



# **OverDoSing: Preventing Job Burnout in Academic Management**

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# Outline

- Definition
- Causes
- Symptoms
- Survey results
- Prevention
- Suggested strategies

# Definition of Job Burnout

1998: 'a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment'

2018: 'severe clinical depression, work related only'

# Causes - Individual

- Feeling obliged to 'go the extra mile'
- Prioritizing the needs of others
- Working long hours to meet expectations
- Going to considerable lengths to support students and teachers
- Having to maintain a positive and enthusiastic front

(Maslach and Goldberg, 1998)

# Causes - Situational

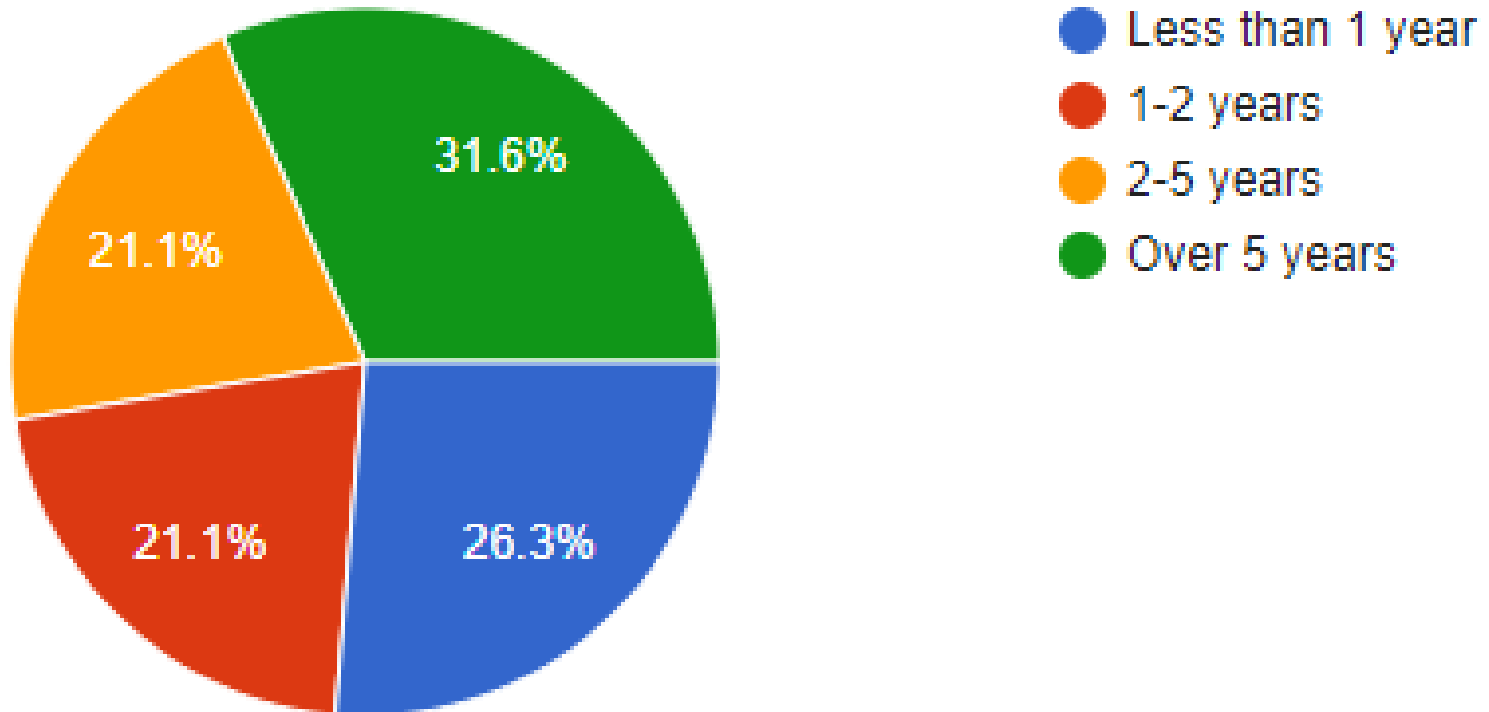
- Imbalance between high workload and availability of resources
- Chronic stressors in the form of job demands
- Conflict between people or values resulting in emotional tension
- Responsibility for academic achievement and pastoral care

(Maslach and Goldberg, 1998)

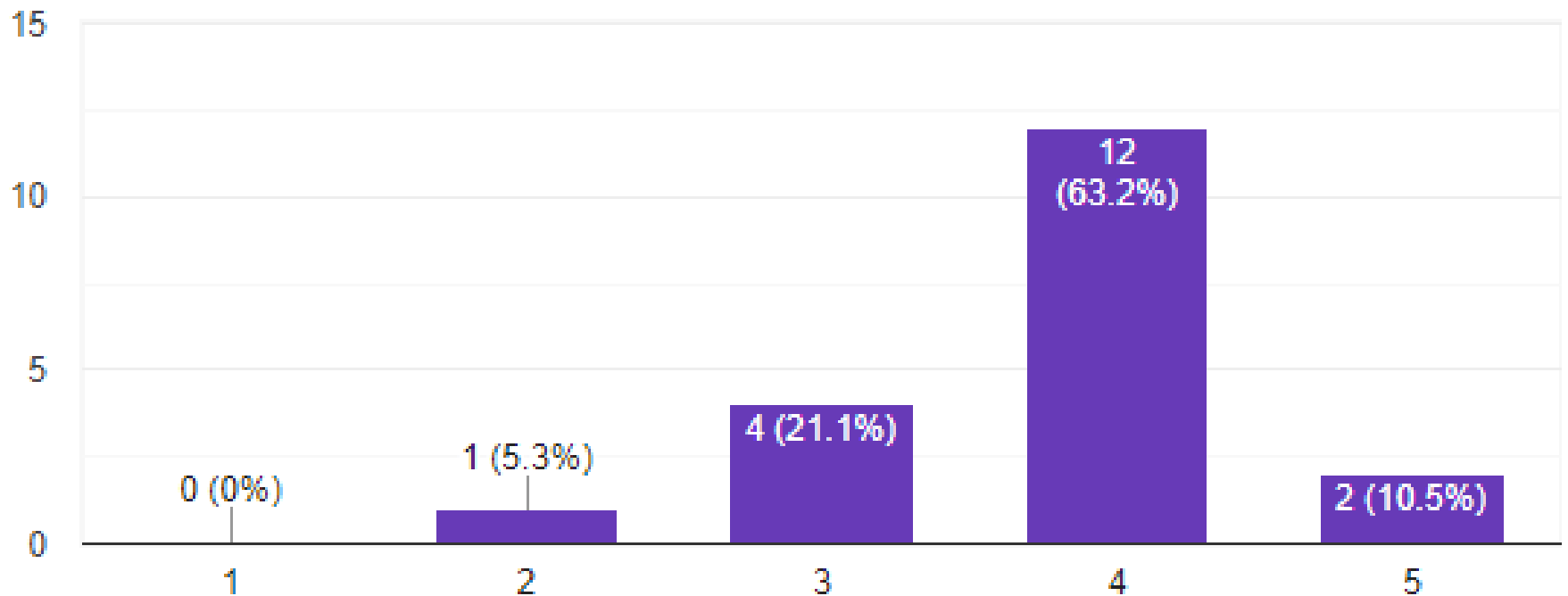
# Symptoms

- Stress dimension – emotional exhaustion  
(drained of energy and motivation)
  - Interpersonal dimension – depersonalization  
(excessive detachment from others)
  - Self-evaluation dimension – reduced personal accomplishment  
(low sense of productivity and competence)
- \* ‘exacerbated by a lack of social support and of opportunities to develop professionally’

# How long have you been in your current academic management role?

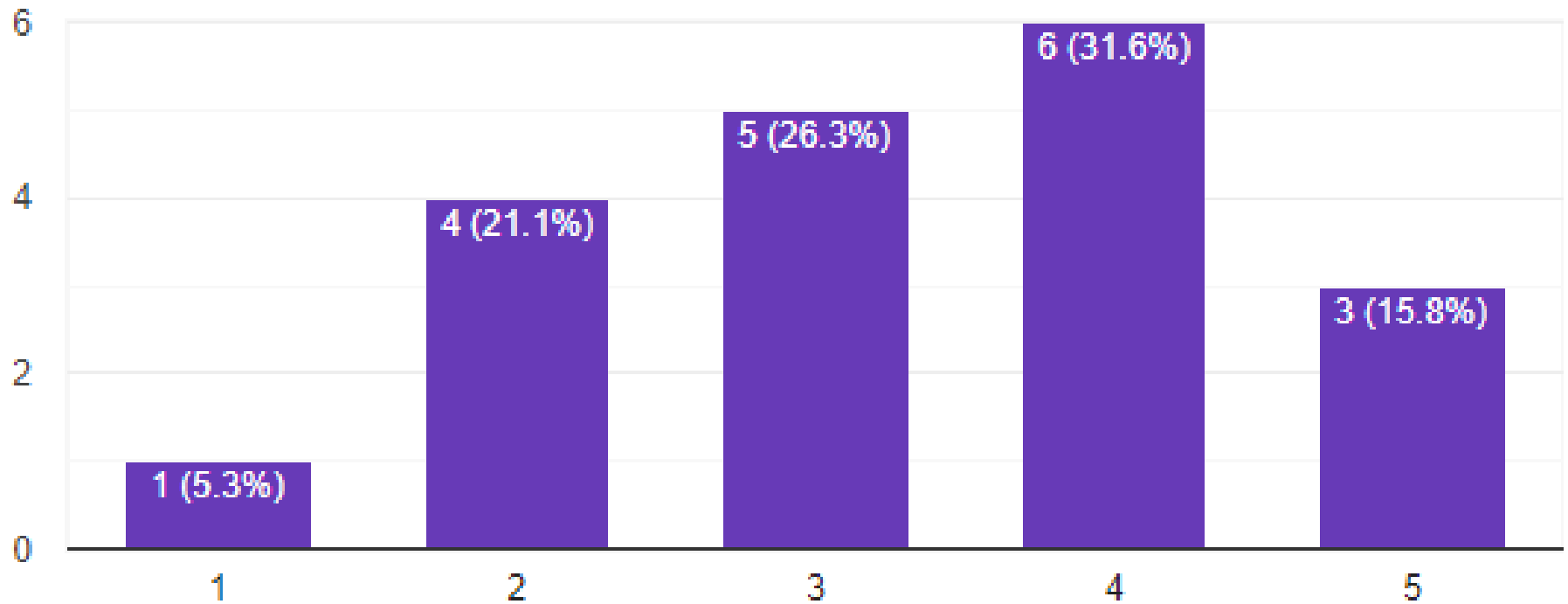


# I generally feel that I do my job effectively

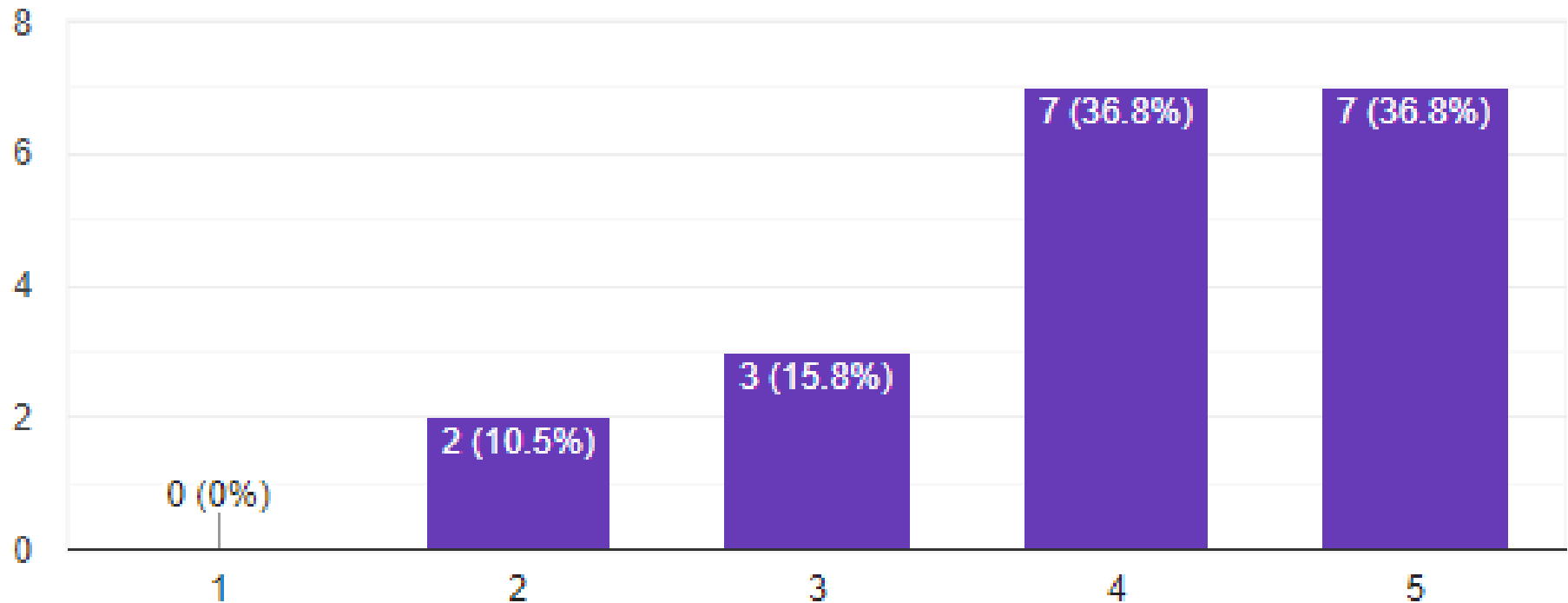




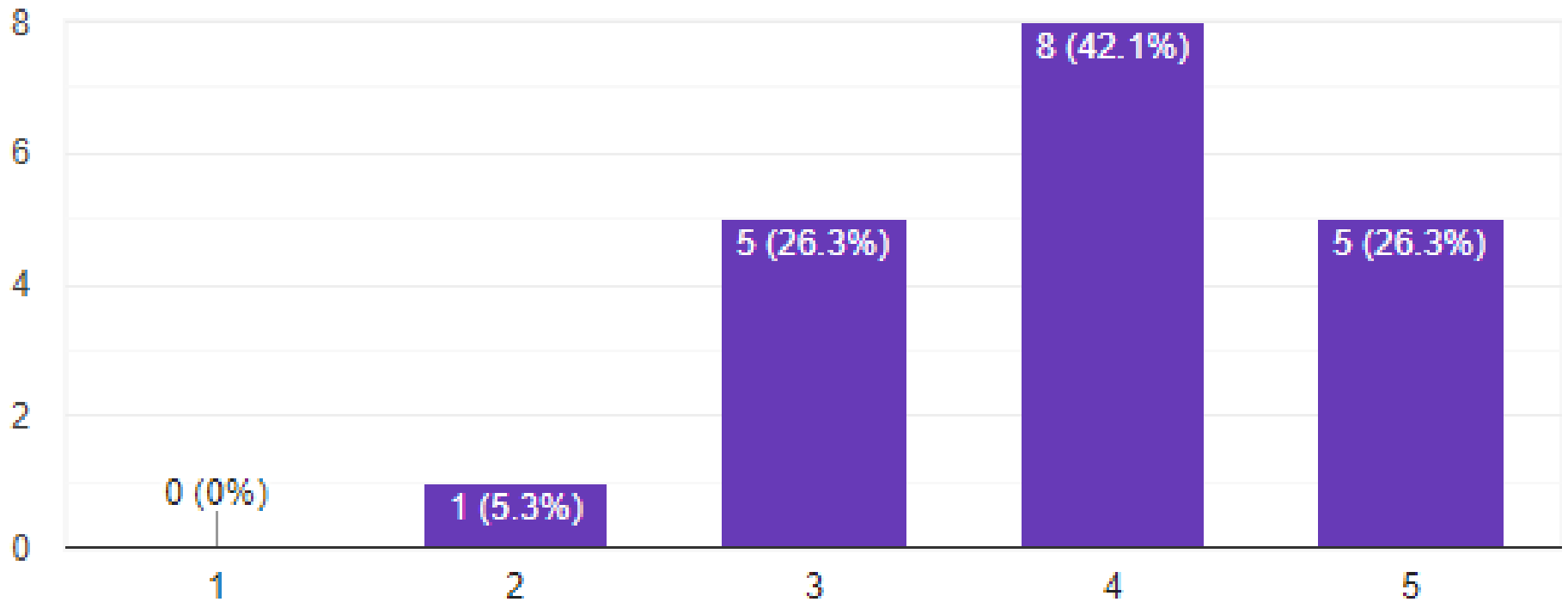
# The demands of my current role exceed my initial expectations



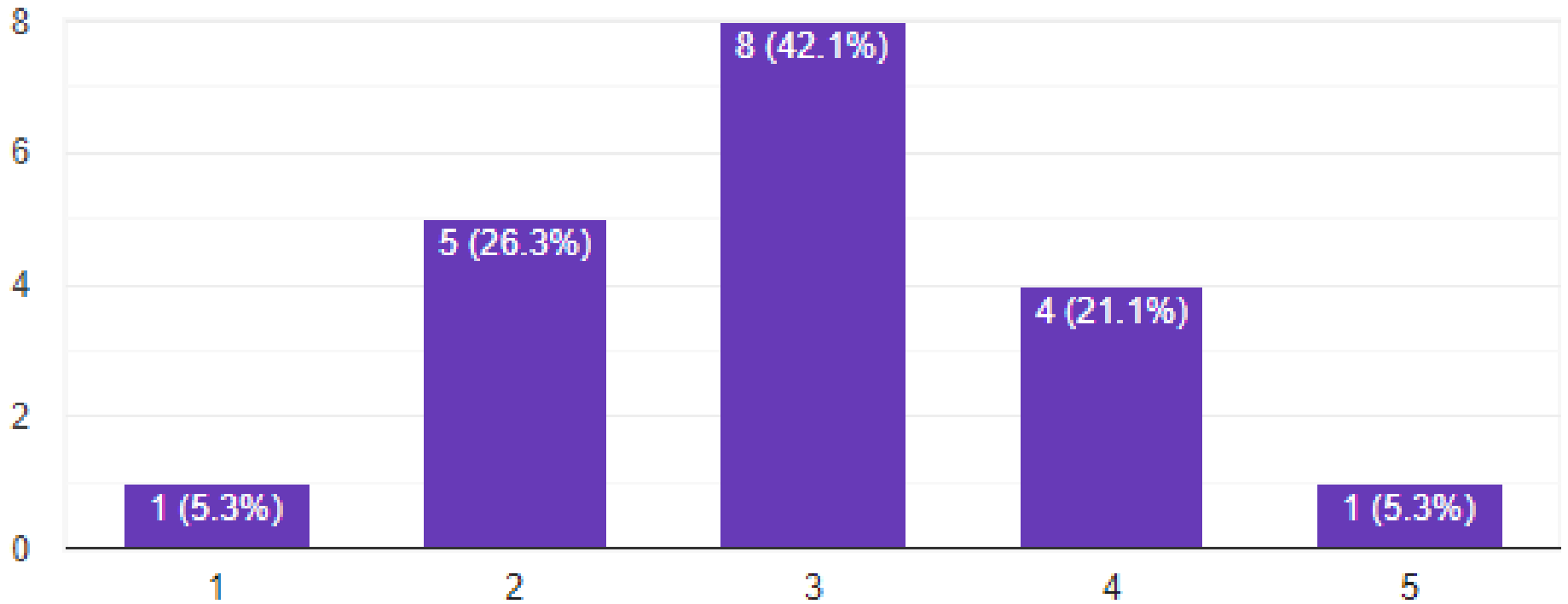
# I can vent job-related frustrations to an empathetic and confidential listener



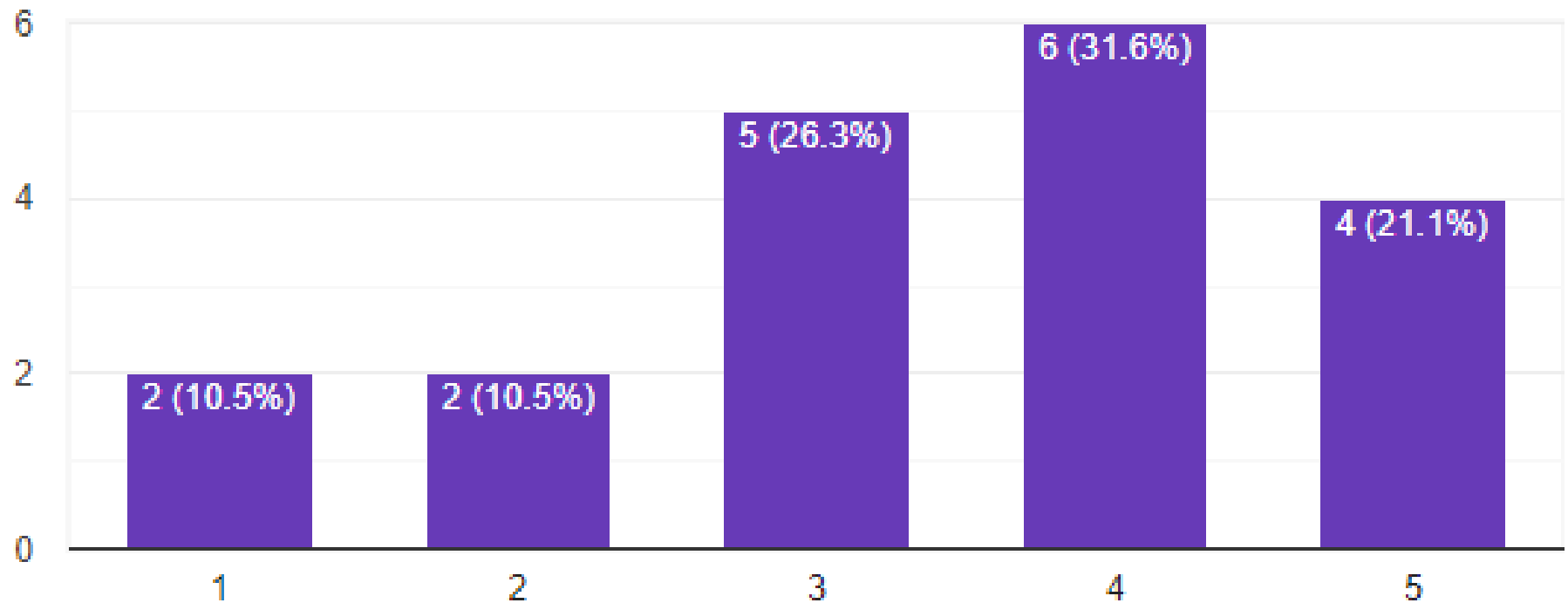
# I feel appreciated by other academic staff



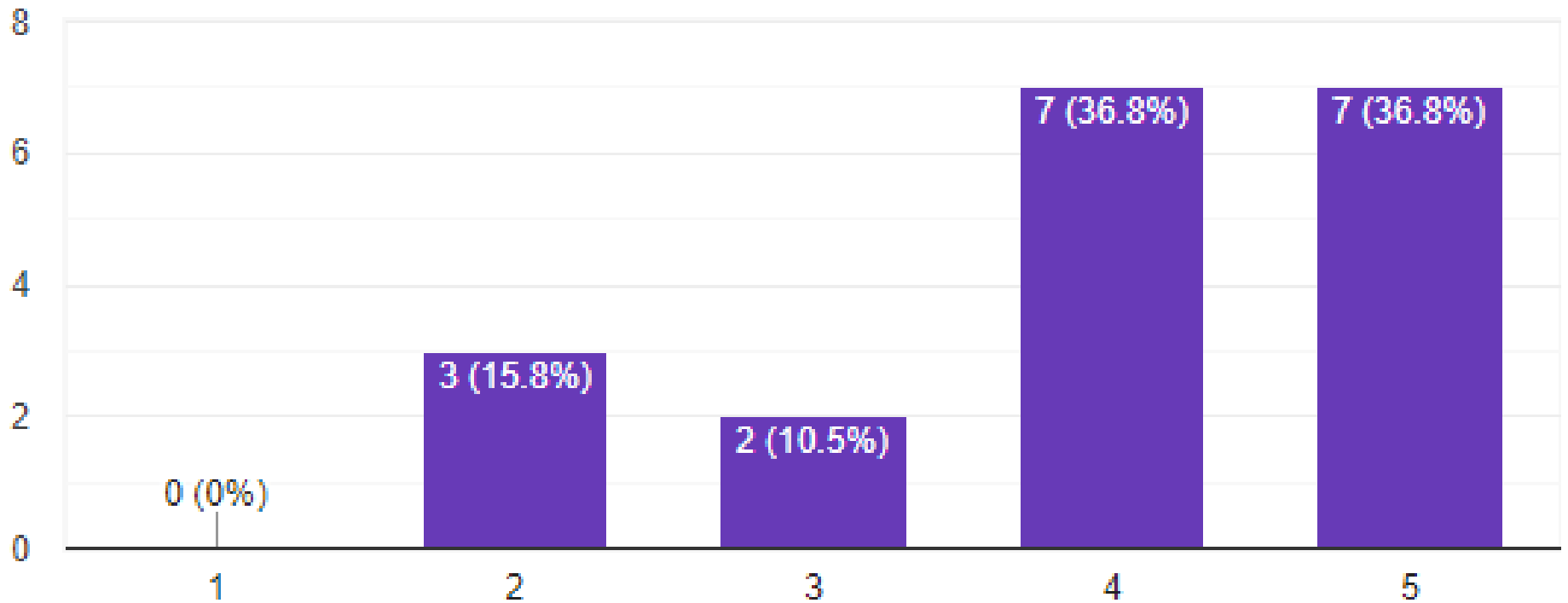
# Teachers are aware of what a typical day in my job involves



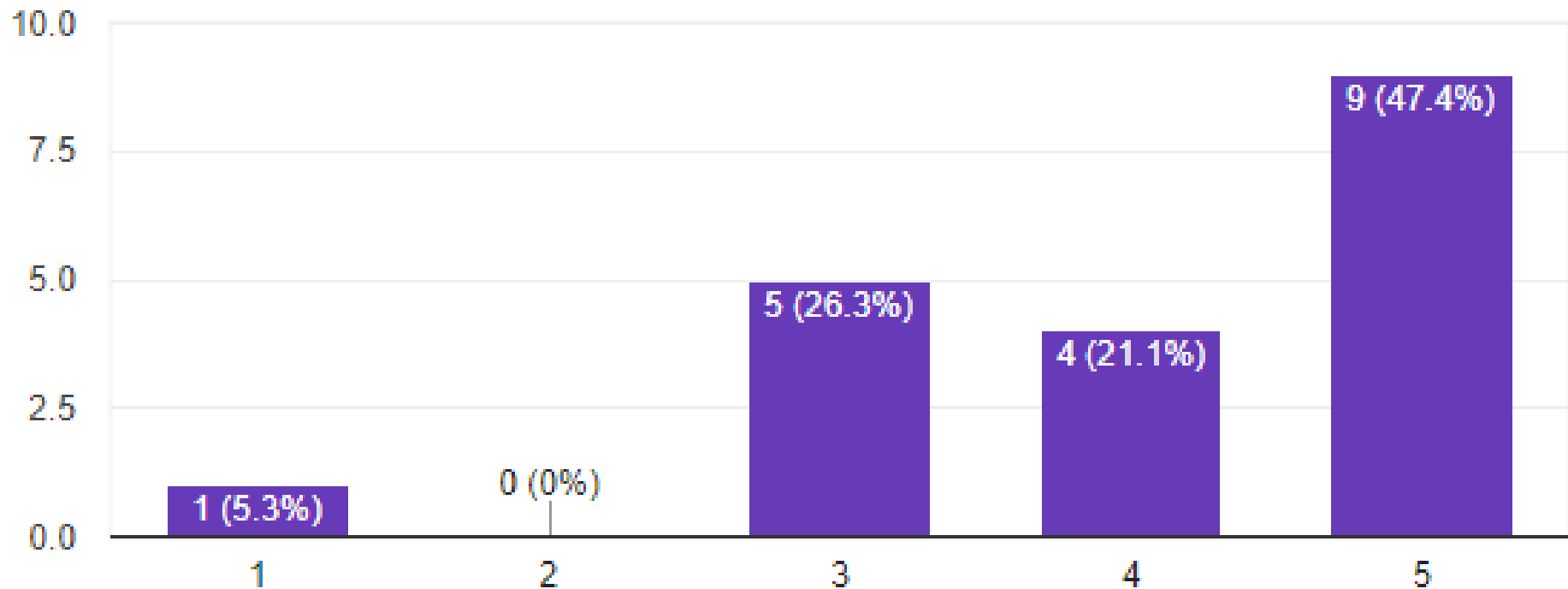
# I can confidently delegate my workload to other staff at busy times or in my absence



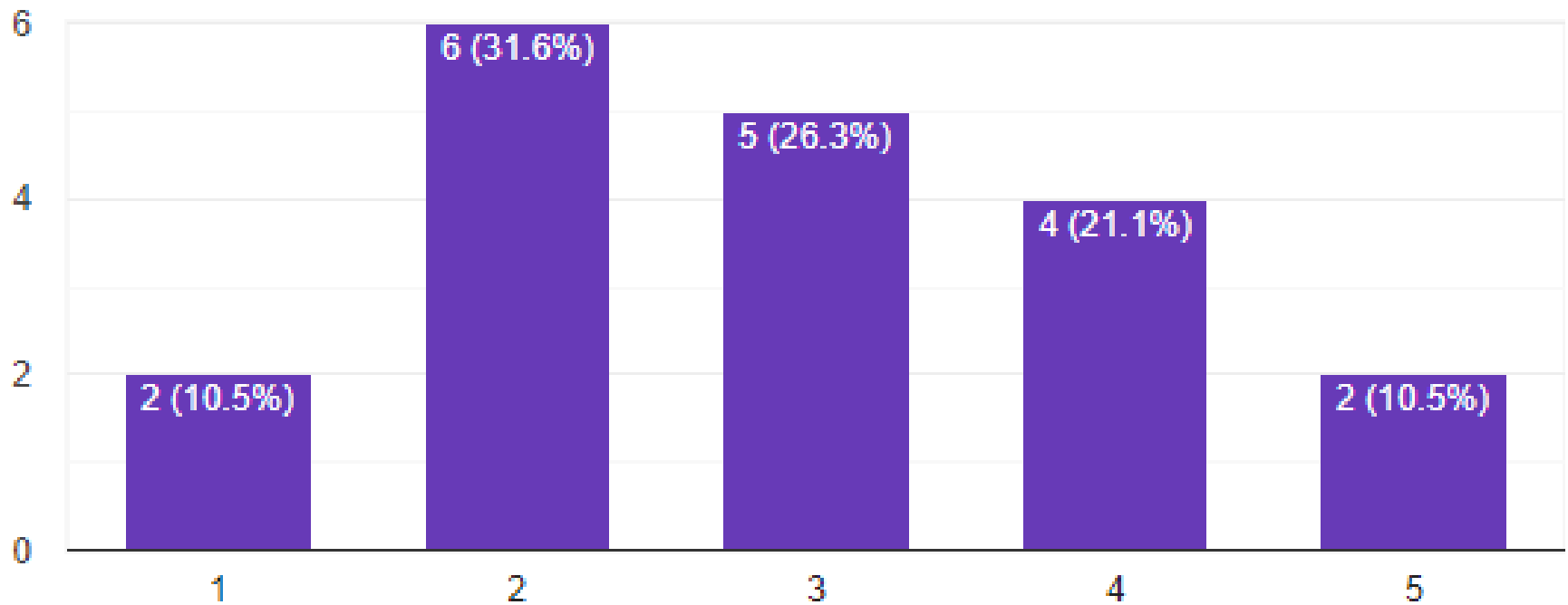
# I regularly perform tasks that are outside of my job description



# I work longer than my contracted hours on a regular basis

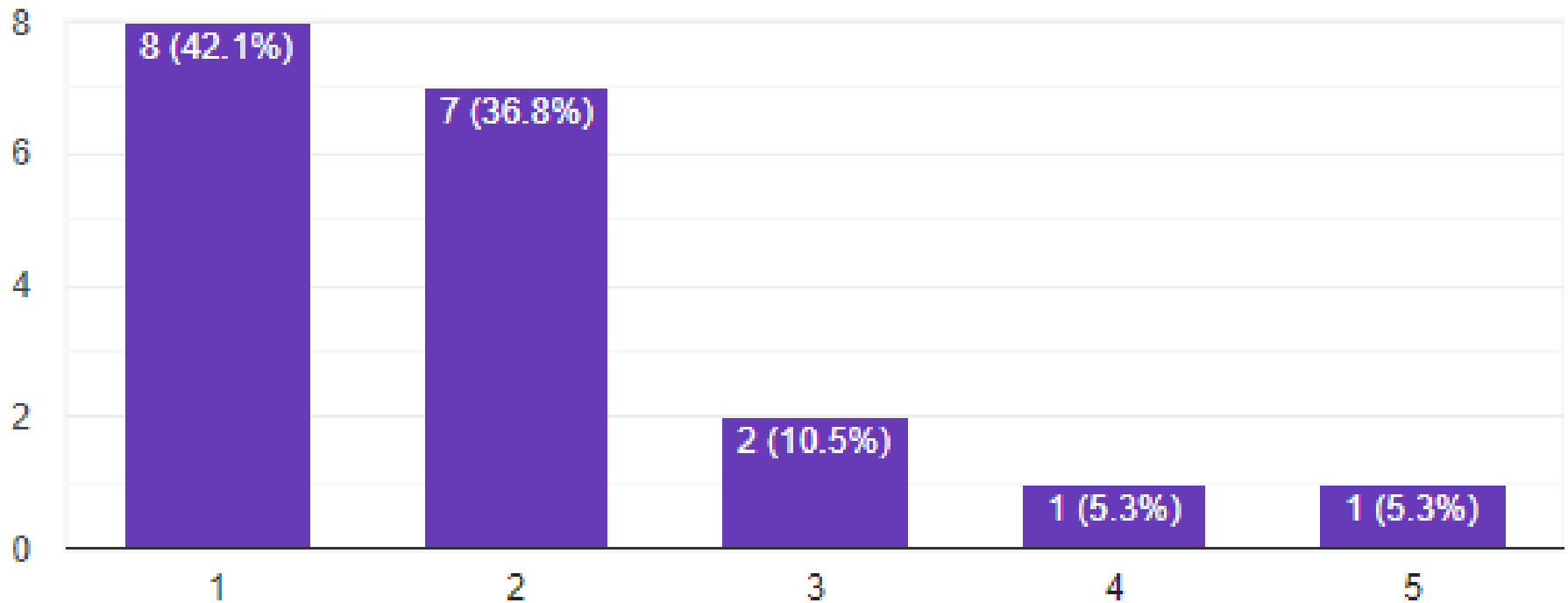


# I have enough time and opportunity to support my own professional development

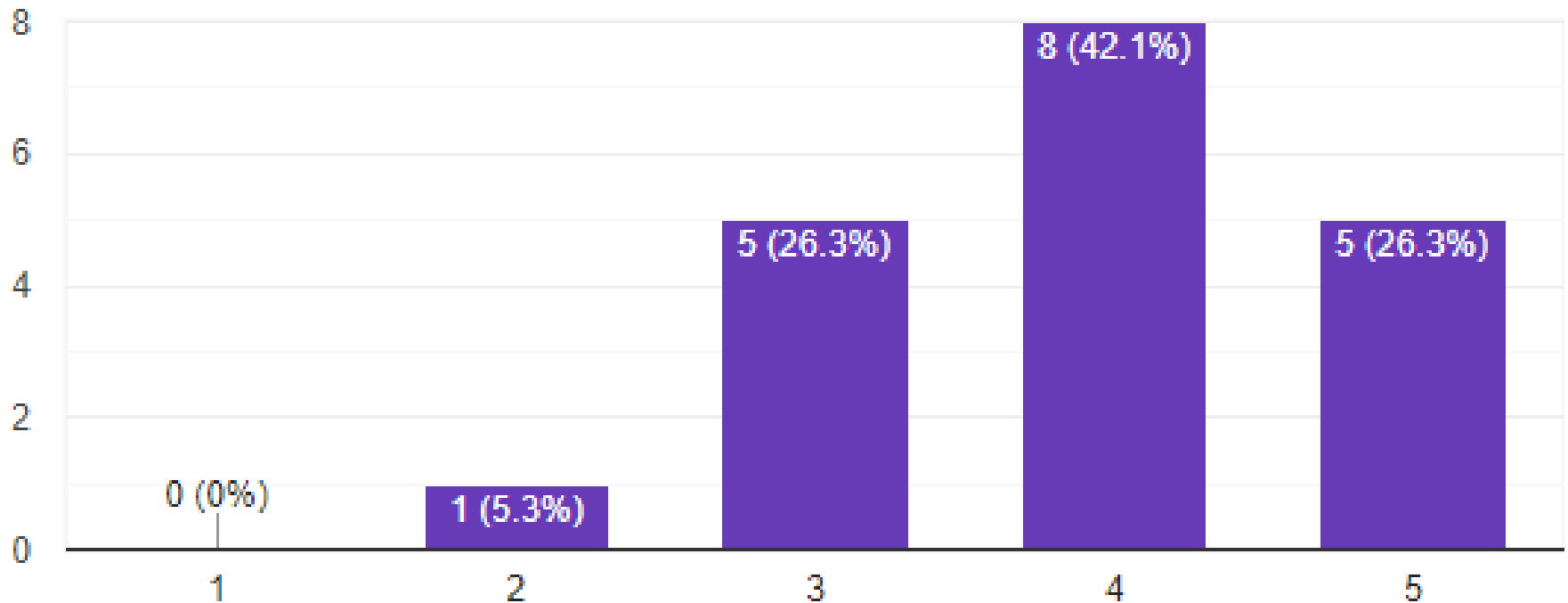




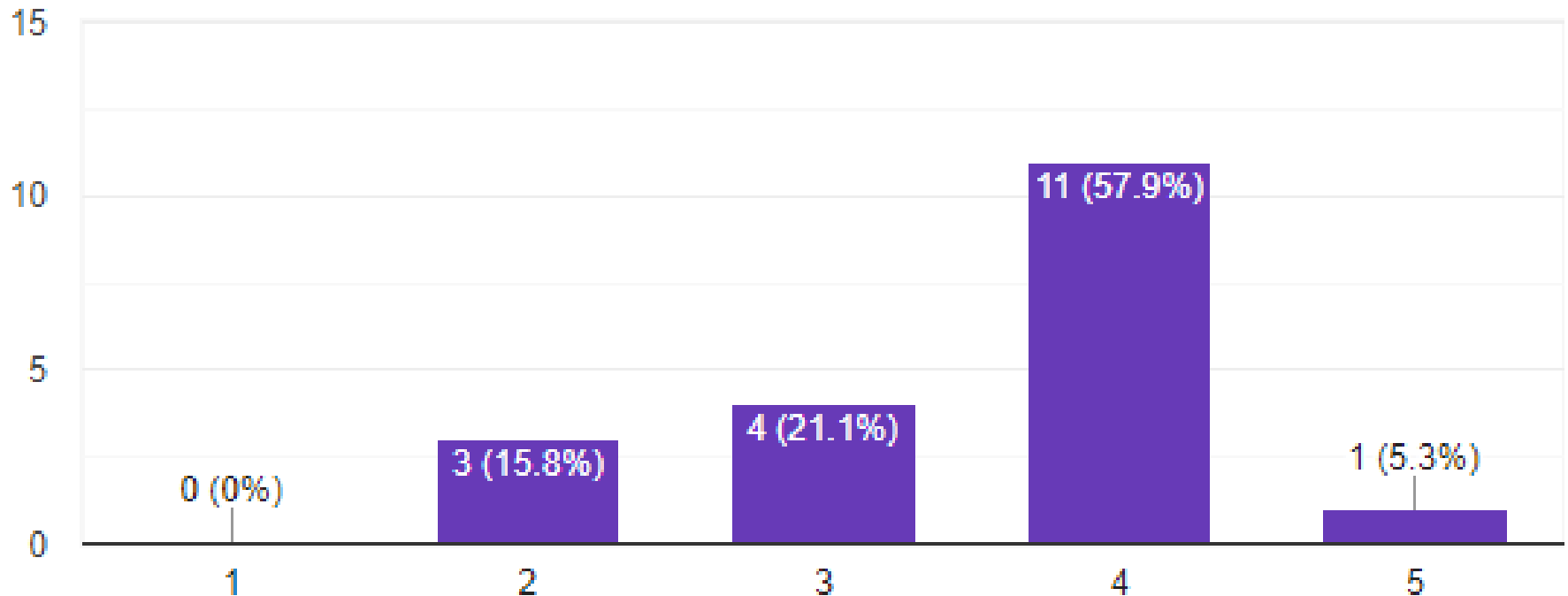
# I had management training before becoming an academic manager



# I am motivated to continue in my current role for the long term



# I would recommend academic management as a potential career pathway



# What would help you to do your job better?

- Improved communication and feedback systems within the organization
- A DoS network and staff stability
- Time to process ongoing training
- More training in business administration
- Fewer (job unrelated) interruptions
- More regular professional development and time to think and plan

# What would help you to do your job better?

- Opportunities for staff curriculum development days without students
- Improved pay, conditions and teaching resources
- More support from higher management
- Less administration around box-ticking for audits
- More appreciation of what I do

# Person-centred Prevention

- Responsibility of the individual – stressors need to be overcome rather than eliminated
- Job-related strategies– developing coping mechanisms, making use of social resources and changing work patterns
- Personal strategies – improving health and conducting self-analysis

(Maslach and Goldberg, 1998)

# Person-centred Prevention

- Developing coping mechanisms – venting emotions and identifying stressors
- Internal stressors – perfectionism, imposter syndrome, inability to say ‘no’
- External stressors – heavy workload, lack of resources, conflict with others
- Changing work patterns – taking regular breaks and avoiding overtime

(Alden, 2019)

# Person-centred Prevention

- Social resources – colleagues, supervisors, friends and family
- Improving health – physical fitness, good nutrition and relaxation strategies
- Self-analysis – unrealistic expectations and standards, need to feel appreciated leading to over work, and recognizing triggers of internal stressors

(Maslach and Goldberg, 1998)



# Situation-centred Prevention

- Work needs to be stressful to make employees work harder
- Useful for jobs focusing on quantity
- Not useful for jobs focusing on quality, particularly when performance is dependent on relationships with people
- Perception that stress leads to productivity

(Maslach and Goldberg, 1998)

# Suggested Strategies

- Time, stress and motivation management
  - Make it known when you do not want to be interrupted and close your door or leave your office at these times
  - Avoid being the 'go-to' person by having a shared, easily accessible list of who is responsible for what
  - Systematize your own PD eg: reading a journal article once a week or taking an online course

(Alden, 2019)

# Suggested Strategies

- Make use of social resources
  - Set aside a limited time for constructive venting with a trusted sounding board on a regular basis
  - Greet staff and students in the morning
  - Have your office door open for a part of each day
  - Run external PD workshops for other ENZ schools
  - Create and invite other DoSes to join a social media group

# Suggested Strategies

The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook group page for 'CELTA & Delta trainers'. The page features a blue header with the group name, a search bar, and navigation options like 'Jennifer', 'Home', and 'Create'. The main content area displays a pair of white Reebok CrossFit sneakers with blue and orange accents. Below the image are buttons for 'Joined', 'Notifications', 'Invite members', and 'More'. The left sidebar contains navigation links such as 'About', 'Discussion', 'Announcements', 'Members', 'Events', 'Videos', 'Photos', 'Files', 'Recommendations', and 'Watch party'. At the bottom, there are options to 'Write post', 'Photo/Video', 'Live Video', and 'More', along with an 'INVITE MEMBERS' button.

CELTA & Delta trainers

Private group

About

**Discussion**

Announcements

Members

Events

Videos

Photos

Files

Recommendations

Watch party

Joined ▾

✓ Notifications

Invite members

... More

Write post

Photo/Video

Live Video

More

INVITE MEMBERS

# Suggested Strategies

- Raise awareness
  - Create 'A Day in the Life of...' for teachers and DoSiTs
  - Develop an induction programme for new DoSes
  - Run an in-house training course for those aspiring to academic management
  - Avoid work-related messaging after office hours
  - Recognize random acts of mindlessness

# Thank you



# References

Alden, E. (2019). Too busy to read this? *Modern English Teacher*, 28(4), 26-28.

Heritage, S. (2015, June). Bored of mindfulness? Give mindlessness a try. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/jun/12/give-mindlessness-a-try>

Maslach, C. (2018, October 22). *Understanding job burnout* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRPBkCW0R5E>

Maslach, C., & Goldberg, J. (1998). Prevention of burnout: New perspectives. *Applied and Preventative Psychology*, (7), 63-74.