

eBook

Let's talk about the health we don't talk about

A side-by-side look at the unseen, stigmatized, and overlooked issues shaping the lives of men and women at work — and what employers can do about it



Health isn't something employees can check at the door.

There's no coat rack for chronic pain. No shelf for postpartum depression. No quiet corner to leave a cancer diagnosis behind.

People carry it all with them — into every meeting, every deadline, every decision.

And while every employee brings their own health story to work, some experiences are shaped by something more specific, and more often overlooked: gender.

At Personify Health, we believe health is deeply personal, and everyone deserves care that reflects who they are. That's why we're committed to supporting all gender identities. While this guide focuses on the health challenges of cisgender men and women, we share this note to be clear about its scope and respectful of all identities

From postpartum depression to prostate cancer, menopause to mental health, many of the most urgent health challenges in today's workforce are gender-specific and still surrounded by silence, shame, or stigma.

These aren't rare conditions. But they're rarely acknowledged.

They're personal, emotional, deeply human, and have a direct impact on productivity, absenteeism, and retention.

And yet, most workplaces still treat them as private matters instead of what they truly are: **critical business realities** that shape how people show up, stay engaged, and succeed at work.



When these challenges are overlooked or unsupported, companies lose time, talent, and trust.

Supporting the unique challenges that **women and men** face starts with seeing what's already there. Naming what's been neglected.

That's why at our Thrive Summits in 2024 and 2025, we brought these conversations to the forefront by hosting candid panel conversations on men's and women's health.

What we heard in both discussions was consistent and powerful: your people are navigating deeply personal gender-specific health challenges every day. And most of them still don't feel safe enough to say a word.

Consider this your guide to breaking that silence. By understanding the gendered health challenges your people are facing, you'll be better equipped to support them in ways that are personal and practical, so you can create a culture where people feel seen, supported, and able to succeed.

Inside you'll learn:

- 1 The three most overlooked and least understood challenges affecting women's and men's health
- 2 Why silence around gender-specific health challenges costs everyone
- 3 And how employers can start building systems of personalized and sustainable support. Where there's something for everybody, not the same thing for everyone.



Want to see the full conversations?



Watch the full women's panel discussion to gain powerful insights on what's missing from most benefits strategies and how to better support your women's health in your organization through maternal mental health, menopause, and more.

Watch now →



Watch the full men's panel discussion to get a clearer picture of what the men in your workforce are really facing through the candid takeaways from experts and advocates on how stigma, silence, and outdated norms are costing employees and what employers can do to break the cycle.

Watch now →

Maternal mental health

The phase we still don't plan for

Returning to work after childbirth isn't a return to normal. It's often the start of a silent mental health crisis. Postpartum depression, anxiety, and identity shifts hit hard, but few women feel safe enough to speak up.

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“I came back from maternity leave eight months ago with my second kid, and it was really hard. Like, really, really hard... She [my boss] sat me down. She's like, ‘This is going to be a really hard three months for you... You don't have to be working beyond the nine to five.’ It gave me permission to ease back in and have so much more confidence in my job.”

— Emily Lindemer, Executive Director of Data & Women's Health Innovation, Morgan Health

What's going unseen:

- **1 in 7 women** experience postpartum depression annually
- Most go undiagnosed and unsupported
- Return-to-work plans focus on logistics, not emotional recovery

Men's mental health stigma

The pressure to power through

From an early age, men are taught to suppress emotions. That silence follows them into the workplace, where stress and anxiety often go unspoken and untreated.

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“Men are expected to live a certain way... it's normative. It's normal, for men to live sicker and die younger... Like, people look at us and they're like, ‘Well, just shake it off. You're alright. You're sad. You're good. Just keep going, brother.’ I'm like, yeah. I don't wanna keep going sometimes, you know? But they expect you to do that.”

— Dr. Michael Rovito, Associate Professor, UCF & Co-Founder, Male Wellness Collective

What's going unspoken:

- **40% of men** have never talked about their mental health
- Emotional pain is masked as irritability, withdrawal, or burnout
- Stigma leads to underuse of therapy, EAPs, and wellness benefits

Menopause and perimenopause

The career years no one talks about

Between ages 45–55, many women face a major biological transition often while leading teams, mentoring others, and driving strategy. But menopause symptoms like brain fog, anxiety, and sleep disruption are rarely acknowledged at work.

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“So much of women’s health care is stigmatized. It makes no sense... We live all of our lives like this. So it is not possible to age and not go through this physiologic process... Brain fog, is super disruptive, including at work... But all this making fun of it really misses the underlying cross currents.”

— Dr. Joanne Armstrong, Chief Medical Officer, Women’s Health, CVS Health

Why it stays invisible:

- Cultural stigma = silence
- Women fear being seen as “less capable” if they speak up
- Most benefits and leave policies don’t address midlife transitions

Preventive care avoidance

Why men wait until it’s too late

Many men delay, doctors visits and screenings even they’re dealing with an experiencing obvious symptoms“ to „Even when their bodies send clear signals that something isn’t right, many men will put off their preventative doctor visits and health screenings.

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“I knew men that were urinating blood, and they still would refuse to go in. I’m like, what will it take? All these cancers... that is something that is wrapped up in this idea of being a man. Because that was told to us as a boy — you’re like, ‘Don’t talk about that...’”

— Dr. Michael Rovito, Associate Professor, UCF & Co-Founder, Male Wellness Collective

Why it gets delayed:

- Social conditioning: real men “tough it out”
- Health feels transactional, not personal
- Screenings feel invasive, unnecessary, or emasculating

The hidden load of caregiving

The job no one hired her for

Before her workday even begins, she's managing medications, school drop-offs, and doctor appointments. From children to aging parents, women carry the "second shift" often without recognition or support.

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“We walk through the day and say, I’ve got this much time. What am I going to dedicate it to?.... We have to do more with less, like, all the time.”

— Dr. Joanne Armstrong, Chief Medical Officer, Women’s Health, CVS Health

Why it matters:

- 60% of caregivers are women
- Caregiving stress leads to burnout, absenteeism, and career pauses
- Emotional labor and mental overload are invisible — but constant

Cardiovascular disease: The silent killer

The #1 cause of death for men

According to the CDC, heart disease kills more than 357,000 men in the U.S. every year. And yet, most men don't know the signs or how much chronic stress, poor sleep, and long hours are putting them at risk.

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“I was diagnosed with coronary artery disease. I have a 40% blockage... You sense mortality.”

— Dr. Michael Rovito, Associate Professor, UCF & Co-Founder, Male Wellness Collective

What's going unchecked:

- Sitting >10 hours/day increases heart failure risk by 60%
- Emotional stress is directly tied to heart health
- High blood pressure and cholesterol often go unnoticed until crisis hits

When Health Goes Unseen, Everyone Pays for It

Ignoring gender-specific health needs doesn't just hurt employees; it hurts your business.

How this shows up at work:

- **Support is available but unused**
 - Men avoid EAPs and screenings. Women don't feel safe speaking up. Benefits go underutilized.
- **Burnout becomes the baseline**
 - Employees push through anxiety, fatigue, grief, or pain until they can't anymore.
- **Productivity quietly suffers**
 - Brain fog, disengagement, and chronic stress lead to missed deadlines and missed opportunities.
- **Top talent walks away**
 - Mid-career employees, especially women, leave due to lack of support, not lack of ambition.
- **Leadership pipelines dry up**
 - Unaddressed health issues take future leaders out of the running before they even raise their hand.



- Menopause symptoms cost U.S. employers \$26.6 billion annually in lost productivity and healthcare costs. (source)
- 40% of men have never spoken to anyone about their mental health. 29% say it's because they're embarrassed. 20% cite stigma (source)
- 23% of women ages 40–60 wanted to quit their jobs due to lack of support for menstrual, perimenopause, or menopause challenges (source)
- Men with untreated mental health issues lose 57% more workdays annually than their peers (source)

From awareness to action: 5 ways to support real health at work

You don't have to solve everything, but you do need to start somewhere. These steps help bridge the gap between what your employees are facing and what your benefits are offering.

1

Personalize benefits by life stage

As the health needs of your workforce evolve, so should your benefits. Supporting your employees requires targeted, life-cycle specific solutions.

- ✔ Offer support for menopause, maternal mental health, and caregiving
- ✔ Include postpartum and perimenopause-specific care in mental health benefits
- ✔ Expand access with telehealth and asynchronous options

Looking for an easy way to start?

Discover how personalized health support can meet your people at every stage of life.

Learn more →



2

Build a culture of psychological safety

When employees don't feel safe sharing what they're going through, they won't ask for the support they need. That's why building psychological safety is a must.

- ✔ Train managers to recognize and respond to health disclosures with empathy
- ✔ Normalize conversations around mental health and women's health
- ✔ Create ERGs or peer spaces for shared experiences and support

Ready to get started?

Explore how to foster real psychological safety at work — without guessing.

Learn more →



3

Reimagine leave and flexibility

Health doesn't follow a schedule and support shouldn't either. Inclusive leave and flexible work policies are what make long-term careers possible, especially for midlife women and working parents.

- ✔ Extend family leave to include caregiving and recovery periods
- ✔ Normalize flexible work without career penalties
- ✔ Consider menopause or caregiver leave as part of inclusive benefits



4

Invest in education and awareness

You can't support what you don't understand and neither can your managers. Empowering your workforce starts with education. When employees and leaders alike understand the realities of menopause, maternal mental health, and men's mental health, the door opens to empathy, early intervention, and meaningful use of benefits.

- ✔ Host webinars on menopause, maternal mental health, men's mental health
- ✔ Offer toolkits for managers and employees
- ✔ Partner with vendors who specialize in gender-responsive healthcare

5

Make health part of your everyday

Too often, health benefits are only mentioned during onboarding or open enrollment, leaving employees to navigate complex, fragmented systems on their own the rest of the time. But when health is embedded into your culture, people feel supported year-round, not just when they're handed a brochure of plan options.

- ✔ Communicate benefits regularly, not just once a year
- ✔ Integrate health touchpoints into team meetings, intranet, and manager 1:1s
- ✔ Use storytelling, ERGs, and champions to reduce stigma and normalize use
- ✔ Make it easy for employees to find and use support when they need it — without having to piece it all together themselves



How to make healthier easier — for everyone.

By now, one thing should be clear:

Supporting your people's health means supporting the full spectrum of human experience, including the challenges shaped by gender.

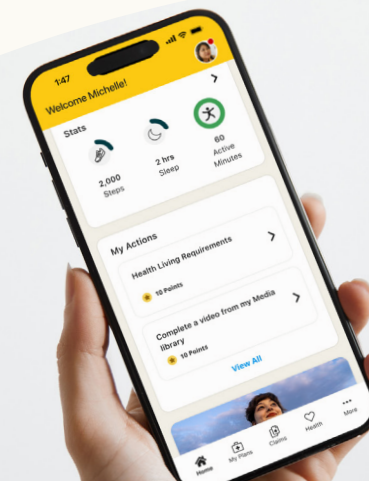
But if you're thinking...

"How am I supposed to address all of this without juggling a dozen vendors, systems, or strategies?"

You're not alone. That's exactly the problem our personalized health platform was designed to solve.

One Platform. Many Solutions. All Personalized.

- ✓ Emotional health, stress, and burnout support — from mindfulness and therapy to coaching and EAPs
- ✓ Caregiver support— including resources for working parents and supporting aging family members
- ✓ Chronic condition management — for diabetes, hypertension, MSK, and more
- ✓ Reproductive and hormonal health — from fertility and family planning to menopause care
- ✓ Preventive care access — with tools for screenings, risk assessments, and early intervention
- ✓ Health navigation and transparency — to help members make informed, cost-effective choices
- ✓ Whole-person coordination — with solutions that connect care, lifestyle, and wellbeing
- ✓ And much more. Because health is never just one thing; it's everything.



And you can have it all within a single, unified experience designed to reduce complexity, increase engagement, and meet your people wherever they are in their lives.

We've done the vetting.

We've built the integrations.

We've optimized the engagement.

So your team can focus on what matters most: impact, not infrastructure.

Because better health doesn't come from more vendors.

It comes from smarter integration — and support that sees the whole person.

Learn how our partner ecosystem can support every stage of men's and women's health.

Explore partner marketplace →



Where we go from here

Congratulations! You've taken the first step to seeing what's long been invisible — and choosing to do something about it.

You've named what's been ignored — maternal mental health, menopause, caregiving, mental health stigma, and more.

You've seen how these issues impact not only people's wellbeing but also the health of your business. And most importantly, you've learned how to begin responding with empathy, systems, and strategy.

Now it's time to turn that insight into strategy. Your people need more than generic benefits. They need support that's specific, stigma-free, and built around real life.



For more inspiration from Thrive Summit:



Thrive Summit 2024 replay library: Catch up on keynotes, panels, and breakout sessions you may have missed. employer health.

Watch the 2024 Thrive replays →



Thrive Summit 2025 replay library: Dive into new insights on building a more proactive, personalized health strategy for everyone on your team. employer health.

Watch the 2025 Thrive replays →



Save the date: Thrive Summit 2026: Join the biggest conversations in workforce health — and be part of what's next live on March 17th - 19th, 2026! employer health.

Get updates and block your calendar →

Book a demo to see how Personify Health helps HR and benefits leaders like you deliver personalized care for every body — and every stage of life.

Book a demo →



About Personify Health

By bringing industry-leading third party administration, holistic wellbeing, and navigation solutions together, all in one place, we have created the industry's first and only personalized health platform. With decades of experience and global operations, we empower diverse and unique businesses – and diverse and unique people – to engage more deeply in health at a lower cost. Through our proprietary combination of data-driven personalization, science-backed methodology, and concierge-level clinical expertise, our end-to-end platform makes it easier to proactively address people's needs across their lives. With a personalized, holistic, and powerfully simple experience, we are redefining industry expectations and what it means to manage health.

Let's connect →



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