

September 2020 Recovery Pulse Survey

October 2020



CERIC

Advancing
Career
Development
in Canada

Promouvoir
le développement
de carrière
au Canada

About the September Survey

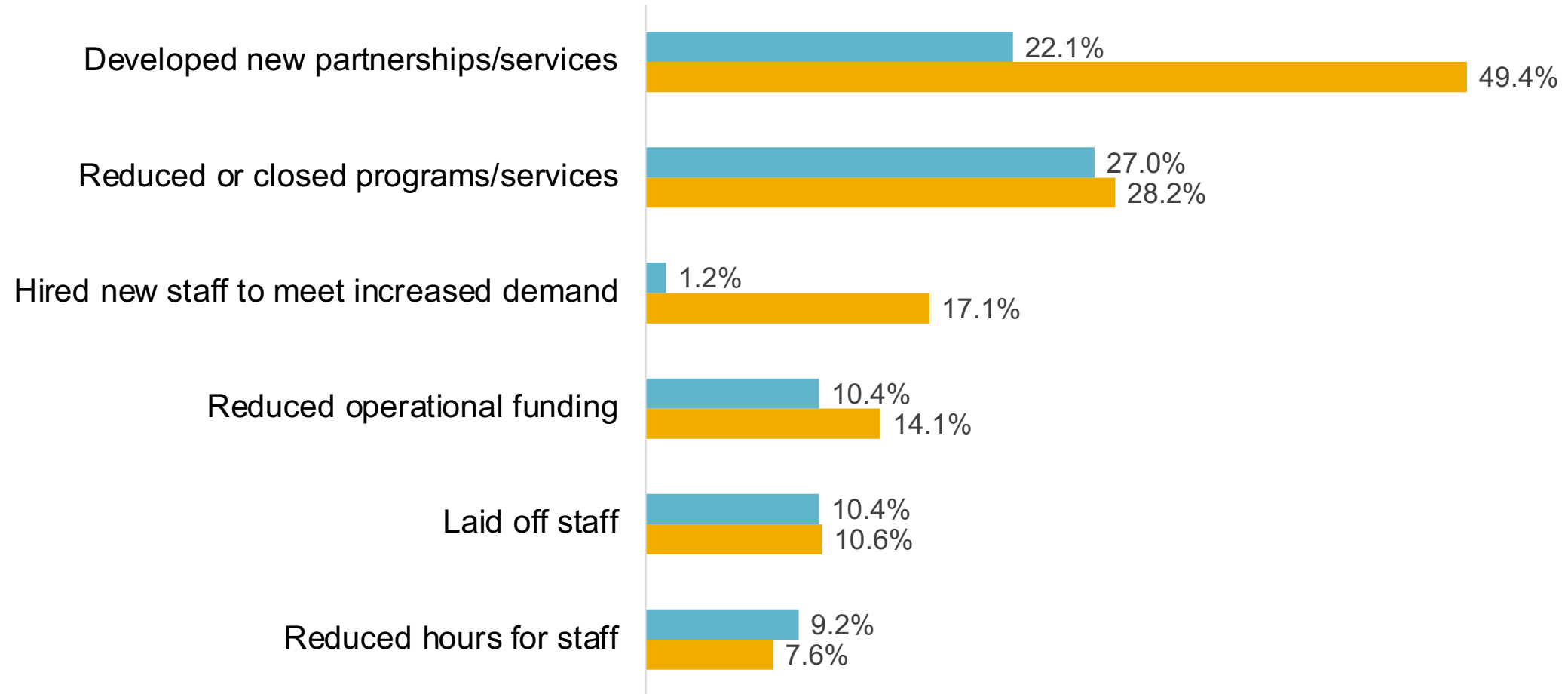
Survey conducted between September 10 & 18

Respondents were drawn from the list of approximately 600 people who completed CERIC's June Recovery Pulse Survey and who agreed to be contacted again

195 people completed some or all of the September survey

170 people could be identified as having completed both the June & September surveys

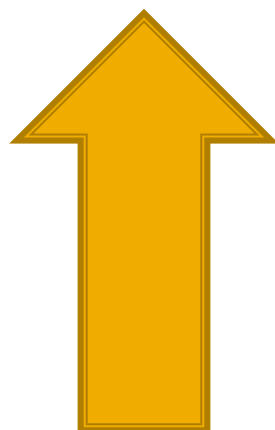
Changes to career services operations



Demand for services since the pandemic began

June

N = 106



17.2% reported an increase in demand for services/supports

September

N = 193



37.3% reported a decrease in demand for services/supports



32.6% reported an increase in demand for services/supports



30.1% reported no change in demand for services/supports



Examples of new partnerships, services, or offerings that were developed, enhanced, or expanded since COVID-19 began

N = 140

- Pivot 2020 is a project partnership between Youthful Cities, Canadian Council for Youth Prosperity and Simon Fraser University - Morris J. Work Centre for Dialogue. The project was conceptualized in March as a response to COVID-19 and is a large scale Urban Research Project that will employ 1200 youth ages 18-30 across 27 cities beginning in October 2020.
- New partnership with "Learn to Camp" who did a webinar about Rouge Valley National Park. This was the first time we introduced camping to newcomers who were very engaged. We have a category called Community Connections in our program. In the past, we would have taken newcomers out to trips, but because of COVID, we had to find some other way of connecting newcomers. I had received an email from a community partner about their services and reached out to them to be able to overcome the challenges."
- Digital Literacy Access Program, developed by our organization. Providing digital support to unemployed individuals to access programs and assist with gaining employment (i.e., tablets, cell phones). As services moved virtually, we recognized that not all individuals had access to the internet or tools that would support them in accessing not only employment services, but many services that moved online.



Examples of new partnerships, services, or offerings that were developed, enhanced, or expanded since COVID-19 began

N = 140

- At our university, four distinct units (career centre, co-op, business school career centre, alumni office) came together to develop a joint employer panel series.
- Developed a partnership with a local organization that will offer an opportunity for students in Grade 12 to participate in a structured Career Exploration to satisfy the 30 hour requirement for Career Life Connections course (BC High School Graduation Requirement). This organization reached out to us during the pandemic, in hopes of launching this fall either in-person or on-line.
- Hosting a local job/career fair was one of our projects' objective. With Covid, we had to find another way to offer our clients access to employers in the area. We developed a partnership with our health regions' Indigenous HR dept. and are now offering monthly employment information sessions via Zoom where the health regions HR dept heads highlight the benefits for working for the region and they walk through the online application process, including applying with barriers (criminal, physical or cognitive) what they are looking for on a resume (key words), offer additional services such as interview techniques & career coaching within their organization, giving clients direct contact to their HR dept. to ask questions relating to working for them. The employment info sessions have expanded to the entire health care region and have participants from EAS, university career and placement dept, immigration centres, Indigenous communities, EIA & EI and has no sign of slowing down.

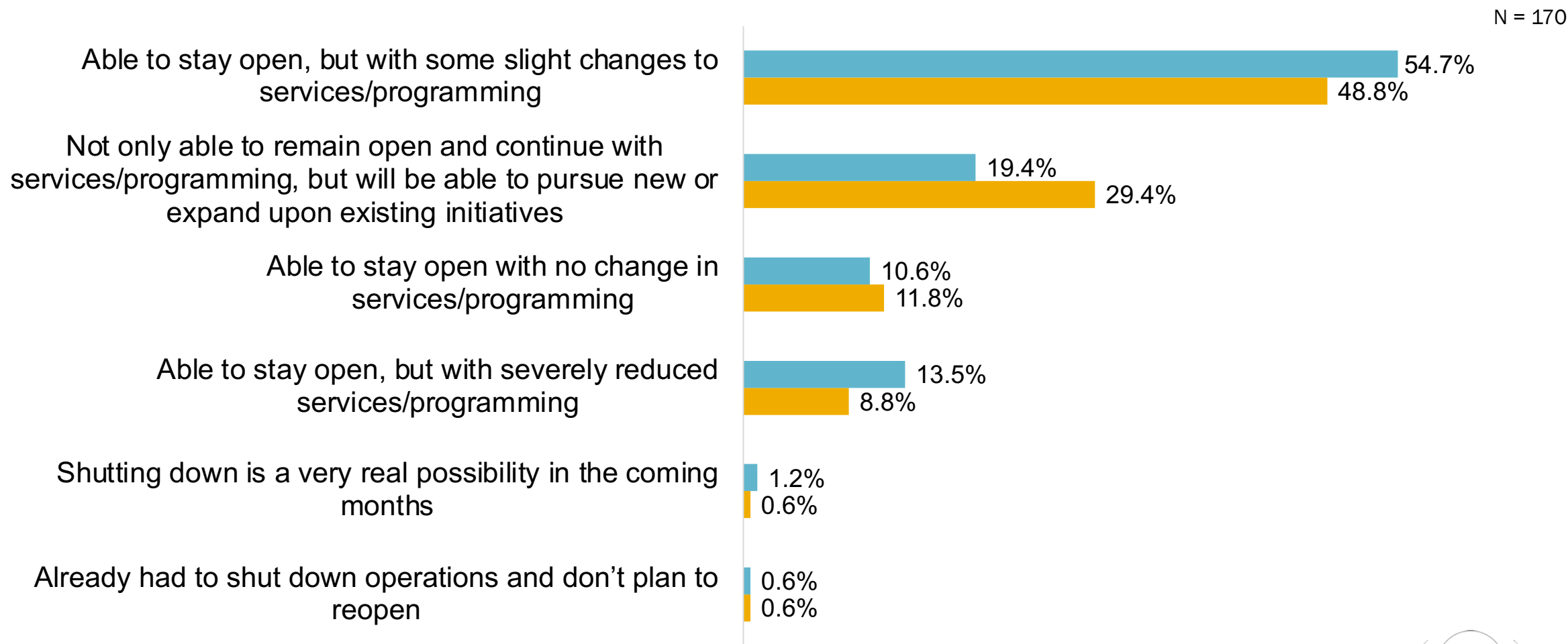


Examples of new partnerships, services, or offerings that were developed, enhanced, or expanded since COVID-19 began

N = 140

- We developed a new partnership with a local recruiter (StaffMax) and we developed a new partnership with the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work. They focus on helping clients with barriers. We are finding more clients have mental health barriers and wanted to refer people to more adequate services.
- Developed a new partnership with Workforce Windsor-Essex Essential Services Worker Registry. This was developed in response to a huge demand by local employers needing to fill positions.
- We have started video taping our workshops and making those available through our co-op student handbook. We then have students join us for a synchronous Q&A. We anticipate continuing this after COVID and a return to in-person operations.
- Started partnership with Toronto Community Benefits to support employment opportunities for our Pre-Apprenticeship Electrician participants (ability to gain access to unionized employers). It came about through a Construction Service Providers network meeting, and a request for interested parties to submit interest in the project.

Ability to continue to operate career services



Do your students/clients view this time period more as:

N = 170

A STRESSOR



78.2%
86.5%

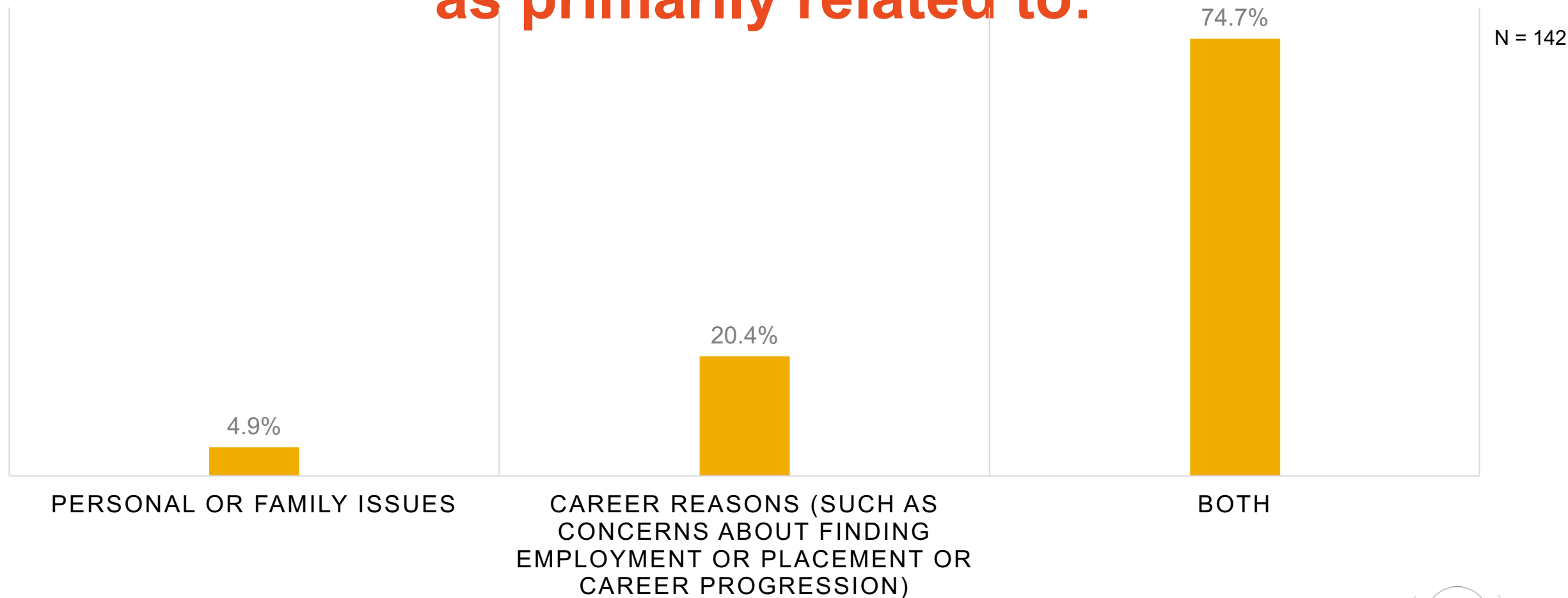
SEPTEMBER
JUNE

AN OPPORTUNITY

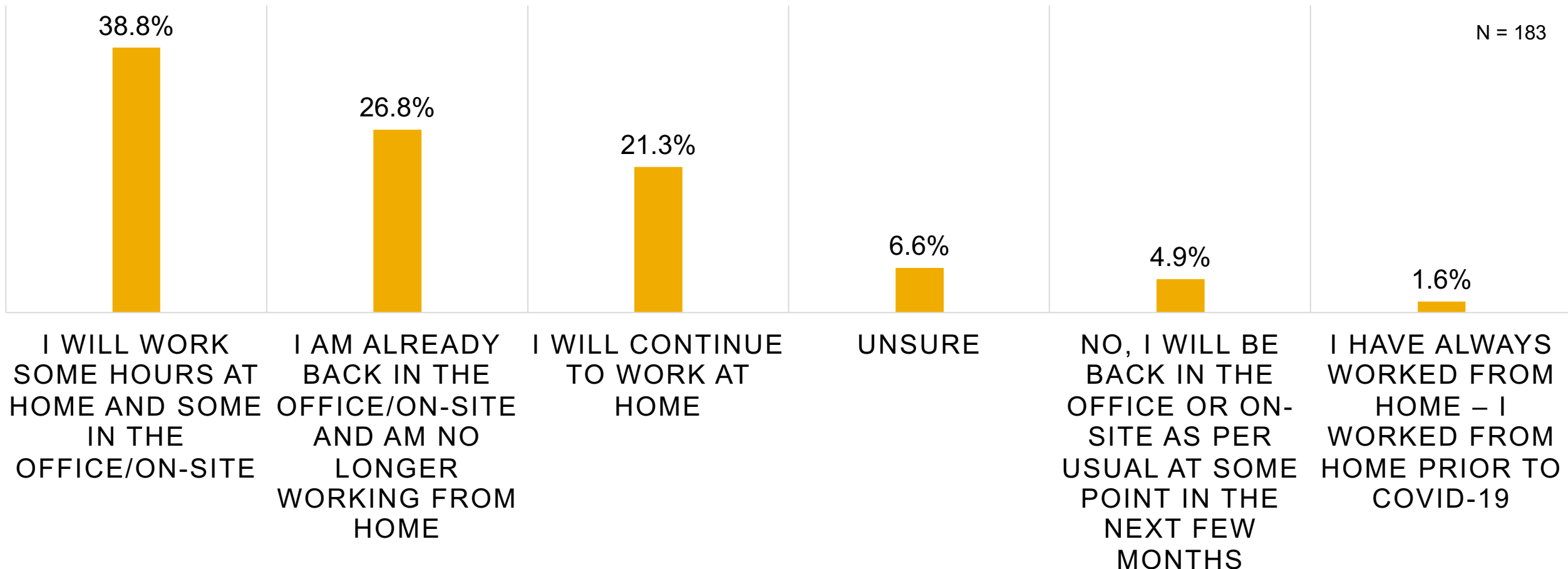


21.8%
13.5%

Would you describe your clients'/students' stress as primarily related to:



Does your workplace plan to continue to work remotely until the end of 2020?



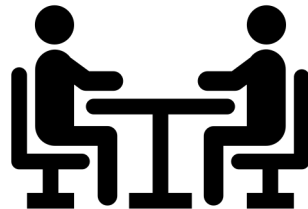
Working remotely until the end of 2020 or beyond will mean that:

57.7%
N = 111



There will be **no change** in how connected I feel to my colleagues or place of work

56.4%
N = 110



My clients or students will be **unaffected** and receive about the same level of service/support

59.5%
N = 111



I will be **as productive** and feel **as empowered as before**

Working remotely until the end of 2020 or beyond will mean that:

N = 111

57.7%

THERE WILL BE NO CHANGE IN HOW CONNECTED I FEEL TO MY COLLEAGUES OR PLACE OF WORK

26.1%

THE CONNECTION I HAVE WITH MY COLLEAGUES AND PLACE OF WORK WILL CHANGE FOR THE WORSE

11.7%

THE CONNECTION I HAVE WITH MY COLLEAGUES AND PLACE OF WORK WILL CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

4.5%

NOT APPLICABLE

Working remotely until the end of 2020 or beyond will mean that:

56.4%



MY CLIENTS OR STUDENTS WILL BE UNAFFECTED AND RECEIVE ABOUT THE SAME LEVEL OF SERVICE/SUPPORT

25.5%



MY CLIENTS OR STUDENTS WILL RECEIVE BETTER LEVELS OF SERVICE/SUPPORT (E.G., EASIER TO COMMUNICATE OR MEET WITH CLIENTS/STUDENTS OR OFFER NEW, MORE RELEVANT SERVICES/PROGRAMS, ETC.)

18.2%



MY CLIENTS OR STUDENTS WILL RECEIVE WORSE LEVELS OF SERVICE/SUPPORT (E.G., MORE DIFFICULT TO COMMUNICATE AND ENGAGE WITH CLIENTS/STUDENTS OR TO OFFER APPROPRIATE SERVICES/PROGRAMS TO CLIENTS OR STUDENTS, ETC.)

N = 110

Working remotely until the end of 2020 or beyond will mean that:

N = 111

59.5%



I WILL BE AS PRODUCTIVE AND
FEEL AS EMPOWERED AS BEFORE

25.2%



I WILL BE MORE PRODUCTIVE AND
FEEL MORE EMPOWERED

15.3%

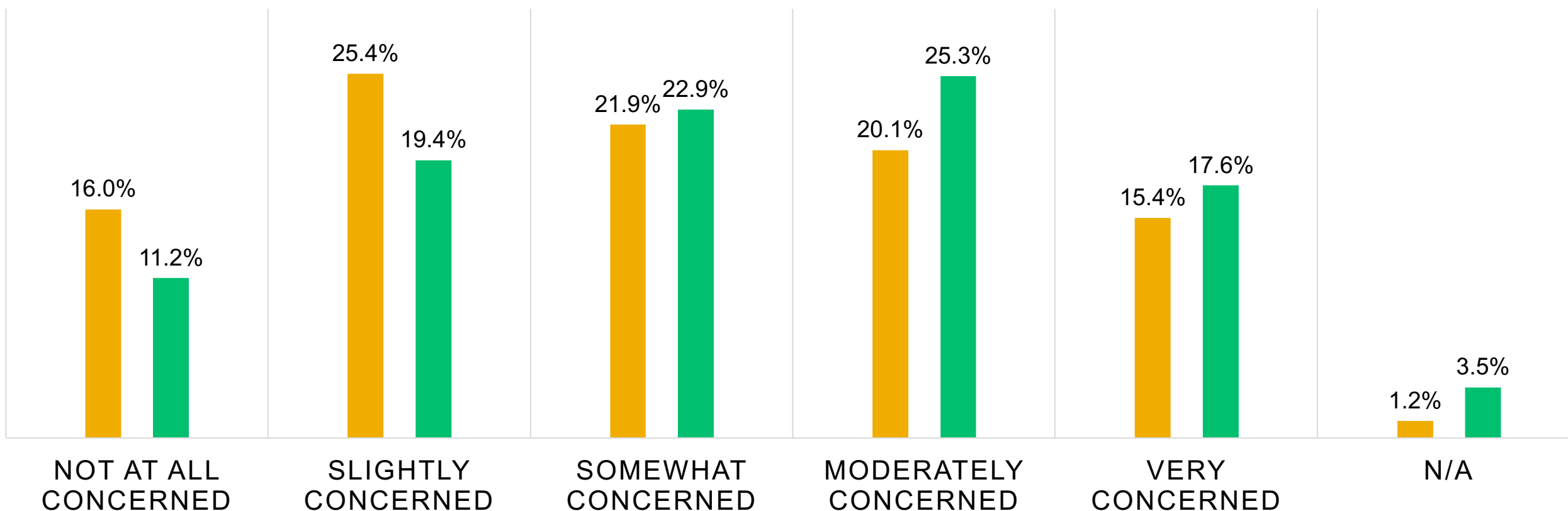


I WILL BE LESS PRODUCTIVE AND
FEEL LESS EMPOWERED

How concerned are you about burnout as a result of the pressure or stress over the past few months?

■ For yourself ■ For senior leadership

N = 176



How concerned are you about burnout as a result of the pressure or stress over the past few months?

N = 176



35.4%

are moderately or very concerned **about burning out**

42.9%

are moderately or very concerned about their **senior leadership burning out**

Mental health challenges

N = 176



Over the summer months:

38.1% noticed a **decline** in their own mental health

39.8% = no change
15.3% = improvement
6.8% = unsure / n/a

70.3% noticed a **deterioration** in the their students or clients' mental health

15.4% = no change
11.4% = unsure / n/a
2.9% = improvement



Problems or challenges identified and resilience demonstrated — synthesis

N = 147

The following slides feature comments from respondents related to:

- ✓ Finding new ways to support clients or students
- ✓ Implementing tech solutions
- ✓ Maintaining a work-life balance
- ✓ Creating staff connections
- ✓ Dealing with changing demand
- ✓ Handling a return to the office



Finding new ways to support clients or students

N = 147

- “Our Career services were one of only a few clients services that supported individuals trying to access CERB, Job Search, and other application supports for various organizations that closed (Student Financial Assistance etc.). This forced us to become leaders in ensuring that all factors to mitigate transmission risks were implemented. Knowledge is power and has enhanced our reputation as a safe environment for staff and clients alike. We have also implemented a remote client service program which provides another channel to connect with clients.”
- “Not being able to provide our youth with a group setting was very concerning to me. We have created an online classroom through Google and with guest speakers from the community, and through a daily check-in, humour, information and perseverance, we have managed to create a safe and meaningful space for these youth. Very successful!”
- “Many of our participants could not participate in online activities as they did not have a computer. We had some old computers at the office the had recently been replaced by newer models. Each participant was given a computer that needed one.”
- “Challenge was to accommodate our clients while working at home. It was a concern as some clients didn't have computers or internet. We overcame this by accommodating them via mail. It made things slower to process but got the same result.”



Work-life balance

N = 147

- “I worked from home prior to COVID, but when the shutdown happened, my children and my spouse were at home. The challenge that I/we faced was a significant decrease in time available to work, and balancing the needs of everyone with respect to working/school. I don't know that we worked differently, but we tried to take turns with managing kids, managing our work, and working different hours. In terms of resilient...I think we were just trying to survive, and were not thriving.”
- “A major stressor across large numbers of staff was having their children at home while they had even more than usual in front of them. Resolved through explorations of how to divide up the work differently; encouraging even more flexible headspaces; checking in with staff to connect personally.”
- “When I first began working from home, it was difficult to shut things off as I was home and in close proximity to everything (computer/phone/client e-mails)...it wasn't until I set up a dedicated "office" that I was able to "shut off" at the end of the day. I also have to admit, that I became somewhat of a webinar junkie and thoroughly enjoyed a series on self-care and mindfulness.”



Implementing tech solutions

N = 147

- “We had many technological upgrades that needed to happen before we were able to work remotely at full capacity. Our IT procurement strategy prior to the pandemic did not focus on high quality hardware, which caused us many initial problems when everyone was sent home. We addressed this by spending and replacing hardware across the board.”
- “Communicating while working from home was a challenge, but initiating a Slack channel for our team helped immensely. It allowed us to collaborate quickly, keep in touch daily, and support each other in real-time. It also kept our communication very well-organized by topic/project, which made it significantly more useful than other "chat" services such as WhatsApp.”
- “Completing training applications remotely, involving new ways of obtaining client consent, password-protecting documents and so on to meet Ministry approval. Came up with processes as well as following Ministry protocols (frequently changing!) to meet increased demand for this program.”
- “We are an Employment Ontario site and the main issue we had was switching to paperless mode of delivery and still trying to meet Ministry expectations e.g., signatures on documents. We switched to electronic signatures and used our shared drive to be able to overcome the challenges.”



Creating staff connections

N = 147

- “Lack of team social opportunities. We made a rota of staff who volunteered to host fun/interesting events at our Friday virtual check out meetings including Jeopardy, guess who with baby pictures, lunch and learn type topics, e.g., what is philosophy, speech therapy overview — all with very creative slides. It created a social hub.”
- “We encouraged 5 minutes of 'collaboration' time at the beginning of every interaction with a colleague(s). Phone, email, zoom meeting etc. to build team and collaboration rather than getting to the heart of the question/problem. We also encouraged staff use this strategy with clients as well. We held a virtual all staff town hall meeting with business update, breakout rooms for 2 separate questions about how are they feeling, what would help and suggestions for the next round of team challenges. We had 3 months of team challenges, where people received weekly points for things such as meditation, walking, exercise, drinking water, learning a new skills, connecting with a friend or co-worker etc., a blog and LinkedIn group where we would share pictures and stories with prizes at the end of each month. It was well received. People said it kept them motivated and gave them something to aspire to each day.”
- “One of our biggest challenges was the conflicting issues of personal isolation and Zoom fatigue. Most staff took vacation time at the end of summer (which really helped) and we've changed some meeting processes for the fall.”



Dealing with changing demand

N = 147

- “Most noticeable is a decline in new intakes and a decrease in current client participation in activities. To increase our intakes we are working more aggressively with the Ministry to contact the recently employed and not wait for them to come to us. For clients that already exist, it is about informing them that a return to work may mean that there is a shift in how their job is done or that new skills may be required and this is an opportunity to address the shifting employers needs to stay relevant and achieve new and stable employment.”
- “Our intakes were lower, but kept sending out e-newsletter to the community, updating social media, that our services are open but are now virtual.”



Handling a return to the office

N = 147

- “I think the biggest challenge for me has been balancing staff mental and physical health challenges. Some staff would like to be in the office daily for mental health and other staff are concerned of having too many people around due to compromised immune systems. We are working in pods where we always work the same days to maintain staff health. Senior Management would like us all to be in the office regularly and that will once again change dynamics of staff mental health.”
- “Shortly before we unlocked the doors to fluid traffic from the public, we were faced with a potential exposure to COVID-19. While procedures were in place to address cleaning, sanitizing and a variety of other health and safety practices, we did not have a process to deal with a potential exposure, as opposed to confirmed exposure. We had to work very quickly to contain the situation and mitigate any further or wider spread exposure. Within hours we had made a number of decisions and redeployed staff and clients to continue working / participating from home. While extremely stressful, we learned that we could adapt very quickly and it forced us to further recognize that we would have to remain flexible and resilient as circumstances can and will change very quickly. In the end, we were fortunate as all tests were negative and we were able to return to business but with increased knowledge and confidence.”



But challenges remain...

N = 147

- “Students with little or no language skills or little or no computer literacy had to be left behind from March to August, slowing down their progress to a halt. Classes are reopened but enrolment is presently considerably lower than in past years.”
- “Too many of our clients (developmentally disabled) have lost work as well as access to therapies that help them cope. Covid has been a huge set back.”
- “I did have one client who seemed to be on track and doing very positive things to help herself but then seemed to deflate quite suddenly. I was not aware of how fragile she was feeling and have been reflecting back on how I could have helped her more or been there for her in ways that helped her feel more supported.”



Future challenges identified by respondents — synthesis

N = 176

Uncertainty of COVID-19

- What will happen if there is another shutdown?
How long will this last? How do we plan?

Loss of direct connections with colleagues, volunteers, clients, or students

- How to create or maintain relationships?

Decrease in employment opportunities

- How to help support clients/students to find work?
- What will the labour market look like?

Meeting increased demand for services or programs

- How to ensure consistent levels of service? How
to prepare for more demand once government
programs like CERB end?

Safety

- How to continue to work in a safe environment?
How to support clients/students who are
concerned about COVID?

Motivating clients/students

- How do I keep them engaged? How to provide
support to students who are sent home due to
school closures?

Balancing work-life

- How to fight against burnout? How to manage
child care?

Access to and support with technology

- How to support those who don't have access to
technology? How to support those with lower
digital literacy skills?

Reduction of staff or services

- What will need to close or be reduced? Will there
be layoffs?

Pressure to meet targets

- How to meet employment targets set by senior
leaders or government ministries?

Maintaining wins in how we work

- How to ensure things like flexibility, virtual
services, etc. are maintained? How do we ensure
we don't become complacent?