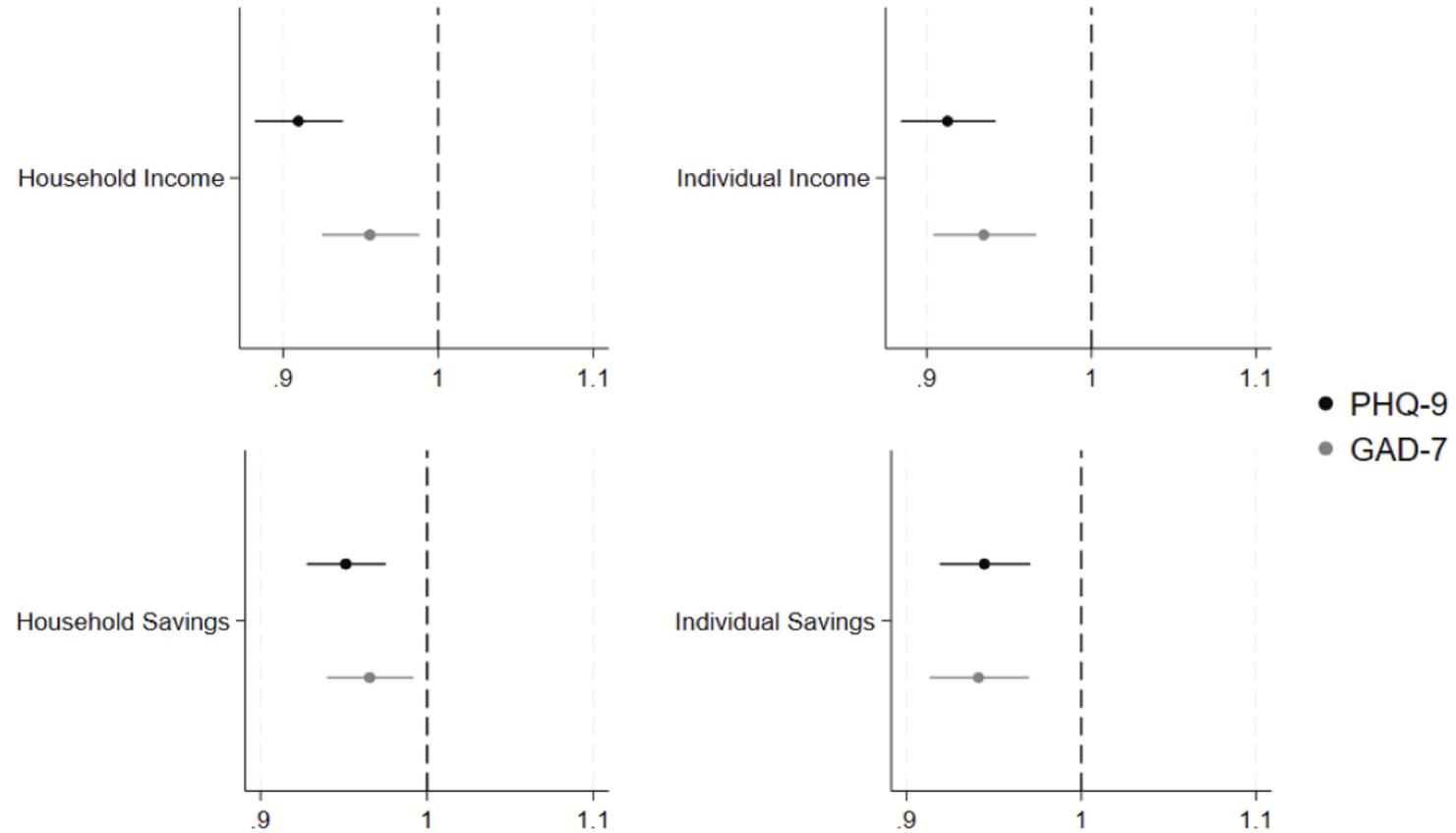


Fig. 2. Odds of exceeding the clinical threshold of the PHQ-9 or GAD-7 adjusted for demographic indicators and baseline mental health: separate financial asset models.

BY THE NUMBERS

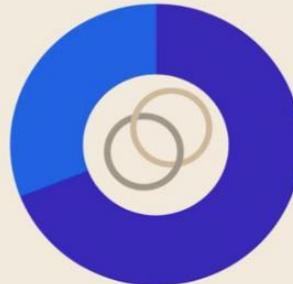
ASSETS + DEPRESSION

Relative to persons with lower assets



88.2%
30 out of
34 articles
report

**HIGHER
INCOME**



72.2%
13 out of 18
articles
report

MARRIAGE



100%
5 out of 5
of articles
report

**HOME
OWNERSHIP**

are associated with lower depressive symptoms in a systematic review of the literature during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- I. Mental health in the U.S.
- II. Assets and mental health
- III. Leveraging policy for change

Scholarship



Public awareness



Policy change

Research

Translation

Public action

Understanding

Communication

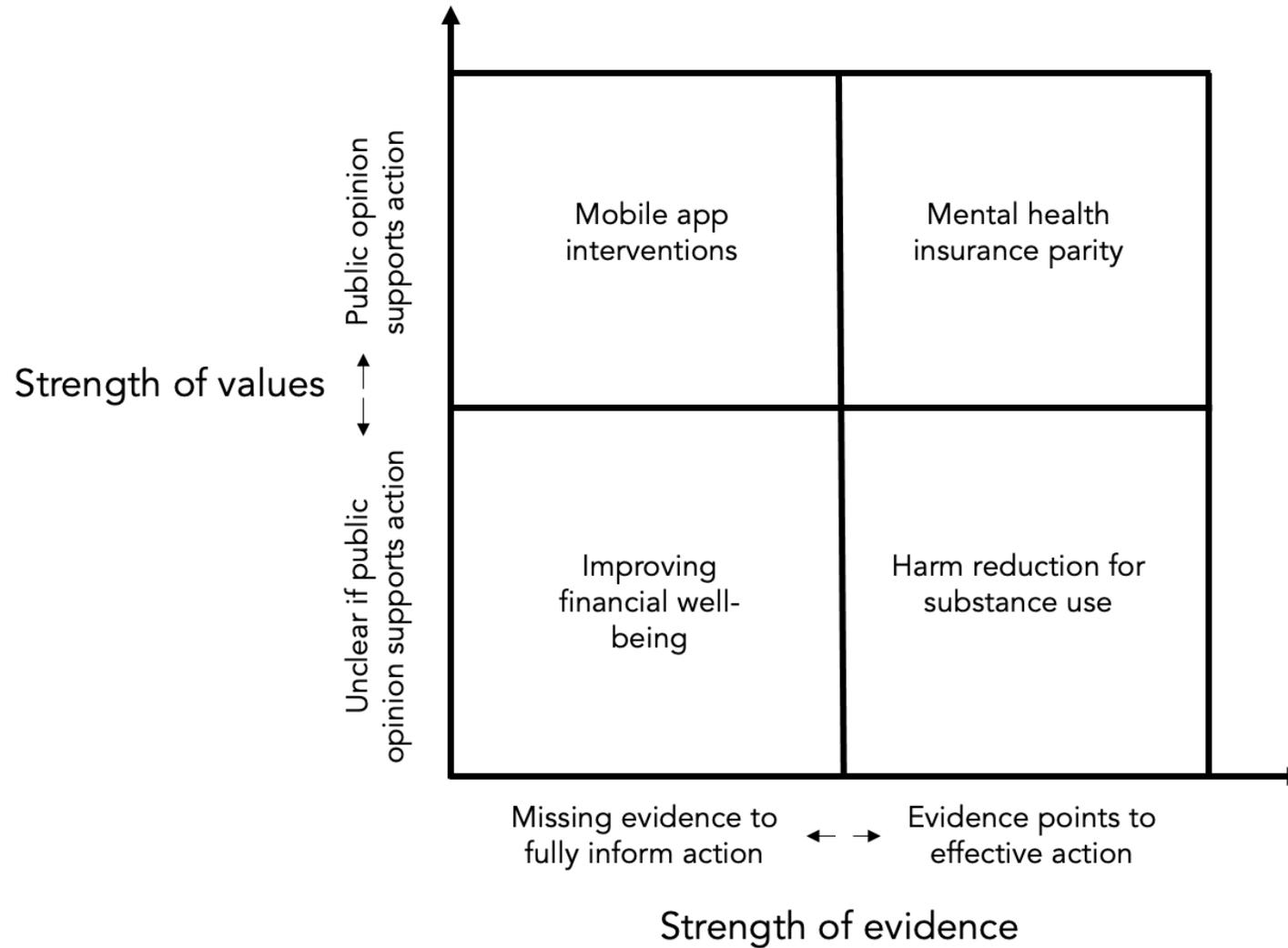
Private action

Teaching

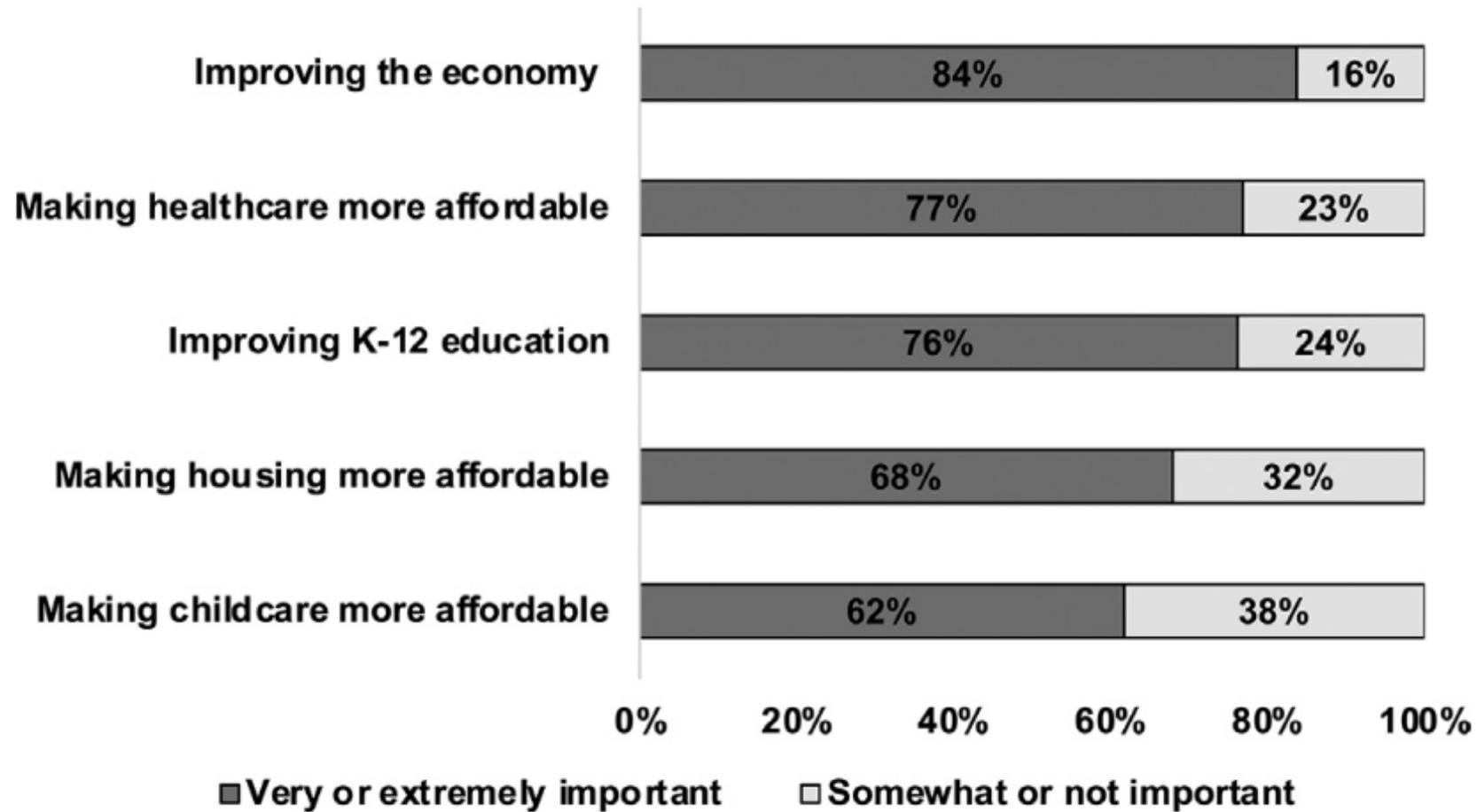
Advocacy

Personal action

The policy evidence and values framework for mental health



Policies that improve health are highly supported by U.S. adults





The reported rate of overdose loss was
not statistically different across self-described
Democrats, Republicans and Independents.

*Kennedy-Hendricks A, et al. Experience of Personal Loss Due to Drug Overdose Among U.S. Adults.
JAMA Health Forum, 2024.*



Center for Mental Health
and Addiction Policy

Translating research



As a nation, our mental health is on the decline and substance use disorder is at an all-time high. This has wide-reaching societal impacts; one in three Americans know someone who has died of an overdose, and one in five live with a mental illness. People with mental health and/or substance use disorders deserve access to treatment and support. In addition to treating those affected, county officials can also help prevent mental health and substance use disorders in their communities.

Housing

Housing stress — often brought on by insufficient, poor quality, or unaffordable housing — is associated with poorer mental health and higher rates of substance use. Increasing access to high-quality, affordable housing, therefore, can help prevent mental illness and substance use in a community by reducing housing-related stressors. See NACo's *Advancing Local Housing Affordability: Best Practice and Policy Recommendations for County Leaders* for ways that counties can improve housing in their communities.

Education

Higher levels of education are associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety. Expanding access to early childhood education is one way that county officials can improve education in their communities. High quality, accessible pre-K programs lead to increased high school graduation rates and higher earnings, which ultimately improve mental health and prevent substance use disorders. Adolescence is also an important time to intervene and prevent substance use disorders. School-based intervention programs that educate adolescents about addiction, dispel misconceptions, help young people develop social-emotional skills, and facilitate the practice of resistance techniques can be effective in reducing rates of substance use disorder in a community. *Botwin LifeSkills Training* is one example of a curriculum that has proven effective at reducing prescription drug misuse by as much as 79%.

Making the Case: Housing, Mental Health & Substance Use

In one large, nationally representative study that followed individuals over five years, those who experienced some form of housing stress had worse mental health than those who did not experience housing stress.

Similarly, another study showed that substance use was highest among participants who were unstably housed.

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Mental Health as a Beneficiary of Wealth Building

By Catherine K. Ettman | November 19, 2024



Public health successes

Reduced lung cancer

Improved birth outcomes

Lowered motor vehicle deaths

Reduced lead poisoning

Extended longevity

And more

Public health successes

Reduced lung cancer

Improved birth outcomes

Lowered motor vehicle deaths

Reduced lead poisoning

Extended longevity

And more

Public health policies

Indoor smoking bans

Folic acid fortification

Vehicle safety standards

Removing lead from gas

Improving the world around us

Up to us



Thank you

Collaborators

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Funders

de Beaumont Foundation

National Institutes of Health

[1F31 MD017133-01]

National Institutes of Health

[T32 AG 23482-15]

Boston University-Rockefeller 3-D Commission

Hopkins Business of Health Initiative

Hopkins Center for Health Disparities and Solutions



Recommendations for CLIMB questions?
Feedback or suggestions?

Thank you!

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CLIMB studies published

1. Ettman CK, Abdalla S, Cohen GH, Sampson L, Vivier PM, Galea S. Prevalence of depression symptoms in U.S. adults before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. *JAMA Network Open*. 2020; 3(9): e2019686-e2019686.
2. Ettman CK, Cohen GH, Abdalla SM, Sampson L, Trinquart L, Castrucci BC, Bork RH, Clark MA, Wilson IB, Vivier PM, Galea S. Persistent depressive symptoms during COVID-19: a national, population-representative, longitudinal study of U.S. adults. *The Lancet Regional Health Americas*. 2021 Oct 4.
3. Ettman CK, Cohen GH, Abdalla SM, Trinquart L, Castrucci BC, Bork RH, Clark MA, Wilson IB, Vivier PM, Galea S. Assets, stressors, and persistent depression over the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Science Advances*. 2022; 8(9).
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7. Dewhurst E, Ettman CK, Bork RH, Thornburg B, Abdalla SM, Galea S, Castrucci BC. Symptoms of post-traumatic stress during the COVID-19 pandemic in the governmental public health workforce and general population. *Journal of Public Health Management & Practice*. 2023; 10.1097.
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10. Kennedy-Hendricks A, Ettman CK, Gollust S, Bandara S, Abdalla SM, Castrucci BC, Galea S. Experience of Personal Loss Due to Drug Overdose Among US Adults. *JAMA Health Forum*. 2024.
11. Ettman CK, Cohen GH, Abdalla SM, Castrucci BC, Bork RH, Galea S. Depression and assets during the COVID-19 pandemic: a longitudinal study of mental health across income and savings groups. *PLOS ONE*. 2024.
12. Hatton CR, Ettman CK, Gollust S, Abdalla SM, Galea S. Mental Health and U.S. Attitudes Toward Social Determinants of Health Policies. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 2024.
13. Ettman CK, Hatton CR, Castrucci BC, Galea S. Mental Health and Mental Health Care Utilization Across Political Affiliation in U.S. Adults. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*. 2024.
14. Ettman CK, Abdalla SM, Wang R, Rosenberg SB, Galea S. Generalized anxiety disorder in low-resourced adults: a nationally representative, longitudinal cohort study across the COVID-19 pandemic. *American Journal of Epidemiology*. 2024.
15. Ettman CK, Thornburg B, Abdalla SM, Meiselbach MK, Galea S. Financial assets and mental health over time. *Scientific Reports*. 2024.
16. Ettman CK, Dewhurst E, Satpathy-Horton R, et al. Whose assets? Individual and household income and savings and mental health in a longitudinal cohort. *Social Science & Medicine* 2025.

Next Up



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Q&A

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