



Mental Health, Accommodations, and Leaves of Absence in Academia

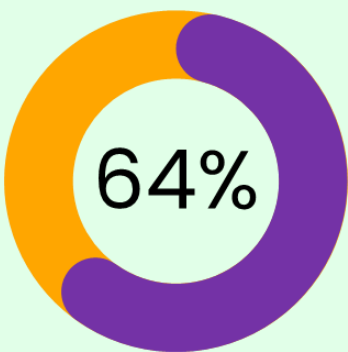
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As a part of the **Healthy Professional Worker Partnership**, 333 academics completed a survey and 20 participated in an interview.



Mental Health

64% of respondents indicated that they have suffered from a mental health issue during their career.



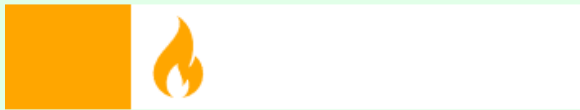
Specific mental health issues include:



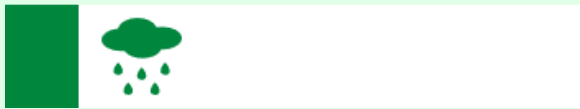
Anxiety (35%)



Psychological distress (28%)



Burnout (22%)



Depression (13%)

Key Sources of Work Stress (Pre-pandemic)

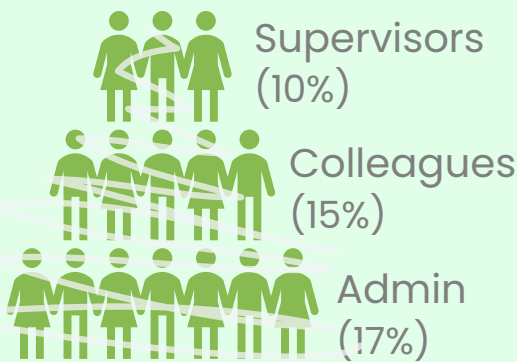
Heavy workload & demands (67%)



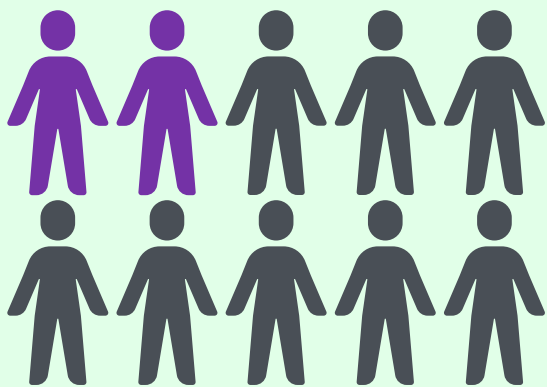
Digital stress (31%)



Poor relations with:



Leaves of Absence



Of the 218 participants who indicated they had a mental health issue prior to the pandemic, only

23%

actually took a leave.

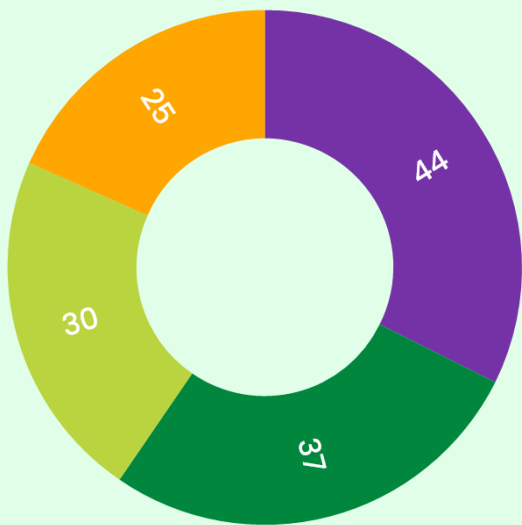


The Healthy Professional Worker Partnership (HPW) is a CIHR & SSHRC funded initiative that examines mental health, leaves of absence and return to work from a comparative and intersectional gender lens. Please visit <https://bit.ly/3je8IKX> for details to cite this document.



Leaves of Absence

Common reasons for not taking a leave of absence:



- Did not think it was warranted (44%)
- Concerns about professional stigma (37%)
- Concerns about negative impact on students (30%)
- Worry about giving extra work to colleagues and guilt (25%)



Academics rarely take leaves of absence because they tend to self-manage.

"...well, if I took time off, it would only be time for me to just worry about stuff more, and I've never felt so incapacitated..."



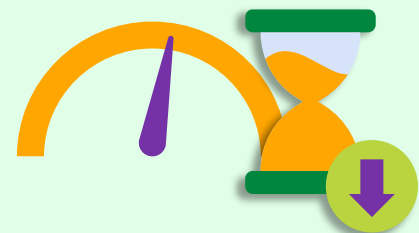
Workplace Accommodations

There is a lack of options for accommodations for academics.



Of the 218 academics who experienced mental health issues,

Only **41** requested accommodations and only **25** received an accommodation.



55% of participants informally made changes to the way they worked by reducing work hours and using vacation time.



Implications

Academics who work during periods of mental ill-health results in high levels of presenteeism and a decline in productivity.



91% of participants reported their mental health had a negative impact on their work productivity.



Academic women tend to experience higher demands, compared to academic men (Heijstra et al., 2017; McCutcheon & Morrison, 2016).

This calls for:



Useful, creative and appropriate accommodations for faculty members with mental ill-health.



Addressing the stigma related to taking a leave of absence for mental ill-health.

