

Coding of the open-ended question about how subject's relationship was affected by the pandemic

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Original coding and rubric by Sonia Hausen, edited by Michael Rosenfeld.

This is what the question looks like on the 2020 and 2022 surveys:

[The preliminary, closed-ended question]

**w3\_coronavirus\_effect [S]**

How has the coronavirus (also known as COVID-19) pandemic affected your relationship to [xnamep]?

1. Our relationship is better than before
2. No change
3. Our relationship is worse than before

[The open-ended question from which the codes below are derived]

**w3\_corona\_open\_text\_A [O, large text box]**

**How and why has the coronavirus (also known as COVID-19) pandemic affected your relationship to [xnamep]? Please write as much detail as you can. We want to understand your story!**

coded variable prefixes: w2cov\_\* and w3cov\_\*

**no\_impact:** This is coded yes when subject explicitly wrote that there was no change in relationship. Many subjects wrote something along the lines of "it has no effect," but then went on to describe a series of effects of COVID on their lives, in which case no\_impact is coded along with the effects. "No\_impact" codes includes people who say they have had no lifestyle change due to COVID. This can be because they don't care or believe in COVID, or because they're essential workers and continued on as before. "no\_impact" can be coded because they already spent most of their time together and at home because they are retired, had medical conditions, are homebodies, or they worked from home already and therefore wrote "no change." In short, they mention their lives haven't been altered because of COVID.

**better:** This was coded when respondent explicitly says relationship is better, or describes how it's better, or uses words like enjoying the time, or explains how the pandemic has been a positive experience etc. For instance: "we talk more, that's been nice." Or "it's forced us to work through some things and now we're in a better place." Or, "we used to be so busy, now we get to spend time together which is great." "It's brought us closer." Something like more quality time would be "better" and "more\_time\_together." "Better" was not coded if they wrote something like: we spend a lot of time together now, but we always have...Note: "no\_impact" and "better" are not mutually exclusive. Some people wrote that COVID had no impact on their relationship, and then went on to explain ways in which being home together has made some aspect of their relationship better; "no\_impact" and "better" can coincide, and "better" can also coincide with "hardship."

**more\_time\_together:** This code indicates subject was spending more time together with partner. This was coded any time a subject mentioned spending more time with partner, or when it's implied with descriptive things such as: "I used to travel for work a lot, now I'm home a lot more" OR "we now get to eat our meals together which we didn't before." This is typically in conjunction with codes that imply benefits of spending more time together. But sometimes, respondents explain more time together as a negative, in which case we coded both "more\_time\_together" and "hardship."

**more\_family\_time:** Any time a person mentioned more family time (and here we mean family time with the partner and coresident children) because of COVID. This can be in combination with “more\_time\_together” and “better.” We also coded more\_family\_time when anyone mentioned increased time with kids at all: kids at home, home-schooling duties, limited childcare options...and if they mention stress as a result of that...then “hardship” was coded also.

**resilient\_adapt\_adjust:** Anytime a subject mentioned how they adjusted to the circumstances with their partner, how they learned to give each other space, how they rolled with the punches, how they’ve weathered things before and are taking it in stride. Or if they mention *learning* more about their partner’s needs (for example to give each other space) and learned how to cope together during the circumstances etc. Basically, it describes how they make it work despite the changes...They may also describe specifically *how* they adapt - he does all the errands since I’m high risk etc.; or describe how they overcome, what they’re doing to adjust at home. Or even how they find new hobbies/things to do together and adapted that way since they can’t do the things they used to do together. Often it’s something like it’s been hard, but we adjusted. Answers mention initial strain (“hardship”) but that their relationship also got “better” as a result of how they adjusted to each other’s needs.

**more\_value\_depend:** This was coded when respondents wrote that because of COVID-19, they were even more grateful to have their partner. Or, knowing they could die tomorrow makes every day more special etc. This was coded any time subjects mentioned being more reliant/dependent on/supportive of each other now. Being more of a team. Generally appreciating partner - Or expressing general appreciation/gratitude for their lot in life/for their relationship as compared to others (count my blessings comments, we are grateful for each other, we are lucky that we are better off than others etc.)

**share\_covid\_attitude:** Both partners are on the same page regarding general attitude toward COVID-19 or COVID-19 precautions, and they share a common approach/belief. Could be comments such as we take care of each other/protective of each other/remind each other to wear masks, or any mention of having the same level of caution. Also – when they mention joint precautions taken together - as choices vs. impositions...it represents a joint decision-making system about how to handle COVID-19...for example

We stay home as much as possible

We wear our masks in public

We practice social distancing

We socialize less

We have been quarantining since march 3

We only leave to do shopping

We try to protect/remind each other/or mention both are careful

Or mention something we don’t do anymore (because of COVID-19)

We did not code “we don’t go out as much anymore” or “been stuck together” as “share\_covid\_attitude” because it’s unclear whether it’s a decision or just because things are shut down, so doesn’t tell us any story about their attitude toward COVID-19 as a couple/or if they’re on the same page etc.

Alternatively, respondents were coded as “share\_covid\_attitude” when they both did not care and think the pandemic is a political hoax. Subjects who wrote that they and their partner don’t believe in it and go about their life in the same way are coded as “share\_covid\_attitude” and “hoax” (to indicate their disbelief in public health advice).

**different\_covid\_attitude:** Couple has differences in opinion and/or behavior when it comes to their beliefs about COVID. Dissensus in how to deal with the pandemic is usually a stressor.

**hoax:** Subject doesn't believe in COVID-19, or thinks it's overblown, or blown out of proportion for political reasons, overblown by media, "we don't believe in the precautions bc violative of our rights", "it's a scam" etc. People who refer to the virus as the "China virus" or other dismissive ways are coded as believing the seriousness of the virus is overstated, and therefore a hoax. Can be both partners or just one. If both, we also code "share\_covid\_attitude" and "hoax." If just one partner has this view, will be coded as "different\_covid\_attitude" and "hoax." If either partner won't wear a mask or won't social distance, we coded that as believing the virus (or the public health messages associated with the virus) are a hoax.

**see\_friends:** This was coded when subjects wrote that there had been no change in how often they see friends, as in their social lives are the same: "we still golf and see our friends." If they mention specifically that one person still sees friends...then typically "see friends" would be coded in conjunction with "different\_covid\_attitude" and "hardship," because only one partner seeing friends would have represented a divergence in attitude toward physical distancing from others.

**see\_friends\_less:** This was coded when subjects wrote they did not see friends at all, or that they see fewer friends, or social opportunities are limited, less socializing, fewer opportunities to see friends, can't visit with friends etc.

**see\_family:** This is a code about seeing extended family, i.e. not one's live-in partner and children. When someone explicitly says, we see our grandkid every week; or we're planning our daughter's wedding, or I care for my mother and other members of the family. Still see extended family – in person. This is different from more\_family\_time, which refers to more time spent with the coresident family.

**see\_family\_less:** This was coded when subjects wrote that they did not see (or saw much less) of their extended family (in person).

**work\_from\_home** – Coded whenever work from home was mentioned, regardless of the duration of the work-from-home situation. Some subjects wrote that they always worked from home (the latter is often then in conjunction no\_impact). A lot of people say "we're home a lot now," or "we're home all the time now" –we typically did not infer WFH unless they specifically mention it. But we did infer work\_from\_home when they said something like: "it's been great not having to commute anymore."

**partner\_work\_from\_home:** This was coded to indicate that partner worked from home, at some point, part-time, or always did.

**work\_less:** This was coded when both partners lost their jobs, or one lost a job, hours got cut, or furloughed – because of COVID-19. Even if now back at work, we coded "work\_less" if subjects described having less work at any point during pandemic.

**retired:** We coded retired when the subject mentions that they or partner are retired. More often we infer retirement from their answer about living in a home, or not having work to attend to.

**had\_covid.** Respondent reports having had COVID in their text answer. See also the direct question in the survey.

**partner\_had\_covid.** If subject mentions that partner had COVID.

**essential\_or\_more\_work:** We coded “essential\_or\_more\_work” when subjects indicated they or their partner were an essential or health care worker, or if they mentioned longer mandatory hours, increased workload for themselves or their partner. “Essential\_or\_more\_work” was often coded in conjunction with “hardship” (increased stress etc.)

**hardship:** This was coded to indicate any mention of financial hardship, increased job stress, overall stress increase, worry, strain on relationship, inability to travel (but only if it is a strain on the relationship; just saying they missed vacation doesn’t count as a hardship), stress at being home, mental health issues or substance abuse, or that they found not doing the things they used to be really problematic, or really missing friends or family. “More\_family\_time” can be a “hardship” if the family doesn’t get along.

**met\_during\_covid:** includes people who met just before the pandemic and decided to get together when the pandemic broke out.

**moved:** During the pandemic respondent moved.

**less\_interaction\_w\_partner:** Physically - When subject sees partner less because of COVID-19, or mentions less physical contact because of social distancing and if the couple did not live together. But “less\_interaction\_w\_partner” can also be coded when subject and partner live together and are around each other all the time, but because kids are home all the time, they can’t get away and mention less sex, less time as a couple, no date nights anymore etc., or less talking – i.e. we can’t have deep conversations and connect because kids home all the time.

**grandkid\_caregiver:** When grandparents mention new responsibilities for their grandchildren