

# Vitality in America 2025:

The power  
of purpose in  
overall health



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Purpose is a new attribute of the Evernorth Vitality Index that is associated with greater autonomy and competence, increased vitality, and improved overall health. Unfortunately, new research shows that less than a third of American adults have a strong sense of purpose in life.

Introduced by The Cigna Group in 2022, the Evernorth Vitality Index (EVI) is a dynamic measure of individual health and vitality – defined as the ability to pursue life with health, strength, and energy. In 2025, the EVI evolved to incorporate a powerful new dimension of vitality: purpose, which measures peoples' feelings of self-meaning, confidence, and intentional living. This relationship aligns with the principles of [Self-Determination Theory of intrinsic motivation](#),<sup>1</sup> a foundational element of the EVI. The addition of purpose measurements supports the EVI's broader, more holistic understanding of health – one that goes beyond physical and mental well-being to include the motivational and relational aspects of how people live.

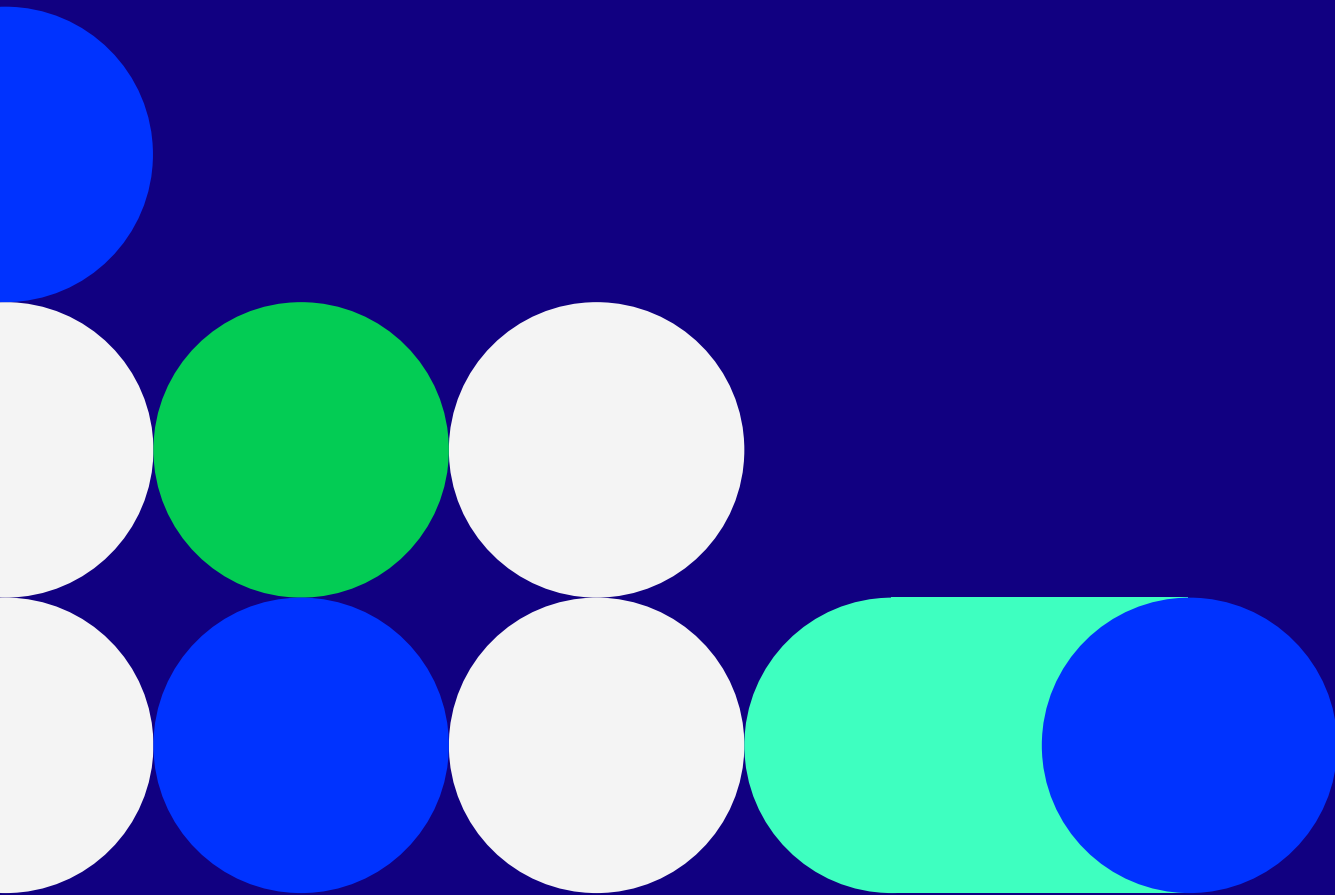
The EVI has always been grounded in data-driven insights, with more than 100,000 survey responses collected to date. This robust foundation allows the EVI to adapt to emerging trends and deliver predictive, actionable intelligence across populations. The dynamic nature of the EVI ensures that it remains relevant and responsive – capturing not just how people feel, but how they behave and thrive. The inclusion of purpose in the EVI enables a deeper view into how people engage with their health, their communities, and their work.

In addition to providing an update on the status of vitality in America in 2025, this year's report explores the impact of purpose on vitality – revealing how individuals with a strong sense of purpose experience better health outcomes, stronger social connections, and greater workplace engagement. It also offers strategies for individuals and organizations to foster purpose as a pathway to improved well-being, resilience, and productivity. By expanding the definition of vitality, the EVI continues to illuminate the full spectrum of what it means to live a healthy, energized life.



## CHAPTER 1

# Vitality in America 2025



Americans' overall vitality levels remain stable in 2025, with most people reporting medium vitality and an average score of 69.3 on a scale of 100.

Despite the addition of purpose as a new dimension of health, the vitality score is consistent with scores captured over the past four years. Additionally, demographic findings remain consistent.

## VITALITY IN THE U.S.

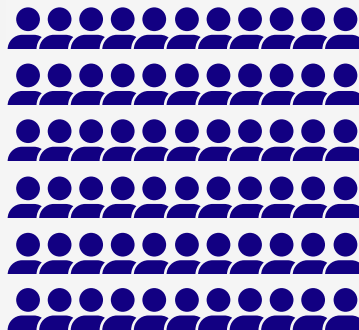
(VITALITY SCORES RANKED 0-100)

**Low**  
(0-47)



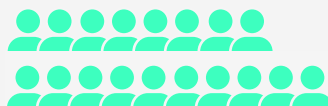
**16%**

**Medium**  
(48-86)



**66%**

**High**  
(87-100)



**18%**

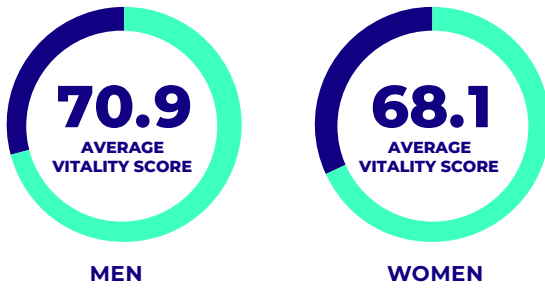
## Vitality scores



### Gender

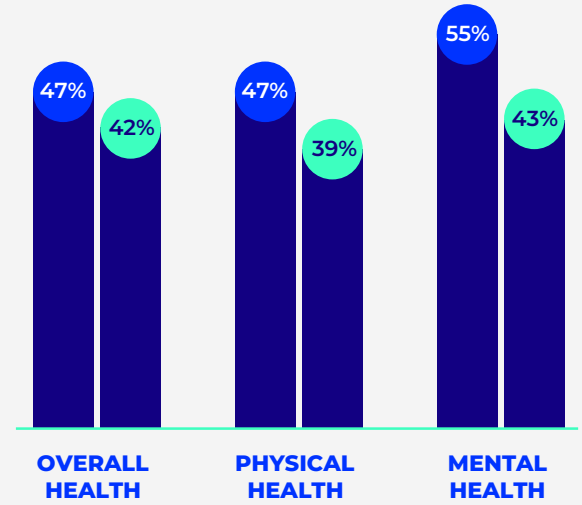
Men have higher overall vitality scores and better perceived health than women.

#### VITALITY BY GENDER



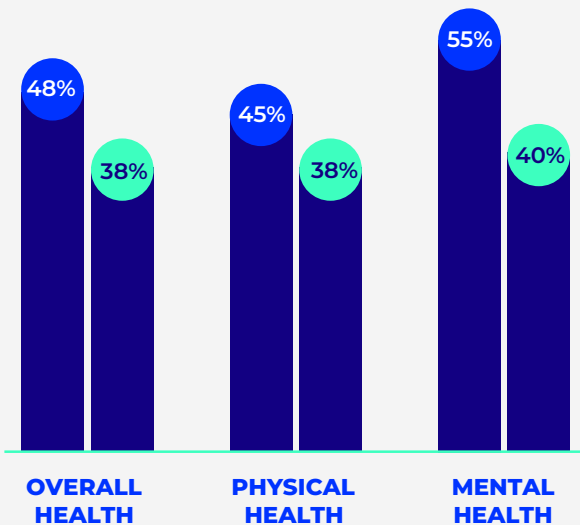
### REPORTING HEALTH AS VERY GOOD OR EXCELLENT

● Men ● Women



### REPORTING HEALTH AS VERY GOOD OR EXCELLENT

● Married/Cohabiting ● Single

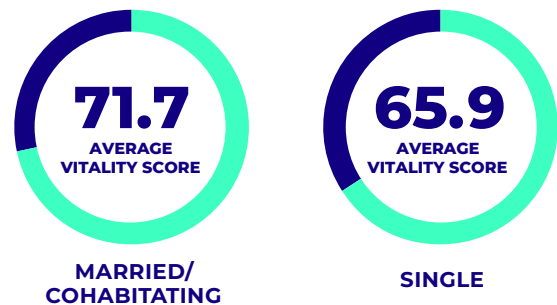


### Relationship status

People who are married or living with someone have higher overall vitality scores and better perceived health than single adults.



#### VITALITY BY RELATIONSHIP STATUS



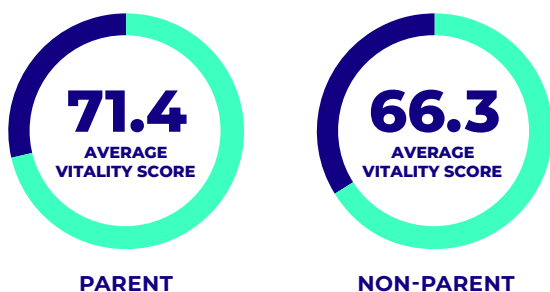




### Parental status

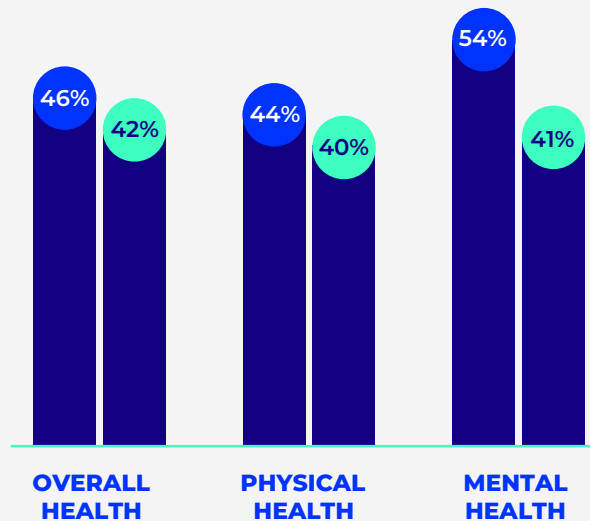
Parents have higher overall vitality scores and better perceived health than non-parents.

#### VITALITY BY PARENTAL STATUS



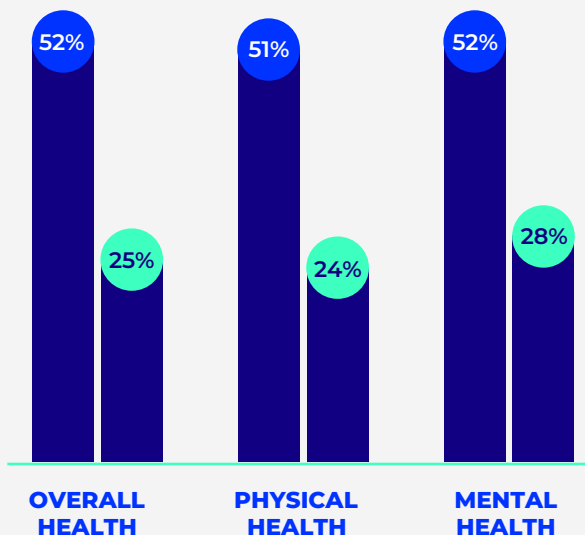
### REPORTING HEALTH AS VERY GOOD OR EXCELLENT

● Parent ● Non-parent



### REPORTING HEALTH AS VERY GOOD OR EXCELLENT

● Worker ● Non-worker (not retired)

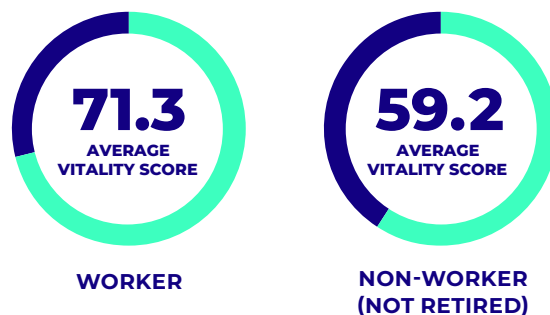


### Work status

Workers have higher overall vitality scores and better perceived health than people who are not working and not retired.



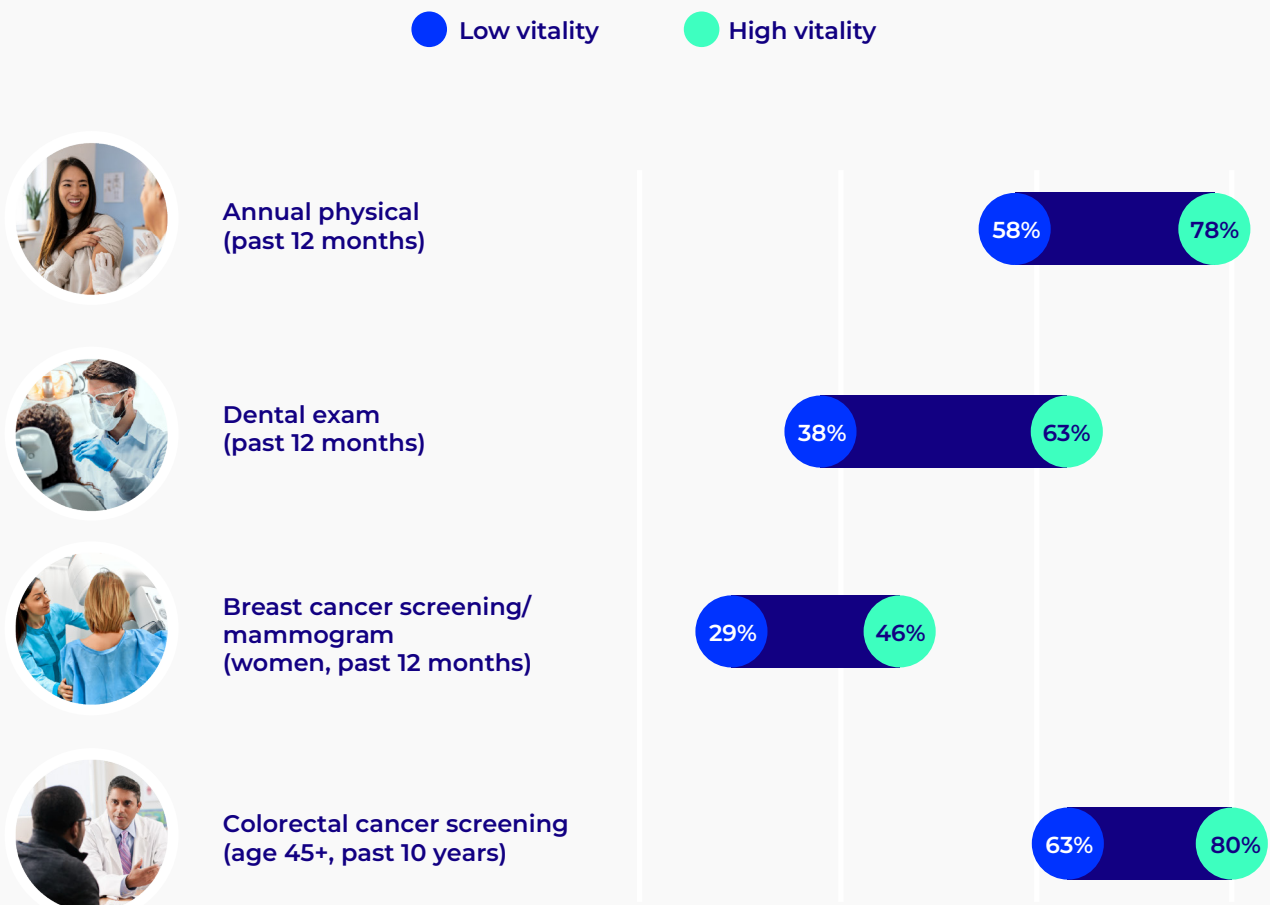
#### VITALITY BY WORK STATUS



## People with higher vitality are more engaged in their health

Individuals with high vitality experience better health outcomes and are more proactive in taking charge of their health. Our research shows high-vitality individuals have fewer chronic conditions (2.9 conditions on average vs. 4.2 conditions for those with low vitality), are more likely to practice healthy habits, and get their necessary preventive care. Additionally, 43% of high vitality workers whose employer offers health and wellness benefits have taken advantage of their benefits in the past year compared to only 21% of working adults with low vitality and employer-sponsored benefits, demonstrating the strong connection between vitality and both personal health engagement and benefit utilization.

### PREVENTIVE CARE GAPS AMONG U.S. ADULTS





Adults with high vitality report more positive interactions with the health care system compared to those with low vitality. They are significantly more likely to say they have a primary care physician (82% vs. 66%) and they place more trust in their health care providers (85% vs. 39%).

High vitality is also associated with higher [health insurance literacy](#),<sup>2</sup> which is critical for effective health care utilization and better health outcomes. For example, we see that individuals with low health insurance literacy are 2.5 times more likely than those with high health insurance literacy to list cost as the reason they skipped their annual physical (26% vs. 10%), even though this type of preventive care is 100% covered by health insurance.

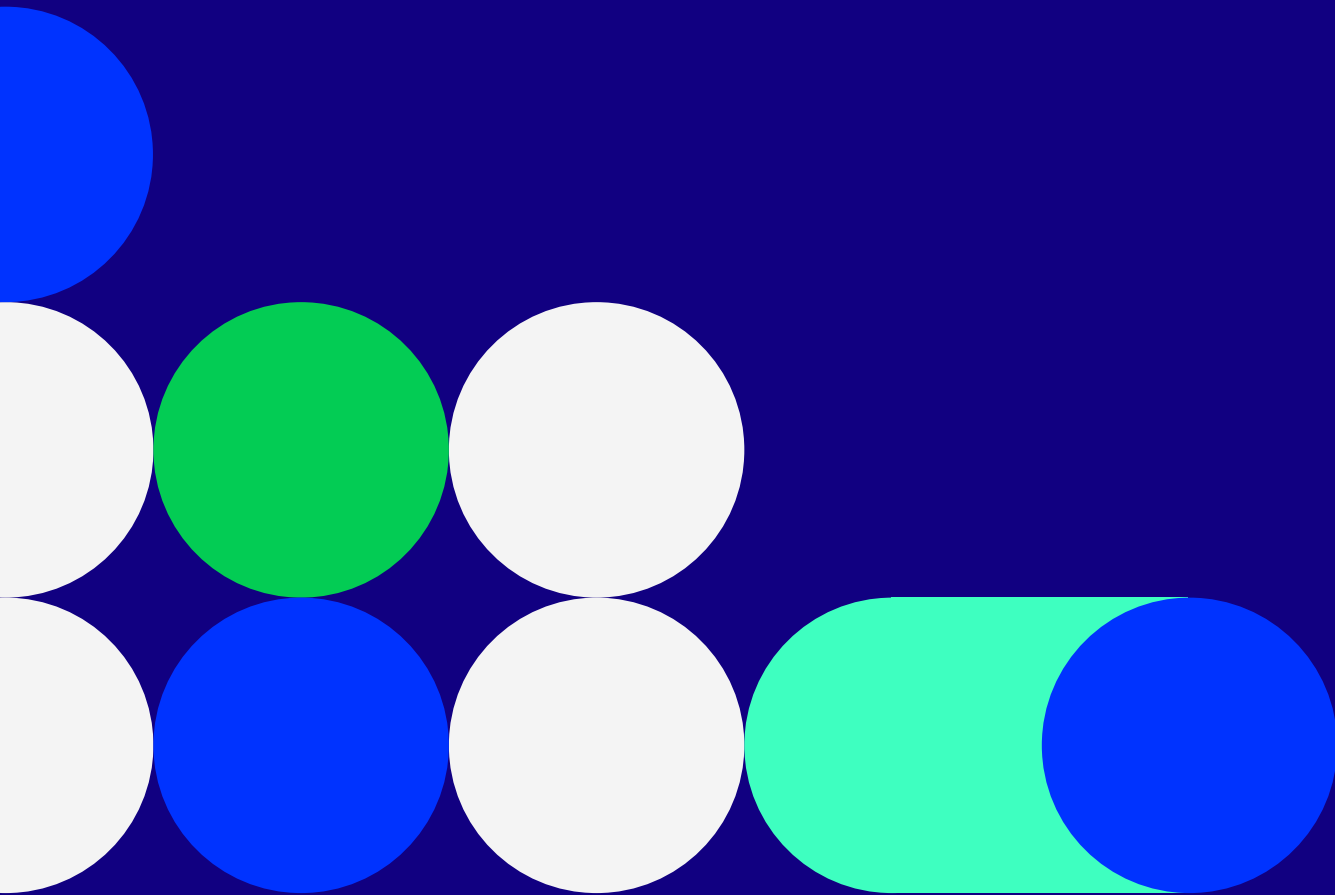
Adults with high vitality not only require urgent care less often (27% required urgent care in the last year vs. 43% of those with low vitality), but when they do, they are far more likely to choose a lower-cost care setting – only 33% of those with high vitality visited an emergency room when they needed urgent care compared to 45% of adults with low vitality. This behavior is consistent with a stronger understanding of health insurance and closer relationships with health care providers, which can contribute to more effective and cost-conscious health care decisions.

**Adults with high vitality** report more positive interactions with the health care system compared to those with low vitality.



## CHAPTER 2

# The power of purpose



Over the past several years The Cigna Group has explored [the dimensions that influence a person's vitality](#),<sup>3</sup> including the elements of physical, financial, emotional, and social well-being. This year we expand our research to examine the role of purpose in living with vitality, highlighting the potential of purpose to enhance both individual and collective well-being at work, in communities, and beyond.

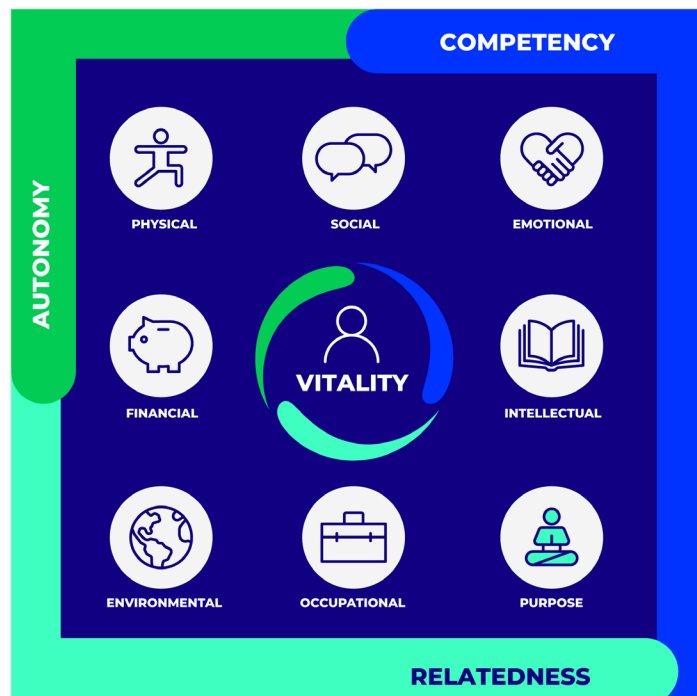
## Defining and measuring purpose

According to Harvard Business Review, purpose is [an overarching intention that is personally meaningful to you and of consequence to the world beyond yourself](#).<sup>4</sup> Purpose serves as motivation, helps people navigate times of uncertainty, and allows us to view a challenge as an opportunity to grow and learn.

To understand how purpose relates to health and well-being, our vitality research categorized respondents along a continuum, based on their overall agreement with purpose-related statements. Within our index, purpose reflects a sense of autonomy and competence, core elements of self-determination theory, that shape one's direction and motivation in life. Individuals with a stronger sense of purpose demonstrate greater clarity, confidence, and self-direction in pursuing meaningful goals.

There is a dynamic relationship between purpose and vitality. Like vitality, purpose is not a static trait, but a quality that can, and should, be intentionally cultivated to improve one's health and well-being.

**Vitality** is defined as the ability to pursue life with health, strength, and energy, and it **can be measured, influenced, and improved**.



## The intersection of purpose and vitality

Nearly one in three (29%) American adults has a strong sense of purpose. These individuals have significantly higher vitality than those who do not. They are five times more likely to say they feel energized (63% vs. 13%), and nearly three times as likely to look forward to each new day (86% vs. 31%).

### VITALITY SCORES BY SENSE OF PURPOSE



Identifying and fostering a strong sense of purpose in life is a conscious decision that requires self-awareness and self-directed action.

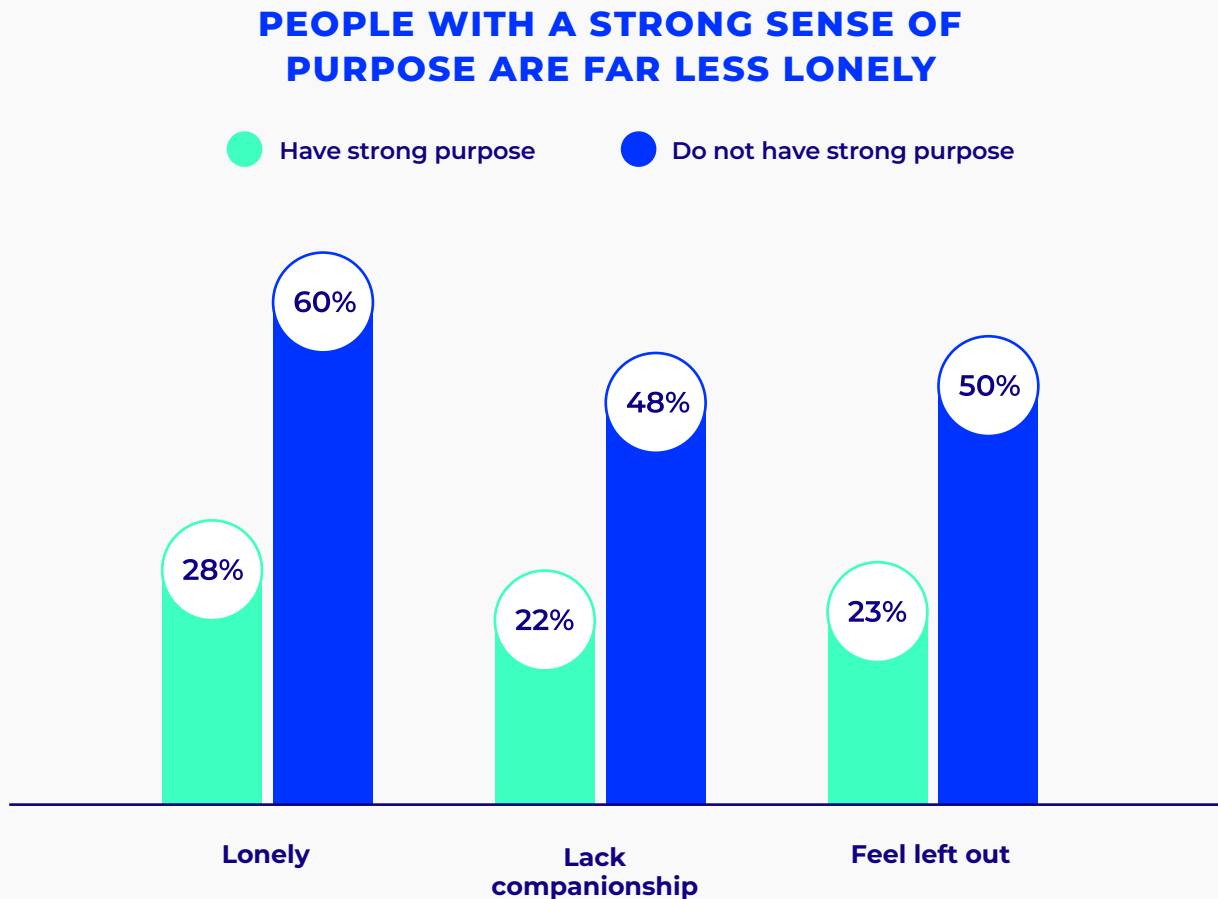
While our research shows that people with a strong sense of purpose tend to act with intention and autonomy across many dimensions of vitality, it is their attention to social connections, personal health outcomes, and workplace success that sets them apart.

## An emphasis on social connections

People with a strong sense of purpose prioritize relationships and community involvement, which leads to a greater sense of belonging and lower rates of [loneliness](#).<sup>5</sup> These adults are confident in their ability to build connections with others, feel closer to the people in their lives, and spend more time contributing to their community.

## The power of purpose: Social connections and prosocial behavior

People with stronger purpose are half as likely to feel lonely, left out, or lacking in companionship, and twice as likely to feel they belong in their community than those without a strong sense of purpose (74% vs. 38%).



This thread of companionship is likely sustained by strong family relationships. People with a strong sense of purpose are significantly more likely than those without to say they talk to their family or partner about how they feel (75% vs. 47%) and that their family has supported them through life (82% vs. 61%).

The key to these deep social connections is that people with a strong sense of purpose have the confidence and competence necessary to strengthen relationships and are actively choosing to spend time with the people in their lives who matter.

## CHOICE, COMPETENCE, AND CONFIDENCE FUEL SOCIAL CONNECTION

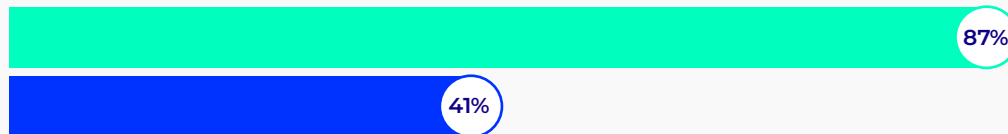


Have strong purpose

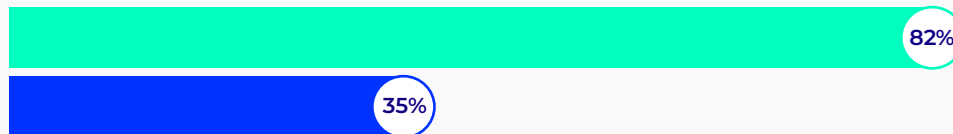


Do not have strong purpose

Make time for relationships because they want to



Have the social skills needed to make friends



Can successfully connect with others



Purpose leads not only to stronger social ties, but also to more pro-social behavior. Our research shows that people with a strong sense of purpose report greater engagement in their community through volunteering, with 42% reporting they volunteer, compared to just 26% of those who do not have a strong sense of purpose. Further, among volunteers, people with strong purpose tend to volunteer more frequently, with 32% volunteering weekly compared to just 27% of those without strong purpose.

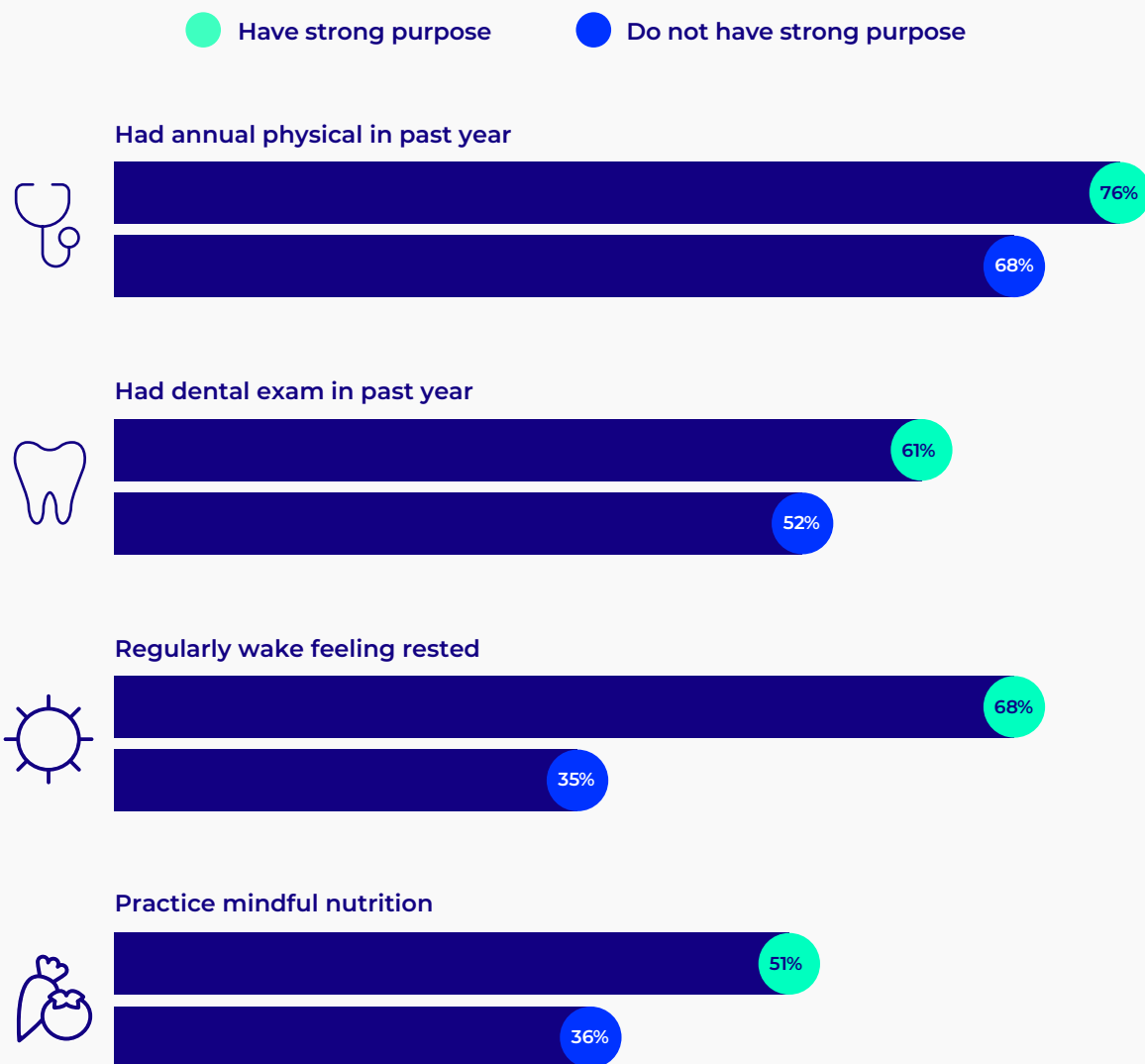
Nearly 9 in 10 people with a strong sense of purpose report they enjoy spending time with others (89% vs. 48% of people without a strong sense of purpose). This suggests purpose is an important factor of social health as well as overall vitality and well-being.



## Autonomy over physical health

Having a strong sense of purpose is linked to greater autonomy and control over one's physical health – 84% of adults with strong purpose say they feel in control over their future health, vs. 55% of those without strong purpose. Additionally, individuals with strong purpose are more likely to practice healthy habits – such as getting regular exercise and restful sleep – and consistently seek preventive care, which can lead to better overall health outcomes.

### PURPOSE IS LINKED TO HEALTHY BEHAVIORS



## The power of purpose: A tool for managing chronic health conditions

Our research shows that a strong sense of purpose may help those living with chronic physical or mental health conditions. Typically, adults with chronic conditions, particularly those with mental health conditions, have much lower vitality scores than those without chronic conditions. However, adults with chronic conditions and a strong sense of purpose have a significantly higher vitality score, nearly matching the scores of those without any conditions. This suggests that a sense of purpose may help reduce the negative effects of living with chronic illness and is [consistent with literature](#)<sup>6</sup> that shows a significant association between stronger purpose and improved health.

### OVERALL VITALITY SCORES



TOTAL ADULTS  
AVERAGE VITALITY  
SCORE



CHRONIC  
CONDITION  
AND PURPOSE



NO CHRONIC  
CONDITION  
AND PURPOSE

The impact on those with mental health challenges is particularly interesting, given previous research from The Cigna Group highlighting [the critical role mental health plays in vitality](#).<sup>7</sup>

Specifically, having a strong sense of purpose can help mitigate reported feelings of depression and anxiety. In fact, among people with a mental health condition, those who have a strong sense of purpose are less likely to report symptoms such as lack of enthusiasm or difficulty controlling worry, compared to those without a strong sense of purpose.

## PURPOSE CAN OFFSET SOME FEELINGS OF DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY IN PEOPLE WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION

 Mental health condition with purpose

 Mental health condition without purpose



### Feelings of depression over the past four weeks

Found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things



Felt that they had nothing to look forward to

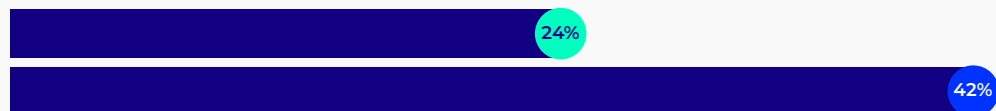


Was unable to become enthusiastic about anything

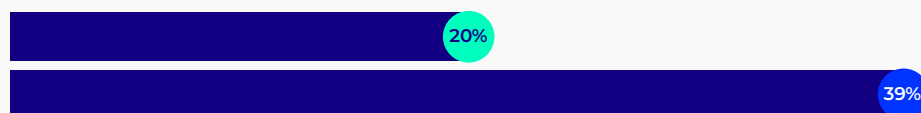


### Feelings of anxiety over the past two weeks

Felt nervous, anxious, or on edge



Was unable to stop or control worrying



## Feeling positive and connected at work

A strong sense of purpose can have a powerful influence on professional performance and satisfaction. Employees who have a strong sense of purpose report a more positive outlook at work, a stronger connection to the work they do, and less work-related stress than those without. They are more likely to pursue ongoing skills development and show enthusiasm and dedication to work beyond basic requirements to help their workplace succeed. These individuals are also more likely to receive recognition such as promotions or achievement awards compared to those without a strong sense of purpose.

### EMPLOYEES WITH A STRONG SENSE OF PURPOSE BRING A MORE POSITIVE OUTLOOK TO WORK

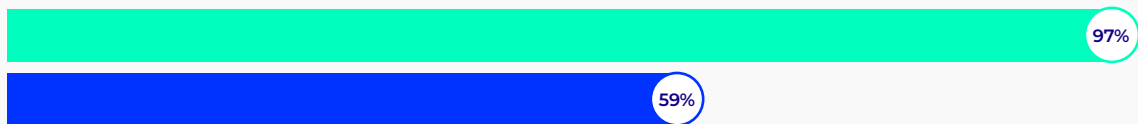


Have strong purpose

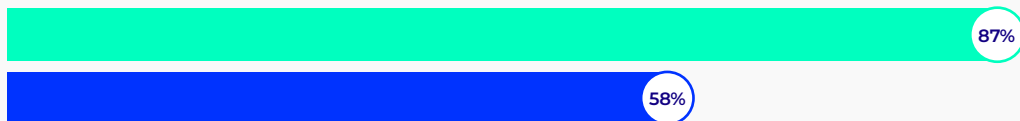


Do not have strong purpose

Felt confident at work



Personally value the work I do



Feel proud to be an employee at my workplace



Satisfied with job



Willing to work harder than needed to help my workplace succeed



## The power of purpose: A boost to worker productivity

Employees with a strong sense of purpose are more productive, often bring greater focus and energy to their work, and are less likely to look for a new job, all of which can have a significant impact on a business's bottom line.

Workers with a strong sense of purpose score better than their coworkers who struggle with purpose on two major indicators of productivity: absenteeism, or missing work for any reason, and presenteeism, which means to be physically at work but mentally elsewhere. While presenteeism is more challenging to track, it is also [significantly more costly](#)<sup>8</sup> for employers than absenteeism.

### PURPOSE AND PRESENTEEISM

● Workers with purpose      ● Workers without purpose

Were unable to perform at an optimal level

10%

22%

Performed at a lower level than capable

12%

26%

Were mentally somewhere else

15%

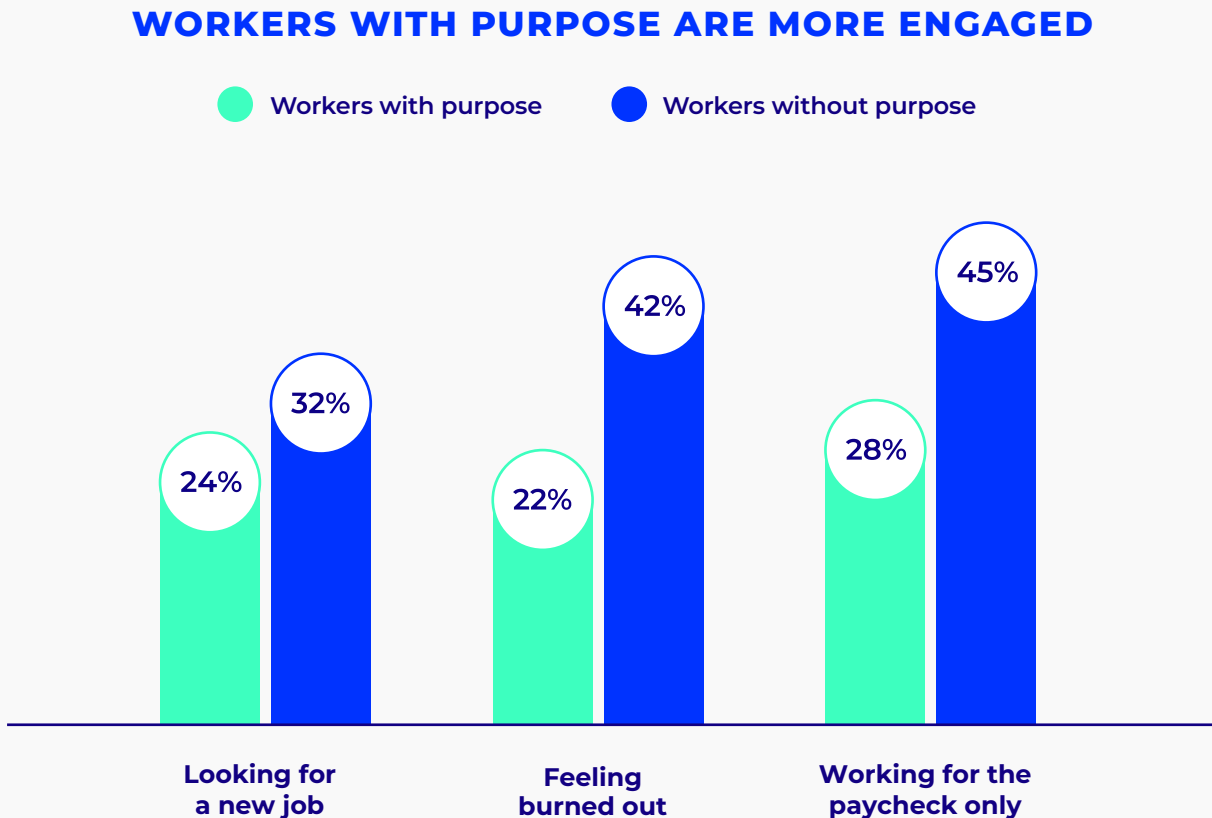
38%

Were not feeling well or were feeling sick

19%

34%

Although workers with a strong sense of purpose feel the same degree of job pressure and demands as those without, they are significantly less likely to report feeling burned out or that they are considering leaving their job.

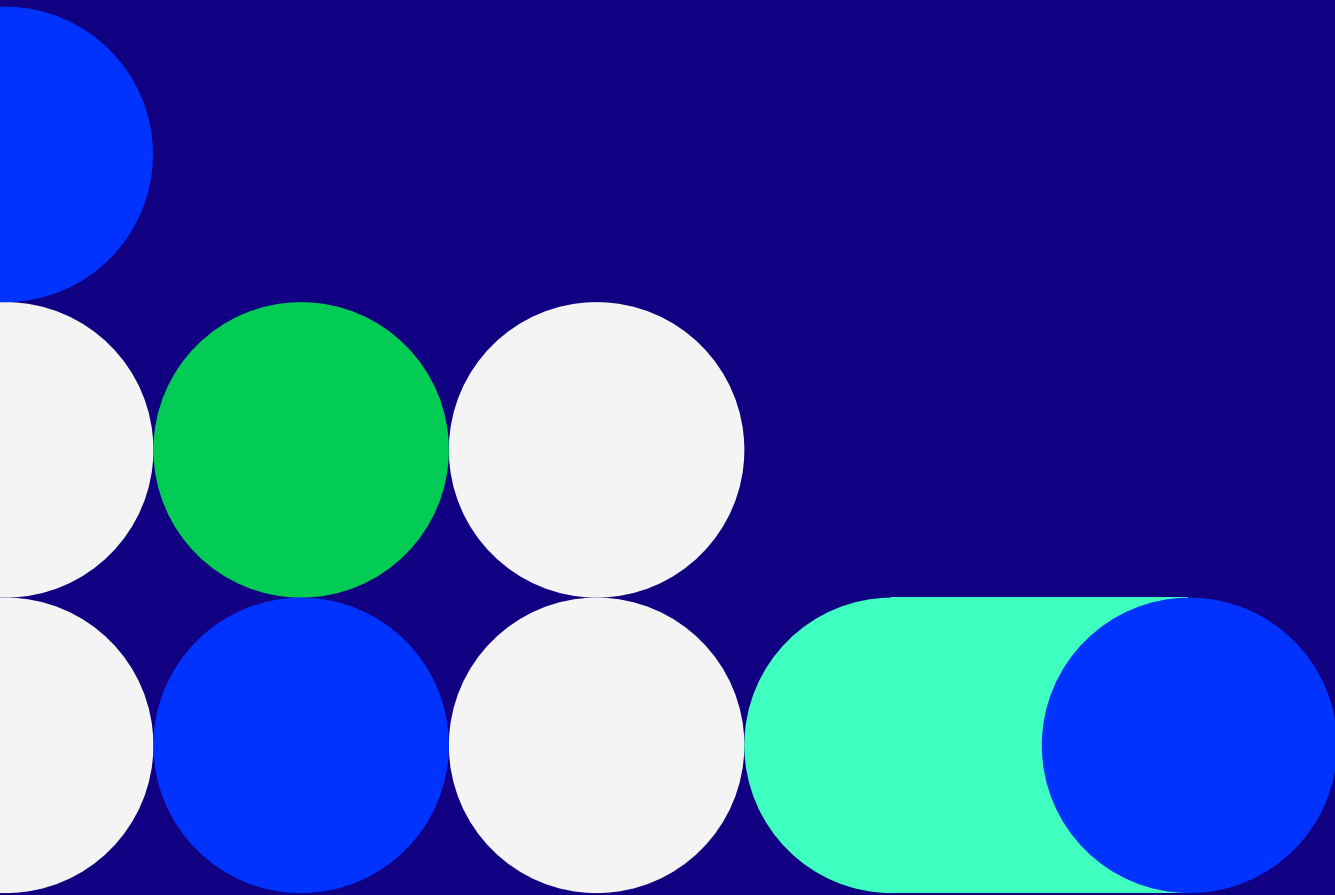


Work resilience cost implications extend beyond the cost of turnover. Even if an employee does not leave their job, the mere [desire to leave can cost 4% of an organization's total salary expenses](#).<sup>9</sup> The estimated [cost of burnout ranges from \\$4,000 to \\$20,000 per employee per year](#),<sup>10</sup> or more than \$5 million annually at an average 1,000-person U.S. company.



## **ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS:**

Strategies to foster  
vitality and purpose



People with a strong sense of purpose intentionally prioritize relationships and actively engage with their health and their work. The following strategies can help foster a sense of purpose and cultivate resilience and well-being.

## **1**

### **Deepen connections with others**

Purpose is strongly linked to relationships, which need ongoing care and attention to thrive. It takes effort, but [making specific plans to connect with family and friends](#)<sup>11</sup> and taking steps to [connect within the larger community](#)<sup>12</sup> can help employees build the skills to strengthen their relationships. Employers can support these efforts by facilitating work/life balance, offering [volunteer opportunities](#),<sup>13</sup> [celebrating individual and team accomplishments](#),<sup>14</sup> and encouraging participation in team social, community, and learning activities.

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## **2**

### **Take ownership of health**

People with a strong sense of purpose take a more active role in maintaining their physical health than those who lack strong purpose. In addition to practicing healthy behaviors – like exercising, eating well, and getting good sleep – individuals can build a sense of empowerment around health by taking simple, intentional steps like [planning for open enrollment](#),<sup>15</sup> reviewing benefits statements, preparing questions for doctor visits, scheduling preventive screenings, and using employer resources such as employee assistance programs (EAPs). Employers can help not only by offering comprehensive benefits, but also by guiding employees on how to use them. They also can promote wellness through technology, contests, and group activities.

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## **3**

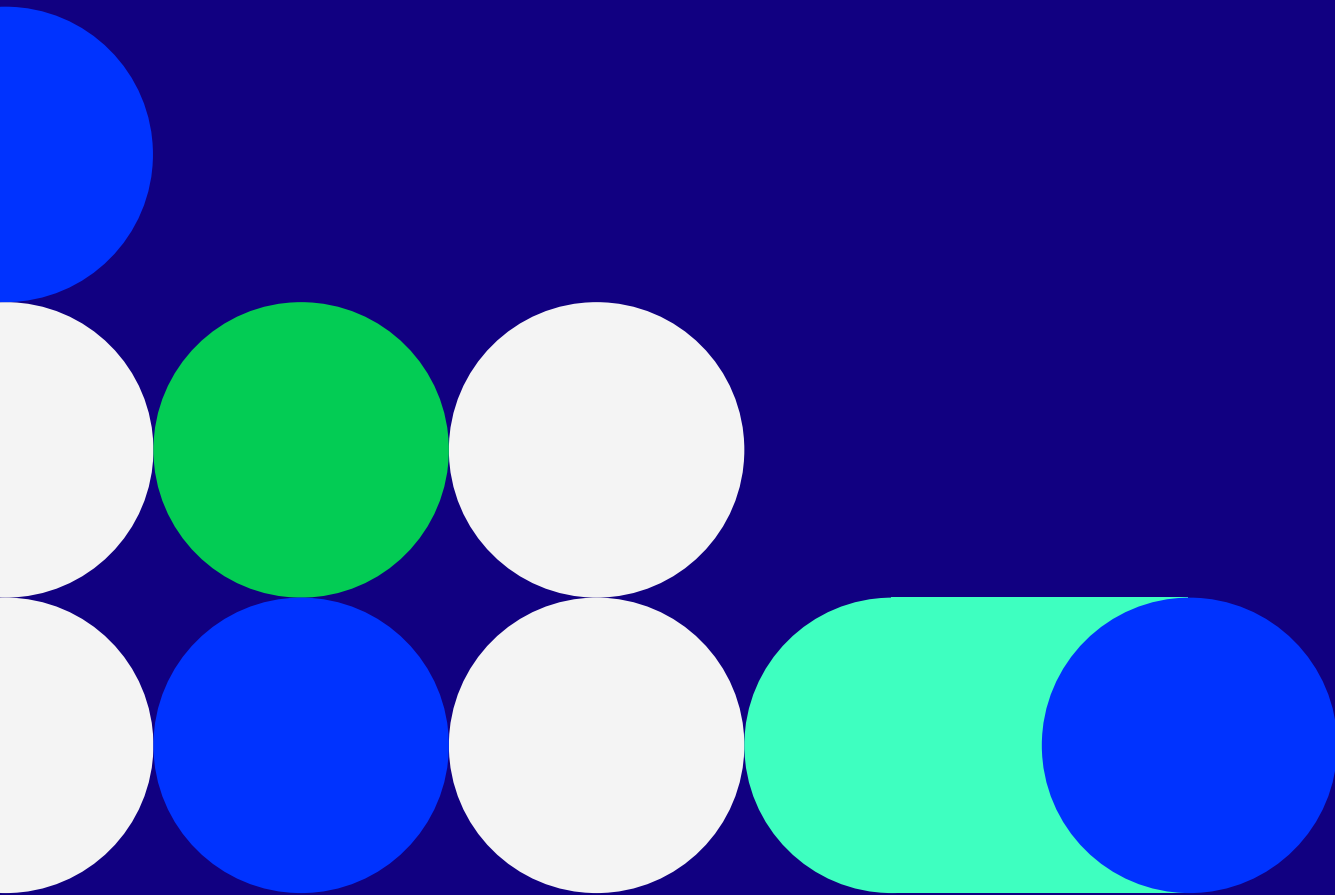
### **Build a sense of shared objectives**

People with a strong sense of purpose bring energy and determination to their roles, take pride in their work, and are motivated to help their organization succeed. Individuals can focus on learning new skills and pursuing tasks that interest them, while leaders can encourage communication, clarify goals, empower decision-making, and offer training tailored to individual roles.

Purpose, like vitality, is attainable for everyone. With employer and community support, individuals can build their sense of purpose as well as confidence in managing their health to support their overall vitality.

**BEHIND THE FINDINGS:**

References and  
methodology



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## Methodology

The Cigna Group conducted an online survey with 5,000 U.S. adults from June 3 to 22, 2025 in collaboration with YouGov. This bilingual (English and Spanish) survey assessed health, vitality, social needs, productivity, and social media attitudes and behaviors across generations.

Participants were United States residents 18 years of age and older, fluent in English or Spanish. To ensure that the sample was representative of the United States 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, education, and income.

### Survey respondent demographics

The sample was split about equal with 48% male and 50% female with 1% preferring to self-describe their gender. Respondents were split representatively between the South (38%), West (24%), Midwest (21%), and Northeast (17%). 60% of respondents were white; 17% report Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin; 12% were Black; 4% Asian; and 6% other races. The majority, 57%, of respondents work for pay and 90% had health insurance or health care coverage.

