

UC San Diego Assessing the Effects of Remote Learning Instruction on Mental Health in College Students

Herbert Wertheim
School of Public Health and
Human Longevity Science

Nicole Santoyo, Nareh Abramian, Omar Nofal
Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health, UC San Diego

Background

- Mental health issues are very common among college students due to academic workload, moving away from home, and financial stress.¹
- More than half of college students in the United States have mental health issues such as anxiety and high stress.²
- Limited research has been done to measure mental health affects of remote learning on college students during the pandemic.

Objectives

To assess the impact of remote learning on the mental health of college students.

Methods

We conducted a cross-sectional online survey in April and May 2021 and collected 77 responses from current students in various colleges and grade levels.

The survey consisted of 10 remote learning statements assessing mental health factors in college students.

The survey was administered via social media posts, emails sent by the public health department, and contacting students directly.

Our instrument measured anxiety, motivation, and likelihood to seek help.

Table 1. Participant Demographics (N=77)

Age	
18-20	15.6%
21-23	77.9%
24-26	5.2%
27+	1.3%
Major	
Public Health	29.87%
Psychology	16.88%
Biology	22.08%
Other	40.26%
Current College Level	
Undergraduate - Freshmen	5.2%
Undergraduate - Sophomore	2.6%
Undergraduate - Junior	22.1%
Undergraduate - Senior	66.2%
Graduate	3.9%
Housing Situation	
On campus	5.2%
Off campus	94.8%
With roommates (Sharing room)	8.2%
With roommates (Own room)	27.4%
With parents/family	57.5%
Live alone	6.8%
Designated Room To Study	
Yes	58.4%
No	11.7%
Sometimes	29.9%

Table 2. Percentage of participants that agree on mental health statements.

Remote Learning Decreased Motivation	97.4%
Remote Learning Has Negative Impacts on Mental Health	81.8%
Remote Learning Increased Anxiety	71.4%
Remote Learning Eased Anxiety	37.6%

There is a statistically significant association between a decrease in motivation and not having a designated study space at p<.05.

Results

Figure 1. 72% of students agreed that remote learning created more anxiety in college students.

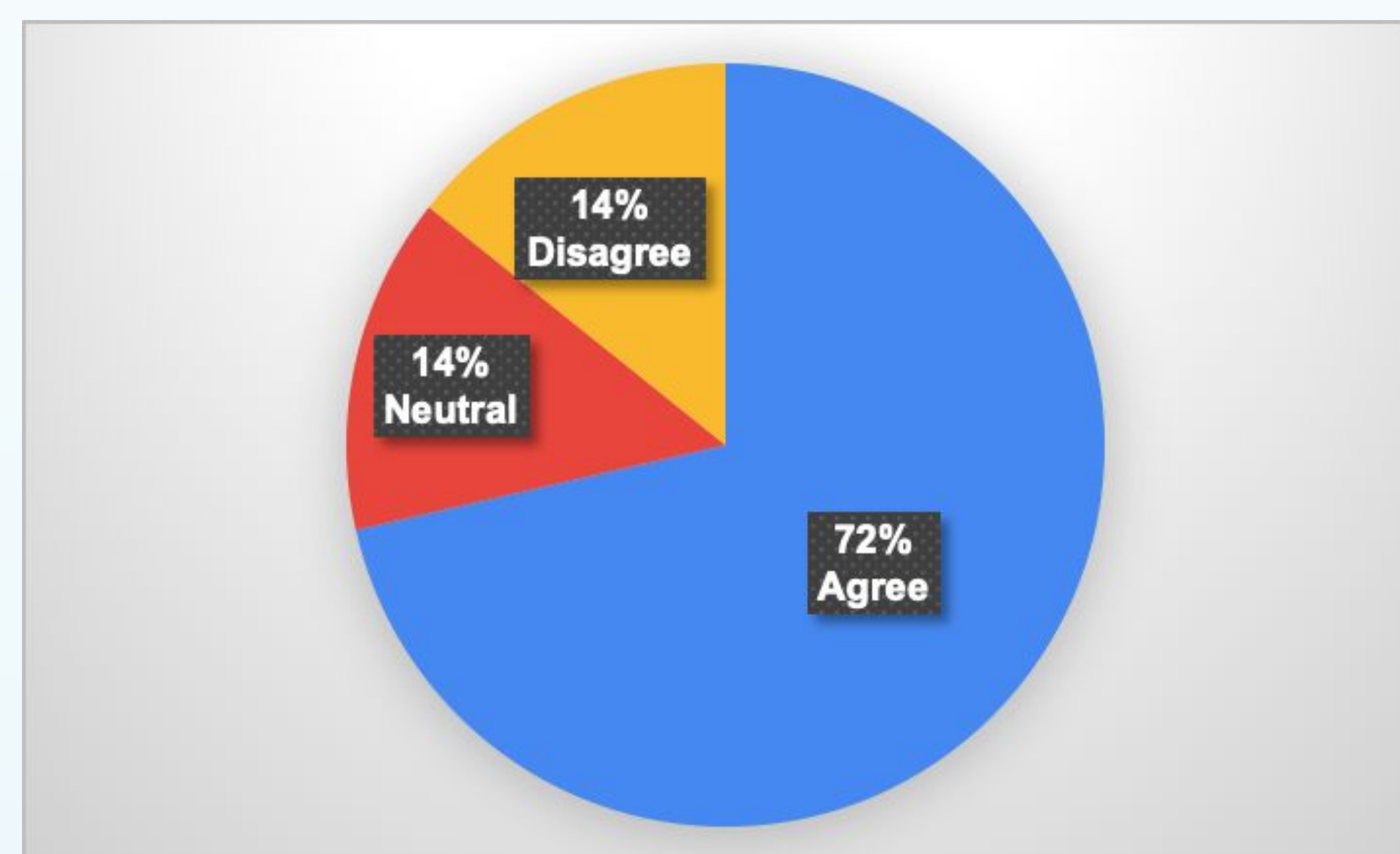


Figure 2. 97% of students agreed that remote learning had caused a decrease in motivation.

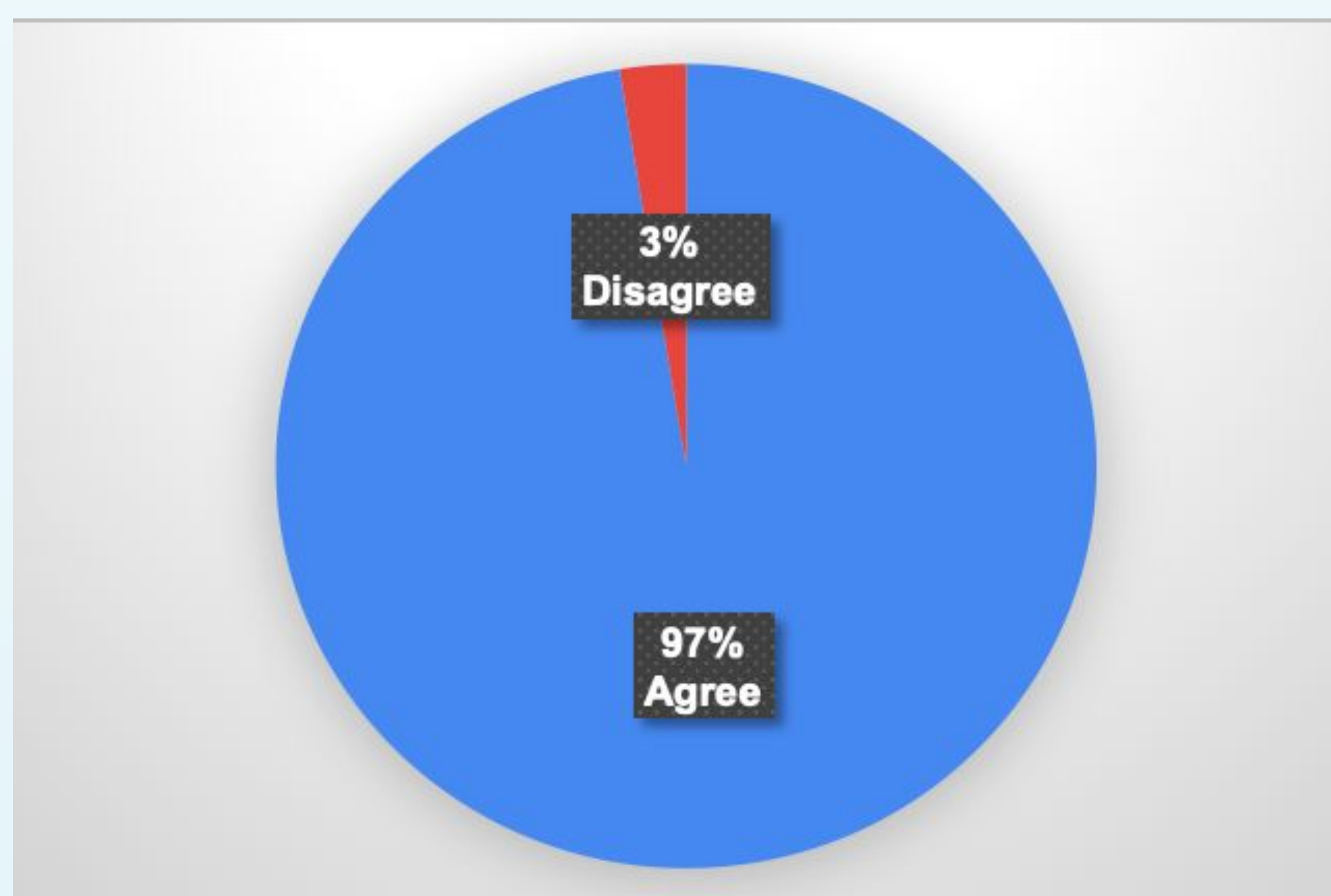
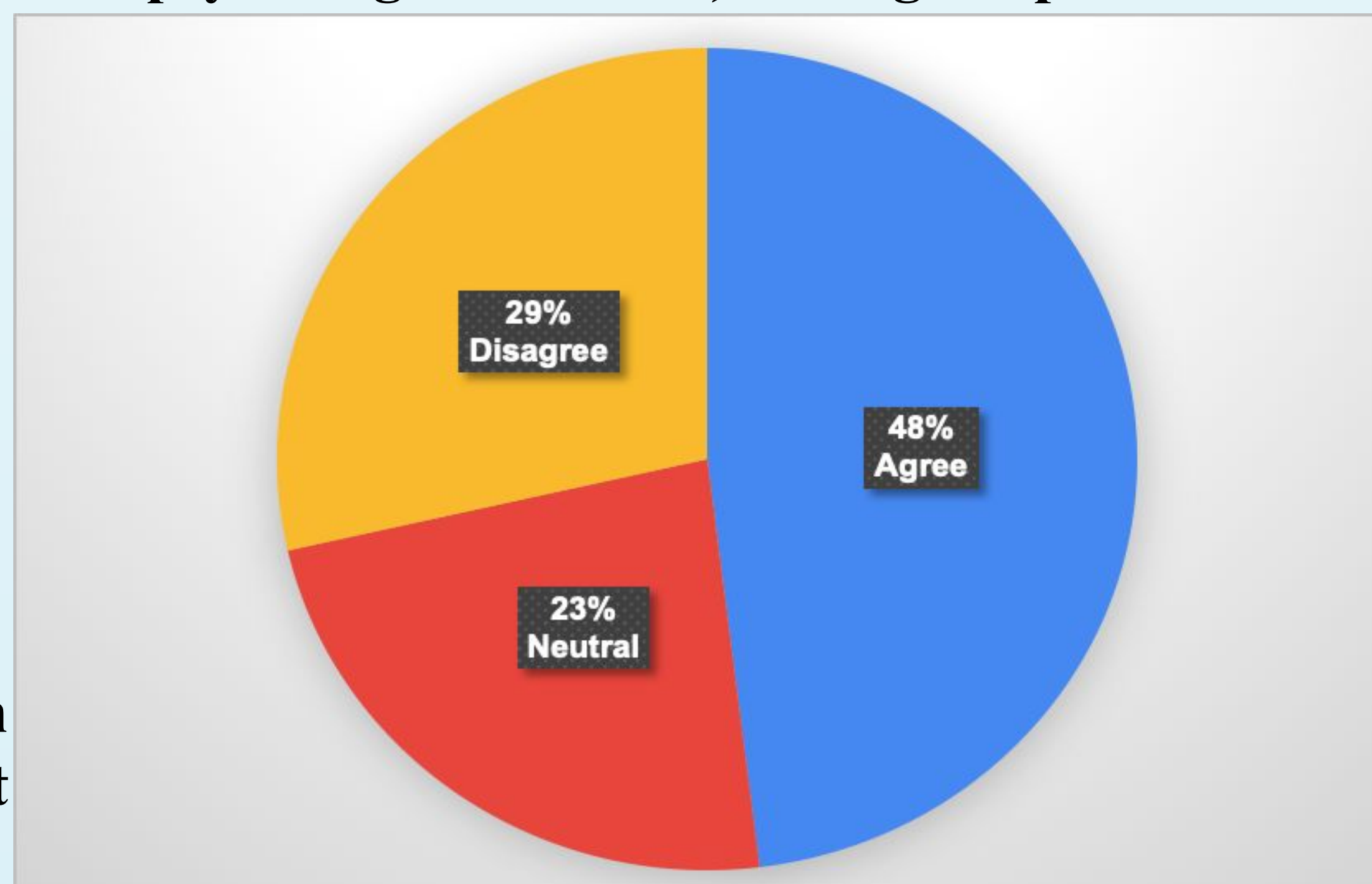


Figure 3. 48% of students agreed that college students are more likely to use CAPS (counseling and psychological services) during the pandemic.



Conclusions

Remote learning has decreased motivation, increased anxiety, and negatively impacted college student's mental health. More than 50% of college students have experienced the listed mental health issues as a result of remote learning.

Most students agree that their peers are also experiencing mental health issues such as decreased motivation and an increase in anxiety as a result of remote learning. However, less than half agree that college students are more likely to use a counseling and psychological service.

Policy Implications

Accessible "teletherapy"/telecounseling is crucial in aiding students, and implementing policies that fund counseling and psychological services and associated student bodies within college campuses for services that promote the psychological wellbeing of the entire student population.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Dr. Sally Romero, the TA's, the BSPH department, and all of the students who filled out our survey.

References

1. Hernández-Torrano, D., Ibrayeva, L., Sparks, J., Lim, N., Clementi, A., Almukhambetova, A., Nurtayev, Y., & Muratkyzy, A. (2020, June 9). *Mental Health and Well-Being of University Students: A Bibliometric Mapping of the Literature*. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7296142/>.
2. Pedrelli, P., Nyer, M., Yeung, A., Zulauf, C., & Wilens, T. (2015, October). *College students: Mental health problems and treatment considerations*. Retrieved February 17, 2021, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4527955/>.