



Mental Health Survey

BY J TURNER RESEARCH

SEPTEMBER 2024

About NAA

The National Apartment Association (NAA) serves as the leading voice and preeminent resource through advocacy, education, and collaboration on behalf of the rental housing industry. As a federation of 141 affiliates, NAA encompasses over 96,000 members representing more than 12.4 million apartment homes globally. NAA believes that rental housing is a valuable partner in every community that emphasizes integrity, accountability, collaboration, community responsibility, inclusivity, and innovation. To learn more, visit www.naaHQ.org.

About J Turner Research

J Turner Research is an independent research company focused exclusively on the multifamily industry for two decades. It is the only company to monitor the online reviews and ratings of 140,000+ properties nationwide. J Turner pioneered the Online Reputation Assessment (ORA®) score, which serves as the multifamily industry standard to measure, benchmark, and compare a property/company's online reputation. J Turner is the national leader in enhancing resident satisfaction through intelligent resident and prospect survey programs, AI-driven data analysis, quantifiable action plans, customized training, and review response service. www.jturnerresearch.com.

About MRI Software

MRI Software is a leading provider of real estate software solutions that transform the way communities live, work and play. MRI's open and connected, AI-first platform empowers agents, owners, operators and occupiers in commercial and residential property organizations to innovate in rapidly changing markets. MRI has been a trailblazer in the PropTech industry for over five decades, serving more than six million users worldwide, including the public and affordable housing sector. Through innovative solutions and a rich partner ecosystem, MRI gives real estate companies the freedom to realize their vision of building thriving communities and stronger businesses. www.mrisoftware.com

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Executive Summary

The rental housing industry’s role in providing housing to millions of Americans is vital, yet the demanding nature of the work can negatively impact the mental health of industry professionals. Recognizing this well reported concern, it’s crucial to understand the specific challenges faced by rental housing workers and identify effective support systems. This report delves into the mental health landscape of the industry, aiming to shed light on the prevalence of mental health challenges, key stressors and coping mechanisms employed by workers. By providing these insights, the report lays the groundwork for developing targeted interventions and support programs to foster a healthier and more sustainable work environment for those dedicated to providing essential housing services.

A comprehensive survey, conducted in collaboration with J Turner Research, sought to understand the state of mental well-being within the rental housing industry. Targeting both management companies and supplier partners, the survey employed a three-pronged approach:

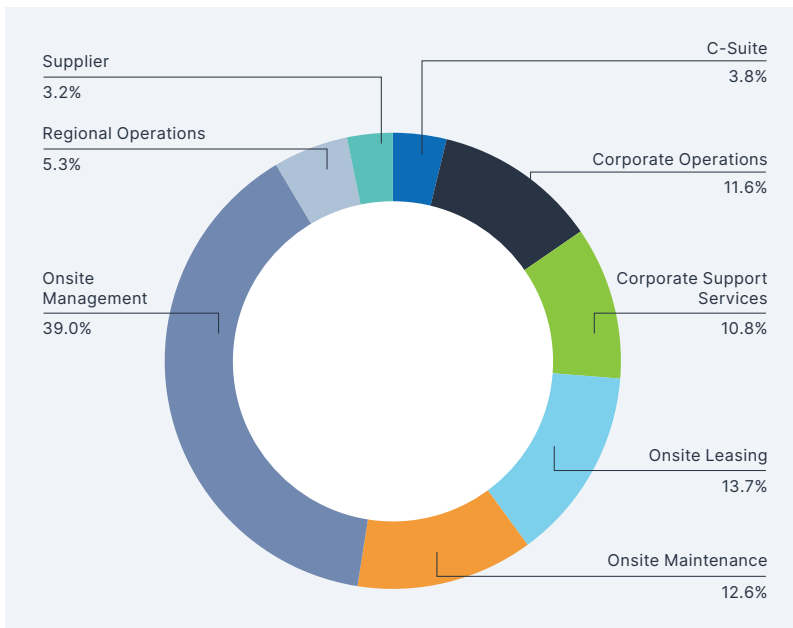
- **Mental and Emotional Distress:** Utilizing the Kessler 10 questionnaire, the survey measured respondents’ current levels of distress.
- **Impact on Work Ability:** This section explored the link between mental health and work performance, specifically examining absenteeism and presenteeism trends.
- **Prevalence of Workplace Trauma:** The survey investigated the occurrence of workplace trauma within the industry and its subsequent impact on employees’ mental well-being.

By analyzing the data collected from these three sections, the report provides valuable insights into the mental health challenges faced by rental housing workers. This information serves as a crucial starting point for developing effective support systems and fostering a more positive and healthy work environment within the industry.

*To preserve the original voice of the speakers, we have kept the spelling in the quotes exactly as they appeared in the responses to the survey.

Demographics

This study drew participation from over 700 workers in the rental housing industry giving us a 99% confidence interval with a ±5% margin of error. The majority (68%) of respondents were women and 29% were men. The remaining responses were from other selected genders. The average amount of rental industry experience was 10.6 years.



Key Findings:

Mental Health in the Rental Housing Industry

This survey unveiled crucial insights into the mental well-being of employees within the rental housing industry. Here are the key findings:

HIGH DISTRESS LEVELS IN SPECIFIC ROLES:

- **Across the Organization:** Onsite Leasing (50%), Onsite Management (46%), C-Suite (45%) and Corporate Operations (44%) experience some of the highest levels of distress, indicating that no matter the level there is a challenge that needs to be addressed.
- **Not Always Greener:** Both supplier partners and management experience significant distress, with levels reaching 46% and 42%, respectively, highlighting challenges across the industry.

PRESENTEEISM AND EFFORT:

- **Overexertion Across Roles:** Respondents across all positions believe they are exceeding performance expectations, consistently reporting effort levels exceeding 100%. Interestingly, those identified as “Well” based on their Kessler 10 scores perceive their performance even higher, averaging 119%.
- **Distress Impacts Actual Performance:** This perception is skewed, as actual performance is lower, particularly for those experiencing distress. Severely distressed individuals believe they contribute 114% performance but only deliver 66%.
- **Onsite Maintenance Stands Out:** Onsite maintenance personnel demonstrate the highest actual performance at 82%, showcasing their dedication despite potential challenges.

TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES AND AWARENESS OF RESOURCES:

- **C-Suite Exposure:** Surprisingly, the C-suite reports the highest rate of traumatic experiences (80%), followed by Onsite Management (50%) and Onsite Leasing (49%).
- **Gap in Resource Awareness:** Despite their exposure, the C-suite demonstrates one of the highest rates of awareness of mental health resources (58%). This awareness is significantly lower among Onsite Management (47%) and Onsite Leasing (40%), highlighting the need for improved communication and accessibility of resources.

PERCEPTION OF MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AND HOPEFULNESS:

- **Room for Improvement:** The industry scores an average of 6.0 out of 10 regarding the seriousness given to mental health. This perception further declines to 4.5 for severely distressed individuals.
- **Hopefulness as an Indicator:** While 80% of respondents express hopefulness, a lack of hope strongly correlates (0.97) with high distress levels, suggesting it as a potential early indicator of mental health concerns.

OVERALL MENTAL HEALTH TRENDS:

- **Positive Trajectory:** The average mental health score is a promising 6.9 out of 10. This, coupled with a 6.6 average response to questions about improving mental health, suggests a positive trend in overall well-being.
- **Concern for Severely Distressed:** Individuals experiencing severe distress are reporting minimal progress in their well-being. Their current scores (4.8) and scores from six months ago (4.4) on a scale measuring improvement are significantly low. This emphasizes the urgent need for targeted support services and interventions specifically designed for this group.

Addressing Distress Within The Industry

The Kessler 10 (K10) is a quick and easy way to assess someone’s recent level of psychological distress. This 10-question survey asks individuals to rate how often they’ve experienced feelings like nervousness, hopelessness and fatigue during the past month. Each answer is scored from 1 (none of the time) to 5 (all of the time), resulting in a total score ranging from 10 to 50. Higher scores indicate greater distress.

UNDERSTANDING K10 SCORES:

- **Well (10-19):** Indicates low levels of psychological distress.
- **Mild Distress (20-24):** Suggests the presence of some psychological distress.
- **Moderate Distress (25-29):** Points to a moderate level of psychological distress.
- **Severe Distress (30-50):** Signifies a high level of psychological distress and potential need for professional help.

WORKPLACE IMPLICATIONS:

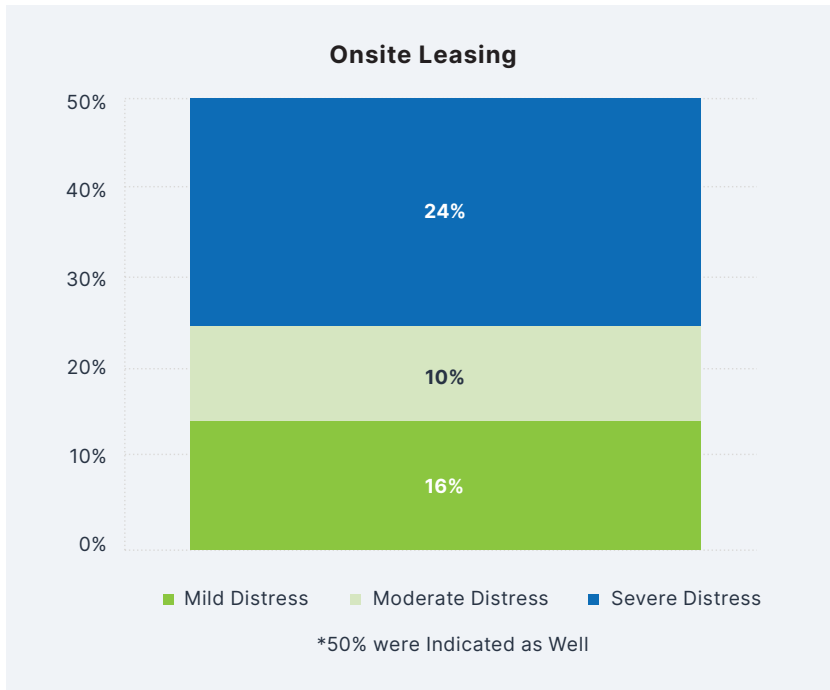
The rental housing industry appears to take a toll on the mental well-being of all involved, regardless of their specific role. This is evident in data showing widespread stress throughout the industry.

| Title | At Least Some Level of Distress | Well |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|------|
| Onsite Leasing | 50% | 50% |
| Onsite Management | 46% | 54% |
| C-Suite | 45% | 55% |
| Corporate Operations | 44% | 56% |



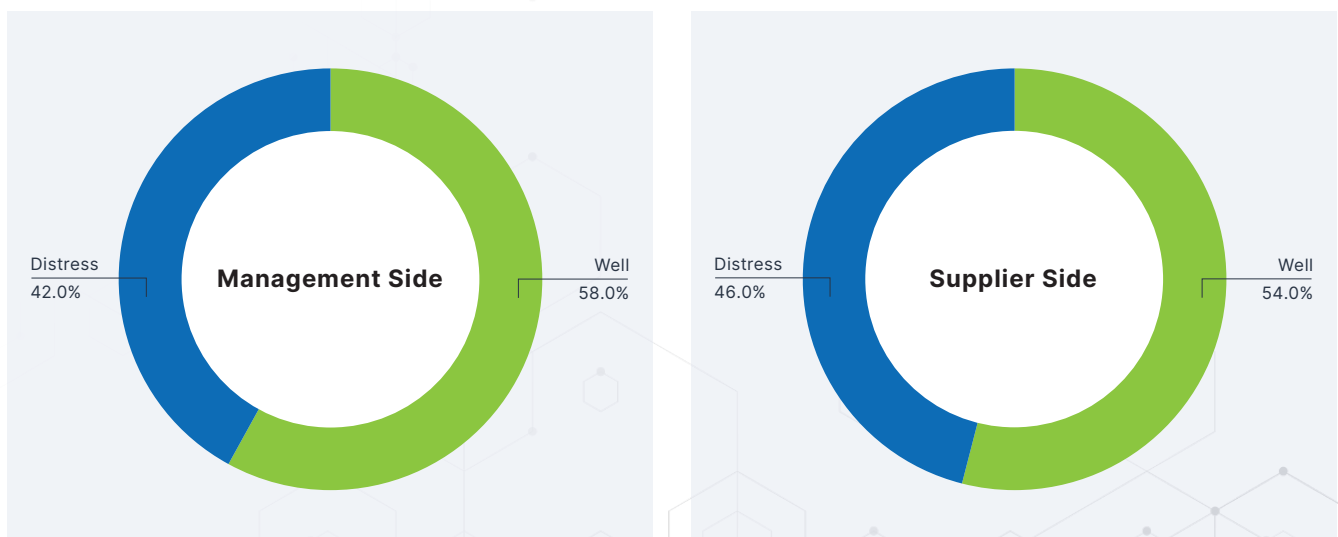
A STEPPING STONE:

The high distress levels among leasing professionals demand immediate attention. With an average experience of just three years, they are often the industry’s first impression yet report the highest rates of distress, with a concerning 24% at “severe” levels. Addressing this issue is crucial for both employee well-being and the industry’s ability to attract and retain talent.



TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN:

While well-being within the industry seems consistent across positions, neither management nor supplier partner roles fare particularly well. Management reports 58% well-being compared to 54% for supplier partners, indicating a marginally better experience, but both groups show a significant portion of individuals in distress (42% and 46%, respectively).



Present and Accounted For (Or Are We?)

Workplace attendance isn't always as simple as "present" or "absent." Two key concepts help us understand the nuances of employee presence and its impact on productivity:

- **Absenteeism:** This refers to the habitual or intentional absence from work. It can be caused by various factors like illness, family emergencies, burnout or low morale. High absenteeism rates can disrupt operations, increase workloads for other employees and impact overall productivity.
- **Presenteeism:** This describes the situation where employees are physically present at work but are not fully functioning due to illness, stress or other personal issues. While they may be at their desks, their focus and productivity are significantly diminished, leading to potential errors, reduced work quality and decreased overall team performance.

Absenteeism and presenteeism, while distinct challenges, share the ability to disrupt organizational effectiveness. To cultivate a thriving and productive workplace, understanding and tackling the root causes of both issues is essential. This survey delved into these concerns by investigating the time employees missed due to personal or family health issues, and by exploring expectations surrounding work hours. Additionally, the survey gauged employee perceptions of their own performance and contrasted it with objective measures of actual performance.

NO BREAKS:

Absenteeism in the industry isn't as big of a concern as some may hypothesize. Data reveals that even severely distressed individuals are only missing about 8.8 hours per month, which translates to roughly 13 days per year. In contrast, those reporting good well-being are absent for less than an hour monthly (1.5 days a year).

While employee absenteeism isn't a major concern, a closer look at vacation time usage paints a worrying picture of potential burnout within the industry. Data reveals that, on average, employees have only taken 1.4 vacation days in the past 28 days. This trend of extended work hours without equal time away, raises red flags.

Survey results indicate that employees, on average, worked beyond their scheduled hours or on their days off more than 8.4 times in the past month. This issue appears to escalate as we move up the corporate ladder:

- **Onsite Management:** 8.8 days
- **Regional Operations:** 13.9 days
- **Corporate Operations:** 11.2 days
- **C-Suite:** 13 days

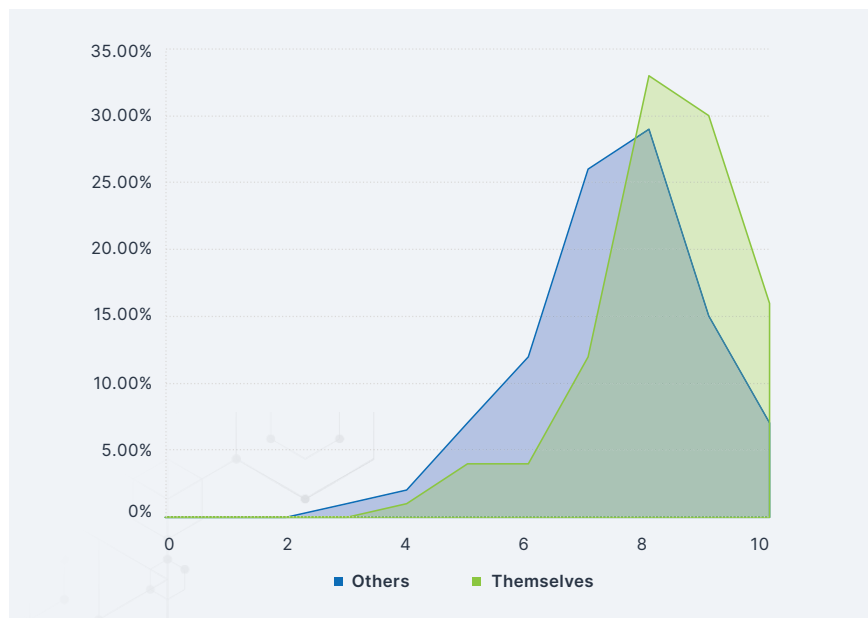
The data also reveals a clear correlation (0.72) between employee distress and the number of days they work extended hours. This connection points to a potential imbalance between work and personal life, impacting employee well-being, particularly among senior management. To ensure a healthy and productive workforce over time, addressing this work-life imbalance is essential.

| Distress Level | Days worked outside of regular hours |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Well | 7.8 |
| Mild Distress | 8.9 |
| Moderate Distress | 7.8 |
| Severe Distress | 10.2 |

AT LEAST WE ARE PRESENT?:

While absenteeism might not be a major concern within the rental housing industry, its lesser-known counterpart, presenteeism, can quietly undermine productivity and well-being. Employees showing up to work while ill, stressed or otherwise unfit to perform their duties effectively can negatively impact customer service, task completion and even workplace morale.

To gauge how much effort individuals believe they invest in their jobs, the survey employed a two-step approach. First, respondents were asked to evaluate the performance of most people in similar roles. Then, on a scale of 0 to 10, they rated their own performance overall. This method helped create a picture of perceived effort among respondents and opened the door to look at presenteeism within the industry.



While individuals rated the general skill level of their peers at an average of 7.4, with most hovering around 7 or 8, they placed themselves significantly higher at 8.2. This confidence is reflected in the chart, where the majority ranked their own abilities as an 8 or 9.

Utilizing the World Health Organization’s Health and Work Performance Questionnaire (HPQ) revealed a notable disparity in perceived versus actual employee performance. Employees, regardless of their stress levels, consistently rated their own performance above 100%, indicating a belief that they are exceeding expectations. Intriguingly, employees experiencing severe distress rated their performance as the second highest, highlighting a potential disconnect between self-perception and reality, especially within this group.

| Distress Level | Perceived Performance |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Well | 119.8% |
| Mild Distress | 106.4% |
| Moderate Distress | 111.6% |
| Severe Distress | 114.5% |

However, a closer look reveals a different picture. When evaluating actual performance based on the past month’s work, a strong correlation (0.99) emerges between distress levels and performance. This indicates that as stress levels rise, actual work performance tends to decline.

| Distress Level | Actual Determined Performance |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| Well | 85.04% |
| Mild Distress | 77.87% |
| Moderate Distress | 71.92% |
| Severe Distress | 66.53% |

A significant issue arises when examining the disparity between a worker’s perceived performance and their actual output. This gap between self-evaluation and reality presents a substantial problem, particularly among severely distressed workers. These individuals tend to overestimate their performance significantly, perceiving it to be around 114% while, in actuality, their output only reaches about 66%. This discrepancy highlights a disconnect between self-awareness and actual productivity, creating a significant challenge for both employee and employer.



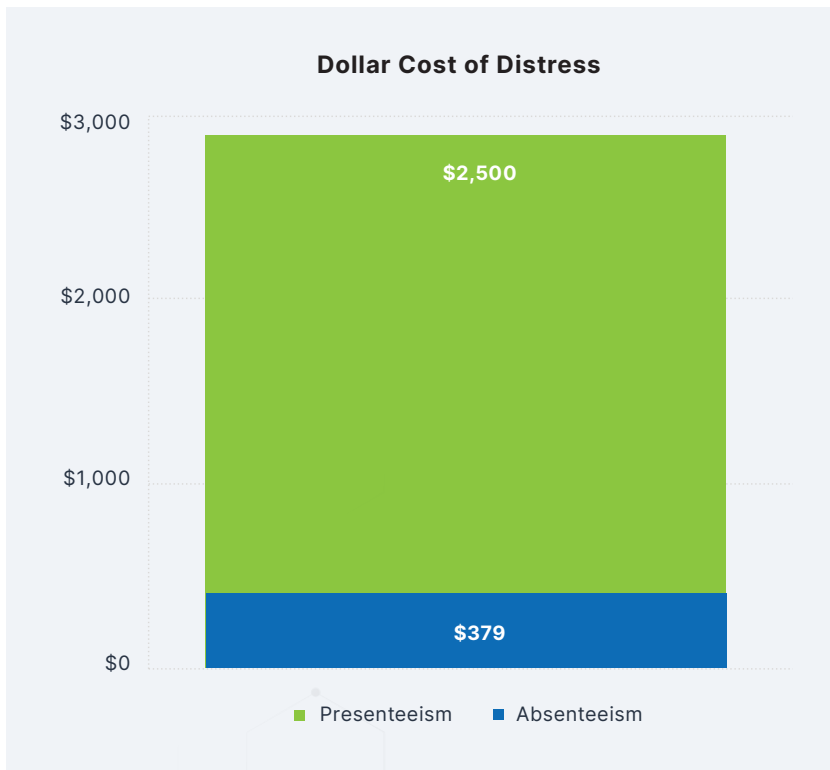
A THOUGHT EXPERIMENT:

While companies often worry about the cost of employees missing work (absenteeism), the cost that’s often overlooked is presenteeism.

Let’s consider an example. An employee earning a \$90,000 annual salary (roughly \$43 per hour) is experiencing severe distress. Based on absenteeism rates discussed earlier, we might expect them to miss around 9 hours of work per month. This absenteeism translates to a cost of approximately **\$379 per month** for the company.

However, the cost of presenteeism is far greater. The data shows that severe distress can lead to a 33% reduction in productivity. For our employee, this means a **monthly loss of approximately \$2,500** due to reduced performance.

When we combine the costs of absenteeism and presenteeism, we find that the employee’s distress results in just under **\$3,000 of lost value per month** for the company. This highlights the significant impact of presenteeism and the importance of addressing employee well-being.



Not Just Wear and Tear

Workplace trauma, encompassing a range of distressing events from bullying and harassment to physical assault and life-threatening accidents, casts a long shadow over individuals and organizations alike. Its severity is often underestimated, yet the ramifications can be profound, leaving lasting scars on mental and emotional well-being. Exposure to trauma at work can lead to a cascade of negative consequences, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression and burnout. The ripple effects extend beyond the individual, impacting productivity, morale, and overall organizational effectiveness. Recognizing the gravity of workplace trauma is crucial for fostering a safe and supportive environment where employees can thrive.



Customer service is difficult if you have true empathy for residents. Residents sometimes arrive hostile, and it is part of my job to deescalate, but with no debriefing for the office worker after, and residents sometimes don't respect professional boundaries.



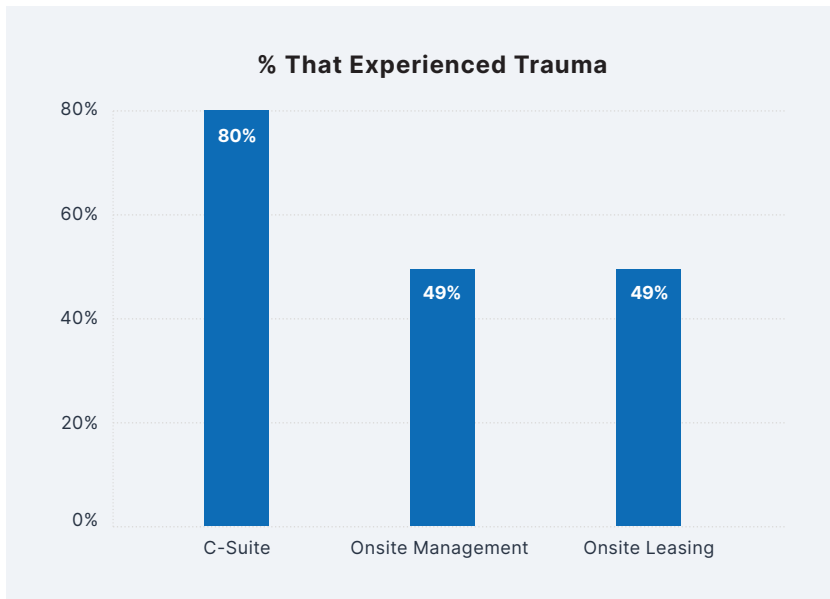
The demanding nature of property management often leads to gallows humor within the industry. Jokes about navigating challenging interactions or encountering distressing situations may serve as a coping mechanism. However, it's crucial to acknowledge the seriousness of these experiences and their potential impact on employee well-being and performance.

Anecdotes of employees facing threats requiring them to barricade themselves in their offices highlight the dangerous situations property management professionals encounter. Furthermore, discovering deceased individuals during wellness checks underscores the emotionally taxing nature of their work. These incidents, while perhaps shared in a lighthearted manner, represent significant emotional burdens, which can lead to stress, anxiety, and even PTSD.

Ignoring the potential consequences of such events can have detrimental effects on employee performance. Unresolved trauma can lead to decreased productivity, difficulty concentrating and challenges in interpersonal interactions. Ultimately, this can impact the overall effectiveness of property management operations and resident satisfaction.

SCARS FROM THE PAST:

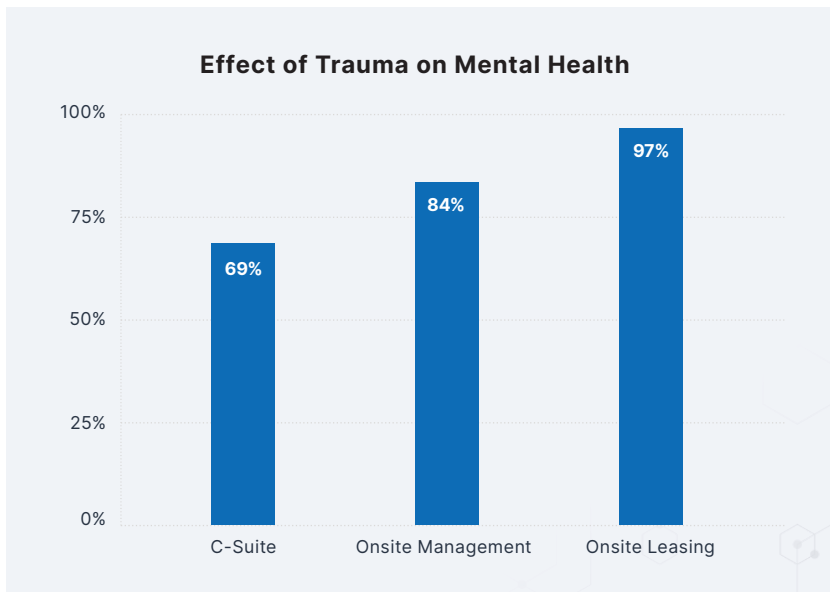
Survey data regarding workplace trauma exposure reveals a concerning trend, particularly amongst experienced professionals. A staggering 80% of C-suite respondents reported experiencing some form of trauma during their careers. This figure underscores the potential mental and emotional toll of prolonged exposure to high-pressure positions within the industry. Furthermore, the data highlights vulnerability across other key roles, with 49% of both onsite managers and onsite leasing professionals also indicating past trauma exposure. This finding suggests the pervasiveness of workplace trauma across various levels of responsibility and operational involvement.



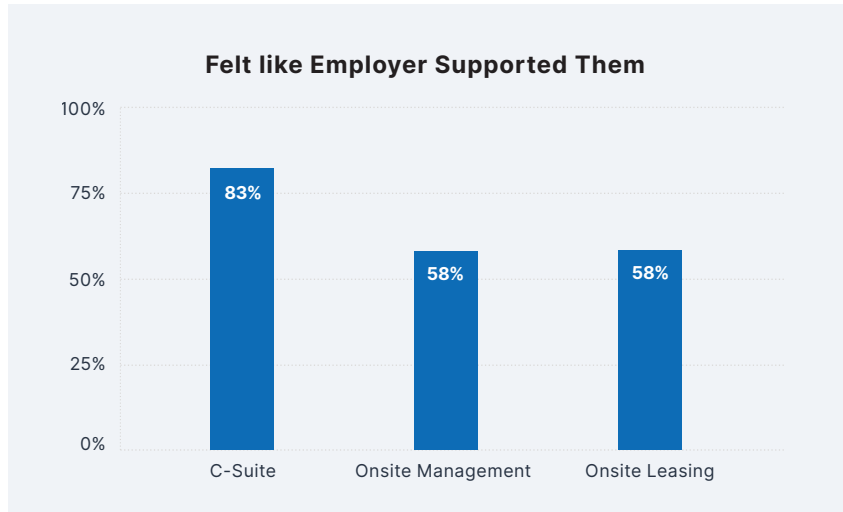
The reach of workplace trauma is far wider than thought. It’s not limited to specific roles or levels; it casts a shadow across the entire industry. The alarming reality is that 47% of employees, regardless of position, have endured some form of trauma at work. This pervasive issue demands attention.

THE EFFECT OF RESOURCES AND SUPPORT:

The survey further delved into the mental health repercussions of workplace trauma experienced by the three groups: C-suite executives, onsite managers, and leasing professionals. Interestingly, the impact on mental well-being on each group displayed an inverse relationship to the rates of trauma. Leasing professionals, despite having the third highest trauma exposure, reported the highest mental health impact, with a staggering 97% indicating negative effects. Onsite managers followed closely behind at 84%. Surprisingly, the C-suite executives, who endured the highest rates of trauma, reported the lowest mental health impact at 69%. While this figure remains significant, the stark contrast to the other groups raises questions and warrants further exploration.



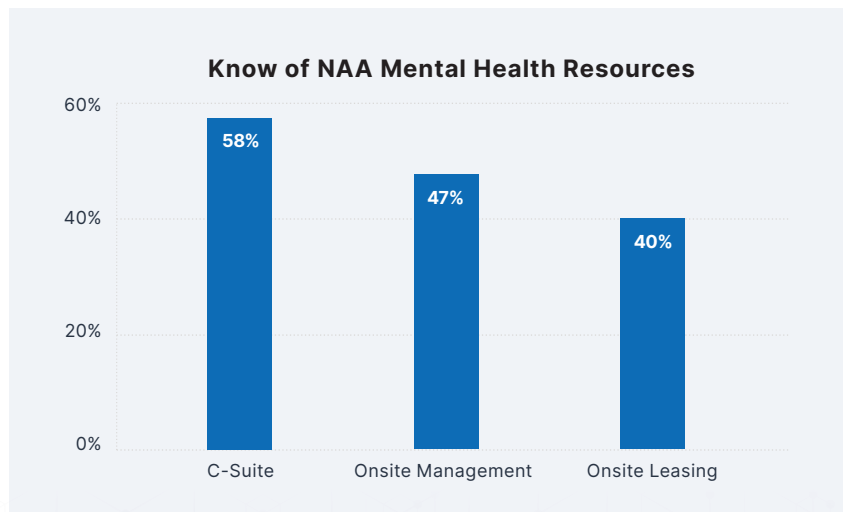
A significant gap in perceived employer support emerged when respondents were asked if they felt supported during traumatic events. While a substantial 83% of C-suite executives felt supported by their employers, only 58% of onsite management and leasing personnel reported the same level of support. This disparity highlights a potential disconnect between leadership and frontline employees during challenging times.



“ Have a protocol in place for employees who need a mental health day that doesn’t involve the threat of a write up. Being told “you can definitely go home [but]” isn’t actually letting someone go home. ”

While NAA offers a wealth of mental health resources and industry conferences increasingly address this crucial topic, there seems to be a disconnect in delivering these resources to the team members who need them most. A concerning disparity exists between leadership awareness and that of boots-on-the-ground staff. While 58% of C-suite executives are aware of available resources, this awareness drops significantly to 47% among onsite managers and a concerning 40% among onsite leasing professionals. This data comes from a per company analysis of knowledge of resources.

The disparity in mental health awareness between corporate leaders and other employees is alarming, especially because we know that employer support and knowledge of mental health resources directly impact how trauma affects employees. This suggests a troubling possibility: Corporate leaders may be less affected by mental health challenges simply because they are more aware of and have better access to resources. Meanwhile, team members lacking this awareness might be struggling in silence, unaware of the support systems available to them. This gap isn’t just unfair, it’s detrimental to the well-being of the entire organization. To create a truly supportive environment, a proactive strategy is needed that ensures all employees are informed about and have equal access to vital mental health resources.



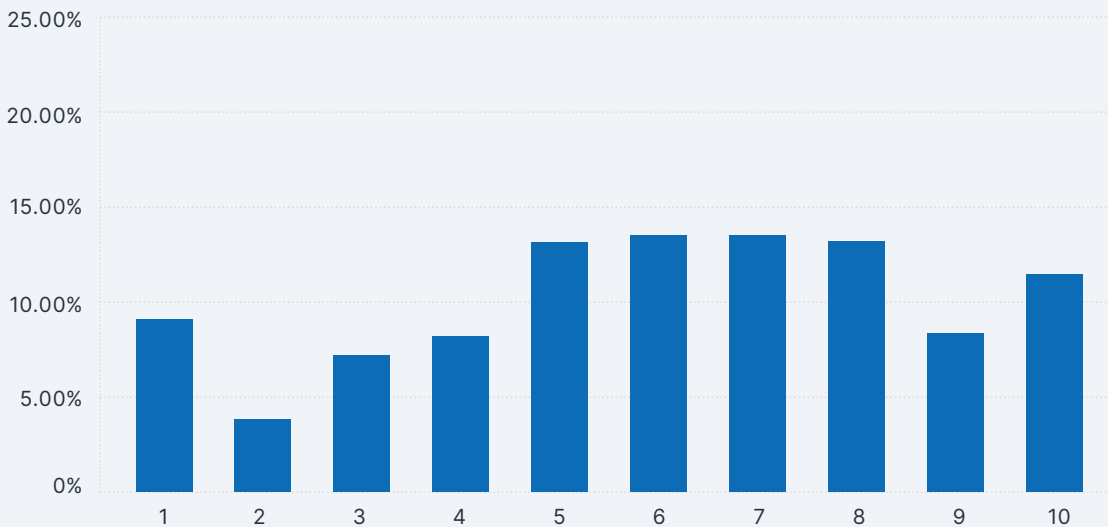
Hope Floats

A CHANGING LANDSCAPE:

The landscape surrounding mental health discussions, while showing some signs of progress, still has a long way to go. Although the stigma associated with mental health is slowly diminishing, significant barriers to open dialogue and access to support remain. While the rental housing industry is beginning to acknowledge the importance of mental health, the integration of concrete support systems and resources is still in its early stages. The increasing presence of mental health on conference agendas is a positive development, but it remains to be seen whether this translates into meaningful change and improved support structures for both residents and professionals within the sector.

The survey gauged the industry’s perceived commitment to mental health using a 1-10 scale, with 1 representing ‘not at all serious’ and 10 representing ‘very serious.’ The average response landed at 6, indicating a slightly above-average perception of seriousness. However, this single statistic doesn’t provide a comprehensive understanding of individual opinions. Further analysis of the response distribution is necessary to gain deeper insights.

Do you feel like mental health is taken seriously by the rental housing industry? Average: 6



The industry’s stance on mental health is unclear, but examining perspectives across different distress levels reveals a stark contrast. Those experiencing severe distress hold a significantly more pessimistic view, averaging a 4.5 on the scale measuring where they perceive the attention given to mental health in the industry. In contrast, individuals who identify as “well” express much greater optimism, averaging 6.7. This disparity highlights a critical concern: Those most in need of mental health support feel the industry is failing to adequately address their struggles.

| Group | Do you feel like mental health is taken seriously by the rental housing industry? |
|-------------------|---|
| Well | 6.7 |
| Mild Distress | 5.9 |
| Moderate Distress | 4.9 |
| Severe Distress | 4.5 |

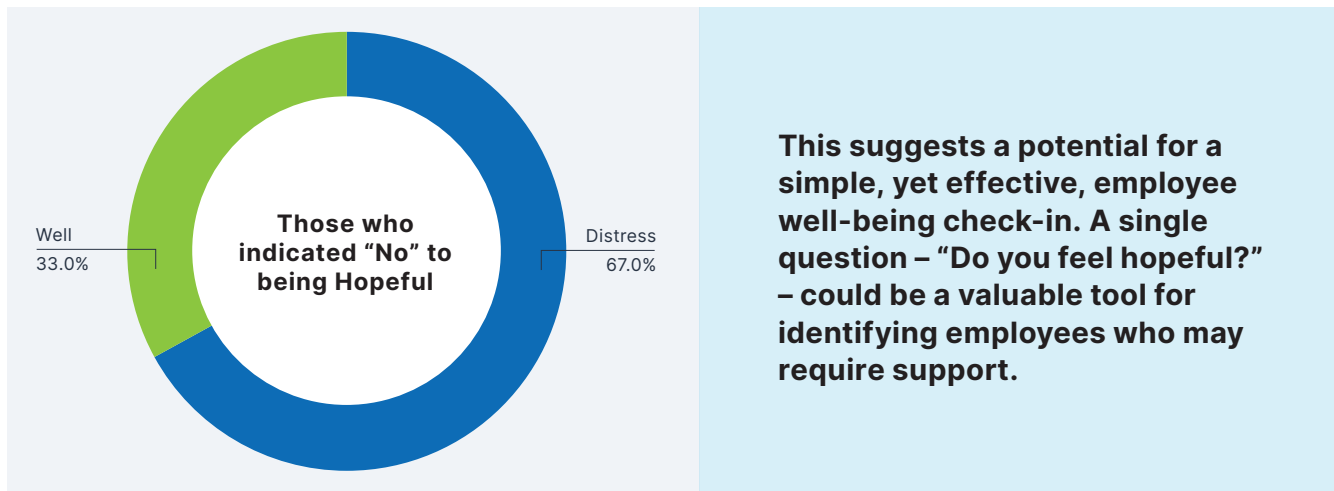
Identifying those most in need of support during a crisis can be a significant challenge. Resources are often limited, making it crucial to pinpoint individuals requiring the most urgent assistance.

AS AN EARLY INDICATOR:

Hopefulness in the workplace acts as a powerful shield for worker mental health, serving as both a protective factor and a potential early warning system. When employees possess a sense of hope, they are better equipped to navigate challenges, manage stress and maintain overall well-being. Conversely, a decline in hopefulness can signal rising levels of mental distress, indicating a need for intervention and support. By recognizing the importance of hopefulness, organizations can gain valuable insights into the mental health of their workforce and take proactive steps to foster a positive and supportive work environment. This, in turn, can help shift societal perspectives on mental health, encouraging a more open and proactive approach to addressing these crucial concerns.

The survey explored feelings of hopefulness. A strong majority (80%) of respondents expressed feeling hopeful, which is encouraging. However, this finding requires further investigation to understand its implications as an early indicator of well-being.

Deeper analysis revealed a striking connection between lacking hope and experiencing distress. There’s a very high correlation (0.97) between respondents who answered “No” to feeling hopeful and those reporting some degree of distress. In simpler terms, if someone didn’t feel hopeful, there was a two-thirds probability they were also experiencing distress. This suggests that hopefulness might be an important factor to consider when assessing mental well-being.



The Future is Bright

“**Optimism is a strategy for making a better future. Because unless you believe that the future can be better, you are unlikely to step up and take responsibility for making it so.**” — Noam Chomsky

SOME POSITIVE SIGNS:

While the data may initially raise concerns about mental health within the industry, a closer look reveals several promising trends. One particularly encouraging finding emerges when comparing respondents’ current mental well-being to their past experiences. The survey asked participants to rate their current mental health on a scale of 1-10, and every job role reported above-average scores of 6 or higher. In fact, the industry average stands at a solid 6.9, demonstrating a somewhat positive state of mental health across the board.

| Title | How do you feel your mental health is today? |
|--|--|
| C-Suite | 7.8 |
| Corporate Acquisitions/Development | 8.5 |
| Corporate Operations | 6.5 |
| Corporate Support Services | 7.2 |
| Onsite Leasing | 6.7 |
| Onsite Maintenance | 7.3 |
| Onsite Management | 6.8 |
| Regional Operations | 6.9 |
| Supplier – Account Management/Customer Service | 6.7 |
| Supplier – Regional Operations | 6.0 |
| Supplier – Sales | 9.0 |
| Supplier – Corporate Operations | 8.0 |
| Supplier – Corporate Support Services | 6.5 |

Mental health in the industry appears to be trending positively. When asked to rate their current mental health compared to six months ago on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being significantly better), the average response was 6.6. This suggests an overall improvement in mental well-being across the industry.

| Title | Compare your mental health today to six months ago (10 being better) |
|-------------------|--|
| C-Suite | 6.5 |
| Onsite Leasing | 6.5 |
| Onsite Management | 6.7 |

A TARGETED APPROACH:

While overall mental health seems to be improving, a closer look reveals a concerning disparity among different distress levels. Those who consider themselves “Well” report high mental health scores, both currently and in terms of improvement. However, as distress levels increase, mental health scores take a sharp decline. Individuals experiencing “Mild” distress report significantly lower scores, with further drops observed in the “Moderate” and “Severe” distress groups. This trend is consistent when comparing current mental health to that of six months ago, indicating a widening gap in mental well-being among those with varying levels of distress.

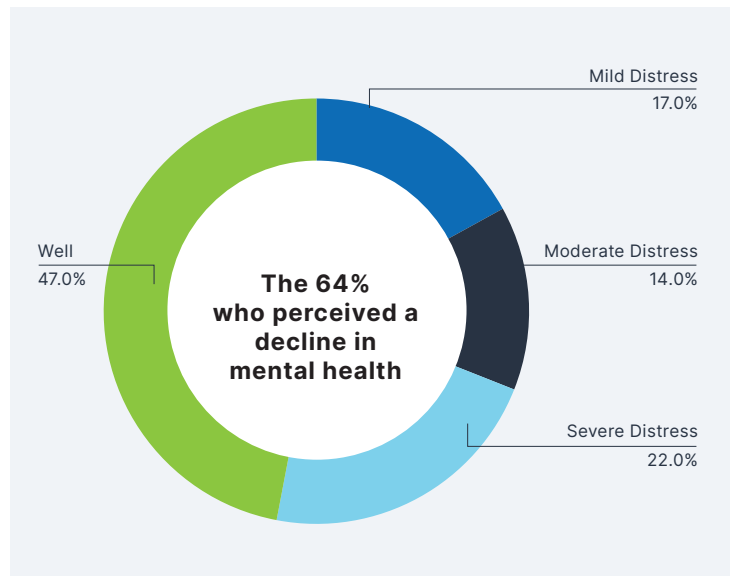
| Group | How do you feel your mental health is today? | Compare your mental health today to six months ago (10 being better) |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Well | 7.9 | 7.5 |
| Mild Distress | 6.5 | 6.3 |
| Moderate Distress | 5.6 | 5.7 |
| Severe Distress | 4.8 | 4.4 |

Despite an overall trend of improving mental health within the industry, the data highlights a concerning exception. Individuals experiencing severe distress reported a decline in their mental well-being compared to six months prior. This finding underscores the urgent need to prioritize resources and support for this vulnerable group. Addressing their specific challenges should be a primary focus to ensure their well-being and prevent further deterioration of their mental health.

A CHANGE IN NARRATIVE:

A concerning and intriguing revelation from the data emerged when respondents were asked about their perception of the overall trend in mental health. This open-ended question yielded diverse responses, but 64% of participants, expressed the belief that mental health has deteriorated since the pandemic.

This finding raises a red flag, especially when juxtaposed with the earlier observation that most individuals perceived an improvement in their personal mental well-being. In fact, excluding the severe distress category, respondents generally indicated an upward trend and a more positive outlook on mental health.



Delving deeper into the 64% who perceived a decline, we discover that the largest segment, constituting 47% of this group, belonged to the “Well” distress category.

When examining the “Well” distress category, a fascinating trend emerges. These individuals tend to express their observations through a broader lens, focusing on societal well-being rather than solely on their personal experiences. For instance, they state:

“mental health in general is worse but not for me”

“Personally I am better off but I know as a collective it seems to be on the decline”

“worst for most people. I am doing fine but the residents and team members are feeling stressed from the pandemic and cost of living going up”

These responses illustrate a clear outward perspective, considering the mental health landscape as a whole, even if they themselves feel well.

In stark contrast, those experiencing distress describe their perceptions through a more personal, first-person lens:

“Worse, I have more anxiety and fear than I did before 2020”

“Worse. I feel a lot of disconnection, a lack of sense of community, among inflation and cost of living being unrealistic.”

This difference in perspective is significant. It suggests that the way mental health data is presented, often skewed toward negativity, might influence individual perceptions. While mental health challenges are undoubtedly a serious issue, there may be an opportunity to present information in a more balanced manner. This balanced approach could potentially help individuals perceive the overall mental health landscape in a less negative light.



The Closing Thoughts

The rental housing industry, while providing essential services, faces a critical challenge: The mental well-being of its workforce. This survey paints a complex picture, revealing high levels of distress across various roles, with onsite staff and leadership particularly impacted. Despite a general trend of positive mental health and increasing awareness, significant concerns remain.

ADDRESSING PRESENTEEISM AND WORKPLACE TRAUMA:

- **Presenteeism:** The hidden cost of presenteeism, where employees work while struggling with mental health issues, demands attention. The resulting decrease in productivity significantly impacts the industry. Strategies to manage workload, promote work-life balance, and provide mental health support are crucial.
- **Workplace Trauma:** The alarming prevalence of workplace trauma, particularly among experienced professionals and onsite staff, requires immediate action. Implementing trauma-informed support systems, fostering open communication and ensuring employee safety are paramount.

BRIDGING THE SUPPORT GAP:

- **Resource Accessibility:** While mental health resources exist, a significant gap in awareness persists, especially for onsite staff. Effective communication strategies and readily accessible support systems are needed to bridge this gap.
- **Leadership Support:** While leaders may be aware of mental health resources, their teams often lack this knowledge. Strong leadership that actively champions and prioritizes mental health initiatives is crucial to bridge this gap.

LEVERAGING HOPE AND POSITIVE TRENDS:

- **Hope as an Indicator:** The strong correlation between hope and mental well-being presents a valuable opportunity. Simple check-ins focusing on hope can be an effective early indicator of distress, enabling timely intervention.
- **Building on Positive Trends:** Despite challenges, the overall trend of improving mental health in the industry offers encouragement. By capitalizing on this momentum and addressing the specific needs of those experiencing severe distress, we can foster a more resilient and thriving workforce.

MOVING FORWARD:

The rental housing industry faces a critical juncture in addressing mental health. Ignoring the mounting pressures and failing to provide adequate support systems will have profound consequences for individuals and the industry as a whole. Without immediate and significant changes, we risk exacerbating existing challenges, leading to a decline in well-being and productivity, and undermining the very fabric of our communities. The time for complacency is over; action is not a choice, but a necessity.

A Note from J Turner Research

The initial simplicity of analyzing numerical data gave a false impression of the study's ease. While numbers are easily quantifiable, they lack the nuance of individual experiences. This oversight became apparent when examining the open-ended responses.

Reading through diverse perspectives from individuals across the industry and situations provided a stark reminder of the human element behind the data. Each response represented a unique journey with its own anxieties and hopes.

To acknowledge these individual stories, the report includes a selection of impactful open-ended responses. These excerpts provide context and highlight the range of experiences relevant to the research, emphasizing the significance of the subject matter.



Selected Responses

How well do you feel your job aligns with your long-term career goals and personal interests?

Currently, it doesn't. I hope once the dust settles, I can focus on what I want to and should be doing.

I feel that I put more effort into my work and the company than most people that are in higher positions than I am. It is frustrating to see people in high positions do the bare minimum and get away with not doing their job to the best of their abilities. I do not see myself working for the company in the next 2-3 years.

There is no alignment. The culture gets more toxic every year while I grow into myself as a person.

Very well, I love multifamily, but the job is taxing and does take a toll.

Pretty bad. This is not what I want or expected.

I would love to finish out my career here until I retire. But there has been a job shift with ACMs and I am fearful my position is going to be eliminated.

Somewhat. It pays the bills and I really enjoy my work. Nothing that aligns with my hobbies and life-long goals though. But I seriously love my job and employer.

Very well, I am in a support role where I can spend my time developing my team and those around me while also getting to positively affect the company culture and performance results.

Since the pandemic, do you feel like mental health has gotten better or worse?

Worse in the sense that it has added more stress onto many people who are dealing with social anxiety.

It went from worse than to better, over time with some counseling sessions.

Since the pandemic mental health is so much worse. People felt isolated, lonely, scared, depressed and removed from everyone. This scar is deep and will not just go away, the pandemic has changed some people's lives forever, and has torn the nation apart.

I think the pandemic had impact in the property management world where owners expect high rents, etc and we being on-site it can be hard when tenants leave to pay a less expensive place to save money. I think some owners/property management are still catching up from the lost returned when the pandemic hit and it puts pressure on us. How can we raise rent and expect for tenants to still make 3x the rent when jobs are not increasing wages? That was a question from an applicant.

Worst for most people. I am doing fine but the residents and team members are feeling stressed from the pandemic and cost of living going up.

Worse. There aren't nearly enough resources for people in this industry.

I'm not sure anyone would say "better" to this question. It's definitely worse.

I feel like mental health has suffered. Everyone seems burnt out and just looking for some time to rest and spend time with their loved ones after working through a global pandemic or facing unemployment. It's weird that we are expected to function how we used to.

Is there anything else you think we should know?

Thank you for showing you care about mental health and caring about our mental well being.

I am currently in search of a good medication that can better help with my anxiously intrusive thoughts and occasional depressive episodes, but other than that, I am grateful for my current life circumstances and am getting through it one day at a time.

We are nothing but a bottom line. We are here for residents and coworkers through all cycles of life and all the owner cares about is getting his incident report, saving money and keeping us out of the news.

A lot of programming done by American corporations feels like a facade. Not much is actually done to inspire someone personally. More so, mental health discussions are seminar based and there are no flexibilities for employees to take any mental health days without using PTO or forfeiting that pay.

Before being so quick to write up employees for missing a non-PTO scheduled day of work or for having to abruptly leave their job during the business hours, they should reach out to the employee to clarify if it was an emergency or ask if they were dealing with a mental health issue. Being a person who is actively dealing with my mental health in this industry, job security is the number one thing I worry about, because in the event that I am having a very hard and emotional mental health day, I want to know for sure that if I take a day to get my mental health back on track, I won't be written up or let go for doing so.

I think that we live in a world where everyone is worried about lawsuits worried about what they can and cannot say, and human compassion is removed from the equation, some are left to feel like there is very little we can do or say when an individual is struggling.

Working for a we don't really care industry makes the weight of mental health heavier then street life.

We as a world need to work on mental health stigma and treat it similar to how we treat physical health issues. Checking on each other and being kind needs to be a priority. Grace and empathy should be part of the qualities and skills leaders should have or be taught the skills to use. Mental health first aid should be a training all leaders should go through.

I wish more employers would act more on their statements about supporting mental health. Employers talk all the time about how important it is, however, authority figures don't always show actionable support.

It is a challenging industry. Nothing is more personal than dealing with people and their homes.







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