



## Christians Struggled with Relational Health Prior to the Crisis — So What Has Changed?

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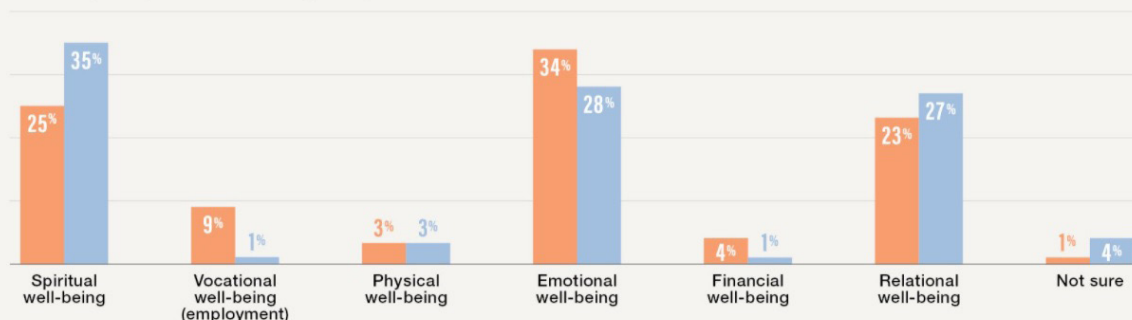
In the early days of the crisis, Barna® began conducting weekly pastor surveys to check in on the pulse of Protestant church leaders and their people during the pandemic. Just a month into tracking (April 14–20, 2020), Barna® asked pastors about the immediate needs of their congregants. Emotional well-being (34%), spiritual well-being (25%), and relational well-being (23%) topped the list, and these concerns held steady throughout the summer. When Barna® asked again (August 13–17, 2020), church leaders responded in higher numbers than before for two of the three needs (28% emotional, 35% spiritual, 27% relational).

### PASTORS' CURRENT OBSERVATIONS OF CONGREGANTS' WELL-BEING NEEDS

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*BASED ON WHAT YOU HAVE OBSERVED, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING REPRESENTS THE MOST IMMEDIATE NEED FOR PEOPLE IN YOUR CONGREGATION?*

● As of April 20, 2020    ● As of August 17, 2020



n=204 U.S. Protestant pastors; April 14-20, 2020.  
n=336 U.S. Protestant pastors; August 13-17, 2020.

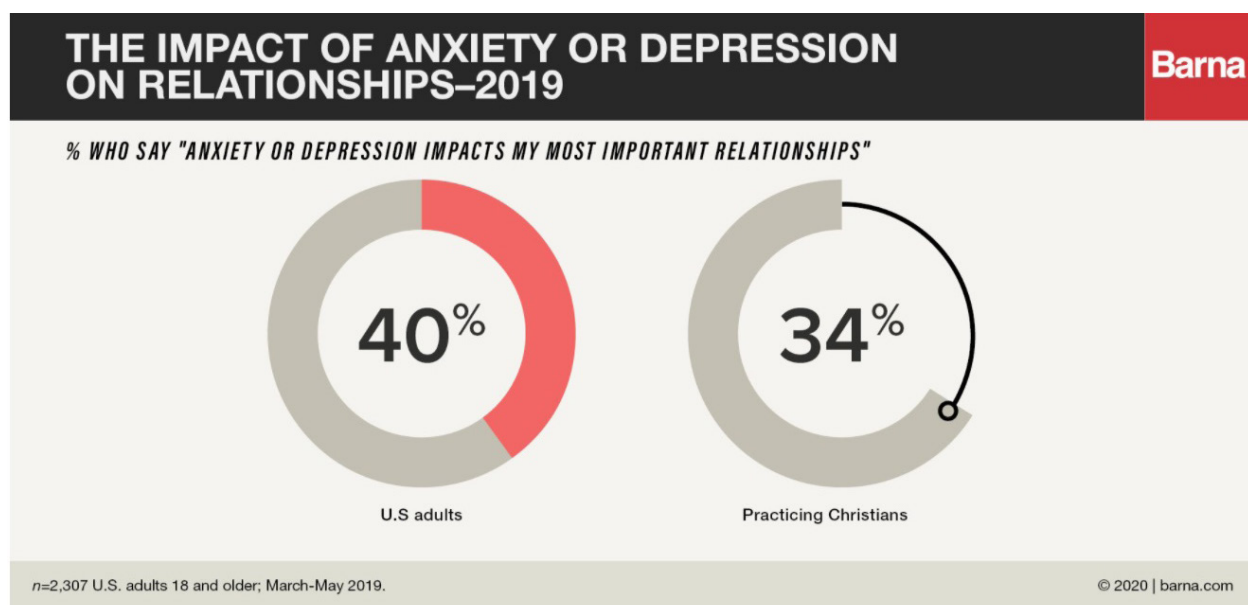
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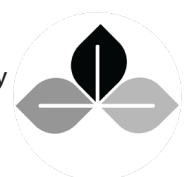
Barna® research indicates that challenges to emotional, relational, and mental health tend to aggravate one another—that is, if someone is struggling in one of these areas, it's statistically more likely that they will be struggling in the other two areas as well. Prior to the pandemic, U.S. adults and practicing Christians alike noted anxiety and depression as the most commonly faced challenges to relational satisfaction, with 40 percent of all U.S. adults and 34 percent of practicing Christians saying this is true.

### **Currently, One in Five Church Leaders Ranks Their Mental and Emotional Health as Below Average**

Practicing Christians are generally confident that their pastor can help them navigate relational struggles. Among those who have experienced a relational hardship, one in three practicing Christians (34%) is likely to turn to a pastor or priest for help.



Per a Barna® pastor survey taken early in the pandemic (April 7–13, 2020), a vast majority of U.S. church leaders (89%) says that they at least somewhat (65%) or definitely (24%) understand the immediate needs of their congregations regarding mental and emotional health. Even so, during that same survey, pastors shared that they were largely not talking about mental or emotional health during their Sunday sermons—while two in five (39%) had broached this topic within the past month, a greater portion either had not (58%), or cannot recall (3%). These percentages did not statistically shift even four months later, when Barna® asked the same question of church leaders. *(see chart on following page)*

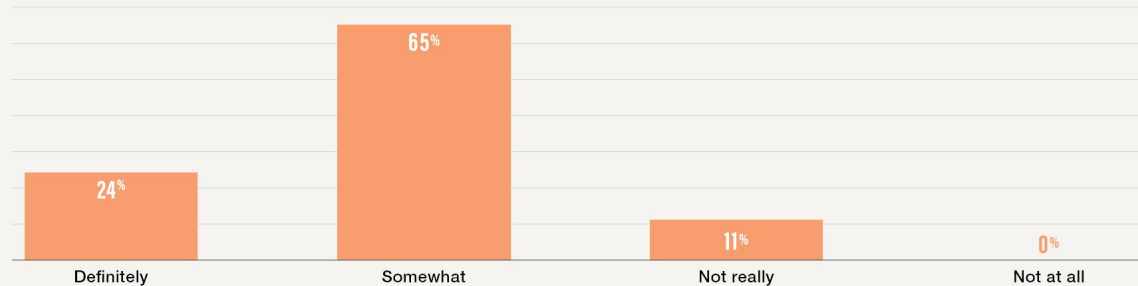


# PASTORS' CURRENT UNDERSTANDING OF CONGREGANTS' MENTAL & EMOTIONAL NEEDS

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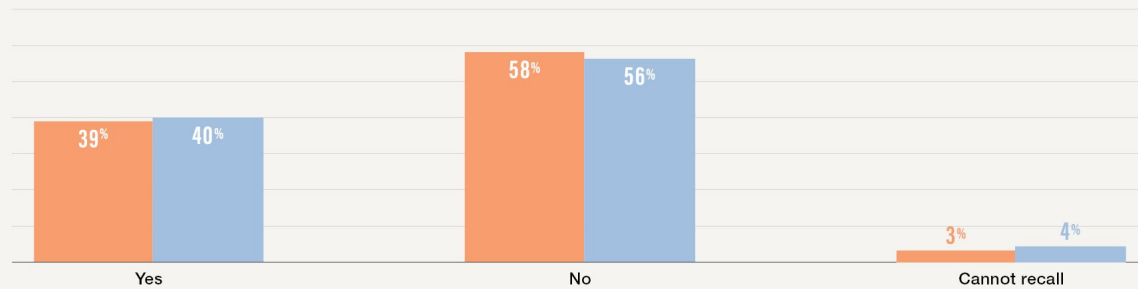
*DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS ARE FOR PEOPLE IN YOUR CONGREGATION AS IT RELATES TO THEIR MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH?*

● As of April 13, 2020



*IN THE LAST MONTH, HAVE YOU OR ANOTHER CHURCH STAFF MEMBER PREACHED ON THE TOPIC OF MENTAL HEALTH OR EMOTIONAL HEALTH?*

● As of April 13, 2020 ● As of August 17, 2020



n=246 U.S. Protestant pastors; April 7-13, 2020.  
n=336 U.S. Protestant pastors; August 13-17, 2020.

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