

Managing a Multigenerational Workforce with Divergent Leave Needs

Seth Turner, Founder and Senior Advisor of
AbsenceSoft



Meet Your Speaker



Seth Turner Founder & Senior Advisor AbsenceSoft

Seth Turner founded AbsenceSoft 12 years ago after many years in the leave management space at Mercer and Reed Group. He saw firsthand that HR teams were drowning in administrative tasks, leaving them with little time to truly support employees during life's most challenging moments. Seth and the founding team built AbsenceSoft to give HR the tools to manage leave and accommodations with confidence and care. The platform blends compliance across the FMLA, ADA, PWFA, and 200+ state leave laws into a deeply human approach. Today, he is a thought leader and frequent speaker at conferences, webinars, and in the press, sharing practical strategies for program design, process improvement, and the significant business impact that comes from managing leave and accommodations the right way.

Legal Disclaimer

The information provided does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice. All information, content, and materials provided and discussed are for general informational purposes only. If you have specific questions, please seek advice from independent legal counsel. Only your individual counsel can provide proper legal advice or guidance relating to your specific business needs.

Today's Agenda

- 1 Welcome
- 2 A Look at Today's Multigenerational Workforce
- 3 Caregivers and the Sandwich Generation
- 4 A Look at Mental Health Leave
- 5 Improving Leave Experiences Across Generations
- 6 Q&A

Poll

What is the most common reason employees give for taking leave in your workforce?

1. Injury and illness recovery
2. Parental leave
3. Family caregiving (child, parent, or relative)
4. Mental health-related reasons
5. Medical procedures and surgery
6. No real stand out – a mix of everything

A Look at Today's Multigenerational Workforce

The State of Leave and Accommodations

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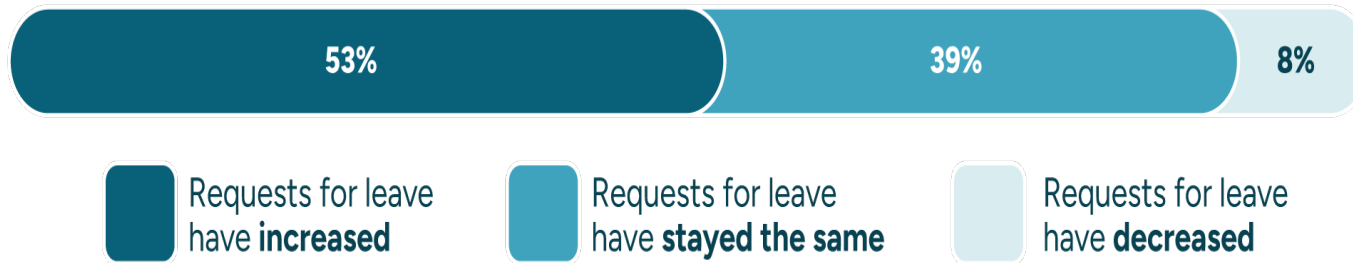
We surveyed 1,200 HR professionals about their leave and accommodations programs. Our goal was to understand how the landscape of leave and accommodations is shifting, and what it means for the workforce today.

absencesoft.com/resources/2026-state-of-leave-and-accommodations

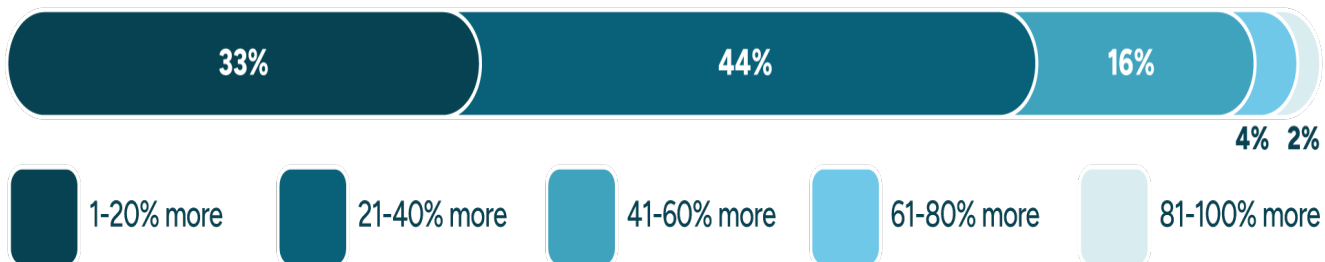


Leave Requests Continue to Rise

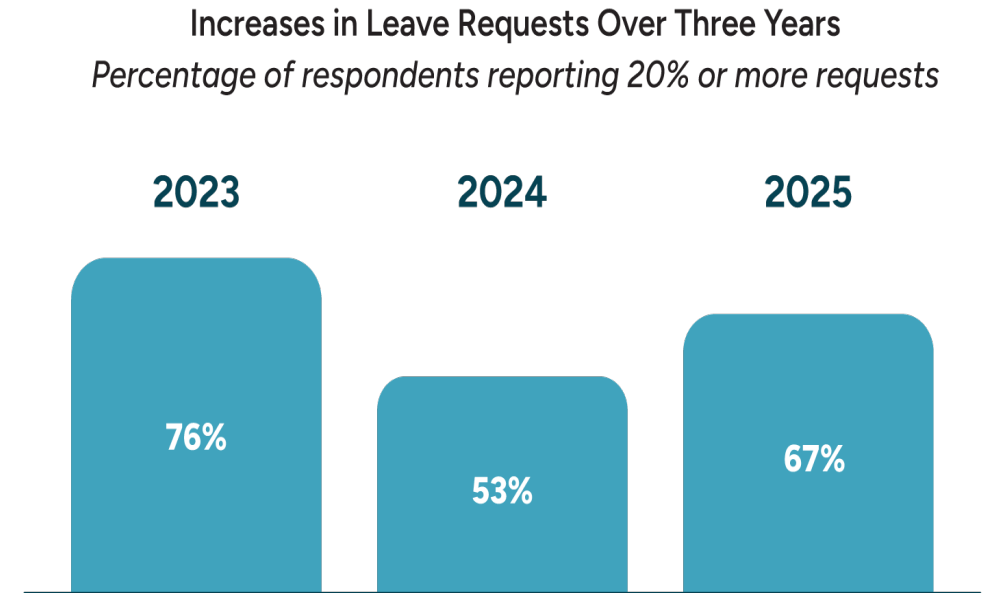
Has the number of requests for employee leaves of absence changed in the past year?



What increase in leave requests has your organization seen in the past year?



Year Over Year Look at Rising Leave Requests



Top Reasons for Employee Leave

What were the top three reasons employees requested leave? No single factor is driving leave increases in requests.

47%

to manage mental
health issues

37%

caring for an aging
relative

34%

caring for a sick child

31%

the death of a loved
one/bereavement

Employee Experience Report

The 2026 Leave and Accommodations Employee Experience Report

We surveyed 2,000 employees at companies with 500 or more employees. 1,000 had requested and taken a leave of absence in the past three years, and the other 1,000 had requested a job accommodation under the ADA or PWFA.

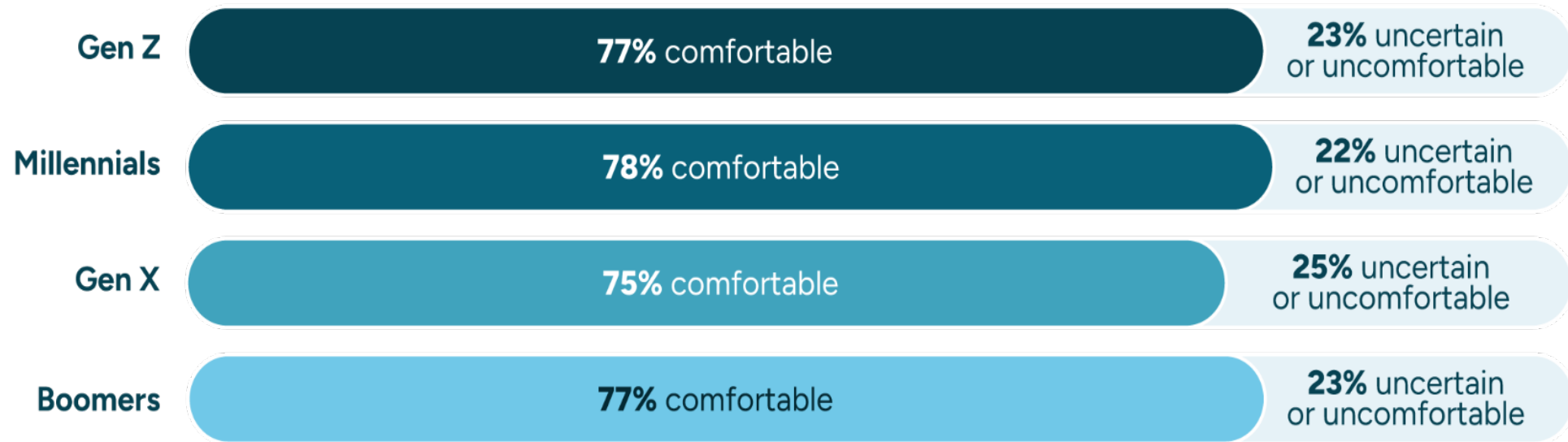
We asked about their experience, why and what requests they made, how it went, and the impact it had on them. The insights paint a picture of a modern workforce filled with both challenges and unique opportunities.

absencesoft.com/resources/2026-leave-and-accommodations-employee-experience-report/



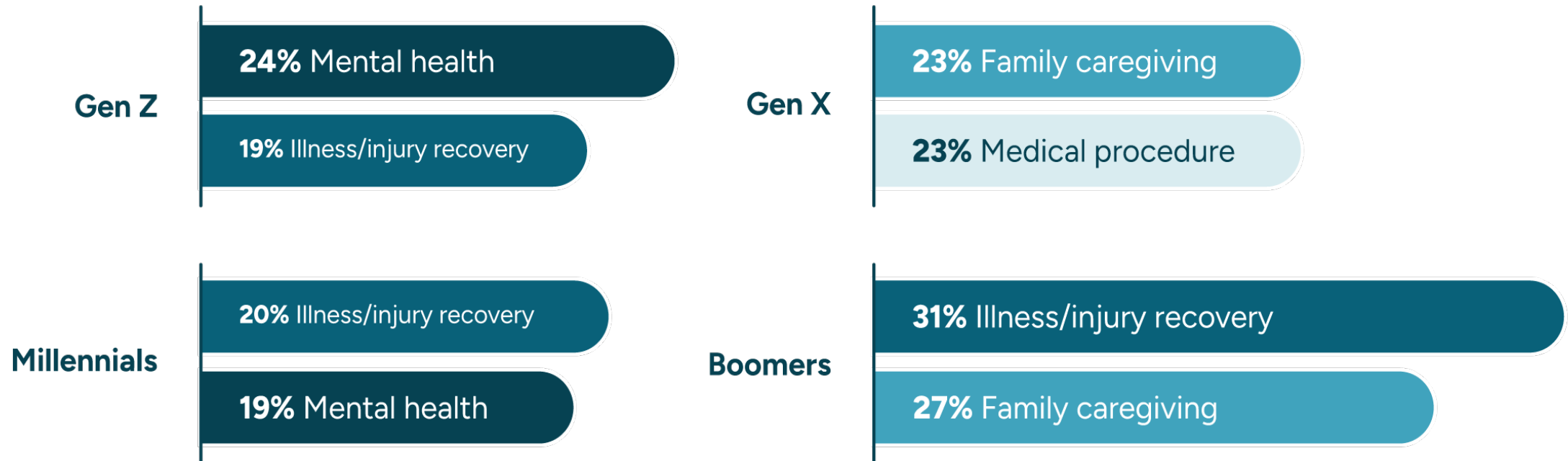
All Generations are Driving Leave Requests

Every generation is comfortable asking for leave:



Generational Leave Drivers

The reasons for leave differ across generations:



Caregivers and the Sandwich Generation

Caregiving in the Workforce

63M

Americans are caregivers

That's a nearly 50% increase since 2015, as more families take on complex and long-term care responsibilities.

30%

Are part of the sandwich generation

These caregivers are supporting children and aging parents at the same time, often while juggling full-time jobs.

40%

Are providing high-intensity care

From managing medications to providing daily care, many caregivers are now delivering around-the-clock support.

92%

Feel heightened stress and anxiety

When 92% of caregivers report heightened stress, mental health support alone isn't enough — families need real relief.

50%

Report a financial toll

Half say caregiving has negatively impacted their finances, and 1 in 4 are taking on significant debt to provide care.

70%

Of caregivers are employed

Most caregivers are balancing their role alongside a career, impacting performance, absenteeism, and turnover.

Policy Gaps & Stacked Entitlements

- Many leave policies still miss caregiving needs, with short durations, strict eligibility, or no eldercare coverage.
- Caregivers often stack sick time, PTO, FMLA, and state leave to support a family member over months.
- Tracking these overlapping leaves manually is difficult and increases compliance risk, especially when entitlements vary by state.
- Leave management platforms can track entitlements automatically and keep HR, managers, and employees aligned.

Policy	Eligible
Family Medical Leave Act	Yes
Oregon Family Leave - Pregnancy/Maternity	Yes
Oregon Paid Leave	Yes
Oregon Paid Leave - Job Protection	Yes
Oregon Family Leave	Yes
ABC Company Parental Leave	Yes

Caregiver Leave is a Critical Support

37%

of job-seekers said that caregiving leave was the most important benefit a future employer could offer



Improving Caregiver Leave Benefits & Policies

- Strong caregiver leave programs offer flexibility, extended family coverage, and enough time for real recovery or transition.
- Leave policies should include expanded bereavement leave options, recognizing that not all caregiving journeys have positive outcomes.
- Business needs must be balanced with employee realities, using clear eligibility guidelines and structured return-to-work processes.
- Policies that anticipate caregiving demands, not just parental leave, strengthen workforce stability and loyalty.



Im p r o v i n g L e a v e E x p e r i e n c e s A c r o s s G e n e r a t i o n s

In Their Own Words: Gen Z

“I wish someone had walked me through the process instead of handing me a stack of PDFs and leaving me to figure it out on my own.”

“I wish my employer had taken more time to communicate what support options were available, so it never had to get to the point of needing leave.”

“The entire experience was poor. If I had the chance, I would leave that job.”

In Their Own Words: Millennials

“I was made to feel like requesting paid time off was something shameful. On top of that, I had to get approval from three different managers. The process needs to be simpler and more fair.”

“I wish I had advocated more for myself and stayed out longer to protect my mental health.”

“Having a single portal where I could upload documents and communicate with my HR rep would have made the whole process so much better.”

In Their Own Words: Gen X

“I wish the process had been clearer and more supportive from the start. Not knowing what documents were needed or what the timeline looked like added unnecessary stress.”

“I wish the process had been more flexible and better communicated. Returning to work felt far more stressful than it needed to.”

“I wish people would stop questioning me when I say I need to take leave.”

In Their Own Words: Baby Boomers

“Looking back, I wish I had told my HR manager about my plans much earlier. I needed three months to care for my spouse, and more lead time would have helped everyone.”

“I wish the people handling my leave had been kinder. My husband had open heart surgery, and the nurse at the facility was not compassionate during an already difficult time.”

“I wish I hadn’t let my hesitation hold me back for so long. I almost didn’t request the leave at all, and I regret how reluctant I was when I finally did.”

Common Issues Across All Leave Experiences

47%

reported paperwork and
deadline issues

44%

reported issues with pay
and benefits

32%

experienced confusing or
unclear processes

16%

lost hours or
responsibilities, got
demoted, or let go entirely

What All Generations Say They Want

46%

want to manage the
entire process from a
mobile device

27%

want faster decisions
and follow-up

45%

wanted self-service
portals and text
messaging

“Definitely would be
easier to do everything
from my phone, through a
company website portal,
or something instead of
filling out paperwork.”

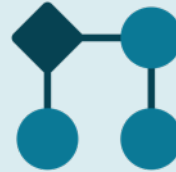


Supporting Workforces with Better Technology



Request Intake

SSO through HRIS, self-service portal, or call centers can all be offered to improve request experience.



Workflows

Workflows can be created based on case complexity or certain types of employee benefit levels, such as physicians vs support staff.



Communications

Automated reminders, proactive communications with additional resources, and personalized notes all improve the experience.

Live Q&A



A Look at Mental Health Leave

The Prevalence of Mental Health Challenges

- One in five U.S. adults experience mental illness every year.
- For one in 20 adults, those experiences are considered serious. Two of the most common disorders are anxiety and depression.
- At some point in their lives, 31.1% of U.S. adults experience an anxiety disorder.
- Another 7.8% experienced at least one major depressive episode in the past year alone.
- The larger your workforce, the more important it is to understand the challenges these employees face —and be ready to support them.



Mental Health Leave Can Be Challenging

- Mental health conditions often don't follow a clear timeline. There may not be a defined start or end date, unless it is outpatient treatment.
- Unlike surgery or pregnancy, recovery can be unpredictable or non-linear.
- Long-term treatment (therapy and psychiatrist visits) leads to intermittent leave needs that can change week to week.
- HR teams may struggle to define the appropriate duration or documentation standards.
- Delays in response or eligibility review can increase anxiety or worsen symptoms.

Only 19%

of employees feel comfortable disclosing their mental health condition to their employer

1 in 10

employees worry about disclosure of their condition to their co-workers

Im p r o v i n g M e n t a l H e a l t h L e a v e P o l i c i e s

- Clarify privacy expectations: managers should never discuss an employee's condition with others.
- Help managers recognize when a leave request may qualify under the ADA, and make sure they follow process to send the request to HR.
- Ensure job descriptions and essential duties are well-documented, especially for roles where accommodations may apply.
- Apply the same criteria to every mental health-related leave request, to keep processes and decisions consistent.



Join Us In Washington DC For Our:

Leave and Accommodations Leadership Summit



Nov. 3

The Leave & Accommodations Leadership Summit brings together senior HR executives, benefits leaders, and industry consultants for a day centered around innovation, measuring impact, and building your network.



Nov. 4

Customer Exclusive

AbsenceSoft customers are invited to stay for a bonus day of programming, focused on diving into our product roadmap, a platform optimization workshop, and breakout groups for peer-led discussions with fellow customers.

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Questions?

For Additional Questions:

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