

# 2026 Trends & Predictions

In 2025, concerns around AI's impact on the workforce proliferated, "job hugging," entered our lexicon amid a tightening labor market, and both "microshifting" and "micro-retirements" trended. What developments will 2026 bring to the world of work?

One thing that's certain: supporting employee mental health and well-being is no longer a "nice to have." It's an essential, mission-critical component for any organization that is looking to hire and retain top talent, increase satisfaction, and bolster innovation and productivity while reducing burnout and absenteeism. Recent insights from McKinsey only reinforce the need for support as Gen Z grows into more than a quarter of the global workforce and report work-life balance as their top priority – even above compensation.

It's clear employers need to pay close attention to how they're supporting employee mental health and well-being in the New Year. Here are three workplace well-being trends we predict will gain steam in 2026.

## 1 A growing hunger for *Human* connection.

There's no denying that 2025 was the year of AI. And while the excitement and capabilities of the new technology are impressive and show tremendous promise, the importance of genuine human connection has only grown.

Participation in **Huddles**, ComPsych moderated peer-to-peer support groups, has **grown by 330% since launching in 2024** with anecdotal feedback emphasizing the benefits of feeling heard, understood, and validated by others.



330%



60%

Additionally, roughly **60%** of people who get counseling services through ComPsych request to meet with a provider in-person when given the option, demonstrating a preference for connection even over convenience.

### What does this mean for employers?

Investing in opportunities for intentional, authentic connection and fostering a community of belonging will grow in 2026. Ultimately the role of technology should be to enable, empower, and enhance human connection – not replace it.

“Loneliness and isolation are real problems in today’s society. Creating community and facilitating moments of genuine connection are invaluable for both individuals and organizations. Research shows social support, human connection, and feeling heard or validated are meaningful and effective sources of healing.”

– Dr. Jennifer Birdsall, Chief Clinical Officer, ComPsych

## 2 Coping and resiliency take center stage.

The overwhelming nature of modern life – in which we’re bombarded by constant notifications, pings, and the 24-hour news cycle – isn’t going away. Anxiety is now the number one reason U.S. workers reach out for mental health assistance. This means everyone needs to increase their capacity to cope, both at work and in life.

ComPsych experienced a **42% increase** in requests for manager trainings on mental health and well-being topics over the past two years.



42%

We anticipate demand will continue to rise into 2026 as employers realize managers are often the first point of contact when an employee is struggling with their mental health.



In particular, the training topic of resilience has grown steadily since the pandemic, and we believe 2026 will be a breakout year for the subject.



### What does this mean for employers?

Helping employees access services that enhance their capacity to cope – from preventative and resiliency building tools to coaching and counseling – is critical. External stressors are unlikely to dissipate, making developing employee coping capacity an essential business strategy. Further, equipping managers with the training, language, and knowledge they need to speak with compassion and guide employees to available resources is vital.

“Increasingly we’re seeing managers recognize the important role they play in the mental health and well-being of employees. Equipping them with the skills and confidence they need to navigate challenging conversations helps to create cultures where well-being is not an afterthought, but a driver of success.”

– Ken Zuckerberg, Vice President of Learning and Organizational Excellence, ComPsych

## 3 Coaching moves from an alternative support to a companion support.

Coaching has long been part of the equation to help improve health and well-being. Recently, however, we’ve seen ComPsych clients express increased interest in addressing total health and well-being with coaching playing a significant and expanding role to help prevent and address socioeconomic stressors in addition to a wide variety of physical health needs.

Distinct from mental health counseling, coaching provides actionable frameworks, tactical next steps, and encourages accountability throughout a person’s journey. ComPsych member trends show an increased interest in coaching programs as more people look for support achieving specific goals, be they professional, physical, social, financial, or in any other aspect of life.



### What does this mean for employers?

Employers can help encourage the right support such as coaching by communicating the distinct value it provides in addition to therapy or digital tools.

“Oftentimes coaches are catalysts for action. By meeting people where they are and providing one-on-one guidance and accountability, coaches help individuals make strides towards their goals while fostering collective growth within an organization.”

– Beth Brown, Director of Health and Well-Being, ComPsych

As we look ahead to 2026, it’s clear the future of workplace well-being necessitates harnessing the power of innovation and humanity. Whether through facilitating genuine peer connections, empowering managers to become mental health allies, building resilience in an always-on world, or providing result-orientated coaching support alongside other offerings, the organizations that will thrive in 2026 and beyond are those that recognize employee well-being as the foundation of sustainable success.