



**Self-reported physical distancing in Wisconsin:
Preliminary survey results to inform COVID-19 messaging**

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Overview

This report gives an overview of analyses relating to Wisconsin residents' self-reported physical distancing practices. These data are from a representative survey of U.S. adults that was conducted using a Qualtrics Panel and was fielded from March 26 to April 1, 2020 (n = 2,251). The survey over-sampled individuals aged 18-35 and individuals from Wisconsin to help directly inform the communication efforts of The University of Wisconsin Communication Task Force for COVID-19 (UCCC19). For these analyses we focused on the respondents from Wisconsin, which were weighted to be representative of Wisconsin adults (n = 503). The report is intended to inform communication efforts surrounding the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak in Wisconsin. Here are some highlights of our findings to be used and shared with people around the state:

Self-reported compliance with physical distancing

- Overall, a high percentage of Wisconsin residents reported practicing physical distancing with 61 percent reporting distancing very much.
- Older residents reported practicing more physical distancing than younger residents (those under 35).
- There does not appear to be a relationship between political ideology and self-reported physical distancing.
- Residents in small towns reported the highest rates when compared to mid-size or large cities, with larger cities reporting less distancing behavior.
- More women reported higher levels of physical distancing when compared to men.
- Those with higher education (bachelor's degree or more) reported more physical distancing.
- Respondents worry about family, community, and the country.

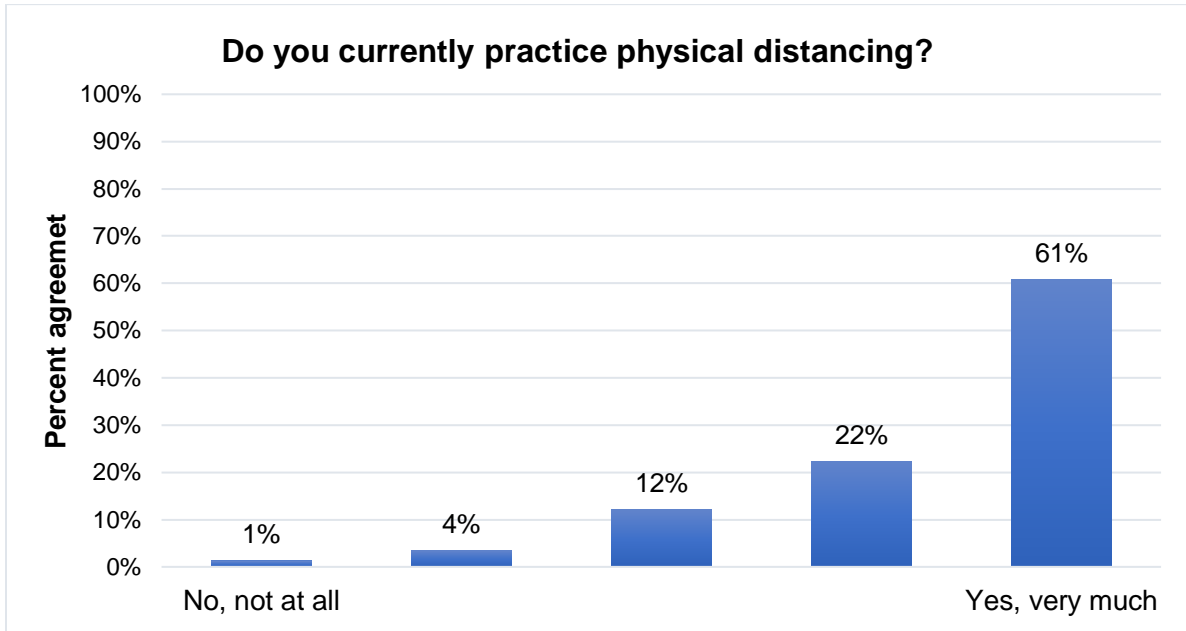
Barriers and benefits related to physical distancing

- Respondents who did not report the highest level of physical distancing reported their barriers to practicing more were:
 - Their situation (work, family, obligations) preventing them from doing so
 - Their perception that most people were overreacting
- Respondents who did not report the highest level of physical distancing said they would consider practicing more:
 - If it would help their family
 - If they were at high risk of infection
 - Because they are a caring, considerate person
- Respondents who don't think physical distancing is effective are less likely to do it. Those who think physical distancing is effective practice it more.
- Respondents who don't think others are practicing physical distancing are less likely to report doing it themselves. Those who think it is the norm to practice physical distancing say they practice it more.

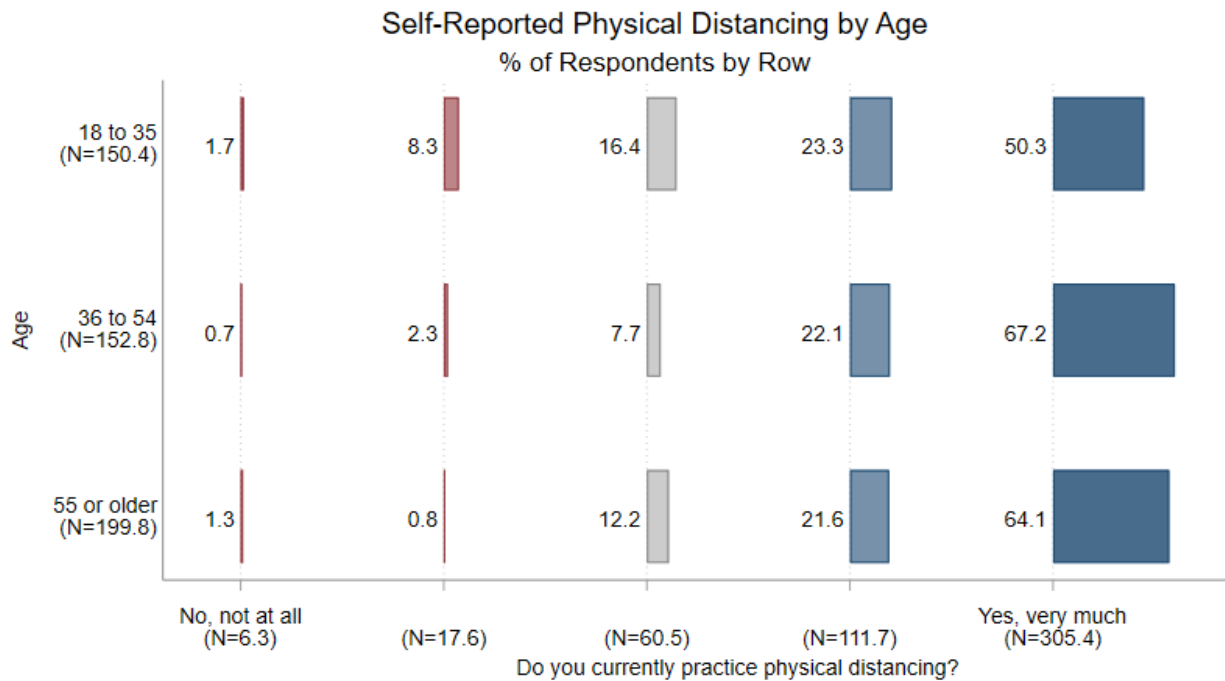
Communication and Trust

- Respondents report national news networks and social media as their top news sources.
- The CDC, public health experts, university scientists, and WHO are the most trusted sources of information about COVID-19.

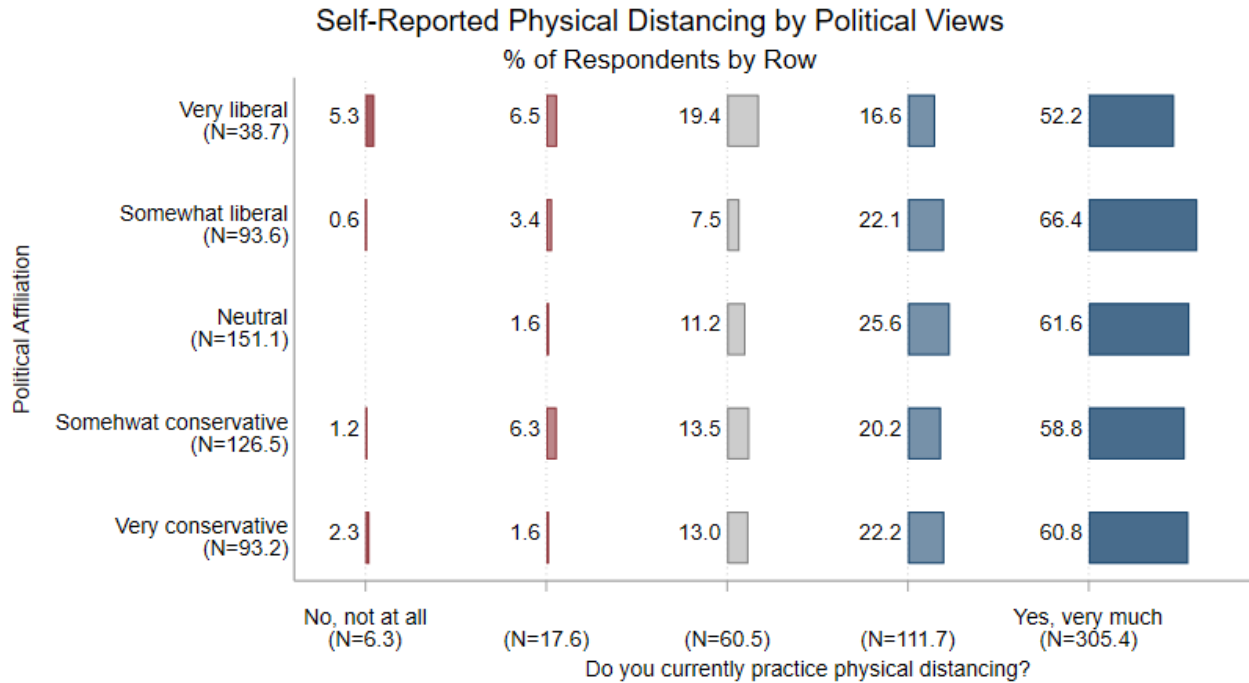
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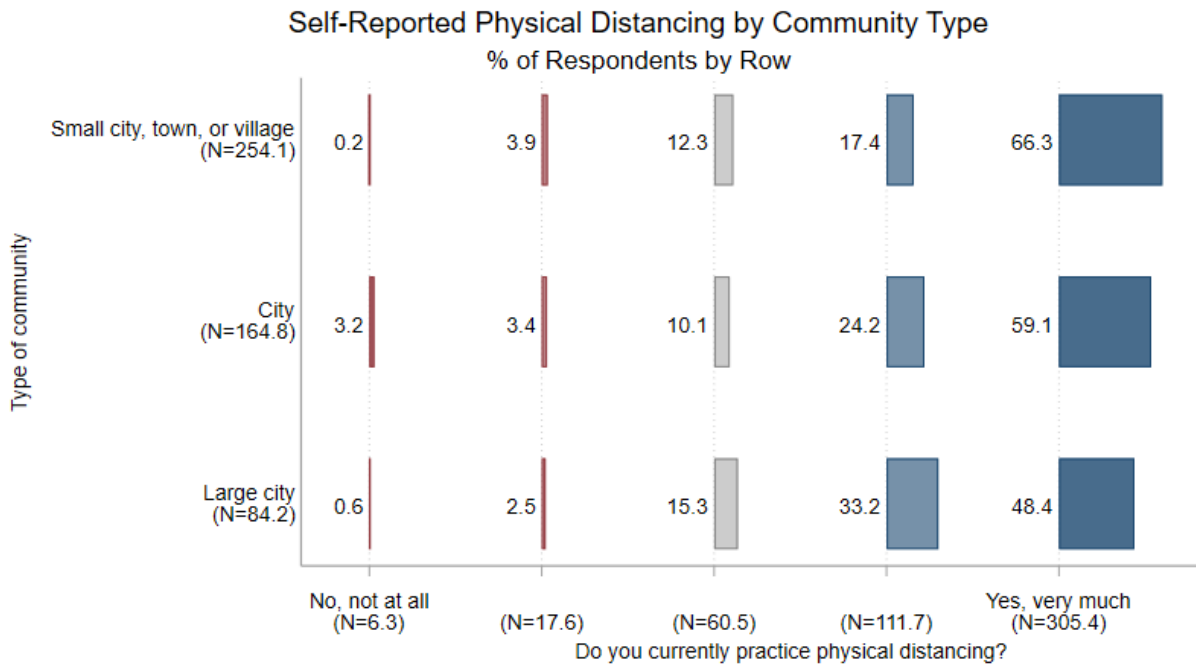
Older residents reported practicing more physical distancing than younger residents (those under 35).



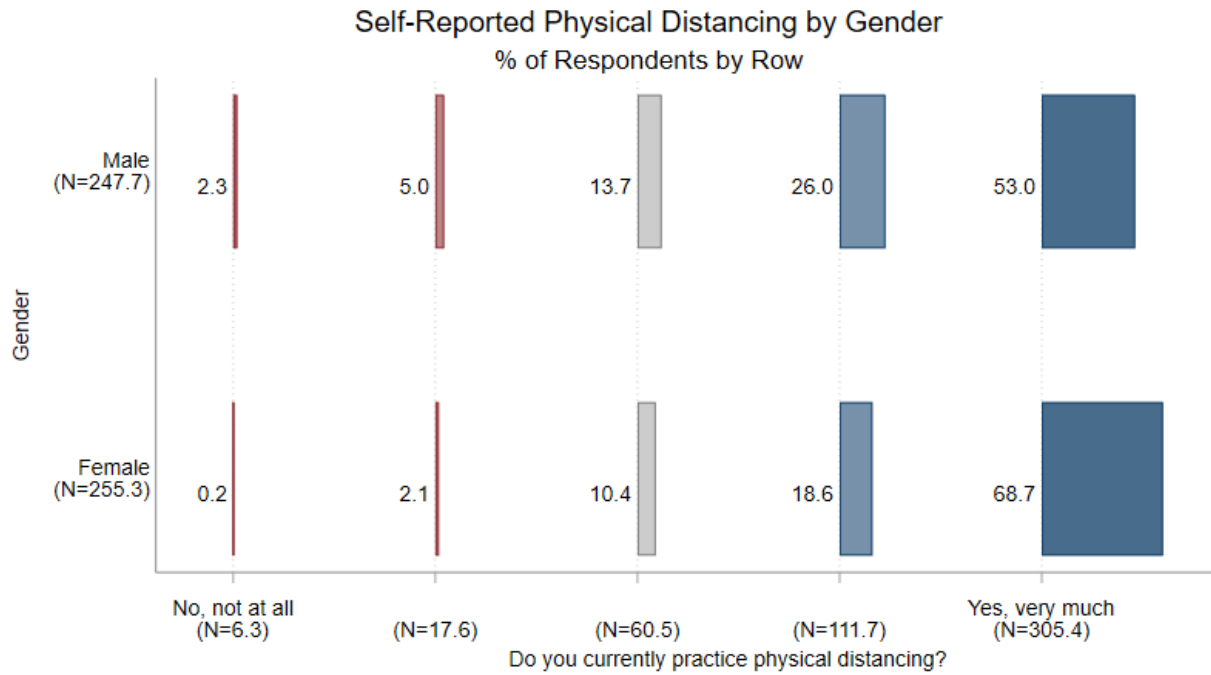
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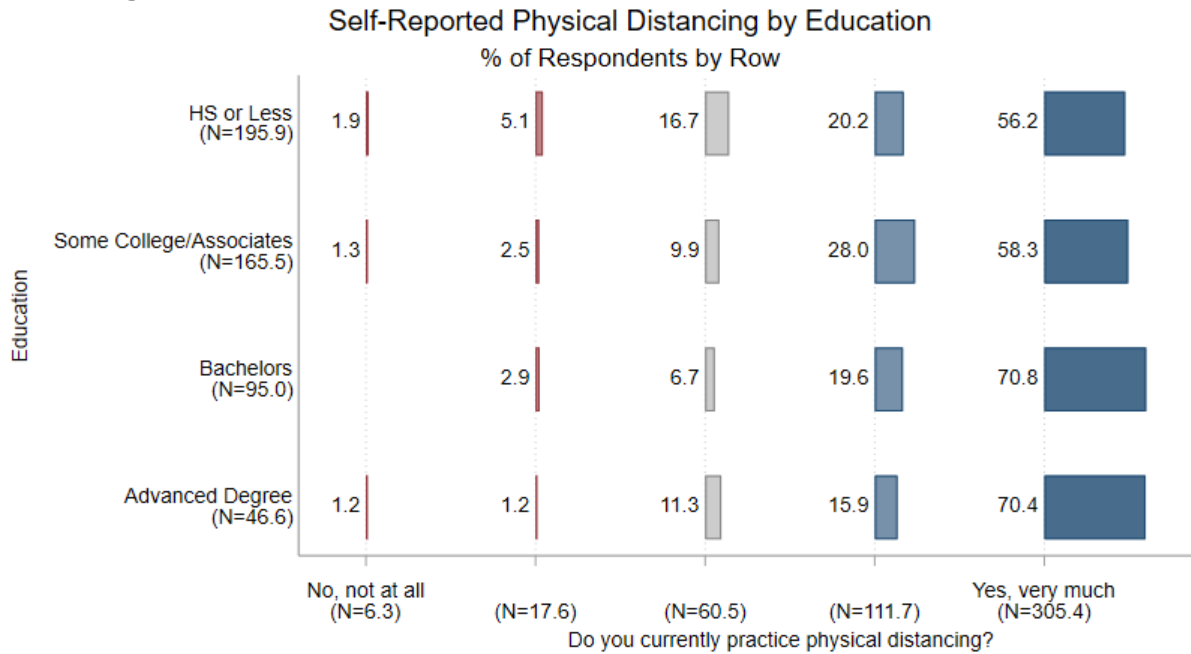
Residents in small towns reported the highest rates when compared to mid-size or large cities, with larger cities reporting less distancing behavior.



More women reported higher levels of physical distancing when compared to men.



Those with higher education (bachelor's degree or more) reported more physical distancing.

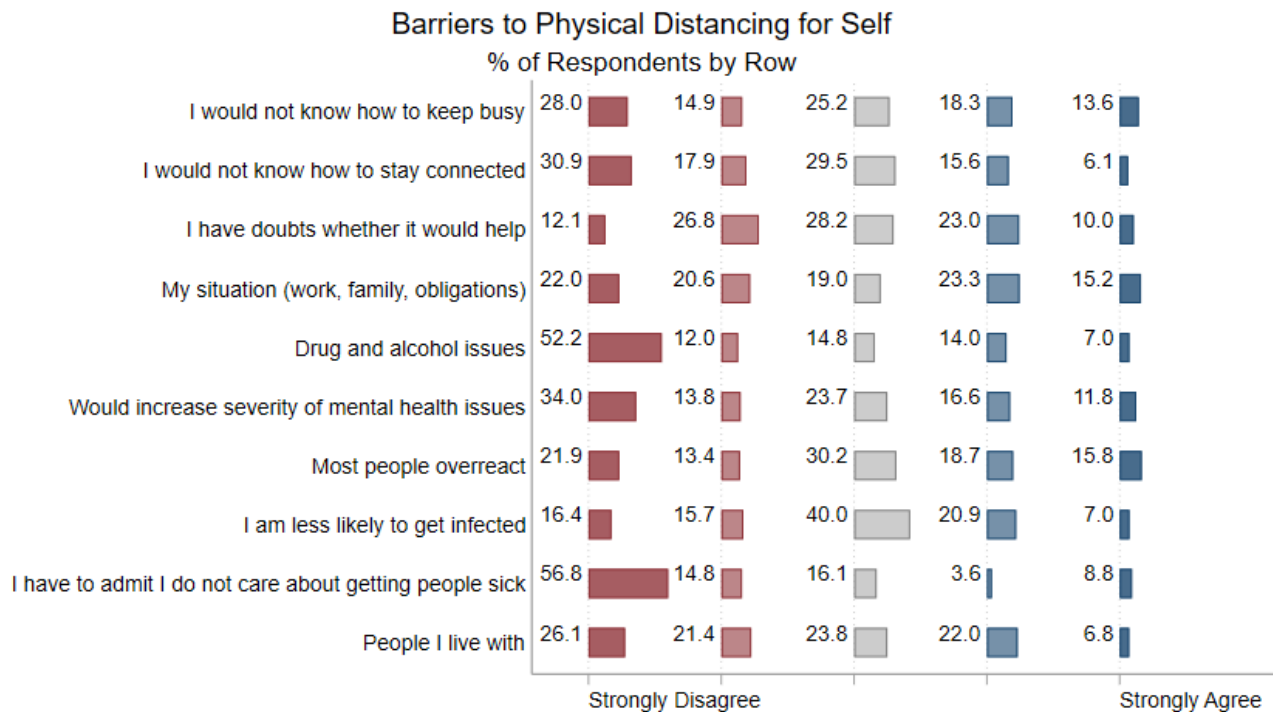


Respondents report concerns about family, community, and the country.

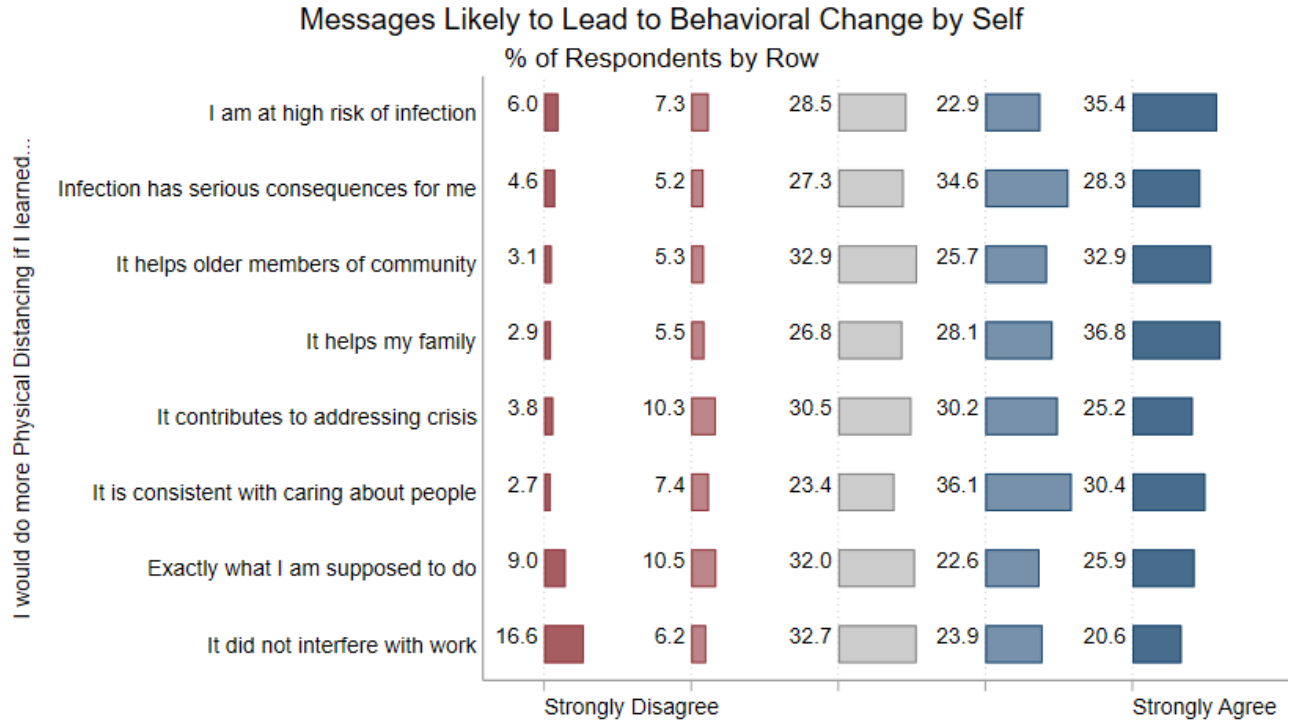
To the question “Please indicate the extent to which you have experienced the following feelings since you became aware of the outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus,” respondents answered the following (responses range from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning not at all and 5 meaning very much):

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Worried about family	503	4.12	1.027
Worried about country	502	3.95	1.094
Afraid about future	503	3.74	1.146
Worried about world	503	3.70	1.148
Worried about community	502	3.69	1.101
Anxious	502	3.37	1.184
Overwhelmed	503	3.12	1.317
More connected to others	503	3.06	1.216
Happy	503	2.55	1.145
Relaxed	503	2.51	1.178
Guilty about being OK	503	2.41	1.312

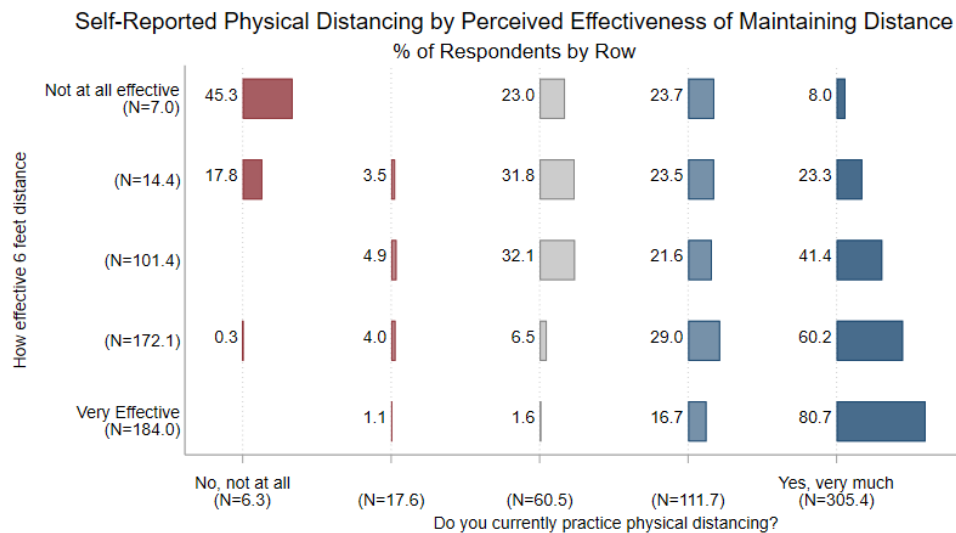
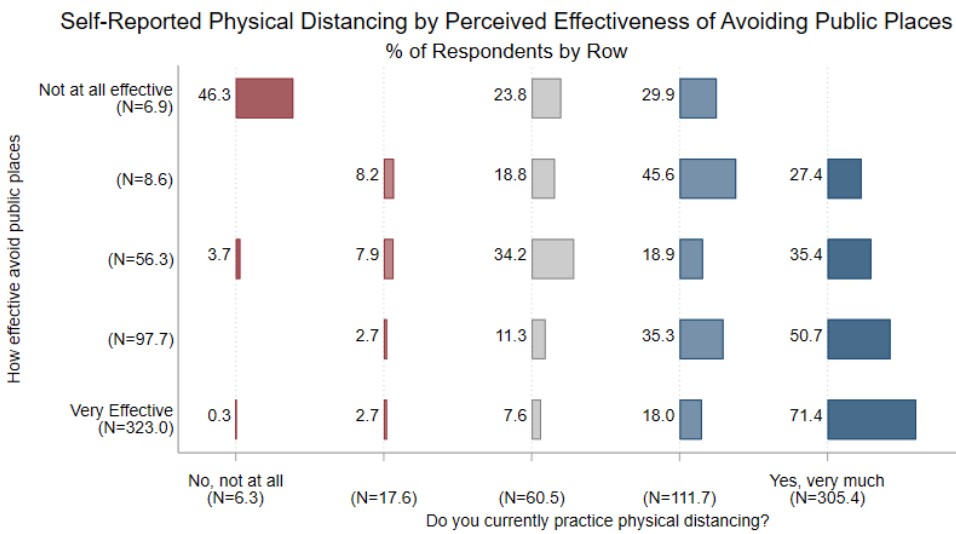
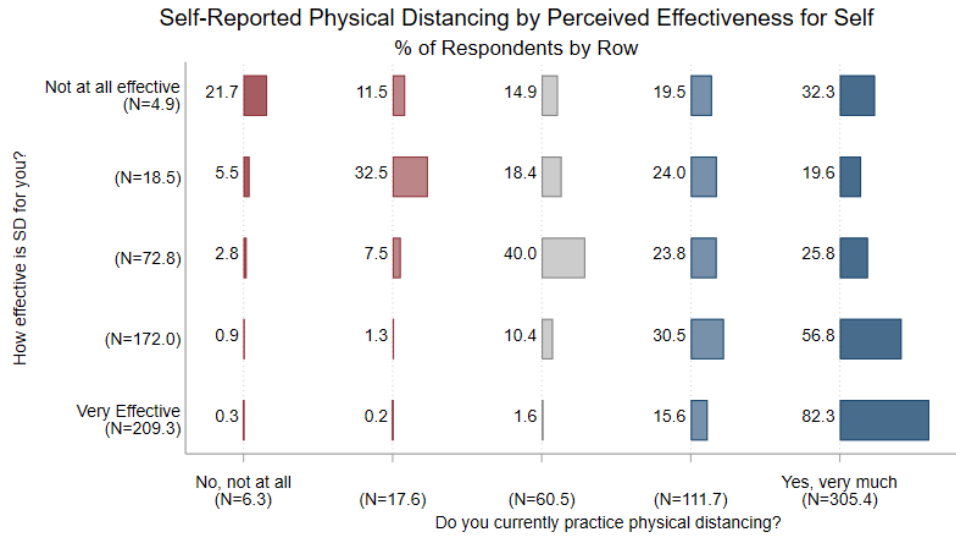
Messaging should consider the barriers to practicing social distancing. Note, these results include those who did not report maximum social distancing.



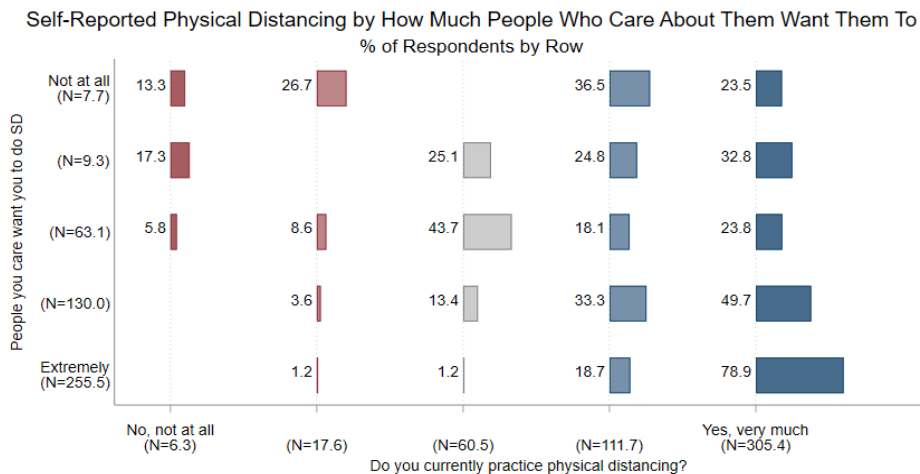
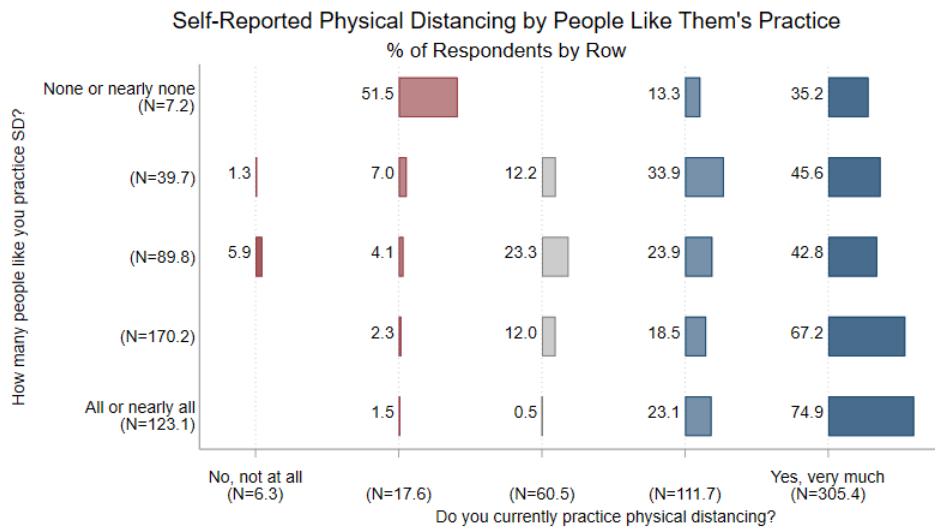
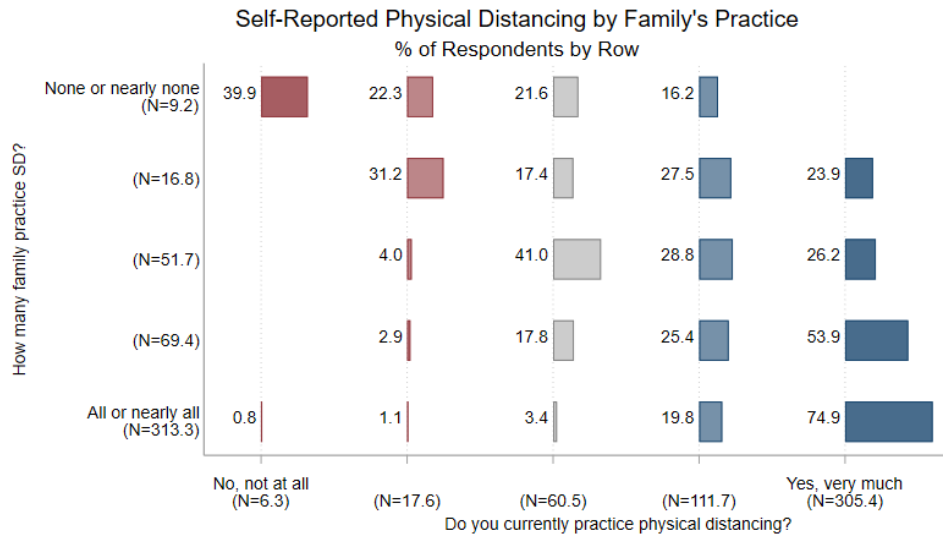
Messaging should highlight the benefits to practicing social distancing. Note, these results include those who did not report maximum social distancing.



Perceived effectiveness: Respondents who don't think physical distancing is effective are less likely to do it. Those who think physical distancing is effective practice it more.



Norms: Respondents who don't think others are practicing physical distancing are less likely to report doing it themselves. Those who think it is the norm to practice physical distancing say they practice it more.



Respondents report national news networks and social media as their top news sources.

To the question “How often do you get news in general from the following sources?” respondents answered the following (responses range from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning never and 5 meaning everyday):

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
National network news	503	3.66	1.33
Social media platforms	503	3.01	1.49
Newspapers and news magazines	503	2.84	1.38
Fox News (online and offline)	503	2.68	1.56
Public radio (online and offline)	503	2.53	1.42
CNN (online and offline)	503	2.53	1.47
MSNBC (online and offline)	503	2.29	1.41
Entertainment news programs	503	2.24	1.38
Progressive news sites	503	2.07	1.31
Conservative talk radio	503	1.96	1.36
Podcasts	503	1.91	1.24
Conservative news sites	503	1.84	1.27
Progressive talk radio	503	1.67	1.15

The CDC, public health experts, university scientists and WHO are the most trusted sources of information about COVID-19.

To the question “Do you trust the information you hear about the COVID-19 coronavirus from [...]” respondents answered the following (responses range from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning do not trust at all and 5 meaning trust very much):

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
CDC	503	4.14	0.97
Public health experts	503	4.09	0.95
University scientists	503	3.88	1.01
WHO	503	3.86	1.16
Your state government	503	3.57	1.06
Your local government	503	3.54	1.04
Friends and family	503	3.24	1.03
The News Media	503	3.02	1.19
The White House	503	2.83	1.41