

Getting to Behavior Change

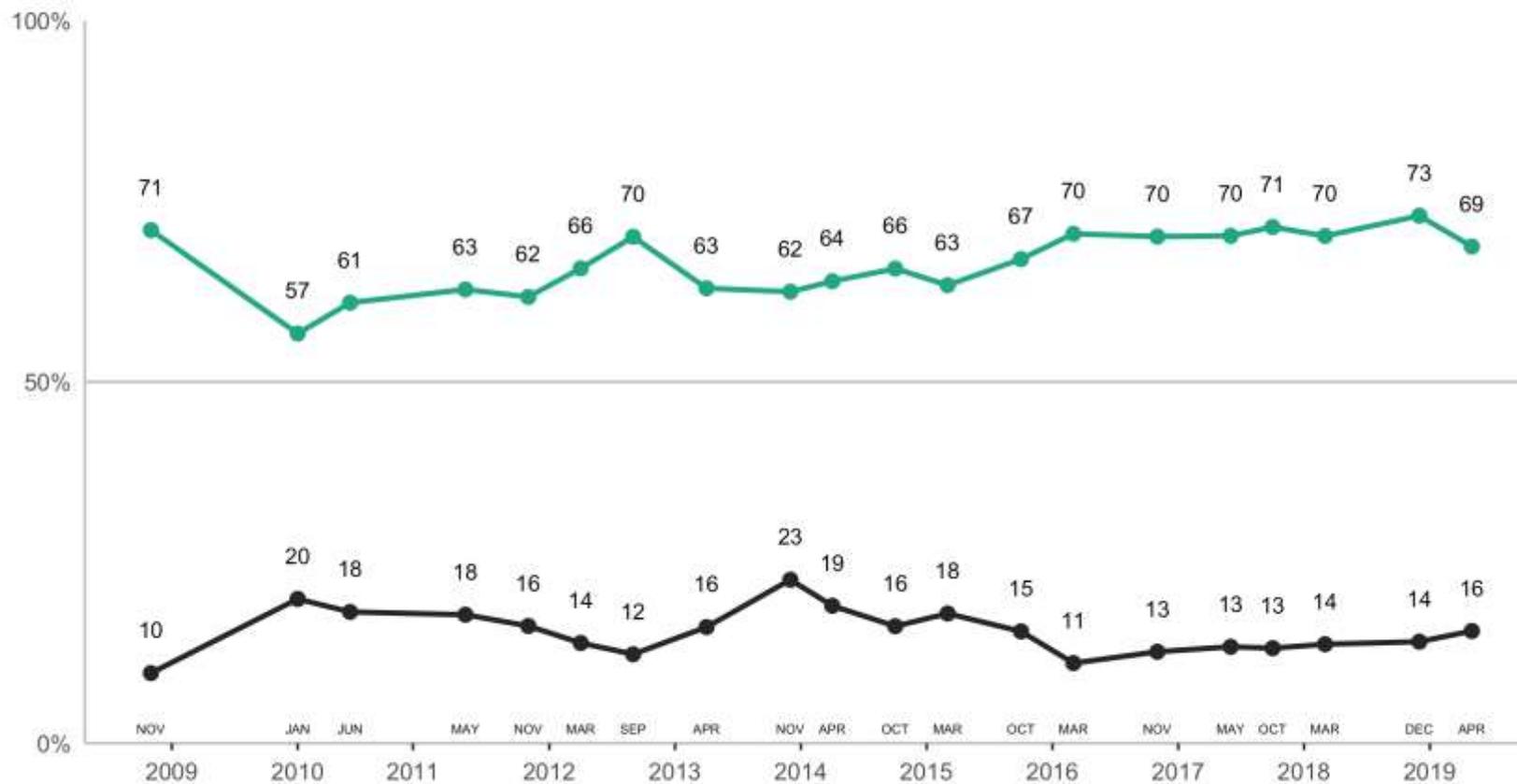
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About seven in ten Americans think global warming is happening

- Think global warming is happening (%)
- Think global warming is NOT happening (%)



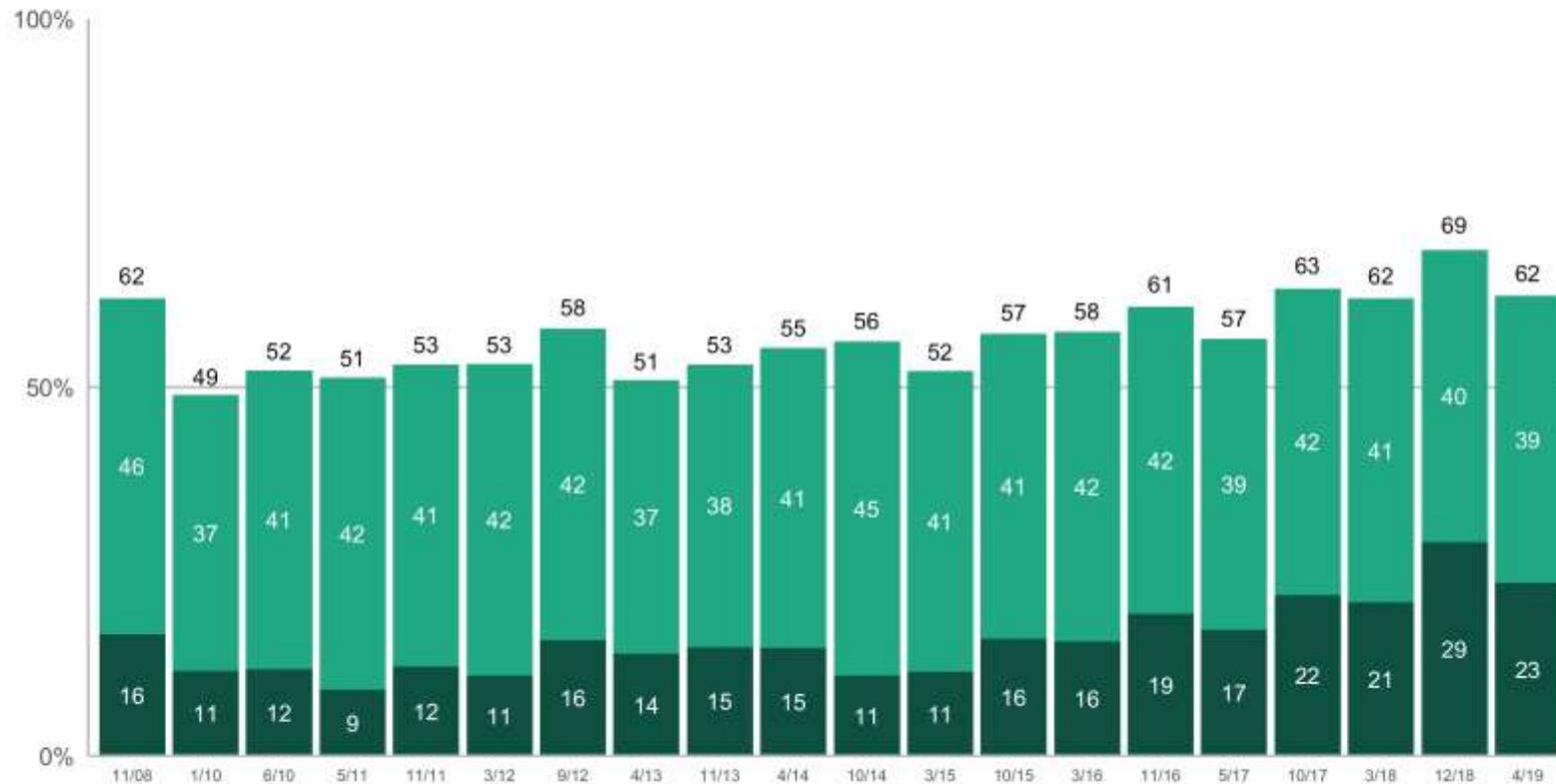
Do you think global warming is happening?

April 2019



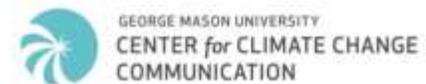
About six in ten Americans are at least 'somewhat worried' about global warming

Very worried Somewhat worried



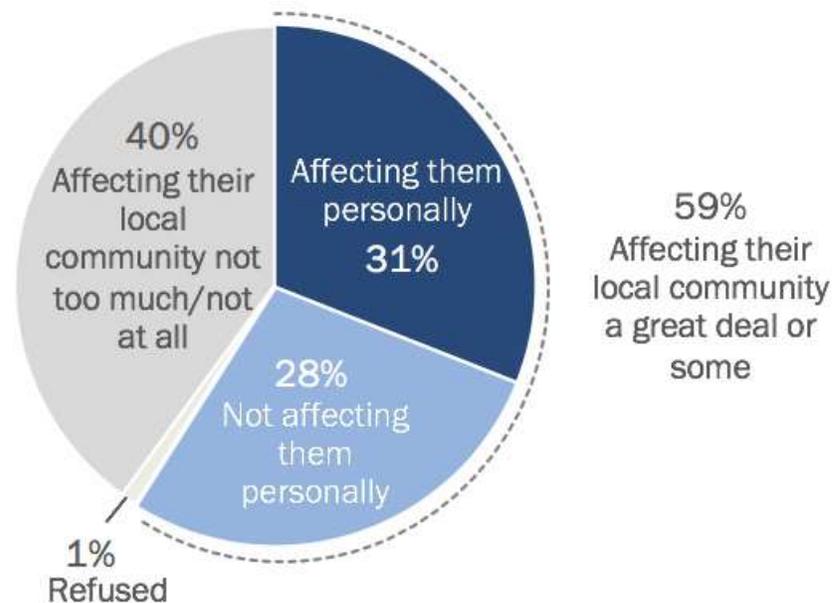
How worried are you about global warming?

April 2019



A majority of U.S. adults say climate change affects their local area; 31% say it affects them personally

% of U.S. adults who say the effects of global climate change are ...



Source: Survey conducted March 27-April 9, 2018.

"Majorities See Government Efforts to Protect the Environment as Insufficient"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

CLIMATE CHANGE QUIZ

But an understanding of the issue, as well as responsive actions, are far behind

- 57% know that the greenhouse effect refers to gases in the atmosphere that trap heat;
- 50% of Americans understand that global warming is caused mostly by human activities;
- 45% understand that carbon dioxide traps heat from the Earth's surface;
- 25% have ever heard of coral bleaching or ocean acidification.

Leiserowitz, A., Smith, N. & Marlon, J.R. (2010) Americans' Knowledge of Climate Change. Yale University. New Haven, CT: Yale Project on Climate Change Communication



Top 5 individual behaviors in a recent study of Americans:

- Recycling
- Purchasing hybrid cars
- Purchasing more eco-friendly products
- Energy conservation and efficiency
- Alternate transportation strategies

None was identified by more than 35%.

Crossman, Bostrom & Hayes, Efficacy foundations for risk communication: How people think about reducing the risks of climate change. *Risk Analysis* 39(10), October 2019

Some recommendations for
getting to behavior change

To energize
the already
committed...

- Focus on knowledge gain
- Encourage personal stories
- Strengthen perceptions that their actions are valuable
- Inoculate them against misinformation

When you need
to energize
everyone, even
the
skeptics....try
social norms



Social norms

Individuals use perceptions of peer attitudes and behaviors as a standard against which to compare their own behaviors.

...particularly in ambiguous situations

...and when other actors are a lot like them

Attitudes and values may follow behaviors



TEST / NGAGE
00:07:06:10

00:03:10

Flashmob

So how can you use social norms to energize climate change behaviors?

- Model the behaviors you want others to embrace. Don't harangue.
- Ground your comments and behaviors in the assumption that most Americans are concerned and feel the need to act.
- Encourage personal storytelling (both yours and theirs) in response to events related to climate change.
- Employ social media thoughtfully. It may be our social norm channels *par excellence*.

