



Women @ Work 2024

A Global Outlook

A Letter from Emma Codd and Elizabeth Faber

Since the inaugural report in 2021, Deloitte's annual *Women @ Work: A Global Outlook* has highlighted some of the most pressing challenges impacting women's experiences in the workplace, and their careers. The 2021 and 2022 findings largely reflected the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of working women—and the move to hybrid working for many—as well as experiences of exclusion, non-inclusive behaviors, and burnout. 2023 saw a downward shift in these experiences, but they remained prevalent for many women, alongside challenges relating to work/life balance, women's health, and domestic responsibilities, among other things.

This year we see these themes continue and, in some cases, worsen. Women are still shouldering most of the responsibility for childcare, domestic tasks, and, increasingly, care for other adults—even if they're the primary earner in the household. This domestic load is impacting mental health: Women who take on the greatest share of household responsibility are far less likely to say they have good mental health than those who do not. And some women fear that a lack of affordable childcare means that they may have to choose between their careers and their responsibilities at home. On top of this, many women are also experiencing negative effects from recently imposed return-to-office mandates, such as an adverse impact on their mental health, the need to reduce their contracted hours, or feeling less productive.

This year again saw increased stress levels for over half of women and more women taking time off for mental health reasons than last year. We also see a continuing trend of women feeling uncomfortable discussing their mental health at work or disclosing it as a reason for taking time off, in part driven by a fear of negative career impact or vulnerability to being laid off.

More than a quarter of women experience health challenges related to menstruation, menopause, or fertility, and many are working through pain or other related symptoms—with this increasing over last year when it comes to menopause. Of those that do feel able to take time off work, many are not disclosing the real reason, fueled by concerns of career impact or by past negative experience.

Most women plan on staying with their employer for around two and a half years, perhaps unsurprising given that only one in 10 believe that their employer is taking concrete steps on gender equality and only a quarter see a gender-diverse leadership team at their employer. While the majority of women (75%) want to progress into a senior leadership position at their organization, 25% do not. The top cited reason? Culture. Alongside this, four in 10 women experienced microaggressions, harassment, or both at work in the past year—and nearly half of women are concerned about their personal safety at work or when traveling for work. And a quarter of women have experienced inappropriate comments or actions from senior people in their organization.

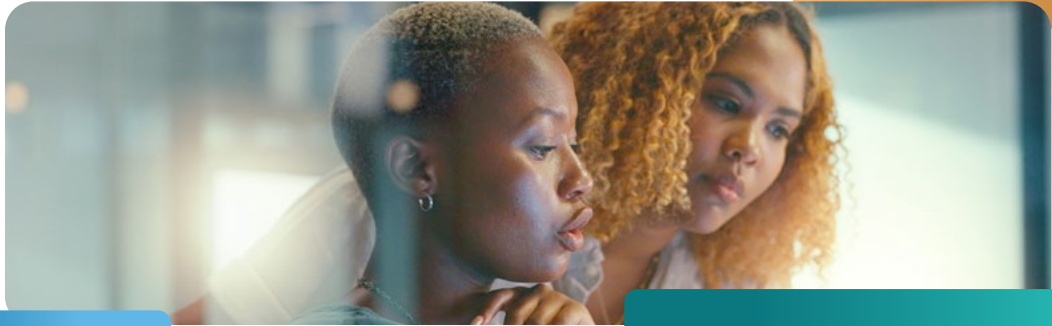
The stark reality conveyed by this data cannot be ignored. It is our hope that organizations will use this critical insight to help drive meaningful and sustained change and enable gender equality in workplaces around the world.



Emma Codd
Global Inclusion Leader



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Executive summary

Now in its fourth year, Deloitte Global's *Women @ Work: A Global Outlook* report examines some of the critical workplace and societal factors that have a profound impact on women's careers. Representing the views of 5,000 women from organizations across 10 countries, the report seeks to understand the lived experiences of women at work—and the ways in which aspects of their lives outside work can impact these experiences.

Our 2021 and 2022 reports were dominated by the negative impacts of the pandemic and the resulting challenges as we emerged from it. They revealed a world of work where women were grappling with burnout, experiencing exclusion as organizations shifted to hybrid working, and encountering non-inclusive behaviors. In 2023 we saw some signs of improvement in these areas, but high stress levels, heavy domestic loads, a lack of workplace support for mental and physical health challenges, and concerns about flexible working continued—and nearly half of women were still encountering non-inclusive behaviors at work. Perhaps this was why in 2023 more women left their employer than in the two previous years combined.

This year's report continues to explore these issues, while also delving deeper into women's experiences with their health, safety, rights, and household responsibilities.

The findings are thought-provoking. They give insight into the challenges, both in and out of the workplace, faced by the world's working women today—and how far employers around the world need to progress to help create workplaces where women are able to thrive.



Key insights

Women are more stressed, mental health stigma persists, and long working hours take a toll

Half of the women in this year's survey describe their stress levels as higher than a year ago, and a similar number say they're concerned or very concerned about their mental health. Two-thirds of women don't feel comfortable discussing mental health at work or disclosing mental health as the reason for taking time off. Workplace culture can contribute to this reluctance, but it's not the only explanation: Many women worry about discrimination or being laid off, and one in 10 have had negative experiences when discussing their mental health at work in the past.

This year's results show a link between working hours and mental health: While half of women who typically just work their contracted hours describe their mental health as good, this declines to 23% for those who regularly work extra hours.

Many women are working through pain

More than a quarter (27%) of women say they have experienced challenges related to menstruation, menopause, or fertility. More than 40% of women who experience high levels of pain due to menstruation say they work through it without taking time off work, similar to 2023. And 39% who experience pain or discomfort due to menopause say they work through it, nearly double the percentage of women who said this in 2023. Fewer women feel comfortable discussing these health challenges with their managers than in 2023, and more say their career has been negatively affected by discussing these matters at work in the past. Women who have experienced health challenges related to fertility, such as difficulty conceiving, high-risk pregnancy or miscarriage report similar trends: When asked which statements apply to them, three in 10 say they haven't taken time off when experiencing high levels of pain or related symptoms, and nearly two in 10 have taken time off but haven't given the real reason—this is unsurprising given that a similar proportion say that discussing these issues in the past has adversely affected their career.

Women who live with a partner still bear the most responsibility for childcare and—increasingly—care of other adults

This year, half of women who live with a partner and have children at home bear the most responsibility for childcare, up from 46% last year. This compares to 12% who say their partner takes the lead, and 26% who say they split childcare responsibilities equally with their partner. Nearly 60% of women who are involved in care of another adult say they take the greatest responsibility for this, a significant increase from the 44% who said so in 2023. Only 5% say this responsibility falls to their partner, a decrease from last year.

One-fifth of women in this year's report say they are the primary earner in their household. Of these, nearly half are still responsible for most of the childcare; only 19% of these women say their partners have the most responsibility. And affordable childcare options are often unattainable for some women, which can lead them to make difficult career decisions. Two in 10 women believe that the lack of affordable childcare might force them to give up their jobs or might slow down their careers.

The survey also reveals the impact of domestic responsibilities on mental health: Women who carry the greatest share of household responsibility are far less likely to report good mental health than those who don't.

Flexibility and work/life balance are critical for retention

Women who are currently looking to leave their employer for another organization cite poor work/life balance and a lack of flexibility on working hours among the top reasons. Women who have left their employer in the past year cite inadequate pay, work/life balance, and a lack of flexibility among the main reasons. Conversely, those who plan to stay with their organization for five or more years say that the ability to manage work/life balance and the weight of personal responsibilities alongside their career is one of the top reasons for staying.

Despite this, this year's report shows that fewer women than last year feel supported by their employers to balance their work responsibilities with their commitments outside work. Only one in 10 feel they can talk openly at work about work/life balance. Nearly all women (95%) feel that requesting or taking advantage of flexible working opportunities will affect their likelihood of promotion, and 93% don't think their workload would be adjusted accordingly if they request flexible work options.



Hybrid work experiences are improving, but some women say they have made adjustments to their work and personal lives following the introduction of return-to-office policies

This year, there's an improvement in women's experiences of hybrid working—including when it comes to exclusion, predictability, and flexibility. But about three in 10 women who work in a hybrid way are still experiencing exclusion from meetings, a lack of predictability in their working pattern, and a lack of flexibility. And 27% of these women say they are still expected to go into the workplace despite messaging to the contrary. The same proportion say that because of the hybrid model, they don't have enough exposure to senior leaders.

More than 40% of women in the survey say their employer has recently implemented a return to the office policy, requiring them to be on site either full time or on certain days. While employers will likely have considered various factors when making this policy decision, nearly four in 10 women who have recently been asked to return on-site full time say they have asked their employer to reduce their working hours following the introduction of the policy, and three in 10 say they have needed to relocate. A quarter say their mental health has been negatively impacted, and a fifth say it has made them less productive.

Women are feeling unsafe in the workplace, and non-inclusive behaviors continue

Nearly half of all respondents are concerned about their personal safety in the workplace or while commuting or traveling for work. Of these women, one in 10 say they have been harassed while traveling for work, and about the same number say they have been sexually harassed by a colleague. And 16% deal with customers or clients who have harassed them or behaved in a way that has made them feel uncomfortable.

The number of women who say they have experienced non-inclusive behaviors such as harassment or microaggressions at work has decreased since last year, but 43% of women still say they have experienced one or more of these behaviors in the past year. A quarter of women have experienced inappropriate comments or actions from people in senior positions in their organization. And among those who have left an employer in the past year, 16% say that one of the main reasons was their experience of harassment or microaggressions.

But these behaviors are often unreported. More than a third of the women who have experienced sexual harassment didn't report it to their organization, and more than 40% who have experienced microaggressions also chose not to report. The most frequently cited reason for this was thinking that the behavior wasn't serious enough to report. But for 14% of women, it was because they were concerned that the behavior would get worse, and about one in 10 worried that reporting it would damage their career.

Gender Equality Leaders are still rare

As with previous years, our survey identifies a small number of organizations that we call the Gender Equality Leaders. Only 6% of the women in our survey work for one of these organizations.

These women feel safer, are more comfortable talking about their mental health at work and are more comfortable that they can work flexibly without it damaging their career. They also report higher levels of loyalty towards their employer, as well as higher productivity, and motivation at work.

Women working for Gender Equality Leaders are more optimistic about their career prospects and less likely to experience inappropriate behaviors or comments from senior leaders. They're less likely to have experienced non-inclusive behaviors, experience lower stress levels and are less likely to have taken time off for mental health challenges.

Women working for these organizations are also significantly more likely to plan to stay with their employer for longer and to see it as somewhere they want to progress: More than 60% of women working for Gender Equality Leaders plan to stay with their employer for more than three years, compared to 41% of the rest of the sample. And 92% of women working for Gender Equality Leaders want to progress to a senior leadership position within their organization.

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Women believe their rights
are deteriorating

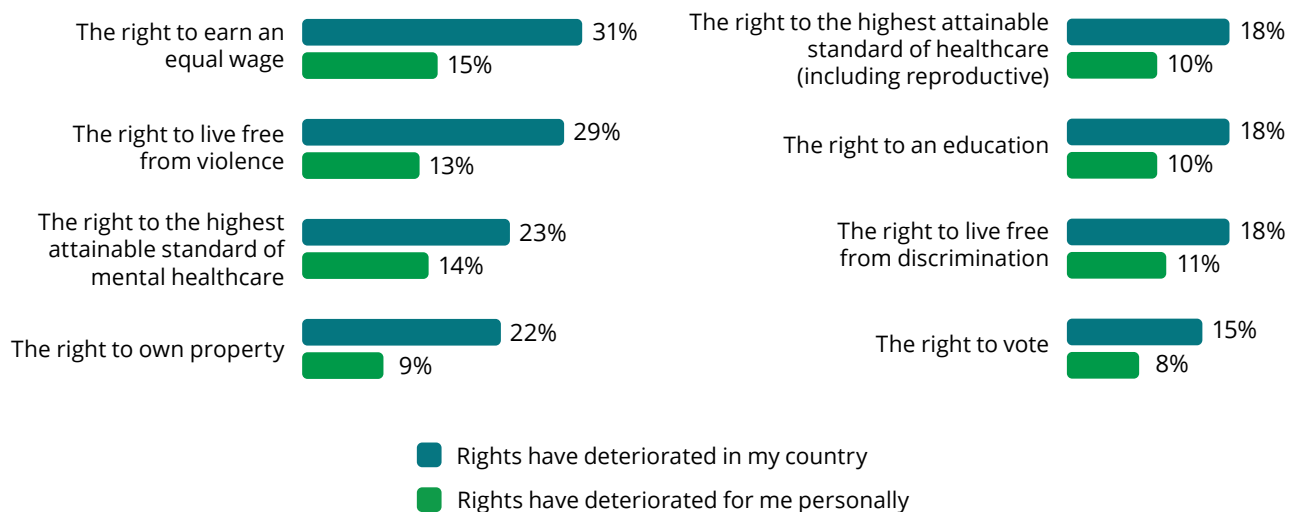


More than one in 10 women think that women's rights have deteriorated in their country in the last year

Fourteen percent of women believe that women's rights have deteriorated in their home country over the last year. Of these, about one in three believe that the right to earn an equal wage has worsened, and 15% say that this has personally impacted them. And 29% believe that the right to live free of violence has deteriorated, with 13% of women saying this has affected them personally.



Which of the following rights have gone backward over the past year?



Base = 721

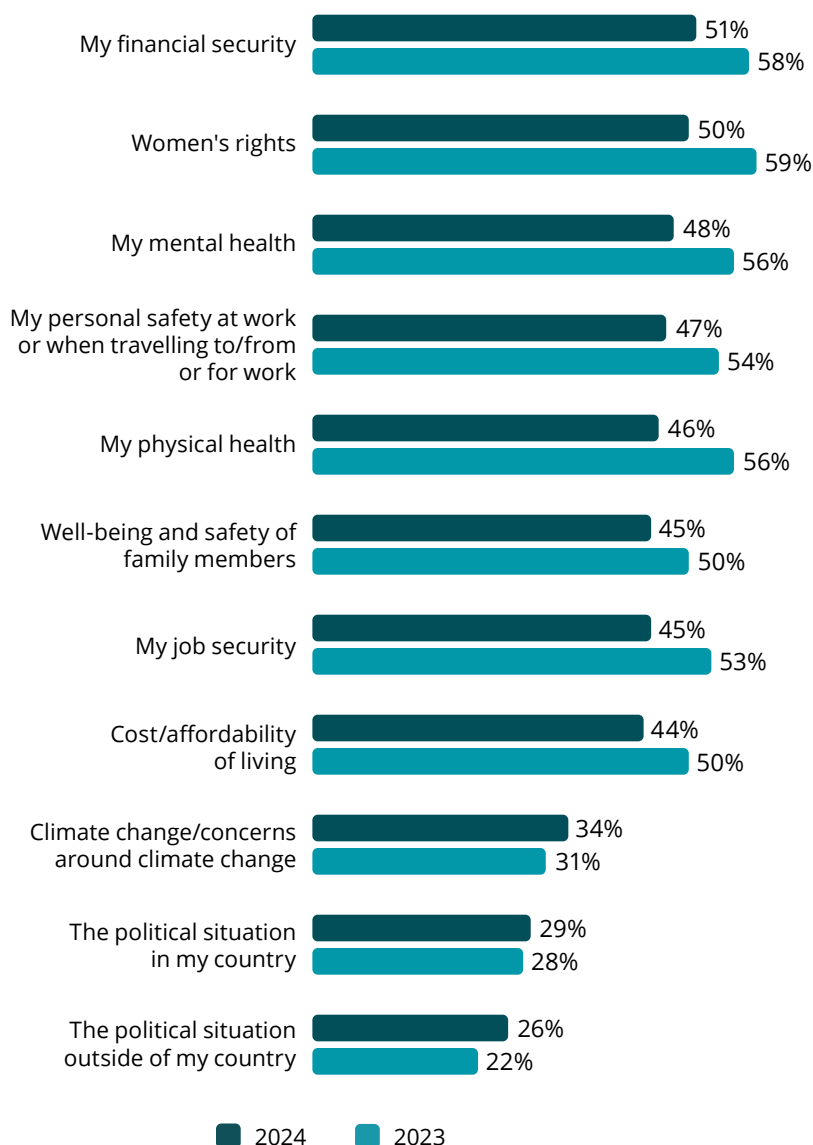


Mental health among women's top concerns

Though concerns about these factors have decreased since last year, financial security, women's rights, mental health, and personal safety remain top concerns for the women in this year's survey.

But women are also concerned about climate change (34%) and the political situation both within (29%) and outside their own countries (26%)—more than they were in 2023.

How concerned do you feel about each of these factors?



Base = 5,000





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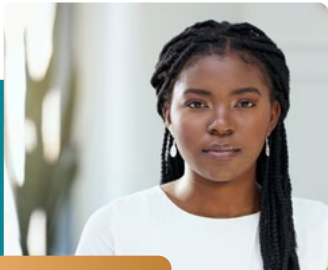
Burnout continues to decline,
but rising stress levels and
workplace mental health
stigma persist



Worldwide, despite some improvement, it's still a bad picture for women's mental health

This year about a quarter of women say they feel burned out, compared with more than a third in 2023 and nearly half in 2022. And slightly more say they get adequate mental health support from their employer (43%) than in 2023 (40%). Only about a third of women say they're comfortable discussing their mental health at work or disclosing mental health challenges as a reason for absence—a slight increase from a quarter a year ago.

Despite these small improvements, the picture remains stark. Half of survey respondents say their stress levels are higher than a year ago, and a third say they have taken time off work in the past year because of mental health challenges. More than half of women say they don't get adequate support for their mental health at work, and two-thirds don't feel comfortable talking about their mental health in the workplace or disclosing mental health as their reason for taking time off.



Women from ethnic minority groups in their home country are reporting even worse experiences: They are less likely to say they get adequate mental health support from their employers or to feel comfortable discussing mental health in the workplace. They also report higher levels of stress and are more likely to have taken time off work due to mental health challenges in the past year compared to women who are in the ethnic majority.

Which of these statements are true for you?

	By year		By group	
	2024	2023	Ethnic minority	Ethnic majority
My stress levels are higher than they were a year ago	50%	51%	60%	49%
I get adequate mental health support from my employer	43%	40%	28%	44%
I feel comfortable talking about my mental health in my workplace	33%	25%	24%	34%
I have taken time off from work due to challenges with my mental health in the past year	33%	31%	46%	32%
I have felt/I would feel comfortable disclosing mental health challenges as the reason for my absence	32%	25%	27%	33%
I feel burned out	23%	28%	23%	23%
I regularly work far more than my contracted working hours each week	19%		16%	19%

Base sizes: Total = 5,000, Ethnic minority = 439, Ethnic majority = 4,561

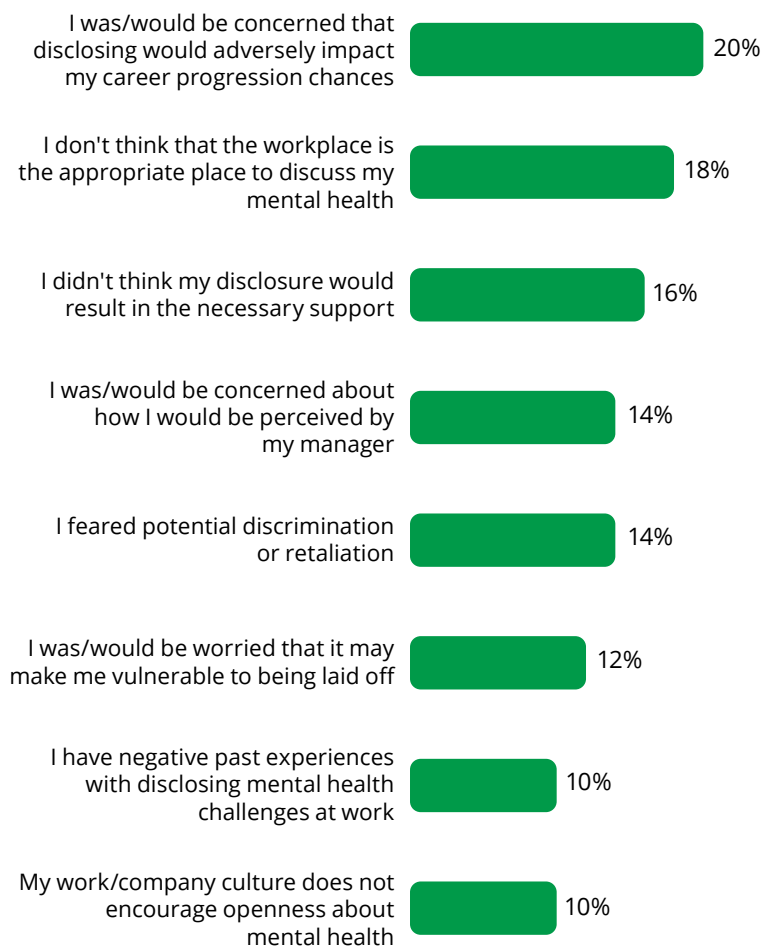


Concerns about adverse career impacts, discrimination or retaliation stop women from disclosing when taking time off for mental health reasons

Among the women who say they're uncomfortable disclosing mental health as the reason for taking time off work, 20% say they worry that doing so would damage their career progression, while 18% say they don't believe the workplace is an appropriate place to discuss their mental health.

Others worry they wouldn't get the necessary support at work if they did talk about it (16%), that they would face potential discrimination or retaliation (14%), or that it could make them vulnerable to being laid off (12%). One in 10 cite past negative experiences with disclosure of mental health challenges.

You indicated that you don't/wouldn't feel comfortable disclosing mental health challenges as the reason for your absence. Why?



Base size = 3,394

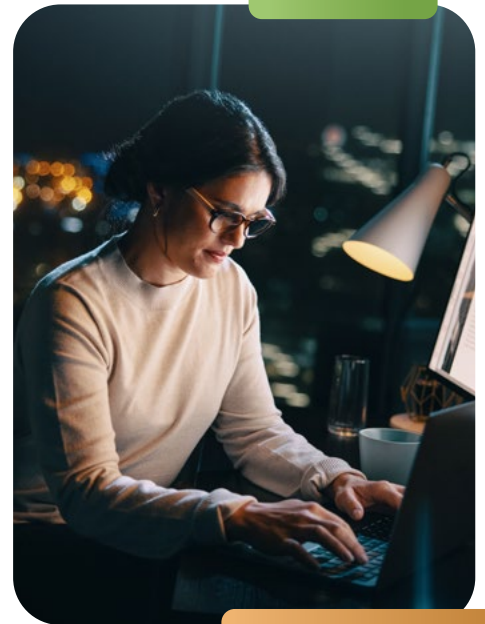


Women are struggling to disconnect from work, and the ones who regularly work more than their contracted hours have worse mental and physical well-being

Less than two in five women say they feel able to switch off from their work, and nearly one in five regularly work more than their contracted hours each week.

This has a direct impact on mental and physical well-being. Among women who regularly work overtime, only 23% say their mental well-being is good and 22% say their physical health is good. Women who don't regularly work overtime are more than twice as likely to report good mental well-being (50%) and good physical health (59%).

Women who regularly work overtime also report significantly lower levels of loyalty to their employer, motivation at work, and productivity.



How would you rate each of the following aspects of your life today?

Percentage saying good/very good

	Mental well-being	Physical health/ well-being	Job satisfaction	Motivation at work	Productivity at work	Feeling a sense of belonging at work	Work/life balance	Loyalty to my employer
Women who work overtime	23%	22%	24%	25%	28%	22%	16%	26%
Women who don't work overtime	50%	59%	60%	62%	67%	62%	51%	70%

Base sizes: women who work overtime = 957; women who don't work overtime = 4,040



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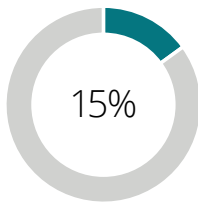
Menstrual disorders, menopause, and fertility challenges are impacting women, yet many feel unable to take time off or seek support



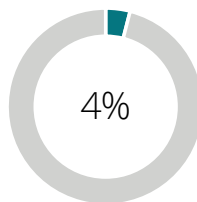
More than a quarter of women experience challenges related to periods, menopause, or fertility

Twenty-seven percent of women say they experience health challenges relating to menstruation (such as endometriosis), menopause, or fertility (such as miscarriage or high-risk pregnancy).

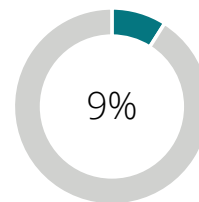
Are you currently experiencing or have you experienced health challenges related to the following?



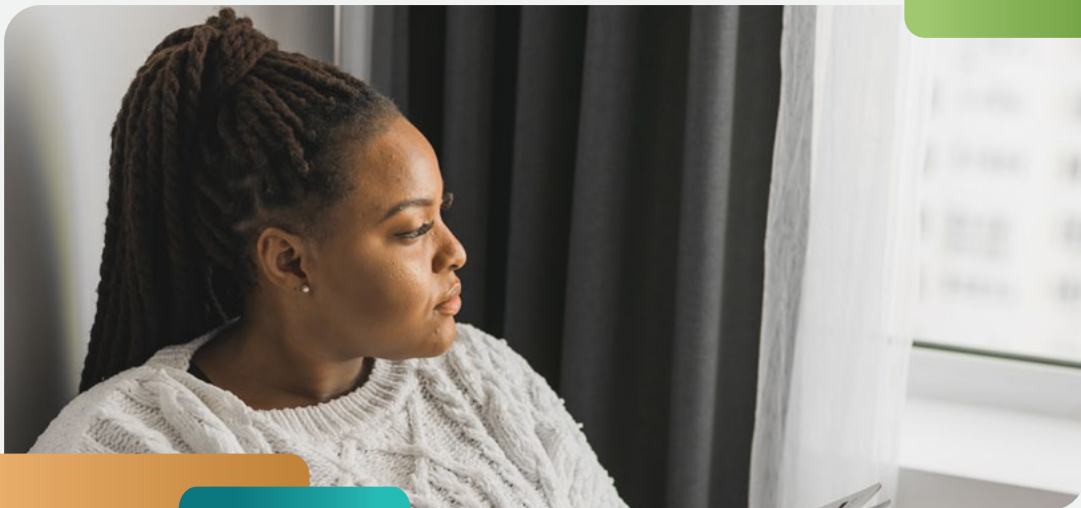
Menstruation



Fertility



Menopause





Menstruation: Women still working through pain and symptoms

About four in 10 women who experience high levels of pain with menstruation don't take time off and instead work through it, which is similar to last year.

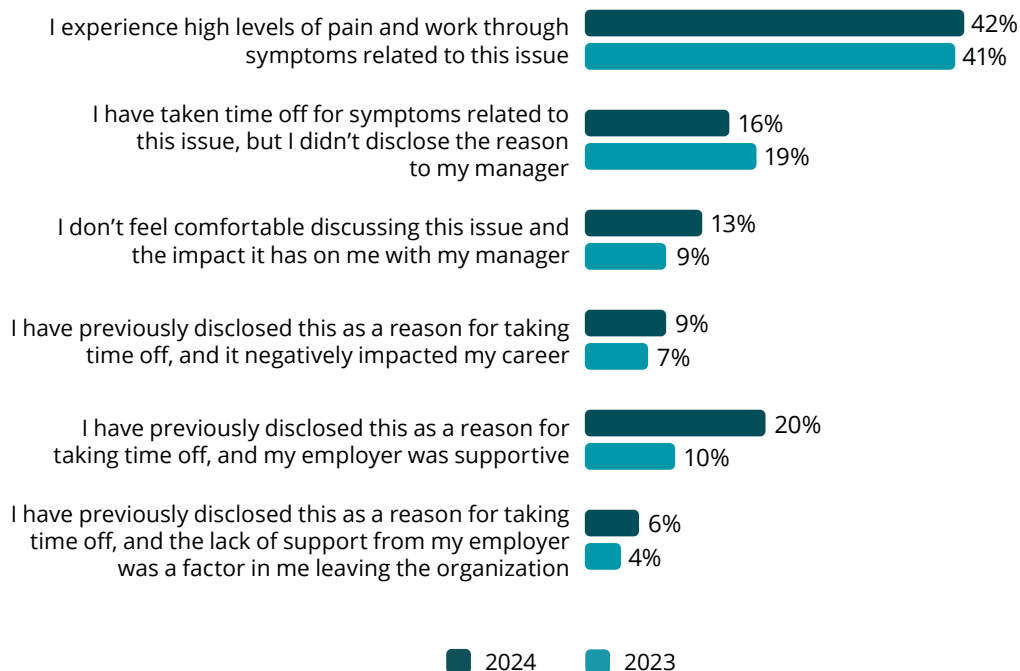
But employers do seem to be showing more support: Two in 10 say they have taken time off and received support from their employer, compared with only one in 10 in 2023.

Nevertheless, the results this year reveal that more women experiencing challenges related to menstruation don't feel comfortable discussing its impact on them with their manager (13% compared with 9% in 2023). And of those women who have given menstrual health as a reason for taking time off, there is a slight year-over-year increases in the number who say their career was damaged by giving it as a reason in the past.

About half of women believe it is extremely important for employers to offer paid leave for menstruation symptoms, but only about one-third work for companies that provide it.

Which of the following statements apply to you?

Women who have experienced menstruation health problems



Base sizes: 2024 = 763; 2023 = 765



Menopause: More women are working through the symptoms—and far fewer feel supported

About 40% of women who report experiencing high levels of pain or discomfort due to menopause say they work through it, compared with just 20% in 2023. Only 19% of women experiencing menopause-related challenges say they were supported by their employers after disclosing menopause as a reason for taking time off work, a significant drop from nearly 30% in 2023.

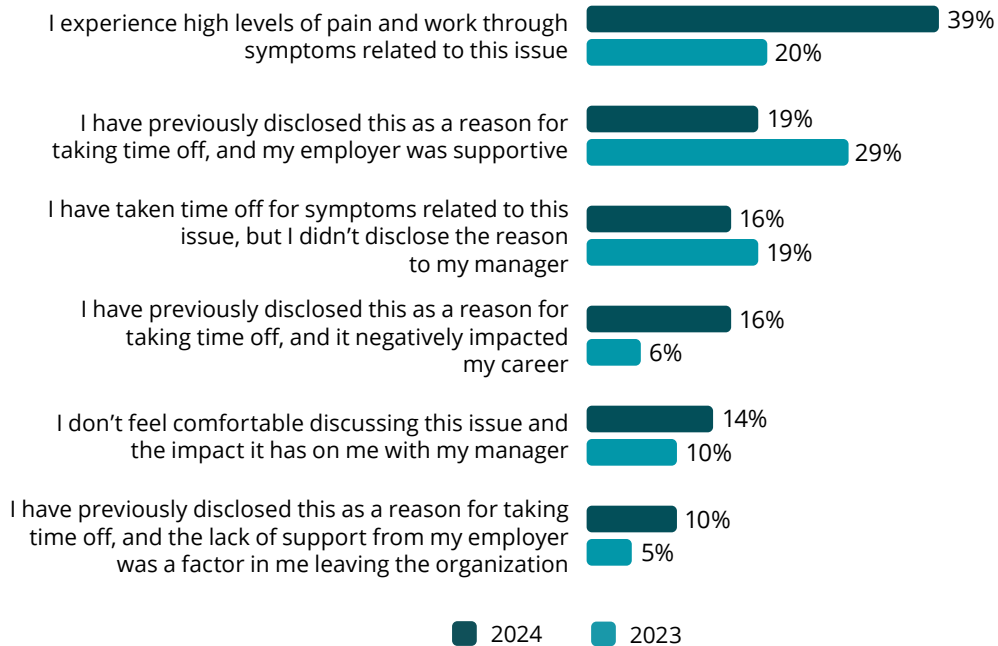
Fewer women also feel comfortable discussing their symptoms with their manager (14% feel uncomfortable in 2024 compared with 10% in 2023), and a lot more say that previously giving menopause as a reason for taking time off work negatively affected their career (16% in 2024 compared with just 6% in 2023). One in 10 women say that an employer's lack of support was a factor in them leaving the organization—double the proportion who said this in 2023.

While nearly half of all women say it's extremely important for employers to offer paid leave for menopause symptoms, only about a fifth work for companies that provide it.



Which of the following statements apply to you?

Women who have experienced menopause health problems



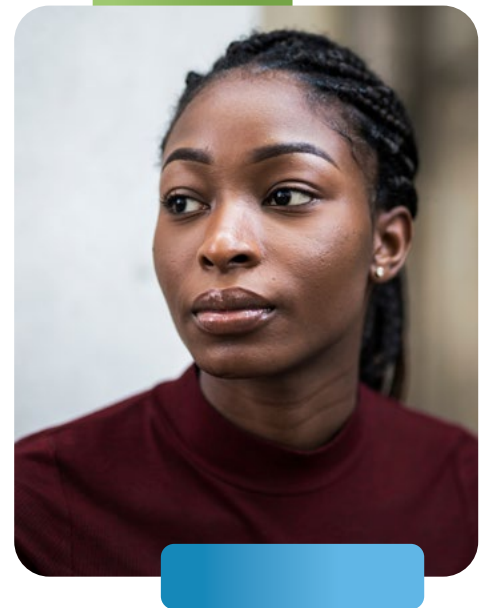
Base sizes: 2024 = 429; 2023 = 377



Fertility: Many women who experience challenges are not taking time off—and many face career setbacks

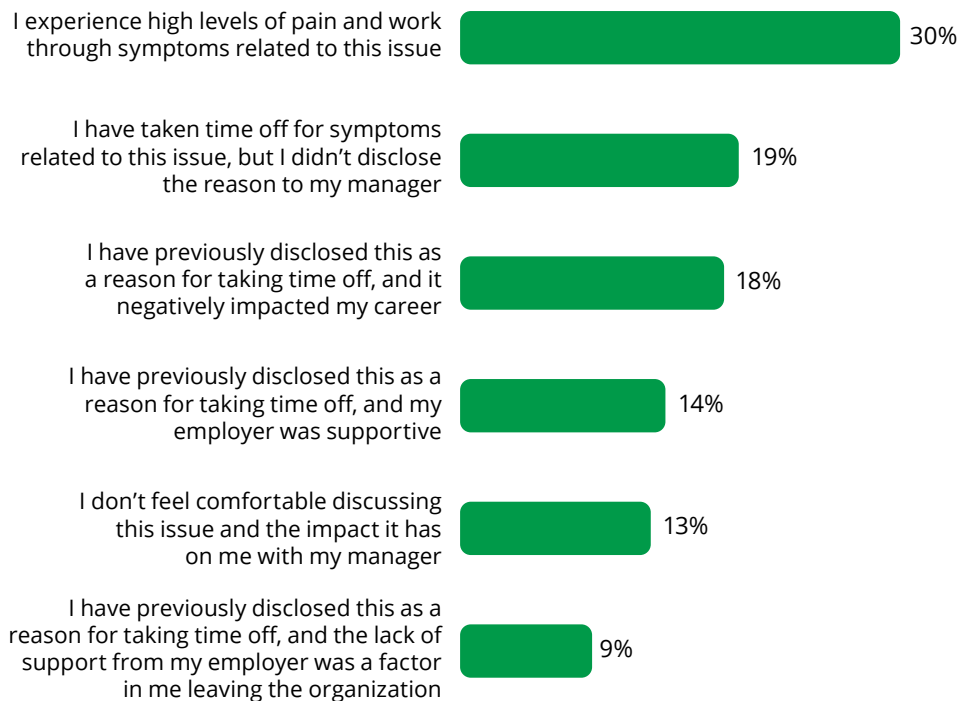
Four percent of women in this year's survey say they have experienced health challenges related to fertility. Three in 10 of these women say they haven't taken time off when experiencing high levels of pain or symptoms, and nearly two in 10 have taken time off but haven't disclosed the real reason.

This is perhaps understandable when we look at the experiences of those who have given fertility challenges as their reason for taking time off: Almost two in 10 of these women believe that giving the real reason to an employer damaged their career, and only 14% say their employer was supportive. This is impacting their employer choices, with one in 10 saying that an employer's lack of support was a factor in them leaving that organization.



Which of the following statements apply to you?

Women who have experienced fertility health problems



Base size: 203



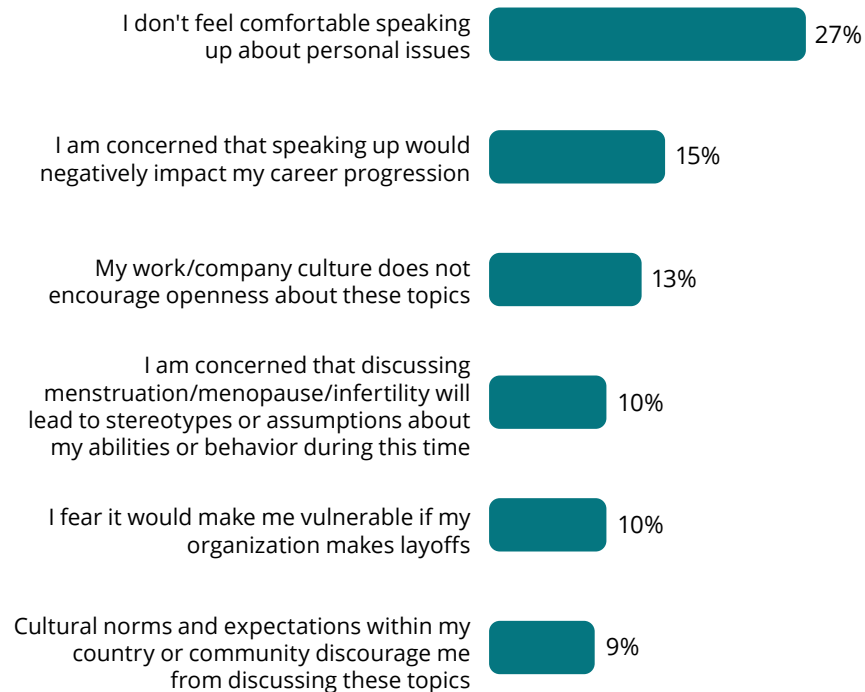
Stigma and company culture affect openness around women's health concerns

Overall, 14% of women experiencing health challenges related to menstruation, menopause, or fertility say they aren't comfortable speaking to their managers about these issues. Among these women, 13% say their company culture doesn't encourage openness around these topics.

And these women are worried that disclosure could jeopardize their positions: 15% believe that speaking up about their health challenges would affect their career progression, 10% believe that it would lead to stereotyping or assumptions being made about them, and 10% believe that speaking up would make them vulnerable to redundancy.

You said you don't feel comfortable speaking to your manager about these issues. Thinking about the reasons behind this, which of the following statements apply to you?

Women who have experienced health challenges related to menstruation, menopause, or fertility



Base size: 384



4

Women still hold the biggest responsibility for household tasks and increasingly—care of other adults



Women still bear the greatest responsibility for caregiving

Half of women who live with a partner and have children at home take the most responsibility for childcare, an increase since last year's findings, and just 12% say this responsibility falls to their partner. Only 26% say they split childcare responsibilities equally with their partner, a significant decrease from 2023.

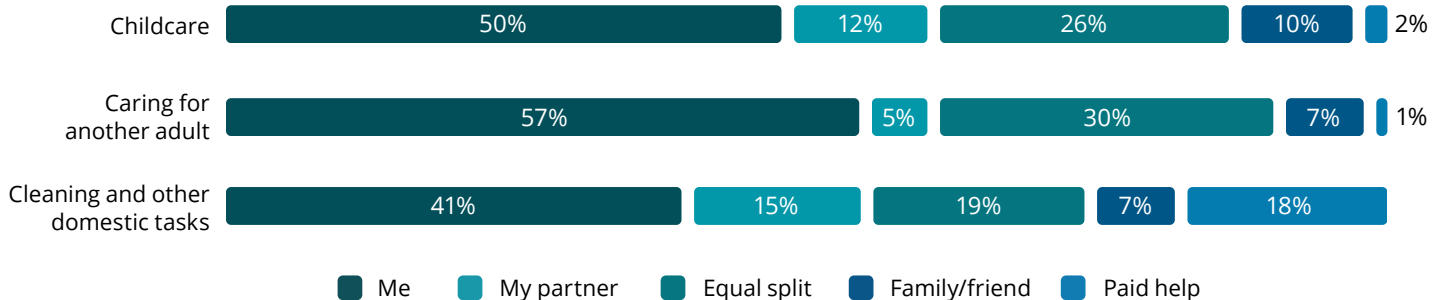
Nearly 60% of women who live with a partner and are involved in care of another adult say they take the greatest household responsibility for this, a significant increase from the 44% who said this in 2023. Only 5% say this responsibility falls to their partner.

And affordability of childcare is driving career decisions for some women: Two in 10 women believe that a lack of affordable childcare might force them to give up their jobs or might slow down their careers.



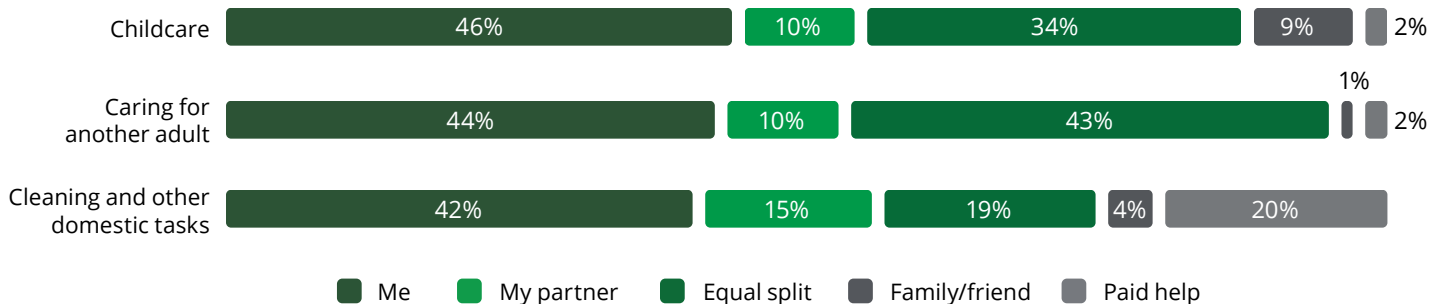
In your household, who has the greatest responsibility for each of the following tasks?

2024



Base sizes: childcare = 1,219; caring for another adult = 791; cleaning and other domestic tasks = 3,585

2023



Base sizes: childcare = 826; caring for another adult = 124; cleaning and other domestic tasks = 2,963



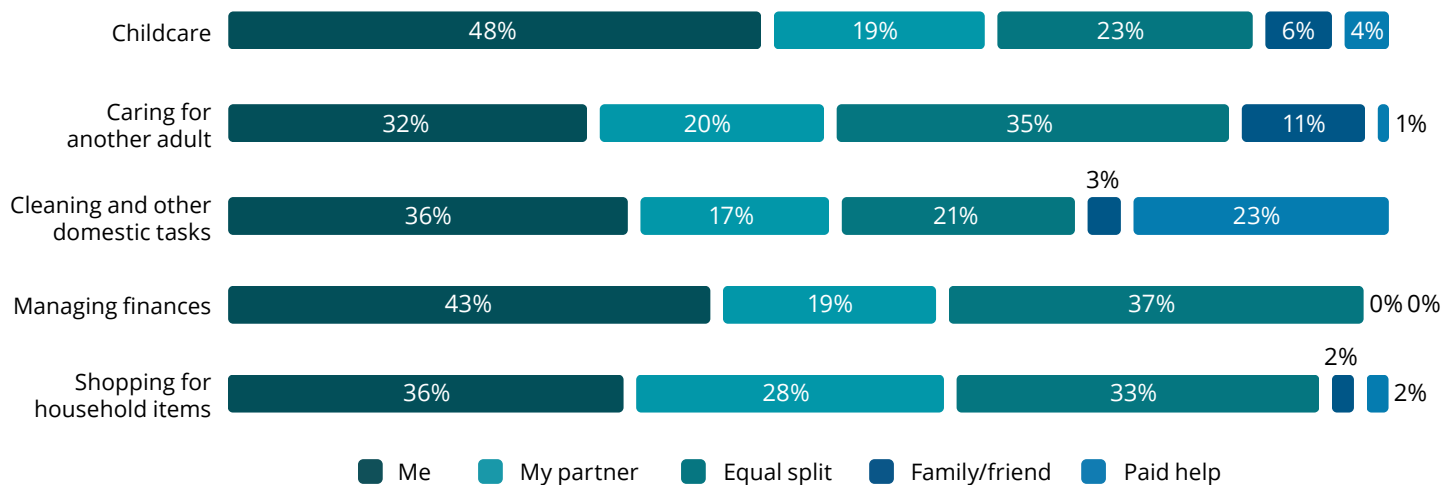
Even if they're the primary earner, women still hold the greatest household responsibility for caregiving and domestic tasks

Two in 10 women (21%) living with a partner say they're the primary earner in their household, and nearly half of these women say they have the greatest responsibility for childcare (48%).

Only 19% of these women say their partner takes on most of the responsibility for childcare. Just 17% say their partner takes on most responsibility for cleaning and other domestic tasks, while 36% say this falls primarily to them. And managing finances also primarily falls to these women—with 43% of primary earners having greatest responsibility for this, compared with just 19% who say this responsibility sits with their partner.



In your household, who has the greatest responsibility for each of the following tasks?



Base sizes: all women who live with a partner and are the primary earner = 767; childcare = 239; caring for another adult = 105



Women with more domestic responsibilities have lower mental well-being—and are less able to focus on their careers

Only 35% of women who live with a partner and have the greatest household responsibility for domestic tasks such as caregiving and cleaning say their mental health is good, compared with 47% whose partner either takes the lead on these responsibilities or shares them equally.

This impacts women's ability to focus on their careers and their mental health: Just 27% of those with the greatest responsibility at home say they can disconnect from their personal life and focus on their career, compared with 42% of women who don't hold this responsibility. Women with the greatest responsibility for domestic tasks at home are also more likely to have taken time off work for mental health reasons. Nearly half say they have taken time off in the past year, compared with just under a quarter of those who don't have the greatest responsibility for these tasks.



How would you rate each of the following aspects of your life today?

Percentage saying good/very good

	Mental well-being	Motivation at work	Loyalty to my employer	Ability to switch off from work	Ability to disconnect from my personal life and focus on my career
Takes lead on caregiving and cleaning	35%	51%	59%	32%	27%
Shares caregiving and cleaning with partner, or partner takes lead	47%	59%	67%	40%	42%

Base sizes: women who live with a partner and take the lead on caregiving and cleaning = 534; women who live with a partner and either split caregiving and cleaning equally with their partner, or their partner does the majority = 262



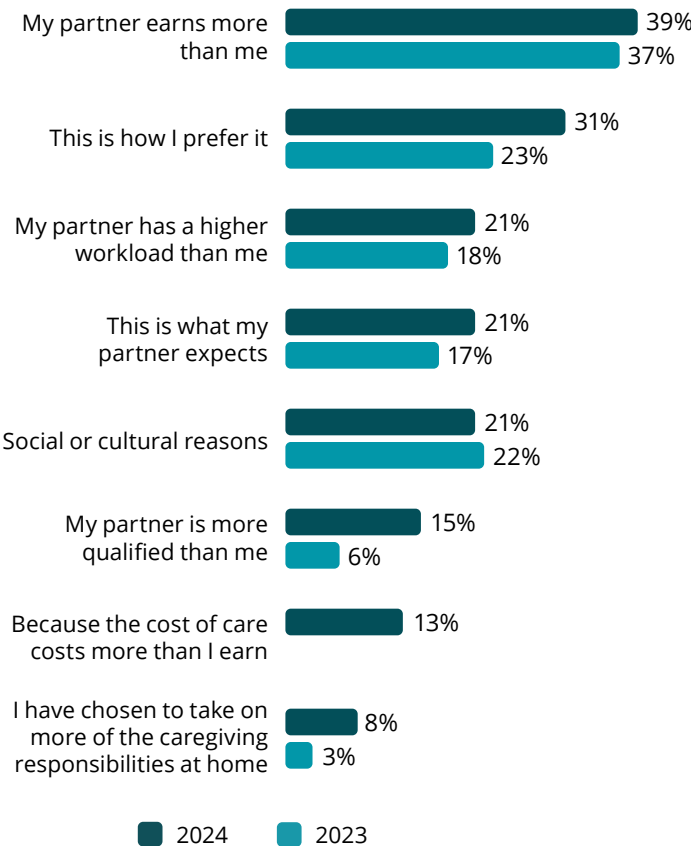
This year, more women feel they need to prioritize their partner's career over their own

Thirty-seven percent of women who reside with a partner feel they have to prioritize their partner's career over their own, which is a slight increase from 2023. Although the top reason for this is that their partner earns more (39%), nearly 10% of women who are the primary earners in their household still say they feel they have to prioritize their partner's career.

Thirty-one percent say that this is just how they prefer it. However, societal or cultural norms are clearly also an influential factor: 21% of all women who feel they have to prioritize their partner's career ascribe it to these norms. The same proportion say that this is what their partner expects.



You said that you feel you have to prioritize your partner's career over your own. Why is this?



Base sizes: 2024 = 1,337; 2023 = 1,232



5

Organizations still aren't making enough progress on gender equality, and company culture can stop women from wanting to move into leadership roles



Most organizations aren't making visible progress on gender equality

Only about one in 10 women say their employer is taking concrete steps to fulfil its commitment to gender equality, and less than two in 10 say their employer has communicated gender diversity targets. Seventeen percent believe that being a woman is a disadvantage in their organization, which could be why 35% of women wouldn't recommend their employer to other women.



Which of the following statements do you agree with?



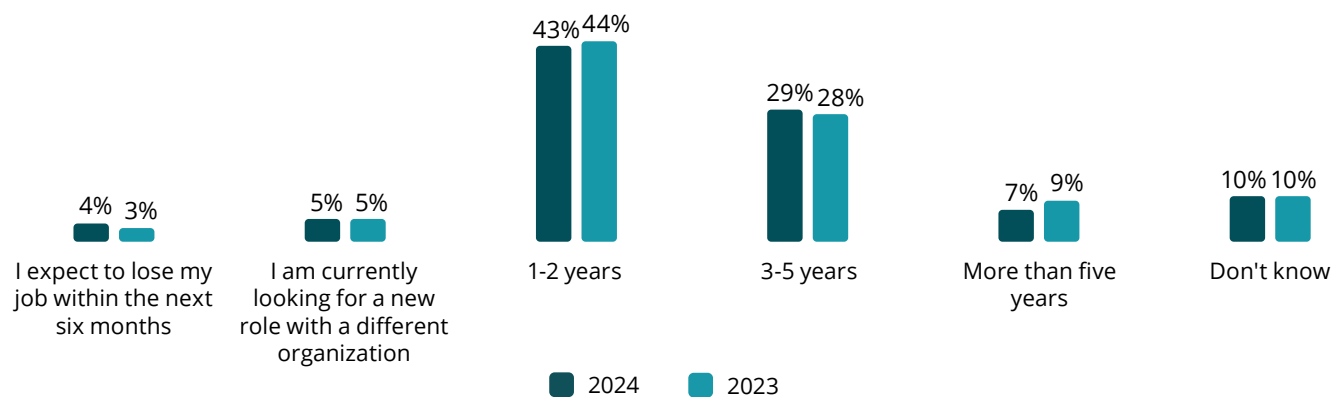
Base size: 5,000



Most women only plan to stay with their employer for around two and a half years. Career advancement, learning and development, and work/life balance are key for retention

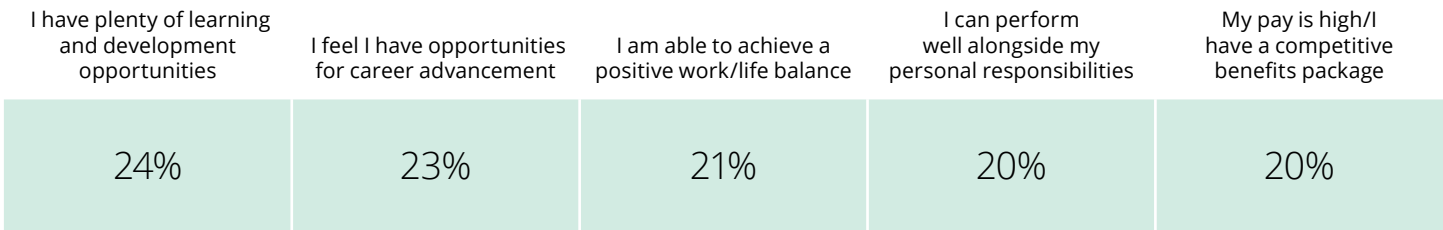
Nearly a quarter of women who say they expect to stay at their employer for five years or more say that learning and development opportunities are one of the reasons, and a similar number say it's because they have opportunities for career advancement. Work/life balance is also important, and so is their ability to perform well at work alongside their personal responsibilities.

How long do you expect to stay with your current employer?



Base size: 5,000

What factors make you want to stay with your employer for more than five years?



Base sizes: 2024 = 369

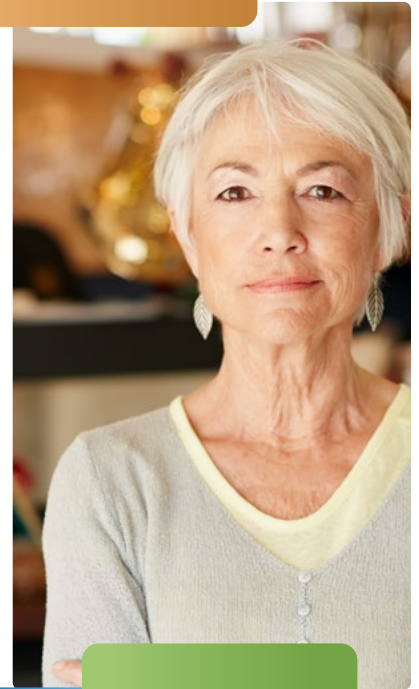


Poor work/life balance, lack of flexibility and inadequate pay are driving women to leave their employers

Sixteen percent of women changed employers in the past year. Inadequate pay and benefits was the top driver, along with poor work/life balance and a lack of flexibility in working hours. Worryingly, this year there's an increase in the number of women giving bullying/harassment or microaggressions as a reason for leaving their employer (16%, compared with 11% last year).

But these factors are not the only issues which are pushing women out of employment. Almost two in 10 women overall say that lack of affordable care options could mean that they have to give up their job or that their career might slow down.

Work/life balance and lack of flexibility are also two of the three top drivers for those women who are currently looking to leave their employer—with limited opportunities to advance being the third. A lack of women role models within the organization also plays a role—with this showing a notable increase compared to 2023 when only 3% cited this as a reason for wanting to leave their employer.



What was your main reason(s) for **leaving** your former employer?

Pay wasn't high enough/ the benefits package wasn't competitive	I was bullied/harassed by a colleague or colleagues or faced microaggressions	Lack of flexibility around when I work	My role didn't align with my values	Lack of learning and development opportunities
18%	16%	15%	14%	14%

What are your main reason(s) for **wanting to leave** your current employer?

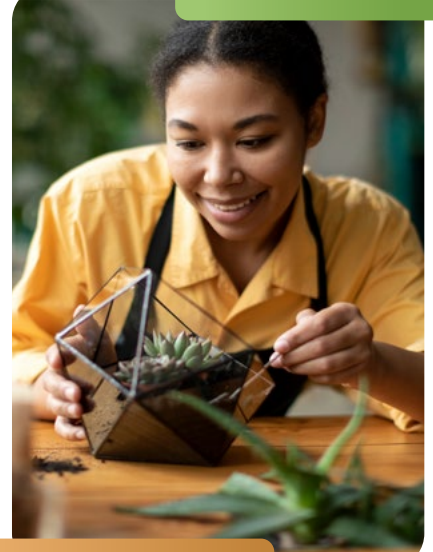
I couldn't achieve work/ life balance	Lack of flexibility around when I work	The role doesn't offer opportunities to advance	Lack of women role models	Pay isn't high enough/the benefits package isn't competitive
22%	21%	18%	16%	14%

Base sizes: 2024 = 255; 2023 = 260; 2022 = 482

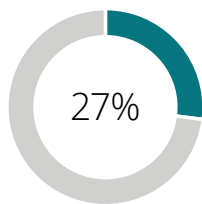


About a third of women who plan to leave their employer are planning to either change careers or start businesses

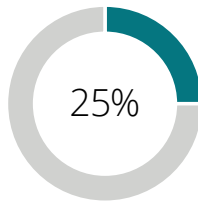
Nearly three in 10 women currently looking for a role in a new organization plan to stay in their industry, but a quarter want to find a role in a different industry. Nearly one in 10 want to start their own businesses.



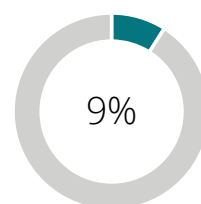
What are your plans if you leave your current employer?



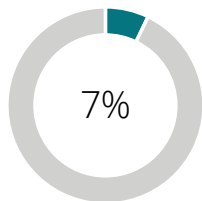
I would like to find a new job in my field/industry with a different company (e.g., a competitor)



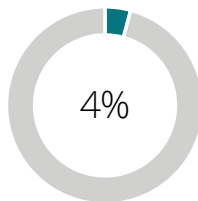
I would like to make a career change and find a job in a different industry



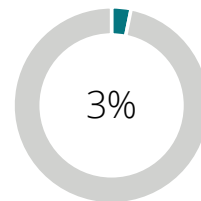
I would like to start my own business



I would like to pursue education/training



I would like to stay at home to care for children/family member/spouse/partner



I would like to retire

Base size: 255



Company culture and pay inequality stop women from wanting to go into senior leadership

While 75% of women want to progress into a senior leadership position within their organization, a quarter of women do not. The top reasons for not wanting to move into senior leadership are that they don't like the culture in their organization (23%) and they believe they would be paid less than a man doing the same role (21%). Additionally, some women don't want a leadership position within their organization because they simply don't think it is possible—20% say they don't believe they will have the opportunity to progress into a senior leadership role.



Top reasons women cite for not wanting to progress into a senior leadership position within their organizations

I don't like the culture within my organization	23%
I believe I would be paid less than a man doing the same role	21%
I don't believe I will have the opportunity to progress into a senior leadership role	20%
It would give me less opportunity to do meaningful work and make an impact	19%
I don't plan on staying at this organization for long enough to progress into a senior leadership position	19%

Base size: 1,244



6

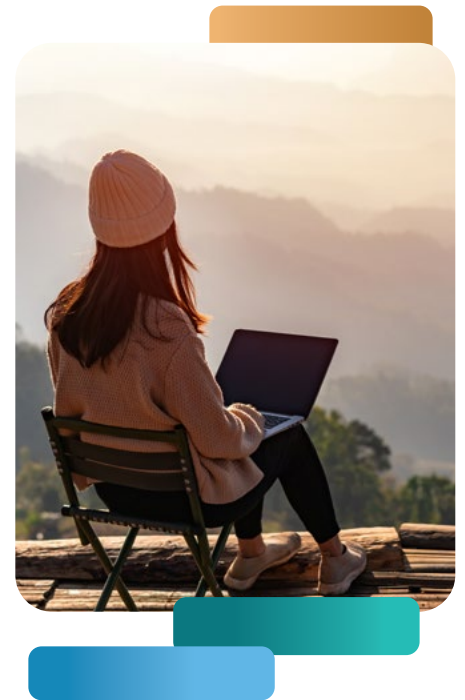
Hybrid work experiences have improved, but some women say they have made adjustments following return-to-office policies



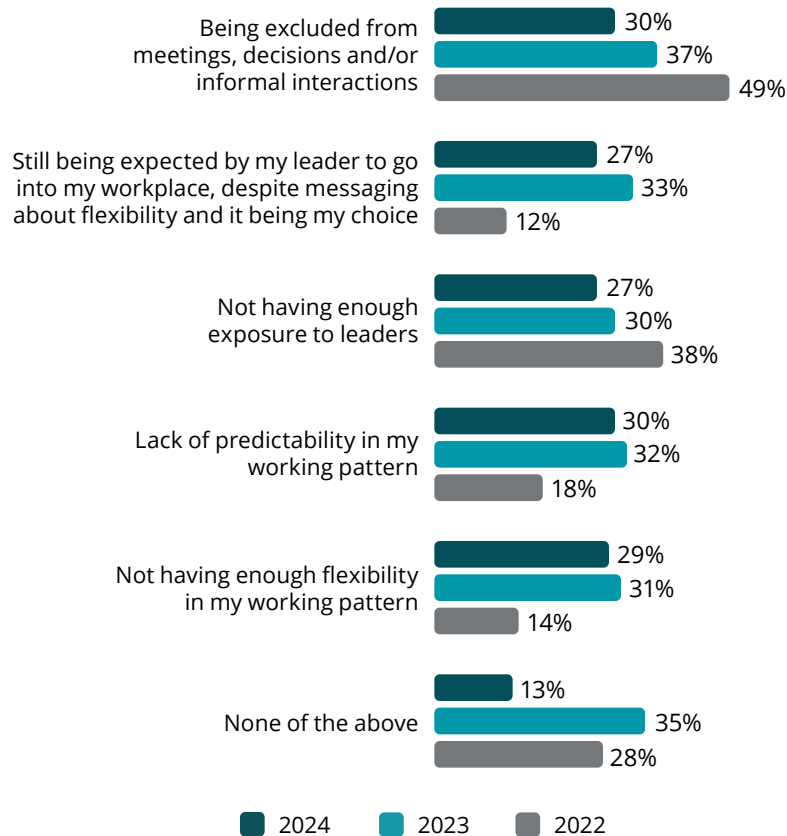
Women's experience of hybrid working is improving, with some reservations

This year has seen an improvement in women's experiences in every area of hybrid working (which means any combination of remote and on-site working) covered by our survey each year—including experiences of exclusion, predictability, and flexibility.

However, about three in 10 women still say they experience exclusion from meetings, a lack of predictability in their working pattern, and a lack of flexibility when working in a hybrid way. And just over a quarter of women who have a hybrid working pattern say they're still expected to go into the workplace despite messaging to the contrary. The same number say they don't have enough exposure to senior leaders.



In the past year, have you experienced or have you been concerned about any of the following aspects of working in a hybrid environment?

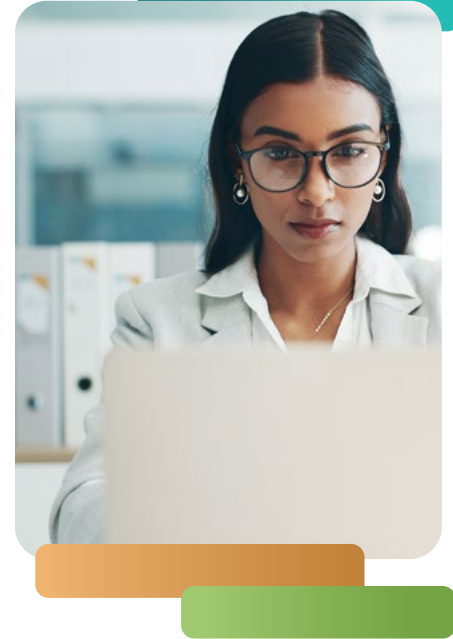


Base sizes: 2024 = 2,459; 2023 = 2,126; 2022 = 3,706

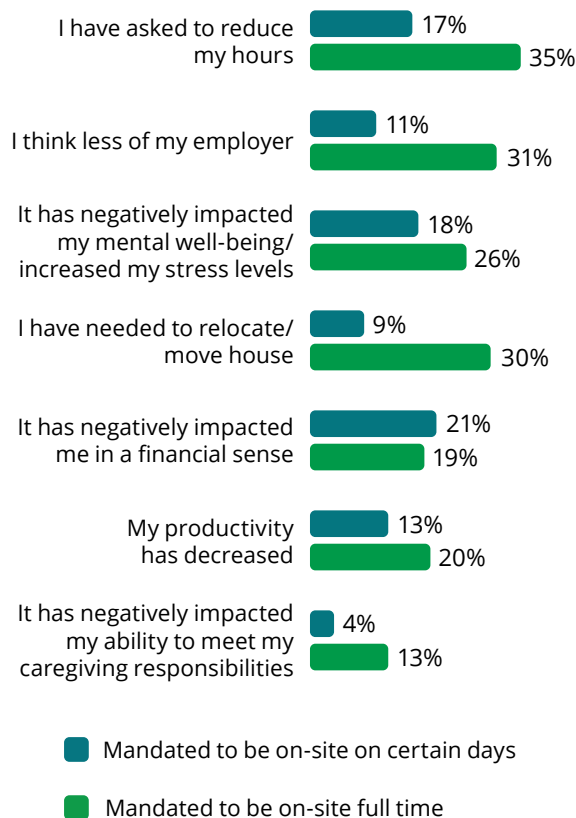


Some women report taking actions, such as reducing working hours, following implementation of return to the office policies

More than 40% of the women in our survey say their employer has recently implemented a return-to-office policy. Of these, a quarter say they are required to be on site full time, and the rest say they have to be in the office on certain days. While [employers will likely have considered multiple factors as part of their decision to implement return-to-office policies](#),¹ some women report that they have made changes to the way they work or their personal lives following the introduction of such policies. For example, more than a third of those now required to be on-site full time say they have asked to reduce their hours and three in 10 say they have needed to relocate. A quarter say that their mental health has been negatively impacted, and a fifth believe their productivity has declined.



How has your return-to-office policy affected you?



Base sizes: mandated in office on certain days = 852; mandated on-site full time = 1,334

¹ For more information on Return to the Office Policies please see [Deloitte's 2024 Human Capital Trends report](#)

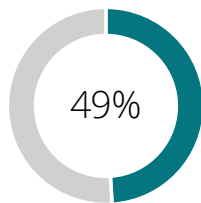


Less than half of women feel supported by their employer, particularly on work/life balance

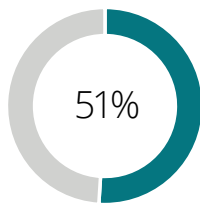
About half of women don't think their employer's commitment to supporting women has increased over the past year, and less than half feel supported by their employer to balance their work responsibilities with commitments outside work. Presenteeism is another challenge: About 40% of women believe they're judged on the hours they're present or spend online rather than the quality of their work, possibly contributing to an always-on work culture where women have difficulty disconnecting.

Nearly every woman (95%) surveyed believes that requesting or taking advantage of flexible work opportunities at their company will negatively affect their likelihood of promotion. And 93% don't expect that their workload would be adjusted if they move to a flexible working arrangement.

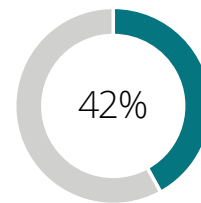
Which of these statements are true for you?



My organization's commitment to supporting women has not increased over the past year

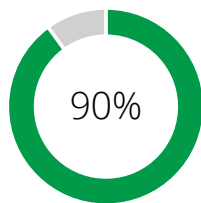


I do not feel supported by my employer in my efforts to balance my work responsibilities with other commitments

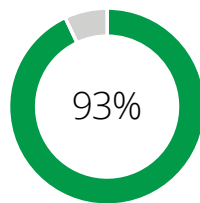


I am judged on the hours I am present/online rather than the quality of my work

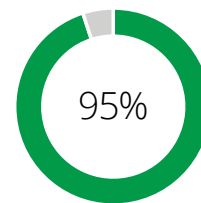
Which of the following statements do you agree with?



I cannot talk openly with my manager about challenges around work/life balance



I am not comfortable that if I request flexible-working options, my workload will be adjusted accordingly



Requesting or taking advantage of flexible-working opportunities affects the likelihood of promotion in my organization



7

Women are worried about their safety at work, while many still face harassment and microaggressions



Women are worried about their safety at work or while traveling for work

Nearly half (47%) of women say they are worried about their safety when at work or when traveling to or for work. These concerns may be founded on experience: One in 10 of these women have been harassed when they have traveled for work, and 16% deal with customers or clients who have harassed them or behaved in a way that has made them feel uncomfortable. Nearly one in 10 have been harassed by a colleague—including stalking and sexual harassment.

Women in underrepresented groups² are more likely to be worried about their personal safety at work or when traveling to or for work: 53% expressed this concern compared with 45% of women who are not from an underrepresented group. This concern is even more pronounced for women with a visible disability (66%) and transgender women (64%).

You previously said you were concerned about your personal safety at work or while traveling to or for work. Which of the following makes you concerned?



Base size = 2,330

Women with a visible disability and transgender women are more likely to worry about their personal safety at work and/or when traveling for work

	Women with a disability	Disability is visible	No disability	Transgender women	Cisgender women
My personal safety at work or when travelling to/from or for work	47%	66%	47%	64%	46%



Base sizes: women with a disability = 227; disability is visible = 61; no disability = 4,769; transgender women = 33; cisgender women = 4,967

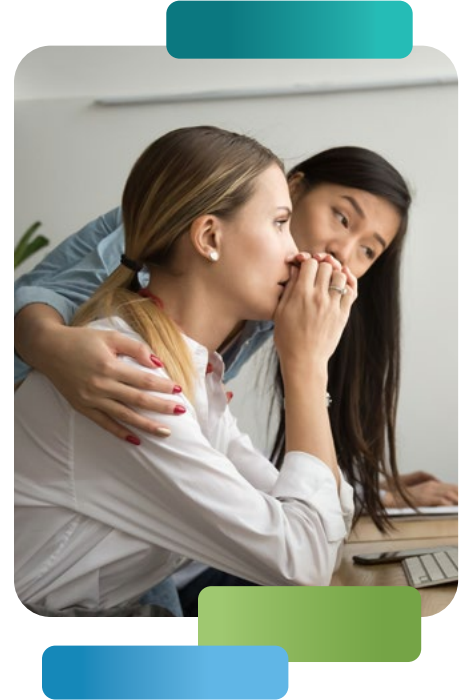
² Underrepresented groups include women in ethnic minority groups in the country they live in, women who have a disability or a neurodivergent variation, and women who identify as LGBT+



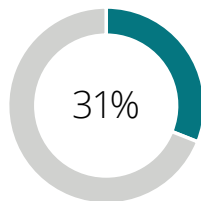
Microaggressions and harassment in the workplace are still pervasive

This year's results show some progress: There has been another reduction in the number of women who say they have experienced non-inclusive behaviors at work. But 43% of women still say they have experienced microaggressions or harassment (or both) in the past 12 months.

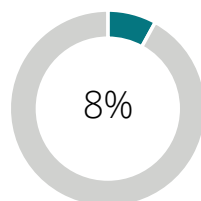
Thirty-one percent of women experienced microaggressions, 4% experienced sexual harassment and 8% experienced other types of harassment. A quarter of women say that people in senior positions in their organization have made inappropriate actions or comments toward them.



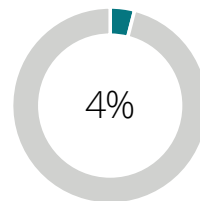
Which of the following behaviors, if any, have you experienced at work over the past 12 months?



Microaggressions



Other types of harassment



Sexual harassment

Base size: 5,000



Non-inclusive behaviors are still not being reported

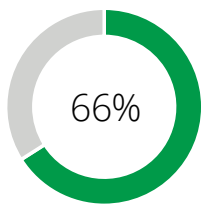
More women are reporting microaggressions than in previous years, yet still more than four in 10 didn't report their experiences to their employer. The same is true of a third of women who experienced sexual harassment.

For those women who didn't report their experience to their employer, the most common reason is that they didn't think it was serious enough to report. Women also say they worried that the behavior would get worse and that their complaint wouldn't be taken seriously. About one in 10 were concerned about confidentiality, and the same number worried that it would damage their career.

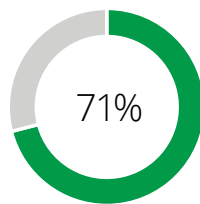
Only about one in 10 women believe they could make a complaint about non-inclusive behaviors at work without it affecting their career, and an equally small number are confident that action would be taken regardless of the seniority of the individual concerned.



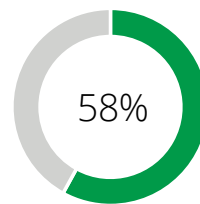
Did you report any of these behaviors to someone in your organization?



Sexual harassment reported



Other types of harassment reported



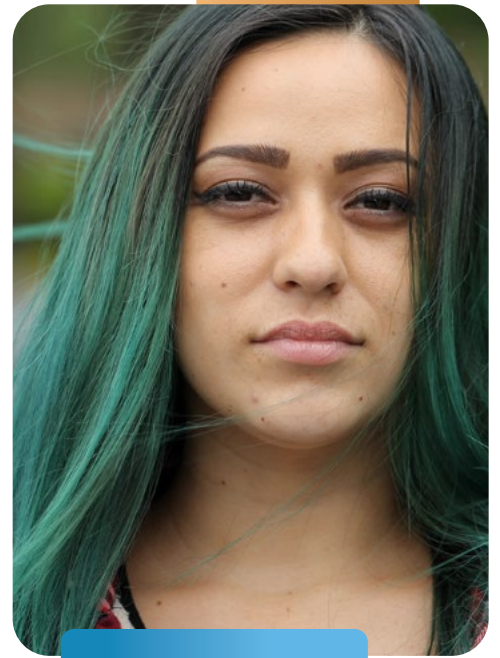
Microaggressions reported

Base sizes: respondents who have experienced sexual harassment in the past 12 months = 210; respondents who have experienced other types of harassment in the past 12 months = 391; respondents who have experienced microaggressions at work over the past 12 months = 1,525



Workplace harassment affects loyalty, productivity, and motivation at work

Women who have experienced harassment at work are significantly less likely to say their productivity, loyalty, sense of belonging at work, motivation, job satisfaction or mental health are good. Only 10% of women who have experienced sexual harassment say their mental health is good, compared with 45% of women overall.



How would you rate each of these aspects of your life today?

Percentage saying good/extremely good

	Total of women	Has experienced sexual harassment	Has experienced other harassment
Mental well-being	45%	10%	31%
Work/life balance	44%	20%	28%
Feeling a sense of belonging	55%	35%	46%
Motivation at work	55%	37%	45%
Loyalty to my employer	61%	44%	57%

Base sizes: total = 5,000; women who have experienced sexual harassment = 210; women who have experienced other types of harassment = 391



Women from underrepresented groups are more likely to have experienced microaggressions or harassment

Forty percent of women in an ethnic minority in their home country have experienced microaggressions, compared with 30% of women not in an ethnic minority. And 45% of women with a disability have experienced these behaviors, compared with 30% of women who do not have a disability.

More than half of LGBT+ women have experienced microaggressions, compared with 28% of women who aren't LGBT+.



Have you experienced any of these at work over the past 12 months?

	Microaggressions	Other types of harassment	Sexual harassment
Ethnic minority	40%	9%	4%
Ethnic majority	30%	8%	4%
Woman with a disability	45%	16%	10%
No disability	30%	7%	4%
LGBT+	54%	23%	10%
Not LGBT+	28%	6%	4%

Base sizes: ethnic minority = 439; ethnic majority = 4,561; women with a disability = 227; women with no disability = 4,769; LGBT+ women = 101; not LGBT+ = 3,384



8

The Gender Equality Leaders
are getting it right, but there
aren't enough of them



Women who work for Gender Equality Leaders feel safer at work

As with previous years, our survey finds that there's a small number of women who agree with all three of the following statements:

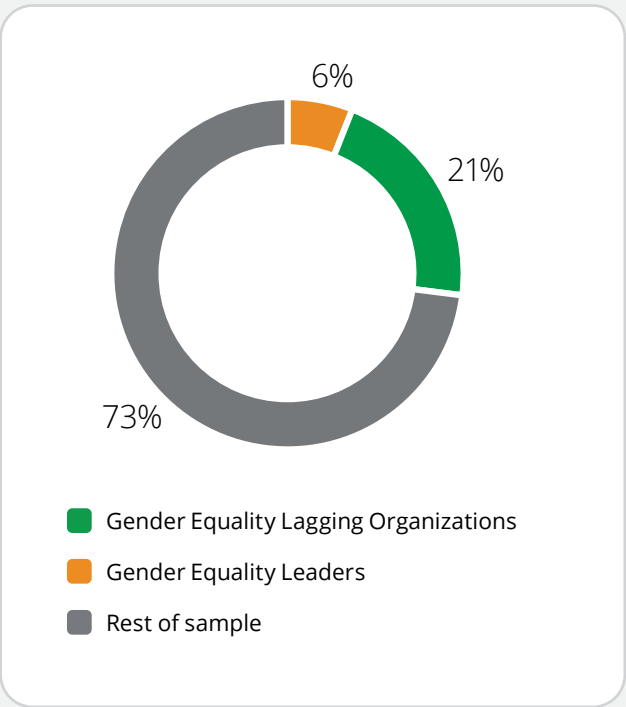
- 1. I feel confident about reporting non-inclusive behaviors I encounter, without concerns about career impact or reprisals
- 2. I feel supported by my employer in my efforts to balance my work responsibilities with other commitments
- 3. My career is progressing as quickly as I would like it to

These women work for organizations that we call the Gender Equality Leaders.

Our research also identified a group of women who disagree with all of these three statements. These women work for organizations that we have called the Gender Equality Lagging Organizations.

Women who work for a Gender Equality Leader report higher levels of loyalty towards their employer, higher levels of productivity, and are more motivated at work. They feel safer, are more comfortable talking about their mental health at work, and are more comfortable that they can work flexibly without it damaging their career.

The proportion of women who work for the Gender Equality Leaders has risen very slightly, from 5% in 2023 to 6% this year (and from 4% in 2021). And the proportion working for Gender Equality Lagging Organizations has fallen slightly from 24% to 21%. Is this progress?





Women who work for Gender Equality Leaders want to stay there longer

These women are more optimistic about their career prospects than women who work for Gender Equality Lagging Organizations and are less likely to have experienced poor behaviors or comments from senior leaders. They're less likely to have experienced non-inclusive behaviors, have lower stress levels, and are less likely to have taken time off for mental health challenges.

Crucially for businesses, they're also far more likely to believe that their employer supports women and more than twice as likely to recommend their organization to other women. Only 1% of women who work for these organizations say that being a woman is a disadvantage there, compared with nearly half of the women who work for Gender Equality Lagging Organizations.

How would you rate each of the following aspects of your life today?

Percentage saying good/very good

	Loyalty to my employer	Productivity at work	Physical health/ well-being	Motivation at work	Feeling a sense of belonging at work
Gender Equality Leaders	76%	75%	74%	71%	71%
Gender Equality Lagging Organizations	26%	25%	21%	22%	20%

Which of these statements are true for you?

	Gender Equality Leaders	Gender Equality Lagging Organizations
I would recommend my organization to other women as a place they should work	85%	37%
My organization's commitment to supporting women has increased over the past year	67%	41%
I am judged on the quality of my work rather than the hours I am present/online	63%	51%
My organization takes a stance on political and social issues that are important to me	57%	41%
I feel less optimistic about my career prospects today than I did this time last year	7%	67%
Being a woman is a disadvantage in my organization	1%	48%

Base sizes: Gender Equality Leaders = 291; Gender Equality Lagging Organizations = 1,062



The Gender Equality Leaders benefit from their inclusive cultures

The data indicates that the Gender Equality Leaders have built inclusive cultures where their employees' work/life balance is valued and respected, and where women are supported in their career progression. And it's making their employees more loyal and more productive:

- 62% plan to stay with their employer for more than three years, compared with only 13% of women who work for Gender Equality Lagging Organizations
- 92% want to progress to a senior leadership position within their organization, compared with only 31% of women who work for Gender Equality Lagging Organizations



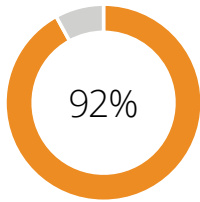
How long do you expect to stay with your current employer?

	Gender Equality Leaders	Gender Equality Lagging Organizations
I expect to lose my job in the next six months	0%	13%
I am currently looking for a new role with a different organization	2%	15%
1-2 years	33%	45%
3-5 years	47%	11%
More than five years	14%	2%
Don't know	2%	12%

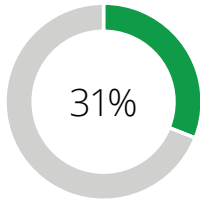
Base sizes: Gender Equality Leaders = 291;
Gender Equality Lagging Organizations = 1,062

Do you want to progress into senior leadership?

Percentage saying yes



Gender Equality Leaders



Gender Equality Lagging Organizations



9

Our recommendations



Our recommendations

The 2024 Women @ Work: A Global Outlook report provides a unique insight into the experiences of women in the workplace alongside their views on other aspects of life that often impact their experiences at work, such as their health, household responsibilities, and rights. The results reveal that much remains to be done. What role can employers play to enable women's success at work? Here's where they can start:

Go beyond just recognizing the importance of mental health at work by understanding what's driving workplace stress and taking action to mitigate it

Mental health remains a pressing issue for women. Women are feeling more stressed—but most say they don't feel comfortable talking about their mental health at work, underscoring the need for organizations to do more. This means not only providing support but also addressing workplace stigma and providing a culture in which women feel able to be open about their own mental health without fear of penalty. It also means identifying the drivers of stress and mental health challenges, such as longer working hours, "always on" cultures, or unclear expectations for hybrid work arrangements, and taking steps to address these problems and their impact on women.

Ensure that organizational policies reflect the importance of women's health and create a culture where they can speak openly about their health and, where needed, take time off work for it

More than a quarter of women have experienced challenges associated with menstruation, menopause, or fertility, yet many are working through pain or symptoms because they do not feel able to take time off. And of those who do take time off, the results show that many are concerned about disclosing the real reason.

Organizations should work to normalize the conversation on women's health, addressing the stigma that remains associated with it and making sure women can access the workplace support they need. This can be by providing training for leaders, revising policies and processes in order to support women encountering challenges, and fostering a culture where women feel able to be open about their experiences and access the assistance should they require it.

Understand and address women's concerns about their safety in the workplace

Nearly half of the 5,000 women polled say that they don't feel safe at work or when they are traveling to or for work.

Employers should urgently work to address these concerns. This could mean reinforcing policies and processes that enable women to feel safe at work, or when traveling for work, and that protect their rights even when customers and clients are involved. Employers should also provide and communicate clear reporting and support routes for those who have concerns about their safety and work to help ensure all employees feel they are part of a work culture where such behavior is not tolerated.



Embed family friendly policies and benefits and focus on enabling work/life balance

With women taking on the majority of household responsibilities, there are real and profound effects on their ability to thrive at work. Employers have a role to play here. Starting with family-friendly policies and benefits—such as those relating to parental leave and emergency care options that help ease the stress of finding short-term dependent care. Employers should find ways to enable women to succeed at work alongside their commitments outside work. This also includes flexible working options that work for both the business and its people, alongside enabling leaders and managers to not only understand these options and policies but to encourage and enable their utilization – without fear of stigma – by those who wish to use them.

Understand the impact of return to office policies on women, then take steps to identify and address challenges

While some employers have determined that it is appropriate to implement a return to working in the office policy, it is important to consider whether such policies could have adverse effects for women—for example, in relation to their mental health, their earning power, or their productivity. Employers should evaluate their approach and find a balance that meets business needs without impacting women's ability to succeed and progress at work.

Address non-inclusive behaviors—and support women's right to speak up without concern

This year again saw many women experiencing non-inclusive behaviors at work. And once again, the report finds that many women are not reporting their experiences to their employer.

Employers should take steps to address non-inclusive behavior in the workplace—and enable women to feel able to report these behaviors without concern. This means focusing on providing an inclusive culture, on leaders understanding how to enable this, and establishing a “speak up” culture through which women feel able to report concerns without fear of adverse impact.

Finally, be a Gender Equality Leader

This year's survey again showed the significant positive impact when an employer focuses on culture, enables work/life balance, and provides meaningful career development for women. This positive impact is clear to see: Among other things, women who work for companies that demonstrate this focus, Gender Equality Leaders, feel safer, are more comfortable disclosing challenges with their health and well-being, and are significantly more likely to stay with their employer for longer. They are also more likely to want to progress in their careers within their organizations.

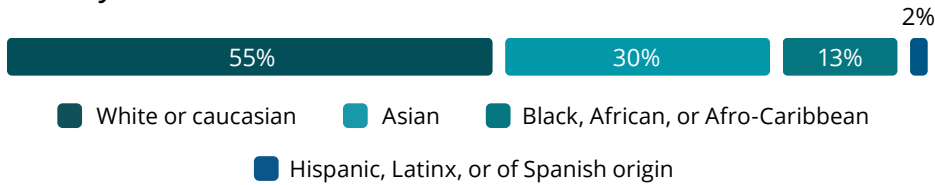
Gender Equality Leaders are reaping the benefits when it comes to the attraction and retention of women and much can be learned from them.



Methodology

Deloitte Global surveyed 5,000 women across 10 countries and seven sectors between October 2023 and January 2024. Countries surveyed: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Japan, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States

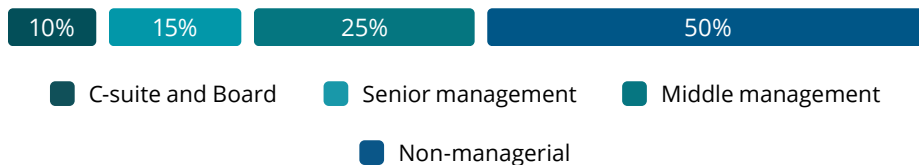
Ethnicity



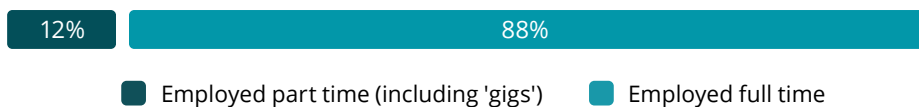
Age



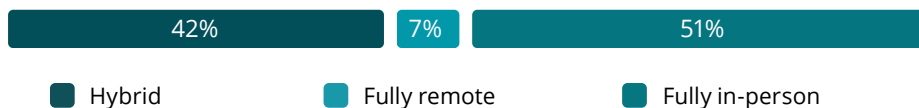
Seniority



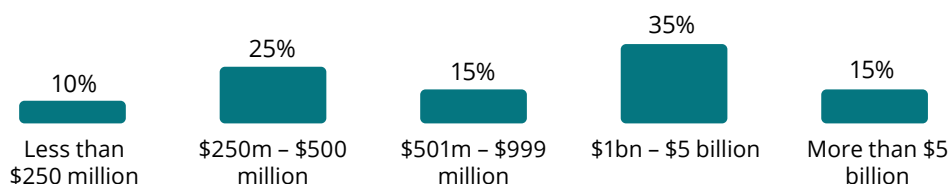
Employment Status



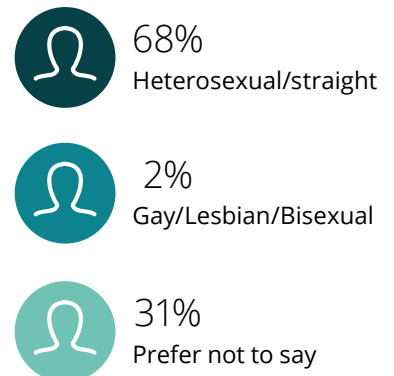
Percentage of hybrid, fully remote, and fully in-person workers



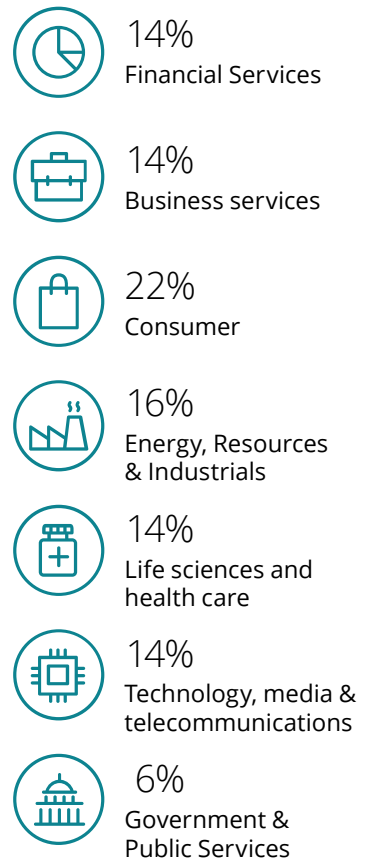
Organization's total global annual revenue (in USD)



Sexual orientation*



Sector of organization



*Note that gender identities and sexual orientations not shown received less than a 1% response rate. Respondents were able to opt out of answering a question about their sexuality.



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