

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS CHARITABLE SECTOR SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT

SUPPORTED BY THE DRAGONFLY FUND

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Tides Canada is a national charity dedicated to provide uncommon solutions for the common good by helping Canadians secure a healthy environment in ways that promote social equity and economic prosperity. We build bridges among sectors, helping to steer more philanthropy into solutions that address social and environmental challenges. In collaboration with diverse partners, Tides Canada provides tools, expertise, strategy, and relationships to get from vision to impact. We work to accelerate positive change and achieve greater impact across the country by bringing giving, investing, and doing under a single roof.



Executive Summary

- The objective of this survey was to identify what current supports (e.g. extended health care, flexible working hours, etc.) for mental health and wellness are offered to employees within the charitable sector. The survey also explored what other supports are desired that may not be offered. This was not an exhaustive survey, as Tides Canada did not ask any demographic questions to correlate answers to individuals (i.e., salary, title, or confirmation that all respondents work within the charitable sector).
- The survey found the top four responses identified as factors that contribute to positive mental health and wellness in the workplace were also the top supports that are currently in place.

The top four factors were:

1. Flexible hours and/or work location
 2. Extended health benefits
 3. Positive office culture and working relationships
 4. Supportive manager
- Tides Canada found the survey had a response rate of 93 individuals, of which 89 answered all five questions. The survey was sent to 612 contacts within the sector and promoted on Tides Canada's social media channels.
 - Through this process, Tides Canada has concluded that there is an interest for more open discussion about mental health and the programs or policies that support individual wellness (22 respondents or 24% agreed to be contacted for any follow-up study) and that more research about what supports mental health and wellness in the workplace is recommended to gain greater insight on the responses provided.
 - Tides Canada hopes to incorporate these findings into our practices and supports that the organization provides and will continue to foster dialogue on the topic within our network.
 - The survey was undertaken on behalf of the Dragonfly Fund, a donor advised fund at Tides Canada. Dragonfly's interest was to explore how they can support their grantees' mental health and wellness.

Introduction

The Dragonfly Fund is a donor advised fund (DAF) at Tides Canada. The Dragonfly Fund is grounded in a vision focused on healing and regenerating the earth and humanity by transforming wealth to health. Dragonfly's grantmaking contributes to this mission by investing in people, organizations, and communities committed to key elements of a healthy earth: clean energy, clean and available water, and a toxic-free environment. The Fund is informed by the Social Justice Principles of Philanthropy and continually renews and updates its practices through learning from grantee feedback. In addition to Tides Canada housing the Dragonfly Fund as a DAF, the fund is jointly managed by the Fund Advisor and Wendy Cooper, Senior Solutions Advisor at Tides Canada. Tides Canada's role includes the development and implementation of a grantmaking strategy, research, grant recommendations, grant administration, and evaluation, among other activities.

When developing the 2018 strategy for Dragonfly Fund grantmaking, the Fund Advisor expressed interest in exploring social, mental, and emotional wellness among Dragonfly grantees. At the core of the interest was fostering strong mental and emotional health in all the work that Dragonfly currently supports. This includes encouraging healthy workplaces and home lives where depression and burnout are no longer issues.

After further discussion, it was decided that the approach for 2018 was to support grantees of the Dragonfly Fund in their own mental health and well-being. This was in recognition of the important role that mental and emotional health plays in the success of grantees' work and the current lack of support in the charitable sector in this area.

To support Dragonfly grantees, two activities were undertaken:

- Tides Canada conducted this research to learn about best practices from charities and projects in its network that are positively contributing to mental health and well-being in charitable workplaces to provide examples that can be shared with Dragonfly grantees, Tides Canada, and the sector more broadly.
- Funds were allocated to add on to grants for approved grantees to support mental health and well-being activities as defined by the grantees.

In this report, we share the survey research, process, findings, and recommendations.



Findings

This is a summary of the survey results based on 93 respondents, of which 89 answered all five open-ended questions.

What Is Mental Health and Wellness

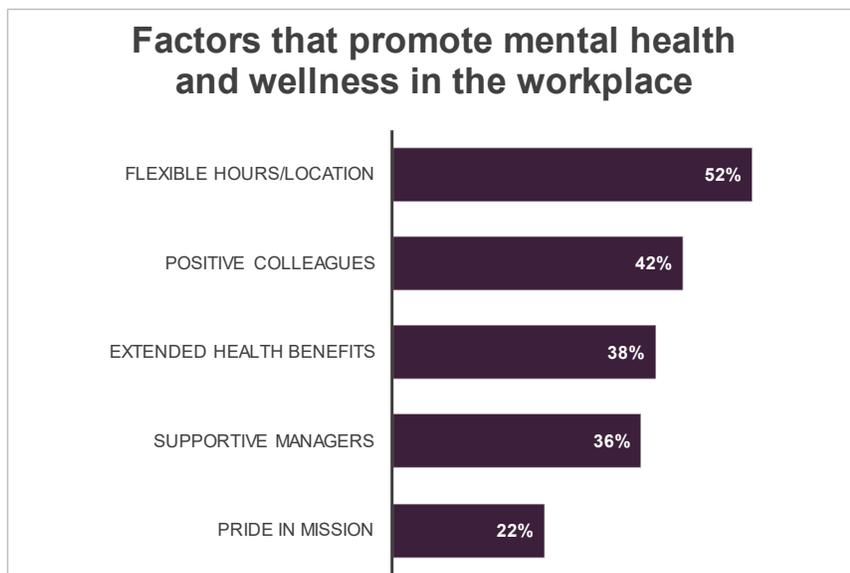
According to the World Health Organization, mental health is defined as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to his or her community.”

In the context of this survey, when asked, “What is mental health and wellness?”, respondents described it as one’s emotional and psychological well-being, and how well one can balance their social, emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical health. Respondents also described it as the ability to regulate stress in a healthy manner, maintain a positive state of mind, and having the resilience and capacity to cope in the face of challenges.

Mental Health and Wellness Factors

Respondents were asked to list factors that support and detract from their mental health and wellness in the workplace. Though they were given the opportunity to respond openly, several examples were listed as prompts. As a result, there were several themes that were repeated by respondents as displayed in the following two charts:

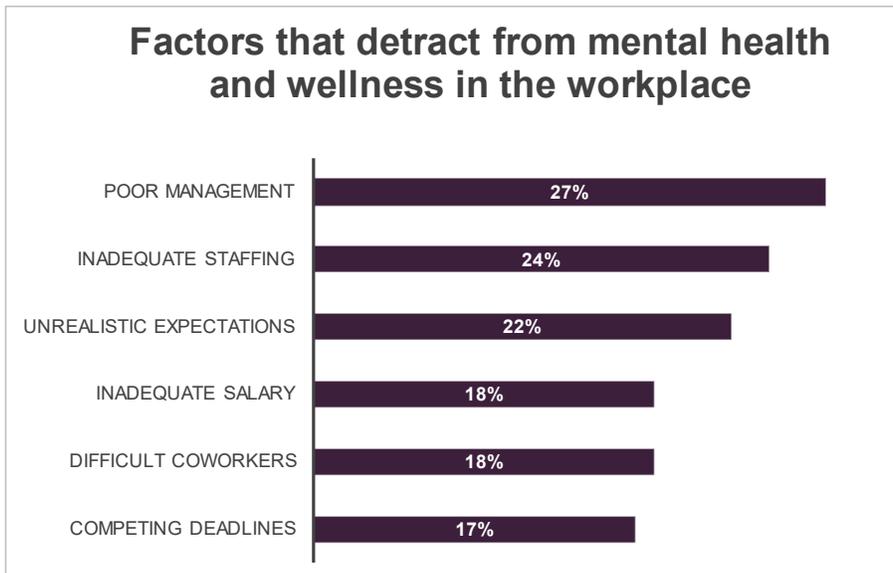
For both questions, the percentages indicated are based on the number of individuals who responded similarly.



Other responses to factors that promote mental health and wellness included:

- Positive public image
- Adequate salary
- Organizational policies promoting self-care
- Work is valued
- Clear job descriptions

- Performance evaluations
- Consistent mentorship
- Social time with fellow staff
- Challenged but not overwhelmed
- Active recognition
- Balance of autonomy and collective responsibility
- Paid sick days
- Equality of benefits for all genders
- Ergonomically-appropriate workstations



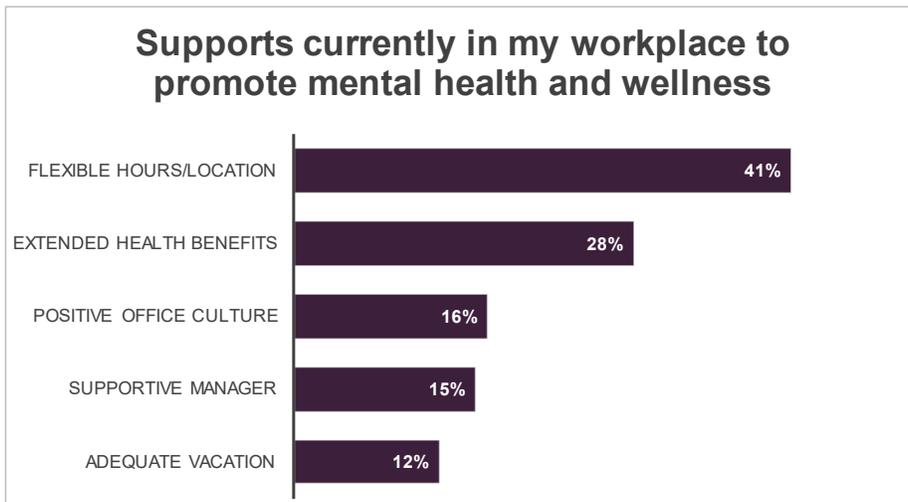
Other responses to factors that detract from mental health and wellness in the workplace included:

- Lack of trust
- Unclear responsibilities
- Poor leadership
- Lack of recognition
- Lack of financial security (i.e., contract work, chasing funding)
- Inadequate vacation allowance
- Negative external perception of the organization
- State of the world (i.e., rise of populism),
- Poor working conditions (e.g., dim lighting, inadequate desk space, drugs on the door step)

Charitable Workplace Supports for Mental Health and Wellness

For the following question, participants were asked to list or describe any services, programs, or initiatives their organizations provided to employees that supports their mental health and wellness in the workplace. This was the focal point of this research project, to determine what was currently in place and gain insight into mental health and wellness programs Dragonfly Fund and others could support.

There were several areas where respondents noted similar supports in place within their organization, as illustrated below:



- Five respondents indicated that they don't feel like they currently have anything in place at their workplace to support mental health and wellness.
- Other supports indicated by respondents included the following:
 - Paid sick days
 - Access to programs like:
 - NWTTA Mental Health Initiative
 - Starling Minds
 - Organizational policies around: anti-harassment, bullying, policy for taking sick or personal days for mental health reasons
 - RRSP contributions or matching
 - Competitive salary, bonuses
 - 360-degree reviews
 - Professional development budget
 - Mentorship opportunities
 - Healthy food in the office
 - Team socials
 - Staff retreats
 - Weekly check-ins with supervisors
 - Pets in the office
 - On the land ceremonies
 - Inclusion of elders

The main factors and supports that are overlapping are related to working conditions and stability of the work. A repeated theme was benefits. Benefits can be costly to an employer, and typically, are only available for longer-term employees. The total compensation looks higher and thus, expenses increase by adding extended health care benefits to employee compensation packages. Comparing the nonprofit to the for-profit sector—every spent dollar faces higher scrutiny within the charitable sector, and money spent on compensation to an employee is viewed as administration and not programmatic. The less money spent

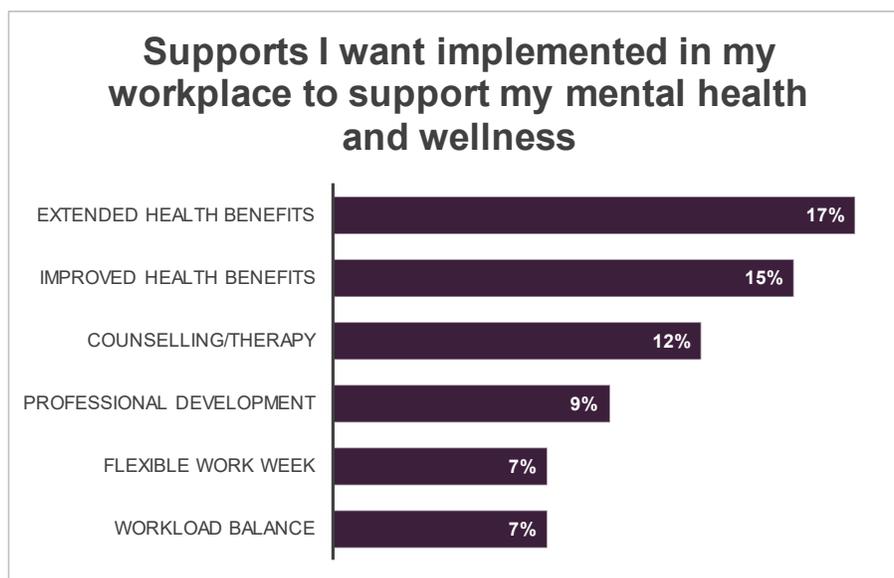
on programs, the more charitable organizations may be criticized. The perception being that there is less money going to help the cause (e.g., feed the hungry, clean the ocean, put extra kids through school).

Flexible work week and locations are often a result of multiple factors. Many professionals are living further outside of city centres due to increased cost of living, so offering the option to telecommute can source a greater pool of talent and enable individuals to maintain better work-life balance by reducing the amount of commuting required. Also, office space in a city centre is a premium, so organizations can keep overhead costs lower by having more staff work offsite. This is also a perk or incentive provided to employees as part of a comprehensive benefits package. This could be especially attractive in the charitable sector when monetary compensation is lower than average. Flexible timing is meant to allow employees to use their time and hours as they see fit and provides the ability for employees to more easily meet family responsibilities, like the coordination of childcare or even reducing childcare costs.

Factors like supportive management and positive office culture can be intentionally mandated and nurtured, however depend on the individuals who partake and participate in personal and professional development, socialization, and open comradery in the office environment.

Desired Supports for Mental Health and Wellness

The final question probed what supports respondents want to see put into place to support their mental health and wellness. The top responses are illustrated below:



- Extended health benefits and improved health benefits were separately tracked. The category “extended health benefits” refers to any respondent that indicated they wanted health care benefits in general, leading us to assume they currently did not have them. “Improved health benefits” encompasses respondents who qualified their benefits as being too low in one or multiple areas (specifically to cover visits to psychologists – 5 respondents), wanting unlimited benefits (4 respondents) or self-directed benefits (3 respondents).
- The responses for this question tracked similarly to responses to other questions, with a more explicit ask for support for counselling or to remove limits on psychological support within existing extended health care benefits plans.
- Budget for professional development was also a noted as a desired support.

- Workload balance in the form of hiring enough staff and having adequate support and coverage was also noted as a desired support by respondents.
- 14 respondents (15% of respondents) felt that they are adequately supported when it comes to mental health and wellness in the workplace.

Other suggestions respondents noted include:

- Having access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Allowing sick days to be used as mental health breaks
- Providing short-term leave allowance and/or long-term disability
- Having clearly defined organizational policies around wellness and work-life balance
- Improving vacation policy
- Offering summer flex days
- Removing any salary caps
- Providing maternity/paternity leave top-up
- Providing opt-in pension plans
- Hiring more staff so no one is overworked
- Instituting a formal peer support system or supporting a more informal peer support network
- Incorporating outdoor time in the work day
- Providing employees with a gym subsidy
- Sponsoring athletic activities for staff
- Providing or improving office space (i.e., windows, plants, sit-stand desks)
- Staff recognition (i.e., awards, events)
- Staff social events (i.e., staff retreats, more frequent meal or snack sharing, less frequent big external events)
- Providing healthy food in the office
- Openly recognizing the impacts of colonialism
- Including elders in all practices
- Offering cultural sensitivity and awareness training
- Providing good intentions training
- Supporting homeopathic treatments
- Promoting a culture of open discussion and communication
- Providing time and space for meditation, on-site quiet room
- Having access to professional mediation services
- Providing access to a menopause support group
- Having management swap jobs with frontline workers to understand work challenges

Methodology

This study was completed through a short survey questionnaire that was shared via email with a group of 612 comprised of Tides Canada staff, shared platform project staff, and grantees. The survey was also promoted on Tides Canada's social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn). There was encouragement for recipients to share widely with their networks to seek fellow employees who work in the charitable sectors. 93 individuals responded, of which 89 answered all five questions.

There were five open-ended questions, and no demographic data was collected. Though all questions posed were open-ended, some examples were provided to support idea generation, specifically in the questions around general factors or conditions that support or detract from one's mental health and wellness in the workplace.

The qualitative response data was organized, coded, and categorized manually into distinct themes areas, and then interpreted and presented as graphs (see Findings section). It is important to note that qualitative response data is subject to some interpretation, and the results and findings are an analysis of the general concepts being communicated by the respondents. This was not a full evaluative study, where results would be triangulated with at least three sources of data.

In addition to the findings presented above:

- There were 22 respondents who indicated they were willing to participate in follow-up interviews and indicated interest in being involved in future research.
- Though we did not specifically ask in which sector respondents worked, response rates surged after each email reminder was sent to the Tides Canada contact list. This indicated that majority of respondents came from our targeted distribution list of individuals working in the charitable sector.

Recommendations

- Incorporate continued resources into the Dragonfly grantmaking strategy for 2019 to further the research and financial support to Dragonfly grantees in the following ways:
 - Support further research that provides additional information on the needs of the charitable sector, and potentially the Dragonfly grantees more specifically.
 - Conduct more targeted research into what is being provided within the charitable sector, through interviews with employers, in addition to employees; also attempt to determine more why some supports are or are not provided through a more comprehensive survey. A comprehensive survey could include asking demographic and employment-related questions to better compare what is being offered and if factors such as size of organization, type of role, location, etc. have an impact.
 - Solicit feedback from 2018 Dragonfly grantees on the outcomes of the additional grant funding provided for mental health and well-being. Also, explore how the support can be structured to better foster employee mental health and well-being.
 - Incorporate any feedback into a revised process for providing additional resources for mental health and well-being of Dragonfly grantees.

Appendix A: Survey Questions

The list below are the five open-ended questions Tides Canada asked respondents.

1. How would you define mental health and wellness?
2. What are some factors or conditions that positively contribute to your mental health and wellness at work? When answering this question, please provide detailed examples. The following factors are examples for you to consider but are not an exhaustive list: Benefits and Services (ex: Employee Assistance Program, Extended Health Care), Working Conditions (ex: flexible working hours, office environment, friendly colleagues), External Factors (ex: public perception of your organizations' mission, government policies), Systems and Structures (ex: company or organization policies, well defined job descriptions, mentorship opportunities)
3. What are some factors or conditions that detract from your mental health and wellness at work? When answering this question, you can consider the same list above in addition to some of these examples: Poor relationships with clients/staff, unrealistic deadlines, lack of managerial support, inadequate salary or other forms of compensation like vacation time and benefits
4. Share any examples of policies, initiatives, or services that are being provided by your organization that positively contribute to your mental health and wellness:
5. What policies, initiatives, or services would you like to have provided by your organization to support your mental health and wellness?

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