



2020

YEAR IN REVIEW

A Year Like No Other

The events of 2020 have added unprecedented stress on healthcare organizations and workers. As a leader, you know the most important resources in your organization are its people—the physicians, advanced practitioners, residents, nurses, and other healthcare workers who show up on the frontlines every day. Your teams have been facing situations that consistently test their training, their stamina and their mental and emotional health as never before.

With over 13 years' experience focusing on clinician well being, VITAL WorkLife continues to evolve and innovate as your partner to ensure your care teams have the resources and support they need to overcome even the most challenging times.

According to the Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation¹, today, one in three adults in the U.S. have reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder during the pandemic, in comparison to the same 2019 time period, where one in 10 adults reported those same symptoms.

Across our national healthcare client base, we saw total case engagement increase year over year from **22%** in 2019 to **37%** in 2020.

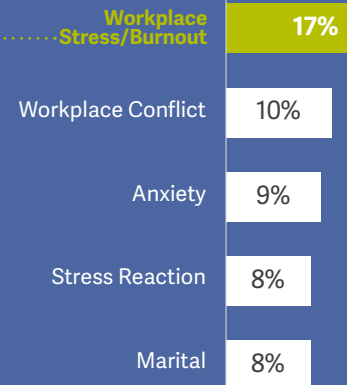
Even more notable, engagement was significantly down in the spring of 2020 with clinicians being immersed in the first

wave of the pandemic. Starting in May, there was a strong increase in mental health and well being assessments accessed as well as requests for support which has continued at an increased pace ever since.

We saw practice challenges rise in 2020 resulting in **Workplace Stress and Burnout** consisting of **17%** of the coaching and counseling cases.

This is not surprising considering the already-high levels of stress and burnout that existed prior to 2020, and the increased pressures since, both professionally and personally.

TOP 5 COACHING & COUNSELING CONCERNS



More than ever, leaders and clinicians appreciate the opportunity to talk with a peer about the difficult situations and feelings they experienced in the past year. The result was an increase in organizational and leadership consultations to support leaders, employees and clinicians in 2020. The most common areas of concern discussed were:

- Frontline clinicians trying to **sustain a thread of their own well being** while giving everything they had to their patients.
- Clinicians struggling with the difficult choice of **leaving medicine all together**.
- Clinicians experiencing extreme anxiety about **transmitting the virus** to their family members.
- Effects of **Second Victim Syndrome** on care teams.
- Clinicians dealing with **Moral Injury** by being put in situations that go against their beliefs and their training. Clinicians can withstand a dose of this, but for many on the front line it has been relentless.
- **Leaders concerned with difficult situations**, individual clinician and work team issues.
- **Health system furloughs and staffing shortages**. When it was time to bring employees back to work, many didn't want to return.

A growing body of evidence from sources across the country supports the effectiveness of peer coaching for improving physician well being. Studies published by Mayo Clinic and Duke University both demonstrated the effectiveness of peer coaching for improving several measures of well being for coached physicians^{3,4}.

Engagement in VITAL WorkLife's peer coaching resource increased in 2020 by 42%. Our peer coaching model has demonstrated a 58% improvement in well being scores from pre- to post coaching engagement.

Clinicians identified the top 3 most-valued benefits of peer coaching:

1. Improved Self Awareness
2. Improved Confidence
3. Improved Validation

Additionally, interest in developing leadership skills was the third most common reason for seeking coaching.

Of those clinicians who engaged in our coaching and counseling resources and responded to our intake & well being assessment survey, we found over half of respondents (51%) would have done nothing to support their well being if VITAL WorkLife resources had not been available to them. Given the high cost of clinician turnover, ranging from \$500,000 to \$1M, the negative impact of a distressed clinician on a culture of safety, and the implications on patient satisfaction, the investment in the health and well being of your care teams was well worth making.

[Click here](#) to read VITAL WorkLife's Peer Coaching White Paper

A recent study by the Physician Foundation found the following²:



58% of physicians often have feelings of burnout, compared to 40 percent in their 2018 survey

As a result of COVID-19's effects on their practice or employment situation:



30% of physicians feel hopeless or that they have no purpose



50% of physicians have experienced inappropriate anger, tearfulness or anxiety



18% of physicians have increased their use of medications, alcohol or illicit drugs

“ I have changed the way I view my job and have learned to better communicate my needs to those around me. I openly share my experience with my colleagues and encourage everyone to consider talking to a coach or a counselor. ”

PEER COACHING PARTICIPANT



Throughout the year, we provided a variety of resources in support of your organization and care teams including:

(18) healthcare and clinician-focused topical articles and in-depth market Insights.

(4) large-scale educational webinars with industry thought leaders and (4) weekend Zoom sessions, to support clinicians at the inception of the pandemic, which featured a variety of VITAL WorkLife Physician Peer Coaches and discussion topics.

- ▶ Leading Through the Stress of COVID-19
- ▶ Effects of COVID-19 on Healthcare Workers & Physicians: Research & Consultant Findings
- ▶ The Leader's Role: Identifying & Addressing COVID-19 Drivers of Stress
- ▶ Cross Industry Learnings from COVID-19—Panel Discussion

We also offered free Nurse Peer Coaching to all our clients to support this critical role

We estimate the value to you to be approximately
\$10,000

To benefit from our resources, clinicians need to be aware of VITAL WorkLife's solution offerings, understand how to access their resources, and trust their needs will be met professionally and confidentially. Our clients with the strongest user engagement have implemented and fully adopted these recommended best practice approaches:

- 1 Identified and onboarded internal Well Being Advocates as part of their organization's commitment and investment in well being. Advocates are onboarded and trained by an experienced VITAL WorkLife senior consultant to be an internal evangelist for the VITAL WorkLife resources and assist with program awareness.
 - In 2021 VITAL WorkLife will be bringing Advocates together from across healthcare organizations to share best practices and exchange ideas
- 2 Consistently highlight VITAL WorkLife resources at department and team meetings and retreats
 - All in attendance are encouraged to download the VITAL WorkLife app
 - Share what resources they've used that have been personally helpful to them
- 3 Engaged an experienced VITAL WorkLife consultant to conduct a solution overview with their leadership team, Well Being/Wellness Committee and recruitment team
- 4 Leveraged VITAL WorkLife's engagement recommendations to assist in transforming their intranet site as a "one-stop shop" of VITAL WorkLife resources including links to:
 - Internal Well Being Advocate resources
 - Program flyers and valuable content specifically curated for healthcare professionals
 - Links to orientation and testimonial videos, trainings and webinars which focus on issues effecting healthcare professionals
 - Single sign-on using dynamic link to member site
- 5 Conducted a home mailer including a personal letter from Leadership Team (with wallet card) using turnkey collateral from VITAL WorkLife's [Resource Site](#)
 - To keep resources top of mind, a home mailer should be conducted every 2-3 years to ensure clinicians and all family members are aware of the resources
- 6 Launched strategic awareness or relaunch campaigns to inform care teams about the availability of VITAL WorkLife resources to support their needs.

One of the greatest challenges to healthcare organizations in 2021 will be the **physical and emotional exhaustion of the health care workforce**⁶ — your care teams can continue to rely on

VITAL WorkLife for the prevention and treatment of PTSD, mental health concerns and coping with fatigue. In instances where you have a special need, VITAL WorkLife is available to provide support in a wide variety of ways, including customized training and consulting, organizational and leadership development and critical incident response.

1. <https://www.kff.org/report-section/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use-issue-brief/>
 2. <https://physiciansfoundation.org/research-insights/the-physicians-foundation-2020-physician-survey-part-2/>
 3. Dyrbye LN, Shanafelt TD, Gill PR, Satele DV, West CP. Effect of a Professional Coaching Intervention on the Well-being and Distress of Physicians: A Pilot Randomized Clinical Trial. JAMA Intern Med. 2019;179(10):1406-14.

4. Schneider S, Kingsolver K, Rosdahl J. Physician coaching to enhance well-being: a qualitative analysis of a pilot intervention. Explore (NY). 2014;10(6):372-9.
 5. <https://www.mgma.com/resources/human-resources/mgma-stat-poll-shows-majority-of-healthcare-leader>
 6. <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/life-sciences-health-care/caring-for-caregivers-pov.pdf>