

HERO SPRING THINK TANK

Conference Proceedings

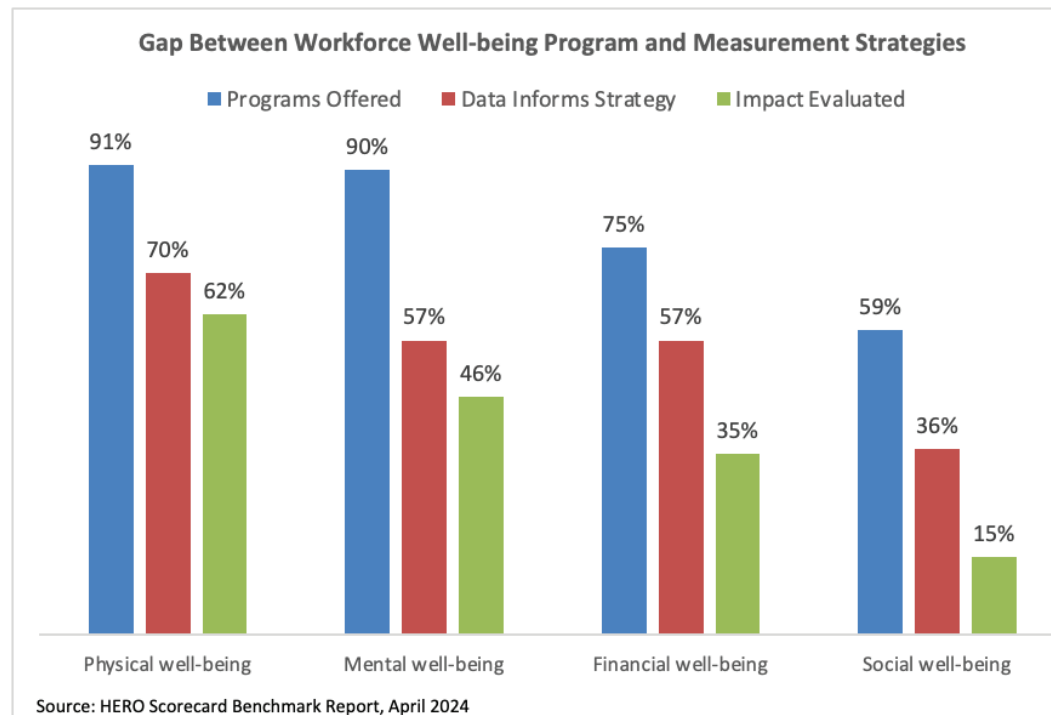


MEASURES THAT MATTER FOR EMPLOYERS WHO WANT TO PROMOTE FLOURISHING

by Jessica Grossmeier, PhD, MPH – HERO Senior Education Fellow

McKinsey researchers recently reported that leading employers have expanded their health and well-being (HWB) offerings to go beyond a focus on physical health to support mental, emotional, financial, social, and spiritual well-being.¹ But the latest benchmark data from the HERO Health and Well-being Best Practices Scorecard in Collaboration with Mercer© (HERO Scorecard) indicates employers' measurement and evaluation strategies may not be keeping pace with the direction of their programs.²

Physical and mental health programs are ubiquitous, with 90% of employers addressing these dimensions of well-being and 75% of employers offering financial well-being programs and resources. Yet, a little more than half say they use psychosocial/mental health or financial well-being data to inform their strategic planning for HWB. The gap for social well-being is even greater, with 59% of employers addressing social or relational well-being with their programs and 36% using data on social well-being to inform their approach. Even fewer employers are using data in these areas to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts, as only 46% include psychosocial/mental health data, 35% include financial well-being, and 15% include social well-being in their program evaluation activities.

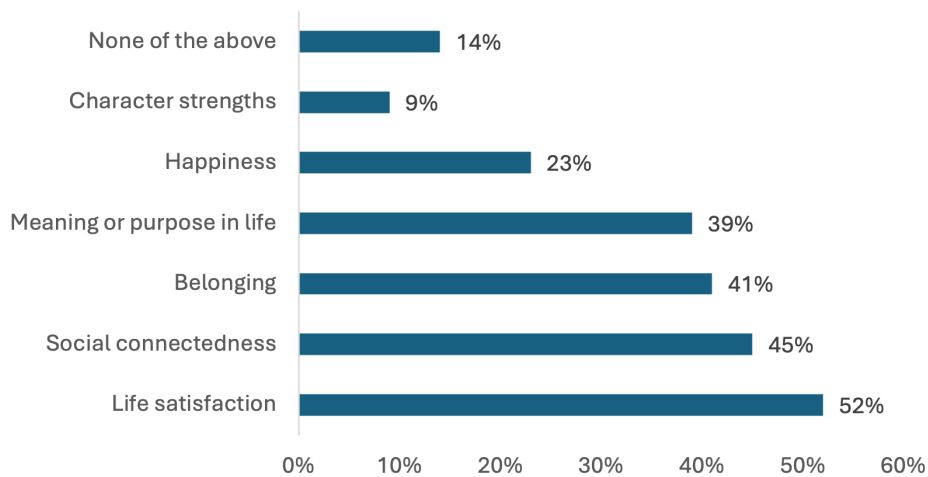


Such gaps were addressed head-on in **HERO's Spring Think Tank** on May 22, 2024, when **HERO members** gathered virtually to discuss "Measures That Matter for Employers Who Want to Promote Flourishing." While it's tempting to digress down a rabbit hole discussion about barriers, this Think Tank's focus was on practical measurement solutions that have been tested and validated in real world settings. Here's a brief recap of the treasure trove of insights, tools, and resources we learned about from some of the world's leading well-being researchers, psychometricians, and consultants. For a full list of our faculty bios, check out the full **speaker brochure**.

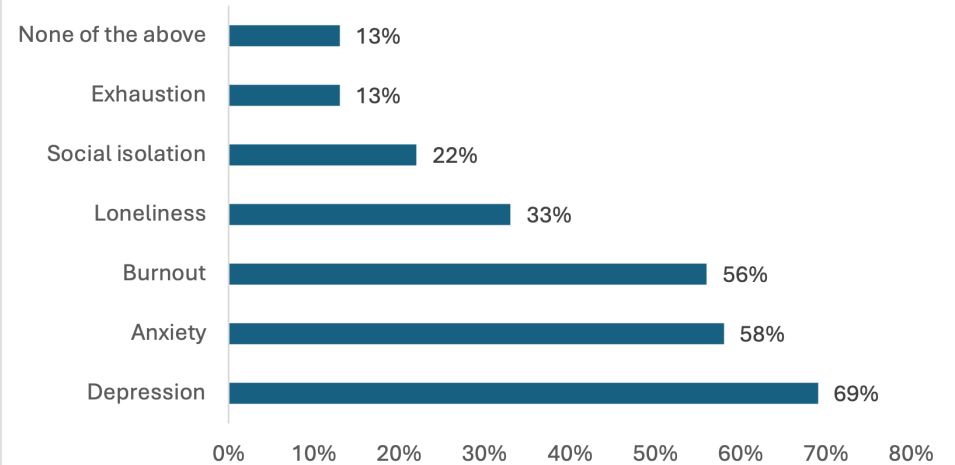
A Think Tank about using measurement to fuel a data-driven approach to workforce well-being is likely to attract leading organizations well ahead of the normative curve in adoption of best practices. It's a testable question, so we opened the Think Tank by asking those gathered which measures they used as part of their HWB efforts. The charts indicate we did indeed attract organizations outpacing the national benchmark data from the HERO Scorecard in terms of the range of well-being areas included in their measurement and evaluation strategies. Across both polls, approximately 85% of those gathered included at least one of the listed areas.

Dr. Noémie Le Pertel has been working with organizations using many of the areas of measurement we polled about, and she encouraged us to focus as much effort on how we are using the data collected as we do on what data we are collecting. It was a theme that resounded throughout the day, in discussions by **Mari Ryan** and **Grant Ian Gamble** about how to effectively analyze and present employee sentiment data to business leaders and other stakeholders. As for Dr. Le Pertel, she shared **frameworks** that she's been using as part of her work at **World Economic Forum** and **Harvard** to align health and well-being measurement strategies with business and sustainability.

Organizations Using Positive Well-being Measures



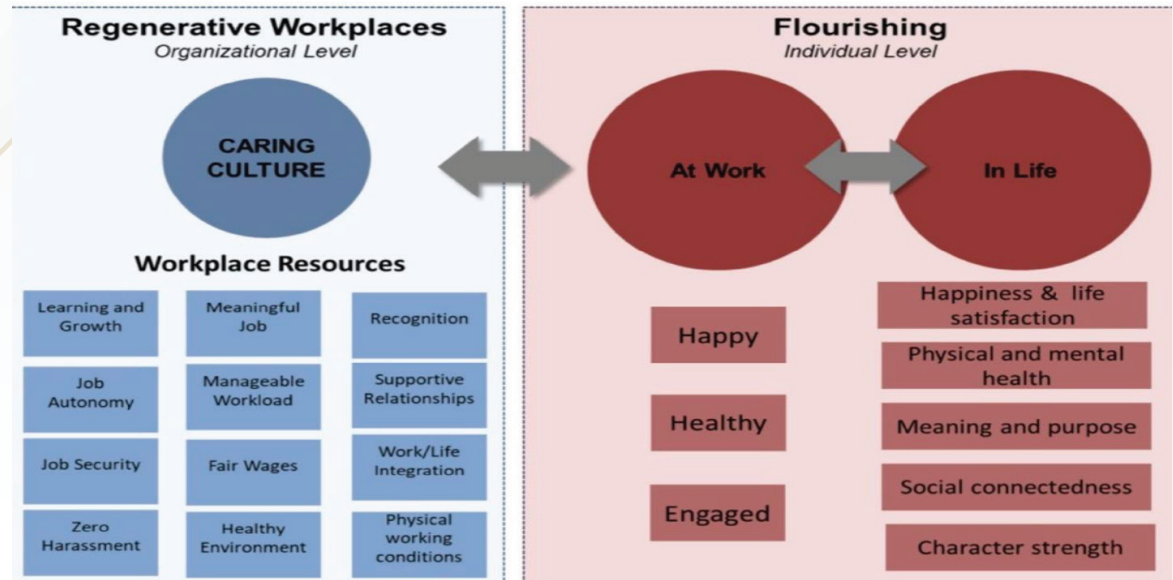
Organizations Using Negative Well-being Measures



Mari Ryan followed suit by sharing a case example of how she worked with an employer to shine light on a huge proportion of their population whose needs had been overlooked due to their narrow approach to data collection. She shared how she used artificial intelligence tools embedded within commonly used data management applications to make employee sentiment data more actionable.

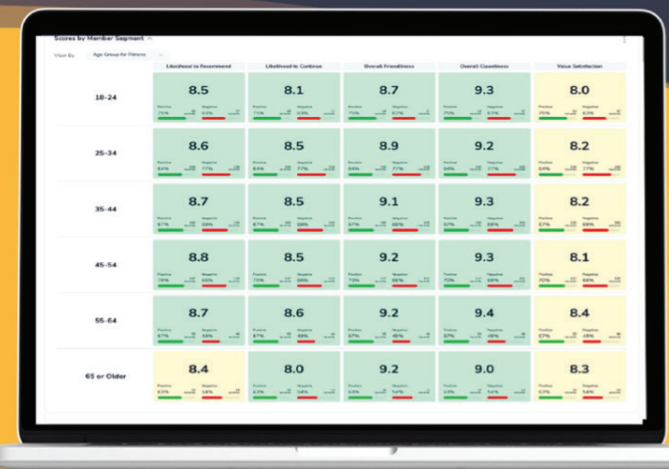
Grant Ian Gamble built on Mari Ryan's example, sharing his insights around how artificial intelligence can be used to deepen our understanding of employee feedback, increasing employee engagement with the organization while promoting workforce well-being and reducing turnover. He referenced **research** indicating the important role of employee commitment on business performance, highlighting the need to invest more attention and resources in employee sentiment data analytics. He also shared his approach, which connects the dots between mindful leadership, team performance, customer experience, and organizational financial performance.

THE WELL-BEING FRAMEWORK [Harvard Shine, 2024](#)



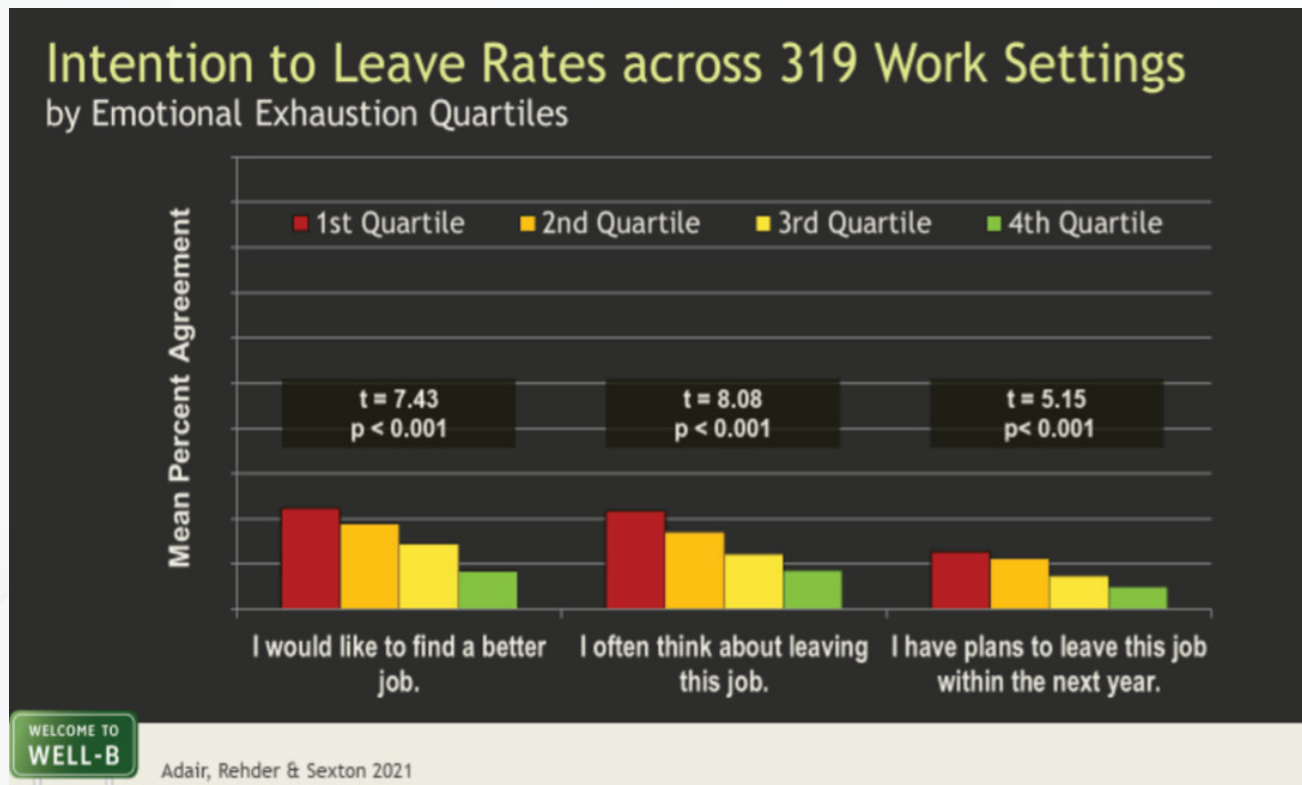
Influencing eNPS Proactively

1. Identifying areas for improvement through AI analysis
2. Examples of successful interventions (workplace improvements, communication strategies)
3. The importance of timely and relevant actions based on AI insights



In between these fascinating and practical discussions about how to use data more effectively, several faculty guests shared a deep dive into the areas of measurement that are often overlooked as part of a workforce well-being initiative. **Dr. Bryan Sexton** shared new **research** on three tools and associated **resources** devoted to measurement and intervention of emotional exhaustion, emotional thriving, and emotional recovery. Mindful of organizational needs to minimize survey fatigue, he made a compelling case for a focus on measurement of emotional exhaustion as a key driver of burnout, disruptive workplace behaviors, and intent to leave the organization. He shared research studies on emotional exhaustion and incorporated numerous links to free measurement and follow-up **intervention** tools as part of his presentation.

Dr. Mary Imboden shared a brief update on a newly available measurement tool called the NIOSH Worker Well-Being Questionnaire (NIOSH WellBQ). HERO has partnered with NIOSH to create an online version of the tool as well as the **HERO Worker Well-being Clearinghouse**, which will house de-identified data and support organizational benchmarking and future research.



Dr. Kerry Evers opened her session by sharing a high-level overview of mostly free measurement tools related to mental health, which was the focus of a collaborative **research** paper published as part of a HERO research effort. The bulk of her remarks focused on measurement of loneliness and social isolation. While these two concepts are highly related, they are distinct experiences. It's possible to experience one without the other and requires using distinct measurement approaches as well as interventions. She recommended employers interested in measuring loneliness combine the free and validated 3-item **UCLA loneliness scale** in combination with a single item direct measure of employee perceptions of loneliness.

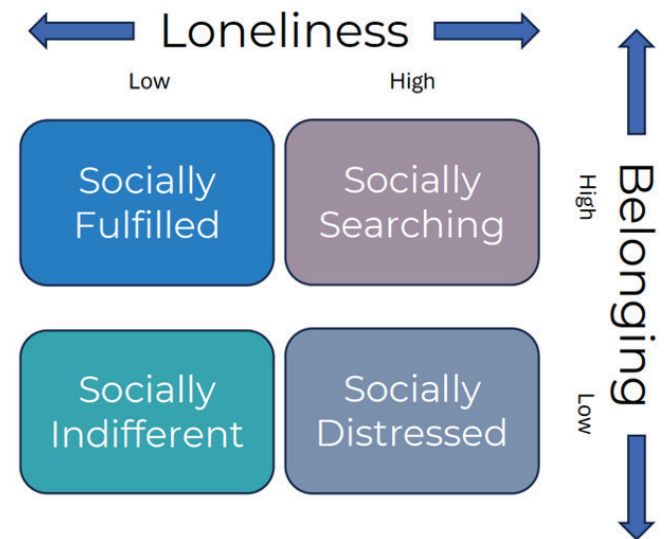
Dr. Renee Moorefield rounded out the day by discussing her **research** linking leadership well-being with leadership impact. This conversational segment included a high-level overview of a measurement tool she co-developed—with support from researchers at the Positive Organization Center in the Business Management School at University of Colorado-Colorado Springs—which has scales devoted to the measurement of wonder, flow, fuel, and wisdom. The fuel dimension represents what we often think about when we think of wellness, but Dr. Moorefield's research demonstrates that wonder, flow, and wisdom are more predictive of leader thriving.

NIOSH Worker Well-Being Questionnaire (WellBQ)



Promoting productive workplaces through safety and health research **NIOSH**

Dual Continuum Model of Belonging and Loneliness



Michelle H. Lim, Kelly-Ann Allen, Michael J. Furlong, Heather Craig & Doug C. Smith (2021) Introducing a dual continuum model of belonging and loneliness, Australian Journal of Psychology, 73(1), 81-86, DOI: 10.1080/00049530.2021.1883411

HERO CEO, **Karen Moseley**, wrapped up the Think Tank with a closing panel including **Janis Davis-Street**, **Rita Patel**, and **Tami Simon**, who were charged with identifying actionable takeaways for organizations. Many of their insights circled back to the recurring theme that workforce well-being must address underlying systemic influences from the organizational environment and culture. This means aligning individual measures of thriving with organizational measures of thriving and sustainability.

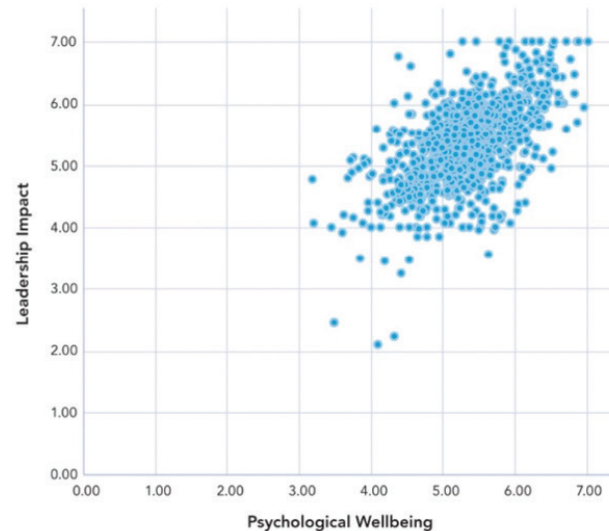
The following questions emerged from the lively discussion and might be considered for a future Think Tank:

- How do we make well-being essential so it's as relevant to the chief financial officer as it is to HR leaders?
- How do we balance the fact that organizations cannot often directly address larger societal issues that impact workforce well-being, while engaging them to be agents of change in their communities?
- How do we measure and identify the elements of culture that influence broader systemic change?

These insights and closing questions were augmented by the rich discussions and ongoing chat among Think Tank attendees. Here are some of the observations shared from the discussion groups:

- How do we shift our organizations from a focus on problems that need to be fixed to a focus on supporting what's needed to help our people thrive?
- Several speakers shined light on the need to ensure we are not just measuring for the sake of measurement. It's critical to ensure we're using the data we collect.
- Few employers seem to be linking their well-being strategy with business outcomes measures.
- We have lots of room for progress when it comes to robust data-driven strategies and integration in the KPI scorecard/business strategy.
- Does focusing on assets/employee flourishing risk under-representing those who are struggling?
- Do we have to choose? Can we look at both thriving and struggling? Perhaps it's based on how to move forward in your specific organization?
- A favorite example of an organization that has tied well-being to the business measures that matter is **DTE Energy**.

HIGHER LEADER WELLBEING LINKS TO HIGHER LEADER IMPACT



Source of research: Wisdom Works Group, 2023

- We heard a great example how ERG leaders meet with the top leaders at their organization regularly to share feedback about how people are feeling about the organization. How are other organizations moving beyond surveys to have meaningful discussions across the organization?
- Trust, positive leadership communications, psychological safety, social connection, and authenticity were identified as ENABLERS of organizational thriving.
- Lack of trust, too many competing priorities, lack of leaders who walk the talk, lack of employee and leadership training were identified as BARRIERS to advancing organizational thriving.

Thanks to Rita Patel, for supporting discussion group sharing and to the following discussion group Facilitators: **Ryan Sledge, Joel Spoonheim, Susan Bailey, Gerardo Durand, and Roshi Fisher.**

Cited References

1. Brassey J, et al. Reframing employee health: Moving beyond burnout to holistic health. McKinsey Health Institute. November 2, 2023. <https://www.mckinsey.com/mhi/our-insights/reframing-employee-health-moving-beyond-burnout-to-holistic-health>
2. HERO Health and Well-Being Best Practices Scorecard in Collaboration with Mercer. *HERO Scorecard Quarterly Benchmark Report*. April 24, 2024.

Recommended Reading from HERO Think Tank faculty for “Measures That Matter for Employers Who Want to Promote Flourishing”

Imboden MT, et al. *Evaluating workforce mental health and well-being: a review of assessments*. American Journal of Health Promotion. 2024;38(4):540-559.

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VanderWeele TJ, et al. *Current recommendations on the selection of measures for well-being*. Preventive Medicine. 2020;133:106004.



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