

NSW Mentally Healthy Workplaces

WORKER MENTAL HEALTH

DURING COVID-19

December 2020 mentalhealthatwork.nsw.gov.au

Mentally Healthy Workplaces in NSW

instinct and reason

worker mental health during COVID-19

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December 2020

project overview

Objectives

SafeWork NSW's vision is to ensure NSW workplaces take effective action to create mentally healthy workplaces to enable "healthy, safe and productive working lives". By 2022, the aim is to have more than 90,000 NSW businesses taking effective action, with the target of a 30% reduction in serious workplace illness and injuries.

The re-execution of the mentally healthy workplaces survey for the 2020 mid-term evaluation provided an opportunity to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health in the workplace in NSW.

Both the employer and worker BMT surveys included additional questions that focused on understanding worker mental health experiences in the last 12 months, the contribution of COVID-19 to mental health in the last 12 months, support and improvements for those feeling unwell provided by the workplace, and the impact of being required to work from home or being required to remain working from the workplace.



Method

The employer and worker BMT surveys were administered online through research only panels.

Timing of fieldwork: 36 days in field



Length of survey:

Employer survey: **14 mins 20 secs**

Worker survey: **13 mins 57 secs**



The results presented in the rest of the report are weighted to the population based on ABS data by ward area, age and gender (the sample profiles and footnotes provide the unweighted responses). All tests for statistical significance have been undertaken at the 95 per cent level of confidence. A red circle or green square around a value denotes that the result is significantly lower or greater (respectively) than that of the total sample for that question.

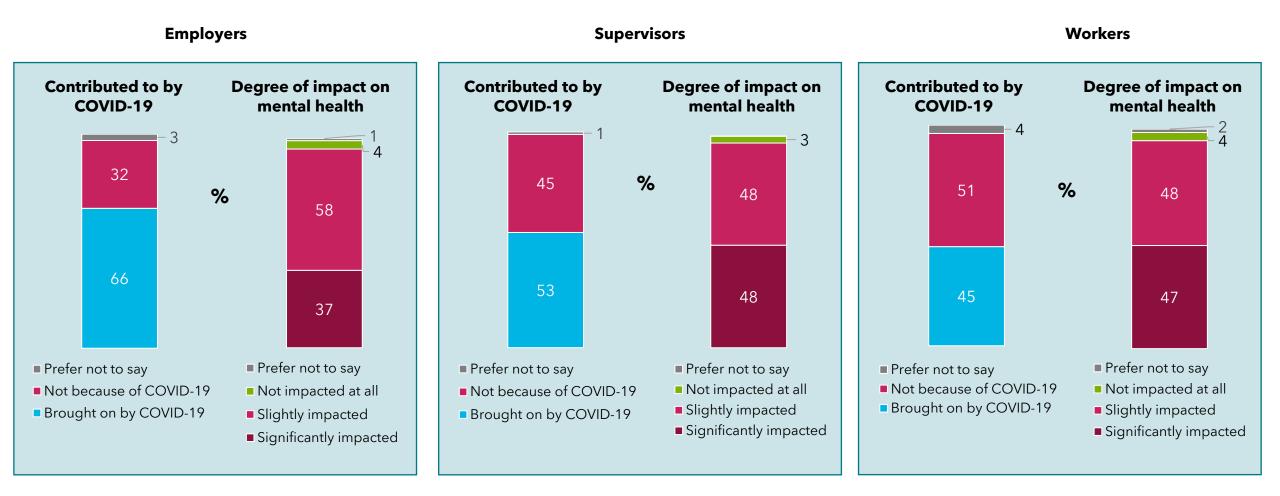


workplace mental health in the last 12 months

Employers (%)



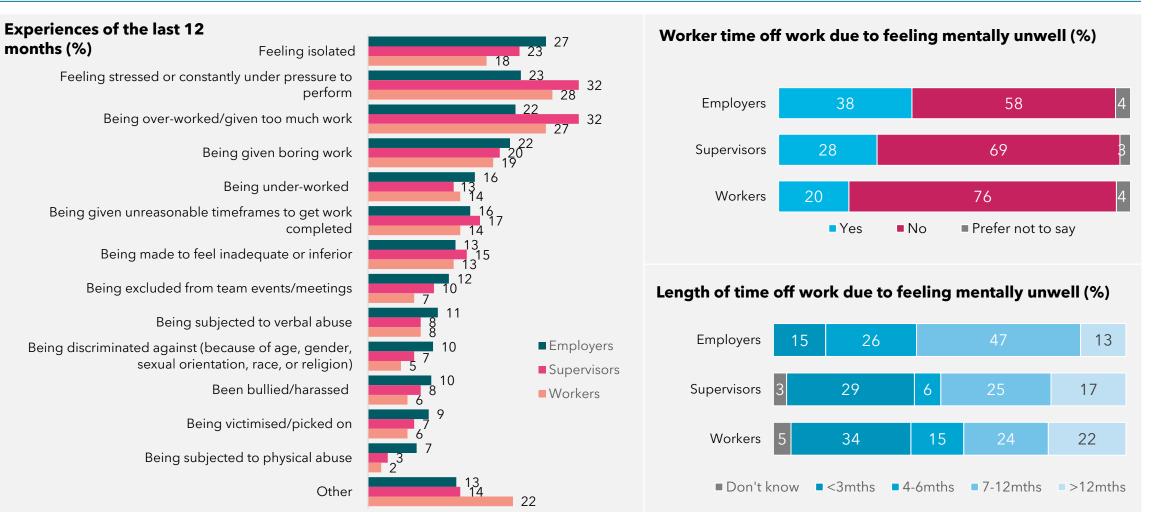
QF1. [single response] In the last 12 months, what percentage of your workforce have reported feeling mentally unwell due to the workplace? Base: NSW employers n=4,002 **QF1.** [single response] In the last 12 months, have you experienced feeling mentally unwell due to your workplace? Base: NSW supervisors n=2,737; NSW workers n=5,268



QF1a. [single response] Was this brought on by the COVID-19 experience? Base: NSW employers (senior management/HR roles) stating % workforce mentally unwell in the last 12 months n=3,314; NSW supervisors who responded mentally unwell in the last 12 months n=1,065; NSW workers who responded mentally unwell in the last 12 months n=1,696 **QF1b.** [single response] To what degree has COVID-19 impacted workers' mental health and wellbeing? Base: NSW employers (senior management/HR roles) stating worker mental health impacted by COVID-19 n=2,311; NSW supervisors who stated mental health impacted by COVID-19 n=607; NSW workers who stated mental health impacted by COVID-19 n=731

mental health experience of workers in the last 12 months

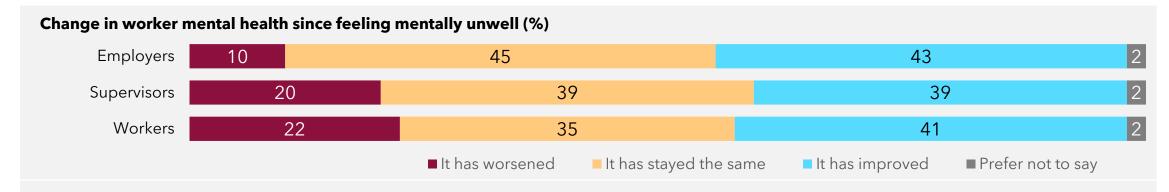
months (%)



QF4. [multiple response] To the best of your knowledge, please indicate which of the following experiences, if any, you/your workers have experienced at work in the last 12 months? Base: NSW employers (senior management/HR roles) n=3,731; NSW supervisors n=2,737; NSW supervisors n=2,737; NSW workers n=5,267

QF5a. [single response] Have workers had to take time off work due to feeling mentally unwell in the workplace? Base: NSW employers (senior management/HR roles) n=4,002; NSW supervisors n=2,737 NSW workers n=5,268 QF5b. [single response] How long ago was that? Base: NSW employers (senior management/HR roles) stating workers had time off work due to mental health n=2,085; NSW supervisors stating they had time off work due to mental health n=796; NSW workers stating they had time off work due to mental health n=1,281

support and improvements for those feeling unwell





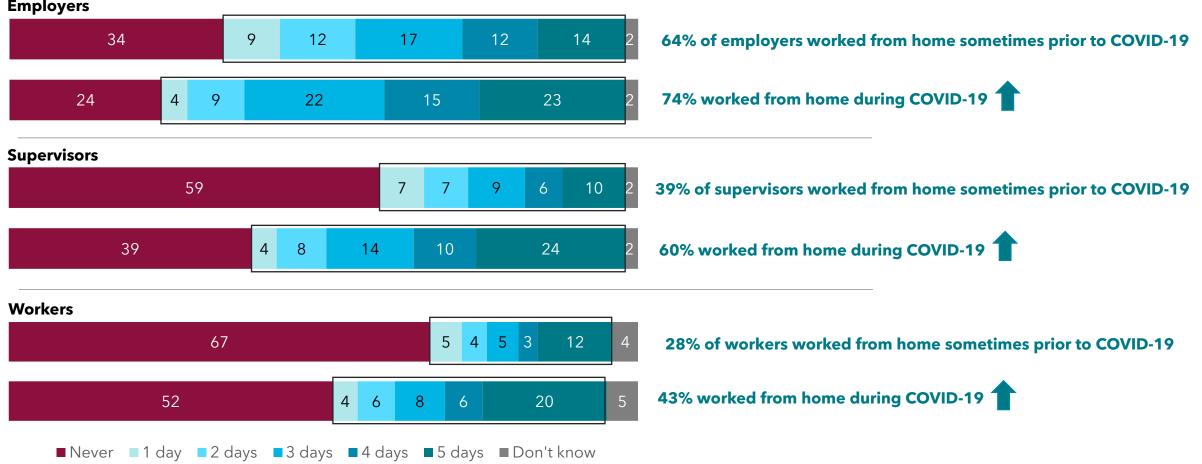
QF3. [single response] What change, if any, has there been in your/your workers' mental health since you/they felt mentally unwell? Base: NSW employers (senior management/HR roles) stating % workforce mentally unwell in the last 12 months n=3,314; NSW supervisors stating mentally unwell in the last 12 months n=1,065; NSW workers stating mentally unwell in the last 12 months n=1,696 **QF3a.** [multiple response] What support, if any, has been provided or accessed by you/workers since they felt mentally unwell? Base: NSW employers (senior management/HR roles) stating workforce mental health improved OR workplace has a positive impact on mental health n=2,778; NSW supervisors stating workforce mental health improved OR workplace has a positive impact on mental health n=1,548; NSW workers stating workforce mental health improved OR workplace has a positive impact on mental health n=2,649

how many worked from home during COVID-19?



%

Employers



QG1. During the COVID-19 period (March to now); about how many days a week, if any, have you generally worked from home? [S/R] QG2. Irrespective of COVID-19, about how many days a week, if any, did you generally work from home? [S/R] Base: NSW employers n= 4,002; NSW supervisors n=2,737; NSW workers n= 5,268

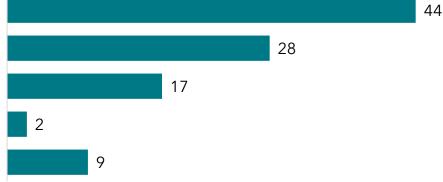
comfort with their working situation



%

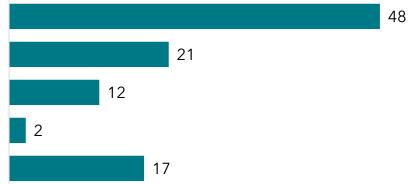
Supervisors

I have been required to go to work and I'm comfortable with that I have been required to work from home and I'm comfortable with that I have been required to go to work and I'm uncomfortable with that I have been required to work from home and I'm uncomfortable with that None of these describe me



Workers

I have been required to go to work and I'm comfortable with that I have been required to work from home and I'm comfortable with that I have been required to go to work and I'm uncomfortable with that I have been required to work from home and I'm uncomfortable with that None of these describe me



QG3. Which of the following best describes the way you have had to work during COVID-19? [S/R] Base: NSW supervisors n= 2,737; NSW workers n=5,268



workplace support for mental health during COVID-19

	24% of employers did NOT work from home:	39% of supervi NOT work from		52% of workers did NOT work from home:
Regularly communicated the measures the business has in place to safeguard us from COVID-19		38	38	31
My workplace was flexible and allowed changes to the way employees work to fulfill family responsibilities that may have changed as a result of COVID-19		37	30	21
Encouraged us to let them know when we are feeling anxious or feeling mentally unwell	34	Ļ	29	20
Ensured employees are aware of the entitlements that can be accessed, including carer entitlements	33		27	14
Provided mental health support services (EAP, training, mental health first aid) from within the organisation and encouraged us to use them	19	14		9
Constantly checked in via surveys/management to pick up increased levels of anxiety or stress with changes in the COVID-19 period	13	11		7
Other	0	0		1
None of the above	19	18		28
No changes have been made to address mental health in the workplace since COVID-19	14		25	25

QG4. Which of the following, if any, has your workplace done to address mental health in general during the COVID-19 period? [M/R]

%

Base: NSW employers who never worked from home since COVID-19 started n=537; NSW supervisors who never worked from home since COVID-19 started n=904; NSW workers who never worked from home since COVID-19 started n=2,525



working from home support for mental health during COVID-19

%

	74% of employers did work from home:	60% of supervisors did work from home:	43% of workers did work from home:
Genuinely support flexible work arrangements	43	45	43
Ensured there is good communication with workers	43	39	36
Ensured there is regular communication with workers	42	44	39
Consulted with workers on how best to manage work that impacts their mental health	31	22	15
Made sure workers have contact details for the EAP or others who could help them if needed	31	24	16
Consulted with workers on aspects of work that might impact their mental wellbeing	30	22	14
Ensured workers disengage from work and log off at the end of the day	28	20	17
Other	0	0	2
None of the above	5	10	21

QG5. Which of the following, if any, has your workplace undertaken in relation to working from home during COVID-19? [*M*/*R*] Base: NSW employers who have worked from home since COVID-19 started n=3,400; NSW supervisors who have worked from home since COVID-19 started n=1,789; NSW workers who have worked from home since COVID-19 started n=2,537





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Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website www.legislation.nsw.gov.au

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