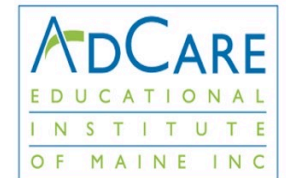


Disaster Behavioral Health *2023 Responder Safety & Health Survey Results and Discussion*

Published March 2024



Support provided by



Disaster Behavioral Health Responder Safety & Health Survey

The 2023 Disaster Behavioral Health Responder Safety & Health Survey was announced in the Disaster Behavioral Health Fall 2023 Newsletter and shared with preparedness and response partners across the State of Maine.

The intent of this survey was to support 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 the pandemic response, compare the 2023 data collected against previous Responder Safety and Health Surveys, and understand emerging training needs.

The 2023 Disaster Behavioral Health Responder Safety & Health Survey can be accessed here: [Disaster Behavioral Health Fall 2023 Newsletter](#)

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.

More information about Maine's Disaster Behavioral Health effort can be found at: <https://mainedisasterbehavioralhealth.com/>

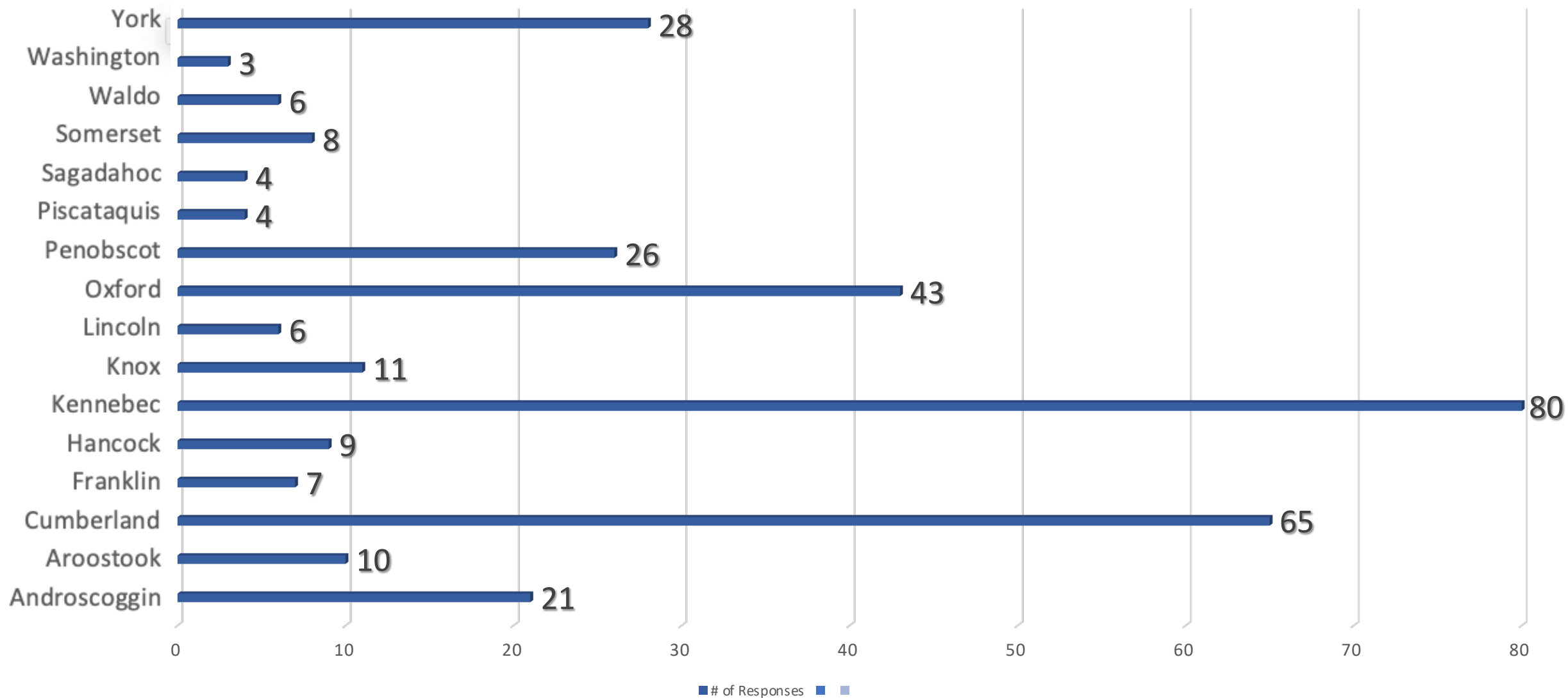
Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q1: Counties where Respondents Live and Work:

Q1 Respondents: 331



Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q2: Age of Respondents

Q2 Respondents: 331

| | |
|---------------|-------|
| 20 and Under: | 0% |
| 21-30: | 3.3% |
| 31-40: | 14.5% |
| 41-50: | 14.5% |
| 51-60: | 28.1% |
| Over 60: | 39.6% |

Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q3: Highest Earned Educational Degree of Respondents

Q3 Respondents: 331

| | |
|------------------------------|-------|
| High School Diploma | 10% |
| Associate Degree | 11.2% |
| Bachelor Degree | 29.9% |
| Masters Degree | 30.8% |
| Non-Medical Doctorate Degree | 4.2% |
| Doctorate MD or DO | 6% |
| * Other | 7.9% |

- * Other includes:
- Certification or training educational courses required by your career field (healthcare, public safety, environmental services, IT, or clergy)

Survey Results

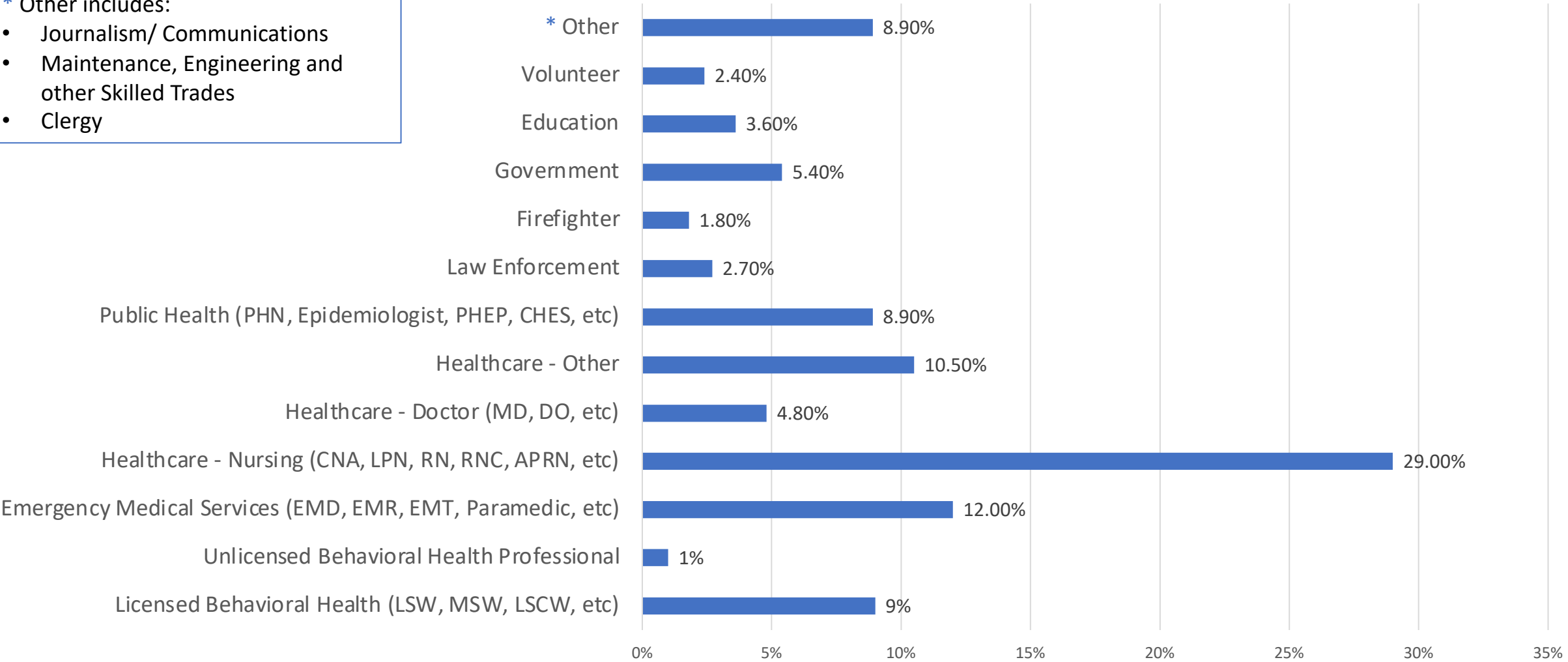
The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q4: Professional Discipline/ Certification or Licensure of Respondents

Q4 Respondents: 331

- * Other includes:
 - Journalism/ Communications
 - Maintenance, Engineering and other Skilled Trades
 - Clergy



Survey Results

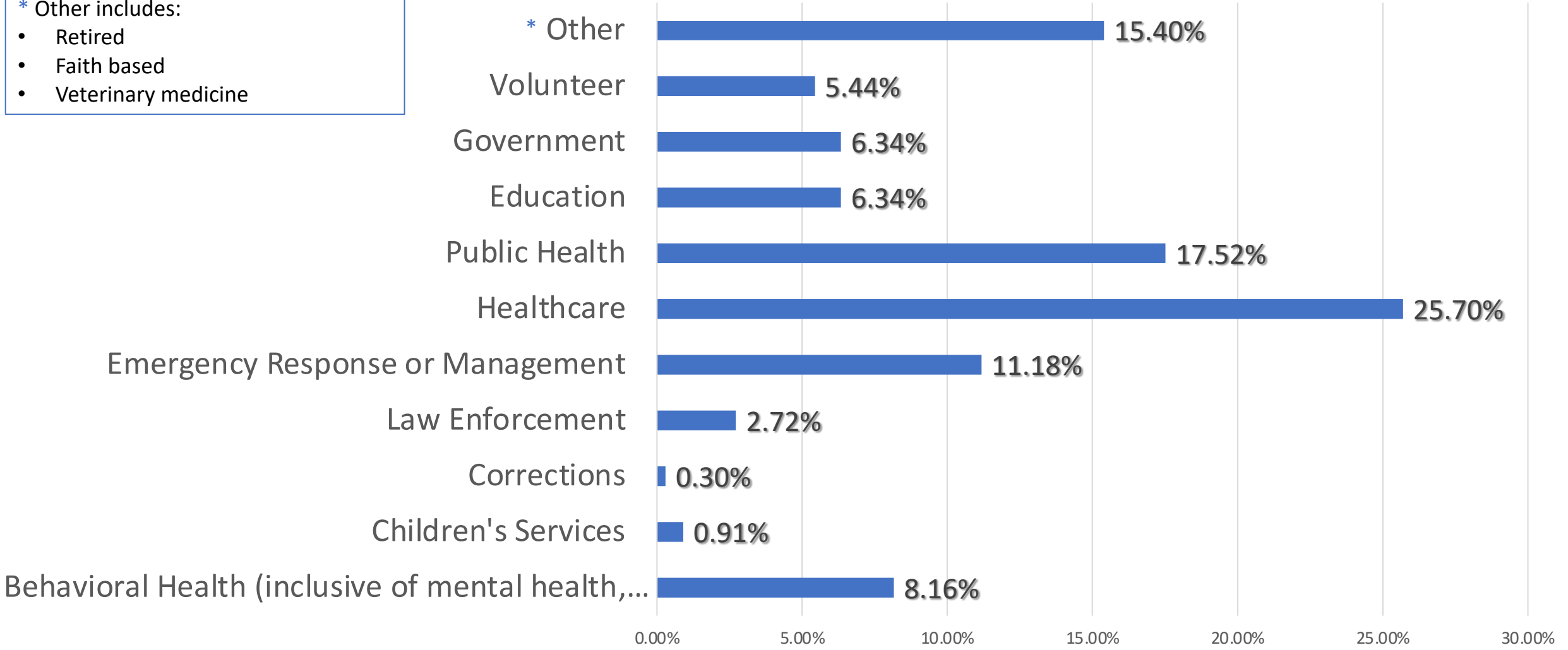
The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q5: Primary Work Setting

Q5 Respondents: 331

* Other includes:
• Retired
• Faith based
• Veterinary medicine



Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q6: Predicting Problems

Excerpt from the survey: *“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 predict might be associated with their current/ upcoming work environment or volunteer deployment.

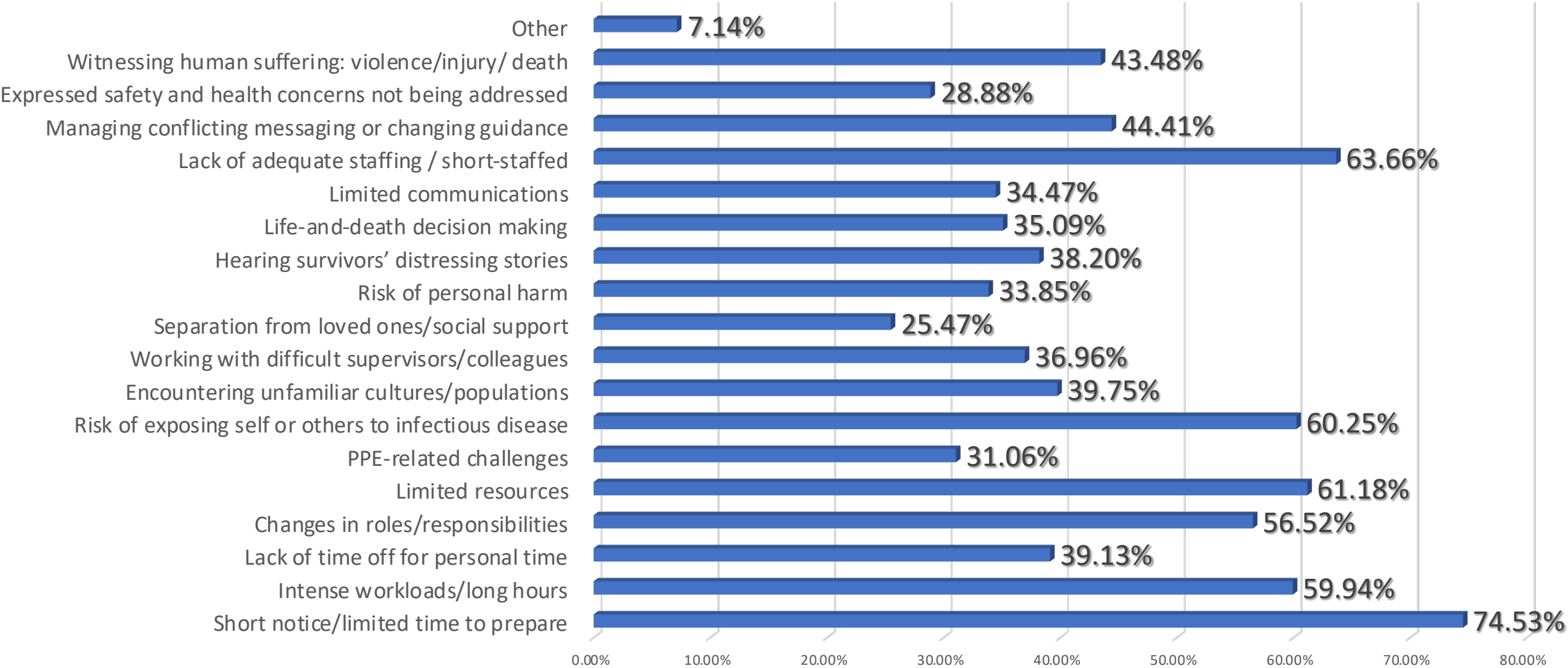
Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q6: Predicting Problems

Q6 Respondents: 322



Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q6: Predicting Problems

Responses in the “Other” category included:

- Concerns about compensation and cost of living / financial concerns
- Physical work environment
- Workplace peer dynamics and relationships

Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q7:

Excerpt from the survey: “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.”

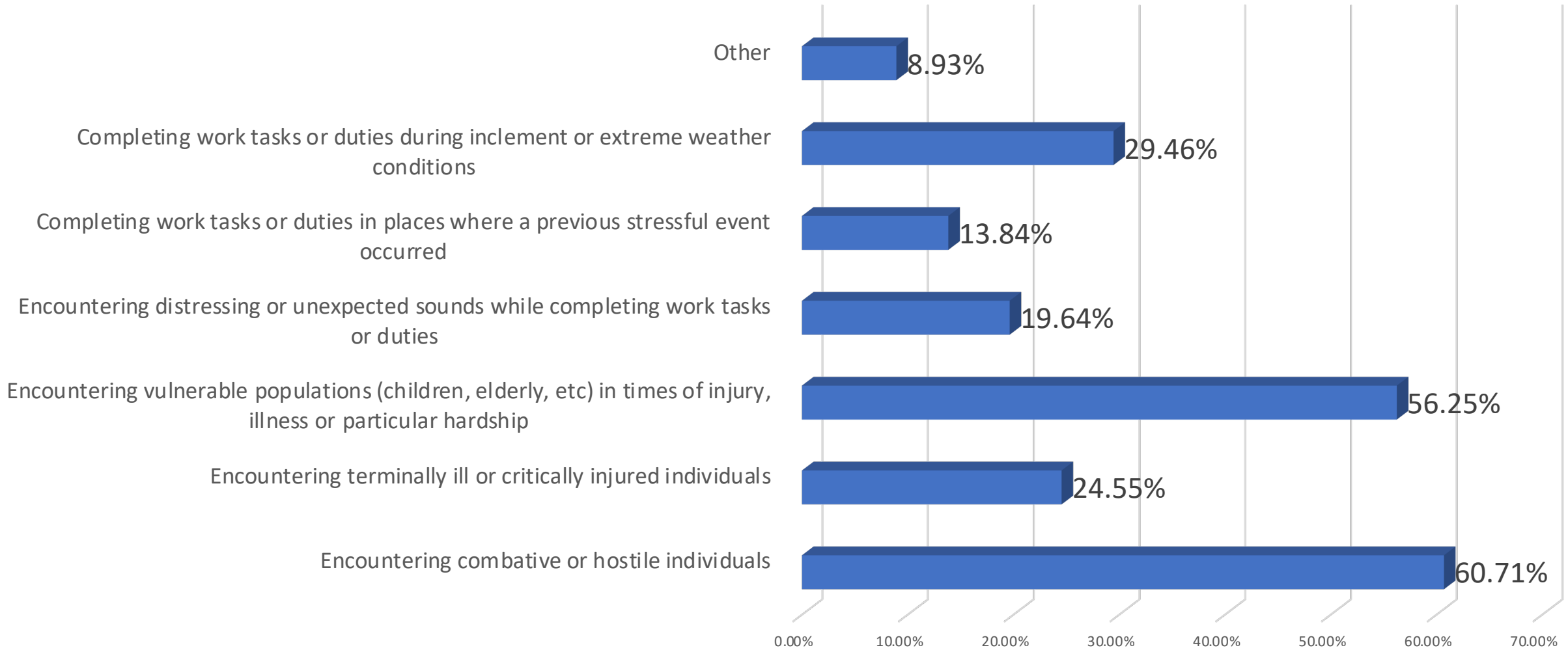
Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q7: Stressful Exposure

Q7 Respondents: 224



Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q7: Stressful Exposure

Responses in the “Other” category included:

- Challenges with peer or leaderships dynamics
- Limited resources to provide to communities while carrying out work duties
- Personal life challenges

Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q8: Recognizing Signs of Stress

Respondents were asked about recognizing personal signs of stress and monitoring these throughout their work assignments and/or volunteer deployments 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 and/or volunteer deployment.

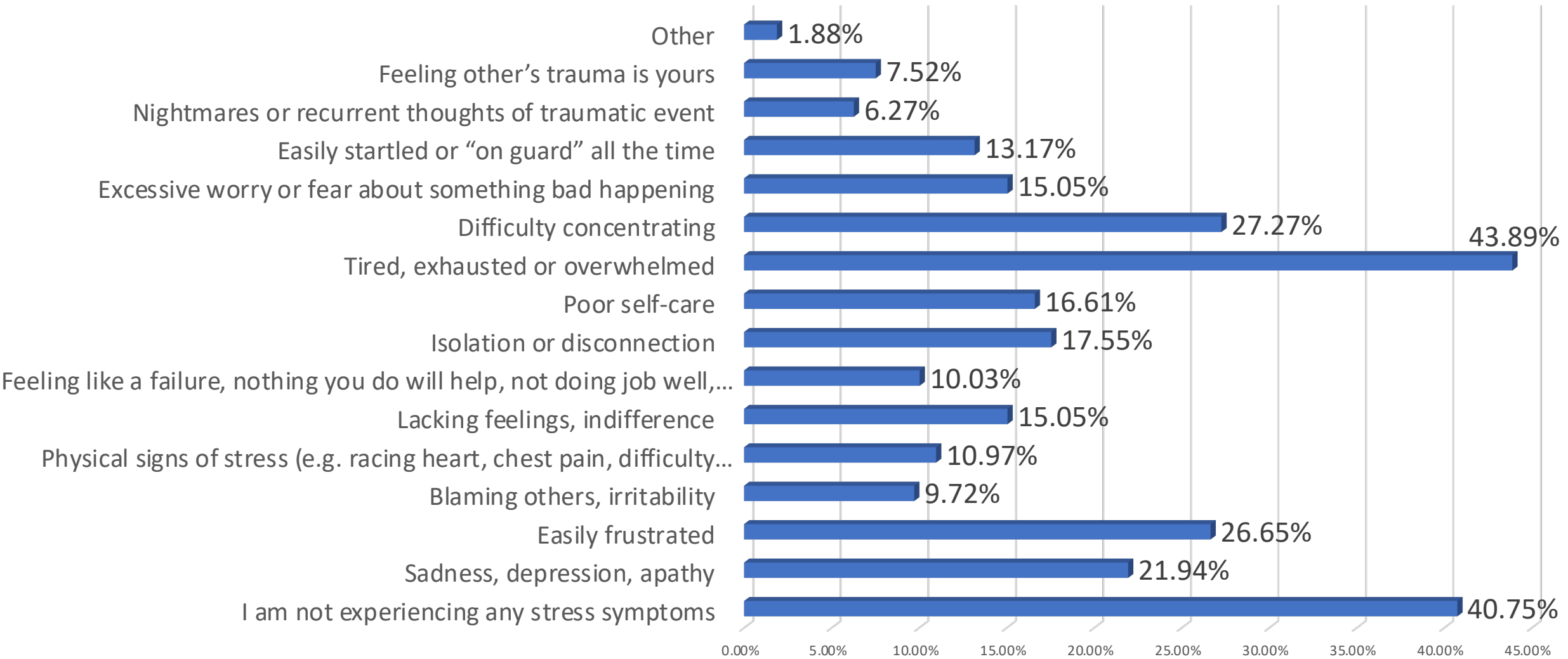
Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q8: Recognizing Signs of Stress

Q8 Respondents: 319



Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q8: Recognizing Signs of Stress

Responses in the “Other” category included:

- Limited experiences of signs of stress
- Personal stressors affecting work stress
- Workplace dynamics with peers

Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q9: Then and Now

Survey participants were asked to rate whether or not they had an increase or decrease in stress-related symptoms in the last 12 months, since the last Responder Safety and Health survey was conducted in 2022.

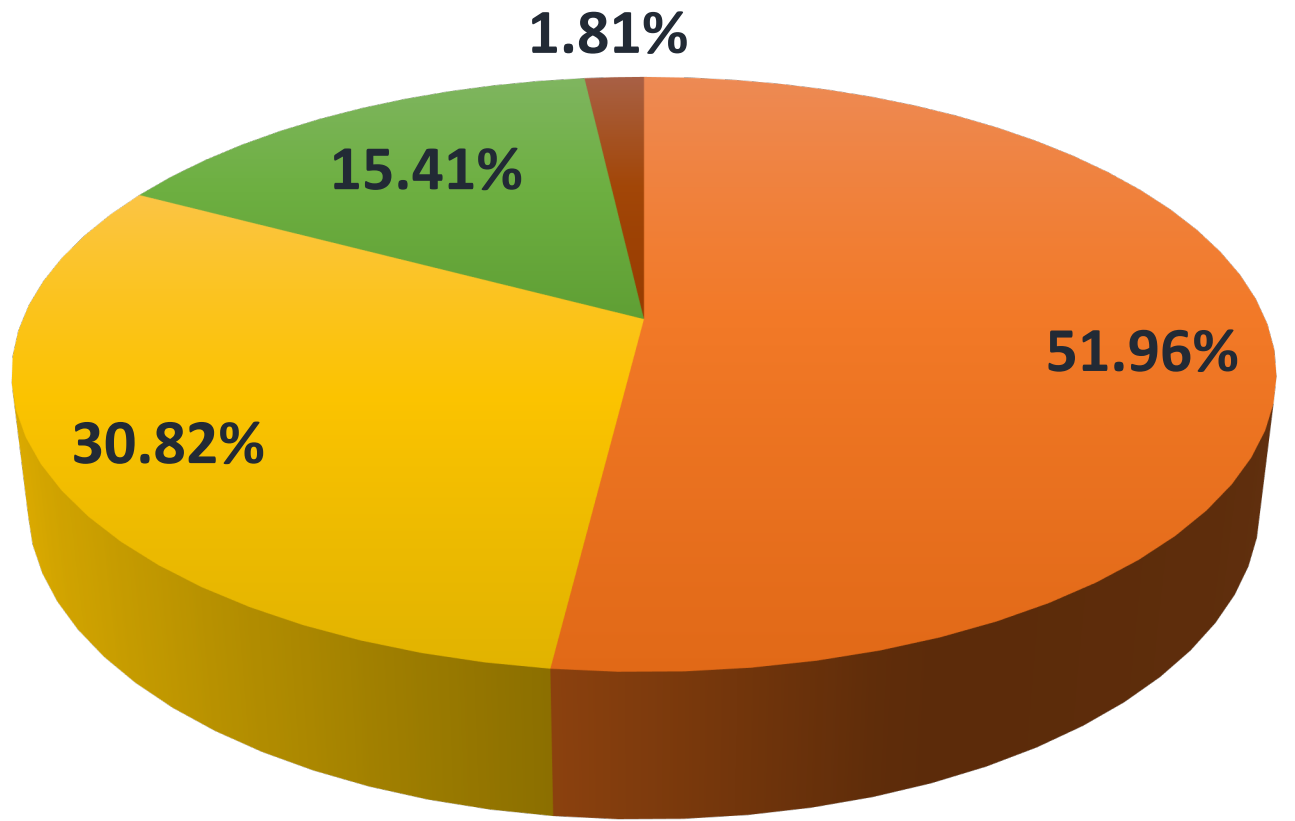
Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q9: Have you experienced an increase or decrease in stress symptoms in the past 12 months?

Q9 Respondents: 324



- “Other” responses included:
- Unsure, first time completing this survey
 - Increased ability every year to deal with stress triggers
 - Increase in personal life stressors impact work stress

■ No Change ■ Increase ■ Decrease ■ Other

Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q10: Respondents were asked to describe their work stress levels through the year of 2022. Response options included:

- Manageable
- Unmanageable
- Other

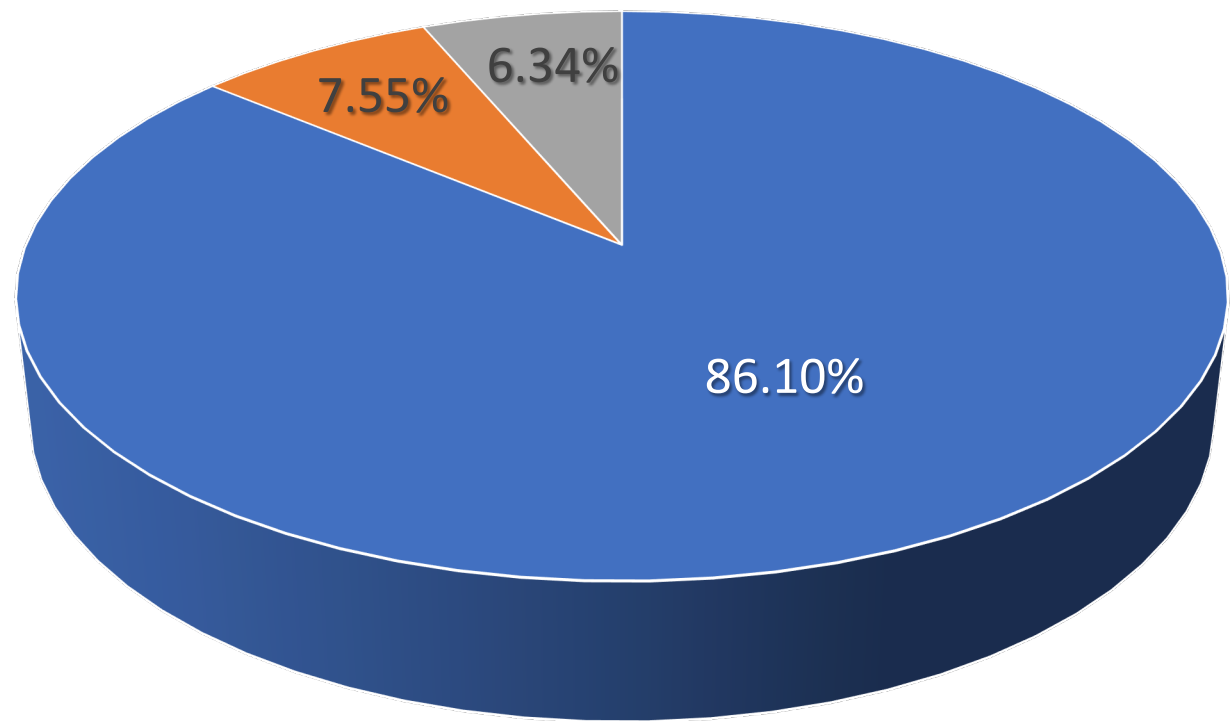
Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q10: How would you describe your work stress level during 2022?

Q10 Respondents: 331



“Other” responses included:

- Retired
- Maintaining regular therapeutic treatment is helpful
- Family stress can add to work stress
- A combination- both manageable and unmanageable at times

■ Manageable ■ Unmanageable ■ Other

Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q11: Respondents were asked to describe their current work stress levels, through the year of 2023. Response options included:

- Manageable
- Unmanageable
- Other

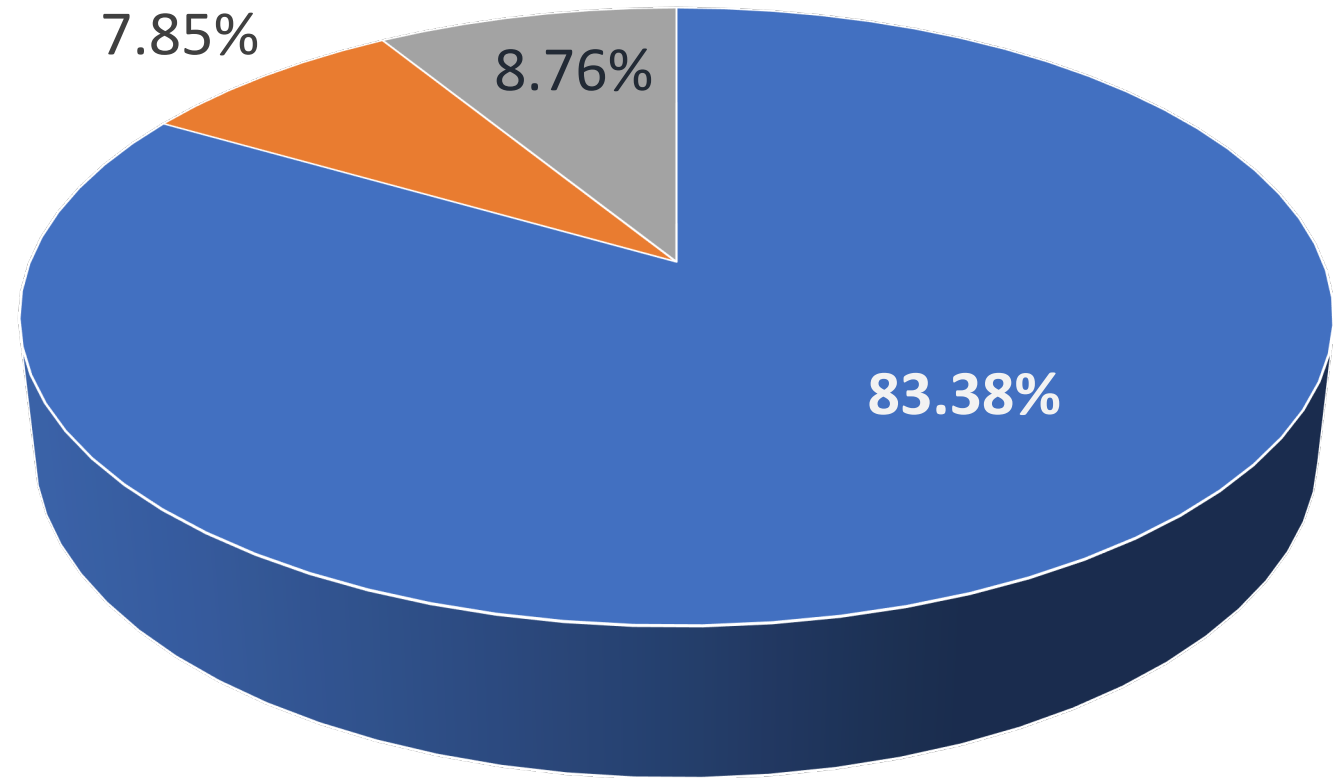
Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q11: How would you describe your work stress levels during the current year, 2023?

Q11 Respondents: 331



■ Manageable ■ Unmanageable ■ Other

“Other” responses included:

- Retired
- Manageable but feels more challenging at times
- Manageable out of necessity to perform duties
- Increased work stress up and down’s due to staffing challenges
- Some times feel more manageable and other times feel less manageable
- In need of more personal time

Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q12: Prescribe Protection

Excerpt from the survey:

“Given that responder stress and fatigue can be predicted, and stress symptoms recognized, consider what you can do, think, and avoid to help you stay fit for duty. Review, adapt, and practice this “prescription for protection” during and after your work assignment/volunteer deployment or any particularly traumatic shift.”

Guiding questions provided to help respondents answer:

- 1) What do you do for yourself when you are upset?*
- 2) What has helped you during previous deployments?*
- 3) What do you like to do when you’re in a good mood or to help you relax?*
- 4) Where do you have control to make things better?*
- 5) What positive things can you say to yourself when things are tough?*
- 6) What/whom should you avoid?*

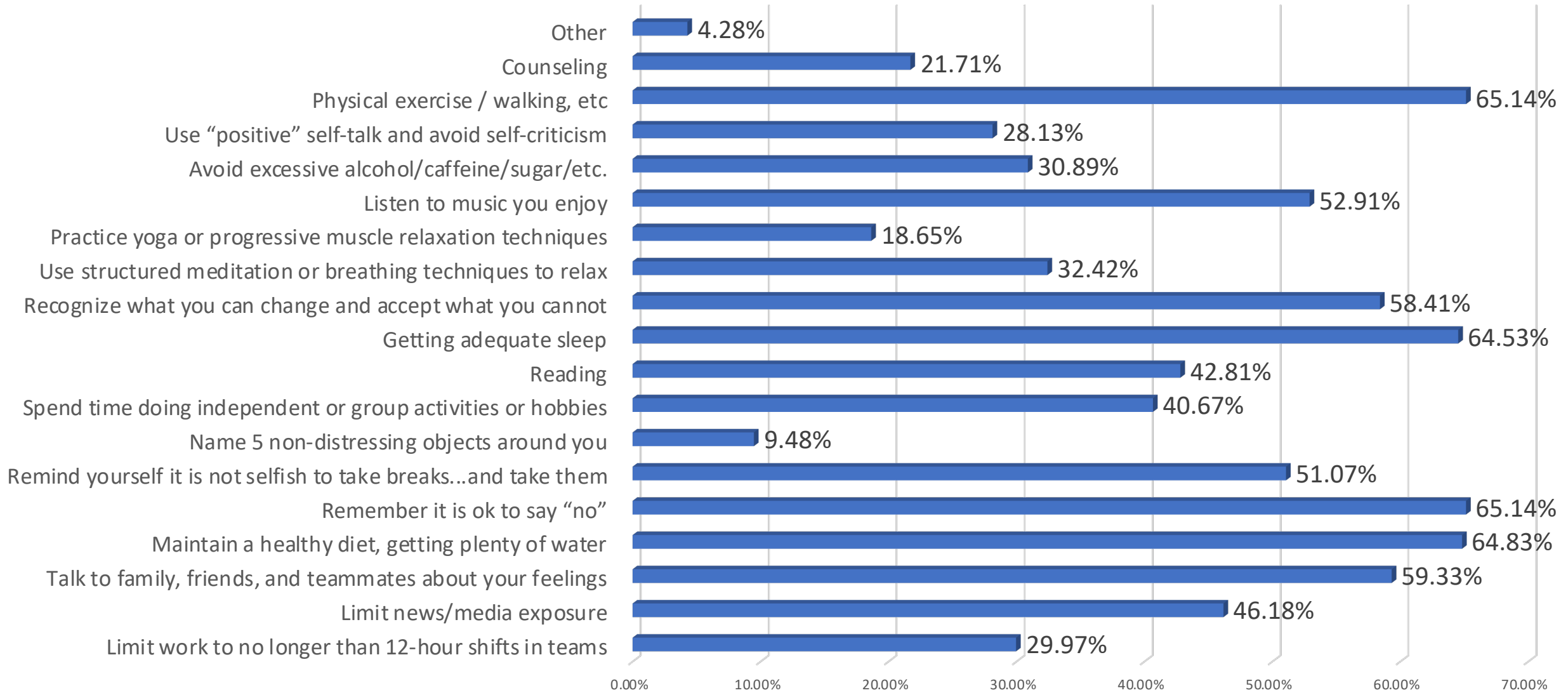
Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q12: Prescribe Protection

Q12 Respondents: 331



Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q12: Prescribe Protection

Responses in the “Other” category included:

- Spend time outside
- Spiritual or faith-based activities
- Support groups
- Encouragement from friends and family

Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q13: Engage a Protections Plan

Excerpt from the survey:

“Creating a team culture and/or a buddy system to provide peer support, connecting with supportive resources and attending trainings are all great ways ENGAGE A PROTECTION PLAN. Remember you may be able to see the signs of stress better in your teammates than in yourself. In a buddy system, two responders partner together to support each other and monitor each other’s stress, workload, safety.

Recognize your personal signs of stress and monitor them so you know when to engage your protection plan. Prolonged exposure to stress can cause new symptoms, which can be more difficult to recognize. Select areas that could be used to enhance your protection plan.”

Respondents were asked to identify areas that would be most beneficial for workforce development to build your stress management skills and support overall responder safety and health.

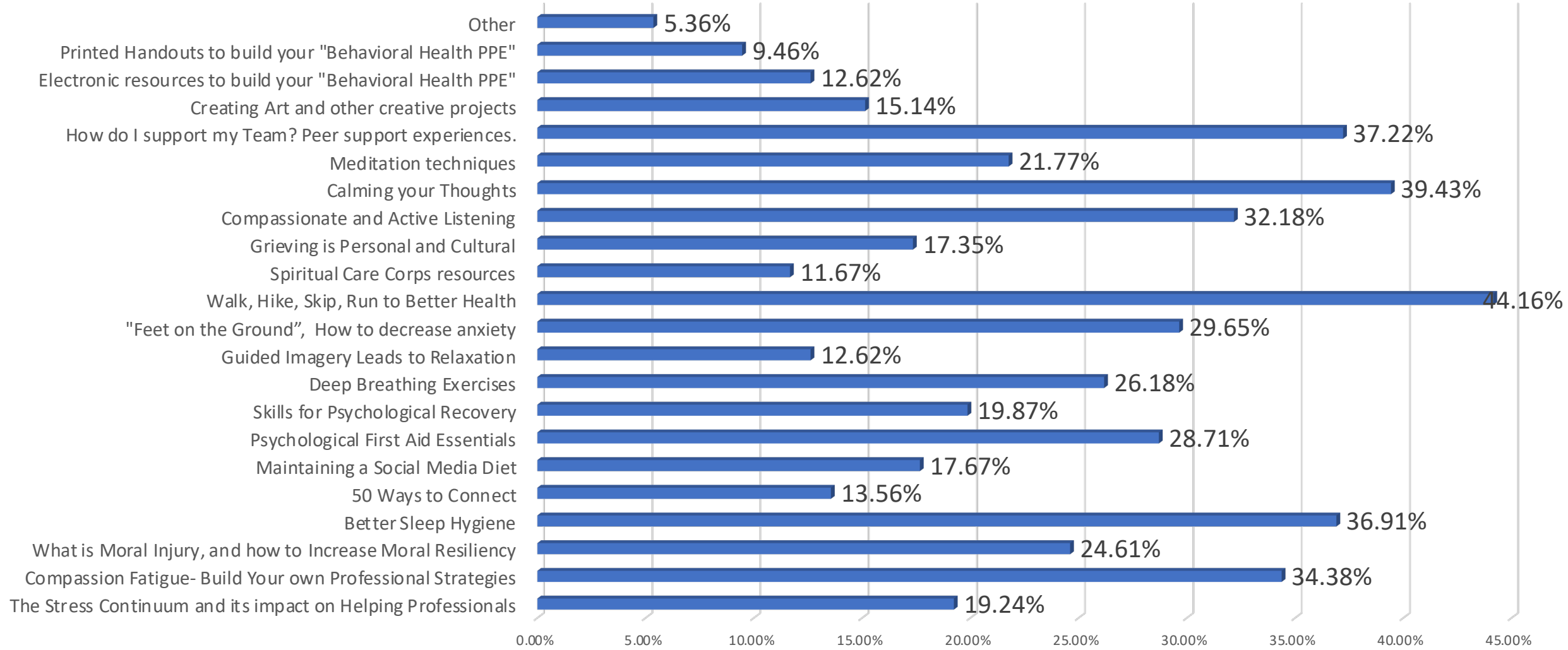
Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q13: In addition to identifying a buddy, what areas do you feel would be most beneficial for workforce development to build your stress management skills and support overall responder safety and health?

Q13 Respondents: 317



Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q13: In addition to identifying a buddy, what areas do you feel would be most beneficial for workforce development to build your stress management skills and support overall responder safety and health?

Responses in the “Other” category included:

- Journaling
- Engagement in spiritual or faith-based activities
- Family and social supports

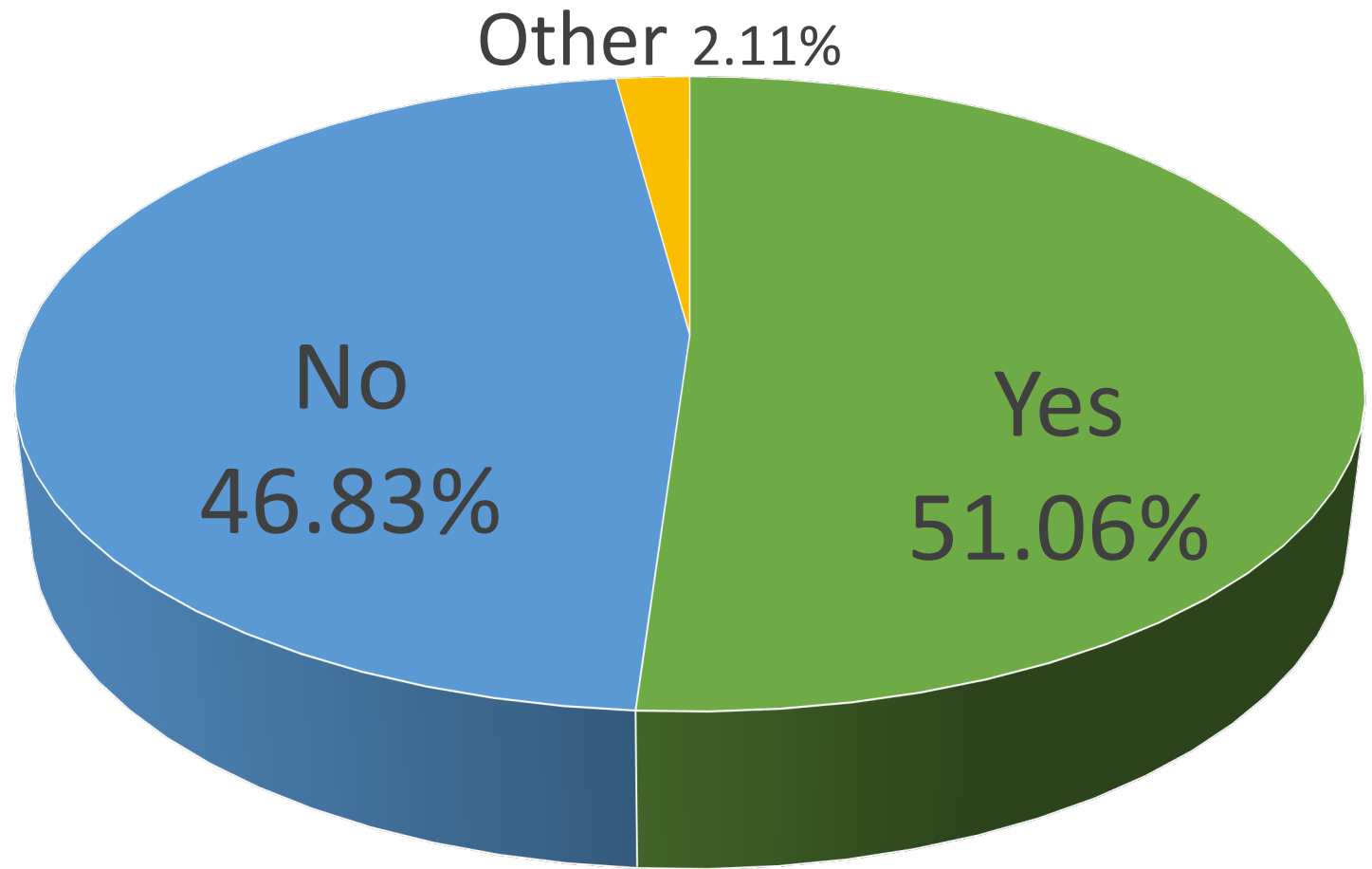
Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q14: Have you participated in any educational or supportive programs or training offered by your employer or volunteer organization in the last year?

Q14 Respondents: 331



Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q14: Have you participated in any educational or supportive programs or training offered by your employer or volunteer organization in the last year?

Responses in the “Other” category included:

- Sought independent programming outside of employer or volunteer organization
- Staying active in social or extracurricular groups

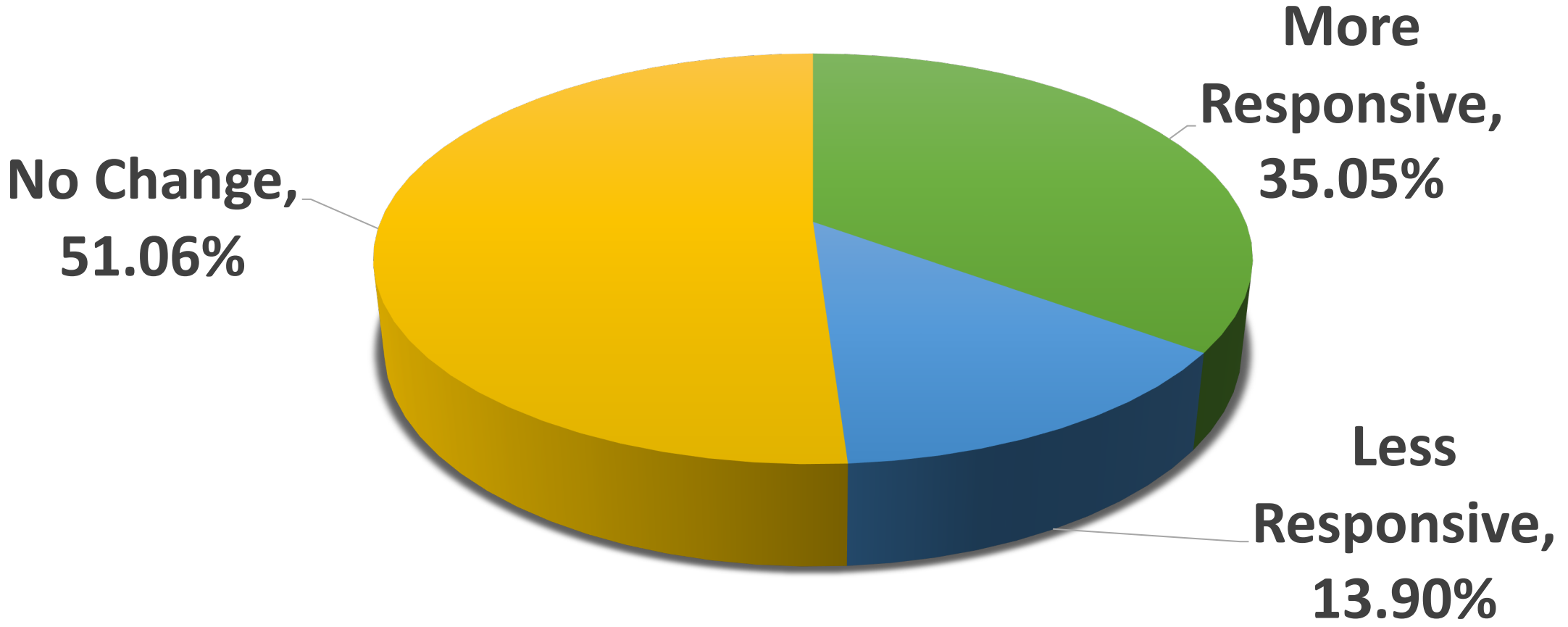
Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q15: Over the past 12 months, do you feel your employer or volunteer organization has been more or less responsive to stress management and resiliency efforts?

Q15 Respondents: 331



Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Q16: Future Notification of Training and Resources

156 Respondents completed their name and email to receive these newsletter updates.

Excerpt from the survey:

“Since the original Responder Safety and Health Survey, the following workforce 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 Training*
- * Personal Resilience and Stress Inoculation Training*
- * Creating Safe Spaces and Relationships for Coping and Resilience: Improving Compassion Satisfaction Among Responders and Communities Training*
- * Disaster Behavioral Health: A Critical Response Training*
- * Managing Staff Stress and Promoting Workforce Resilience*
- * Incident Command System Training (100 and 700)*

Additional, workforce development trainings will be offered based on the finding of this survey. If you would like to receive the quarterly electronic Maine Disaster Behavioral Health Newsletter, where training opportunities are announced, please include your name and email address.”

Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Survey Analysis: Comparing 2021, 2022 and 2023 Survey Results

- One of the notable shifts in this Responder Safety and Health survey has been an increase in responses; this survey was initially launched in the spring of 2021 during the COVID 19 Pandemic and received 142 responses. The 2022 survey received 242 responses, and the 2023 survey received 331 responses; the highest amount yet. Responders appear to be more willing to provide insight into their health and safety.
- The 2023 survey showed a more comprehensive capture of responses, including responses from all 16 of Maine's counties.
- The 2023 survey showed there was an increase in respondents between the ages of 51-60 and over 60, capturing a larger population of retired professionals and highlighting our aging workforce / volunteer community.

Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Survey Analysis: Comparing 2021, 2022 and 2023 Survey Results

- Compared to previous years, more survey respondents completed every survey question. In previous years, some respondents declined to answer questions that might feel more emotionally or cognitively probing. Respondents appear to feel more comfortable with sharing about their experiences, as well as an increased awareness of recognizing signs of stress and resiliency.
- Respondents also demonstrated a 2% increase in reporting their current work stress levels feeling manageable since the 2022 survey, and a 1.15% decrease in reporting work stress levels feeling unmanageable. This suggests that work stress levels may be stabilizing overall. Reported work stress levels in the 2021 survey implied a much higher inability to manage stress based on survey responses; the unprecedented levels of work-related and personal stress during the COVID pandemic in 2020 and 2021 presented new challenges to Mainers in all career fields but particularly any fields in immediate, active essential roles to COVID response work.
- Survey respondents reported a higher rate of manageability in their work stress but additional comments highlighted some increases of stress in their personal or family lives, which may skew our abilities to observe how manageable our work stress really is.

Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Survey Analysis: Comparing 2022 and 2023 Survey Results:

- Additional comments and responses to Question 13 in particular, highlighted some additional needs by respondents. Respondents reported that their operational concerns at work, such as staffing or dynamics with leadership, interfered with their ability to participate in programming. Some respondents reported they have limited time to participate in these programs due to the demand in their work duties.
- Mainers have also felt the pressure economically with cost of living and/ or meeting financial needs of their families, which some respondents commented on adding stress to their day-to-day in various questions through the survey. Comments made suggest an increase in resiliency, with responders pushing through to meet the needs of their work duties, but still feeling the impact of this push through in other areas of their lives.

Survey Results

The 2023 Responder Safety and Health Survey had 331 total responses.



Survey Analysis: Comparing 2022 and 2023 Survey Results:

- The increased engagement of responders participating in this survey, as well as the more consistent response numbers to all survey questions inspires that Maine responders may be feeling more supported and willing to share their experiences. This can serve to enhance Maine CDC's confidence in the provision of meaningful and desired programming, training and resources to Maine responders in their day-to-day roles as well as in times of disaster.
- Separate from the responses included in the survey, but a complimentary observation: The Disaster Behavioral Health program observed strong engagement and participation in educational opportunities throughout 2023. This also suggests a strong desire from our Maine responders to continue learning and engaging, while receiving support for the valuable work they perform in our communities statewide.