

Autumn Update

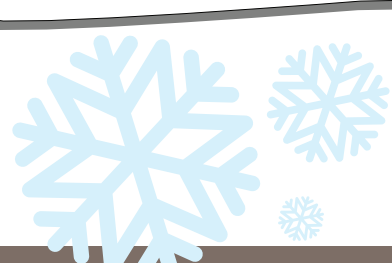
It's fall, and the change in seasons is looming for many museum-goers.



Seven months into this pandemic, with no immediate end in sight, has many museum-goers feeling we are on a never-ending rollercoaster of challenges and stressors.

"We reel from crisis to catastrophe day-to-day."

"Right now, feeding my soul and heart are secondary. How can I stay alive? How can I make decisions to keep me and my family safe?"



They are looking ahead towards colder weather ... with dread.



"I keep telling myself that not being able to go out this winter won't be too bad ... but this feels a little like whistling in the dark. The reality is that we don't know what's going to happen, so we have to hope for the best and plan for the worst, I guess."



"I am concerned that in the coming months, virtual events will once again become the only options as the weather gets colder and restrictions increase. Mental health is definitely becoming a bigger problem as I am terrified of having to re-enter the type of experience we had in March, April, and May."

Though some are planning ahead with ways to cope:



"Winter is tough on me, but I've prepared myself that I'll just have to grin & bear it this time! Going to ramp up the hygge!"



"I'm actively trying to channel my Norwegian relatives and make my home very cozy for winter. I'm putting things like scented candles and cozy blankets around the house. We're also decorating for specific holidays (we didn't do this much before) and I'm putting things like my knitting, puzzles, and coloring books out to remind myself to do that instead of doom-scrolling social media."

But overall, the emotional state of most museum-goers is low, with concerns mounting around:

Virus fatigue



"My biggest worry for me (and others) is a fear of complacency and compliance fatigue."



Education



"As an educator, I can tell you with certainty that this 'new normal' of school is not working for anyone. My biggest worry is that we are going to have an entire generation of children with BIG learning gaps. This is going to be an ongoing problem in education for years."



Community

"Small businesses that I like to support have been closing permanently. Will museums survive? The symphony? Ballet? Theater? Even the public library as we know it won't be the same in the future."



Country

"I fear more for what happens after this 'interim' period and we start seeing the long-term damage that has been done to our country by the extreme mismanagement of this crisis for the last six months."

The challenges our museum-going panelists are facing are far from unique. Instead, they represent how museum-goers, and many in the public, are finding this ongoing pandemic to be increasingly difficult. And as the pandemic continues, and winter sets in, the challenges will likely only increase.

Museums and the Pandemic Data Stories are created by Wilkening Consulting on behalf of the American Alliance of Museums. Sources include:

- 2020 Online Panel of Museum-Goers (ongoing)
- 2020 Broader Population Sampling
- 2020 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers

*Data Stories share research about both museum-goers (who visit multiple museums each year) and the broader population (including casual and non-visitors to museums).

The entire series of Museums and the Pandemic Data Stories can be found at wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories.

