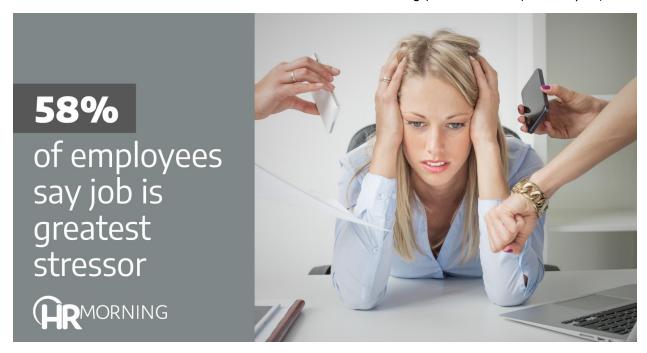# Study Finds Flexibility is the Key to Improving Employee Mental Health

HR Morning | Rachel Mucha | February 18, 2022

Throughout the pandemic, employers have heard a lot about the importance of employees' mental health. But even with things heading in a positive direction on the COVID-19 front, that doesn't mean you don't have to worry about mental health anymore.

In fact, a recent survey from Qualtrics shows that employees' mental health issues are persisting — and work is the culprit.

The majority of employees (58%) reported their job is the main source of their mental distress.

Many thought the solution to this was remote work — but that doesn't solve the problem for everyone. Almost 70% of employees said that remote work blurred the lines between "home" and "work," which isn't necessarily a good thing. Twenty-three percent actually said remote work had a negative impact on them mentally.

Reasons remote work impacted people negatively include earlier start times (20%), using fewer sick days (18%) and working longer hours (17%).

Qualtrics found that employees need more than remote work. Flexibility is the key to combating job-related mental health issues, and 55% of employees could be swayed to stay at their company if they had flexible options.

Different types of flexibility

The study asked employees to define what kind of flexibility would work for them.

Here are the top three meanings of "flexibility":

- choosing which hours of the day to work (41%)
- choosing which days of the week to work (25%), and
- the ability to work from any location (14%).

Employees also noted they'd like flexibility to leave during the day to attend to errands and doctor's appointments.

Another thing that would help employees' stress level is being evaluated based on results instead of the number of hours they put in.

According to the survey, workers believe this would:

- increase efficiency (50%)
- increase focus (44%)
- bring more attention to contributions and achievements (31%)
- help create an even playing field among employees (26%), and
- allow people to spend less time at work (26%).

Flexibility isn't the only solution to mental health struggles. Some other things employees reported would help them at work included higher pay (58%) and a four-day workweek (46%).