

Governor's Master Plan for Aging COVID-19 Survey Results

August 2020



Overview of Survey and Respondents



Survey Overview

Survey Methods

- Online survey posted in English, Spanish, and Chinese on engageca.org
- Open July 10-July 27, 2020

Survey Topics

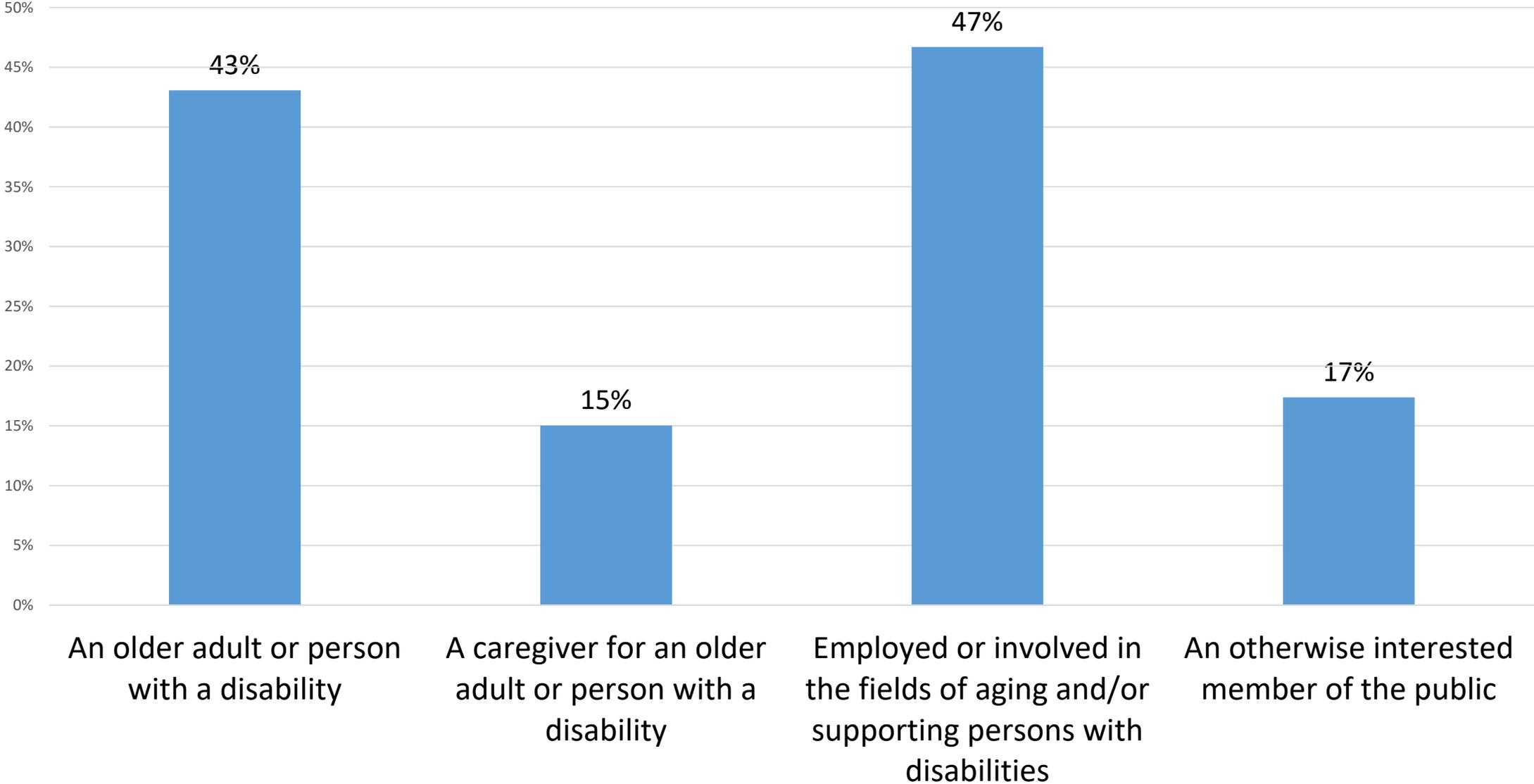
- Experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Challenges, including unfair treatment
 - Helpful experiences
 - Importance of the internet
 - Access to COVID-19 information
- Recommendations based on COVID-19 experience

Survey Respondents

- More than 900 total respondents (n=938)
- Most responses were provided in English (94.2%, n=884)
 - 3.5% responses provided in Chinese (n=33)
 - 2.2% responses provided in Spanish (n=21)
- Respondents most commonly described themselves as being
 - An older adult or person with a disability (43%) and/or
 - Employed or involved in the fields of aging and/or supporting persons with disabilities (47%)

How Respondents Describe Themselves

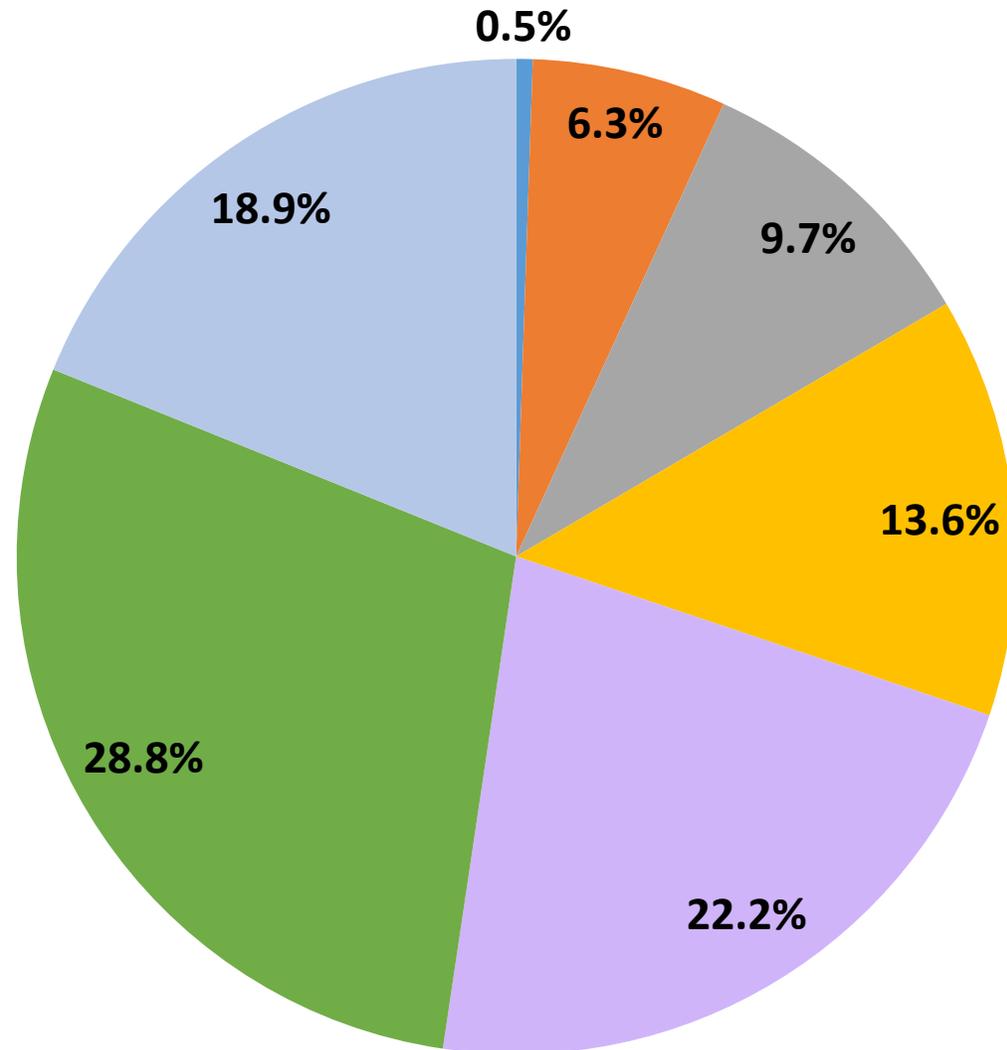
% of Respondents



Survey Respondents

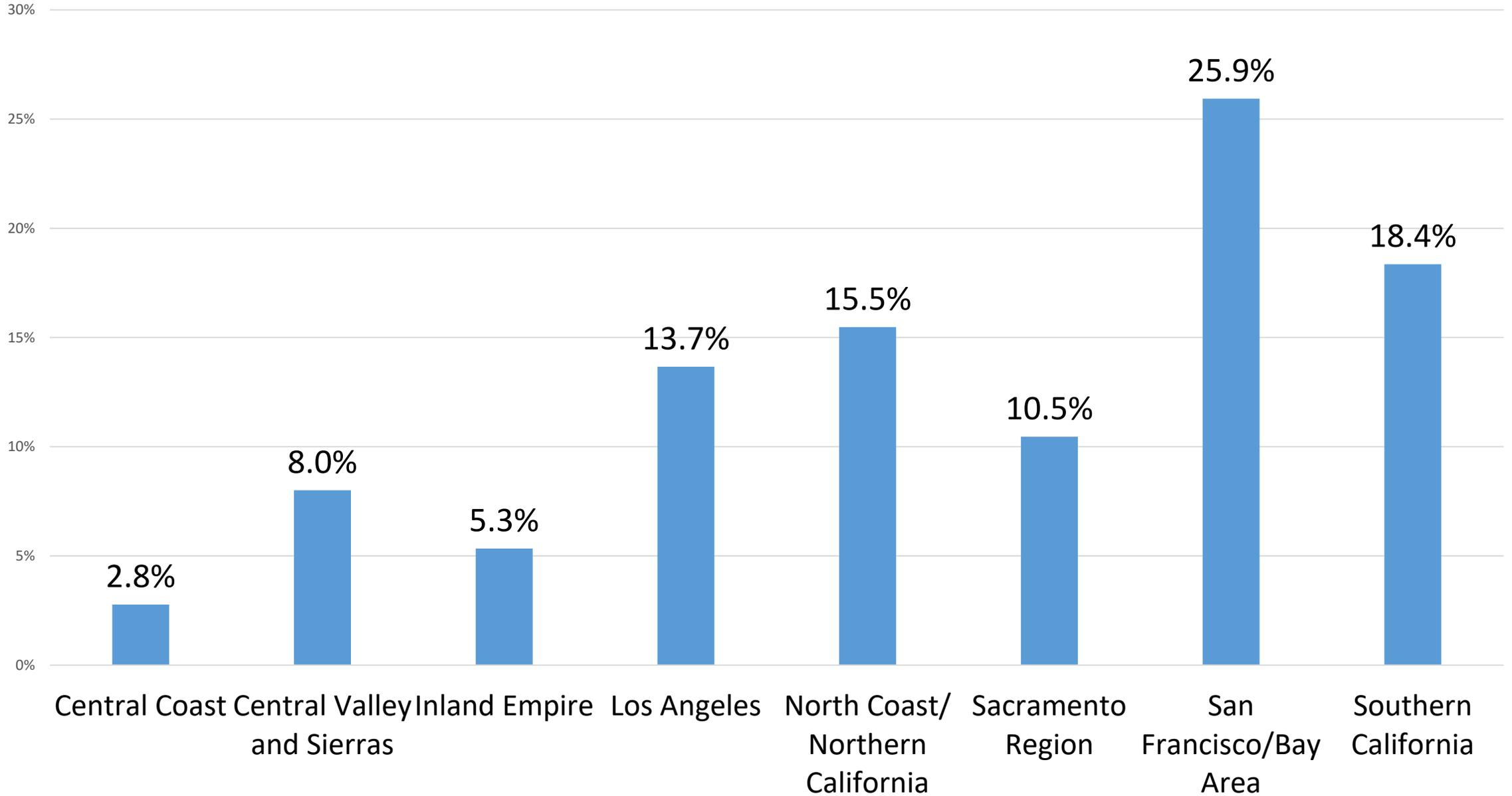
- Most respondents were age 55 or older (70%)
- Respondents live throughout California, but most commonly in
 - San Francisco/Bay Area (26%)
 - Southern California (18%)
 - North Coast/Northern California (16%)
 - Los Angeles (14%)
 - One respondent lived outside of California

Age of Respondents



- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 - 74
- 75+

Where Respondents Live



Key Takeaways

- Results about top challenges and top helpful experiences were in alignment
 - Isolation during COVID-19 was most frequently identified as “most” or “very” challenging (70%)
 - Experiences to address isolation – including various ways to connect to family, friends, and community – were identified as most helpful during COVID-19
- Nearly 9 in 10 respondents view the internet as essential during COVID-19 (86%)

Challenges during COVID-19

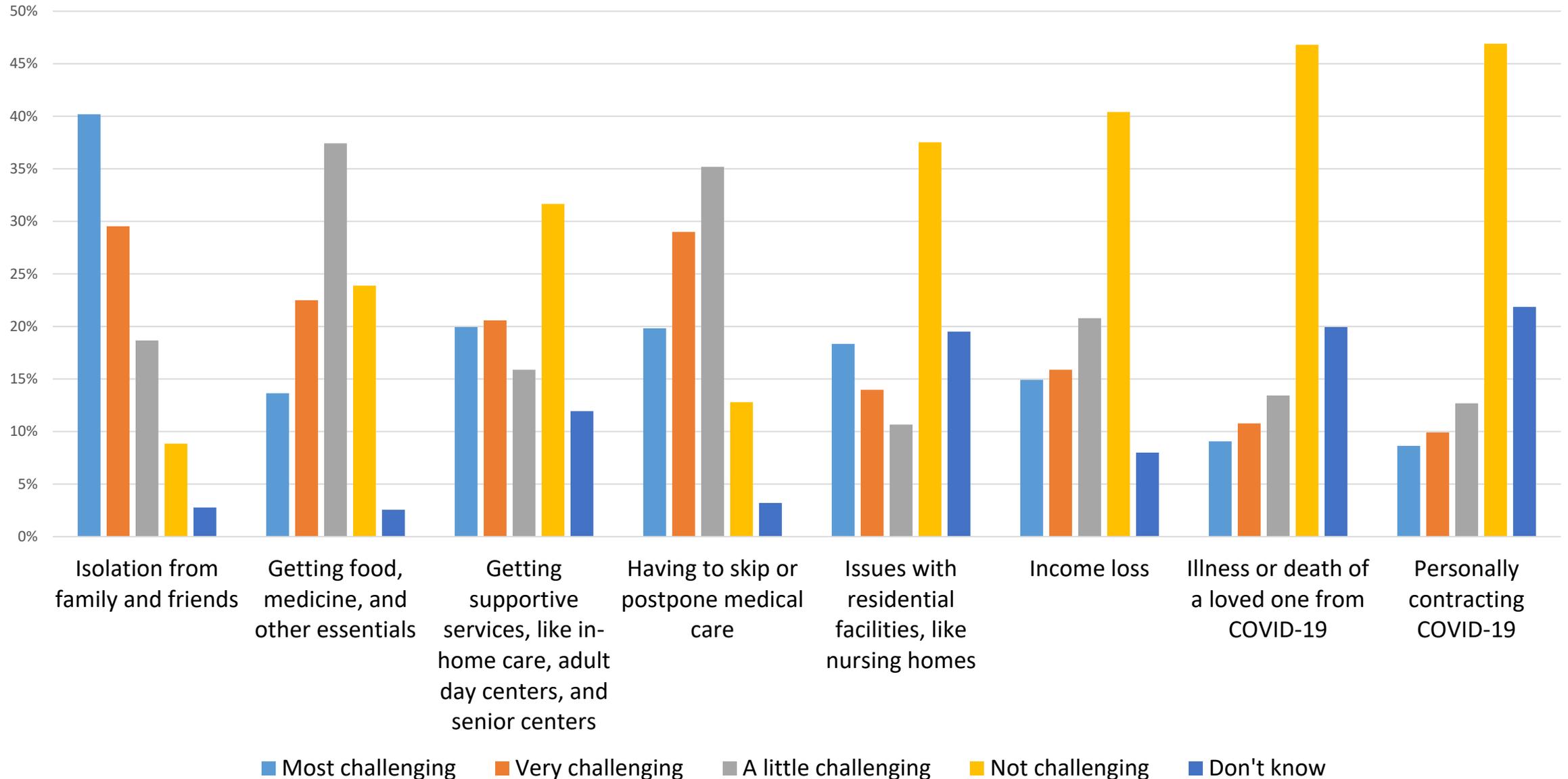
Challenges during COVID-19

- Isolation from family and friends is the top concern for all respondents
 - 70% of all respondents rated isolation as “most” or “very” challenging
- More than 1 in 5 respondents (22%) indicated they have been treated unfairly during the COVID-19 pandemic because of a health condition or disability, their age, their race or ethnicity, and/or the language they speak.
 - 14% of all respondents indicated they have been treated unfairly due to their age.

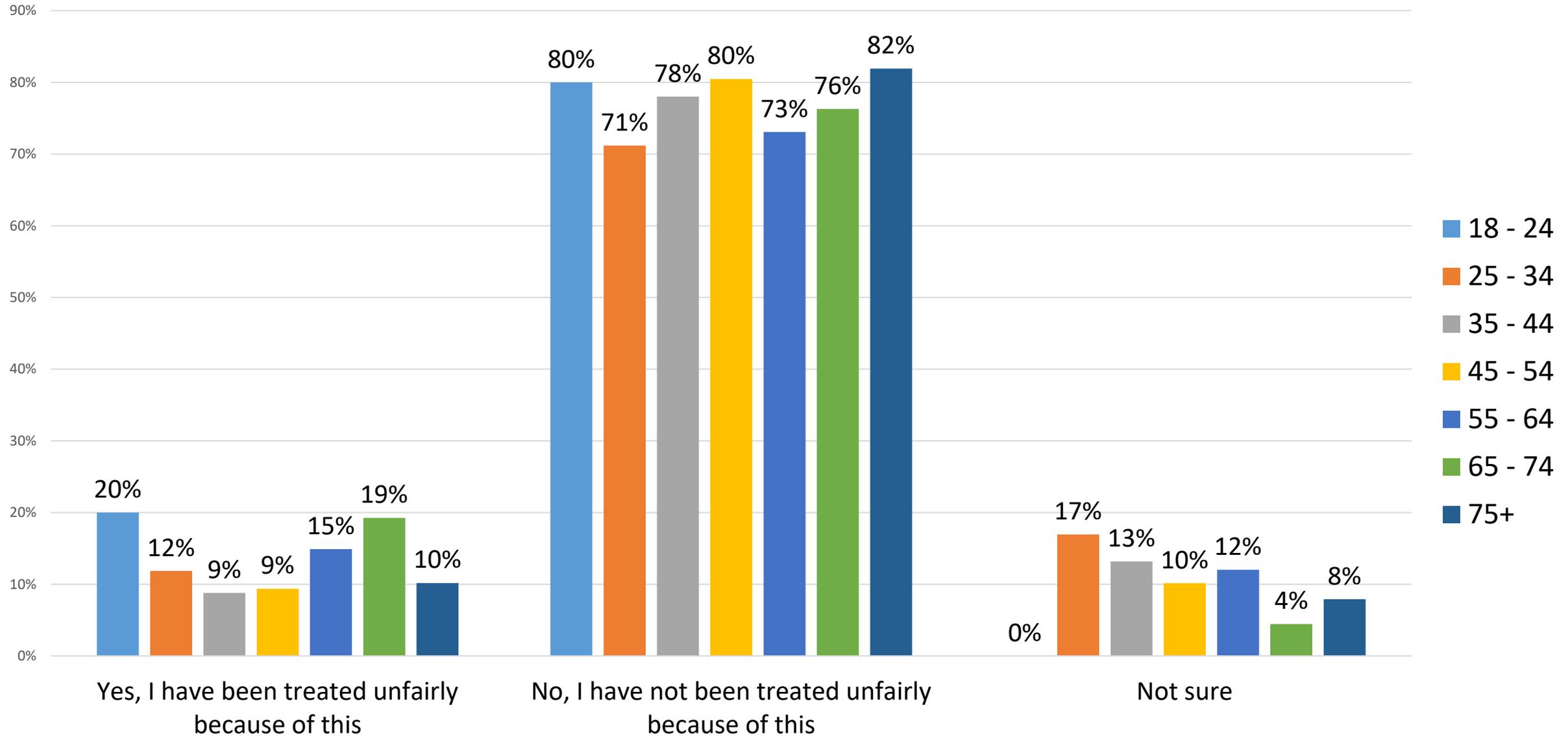
Challenges during COVID-19

- Access to medical care, supportive services, and other essentials are also a significant concern
 - About half (49%) of all respondents indicated that skipping or postponing medical care was “most” or “very” challenging
 - More than a third said “Getting supportive services, like in-home care, adult day centers, and senior centers” (41%) or “Getting food, medicine, and other essentials” (36%) was “most” or “very” challenging

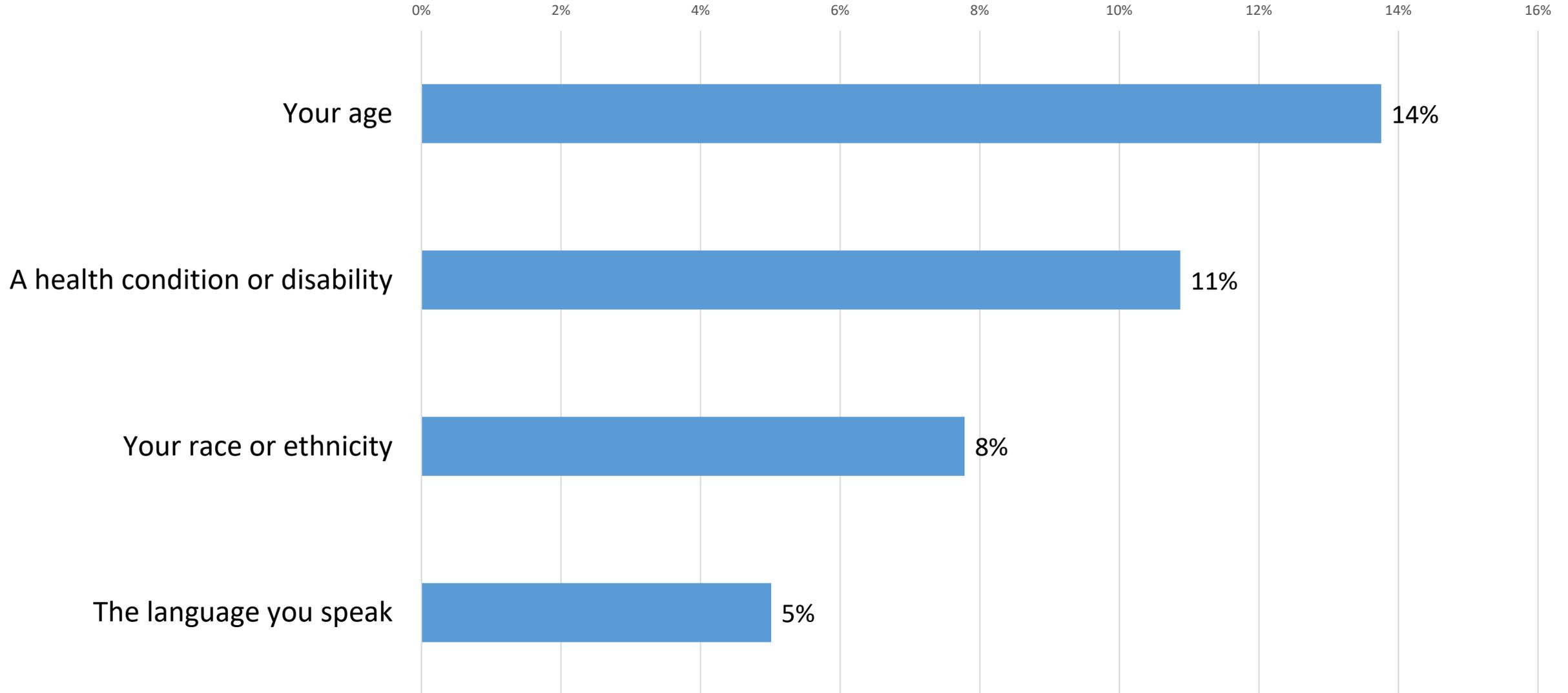
Challenges Experienced during COVID-19 Pandemic (All Respondents)



Do you feel that you have been treated unfairly during the COVID-19 pandemic based on your age?



Share of Respondents Indicating Unfair Treatment Based On...

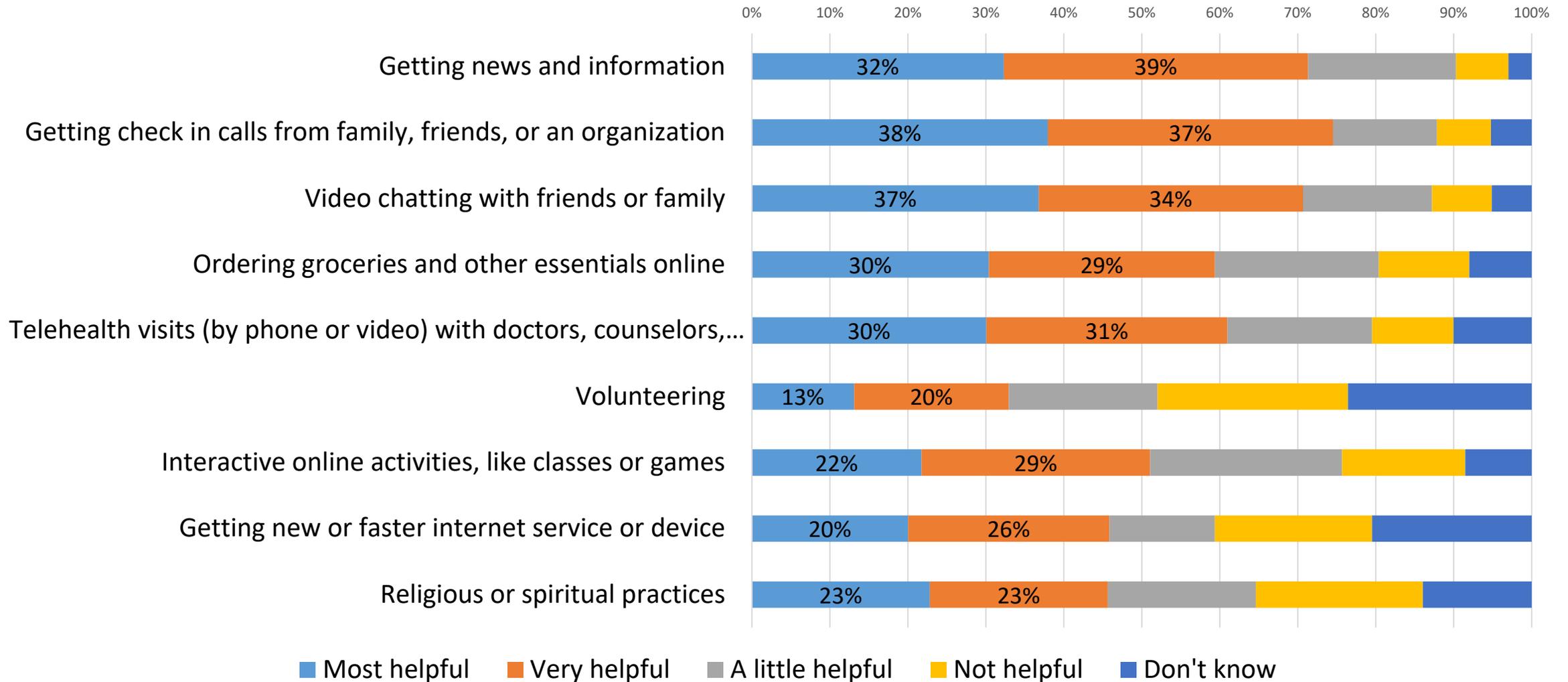


Helpful Experiences during COVID-19

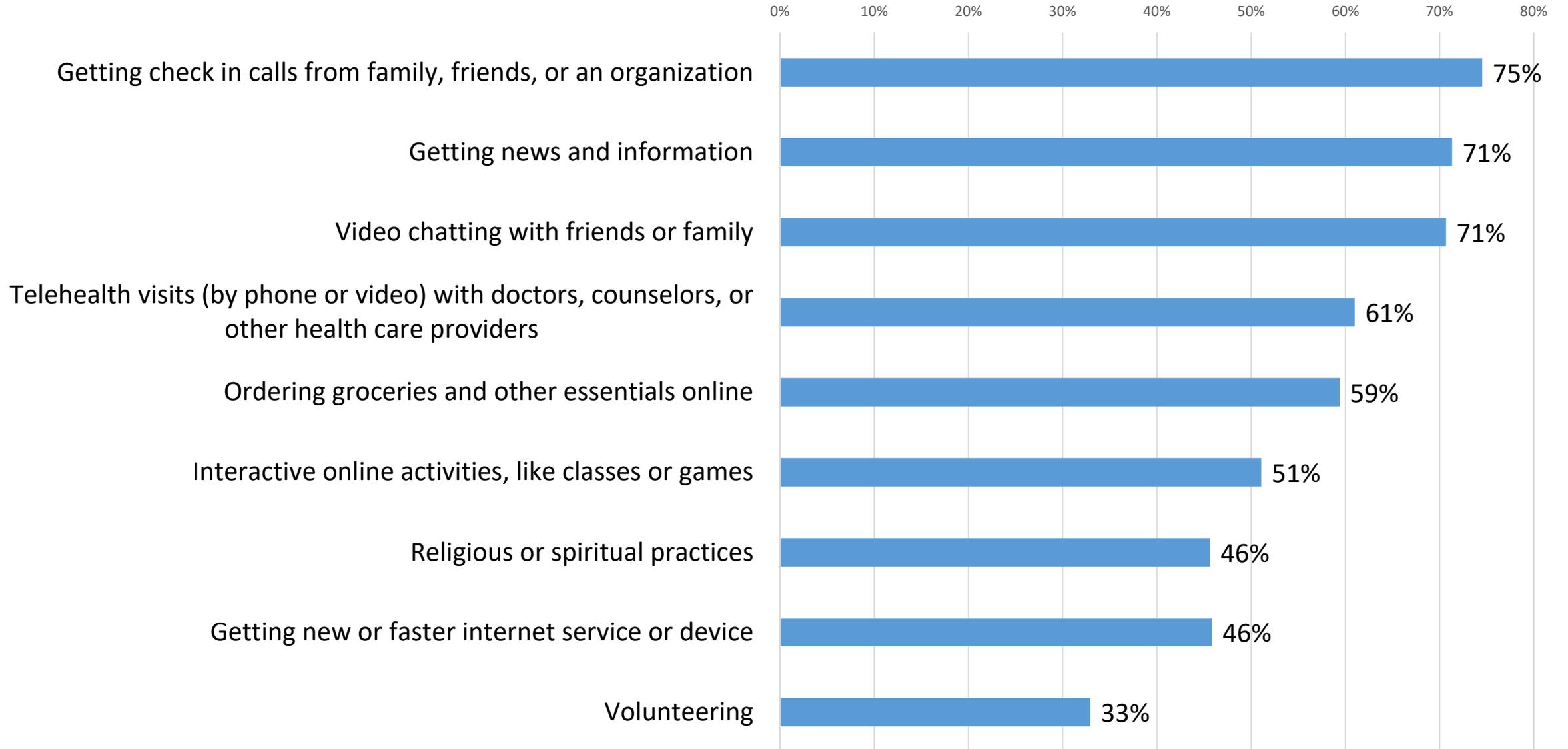
Helpful Experiences during COVID-19

- Having access to family, friends, and information is most commonly identified as “most” or “very” helpful
 - Getting check in calls from family, friends, or an organization (75%)
 - Getting news and information (71%)
 - Video chatting with friends or family (71%)
- Remote access to health care, food, and other essentials is also helpful
 - Telehealth visits (by phone or video) with doctors, counselors, or other health care providers (61%)
 - Ordering groceries and other essentials online (59%)

What has been helpful to you, or to older adults and persons with disabilities that you know, during the COVID-19 pandemic? (All Respondents)



Share of Respondents Indicating Item as “Most” or “Very” Helpful (All Respondents)



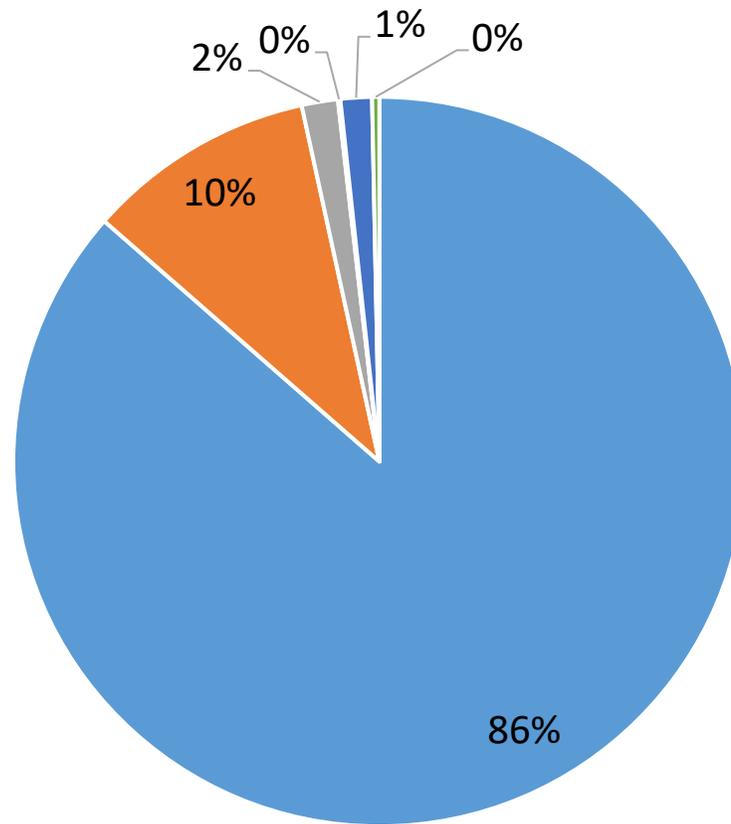
Staying Connected and Informed



Staying Connected and Informed

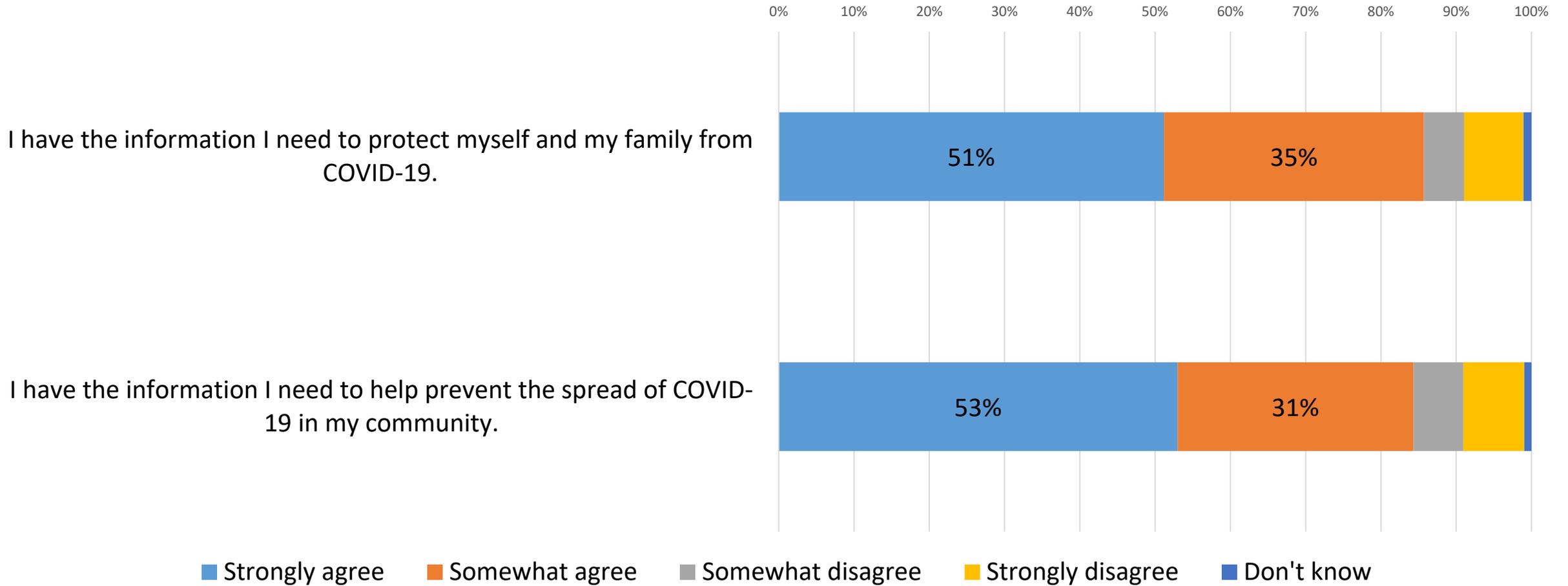
- Nearly 9 in 10 respondents view the internet as essential during COVID-19 (86%)
- Many of the most helpful experiences are internet-related
 - Video chatting with friends or family (71%)
 - Ordering groceries and other essentials online (59%)
 - Interactive online activities, like classes or games (51%)
 - Getting new or faster internet service or device (46%)
- About half of respondents “strongly agree” that they have the information they need to protect themselves and their family from COVID-19 (51%) and to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in their community (53%).

How important, if at all, has the internet been for you personally during the COVID-19 pandemic? (All Respondents)



- Essential
- Important but not essential
- Not too important
- Not at all important
- I do not have regular access to the internet
- Don't know

Access to Information



Qualitative Data:

Additional Responses from Respondents

Respondents' Thoughts on Challenges During COVID-19

Sample Qualitative Responses

Challenges: Isolation & Engagement

- “Not being able to see friends & family. Not being able to have a meaningful life, not being able to breathe!”
- “I feel that it is extremely unfair that I am forced to remain very isolated because others are not wearing masks or distancing.”
- “Wish there were more ways to help virtually - maybe have older adults volunteer as tutors for elementary school children who will have to distance learn.”
- “Solitary confinement in a SNF My aunt died of COVID and no one could contact or communicate with her during her last week of life. It was devastating.”
- “I miss social gatherings playing table tennis and indoor pickleball.”



Challenges: Access to Essentials

- “Access to PPE and cleaning supplies. Where are they?”
- “Transportation: getting around on the bus due to reduced or discontinued service and the need to limit public exposure to COVID-19.”
- “I live alone and I need plumbing work but am afraid to have in a plumber.”
- “Access to agencies like SSA, Medicare, and County Public Benefit Programs”
- “Can't use EBT online, so have to go to stores.”

Challenges: Economic and Personal Well-Being

- “Paying rent now that my roommate has moved out and i must pay entire rent alone. it is more than my monthly SSI direct deposit.”
- “More expensive to live not being able to go to usual sales and discount stores.”
- “Costs rising mostly utilities and food NO increase in SS.”
- “I am looking for low income senior housing, but worry about safety. I am afraid also of contracting the virus from younger family members I live with.”

Challenges: Caregiving

- “Caring for so many of my friends and neighbors that have few social resources.”
- “Child care (we are raising a grandchild).”
- “Husband with dementia. Too risky to get in home care or consider a nursing home. No respite for me.”
- “Taking care of disabled daughter and my age.”
- “Caregivers of people with dementia are having a very difficult time without in-home care companions and adult day centers. Isolation is a problem.”
- “No leisure or free time. A wheelchair & without intermittent caregiver and housekeeper I'm in motion 16 hours a day.”

Challenges: Ageism & Ableism

- “COVID has made Ageism worse! The generic older adult is now seen as infirm.”
- “Not given the room to pass comfortably while traveling with my service dog when trying to practice physical distancing.”
- “Older people are invisible neither to be seen nor heard.”
- “My city pushed to reopen too quickly for young people and revenue. Ageism.”

Challenges: Access to Reliable Information

- “Mixed messages from Regional Centers and inability to contact key people, and receive pertinent information.”
- “Explaining to older adults how to stay safe when guidance on media has been so disorganized.”
- “Conflicting stories in the news.”
- “It is difficult to understand local restrictions of Counties located near me. I wish there was 1 source for up to the minute County COVID-19 rules.”
- “Mostly confusion over rules and protocols”
- “Changes to and inconsistent directions on what to do to keep oneself safe.”

Challenges: Health & Health Care

- “Getting the healthcare needs and management of health issues met at home.”
- “I have had chemotherapy until March and have not been able to see a Doctor in person since then.”
- “My mother’s hip replacement having to be postponed.”
- “My Mom was treated unfairly: she was admitted to hospital for non-COVID issue and was not allowed a support person, worsening her dementia and anxiety.”
- “Lack of access to dental and other services.”
- “Not having access to mental health professionals to help me deal with my anxiety and depression.”

Challenges: Technology

- “Older friends who do not have or don't know how to fully use “smart” technology.”
- “No electronic devices. No internet.”
- “Seniors suffer because so much is done through computers. Would be great to have home visitors help seniors with computer communications needs.”
- “Having to conduct life online.”
- “We experienced extremely slow or no service since the pandemic hit making online services harder to access.”

Challenges: Loss

- “Dealing with death of partner in memory care and unable to visit his final month of life.”
- “Solitary confinement in a skilled nursing facility. My aunt died of COVID and no one could contact or communicate with her during her last week of life. It was devastating.”
- “Not being able to travel for family funerals.”

Respondents' Thoughts on Helpful Experiences During COVID-19

Sample Qualitative Responses

General Helpful Experiences

- “Honestly I've gotten more help and support than before covid”
- “Enjoyed the peaceful quiet of no traffic noise.”
- “Seeing neighbors (masked, at a distance) when walking outside”
- “Meal delivery twice a week”
- “Neighbors who drop off food”
- “Walking my dog or sitting outside enjoying the weather”

General Helpful Experiences

- “Having parks and streets reconfigured to encourage exercise and physical distancing”
- “Creative and artistic activities. Making things.”
- “mailing and receiving letters to stay in touch and have some thing to look forward each day”
- “We are part of a “Village” of older people who assist each other!”
- “I started sewing masks.”

Helpful Experiences: Technology

- “The AWESOME instructor from my gym doing their classes via Zoom!”
- “Teaching my grandchildren on zoom.”
- “Having our home church streaming on YouTube.”
- “reading the news from the county health officer. reading an accessible website for blind people with stats that read well for a screen reader user.”
- “Help with IT as a new user.”
- “Library login providing access to databases & entertainment.”
- “I live in a rural area and had to get satellite internet. So lucky to have the income to afford it.”
- “Running zoom groups for my church.”

Thank you!

Send questions to EngAGE@aging.ca.gov

Learn more about the Master Plan for Aging at

 **ENGAGE**CA.org

