



NOT 9 TO 5

2021 MENTAL HEALTH SURVEY

Produced for and by the foodservice & hospitality industry

Not 9 to 5 is a non-profit global leader in mental health advocacy for the hospitality industry.

We designed and delivered a survey as part of our Mind Your Health project. The goal of this research is to produce a more comprehensive picture of mental health and substance use challenges in the restaurant and hospitality industry.

Not 9 to 5 was founded on instinct and then cemented in data. We're seeking to gather and share data to help us all better understand and advocate for change.

The survey had 673 restaurant and hospitality industry professionals participate. The goal was to capture the realities of mental health and substance use challenges in the community.

None of this would have been possible without the Employment and Social Development funding support we received.

Mind Your Health is funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Centre.

Mind Your Health est financé par le Centre des Compétences futures du gouvernement du Canada.



**Future Skills
Centre**

Centre des
Compétences futures

Funded by the
Government of Canada's
Future Skills Program



Visit us at not9to5.org

Follow us @ [not9to5org_](https://www.instagram.com/not9to5org_)



NOT 9 TO 5

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic has had a profound impact on everyone. This has caused various ripple effects into many industries, one of which is the exposure of the systemic issues of the hospitality industry to the world. The issues plaguing us have only been *exacerbated* by the pandemic, not created. As owners, operators and diners, we can no longer ignore this fact.

Inadequate compensation, little to no employee benefits and support, irregular hours, lack of physical and psychological safety and heightened substance use. These are just some of the components of the hospitality industry that *all* workers have been affected by, and now made worse by the ongoing challenges of the pandemic.

To hospitality workers, this is nothing new. For some of us, hushed conversations on these topics with trusted colleagues is an everyday occurrence. For some of us however, we suffer in silence, and feel alone in our struggles, which often leads to increased substance use, anxiety, depression and more. How could anyone *not* feel alone when our workplaces, industry leaders and even peers normalize, glamorize and perpetuate such a problematic system?

Not 9 to 5 produced this survey to find out exactly how the pandemic has affected our industry's mental health, because no one is unaffected. Data is not a passing remark in the dish pit. Data is concrete, tangible proof that these issues are valid and in dire need of attention as a community of workers and leaders. The debate and denial about the high rates of mental health crisis in our industry is over, and it is up to all of us to take these lessons and forge a better future and new foundation for our industry.

Visit us at not9to5.org

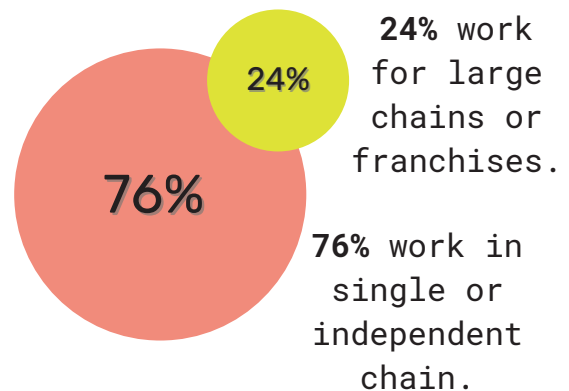
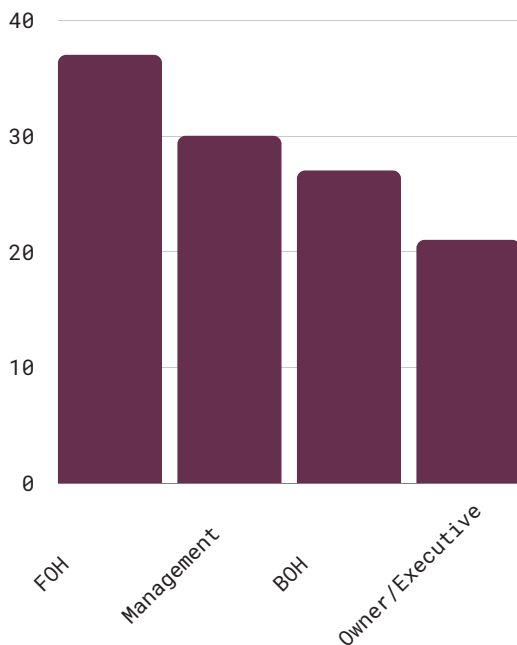
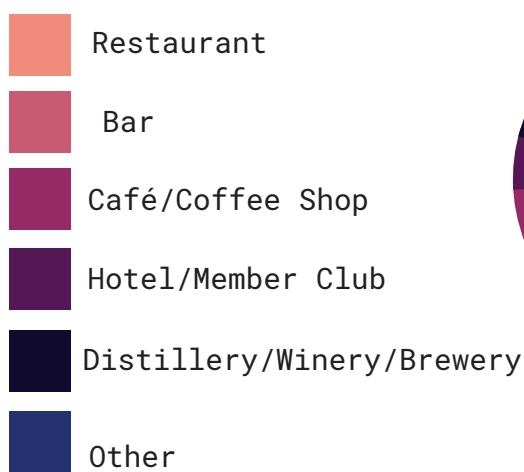
Follow us @ [not9to5org_](https://www.instagram.com/not9to5org_)



NOT 9 TO 5

WORKPLACE INFO

Most of the people surveyed described their workplace as a restaurant (57%), followed by bars (12%), café/coffee shop or hotel/member club (both 5%), or a distillery/winery/brewery (4%).



The primary roles listed were FOH (37%), management (30%), BOH (27%), and owner/executive (21%).

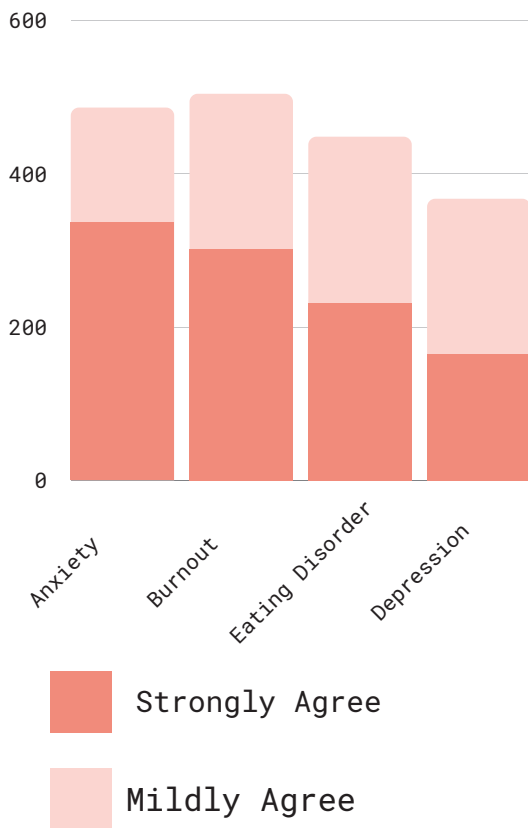
SWIPE >>



NOT 9 TO 5

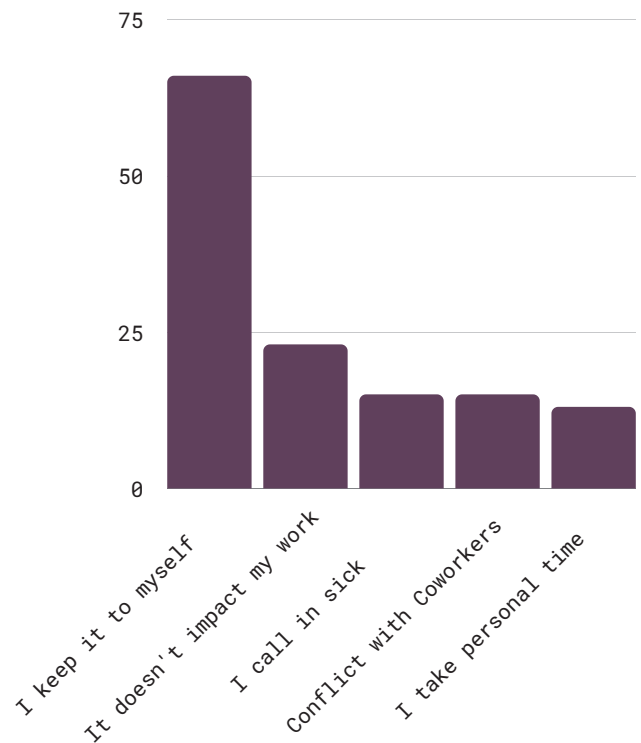
WORKPLACE IMPACT

Primary Concerns



The primary concerns of mental health challenges are felt by the majority of respondents. Most agreed to experience anxiety (84%), burnout (87%), depression (77%), as well as disordered eating (63%).

How is work affected?



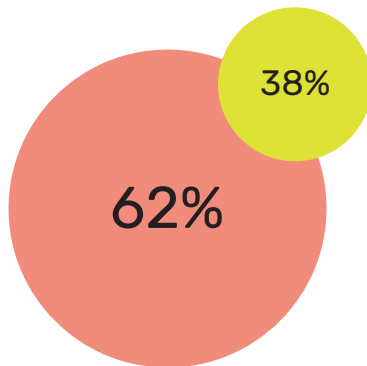
Most, 67%, however, said they still kept their struggles to themselves and tried not to let it show. Absenteeism, and inner conflict were also side effects experienced in the workplace.

SWIPE >>



NOT 9 TO 5

DO YOU SEEK HELP?



Only 38% of respondents said they sought professional help. 62% said they did not, citing financial reasons as the main barrier.

"I knew a therapist would advise me to quit drinking and stop drug usage and I wasn't ready to. At ten months sober now, I am waiting to have the energy to focus on finding a therapist I'll connect with." -

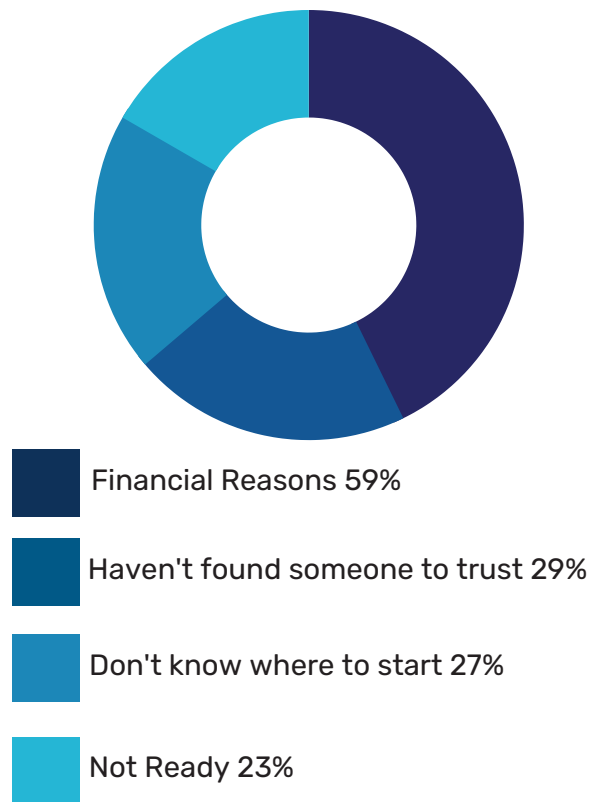
Anonymous

"Who says I can afford therapy? And when would I even have time, when I work long hours? This is the 3rd year in a row where I couldn't even go on vacation to get a proper break from non-stop work AND school."

- Anonymous

Why not seek professional help?

When the respondents were asked why they were not seeking professional help, they shared the top barriers for access.



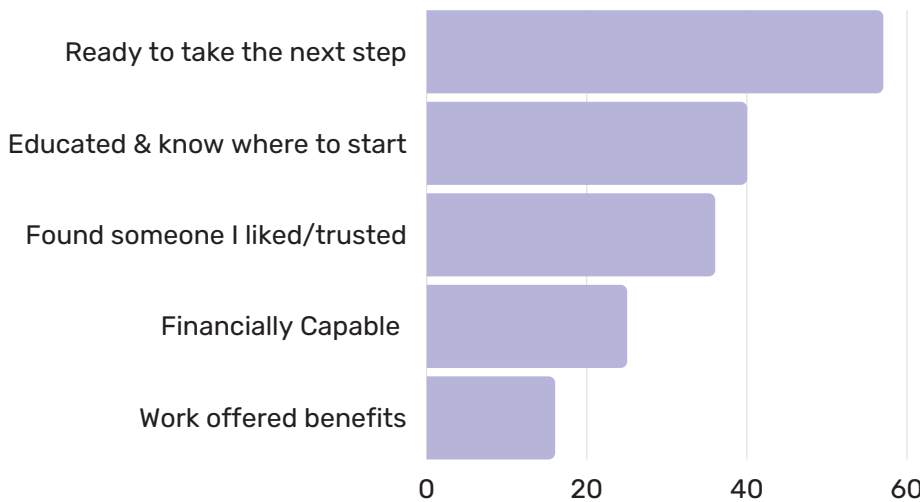
SWIPE >>



NOT 9 TO 5

COPING METHODS

Why do you seek professional help?

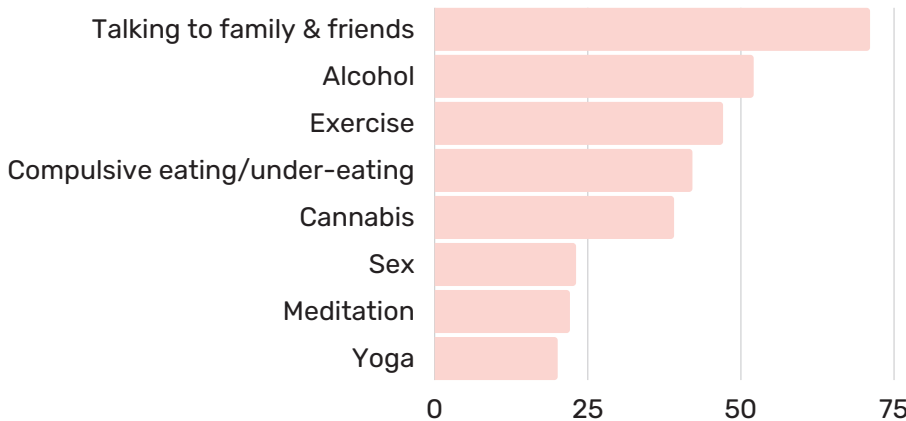


"I was finally able to admit to myself that I wasn't able to handle my depression, anxiety and agoraphobia anymore. After going back to work after the first lockdown during the pandemic I was feeling suicidal again. I am anxious about returning to work after the lockdowns."

- Anonymous

A large percentage expressed a need for professional help and were ready to take the next step. However, most people had developed their own coping methods and ways to deal with their stress and mental health.

How do you find relief?



Many opened up about their personal experiences by sharing comments. Through various ways, many people said they found stress relief from "Putting myself into dangerous situations," with many suggesting illicit substances and alcohol.

SWIPE >>

Visit us at not9to5.org

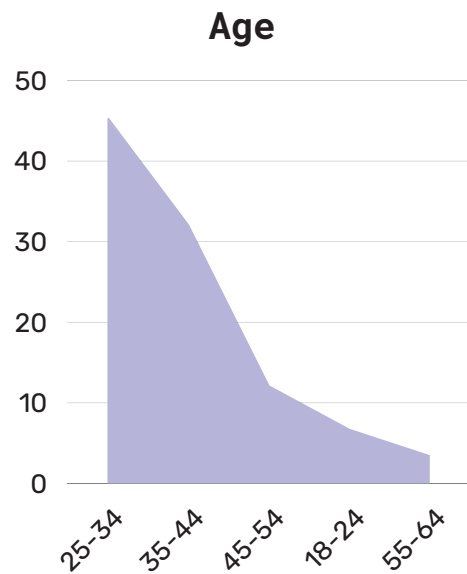
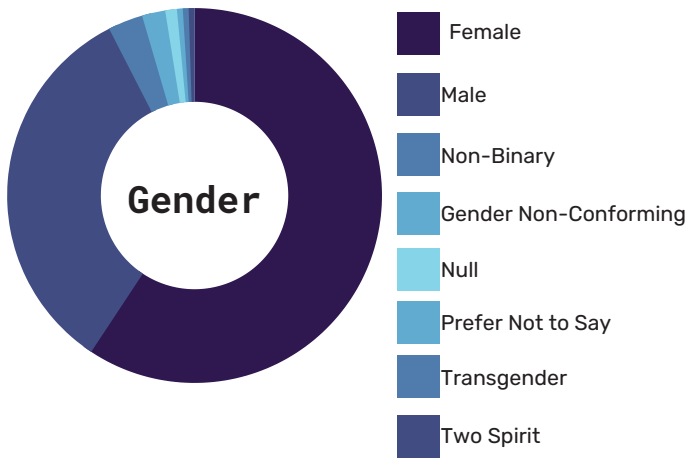
Follow us @ [not9to5org_](https://www.instagram.com/not9to5org_)



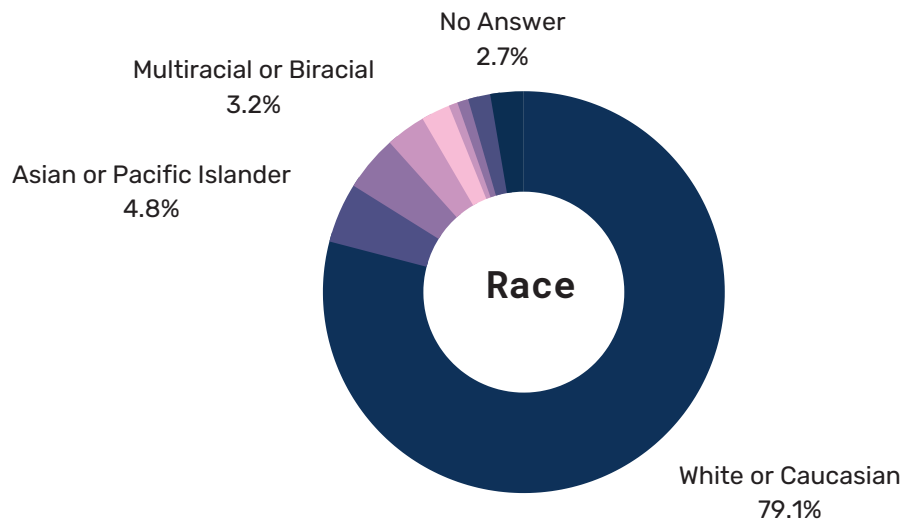
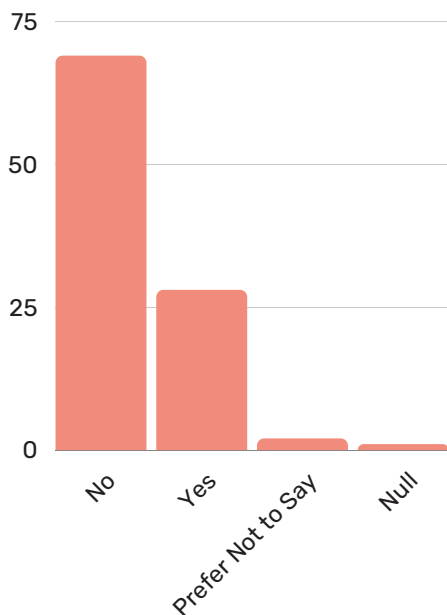
NOT 9 TO 5

DEMOGRAPHICS

We got responses from **673** people across the hospitality industry, with **115** people outside of Canada. Most responses came from white or Caucasian females between **25-44** and **28%** identified as LGBTQ2S+.



LGBTQ2S+



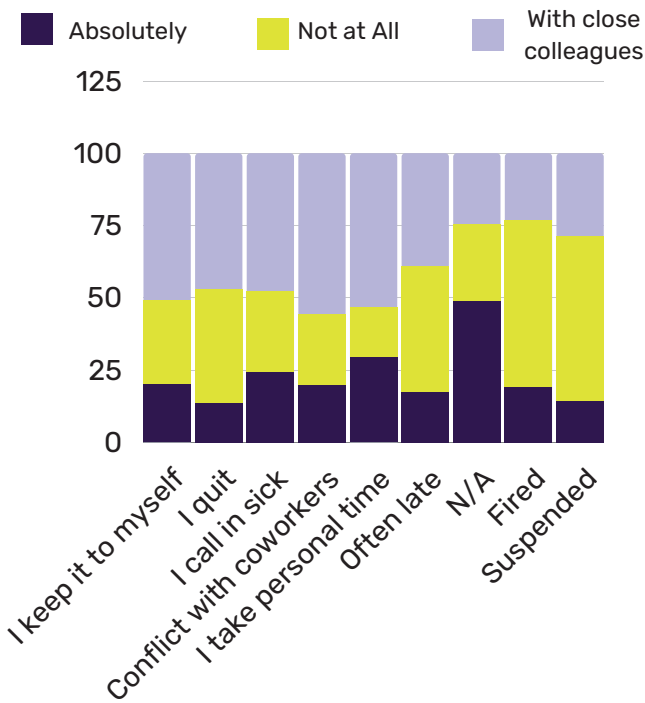
SWIPE >>



NOT 9 TO 5

KEY INSIGHTS

Do you discuss mental health at work?

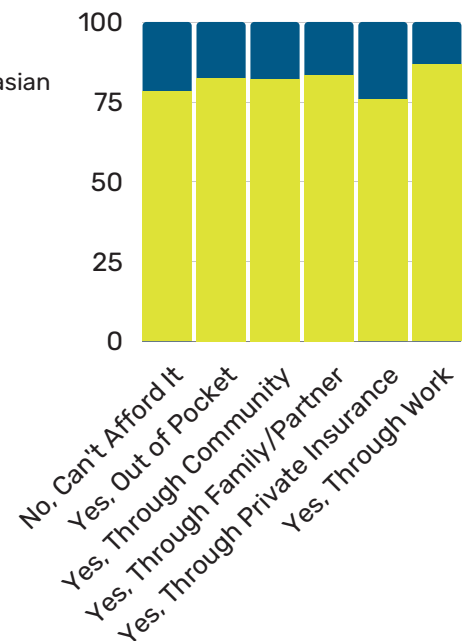
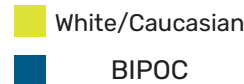
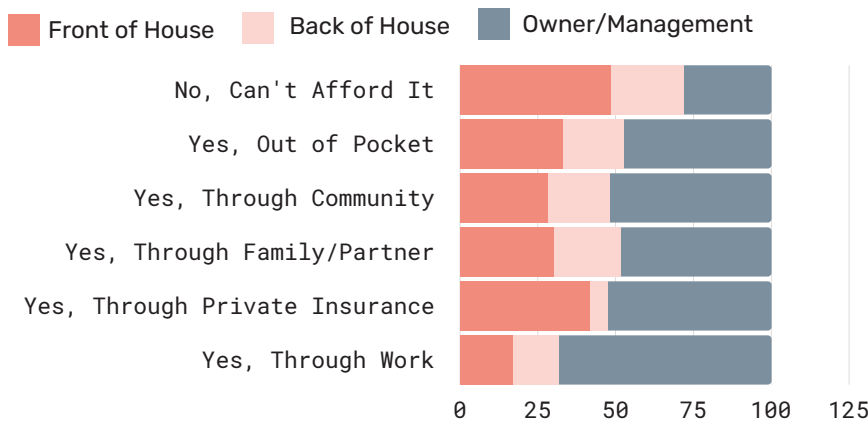


Mental health and substance use challenges and supports change depending on where you work in the restaurant, ie. BOH vs FOH.

Cis-males had the easiest access to mental health resources, but were the least likely to seek help or feel their mental health and substance use affected their ability to work, along with BIPOC folks.

Ultimately, BIPOC folks were the least likely to admit to having mental health or substance challenges.

Mental healthcare access by race and role





NOT 9 TO 5

CONCLUSION

The top mental health primary concerns of the respondents included anxiety, depression, burnout, and disordered eating. With these identified, it became evident how mental health and substance use challenges impacted participants' work. Key findings in the report demonstrate the extent to which variables such as race, gender, orientation, and work position influence mental health challenges. These variables play a vital role in an individual's perceived psychological safety in the workplace.

The title and position a person holds within the current hierarchical structure of a workplace impacts both their awareness and access to mental health resources, with financial obstacles remaining a key barrier for all. There were varying degrees of increased substance use, absenteeism and attrition reported amongst back of house (BOH) positions compared to that of front of house (FOH). This demonstrates the emphasis on a 'hierarchical structure' or brigade system influence continues to cause adverse effects on the mental wellbeing of workers.

It is clear to see that participants' race, gender, and orientation has an influence on how mental health is perceived and experienced. Females, as well as non-conforming, LGBTQ2S+ folks, were more likely to seek help than cis-males, even though they reported having significantly greater access to workplace mental health benefits. The majority of cis-males and BIPOC folks were more likely to report that mental health and substance use doesn't affect their ability to work. However, cis-males were more likely to admit mental health challenges compared to BIPOC folks who reported they were not at all likely to admit to it. The most common response, 67% of workers, kept it to themselves and tried not to let it show while on the job. For LGBTQ2S+ folks, job security, education, financial security, and trust in those around them were all seen as barriers to discussing mental health or addiction and seeking support.

Visit us at not9to5.org

Follow us @ [not9to5org_](https://www.instagram.com/not9to5org_)



NOT 9 TO 5

CONCLUSION

Acknowledging the diversity of your employees is integral to understanding the specific challenges they face with mental health and substance use. This is also key in figuring out the type of awareness and interventions that are needed. Our survey demonstrates that mental health and substance use challenges are a direct byproduct of work cultures that do not support, but instead, further stigmatize employee mental health. All the more damaging is knowing that the majority of respondents expressed a need for professional help and that they feel ready to take that next step, but do not have the time, financial, or community support.

So, now what?

An overwhelming majority of respondents stated that they would like to receive more educational tools from Not 9 to 5, including harm reduction practices, peer support and workplace mental health training.

You spoke. We answered.

Through our **CNECTing** platform, we educate and train in mental health and substance use support skills. Our course **Primary Concerns** was developed to help identify, understand and respond to crisis situations both in the workplace and interpersonal interactions. **Primary Concerns** then led us to develop our **CNECTed Certification Program**, expanding on the harm reduction and peer support skills taught in **Primary Concerns** with an intersectional lens and self-led assessment of learning. Ultimately, **CNECTed** will provide education, training and support skills for employees and employers to operate and work in a psychologically safe workplace.

Visit us at not9to5.org

Follow us @ [not9to5org_](https://www.instagram.com/not9to5org_)



NOT 9 TO 5

NOW WHAT?

Not 9 to 5 aims to bring our community together through various events and peer support groups, whether they are Not 9 to 5 lead, or through co-promotion and participation in fellow community members' events. Our social media channels are consistently updated with all things hospitality and mental health focused. With plans to curate monthly virtual as well as future in-person events in 2022, we currently offer virtual workshops, Q&A sessions, and our unique "Kitchen Table Talks," which connect workers and leaders in the industry through peer support and community building.

The time for change in the hospitality industry is now!

The pandemic has highlighted the systemic issues of this industry in ways in which the public can no longer ignore. This momentum has helped us move away from operating in silos, and toward unity to create more impactful, widespread change. At Not 9 to 5, we are disruptive, we are compassionate, we are intersectional and resourceful. So is our community. We are hopeful that one day we can use these terms to describe the entire hospitality industry.

For any questions or feedback on this report or for resources, please reach out to us directly by writing us at info@not9to5.org or visiting our website.

Visit us at not9to5.org

Follow us @ [not9to5org_](https://www.instagram.com/not9to5org_)