



SECTION 1.

THE STATE OF WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH



ISSUES EXPERIENCED IN THE PRIOR MONTH:



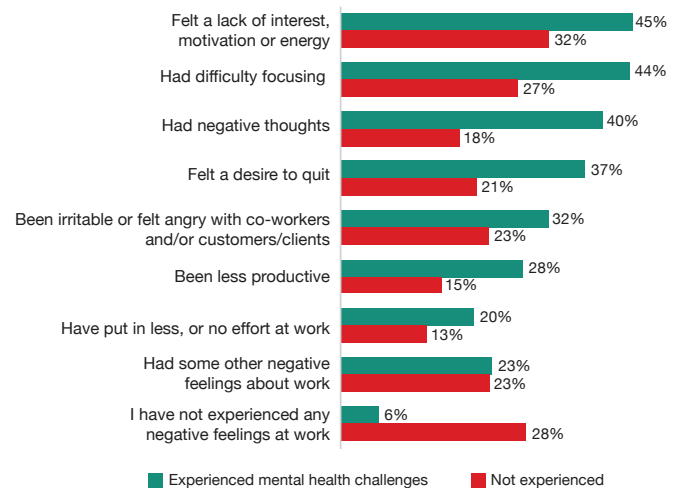
FEELINGS AT WORK IN THE PRIOR MONTH:



In the UAE, workers' experience of mental health issues is in line with levels found globally (51% vs 52%), and similarly the same proportion (68%) have concerns about their mental health. When asked whether they had felt negative emotions at work over the previous month, 94% of workers who have experienced mental health issues in the UAE said they had felt one or more (compared to 72% of employees 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 (45% vs 32% amongst those not affected). Difficulty focusing came second (44% vs 27%). Worryingly, 37% felt a desire to quit their job (vs 21%), and more than three in ten (32%) felt angry or irritable towards co-workers or clients (vs 23%) – 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 61% 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. Fifty-eight percent of workers in the UAE mention they experienced stress at work in the month before the survey – making it the highest-ranking issue of the seven issues measured, with a score markedly above the global average (52%). The proportion of employees affected by work-related stress reaches 61% amongst Gen Zs.

In considering the impact of various work-related aspects on mental health, UAE employees are more positive than their global counterparts: 45% feel their workplace culture supports their mental health (vs 36% globally), rather than undermines it (20%). Those numbers are practically the same for the management style of managers. However, UAE workers are just as likely to say their workload supports mental health than undermines it (both 33%).

SECTION 2.

STIGMA AND THE BARRIERS TO PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AT WORK

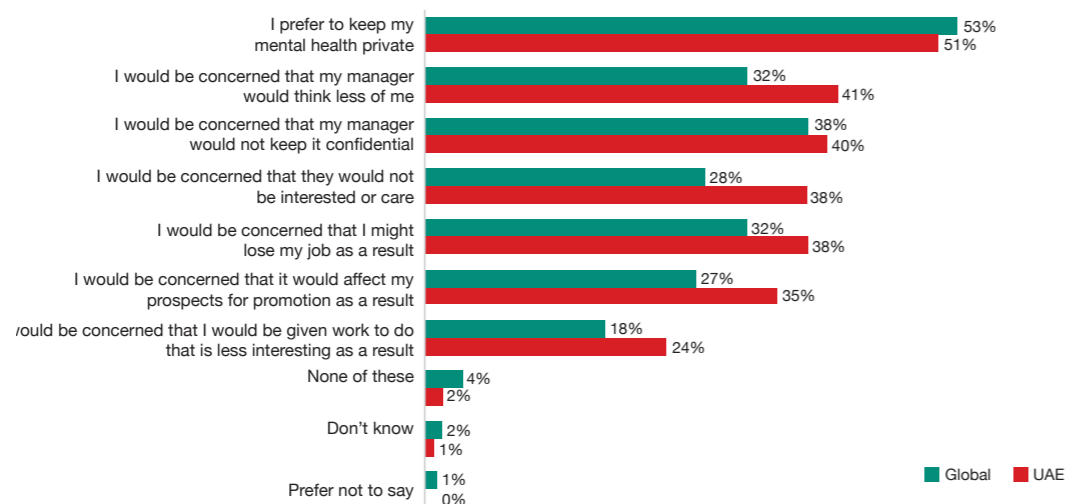
In the UAE, stigma is still holding people back from sharing mental health issues at work: 41% of UAE respondents overall feel there is stigma in their workplace around mental health – slightly higher than the global average (37%). In those workplaces, 62% of those affected by mental health challenges say they have felt stigma personally as a result of those issues (with the global proportion being 57%).

Among those affected by poor mental health in the UAE, 58% have told their managers about their issues, more than the global average of 53%, and an alarming 60% of those have been discriminated against as a result (50% globally). Yet, 64% percent of workers say they would be willing to share mental health issues with their manager (markedly higher than the global average of 56%) and 69% would be comfortable disclosing them as the reason for taking time off (61% globally).



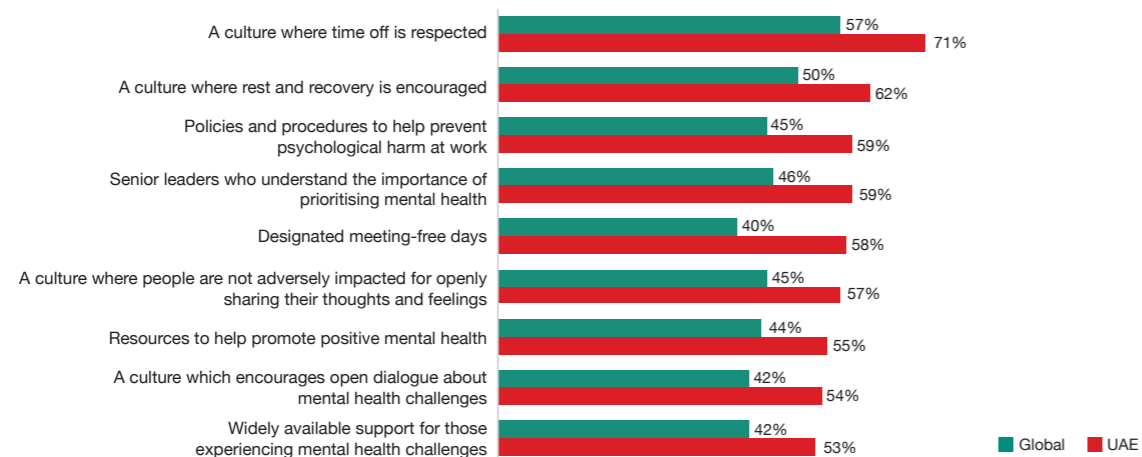
In terms of reasons for not disclosing mental health issues as the cause of people's absence, a preference for privacy (51%) comes first, with this being more even marked for Gen X (58%). Second is a concern around their manager thinking less of them (41%), while nearly four in ten (38%) would fear losing their job as a result (reaching 44% for Gen X) – pointing to stigma. Forty percent say they are concerned about their manager not keeping their issues confidential.

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



When reflecting on the policies and cultural aspects which support mental health in their organisation, UAE workers are noticeably more positive than the global averages: 71% say they benefit from a culture where time off is respected (vs 57% globally), or where a culture of rest and recovery is encouraged (62% vs 50%). Fifty-nine percent say they have access to policies and procedures that help prevent psychological harm – significantly more than the global average of 45%.

Workplace culture and policies that are in place



SECTION 3.

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

Eighty-one percent of workers in the UAE feel that it's extremely or very important for employers to look after the mental health of their workforce, compared to 73% globally. But only 64% believe that supporting employee mental health is a top or high priority for their leaders (globally 56%), and 59% consider they have senior leaders who understand the importance of prioritising mental health (globally 46%). When asked whether the head of their organisation talks about mental health, half of workers (50%) answer positively, above the global average (40%).

Within organisations where leaders do not vocally address mental health, 68% of respondents think they should. This number is higher than the global average (59%).

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, 84% 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, 74% of people are willing to disclose their issues to their managers, compared to 49% where they don't.

Crucially, whether senior leaders speak about mental health or not seems to impact workers' feelings about their place of work: those in organisations where senior leaders do not speak up are more likely to feel a lack of interest, motivation or energy (49% vs 33%), feel a desire to quit (38% vs 25%), or be irritable with co-workers or customers (32% vs 26%).



50%

Heads of organisations speak out (globally 40%)



68%

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



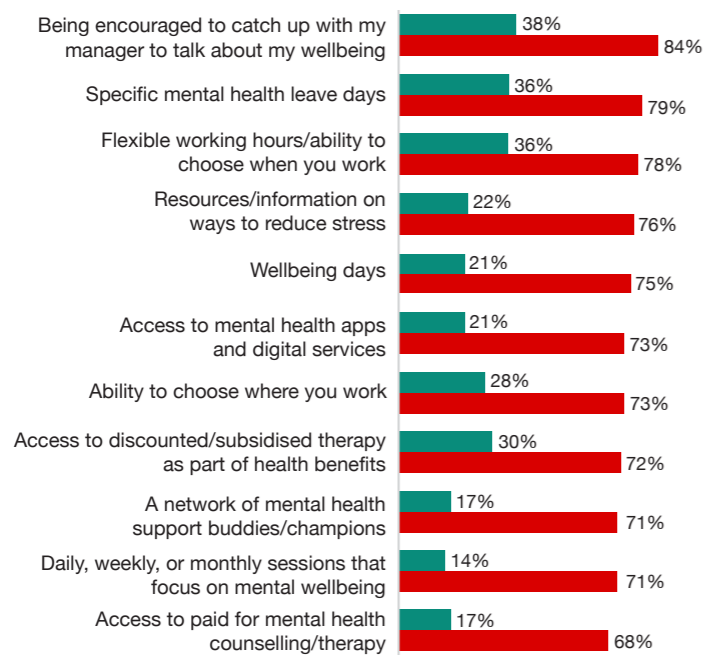
WHERE THE LEADER SPEAKS OUT:

- The view of whether their "Employer cares about mental health" increases from **30% to 84%**
- Workers' desire to quit reduces from **38% to 25%**



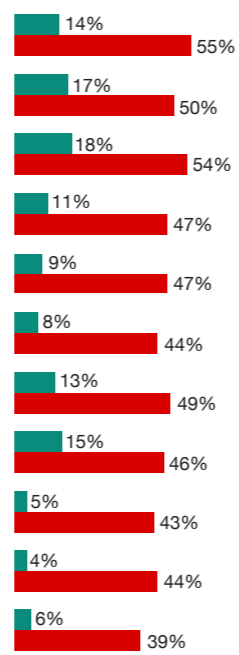
In organisations where the head of organisation speaks out, workers are more likely to report that support is available, and there is a greater tendency for that support to be used. For example, the provision of resources on ways to reduce stress rises from 22% to 76%, and the use of counselling or therapy support increases from 6% to 39%.

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

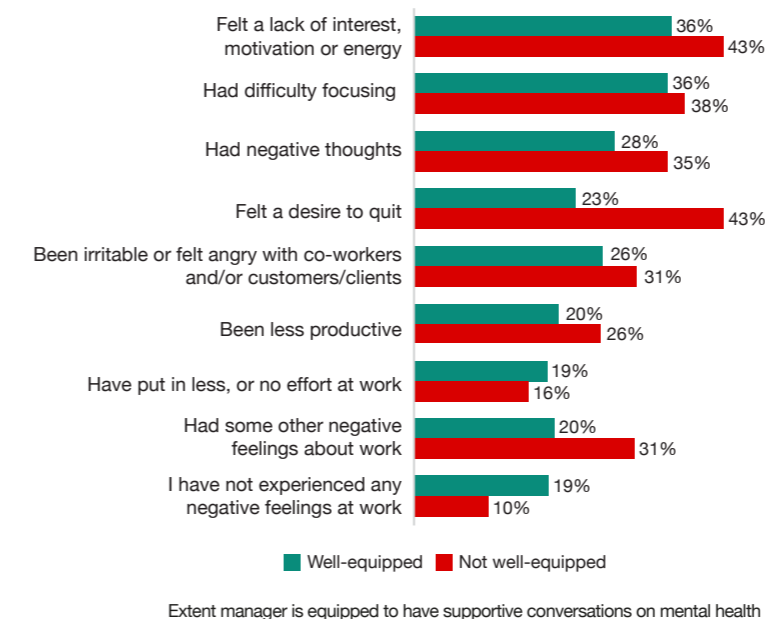


SECTION 4. TRUST AND PROXIMITY: THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF LINE MANAGERS

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 the UAE who consider their direct manager well-equipped to hold conversations about mental health report are even less likely to have a desire to quit their job than when they have a senior leader who speaks about mental health.

Conversely, UAE workers who feel their manager is not equipped to have supportive mental health conversations report worse experiences. Forty-three percent have felt low levels of motivation (vs 36% in those whose manager is well equipped), 35% have had negative thoughts (vs 28%) and 26% report being less productive (vs 20%).

Feelings at work



Managers who haven't had training on holding mental health conversations report lower levels of confidence in their ability to support people in their teams (74% vs 83% of those who have been trained). Similarly, only 59% believe their manager is equipped to hold conversations that would help someone with mental health issues (vs 48% globally), although 67% percent of people surveyed in the UAE feel their manager would be supportive if they shared their mental health challenges with them (slightly above the global figure of 62%). Despite this, many employers are under-investing in their managers' skills on mental health, with only 46% of managers having had training on mental health conversations (globally 41%). Amongst those who have had training, 51% say this training was a 'one off' (globally 42%).

59%

OF MANAGERS ARE EQUIPPED FOR SUPPORTIVE CONVERSATIONS



46%

OF MANAGERS HAVE HAD TRAINING ON MENTAL HEALTH CONVERSATIONS



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

FEELINGS OF LACK OF INTEREST, MOTIVATION OR ENERGY REDUCED FROM **46% TO 36%**

DESIRE TO QUIT REDUCED FROM **43% TO 23%**

SECTION 5.

WORKPLACE SUPPORT: EXPECTATIONS VERSUS REALITY

81%

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



64%

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



61%

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



62%

have access to special mental leave days (globally 42%)



26%

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



46%

have not used resources on ways to address stress but are willing to do so (globally 44%)



Whether mental health issues stem from work-related causes or not, it is clear that workers look to their employers to provide support. Encouragingly, in the UAE, a higher proportion of workers than seen globally feel that their employer provides that support: 61% versus 53%. In contrast to the global picture, most types of support are available for half or more of workers in the UAE, and the support is generally used by more than half of those for whom they are available.

When asked about what can make the most positive impact on them personally at work, 39% of people mention employers looking after their mental health (43% globally) – ranking it third among the six aspects measured. Higher-ranking aspects - ensuring the work environment is safe (52%), and ensuring employees are comfortable speaking up about non-inclusive behaviours (45%) are both themselves conducive to mental wellbeing.

Types of support available

Types of support used

Not used but willing to

