



# Potential Health Service Psychologist Workforce Capacity Decrease

The American Psychological Association's Survey of Health Service Psychologists (April 2021,  $N = 842$ ) found that 38% of psychologists were working more than they did before the pandemic, and 16% of psychologists were planning to decrease practice hours. For psychologists providing services to specific population groups,<sup>1</sup> the percentages of psychologists working more during the pandemic and psychologists planning to decrease practice hours indicate potential capacity issues in meeting the needs of these population groups.

- For psychologists frequently providing services to Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander populations, 60% percent were working more than they did before the pandemic, and 25% were planning to decrease practice hours.
- For psychologists frequently providing services to American Indian/Alaska Native populations, 57% were working more than they did before the pandemic, and 29% were planning to decrease practice hours.
- For psychologists frequently providing services to immigrant populations, 42% were working more than they did before the pandemic, and 19% were planning to decrease practice hours.

There are also workload capacity concerns for psychologists frequently providing services to Asian populations, populations living with chronic pain, populations living with chronic illnesses, and gay, lesbian, or bisexual populations.

Psychologists frequently providing services to children (under 11), adolescents (12-17), transgender and gender-non-conforming populations, American Indian/Alaska Native populations, active duty military, and those frequently providing services to the homeless, unemployed, immigrant, rural, and religious populations were working more than 40 hours per week on average.

## IMPLICATIONS

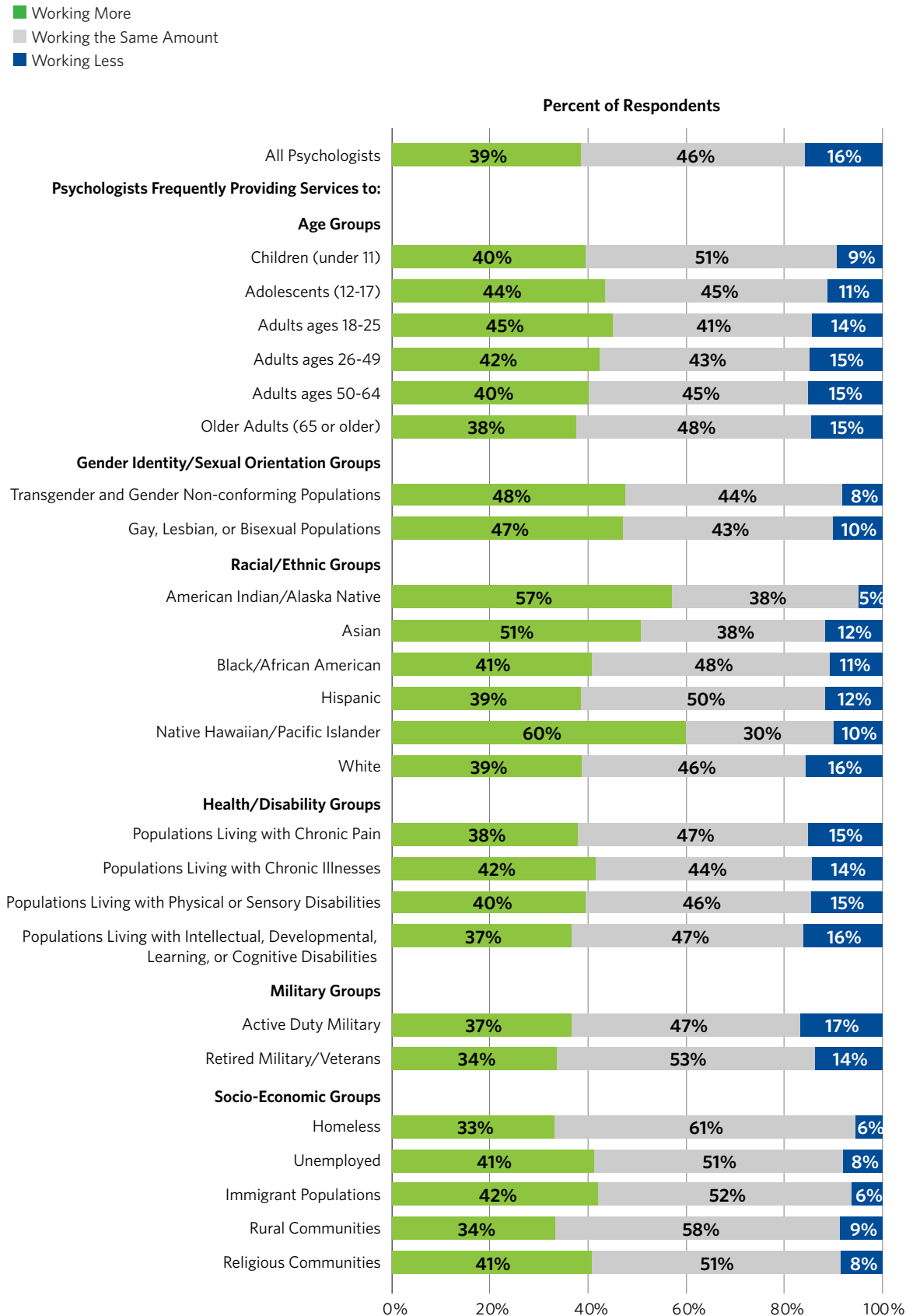
First, there are implications for meeting population health needs, especially in light of increasing population mental health needs through the course of the pandemic.<sup>2</sup> Psychologists have reported great increases in treating anxiety, depressive, and trauma-related disorders, as well as increased demand from White, Asian, multi-racial populations, adults (18-64), adolescents (13-17), and older adults (64-79). Increased population demand and potential decrease in psychologists' workload may exacerbate the unmet mental health needs for many population groups.

Second, there are indications that psychologists were working near, at, or above the top of their workload capacity. Nearly two thirds (65%) of psychologists reported that they have no capacity for new patients during the pandemic, almost half (46%) reported feeling burned out, and 41% were not able to meet the demand for treatments from patients.<sup>2</sup> This highlights the importance of supporting and maintaining psychologists' well-being so that psychologists can in turn meet population health needs.

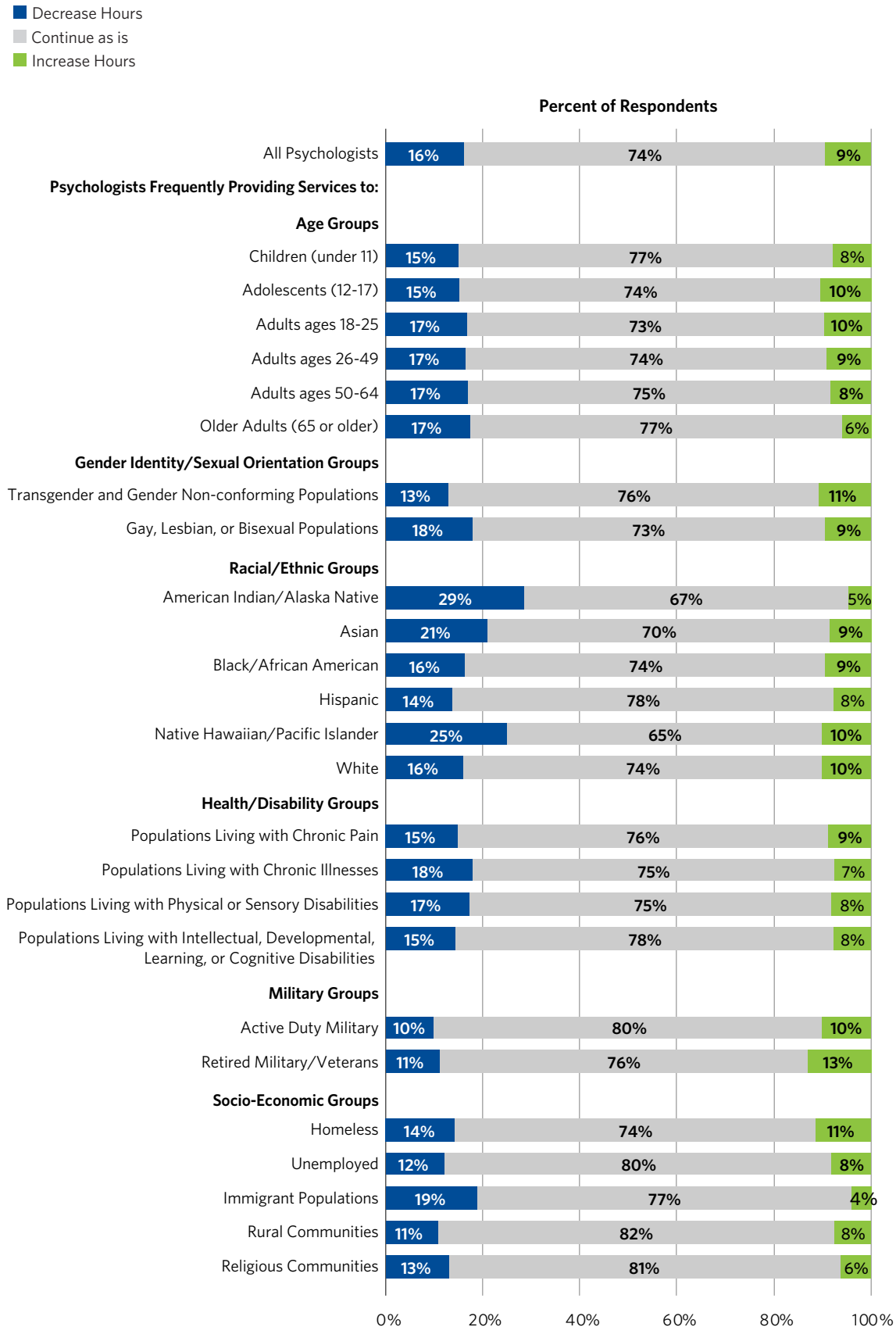
<sup>1</sup> Psychologists were asked about the frequency at which they provide services to each population group: very frequently, frequently, occasionally, rarely, and never. Those reported very frequently or frequently were included as psychologists frequently providing services to each population group.

<sup>2</sup> American Psychological Association. (2021). Worsening mental health crisis pressures psychologist workforce. <https://www.apa.org/pubs/reports/practitioner/covid-19-2021>

## WORKLOAD DURING THE PANDEMIC COMPARED TO BEFORE THE PANDEMIC



## PRACTICE PLANS FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS



## MEAN WORK HOURS

