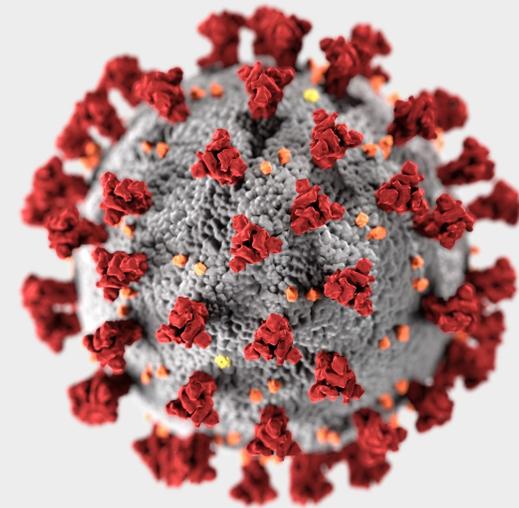




# Mental Health in the Time of COVID-19

Miquela G. Smith, MPH  
Extension Program Specialist II - Health  
Disaster Assessment and Recovery Unit



## »» OBJECTIVES

- Provide an overview of mental health statistics before the pandemic
- Describe the added burden of the pandemic on the mental wellbeing of Texans
- Explain long-term strategies to improve the mental health of Texans
- Describe Mental Health First Aid and other programs offered by AgriLife Extension

**1 in 5**

U.S. ADULTS  
EXPERIENCE A  
MENTAL DISORDER IN  
ANY GIVEN YEAR

**\$90 billion**

DOLLARS ARE SPENT  
ANNUALLY ON  
TREATING MENTAL  
HEALTH DISORDERS

## IN 2018 IN THE UNITED STATES:

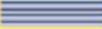
Over 48,000 people died by suicide

SUICIDE WAS THE 4TH LEADING  
CAUSE OF DEATH AMONG  
INDIVIDUALS AGES 35-54

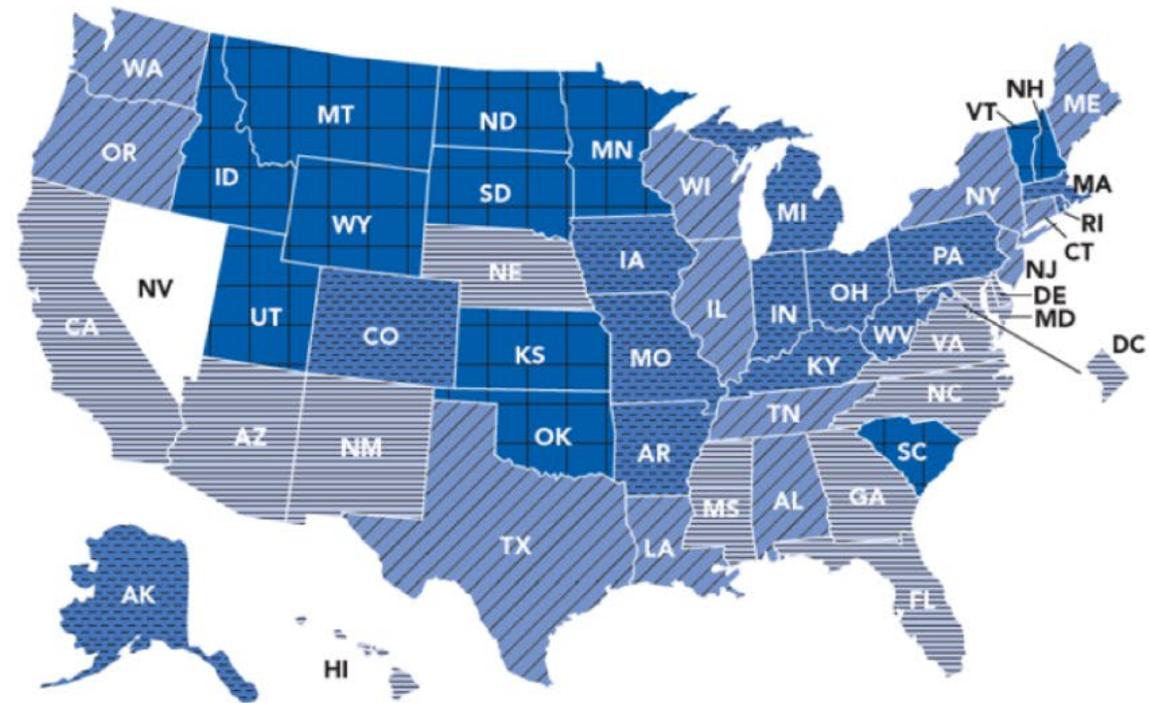
SUICIDE WAS THE 2ND LEADING  
CAUSE OF DEATH AMONG  
INDIVIDUALS AGES 10-34



## Suicide rates rose across the US from 1999 to 2016.

	Increase	38 - 58%
	Increase	31 - 37%
	Increase	19 - 30%
	Increase	6 - 18%
	Decrease	1%

SOURCE: CDC's National Vital Statistics System;  
CDC Vital Signs, June 2018.



From 1999 to 2016, the suicide rate in Texas increased by 18.9%

TABLE. Suicide deaths and rates\* among persons aged  $\geq 10$  years, by county urbanization level,<sup>†</sup> sex, race/ethnicity, age group, and mechanism of death — United States, 2001–2015



Characteristic	2001-2003		2004-2006		2007-2009		2010-2012		2013-2015		Total	
	Deaths	Rates	Deaths	Rates	Deaths	Rates	Deaths	Rates	Deaths	Rates	Deaths	Rates
<b>County urbanization level</b>												
Large metropolitan	44,568	11.19	45,934	11.11	50,914	11.84	55,852	12.47	59,243	12.72	256,511	11.92
Medium/small metropolitan	28,936	13.39	31,095	13.82	33,892	14.48	37,539	15.54	41,583	16.77	173,045	14.86
Nonmetropolitan/rural	19,832	15.50	21,006	16.10	22,385	16.79	24,626	18.35	26,710	19.74	114,559	17.32
<b>Total</b>	<b>93,336</b>	<b>12.54</b>	<b>98,035</b>	<b>12.72</b>	<b>107,191</b>	<b>13.41</b>	<b>118,017</b>	<b>14.29</b>	<b>127,536</b>	<b>14.98</b>	<b>544,115</b>	<b>13.64</b>

Source: CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), 2017

Suicide rates are higher in rural areas

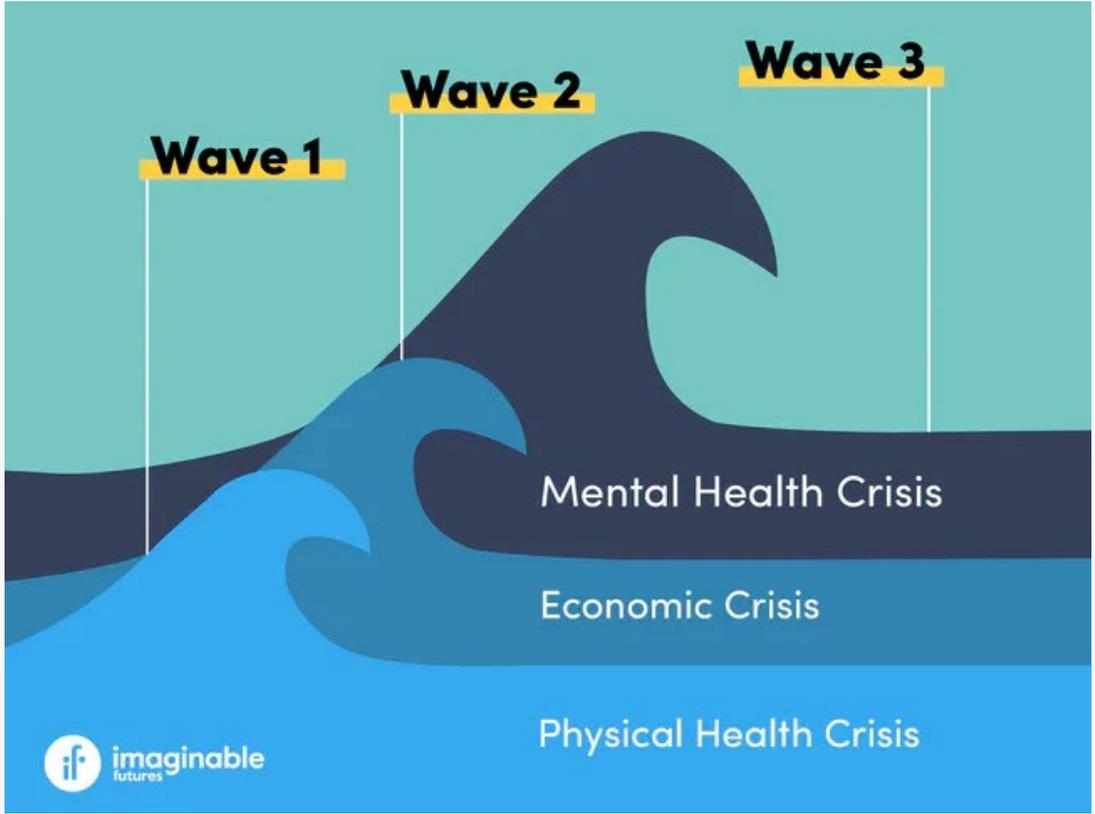
## Youth Statistics

According to the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey for high schoolers in Texas:

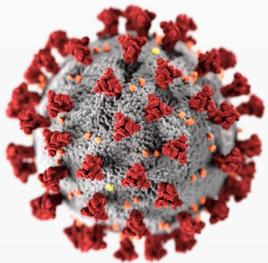
- 34.2% reported feeling sad or hopeless for 2 weeks in a row or more.
- 17.6% reported that they seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months.
- 12.3% reported that they had attempted suicide.

# COVID-19 and Mental Health

*Disasters breed trauma.*



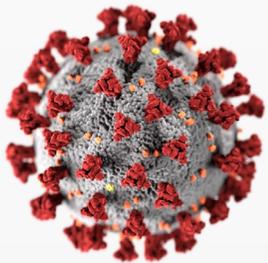
# THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC



A national survey commissioned by the National 4-H Council and conducted by the Harris Poll in May 2020 found that:

- 7 in 10 teens are struggling with their mental health in the wake of COVID-19.
- More than half stated that the pandemic has increased their feelings of loneliness.
- 64% believe it will have a lasting impact on their mental health.

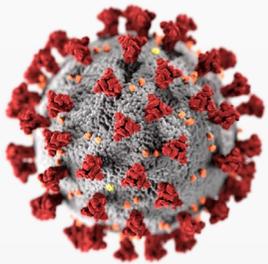
# THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC



Teens in Quarantine Survey conducted by the Institute for Family Studies/Wheatley Institution during May-July 2020 found that:

- Depression and loneliness were *lower* among teens in 2020 than in 2018.
- Unhappiness and dissatisfaction with life were only slightly higher in 2020 compared to 2018.
- Teens reported sleeping more and spending more time with their families during quarantine.

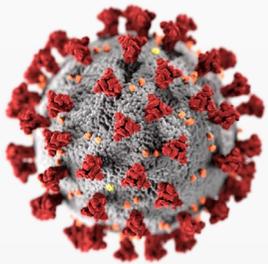
# THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC



## 2020 Household Pulse Survey

*To rapidly monitor recent changes in mental health, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) partnered with the Census Bureau on an experimental data system called the Household Pulse Survey. This 20-minute online survey was designed to complement the ability of the federal statistical system to rapidly respond and provide relevant information about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in the U.S.*

# THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC



## 2020 Household Pulse Survey

- Intended to obtain information on frequency of anxiety and depression symptoms among U.S. adults
- Questions were modified from:
  - The two-item Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-2)
  - The two-item Generalized Anxiety Disorder scale (GAD-2)

# Household Pulse Survey

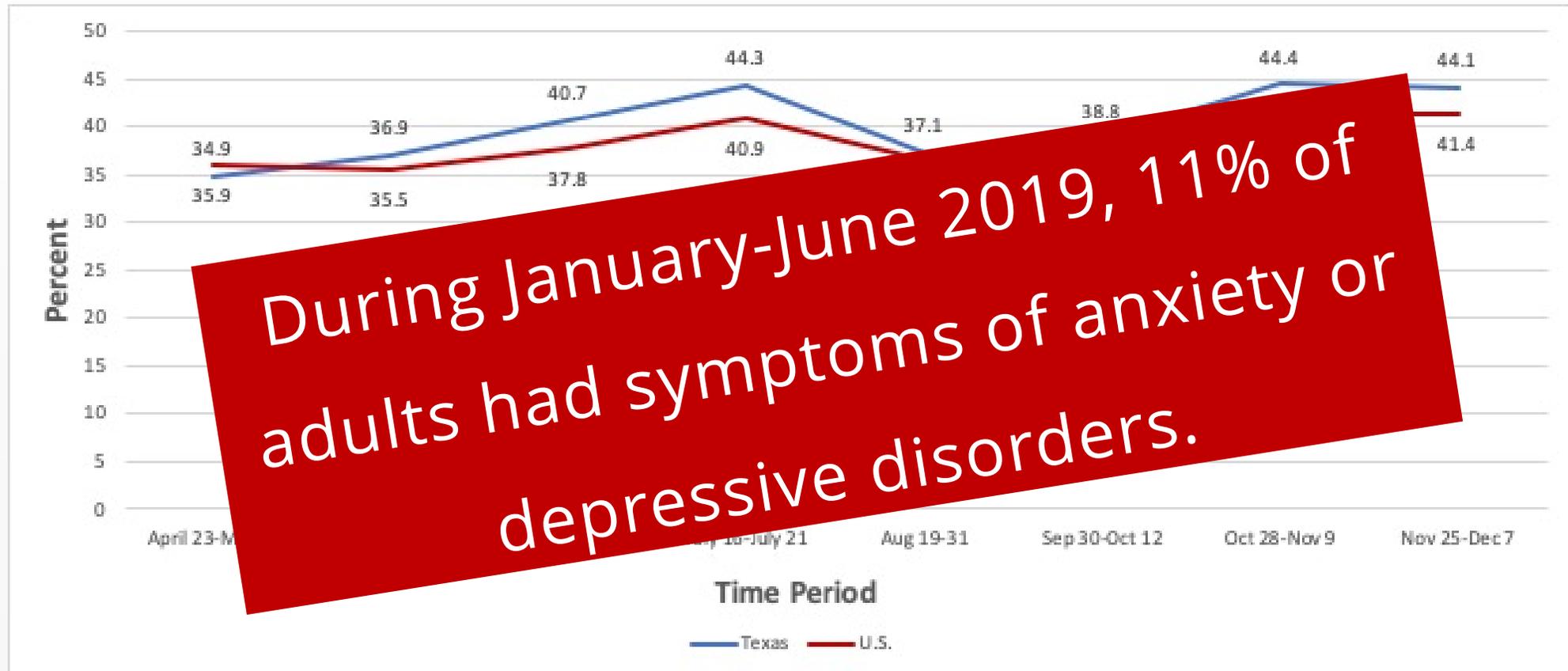
## Percentage of Adults who Reported Symptoms of Anxiety or Depression



Sample size ranged from 49,931 - 94,329 U.S. adults, depending on the week

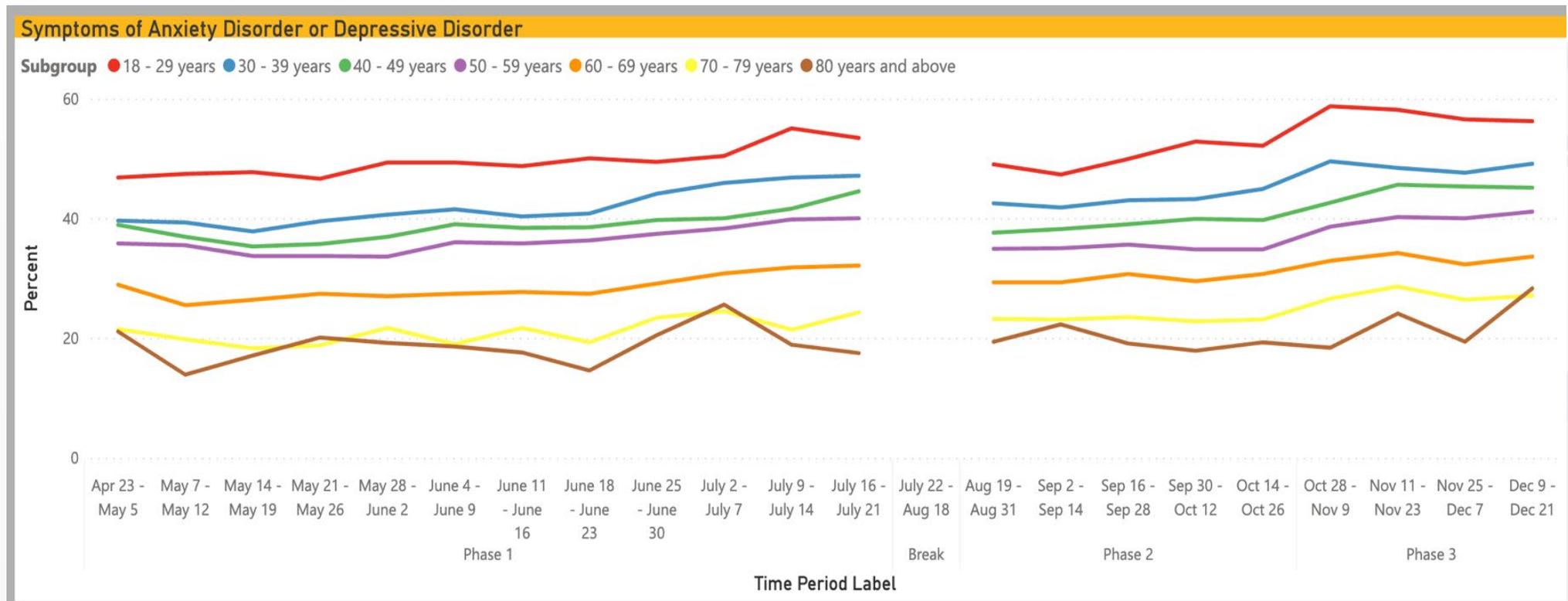
## Household Pulse Survey

Percentage of Adults who Reported Symptoms of Anxiety or Depression



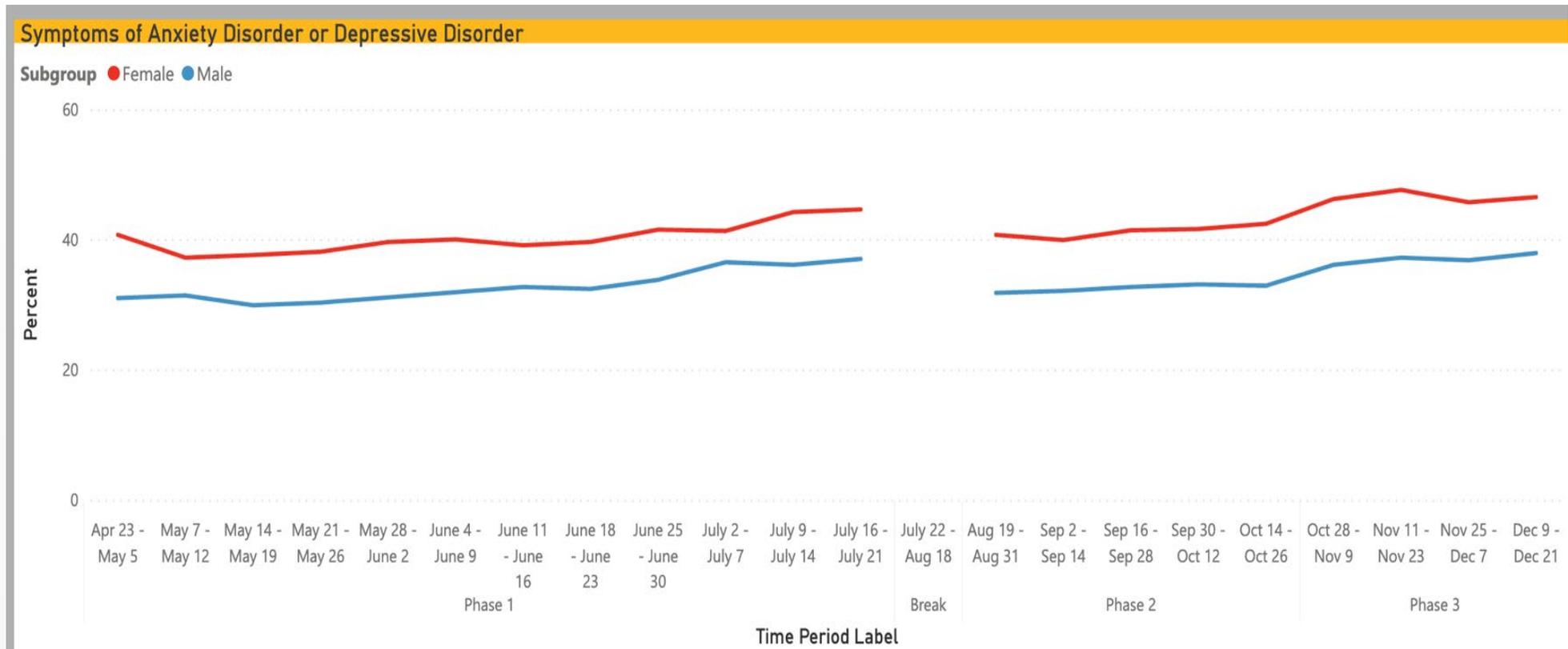
# Household Pulse Survey

## Symptoms of Anxiety or Depression by Age Group Among U.S. Adults



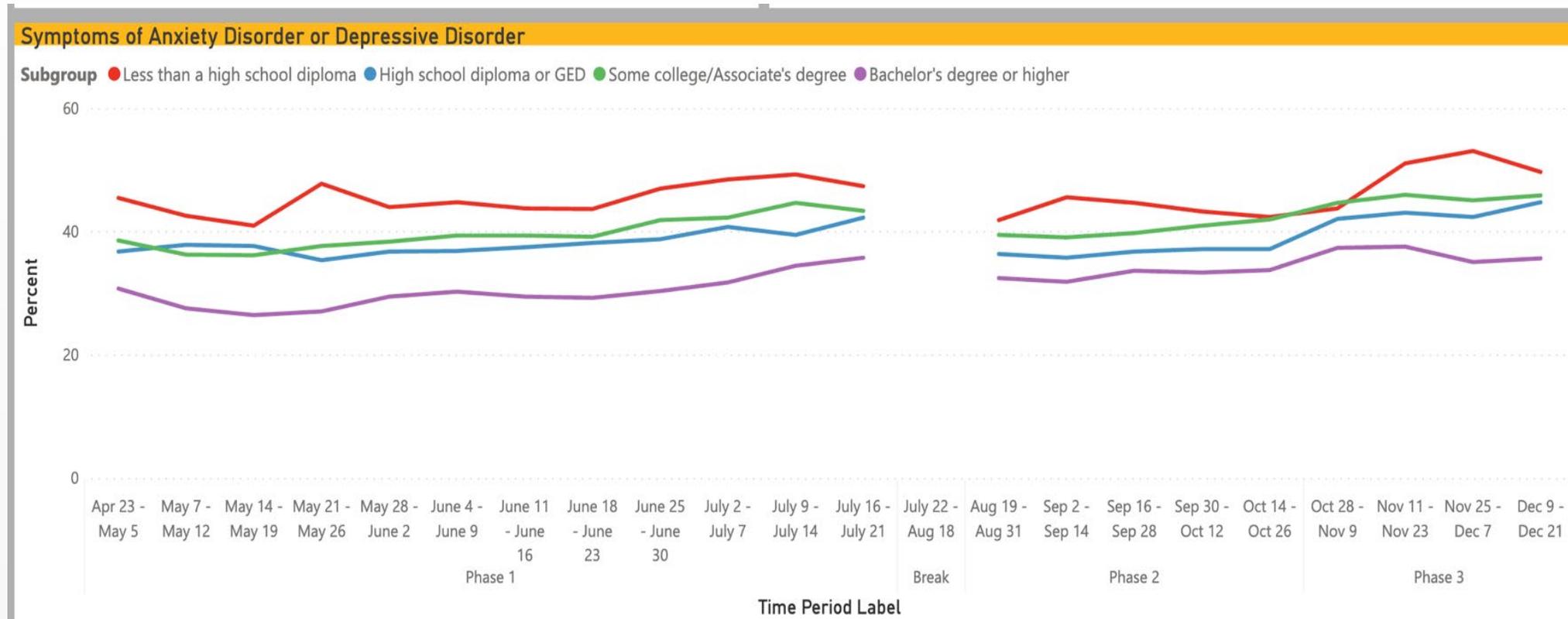
# Household Pulse Survey

## Symptoms of Anxiety or Depression by Sex Among U.S. Adults



# Household Pulse Survey

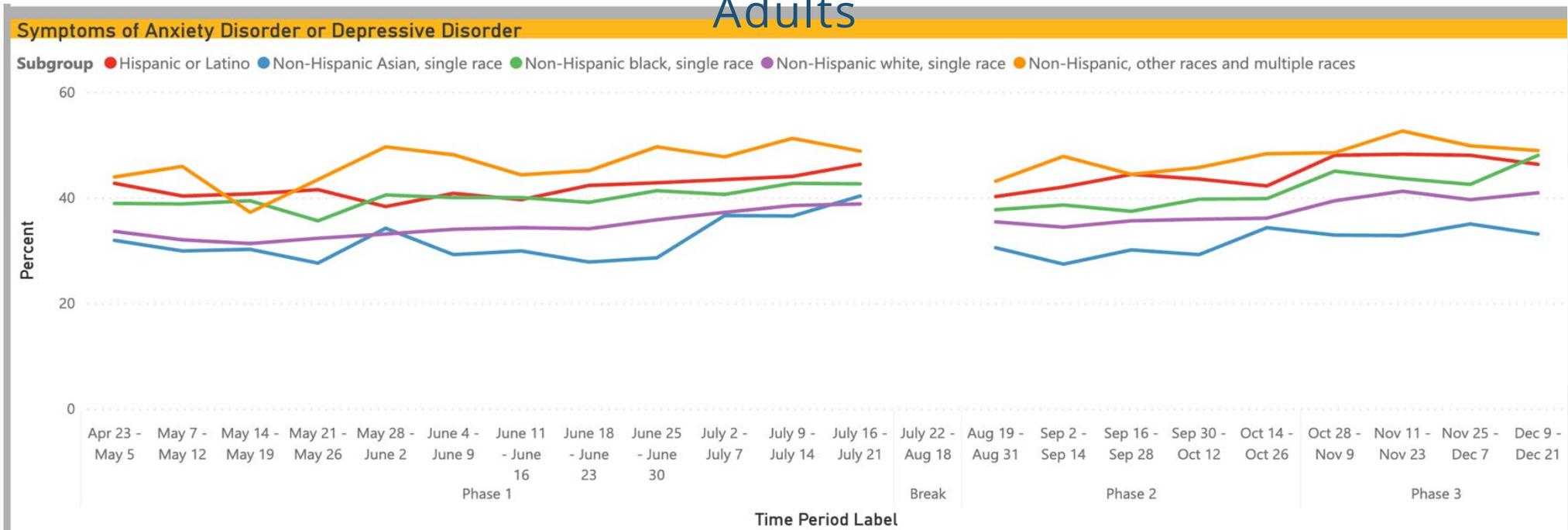
## Symptoms of Anxiety or Depression by Education Among U.S. Adults



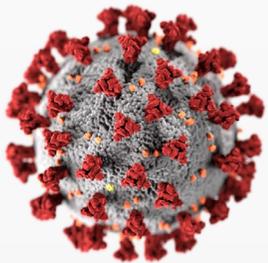
# Household Pulse Survey

## Symptoms of Anxiety or Depression by Race/Ethnicity Among U.S.

### Adults



# THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC

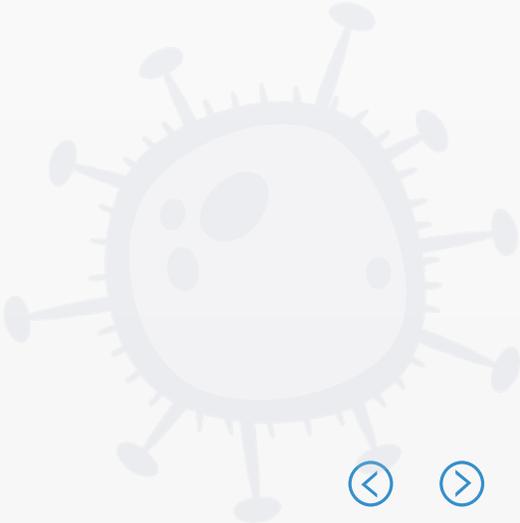


## December 2020 Poll Commissioned by the American Farm Bureau Federation:

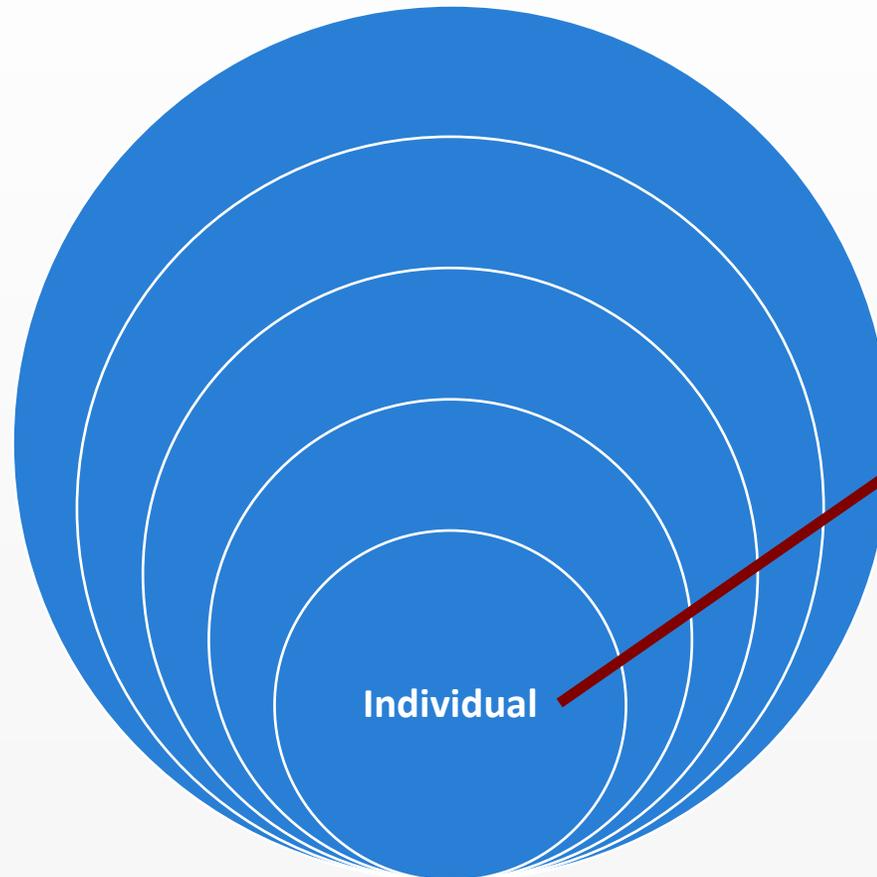
- 2/3 of rural adults ages 18-44 said they are personally experiencing more mental health challenges than they were a year ago
- 61% said that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted mental health in rural communities *a lot or some*
- 52% of farmers/farmworkers and 45% of rural adults reported that stress and mental health have become more of a problem in their community in the past year.
- The main obstacles to seeking help for a mental health condition remain cost, availability, accessibility, stigma, and embarrassment.

# Long-Term Effects



- Using modeling, The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute predicts that for every 5% increase in unemployment, we could annually lose an additional 4,000 Americans (including 300 Texans) to suicide, and 5,500 American (including 425 Texans) to drug overdose.
  - Without intervention, increased rates of mental distress and mental disorders could persist.
  - Other long-term impacts are still unknown.
- 
- 

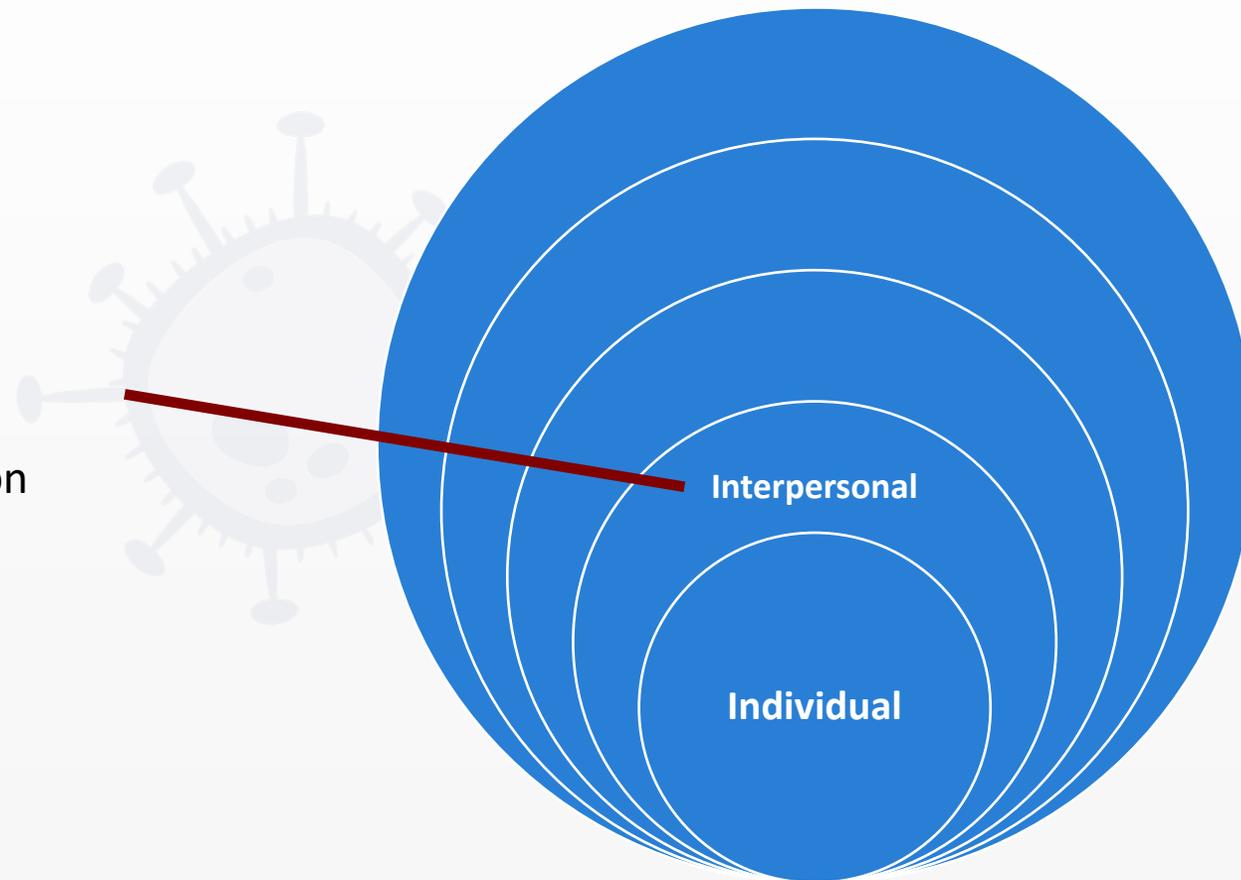
# Improving the Mental Health of Texans



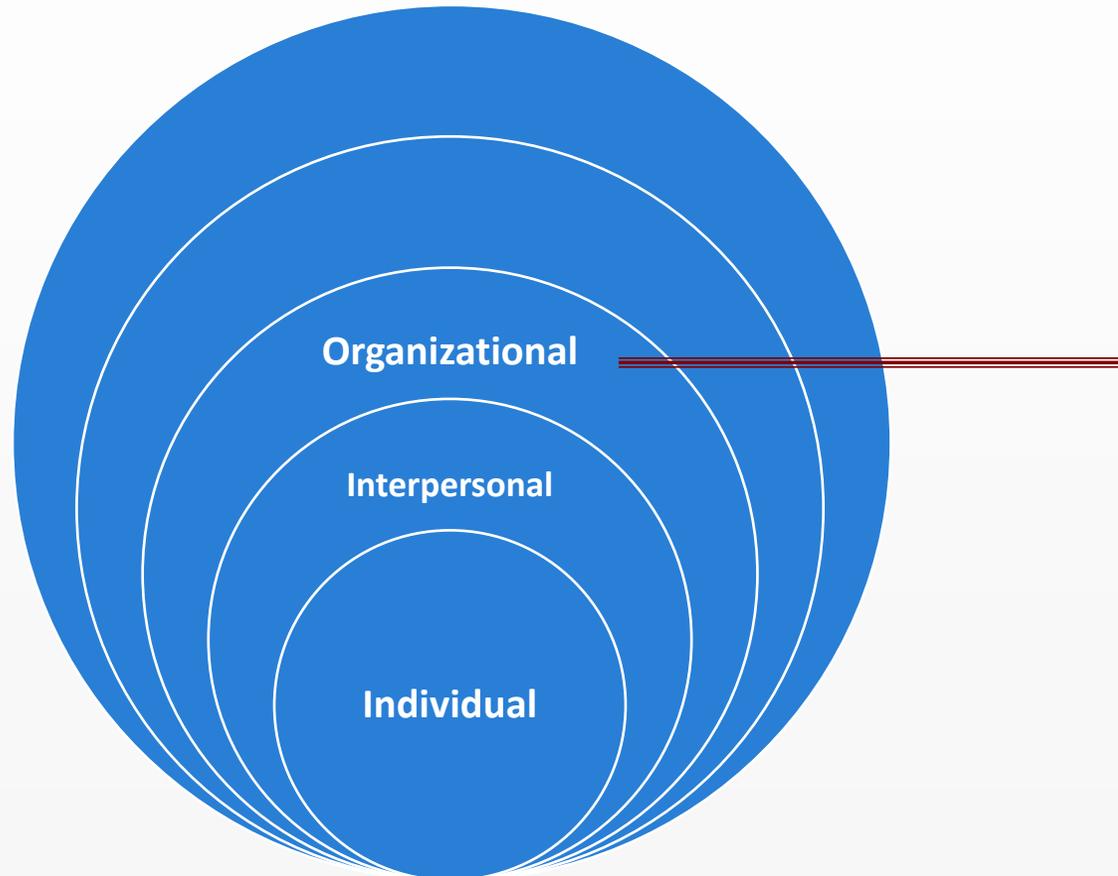
- Build individual resilience
- Increase knowledge and self-efficacy
- Promote self-determination and socioeconomic security

# Improving the Mental Health of Texans

- Strengthen support systems & increase connectedness
- Teach skills that help people reach out and effectively help a person in need
- PCP screening for MH symptoms
- Model self-care



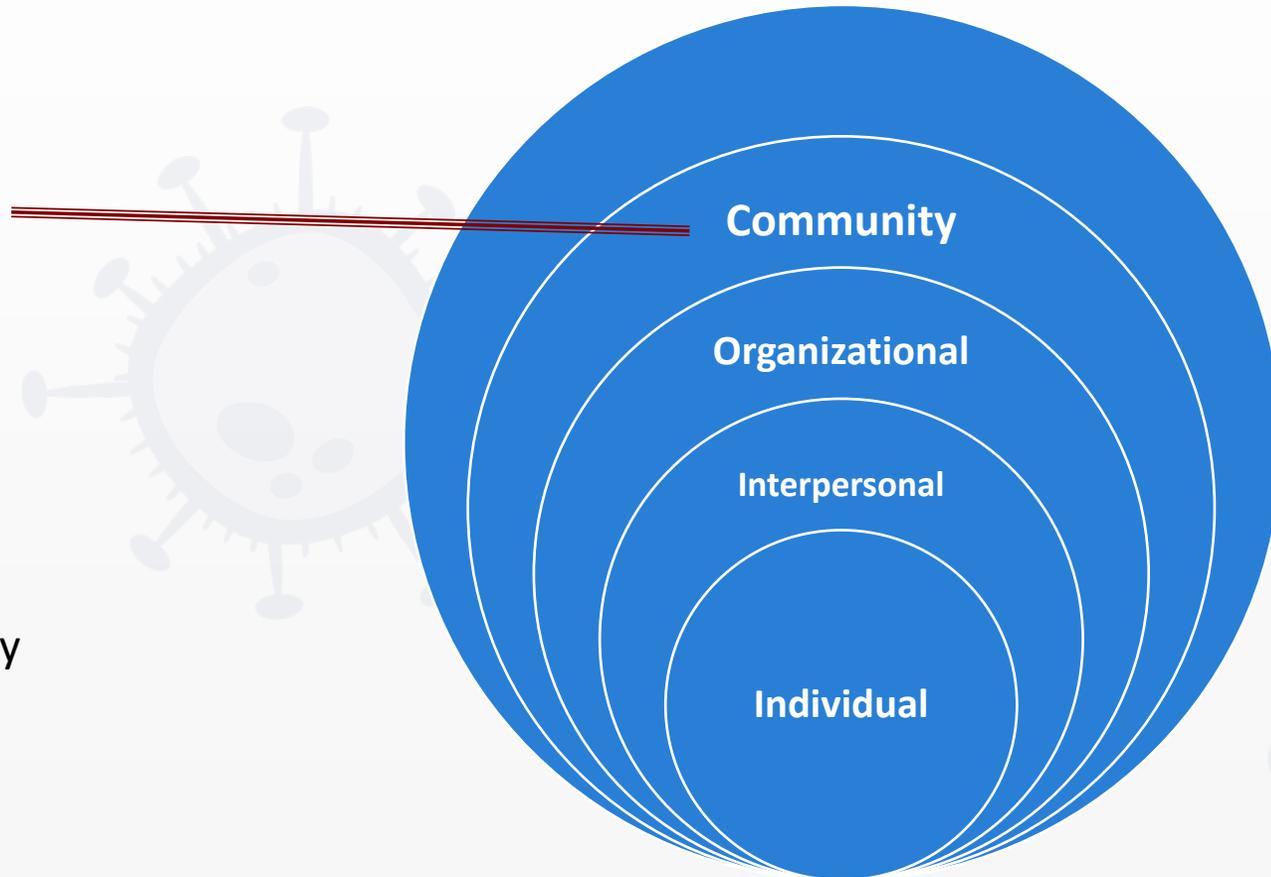
# Improving the Mental Health of Texans



- Consider work environments and policies
- Ensure availability of school counselors
- Increase support of MH within faith-based organizations
- Train crisis intervention teams

# Improving the Mental Health of Texans

- Increase connectedness
- Reduce stigma
- Improve mental health service accessibility
- Create community networks



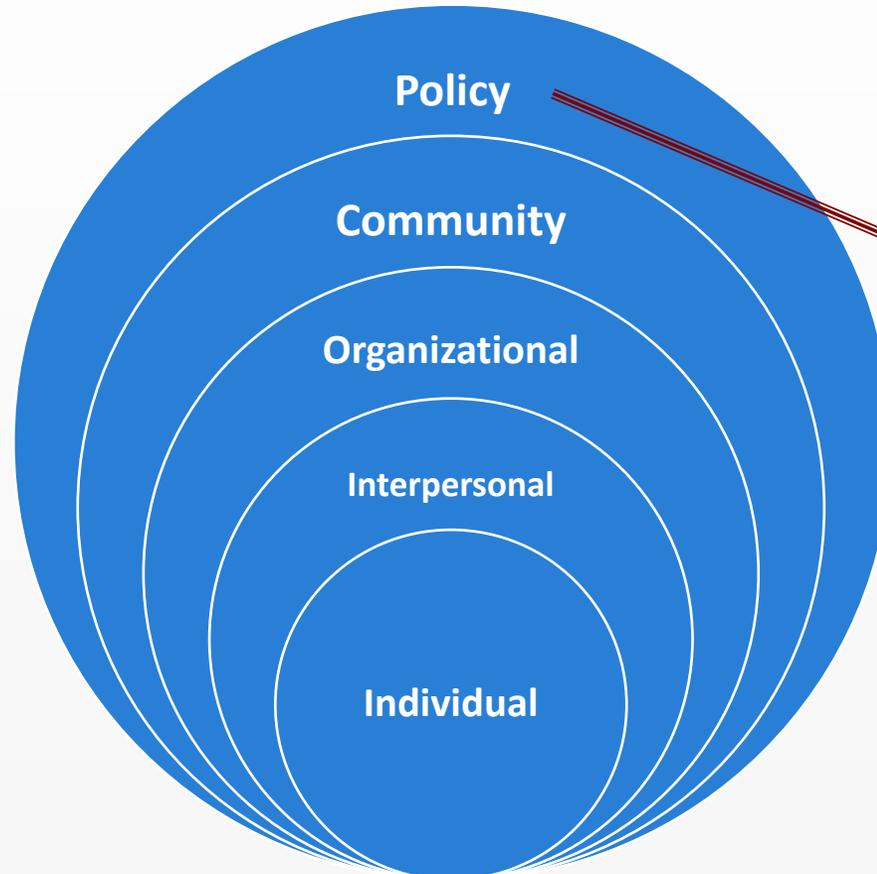
# Improving the Mental Health of Texans

## The Behavioral Health & Suicide Prevention Task Force: Montgomery County



*The BHSP Community Task Force exists to create a happier, healthier community by raising awareness about behavioral health and suicide through education, prevention and connections.*

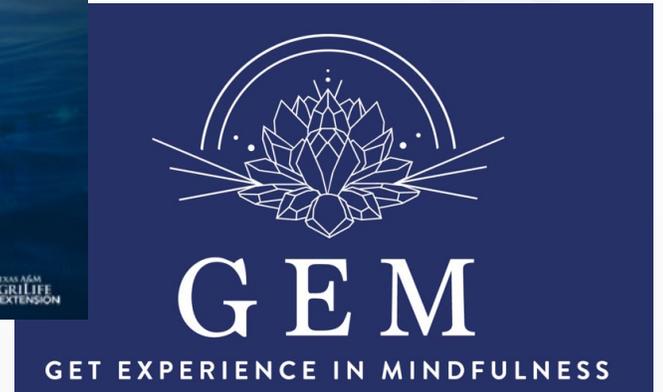
# Strategies for Improving the Mental Health of Texans



- Legislation (e.g H.B. 18, CARES Act)
- Adequate funding for mental health programs
  - Telebehavioral health
- Integrated healthcare systems
- More visible MH champions in state and federal government

# AgriLife Extension Mental Health Programs

Mindfulness programs



Mental Health First Aid



MENTAL  
HEALTH  
FIRST AID®

# Mental Health First Aid

*MHFA is an evidence-based program that teaches participants to recognize signs and symptoms of mental health conditions, including substance use disorders. During the class, participants learn how to provide initial support to someone who may be developing a mental illness or is in crisis.*



MENTAL  
HEALTH  
FIRST AID®

## Types of MHFA

Youth Mental Health First Aid	Adult Mental Health First Aid
Designed for adults who work with adolescents	Designed to teach adults how to respond to other adults
Focuses on common MH challenges affecting youth (depression, anxiety, eating disorders, etc.)	Focuses on common MH challenges for adults (anxiety, depression, psychosis, addictions such as opioids)
Reviews typical adolescent development	Different modules available for First Responders, Rural, Veterans, Public Safety, Higher Education, Faith-Based Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teach a 5 Step action plan to help individuals in both crisis and non-crisis situations               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Now offered virtually and in a hybrid format</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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**WHEN WE FIND THE COURAGE  
TO SHARE OUR EXPERIENCES  
AND THE COMPASSION  
TO HEAR OTHERS TELL THEIR STORIES,  
WE FORCE SHAME OUT OF HIDING,  
AND END THE SILENCE.**

BRENÉ BROWN



**NATIONAL**  
**SUICIDE**  
**PREVENTION**  
**LIFELINE™**  
**I-800-273-TALK**  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Texas Health and Human Services

**COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line**

Call the toll-free  
 COVID-19  
 Mental Health  
 Support Line

**833-986-1919**



20D0444



# Thank You!

Miquela G. Smith, MPH  
Extension Program Specialist II - Health  
[miquela.smith@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:miquela.smith@ag.tamu.edu)

