# Results of Mental Health Survey of Entrepreneurs

as of September 27, 2023

Conducted September 18 - 27, 2023

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For questions, comments or feedback, please contact Tina Phillips. <u>tina@hangonhealth.org</u>



October 18, 2023

To my fellow Nashville entrepreneurs,

First, I want to thank each person who participated in my recent survey, Mental Health of Entrepreneurs.



The idea for this survey came from part of my new mission: to help those who are suffering from mental health disorders know they are not alone.

When I launched my business development consulting company 615innovations in July 2020, I was feeling pretty confident. As a type-A, problem solver who rarely evaluates risk - which I learned is a trait of Bipolar II - I jumped in head-first. As I was going through the roller coaster of emotions that come with owning your own business, I wondered if any of my entrepreneur friends were going through the same feelings and challenges. Were they as stressed as me? Anxious? Frustrated? Depressed? Had they stopped exercising? Did they stop seeing friends and stop spending time with significant others? Whenever I asked, though, everyone always said "Things are great!" And for some reason, I just kept thinking to myself, "There's no way!".

Which leads me to today. I conducted this survey for three reasons: first, to selfishly validate my own thoughts and feelings among people in my community. Second, because when I started to share my story, openly and honestly, others started to share their stories. Had I not done that, I'd continue to feel very alone and lost. The responses to this survey give credibility to those feelings. Finally, I am a firm believer that everything happens for a reason. I now believe that my entrepreneurial journey, and the mental health issues that transpired, were so that I could find my new purpose in life: supporting entrepreneurs' mental (and physical) wellbeing.

#### Now, a few quick highlights about the survey:

- Survey ran for 9 days (September 18 27, 2023).
- There were 126 respondents.
- It was distributed through social media and business-oriented organizations such as the Nashville EC & TN Women Connect
- Survey questions
  - Some questions come from my experience as an entrepreneur
  - Some from where I am in life in general
  - A portion are directly from a standard mental health assessment one would take when working with a mental health professional

As of now, there is no "what's next" for the survey. It's purely an FYI. In time, I plan to provide resources to help the entrepreneurial community, so stay tuned. (<u>Click here</u> if you want to sign up for my future newsletter!)

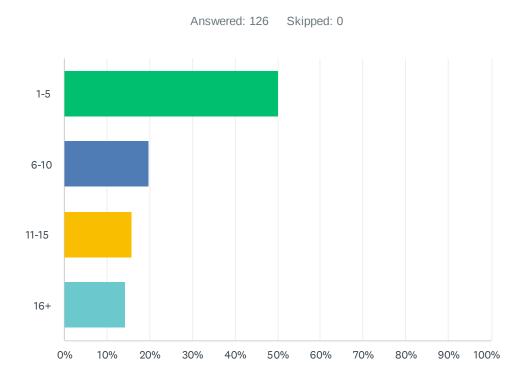
Again, I truly appreciate those who participated. If you're willing to share, I'd love to hear your stories as I figure out how best to serve this community. (Judgment free and confidential, of course!) I also welcome any ideas and feedback on how I can help you and the community.

For more on my story and updates on my mission, you can follow me on LinkedIn.

All my best, *Tina Phillips* Hang On Health (and Founder of 615innovations LLC) <u>tina@hangonhealth.org</u> Website to come!



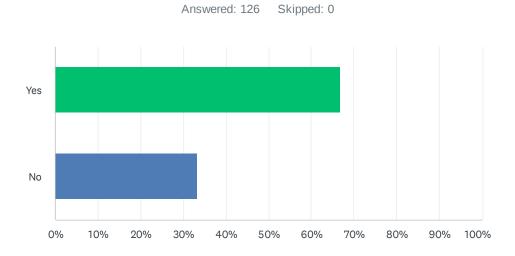
#### Q1 How many years of experience do you have as a founder?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1-5	50.00%	63
6-10	19.84%	25
11-15	15.87%	20
16+	14.29%	18
TOTAL	12	26



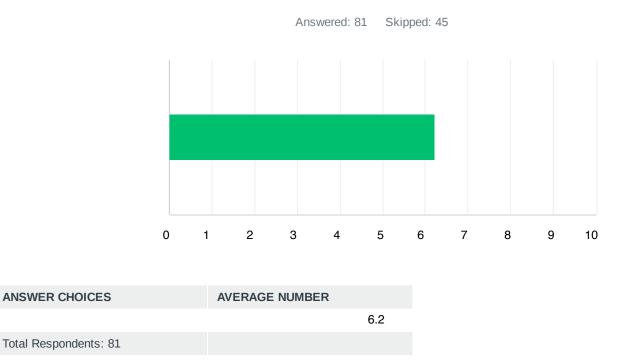
# Q2 Do you manage a team? ("Team" can include W2, 1099 or hourly workers.)



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	66.67%	84
No	33.33%	42
TOTAL		126

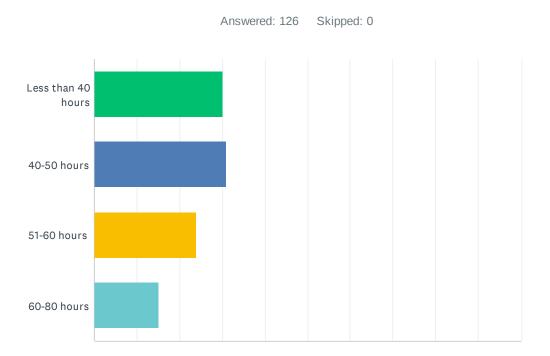


## Q3 If you answered yes to Q2, on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being "not stressful" and 10 being "very stressful", how stressful is managing a team?





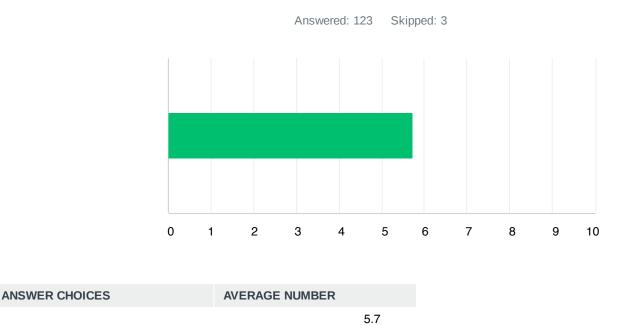
## Q4 On average, how many hours a week do you spend working on your business?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 40 hours	30.16%	38
40-50 hours	30.95%	39
51-60 hours	23.81%	30
60-80 hours	15.08%	19
TOTAL		126



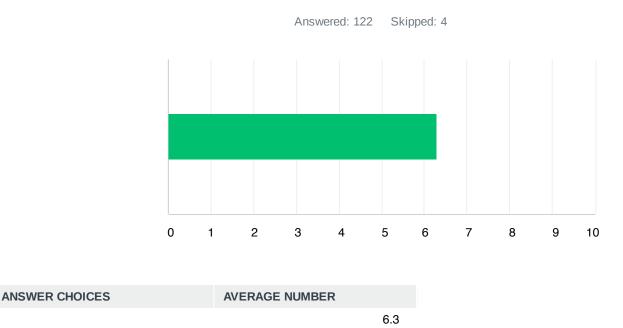
#### Q5 On a scale of 1-10, 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "very satisfied" how satisfied are you with your personal life? (e.g., relationships with friends, personal growth, hobbies)



Total Respondents: 123



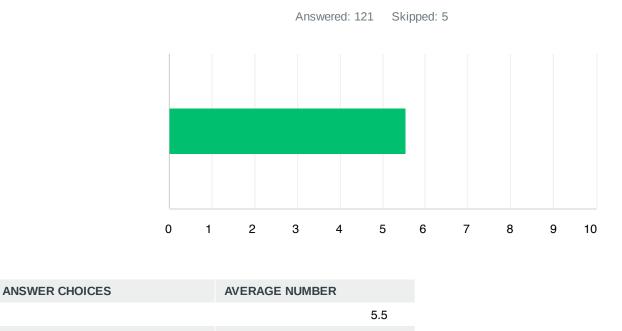
# Q6 On a scale of 1-10, 1 being "no impact" and 10 being "significantly impacted", how much is your family affected by you owning your own business?



Total Respondents: 122



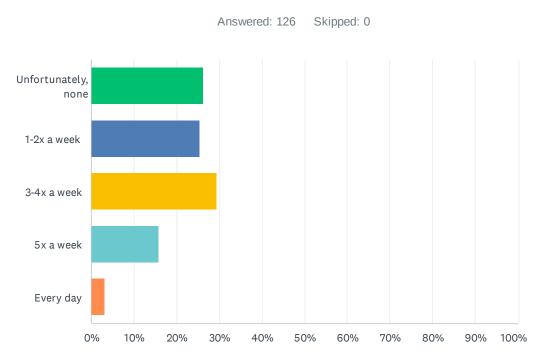
## Q7 On a scale of 1-10, 1 being "not healthy" and 10 being "very healthy", how would you rate your eating and nutritional habits?



Total Respondents: 121



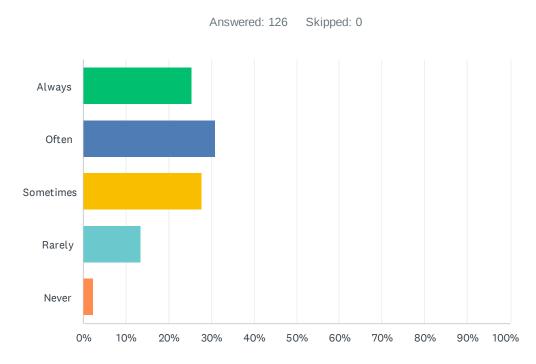
# Q8 On average, how often do you exercise or do some kind of physical activity each week such as cardio, weights, sports, or workout classes like yoga and pilates?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Unfortunately, none	26.19% 33
1-2x a week	25.40% 32
3-4x a week	29.37% 37
5x a week	15.87% 20
Every day	3.17% 4
TOTAL	126



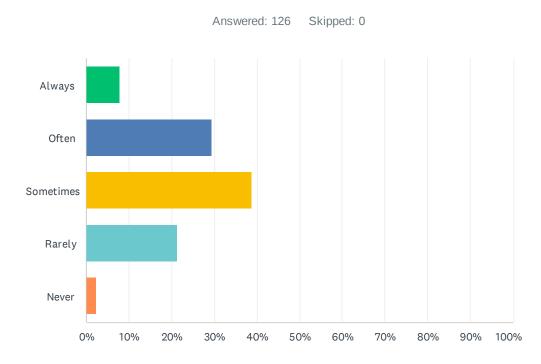
#### Q9 How often are you concerned with your mental health?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Always	25.40% 32
Often	30.95% 39
Sometimes	27.78% 35
Rarely	13.49% 17
Never	2.38% 3
TOTAL	126



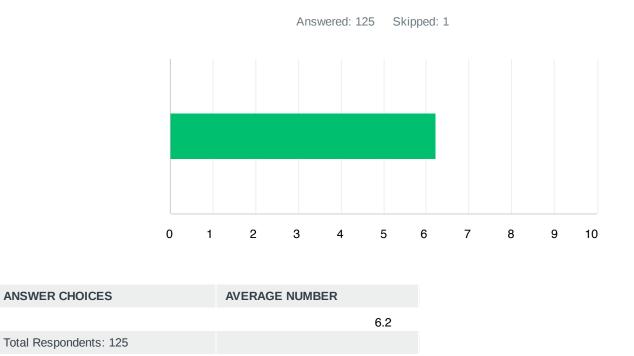
#### Q10 How often do you prioritize your mental health and self care?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Always	7.94% 10
Often	29.37% 37
Sometimes	38.89% 49
Rarely	21.43% 27
Never	2.38% 3
TOTAL	126

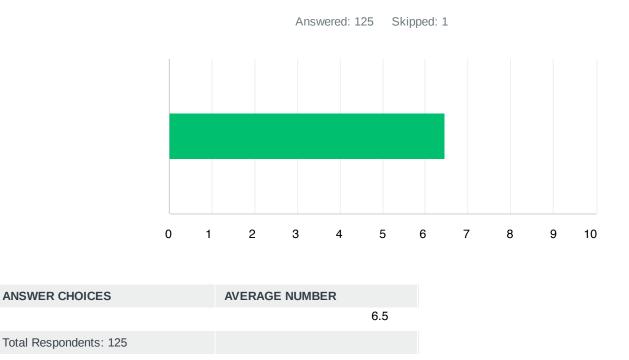


## Q11 On a sale of 1-10, with 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "great", how would you rate your self-esteem?



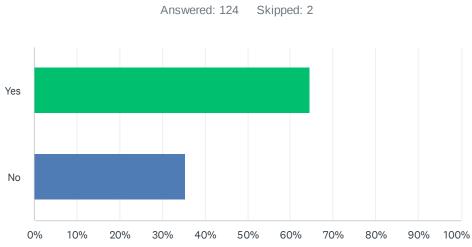


# Q12 On a scale of 1-10, 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "very" how confident do you feel about your career?





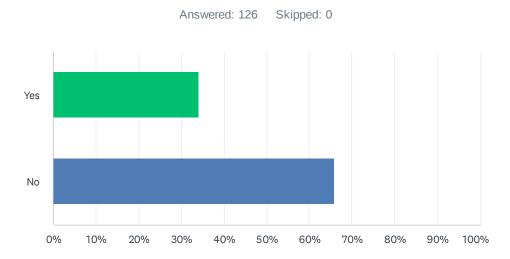
## Q13 Have you found your life's purpose?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	64.52%	80
No	35.48%	44
TOTAL		124



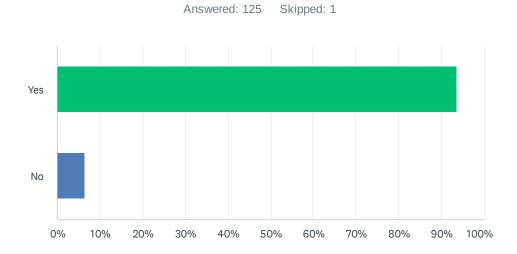
## Q14 Have you achieved the level of success you envisioned for yourself at your current age?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	34.13%	43
No	65.87%	83
TOTAL		126



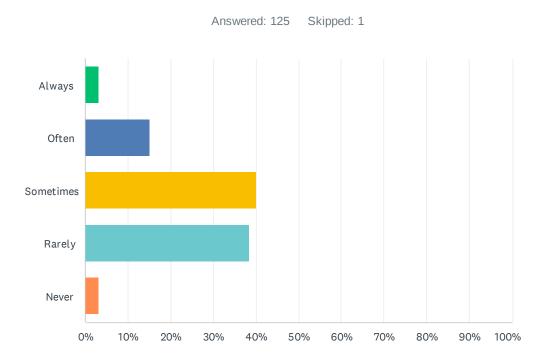
#### Q15 Have you ever experienced a time in your life where you felt lost?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	93.60% 117
No	6.40% 8
TOTAL	125

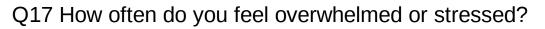


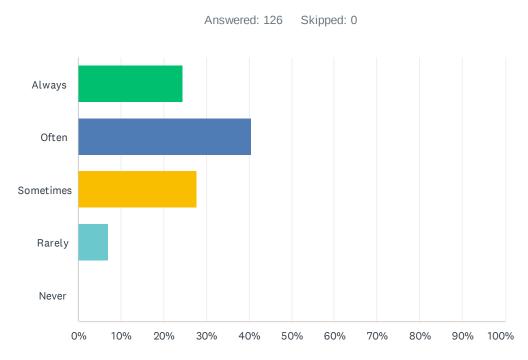
### Q16 How often do you feel embarrassed or ashamed?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Always	3.20% 4
Often	15.20% 19
Sometimes	40.00% 50
Rarely	38.40% 48
Never	3.20% 4
TOTAL	125

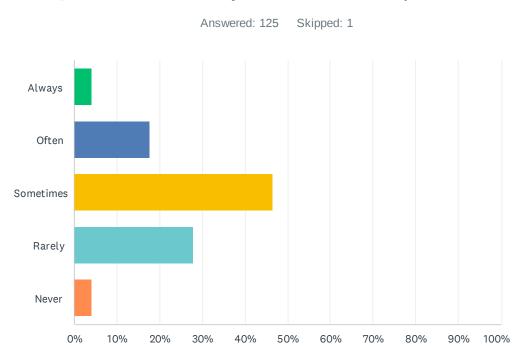






ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Always	24.60% 31
Often	40.48% 51
Sometimes	27.78% 35
Rarely	7.14% 9
Never	0.00% 0
TOTAL	126

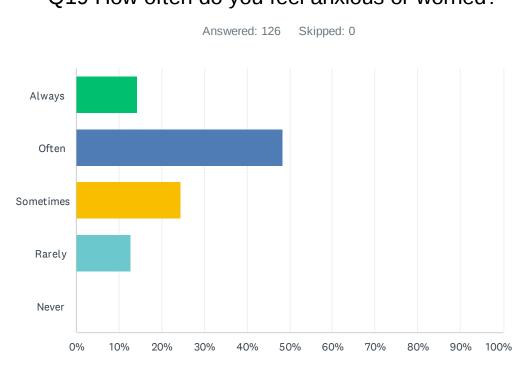




ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Always	4.00% 5
Often	17.60% 22
Sometimes	46.40% 58
Rarely	28.00% 35
Never	4.00% 5
TOTAL	125

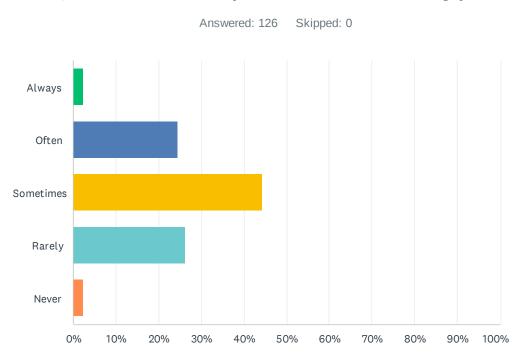
### Q18 How often do you feel sad or depressed?





ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	14.29%	18
Often	48.41%	61
Sometimes	24.60%	31
Rarely	12.70%	16
Never	0.00%	0
TOTAL		126

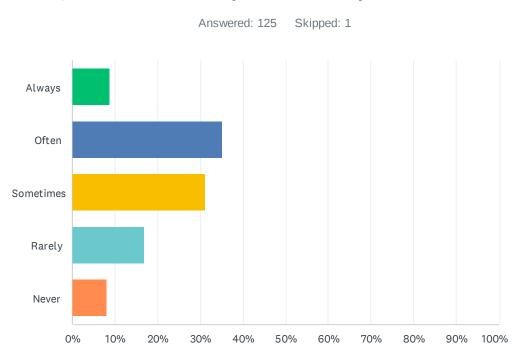




ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	2.38%	3
Often	24.60%	31
Sometimes	44.44%	56
Rarely	26.19%	33
Never	2.38%	3
TOTAL		126

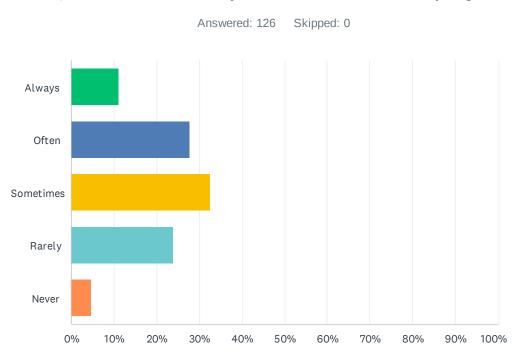
### Q20 How often do you feel irritable or angry?





ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	8.80%	11
Often	35.20%	44
Sometimes	31.20%	39
Rarely	16.80%	21
Never	8.00%	10
TOTAL		125

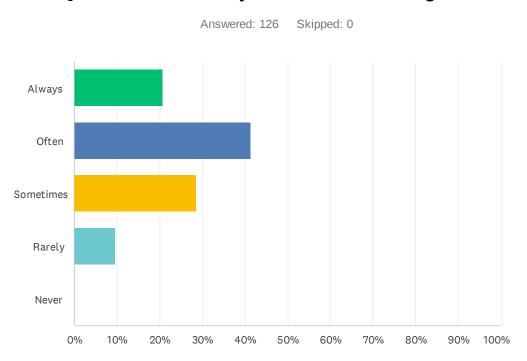




ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Always	11.11% 14
Often	27.78% 35
Sometimes	32.54% 41
Rarely	23.81% 30
Never	4.76% 6
TOTAL	126

### Q22 How often do you have trouble sleeping?



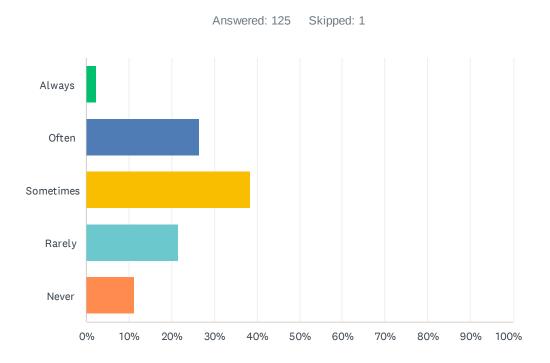


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	20.63% 2	26
Often	41.27% 5	52
Sometimes	28.57% 3	36
Rarely	9.52% 1	12
Never	0.00%	0
TOTAL	12	26

### Q23 How often do you feel tired or fatigued?



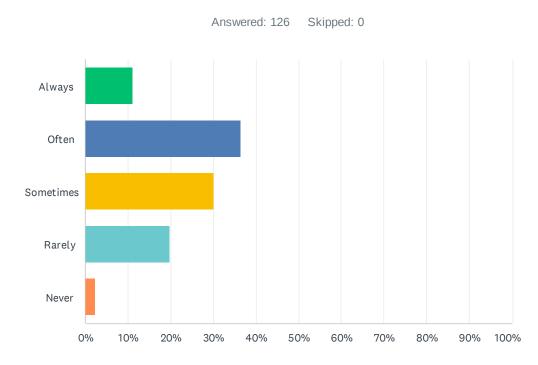
## Q24 How often do you feel a lack of interest or pleasure in activities you used to enjoy?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Always	2.40% 3
Often	26.40% 33
Sometimes	38.40% 48
Rarely	21.60% 27
Never	11.20% 14
TOTAL	125



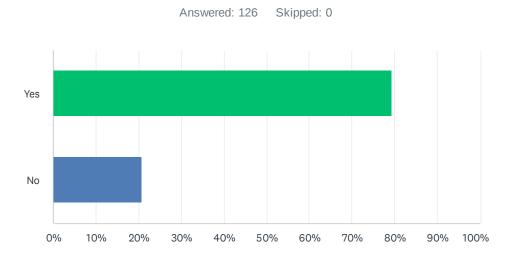
### Q25 How often do you have trouble concentrating or focusing?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Always	11.11% 14
Often	36.51% 46
Sometimes	30.16% 38
Rarely	19.84% 25
Never	2.38% 3
TOTAL	126



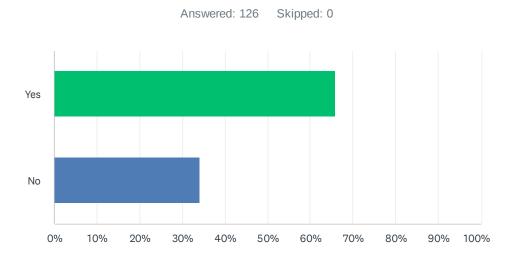
#### Q26 Have you experienced any major life changes or stressors that have or continue to affect you? (e.g., job loss, a death in the family/friends, finances, relationship issues, health problems)



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	79.37% 10	00
No	20.63% 2	26
TOTAL	12	26



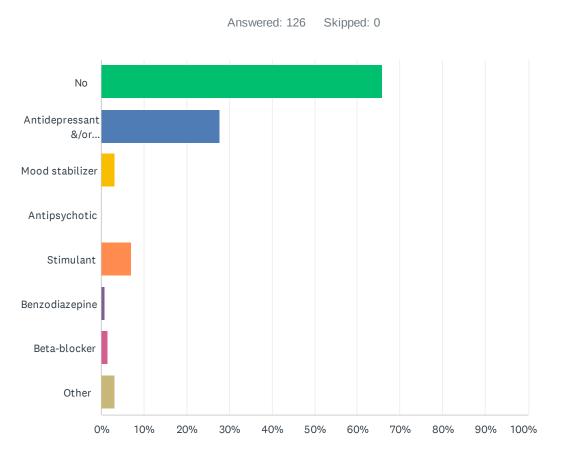
# Q27 Are you currently seeking or have you ever worked with a mental health professional?



Yes	65.87%	83
No	34.13%	43
TOTAL	1	.26



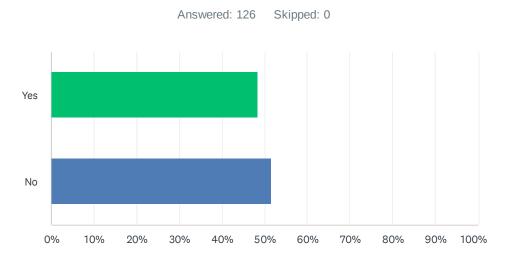
## Q28 Are you currently on medication for mental health? If yes, please select all that apply.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	65.87%	83
Antidepressant &/or anti-anxiety	27.78%	35
Mood stabilizer	3.17%	4
Antipsychotic	0.00%	0
Stimulant	7.14%	9
Benzodiazepine	0.79%	1
Beta-blocker	1.59%	2
Other	3.17%	4
Total Respondents: 126		



## Q29 Are there any other emotions or feelings you have that you don't let anyone else see, not even family members?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	48.41%	61
No	51.59%	65
TOTAL		126



#### Mental Health of Entrepreneurs Survey

Q. 29: Are there any other emotions or feelings you have that you don't let anyone else see, not even family members?

YES: 48.41% No: 51.59% Responses: 126 out of 126

If you answered yes to Q29, are you willing to share those emotions or struggles here?

Responses: 35 See below.

Always stressed, so much to do & not enough time to do it, never able to "stay on top of" competing priorities

Anxiety

Anxiety

Body image struggles I tend to keep to myself.

Doubt, fear, and I often don't share the level of anxiety I have.

Especially with a spouse, it is hard to tell them how hard things get and to share the times you feel like you are failing. Especially if you are responsible for family income. You start thinking that they will think you are a "loser" and lose respect for you or fall out of love if you are failing. So you fell like you have to keep some of the bad days and failures to yourself. That is when you feel most alone.

Fear

Fear of failure

Fear of failure

Fear of failure, concern about financial future

Fear of the future, security, and anxiety over retirement

Feeling that I'm not adequate or capable like other people. People think I have it together but my finances are a mess, I never know what im doing, I feel like I should know how to do everything

Feelings of failure, not getting emotional support from partner, thinking that I've lost my independence in relationships bc I work so hard to prove my worth via my business

Feelings of self-doubt when things don't work out the way that I plan for them to always creep in when I hit an impasse. I struggle immensely with "letting go" of things as well; often internalizing the anxiety I feel when my need to control the uncontrollable happens.

Frustration

Page 30



I didn't answer yes, only because that wasn't the route I wanted to take. I felt as though just simple changes in my life and my mindset were able to help me get back over the hump

feel unworthy

I had a very deep sadness for years. In November of 2022, my daughter had a suicide attempt and it changed my life forever. I had to focus on myself and make huge changes and I closed my company in June of 2023.

I think fear is the biggest one for me. Fear of failure, fear of disappointment, Fear of letting people down, Fear of losing belongings when in those low times, obviously fomo, and so much more.

I've lost my network 2x in recent years due to moves, and my business is suffering as it has always come through personal connections. I struggle at networking events. People are nice but aren't supportive of business like mine. I feel very alone, and like I'm failing personally and financially. I want to quit, but my skill set no longer seems to be a good fit for anything. I'm constantly questioning my worth.

I'm just concerned about my memory and focus and attention.

Im in physical pain but I don't want my family or business partner to know the extent.

Imposter syndrome is a very real thing! Having high goals put's me in a position to sometimes question if I am a fraud.

imposter syndrome, doubts, fears

Kids,(10&14yrs)... unhappy husband... and financial stresses

Loneliness, sadness, sense of being under appreciated

Marital struggles

My family isn't very supportive nor believe in "mental health" issues. Therefore I keep most of my feelings and struggles to myself.

Sadness

Sadness from losing a sibling, feeling like I put in more effort in friendships than returned

Sadness, failure

Self worth and acceptance

That I feel pretty lost and very inept.

The fear of failure. The fear of not being financially stable. The level of stress that is clearly affecting my body in negative ways. The lack of exercise and taking care of myself.

The overwhelming feeling of carrying the weight of responsibility for my family's livelihood and health.



#### **Final Question**

Q. 31 What are some of the ways you cope with managing your emotions and mental health? The answers to this question could help others in a similar state of mind.

#### Responses: 105

Binge tv, have a cocktail

By taking a step back to look at what I have accomplished so far and to be grateful for what I have.

Daily exercise, sauna, meditation, journaling, eating well, monthly therapy appointment, eating to fuel my body

deep breathing / beautiful weather patio time / take a walk / social activities with friends

Drink beer:)

Drink, get organized, lots of to do lists, pray, therapy, medication, social outlet, self care when I make time.

Ear rise and working

Eating well did wonders, especially cooking my food at home.

enforcing boundaries with relationships, even when it is hard to do. Setting do not disturb automatically for scheduled focus hours. Trying to learn to be gentle with myself.

Exercise

Exercise , mindfulness

Exercise is very important to me. Solo travel has been a balm for my soul.

Exercise, coffee, and enjoying good food

Exercise, good food, walks

Exercise, morning sunlight, taking a walk, getting rest.

exercise, seeing a professional, journaling, self care activities

Exercise, talk therapy

Exercise, tidying my desk at the end of the day, meal prepping and making freezer meals in advance for the harder days, having people I know I can call/text on hard days.

EXERCISE, TIME WITH FRIENDS

Page 32



Exercise... educational sessions (help see things from a different perspective)

Focus.Club has been a game changer - the only thing that has really helped me even after years of therapy and meds - it was designed by an adhder - helps me focus but also remain calm. Saved me from losing my main job after having a month long nervous breakdown

get a massage, watch mindless TV

Get in God's Word and do something I enjoy to relax

Getting enough rest and exercise

Helping others/passion causes, music, travel, writing

I am a licensed psychotherapist (waiting for another lic in Tenn) and have had many many years of psychoanalysis and therapy to work through childhood trauma abuse. Just went through breakup (with bf moving to Tenn)....and the last few months have been TOUGH!...I dance vigorously at the studio 2X a week, swim 3X a week, do 10 min yoga every morning and 20-30 min walk every morning. Also started swing dancing. The physical exercise calms my anxiety and makes me feel good. I eat really well, 80 pct vegs and protein. A cup of coffee really boosts my mood. Almost always sleep 10 to 6, that is the best routine for me and my sleep is good. Only one glass of wine several times a week, as alcohol is depressant. I have a therapist twice a week on Zoom. I love my therapy practice which also includes crisis visits to businesses working with employees in trauma (robbery, layoff, homicide etc)...Feel very fulfilled with work...But it is lonely at the top, I am very deep thinking and smart and successful and it is isolating. I feel LONELY a LOT!!!! texting and the occasional phone call are NOT satisfying emotionally...and that is what everyone does.

I am a life coach so I use emotional processing, meditation, breathing, reframing, most importantly I know who I am, the value I bring and feel a sense of growth and purpose growing toward my dreams

I am deeply connected to God. I pray often. I rely heavily on scripture and use it as a reminder of the promises of God. While we are not promised a life of no trouble it's still hard to cope sometimes when there doesn't seem to be a solution.

I choose to stay positive but also allow my self to feel my emotions. Eating well, self-care, fun and relationships all help my mental health so I invest in those things.

I control my controllables regarding quality sleep, hydration, nutrition, and intentional movement. Often the mind will follow the body, and if the mind is lost, nurture the body.



definitely prioritize my exercise routine and my personal life.

I do daily breath work and meditation. And workout on a regular schedule. These have been huge for me! Thanks, Tina - this work is important!

I don't do this well... but when I journal I usually feel better on the other side.

l got out into nature and unplug. Walks, hikes and backpacking trips

I have been proud of myself for leaving my job and starting my own business. Good days keep me going for awhile! I haven't had a "bad" day in a while but it happens. I just lean on my husband and we change some things around and then things are better again.

I just do the best I can

l left my startup and now its all happier

I pray and talk to myself to identify what I'm feeling and why. Then talk to a trusted friend or therapist for extra perspective and support.

I recently took an anger management class to help me control my emotions and I found it extremely helpful. Not only did it help me take a step back and realize the way I was handling situations incorrectly when my temper would get the better of me, but it also helped strengthen my personal relationships and helped me to become a better listener.

I started reading fiction to relax at the end of the day. I was having nightmares and trouble sleeping because I worked until I went to bed. I had to stop doing that and give my brain a break. Reading allows me to completely zone out and empty my mind, and I go straight to bed after that. No social media, email, videos, or phone. I have lowered my social media time considerably because it makes me more anxious and depressed and I compare myself and my business to others.

I try to take a break when I can tell my body needs it. I leave town often to "get away" from the stress and pressure.

I'm 70, so mostly I have dealt with issues and made peace with where I am in life. But far less so when I was much younger.

I'm not great at this. I should maintain a bedtime routine better than I do - that helps, when I remember.

I've sought counseling many times, church small group, journaling. Prayer, walking, getting outside



journaling, therapy, reading, hobby, got a dog

Keeping a positive mind, knowing that God will provide as needed.

Lifting weights. Find the positives in every and every day. Is it a bad day or a bad 5 minutes? Everyone says don't let something ruin your day, but it's only going to if you allow it. Move on don't dwell on what could have been.

Make a plan for change

Making a list and working off a list always helps me focus my attention and energy. I always try to remind myself that you will make mistakes and constantly learn. Religion/faith/prayer helps guide me as well and gives me a level of confidence.

Making time for hobbies, even if it is just one hour per week as it is with me. It gives me something to look forward to even when things are not going well. Also, I have learned that there are great days and bad days. I try to balance my emotions so I do not get over excited about good things and do not get overly upset about bad things, as there are always cycles. By moderating otherwise extreme positive emotions when things go well, I found it makes the other extreme less impactful.

Massages, quiet time, a good cup of coffee, perspective

Mediation has helped me tremendously

Medications, taking things one day at a time

Meditate, talk to a friend, spend time alone

Meditation and daily commitment to positive affirmations and a positive mindset has worked miracles for me. When I was really down and out, coming to my spirituality tremendously changed my life. My life is no longer in constant stress and my business is thriving because I DECIDED I get to have it all, and I get to do it with ease. Everything starts in the mind first - so making sure my mind is always focused on the positive is crucial for me. Then, my actions that follow are aligned with the state I'm in. When I have a negative thought, it's very important to notice that thought right away, identify it as a lie (because to me anything that isn't coming from Love is a lie), and then shifting it into my truth. Doing meditation that includes deep imagining and envisioning myself where I want to be as if it's happening now, and truly BELIEVE it gets to happen for me and choosing to consciously and fully TRUST the universe works. It works! No one but me and nothing outside of me gets to determine the direction of my life - I always have the power to shift out of a funk and with practice and commitment, it gets easier and easier. It takes dedication and work to heal your nervous system but it is more than worth it. I truly feel like I am a conscious co-creator with the universe and since I regained my faith in life and spirituality, I've made more money than ever, have healed, and am thriving and I want everyone to know that meditation, affirmations, and commitment to conscious positivity is a game changer.



Meditation, a walk in nature, a good nights sleep

Meditation, Neural Integration Therapy and lifting heavy weights

Meditation, walking in nature, occasional journaling

Meds, therapist, honoring my emotions as they come. Taking time off as I need it (which having a team enabled me to do.)

Move forward- to do something- a project, a committee, community involvement

Movement. Getting outside for a walk/run or working out in the gym.

Now I walk daily, meditate, eat a 100% vegan diet and work for someone else.

overeating, drinking, isolating, shutting down

Planning travel, getting out in the woods (or dreaming about it).

Prayer

Prayer and my faith in Christ. No matter what, He's got me!

Prayer and refocusing

Prayer, belief, Exercise, Yoga, Dieting, Hydrating, Make time for hobbies,

Prayer, Bible study, small group/community

Prayer, conversation with my husband, essential oils, supplements, healthy foods

prayer, meditation, church, breathing, exercise, yoga, journaling, scripts/mantras

Putting Jesus above all. Eliminating alcohol and drugs. Working with counselors. Dying to self daily (Surrender).

remind myself failure is not the worse thing and I have no reason to think I will fail rather I have proven I can succeed

Self care, exercise, massage, meditation, breaks

Self-help books, therapy, trying anti-anxiety meds for the first time (so jury's still out on that one)

Setting strong boundaries and doing "soul work" to overcome them by writing, listening to music, or talking with a professional.

Social events, exercise, reading

Speak with a LPC monthly and listen to music.

Speaking with my therapist, meditation, breathing techniques

Page 36



Stay busy

Stir shit and act out irrationally

Take a break; walk away from the situation;

Take breaks, exercise, go outside/change scenery, eat chocolate, spend time with my dogs, message or call a friend

taking medication, journaling, talking to friends/family, self-care rituals like exercise and getting outside, trying not to take life/business so seriously and remembering that the risks are mostly minimal when it comes to trying new things or putting yourself out there

Taking the quiet time I need when I need it, releasing professional or societal expectations, hydrating, exercising, getting rest, cultivating healthy + helpful community, getting shit done so I don't obsess about it.

Talk therapy, CBD for pain

Talk to other businesses owners

Talking to friends and family about my issues and stress. I also see a psychologist, psychiatrist, and ketamine specialist.

Therapy and being open with close friends/family

Therapy and talking with friends regularly about my emotions!

Therapy, community care (investing in friendships, meaningful gathering, and connecting with family), creative pursuits, rest, and movement.

Therapy, physical exercise, peer group, breathing exercises, and avoidance lol

This is the million dollar question. At the end of everyday, I make sure I eat dinner with my family, and I prioritize downtime relaxing. I watch mindless TV and smoke weed. Hahaha

Time away. Music. Spending time enjoying family and hobbies

Try to stay positive, always challenge myself and believe I am doing good work

Try to work on things I enjoy- hobbies that I am ignoring.

Understanding what's in vs what's out of my control. Leaning on Jesus and knowing God is my source of hope and strength. Letting my emotions out to release them, but then fixing my mind on what the TRUTH is. Putting things into perspective.

Walk



Watch a favorite movie, take a drive, take a nap. Unfortunately, I usually keep it bottled up because I never really have time or create time to address the emotions.

Weekly therapy, working out, medications. I am also autistic, and I use different techniques to help with that, such as stimming.

Work out when possible!

Working out

Working out, communication with friends and loved ones, reading and journaling

Working with a coach, seeking wise counsel from trusted peers and mentors, setting more boundaries around time off with family

Working with a therapist who specializes in working with women entrepreneurs

Writing down my thoughts to help process how I'm feeling. Getting that clarity makes me more effective in talking it out with my support system.

This concludes the results of the Mental Health Survey of Entrepreneurs. If you have any questions, comments or feedback please contact Tina Phillips at <u>tina@hangonhealth.org</u>.

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