

MANAGE

THREE STEPS TO IMPROVING

EMPLOYEE

EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING & RETENTION

BURNOUT

WRITTEN BY

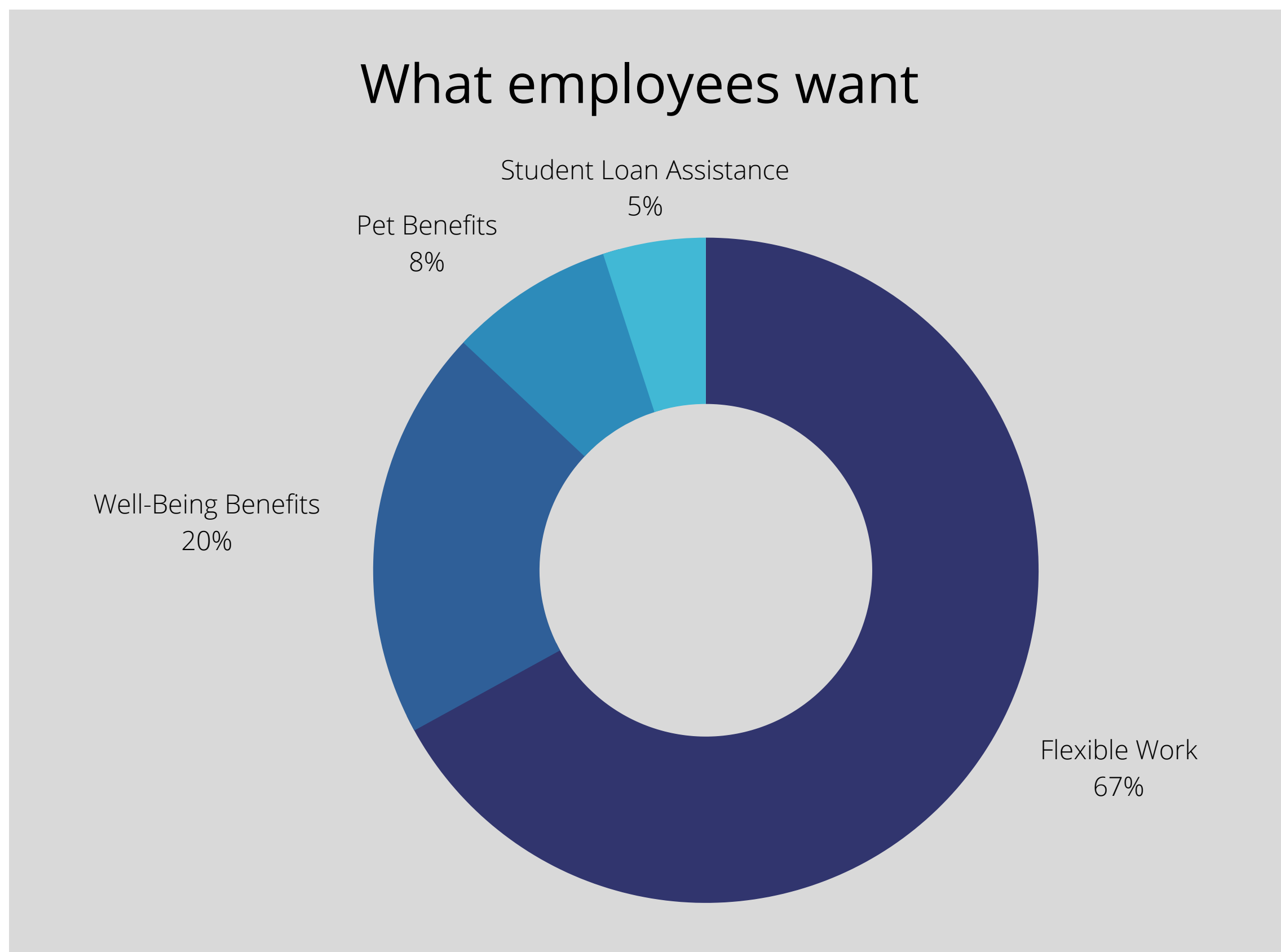
*benefits
media* 

JUNE 2022

A Problem Bigger Than Inflation

The World Health Organization recently classified burnout as a disease. Defined as chronic, acute stress over prolonged periods of time, worker burnout has been characterized with feelings of reduced performance at work, heightened negativity about one's job, and depletion of energy.

Nearly 60 million Americans have voluntarily left their jobs since the beginning of 2021 according to the 2022 Global Benefits Attitudes Survey, commissioned by consulting firm Willis Towers Watson. While a myriad of contributing factors are likely at play, 20% of those workers self-reported that seeking higher pay wasn't the reason for their departure, leaving workplace benefits, quality of life, and similar factors responsible for their decisions. "Some are leaving for a nudge up in pay, but some aren't," reasons Tracey Malcolm of the consulting firm.



Malcolm goes on to assert that many employees' sticking point is over remote work, chiefly that workers are expecting more remote opportunities than employers are willing to allow. Her firm's survey concludes that a combined 58% of respondents would prefer more remote work, citing less time commuting, lower spending, and more time keeping up with household commitments as their motivation.

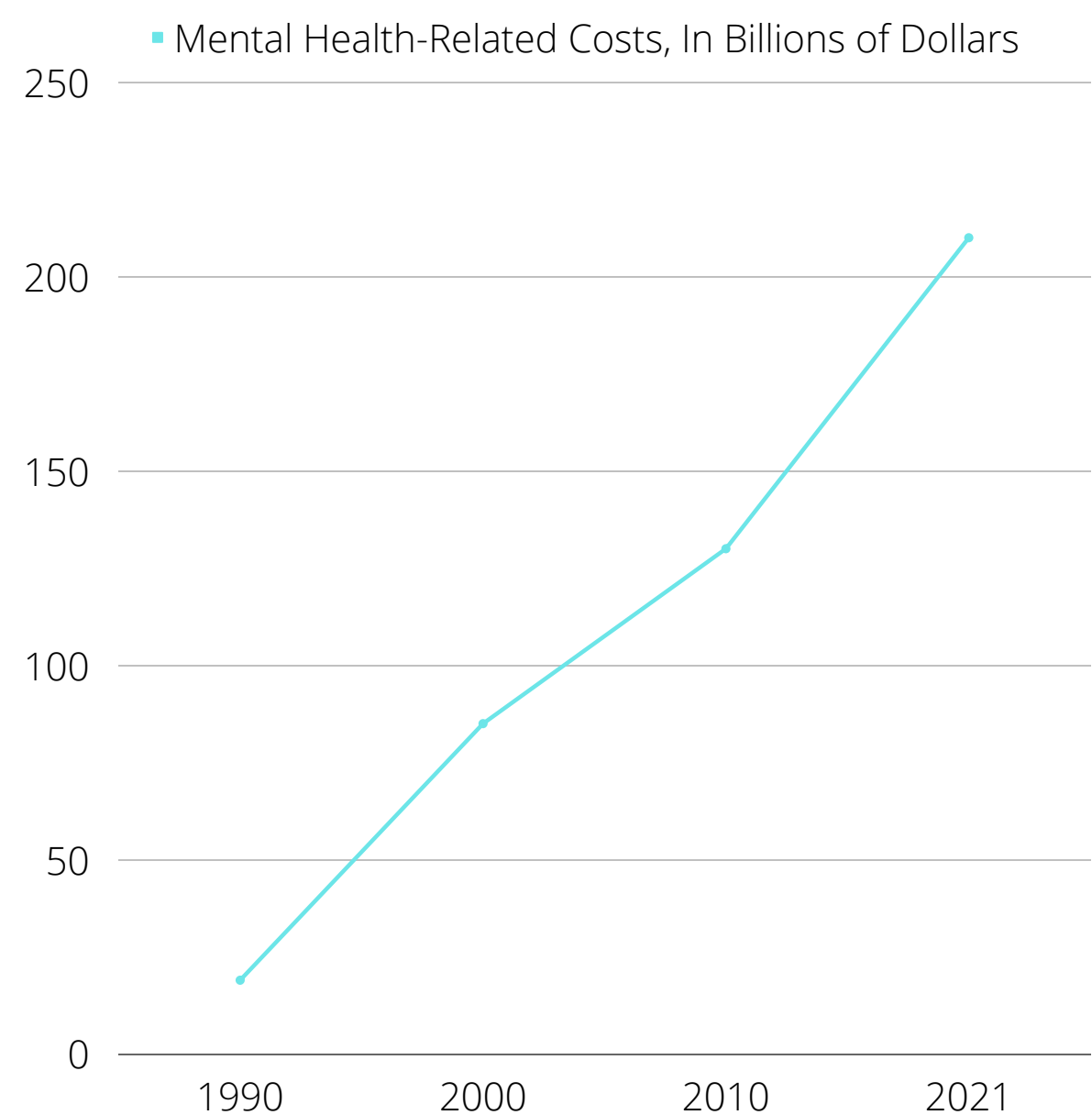
How does this tie into benefits and insurance? According to ComPsych, there's a significant connection.

In the last quarter of 2021, ComPsych produced research showing that "57 percent of employers think burnout is still affecting turnover and retention at their company". With no real method for separating free time and work, both remote employees and employees at the office are struggling in a real way. The key to reversing this trend is a focus on mental health.

Mental Health Benefits Still Fall Short

In 2020 employers revisited their mental health and well-being benefits, and implemented changes and enhancements at rates higher than ever before. Recent data from multiple studies has found those steps to still be inadequate.

"The pandemic has created some of the most trying situations leaders have ever faced and burnout is a serious issue in our new world of work," said Dr. Richard A. Chaifetz, Founder, Chairman and CEO of ComPsych. "People's mental and physical health are really strained and they are suffering. Employers must take the reins and actively try to alleviate issues before things get worse."



The American Psychiatric Association found that employees with unresolved depression experience a 35% reduction in productivity, contributing to a loss of \$210.5 billion a year in absenteeism, reduced productivity, and medical costs.

The conclusions drawn by ComPsych, plus research findings of the APA both advocate for enhanced mental healthcare, but workers are increasingly met by the realities of their employer's benefits packages. Nearly half, 43% of U.S. employees, say their employer-provided health care plan's mental health benefits did not meet all of their needs in 2020. What's more, 26% of workers in that same period who received mental healthcare called the quality of care "substandard."

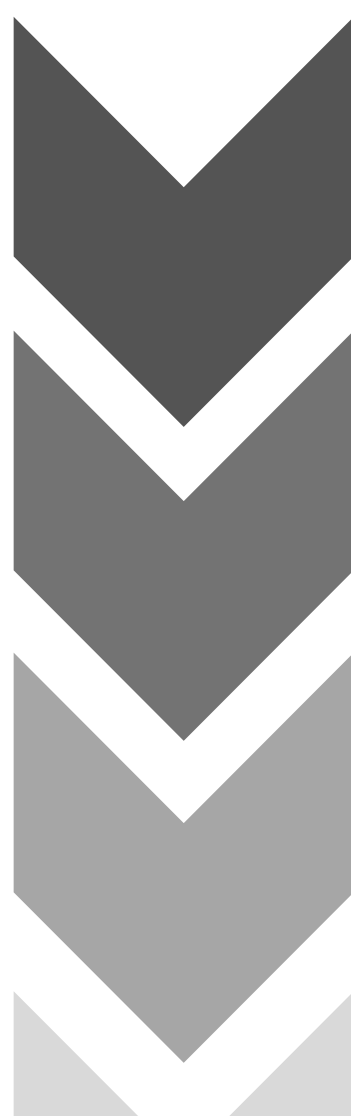
Fixing the issue of burnout means directly addressing mental health benefits, and employees agree. Encouraging time off and offering mental health days were advocated for by 65% of ComPsych respondents. The case is furthered by research from The Harris Poll reflecting that in 2021, 49% of American workers accessed mental healthcare, while nationwide the trend sits at only 20%, demonstrating that workers are roughly 250% more likely to need mental health care than the general population.

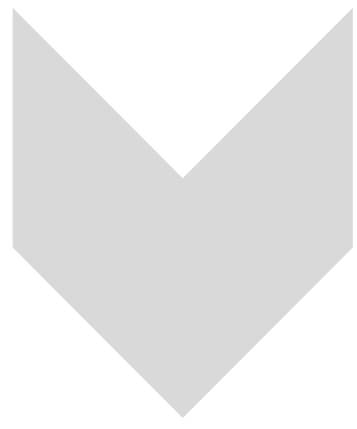
Placing more emphasis on employee mental health benefits has dramatic benefits according to research by an NIH Advisory Council, potentially including:

- “Increased productivity: Research shows that nearly 86 percent of employees treated for depression report improved work performance. And in some studies, treatment of depression has been shown to reduce absenteeism and presenteeism by 40 to 60 percent.”
- “Increased retention: In a 2019 survey of more than 1,500 employees nationwide, more than a third of the respondents said they had left a job due at least in part to mental health. Of these, 59 percent said mental health was the primary reason.”
- “Decreased health care and disability costs: According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, rates of cardiovascular and metabolic diseases are twice as high in adults with serious mental illness.”

Three Steps To Greater Employee Retention

With 86% of employees nationwide asking for more mental health care benefits, here are three ways to deliver:



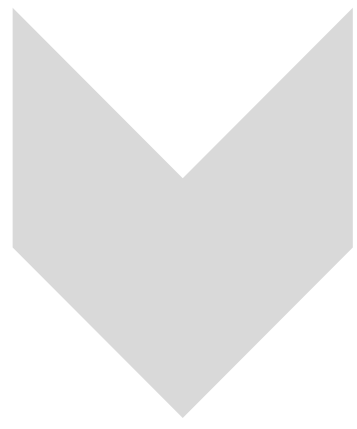


1

Weed-out phantom mental health care.

1. “Ghost networks” and “phantom” mental health coverage both refer to a growing problem of provider networks that aren’t providing. The result is endless calls to schedule appointments that never get returned.
2. Verify up front with the plan how many psychiatrists and psychologists are in-network and be prepared to ask the plan for a “single-case exception” if a covered member isn’t able to receive care in a reasonable amount of time.
3. App-based and virtual counseling and therapy services may not be suitable for all employees. Recent reports about certain platforms reveal employees are turned away and even experience platform burnout due to startup companies that may be too busy to assist.



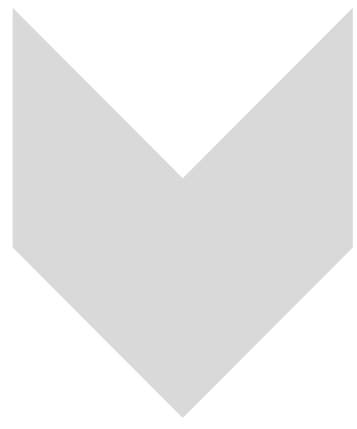


2

Focus on EAPs with evidence-based therapies (EBT).

1. Ensure your EAP focuses primarily on evidence-based therapy (EBT). EBTs can alleviate an employer's concerns about the efficacy of treatment. EBTs have been thoroughly tested in controlled, randomized trials, and unlike other treatment modalities are proven to have effective outcomes.
2. Mental health benefits through an EAP that shy away from evidence-based therapies (EBT) can force employees to seek care elsewhere, resulting in out-of-pocket costs ranging from \$100 to \$200 per session. This further exacerbates any sense of dissatisfaction employees may have with benefits through their employer.





3

Create well-being policies.

1. The most requested well-being benefit is greater flexibility in working schedules. Consider all options for adding in flexibility to employees' schedules, then do it.
2. Offer incentives for participating in yoga, mindfulness sessions, and similar.
3. Encourage employees to use their vacation time. One strategy is to limit the vacation days that can be rolled over into the next year.
4. Ease the transition back to the office by developing a return-to-work process that provides for leaves of absences for employees with mental health challenges.