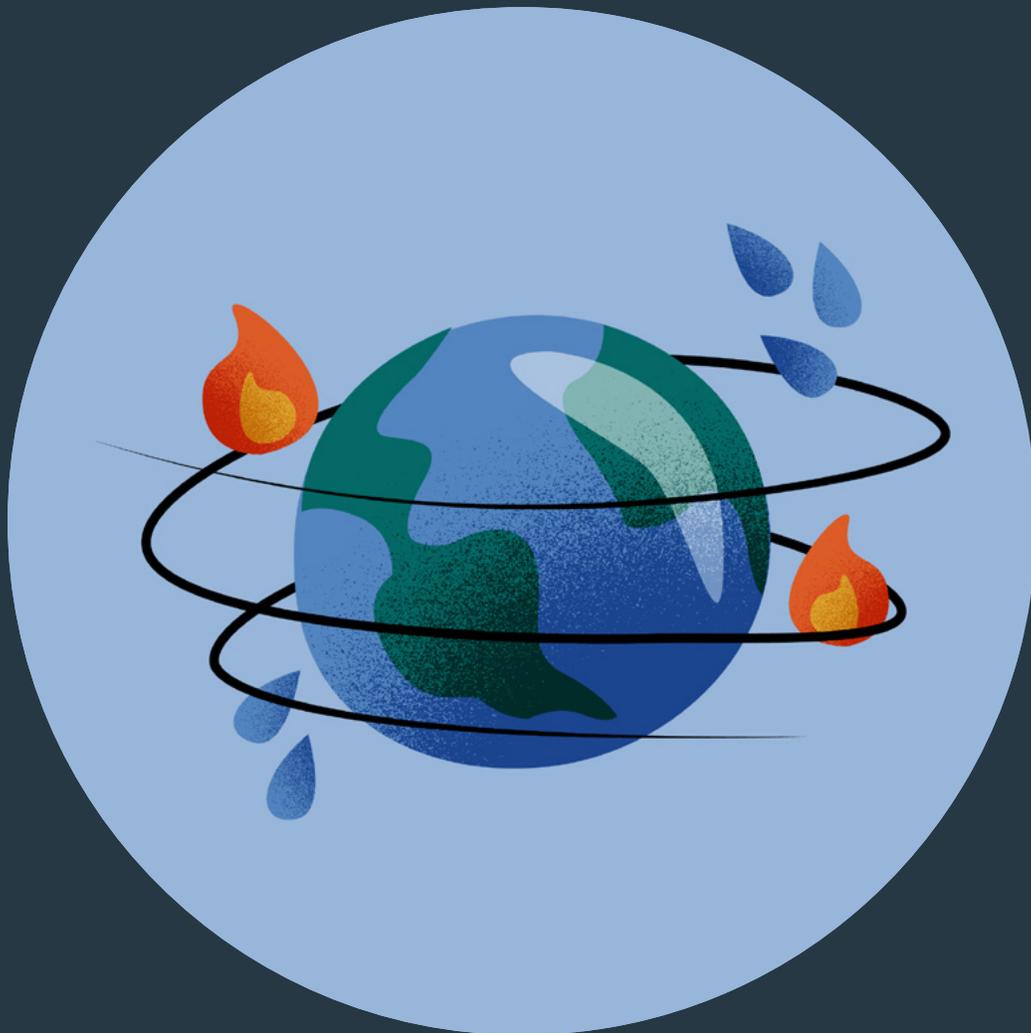


October
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Mental Health Check-up: A Look at Employee Mental Health in a *Post- Pandemic World*



ginger

Introduction

Over the last six months, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a dramatic toll on our mental health. As the number of COVID-19 cases continues to exponentially increase, our collective resilience continues to be tested. According to a recent workforce survey, nearly 70% of US workers believe this is the most stressful period of their careers, including major events like the September 11 terror attacks and the 2008 Great Recession. Looking forward, existing issues will be compounded by yet another set of new challenges, such as the adjustment to distance learning for both children and parents, stress around the election, and more.

As a mental health system with a measurement-based care model, Ginger tracks key metrics across the member journey and has uncovered emerging mental health patterns as a result of the pandemic. Here are three key takeaways on how COVID-19 has impacted the state of mental health since the onset of the pandemic and insights for how companies can address a new landscape of employee needs going forward.

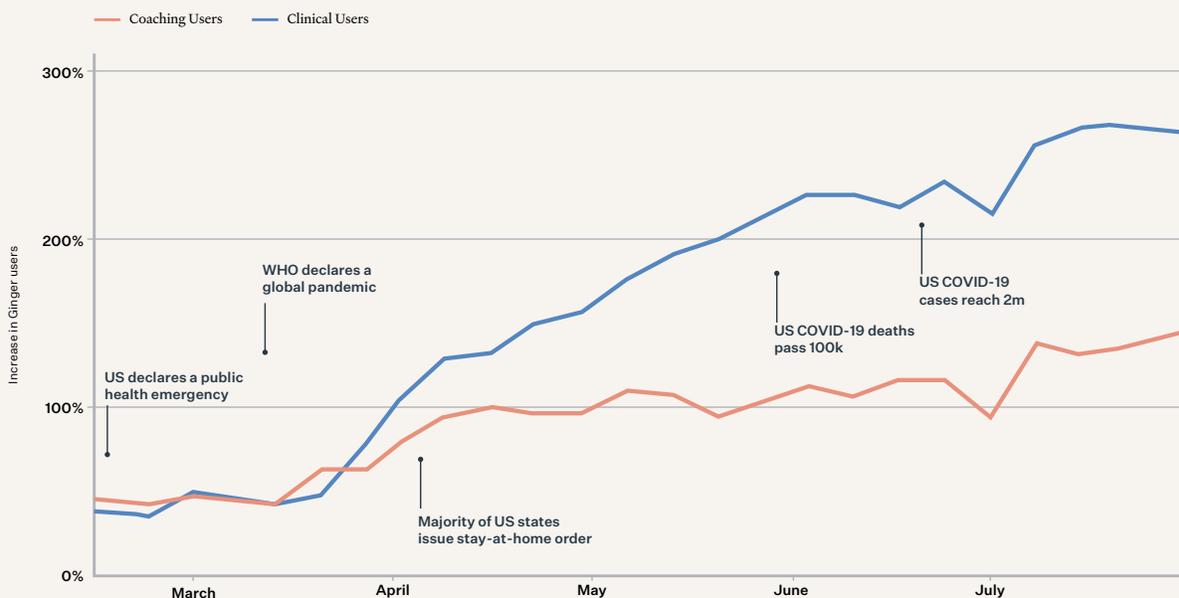
1.

The pandemic's impact on mental health needs has *far from stabilized*.

Since the onset of the pandemic, Ginger has observed spikes in usage of behavioral health coaching, therapy and psychiatry. When California became the first state to issue a stay-at-home order in March 2020, other states quickly followed suit, and Ginger immediately saw an uptick in member activity. By mid-June, the total number of COVID-19 cases in the US passed the 2 million mark. By that time, Ginger coaches were reporting that conversations with members were more intense than ever before (26% more intense compared to the pre-COVID average).

Week after week, Ginger has continued to observe record-high demand for services. In July 2020, weekly utilization rates increased on average 130% for coaching and 255% for therapy and psychiatry, as compared to pre-COVID-19 averages. In fact, Ginger has also seen a 20% uptick in nighttime (10pm-6am) conversations with coaches. Stress and anxiety-related sleep disruption is creating a cyclical effect where poor sleep is leading to even greater distress. The increasing demand for mental health support - day and night - indicates members are still struggling to cope under the constant stage of uncertainty. With no end in sight to the pandemic, mental health needs have far from stabilized.

Utilization during COVID-19



The increase in Ginger users is compared to the average number of users before COVID-19, defined as the period from August 2019 to January 2020. Users include new client launches during COVID-19.



GINGER INSIGHT

With such a high volume of need and severity, solutions need to scale care cost-effectively to meet the demand. A virtual mental health delivery system is uniquely positioned to provide increased capacity while driving cost-effective care. By harnessing the power of behavioral health coaches, therapists, psychiatrists, and augmented intelligence, high-quality clinical and subclinical care can be delivered at scale - anytime, anywhere, for anyone.

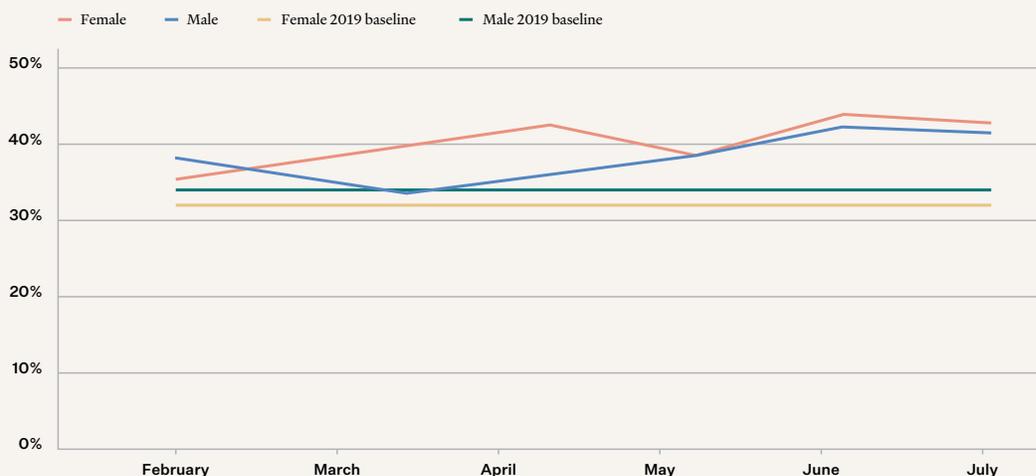
2.

Symptoms of depression and anxiety are on the rise across *all demographics*.

Across its entire member base, Ginger has seen an uptick in users screening positive for depression and anxiety, as measured by the PHQ-2 and GAD-2, respectively. The acuity of symptoms associated with depression is particularly pronounced. Since the start of the pandemic, Ginger has observed a 13% increase in the proportion of members screening positive for depression when compared to the pre-COVID-19 average. This upward trend can be seen across all genders and ages, especially amongst females and the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups. In June 2020, a record percentage of new Ginger members screened positive on the PHQ-2 during their intake survey. Additionally, Ginger’s psychiatrists have written 163% more prescriptions for psychotropic drugs, primarily for antidepressants.

Ginger’s observations are consistent with national pulse surveys conducted by the CDC in collaboration with the US Census Bureau. In May 2020, 24% of survey respondents had symptoms of major depressive disorder and 30% for generalized anxiety disorder. By July 2020, the numbers had increased significantly with 30% showing symptoms of depression and 36% for anxiety. As the pandemic wears on, it’s clear that the mental health crisis, which existed long before COVID-19, will only be exacerbated.

Rate of Positive Depressions Screens *by Gender*





GINGER INSIGHT

Prevention starts by opening access for the entire population and engaging members in care. Behavioral health coaching is an emerging modality proven to address a wide spectrum of challenges, including day-to-day stress, anxiety, and depression. 90% of Ginger members are entirely supported within coaching and do not need a therapist or psychiatrist added to their care team. Equally critical to an upstream approach is early intervention for acute needs. At Ginger, coaches, superpowered by technology, play a key role in actively detecting at-risk members who should be escalated to clinical services, ensuring the right care is delivered at the right time across the entire population.

3.

Long standing mental health inequities are *exacerbated* by the pandemic.

Nearly all companies are struggling during COVID-19, but some industries, including airlines, healthcare, manufacturing, and retail, have been hit particularly hard and their workers are hurting the most. Prior to the pandemic, employees in these industries were often more vulnerable and disadvantaged. Retail workers, as an example, are typically faced with an emotionally and physically demanding work environment, which can lead to fatigue, stress and burnout. With much of the retail workforce considered “essential” during the pandemic, many existing burdens - whether emotional, mental, financial, or physical - have only worsened amidst higher risk of exposure to the virus, added difficulties of childcare, fear of unemployment, and more.

Before the pandemic, Ginger observed higher depression and anxiety scores (PHQ-2 and GAD-2) scores on average amongst its members working in highly impacted industries. As such, they were already at greater risk of depression and anxiety. Since the pandemic, the disparity in mental health status has only become more pronounced. Ginger members employed in these hard hit industries have significantly higher levels of anxiety, and the gap isn't likely to close anytime soon. While the pandemic has highlighted many long standing health inequities, physical health has been the primary focus. With growing evidence about the disproportionate effects on mental health, it's clear the picture of health inequity is much broader.

Anxiety symptoms across industries impacted by COVID-19¹



¹ COVID-19's impact by industry is informed by [Moody's Global COVID-19 Impact Heatmap](#) and Ginger's book of business. Each question on the GAD-2 is rated on a 4-point scale, from 0 (not at all) to 3 (nearly every day).

Depression symptoms across all industries impacted by COVID-19²



² COVID-19's impact by industry is informed by [Moody's Global COVID-19 Impact Heatmap](#) and Ginger's book of business. Each question on the PHQ-2 is rated on a 4-point scale, from 0 (not at all) to 3 (nearly every day).



GINGER INSIGHT

Providing 24/7, on-demand access to mental health support reduces inequities in access to care. This is more important than ever as the pandemic continues to create irregular work schedules for many workers, particularly for those in industries where nonstandard work shifts, long hours, and understaffing have intensified. In fact, 76% of Ginger members used coaching outside of business hours - even before the pandemic. Around-the-clock support, not just triage, breaks down barriers to access and ensures workers get personalized support in their moment of need - whether it's during a lunch break or after a shift that ends in the middle of the night.

As companies reimagine employee wellbeing amidst a pandemic that is far from over, one thing is certain: the mental health of their workforce is paramount. 93% of employees believe that companies that have strong emotional and mental health support for employees will be more likely to survive the impact of COVID-19. How organizations support the mental health of their employees will have far-reaching business implications during and after the pandemic.

Ready when *you* are

At Ginger, we believe that everyone deserves access to incredible mental healthcare. Our on-demand system brings together behavioral health coaches, therapists, and psychiatrists, who work as a team to deliver personalized care, right through your smartphone. The Ginger app provides members with access to the support they need within seconds, 24/7, 365 days a year. Millions of people have access to Ginger through leading employers, health plans and partners. Ginger has been recognized by The World Economic Forum as a Technology Pioneer, Fast Company as one of the Most Innovative Companies in Healthcare and UCSF's Digital Health Awards as 2020's leading Mental Health Company.

learn more at—ginger.com

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