



RESEARCH FINDINGS:

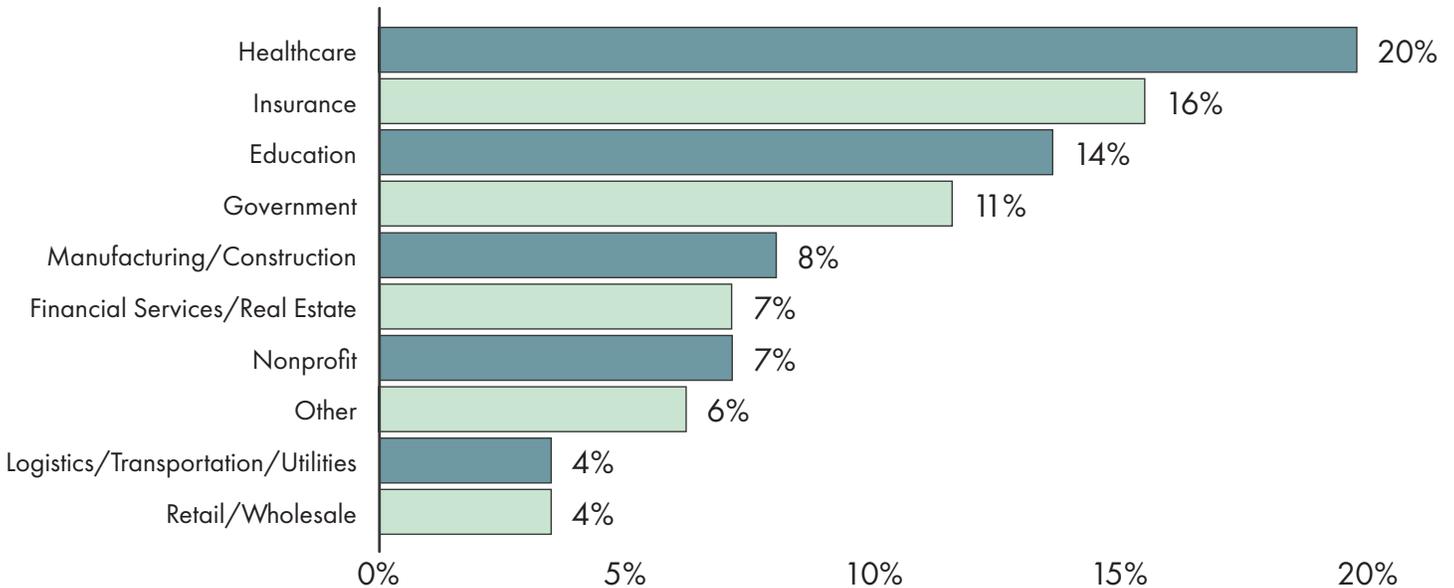
2021 WORKPLACE RESILIENCE SURVEY

For many organizations, resilience has become synonymous with stress management, but the resilience challenges post and during the global pandemic present brand new challenges that need brand new solutions. WELCOA and Unmind partnered on a survey project to identify the current state of organizational burnout and resilience from multiple perspectives. This study sought to identify what employer’s challenges are when working to protect employee mental well-being, what’s working best, and what their major concerns are for the future.

To capture a multi-dimensional perspective, 1,000 U.S. employees and 228 U.S. employers were surveyed. Out of the employers surveyed, thirty-four percent represented partner organizations (brokers, consultants, health plans, and TPAs). The industry type breakdown can be found in Figure 1.

Overall, the survey identified that there is a mental health crisis that does not seem to be resolving. A lot is being done by employers, but they don’t know if they are doing the right things.

Fig. 1: Top Industries Represented



EMPLOYEES ARE BURNED OUT & EVERYONE IS FEELING IT

Ninety percent of employers are concerned that their employees are experiencing burnout, and for good reason. Forty-five percent of employees surveyed have experienced symptoms of burnout over the last twelve months. Not surprisingly, thirty-eight percent of employees say their mental health and well-being has been negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Employers cited that work-life balance is a top weekly (39%) to daily (35%) concern for employees (Fig. 2), and fifty-one percent of respondents say it has only gotten worse. Despite controversy around the amount of time that remote employees are actually working and concerns over presenteeism, the findings of this survey suggest that employers are very clear about the impact of COVID-19 on employee work hours. Sixty-four percent of employers have seen employees' working hours increased since the pandemic started; the majority (44%) cited this increase as anywhere from ten to twenty-four percent over pre-pandemic working hours.

More than the current state of burnout and overwork described by the survey population, survey findings begin to reveal a compelling story about the impending mental health crisis or "mental health pandemic." Forty-three percent of employers feel that the pandemic has negatively impacted their ability to help employees advance in their careers, and sixty-five percent believe the employee mental health implications of COVID-19 will negatively impact business performance over the next 12 months.

Fig. 2: Employers Cite Work-Life Balance Coming Up Frequently as a Challenge to Employees

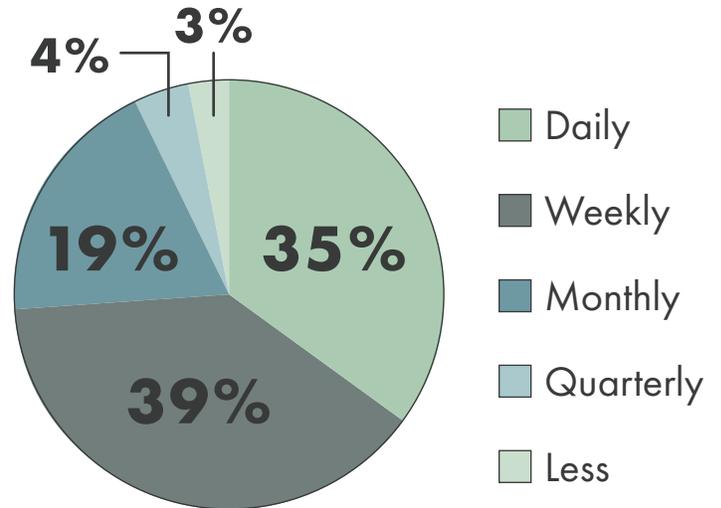
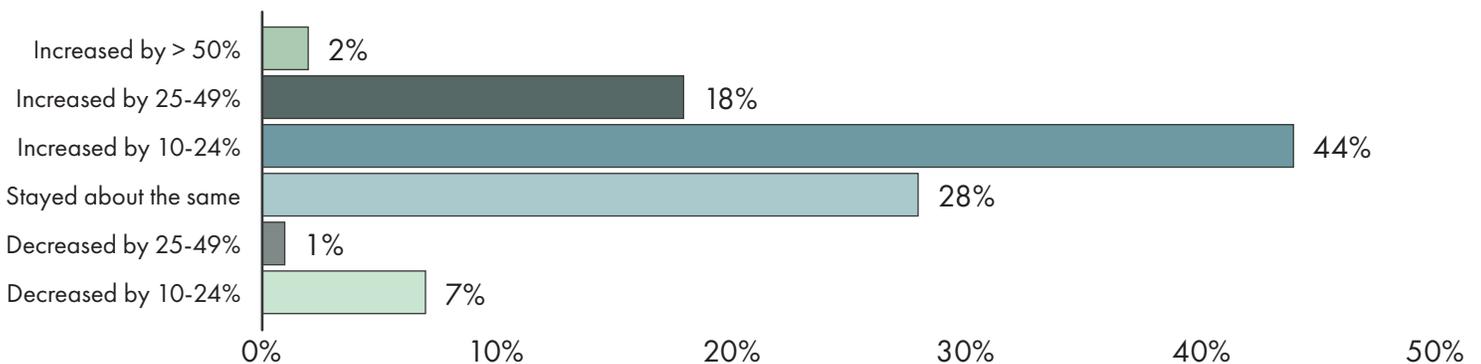


Fig. 3: When asked to describe how working hours have changed, 64% of employers have seen employees' working hours increased since the pandemic started; the majority (44%) cited this increase as anywhere from 10%-24% over pre-pandemic working hours.



THE WORKPLACE RESPONSE

Only thirty-seven percent of employers feel they have a strong understanding of the mental health and wellbeing of their people; this can be compared to the only thirty-one percent of employees who actually feel supported.

Offering flexible remote working is not enough, as one respondent described it, "Working at home due to the pandemic does not equal being flexible. These employees tend to work more because they do not have a commute either way. Our 'essential workers' continue with their current schedule or work longer hours when someone is sick or they need to fill-in to get the work done." By the numbers, eighty-six percent of employers are offering flexible remote working as a strategy for combating burnout, but only thirty-one percent of employees feel like their employer has taken steps to support their mental health.

RESOURCES & PROGRAMMING

This survey gathered many insights about what types of approaches employers are using to address burnout and mental health, and they have varying levels of perceived impact. Management training is cited as both a top intervention for addressing employee mental health and one that organizations are desiring to invest in.

Top most impactful interventions provide meaningful and tactical assistance (e.g. parental support) or fundamentally change the way work is getting done (e.g. adjust expectations to focus on productivity). See a breakdown of top interventions by perceived impact in Figure 6. Still others cited creative, community-based interventions, "We now have a morale committee to design communications that will reinforce to our employees that we care about their state of mind."

Even though there is consensus about what the most high impact interventions are, the majority of employers are not deploying them and are largely relying on offering flexible or remote working (86%) or using digital tools that promote work-life balance (47%).

Fig. 4: Only 37% of employers feel they have a strong understanding of the mental health and well-being of their people

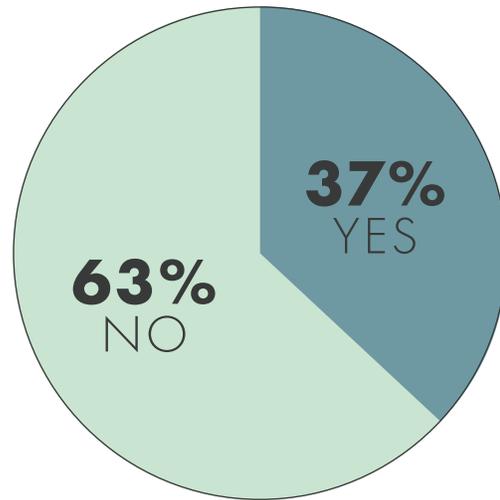
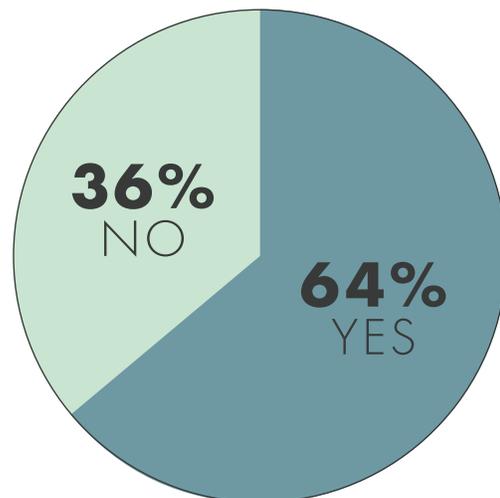


Fig. 5: 64% of employers have a strategy in place for specifically managing employee mental health & well-being



BARRIERS & CONCERNS

Employers are doing a lot of great work to address burnout and build more resilient organizations, but there are many unknowns and concerns. Just over half (55%) of respondents believe they have adequately supported their people. The majority (90%) are either concerned or very concerned that their employees are experiencing burnout.

As employers work to address workplace issues related to burnout and mental health, survey findings point to an emerging value proposition for these efforts. Ninety-three percent of employers believe employee wellbeing and support will be critical in attracting and retaining talent in the future. But there does still seem to be a disconnect between an understanding of that value proposition and the agency to take action to protect employee health. Senior leadership buy-in (27%) and lack of budget (14%) are still the top reasons cited for not having a mental health strategy in place.

Fig. 6: Top 5 Interventions for Supporting Work-Life Balance

1. Offering increased paid time off (91%)
2. Offering increased support for parents (89%)
3. Focusing on productivity, rather than working hours (89%)
4. Asking your employees how they would like to improve the work-life balance (84%)
5. Providing managers and leadership with training around promoting work-life balance among colleagues (80%)

RECOMMENDATIONS

For organizations who are ready to take action, this survey reveals a few key tactics to take into consideration.

1. Create a strategy and take action.

Failing to support employees now could be a detrimental barrier to organizational growth and performance for years to come, as the majority of our respondents believe employee wellbeing and support will be critical in attracting and retaining talent in the future.

2. What gets measured gets managed.

By gaining an organizational level view of the mental health of your workforce, you can see what's working what's not; where wellbeing is depleted, where it's nourished; and ultimately inform decisions around wellbeing off the back of it. Tools like the **Unmind Index** that designed by specialist clinical psychologists and validated by expert statisticians are designed to do things like capture the core areas of well-being and identify those that need the most attention within a population.

3. Provide mental health training organization-wide.

According to survey findings, there is some consensus that mental health training is a solution that is rising to the top for both managers and organizations generally. It is important to train entire organizations as well as managers. The principles required to build and maintain a mentally healthy workplace come from the bottom up as well as top-down. By enriching your entire organization's understanding of mental health, you create a positive and supportive ecosystem, where employees are empowered not just to manage their own wellbeing, but also to support each other. Survey partner **Unmind's Mental Health Foundations Training** features systematic support for both managers and the wider workforce. Here are a few things to look for when you are considering solutions for mental health training.

- Mental health training should be practical, accessible and credible.
- Mental health training has traditionally often landed with managers, or a select few senior staff members. There are a few reasons behind this. For one, organizations have traditionally looked to leaders to influence working environments and culture. While managers will always play a vital role in setting the tone, we're beginning to see employees get a more prominent voice in decision-making.
- Another factor is cost. With typical mental health training schemes costing around over \$350 per person, it's common for organizations to send a handful of senior staff. According to a study by **Business in the Community**, just forty-four percent of employees feel comfortable talking to their managers about their own mental health – clearly, literacy and awareness in this area are advantageous to everyone.



ABOUT WELCOA

For 30+ years, WELCOA has served as the source of information and inspiration to propel the workplace wellness profession forward. We offer inclusion in a thriving community of wellness enthusiasts, comprehensive training led by the nation's top experts and access to an expansive library of effective tools and templates.

WELCOA's mission is to be a transformative force that improves the health and well-being of all working people. As a purpose-driven, nonprofit organization, we are squarely and solely focused on generating health and prosperity for our Members, their companies and the places we all call home.



ABOUT UNMIND

Unmind is a workplace mental health platform. We empower employees to measure, understand, and improve their mental wellbeing. Working in collaboration with clinicians, authors, and academics, we provide digital tools that nourish all aspects of mental wellbeing. From sleep to calmness, fulfillment to happiness.