



# **Quality Connections, Quality Results**

CQI CONFERENCE 2025

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# introduction

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- i. Why It Matters
- ii. What Can We Do? *Relationship Building & Maintenance*
- iii. Benefits
- iv. CQI Methods
- v. Defining CQI Success *Individual & Collective*
- vi. Questions & Closing

## Introduction Question:

- How do connections impact continuous quality improvement at your organization?

## Learning Objectives

- Participants will understand the importance of generating staff 'buy in' for quality initiatives and creating professional growth opportunities for others.
- Participants will learn effective strategies for building and maintaining connections and relationships with staff at all levels.
- Participants will learn collaborative and productive project management methods.
- Participants will be able to identify and align their personal values with CQI work.



# speaker bio

## Education

- Associate of Arts in Teaching, STLCC 🎓
- Bachelor of Science in Public Administration, CMU 📊

## Career

- 5 years in nonprofit quality management
- 10 years in management (office, retail, nonprofit)

*My intention with this presentation is to use data and social concepts to highlight the need for authentic, trusting, professional working relationships to strengthen quality improvement efforts.*





# why it matters

**Reason #1** For the first time in history, there are 5 different generations in the workforce resulting in a variety of social dynamics, conflicts, and work styles.

**Reason #2** Rates of burnout and stress have increased across industries. Burnout is a frequently cited reason for resignations.

We are also facing a loneliness epidemic in the United States. Data from Morning Consult commissioned by Cigna shows 58% of adults are considered lonely.

**Reason #3** Positive social connections at work create psychological safety, promotes inclusivity, creativity, problem-solving, and authenticity without fear of judgement or punishment.

Workplaces that have a strong culture of connection and belonging see greater engagement, productivity, and worker well-being,

Source: The Importance of Social Connections in the Workplace

## Questions to Consider:

1. How does loneliness impact your workplace?
2. Are positive social connections prioritized at your organization?
3. How do we begin promoting a culture of connection and belonging?



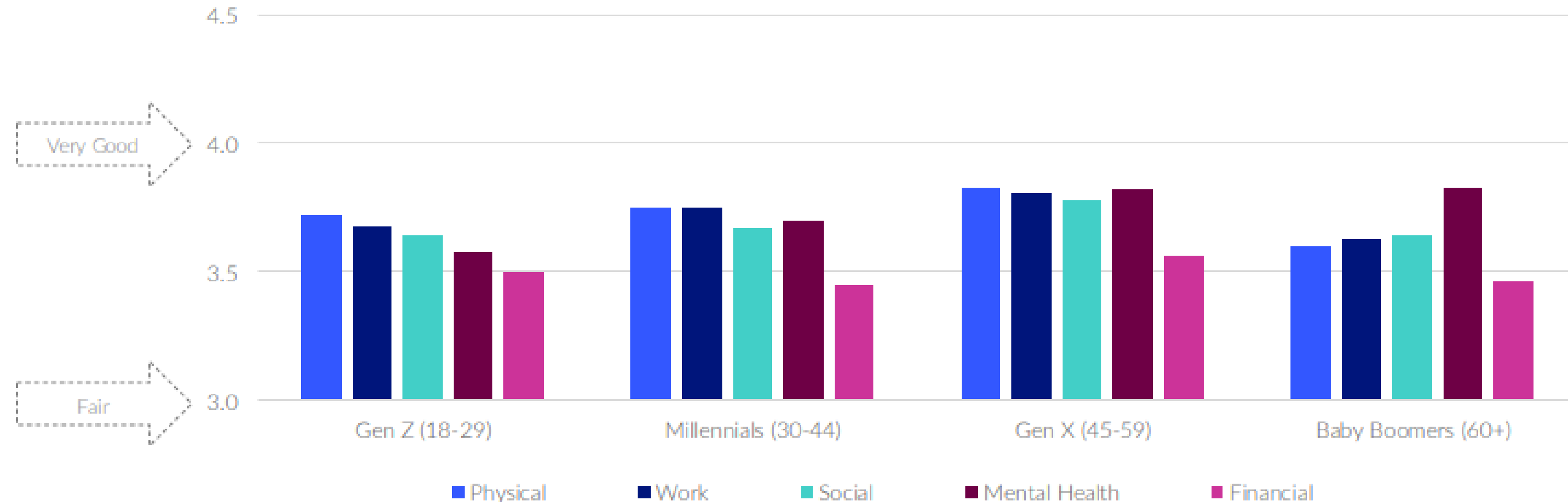
**Table 2: Factors Affecting Nonprofit Recruitment and Retention**

Factor Affecting Recruitment and Retention	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Salary competition	1,183	72.2%
Budget constraints/insufficient funds	1,087	66.3%
Stress/burnout	823	50.2%
Challenges caused by government grants/contracts	338	20.6%
Other	332	20.3%
Lack of child care	239	14.6%
Not Sure	166	10.1%
COVID-19 and vaccinations	107	6.5%

Source: National Council of Nonprofits 2023 Nonprofit Workforce Survey Results

# Well-Being by Age Cohort

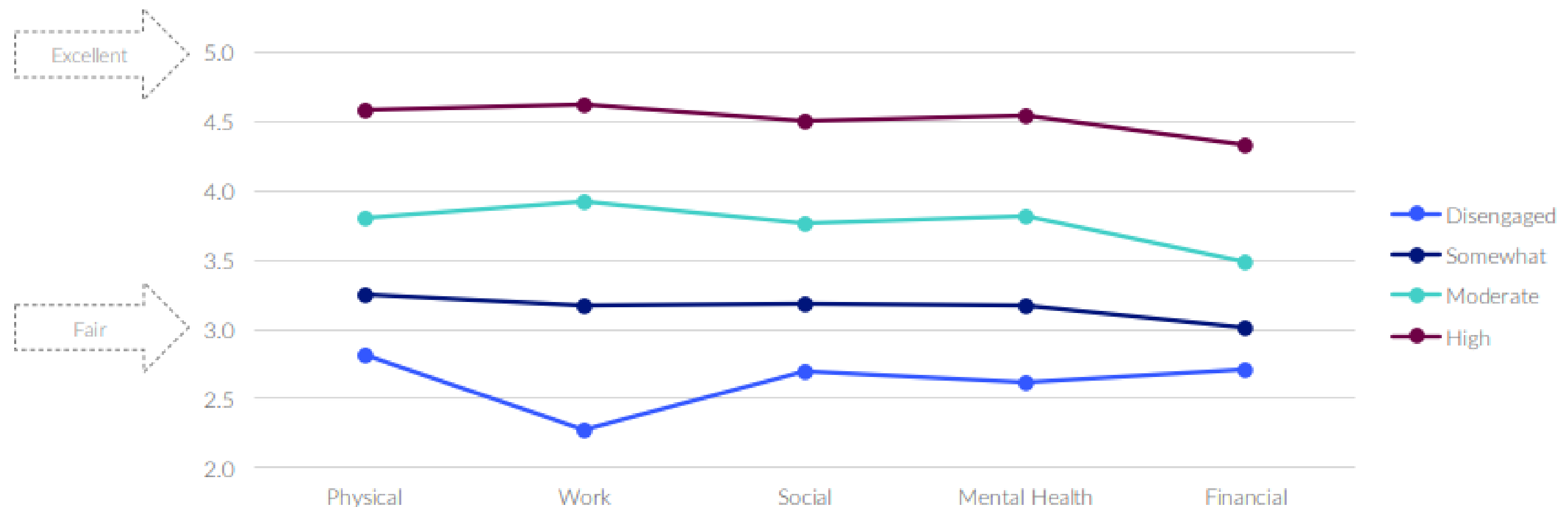
Overall, Financial Well-being was the lowest scoring dimension across the age cohorts. Over half of respondents indicated that their Financial Well-being was *Poor* or *Fair*.



WebMD Health Services, Center for Research, 2024 Workplace and Employee Survey, n=3,653. Response options ranged from Poor (1) to Excellent (5) on a 1-5 scale.

# Well-Being and Employee Engagement

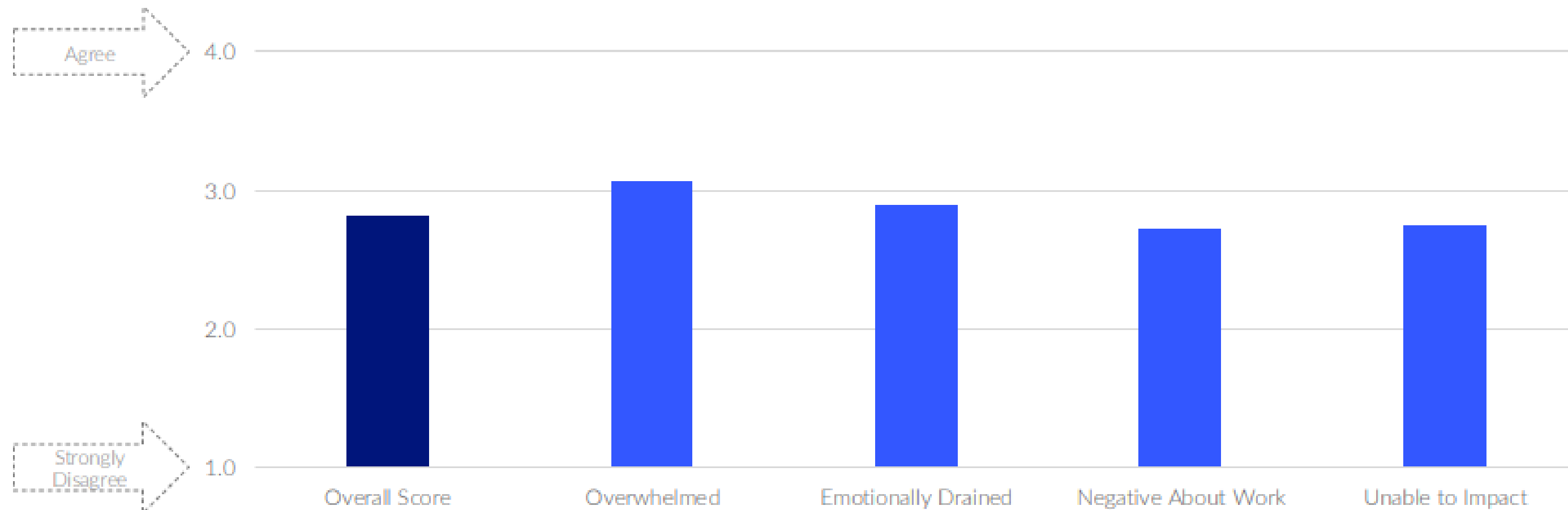
Well-being among engaged employees was 70% more favorable relative to disengaged employees across all dimensions. Work Well-being was more than 2x times more favorable.



WebMD Health Services, Center for Research, 2024 Workplace and Employee Survey, n=3,653. Response options ranged from Poor (1), Fair (3) to Excellent (5) on a 1-5 Scale.

# Dimensions of Burnout

Nearly one-third of employees experienced Persistent Burnout. Feeling overwhelmed due to workload was the greatest and most consistent contributor to Burnout.

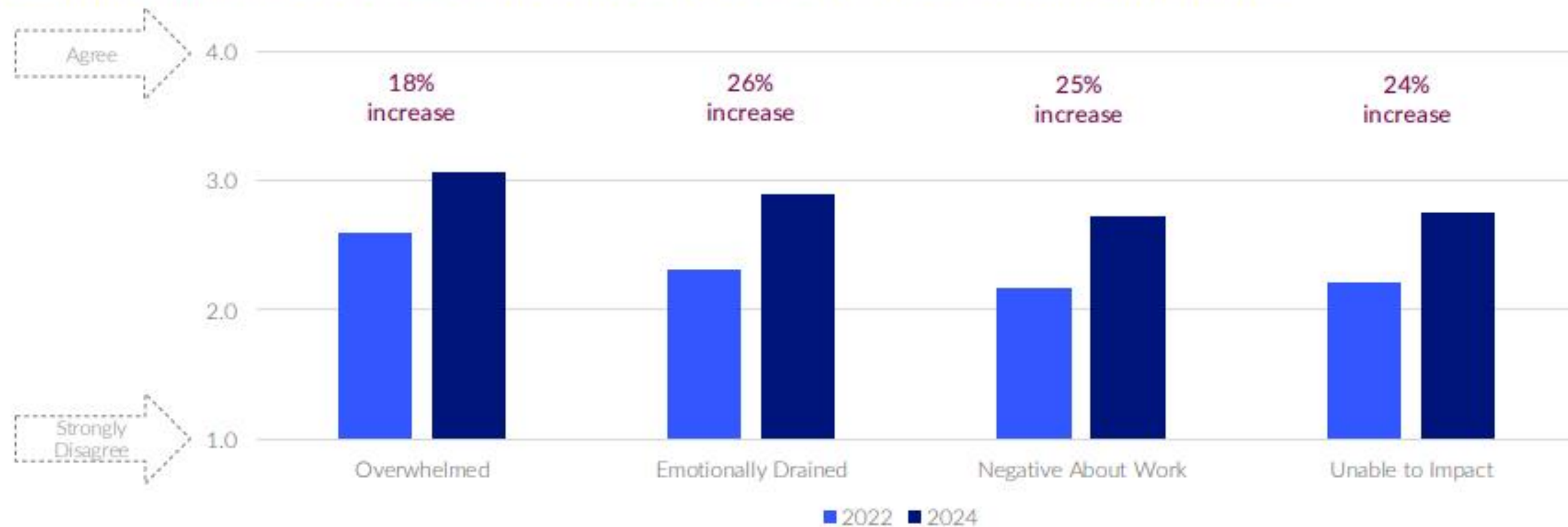


WebMD Health Services, Center for Research, 2024 Workplace and Employee Survey, n=3,653. Reflects average scores; Response options ranged from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) on a 1-5 scale. Burnout defined based on 4 dimensions: feeling overwhelmed by workload, feeling emotionally drained, feeling negative about work, feeling unable to make an impact.



# Changes in Burnout

Burnout increased by 18-26% from 2022 to 2024 across each dimension.



WebMD Health Services, Center for Research, 2024 Workplace and Employee Survey, n=3,653. Reflects average scores; Response options ranged from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) on a 1-5 scale. Burnout defined based on 4 dimensions: feeling overwhelmed by workload, feeling emotionally drained, feeling negative about work, feeling unable to make an impact.

# WHAT CAN WE DO?

Encourage &  
Ask Questions



Questions to Consider:

- This is easier said than done, otherwise we would all be doing it. What impacts our abilities to do these things at work?
- Why is it okay for some people to let their guard down and be more vulnerable at work than others? Who determines what appropriate vulnerability is?
- How do we create a culture where all are allowed to show up to work as their authentic selves?

Navigate  
Compromise &  
Conflict



Break the  
Silence



Create Space  
& Growth  
Opportunities



Practice &  
Promote  
Authenticity



### Authenticity has a positive impact on work

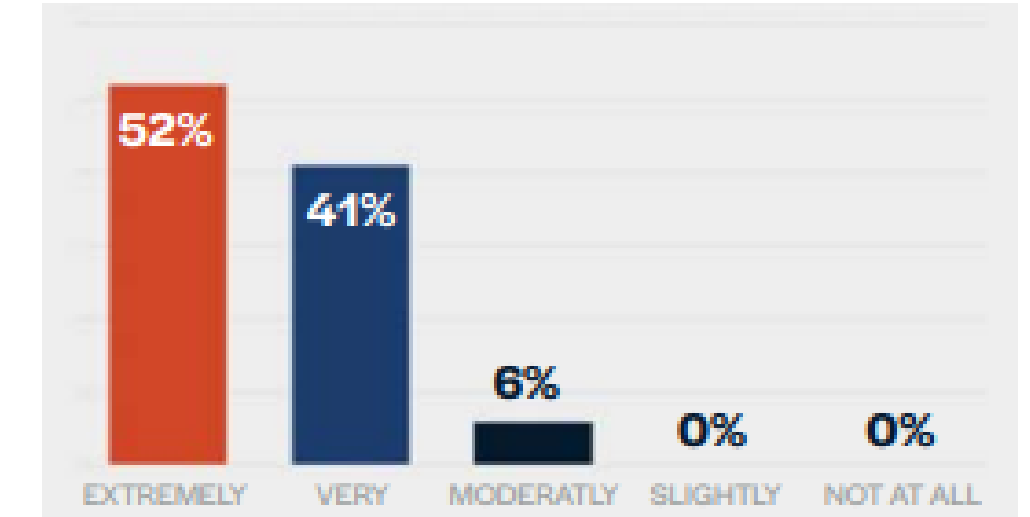
The survey respondents who said they were able to be authentic at work (93%) were asked what the impact was. They were given a series of options from which they could choose the top three. Following are the “top five” most popular choices. Enhanced effectiveness and productivity are clearly positive impacts. Another noteworthy impact appears to be organizational loyalty, especially when we consider the 6th-most popular response (closely ranked to #5): “I am more committed to staying with my organization.”

- 1) I am more able to do my best work
- 2) I build stronger relationships with my colleagues
- 3) I am more effective
- 4) I am more productive
- 5) I am more likely to go “above and beyond” for my organization

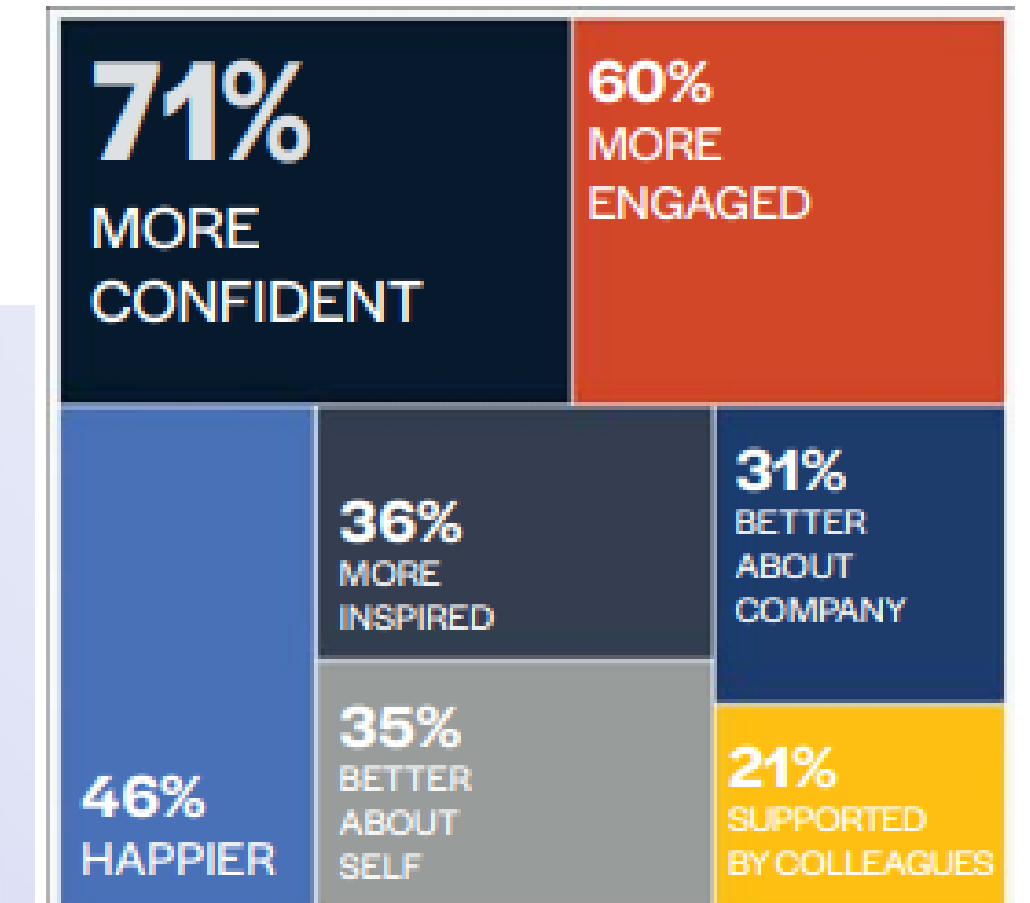
What is the impact when you are authentic at work?



How important is it to you to be authentic at work?



How do you feel when you are authentic at work?



# benefits

Creating Buy In  
(WE ❤️ CQI!)

Questions to Consider:

- What other benefits are there to promoting connections in the workplace?
- What organizational or structural conditions are impacting our ability to have these benefits?
- What is the cost of neglecting the social aspect of our work?

Investing in Staff  
(Nurturing Skills & Competencies)



Increasing  
Wellbeing &  
Decreasing  
Burnout



Promoting  
Safety &  
Trust



Generating  
Change



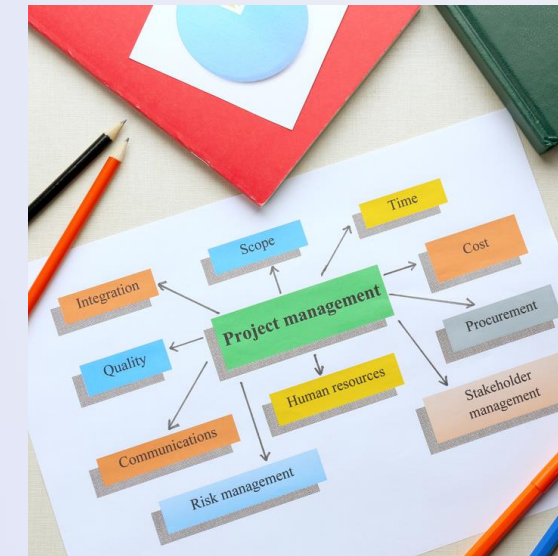


# methods & social connections

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**Plan, Do,  
Study, Act**



**Extreme Project  
Management**

# PDSA

PLAN, DO,  
STUDY,  
ACT

## Benefits

- Structured and organized approach to improvement processes
- Helps identify effective solutions
- Allows for small scale testing to minimize waste in resources
- Encourages documentation to solidify findings and communicate lessons learned.

## Considerations

- Requires resources (time, people, money, etc.) to effectively complete especially if you need to do multiple rounds of testing.
- Requires buy in and sustained efforts from all involved.
- Not a one and done process, continuous review and revision is necessary.

## Planning Stage

- Create your Team
- Set Your Focus & Intention
- Describe the Problem
- Conduct Root Cause Analysis

## Adopting Stage

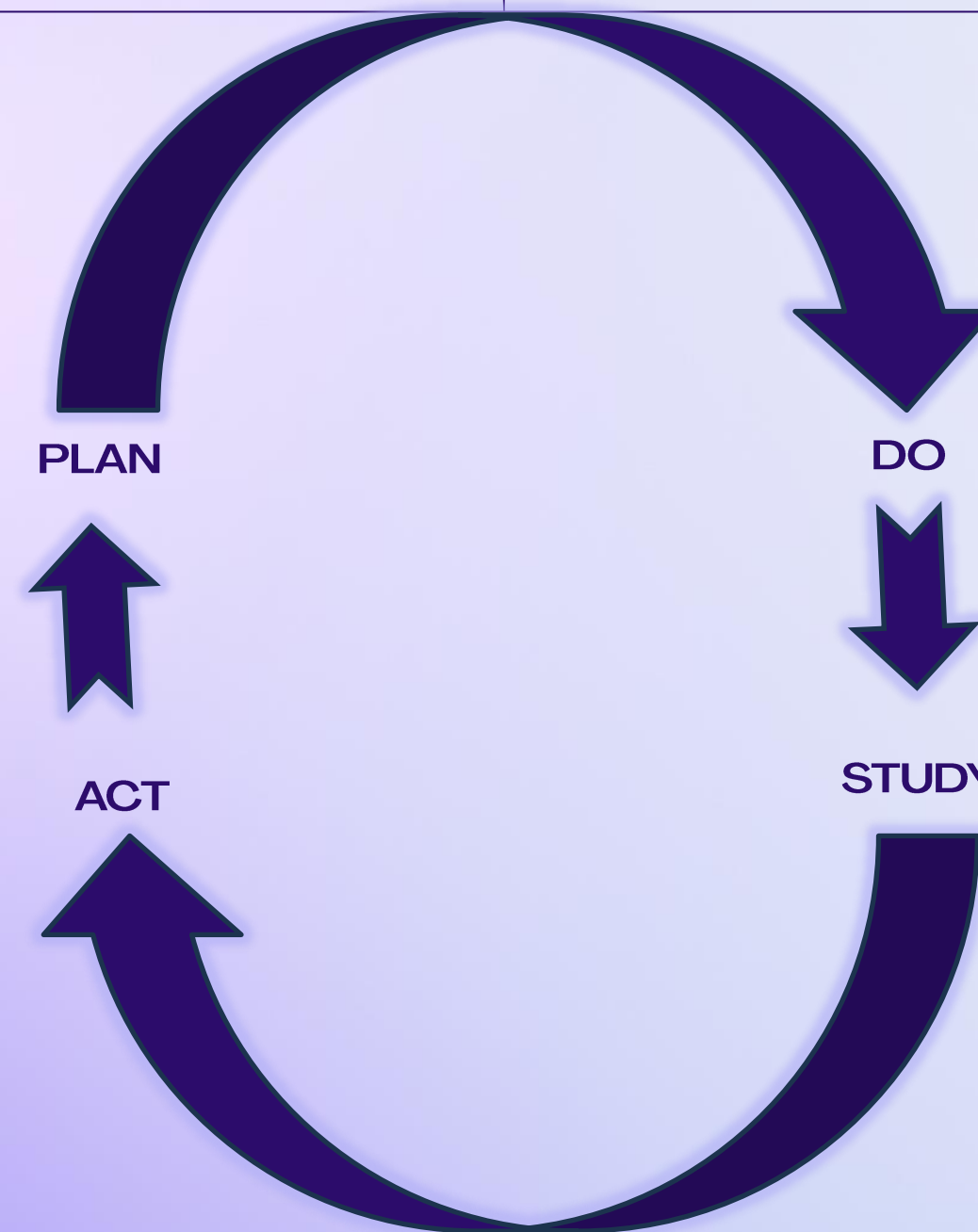
- If successful, embrace full scale implementation
- If unsuccessful, start over with new solution

## Implementation Stage

- Implement Action Plan
- Collect Data
- Document Findings

## Review Stage

- Evaluate Results
- Determine Sustainability
- Identify Next Steps



# extreme project management

- Idea created by Kent Black in the mid 90s when working on payroll software for Chrysler
- In 2004, project management professional, Doug DeCarlo, wrote Extreme Project Management: Using Leadership, Principles & Tools to Deliver Value in the Face of Volatility
- Sometimes referred to as agile, adaptive, radical or change-driven project management

## Characteristics

- Fast paced
- Adaptability
- Uncertainty
- Relaxed control
- Trial and error
- Creative Problem Solving



## Stages

- Planning
  - Questioning
  - Scheduling
- Kickoff
- Communication
- Review
- Wrap Up

## Requirements

- Trust & Confidence
- Effective Time Management
- Open Communication
- Mutual Understanding
  - Goals
  - Expectations
  - Responsibilities

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# defining CQI success...

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## INDIVIDUAL

- Focus on your actions, behaviors, and decisions.
  - Are they aligned with your values and priorities?
- Seek out and create opportunities to build connection through CQI work.
- Lead with these concepts in your spaces and recognize that your individual actions result in collective change.

## COLLECTIVE

- Provide training, opportunities, and resources on building and maintaining connections at work.
- Promote challenging practices that may no longer serve the organization.
- Understand the cost of not making the investment in people.



# defining

CQI  
SUCCESS

- Individual:

- At work, I am responsible for providing solutions to complex issues. I embrace the possibility new challenges present and welcome the perspective of my peers. I consider those who will be impacted the most from these decisions and work to bring their voice into the space. I prefer to take my time in making decisions and implementing strategies. I always strive to improve the quality of my work.

- Group or Team:

- Comprised of unique definitions of success, uses those definitions to guide the direction of their work. Seeks continuous quality improvement as a collective. Attitudes, behaviors, and actions socially influence the organizational approach.

- Organization:

- Heavily influenced by groups/teams, specifically leadership to determine priorities, values, practices, etc. Can easily fall into the rut of familiarity or only practicing CQI to check a box. Meaningful change is possible but requires intention.



questions, comments,  
thoughts?

# sources & further reading

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- [The Importance of Authenticity in the Workplace](#)
- [National Council of Nonprofits 2023 Nonprofit Workforce Survey Results](#)
- [Creating an Aim Statement](#)
- [Crafting Your Personal Mission Statement](#)
- [What is Extreme Project Management?](#)
- [What is Project Management?](#)
- [Authentic Leadership, Trust \(in the Leader\), and Flourishing: Does Precariousness Matter?](#)
- [A guide to mastering small talk with just about anyone, according to experts](#)
- [PDSA Flow Chart](#)
- [Radical Project Management](#)
- [WebMD Center for Research 2024 Workplace & Employee Survey](#)
- [WebMD Health Services The Importance of Social Connections in the Workplace](#)
- [Gettysburg College One Third of Your Life is Spent At Work](#)
- [Purdue Global Generational Differences in the Workplace](#)
- [Institute for Health Care Improvement – Quality Essentials Toolkit](#)
- [Institute for Health Care Improvement – PDSA Worksheet](#)
- [Agency for Health Care Research and Quality Plan, Do, Study, Act](#)
- [Continuous Quality Improvement Toolkit](#)



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✧✧ **THANK YOU** ✧✧

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CQI Conference Presenter  
Feedback Form



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