



Infinite Potential
Leadership | Culture | Analytics



THE STATE OF WORKPLACE BURNOUT 2025 REPORT

A New Era of Work: Strategies for a Sustainable Workforce

Foreward

Work has changed – but not always for the better. AI is accelerating uncertainty, DEI initiatives are being scaled back, and the debate over ways of working has led to widespread disengagement and dissatisfaction. As a result, employees everywhere are asking the same question: *Why are we here?*

We’re at a turning point. Burnout isn’t just an individual struggle – it’s a signal of deeper systemic issues in the way we work. Leaders can no longer afford to treat wellbeing as a perk; it’s a business imperative. Organisations that fail to address burnout risk losing their best talent, trust, and long-term sustainability.

The *State of Workplace Burnout Report* provides the insights we need to move beyond superficial solutions and shed light on the root causes of burnout. Let this report be a catalyst for reflection and action, guiding us with hope that we can build workplaces that are not only productive but also healthy and sustainable for everyone.



Jennifer Moss
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author of The Burnout Epidemic and Why Are We Here?*

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The Opportunity of Uncertainty

A rapidly changing landscape. A radically shifting narrative. The future is unwritten – and therein lies its power.

Work is facing a defining moment. This is a time of relentless uncertainty, shaped by volatile global events, advances in technology and AI, shifting workplace cultures and a growing awareness of the impact of mental health and wellbeing. The old playbook is obsolete. Reimagining how we work is no longer optional; it's imperative.

'Work' is no longer defined by a job, an office, or a rigid hierarchy. People are seeking stability and purpose, and are rejecting the outdated 'do more with less' leadership styles that fuel burnout and erode trust.

If organisations want to improve productivity, cut costs, and mitigate risk, they can't cling to 'the good ol' days'. They need a new paradigm of work. The future of work is about aligning the needs of both organisations and their people to create sustainable high performance.

This year's study

In its fifth year, The State of Workplace Burnout reveals both progress and persistent disparities. While there is overall improvement, stark inequities remain for intersectional groups. The study continues to show that wellbeing is not a trade-off for performance, it's the very engine that powers it. This year's report digs deeper and highlights emerging workplace trends and uncovers emerging risks to organisations – the shocking rate of loneliness in the workplace and the ill effects of the 'Distracted Worker'.

The takeaway is this: the numbers in this report are people. The insights are not mere statistics – they are a call to action. It is up to all of us to reimagine work not as a tool of exploitation and burnout but as a sustainable ecosystem where organisations and people thrive.

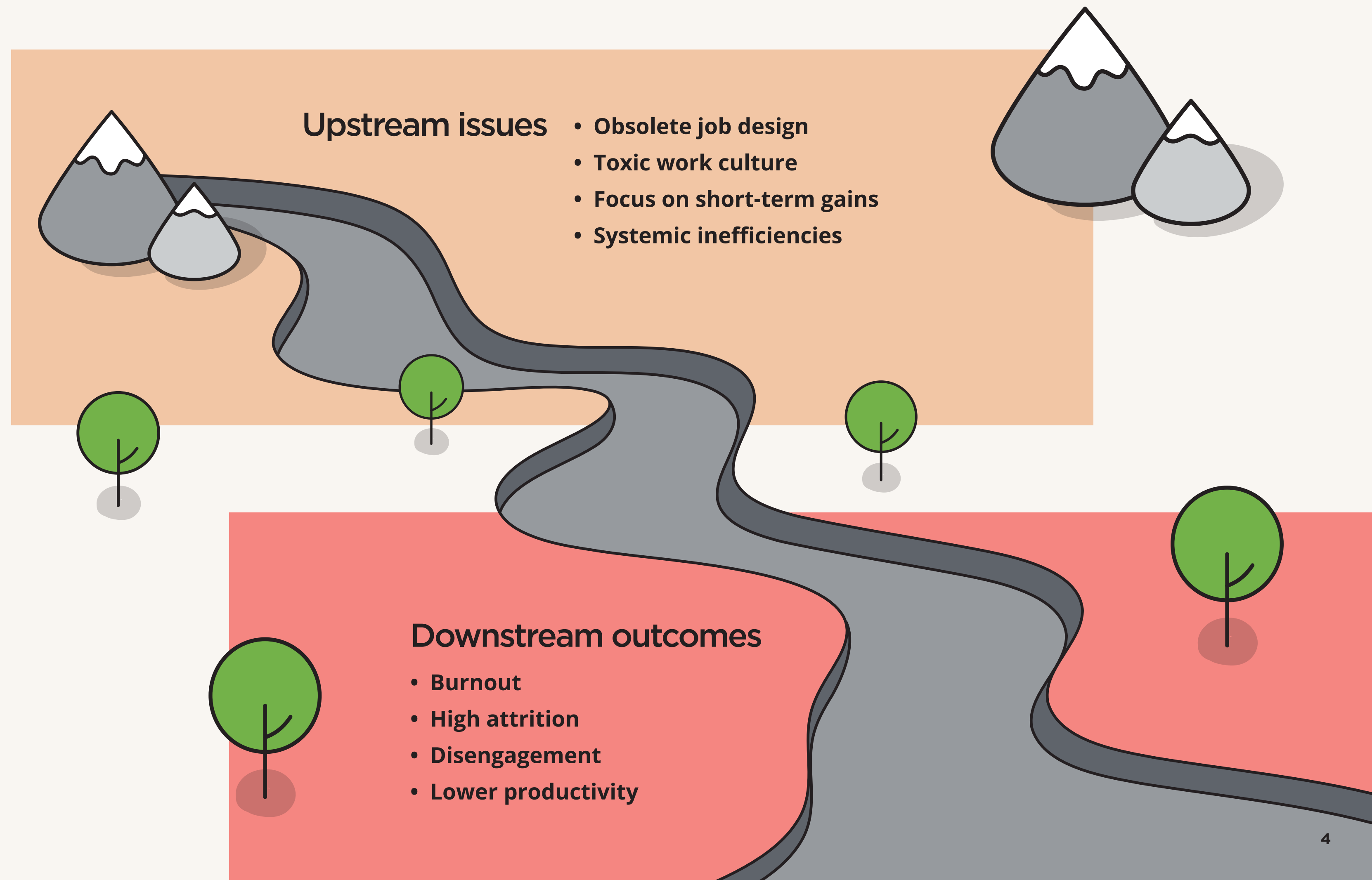
Demanding 'more with less' is not a sustainable strategy. We need a new paradigm of work.



Upstream Thinking: A Systems Approach to Addressing Burnout

Burnout doesn't happen in isolation – it is the result of toxic systems and cultures within an organisation. To end burnout, leaders need to first take a step back and see the forest rather than just the trees. Leaders need to understand that every component – be it leadership, processes, or culture – interacts in complex ways that produce emergent outcomes. Taking this kind of systems approach shifts the focus from individuals to the root causes of burnout.

Instead of asking “why are my people burning out?”, leaders need to explore “what aspects of the way we work and our culture contribute to chronic stress?” By identifying these factors and interdependencies, leaders can design solutions that address root causes rather than merely treating symptoms. The goal of embedding wellbeing is empowerment, not entitlement. It's about creating the optimal environment that supports sustainable high performance.



Understanding Burnout

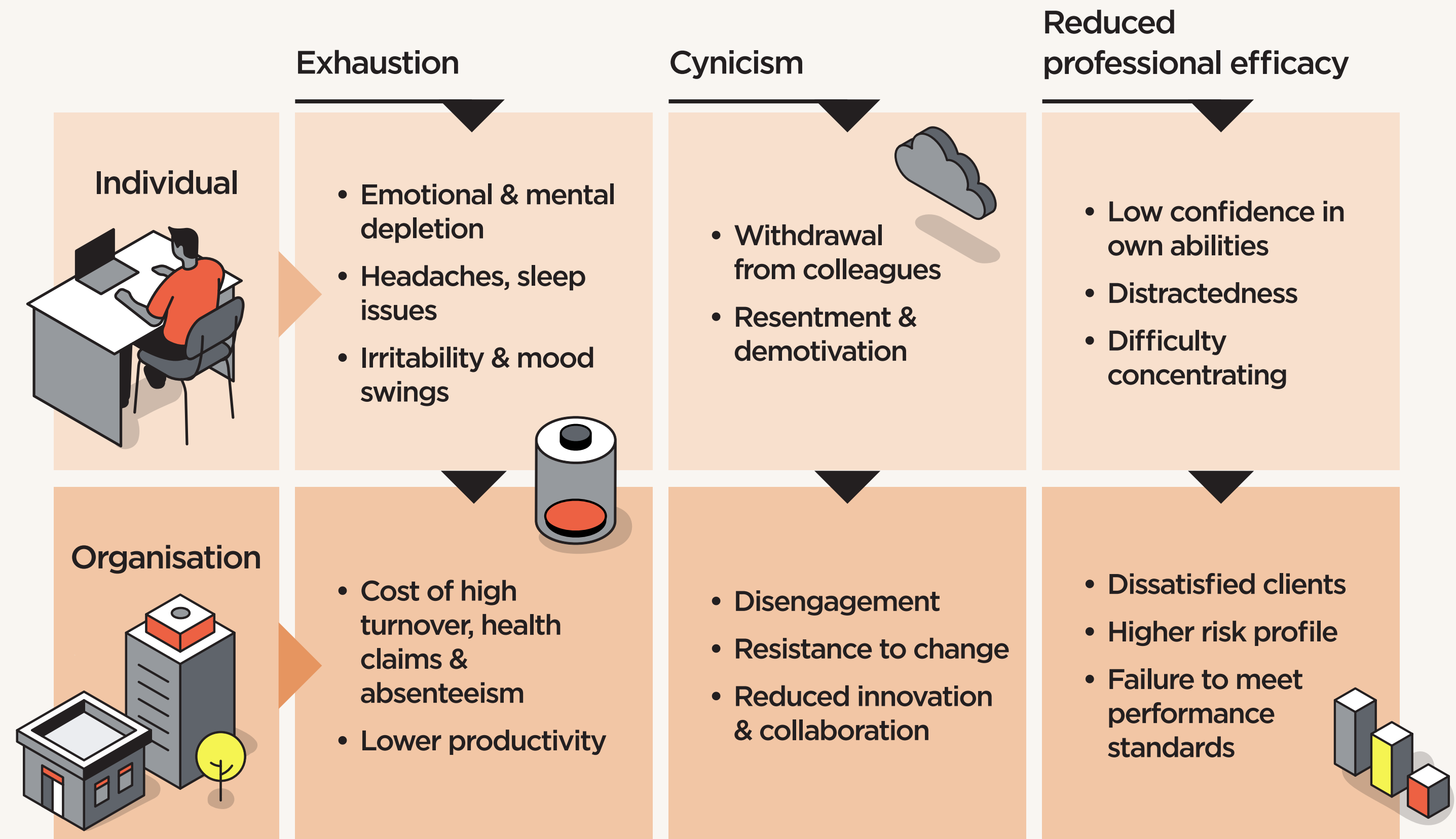
While the stigma around burnout is slowly fading, the term remains misunderstood and misused. Burnout is an inherently complex issue, making it important to be clear about its definition.

Burnout Defined

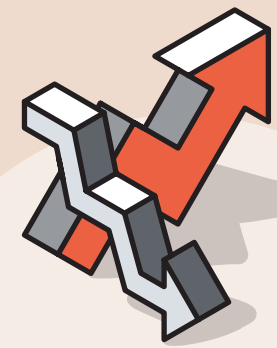
The World Health Organization defines burnout as *a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed, which is characterised by 3 dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism and reduced professional efficacy.* Burnout occurs when an individual experiences all 3 dimensions simultaneously.

At its core, burnout is a consequence of capitalism. An insatiable desire for more – more productivity, profits, output. When it comes to burnout prevention, leaders have been fundamentally misconstruing the issue to the detriment of their people and their organisations. It's not a choice between strong organisational outcomes or a healthy, burnout-free workforce. **In fact, wellbeing is the engine that drives sustainably strong organisational outcomes.**

How Burnout Impacts Individuals and Organisations



2025 Global Workplace Trends



1

Trends in Workplace Burnout

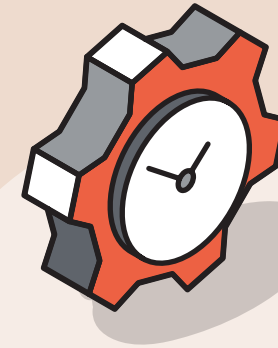
Burnout has declined by 3% globally, while overall wellbeing has seen a solid improvement, up 25% from the previous year.



2

Intersectional Disparities in the Workplace

Intersectional analysis reveals significant disparities in the workplace experience. Specific groups face elevated levels of burnout, lower wellbeing, and lower sense of belonging.



3

The Productivity Paradox

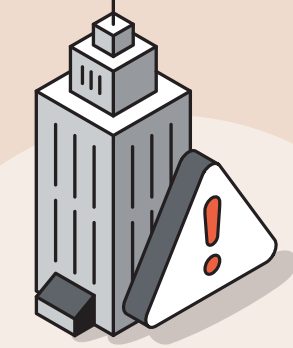
Outdated practices used to drive higher productivity may backfire and instead cause burnout – 63% of people experiencing burnout indicated being less productive in the past 12 months.



4

The Erosion of Workplace Trust

Employees generally trust their direct manager, but don't trust the organisation as a whole to act in the best interest of its employees – which undermines productivity and quality of work.



5

The Rise of New Workplace Risks

Technological advances in the workplace have boosted efficiency but may have also introduced new challenges organisations must confront – the 'Distracted Worker' and loneliness in the workplace.

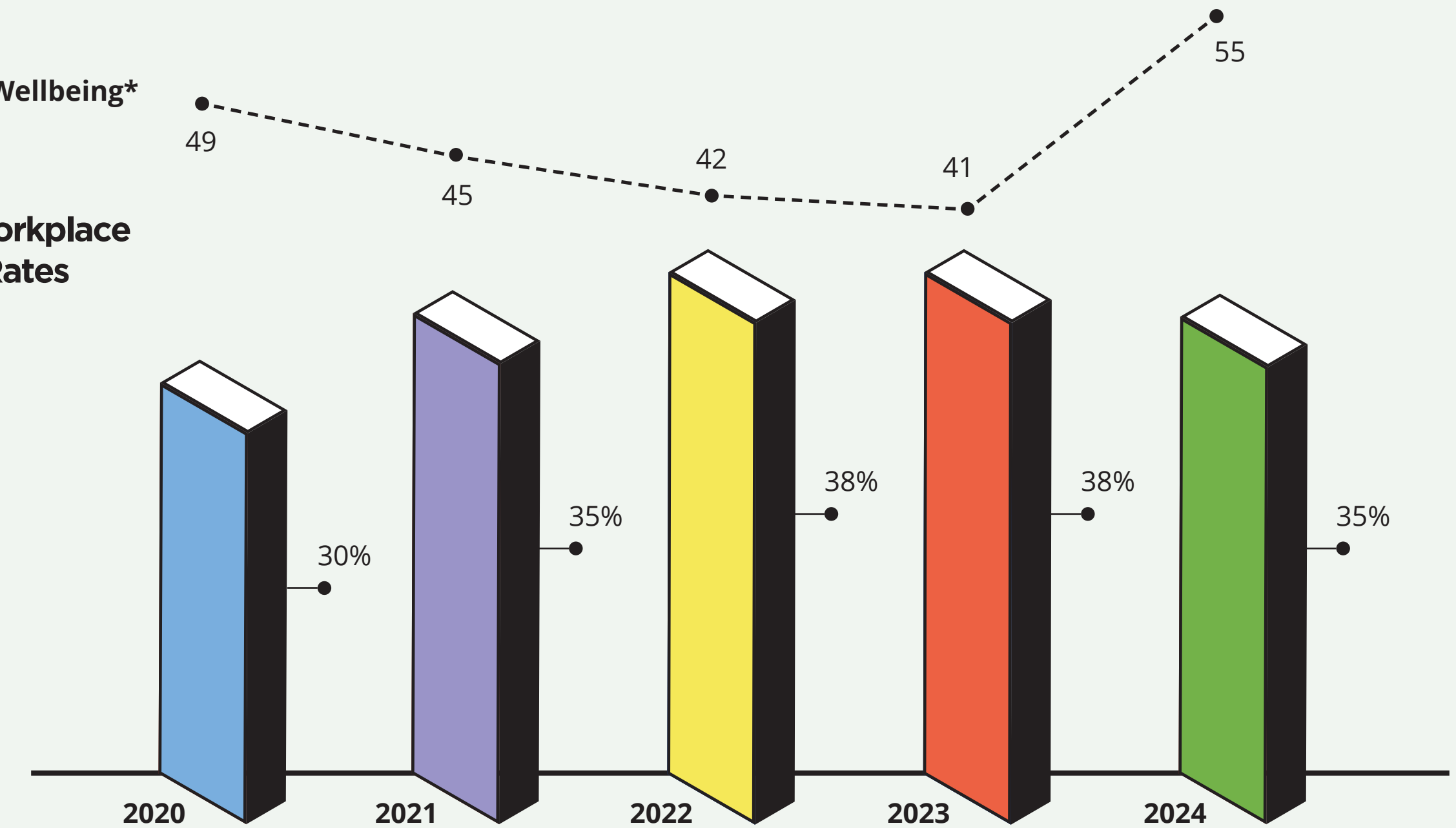


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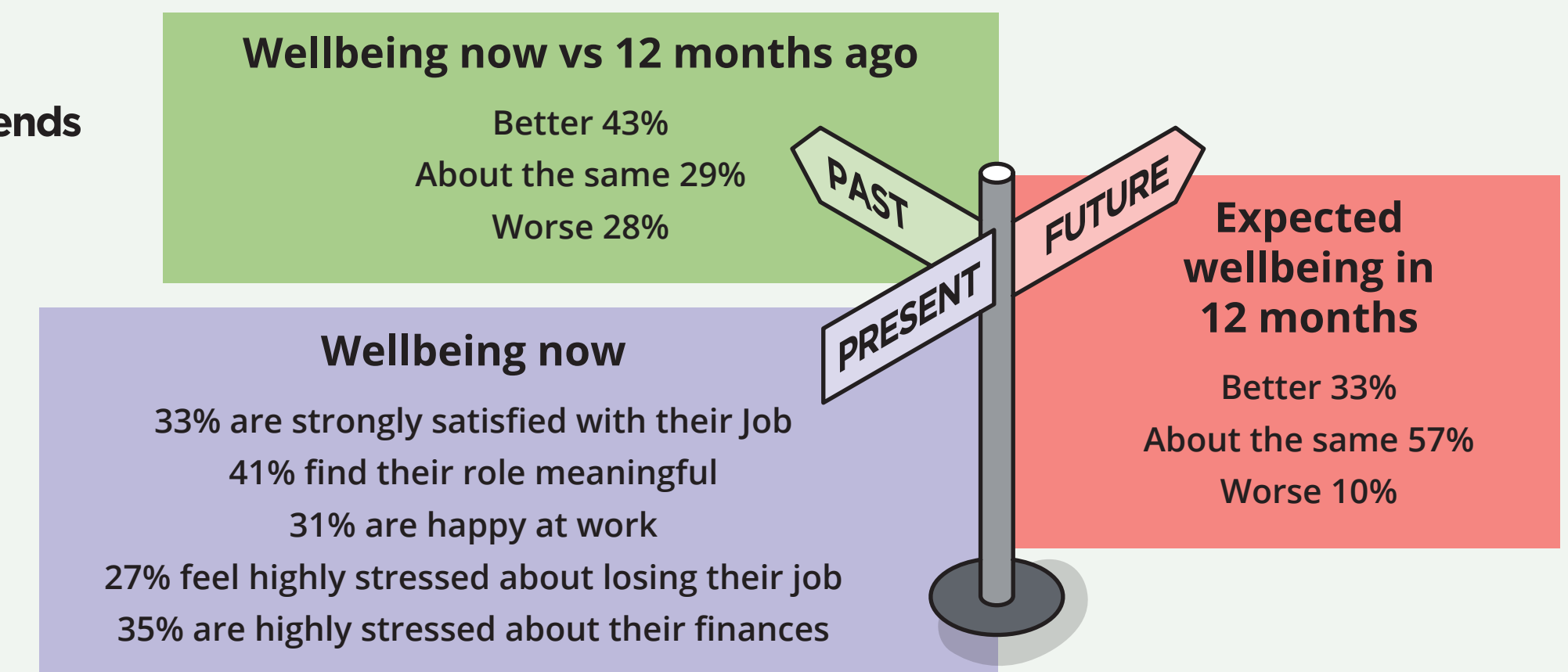
Trends in Workplace Burnout

The slight downward trend of burnout and improvement in wellbeing are likely the residual impact of the robust continuation of support that started during Covid-19. However, these gains are fragile. As some organisations pull back on wellbeing initiatives (such as flexible/hybrid work), they risk undoing these hard-earned results. When organisations retreat from investing in their people and solely focus on increasing productivity, it sends a clear message to the workforce that people come second. This erodes trust, engagement, and, ultimately, performance. It is a strategic mistake to scale back, rather than double down on prioritising wellbeing as the foundation for long-term sustainable performance.

Overall Wellbeing*
Global Workplace
Burnout Rates



Global Wellbeing trends

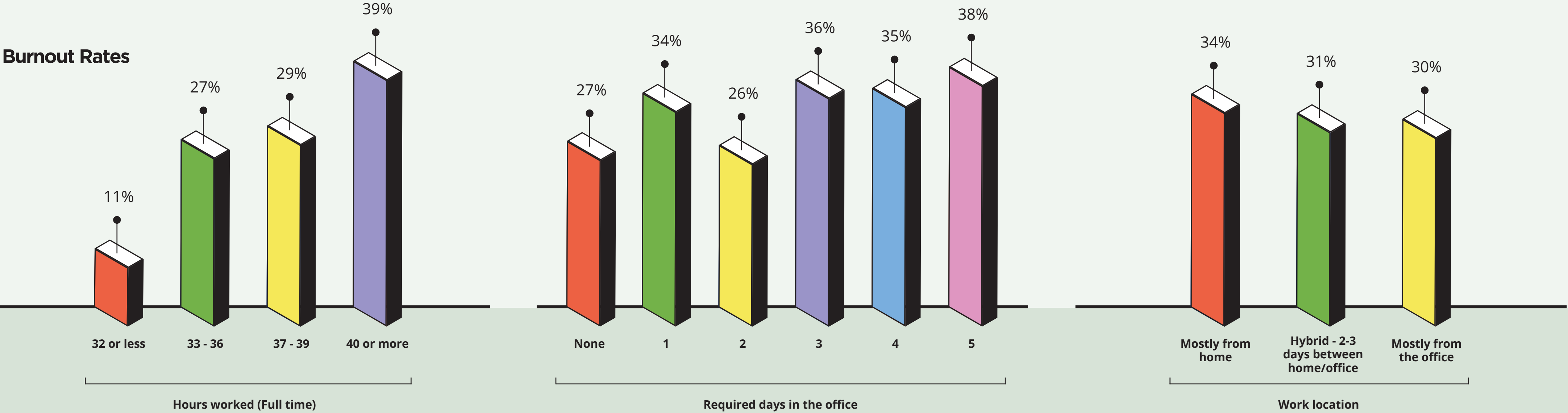


* Overall Wellbeing rating from 0 (Consistently Burnt Out) to 100 (Energised and Engaged)



Relationship Between Burnout and Workplace Trends

The evidence from the study continues to suggest that how work is structured plays a crucial role in shaping employee wellbeing. This systems-level look reveals where organisations need to focus to mitigate burnout.



Hours Worked and Burnout

Similar to past findings, as work hours increase (full-time roles), so does the level of burnout. In any honest conversation about mitigating burnout, number of hours worked must be a part of the discussion.

Required Days in the Office and Burnout

The data clearly shows two days as the optimal number of mandatory days in the office. It's time to shift the conversation from "where" we work to "how" we work and create meaningful opportunities for connection.

Burnout and Work Location

The data shows a slight increase in burnout for those working mostly from home (4-5 days). While there is value in bringing people back to the office, what matters is how organisations design work across these environments.

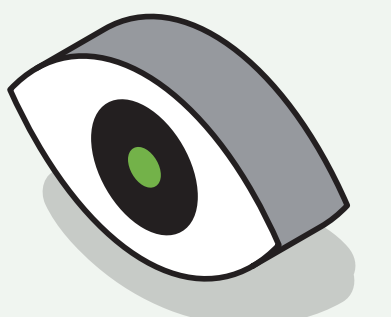


2 Intersectional Disparities in the Workplace

Dismantling systemic bias is one of the biggest challenges of our time. A significant portion of the population continues to be disadvantaged across society. This can be seen in the workplace, where historical and systemic barriers create different work experiences for intersectional workers. Research shows that organisations that actively remove these barriers benefit from stronger collaboration, higher retention, and increased innovation¹.

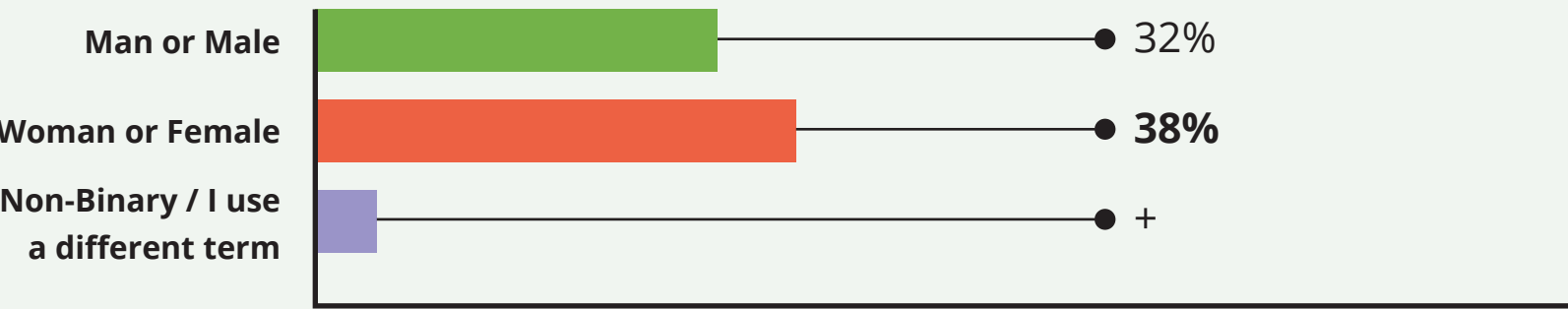
The workplace has the power to effect meaningful change and play a central role in advancing equity, where all people have fair access, opportunity, resources, and power to thrive. Recognising and embracing intersectionality in the workplace brings numerous benefits. It fosters stronger social bonds among colleagues, attracts a more diverse revenue, and leverages the cross-fertilisation of ideas and experiences.

Intersectionality isn't about dividing people – it's about understanding the full picture of the human experience so we can build workplaces that work for all.

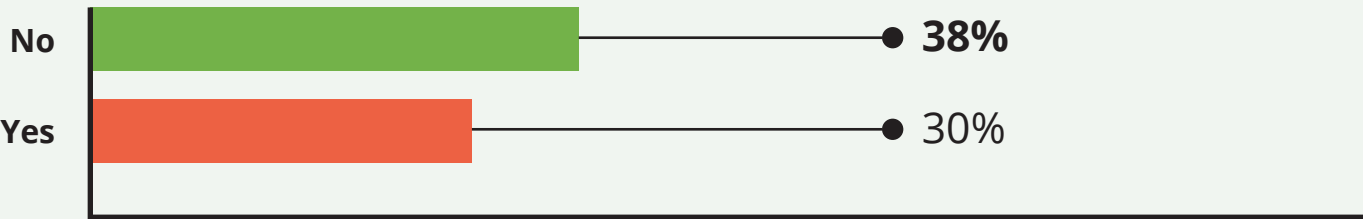




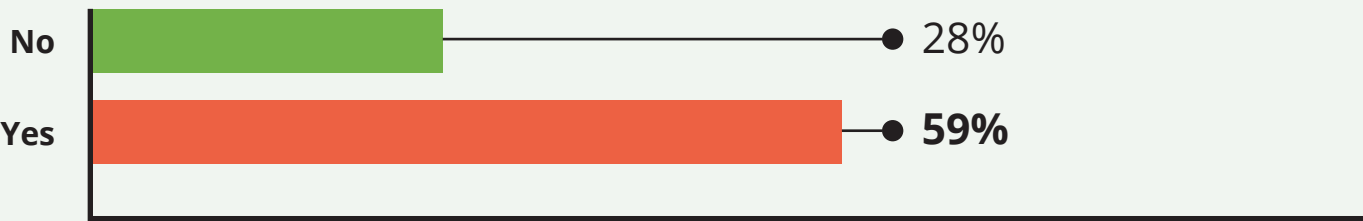
Burnout Rates



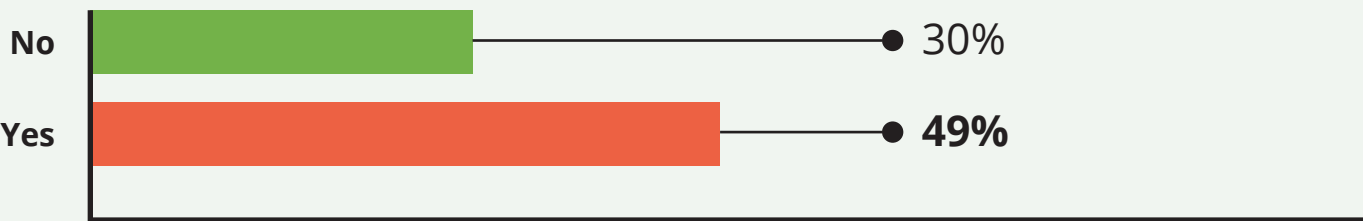
Gender



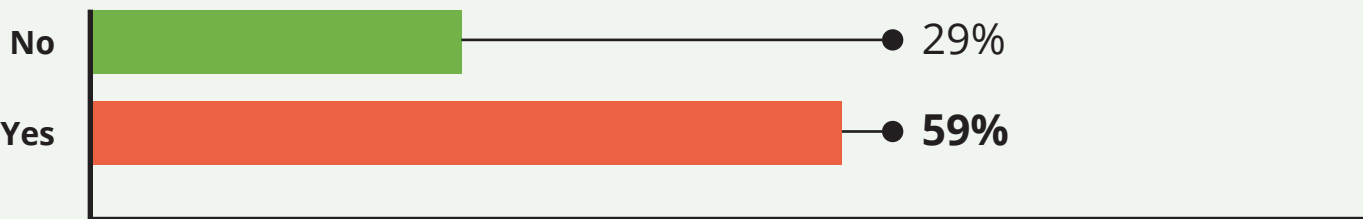
Caring responsibilities*



Disability**

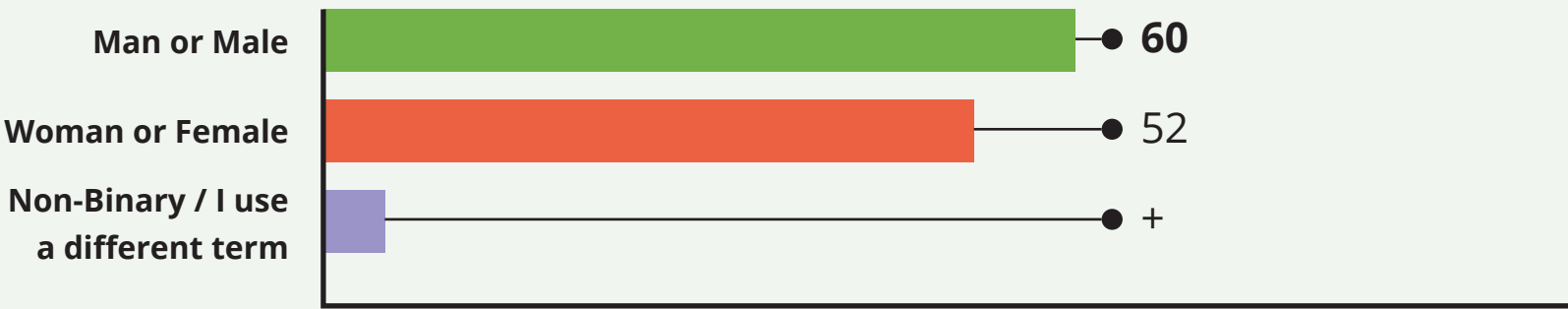


Ethnic minority***



LGBTIQ+ Community****

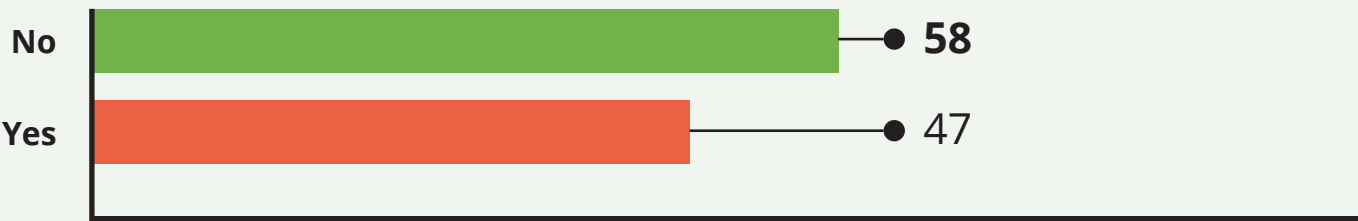
Overall Wellbeing (0-100)



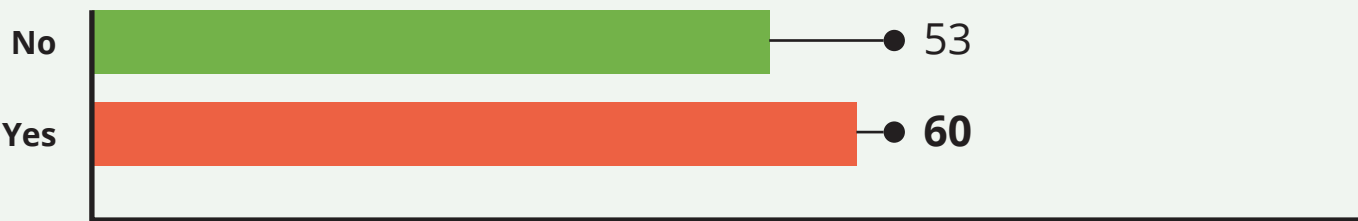
Gender



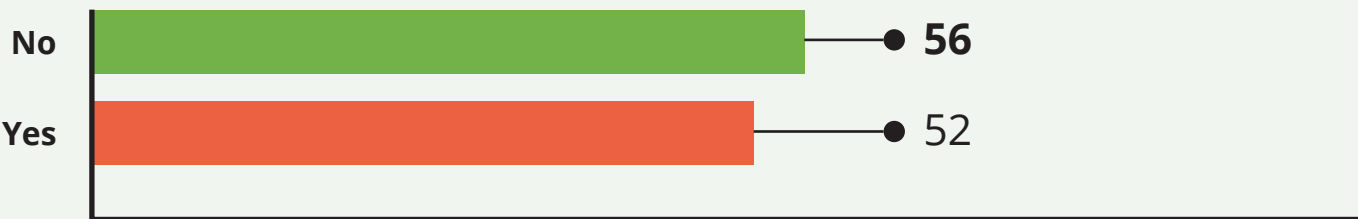
Caring responsibilities*



Disability**



Ethnic minority***



LGBTIQ+ Community****

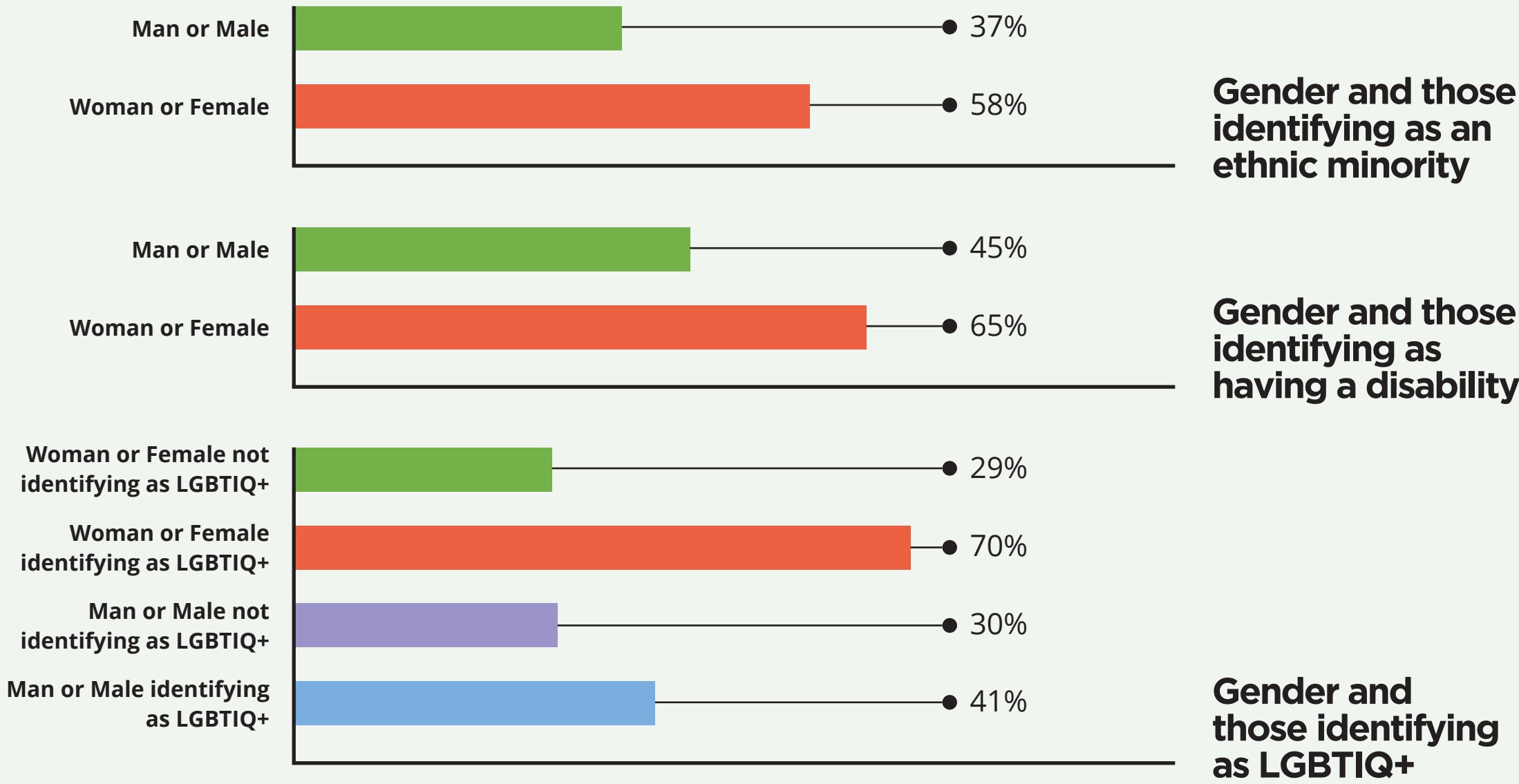
* Do you have caring responsibilities?
** Do you identify as a person with a disability or other chronic condition?
*** Do you identify as an ethnic minority in the country where you currently reside?
**** Do you identify as a person belonging to the LGBTQ+ community?
+ insufficient N for reporting



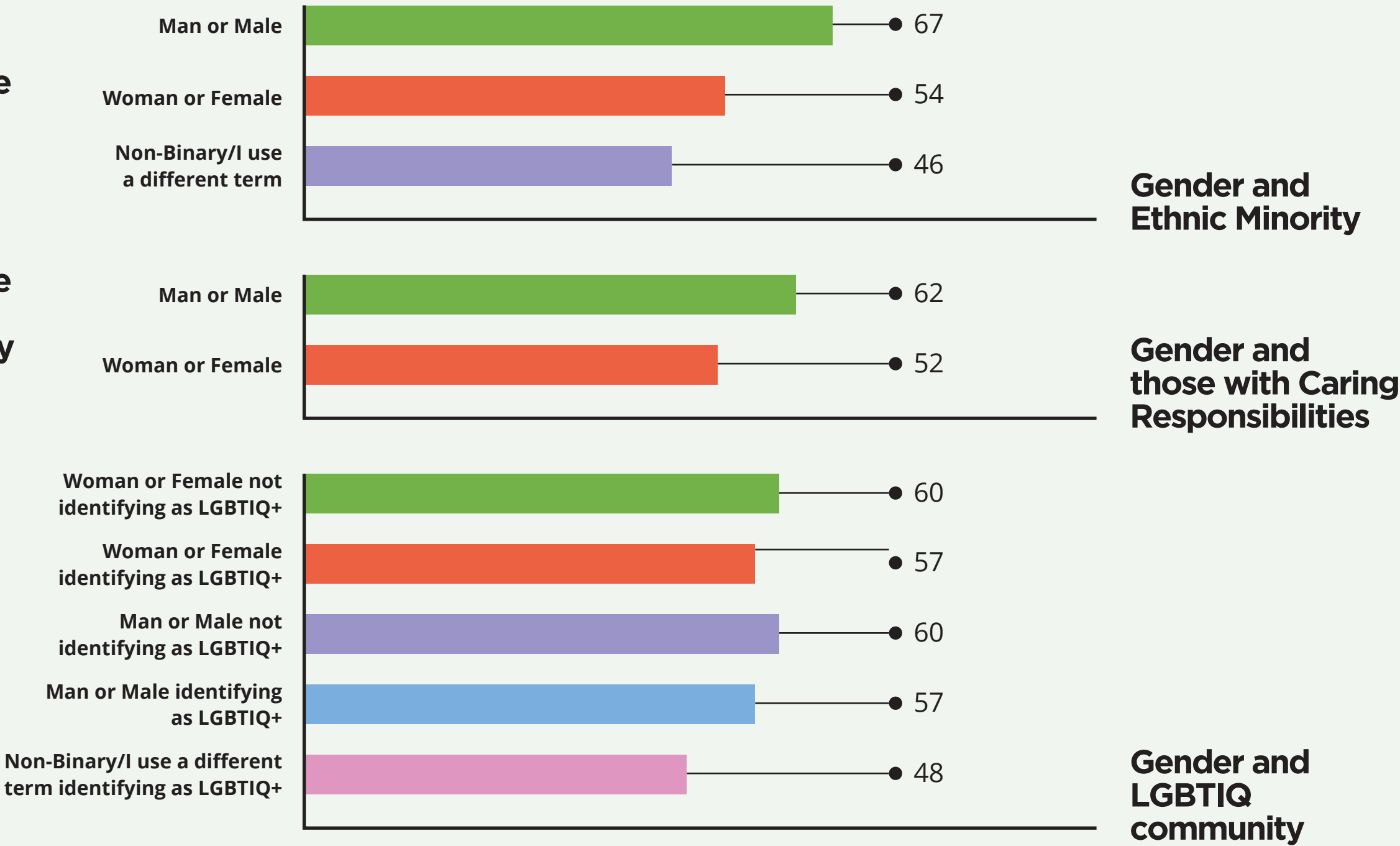
Workplace Experience of Intersectional Groups*

People are multidimensional, and no group or identity is a monolith. Given the complexity of burnout and its roots in systemic and cultural causes, it is unsurprising that intersectional groups are affected at different rates. These findings underscore an important message: to address burnout and create a sustainable workplace, we need to assess and adjust how the organisation’s culture, leadership, and the design of the work affect different people in different ways.**

Burnout Rates

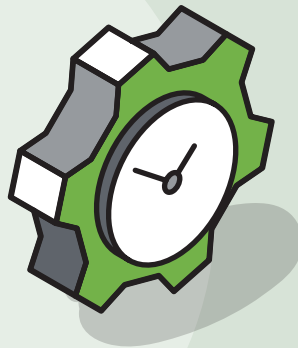


Overall Wellbeing (0-100)



* Please contact Infinite Potential for more in-depth intersectional analysis.

** Certain intersectional groups did not meet reporting requirements.

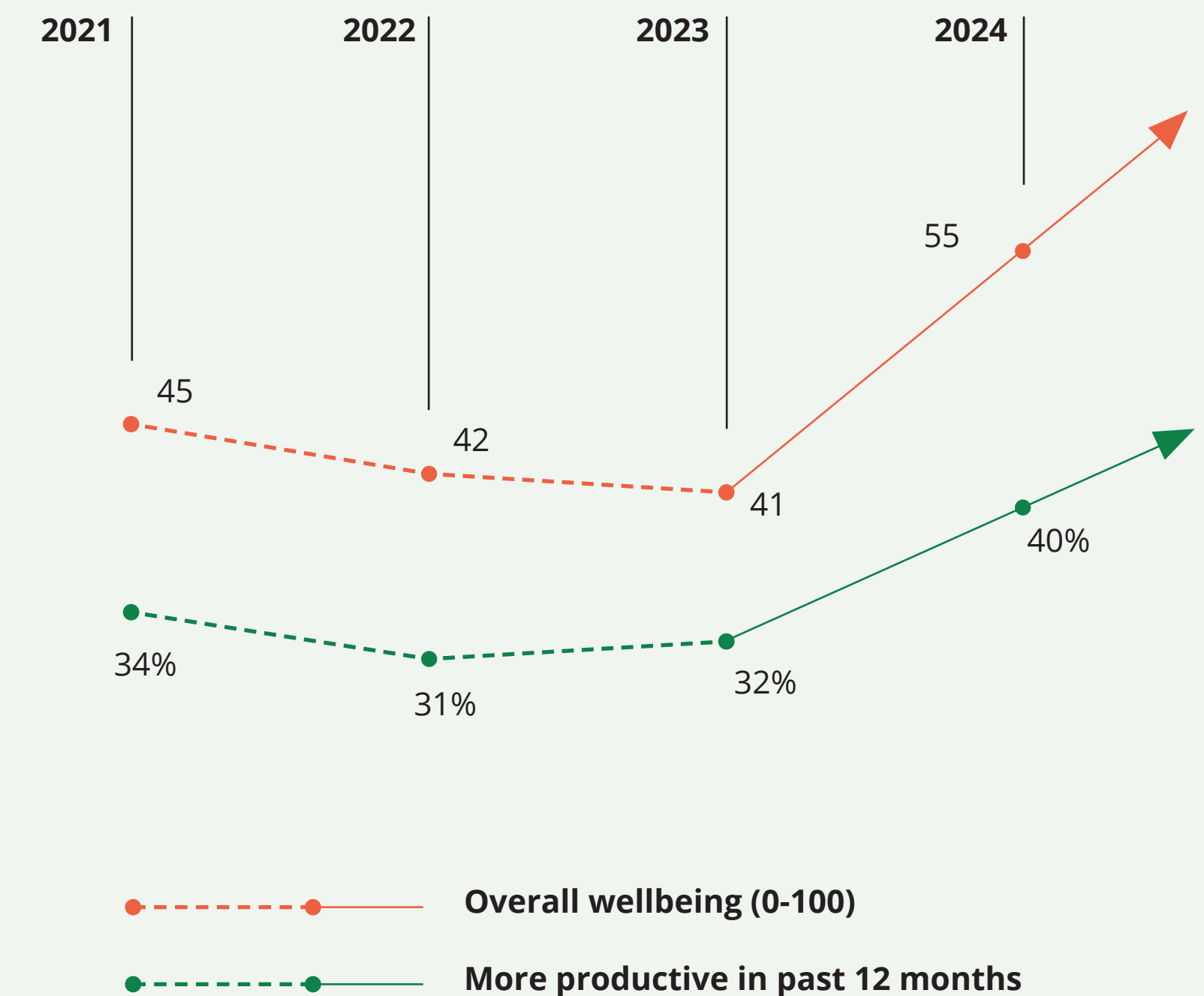


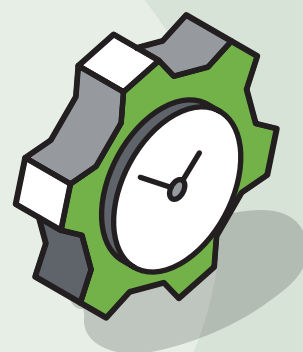
The 3 Productivity Paradox

Following years of weak output growth and diminishing returns from traditional tactics to increase productivity (reorganisation, process re-engineering, more reorganisation, etc.), improving productivity is a top priority for most organisations. However, productivity is complex and often misunderstood, both in terms of how to measure it, and what levers will have an impact. Economists, governments, and organisational leaders alike rarely address the well-established fact that healthy people lead to higher productivity. This is a win-win option that we should prioritise, not only for the good of people and organisations, but also for broader society.

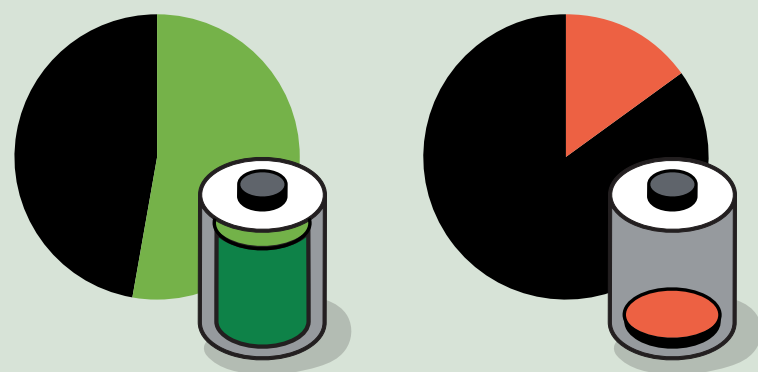
Years of research have shown a strong link between productivity and workplace wellbeing, and prioritising and investing in efforts that address workplace wellbeing can have significant returns on the bottom line². Chronic stress, work-related health issues, burnout, all cost the global economy trillions of dollars in lost productivity³.

The connection between wellbeing and productivity'



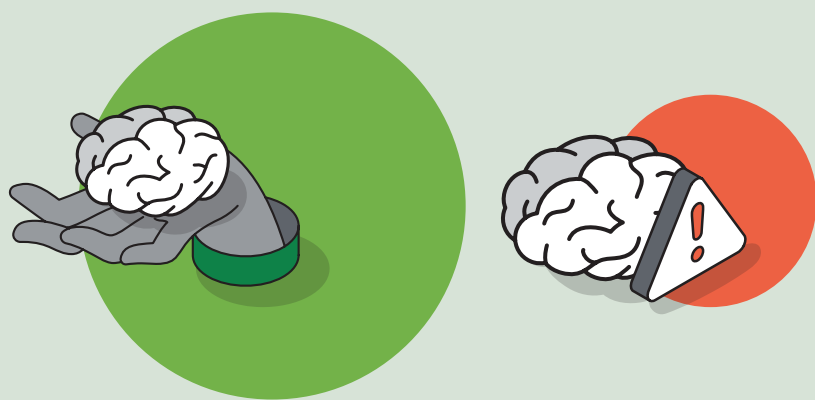


Factors that drive productivity



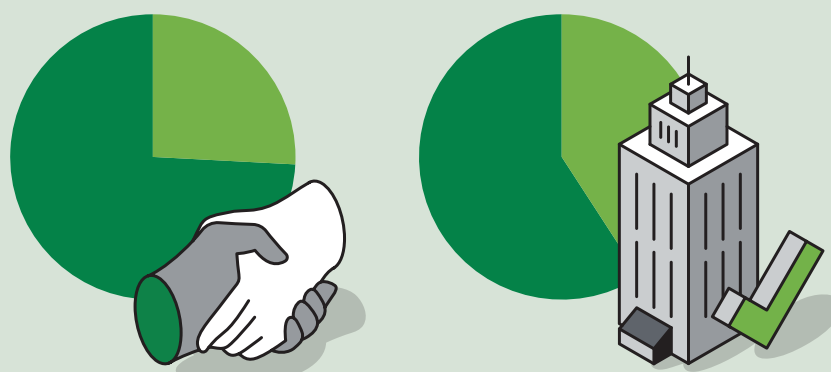
Mitigating Burnout

Those not experiencing burnout reported being more productive in the past 12 months (53% of those not experiencing burnout vs 15% of those who are).



Psychological safety

Those feeling psychologically safe in their workplace are 2.5 times more likely to report being more productive in the past 12 months.



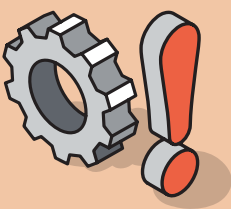
Trust

Those who trust their direct managers are 26% more likely to report being more productive in the past 12 months.

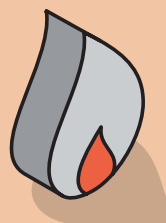
Those who trust their organisation are 41% more likely to report being more productive in the past 12 months.

The study asked people to identify the top 5 barriers to productivity. These are clear examples of the upstream issues that leaders need to focus on to reduce downstream outcomes. Put simply, addressing the root causes of burnout also improves productivity.

What's keeping people from being productive?



Ineffective/inefficient workplace processes



Frequent interruptions



Not enough time to complete work



Unsustainable workload



Lack of clear communication

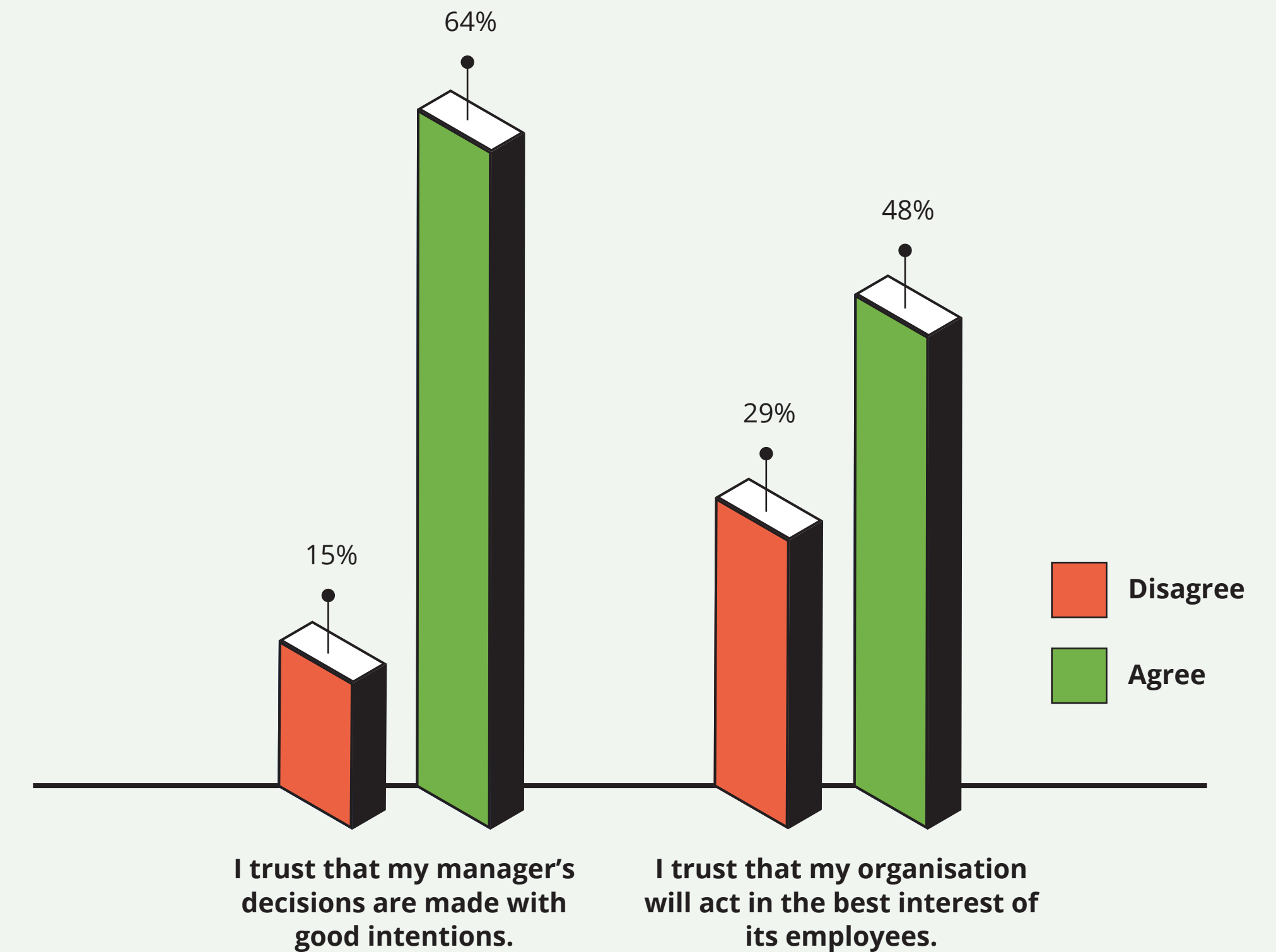


4 The Erosion of Workplace Trust

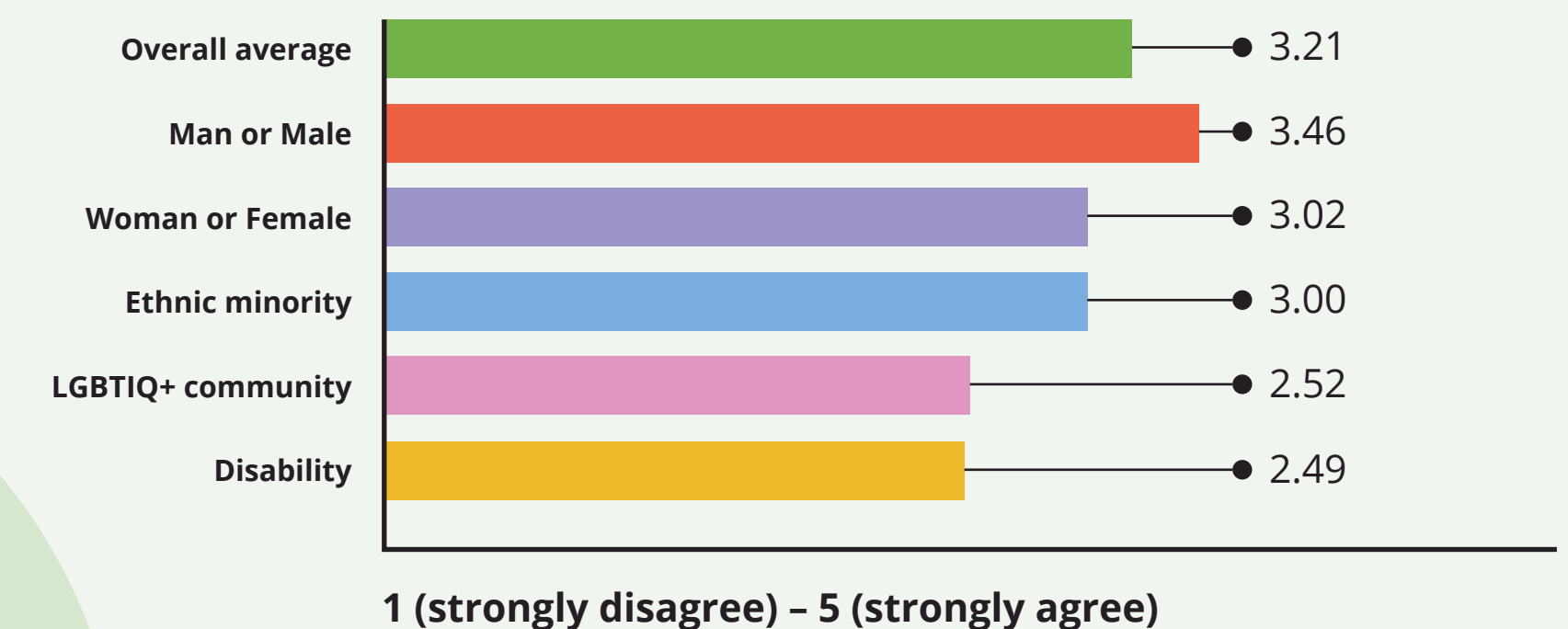
Trust is the foundation of a healthy functioning society and of any successful workplace. At work, people experience trust when they feel confident in a leader or organisation's capacity to safely navigate the unknown. Trust drives results. A person's trust in the organisation is the strongest variable influencing how energised they feel at work, how willing they are to collaborate, and their intent to stay.

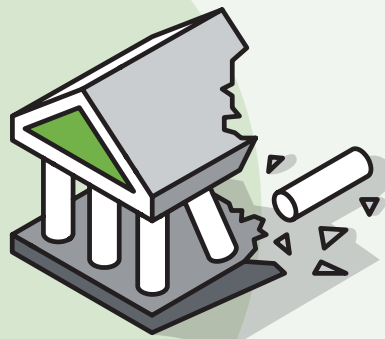
Years of layoffs, overwhelming workloads and broken promises have eroded trust in the organisation. Leaders who claim to "care about their people" while demanding more with fewer resources send a contradictory message that erodes trust.

This year, the study investigates the effect of trust on organisational metrics and what an erosion of trust could mean for organisations.

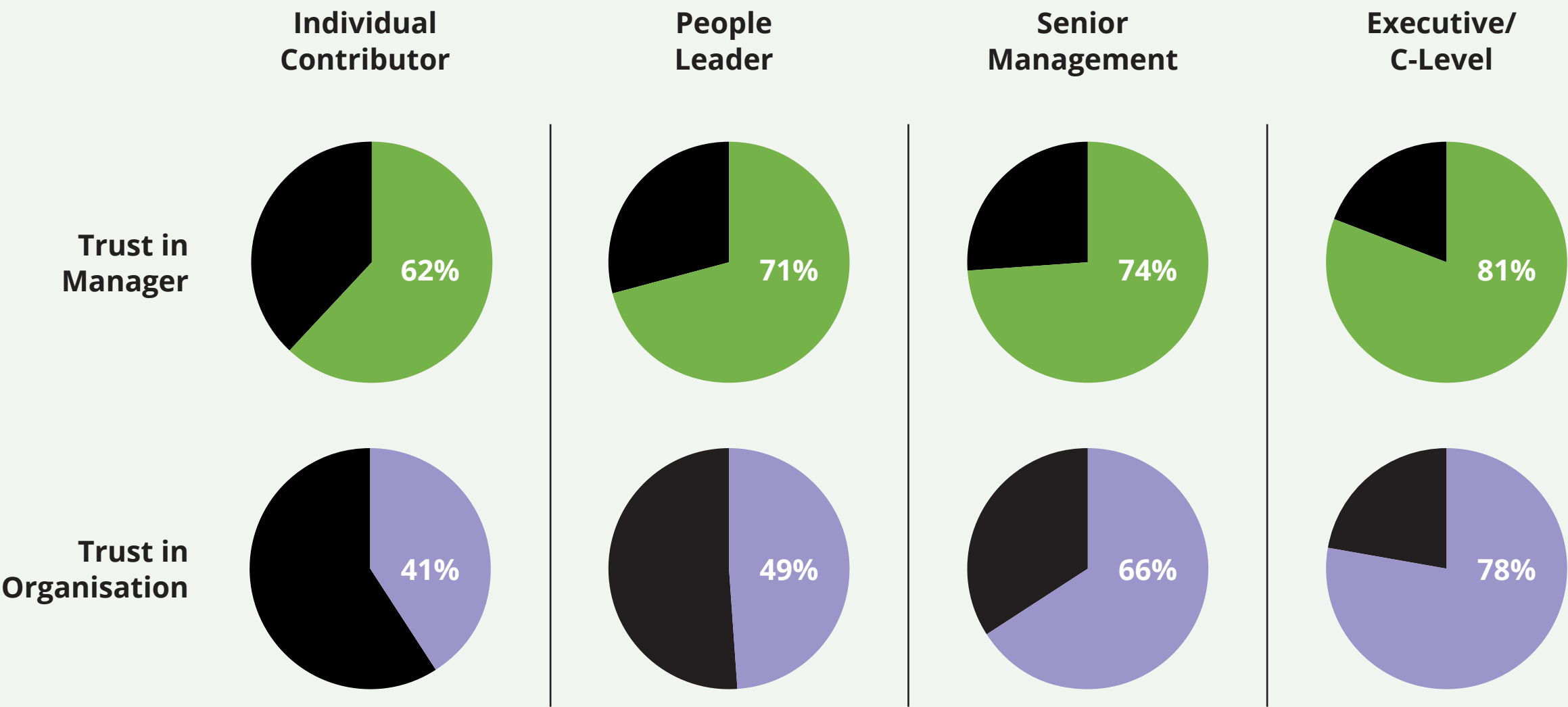


Trust in Organisation by Demographic Groups

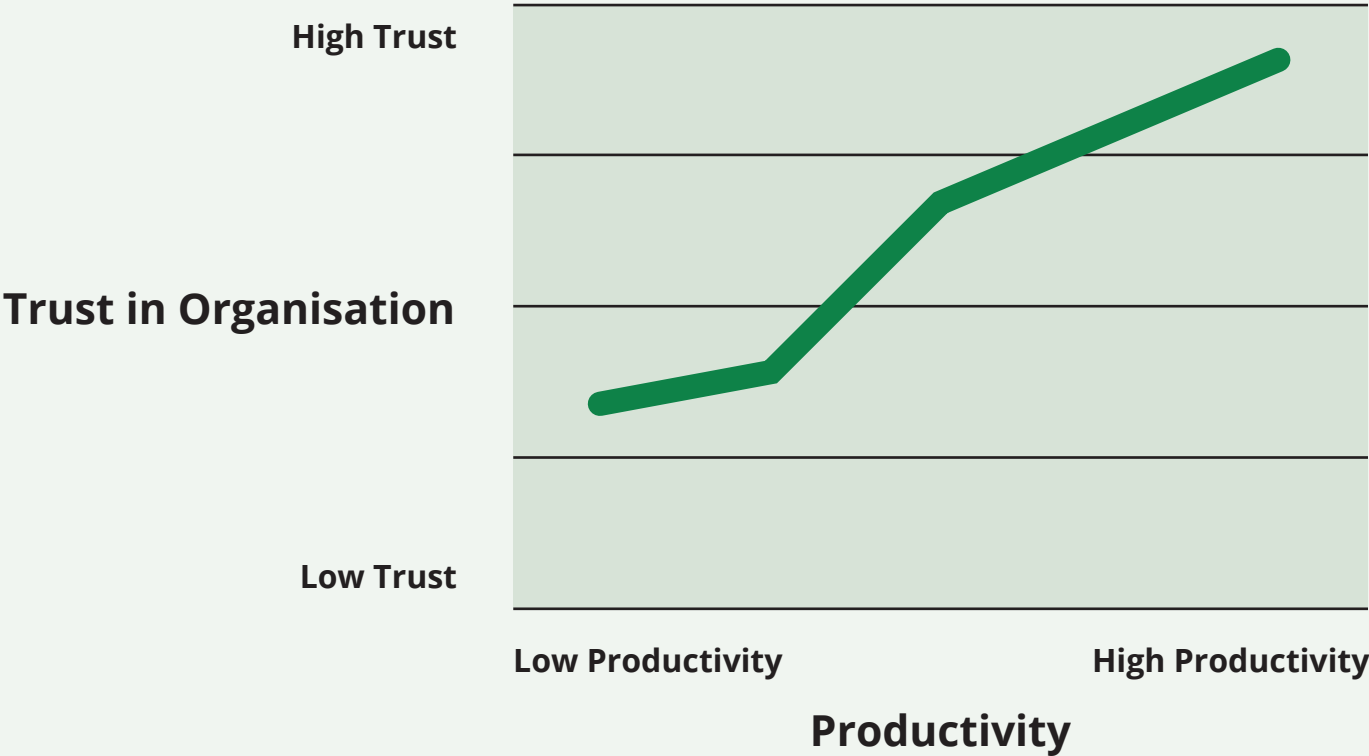




Trust by Job Level



Trust and Productivity



Cracks in the foundations of people’s trust in their organisation are apparent, with only 41% of Individual Contributors indicating that they trust their organisation. The disparity in trust between job levels is a red flag that all senior leaders should heed.

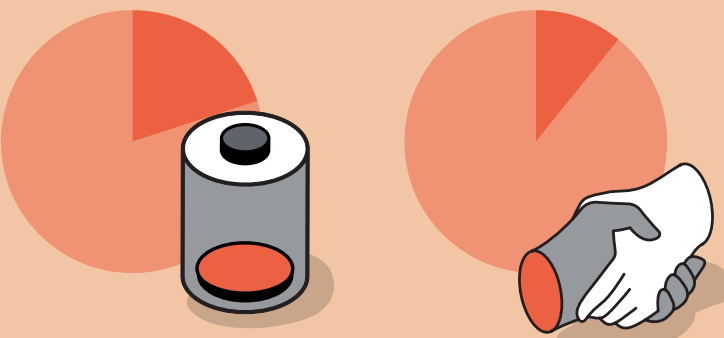
The Impact of Low Organisational Trust

Loneliness and Trust



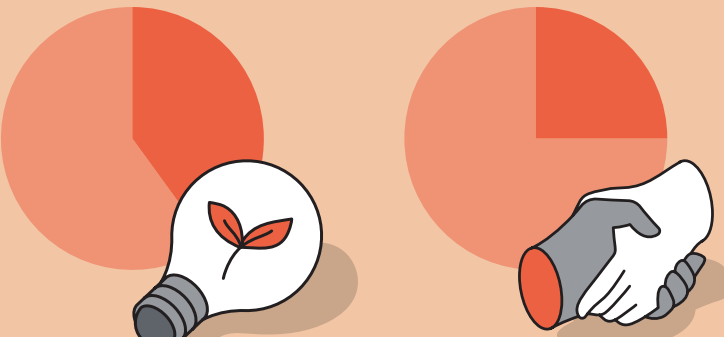
Those experiencing loneliness have **21%** lower trust in their organisation and **15%** lower trust in their manager.

Burnout and Trust



Those experiencing burnout have **20%** lower trust in their organisation and **11%** lower trust in their manager.

Quality of Work and Trust



Those who reported producing lower quality work have **40%** lower trust in their organisation and **25%** lower trust in their manager.

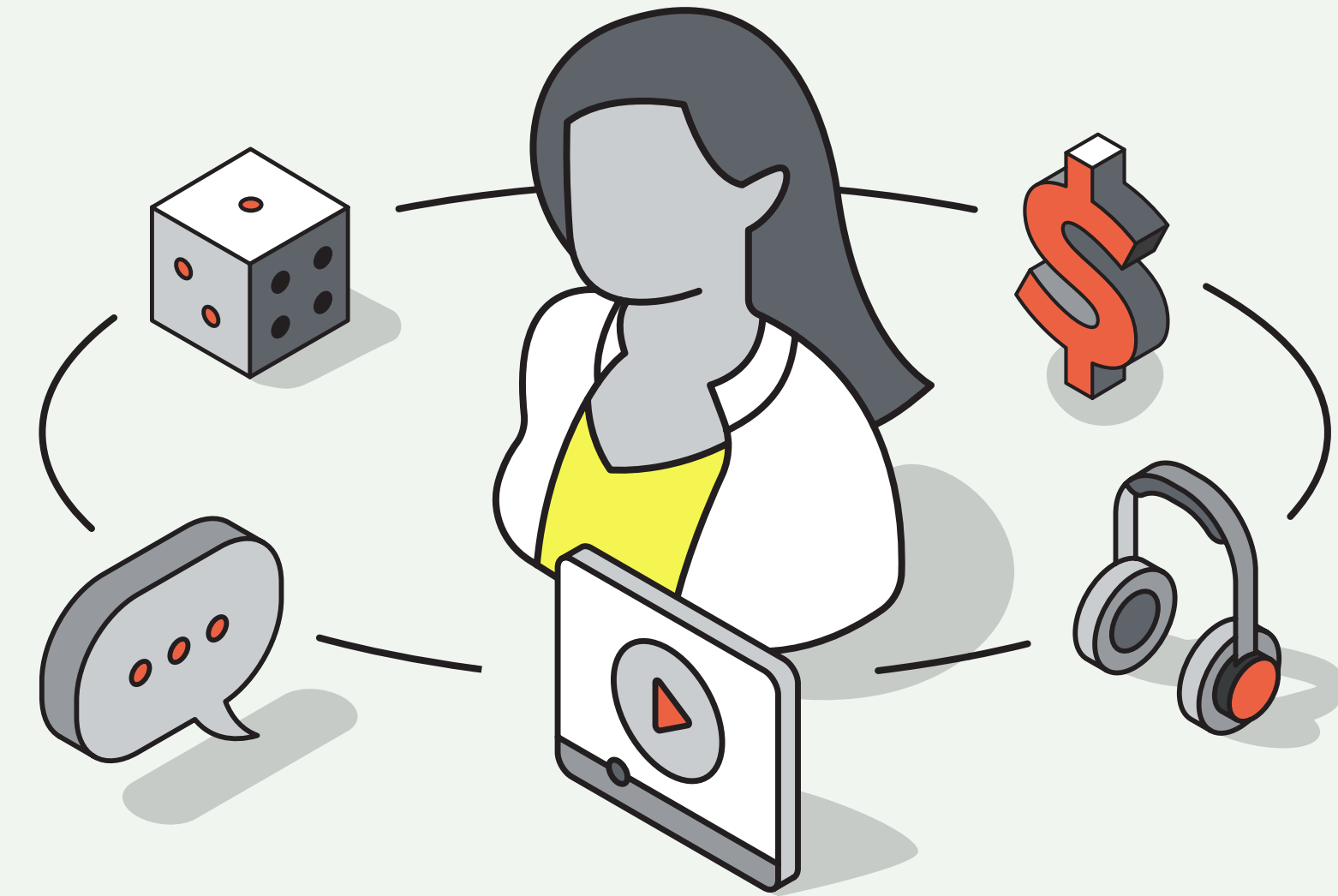


5 The Rise of New Workplace Risks

The Distracted Worker

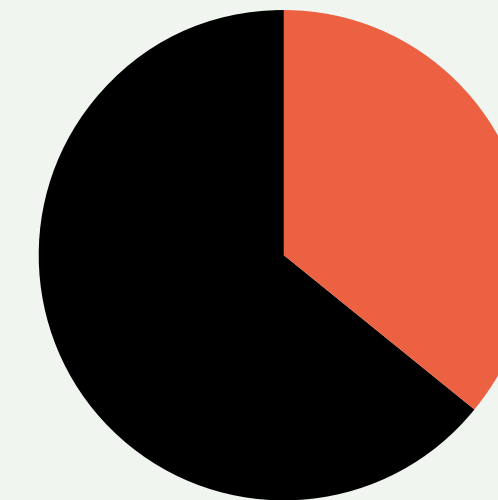
The pace and complexity of work are accelerating – driven by the rise of AI and other technologies. The need for employees to stay focused and attentive is critical. We are witnessing the rise of the Distracted Worker, whose focus is fractured by the very demands of modern work. These individuals' struggle to stay present has real implications for increasing organisational risks.

This year's study examined the rise of the 'Distracted Worker' and its relationship with other factors. The study used participant's levels of mindfulness as a measure for focus, concentration and level of distractedness.⁴

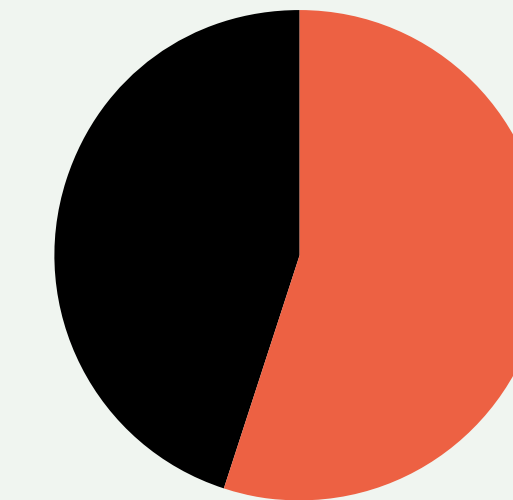


Data shows that 16% of participants are 'Highly Distracted' with 62% in the average range and 16% with 'low distraction'.

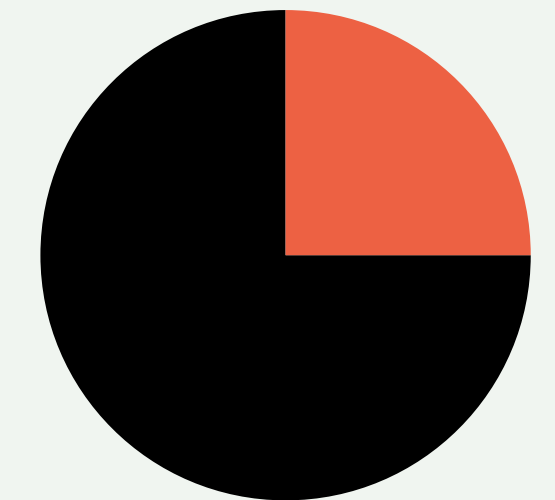
Of those who are highly distracted



36% are also experiencing burnout
(vs only 4% of those who are low in distraction)



55% reported being less productive
(vs only 9% of those who are low in distraction)



25% report experiencing loneliness at work
(vs only 7% of those who are low in distraction)

Workplace Loneliness

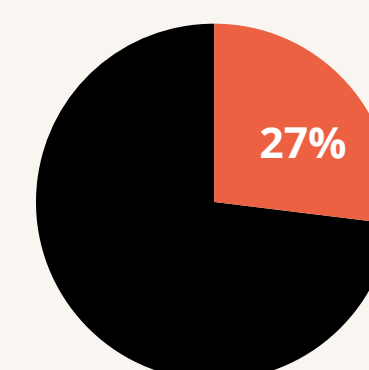
Social connection is a fundamental human need, as essential to our survival as food, water, and shelter. At its core, the fabric of any thriving organisation is woven from strong connections. When organisations neglect these bonds, they sow the seeds of poor performance and cultivate loneliness in the workplace.

Loneliness is connected with anxiety, depression, a lack of purpose and the sense that their place in the world is not important⁵. Loneliness in the workplace is the result of a wide range of organisational factors that interact in complex ways.

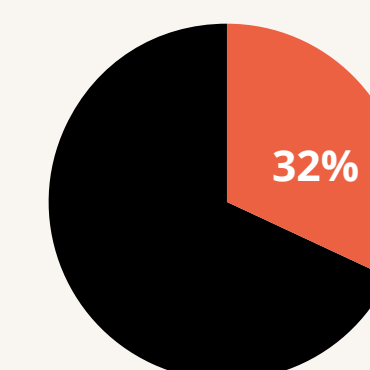
Loneliness is often the tip of an iceberg that covers a maelstrom of issues below: alienation, exclusion, overwhelm, under-resourcing, inequity, distrust and disconnection.

In this year's study, participants were asked to reflect on loneliness in the context of their work, and the data revealed shocking levels of loneliness. The data also show the profound impact loneliness has on productivity, engagement and wellbeing.

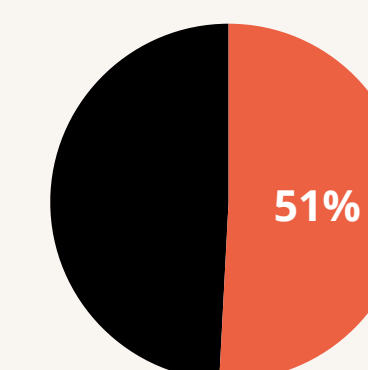
Those experiencing loneliness in the workplace



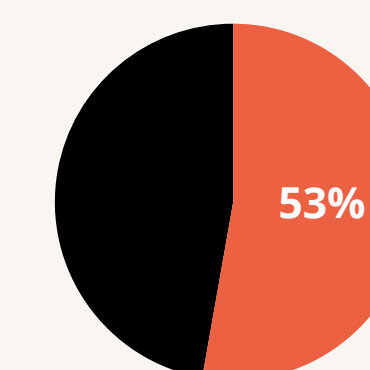
Those most affected by loneliness in the workplace



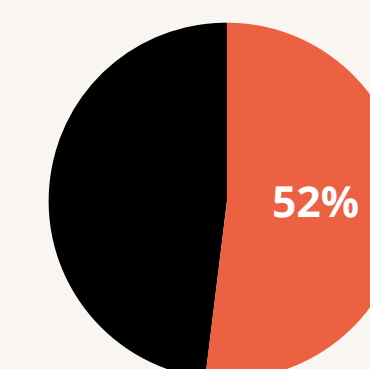
Women/Female



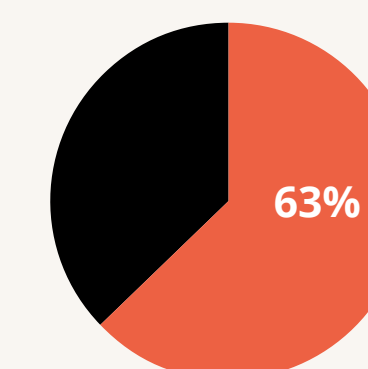
People identifying as LGBTIQ+



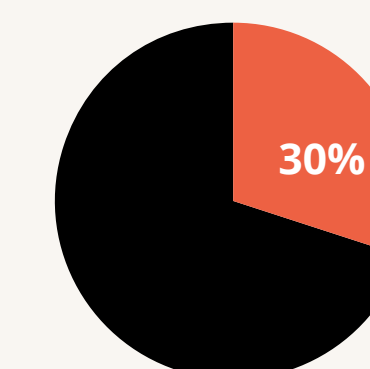
People identifying as having a disability



Women/Female identifying as an ethnic minority



Women/Female identifying as having a disability



People who do not have caring responsibilities



Meena loved her job. She thrived on leading projects and solving complex problems. But when her workload was doubled due to layoffs, something shifted. Her calendar was a battlefield of back-to-back meetings and deadlines stacked up faster than she could clear them. And her team – the people she once loved to brainstorm with over coffee – felt like distant names in an email thread. While her manager praised her for “handling it”, she began to struggle with feelings of disengagement and isolation.

Loneliness undermines the health of an organisation. It can erode culture, productivity, innovation, engagement and performance.

Leaders who ignore workplace loneliness risk productivity and a rise in risk culture.

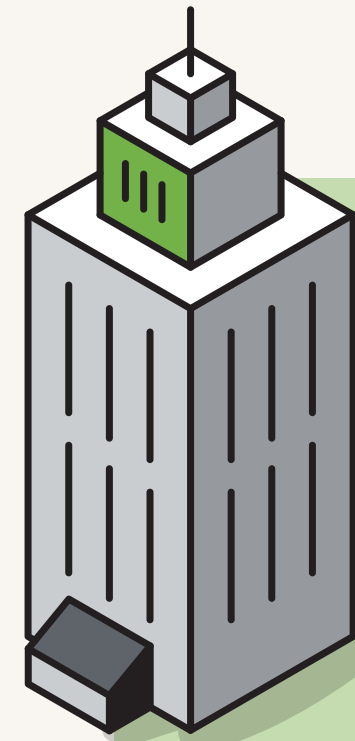


Individual Trends in Workplace Loneliness

Those who experience burnout are 2.5x more likely to also experience loneliness.

Those experiencing loneliness in the workplace...

- 2x less likely to indicate that they've been more productive in the past 12 months
- Have a wellbeing score 28% lower than those not experiencing loneliness
- 11% more likely to indicate that their wellbeing will be worse in the next 12 months
- 23% more likely to be looking for another job



Organisational Trends in Workplace Loneliness

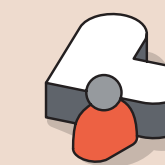
Those who are not experiencing loneliness...

- 57% more likely to indicate that they've been more productive in the past 12 months
- Indicated a 63% higher sense of organisational support
- Experience a 40% higher sense of belonging within the organisation
- Experience 33% higher rates of engagement
- Rated 33% higher in their sense of psychological safety in the workplace

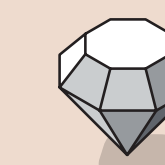
The survey items below showed the strongest negative correlation with loneliness in the workplace.



"I receive appropriate recognition when I do good work."



"My manager encourages and supports me in my work."



"I believe that my contributions are valued and appreciated by my teammates."

Wellbeing is at Risk.

The progress made in prioritising employee wellbeing is at risk of being undone. As economic uncertainty looms, cost-cutting and productivity pressures mount, there are already troubling signs of a pullback. Leaders are struggling to see the results and ROI that they thought they would in their investment in wellbeing. People are still feeling stressed and burnt out, engagement rates have dropped, and productivity has not improved (based on outdated metrics of success). This mindset is not only flawed and short-sighted – it's dangerous.

There is a fundamental misunderstanding of the purpose of wellbeing. For many, there is a perception that employees are fragile and unable to deal with obstacles and challenges, and wellbeing is there to 'fix' and coddle them. In reality, wellbeing is about empowerment, not entitlement. At the heart of wellbeing is building up people to deal with whatever

challenges work (and life) brings. Decades of research show that prioritising wellbeing makes people more productive, resilient and innovative.

This is not the time to walk away from wellbeing. The data from this report signals that wellbeing is more important than ever, there is a need to double down, not retreat. Ignoring the wellbeing of your workforce in favour of immediate financial gains or productivity targets puts your people and your organisation's future at serious risk. However, there is a need to focus on the right priorities when addressing wellbeing. These include:

- Create a physically and mentally healthy workplace – Identify and address physical and psychosocial risks in the workplace.
- Ensure leaders understand and champion wellbeing – Provide leaders with the tools and accountability to balance the needs of the organisation and their people.

- Redesign work for sustainability — Address unmanageable workloads, clarify priorities, and give employees more control over how they work.
- Build strong team connections – Strong, collaborative, and supportive teams are foundational to enhancing individual wellbeing and overall organisational success.
- Measure what matters – rethink traditional metrics (e.g., hours worked) with more holistic and longer-term views of productivity and health.

The risk of sliding back into old habits is real, but so is the opportunity to redesign work as a competitive advantage. Leaders must stop viewing wellbeing as an optional perk and start treating it as a strategic priority. Wellbeing is not a luxury or a trend – it's the key to becoming a sustainable, high-performing organisation. It's time to step up or be prepared to fall behind.

Creating Sustainable Workplaces

We are on the precipice of a significant leap in how we work and our relationship with work – ushered in by advances in technology, new ways of working, and a deep desire to live a sustainable work-life. While great excitement exists, it's difficult to ignore the near-term risks and entrenched barriers holding organisations back from redesigning work around people.

To stay ahead and create a unique competitive advantage, organisations need a new framework that balances economics and empathy in the pursuit of sustainable productivity. Wellbeing is about empowerment, not entitlement.

Infinite Potential's Workplace Sustainability framework can help guide organisations on a journey towards a workplace evolution. This framework focuses on systems and structures that create a sustainable

high-performance workforce that leads to improved outcomes for organisations and stakeholders. When the needs of the organisation and its people are aligned, we create better workplaces, and in doing so, better societies.

Wellbeing is about empowerment, not entitlement.



About the Study

2250 participants | 47 countries

Gender profile

- 56% Woman or Female
- 41% Man or Male
- 2% Non-Binary/I use a different term
- 1% Prefer not to answer

Work status

- 90% Full time
- 8% Part time/Casual
- 2% Not currently employed

Job level profile

- 41% Individual Contributor
- 14% First Line Leader
- 22% Middle Management
- 15% Senior Management
- 8% Executive Level/C-Suite

Age profile

- 1% 18 – 24
- 28% 25 – 34
- 41% 35 – 44
- 22% 45 – 54
- 6% 55+
- 2% Prefer not to answer

Work location

- 21% Mostly from home
- 29% Hybrid working
- 48% Mostly from the office/workplace
- 2% Not currently working

Organisation type

- 61% For-profit/Commercial
- 19% Government/State-owned
- 20% Non-profit/NGO/Charity

Organisation size

- 21% Less than 50
- 20% 50 – 149
- 26% 150 – 999
- 22% 1000 – 9999
- 11% Over 10,000

Glossary

Burnout: An occupational phenomenon conceptualised as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. This study uses the Infinite Potential Burnout Scale (IPBS) to measure the three dimensions of burnout.

Loneliness: A subjective distressing experience that results from perceived isolation or inadequate meaningful connections, where inadequate refers to the discrepancy or unmet need between an individual’s preferred and actual experience. The study adopted the UCLA three-item scale to measure loneliness in the workplace.

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Wellbeing: A person’s optimal overall physical, mental, emotional and financial health.

Trust: The confident relationship with the unknown (source: Rachel Botsman, Oxford professor and thought leader on modern trust).

Mindfulness/Distracted Worker: The awareness that arises through “paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally”⁶ (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4).

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About the Research Team



Dr. John Chan

Dr. John Chan is an Industrial/Organisational psychologist and the Managing Director of Infinite Potential. With over 20 years of global experience, John has dedicated his career to transforming our ways of working and our relationship with work. His mission is to make the workplace a haven in an unpredictable world - redefining how organisations sustain high performance and support of their people. John has worked across diverse industries, from Silicon Valley start-ups to NYSE and ASX-100 companies to community service organisations.

John is a leading voice and thought leader in workplace burnout and sustainability. He is a regular contributor to academic and media publications and is a sought-after speaker at national and international conferences.



Sally Clarke

Sally Clarke is a former corporate finance lawyer at one of Europe's top firms, a yoga and meditation teacher, and the author of two books on burnout, including Amazon best-seller 'Protect Your Spark'. Having lived on four continents, Sally is on advisory boards around the globe, providing guidance on systemic burnout prevention.

Sally is a sought-after keynote speaker, panelist and thought leader. She writes regularly on leadership, burnout prevention, wellbeing and spirituality and cohosts the popular leadership podcast, We Are Human Leaders.

About Infinite Potential

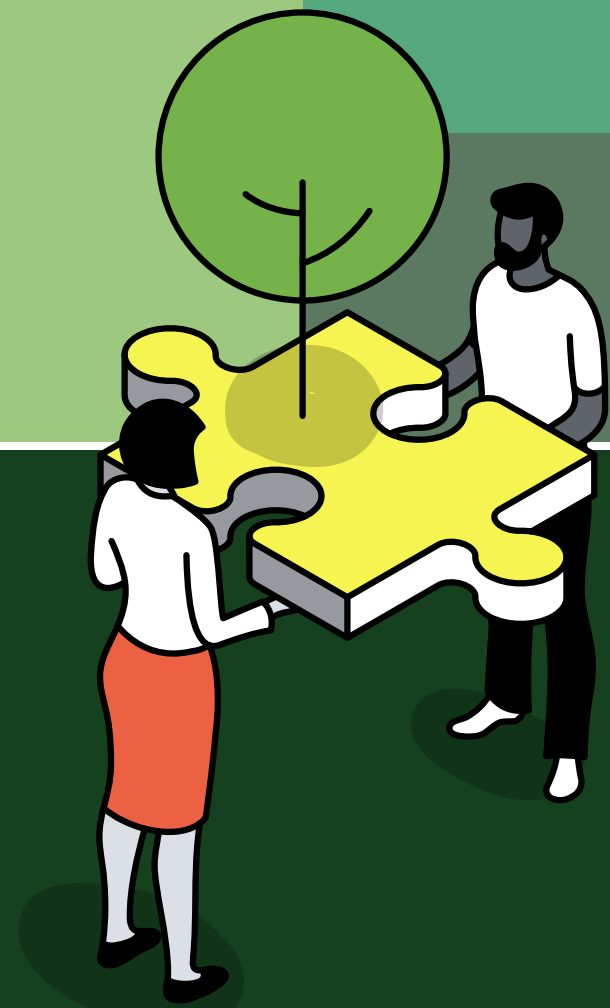
Infinite Potential is an independent think tank that focuses on research and evaluation of complex workplace matters. Using a systems approach, Infinite Potential partners with leaders in business, government, and community services to provide insights and solutions to complex issues through robust research and analysis. Working closely with organisations and stakeholders to embrace a collaborative and holistic approach to reveal the greatest opportunities.

Our mission is simple: To make work a haven of enrichment and engagement for everyone.

Through our robust expertise and collaborative approach, we shed light on the complex dynamics that shape work experiences. We partner with organisations to translate insights into actionable strategies, creating workplaces that are not only productive but also focused on the wellbeing of their people.

At Infinite Potential, we believe that by building better workplaces, we can build a better society.





Infinite Potential

Leadership | Culture | Analytics