DCF Staff Work from Home Survey Results
June 12, 2020

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REMOTE WORK SUCCESS FACTORS

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP
- Acknowledge and adhere to clear organizational structure
- Regular updates and information sharing
- Video messages from DCF leadership

POLICY
- Develop relevant policies for work-from-home and associated initiatives
- Update and inform staff of new developments

TECHNOLOGY
- Secure, designate and distribute technological tools for staff to continue mission-critical work from home or remote locations
- Provide new apps and services for convenience and ease of use
- Offer remote HelpDesk support to manage issues with technology

STAFF DEVELOPMENT
- Engage staff in determining supports needed to successfully work from home
- Support productivity by providing best practice information for how to work and supervise effectively from home
- Develop web-based hub of resources to promote staff wellness initiatives and encourage use of available services
- Create or share training opportunities to equip staff to advance department vision and mission-critical tasks

SET EXPECTATIONS AND REVIEW OUTCOMES
- Establish expectations and standards to maintain performance, productivity, engagement and job satisfaction
- Track the metrics to gauge progress, identify areas for improvement and set new goals

Part 1. Overview

Survey Participants

The objective of this effort was to support DCF in understanding the current remote work experiences and insights of staff and to support COVID-19 related response efforts (see Appendix, pg. 28, for more information about how the survey was collected).

87%
Staff Response Rate

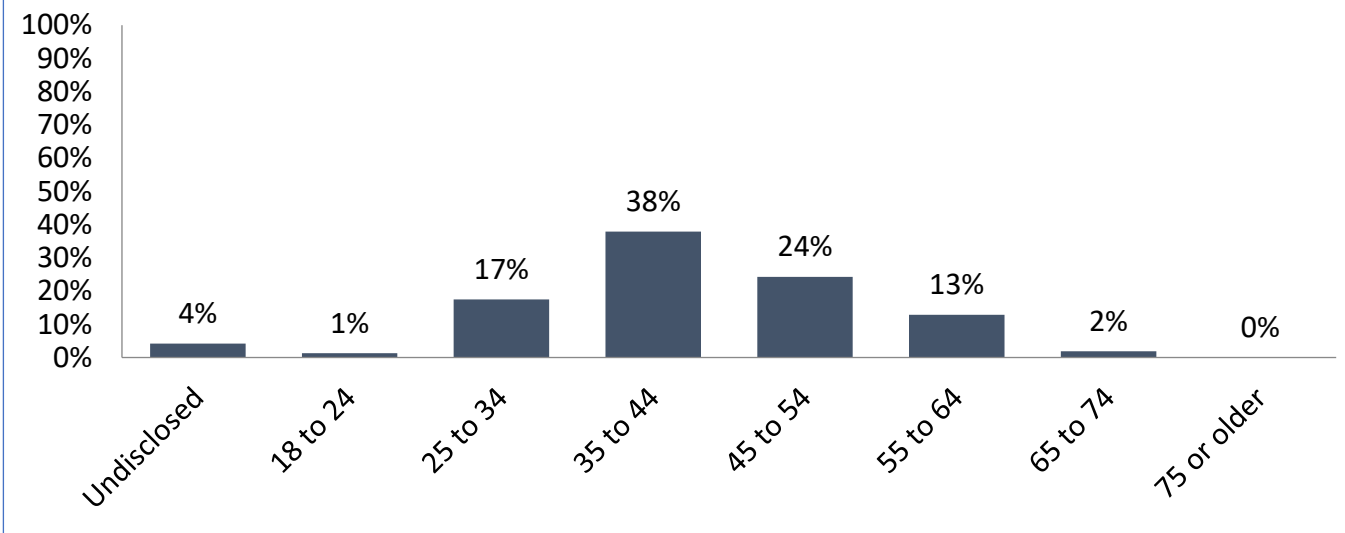|	DCF	Survey Participants
Total Staff	**6,750**	**5,854**
Non-Supervisory	83%	78%
Supervisory	17%	22%

81%
of the participants work in CP&P, but every division, regional school and IAIU regional office was represented.

58%
of the participants have worked at DCF for more than ten years

- These staff members live in every county
- These staff members work in every county.
- Most respondents conduct their work in one county. 69% reported that they do NOT typically travel to multiple counties to carryout their day to day work.

Age
(Percentage of Participants by Age Range)

Undisclosed	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74	75 or older
4%	1%	17%	38%	24%	13%	2%	0%

Results Highlights: Remote Work Experience

| TOPIC	SUMMARY	EMERGING CONCERNS
Organizational Leadership and Policy	Overall most staff have been working 5 days per week from home, they understand the policy and feel supported by their supervisors.	• Organizational connectedness may be an emerging concern as some staff reported not feeling connected to the organization when working remotely.
Technology	Overall, staff have access to needed hardware and software, but some challenges have emerged that relate to inconsistencies or confusion about access to software and network challenges.	• Limited connectivity and access to technology for families may be influencing the quality of service delivery provided via video applications.
Staff Development and Support	Most staff report being able to work effectively from home. Staff reported positive benefits associated with working remotely related to carrying out work tasks, productivity and well being. In addition, most staff have been able to maintain the quality of family and work-related relationships. However, many staff have also experienced various challenges and have some have concerns about long term remote work. Most concerns surround the unknowns of the next several months.	• Staff feel supported by supervisors and those who provide oversight feel confident in the ability of supervisors to carry out their work remotely. However, supervisors reported being concerned about being able to measure performance remotely. In addition, staff open ended feedback highlighted the fact that some supervisors may be engaging in task oversight behaviors that are perceived by staff as "micro-management."
Expectations and Outcomes	There is variation in reported remote work task fit across divisions. The results indicate that in order to address task fit mismatch we would need to focus on providing support to staff who require a lot of direct supervision and in-person interactions. Most DCF supervisors reported that overall job performance either improved or stayed the same during the COVID-19 Response Period across all performance areas. DCF Staff self-reported that productivity either increased or stayed the same during the COVID-19 response period.	

Results Highlights: Next Steps Planning

TOPIC	SUMMARY	EMERGING CONCERNS
Concerns Related to Returning to a Building	Most reported wanting to be aware of facility cleaning and maintenance procedures and were concerned about the potential for being exposed to COVID-19. Staff were also concerned about the implementation of social distancing protocols internally, but also with families and system partners.	• Staff highlighted concerns related to needing guidance on how to handle compliance challenges. • Staff highlighted concerns related to engaging families and implementing protocols in the field.
Long Term Planning Perspectives	Overall most staff would welcome incorporating some form of working from home going forward.	• Most supervisors reported having concerns about operating remotely long term. • Most supervisors recommended 2 or 3 days in the office.

Part 2. Key Results

Remote Work Arrangements, Organizational Policy and Connectedness
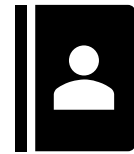
Remote Work Arrangement 5 Days
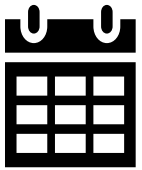
85% of the participants reported that they have typically been working remotely 5 days per week during the COVID-19 Response Period

Policy

88% of the participants reported understanding the updated NJ DCF work from home policies that have been put in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Organizational Connectedness
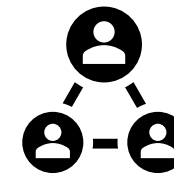
67% of the participants reported that when they are working remotely, they feel connected to the Department as a whole.

DCF Resources that can help:
Find Remote Work Tips at https://www.nj.gov/dcf/wfh_resources.html and be sure to join the Commissioner's All Staff Teams Video Conference on Friday's at 12:00 p.m.

Staff Reported Supervisory Characteristics

| Items	
(Percentage of participants who agreed or strongly agreed with the items below)	
My supervisor trusts my ability to work remotely.	93.1%
My supervisor is able to establish clear objectives while working remotely.	89.2%
My supervisor provides feedback regularly about the quality of my work.	83.8%
My supervisor does a good job communicating with employees remotely.	87.0%
My supervisor is flexible and supportive of staff who are working remotely.	89.5%
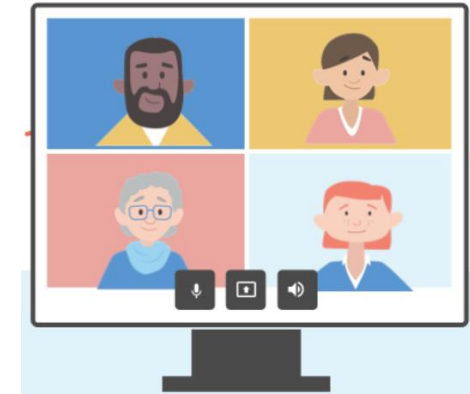
Comment Trends

In response to an item related to concerns about remote work 1,880 survey respondents provided open ended comments. 157 noted concerns related to perceptions of management. We highlight the key comment trends below.

- Inconsistent messaging from management/supervisors relative to changing protocols
- Transparency from the top down.
- Being micromanaged; frequency of meetings (daily), directed to contact families to often
- Due to multiple check-ins, documentation is overwhelming
- Required to produce a log every week of work completed, too much documentation.

DCF Resources that can help: Find Supervision and Remote Work Tips at https://www.nj.gov/dcf/wfh_resources.html

Access to Technology

I have the necessary office equipment and software to support remote work for an extended amount of time.

77%
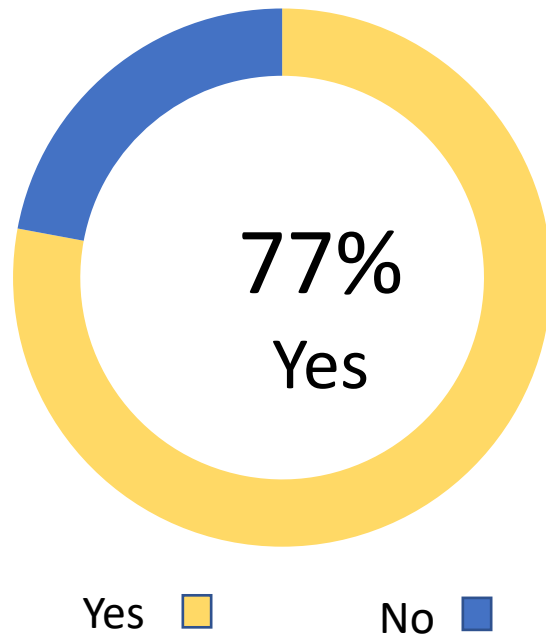Yes

Yes ☐   No ■

Comment Trends

In response to an item related to concerns about remote work 1,880 survey respondents provided open ended comments. 1,050 noted concerns related to technology and communication. We highlight the key comment trends below.

- Inability to communicate and engage with families and providers due to in accessibility to various video applications on the part of the families.
- Difficulty assessing safety, due to lack of video conference capabilities
- Limited access to DCF applications. For example, launching of court reports, LOBA information, authorization documents, substance abuse referrals, full case files.
- Intermittent connectivity issues, due to outdated computer systems, needing to utilize personal computers. Inconsistent VPN issues, needing to constantly to shut down/reboot, lack of access to shared drive.
- Certain video applications not permitted (Zoom only allowed for 40 minutes-free)
- Limited access to technological tools: printer, scanner, copier, cameras on computers.

DCF IT Resources that can help: Contact the NJ Help Desk for all IT support by contacting njspirithelpdesk@dcf.nj.gov. Find the Technology Guide which provides information about DCF tools at https://www.nj.gov/dcf/wfh_resources.html
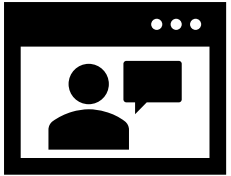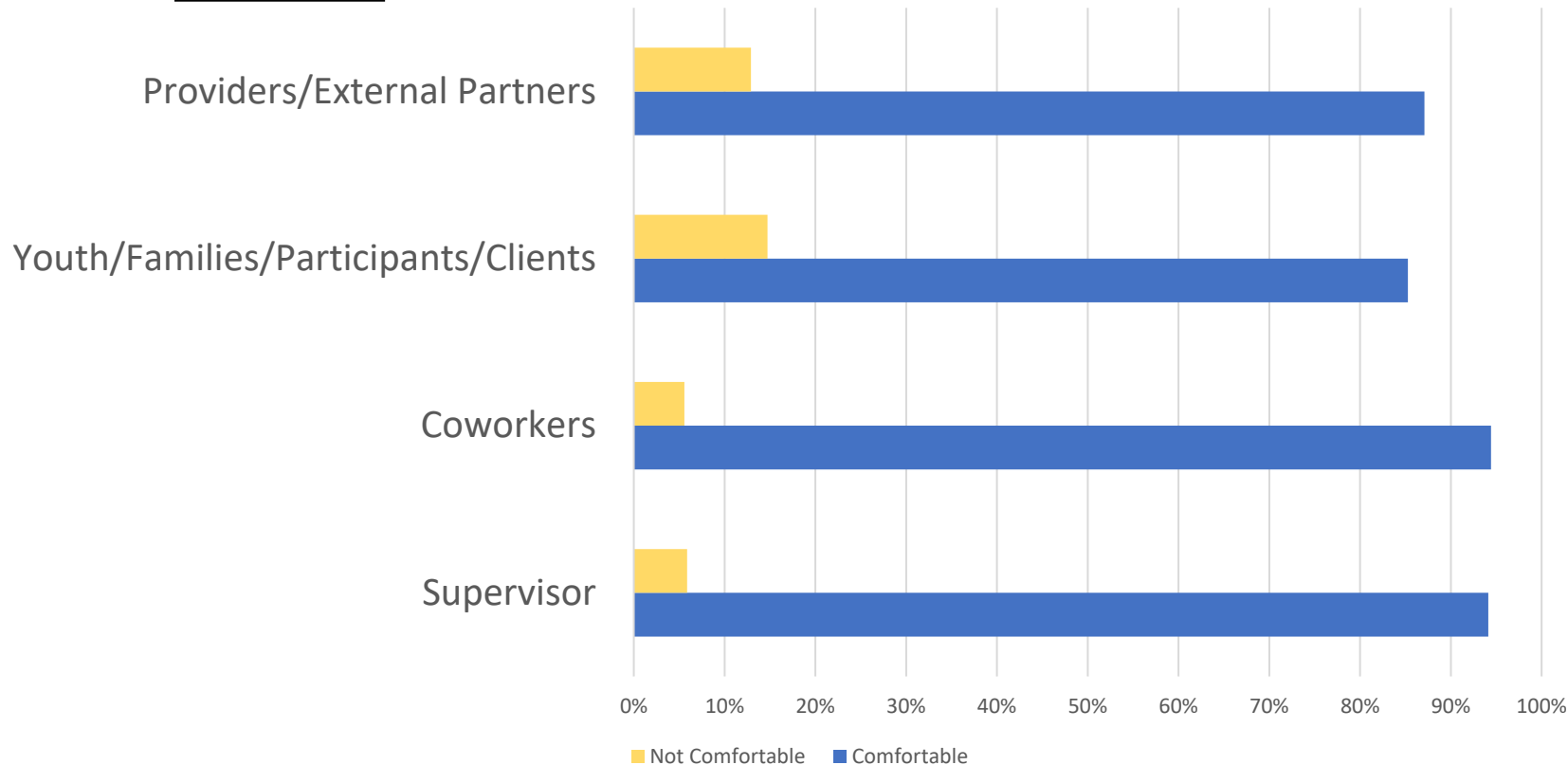
Supervisor Perspective

Supervisor Reported Characteristics During COVID-19 Response Period

Item Sample: 1,197	Never/Seldom	About Half of the Time	Usually/Always
I trust the ability of the staff in my unit to work remotely.	1%	6%	92%
In these past two months, I have been able to establish clear objectives for remote workers.	1%	7%	92%
I can use technology to effectively communicate with my direct reports virtually.	2%	6%	92%
I feel comfortable being flexible with and providing support to staff who are working remotely.	1%	5%	95%
It is challenging to provide feedback regularly to staff in my unit remotely.	80%	11%	8%
It is more difficult to measure the productivity of remote workers when they work offsite.	62%	19%	20%

75% of Supervisors agreed

that they feel they have been given the guidance and support needed from my supervisor to be able to do a good job supervising my staff remotely.

72% of the Supervisors

agreed that they would be interested in participating in training related to supervising remotely.

Home Environment

Percentage of participants who responded Yes to each item

Yes ☐   No ☐

My home work space is a safe and comfortable space where it is easy to concentrate on work.

88%
Yes

I have private space in my home where I am able to have confidential conversations

88%
Yes

My household members understand when I am working and will not disturb me.

78%
Yes
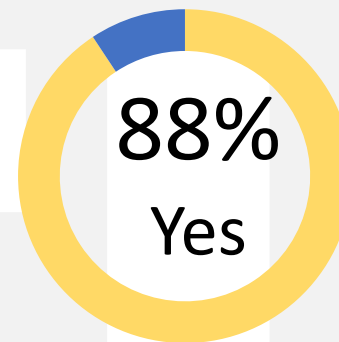
Dependent Care Responsibilities

Yes ▢   No ▢

I have dependents that require care during remote work hours due to the statewide COVID-19 response.

44% Yes
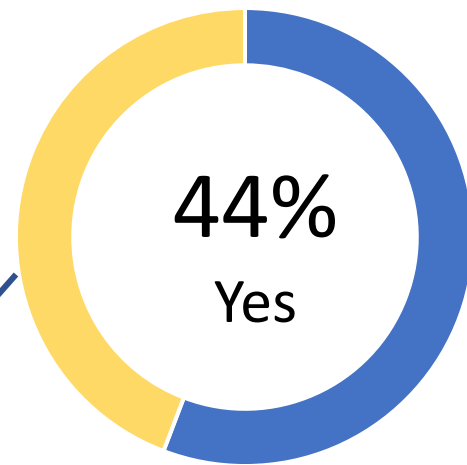
Even when daycare centers, schools and camps reopen, I will have dependents that will require care during remote work hours.

21% Yes
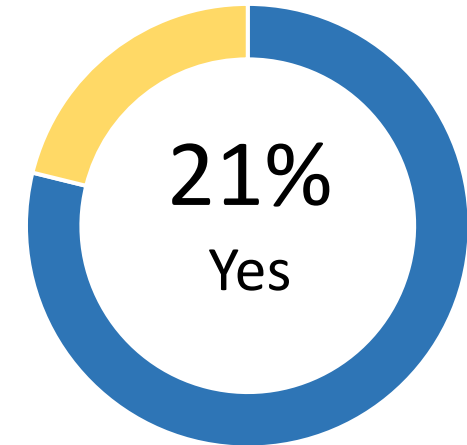
53% of those who reported currently having dependents who require care during work hours also reported having dependent care support to relieve them from primary care responsibilities during remote work hours.
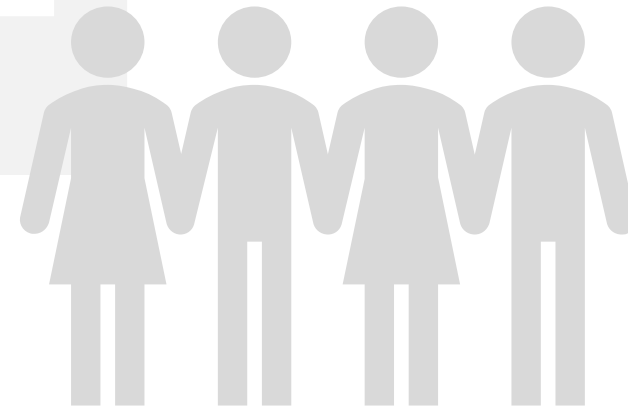
Which have been the most successful aspects of your remote work experience?

Highlight:
97% of staff experienced a positive aspect of working remotely

Percentage of Respondents that indicate each aspect

- Reduced commute — 76.1%
- Working from home — 65.8%
- Reduced work-related costs — 58.0%
- Time with Family — 54.9%
- Flexible schedule — 53.2%
- Productivity — 46.8%
- Working from any location — 34.5%
- Other (please specify) — 10.5%
- I have not experienced any successful aspects — 2.7%

■ Responses
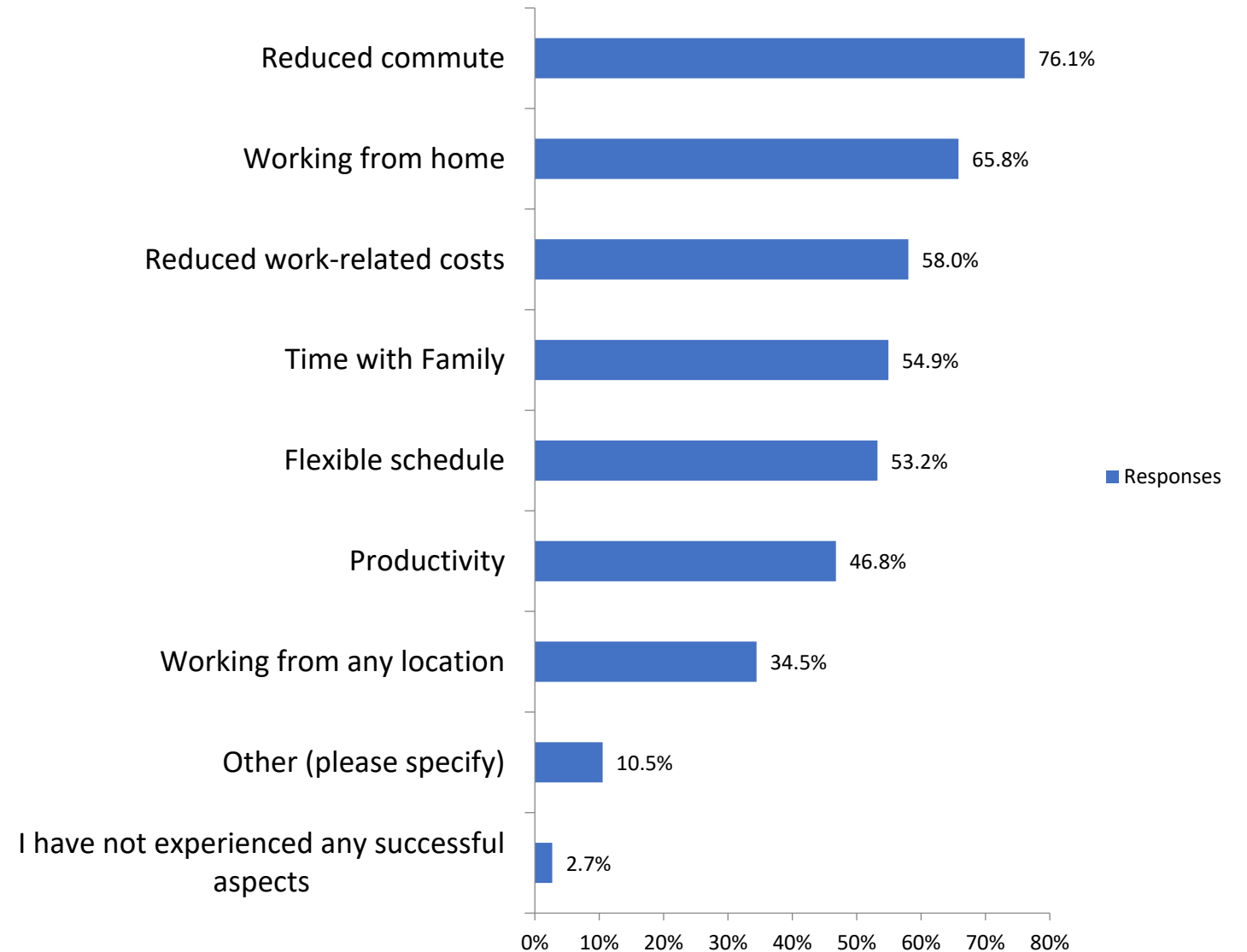
(see Appendix, pg. 29 for more information about the "Other" comments).

Which have been the least successful aspects of your remote work experience?

Highlight:

80% of staff experienced a challenging aspect of working remotely

Percentage of Respondents that indicate each aspect

Aspect	Percentage
Unplugging after work	39.7%
Adapting to physical...	30.8%
Distractions at home	30.0%
Collaborating and or...	23.9%
Other (please specify)	21.3%
I have not experienced...	21.0%
Taking vacation time	16.1%
Staying motivated	16.1%
Loneliness	14.3%
Finding reliable...	12.8%
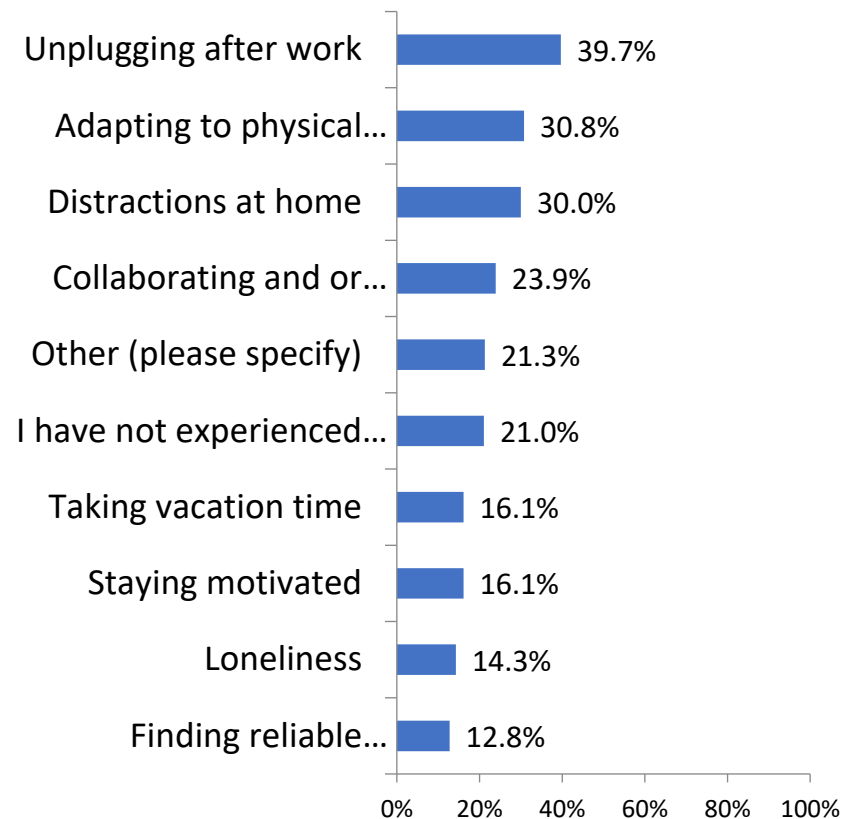
(see Appendix, pg. 30 for more information about the "Other" comments).

15% of the participants reported I have stressors in my life which make it difficult for me to focus on work.

7% of the supervisors reported having stressors in my life which make it difficult for me to focus on supervision.

Research note: These findings support previous research related to stress and telecommuting.

DCF Resources that can help:
https://www.nj.gov/dcf/wfh_resources.html

Staff Connectedness

(Percentage of Staff Reporting that Specified Relationships Stayed the Same, Improved or Worsened)

	Improved	Stayed the Same	Worsened
Members of my Household or Family	**43.3%**	**44.0%**	**5.5%**
Supervisor	**20.0%**	**72.9%**	**5.4%**
Coworkers	**15.0%**	**69.2%**	**13.9%**
Families/Clients/Participants	**14.8%**	**53.0%**	**12.8%**
Providers	**12.1%**	**54.1%**	**14.1%**

Key points: Overall most relationships are being maintained across relationship types. We should keep an eye on staff connectedness with coworkers, those whom we serve and providers. In addition, staff were more likely to report improvement in relationships with their own family members.

Task Fit

In most organizations there are a variety of job types. There are some jobs that are just not suitable for teleworking. However, there are other jobs that consist of a mix of functions with some tasks that can be adapted for telework and others that cannot.

The goal for managers and supervisors should be to understand the functions that make up the job roles that they oversee and be prepared to provide coaching, technology and support across task types.

Task Fit: By Role

Task Fit Scale:

Response Options Ranging from 1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree.

Higher Agreement (e.g. averages of 4 or better) = Greater Remote Work Fit.

Lower Agreement (e.g. averages less than 3) = Lower Remote Work Fit and are highlighted below

Item Averages by Role Type

	Support Staff	Administrative Professional	Frontline Worker/ Office Worker	Supervisor	Manager	Director/ Administrator /Assistant Director	Executive Management	Overall Item Mean
Listwise N	924	484	2918	931	101	87	25	5470
My job includes defined tasks and work products with measurable work activities and objectives.	3.9	4.1	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.2	3.9	4.0
In my role, I am able to control and schedule my workflow.	3.8	4.1	3.8	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.8
My job responsibilities can be arranged so there is no difference in the quality of service provided to youth, families, participants or DCF staff whom I support.	3.6	4.0	3.3	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.5
For the most part, I can do my job without special equipment located in the office.	3.4	3.7	3.3	3.6	3.8	4.0	3.7	3.4
My job has few face-to-face communication requirements and communication can be handled by telephone or email.	3.5	4.0	2.9	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.3	3.2
My role requires minimal direct supervision or contact with youth, families, participants or DCF staff whom I support.	3.3	3.8	2.5	2.7	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.8
My role requires me to have few in-person interactions with other people in the workplace (i.e., coworkers, youth, families, providers and general public).	3.0	3.3	2.6	2.9	2.9	2.5	2.7	2.8

Key point:

The results indicate that in order to address task fit mismatch (roles that are not as suitable to working from home) there needs to be a focus on providing support to staff who require a lot of direct supervision and in-person interactions in their roles

Staff Self-Reported Productivity

Item: How would you rate your productivity when working from home compared to working in an office?

Key point:
DCF Staff self-reported that productivity either increased or stayed the same during the the COVID-19 response period
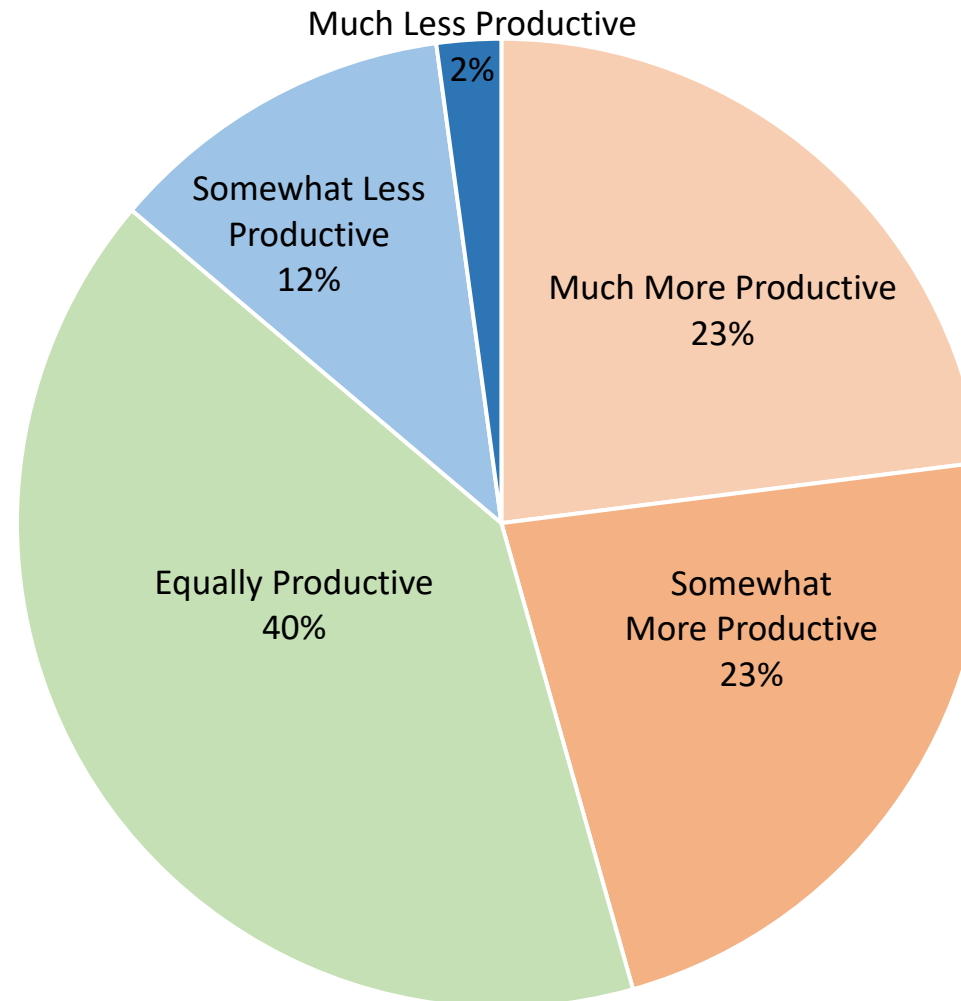
Supervisor Reported Unit Level Productivity

Key point:

Most DCF supervisors reported that overall job performance either improved or stayed the same during the COVID-19 Response Period across all performance areas.

12% of supervisors reported concerns related to decline in productivity and ability to collaborate with coworkers.

Response Option Percentages for Performance Domains

	Interpersonal Skills	Dependability	Ability to work independently	Ability to team and collaborate with coworkers	Productivity	Communication	Overall performance
Much Worse	0.4%	0.1%	0.3%	0.9%	1.2%	0.5%	0.1%
Somewhat Worse	8.3%	5.8%	6.2%	11.4%	10.8%	8.0%	5.5%
Stayed the Same	66.0%	66.1%	59.0%	59.3%	47.5%	55.5%	54.9%
Somewhat Improved	19.8%	19.6%	24.9%	18.2%	29.6%	24.0%	29.1%
Greatly Improved	5.6%	8.4%	9.7%	10.3%	10.9%	12.1%	10.4%

Legend: Greatly Improved, Somewhat Improved, Stayed the Same, Somewhat Worse, Much Worse

Part 3. Planning Next Steps

What are your main concerns about working in an office building in the near future?

Percentages of Survey Respondents who Indicated Concerns

Concern	Responses
Cleaning/sanitizing supplies...	77%
Not knowing if work spaces...	76%
Availability of and/or...	71%
Maintaining social distancing...	70%
Going back into the office...	69%
Not knowing whether...	58%
Readjustment to office life	27%
Other (please specify)	14%
I don't have any...	6%
Using public transportation...	5%
My skills and or knowledge...	2%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%
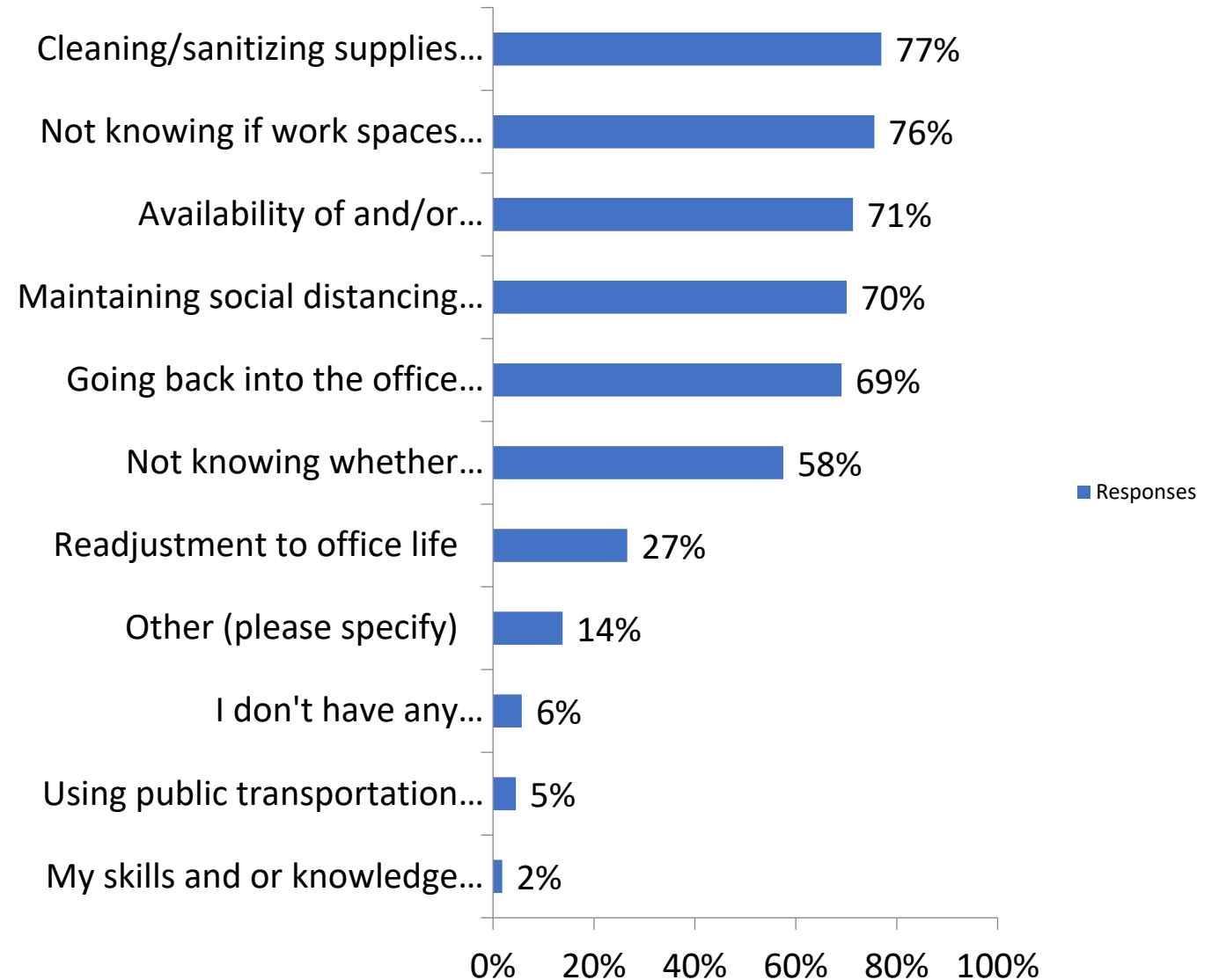
(see Appendix, pg. 31 for more information about the "Other" comments).

What do you value most about returning to the office?

Percentages of Survey Respondents who Indicated Valued Aspects of Work

| Aspect	Percentage
Easier access to tools and…	66.6%
Seeing friends, colleagues, and…	63.1%
Easier collaboration with co-…	55.1%
Access to physical resources…	38.8%
Better work/life balance	33.2%
No longer having to work from…	8.9%
Not Applicable	6.6%
Other (please specify)	6.4%
Office perks (food, snacks, etc.)	3.3%
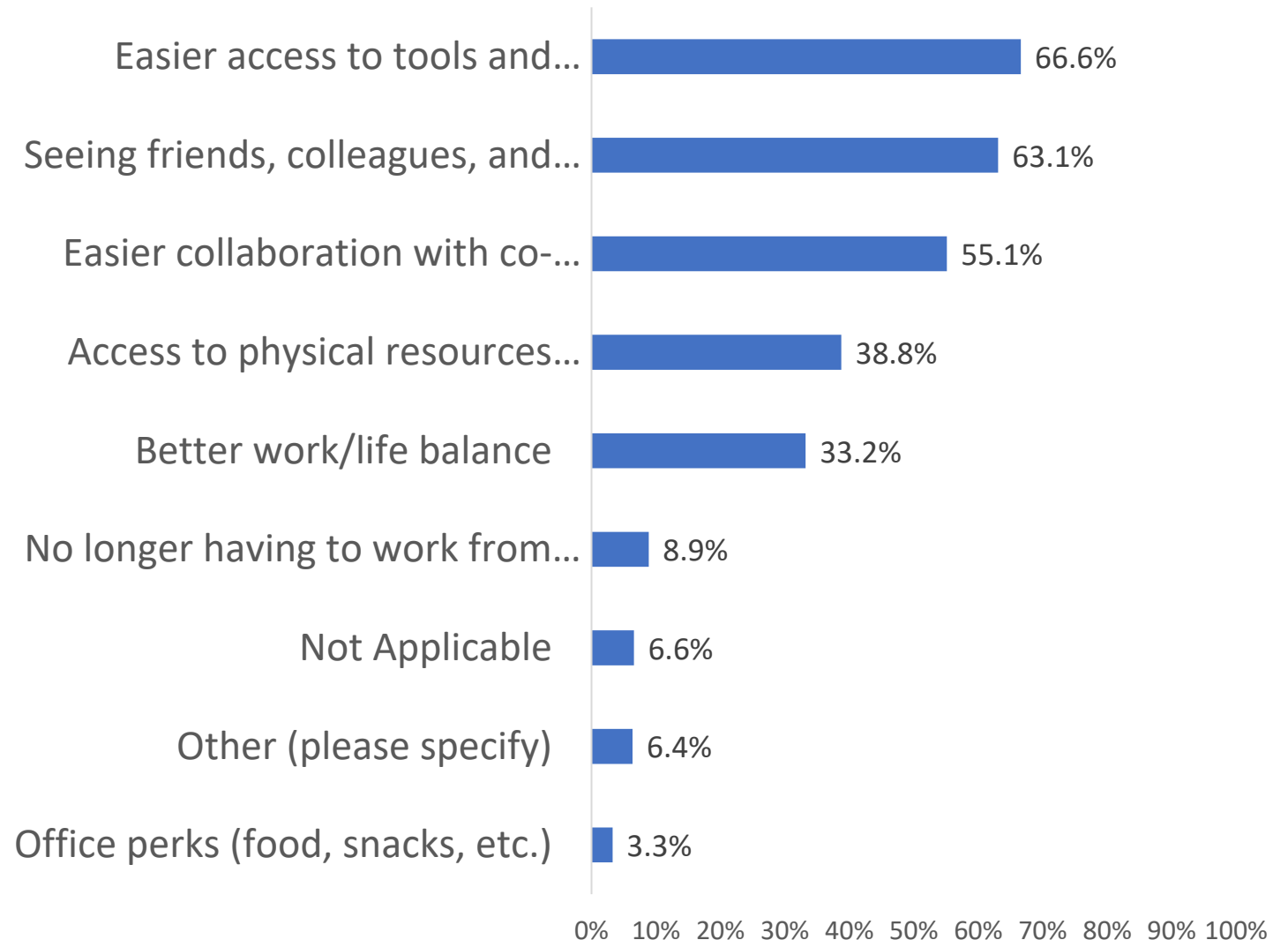
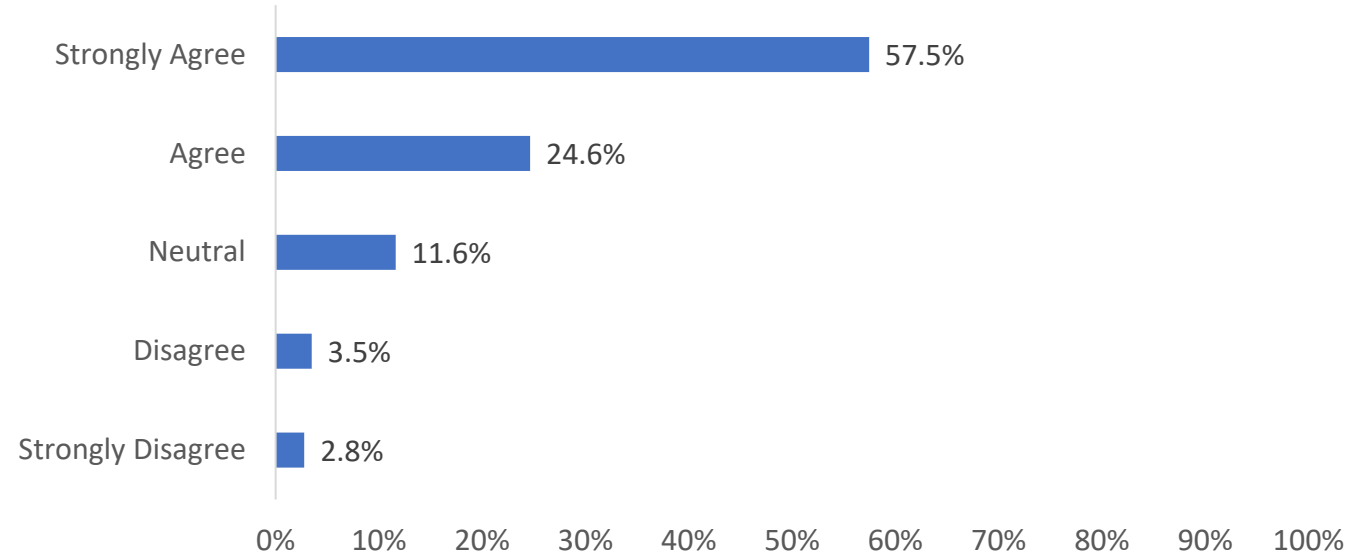(see Appendix, pg. 32 for more information about the "Other" comments).

Perspectives About the Notion of Remote Work Going Forward

Item: Not knowing how long this pandemic will impact operations at DCF, how well do you think your unit can function using some form of remote work going forward? (Response Percentages; S
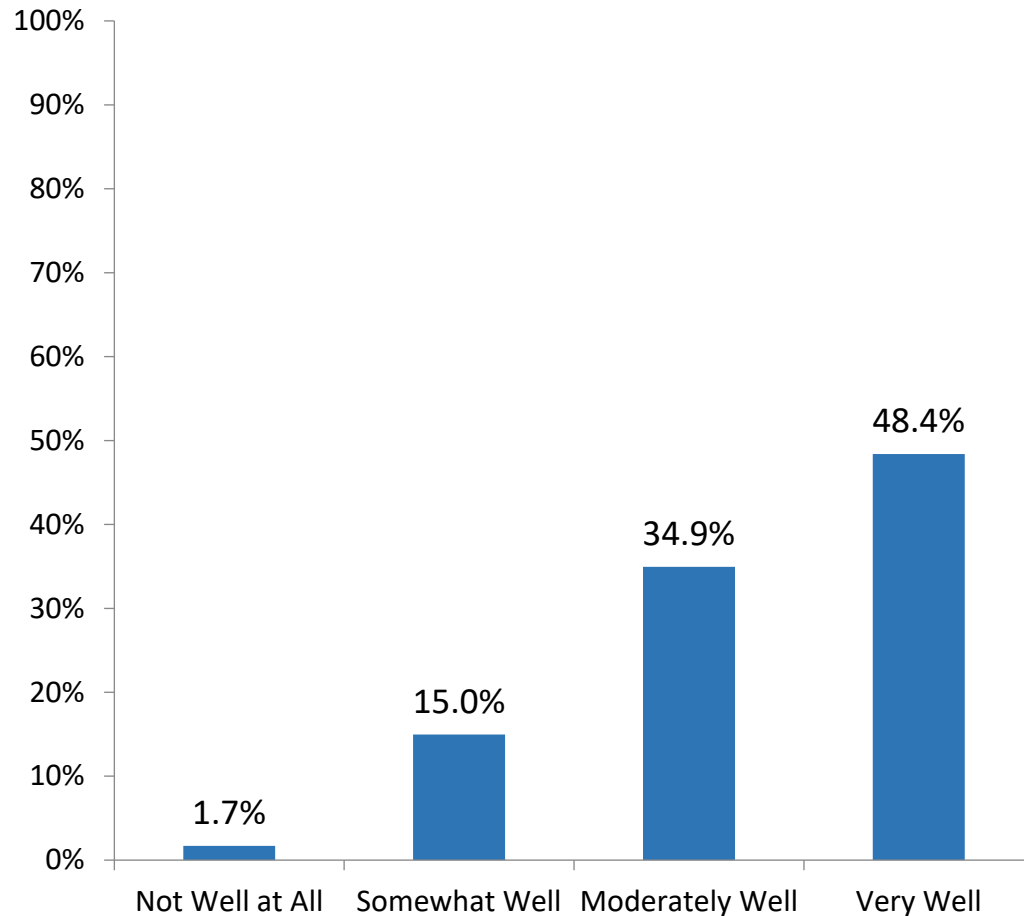
Item: Given the opportunity, I would be interested in continuing some form of working remotely. (Response Percentage

38% of the supervisor participants reported agreeing that while they are able to effectively supervise remotely, they are concerned about supervising this way for the long term.

Perspectives About the Notion of Remote Work Going Forward

Item:
How many days might you recommend that some of your unit work remotely goi
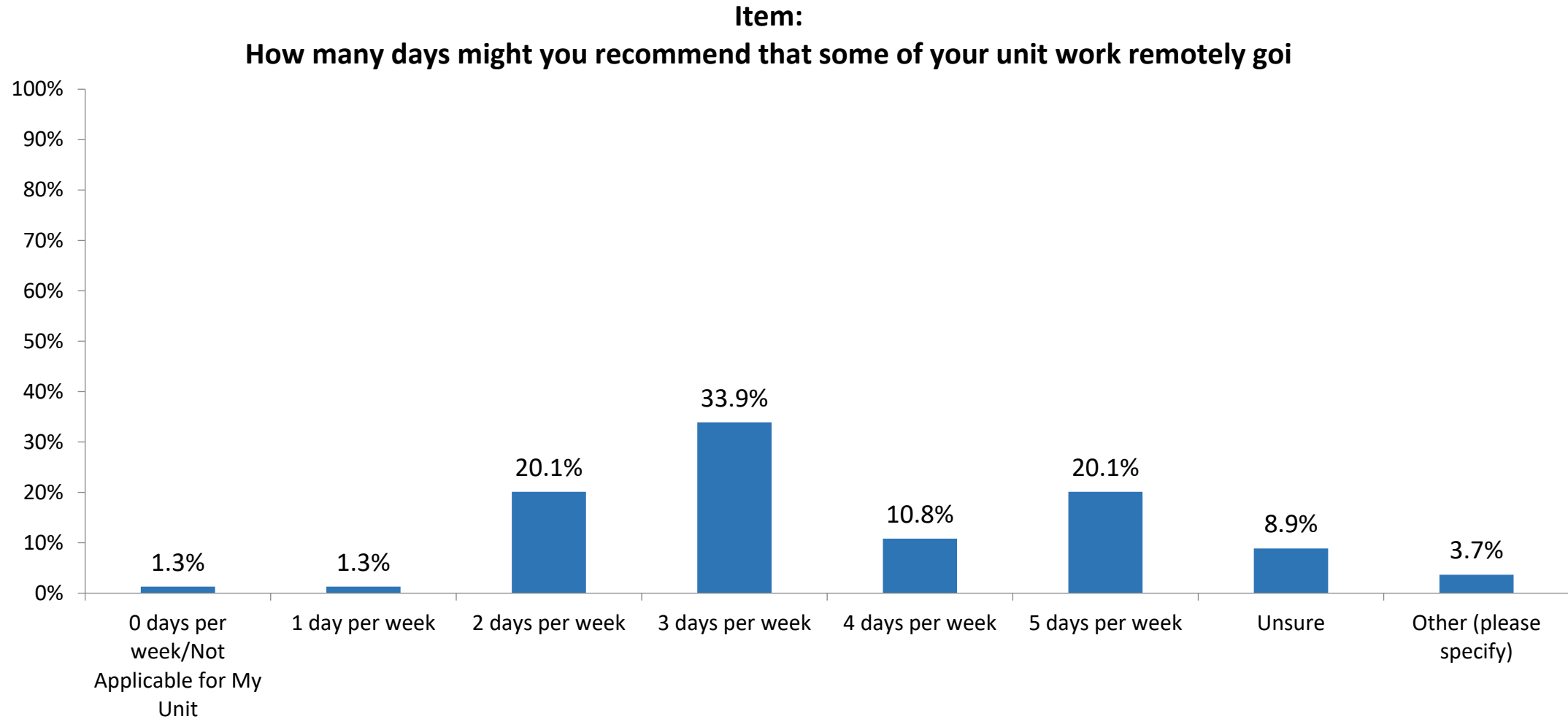
(see Appendix, pg. 33 for more information about the "Other" comments).

Appendix

Methodology Notes

- The objective of this effort was to support DCF in understanding the current remote work experiences and insights of staff and to support COVID-19 related response efforts.

- A multi-disciplinary Remote Work Support Group team of internal DCF staff conducted a literature review of remote work-related research and existing measurement tools and then went on to develop a survey, manage survey data collection and analysis and synthesize open-ended qualitative feedback.

- The survey consisted of 30 items that consisted primarily of multiple-choice response options with a mix of scale types. Five items offered an "other – please specify" response option that allowed survey participants to provide open-ended responses. The survey was distributed electronically to staff who completed it anonymously during the period of May 20, 2020 and May 27, 2020.

- Most participants completed the entire survey yielding a completion rate of 95%. Although, the overall sample size was 5,854. The item samples ranged slightly. Most variation was due to skip logic related to staff roles and the remaining variation was related to some missing item responses. Survey participants provided approximately 3,050 open ended comments after indicating "other" as a response option.

Comment Trends

	Topic Trends	Counts
Total Other Sample: 587		
Total Item Sample: 5,546	Quality of Life	269
	Work Related Improvements	180
	Family Related	75
	Communication	73

Item. Which have been the most successful aspects of your remote work experience?

Quality of Life

- Less Stress/ Anxiety /Gossip
- Self/Family Safe from Exposure
- Better Physical, Mental Health, Exercise, Food
- Nicer / Safer Physical Environment Than Office
- Work/ Life Balance
- Time with Pets
- No Dress Code / Getting Ready for Work / Meal Prep
- More Sleep

Work-Related Improvements

- Fewer Interruptions/ Focused at Work
- Likes New Technology
- New Innovations in Job Duties
- Less Paper / Reducing Footprint
- Reduced work-related travel
- Reduced Overtime
- Less risk of harm from client/client's environment

Family Related

- Able to Care for Children/ Saves Money on Childcare
- Caring for Elderly / Adult Dependents

Communication

- Improved Communication
- Increased Supervisor or Team's Trust / Support
- More Time with Clients / Providers
- Improved Morale
- More Privacy

Comment Trends

Topic Trends	Affirmative Counts
Technology and Communication	1,050
Connections/Workload Requirements/Task Fit	529
Adjustment/Distractions/Emotional and Physical Health	501
Supervision, Policy, Management	157

Item. Which have been the least successful aspects of your remote work experience?

TECHNOLOGY/COMMUNICATION

- See list on slide 8

CONNECTIONS/WORKLOAD REQUIREMENT/TASK FIT

- Excessive meetings and follow ups with families and providers take away from actually getting the documentation and work completed.

- Being micromanaged by supervisors is stressful and makes it difficult to get work done.

- Inability to fulfill my job requirements while working remotely, as role is in office; i.e. LOBA custodian.

- Connecting with providers to obtain collateral information is difficult due to lack of response, which does not allow for a case to be closed.

- Demands of work have become more intense, "everyone needs something STAT" from spreadsheets, to other reports.

- Difficulty building a relationship/engagement of trust with a new family due to no face to face connection.

- Inability to connect with my colleagues to debrief, brainstorm on a moment's notice.

- Coordinating educational efforts in alignment with DOE expectations and coordination with residential group homes, who have direct access to students.

SUPERVISION/POLICY/MANAGEMENT

- See list on slide 7

ADJUSTMENT/DISTRACTIONS/EMOTIONAL /PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Multi tasking, between assisting children with remote learning and keeping up with workload.

- Inability to "switch off" for lunch and at the end of the day due to the demands of the work.

- Screen fatigue, unconducive work- station at home

- Anxiety brought on by COVID-19 and the loss of family members to the virus

- Adapting to new ways of working with families

- Adapting to new technological methods

- Adjusting to lower physical activity and feeling unhealthy

- Feeling isolated, easy to get into a rut and not be motivated

- Inability to break away from abuse/neglect cases

- Afraid to go back to an office, as it will not be SAFE

Comment Trends

Topic Trends	Affirmative Counts
Concerns About Covid-19 Exposure	469
Facilities	208
Understanding Protocols, Testing and Contact Tracing	**95**
Loss of remote work benefits and autonomy	69
Child Care	62
Other	46

Item. "What are your main concerns about working in an office building in the near future?"

Concerns about Exposure to COVID-19

- Internal staff/External partners
- Exposure to family, especially high-risk family members
- Not knowing if others are asymptomatic
- Not knowing if anyone has tested positive before entering a home
- Co-location with other entities
- Employees reporting to work instead of staying at home when sick

Facilities

- Concerns about state vehicles
- Daily cleaning schedule
- Quality and clean air ventilation
- Modifications of workspace
- Elevator protocols

Implementation of protocols as they relate to client engagement and employee compliance

- Compliance processes and roles of managers, supervisors, coworkers
- Impact on practice
- Testing and Contact Tracing
  - Precondition for reentrance into an office
  - Requirement thereafter?
  - Requirement for clients, visitors before entrance into a DCF office?

Loss of Remote Work Benefits

- Future inability to work remotely
- Loss of schedule flexibility

Child Care

- Availability of resources prior to returning (e.g. summer camps)
- Concerns about school openings in the fall

Comment Trends

Item. "What do you value most about returning to the office?

Total Other Responses Reviewed: 214	Topic Trends	Affirmative Counts
Total Item Responses: 5,602	Copiers, Printers, Fax	58
	Structure of Work Flow	36
	Interactions with clients/students	28
	Access to Files	22
	No value	70
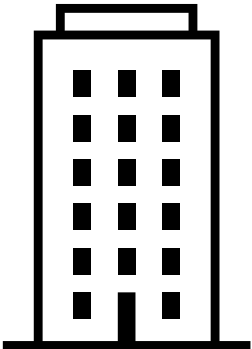
Copiers, Printers, Fax

- Printing for large documents
- Copying files

Structure of Work/flow

- Supervision of work
- Knowing expectations of job and being able to respond quickly
- Communication with other staff

Interactions with clients/students

- Staff miss their interactions with staff and clients.
- Prefer to meet in person

Access to Files

- Paper files
- Some comments on electronic files

Note

In 70 of the "other" comments survey participants did not report a value. Instead, they stated that they preferred working from home. This was in addition to the not applicable reported in the existing response options,

Comment Trends

Item. How many days might you recommend that some of your unit work remotely going forward?

	Topic Trends	Affirmative Counts
Total Other Responses: 43		
Total Item Responses: 1,174	In Office as Needed	18
	2-3 Days	12
	Based on Job Duties	7
	Alternating Schedules	6

2-3 days
Sweet spot for replies, many respondents indicated 2 or 3 days

Alternate Schedule
Set a schedule such as every other week or 3 days per month

Dependent on Job Duties
Some tasks need to be completed in person

As needed
Work can be completed at home and only needs to be completed in person when necessary