

Executive Summary

Overview

The Maricopa County Department of Public Health partnered with the ASU Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center (SIRC) to conduct focus groups to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on Maricopa County residents. **In 2021, 33 focus groups were conducted with 186 participants.** This COVID-19 focus group study aimed to capture the impact of COVID-19 on the individuals, families and diverse geographical, ethnic and cultural communities within Maricopa County, Arizona. This study highlighted the **impacts, barriers, trust, and needs related to COVID-19** and is consistent with recent national research on community impacts of COVID-19. In focus groups and surveys, participants shared their unique stories and perspectives as they related to COVID-19.

Participants & Process

Focus groups
via Zoom

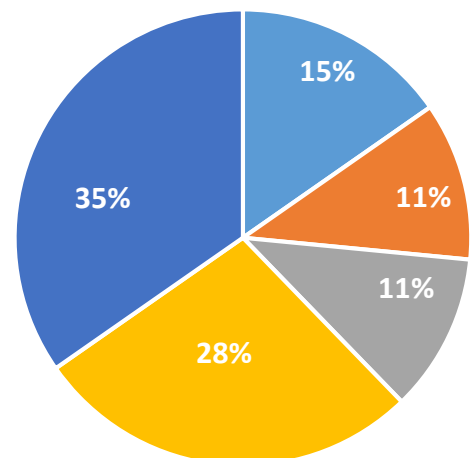
Online Survey

Incentives

Participants were recruited through purposeful sampling using community partners and a recruitment flyer.

186 Total Participants

- 72% male, 27% female
- Included Residents from
 - 5 geographic Maricopa County locations
 - Older adults
 - African Americans
 - Hispanics/Latinos
 - Native Americans
 - Asian Americans
 - Ethnic minority young adults
 - LGBTQIA persons
 - Veterans
 - New Parents
 - Parents of young children
 - Refugees



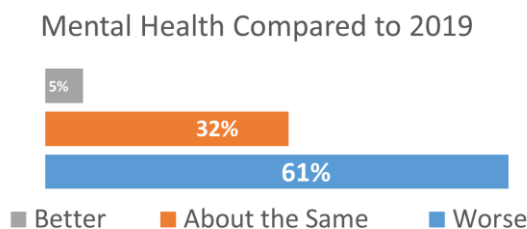
- American Indian/ Alaska Native
- Black/ African American
- Asian
- Hispanic/ Latino
- White

Results

The results tell a story of **resilience** and **connection** amidst a pandemic. In light of individuals who reported declines in mental health due to isolation, depression and anxiety, it also serves as evidence that the **community stands ready to collaborate**, with innovative and specific ideas on how to share health related information to the betterment of their lives, their families and communities.

Participants discussed declines in mental health and physical health and barriers to the vaccine as well as vaccine hesitancy and confusion. Suggestions were offered for messages and for who would influence their vaccine decisions, noting that one size does not fit all.

When asked how their mental health was compared to pre-COVID-19, **61% stated it was worse**.



Although participants discussed misinformation and rumors regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, **61%** were *highly likely* to receive the vaccine and **67%** had *been vaccinated or had plans to get vaccinated*.

In the Words of the Participants

Dissemination, Resilience and Silver Linings

They can build trust with young adults 18- to 24-year-olds by making the language more teen friendly so that we can understand what they're saying. Young Adults

One of the biggest barriers in the Black community is trust, so to overcome it, having someone come to church where we feel protected that could help. Parents of Minors

I think that in order to make such an approach to the Latino population, it could start on how to handle information or this type of advertisements or in the places where we go as a Latino population. Paiute Spanish

I'm in better physical shape. I remember starting hiking- I'm like I couldn't even make it up the mountain & now I'm like let's like let's do this. African American