

Dear HRPAs Members,

Once again, I want to thank you for taking the time to respond to the latest COVID-19 member survey. It matters that 1,127 of you shared your experiences, ideas, and perspectives because it allows us to stay on top of the latest trends and share new insights about what is happening across organizations and HR functions in Ontario.

So many **insights** and **trends** were unearthed – many are quite eye-opening, and I’m excited to share them with you below. But, perhaps the most satisfying results to share with you were the many wonderful things our members are doing to prepare for return to work, highlighting the enormous value HR is delivering. A few select comments from our members sum it up:

*“[We’re] pivoting our business for the greater good of our employees and the communities we serve.”*

Another wrote:

*“Being pro-active pays! As a direct result of HR’s leadership and recommendations, our company was a leader in planning, communications and implementing safety responses.”*

And another respondent shared how their business is helping to...

*“feed the essential workers who had to come in to work so they didn’t have to leave the building.”*

Accompanying this message is an infographic, which I encourage you to share with colleagues and sectors and via your social channels.

## The Top 10 Insights + Trends

**1. Most organizations are planning for return to work by the end of summer.** Respondents expect employees will start returning to the workplace in the next three months and 53% expect to have all of their employees back in the primary workplace within six months. This means that a number of new or enhanced policies and procedures will need to be in place; ranging from health and safety, to dynamic work schedules, to infection prevention & control compliance expectations.

**2. Change will be the new normal.** 38% of organizations plan permanent restructuring, including changes to their business model, organizational structure, policies, new workflows, reduction of physical workspaces, downsizing, and the ways people interact.

**3. Work from home is here to stay.** 81% of organizations are planning to permanently retain or expand remote working options.

**4. Crises spurn creativity.** Respondents contributed many examples for how their organization leveraged their values as a means of retaining and engaging staff and also looking to the future. Experimentation and agile change have become the new normal with heightened corporate social responsibility actions.



**5. Changes to schedule and routine are expected.** A wide array of programs are being put in place including modified work schedules, flex time, and rotating shifts.

**6. Relationships within unionized workplaces remain stable.** For unionized workplaces few (16%) found an increase of grievances. Perception of relationships with labour-management has stayed the same – approximately two-thirds of respondents said these remain positive relationships.

**7. HR Professionals have been very involved in their organization's return to workplace planning process.** As we've already highlighted, HR has been an essential voice at the strategic table with the majority of respondents participating at a high level (81%).

**8. Supporting working families is a priority.** Organizations are planning to make special arrangements to assist their employees as schools and child-care centres remain closed and summer camps are not available.

**9. Strict health and safety measures are expected.** Nearly all respondents, (95%), plan to implement or expand the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for employees but the ways in which this need is being met varies.

**10. Business travel is on hold.** In most cases, (85%) travel of any kind is postponed indefinitely or, if travel is permitted, it requires approval required from Executives.

Thank you and please continue to stay safe,

Louise Taylor Green,  
CEO

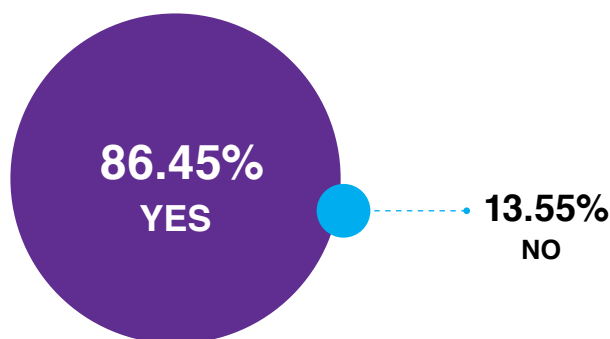


Human Resources  
Professionals  
Association

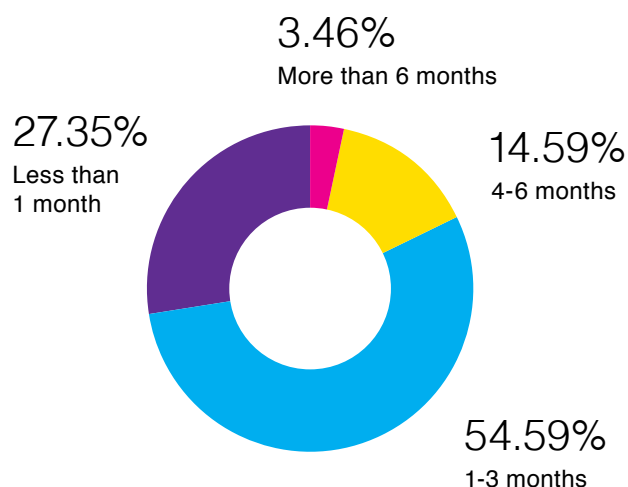
# HRPA COVID-19 MEMBER SURVEY PART 2: RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE

## Return to Workplace Plan

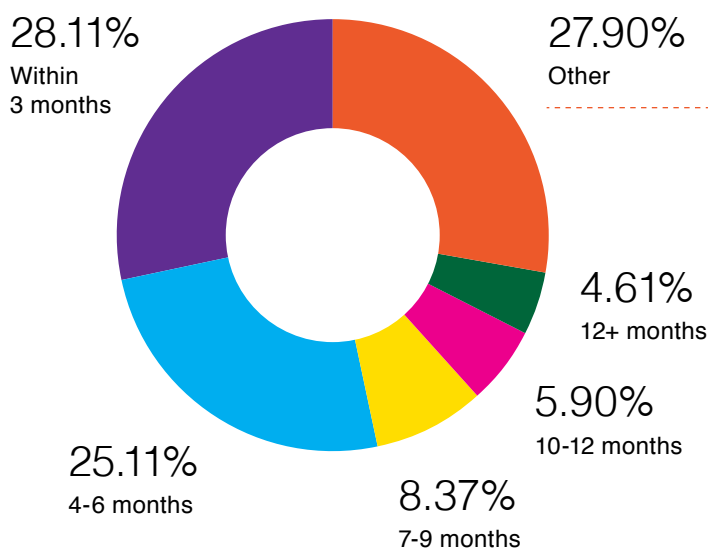
**Q** Has your organization started to plan for employees to return to the workplace?



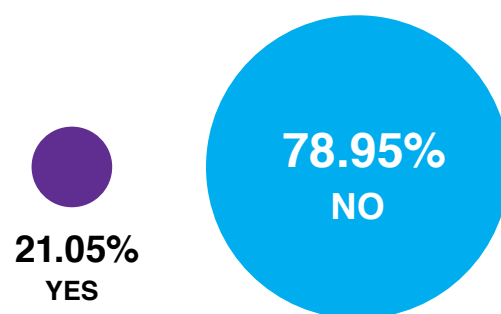
**Q** On what time horizon do you expect your organization will start returning employees to their primary workplace?



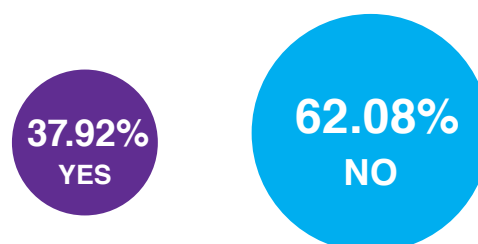
**Q** When does your organization expect to have all employees back to work at their primary workplace?



**Q** Is your organization planning, or have they already needed to permanently lay off employees as a result of COVID-19?



**Q** Will your organization do any permanent restructuring as a result of COVID-19?



- Unsure or unknown at the moment; indefinite work from home plan in place
- Customized approach, gradual or staggered return
- Contingent on government guidance and restrictions
- Already an essential service

**Q Please describe the permanent restructuring your organization is doing as a result of COVID-19:**

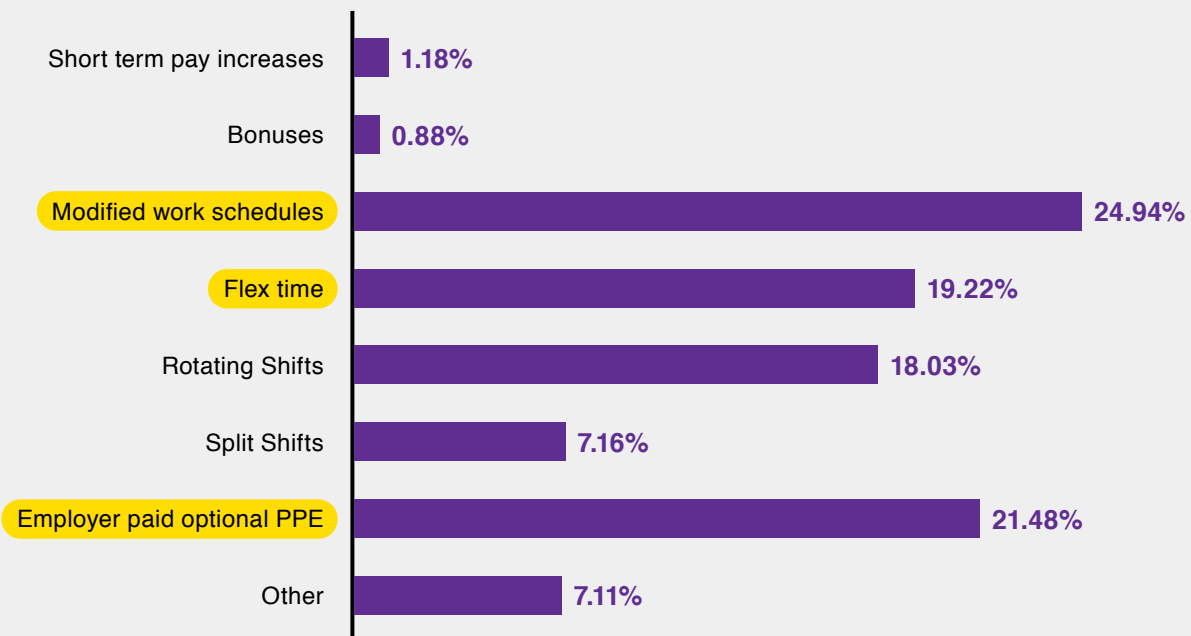
- Elimination of positions resulting in permanent layoffs/ downsizing, retraining and redistribution of tasks.
- Reclassified jobs and outsourced work; increase of contractors instead of full-time employees.
- Reducing contract workers in order to retain permanent staff.
- Closing or reduction of offices/physical work spaces.
- Permanent work-from-home arrangements.
- Creating more virtual/digital processes.
- Still under review or in planning stages.
- Employee recall dependent on service or production demand.

**Q Is your organization's policy or approach to business travel changing as a result of COVID-19?**



**Q Which of the following is your organization planning to implement as a means to encourage employees to return to the workplace?**

Note: Respondents were able to select multiple options.



## Remote Work

**Q** Have your perceptions of remote work changed since the start of the pandemic?



Describe how your perceptions of remote work changed:

“

COVID-19 has shown that working from home is feasible and that employees can still be productive.

Every employee reacts differently – some now want to work from home more frequently, others prefer in-person interaction with their colleagues.

Enjoy being able to be more relaxed at home with less distractions.

Stressful due to less work-life balance; difficult to maintain boundary between professional and personal time.

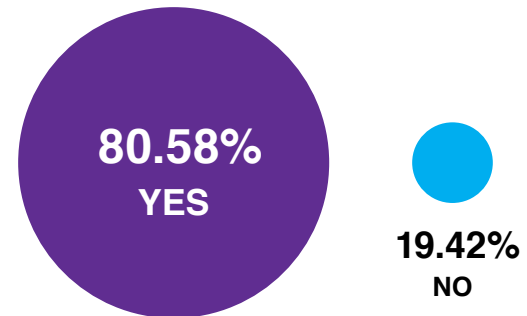
It has been more challenging to coordinate efforts that involve working between departments.

Those without dedicated work spaces or are caring for family members and lacking privacy have found it difficult.

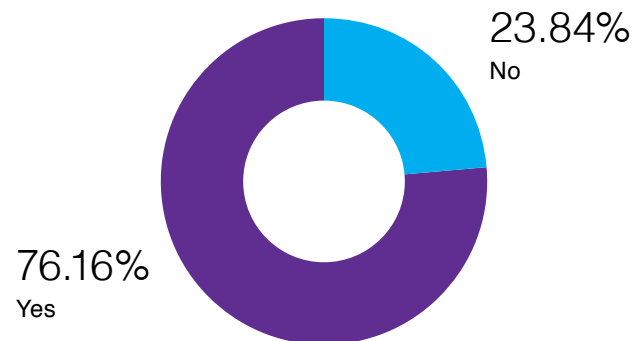
A combination of working in-office and remotely is the best option.

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**Q** Is your organization planning to permanently retain or expand remote working options for its employees as a result of COVID-19?



**Q** If schools remain closed and summer camps are not available, is your organization planning to make any special arrangements to assist working families?



“

Flexible schedules or continuing remote work arrangements.

Most likely will include the option to use vacation/lieu time, or leave of absence, on top of flex or compressed work.

Individual accommodation plans that varies by request.

Planning for options to bring in childcare to the office so that employees have the option to bring their children to work.

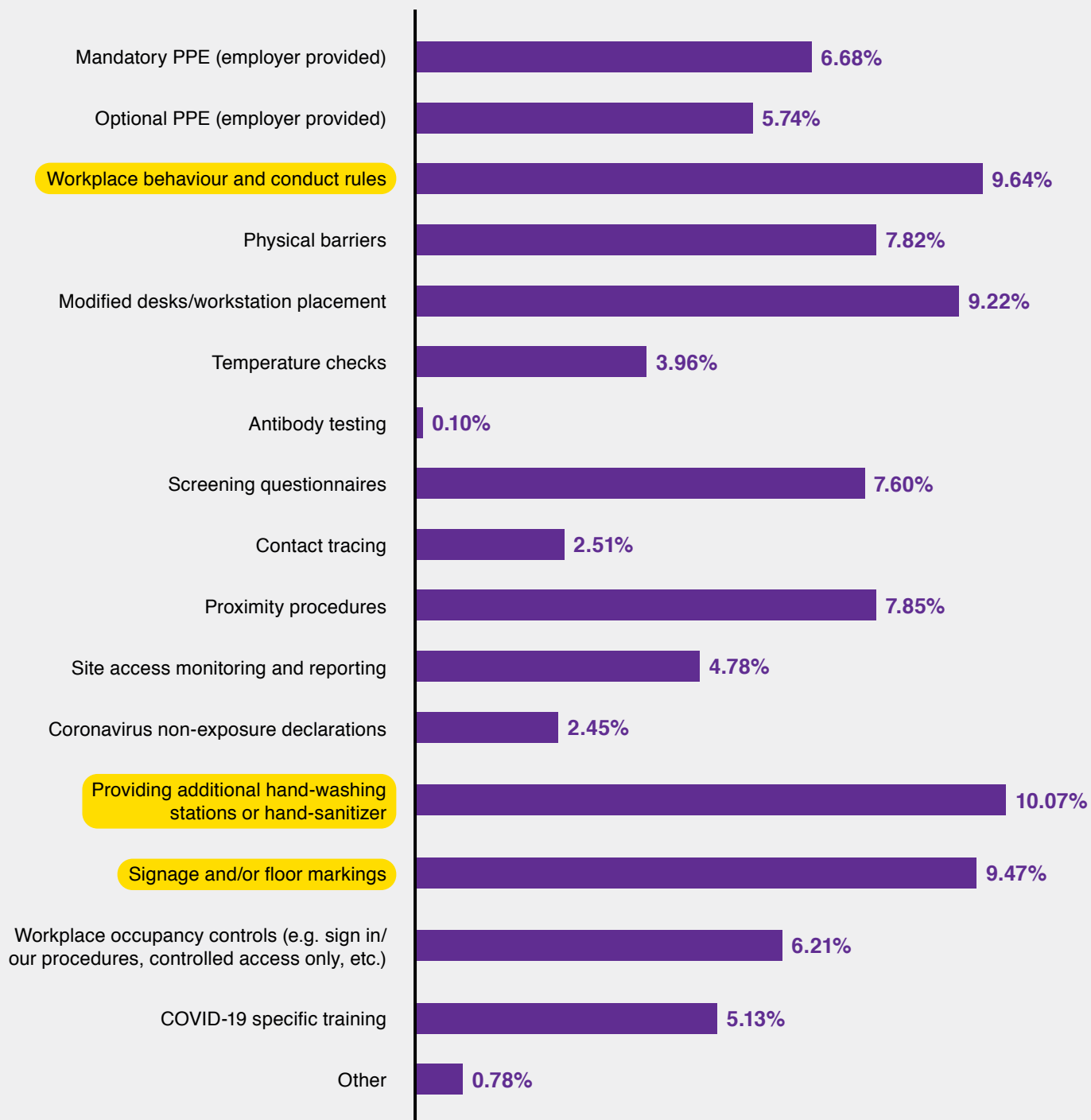
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## Healthy and Safety

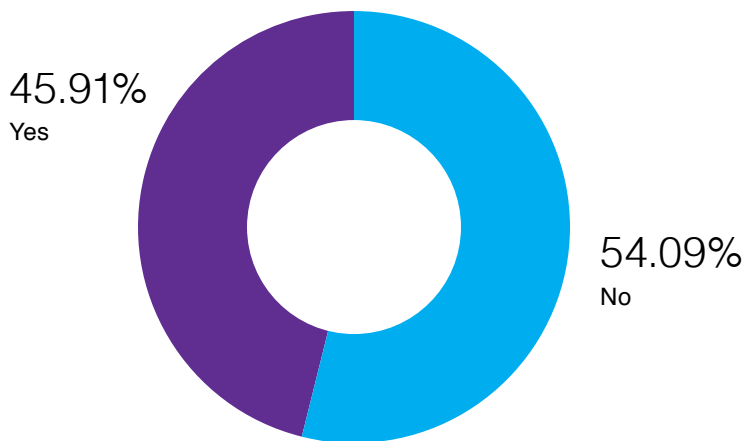


**What types of new specific measures has your organization, or will your organization implement as it relates to maintaining a safe, healthy and hygienic workplace for employees and visitors?**

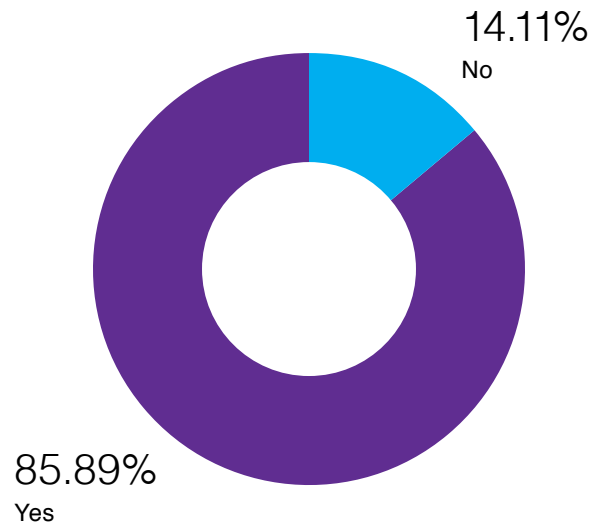
Note: Respondents were able to select multiple options.



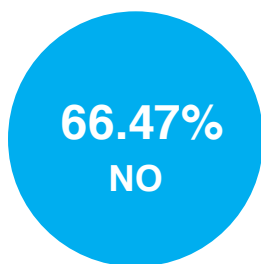
**Q** Have you provided any additional or special education to leaders about their legal obligations under the Occupational Health & Safety Act?



**Q** Would you say your organization is prepared to support employees with increased mental health supports given the reported stress/ anxiety levels associated with COVID-19?



**Q** Other than physical distancing, PPE, and other requirements or best practices, has HR recommended or planned any innovative or creative ways to safely return employees to the workplace?



**33.53%**  
YES

Describe the innovative or creative ways your organization has planned to safely return employees to the workplace:

“ Provided home thermometers for self check temperature prior to coming to work. Provided disposable, reusable, and approved personal home made face masks. Installed digital IR automated temperature check camera system. ”

“ Installed plexiglass around work stations, touchless faucets/paper towel dispensers, removed hand driers, installed sensors for doors to open automatically to avoid touch handles, ordered a personalized pen with a stylus so employees do not have to touch screens or buttons. ”

“ Ride assistance for frontline workers to avoid having to use public transit. ”

“ Installed a wireless doorbell to protect our receptionist and front office areas from non-employees. ”

“ Phased in approach, staggered schedules, and rotate days people are in the office. ”

“ Return to Work kits: Cooler lunch bags (to deter use of fridges), filled with insulated coffee mugs, PPE, hand sanitizer, wipes, information of usage and reminders on company policies. ”

“ Implemented daily self evaluation app that is available on phones and tablets at employee entrances. ”

“ Communication is key. Employees are provided opportunities to have their voices heard and ideas incorporated into the Safe RTW plan. ”

“ Extra 5 paid days for 2021 to encourage wellness. ”

## HR Impact

**Q** What creative solutions/activities have you implemented in your organization that really show the value of HR?

“ Created a COVID-19 Hub for employee resources (Public Health, Mental Health, Fitness and Nutrition links, Hotlines, EFAP), weekly communications, provided everyone with a half day off each Friday for June/July/August, and conduct regular weekly random check-ins with all employees. ”

“ Keep pushing the creativity and can-do attitude, creating policies to support working from home, checking in with staff, soliciting feedback, creating an emergency planning team, also organizing virtual socials to keep team connected. Developed virtual onboarding process for new hires. ”

“ Increased EAP resources and paramedical maximums. Introduced a Virtual Doctors program which allows employees to access healthcare services online. ”

“ I have not been creative but I have been compassionate. ”

“ Redeploying laid off employees to other positions that may not be their traditional role but the transferrable skills can support the employee in the new role. ”

“ Personalized approach, all employees contacted 1:1. ”

“ HR has a seat at the table for all business discussions, and remains the primary point of contact for COVID-19 related matters. ”

“ Weekly “Ask Anything” sessions with HR. ”

“ Mental health training, special leaves for those not able to work from home because of personal circumstances (eg. caregiver obligations). ”

“ Accommodation and flexibility to pick shifts as need to support children at home, increased EAP assistance package, onsite health practitioner support. ”

“ Pay incentives for associates being flexible and adapting to change. Weekly check-ins on the status of employee's health by managers. Tracking associates who are off through contact tracing. ”

“ Redesign of manufacturing lines. Reduction in total working hours to provide gaps between shifts and minimize exposure. Modification to ventilation systems to increase fresh air flow. ”

“ Weekly newsletters with specific content to support employees with physical safety, ergonomics, mental health, and creative entertainment ideas for employees and their family members. ”

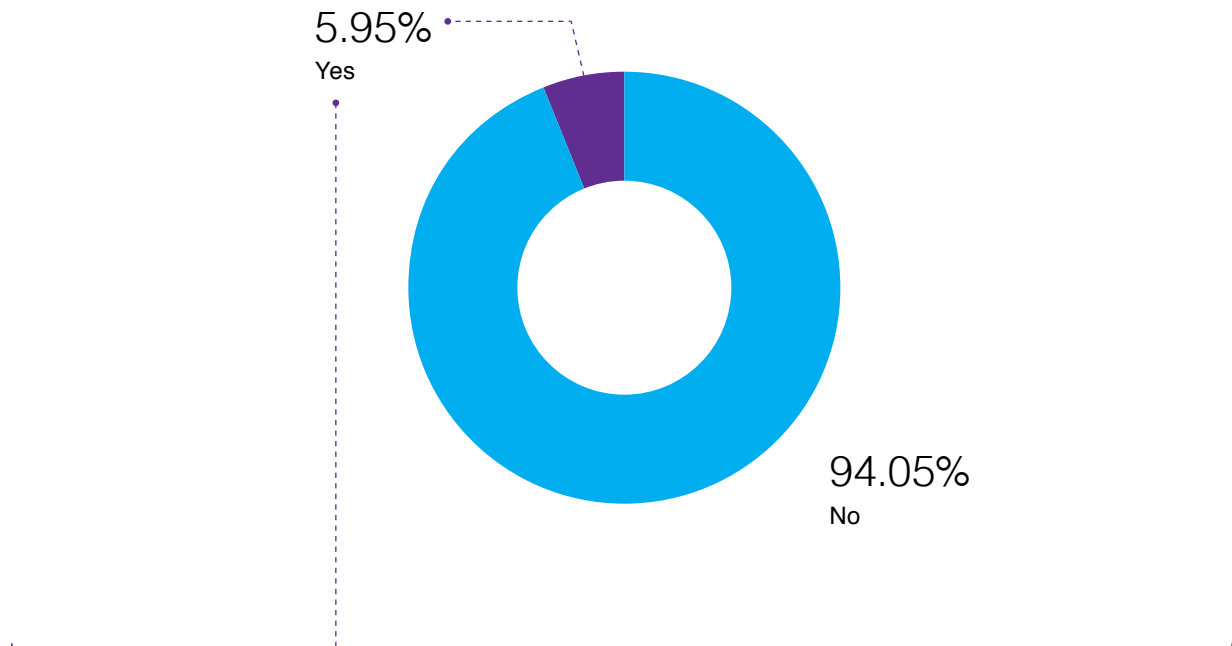
“ Toolkits for managers to assist with managing remote teams, e.g. leading through times of change. ”

“ EAP Recommendation to extend Sick Day Coverage to contract staff who otherwise not be eligible for it. Providing staff with care package voucher that staff can use to purchase items they feel would be useful for their mental or physical support. ”





**Do you have a story to tell about how you or your organization handled something challenging during this crisis?**



**If yes, what would the headline of that story be?**

“

**Plan BEFORE the Inevitable Happens**

Successfully keeping employees safe during the pandemic to ensure that medicines are available to our patients around the world.

How we managed to hire 16 new employees during a pandemic

Pivoting our business for the greater good of our employees and the communities we serve

Here's what NOT to do as HR during a pandemic.

Company provided labour to local manufacturer to support production of essential, global respirator equipment.

The Aga Khan Museum pivots to being a Museum Without Walls.

Employees were experiencing food shortages at their local stores. We ordered a large supply of food items and distributed it to workers so they could stock their homes with staple items.

The true colours of leadership revealed: discovered during COVID that employees were definitely not a priority.

Wholistic Human Resources: Going beyond the HR office door.

Being pro-active pays! As a direct result of HR's leadership and recommendations, our company was a leader in planning, communications and implementing safety responses.

Agency Healthcare workers step up.

Our drivers are our heros. We have kept our economy going through the dedication of our Professional Drivers.

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