



THIRD ANNUAL

Workforce Attitudes

toward
*Mental
Health*

REPORT 2021

ginger



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When the COVID-19 pandemic began last year and the Ginger workforce went fully remote, it quickly became clear to me that one of our top priorities was to support our employees' mental health needs. Our leadership team wanted to ensure that our employees, as they faced the loneliness of working from home or the stress of remote school for their children, knew that we were there for them. We implemented new policies and benefits to support our employees, like monthly self-care days, increased wellness benefits, and an external mental health coach. As CEO, I was proud of the way we stepped up to provide our employees with extra support.

But, even as a health technology company, we spent significant time solving for the “last mile” challenge: effectively communicating to employees all that was available to them.

When we performed our research this year with both CEOs and the average U.S. worker, we saw the “last mile” challenge show up across the board—in their beliefs and their experiences with mental health..

Fundamentally, executives and employees agree mental health is an important issue that employers should support. However, there's a significant gap between CEO and employee perceptions of available mental health benefits. Our research showed, 96% of CEOs believe their companies are doing enough for employee mental health, yet only 69% of employees agree.

In this year's report, we offer solutions to bridge the awareness gap between CEOs and employees. As I am learning through my own experience as CEO of a mental health company, we can offer incredible mental health and wellness benefits, and I know that they're only effective if employees are using them.

Our research found that both employees and CEOs are overwhelmingly optimistic about the future. I take comfort in this finding and share this sentiment as I look forward to the year ahead in which we advance closer to Ginger's own mission of a world where mental health is never an obstacle.

Russell Glass
CEO, Ginger

Goals *and* Methodology

In February 2021, Ginger partnered with Dimensional Research to survey 1,229 employees in the United States across a variety of industries, demographics, and work types, including knowledge, service, and manual workers. All those surveyed were employed for 30 hours a week or more at jobs that included benefits. The survey asked a wide range of questions about experiences with mental health and employee benefits. The survey was fielded from February 8th to February 16th, 2021. To enable trend analysis, certain questions were repeated from similar 2019 and 2020 surveys.

Following the employee survey, Ginger and Dimensional Research surveyed 158 U.S. business leaders, all of whom were employed as CEO, president, or equivalent business leaders at a company that offers job benefits and has at least 100 employees. This survey was fielded from February 17th to February 23rd, 2021. Some questions from the employee survey were repeated to enable comparison. Leaders were also asked about their experiences with mental health and about their company's mental health benefits for employees.

How do you define "mental health support?"

“Mental health support” as defined in the study includes a wide spectrum of activities, from mindfulness practices and coaching to formal mental health services from a therapist or psychiatrist. Participants were given this definition of mental health and were required to acknowledge the definition to participate.

What is Ginger?

Ginger makes it easy for employees to get the support they need, when they need it, with on-demand mental health coaching, video therapy and psychiatry, and self-guided skill-building activities and exercises.

What is Dimensional Research?

Dimensional Research provides in-depth market research to help technology companies make smarter business decisions.

Four key messages for employers

1 Employees and CEOs are *optimistic* about the future.

While 2020 was a year of anxiety and uncertainty, 2021 is proving to be a year of optimism. Last year, 70% of employees reported feeling more stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic than ever before in their professional careers. In 2021, while 58% of employees agree that COVID is still a top stressor at work, 95% of employees are feeling optimistic about

life returning to “normal” and are looking forward to in-person visits with friends and family and opportunities for personal growth. Furthermore, of employees who have been working from home due to the pandemic, 99% report that their mental health has benefited from their work-from-home situation.

2 CEOs *overwhelmingly* believe that employees’ mental health impacts business outcomes.

Last year, COVID-19—and the ensuing lockdowns, social distancing, and work-from-home situations—exacerbated the existing mental health crisis in the U.S. As a result, however, the pandemic shined a spotlight on the importance of mental healthcare, especially in the workforce. Due to the pandemic, nearly all CEOs surveyed report investing in their own mental health, with 94% of CEOs receiving mental health support for themselves, and focusing more on mental health at

their companies. CEOs also recognize the impact that employees’ mental health can have on work, with 80% believing that poor employee mental health negatively impacts employee productivity. Meanwhile, 95% of employees report that mental health support helped them feel more positive, less stressed, and more productive at work. As one employee shared, “It made me very productive to know employers cared... If I am valued, I want to offer that back.”

3 — There's a disparity between *CEOs and employees* when it comes to believing that companies do enough to support mental health.

Many companies have invested in mental health benefits, and yet employees aren't sufficiently aware of them. In fact, 96% of CEOs think they are doing enough for employee mental health, yet only 69% of employees agree. And while 70% of CEOs say they're accepting of emotional and mental health issues in the workplace, only 35% of employees believe this is true. Not only do CEOs report their companies are accepting of discussions about mental health, they're talking about their own mental health,

too. Of the CEOs who do talk about their mental health, more than half report that doing so makes them a better leader. And yet, while CEOs say that they're talking about mental health (and their companies are focusing on it more), not all employees see it that way. The more senior the employee, the more likely they are to view their company's support of mental health positively. Individual contributors report that their companies offer mental health benefits only half as often as CEOs do.

4 — CEOs and employees continue to experience high-levels of stress and are *increasingly relying* on technology-based mental healthcare for help.

As stress levels among employees continue to rise, employees are turning to technology-based mental healthcare for support more and more. This year, 48% of employees report experiencing high or extreme stress over the past year—a 7% increase from pre-pandemic levels in 2019. Meanwhile, use of technology-based mental health services has increased from 29% at the

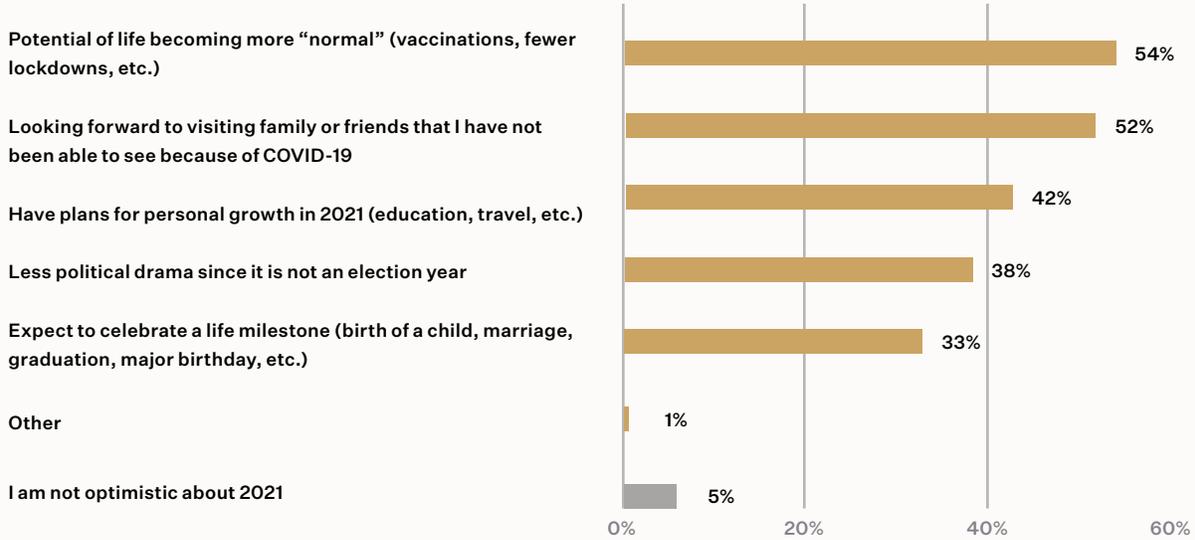
beginning of 2020 to 48% in 2021. Use of mental health benefits overall (both virtual and other) has increased 39% over the last year. In fact, more than three-quarters of employees who worked with a mental health professional did so virtually in the past year, with executive, skilled workers, and employees with caregiving responsibilities preferring virtual mental health support the most.

1

Vaccinations.
Fewer lockdowns.
Visits with friends
and family. *Hope
for the future.*

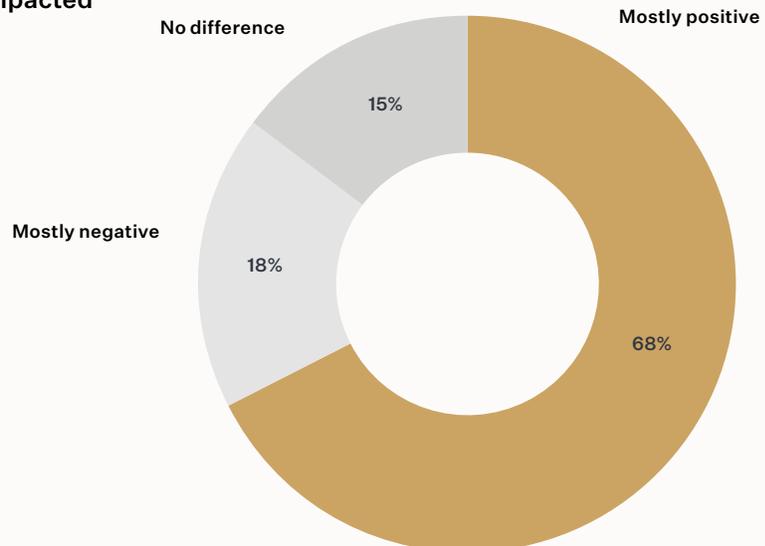
95% of employees are optimistic about 2021.

When you think about 2021, what gives you optimism?



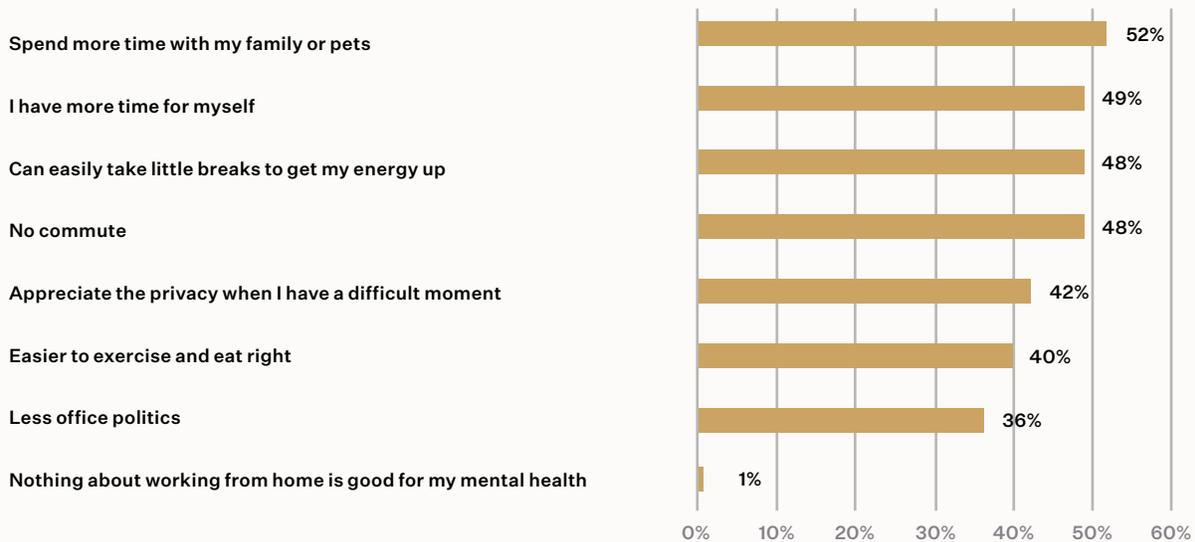
While COVID-19 has been stressful, working from home has been a positive experience for most employees.

In general, how has working from home since the onset of COVID-19 impacted your mental health?



99% of employees benefited from working from home because of COVID-19.

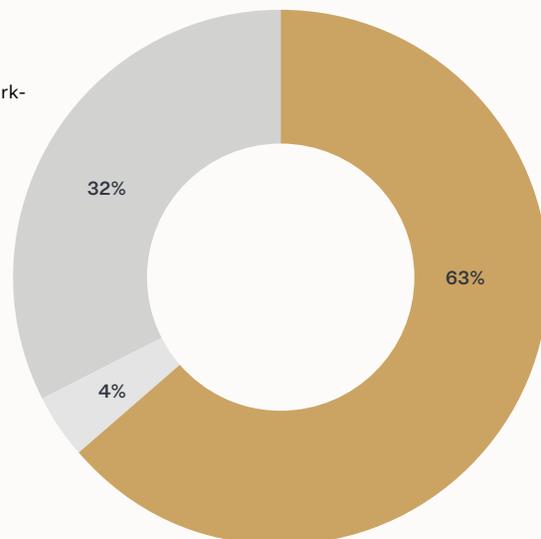
What parts of working from home during COVID-19 do you find helpful for your mental health?



How has COVID-19 impacted your own mental health?

63% of CEOs report that COVID-19 has been positive for their mental health.

- Mostly positive**
I've been energized by having new business problems to solve or appreciated changes related to work-from-home
- Mostly negative**
I'm more anxious, burnt out, or generally stressed
- It hasn't had an impact**



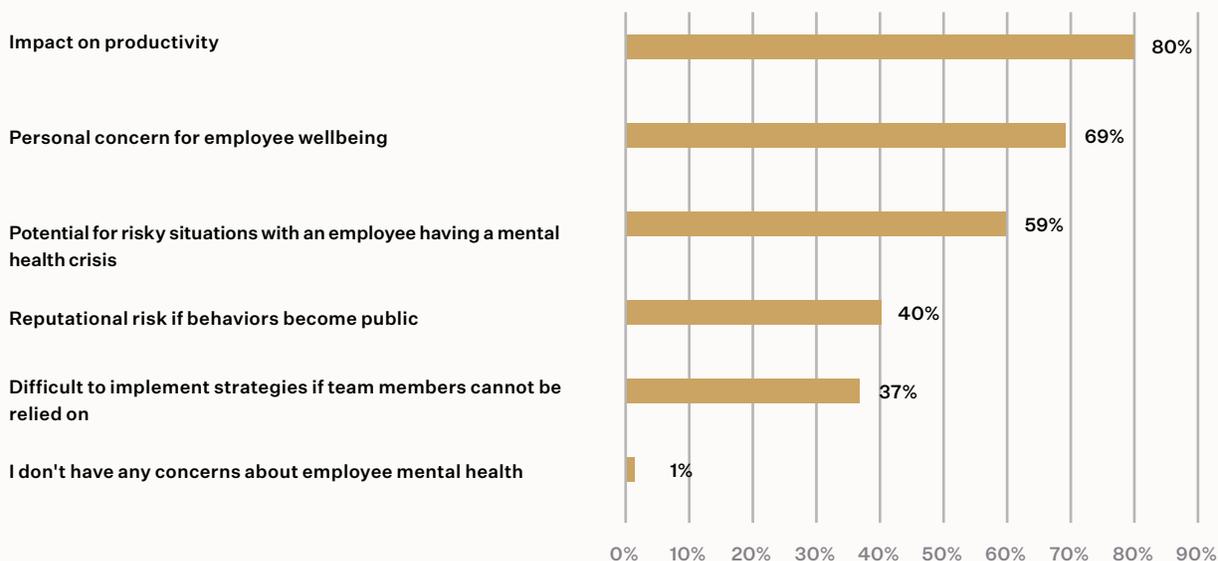
2

“It made me very productive to know employers cared... If I am valued I want to offer that back.”

Mental health impacts business.

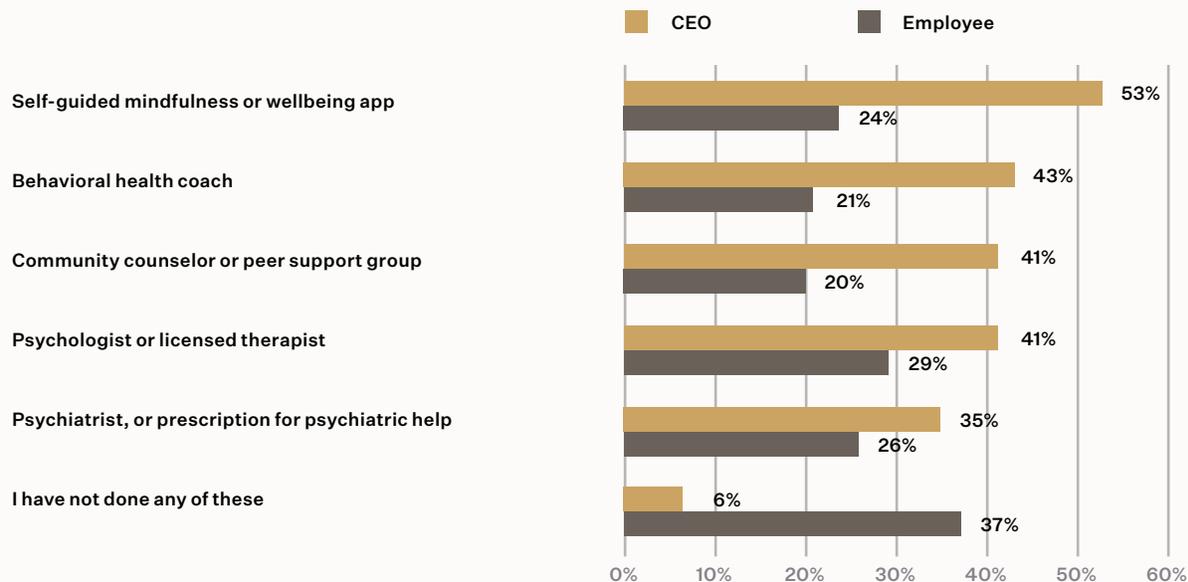
CEOs see productivity as the top concern when it comes to employees' mental health.

As a business leader, what concerns do you have about employee mental health?



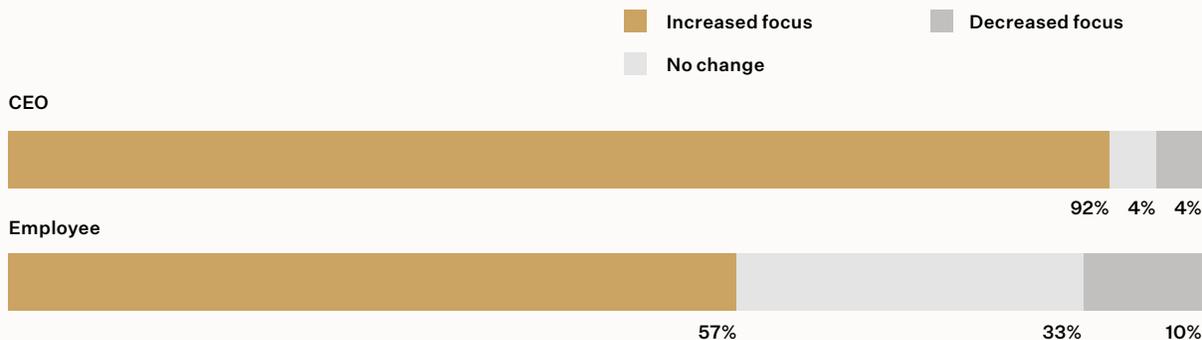
CEOs are far more likely than employees to receive mental health support.

In the past year, have you received any mental health support?



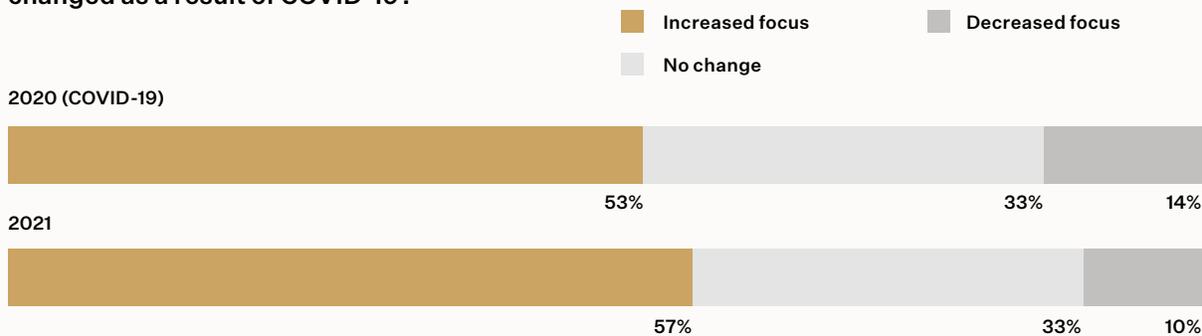
92% of CEOs say that their companies are more focused on mental health because of COVID-19.

How has your company's focus on employee emotional and mental health changed as a result of COVID-19?



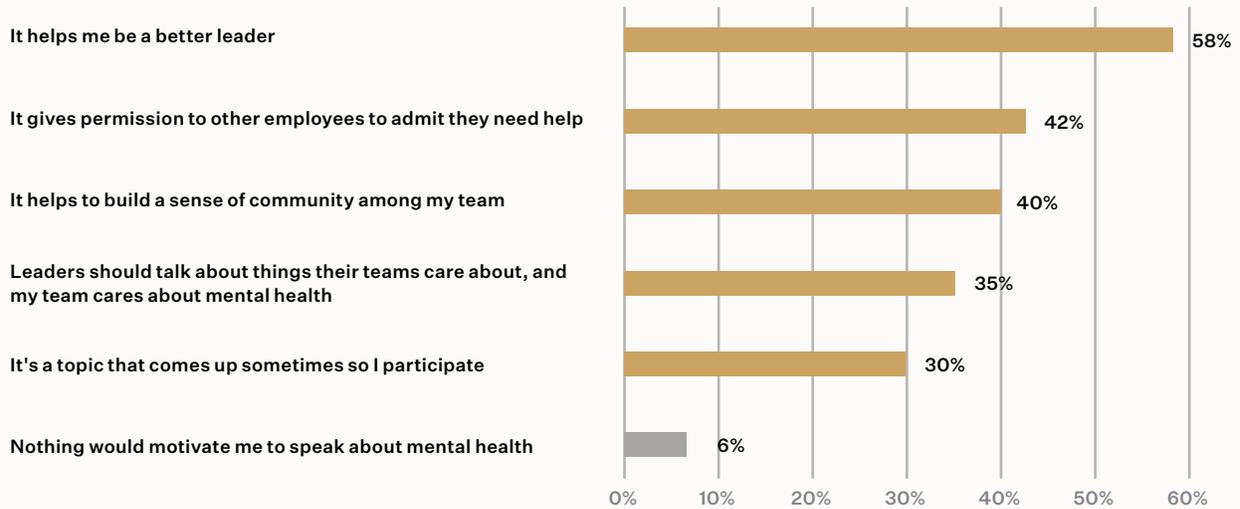
57% of employees report that their company's focus on mental health has increased as a result of COVID-19.

How has your company's focus on employee emotional and mental health changed as a result of COVID-19?



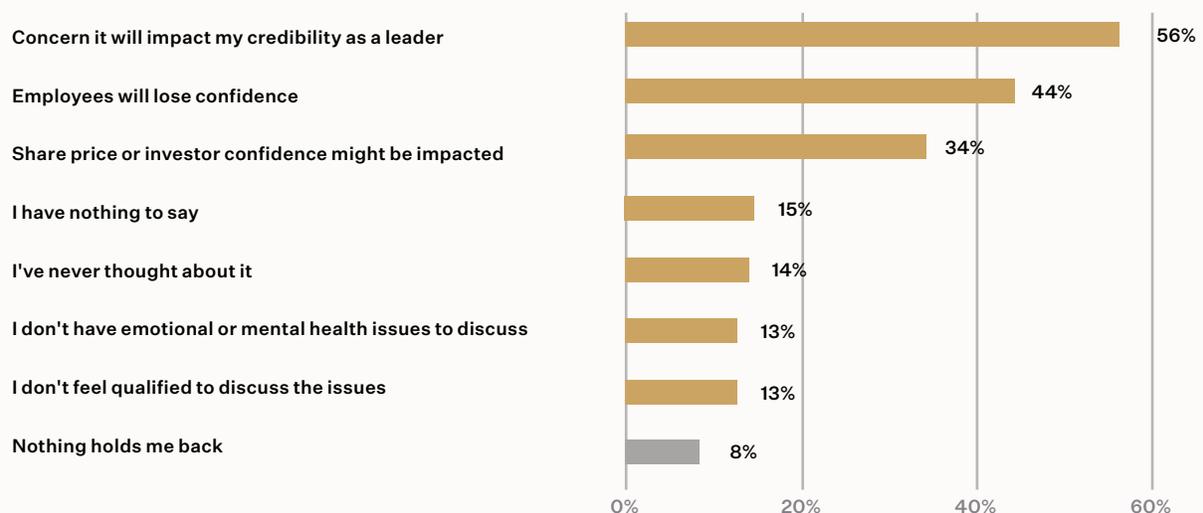
More than half of CEOs say that talking about their own mental health makes them a better leader...

What motivates you to speak to your employees or staff about your own emotional and mental health?



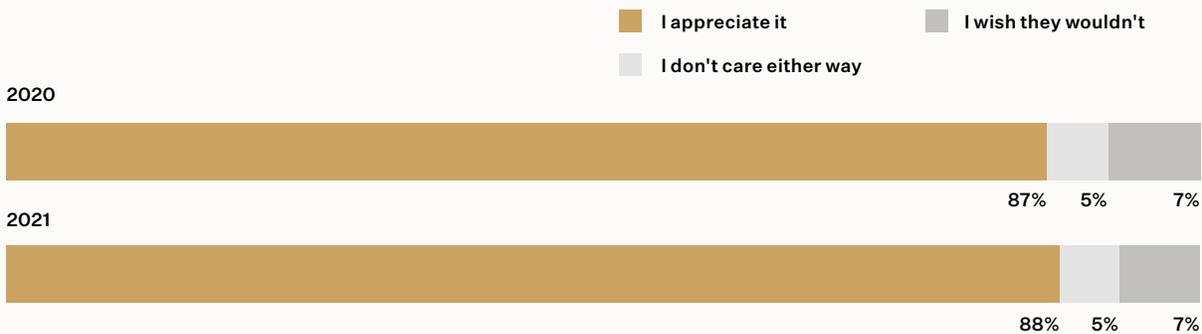
... but CEOs also hold back from talking about their mental health because of concerns it will impact their credibility and employee confidence in them.

What holds you back from talking about emotional and mental health with your team?



88% of employees appreciate when their company's leaders talk about their own mental health.

How do you feel about your leaders speaking about their emotional and mental health?



3

CEOs care about
mental health.
Employees are
getting a *different*
message.

94% of CEOs agree employee mental health is a C-suite issue.

CEO: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

- Strongly agree
- Agree somewhat
- Disagree somewhat
- Strongly disagree

Employee mental health is a C-suite issue, not just an HR issue.



I find it easier to deal with work-related mental health issues than mental health issues with my kids.



I am concerned that my managers are putting their own mental health at risk by absorbing the stress of their teams.



I do care about the mental health of my employees, but practically, I don't know what to do about it.



69% of CEOs see themselves as accepting of mental health issues. Only 35% of employees agree.

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

- Strongly agree
- Agree somewhat
- Disagree somewhat
- Strongly disagree

CEO: As a business leader, I am more accepting of emotional and mental health issues now than in the past.



Employee: My workplace is more accepting of emotional and mental health issues now than in the past.

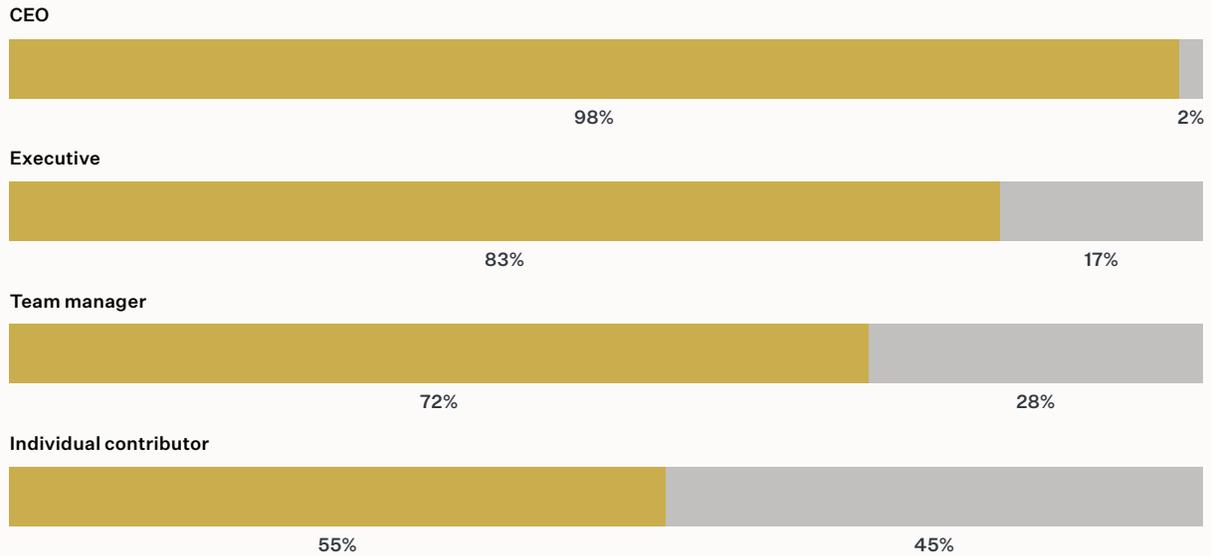


98% of CEOs say their company offers mental health benefits. Meanwhile, 55% of individual contributors say that their company does.

CEO: Does your company offer emotional and mental health benefits to employees?

Employee: Does your employer offer emotional and mental health benefits?

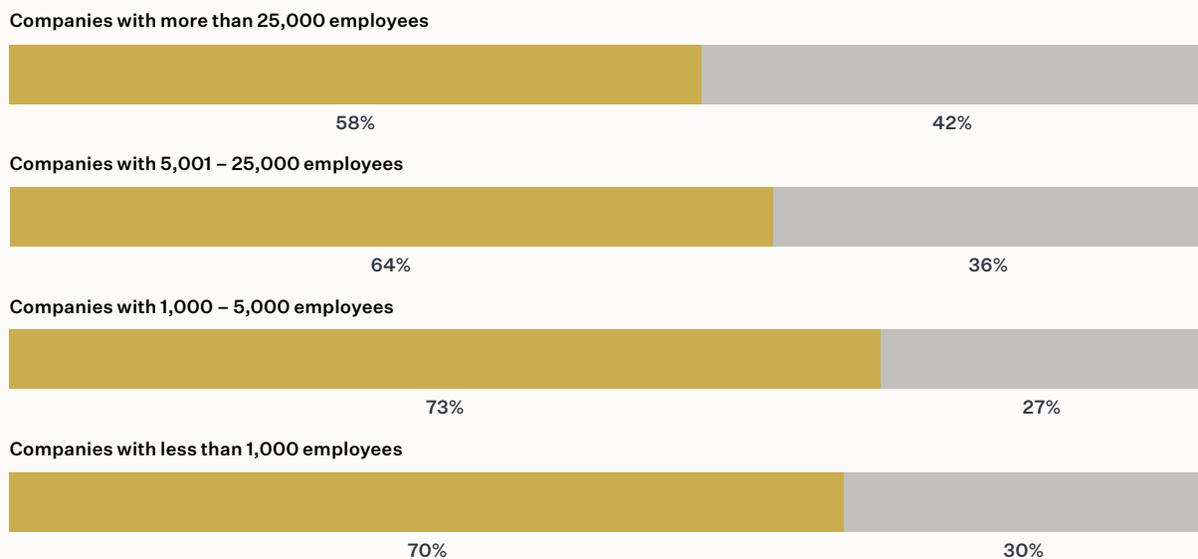
Yes
No



The bigger the company, the less likely employees are to think their employer is doing enough for mental health.

Employee: In your opinion, does your employer do enough to support your mental health?

Yes
No



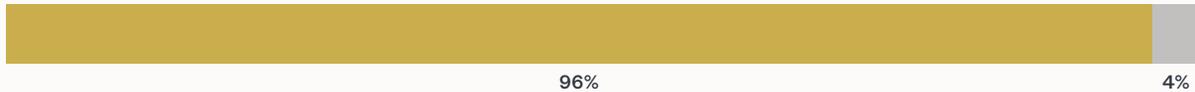
Individual contributors are nearly half as likely as CEOs are to think their companies do enough to support mental health.

CEO: In your opinion, does your company do enough to support the mental health of your employees?

Employee: In your opinion, does your employer do enough to support your mental health?

Yes
No

CEO



Executive



Team manager



Individual contributor



4

Even with an optimistic outlook, *stress levels remain high*, and employees are turning to technology-based mental health support.

Employee stress levels are still high.

How would you characterize the overall level of stress you have experienced within the past 12 months?

- Extreme stress (experience stress every day)
- High stress (experience stress most days)
- Moderate stress (experience stress at least once a week)
- Low stress (rarely experience stress)
- No stress

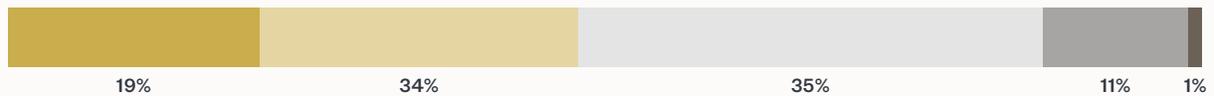
2019



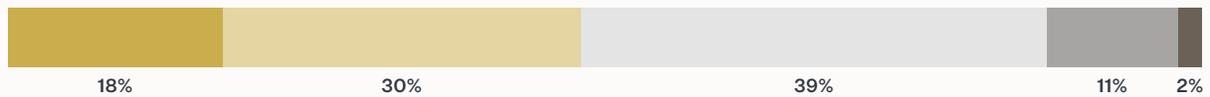
2020 (Pre-COVID-19)



2020 (During COVID-19) This version of the question asked about overall stress "in the past 4-6 weeks"



2021



Use of technology-based mental health-care has jumped from 29% to 48% over the past year.

Have you ever used technology-based emotional or mental health services such as online counseling or mental health apps?

- Yes
- No

2020 (Pre-COVID-19)



2020 (During COVID-19) This version of the question asked about overall stress "in the past 4-6 weeks"

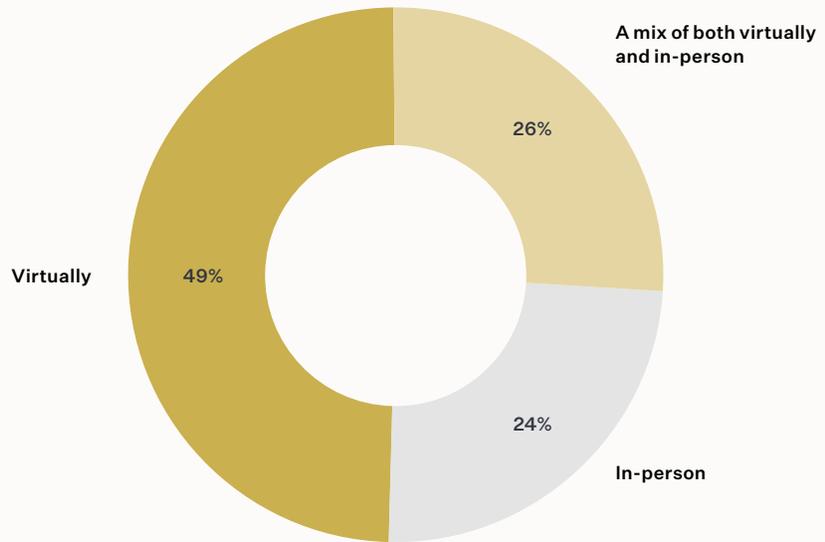


2021



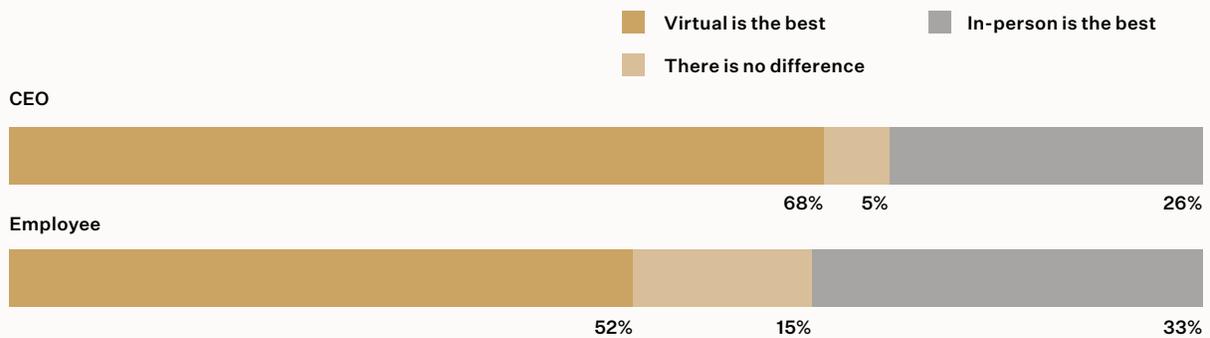
76% of employees who received mental health support, did so virtually.

How did you receive mental health support in the past year?



CEOs especially prefer virtual mental healthcare.

Based on your recent experiences with virtual mental health support, what is your preferred way to work with a therapist?



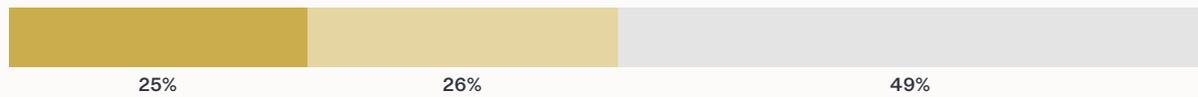
Executives and blue collar workers prefer virtual mental healthcare more than other job roles and types.

Based on your recent experiences with virtual mental health support, what is your preferred way to work with a therapist?

- Virtual is the best
- There is no difference
- In-person is the best

Job Level

Individual contributor



Team manager

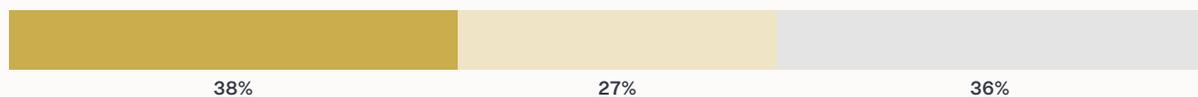


Executive

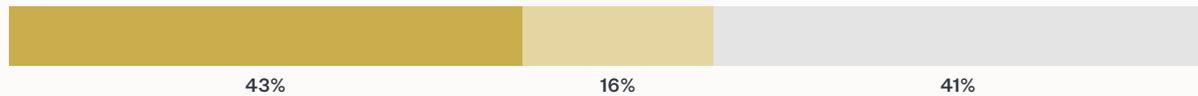


Type of Work

Service worker



Knowledge worker



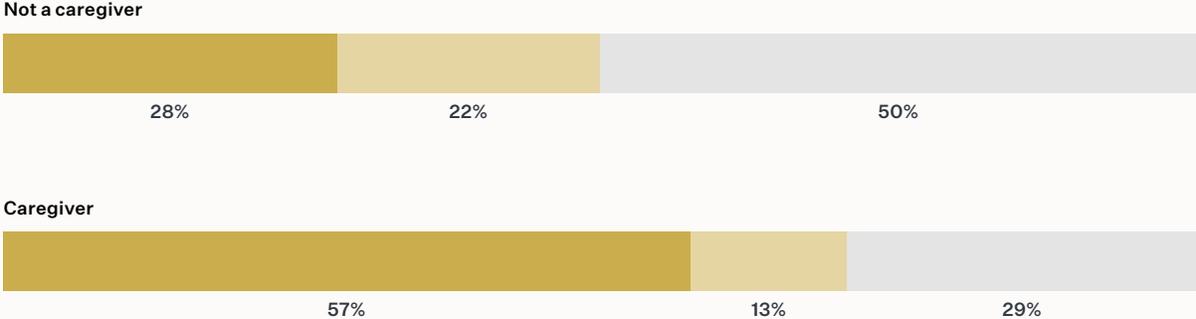
Manual worker



Employees with caregiving responsibilities prefer virtual therapy twice as often as much as those without caregiving responsibilities.

Based on your recent experiences with virtual mental health support, what is your preferred way to work with a therapist?

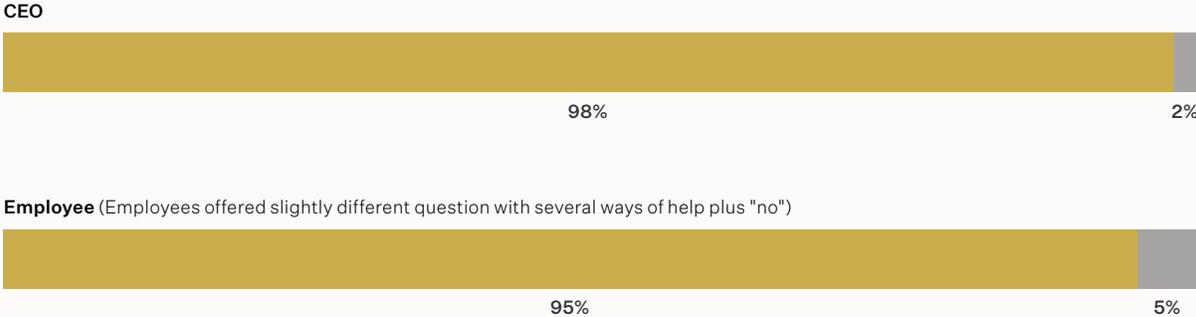
- Virtual is the best
- There is no difference
- In-person is the best



Nearly all employees and CEOs found that mental health support helps them at work.

Did the mental health support you received in the past year help you cope at work?

- Yes
- No



In Conclusion

What leaders
can do

1 Invest in a mental health benefit if you haven't already.

Our research shows that employees appreciate—and expect—a mental health benefit as part of their benefits package. Yet, traditional solutions such as employee assistance programs (EAPs) only allow employees access to a limited number of in-network providers, with long wait times that leave an employee's mental health untreated while they wait. Virtual mental healthcare is now the norm. For the past three years employees have been increasingly turning to virtual care for their mental health support—and [research shows](#) that it works to improve mental health outcomes. Offer your employees an effective, convenient mental health benefit. It's what they've come to expect.

2 Communicate with employees effectively so they're aware of the mental health benefits available to them.

While almost all CEOs we surveyed are aware that their company offers mental health benefits, only 55% of individual contributors say their company offers them. This gap either indicates an overstatement by CEOs, a lack of awareness by employees, or both. If you've done the work to find the right mental health benefit, make sure employees know about that benefit. Develop a strong communications plan that connects mental health to employees' everyday needs—like sleep, tackling loneliness, and managing work-life balance as a parent.

3 Encourage open discussion around mental health, starting with leadership.

Employees appreciate when leaders speak about mental health. Help normalize mental health support by speaking about your own struggles and self-care. Promote work-life balance through policies that support employees' mental health, such as no emails on weekends, flexible work hours, and mental health days for employees to relax and refresh. Show employees that you're following these policies yourself. In this time of uncertainty, create a predictable working environment by allowing open communication with employees, defining clear goals, and establishing regular routines. Create opportunities for employees to have decision-making power so they can feel more in control. Finally, with COVID-19 very much still here, recognize that 100% productivity isn't realistic yet.

Participant Demographics

EMPLOYEE DEMOGRAPHICS

Age

14% Younger than 25, 31% 26-39, 34% 40-56, 25% Older than 55

Gender

48% Female, 51% Male, 0.49% Transgender, 0.33% Non-conforming

Annual Household Income

4% Less than \$25,000, 18% \$25,000-\$50,000, 23% \$50,000 - \$75,000, 38% \$75,000 - \$150,000, 10% \$150,000 - \$250,000, 5% More than \$250,000, 2% Prefer not to say

Job Level

23% Executive, 37% Team manager, 40% Individual contributor

Type of Work

27% Blue collar (i.e., construction, agriculture, transportation), 35% Pink collar (i.e., retail, educator, hospitality, healthcare), 37% White collar (i.e., office, technology, media)

Company Size

20% Less than 100, 36% 100-1,000, 12% 1,001-1,500, 13% 1,501-5,000, 10% 5,001-25,000, 10% More than 25,000

Living Environment

34% Large metropolitan city, 36% Other urban area, 30% Rural

Caregiving Responsibilities

20% Preschool age or younger children, 27% School-age children, 21% Teenagers, 22% Young adults living at home, 12% Parents or other older adults, 31% I am not a caregiver

Ethnicity

68% Caucasian or White, 16% Black or African American, 9% Hispanic or Latino, 5% Asian, 1% Native or Indigenous American, 0.41% Other, 0.49% Prefer not to say

Current Work Environment

46% Working from home, 11% Working in an isolated environment that is not my home (vehicle, single-person office, etc.), 44% Working in a location around other people, 0% Temporarily not working because of COVID-19

Why Working from Home

20% I have always worked from home, 70% I started working from home because of COVID-19, 10% I worked from home sometimes before, but now am at home all the time because of COVID-19

Participant Demographics

CEO DEMOGRAPHICS

Age

1% Younger than 30, 50% 30-40, 43% 41-50, 3% 51-60, 2% 61-70, 1% Older than 70

Gender

15% Female, 84% Male, 1% Non-conforming

Type of Work

41% White collar (i.e., office, technology, media), 29% Pink collar (i.e., retail, educator, hospitality, healthcare), 30% Blue collar (i.e., construction, agriculture, transportation)

Company Size

29% 100 - 1,000, 18% 1,001 - 1,500, 27% 1,501 - 5,000, 22% 5,001 - 25,000, 5% More than 25,000

Ownership type

44% Public, 56% Private, 0% Other (i.e., government)

Region

37% Coastal, 63% Interior

Living Environment

73% Large metropolitan city, 22% Other urban area, 4% Rural

Household Composition

82% Spouse or other partner, 27% Preschool age or younger children, 49% School-age children, 30% Teenagers, 12% Young adults living at home, 6% Parents or other older adults, 4% No one besides me

Split of Domestic Responsibilities

40% My spouse or partner does most of it, 34% I do most of it, 23% My spouse or partner and I have equally shared responsibilities, 3% I have paid staff

Ethnicity

85% Caucasian or White, 8% Black or African American, 2% Hispanic or Latino, 3% Asian, 0% Native or Indigenous American, 1% Other, 1% Prefer not to say

Current Work Environment

51% Working from home, 49% Working at an office or other work environment

Why Working from Home

88% I started working from home because of COVID-19, 10% I have always worked from home, 2% I worked from home sometimes before, but now am at home all the time because of COVID-19

Ginger brings high-quality, on-demand mental health support to those in need. Through the Ginger app, members can connect immediately with our team of coaches through in-app text messaging. For members who need extra support, a therapist or psychiatrist can be added to their care team for video sessions. Millions of people have access to the Ginger on-demand mental health system through our work with employers, health plans, and other partners.

To learn more about how Ginger can support your workforce, contact us at ginger.com/contact.

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