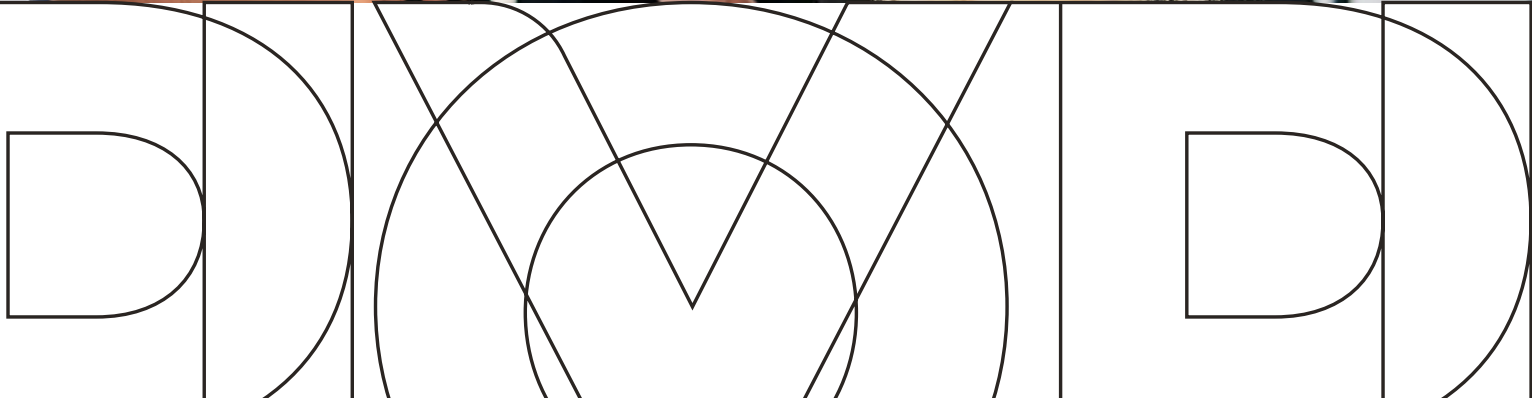


PRIORITIZING WELLNESS IN BEAUTY EDUCATION: **STUDENT SUCCESS AND INSTRUCTOR RETENTION**



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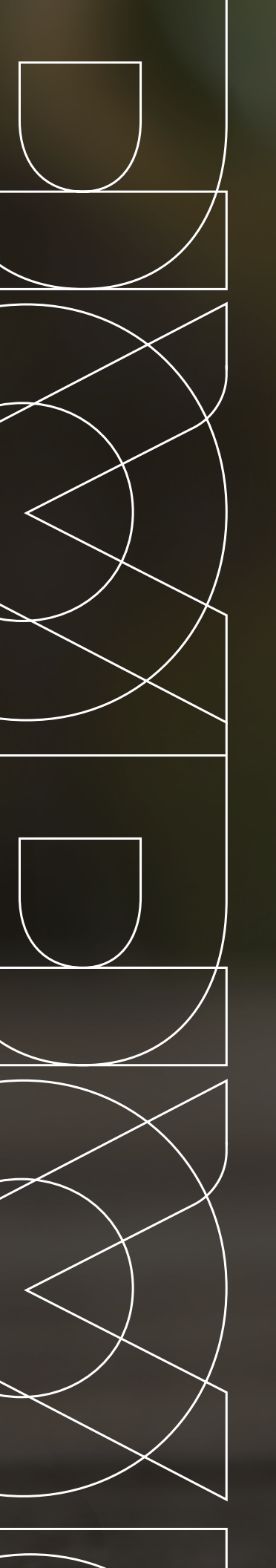


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PRIORITIZING WELLNESS IN BEAUTY EDUCATION: **STUDENT SUCCESS AND INSTRUCTOR RETENTION**

Wellness is now a central concern for beauty schools, directly influencing the success and sustainability of their programs. For students, challenges such as mental health struggles, financial stress and social pressures can disrupt classroom engagement and hinder their ability to graduate. For instructors, these same pressures—combined with the demands of guiding students—contribute to burnout and create significant challenges for retaining skilled educators.

The lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have made addressing wellness more urgent than ever. The return to in-person learning has brought new emotional and social challenges for students, while the influence of social media continues to amplify stress and self-comparison in this highly visual industry. Additionally, generational differences between students and educators have added layers of complexity to communication and collaboration within the classroom.

This white paper, based on recent research conducted by Pivot Point International, explores the wellness challenges within beauty schools today. By examining the experiences of both students and their instructors, the research highlights barriers to student engagement, graduation and instructor retention, while identifying strategies and tools to address them.

Student Wellness

Both students and instructors recognize wellness as a significant factor influencing students' progress toward becoming beauty professionals. Struggles with mental health, financial stress and social challenges directly affect students' ability to actively engage in class and perform academically, ultimately impacting their journey to graduation.

Instructor Wellness

Instructor wellness is equally critical, as educators face mounting challenges in an ever-changing educational landscape. They must navigate complex post-pandemic social and emotional dynamics, adapt to rapid technological advancements and bridge generational communication gaps with their students. These pressures highlight the urgent need to prioritize instructor well-being as a key strategy to improve engagement and address the ongoing shortage of qualified educators.

Access to Wellness Resources

Both students and instructors express a strong need for access to wellness tools and resources. While nearly all instructors emphasize the importance of supporting student wellness, many feel current resources are insufficient to meet these needs effectively, underscoring an opportunity for schools to invest in better solutions.

Wellness is no longer a secondary issue—it is vital for ensuring students can successfully complete their programs and for fostering the long-term retention of dedicated educators. By addressing these challenges head-on, beauty schools can create more resilient communities, manage risk and better prepare future beauty professionals for success.

To gain insights into the wellness of the beauty school community, Pivot Point polled over 700 beauty school students and over 200 beauty school instructors. This study utilized a mixed-methods approach, incorporating quantitative data collection and analysis and qualitative responses through open-ended comments.

The primary focus of this research was social and mental health; however, it also captured additional dimensions of wellness including physical and financial health to provide a holistic view of well-being within the beauty school environment.

A partnership with The Vitality Project supported our research.

Later sections of this white paper provide additional information on our partners, key findings from our companion research on the professional salon community and a list of wellness-related resources.

[Pivot Point Wellness Research](#)



We asked students and their instructors (as an aggregate) about the wellness issues students face and how they impact the beauty school learning environment.

Students and instructors both identified wellness challenges as making the journey to becoming a professional more difficult.

88% of students say they're dealing with one or more wellness issues, from mental and social health to financial worries and physical wellness challenges.

97% of Instructors agree, and see their students struggle with these challenges, primarily related to anxiety, financial stress and family/relationship issues.

These challenges don't stay outside the classroom.

43% of students say they face social issues at school, and 37% of students say these struggles are affecting their school performance.

94% of instructors agree that mental and social health issues are a challenge, primarily related to reduced participation in class.

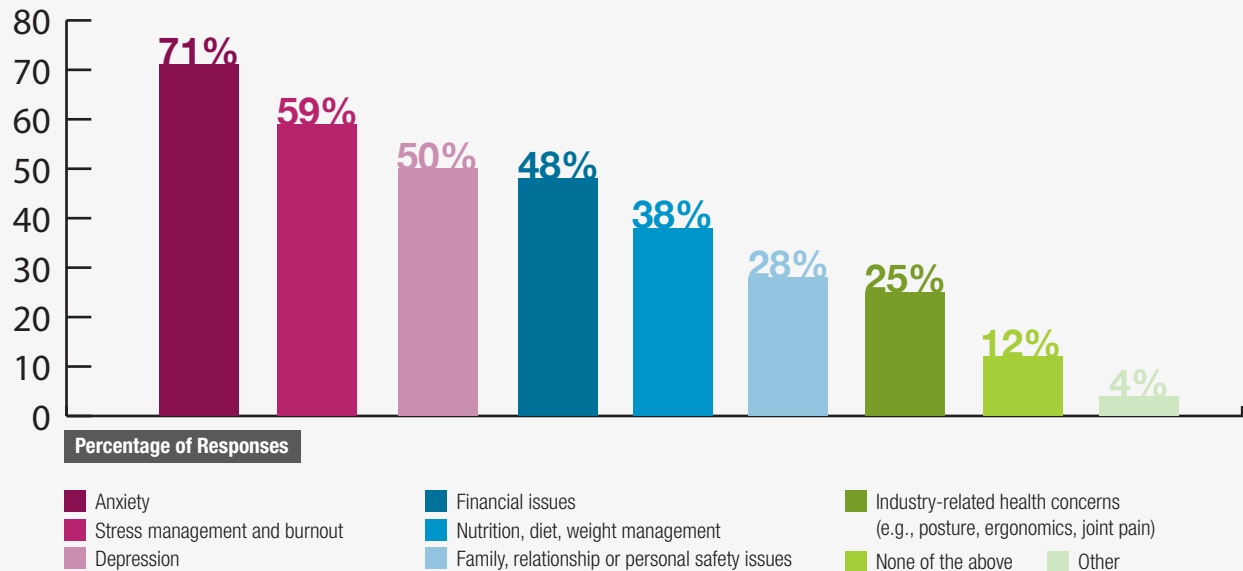
Both students and instructors agree that these issues make students less interested in completing school or taking the state boards.

This research highlights that social and emotional challenges are significant barriers to student success—affecting both engagement in the classroom and the desire to complete their journey to become beauty professionals.



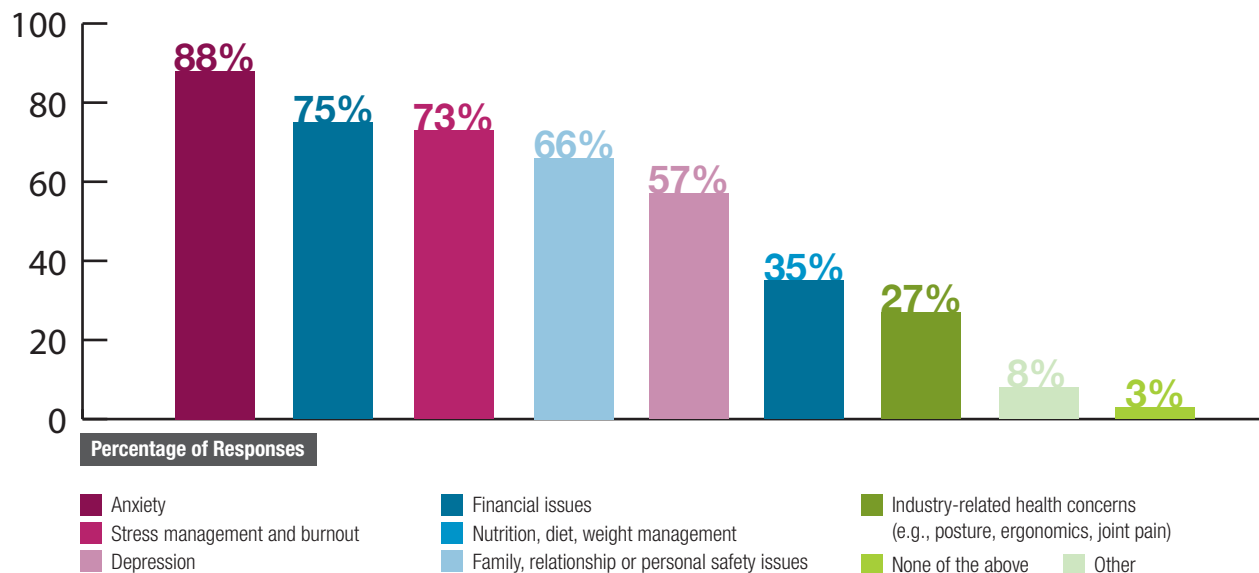
STUDENTS: Overall, 80% say they struggle with some form of mental health issue, 48% say they deal with financial issues and 47% say they struggle with some form of physical challenge.

Question: What mental and physical health challenges do you personally experience, if any?
Select all that apply:



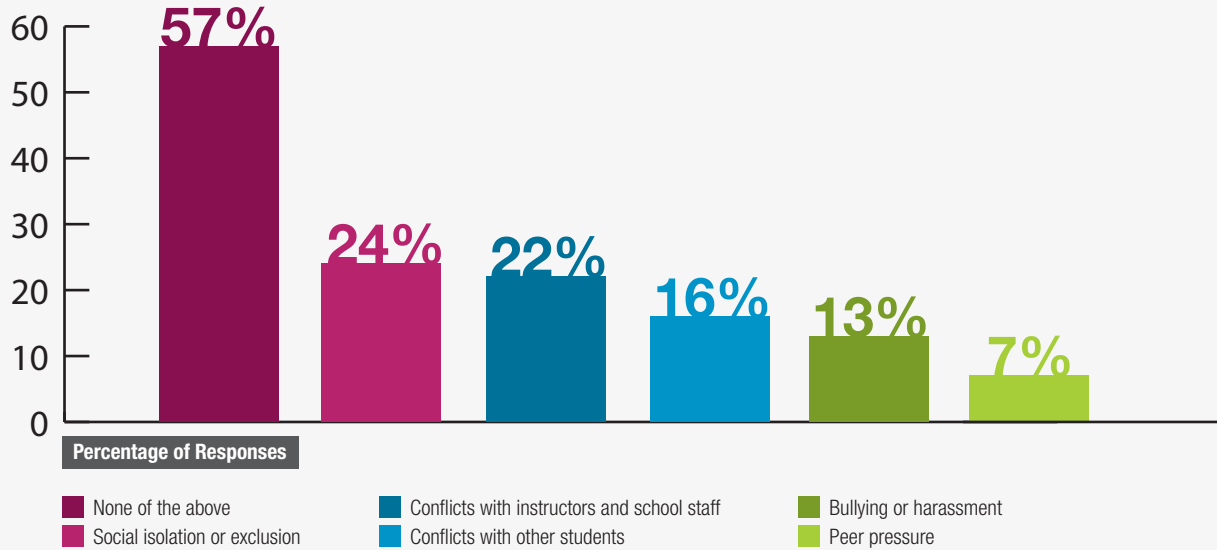
INSTRUCTORS: While instructors agree that student mental health issues are most critical, they rate financial, student and family, relationship or personal safety issues significantly higher than their students do.

Question: What mental and physical health challenges have you observed your students facing?
Select all that apply:



STUDENTS: 43% of students say they have social challenges at school. These impact their performance in school, most notably through decreased class participation.

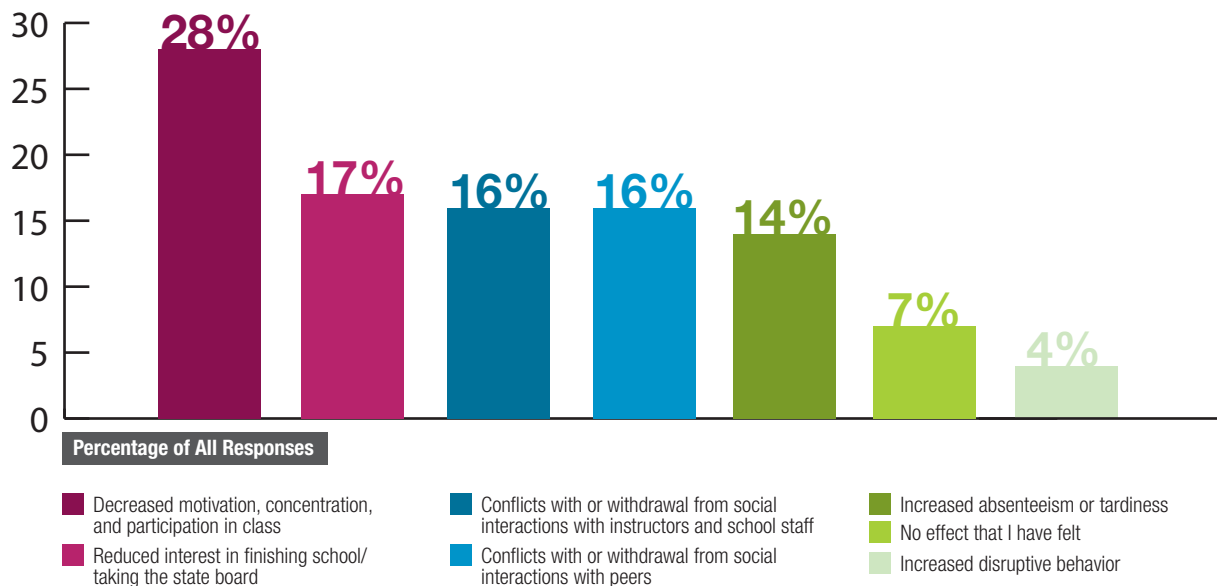
Question: What social challenges do you face at school, if any? Select all that apply:



STUDENTS: Among the 43% who report experiencing social challenges at school, 83% say these issues negatively affect their performance, particularly their class participation.

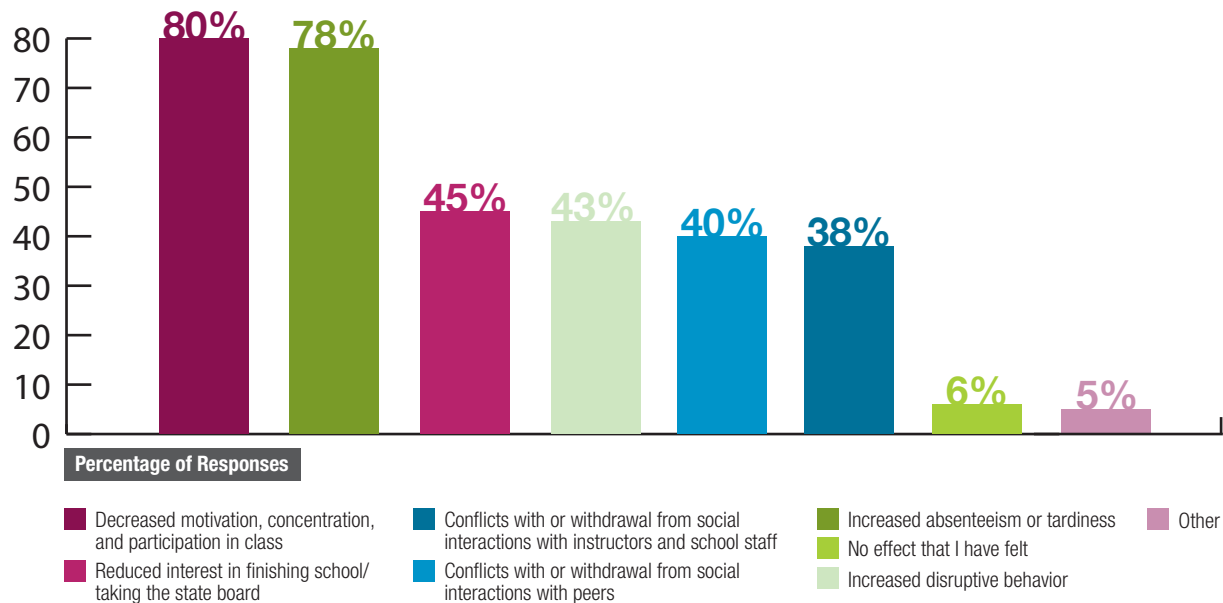
Question: How have social challenges affected your school performance, if at all? Select all that apply:

To provide clarity, the graph below provides percentages based on all respondents, not only those who reported social challenges.



INSTRUCTORS: 94% of Instructors say they have seen social and mental health challenges impact student performance, most commonly through reduced participation. Notably, they view increased absenteeism or tardiness as more of an issue than their students do.

Question: In your experience, how have social and mental health challenges affected your students' performance? Select all that apply:



Instructors face unprecedented challenges in today's educational landscape.

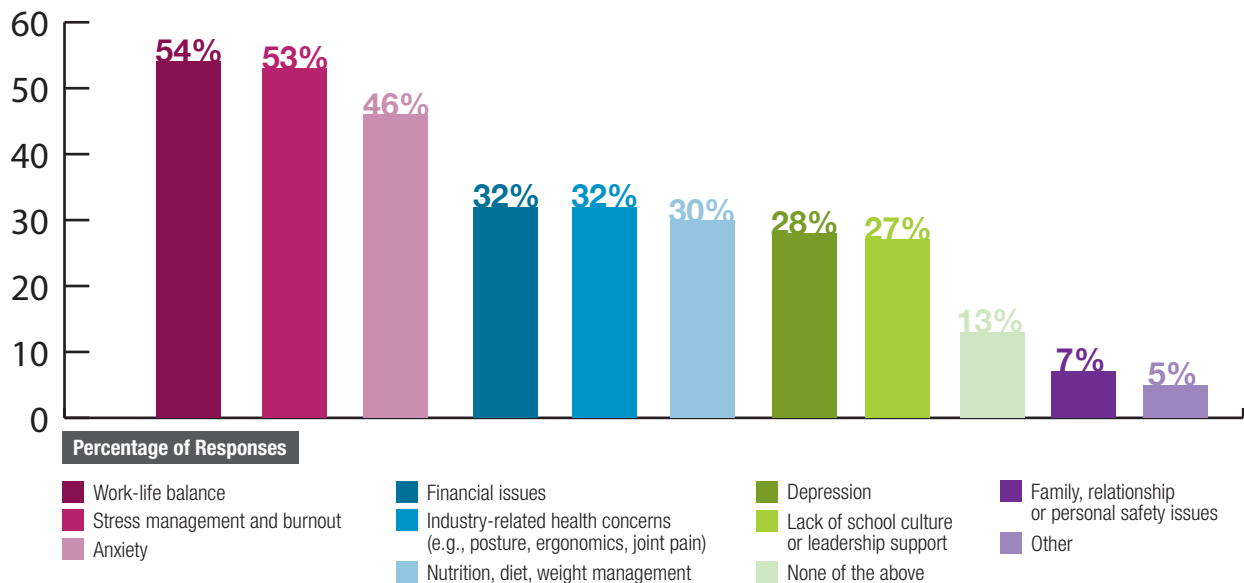
Beyond the traditional demands of teaching, they navigate a complex mix of social and emotional issues that students bring into the classroom. The post-pandemic environment, rapid and often disruptive technological advancements and evolving student-instructor dynamics—marked by shifts in respect, communication and expectations—add new layers of complexity to their role.

These underscore the importance of prioritizing and supporting instructor well-being, particularly within beauty schools grappling with a shortage of qualified educators.

INSTRUCTORS: 87% report they face personal wellness challenges.

When clustered into more general categories, 86% mentioned some form of mental wellness, 54% mentioned work-life balance, 53% mentioned health-related challenges and 32% mentioned financial challenges.

Question: What mental and physical health challenges do you personally face? Select all that apply:





We asked instructors “What is the most challenging aspect of being an educator you are currently struggling with?”

WELLNESS CHALLENGES

1. Balancing Personal Stress and Burnout:

“Balancing burnout and personal stress caused by constant demands.”

2. Anxiety from Supporting Students:

“Anxiety and emotional fatigue stemming from supporting students’ struggles.”

3. Work-Life Balance Challenges:

“Life-work balance. Being there for everyone.”

4. Lack of Training for Emotional Support:

“It can be stressful when students share their struggles with me. They go through traumatic things that I haven’t ever experienced, so to be trained on how to handle or coach them would be nice.”

5. Time Management:

“Not having the time for myself to make sure I can grade, access, work with individual students, and be able to do the ‘paperwork’ aspect of an educator.”

THEIR STUDENTS AND CLASSROOM CHALLENGES

1. Respect and Engagement Challenges:

“Disrespectful students who would prefer to sit on their phone than learn what we are trying to teach them.”

2. Communication and Transparency Issues:

“When students don’t have the language to be transparent enough to talk to educators. How to handle their attitude so it doesn’t affect any other students.”

3. Classroom Management:

“Classroom management and disruptions - students don’t seem interested in attending or concerned about missing school.”

4. Mental Health Concerns:

“Students with undiagnosed mental health issues.”

5. Energy and External Influences:

“Energy is hard to keep high and positive when there are disruptions and students going through their own issues and bringing them to class.”



THEIR STUDENTS AND EXTERNAL CHALLENGES

1. Financial Challenges:

“The economic, financial situation of student population.”

2. Attendance Issues:

“Student attendance due to personal and financial issues.”

3. Lack of Support Systems:

“The reality that we are teaching humans that all face daily life challenges, and most of our students are without basic support systems, let alone any mental health therapies.”

4. External Crises Affecting Education:

“Multiple students facing a variety of crises away from the school which is having a direct effect on their education and attendance in school.”

5. Negative Influences:

“Students with negative outside influences.”

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHALLENGES

1. Leadership and Support Issues:

“Lack of support & awareness from leadership.”

2. Administrative and Process Challenges:

“All the extra steps to do the same thing. One paper for this, then another, then add in Canvas. It is like overkill sometimes.”

3. Resource Constraints:

“Lack of available tools and resources. I find myself spending more and more of my own money to have the things I need to teach.”

4. Mental Health Support Needs:

“So many of our students struggle, and we aren’t able to help due to a lack of resources. I’d love if we could have a therapist or someone to help our students.”

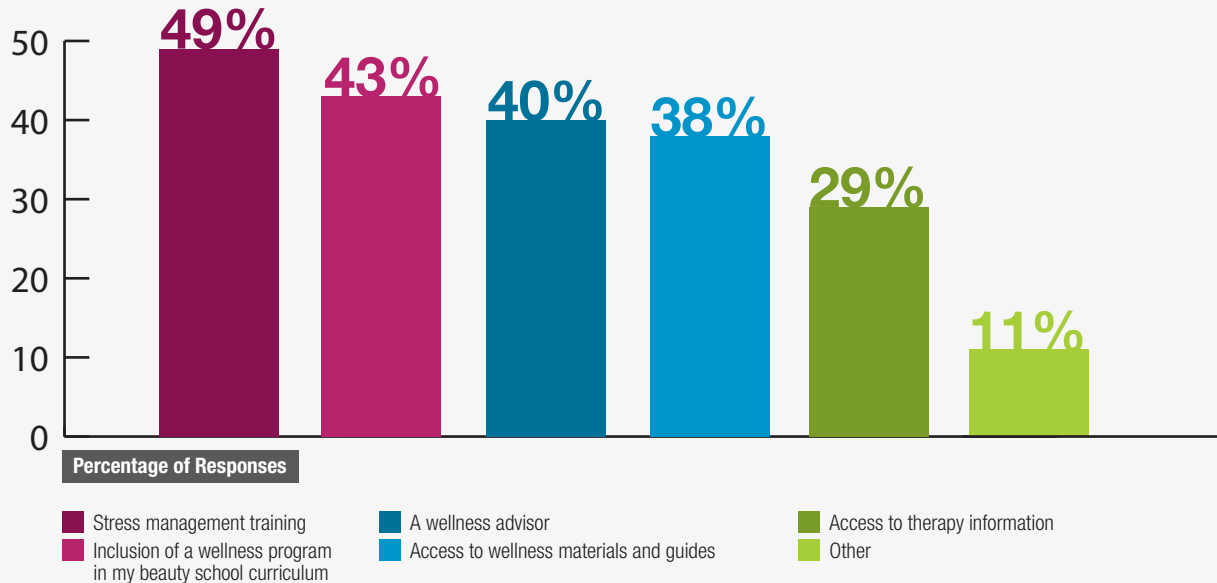
5. Team Collaboration and Consistency:

“Lack of consistency among staff.”

We asked both students and instructors to identify which wellness resources and tools they would find most valuable, providing insights into how schools can foster a supportive environment.

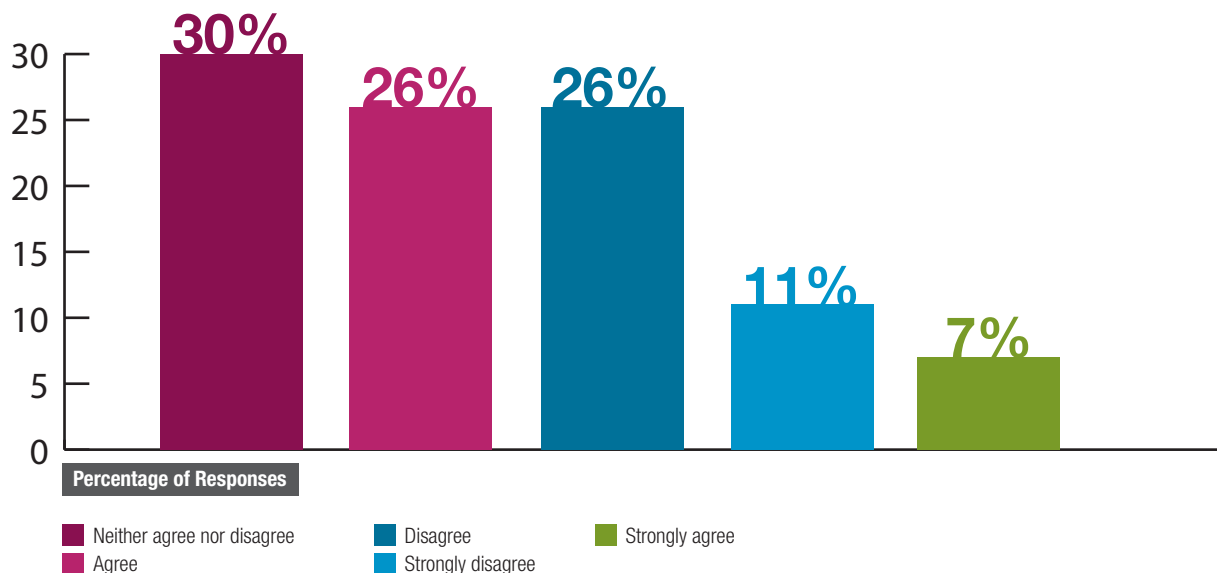
STUDENTS:

Question: Which of the following would help support your physical, mental and emotional well-being at school?
Select all that apply:



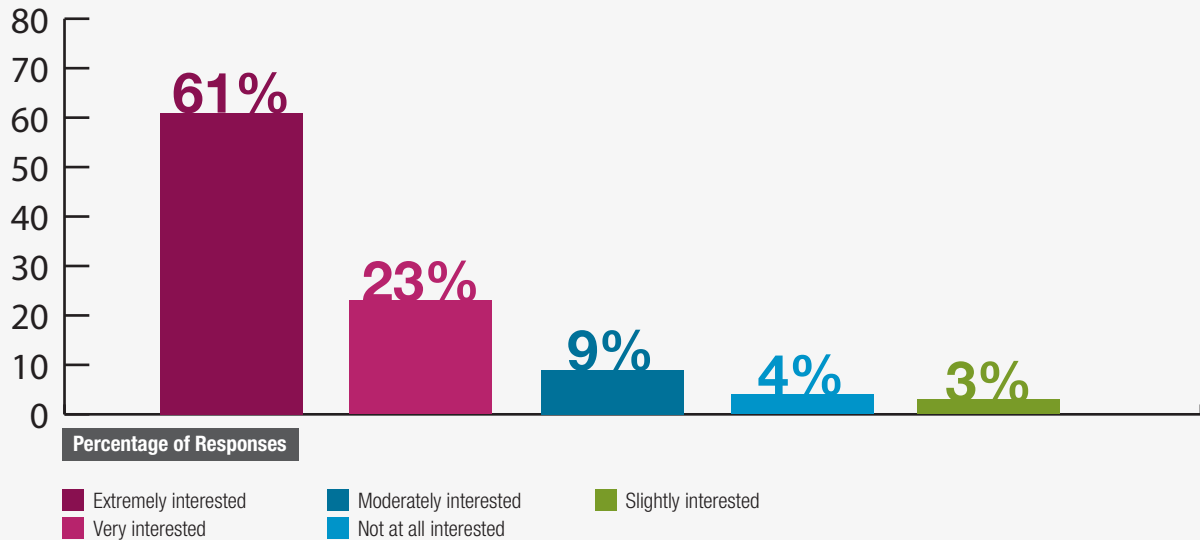
INSTRUCTORS: While instructors were mixed on the availability of resources, virtually all were interested in having tools available.

Question: How closely do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I have all the necessary tools to support my students' mental and emotional wellness."

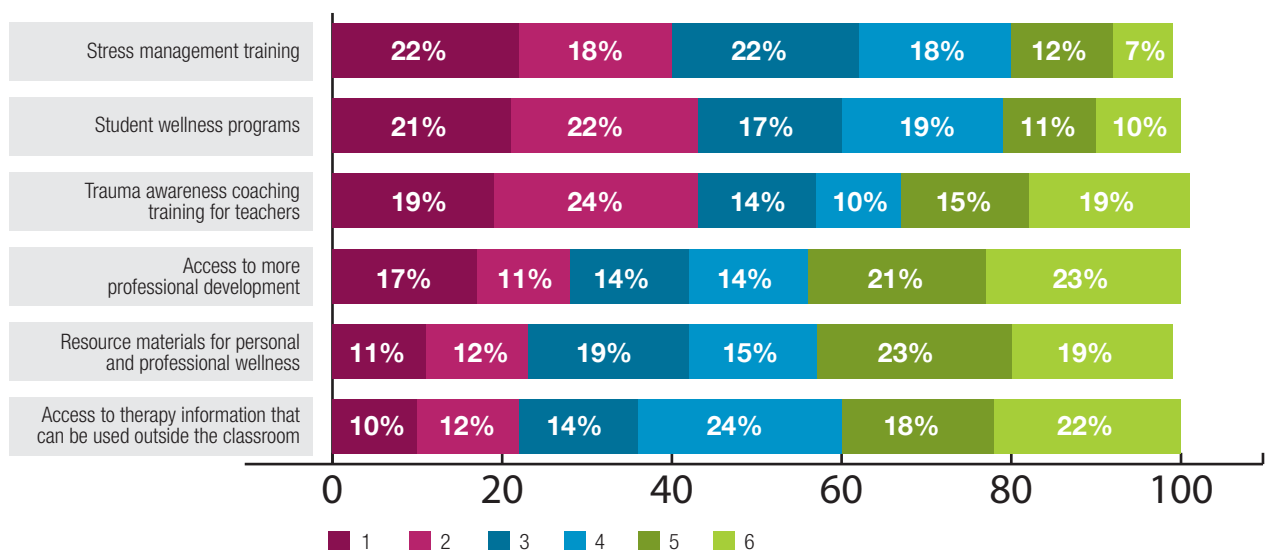


INSTRUCTORS: While instructors were mixed on the availability of resources, virtually all were interested in having tools available.

Question: How interested would you be in having tools available at your school to support mental, emotional and physical wellness?



Question: All – Please rank the following tools in order of how much they would help support your wellness and success, with 1 being the most helpful and 6 being the least helpful.



Pivot Point Wellness Resources

- Wellness Research – Schools
- Wellness Research – Professionals
- The Vitality Project
- Pivot Point Fundamentals Wellness Curriculum
 - Healthy Mind and Body
 - Ergonomics
 - Basic Communication
 - Communicate With Confidence
 - Human Relations
 - Resilience
- Shear Haven Domestic Violence Awareness Guide
- Industry Wellness Resources
- Diversity and Inclusion Resources

Beauty Industry-Specific Wellness Resources

- [Beyond the Chair](#)
- [Confess Project](#)
- [Cosmetologists United](#)
- [Dresscode Project](#)
- [Hair Has No Gender](#)
- [Hair Love Retreat / The Vitality Project](#)
- [Head Up](#)
- [Professional Beauty Association](#)
- [SalonCentric Retreat](#)
- [Sensory Space Salon](#)

General Wellness Resources

- [Mental Health America](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health](#)
- [Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#)
- [Mental Health First Aid](#)
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)
- [The Sanctuary Challenge](#)
- [IDONTMIND](#)

Mental Health Research

- This [McKinsey](#) report highlights that Gen Z is more likely to report behavioral health conditions compared to previous generations, emphasizing the need for tailored mental health services.
- Using research from the [Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis](#), this study explores the interplay between economic stressors, technological influences and mental health among Gen Z, noting a significant rise in depression rates within this cohort.
- This article from [Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health](#) discusses the impact of social media on Gen Z's mental health, linking increased screen time to higher instances of anxiety and depression.
- The [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) provides an overview of mental health trends among Gen Z, reporting that nearly two-thirds have experienced at least one mental health problem in the past two years.
- The [American Psychological Association's](#) Monitor on Psychology highlights that Gen Z individuals are more likely to report their mental health as fair or poor compared to older generations.
- This 2023 report by the [RAND Corporation](#) indicates that while teacher well-being has improved since the peak of the pandemic, it remains below pre-pandemic levels, with stress and job dissatisfaction cited as primary reasons.
- This report from [Lyra](#) talks about trends in mental health in the workplace, and how companies are addressing the challenges.

Prioritizing Wellness in Beauty: Insights From the Professional Beauty Community

In a companion study, Pivot Point surveyed licensed, actively working cosmetologists to better understand the challenges they face, how these challenges impact their work and the coping strategies they use.

The primary focus of this research was on social and mental health; however, it also captured additional dimensions of wellness, including physical health, financial health and personal safety to provide a holistic view of well-being across professional beauty.

Our findings revealed that 91% of respondents reported facing at least one wellness-related challenge, primarily related to:

- Work-life balance
- Mental health concerns, such as stress, anxiety and depression
- Physical health issues
- Financial pressures

These struggles affect their workplace attendance, engagement and relationships with co-workers and clients, reducing motivation and, in some cases, leading professionals to leave their jobs or the industry altogether.

This research highlights a need to prioritize wellness for beauty professionals as part of our broader industry efforts to support our industry.

[FOLLOW THIS LINK](#)



THE VITALITY PROJECT

Elizabeth Faye, the founder of The Vitality Project, is a globally recognized wellness expert and trauma-informed life coach who has profoundly impacted the professional beauty and wellness industry. From a troubled youth to a career as a stylist, salon owner, educator and motivational speaker, she has inspired thousands with her message of transformation and empowerment.

Her award-winning documentary, *Hairstylists Change the World*, available on Amazon Prime, highlights the powerful impact beauty professionals have on their communities. Elizabeth's work integrates personal development and wellness into salons, schools and industry culture, paving the way for brighter, more fulfilling careers.

As the founder of The Vitality Project, Hair Love University and Glow Breathwork, community-based education companies that have touched over 30,000 careers, Elizabeth champions the connection between well-being and success. A two-time NAHA Educator of the Year finalist, she has facilitated countless career transformations through retreats, mentorship programs, corporate speaking and coaching. Her mission to normalize workplace wellness and make it accessible to all reflects her devotion to changing lives and creating a lasting ripple effect in the beauty and wellness industry.

<https://hairloveuniversity.com/vitality>



Elizabeth Faye, Founder

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[Pivot Point International](#) is a third-generation family business dedicated exclusively to the professional beauty industry. Our team includes over 30 professionals with industry-specific licenses and we have extensive experience with beauty schools, salons, spas, barbershops, chains, brands and distributors.

Pivot Point offers original and third-party cosmetology, barbering, nails and esthetics education and content through a learning platform designed specifically for beauty professionals.

Pivot Point manufactures the industry's most diverse range of high-quality mannequins, all produced in our company-owned [SA 8000-certified](#) factory to meet stringent ethical and production standards. This includes a full range of [texture mannequins](#) and our versatile and eco-friendly [CAP SERIES](#) mannequins—designed for increased portability, reduced storage space and minimized landfill waste—and offering customizable hair and skin tone options.

Pivot Point is committed to supporting the industry and its professionals through charitable, cause-driven and educational activities and recognition programs, and has a strong focus on [ethical manufacturing](#), [diversity and inclusion](#) and [sustainability](#).

We are a proud founding member of [Beauty Changes Lives](#), and collaborate on the Honor Your Teacher recognition program, the Intercoiffure Student Contest and the Leo Passage Educator of the Year award.

We understand industry relationships and trends, ensuring your research objectives are met with actionable, real-world insights.

Whether your research is for internal intelligence or to support sales and marketing, we can help you explore all your research options. Knowing that quick turnaround is often a consideration, our industry relationships and experience help us provide you with the most time-effective solution.

We look forward to working with you!

INQUIRY FORM

pivot-point.com/research/

THE PIVOT POINT RESEARCH LEADERSHIP TEAM



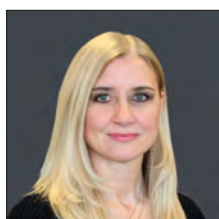
Steve Reiss
*Strategic Marketing &
Business Insights*

15+ years providing custom research solutions to leading beauty industry groups, with a focus on leveraging research insights to create effective strategies supporting business goals.



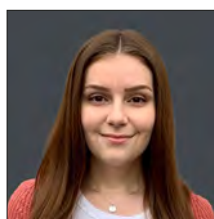
Sabrina Cason
Primary Research

Specializes in consumer-focused market research, leading and designing research methodology, execution and analysis that provides insight to drive business growth.



Vasiliki A. Stavrakis
Secondary Research

Specializes in analyzing and aggregating third-party and government data and regulatory, licensing and accrediting agency requirements to inform business decisions.



Christina Mooshil
Data Visualization

Specializes in combining analysis, design and storytelling to create visual data representations that help people understand and evaluate information more easily.