



# 2021 Employee Mental Health and Well-being Report

Closing the Mental Health Gap

## eBook

A study examining U.S. employees' mental health, well-being and attitudes toward employer-sponsored mental health services and digitally delivered care.

## SilverCloud Health: Our Perspective

We help employers add mental health tools, programs and support across employee populations with different needs, that are largely unmet by current programs and benefits. Our programs are backed by nearly two decades of clinical research and proven outcomes to improve employee well-being and productivity while reducing turnover.

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## **SILVERCLOUD HEALTH COMMISSIONED A SURVEY THROUGH A THIRD-PARTY RESEARCH FIRM TO BETTER UNDERSTAND EMPLOYED U.S. ADULTS' PERSPECTIVES**

### **Survey Approach**

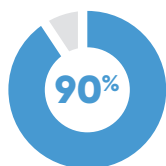
In response to insufficient information available about whether employees' mental health needs were being met, and what further support employers could provide, SilverCloud Health commissioned a survey through a third-party research firm to better understand 1,288 employed U.S. adults' perspectives on the following interrelated topics:

- **How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted employees' mental health and wellness?**
- **Are employees receiving appropriate mental health services and benefits through their employer?**
- **Are employees utilizing their mental health benefits?**
- **What changes are employees looking for in the delivery of mental health care?**

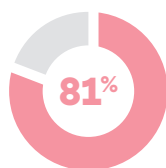
## SilverCloud Health: Our Perspective

"Nearly a year into the pandemic, employees feel like they are truly lacking the tools and resources to help them manage their feelings of stress and anxiety. These feelings are compounded further as a result of things like parental guilt, pandemic fatigue and the challenge of trying to remain productive in an almost all remote environment."

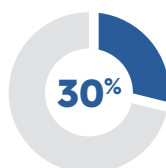
**Ken Cahill, CEO of SilverCloud Health**



**Said COVID-19 had contributed to increasing their stress level**



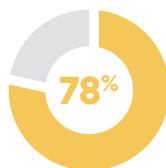
**Of those with depression and anxiety have experienced a greater need for mental health treatment during COVID-19**



**Of employees had experienced an increased need for mental health treatment during the pandemic**



**Agree or strongly agree their employer could be doing more to help support their well-being and mental health**



**Of employees prefer online services and support over in-person services**

## Key Findings

Employees' worries about being exposed to the coronavirus, increased isolation and limited social engagement, the potential for financial distress, and other concerns are still prevalent. Yet a time when the need for expanded mental health benefits and care is great, too many employees aren't able to access appropriate mental health support and care. They lack mental health benefits, or don't know what mental health benefits their employer provides.

An overwhelming majority of employees want their employer to step up with added digital services and support that they can access anonymously on their internet-connected device. Employers should understand traditional therapy resources are limited and aren't equipped to deal with the full scale of the mental health crisis.

Employers should take steps to fully understand the emotional health of their employees and establish more flexible, digital programs that can provide clinically appropriate care tailored to their needs. While the data is tied to pandemic-related stress, the numbers highlight an ongoing, chronic issue of employees wanting more mental health support that is likely outlast the pandemic.

Employers should understand traditional therapy resources are limited and aren't equipped to deal with the full scale of the mental health crisis. They should take steps to fully understand the emotional health of their employees and establish more flexible, digital programs that can provide clinically appropriate care tailored to their needs. While the data are tied to pandemic-related stress, they highlight significant needs of employees wanting more mental health and well-being support which will likely outlast the pandemic.



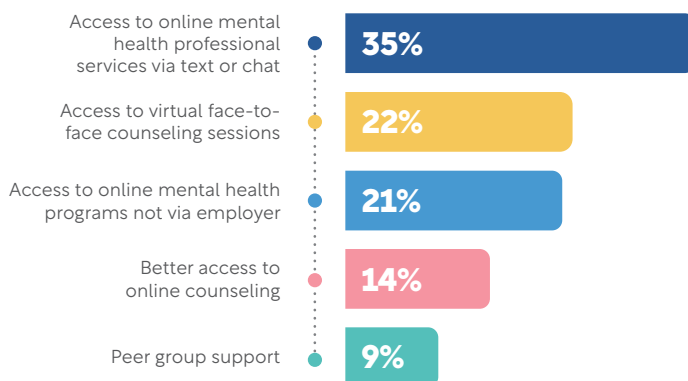
# Lack of Mental Health Services

Employees want more support from their employer during COVID-19, and many aren't receiving adequate care and resources to address their symptoms. 58% of respondents said they did not feel their employer has taken more interest in their mental health during the pandemic. A further 66% of respondents said they "agree" or "strongly agree" with this statement: *During COVID-19, my employer could be doing more to help support my well-being and mental health.*

Employees want more access to online therapy, which decreases stigma and provides them with more anonymity and the ability to control their care pathway.

**SilverCloud Health asked respondents to choose which service they would want their employer's mental health benefits to provide, and the results are:**

## Which Service Should Your Employer's Mental Health Benefits Provide?



A combined 78% of respondents preferred online services and support over in-person services (peer group support or onsite counseling).

# SilverCloud Health Perspective

The survey data further underscore the significant return-on-investment that digitally delivered, on-demand behavioral health services can provide. Based on the fact that 38% of respondents reported missing time at work due to COVID-related stress, SilverCloud estimates that the time missed by these employees is equivalent to 6.7% of all hours worked, or an average of over a half hour per day for every employee.

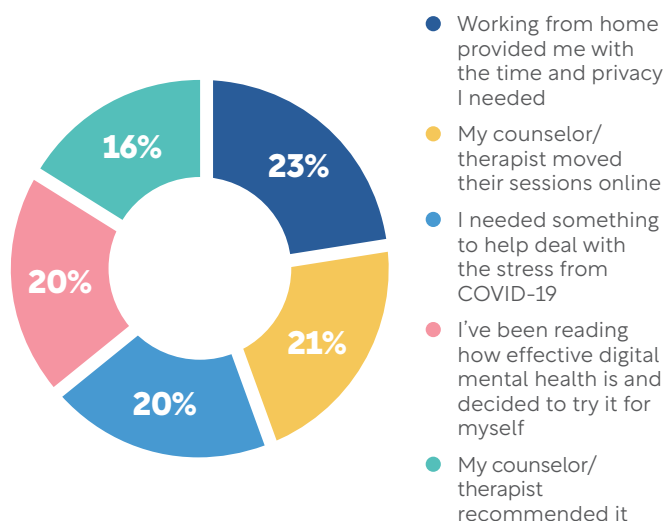
The survey recipients had average annual earnings of \$87,000 which equates to losses of almost \$5,800 per year for every employee. For an employer with 5,000 employees, this equates to 1,900 workers who would be missing work time due to COVID-related stress, and is **worth over \$120,000 in lost productivity per day or over \$28 million per year**. Given the potential for digital therapy to provide meaningful support to many more employees, it has the potential to reduce these losses substantially.

Employers can increase mental health benefit utilization by offering digital mental health options. Six out of 10 respondents said they would be more likely to use their mental health benefits if they could access their benefits at any time from their smartphone or other devices.

**SILVERCLOUD ESTIMATES THAT A COMPANY WITH 5,000 EMPLOYEES WOULD LOSE \$28 MILLION ANNUALLY IN LOST PRODUCTIVITY IF MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES GO UNADDRESSED**

Yet 79% of respondents said they don't have previous experience using a digitally delivered mental health service. Among those 21% who have tried a digital-based mental health service, the following were the top motivations:

### Why Did You Decide to Use a Digital Mental Health Solution?



The data demonstrate a clear opportunity for employers to embrace digitally enabled mental health therapies to drive better utilization. Mental health treatment based on clinically validated approaches can have a dramatic impact on reducing medical costs, increasing productivity and reducing lost workdays.

The American Heart Association CEO Roundtable noted in a 2018 study<sup>1</sup> that evidence-based, digital mental health treatments can save between \$2 and \$4 for every dollar invested.

**EMPLOYERS SHOULD UNDERSTAND TRADITIONAL THERAPY RESOURCES ARE LIMITED AND AREN'T EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH THE FULL SCALE OF THE ONGOING MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS**

### SilverCloud Health: Our Perspective

A key part of driving utilization of mental health benefits is providing relevant content addressing challenges that people are confronting. SilverCloud Health's digital mental health platform delivers the appropriate on-demand content to the right person at the right time, driving better patient outcomes. In 2020, SilverCloud Health's clinical team introduced a dedicated program called Challenging Times to help patients deal with COVID-19 related issues, such as worry, sleep, bereavement, isolation and work-life balance. Additionally, SilverCloud has released a new content extension called Money Worries, helping users better cope with financial distress.



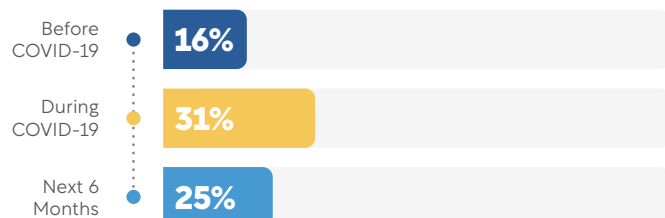
# Mental Health Symptoms on the Rise

Stress levels are heightened in the overall population, but especially among people already dealing with anxiety and depression.

Respondents were asked to estimate their stress levels (1) before the pandemic began to impact the U.S. in early 2020, (2) during the first 3-4 months of the pandemic, and (3) to rate their expected stress levels over the next six months. For each question, they were given four options: “no stress,” “low stress,” “moderate stress” and “high stress.”

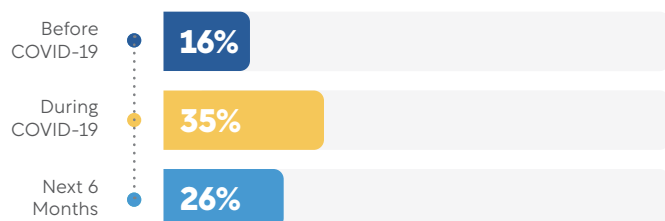
Among people with diagnosed anxiety, the results are:

## Percent With Anxiety Who Had/Have/Expect “High” Stress Levels



Among those with diagnosed depression, the results are:

## Percent With Depression Who Had/Have/Expect “High” Stress Levels



## SilverCloud Health: Our Perspective

“The survey data points to a massive supply-demand problem in mental health with the reduced capacity for mental health service delivery,” said Derek Richards, Ph.D., Chief Science Officer at SilverCloud Health. “The gaps in employees’ mental health needs and the access to effective interventions is largely due to the barriers that keep many people from seeking care in traditional therapeutic settings. Digitally enabled mental health services are now a critical piece of the mental health infrastructure.”

**Derek Richards, Ph.D., Chief Science Officer at SilverCloud Health**

The fact that people with a behavioral health diagnosis are experiencing dramatically higher levels of stress indicates some of these employees could face reduced productivity, increased traditional provider utilization or increased need for sick days to recoup their mental health.

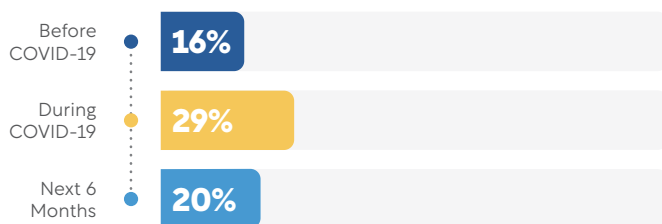
Among the entire population, people between 39-55 years are experiencing the highest stress levels of any age group, with 67% saying they experienced “moderate” or “high” stress in the first 3-4 months of the pandemic, and 68% expecting to experience those stress levels over the next six months.

**AMONG THE ENTIRE POPULATION, PEOPLE BETWEEN 39-55 YEARS ARE EXPERIENCING THE HIGHEST STRESS LEVELS OF ANY AGE GROUP**

# Mental Health Impact on Productivity

Stress is reducing many employees' productivity. Respondents were asked to estimate how productive and engaged they were at work (1) before COVID-19, (2) during COVID-19, and (3) how productive they will be over the next six months. They could choose: "not productive at all," "less productive than usual," "fairly productive" and "very productive." 29% of employees indicated they have been less productive during the pandemic and expect to remain at lower levels post-pandemic. The results are:

## Percent Who Say They Were/Are/Will Be "Less Productive" or "Not Productive at All" at Work



Some employees are taking sick days to deal with these feelings of being overwhelmed or stressed. Respondents were asked to compare their stress before January 2020 to the present, and estimate whether they are using more sick days due to stress. The results are:

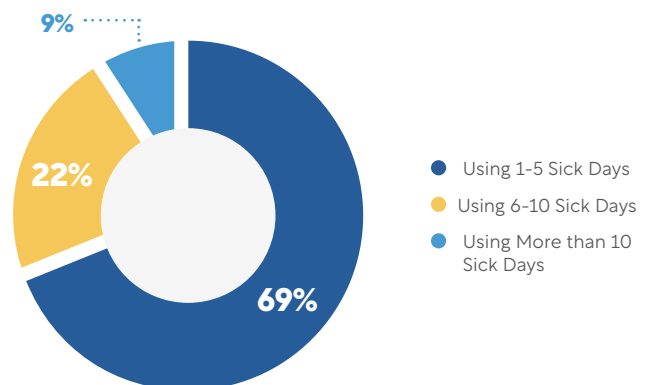
## SilverCloud Health: Our Perspective

"With mental health symptoms going unaddressed, this will also impact employers directly in the form of reduced productivity, turnover and absenteeism. As affirmed in the recently published Banbury Forum for Digital Mental Health Treatment statement, digital mental health treatments have proven to be effective interventions and can overcome access and provider shortages."

**Ken Cahill, CEO of SilverCloud Health**

32% of employees have used sick days due to stress related to the pandemic, and of those, 69% used 1-5 sick days, 22% used 6-10 sick days and 9% used more than 10 sick days.

## Usage of Sick Days Due to Stress



**32% OF EMPLOYEES ARE TAKING SICK DAYS TO DEAL WITH FEELINGS OF BEING OVERWHELMED OR STRESSED**





# Low Utilization of Mental Health Services

35% of respondents feel they are not receiving the mental health care they need. This rises to 44% among those who said they experience symptoms of depression, and 39% among those experiencing anxiety.

The reasons identified are:

- One-third do not have access to mental health benefits through their employer. There are multiple reasons employers don't provide mental health benefits, including cost and not fully understanding the need, or lacking the information to understand the potential ROI.
- Respondents were asked to choose up to three reasons why they don't use their mental health benefits from a list of 11 choices. 50% said they don't need help for stress, depression or other behavioral issues. The other top answers were:
  - **I'm not aware what is included in my benefits: 15%**
  - **I'm not sure how to access the benefits: 14%**
  - **The services are too expensive (out of pocket costs): 14%**
  - **I don't have time to get help: 13%**
  - **I'm concerned about stigmas related to getting mental health services: 9%**
  - **The benefits were confusing: 7%**

Many people facing mental health conditions never get help because care and support is difficult to access. Digital mental health programs give employees faster access to the behavioral health services and support they need so they can reduce their symptoms, decrease the mental health stigma and feel better. These digital programs also free clinical teams from the heavy burden of delivering individual face-to-face care to a growing number of patients with mental health needs. On-demand, virtual support programs reach more patients at their time of need while reducing the strain on the healthcare system.

## SilverCloud Health: Our Perspective

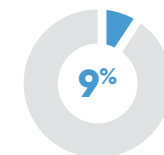
SilverCloud Health's digital mental health platform simplifies implementing an employee mental health and wellness program, enabling employers to more effectively get their employees enrolled in as little as 4 weeks. This helps employers eliminate challenges around lack of employee utilization of benefits. SilverCloud's customer support team works with employers to integrate SilverCloud's solution into their care pathways and to tailor the intensity of clinical interventions with individual needs.



**Do not have access to mental health benefits through their employer**



**Of individuals are not aware what is included in their benefits**



**Of individuals are concerned about stigmas related to getting mental health services**



**29% OF EMPLOYEES  
INDICATED THEY HAVE  
BEEN LESS PRODUCTIVE  
DURING THE PANDEMIC**

## Conclusion

Mental health challenges directly impact a business' productivity and bottom line: the CDC reports<sup>2</sup> that there are 11.5 days of reduced productivity and 4.8 workdays lost over three months for an employee experiencing depression.

Yet while these challenges around mental health, lost productivity and absenteeism appear to be more acute during the pandemic, they have confronted employers prior to the pandemic and will likely be here long after the pandemic has subsided.

Employers can help address the care gaps identified in this study by looking for digital mental health solutions or Employee Assistance Program (EAP) providers to offer key services.

Additionally, offering more flexible, digitally delivered mental health programs and services tailored to how employees prefer to consume information, on their device or home computer, can have a powerful impact on employees' mental health and well-being.

**Methodology:** SilverCloud Health collected responses between Jan. 4-7, 2021, via a third-party research firm, from 1,288 U.S. based people 18 years and older who are employed on a full-time basis. Researchers attempted to achieve the U.S. Census balance among different age groups, income levels, races, genders, relationship statuses, geographical regions and other factors to ensure a diverse and representative sample.

# The Solution

SilverCloud Health is the world's leading digital mental health company, enabling employers, providers and health plans to deliver clinically validated on-demand programs that improves outcomes, increases access and scale while reducing costs. The company's multi-award-winning digital mental health platform is a result of over 18 years of clinical research with leading academic institutions.

Today, SilverCloud is trusted by 100s of employers, covering 10s of millions of employee lives to meet their mental health needs. Global experts have deeply validated the platform through full randomized control trials and real-world data. The platform continues to lead the industry with its effectiveness, engagement and range of clinical programs that encompass the full spectrum of mental health needs.

**Learn more at: [SilverCloudHealth.com/Employers](https://SilverCloudHealth.com/Employers)**

## SilverCloud Health

**Ready to invest in the mental health of your organization?**

**Contact Us**



## Citations

1. American Heart Association, "Employers are vital to promoting mental health new report says," Dec. 12, 2018, <https://newsroom.heart.org/news/employers-are-vital-to-promoting-mental-health-new-report-says>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: "Depression Evaluation Measures," <https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/health-strategies/depression/evaluation-measures/index.html>

## SilverCloud Health Programs

All programs offer bonus content, including the Challenging Times module specifically developed to support you as you navigate the current COVID-19 crisis. You can access the programs on your desktop, cell phone, or tablet.

- **Anxiety:** Learn to challenge anxious thoughts and situations
- **Depression:** Manage and overcome feelings of low mood and sadness
- **Depression and Anxiety:** Learn to manage low mood and anxious thoughts
- **COVID-19/Challenging Times:** Manage stress & self-care during challenging times
- **Stress:** Overcome and manage your stressors
- **Insomnia & Sleep Issues:** Build healthy sleep habits
- **Resilience:** Enhance your wellbeing and build work-life balance

