



# How the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic Has Disrupted Wellbeing and Work Environments



## REPORT

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# The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 caused an upheaval in everyday life across the globe.



Individuals' physical and mental health, work environments, economic circumstances and social wellbeing have all been impacted.

This unforeseen and unpredictable disruption has established a greater degree of isolation and quarantining, with an impact wide and deep, especially on people's healthy routines, behaviors and habits. Challenges like restricting access to fitness facilities and removing social and personal interventions for stress reduction, have forced people to adapt to new circumstances in a short amount of time. The pandemic has also brought to the forefront how underlying physical and mental health conditions are major contributors to the risk of getting infected with the coronavirus. Managing one's overall physical and mental health is more important than ever.

Conditions such as obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease and high blood sugar substantially increase the risk of death among those who contract the virus. The lockdowns and regulations have exposed a lack of mental health resilience, awareness of emotional and mental health issues and support for these issues across the world. In addition, the pandemic has exposed the major impact that social determinants of health play regarding the likelihood of contracting COVID-19 and severity of illness – including the likelihood of dying from the infection.

Amid this crisis, Virgin Pulse conducted a survey to gain insight into how these changes and disruptions were affecting those who participate in their employer-sponsored wellbeing programme, as well as what they need and what has helped during this time. We asked about critical topics such as:



**Nutrition**



**Finances**



**Stress levels**



**Work environments**

Additionally, we asked members how they were utilising health and wellbeing resources to handle the changing circumstances, and how supported they felt by their employers. And we incorporated respondents' step and sleep activity from before and during the COVID-19 survey period. The confidential survey went out to all US members of companies who opted to participate in the survey.

# Survey Population Characteristics

77% of the respondents were between the ages of 30 and 60, which reflects the age distribution across the entire Virgin Pulse platform.

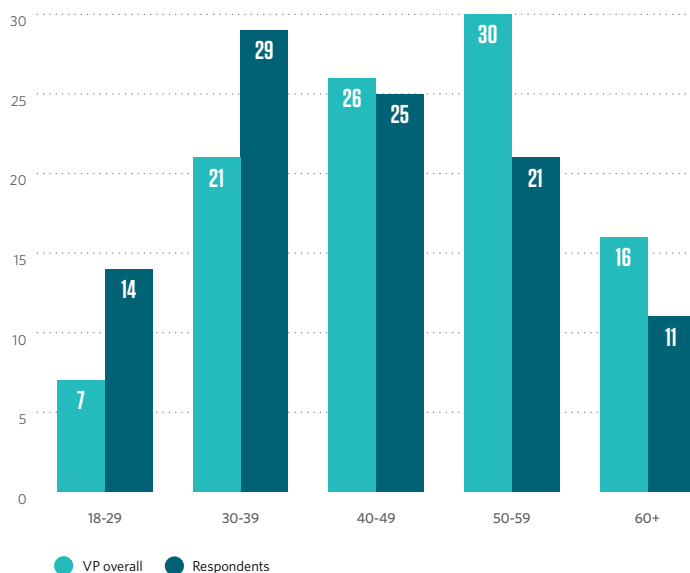
It is important to note that morbidity and mortality adverse outcomes relating to COVID-19 is highest in people older than 65, therefore our relatively smaller sample size in this demographic may be not a true representation of the impact of COVID for those most at risk. The gender distribution, however, is slightly different. While the split across all members is also majority female, the respondent population has a much larger disparity than age group distributions: 44% of all respondents were male, while 56% of all Virgin Pulse members are female.

**73,199**  
Responses

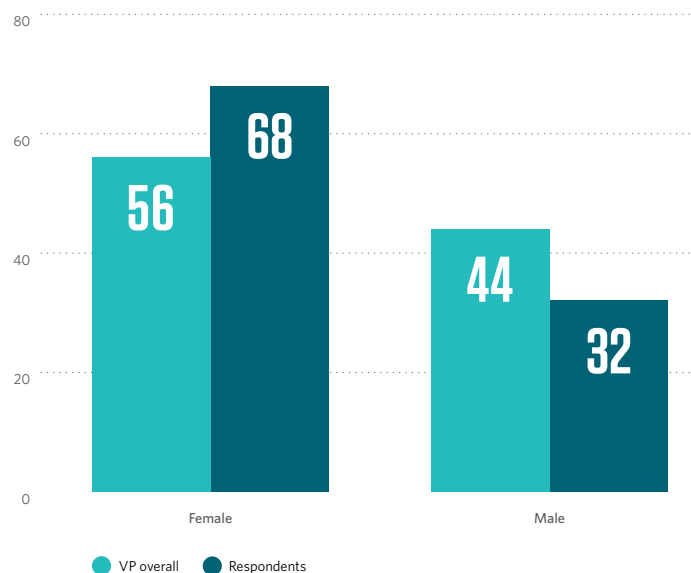
**460**  
Companies

**14**  
Industries

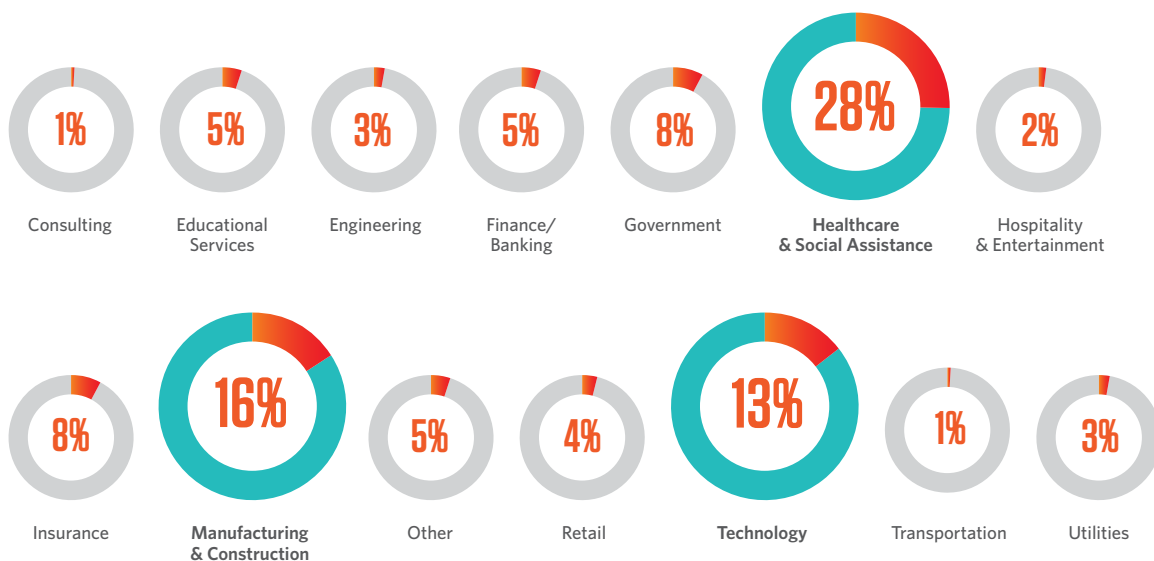
Age Group (% of respondents)



Gender (% of respondents)



The respondents come from 14 different industries, with employees from Healthcare & Social Assistance being the largest group, making up 28% of respondents. There was also a significant number of responses from the Manufacturing & Construction and Technology industries. The industry distribution of respondents is nearly identical to the entire Virgin Pulse client distribution.



## Executive Summary

**The majority of respondents have transitioned to remote work (55%), but disruptions in daily routines can change healthy eating habits and increase stress.**

The pandemic has caused a change in how we work, with companies transitioning to remote work as much as their business operations allow. This raised many questions for employers concerned about changes in productivity. The results show that a large proportion of employees who have transitioned to remote work are working the same amount or even more (86%), with more than half reporting no significant impact on their ability to focus on work (52%). Several reports have also supported this finding.<sup>1</sup> These facts may put employers at ease regarding the potential future of work, demonstrating that employees are just as, if not more productive when flexible working arrangements are implemented.

55%

transitioned to  
remote work

50%

working the  
same amount

52%

report no issues  
focusing on work

<sup>1</sup> Business Facilities, 2020. Employees working more hours during COVID-19 pandemic.  
Retrieved from <https://businessfacilities.com/2020/03/u-s-employees-working-more-hours-during-covid-19-pandemic/>

However, with any change to daily routines comes an adjustment period. Some industries such as Healthcare & Social Assistance have obviously been impacted more, while others such as Engineering have seen relatively less disruption. Those who are now working at a new work location (4% of total respondents) also seem to be affected more than those who have had no change to work location or can now work from home.

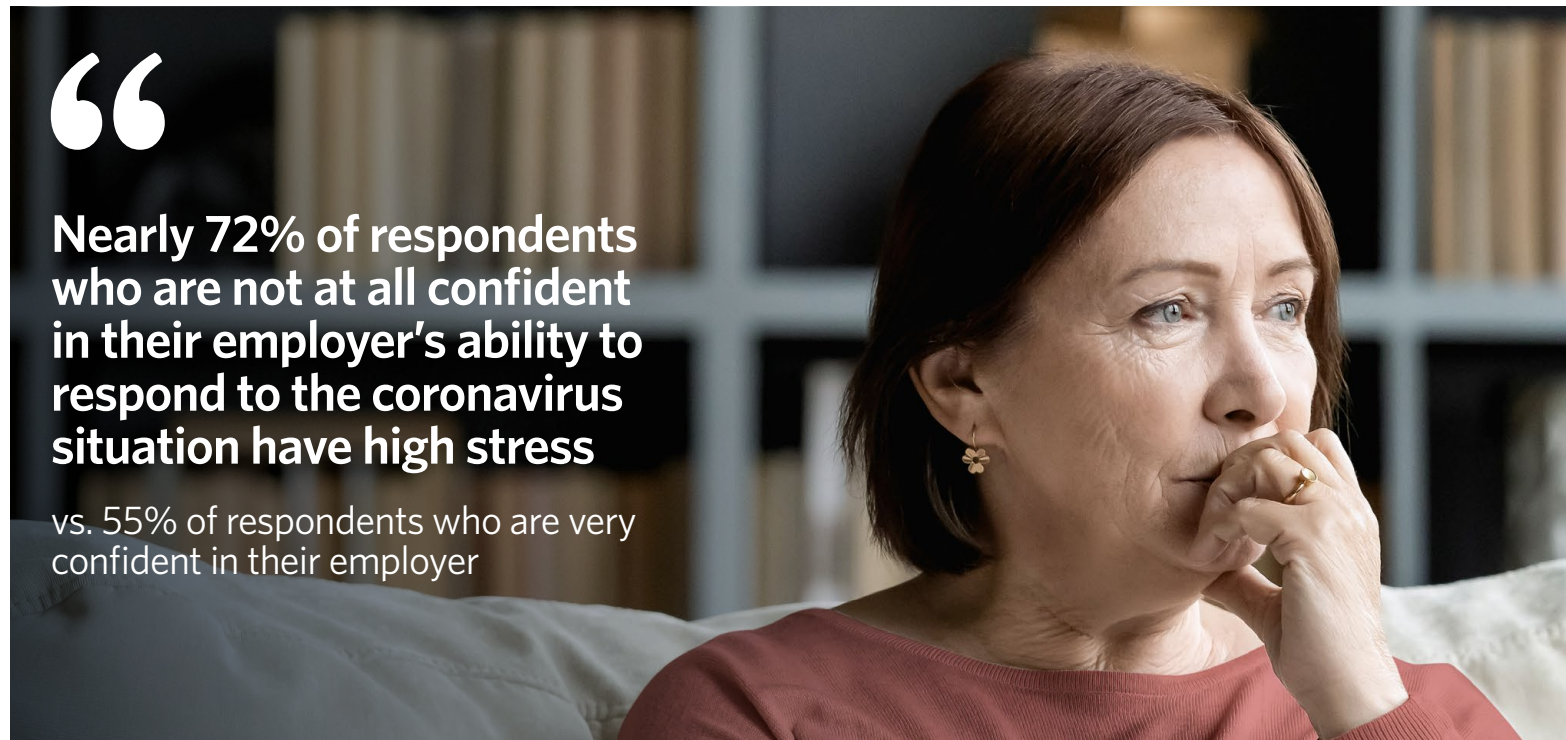
Maintaining healthy habits and routines is a theme throughout this report. We consistently see circumstances where a change, either in work environment or financial status have a higher likelihood of leading to negative impact health-related routines and on health. But we also see that there is no one-size-fits-all rule that determines who adjusts well and who doesn't. Because of this, it is critical employers are aware of what factors can potentially lead to detrimental health outcomes and work to mitigate these risks. Building trust, communicating and establishing confidence from employees is also of vital importance to helping them adjust during this time. Nearly three out of four (72%) of respondents who are not at all confident in their employer's ability to respond to the coronavirus situation have high stress, vs. 55% of respondents who are very confident in their employer. Possible and potential changes in employees' mental health status is a consequence of this remarkably disruptive year, however, an organisation and an employer taking action and providing resources can mitigate impact of stress and uncertainty.

Financial struggles are expected for about one in every five people under age 60; 2020's high unemployment compounds the pandemic effects on emotional and physical health. Employers should emphasise financial wellness resources and extend them to those who've lost their jobs. Despite a historic year in a negative sense, there is still room for increased utilisation of all mental health resources in a wellbeing programme. Encouraging employees to take advantage of these resources and removing the stigma that comes with asking for help and advice gives your employees a sense of trust and confidence towards you as the employer. 55% of respondents who did not show a decrease in physical activity, sleep or stress during the pandemic utilised Virgin Pulse resources. While several challenges have existed in the past few months, data suggests that by encouraging use of resources including our VP platform, negative effects can be mitigated, and people are able to maintain their wellbeing and ability to be as or more productive at work during these times.

“

**Nearly 72% of respondents who are not at all confident in their employer's ability to respond to the coronavirus situation have high stress**

vs. 55% of respondents who are very confident in their employer



## Key Findings: Consistency & Routines Matter

### Evaluating wellbeing vendors: Ease of use is top priority.

Perhaps the most relevant word that describes how 2020 has impacted our work lives is “disruption”. Every role in every industry has had to adjust to a change in how they work and where they work. In jobs involving hands-on responsibilities, service, distribution and other critical roles, their location of work may not have changed; however, their working environment certainly has. Mandatory use of PPE, social distancing and dealing with surge in demand (e.g. grocery stores) and changing hygiene practices has added extra layers to the daily routines of these employees.

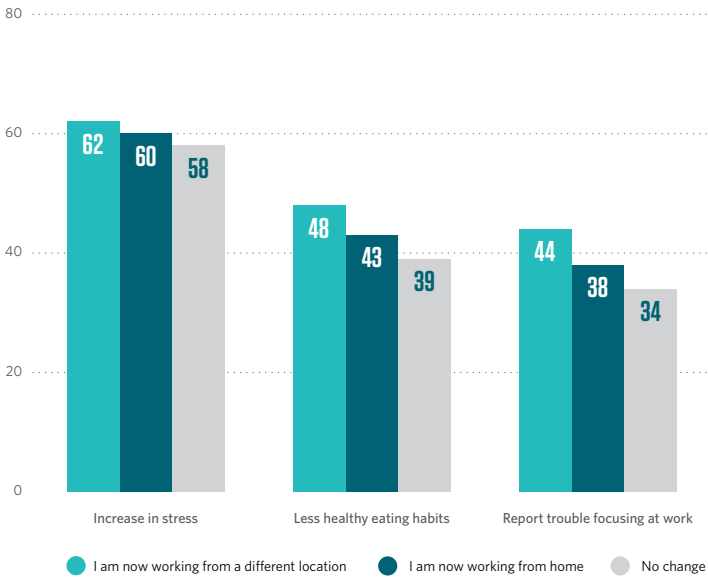
For employees who are fortunate enough to be able to work from home, this presents a new kind of challenge as juggling home, family commitments and work life becomes a difficult balancing act.

Industries that required a lot of pandemic-related frontline workers and have higher risk of exposure have had to work at a new location, being forced to adjust to a new environment.

Every group is faced with their own obstacles which undoubtedly affects the physical and mental wellbeing of employees. However, the data from our survey shows some work changes are more disruptive than others, with those changing to a new location feeling the most impact.



The no change population is a mix of essential employees and those who were already working remote. While there are fewer disruptions to the work environment, the wellbeing results are mixed due to the assortment of workers in this group.



For respondents who are now working at a new location (n = 2,555, 4%)



Respondents who are now working from home (n = 34,034, 47%)



No Change in Work Location (n = 22,698, 31%)



## COVID-driven changes in work negatively impact health behaviors, but wellbeing engagement helps.

The less change to an employee's work environment, the less impact there is on their mental health. If there must be a change, it is helpful to have a flexible option such as working from home.

In fact, employees who have had no change from where they work or are now working from home have a lower proportion of members having negative eating habits (39% and 43% respectively) than respondents who have had a change in working environment (48%). With obesity being one of the leading risk factors for COVID-19 related deaths,<sup>2</sup> nutrition is an aspect of our lives that cannot be overlooked. Virgin Pulse's Book of Business data shows that nutrition trackers are still under-utilised, with no noticeable increase in tracking habits since COVID-19 began.

For those who must deal with working in a new environment, there is a significant impact on work focus and eating habits. It is apparent that disruptions can throw off your daily productivity, as shown by 43% of individuals who changed location having trouble focusing on work compared to only 34% of individuals with no location change. Establishing

a new work routine is difficult, whether that's as simple as finding your favorite take-out option to eat during a lunch break, to something that requires more effort such as fitting in with new coworkers at a new location. Employers can help by providing information on the new work location prior to an employee moving. Though this may have been difficult given the short time period of adjustment when the pandemic began, there has now been enough time to expect and be better prepared for this type change in the future.

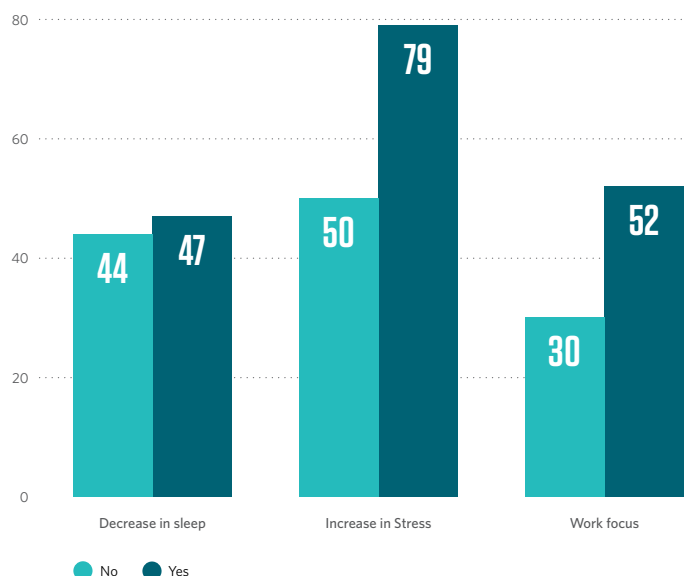
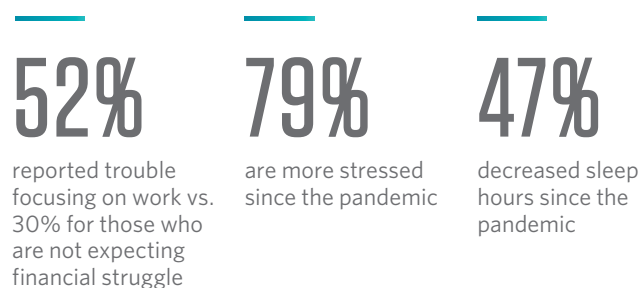


<sup>2</sup> CDC, 2020. People with certain medical conditions. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html#obesity>

## Despite the stock market holding strong after a recovery, economic circumstance for many employees is dire.

Studies have shown strong correlations between financial anxiety and mental health<sup>6</sup> problems, suggesting that a negative disruption in one's financial situation is a leading stress trigger, which subsequently impacts several facets of peoples' lives. We see this reflected in our data.

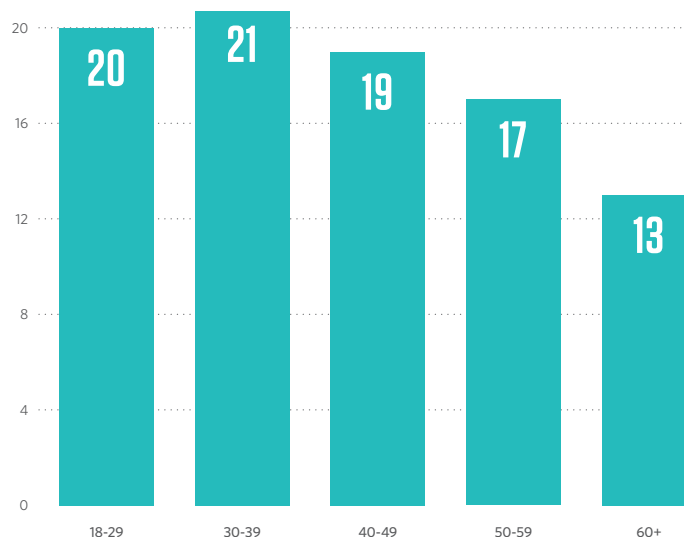
Of those who are expecting financial struggle (17%, n = 12,429):



One may anticipate financial concerns to be more prevalent among certain age groups; however, apart from 60+ year old employees (13%), every other age group from 18 – 59 has about the same proportion of respondents expecting financial struggles (17 – 21%).

Since 84% of respondents are likely unable to retire in the near future, COVID-19's economic impact is adding to stress for most generations in the workforce.

2020's high unemployment is integral to consideration of the impact of the pandemic. It is safe to assume that economic concerns are on the minds of just about everyone, albeit to differing degrees. The most significant factors affecting mental health are due to uncertainty and lack of trust at all levels of society. Employers can help mitigate these concerns by supporting employees and offering financial wellness and retirement planning resources and guidance through their wellbeing programme. Maintaining transparent communication throughout changes in the organisation and ensuring the privacy of employees' financial status is upheld are of foremost importance.



<sup>6</sup> Psychiatric Times, 2018. Addressing Poverty and Mental Illness. Retrieved from <https://www.psychiatrictimes.com/view/addressing-poverty-and-mental-illness>

## Industry differences.

The pandemic has affected different industries in different ways.

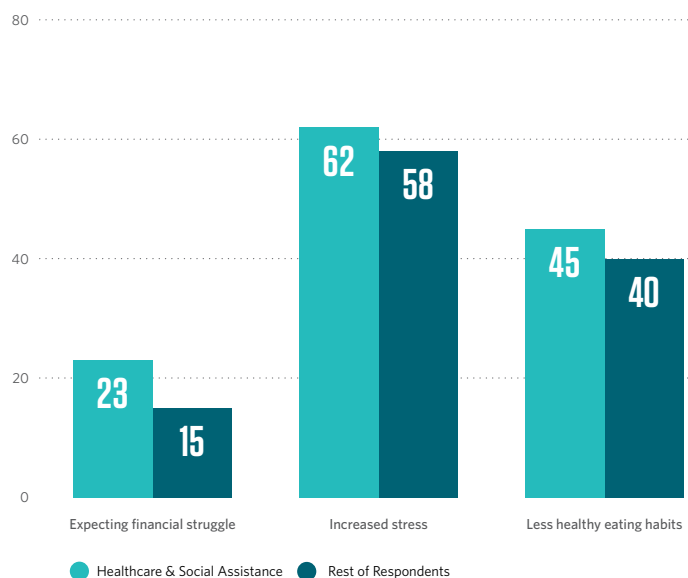
Some industries were already reliant on remote workers and had much more flexibility to allow their employees to be remote (e.g. software engineering). Some were forced to transition to remote work for the first time (e.g. government/education). On the other end of the spectrum, the industries with frontline workers who are unable to work remotely experienced different disruptions (e.g.; mandatory hygiene measures, socially distant services). Different industries are

also on different trajectories towards recovery and normalcy;<sup>7</sup> however, the one common theme is every industry was forced to adapt in some way. Results across industries among Virgin Pulse clients including non-traditional comparisons like type of disruption, can help employers understand the specific personal challenges faced by their own employees, and how their wellbeing programme should offer targeted and personalised support.

## Healthcare & Social Assistance have the most employees working from a different location.

Of course, during a pandemic, the impact on the Healthcare industry among our client base has been the most profound.

Those involved have not only been faced with a new and previously unknown threat to their communities but also the potential direct threat to their lives and those they live with on a daily basis. Our analysis found that 7% of employees in the industry are now working in new locations (working from home not included), which is the highest among all industries. It is no surprise to see the following among that population:



<sup>7</sup> Deloitte, 2020. COVID-19 Sector Heatmaps. Retrieved from <https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/covid-19/covid-19-sector-map.html>

In the previous section, we looked at how a changing work environment can impact different aspects of life. Compounded by working in an industry involved with the pandemic, the effects on healthcare workers are reflected in the data.

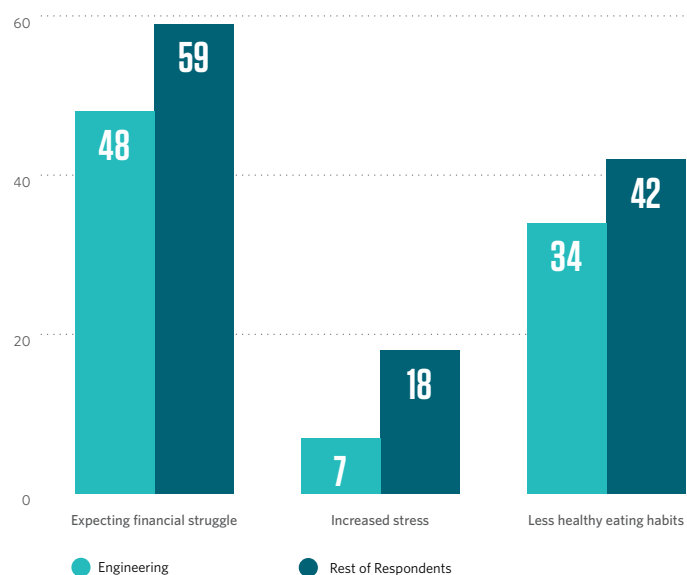
62% of respondents report being more stressed (4% above Book of Business average), and 46% decrease in sleep. This may not seem much higher than the book of business, however, since mental health and sleep deprivation was already prevalent<sup>8</sup> in Healthcare workers, this should be a cause for heightened concern and intervention. It is important to note that Virgin Pulse members in the Healthcare industry, besides frontline clinicians (doctors, nurses and physical therapists), include radiology and laboratory personnel as well as administrative, maintenance, laundry, food services and housekeeping staffs.

Therefore, these numbers may be more extreme if office and corporate workers were not mixed into the results and we focused solely on frontline workers (due to privacy concerns, we were not able to collect job title/profession data). The Healthcare & Social Assistance industry is in a unique position relative to others, as they are the lone industry where even if there is no change in the work location — due to the nature of their work, the disruption caused must still be greater than others.



## Engineering shows the lowest disruption.

By contrast, in the Engineering industry, 65% of respondents are now working from home, with only 3% of respondents working from a different location:



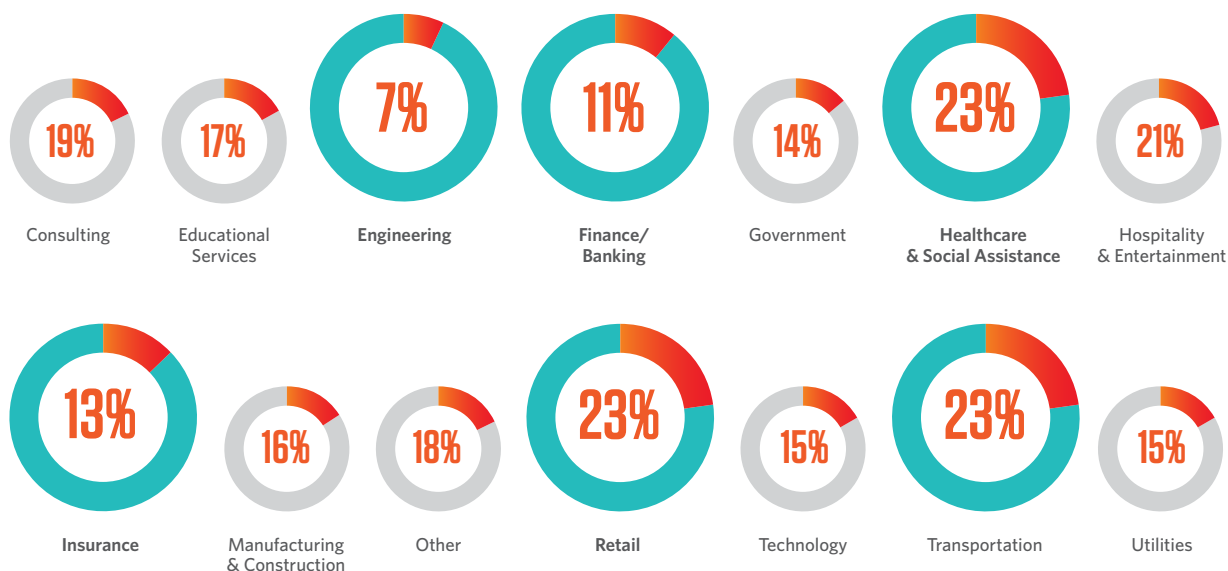
<sup>8</sup> Yahoo, 2020. Apparently, these are the most sleep-deprived professions. Retrieved from <https://news.yahoo.com/apparently-most-sleep-deprived-professions-040000364.html>



The proportion of members who are more stressed is significantly lower than those in the Healthcare & Social Assistance industry.

This could be due to the nature of the work involved in each industry, but also the disparity in proportion of members who are expecting financial struggle. The Healthcare and Engineering industries are on opposite ends of the financial struggle spectrum, with 23% of Healthcare & Social Assistance respondents expecting financial struggle in the near future (5% higher than Book of Business), compared to 7% of Engineering respondents. We have touched on the mental health impact of financial struggle, and it is imperative that organisations be aware of where their industry stands and how their own workforce compares, and to provide early intervention and support.

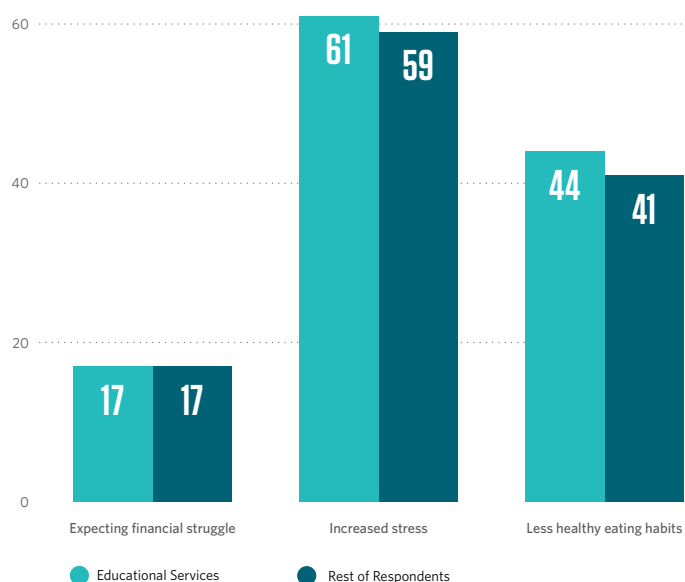
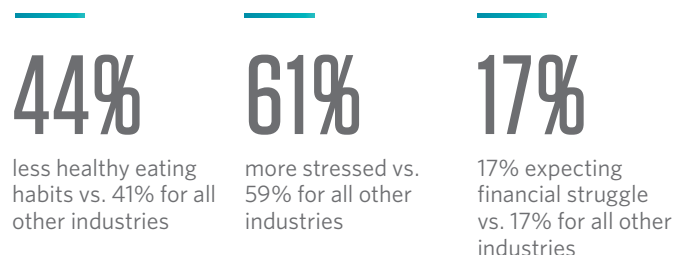
The proportion of members who declined in sleep is very similar for both industries, however, prior to COVID-19, sleep deprivation had not been a common problem in Engineering, unlike in Healthcare. Importantly, sleep across the Virgin Pulse Book of Business has decreased by 4% (16.8 minutes) in 2020, however, members are still averaging over 7 hours of sleep. Prior to the pandemic, sleep quantity for our Book of Business saw little variation, and always remained around 7.1 – 7.4 hours.



## Dealing with change in the middle of the impact spectrum.

Next, we consider industries that have more employees forced to work from home but not traditionally accustomed to remote work. In Educational Services, we've seen that it is possible for remote learning to happen at scale, despite enormous disruptions and learning curves. 73% of respondents from Education are now working from home, but 5% of respondents from the Educational Services industry are now working from a different location, slightly higher than the Book of Business average.

They have experienced more moderate impacts:



The Educational Services industry results seem like a mix of the Healthcare and Engineering industries. Transitioning to remote learning was never previously tested at such a large scale, and not only presents a difficult challenge for educators as curriculums have to adapt on the fly, but also to parents who relied on school as supervision for children and are no longer able to.<sup>9</sup> The second and third waves of the virus spread have kept learning institutions in flux, indicating wellbeing results may still be suboptimal for some time to come as proportions of this group are constantly adapting.

Three different industries – Healthcare & Social Assistance, Engineering and Educational Services – at different phases of change during COVID-19 demonstrate that there is no one-size-fits-all on how to deal with change or what to emphasise among wellbeing solutions and benefits.

Organisations within an industry that can transition to working from home relatively easily seem to experience less negative impacts, but still have a significant proportion of respondents who are more stressed. Industries that are not accustomed to remote work or do not have that option need the most support. Clear guidelines for these organisations can remove the thinking and complexity involved during this transition, and employers should look for ample opportunities to provide guidance.

*\*\* To find out responses to all industries, please refer to the Appendix section on page.*

<sup>9</sup> New York Times, 2020. Why are childcare programmes open when schools are not?  
Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/04/parenting/schools-day-care-children-divide.html>

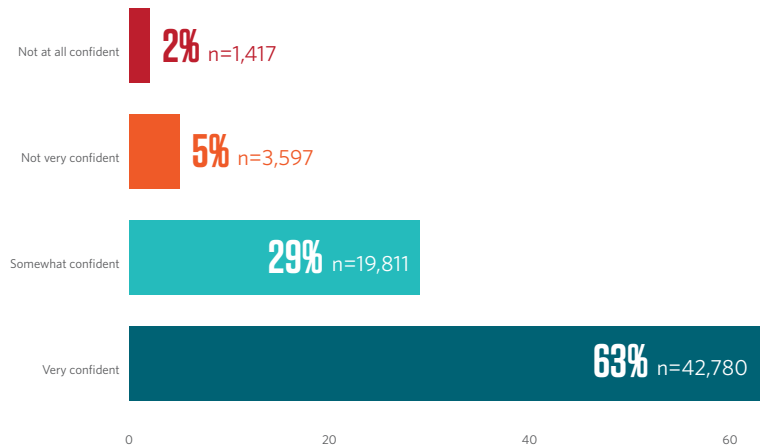
## Support All Members, No Matter How Well They're Doing

**The above findings highlight some differences between industries, and those who are best at adapting to different types of working environments. However, it is important not just to offer support for at-risk members but supporting all employees.**

COVID-19 has affected everyone in both direct and indirect ways, and uncertainty and change will last for a considerable time. Improving the resilience of everyone in the workforce should be a high business priority for all. This includes providing specific targeted resources, flexibility and ability to address areas of need, and helping members feel a sense of control by providing a strong culture and stable work environment.

## Over 60% of respondents were very confident in their employers' ability to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is an inherent bias in the question as organisations who have made the decision to invest in a health and wellbeing programme give respondents some level of confidence that the employer cares about their wellbeing, but there are still 36% of members who do not feel very confident in their employer despite having access to a health and wellbeing programme. This is an indication that employers can't view wellbeing programmes as a box that needs to be ticked off; rather they need to but need to dedicate resources and attention to integrate the wellbeing programme into their employees' daily lives.



## Confidence in your employer matters.

Building confidence and trust with your employees is imperative, as the data shows. Simply showing them, through effective communication and action, that you have the employees' best interests in mind can make a difference in maintaining a productive and physically and mentally healthier workforce.

73%

of respondents who are not at all confident in their employer are more stressed vs. 55% of respondents who are very confident

60%

of respondents who are not at all confident in their employer report having trouble focusing on work vs. 32% of respondents who are very confident



## The working-from-home population is the most confident in their employer's pandemic response.

The population that transitioned to working from home is doing relatively well compared to the overall population, likely since they can work with reduced risk of exposure to the virus, greater control over exposure and added work flexibility.

70%

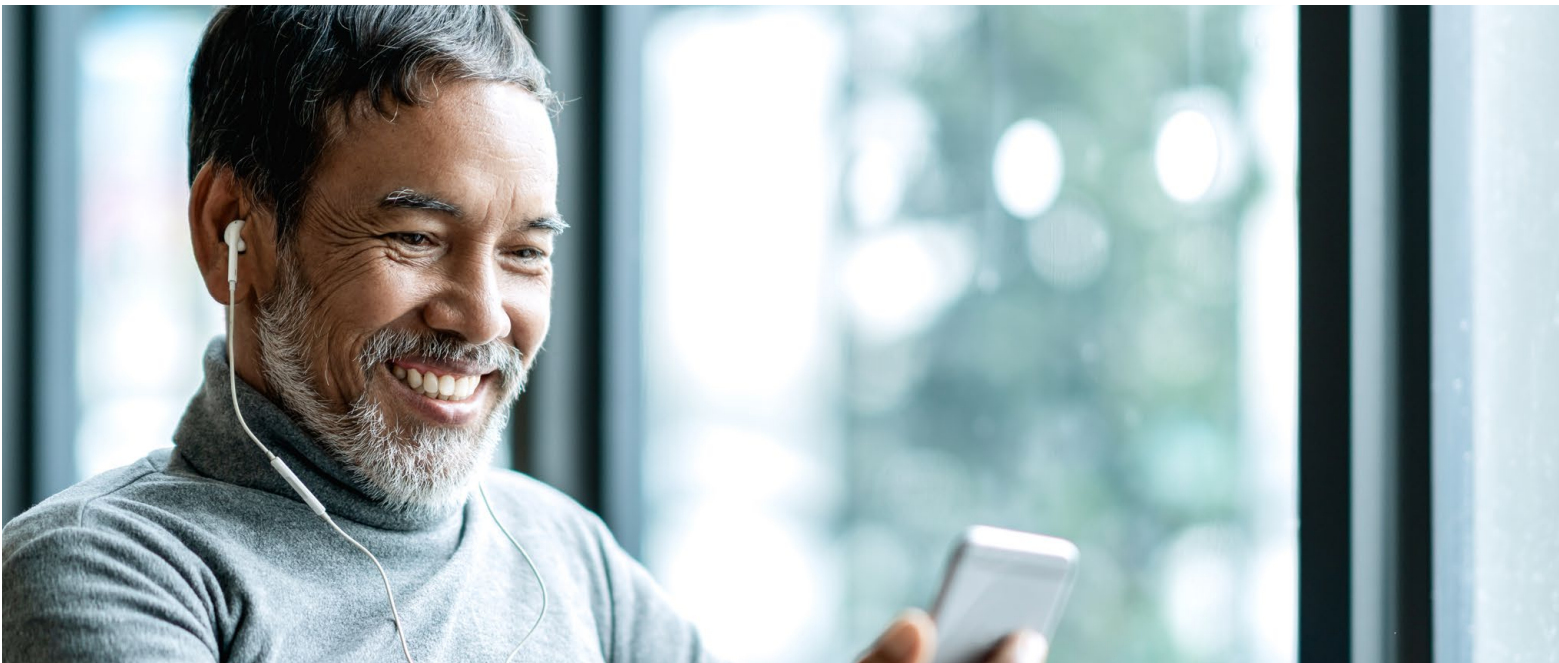
of those working from home are very confident in their employer's response

30%

of those working from home report healthier eating habits

34%

of those working from home report working more – 11% higher than the next group



It is encouraging to see the unintended benefits of being able to work from home. The high proportion of members feeling confident in their employer as they transition to remote work indicates that an employers' willingness to allow employees to work remotely gives workers a sense that they are trusted.

However, the added flexibility does come with potential downsides, as the clear separation between work and home is blurred, indicated by 34% of employees reporting they are now working more. People working at home who also have responsibility for the care of children, their parents or someone who is ill, may be at an increased risk of burnout and mental health issues. They may spend less quality time with family and on self-care (at a minimum health-focused routines, behaviors and activities), and experience other

negative longer-term physical and mental consequences. Survey demographics did not include life circumstances and family status, but it would be strongly recommended that organisations be cognisant of these potential effects and continue to support their employees working from home to make time and space for self-care. Incorporating innovative ways to maintain work-life balance is essential, such as more frequent use of short breaks and following a schedule, can help avoid burnout.

## What Can Employers Do?

### Improving employee resilience with the provision of more mental health resources.

It should go without saying that the pandemic, complicated further by national and global unrest, economic downturn as well as other major events and issues such as race and politics, has established a focus on concerns of mental health. Stress levels have likely never been higher across the population, and people dealing with more serious mental health issues need support more than ever. No longer as stigmatised and hidden as in generations past, people are willing to be more open about their mental health challenges, indicated by responses to our survey:

32%

of at-risk members requested further mental health resources

76%

of the total population reports elevated stress, indicating a gap in stress management resources

**Providing mental health and stress reduction resources can impact additional aspects of wellbeing**

Among all mental health resources that we track, only EAP utilisation has not increased since the pandemic started. Roughly 25% are using coaching in any given month, but less than 5% of the total population are fully utilising other resources aimed at mental health care. Initially, there was an encouraging increase in stress-reduction resources like

digital meditation, yoga and social challenges enabling group support and less isolation. Companies should keep trying to make these resources more accessible, and positively encourage utilisation of them however possible by prioritising their promotion among their benefits and rewards strategies.

## Aim to provide stable work circumstances for your employees.

While work itself is still subject to lockdowns, social distancing and other local and national guidelines aimed at controlling virus spread for an indeterminate time to come, companies are best served by establishing a workforce health and productivity strategy focused on supporting employees in their daily, weekly and monthly routines that can also provide better wellbeing support.

We've seen how impactful changes in work environment can be to employees, so it is in the best interest of organisations to minimise the disruption as much as possible.

By further segmenting respondents into those who are "well-adjusted" and those who are "at-risk," we see that utilisation of wellbeing programme resources can bring to employees' attention some critical factors that may have been overlooked, as well as centralise resources and support that they need.

### 55% of the well-adjusted members report using Virgin Pulse to keep a daily routine during the COVID-19 situation.

Regular communication and reminders through e-mail, push notifications or webinars are valuable low-cost resources that can have a significant payoff.

By minimising the frequency of changes and being open to a slower progression to the next "normal" of what work will look like post-COVID-19, companies can hope to increase the population's overall proportion of well-adjusted employees and reduce the proportion at-risk employees. Businesses should prioritise programmes and tactics focused on reducing specific health risks.



#### At-Risk

Decrease in validated activity

Decrease in validated sleep

Increase in self-reported stress levels  
(answering 7 or higher on the 1 to 10 scale in the member survey)



#### Well-Adjusted

Increase in validated activity

Increase in validated sleep

Decrease or little to no increase in self-reported stress levels (answering 6 or below on the 1 to 10 scale in the member survey)

\*Validated activity refers to data points that are not self-entered by the member

## Summary of Recommendations

**The COVID-19 pandemic has already had a significant impact and will keep organisations and individuals operating in a “next normal” state for the foreseeable future.**

Even when the pandemic is under control, work and lives are not likely to return to pre-2020 “normalcy.” With the possibility of the pandemic lingering or another novel virus emerging, companies may also seek to maintain preparedness. Furthermore, employers may continue to support remote status in lieu of maintaining or leasing buildings for large work locations and people may want to keep working from home. There is no-one-size-fits-all approach and will likely depend jointly on employee and employer preferences and needs. In short, businesses that have established new work processes, procedures and systems may not be so ready to quickly abandon them. Below are recommendations for both organisations and their employees on how to stay safe and healthy during this time and into the future.

## Organisations



Encourage a corporate culture of wellbeing, education, support and self-care embedded within future planning



Develop employee resilience to prepare for living with change, uncertainty and new ways of work life



Ensure mental health and physical health are given similar priorities in wellbeing programmes



Promote tools that build strong routines (i.e. Virgin Pulse's daily cards or healthy habits)



Bring awareness to financial wellbeing resources during unprecedented economic turmoil



Strive for transparent and clear communication; it builds trust with employees, which helps them reduce stress and anxiety over job-related concerns



Where possible, aim to maintain what worked best for employees and create as close to a similar working routine as possible



Create regular wellbeing reminders and notifications keep employees' health top of mind



Offer free mental health resources if available

Strive for transparent and clear communication; it builds trust with employees, which helps them reduce stress and anxiety over job-related concerns.





## Individuals



Reach out to your employers about available resources - more often than not there are resources that employees are unaware of



Try building a daily routine - small changes can make a big difference



For those working from home, schedule frequent and regular breaks, and abide to "sign off" times to maintain healthy work life balance



Schedule and communicate regular times during day that young ones can "meet with you" for anything they may need or want to ask (making exceptions for any emergency situations that require immediate attention)



Involve family members, friends and colleagues in your approach to wellbeing



Maintain a healthy diet: For those working from home, take advantage of the fact you can cook healthy meals throughout the day. For those working at an office or a new location, prepare healthy meals in advance or seek out healthy choices in the local area. Obesity is the leading risk factor for COVID-19 deaths, and it's important to minimise this risk as much as possible



Make a regular sleep routine part of your wellbeing programme



Try to use meditation or mindfulness exercises on a daily basis



Do not neglect any underlying health conditions and do not be afraid to approach your healthcare provider

**The COVID-19 pandemic is a dynamic situation and new information becomes available on a regular basis as medical professionals learn new facts and approaches to COVID-19. These recommendations are based on what we know so far and what we can glean from our survey results. Virgin Pulse is closely monitoring the evolving situation around COVID-19 and ways we can provide education and thought leadership on how organisations should adjust.**

COVID-19 has had a major impact on the physical, mental and financial health of employees and employers, impacting their work and home lives. To help organisations and individuals navigate this challenging time, Virgin Pulse released a number of resources, product integrations, new offerings and virtual content aimed at supporting the physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing needs of workforces and their families.

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## COVID-19 Wellbeing Resources

The first in our industry to respond to COVID-19, Virgin Pulse Science Advisory Board members, clinicians and expert partners created dozens of resources, toolkits and webinars to keep customers and communities safe and informed through the pandemic. Accessible within the Virgin Pulse app and in a [free public-facing COVID-19 wellbeing hub](#), individuals and organisations could access topics such as a coronavirus Q&A, protecting high-risk populations, staying active through disruptions, work-life balance, dependent care, new considerations for working from home or on the front lines, nutrition, mental health and combating the effects of loneliness and isolation.

GO TO LINK

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## Work-From-Home Playbook

Adjusting to the rapid shift to remote working was difficult for employees and employers alike. This sudden change of routine, along with the added stress of the pandemic, presented an array of challenges that left many seeking a one-stop-shop for support. To help organisations navigate this new world of working, we put together a comprehensive public-facing resource to boost productivity, mindfulness, resilience, sleep, nutrition and physical activity.

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## VP Passport

Recognising the critical need for a configurable tool that employers could use to keep their workplace and their people safe in their return-to-workplace plans, we launched VP Passport in June 2020 to align with the new world of workplace safety. Complete with screening, reporting, live support, partner solutions, a safety dashboard and more, this digital platform was created to meet the unique needs of each organisation while adhering to national safety protocols to reinforce a smooth reopening process.

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## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Between the public examples of social injustice and the racial disparities underscored by COVID-19, businesses everywhere realized the urgent need to improve not only diversity and inclusion within their workforce, but also health equity at large. In response to this public health crisis, we turned to diversity, equity and inclusion experts like [Dr. Aletha Maybank](#), [Dr. Dexter Shurney](#) and our newest Science Advisory Board member [Dr. Jessica Isom](#) to provide informed guidance for our in-app and online content and exclusive webinars as part of our THRIVEx extended series.





## Conclusion

**A key goal of this paper is to reinforce the importance of maintaining healthy lifestyle routines and stability in our lives.**

Changes in our physical, mental, financial or social health have had a significant impact on employee risk for severe COVID-19 outcomes and have been shown to significantly disrupt working lives. Now more than ever, employers have a responsibility to understand the most effective ways to help and connect with their employees and provide support to improve personal and business resilience.

Creating a stable environment for employees through clear communication and thoughtful action can dramatically change workers' lives, while also determining how an organisation adjusts to a new normal. 2020 has undoubtedly made an impact on the entire population, and it is imperative we learn from the negative disruptions COVID-19 has caused. Regardless of how an organisation has been forced to deal with COVID-19, the consistent message the data has shown us is take care of your employees and they will take care of your business.

# CHANGING LIVES *And* BUSINESSES FOR GOOD

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