



## **BELONGING:** THE ANTIDOTE TO QUIET QUITTING AND BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

Employee versus employer perceptions of workplace  
wellbeing and what differentiates leading organizations

# Table of Contents



**A Holistic Look at Workplace Wellbeing..... 3**

**Gaps, Challenges, and Opportunities ..... 5**

**Wellbeing At Work: The Current Environment ..... 9**

**Culture is King ..... 12**

**Wellness Innovators ..... 14**

**The Benefits of Investing in Workplace Culture ..... 18**

**Key Takeaways..... 21**

**About the Research ..... 22**

**About LifeSpeak Inc ..... 23**

**About Lighthouse ..... 24**

# A Holistic Look at Workplace Wellbeing

3

Think for a moment what it takes to be well. Not just “I’m okay,” but “really well” across the different facets and aspects of work and life.

It’s not an easy balancing act, given that increased stress at work can affect an individual’s mental and physical health, and influence how they interact with coworkers, family, friends, and their community.

This undeniable interconnectedness between physical and mental wellbeing has influenced the increased adoption of workplace wellbeing initiatives over the years and has contributed to the understanding that workplace wellness is about more than physical fitness challenges and biometrics; it is about acknowledging and supporting comprehensive, whole-person health for employees and their dependents.

**By definition, holistic or whole-person wellbeing exists at the intersection of:**

- **Physical health**
- **Mental health**
- **Financial wellbeing**
- **Social wellbeing**
- **Spiritual wellbeing**

Employers have increasingly come to recognize that they play a pivotal role in supporting employees in all factors of wellbeing. However, it’s one thing to verbally commit to supporting these needs as a talent leader, champion of equity, or business executive, and it’s another matter entirely to deliver on that promise across an organization.

This report addresses the topic of holistic wellbeing and highlights the results of a new research study that examined employer versus employee perceptions about the degree to which organizations support whole-person wellbeing in the workplace and through the benefits they offer. The study was conducted by Lighthouse Research & Advisory Group on behalf of LifeSpeak Inc., the leading whole-person wellbeing solution that blends personal and digital support for the workplace. LifeSpeak Inc.’s suite of solutions allows organizations to provide best-in-class content and expertise at scale, meeting individual employees wherever they are on their personal wellbeing journeys. As the parent company to LIFT Digital, ALAViDA Health, Torchlight, and Wellbeats, LifeSpeak Inc. provides in-depth expertise across mental health, wellness, physical fitness, substance use, and caregiving.

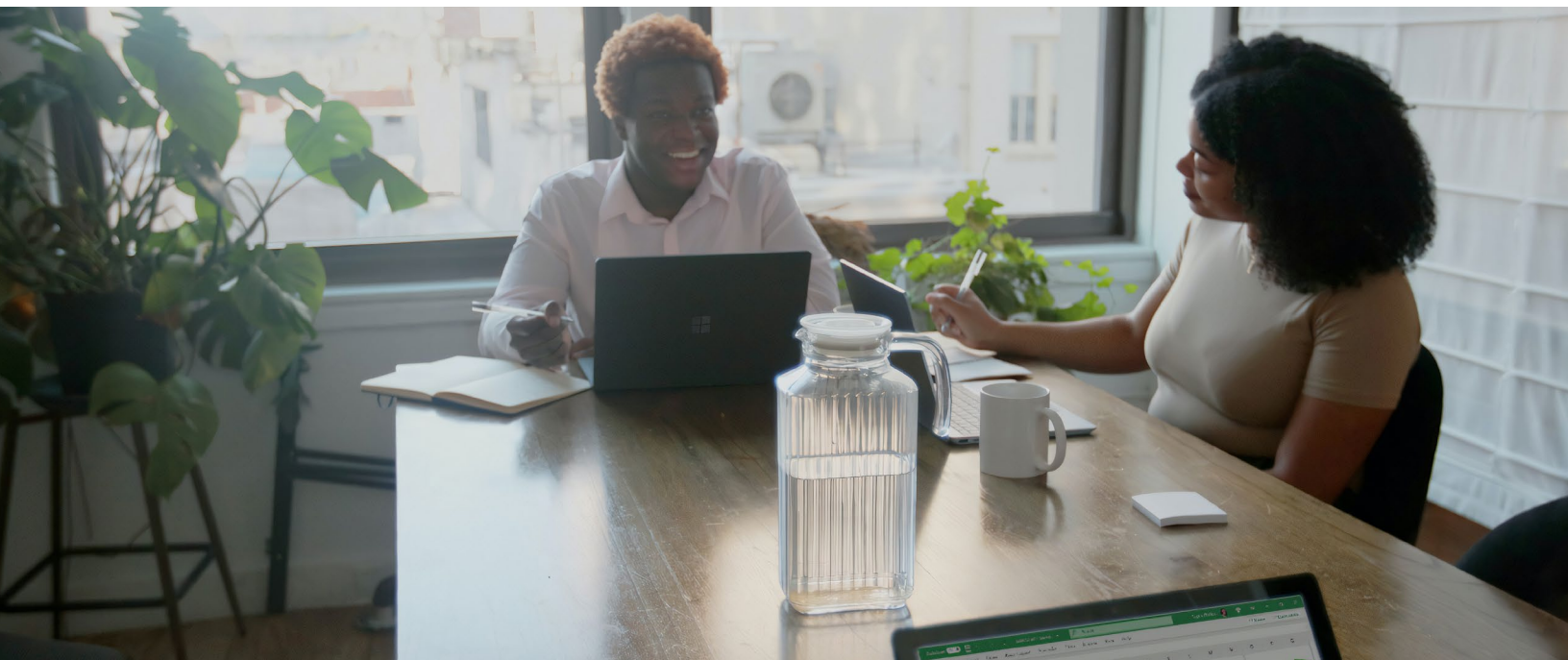


**Why it matters.** In a previous study on workforce retention, LifeSpeak Inc. found that a top driver of employee turnover was stress and burnout, and with millions of employees changing jobs in the last year and a half, this trend continues to plague employers.

To gauge the current state of workplace health and how it contributes to attrition, stress, and burnout, LifeSpeak Inc. and Lighthouse Research surveyed 1,000 employers and 1,000 workers across North America, and uncovered insights that will help employers to more effectively support employees through wellness initiatives and the benefits they offer. The 2022 study explored concepts like:

- **How comfortable employees are with discussing their overall wellbeing at work;**
- **How comprehensive wellbeing support translates to business outcomes; and**
- **What sets innovative wellbeing leaders apart from other companies.**

This report will help you examine your organization's wellbeing journey, while providing practical ideas that you can implement into your corporate health strategy and everyday programming.

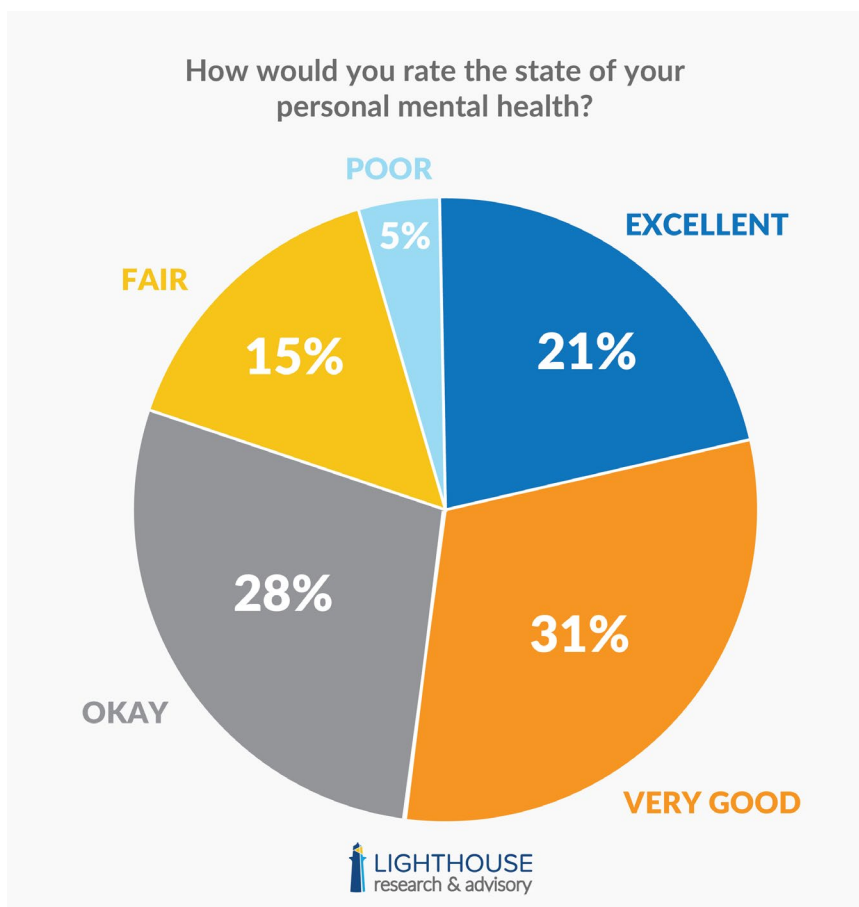


## Gaps, Challenges, and Opportunities

The challenges are numerous for employers today, from balancing remote and onsite employee populations to offering and managing the ideal mix of benefits to attract and retain employees – all while helping mitigate healthcare costs and improve workforce performance. Fortunately, with the right support and resources, employers and employees are more likely to feel like they can manage both their work and their everyday life.

That's the good news. The not-so-good news is that roughly half of all employees rate their mental health as "okay" or worse, and because of the connection between mental and physical health and how these factors influence productivity and performance, this can spell trouble for employers<sup>1</sup>.

*Figure 1: Workforce Ratings of Personal Mental Health*



Source: 2022 Lighthouse  
Research & Advisory Workplace  
Wellbeing Study (n=1,000)

1. <https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-019-8033-1>

While many respondents feel they have a positive state of mental health, clearly there's opportunity to help others improve their mental wellbeing, which can influence important factors, like engagement and retention.

In addition to exploring mental wellbeing status, this report touches on employee belonging by assessing respondents' sense of belonging in relationship to organizational transparency, leadership commitment and support, and having access to resources that help employees manage work priorities. Responses revealed some clear ties between an employee's sense of belonging and their mental health and wellbeing:

- **Employees who perceive both progress and prioritization on health and wellbeing are more likely to feel like they truly belong within the company.**
- **Employees with a high belonging score are connected to outcomes like employee retention, feelings of equitable treatment, and an openness to recommend the company as a great place to work.**
- **Employees are four times more likely to say their company doesn't prioritize wellbeing if they fall in the low belonging category.**
- **For clarity from a demographic perspective, groups like women, Latinx, and multiracial respondents were more likely to score in the low belonging category in this study.**



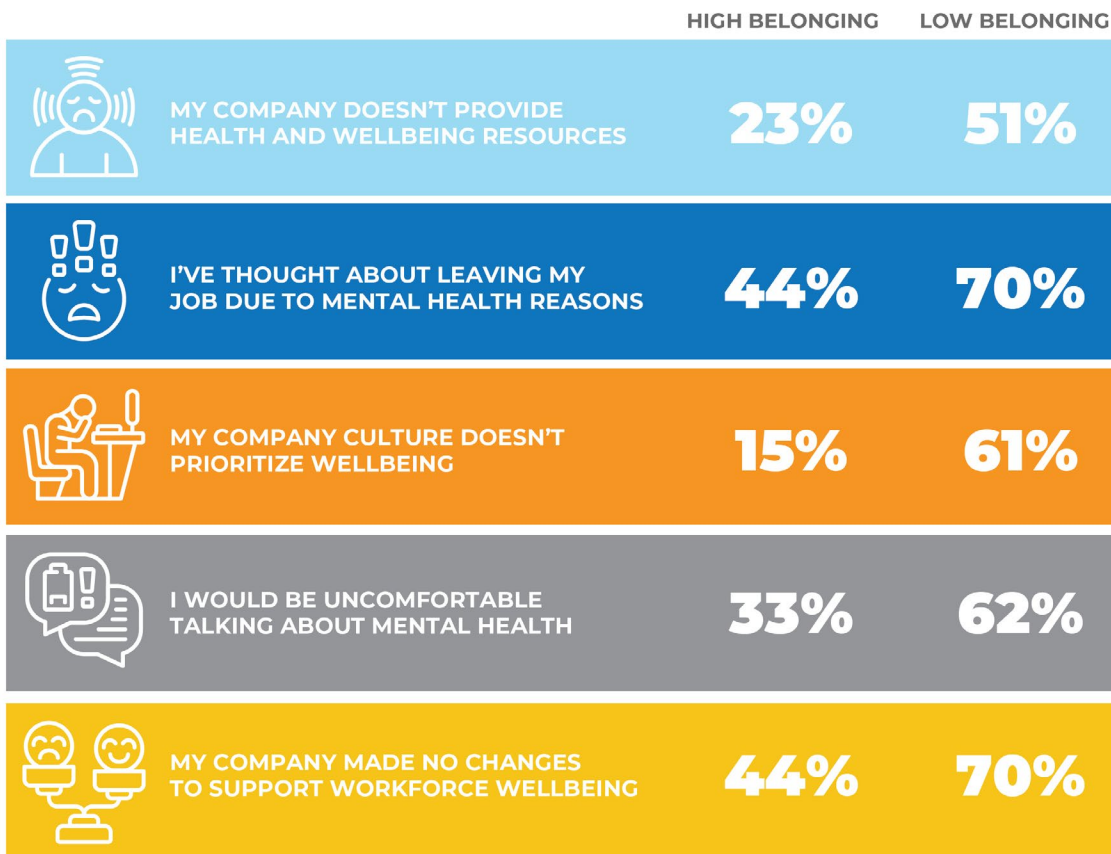
## **EMPLOYEE BELONGING INSIGHT**

**Employees with a low belonging score are 59% more likely to think about quitting their job due to mental health reasons.**

Figure 2: The Intersection of Employee Belonging and Wellbeing

## Belonging Scores

“I FEEL ACCEPTED, RESPECTED, AND APPRECIATED AT WORK”



Source: 2022 Lighthouse Research & Advisory Workplace Wellbeing Study (n=1,000)

*We are investing in “no regrets” changes as an enterprise, because we know that supporting our people at work will make them more valuable at home, in their communities, and in the workplace.*

—Bhushan Sethi, People & Organization Joint Global Leader, PwC

Forward-thinking business leaders are using a range of approaches to help mitigate the effects and impact associated with workforce mental health needs, including:

- **Supportive employment relationships;**
- **Positive workplace culture; and**
- **Relevant, accessible health benefits.**

One clear opportunity that cuts across all these areas? **Employee mental health and wellbeing support.**

8



*“A person who feels like they belong at work is five times more likely to recommend their employer as a great place to work and four times less likely to have faced mental health declines in the last year.”*

—George Rogers, Chief Culture Officer, Lighthouse Research & Advisory

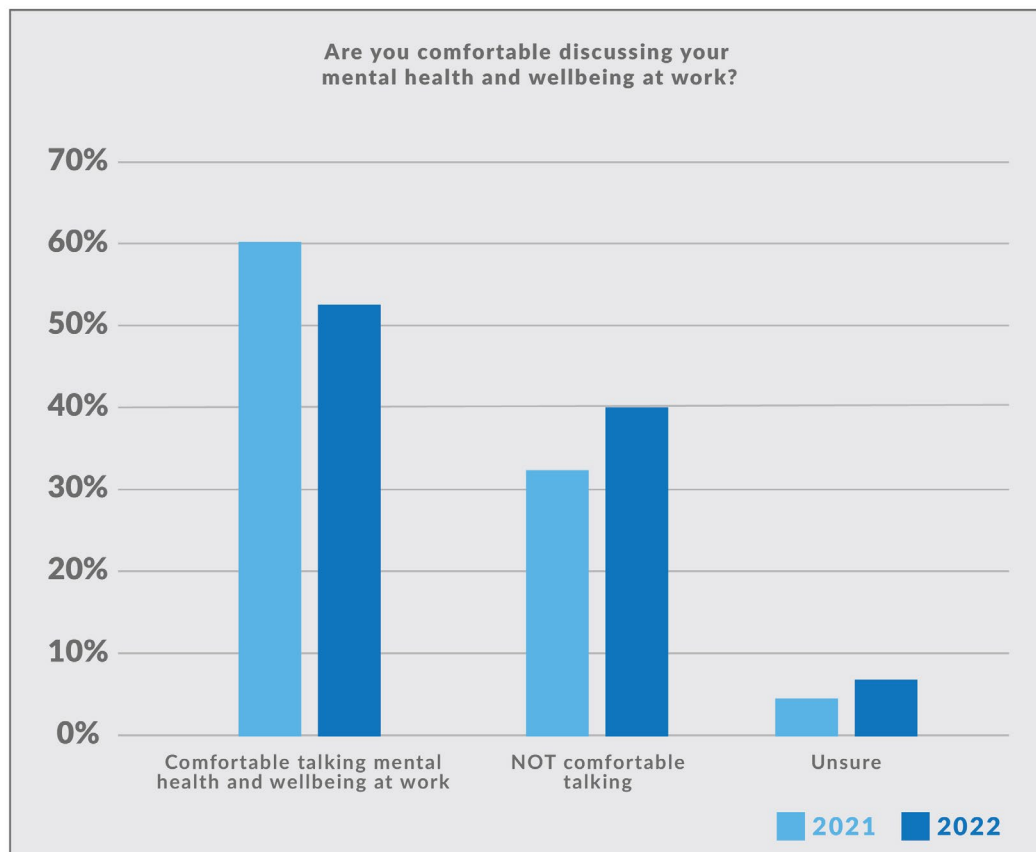
## Wellbeing At Work: The Current Environment

9

In 2015, Google published findings from an internal study that revealed psychological safety<sup>2</sup> is the key ingredient to high-performing teams. In essence, individuals felt safe about asking questions, sharing ideas, and challenging each other because they knew that the team was always working together towards a common goal, not worrying about politics and infighting.

Trust, comfort, and psychological safety don't just happen naturally, which is why the newest LifeSpeak Inc. study asked employees at a wide range of companies how comfortable they are with discussing their health and wellbeing with their coworkers or their manager.

*Figure 4: Comfort With Health and Wellbeing Discussions in the Workplace*



Source: 2022 Lighthouse Research & Advisory Workplace Wellbeing Study (n=1,000)

2. <https://rework.withgoogle.com/print/guides/5721312655835136/>



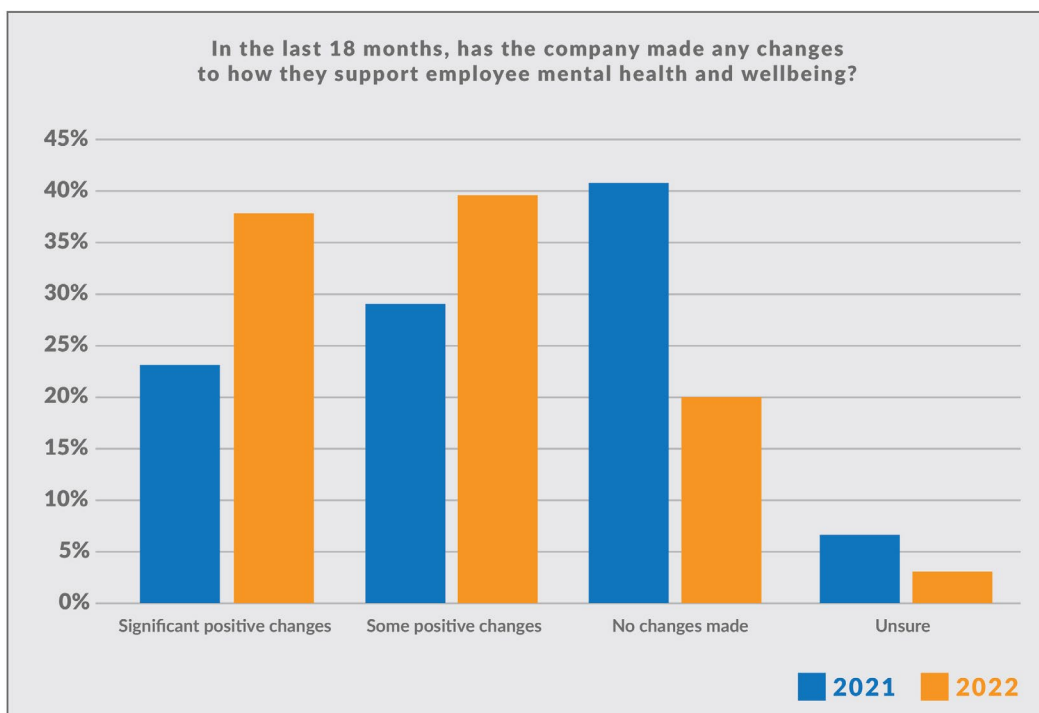
**Employees are TWICE AS LIKELY as employers to say that there have been no positive changes to support mental health and wellbeing.**

10

Unfortunately, 4 in 10 workers say they are not comfortable having these discussions at work. In fact, the number of people who are uncomfortable talking about wellbeing at work has **increased** since 2021. In essence, while employers are increasing their investment in wellbeing, the workforce isn't responding as employers might expect or hope.

The LifeSpeak Inc. study also revealed a disconnect between how employees and employers perceive the level of organizational support for workplace mental health and the extent to which employers have implemented changes or improvements. In fact, **employees are twice as likely as employers to say that there have been no positive changes to support mental health and wellbeing.**

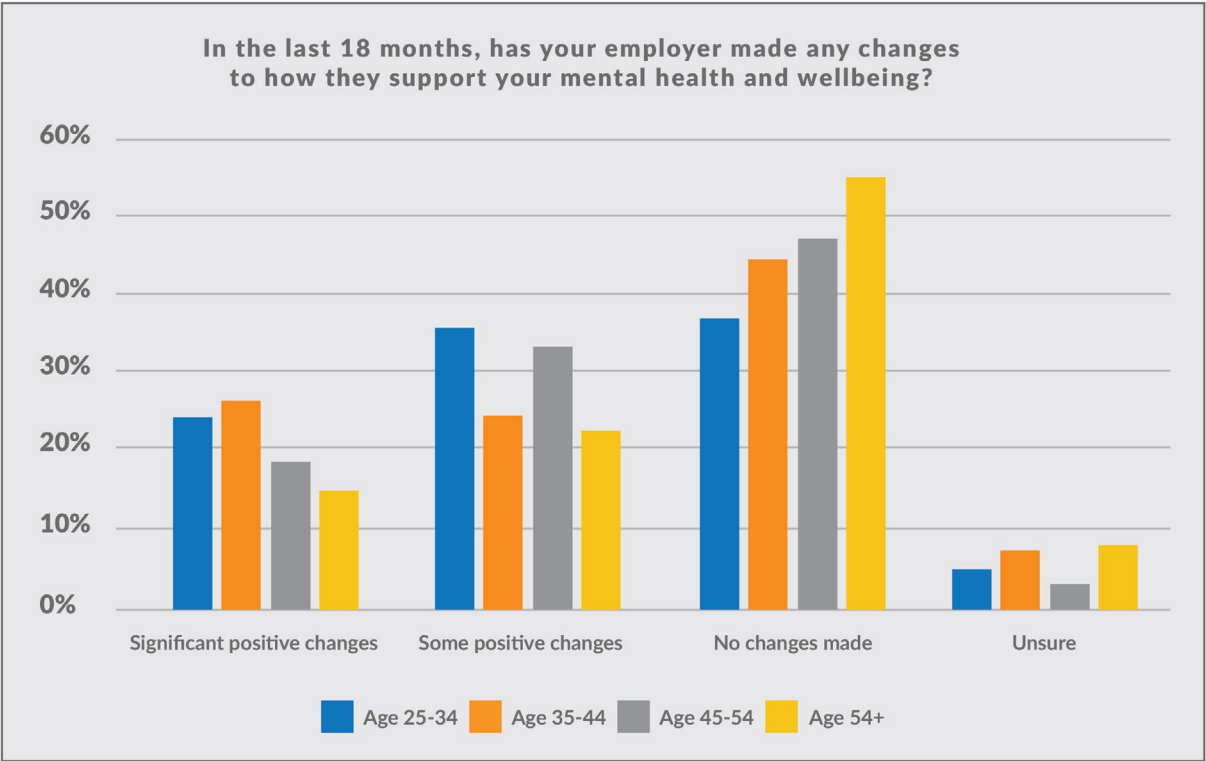
*Figure 4: Worker and Employer Perceptions of Wellbeing Changes and Support*



Source: 2022 Lighthouse Research & Advisory Workplace Wellbeing Study (n=1,000)

For employers who are trying and struggling to provide the best and most helpful resources to their teams, this gap in perceptions presents a significant hurdle. It may help employers to understand that there was a correlation between perceptions of support and improvement and the age of the employee being surveyed.

Figure 5: Age-Based Comparison of Wellbeing Changes and Support



Source: 2022 Lighthouse Research & Advisory Workplace Wellbeing Study (n=1,000)

## Culture is King

Culture is the collective set of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of an organization. Culture is often discussed in vague or intangible terms, but it can be made visible through leadership behaviors, communication, and other means. And according to the LifeSpeak Inc. survey, employees think organizational leaders can do more to create and nurture a culture of health and wellbeing in the workplace.

*Figure 6: Employee Perception of Company's Culture of Health/Wellbeing Year over Year*



Source: 2022 Lighthouse Research & Advisory Workplace Wellbeing Study (n=1,000)

Leadership—from the C-suite to frontline managers or shift supervisors—are the lynchpin to a healthy workplace culture that prioritizes health and minimizes the effects of stress and burnout, two very real issues that contributed to the Great Resignation and the Great Reprioritization<sup>3</sup>. The LifeSpeak Inc. survey revealed the following about the importance of leadership in creating a culture of health and wellbeing by giving employees permission to tend to their wellbeing and to engage in the benefits offered by the organization.

3. <https://lhra.io/blog/3-reasons-people-quit-and-3-that-make-them-stay/>

## The Inclusive Perspective ON WELLBEING AT WORK



EMPLOYEES WHO SAY THEY DON'T HAVE A SUPPORTIVE MANAGER ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO LEAVE IN THE NEXT 30 DAYS.



FRONTLINE WORKERS ARE FOUR TIMES MORE LIKELY TO HAVE PLANS TO QUIT THEIR JOB IF THEY DON'T HAVE A SUPPORTIVE MANAGER.



MEN ARE 30% MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN TO SAY THEY ARE COMFORTABLE DISCUSSING HEALTH AND WELLBEING AT WORK



WOMEN ARE 30% MORE LIKELY TO SAY THEIR COMPANY DOESN'T HAVE A CULTURE OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING.



EMPLOYEES OF COLOR ARE 50% MORE LIKELY TO BE USING EMPLOYER-PROVIDED WELLBEING RESOURCES ON A MONTHLY BASIS.



WORKING MOTHERS ARE 3X MORE LIKELY TO BE UNCERTAIN ABOUT TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE.



WOMEN OF COLOR ARE 22% MORE LIKELY TO HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT QUITTING THEIR JOB IN THE LAST 18 MONTHS DUE TO MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING REASONS.

In addition to giving employees literal and figurative permission to care for their wellbeing, leaders at all levels can contribute to a culture of health by prioritizing their own personal wellbeing and demonstrating to employees that it is ok to put yourself and your health before productivity.

## Wellness Innovators: What they are and how they are different

14

There is an adage, “You can tell a lot about a person by looking at their calendar and their pocketbook.” In other words, how someone spends their time and resources shows what’s important to them. The same is true of employers. Those that support and prioritize a culture of health and wellbeing are using their resources to create a safe and nurturing workplace environment.

In this study, LifeSpeak Inc. and Lighthouse Research identified a group of organizations that exemplify a healthy workplace culture by offering a combination of tools, benefits offerings, leadership support – all of which contribute to an underlying culture of health and wellbeing.

To be defined as a Wellness Innovator, employer responses related to culture of health were combined with responses related to the types of resources offered to workers. To identify those organizations that were not just offering tools, but that were building a supportive culture, responses from participating companies were compared to 250 other firms in the study that don’t offer that same level of resources and culture, and the results in many cases were stark.

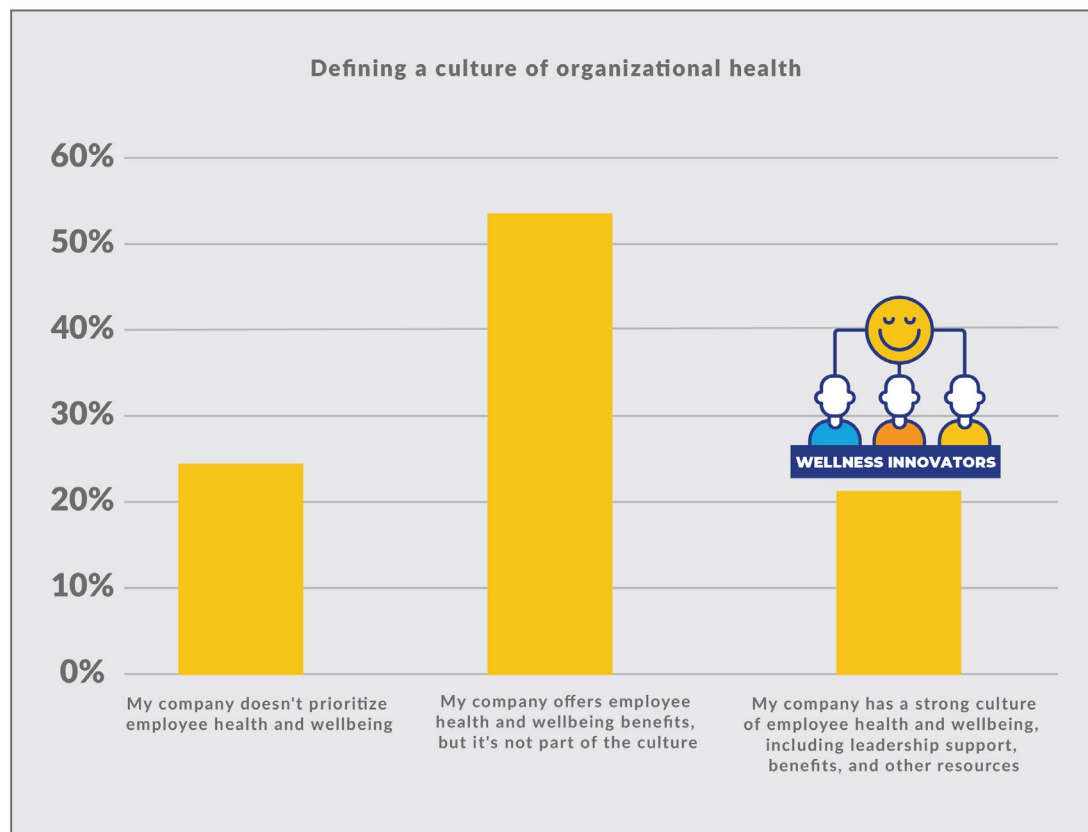
● **There were many noteworthy differences between companies that were designated as Wellness Innovators and other organizations, including:**

- **Half of companies that don’t have a culture of health say they haven’t adopted wellbeing benefits because it’s not an organizational priority at this time.**
- **Wellness Innovators are two and a half times more likely to have made significant positive changes to support the health and wellbeing of their workforce.**



**Half of companies that don’t have a culture of health say they haven’t adopted wellbeing benefits because it’s not an organizational priority at this time.**

Figure 7: Separating Wellness innovators from the Rest



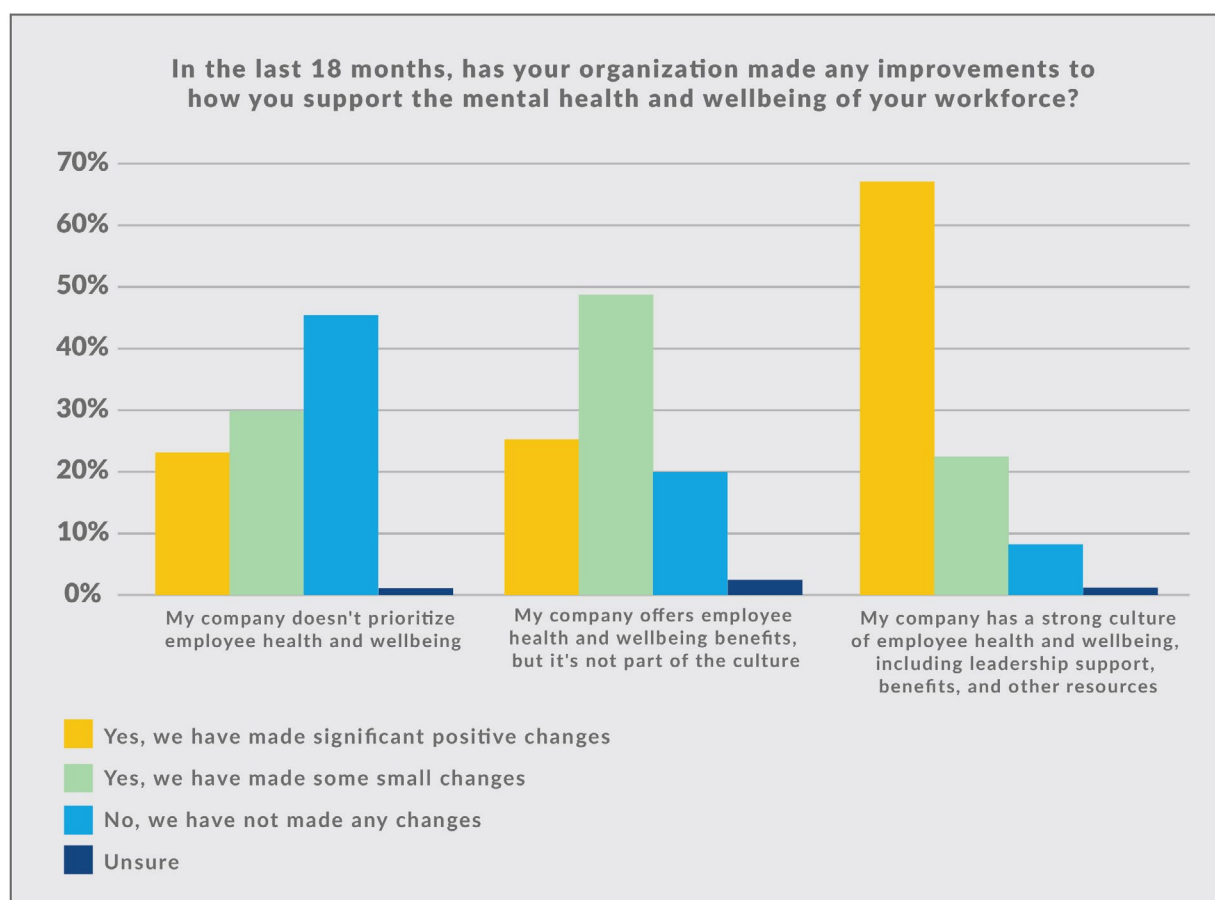
Source: 2022 Lighthouse Research & Advisory Workplace Wellbeing Study (n=1,000)

Wellness Innovators were much more likely to have made changes to their wellness benefits, overall, as compared to companies that did not meet the criteria. **These organizations were five times more likely to say they have made no changes to support health and wellbeing.**



**Wellness innovators are 2.5 TIMES MORE LIKELY**  
to have made significant positive changes to support the  
health and wellbeing of their workforce.

Figure 8: Comparing Health and Wellbeing Improvements for Wellness Innovators

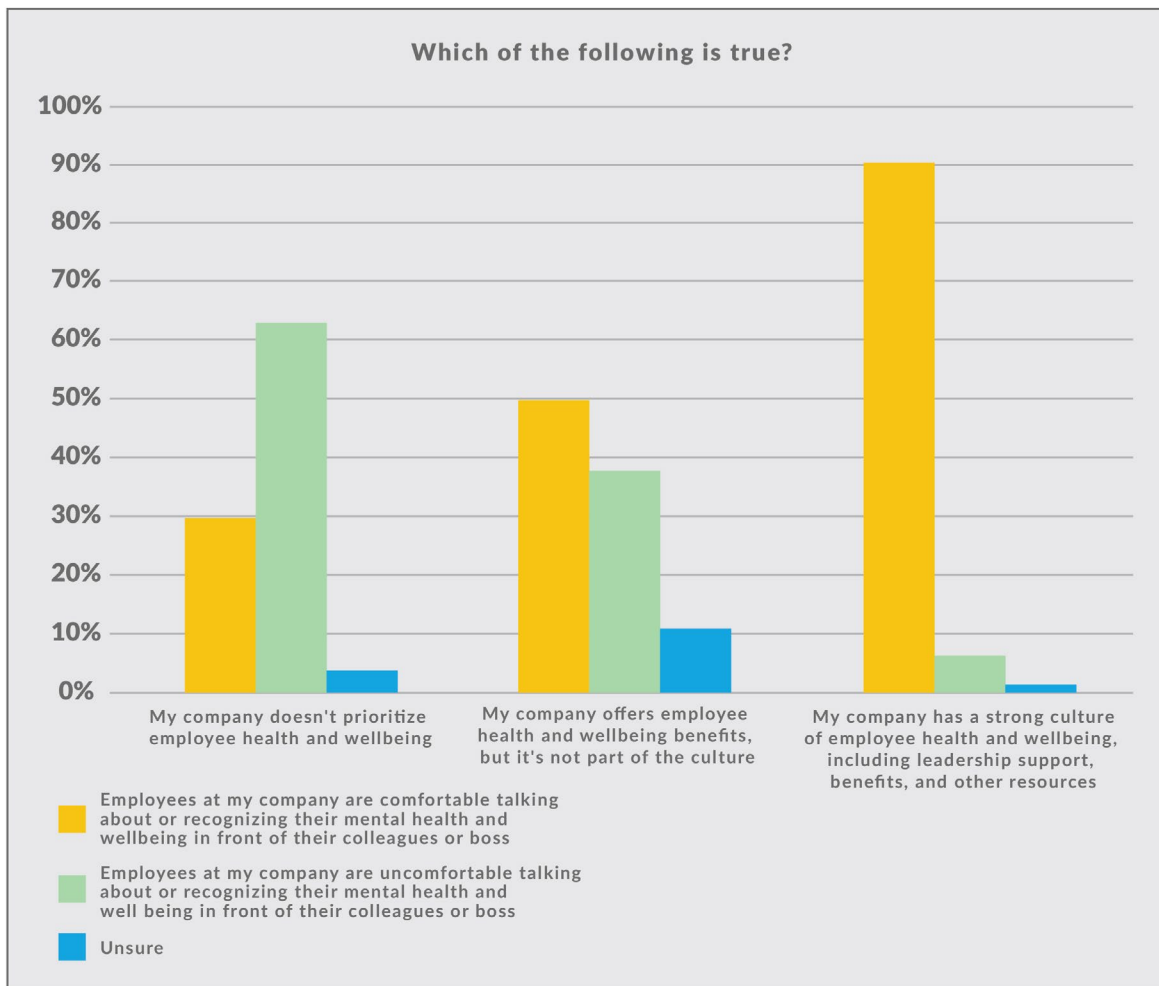


Source: 2022 Lighthouse Research & Advisory Workplace Wellbeing Study (n=1,000)

Not only were Wellness Innovators perceived to have made changes and visible improvements to supporting employee wellbeing, but employees had a high comfort level with wellbeing conversations in the workplace.

**In fact, employees at these organizations were three times more likely to be comfortable discussing their mental health and wellbeing at work.**

Figure 9: Comparing Comfort with Workplace Wellbeing Conversations for Wellness Innovators



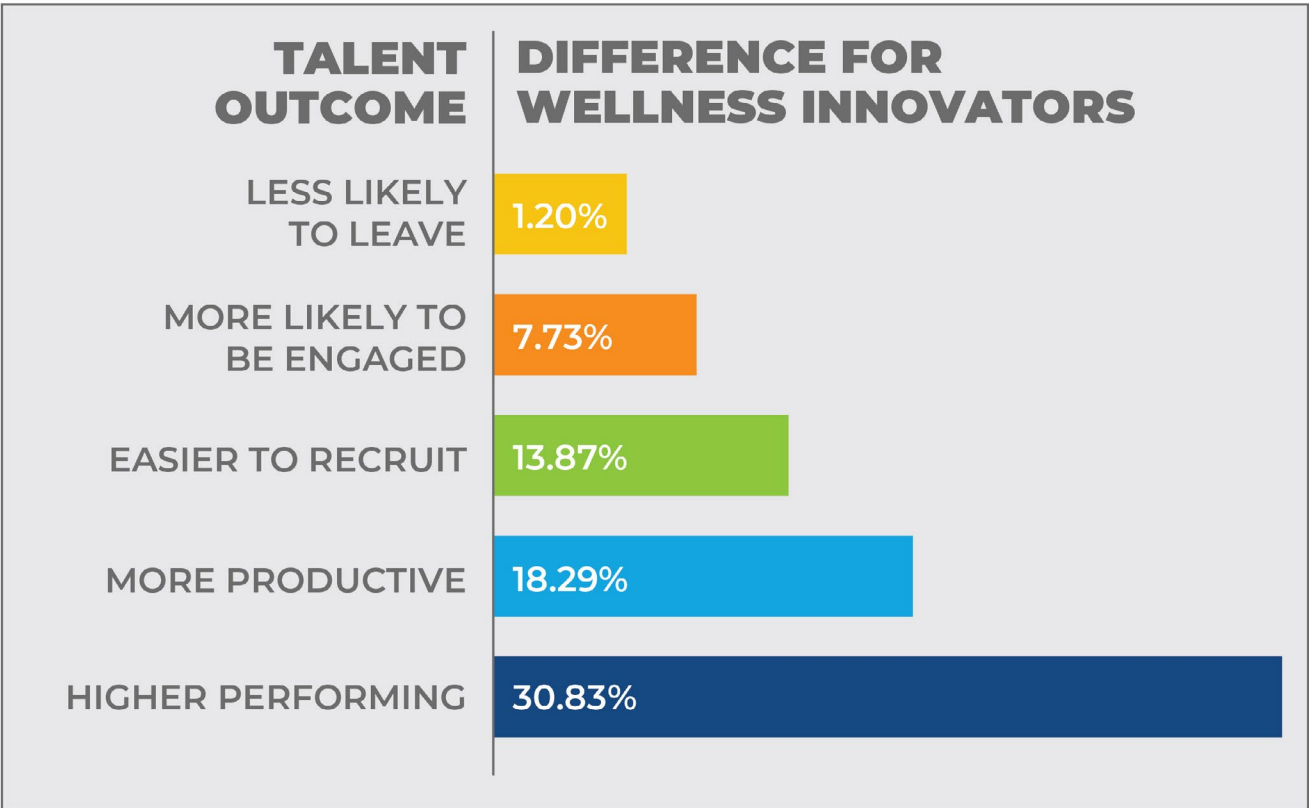
Source: 2022 Lighthouse Research & Advisory Workplace Wellbeing Study (n=1,000)

This just goes to show how important it is that employers stand behind their commitments. If a company claims to prioritize employee wellbeing, employees will sense that in a very practical way when they are able to share their needs openly with their leaders and coworkers. Wellness Innovators cut through the noise by prioritizing a true culture of wellbeing for their people.

# The Benefits of Investing in Workplace Culture



Organizations that invest in workplace wellbeing and that nurture a culture of health are more likely to see the following workforce attributes:



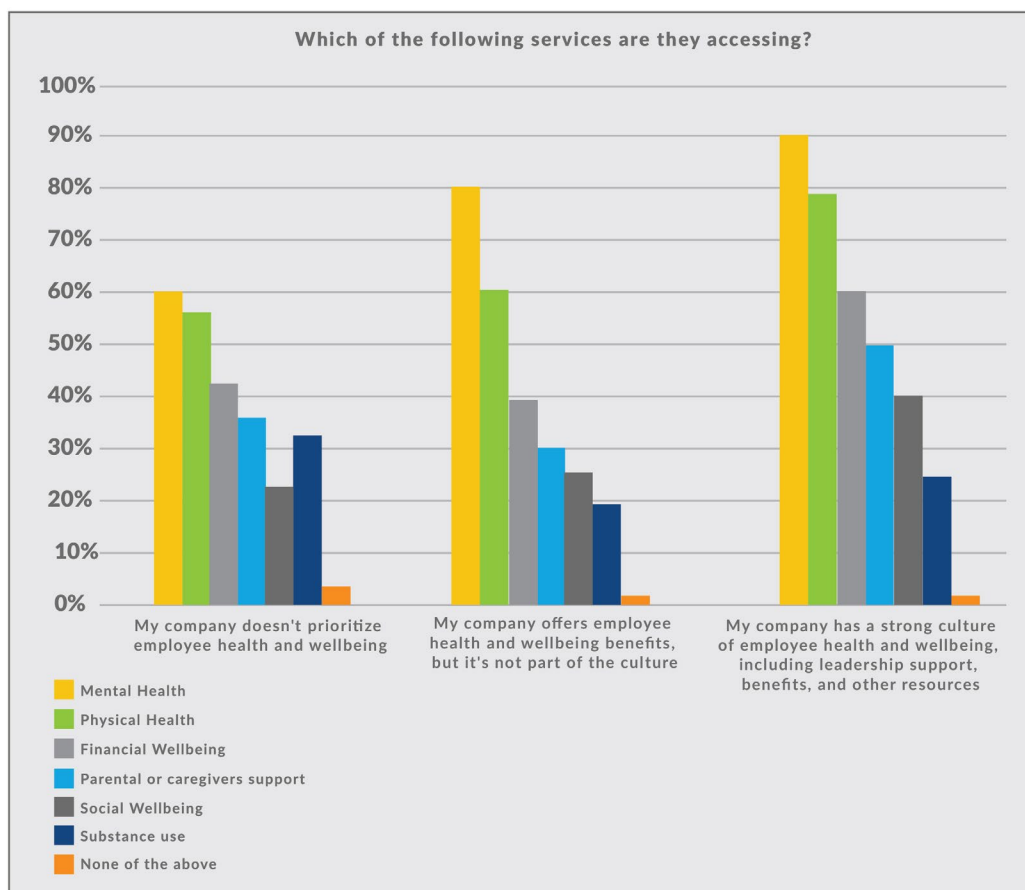
Source: 2022 Lighthouse Research & Advisory Workplace Wellbeing Study (n=1,000)

Not only are Wellness Innovators more likely to offer wellbeing-focused benefits and technologies to their people, but their people are more likely to use each of them and use them more often. For instance, when compared to companies that do not have a culture of wellbeing, employees at Wellness Innovators use mental health benefits 38% more often, physical wellbeing resources 50% more often, and financial wellbeing options 74% more often.

This is a clear distinction, because some companies offer benefits or tools without the necessary cultural support, which is critical to employee success. Tools can be everything from a simple employee assistance program (EAP) to more focused, dedicated solutions that support employee health and wellbeing needs through training, coaching, and mindfulness.

In the 2021 Mental Health Report Card from LifeSpeak Inc. and Lighthouse Research, it was revealed that companies can try to make positive changes to support employees, but if those changes aren't rooted deeply in the operating DNA of the company, the workforce doesn't perceive them to have real value.

*Figure 10 : Comparing Usage of Employee Wellbeing Benefits for Wellness innovators*



Source: 2022 Lighthouse Research & Advisory Workplace Wellbeing Study (n=1,000)

Every company has a culture, but the real difference lies in the priority that's placed on wellbeing within that culture, and whether employee wellbeing is a deciding factor in leadership decision-making or if workforce wellbeing is an afterthought.

These concepts have been explored previously by leaders in workplace wellbeing, including the Wellness Council of America (WELCOA), which has identified the following aspects of successful wellbeing initiatives<sup>4</sup>:

- **Committed and aligned leadership**
- **Collaboration in support of wellness**
- **Collecting meaningful data**
- **Creating an operating plan**
- **Choosing to support the whole employee**
- **Conducting evaluations and iterating over time**

Wellness Innovators don't just pay lip service to employee wellbeing. They invest in it with their time, their attention, and their resources. And with that investment, they create an atmosphere where employees can show up and truly be their best and most healthy selves every day at work.

---

4. <https://www.welcoa.org/blog/tools-for-designing-work-for-well-being/>



**Wellness Innovators are 50% more likely to offer a solution  
to support employee mental health.**

## Key Takeaways

21

1

### IF COMPANY CULTURE MATTERS TO YOUR COMPANY, EMPLOYEE WELLBEING SHOULD, TOO

The data in this research clearly indicate that there's a connection between an employee's sense of connectedness to their organization and how they feel about their overall wellbeing. **Employees with a high belonging score are four times less likely to have faced mental health declines in the last year.** Employers that are struggling to create those ties with the workforce can leverage mental health and wellbeing initiatives as a practical, tangible way to support every employee in a personalized way.

2

### DIVERSE GROUPS HAVE DIFFERENT WELLBEING EXPERIENCES

Whether we're looking at age, ethnicity, gender, or other aspects of someone's life, **there are clear variances in how these groups experience wellbeing at work.** For example, women are less likely to be comfortable discussing mental health at work, and women of color in particular are more likely to have had thoughts about quitting due to mental health challenges. Employers that want to make progress must keep this in mind if they want to create more equitable mental health and wellbeing outcomes in the workplace.

3

### WELLNESS INNOVATORS SET THE STANDARD

While gaps exist, Wellness Innovators that have committed to a culture that prioritizes health and wellbeing are creating a higher standard for the workforce. **These Wellness Innovators are setting different priorities, and they are also reaping different benefits from a more connected, productive, and engaged workforce when compared to other firms.** While culture change is hard, it's also necessary, especially when it comes down to the health of the employees that company leaders are meant to serve.

## About the Research



This research was conducted in fall 2022 and is based on survey responses from the workforce (n=1,000) and business decision makers (n=1,000) with responsibility for HR, benefits, and wellbeing initiatives. Survey respondents in both cases were based in North America. Employer responses represent companies with a minimum of 1,000 employees from every industry and span the following company sizes:

- 1,000-2,500 employees: 22%
- 2,501-5,000 employees: 23%
- 5,001-10,000 employees: 23%
- 10,001+ employees: 32%

## About LifeSpeak Inc.

LifeSpeak Inc. is the leading whole-person wellbeing platform that blends personal and digital support for the workplace. LifeSpeak Inc.'s suite of solutions allows organizations to provide best-in-class content and expertise at scale, meeting individual employees wherever they are on their personal wellbeing journeys. As the parent company to LIFT Digital, ALAViDA Health, Torchlight, and Wellbeats, LifeSpeak Inc. provides in-depth expertise across mental health, wellness, physical fitness, substance use, and caregiving. With more than 30 years of collective experience, LifeSpeak Inc. works with Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, insurance providers, and others across the globe. Insights from LifeSpeak Inc.'s digital and data-driven solutions are used to uncover gaps in wellbeing at the individual and organizational levels, ultimately enhancing workplace performance outcomes. To learn more, follow LifeSpeak Inc. on LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com/company/lifespeak-inc>), or visit [www.LifeSpeak.com](http://www.LifeSpeak.com).





## About Us

Lighthouse Research & Advisory is a modern analyst firm dedicated to setting the standard for excellence in talent, learning, and HR. By providing compelling research and actionable insights for business leaders, our team's mission is to navigate the rapidly changing field of human capital management to support today's talent and learning functions.

Our advisory, research, content, events, HR Awards Program, and other offerings serve tens of thousands of employers across the globe every year.

Put simply: our goal is to chart a new course for talent. We do this with compelling research, innovative ideas, and a strong grasp of the current state of talent and technology at work. We have supported hundreds of organizations with our research, advisory, and insights since our beginning in 2016. In addition, our data also inform key product and strategy decisions at the industry's leading technology and service providers.

Ben Eubanks is the Chief Research Officer at Lighthouse, providing trusted advice for today's modern talent leaders. Prior to joining Lighthouse, Ben worked as a research analyst and an executive practitioner. His analyst work focused on learning, talent acquisition, and talent management. During his career, he has published more than 100 pieces of research and provided advisory services to executives from some of the largest and most respected organizations in the world.

Unlike most analysts, he also has hands-on experience working as an HR executive, leading both strategic and tactical talent practices. Ben is the host of *We're Only Human*, a podcast focused on the intersection of people, technology, and the workplace. In addition, he runs [upstartHR.com](http://upstartHR.com), a website serving HR leaders that has reached more than 1,000,000 readers since its inception.