



# Research Findings

## Selling a Home Described as Being a Stressful Experience by More than Three Quarters of Home Sellers

### More Than a Third Admit They Cried During This Process as a Result of Being Overwhelmed

**Washington, DC, June 25, 2019** — A recent online survey conducted by Ipsos on behalf of Zillow reveals that more than three quarters of Americans who have sold a home in the past three years say the experience of selling was stressful for them (77%) – behind only going through a relationship breakup (78%). Selling a home is rated as being more stressful than buying a new home (72%), planning a wedding (60%), getting fired (58%), becoming a parent (58%), teaching a teenager to drive (53%) and potty training a child (47%).

- Those most likely to describe the home selling process as stressful include adults under the age of 35 (82% vs. 73% of those age 55+), those with no children living at home (79% vs. 68% of those with children), and those who say the home selling process took longer than they expected (84% vs. 72% of those who felt the process took about as long as expected).

Home sellers report that many factors related to the house selling process can contribute to this stress. Roughly two thirds, for instance, say that the uncertainty of selling for the desired price (70%) or within the desired timeframe (69%), packing up their belongings (67%), worrying about buyer offers falling through (65%) and making improvements to prepare the home for sale (65%) all added to the stress felt during this process.

- Though one in four say that the home-selling process took about as long as they expected it would (24%), a third say instead that the process either took longer (34%) or less time (34%) than they expected.

Another six in ten say that the lack of control over the selling process (63%), getting rid/selling some belongings (60%), de-cluttering (59%), timing the sale with the purchase of a new home (58%), and not knowing if buyers are seriously interested (57%) also contributed to the stress felt during this time. Keeping the house clean for open houses and tours (55%), lack of clarity regarding aspects of the overall selling process (51%) and leaving the home for tours and open houses (50%) are least likely to be rated as stressful, though at least half of those surveyed report these activities elevated their anxiety levels during this time.

With all the stress associated with selling a home, it is no surprise that more than one in three admit that they have cried as a result of feeling stressed/overwhelmed during this process (36%). This includes 83% who cried up to five times and nearly one in five who cried more than this (18%)! Those most likely to cry include adults between the ages of 18-34 (67% vs. 39% of those age 35-54 and 18% of those 55+), those with children living at home (51% vs. 32% of those with no children), and those who describe the house selling process as stressful (41% vs. 16% who say selling a house is not stressful).

Three quarters of American home sellers find the stress of selling their house comparable to other stressful events (77% versus 23% who say that none of the things listed are similar to the home selling process in terms of stress levels). Sellers are most likely to associate the stress of selling a home to that felt when moving to a new home (28%), and nearly one in five found the stress of selling a home similar to starting a new job (19%), getting fired from a job (17%), and experiencing conflicts at work or at home (17%). More

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than one in ten say that selling a home is just as stressful as going through a break up (15%), planning a wedding (13%), teaching a teen how to drive (11%), losing all of their luggage when on vacation (10%) and getting a root canal (9%).

- Those who cried during the home selling process are much more likely to find the stress of selling a home comparable to other stressful life events, including a greater proportion who say it is akin to getting fired (25% vs. 13% of those who did not cry), a relationship break up (20% vs. 12%), planning a wedding (17% vs. 10%), becoming a parent (14% vs. 5%), and potty training a child (8% vs. 3%).

## About the Study

These are the findings from an Ipsos poll conducted May 3 - 17, 2019 on behalf of Zillow. For the survey, a sample of 1,068 adults ages 18 and over from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii was interviewed online, in English. In order to qualify for the survey, respondents had to have sold their home within the past three years. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of  $\pm 3.4$  percentage points for all respondents.

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from Ipsos's online panel (see link below for more info on "Access Panels and Recruitment"), partner online panel sources, and "river" sampling (see link below for more info on the Ipsos "Amparo Overview" sample method) and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2017 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, and region.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online nonprobability sampling polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following ( $n=1,068$ ,  $DEFF=1.5$ , adjusted Confidence Interval=4.9).

For more information about conducting research intended for public release or Ipsos' online polling methodology, please visit our [Public Opinion Polling and Communication](#) page where you can download our brochure, see our public release protocol, or contact us.

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## About Ipsos

Ipsos is an independent market research company controlled and managed by research professionals. Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos has grown into a worldwide research group with a strong presence in all key markets. Ipsos ranks fourth in the global research industry.

With offices in 89 countries, Ipsos delivers insightful expertise across five research specializations: brand, advertising and media; customer loyalty; marketing; public affairs research; and survey management.

Ipsos researchers assess market potential and interpret market trends. They develop and build brands. They help clients build long-term relationships with their customers. They test advertising and study audience responses to various media and they measure public opinion around the globe.

Ipsos has been listed on the Paris Stock Exchange since 1999 and generated global revenues of €1,749.5 million in 2018.

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We make our changing world easier and faster to navigate and inspire clients to make smarter decisions.  
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