

Lyra

2025 Workforce Mental Health

Trends

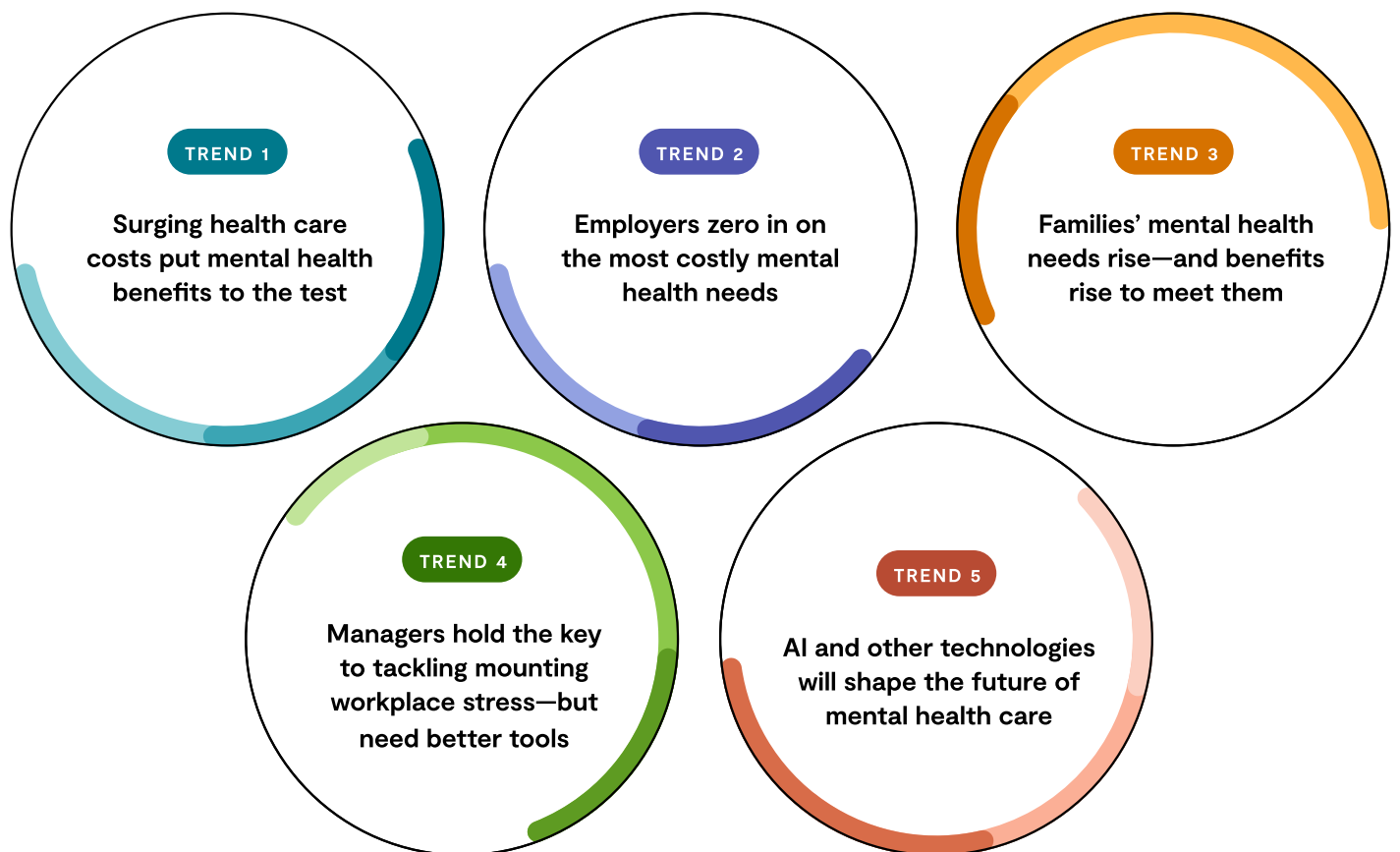
Forecast

32%

The work of HR and benefits leaders is more complex than ever. From the rising tide of chronic illness and the skyrocketing demand for costly GLP-1s to the unique health challenges faced by working parents, employee needs are evolving at an unprecedented pace. As employers face the steepest health care increases in over a decade, managing unpredictable costs has become an increasingly daunting task. Despite these emerging demands, mental health remains a top priority reported by benefits leaders, underscoring the critical importance of providing high-value mental health benefits for today's workforce.

For the past five years, Lyra Health has surveyed human resources (HR) and benefits leaders across industries to uncover their top challenges, track evolving attitudes, and surface practical solutions. This year, we surveyed more than 500 HR and benefits leaders from U.S.-based organizations with worldwide staff to identify the trends shaping workforce mental health in 2025. In this report, we share key insights, combined with expert perspectives from our clinical and organizational well-being leaders.

In the year ahead, five key trends will dominate conversations about the strategies needed to improve employee well-being:





TREND 1

Surging health care costs put mental health benefits to the test

In 2025, HR and benefits leaders are under pressure to connect people with exceptional care while managing increasingly tight budgets. They're examining mental health benefits' impact on employee engagement, clinical outcomes, and cost savings to ensure that these mission-critical services are delivering value to their people and their business.

“Proven, evidence-based mental health care gets people the fastest and strongest improvement with care. Accessing this efficient, effective care also translates into cost savings for employers, as resources aren’t squandered on inadequate care. Better mental health also leads to better physical health, so employers see additional savings from pharmaceutical and other medical costs.”

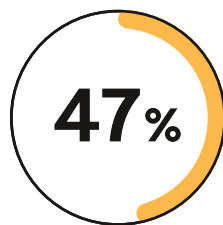


Anita Lungu, PhD
VP of Clinical Product and Research at Lyra Health

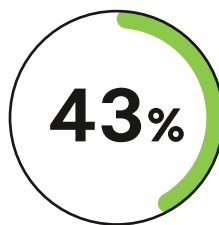
In our survey, benefits leaders identified managing costs with stagnant or shrinking budgets as a top priority for the year ahead. Nearly all respondents (87%) say that demonstrating ROI for mental health care is critically important to HR leadership, but less than a third of companies strongly believe their mental health vendors' ROI claims—highlighting the need for credible, data-driven evidence of program effectiveness.

Recruitment and retention strategies are also key to controlling costs, and offering robust mental health benefits is one proven approach for retaining talent. Employee turnover, which can cost companies up to twice an employee's salary, remains a big challenge. A recent Gallup poll revealed that half of U.S. employees are open to leaving their current organization. In our survey, HR and benefits professionals ranked retention as a top-three challenge for 2025, with 88% agreeing that comprehensive mental health benefits encourage employees to stay. Many employers will likely lean on these benefits to help support workers through layoffs, hiring freezes, and restructuring.

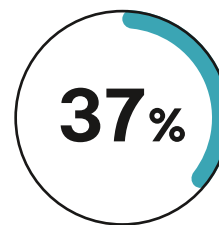
Benefits leaders look to three key measures to demonstrate the business impact of their mental health investment



Health claims cost/
savings



Employee retention
and recruitment




Employee productivity
and absenteeism

Regardless of the metrics they focus on, HR and benefits leaders agree that going beyond a “check-the-box” approach to mental health benefits yields tangible results. Employers with comprehensive mental health benefits are 13% more likely to report higher employee productivity, 17% more likely to see increased employee engagement, and 10% more likely to achieve ROI compared to those without—evidence that high-value care pays off.

“ROI tied to mental health support comes in many forms, but impact on retention, engagement, and productivity are especially important to employers today. With mental health disability leaves on the rise and burnout being both prevalent and predictive of people disengaging at work or even leaving their jobs, mental health benefits vendors need to demonstrate impact on key people metrics in addition to health care claims costs.”



Joe Grasso, PhD
Vice President of Workforce Transformation at Lyra Health

 <p>Top benefits-related priorities for HR leaders in 2025</p>	<p>1 Supporting families and BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ employees</p>
	<p>2 Demonstrating the ROI of benefits programs</p>
	<p>3 Boosting visibility and utilization of benefits</p>
	<p>4 Managing benefits costs effectively</p>
	<p>5 Integrating well-being benefits</p>



Strategy starters



1

**Evaluate care
delivery efficiency**

Assess how your organization benefits from efficient mental health care delivery, including measurable cost savings such as inpatient and outpatient care, emergency care, and prescription spend reduction.



2

**Measure care
effectiveness**

Ensure your population receives high-quality, evidence-based, and measurement-informed care by tracking clinical outcomes and using data to identify areas for improvement.



3

**Expand engagement
and access**

Monitor utilization rates and make sure employees can access care quickly and equitably, addressing any barriers to engagement or gaps in program reach.

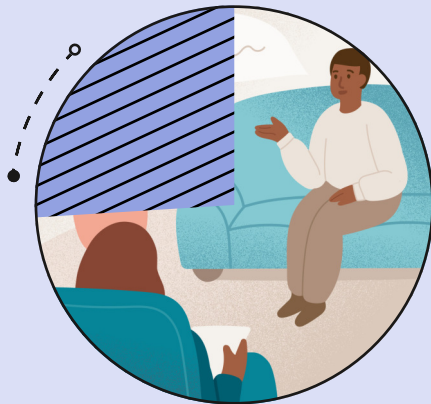


TREND 2

**Employers zero in
on the most costly
mental health needs**

Complex mental health needs—more acute conditions such as severe depression, suicidality, and substance use disorders (SUDs)—affect nearly 1 in 20 adults in the U.S., and overall the number of people diagnosed with a mental health disorder has increased by 40% in recent years. Poor mental health not only takes a profound personal toll but also costs organizations billions annually. Yet, accessing care remains a significant challenge due to the limited availability of specialists, long wait times, and a lack of coordination across treatment programs. Too often, these roadblocks leave employees who are struggling most without urgently needed care.

According to our survey, 81% of HR leaders are increasingly concerned about rising rates of serious mental health conditions, and 74% report employees struggle to find specialists through health plans or employee assistance programs (EAPs). Substance use disorders, in particular, are a top-reported concern for HR and benefits leaders, underscoring the urgency to address these challenges. These findings align with broader priorities—over 1 in 5 HR and benefits leaders surveyed say addressing serious mental illness is a key focus for their mental health strategies in 2025 and something they believe will significantly impact employee well-being over the next five years.



74%

of HR and benefits leaders say employees struggle to find specialists through health plans or EAPs

A key driver of rising spend is that 20% of the population accounts for 80% of health care costs, often due to complex health issues. Nearly half (49%) of survey respondents report growing mental health claims for issues such as SUDs and suicidality. These findings highlight that investing in comprehensive care for employees with serious mental health needs lowers costs while improving well-being.

“HR and benefits leaders are paying attention to high-acuity needs that have surfaced as communities face new stressors and pressures. As health care claims data show, there’s still work to be done when it comes to addressing complex mental health conditions.”



Smita Das, MD, PhD
VP of Psychiatry and Complex Care at Lyra Health

To tackle these challenges, employers are prioritizing investments in evidence-based care that not only counter stigma but also deliver meaningful outcomes. With traditional health care systems often falling short—leaving employees with months-long wait times, costly and ineffective out-of-network treatment options, fragmented care, and high readmission rates—HR and benefits leaders are connecting people to comprehensive, coordinated support that addresses these critical needs.



49%

of HR and benefits leaders say claims costs for serious mental health issues are rising



Strategy starters



1

Provide evidence-based care

Partner with benefits providers that prioritize evidence-based approaches, high-quality practitioners, proactive follow-up, and appropriate medication management to address complex conditions.



2

Streamline access

Offer expert care navigation, an easy-to-use member experience, and robust provider networks to help employees quickly connect with specialists equipped to address their unique mental health challenges.



3

Champion mental health awareness

Create a culture of openness by launching anti-stigma campaigns, hosting educational workshops, and encouraging leaders to speak openly about mental health issues.



TREND 3

**Families' mental
health needs grow—
and benefits rise to
meet them**

Amid an ongoing mental health crisis among children and parents, offering mental health benefits for employees' families is more crucial than ever. These benefits not only support kids' well-being but also allow parents to stay engaged in their careers. According to our survey, 85% of HR and benefits leaders agree that providing mental health care for the entire family is essential. Yet, 82% report that employees struggle to find quality care for themselves or their families through EAPs. Teens and children face unique barriers to accessing care, further intensifying the crisis.

“Traditional approaches to childhood mental health care have failed our kids as well as their parents and caregivers. It has been extraordinarily difficult for families to find specialists practicing evidence-based care, and parents are left poorly supported when coping with these difficult and complex family situations.”



Connie Chen, MD
Chief Operating Officer of Lyra Health

In 2025, we anticipate that employers will do their part to address these issues by expanding access to high-quality mental health care for families. One in three HR and benefits leaders (32%) rank caregiving and parenting support as their company's top health and well-being priority. And nearly one-third cite extending benefits for specific populations, such as dependents, or support for BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ employees, as their top mental health benefit priority for the year.

About half (49%) of survey respondents report that health care claims for kids and teens are rising, driven by growing demand and a system that's ill-equipped to meet their needs. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), only about 20% of kids with a mental health disorder receive care from a specialized provider, highlighting a critical gap in treatment access.



85%

of respondents think offering mental health care for the entire family is essential

Employers are making strides in supporting families, but there's work to do on neurodiversity, which affects up to 1 in 5 people globally. Children and adolescents who are neurodivergent often face a higher risk of mental health challenges such as anxiety and depression and need specialized care to address these co-occurring conditions. While 87% of the HR and benefits professionals we surveyed recognize the need to address neurodiversity in their workplace, 71% admit they're unsure how to start.



32%

of HR and benefits leaders rank caregiving and parenting support as their company's top health and well-being priority.



Strategy starters



1

Gather feedback from working parents

Connect with your parental and family-related ERGs to understand which mental health resources they need most.



2

Offer comprehensive family care

Ensure your mental health benefit covers the entire family, with specialists for children and teens, and offers virtual care options with flexible appointment times like evenings and weekends to accommodate busy schedules.



3

Enhance the member experience

Review the care journey to ensure it's accessible and user-friendly for parents, kids, and teens.



TREND 4

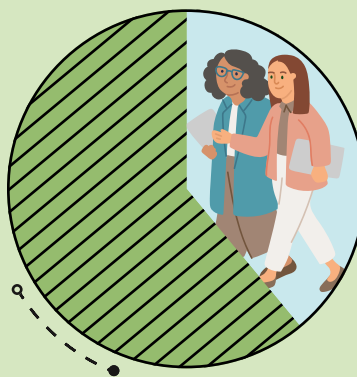
**Managers hold the key
to tackling mounting
workplace stress—but
need better tools**

If there's a common denominator affecting mental health in the workplace, it's stress. More than 1 in 3 HR and benefits leaders identified work-related stress and burnout as the most common challenge impacting employees, citing "excessive workload" as the main work-related factor negatively affecting mental health. Half of survey respondents report that stress and anxiety impacted their workers over the past year—a number that's risen steadily over the past several years.

The need for managerial support

39%

of respondents report that "We provide resources for managers to support mental well-being at work"



85%

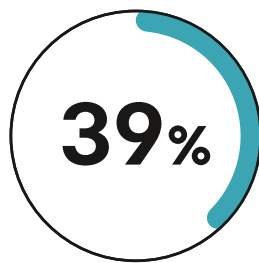
of respondents say, "Managers are an integral part of our workforce mental health strategy"

This year, 39% of HR and benefits leaders cite financial stress as a top-three factor harming workforce mental health—more than double last year's 18%. This comes as job insecurity is poised to be a major stressor in 2025, with U.S. layoffs 51% higher in October 2024 than in October 2023. To address financial stress, employers are considering solutions such as financial counseling, on-demand pay, and wage advances to ease financial strain and boost overall well-being.

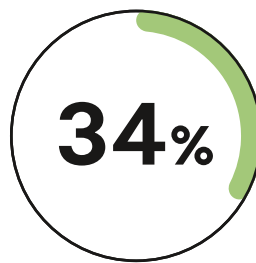
Other significant stressors include managerial stress, ranked third (24%) by HR and benefits leaders, and incivility or unruly behavior at work, which 22% of respondents identify as a key factor negatively impacting mental health. Managers are uniquely positioned to observe and mitigate workplace stress, but our survey highlights a gap between the expectations placed on managers to support employee mental well-being and the tools they're given to succeed. A growing trend in 2025 will involve deeper collaboration with managers, equipping them with the training and resources needed to better support their teams.

Managers face disproportionate work-related stress due to high expectations for supporting workforce mental health paired with limited resources. This presents a key opportunity for organizations in 2025 to significantly improve workplace wellness by prioritizing mental health support for managers.

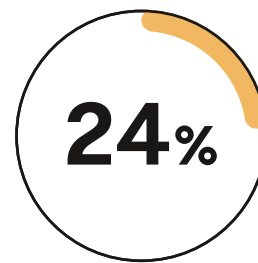
Top stressors negatively impacting mental health in the workplace:



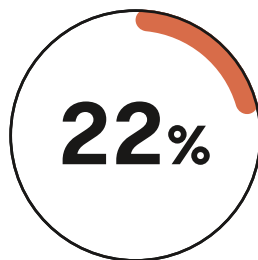
Financial stress



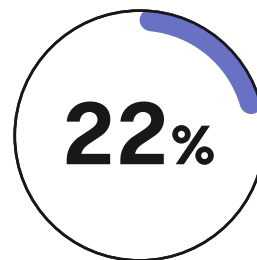
Work-related stress and burnout



Managerial stress



Incivility or unruly behavior at work



Workplace policies (e.g., return to office)

“It’s important to evaluate which aspects of work life may be impacting your workforce’s mental health, consult with managers and team members on what the data are saying, and collaborate on commonsense improvements to working conditions that can improve both well-being and performance.”



Joe Grasso, PhD
Vice President of Workforce Transformation at Lyra Health



Strategy starters



1

Empower employees with coping resources

Provide proactive support such as resiliency training, stress management workshops, and on-demand mental health programming to empower employees to recognize and address stress effectively.



2

Prioritize psychological health and safety

Implement policies, practices, and approaches to work design that combat common drivers of work-related distress, including incivility, role ambiguity, low job control, and poor change management.



3

Support managers

Equip managers with mental health resources to manage their own unique stressors, data about how work impacts their teams’ well-being, and training on how to address workplace drivers of team stress.



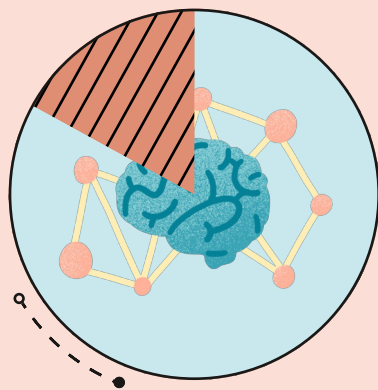
TREND 5

**AI and other
technologies will shape
the future of mental
health care**

Not long ago, AI was barely a blip on the radar, but in 2025, it will be at the forefront of innovation. Advances in machine learning and other technologies are poised to make mental health care more accessible, effective, and sustainable for both organizations and their employees. According to our survey, 83% of HR and benefits professionals believe AI will play a pivotal role in improving mental health care in the coming year.

Survey results show the clear potential of AI, with 61% of respondents naming it as a top emerging trend expected to shape mental health benefits over the next five years. Already, innovative mental health solutions are using AI to match employees with providers specifically trained to address their unique mental health needs. AI is also enhancing care by helping employees connect with providers who practice culturally responsive care, a factor proven to strengthen therapeutic relationships and improve outcomes.

The top emerging mental health benefits trends, according to HR and benefits leaders

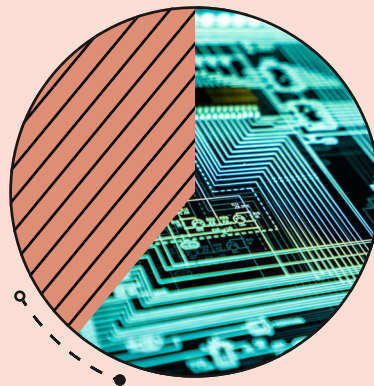


83%

believe AI will play a pivotal role in improving mental health care

61%

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Two other AI opportunities—integrating mental and physical health care and creating personalized mental health plans—rank as the second and third top emerging trends

Digital platforms and telehealth are further expanding access to high-quality care, reaching employees regardless of location and offering an efficient way to support mental health on a global scale.

“Too often, the traditional mental health system struggles to connect clients with the right providers. Getting this right is paramount for good outcomes, allowing clients to develop strong therapeutic alliances, stay in care, and get the help they need. AI can do this by analyzing clients’ needs and preferences to match them with the best-fit provider. This is just one way technology can expand access to vital care.



Jenny Gonsalves
Chief Technology Officer at Lyra Health

Technology is only as effective as the people guiding its application, and, in 2025, we anticipate employers will take bold steps to address the psychological needs of their workforce, implementing strategies that create lasting impacts on employee mental health.



Strategy starters



1

Prioritize benefits with advanced matching technology

Choose mental health programs that use AI-powered tools to match employees with providers based on clinical needs, preferences, and proven treatment success.



2

Require personalized support

Look for benefits that use AI to surface tailored resources, wellness tools, and other employer-provided support—helping employees easily access the care and resources they need.



3

Support providers with smarter solutions

Partner with vendors that equip their providers with AI-driven tools to streamline administrative tasks, so they can spend more time delivering high-quality care to employees.

In uncertain times, the cost of inaction is too high

In an unpredictable world, as mental health challenges continue to rise, so must companies' efforts to meet these growing needs. By reducing workplace stress for employees and managers, extending benefits to families, supporting costly complex needs, and leveraging innovative technologies, organizations can achieve significant improvements in workforce mental health—often with minimal investment.

These strategies strengthen employee well-being and drive positive outcomes for key business metrics such as health care costs, retention, talent attraction, productivity, and engagement. Employees who experience less stress, have access to care for their families, and feel supported in the workplace are more productive, more resilient, and more likely to stay with their organization. Thoughtfully deployed, comprehensive mental health benefits improve lives while strengthening the bottom line.



Explore how Lyra can help support mental health in
your workplace in 2025 and beyond

[Request a free consultation](#)

Methodology

To better understand the experiences and attitudes of employees, human resources managers, and benefits leaders related to mental health in the workplace, Lyra Health conducted a survey of more than 500 individuals via an online survey from PureSpectrum between Sept. 10 and 30, 2024. All respondents were at least 18 years of age and living in the U.S. when the survey was completed.

All respondents self-identified as manager-level or above, working in their organization's "employee benefits" department at companies with 1,000 or more employees.

PureSpectrum partners with the top online sample providers to supply a network of diverse, quality respondents to their client base. The survey data comes from traditional, actively managed, double-opt-in market research panels.

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About Lyra Health

Lyra Health helps leading companies improve access to effective, high-quality mental health care for their employees and their families. With Lyra's innovative digital care platform and global provider network, members receive the best care and get better faster.

partners@lyrahealth.com | www.lyrahealth.com