

Staff Health and Well-Being during Emergencies and Disasters:

Lessons Learned during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Topic

Emergency Preparedness

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graph TD; A[Emergency Preparedness] --> B[Human Resource Considerations]; B --> C[Staff Health and Well-Being]; C --> D[Lessons Learned from COVID-19]
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Human Resource Considerations

Staff Health and Well-Being

Lessons Learned from COVID-19

To Do List

①

②

③

Learn



Learning Objectives

- Describe best practice for human resources during emergencies and disasters.
- Explain how best practices for human resources are applied to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Evaluate current organizational human resource policies around emergencies and disasters, including the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Design surveys to assess staff health and well-being during business disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background



- Best practice = written human resource (HR) disaster procedures and policies
- FEMA recommends business continuity planning include HR considerations, such as:
 - Pay
 - Benefits
 - Employee schedules
 - Leave and time off
 - Employee assistance
- Employees around the world were impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Organizations should be working on policy related to staff health and well-being during disasters

Methodology



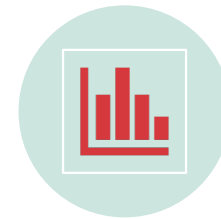
A literature review was conducted using peer-reviewed research in the fields of HR and emergency management.



Eleven relevant articles were reviewed, seven were used to create a HR considerations document.



Research used to create surveys for organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic, evaluating the health and well-being of staff.



Data analyses conducted from staff survey responses.

Human Resource Considerations

Organized by category:

- Physical safety or health
- Psychological well-being
- Communication
- Support services
- Logistics
- Benefits

Consider timing:

- Before, during, after an emergency or disaster
- Phase of response:
 - Preparedness
 - Response
 - Recovery
 - Reconstitution

Human Resource Considerations

Ensuring Safety and Well-being Accounting for Staff:

- First and foremost task of organizations
- Preliminary check, as soon as possible
- All staff (scheduled to work or out on leave)
- More detailed assessments after preliminary check
- Check on safety & well-being of significant others
- Continue checks on staff during prolonged events

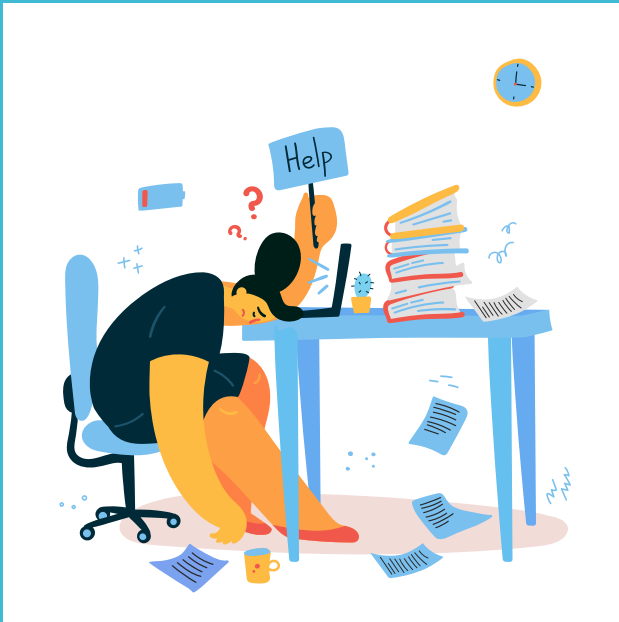


Staff Surveys



- Survey Monkey
- 250 responses, two organizations
- Questions organized by five critical business assets:
 - Staff
 - Supplies and Equipment
 - Space (Facilities)
 - Systems
 - Communications
- Multiple question/answer formats
 - Likert scale
 - Ranking
 - Multiple choice
 - Open-ended, free text

Staff Surveys



**Are any of these factors affecting your ability to work remotely?
(mark all the apply)**

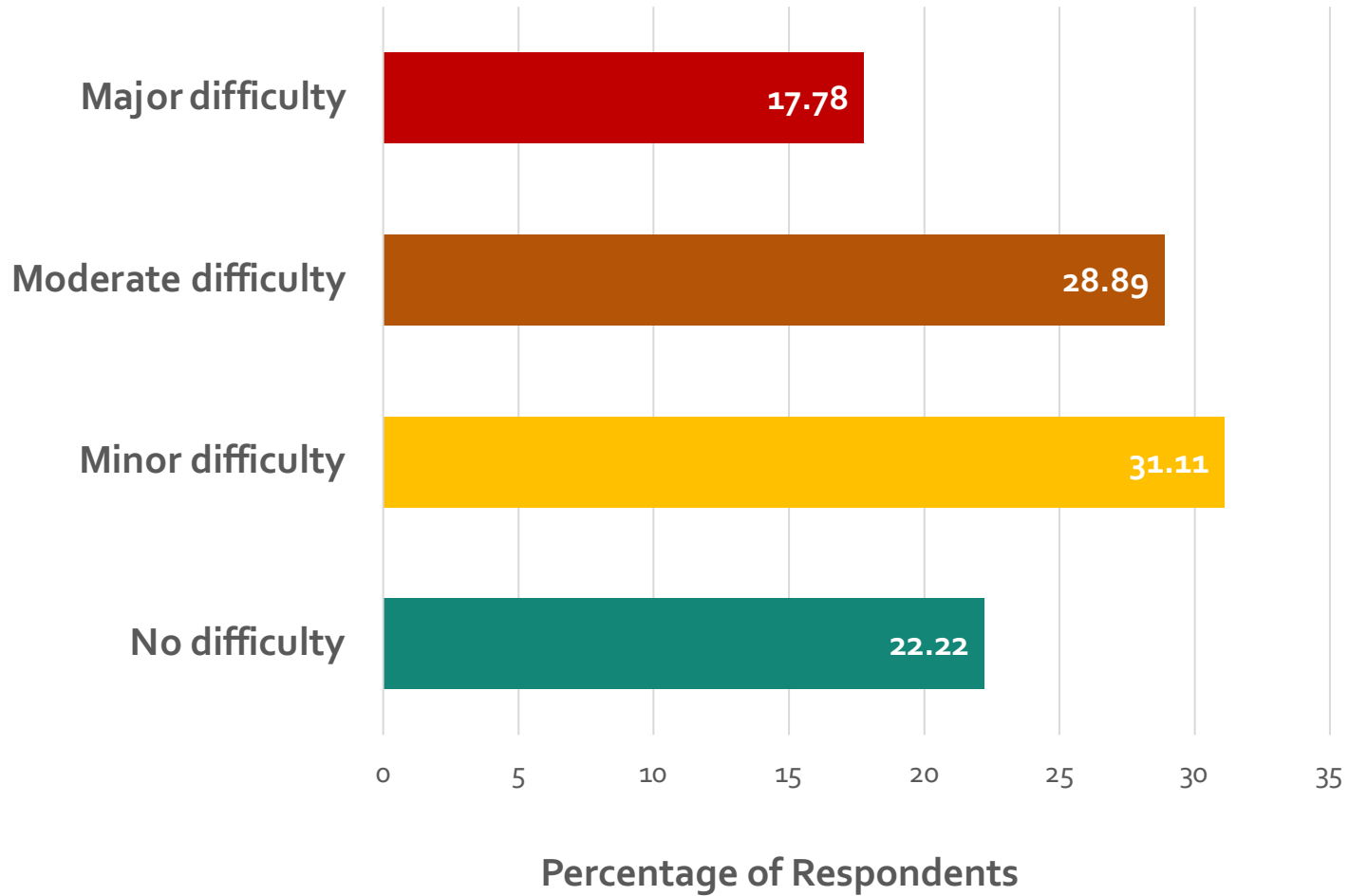
- Having to simultaneously manage home and work responsibilities
- Concern for personal and family health and well-being
- Childcare issues
- Technical difficulties
- Unable to access team members when needed
- Other [*OPEN-ENDED*]

Personally, how difficult has it been for you to work during the pandemic?

- No difficulty
- Minor difficulty
- Moderate difficulty
- Major difficulty

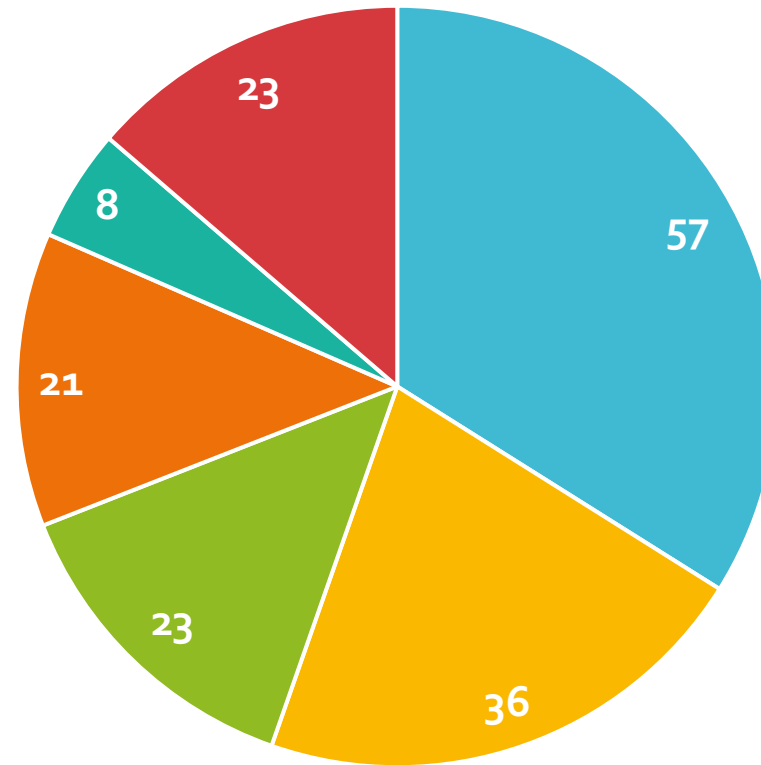
How would you rate your overall well-being and health during the pandemic?

- Very good
- Good
- Acceptable
- Poor
- Very poor
- Prefer not to answer

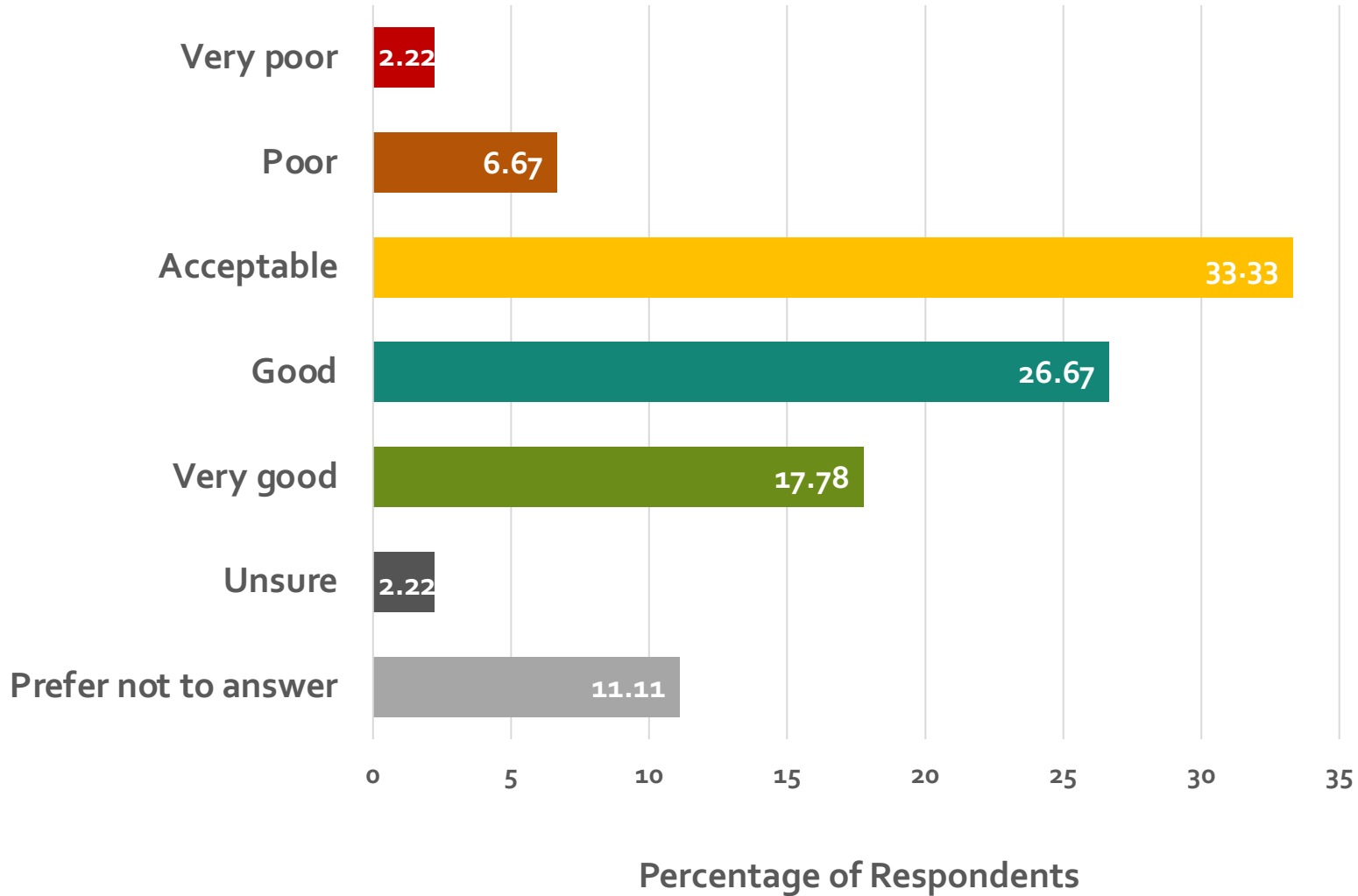


Difficulty
Working
during the
Pandemic

Factors Affecting Ability to Work Remotely

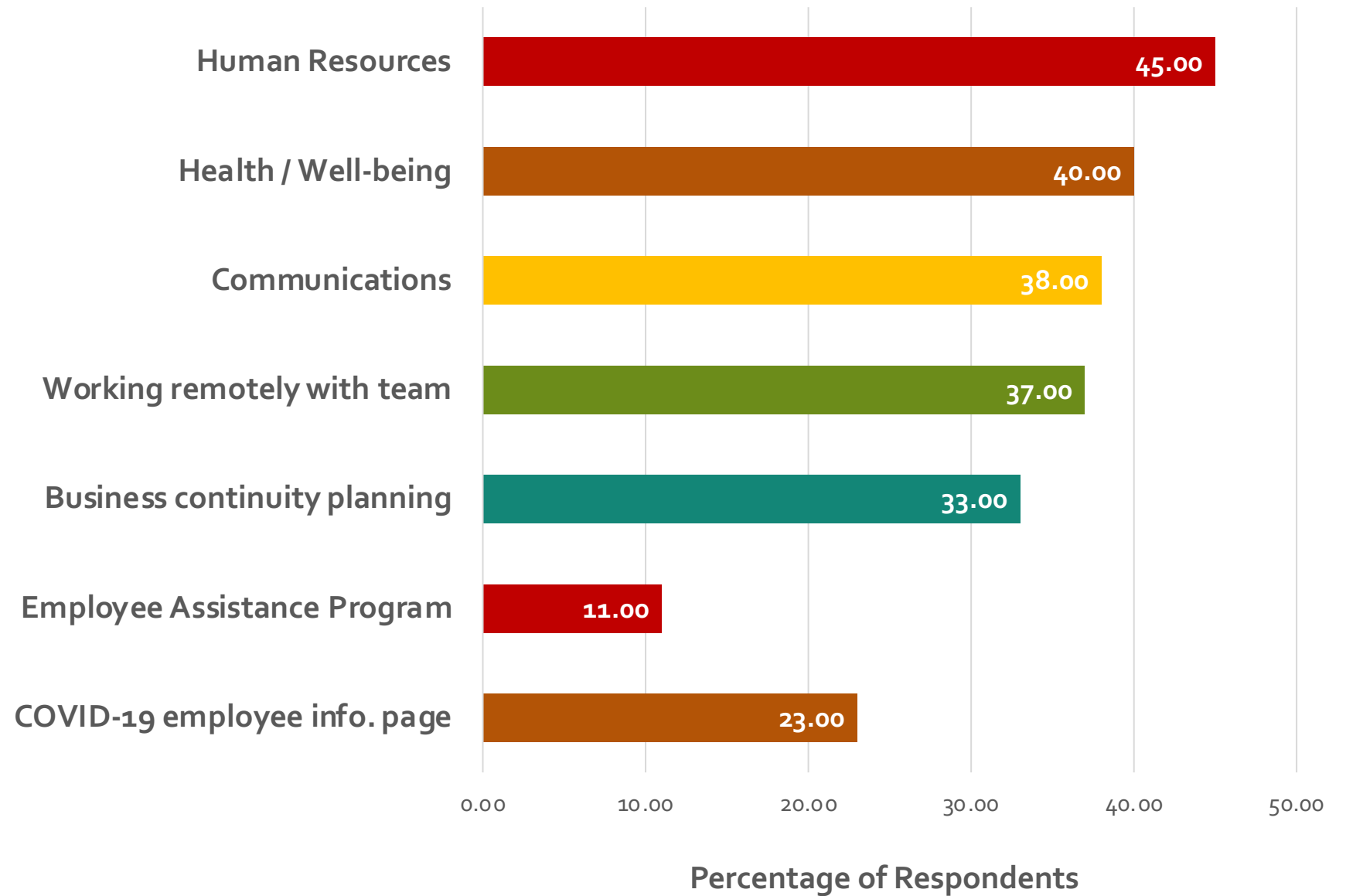


- Simultaneously manage home and work responsibilities
- Concern for personal and family health and well-being
- Childcare issues
- Technical difficulties
- Unable to access team members when needed
- Other

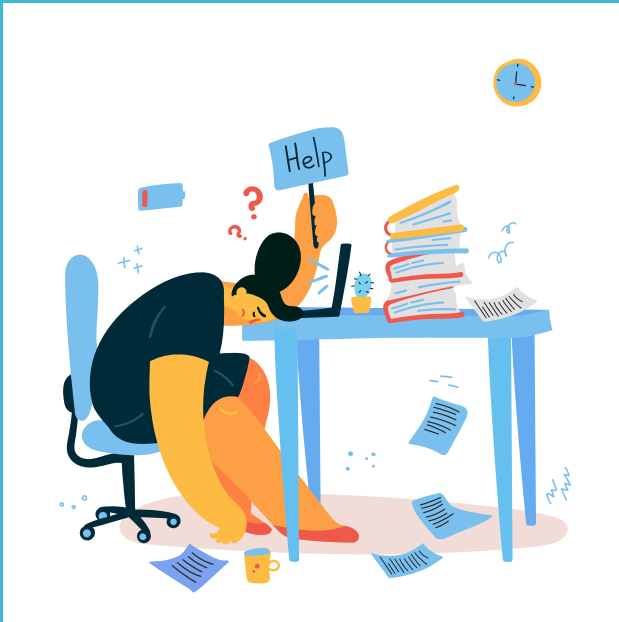


Rate your
Overall Health
and Well-being

Resources Accessed to Cope with COVID-19



Staff Surveys



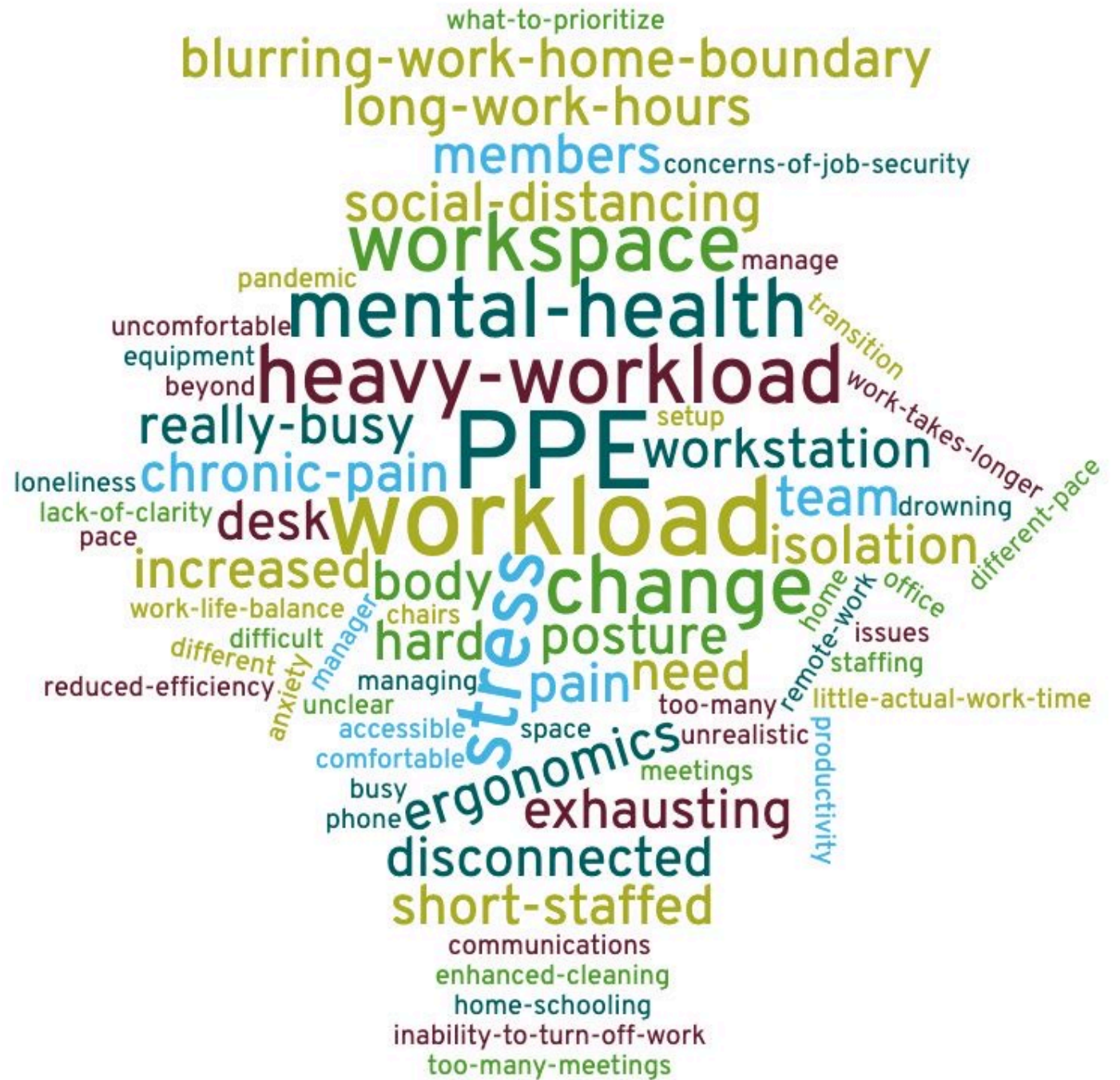
If you have experienced any difficulties, please describe
[OPEN-ENDED]

If you have experienced challenges with your overall well-being and health during the pandemic, please describe
[OPEN-ENDED]

Are any of these factors affecting your ability to work remotely – Other [FREE TEXT BOX]

- 17% of respondents chose to answer "Other"
 - 52% related to mental health, difficulty with work-life balance, concern over job security
 - 29% related to heavy workload, long hours, reduced productivity
 - 23% related to equipment, ergonomics, poor workspace at home

Qualitative Data





Outcome

- Two different Oregon-based organizations used the COVID-19 survey to assess staff during the pandemic.
- A total of 250 responses were collected.
- 53% of respondents reported moderate to major difficulty at work during the pandemic.
- Approximately 10% of respondents reported very poor and poor health and well-being.
- Concern for personal and family health and well-being affected the work of 36% of respondents.
- Organizations had the opportunity to adjust support services and resources offered and refine messaging to staff.

Implications

- It is critical for organizational leaders and managers to incorporate disaster considerations into organizational policy.
- Be forward-thinking when it comes to supporting staff, one of the most critical organizational assets.
- More research is needed on staff health and well-being during long term disruptions.



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