AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

2024 WORK IN AMERICA™ SURVEY

Psychological Safety in the Changing Workplace



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INTRODUCTION

More than 4 years after the COVID-19 pandemic upended the American workplace, the results of the American Psychological Association's 2024 Work in America™ survey reveal that most workers are generally satisfied with their jobs and feel good about their performance and productivity, especially in workplaces that foster "psychological safety."

Workers reported notably different experiences based on factors including their job type or level, their relationship with their managers or direct supervisors,[1] the level of mental health support provided by their employers, their age range, whether they can work in their preferred location (in-person, hybrid, or remote), and whether they live with a cognitive, emotional, learning, or mental disability.

The Harris Poll conducted the survey online in the United States on behalf of APA between March 25 and April 3, 2024 among more than 2,000 employed adults. Learn more in the Methodology section.

[1] Sixteen percent of the sample were self-employed. Self-employed respondents were given the option of indicating when questions about such topics as managers, coworkers, workplace policies, workplace monitoring, and perks or benefits provided by an employer were not applicable to their self-employed work environment. Accordingly, throughout this report, the percentages reported are based upon only that portion of the sample for which the question was applicable.

I. Psychological safety at work fosters creativity, innovation, and effective teamwork

Psychological safety refers to a workplace climate in which workers are comfortable expressing themselves and believe they can take appropriate interpersonal risks. As described by Dr. Amy Edmondson, a leading expert on psychological safety at Harvard Business School, "When people have psychological safety at work, they feel comfortable sharing concerns and mistakes without fear of embarrassment or retribution. They are confident that they can speak up and won't be humiliated, ignored, or blamed. They know they can ask questions when they are unsure about something. They tend to trust and respect their colleagues."[2]

Psychological safety at work is not directly analogous to physical safety at work. Psychological safety is not akin to a hardhat that workers can put on to shield themselves from injury. Rather, a psychologically safe workplace is one where workers can raise and discuss difficult issues, which may not always feel good, but ultimately fosters creativity, innovation, and effective teamwork.

To measure psychological safety, the survey asked workers seven questions, adapted from a scale developed by Edmondson, about the small team or group of people they worked with most closely on a day-to-day basis.

Workers indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed[3] with the following statements:

1. If an employee makes a mistake, it tends to be held against them.
2. Employees value each other's unique skills and talents.
3. Employees are comfortable bringing up problems and tough issues.
4. Employees sometimes reject others for being different.
5. Employees feel safe taking risks.
6. Employees feel comfortable asking others for help.
7. Employees sometimes act in a way that deliberately undermines the efforts of others.

Workers' responses to each of the seven questions were combined to create a single psychological safety score. Based on their overall score, workers were divided into either higher or lower ratings of their experience of psychological safety at work, with 51% experiencing higher psychological safety (at or above the median) and 49% experiencing lower psychological safety (below the median).

Workers experiencing higher psychological safety at work tended to report more positive sentiments about factors such as:

- Overall job satisfaction (95% of those experiencing higher psychological safety vs. 85% of those experiencing lower psychological safety)
- Satisfaction with specific aspects of work, such as relationships with coworkers (99% vs. 84%), relationships with managers (97% vs. 78%), work schedule (95% vs. 81%), and monetary compensation (89% vs. 68%)
- That they receive adequate non-monetary rewards (e.g., awards, praise from supervisors or thank-you cards) for achievements and contributions at work (80% vs. 52%)

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[2] Edmondson, A. C. (2018). *The fearless organization: Creating psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation, and growth.* Wiley.

[3] The question asked respondents to rate the statements on a scale from 1-4, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 4 being "strongly agree." Items 1, 4, and 7 were reverse scored.

- Finding meaning (95% vs. 79%), pride (97% vs. 87%), and engagement at work (94% vs. 77%)
- Confidence in their CEO or other primary organizational leader (89% vs. 66%)
- That they matter to their employer (93% vs. 61%) and coworkers (94% vs. 71%)
- That they can reach their highest potential at their current place of work (81% vs. 62%)
- That their work has a positive impact on society (92% vs. 79%)
- That their overall mental health is "excellent" or "good" (84% vs. 67%)

In addition, workers experiencing higher psychological safety at work were less likely to report negative workplace outcomes, such as:

- Feeling tense or stressed out in a typical workday (27% among those experiencing higher psychological safety vs. 61% among those experiencing lower psychological safety)
- An intent to look for a new job within the next year (19% vs. 41%)
- Negative feelings at work within the last month, such as emotional exhaustion (17% vs. 34%), feeling ineffective at work (13% vs. 19%), irritability or anger with co-workers and customers (11% vs. 25%), and a desire to keep to themselves at work (15% vs. 34%)
- That their employer thinks their workplace environment is a lot mentally healthier than it actually is (44% vs. 75%)
- That their work environment has a negative impact on their mental health (18% vs. 57%)

Even when responding to open-ended questions that did not directly ask about psychological safety, many workers pointed to the importance of feeling comfortable speaking up and having their opinions taken seriously. These workers were asked to list "the most important things your employer either is doing or should be doing to help make you more effective and efficient at your job."

54-year-old White male worker: *Listen and be open to criticism and outside opinions.*

47-year-old Black female worker: *Listening to suggested ideas to help get work done and actualizing the suggestion.*

45-year-old Black male worker: *My employer listens to me when I voice my opinion.*

60-year-old Black female worker: *I like the fact that I am expressing my views and opinions, and they are being heard and considered valuable.*

25-year-old White female worker: *Gives the opportunity to participate and give opinions.*

II. Several workplace practices are associated with psychological safety

The survey data do not tell us what causes psychological safety at work. However, more workers experience psychological safety when certain workplace practices, policies, or programs are present. Workers who experience higher psychological safety are significantly more likely than those who experience lower psychological safety to report that their employer offers:

- Opportunities to give feedback regarding company culture, colleagues' performance, trainings, etc. (62% of those experiencing higher psychological safety vs. 39% of those experiencing lower psychological safety)
- Opportunities to receive feedback (57% vs. 37%)
- Opportunities to be involved in decision making, problem solving, and goal setting (50% vs. 29%)
- The ability to work remotely (44% vs. 32%)
- Support for employees who are caregivers (37% vs. 24%)
- A variety of inclusive low-pressure social gatherings to connect and interact with coworkers (34% vs. 22%)
- Meeting-free days (26% vs. 19%)
- Companywide mental health days (18% vs. 11%)

Psychological safety was also associated with positive sentiments about company culture. Workers who experienced higher psychological safety were more likely to describe their company culture/workplace as one that:

- Understands when employees need flexibility to handle unforeseen personal issues (80% vs. 44% for workers who experienced lower psychological safety)
- Respects time off (76% vs. 46%)
- Encourages employees to take care of their mental health (66% vs. 31%)
- Encourages breaks during the workday (60% vs. 35%)
- Treats them fairly compared with others (94% vs. 66%)
- Provides sufficient resources to help employees manage their stress (79% vs. 51%)
- Regularly provides information about available mental health resources (60% vs. 49%)
- Fosters positive relationships among coworkers (96% vs. 74%)
- Offers opportunities for collaboration and teamwork (95% vs. 70%)
- Fosters positive relationships between managers and the people they manage (94% vs. 64%)
- Values skills over educational degrees (80% vs. 69%)

An association with psychological safety was also apparent in workers' relationships with their direct manager or supervisor. Nearly all workers experiencing higher psychological safety (96%) said their manager is effective at respecting their psychological and emotional wellbeing, compared with 71% of workers experiencing lower psychological safety. Workers experiencing higher psychological safety were also more likely to say their direct manager or supervisor is effective at resolving conflicts in the workplace (95% vs. 66%).

Privacy and respect for workers' personal boundaries were also associated with psychological safety. Workers experiencing higher psychological safety were more likely to say that, as far as they're aware, their employer does not use technology to monitor them while they are working (64% vs. 45% of those experiencing lower psychological safety), and to agree that when it comes to technology, their employer is good about respecting their privacy (96% vs. 77%). More than 9 in 10 workers experiencing higher psychological safety (93%) also agreed that their employer respects their personal boundaries, compared with 54% of workers who experience lower psychological safety.[4]

III. Psychological safety is associated with higher self-ratings of performance and productivity

Most American workers feel good about their performance and productivity. However, this is less prevalent among workers who experience lower psychological safety.[5]

When asked to rate their own performance at work, most workers scored themselves as either "outstanding" (32%) or "very good" (49%), as opposed to "good" (17%), "below average" (2%), or "poor" (< 1%). Those in upper management were more likely to rate their own performance as "very good" or "outstanding" (90%) compared with middle managers (76%), front-line workers (79%), and individual contributors (81%).[6]

Similarly, when asked to rate their own productivity, most workers scored their productivity as "high" (59%) or "moderate" (39%), as opposed to "low" (2%). And upper managers were more likely to rate their productivity as "high" (71%) compared to middle managers (53%), front-line workers (56%), and individual contributors (60%).

Overall, workers who reported experiencing higher psychological safety at work were much more likely than those who experience lower psychological safety to:

- Rate their performance as "very good" or "outstanding" (91% vs. 69%)
- Rate their productivity as "high" (74% vs. 43%)
- Be proud of the work they do (97% vs. 87%)

As with psychological safety more broadly, workers' relationships with managers were also related to self-rated performance and productivity. Those reporting satisfaction with this relationship were more likely than those reporting dissatisfaction to:

- Rate their own performance as "very good" or "outstanding" (84% vs. 59%)
- Rate their own productivity as "high" (62% vs. 38%)

One factor psychological science has confirmed is associated with decreased performance and productivity is workplace burnout. Workers who experience lower psychological safety at work or reported being dissatisfied with their relationship with their manager or supervisor were more likely to experience, in the last month, at least one outcome that is often associated with workplace burnout—such as low energy, feelings of negativity, and a sense of reduced efficacy at work—compared with their counterparts.[7]

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[4] Workers were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement "My employer does not respect my personal boundaries." Of those in the higher psychological safety group, 93% somewhat or strongly disagreed. Of those in the lower psychological safety group, 54% somewhat or strongly disagreed.

[5] The survey data establish an association between the prevalence of workers' positive self-ratings of their performance/productivity and their experience of psychological safety. The data do not reveal the cause of this association.

[6] Individual contributor is defined as someone with a middle level or senior position who does not have management responsibilities.

[7] It should be noted that the World Health Organization has set forth criteria for workplace burnout. A worker who merely reports experiencing, within the last month, one or more negative outcomes associated with burnout does not necessarily meet the WHO criteria for workplace burnout.

		Psychological safety at work		Relationship with manager	
Experience	**Total % reporting experience in last month**	**Those experiencing higher psychological safety**	**Those experiencing lower psychological safety**	**Those satisfied with manager**	**Those dissatisfied with manager**
Lack of interest, motivation, or energy	29%	20%	39%	28%	46%
Difficulty focusing	25%	21%	30%	23%	38%
Emotional exhaustion	25%	17%	34%	23%	45%
Not feeling motivated to do their very best	23%	16%	31%	21%	40%
A desire to keep to themselves	23%	15%	34%	22%	42%
Lower productivity	18%	14%	23%	18%	25%
Irritability or anger with co-workers and customers	17%	11%	25%	15%	43%
Feeling lonely or isolated	16%	10%	23%	14%	37%
A feeling of being ineffective at work	16%	13%	19%	14%	24%
Lack of effort at work	16%	10%	23%	15%	29%
Desire to quit my job	16%	7%	29%	13%	48%

All differences between those experiencing higher psychological safety and those experiencing lower psychological safety and all differences between those satisfied with their manager and those dissatisfied with their manager are statistically significant.

Workers pointed to several factors they believe could have a further "very strong positive" or "strong positive" impact on their productivity, including:

- Control over how they do their work (72% selected "very strong" or "strong" positive impact as opposed to "moderate," "slight," or "no" positive impact)
- Personal fulfillment from the work they do (72%)
- Access to resources (72%)
- Their relationship with their direct manager or supervisor (70%)
- Overall psychological wellbeing at a particular time (70%)
- Overall physical wellbeing at a particular time (68%)

Notably, workers living with a physical disability were significantly more likely to say that access to resources needed to do their work would have a positive impact on their productivity (85%), compared with workers with no disability (72%).

Workers were asked, "What are the most important things your employer either is doing or should be doing to help make you more effective and efficient at your job?" Most responses focused on achieving the right balance between setting clear goals and expectations while trusting workers and allowing them to do their jobs without being micromanaged.

38-year-old Black male worker: *Giving clear and direct instructions, allowing flexibility in the execution of tasks, acknowledging and praising successful completion of tasks.*

41-year-old Asian female worker: *Giving me more autonomy and trust.*

37-year-old Hispanic male worker: *Giving me freedom to perform and providing me the needed support when needed.*

71-year-old Hispanic female worker: *Let me use my creative influence on my projects.*

IV. Despite most workers' job satisfaction, 15% reported a "toxic" workplace, lacking in psychological safety

The vast majority (90%) of workers reported being at least somewhat, if not very, satisfied with their job overall. In fact, 81% would recommend their place of work to others as a good place to work. Further, fewer than a third (29%) intend to look for a new job at a different company or organization in the next year, a number that has been trending downward since 2022, when it was 34%. Overall job satisfaction was even higher for upper managers, with 95% reporting being at least somewhat, if not very, satisfied with their job.

Most workers also reported satisfaction with their workplace relationships. For example, 92% of workers reported being satisfied with their co-worker relationships and 88% with their managers or supervisors. Further, 86% of workers agreed with the statement, "My workplace fosters positive relationships among coworkers," and 79% of workers agreed with the statement, "My workplace fosters positive relationships between managers and the people they manage." Most workers (83%) also reported agreeing that, when they are at work, they feel like they belong.[8] And 86% agreed that they feel comfortable being themselves in their workplace.

Unfortunately, 15% of workers face what they characterize as a somewhat or very toxic workplace. Not surprisingly, the overwhelming majority (89%) of this group also reported experiencing lower psychological safety at work.

For such individuals, work life appears to be a source of significant psychological distress. For example, a 66-year-old Hispanic female worker reported:

"The manager allows one employee to bully certain people causing a toxic work environment."

Similarly, a 47-year-old White female worker reported:

"There is a lot of blatant bullying done by a few .... This group ... actively practice[s] lateral violence, and manage-

[8] These sentiments are more prevalent among upper management (91%) than middle-management (79%) or front-line workers (79%); and more prevalent among male workers (85%) than female workers (81%).

ment takes their side because they are friends outside work. This group has literally run several new employees off the unit, one quit during her orientation, stating the staff … is toxic to the core. I dread interactions with these women, and I know it gives me anxiety."

And the numbers are worse for those living with a cognitive, emotional, learning, or mental disability. Among those living with such a disability, 24% reported a toxic workplace, compared with 14% of those without a disability.

Further, job satisfaction varied depending upon workplace characteristics and culture. For example, 96% of workers who reported that their employer provides sufficient resources to manage stress also reported job satisfaction, compared with only 76% of workers who reported that their employer does not provide sufficient resources to manage stress. Similarly, 91% of workers who reported that their employer offers mental health support reported job satisfaction, compared with only 76% of workers who reported that their employer does not offer mental health support.

The experience of psychological safety at work was also associated with overall job satisfaction. Those experiencing higher psychological safety were 10 times less likely than those experiencing lower psychological safety to describe their workplace as toxic (3% vs. 30%). Those experiencing higher psychological safety were also:

- Less likely to report an intent to look for a new job in the next year (19% vs. 41% of those experiencing lower psychological safety)
- More likely to recommend their workplace to others (94% vs. 66%)
- More likely to report overall job satisfaction (95% vs. 85%)

Psychological safety was also associated with specific aspects of job satisfaction. Those experiencing higher psychological safety were more likely to report satisfaction with:

- Their relationships with coworkers (99% of those experiencing higher psychological safety vs. 84% of those experiencing lower psychological safety)
- Their relationships with managers or supervisors (97% vs. 78%)
- The policies in place to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion (96% vs. 80%)
- Their work schedule (95% vs. 81%)
- How well their workplaces are preparing them for the future (91% vs. 68%)
- Support for mental health and wellbeing provided by their employer (91% vs. 66%)
- Their opportunities for growth and development (87% vs. 63%)

With regard to compensation, workers experiencing higher psychological safety at work were:

- More likely to report satisfaction with their compensation (89% vs. 68% of those experiencing lower psychological safety)
- More likely to report receiving adequate monetary compensation (84% vs. 65%)
- Less likely to worry that their compensation has not kept up with inflation (43% vs. 21%)
- Less likely to be concerned that an economic slump, downturn, or recession will cause them to be laid off, furloughed, or otherwise lose their job in the next 12 months (71% vs. 55%)

Psychological safety is also associated with a sense of belonging. Those experiencing higher psychological safety at work were:

- More likely to report feeling like they belong at work (95% vs. 69% of those experiencing lower psychological safety)
- More likely to report feeling comfortable being themselves in the workplace (95% vs. 75%)
- Less likely to report feeling lonely when they work (11% vs. 45%)

V. Younger workers and workers who experience lower psychological safety are more concerned about the intergenerational workforce

The number of employed Americans aged 65 and older is increasing.[9] Accordingly, the age gap between the youngest and oldest coworkers is likely widening and intergenerational workforces may become more prevalent. In general, the survey found acceptance of the intergenerational workforce, though the youngest workers expressed less comfort working with people of different ages than other age groups.

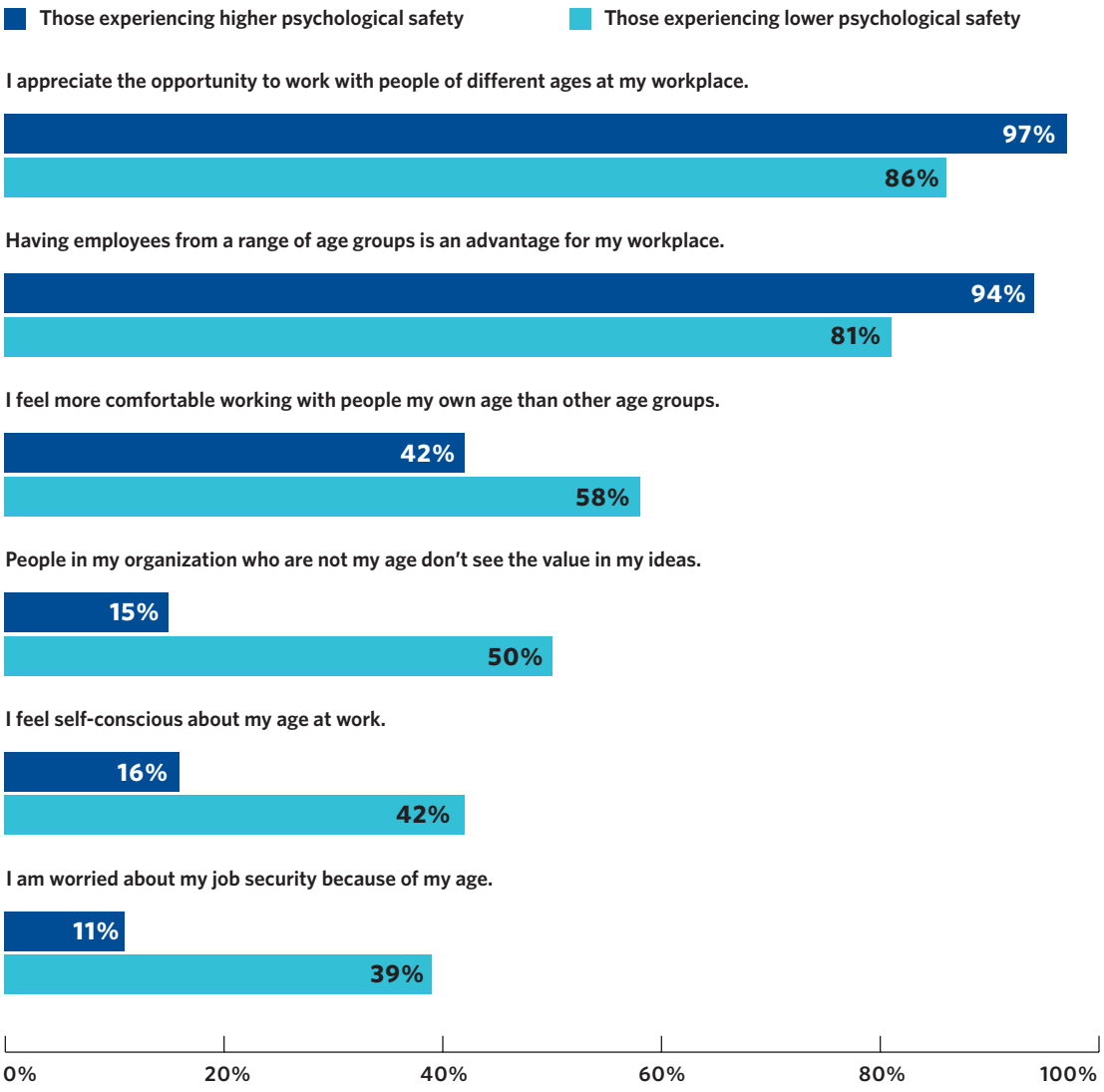
	Percentage agreement by age group				
How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?	**18-25 (a)**	**26-43 (b)**	**44-57 (c)**	**58-64 (d)**	**65+ (e)**
I appreciate the opportunity to work with people of different ages at my workplace.	86%[c]	91%	95%	93%	91%
Having employees from a range of age groups is an advantage for my workplace.	80%[bd]	88%	87%	91%	89%
I feel more comfortable working with people my own age than other age groups.	62%[cde]	57%[cde]	42%[e]	38%	27%
People in my organization who are not my age don't see the value in my ideas.	48%[bcde]	34%[e]	28%[e]	27%[e]	16%
I feel self-conscious about my age at work.	43%[bcde]	29%[e]	25%	24%	18%

Statistically significant differences across columns are denoted with superscripts.

[9] https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2023/12/14/older-workers-are-growing-in-number-and-earning-higher-wages/

Overall, acceptance of the intergenerational workforce appears to be much more prevalent among those who experience higher psychological safety in their workplace.

HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?



Generational differences also played out in reported performance and productivity where older workers were more likely to report very good or outstanding work performance compared to younger adults. The same can also be said for productivity as older workers were more likely to report high levels of productivity compared to younger workers.

	18-25 (a)	26-43 (b)	44-57 (c)	58-64 (d)	65+ (e)
Workers reporting very good or outstanding work performance.	71%[cde]	80%[de]	81%	92%	89%
Workers reporting high levels of productivity at work.	44%[cde]	56%[de]	60%	71%	77%

Statistically significant differences across columns are denoted with superscripts.

Although younger workers were more likely to report using artificial intelligence tools to assist them with their work, they were also more likely to feel worried about technology and AI making their jobs obsolete as compared to older workers.

	18-25 (a)	26-43 (b)	44-57 (c)	58-64 (d)	65+ (e)
Workers who use artificial intelligence tools to assist them with their work at least once a month or more.	41%[cde]	44%[cde]	29%[e]	23%[e]	11%
Workers who agree or strongly agree with the statement...					
I worry that a new form of technology will eventually make some or all of my job duties obsolete in the future.	50%[cde]	50%[cde]	38%	31%	30%
I worry that artificial intelligence (AI) may make some or all of my job duties obsolete in the future.	48%[de]	45%[de]	40%[d]	30%	30%

Statistically significant differences across columns are denoted with superscripts.

VI. A third of the workforce struggles to achieve work-life harmony

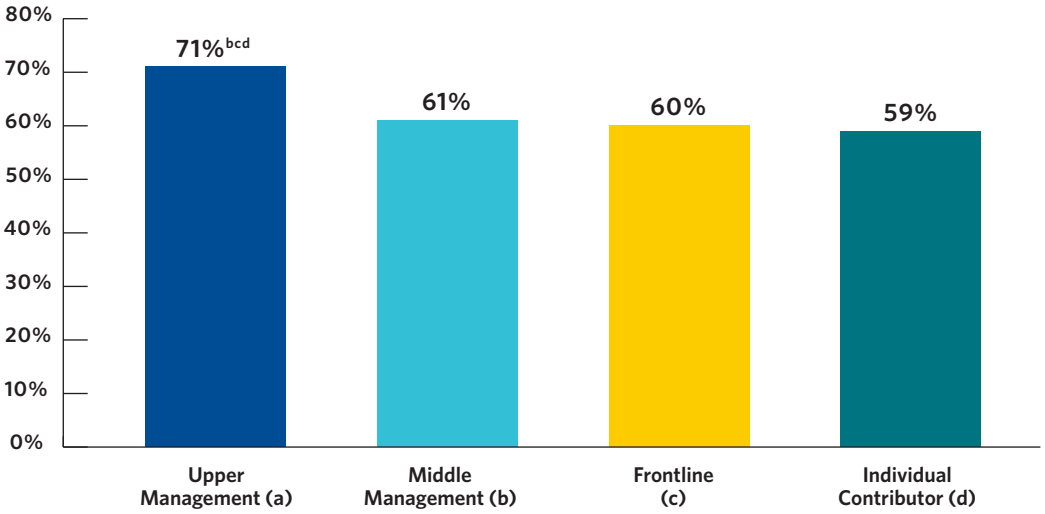
A third (33%) of workers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I don't have enough flexibility at work to be able to keep my work life and my personal life in balance." The same percentage agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I don't have enough control over when, where, and how I do my work."

More than 2 in 5 (45%) workers reported having to work more hours per week than they want to, but this concern affects 57% of workers who are living with a cognitive, emotional, learning, or mental disability.

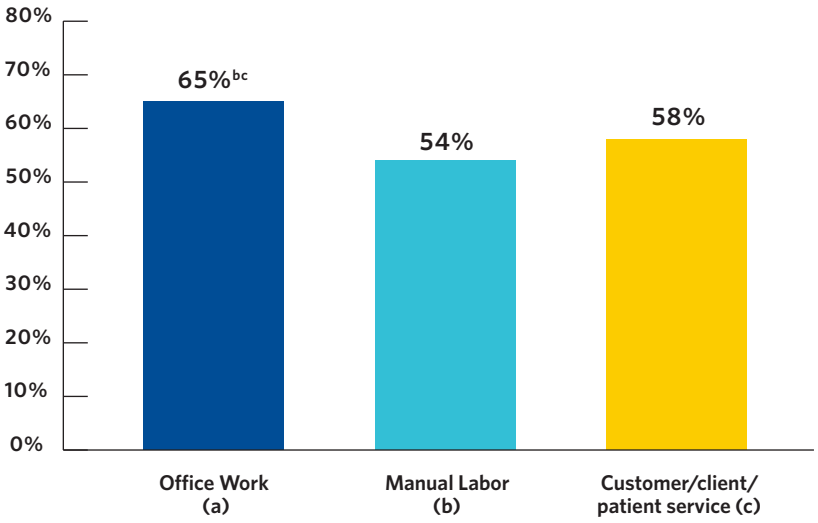
Further, only 60% of workers described their company's culture as one that "respects time off," and this number was significantly lower for some workers based on their duties, type of work, or disability status.

WORKERS WHO DESCRIBED THEIR COMPANY'S CULTURE AS ONE THAT "RESPECTS TIME OFF"

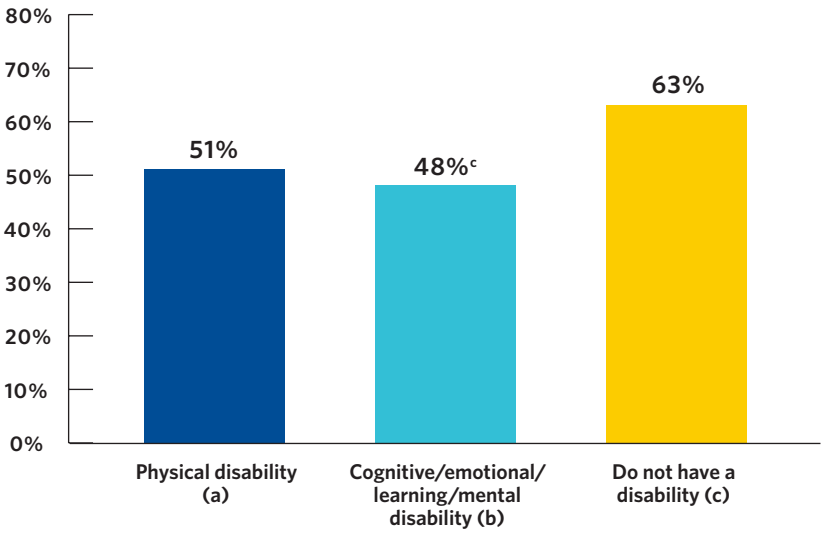
BY DUTIES WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION



BY TYPE OF WORK



BY DISABILITY STATUS



Statistically significant differences within groups are denoted with superscripts

Employers' lack of respect for time off can take many forms and involves more than merely the number of allowed personal time-off days.

24-year-old White nonbinary worker: *Any day I take off usually leads to my coworker having to work a 12-hour shift, making me feel bad even though they say they don't mind as I do the same for them.*

54-year-old Black male worker: *The blurred lines between work time and non-work time has had a negative impact on my mental health. Work seems to never end.*

61-year-old White female worker: *The work hours should be clearly defined so as not to put in extra hours that are not recognized and uncompensated monetarily.*

33-year-old White female worker: *Lack of schedule flexibility and time off to decompress. Working 6 days a week with Sunday as your only day to yourself can be overwhelming at times.*

Those who reported experiencing higher psychological safety at work were:

- More likely to report a culture that respects time off (76% of those experiencing higher psychological safety vs. 46% of those experiencing lower psychological safety)
- Less likely to report that they don't have enough flexibility at work to be able to keep their work life and personal life in balance (18% vs. 50%)

Similarly, those who reported satisfaction with their relationship with their direct manager were:

- More likely to report a culture that respects time off (64% vs. 35% of those not satisfied with their relationship with their direct manager)
- Less likely to report that they don't have enough flexibility at work to be able to keep their work life and personal life in balance (31% vs. 57%)

And those who are working in their preferred location (in person, remote, or hybrid) were:

- More likely to report a culture that respects time off (63% vs. 54% of those not working their preferred location)
- Less likely to report that they don't have enough flexibility at work to be able to keep their work life and personal life in balance (28% vs. 41%)

Further, among those workers who reported an intent to look for a new job within the next year, only 43% also reported a culture at their current job that respects time off, compared with 67% of those who reported no intent to look for a new job within the next year.

VII. Americans working in their preferred location report better workplace experiences

More than half of the Americans surveyed work fully in-person (59%), 24% work in some hybrid mix of in-person and remote, and the final 17% work fully remote.

Perhaps more important than where people work is where they want to work. Overall, 67% were working in their preferred location. Just over a third (38%) said they want to work all in-person, 34% said they want to work hybrid, and 28% said they want to work fully remote.[10] Thus, the distribution of worker preferences is closer to equal thirds, whereas the reality tilts more heavily toward all in-person. Overall,

[10] Among those living with a cognitive, emotional, learning, or mental disability, 24% prefer in-person, 45% prefer hybrid, and 31% prefer remote.

one-third of workers (33%) were not working in their preferred mode, whether that was in-person, remote or hybrid.

When workers were in their preferred location, they were more likely to report good or excellent mental health (81% vs. 67%) and overall satisfaction with their job (92% vs. 85%). Further, those working in their preferred location reported being more likely to:

- Be satisfied with their work schedule (92% of those in their preferred location vs. 81% of those not in their preferred work location)
- Be satisfied overall with their job (92% vs. 85%)
- Be satisfied with their compensation (84% vs. 69%)
- Be satisfied with their opportunities for growth and development (82% vs. 66%)
- Agree they feel comfortable being themselves in the workplace (90% vs. 79%)
- Agree that their workplace fosters positive relationships among co-workers (89% vs. 79%)
- Agree that their personal values are respected in the workplace (88% vs. 78%)
- Agree that when they are at work, they feel like they belong (87% vs. 74%)
- Agree that they feel valued at work (87% vs. 71%)
- Agree that they would recommend their place of work to others as a good place to work (87% vs. 69%)
- Agree that their workplace has opportunities for collaboration and teamwork (85% vs. 76%)
- Agree that their workplace fosters positive relationships between managers and the people they manage (83% vs. 72%)

In contrast, when workers were not in their preferred work location, they were more likely to report:

- Lack of interest, motivation, or energy at work (44% of those not in their preferred location vs. 22% of those in their preferred work location)
- Feeling tense or stressed out during the workday (43% vs. 26%)
- That their work environment has a negative impact on their mental health (41% vs. 29%)
- Emotional exhaustion at work (37% vs. 19%)
- Difficulty focusing at work (36% vs. 19%)
- A desire to keep to themselves at work (35% vs. 17%)
- Not feeling motivated to do their very best at work (33% vs. 18%)
- A desire to quit (28% vs. 11%)
- Irritability or anger with co-workers or customers (27% vs. 12%)
- Lower productivity at work (26% vs. 14%)
- Feeling lonely or isolated at work (23% vs. 13%)
- A lack of effort at work (23% vs. 12%)
- A feeling of being ineffective at work (22% vs. 13%)
- Experiencing harm to their mental health at work (13% vs. 4%)

Many of the negative experiences reported by workers who are not in their preferred work location are often associated with workplace burnout.

Further, there is an association between working in one's preferred location and experiencing psychological safety at work. Respondents who experience such safety were more likely to report that they work in their preferred location (72% vs. 57% of those experiencing lower psychological safety).

The differences in work location preferences and the satisfaction of working in one's preferred location are also evidenced in many respondent comments. A Hispanic female worker in her 40s said that working from home, taking mental health days when needed, and having the freedom to do the work on her own time have a positive impact on her overall mental health, happiness, and wellbeing.

52-year-old White male worker: [Being in his preferred location] *gives me a chance to socialize with the people I work with and the customers who come into my retail store.*

42-year-old Black female worker: *I enjoy working with my immediate coworkers and the hybrid schedule allows me to have more flexibility with home and work.*

33-year-old Native American male worker: *I work in a healthcare facility, so with that being said seeing the look on patients faces as they walk in the building with all gives me an overall satisfaction.*

Setting aside workers' preferences, the survey also directly compared the experience of workers who are fully in-person, hybrid, and fully remote. Overall, hybrid workers more often showed positive sentiments about and assessments of their work experience compared with workers in other locations.

For example, compared with in-person workers, hybrid workers more often reported:

- That their direct manager/supervisor is effective at respecting their psychological and emotional well-being (89% of those working hybrid vs. 82% of those working fully in-person)
- Mattering to their co-workers (88% vs. 82%)
- That their direct manager/supervisor is effective in resolving conflicts in the workplace (85% v. 78%)
- Mattering to their employer (82% vs. 76%)
- Feeling they could reach their highest potential at their current place of work (77% vs. 69%)
- Agreement that they receive adequate non-monetary rewards for their contributions at work (73% vs. 64%)
- That their employers offered opportunities to give feedback regarding things such as company culture, colleagues, performance, trainings, and so on (56% vs. 48% of those working fully in-person)
- That their employers offered opportunities to receive feedback (56% vs. 42%)

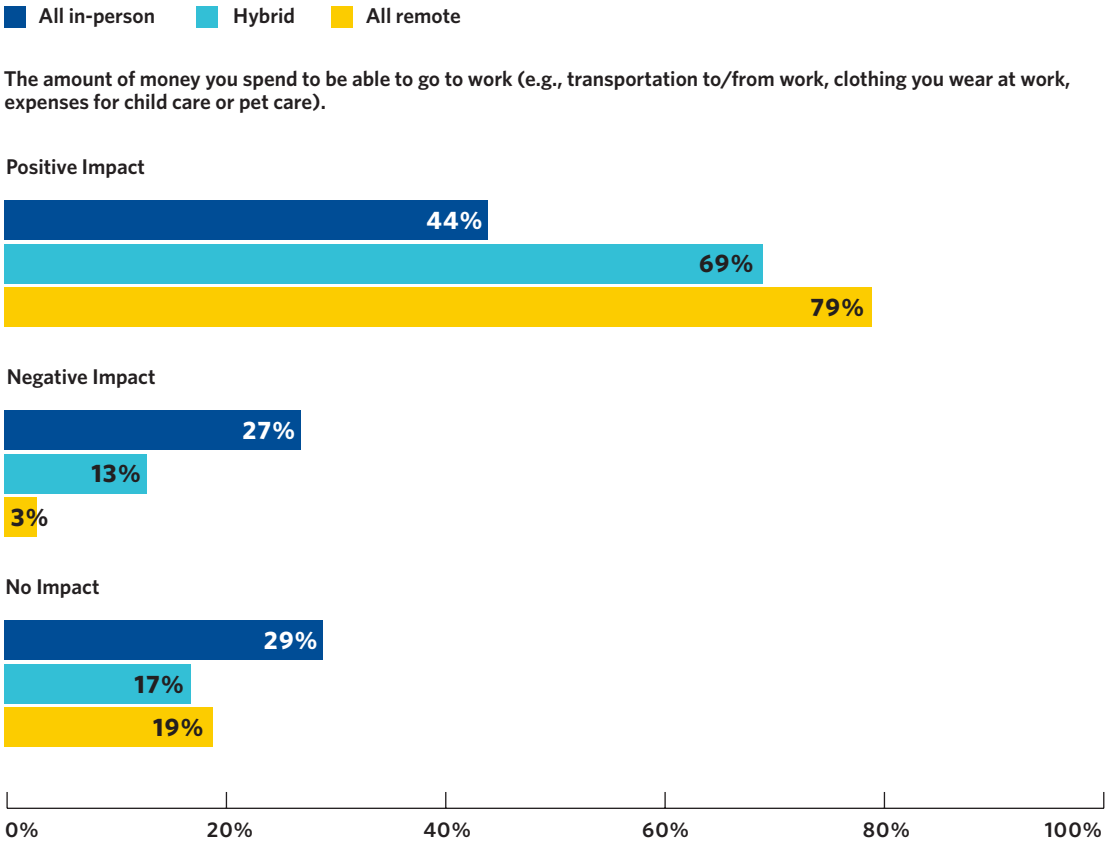
Similarly, compared with fully remote workers, hybrid workers more often reported:

- That their employers offered opportunities to be involved in decision making, problem solving, and goal setting (46% hybrid vs. 27% fully remote)
- That their employer offered a variety of inclusive low-pressure social gatherings to connect and interact with co-workers (42% vs. 24%)
- Agreement that their workplace provides them with access to resources for them to achieve their best work (87% vs. 79%)

However, hybrid workers were also more likely to report having to work more hours per week than they wanted to, compared with remote workers (52% vs. 38%).

One practical area where the benefits of fully remote work stood out was the cost of working.

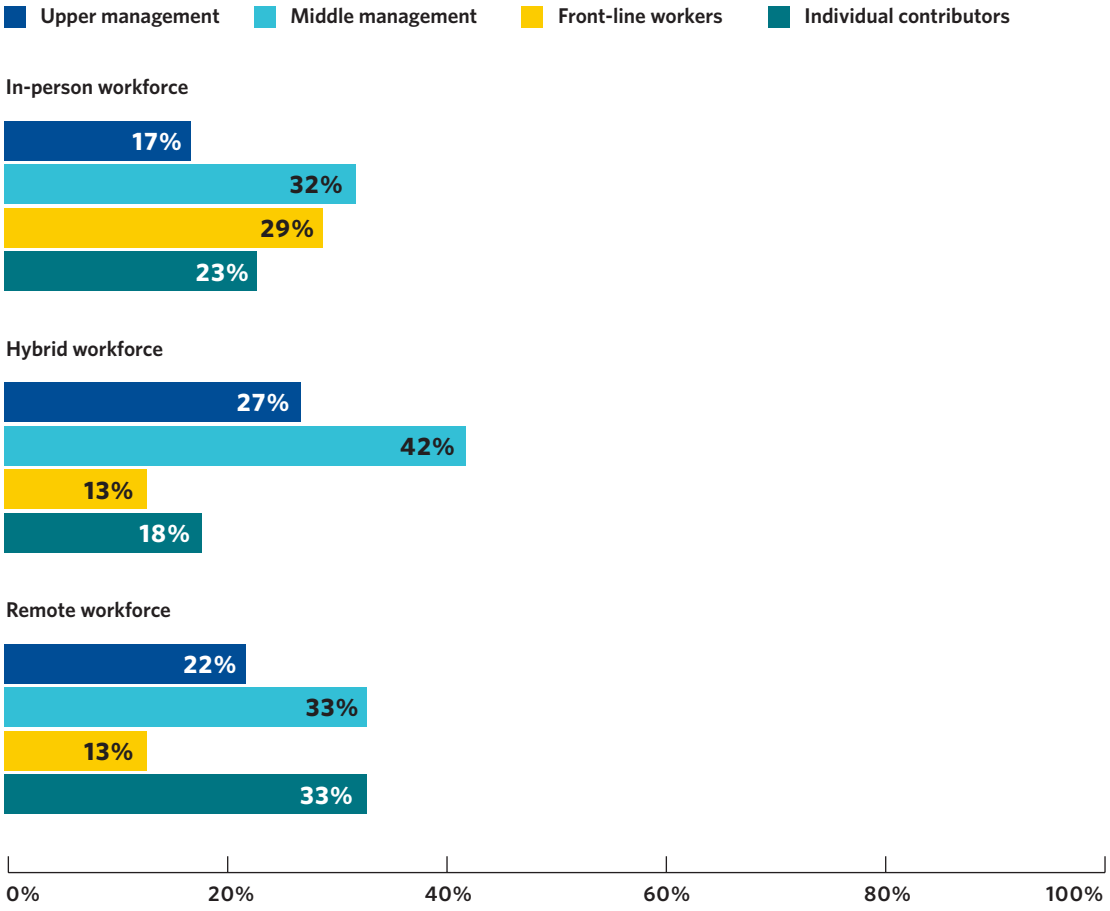
HOW MUCH OF A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE IMPACT HAS WORKING [ALL IN-PERSON/ HYBRID/REMOTE] HAD ON EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:



Totals may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding

When comparing in-person, hybrid, and remote work locations, it is important to keep in mind the uneven distribution of workers' roles across these categories. For example, the hybrid workforce appears dominated by upper management (27%) and middle management (42%). Some of the positive sentiments associated with hybrid work may be driven by management's tendency to report more positive sentiments about work. It is also possible that managers, especially in upper management, have more flexibility and autonomy over where they work and use that autonomy to gravitate toward their preferred work location.

REMOTE, HYBRID, AND IN-PERSON WORKFORCES BY POSITION WITHIN ORGANIZATION



Finally, regardless of work location, the majority of workers agreed that if they only worked four days a week, they could be just as effective (81%) and would be happier (79%) at work. This may explain the two-thirds of employed adults who believe the four-day workweek will become the norm in America in their lifetime (67%). Indeed, the percentage of workers reporting that their employer offers four-day workweeks was significantly higher than the previous two years (22% in 2024 vs. 17% in 2023 and 14% in 2022).

Like so many other topics, the opinions of upper management regarding four-day workweeks differed from those of other workers. Individual contributors (83%) and middle managers (83%) were more likely than upper managers (75%) to agree they could be just as effective if they only worked four days per week.

VIII. Many American workers are worried that their compensation is failing to keep pace with inflation

Negative sentiments about work across broad swaths of the workforce tend to be tied to concerns about the economy, such as compensation not keeping up with inflation. Indeed, 7 in 10 (70%) female workers and 64% of male workers reported sharing this worry. Those who reported living with a cognitive, emotional, learning, or mental disability also tended to be more concerned than those not living with a disability (85% vs. 66%).

The worry that inflation is eroding real income was more prevalent among those with household incomes of less than $50,000 per year than among those with household incomes of $125,000 or more per year (74% vs. 62%). Similarly, the concern was more prevalent among front-line workers (74%), middle management (68%), and individual contributors (67%), than among upper management (56%).

Not surprisingly, those concerned that their compensation has not kept pace with inflation were almost twice as likely to report dissatisfaction with their job (11% vs. 6%). They were also twice as likely to report that their work environment has a negative impact on their mental health (44% vs. 18%), far more likely to report that they typically feel tense or stressed out during the workday (52% vs 26%), and far more likely to rate their own mental health as poor/fair (29% vs. 13%).

Interestingly, respondents were far less likely to worry that their compensation has not kept up with inflation if they experienced higher psychological safety at work (57% vs. 79% of those experiencing lower psychological safety) or had satisfying relationships with their direct manager (67% vs. 77% of those dissatisfied with this relationship). Those not working in their preferred location were also more likely to report this worry (76% vs. 66% of those in their preferred location).

37-year-old Hispanic female worker: *My pay and benefits are what have a negative impact on my mental happiness and wellbeing because it hasn't kept up with inflation.*

32-year-old multiracial female worker: *It is very stressful due to the lack of compensation compared to inflation.*

50-year-old White female worker: *Inflation has held back our raises.*

24-year-old Hispanic female worker: *The pay isn't as good at it used to be with inflation and rising costs, and it's really hard to get a raise.*

49-year-old White female worker: *Raises not keeping up with inflation.*

IX. As American workers embrace AI at work, employers' policies may be falling behind

One-quarter (25%) of workers reported using artificial intelligence tools to assist with their work at least weekly, and more than a third (35%) reported doing so at least monthly. However, only 18% reported knowing whether their employer has an official policy about acceptable employee uses of AI. Almost half (50%) said their employer has no such policy, and close to one third (32%) were unsure.

A closer look at those who intentionally regularly use AI to assist with their work reveals significant differences in this use among different groups of workers. The prevalence of intentional use of AI at least monthly was higher among:

- Males than females (39% vs. 30%)
- Workers who are Black or Hispanic than White (43% and 42% vs. 32%)
- Those with household incomes greater than $125,000 per year (40% vs. 33% with incomes between $50,000 and $125,000, and 30% with household incomes less than $50,000)
- Those with more formal education (44% of those with more than an associate's degree vs. 26% of those with a high school diploma or associate's degree, and 30% of those with high school or less)
- Those who work in an office (42%) as opposed to doing manual labor (29%) or customer/patient/client service (28%)
- Those who work a hybrid schedule (54%) as opposed to being fully in-person (28%) or remote (31%)

A majority of employees who use artificial intelligence tools to assist them said it has had a positive impact on many aspects of their work, including:

- Productivity (76%)
- Quality of work (74%)
- Time management (74%)
- Creativity (68%)
- Job satisfaction (66%)
- Mental health (59%)

When asked, "What are the most important things your employer either is doing or should be doing to help make you more effective and efficient at your job?" a 39-year-old Asian male worker said:

"I feel my employer should help us to embrace and adopt use of new technology to make us more effective in our roles such as learning AI and strategizing potential use cases."

A 52-year-old Black female worker said:

"Start thinking of ways that AI can benefit everyday workflows."

In addition, more than 7 in 10 employed adults agreed advancements in technology are helping them work more efficiently and accurately (74%) and that they accomplish more at their job now than in the past because of new technologies (71%). Overall, fewer than 2 in 5 workers (36%) felt that advancements in technology are making their job worse, not better.

Two other factors involving more positive feelings about new technologies, including AI, were whether workers experienced psychological safety at work and their relationship with their manager.

	Relationship with manager		Psychological safety	
Strongly or somewhat agree with ...	**Satisfied with relationship**	**Dissatisfied with relationship**	**Those experiencing higher psychological safety**	**Those experiencing lower psychological safety**
Advancements in technology are helping me work more efficiently and accurately.	77%	55%	79%	69%
I am able to accomplish more at my job now than in the past because of new technologies.	74%	59%	73%*	70%*
I am confident my employer will retrain me for a different job if artificial intelligence (AI) replaces my job duties.	64%	44%	66%	56%

*This difference is not statistically significant. All other differences between workers based on their relationship with their manager and differences between workers experiencing higher or lower psychological safety are statistically significant.

X. A growing number of American workers worry that AI or other new technologies may take some, or all, of their job duties

Not everyone shares entirely positive feelings about new technologies in the workplace. Approximately 4 out of 10 workers (41%) worry that AI may make some or all of their job duties obsolete in the future. This worry was far more prevalent among workers who experience lower psychological safety at work (55% vs. 30% of those experiencing higher psychological safety).

A similar percentage (43%) worry that some form of technology will eventually make some or all of their job duties obsolete in the future. This worry, too, was more prevalent among workers who reported lower psychological safety at work (55% vs. 32% of those experiencing higher psychological safety). This worry was also more prevalent among younger workers (50% of those aged 18-25 vs. 31% of those aged 58 and older). And it was more prevalent among those living with a cognitive, emotional, learning, or mental disability (60%) than those who are not living with a disability (41%).

Further, upper and middle managers were more likely than front-line workers and individual contributors to believe that new technologies, like AI, will lead to an increase in available jobs in the future (55% and 57% vs. 39% and 39%, respectively). Upper and middle managers were also more likely to be confident that their employer will retrain them for a different job if AI replaces their job duties than were front-line workers and individual contributors (66% and 69% vs. 53% and 53%, respectively).

Compared with workers who did not express worry that AI will take some or all of their job duties in the future, those who are worried were also more likely to report that:

- During the workday they typically feel tense or stressed out (54% of those who are worried about AI vs. 36% of those who are not worried about AI)
- They are not learning new things at work that will help them in the future (50% vs. 31%)
- Their work environment has a negative impact on their mental health (47% vs. 28%)
- They are micromanaged at work (44% vs. 26%)
- They intend to look for a new job at a different company or organization in the next year (36% vs. 24%)

XI. Electronic monitoring of American workers remains prevalent yet is associated with many negative sentiments about the workplace

Many employers use various forms of electronic technology to monitor employees, from software to GPS to bar scanners. These electronic performance monitoring technologies can raise concerns regarding privacy and wellbeing.

In general, most American workers believe their employer is good about respecting their privacy (87%) and adequately protects the security of any private data or information about them (83%). However, just over a third (35%) reported being worried that their employer uses technology to spy on them during work hours. That worry was more prevalent among Hispanic, Asian, and Black workers compared with White workers (46%, 41%, and 37% vs. 29%, respectively).

Less than half of workers (44%) said that, as far as they are aware, their employer uses technology to monitor them while they are working. That number is down slightly from 2023 (51%) and 2022 (53%). The prevalence of monitoring was higher among Black and Hispanic workers than among White workers (55% and 47% vs. 38%, respectively). The prevalence was also higher among those doing manual labor (55%), as opposed to office work (44%) or customer/patient/client service (42%).

Overall, monitoring was associated with several negative sentiments about the workplace. Although it cannot be said, from this data, that monitoring causes these negative sentiments, monitoring and certain negative sentiments co-occur at a rate unlikely to be a mere coincidence. Compared with workers who are not monitored (or don't know that they are), those who know they are monitored were more likely to report:

- Feeling tense or stressed out during a typical workday (51% of those who know they are monitored vs. 38% of those who are not or don't know they are monitored)
- Feeling micromanaged (47% vs. 23%)
- Planning to look for a new job in the next year (39% vs. 21%)

However, the state of monitoring in the American workplace is complex. There are meaningful percentages of workers who are aware that their employer uses technology to monitor them and who report certain positive sentiments, such as that the monitoring:

- Helps protect their safety at work (69%)
- Helps them stay focused (61%)
- Helps ensure that they are rewarded for their productivity even when nobody is around to see it (61%)
- Makes them more productive (59%)
- Improves their workplace experience (58%)

A closer examination reveals differences in the prevalence of these positive sentiments among those in upper management versus front-line workers.

My employer's current practice of using technology to monitor me while I'm working...	**Upper management who are monitored**	**Front-line workers who are monitored**
Helps protect my safety while I'm at work.	82%	61%
Helps me stay focused.	74%	55%
Helps ensure that I am rewarded for my productivity even when nobody is around to see it.	75%	48%
Makes me more productive.	70%	54%
Improves my workplace experience.	77%	47%

All differences between upper management who are monitored and front-line workers who are monitored are statistically significant.

Further, workers who experience psychological safety at work were more likely to report positive sentiments regarding monitoring.

My employer's current practice of using technology to monitor me while I'm working...	**Those experiencing higher psychological safety**	**Those experiencing lower psychological safety**
Helps protect my safety while I'm at work.	81%	62%
Helps me stay focused.	69%	55%
Helps ensure that I am rewarded for my productivity even when nobody is around to see it.	73%	51%
Makes me more productive.	71%	51%
Improves my workplace experience.	66%	51%

All differences between those experiencing higher psychological safety and those experiencing lower psychological safety are statistically significant.

Likewise, those who reported higher psychological safety were less likely to report negative sentiments regarding monitoring.

My employer's current practice of using technology to monitor me while I'm working...	Those experiencing higher psychological safety	Those experiencing lower psychological safety
Makes me feel like they do not trust me.	36%	65%
Is an invasion of my privacy.	31%	58%
Causes me to feel stress.	29%	59%
Makes me feel uncomfortable.	31%	58%
Makes me feel anxious.	26%	57%
Makes me want to look for a different job.	18%	51%

All differences between those experiencing higher psychological safety and those experiencing lower psychological safety are statistically significant.

Further, positive sentiments about monitoring were more prevalent among those working in their preferred location than those not working in their preferred location.

My employer's current practice of using technology to monitor me while I'm working...	Those working in preferred location	Those not working in preferred location
Helps protect my safety while I'm at work.	77%	57%
Helps me stay focused.	68%	49%
Helps ensure that I am rewarded for my productivity even when nobody is around to see it.	66%	52%
Makes me more productive.	65%	50%
Improves my workplace experience.	68%	41%

All differences between those working in their preferred location and those not working in their preferred location are statistically significant.

Finally, those working in their preferred location were less likely to report negative sentiments regarding monitoring.

My employer's current practice of using technology to monitor me while I'm working...	Those working in preferred location	Those not working in preferred location
Makes me feel like they do not trust me.	46%	65%
Is an invasion of my privacy.	42%	56%
Causes me to feel stress.	38%	60%
Makes me feel uncomfortable.	39%	59%
Makes me feel anxious.	35%	59%
Makes me want to look for a different job.	34%	44%

All differences between those working in their preferred location and those not working in their preferred location are statistically significant.

XII. Stigma surrounding mental health persists in some workplaces, especially for those who experience lower psychological safety

Nearly one-quarter of American workers (24%) reported their overall mental health as being fair or poor, as opposed to good or excellent. That number is down slightly from 2023 (28%) but up slightly from 2022 (19%). Certain groups of workers were more likely to report fair or poor mental health. For example, there were differences between male and female workers, the youngest and oldest groups of workers, front-line workers and upper management, service workers and office workers, and whether workers experience higher or lower psychological safety.

	Workers reporting fair or poor mental health	Workers reporting good or excellent mental health
Gender		
Male	30%	70%
Female	17%	83%
Age		
18-25	31%	69%
65+	4%	96%
Role		
Front-line worker	29%	71%
Upper management	17%	83%

	Workers reporting fair or poor mental health	Workers reporting good or excellent mental health
Type of work		
Customer/client/patient service workers	30%	70%
Office workers	20%	80%
Psychological safety at work		
Experience lower psychological safety	33%	67%
Experience higher psychological safety	16%	82%

All differences between workers reporting fair or poor mental health and workers reporting good or excellent mental health are statistically significant.

More than a third (39%) of workers said they worry that informing their employer about a mental health condition would have a negative impact on them in the workplace. The statistics are echoed in some of the respondents' comments. For example, a 23-year-old Asian male worker said:

There can still be a stigma when it comes to mental health (especially when it comes to depression and anxiety). This can discourage people from seeking help in regard to their mental health.

This, too, was related to the experience of psychological safety at work. Among those who experience lower psychological safety, 57% reported worrying that informing their employer about a mental health condition would have a negative impact on them in the workplace. In contrast, among those who experience higher psychological safety, only 22% shared that worry.

More than half of workers (59%) strongly or somewhat agreed that their employer thinks their workplace environment is a lot mentally healthier than it actually is. That number, too, was far higher among workers who reported low levels of psychological safety at work (75%) than those experiencing higher psychological safety (44%), as well among workers who reported dissatisfaction with their relationship with their manager or supervisor (77%) than those reporting satisfaction with that relationship (57%).

In the end, supporting employee mental health has the potential to have a meaningful, positive impact on performance, productivity, and culture. For example, those who rated their mental health as good or excellent were more likely than those who rated their mental health as poor or fair to:

	Workers reporting good or excellent mental health	Workers reporting fair or poor mental health
Rate their productivity at work as high	63%	44%
Rate their performance at work as "outstanding" or very good	85%	68%

All differences between workers reporting fair or poor mental health and workers reporting good or excellent mental health are statistically significant.

With regard to workplace culture, a 27-year-old Hispanic female worker praised her employer for its emphasis on supporting mental health, saying:

They make mental health an important thing and are understanding and that helps me be the best I can be.

A 36-year-old Black female worker said:

Mental health is a big thing and I'm glad we make that a priority.

A 26-year-old Black male worker said the most important thing his employer is either doing or should be doing to help make him more effective and efficient at his job is:

Checking on the mental well-being of others.

XIII. In Conclusion

These results provide extensive support that workers who experience psychological safety in their workplaces also report much more positive experiences, including overall job satisfaction, relationships with colleagues, and fewer negative workplace outcomes such as emotional exhaustion and workplace burnout. Employers should review the workplace practices found to be associated with higher psychological safety, such as opportunities to give and receive feedback, meeting-free days, and mental health days. Finally, given the connection of psychological safety with ratings of performance and productivity, business leaders should consider that creating a work culture where team members can be themselves, speak up, and take risks, can in turn impact the bottom line.

METHODOLOGY

The 2024 Work in America™ survey was conducted online in the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of the American Psychological Association among 2,027 employed adults, including 404 Black, 413 Hispanic, 205 Asian, and 923 White. The survey was conducted March 25-April 3, 2024.

Data were weighted where necessary by age by gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size, work status, household income, and smoking status to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

- Data for Black, Hispanic, Asian, and White employed adults were weighted separately as needed by age by gender, region, education, marital status, household size, household income, work status, and smoking status, then combined by a post weight to report in total.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in these surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

- The data for the Black sample is accurate to within ± 6.2 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.
- The data for the Hispanic sample is accurate to within ± 7.7 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.
- The data for the Asian sample is accurate to within ± 9.3 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.
- The data for the White sample is accurate to within ± 4.3 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other sources of error that are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.


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