



ADAPTIVE COPING FOR COVID-RELATED STRESS

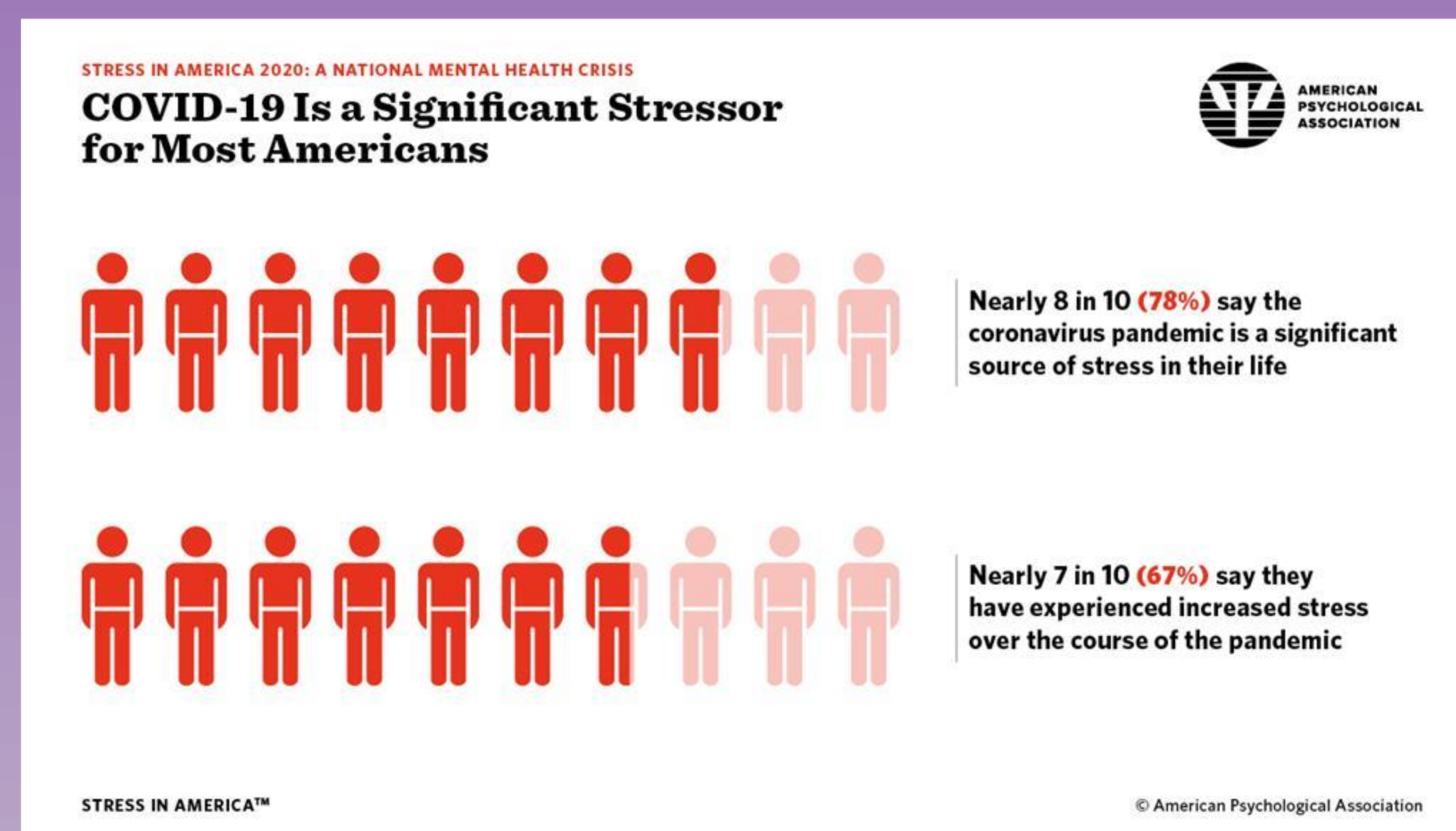
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INTRODUCTION

COVID STRESS SYNDROME



<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2020/infographics-october>

Stressors related to COVID-19:

- Fear of contracting disease
- Social isolation
- Job loss
- Additional workload for parents and caregivers

Resulting in:

- Irregular sleep patterns
- Undesired weight changes
- Increased alcohol consumption

METHOD

Combining published research and theory with data collected through interviews this project explored the positive and negative effects of spirituality and physical exercise on COVID-19 related stress.

Table 1
Sample Participant Responses to the Question: How has COVID-19 impacted your life?

Participant Pseudonym	Participant Response
Nina	"Fear of everything, if someone coughs around me do they have it? Should I be around people, what if I have it and give it to someone else?"
Shelley	"We had new work mandates. We had to wear double masks, plus shields and aprons. New precautions actually seemed to create uneasiness in patients."
Debra	"I was just off balance. My routines were not available. Everything just changed so drastically."

Table 2
Sample Participant Responses to the Question: Do you see yourself as religious/spiritual, if yes, how so?

Participant Pseudonym	Participant Response
Debra	"I trust in God. I know He'll take care of me."
Shelley	"My relationship with God is the foundation of my life."
Andrea	"I have a personal relationship with God and I'm part of a church."

Table 3
Sample Participant Responses to the Question: Has spirituality aided or hindered your physical/psychological wellbeing over the recent year?

Participant Pseudonym	Participant Response
Whitney	"I definitely relied more on God this past year. I know that Jesus is the Great Physician and I see COVID-19 as spiritual warfare."
Nina	"It has been a challenge to stay in faith and not doubt. I've tried to stay positive, but I pray for something and then it didn't turn out the way I thought."
James	"It definitely helped me. Through everything I was calm because I knew God would provide for us and sustain us."

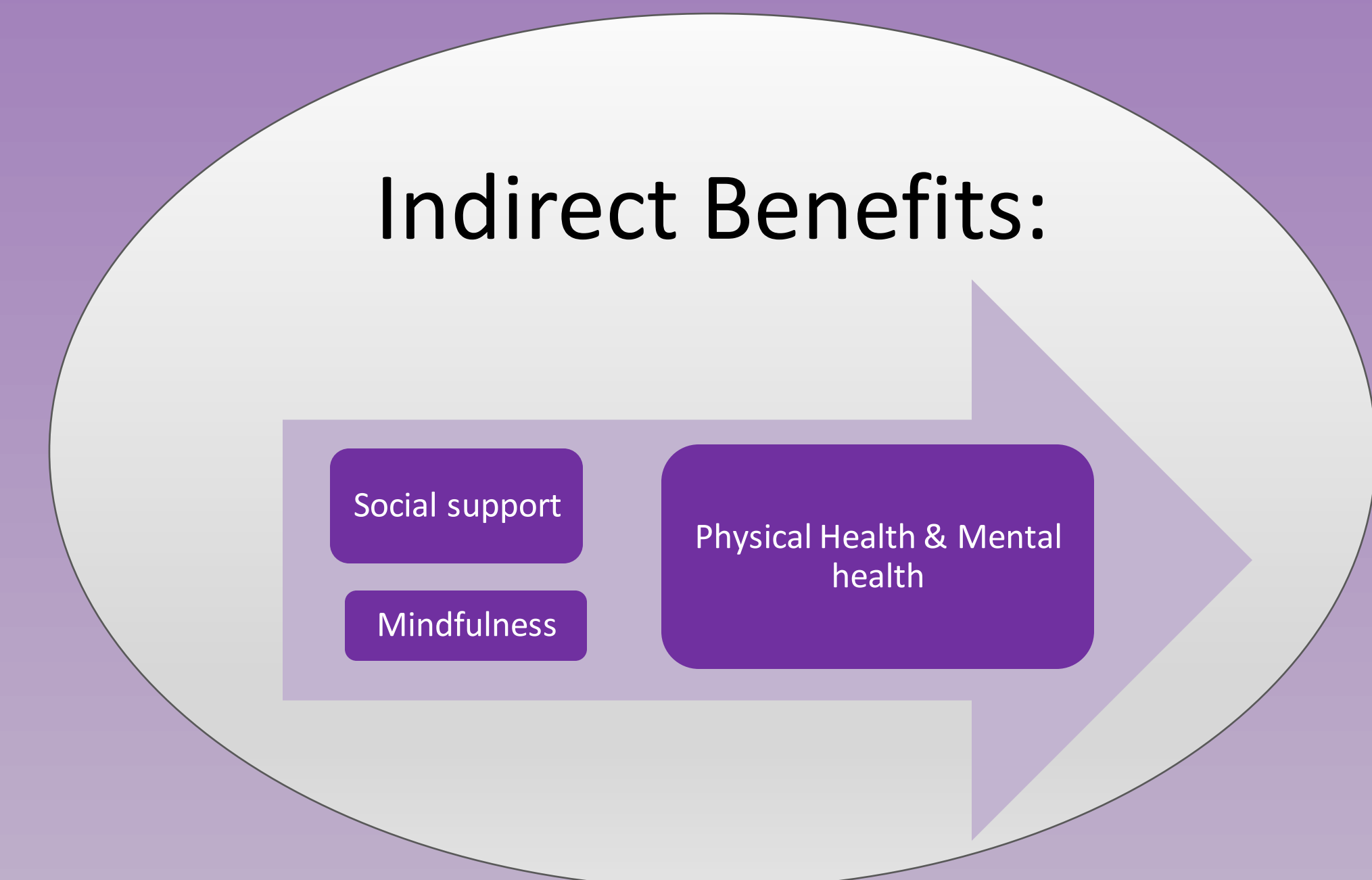
Table 4
Sample Participant Responses to the Question: Do you see yourself as physically active and if yes, how so?

Participant Pseudonym	Participant Response
Debra	"Yes, before COVID-19 I worked out at the senior center 5 days a week, taking one-hour classes each time."
James	"Yes, I have a gym membership and work out regularly."
Whitney	"Yes, I run several times a week and have a gym membership."

Table 5
Sample Participant Responses to the Question: Has physical activity aided or hindered your physical/psychological wellbeing over the recent year?

Participant Pseudonym	Participant Response
Debra	"Physical activity just makes our lives better."
James	"I would say physical activity helped me during COVID-19, but the gym was closed for a couple of months and when I tried to work out at home, I would lose my focus. There were always other things I needed to be doing at home."
Nina	"Lockdowns did hurt being physically active, but it helped when I did."

All names have been modified to maintain anonymity.



DISCUSSION

The restrictions placed on society by the COVID-19 pandemic for the purpose of limiting spread of the disease appear to have produced a different set of potential chronic health issues. Through lockdown and social distancing measures the general public lost access to key elements of daily life. The literature and qualitative interview data primarily support a negative association between participation in spiritual and physical activity and COVID-19 related stress. These findings are not surprising based on previous research investigating coping and other chronic stressors.