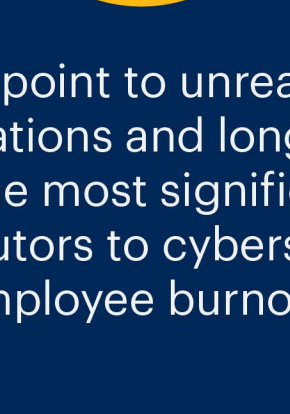
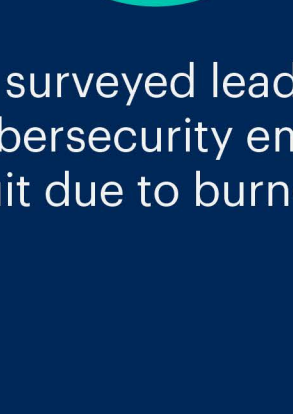


How Do Cybersecurity Leaders Address Employee Burnout?

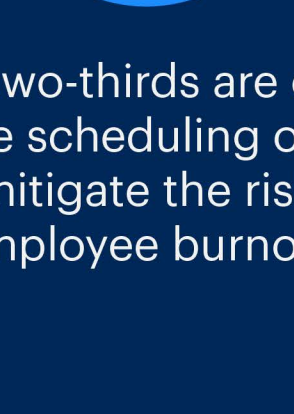
Cybersecurity employees face myriad internal and external pressures that can lead to burnout. What are the consequences of employee burnout and how are leaders reducing this risk?



Most point to unrealistic expectations and long hours as the most significant contributors to cybersecurity employee burnout



Half of surveyed leaders saw their cybersecurity employees quit due to burnout



Nearly two-thirds are offering flexible scheduling options to mitigate the risk of employee burnout

Data collection: Nov 14-24, 2023

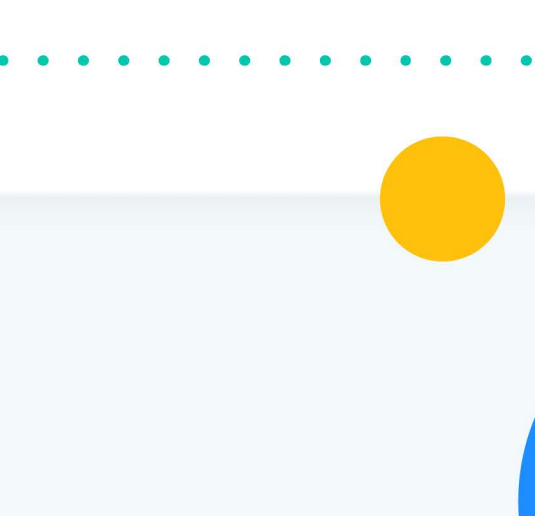
Respondents: 144 information security and IT leaders managing cybersecurity employees who either experienced burnout, or are considered at risk of burning out

About Gartner Peer Community One-Minute Insights:

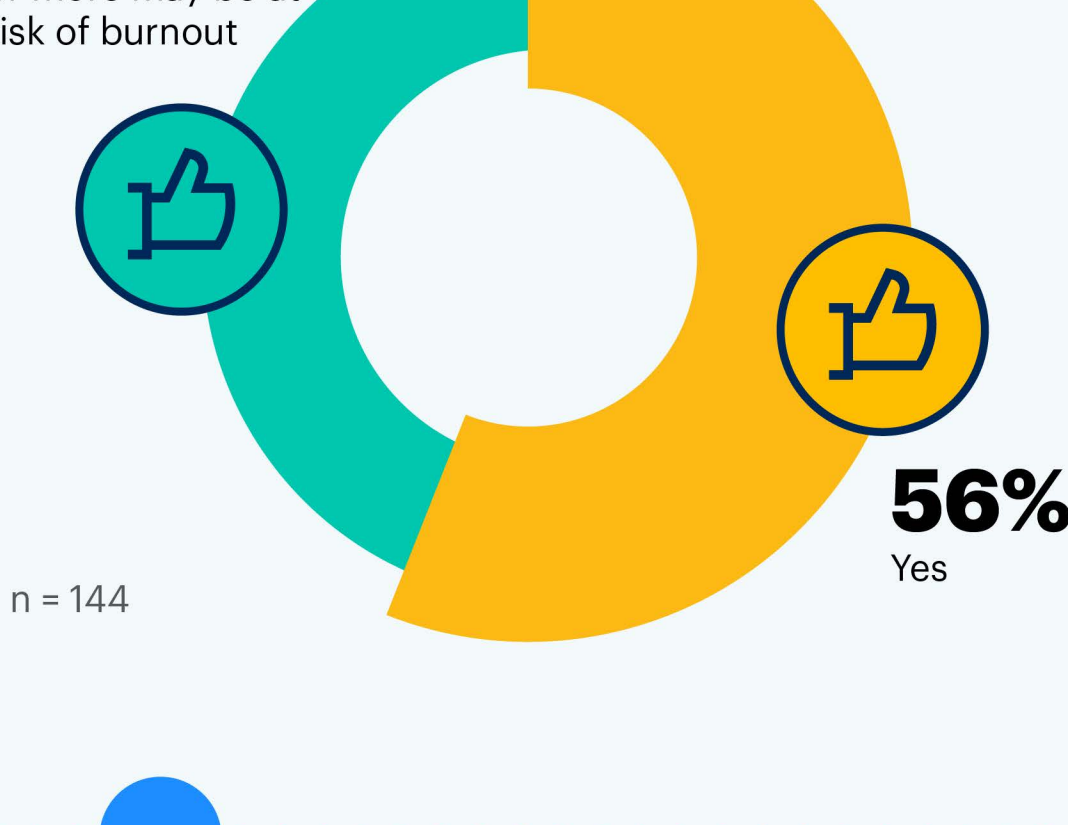
Gartner Peer Community is for technology and business leaders to engage in discussions with peers and share knowledge in real time.

Surveys are designed by Gartner Peer Community editors and appear on the Gartner Peer Community platform. Once the respondent threshold is met, survey results are summarized in a One-Minute Insight.

The results of this summary are representative of the respondents that participated in the survey. It is not market representative.



Unrealistic expectations among top contributing factors to employee burnout



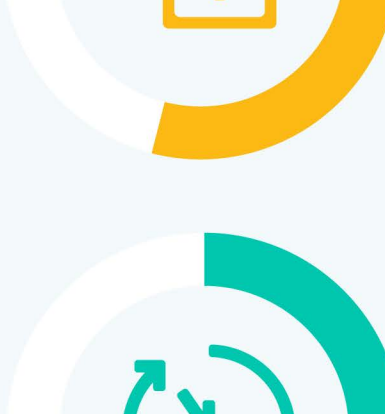
Over half (**56%**) of all respondents (n = 144) report that one or more of their **cybersecurity employees experienced burnout** in the past 12 months.

Have any of your cybersecurity employees experienced burnout in the past 12 months?*

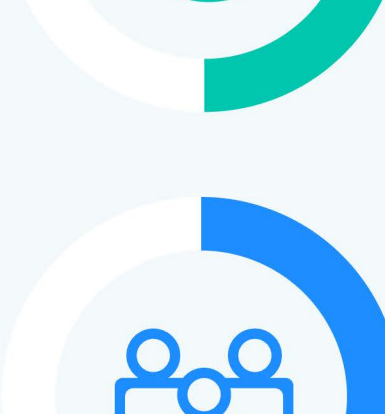
Among leaders whose employees dealt with burnout during this period (n = 80), **54% cite unrealistic expectations** as one of the most significant contributing factors.

Based on your personal understanding, which of the following factors have been the most significant contributors to your employee(s) experience(s) with burnout? Select up to 3.²

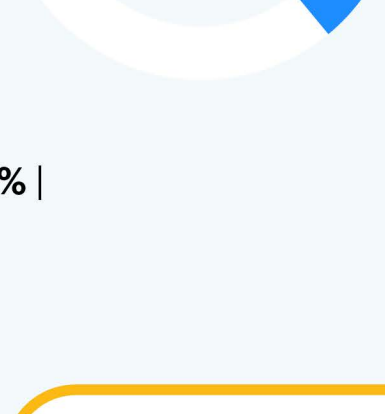
Security function blamed if business goals aren't achieved **33%** | Evolving threat landscape **31%** | Middle managers lack leadership training **28%** | Complex technical environment **28%** | Lack of recognition **26%** | Lack of clarity around responsibilities **23%** | Alert fatigue (i.e., abundance of false positives from monitoring tools) **14%** | Pressure to address low-priority tasks before others **13%** | Unclear definition of success **11%** | Not sure **0%** | Other **0%**



54%
Unrealistic expectations of security function



50%
Pressure to work late nights and/or weekends



39%
Insufficient staffing

n = 80

“Workload is excessive because of budget constraints and availability of qualified candidates.”

Director, educational services industry, 5,000 - 10,000 employees



“Alert fatigue is pushing our team to the limits at times, with multiple systems sending out alerts 24/7.”

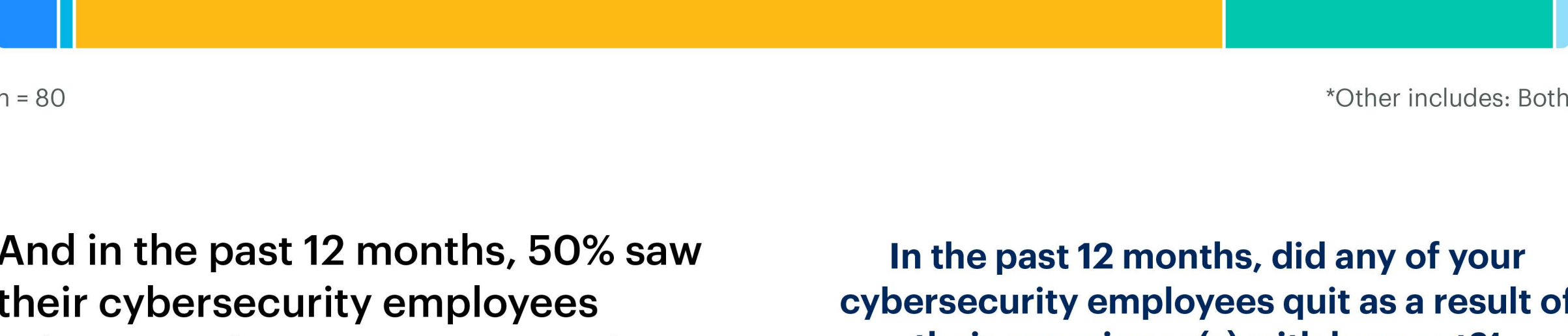
VP, healthcare industry, 1,000 - 5,000 employees



Question: Please share any final thoughts on burnout among cybersecurity employees.

Cybersecurity employee burnout not often disclosed, commonly leads to quitting

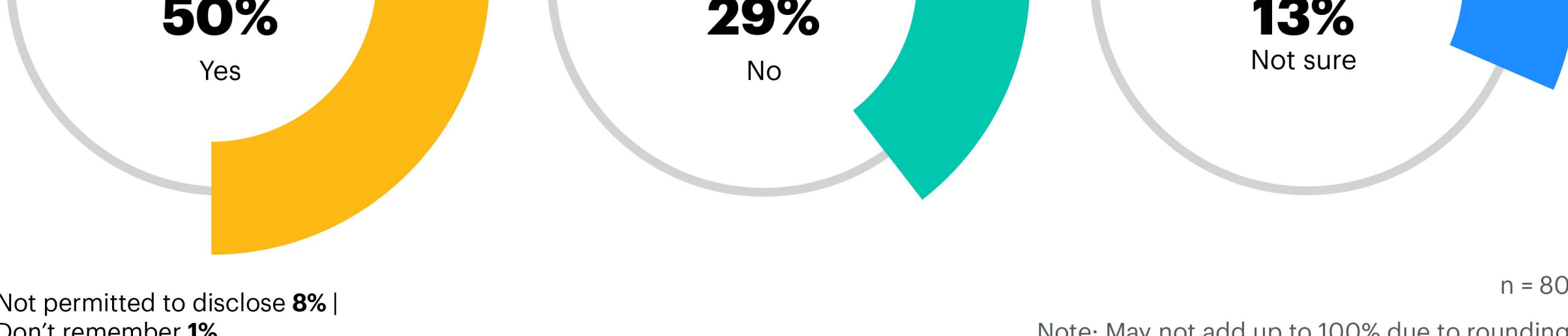
In most cases, did you learn that your cybersecurity employee(s) were experiencing burnout through observation, or did they explicitly disclose their experience (e.g., to yourself, another manager, or HR)?³



*Other includes: Both

And in the past 12 months, 50% saw their cybersecurity employees subsequently quit as a result of burnout.

In the past 12 months, did any of your cybersecurity employees quit as a result of their experience(s) with burnout?⁴



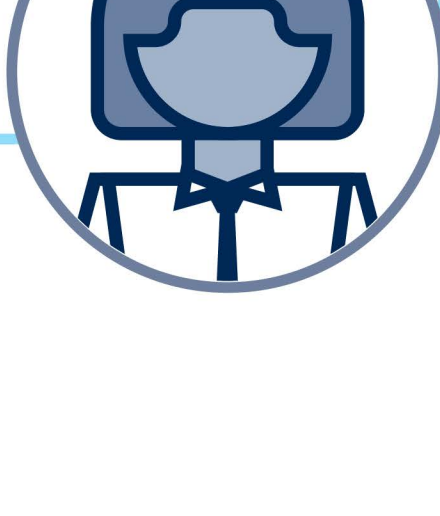
Not permitted to disclose **8%** | Don't remember **1%**

n = 80

Note: May not add up to 100% due to rounding

“The constant pressure and out-of-hours call outs take their toll.”

Director, arts and entertainment industry, 10,000+ employees



“Burnout is a very serious challenge and a silent one. Employees do not always come forward until it is too late.”

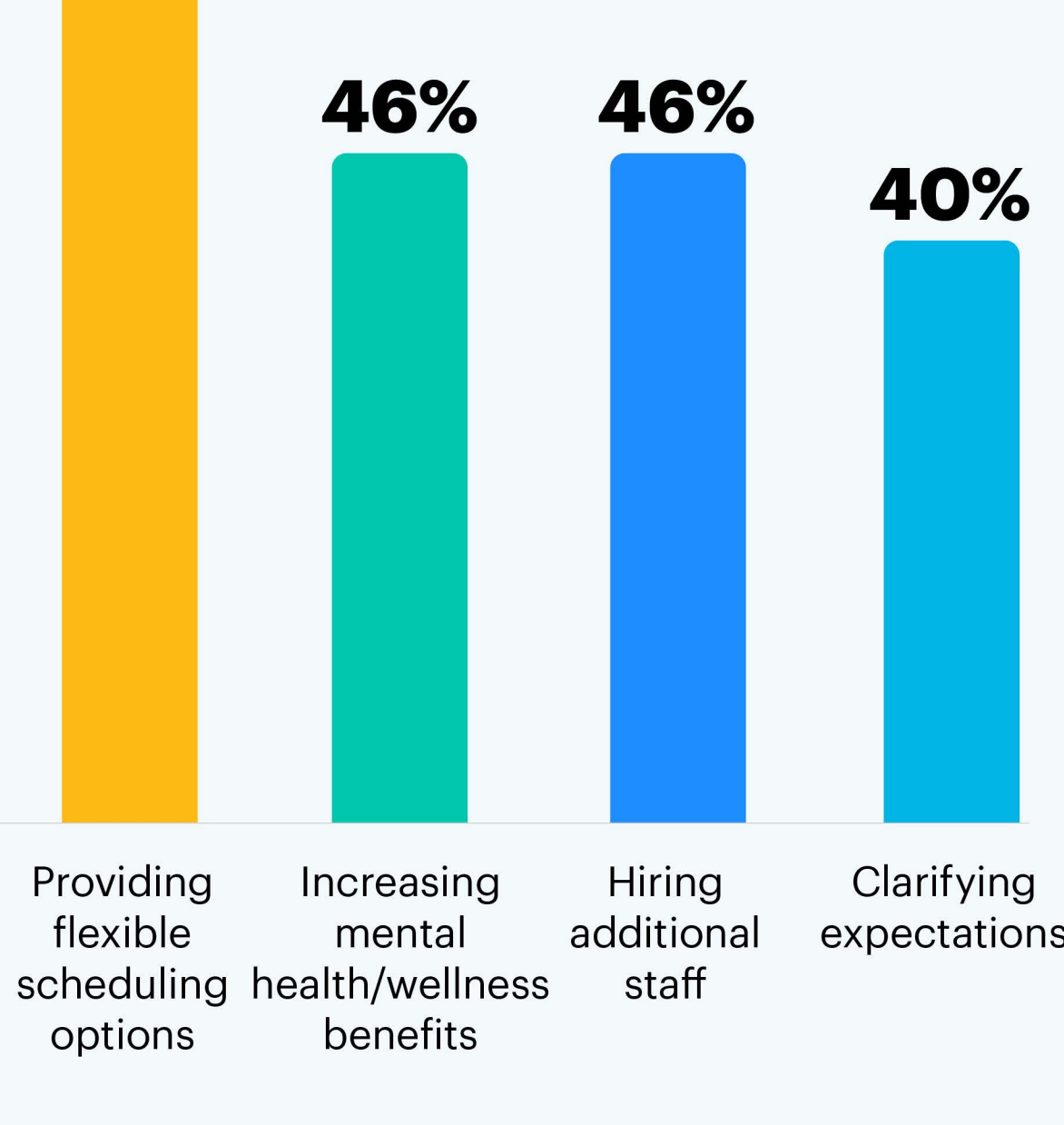
Director, professional services industry, 10,000+ employees



Question: Please share any final thoughts on burnout among cybersecurity employees.

Question: Please share any final thoughts on burnout among cybersecurity employees.

Leaders look to mitigate cyber employee burnout risk with flexible scheduling



n = 80

*Other includes: Financial benefits

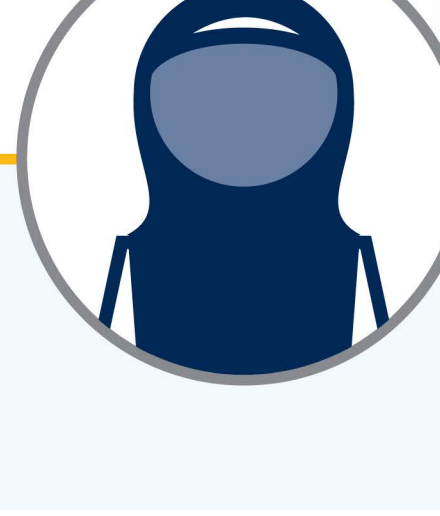
Most leaders (**64%**) whose cybersecurity employees have burned out over the past 12 months are addressing this risk with **flexible scheduling**. 46% are doing so by expanding wellness benefits or hiring more staff.

Which of the following strategies are you using to reduce the risk of burnout for your cybersecurity employees? Select all that apply.

Modeling good work-life balance (e.g., setting professional boundaries, scheduling breaks) **35%** | Introducing recognition initiatives **34%** | Enforcing mandatory PTO **31%** | Improving communication between managers and employees **29%** | Raising awareness about signs of burnout **29%** | Prioritizing leadership training for middle managers **28%** | Prioritizing automation to streamline workflows **26%** | Increasing PTO allowance **23%** | Implementing new tools **16%** | Other* **1%**

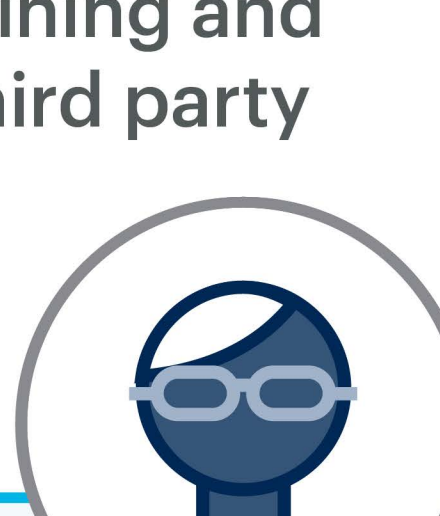
“Less complex tooling and more automated remediation options are needed in cybersecurity to help reduce burnout.”

Director, manufacturing industry, 10,000+ employees



“Need more training and support from third party providers.”

VP, retail industry, 10,000+ employees



Question: Please share any final thoughts on burnout among cybersecurity employees.

Question: Please share any final thoughts on burnout among cybersecurity employees.

In their own words...

“I have seen this many times during my career. As Michigan CISO, I saw it with my staff. As I travel the country, I see it all the time on other teams that tell me they are experiencing burnout.”

- C-suite, telecommunications industry, 1,000 - 5,000 employees

“There needs to be more organisational awareness of, and support for, burnout. [Organizations] seem oblivious to what it is and how their culture can cause it and/or normalise it. Staff tend to get the brush off until they start getting booked off sick, and even then, there's still no real support once staff return from sick leave.”

- C-suite, professional services industry, <1,000 employees

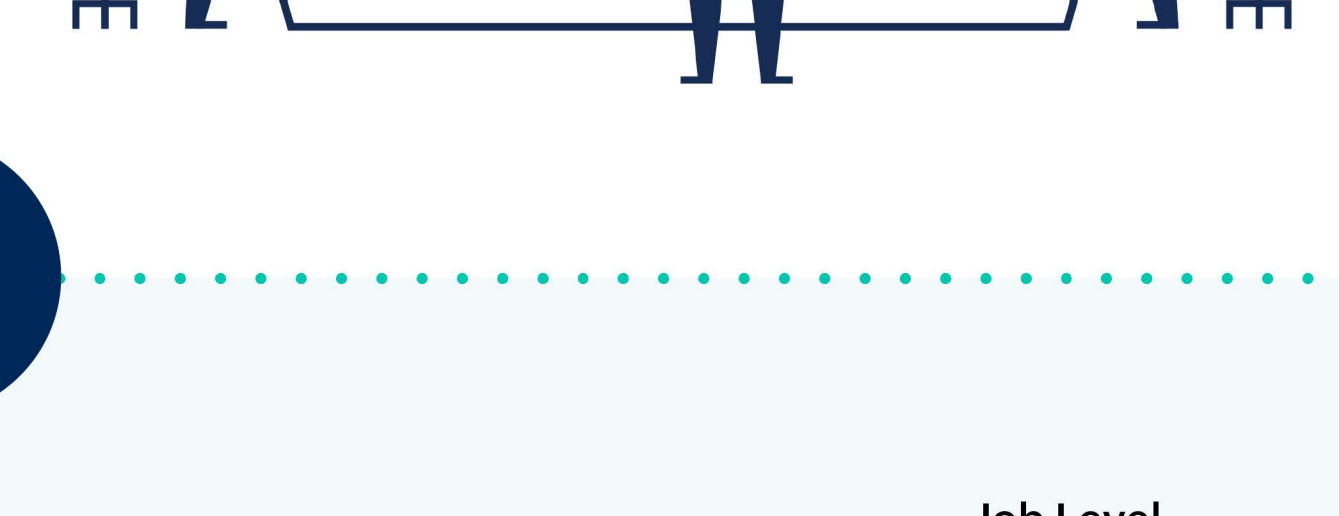
“4-day work weeks [are] needed.”

- Director, educational services industry, 1,000 - 5,000 employees

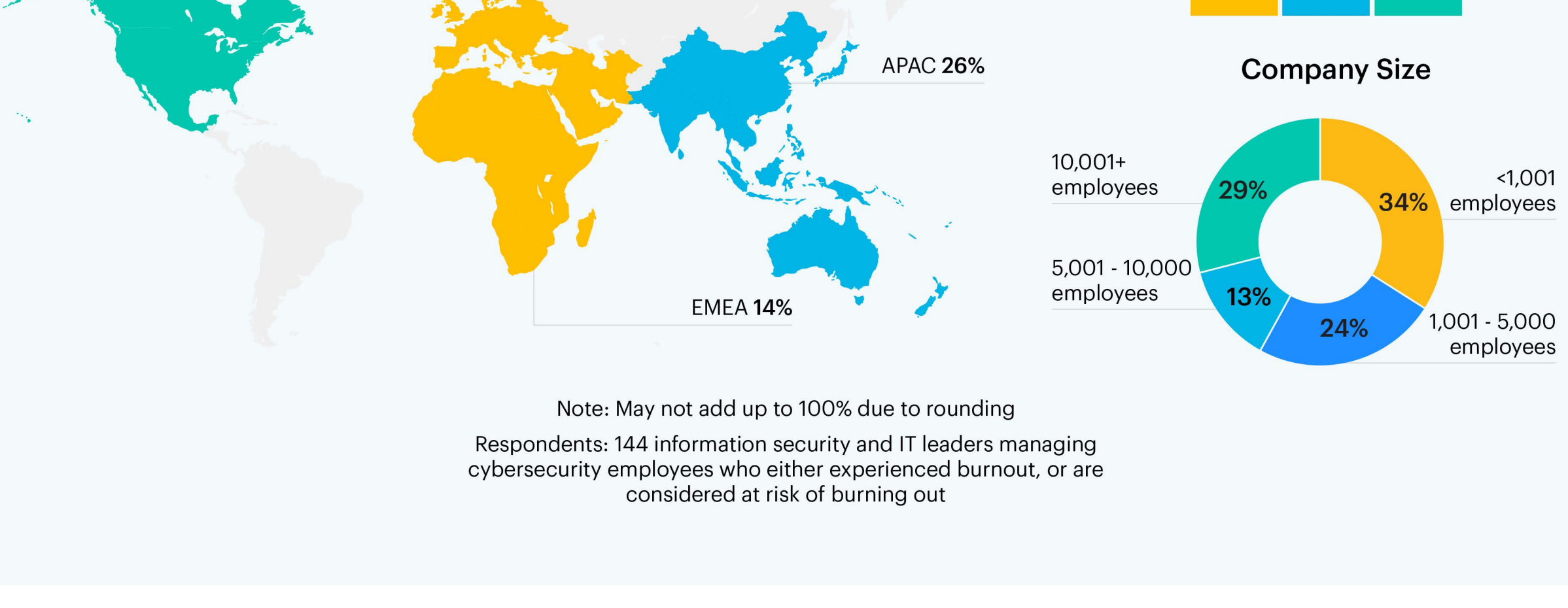
“Burn out is a real risk, and it takes time to recover. A weekend, even a week, doesn't cut it.”

- C-suite, professional services industry, 1,000 - 5,000 employees

Question: Please share any final thoughts on burnout among cybersecurity employees.



Respondent Breakdown



Note: May not add up to 100% due to rounding

Respondents: 144 information security and IT leaders managing cybersecurity employees who either experienced burnout, or are considered at risk of burning out

Want more insights like this from leaders like yourself?

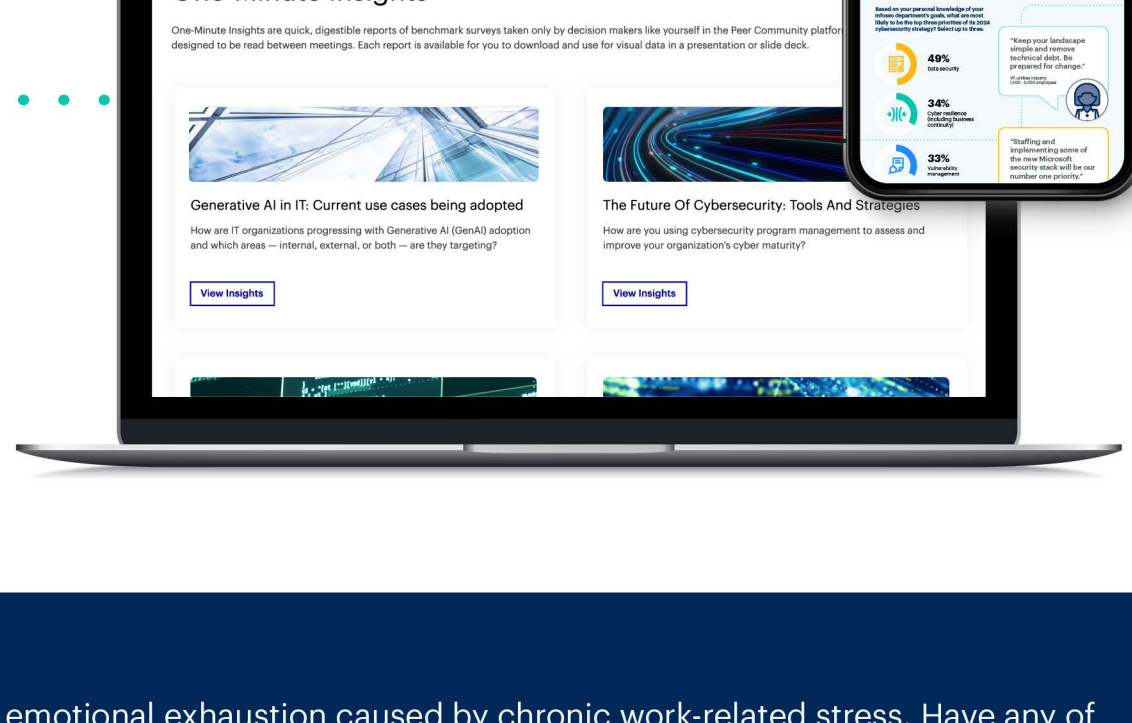
Click [here](#) to explore the revamped, retooled and reimagined Gartner Peer Community. You'll get access to synthesized insights and engaging discussions from a community of your peers.



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Source: Gartner Peer Community, Cybersecurity Employee Burnout: Causes and Prevention Strategy survey.

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¹Full question text: "Burnout in the workplace refers to a state of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion caused by chronic work-related stress. Have any of your cybersecurity employees experienced burnout in the past 12 months?" Respondents who answered "No" or "Not sure" were eliminated from the survey.

²Question shown only to respondents who answered "Yes" to "Burnout in the workplace refers to a state of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion caused by chronic work-related stress. Have any of your cybersecurity employees experienced burnout in the past 12 months?"

³Question shown only to respondents who answered "Yes" or "No, but I think one or more may be at risk of burnout" to "Burnout in the workplace refers to a state of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion caused by chronic work-related stress. Have any of your cybersecurity employees experienced burnout in the past 12 months?"