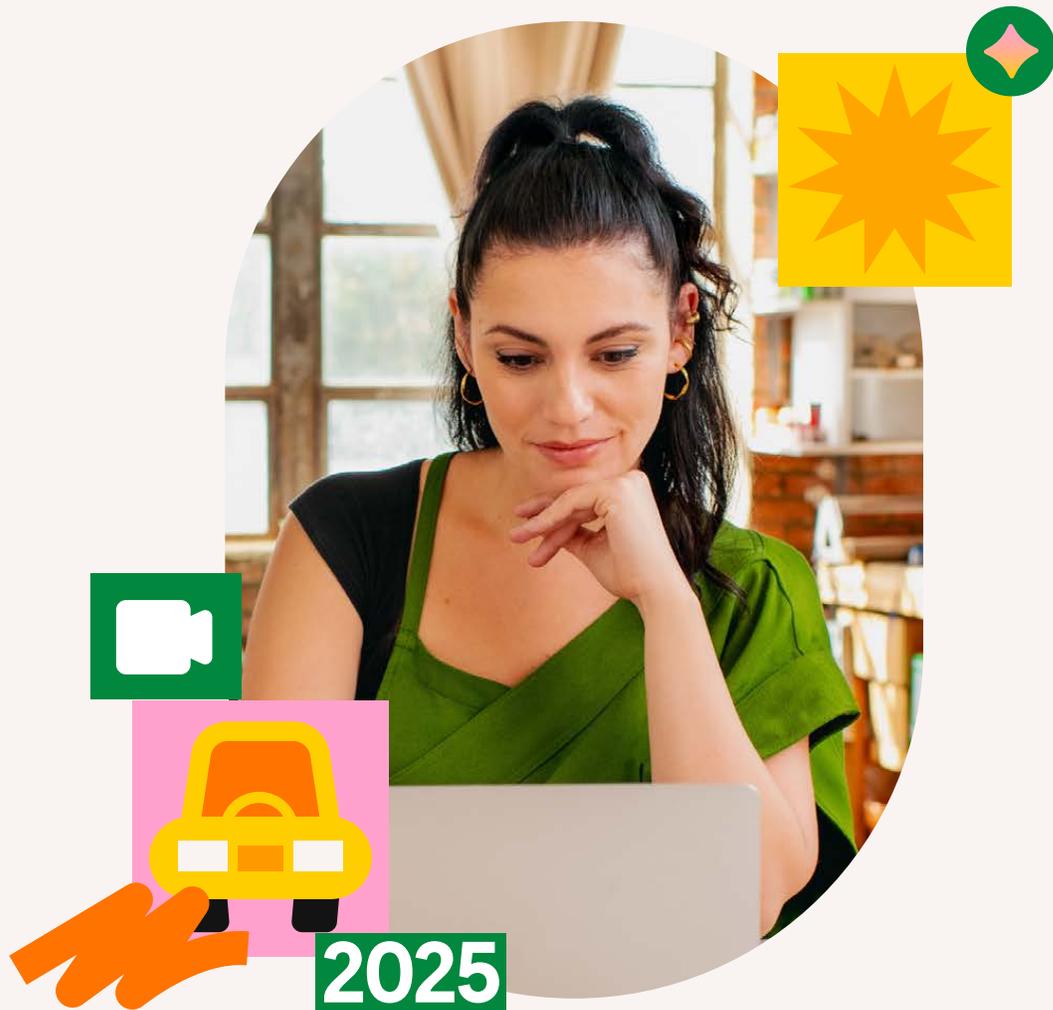




# Workforce State of Mind



Seventh Annual Workplace Mental Health Trends Report

**Mental health needs are growing across the globe, and recognizing them is more important than ever. In recent years, we have watched a dramatic ebb and flow of mental health support offered to employees from their companies.**

**But as life becomes increasingly complex – marked by rising societal pressures, workplace challenges, and personal demands – employees are seeking more mental health support to show up feeling their best, both at work and outside of it.**

Today, an added challenge for HR leaders is working to balance tight budgets while still delivering impactful benefits for their people. This growing challenge can be attributed to a number of factors, one being the increasing costs of healthcare. Employers are expecting a third consecutive year of health benefit cost increases above 5% in 2025. In addition, a slow return to “normalcy” in work and at home – with more employees returning to office and children in school – has driven a shift in where HR teams choose to invest.

HR leaders are now faced with the tough choice of where to make tradeoffs in employee benefits. But trends in employee mental health and the broader impact of global events indicate that employees need support more than ever. Half of employees reported that they have cried because of work issues, and 58% have considered quitting their jobs as a result of their mental health. In addition, the number of employees that report that their company does enough to support their mental health has decreased in recent years. This is concerning, given that 95% report feeling better after using employer-provided mental health benefits.

**66**

**While it can seem challenging to invest in employee benefits with limited resources, the data shows that investing in mental health pays dividends when it comes to productivity and engagement – and as a result, business outcomes. Leaders must recognize how showing up for their people to help them prioritize their wellbeing enables employees to show up more for their customers and teams. It’s a win-win.**

LISA MULROONEY GROSS, CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER, HEADSPACE

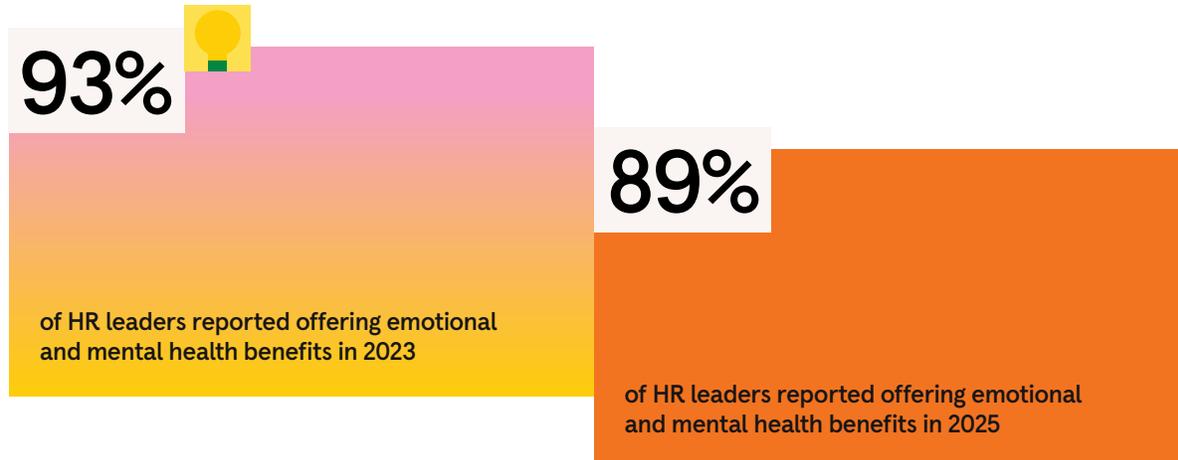




6 in 10

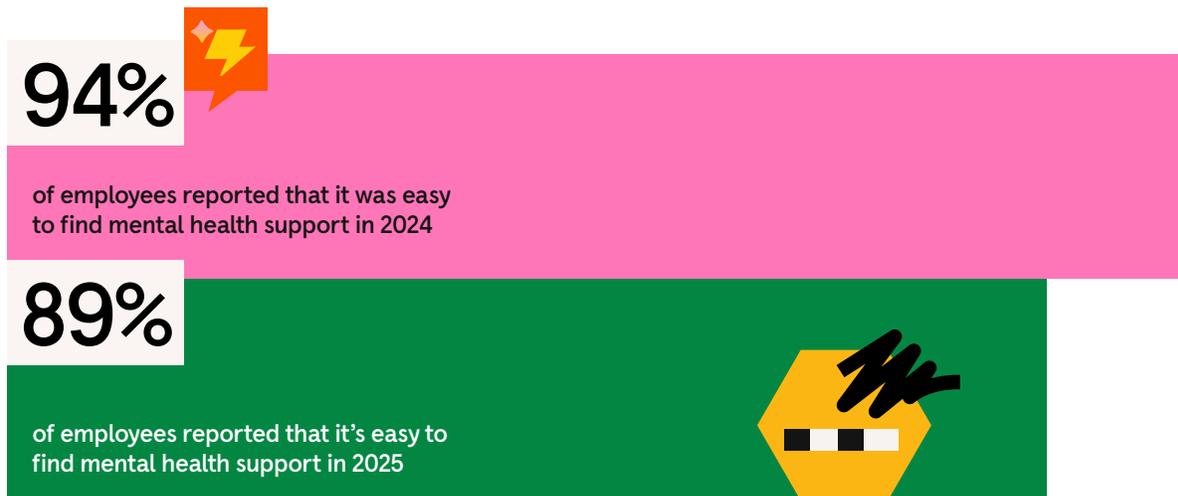
employees have considered quitting their jobs as a result of their mental health

## Fewer HR leaders are reporting that their company offers mental health benefits than in past years



Together, this suggests that a decrease in an emphasis on mental health and well-being at work is leading to negative impacts on employees and on businesses. Poor mental health can result in reduced productivity, absenteeism, and for many, a desire to quit. As employers consider how to best support their employees while managing tight budgets and competing priorities, the trends in this report can help HR leaders make the decisions that are best for their teams.

## Fewer employees are reporting that it's easy for them to find mental health support



# What we measured

In our seventh annual survey on workplace mental health, we partnered with Dimensional Research to conduct a survey among employees and HR leaders in the U.S. and U.K. from November 25, 2024 to January 2, 2025. To enable trend analysis, select questions were repeated from similar 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 surveys. In addition, we surveyed HR leaders at our own Headspace clients, and consulted other organizations to ensure we gathered the best practices and most pressing trends in workplace mental health.

## Employees

**2,045 RESPONDENTS**

- Respondents in the UK and the US working > 30 hours per week spanning knowledge, service, and manual workers
- Survey asked wide range of questions about experiences with mental health and employee benefits



## HR Leaders

**223 RESPONDENTS**

- Respondents in the UK and the US
- Survey includes wide range of questions about their experiences with mental health, including questions on company benefits for employees



WHAT WE LEARNED:

# 5 key insights on mental health at work in 2025

TREND #1

# The loneliness epidemic drives a need for community – and leads to higher healthcare costs.



**76%**

of remote employees have considered quitting due to their mental health, compared to **55% hybrid** and **54% in-person**

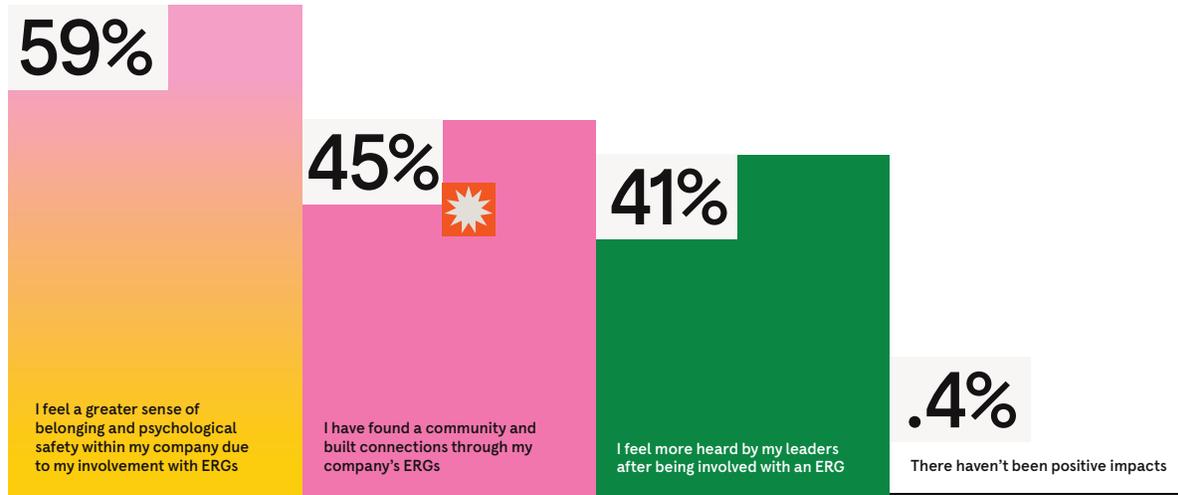
With more than 1 in 5 people worldwide feeling lonely often, according to Gallup, it's clear that many of us are in need of human connection. There are a variety of causes of loneliness and isolation, from age, to socioeconomic status, to geographical location – and this can have impacts beyond a person's social life. Loneliness and social isolation can increase a person's risk for mental health conditions like anxiety and depression, as well as physical conditions like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. At work, this can manifest as reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, and higher healthcare costs.

Luckily for employers, workers are eager to build connections, and many see work as a place to do so. The top benefits that employees said would make them more likely to stay at a job were employee-sponsored team and culture building, and professional development and upskilling. This signals a desire for opportunities to connect with others on both a personal and professional level.



Furthermore, data shows that the efforts HR teams are making to drive connections are effective – particularly in the communities built through Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). 59% of those involved in ERGs feel a greater sense of belonging and psychological safety within their company, and 45% have found a community and built connections.

## What positive impacts do company-sponsored Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) have on your experience in the workplace?



ERGs creates a space for our employees to be authentic, give feedback, share our wins and encourage one another. By fostering belonging, career growth, advocacy, and well-being, ERGs make workplaces more inclusive and empowering for all.

JAMEEKA AARON, CHIEF INFORMATION SECURITY OFFICER AT HEADSPACE, EXECUTIVE SPONSOR OF A HEADSPACE ERG



We also found that remote employees experience more negative effects on their mental health from work compared to hybrid or in-person employees. 70% of remote workers have cried due to work, compared to 44% of hybrid and 48% of in-person workers. Similarly, 76% of remote employees have considered quitting due to their mental health, compared to 55% of hybrid and 54% of in-person employees. This suggests that the opportunity to connect with teammates and see others face-to-face can have positive impacts on both mental health and retention. Employees still deeply value flexibility in workstyles and work schedules, so it's important that leaders enable connection in the workplace – both digitally and physically.



**76%**  
of remote employees  
have considered  
quitting due to their  
mental health



compared to  
**55%**  
of hybrid employees

and  
**54%**  
of in-person  
employees

When employees feel disconnected in the workplace, it can significantly impact productivity, engagement and overall well-being. But that also means organizations have a real opportunity to create a stronger workplace culture and more connected teams. As a firm, Edward Jones is committed to fostering a culture of engagement and belonging through ongoing investments in every aspect of associate well-being – mental, emotional, physical, financial and social. Initiatives like our partnership with Headspace help ensure our associates feel supported, valued and empowered to do their best work.

PATRICK CHANOD, PRINCIPAL, HUMAN CAPITAL,  
WELL-BEING CENTER OF EXCELLENCE, EDWARD JONES



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Another consideration for HR teams as they ensure employees feel a sense of connection from work: different generations have different needs. More Gen Z employees report that they agree with the statement “I just want to do my job and go home – connecting with my co-workers or team is not a priority for me.” Yet, they also were the generation of workers that most highly ranked team and culture-building as the top incentive to keep them at their job. This suggests that while they are craving connection, they also need it to be seamlessly integrated into their everyday lives – not added on to existing stress. By creating better opportunities for connection, HR leaders can better engage all generations of workers, leading to more collaborative teams and more satisfied employees.

#### TAKE ACTION

**What can you do to reduce loneliness and help build connections among employees?**



In an NLM study, employees who used Headspace meditations and mindfulness daily reported significant improvement in perceptions of workplace social support.

- Budget for in-person connectivity. Consider investing in team and company-wide offsites and workshops that allow employees to spend time getting to know one another.
- Consider paired virtual experiences when you hold in-person events so remote employees don't feel left behind. These could be hybrid, group meditations or coach-facilitated Q&A sessions that help employees learn more about caring for their mental health – and spend time together as a team.
- Build collaborative activities into meetings to encourage employees to interact beyond sharing updates. For example, ask weekly icebreakers or a “question of the day,” or invite employees to share personal stories, helping to create spaces of vulnerability.
- Encourage localized connections where you have a critical mass of employees. This could be through weekly or monthly get togethers in-person, or investment in a physical workspace where employees can collaborate and work together.
- Support ERGs with funding, executive sponsorship, and other resourcing as a critical component of employee connectivity.

TREND #2

Leaders feel like their workplaces encourage setting boundaries, but many employees don't feel the same.



**71%**

of employees report working outside of their expected schedule at least weekly

When employees have a hard time enforcing boundaries at work – logging off on time, taking vacation, and maintaining a healthy work/life balance – it can impact business, too. The increased stress that employees experience can lead to reductions in productivity, and increases in absenteeism and presenteeism. It can hurt a team’s ability to collaborate and connect, and in severe cases, can lead to leaves of absence or even cause employees to quit.



**Work-related stress doesn’t end when the shift is over; it follows us into all areas of our lives, draining our finite energy pool. As personal and professional demands intertwine, we must find ways to regulate and replenish this limited energy pool, focusing on long-term well-being. Employers have an opportunity to play a crucial role in fostering a culture that supports work-life balance, ensuring happier, healthier, and more productive employees. The cycle of burnout and the urge to quit every week is unsustainable – we need to structure our lives in ways that restore, not deplete, our energy reserves.**

JENNA GLOVER, CHIEF CLINICAL OFFICER, HEADSPACE



Most HR leaders understand the importance of boundaries and the impacts that burnout and stress can have. Yet, data indicates that policies may not be as effective or as spread throughout the organization as they think. While 70% of HR executives say their company has clear, actionable guidelines and resources for employees to set boundaries at work, only 54% of HR directors and 43% of HR managers agree. This suggests that policies put in place may not be making their way to all employees, especially those at more junior levels in the organization.

71% of employees report working outside of their expected schedule at least weekly, and 75% report being available as needed even when taking time off from work. 92% report that their sleep is negatively impacted by work at least occasionally. What’s more, executive employees are much more comfortable enforcing boundaries at work than managers or individual contributors (ICs).

# How comfortable do you feel enforcing boundaries?

PERCENTAGES OF THOSE WHO ANSWERED VERY COMFORTABLE

38%

Team Manager

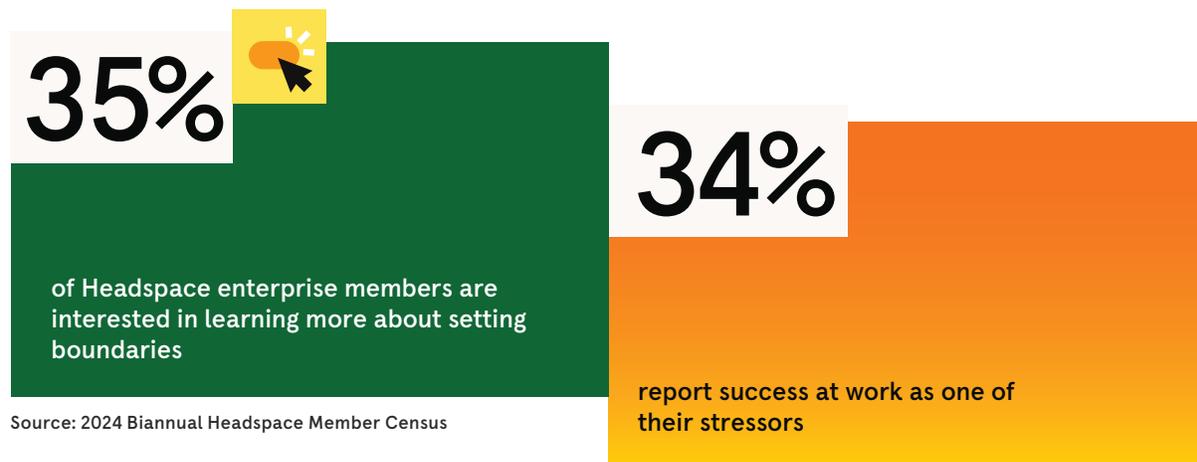
62%

Executive

41%

Individual Contributor

Compounded, this data shows that many employees, especially non-executives, don't feel comfortable enforcing boundaries at work. This results in additional stress, sleep challenges, and burnout – which can negatively impact their performance at work and their ability to show up in their personal lives. Leaders must take steps to ensure that all employees feel as comfortable as they do enforcing boundaries.



#### TAKE ACTION

**How can organizations ensure that all employees know how to set boundaries – and feel comfortable enforcing them?**



With skill-building tools and resources, Headspace can help employees understand how to feel comfortable setting and enforcing boundaries when it comes to their work/life balance.

- Provide training to help people leaders spot the signs of mental distress. Headspace's workshop, 'Leaders as a Lifeline', and guided content, 'Thrive as a Leader', helps managers do just that to maintain mental wellbeing across teams.
- Empower managers to check in with employees regularly about boundaries and workloads.
- Ensure that each level can communicate to their teams to make sure they enforce their own boundaries and feel comfortable doing so.
- Create written guidelines around work times and time off policies, and make sure people managers actively encourage their teams to take breaks and time away from work.
- Offer tools that help your employees proactively set boundaries. For example, an out-of-office template that employees can easily fill out with information that might be needed while they're away allows them to completely unplug during their time off.
- Consider a variety of flexible time off options to ensure that employees are able to prioritize taking time away to recharge.

TREND #3

**Mental health leaves of absence are increasing, and employees don't feel supported when they need a break.**

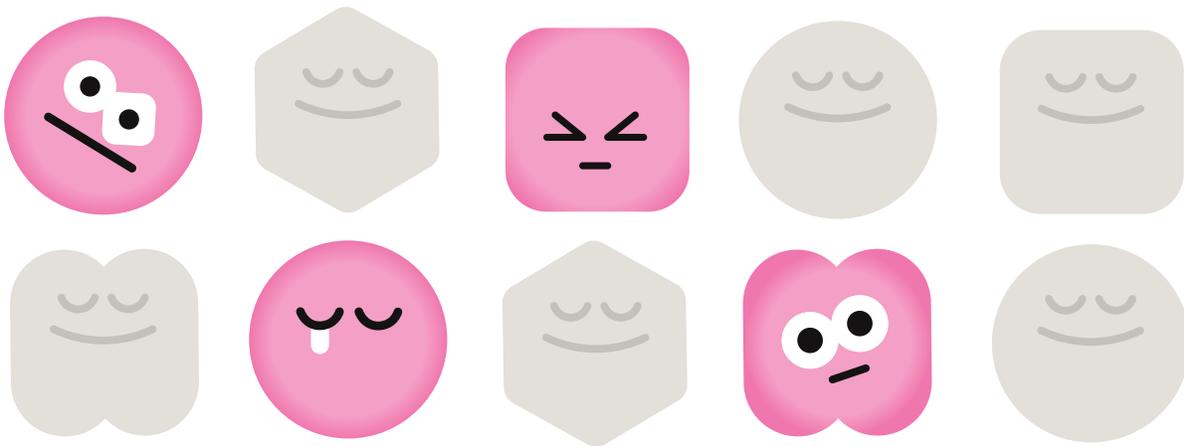


**51%**

of HR leaders say that mental health-related leaves of absence are increasing at their company

With increasing stressors outside of work, like economic instability, inflation, and global conflicts, many people are finding less time to mentally recover and care for themselves. In addition, with widespread layoffs, remaining employees may be feeling burnt out from taking on more work, or stressed that they could be laid off, too. As a result, for many, mental health can reach a breaking point in which a person needs concerted time away from work responsibilities to feel better. For many, this means extended leave, often under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

Workplaces are reflecting these challenges – 51% of HR leaders report that mental health leaves of absence are increasing, and 4 out of 10 employees report having taken a leave of absence to care for their own mental health. With these leaves becoming more commonplace, it's important that leaders have impactful policies in place to support employees through leaves and return to work, and offer resources to proactively support mental health, so that leaves are less common.



# 4 in 10

employees report having taken a leave of absence to care for their own mental health

4 in 5 HR leaders say they have a policy in place for mental health–related leaves of absence, and 7 in 10 report providing resources to get back to work after a mental health leave. Unfortunately, many employees who take mental health leaves don't feel these resources and policies are adequate.

62% of employees did not feel fully supported when discussing their mental health–related leave of absence with their manager or HR, and 56% did not feel fully supported upon returning to work after their leave. This suggests that policies to support employees taking mental health leaves may not be as effective or comprehensive as leaders intended.

Given that 96% of HR leaders agree that accessible and proactive mental health resources can reduce the need for extended mental health leaves, it's important to ensure employees have access to these tools.



**7/10**

HR leaders report that they provide resources to get back to work

**56%**

of employees did not feel fully supported upon returning to work after leave



**9/10**

HR leaders agree that accessible and proactive mental health resources can reduce the need for extended mental health leaves



Organizations must prioritize mental health by fostering a culture of connection, prevention, and balance. At Microsoft, we recognize that well-being isn't just about support in times of crisis; it's about creating an environment where employees have the tools to support their mental health every day. By investing in initiatives that destigmatize mental health, encourage employees to set healthy boundaries, and recharge when needed, we empower our teams to navigate challenges with resilience.

KRISTEN ROBY DIMLOW, CORPORATE VICE PRESIDENT,  
GLOBAL TALENT ACQUISITION, TOTAL REWARDS AND  
PERFORMANCE, MICROSOFT



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#### TAKE ACTION

### What can you do to reduce mental health-related leaves of absence, and support employees who do take them?

- Create written, clear guidelines about how HR and team managers should support employees who take mental health-related leaves of absence. Include templates for offboarding and onboarding an employee for a leave, and socialize the policies so employees know it's an option.
- Garner feedback from those who have taken leave. What resources would have helped them in the transition? What do they wish they had known before taking leave? Use this feedback to adapt your policies.
- Provide specific mental health resources and tools to help individuals return to work, like therapy and guided content.
- Encourage all employees to proactively care for their mental health by using the employer-provided resources. These tools can be used on a daily basis to help build resilience and process feelings, so employees are better able to navigate challenging situations, bounce back, and bring their best selves to their workplace and their home lives.

TREND #4

# Organizations need ways to better support employees with different mental health needs.



**67%**

of HR leaders report that the most important offering when considering an EAP is their mental health support

An ongoing challenge for many HR teams is to ensure that the employee assistance program (EAP) they offer their employees is meeting the needs of their teams – and that the employees are using it to their advantage. 67% of HR leaders report that the most important offering when considering an EAP is mental health support, which can include coaching, therapy, psychiatry, and guided content. For many leaders, a traditional EAP isn't enough. EAPs must provide high-quality, effective mental healthcare that is engaging and easy to access.

Today's mental healthcare offerings for employees should go beyond therapy or psychiatry for times of crisis alone. Employees today who are facing a variety of stressors also need mental well-being and skill-building tools that are easy to access and ensure that they have the resources to regularly take time to care for their minds.



The key to ensuring this happens is making sure that your EAP not only provides comprehensive mental healthcare and support, but also enables your team to drive engagement. Unfortunately, only half (52%) of HR leaders are completely satisfied with their EAP provider's communication and employee engagement materials. They also believe that regular distribution of employee communications and reminders could increase EAP utilization.

**66** A lot of traditional EAPs focus just on therapy, but we knew our team needed more than that. Sometimes it's coaching, sometimes it's a meditation or a sleepcast to unwind after a long shift. We wanted to make mental health support feel natural and accessible—something people could use every day, not just in a crisis. That's what made Headspace EAP stand out for us.

LISA MOSBY, CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER, BARTACO



In order to drive employee engagement with EAP-provided mental health resources, EAP vendors need to provide adequate communications to engage employees – and partner with companies to ensure that these communications are meeting the needs of their specific workplace. EAP providers can share best practices and strategies to create a culture of care – one that infuses mental well-being into a company’s culture and ensures that employees can easily access the tools available to them.

#### TAKE ACTION

### How can organizations make sure their EAP is moving the needle on mental health?

- Partner with an EAP provider that offers robust, personalized, and end-to-end mental health support and regular, engaging communications. Consider the value of low-barrier subclinical offerings within EAPs, like evidence-based sleep support, as a low-stigma entry to care.
- Make sure to choose a partner who can work with you to tailor communications to your audience, highlighting the services most important for your employees.
- A big blocker to EAP usage is the (perceived or actual) difficulty in getting to a provider in a timely manner. Use communications that make it clear how to access help quickly.
- Infuse mental health into your company culture by enabling leaders to discuss mental health in a way that reduces stigma. Encourage managers to regularly communicate the availability of support and the value it provides.

TREND #5

# HR leaders and employees alike are ready for AI in mental health.

94%

of HR leaders are interested in offering mental health benefits that use AI, and **89% of employees** would feel comfortable using them



Organizations are seeking mental health solutions that can operate at scale, supporting employees in a way that ultimately drives improved outcomes and reduces the costs of care. One key way to do this is with technology-enabled, preventative, subclinical resources. This enables employees to take steps to care for their mental health on their own time and leverage science-backed approaches to use technology to improve mental well-being. What's more, platforms leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) are making significant headway in the way they provide support.

The recent advancements of AI in mental health are promising, especially considering the appetite for the use of AI. 94% of HR leaders are interested in offering mental health benefits that use AI, and 89% of employees would feel comfortable using them.



**Ebb** is Headspace's empathetic AI companion integrated into its app to help people navigate life's ups and downs. Ebb provides instant, personalized support designed to guide Headspace members through self-reflection and emotional processing.

At a time when budgets for mental healthcare can be tight, this indicates a key opportunity – employers can leverage mental health offerings that utilize AI as a way to more efficiently scale support. This means that more employees can engage in care to support their mental well-being more easily, and more individuals can be supported – rather than a traditional model that only offers mental health support through 1:1 therapy and psychiatry.

AI integrations in mental health offerings also provide opportunities beyond care and as a complement to care, including skill-building and support between clinical appointments. This can help improve resilience and key mental health outcomes metrics.



The operational efficiency, productivity and employee satisfaction opportunities that exist when integrating AI into employee support programs are compelling. Even more exciting is the potential of AI to personalize support at scale, paving the way for a future where healthier outcomes for employees aren't only possible, but accelerated.

JEFF SCOTT, MANAGING DIRECTOR, BENEFITS, WELLNESS,  
PERFORMANCE AND RECOGNITION, BANK OF MONTREAL



**TAKE ACTION**

## How can you take advantage of the advancements in mental health AI?

- Given the interest from employees in AI-powered mental health support, it's time for leaders to consider these next-generation offerings. Explore mental health benefits that offer AI personalization and support, such as [Ebb](#).
- Remember that AI cannot replace human-driven mental healthcare like therapy and psychiatry – but it can complement it. Look to AI as a resource for preventative and skill-building support.
- Mental health can be personal. It's important that any care offerings are confidential and secure. Ensure the appropriate guardrails are in place by examining the security and privacy protocols of any mental health platform using AI.

## Addressing employee mental health challenges in 2025

While data shows that today's employees are struggling when it comes to mental health, it also indicates that HR leaders have a great opportunity to make a positive impact, despite tight budgets and competing priorities.

Leaders can improve employee mental health both via company culture and through the benefits offered. By creating opportunities for connection and community building at work, teams can reduce loneliness among employees and increase retention. And, by building deeper personal connections, leaders can also empower employees to speak up when it comes to boundaries at work so they can create a positive work/life balance – enabling them to bring their whole selves to work and reducing the likelihood of burnout. When HR creates clear, actionable guidelines to ensure that their culture is one where employees feel safe enforcing boundaries and feel connected to their teams, they create sustainable, long-lasting cultures of care.

When it comes to mental health benefits, offering personalized support and comprehensive, engaging benefits is key. With technology-enabled solutions that quickly connect employees to the support they need and drive improved outcomes and healthcare cost savings, HR leaders can reduce absenteeism and presenteeism, resulting in better business.

The University of California San Francisco (UCSF) saw this come to life with their employee population. In a randomized controlled trial published in [JAMA](#), UCSF researchers evaluated the impact of Headspace use on 1,400+ employees with no history of meditating or practicing mindfulness. After engaging with Headspace's mindfulness and meditation content for eight weeks, participants reported significant improvements around perceived stress, job strain, burnout, work engagement, mindfulness, depression, and anxiety. Improvements sustained – or got better – at a four-month follow-up.



Interested in learning more about how you can address employee mental health? [Contact us](#).

# How well does your organization support employee mental health?

Use this checklist to see if you're addressing the key challenges and opportunities in employee mental health today.

- BUILDING COMMUNITY**
  - Plan for team connection, whether that's in-person offsites and workshops, hybrid or virtual group meditations, or collaborative activities during meetings
  - Support ERGs with funding, executive sponsorship, and other resourcing as a critical component of employee connectivity
  - Provide preventative mental health support that focuses on mental resilience
  
- ENABLING HEALTHY BOUNDARY-SETTING**
  - Ensure guidelines around work times and time-off policies are available to all
  - Provide mental health tools and workshops that teach employees how to proactively set boundaries and enforce them
  - Offer flexible PTO and break policies, allowing employees time away from work in the way that works for their schedule
  - Provide training to help people leaders check in with their teams and spot the signs of mental distress
  - Ensure employees at all levels of the business feel comfortable setting and enforcing boundaries at work
  
- SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES THROUGH MENTAL HEALTH LEAVES OF ABSENCE - AND PREVENTING THEM**
  - Create written, clear guidelines about how HR and team managers should support employees who take mental health-related leaves of absence. Include templates for offboarding and onboarding an employee for a leave, and socialize the policies.
  - Collect feedback from employees who have taken mental health leaves about their experience, and adapt guidelines and support tools accordingly
  - Provide specific mental health resources and tools to help individuals return to work, like coaching, therapy, and skill-building tools
  - Encourage employees to proactively care for their mental health by using the employer-provided resources on a regular basis

OPTIMIZING YOUR EAP FOR RESULTS

- Partner with an EAP provider that offers robust, personalized, and end-to-end mental health support
- Choose a partner who can work with you to tailor communications to your audience, highlighting the services most important for your employees
- Communicate regularly and across multiple channels to ensure employees always know how to access help quickly
- Infuse mental health into your company culture by enabling leaders to discuss mental health in a way that reduces stigma
- Encourage managers to regularly communicate about the availability of mental health support and the value it provides

 TAKING ADVANTAGE OF AI INNOVATIONS IN MENTAL HEALTH

- Explore mental health benefits that offer AI personalization and support, such as Ebb
- Look to AI as a resource for preventative and skill-building support. Ensure that AI offerings can be used as a complement to human-centered mental healthcare like therapy or psychiatry.
- Ensure appropriate guardrails are in place by examining the security and privacy protocols of any mental health platform using AI
- Make sure employees understand the confidentiality of AI tools so they feel comfortable using them



Interested in learning more about how Headspace can help your company check every box on the list? [Contact us here.](#)

