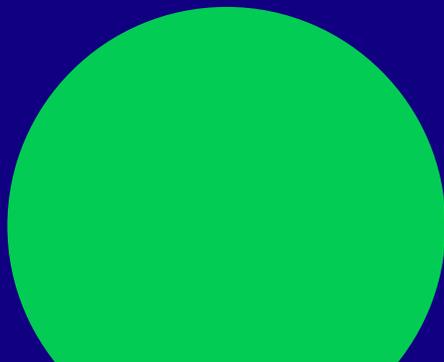
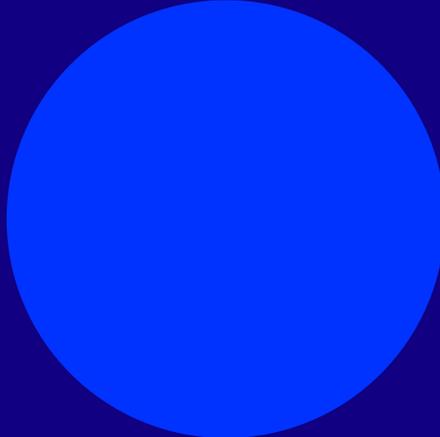




Vitality in America 2023



The second annual Vitality in America study, commissioned by The Cigna GroupSM, explores the state of vitality in the United States along with health attitudes, behaviors, social determinants of health, and experiences in health care and work – as well as how people’s perceptions of these topics have changed and evolved since 2022. The research is based on a survey of 10,000 adults that was fielded in June 2023 by Morning Consult. It utilizes the [Evernorth Vitality Index](#) (EVI)– a subjective measure of health and well-being – to understand the capacity of Americans to pursue life with health, strength, and energy.

Vitality is composed of eight interdependent, dynamic dimensions of health and well-being: **emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, and spiritual**. A person’s perceived ability to make choices and engage willingly, develop skills and capacities, and connect to others across these life domains impacts their vitality.



In this year’s survey, we found that while the state of vitality in the United States hasn’t changed much year over year, individuals across all age groups, sexes, and races are struggling with physical and mental health and are stressed about financial health. The study confirms the inextricable link between vitality, emotional health, stress, and the ability to perform day-to-day tasks. It examines the vitality of the working population and finds that workers with high vitality are healthier, perform better on the job, work harder, and better utilize their health benefits, making a case for employers to develop strategies to retain high vitality workers.

What’s different in this year’s report is our deep dive into Generation Z – the cohort most notable for lower vitality levels in 2022. In addition to the main vitality survey fielded among a general population sample of 10,000 adults, an additional survey was fielded among 4,000 adults, one-quarter of those who were Gen Z adults (those born between 1997 and 2005). We found that Gen Z’s mental health challenges play a considerable role in their lower vitality. So does their financial insecurity, as money is top of mind for Gen Z. We also found that Gen Z still struggles with loneliness. Many are underwhelmed by their experience in the workplace and feel burned out. Interestingly, Gen Z reports more negative consequences resulting from social media use than non-Gen Z generations.

Let’s take a closer look at this year’s research, which gives insight into how individuals can improve their health, well-being, and vitality, as well as how employers can help their workforces do the same.

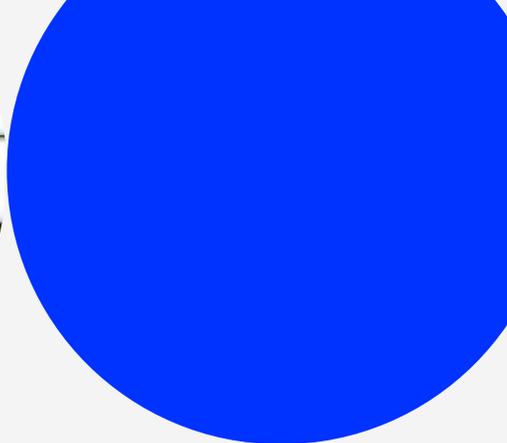


Table of contents

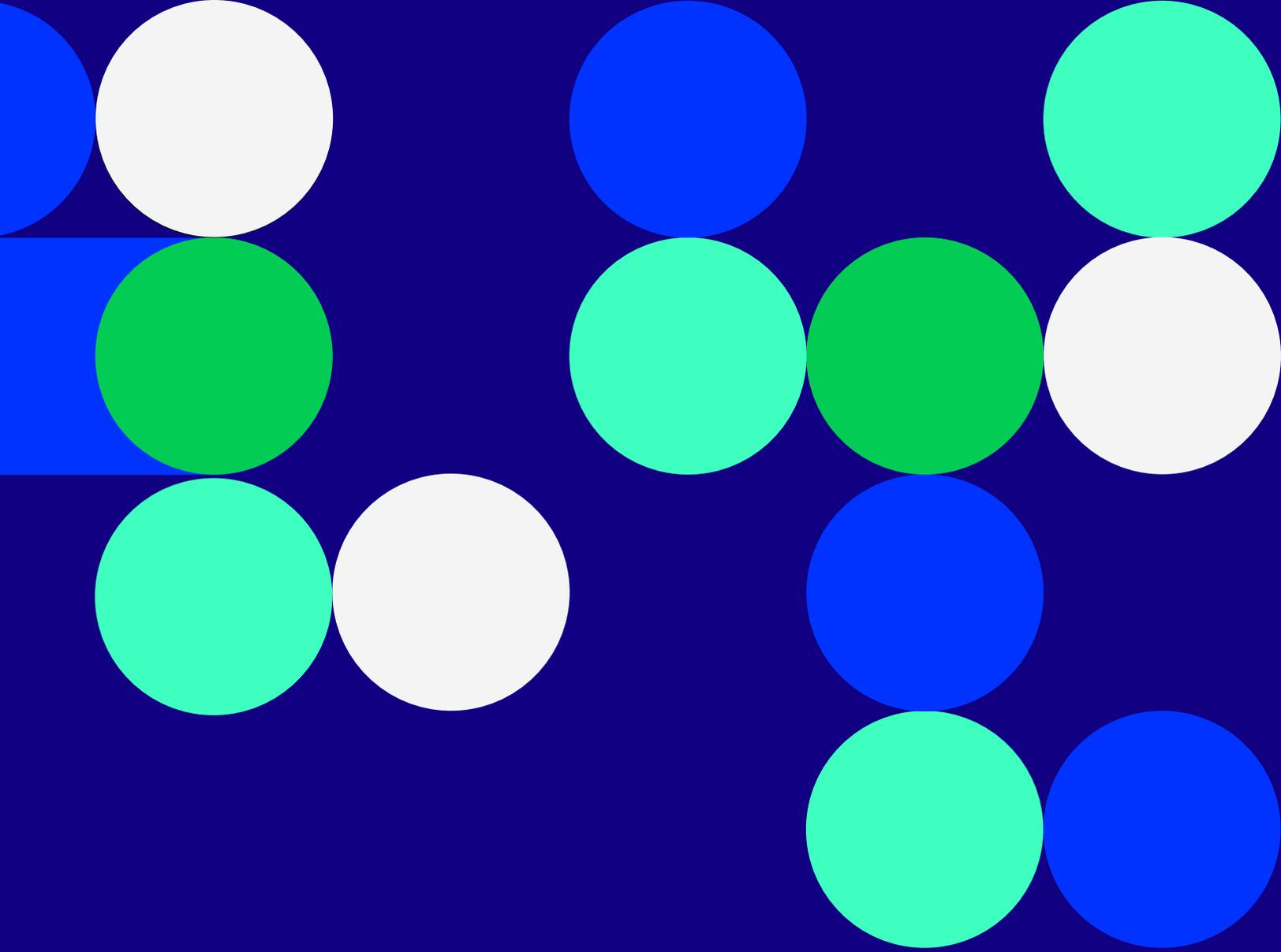
CHAPTER 1:

The capacity of Americans to pursue life with health, strength, and energy	4
Americans struggle most with physical, emotional, and financial dimensions of health	5
The state of vitality among the working population	10
Life stage, social needs, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, and relationship status all impact vitality	16
Key takeaways on vitality and adults in the United States	21

CHAPTER 2:

The state of vitality among Gen Z adults in the United States	22
Digging into Gen Z's mental health challenges	23
Gen Z's struggles with financial insecurity and conflicted expectations for the future	26
Gen Z workplace vitality insights	29
Gen Z social media utilization and impact on vitality	31
Key takeaways on vitality and Gen Z	32

Demographics and Methodology	33
------------------------------------	----



CHAPTER 1:

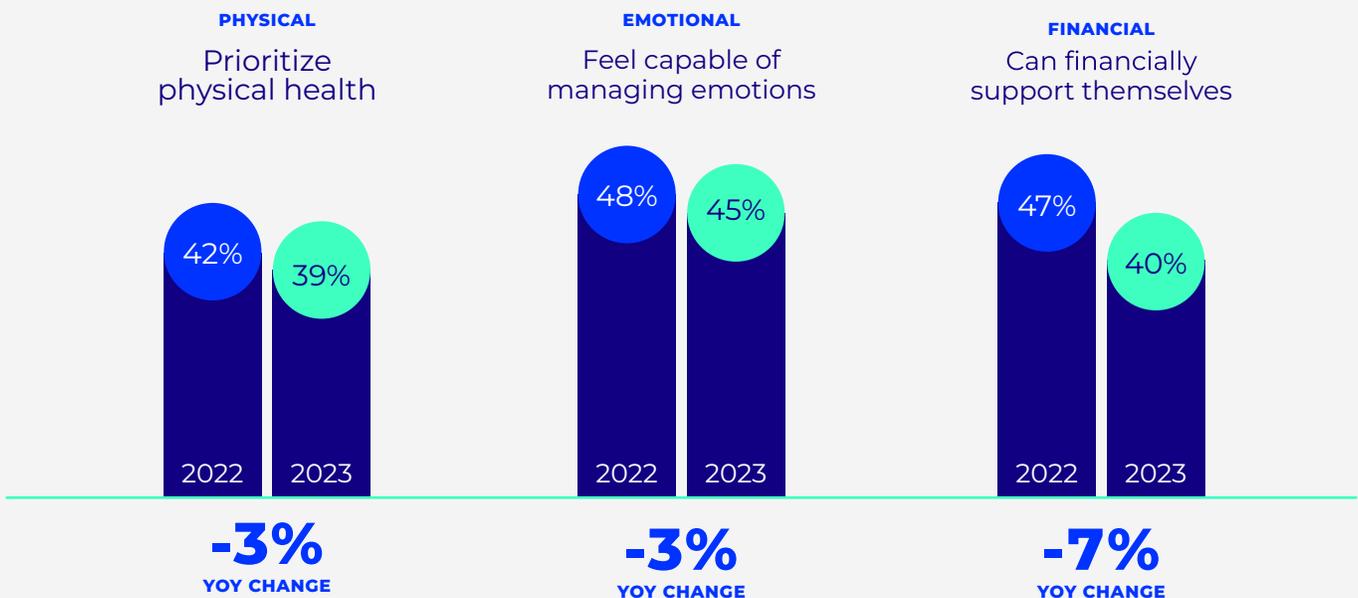
The capacity of Americans
to pursue life with health,
strength, and energy

Americans struggle most with physical, emotional, and financial dimensions of health

Since [our last study](#) was released in November 2022, the vitality of adults in the United States has stayed relatively flat. U.S. adults report a 67.2 out of 100 average vitality score, which is stable from 2022, when the average was 67.4.

However, digging deeper into the various dimensions of health uncovers some interesting changes from last year, particularly in the physical, emotional, and financial dimensions of health and well-being, where we see downward shifts.

DOWNWARD SHIFTS IN PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, AND FINANCIAL DIMENSIONS OF HEALTH



Even though U.S. adults are struggling across the physical, emotional, and financial dimensions of health and well-being, there is an increase in optimism from last year: 47% report looking forward to each new day (up from 43% last year), and 41% report feeling alive and vital (compared with 39% last year).

High vitality among U.S. adults in 2023 is associated with better physical health, driven by healthier habits and higher health engagement. As we found last year, adults with high vitality are more likely to report excellent or very good overall physical health than those with low vitality. They tend to have healthier habits too, with high vitality adults more likely to get five or more hours of exercise per week than low vitality adults. High vitality adults are also more likely to eat fruit at least once a day, get five or more hours of sleep, and report feeling well rested. This engagement and investment in their health pays off, with nearly 2 in 5 high vitality adults reporting not having chronic conditions, while fewer than 1 in 5 low vitality adults can say the same.

HIGH VITALITY ADULTS EXHIBIT HEALTHIER BEHAVIORS



Overall, the research points to general declines in self-reported health, with perception of physical health down six points from last year. Our research finds that low vitality is associated with lower feelings of control over future health. Access to care is a bigger issue this year than last year, with more U.S. adults reporting that cost and transportation issues prevented them from getting care this year.



said cost was the reason they didn't get care in 2023 (vs. 19% in 2022)



said they didn't get a prescribed medication due to cost (vs. 19% in 2022)



said they didn't get care because of transportation challenges (vs. 19% in 2022)

New to this year's report is a drilldown into chronic conditions among U.S. adults. Overall, we see that having good management of chronic conditions has a positive impact on vitality. We are also able to dive specifically into how living with a chronic condition, such as cancer or depression/anxiety, impacts vitality.

Key among the findings was that high vitality adults diagnosed with cancer or depression/anxiety are significantly more satisfied with their life than their low vitality counterparts. What's interesting is that their outlook on life seems highly correlated to vitality. In fact, most adults with cancer or depression/anxiety who have high vitality feel their life is worthwhile, feel their life is close to their ideal, and are generally happy in their life.

High vitality adults living with cancer rate their overall and physical health higher than adults with low vitality who have cancer. They rate their mental health more positively and are less likely to also be diagnosed with depression/anxiety or report symptoms of depression. The majority (85%) of high vitality adults living with cancer rate their mental health as excellent or very good, which is significantly more than the 21% of low vitality adults living with cancer who say the same.

What's more, high vitality adults with cancer or depression/anxiety are more likely to want to learn how to improve their vitality (61% vs. 32% with depression, 41% vs. 23% with cancer), and they engage in healthy behaviors that can help them do so. They are more likely to get regular exercise, spend time outdoors, eat fruit daily, and get enough sleep.

High vitality adults with cancer or depression/anxiety also have much higher resilience than their low vitality counterparts, likely because they report **having a better support system, feeling more confident they can manage their health condition, and feeling more in control of their future health** than those with low vitality.



Importantly, high vitality adults with cancer or depression/anxiety have better relationships with their health care providers and are more likely to have visited a provider for a check-up in the past year than low vitality adults with cancer or depression/anxiety. High vitality adults with depression/anxiety are significantly more likely to have seen a mental health professional in the past year (61% vs. 44% of low vitality), indicating people are addressing their mental health conditions. Most high vitality adults who did not visit a mental health professional felt they didn't need to, while those with low vitality were more likely to have experienced a barrier to getting care.

THE RELATIONSHIP ADULTS WITH CANCER OR DEPRESSION/ANXIETY HAVE WITH THEIR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

	Diagnosed with cancer		Diagnosed with depression/anxiety	
	Low Vitality	High Vitality	Low Vitality	High Vitality
Visited health care provider for annual check-up within past year	69%	89%	63%	88%
Feel listened to by health care provider	32%	87%	39%	78%
Feel appreciated and respected by health care provider	30%	81%	37%	77%
Have a sense of trust in health care provider	39%	87%	39%	80%
Feel health care provider gives opportunities to ask questions or express concerns	44%	90%	44%	74%
Feel health care provider understands their background/community	20%	67%	23%	68%
Feel health care provider takes time to get to know them	36%	78%	36%	78%

Mental health and emotional well-being are also significant drivers of vitality. Adults with strong mental health are 10 times more likely to have high vitality than those with fair or poor mental health. Adults with low vitality who report struggling with their mental health are more likely to experience a lack of motivation and enthusiasm. They also report feeling like they don't have anything to look forward to and often find themselves getting agitated.

Adults are most stressed about their finances, followed by their housing conditions, work, family or social relationships, and health.

FIVE TOP DRIVERS OF STRESS AMONG U.S. ADULTS*



Study participants reported experiencing stress in these areas "often" or "very often."

Adults reporting fair or poor mental health are more likely to have received therapy from a mental health professional in the past 12 months than the general population. There is also an increase in those receiving counseling from a mental health professional from 2022 to 2023 (20% to 24%). This is encouraging year over year and demonstrates that more people are getting the help they need. For the 32% of individuals who needed mental health counseling but did not receive it, cost was the top barrier to care, followed by difficulty finding a provider, lack of appointments in a reasonable time frame, and transportation. This is exacerbated among those with poor mental health, where 68% of those who did not receive care experienced a barrier.

Generation Z adults are struggling most with their mental health, followed closely by Gen X and Millennials. Meanwhile, Baby Boomers are the most likely of all generations to rate their mental health as excellent or very good. Gen Z and Millennials are most likely to have received counseling or therapy in the past 12 months (30% and 33%, respectively). Among those who did not receive counseling, cost presents a challenge to a significantly higher proportion of Gen Z and Millennials than older cohorts.

Gen Z also lags the general population in feeling control over their future health and that their life is worthwhile, and fewer rate their quality of life as excellent, which may contribute to their overall lower mental health and vitality. They also report lower levels of feeling their life is close to their ideal, that their purpose guides what they do, and that they feel generally happy in their life.

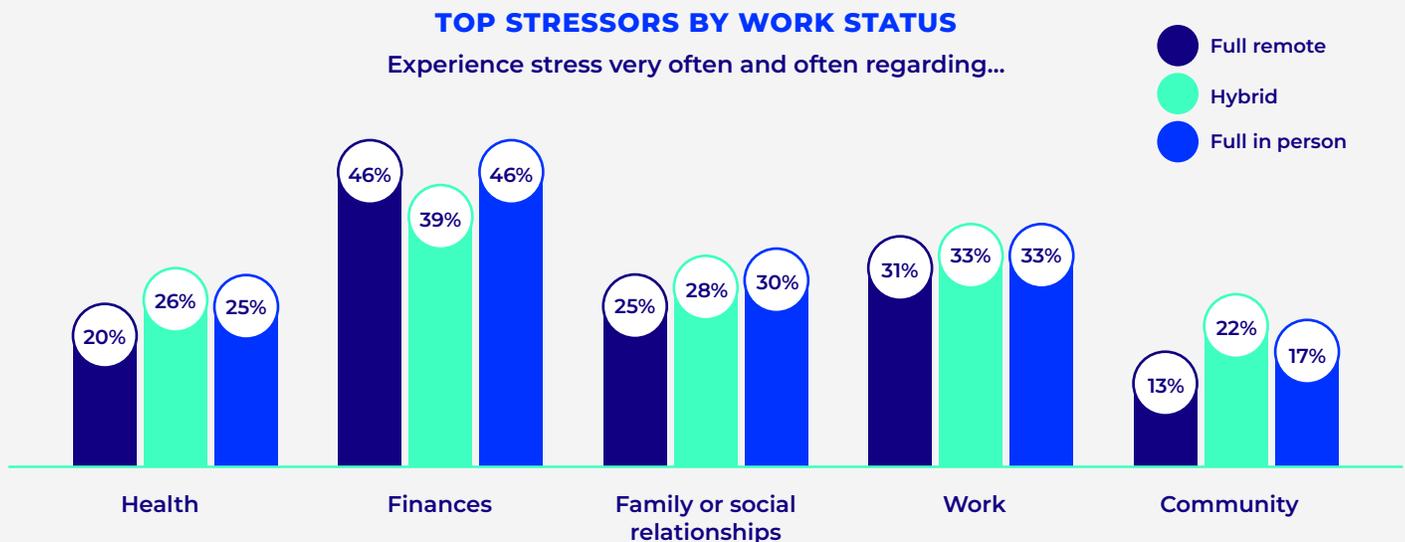
The state of vitality among the working population

Workers enjoy higher vitality compared with their nonworking counterparts and the general population, likely because they are more likely to feel energized, armed with all the skills and tools necessary to live a healthy life, and that they have freedoms and opportunities to financially support themselves. Despite this, workers (28%) do indicate higher levels of feeling drained than nonworkers (22%) and the general population (26%).

Adults who are working enjoy better overall health than the general population, with greater engagement in healthy habits. For example, those who work are less likely to have chronic conditions than the general population (32% with no chronic conditions vs. 28%), get at least five hours of exercise per week (38% vs. 33%), and have better physical health (49% vs. 42%).

Mental health is generally similar across workers and those who do not work, though workers are more likely to have received mental health counseling in the past 12 months, likely due to greater access to mental health resources.

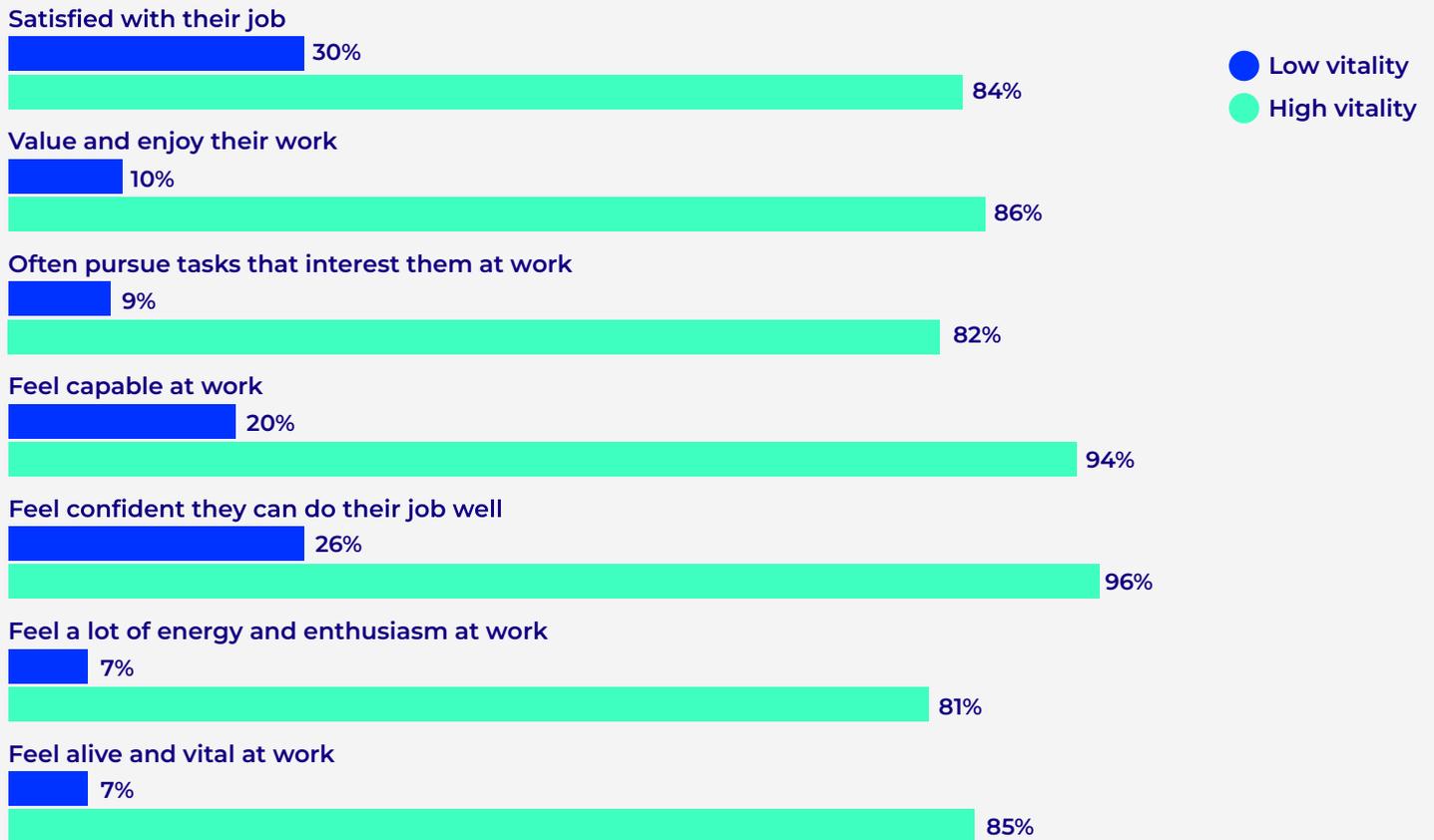
Job satisfaction and vitality are also inextricably linked, with satisfied workers having higher vitality than those who are dissatisfied with their jobs (73.9 out of 100 average vitality score vs. 55.7, respectively). Those who work in person (61%) or in hybrid work environments (60%) are more satisfied with their jobs than those who are fully remote (52%) and have higher vitality (68.9 for in person, 68.3 for hybrid, and 66.6 for remote). Hybrid workers report more healthy habits than remote and in-person workers, with better physical health, greater levels of activity, and at least one hour a day spent outdoors. Finances, work, and family or social relationships were cited as the top stressors for workers, regardless of where they work (in person vs. hybrid vs. remote).



Additionally, satisfied workers report better mental health than those who are dissatisfied (59% vs. 25%) and have lower levels of stress around their health, finances, family or social relationships, work, home, and community. They also have greater levels of overall satisfaction with their life, rate their quality of life higher, and feel happier in their life than people who are dissatisfied with their jobs.

The research indicates that organizations could benefit from strategies to retain high vitality workers. Workers with high vitality are more likely than low vitality workers to enjoy their work, pursue work tasks that interest them, feel more capable at work, feel confident they can do their jobs well, feel energy and enthusiasm at work, and feel alive and vital at work. They are also more likely to perform well on the job.

WORKER VITALITY IMPACTS KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



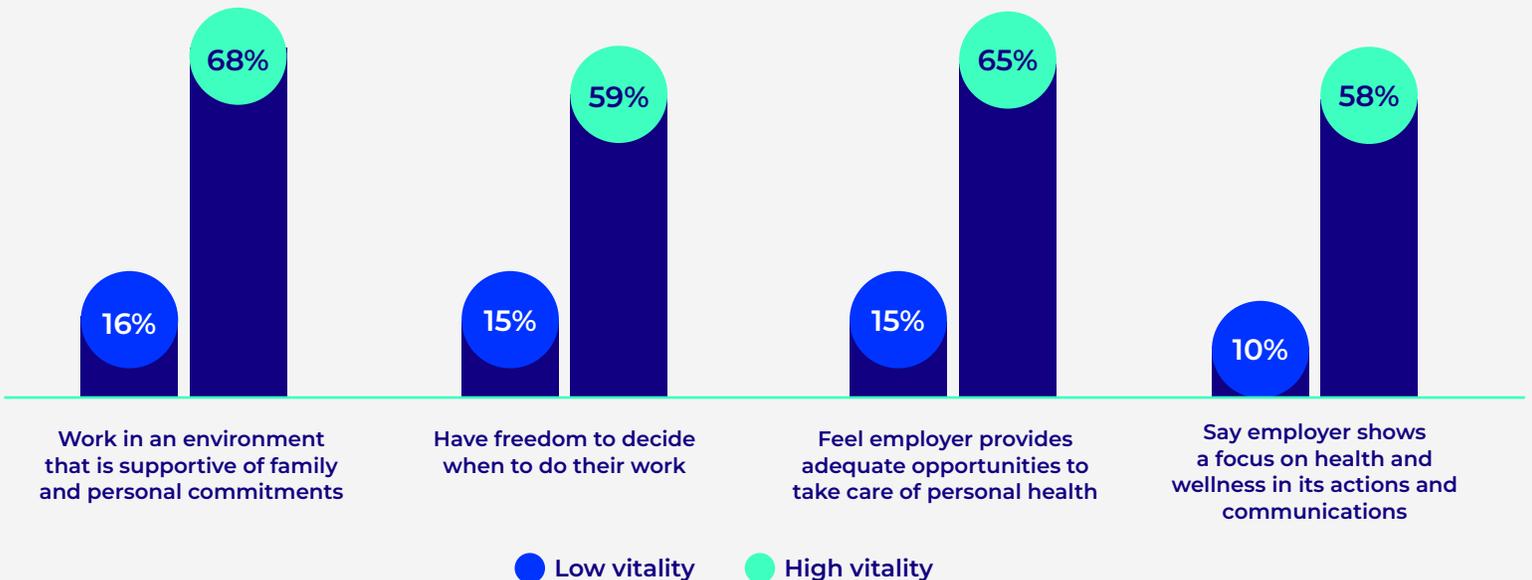
High vitality workers are also more likely than their low vitality counterparts to get growth opportunities within their company, with 31% having been offered a pay raise due to merit, 18% having been offered a promotion, and 38% having been recognized for achievement at work. Workers with high vitality are also more enthusiastic about their work and the company they work for than low vitality workers and are more willing to work harder to help their workplace succeed, highlighting their value and the importance of retaining these individuals.

HIGH VITALITY WORKERS MORE LIKELY TO PERFORM WELL AT WORK

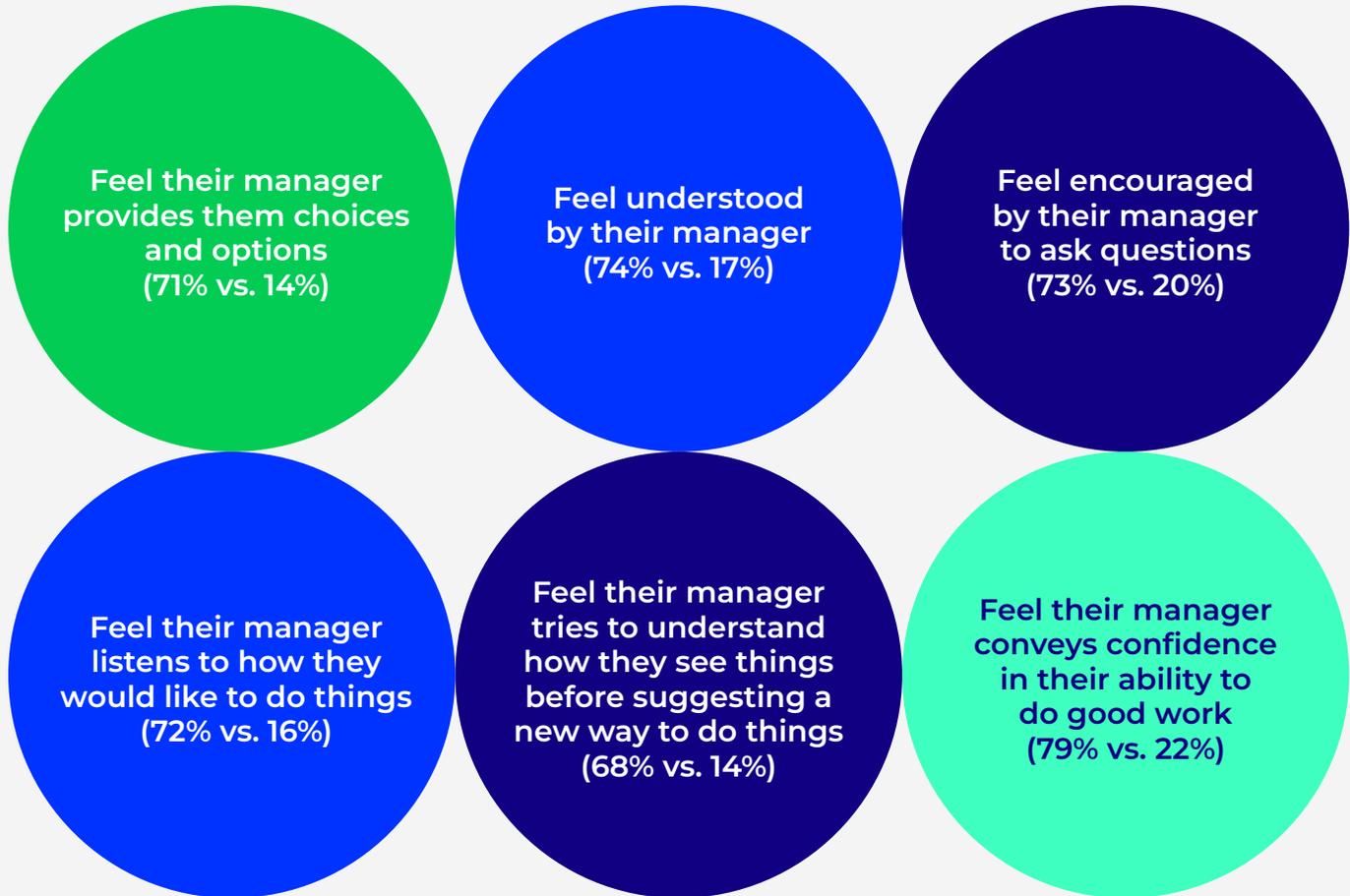
	Low Vitality	High Vitality
Received a skill-based certificate related to work	13%	18%
Received a pay raise because of merit	19%	31%
Were offered a promotion	9%	18%
Were recognized for achievement at work	20%	38%
Took on additional responsibilities in their organization	27%	31%
Are willing to work harder to help their company succeed	45%	84%
Are enthusiastic about their job	32%	86%
Feel satisfied with their ability to balance personal and professional demands	34%	92%
Can carry out duties at work well	27%	87%

Work culture plays an important role in vitality as well. Nearly 4 in 10 employed adults report working in an environment that is supportive of their family and personal commitments. While this is higher among those with high vitality (68%), only 16% of workers with low vitality can say the same. Finally, 30% of workers say their employer shows a focus on health and wellness in its actions and communications, but only 10% of low vitality workers agree.

WORK CULTURE INFLUENCES VITALITY



HIGH VITALITY WORKERS REPORT STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR MANAGERS THAN LOW VITALITY WORKERS AND REPORT THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO:



Roughly 2 in 5 working adults indicate they are very likely or likely to consider looking for a new job in the next year. This is true for both low and high vitality workers, despite high vitality workers being satisfied with their job. In fact, high vitality workers (27%) are significantly more likely to say they are very likely to make a genuine effort to find a new job in the next year compared with low vitality workers (19%).

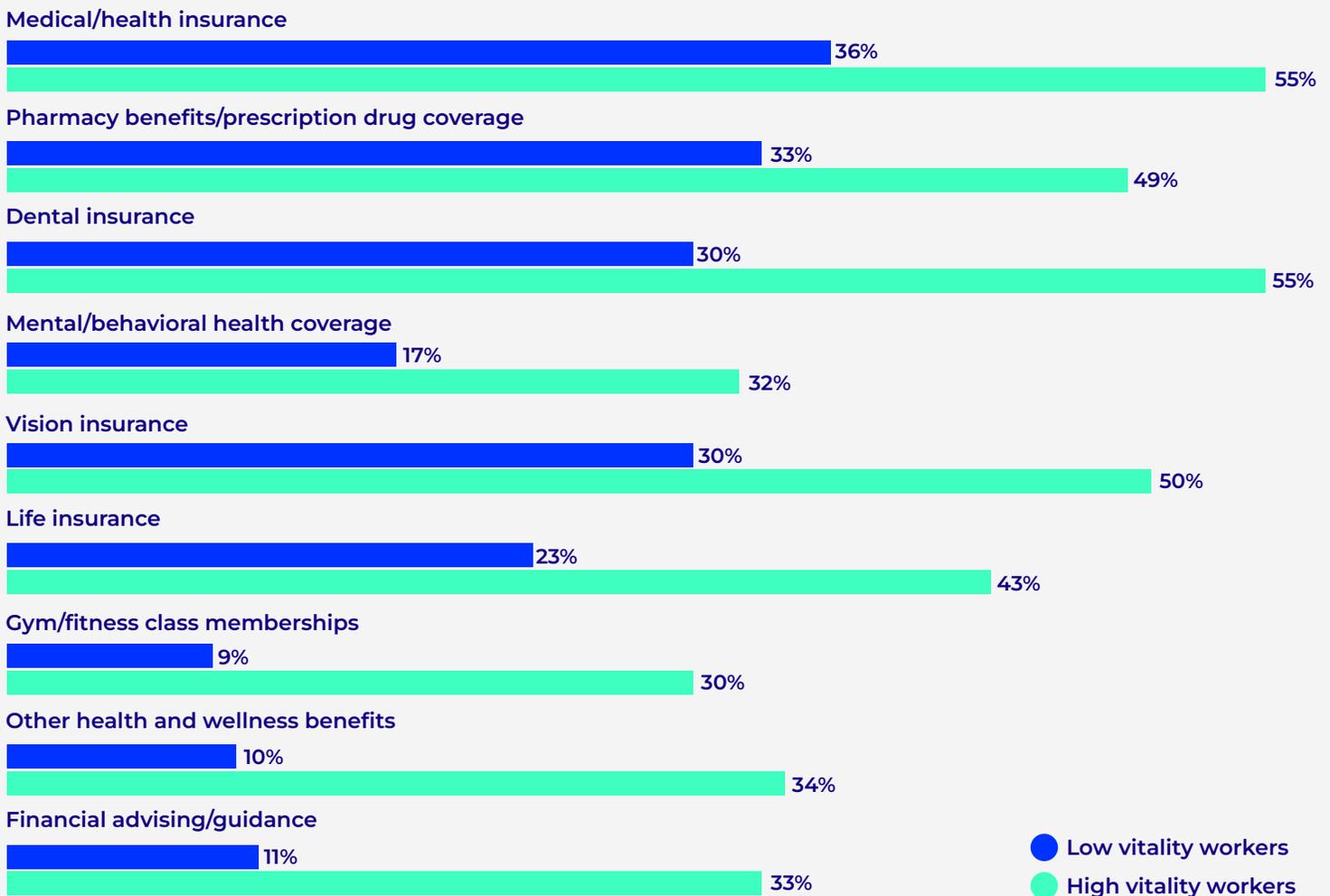
Finances and work are the top sources of stress for workers. Low vitality workers experience these stressors at higher rates – roughly double that of their high vitality counterparts, with a particularly high incidence of financial stress. This makes sense since low vitality workers are also more likely to earn less. Nearly 7 in 10 low vitality workers get stressed over their finances very often or often, compared with only 3 in 10 high vitality workers. Low vitality workers are also lonelier and less resilient than high vitality workers.

Despite work being a top stressor, almost half (48%) of working adults say they value and enjoy their work, with 59% saying they feel capable at their job and 63% saying they are confident they can do their job well.

Benefits are important too. The data shows that overall, workers are satisfied with their benefits, but high vitality workers are more satisfied and more engaged with their benefits than low vitality workers. More than half of high vitality workers use their medical benefits often or sometimes vs. 36% for low vitality. This is concerning given that people who are struggling with their vitality have higher levels of stress and greater mental health care needs. Additionally, low vitality workers use their mental health benefits sometimes/often at nearly half the rate of high vitality (17% vs. 32%). This data indicates that employers could see advantages from strategies aimed at improving benefit utilization among their workforce, with a particular focus on low vitality individuals.

HIGH VITALITY WORKERS MORE ENGAGED WITH THEIR HEALTH BENEFITS

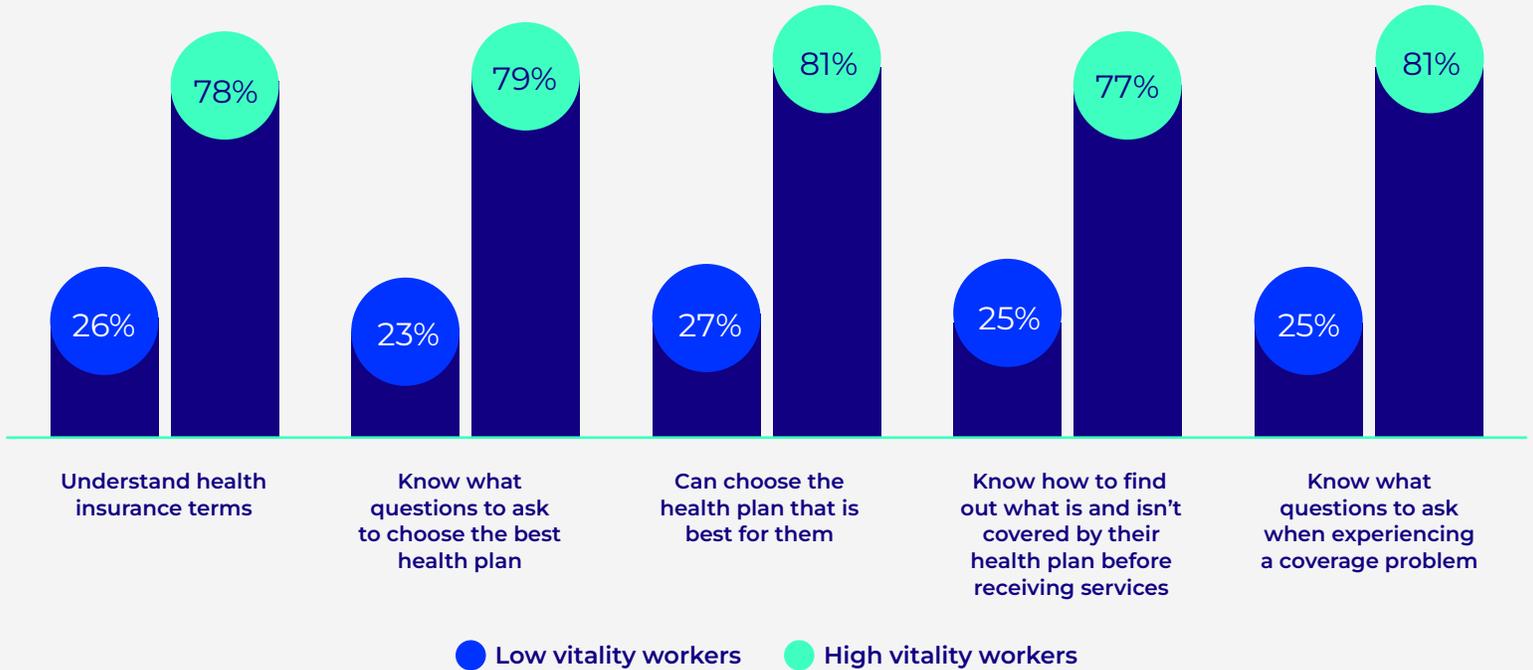
Percentage of employees who sometimes/often use the benefits available



Given their higher utilization of benefits, it's not surprising that health insurance literacy is also significantly higher among high vitality workers.

HEALTH INSURANCE LITERACY SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER AMONG HIGH VITALITY WORKERS

Percentage of workers who feel very confident in their health insurance literacy



As part of our deep dive into vitality and people living with chronic conditions, including cancer and depression/anxiety, we found that high vitality working adults with depression/anxiety are significantly more satisfied with their job and feel more positive about their role at work compared with low vitality counterparts. They generally feel more supported by their employer and experience a more positive managerial relationship. Of note is that high vitality does not make a person immune to work demands or time pressure – they feel this at the same rate as low vitality workers with depression/anxiety but are able to manage them differently and report higher work support. Accordingly, 95% of high vitality adults with depression/anxiety feel confident they can do their job well, compared with only 30% of those with low vitality.

Workers with high vitality living with depression/anxiety feel less stress at work than their low vitality counterparts. High vitality workers with depression or anxiety are more likely to feel enthusiastic about their job and go above and beyond to help their employer succeed, so the job stress may be there, but it is felt less acutely by those with high vitality, and it is less likely to impact their productivity.

Finally, high vitality adults with depression/anxiety were significantly more likely to feel they received appropriate recognition for good performance at work, in the form of a raise, promotion, or recognition for an achievement, in the past year.

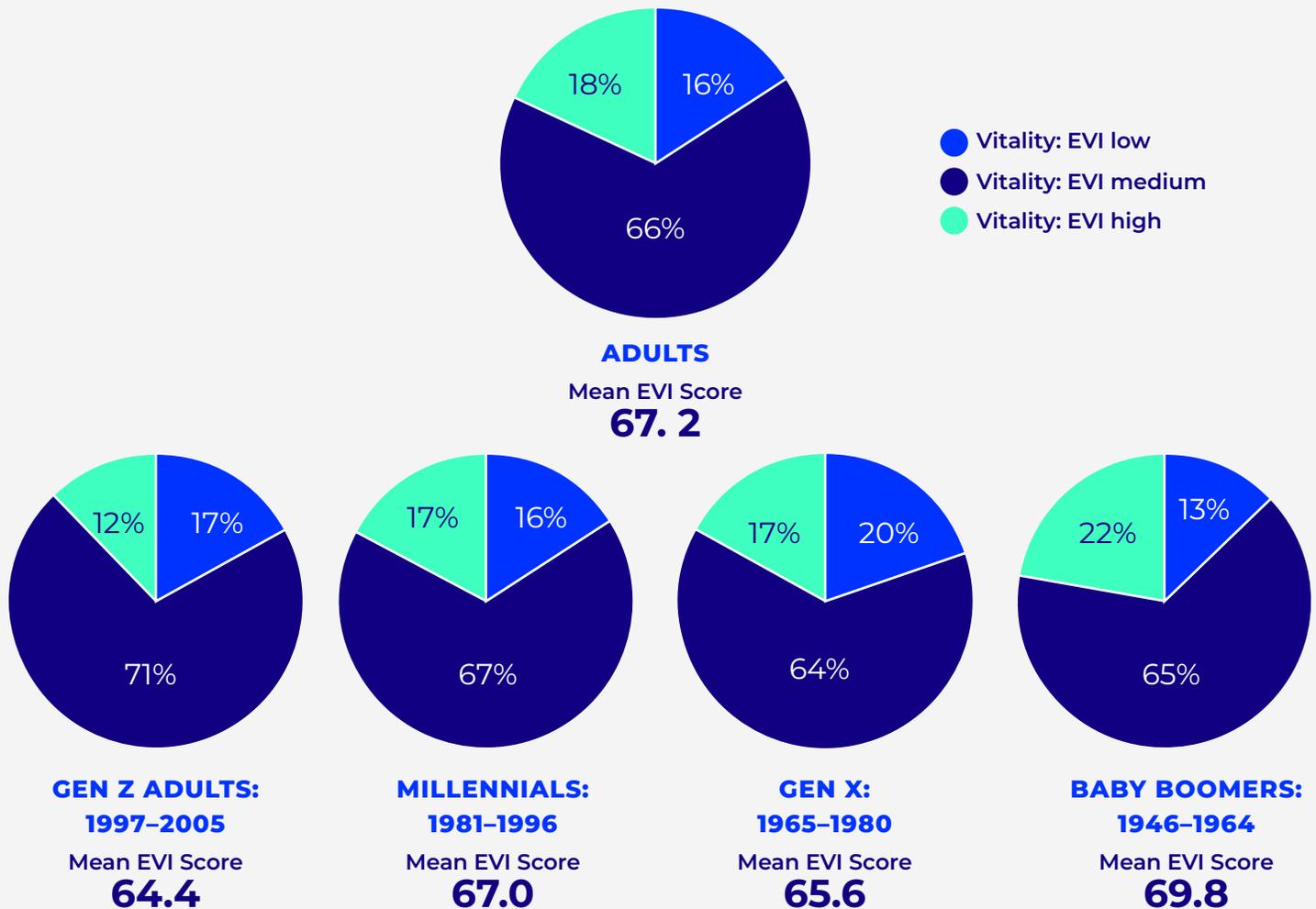
Life stage, social needs, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, and relationship status all influence vitality

Consistent with 2022, men report higher vitality scores than women (68.8 average vitality score vs. 65.8, respectively). This may be due to the additional responsibilities associated with parenting, where women may benefit from additional support: 59% of women are parents or legal guardians vs. 54% of men.

Interestingly, Baby Boomers have the highest vitality scores – higher than all other generations and the general population. On the other hand, Gen Z has the lowest vitality, with just 12% of adults born between 1997 and 2005 reporting high vitality.

Of particular interest is the increase in well-being as age increases, despite declines in physical health. Along with the decline in physical health is a reduction in anxiety and depression among older adults.

A GENERATIONAL BREAKDOWN OF VITALITY



The research shows that Gen Z's low vitality comes with lower levels of physical, social, intellectual, emotional, and environmental well-being than older generations, particularly Baby Boomers.

GEN Z HAS LOWER LEVELS OF PHYSICAL, SOCIAL, INTELLECTUAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING

	Adults	Gen Z adults: 1997–2005	Millennials: 1981–1996	Gen X: 1965–1980	Baby Boomers: 1946–1964
Feel energized	30%	30%	34%	27%	29%
Look forward to each new day	47%	37%	44%	45%	54%
Feel alive and vital	41%	36%	41%	37%	45%
Prioritize physical health	39%	35%	40%	36%	42%
Have the skills and tools necessary to live a healthy life	46%	39%	44%	44%	52%
Can successfully build connections with others	46%	41%	46%	45%	50%
Value learning new things	55%	50%	57%	54%	57%
Feel capable of managing emotions	45%	36%	41%	43%	55%
Have freedoms and opportunities to financially support themselves	40%	36%	39%	35%	46%
Have safe spaces	53%	43%	51%	53%	60%

Relationships and parental status influence vitality. Case in point: Those who are married or living with a partner enjoy higher vitality than single adults, with stronger performance across all aspects of vitality. Interestingly, parents have higher vitality than nonparents despite similar depletion, with roughly a quarter agreeing they feel drained. This shifts depending on the stage of parenting, with those with younger children reporting significantly higher levels of depletion than those with adult children (32% vs. 18%), despite slightly higher overall vitality (Parents with children under 18: 69.6. Parents with adult children: 68.6).

When looking at LGBTQ+ adults in this year's study, we found that compared with heterosexual adults, LGBTQ+ adults continue to have lower levels of vitality and higher levels of loneliness. However, overall levels are stable since 2022. Vitality is stable among heterosexual adults too. However, their high resilience is softening, and their loneliness has increased relative to 2022.

LGBTQ+ adults report feeling as safe in their communities and as comfortable expressing their opinions as last year, while heterosexuals feel less so.

YOY LOOK AT VITALITY, LONELINESS, AND RESILIENCE AMONG HETEROSEXUAL ADULTS VS. LGBTQ+ ADULTS

	Heterosexual		LGBTQ+	
	2022	2023	2022	2023
VITALITY				
Low vitality	14%	14%	28%	27%
Medium vitality	68%	67%	64%	62%
High vitality	19%	19%	8%	10%
LONELINESS				
Percentage who are lonely	50%	56%	73%	72%
RESILIENCE				
Low resilience	7%	8%	15%	12%
Medium resilience	40%	45%	57%	56%
High resilience	52%	47%	29%	32%

Our research found that adults living in areas with high social needs* have lower vitality. However, it is possible for this group to achieve high vitality. A deep dive into U.S. adults with the highest risk for social needs finds significant differences between those with high and low vitality. Namely, adults who have high vitality who live in under-resourced areas have stronger social connections and family support and are less likely to be lonely.

Meanwhile, those with low vitality living in very high social risk neighborhoods feel less connected and are more likely to report social needs, such as food insecurity, than those living in the same neighborhood with high vitality (55% vs. 23%).

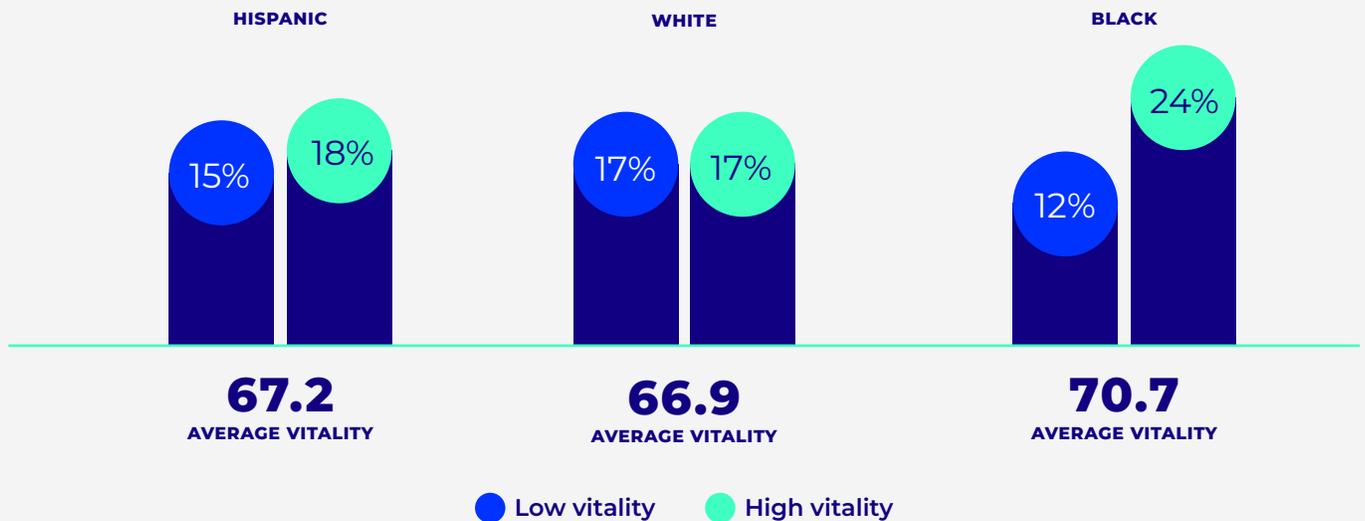
Two-thirds of adults with very high social needs and high vitality self-report having excellent/very good overall and physical health – more than three times as many of the adults with very high social needs and low vitality who can claim the same. Adults with very high social needs and high vitality have fewer chronic conditions to manage. More than a third (36%) have no chronic conditions, and 43% of those who report chronic conditions have only one. Half of adults with very high social needs and low vitality have three or more chronic conditions. Finally, adults with very high social needs and high vitality are much more likely to practice healthy habits, such as regular exercise, regular fruit consumption, and more restful sleep.

Interestingly, workers living in areas with high social needs who have high vitality report higher availability and utilization of medical insurance, dental insurance, behavioral health benefits, vision insurance, financial programs, and other health and wellness programs offered by their employers.

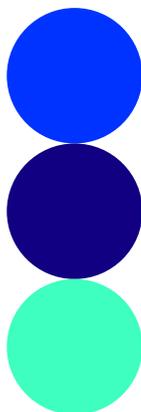
*Social needs were defined by the Evernorth Social Determinants of Health Index

One surprising finding in this year’s research was that the Black community has higher vitality (70.7) than whites (66.9) and Hispanics (67.2). Even within low vitality groups, Black people have directionally higher vitality than whites (37.5 vs. 36.5). Black adults are significantly more likely to feel alive, vital, and energized and are looking forward to each day more than in 2022.

VITALITY LEVELS ACROSS RACE AND ETHNICITY



High vitality Black adults are more likely to be married (29% high vitality vs. 19% low vitality). Some other characteristics we uncovered include:



High vitality Black adults are more likely to have insurance coverage than low vitality Black adults (85% vs 77%).

High vitality Black adults fall into a higher income bracket than their low vitality counterparts.

11% of high vitality Black adults hold a postgraduate degree, significantly higher than low vitality Black adults (3%).

Meanwhile, low vitality Black adults have lower levels of physical health and are engaged in less physical activity than their high vitality counterparts. They are less likely to eat fruit once a day (12% vs. 43% for high vitality), and they get less sleep than their high vitality counterparts (32% with low vitality get less than four hours of sleep per night vs. just 11% for high vitality).

Low vitality Black adults are also significantly more likely than their high vitality counterparts to indicate they have a chronic condition (65% vs. 51%). Specifically, they are significantly more likely to experience clinical depression and anxiety (32% vs. 8%).

Low vitality Black adults are less likely than their high vitality counterparts to have a primary care provider (49% vs. 77%) and are less likely to have seen a doctor for an annual check-up in the last year (50% vs. 76%). With this comes lower levels of health literacy for low vitality Black people.

All in all, high vitality Black adults feel more satisfied with their life, exhibit higher resilience, and feel less lonely than low vitality Black adults, in part due to **greater familial support and belonging in their community.**



Interestingly, high vitality Black and Hispanic adults are more likely to fall into the 18- to 34-year-old category (41% and 39%, respectively) than their white counterparts (13%).

In line with their higher incomes, white people with high vitality report feeling stress about their finances less often than Black and Hispanic people (22% of whites with high vitality feel stress about their finances very often/often vs. 28% of Black people and 31% of Hispanics).

Key takeaways on vitality and adults in the United States

1

Overall, vitality levels are flat year over year. However, adults in 2023 are lonelier than they were last year, and their resilience is declining. They are also dealing with stress around their finances and grappling with declines in their mental health and physical health compared with 2022.

2

There are many bright spots in this year's research: Historically low vitality groups, such as Gen Z, Black people, and LGBTQ+ adults, are not experiencing the same levels of decline across vitality and resilience or an uptick in loneliness. Instead, these cohorts report feeling more alive and vital, with an optimistic view of their life (looking forward to each new day), compared with 2022. Also surprising in this year's research is the positive outlook of high vitality adults who are living with chronic conditions, such as cancer or depression/anxiety.

3

Though Gen Z continues to report the lowest levels of vitality, they are gaining ground in building vitality while other generations stagnate or decline. Relatedly, Gen Z indicates higher levels of energy and optimism in 2023.

4

Work environments that support vitality result in more motivated and engaged workers. We're seeing stark differences in vitality across several dimensions of health and well-being when it comes to the working population vs. nonworkers. Workers are healthier, more fulfilled, more likely to have higher vitality, and more likely to have health insurance literacy. The research finds that high vitality workers perform best on the job and suggests that employers could benefit from strategies to retain high vitality workers.

5

Consistent with 2022, men have higher vitality than women. However, women are feeling more alive and vital and are more likely to look forward to each day versus 2022, despite being twice as likely to suffer clinical depression as men (a significant increase vs. 2022). Meanwhile, men are seeing a small decline in their vitality and are seeking ways to help improve and maintain it.

6

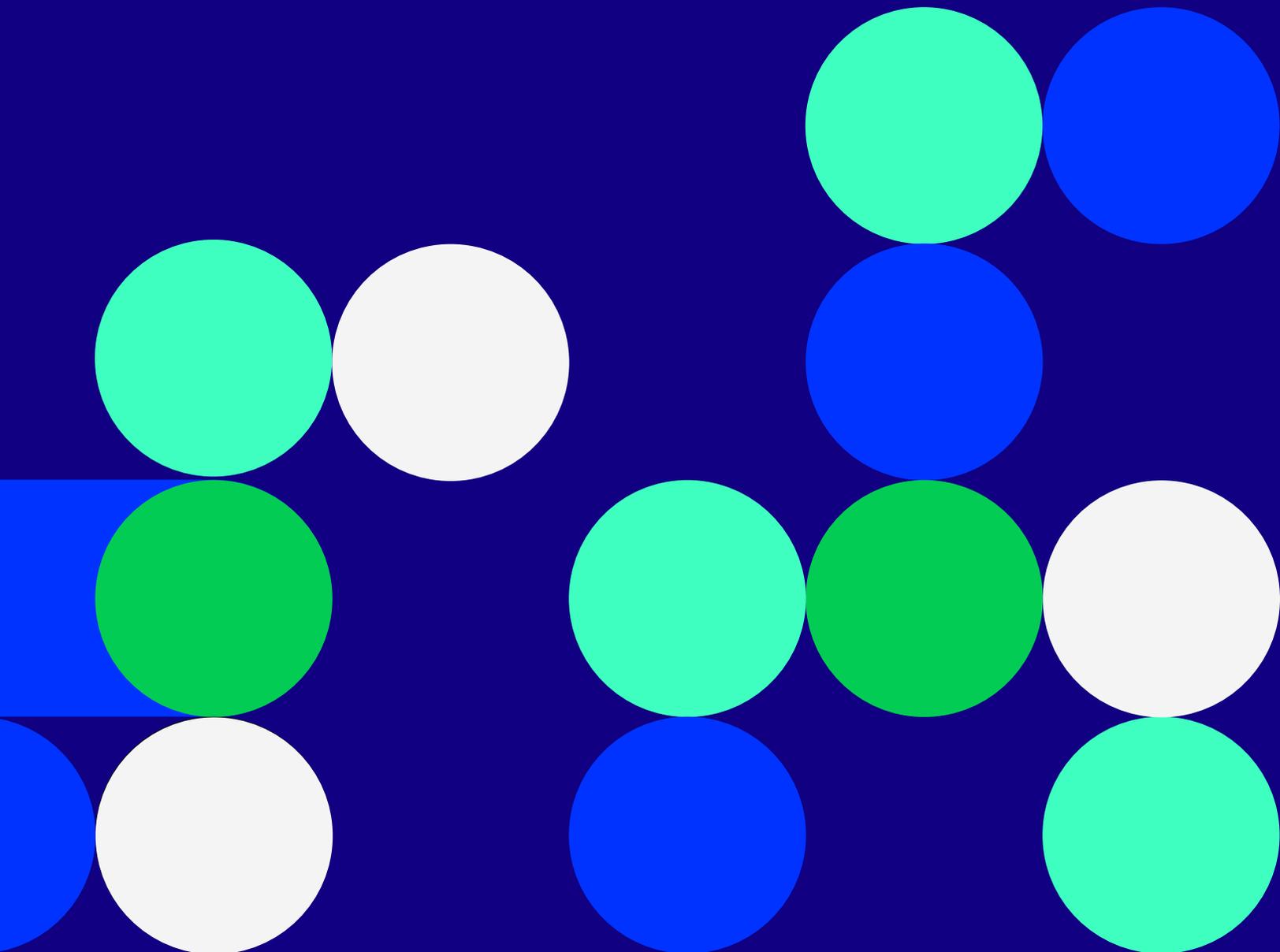
Compared with heterosexual adults, LGBTQ+ adults continue to indicate lower levels of vitality and resilience, yet overall levels are trending upwards. In 2023, LGBTQ+ adults are more likely to feel alive and vital and say they look forward to each new day. Across health and wellness metrics, LGBTQ+ adults are stable with 2022 while heterosexual adults show a decline.

7

For white adults, vitality is trending downwards and resilience is declining, and they are significantly more likely to say they are lonely. Conversely, Black adults are more vital and less lonely in 2023 than they were in 2022.

CHAPTER 2:

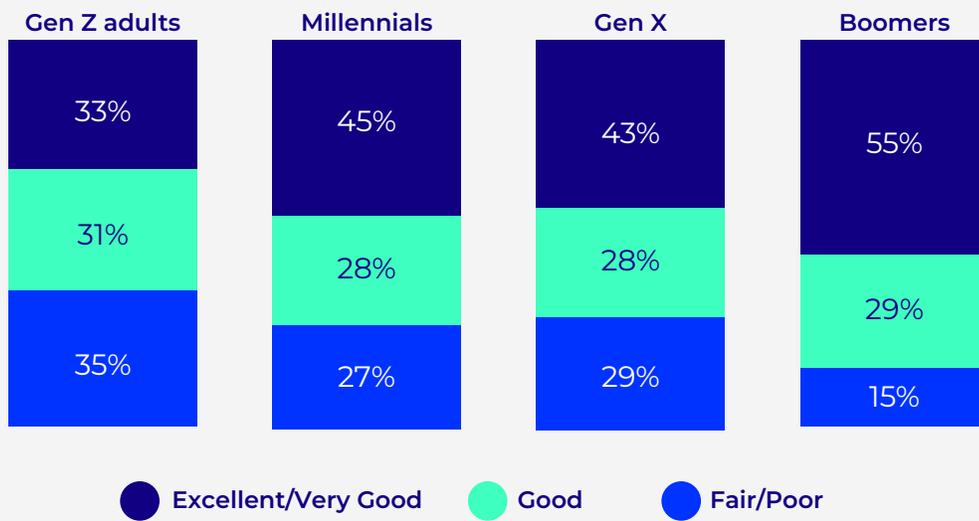
The state of vitality
among Gen Z adults
in the United States



Digging into Gen Z's mental health challenges

Even though Gen Z's vitality is trending upwards, this cohort still has the lowest vitality across generations. In particular, Gen Z emotional well-being is a struggle, with significantly fewer of them reporting their mental health as excellent or good compared with older generations. One reason is because Gen Z adults are significantly less likely to rate their own mental health as excellent/good compared with older generations.

GEN Z STRUGGLES MORE WITH MENTAL HEALTH THAN ANY OTHER GENERATION



Gen Z women in particular report poor mental health, with only a quarter (26%) describing their mental health as excellent or very good, compared with 43% for Gen Z men.



This generation has significantly lower perceptions of their personal confidence and self-esteem. Again, this is especially pronounced for Gen Z women – only 27% describe their confidence and self-esteem as excellent or very good and only 29% see their body image as excellent or very good, compared with 40% and 41% of Gen Z men, respectively. White Gen Z adults were more likely than their Black counterparts to report struggling with their mental health, body image, and confidence. In fact, Black Gen Z adults have particularly strong body image – almost double that of white Gen Z adults.

WHITE GEN Z ADULTS REPORT LOWEST MENTAL HEALTH, BODY IMAGE, AND CONFIDENCE



Gen Z adults feel relatively dissatisfied with their life compared with older adults, with only a third feeling positive about their quality of life or that the things they do in their life are worthwhile, which is significantly lower than older generations.

Based on the data from our main vitality survey, we see that 27% of Gen Z adults have been diagnosed with clinical depression/anxiety, similar to Millennials (30%) and Gen X (30%). About one-third of Gen Z adults report seeking care from a mental health professional (30%). Our research shows this cohort appears to be struggling more with mental health challenges than older generations. In fact, 42% of Gen Z adults believe health issues are a major problem facing their generation, with 53% citing mental health as the most important health problem. Among low vitality Gen Z adults, this number jumps to 65%. Poor mental health significantly impacts the daily life of Gen Z. Roughly half report their poor mental health keeps them from taking care of responsibilities and from concentrating on doing important tasks. More than 4 in 10 also report poor mental health keeps them from going out of the house, getting around on their own, or participating in social activities.

One of the reasons Gen Z struggles most with mental health is that they lack the resilience older generations have had time to develop, and they are far lonelier. This cohort also struggles to feel like they belong and that they have people in their life they connect with and are supported by.

Many Gen Z adults report a gap between the social and community connections they want and what they have been able to achieve. Three-quarters of Gen Z adults say having deep and loving relationships is a very or somewhat important goal in their life, but 57% say they lack companionship. Less than half (38%) feel confident in their ability to make friends and establish connections (37%). More than half (56%) of Gen Z adults want to contribute to their community, but only 36% feel they currently belong in their community.

We believe helping Gen Z find ways to meaningfully contribute to their communities could improve their mental health, vitality, and sense of belonging and help them to forge social connections. Those with higher vitality are significantly more likely to volunteer, say they have a sense of purpose, and connect strongly with their community.



Gen Z wants to develop stronger social connections and family bonds but struggles with doing so. They view their family structure less solidly than older generations and seem to miss out on many of the benefits provided by a strong family bond. Older generations are more likely to think of their family as the immediate group of people they live with (spouse, children, etc.), while Gen Z tends to have a looser definition that includes any relative.

The majority of Gen Z agree their family cares for one another, has fun together, and supports each other, but at much lower levels than older adults. Because of these weaker bonds, Gen Z adults are not realizing the same health benefits as older adults: Gen Z has less family support in making healthy changes, avoiding unhealthy habits, and encouraging physical activity. Gen Z adults with high vitality are significantly more likely to indicate their family is caring, supportive, and fun than Gen Z adults with low vitality. Additionally, nearly half (44%) of Gen Z adults felt stressed all the time or often about their family or social relationships, significantly more than Gen X and Boomers. High vitality Gen Z adults are significantly more likely to have stronger family connections than their low vitality counterparts.

Gen Z’s struggles with financial insecurity and conflicted expectations for the future

Gen Z adults are experiencing financial struggles that contribute to their lower vitality. More than half (55%) experienced stress about their finances, a higher percentage than older generations (42%). Most Gen Z adults – and older generations – agree that financial and/or economic concerns are the most important problem facing their generations right now, citing the high overall cost of living (35%) and inflation (25%) as the biggest financial problems.

Fifty-eight percent of Gen Z report an income of less than \$50K a year. For low vitality Gen Z, this number is even higher: A whopping 70% of low vitality Gen Z adults earn less than \$50K per year, and 39% make under \$25K. The majority (57%) of Gen Z with low vitality have found their income was too low to cover their living expenses over the past year.

TOP FINANCIAL CONCERNS ACROSS GENERATIONS

Among those indicating financial problems are a top issue facing their generation

	Gen Z adults	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers
High overall cost of living	35%	31%	37%	38%
Inflation	25%	24%	30%	23%
Living wages	14%	15%	8%	5%
Economic recession	8%	10%	13%	9%
Student loan debt	5%	5%	2%	0%
Health care costs	5%	4%	5%	18%
Credit card debt	3%	5%	1%	5%
Cost of education	3%	2%	2%	0%
Mortgages	1%	3%	1%	1%
Other	1%	1%	1%	2%

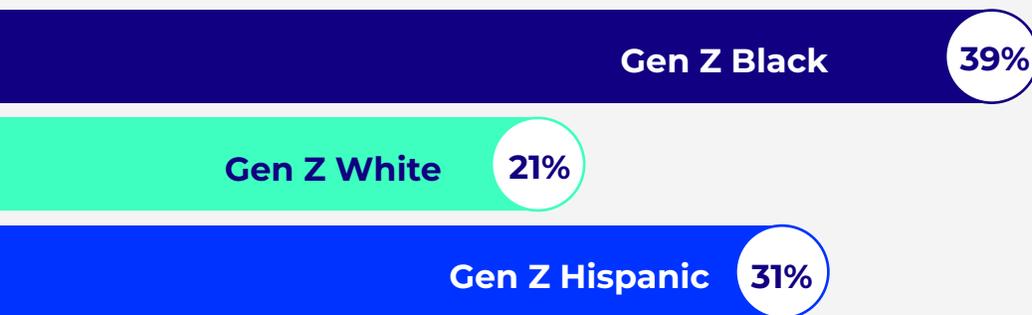
The research shows that Gen Z has tempered optimism for their personal direction and greater pessimism for the direction of society at large. Those reporting high vitality report more optimism about the future, suggesting a strong connection between vitality and future outlook.

Vitality plays a big role in their outlook on the future. Many (44%) feel the life opportunities available to them personally are extremely or very promising.



Slightly fewer (40%) feel they have control over their future. However, only 26% of Gen Z adults feel optimistic about the direction of society in general. Male Gen Z adults are more likely to feel optimistic about the direction of society compared with females (33% males vs. 20% females).

OPTIMISM ON THE DIRECTION OF SOCIETY BY RACE/ETHNICITY

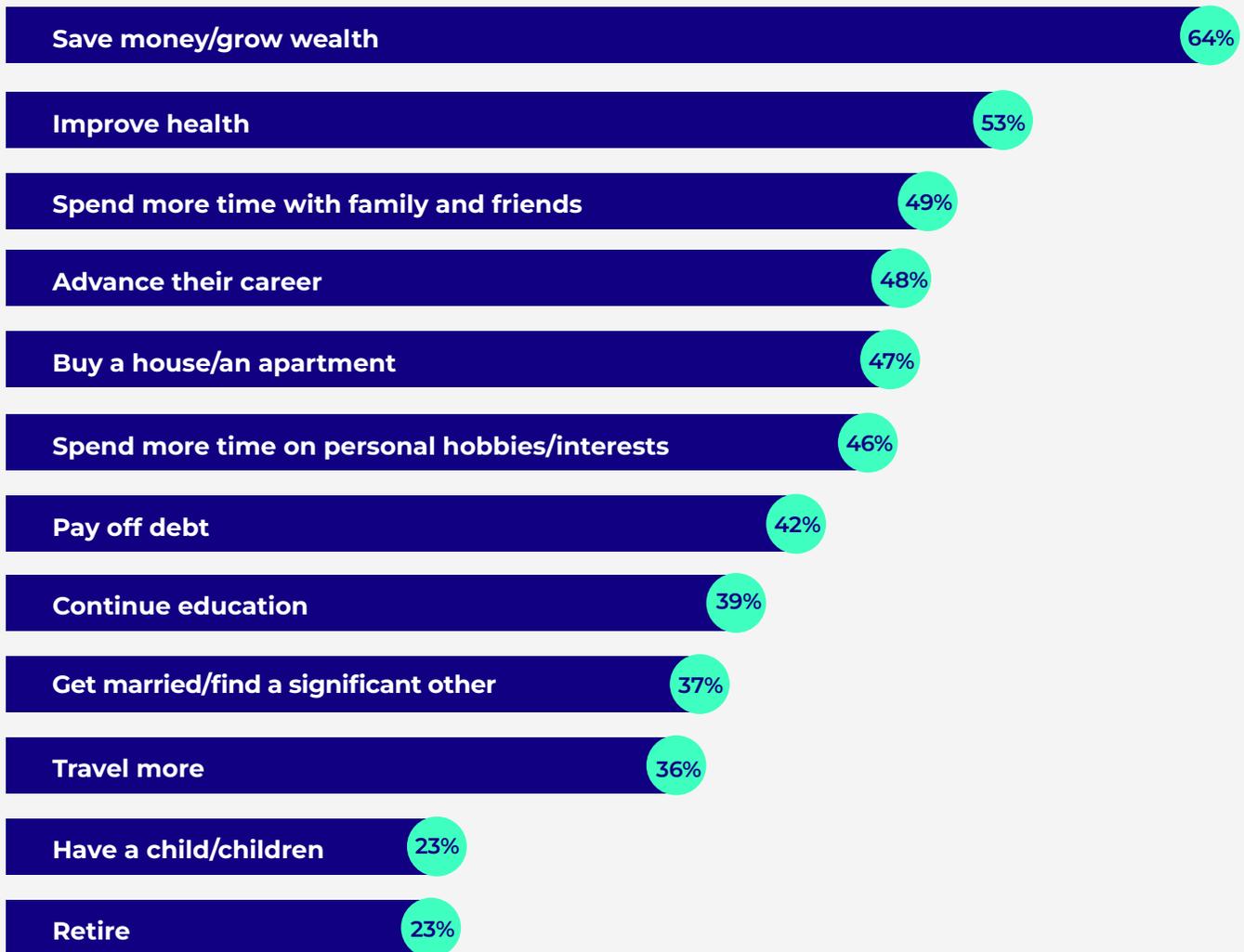


Percentage who feel optimistic about the direction of society in general

While all generations agree that financial/economic problems are the most important challenges our society faces, Gen Z places higher emphasis on societal issues (driven by human rights problems and racism) than older generations.

Given their younger age, many of the top personal goals Gen Z adults have for the next five years are geared toward settling into their life: saving money, advancing in their career, and buying a home. Other top priorities include spending more time with family and friends and on personal hobbies and interests.

TOP GOALS GEN Z ADULTS WANT TO ACHIEVE IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS



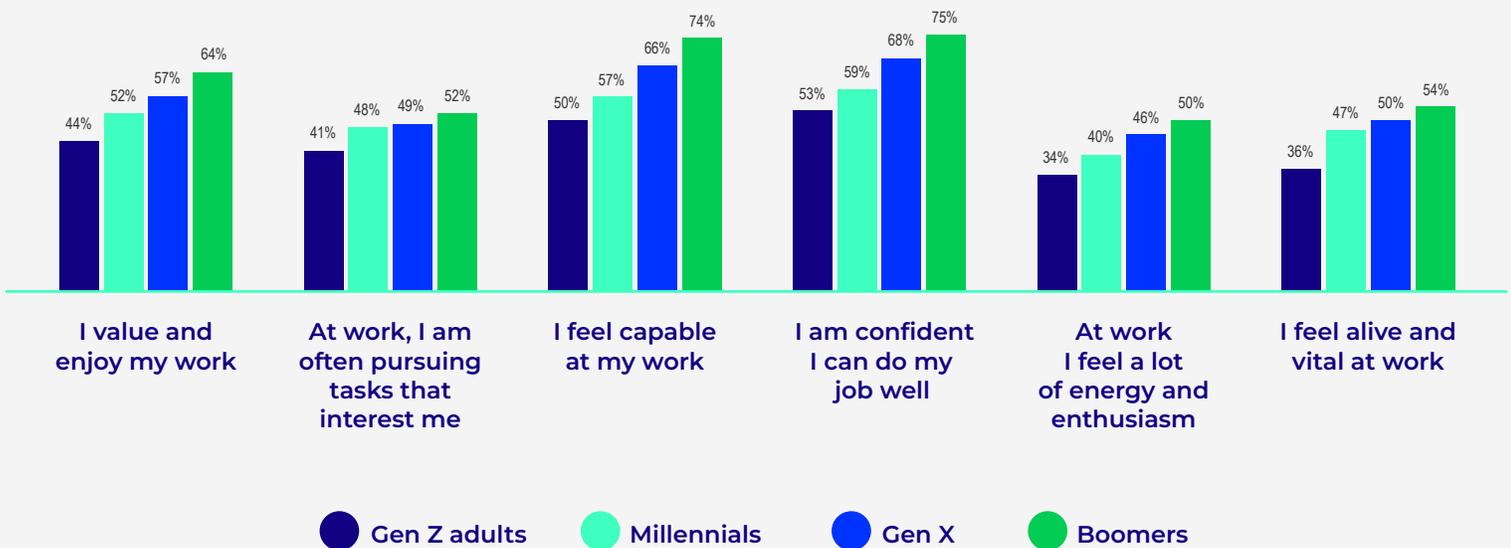
Gen Z workplace vitality insights

Just starting out in their profession, Gen Z is underenthused by their work. The cohort is most commonly working in retail (13%), health care (11%), and hospitality (11%), industries that tend to require in-person work. These newer workers experience a disconnect between their expectations for their career and the reality of their current job.

While most employed Gen Z adults say they are satisfied with their job, they still lag older generations (66% very or somewhat satisfied with job vs. 78% for non-Gen Z). Gen Z is least satisfied with their salary, the benefits provided, their chances for advancement, and the sense of meaning or purpose in their job. Gen Z adults are also less likely to feel they have autonomy at work, that their work has meaning, or that their job/company is making a positive difference. Nearly half (41%) feel burned out in their job. And 59% of employed Gen Z adults have plans to look for a new job.

Given these workplace insights around Gen Z, it is unsurprising this cohort feels less capable and less confident in their ability to do their job well. But they aren't giving up: Gen Z places a higher priority on developing their skills, gaining expertise, and earning professional certifications and degrees than Gen X and Baby Boomers.

WORK PERCEPTIONS BY GENERATION



Another reason Gen Z has lower levels of vitality than their older working counterparts is that managerial and social relationships appear to be weaker for Gen Z employees. Significantly fewer Gen Z workers report feeling understood by their managers, and fewer feel their managers are as confident in their abilities as they are with workers in older generations. Compared with older workers, Gen Z employees also feel less close to people at work and are less likely to say they have a lot in common with the people around them on the job.

Our research uncovered a disconnect between how Gen Z currently works and how they would prefer to work. The majority of employed Gen Z adults work completely in person, while most would prefer to work a hybrid arrangement or remotely. Only 62% say they are satisfied with the way they work (in person/hybrid/remote).

Gen Z's top professional goal for the next five years is to make more money, which is consistent across generations and vitality levels. Interestingly, few would look to their current employer for help in achieving their professional goals, except for earning more money. While half aspire to find a job with meaning/purpose, only 26% want their current employer to help them achieve that. Nearly half want to develop their current skills and learn new skills, but only about a third want help doing so from their current employer. This may suggest that many view their current employer as a stepping stone and not where they'll find themselves in five years.

Given Gen Z's financial insecurity and their stated desire to earn more money, it's unsurprising that salary is their top consideration when looking for a new job. Flexibility of work hours, a sense of meaning/purpose, and chances for advancement are next in importance to Gen Z. They are also closely aligned with Millennials on many of the nontraditional benefits that would be important to them when considering new employment: days off after major holidays, six months maternity/parental leave, four-day workweeks, paid family and medical leave under FMLA, and onsite health care.

Only half (50%) of Gen Z employees are satisfied with the benefits provided by a employer. A third of Gen Z employees subscribe to and use their employer-sponsored health insurance. Older generations report higher utilization and higher satisfaction with their benefits.

The most utilized benefit among Gen Z is paid time off, and even that is utilized to a lesser extent than other generations. Lower subscription to employer-sponsored health insurance may be due to Gen Z's age, as they can remain on a parent's insurance until age 26 (33% of Gen Z has health insurance through a parent's plan). One in five (21%) Gen Z adults who has access to an employer-sponsored retirement plan does not contribute to it. With 58% of Gen Z having a household income of less than \$50K, they may not be concerned about contributing to a 401(k) plan at this time.

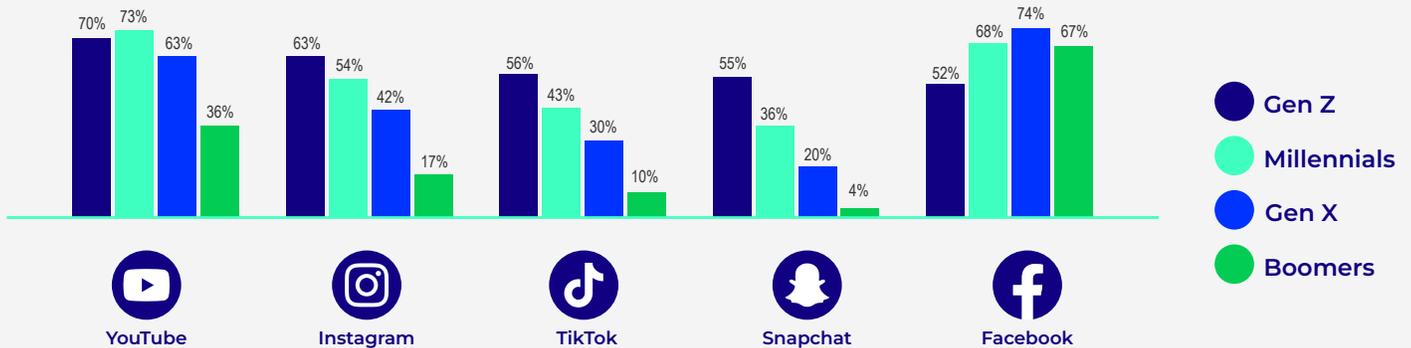


Gen Z social media utilization and impact on vitality

Unsurprisingly for this digital-first generation, social media use is highest among Gen Z, with nearly all Gen Z adults (96%) using some form of social media daily. Most are logging in to YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, or Facebook at least once a day. Their presence on newer platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat, is much higher than older generations.

Gen Z adults are most likely to be logged in to social media in the afternoon, early evening, and nighttime. Weekly screen time is similar among Gen Z, Millennials, and Gen X. However, Baby Boomers log the most weekly screen time, with 50% spending five or more hours a day on a screen. This encompasses all screen time, including TV, computer, smartphone, and other devices for purposes other than work or school-related activities.

TOP FIVE SOCIAL PLATFORMS GEN Z USES AT LEAST ONCE A DAY



Since social media use among Gen Z adults is ubiquitous, it is unsurprising that they report experiencing more positive benefits from social media than older generations. Across generations, many adults agree that social media provides entertainment and helps them keep in touch with family and friends. In addition, Gen Z is more likely than older generations to feel social media has helped them discover new ideas, learn new skills, find new hobbies, find communities with similar interests, make money, find products that improve their life, and learn how to manage their health and well-being.

Despite these positive benefits, 83% of Gen Z adults report some form of negative consequences from social media, significantly higher than older generations. Gen Z adults are more likely to say that social media usage has resulted in struggles with self-esteem/self-image, difficulty focusing on reality, bullying, and negative comparisons to peers. More than 1 in 5 (21%) of Gen Z adults say they have lost/damaged personal relationships with friends, family, or loved ones because of social media.

Gen Z is more attached to social media than older generations, with nearly three-quarters having started using it at a young age. In fact, 73% of Gen Z adults began using social media by the time they were 15. Only 44% of Gen Z adults believe they are addicted to technology, but 67% feel most other people their age are addicted, and 40% say they'd like to spend less time on social media.

Key takeaways on vitality and Gen Z

1

Gen Z continues to struggle with their mental health, with women in particular reporting poor mental health. This generation reports lower personal confidence and self-esteem, more concerns about body image, and relative dissatisfaction with their personal and professional lives.

2

Gen Z adults are concerned about their financial situation, and this too contributes to their low vitality levels. Many don't earn enough income to sustain their living expenses, and they are concerned about the high cost of living, inflation, living wages, and other expenses that contribute to their financial insecurity.

3

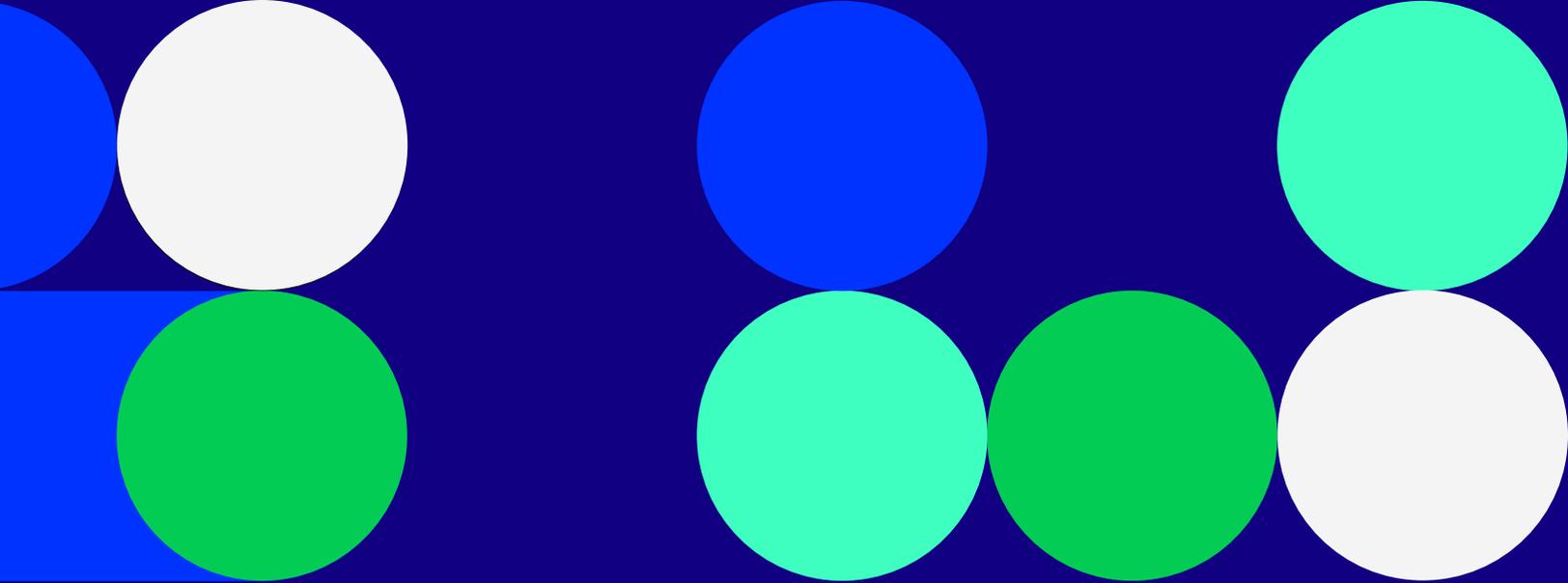
This cohort of younger adults lacks resilience and struggles with loneliness. They feel disconnected from their families and their friends, which impacts their vitality and their mental health. They want to play a role in improving their communities, and our research suggests that helping them find ways to do meaningful work could help enhance vitality.

4

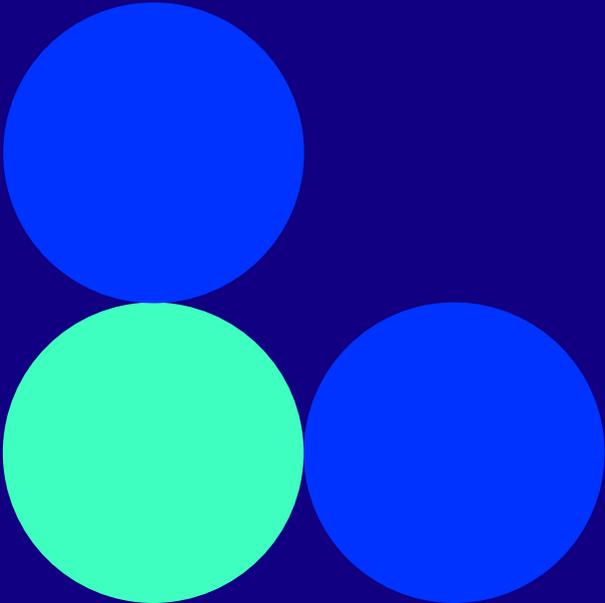
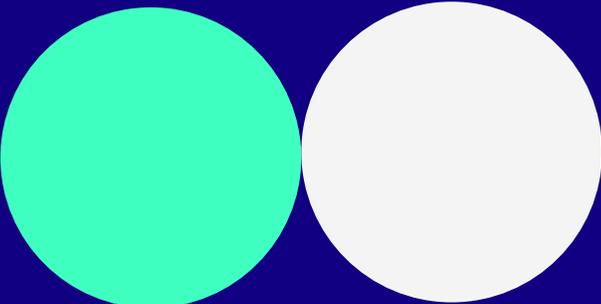
Gen Z is generally underwhelmed by their workplace experience. While many are satisfied with their current job, they aren't satisfied with their salaries, benefits, or chances for advancement. They also lack a sense of purpose in the work they do. As a result, many feel less capable and confident in their ability to get their work done.

5

Gen Z's social media utilization is higher than any other demographic's, and while this cohort recognizes that social media has negatively impacted their self-esteem and self-image, they believe social media is helping them connect with people, entertainment, and new ideas.



DEMOGRAPHICS AND METHODOLOGY



Chapter 1: Capacity of Americans to pursue life with health, strength, and energy

The Cigna Group conducted the second wave of our annual vitality study from May 25 to June 20, 2023, in collaboration with Morning Consult. This nationally representative, bilingual (English and Spanish) online survey assessed the health, vitality, social needs, and productivity of more than 10,000 U.S. adults aged 18 and older.

To ensure that the sample was representative of the U.S. population, quotas were established based on Census Data using a cross-section of age and gender, with employment quotas based on Bureau of Labor Statistics data. Data was then weighted to match the U.S. population on gender (in total and for Gen Z), age, ethnicity/race, region, employment status, and income.

The sample was split about evenly between males (48%) and females (51%). Respondents were split representatively between the South (37%), West (24%), Midwest (21%), and Northeast (18%). Sixty-seven percent of respondents were white; 16% Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin; 10% were Black; 4% were Asian; and 3% were other races. The majority of respondents, 61%, work for pay, with most (83%) having one job, and 89% had health insurance or health care coverage.

Chapter 2: The state of vitality among Gen Z adults in the United States

The Cigna Group conducted an online survey with 4,000 U.S. adults aged 18 and older from June 6 to June 14, 2023, in collaboration with Morning Consult. This bilingual (English and Spanish) survey assessed health, vitality, social needs productivity, and social media attitudes and behaviors across generations.

Participants were U.S. residents, aged 18 years and older, and fluent in English or Spanish. To ensure that the sample was representative of the U.S. population, quotas were established based on Census Data using a cross-section of age and gender, with employment quotas based on Bureau of Labor Statistics data. Data was then weighted to match the U.S. population on gender, age, ethnicity/race, region, and employment status.

In the survey, 3,024 general population respondents were surveyed. An additional over-sampling of 1,003 Gen Z respondents were also surveyed, for a combined total of 1,238 Gen Z respondents.

The general population sample consisted of 8% Gen Z, 36% Millennials, 29% Gen X, and 27% Baby Boomers. Approximately 48% were males and 52% were females. About 66% of respondents were white, 16% were of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin, 10% Black, and 6% Asian. Approximately 61% were employed, with the majority (86%) having one job. About 87% reported having health insurance.

Among Gen Z, 45% were male and 53% were female. Approximately 52% were white, 26% were of Hispanic Latino or Spanish origin, 13% Black, 6% Asian and 3% other races. Nearly 73% were employed with 83% having one job and 80% have health insurance.

