

INSIGHT REPORT

# The people equation:

How human wellbeing can multiply business results.



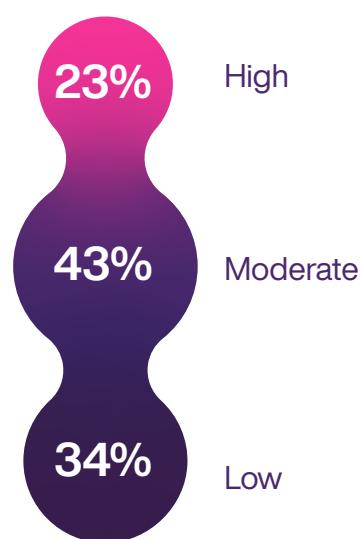
# The strategic advantages of a healthy, happy workforce.

As organizations navigate unprecedented digital transformation, global competition and a volatile geopolitical landscape marked by economic uncertainty, it is critical to create a stable environment for your most valuable asset — your people.

Consider this: The majority of employees in the U.S. report moderate to severe mental health risks; a quarter feel anxious and isolated and do not have emergency savings to cover basic needs; and more than a third of workers feel under constant stress. According to Gallup, the number of Americans who are stressed has been on a steady incline since 2004.

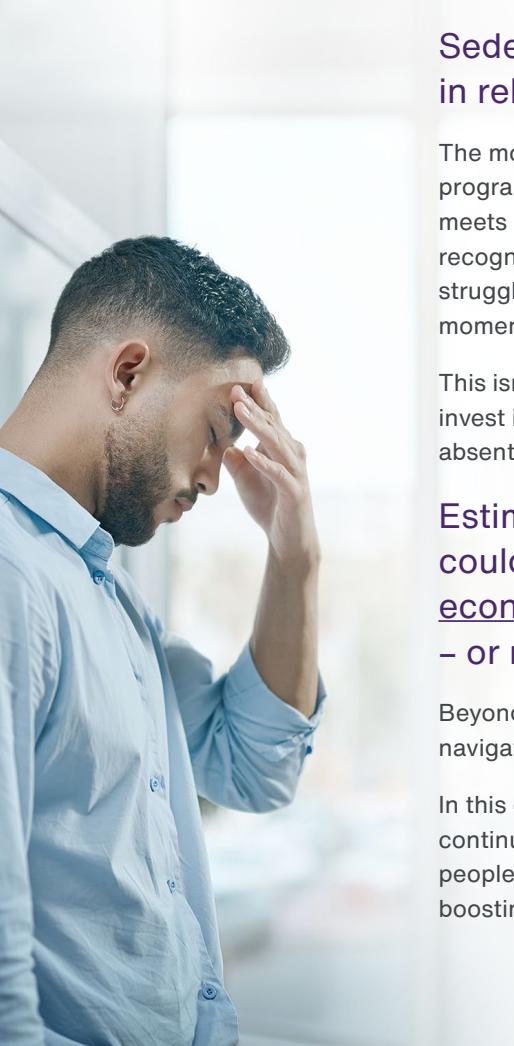


## U.S. employees mental health risk:



## Among U.S. employees:





These challenges can have direct financial implications on organizations. Between 2021 and 2023, short-term disability claims related to mental health rose by 15 percent, with employee disengagement costing organizations millions through burnout, stress and physical health issues that manifest as absenteeism and high turnover cycles.

## Sedentarism alone costs \$117 billion a year in related healthcare.

The most effective organizations are moving beyond traditional employee assistance program (EAP) models toward integrated, accessible and digitally enabled care that meets employees when and where they need it most. Forward-thinking companies recognize that employee wellbeing exists on a continuum — from feeling well to struggling to feeling unwell — with people requiring different support at different moments along their journey, with a focus on preventive vs. reactive care.

This isn't just compassionate leadership. It's a smart business strategy. Organizations that invest in comprehensive employee support see measurable gains in productivity, lower absenteeism, reduced healthcare costs, and stronger engagement and retention.

Estimates suggest these investments in employee support could generate between \$3.7 trillion and \$11.7 trillion in global economic value, translating to \$1,100 to \$3,500 per employee — or roughly 17 to 55 percent of average annual pay.

Beyond the immediate returns, these companies also help build the resilience needed to navigate today's complex business landscape.

In this ebook, we will explore how modern EAPs can help support individuals across the continuum. We'll examine why traditional approaches are evolving and how connecting people with care along the continuum can help to drive a healthier workforce, while boosting productivity, engagement, retention and other key business metrics.

## Care continuum

Feeling well



Struggling



Feeling unwell



Preventive

Reactive



# The current state of employee wellbeing.

By providing individuals with a sense of purpose, a place for social connection and opportunity for growth and achievement, work has the potential to contribute to employee health and wellbeing. Recent data reveals a decline in employee mental health nation-wide, with only one-third of employees at low risk of mental health concerns.

**For most workers, the challenges extend beyond job stress. Here are some of the areas impacting employee wellbeing:**

44% say financial concerns are a source of personal stress.

25% say health/medical concerns are a source of personal stress.

29% feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities.

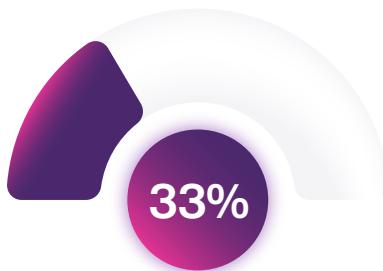
27% say a high workload is a source of work stress.

20% feel depressed.

## The data also reveals a shift in U.S. employees' priorities:



of workers cite **quality of their benefits as a top factor** in why they chose their current employer.



of workers would prefer **better wellbeing support over a 10 percent increase in salary.**



of workers would consider **switching to an employer offering the same pay but better wellbeing support.**

Specific areas where employees say they want enhanced coverage include dental care, retirement savings options and more mental health services.



The good news is that employer support is making a meaningful difference.

According to the TELUS Mental Health Index, workers who reported that the mental health benefits provided by their employer had improved scored 16 points higher on mental health assessments compared to those who said their mental health benefits had decreased.

**Average mental health score of employees with excellent benefits**



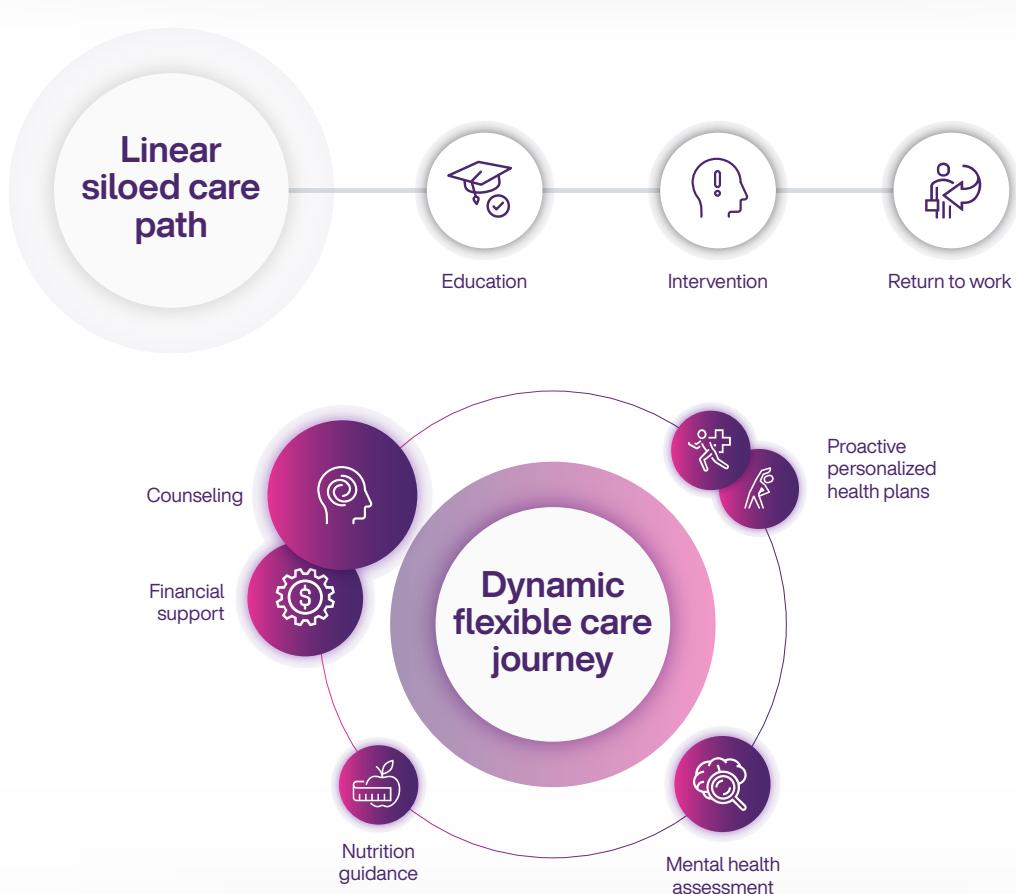
**16 points higher**  
vs. those with poor benefits

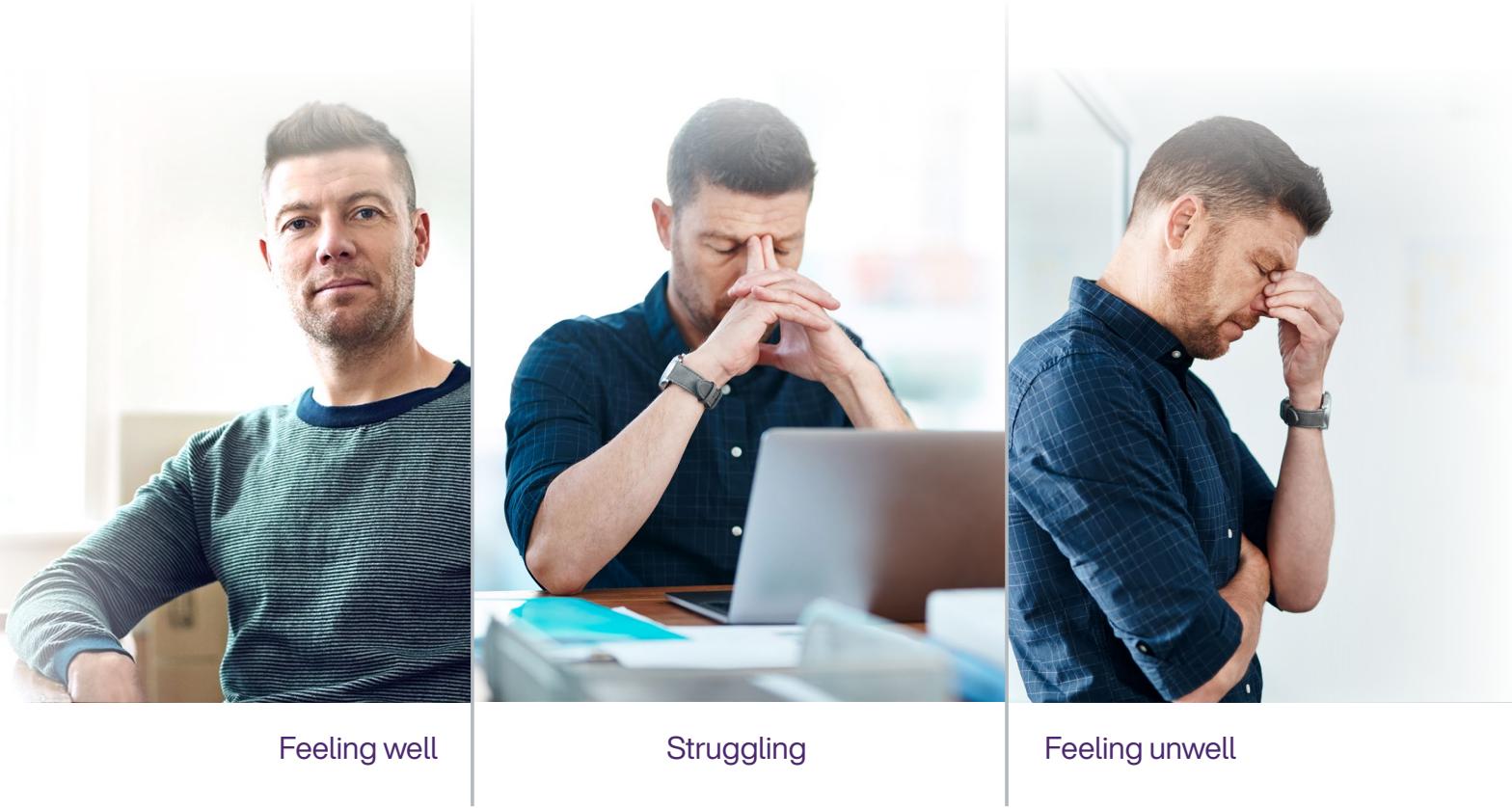
# Reimagining support: the wellbeing continuum.

To better understand the journey to where we are today, it is important to examine the traditional approach to employee support. This model typically treats wellbeing initiatives as separate programs with distinct objectives: education and awareness, intervention services addressing existing issues and return-to-work programs that help employees transition back after leaves of absence.

But this siloed approach doesn't reflect how people actually experience wellbeing – personal experiences rarely follow a straight line. For example, an employee struggling with mental health issues may also be facing financial stress, which compounds their workplace difficulties. While providing workplace accommodations addresses the immediate symptom, a comprehensive solution can also help tackle the underlying financial pressures that may be contributing to their mental health struggles in the first place.

A journey-based approach acknowledges that wellbeing is dynamic and fluid, and that people may move along the spectrum, requiring various levels and types of support at different times depending on their circumstances, challenges and access to support systems.





# Understanding the wellbeing continuum: **feeling well, struggling and feeling unwell.**

The continuum represents three stages of wellbeing that people may experience—from feeling well to struggling to feeling unwell—with each stage requiring different types of support and intervention. These stages are not fixed points, but run along a spectrum that people naturally move across throughout their lives and careers.

# Stage 1: Well Prevention and maintenance.

## What this stage looks like:

Workers in this stage are functioning well with good mental, physical and financial health. They benefit from resources that help maintain overall wellbeing, opportunities for growth and development, and work-life balance support.

## Services and programs you can offer to your employees:

Proactive services that you can offer to your employees in this stage should help educate and empower them to maintain their current level of mental and physical wellbeing. Programs geared toward prevention and maintenance may include:

- **Real-time activity tracking** to monitor health metrics and physical activity levels
- **Personalized health plans** that can be tailored to individual needs and goals
- **Fitness and nutrition coaching** such as professional guidance for exercise routines and dietary choices
- **Personal and professional development learning opportunities** to help enhance skills and promote career growth
- **Work-life balance initiatives** including flexible schedules and designated wellbeing days
- **Financial wellbeing programs**, such as pension matching and structured savings plans





### Expected impact for employees:

Greater resilience when facing everyday stressors, better work-life balance, higher energy levels and improved physical health markers.

This is important as employees satisfied with their physical health score significantly higher on mental health assessments and gain 21 more days of productivity each year.

Notably, employees who get at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week miss an average of 4.1 fewer days of work per year.

 Reduced minor absences

 Improved retention rates

 Enhanced employer brand

 Stronger organizational culture

### Expected impact for organizations:

Reduced minor absences, improved retention rates, enhanced employer brand and stronger organizational culture. Organizations that prioritize workplace wellness programs attract and retain top talent, and experience 37 percent lower absenteeism rates and 25 percent lower health care costs.



### The cost of neglecting prevention:

Higher rates of absenteeism, minor health issues evolving into serious concerns and increased healthcare costs over time. Research shows that most (76 percent) workers fail to get the recommended amount of physical activity, which has a compounding effect on business. Those rating poor employer support for their physical wellbeing lose an additional 23 working days in productivity annually compared to those reporting excellent support.

## Stage 2: Struggling Early intervention and support.

### What this stage looks like:

Workers in this stage are experiencing challenges that affect their wellbeing, but can still function with appropriate support. The challenges they may be facing could include emerging mental health concerns, work-related stress, family difficulties or financial pressures.

### Services and programs you can offer to your employees:

Services that you can offer your employees in this stage should help limit the impact of the risks they are facing and empower them to access the support they need. Support programs may include:

- **Counseling services** through multiple channels spanning in-person sessions, video calls, phone consultations and text messaging
- **Specialized services** for financial concerns and legal issues
- **Family support services** providing childcare guidance and elder-care resources to help employees manage family responsibilities
- **Digital self-guided mental health solutions** providing accessible therapeutic support and interventions





Significant improvement in depression symptoms



Decreased absenteeism and presenteeism



Improved team dynamics



Lower healthcare costs



Enhanced manager effectiveness

#### Expected impact for employees:

Significant improvement in depression symptoms, improved concentration at work, enhanced coping strategies and resilience and prevention of symptom escalation.

#### Expected impact for organizations:

Decreased absenteeism and presenteeism, improved team dynamics, lower healthcare costs and enhanced manager effectiveness.

**75%**

of medical costs accrued are mostly due to preventable conditions.

#### The cost of inadequate intervention:

Higher rates of long-term disability claims, extended recovery times, higher insurance premiums and turnover of valuable talent.

This can all lead to significant costs to the business. According to research, 75 percent of medical costs accrued are mostly due to preventable conditions, while up to 20 percent of total payroll in voluntary turnover costs are due to burnout. Businesses lose an estimated \$20 million in lost opportunity due to employees who are struggling.

**20%**

of total payroll in voluntary turnover costs are due to burnout.

## Stage 3: Unwell Specialized support and recovery.

### What this stage looks like:

Workers in this stage are experiencing significant mental or physical health issues that impair their focus and functioning. They may be unable to work or fulfill their usual responsibilities due to serious health conditions, burnout or other significant challenges.

### Services and programs you can offer to your employees:

Support at this stage should focus on helping employees respond to their acute needs, and may include:

- Counseling
- Critical incident response
- Enhanced mental health benefits
- Access to specialist assessments
- Interventions and return to work support services





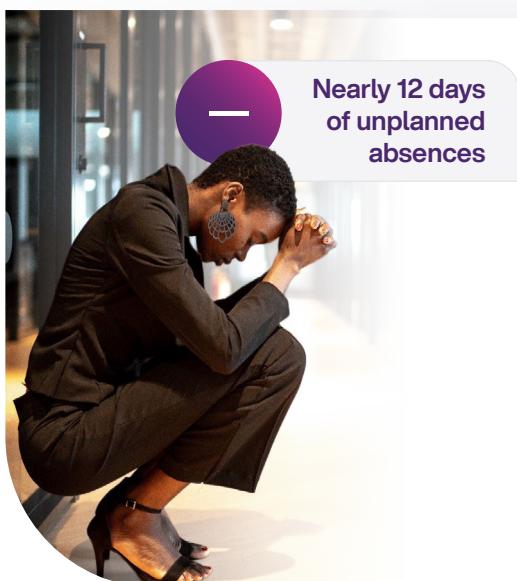
### Expected impact for employees:

Successful reintegration into the workplace, sustained recovery and wellbeing, prevention of symptom recurrence and enhanced work satisfaction.

- ✓ Shortened disability durations
- ✓ Lower disability costs
- ✓ Retention of institutional knowledge and talent
- ✓ Improved team cohesion
- ✓ Stronger corporate culture of support

### Expected impact for organizations:

Shortened disability durations, lower disability costs, retention of institutional knowledge and talent, improved team cohesion and stronger corporate culture of support.



### The cost of ineffective recovery support:

Repeated absences, higher long-term disability costs, loss of valuable talent and negative impacts on team dynamics and morale.

Over a 12-month period, workers with fair or poor mental health are estimated to have nearly 12 days of unplanned absences annually compared with 2.5 days for all other workers. Generalized across the U.S. workforce, this missed work is estimated to cost the economy USD \$47.6 billion annually in lost productivity.

# Beyond traditional models: modern EAP solutions.

An all-in-one service offers a critical advantage to organizations that traditionally struggle with low utilization and awareness of EAPs. By integrating wellbeing tools with EAP services, employees can more easily discover the support they need, while using the features they enjoy, ultimately helping to boost awareness and utilization across all services – which can lead to improved productivity, stronger engagement and a workforce that prioritizes wellness. It's a win-win for everyone involved.

Instead of waiting for health issues to surface, these platforms offer a powerful preventative approach to wellbeing. Employees, for example, can monitor fitness goals, schedule personalized counseling sessions, and access tailored resources – all while activity tracking, wearable technologies and health assessments work behind the scenes to improve physical activity, sleep quality and reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

Improved physical activity translates directly into business value. Organizations can lower health-related costs by 10 to 22 percent by encouraging a more active workforce and see 21 additional productive days per year among employees satisfied with their physical health.

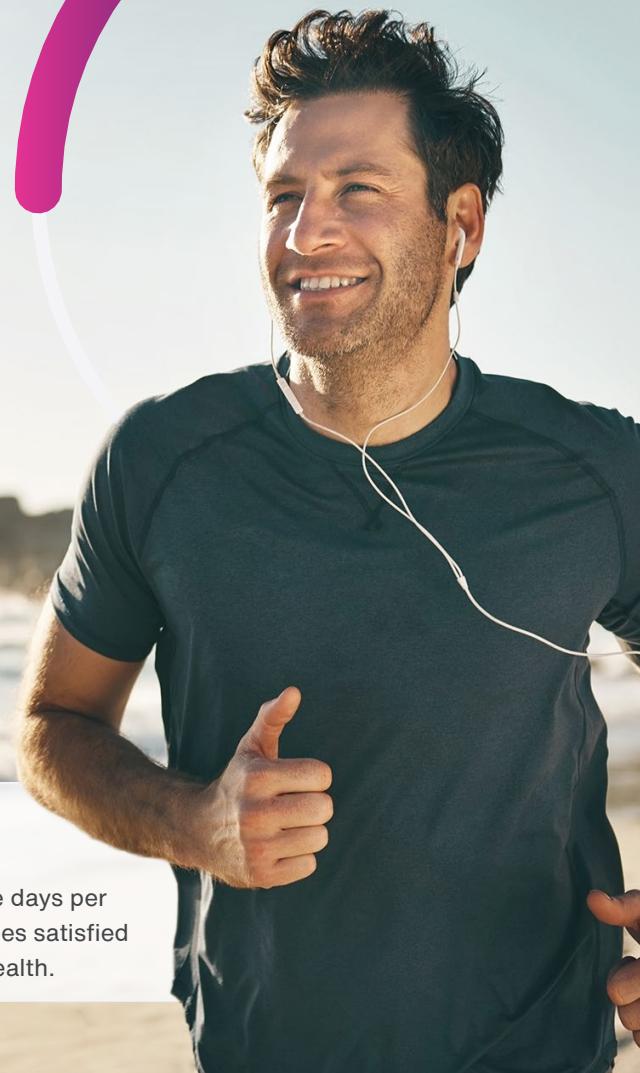
Beyond these measurable outcomes, access to real-time insights that provide immediate progress feedback to help you better understand what programs are working and where the opportunities are to make data-driven business decisions that can help improve the health of your organization.

Up to  
**22%**  
lower health-related costs for active workforces.



**+21**

additional productive days per year among employees satisfied with their physical health.



# Measurable returns on wellbeing investment.

## Business impact across key areas.

Organizations implementing comprehensive EAPs and wellbeing support experience significant improvements in key performance indicators across several critical areas:

**-4.1**

**fewer sick days**

Physically active employees require fewer healthcare expenditures — and those who exercise vigorously for at least 75 minutes per week take approximately 4.1 fewer sick days per year, on average.

**-46.6%**

**absenteeism**

Reduced absenteeism, with studies showing a 46.6 percent improvement.

**3x**

**more effective at improving wellbeing**

Active EAP users are almost 3 times more effective (287 percent) at improving their wellbeing and reducing presenteeism.

**+16 points**

**higher mental health score**

Workers who indicate that their employer's support improved have a mental health score 16 points higher than workers who indicated the support lessened.

**1.5x**

**more likely to develop psychological safety**

Active EAP users are over 1.5 times (168 percent) more likely to develop psychological safety at work.



# Positive clinical outcomes mean positive business outcomes.

Your organization can help foster a healthier work environment with the right wellbeing partner.

TELUS Health's proven clinical outcomes also contribute to reduced absenteeism, increased engagement and tangible return on investment.

With TELUS Health EAP, positive clinical outcomes mean positive business outcomes.



## Employee outcomes

82%

of people with moderate to severe depression see **symptom improvement** after accessing counseling services.<sup>1</sup>

45%

of employees report **more engagement at work** after accessing counseling services.<sup>2</sup>

65%

**feel better** about their life<sup>3</sup>

51%

**no longer dread** going to work<sup>4</sup>

55%

feel they can **concentrate better** after accessing counseling<sup>5</sup>

13%

**improvement in overall physical activity**<sup>6</sup>



## EAP return on investment for employers.



**+66 hours**

Each user gains approximately 66 hours of productivity.<sup>7</sup>



**0.9%**

Utilization rate at which EAP investment is recovered<sup>9</sup>



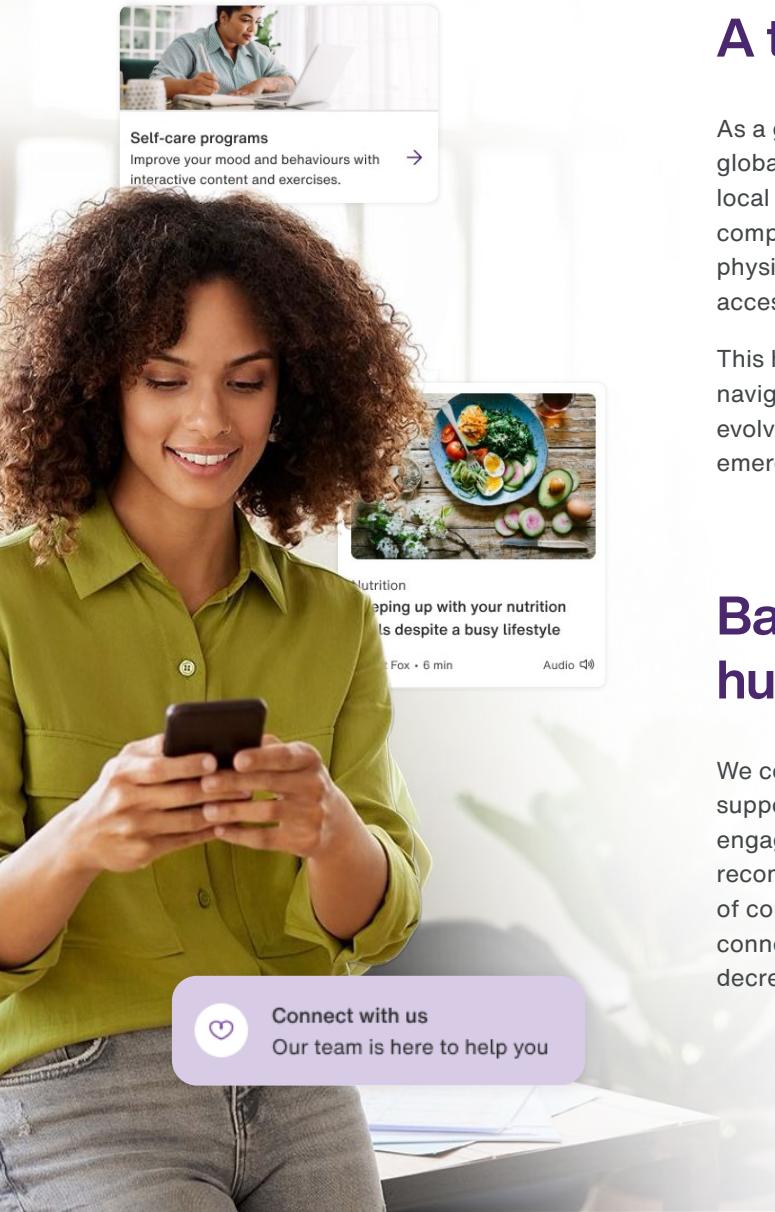
**3.35:1**

The average return on investment for EAP services<sup>8</sup>

1. Based on results compiled using WOS survey data and internal TELUS Health analysis. PHQ-9 score is assessed by clinician at intake and end of case. Results for users presenting with moderate to severe depression. 82% had symptom improvement of 3+ points on their PHQ-9 score. 65% had marked improvement of 6 points or more.
2. WOS outcome data EAP USA 2023 - based on 6,487 completed pre-EAP and post-EAP WOS surveys.
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
5. Ibid
6. TELUS Health Wellbeing 2023-2024 internal data.
7. 2023 USA EAP ROI analysis. Based Workplace outcome suite report data for US Book of Business averages, Jan 1 2023-Dec 31, 2023.
8. Ibid
9. Ibid

# Why partner with TELUS Health?

At TELUS Health, we've developed an enhanced approach that goes beyond traditional EAP offerings. Our solutions help address evolving workplace challenges with comprehensive programs that can help support employees, no matter where they are in the wellbeing continuum – feeling well, struggling or feeling unwell. We aim to deliver actionable insights for leaders and personalized care journeys that help prevent escalations and support employees at every step of their journey.



## A truly integrated approach.

As a global leader in health and wellbeing solutions, we fuse global clinical excellence with a digital-first approach and local understanding, backed by data-driven insights and comprehensive support. Our platform seamlessly connects physical, mental and social wellbeing programs through a single access point, helping increase employee adoption.

This holistic approach helps ensure your employees can easily navigate from one type of care to another as their needs evolve – whether they're seeking preventive resources, facing emerging challenges or requiring support during difficult times.

## Balancing technology and human connection.

We combine advanced digital tools with compassionate human support to create a user experience designed to help drive engagement. Our AI-powered platform delivers personalized recommendations and resources, while our extensive network of counselors and specialists provides the essential human connection. This balance of technology and personal touch can decrease the dropout rates by 2.9 times.

## Global reach with local expertise.

Every 10 seconds, TELUS Health is caring for or supporting someone around the world.

We bring this extensive experience to your organization with support in 70+ languages, a network of more than 180,000 counselors and health professionals, and trusted relationships with more than 2,000 clients in the U.S. Our services help more than 164 million individuals worldwide across 200 countries and territories.



70+ languages



180,000+  
counselors and  
health professionals



2,000+  
clients in the U.S



164 million+  
individuals



200 countries  
and territories

## Prevention that performs.

In today's competitive landscape, supporting employee wellbeing can be a strategic business advantage that can directly impact your bottom line through improved talent retention, workforce engagement and productivity – because when your people thrive, your business thrives.

**TELUS Health is committed to helping employers build the healthiest workplaces on the planet.**

Talk to us about how we can support your people along the wellbeing continuum, and help to boost productivity, engagement and other key metrics that are important to your organization.

Contact us

# Continue learning

Discover additional resources that can help inform and support your organization's mental health and wellbeing strategy.



## Balancing the health benefits needs of a multigenerational workforce.

Explore the generational differences between today's employees, and how employers can help build and sustain an engaged, productive workforce with flexible health benefits plans.

[Get the eBook](#)



## Accommodating mental health in the workplace.

Learn how implementing a mental health model in the workplace can help ensure employees are supported at every stage of their journey.

[Read the article](#)



## Holistic health: The intersection of employee mental, physical and financial wellbeing.

Explore the interconnected aspects of employee health and how they affect the performance of individuals and organizations alike.

[Get the eBook](#)



[telushealth.com](http://telushealth.com)