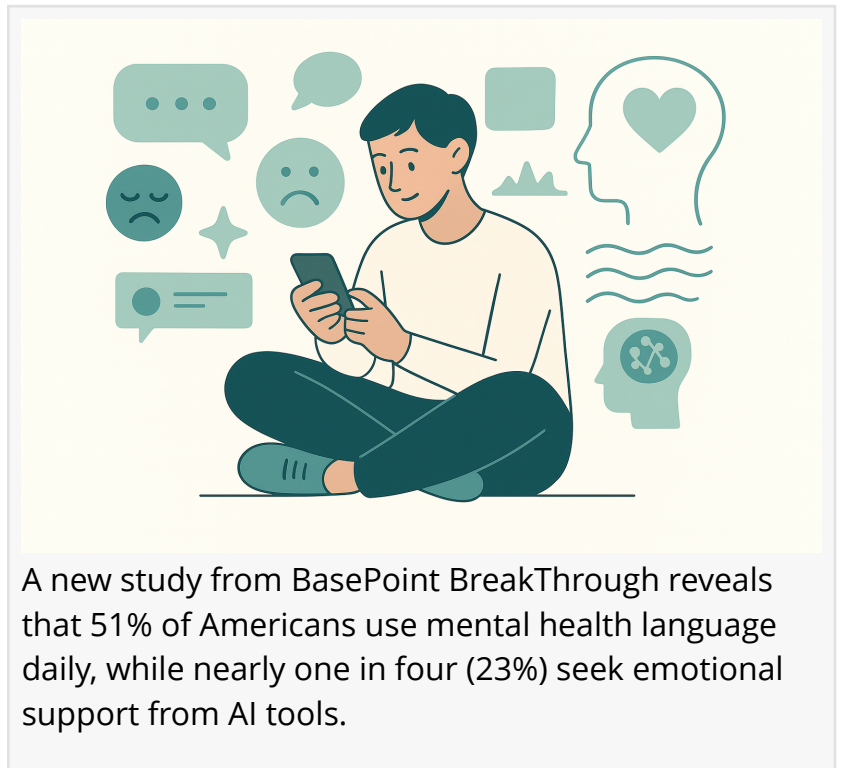


Study Finds 51% Use Mental Health Language, 23% Turn to AI for Emotional Support

New research from BasePoint BreakThrough examines how online content and access challenges are reshaping mental health culture in America

DALLAS, TX, UNITED STATES, March 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Mental health conversations are becoming part of everyday life in the United States. New [research from BasePoint BreakThrough](#) finds that 51% of Americans now use mental health-informed language in daily conversations, while 23% report turning to artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots for emotional support.



The findings point to a broader cultural shift in how Americans understand and cope with their emotions — one shaped by social media, digital tools, and ongoing barriers to professional care.

BasePoint BreakThrough surveyed 1,000 U.S. adults to examine how mental health vocabulary, online content, and non-traditional support systems are influencing emotional habits and help-seeking behavior.

Key Findings

- 51% of Americans use mental health language in everyday conversation, rising to 74% of Gen Z and 68% of millennials.
- 32% encounter mental health terminology most often on social media platforms like Instagram or TikTok.
- 41% say online content has changed how they describe their emotions — increasing to 60% among AI chatbot users.

- 23% use AI chatbots for emotional support, led by 44% of Gen Z and 31% of millennials.
- 73% believe mental health language online can feel performative or inaccurate at least some of the time.
- 53% cite cost as the primary reason they have not pursued professional mental health care.

Social Media Is Influencing How Americans Talk About Mental Health

Nearly one in three Americans (32%) say they most often encounter mental health terminology on social media. Among younger adults, exposure is even higher — 68% of Gen Z report regularly encountering these terms online.

At the same time, increased familiarity with “therapy-informed” language does not always translate to clarity. Nearly three-quarters (73%) believe mental health content online can feel performative or inaccurate.

“As a clinician, I see every day how profoundly disconnection impacts emotional well-being,” said Haley Hicks, COO and Licensed Clinical Social Worker at BasePoint BreakThrough. “What stood out most to me in this research is how many people are turning to social media and AI for emotional support — often not because they prefer it, but because professional care feels out of reach. Cost is frequently named as the barrier, and that’s real.”

“What’s less clear to me is whether people realize that many programs, including BasePoint, are often covered by insurance. There are options available that people may not be aware of. The growing fluency in mental health-informed language is encouraging, but I hope it also empowers individuals to explore professional care when they’re ready.”

AI Is Emerging as a Support Tool — Especially for Younger Adults

The survey found that nearly one in four Americans (23%) use AI chatbots for emotional support. Among AI users:

- 47% say it helped them reframe their feelings.
- 41% describe the experience as nonjudgmental.
- 55% say exposure to online terminology influenced how they describe their emotions.

Younger adults are leading this trend, with 44% of Gen Z reporting AI chatbot use for emotional support.

“If a term or trend from social media or an AI platform resonates, that can be a powerful starting point,” Hicks said. “It shows self-awareness and a desire to understand what you’re feeling. That momentum matters.”

“Online language and tools can open doors, but they don’t have to be the final stop. Many

treatment centers — including BasePoint — offer free clinical consultations to help individuals better understand their options in a supportive, professional setting. Exploring what’s available doesn’t require a commitment; it’s simply an opportunity to gather information and feel supported in deciding next steps. The fact that so many people are searching for answers tells me they want to feel better. That willingness is something to build on.”

Cost Remains a Major Barrier to Professional Care

While conversations about mental health have become more common, access to treatment remains uneven.

More than half of respondents (53%) cite cost as the main reason they have not sought professional mental health care. Other reported obstacles include time constraints (38%), stigma or discomfort (31%), insurance confusion or lack of coverage (30%), and difficulty finding an available provider (26%).

As a result, 63% of Americans report seeking some form of emotional support outside traditional therapy, including friends and family who use mental health-informed language (34%), podcasts (20%), online forums (19%), mental health apps (19%), and AI chatbots (23%).

The findings suggest Americans are not rejecting therapy — many are navigating a fragmented system where cost and access challenges shape how and where they seek help.

About BasePoint BreakThrough

BasePoint BreakThrough is a Dallas-area Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) and [Intensive Outpatient Program](#) (IOP) providing structured, evidence-based treatment for young adults ages 18–35 with mental health and co-occurring disorders. The organization offers in-person and virtual care, including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), group therapy, and family support. BasePoint is in-network with most major commercial insurance plans and also operates an Academy program serving teens ages 11–18.

To read the full study, visit:

<https://basepointbreakthrough.com/blog/american-mental-health-culture-trends/>

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