

Navigating Work-Life Balance in Grand Erie

OCTOBER 2021



Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie
Commission de planification de la main-d'oeuvre de Grand Erie

Canada

EMPLOYMENT
ONTARIO

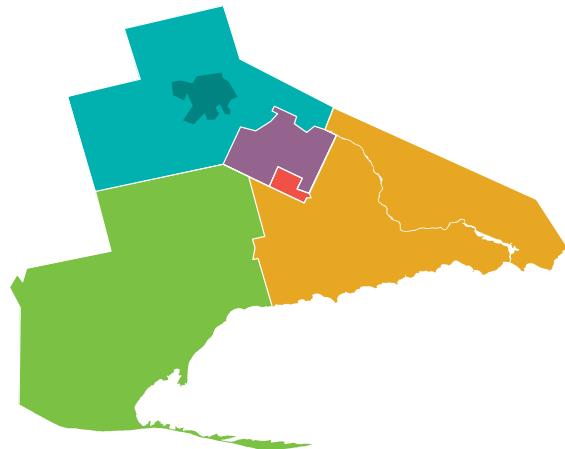
Ontario



Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie

OUR VISION

A skilled, resilient workforce contributing to dynamic communities and their economies



Canada

EMPLOYMENT
ONTARIO

Ontario

This Employment Ontario project is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect those of our government funders.

The material in this report has been prepared by WPBGE and is drawn from a variety of sources considered to be reliable.

We make no representation or warranty, expressed or implied, as to its accuracy or completeness.

In providing this material, WPBGE does not assume any responsibility or liability.

Danette Dalton, Executive Director, Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie

Prepared by: Wynona Mendes, Labour Market Analyst, Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie



CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	.4
INTRODUCTION .....	.5
BACKGROUND .....	.6
SURVEY OVERVIEW .....	.7
METHODOLOGY .....	.7
LIMITATIONS .....	.7
SURVEY SAMPLE .....	.8
KEY FINDINGS .....	.13
An Overview of Work .....	.14
Work Lives of Grand Erie Residents .....	.15
Leaving Work .....	.16
Allocation of Time .....	.17
Personal Lives of Grand Erie Residents .....	.19
Insights into Caregiving .....	.20
Work-Life Balance .....	.21
Burnout .....	.22
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	.23
Recommendations for Employers .....	.24
Recommendations for Government & Community Service Providers .....	.26
Recommendations for Individuals .....	.27
CONCLUSION .....	.28
APPENDIX .....	.29
Resources for Employers .....	.29
Resources for Government & Community Service Providers .....	.29
Resources for Individuals .....	.29



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is well known that a happy, satisfied employee is more likely to be a productive employee, and more likely to stay with an employer long-term, thereby reducing staff turnover and the cost of recruitment. For this reason, some employers and academics alike have dedicated numerous resources to better understand and tackle issues that impact work-life balance. With today's labour shortage, companies have even more incentive to keep their employees happy and satisfied.

The need to better understand this subject was identified as a priority by Grand Erie's Local Labour Market Planning (LLMP) Committee in early 2021. Considering this, the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie (WPBGE) set out to conduct a work-life balance study within the Grand Erie community, comprising of residents of the City of Brantford, Six Nations of the Grand River, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Counties of Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk. The *Navigating Work-Life Balance in Grand Erie* survey was designed to address gaps in knowledge about the obstacles and challenges local residents face in achieving a healthy work-life balance.

The objectives of this survey were:

- To identify supports that Grand Erie residents require from employers, government and community service organizations
- To help residents to identify changes they can make in their own lives to improve their work-life balance

A total of 535 residents completed the survey, providing insights into their work lives, their personal lives, and how satisfied they were with the balance between the two.

The results revealed that 37% of Grand Erie residents were dissatisfied with their current work-life balance. Another 34% noted they were somewhat satisfied, while a slightly smaller portion (29%) indicated they were extremely or very satisfied.

There was a significant variance in work and personal lives, and therefore work-life satisfaction, across different demographics. This report dives into these differences, reviewing gaps in supports that various groups need and would benefit from.

This report ends with a list of recommendations for employers, government & community service providers and individuals, based on the results of the survey and on secondary research conducted by WPBGE. It also includes a series of useful resources that individuals, community service organizations and employers can consult as they work towards better supporting the work-life balance of Grand Erie's residents.

Readers are encouraged to review the results, paying close attention to the work-life balance challenges over which they have the most influence, and to consider what policies, programs and practices they can implement to enhance the work-life balance – and subsequently the health, happiness and resiliency – of Grand Erie residents.

Work-Life Balance is defined as a state in which the demands of both a person's job and personal life are equal.



INTRODUCTION

With issues such as the skills shortage, an aging workforce, and cost of living on the rise, supporting the work-life balance of our community is more important now than ever before.

Whether from the perspective of an employer, a government representative, a community service provider, a manager, or any other resident, the case for improving work-life balance is clear: individuals with healthy work-life balance are more likely to be more present and productive employees, spouses/partners, parents/caregivers, and community members.

Yet, 27% of Canadian workers reported having high to extreme levels of stress daily, according to a 2017 Statistics Canada report¹. While many Canadians reaped the benefits of more flexibility in how, where and when they work due to the pandemic², a Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) study reported 80% of Canadians felt that COVID-19 had some negative impact on their mental health³. Common stressors – physical, mental and financial – increased along with the uncertainty of the global pandemic. Canadians – particularly those with caregiving responsibilities – that made the switch to remote work were even more likely to feel pronounced impacts on their work-life balance, reporting more irritation, physical discomfort and work-life conflict than they had been experiencing pre-pandemic⁴.

With healthcare, childcare and eldercare services being limited and even suspended during COVID-19, caregivers (individuals busy building families/homes and careers) faced an even greater

set of challenges juggling the demands of work and care. This added stress resulted in 100,000 women exiting the Canadian labour market in early 2020, compared to under 10,000 men, highlighting the reality that not all populations were equally impacted by the structural changes triggered by COVID-19⁵.

Recognizing the many workforce shifts that have taken place within the recent past, the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie set out to better understand the work-life balance of residents within the City of Brantford, Six Nations of the Grand River, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Counties of Brant, Haldimand, and Norfolk, in efforts to assist local government, community service providers and employers in developing renewed practices, policies and programs that support community well-being. It is worth noting that a unique aspect of this research is that it was undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic, and captures the additional impacts that all residents – regardless of income, education, skillset, employment status etc. – had to deal with during this timeframe.

1 Statistics Canada – Work Related Stress

2 The Conference Board of Canada – Working Through COVID-19

3 CAMH – Navigating the New Normal

4 Conestoga College – National Work From Home Survey

5 The Conference Board of Canada – Caring for Caregivers



BACKGROUND

WPBGE's 2019 Job Seeker and Employee Survey (completed prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic) revealed that the top 3 reasons for people quitting their jobs were:

1. health concerns not being accommodated,
2. unpredictable work schedules, and
3. overwhelming workload¹.

Insufficient variety at work, low wages and absence of proper procedures for addressing workplace concerns were other reasons commonly cited by local residents. These results confirmed that much of the job turnover – which was increasing, based on local EmployerOne survey – a local survey of employers – year-over-year trends² – was largely due to individuals' frustrations with the employers they worked for.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic amplified these concerns for many. Companies laid-off/furloughed a significant portion of staff and 1 in 4 of those who continued to be employed reported working more, according to the Workforce Planning West³ Worker Impact Survey conducted in May 2020⁴ (at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic). Meanwhile, 29% of employers surveyed in the fall of 2020 reported reduced productivity amongst remote workers⁵.

The *Navigating Work-Life Balance in Grand Erie* survey was designed to address gaps in knowledge about the work-life balance of local residents. By identifying common stressors and obstacles to a healthy work-life balance, WPBGE aims to offer employers, government and service providers the data they require to implement programs, projects and policies that can better support the health and well-being of our community.

¹ WPBGE – Job Seeker and Employee Survey

² WPBGE – Employer One Survey

³ Workforce Planning West is a group of nine Workforce Planning Boards – including WPBGE – operating in the area between Lake Erie and Lake Huron, Ontario.

⁴ Workforce Planning West – COVID-19 Worker Impact Survey

⁵ WPBGE – Grand Erie COVID-19 Business Recovery Survey



SURVEY OVERVIEW

Amidst the massive shifts that occurred following the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, the issue of work-life balance was brought into the spotlight. A significant portion of residents made the shift to remote work. As a result of furloughs/temporary layoffs made by many companies, those that remained employed continued to juggle increased workloads alongside making time for themselves and their families.

The *Navigating Work-Life Balance in Grand Erie* survey was developed through researching common work-life balance stressors/challenges, and by consulting local service providers to gain insights into what they were hearing from clients. The survey contained 3 main sections – Work Life, Personal Life and Work-Life Balance – with additional questions for caregivers and those working remotely.

The survey was live for a period of about 3 months, from May 19th to August 31st, 2021.

METHODOLOGY

The survey was primarily conducted online due to restrictions around the COVID-19 pandemic, using a variety of social media marketing tools to target a diverse sample of residents across the Grand Erie area. There was also some media coverage, based on a media release sent out during the survey launch.

In addition, over 40 community partner organizations in the Grand Erie area – including the Employment Ontario network, educational institutions, economic development, and local Chambers of Commerce – were asked to circulate the survey via their communication channels. Our partner agencies that were able to meet with clients in-person were able to provide paper copies of the survey to complete.

LIMITATIONS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, promotion and distribution of the survey was limited. Although efforts were made to diversify how the survey was shared, most respondents were reached via WPBGE's media outreach, partner distribution and social media posts/ads.

As a result of this, people in rural communities with limited internet access are likely underrepresented within this survey, as are individuals with limited computer literacy skills and those that do not use social media.

Outside of the pandemic restrictions, WPBGE would make every effort to provide a variety of in-person engagements to ensure there are many opportunities for people to participate.

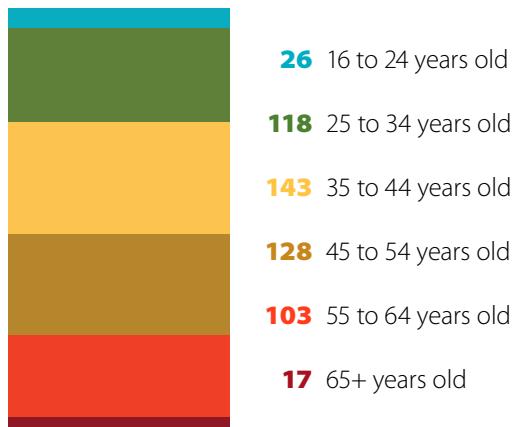
SURVEY SAMPLE

The *Navigating Work-Life Balance in Grand Erie* survey collected data from 535 residents within the Grand Erie area. In order to fully understand how various groups perceived work-life balance, some preliminary data was collected on residents' sex, age group, location, education, employment status, household income level, skill level, industry of employment, relationship status, caregiver status and affiliation with other groups. A breakdown of each subset is detailed below.

Significant differences in the ways certain groups perceive work-life balance will be highlighted within the 'Key Findings' section of this report (page 13).

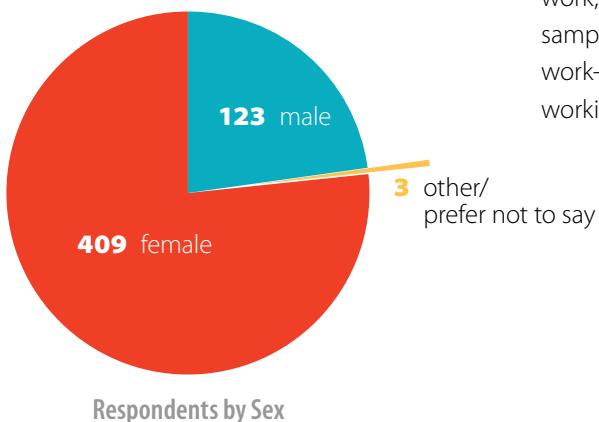


Respondents by Age Group



SEX

Although efforts were made to reach more males through targeted social media ads and requests to partners, females are overrepresented in the survey sample, making up 76% of all respondents.

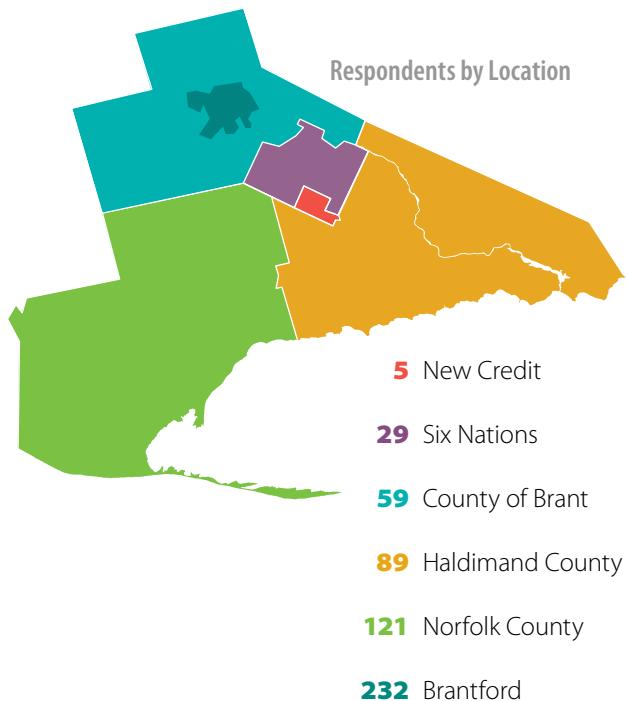


AGE GROUP

Most age groups are fairly well represented within this sample, with the exception of youth (16 to 24 years old) and seniors (65+ years old). That said, a significant proportion of individuals in these groups do not work, so it can be assumed that the sample adequately captures the work-life balance issues of most working adults.

LOCATION

The location of survey respondents is relatively proportionate to the population of each of the six communities in Grand Erie¹. City of Brantford, Six Nations of the Grand River and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation residents are slightly overrepresented within the survey sample, while residents of the Counties of Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk are marginally underrepresented.



¹ Based on Statistics Canada – 2016 Census Custom Tables



- 18** some High School
- 52** High School
- 80** some College or University
- 220** College/Trade School
- 128** Bachelor's Degree
- 33** Master's Degree
- 1** Ph.D. or higher
- 3** prefer not to say

Respondents by Educational Attainment

EDUCATION

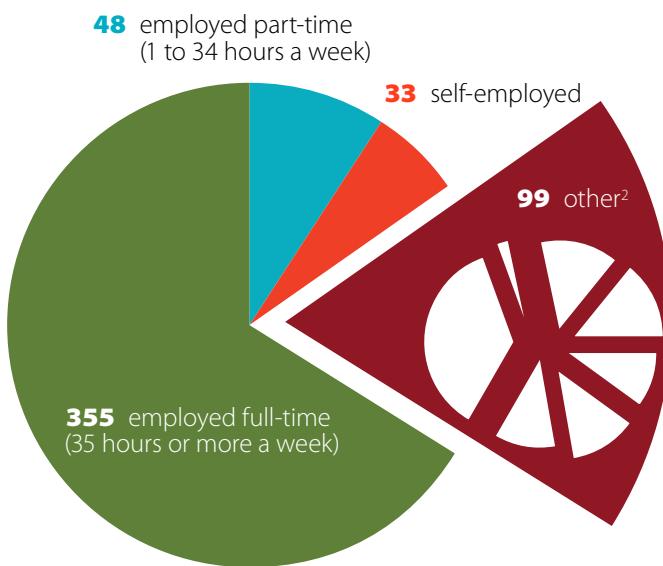
Individuals with high school diploma or below are underrepresented within this sample, while those with college/trade certificates and bachelor's degrees are slightly over represented¹.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

When asked what best described their employment status, 66% said they were employed full-time, 9% were employed part-time and 6% were self-employed.

10% were unemployed/temporarily laid off, and the remainder – 9% – were either students, stay-at-home parents, retirees, or unable to work.

About 18% of individuals employed in full-time work also had 1 or more part-time jobs, illustrating that many work well over the standard 40 hours per week to earn their living. Among those that worked part-time, about 19% had 2 jobs, and 2% indicated working 3 jobs at the time of the survey. Many self-employed individuals also held additional part-time jobs.



Respondents by Employment Status

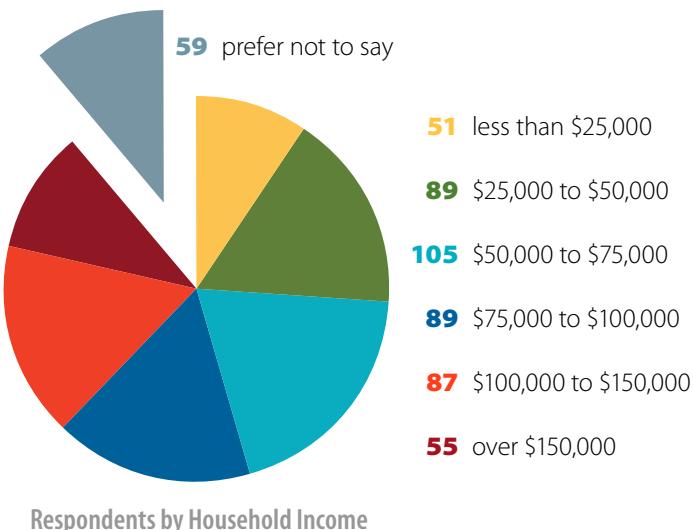
- 10** stay-at-home parent/care-giver
- 12** student (full-time or part-time)
- 11** retired
- 36** unemployed, looking for work
- 2** unemployed, not looking for work
- 14** temporarily laid-off
- 14** unable to work

¹ Based on Statistics Canada - 2016 Census Custom Tables

² The remaining 99 respondents were either unemployed, or fell into one of the other categories, as illustrated above

HOUSEHOLD INCOME LEVEL

The survey sample is fairly representative of the proportion of residents within each income bracket, according to 2019 data on household income (sourced from the T1 Family File)¹. Lower income households (i.e. total income under \$50,000) are marginally underrepresented, while median income households (i.e. total income between \$50,000 to \$100,000) are slightly overrepresented.

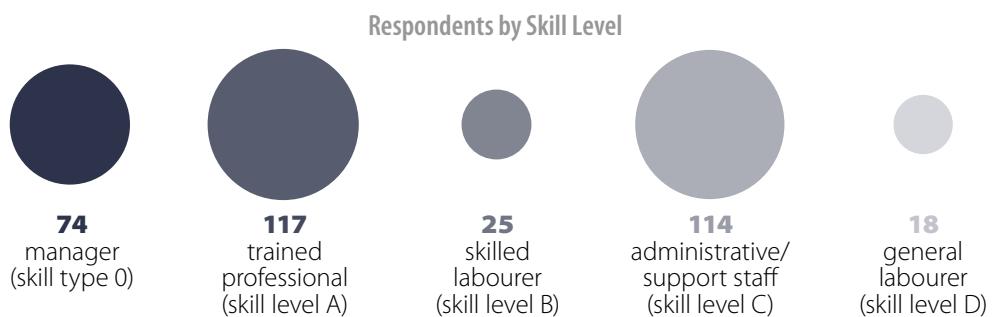


¹ Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0012-01
Distribution of total income by census family type and age of older partner, parent or individual

SKILL LEVEL

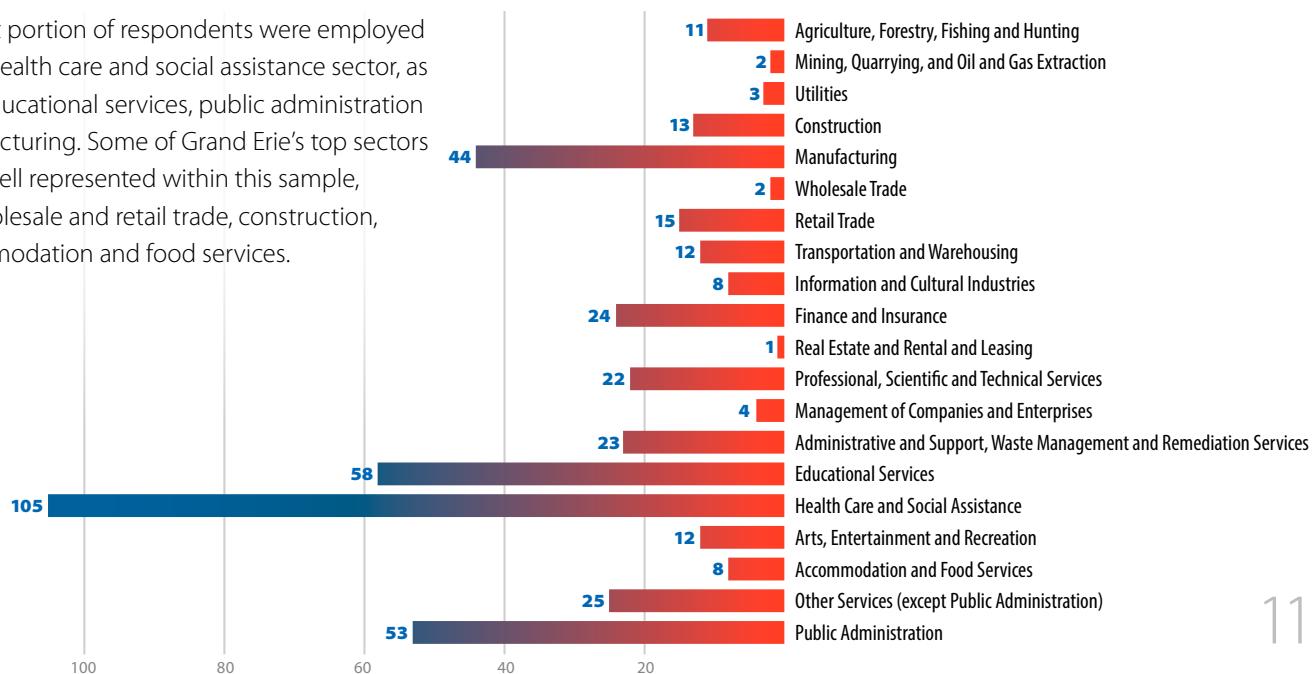
Based on 2016 Census data², managers (skill type 0) and trained professionals (skill level A) are marginally overrepresented within this survey sample, while skilled labourers (skill level B) and general labourers (skill level D) are underrepresented. Administrative/support staff (skill level C) are well represented within the sample.

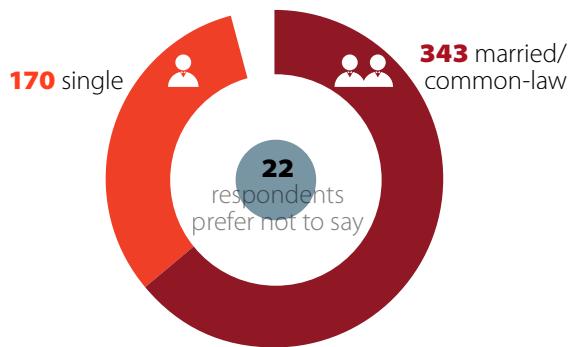
² Based on Statistics Canada – 2016 Census Custom Tables



INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT

A significant portion of respondents were employed within the health care and social assistance sector, as well as in educational services, public administration and manufacturing. Some of Grand Erie's top sectors are not as well represented within this sample, namely wholesale and retail trade, construction, and accommodation and food services.





RELATIONSHIP STATUS

Of the 513 individuals that shared their relationship status, around 32% were single (i.e. not married, widowed, divorced or separated) and 64% were either married or in a common-law relationship.

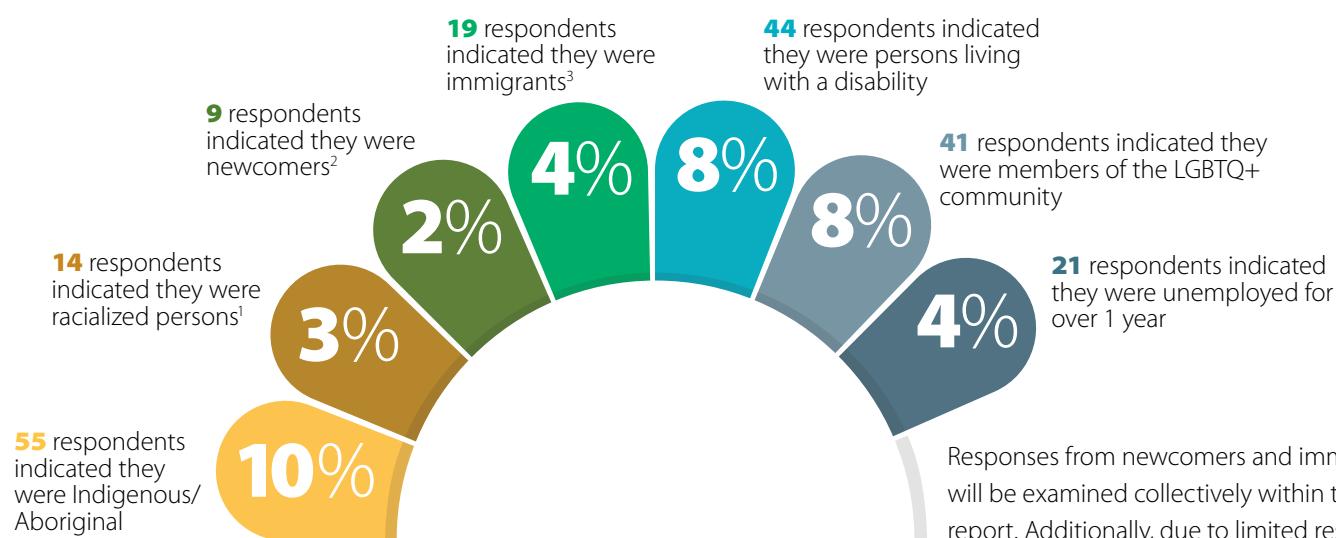
CAREGIVER STATUS

Respondents were also asked if they hold any caregiving responsibilities for children or other dependents (i.e. older parents or persons living with a disability). Approximately 37% of respondents said they were caregivers. Of these, only 6% noted they were full-time caregivers, indicating that the majority of people who hold caregiving responsibilities also hold paid jobs.



AFFILIATIONS WITH OTHER GROUPS

Respondents were also asked to select if they belonged to any of the following groups:



Responses from newcomers and immigrants will be examined collectively within this report. Additionally, due to limited responses from individuals who identified as 'racialized persons' or 'long term unemployed', no conclusive statements about these groups can be made.

¹ i.e. persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour

² i.e. persons who arrived in Canada within the past 10 years, or have permanent resident or refugee status

³ i.e. persons who arrived in Canada over 10 years ago



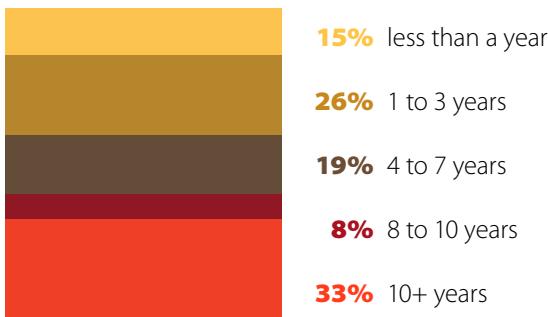
Key Findings



AN OVERVIEW OF WORK

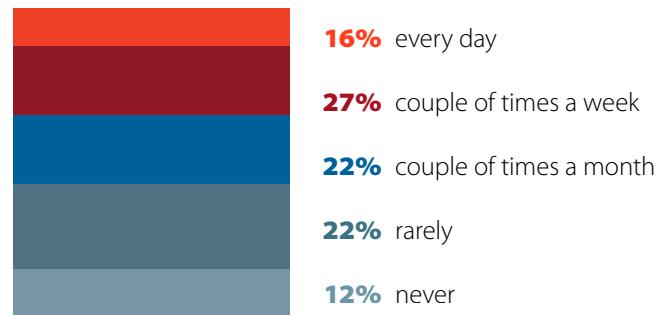
There was significant variance in the length of employment of respondents, with around 15% indicating they've been in their current position for less than 1 year, and 33% indicating they've been at their existing job for over 10 years.

Length of Employment



Managers (Skill Type 0) and trained professionals (Skill Level A) were more likely to have held their position for several years. Meanwhile, 41% of those in labouring jobs had been in their current role for less than 1 year.

Frequency of Overtime Work



Over 70% of individuals in managerial positions worked frequent overtime (i.e. daily or couple times a week), compared to an average of 43% across all skill levels. Meanwhile, people in labouring jobs (Skill Level D) and to a lesser extent, trained professionals (Skill Level A) were more likely to select 'rarely' or 'never' when asked about overtime work.

About 50% of those who had worked from home within the last year indicated they worked overtime daily or several times a week, compared to 31% of those who did not work from home.

The data also suggests that individuals who have been working in their current position for a longer period of time (i.e. over 8 years) were more likely to work frequent overtime as compared to those that have been working in their company for under 3 years.

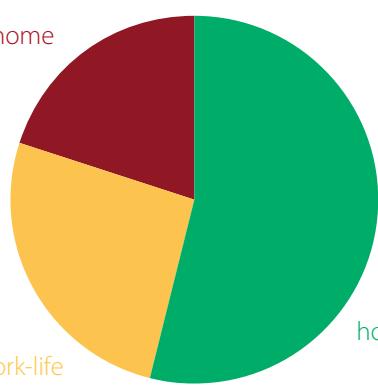
The Impact of Remote Work

20%

Working from home
worsened my
work-life
satisfaction

26%

Working from
home **did not**
change my work-life
satisfaction



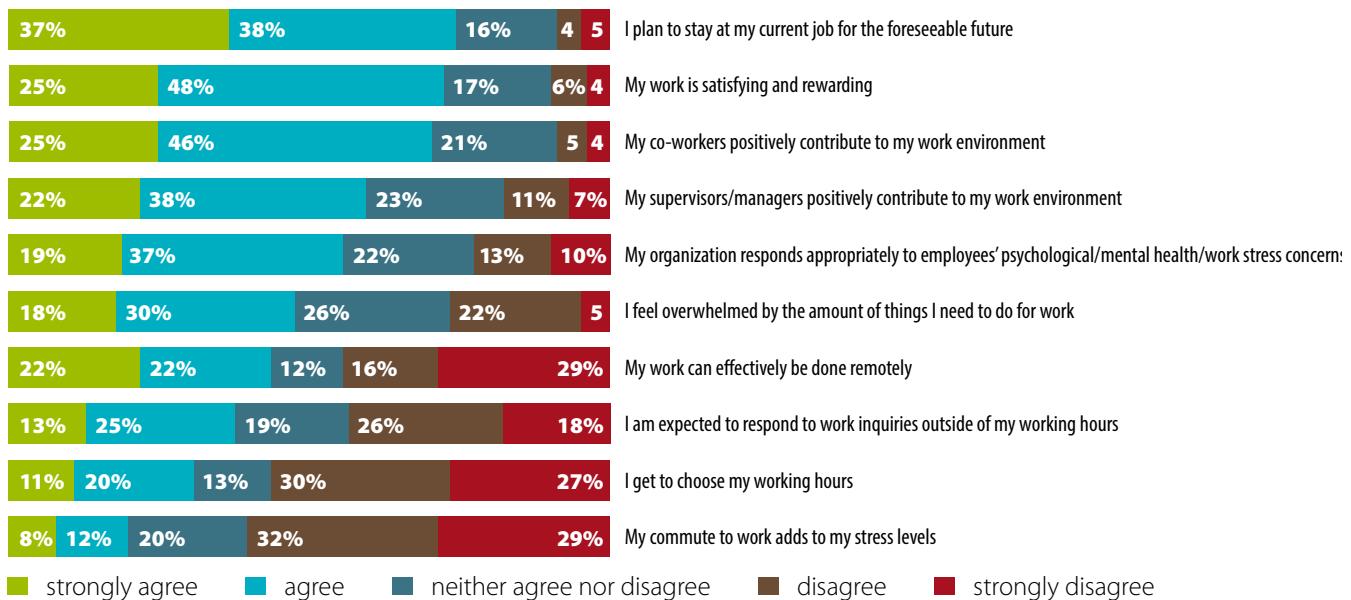
54%

Working from
home **improved**
my work-life
satisfaction

Approximately 65% of respondents said they worked from home within the last year, of which 54% noted that working from home improved their work-life satisfaction. Meanwhile, 20% disagreed, highlighting challenges such as distractions at home and an increased expectation to work overtime as needed/respond to inquiries outside of work hours. Many of these individuals also held caregiving responsibilities, as will be examined further along within this report.

WORK LIVES OF GRAND ERIE RESIDENTS

Work Lives of Grand Erie Residents



■ strongly agree ■ agree ■ neither agree nor disagree ■ disagree ■ strongly disagree

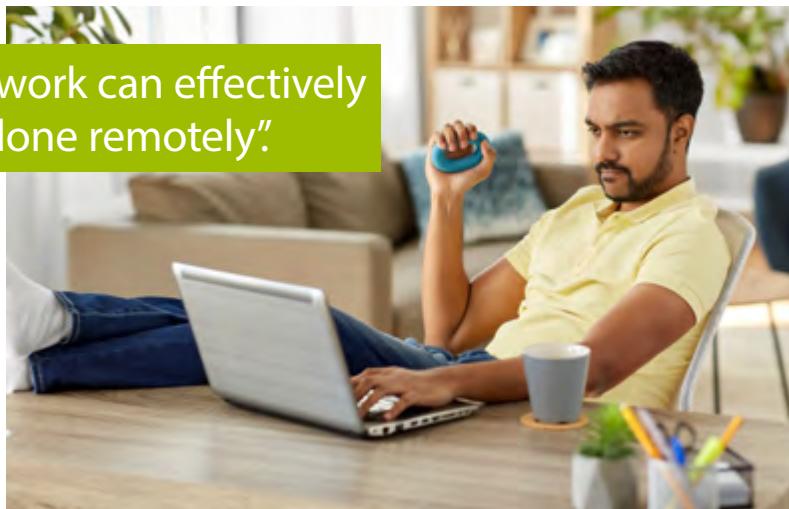
Employed individuals indicated high levels of optimism about their work, with almost 75% agreeing that their work was satisfying and rewarding and that their co-workers contributed positively to their working environment.

Considering this, it is easy to understand why a similar portion agreed to the statement: "I plan to stay at my current job for the foreseeable future".

That said, not all employees reported a clear separation of work and life. About 38% stated they were expected to respond to work inquiries outside of their working hours, and 48% said they felt overwhelmed by the amount they needed to do for work. Those with household incomes over \$100,000 (most of whom were either managers or trained professionals) were significantly more likely to indicate agreement with these statements, as were self-employed individuals.

Of those who agreed that their work could effectively be done remotely, 9 people did not work from home in the last year. Almost all of these individuals noted within the additional comments section that this shift would improve their work-life balance. On the flip side, almost two-thirds of those who did work remotely within the last year did not think that their work could effectively be done remotely, with 1 in every 4 of those indicating they strongly disagreed with the statement. As might be expected, there was significant overlap between this group and those that indicated that working from home worsened their work life balance.

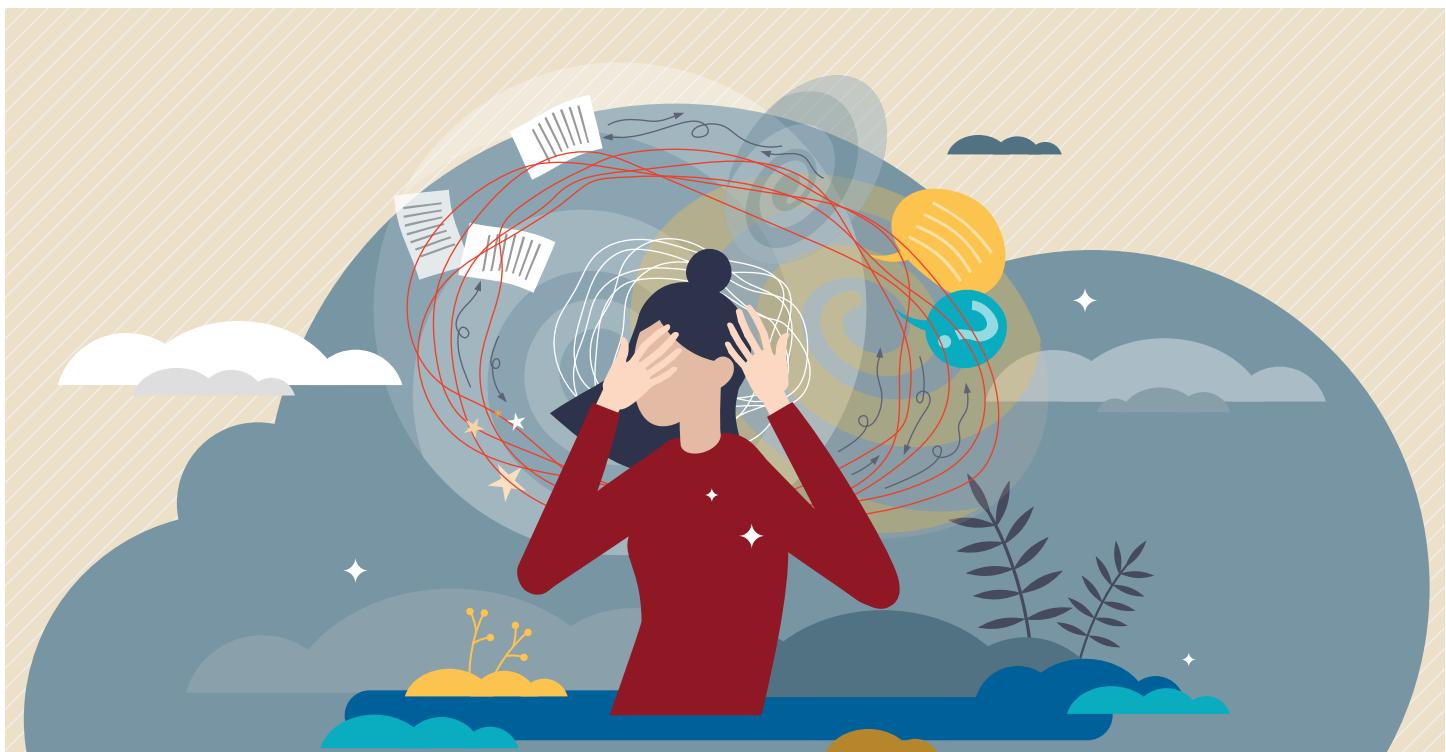
"My work can effectively be done remotely"



Employees also expressed other organizational concerns. About 23% indicated their organization did not respond appropriately to employees' psychological/mental health/work stress concerns, and 18% disagreed that their supervisors/managers positively contribute to their work environment. It is worth noting that compared to other skill levels, individuals in labouring (Skill Level D) jobs were far more likely to report dissatisfaction with their work, their co-workers and their supervisors/managers. Despite these issues (and the data below on leaving work), only 9% indicated they had plans to change their jobs in the foreseeable future, suggesting some hesitancy about leaving their current role. This hesitancy may be due to concerns about maintaining quality of life including wage, benefits, proximity to family and other responsibilities, and/or being able to find another suitable job in the current market.

LEAVING WORK

An astounding 53% of respondents stated they had considered leaving their jobs within the last year, of which a disproportionate number were Six Nations and New Credit residents, Skill Level D workers, people living with disabilities and members of the LGBTQ+ community.



Their top reasons for considering quitting were:

1. Burnout (20%)
2. Toxic/dysfunctional environment (16%)
3. Not able to use their skillset to the fullest (6%)
4. Career change (6%)
5. No room to grow (5%)

A few others noted that they were not provided with the tools they needed to do their job well, or due to insufficient pay.

While 'burnout' was the primary reason cited by almost every demographic group, there were some groups that had a more diverse set of reasons. Part-time employees as well as Skill Level C and D workers more frequently identified factors such as career change, not being able to use their skillset to the fullest and lack of growth opportunities.

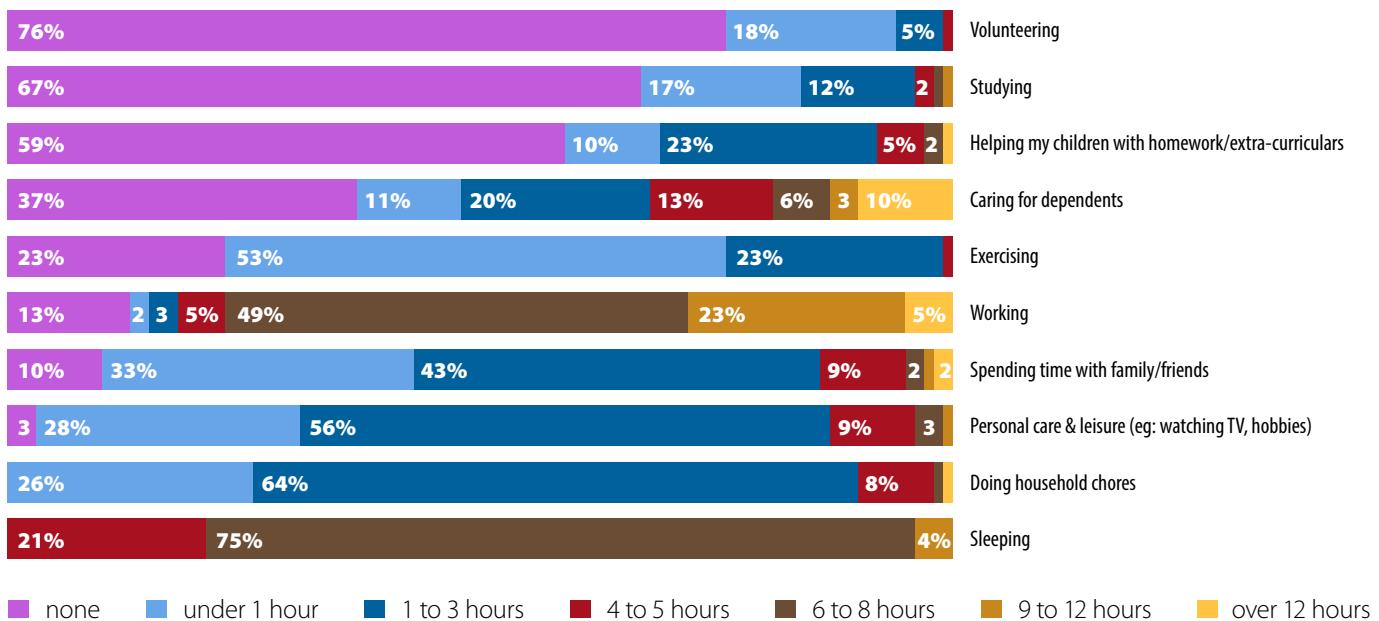
Those with total household incomes under \$25,000 were more likely to cite 'insufficient pay' as were newcomers and people living with disabilities.

ALLOCATION OF TIME

Time allocation has significant impacts on how people experience work, life and work-life balance. To better understand the stressors in the lives of Grand Erie residents, this survey included a simplified time-use study, wherein respondents were asked to estimate the average amount of time they spent on various activities on a given workday.



Allocation of Time



Volunteering: As might be expected – particularly during a global pandemic – residents allocated the least amount of their time to volunteering, with the majority indicating it was not a part of their average day. Part-time employees, self-employed individuals and those over the age of 55 most frequently indicated spending up to 3 hours of their average day volunteering.

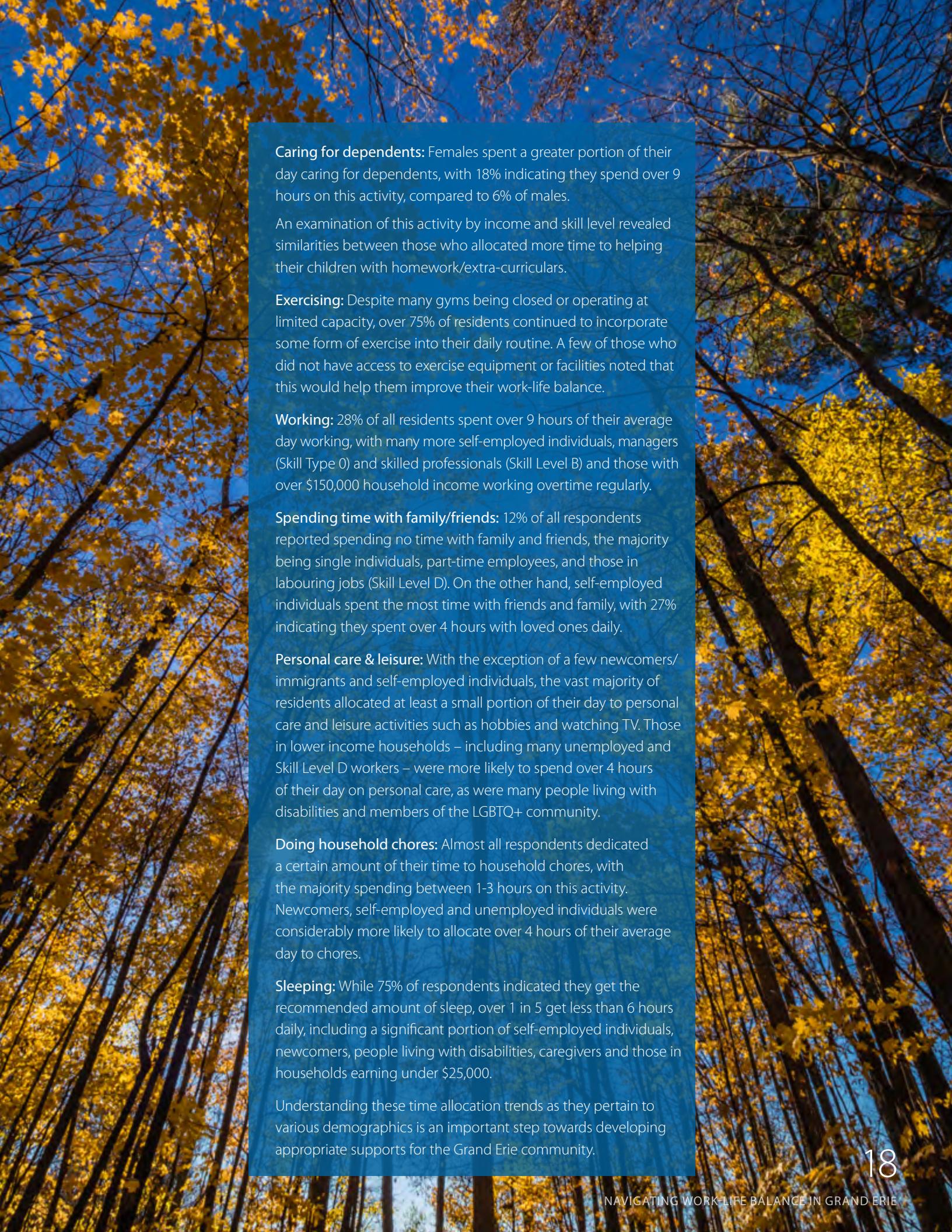
Studying: Of the 1 in 3 that did spend a portion of their day studying, majority were youth (aged 16 to 24), likely enrolled in one of Grand Erie's several educational institutions. A significant portion of newcomers and unemployed individuals also spent between 1 to 5 hours of their day studying.

Helping children with homework/extracurriculars:

Individuals aged 35 to 55 were most likely to spend time on this activity, with a disproportionate percentage of these being females.

Income also appeared to be correlated with the amount of time spent on this activity. While there were exceptions, the general trend suggests that the greater the household income, the more time parents spend helping children with their homework/extracurriculars.

Additionally, skilled labourers (Skill Level B) tended to spend the most time on this activity, followed by managers (Skill Type 0) and trained professionals (Skill Level A).



Caring for dependents: Females spent a greater portion of their day caring for dependents, with 18% indicating they spend over 9 hours on this activity, compared to 6% of males.

An examination of this activity by income and skill level revealed similarities between those who allocated more time to helping their children with homework/extracurriculars.

Exercising: Despite many gyms being closed or operating at limited capacity, over 75% of residents continued to incorporate some form of exercise into their daily routine. A few of those who did not have access to exercise equipment or facilities noted that this would help them improve their work-life balance.

Working: 28% of all residents spent over 9 hours of their average day working, with many more self-employed individuals, managers (Skill Type 0) and skilled professionals (Skill Level B) and those with over \$150,000 household income working overtime regularly.

Spending time with family/friends: 12% of all respondents reported spending no time with family and friends, the majority being single individuals, part-time employees, and those in labouring jobs (Skill Level D). On the other hand, self-employed individuals spent the most time with friends and family, with 27% indicating they spent over 4 hours with loved ones daily.

Personal care & leisure: With the exception of a few newcomers/immigrants and self-employed individuals, the vast majority of residents allocated at least a small portion of their day to personal care and leisure activities such as hobbies and watching TV. Those in lower income households – including many unemployed and Skill Level D workers – were more likely to spend over 4 hours of their day on personal care, as were many people living with disabilities and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

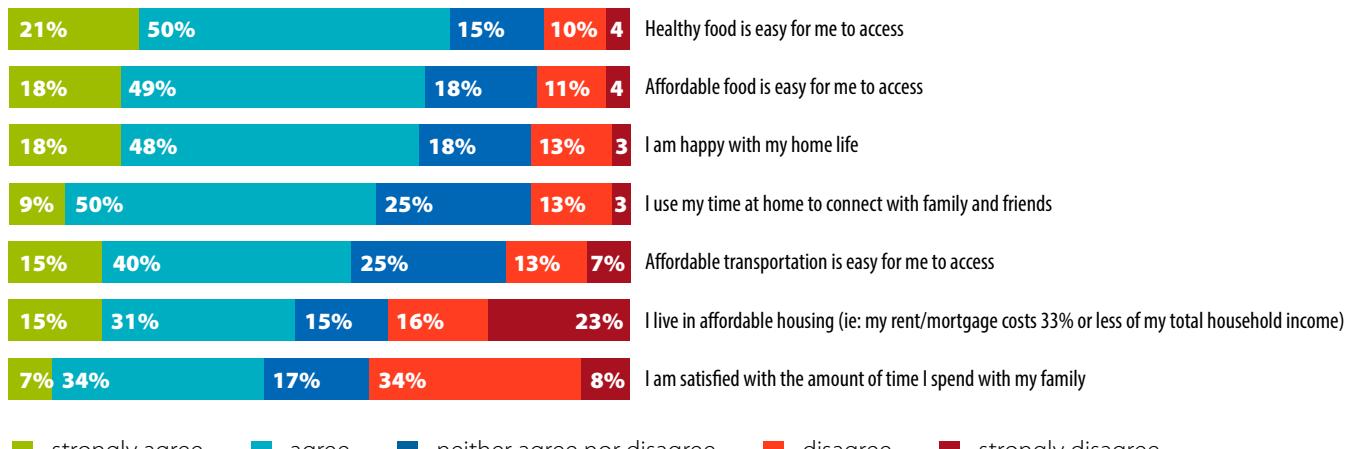
Doing household chores: Almost all respondents dedicated a certain amount of their time to household chores, with the majority spending between 1-3 hours on this activity. Newcomers, self-employed and unemployed individuals were considerably more likely to allocate over 4 hours of their average day to chores.

Sleeping: While 75% of respondents indicated they get the recommended amount of sleep, over 1 in 5 get less than 6 hours daily, including a significant portion of self-employed individuals, newcomers, people living with disabilities, caregivers and those in households earning under \$25,000.

Understanding these time allocation trends as they pertain to various demographics is an important step towards developing appropriate supports for the Grand Erie community.

PERSONAL LIVES OF GRAND ERIE RESIDENTS

Personal Lives of Grand Erie Residents



When asked about common home-life stressors, a significant majority agreed (to varying extents) that access to healthy and affordable food was not a major concern. Unsurprisingly, those in households earning less than \$25,000 most frequently disagreed with this statement, as did a considerable proportion of people living with disabilities. These demographics were also least likely to say that affordable transportation is easy for them to access.

The statement about affordable housing, however, generated a more divided response. While 46% responded positively, 39% indicated they did not live in affordable housing. Populations most affected by housing affordability include: people living with disabilities, youth, Skill Level D workers and unemployed individuals.

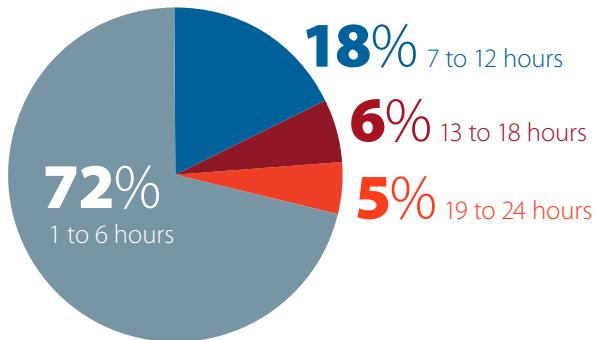
While around 2 of every 3 respondents said they were happy with their home life, around 16% disagreed – namely individuals who are unemployed, in lower-income households (under \$25,000) or single. Many of these individuals also noted that they don't use their time at home to connect with family or friends. Work stress and fatigue often get carried into the home, and can affect how people spend their outside-of-work hours. Around 42% of residents reported they were dissatisfied with the amount of time they spent with family. Females, caregivers, core-working age adults (aged 35 to 55) and residents of Six Nations and New Credit were least satisfied with how much time they spent with family.



INSIGHTS INTO CAREGIVING

Of the 37% of respondents that indicated they were caregivers, 40% were responsible for 1 person, 39% were responsible for 2, and 15% were responsible for 3 people. 6% indicated they were caregivers for 4 or more people.

Time Spent on Caregiving Responsibilities



About 3 in every 4 caregivers spent between 1-6 hours each day on these responsibilities, while the remainder reported spending more than 6 hours caring for their dependents. While some of those who reported spending 13 hours or more of their day on this activity were full-time caregivers, many others also worked paid jobs.

These individuals were also asked if they felt they were able to provide an equal balance of their time to work and caregiving responsibilities. Excluding the 6% that said they were full-time caregivers, 48% noted they were able to find a good balance, while 52% disagreed. As might be expected, a higher proportion of those who spent 7+ hours of their day taking care of their dependents indicated they did not find their time was well balanced. Most individuals who reported poor balance of work and caregiving responsibilities were in mid-income households (i.e. \$50,000 to \$100,000) working Skill Level B or Skill Level D jobs. Understandably, a vast majority – 82% – of those who struggled to juggle work and caregiving reported dissatisfaction with their work-life balance.

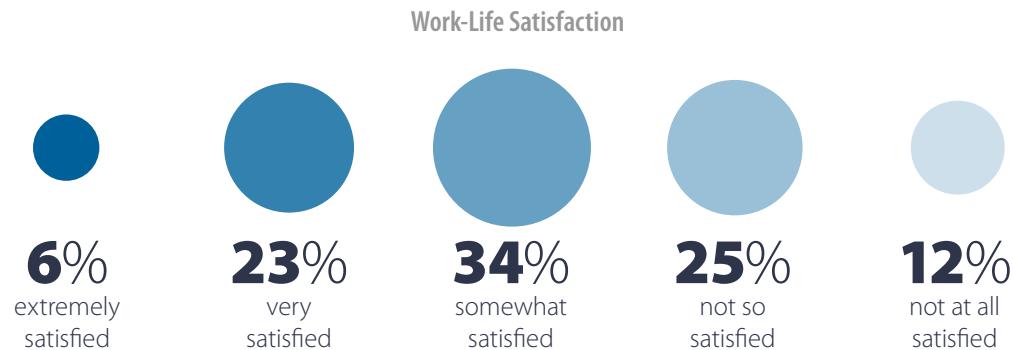
To further examine how COVID-19 impacted caregivers, those with dependents under 18 were asked to describe their experiences supporting their children's online learning. About 63% reported it was difficult or very difficult, while 14% reported it was 'easy' or 'very easy' and the remainder falling somewhere in between. Overwhelmingly, females indicated they found this experience challenging, as did many residents of Six Nations & New Credit, Skill Level B workers, and those in households earning over \$50,000.



WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Following the sections on work and personal life, respondents were asked:

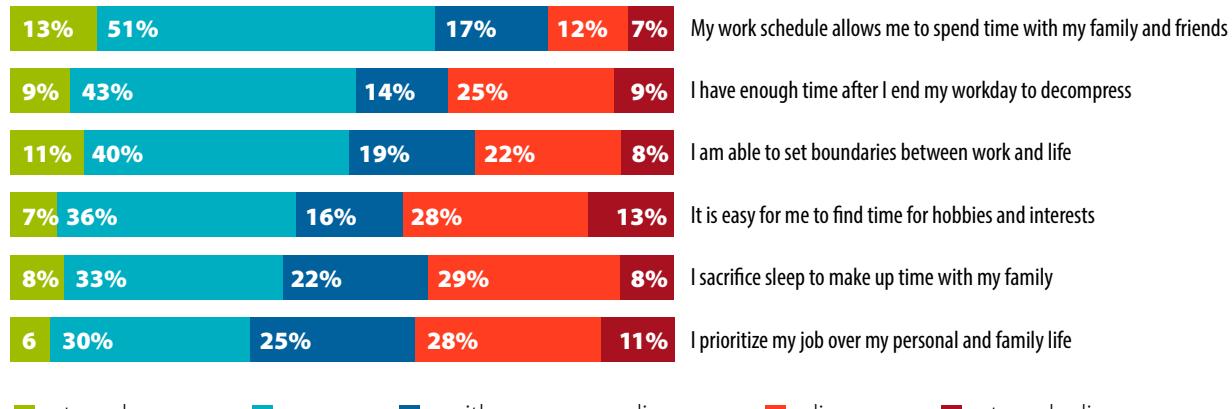
How satisfied are you with your current work-life balance?



The results indicate significant levels of dissatisfaction among Grand Erie residents. Only 6% said they were extremely satisfied, with double – 12% – saying they were not at all satisfied. As might be expected, there was significant overlap between those who were dissatisfied and those who felt overwhelmed at work, those who work for organizations that don't respond appropriately to employees' health concerns, and those who were unhappy

with the amount of time they spent with family. In particular, unemployed individuals, those in lower skilled/lower paying jobs, working caregivers, and people living with disabilities were most dissatisfied with their current work-life balance. These individuals were also far more likely to report experiencing burnout, a topic that will be examined further.

Work-Life Balance of Grand Erie Residents



Approximately 64% of residents agreed that their work schedule allows them to spend time with family and friends, while 59% indicated that they use their time at home to connect with their loved ones (previous section), suggesting that for a small portion of the population, non-work activities – be it chores or hobbies – are a barrier to time allocated to family & friends. There may be some opportunity here to support these individuals in developing better time management skills. For a significant 19% however – many of whom are self-employed individuals and Skill Level D workers – their work schedule simply didn't allow for sufficient time spent at home. An even higher percentage of respondents said they sacrifice sleep to make up time with family, including many managers and Indigenous people. Likewise,

around 36% said they prioritize their job over their personal lives, including many caregivers (individuals busy building families/homes and careers), typically between 35 to 44 years old.

A little over 50% of residents agreed that they are able to set boundaries between work and life and that they have sufficient time after their workday to decompress. Managers and those in households earning over \$150,000 were most likely to disagree with this statement. Lastly, just over one-third said they did not have trouble finding time for hobbies and interests, of which a significant portion were non-caregivers and older adults (aged 55+). Meanwhile, many Skill Level D workers, and members of the LGBTQ+ community were among the 41% that did not find sufficient time for hobbies and interests.

BURNOUT

The final section of the survey asked respondents if they've experienced burnout.



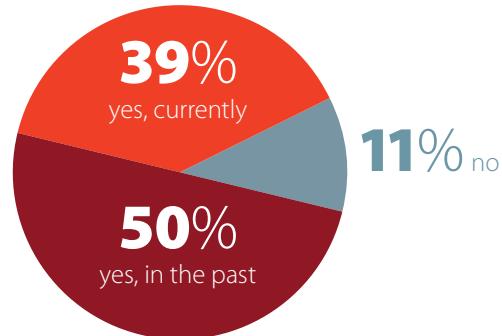
An overwhelming 89% of residents said they had experienced burnout, with just under half indicating that they were currently experiencing burnout. The rapid labour market shifts triggered by the global pandemic, coupled with the stressors of living through this volatile period, have undeniably had a negative effect on the mental health and well-being of Grand Erie residents. Caregivers, members of the LGBTQ+ community, people living with disabilities, Skill Level D workers and unemployed individuals most frequently noted that they were currently experiencing burnout.

Respondents were also asked about methods they use to cope with burnout. The top responses were:

1. Watching TV/Netflix – selected by 52% of respondents
2. Speaking to friends/family/others – selected by 44% of respondents
3. Exercising – selected by 43% of respondents
4. Hobbies – selected by 34% of respondents
5. Eating (both healthy and unhealthy foods) & sleeping well – selected by 32% of respondents

Other strategies employed by residents include taking mental health days (28%), consuming substances (e.g.: alcohol, marijuana) (24%), taking prescribed medications (23%) and taking vacations (22%).

Have Residents Experienced Burnout?



While individuals can play a significant role in preventing and addressing burnout, employers should be more active in better understanding how work contributes to the stress levels of their employees. The survey results indicate that employees who currently reported experiencing burnout were more likely to consider leaving their existing job. A 2021 study conducted by Gallup echoed this finding, and offered other critical insights into this subject, including that those experiencing burnout were 63% more likely to take a sick day¹. It is important for employers to recognize the human element in their employees, and that personal responsibilities and life stressors – both current and past – can contribute significantly to the state of their mental health.

¹ Gallup – Employee Burnout: Causes and Cures



Recommendations

The results of this survey clearly illustrate that there are a number of obstacles and stressors that affect the lives of local residents. As is evident by the significant proportion of residents who work overtime, find it difficult to balance work and life and who are experiencing burnout, many in Grand Erie struggle to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Employers, community service providers, government and residents alike are encouraged to consider what steps they can take to improve their personal health and well-being as well as that of their community.

The following is a list of recommendations developed based on the survey results and through research conducted by WPBGE. While some of these recommendations are based on research conducted within the Canadian context, WPBGE acknowledges

that many others below draw upon innovative examples from across the globe. Given the state of work-life balance within our community, it is important to consider unconventional solutions, and to think about how we may be able to adapt and apply these unique approaches and practices within our community to support the workforce more holistically. WPBGE shares these examples and resources with you for no other reason than to inspire. We acknowledge that not everyone will agree, and encourage readers to form their own opinions about what balance means to them and/or their business/organization.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

Although managers are perceived to be “at the top” of the chain of command, they are the foundation of a successful workplace in any type of business, organization or institution. Work-life balance, thus, starts ‘at the top’. It doesn’t just rest with Human Resource (HR) departments, but includes many elements/departments working together, with a strong leader as the direct report. Successful workplaces and teams have strong visionary leaders on their management teams, that see the big picture and that appreciate and recognize the human element in order to promote a strong workforce. They also recognize that their management team and their HR departments are not immune to experiencing work-life imbalance or burnout. Leaders must

pay close attention to curating a team that fosters the culture they envision, bearing in mind that years of service and/or a wealth of credentials do not necessarily qualify a person for a management role.

Employers are encouraged to review the benefits offered and the best practices employed by [Canada’s Top Employers](#), or those within the [Greater Toronto Area](#), and to seek out opportunities to integrate these policies within their workplaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

RECOMMENDATION	RESOURCES
<p>Strengthen managerial capacity to understand, recognize and prevent burnout. Encourage leaders to focus on their people's satisfaction and well-being through relationship-building, coaching, mentoring & frequent check-ins that allow employees to voice their concerns and discuss opportunities to improve their work-life balance.</p>	<p>While training is critical, a Harvard Business Review publication argues it is equally important to reform the organizational systems – which define roles, responsibilities, and relationships – within which managers and their teams operate.</p>
<p>Allocate time to learning about specific needs of your employees (e.g. childcare, flexible schedules, improved resources to help employees do their jobs well) and create a plan to address these needs, while maintaining their privacy and avoiding judgement.</p>	<p>Read more about the relationship between creating a high performance culture and caring for employees' needs in this Talent Management and HR article.</p>
<p>Set clear work expectations for each employee, ensuring that the time required to complete these tasks successfully does not exceed the total number of required work hours .</p>	<p>McGill University's 5-Step process to a Healthy Workplace outlines the relationship between job demand and job satisfaction & presents a guide that managers can use to effectively manage workloads.</p>
<p>Ensure that employees are provided with the tools they need to do their jobs effectively, particularly for those working (partially or completely) remotely.</p>	<p>Not having the right tools can lead employees to feel disengaged and contributes to low morale, according to this article published by the HR Booth.</p>
<p>Establish frequent mandatory mental health training for management and staff, with a focus on workplace inclusivity.</p>	<p>A study by Mental Health Commission of Canada concluded that the annual impact of mental illness within the workplace (as a result of absenteeism, lower productivity or under-performance) is estimated to reach \$16 billion in 2041, up from \$6.4 billion in 2011.</p>
<p>Increase funding allocated towards employee health and wellness benefits (e.g.: gym memberships, standing desks, company wellness room, health breaks, annual health & wellness days).</p>	<p>Closing the Gap Healthcare Group cites increased employee awareness of health risks, reduced risks of disease, boosts in employee morale and productivity and strengthened relationships as some of the many benefits of corporate wellness programs.</p>
<p>Encourage autonomy and work ownership within the workplace. Employees value being able to apply their skillset to the fullest at work.</p>	<p>A Forbes article argues that autonomy is the key to employee engagement, offering lessons learnt from companies that employ strategies to increase ownership among workers.</p>
<p>Consider alternate work-models designed to reduce employee stress, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-day work-week • Hybrid (in-office and remote) work arrangements • 6-hour work day 	<p>A recently published article in The Atlantic reviews the positive impacts of the 4-day work week on business productivity and employee wellness.</p>
<p>Design workspaces that are welcoming (e.g. bigger windows, better lighting, limited noise, quiet spaces), considering the needs of introverted and extroverted people.</p>	<p>This Axiom article presents examples of innovative workplace design and their impact on employee satisfaction and productivity.</p>
<p>Create safe/healthy collaboration spaces (both indoors and outdoors) that allow employees to work together more and build better connections with one another.</p>	<p>The Conference Board of Canada summarizes the value of and issues to consider when redesigning workspaces to facilitate collaborative culture .</p>
<p>Promote social clubs, like walking clubs, book clubs etc.</p>	<p>A design and strategy firm prediction – published on Forbes – argues that the establishment of 'social clubs' is the pull factor that businesses need to get employees back into the office, highlighting research that found 54% of respondents missing sociability and office teamwork during the pandemic.</p>
<p>Review wages on an annual basis and adjust as needed, accounting for inflation/ increased costs of living.</p>	<p>A piece published in the Toronto Star draws a parallel between employers who struggle with the most labour shortages and those that tend to offer lowest wages and/or the least reliable work hours.</p>
<p>Promote breaks</p>	<p>One Forbes study found a direct correlation between adequate breaks during work and employee engagement/work performance.</p>
<p>Promote lunch and learn events which provide everything from learning and updating opportunities to exercise classes.</p>	<p>Glassdoor's Career Advice Experts argue that regular lunch and learns speed up employees' professional development, while also fostering stronger relationships. Following this, they present a list of topics that most employees would find value in.</p>
<p>Create online portals where people can socially connect with other employees online to car-pool, buy and sell products from each other, arrange day care etc.</p>	<p>Check out this consulting company's recommendations on why and how to create employee portals that support the needs of your workforce.</p>
<p>Provide day care solutions</p>	<p>Read more about Harvard Business Review's case for employer-provided child care benefits.</p>
<p>Integrate skill-training opportunities into the workplace, concentrating on efforts that could help bridge existing skills gaps at your organization.</p>	<p>Brookfield Institute's Job Pathways Playbook advocates for a 'human-centered design' approach to creating pathways that work for employers and workers & presents a model that leverages the power of data while ensuring that human factors are considered as well.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY SERVICE PROVIDERS

Government agencies and community service providers, can also play an instrumental role in crafting and implementing programs, policies and practices that support better work-life balance. From advocacy in favour of better policies to supporting funding for community resources that residents dealing with work-life stress can access, these institutions have the power to make significant systemic shifts.

By challenging existing norms through drawing on examples from around the world (e.g. as documentarian Michael Moore does in 'Where to Invade Next'), leveraging existing and new partnerships, combining resources, and thinking innovatively and unconventionally, those in public service roles can make significant strides in building a brighter tomorrow for local residents.

RECOMMENDATION	RESOURCES
Conduct workshops to help employers improve managerial capacity to support employees.	A 2020 case study published by Chief Learning Officer reviews the benefits of formal diversity training and its influence on leadership effectiveness.
Work with employers to invest in housing and transportation supports to reduce the financial stress of residents, targeting these supports to those who experience the greatest number of barriers to affordable, accessible and suitable housing/transportation.	Encourage employers to leverage partnership opportunities that support their employees' housing and transportation needs.
Expand public transit routes and schedules to accommodate the needs of commuting residents/reduce time spent commuting.	C40's Knowledge Hub contains an extensive guide on how to make public transit a more attractive option for locals. Also, check out WPBGE's Navigating Grand Erie: Transportation Survey Summary Report for a full list of recommendations.
Improve spaces for physical activity by installing community fitness equipment, maintaining and expanding local trail systems etc.	A University of Lethbridge study found that accessible workout equipment benefited community health, sense of community, and families.
Establish better mental health supports, ensuring that all residents, especially vulnerable populations, are able to easily access these services. Consider the varying comfort levels of residents while developing a portfolio of available options.	The Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health lists a series of innovative initiatives – along with their anticipated impact – undertaken by regional health systems in the province.
Explore different avenues to promote existing community supports. Some residents noted that their awareness of available services is limited, and that they do not know where to look for help.	Content Marketing is essential to meeting your organization's strategic goals, according to this guide for nonprofits .
Experiment with different programs and supports to help caregivers (i.e. improved daycare, after school programs for kids, elder care support, enhanced ability for caregivers to network with one another).	The Ontario Caregiver Coalition argues that the current state of caregiving is unsustainable, calling for more financial support and improved support for home and respite care.
Provide increased support for employers to hire and accommodate the needs of people with disabilities.	The Coalition for Persons with Disabilities quotes studies that prove higher revenues, net income and profit margins among businesses that actively seek to employ people with disabilities, compared to those that do not.
Promote retraining opportunities for low-income/unemployed individuals.	A joint collaboration between Ryerson University's Diversity Institute, Future Skills Centre and Public Policy Forum summarizes the demand/opportunities for skills training and retraining in a post-pandemic world.
Develop and deliver workshops and/or educational campaigns – targeted at populations most affected by burnout – to inform residents about healthy coping mechanisms and ways to deal with high levels of stress.	Supporting mindfulness has been proven to enhance workplace functioning through decreased burnout, according to a study published by the American Academy of Family Physicians .
Connect with employers about offering 'burnout prevention' training to their employees, and ensure that managers/HR reps are present and actively involved in delivering these workshops.	Break Through – a Canadian wellness organization – argues that healthy company culture starts at the top, with leadership being equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to make employee well-being a priority.
Explore opportunities to further the education and training of low-skilled workers. This can help employers/managers improve workload planning by creating more opportunities for delegation of tasks.	Considering the impacts of job polarization trends, a Public Policy Forum publication advocates for better policy that can close the gap between people's skillsets and those that are in demand.
Consider promoting career opportunities that require less frequent travel.	Examine skilled trades in demand using resources like WPBGE's In Demand Skilled Trades Study , and design/administer courses that train young individuals for these professions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS

The survey results indicate that generally, people are not well equipped with the supports they need to manage a balanced lifestyle, especially those in lower skilled and lower paying jobs. Further, those working in service and health care industries often experience added strain caused by a prolonged state of hypervigilance. These individuals are often not afforded the time they need to look after their own physical and mental health. Knowledge and education about creating new routines and habits, as well as increasing availability and access to support

resources is essential to addressing this issue. This will help people to understand what they need, how to describe what they need or how they feel and who to reach out to for help.

A variety of resources are needed to address the varying needs in the community. No one option is better than the rest. We have to take care today – of ourselves and our family – to promote a movement for a healthy tomorrow. And that movement starts with each one of us.

RECOMMENDATION

Allocate time in your daily schedule to spend with friends and family in safe/healthy ways.

RESOURCES

According to a [TED talk by Nadine Harris](#), adverse/traumatic past experiences – particularly in one's childhood – have been linked to increased risk of depression, suicidality, lung cancer, heart disease and more, highlighting the critical importance of adequate time allocation to building and maintaining healthy relationships with family and friends.

Reach out to your company management if you are feeling stressed out/overworked, and have a conversation with them about how they can support you.

This [Harvard Business Review publication](#) outlines a 4-step framework to discussing your mental health with your employer:

- 1) Understanding
- 2) Deciding
- 3) Preparing
- 4) Sharing

Integrate physical activity into your daily schedule. Exercise – be it yoga, cycling or jogging – has been proven to reduce stress levels and increase overall wellness.

The [World Health Organization Fact sheet on Physical Activity](#) lists several proven benefits, including prevention and management of non-communicable diseases, reduction of depression and anxiety symptoms, enhanced thinking, learning and judgement skills etc.

Reach out to community services that can offer support and coping strategies to address burnout/stress.

For a complete list of local supports, visit <https://workforceplanningboard.org/job-map/>

Treat yourself. Make a plan to dedicate a portion of your day – even if just 10 minutes – to engaging in personal care/leisure activities that spark joy, such as creating art, taking a stroll, journaling, meditation, prayer, laying down, stretching, or even finding a quiet area away from people.

The [University of Colorado Health and Wellness Services](#) makes a convincing case for the psychological benefits of treating oneself, and contains a list of activity suggestions based on available time – from 30 seconds to all day.

Explore the great outdoors. The Grand Erie area is fortunate to have many lovely trail and waterfront areas that are conducive to walking and biking.

[Ontario Parks' blog](#) presents a list of the many mental health benefits of the outdoors – and a link to provincial parks nearby.

Create an outdoor oasis on your balcony, porch, deck or yard. Keep it simple, but comfortable, whatever that means to you.

Check out [this HGTV guide](#) to transforming your porch, patio or deck.

Consider alternative forms of health care like naturopathy, message therapy with an RMT, physiotherapy, acupuncture, individual or group counselling, dietician, personal trainer, cooking classes etc.

Check out a complete list of available services at www.info-bhn.ca. From the menu, chose Health and Wellness, then chose "Alternative medicine/therapy".

Talk to your family doctor about how you are feeling and ask about other resources.

[Mind Your Mind](#) contains a list of useful tips and tricks to initiating a conversation with your doctor about your health and well-being.

Readers are encouraged to review the results of this report, paying particular attention to the questions/statements over which they have the most influence within their workspace/community, and to develop actionable strategies to support healthier work-life balance.



CONCLUSION

The world of work is changing at a rapid pace, and with it, the expectations, experiences and stressors of those living and working within our community. WPBGE's Work-Life Balance survey presents unique insights into the needs of Grand Erie's workforce, outlining the obstacles faced by various segments of the population. Almost 40% of the workforce indicated that they are dissatisfied with their work-life balance and/or currently experiencing burnout, emphasizing the need for better support systems. Issues surrounding work-life balance affect all citizens, but in particular, unemployed individuals, those in lower skilled/lower paying jobs, people living with disabilities, caregivers and individuals busy building families/homes and careers experience significant obstacles to developing a healthy work-life balance. These individuals often have limited capacity to respond and thus require specific supports from their employers and their community. From leaders to managers to workers, everyone faces challenges operating in a system that puts profits and productivity before people's health and well-being. A systemic shift is required, and this involves building and strengthening emotional intelligence within all members of the workforce. This task may seem daunting, but – with the commitment and collaboration of government, educational institutions, service providers, employers and residents alike – it is achievable.

The results of this survey highlighted that higher wages, reduced work hours, setting realistic expectations and offering work flexibility are key factors that employers should consider to enhance the work-life balance of their employees. From a community development perspective, increased financial supports for those who need them, alongside access to health resources, fitness spaces and improved social connections are all critical needs of local residents. There is a cost with implementing any new practice or policy. However, simple changes such as implementing new routines in the workday, and allocating time for getting outdoors for fresh air, exercise, and conversation can make a big impact on lives and a minimal impact on cost.

Identifying these needs is step one. Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie's goal – through conducting this study, analyzing the results and distributing this report – is that employers, government, and community service providers will be encouraged to work towards strategically addressing these concerns through the implementation of reformed policies, programs and practices – starting with those outlined within the Recommendations & Resources sections of this report. In doing so, they can collectively support the movement to a healthier, happier, and more resilient Grand Erie.

APPENDIX

RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS

1. [Go Home: The Business Case for Work-Life Balance \(Wired\)](#)
2. [Employee Burnout: Causes and Cures \(Gallup\)](#)
3. [Navigating the New Normal: A COVID-19 Supplement to CAMH's Mental Health Playbook for Business Leaders \(CAMH\)](#)
4. [Grief, Loss, Burnout: Navigating a New Emotional Landscape at Work \(McKinsey & Company\)](#)
5. [Mental Health in the Workplace: The Coming Revolution \(McKinsey & Company\)](#)
6. [Grand Erie Jobs \(WPBGE\)](#)

RESOURCES FOR GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY SERVICE PROVIDERS

1. [Mental Health Index \(LifeWorks\)](#)
2. [Mind and Body: Impact of the Pandemic on Physical and Mental Health \(Environics Institute, Future Skills Centre, Diversity Institute\)](#)
3. [Caregiving in Canada: Challenges and Opportunities Shaping a National Conversation \(PetroCanada CareMakers Foundation\)](#)
4. [Supporting Caregivers Through Policy: The Caregiver Policy Lens \(BC Psychogeriatric Association\)](#)
5. [Ontario Parent and Family Survey Results \(Strong Families\)](#)
6. [Grand Erie Jobs \(WPBGE\)](#)
7. [How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime: Nadine Burke Harris, Ted Talk](#)

RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUALS

1. [Guide to Work-Life Balance \(CMHA\)](#)
2. [Community Addiction and Mental Health Services of Haldimand and Norfolk](#)
3. [St. Leonard's Community Services, Addictions & Mental Health Services](#)
4. [Haldimand-Norfolk REACH](#)
5. [The Ontario Caregiver Organization](#)
6. [Caregiver Resources \(TEVA\)](#)
7. [Grand Erie Jobs \(WPBGE\)](#)
8. [Ontario Caregivers' Peer Support Network](#)
9. [MindBeacon: Therapist Guided Program](#)
10. [AbilitiCBT](#)



Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie

Commission de planification de la main-d'œuvre de Grand Erie

The Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie
1100 Clarence Street South, Suite 101, Box 12, Brantford, ON N3S 7N8
Phone: 519-756-1116 | Fax: 519-756-4663
www.workforceplanningboard.org