

INFLUENCING YOUNG AMERICA TO ACT

SPECIAL COVID-19 RESEARCH REPORT - MAY 2020

Research By:  Cause & Social
Influence)))

The Influencing Young America to Act Special COVID-19 Research Report series reflects the actions young Americans are taking related to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic declared in the U.S. on March 11, 2020.

This special series is part of the Cause and Social Influence research initiative launched by INFLUENCE|SG in 2018. The initiative examines how Americans 18 to 30 years old (Generation Z and millennials) at any given time are influenced by and influence others to intentional action on social issues.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

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INTRODUCTION:

This brief presents results from the third of a four-part research series by the Cause & Social Influence initiative to track young Americans' actions related to the 2020 COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. This study covers actions during the three weeks preceding May 15, 2020, or nine weeks after the White House officially declared the pandemic.

The expanding view of philanthropy we have seen to date continued during this third wave of research. Always a demographic that has viewed their actions as of equal value to their monetary gifts, young Americans continue to believe that supporting local business is the most effective action they can take to help others right now. This is their number-one way to show support, while the trend of low charitable giving we have seen since this research began also continues.

The areas of most noticeable change from the two prior reports involve influencers and interacting with others. In its early stages, the pandemic was prompting young Americans to turn away from

social influencers (celebrities and content creators) as information sources. Traditional media became their primary news sources, and local governments were the entities most influencing whether they took action to stop the spread of the virus. Now, however, young Americans have again turned to social influencers for information related to COVID-19. Concurrently, the trend continues of about a third of young Americans doing nothing to slow the spread of the virus.

This wave of research discovered that females are much more uncomfortable than males about certain activities: visiting a hospital (f=58%, m=50%), seeing a movie in a theater (f=64%, m=55%) and attending a cause-related special event in person (f=54%, m=44%). By June 15, though, both genders report anticipating less discomfort, with females still expecting to feel less comfortable than males.

In another 30 days, we will conduct the fourth research wave to reflect how these times are affecting the social actions of young Americans – especially as the country begins to reopen. To download the earlier reports, visit causeandsocialinfluence.com/research.

RESEARCH PROTOCOL:

For this third phase of the research, a quantitative approach was taken with an online survey fielded from 3 PM to 7 PM EST on May 15, 2020, to collect data about the actions taken by young Americans (ages 18-30) related to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) during the preceding three weeks. The survey had 1,049 respondents from a nationally representative sample based on census-projected ethnic and demographic composition. With this

response rate, the data presented has a 95% confidence interval and 3% margin of error. Visit causeandsocialinfluence.com/research-may2020 for more information on the sample.

In analyzing data and drawing conclusions about behavior, researchers acknowledge restrictions suggested and imposed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), the White House, state and local governments and employers. During the period covered by

this survey, while only essential services were open (with limited service), local, state and federal governments were considering various reopening plans. On May 14, *The New York Times* reported that, "Scattershot reopenings of retail stores, nail salons and restaurants around the country have not halted the flood of layoffs, with the government reporting Thursday that nearly 3 million people filed unemployment claims last week, bringing the two-month tally to more than 36 million."

2020 COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) TIMELINE

1/30: WHO declares global public health emergency

3/11: WHO officially declares a pandemic
3/13: U.S. declares national emergency

3/20: Survey 1 opened
3/21: Survey 1 closed

3/26: U.S. leads world in confirmed cases
3/30: States begin stay-at-home directives

4/10: Global deaths surpass 101,000
4/17: Survey 2 fielded 6-10 PM EST

5/15: Survey 3 fielded 3-7 PM EST

January

February

March

April

May

KEY FINDINGS

1. Supporting local business continues to be the number-one and most meaningful way young Americans helped others during the pandemic.

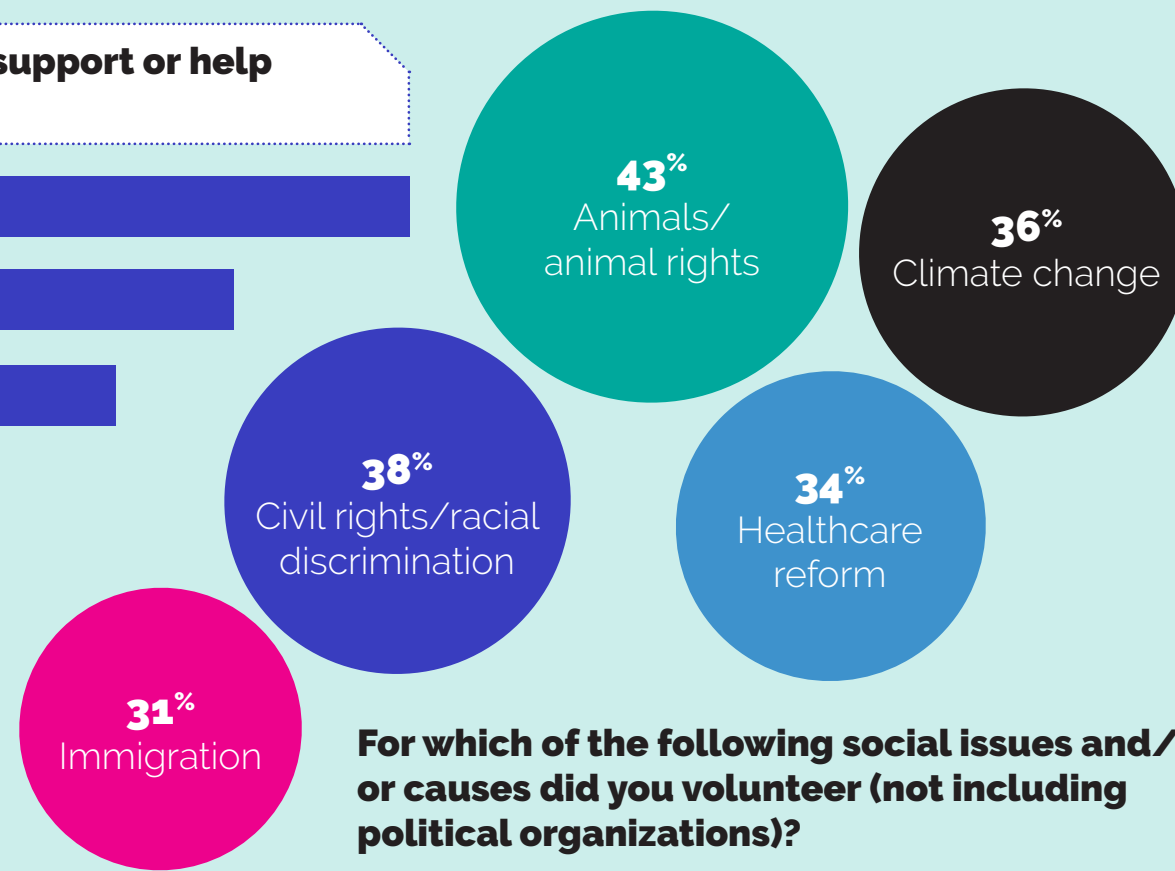
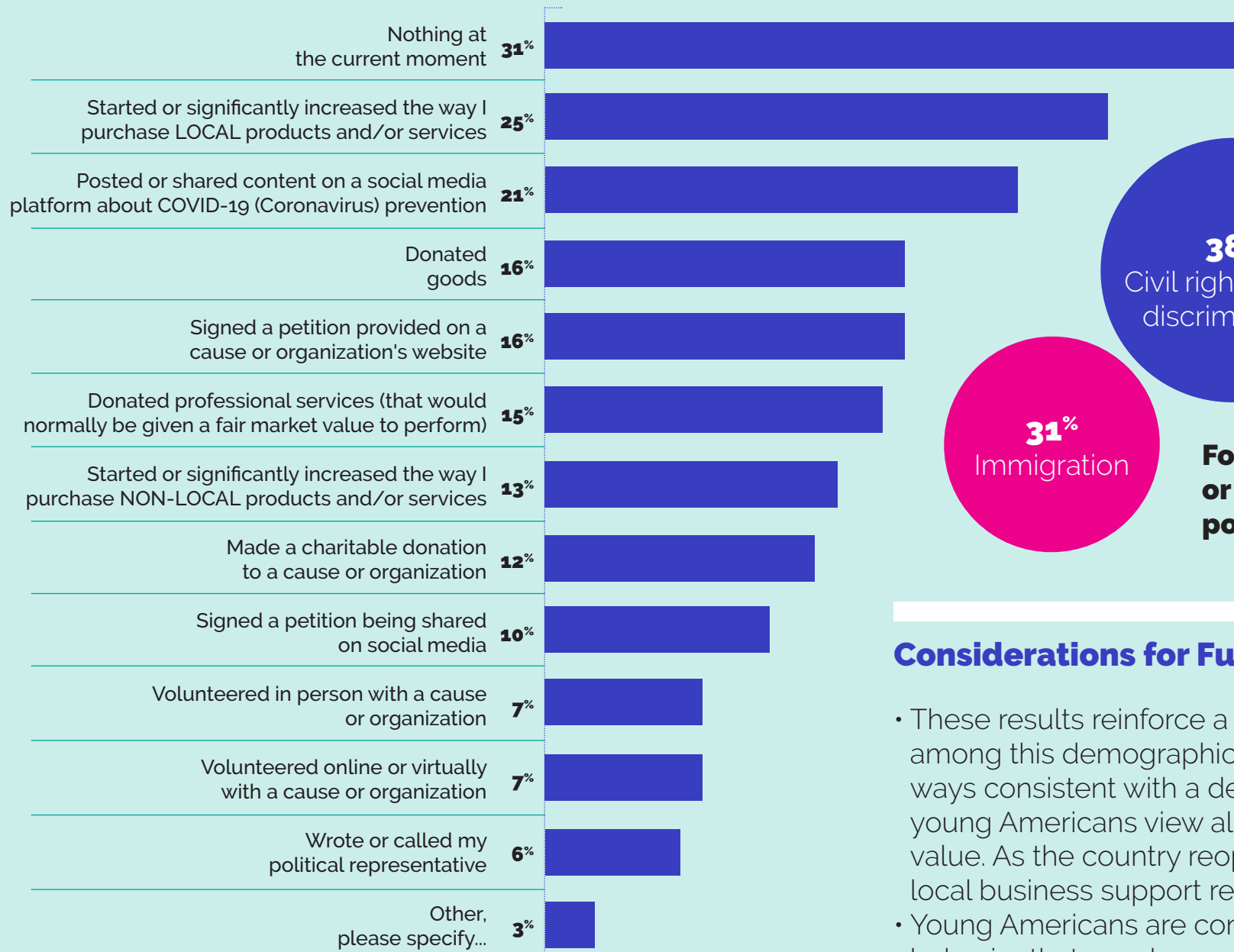
As previously reported in this research series, shopping local was the top action taken to support others during the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. Also continuing was the belief that this action is the most influential one to support others.

Financial charitable giving remained low, continuing a trend from both prior research waves to reinforce that young Americans are not donating as a way to help others. Previous surveys also asked respondents about their level of donating goods and services. To further understand

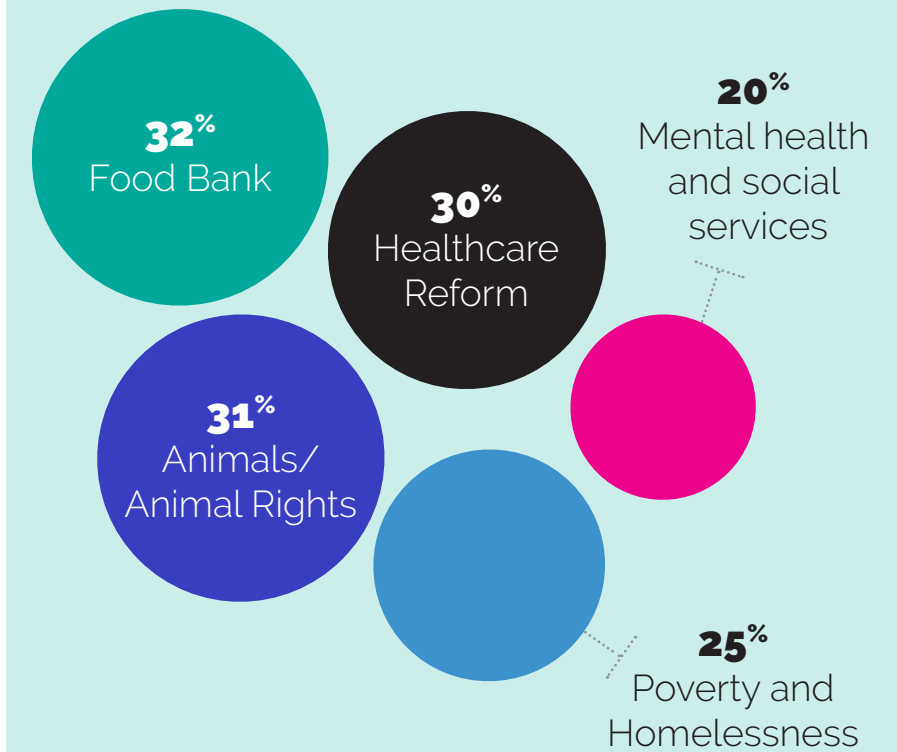
this important data point, this survey separated those categories into two questions, asking respondents if they had a) donated goods and b) donated professional services (such as pro bono legal counsel). April 2020 results showed that 16% of respondents had "donated goods and services;" these May results reveal that 16% donated goods and 15% donated professional services.

Animals/animal rights surged to the top issue for which young Americans volunteered, from 31% in the previous survey to 43% today. The top five causes prompting volunteerism all increased noticeably, with civil rights/racial discrimination moving into the number-two spot from much farther down the list last month.

What actions have you taken in the last three weeks that may support or help other people during the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic?



To which of the following social issues and/or causes did you donate (not including political organizations)?



Considerations for Future Analysis

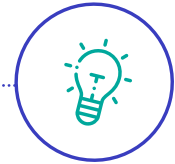
- These results reinforce a broadening philanthropic mindset among this demographic. They are defining "support" in ways consistent with a decade of research showing that young Americans view all their assets as being of equal value. As the country reopens, it will be interesting to see if local business support remains a top choice.
- Young Americans are contributing to shifts in consumer behavior that may become permanent. At the same

time, this demographic is among those facing historic unemployment. As the country reopens, how will young people's consumer behavior change?

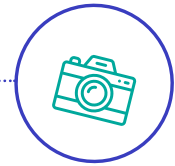
- Civil rights/racial discrimination was not among the top five causes for which this demographic volunteered in the last research wave; this issue has moved into the number-two spot. Recent media coverage highlighting the inequities among races/ethnicities affected by COVID-19 (Coronavirus) could be a contributing factor and something to watch.

2. Young Americans are turning back to influencers for news on COVID-19.

Influencers by Definition



Content Creator – an individual who grew their audience by creating content online and now uses their online presence as a primary profession.

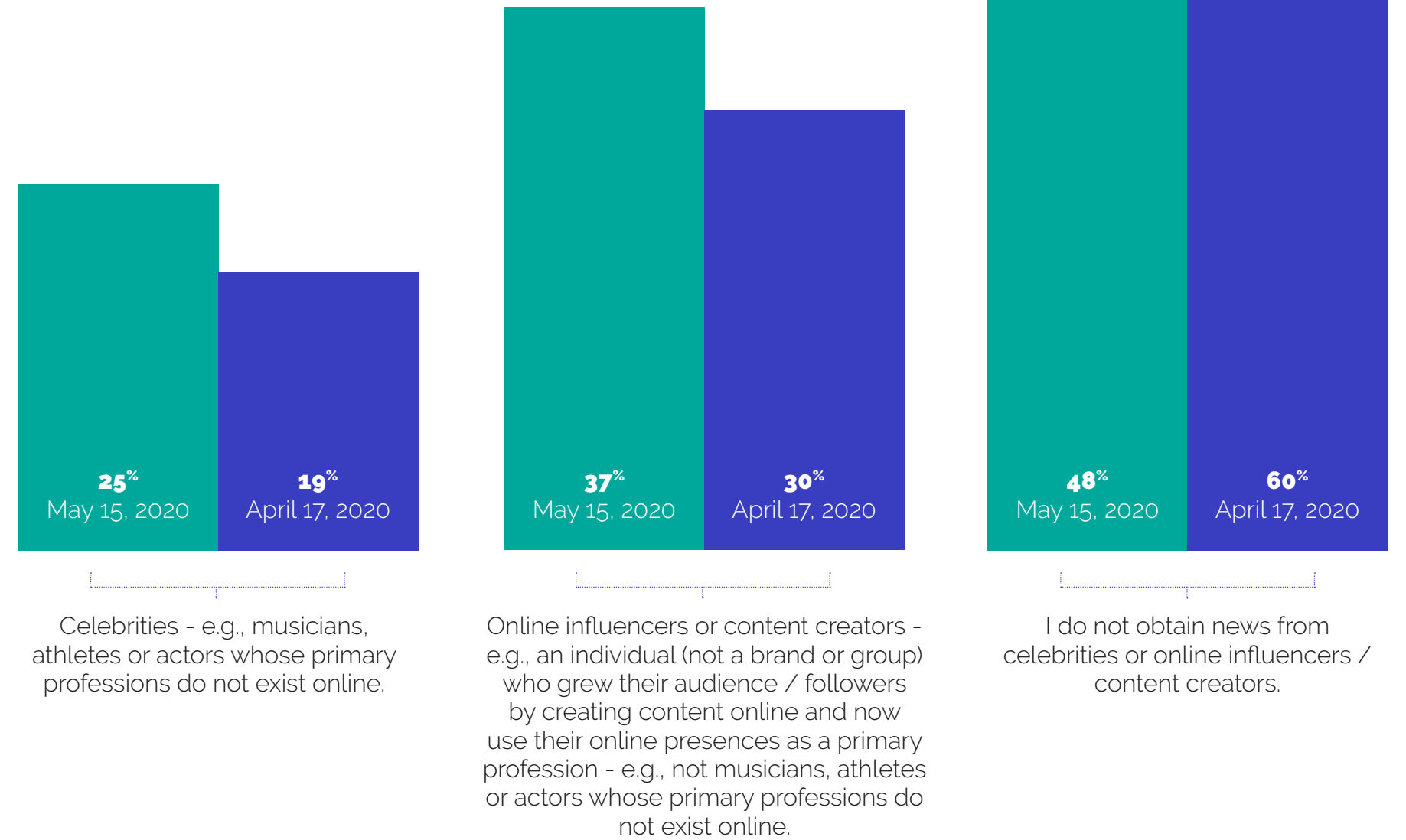


Celebrity – an individual who is famous for their primary work done offline, though they may have an online presence.

Previous research in this series, conducted as COVID-19 was in its early stages in the U.S., revealed that influencers were not a source of pandemic news for 60% of young Americans. As of late April, much unverifiable information was being shared digitally, and celebrities had just begun to regularly broadcast programming online and over the airwaves from their homes.

As more information became available and the stresses of isolation became clearer, many brands, agencies, celebrities, content creators and the White House began spreading messages related to the pandemic, thereby expanding the public's choices. Now, the percentage of young Americans who said that influencers were not a resource for pandemic news has dropped to 48%. Of those who turned to influencers, 25% cited celebrities and 37% cited content creators as their resource of choice.

Do you obtain news about COVID-19 (Coronavirus) from celebrities or online influencers / content creators?



Considerations for Future Analysis

- The longer the pandemic wears on, the more likely people will become inured to social distancing, isolation, working from home and visiting with others via video conferencing. How will this affect young Americans' involvement with causes, and how can influencers help show them how to stay involved?
- More media coverage and public service announcements are being dedicated to how the isolation imposed by the pandemic may affect such issues as mental health, youth suicide and domestic violence. How will the behavior of young Americans change as both victims and supporters of such issues?

3. Young Americans are not comfortable performing activities in public, including volunteering and attending events for causes.

At the start of this research phase, news media stories about beaches and apartments filled with young people were being replaced by public regret of their behavior. This is when we began tracking young Americans' level of comfort in interacting with others and how it was affecting their involvement with causes (volunteering, attending special events, etc.).

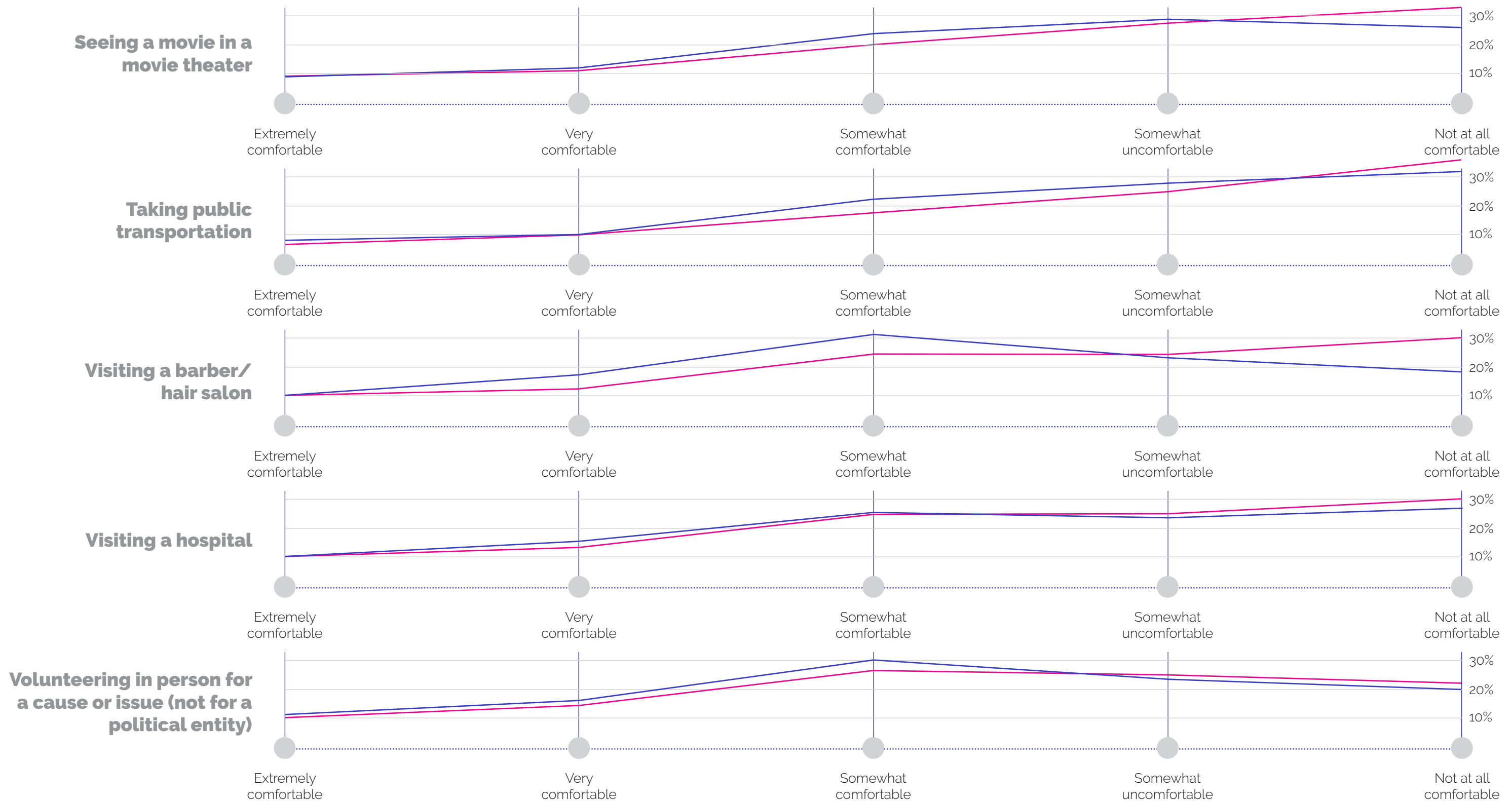
Right now, young Americans primarily are uncomfortable with public activities. Going to work and seeing a doctor are the most acceptable, while individuals are least comfortable with taking public transit (66%) and seeing a movie in a theater (60%). Nearly half (49%) are uncomfortable attending a cause's special event in person, with another quarter (27%) only somewhat comfortable. Similarly, 48% are uncomfortable volunteering in person for a cause or issue, with another 27% only somewhat comfortable. Respondents anticipate their level of comfort in volunteering and attending events growing slightly by June 15.

Using the scale below, indicate your level of comfort in resuming the following activities that are listed: ● Today ● June 15



Using the scale below, indicate your level of comfort in resuming the following activities that are listed:

● Today ● June 15



Conclusion

This is the third of four reports at 7, 30, 60 and 90 days into the officially declared U.S. national emergency around COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Though parts of the country and economy are reopening, young Americans are still uncomfortable with resuming in-person activities in support of others. At the same time, a looming presidential election may begin to bring attention to issues not at the forefront currently. We will continue observing this demographic's changing behaviors in real time to determine whether actions during this pandemic have a lasting effect on social issue involvement that makes causes and companies change the way they approach and engage young Americans in the future.