

2022 WI Fire and EMS Mental Health Survey - Analysis

Prepared for Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin Charitable Foundation

OVERVIEW

In consultation with Rogers Behavioral Health, the Professional Firefighters of Wisconsin Charitable Foundation developed a mental health survey made accessible to all professional and volunteer Fire and EMS professionals across the state of Wisconsin from October 17, 2022, to January 06, 2023. Full-time, part-time, volunteer, and retired firefighters and EMS responders completed the 43-item survey designed to provide insights on job-related critical stress and associated behavioral health needs. The survey included limited demographic information (race, ethnicity, gender, years of service) and inquired about critical incidents or traumatic events on the job, thoughts of self-harm, sleep issues, substance use, engagement with department or municipal support services, and perception of mental health stigma in the field. A brief psychological screening tool for depression, anxiety, and general psychological distress—the PHQ-4—was also included.

This was the third year distributing the survey, and for the first time the survey included an optional, validated self-reported, measure of professional quality of life, the Pro-QoL. This instrument was utilized to gather insight into work satisfaction, secondary trauma, and burnout in “helping” professionals.

1515 individuals responded to the survey (an increase from 777 and 1022 respondents in 2020 and 2021, respectively), and 777 took the optional Pro-QoL assessment in 2022. [note: the 777 Pro-QoL completers in 2022 is only coincidentally the same number of respondents as the 777 total respondents in 2020]. Further respondent delineation follows:

Employment Status:

	All	Males	Females
Full-time	874 (57.7%)	754 (86.3%)	119 (13.7%)
Part-time	126 (8.3%)	78 (61.9%)	48 (38.1%)
Retired	106 (7.0%)	87 (82.1%)	19 (17.9%)
Volunteer	409 (27.0%)	266 (65.0%)	142 (35.0%)

Primary Department Type:

	All	Males	Females
Municipal	1329 (87.7%)	1077 (81.0%)	250 (19.0%)
Private	186 (12.3%)	108 (58.1%)	78 (41.9%)

Services Provided:

	All	Males	Females
EMS	332 (21.9%)	147 (44.3%)	185 (55.7%)
Fire	118 (7.8%)	109 (92.4%)	9 (7.6%)
Fire and EMS	1065 (70.3%)	929 (97.2%)	134 (2.8%)

Fire Rank:

	All	Males	Females
Chief officer	192 (16.2%)	179 (93.2%)	13 (6.8%)
Driver	166 (14.0%)	155 (93.3%)	11 (6.7%)
Firefighter	551 (46.6%)	447 (81.1%)	103 (18.9%)
Line officer	274 (23.2%)	257 (93.8%)	16 (6.2%)

** Out of 1183 who responded to this question*

EMS Level:

	All	Males	Females
Critical care paramedic	136 (9.7%)	111 (81.6%)	25 (18.4%)
EMT advanced	156 (11.2%)	100 (64.1%)	56 (35.9%)
EMT basic	441 (31.6%)	317 (71.9%)	123 (28.1%)
First responder	150 (10.7%)	111 (74.0%)	39 (26.0%)
Paramedic	514 (36.8%)	437 (85.0%)	76 (15.0%)

** Out of 1397 who responded to this question*

Years of Service:

	All	Males	Females
2 years or less	95 (6.3%)	57 (60.0%)	37 (40.0%)
2-5 years	173 (11.4%)	104 (60.1%)	69 (39.9%)
5-10 years	257 (17.0%)	185 (72.0%)	72 (28.0%)
10-15 years	231 (15.2%)	187 (81.0%)	43 (19.0%)
15-20 years	204 (13.5%)	172 (84.3%)	32 (15.7%)
20-25 years	217 (14.3%)	189 (87.1%)	28 (12.9%)
More than 25 years	338 (22.3%)	291 (86.1%)	47 (13.9%)

Race and Ethnicity:

American Indian or Alaskan Native	7 (0.5%)
Asian	6 (0.4%)
Black or African American	16 (1.1%)
Hispanic, Latinx or Spanish	21 (1.4%)
Multiracial	25 (1.7%)
White	1427 (94.2%)

Other	8 (0.5%)
Unknown	5 (0.3%)

Responses by county with 20 responses or more:

Brown	39 (2.6%)	Racine	70 (4.6%)
Dane	189 (12.5%)	Rock	34 (2.2%)
Fond du Lac	35 (2.3%)	Sheboygan	30 (2.0%)
Kenosha	51 (3.4%)	Washington	35 (2.3%)
La Crosse	30 (2.0%)	Waukesha	91 (6.0%)
Marathon	49 (3.2%)	Winnebago	112 (7.4%)
Milwaukee	184 (12.1%)	Wood	41 (2.7%)
Outagamie	31 (2.0%)		

Job-Related Critical Stress:

When asked “Have you experienced a critical incident or a traumatic event on the job?”, of the 1515 respondents, 1414 (93.3%) indicated they had experienced a job-related critical incident or traumatic event. Previously, 726 out of 777 (93.4%) and 935 out of 1022 respondents (91.5%) in 2020 and 2021, respectively, answered ‘yes’ to this question.

Of the 1414 respondents in 2022 who indicated they had experienced job-related critical stress, 268 (19%) reported having nightmares about the events or unwanted thoughts about the events within the last *month*- 242 (17.1%) of whom reported trying to not think about the event(s) or going out of their way to avoid situations that reminded them of the event(s). Likewise, 509 respondents (36%) reported having nightmares or unwanted thoughts of the events within the last *year*, and of those, 391 (27.7%) reported trying to not think about the event(s) or going out of their way to avoid situations that reminded them of the event(s). The following tables further delineate the complications experienced as the result of job-related critical stress:

By Employment Status

	All	Full-time	Part-time	Retired	Volunteer	NBC*
Total Respondents	1,515	874 (57.7%)	126 (8.3%)	106 (7%)	409 (27%)	6,962
Respondents that experienced a critical or traumatic event	1414 (93.3%)	827 (94.6%)	114 (90.5%)	105 (99.1%)	368 (90.0%)	6,598 (94.2%)
Change in view of job or future	605 (42.8%)	407 (49.2%)	43 (37.7%)	43 (41.0%)	112 (30.4%)	2,685 (49.4%)
Sleep problems	834 (59.0%)	535 (64.7%)	64 (56.1%)	61 (58.1%)	174 (47.3%)	3,867 (71.1%)
Family or relationship problems	539 (38.1%)	377 (45.6%)	38 (33.3%)	34 (32.4%)	90 (24.5%)	3,211 (59.1%)**
Thoughts of suicide or self-harm	209 (14.8%)	129 (15.6%)	23 (20.2%)	18 (17.1%)	39 (10.6%)	1,046 (19.2%)**
Substance abuse	221 (15.6%)	165 (20.0%)	9 (7.9%)	17 (16.2%)	30 (8.2%)	1,451 (26.7%)**
Easily angered or withdrawn	716 (50.6%)	482 (58.3%)	57 (0.5%)	46 (43.8%)	131 (35.6%)	2,597 (66.2%)
None of the above	309 (21.9%)	134 (16.2%)	31 (27.2%)	23 (21.9%)	121 (32.9%)	

*NBC National Survey -- <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/firefighters-mental-health-survey-ptsd/1809>

**Statistically significant –PFFW survey respondents reported these challenges significantly less than the national average

Percentages reported with a shaded background are based on all responses; percentages reported with a white background are based on only the respondents who indicated they had experienced job-related critical stress.

By Department Type

	All	Municipal	Private
Total Respondents	1,515	1329 (87.7%)	186 (12.3%)
Respondents that experienced a critical or traumatic event	1414 (93.3%)	1246 (93.8%)	168 (90.3%)
Change in view of job or future	605 (42.8%)	534 (42.9%)	71 (42.3%)
Sleep problems	834 (59.0%)	743 (59.6%)	91 (54.2%)
Family or relationship problems	539 (38.1%)	482 (38.7%)	57 (33.9%)
Thoughts of suicide or self-harm	209 (14.8%)	179 (14.4%)	30 (17.9%)
Substance abuse	221 (15.6%)	201 (16.1%)	20 (11.9%)
Easily angered or withdrawn	716 (50.6%)	637 (51.1%)	79 (47.0%)
None of the above	309 (21.9%)	270 (21.7%)	39 (23.2%)

Percentages reported with a shaded background are based on all responses; percentages reported with a white background are based on only the respondents who indicated they had experienced job-related critical stress.

By Gender

	All	Male	Female
Total Respondents	1,515	1185 (78.2%)	328 (21.7%)
Respondents that experienced a critical or traumatic event	1414 (93.3%)	1119 (94.4%)	293 (89.3%)
Change in view of job or future	605 (42.8%)	479 (42.8%)	125 (42.7%)
Sleep problems	834 (59.0%)	656 (58.6%)	177 (60.4%)
Family or relationship problems	539 (38.1%)	453 (40.5%)	85 (29.0%)
Thoughts of suicide or self-harm	209 (14.8%)	161 (14.4%)	47 (16.0%)
Substance abuse	221 (15.6%)	194 (17.3%)	26 (8.9%)
Easily angered or withdrawn	716 (50.6%)	586 (52.4%)	129 (44.0%)
None of the above	309 (21.9%)	243 (21.7%)	65 (22.2%)

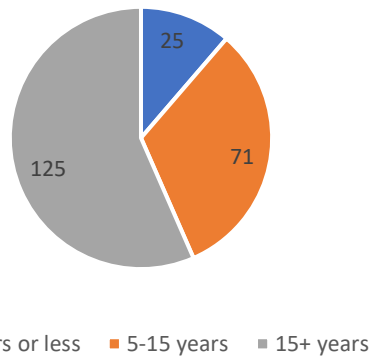
Percentages reported with a shaded background are based on all responses; percentages reported with a white background are based on only the respondents who indicated they had experienced job-related critical stress.

By Years of Service

	All	2 years or less	2-5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	15-20 years	20-25 years	25 + Years
Total Respondents	1,515	95 (6.3%)	173 (11.4%)	257 (17%)	231 (15.2%)	204 (13.5%)	217 (14.3%)	338 (22.3%)
Respondents that experienced a critical or traumatic event	1414 (93.3%)	65 (68.4%)	151 (87.3%)	244 (94.9%)	221 (95.6%)	199 (97.5%)	206 (94.9%)	328 (97.0%)
Change in view of job or future	605 (42.8%)	17 (26.2%)	61 (40.4%)	114 (46.7%)	107 (48.4%)	103 (51.8%)	88 (42.7%)	115 (35.1%)
Sleep problems	834 (59.0%)	33 (50.8%)	80 (53.0%)	142 (58.2%)	135 (61.1%)	141 (70.9%)	131 (63.6%)	172 (52.4%)
Family or relationship problems	539 (38.1%)	18 (27.7%)	46 (30.5%)	95 (38.9%)	84 (38.0%)	97 (48.7%)	96 (46.6%)	103 (31.4%)
Thoughts of suicide or self-harm	209 (14.8%)	11 (16.9%)	26 (17.2%)	37 (15.2%)	31 (14.0%)	30 (15.1%)	31 (15.0%)	43 (13.1%)
Substance abuse	221 (15.6%)	9 (13.8%)	16 (10.6%)	39 (16.0%)	32 (14.5%)	38 (19.1%)	45 (21.8%)	42 (12.8%)
Easily angered or withdrawn	716 (50.6%)	20 (30.8%)	72 (47.7%)	123 (50.4%)	127 (57.5%)	116 (58.3%)	110 (53.4%)	148 (45.1%)
None of the above	309 (21.9%)	22 (33.8%)	37 (24.5%)	52 (21.3%)	42 (19.0%)	31 (15.6%)	35 (17.0%)	90 (27.4%)

Percentages reported with a shaded background are based on all responses; percentages reported with a white background are based on only the respondents who indicated they had experienced job-related critical stress.

Substance Abuse by Years of Service



By Services Provided

	All	EMS	Fire	Fire and EMS
Total Respondents	1,515	332 (21.9%)	118 (7.8%)	1065 (70.3%)
Respondents that experienced a critical or traumatic event	1414 (93.3%)	294 (88.6%)	104 (88.1%)	1016 (95.4%)
Change in view of job or future	605 (42.8%)	125 (42.5%)	29 (27.9%)	451 (44.4%)
Sleep problems	834 (59.0%)	171 (58.2%)	42 (40.4%)	621 (61.1%)
Family or relationship problems	539 (38.1%)	89 (30.3%)	27 (26.0%)	423 (41.6%)
Thoughts of suicide or self-harm	209 (14.8%)	52 (17.7%)	10 (9.6%)	147 (14.5%)
Substance abuse	221 (15.6%)	38 (12.9%)	4 (3.8%)	179 (17.6%)
Easily angered or withdrawn	716 (50.6%)	141 (48.0%)	36 (34.6%)	539 (53.1%)
None of the above	309 (21.9%)	76 (25.9%)	32 (30.8%)	201 (19.8%)

Percentages reported with a shaded background are based on all responses; percentages reported with a white background are based on only the respondents who indicated they had experienced job-related critical stress.

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Sleep Problems

Respondents were asked to describe any sleep problems as a result of their work. Over 80% of respondents reported at least one sleep problem. Details are provided in the charts that follow:

Years of Service								
	All	2 years or less	2-5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	15-20 years	20-25 years	(+) than 25 years
Sleep problem	1250 (82.5%)	73 (76.8%)	140 (80.9%)	221 (86.0%)	190 (82.3%)	181 (88.7%)	187 (86.2%)	258 (76.3%)

Employment Status					
	All	Full-time	Part-time	Retired	Volunteer
Total Respondents	1,515	874 (57.7%)	126 (8.3%)	106 (6.9%)	409 (2.7%)
Difficulty falling asleep	676 (44.6%)	418 (47.8%)	63 (50.0%)	37 (34.9%)	158 (38.6%)
Not Feeling Rested	987 (65.1%)	610 (69.8%)	95 (75.4%)	57 (53.8%)	225 (55.0%)
Waking up frequently	753 (49.7%)	463 (53.0%)	57 (45.2%)	56 (52.8%)	177 (43.3%)
Difficulty staying awake	262 (17.3%)	171 (19.6%)	23 (18.3%)	13 (12.3%)	55 (13.4%)
Use substances to fall asleep	188 (12.4%)	140 (16.0%)	11 (8.7%)	11 (10.4%)	26 (6.4%)
Use Medication to Stay Awake	225 (14.9%)	163 (18.6%)	22 (17.5%)	5 (4.7%)	35 (8.6%)
Use Medication to fall asleep	257 (17.0%)	160 (18.3%)	24 (19.0%)	24 (22.6%)	49 (12.0%)
Multiple sleep problems	947 (62.5%)	590 (67.5%)	88 (69.8%)	61 (57.5%)	208 (50.9%)
No sleep problems	265 (17.5%)	124 (14.2%)	17 (13.5%)	25 (23.6%)	99 (24.2%)

Services Provided				
	All	EMS	Fire	Fire and EMS
Total Respondents	1,515	332 (21.9%)	118 (7.8%)	1065 (70.3%)
Difficulty falling asleep	676 (44.6%)	167 (50.3%)	37 (31.4%)	472 (44.3%)
Not Feeling Rested	987 (65.1%)	212 (63.9%)	59 (50.0%)	716 (67.2%)
Waking up frequently	753 (49.7%)	169 (50.9%)	44 (37.3%)	540 (50.7%)
Difficulty staying awake	262 (17.3%)	62 (18.7%)	11 (9.3%)	189 (17.7%)
Use substances to fall asleep	188 (12.4%)	37 (11.1%)	6 (5.1%)	145 (13.6%)
Use Medication to Stay Awake	225 (14.9%)	60 (18.1%)	11 (9.3%)	154 (14.5%)
Use Medication to fall asleep	257 (17.0%)	88 (26.5%)	10 (8.5%)	159 (14.9%)
Multiple sleep problems	947 (62.5%)	221 (66.6%)	45 (38.1%)	681 (63.9%)
No sleep problems	265 (17.5%)	63 (19.0%)	30 (25.4%)	172 (16.2%)

Sleep Problems Reported by Schedule:

California: 24 hours on, 24 hours for 2 cycles, then 24 hours on, 96 hours off

Chicago: 24 hours on, 48 hours off

48/96: 48 hours on, 96 hours off

	Full-Time Firefighters- Work Schedule				
	40 hours/wk	48/96	California	Chicago	Other
Total Respondents	110	96	428	181	59
Difficulty Falling Asleep	47 (42.7%)	51 (53.1%)	194 (45.3%)	91 (50.3%)	35 (59.3%)
Not Feeling Rested	73 (66.4%)	64 (66.7%)	301 (70.3%)	134 (74.0%)	38 (64.4%)
Waking Frequently	51 (46.4%)	55 (57.3%)	228 (53.3%)	99 (54.7%)	30 (50.8%)
Difficulty Staying Awake	27 (24.5%)	17 (17.7%)	73 (17.1%)	41 (22.7%)	13 (22.0%)
Use Substances to Fall Asleep	17 (15.5%)	18 (18.8%)	70 (16.4%)	24 (13.3%)	11 (18.6%)
Use Medication to Stay Awake	17 (15.5%)	17 (17.7%)	71 (16.6%)	41 (22.7%)	17 (28.8%)
Use Medication Fall Asleep	22 (20.0%)	20 (20.8%)	65 (15.2%)	32 (17.7%)	21 (35.6%)
Multiple Sleep Problems	74 (67.3%)	68 (70.8%)	279 (65.2%)	129 (71.3%)	40 (67.8%)
No Sleep Problem	16 (14.5%)	12 (12.5%)	65 (15.2%)	23 (12.7%)	8 (13.6%)

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Anxiety, Depression and Psychological Stress Screening (PHQ-4)

The PHQ-4 is a 4-question screening that assesses respondents for anxiety and depression symptoms as well as approximate degree of psychological stress.

Of the total 1515 responses, 263 (17.4%) screened positive for **anxiety** symptoms, and 248 (16.4%) screened positive for **depression** symptoms. Of the 874 full-time firefighters, 162 (18.5%) screened positive for **anxiety** symptoms, and 151 (17.3%) screened positive for **depression** symptoms. The results were notably higher for female respondents.

	Total Respondents	Anxiety	Depression	Anxiety and Depression
All	1515	263 (17.4%)	248 (16.4%)	151 (10.0%)
Employment type				
Full-time	874	162 (18.5%)	151 (17.3%)	89 (10.2%)
Part-time	126	27 (21.4%)	26 (20.6%)	17 (13.5%)
Retired	106	14 (13.2%)	16 (15.1%)	9 (8.5%)
Volunteer	409	60 (14.7%)	55 (13.4%)	36 (8.8%)
Primary department				
Municipal	1329	219 (16.5%)	201 (15.1%)	122 (9.2%)
Private	186	44 (23.7%)	47 (25.3%)	29 (15.6%)
Services provided				
EMS	332	82 (24.7%)	84 (25.3%)	57 (17.2%)
Fire	118	11 (9.3%)	11 (9.3%)	5 (4.2%)
Fire and EMS	1065	170 (16.0%)	153 (14.4%)	89 (8.4%)
Fire rank				
Chief officer	192	21 (10.9%)	15 (7.8%)	11 (5.7%)
Driver	166	32 (19.3%)	30 (18.1%)	18 (10.8%)
Firefighter	551	88 (16.0%)	83 (15.1%)	49 (8.9%)
Line officer	274	40 (14.6%)	36 (13.1%)	16 (5.8%)
EMS level				
Critical care paramedic	136	32 (23.5%)	33 (24.3%)	20 (14.7%)
EMT advanced	156	34 (21.8%)	30 (19.2%)	21 (13.5%)
EMT basic	441	85 (19.3%)	81 (18.4%)	55 (12.5%)
First responder	150	17 (11.3%)	14 (9.3%)	10 (6.7%)
Paramedic	514	84 (16.3%)	79 (15.4%)	40 (7.8%)
Sex				
Male	1185	177 (14.9%)	164 (13.8%)	91 (7.7%)
Female	328	85 (25.9%)	83 (25.3%)	60 (18.3%)

	All	Anxiety Only	Depression Only	Anxiety and Depression
All (includes EMS)	1515	263 (17.4%)	248 (16.4%)	151 (10.0%)
Full-time firefighters	874 (57.7%)	162 (18.5%)	151 (17.3%)	89 (10.2%)
Men	754 (86.3%)	130 (17.2%)	113 (15.0%)	64 (8.5%)
Women	119 (13.6%)	32 (26.9%)	37 (31.1%)	25 (21.0%)

**The Anxiety and Depression Association of America estimates 18.1% of adults in the U.S. have anxiety and 6.7% of adults in the U.S. have depression at some point every year. Consistently, research shows that women exhibit depression at a rate 2-3 times higher than men through age 45.*

Overall psychological stress is measured by the PHQ-4 with ranges of distress: “None” (0-2), “Mild” (3-5), “Moderate” (6-8), and “Severe” (9-12), where a higher score denotes a greater degree of psychological stress.

	Total Respondents	Degree of Psychological Distress			
		None (0-2)	Mild (3-5)	Moderate (6-8)	Severe (9-12)
All (includes EMS)	1515	858 (56.6%)	437 (28.8%)	131 (8.6%)	89 (5.9%)
Full-time firefighters	874	464 (53.1%)	280 (32.0%)	79 (9.0%)	51 (5.8%)
Men	754	418 (55.4%)	236 (31.3%)	65 (8.6%)	35 (4.6%)
Women	119	46 (38.7%)	43 (36.1%)	14 (11.8%)	16 (13.4%)

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Trauma Screening (PC-PTSD-5)

The Primary Care PTSD Screen for DSM-5 (PC-PTSD-5) is a 5-item assessment designed to identify individuals with probable PTSD. Those who screen positive are recommended for further, formal assessment.

Of the total 1515 responses, 205 (13.5%) screened positive for probable PTSD within the last *year*, and 127 (8.4%) screened positive in the last *month* prior to the survey.

Of the 874 full-time firefighters, 111 (12.7%) screened positive within the last *year*, and 83 (9.5%) screened positive within the last *month*. Further delineation by sex and co-occurring anxiety and depression is below. To be noted, there is a correlation between anxiety and depression and the potential for post-traumatic stress. Females reported the highest rates of both co-occurring anxiety and depression.

	Possible PTSD within last year **	Probable PTSD within the last month
All respondents (n = 1,515)	205 (13.5%)	127 (8.4%)
Full-time firefighters (n = 874)	111 (12.7%)	83 (9.5%)
Men (n = 754)	90 (11.9%)	69 (9.2%)
Women (n = 119)	21 (17.6%)	13 (10.9%)

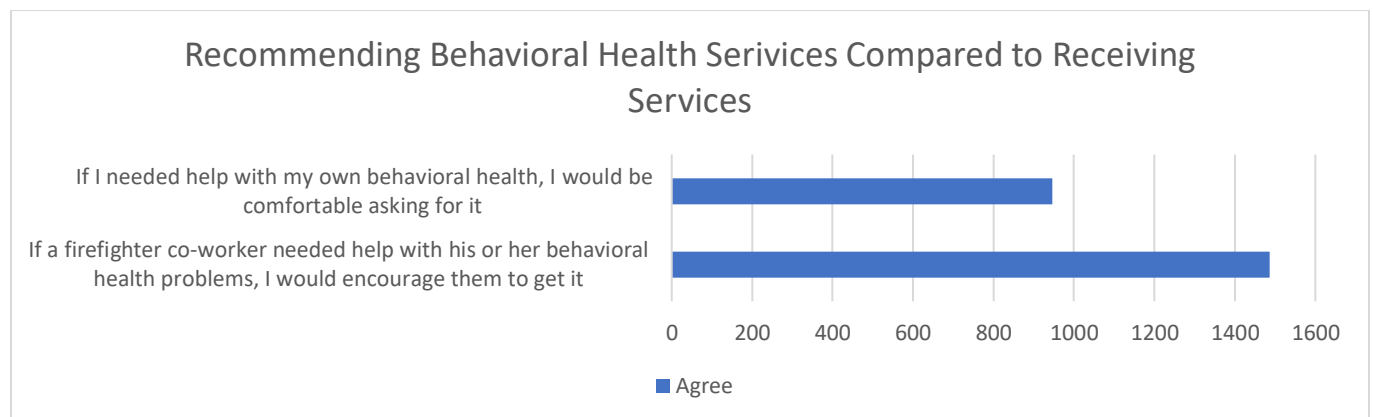
	Co-occurring anxiety and probable PTSD symptoms within the last month	Co-occurring depression and probable PTSD symptoms within the last month
All respondents (n = 127)	84 (66.1%)	74 (58.3%)
Full-time firefighters (n = 83)	58 (69.9%)	50 (60.2%)
Men (n = 69)	47 (68.1%)	38 (55.1%)
Women (n = 13)	11 (84.6%)	11 (84.6%)

Stigma

Respondents were asked to respond to questions about potential stigma associated with seeking treatment or support for behavioral health needs. Consistent with reports from previous years, over 98% of respondents would encourage their peers to seek support- a rate much higher than they would seek support for themselves. In 2022, the rate of those agreeing with the statement: “I would feel comfortable asking for my own behavioral health support” was 62.5%.

All Respondents (includes EMS)				
	Firefighters think treatment for behavioral health is a sign of personal weakness	I would encourage a firefighter co-worker to get behavioral health	I would ask for my own behavioral health	I would know where to go for my own behavioral health
Strongly agree	182 (12.0%)	1175 (77.6%)	351 (23.2%)	407 (26.9%)
Agree	554 (36.6%)	311 (20.5%)	595 (39.3%)	741 (48.9%)
Neither	353 (23.3%)	25 (1.7%)	304 (20.1%)	172 (11.4%)
Disagree	303 (20.0%)	1 (0.1%)	214 (14.1%)	163 (10.8%)
Strongly disagree	123 (8.1%)	3 (0.2%)	51 (3.4%)	32 (2.1%)

Full-time Firefighters				
	Firefighters think treatment for behavioral health is a sign of personal weakness	I would encourage a firefighter co-worker to get behavioral health	I would ask for my own behavioral health	I would know where to go for my own behavioral health
Strongly agree	96 (10.9%)	668 (76.4%)	189 (21.6%)	253 (28.9%)
Agree	314 (35.9%)	186 (21.3%)	335 (38.3%)	435 (49.8%)
Neither	210 (24%)	18 (2%)	185 (21.2%)	101 (11.6%)
Disagree	201 (22.9%)	0 (0%)	135 (15.4%)	67 (7.7%)
Strongly disagree	53 (6%)	2 (0%)	30 (3.4%)	18 (2%)



Resources

When asked which people or entities they would be comfortable asking for behavioral health assistance, respondents were most likely to turn to a treatment provider (52.7%), a family member or friend (49.9%), or peer/co-worker (45.7%). 6.5% indicated they would not be comfortable seeking support.

For full-time firefighters, the rates were similar- treatment provider (49.9%), family/friend (49.1%), or peer/coworker (48.6%). 5.8% indicated they would not be comfortable seeking support.

All Respondents (includes EMS)		
	I would ask the following for behavioral health assistance.	I have previously received help from the following resources.
City/county/district employee assistance program	468 (30.9%)	140 (9.2%)
Treatment provider	798 (52.7%)	361 (23.8%)
Family member or friend	756 (49.9%)	257 (17.0%)
Peer or co-worker	693 (45.7%)	255 (16.8%)
Department employee assistance program	556 (36.7%)	165 (10.9%)
PFFW member assistance program	310 (20.5%)	28 (1.8%)
Other	105 (6.9%)	68 (4.5%)
None of the above	98 (6.5%)	826 (54.5%)

Full-time Firefighters		
	I would ask the following for behavioral health assistance.	I have previously received help from the following resources.
City/county/district employee assistance program	302 (34.6%)	106 (12.1%)
Treatment provider	436 (49.9%)	205 (23.5%)
Family member or friend	429 (49.1%)	138 (15.8%)
Peer or co-worker	425 (48.6%)	145 (16.6%)
Department employee assistance program	387 (44.3%)	122 (14.0%)
PFFW member assistance program	253 (28.9%)	21 (2.4%)
Other	54 (6.2%)	40 (4.6%)
None of the above	51 (5.8%)	457 (52.3%)

Satisfaction with Resources

Of the 1515 total responses, 165 people (11%) reported utilizing their department Employee Assistance Program- 56% of whom found satisfaction in the services. 140 (9%) indicated that they sought help from an EAP provided by their city, county, or district- 57% of whom found

satisfaction in the services. Of the full-time respondents, 28 (2%) reported seeking help from the PFFW member assistance program, and 79% were satisfied with the services.

All Respondents			
	City/County/District EAP	Department EAP	PFFW MAP
Total	140	165	28
Strongly agree	27 (19.3%)	35 (21.2%)	13 (46.4%)
Agree	53 (37.9%)	57 (34.5%)	9 (32.1%)
Neither agree / disagree	28 (20.0%)	39 (23.6%)	4 (14.3%)
Disagree	15 (10.7%)	15 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Strongly disagree	17 (12.1%)	19 (11.5%)	2 (7.1%)

Full-time Firefighters			
	City/County/District EAP	Department EAP	PFFW MAP
Total	106	122	21
Strongly agree	16 (15.1%)	25 (20.5%)	10 (47.6%)
Agree	46 (43.4%)	40 (32.8%)	7 (33.3%)
Neither agree / disagree	18 (17.0%)	29 (23.8%)	3 (14.3%)
Disagree	12 (11.3%)	13 (10.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Strongly disagree	14 (13.2%)	15 (12.3%)	1 (4.8%)

Interest in Behavioral Health Training

Over half of the total respondents (55%) expressed interest in training to assist other firefighters with behavioral health needs. Of those, the level of experience most likely to show interest in peer-support training were individuals with 10 years or less of work experience.

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Professional Quality of Life

The Professional Quality of Life (Pro-QoL) instrument was offered to participants as an optional, validated 30-question self-report questionnaire to measure work satisfaction, secondary trauma, and potential burnout in “helping” professionals. The tool was developed as a measure of both the negative and positive effects of working with those who have experienced traumatic stress. Of the 1515 participants that completed the survey, 777 (51%) participants opted to take the additional Professional Quality of Life survey. To our knowledge, this is the largest sample of firefighters to have been assessed using the Pro-QoL.

Initial results are as follows:

Scoring for the Pro-QoL is categorical, and scores are assigned a level based on these ranges:

High: 42-50

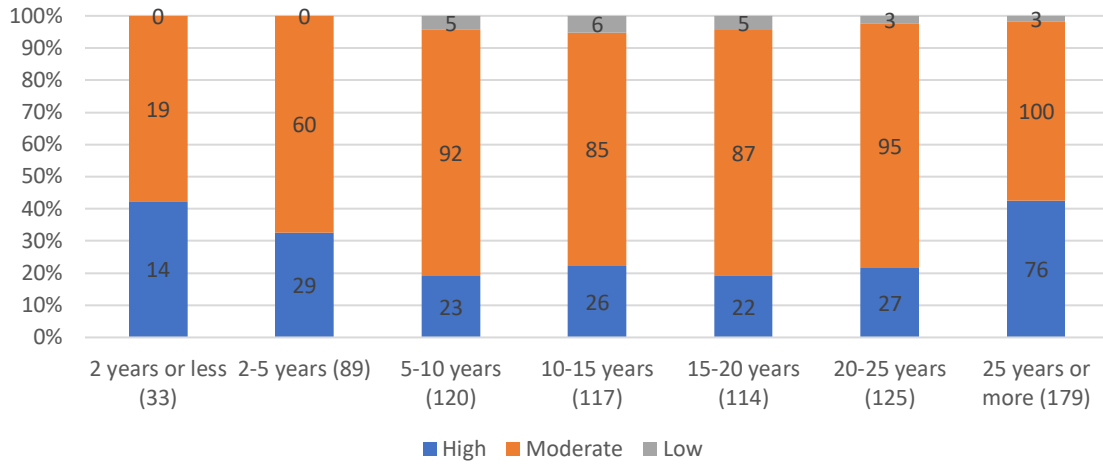
Moderate: 23-41

Low: 0-22

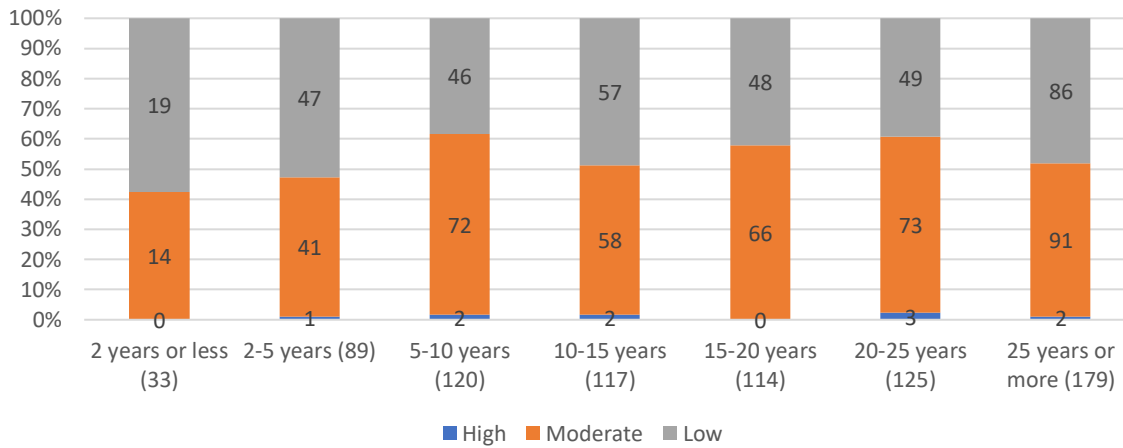
Pro-QOL Category	Mean (sd)	n (%)
Compassion Satisfaction	37.2 (6.96)	
High		217 (27.9%)
Moderate		538 (69.2%)
Low		22 (2.8%)
Burnout	25.3 (6.52)	
High		3 (0.3%)
Moderate		503 (64.7%)
Low		271 (34.9%)
Secondary Traumatic Stress	23.9 (6.94)	
High		10 (1.3%)
Moderate		415 (53.4%)
Low		352 (45.3%)

In follow-up analyses, for publication purposes, we intend to evaluate those with moderate-to-high secondary traumatic stress against other reported concerns such as sleep problems, potential other psychological distress, or personal concerns.

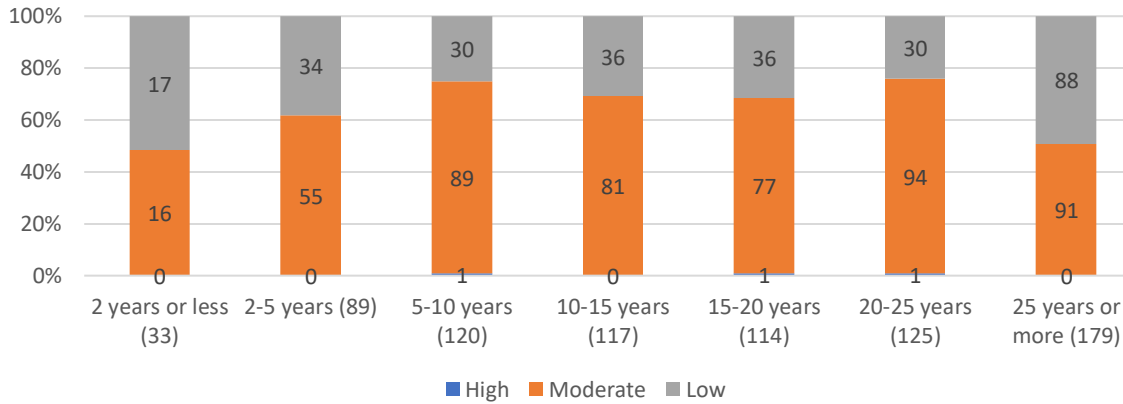
WI Fire and EMS Compassion Satisfaction by Years of Service



WI Fire and EMS Secondary Traumatic Stress by Years of Service



WI Fire and EMS Burnout by Years of Service



Summary

From October 17, 2022, to January 06, 2023, 1515 Fire and EMS professionals and volunteers across the state of Wisconsin completed a 43-question electronic survey designed to evaluate behavioral health needs and supportive opportunities. Data was gathered anonymously, inquiring about critical/traumatic incidents, thoughts related to anxiety and depression, psychological distress, mental health stigma and engagement with support services. Below is a summary of each category gathered from the survey: job-related critical stress, anxiety and depression, sleep problems, distress and stigma, peer training and behavioral health resources.

Of the 1515 respondents, 1414 (93.3%) indicated they had experienced a job-related critical incident or traumatic event. Of those respondents, 268 (19%) reported having nightmares about the events or unwanted thoughts about the events within the last month, and 509 respondents (36%) reported having nightmares or unwanted thoughts of an event within the last year; 242 respondents (17.1%) reported they tried hard not to think about the event or avoided situations that would remind them of the event within the last month.

Over 80% of the total respondents reported at least one sleep problem.

263 (17.4%) screened positive for anxiety symptoms, and 248 (16.4%) screened positive for depression symptoms. Of the 874 full-time firefighters, 162 (18.5%) screened positive for anxiety symptoms, and 151 (17.3%) screened positive for depression symptoms.

98% of respondents would encourage their peers to seek support at a rate higher than they would seek support for themselves. In 2022, the rate of those agreeing with the statement “I would feel comfortable asking for my own behavioral health support” was 62.5%.

Of the 1515 respondents, just over half (51%) opted to respond to the optional Professional Quality of Life questionnaire. Results from the Pro-QoL revealed that 97% of the respondents reported a moderate-to-high degree of compassion satisfaction toward their job. 65% experienced a moderate-to-high degree of burnout, and 53% experienced a moderate-to-high degree of secondary traumatic stress.