

Disaster Behavioral Health *Responder Safety & Health Survey Results and Discussion*

Published May 8, 2023



Disaster Behavioral Health Responder Safety & Health Survey



The Disaster Behavioral Health Responder Safety & Health Survey was announced in the Disaster Behavioral Health Fall 2022 Newsletter and shared with preparedness and response partners across the State of Maine.

The intent of this survey was to meet the Disaster Behavioral Health Domain 1- Activity 7 Deliverable: Coordinate risk assessment and training to help mitigate responder exposure to traumatic events. An additional intent was to evaluate responder safety and health following more than two and a half years of pandemic response and compare data collected with against the 2021 Responder Safety and Health Survey.



Data collected will be used for quantifiable information. No individual names, comments or other identifying information will be included in final reporting. This survey will assist in our ability to quantify and qualify the potential exposure to traumatic events likely to have impacted responders during this pandemic; and identify methods to manage stress and to develop individual coping strategies. The survey results will inform the Maine CDC, Disaster Behavioral Health (DBH) program on future planning efforts, training needs and resource sharing initiatives to support responder safety and health.

This survey is based on the Anticipate.Plan.Deter™ Personal Resilience Plan and PsySTART Responder Triage System. © M. Schreiber, 2020.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ResponderHealthSafetySurvey2022>

More information about Maine's Disaster Behavioral Health effort can be found at:

<https://mainedisasterbehavioralhealth.com/>

Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



Q1: Gender of Respondents:

➤ 242 Total Respondents

- 72.3% Female
- 26.4% Male
- 1.2% Other or Prefer Not to Identify

Q2: Age of Respondents

➤ 240 Total Respondents

- 20 and Under: 0%
- 21-30: 2.9%
- 31-40: 14.1%
- 41-50: 15%
- 51-60: 25.4%
- Over 60: 42.5%

Survey Results

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Q3- Highest Earned Educational Degree of Respondents

➤ 241 Total Respondents

- 0% Completed Less than High School
- 7% hold a High School Diploma
- 11.2% hold an Associate Degree
- 29.4% hold a Bachelor Degree
- 36.1% hold a Masters Degree
- 7.4% hold a Non-Medical Doctorate Degree
- 5.3% hold a Doctorate MD or DO
- 3.3% Other

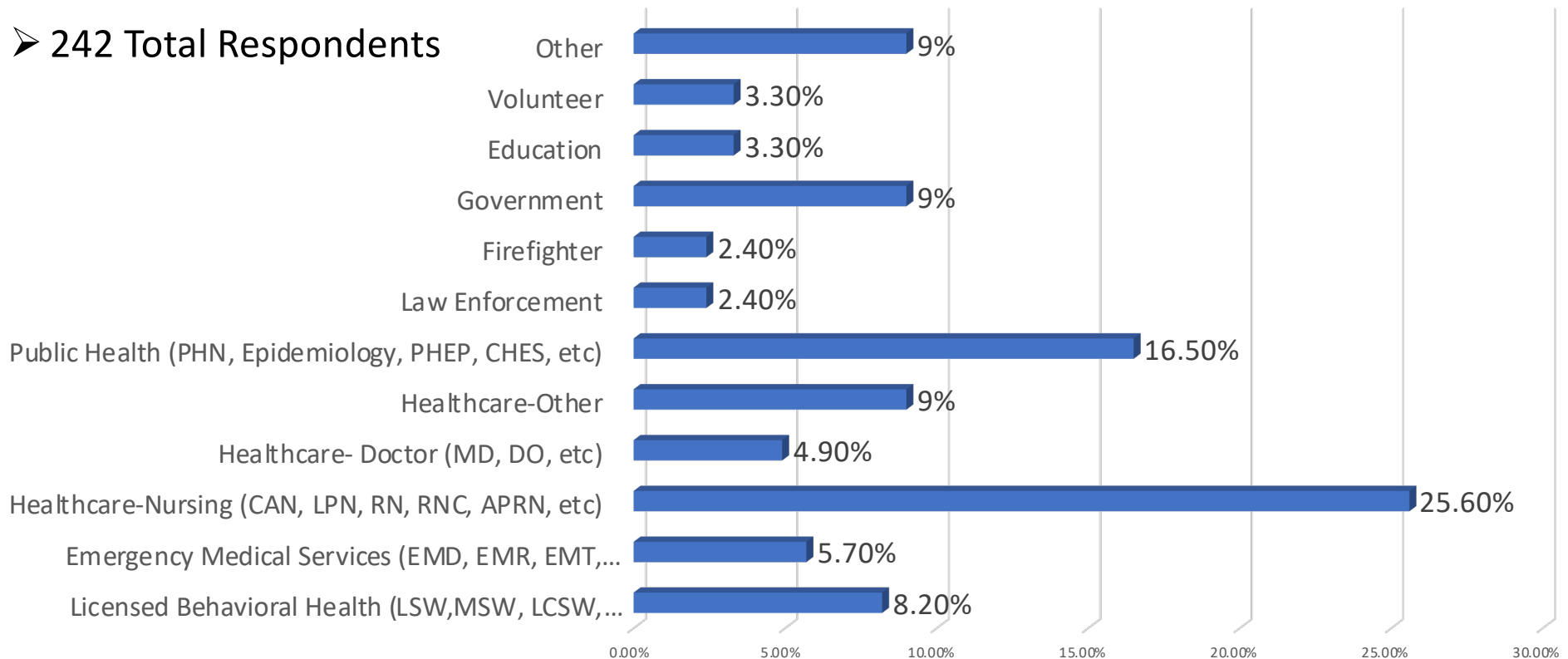
Survey Results

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Q4- Professional Discipline/ Certification or Licensure of Respondents

➤ 242 Total Respondents

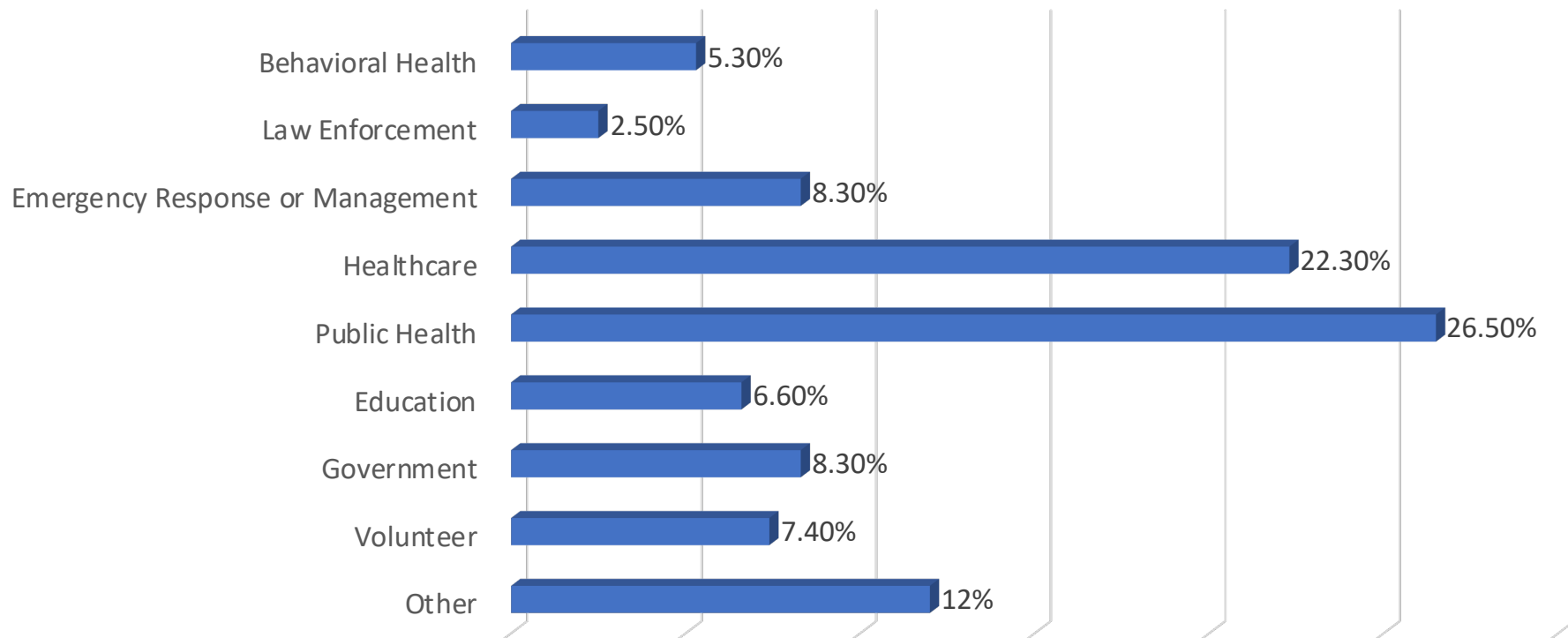


Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



Q4- Primary Work Setting ➤ 242 Total Respondents



The Primary Work Setting for Respondents who answered "Other" included individuals who were retired, labor, safety, and non-healthcare related patient care

Survey Results

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Q6- Predicting Problems: As a responder, you and your team are at risk of experiencing a traumatic incident- an incident that may involve exposure to catastrophic events and emotionally or physically challenging situations. Respondents were asked to check all exposure elements they might predict might be associated with their current/ upcoming work environment or volunteer deployment.

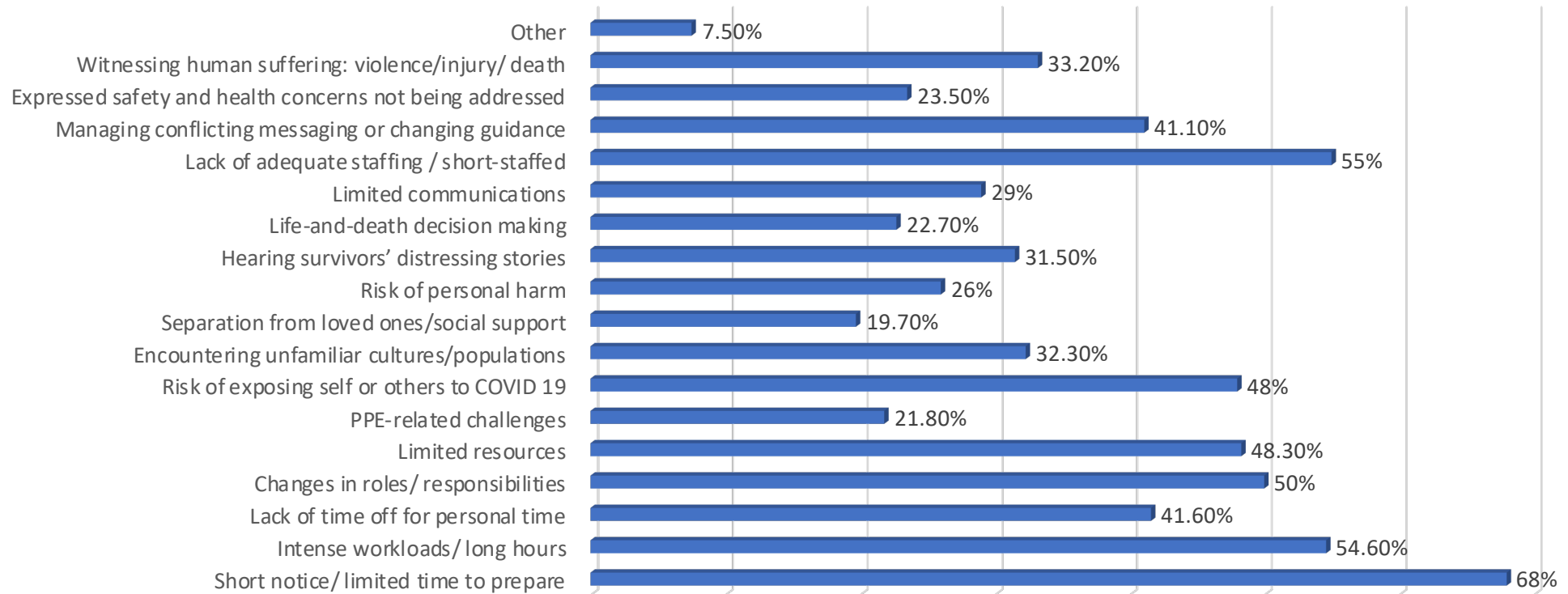
Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



Q6: Predicting Problems

➤ 238 Total Respondents



Respondents who answered "Other" reported problems like concerns with education and/or training, issues with work/life balance and financial or transportation issues

Survey Results

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Q7: Everyone reacts differently to stressful exposures, particularly when an event reminds them of a past event or when the stress is prolonged. Based on the previous Responder Safety and Health Survey responses, the top six triggers recognized have been provided as follows. Please check off up to 3 triggering events or areas that negatively impact your stress level in your work environment and/or provide add another impactful trigger.

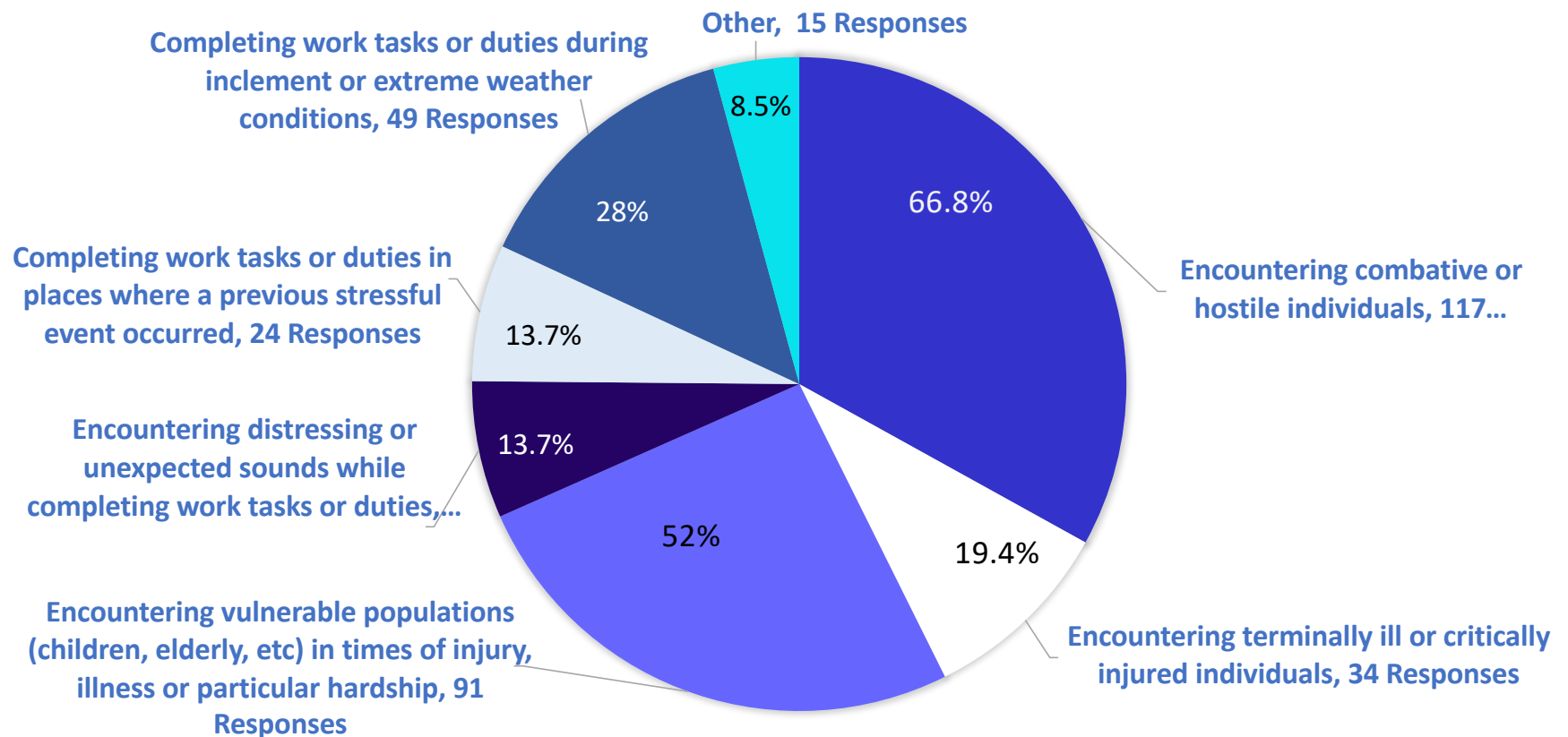
Survey Results

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Q7: Stressful Exposures

➤ 238 Total Respondents



Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



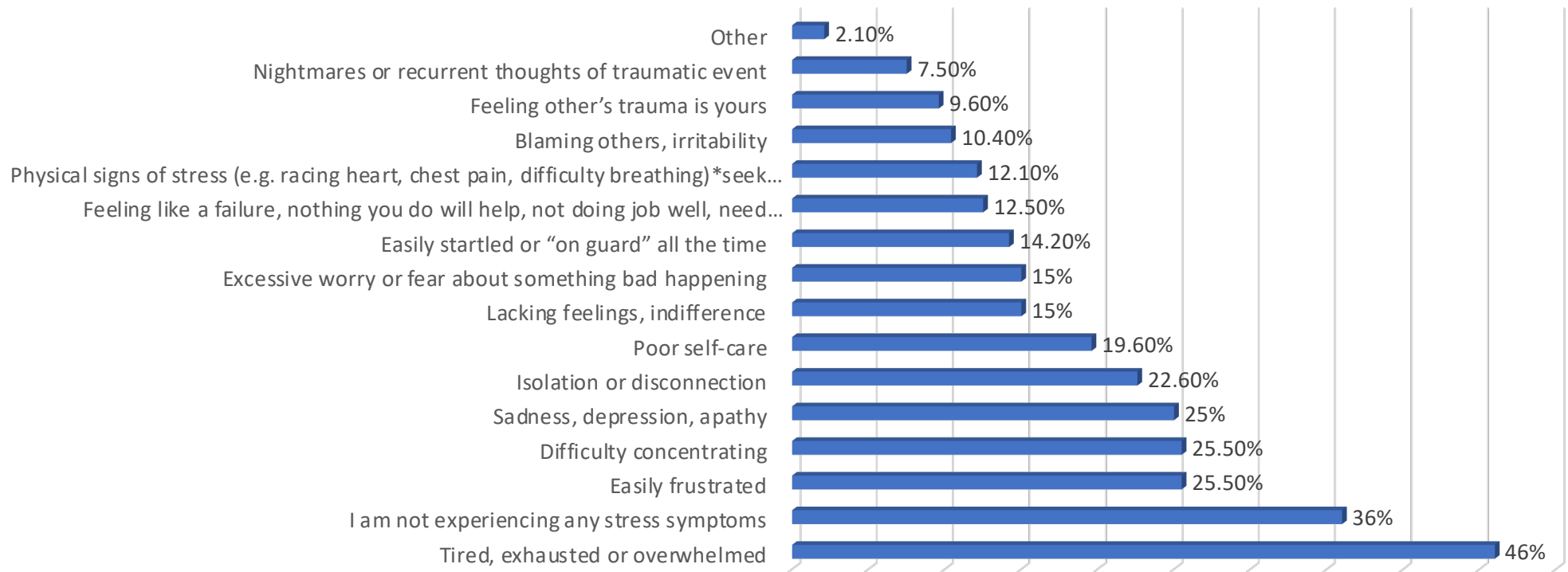
Q8: Respondents were asked about recognizing personal signs of stress and monitoring these throughout their work assignment or deployment so they would know when to engage their protection plan. Respondents were given a list of stress-related symptoms and asked to check off all stress symptoms they felt were associated with their work environment or volunteer deployment.

Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



Q8: Recognizing Signs of Stress ➤ 239 Total Respondents



Respondents who answered "Other" reported these signs of stress: dwelling on thoughts, experiencing racing thoughts, not feeling like they are needed or best utilized in their work

Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



Q9: Survey participants were asked to rate whether or not they had an increase or decrease in stress-related symptoms in the last 18 months, since the last Responder Safety and Health survey was conducted in 2021.

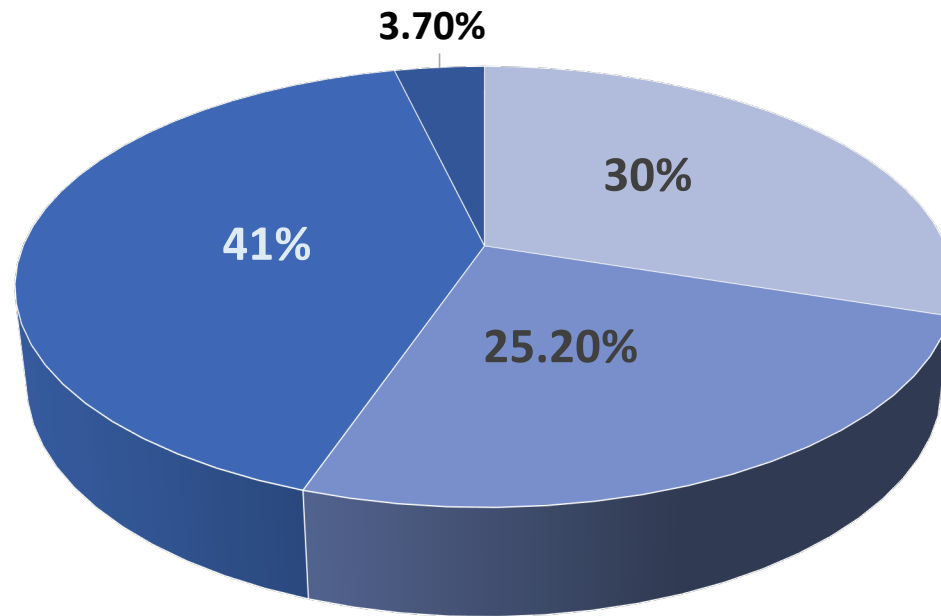
Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



Q9: Changes in Stress-Related Symptoms

➤ 242 Total Respondents



■ No Change- 74 Responses

■ Increase- 61 Responses

■ Decrease- 98 Responses

■ Other- 9 Responses

Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



- Q10: Respondents were asked to describe their work stress levels prior to COVID 19; responses included:
 - Manageable
 - Unmanageable
 - Other
 - “Other Responses” included not feeling as impacted due to retirement, job transition or experiencing ups and downs in levels of stress management

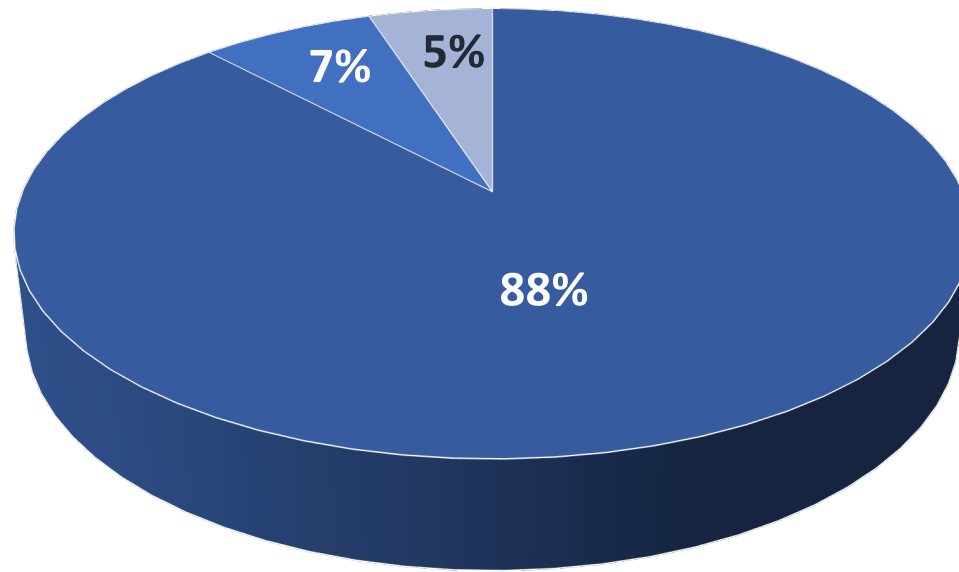
Survey Results

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Q10: Pre-COVID Work Stress

➤ 242 Total Respondents



■ Manageable- 213 Responses

■ Unmanageable- 17 Responses

■ Other- 12 Responses

Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



- Q11: Respondents were asked to describe their current levels of work stress, in comparison to Question 10 and given the same possible answers:
 - Manageable
 - Unmanageable
 - Other
 - “Other” responses included statements like feeling stress levels change day to day, feeling that “manageable” is becoming more challenging, or that stress is manageable but requires more intense effort to maintain

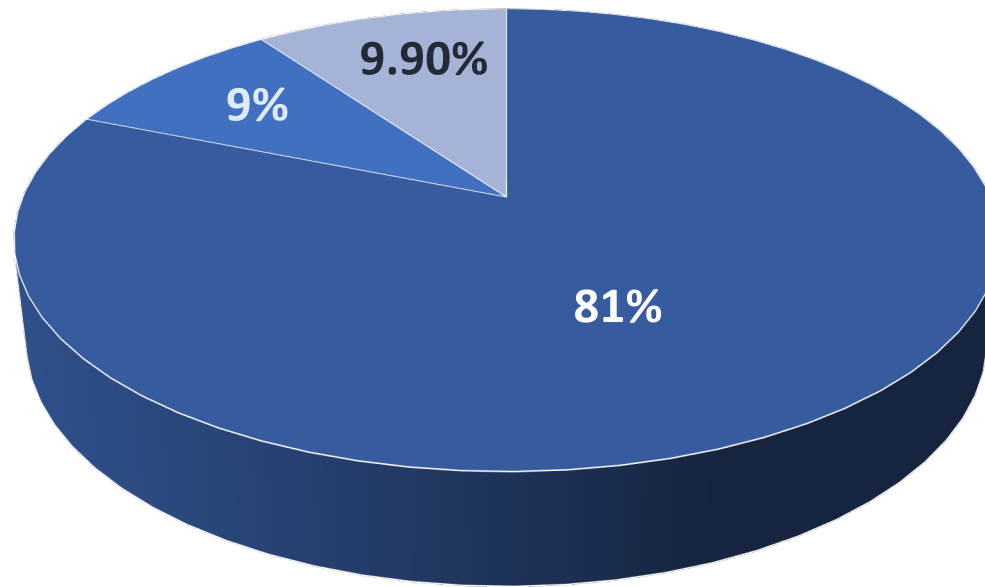
Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



Q11: Current Work Stress

➤ 242 Total Respondents



■ Manageable- 196 Responses

■ Unmanageable- 22 Responses

■ Other-24 Responses

Survey Results

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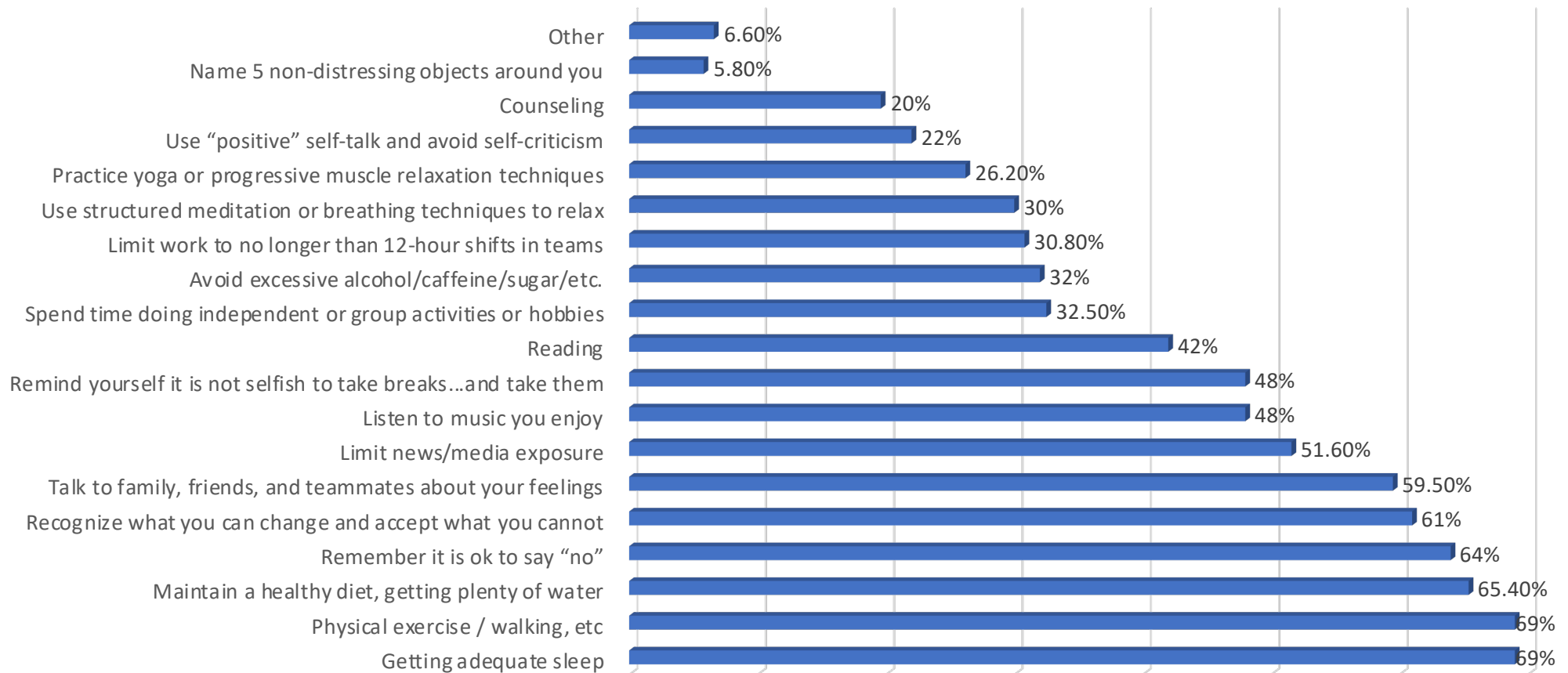
- Q12: Respondents were asked to list activities they could or have utilized to manage their stress and compassion fatigue; respondents were given a variety of activities to select, comparable to the 2021 survey choices to a similar question. Guiding questions to this part of the survey included:
 - What do you do for yourself when you are upset?
 - What has helped you during previous deployments?
 - Where do you have control to make things better?

Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.

Q12: Stress Management Activities

➤ 240 Total Respondents



Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



Q13: Respondents were asked to identify areas that would be the most beneficial for workforce development to help build protective factors, or “Behavioral Health PPE”

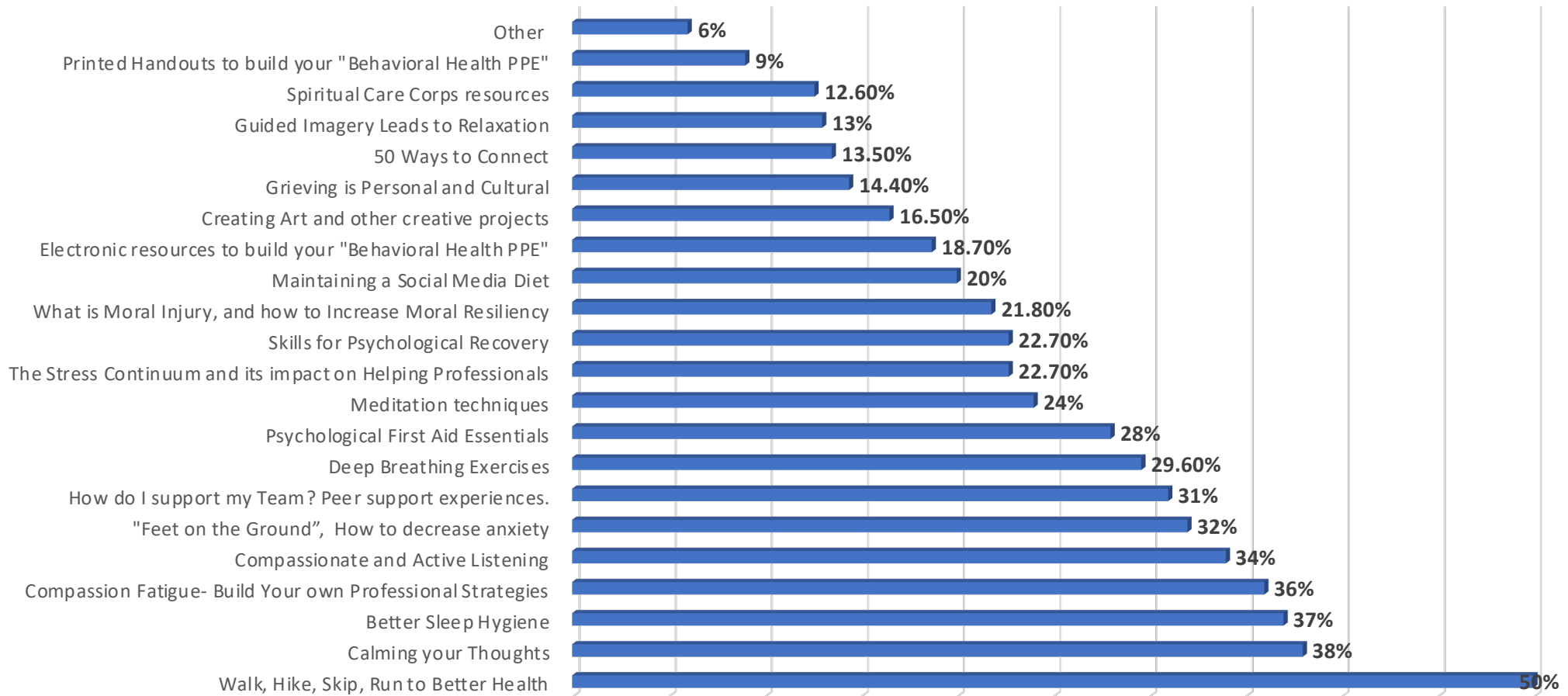
Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



Q13: Building Protective Factors

➤ 229 Total Respondents



Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



Q14: Respondents were asked to assess whether they felt their employer or volunteer organization had been more or less responsive to stress management and resiliency efforts

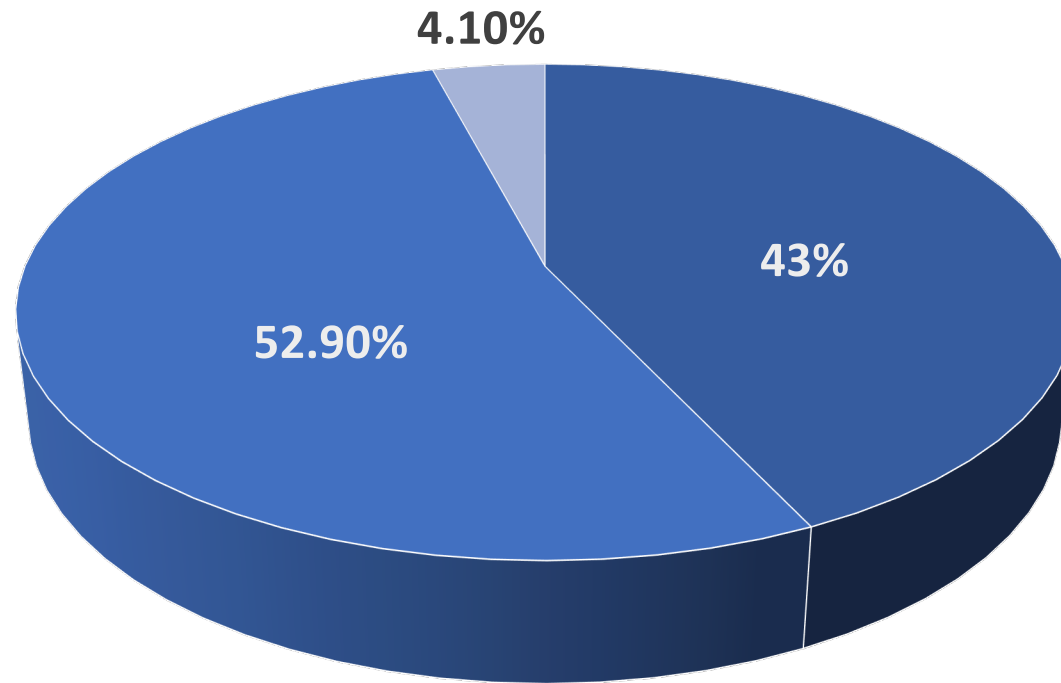
Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



Q14: Assessing Employer Support

➤ 242 Total Respondents



■ Yes- 104 Responses ■ No- 128 Responses ■ Other- 10 Responses

Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



Q15: Over the past 18 months, do you feel your employer or volunteer organization has been more or less responsive to stress management and resiliency efforts?

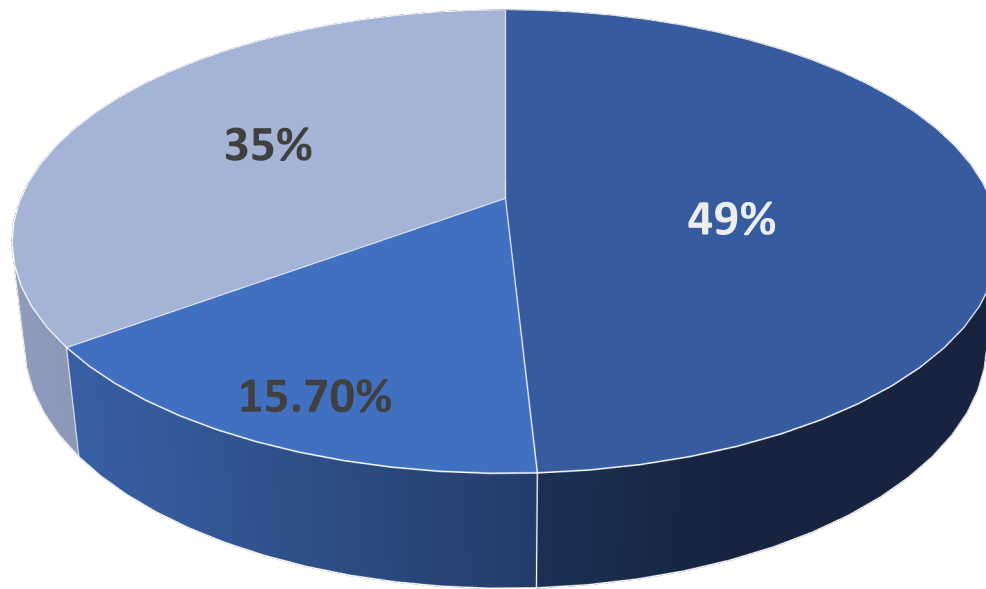
Survey Results

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Q15: Workplace Resiliency

➤ 242 Total Respondents



■ More Responsive- 119 Responses

■ Less Responsive- 38 Responses

■ No Change- 85 Responses

Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



Since the original Responder Safety and Health Survey in 2021, the following workplace development trainings have been offered by Maine CDC's Disaster Behavioral Health Program to strengthen "Behavioral Health PPE" and support overall responder safety and health:

- Resetting Your Check Engine Light Training
- Psychological First Aid
- Creating Safe Spaces and Relationships for Coping and Resilience: Improving Compassion Satisfaction Among Responders and Communities Training
- Disaster Behavioral Health: A Critical Response
- Empathic Communication
- Personal Resilience and Stress Inoculation

Q16 of this survey advised that workforce development trainings will be offered based on the findings in this survey, and that individuals responding to this survey may supply their name and email to receive this updates through the electronic Maine Disaster Behavioral Health Newsletter

Survey Results

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Survey Analysis: Comparing 2021 and 2022 Survey Results:

The 2021 and 2022 Responder Surveys showed immense and varied impacts to our responder communities through one of the biggest public health responses of the century. Through the 2022 survey results, it is evident responders are still feeling the impacts of compassion fatigue, burnout and feeling limited support from their employers or volunteer organizations. The recovery phase following a disaster usually has an unclear timeline, and it will take continued support recovery efforts to heal our responder communities from the significant efforts of the COVID 19 Response.

Survey Results

The 2022 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 242 total responses.



Survey Analysis: Comparing 2021 and 2022 Survey Results:

- On the 2021 survey, very few respondents skipped more mentally in-depth questions requiring answers that might feel more emotionally or psychologically vulnerable. On the 2022 survey, a larger number of respondents skipped these questions, with greater response rates to generalized, demographic and categorical questions.
- On the 2021 survey, levels of stress and burnout were evident; on the 2022 survey respondents were asked to rate whether their stress increased or decreased in the past 18 months and all 242 respondents answered this question.
 - The responses to this questions are fairly evenly distributed but the highest response of 40% is that respondents experienced a decrease in stress symptoms. This decrease in stress leads to more productive work habits, better stress tolerance and improved physical wellness.

Survey Results

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Survey Analysis: Comparing 2021 and 2022 Survey Results:

- Many respondents described their work stress levels prior to COVID as manageable by a significant mark, of 88% of all 242 respondents. These results illustrate a greater level of awareness and insight to personal and professional stress management post-COVID pandemic. This improved awareness also demonstrates how we approach tasks or situations that may have previously reached a stress surge level but now feel more manageable.

-On the 2022 survey respondents were also asked to describe current work stress levels and 81% of the 242 respondents answered “manageable”. We know that stress is an unavoidable aspect of life, but when we can view stress as manageable instead of overwhelming, we can overcome challenges more efficiently.

Survey Results

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Survey Analysis: Comparing 2021 and 2022 Survey Results:

- The 2021 and 2022 surveys asked respondents to review their Behavioral Health PPE and things that help manage stress; 2021 answers were more focused on recreational activities and 2022 answers appeared more focused on physical well-being to support overall well-being. On the 2022 survey, only 229 respondents answered the BH PPE question. Is there still continued stigma around taking advantage of BH PPE/ supports and resources in the front line/ first responder population?
- Throughout the pandemic many workers expressed concern for their workplace providing support to them; the 2022 survey asked respondents if they had participated in programming offered by their employer. The respondents were fairly evenly split, with 43% participating and 53% not participating. The remainder of responses included:
 - “I don’t remember”
 - “I am self-employed”
 - “No, as it seems to be used against peers that have”
 - “There isn’t enough time on duty”
 - “Retired”
 - “There was a spike at first” but not enough further programming as time went on
- Respondents were then asked to consider whether their employer was more or less responsive; 49% answered more responsive, 35% as “no change” and the remaining 15.7% as less responsive. This responsiveness may be in a variety of forms, like supportive programming, trainings or linkages to external supports like EAP counseling or similar resources.