



2024-2025

Workplace benefits trends

Mental health + employee well-being

How employers can better support employee well-being

More and more, organizations are discovering that mental health and well-being are key elements of job satisfaction and productivity. There has been some progress in how employers support these qualities in the workplace. More employees report feeling their organizations care this year than last; however, challenges like stress and burnout from work remain prevalent. It's essential for employers to consider ways to address these issues head-on, like offering flexible work hours, additional PTO and comprehensive mental health coverage as part of a comprehensive benefits package to attract and retain top talent. As the importance of mental health in the workplace continues to rise, employers might seek proactive ways to make employees feel supported both on and off the clock.

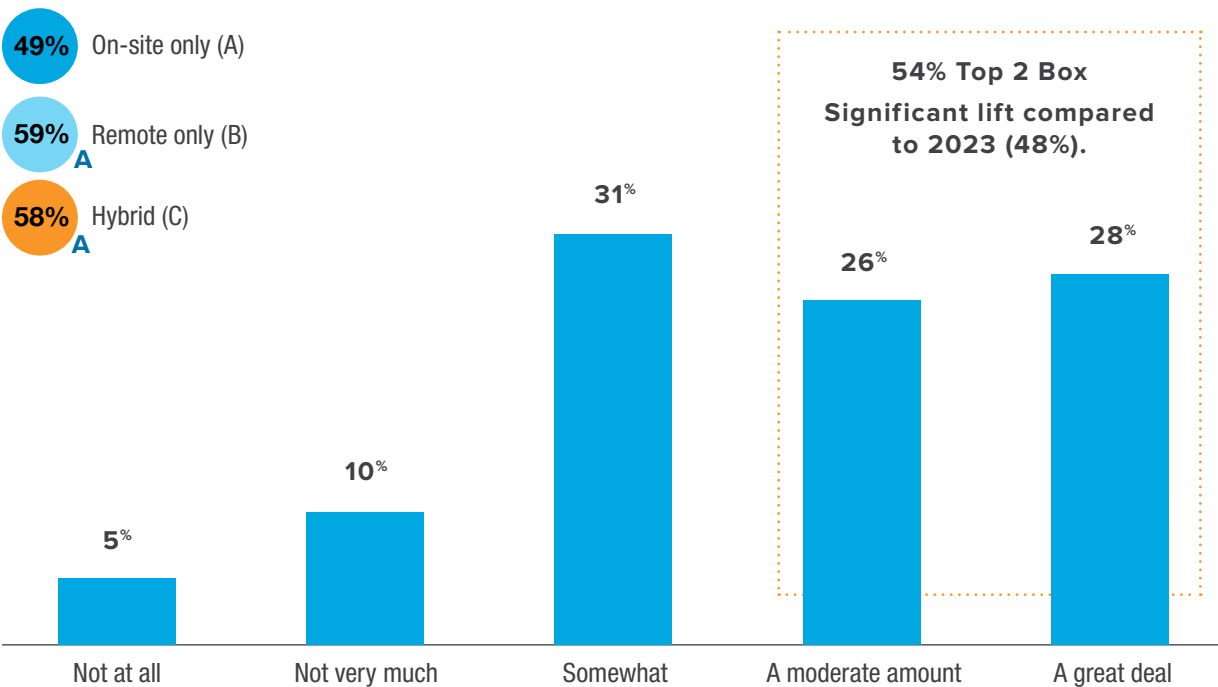


Organizations are making progress in addressing mental health concerns

Year over year, there has been a significant increase in employee confidence that employers care about their mental health. However, this feeling is less pronounced among on-site workers, highlighting one potential area for improvement. Also, despite this progress, 15% of employees still believe their employers don't care about their mental health, indicating there is plenty of work still to be done.

More than half (54%) of all employees are now confident that their employers care at least moderately about their mental health, with more than a quarter (28%) believing they care a great deal. This is an improvement over 2023, where only 48% believed their employers cared. However, there appears to be less confidence among those working fully on-site.

My employer cares about my mental health a moderate amount/a great deal:



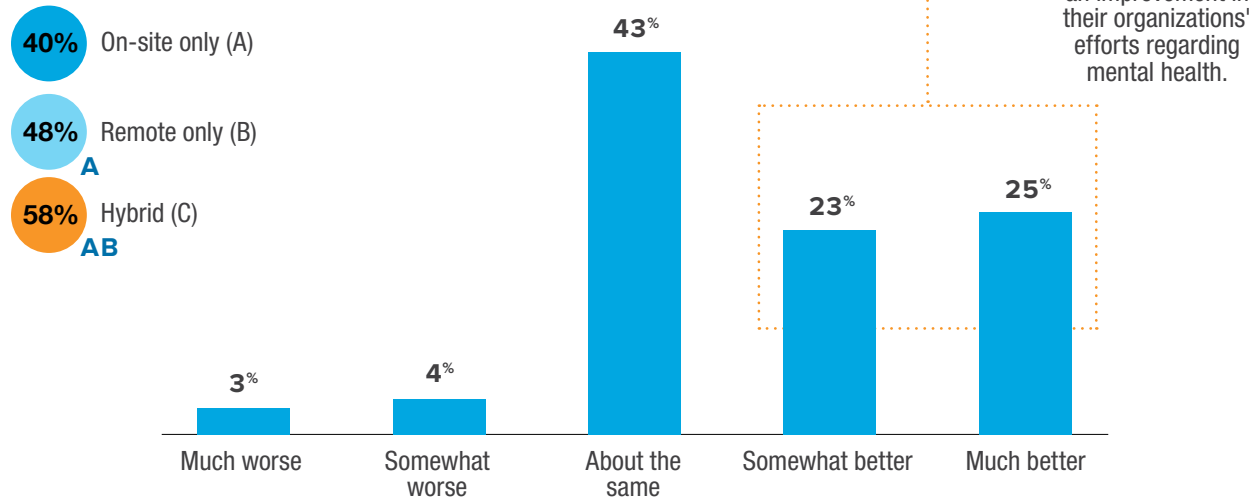
Question: How much do you believe your employer cares about your overall mental health?

A/B/C indicates sub-group is statistically significantly higher than corresponding sub-group at the 95% confidence level.

Nearly half of employees feel their organizations are doing a better job addressing mental health today than they were a year ago. This is a big step in the right direction, as a direct correlation can be drawn between employees feeling supported in their mental health and their overall job satisfaction. However, once again, this feeling isn't echoed as strongly among on-site employees, suggesting more resources and attention might need to be directed their way.

Nearly half (47%) of all employees believe their organizations have done a better job addressing mental health over the past year — and very few believe their companies have declined in their support.

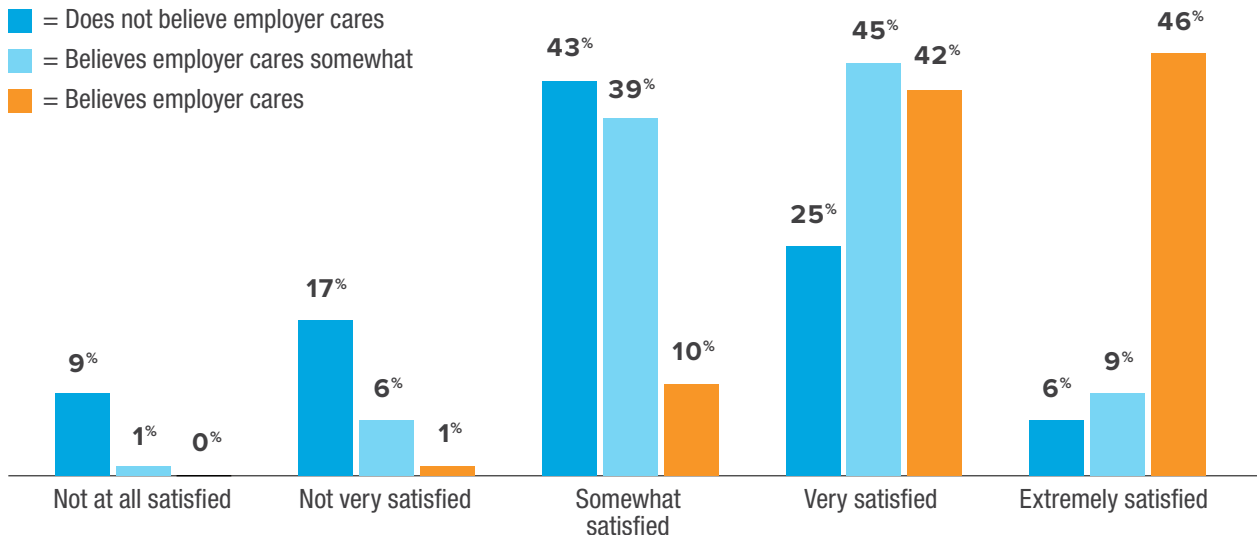
My employer's efforts regarding mental health are somewhat/much better than a year ago.



Question: Compared to a year ago, would you say your organization's efforts regarding mental health in the workplace are...

A/B/C indicates sub-group is statistically significantly higher than corresponding sub-group at a 95% confidence interval.

Unsurprisingly, employees who are confident that their employers care about their mental well-being are far more likely to express strong job satisfaction, with nearly half (46%) saying they are extremely satisfied and an additional 42% saying they are very satisfied.



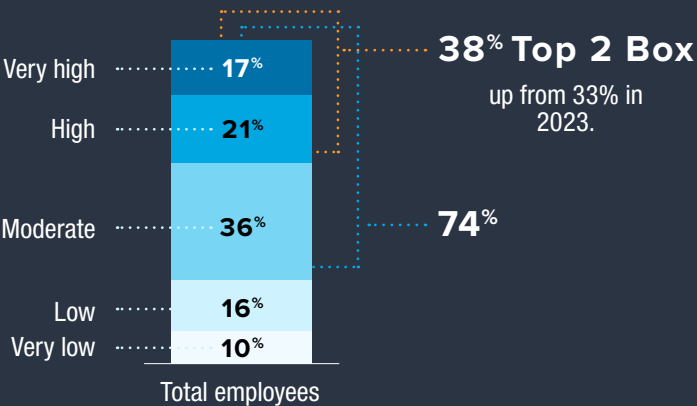
Question: Overall, how satisfied are you with your job?

Question: How much do you believe your employer cares about your overall mental health?

Workplace stress remains a persistent challenge

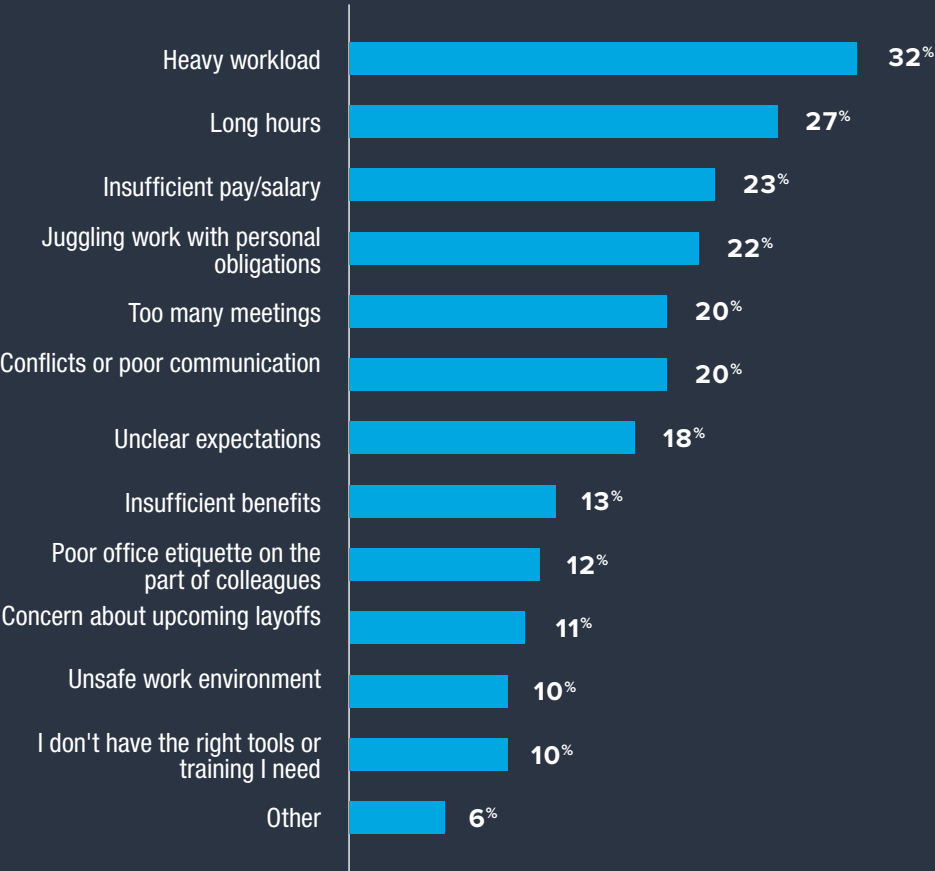
Despite improvements in support for mental health issues, employees continue to report high levels of workplace stress. This year, 3 in 4 employees reported at least a moderate level of stress at work. There also has been an increase in the number of employees experiencing high levels of stress rising to 38% from 33% in 2023. Heavy workloads are the primary driver, though other factors contribute.

Workplace stress is high among employees, with 74% reporting at least a moderate level of stress and a year-over-year increase in those reporting high levels of stress.



Question: How would you quantify the amount of workplace stress you experience?

A third of all employees blame a heavy workload for their stress, though there are many other culprits.



Question: Which of the following cause you the most stress at work?

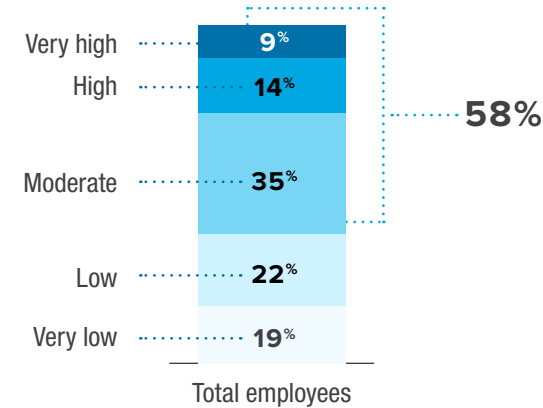


Burnout is prevalent, especially among millennials

Burnout is affecting a large portion of the workforce, with well over half (59%) of employees experiencing at least a moderate level of burnout. However, while burnout is prevalent, it is still less common than levels of stress described as "moderate." This could suggest that some employees are finding ways to manage their stress so they don't reach the point of burnout.

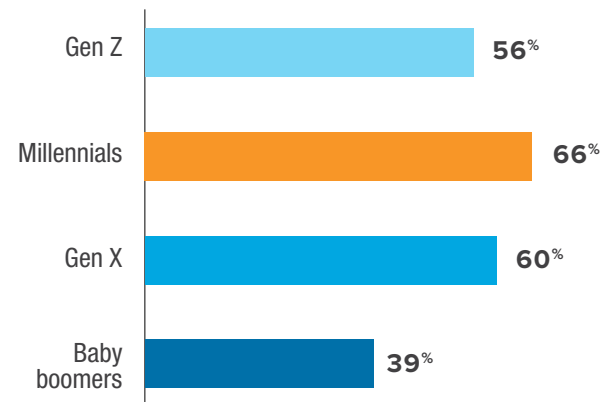
Millennials, in particular, are more affected by this issue than other age groups. Also, unlike in previous years, there is no significant gender gap in burnout rates among this group, suggesting that broader generational factors are at play. One possible explanation for the higher levels of burnout among millennials could be their unique career pressures and expectations: facing more demanding work environments than other generations — defined by constant connectivity, high performance expectations and a competitive job market. Beyond career challenges, many millennials are part of the “sandwich generation,” managing the demands of young children while simultaneously caring for aging parents. This constant juggling act of managing career aspirations, familial duties and personal well-being may be pushing millennials into burnout faster than other age groups.

More than half (59%) of all employees are facing moderate or high burnout, with nearly a quarter (23%) facing high burnout.



Question: How would you rate your current level of burnout?

Nearly two-thirds (66%) of all millennials say they are facing moderate or high burnout — far more than baby boomers (39%).



Question: How would you rate your current level of burnout? // % Moderate-Very high

Addressing burnout is key to helping prevent more severe mental health issues from taking hold

Tackling burnout is key to helping millennials — and other age groups — thrive. This report shows that people who experience high levels of burnout are much more likely to suffer from severe mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress — so the stakes couldn’t be higher. Unfortunately, addressing these issues isn’t simple or straightforward. Organizations that are serious about making mental health a priority must be willing to explore benefits like flexible work hours, additional PTO and other creative solutions as part of their comprehensive benefits package.

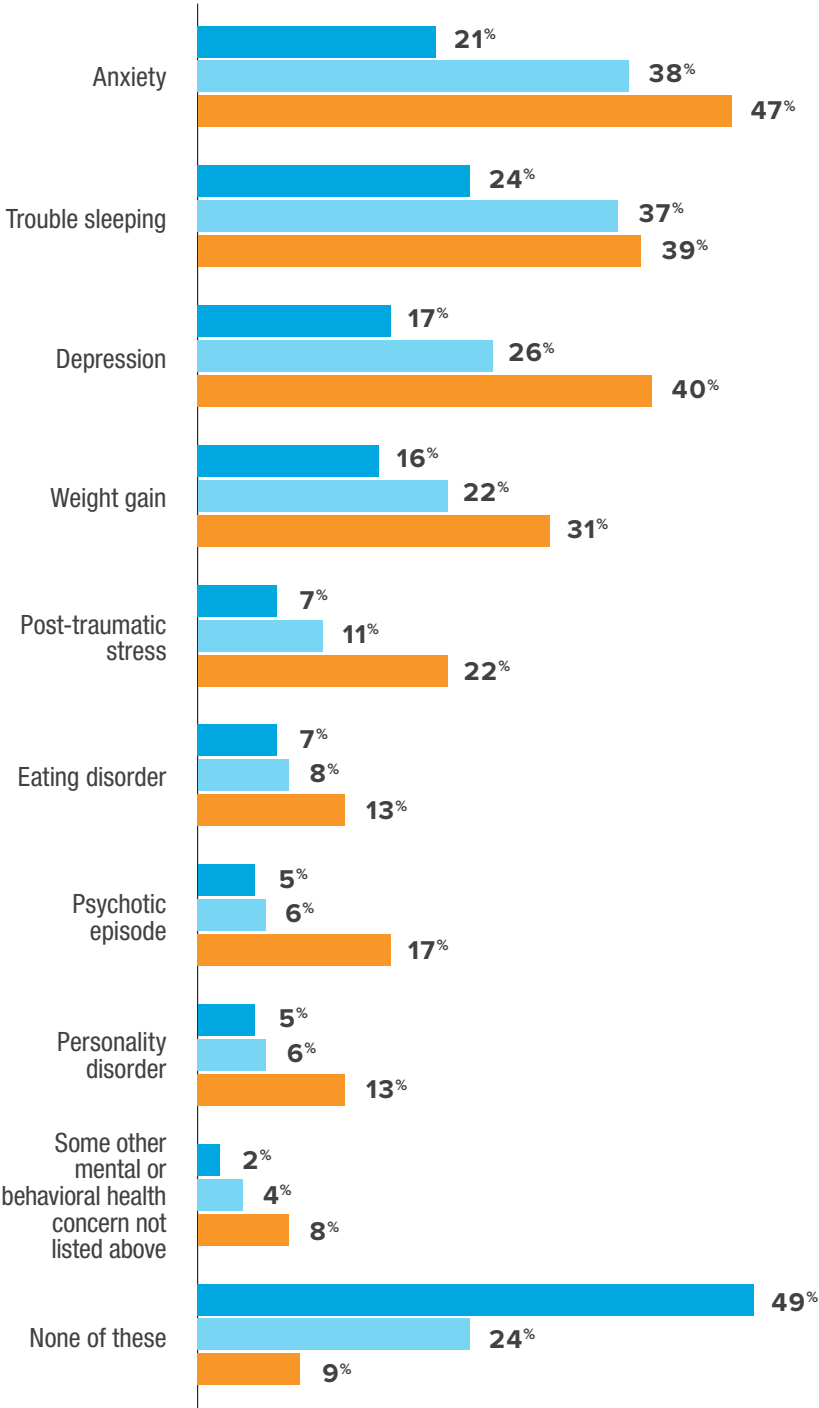
There are significantly higher instances of all mental health challenges among those experiencing high burnout than among those experiencing low or no burnout.

- = Low/no burnout
- = Moderate burnout
- = High burnout

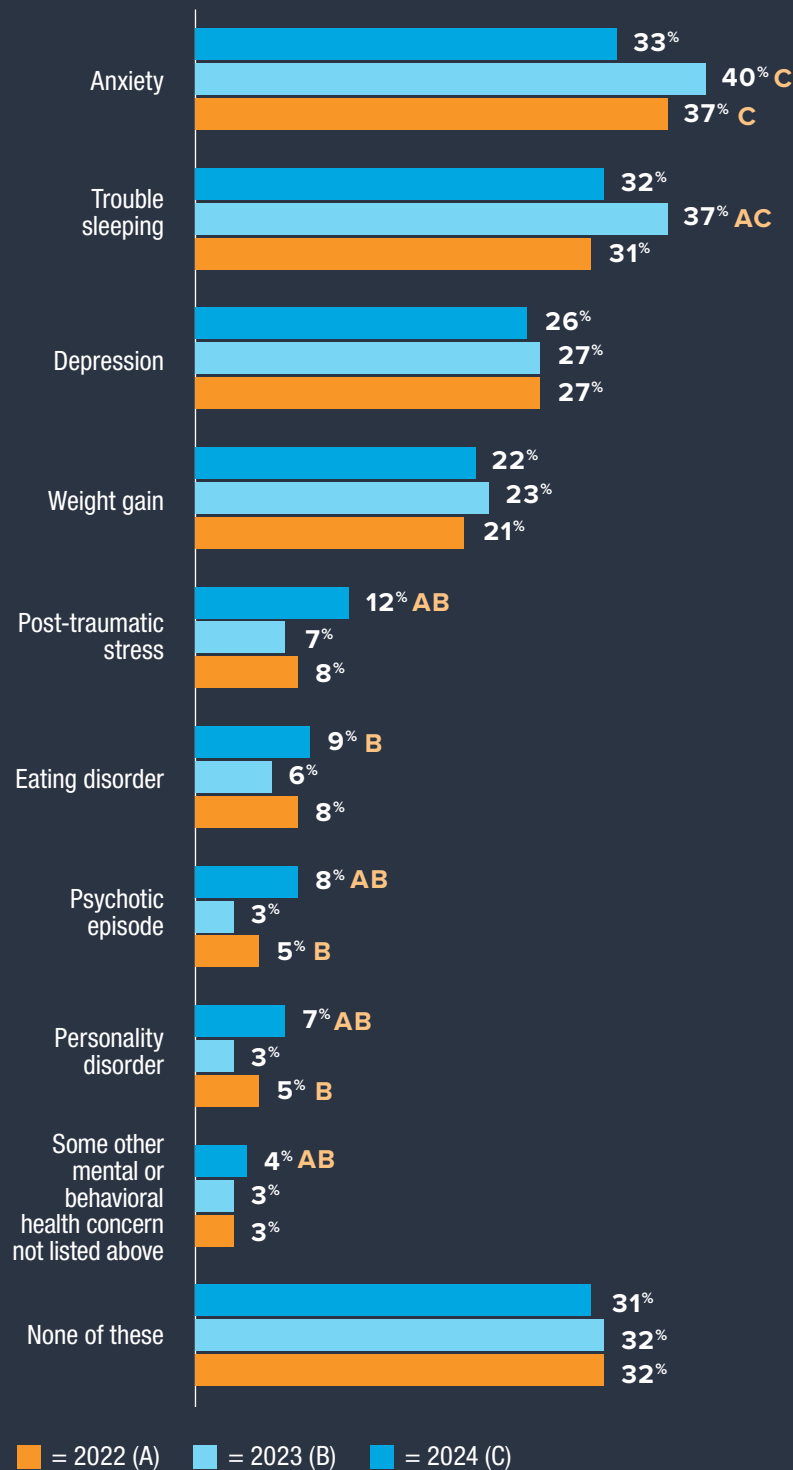
Question: Have you experienced any of the following in the past 12 months?

Question: How would you rate your current level of burnout?

While reports of anxiety and trouble sleeping have declined since 2023, there has been an increase in more severe mental health concerns, including post-traumatic stress, eating disorders and psychotic episodes. Again, these more severe issues indicate that organizations should be willing to try new approaches to combatting mental health issues among employees. Organizations that are proactive in communicating with employees about mental health concerns — and who remain flexible in their approaches to addressing them — will likely set themselves apart from the competition.



In positive news, anxiety and trouble sleeping have declined compared to last year. However, more severe mental health concerns have increased — and depression and weight gain have remained flat.



Question: Have you experienced any of the following in the past 12 months?

A/B/C indicates sub-group is statistically significantly higher than corresponding sub-group at the 95% confidence level.

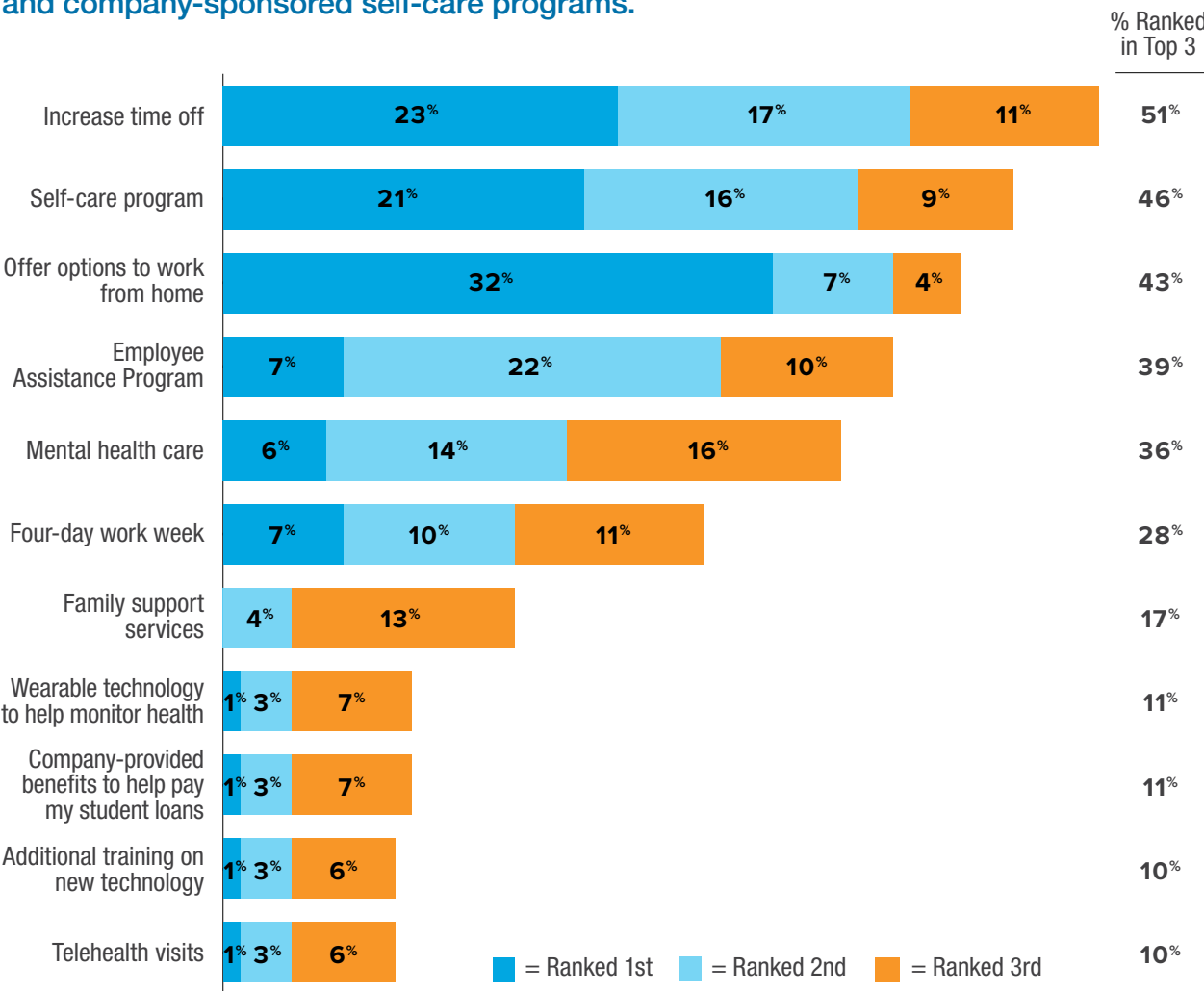


Flexible work options and PTO are key to combatting burnout

To address burnout, employees are seeking increased options to work from home, more PTO and company-sponsored self-care programs. Organizations that are willing to be flexible in their approach — like hybrid models and new mental health and well-being initiatives that allow employees to have input into their own care programs — will likely be set up for success. Interestingly, while a four-day work week is often discussed as a potential solution, it is not as highly regarded by employees — perhaps because they recognize that their heavy workloads couldn't realistically be managed in fewer days.



Nearly a third (32%) of those who have experienced burnout say the ability to work from home would be most effective for helping them cope, followed by increased PTO and company-sponsored self-care programs.

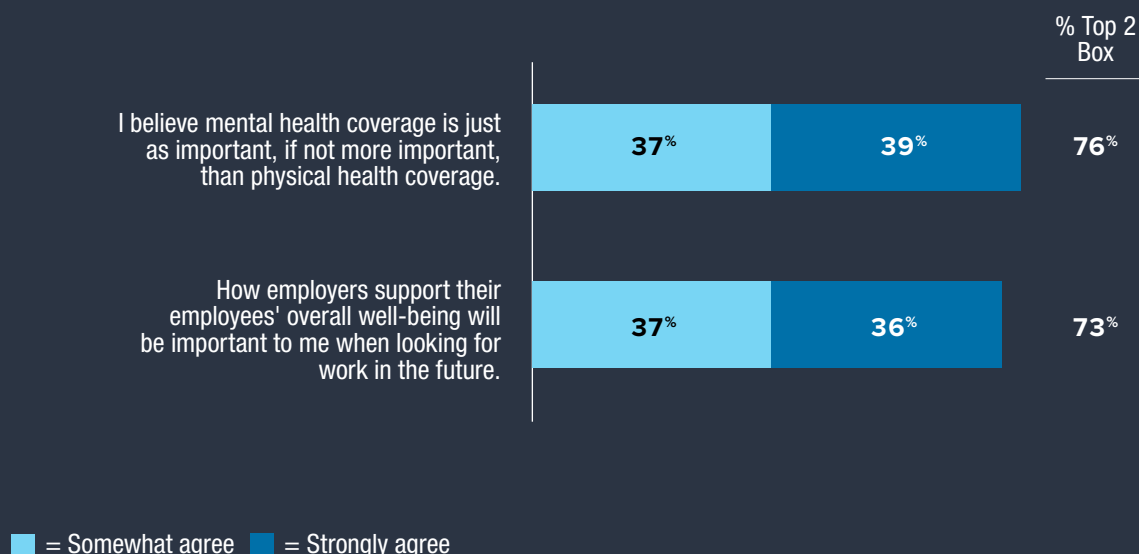


Question: Which of the following would be most useful with helping you deal with burnout or personal mental health concerns?

Mental health coverage is just as important as major medical

Employees are increasingly recognizing the importance of mental health coverage as part of their benefits plan, with 76% ranking it as “just as important” as major medical coverage. This new tendency is reflected in future job considerations as well, with nearly three-quarters (73%) planning to evaluate an employer’s mental health support when seeking new opportunities. Modern enterprises should see this as proof that supporting employees with mental health resources isn’t just a way of retaining top talent, but it also is a way of attracting it.

Three-quarters (76%) of employees say mental health coverage is just as important as physical health coverage, and a similar percentage (73%) say that how organizations manage employees’ overall well-being will be an important consideration for them when job-hunting in the future.

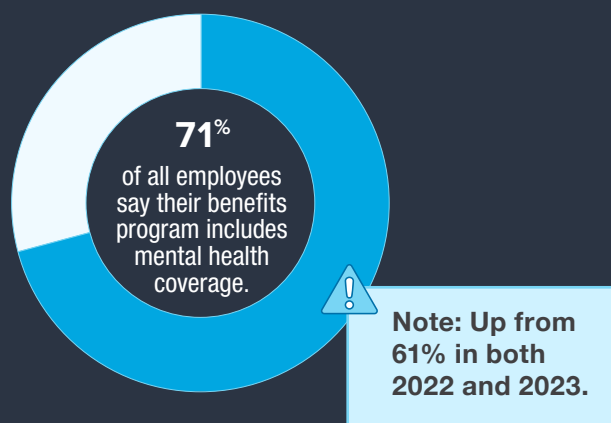


Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

In positive news, far more employees (71%) have access to mental health coverage than in previous years (61%).

However, this still leaves nearly a third (29%) without coverage.

Question: As part of your current insurance coverage, do you have coverage for mental health resources?



Employees who have access to mental health care as part of their benefits package are more likely to feel that their employers genuinely care about their mental well-being. Furthermore, these same employees report higher satisfaction with their benefits package and say they are more likely to believe that their benefits meet their family's needs. This underscores the critical role mental health support plays in overall employee satisfaction and the effectiveness of benefits programs.



Well over half (58%) of those who have mental health coverage believe their employers care about their mental well-being, compared to just 42% of those who do not have mental health coverage.



Those with mental health coverage are more satisfied with their benefits package than those who do not have mental health coverage (72% vs. 54%).



Similarly, those with mental health coverage are more likely to say their benefits package meets their family's needs than those who do not have mental health coverage (73% vs. 55%).

Pro tip: Make offering mental health support a priority. To align with employee expectations, ensure your benefits package includes robust mental health coverage and support. Consider expanding access to mental health resources, such as counseling, and offer discounts on popular self-care apps and resources. Companies can also experiment with flexible work options and increased PTO to address stress and burnout in the workplace. Employees report that when employers demonstrate a commitment to mental health, it can significantly boost their satisfaction with and confidence in their coverage.

About the study

The 2024-2025 Aflac WorkForces Report is the 14th annual Aflac employee study examining benefits trends and attitudes. Conducted by Kantar on behalf of Aflac, the employer survey took place online between June 6 and June 21, 2024, and the employee survey took place online between June 6 and July 10, 2024. The surveys captured responses from 1,003 employers and 2,000 employees across the United States.

For more information, visit aflac.com/awr.

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