

Survivors' Experiences with Employment

MORE THAN 14 MILLION CANCER SURVIVORS LIVE IN THE UNITED STATES—and the number is rising. Cancer and cancer treatment can impact survivors' employment in both positive and negative ways. Cancer survivors face decisions and issues such as

- › Deciding whether they can—and want to—continue working, take time off, retire, or change their job schedule or roles
- › Considering whether, when, and how to talk to their employer and co-workers about their condition
- › Maintaining their health insurance and other benefits when they are not working
- › Getting needed support from their employer and co-workers
- › Understanding federal protection laws.

MOST CANCER SURVIVORS WORK AFTER DIAGNOSIS

The 2012 LIVESTRONG Survey provides important information about the employment experiences of cancer survivors. Of survey respondents who were diagnosed in 2002 or later and were aged 15 or older at the time of diagnosis, 80% worked for pay at a job or a business after their diagnosis.

CANCER INTERFERES WITH MANY SURVIVORS' ABILITY TO WORK

Most cancer survivors who had worked since their diagnosis reported that cancer interfered with their ability to perform work-related physical (67%) and mental (61%) tasks; 72% said they were less productive at work. Women were more likely than men to report a negative impact on their work productivity (75% vs. 67%, $p < .001$). Women were also more likely than men to report a negative impact on their ability to perform work-related physical (71% vs. 61%, $p < .001$) and mental tasks (67% vs. 52%, $p < .001$). Differences by age are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. How cancer interferes with ability to work and productivity, by age at diagnosis

Impact	Age at Diagnosis		
	15-39	40-59	60+
Interfered with ability to perform...			
physical tasks	69%	68%	54%
mental tasks	67%	63%	40%
Less productive at work	75%	74%	54%

CHANGES IN WORK STATUS ARE COMMON, ESPECIALLY DURING TREATMENT

More than three-quarters (78%) of survivors who had been employed made a change to their work hours, duties, or employment status because of cancer, its treatment, or its lasting effects. Women were less likely than men to take extended paid time off and were more likely to take unpaid time off ($p < 0.001$). Differences by age are presented in Figure 1.

Survivors were most likely to change their work status during the course of treatment; 88% of survivors took extended time off, 80% took unpaid time off, and 65% switched from full- to part-time status while they were in treatment. For most survivors, a change in

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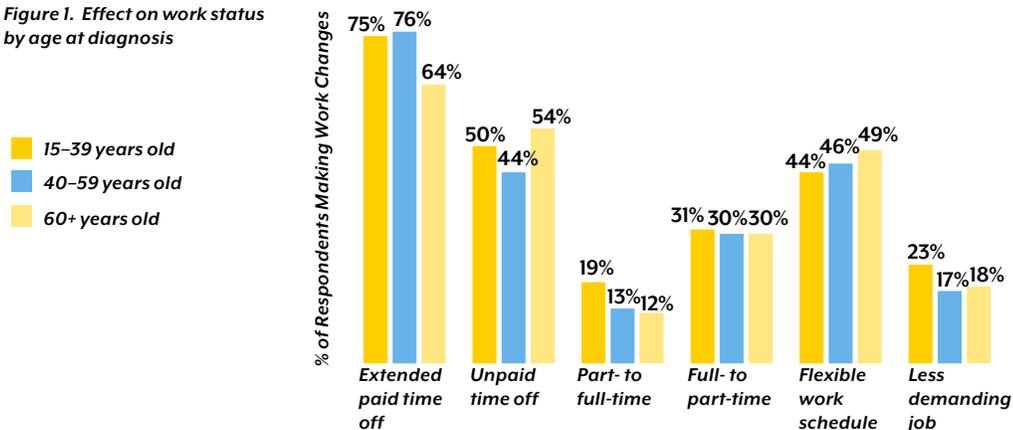
Women were more likely than men to report a negative impact on their work productivity.

About the LIVESTRONG Surveys

The LIVESTRONG Surveys explore cancer survivors' needs and experiences before, during, and after a cancer diagnosis. The 2012 survey was completed by a total of 6,383 survivors. This brief presents findings from 4,896 survivors who were diagnosed in 2002 or later and were aged 15 or older at the time of diagnosis.

For more information about the LIVESTRONG Surveys, visit www.LIVESTRONG.org/What-We-Do/Our-Approach/Reports-Findings.

Figure 1. Effect on work status by age at diagnosis

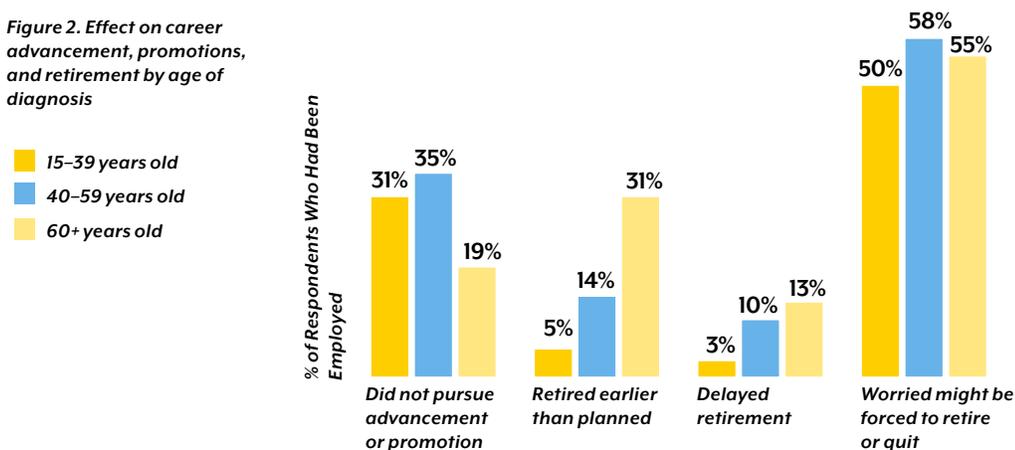


work status was temporary—69% took extended paid time off, 66% took unpaid time off, and 50% changed from full- to part-time status for less than 6 months. However, more than half (58%) of those who changed to a less demanding job maintained that status for longer than 6 months (30% for 1 to 3 years and 28% for 3 years or more).

CANCER AFFECTS PROMOTIONS, ADVANCEMENT, AND RETIREMENT PLANS

More than half (55%) of cancer survivors were worried that they would be forced to retire or quit before they were ready, and almost one-third (32%) decided not to pursue an advancement or promotion. Female survivors were significantly more likely to not pursue an advancement or promotion or to retire early; they were also more worried about having to quit or retire before they were ready. Differences by age are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Effect on career advancement, promotions, and retirement by age of diagnosis



MOST SURVIVORS GET SUPPORT FROM THEIR CO-WORKERS

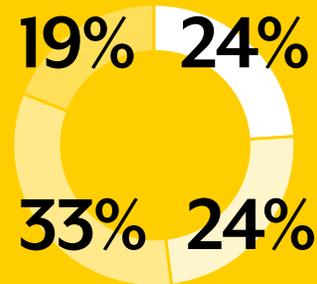
Sixty percent of survivors said co-workers supported them through activities such as donating sick time or picking up extra duties for them. Women (61% vs. 57% for men, $p=0.02$) and survivors who were younger at the time of diagnosis were more likely to get support from co-workers (66% of survivors aged 15 to 39 at diagnosis, 59% of survivors aged 40 to 59, and 45% of survivors aged 60 or older).

OVERALL, SURVIVORS EXPERIENCE BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON THEIR WORK LIVES

Twenty-four percent of survivors said cancer had a mostly negative impact on their work life or career, and an equal proportion reported a mostly positive impact. One-third reported equally positive and negative impacts, and the remaining 19% felt the impact was neither positive nor negative. Survivors who were younger at the time of diagnosis and male survivors tended to report more positive impacts on their work lives.

For additional information and resources about cancer and employment, see <http://www.livestrong.org/we-can-help/managing-your-life-during-treatment/employment-issues/>.

An equal percentage of survivors report mostly negative and mostly positive impacts on their work life and career



33% of survivors report equally positive and negative impacts, while 19% report neither positive nor negative impacts

The LIVESTRONG Foundation fights to improve the lives of people affected by cancer now. Created in 1997, the Foundation is known for providing free cancer support services and advocating for policies that improve access to care and quality of life. Known for its powerful brand—LIVESTRONG—the Foundation has become a symbol of hope and inspiration around the world. Since its inception, the Foundation has served 2.5 million people affected by the disease and raised more than \$500 million to support cancer survivors. One of America's top nonprofit organizations, the Foundation has been recognized by industry leaders, including Charity Navigator, the National Health Council, and the Better Business Bureau, for its excellent governance, high standards, and transparency. For more information, visit LIVESTRONG.org.