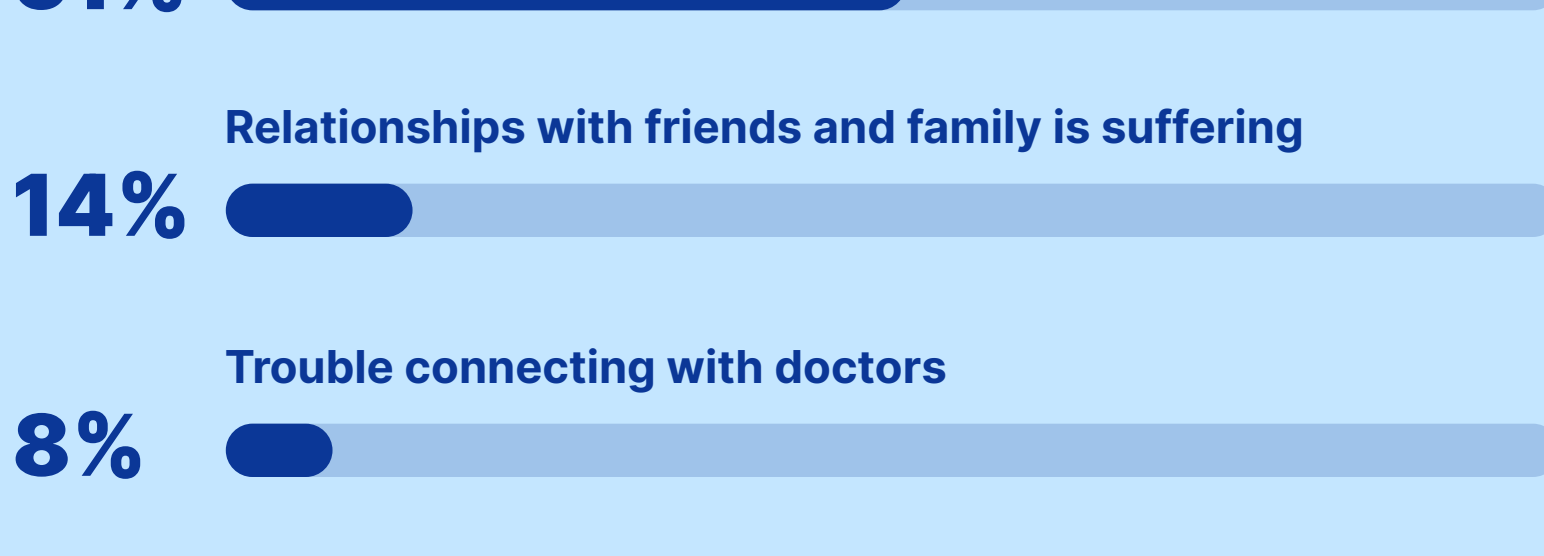


COVID-19 and Social Distancing Single Out The Hard of Hearing

The deaf and hard of hearing community are facing a unique set of challenges during COVID-19 and national social distancing measures. Whether it's healthcare needs, connecting with friends or family, or continuing with day-to-day remote job responsibilities, all ages of the community are uniquely feeling the impact of these global changes. InnoCaption, a mobile app-based provider of real-time captioning for phone calls, surveyed the community to learn more about how it's affecting them.

Distance Equals Difficulty

It's imperative in our current climate to wear masks, keep social distance and stay inside. However, the deaf and hard of hearing community relies on the complete opposite, using lipreading and proximity in order to communicate with others. Are they a community that is left behind with this new social norm? InnoCaption's research found:



51% of respondents indicated that the biggest obstacle faced during the current COVID-19 pandemic situation was communication difficulties due to social distancing.

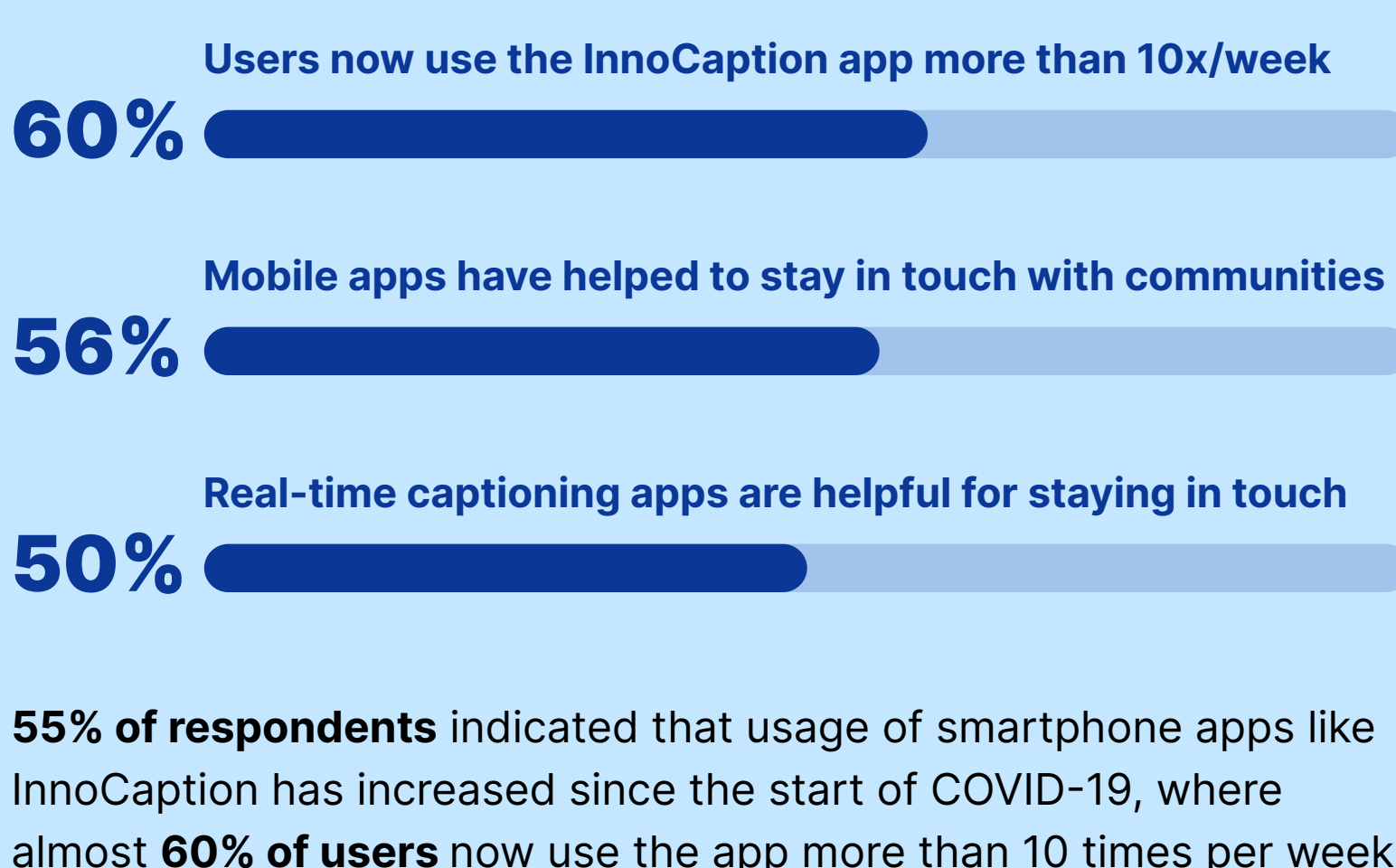
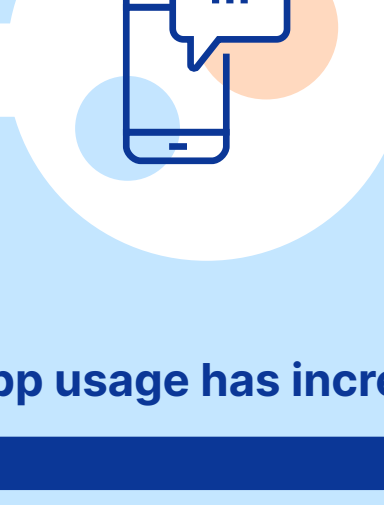
Of those 51% of respondents, those **70 and older** felt the most impacted.

The next biggest group of a combined **14%** said relationships with friends and family is suffering, while **8%** said they had trouble connecting with doctors.



An overwhelming majority, **95% of respondents**, indicated that the use of masks significantly impacts their ability to successfully communicate with others.

Of the respondents who noted their employment was impacted (**7%**), the majority were between the ages of 50-59.

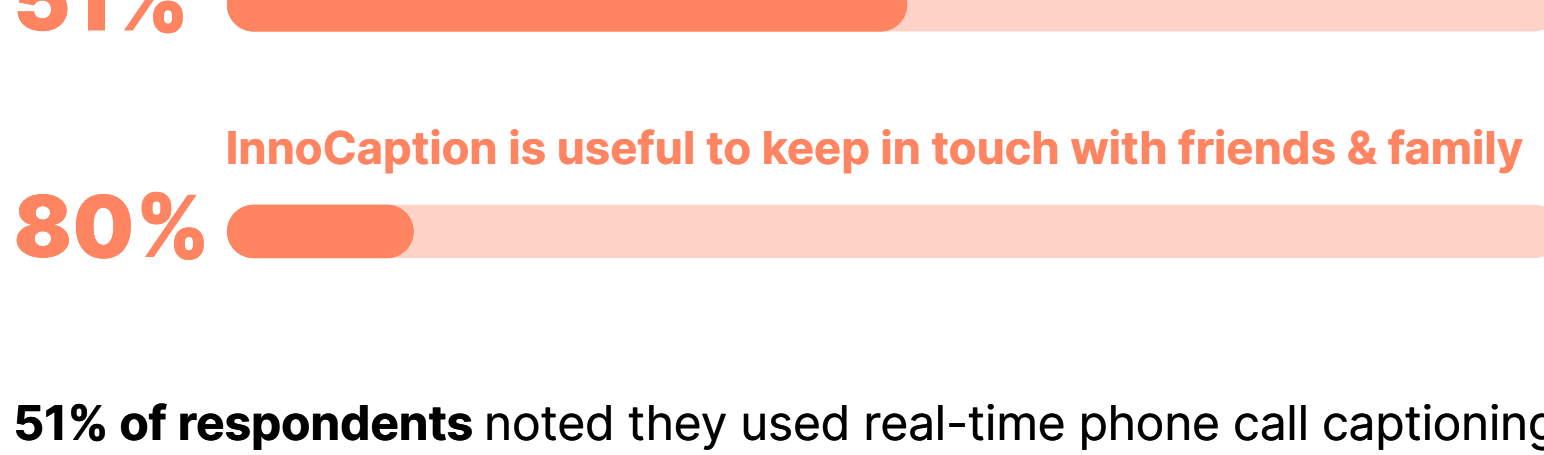


55% of respondents indicated that usage of smartphone apps like InnoCaption has increased since the start of COVID-19, where almost **60% of users** now use the app more than 10 times per week, indicating an increased need for alternative accessible communication options.

56% of respondents answered "Definitely yes" when asked whether mobile apps such as InnoCaption have helped to stay in touch with their respective communities; **50% of both the youngest and oldest age groups** (70+ and >30) indicated real-time captioning apps are helpful for staying in touch.

The Virtual Divide

The pandemic amplified people's need to feel and stay connected to family, friends and colleagues. Face-to-face interaction is replaced by virtual communication over technology like Zoom and FaceTime. Those in the hard of hearing community shared how vital it was to have technology help them bridge the gap in the digital communication divide:

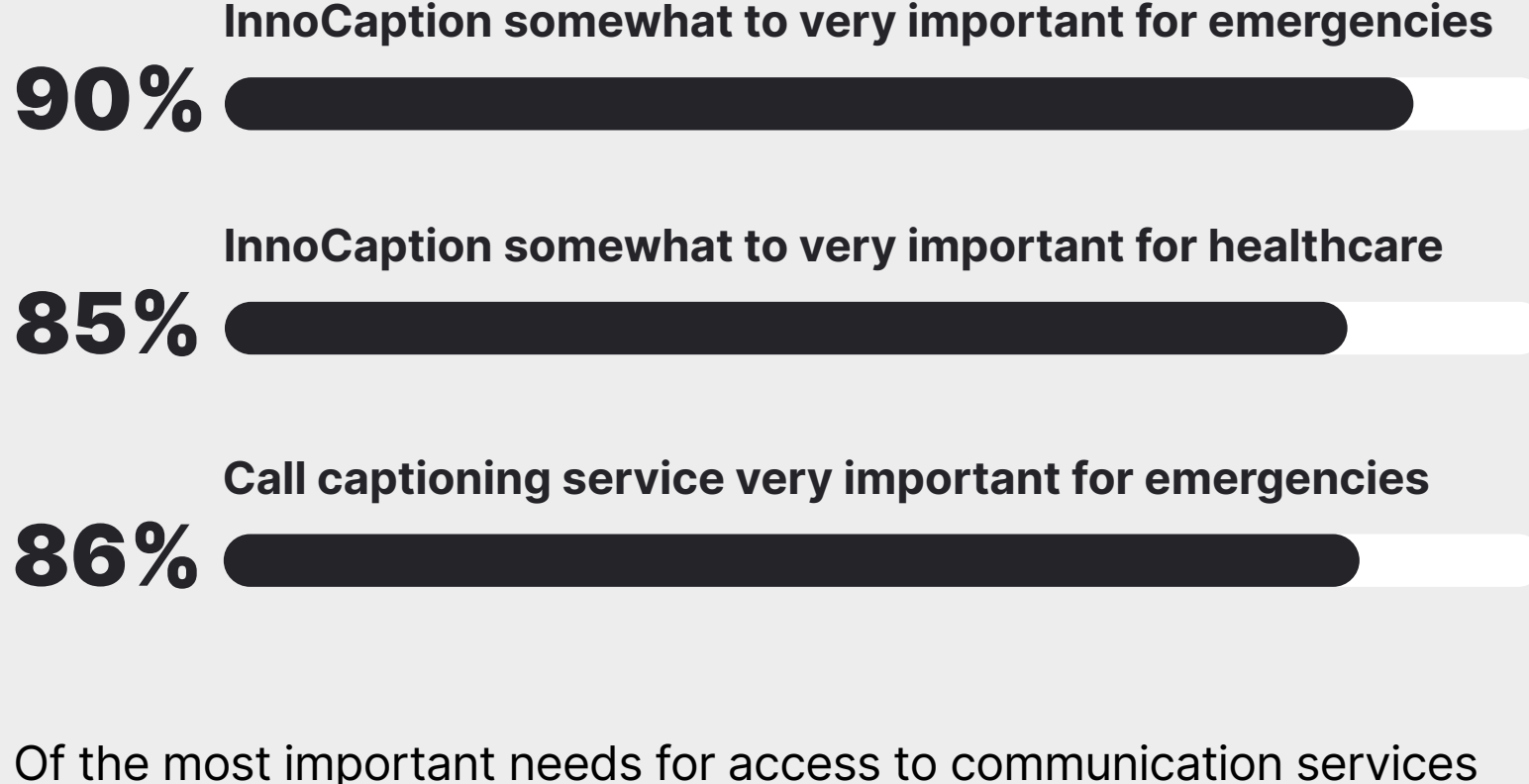


51% of respondents noted they used real-time phone call captioning technology to help them effectively do their jobs, touching on the challenges of remote conferences and video calls for those with hearing loss.

Across all age groups 40 and older, at least **80% of respondents** indicated smartphone apps like InnoCaption are important for keeping in touch with friends and family, while younger age groups still noted using phone call captioning apps for staying connected, they ranked lower (**29%**) potentially due to more prevalent use of social media and messaging apps.

A New Era of Healthcare

Access to health care has always been critical, but the pandemic amplified the need. As the relationship between patients and doctors continues to move toward a telehealth setting, InnoCaption users expressed their needs:



Of the most important needs for access to communication services for the hard of hearing, healthcare needs ranked consistently high for users across age groups with **90% of respondents** feeling that InnoCaption was somewhat to very important for emergencies and **85%** expressing its somewhat to very important for healthcare needs.

While importance of phone call captioning technology for healthcare needs was consistently high across all age groups, ages 40-59 ranked the highest at **73%**.

Interestingly, of the age groups who ranked the real-time phone call captioning service very important for emergencies, those 30 and under ranked the highest at **86%**.

As our world makes permanent shifts in how we work and interact with one another, the deaf and hard of hearing community faces an ongoing battle of new challenges to overcome. InnoCaption surveyed 840 of its users, all of whom must be a registered user with hearing loss by federal law. The survey was conducted over the course of five weeks via email to those in the deaf and hard of hearing community to learn how they have been coping with COVID-19 and the new challenges that have arisen as a result of social distancing. Additionally, InnoCaption conducted a poll via its Facebook page with regards to the impact of masks. The poll was conducted over the course of seven days and surveyed 64 respondents. The use of technology and Artificial Intelligence is working to help bridge this gap.