

Hughes Center Research Documents



For immediate release

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Galloway, N.J. The COVID-19 pandemic had wide-ranging impacts on New Jersey mental health, treatment and outcomes involving numerous mental health issues, according to research published today by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University.

The project, led by Stockton professor Justin Ostrofsky, Ph.D., overseeing three student researchers, investigated how New Jersey residents with specific mental health issues fared during the pandemic and whether COVID-19 worsened those problems. The researchers, working over two college semesters, analyzed public datasets, published research and the results of an original Stockton University Poll.

They evaluated data from before and after the pandemic began within the context of national and global trends to determine if those changes could be attributed to the pandemic or not.

Results indicate the pandemic was at least partly responsible for negatively affecting certain mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, stress-related problems and post-partum depression, especially among young people.

A statewide Stockton Poll conducted as part of the research corroborated trends found in the analysis, with 30% saying COVID worsened mental health problems, including those involving alcohol and drug use. A majority experienced disruptions in their lifestyle, with one in three saying those disruptions worsened their mental health.

research validates those concerns and documents specific areas of mental health that were affected.

-19 first spread, officials and doctors appropriately rushed to protect the value of this Hughes Center report is to show where we need to be prepared during the

Stockton student researchers and report co-authors included Psychology majors Keith Jennings, Matthew Crilley and Anna Caputo. Crilley and Caputo graduated in May.

Their report identified a number of trends in the data. Highlights include:

The number of diagnoses for depression, anxiety and trauma or stress-related disorders increased in 2020 over the prior year.

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Stockton University

Stockton University is [ranked](#) among the top public universities in the nation. Our more than 9,000 students can choose to live and learn on the 1,600-acre wooded main campus in the Pinelands National Reserve in South Jersey and at our coastal residential campus just steps from the beach and Boardwalk in Atlantic City. The university offers more than 160 undergraduate and graduate programs. Learn more at stockton.edu.