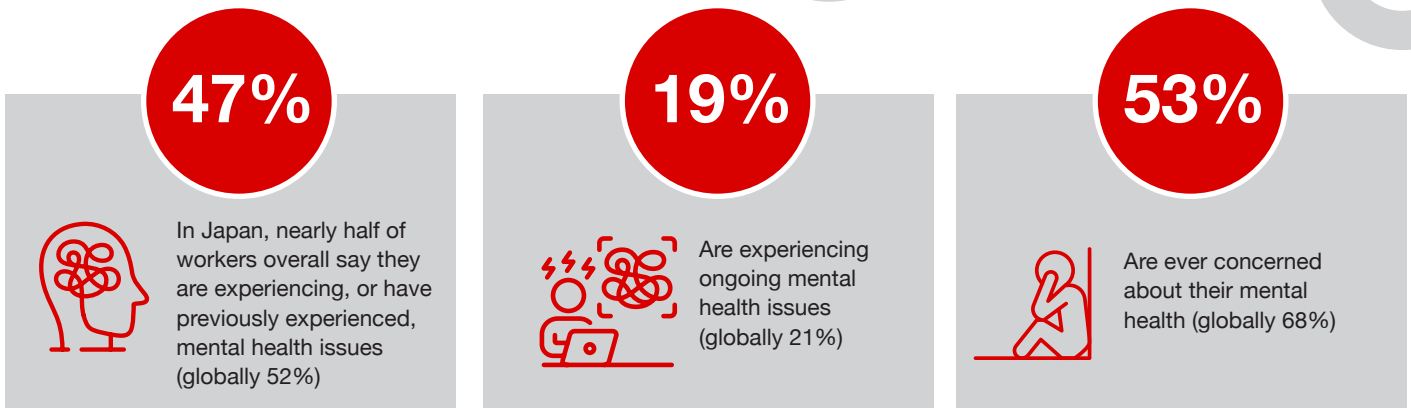


MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE: THE JAPANESE PICTURE

SECTION 1. THE STATE OF WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH



ISSUES EXPERIENCED IN THE PRIOR MONTH:



FEELINGS AT WORK IN THE PRIOR MONTH:



At 47%, Japanese workers' experience of mental health issues is only slightly lower than found globally (52%), and a significantly lower proportion (53% compared with 68% globally) have concerns about their mental health. However, a larger proportion of Japanese respondents describe their mental health as only 'fair to poor' (53%), compared with 30% globally. When asked whether they had felt negative emotions at work over the previous month, 86% of workers who have experienced mental health issues in Japan said they had felt one or more (compared to 52% of employees in who have not experienced mental health issues).

A lack of interest, motivation or energy – symptoms often associated with burnout - was the most commonly experienced by those affected by mental health challenges (39% vs 20% amongst those not affected). A desire to quit their job over the previous month (35% vs 9%) and broader negative thoughts (35% vs 15%) were next, and three in ten (34% vs 16%) felt angry or irritable towards co-workers or clients – showing the extent to which mental health can influence behaviours and mindsets in the workplace.

Feelings at work



The proportion of employees affected by work-related stress reaches 54% amongst Gen Zs.

While the reasons behind a person's mental health issues are often complex, the data shows that work-related causes could play a significant role. Forty-seven percent of workers in Japan mention they have experienced stress at work in the month before the survey –the highest-ranking issue of the seven issues measured. The proportion of employees affected by work-related stress reaches 54% amongst Gen Zs. Other issues were generally lower than shown globally, with concerns about money at 24%, compared with a global figure of 50%.

Twenty-two percent of Boomers in the workforce in Japan mention experiencing difficult relationships at work – higher than the global average of 16% - but, across all age groups, issues and concerns about family health and relationships were experienced less than globally.

In considering the impact of various work-related aspects on mental health, more people in Japan believe their workload undermines their mental health (24%) than supports it (14%). The most supportive aspects for workers in Japan are the ability to work remotely/from home (though only at 19%), and the working hours (also 19%), although those numbers are well below global averages.

SECTION 2. STIGMA AND THE BARRIERS TO PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AT WORK

In Japan, while stigma is holding people back from sharing mental health issues at work, it is at a lower level than globally: roughly one fifth of respondents (22%, against a global average of 45%) feel that people would not be adversely impacted if they shared their thoughts and emotions in their place of work.

Twenty-six percent of Japanese respondents overall feel there is stigma in their workplace around mental health (37% globally). In those workplaces, 38% of those affected by mental health challenges say they have felt stigma personally as a result of those issues (with the global proportion being 57%.)

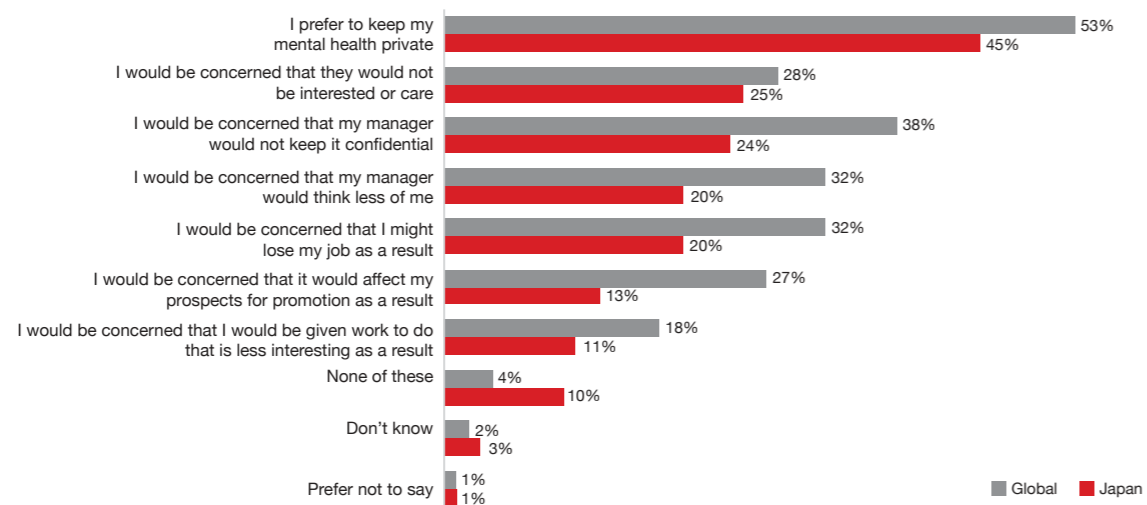
However, among those affected by poor mental health in Japan, only 28% have told their managers about their issues, well below the global figure of 53%; 32% of those have been discriminated against as a result, which compares with the global figure of 50%.

Only 40% of workers in Japan are willing to share mental health issues with their managers (compared with the global average of 56%) and 44% would be comfortable disclosing them as the reason for taking time off (61% globally).



In terms of reasons for not disclosing mental health issues as the cause of people's absence, a preference for privacy (45%) come first. But other reasons point to stigma: one in four feel that their manager would not care (25%) or keep their mental health challenges confidential (24%), while one in five (20%) would fear losing their job as a result. There are differences between women than men, and between workplace generations: for example, privacy is a more of a factor for women (50%) than men (40%), and Boomers (58%) than Gen Xs (41%), with Gen Zs at 49%.

Reasons for not disclosing mental health as the reason for taking time off



When reflecting on the policies and cultural aspects that support mental health in their organisation, figures for Japan are consistently at lower levels than globally: around one in five (19%) say they have resources to help promote positive mental health (vs 44% globally) or a culture which encourages open dialogue (18% vs 42%). Only 21% recognize widely available support in their workplaces for those experiencing mental health challenges (42% globally), and meeting-free days (25% vs 40%) are less commonly available in Japan than seen globally.

Workplace culture and policies that are in place



SECTION 3.

SETTING THE TONE: THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF LEADERSHIP ON MENTAL HEALTH

Thirty-nine percent of workers in Japan feel that it's extremely or very important for employers to look after the mental health of their workforce, significantly lower than the global figures of 73%. Only 29% believe that supporting employee mental health is a top or high priority for their leaders (globally, 56%), and 21% consider they have senior leaders who understand the importance of prioritising mental health, compared with 46% globally.

When asked whether the head of their organisation talks about mental health, fewer than one in five workers (17%) answer positively, well below the global average (40%).

Within organisations where leaders do not vocally address mental health, workers are not clear that this is important: 42% are not sure, higher than the 37% of respondents who think they should.

Yet the research shows a clear improvement in perceptions and attitudes to work when heads of organisations choose to speak about mental health: in organisations where they do speak, 77% of workers feel their organisation cares about their mental wellbeing, whereas only 30% do when their leaders do not address it.

A clear narrative from senior leaders on mental health also correlates with more people opening up about their own issues: where heads of organisations speak about mental health, 63% of people are willing to disclose their issues to their managers, compared to 35% where they don't.



17%

Heads of organisations speak out (globally 40%)



37%

Would like their head of organisation to speak out, where they do not already (globally 59%)



WHERE THE LEADER SPEAKS OUT:

- The view of whether their "Employer cares about mental health" increases from 30% to 77%
- Workers' desire to quit reduces from 25% to 22%



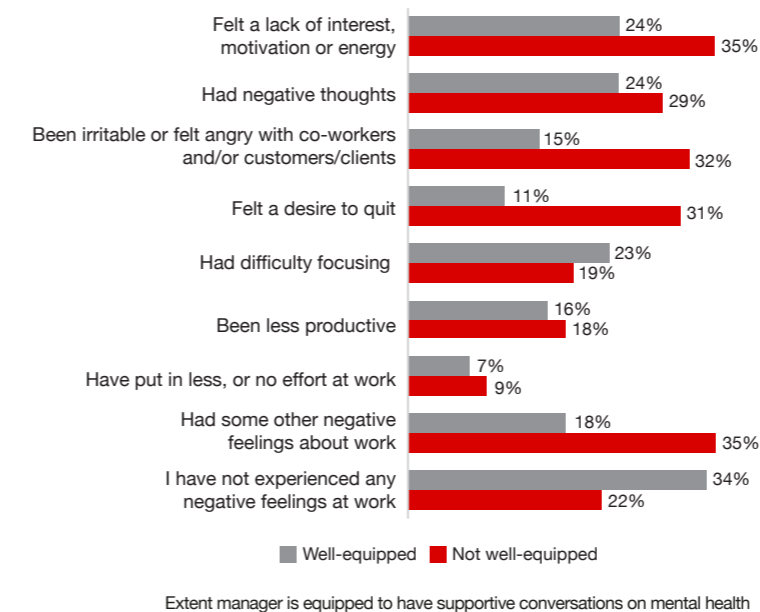
In organisations where the head of organisation speaks out, workers are more likely to report that support is available, and there is a greater tendency for that support to be used. For example, provision of resources on ways to reduce stress rises from 9% to 42%, and the use of counselling or therapy support increases from 2% to 21%.

SECTION 4. TRUST AND PROXIMITY: THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF LINE MANAGERS

Besides the instrumental role that senior leaders can play in speaking about mental health, the personal behaviours and attitudes of those with line management responsibilities are likely to be a key factor in supporting people's wellbeing. Employees in Japan who consider their direct manager well-equipped to hold conversations about mental health report even fewer negative feelings at work – including desire to quit – than when they have a senior leader who speaks about mental health.

Conversely, Japanese workers who feel their manager is not equipped to have supportive mental health conversations report markedly worse experiences. Thirty-two percent felt irritable or angry with colleagues or customers in the month before the survey (vs 15% in those whose manager is well-equipped) and 31% report having felt a desire to quit (vs 11%).

Feelings at work



Managers who haven't had training on mental health conversations report much lower levels of confidence in their ability to support people in their teams (32% vs 70% of those who have been trained). Strikingly, fewer than one in five (19%) believe their manager is equipped (32% vs 70% of those who have been trained). Strikingly, fewer than one in five (19%) believe their manager is equipped to hold conversations that would help someone with mental health issues (compared with 48% globally). Forty-four percent of workers overall feel their manager would be supportive if they shared their mental health challenges with them (lower than the global figure of 62%).

Despite this, many employers are under-investing in their managers' skills on mental health. Only 20% of managers having had training, compared with 41% globally (the figure for non-managers is as low as 5%). Even amongst those who have had training, 39% say this training was a 'one off' (globally 42%).



WHERE THE MANAGER IS WELL-EQUIPPED TO HAVE THOSE CONVERSATIONS:

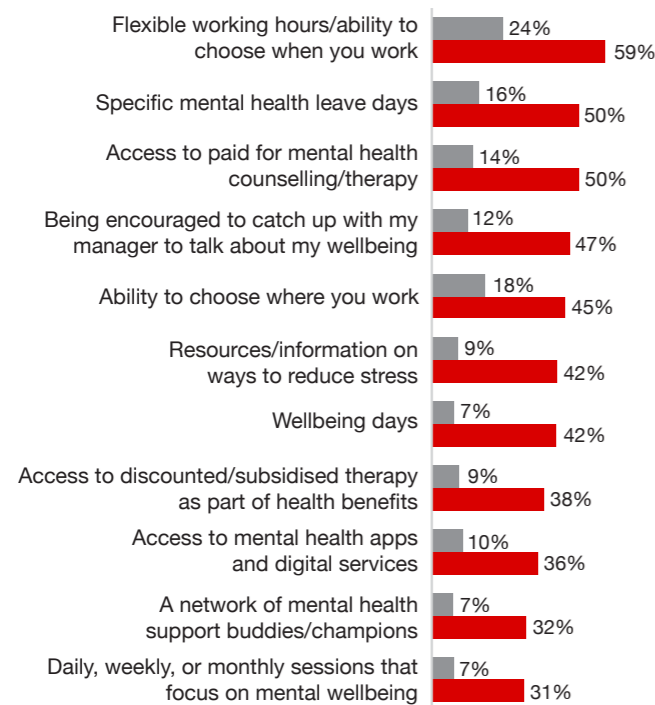
FEELINGS OF IRRITABILITY OR ANGER WITH CO-WORKERS AND/OR CUSTOMERS/CLIENTS REDUCED FROM

32% TO 15%

DESIRE TO QUIT REDUCED FROM

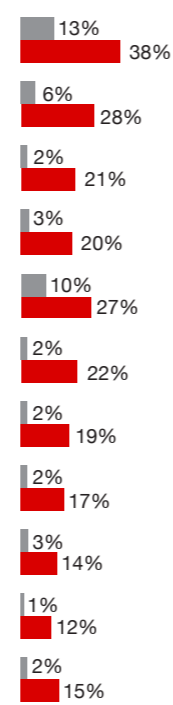
31% TO 11%

Types of support available



■ Head of organisation does not speak about mental health ■ Head of organisation does speak about mental health

Types of support used



SECTION 5.

WORKPLACE SUPPORT: EXPECTATIONS VERSUS REALITY

39%

employees consider it important that workplace mental health is prioritised (globally 73%)



29%

perceive mental health to be a priority for their employer (globally 56%)



35%

say their employer provides mental health support (globally 53%)



15%

have access to wellbeing days (globally 39%)



7%

use paid-for counselling where available (globally 18%)



23%

have not used regular sessions focusing on mental wellbeing but are willing to do so (globally 45%)



Whether mental health issues stem from work-related causes or not, workers look to their employers to provide support, though at lower levels in Japan than globally. When asked about what can make the most positive impact on them personally at work, 37% of people mention employers looking after their mental health – behind the provision of a safe working environment (44%) and support for physical health (39%), which themselves are both conducive to mental wellbeing.

In Japan, only 35% of workers feel that their employer provides that support, versus 53% globally. Most types of support are available for fewer than one quarter of workers in Japan, and support specifically in relation to mental health is generally used by fewer than half of those for whom it is available.

Types of support available

Types of support used

Not used but willing to

