

My Experience Health

Many members of the Berkeley community have worse self-reported health including mental health. Health metrics are worse among women; transgender and gender non-conforming; LGBTQ+; Southeast Asian; Pacific Islander; Southwest Asian/North African; African American/Black; Chicana/Latina; Native American/Alaska Native; disabled; growing up working class or poor; and respondents not having parents with 4-year degrees. Intersections of marginalization have worse health. Students with dependents; current or former foster youth; and system impacted students are also more likely to have worse health.

Health metrics strongly correlate with each other and with other metrics such as basic needs and interpersonal experiences. The mental health metrics reveal patterns that are consistent with other surveys of mental health at colleges and universities.

Overall Health

Overall, most respondents (84%) rated their general health as good, very good, or excellent. Faculty had the highest self-rated health with almost all faculty (94%) rating their health positively, while undergraduates had the lowest with just over three quarters (77%) rating their health positively. Minoritized and marginalized communities reported lower self health assessments. Undergraduates with dependents, system impacted respondents, and current or former foster youth all reported notably lower overall health.

Table 1. Overall Health by Population
Percentage of respondents reporting Excellent, Very Good, or Good overall health

Group	Undergraduates	Grad Students	Postdocs	Faculty	Academic Staff	Staff	All
Total	77%	88%	92%	94%	92%	89%	84%
0 Marginal Factors	91%	97%	100%	98%	100%	93%	95%
1 Marginal Factors	90%	95%	97%	97%	96%	94%	93%
2 Marginal Factors	82%	89%	94%	92%	93%	91%	87%
3 Marginal Factors	73%	82%	94%	89%	86%	87%	79%
4 Marginal Factors	69%	82%	82%	80%	79%	80%	73%
5 Marginal Factors	53%	66%				75%	59%
6 Marginal Factors	54%					73%	56%

Stress

Almost all respondents reported finding their work or studies stressful. This was true across populations and affinity groups with little variation.

Anxiety

Overall, just over half of respondents (56%) met the threshold for follow-up for anxiety. Academic staff had the lowest reported endorsement of anxiety symptoms (31%) while undergraduate students had the highest endorsement (66%). Minoritized and marginalized communities had the higher endorsements with people with disabilities and trans gender/gender non-conforming respondents having significantly higher (around 30% higher) than the campus overall. Anxiety endorsement accumulates with each added marginalization. Undergraduates with dependents, Muslims, system impacted respondents, and current or former foster youth all reported notably higher endorsement of anxiety symptoms.

Table 2. Anxiety Symptoms by Population

Percentage of respondents endorsing symptoms of anxiety (not a clinical diagnosis)

Group	Undergraduates	Grad Students	Postdocs	Faculty	Academic Staff	Staff	All
Total	66%	54%	46%	NA	31%	41%	56%
0 Marginal Factors	45%	38%	33%	NA	17%	28%	37%
1 Marginal Factors	49%	41%	47%	NA	28%	34%	42%
2 Marginal Factors	65%	60%	42%	NA	28%	39%	56%
3 Marginal Factors	73%	65%	63%	NA	39%	45%	63%
4 Marginal Factors	76%	66%	45%	NA	25%	49%	67%
5 Marginal Factors	86%	74%				64%	81%
6 Marginal Factors	85%					82%	84%

Depression

Overall, just under half of respondents (49%) met the threshold for follow-up for depression. Academic staff had the lowest reported endorsement (26%) while undergraduate students had the highest endorsement (60%). Minoritized and marginalized communities had the higher endorsements with disabled and trans gender/gender non-conforming respondents having significantly higher (around 25% higher) than the campus overall. Depression endorsement accumulates with each added marginalization. As with anxiety, undergraduates with dependents, Muslims, system impacted respondents, and current or former foster youth all reported notably higher endorsement of depression symptoms.

Table 3. Depression Symptoms by Population

Percentage of respondents endorsing symptoms of depression (not a clinical diagnosis)

Group	Undergraduates	Grad Students	Postdocs	Faculty	Academic Staff	Staff	All
Total	60%	44%	41%	NA	26%	35%	49%
0 Marginal Factors	37%	35%	42%	NA	24%	27%	33%
1 Marginal Factors	44%	30%	28%	NA	19%	26%	34%
2 Marginal Factors	55%	49%	32%	NA	27%	32%	47%

3 Marginal Factors	67%	52%	63%	NA	31%	39%	56%
4 Marginal Factors	71%	57%	36%	NA	25%	41%	61%
5 Marginal Factors	81%	65%				41%	71%
6 Marginal Factors	87%					64%	82%

Mental health was assessed using the DSM-5 Self-Rated Level 1 Cross-Cutting Symptom Measure—Adult and the methodology given by the American Psychiatric Association [CITATION]. It is not intended as a clinical diagnostic but a measure to identify endorsement of symptoms and to suggest where additional inquiry may be useful.

Broader Context of Health Findings

In 2014, the UC Berkeley Graduate Well-being survey found that 44% of graduate students expressed symptoms of depression. A follow-up survey in 2016 from the UC Office of the President found that 35% of UC-wide graduate students expressed symptoms of depression. These results align with the results of the My Experience Survey which show 44% of graduate students at the threshold for further screening of depression. The 2017 National College Health Assessment (NCHA) surveyed both undergraduate and graduate students about mental health diagnoses and clinical visits. It found that 18% of all students reported being diagnosed with clinical depression or had been treated by a professional, and 22% of all students reported anxiety diagnoses or treatment. Recent studies of other higher education settings show mental health as a growing concern among graduate students [CITATION].

Table 4. Other Mental Health Findings

Percentage of respondents endorsing symptoms of depression, anxiety (not a clinical diagnosis)

Source	Depression	Anxiety
My Experience (2019 graduate students)	44%	54%
Graduate Well-Being (2016 UC grad students)	35%	n/a
African American/Black	38%	n/a
Chicanx/Latinx	40%	n/a
LGBTQ+	48%	n/a
Graduate Well-Being (2014 UC Berkeley)	44%	n/a
National College Health Assessment (2017)*	18%	22%
Men*	10%	11%
Women*	21%	26%