



Spotlight on mental health: Are we caring for caregivers?

New research identifies challenges and opportunities for employers.

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GROUP BENEFIT
SOLUTIONS

Overview.

While an important focus has been placed on helping employees with their own mental well-being, the latest research commissioned by New York Life Group Benefit Solutions (NYL GBS) reveals that employees who are caring for loved ones living with mental health challenges also need greater support in the workplace.



“While many employers have increased benefit offerings designed to address eldercare and childcare needs, caregiving associated with mental health is an area of opportunity – and our research shows employees are turning to their workplaces for this kind of support.”

Meghan Shea, Vice President and Head of Strategy and Solutions at New York Life Group Benefit Solutions.

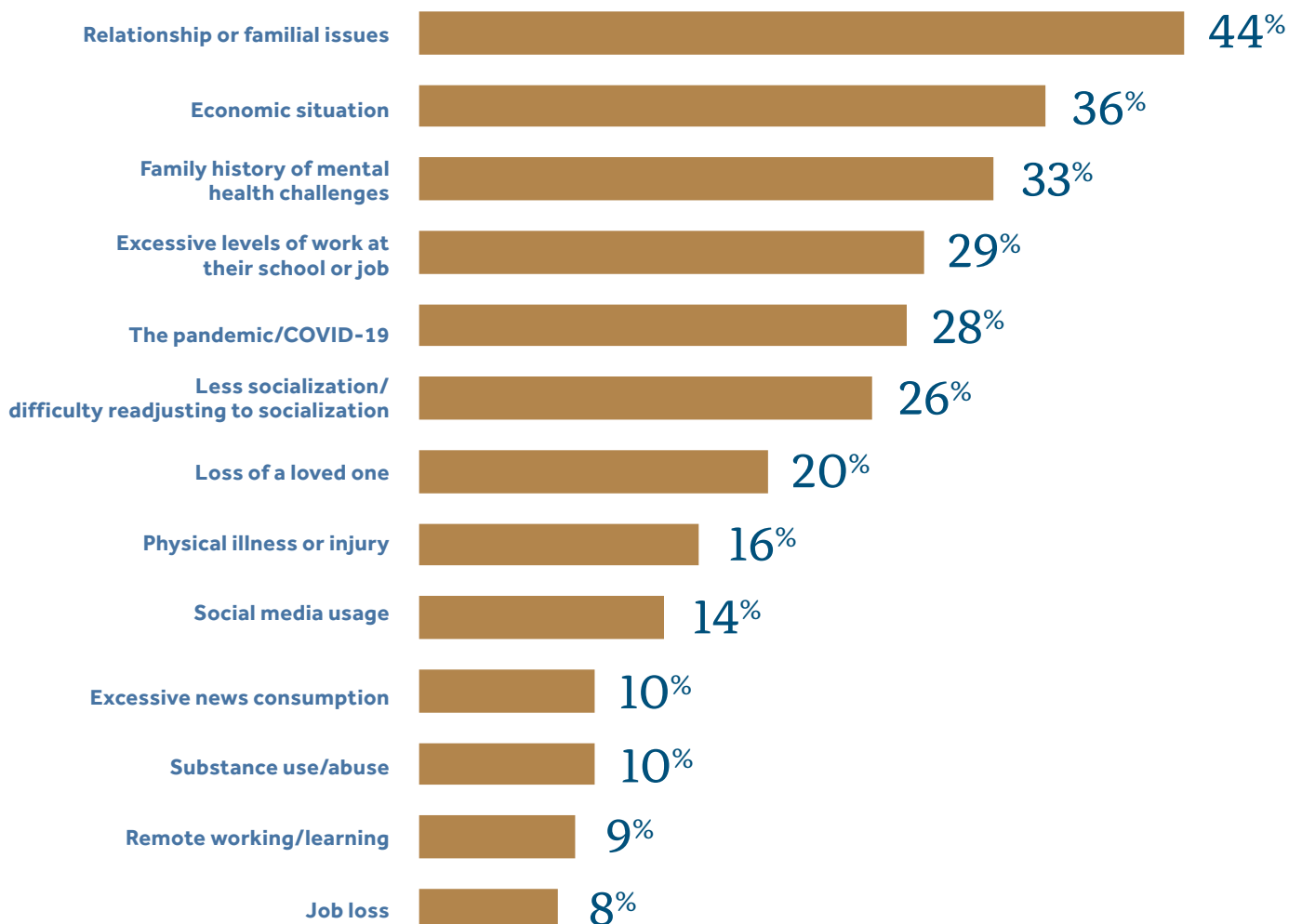
The growing mental health crisis.

Mental illness across the globe has accelerated in recent years. That includes a 25% increase in depression and anxiety in the first year of the pandemic, according to the World Health Organization.*

In the U.S., this growing mental health crisis is affecting both individuals and those caring for a loved one with mental health challenges. A diverse range of factors are contributing to these mental health issues, from personal relationships and economic situations to excessive workloads

and social media consumption. To understand who and how these trends are impacting the workplace, NYL GBS commissioned research among workers who have been supporting a loved one struggling with a mental health challenge.

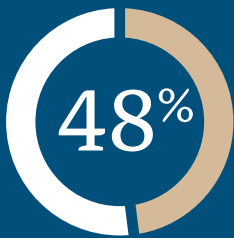
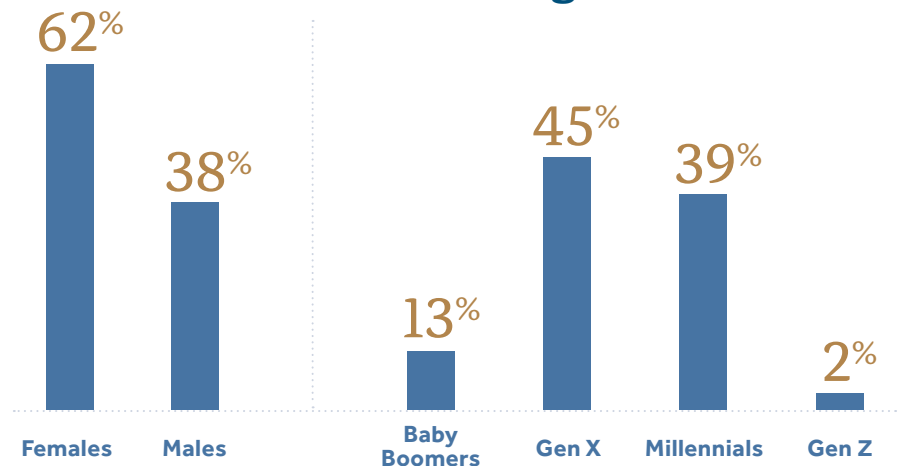
Factors contributing to an increase in mental health challenges.



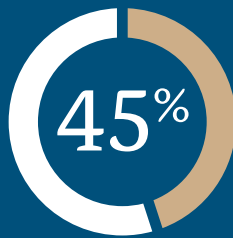
As mental health challenges grow, so do caregiving responsibilities.

We found that nearly half of surveyed workers helped a loved one, primarily a spouse or child, live with a mental health challenge in the last year. Of this group, a significant number say their loved one is struggling with their mental health more often this year than in the previous year, and most say they've helped a member of their household with anxiety in the past year. This data suggests that mental health is likely to remain a primary caregiving driver.

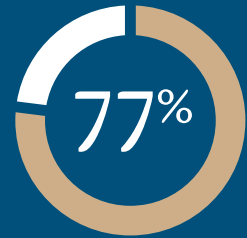
Who are the caregivers?



48% of surveyed workers have helped a loved one with a mental health challenge in the past year.



45% of caregivers say their loved ones have experienced more mental health challenges this year compared to the previous year.



77% of surveyed caregivers report helping their loved one with anxiety.



Caregivers report spending an average of **nine hours per week** helping their loved ones.

These primary caregiving responsibilities include talking through their loved ones' mental health challenges, assisting with day-to-day tasks, or accompanying them to appointments.



Caregivers are struggling.

Most surveyed caregivers said that helping loved ones manage these challenges has impacted their personal lives and taken a toll on their own mental health and stress levels. Caregivers cited a need for their own mental health support to address a variety of pressures affecting their personal lives.

80%

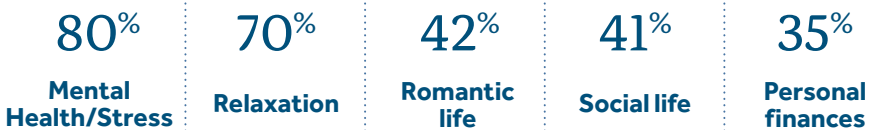
of caregivers said helping loved ones with mental health challenges has impacted their own mental health/stress levels.

65%

said they need more assistance to address their own mental health.

The toll of mental health caregiving.

Areas of impact on caregivers' lives

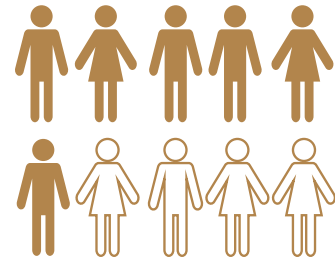


“The increasing rate of mental illness is a growing concern, impacting both individuals navigating these challenges and the loved ones who are supporting them.”

Meghan Shea
Head of Strategy and Solutions
New York Life Group Benefit Solutions

Caregiving is impacting work productivity.

The added pressures associated with caregiving are not only having an impact at home, but also in the workplace. Most caregivers agree that supporting their loved ones has affected their productivity. While at work, they report feeling distracted and overwhelmed, lacking motivation, and having difficulty thinking. Nearly half of caregivers (46%) say they aren't performing their best.



6-in-10

caregivers agree that their work productivity has been impacted while trying to focus on helping their loved ones.

Productivity and performance are at risk.

While at work, these caregivers report



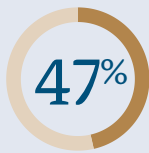
Unfortunately, caregivers silently struggle in the workplace.

Caregivers are silently struggling at work due to the negative impact of caregiving on their mental health and work performance. But despite feeling stressed, exhausted, and overwhelmed, many caregivers hesitate to voice their needs.

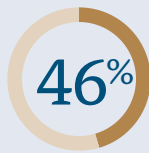
Only half of caregivers say they have taken time off from work for reasons related to their own mental health or to help support that of their loved one. Those who didn't take time off cited their outstanding work as the reason. Managers, in particular, were more likely to avoid taking time off (51%) than non-managers (41%), due to workloads.

Caregiving and the workplace.

Caregivers avoid taking time off



say they have not taken time off for their own mental health or a loved one's.



cited too much work to do as reason for not taking time off.

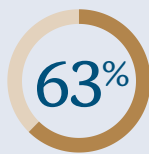


say they don't want to be perceived as unreliable.

Caregivers avoid discussing mental health at work



of caregivers have not told anyone at work about needing to help support their loved one.



of female caregivers withheld their caregiving status.



of caregivers don't believe anyone at work is equipped to help them find mental health resources.



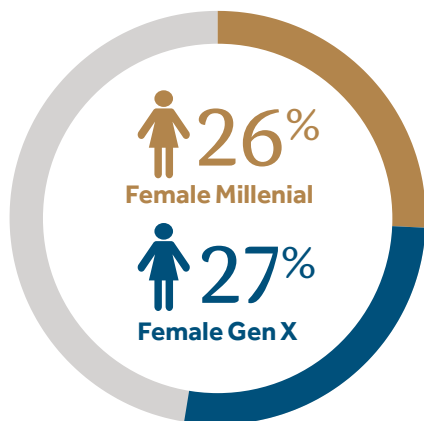
Employers might explore why certain employees are reluctant to discuss mental health in the workplace. Most caregivers have withheld their status as someone who is supporting their loved ones' mental health needs, while one fifth of caregivers don't believe that their organization is equipped to provide support.

Women: more likely to be caregivers... less likely to talk about it.

The survey indicates that women experience more stigma surrounding mental health discussions in the workplace — even though they make up more than half of caregivers. Females were less likely than males to inform anyone at work about supporting their loved ones. Women were also less likely than men to disclose how their role as a caregiver was impacting their own mental health. This is even more pronounced when looking at female Millennials and Gen Xers.



More than half of caregivers are female Millennials and Gen Xers.



They say that caregiving affects their own mental health

↑ **67%** more anxiety compared to male Millennials (56%)³

↑ **54%** more sadness compared to male Gen Xers (45%)⁴

Male Millennials are more receptive to employer resources.

↑ **60%** more aware of employer mental health resources compared to female Millennials (51%)

↑ **41%** more receptive to using those resources compared to female Millennials (34%)

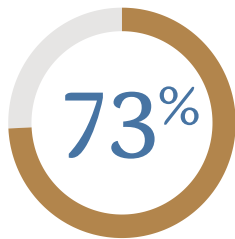
Interestingly, male Millennials were more likely to be familiar with their company's mental health resources, and also more likely than their female counterparts to say that nothing would prevent them from using mental health benefits.

"The survey results show that there is still a great deal of stigma surrounding mental health discussions in the workplace, particularly for women," said Shea. "This highlights an opportunity for workplaces to focus on providing safe and supportive environments where employees, regardless of age or gender, feel comfortable discussing their mental health challenges and seeking the help they need."

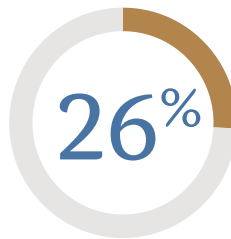
More opportunities for employers to help.

Employers have an opportunity to create an even stronger culture of support around mental health and drive greater awareness of available resources. Most caregivers express a desire for additional benefits at work focused on mental health, while only slightly more than half (54%) are familiar with their employers' mental health resources.

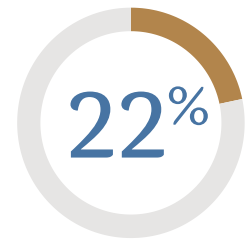
Even fewer say their employer offers training to help them identify a loved one's mental health and only one in five caregivers say their employer offers training that prepares them for conversations with loved ones about mental health challenges.



73% of caregivers wish their employer would offer more benefits focused on mental health.



26% say their employer offers training to help them identify if a loved one is experiencing a mental health challenge.



22% say their employer offers training that prepares them for conversations with loved ones about mental health challenges.





How employers can get started.

Many employers have increased benefit offerings to address a range of employee needs, from childcare to eldercare. With caregivers expressing a desire for mental health support in the workplace, providing mental health resources, and caregiving offerings is an area of opportunity.

Employers can make a positive impact by acknowledging and addressing these challenges and creating a workplace that values the well-being of its caregivers. Considering flexible work arrangements or paid time off for caregiving needs can go a long

way in supporting employees who are juggling the demands of caregiving and work.

Another opportunity lies with human resource departments where the focus is on providing the right benefit offerings. What's often missing are advocates at the local level, such as team leads and managers. By training managers on how to effectively discuss mental health needs with their employees, they can reinforce and drive awareness of available support during one-on-one discussions.

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5 ways

to build a greater culture of support

1 

Evaluate and take inventory of current available benefits.

The best place to start is with evaluating your current mental health benefits. Some mental health services may already be included within your Employee Assistance Program that can provide helpful support to caregivers, such as counseling and coaching services.

After taking inventory, you can better assess the need and opportunity to add additional resources for employees.

2 

Consider offering paid time off for caregiving needs, along with flexible work arrangements.

When employees feel compelled to show up for work while navigating mental health caregiving challenges, they are not showing up as their best self.

By offering flexible work arrangements and paid time off specific to caregiving needs, you can better enable employees to find a more effective work-life balance. This could help ensure that when employees are at work, they are focused and productive.

3 

Drive ongoing awareness of available mental health resources.

Deploy communications and reminders throughout the year promoting resources, not just at benefits enrollment time. Consider multiple ways to promote available support beyond your benefits intranet site, such as highlighting resources during company or team meetings.

4 

Create training and education specific to mental health needs.

Implementing management training focused on effective ways to help employees manage mental health challenges could help to reduce the stigma often associated with speaking about mental health in the workplace. It could also help employees feel more comfortable in discussing caregiving needs with managers before work performance begins to suffer.

5 

Develop advocates for mental health wellness throughout your organization.

Creating mental health benefit advocates, beyond your benefits team, can help ensure that employees are aware of available resources and encouraged to take advantage of them.

If trained appropriately, managers make great advocates, reinforcing and driving awareness around available support during one-on-one discussions.

Putting Benefits To Work For People.SM

Contact Us



Learn about the mental health tools and resources we have available to support you and your employees. Reach out to your New York Life Group Benefit Solutions representative or contact us:

[newyorklife.com/group-benefit-solutions/contact-us](https://www.newyorklife.com/group-benefit-solutions/contact-us)

About New York Life

New York Life Insurance Company (www.newyorklife.com), a Fortune 100 company founded in 1845, is the largest mutual life insurance company in the United States⁵ and one of the largest life insurers in the world. Headquartered in New York City, New York Life's family of companies offers life insurance, retirement income, investments and long-term care insurance. New York Life has the highest financial strength ratings currently awarded to any U.S. life insurer from all four of the major credit rating agencies.⁶

Survey methodology

Survey methodology: New York Life Group Benefit Solutions commissioned Morning Consult to conduct an online poll between December 9th–December 15th, 2022, among 1000 Employed adults who have had their mental health impact by caring for loved one who is facing a mental challenge. The data was weighted to approximate a target sample of adults based on gender, age, race, educational attainment, and region. The margin of error for the full sample is +/- 3 percentage points. All statistics included in this communication were derived from this study unless footnoted with another source.

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* Source: World Health Organization, COVID-19 pandemic triggers 25% increase in prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide, March 2, 2022.

¹ 55% of caregivers who reported their work productivity has been impacted indicated they were lacking motivation.

² 53% of caregivers who reported their work productivity has been impacted indicated they were having difficulty thinking.

³ 67% of female millennials report having more anxiety compared to male millennials (56%).

⁴ 54% of female Gen Xers report having more sadness compared to male Gen Xers (45%).

⁵ Based on revenue as reported by "Fortune 500 ranked within Industries, Insurance: Life, Health (Mutual)," Fortune magazine, 5/23/2022. For methodology, please see <http://fortune.com/fortune500/>.

⁶ Individual independent rating agency commentary as of 10/18/2022: A.M. Best (A++), Fitch (AAA), Moody's Investors Service (Aaa), Standard & Poor's (AA+).

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