



A Generational Comparison of Employee Behavioral Health

Behavioral Health Impact Study



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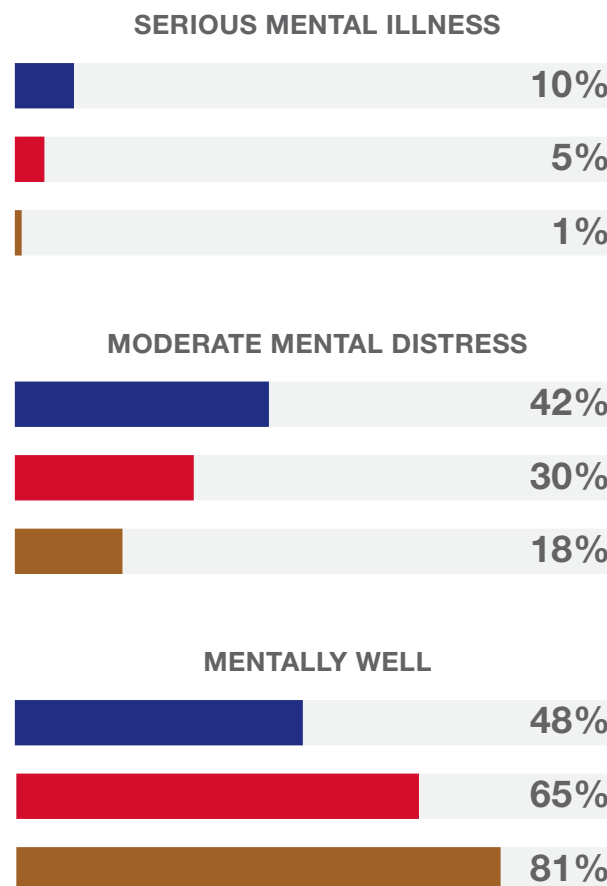
Behavioral Health by Generation

Millennials, Gen X, Boomers—each of these generations differ through the way they work, what they prioritize and the events that have molded them throughout their lifetime.

Yet, one similarity is that people of all ages are affected by the challenges of behavioral health conditions.

Mental health distress—such as depression and anxiety—and substance abuse are serious issues, and no generation is immune.

WHO IS REPORTING **MENTAL DISTRESS**?

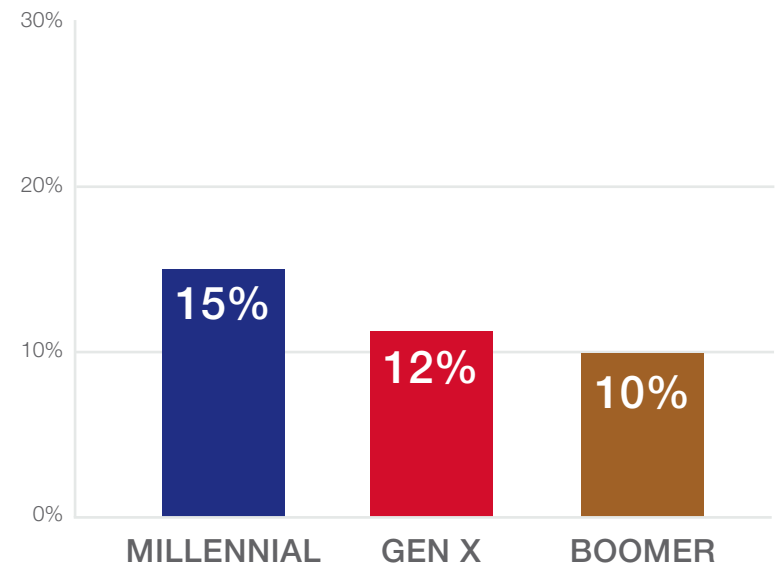


GENERATION
Millennial ■ Gen X ■ Boomer ■

But the generational difference is much smaller when it comes to addiction.

To learn more about how behavioral health conditions are affecting each generation of workers, The Standard conducted the Workplace Behavioral Health Impact Study. In this report you'll learn how each generation views behavioral health, how it's affecting their work, and how they expect their employers to handle these issues.

WHO HAS EVER SUFFERED FROM AN **ADDICTION?** (EXCLUDING TOBACCO)





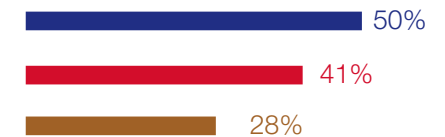
Of those responding that they're struggling with **mental health issues**, what are they struggling with?

MOST PREVALENT CONDITIONS

Depression



Anxiety



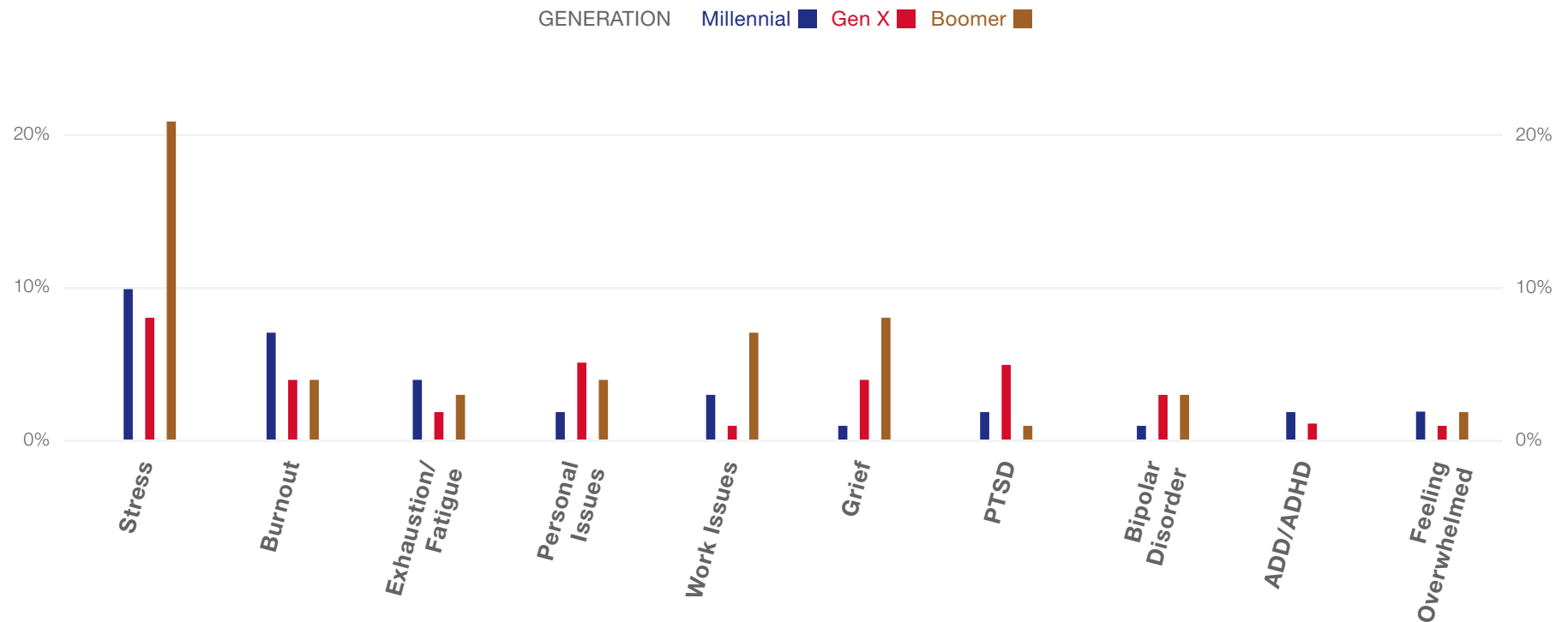
GENERATION Millennial ■ Gen X ■ Boomer ■

Conditions by Generation

From depression—the most prevalent condition—to PTSD, each generation is struggling with behavioral health issues in different ways and at different rates. And each generation describes their mental health conditions in slightly varying ways. For instance, what may be referred to as “stress” by Boomers might be called “anxiety” by younger workers.

But one thing is certain: no matter what they are categorized as, workers are struggling with a wide variety of behavioral health issues.

OF THOSE RESPONDING THAT THEY’RE STRUGGLING WITH
MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, WHAT ELSE ARE THEY STRUGGLING WITH?

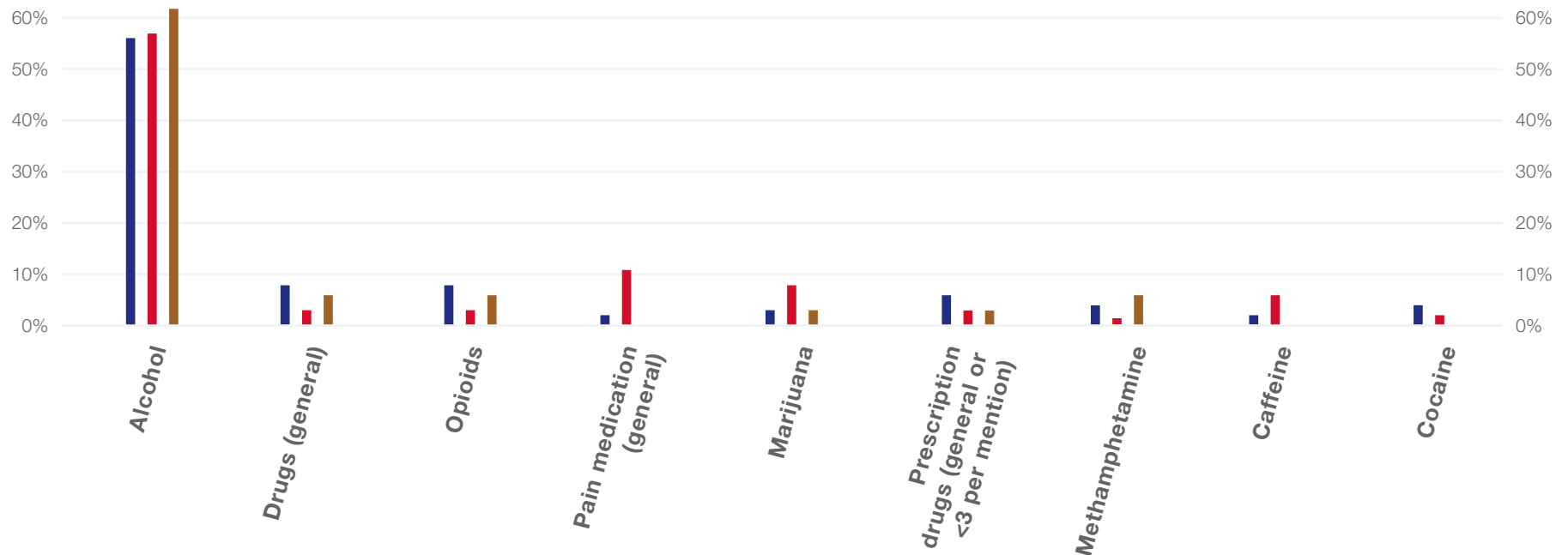


Conditions by Generation, continued

Just like with mental health issues, all generations have people who are also struggling with some level of substance abuse and addiction, from alcohol to illegal drugs.

OF THOSE STRUGGLING WITH **SUBSTANCE ABUSE ISSUES**,
WHAT ARE THEY STRUGGLING WITH?

GENERATION Millennial ■ Gen X ■ Boomer ■



Workplace Concerns by Generation

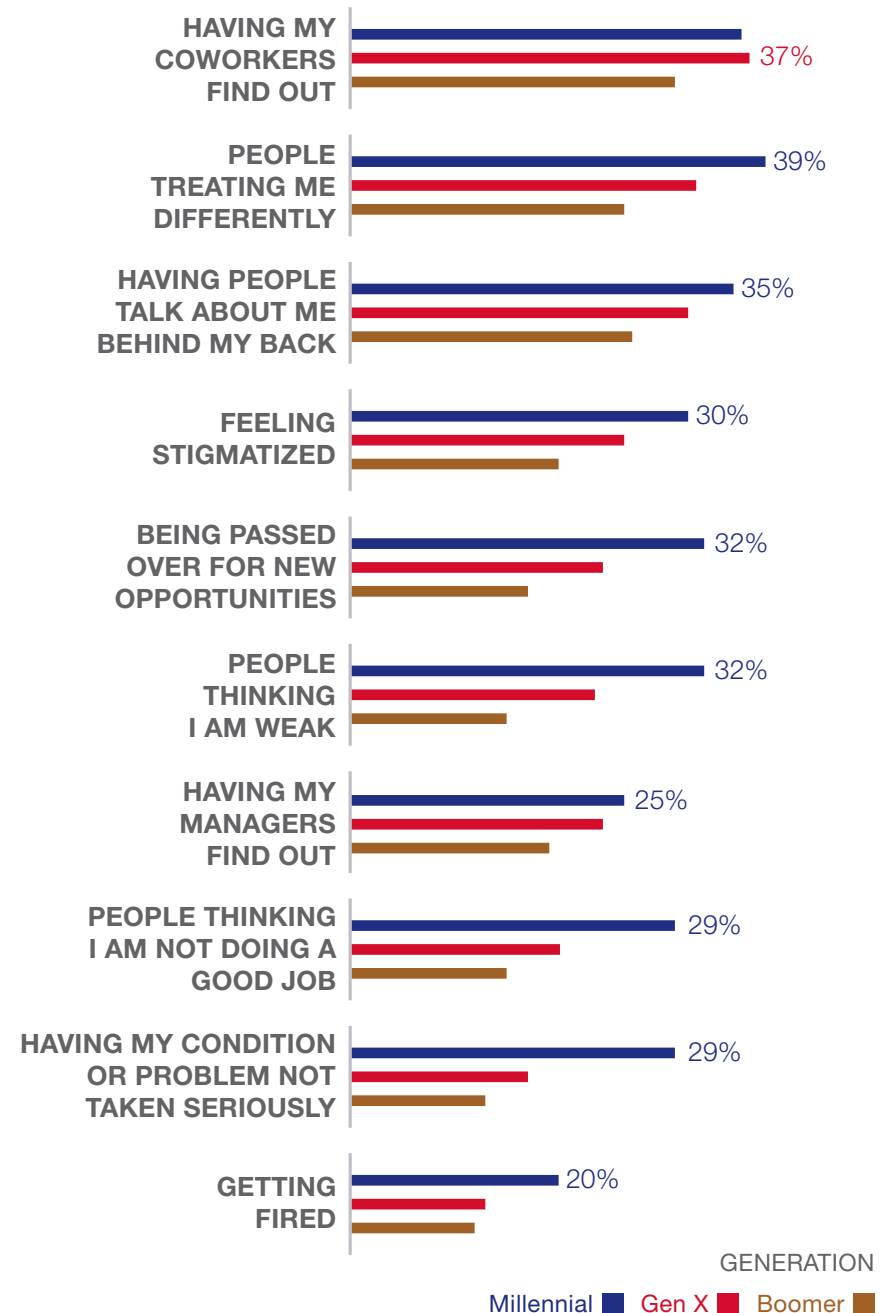
Across all generations, workers struggling with mental health and substance abuse issues are concerned about feeling stigmatized if they let their employer or others know.

But younger workers are especially concerned about the stigmas associated with having a mental health condition or issues with substance abuse.

“It seems like when you do voice your concerns, you suffer repercussions. It’s like they get upset, and then they’ll say, ‘Well maybe this isn’t the place for you.’”

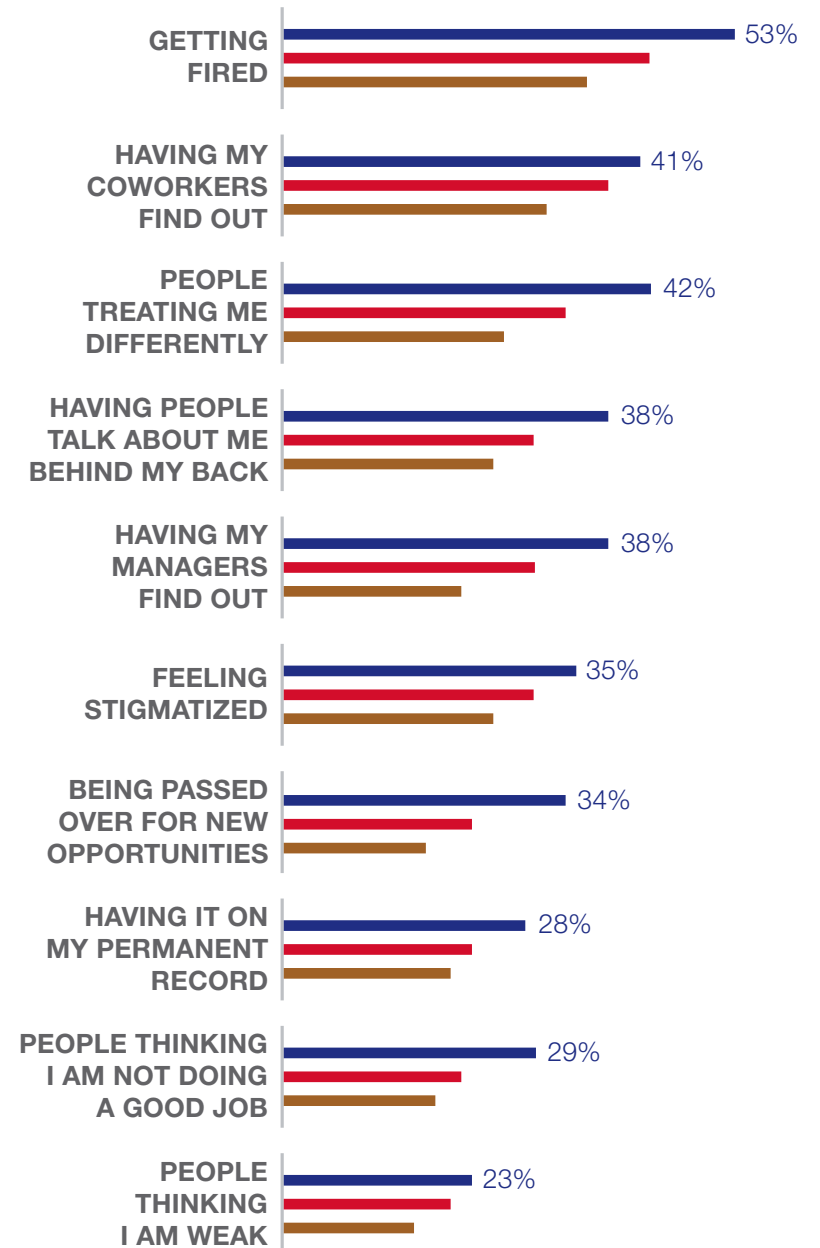
— Female, age 36, education industry

TEN BIGGEST WORRIES OF INFORMING EMPLOYER OF **MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**





TEN BIGGEST WORRIES OF INFORMING EMPLOYER OF **SUBSTANCE ABUSE ISSUE**



GENERATION

Millennial ■ Gen X ■ Boomer ■

Effect on the Job

Workers struggling with behavioral health challenges can lose a substantial amount of productivity while on the job.

Our study found that Millennials have struggled with productivity or missed work because of mental health issues more than their older coworkers.

MENTAL HEALTH AFFECTING WORK BY GENERATION

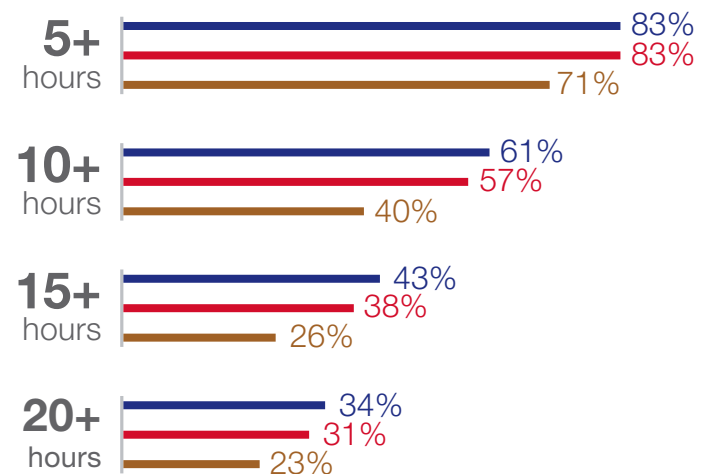


41%
of Millennials have ever been less productive at a job vs. **26%** of Gen X and **17%** of Boomers



29%
of Millennials have ever missed a day of work vs. **22%** of Gen X and **13%** of Boomers

FOR THOSE WHO STRUGGLED, HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK WERE LESS PRODUCTIVE?



GENERATION
Millennial ■ Gen X ■ Boomer ■

Roadblocks to Getting Help

Many employees don't know what resources are available to help them with their behavioral health conditions. And even when they are comfortable seeking help at work, they aren't sure who to talk to.

For both mental health and substance abuse issues, Millennials are the least likely to know what resources are there to help them or who at their employer they can speak with to get help.

Even if workers want help for their mental health conditions, worries related to workplace stigmas can create a roadblock. **Younger workers are more likely to avoid seeing a therapist or taking medication due to work concerns.**

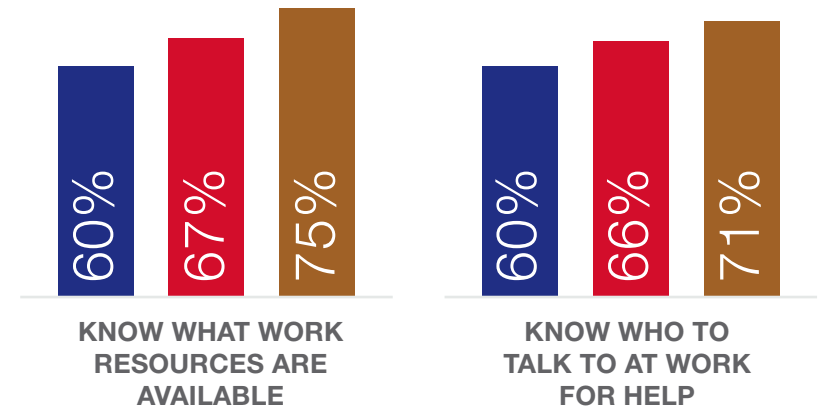


16% of Millennials have ever **avoided seeing therapist because of work** (versus 7% of Gen X and 2% of Boomers)

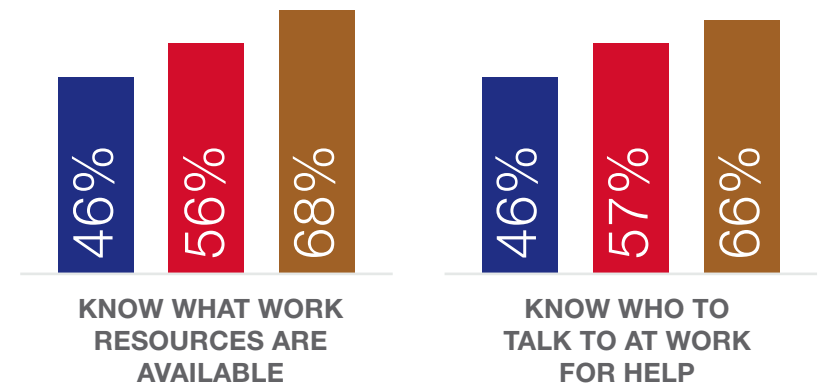


6% of Millennials have ever **avoided medication because of work** (versus 3% of Gen X and 1% of Boomers)


GETTING HELP FOR **MENTAL HEALTH**



GETTING HELP FOR **SUBSTANCE ABUSE**



GENERATION
Millennial ■ Gen X ■ Boomer ■



“I would say work-life balance is a big thing that a lot of people aren’t great at. Because that’s probably one of the best ways to reduce stress. Work is important, and things need to get done, but everyone is a person who has a lot going on.”

— Female, age 29, education industry

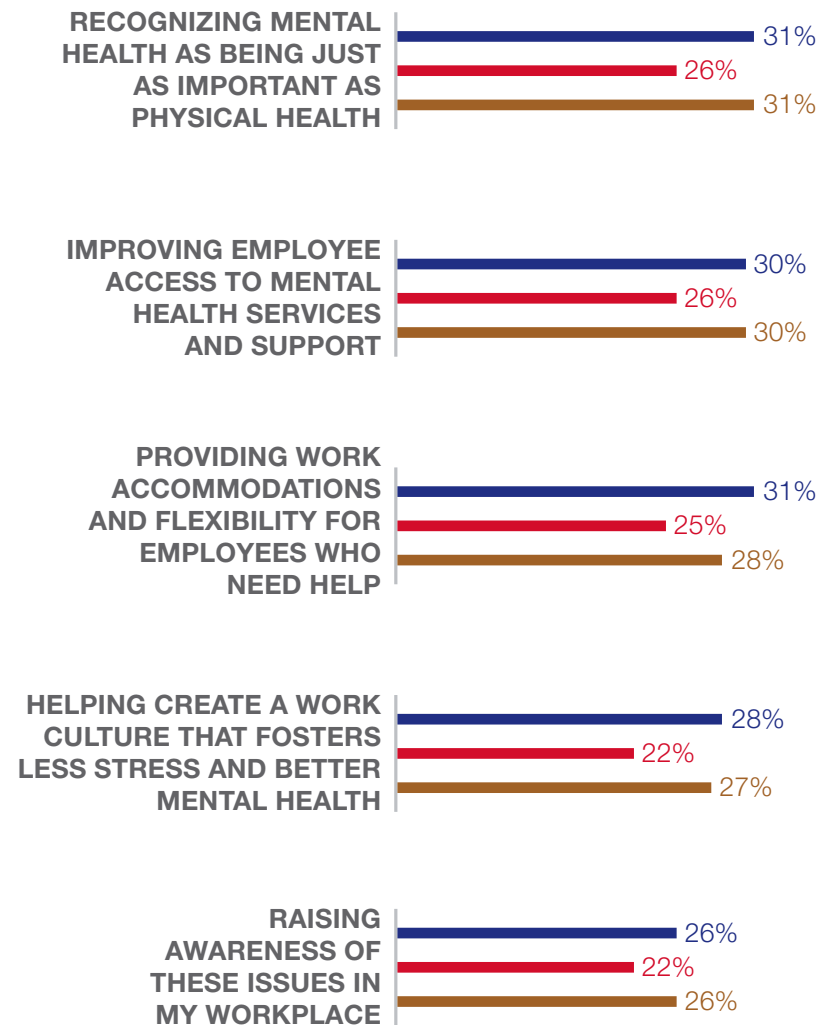
How Are Employers Doing?

When it comes to how well employers are understanding, recognizing, and supporting behavioral health needs, there's work to do.

Fewer than a third of employees rate their employers as doing very good or excellent at supporting behavioral health needs.

Gen X provides especially low marks for their employers. And as events outside of workers' control, such as the COVID-19 Pandemic, cause additional disruptions, it's likely a supportive culture will be valued even more highly.

EMPLOYEES WHO SAY THEIR EMPLOYER IS DOING VERY GOOD OR EXCELLENT AT SUPPORTING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



GENERATION
Millennial ■ Gen X ■ Boomer ■

Employer Focus

There are many nuances when it comes to the generational differences of behavioral health in the workplace.

Here are a few key takeaways for you to consider in your next steps.

- ▶ Boomers may think there's less need to focus on mental health at the workplace and some are aging out of the workforce
- ▶ Less than a third of Gen X think their employers are doing very good or excellent at supporting behavioral health
- ▶ Millennials—currently the largest portion of employees—are struggling the most with behavioral health challenges. Additionally, the disruptions from events such as the COVID-19 Pandemic will affect this generation throughout their work lives
- ▶ Both Gen X and Millennials are the generations who would most like their employers to focus on creating a work culture that fosters mental health

Employer Focus, continued

Find additional resources related to behavioral health in the workplace by visiting the behavioral health resource center at standard.com/behavioralhealth. You'll find more reports developed from our Behavioral Health Impact Study and other helpful tools.

WHAT CAN EMPLOYERS DO TO CREATE A WORKPLACE CULTURE THAT SUPPORTS EMPLOYEES WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE ISSUES?

- **Include employee health in company mission and values, and ensure that leadership and policies reflect these values**
- **Offer comprehensive employee benefit options to treat mental health and substance abuse issues**
- **Provide wellness programs and incentives, and encourage employee participation**
- **Educate employees about where to access benefits information and resources, and who to contact for help**
- **Partner with experts, like your disability carrier, who understand effective behavioral health accommodations and solutions**
- **With increased telecommuting, ensure remote workers and teams are supported and included in positive work culture programs**
- **Offer flexibility to employees during disruptive times, and to those experiencing behavioral health challenges**

Research methodology

The Standard commissioned Versta Research, an independent research firm, to design and execute a survey of 2,004 full-time employees in the U.S. about mental and behavioral health issues in the workplace. All respondents were aware of employer sponsored disability benefits, whether or not their employer offered those benefits and whether or not they participated. All industries and economic sectors except federal government employees were included. The survey was fielded in September and October, 2019.

In addition to the survey, selected respondents were invited to participate in follow-up phone interviews to gain deeper insight related to worker perspectives on how effectively employers are dealing with behavioral health issues, and the critical workplace needs of employees with behavioral health issues. The follow-up interviews were conducted in January and February, 2020.

In the survey, mental health was measured using the Kessler K6 scale with cut off criteria recommended by Judith J. Prochaska, Hai-Yen Sung, Wendy Max, Yanling Shi, and Michael Ong in “Validity Study of the K6 Scale as a Measure of Moderate Mental Distress based on Mental Health Treatment Need and Utilization” published in *The International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*, June 2012, Volume 21(2): 88–97.

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