



MAY 2026

Flourish@Work

Research Summary Report

Employers Are Overlooking A Highly Valuable Group of Workers

An estimated 15.4 million US adults—roughly 6% of the population—report having a serious mental illness (SMI). Individuals living with SMIs are a diverse group, many with unique skills and strengths. One Mind’s research and the research of others have identified persistence, innovative and agile thinking, strong pattern recognition, increased empathy, and higher loyalty as a few of the strengths possessed by workers with SMIs. A majority of workers with SMIs are not competitively employed, leaving many of these strengths untapped. In competitive employment, many individuals report insufficient support in the workplace, which can lead to burnout or absenteeism and in turn increase healthcare costs for employers (Gallup, 2022).





FLOURISH@WORK AIMS TO CHANGE THE STATUS QUO

Flourish@Work is a program designed to enable employers to successfully support, develop, and retain workers with serious mental illness (SMI) while promoting recovery, productivity, and equity. Offered through One Mind at Work, the program aims to improve workforce mental health through comprehensive training, collaborative design, and expert consultation from members of the One Mind Lived Experience Community.

Flourish@Work can help employers engage the strengths of workers with SMIs and ensure workers are optimally supported so they can flourish.

ONE MIND'S "WORKERS WITH SMI" SURVEY RESULTS & RESEARCH FINDINGS

In 2025-2026, One Mind conducted a survey to collect first-hand accounts from workers with serious mental illness—148 individuals responded, generously providing key insights on their work experiences.

The survey results, in alignment with previous research, highlight four key takeaways:

1. Strong Leadership is Essential
2. What Benefits One Benefits Many
3. Workplace Accommodations Cost Minimally
4. Knowledge is Power

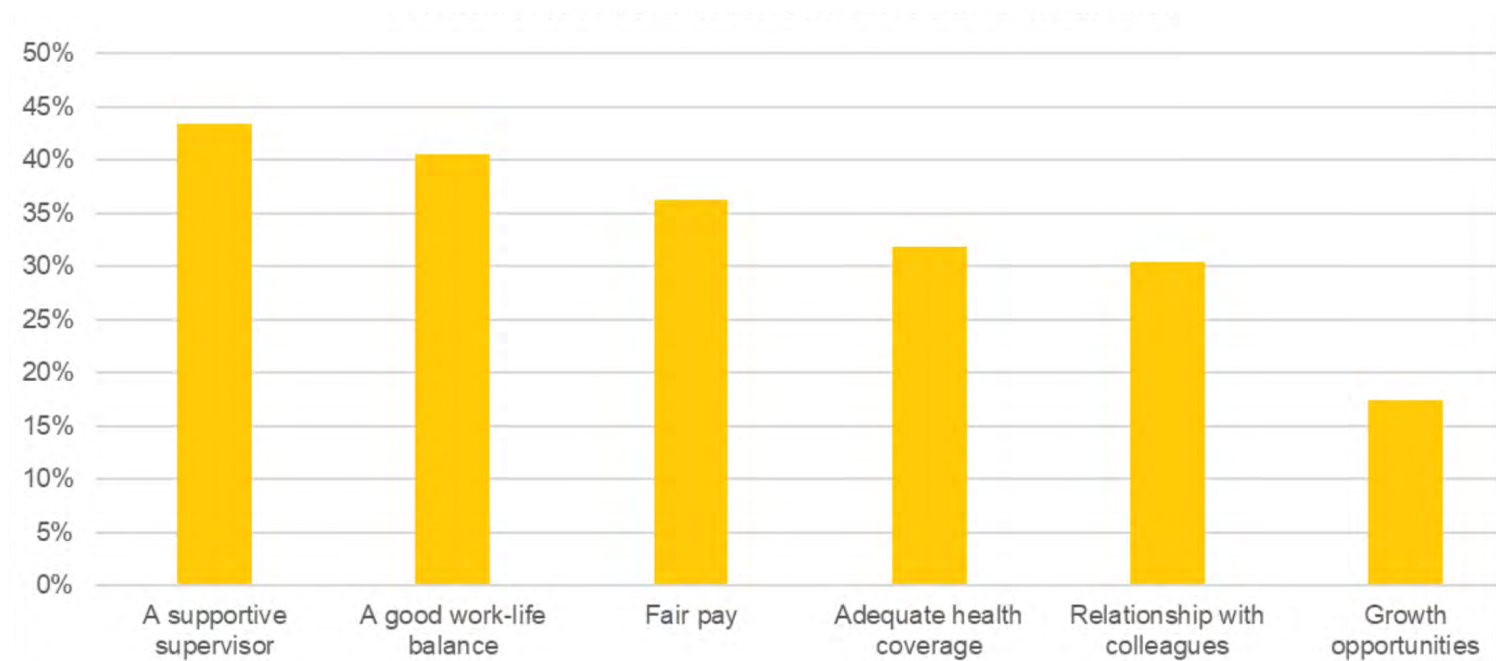


KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM ONE MIND'S "WORKERS WITH SMI" SURVEY:

1. Strong Leadership is Essential

A strong leader is crucial to the growth and development of any worker. According to survey respondents, the leading determinant of success and growth in the workplace is having a supportive supervisor. Workers with SMIs specifically benefit from having a mentor who can provide guidance on navigating workplace dynamics or on achieving a healthy work-life balance.

What do workers with SMIs need to flourish?



Survey respondents highly valued the ability to have a mentor with personal experience of SMIs and overwhelmingly identified seeing other individuals with SMIs in positions of leadership as an indicator of a supportive workplace.

2. What Benefits One Benefits Many

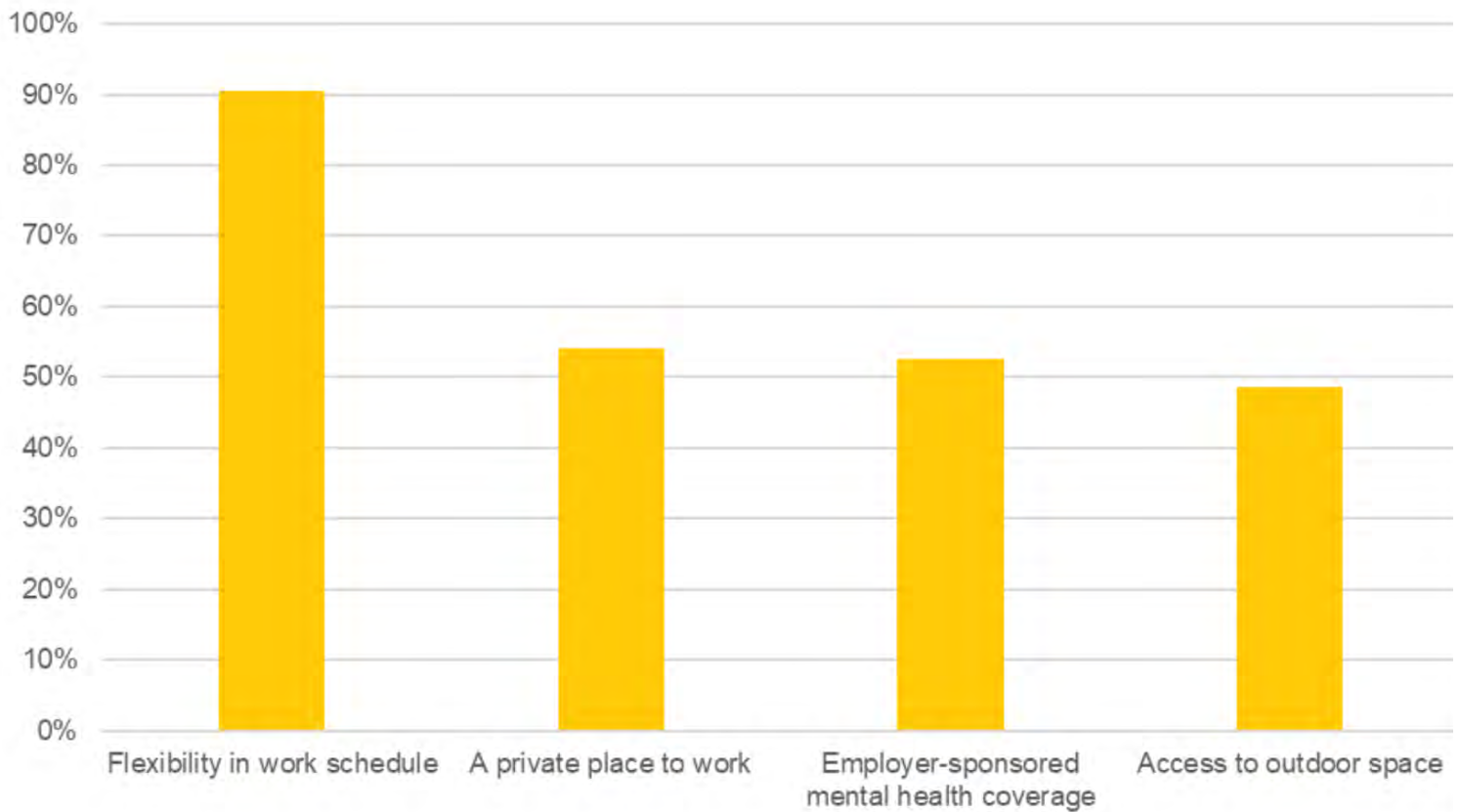
Survey respondents and key informant interviews shared that workplace policies that support mental health are a major factor in determining success, but that these policies are not specific to SMIs. Rather, workplace wellness practices which support the mental health of all workers, are especially beneficial to workers with SMIs. Employer-sponsored health plans with strong coverage for mental health services were identified as crucial for career-oriented workers to thrive.

Additionally, programs in the workplace to support other marginalized identities, such as LGBTQIA individuals, increase trust in workers with SMIs, many of whom hold intersecting identities that also impact their growth in the workplace.

3. Workplace Accommodations Cost Minimally

While employers may believe accommodations for SMIs will be onerous or expensive, the most highly requested accommodation is free: flexibility in scheduling. Survey respondents identified scheduling flexibility as the single most beneficial accommodation (e.g. ability to attend medical appointments, or flexible start times to accommodate treatment options). Survey respondents also indicated that flexibility in work location is vital: nearly 70% of workers preferred a hybrid work environment. Unfortunately, many workers do not feel comfortable requesting the accommodations that could support their developing career: 80% of survey respondents did not feel confident that employers would honor requests for accommodations.

Accommodations beneficial for workers with SMI



4. Knowledge is Power

Workers with lived experience of SMIs hold unique strengths, but in order to utilize these strengths, employers need to expand their knowledge of mental health broadly and of serious mental illnesses specifically. Currently, stigma and unintentional discrimination persist, despite employers' best intentions to support employees. Survey respondents and key informants describe stigmatizing beliefs in the workplace, such as the misguided belief that including workers with SMI increases risks of workplace violence ([Justice Center, 2021](#)).



Flourish@Work: Supporting Employers Seeking to Amplify the Talents of Workers with Lived Experience of Serious Mental Illness

One Mind's research identified the keys to overcoming stigma: **knowledge** and **familiarity**.

- Knowledge separates the facts from the myths about serious mental illness.
- Familiarity, through interactions with individuals with serious mental illness, deconstructs preconceptions by showing workers with SMIs as the talented, empathetic, and unique individuals they are.

Flourish@Work arms employers with both the knowledge necessary to support their workers, and the opportunities to develop familiarity with individuals through our storytelling pilot.



ONE MIND Lived Experience

Learn more at [OneMind.org](https://www.onemind.org)