

Survey Panel Results

The Wellbeing Partners

February 2021

Background

Each month, The Public Good Projects (PGP) conducts rapid polling to understand community attitudes toward certain health topics. For February 2021, perceptions of stigma against substance use disorders (SUD) since COVID-19 pandemic were evaluated. Eligibility to participate in the survey included currently living in Nebraska or Iowa, specifically from one of the four counties identified by TWP in the Omaha/ Council Bluffs metropolitan area. Participants were recruited through both PGP's internal panel participants, and distribution of the survey link to community members by TWP. Data from panel surveys are intended to provide quick information that can be easily applied to programs, and are not intended to serve as a representative sample of the area.

Of note, some questions asked in this panel survey were also asked in a larger baseline survey conducted in summer 2020, which was done in conjunction with other mental health programs being implemented by TWP and PGP. This allowed analysts to compare some answers regarding SUD stigma from respondents over time. Results from the baseline survey are noted throughout, where appropriate.

Demographics

The survey concluded with a total of 285 respondents. Just over 60% of respondents were female (63.5%) with almost 40% male (36.1%), almost 75% were white/ Caucasian (77.9%), and most were between the ages of 35-44 years. Following population trends, most respondents were also from Douglas County (58.9%).

From the summer 2020 baseline evaluation, there were a total of 224 respondents. Demographic trends were similar to the February survey respondents.

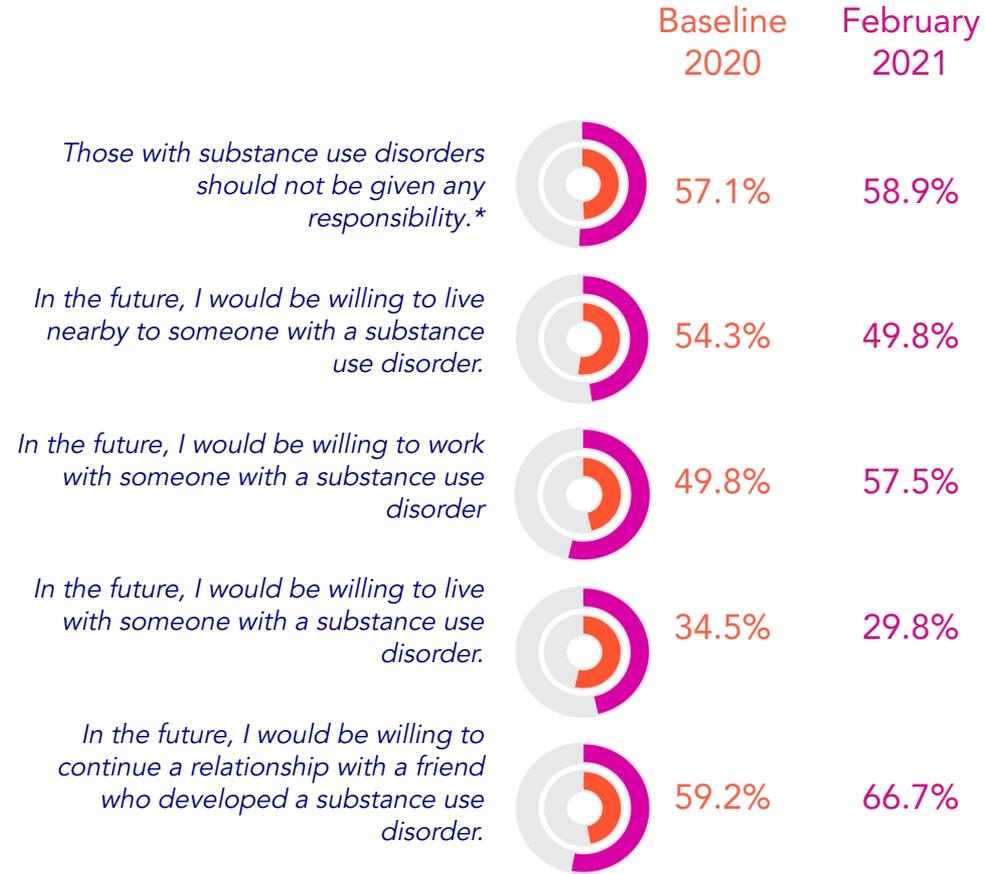
Demographic	
Douglas County	58.9%
Sarpy County	16.5%
Pottawattamie County	15.8%
Cass County	8.8%
White/ Caucasian	77.9%
Black/ African American	9.5%
Hispanic/ Latinx	6.3%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.1%
Asian	4.2%
Hawaiian Native/ Other Pacific Islander	0.0%
Other Race	2.8%

Demographic		
Female		63.5%
Male		36.1%
Non- Binary/ Other		0.0%
Prefer to not say		0.4%
Age Groups (in years)	18-24	11.2%
	25-34	26.0%
	35-44	29.5%
	45-54	14.4%
	55+	19.0%

Stigma toward SUD

Questions gauged stigma toward substance use disorders, including desires for social distance. Comparisons from the baseline survey showed mixed results. Compared to baseline, respondents in the February survey more often agreed that those with SUDs should be given responsibility, that they would be willing to work with someone with an SUD, and that they would continue a relationship with a friend who has an SUD.

Despite this, other questions showed a decline in agreement at the February survey. Willingness to both live with and to live nearby individuals with an SUD both showed declines over time.



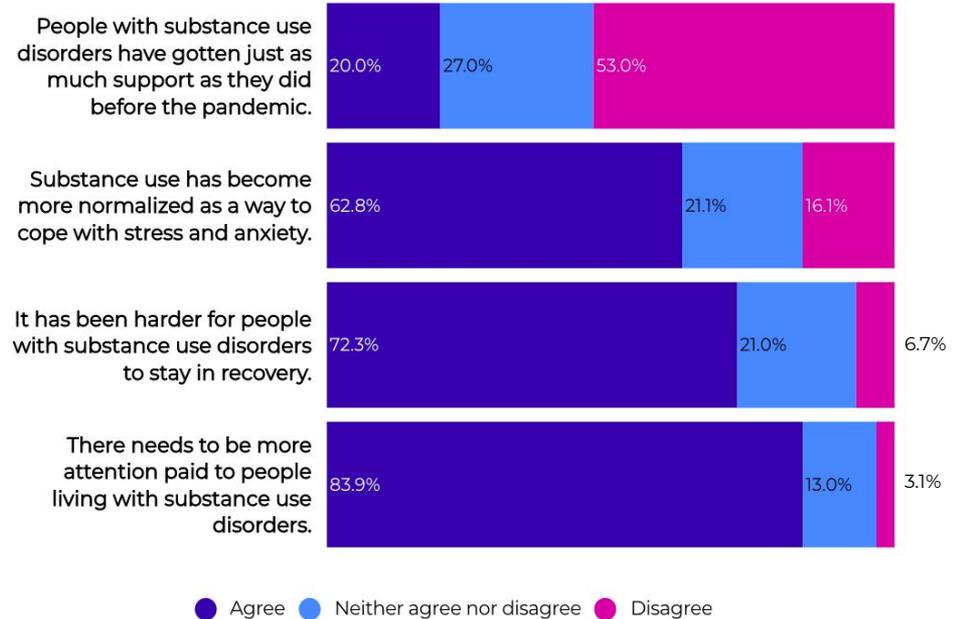
*Shows disagreement with statement

SUD since COVID-19

When asked about perceptions of substance use since the COVID-19 pandemic, respondents generally recognized that the pandemic has had a negative impact on those living with SUD. Almost 85% feel there needs to be more attention paid to those with SUD, almost 75% agree that it has been harder to stay in recovery, and just over half feel that people with SUD have not received the same level of support as they did before the pandemic. Most respondents disagree that people with SUD have gotten just as much support as they did before the pandemic.

Over 60% also feel that substance use has become a more normalized way of coping with stress and anxiety during the pandemic.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic....

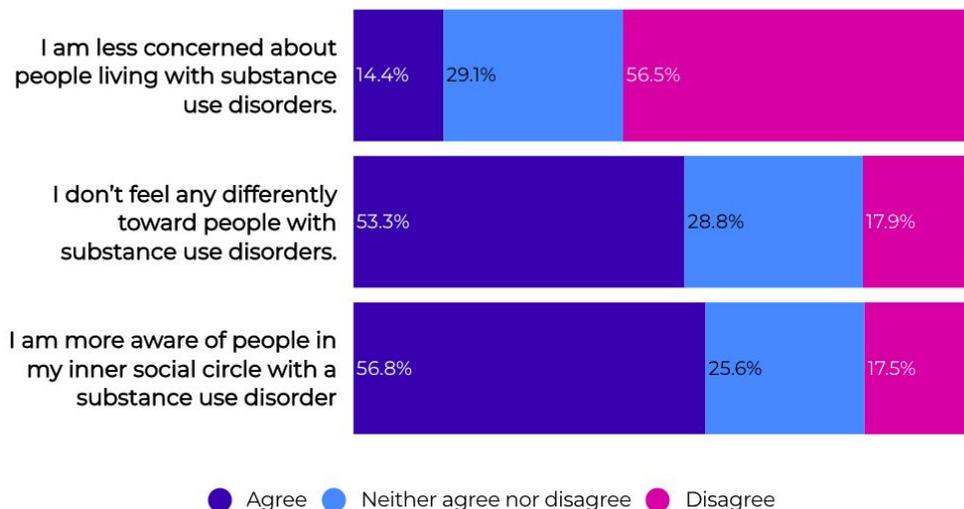


SUD since COVID-19

Respondents' personal feelings toward those with SUD appear to have remained generally stable. Since the start of the pandemic, only 15% are *less* concerned about people living with SUDs, and over 50% agree that their feelings toward those with SUDs have not changed.

Awareness toward loved ones living with SUDs seems to have increased for the majority of respondents, with 57% agreeing that they are now more aware of those with substance use disorders among people in their inner social circle.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic....

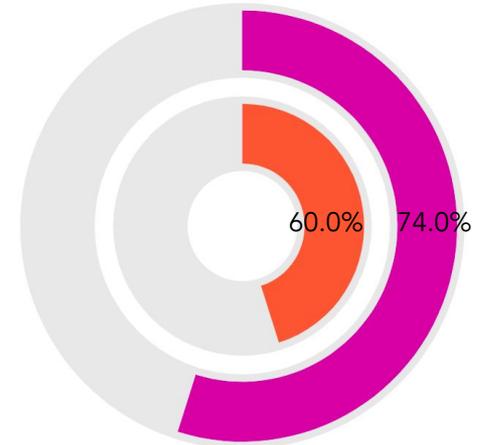


Comfort with SUD Support

At the baseline and the February survey, respondents were asked how comfortable they felt offering support to others who are living with SUD. Results showed a 14 percentage point increase in comfort (shown at right).

At the February survey only, a separate question also asked respondents about their comfort levels in offering to help someone with a substance use disorder find resources for treatment and recovery. A higher percentage, 85.3% agreed that they feel comfortable helping someone find resources or treatment. This finding suggests that people feel more comfortable providing *specific types* of support, and less comfortable when asked to provide general support, without a specific aim.

*How comfortable would you be offering support to others for a SUD.**



● February Pulse ● Baseline Evaluation

**shows respondents answering "very" or "somewhat" comfortable*

Community Support for Those with SUD

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked how they feel their communities can best support people living with SUD during the pandemic. Half of respondents believe that their communities need to expand access to treatment or resources with at-home or telehealth options, while a quarter of respondents believe that their communities should do more to advertise existing resources, and 19% feel that SUD should be destigmatized and spoken about more openly.

50%

Expand access with at home
or telehealth options

"Give them options to help
more at home"

"Make treatment more easily
available"

"Offer free counseling via
on-line or socially distanced
means"

25%

Advertise existing resources

"Make resources more known"

"Directing people where they
can receive help and support"

"Promote it on TV, social media,
etc."

"More awareness of programs"

19%

Destigmatize & speak openly
about SUD

"Be open about it. These
people still need help and are
people we can not keep
shunning them"

"Make it less of a taboo"

"Increasing awareness and
providing support. Less
judgement"

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Needed Education & Resources

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked what education & resources would help them feel empowered to offer support to those currently living with a SUD in their community. The various responses included:

Information about resources & treatment



“One central place to find information and resources”

“Knowing where to find help. I wouldn't even know where to start looking to help someone and to find quality help for them”

“Knowing what resources are actually available in our community”

Classes or seminars



“Video course with examples”

“More awareness and seminars”

Access to mental health care

“By Having Access to a mental health professional”

“Therapy for them and for me”

“Make more facilities available”

Support groups

“More access to support groups”

“Online support groups, in person support groups and even organizations that offer services to support”

“More support groups on different topics”



Information specifically on SUD

“More in depth psychology information on why people start their substance abuse”

“Learning triggers of what causes substance use and what to do when people have the disorders”



Personal testimonials

“Having helpers who have dealt with and/or overcame their own substance abuse issues”

“How to help, who helps, what does help look like, successful recovery stories”



Thank you.

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