

Employers Get Failing Grade on Mental Health Support from Employees, Rank Themselves Barely “Passing,” Finds New Research

2021 Mental Health Report Card from Lighthouse Research & Advisory and LifeSpeak Highlights Discrepancies Between Employer and Employee Outlook on Mental Health

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TORONTO--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--Vast disparities exist between employers and employees when it comes to their perception of the mental health support companies are providing to their workers, according to research conducted by [Lighthouse Research & Advisory](#) and announced today by [LifeSpeak](#) (TSX: LSPK), the mental health and wellbeing platform for employee and customer-focused organizations.

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The report, “[2021 Employer Mental Health Report Card](#),” commissioned by LifeSpeak, compares survey responses of more than 1,000 large employers and more than 1,000 employees across the U.S. It found that workers give their companies a failing grade – “F” – when it comes to workplace mental health and wellbeing support. Just as concerning, employers only graded themselves a “C” average for the mental health support they offer to their workforce.

“In the 10 years I've been doing research on employer priorities, this is the first time I've seen this big of a gap between the reality that workers and employers perceive,” said Ben Eubanks, chief research officer at Lighthouse Research & Advisory. “When analyzed in aggregate, the data from this research indicates that employers are trying to implement solutions to support mental health needs for the workforce, but the reality is these efforts aren't being seen, felt, and received by many of the workers they are meant to support.”

As outlined in the report, employees' overall perception of how their organizations support mental health is actually much worse than the corresponding letter grades depicted in this research. Employees and employers were asked to rank their organization's support for mental health on a scale of 1 to 10. The average employee ranking was a 4.4, or an “F” on the corresponding academic grading scale. The average ranking employers gave themselves was a 7.6, with respondents in HR roles grading their company a slightly higher 7.8 and senior company leaders in non-HR roles averaging 7.2.

In addition to this clear mismatch in perception, the research also exposed other disparities, including:

58% of employers said they made significant positive changes to their mental health and wellbeing support over the past 18 months, compared to only 46% of workers who recognized those changes. While this is a somewhat nominal gap, it begs questions about how effective those improvements are if workers still rate their company's overall support a 4.4 out of 10.

64% of employees cited flexible work schedules as the best method to improve employee health and wellbeing, while this was selected by only 46% of employers.

Employees are generally comfortable talking about mental health but not as comfortable as employers think. 60% of employees said they would be comfortable discussing their mental health and wellbeing in front of a colleague or boss. In comparison, 75% of employers thought people at their company would be comfortable in that situation.

A person's age also affects their comfort level when discussing mental health in the workplace. A worker between the ages of 25 and 34 is 50% more likely to be comfortable with this than a worker 54+ years old.

Men are twice as likely as women to feel their employer has made significant positive changes to mental health and wellbeing support over the past 18 months.

Data Shows Employers Where to Prioritize, and Why

While this research exposed many discrepancies in the way employers and employees view mental health support in the workplace, it also showed areas of alignment. It provided a valuable roadmap for employers to address gaps in care. For example, employers and employees were both asked to indicate the benefits that result from positive mental health support, and the way these groups prioritized the benefits was identical:

1. Higher productivity
2. Better overall performance
3. Greater satisfaction and engagement
4. Less likely to leave the job
5. Easier to recruit new talent/Recommend job to friends
6. Fewer sick days

In the current, highly competitive job market, the perception employees have towards the ability of mental health benefits to play a positive role in recruiting, and retention was especially notable. Nearly half of all employees surveyed said mental health support would make them less likely to leave a job (49%) and more likely to recommend a job to a friend (48%).

This research also probed the best methods for supporting mental health and wellbeing and how to make mental health benefits more appealing and accessible. When it comes to the best ways to support mental health, there was a general consensus among employers and employees around three main ideas – providing access to qualified experts, having company leaders openly support mental health conversations, and providing relevant training and education.

While employer and employee viewpoints on a flexible work schedule did not align, as highlighted above, employers should realize that the workforce voiced the importance of flexibility in multiple areas of this research. In addition to 64% of employees citing flexible work schedules as the best method for improving employee mental health, 71% said the ability to access mental health support at a place and time that's convenient to them would make mental health benefits more appealing.

"Senior leaders are realizing the enormous business value in doing right by their workforce and ensuring they have the mental health support they need. It's a trend we've seen for years, and this research validates and quantifies much of what we've learned along the way," said Michael Held, CEO and founder of LifeSpeak. "Employers around the globe that truly want to make an impact in their employees' lives – and in their business – by improving mental health need to invest in solutions that will be used by those who need them. Companies need to embrace a culture of acceptance and support for mental health while heeding the call for flexibility and confidentiality. We've seen from our large global customers that these are key elements to supporting mental health in the workplace, and this research provides hard metrics that bear out our experiences."

To see the report, "2021 Employee Mental Health Report Card," including a full analysis of the data from Lighthouse Research & Advisory, visit: <https://lifespeak.com/doc/2021-employer-mental-health-report-card>

About Lighthouse Research & Advisory

Lighthouse Research & Advisory is a modern, independent analyst firm dedicated to setting the standard for excellence in talent, learning, and HR with practical research and a hands-on approach. By providing compelling research and actionable insights, our team enables HR, learning, and talent leaders to deliver more value to the business. Our research examines competitive practices, cutting-edge technologies, and innovative strategies. For more information, visit www.lhra.io.

About LifeSpeak Inc.

LifeSpeak is a leading software-as-a-service provider of a platform for mental health and total wellbeing education for organizations committed to taking care of their employees and customers. With 17+ years of experience creating and curating thousands of expert-led micro-learning videos and other digital content, LifeSpeak's proprietary library's depth and breadth of easily consumable content helps companies around the world support their people anytime and anywhere. LifeSpeak serves a diverse global client base across many industries and sectors, including Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, insurance providers, and other health technology firms. LifeSpeak is the parent company of LIFT

Digital Inc. (“LIFT” or “LIFT session) and ALAViDA Health Ltd. (“ALAViDA”). To learn more, follow LifeSpeak on LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com/company/lifespeak-inc>), or visit www.LifeSpeak.com.

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