2022
MIND THE WORKPLACE:
Employer Responsibility to Employee Mental Health

MHA
Mental Health America

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mental Health America (MHA) – founded in 1909 – is the nation's leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and to promoting the overall mental health of all. Our work is driven by our commitment to promote mental health as a critical part of overall wellness, including prevention services for all, early identification and intervention for those at risk, integrated care, services, and supports for those who need it, with recovery as the goal.

Millions of employees spend a large part of their day and lifetime at work, increasing the workplace's effect on employee mental health and well-being. MHA's workplace mental health initiatives are part of an ongoing commitment to uncover workplace disparities, promote meaningful change in organizational practices, and develop resources to address the mental health needs of employees.

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MESSAGE FROM SCHROEDER STRIBLING PRESIDENT & CEO, MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA

Dear Colleagues,

Mental Health America is proud to release our annual *Mind the Workplace* report.

At Mental Health America, we know that mental health *is* health. We further know that all of the environments in which we live daily contribute to our experience of mental well-being and sometimes mental distress or illness. This is no less true of our workplaces than elsewhere.

While in the past many companies and employees may have thought of mental health conditions as something that developed "outside the workplace," these past two years of the COVID-19 pandemic have made it overtly clear that our workplaces directly affect our health in every way – from the risk of spreading infection to the potential for anxiety or depression. The experiences we have each day at work – our relationships with co-workers and managers, our access to quality and confidential support as needed, and the values and policies that guide our efforts, have a direct effect – positive or negative – on our overall sense of well-being.

Furthermore, these past two years of disruption have created new and perplexing questions for employers with regard to employee mental health and overall well-being. For instance: how do we effectively support employees with children at home during school closures? How do we promote positive connectivity amongst workers now distanced from one another, working in virtual spaces? Or how do we effectively support the mental health needs of employees experiencing unprecedented levels of stress and anxiety during a global health threat?

At Mental Health America, we believe that companies want to be positive environments that promote the well-being of their workers, and we believe that workers deserve emotionally intelligent workplaces. Whatever your role at your workplace, you will find valuable insights in our *Mind the Workplace 2022 Report* – insights that will enable and empower you to make change where it is needed and to celebrate healthy practices where they have been created. As we contend with the rapidly changing workplace and the new calls by employees for healthy and supportive work environments, we appreciate that you are invested in rising to meet these new demands and seizing the opportunities they present.

Schroeder Stribling
President and CEO
Mental Health America

MESSAGE FROM ANDREW FAAS
FOUNDER, FAAS FOUNDATION

The Faas Foundation is pleased to have partnered with Mental Health America in advancing solutions to help create psychologically safe work climates and environments.

This report highlights the need for leadership to reduce, and ideally eliminate, the tremendous amount of unnecessary stress workers face, largely because the conditions necessary for active and positive engagement do not exist in their workplace.

In research I have done for my book, *"From Bully to Bull's Eye - Move Your Organization Out of the Line of Fire,"* and work the Faas Foundation has done with Mental Health America and the Yale Center For Emotional Intelligence, we have identified those conditions. They are:

- Mutual trust and respect.
- Stability, security, and safety.
- A sense of purpose.
- A sense of efficacy.
- The ability to speak truth to power.

Research is showing where these conditions exist; there is less stress and burnout, higher engagement and inclusion, and lower attrition.

This report also highlights the importance of emotional intelligence as a core competency that we feel is essential to create these conditions.

Andrew Faas
Founder
Faas Foundation

CONTENTS

Poor employee mental health is not a new workplace issue. Employee expectations have shifted rapidly in recent years, emphasizing an employer's responsibility to the well-being of their workforce. In September 2021, 4.4 million people resigned from their positions due to inflexibility, burnout, or a re-evaluation of life priorities.[1] A poor work environment only adds to the stress of living and working through a pandemic. One employee describes their experience at work this way:

> *My company has mental health programs in place…However, my department and team [are] problematic. Between high turnover, heavy workload, unrealistic expectations, and a toxic team environment, it has weighed down on me to the point where I stopped wearing make-up to work because I was crying all the time.*

While employers recognize the need to address employee mental health, organizations may struggle to implement the appropriate interventions. Through MHA's Work Health Survey, employees shared their experiences with mental health supports at work. Interventions included mental health awareness and resource promotion, supportive management, employee empowerment, and leadership commitment to a mentally healthier workforce. The Work Health Survey measured the perceptions of over 11,301 employees across 17 industries in the U.S.

In this *Mind the Workplace 2022 Report*, MHA seeks to answer the latest question on business leaders' minds, "How can we meaningfully support employee mental health in 2022?" The findings reflect that positive workplace mental health requires investment (i.e., time, intention, and action) from all levels of an organization, including executive leadership, management, and employees. Survey findings reveal that the most important strategies to improve mental health outcomes are company investment, managerial support, and employee empowerment.
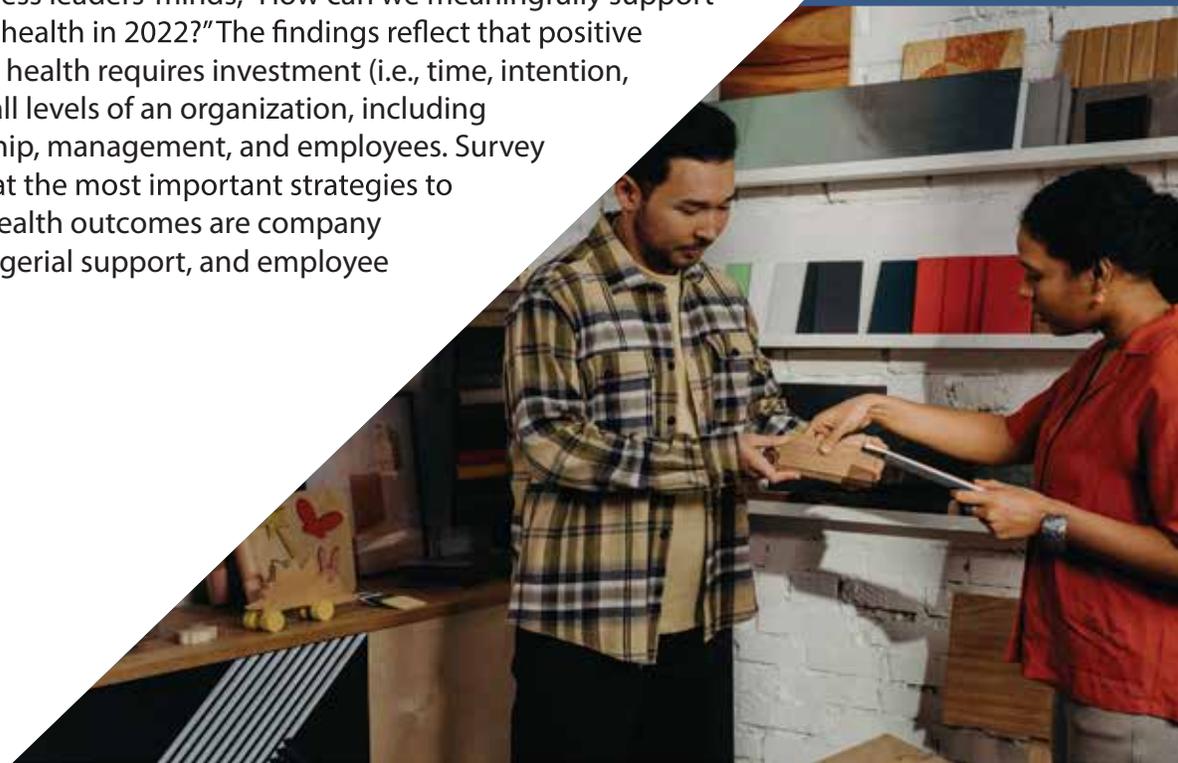
MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT

- **While stress and distraction levels are lower in the healthiest of workplaces, rates of stress and distraction remain high across all workplaces.** Eighty percent of employees agree that the stress from work affects their relationships with friends, family, and co-workers. Seventy-one percent of employees find it difficult to concentrate at work, compared to 65% in 2021 and 46% in 2018.
- **Employees in unhealthy workplaces are more likely to seek out other professional opportunities.** Fifty-six percent of all surveyed employees spent time looking for a new position, compared to 40% in 2018.

COMPANY INVESTMENT

- **Companies that invest in developing supportive managers are correlated with overall healthier workplace scores.** Only 40% of employees agree that their company invests in developing supportive managers.
- **Company leadership speaking openly about mental health and providing mental health training raises employee awareness about resources at work.** Only 34% of employees state that their company's leadership speaks openly about mental health, and 46% of companies provide mental health training.

MANAGERIAL SUPPORT

- **Managerial support strongly correlates with employee empowerment and positive employee mental health outcomes.** Fifty-nine percent of employees report that their manager cares about their personal well-being.
- **Almost half of the healthiest workplaces encourage PTO usage as a management expectation, compared to 4% of the least healthy workplaces**. Fifty-eight percent of employees disagree that their manager encourages them to take off time when needed.

EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

- **The level of agency an employee experiences within their role impacts their workplace stress, leading to other mental health concerns.** Two in three employees are not comfortable providing feedback to their manager about their performance, and 57% of employees cannot negotiate responsibilities or workload with their manager.
- **Mental health awareness is increasing, but employee comfort levels and their likelihood of seeking out workplace resources leave room for improvement.** Forty-seven percent of employees know what mental health services they can use when struggling with a mental health concern, but only 38% would be comfortable using their company's services for a mental health concern.

MENTAL HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

- **As company leadership, establish employee mental health and well-being as a top organizational priority.**
  - o Develop an employee-centric mental health strategy informed by the specific needs of the company's workforce.
  - o Invest personnel, a budget, and additional resources to support the mental health strategy.
  - o Consider employees living with mental health or substance use conditions as part of creating an inclusive workplace culture.

- **As company leadership, invest in developing supportive and emotionally intelligent people managers.**
  - o Develop a process that allows employees to provide feedback to their manager as well as negotiate their titles, roles, responsibilities, salaries, and workload.
  - o Provide tailored mental health training that addresses both the employer's and managers' roles in promoting positive workplace mental health.
  - o Educate managers about the explicit procedures or supports available to employees.
  - o Educate managers about burnout and how to notice signs of increased stress in direct reports.
  - o Expect managers to check in with employees and encourage time off, as needed.

- **As a manager, consider your role as a people manager and consider your strengths and growth opportunities.**
  - o Cultivate relationships built on trust and respect with direct reports.
  - o Learn about and apply active listening skills and emotional intelligence in daily interactions.
  - o Provide the appropriate level of guidance and assist employees with workload management.
  - o Notice the signs of increased stress or burnout in employees.
  - o Actively encourage employees to take off time when needed.

The 2021 Work Health Survey launched on October 30, 2020. It was available to the public through **MHA's Online Screening Program** website. The survey included 19 items selected as measures for company investment, managerial support, employee empowerment, and mental health impact.

The Work Health Survey collected 11,301 U.S.-based responses in 10 months (October 30, 2020 – August 31, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

Survey responses were scored on a 1-6 Likert scale: 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Somewhat Disagree, 4 – Somewhat Agree, 5 – Agree, 6 – Strongly Agree. Inverse scoring was used for negatively worded statements. For example, in the statement, "My company cares about my personal well-being," one point is assigned for every "Strongly Disagree" response, and six points for every "Strongly Agree." For the question, "The stress from work has led to other mental health concerns," six points were assigned to every "Strongly Disagree" and one point to every "Strongly Agree." Lower scores indicate an unhealthy workplace. High scores indicate a healthier workplace. The final score for each respondent represented the sum of all ratings, while the average was determined by a collective sum divided by all respondents.

Correlation coefficients were computed for each question against the overall workplace health score. Question 11 ("My company's leadership is invested in their employees' well-being") and Question 7 ("My company invests in developing supportive managers") had the strongest correlation to the overall score ($r=0.780$ and $r=0.772$, respectively). Question 17 ("I find it difficult to concentrate at work") had the weakest correlation to the overall score ($r=0.425$).

In addition, the sum of each respondent's responses was categorized into the following quartiles: unhealthy (overall Work Health Survey score is between 0 and 39), moderately unhealthy (score between 40 and 53), moderately healthy (score between 54 and 68), and healthy (score of 69 or more), to compare the practices and interventions of the top 25% of healthy and bottom 25% of unhealthy workplaces in each section. Overall, the average score among workplaces was 53.82, the median 52, and the mode 38. The percentage breakdown of each quartile is demonstrated in the graph.

Overall Work Health Scores

Category	Percentage
Healthy	23.09%
Moderately Healthy	24.06%
Moderately Unhealthy	26.56%
Unhealthy	26.30%

0.00%   10.00%   20.00%   30.00%   40.00%   50.00%
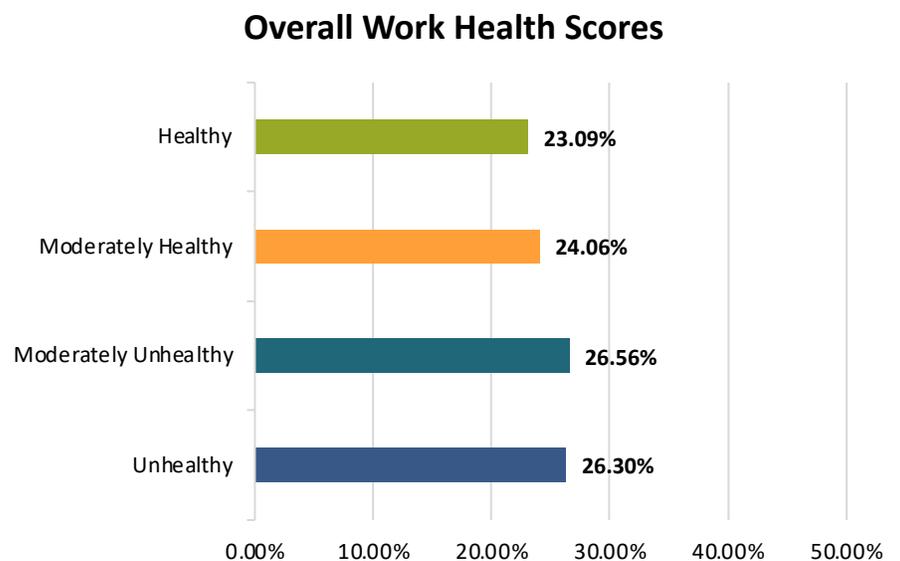
MHA's 2021 Work Health Survey respondents were likely to find the survey when searching for mental health support through **mhascreening.org**. The sample weighs heavily among users experiencing other mental health concerns or experiencing problems with work that might exacerbate mental health concerns. Rather than reflecting the general population, MHA's survey respondents represent employees who are most at risk of burnout and poor employee well-being. The convenience sample allows MHA to evaluate the challenges and opportunities that will impact those with the highest needs.

WORK HEALTH SURVEY QUESTIONS

The Work Health Survey included the following statements:

Individuals were asked to rate each question/statement below using the following scale: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree:

1. My company cares about my personal well-being.
2. My company provides access to mental health training.
3. I am aware of what mental health services I can use when I'm struggling at work.
4. I would be comfortable using my company's services for a mental health concern.
5. I would be comfortable asking my manager or HR for an accommodation if I needed it.
6. My manager cares about my personal well-being.
7. My company invests in developing supportive managers.
8. My manager actively encourages me to take time off when I need it.
9. I am comfortable providing feedback to my manager about their performance.
10. I can negotiate my responsibilities and workload with my manager.
11. My company's leadership (board, CEO, HR) is invested in their employees' well-being.
12. My company's leadership speaks openly about mental health in my workplace.
13. If I needed to take leave for a mental health concern, my company would support me.
14. My company invests in an inclusive environment where employees of all identities feel valued and represented.
15. The stress from work affects my relationships with friends, family, and co-workers.
16. The stress from work has led to other mental health concerns *(e.g., anxiety, depression, substance use)*.
17. I find it difficult to concentrate at work.
18. I spend time actively looking for a new position.
19. Tell us how your workplace is supportive or unsupportive. *(optional)*
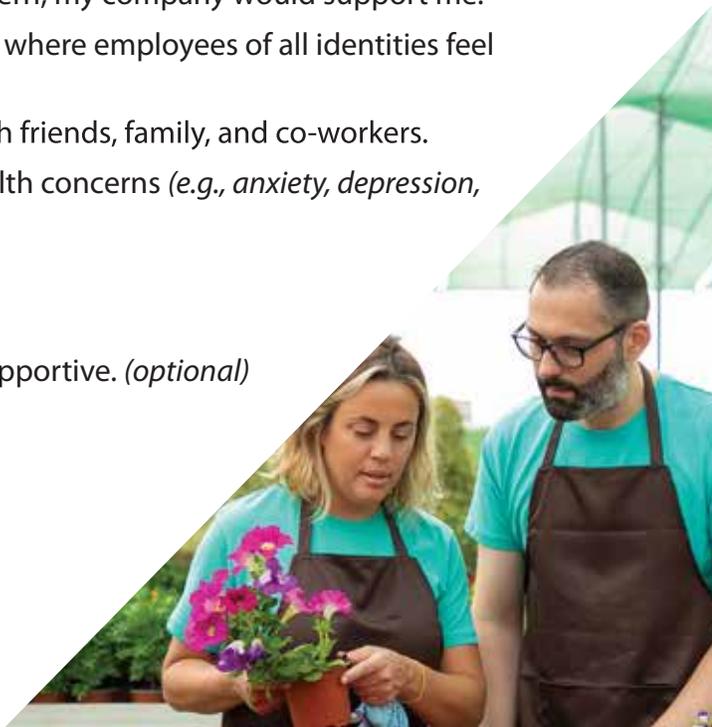
The survey also collected work environment information, including employment status (full-time, part-time, or independent contractor), organization size, industry type, income, and benefits currently offered by the respondents' company. It also collected respondents' age, race/ethnicity, and current state of residence. Answering these questions was voluntary.

1. **What is your current employment status?**
   a. Full-time
   b. Part-time
   c. Independent contractor/Freelance employee

2. **Which of the following best describes your position?**
   a. Someone supervises me; I supervise no one.
   b. Someone supervises me; I supervise one or more people.
   c. I supervise one or more people; no one supervises me.

3. **How many people work for your organization?**
   a. 1-10
   b. 11-50
   c. 51-250
   d. 251-1,000
   e. 1,001-5,000
   f. 5,001+

4. **What industry do you work in?**
   a. Academic (Professor, Teaching Assistant, Researcher)
   b. Automotive
   c. Construction
   d. Education (Primary or Secondary School Teacher, Child Care Worker)
   e. Energy
   f. Financial Services
   g. Food and Beverage
   h. Health Care
   i. Legal Services
   j. Manufacturing
   k. Marketing and Sales
   l. Media and Telecommunications
   m. Nonprofit
   n. Public Sector (Government)
   o. Research and Development
   p. Social Services
   q. Other

5. **What is your estimated individual income?**
   Less than $20,000
   a. $20,000-$39,999
   b. $40,000-$59,999
   c. $60,000-$79,999
   d. $80,000-$99,999
   e. $100,000-$149,999
   f. $150,000+

6. **Of the following selections, which does your company currently provide?** (Check all that apply.)
   a. Competitive salary or wages
   b. Insurance benefits that cover mental health
   c. Other financial perks (401(k), short or long-term disability)
   d. Paid time off (vacation, sick, holidays)
   e. Paid parental leave
   f. Employee assistance program (EAP) or similar program
   g. Professional development opportunities (conference registration, travel stipends, education/certification reimbursement)
   h. Open-door policies or a relaxed work environment
   i. Flexibility in time off during the workday (breaks, long lunch, time to exercise, relax, take a nap)
   j. Remote work options (permanent or semi-permanent remote work, teleworking)
   k. On-site perks (child care, ability to bring a pet to work, wellness space, gym)
   l. Volunteer opportunities

MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT

In recent years, the conversation about mental health has increased in workplaces nationwide. Unfortunately, mental health awareness alone is not enough to impact employee mental health outcomes. Companies need to invest beyond mental health awareness campaigns and conversations to address employee mental health and well-being holistically. Companies that care about and invest in employee mental health also reduce workplace stress, leading to fewer mental health concerns and increased employee engagement.

Survey respondents were asked about their workplace stress and mental health through the following measures:

- The stress from work affects my relationships with friends, family, and co-workers.
- The stress from work has led to other mental health concerns *(e.g., anxiety, depression, substance use)*.
- I find it difficult to concentrate at work.
- I spend time actively looking for a new position.

| Healthy Workplaces (Top 25%)	Survey Item	Unhealthy Workplaces (Bottom 25%)
9.38%	I spend time actively looking for a new position.	38.48%
15.64%	I find it difficult to concentrate at work.	31.58%
14.50%	The stress from work has led to other mental health concerns *(e.g., anxiety, depression, substance use)*.	31.57%
16.49%	The stress from work affects my relationships with friends, family, and co-workers.	30.24%

Employees in nearly 40% of the least healthy workplaces were more likely to seek other professional opportunities compared to 10% of employees in the healthiest workplaces, as demonstrated by the graph below. Levels of stress and distraction were also lower among healthier workplaces.

I spend time actively looking for a new position.
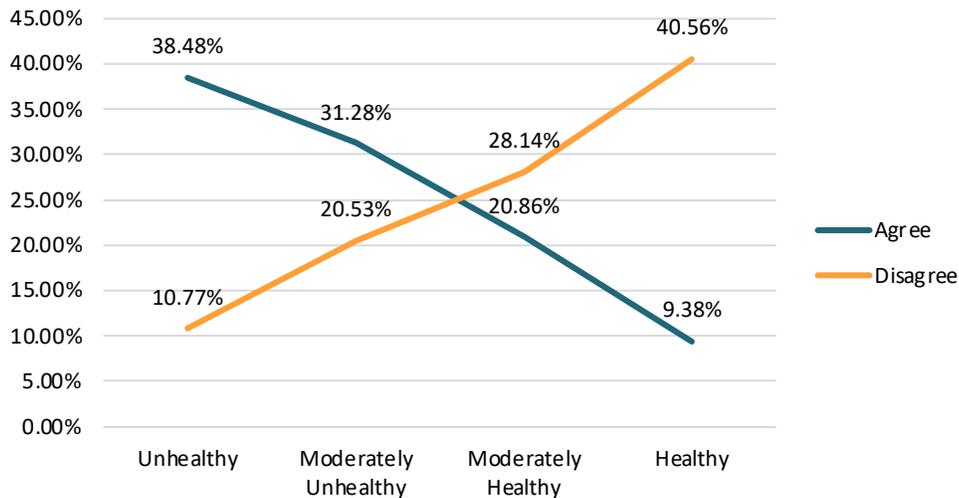
Managing stress and balancing professional and personal demands continues to be a prominent issue for employees. In 2021, 80% of employees agreed that the stress from work affects their relationships with friends, family, and co-workers, including 1 in 3 employees who strongly agreed with this statement. Often, stress leads to larger mental health concerns when it interrupts an employee's daily activities and interactions, including being productive at work or spending time with loved ones.

The stress from work affects my relationships with friends, family, and co-workers.
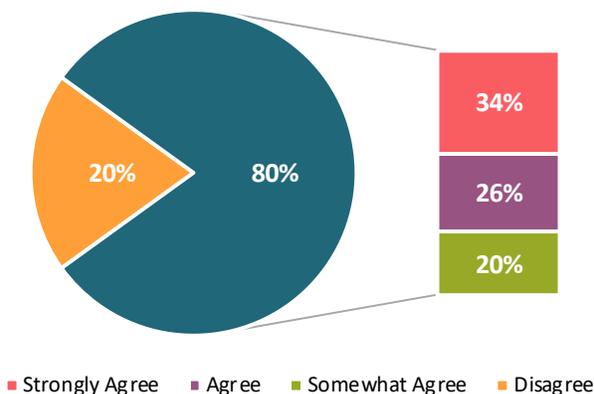
In 2021, the survey findings showed that 78% of employees agreed that their workplace stress affects their mental health, compared to 85% (7% decrease) of respondents in 2020. Rates of stress leading to increased mental health concerns among employees remain prominent across organizational sizes and industries. However, many companies have implemented programs focused on stress management and burnout mitigation since the pandemic, which may or may not have decreased employee stress levels. On the contrary, employees may also have become desensitized or adjusted to an increased level of sustained stress and unease over the past two years.

The stress from work has led to other mental health concerns. (2020 Data)
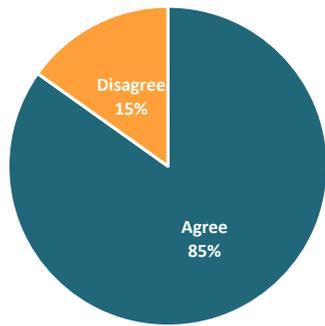
The stress from work has led to other mental health concerns. (2021 Data)
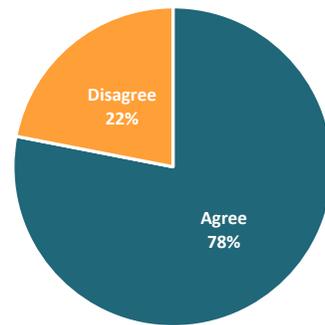
The graph below demonstrates that even though workplace stress appears more manageable in the healthiest workplaces, all employees are still at risk for unmanageable stress that may lead to other mental health concerns. Workplaces, no matter their position on the spectrum of workplace health, need to seriously consider addressing stress, burnout, and poor employee well-being as a top priority.

The stress from work has led to other mental health concerns.
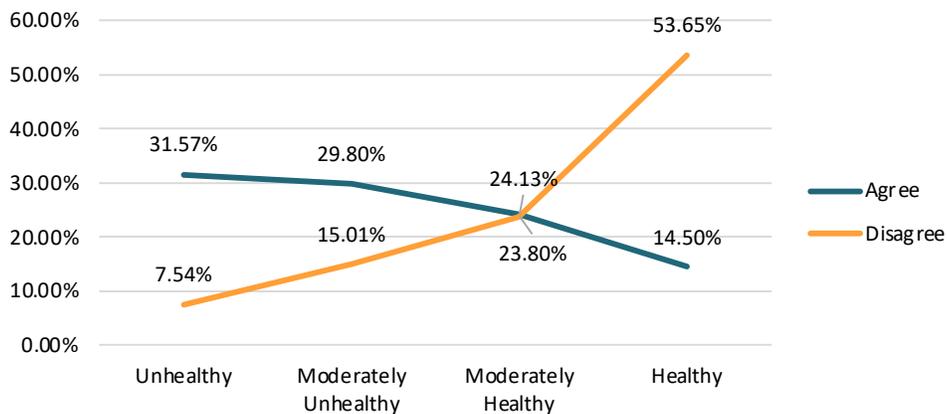
Finally, employees are finding it increasingly difficult to concentrate at work. In 2021, 71% of employees found it difficult to concentrate at work, compared to 65% (6% increase) in 2020 and 46% (25% increase) in 2018. Several factors could be contributing to this increase, but two years of living and working through the pandemic and other world events could contribute to lesser concentration at work.

I find it difficult to concentrate at work.
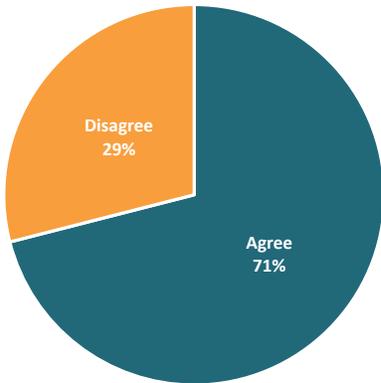
I find it difficult to concentrate at work.
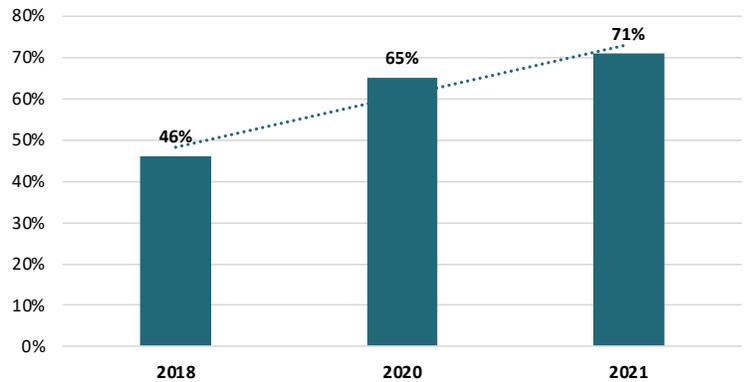
EFFECT CHANGE ON EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES

A company that cares about employee mental health engages in the following activities:

- Understands the relationship between employee mental health and engagement.
- Identifies and addresses the primary drivers of employee stress and burnout.
- Assesses how the organization supports work-life balance of staff at all organizational levels.
- Considers the physical and social work environment in the development of the organization's overall mental health strategy.

COMPANY INVESTMENT

A successful business and a mentally healthy workforce are not mutually exclusive. In fact, a company that invests in employee mental health contributes to the organization's overall health. However, cultivating a mentally healthy workplace requires collaboration and investment from all levels of the organization, including the executive team, human resources (HR), management, and employees. One Work Health Survey respondent describes this concept in action:

> *We constantly receive communication about available resources that support our mental, emotional, and physical health. We also have very supportive management that encourages us to [care for] ourselves. It is much appreciated.*

Survey respondents were asked about their company's investment into mental health through the following measures:

- My company cares about my personal well-being.
- My company's leadership *(board, CEO, HR)* is invested in their employees' well-being.
- My company's leadership speaks openly about mental health in my workplace.
- My company provides access to mental health training.
- My company invests in developing supportive managers.
- My company invests in an inclusive environment where employees of all identities feel valued and represented.

Since the pandemic, employers have increased the conversation about mental health, emotional well-being, and self-care in the workplace. About 1 in 2 employees express that their company, as a whole, cares about their personal well-being. However, only 41% of employees report that their company's leadership, defined as the board of directors, executive team, and HR, is invested in their well-being. Employees feel that their workplace generally cares about their well-being, but leaders should consider how their actions directly impact or enhance their workforce's well-being.

**My company cares about my personal well-being.**
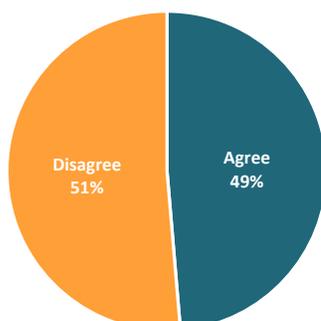
Disagree 51%
Agree 49%

My company's leadership (board, CEO, HR) is invested in their employees' well-being.

Agree 41%
Disagree 59%
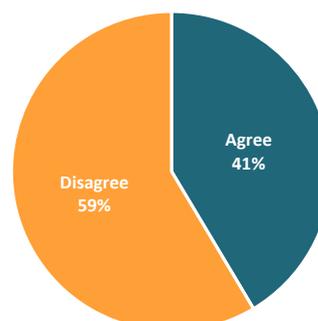
In the healthiest workplaces, employees indicated that direct actions taken by leadership included speaking openly about mental health, investing in developing supportive managers, and investing in an inclusive culture, compared to the least healthy workplaces in which less than 7% of organizations applied these strategies.

Healthy Workplaces (Top 25%)	Survey Item	Unhealthy Workplaces (Bottom 25%)
53.01%	My company's leadership speaks openly about mental health in my workplace.	4.07%
50.75%	My company invests in developing supportive managers.	2.96%
50.52%	My company's leadership (board, CEO, HR) is invested in their employees' well-being.	2.73%
44.70%	My company cares about my personal well-being.	4.15%
42.15%	My company provides access to mental health training.	8.21%
40.64%	My company invests in an inclusive environment where employees of all identities feel valued and represented.	6.65%

According to the survey findings, company investment strongly correlates with managerial support and employee empowerment. People who reported their company invests in developing supportive managers also reported they felt their manager cared for their well-being (r=0.646) and that their company would support them if they needed to take leave for a mental health concern (r=0.560). The graphs below demonstrate how healthier organizations that invest in developing supportive managers and creating a culture of support for those living with mental health conditions compare to unhealthy organizations.

My company invests in developing supportive managers.

Disagree: Unhealthy 42.07%, Moderately Unhealthy 34.58%, Moderately Healthy 18.95%, Healthy 4.39%
Agree: Unhealthy 2.96%, Moderately Unhealthy 14.68%, Moderately Healthy 31.61%, Healthy 50.75%

If I needed to take leave for a mental health concern, my company would support me.

Disagree: Unhealthy 44.41%, Moderately Unhealthy 34.35%, Moderately Healthy 18.00%, Healthy 3.23%
Agree: Unhealthy 4.11%, Moderately Unhealthy 17.01%, Moderately Healthy 31.48%, Healthy 47.40%

In addition, company leadership that speaks openly about mental health (r=0.517) and provides mental health training (r=0.636) correlates with employees knowing what resources are available at work. Unfortunately, only 34% of employees state that their company's leadership speaks openly about mental health in their workplace, including 1 in 3 who strongly disagree with this statement. In addition, fewer than half of companies provide access to some form of mental health training.

My company's leadership speaks openly about mental health in my workplace.

34%   66%

12%
20%
34%

■ Agree
■ Somewhat Disagree
■ Disagree
■ Strongly Disagree

My company provides access to mental health training.

Disagree 54%   Agree 46%
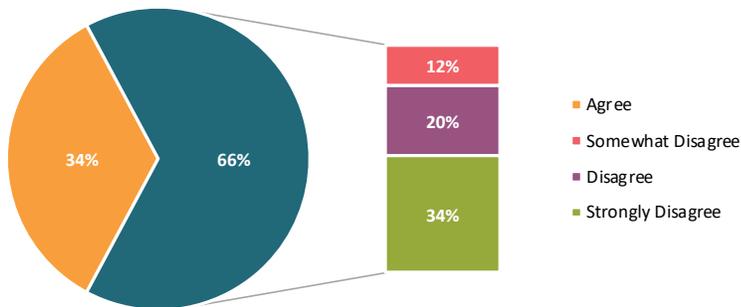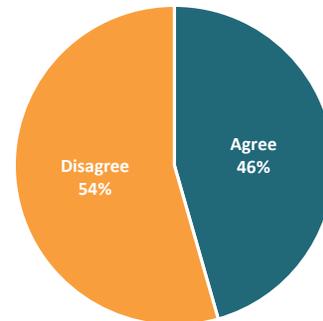
INVEST IN EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH AS A COMPANY

Company leadership that engages in the following activities can contribute to a mentally healthier workplace:

- Establishes employee mental health and well-being as an organizational strategic priority.

- Invests personnel, a budget, and additional resources to support a mental health strategy.

- Communicates the strategy clearly and effectively across all levels of the organization.

- Speaks openly and honestly about personal mental health concerns as a leader *(e.g., personal stressors, experience with symptoms of depression or anxiety)*.

- Develops supportive and emotionally intelligent people managers.

- Considers employees living with a mental health condition or substance use disorder as part of creating an inclusive and equitable workplace culture.

- Provides tailored mental health training that addresses both the employer's and employees' roles in promoting positive workplace mental health.
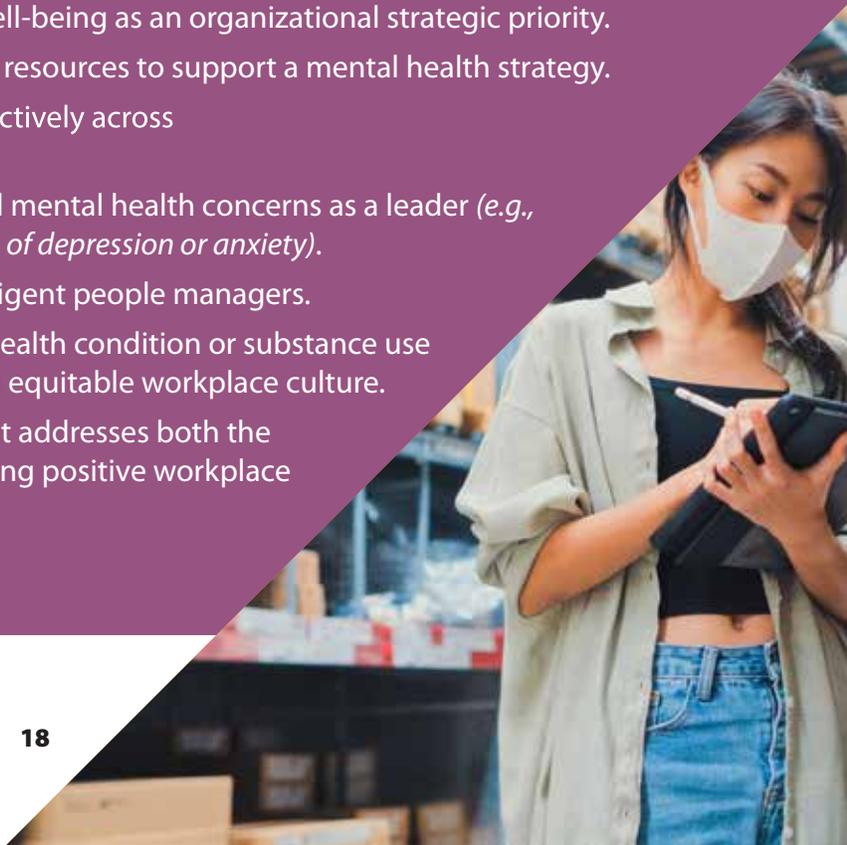
MANAGERIAL SUPPORT

In addition to attentive company leadership, supportive and confident people managers are key to a successful workplace mental health strategy. Aside from co-workers, managers are often one of the first points of contact when employees are experiencing a mental health concern. As a matter of company policy, managers should be equipped with the knowledge and tools to be attentive and responsive in these situations. People who successfully manage others require social awareness, emotional intelligence, and a basic understanding of company policies and processes designed to support employee well-being.

Respondents were surveyed about their experiences with managerial support through the following measures:

- My manager cares about my personal well-being.
- My manager actively encourages me to take time off when I need it.

Healthy Workplaces (Top 25%)	Survey Item	Unhealthy Workplaces (Bottom 25%)
48.18%	My manager actively encourages me to take time off when I need it.	3.89%
38.29%	My manager cares about my personal well-being.	6.87%

According to the survey findings, 59% of employees reported that their manager cares about their personal well-being. Whether an employee's manager cares about their well-being strongly correlates with employee empowerment, including feeling comfortable providing feedback to their manager (r=0.517), negotiating responsibilities and workload (r=0.527), and taking leave for recovery from a mental health condition (r=0.560).
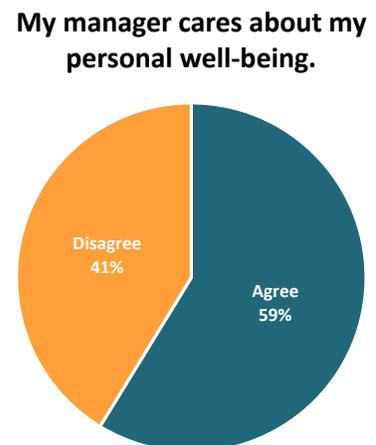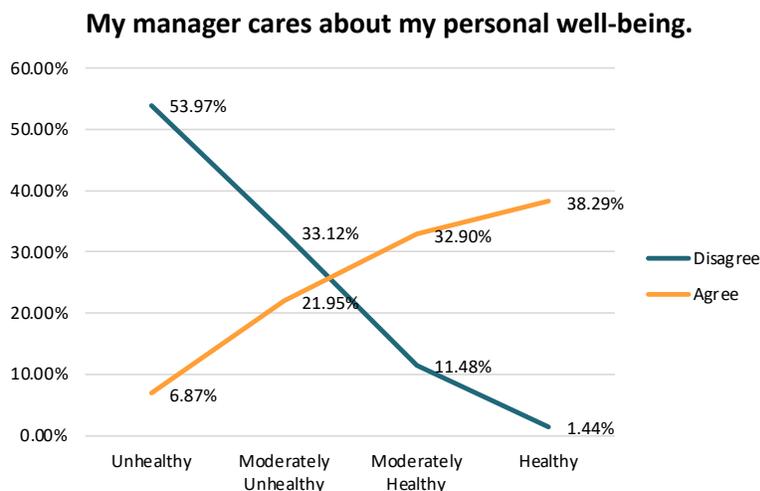
My manager cares about my personal well-being.

My manager cares about my personal well-being.

Companies that invest in developing supportive managers are correlated with overall healthier workplace scores (r=0.772). Unfortunately, only 40% of employees agree that their company invests in developing supportive managers. One Work Health Survey respondent describes their experience with a direct supervisor:

> *Although the organization I work for tries to develop a culture of inclusion and well-being, my direct supervisor creates a very negative experience with disrespect, unappreciation, unprofessional[ism], and at times, is a classic bully. It is very stressful and anxiety-producing. History has shown me that those who have reported the behaviors have not been "heard" or protected and sadly leave the organization.*

My company invests in developing supportive managers.

Agree 40%
Disagree 60%
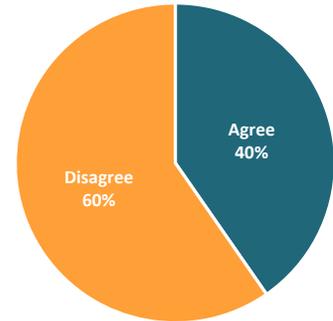
In 2021, burnout and resignations were reported at all-time high rates in the United States.[2] One method of mitigating employee burnout is encouraging time off from work to relieve stress and recover. Almost half of the healthiest workplaces include encouraging the use of PTO as a management expectation, compared to 4% of the least healthy workplaces. MHA's Work Health Survey reveals that 58% of employees disagree that their manager encourages them to take off time when needed, including 30% who strongly disagree with this statement. A Work Health Survey respondent describes their management's approach to wellness:

> *Management actively and consistently encourages a healthy work-life balance, using PTO, and taking breaks throughout the day for a walk or meditation.*

My manager actively encourages me to take time off when I need it.

42% 58%

11%
17%
30%

■ Agree ■ Somewhat Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree
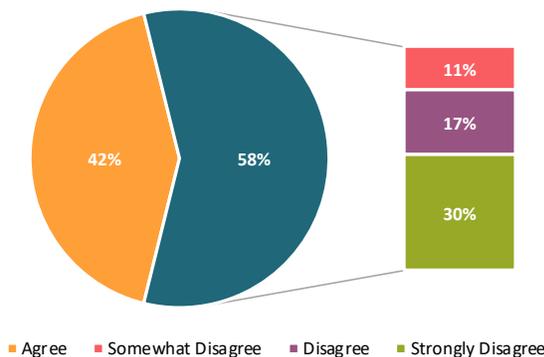
SUPPORT AND DEVELOP SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE MANAGERS

A manager who engages in the following activities can contribute to a mentally healthier workforce:

- Cultivates relationships built on trust and respect with direct reports.
- Learns about and applies active listening skills and emotional intelligence in daily interactions.
- Provides the appropriate level of guidance and assists employees with workload management.
- Notices the signs of increased stress or burnout in employees.
- Actively encourages employees to take off time when needed.

EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

Raising awareness, providing managerial support, and communicating about mental health resources are steps toward creating a mentally healthy workplace. However, employees should also feel empowered to advocate for their mental health needs and contribute to a culture of inclusion. In addition, employers must be prepared to direct employees who speak up to the appropriate resources, including an employee assistance program (EAP), HR, employee resource group, or other mental health resources.

Survey respondents were asked about their experiences with feeling empowered as an employee through the following measures:

- I am aware of what mental health services I can use when I'm struggling at work.
- I would be comfortable using my company's services for a mental health concern.
- I would be comfortable asking my manager or HR for an accommodation if I needed it.
- If I needed to take leave for a mental health concern, my company would support me.
- I am comfortable providing feedback to my manager about their performance.
- I can negotiate my responsibilities and workload with my manager.

According to the practices of the healthiest workplaces, a manager can facilitate a space in which employees feel comfortable in several ways: (1) encouraging the employee to provide feedback on the manager's performance, (2) negotiating certain aspects of the employee's position, and (3) discussing the company's benefits and accommodations process. Less than 10% of the least healthy workplaces engage in these practices.

Healthy Workplaces (Top 25%)	Survey Item	Unhealthy Workplaces (Bottom 25%)
52.99%	I am comfortable providing feedback to my manager about their performance.	5.39%
52.98%	I would be comfortable asking my manager or HR for an accommodation if I needed it.	4.32%
48.11%	I would be comfortable using my company's services for a mental health concern.	7.43%
47.40%	If I needed to take leave for a mental health concern, my company would support me.	4.11%
46.95%	I can negotiate my responsibilities and workload with my manager.	5.13%
40.87%	I am aware of what mental health services I can use when I'm struggling at work.	9.60%

The level of agency an employee experiences within their role impacts workplace stress that can lead to mental health concerns. Managers can help guide and mentor employees, but the employee should have the freedom to determine the best path in reaching their professional and personal goals. Two in 3 employees are not comfortable providing feedback to their manager about their performance, and 57% of employees cannot negotiate responsibilities or workload with their manager.

I am comfortable providing feedback to my manager about their performance.
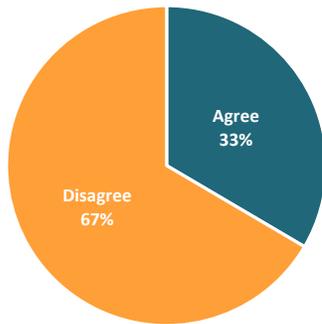
Agree
33%

Disagree
67%

I can negotiate my responsibilities and workload with my manager.

Agree
43%

Disagree
57%

The graphs below demonstrate how healthier companies invest in management to encourage direct report feedback and provide opportunities for responsibility and workload negotiation.

I can negotiate my responsibilities and workload with my manager.
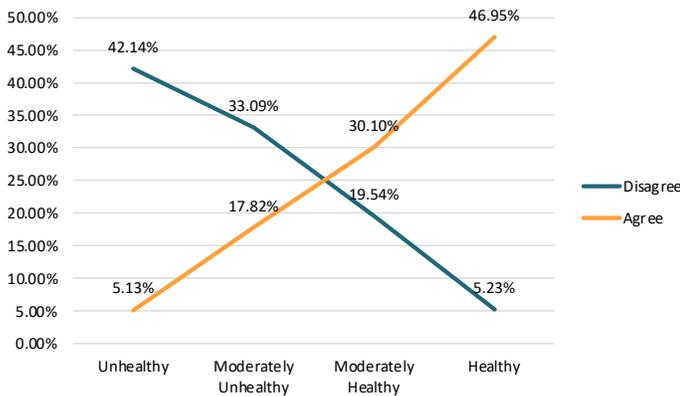
42.14%	33.09%	30.10%	46.95%
5.13%	17.82%	19.54%	5.23%

— Disagree
— Agree

Unhealthy · Moderately Unhealthy · Moderately Healthy · Healthy

I am comfortable providing feedback to my manager about their performance.

36.81%	32.70%	27.29% / 22.44%	52.99%
5.39%	14.33%		8.05%

— Disagree
— Agree

Unhealthy · Moderately Unhealthy · Moderately Healthy · Healthy

Regarding company communications, 47% of employees know what mental health services they can use when struggling with a mental health concern. However, only 38% of employees would feel comfortable using their company's services for a mental health concern. Reasons why employees may not feel comfortable using the services provided by their company could include mental health stigma, issues concerning mental illness disclosure, potential loss of professional opportunities, or discrimination.

Finally, only 35% of employees would feel comfortable asking their manager or HR for a mental health accommodation if they needed it. But nearly 1 in 2 employees feels that their company would support them if they needed to take leave for a mental health concern. While employees should feel supported by their organization if they need to take leave, implementing measures that encourage prevention and early intervention and an inclusive workplace culture should be integrated into an organization's mental health strategy.

EMPOWER EMPLOYEES TO ADVOCATE FOR THEMSELVES

An empowered employee is a person who can comfortably and confidently engage in the following activities:

- Provide constructive feedback to their manager about their performance.
- Negotiate their title, role, responsibilities, salary, and workload with their manager.
- Be informed about the company's mental health services and supports.
- Ask for reasonable accommodations that support a mental health condition or substance use disorder.
- Take a leave of absence to recover from a mental health condition or substance use disorder.

I am aware of what mental health services I can use when I'm struggling at work.

Disagree 53%
Agree 47%

I would be comfortable using my company's services for a mental health concern.

Agree 38%
Disagree 62%

I would be comfortable asking my manager or HR for an accommodation if I needed it.

Agree 35%
Disagree 65%

My company would support me if I needed to take leave for a mental health concern.

Agree 45%
Disagree 55%

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APPENDIX A:
WORK HEALTH SURVEY RESULTS

The Work Health Survey comprised 19 items measuring workplace health using the following domains as a framework: company investment, managerial support, employee empowerment, and mental health impact. The survey was accessible on MHA's website as part of our Online Screening Program. Survey items were required, and additional demographic questions were voluntary.

Over 11,300 surveys were completed, which are analyzed in this appendix. The purpose of the Work Health Survey was threefold:

1. To collect data on the attitudes and perceptions held by employees toward their workplace.
2. To measure the state of workplace health across industries.
3. To identify key factors affecting employee mental health and well-being.

SURVEY RESULTS: DEMOGRAPHICS

Age	Count	Percent
17 or younger	353	4%
18-24	1687	19%
25-34	2656	30%
35-44	1850	21%
45-54	1267	15%
55 or older	907	10%
Total	**8720**	**100%**

Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percent
Asian or Pacific Islander	581	7%
Black or African American (non-Hispanic)	688	8%
Hispanic or Latino	681	8%
More than one of the above	353	4%
Native American or American Indian	92	1%
Other	272	3%
White (non-Hispanic)	5581	68%
Total	**8248**	**100%**

Individual Income	Count	Percent
Less than $20,000	1080	14%
$20,000 - $39,999	1658	21%
$40,000 - $59,999	1491	19%
$60,000 - $79,999	1060	14%
$80,000 - $99,999	717	9%
$100,000 - $149,999	1046	13%
$150,000+	760	10%
Total	**7812**	**100%**

How many people work for your company?	Count	Percent
1-10	693	8%
11-50	1391	16%
51-250	1730	20%
251-1,000	1467	17%
1,001-5,000	1121	13%
5,001+	2066	24%
Total	**8468**	**100%**

What is your current employment status?	Count	Percent
Full-time	7198	84%
Part-time	1105	13%
Independent contractor/Freelance employee	229	3%
Total	**8532**	**100%**

Which of the following best describes your position?	Count	Percent
Someone supervises me; I supervise no one.	5259	62%
Someone supervises me; I supervise one or more people.	2750	33%
I supervise one or more people; no one supervises me.	422	5%
Total	**8431**	**100%**

What industry do you work in?	Count	Percent
Academic (Professor, Teaching Assistant, Researcher)	278	4.04%
Automotive	148	2.15%
Construction	225	3.27%
Education (Primary or Secondary School Teacher, Child Care Worker)	709	10.30%
Energy	96	1.39%
Financial Services	394	5.73%
Food and Beverage	676	9.82%
Health Care	1687	24.51%
Legal Services	116	1.69%
Manufacturing	524	7.61%
Marketing and Sales	428	6.22%
Media and Telecommunications	146	2.12%
Nonprofit	476	6.92%
Public Sector (Government)	476	6.92%
Research and Development	106	1.54%
Retail	32	0.46%
Social Services	365	5.30%
Total	**6882**	**100%**

SURVEY RESULTS: SURVEY QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

My company cares about my personal well-being.

Response	Count
Strongly Agree	868
Agree	1941
Somewhat Agree	2690
Somewhat Disagree	1531
Disagree	2066
Strongly Disagree	2205

QUESTION 2

My company provides access to mental health training.

Response	Count
Strongly Agree	871
Agree	2271
Somewhat Agree	2009
Somewhat Disagree	1081
Disagree	2045
Strongly Disagree	3024

QUESTION 3

I am aware of what mental health services I can use when I'm struggling at work.

Response	Count
Strongly Agree	920
Agree	2376
Somewhat Agree	2036
Somewhat Disagree	1112
Disagree	2067
Strongly Disagree	2790

QUESTION 4

I would be comfortable using my company's services for a mental health concern.

Response	Count
Strongly Agree	742
Agree	1812
Somewhat Agree	1751
Somewhat Disagree	1444
Disagree	2254
Strongly Disagree	3298

QUESTION 5

I would be comfortable asking my manager or HR for an accommodation if I needed it.

Response	Count
Strongly Agree	709
Agree	1517
Somewhat Agree	1734
Somewhat Disagree	1396
Disagree	2427
Strongly Disagree	3518

QUESTION 6

My manager cares about my personal well-being.

Response	Count
Strongly Agree	1562
Agree	2516
Somewhat Agree	2561
Somewhat Disagree	1284
Disagree	1431
Strongly Disagree	1947

QUESTION 7

My company invests in developing supportive managers.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
618	1544	2396	1614	2188	2941

QUESTION 8

My manager actively encourages me to take time off when I need it.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1031	1818	1931	1251	1902	3368

QUESTION 9

I am comfortable providing feedback to my manager about their performance.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
651	1485	1646	1378	2351	3790

QUESTION 10

I can negotiate my responsibilities and workload with my manager.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
730	1851	2256	1507	2110	2847

QUESTION 11

My company's leadership (board, CEO, HR) is invested in their employees' well-being.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
665	1594	2424	1591	1972	3055

QUESTION 12

My company's leadership speaks openly about mental health in my workplace.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
658	1470	1754	1322	2290	3807

QUESTION 13

If I needed to take leave for a mental health concern, my company would support me.

| Category	Value
Strongly Agree	704
Agree	1789
Somewhat Agree	2587
Somewhat Disagree	1921
Disagree	1737
Strongly Disagree	2563

QUESTION 14

My company invests in an inclusive environment where employees of all identities feel valued and represented.

| Category	Value
Strongly Agree	941
Agree	2296
Somewhat Agree	2720
Somewhat Disagree	1494
Disagree	1635
Strongly Disagree	2215

QUESTION 15

The stress from work affects my relationships with friends, family, and co-workers.

Category	Value
Strongly Agree	3833
Agree	2893
Somewhat Agree	2323
Somewhat Disagree	787
Disagree	928
Strongly Disagree	537

QUESTION 16

The stress from work has led to other mental health concerns.

Category	Value
Strongly Agree	3731
Agree	2800
Somewhat Agree	2291
Somewhat Disagree	729
Disagree	1097
Strongly Disagree	653

QUESTION 17

I find it difficult to concentrate at work.

Category	Value
Strongly Agree	2464
Agree	2634
Somewhat Agree	2927
Somewhat Disagree	1183
Disagree	1485
Strongly Disagree	608
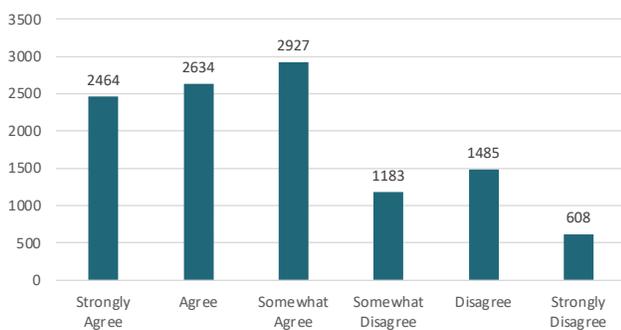
QUESTION 18

I spend time actively looking for a new position.

Category	Value
Strongly Agree	2081
Agree	1910
Somewhat Agree	2342
Somewhat Disagree	1153
Disagree	2189
Strongly Disagree	1626
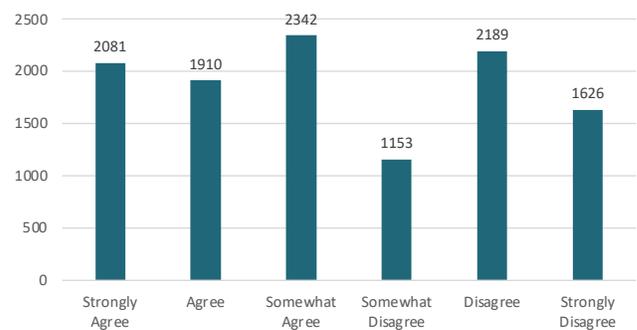
ENDNOTES

1. Cox, Jeff. "Workers Quit Jobs in Record Numbers as Consumer Sentiment Hits 10-Year Low." *CNBC*, CNBC, 12 Nov. 2021, **https://www.cnbc.com/2021/11/12/consumer-sentiment-hits-10-year-low-while-workers-quit-jobs-in-record-numbers.html**.

2. Mayer, Kathryn. "What's behind the Great Resignation? Blame Burnout." *HR Executive*, HR Executive, 30 Sept. 2021, **https://hrexecutive.com/whats-behind-the-great-resignation-blame-burnout/**.