


# Survey Results: Looking Past COVID-19



**More than 600 attorneys responded** to a survey the State Bar of Nevada recently posted about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on attorneys' practices and the overall well-being of themselves and their offices. Few were unaffected. They adapted to a "new normal," and adjusted work and family obligations with the inherent stress and anxiety that followed statewide and national shutdowns.

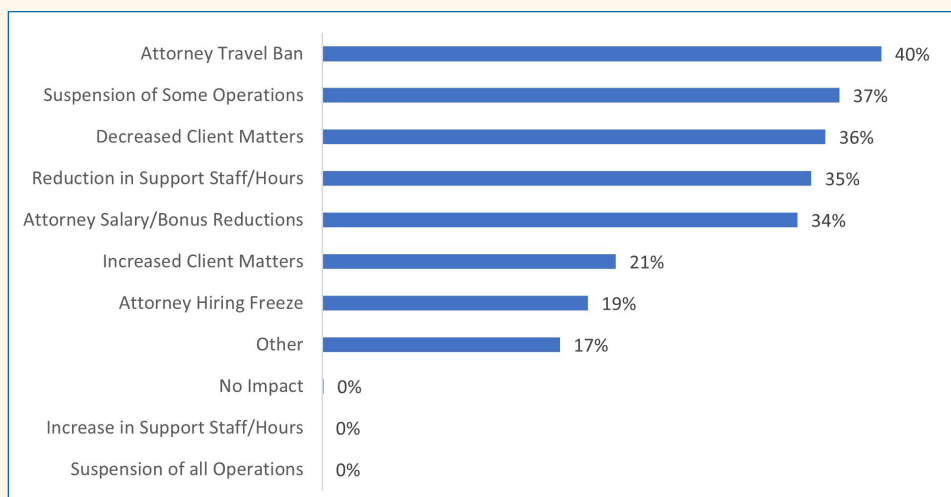
**The result?** Nevada lawyers developed resiliency, gained newfound appreciation for what is important, and have adjusted the ways they do business that may have staying power in the years ahead.

## The Effects on Practice and Well-Being

When asked how the pandemic affected their practices in 2020, not surprisingly, an attorney travel ban rated as the top impact. Other top-rated effects were those that hit the bottom line for firms and attorneys, including suspension of some operations, decreased client matters, reduction in support staff, and attorney salary and bonus reductions. Most impacts were represented uniformly among all attorneys and practice areas; however, decreased client matters affected solo and small practice attorneys at a higher rate, with 47 percent seeing a reduction, as compared to 36 percent of total survey respondents.

Attorneys also provided personal anecdotes about the impact of COVID-19 on their practices, including disruption of in-person practice when a fellow attorney or staff member tested positive for the virus, death of a co-worker due to COVID-19, limited access to staff, and limited means of communicating with clients.

## How Pandemic Affected Practice in 2020

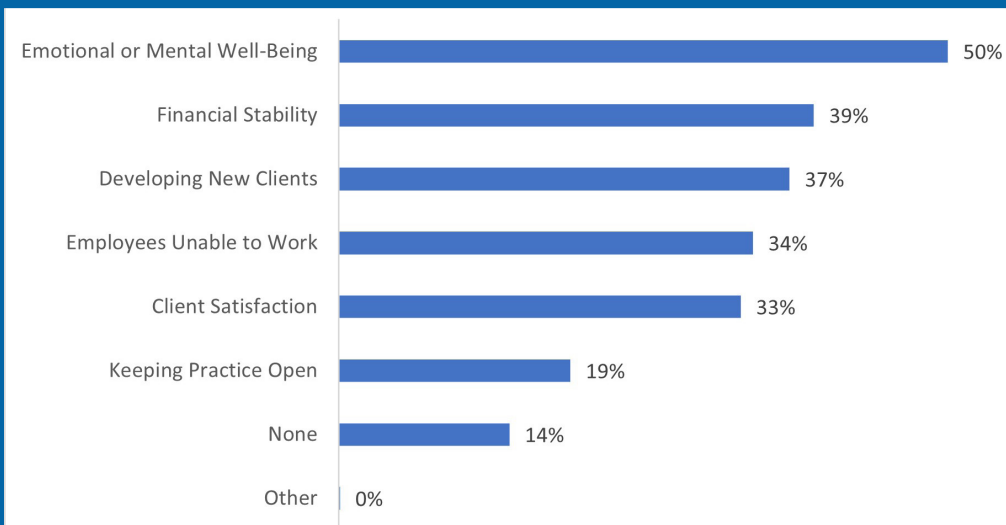


After a year of adjusting to practicing during the pandemic, attorneys noted emotional or mental well-being, financial stability, and client development as the top pressing concerns for the next 12 months. They also noted other ongoing concerns, including safety protocols for returning to in-office work and court appearances, adjusting to a “pre-COVID” routine, and reestablishing client relationships following a year of no personal contact.

### Pearl of Wisdom:

“The pandemic has been both a blessing and a curse to my practice of law. I’ve had to make many uncomfortable adjustments—but that includes adjustments that were uncomfortable at first and which now I can’t imagine working without. Particularly the flexibility and the availability of remote working and remote court appearances. For the sake of the environment ... and of our collective sanity, I hope these things remain in place. I hope that we as a legal field do not go back to the rigid, uncompromising way of working pre-COVID.”

## Concerns for the Next 12 Months



### Pearl of Wisdom:

“We have great ability to adjust to difficult circumstances, even if we do not realize it at first.”

## Impact on Employees and Co-Workers and Firms

Increased feelings of stress, anxiety, and isolation, followed by increased family obligations and decreased productivity, were the most-cited pandemic-related effects on employees and co-workers. When asked how these impacts compare today versus one year ago, the results were mixed.

Forty percent of those responding indicated that productivity is generally better. Another 43-50 percent indicated that family obligations, loss of firm revenue and personal income, and layoff fears remain the same. And about one-third of survey takers indicated that feelings of isolation, anxiety, and stress are generally worse.

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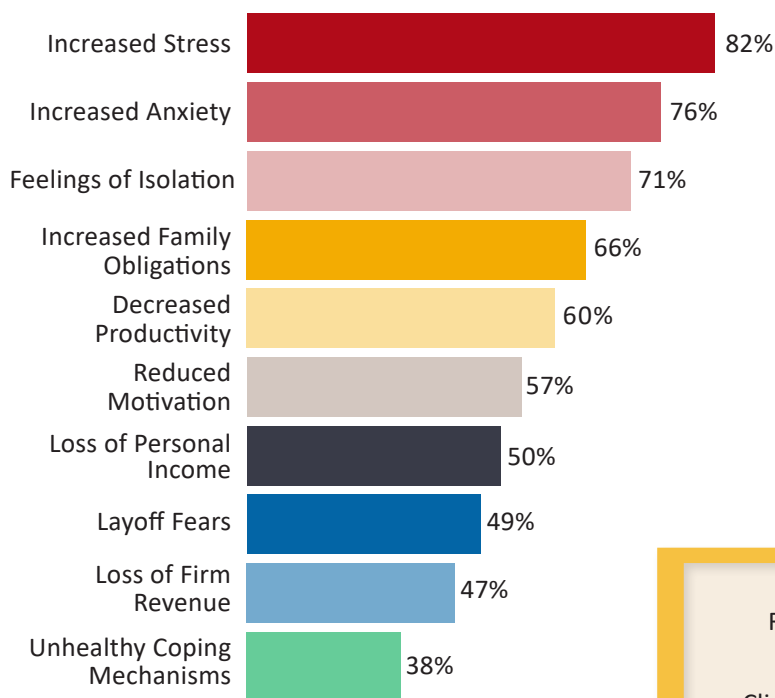


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For those practicing in large firms of 15 or more attorneys, rates of stress, anxiety, and isolation were markedly higher than their solo counterparts. For example, 88 percent reported increased stress versus 73 percent of solo practitioners. Feelings of increased anxiety and isolation were also 14-18 percent higher among large firm attorneys than solos.

Lawyers and law firms adapted to the “new normal” by becoming more tech savvy (72 percent), providing flexibility in employee work hours (53 percent), and identifying more enhanced or efficient workflows (37 percent). While 25 percent of survey-takers indicated they used the pandemic as an opportunity to slow the pace of work, others noted the opposite, using the uninterrupted time at home to work more.

### Concerns for the Next 12 Months



## The Bright Spots

The survey revealed adaptations that lawyers and law firms made during the COVID-19 pandemic that changed the way they do business, starting with remote working. Of the survey-takers, 71 percent stated that they worked remotely for the first time since the pandemic began, and 66 percent indicated remote work will continue in the future. As one attorney noted, “I don’t want everything to be remote. But the flexibility would be nice ...”

Engaging in client meetings via video, using remote notary/document signing services, and satisfying CLE with remote attendance were also ranked highly among practices that began during the pandemic and will likely continue in the future.

Nevada attorneys also explored healthy programs for the first time or with renewed interest since the COVID-19 outbreak, with exercise, taking personal time off, and learning how to cook healthy meals rating the highest. Of those who began a new healthy activity, 88 percent indicated they were somewhat or extremely likely to continue going forward. Nearly 40 percent of firms also began to promote employee health and well-being for the first time since the COVID-19 outbreak.

Notably, once things are “back to normal” more than 75 percent of survey-takers stated they would like to see remote court hearings continue. Survey takers noted a desire to keep video court appearances for minor hearings, such as continuances and status checks, as these remote appearances save time, reduce travel, and benefit clients financially. Other remote functions of practice were also rated highly, with 69 percent indicating they would continue using remote document signing services and 68 percent who will continue using video for client conferences, with Zoom being the preferred video conference platform. Focusing on employee mental health and well-being will also be a future priority for nearly 60 percent of survey takers.

