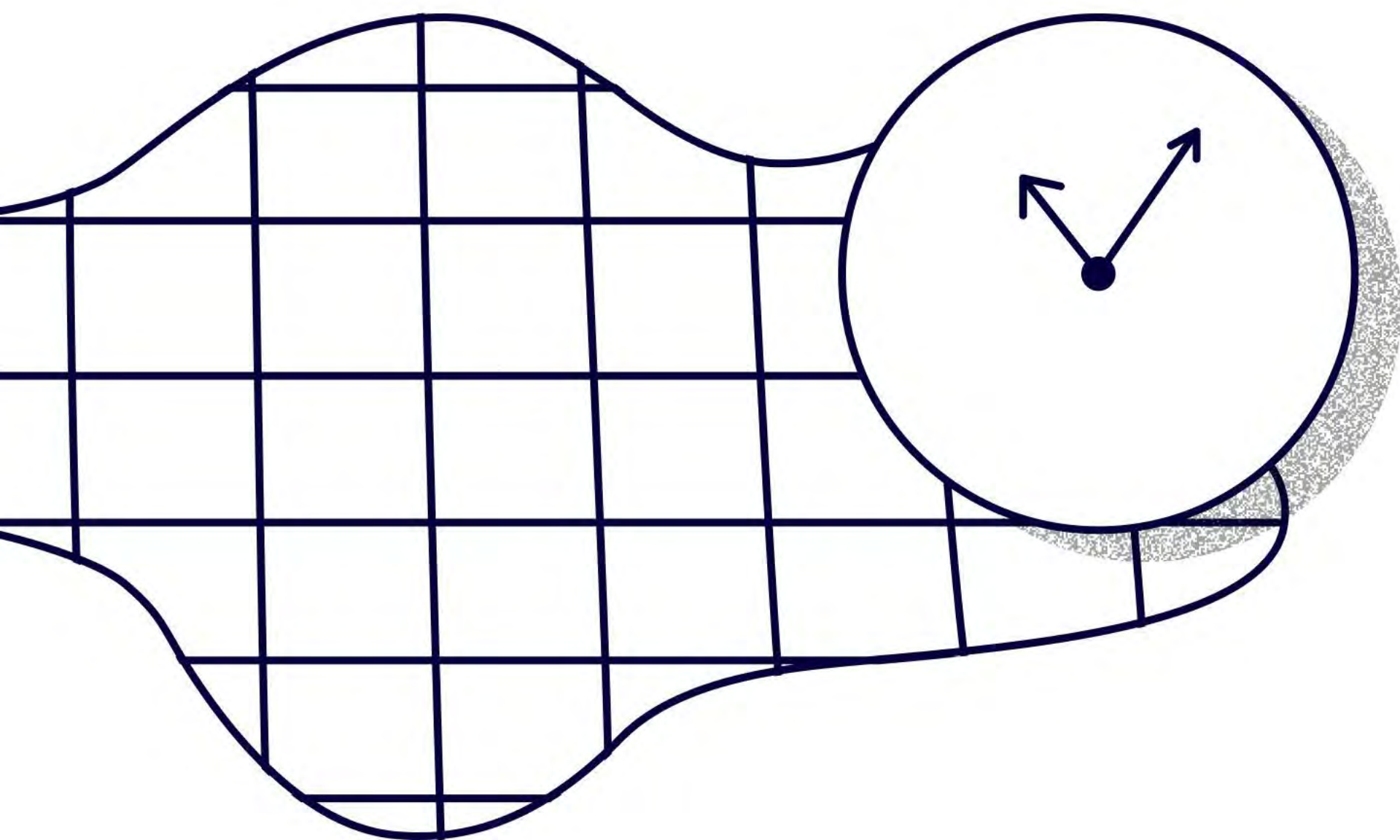
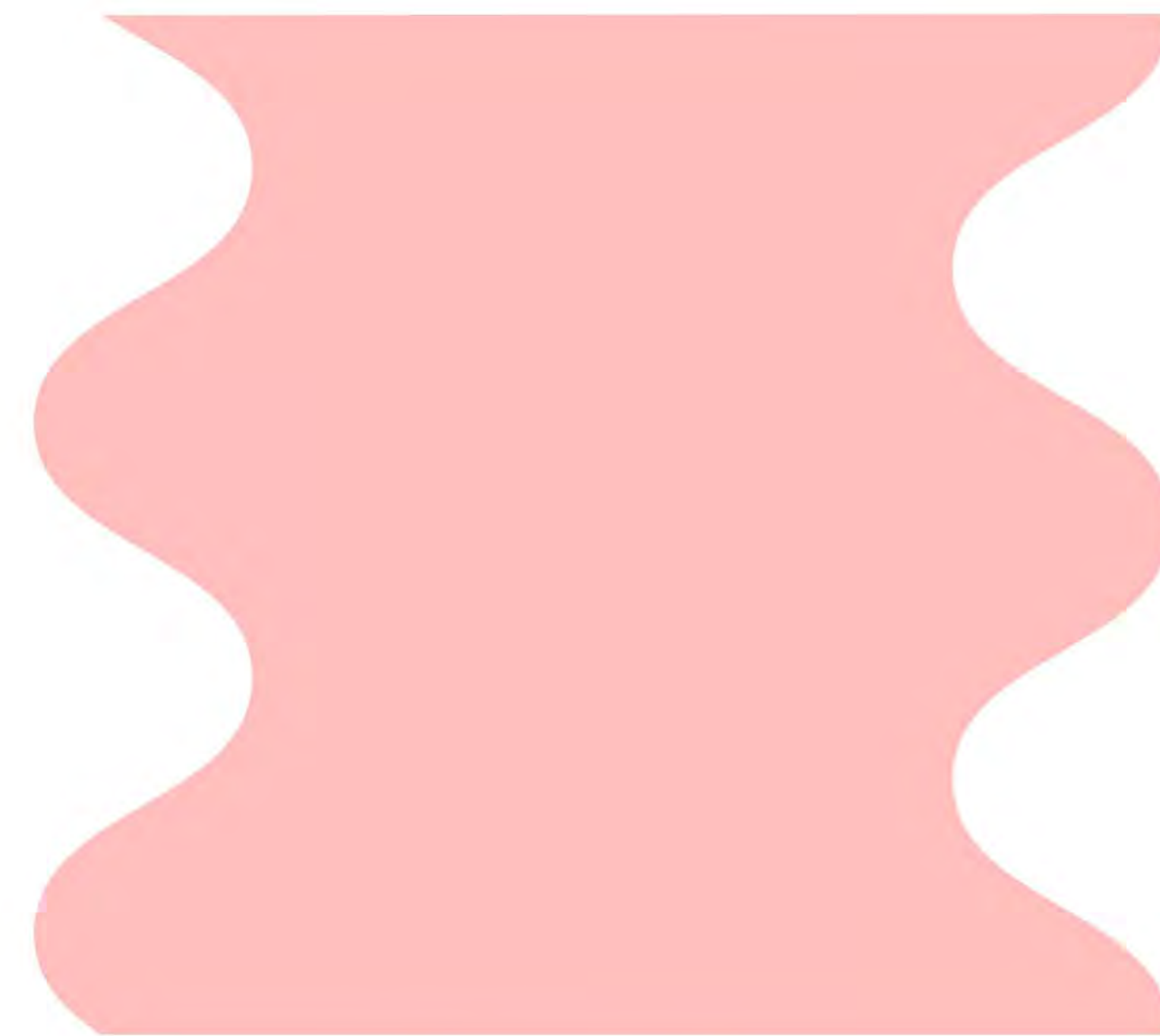




A Year of Remote Work

A look into the work
from home experience



A survey report by
miro

About this survey

For the last 12 months, tens of millions of knowledge workers have been part of an unexpected experiment into the feasibility of long-term remote work. The impact has been felt both professionally and personally.

To learn more about how habits have shifted since the beginning of remote work, Miro commissioned YouGov to survey knowledge workers about the impact on workplace engagement, key relationships in their personal and professional lives, their mental health, and more.

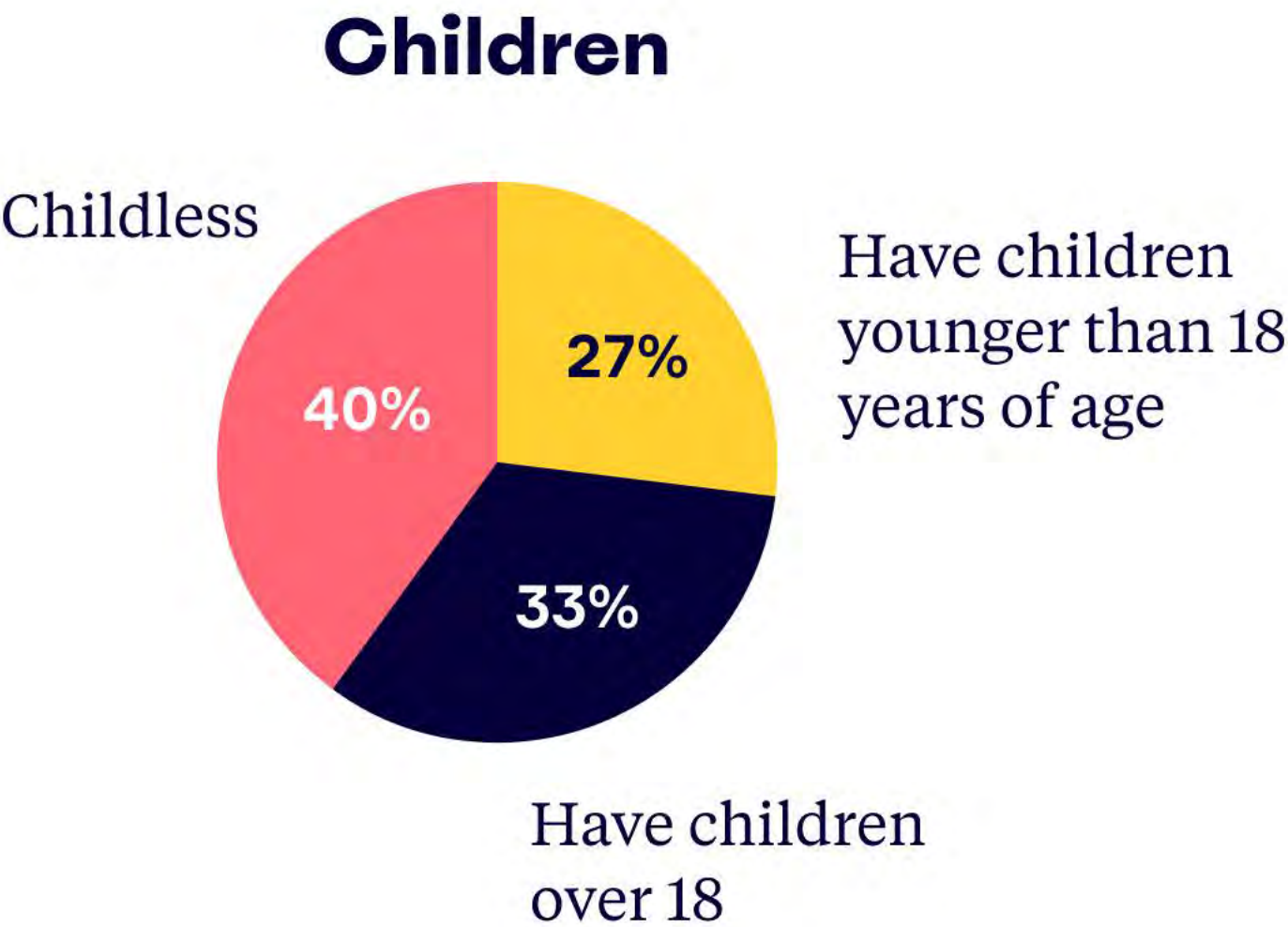
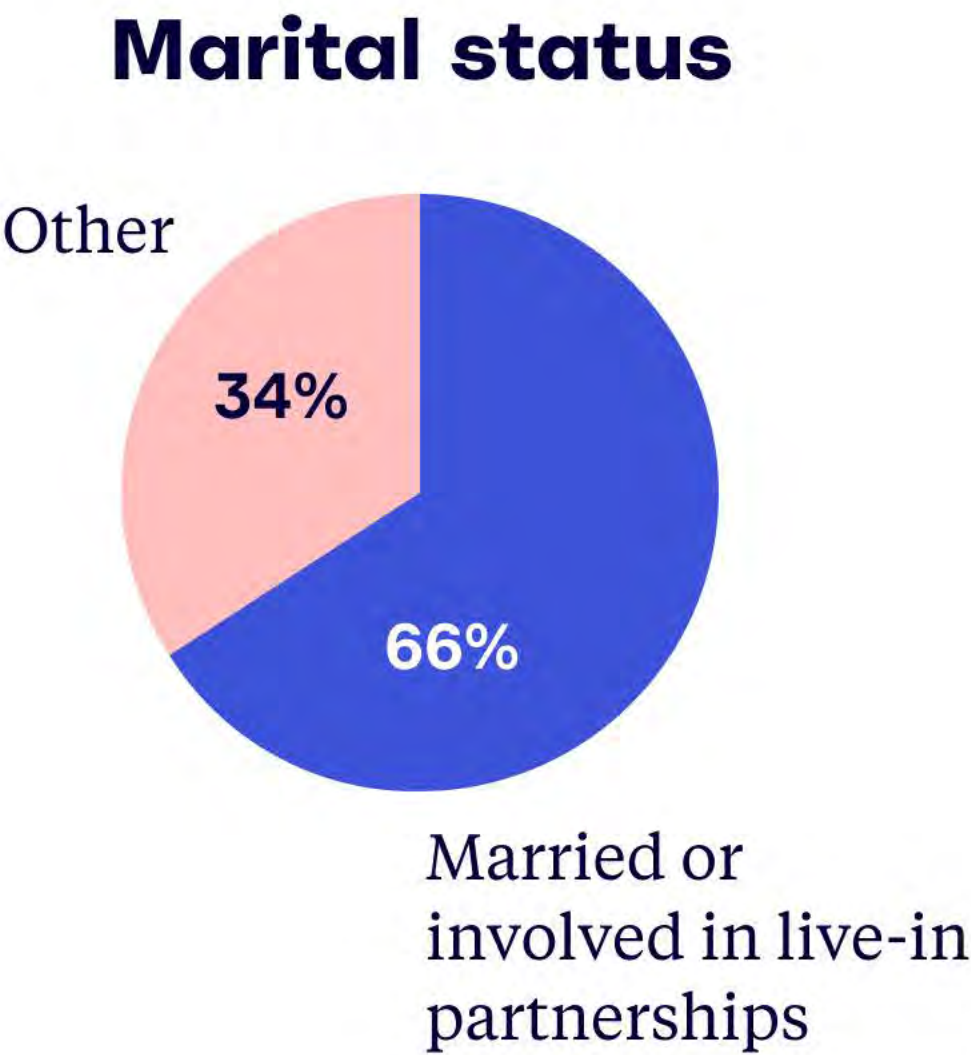
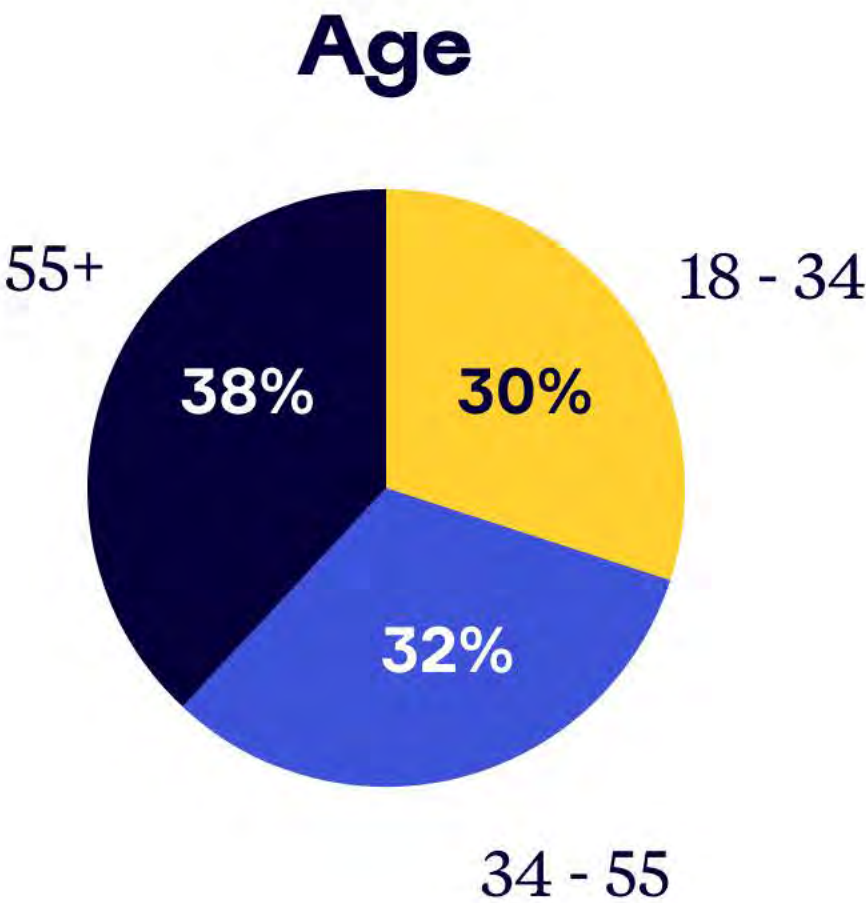
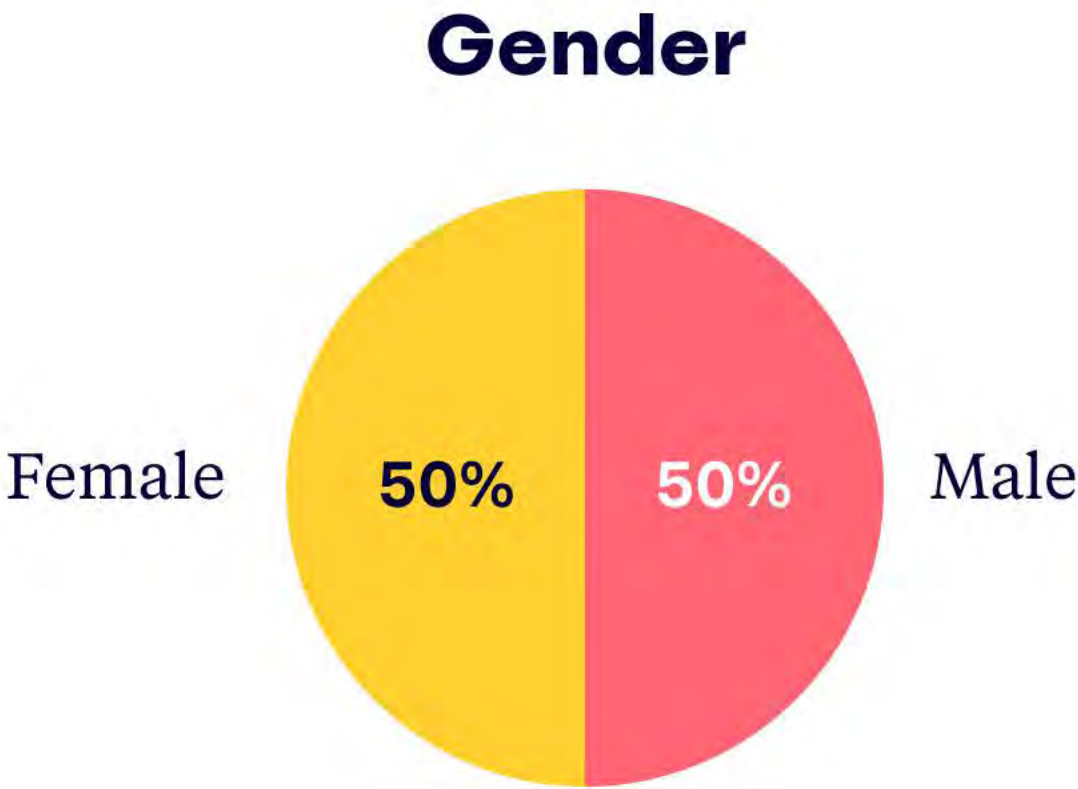
Methodology

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1,013 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken during February 1 — 5, 2021. The survey was conducted online.

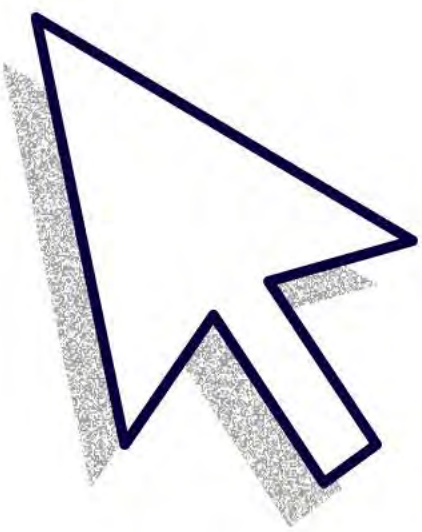


Demographics

In our quest to get an accurate picture of the state of remote work, we sought to include equitable representation across ages, relationships, and genders in our survey. Of our respondents:



Key Findings



49%

of married individuals (and those in live-in relationships) say that working from home has improved their relationship with their spouse/partner.

62%

of parents with children under the age of 18 say that working from home has improved their relationships with their children.

34%

of workers say they are “somewhat likely” or “very likely” to relocate if remote work becomes permanent in their companies. The number one reason is to be closer to family and friends (40%).

57%

of knowledge workers say they are more likely to multitask during virtual meetings than they were before the pandemic. The biggest distractor during virtual meetings is email.

33%

of knowledge workers are awake for less than 20 minutes before they begin work in the morning.

43%

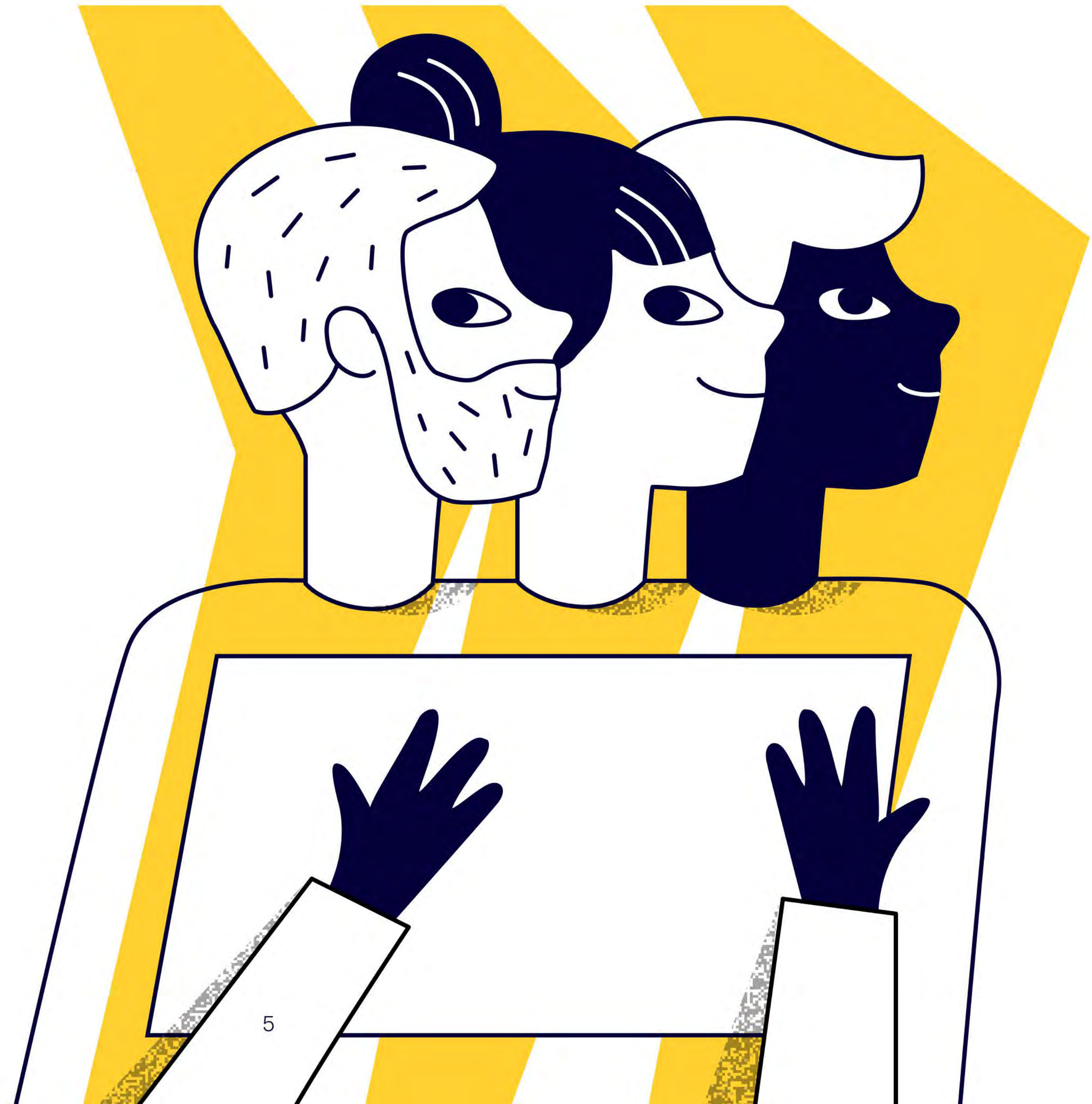
of respondents say they’ve seen an improvement to work/life balance in the last year, but they were more likely to say they’ve seen a decline in mental health rather than an improvement.



How has remote work affected relationships?

At the start of the pandemic, speculation and uneasiness swirled. How would relationships with spouses, friends, co-workers, and children be affected while sheltering in place? Some historical analysts predicted a post-pandemic baby boom. Others felt months of confinement may cause relationships to deteriorate as the anxieties of work and life blended in the pressure cookers of homes around the globe.

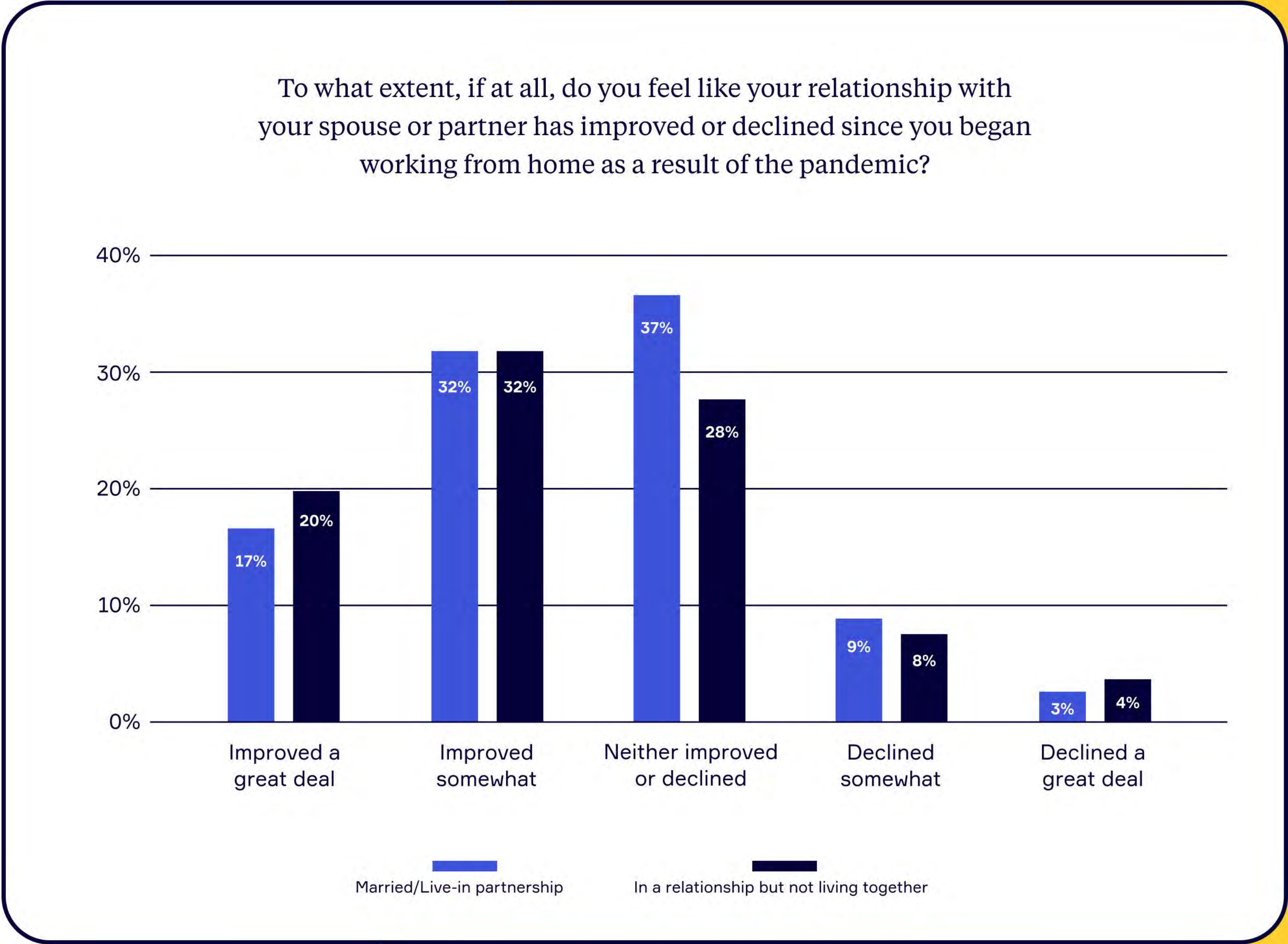
Fortunately, [Miro's data reveals an overall improvement to relationships during the last year, hinting toward long-term remote work benefits.](#)



Personal relationships have improved since the move to WFH

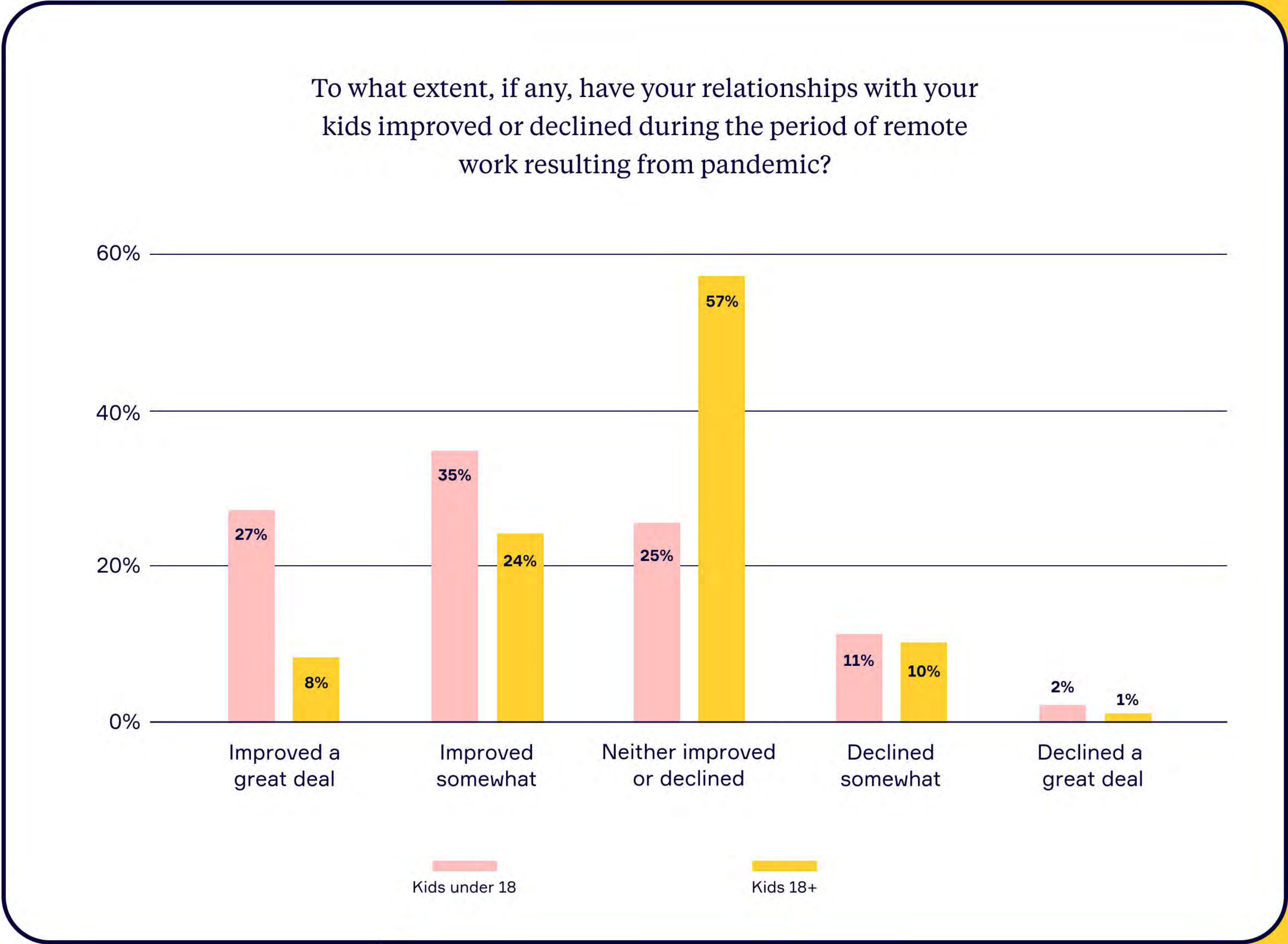
Nearly half of respondents (49%) report an improved relationship with their spouse or partner, while just 12% say their relationship has declined.

For non-cohabiting couples, the results are slightly more positive, with 52% reporting improvements.



Parent/child relationships are the biggest winners

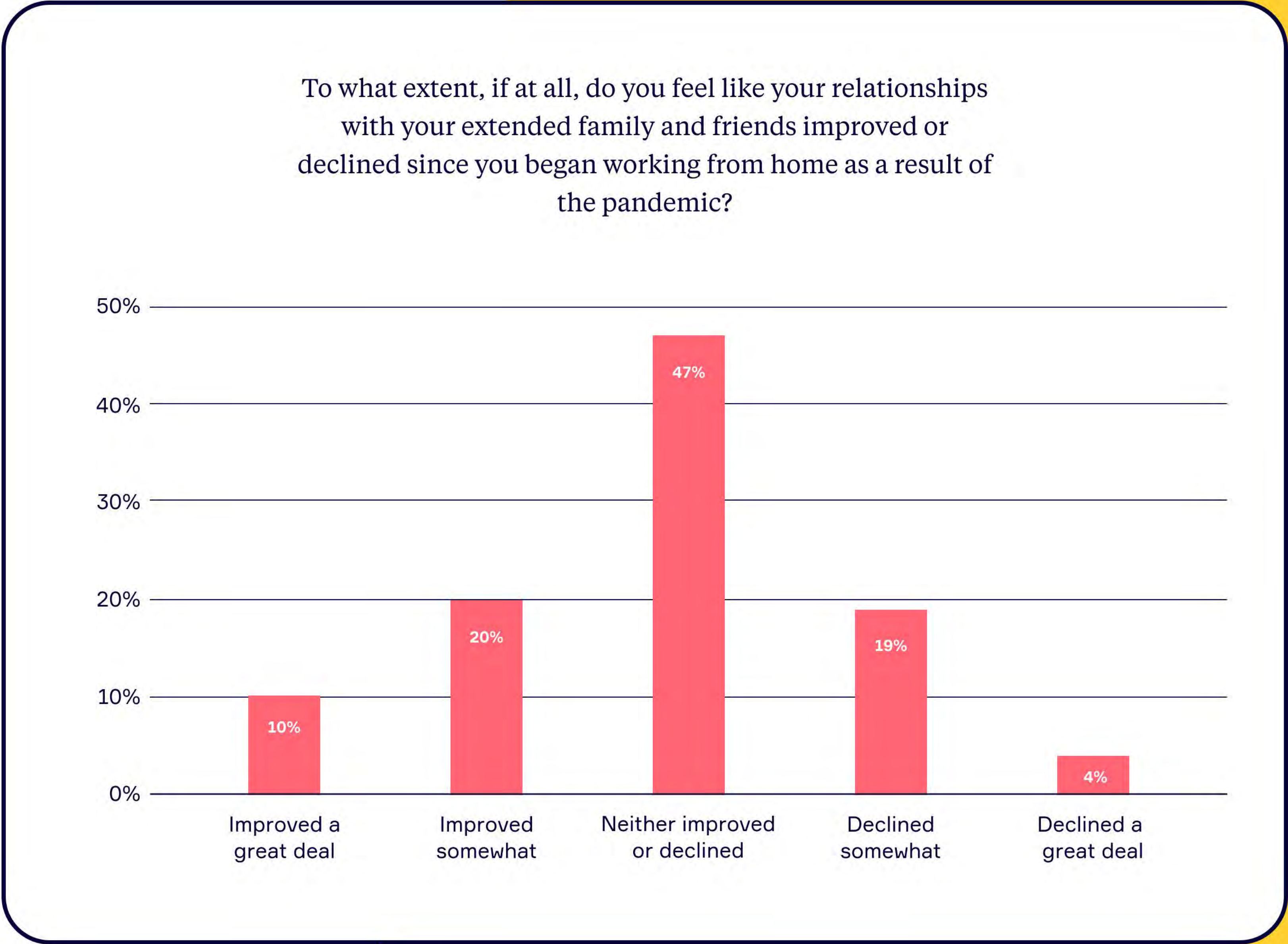
Despite the added pressure of parents taking on the role of at-home teachers, this did not negatively impact their relationships. In fact nearly two-thirds of parents with children under 18 (62%) say their relationships with their kids have improved during this period of remote work, which a large number of those saying their relationships have improved a great deal. For parents with children over 18, nearly a third (32%) reported improvements to relationships.



Friends and extended families see the smallest improvements

Nearly a third (30%) of knowledge workers say relationships with their friends and extended family have improved during this period of working from home, despite shelter in place mandates.

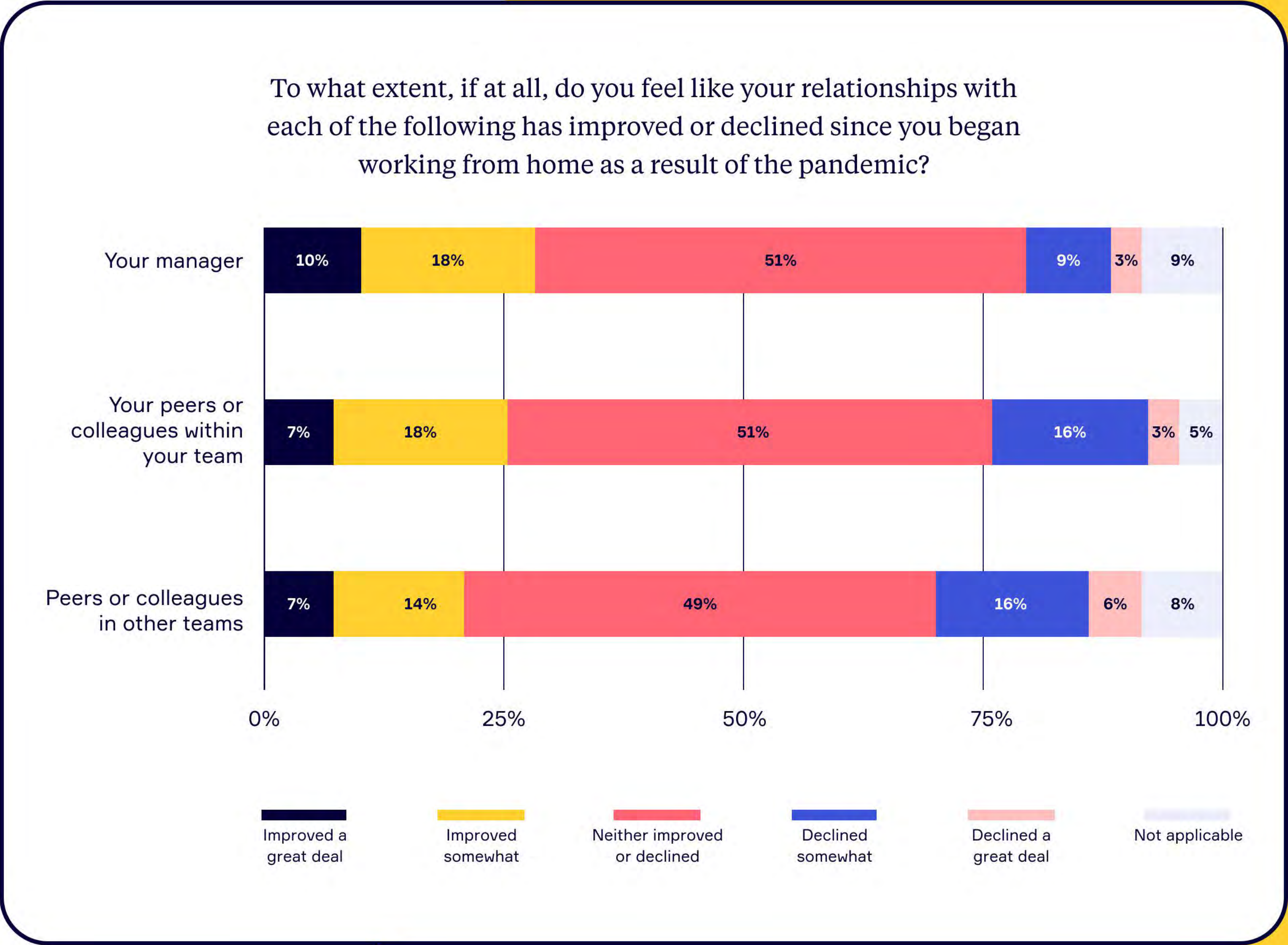
It wasn't all good news though. Nearly a quarter (23%) reported that extended relationships have declined, leading to speculation that workers are anxious to reconnect, make up for lost time, and (hopefully) return to normal gatherings in the coming year.



Mixed levels of improvement among professional relationships

Just over a quarter (28%) of respondents said relationships with their managers have improved and a quarter (25%) said relationships with their direct colleagues have improved.

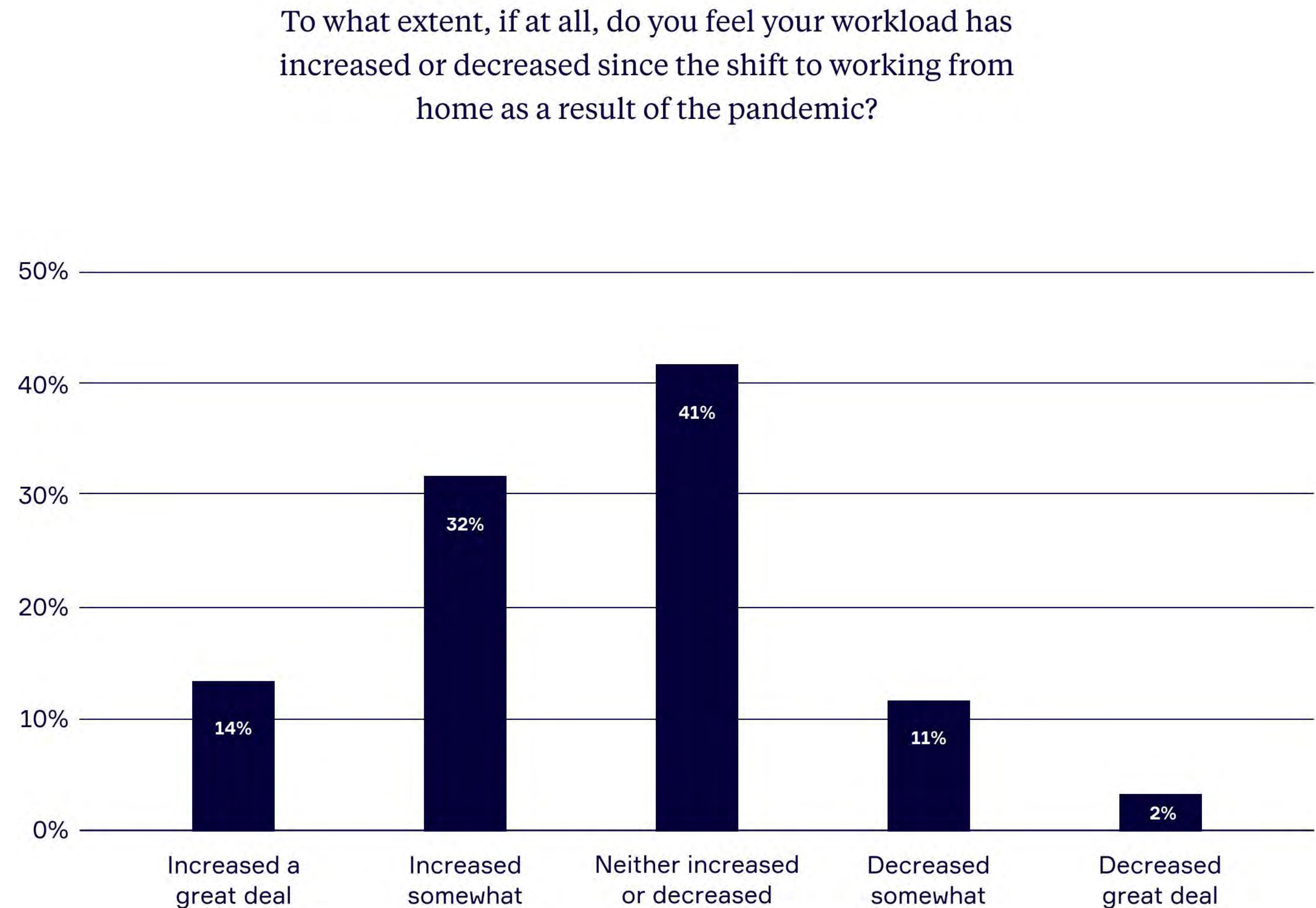
However, slightly more people said relationships with colleagues outside their team have declined (22%) than improved (21%). This may be indicative of the challenge remote work presents for creating spontaneous interactions - or “water cooler talk” - with colleagues outside of immediate teams. Such interactions have shown to be key to long-term innovation and problem solving in companies.



Almost half of respondents report an increase in their workload

The benefits stemming from working from home for both families and individuals come with an important asterisk. These relationships have improved despite the fact that nearly half (46%) of knowledge workers have reported an increase in workloads since the start of the pandemic.

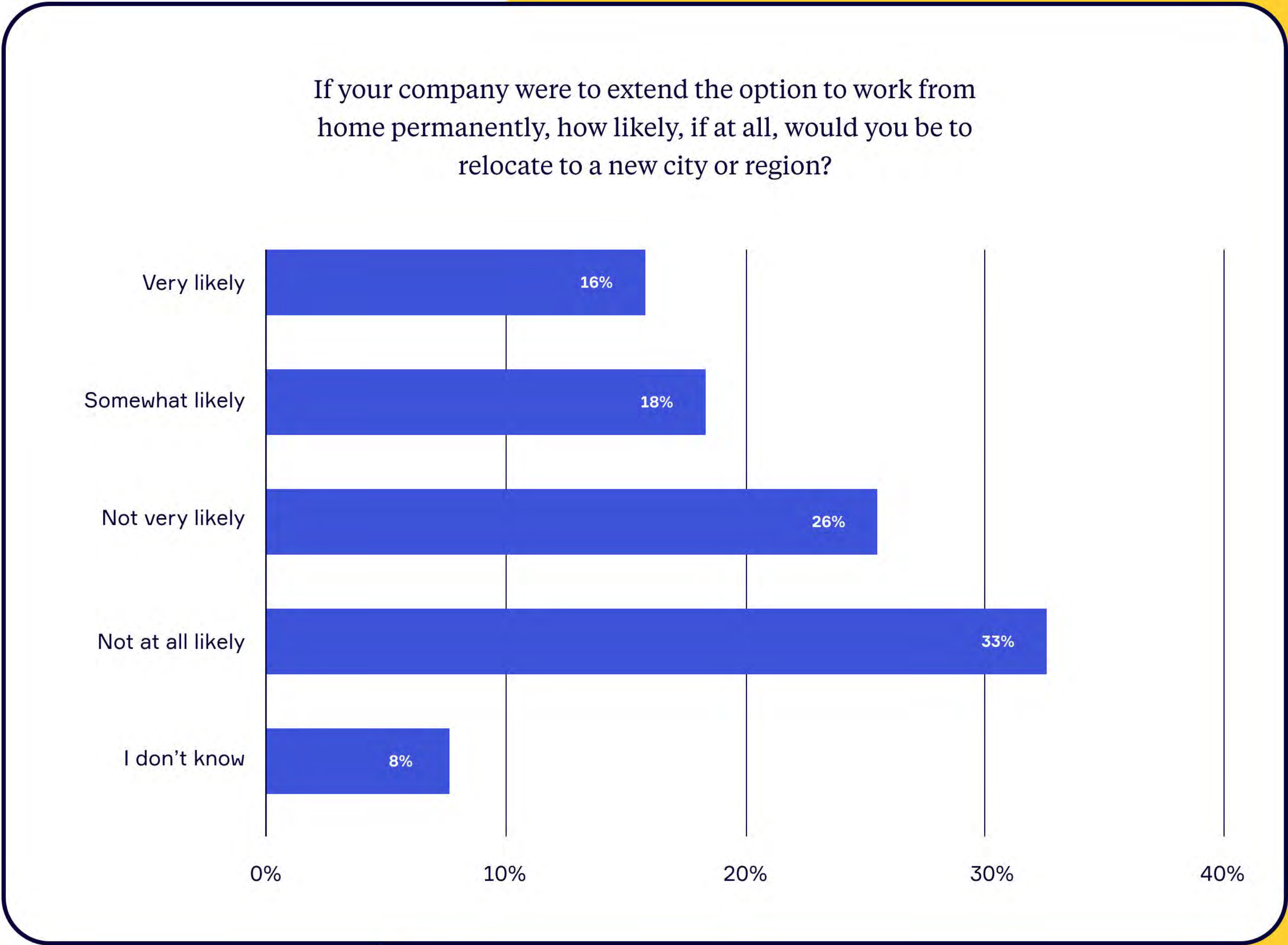
This may indicate that the flexibility of remote work allows workers to plan around time spent with family while still meeting their goals at work. It might also speak to the effect of digital tools in accelerating work.



Will permanent remote work really lead to a mass migration?

34% of respondents said they are at least “somewhat likely” to relocate to a new region if remote work is made permanent. 16% are “very likely” to relocate.

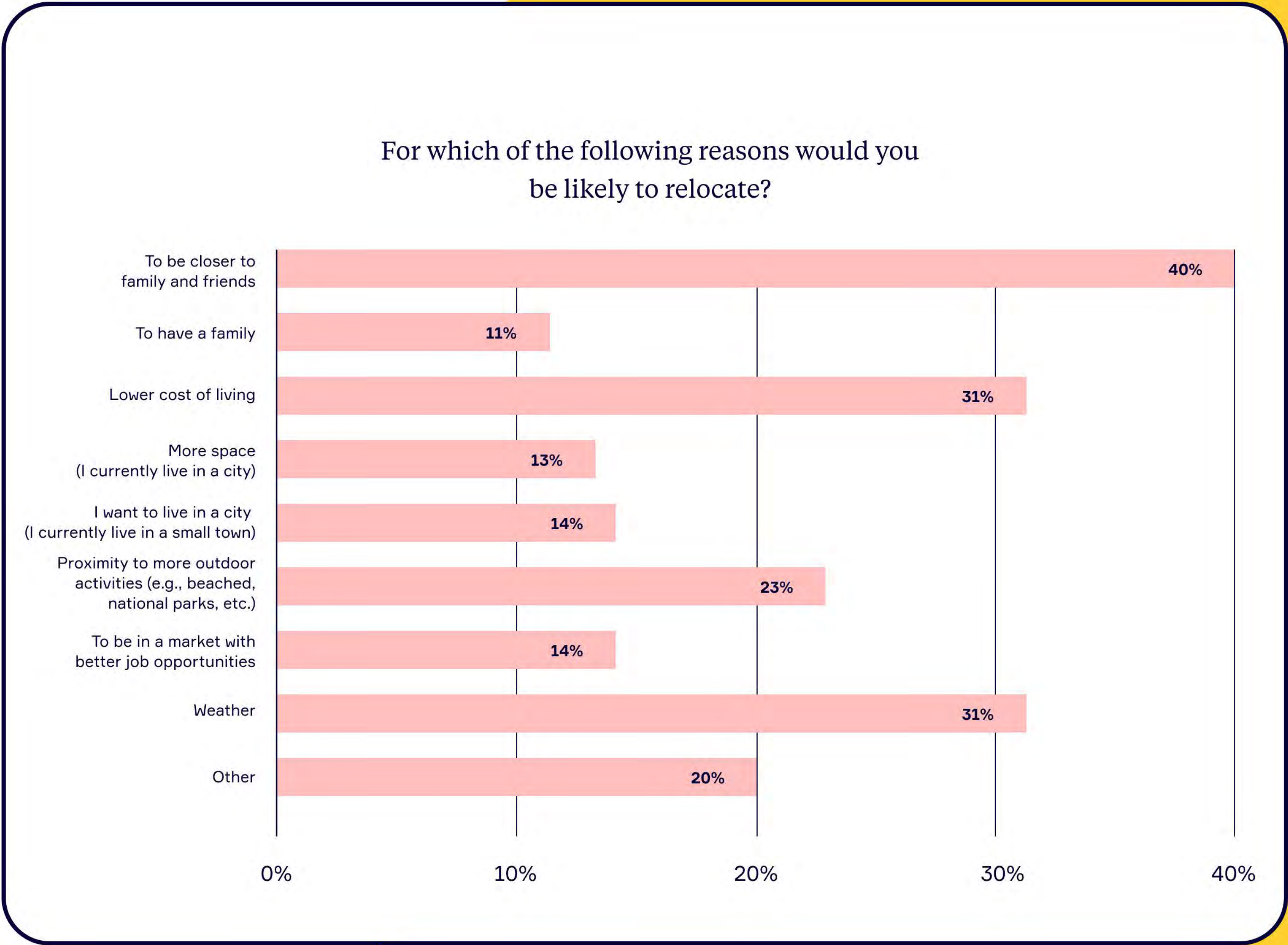
16% of the U.S. population is approximately 52 million people. While not all of these people have remote-friendly jobs, we can still see the scale of the potential migration ahead.



Will remote work reconnect us with family?

Among reasons knowledge workers say they're likely to relocate, "to be closer to family and friends" is the clear leader, with 40% of respondents selecting this option.

Other top reasons included lower cost of living, and to be in a different climate.



Engagement during remote meetings

Our survey indicates some unexpected improvements to personal relationships during remote work. "But are knowledge workers as engaged as they once were in the office? And if not, what kinds of distractions pull them away from their job?"

In this section, we'll discuss remote work engagement — specifically during virtual meetings — and try to understand [where remote work is succeeding](#) and [where it's failing in driving engagement](#).

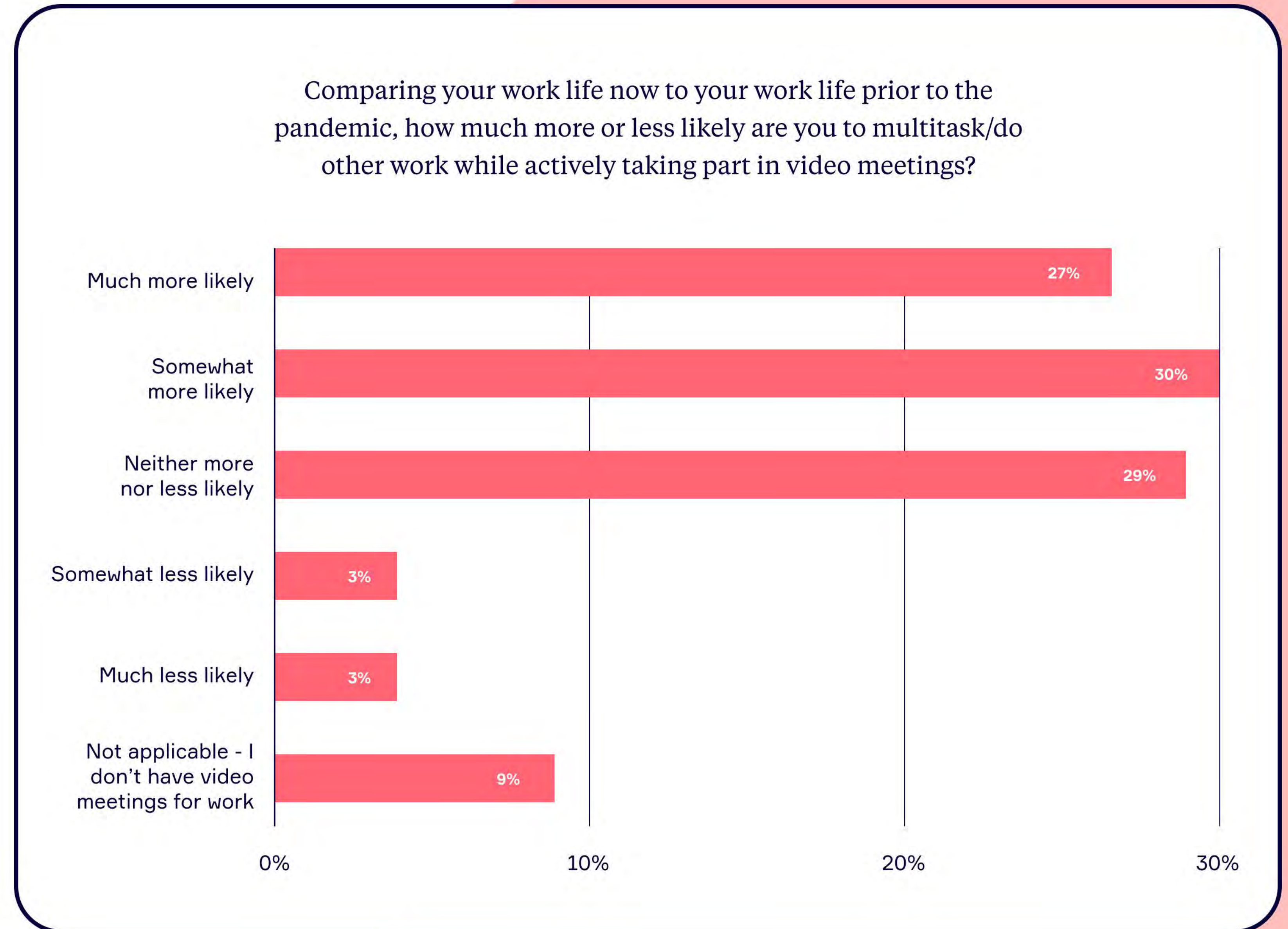


Are we paying attention during virtual meetings?

Over half (57%) of knowledge workers admit that they're more likely to multitask during virtual meetings than they were before the pandemic.

Why the change? It's possible that the nature of remote collaboration has led to an increase in the number of meetings that are not always relevant.

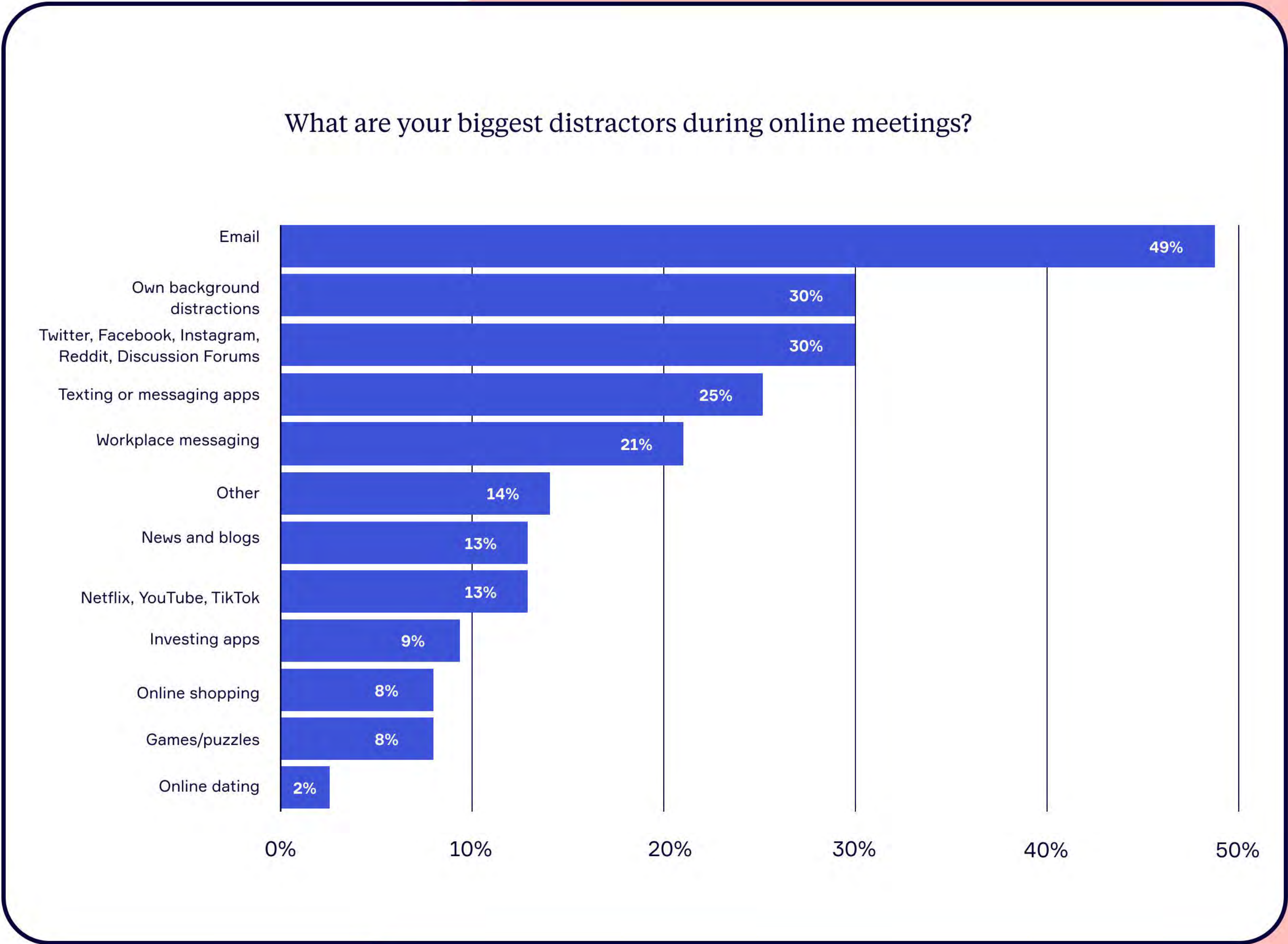
It's also possible that increasing workloads increase the pressure to multitask. Or, it could be that the privacy of working at home makes people more comfortable surfing the web during calls, knowing no one can see their screen.



So what's distracting us? It turns out – more work.

Knowledge workers identified email as the biggest distractor during virtual meetings. That's not to say non-work factors aren't on the list. "Household distractions like children and pets" tied "social media" as the second most common distractions. Other digital distractions like "texting and workplace messaging" were also cited.

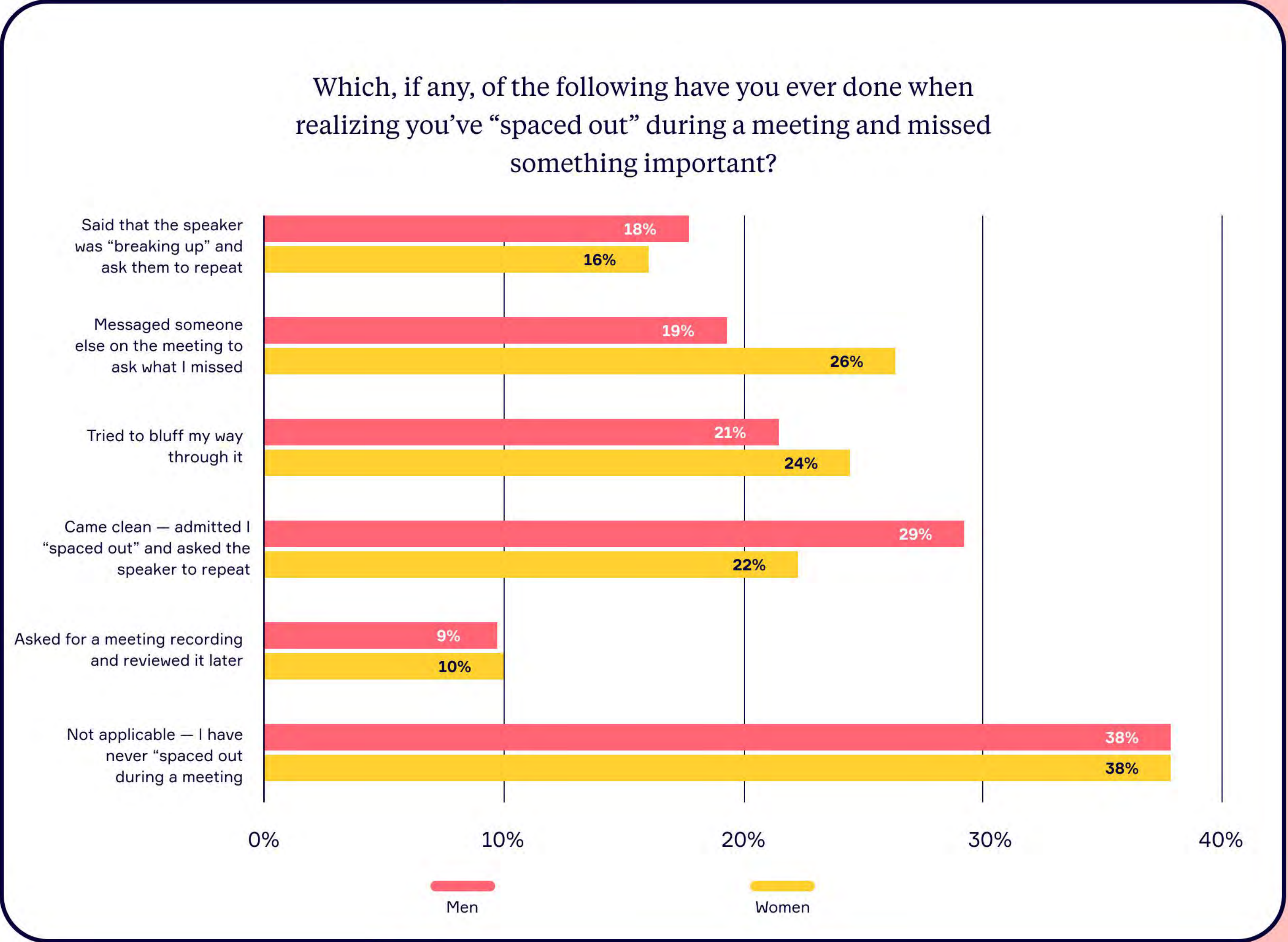
More workers reported being distracted by personal messaging and social media than by workplace messaging, meaning they may be more willing to check their text messages instead of Slack messages during meetings.



Busted! What do we say when we space out?

With all those distractions, knowledge workers are bound to get caught off guard in meetings once in a while. Over 60% of respondents admit to spacing out during meetings, but there are surprising discrepancies in how each gender admits to handling this.

For example, 32% more men than women said they have come clean and admitted to spacing out, and 36% more women than men said they have sent backchannel messages to other attendees to find out what they missed. Women were also slightly more likely to say they've tried to bluff their way through it.

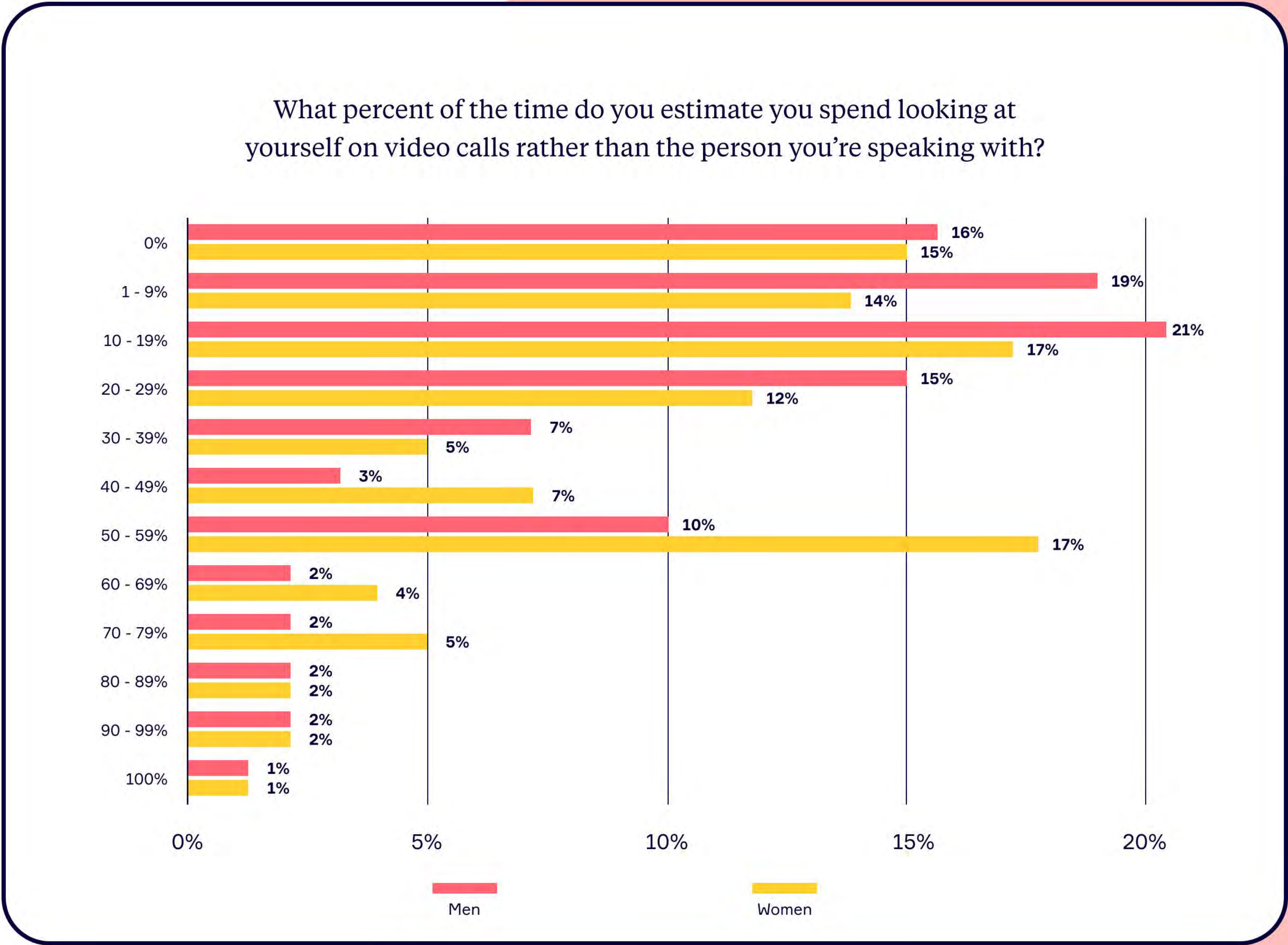


Are we distracting ourselves?

Have you ever caught yourself combing your hair in your preview on Zoom and wondered how long you've been looking at yourself? The good news is, it's possible no one even noticed.

A quarter of knowledge workers say they spend between 20% and 50% of the time on video calls looking at themselves rather than the people they are speaking with. Women were 63% more likely than men to say they look at themselves for at least half of the time in virtual meetings.

Just a third of respondents (32%) said they look at their own preview window less than 10% of the time on calls.



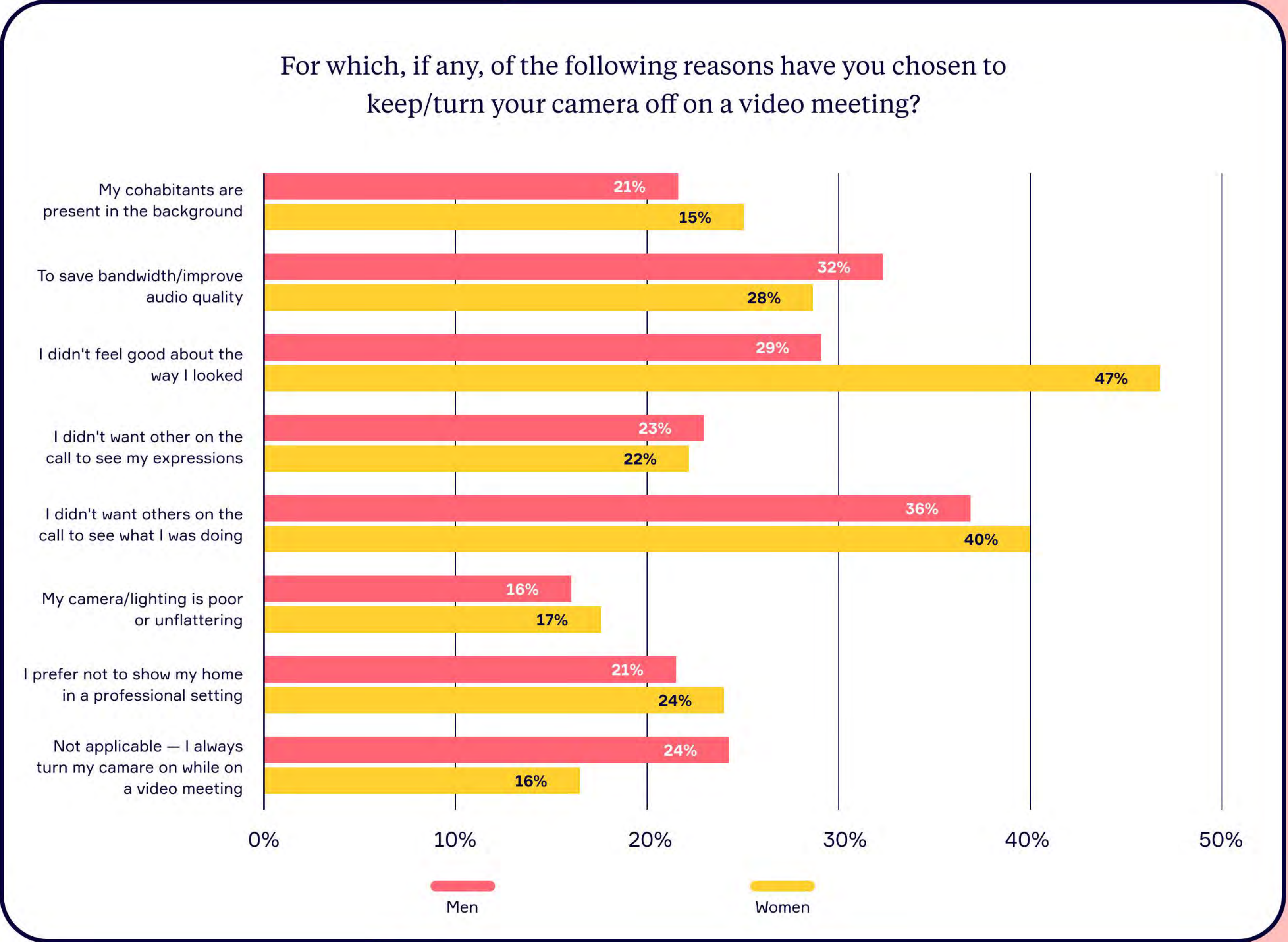
Virtual meeting etiquette: Cameras on or off?

Working from home also creates the potentially awkward situation of inviting colleagues into personal spaces via video conferencing. Some knowledge workers are more reluctant to keep their cameras on than others.

Our survey found that women may also feel more pressure to keep up a professional appearance, even while working from home.

50% more men than women said that they always turn their cameras on during video calls. And 62% more women say they've turned their cameras off because they didn't feel good about the way they looked on camera.

Both men and women are also very likely to turn off their cameras to hide the fact that they are multitasking during a meeting.



Work habits, work hours, and wellness

With remote work, the absence of a commute and professional office environment creates a new amount of freedom for workers to redefine their own routines that may ultimately affect their work performance and wellness. In this section, we'll review some of our findings about [how workers start their days](#), and [how they feel working from home](#) has affected their health.

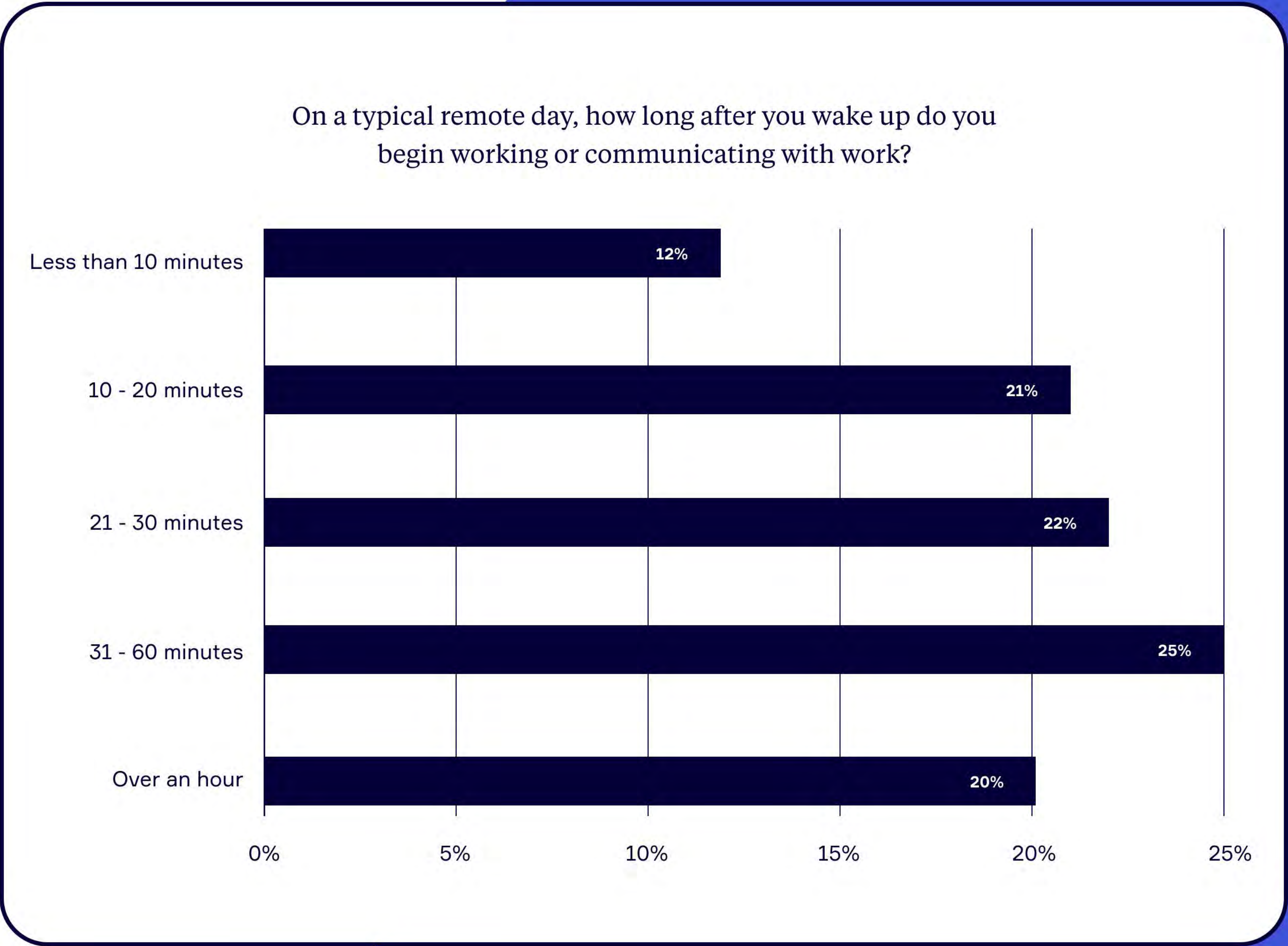


Do knowledge workers roll out of bed to work?

It turns out that more than a handful of knowledge workers are, in fact, rolling out of bed to start work in the morning. A significant number of respondents - a full one third - say they are awake “for less than twenty minutes” before they start checking in with work.

Two-thirds of workers are awake at least long enough to shower and grab a bite to eat before they open their laptops (21 minutes or more).

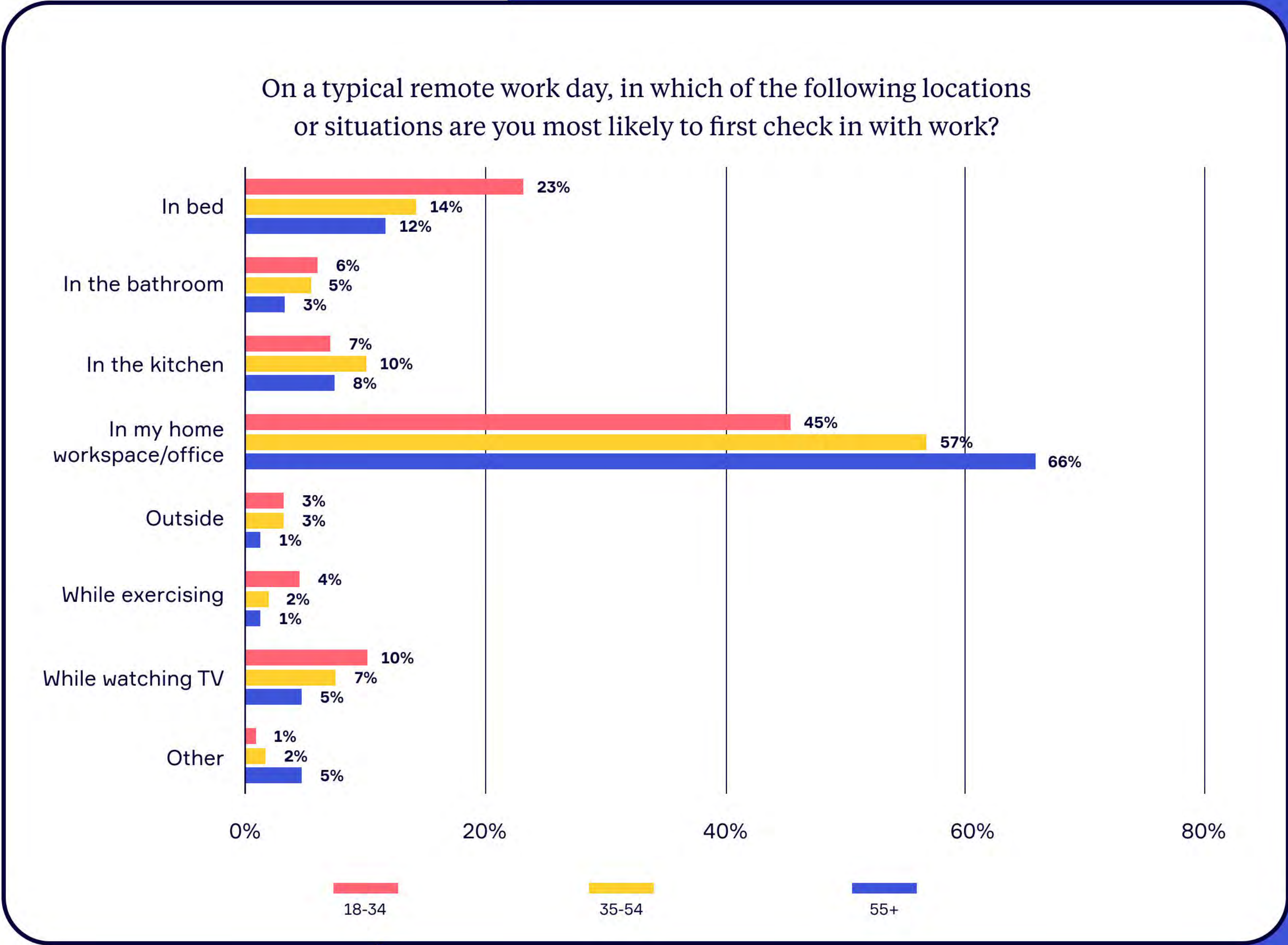
In your morning meetings — can you tell who belongs to what group?



Younger workers are less connected to their workstations

Nearly a quarter of younger knowledge workers (23%) say the first place they check in with work is in bed. In general, younger workers were more likely than older workers to begin working in unconventional settings — for example, while exercising, watching TV, or even in the bathroom.

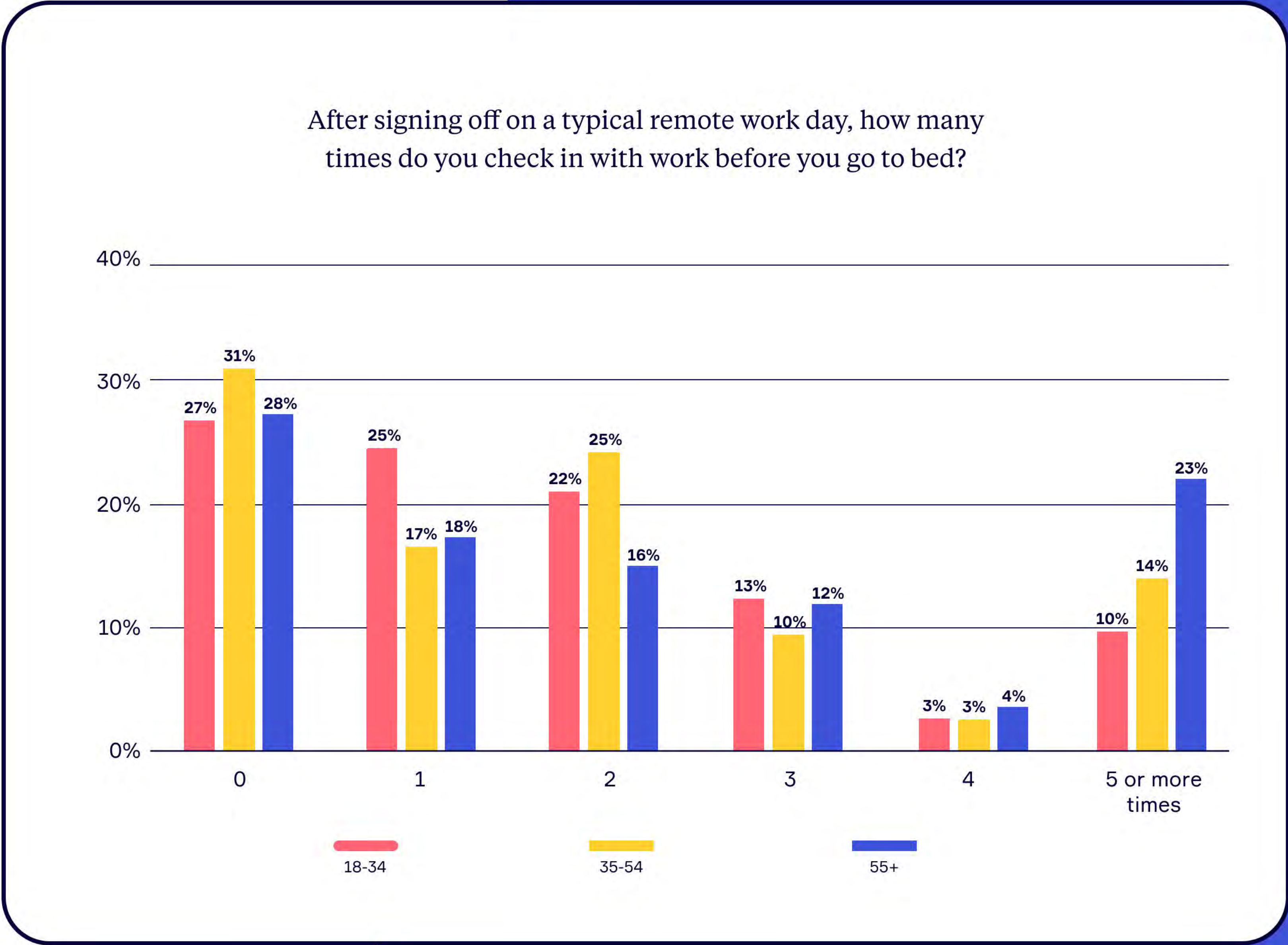
Older workers on the other hand appear more connected to conventional routines, and are much more likely to begin work in their home office or at their workstation.



Who struggles to sign off at night?

While younger knowledge workers are more likely to start work early in the morning, older workers appear to be a bit more likely to check email into the evening.

Workers over 55 years of age were more than twice as likely as workers under 34 to say they check email more than 5 times before going to bed.

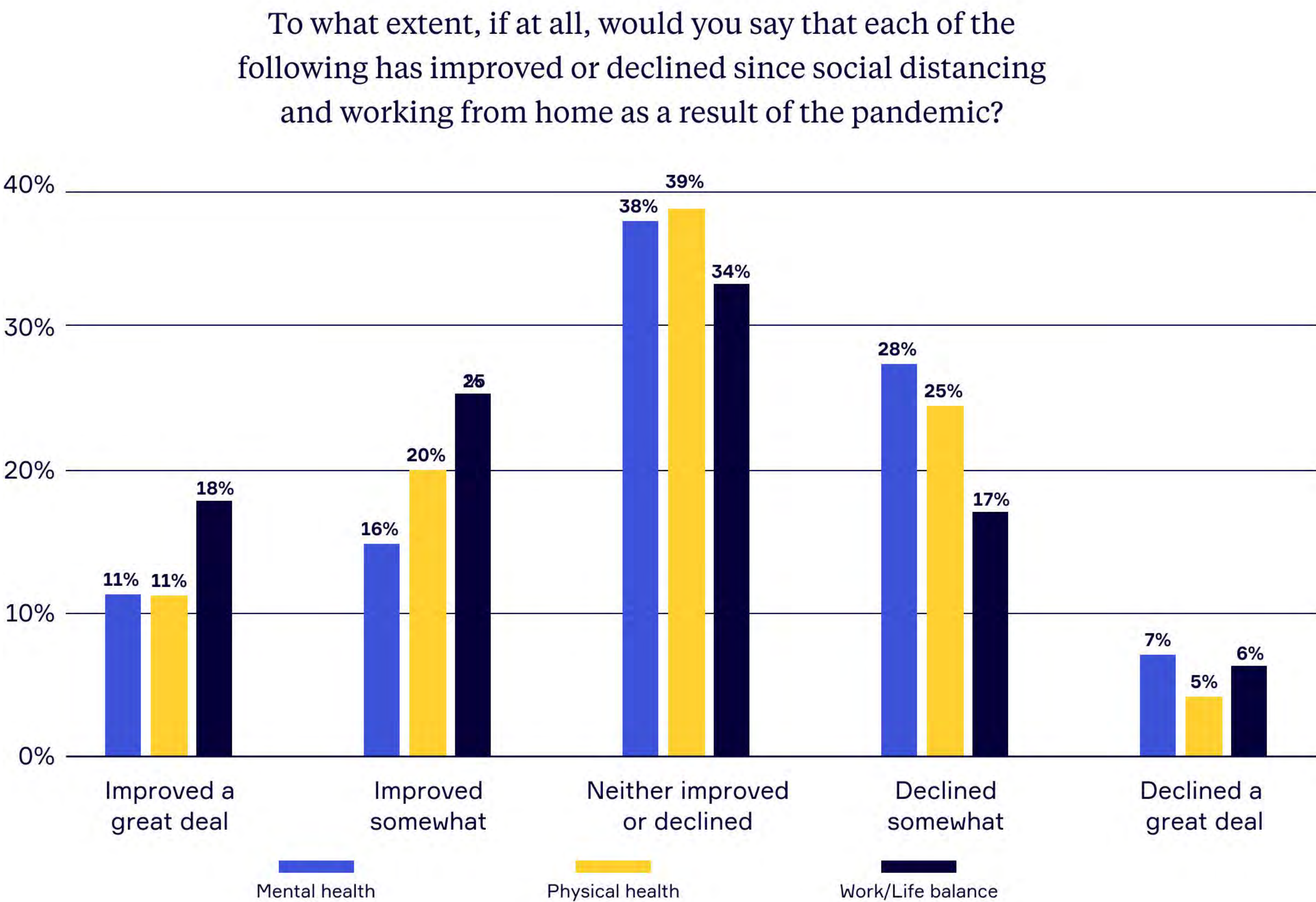


How is work from home affecting our health?

Miro's survey found, somewhat paradoxically, that the improvements to work/life balance brought about by the pandemic are not necessarily translating into overall improvements to mental health.

While 43% of respondents said that their work/life balance has had a net improvement in the last year, 35% reported that their mental health had declined - which is more than 34% larger than the group who reported seeing an improvement to their mental health.

However, it should be noted that the largest group of respondents reported that they had seen no improvements or declines to their mental health, physical health, or balance.

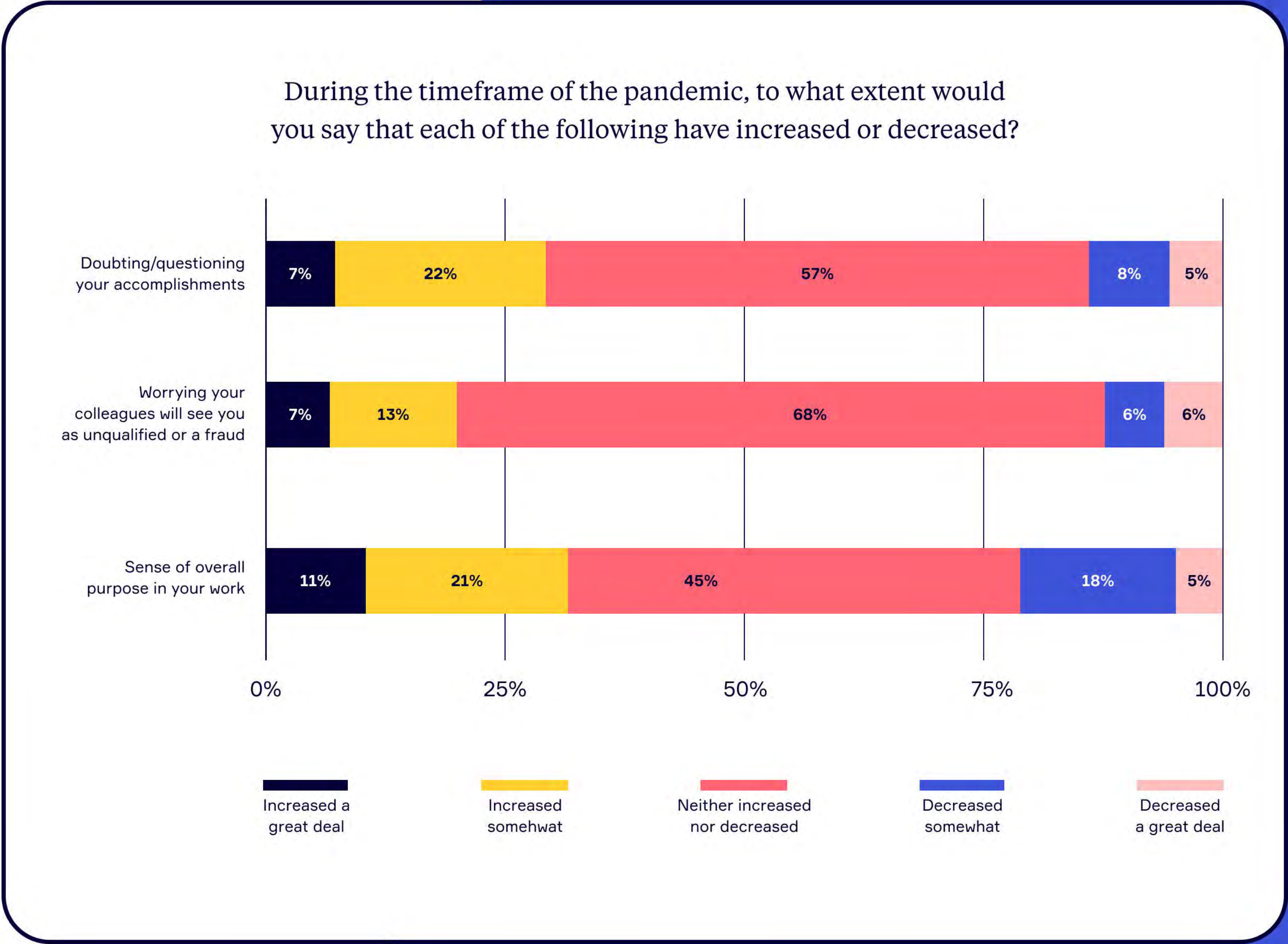


Impostor syndrome has increased during the pandemic

Impostor syndrome is often defined as experiencing a feeling of inadequacy or incompetence, even when evidence consistently demonstrates otherwise. In short, it means people chalk up their failures to incompetence, and their successes to luck.

It turns out that remote work may impact our ability to internalize success. 29% of respondents said they have experienced an increase in doubting their accomplishments since the start of the pandemic, and one-in-five say they are more likely to worry their colleagues will view them as unqualified.

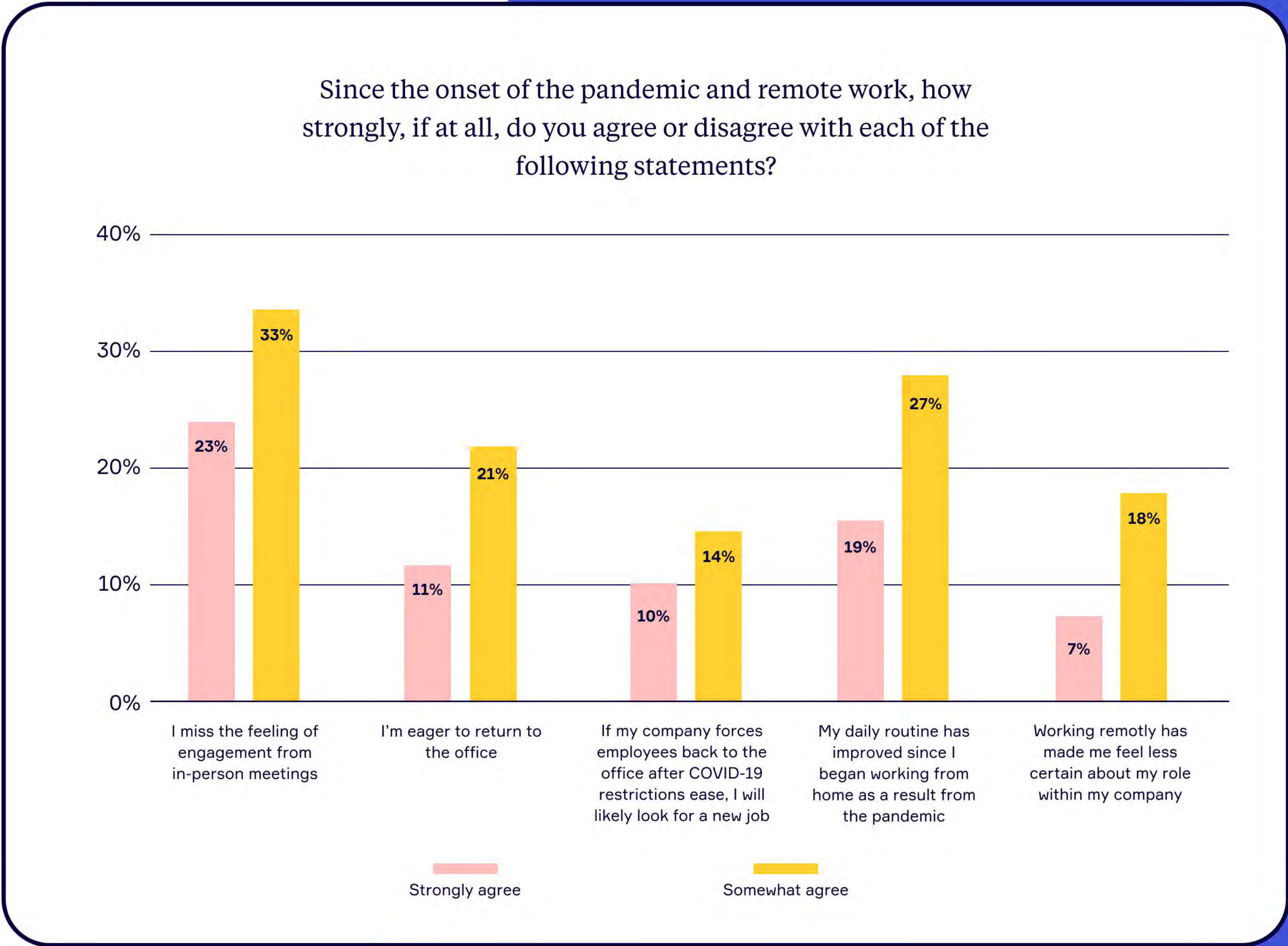
There is some good news, though: almost a third (32%) say their sense of purpose in their work has increased during the pandemic.

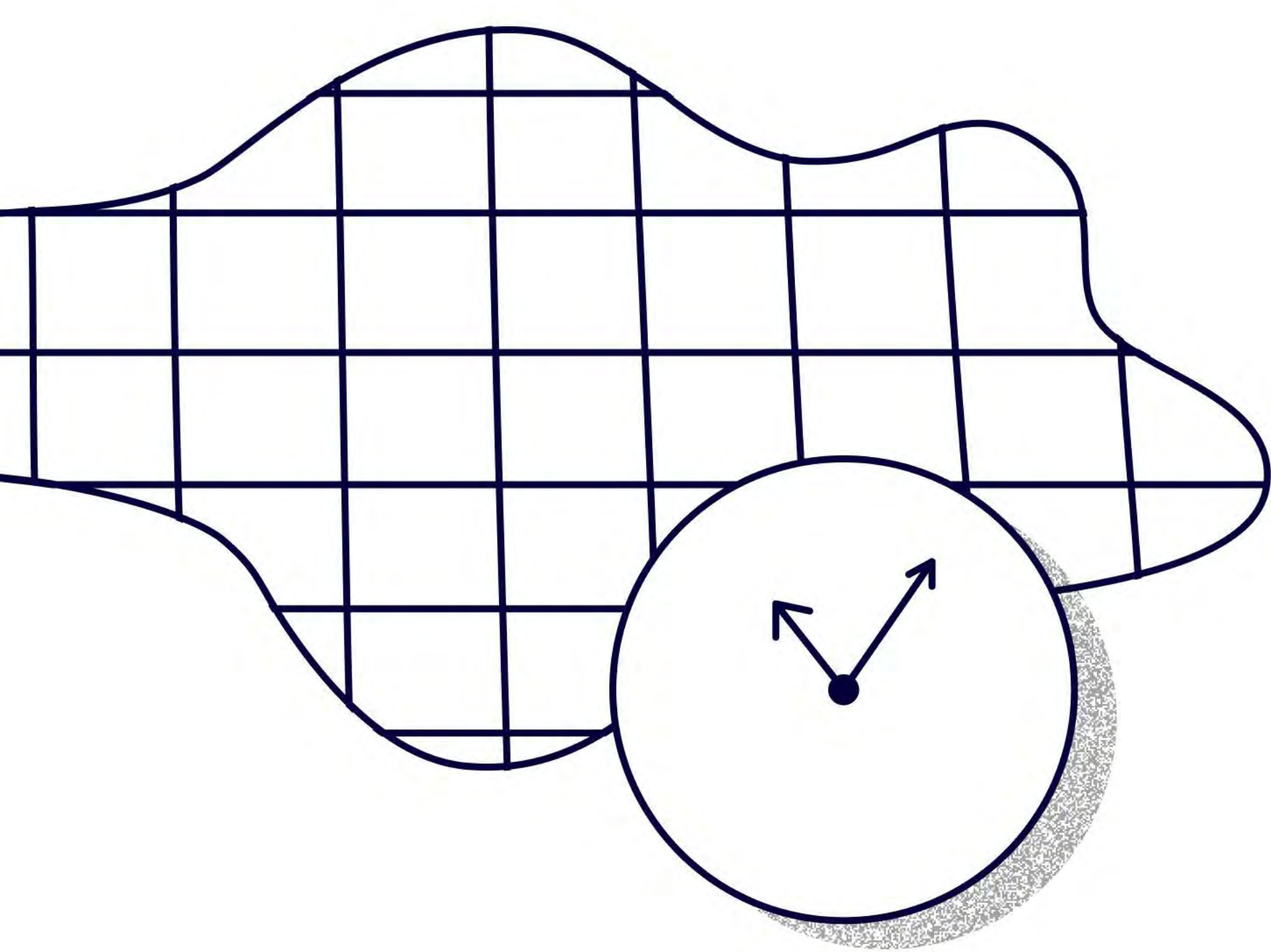


Mixed feelings on returning to work

In additional questioning, we found that employees have mixed feelings on returning to work. While over half (56%) of employees said they miss the engagement from in-person meetings, just 32% said they are eager to return to the office. And almost a quarter (24%) said they'll look for a new job if their company forces employees back to the office.

And while 46% said they agree that their daily routine has improved since working from home, the fact that more employees report declines in mental health gives us pause to question the impact of these improvements.





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