

Disaster Behavioral Health *2025 Responder Safety & Health Survey (Maine)* *Results and Discussion*

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MAINE DISASTER
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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Disaster Behavioral Health Responder Safety & Health Survey

The Disaster Behavioral Health Responder Safety & Health Survey was announced in the *Disaster Behavioral Health Winter 2025 Newsletter* and shared with preparedness and response partners across the State of Maine.

Analytic Objectives:

1. Meet the Disaster Behavioral Health Domain 1- Activity 7 Deliverable: Coordinate risk assessment and training to help mitigate responder exposure to traumatic events.
2. Evaluate responder safety and health annually and in a consistent way that can identify trends and changes.
3. Compare data collected in the 2025 Responder Safety and Health Survey against the Responder Safety and Health Survey data from 2023 and 2024.



Disaster Behavioral Health Responder Safety & Health Survey

Apply findings:

- Maine CDC seeks to use the information to identify emerging trends and changes to inform workforce development focus areas.
- To share openly the data collected to better inform agencies and organizations around the current “temperature” or responder safety and health in Maine.
- Direct resources to identified stress management skill building 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/ResponderSafetyHealth2025>

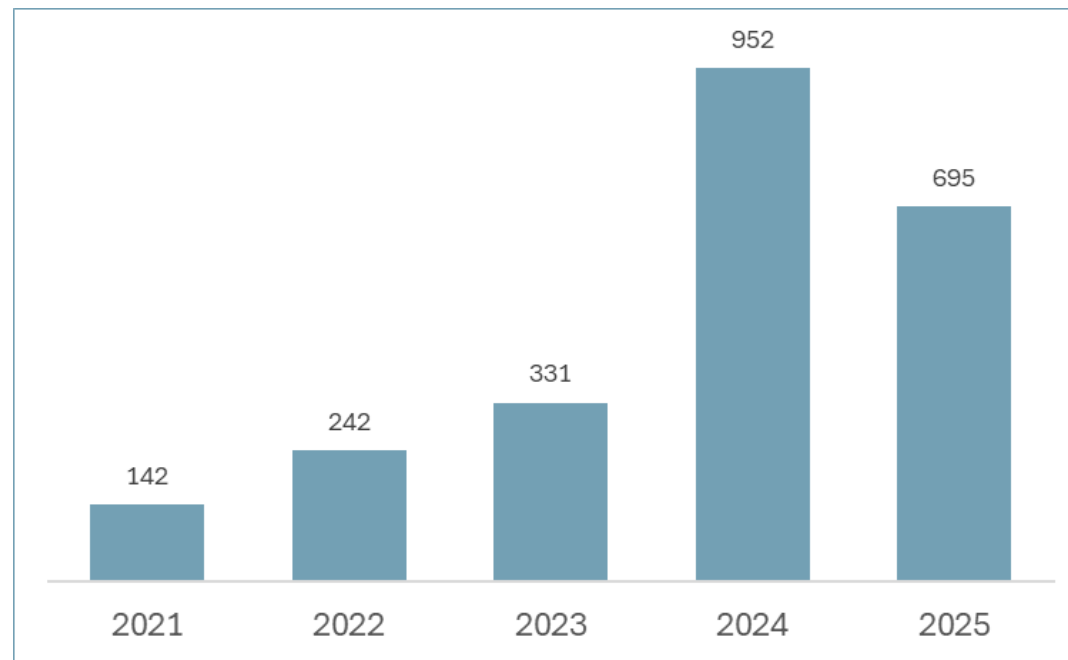
More information about Maine’s Disaster Behavioral Health effort can be found at:

<https://mainedisasterbehavioralhealth.com/>

Survey Response Rates 2021 - 2024



- Survey Responses- fewer participants compared to 2024, but relatively high compared to previous years.
- 2025 survey had 695 responses.

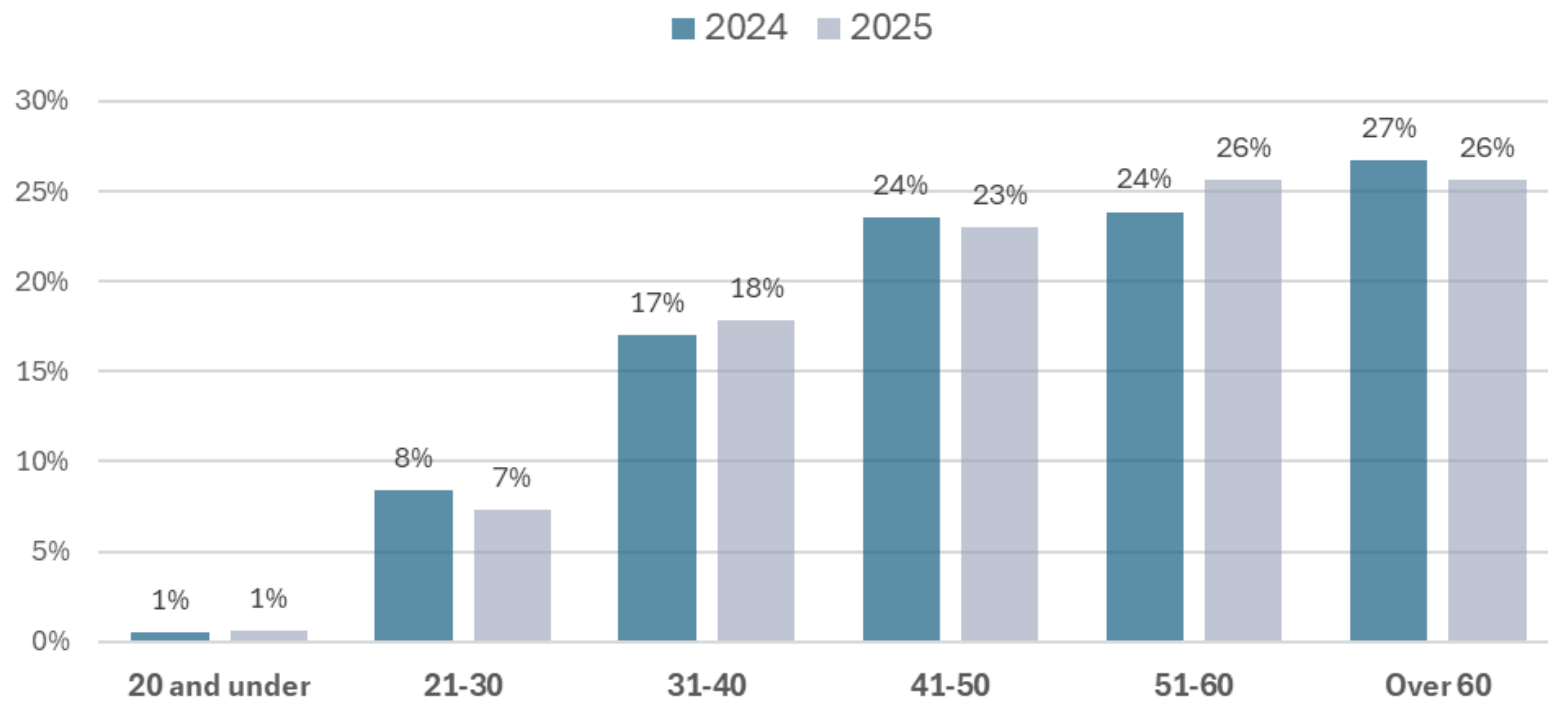


Survey Results

Q2: How old are you?



- Similar age distribution compared to 2024 survey

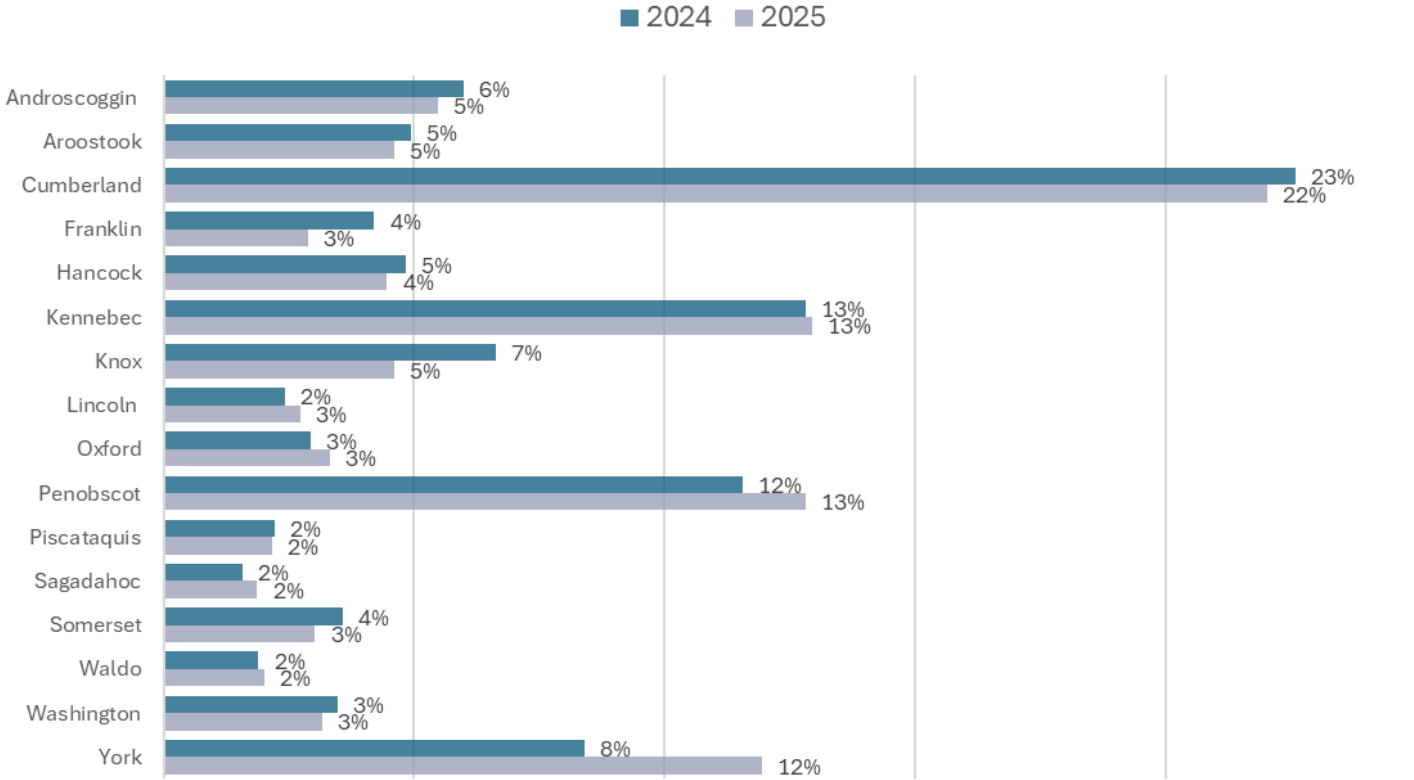


Survey Results

Q1: County of Residence or Work Environment (695 total respondents)



- Similar county distribution compared to 2024 survey
- Slightly larger representation from York County

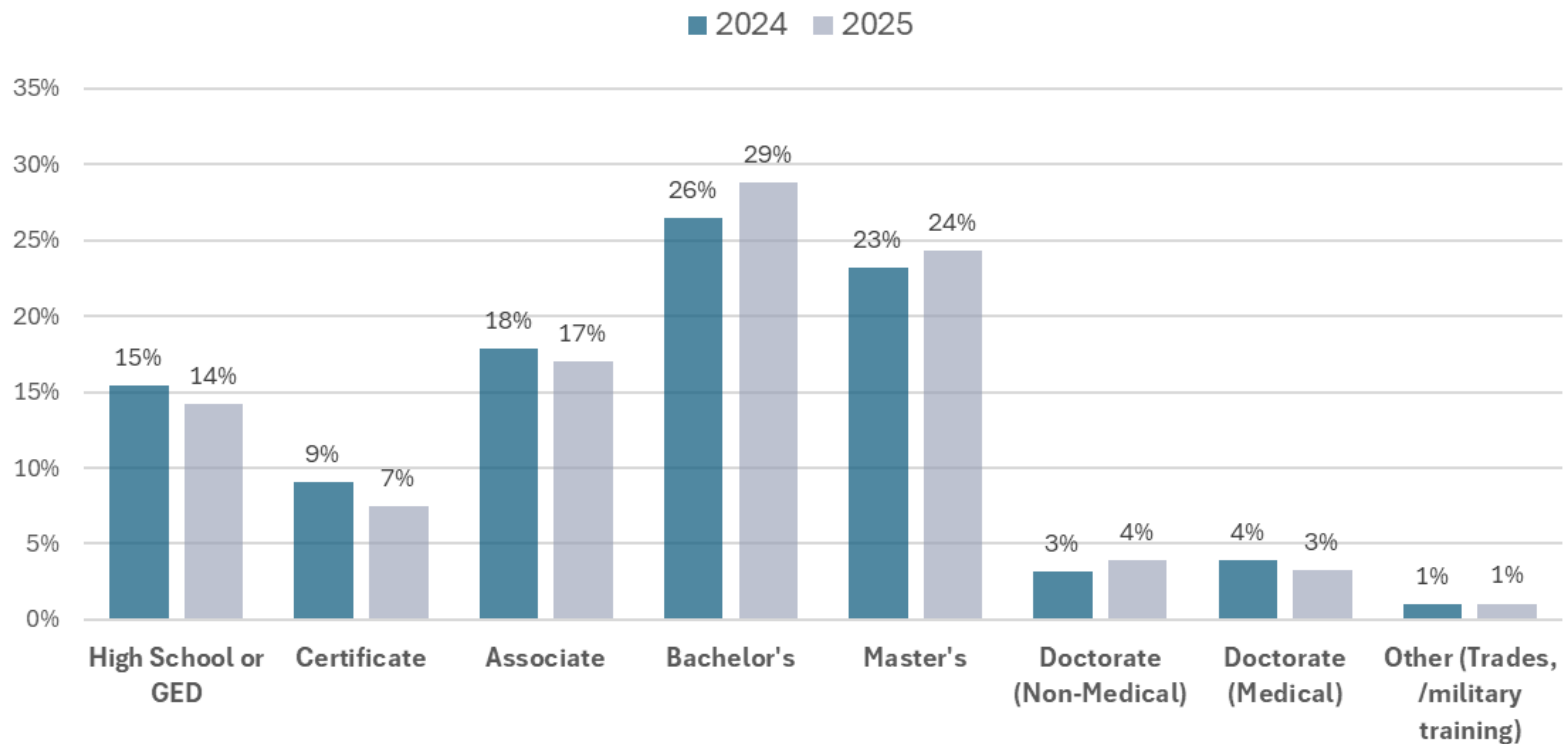


Survey Results

Q3: Your highest earned educational degree

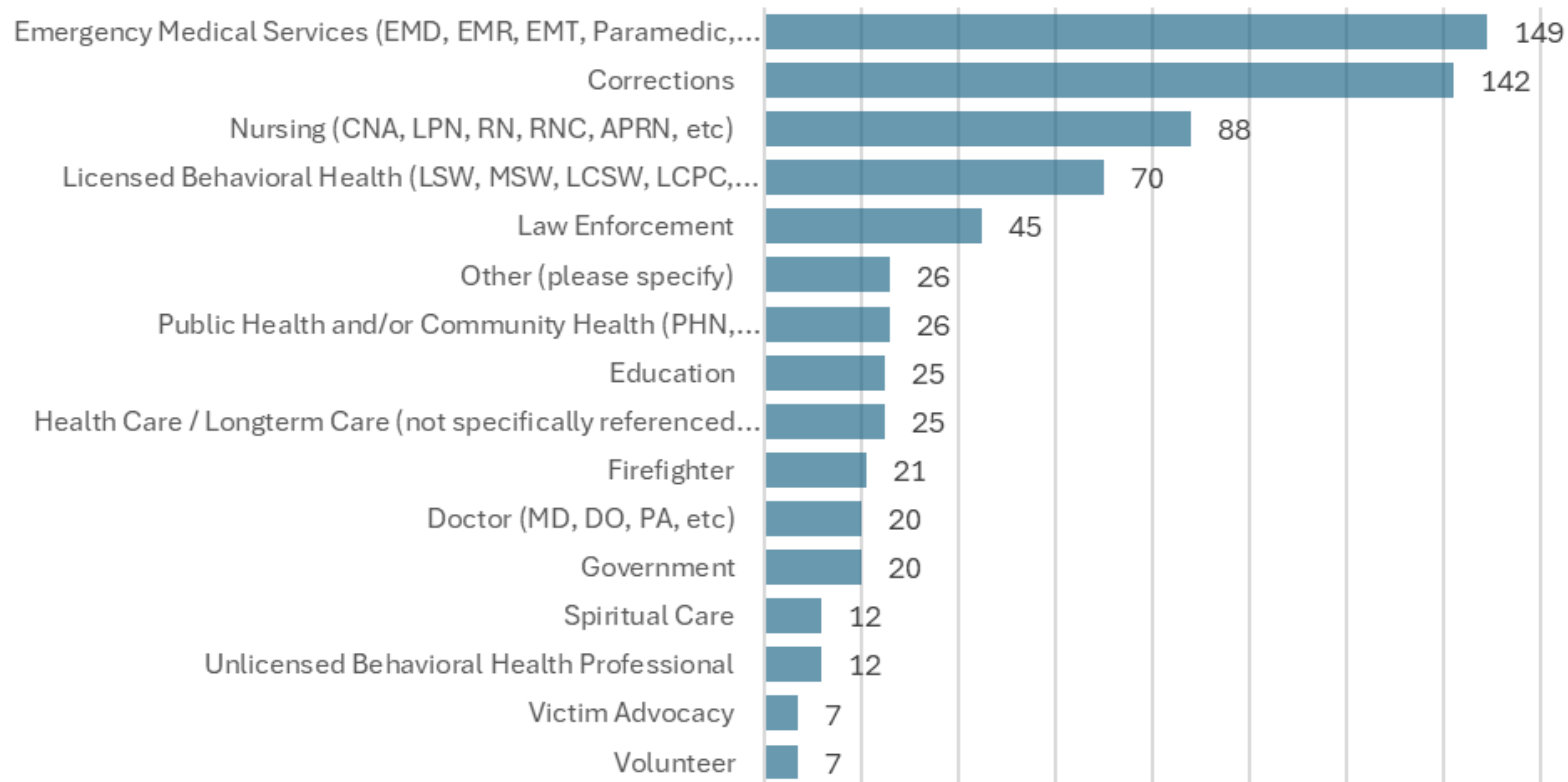


- Similar education profile compared to 2024 survey



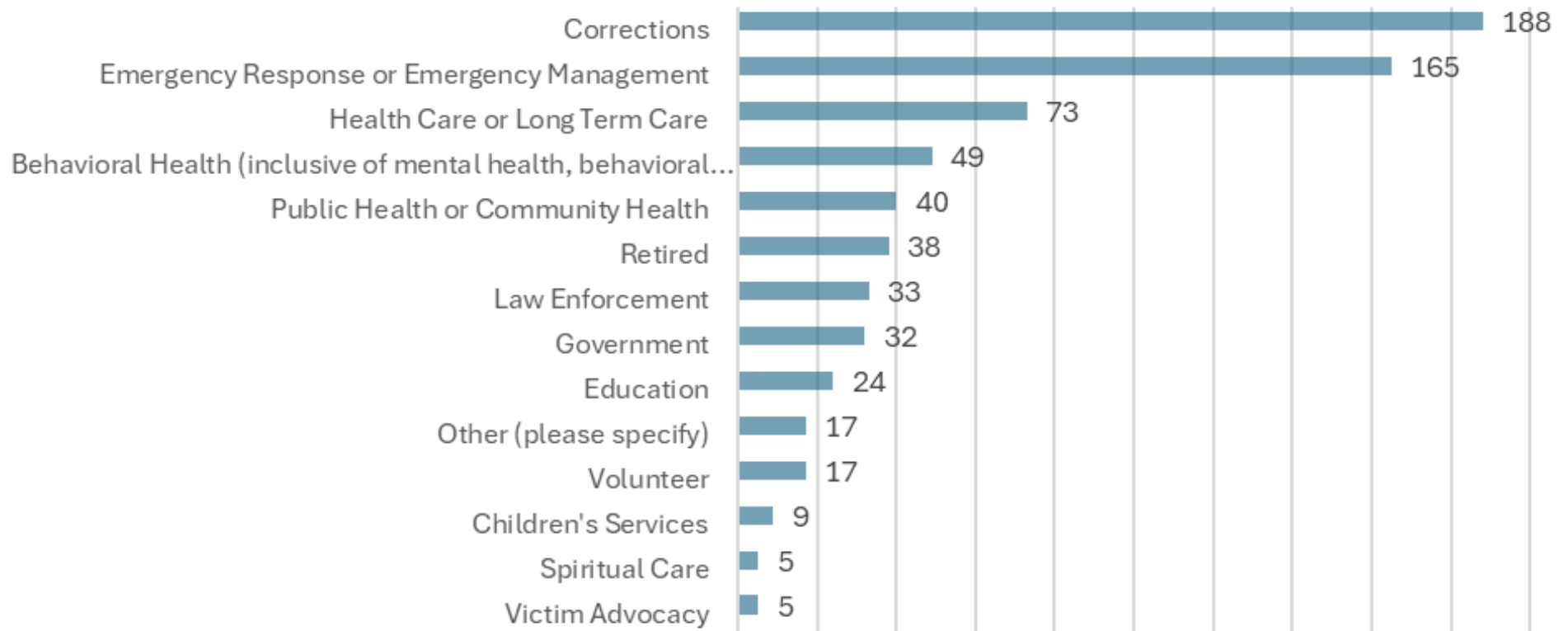
Survey Results

Q4: Professional Discipline/ Certification or Licensure



Survey Results

Q5: Primary Work Setting



Survey Results



Q6: Predict 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 like those listed below”.

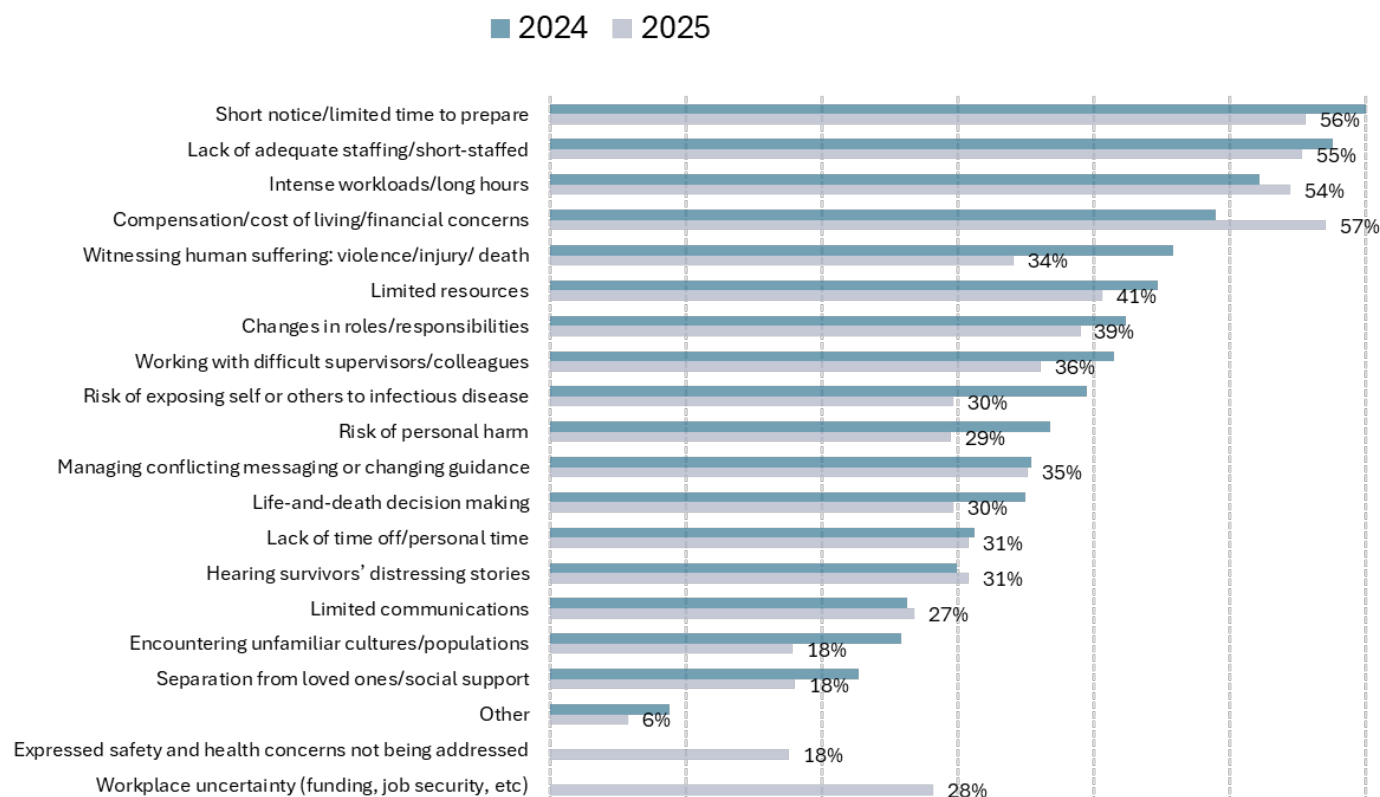
Survey respondents were asked to select all exposure elements they associated with their 2025 work environment or volunteer deployment

Survey Results



Q6: Predict Problems: select all exposure elements you associate with your 2025 work environment or volunteer deployment

- A few personal exposure items were less frequent such as: short notice, witnessing human suffering, risk of exposure and risk of personal harm.
- Compensation, cost of living and financial concerns were more prevalent.
- Two items add this year: “expressed safety and health concerns not being addressed” and “workplace uncertainty (funding, job security, etc.) were identified among 18% and 28% of responders.

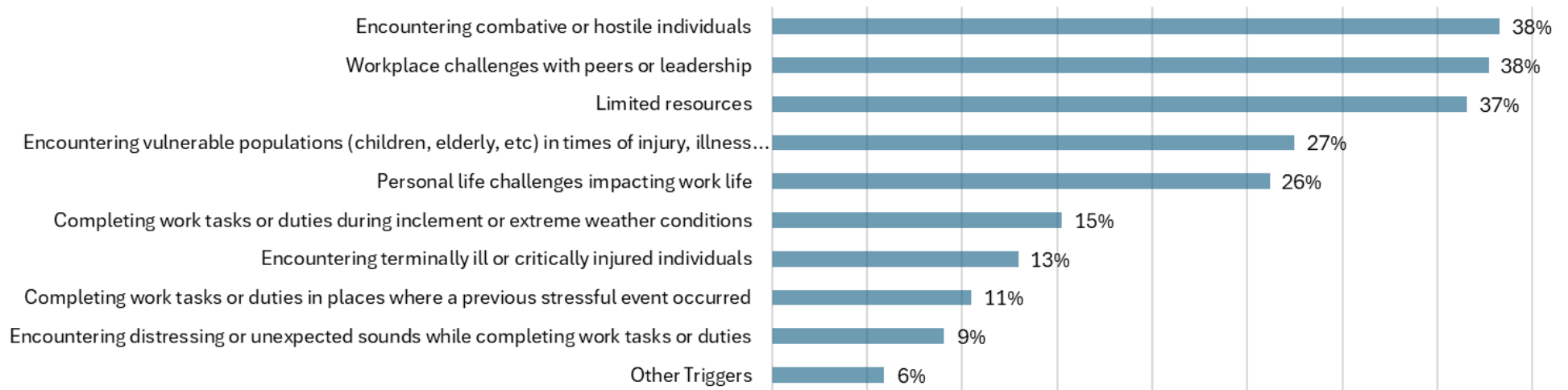


Survey Results



Q7: Please check up to 3 triggering events or areas that negatively impact your stress level in your work environment.

- Limited resources increases slightly compared to 2024 (37% vs. 30%)
- Encountering vulnerable populations decreased slightly compared to 2024 (27% vs. 32%)



Survey Results



Q8: Recognizing Signs of Stress

Recognize your personal signs of stress and monitor them throughout your work assignment or deployment so you know when to engage your protection plan.

Prolonged exposure to stress can cause new symptoms, which can be more difficult to recognize. Common symptoms of stress include the following.

Please check off all stress symptoms you feel are associated with your work environment or volunteer deployment.

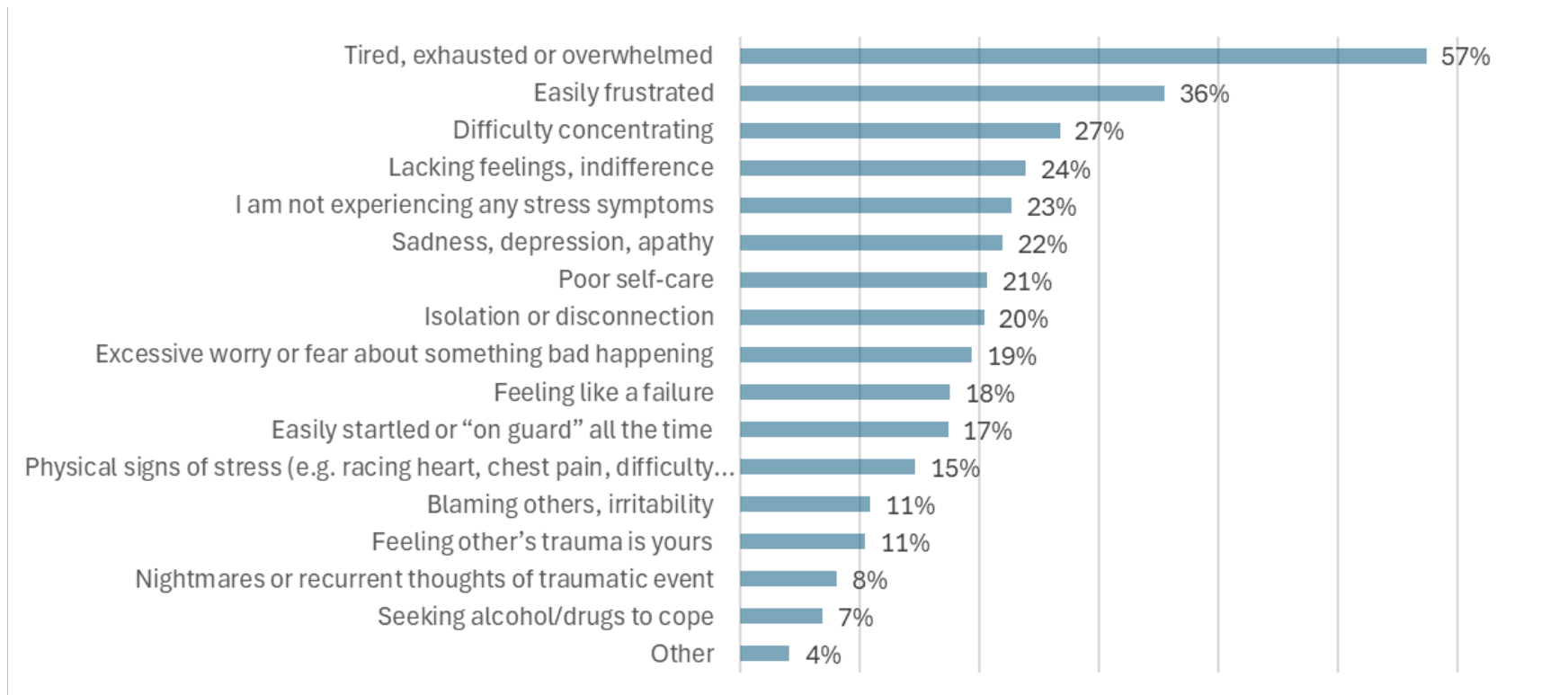
Survey Results

Q8: Recognizing Signs of Stress

Check all stress symptoms you feel are associated with your work environment or volunteer deployment.



- Tired, exhausted or overwhelmed increases slightly compared to 2024 (57% vs. 52%)

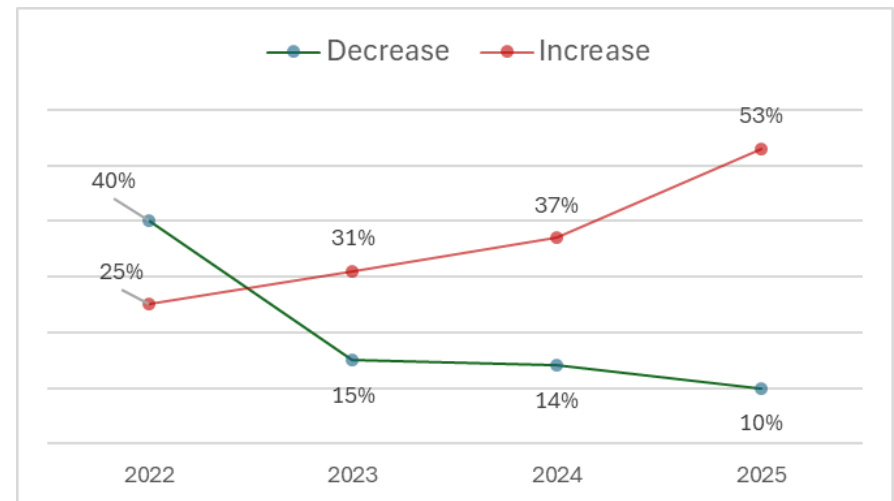
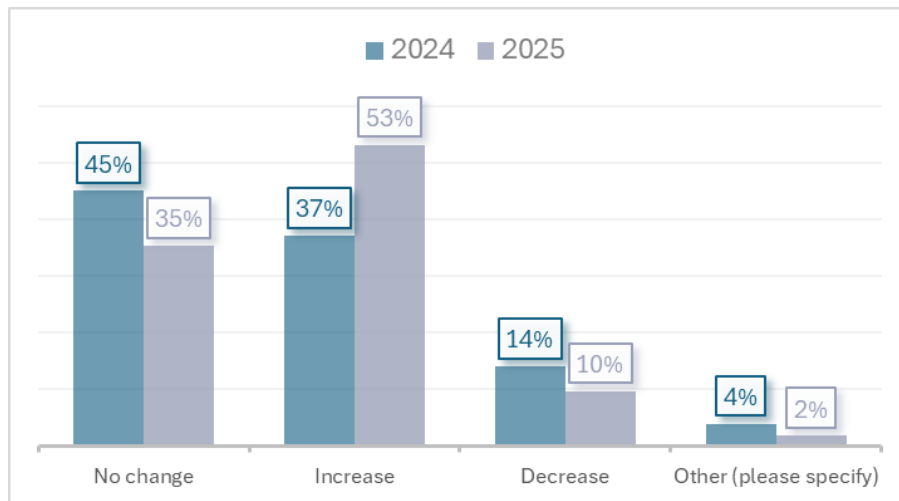


Survey Results



Q9: Respondents were asked if they had experienced an increase or decrease in stress symptoms in 2025, compared to the last Responder Safety and Health survey covering 2024.

- In 2025, 53% of responders indicated increased year over year stress compared to 37% reporting in 2024
- Responders have indicated increasing stress every year since 2022
- In 2022, 40% of responders indicated decreasing stress which may represent a post pandemic readjustment

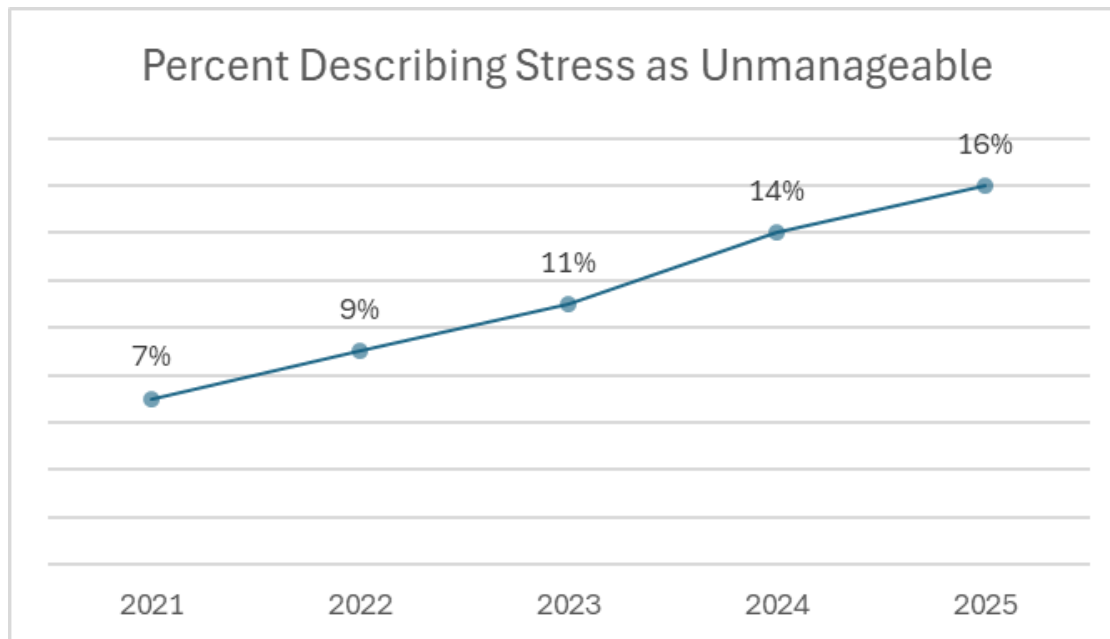


Survey Results



Q11: How would you describe your work stress levels in 2025?

- In 2025, 16% of responders indicated stress was unmanageable, compared to 14% reporting in 2024
- Percent of responders who have indicating unmanageable stress has increased every year since 2021



Survey Results



Q12: Prescribe Protection

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:

What do you do for yourself when you are upset?

What has helped you during previous deployments?

What do you like to do when you’re in a good mood or to help you relax?

Where do you have control to make things better?

What positive things can you say to yourself when things are tough?

What/whom should you avoid?

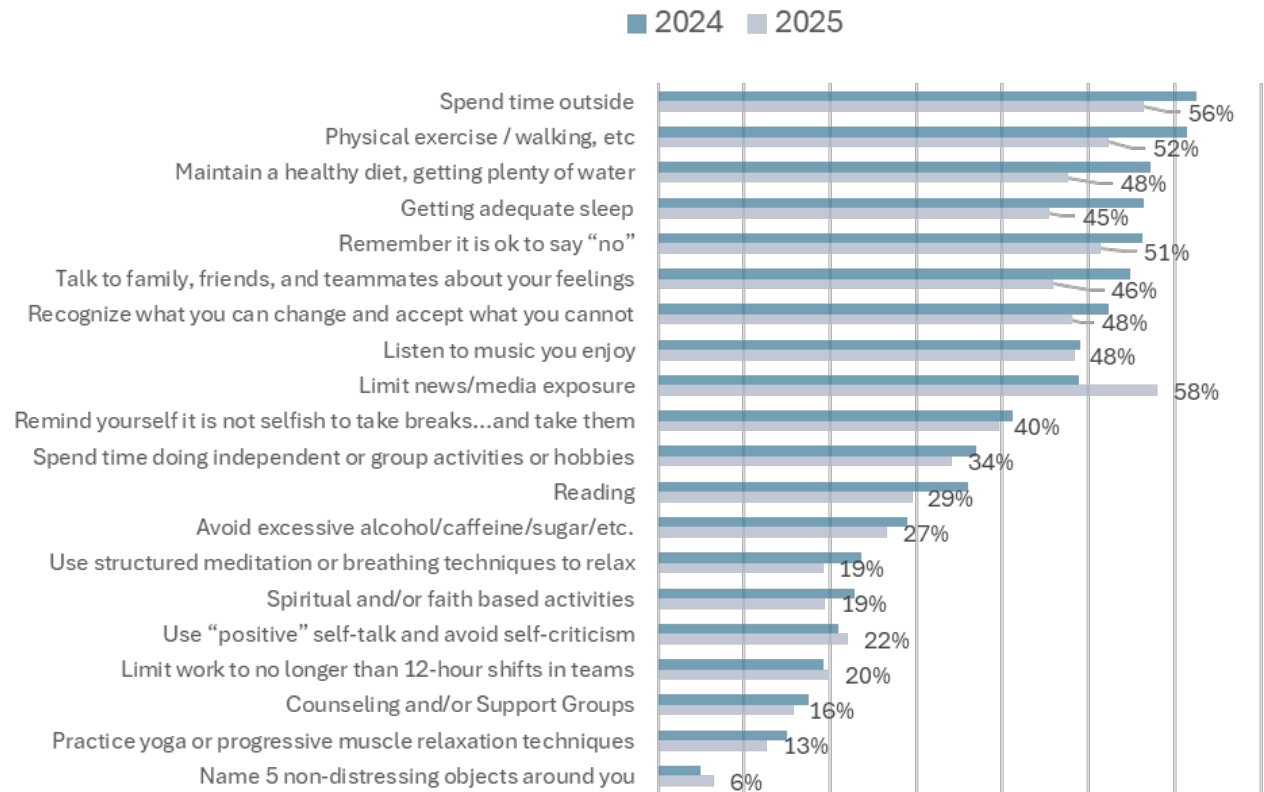
Survey Results



Q12: Prescribe Protection. What you can do, think, and avoid to help you stay fit for duty.

Check all that apply.

- A number of traditional behaviors such as spending time outdoors and physical activity have decreased as responses
- Percent of responders who indicated limiting news and media exposure has increased



Survey Results



Q13: What areas do you feel would be most beneficial for workforce development to build stress management skills and support overall responder safety and health?

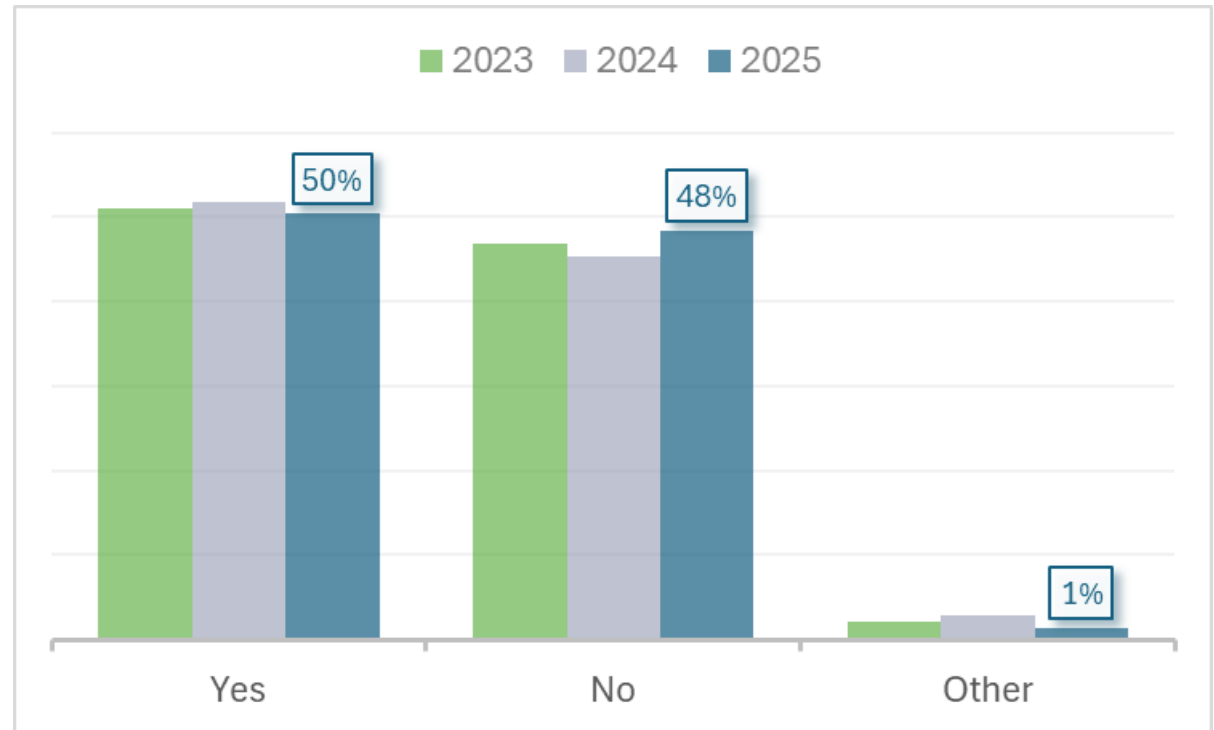
- With a few small exceptions, areas of workforce development were similar to last year
- Areas with additional weight included:
 - Walk, Hike Skip, Run to Better Health
 - Exploring Different Ways to Connect.
 - Understanding Spiritual Care



Survey Results

Q14: Respondents were asked if they had participated in any educational or supportive programs or training offered by their employer or volunteer organization in the last year?

- The percent of responders who participated in training over the previous year has remained stable at about 50% over the past three years.

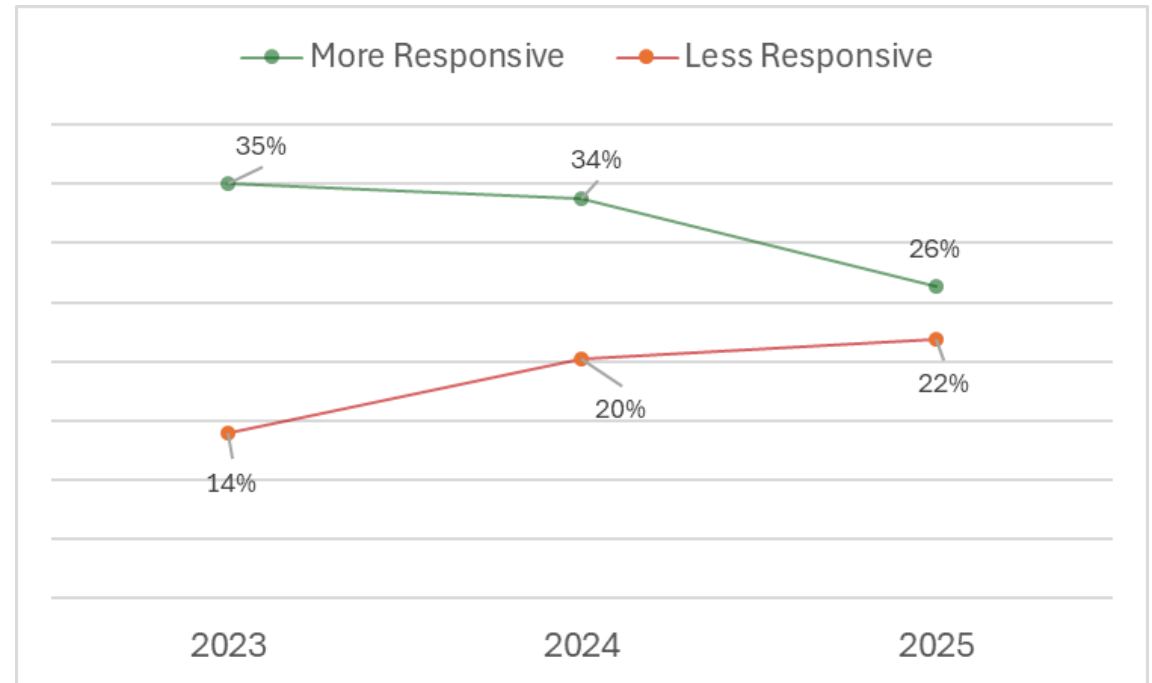


Survey Results



Q15: Respondents were asked if they felt their employer or volunteer organization has been responsive to stress management and resiliency efforts over the past 12 months?

- Over the past three years the percent of employers who are rated as “more responsive” decreased from 35% to 34% to 26%.
- Over the past three years the percent of employers who are rated as “less response” increased from 14% to 20% to 22%.



Data collected will be used for quantifiable information. No individual names, comments or other identifying information will be included in the final reporting. This survey will help quantify and qualify the potential exposure to traumatic events that responders may have experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and the years the follow, identify methods to manage stress, and develop individual coping strategies. The survey results will inform the Maine CDC's Disaster Behavioral Health (DBH) program on future planning efforts, training needs, and resource-sharing initiatives to support responder safety and health.

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

<https://mainedisasterbehavioralhealth.com/>

“Other” Response Detail

Q3 Highest earned educational degree:

Trade School and Military School

Q4 Professional Discipline / Certification or Licensure:

Other Care/Therapy, Communications, Trades, Laboratory, Finance, Administration/Management, Analyst, Engineering, Veterinary, Preparedness/Safety

Q5 Primary Work Setting:

Other Care/Therapy, Communications, Trades, Laboratory, Finance, Administration/Management, Preparedness/Safety, Other Healthcare/Therapy

Q6 Exposure Elements associated with 2025 work environment or volunteer deployment:

N/A , Retired, public scrutiny, trouble accessing support services, health insurance, access to training, stressed colleagues, trouble with management/leadership, unsafe working conditions, compensation, lack of honesty/morals, threats, technology, moral injury, administrative priorities, policy/legislation impacting work, cost of living

Q7 Triggers:

Compensating for inadequate/unqualified peers/staffing, understaffed, insufficient breaks, workspace challenges, working suicide attempts, childcare, work/life balance, political climate, health insurance challenges, vicarious trauma, compensation, feeling disrespected by peers/management

Q8 Stress Symptoms associated with 2025 work environment or volunteer deployment:

N/A, political climate, financial/cost of living stressors, job security, unsafe staffing, work/life balance, trouble sleeping, mental fatigue/anxiousness, feeling undervalued by employer, suicidal ideation, workplace maintenance shortcomings, taking time for self-care not being supported by management, inconsistent management perspectives, personal life hardships

Q9 Increase or decrease in stress symptoms in 2025, compared to 2024:

New or different position in 2024, a mixture of both, personal life / health stressors impacting work

Q10 Describe your work stress levels during 2024:

New or different position in 2024, a mixture of both, personal life / health stressors impacting work, N/A/retired

Q11 Describe your work stress levels during 2025:

Approaching unmanageable, a mixture of both, personal life factors make work stress levels less manageable, political climate making work stress less manageable, N/A retired

Q12 Prescription for protection elements:

All of the above, art, gardening, acceptance, isolation and silence, political activism, support groups / therapy, working remotely, eliminate the “news”, prioritize self-care, time with pets, time with family, extra rest, travel, N/A

Q13 Topics beneficial for workforce development to build stress management skills and support overall responder safety and health:

Peer to peer connections, mental health first aid, improved work conditions, respectful administration, honest conversations, systemic change, not putting the onus of burn-out on individuals by drilling care practices into them, increased pay, hiring qualified candidates, leadership skills development, coaching/mentoring training, improvements to facilities, boundaries between home and work lives, building exercise into a workday, systemic betrayal and disaster response, increased preparedness

Q14: Participation in any educational or supportive programs or training offered by their employer or volunteer organization in the last year:

Other can be summed up as: nothing offered, no time allotted for this, N/A, retired