

talkspace for Business

2022 Report

Employee Stress Check

*Where work-life balance
meets burnout*



Introduction

Last year, Talkspace commissioned a survey with The Harris Poll to track current employee attitudes toward mental well-being and work. Today, Americans live in a country with fewer COVID-19 cases, more are returning to physical places of work, and many who were looking for new jobs have found their greener pastures.

Despite these and other changes for American workers, levels of stress and burnout remain the same. Our latest Employee Stress Check Report highlights a mental wellness rut for millions of workers. Around **half feel work-related stress or burnout**, and despite record resignation rates in 2021, around **a third are considering quitting**. **Parents are particularly affected by workplace stress and burnout, with 60% reporting difficulty balancing the responsibilities of work and family.**

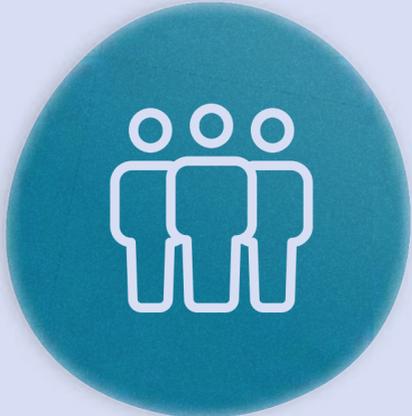
A crucial step toward mental well-being that few have taken, but most would find useful, is simply talking about it. 3 in 5 employees would be likely to stay at a job if it offered more mental health services. And the benefits of talking extend beyond therapy. The **43% of respondents who said their manager “protects their mental health”** are far more likely to find work fulfilling and less likely to feel burned out or stressed.

In the competition to find and retain talent, employee stress and burnout can no longer be ignored. This report examines not only how and among whom stress has an outsized impact, but how addressing mental well-being can create a healthier and more productive company culture overall.

Methodology

The Harris Poll conducted an online poll among 1,400 American workers from March 31 – April 8, 2022. All respondents were full-time employees in the U.S., and the study included an oversample of **817 working parents** with children under the age of 18.

Results were weighted by gender, region, race, age, income, and education to U.S. Census data to align with proportions in the population.



n = 1,400 workers



**n = 817
working parents**

The state of stress in 2022



In 2022, many Americans remain stuck in a mental wellness rut

Around 1 in 2 workers are burned out (51%) or find work too stressful (46%). The presence of burnout and stress remains consistent with levels seen in our 2021 survey (52% were burned out, 50% found work too stressful).

Additionally, a majority of those who are burned out or stressed say it has worsened in the last year. Stress and burnout rank just below inadequate pay among top worker complaints that lead employees to evaluate their job.

Stressors at work



Q. How well do each of the following describe how you have been feeling about work over the past three months?
Q. Compared to last year, do you feel work is more or less stressful, or about the same?
Q. Compared to last year, do you feel more or less burned out, or about the same?

59%

Of those who say they are burned out say they're more burned out since last year
(31% same level of burnout, 9% less)

53%

Of those who find work stressful say it's been more stressful in the last year
(39% same stress, 8% less stress)

A large share of U.S. workers are still considering quitting their jobs

Work stress continues to drive a growing number of workers to consider quitting.

34%

of workers
are currently
considering quitting
their job—down from
41% in 2021



However, there
has been an
**increase in
workers likely
to quit their job**
in the next six months
(32% compared to 28% in 2021)

59%

**of those who
are considering
quitting**
are more likely
to quit their job
compared to
last year

66%

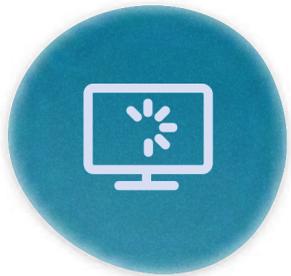
**of those who
are considering
quitting**
say getting more
mental health services
could convince them
to stay

Working parents are hit harder by the factors that contribute to work stress and burnout



60% of all working parents

report difficulty balancing work and familial responsibilities.



44% of parents have missed more than one full day of work

since the start of the year because of that difficulty.



58% report burnout and 47% report decreased productivity

as a result of difficulties juggling responsibilities as a parent.

Mental health services can help retain workers, especially parents, younger workers, and those currently considering quitting.

% likely to stay in current position if they received more mental health services

70%

of young workers

68%

of working parents

66%

of those considering quitting

Q: If you were considering quitting your job, how likely are each of the following to convince you to stay in your current position?

Behind the scenes of a stressful workplace



Stressed workers are often tasked to do more with less

Being asked to do more with less time, resources, and support is impacting employees' mental health, resulting in work stress that bleeds into personal life.

Top stressful situations at work

52% being asked to take on more work

48% hours away from family, leisure

47% being asked to do work faster

46% being micromanaged

Top impacts of work stress in personal life

34% report trouble sleeping

30% feel short tempered

31% say it impacts their happiness

30% report eating more junk food

What Talkspace therapists have observed

“When an imbalance in work and personal life occur, it creates a level of stress that reverberates within all areas of our life. It impacts our work productivity and our desire to be present in our personal life. Ensuring to create boundaries and working to rebalance work and personal is important all around.

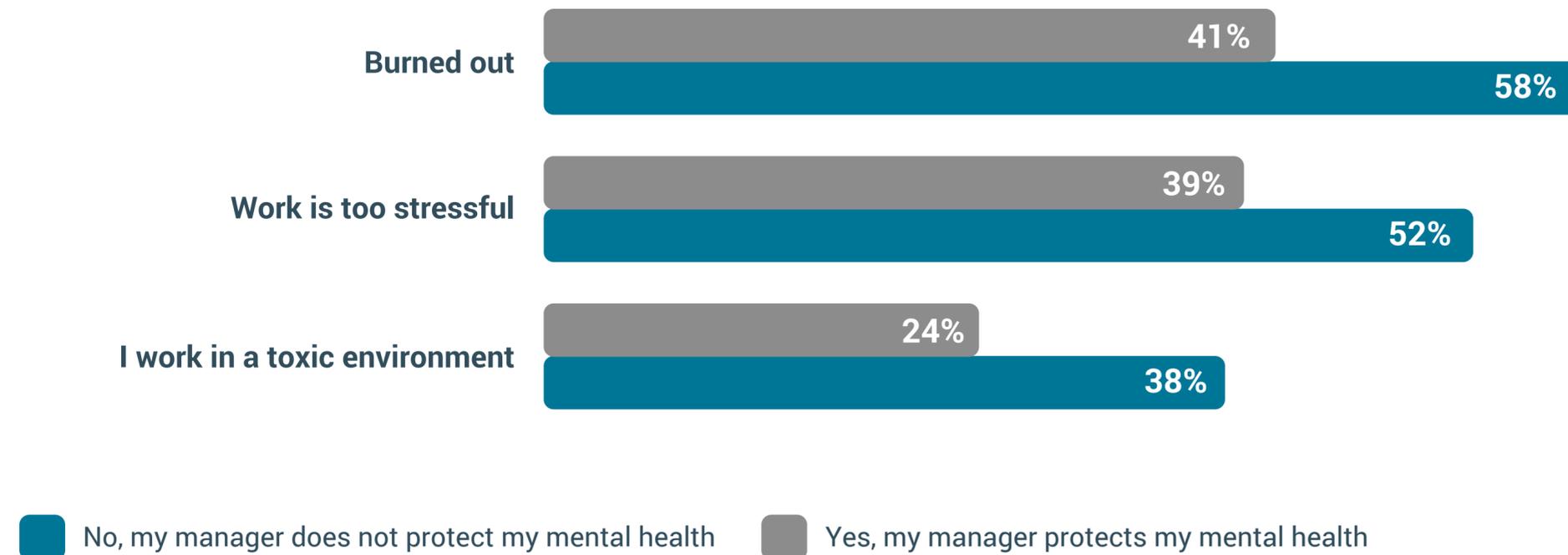
— Minkyung Chung, MS, LMHC

Unsupportive managers continue to drive stress and burnout

Employees with unsupportive managers are more likely to report a toxic workplace.

Employees who say their manager does not protect their mental health also say that they work in a toxic environment (38% vs. 24%). These employees report higher levels of burnout (58% vs. 41%) and stress (52% vs. 39%) compared to employees who feel supported by their manager.

How supportive managers influence workplace perception

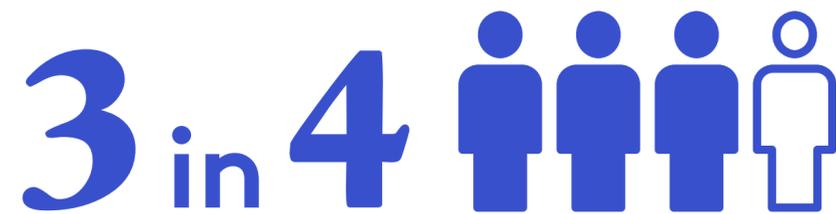


Q. Does your boss or manager take steps to protect your mental health?
Q. How well do each of the following describe how you have been feeling about work over the past three months?

Wellness days are underutilized

Time off is a tool for mental wellness that's highly popular but underutilized.

It's clear workers want more time off for their mental wellness, but also clear that many aren't using the time given to them.



74% of workers say more leave, like mental health days, would make them consider staying.



While paid time off is an important tool to address workplace stress, less than 2 in 5 workers get and use most of their PTO.

Parents are even more affected by a stressful workplace

Overall, working parents are more affected by stress in the workplace as they balance work and family responsibilities.

Balancing work and familial responsibilities proves difficult for **60% of all working parents**. They are more susceptible to workplace stress than non-parents, especially when faced with long hours that get in the way of family or leisure time.

Burnout (54%) and decreased productivity (47%) are common among parents as they juggle their home and work lives.

44% of parents have missed more than one full day of work since the start of the year due to having to balance parenting and work responsibilities.

Parents are more worried than other workers about **losing the ability to take breaks when needed (26%) and increased costs of commuting to work (30%)** as a result of the return from working remotely to a physical workplace.

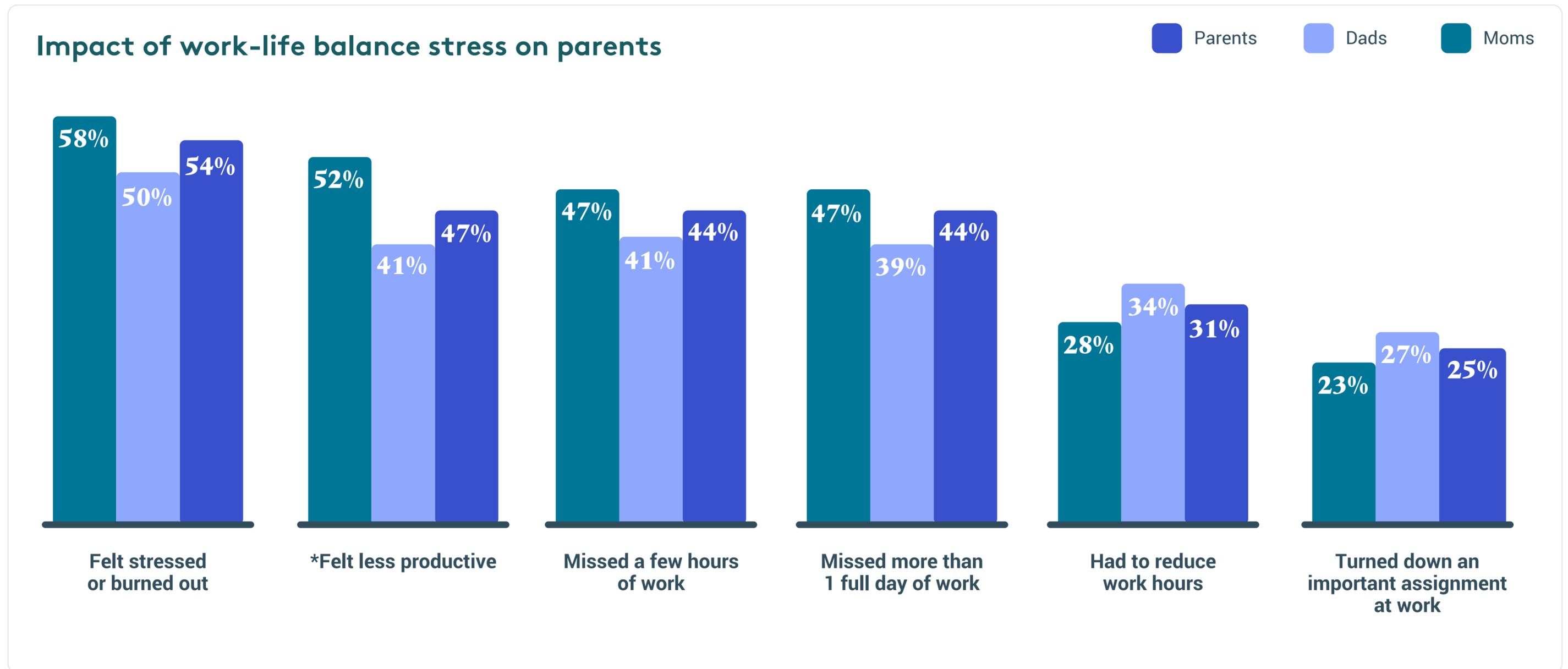
What Talkspace therapists have observed

- “
1. *Working mothers are tasked with not only their day-to-day assignments at their job, but they often are called upon to carry the lioness's share of the household tasks as well. This can be both exhausting and demoralizing for many.*
 2. *Finding ways to create even a small amount of personal space after coming home from work can really go a long way. Sometimes finding this space requires a bit of creativity. I'm personally a fan of the 15 minute bathroom break (with a locked door) after getting the kids in the house!*
 3. *Setting clear boundaries in the workplace is key to finding work-life balance. If your duty day ends at 5pm, do everything in your power to leave on time. The work will never be fully caught up, and staying late every day to chase that dream is not worth the cost. Enlist your fellow colleagues to help keep you accountable to leaving work on time and using your vacation days throughout the year.*

— Ashley Ertel, LCSW, BCD, C-DBT

Work stress especially impacts working mothers

While balancing work and familial responsibilities proves difficult for nearly half of working parents, nearly 6 in 10 mothers have experienced either stress or burnout as a result of work-life balance, and more than half of them have felt less productive.



Q. (If parent) Since the start of the year, have you experienced the following because you were balancing work and parenting responsibilities?
* Means statistically significant difference

Key Takeaways

1

53% of those who find work stressful say it's been more stressful in the last year.

Unsupportive managers and increased workloads seem to have an outsized impact.

2

Balancing work and familial responsibilities proves difficult for 60% of all working parents.

They are more susceptible to workplace stress than non-parents, especially when faced with long hours that get in the way of family time.

3

Employees are underutilizing their wellness days.

While workers desire more time off from their employer, less than half (39%) actually get and use most of their PTO.

What employers can do



Conversation—with therapists or managers—goes a long way.

Serious conversations about mental wellness are both relatively rare and highly beneficial. Employees who talk with therapists or managers about their mental health report more fulfillment and less stress.

Of the 48% who have seen a therapist ever, 2 in 3 say it's helped them with work issues around:

- Having a hard time focusing
- Managing unrealistic expectations
- Poor work/life balance

Of the 43% who say their manager protects their mental health, they are:

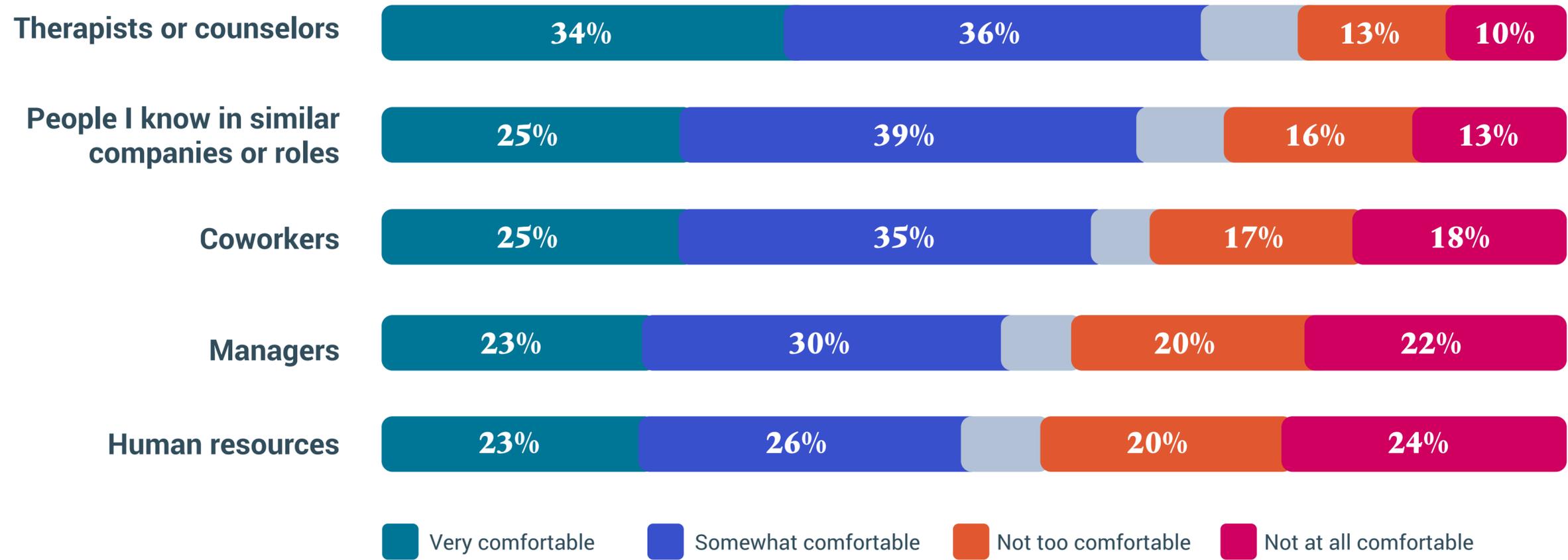
- Far more likely than their counterparts to agree work is fulfilling (**86% agree compared to 57% among workers their counterparts**).
- Far less likely to feel **burned out (41% vs. 58%)** or stressed (**39% vs 52%**).

70% prefer to talk to a therapist about work stress

7 in 10 indicate they would be very or somewhat comfortable talking to a therapist about their mental health related to work.

Workers report they would be more willing to talk to a therapist than peers outside of work, coworkers, managers, or even HR about stress related to work.

Communication comfort level by role



Managers can lead mental health discussions

Those who feel their manager supports their mental health are more likely to be fulfilled and less likely to experience stress and burnout from work.

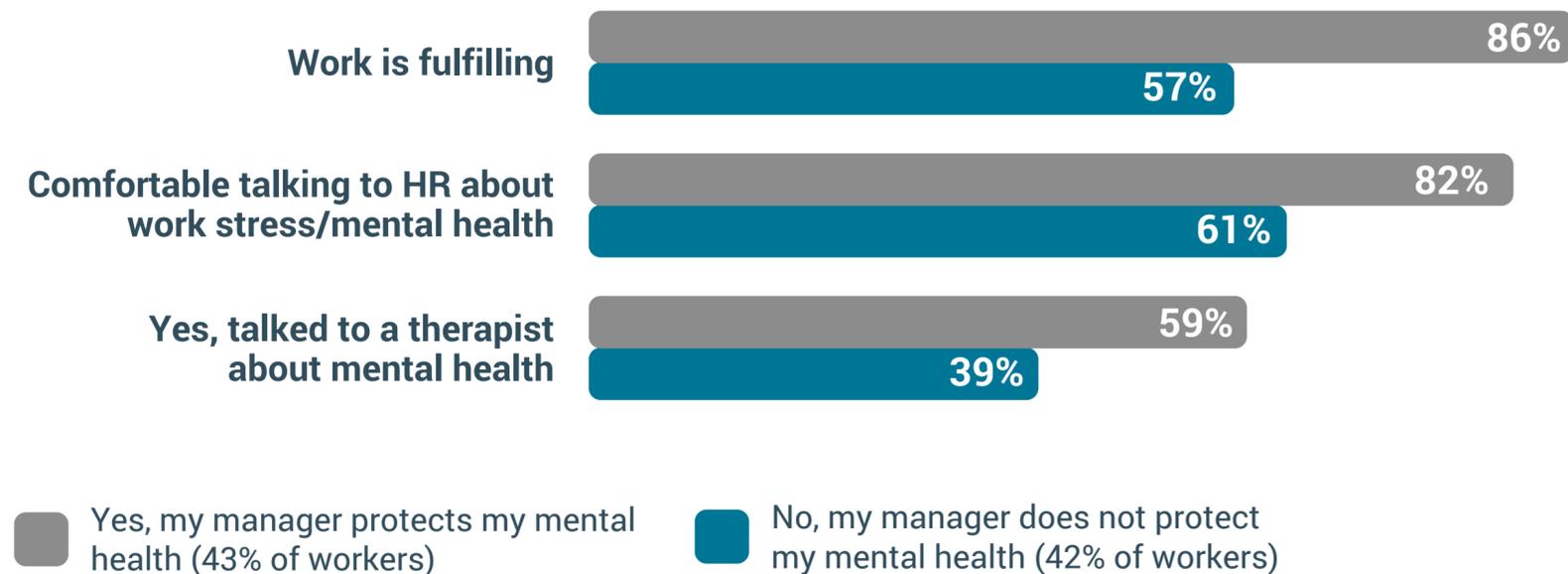
Train your managers to spot issues around mental health and the best ways to discuss it with direct reports and teams. That said, the mental health conversation shouldn't fall exclusively on managers—offer and promote the use of trained mental health professionals to your employees for private clinical support.

What Talkspace therapists have observed

“Research shows time and time again that a single support or a perceived social support can make a huge difference in buffering stress. Managers in today's world can't afford to be driven by ego, especially when retaining faithful employees is on the line. A manager that checks in even minimally, but authentically, can help someone feel valued and can in turn impart motivation in the process. Many of my clients have recently shared tireless efforts to “please” in the workplace even at the cost of dignity during pressured times. Oftentimes this starts the process of burnout while craving even the smallest sign of acknowledgement, respect and support.

— Elizabeth Keohan, LCSW-C, LICSW, LCSW

Positive indicators and manager support



Q. Does your boss or manager take steps to protect your mental health? All differences in table are statistically significant.

Parents especially value manageable workloads and flexibility

Better pay and benefits are the top factors that potential quitters say would convince them to stay—but parents also value a more manageable workload and increased flexibility.

% likely to convince you to stay in current position	Workers likely to consider quitting	Parents likely to consider quitting	Net difference
Better pay and benefits	83%	88%	+5
More paid time off, like mental health days	80%	87%	+7
More flexibility to choose my own schedule	77%	87%	+10
A more manageable workload	76%	88%	+12
A promotion or opportunity for career advancement	76%	83%	+7
Getting work I am passionate about	76%	86%	+10

Key Takeaways

- 1** **86% of employees feel fulfilled at work under a supportive manager**
- 2** **Mental health services can help retain 66% of workers considering quitting**
- 3** **70% of workers feel most comfortable talking about work stress to a therapist**
- 4** **80% would reconsider staying at job if it offered more PTO. (Employers should encourage them to take it)**

Final notes from Talkspace therapists



Talkspace therapist tips

1

Don't just think of stressors as related to the pandemic or return to work—consider longer-term issues that might impact your workforce, like pay, benefits, career growth, time off, etc.

“Work stressors are not only confined to issues related to returning to work after the pandemic. Other stressors, like commute time, career satisfaction, and salary, are just as relevant. During the pandemic, they became less of a focus as we needed to prioritize our safety and physical health. But these work stressors are just as important and can impact productivity and efficiency

— Minkyung Chung, MS, LMHC

2

Don't wait for timed check-ins like quarterly reviews to see how your workers are feeling. Be mindful of stressors like busy seasons, tough deadlines, and tough managers.

“It is helpful to check in with employees periodically so that they feel supported and heard. When things are more hectic at work, it usually has an impact on employees and can raise their stress levels. By providing a safe space, you can help them work through any negative thoughts or feelings they might be experiencing. This in turn can increase their connection to the company, their happiness at work, and their productivity.

— Bisma Anwar, LMHC

Talkspace therapist tips

3

Train your managers to identify potential mental health issues and tactfully discuss it with their teams. In addition, offer and promote the use of trained mental health professionals to help manage work-related stress and burnout.

“Managers can get mental health first aid training to help them understand signs and symptoms of mental illness. That way, they can provide a first line of support to an employee who may be struggling. Partnering with companies like Talkspace to provide therapy through trained mental health professionals is a great way to offer clinical help for employees struggling with their mental health.

— Bisma Anwar, LMHC

4

Create a culture that encourages, protects, and maybe even schedules time off for employees. The data indicates that while more PTO is a popular mental health request, the benefit remains under-utilized. This demonstrates that many employees face barriers to taking time off, even when they have the PTO.

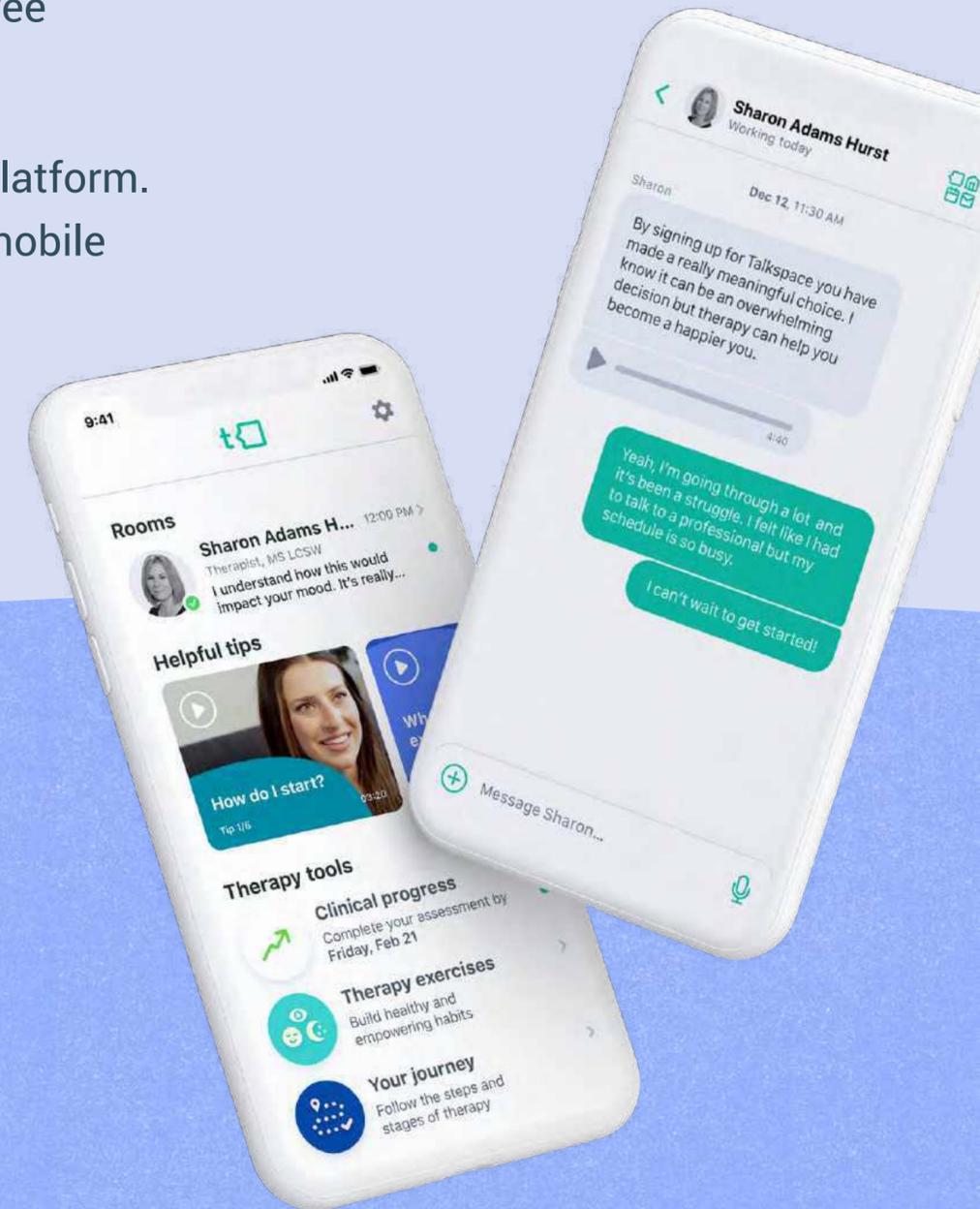
“Guilt is a common barrier to not only taking time off, but in actually disconnecting from work when you're on PTO. Encouraging your teams to use their PTO, and reminding them to take their days at least quarterly, can be a way to communicate you care about them, and that you want them on your team for the long haul.

— Kate Rosenblatt, MA, LPC, LMHC

About Talkspace for Business

Today, the need for care feels more urgent than ever. Whether it's psychiatry or adolescent, individual, or couples therapy, Talkspace offers treatment options for almost every need. Talkspace members can send their provider text, video, and voice messages anytime, and schedule live sessions with them. Over 2 million people have used Talkspace, and 76.5 million lives are covered for Talkspace care through insurance, employee assistance programs, or other network behavioral health paid benefit programs.

Talkspace is a leading virtual behavioral healthcare company enabled by a purpose-built technology platform. As a digital healthcare company, all care is delivered through an easy-to-use and encrypted web and mobile platform, consistent with HIPAA and state regulatory requirements.



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