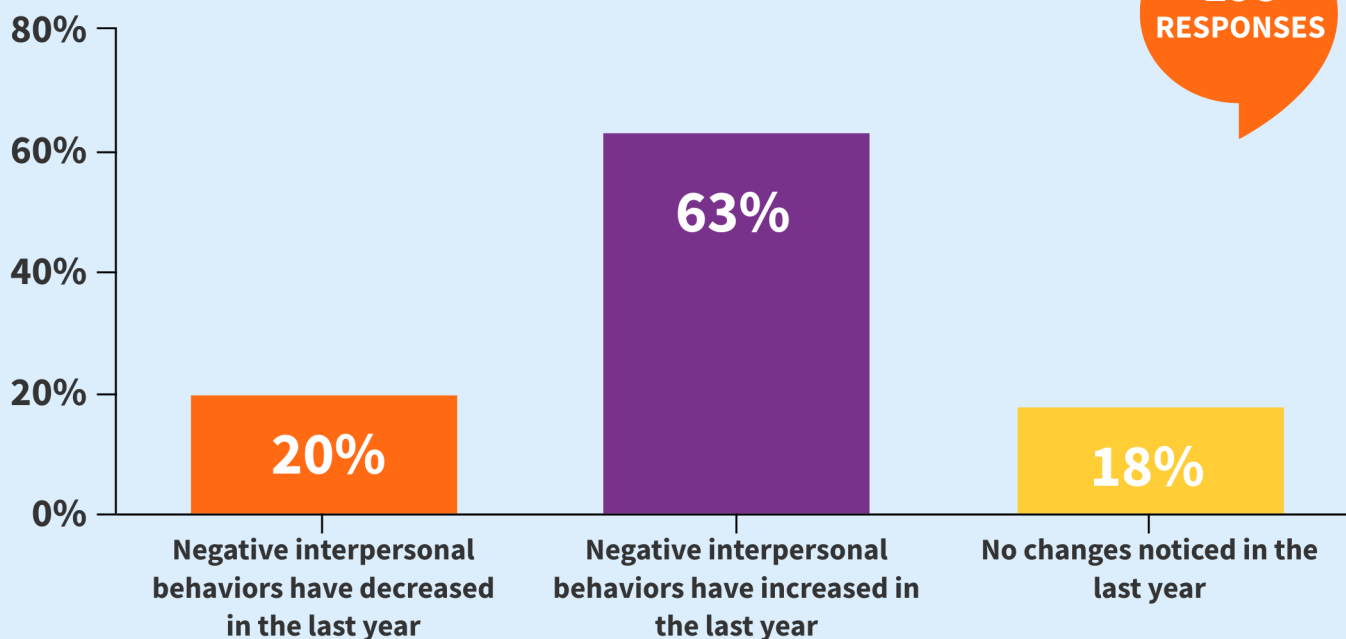




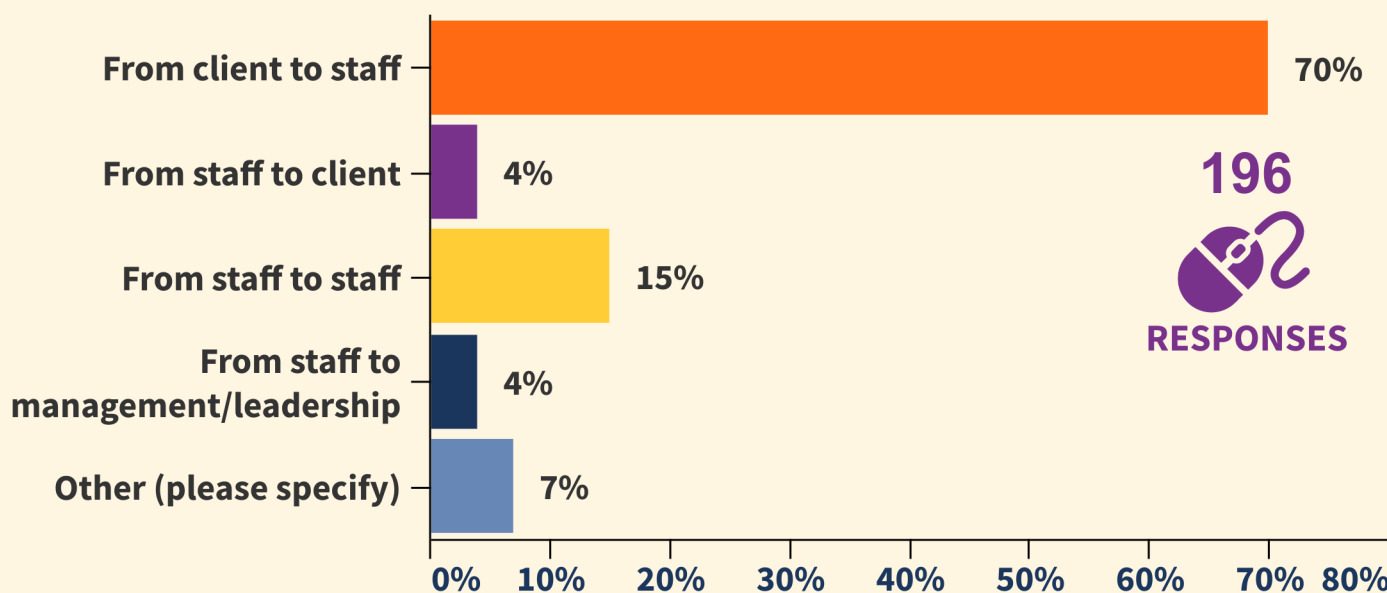
NEGATIVE INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOR

Q#1 Have you identified a change in negative interpersonal behaviors (i.e., unkind, verbally abusive, violent, or speaking in a loud manner) in your hospital in the last year?

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RESPONSES



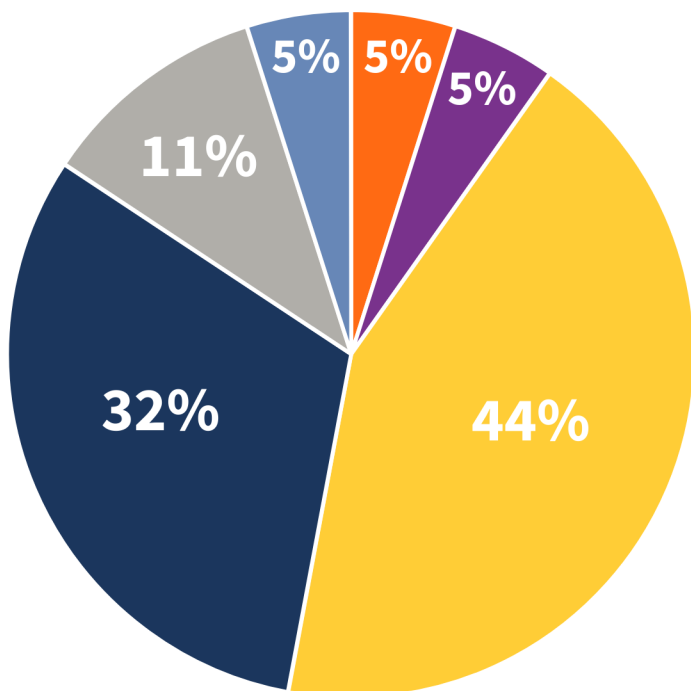
Q#2 Where do you see most of this negative interpersonal behavior?





NEGATIVE INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOR

Q#3 In what form do you see most of the negative interpersonal behavior?



- Through online social media or other online outlets
- Through electronic communications such as email or text
- Through phone conversation
- In-person, through face-to-face interaction
- Third person comments
- Other (please specify)

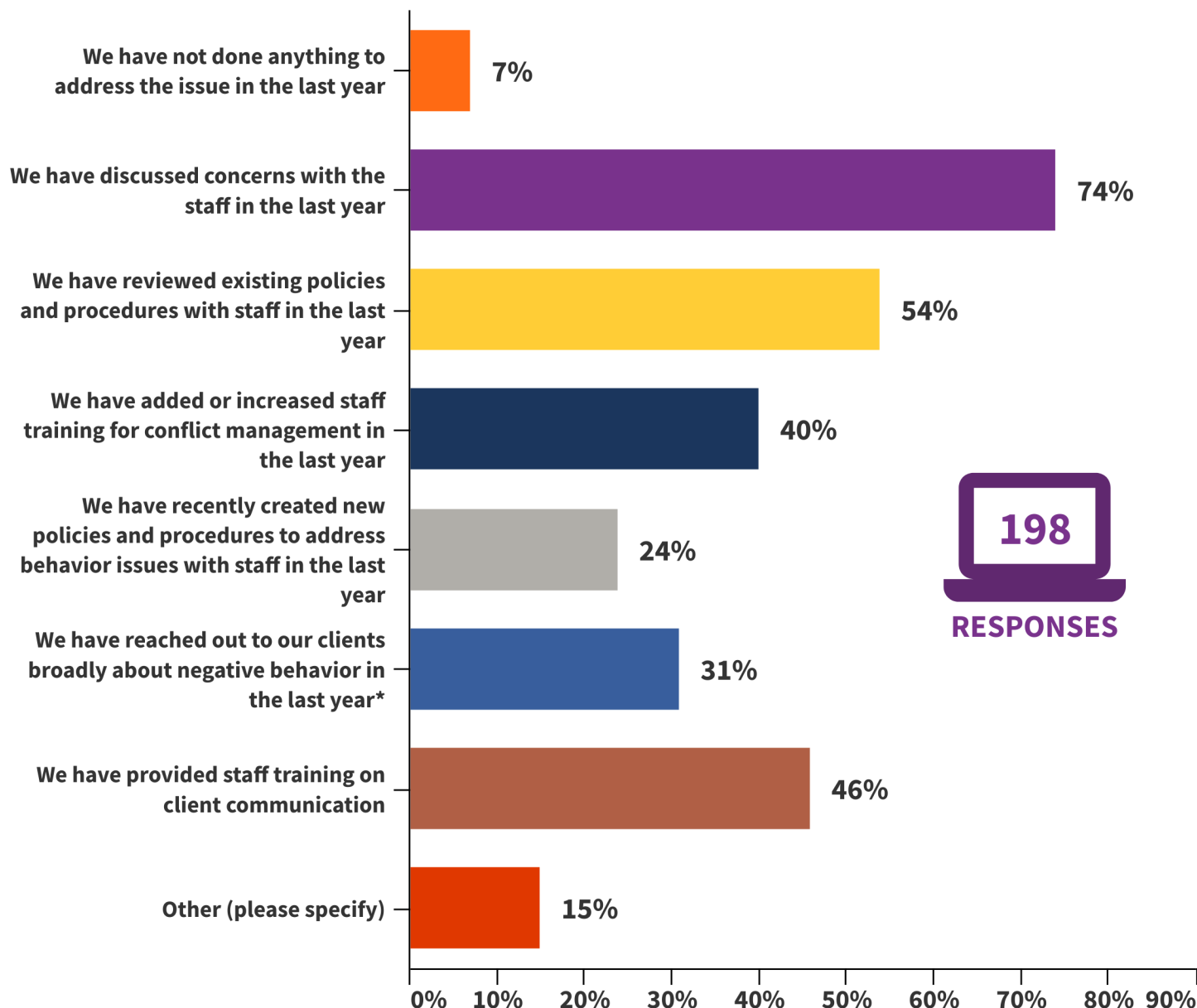
Q#4 Which do you find it the hardest to manage? (rank)





NEGATIVE INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOR

Q#5 How has your practice responded to negative interpersonal behavior? (check all that apply)

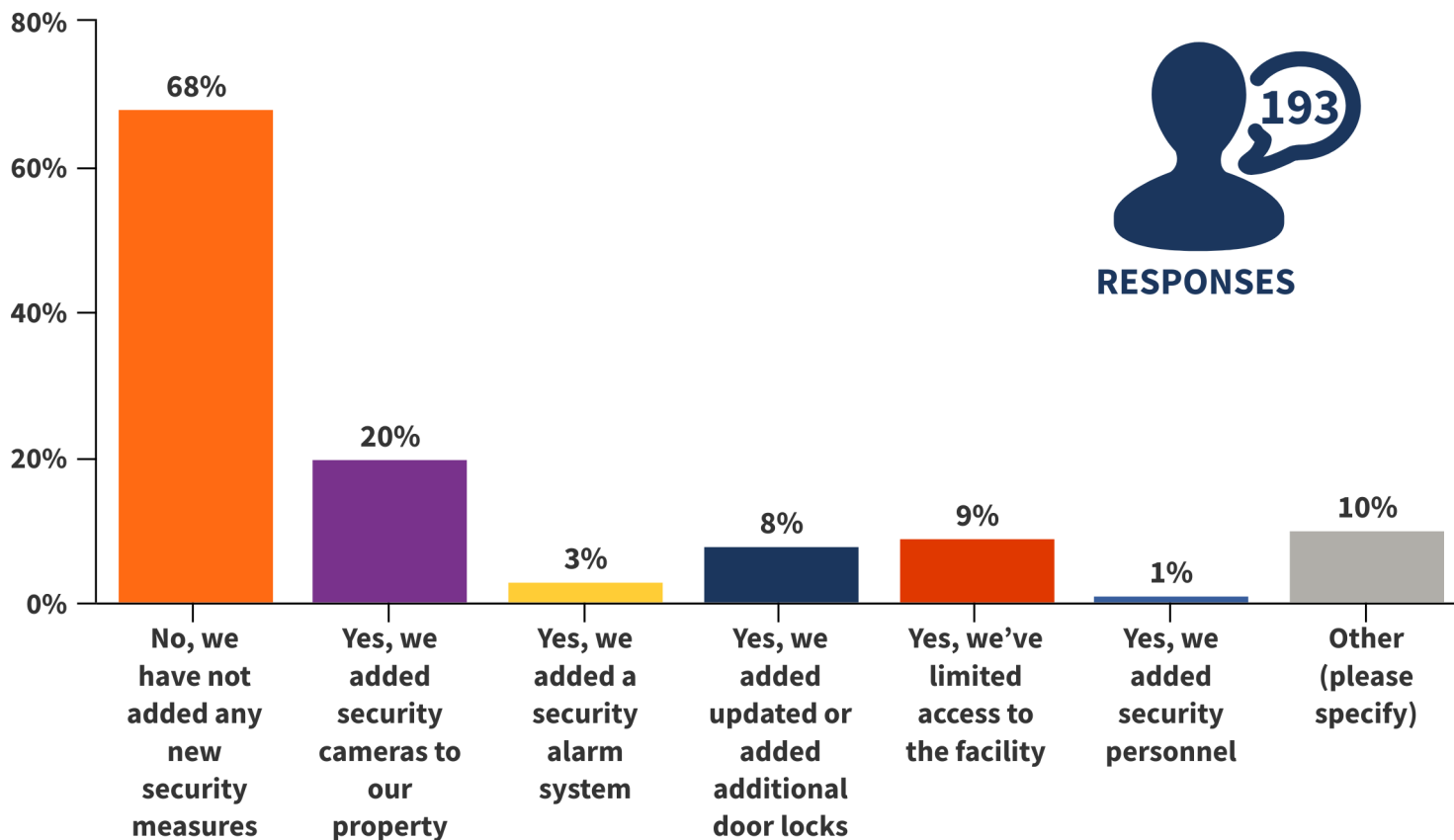


*signage, email communications, social media, letters, etc.

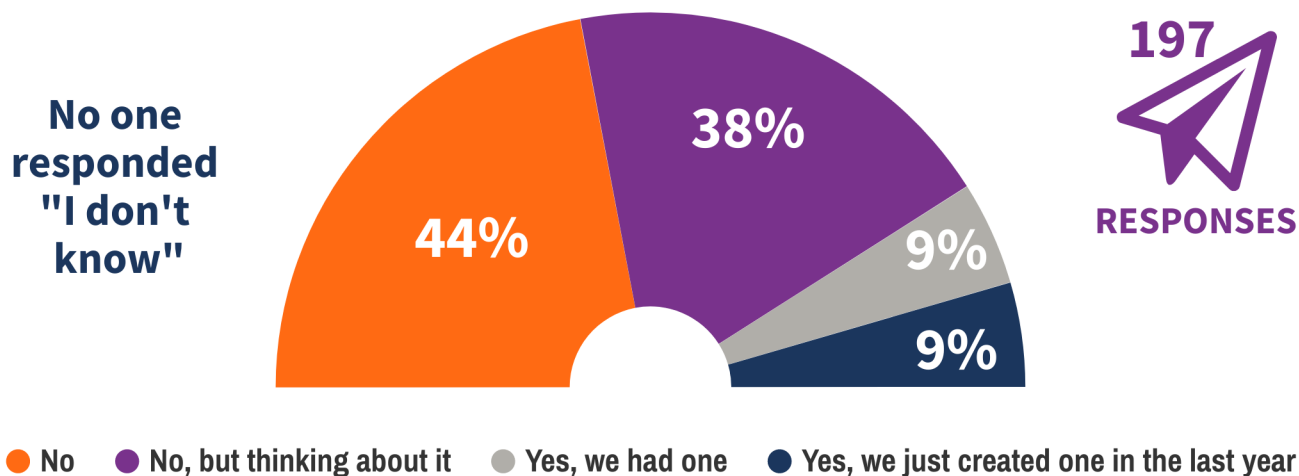


NEGATIVE INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOR

Q#6 As a result of negative behavior in your practice, have you added any new security technology to protect your facility, practice, and staff in the last year? (check all that apply)



Q#7 Does your practice display or share with your clients a code of conduct policy for acceptable behavior?



Notable Facts and Figures

NEGATIVE INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOR

Public misconduct has been on the rise for several years; people are just acting badly to each other in a way they never have before, whether it is in person or online. We see this in veterinary medicine; clients are ruder to practice team members than they used to be and even members of own profession are more short-tempered than in the past. Of course, this isn't just a veterinary medicine thing; this is being reported everywhere—restaurant workers are regularly berated, airplane passengers have gone nuts, and the comments seen on social media are beyond belief.

It has been a rough couple of years for many people with the pandemic and the related social isolation, illness, deaths of friends and relatives and then the current economic situation. None of these excuse bad behavior but perhaps makes it more understandable.

This month's survey delves into the topic of negative interpersonal behavior (unkind, verbally abusive, rude, or violent behavior) in veterinary medicine.

While the graphs above show the responses to various questions about this topic, several of the questions also had an option for "other" responses and answers for these are shown below.

Question 2: Where do you see most of this negative interpersonal behavior?

Most of the "other" answers said that more than one of the answer choices or all of them applied in their practice. One person noted that the negative behavior was not directed towards anyone in particular, just in general.

Question 3: In what form do you see most of the negative interpersonal behavior?

Most of the "other" answers said that more than one of the answer choices applied in their practice. Several people mentioned "client shaming" going on amongst the staff.

Question 5: How has your practice responded to negative interpersonal behavior? (Check all that apply.)

As can be seen above, most of the actions taken by practices are internally focused; only about one-third of the respondents said they had done something that included communication with clients. The "other" answers indicated a broad range of additional actions taken by practices including:

- Discuss concerns with clients individually as needed, talk to clients about their behavior and emphasize this is not acceptable and will not be tolerated in the future, fire clients when needed
- Fired staff troublemakers or otherwise negative employees (including DVMs)
- Posted code of conduct in exam rooms
- Added security cameras and recording of all phone calls
- Re-emphasized core values consistently with staff
- Have mediated conversations between staff
- Shifted positions and terminated employees
- Have an onsite director of culture who is involved with all staff and client interpersonal issues
- Staff is trained to document issues/problems and ask a manager for assistance if needed
- Training on de-escalation of difficult situations
- Training and in-person wellness support for staff who face this kind of treatment from clients
- Written policies for client behavior

Notable Facts and Figures (cont'd.)

Several respondents offered a different perspective:

- “We have not seen an increase in negative behavior. Most animal hospitals have not seen an increase in negative behavior. They are stressed out and perceive bad behavior. Or they are seeing more new clients than they ever have and do not have the level of trust with their clientele that they are used to. Clients have never been nicer than during COVID. Occasionally we have negative interactions, that’s just part of this job. We disassociate ourselves from the guilty party and move on.”
- “We have discussed empathy. We’ve also discussed that many of the clients would never have escalated if we didn’t make a mistake. Very few of my staff understands what it is to be a client.”

One person noted: “DVMs know they have the power because of the lack of vets. The owner is scared to lose the DVMs, so they get away with it.”

Question 6: As a result of negative behavior in your practice, have you added any new security technology to protect your facility, practice, and staff in the last year? (Check all that apply.)

“Other” answers included:

- Added a buzz-in system for the front door to limit client access in general due to limited staff
- Added audio recording in addition to more security cameras
- Invite local law enforcement to stop in for free coffee
- Removed staff pictures and names from the website
- “Prevention is the best protection, managing expectations”
- Do active shooter training more frequently
- Added recording of all phone calls
- “We make sure no one is left alone in the practice and wait to pull out together. Due to break-ins, we upgraded our security system and reinforced points of entry”
- Added a silent alarm at the front desk
- Protocols for how we deal with clients

While none of the above is a surprise given the current world environment, it was a bit of a depressing way to end the year’s Insider Insights surveys! However, as someone said above, prevention is the best protection and practices must be more cautious than ever.

I hope everyone can put some of the current doom and gloom aside and enjoy your holiday season—see you in 2023!