



A Blueprint for the Flourishing Workforce

The Key Trends, Skills and Values Required
To Rebuild in The Next Normal



A Blueprint For The Flourishing Workforce:

The Key Trends, Skills and Values Required in
The Next Normal

It's the anniversary of the World Health Organization pronouncement of the COVID-19 pandemic, and with vaccines giving us hope of phased out restrictions, we are all looking ahead at how we can rebuild flourishing organizations.

The emotional burnout of prolonged anxiety, stress, social unrest, social isolation, grief, and economic hardships has been unlike anything communities — and certainly employers — have ever faced. Scores of experts from medical to media to corporate culture have identified and aligned on the red-flag realization that mental health is the “second pandemic” that could last for years to come.

Fortunately, times of great crisis can also create moments of great innovation.

McKinsey reported in June 2020 that over 90% of executives expect COVID-19 will fundamentally change the way they do business. What are the unplanned organizational changes happening in the immediate and mid-term? How can we reskill our managers and employees to recognize burnout and lead from the new epicenter of corporate culture and compassion? What does a measurable plan look like to address the seismic shift of the collective mental health condition?

The facets of work and life that will return to pre-pandemic conventions or evolve to something new are being tested and deployed. Across the changes, whichever way they go, there's a consistent determinant factor that's coalescing in all of the key trends and new skills companies are adopting in order to reestablish a resilient and productive workforce.

"Perhaps Crisis Forces
Commonality of Purpose
on one another."
— *Michelle Dean*

This factor has been emerging for years, most evidenced by forward-thinking organizations who balanced Return On Investment (ROI) with Value On Investment (VOI). It's a human-centric metric that merges the best elements of ROI and VOI, and integrates them with an evolving state of Corporate Culture and Purpose...it's a factor that leverages the intrinsic value of an organization's greatest asset: its people.

The critical mass of languishing individuals precipitated by the pandemic has magnified the strategic importance to move beyond 'check-the-box' mental health initiatives. The organizations leading this next era have made a demonstrable investment in people and their mental wellness. HR leaders are empowered now more than ever to ensure their employees are well, or are earnestly supported with modern solutions when not. Organizations who are best prepared will emerge post-pandemic with a purpose-driven workforce who can flourish, no matter what happens next.

This paper is not an exhaustive report of every aspect of our personal and professional lives that have been profoundly impacted by COVID-19; instead, it will explore vital areas that demonstrate why there's an undeniable theme resounding throughout the global population, and especially the workplace.

The following Blueprint provides eMindful's recommendations of the best practices and tactical steps required for the days ahead, advancing from ROI and VOI to the new metric: VIP... Value In People.

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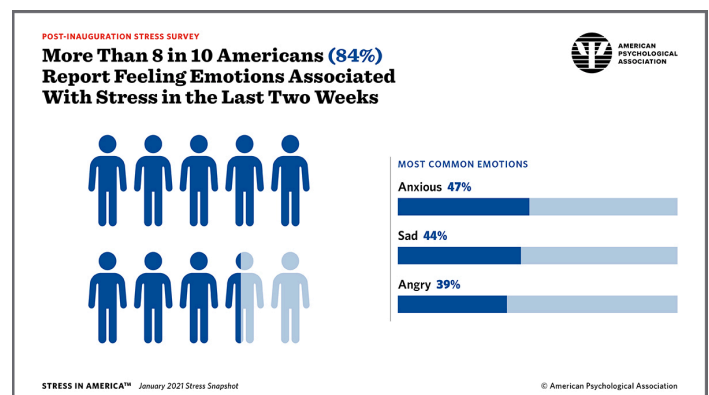
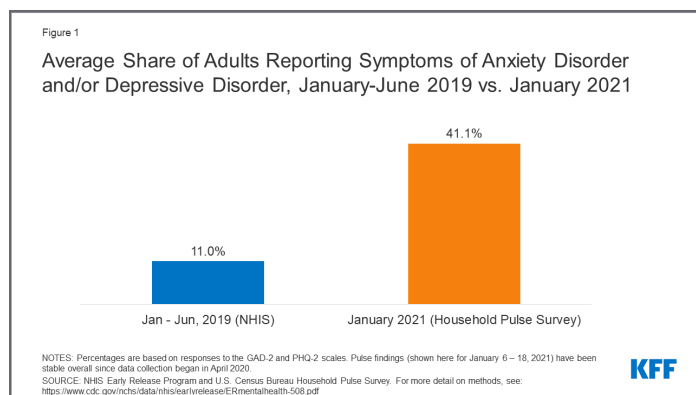
The Rapid Rebrand of Mental Health

It's not that no one cared... just no one knew. Mental health happened to someone else, or people were fully aware yet suffering in silence. Mental health was mired in stigma from the uninformed masses, and it was primed for an awakening.

Stigma-Free Mental Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it painfully clear that our emotional health is fragile – the consistent barrage, over time, of uncertainty and ambiguity can take its toll on even the most resilient of minds.

Over the course of 2020 into 2021, mental health could no longer be ignored, because it was ubiquitous; nor could it be misunderstood because nearly everyone was directly experiencing some level of it. The **Kaiser Family Foundation** measured an increase of 300% in the percentage of people reporting Anxiety or Depressive Disorder, to 41% of adults in the U.S., while the **American Psychological Association** registers more generalized stress at 84% of U.S. adults.



With the increased prevalence of stress, anxiety and depression, mental health has become a commonplace fixture in everyday life. The conversations are no longer pointing "over there" to "that guy," but about we and me. This rapid diffusion among "us" organically rebranded mental health support as necessary and acceptable.

Thought Leadership:

At Microsoft, employees also share their mental health stories—something that happened organically, rather than through a program. "We didn't ask, but it has happened that many of our leaders stepped up and started telling their stories, their personal struggles or ones they've witnessed," said Microsoft's *Sonja Kellen*.

Thought Leadership:

MassMutual has been a staunch advocate for reducing the stigma around mental health. Scott Burke, RN, Health Promotion Coordinator, notes EAPs are no longer just for severe matters. "EAPs are for everyday moments as well." The organization has used scalable, live virtual mental health support to complement its EAP and to remove real or perceived barriers to getting help. They are also training their leaders to recognize various symptoms and encouraging them to start meetings with earnestly asking, "are you OK?"

Most Americans – 85% according to the [American Psychological Association](#) – believe that having a mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of. Conversations and behavior patterns changed to forge new pathways for earnest empathy and compassion.

How are organizations reacting to this rapid rebrand, and what can your company start doing today in response to this growing mental health movement?



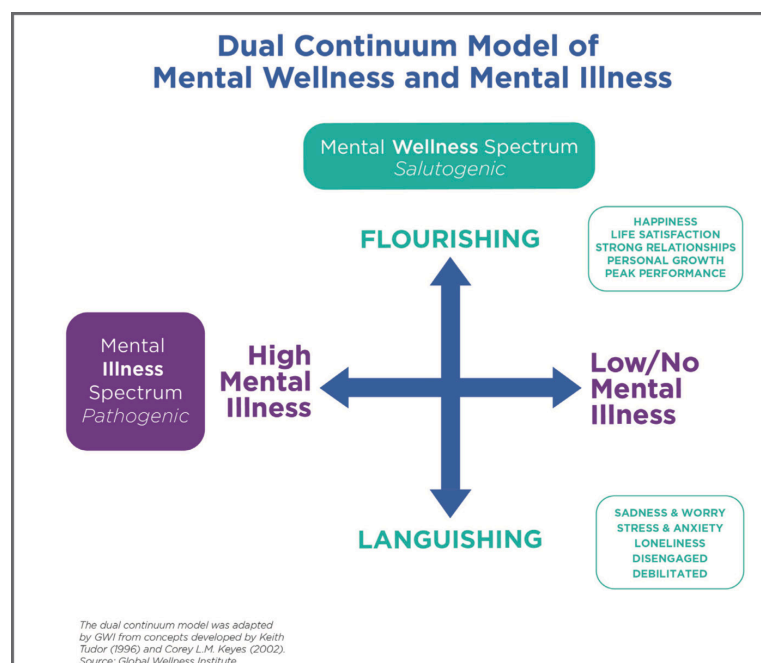
Insights & Actions:

- Evaluate your work environment and how it could be enhanced to support mental health. Ask for feedback from your employees through surveys or focus groups.
- Review your company mission, vision and values, and consider refining them to reflect your commitment to employee wellness.
- Encourage leadership to actively support the idea that it's OK to seek help when you need it, and to lead by example with compassion and prioritizing self-care.
- Integrate mental health into your company's existing corporate social responsibility and philanthropic efforts.

The Dual Continuum of Mental Wellness And Mental Illness

Despite the reduction of stigma, the term “mental health” is fairly broad and, for many, still elicits connotations of illnesses or disorders. A more modern, inclusive perspective has been illustrated by The [Global Wellness Institute](#)'s annual report released in November 2020: Defining the Mental Wellness Economy.

Over the last 13 years, the Global Wellness Institute has consistently produced illuminating research. In their recent report they've adapted concepts from Keith Tudor (1996) and Corey L.M. Keyes (2002) to present a dual continuum model that more comprehensively presents the mental health spectrum.



An excerpt from the GWI report related to the model shown on the previous page:

Mental wellness is more than just the absence of mental illness. The complex relationship between mental illness and mental wellness is best understood by envisioning them sitting on two separate continuums. The horizontal axis measures mental illness from high to low, while the vertical axis measures mental wellness from languishing to flourishing. About 85% of the world's population does not have a diagnosed mental illness, but these people are not all “mentally well” or thriving, because of pervasive stress, worry, loneliness, and other challenges. On the other hand, those who have a diagnosed mental disorder can still have moderate or positive mental wellness (e.g., having good relationships, feeling happy, or functioning well at a job). Practices that increase our mental wellness are increasingly recognized as protective factors for our mental health, as well as helping reduce the severity and symptoms of mental illness (alongside conventional treatment regimens).

Mental wellness is an active process of moving from languishing, to resilience, to flourishing. On one level, mental wellness is about prevention; coping with life's adversity; and being resilient when we face stress, worry, loneliness, anger, and sadness. On another level, mental wellness moves us toward a deeper, richer, and more meaningful human experience, which is often described as flourishing. What it means to flourish is subjective and personal, and it is shaped by individual values, culture, religion, and beliefs. For one person, it can mean functioning at the top of their game and achieving their life goals, while for another it might mean self-transcendence.

While many employees in the workforce pre-pandemic were comfortably living in the middle to upper right side of the model, the pandemic has triggered a collective shift downward, drifting in the lower right quadrant.

A significant challenge employers face in the Next Normal is understanding how to identify — when there's no apparent Mental Illness — the employees who need help. Once identified, it's equally important to assess and provide the right resources that understand the sophisticated nuances of mental health, and can deliver evidence-based, skills-based programs that achieve measurable outcomes.

The GWI further defines Mental Wellness in a two fold fashion:

- Mental Wellness is a **resource**, because it is dynamic, renewable, and positive.
- Mental Wellness is a **process** that we engage in proactively, it is not a static state of being.



Insights & Actions:

- Train leaders, managers and wellness champions within the organization to recognize burnout and the nuances of “languishing.”
- Train employees on compassion and self-care.
- Deploy “forever” resources — structured programs that have finite durations might be effective, but need to be complemented with ongoing, daily support to accommodate the nature of the non-static state of being.
- Consider new assessments that measure flourishing, and/or work-related anxiety tools to review how employees can focus and act to achieve goals during challenging events (e.g. WAAQ).

Meditation Goes Mainstream

One size doesn't fit all, and people have preferences when it comes to getting mental health support. Someone who might never try in person therapy might rush to text based chat therapy — another who prefers telehealth style group sessions might never watch an asynchronous self-directed program online. The definition of “provider” is evolving and providing choice is paramount to getting maximum utilization across the total population.

It's foundational to the Blueprint For The Flourishing Workforce to preserve an ecosystem of solutions where participants can engage in the way they need it. As people actively seek new modalities of care, it might be no surprise that the practice of meditation has now gone mainstream.

Mindfulness and meditation programs have exploded in utilization over the recent years, most pronounced during the pandemic. The fitness tracking device FitBit recently reported in October 2020 that meditation time logged as exercise was up 2,900% globally during the pandemic YOY across age groups.

Innovative companies leading the way have well established mindfulness programs, and — when working with a sophisticated, enterprise-grade solution — have years of evidence-based outcomes demonstrating improvements in performance, productivity, sleep quality improvements and healthcare costs mitigation.

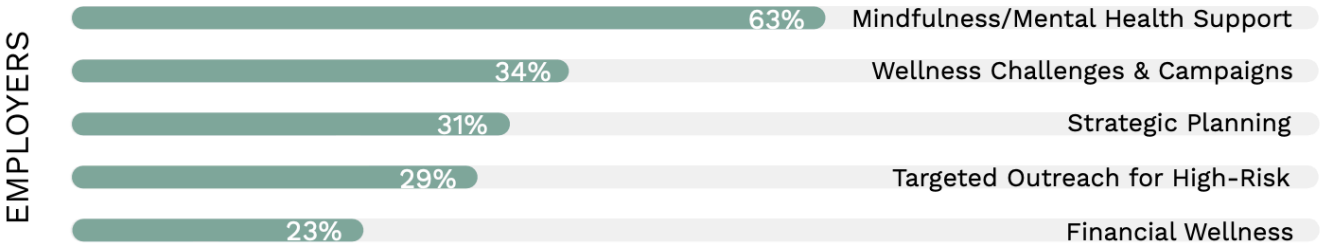


eMindul has 13+ years of data-driven insights and consistent results delivering evidence-based mindfulness programs, and has the longitudinal data demonstrating the adoption of meditation by the mainstream. Prior to the pandemic, 60% of eMindful's book of business participants identified themselves as new to mindfulness, whereas through the pandemic period that percentage has increased to 80%, signaling a wide population seeking, and mainstreaming, the practice of meditation. Employers who are not yet supporting their employees with this option are, though, reporting alignment with this trend and its importance.

WELCOA and CHC Wellbeing reported in their 2020 Trends In Wellness Survey that 63% of employers ranked Mindfulness/Mental Health Support as the top focus for 2021.

WHAT'S NEW, WHAT'S NEXT?

When asked to rank the three most important wellness priorities for the year ahead, mindfulness/mental health was a top focus for both employers and partners.





Insights & Actions:

How to introduce Mindfulness at Work™ Mindfulness and meditation practices can reduce sick days, increase trust in leadership, and boost employee engagement and performance. Here are some practical ways you can begin to embrace mindfulness practices at your workplace:

- Create a culture where meditation micro-practices are not just tolerated, but actively encouraged and supported in the organization.
- Offer meditation workshops to integrate mindfulness at your workplace in a less-intrusive ways.
- Give employees permission to spend 14 minutes – just 1% of their day – practicing mindfulness. Consider using the STOP model for a mindful minute between meetings: Stop what you're doing, Take a breath, Observe your thoughts and emotions, and Proceed.

The Powerful Connection Between Mental And Physical Health

The link between mental health and physical health is becoming more measurable and understood every year. The **National Alliance on Mental Illness** reports that people with depression have a 40% higher risk of developing cardiovascular and metabolic diseases than the general population, that 18.4% of U.S. adults with mental illness also experienced a substance use disorder, and that 60% of healthcare costs are attributable to mental illness and substance abuse.

Employers have a fiduciary responsibility and strong incentive to focus on mental health in addition to physical health. Stress and depression can also greatly impact productivity.

Collectively, employees miss **893 million days of work** annually due to absenteeism, and roughly 527 million lost work days due to presenteeism (working at reduced capacity). The impact is significant for employers – it's estimated that depression and anxiety cost the global economy an **estimated \$1 trillion each year** in lost productivity.

Lifestyle choices are also a key driver of employee wellness and healthcare costs. More than a quarter of healthcare expenses are a direct result of unhealthy lifestyle choices (lack of sleep, diet, stress, smoking, etc.). Mindfulness practices are exceptional behavioral change agents that develop skills in participants to bring greater awareness to habitual reactions and patterns, and make more purposeful decisions aligned with intentions for better health.

The Blueprint For The Flourishing Workforce recognizes the best practices of leading companies evangelizing the equal importance and connection between mental health and physical health, exemplified by MetLife and their incentive design.



“Practicing mindfulness is as important as getting the flu shot” - Amy Marlow, Senior Benefits and Wellness Specialist, MetLife

Thought Leadership:

MetLife is a leader in the emotional health movement. The organization made emotional health a top priority to protect the well-being of its population and better serve its customers. One of the many initiatives MetLife put in place included a campaign that rewarded employees who received a flu shot and those who practiced mindfulness with the same financial incentive, signaling that emotional health is as important as physical health. MetLife experienced unprecedented engagement from the campaign.



Insights & Actions:

How to foster the physical and mental health connection. Mindfulness is a proven practice for achieving both positive physical and mental health outcomes. Here are some practical ways you can integrate emotional health support into your employee wellness approach:

- Consider adding a mindfulness program as a key component of your company's Employee Assistance Program to promote mental health in the workplace.
- Integrate mental health into your company's existing corporate social responsibility and philanthropic efforts.
- Implement a donation-matching program, where your company matches each minute of mindfulness with a correlating cash donation.

The Radically Different Workplace of Today & Tomorrow

As we begin to re-think the nature of where and how we work, it's inevitable that workplaces in the future will look very different than they do today. Hybrid and remote work environments are redefining the way we think about the office. To maintain a sense of connectedness and shared purpose, organizations will need to focus on cultivating a culture of inclusiveness, transparency and empowerment. And their leaders may need to develop new skills in order to drive that cultural shift.

Office Space, Redefined

The pandemic has reshaped our entire way of thinking about corporate office space. Over time, it's estimated that some companies could realize more than a **30% reduction in real estate costs** by re-sizing and optimizing their footprint to accommodate increased remote and hybrid work in a post-COVID-19 environment.

Future offices will likely look very different than they do today, and the reasons go far beyond just real estate costs. Most of us spend nearly a third of our lives at the office – so the impact of our work environment on our overall health and well-being is significant. Employers who understand this connection should look beyond the more obvious cost savings implications, and instead view the redefined office space as an opportunity to create a safer, more inclusive and productive environment for their employees.



Thought Leadership:

Mindful office space in action at Salesforce

Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff has long been a champion of mindfulness and its ability to **"promote clear thinking and innovation"** at work. Salesforce has installed Mindfulness Zones on each floor of its offices, where employees can take a quiet moment to de-clutter their minds – and come up with their next great idea.



Insights & Actions:

How to re-imagine your office space

By taking an employee-centered approach to your workplace – one that emphasizes natural light, good ventilation, comfortable seating and temperatures – Harvard Business Review notes that companies can **reduce employee absenteeism by up to 4 days annually**. Here are some practical tips to help you get started:

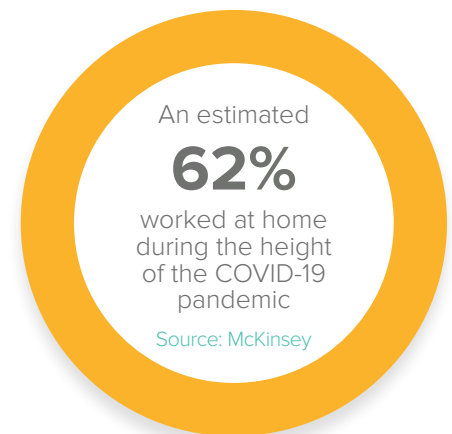
- Evaluate your work environment and how it could be enhanced to support emotional health. Ask for feedback from your employees through surveys or focus groups.
- Take a transformational approach rather than an incremental one – evaluate the importance of geography and environment (i.e. urban vs. suburban) when considering the ideal location for your office.

- Consider using a mix of solutions, including owned and leased space, as well as flex- and co-working spaces.
- Create unique workspaces that are designed specifically for different types of activities at work - including quiet spaces to encourage recharging and mindfulness practices.

Flexible Working From Home

While COVID-19 prompted an unprecedented scramble to work from home, many employees – and organizations – were surprised at how easy it was to work remotely. What started out as awkward virtual meeting interruptions by pets, kids and technical glitches, soon became a bonding sense of “Zoomanity” and “WebExistentialism” — basically baring the circus of our lives for our colleagues to gander in the most humorous, vulnerable, and endearing ways.

And the notion that working from home decreases productivity has been shattered. In **a recent survey by Mercer on the future of flexibility in the workplace, 90% of employers** said employee productivity was either the same or higher than it was before the pandemic. AON’s “Accelerate Your Workforce Into The Future” report surveyed over 5,000 companies and saw an increase of 31% of productivity levels.



It's about more than remote working

Flexibility has expanded across multiple dimensions as employers have sought to be flexible to address employee needs around caring for themselves and their families during COVID-19. Our findings show that few employers plan to retract this flexibility post-pandemic.

Dimension	Type	COVID-related expansion
Where	FT Remote working	70%
	PT Remote Working	70%
When	Flextime	55%
	Alternative shifts/schedules	37%
	Compressed workweek	20%
What	Part-time	18%
	Job sharing	6%
	Phased/Flexible retirement	10%
How	Fluctuating workweek	8%
Who	Contract/gig/freelancing	7%
	Internal talent marketplace	17%

20%+ 10-19% <10%

On the positive side, employees attributed their increased productivity to an eliminated commute and relaxed morning routines and work attire, all which improved mental wellness. On the negative side, some employees noted the blur of personal and professional and no clear “punch of the clock” to end the day.

And every organization – and employee – is different. Some have been successful with remote work, while others have struggled. The overarching benefits, though, are clear enough. Companies have discovered the benefits of recruiting without location restraints, which can potentially reduce real-estate costs. Across five dimensions of flexibility, Mercer is signaling that “...few employers plan to retract this flexibility...”.

There are certainly financial and productivity benefits realized here, and ultimately they reflect the wisdom that giving people flexibility has a positive impact on the bottom line. It’s about Value In People.

The trade-off for employers in a flexible work design is in discovering how to best maintain a sense of connectedness. Cultivating a connected culture is important now more than ever. Mindfulness practice can be a effective tool to develop skills proven to create a deeper sense of connection to oneself, to others, and to a greater sense of purpose.

Thought Leadership:

When CNO Financial associates began working remotely full time, the organization led with compassion and empathy and acted quickly to ensure its employees were equipped to juggle personal and professional responsibilities. The organization provided ergonomically correct workspaces for its associates' home offices and created a no meeting rule from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. every day to give its associates time to take care of themselves and tend to their competing demands.



Insights & Actions:

How to optimize and connect your at-home workforce

Instilling a culture of mindfulness can support and strengthen connectedness in your organization. Here's how you can start re-defining work from home – and promoting connectedness:

- Reflect on your company's values and culture, and think about what types of interactions and environments promote it.
- To understand the benefits and pitfalls of a more permanent work-from-home arrangement, identify the most important processes for each major business and function. Then, invite your employees to help you re-imagine them in a remote environment.
- Set a schedule and encourage routines. This could be as simple as holding meetings at the same time each week or allowing time for regular breaks to restore energy and focus.
- Consider adding virtual care services, wellness apps and mindfulness programs as a key component of your company's Employee Assistance Program.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

In the midst of the pandemic, another breaking point of injustices led to widespread social unrest calling out the reality of long-standing, systemic prejudices.

DEI polices are evolving and getting more attention. The emergence of Value In People is extending to all in new ways.

86%

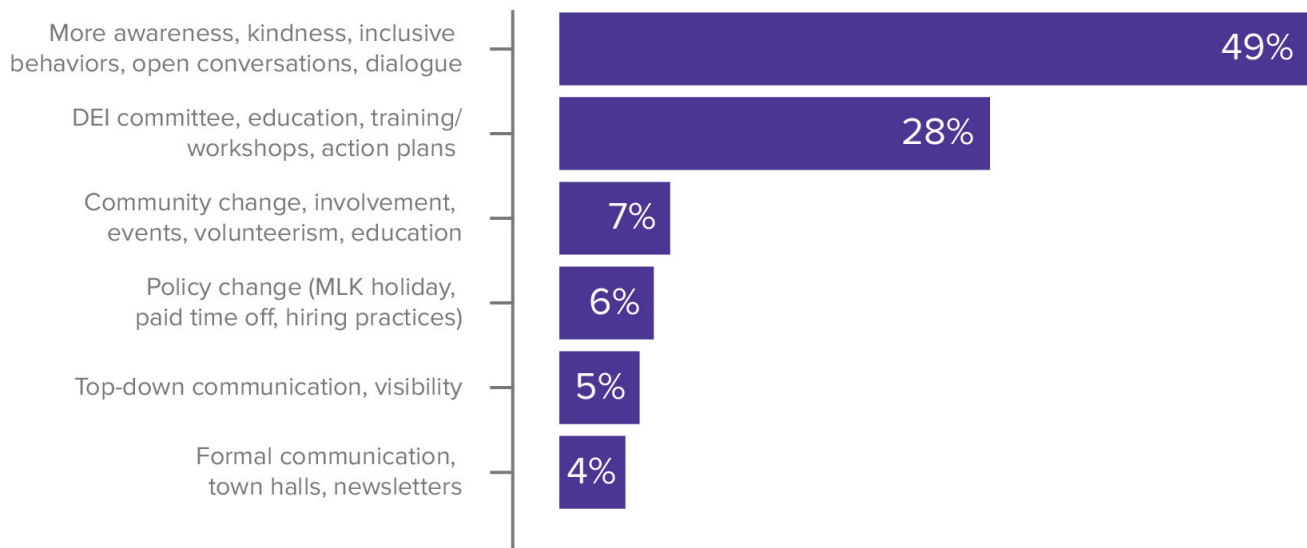
Believe a diverse workforce is key to building an agile workforce

Source: AON

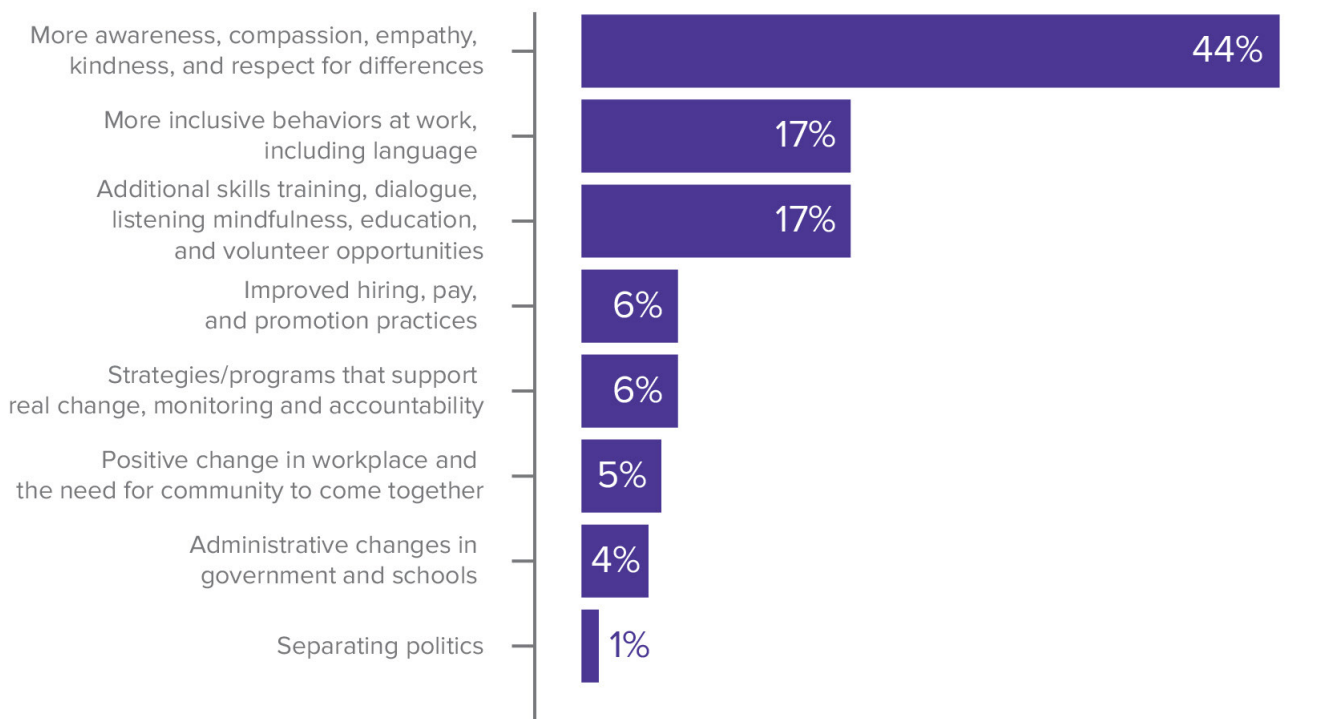
eMindful conducts biweekly pulse surveys to ensure a constant stream of new programs based on real-time relevance. During the week of February 4 -11, 2021, nearly 800 participants around the globe responded to the inquiry: Have you seen positive change to address racial injustices and inequities in your workplace and community. And if so, what changes have you noticed and what changes would you like to see moving forward.

Positively, 73% of the respondents noted they had indeed seen change over the last year.

“What changes would you like to see moving forward?”



“What changes would you like to see moving forward?”



While progress has been made around DEI, leaders at the highest levels need to take bold action to accelerate these efforts and effectively communicate them to their population.

These results reveal that strides have been made to create more awareness, kindness, inclusive behaviors, open conversations, and dialogue around racial inequities in the workplace and community. Leaders have the opportunity, now, to elevate these actions to drive policy change and influence DEI efforts at the highest level.

Only a small percentage (6% of participants have noticed policy changes, including (MLK holiday, paid time off, hiring practices; top-down communication and visibility (5%; and formal communication, town halls, and newsletters (4%. This indicates that leaders need to take further action to communicate to their population and incorporate DEI measures into daily operations creating greater awareness, compassion, empathy, kindness, respect for differences, and inclusivity. Offering resources that complement and enhance your DEI efforts will help to drive powerful action within and beyond the walls of your organization.

Not every policy well worth adopting is obvious. Rohit Bhargava is a renowned speaker and prolific author of Non-Obvious Things, and he recently produced a Beyond Diversity summit with 25 leaders — all who contribute back to the obvious, if there's any vital factor that supports and elevates Value In People, it's DEI. Policies and programs that elevate the right voices and perspective are becoming increasingly foundational to attracting and retain top talent, building a resilient, agile culture.

25 LESSONS IN DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION



THAT I LEARNED FROM THE NON-OBVIOUS BEYOND DIVERSITY SUMMIT

BY ROHIT BHARGAVA

1. Take action.
2. Go beyond single-issue diversity.
3. Make diversity relatable and authentic.
4. Tokenism isn't a victory.
5. Address the room's elephant directly.
6. Diversity can be visible and invisible.
7. Rethink your "person first" language.
8. Diverse colleagues are not your teachers/experts.
9. Move beyond identity as the story.
10. Skip the eye contact & traditional requirements.
11. Take people with you.
12. Innovate and lead like a disabled person.
13. Unbiased algorithms are an impossibility.
14. Rural America does not equal white America.
15. Disabled stories don't need to be inspirational.
16. Consider diversity within diversity.
17. Make the trade-off for accessibility.
18. Practice radical listening.
19. Strive for diversity to go unnoticed.
20. Set a tone of deep respect for culture and people.
21. Focus on the similarities instead of the differences.
22. Find beauty in intersectionality.
23. Reconsider your tech assumptions.
24. Start with inclusivity in mind.
25. "And" is better than "Either."

Watch all the videos on-demand: www.nonobviousdiversity.com



Insights & Actions:

How to nurture an inclusive workplace

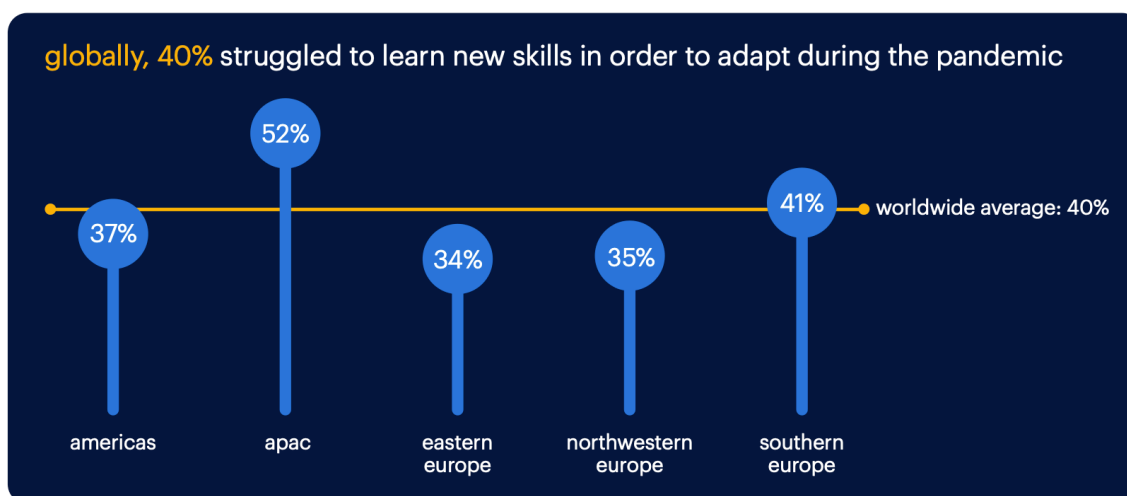
Best-in-class diversity and inclusion programs recognize emotional health as a diversity issue. And organizations that embrace a people-first philosophy know that emotional health and employee satisfaction go hand-in-hand. Here are some practical ways you can foster inclusivity in your workplace:

- Watch out for and avoid excessive job demands – they can damage self-esteem and activate negative stereotypes and bias.
- Review your diversity and inclusion program to ensure an adequate focus on mental health. Open a dialogue where employees can share their experiences and needs.
- Try group mindfulness practices as a way to build community and compassion within teams.
- Establish a workplace where employees feel empowered and safe, where they can speak authentically and be their true selves without fear of embarrassment or retaliation.

Reskilling

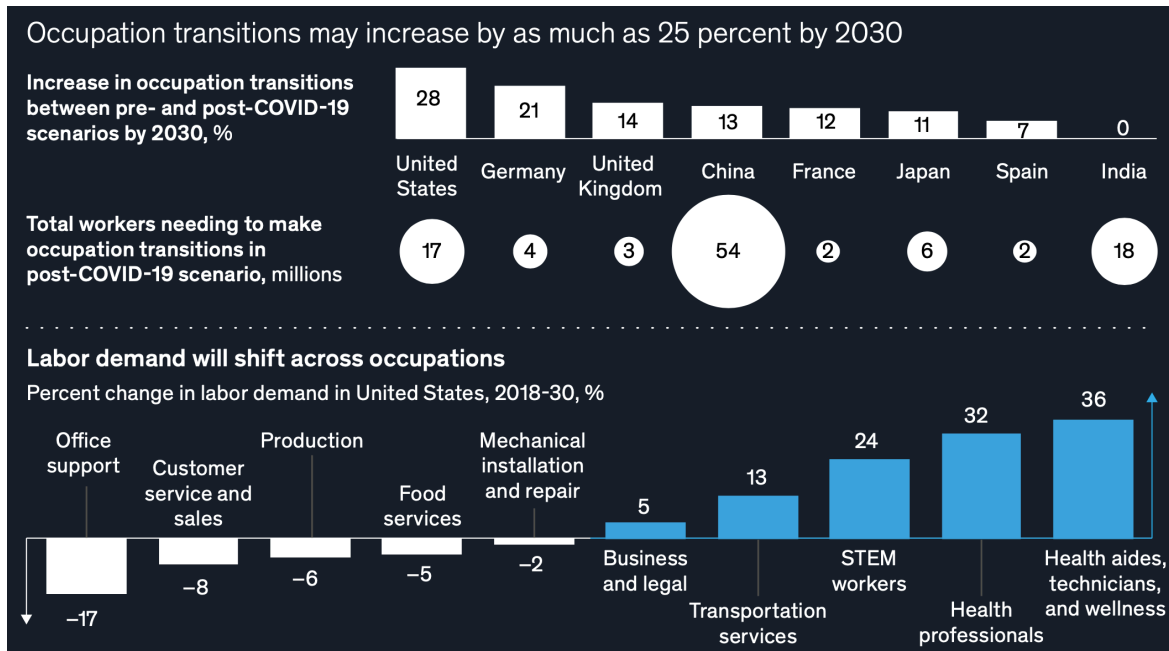
Reskilling is a vast subject; and it affects a vast amount of employees and job seekers. It involves training employees on an entirely new set of skills — either because their role has changed, become obsolete, been eliminated, advanced due to technology, or... was upended through a pandemic.

Fast Company covered that at the start of 2020, 9 out of 10 leaders said it was their responsibility to provide training and reskilling opportunities for their employees, yet only 1 in 5 said they were actually doing it. Once quarantine lockdowns, working from home, and social distancing measures were mandated, everyone was forced to figure it out and reskill together through unprecedented times. Yet not everyone is getting the help they need. A global average of 40% of employees are signaling that they have struggled to learn new skills to adapt during the pandemic, according to Randstad's new Workmonitor survey.



With the financial impact and economic uncertainty, millions of workers that were furloughed or laid off didn't get a chance to reskill in parallel with their peers. As employers reoriented their productivity needs away from "jobs" and toward tasks and activities, the already burgeoning gig economy

accelerated even faster. A survey from daVinci Payments, a payment firm servicing gig workers, found that gig payments in 2020 **grew 33% to \$1.6 trillion**. In April 2020, Amazon announced it was **hiring 75,000 delivery workers** to assist with the pandemic related increase of online sales. How many of these types of pandemic-surge jobs will be gigs, perma-lancing or full time hires? eCommerce as a percentage of total retail sales has accelerated 4x faster last year than in years prior — the need for on-site customer interaction has been drastically reduced. Change is constant and now accelerated, requiring different skills to operate the workplace of today and tomorrow. Gig work has quickly established itself as a reliable resource on both sides of the transaction. As organizations actively assess which roles to bring back, reskill or reimagine, the rise of gig work also simplifies — or complicates depending on your industry — the related analysis organizations are doing regarding continued remote-work support and reduction of office space footprints.



The downstream impact of these decisions will radically transform the workforce, influencing significant occupation transitions across industries. McKinsey projects the global impact of these transitions in the above infographic, excerpted from their recent *The Future Of Work After COVID-19* report.

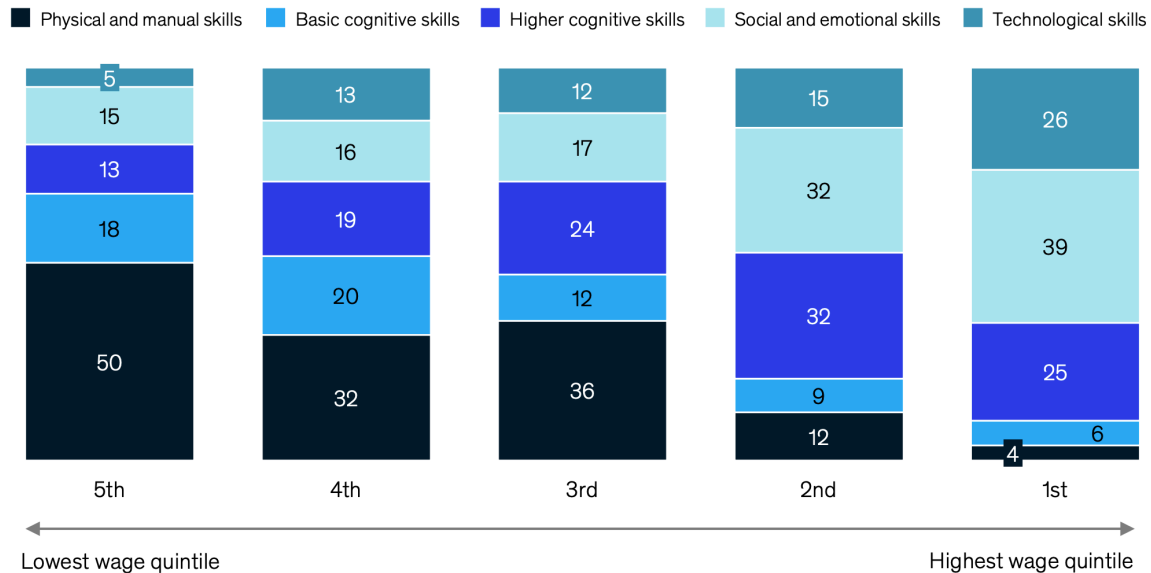
Compounding the shifts in the workforce, women are leaving the workforce. Female workforce participation has already dropped to 57% — the lowest level since 1988, according to the National Women’s Law Center. The U.S. Bureau Of Labor Statistics reported that in September 2020, when schools resumed, many of them with remote learning, **80% of the 1.1 million people who exited the workforce were women**. [LeanIn.org](https://leanin.org), through their **2020 Women In The Workplace** report, noted one in four women are now considering leaving the workplace or downshifting their careers — as many as two million women could leave corporate America.

After decades of incremental advancement in gender equality and inclusive workforces, a delayed period of returning to work, or abandoning the pursuit of managerial and leadership roles altogether, could significantly set back the progress that's been made. However long delayed, when professional women jump back into the post-pandemic workforce, they'll certainly see significant changes — automation, AI, newly created roles and responsibilities, evolving skills, new technology and more.

Workers will need to learn more social and emotional skills, as well as technological skills, in order to move into occupations in higher wage brackets.

Time spent using skills in each skill category by wage quintile in the United States

%



1. Using O*NET data, more than 2,000 work activities for more than 800 occupations were classified according to the primary skill used.

Source: Employment and Training Administration, US Department of Labor; O*NETOnLine; US Bureau of Labor Statistics; McKinsey Global Institute analysis

The bottom line of all this change is that we're headed, quite quickly, into an unrecognizable and unfamiliar state of the workplace. It's radically different — whether individual roles are modestly impacted or completely altered for good — the ecosystem working together will undoubtedly require different skills.

The reskilling efforts across these permutations will be critical to preserving and rebuilding a flourishing workforce.

What's the blueprint for reskilling our workforce? What are the best practices for retained employees to lead, manage and collaborate with gig workers? What skills are needed to maintain effective communication with work-from-home remote teammates?

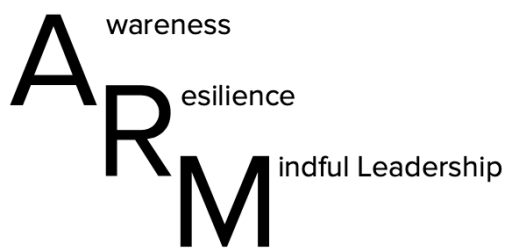
At a minimum, the reskilling efforts of the workforce will require resilience — it's a pre-requisite to any rapid change, especially in the discomfort of it being throw at us from a pandemic. Mental health America's Mind The Workplace 2021 Report shows that 1 in 4 employees are experiencing severe burnout. Attempting to reskill, or lead, or collaborate with others during an organizational time of drastic change can be highly stressful without the fundamental skills in place.

As we prepare people and organizations to flourish in the post-pandemic era, a driving force behind it all is the motivation to see what's needed today and help people get there. Reskilling is required, now, and the process is inherently about compassion — it's about profit too... no shame or mistake in that. We care enough about our people to ensure they are equipped to keep our organizations thriving. Here again, Value In People resonates as the secure scaffolding to rebuild.



Further in McKinsey's The Future of Work After COVID-19 report, as shown on the previous page, social and emotional skills were identified as a significant requirement for higher wage jobs. Lower and middle wage jobs were also the most targeted for transition and decline in demand due to automation and other advancements. With higher wage jobs in a net increase of demand, and social and emotional skills being a compelling component of these jobs, it stands to reason that part of any reskilling effort — or general professional development and career advancement for anyone — should include these “softer” skills.

In order to reskill employees with social and emotional intelligence, we need to A.R.M. our employees for success.



Awareness — one of the most prominently developed subskills of mindfulness. It helps us to gain clarity in the moment to understand what's at stake, what's needed, and what's the intention or action that best aligns with the purpose at hand.

Resilience — rapid organizational change requires adaptable people. Resilience is the ability to withstand or recover quickly from challenging events. Mindfulness is one of the most proven and powerful practices to develop resilience.

Mindful Leadership — mindful leaders can lead well through disruption and uncertainty. They foster a sense of belonging in their teams, and they're able to connect the “why” to their team's purpose and work. Employees need leaders who listen; who are compassionate, flexible, and transparent. Mindful Leaders can step into their own strengths, galvanizing the qualities that people need right now, including stability, and connection. Through mindful leadership, they can inspire the transformation.

Every organization will change in their own way. The Blueprint For The Flourishing Workforce looks beyond the key trends shaping the radically different workplace of tomorrow to see the underlying current that's universally pulling everyone: it's the dense gravity of Value In People.



Insights & Actions:

How to develop mindful leaders

Your leadership team can help you lay the groundwork to support a culture of mindfulness across your organization. Here are some practical tips to help your leaders get started on their mindfulness journey:

- Partner with a mindfulness practitioner to train senior level managers with mindful leadership skills. This training will help them lead more effectively during times of great change and uncertainty – and discover the opportunities that lie ahead.
- Screen potential candidates for competencies and skills tied to practicing mindfulness and EQ.
- Encourage leaders to model mindful behaviors – being attentive, open, accepting, thoughtful and curious – and to share their own personal experiences with mindfulness.
- Make “mindful moments” a regular habit between meetings. Take a few minutes to clear the mental and emotional energy and regroup. Do this as part of team meetings to help boost attentiveness and engagement.

End of Part I

Part II covers the landscape of benefit design, the tactical strategies for your benefits strategy, and the metrics for success in the new era of Value In People.

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To unlock **Part II** of **A Blueprint For The Flourishing Workforce** with custom strategies and insights for your organization, click [schedule a meeting](#) today and connect with an eMindful representative.