In October 2021, Sonder commissioned McGregor Tan to survey 1,025 employees in Australia who were working a minimum of 20 hours per week. We wanted to look beyond the media hype, and confirm our own observations from providing wellbeing support to some of the largest employers in the country.

The results shone a spotlight on current gaps in employee physical and psychological safety, and mostly confirmed what we have been seeing in our 24/7 support for medical, safety, and mental health concerns. For example:

What is surprising is the extent of workplace aggression and the lack of support afterwards. Whilst conversation in the media tends to focus on customer aggression, we found that 44 per cent of employees had experienced aggression from colleagues, and 35 per cent of employees had experienced aggression from managers. Furthermore, nearly one in two employees did not receive any support after an incident of aggression from a customer, colleague or manager.

This executive snapshot shares a confronting picture of workplace issues hidden in plain sight. It shows how far organisations still need to travel on their journey towards holistic wellbeing and safety, if they care about brand reputation and their ability to attract, engage and retain employees.

To create healthier and more resilient organisations, we challenge organisational leaders to embrace their responsibility for wellbeing, proactively measure wellbeing data, integrate wellbeing into their organisational practices, and have the courage to break existing conventions to effect meaningful change.
Suicide

Suicide ideation and death by suicide have a significant impact, yet there are gaps in organisational support.

52% of employees have personally known a colleague, family member or friend who has attempted or died from suicide.

Of these employees:

- 92% said this had an impact on their mental wellbeing.
- 46% wanted more support from their workplace.

When the workplace was aware of the incident, 50% of employees currently feel or have felt bullied or harassed at work.

Safety and mental health

Employees are not feeling physically and/or psychologically safe at work and/or at home.

- 72% of employees do feel or have felt depressed.
- 25% of employees are contemplating or have considered suicide.
- 50% of employees do live or have lived in a domestic and family violence situation.
- 22% of employees are contemplating or have considered suicide.

“These are sobering statistics, reflecting that our community is under distress and so are our people - who want and need more support.”

Louise Butler, Head of Psychology, Sonder
**Workplace aggression**

Employees are reporting aggression within their own organisations, as well as on the front line.

- **62%** of these employees have experienced aggression from customers.
- **44%** of these employees have experienced aggression from colleagues.
- **35%** of these employees have experienced aggression from managers.

**Time off work**

Employee concern about mental wellbeing is affecting workplace attendance rates and impacting colleagues.

- **42%** of employees have taken time off work in the last 12 months due to concerns about their mental wellbeing.
- **26%** of employees have taken time off work in the last 12 months due to concerns about the mental wellbeing of their friends or family.
- **77%** of employees have taken on extra work duties as a result.
- **25%** of employees were paid for the extra work duties.
Leading by example

Employees look to leadership to ‘walk the talk’ when it comes to discussing mental wellbeing.

- 80% of employees said that seeing or hearing leaders talk about their own mental wellbeing makes them feel that they can also talk about their mental wellbeing in the workplace.
- 57% of employees said their CEO talks about their own mental wellbeing.
- 71% of employees said their manager talks about their own mental wellbeing.

Low understanding

Many employees do not use wellbeing programs due to a low understanding of them.

- 18% of employees (who are aware of their workplace’s mental wellbeing programs) understand all of the programs available.

High expectations

Employees expect their employer to provide mental wellbeing support.

- 92% of employees think it’s important for their next employer to offer mental wellbeing support.

Source: October 2021 McGregor Tan survey (commissioned by Sonder) of 1,025 employees in Australia working a minimum of 20 hours per week. Industries: Government and social services (28%), retail and wholesale trade (22%), banking and financial services (22%), transportation and distribution (9%), utilities (5%), professional services (4%), insurance (4%), property and real estate (4%), and media (2%).