

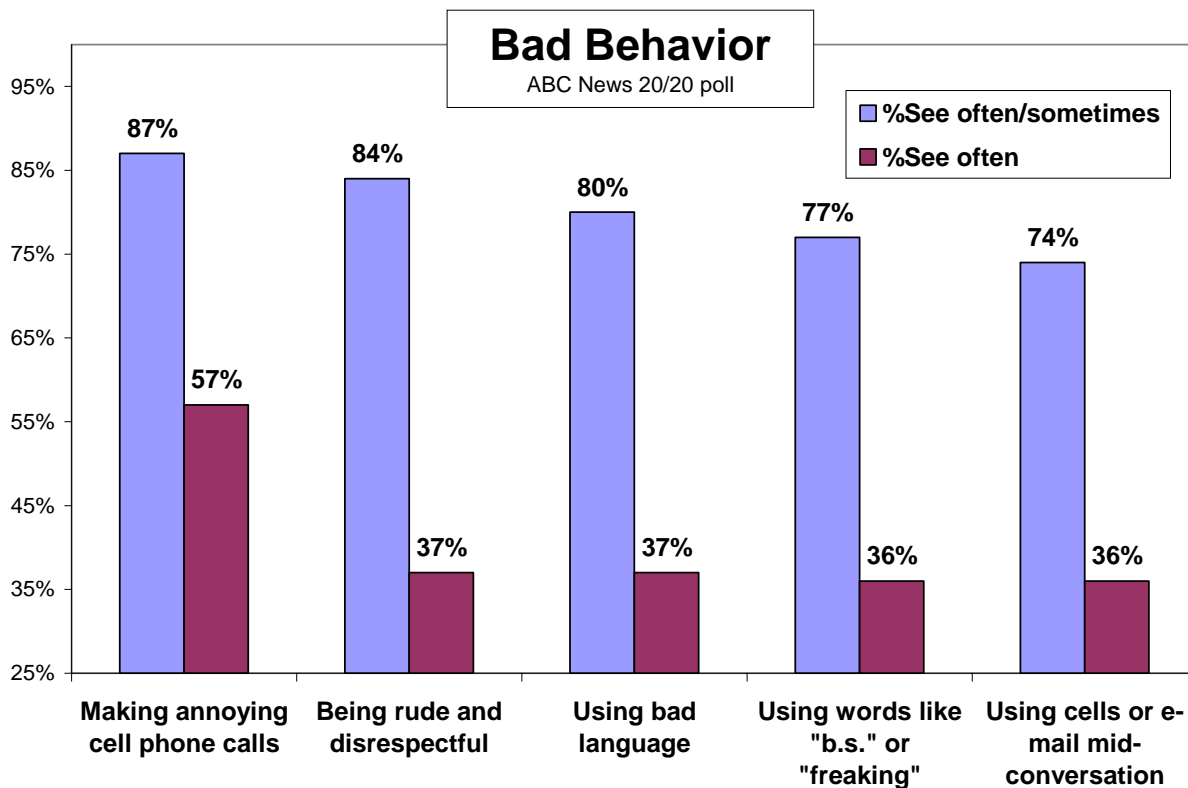
Rudeness in America, 2006: It's the #@%! Cell Phones

In the ranks of rudeness, cell phones reign.

While vast majorities of Americans experience a range of rude behaviors at least occasionally in their daily lives, the one transgression that occurs most often is accompanied by a ring tone: People talking on cell phones, in public places, in a loud or annoying manner.

Eighty-seven percent of Americans in this ABC News 20/20 survey say they encounter that kind of gabbing at least sometimes, and a majority – 57 percent – hear it often. That takes the cake for frequency; by contrast, just under four in 10 often experience generally rude or disrespectful behavior, cursing, near-cursing or people interrupting conversations to use e-mail or cell phones.

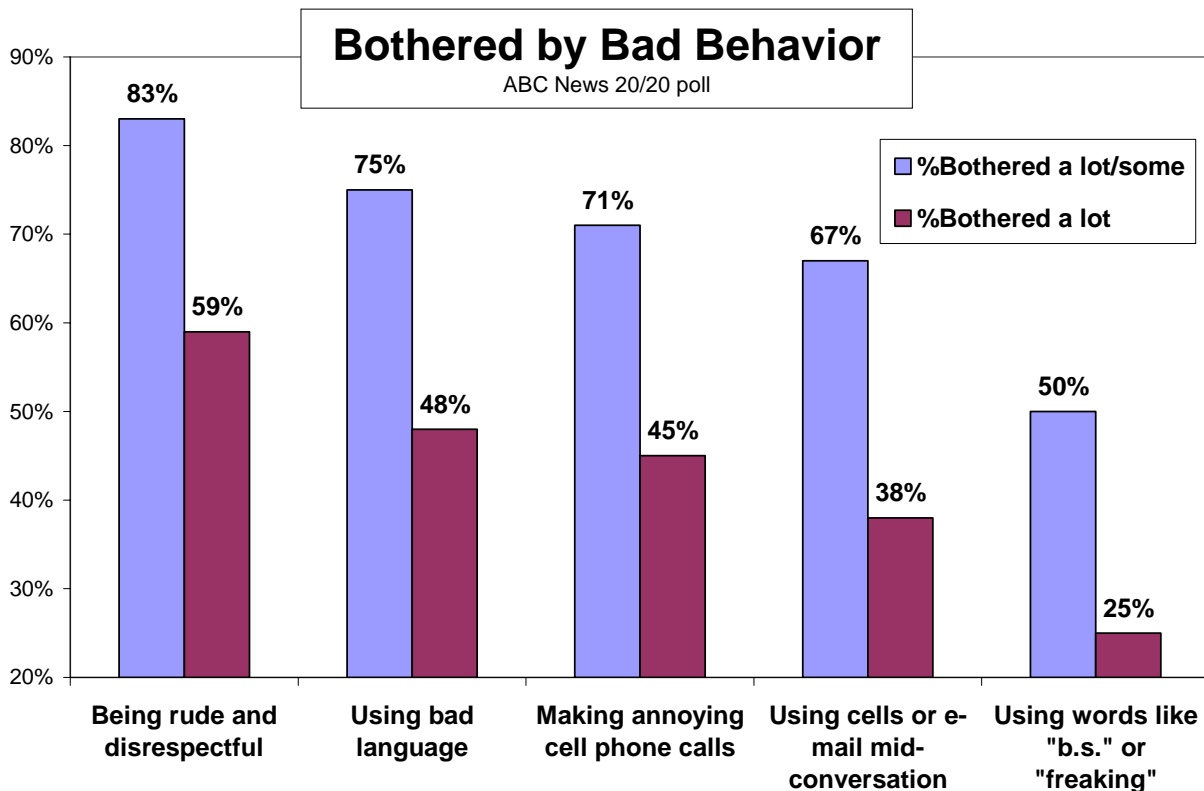
Those other behaviors still occur aplenty: Tote up people who experience these “sometimes” as well as “often” and you get at least three-quarters in each case.



BOTHER – How bothersome these behaviors are is another matter. Rude or disrespectful behavior is the most objectionable – among people who see it, nearly six in 10 say it bothers

them “a lot.” But many people have become inured to cell-phone offenses: Forty-five percent say rude use of cell phones bothers them a lot. About as many are very bothered by swear words, while least objectionable is the use of ersatz curses, such as “freaking” or “b.s.” Twenty-five percent of Americans say that bothers them a lot.

Again, broader bother – not just “a lot,” but also including people who are somewhat bothered – runs much higher, ranging from 83 percent for general rudeness to 50 percent for substitute swearing.



This national survey was conducted to support the ABC News 20/20 special “That’s So Rude! What’s Happened to Manners in America,” airing Friday, Feb. 3 at 10 p.m. Eastern.

GROUPS – Sensitivity to the lack of courtesy varies among groups, with women and older Americans most likely to be bothered by bad behavior. The biggest difference between the sexes is on the appropriateness of public cursing: Fifty-eight percent of women say it bothers them a lot, compared with 38 percent of men – a big 20-point gap.

Women also are 16 points more likely than men to be very bothered by people who are rude or disrespectful in general, and nine to 13 points more apt to be bothered by other behaviors.

People who ...	All	% Bothered a lot		Diff.
		Men	Women	
Use bad or rude language	48%	38%	58%	Women +20
Are rude or disrespectful	59	50	66	Women +16

Answer cells/email mid-conversation	38	31	44	Women +13
Make loud cell phone calls	45	40	49	Women +9
Use substitute like "freaking"	25	21	30	Women +9

There are also differences by age. Seniors – the least likely to use cell phones regularly – are the most annoyed by loud cellular calls: Nearly six in 10 are bothered by it a lot, compared with 35 percent of those under age 35. Similarly, seniors are the most likely to be very bothered by people using cells or e-mail mid-conversation, cursing or the use of substitute curses.

OWN BEHAVIOR – Bad manners, to some extent, may be a thing of youth. Overall, in terms of their own behavior, 41 percent of Americans admit to sometimes being so busy and pressed for time that they’re not as polite as they’d like to be. Among those under age 35 it’s 48 percent; that drops to 38 percent among their elders.

Despite their different sensibilities, men and women are about equally likely to say they’re sometimes less polite than they’d like. And contrary to what you might expect, Americans who live in urban areas are no more likely than those in outside metropolitan centers to say they’re sometimes too busy to act politely.

Just under two in 10 Americans say they curse regularly, but add in those who do swear, but “not so often,” and it rises to 36 percent. Again, it spikes among young adults: Nearly three in 10 of those under 35 swear in public very or somewhat often, nearly triple the number of seniors who do so.

CONNECTED/DISCONNECTED – There’s no clear, consistent link between the use of communication devices and rudeness. People who never use cell phones are less apt than users to say they’re sometimes too busy to be as polite as they’d like; but impoliteness does not increase as frequency of cell phone use rises.

Also, cell phone users are no more likely than non-users to say they curse regularly. And people who use e-mail, iPods or MP3s, and/or text messaging are no more likely than those who don’t use such tools to say they’re sometimes too busy to be polite, or to say they use swear words.

All told, about half of Americans regularly use cell phones, as many regularly use e-mail and nearly three in 10 regularly use iPods or other personal music devices. Fewer, one in six, use text or instant messaging on a regular basis.

Age is a big factor: Cell phone usage is highest among those under 45, use of iPods and text messaging is significantly higher among those under 35 and e-mail usage drops precipitously among seniors.

	%Use very/somewhat often			
Age:	18-34	35-44	45-64	65+
Cell phone	59%	58	47	20
E-mail	53	62	47	21
iPod/personal music device	44	28	20	11
Text message or IM	33	13	9	5

TREND – Neither observed rudeness nor the bother it causes have changed much in the past four years, despite a continued spike in the number of Americans toting cell phones and other mobile communication gadgetry.

There are some slight shifts. Fifty-seven percent now report often witnessing others making loud or annoying cell phone calls in public areas; that’s up eight points from a Public Agenda/Pew poll in 2002. The percentage bothered “a lot” by these calls inched up by a modest five points.

On the other hand, reports of rude language in public are down slightly, by five points, from 2002 – and the number of people who are very bothered by that kind of language is down by eight points.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Jan. 20-24, 2006, among a random national sample of 1,014 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Jon Cohen and Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

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Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1. I am going to ask you how often you see certain behaviors in your daily life. For each, please tell me if you see it happening often, sometimes or practically never.

1/24/06 - Summary Table

	NET	-----Often/Sometimes----- Often	Sometimes	Practically never	No opin.
a. People who are rude and disrespectful	84	37	47	16	*
b. People who use their cell phones in a loud or annoying manner in public areas	87	57	30	13	*
c. People who answer their cell phones or email while in conversation with other people	74	36	38	25	*
d. People who use bad or rude language out loud in public	80	37	44	20	*
e. People who substitute words like “freaking” or “B.S.” for swear words	77	36	41	22	1

Trend where available:

a. People who are rude and disrespectful

	NET	-----Often/Sometimes----- Often	Sometimes	Practically never	No opin.
1/24/06	84	37	47	16	*
1/23/02*	88	34	54	12	0

*Public Agenda/Pew

b. People who use their cell phones in a loud or annoying manner in public areas

	-----Often/Sometimes-----			Practically	No
	NET	Often	Sometimes	never	opin.
1/24/06	87	57	30	13	*
1/23/02*	80	49	31	19	1

*Public Agenda/Pew

c. No trend

d. People who use bad or rude language out loud in public

	-----Often/Sometimes-----			Practically	No
	NET	Often	Sometimes	never	opin.
1/24/06	80	37	44	20	*
1/23/02*	85	44	41	15	0

*Public Agenda/Pew

e. No trend

2. When you see this happen how, much does it bother you - a lot, some or only a little?

1/24/06 - Summary Table*

	-----Bothers-----			-----Doesn't bother-----			No
	NET	A lot	Some	NET	A little	At all(vol.)	op.
a. People who are rude and disrespectful	83	59	24	17	15	2	*
b. People who use their cell phones in a loud or annoying manner in public areas	71	45	26	29	26	3	*
c. People who answer their cell phones or e-mail while in conversation with other people	67	38	29	32	25	7	*
d. People who use bad or rude language out loud in public	75	48	27	24	20	3	1
e. People who substitute words like "freaking" or "B.S." for swear words	50	25	25	50	37	12	*

*Asked of total who ever see behavior.

Trend where available:

a. People who are rude and disrespectful

	-----Bothers-----			-----Doesn't bother-----			No
	NET	A lot	Some	NET	A little	At all(vol.)	opin.
1/24/06	83	59	24	17	15	2	*
1/23/02*	89	62	27	10	9	1	0

*Public Agenda/Pew

b. People who use their cell phones in a loud or annoying manner in public areas

	-----Bothers-----			-----Doesn't bother-----			No
	NET	A lot	Some	NET	A little	At all(vol.)	opin.
1/24/06	71	45	26	29	26	3	*
1/23/02*	72	40	32	28	24	4	0

*Public Agenda/Pew

c. No trend

d. People who use bad or rude language out loud in public

	-----Bothers-----			-----Doesn't bother-----			No
	NET	A lot	Some	NET	A little	At all(vol.)	opin.
1/24/06	75	48	27	24	20	3	*
1/23/02*	84	56	28	17	14	3	0

*Public Agenda/Pew

e. No trend

3. I am going to read you a statement and ask how closely it comes to describing how you feel. "Sometimes, I'm so busy and pressed for time that I'm not as polite as I should be, and I feel sorry about it later on." Does this come very close, somewhat close, not too close or not close at all to describing how you feel?

	-----Close-----			-----Not Close-----			No
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all	opin.
1/8/06	41	11	30	58	24	34	1

4. How often, if ever, do you (ITEM) - very often, somewhat often, not so often or hardly ever?

1/24/06 - Summary Table

	-----Often-----			-----Not often-----			Never	No
	NET	Very	Smewhat	NET	Not so	Hardly ever	(vol.)	op.
a. Talk on a cell phone	49	24	25	39	14	25	12	0
b. Use text messaging or instant messaging	17	10	7	53	7	46	30	*
c. Check or send email	48	32	16	39	12	26	14	*
d. Listen to an iPod or other personal music devise	28	14	14	49	11	38	23	*
e. Curse or use a swear word in public	18	5	14	61	18	43	21	0

END