

Thriving versus Surviving: Why Work Culture Matters

A bundle of many thin, colorful threads (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple) are gathered together at the top and held in place by a single metal needle. The threads extend downwards and outwards, forming a wide, inverted V shape. The background is solid black.

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Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

I and/or my spouse/partner have NO personal or professional financial relationships with commercial interests that could be perceived as a conflict of interest related to the content of this activity.



Objectives

1. Identify common mental health difficulties that have been revealed or highlighted due to the pandemic.
2. Define stress, anxiety, depression, languishing, burnout, compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma, and moral injury.
3. Identify common work-life myths
4. Define “Red Threads” and their importance to performance and mental health
5. Name tangible options for increasing support and providing coaching in the new hybrid world

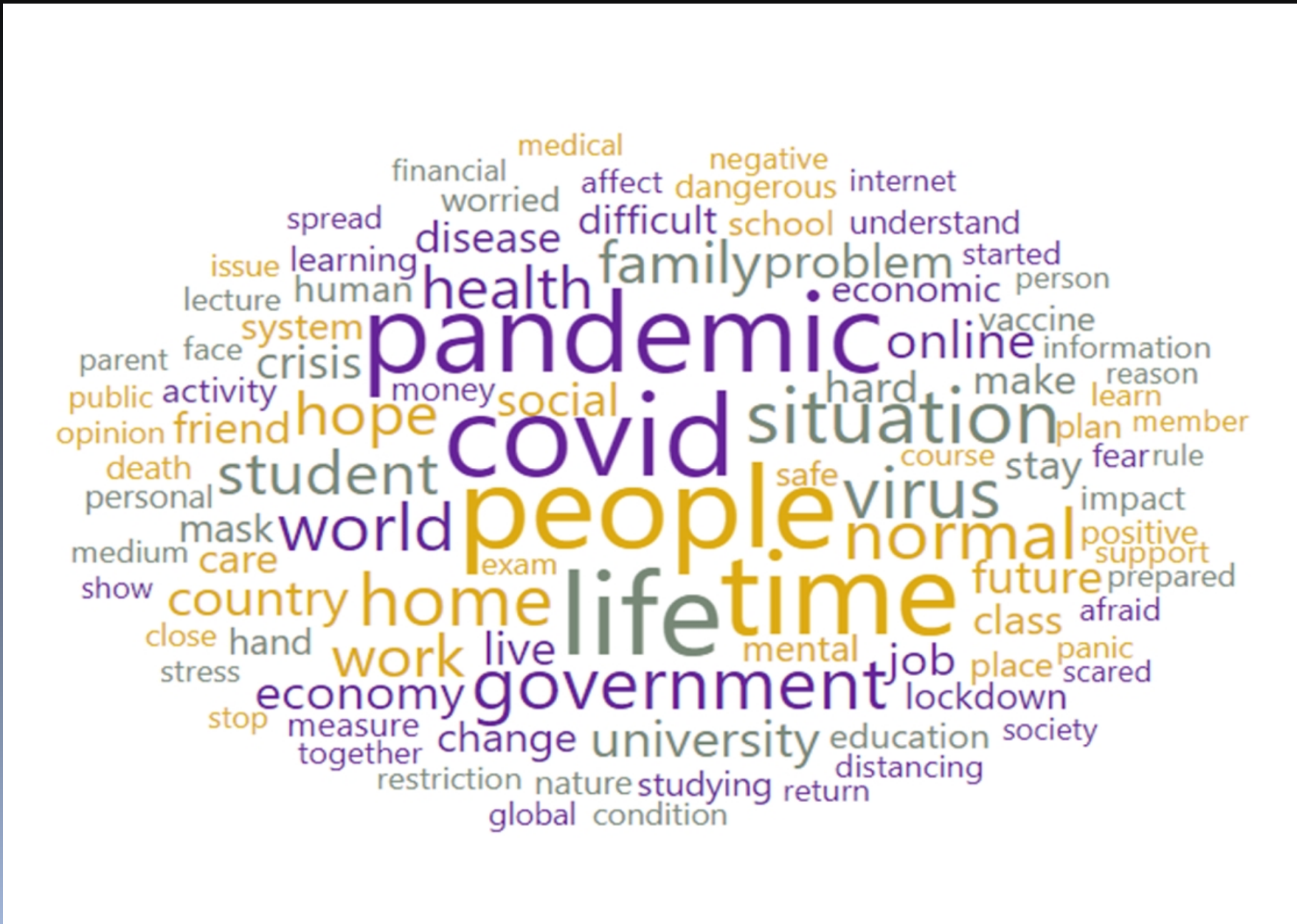
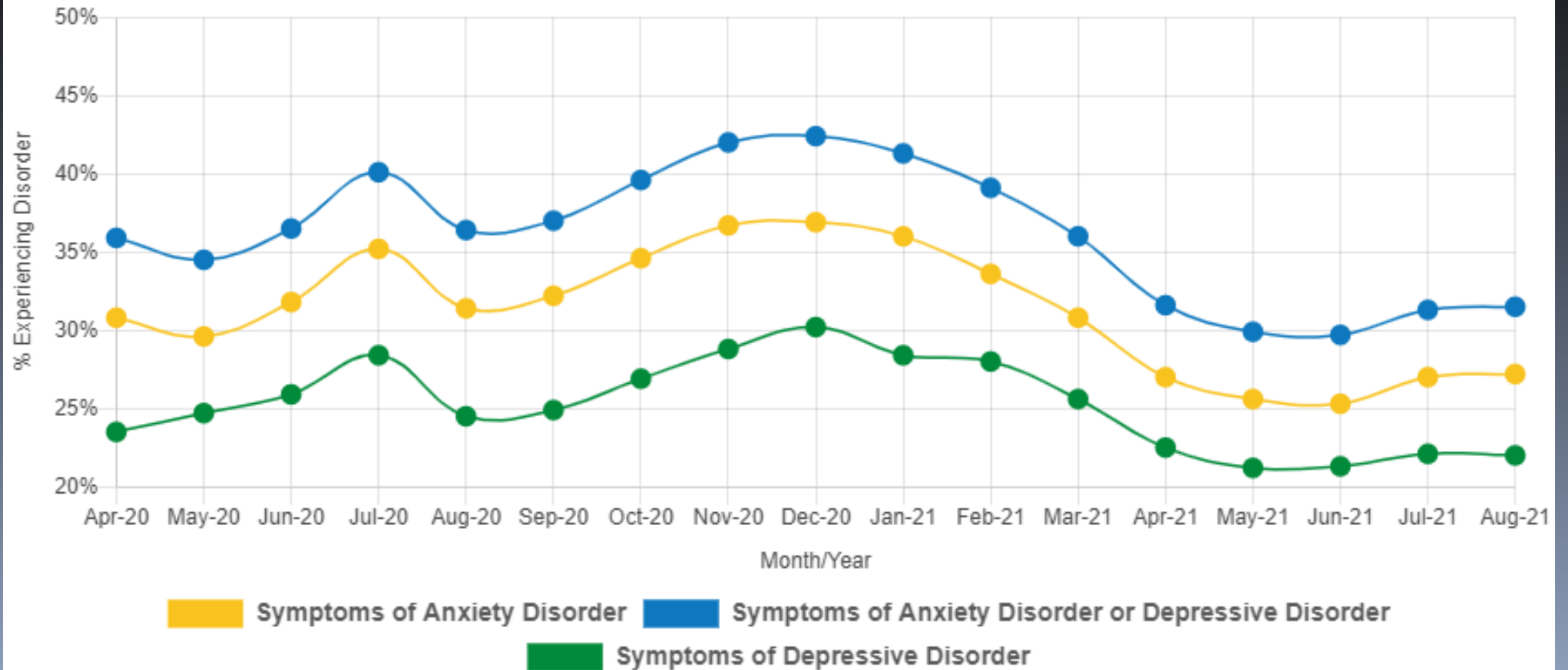


Figure 1: Covid-19 Social Science Lab Word cloud ([CovidSocLab, 2020](https://www.covidsoclab.com/))

Anxiety and Depression During the Pandemic



QuoteWizard.com 2022

Figure 2: From *Pandemic anxiety and depression* (VinZant, 2021)

State	% of people with symptoms of anxiety or depression in Aug 2021	% change since Jan 2021
United States	32%	-24%
Connecticut	26%	-34%
Tennessee	37%	-24%

Tennessee	% of people experiencing in Aug 2021	% change since Jan 2021	Pandemic high
Anxiety	32%	-18%	44%
Depression	26%	-17%	32%

Gender	% of people experiencing in Aug 2021	% change since Jan 2021	Pandemic high
Female	35%	-22%	47%
Male	28%	-26%	38%

Race/Ethnicity	% of people experiencing in Aug 2021	% change since Jan 2021	Pandemic high
Hispanic	36%	-19%	44%
Asian	23%	-36%	32%
Black	33%	-24%	48%
White	30%	-25%	41%

Tables 3 & 4: Adapted from [Pandemic anxiety and depression](#) (VinZant, 2021)

SOMETIMES I AM SO STRESSED ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC THAT I STRUGGLE TO EVEN MAKE BASIC DECISIONS

% STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT AGREE



Gen Z adults

37%

Millennials

48%

Gen Xers

32%

Boomers

14%

Older adults

3%

HAVE EXPERIENCED BEHAVIOR CHANGES IN THE PAST MONTH AS A RESULT OF STRESS

% REPORTING



Gen Z adults



Millennials



Gen Xers



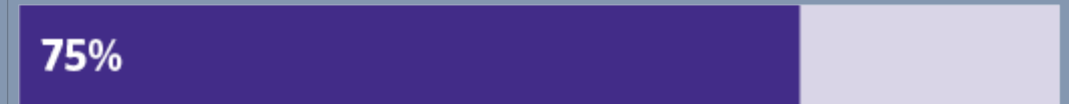
Boomers



Older adults



Parents



Non-parents

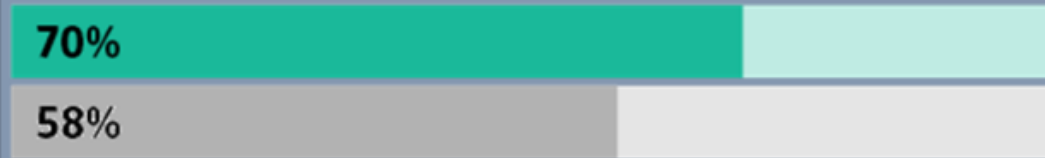


CHANGES IN DEMAND BY TREATMENT AREA SINCE THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC STARTED

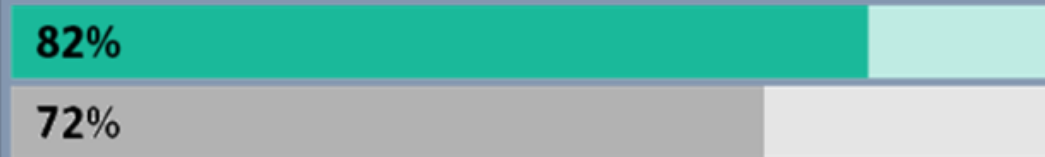
% REPORT INCREASED DEMAND

■ 2021 ■ 2020

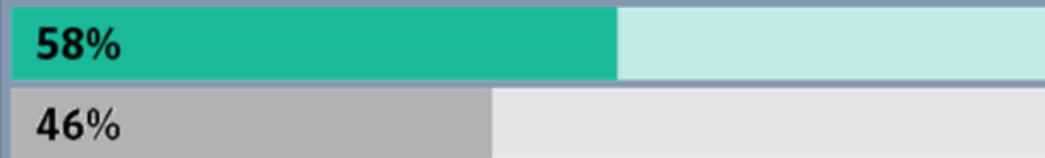
Depressive disorder



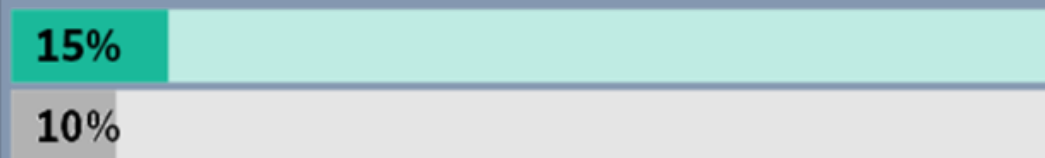
Anxiety disorder



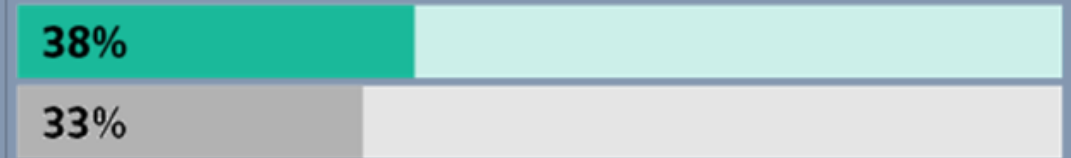
Trauma-and stressor-related disorders



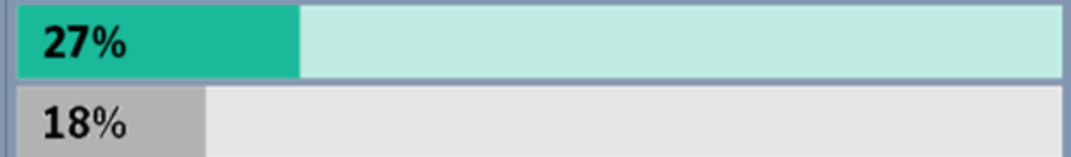
Feeding and eating disorders



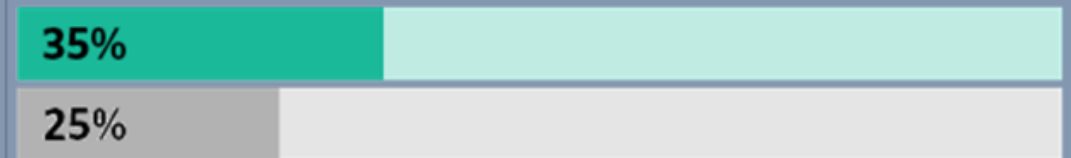
Sleep-wake disorders



Substance-related and addictive disorders



Obsessive-compulsive and other related disorders



I INTEND TO SEEK EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE OF MY COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION IN THE NEXT YEAR

% STRONGLY AGREE/AGREE

Those who typically feel tense or stressed out during the workday



71%

Those who don't typically feel tense or stressed out during the workday



20%

SOURCES OF STRESS: 2019-2021

% VERY/SOMEWHAT SIGNIFICANT



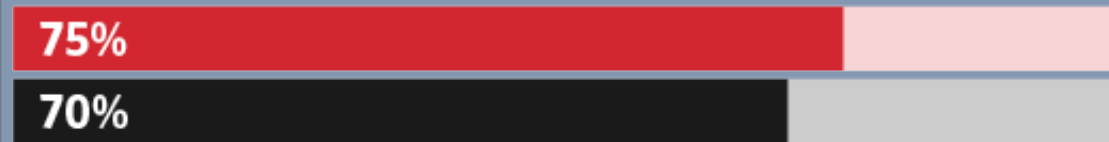
	2021	2020	2019
Work [Among those employed]	66%	64%	64%
Money	61%	64%	60%
The economy	59%	63%	46%
Family responsibilities	57%	58%	55%
Personal health concerns	52%	57%	50%
Health problems affecting my family	51%	55%	49%
Relationships (e.g., spouse, kids, girl/boyfriend)	51%	52%	49%
Housing costs (e.g., mortgage or rent)	51%	48%	45%
Personal safety	44%	50%	35%
Job stability	43%	46%	40%
Discrimination	32%	33%	25%

STRAIN ON PARENTS IS ON THE RISE

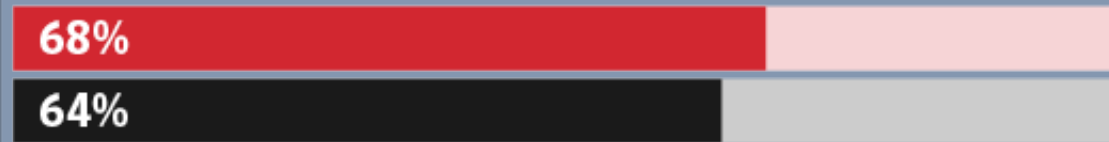
% REPORTING

■ 2021 ■ 2020

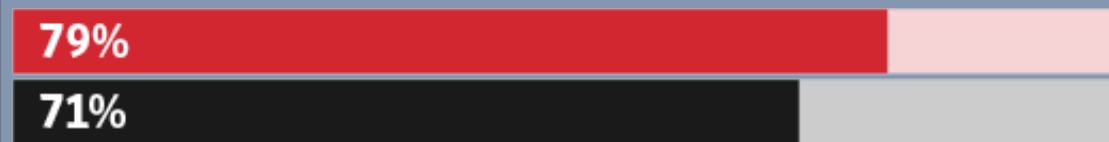
Family responsibilities are a very/somewhat significant source of stress



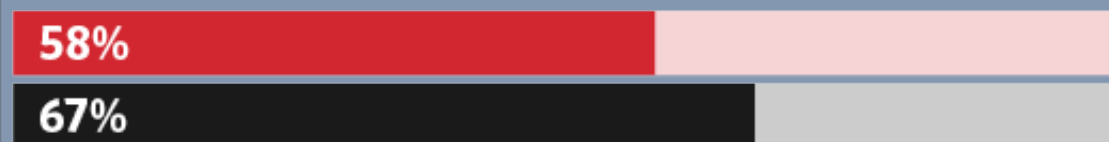
Relationships are a very/somewhat significant source of stress



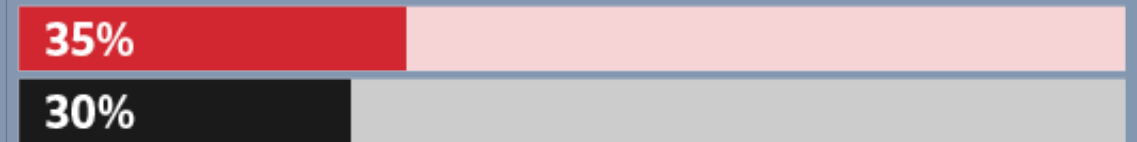
Could have used more emotional support than they received over the past year



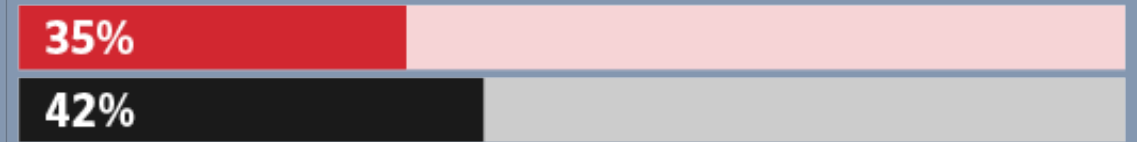
Feel they are doing enough to manage their stress



Naps to manage stress



Spends time with friends or family to manage stress

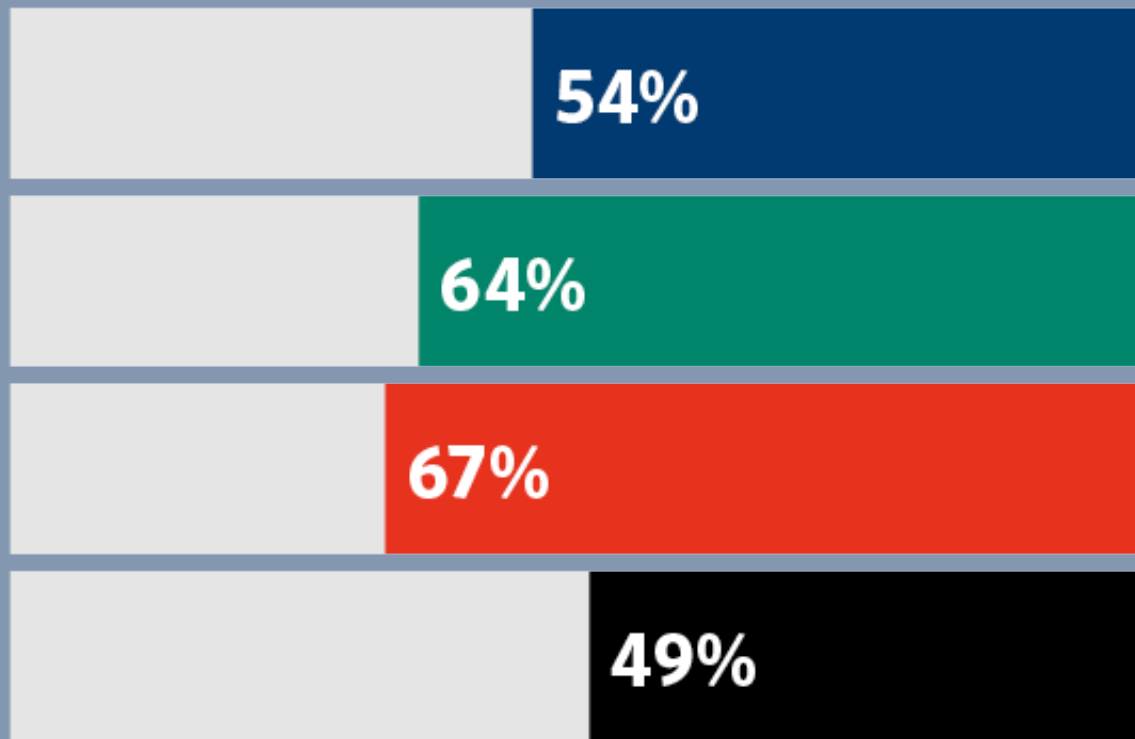


Mental health is very good or excellent



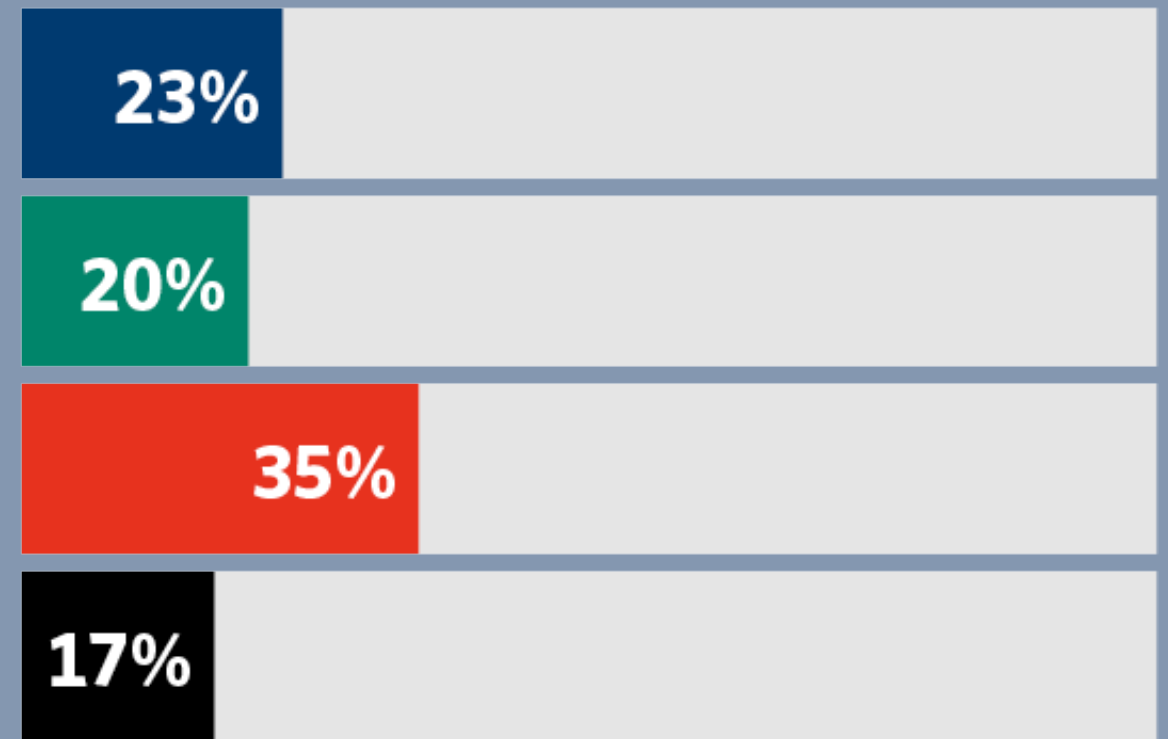
■ Upper-level employees ■ Middle-level employees ■ Front line workers ■ Individual contributor

HAVE EXPERIENCED NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF WORK-RELATED STRESS IN THE PAST MONTH



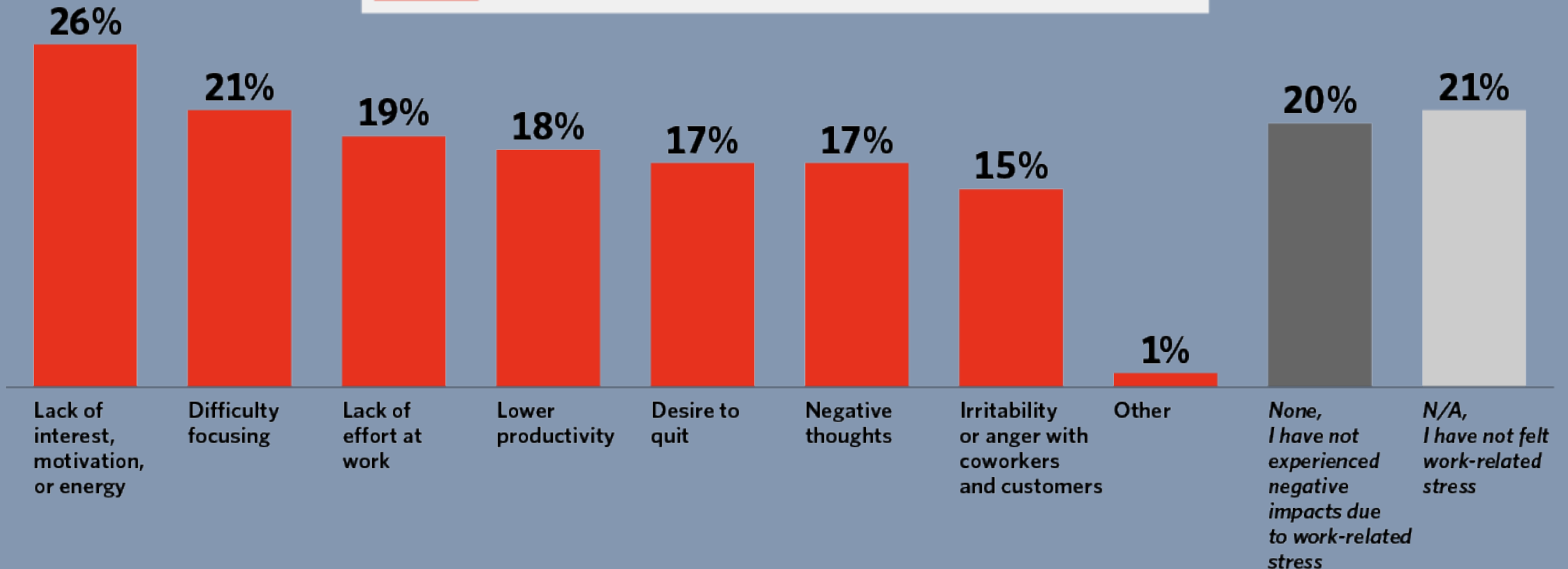
HAVE FELT FED UP QUITE FREQUENTLY OR MORE OFTEN IN THE PAST MONTH

% ALWAYS OR ALMOST ALWAYS/VERY/QUITE FREQUENTLY



EXPERIENCES DUE TO WORK-RELATED STRESS IN THE PAST MONTH

59% experienced negative impacts of work-related stress (NET)





Stress

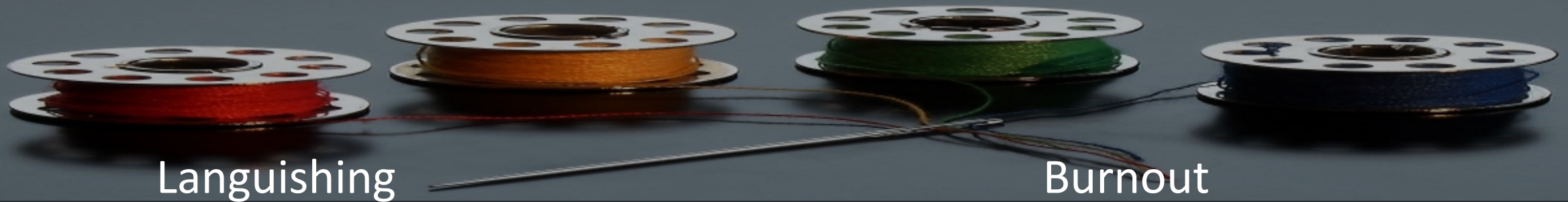
- Response to threat
- Short term
- Symptoms: irritability, restlessness, anger, fatigue, muscle pain, digestive troubles, difficulty sleeping

Anxiety

- Remains in absence of stressor, if identifiable
- Persistent and excessive
- Symptoms: irritability, restlessness, agitation, panic, sense of impending doom, fatigue, muscle tension, insomnia, difficulty concentrating, digestive problems

Depression

- ≥ 2 weeks
- Symptoms: anhedonia, feeling down/low/blue, irritability, sleep changes, appetite changes, psychomotor changes, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, difficulty concentrating, thoughts of death



Languishing

- “not feeling good about and not functioning well in life”
- dwindling motivation, lack of focus, zoning out, difficulty getting out of bed
- counting work hours, television binging, revenge bedtime

Burnout

- ICD-11 Syndrome: “chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed”
- physical and mental/emotional exhaustion
- Distance and detachment from job
- Sense of dread about work
- Cynicism, negativity, irritability
- Feeling never good enough, stuck, lack of accomplishment
- Reduced professional efficacy



Compassion Fatigue

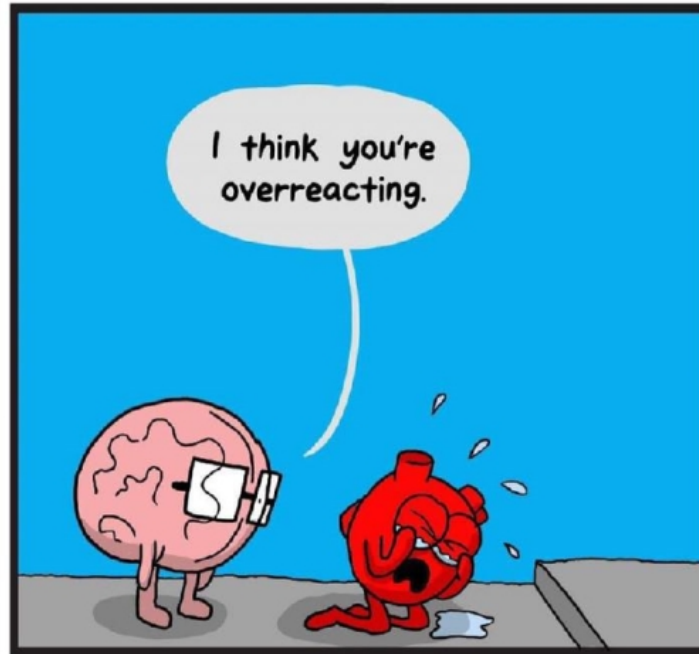
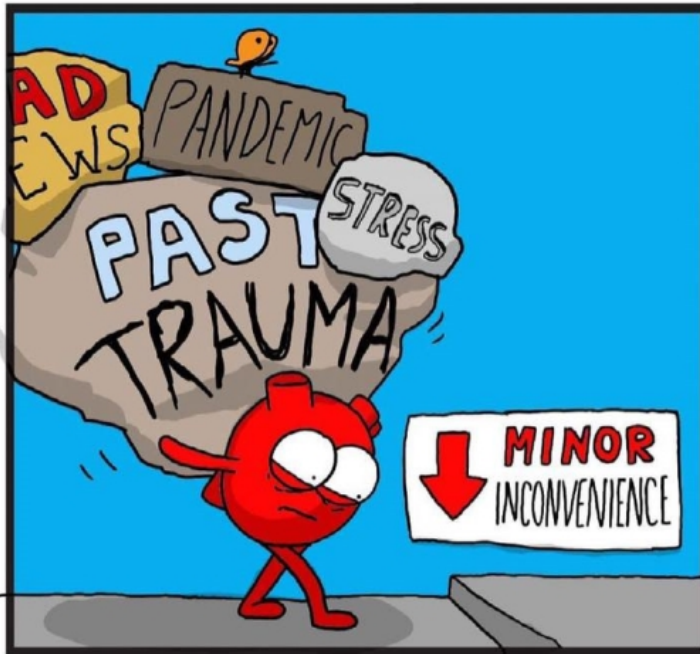
- “cost of caring”
- Exhaustion, isolation, headaches, irritability, sleep disturbance, tension
- Hypervigilance
- Chronic negativity
- Low morale
- Diminished empathy
- Helplessness, guilt
- Difficulty concentrating
- Impaired decision making
- Avoidance

Vicarious Trauma

- “profound shift in worldview”
- Fundamental beliefs about the world are altered
- Overidentification and intrusive imagery
- Difficulty concentrating
- Helplessness
- Exhaustion
- Quitting, changing jobs
- Boundary violations

Moral Distress & Injury

- From ethical dilemmas
- Lack of agency, insufficient resources, witnessing poor care, clash of care standards, complicity in wrongdoing, end-of-life decisions
- Guilt and shame
- Sense of betrayal, anger, and ‘moral disorientation’
- Linked to CF, burnout, depression, PTSD, and suicide



- 
- A bundle of multi-colored fibers, including shades of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple, is arranged to form a shape resembling a stylized letter 'A' or a bridge structure. The fibers are bundled together and extend from the bottom corners towards the top center, where they meet at a single point. A thin, dark vertical line runs down the center, possibly representing a central support or a shadow.
- How do we talk about these issues on a daily basis?
 - How does the workplace respond?



Work-Life Myths

- Check your personal life at the door
- Balance your work and professional life
- Work = job
- Do what you love
- Keep on swimming
- Self-care = resiliency = cure for burnout.
- Busyness = productive = achieving = better
- Productivity = doing more
- Multitasking = productivity
- Success = conform.
- Saying “psychological safety” = Psychological Safety
- Climb the ladder = success
- Remediate weaknesses = success
- No “I” in Team
- Team & togetherness = in-person
- Good supervision = feedback.
- Business As Usual = best practice





Red Threads

- “An activity that you do, especially at work, that gives you energy, excitement, and joy.”
- “Activities where you disappear in them, and time flies by.”
- “You find yourself instinctively wanting to pull on these threads. And when you do, your life feels easier, more natural, time rushes by.”



Individual Strategies

- Explore your experience
 - Know your schedule
- Focus on your strengths
- Create a support network
- Tame your “should”
 - Separate goals and velleities
 - Embrace ebb and flow
 - Practice self-compassion
- Pick a self-care technique and use it regularly
- Prioritize nourishment
- Scheduled blackouts



tn.providerwellness.org

The Tennessee Professional Screening Questionnaire (TN-PSQ) continued to exceed expectations. In Year 2, 178 health professionals visited the website to receive an anonymous mental health screening, for a total of 408 screeners since its launch in February 2020.

Results to date:

- 56% scored in the high/severe distress level
- 40% in moderate distress
- 74% viewed the counselor's initial response
- 32% dialogued with a counselor
- 72% of dialoguers asked for a referral in their area

The key finding: 85 percent of screeners were not already receiving treatment or therapy for their mental health problem. This result indicates the TN-PSQ is reaching its intended population: struggling health professionals who may be reluctant to contact the TMF directly or otherwise seek help on their own.

We want to express our gratitude to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) Interactive Screening Program, our partners in development and implementation; to our excellent TN-PSQ site counselors, Rhonda Bartine, PMHNP-BC, and Selena Phillips, FNP-BC, both of Willows Health and Recovery in Nashville, TN; and to our donors and grantors who fund this proactive resource.



Team Strategies

- Know yourself and your “shadow”
- Embrace your role as coach
- Name workplace distress
- Share your messy story
- Know your team
- Support their “wyred”
- Encourage development of and time for red threads
- Infuse control
- Reward and acknowledge with intention
- Teach and practice self-care as an imperative
- Ask “Why”
- Say “No”
- Identify “Good Enough”



System Strategies

- Review values, close the gap
- Make \$ = values
- Name hazards and healing
- Embrace system accountability for CI
 - Workload
 - Resilience
 - Psychological Safety
 - Flexibility
 - Control
 - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
 - Coaching
- Create and embrace ebb and flow
- Prioritize Red Threads

A photograph of several spools of thread in various colors (red, orange, green, blue) and a needle, arranged on a dark surface. The word "References" is overlaid in white text on the image.

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