


New York National Guard COVID-19 Warfighter Resilience & Readiness Survey

National Guard Bureau and the Uniformed Services University Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress surveyed NYNG Soldiers and Airmen from August to December 2020 about their experiences with COVID-19 and related activations.

3,993
respondents


1 in 3 reported personal experience with COVID-19
e.g., self/family sick, someone close died

Key Takeaways

Support from leaders, peers, friends, and family contributes to better health outcomes.



High unit leader / supervisor support



Lower current stress + fewer bad physical / mental health days



Low unit leader / supervisor support



25% more stress + 50% more bad physical / mental health days

Findings



22%

reported increased alcohol use



16%

felt quite a bit / extremely stressed



10%

felt that poor physical or mental health kept them from usual activities

Health outcomes among those on high-stress assignments following personal experience with COVID-19:

75%

more likely to report worse mental health

75%

more likely to seek mental health support

2x

increased alcohol use



Implications

- Higher alcohol use may increase personal safety risks (e.g., motor vehicle accidents)
- Stress may increase potential for relationship impacts and conflict among living partners
- High-stress assignments may worsen health outcomes for those with personal COVID-19 experience
- Time outdoors, exercise, daily routines, and talking to friends and family helps manage stress

What Can Leaders Do?

- ✓ Provide opportunities to promote strong connections, open dialogue, and access to resources (e.g., Behavioral Health Officers, Chaplains)
- ✓ Provide regular time to decompress through staying connected with friends and family, and exercising
- ✓ Be vigilant toward those with personal COVID-19 experience and assign to lower stress assignments, when possible
- ✓ Praise Guard members for handling challenges and their contribution to mission
- ✓ Reduce uncertainty (clarify length of activation and tasks)



For additional actions leaders can take to support Guard members working during COVID-19, download the Pandemic Activations - Select, Train, Assist, Reset (PA-STAR) Pocket Card: <https://www.cstsonline.org/education-and-training/health-campaigns/leader-support-for-service-members-working-during-covid-19>