



WORKFORCE MENTAL HEALTH REPORT

A New Look at How Global Employees Use Mental Health Support

New data reveal the mental health care experiences and perspectives of 2,000 full-time employees who have used therapy. Respondents located across four countries reported on seeking support for everyday stress, workplace stress, and AI-related change.



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Executive Summary

Therapy has become a more accepted part of how people care for their mental health. Employees are talking about it more openly, seeking help, and largely finding that help valuable. **That growing acceptance has also changed how people use therapy.**

Therapy has increasingly become **the catch-all mental health care option**, not just for clinical care but for everyday stress.

To understand what that shift looks like—and what it could mean for employers—Modern Health surveyed 2,000 full-time employees at organizations with teams of 250 or more across the U.S., UK, Mexico, and Singapore, all of whom have used or are currently using therapy.

Their responses affirm therapy's value while revealing a more complicated picture of how it's being used.

A majority of employees describe care that felt more intensive than they needed or uncertainty about what should happen after they began to improve and meet their goals. Many see a role for coaching in addressing concerns they've previously brought to therapy.

Work is part of the picture, too.

Employees are seeking support for workplace stress, and more than one-third say they've sought professional support instead of speaking with their manager or HR. AI-related uncertainty is entering care as well. And across countries, employees differ in why they seek therapy and the role professional care plays in their lives.

For employers, the findings raise a broader question about what happens when therapy becomes the default path into mental health support.

In a time where health care costs are expected to rise 9.2% in 2027, it's worth recognizing that 60% of respondents said they've experienced therapy that felt more intensive than they needed.

For benefits leaders, the findings put greater focus on matching mental health investment to employees' needs.



PART ONE

The Workforce Shifts

Four shifts shaping workforce mental health

01

Everyday stress is increasingly finding its way into therapy

The employees in this research have experienced therapy firsthand, and overwhelmingly, they value it. 88% say therapy met their needs, and 86% report having a clear treatment plan that helped them identify goals and measure progress.



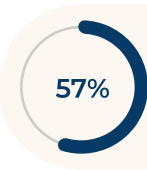
Their views on therapy's expanding role are more complicated

78% believe normal workplace frustrations are increasingly being treated as mental health issues, and 76% say everyday stress is being treated as a medical problem requiring professional treatment. 76% also report that therapy has become a default solution for problems previous generations handled through friends, family, faith, or community.

60%

report believing that society has become overly reliant on therapy as the answer to every kind of stress.

Respondents' own experiences add another dimension.

57%

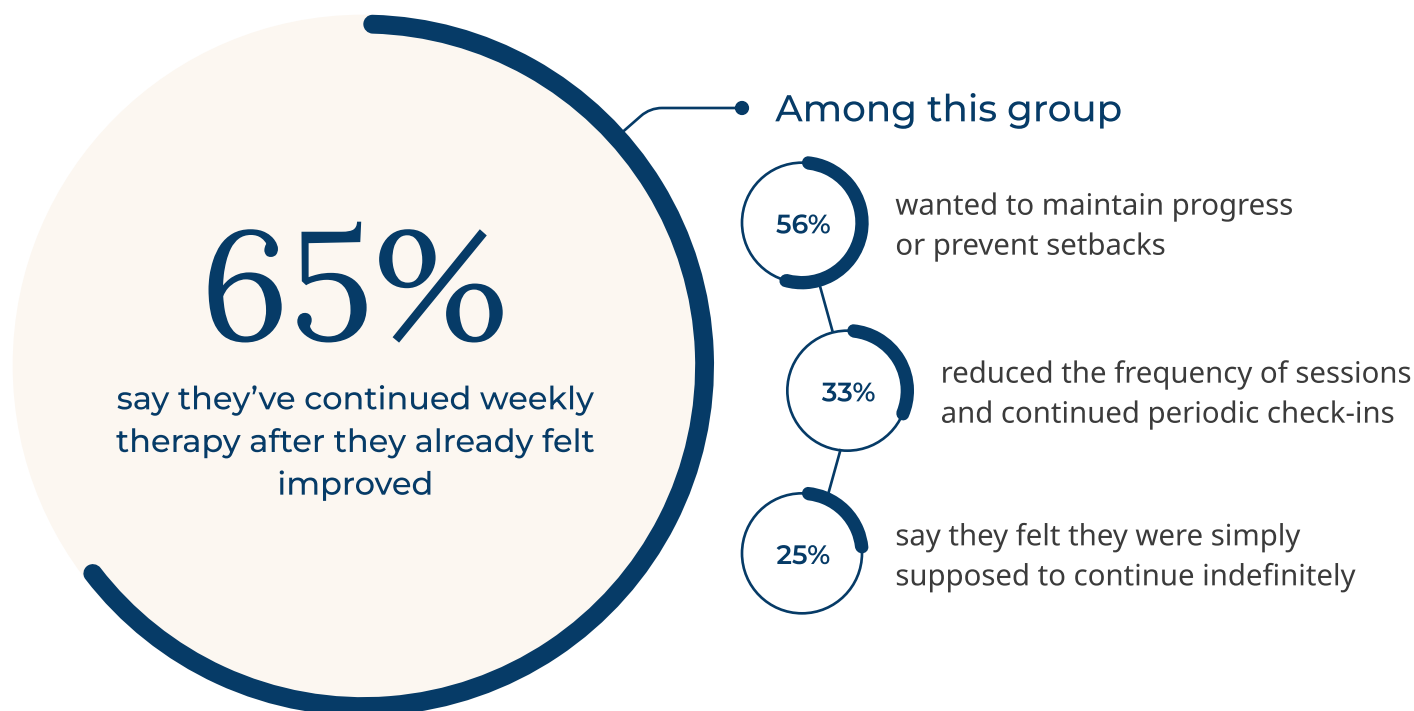
say there's been a time when they felt pressured to seek therapy even when they weren't sure they needed it.

60%

say they've experienced therapy that felt more intensive than what they needed when they simply wanted someone to talk to about stress.

Together, the findings point to an expanding role for therapy. Employees value it highly, while many also believe professional care is increasingly being used for everyday stress and normal workplace frustrations.

Improvement doesn't always come with a clear next step in care



Other findings suggest that employees don't always have a clear path forward. 58% say they've continued therapy after meeting their intended goals because they were anxious about losing support.

37% of respondents say they've exaggerated or embellished symptoms or stress to justify continuing sessions or make an appointment feel "worth it."

This data points to the importance of helping employees understand what progress looks like and how care can change as their needs change. Benefits that use measurable outcomes to guide care can help employees and care providers make informed decisions about whether to continue therapy, reduce its frequency, or transition to another form of support.

Matching support to need benefits employees and employers

The clearest direction comes from what employees say they want:

95% agree everyone should have access to the right support, which may or may not include therapy,

and **93%** would rather their employer invest in support that helps prevent burnout before it starts.

For benefits leaders, that means giving employees different ways to engage with effective support and enough guidance to find an appropriate starting point. Employees shouldn't have to determine the type or intensity of care they need before they ask for help.

That guidance matters throughout the care journey. Goals and outcomes can help inform when therapy remains appropriate, when its frequency can change, and when another form of support may better fit an employees' needs. For employers, that also helps direct mental health investment toward care appropriate to the person and the moment.



Decades of research show that therapy is effective for improving mental health. But it can't be the answer to every type of stress or a substitute for meaningful relationships and other healthy ways of coping. A strong mental health system also gives people options as their needs change, so they can find support that fits where they are."

Dr. Jessica Watrous

Chief Clinical Officer, Modern Health

What to look at in your organization

Look beyond which forms of support are available to how employees are guided to use them. How does the benefit determine an appropriate starting point rather than defaulting employees to one type of care? What evidence shows that different forms of support are effective and meeting employees' needs? And how does that guidance change as employees make progress or their needs change?

Question to take back to your organization:

How well does your mental health benefit guide employees to the type of support that fits their needs?

02 Workplace stress is following employees into care

For many employees, workplace stress extends beyond the workday and into the support they seek. 51% of respondents report seeking therapy or coaching in connection with workplace stress. More than one-third (35%) say they've sought professional support for workplace stress instead of speaking with their manager or HR.

Their reasons show why confidential support serves a different role from workplace support.

Why employees sought professional support instead of speaking with a manager or HR



Employees have good reasons to take some concerns outside the workplace. A manager doesn't replace a therapist or coach, and employees may reasonably prefer confidential support for personal or emotional concerns.

But employees also point to sources of stress embedded in the work itself.

OF EMPLOYEES WHO SOUGHT THERAPY OR COACHING FOR WORKPLACE STRESS

51% say all or most of that stress could have been addressed through better management, clearer communication, reasonable workloads, or better leadership.

That finding draws an important boundary around what mental health benefits can accomplish.

Organizations

have influence over many of the conditions employees say contributed to that stress in the first place, including workload, communication, leadership, and how work is designed.

Therapy and coaching

can give employees confidential places to process difficult experiences, develop skills, and manage stress.

For HR and benefits leaders, that makes workplace stress useful to examine across data sources. Similar patterns in employee listening, absence and turnover, engagement data, manager feedback, and reasons for seeking mental health support can help identify where individual support and changes to the employee experience may need to work together.

What to look at in your organization

Look for places where mental health and workplace signals converge. Are the same teams, moments, or working conditions surfacing across employee listening, absence and turnover, engagement data, manager feedback, and benefit utilization?

Question to take back to your organization:

How well does your mental health benefit equip managers to recognize strain, respond effectively, and connect employees with appropriate resources?

Go deeper



[Why psychosocial risk is rising on the HR agenda](#)



[Nine opportunities to highlight mental health benefits in the employee lifecycle](#)

03

AI anxiety is already showing up in mental health care

AI is changing employees' experience of work now. Roles are evolving, skill expectations are shifting, and employees are trying to understand what new technology will mean for their jobs and careers.

For a substantial share of employees, that uncertainty has become part of their mental health experience.

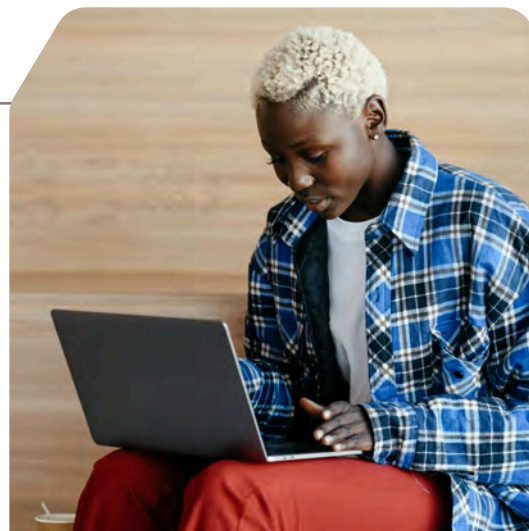
43%

say anxiety about AI replacing their job or changing their role contributed to their need for therapy or coaching.

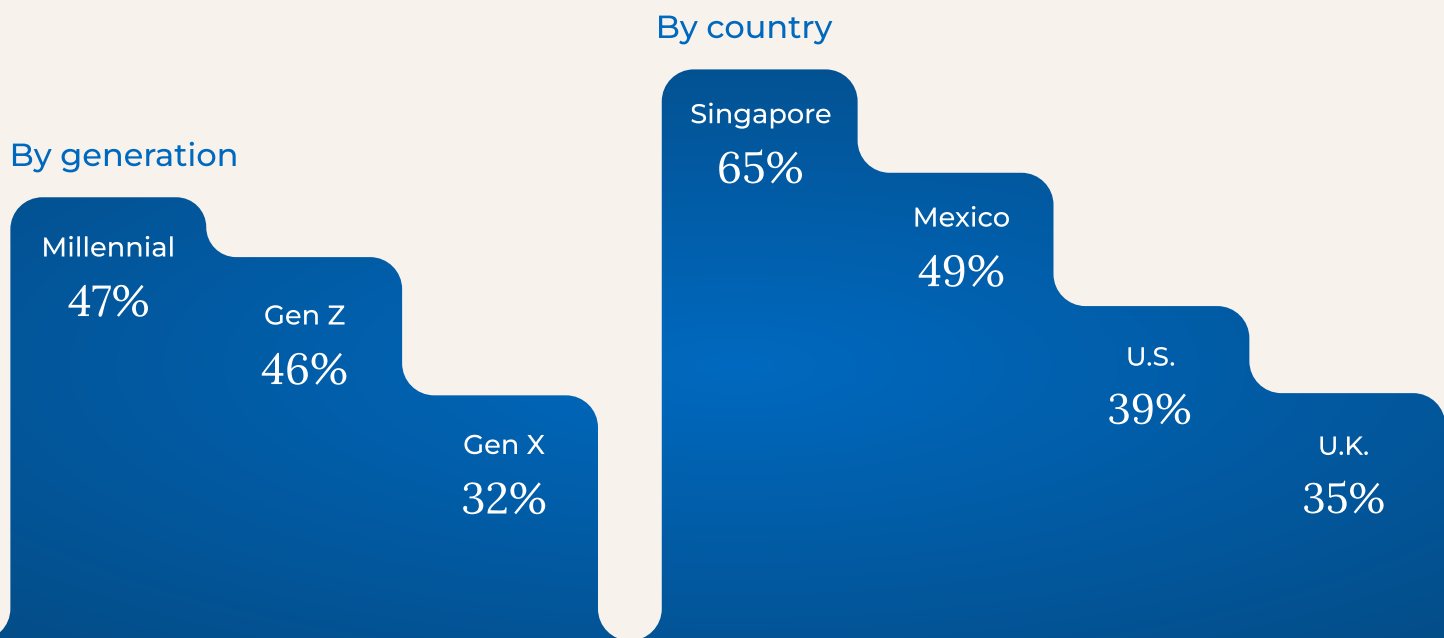


AI anxiety is especially pronounced among younger employees and in some markets

The global figure masks considerable variation.



Employees who say AI anxiety contributed to their need for therapy or coaching:



These differences give global employers a reason to look beyond a single workforce-wide view of AI transformation. Employees in different markets and career stages may be experiencing the same organizational changes very differently.

Singapore country-level margin of error: ±7 percentage points.

The employee experience of AI extends beyond the technology itself

For HR and benefits leaders, AI transformation has become part of the workforce mental health landscape. As employees navigate changing roles, new skill requirements, performance expectations, and questions about their future, some are bringing the resulting anxiety into mental health care.

Organizations have meaningful influence over some of that experience. Clear communication about what's known, what's still being decided, how roles are evolving, and where employees can build new skills gives people more concrete information to work with. Managers can help translate broader organizational decisions into what they mean for a particular team or role.

Employees may still have uncertainty, fear, or difficult career decisions to work through. Mental health support gives them a confidential place to do that.



AI-related change can create real uncertainty for employees, especially when they're trying to understand what it means for their role and future. Clear communication, enablement, opportunities to build new skills, and mental health support each address a different part of that experience.”



Alison Borland

Chief People & Strategy Officer, Modern Health

Employees still place a high value on human care

Even as AI becomes more embedded in work and daily life, employees remain cautious about its role in mental health care.

Among all respondents,



68%

say they probably or definitely wouldn't trust AI to replace a therapist.

In the U.S. and UK, that rises to **72%**.

Employees also see technology influencing how people interpret their own mental health.

88%

believe social media and AI together have contributed to more self-diagnosis of mental health conditions.

For employers evaluating AI-enabled mental health tools, those findings add another consideration alongside access, quality, privacy, and clinical standards: how employees themselves view the role of AI in care.

What to look at in your organization

Consider the employee experience alongside the operational plan for AI adoption. How clearly do employees understand what changes mean for their roles? Do managers have enough information to answer practical questions? Are employees being supported as they build new skills? And where can they turn when their concerns become more personal?

Question to take back to your organization:

As AI changes how work gets done, how is your organization addressing the uncertainty employees are experiencing alongside it?

Go deeper



[Review a framework for managing AI anxiety across your workforce](#)

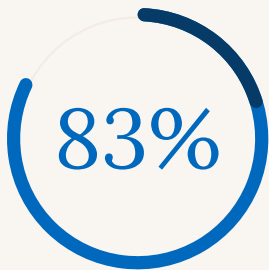


[Understand the role of managers as multipliers of organizational resilience](#)

04

Employees see a role for coaching in everyday needs

Everyday stress, work-related stress, work-life balance, confidence, habits, and accountability are among the concerns employees say they'd bring to a coach. They're also similar to some of the experiences respondents describe bringing into therapy.



believe at least some of what they've brought to therapy could have been effectively addressed through coaching, including **21% who say most of it** could have been.

Employees are interested in coaching. Many still don't understand it.

Access remains relatively limited: 43% of respondents report having employer-provided coaching.

Among respondents without access

83%

say they'd be very or somewhat likely to use coaching **if it were offered.**

The reasons they'd use it center largely on everyday challenges:



Employees also see value in having multiple forms of support available

87%

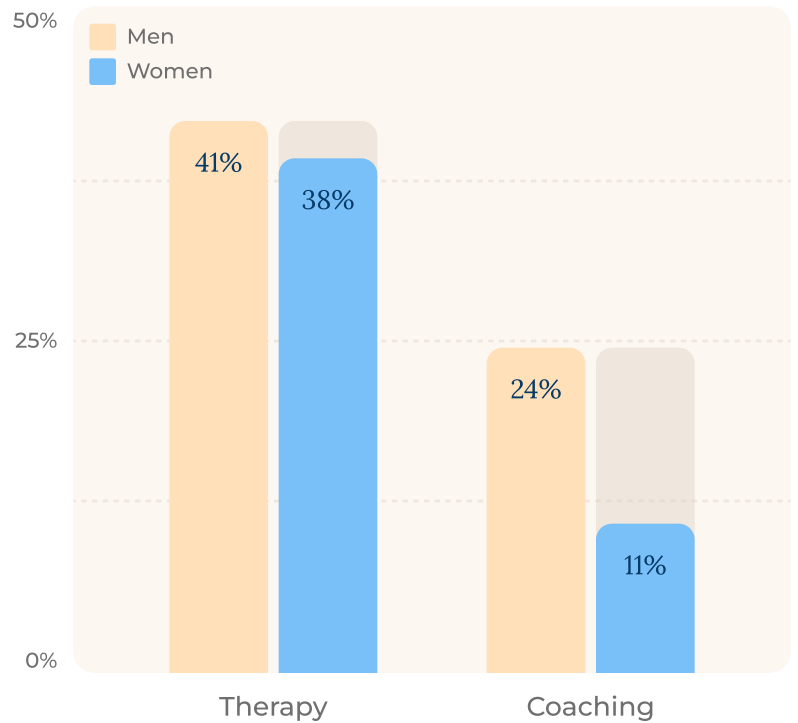
say access to both therapy and coaching would be helpful.

Understanding may be one barrier to making use of that choice. **90% say a lack of understanding about coaching may keep people from using it.** Perceptions of coaching also vary: 38% associate it primarily with executives and wealthy people, and 74% associate coaching with high achievers.

For benefits leaders, access is only part of the equation. Employees also need a clear sense of what coaching is, what they might use it for, and how it fits alongside therapy and other forms of support.

Coaching may offer another way into support

The findings on stigma make that choice especially relevant. Men and women in the survey report relatively similar rates of current therapy use, but their reported use of coaching differs considerably.



One-third of men say stigma or embarrassment has stopped them from getting therapy when they wanted it.

Across respondents, 87% say some people experience less stigma using a coach, and 92% believe coaching could make people more comfortable trying therapy later.

ACROSS RESPONDENTS:

82%

say coaching feels more approachable than therapy

Several factors may contribute to men's higher coaching use, but the findings on stigma add useful context. Offering different ways to engage may help reach employees who might otherwise hesitate to seek therapy.

Coaching can broaden opportunities to engage

Employees don't have to be in crisis—or know that they want therapy—to benefit from mental health support. Everyday stress, work-life strain, confidence, habits, and difficult moments at work can all be meaningful reasons to engage.

Coaching provides an evidence-based way to support employees with everyday stress and other personal and workplace challenges. In [a peer-reviewed study](#) of working adults who primarily used coaching through Modern Health, participants completed an average of 2.5 coaching sessions over three months. Over that period, average depression symptoms decreased by 22.5% and anxiety symptoms by 12%, alongside improvements in perceived stress, self-compassion, distress tolerance, and mindfulness.

For benefits leaders, the broader opportunity is to make mental health support relevant across a wider range of moments—and help employees understand which resources may be useful for what they're experiencing.



Coaching can be one effective pathway within a broader system that matches support to the person. Employees at different levels of need deserve meaningful ways to engage with their mental health benefit.”

Dr. Jessica Watrous

Chief Clinical Officer, Modern Health

What to look at in your organization

Consider how coaching is presented within the broader mental health benefit. Would an employee dealing with everyday stress, work-life strain, confidence, or a difficult transition recognize coaching as an option? Is it clear what coaching is designed to help with and how an employee can access it?

Question to take back to your organization:

Does your mental health benefit give employees clear, credible ways to get support for everyday challenges before those challenges become more difficult to manage?

Go deeper



[See how coaching delivers measurable mental health and resilience gains](#)



PART TWO

The Global View

The same mental health strategy
can feel different across markets

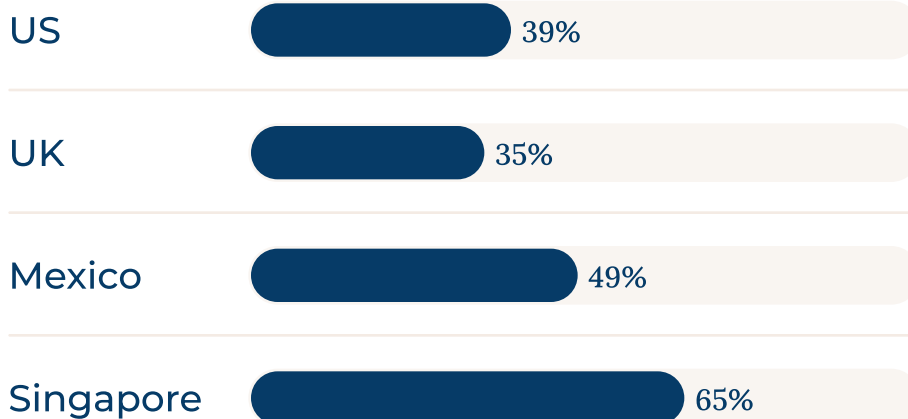


Global employers often aim for consistency in mental health benefits.

Employees experience those benefits within different local contexts. The country findings show meaningful differences in why employees seek therapy, who they rely on for emotional support, the barriers they encounter, and how workplace stress and AI-related uncertainty are showing up in care.

For global benefits leaders, these patterns are signals to investigate within their own workforce. They can help identify where a consistent global strategy may require different communication, navigation, or support at the local level.

AI anxiety contributed to need for support



Leading reason for therapy

Everyday stress	47%
Someone to talk to	39%
Family/relationship support	47%
Work skill-building	43%

United States:

Everyday stress is the leading reason for therapy

Among U.S. respondents, **47% cite everyday stress as a reason they sought therapy**, making it the most commonly reported reason. Once employees decide they want help, cost is the leading barrier, followed by difficulty finding the right therapist and uncertainty about whether therapy will address what they need.

The findings put affordability, fit, and navigation together in the employee experience. AI-related uncertainty is also entering care: 39% say anxiety about AI replacing their job or changing their role contributed to their need for therapy or coaching. At the same time, 72% say they probably or definitely wouldn't trust AI to replace a therapist.

What global benefits teams should consider:

Where do U.S. employees encounter the most friction between deciding they want support and finding support that works for them?

United Kingdom:

Waiting for care shapes the access experience

UK respondents **most commonly sought therapy because they wanted someone to talk to, cited by 39%**. Long waits also emerge as a prominent barrier.

For employees who have already decided to seek help, the time between asking for support and receiving it becomes an important part of the benefit experience. Employers can examine what resources are available during that period and whether employees receive guidance toward other appropriate forms of support.

AI-related anxiety contributed to the need for therapy or coaching for 35% of UK respondents, while 72% say they probably or definitely wouldn't trust AI to replace a therapist.

What global benefits teams should consider:

How does your mental health benefit support UK employees while they're waiting for or navigating care through the NHS?

Mexico:

Professional care plays a larger role in emotional support

The role of professional care stands out among respondents in Mexico.

51%

say they rely primarily on a therapist for emotional support,

compared with 15% in the U.S., 17% in the UK, and 13% in Singapore.

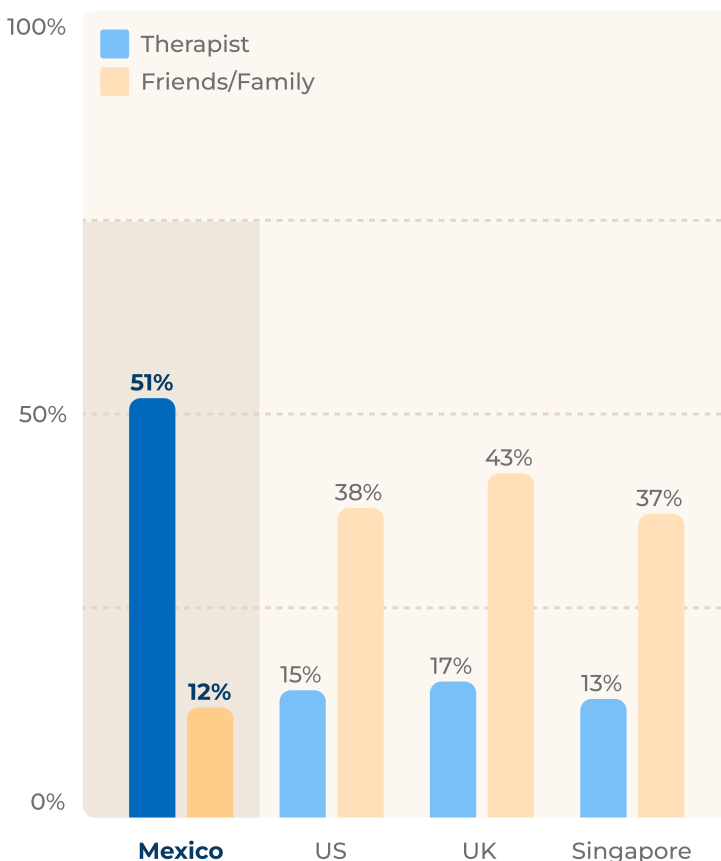
Friends and family are much less often the primary source of emotional support among Mexico respondents: 12% rely primarily on them, compared with 38% in the U.S., 43% in the UK, and 37% in Singapore.

That pattern is particularly notable alongside why Mexico-based respondents seek therapy: family and relationship support is the leading reason, cited by 47%. AI-related uncertainty contributed to the need for therapy or coaching for 49%.

Respondents in Mexico also express some of the strongest views about therapy's expanding role.

- 91% say everyday stress is increasingly treated as a medical problem requiring professional treatment
- 87% say therapy has become a default for problems previous generations handled through friends, family, faith, or community
- 86% say normal workplace frustrations are increasingly treated as mental health issues requiring professional therapy

These findings make Mexico particularly important for benefits teams to examine through their own employee data. The survey shows a distinctive relationship with professional support, without telling us what accounts for those differences.



What global benefits teams should consider:

How are employees in Mexico using and navigating mental health support—and does that match the assumptions built into your global strategy?

Singapore

Workplace change is showing up strongly in care

Work plays a prominent role in why Singapore respondents seek support. **43% sought therapy for work-related skill building**, while the same share cited managing difficult workplace situations and colleagues.

AI-related uncertainty stands out even more:

65%

say anxiety about AI replacing their job or changing their role contributed to their need for therapy or coaching, the highest share among the four countries surveyed.

Singapore respondents also report notable experiences with the intensity and duration of therapy. 76% say they've experienced therapy that felt more intensive than what they needed, and 73% say they've continued weekly therapy after they already felt improved.

These findings give global employers several signals to examine together as AI adoption and other workplace changes accelerate.

Country-level findings for Singapore have a margin of error of ± 7 percentage points.



What global benefits teams should consider:

What mix of therapy, coaching, and other support would help meet employees' needs in Singapore—and how easily can they adjust that support as their needs change?

A global standard informed by local experience

A global mental health strategy creates a shared standard for what employees can expect from their benefit. These findings show where local workforce data can sharpen how that standard is delivered.

Employees across the four countries differ in why they seek support, the barriers they encounter, the role therapy plays in their lives, and the workplace pressures entering care. Benefits teams can use those differences to examine where communication, navigation, local resources, or workforce support may need to respond differently.

The goal is consistency in the areas where consistency protects the employee experience—such as quality, clinical standards, trusted access, and measurement—alongside enough local insight to understand how employees are experiencing and using that support.



Question to take back to your organization:

Where are global averages hiding meaningful differences in how employees seek, experience, and use mental health support?

Go deeper

- [How to consolidate global EAP services without losing what works](#)
- [Explore peer-reviewed mental health outcomes across the globe](#)



PART THREE

The Employer Implications

What the findings mean for employers



Employers are evaluating mental health benefits against sustained pressure on health care costs. WTW projects global medical costs to rise 10.3% in 2026, with double-digit increases expected in Asia Pacific and Latin America. In the U.S., employers are already projecting another 9.2% median increase in health care costs for 2027 before plan design changes.

That cost environment puts greater scrutiny on how health care dollars are being used. The findings in this report give benefits leaders another dimension to examine: how well mental health spending aligns with the type and intensity of support employees need.

Across the survey, employees describe bringing everyday stress and workplace frustrations into therapy, experiencing therapy that felt more intensive than they needed, and continuing weekly sessions after they felt improved. For employers, those experiences raise a financial question alongside a care question: How much of their mental health investment is going toward a level of care employees themselves say exceeded what they needed, and how effectively does the benefit guide employees toward appropriate support as their needs change?

Five questions to bring back to your mental health strategy

01

How does your benefit guide employees to an appropriate starting point?

Look beyond which forms of support are available. Consider how employees are guided among therapy, coaching, and other resources based on what they're experiencing rather than being expected to determine the right type or intensity of support themselves.

02

Are employees using the full range of support available to them?

Having multiple options only helps if employees understand what they're for and are guided toward them appropriately. Look at how employees use therapy, coaching, and other support—and whether one modality has become the default for a broad range of needs.

03

What happens as an employee makes progress or their needs change?

Examine how goals and outcomes are used to inform care over time, and how easily employees can change the type, intensity, or cadence of support when appropriate.

04

How well does your strategy address the workplace factors employees bring into care?

Consider what benefit data, employee listening, manager feedback, and workforce measures reveal about workload, communication, organizational change, and other sources of stress. Look at whether managers have the training and support to respond effectively to the issues within their role.

05

What does the evidence tell you about the value of your mental health investment?

Look beyond access and utilization to outcomes, employee experience, and the effectiveness of different forms of support. Examine what evidence shows that employees are receiving clinically appropriate care at the right level and that care adjusts as their needs change. For global programs, look at those measures by market where possible rather than relying solely on global averages.

Designing for needs that change

People don't always know what kind of support will be most useful when they begin looking for help. And what works for them at one point may change.

An employee dealing with work stress may benefit from coaching. Another person describing similar stress may need clinical care. Someone in therapy may improve and shift to less frequent support. A new life event, worsening symptoms, or a different challenge can change what makes sense again.

Modern Health's Adaptive Care approach is designed around that movement. Therapy, coaching, and other forms of support are brought into one experience, with guidance that helps members connect with care based on their needs and preferences and adjust as those needs change.

The research reinforces the value of that flexibility. Employees describe needs that span everyday stress, workplace challenges, skill building, ongoing emotional support, and clinical care. They also describe needs changing over time.

Availability of specific care modalities may vary by benefit design and location.

For employers evaluating a mental health solution, that leads to a useful question:

How well does the experience guide employees to appropriate support and help them adjust as their needs change?



Learn how Modern Health helps employees connect with support that adapts to their needs.

[See how Adaptive Care works](#)



Methodology

Modern Health commissioned the Global Therapy and Coaching Survey, conducted and analyzed by DKC Analytics from August 3–9, 2026. The survey included 2,000 adults ages 22–60 working full time at organizations with more than 250 employees across the United States, United Kingdom, Mexico, and Singapore. All respondents had used therapy, confirmed through consumer-matched data and respondent self-confirmation.

The sample included 1,000 respondents in the U.S., 400 in the UK, 400 in Mexico, and 200 in Singapore. DKC Analytics procured the sample through the Pollfish survey delivery platform. No post-stratification was applied.

At a 95% confidence level, the reported margin of error is approximately ± 2 percentage points for the full sample, ± 3 points for the U.S., ± 5 points for the UK and Mexico, and ± 7 points for Singapore.

Survey findings reflect respondents' reported experiences, perceptions, and beliefs. Some questions allowed respondents to select more than one answer, so percentages from those questions may overlap. Country and demographic comparisons describe patterns within the survey sample and don't establish what accounts for those differences.

The coaching outcomes research cited in this report comes from a separate study and population and should be interpreted within the methodology of that research.

