Long COVID and Mental Health Facts

- Nearly 1 in 5 adults aged 18-65 who have had COVID-19 will also suffer from Long COVID. (*CDC*)

- Asian American (AA) adults who have not been vaccinated are the least likely racial group to have antibodies for the virus that causes COVID. (CDC) Asian Americans also have the highest rate of Long COVID-19 with the highest rate of severity in symptoms. *(U.S Census Bureau)*

- Rates of anxiety and depression increased by 25% in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. (*WHO*)

- In 2021, 40% of AA adults and 38% of NHOPI adults reported having mental health issues, compared to ~10% and 16.6% in 2019, respectively. (*AHA, SAMHSA*)

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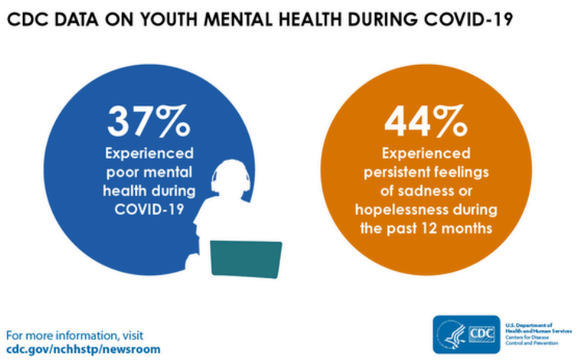
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APIAHF ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER AMERICAN HEALTH FORUM

SALDEF Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund

The Intersection of Long COVID and Mental Health

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Available Resources

1. Contact Asian Lifenet’s hotline at 1-877-990-8585 for immediate support in Cantonese, Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, and Fujianese.
2. Contact NAMI at 800-950-6264 to see if there is a support group available specific to your needs.
3. Survivor Corps created an interactive map to help people find a Post-COVID Center near them.
4. Find a culturally relevant therapist through the Asian Mental Health Collective
5. Refer to NAAPIMHA’s website to review culturally relevant mental health resources and AANHPI providers.

How are Long COVID and mental health related?

- Due to overlap in psychiatric symptoms of Long COVID and mental illnesses, it can be difficult to accurately diagnose Long COVID. (*AHA*)

- It can also be difficult to verify if mental health symptoms were present prior to Long COVID, or if they emerged after the illness. (*AHA*)

- Shared symptoms between Long COVID and mental health conditions include: sleep issues, fatigue, changes in appetite and concentration, and others. (*AMA, HHS*)

- Some populations are at higher risk for Long COVID such as ethnic minorities, the elderly, LGBTQ+ people, and people who have preexisting mental health conditions or physical disabilities. (*HHS*)

Lubell, J. (2022, Dec 20). For patients with long COVID, look out for psychiatric sequelae. American Medical Association.

Williamson, L. (2023, August 17). Understanding the link between long COVID and mental health conditions. American Heart Association News.

U.S Department of Health and Human Services. (2023). HHS Issues Advisory on Mental Health Symptoms and Conditions Related to Long COVID. HHS.

Long COVID FAQ



What is Long COVID?
Long COVID is known by many names, including Post-COVID Conditions, post-acute COVID-19, and chronic COVID, among others. It is characterized by health problems that occur at least 4 weeks after initial infection with COVID-19. (*CDC*)

How do I know if I have Long COVID?
There is no test that can diagnose Long COVID. Visit your doctor or go to a post-COVID Care Center (PCCC) to receive a health assessment and diagnosis.

The assessment will cover a full physical and mental health assessment to determine the best treatment plan. (*CDC*)

Is Long COVID preventable?
Yes! Taking at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine decreases the chances of long COVID by about 30%. (*Marra*)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023, July 20). Long COVID or Post-COVID Conditions. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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Long COVID & Mental Health FAQ



If I have Long COVID, will I also have mental health issues?

Long COVID is associated with increased risk of mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. (*Goodman et al.*) It is difficult for your body to cope with ongoing struggles and lifestyle changes; over time it can result in mental health struggles. There is no definite answer, which is why it's important to seek help from a healthcare provider and take steps to care for your mental and physical health.

How can I treat mental health issues caused by Long COVID?

If you think you may be suffering from mental health issues, please seek advice from a healthcare professional. Treatment plans will vary based on your specific symptoms and conditions. You can also implement holistic self-care strategies and healthy coping mechanisms to support your mental health.

Goodman ML, Molldrem S, Elliott A, Robertson D, Keiser P. Long COVID and mental health correlates: a new chronic condition fits existing patterns. Health Psychol Behav Med. 2023 Jan 8;11(1):2164498. doi: 10.1080/21642850.2022.2164498. PMID: 36643576; PMCID: PMC9833408.

mental health matters

Mental Health Self-Care Strategies



Practice Mindfulness
Deep breathing and meditation can help calm your mind



Exercise regularly
Even small amounts of regular exercise can improve your mental and physical health



Express Yourself
Journaling, art, or other enjoyable hobbies can help foster positive thoughts



Socialize with others
Friends and family can help by providing emotional support and fun times



Implement Daily Self-Care Routines
Improving your sleep schedule and eating habits can help ensure your body has the energy it needs

National Institute of Mental Health. "Caring for Your Mental Health." National Institute of Mental Health, February 2024. https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health