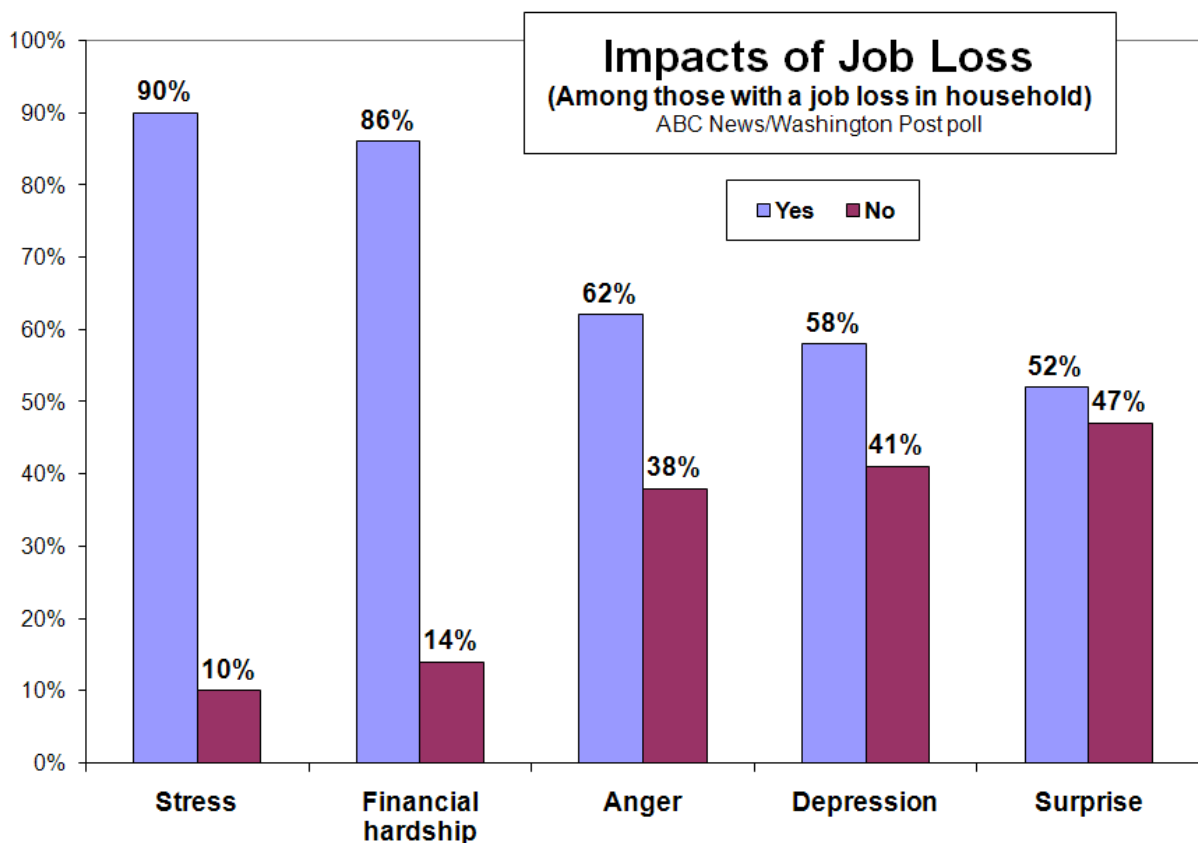


## **Beyond the Financial Damage, Layoffs Take a Heavy Emotional Toll**

When the pink slip comes, trouble follows – financial, but emotional as well.

Three in 10 Americans in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll say they or someone in their household has lost a job in the past year – a new high. And the impacts can be devastating: Beyond financial hardship, large numbers report anger, stress and depression as a result.

Given the state of the economy – 10.2 percent unemployment, 17.5 percent including those who've given up looking – “surprise” is the least common reaction measured in this survey. Nonetheless more than half of those who report a layoff in their household, 52 percent, were surprised by it.



Other emotional responses range higher: Nearly all – 90 percent – report personal stress as a result of the layoff. Sixty-two percent, anger. And 58 percent, depression. As percentages of the

full population, those compute to 27 percent of all Americans with stress, 19 percent angry and 17 percent suffering depression in response to the loss of a job.

There's also, of course, financial hardship: Among those who've sustained a job loss in the household, 86 percent report money trouble, and 62 percent say it's been serious.

RE-HIRE – There are some positive (or at least less negative) outcomes: Among people who report a job loss in the last year, just fewer than four in 10 say the person who'd been axed has been able to find a new job. The flipside: Of them, 51 percent say it's for less pay.

Just 15 percent report finding a better-paying job; the remaining third lined up new work for about the same money.

When new jobs are unavailable, the pain is especially severe: Depression soars to 70 percent among people laid off and still out of work, compared with 40 percent of those who've lost one job but found another. Experiencing a “great deal” of financial hardship, naturally, also soars among those who haven't found another job. So does pessimism about the economy's future.

	Lost job, got another	Lost job, still jobless
Depression	40%	70%
Serious financial hardship	53	69
No sign of recovery	51	69

RECOVERY? – Even if it hasn't yet reached the job market, some Americans report signs of a recovery; 44 percent say their own experience indicates the economy has begun to improve. But 54 percent see no such signs. As noted in the table above, that peaks at 69 percent of those who've had someone in their household laid off and still out of work.

Among those who've yet to see signs of recovery, moreover, “hopeful” is not the word of the day: More than three-quarters in this group expect it to be more than a year before the economy begins to recover. A mere 4 percent expect recovery in the next few months.

Economic assessments, to be sure, are informed to a significant extent by partisan and ideological differences. Fifty-seven percent of Democrats say the economy's begun to recover; that drops to 44 percent of independents and just 28 percent of Republicans. The range likewise is from 56 percent of liberals to just three in 10 conservatives. And economic optimism is 39 points higher among those who approve of President Obama's handling of the economy than among those who disapprove, 64 percent vs. 25 percent.

UNHAPPY SURPRISE – Surprise at losing a job is another factor in emotional responses and financial pain alike. As noted, among people who report a job loss in their household, 52 percent were surprised by it. These people are much more likely than those who saw it coming to be angry about the job loss. They're also more apt, albeit moderately so, to be stressed, depressed, and to have a great deal of financial hardship.

	Surprised by job loss	Not surprised
Anger	77%	45%
Stress	94	85
Depression	64	52
Serious financial hardship	67	57

**INCOME/INSURANCE** – Results of this survey mark the uneven distribution of household job losses. The greatest differentiation by far is by income, with the loss of a job in the last year twice as likely to have hit lower-income than higher-income families. Among people with family incomes greater than \$100,000 a year, 16 percent report a job loss in their household. Among those with incomes less than \$50,000, this soars to 37 percent.

A final result underscores the stress and financial hardship layoffs can bring – and ties into the current health care debate as well. Among Americans who have not been hit by a job loss in their household, 11 percent don't have health insurance. But among the three in 10 who have had a job loss, the lack of health insurance spikes, to 25 percent.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Nov. 12-15, 2009, among a random national sample of 1,001 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results for the full sample have a 3.5-point error margin. Click [here](#) for a detailed description of sampling error. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, PA.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow (\*= less than 0.5 percent).

1-25 previously released.

26. In terms of your own personal experience, do you feel the economy has or has not begun to recover?

	Has	Has not	No opinion
11/15/09	44	54	1

27. (IF NOT BEGUN TO RECOVER) When do you think the economy will begin to recover - in the next few months, in six months to a year, or do you think it'll be longer than that?

	Next few months	Six months to a year	Longer than that	No opinion
11/15/09	4	19	77	1

26/27 NET:

			---- Economy has not begun recovery ---			
			Will in next	In 6 mos.		
	Has	NET	few months	to a year	Longer	No opinion
11/15/09	44	54	2	10	41	1

28. In the last year, have you or has anyone living in your household been laid off or lost their job?

	Yes	No	No opinion
11/15/09	30	70	*
9/12/09	27	73	*
4/24/09*	23	77	0
2/22/09	18	82	*
12/14/08	18	82	*

\*4/24/09 and previous: "In the last few months..."

29. (IF JOB LOSS IN HOUSEHOLD) Did this job loss happen to you personally, or to another person living in your household?

	You personally	Another person in your household	Both (vol.)	No opinion
11/15/09	37	55	7	0

28/29 NET:

		-- Job loss or layoff in household --			
			Another in	Both	
	NET	Personally	household	(vol.)	No No opinion
11/15/09	30	11	17	2	70 *

30. (IF JOB LOSS IN HOUSEHOLD) Would you say (you were/the person involved was) (ITEM) about this job loss, or not?

11/15/09 - Summary Table

	Yes	No	No opinion
a. Surprised	52	47	1
b. Angry	62	38	*

31. (IF JOB LOSS IN HOUSEHOLD) Would you say this job loss has caused (you/the person involved) to experience (ITEM), or not? (IF FINANCIAL HARDSHIP) Is that a great deal of hardship; or hardship, but not a great deal?

11/15/09 - Summary Table

		----- Yes, caused -----			No, did	
	NET	Great deal	Not great deal		not cause	No opinion
a. Personal stress	90	NA	NA		10	0
b. Depression	58	NA	NA		41	*
c. Financial hardship	86	62	23		14	0

32. (IF JOB LOSS IN HOUSEHOLD) (Have you/Has this person) been able to find a new job, or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
11/15/09	39	61	*

33. (IF FOUND NEW JOB) Is the pay at the new job better, worse or about the same as at the old job?

	Better	Worse	Same	No opinion
11/15/09	15	51	33	1

32/33 NET:

	NET	----- Yes, found new job ----- Better pay	Worse pay	Same pay	No new job	No opinion
11/15/09	39	6	20	13	61	*

34-55 previously released or held for release.

\*\*\*END\*\*\*