



# Well-being

of Polish women and men

Research and content  
development



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A: Have you ever heard such a word as “well-being”?

B: No. Does it mean good condition?

A: Let it be. What does it mean to you: to be in good condition?

B: That I’m happy, cheerful, and energetic, for example. And also it’s when I wake up and know that something cool is waiting for me. And the bad state is when I’m so exhausted, just sitting on my phone.

**Excerpt from a conversation  
with Mia (age 9) of the Alpha generation**

Well-being – I understand that it is the feeling when someone is in a state where they feel good. That’s a nice word. I hadn’t heard of it before. Life presents us with many challenges. I know something about it because I’ve already lived ninety-three years. And it is the preservation of our “state of well-being” in all of this that is important. The sense of this well-being should probably always be at the right level for us. It’s worse when someone doesn’t know how to take care of themselves and doesn’t know what calls them to daily well-being. Here it is already necessary to know oneself, and this is probably not so obvious today.

**Excerpt from a conversation with Albina (93)  
of the Silent Generation**

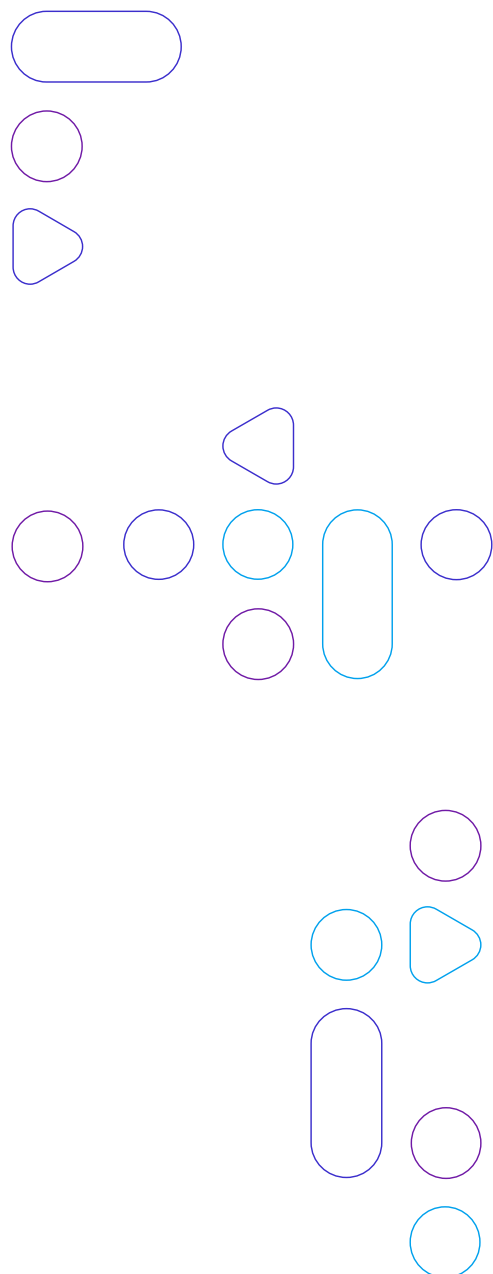
Today, facing economic, geopolitical, climate, energy, and many other crises, we live in a world of so-called crisis multiplication. On top of this, we are dealing with the increasing technologization of our lives, polarization and a nanosecond culture that forces us to be constantly in a hurry. All this has a negative impact on our physical and mental health, on the quality of our relationships, and consequently on the way society and the economy function. Not surprisingly, achieving well-being in the broadest sense is one of the most significant challenges today – also for companies. After all, as the sense of well-being declines, people's commitment, and their work efficiency decrease. Instead, job burnout and employee turnover are on the rise. However, measures taken by organizations to improve well-being are often not effective. And this is for several reasons. First of all, companies tend to look for a one-size-fits-all solutions to help their employees achieve well-being. This is impossible because well-being is something very individual. Secondly, they try to improve well-being through small, sometimes superficial initiatives, while the source of the lack of well-being is sometimes difficult to diagnose without the right tools. And finally, poor measurement of well-being or a complete lack thereof can constitute a major problem. So it was with

great pleasure that we accepted Benefit Systems' invitation to create a well-being index to address these challenges. It is an index that measures well-being at the individual level and thus allows to well-being viable, impactful solutions. An index that is holistic and encompasses many aspects of our functioning that affect our sense of well-being, including, for example, our relationships with others, the comfort of our lives or contact with nature. An index that can be used both on the individual and organizational level. And finally, an index that can not only accurately identify areas requiring intervention, but also monitor progress and adjust strategies in response to dynamically changing conditions and employee needs. In this report, we present not only Well-being Score – the tool we developed – but also the results of a survey of the well-being of Polish women and men. I believe that the data will help all of us not only to take steps that realistically improve the quality of life of employees, but also to build a sustainable culture of well-being that is the foundation of a strong and healthy society.

Wishing you a good read

**– Natalia Hatałska**  
**CEO, infuture.institute**





At Benefit Systems, we have been supporting employees and employers on their path to a healthy and active life for more than 20 years. We understand that individual well-being consists of many factors. When creating our solutions, we focus on taking care of the body and mind holistically. The MultiSport program helps maintain regular physical activity, affecting efficiency and engagement at work, coping with stress, as well as improving mental fitness. The MultiLife platform, on the other hand, comprehensively supports personal development and resilience. Our products combine to form a well-being ecosystem, holistically addressing a variety of personal and business needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced all of us – both employees and employers – to redefine our priorities and needs. Concern for mental health and maintaining work-life balance have come to the fore. This is a signal of global changes also taking place in our society.

It is becoming increasingly important to keep the body and mind fit through prevention – regular physical activity, a healthy diet, regeneration and regular checkups. We are living longer but under constant pressure caused by polycrisis. Wars, economic crisis, climate disaster, global-

ization and unlimited development of technology create fear of what tomorrow will bring. To function in the VUCA era – in an unpredictable, complex, ambiguous, and uncertain environment – we need to build new competencies.

In a changing world, it is becoming crucial to strive for continuous expansion of one's knowledge and skills (life-long learning). Not only the hard and technological ones, but especially the soft and mental ones. One of them is resilience – adaptability to change, another – building relationships with others. Also taking care of one's own holistic well-being is becoming an important competence of the 21st century.

However, to take care of something, we need to diagnose the current state. Awareness of one's needs is an excellent starting point for developing and improving well-being in various areas. That is why, in cooperation with infuture. institute, we have developed a tool to measure well-being. Since it varies over time, one can take the survey repeatedly to see what kind of changes take place.

Insight into information on employee well-being allows employers to determine the starting point for developing a well-being strategy at

the company. It makes it possible to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of ongoing activities – both on the individual and organizational level. In addition, ongoing monitoring of indicators allows to verify well-being activities and respond to changes.

The basis for the development of our tool was a survey conducted on a representative sample of Polish women and men. Its results are presented in this report. We hope it will become the basis for a broader discussion of our well-being.

We are committed that both leaders and employees take care of their well-being. Better health and comfort help cope with daily challenges. And that improves the quality of life – both at work and outside of work.

**– Benefit Systems**

# Executive Summary

## WHY WELL-BEING?

We are living in times that make us feel fearful and anxious, and cause us to lose our sense of security. Our world is a world of polycrisis – at one time we are dealing with a climate crisis, a geopolitical crisis, an economic crisis, a health crisis, and a crisis of relationships and trust. In addition, we are living in a time of so-called techceleration, a moment when the proliferation of technologies is faster than our ability to assimilate them. Living in such an uncertain, volatile, fragile, and challenging reality requires us, both at the level of individuals and organizations, to treat well-being as a resource that helps us adapt, operate effectively, and build resilience in a dynamically changing world.

## HOW TO MEASURE WELL-BEING?

Aware of the persistence and severity of polycrisis, infuture.institute, on behalf of Benefit Systems, developed the Well-being Score – a proprietary well-being index that allows us to monitor our level of well-being and proactively work to improve the score. The index is holistic (it takes into account multiple factors), contextual (it depends on the situation we are in), time-varying (it takes into account our lifestyle), and multi-level. It takes into account six areas in the two dimensions in which we function daily. Physical health, mental health, and inner peace are internal, more subjective areas – they reflect a person's view of the elements related to him as an individual. Life comfort, relationships, and nature, on the other hand, are external areas, relating to elements of social life, finances, the economic-political situation, or relations with the natural environment. Thus, the Wellbeing Score is the first model of its kind that treats well-being comprehensively and allows its level to be regularly verified among Polish women and men.

## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF WELL-BEING?

No matter what we call this phenomenon – be it work-life balance, work-life blending, or work-life integration – we know that work and personal life form a system of interconnected vessels. Therefore, work is a horizontal area that permeates all six component areas of the Wellbeing Score. We find the work thread in areas related to relationships with others, mental health, inner peace, or comfort of life.

We also know that neglecting the well-being of employees affects the less efficient functioning of the economy, if only because of their lost productivity, non-attendance, or layoffs. Nurturing relationships and developing interests and passions translates into our overall mental and emotional well-being, and ultimately into our effectiveness and productivity at work. Benefits that support the shaping of well-being should therefore go beyond it.



## KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Well-being varies over time. Currently, almost half of Polish women and men (47% of respondents) rate their well-being as average – we are thus at a point of balance. This means that people in this group if they do not take care of individual areas of well-being, can move to a lower level or, by taking care of all component areas, improve their well-being.

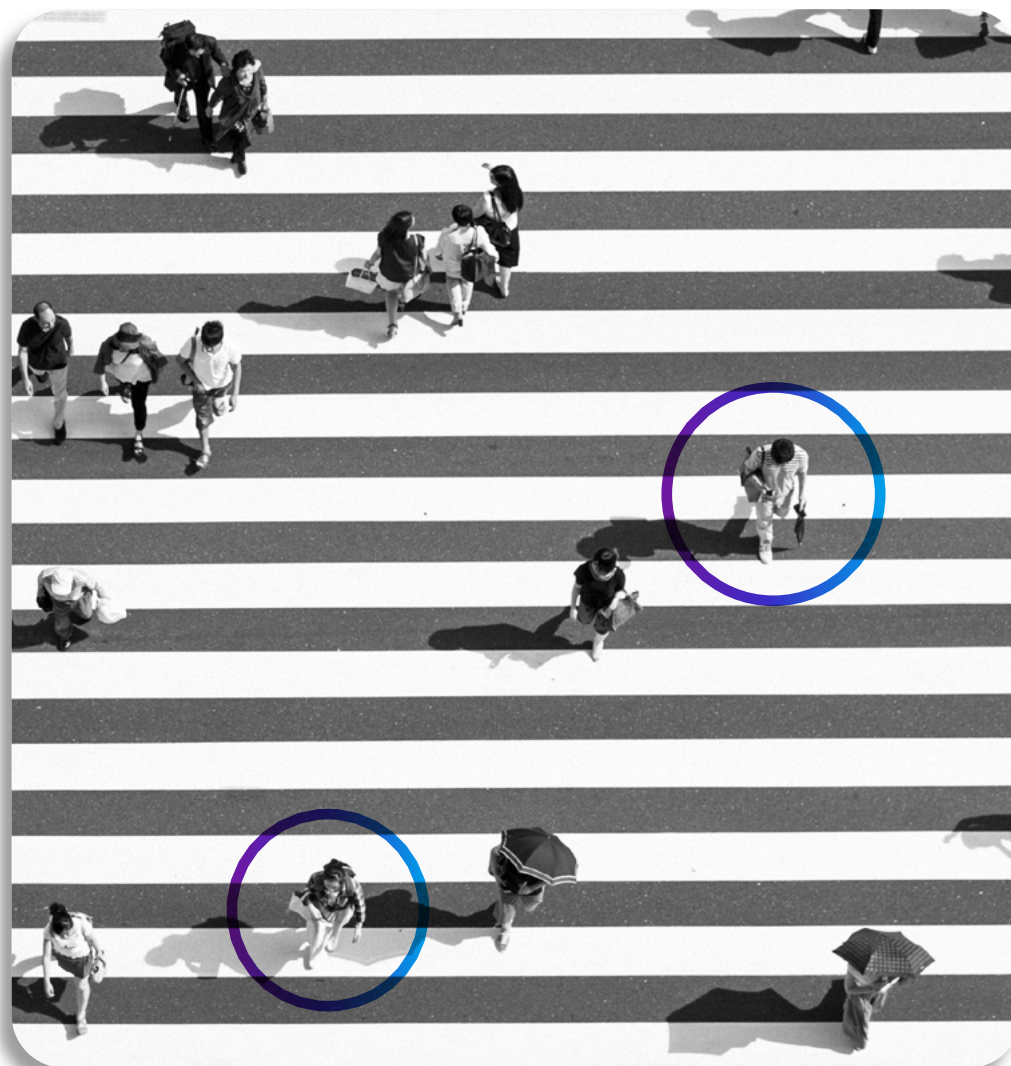
Gender does not seem to determine feelings of well-being. Minimal differences are apparent only in the case of very low and low well-being (11% men, 16% women) and may be due to social and cultural factors, such as stereotyping of the role of women, imbalance between work life and domestic responsibilities, or gender inequality issues.

The well-being of Polish women and men is correlated with their subjective age – how mature they feel, how they rate their mental abilities and physical fitness, and their overall level of satisfaction with life. Their well-being is

higher, the younger they feel. This is particularly evident at the level of high and very high well-being, where it is indicated by the highest number of people (32% and 10%, respectively) feeling younger.

A zero-one approach to well-being at work over the long term is not sufficient. It is worth taking into account an individualized approach based on various factors, such as career stage, moment in life, and the role played in the organization.

The higher level of well-being for those who work hybrid (52% in this group) compared to those who work from home (44%) and from the office (39%), may suggest a favorable impact of flexibility of forms of employment on the overall well-being of workers. Flexibility and the ability to combine work from home and the office thus appears to be a working model that allows employees to better harmonize their work and private lives.





# Well-being and its importance



## WHAT IS WELL-BEING?

The World Health Organization in 1948 defined health as „not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, but a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.”<sup>1</sup>. Such an assumption, pointing to well-being, was quite bold at the time – even too utopian for many.

Today, well-being is not only dealt with by doctors, psychologists, or sociologists but also by architects or HR specialists. Although we know more and more about it, there is still no single and valid definition. It is described both through the prism of physical health, mental health, and quality of relationships<sup>2</sup>, and by a measure of subjective feelings of happiness and satisfaction. Researchers, mainly psychologists, also pay attention to the issue of development, realization of potential, living in harmony with the nature of humans<sup>3</sup>, or the balance between one's resources and the challenges one faces<sup>4</sup>. Thus, well-being is an extremely multidimensional concept on the one hand and a very subjective one on the other.

1. World Health Organization, Constitution, <https://www.who.int/about/accountability/governance/constitution> [accessed: 31.01.2024].

2. D. Karaś, Pojęcia i koncepcje dobrostanu: przegląd i próba uporządkowania, „Studia Psychologica: Theoria et Praxis” 2019, 19(2), p. 5–23, <https://doi.org/10.21697/sp.2019.19.2.01> [accessed: 31.01.2024].

3. C. D. Ryff, Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being, „Journal of Personality and Social Psychology” 1989, 57(6), p. 1069–1081, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069> [accessed: 31.01.2024].

4. Paradygmaty współczesnego zarządzania z perspektywy młodych naukowców, ed. J. Dzierdżiora, M. Lisiński, Dąbrowa G. Nicza 2023, [https://wsb.edu.pl/files/news/11906/paradygmaty\\_wspolczesnego\\_zarzadzania.pdf](https://wsb.edu.pl/files/news/11906/paradygmaty_wspolczesnego_zarzadzania.pdf) [accessed: 31.01.2024].



Polish women and men, in a survey conducted for this report, when asked about their definition of well-being, pointed to such factors as agreeing with themselves and the world, feeling good, not worrying about what we have, living with dignity, a sense of stabilization, satisfaction with life, overall good health, peace of mind, a clean environment, being good or not having to worry about finances, among others.

The experts interviewed by infuture.institute for this report, in turn, emphasized the importance of equality, a holistic approach to taking care of oneself, and the ability to cope with challenges or resilience. They also pointed to the subjectivity of the phenomenon.

***An important element of well-being is feeling connected and belonging, both internally and externally. So a sense of connection to one's thoughts and emotions as well as belonging to a realm beyond one's existence: a social community, a cultural community, humanity, and being part of a living world.***

**Slawomir Murawiec, MD, PhD**

chief psychiatric specialist  
in Akademia Zdrowia Psychicznego Harmonia

***For me, well-being is living in balance, which includes many different factors that make up the whole. As a biologist, I would call it homeostasis or the ability to persist in a healthy, dynamic allostasis.***

**Asia Wojsiat (Podgórska), PhD**

neurobiologist, biochemist,  
university lecturer, science popularizer

***I define well-being as that moment when I feel that my resources, competencies, and mental capabilities are not less than the challenges I face. I don't need to feel that I am well, in the sense of warm and comfortable, I need to feel that I can handle reality.***

**Marta Niedźwiecka**

psychologist, sex coach, undergoing  
psychoanalytic training, authoress of the podcast  
„O zmierzchu” and the book of the same title  
as well as the book „Slow Sex”

5. Psychologia pozytywna. Nauka o szczęściu, zdrowiu, sile i cnotach człowieka, ed. J. Czapirski, Warszawa 2004, p. 7–10.

6. F. Ben Abdelaziz, Y. J. Anwar, R. Krech, V. Lin, C. Williams, Creating 'wellbeing societies': moving from rhetoric to action, <https://www.phrp.com.au/issues/july-2023-volume-33-issue-2/creating-wellbeing-societies/> [accessed: 31.01.2024].

7. On a scale of – 3 to 3, the impact of this trend was rated at 0.95.

The topic of well-being, quality of life, and the essence of a good life or a good society is particularly relevant today. Among other reasons, according to research<sup>5</sup>, despite economic progress or increasing material prosperity, people are not becoming happier at all.

We also already know that progress cannot be measured by economic indicators alone. In recent years, the World Health Organization has also alluded to well-being as a phenomenon that can engage communities and accelerate efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>6</sup>. Also, infuture.institute analysis shows that well-being as a trend has a positive impact on the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>7</sup>. It is also one of the few on the 2024 Trend Map that horizontally crosses megatrends, which demonstrates its strength and importance.

On the one hand, it is an important factor in the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. On the other, it reflects how we as societies strive for emotional and mental harmony in the face of evolving norms and values. It also underscores the need to redefine the health-care system and quality of life and to move from a reactive system to a preventive system that

will proactively help prevent diseases.

By its subjectivity, multidimensionality, and non-obviousness, well-being is a difficult phenomenon to measure. However, in today's reality, where technological advances and changing social contexts affect our daily lives, understanding and holistic measurement of well-being



ing become necessary.

## WHY MEASURING AND UNDERSTANDING THE WELL-BEING PHENOMENON IS NECESSARY?

We are living in times that make us feel<sup>8</sup> afraid and anxious (4% of the world's population suffers from anxiety disorders<sup>9</sup>), causing us to lose our sense of security. Our world is a world of polycrisis – a reality in which crises occur simultaneously, interact with each other, and through digitization and access to various sources of information are constantly present in our lives.

### Conflicts and crises

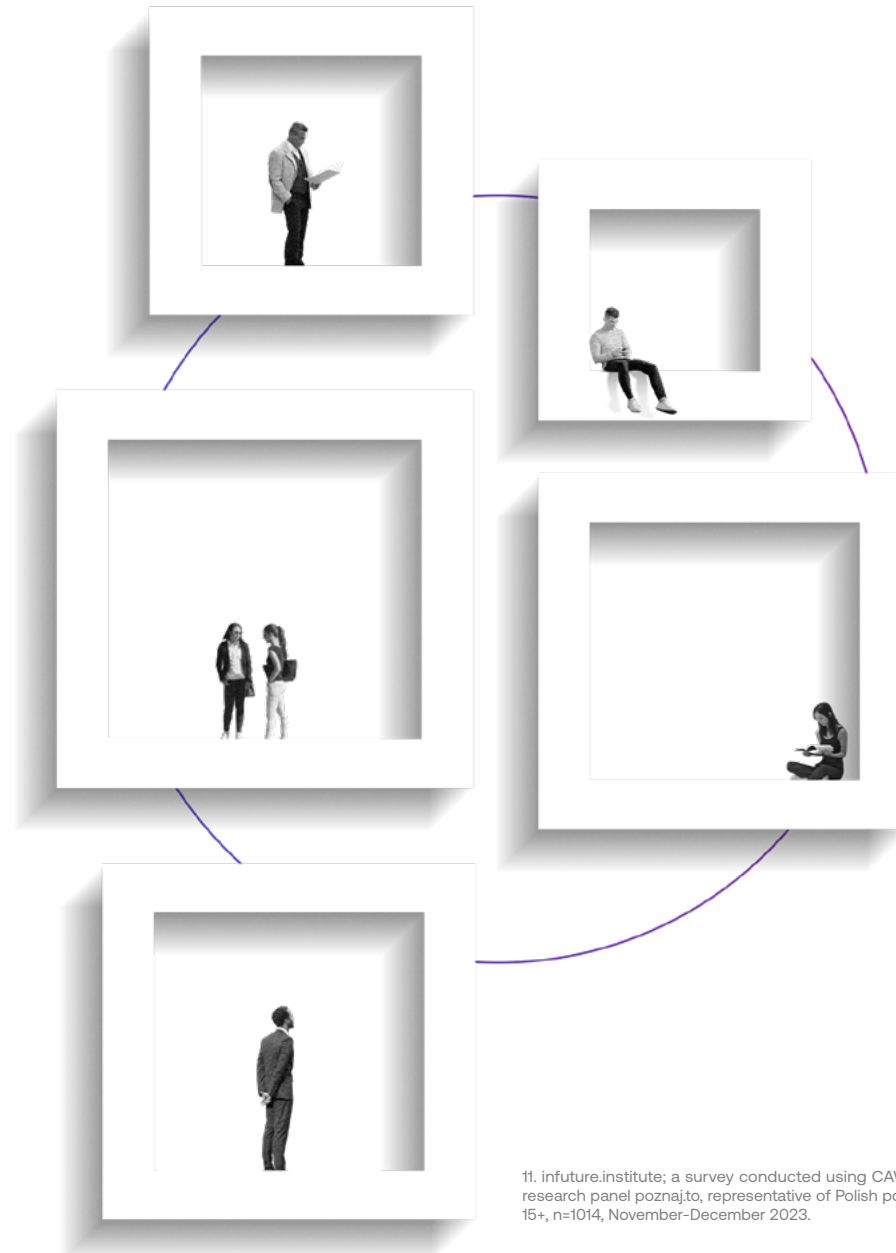
Ongoing armed conflicts around the world – Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and conflicts in the Middle East – are broadcast in the media daily. Recipients of this information may experience secondary trauma<sup>10</sup>, a state of chronic emotional stress. The current socio-political situation arouses anxiety to a high or very high degree in 61% of Polish women and men.<sup>11</sup>

8. J. Ducharme, America Has Reached Peak Therapy. Why Is Our Mental Health Getting Worse?, [www.time.com](http://www.time.com) [accessed: 22.01. 2024].

9. World Health Organization, Anxiety Disorders, [www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/anxiety-disorders](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/anxiety-disorders) [accessed: 31.01.2024].

10. A. Bhatia, O. Khokhlova, N. Lamba, C. McHugh, Mental health hygiene during a health crisis: Exploring factors associated with media-induced secondary trauma in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, „Health Psychol Open” 2023, 2(10).

11. infuture.institute; a survey conducted using CAWI method on research panel poznaj.to, representative of Polish population aged 15+, n=1014, November-December 2023.



*The results of a study we conducted on people's reactions to the pandemic and the war in Ukraine show that people who followed media messages with greater intensity experienced greater apprehension, anxiety, and more severe stress. It is unclear whether this is the result of active information-seeking by people who are inherently more fearful, or whether a feedback loop is at work here, whereby learning more about a fearful situation makes people feel even more threatened, and feeling stronger fear, they seek more information. Importantly, the aforementioned relationship has been observed in various countries around the world, not just in Poland and not just in Europe.*

**Agata Chudzicka-Czupala, PhD**

Interdisciplinary Center for Research on Social Activity  
& Well-Being FEEL & ACT WELL, SWPS University

The crisis of relationships is deepening and the problem of loneliness is increasing. Loneliness and the lack of bonding relationships between people, which are particularly acute for younger people, can provoke problems in communication and foster polarization.

We already know the extent of the consequences of this phenomenon. Loneliness is the cause of the atomization of society, reduces the sense of agency, negatively affects social engagement, and takes a toll on mental and physical health.

***The phenomenon of loneliness can have a destructive effect on various aspects of our lives, both physical and mental. In the context of physical health, loneliness can lead to an increase in cardiovascular-related diseases and a weakened immune system. Tolerance to physical pain is also then increased, which can lead to greater trauma.***

**Marta Niedźwiecka**

psychologist, sex coach, undergoing psychoanalytic training, authoress of the podcast „O zmierzchu” and the book of the same title as well as the book „Slow Sex”

## Work-life balance

The COVID-19 pandemic has upset the balance between personal and professional life. It has injected uncertainty and fear into the lives of employees, requiring them to adapt quickly to the new reality. One of the more abrupt changes was the detachment from the work environment, which resulted in a deepening sense of loneliness (as many as 74% of young workers experienced loneliness during lockdowns<sup>12</sup>) and

the need to build and maintain relationships through technology.

The place of the concept of work-life balance (maintaining a clear distinction between work and private life) began to be taken by the concept of work-life integration or work-life blending. Working from home or hybrid, employees began to combine work and private life responsibilities, juggle tasks, and manage their time flexibly. It turned out that these two worlds intersected so much that balance and rigid boundaries were not only impossible to maintain but even to clearly define. Employers have also begun to see more and more clearly that well-being cannot be divided into the professional one, cared for by the employer, and the private one cared for after working hours.

12. Lockdown loneliness & the collapse of social life at work, a survey among 2,000 of UK workers conducted by Totaljobs in July, 2020.

13. infuture.institute; a survey conducted using CAWI method on research panel poznajto, representative of Polish population aged 15+, n=1014, November-December 2023; summed indications (0, 1 – very low, 2, 3 – low, 4, 5, 6 – medium, 7, 8 – high, 9, 10 – very high).

14. M. P. Aylett, D. Ching, C. Linehan, G. Murphy, M. Quayle, J. Twomey, Do deepfake videos undermine our epistemic trust? A thematic analysis of tweets that discuss deepfakes in the Russian invasion of Ukraine, „PLOS ONE” 2023, 10(18).

15. M. Tang, J. Koopman, K. M. Mai, D. De Cremer, J. H. Zhang, P. Reynnders, Ch. T. S. Ng, I-H. Chen, No Person Is an Island: Unpacking the Work and After-Work Consequences of Interacting With Artificial Intelligence, „Journal of Applied Psychology” 2023.

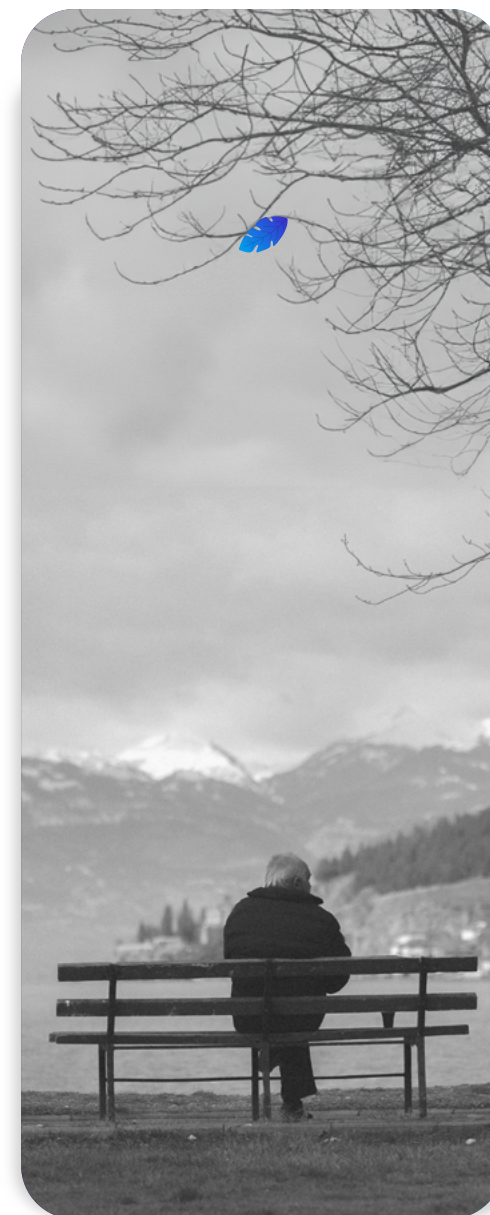
***We must remember that a person is a unity. Problems experienced at work a person also live through at home. The challenges they face in their private life, in turn, impinge on their functioning at work. The psycho-physical condition depends on what happens in both spheres of life.***

**Agata Chudzicka-Czupała, PhD**

Interdisciplinary Center for Research on Social Activity  
& Well-Being FEEL & ACT WELL, SWPS University

## Technologization and digitization of life

Uncertainty and anxiety are also exacerbated by the rapid development of technology. The pace of technological change negatively affects the quality of life of 34% of Poles to a high or very high degree<sup>13</sup>. Our uncertainty is further deepened by the blurring of the boundaries between the real and digital worlds – between what is real and what AI has created<sup>14</sup>. Previous research shows that unchecked use of artificial intelligence can contribute to deepening isolation, insomnia, and falling into addictions<sup>15</sup>. Already, phenomena such as technostress and digital anxiety reflect how over-stimulated, frustrated, and tired we are from daily use of technology for hours on end. These negative feelings are reinforced by, among other things, the ability to track armed conflicts almost in real-time or the increasingly common doom





scrolling. At the other end of the spectrum, we have digital well-being (also referred to as digital wellness), which is becoming an important part of shaping well-being and maintaining a balance between the digital and physical worlds.

**Research indicates that prolonged use of social media, especially for young people, can be disastrous for their self-esteem and mental health. Limiting the amount of time spent online to even one hour a day can have a positive effect, increasing overall happiness.**

#### Mateusz Majchrzak

certified CBT-I therapist, a specialist in sleep, stress, and anxiety and depressive disorders, member of, among others, Polskie Towarzystwo Psychologiczne and Polskie Towarzystwo Badań Nad Snem

For years, technology has been changing not only the way we function, and communicate but also the tool or forms of work. The number of apps, tools, platforms, and digital solutions grows constantly. Along with these changes, new phenomena are also gaining momentum, including digital stress, technostress, and the need for digital hygiene.

#### Climate change

2023 was the warmest year in history<sup>16</sup>. The inadequacy of global, long-term actions increases fears about the future for some people and causes an increase in anxieties about the fate of the planet and the immediate environment. Worried about the state of the environment to a high or very high degree are 60.5% of Polish women and men<sup>17</sup>. And while eco-anxiety (referred to as solastalgia – emotional suffering caused by climate disaster) is not yet a disease entity, it is becoming another increasingly common psychological burden we face.

**Anxiety about perceivable climate change and fear of climate disaster and its consequences are felt by many people, especially in younger generations. It is one of the fears that concern the future, such as the economic crisis or armed conflicts.**

#### Slawomir Murawiec, MD, PhD

chief psychiatric specialist  
in Akademia Zdrowia Psychicznego Harmonia

#### Diseases of civilization

And despite the fact that over the past hundred years, thanks to the development of technology and medicine, the length of human life has lengthened, this increase is not correlated in any way with an improvement in our quality of life. This means that we are living longer in poor or moderate health. In 2019, the World Health Organization reported that more than one billion people worldwide are living with mental health problems<sup>18</sup>. Recent studies suggest that one in two people will struggle with a mental disorder during their lifetime<sup>19</sup>. Culturally, mental health, despite the popularization of psychoeducation, is still sometimes taboo.

It is not only the mental health crisis that is causing our quality of life to deteriorate. It is also related to the development of civilization or neurodegenerative diseases<sup>21</sup> – multifactorial diseases that also develop through external causes, such as environmental, and economic changes or increased stress. In 2020, more than 55 million people worldwide were suffering from dementia. According to estimates, the number is expected to double by 2030.

# 21%

of Polish women and men feel permanent stress, just as many feel hurried, and 27% sometimes lose the meaning of life<sup>20</sup>.



16. Poynting Mark, Rivault Erwan, 2023 confirmed as the world's hottest year on record, [www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com) [accessed January 22, 2024].

17. infuture.institute; a survey conducted using the CAWI method on the poznaj.to research panel, representative of the Polish population aged 15+, n=1014, November-December 2023; summed indications (0, 1 – very low, 2, 3 – low, 4, 5, 6 – medium, 7, 8 – high, 9, 10 – very high).

18. World mental health report: transforming mental health for all, World Health Organization, Geneva, 2022.

19. J. J. McGrath et al., Age of onset and cumulative risk of mental disorders: a cross-national analysis of population surveys from 29 countries, "The Lancet Psychiatry" 2023, 10(112).

20. infuture.institute, op. cit.

21. a group of congenital or acquired progressive diseases of the nervous system, in which the primary pathological phenomenon is the loss of nerve cells



In 2022, 2.5 billion adults were overweight, and of these, 890 million were living with obesity<sup>22</sup>. Each year around the world, 3 million people die from harmful alcohol consumption<sup>23</sup>.

**The main public health problems are excessive body weight and heart disease. Obesity is a significant risk factor for many diseases of civilization, including type two diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Prevention of these conditions, from my perspective, is an absolute priority. In addition, a lifestyle that protects against these diseases will also have other benefits. In the long term, maintaining a healthy body weight and being active also translates into maintaining psychophysical function and good health in old age.**

**Damian Parol, PhD**

nutritionist and psychodietitian

22. World Health Organization, Obesity and overweight, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/obesity-and-overweight> [accessed: 31.01.2024].

23. World Health Organization, Alcohol, [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/alcohol/?gad\\_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiAxaCvBhBa-EiwAvsLmWkoRuXIK5d6nX50ef\\_UWj-BMOdqNdj4N-1aTx\\_l69wR-FZe9eAmHuhoCO4EQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/alcohol/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiAxaCvBhBa-EiwAvsLmWkoRuXIK5d6nX50ef_UWj-BMOdqNdj4N-1aTx_l69wR-FZe9eAmHuhoCO4EQAvD_BwE) [accessed: 31.01.2024].

24. Z. Mockało, A. Stachura-Krzyształowicz, Jak rozwijać kapitał psychologiczny pracowników w celu poprawy ich dobrostanu? Przykłady interwencji, <https://yadda.icm.edu.pl/baztech/element/bwmeta1.element.baztech-21b786d6-9ca1-4e57-becc-08e-1a23abe1e> [accessed: 31.01.2024].

**Alcohol does not have a health-promoting effect. A 2023 WHO regulation shows that there is no safe dose of alcohol, and any amount can prove dangerous. Even though small doses of wine were once recommended in diets promoting brain health, alcohol does not have a neuroprotective effect, and the resveratrol that affects this can be found in other products.**

**Asia Wojsiat (Podgórska), PhD**

neurobiologist, biochemist,  
university lecturer, science popularizer

### Building Resilience

In today's world, adapting to changes resulting from crises is becoming an essential skill.

**As we take care of our well-being in difficult times, we become more resilient and emotionally flexible. That is, we become more resilient and better equipped to deal with the challenges we encounter.**

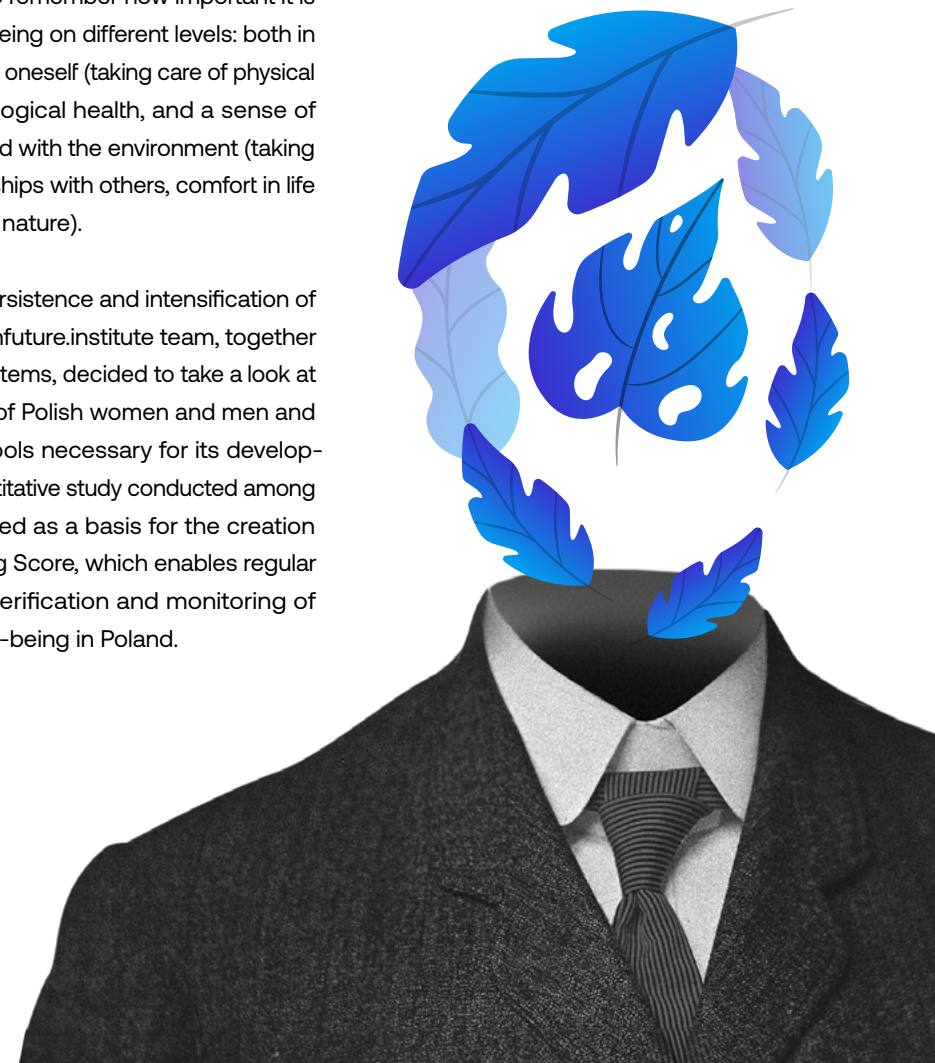
**Marta Niedźwiecka**

psychologist, sex coach, undergoing  
psychoanalytic training, authoress of the podcast  
„O zmierzchu” and the book of the same title  
as well as the book „Slow Sex”

Well-being in a polycrisis era can help us develop resilience, the ability to cope in the face of difficulties. It is a competence that helps us return to a state of equilibrium in situations of adversity<sup>24</sup>, and is also considered a competence of the future.

Given how crises from different areas overlap, it is important to remember how important it is to shape well-being on different levels: both in relationship with oneself (taking care of physical health, psychological health, and a sense of inner peace) and with the environment (taking care of relationships with others, comfort in life or contact with nature).

Aware of the persistence and intensification of polycrisis, the infuture.institute team, together with Benefit Systems, decided to take a look at the well-being of Polish women and men and to define the tools necessary for its development. The quantitative study conducted among Poles also served as a basis for the creation of the Wellbeing Score, which enables regular and effective verification and monitoring of the level of well-being in Poland.



# Well-being of Polish women and men today



## SENSE OF WELL-BEING

Well-being changes depending on what is happening in our lives and how we feel about it. It depends on the context of life and a person's individual experiences. Polish women and men do not specifically identify whether well-being is a permanent or fleeting state. The number of indications for both poles is similar – to a similar degree they treat well-being as something permanent (51%) or fleeting (49%). This only confirms the complexity and multidimensionality of the phenomenon. As humans, we have different approaches to shaping well-being. This is why it is so important to take this diversity into account when building strategies to support the shaping of well-being. This result also underscores the need to constantly monitor it to better respond to the challenges posed by the crises we face.

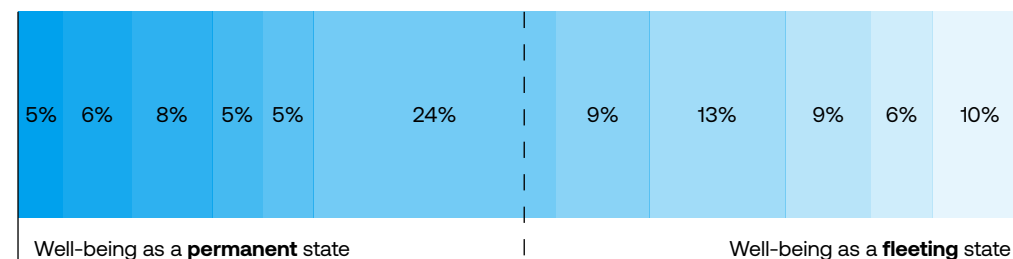
*Well-being is a dimension, a variable of some intensity. A person can have a very low subjective sense of well-being, but still, this well-being exists. Attention should be paid to the condition of well-being. Building up a tolerance for discomfort will also be important here: a person who has lost their job or is facing the illness of a loved one can hardly be expected to feel a high level of subjective well-being.*

**Joanna Gutral, PhD**

psychologist, psychotherapist,  
psychoeducator

### Chart 1

#### A sense of constancy of well-being



Source: A survey carried out using the CAWI method on a research panel poznaj.to, representative of the population of Poland, n = 1004, on 18-22.09.2023. The question was: „Well-being is for you: a permanent state / a fleeting state?”.

## WHAT IS THE WELL-BEING OF POLISH WOMEN AND MEN?

Since well-being is not constant its level will fluctuate. This should be especially kept in mind when looking at the results of a survey in which Poles assessed their well-being. It turns out that almost half of the population (47% of respondents) assess their well-being as average<sup>25</sup>. This means that they are at a point of balance. On the one hand, there is a potential risk that people in this group could just as quickly move to a lower level, experiencing deterioration in, for example, their mental state, as they could move to a higher level, by, for example, developing the ability to cope with stress.

The second largest group of indications is for those who rated their well-being as high (31%) and very high (8%). In contrast, 14% represent the group that rated their well-being as low (12%) and very low (2%).

**Chart 2**

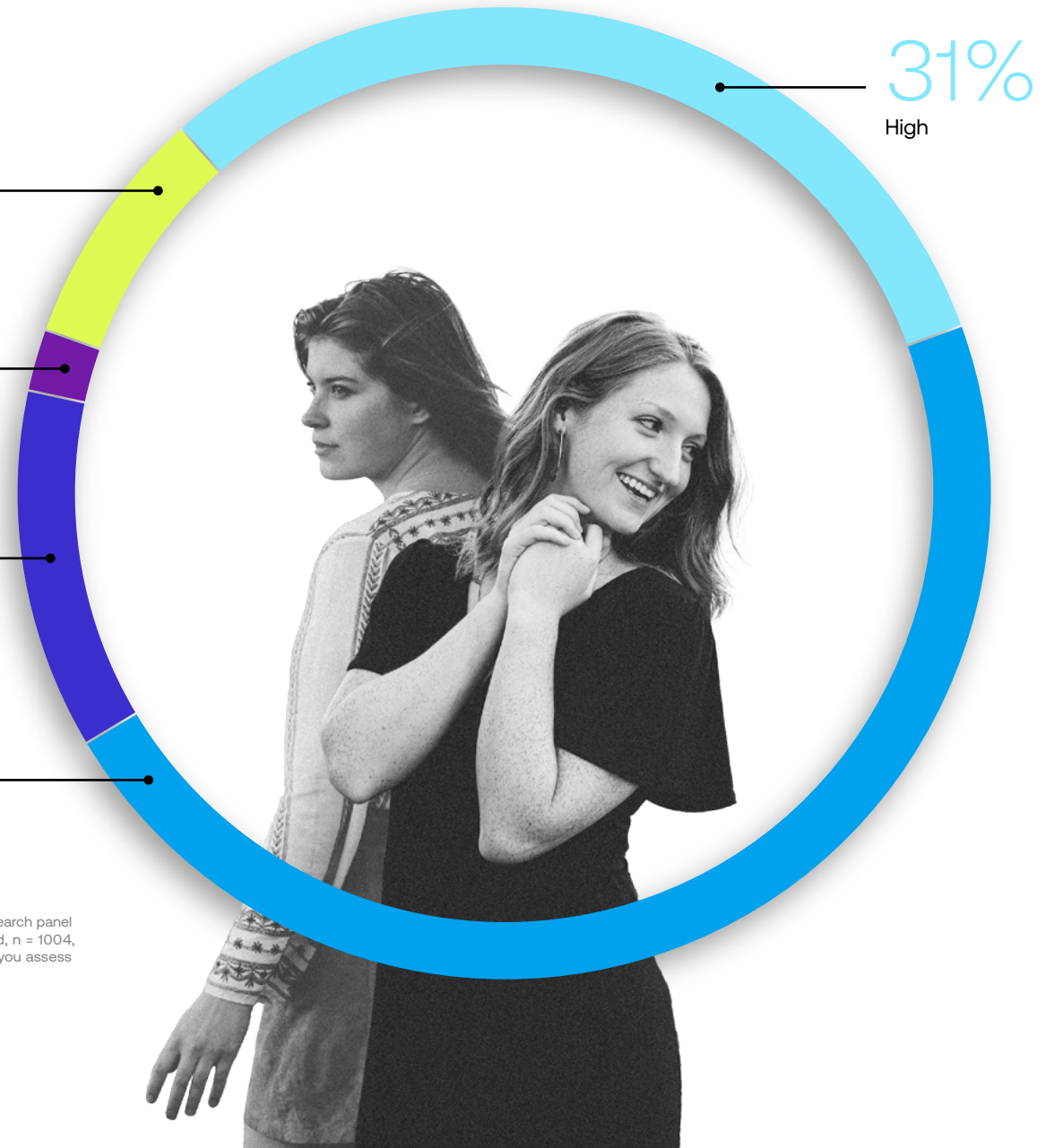
**Perceived well-being of Polish women and men**

8%  
Very high

2%  
Very low

12%  
Low

47%  
Average



25. infuture.institute, a survey conducted using the CAWI method on research panel poznaj.to, representative of the Polish population, n = 1004, between 18-22.09.2023, summed indications (0, 1 – very low; 2, 3 – low; 4, 5, 6 – medium; 7, 8 – high; 9, 10 – very high).

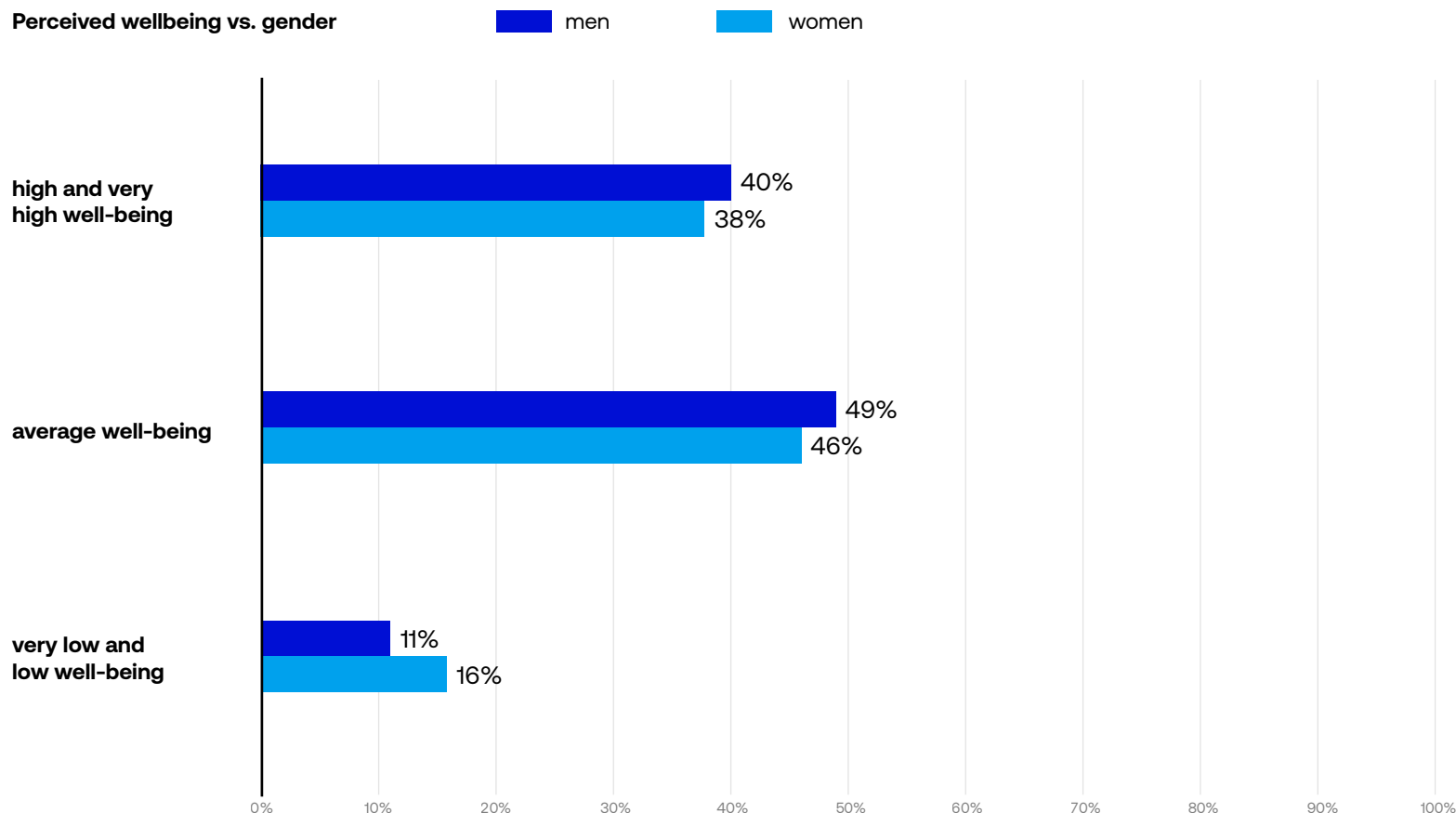
Source: A survey conducted by CAWI method on a research panel poznaj.to, representative of the population of Poland, n = 1004, between 18-22.09.2023. The question was: „How do you assess your well-being?”.

## DOES GENDER DETERMINE A SENSE OF WELL-BEING?

Gender does not seem to determine the sense of well-being. The indications for individual responses for men and women are similar. High and very high well-being is declared by 40% of men and 38% of women. In contrast, medium well-being is felt by 49% of men and 46% of women. A difference of five percentage points (11% men, 16% women) can be seen in the case of very low and low well-being. It may be due to the influence of social and cultural factors, such as the stereotyping of the role of women, the lack of balance between work and domestic responsibilities, the more frequent performance of unpaid work by women, or gender inequality issues (including less access to education or less pay). It is worth noting that these factors not only affect women's perceptions of their well-being but can also contribute to chronic stress, which translates into the deterioration of their health. It is, therefore, necessary to take into account these differences in creating solutions to support work-life harmonization, among other things, or gender equality in the labor market.

**Chart 3**

**Perceived wellbeing vs. gender**



Source: A survey conducted by CAWI method on a research panel poznaj.to, representative of the population of Poland, n = 1004, between 18-22.09.2023. The question was: „How do you assess your well-being?”.



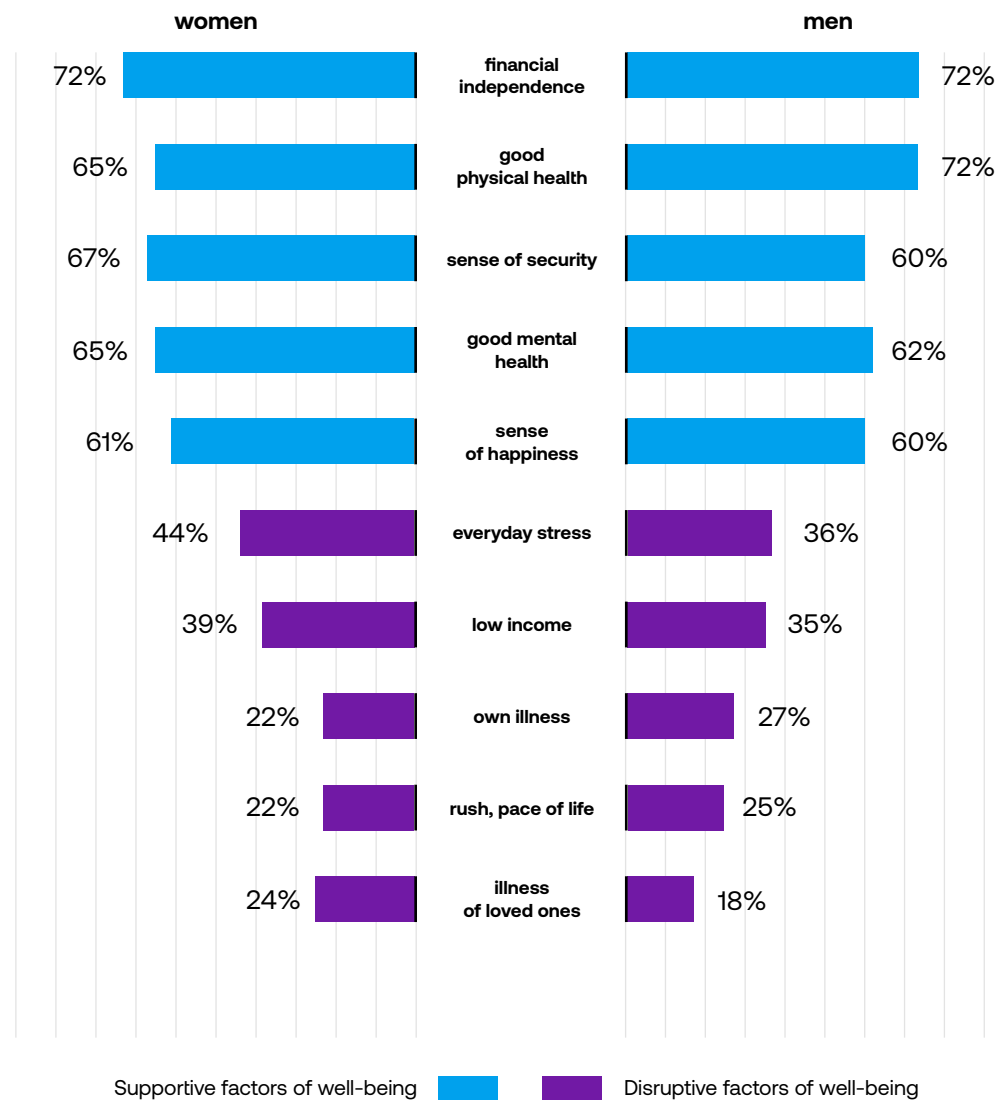
Despite small differences in perceived well-being, two groups of factors are evident that speak to the disparity in attitudes toward well-being for men and women.

The first relates to attitudes toward one's own and loved ones' illnesses. For women, the illness of loved ones negatively affects their well-being to a greater extent than their illness (24% vs. 22%). For men, on the other hand, the opposite situation can be seen. Own illness determines the disruption of well-being to a greater extent than the illness of loved ones (27% to 18%). Women are still socially more often recognized as caregivers and those directly responsible for enhancing the well-being of loved ones. Surveys show that more than half (57%) indicate that they have the primary role in caring for children, and 46% in caring for elderly family members<sup>26</sup>. It seems to be natural, therefore, that assessments of their well-being are strongly linked to the condition of loved ones. Men, on the other hand, having been raised for generations to be strong and independent individuals, are less likely to ask for help and often try to cope with challenges on their own at all costs, including those related to physical and mental health.

26. Praca zawodowa a pełnienie ról opiekuńczych przez kobiety i mężczyzn w Polsce, Forum Odpowiedzialnego Biznesu, Karta Różnorodności 2020, p. 18, [https://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/FOB\\_Praca-zawodowa-a-pe%C5%82nienie-r%C3%B3l-opieku%C5%84czych-przez-kobiety-i-m%C4%99%C5%BCzyn-w-Polsce.pdf](https://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/FOB_Praca-zawodowa-a-pe%C5%82nienie-r%C3%B3l-opieku%C5%84czych-przez-kobiety-i-m%C4%99%C5%BCzyn-w-Polsce.pdf) [accessed: 31.01.2024].

**Chart 4**

**Disruptive and supportive factors of well-being vs. gender**



The second group of factors talks about attitudes toward health. We see that for women, physical health and mental health are equally identified as factors supporting well-being (65% for each indication). For men on the other hand, the difference between indicating physical and mental health as a supporting factor is as much as ten percentage points. The reasons for this can be attributed to, among other things, a stereotypical approach to gender roles, the still apparent taboo associated with mental health, and the consequent lack of a holistic approach to health.

*People who want to fit into the prevailing stereotypes in society find it more difficult to live. Social expectations and patterns promoted by culture set a more rigid framework than we actually need to live well.*

**Marta Niedźwiecka**

psychologist, sex coach, undergoing psychoanalytic training, authoress of the podcast „O zmierzchu” and the book of the same title as well as the book „Slow Sex”

Source: A survey conducted using the CAWI method on a research panel poznaj.to, representative of the Polish population, n = 1004 in the period 18-22.09.2023. The questions were: „What elements are essential for your well-being to be at a high level?” and „List up to three main factors that disrupt your well-being.”

## CHRONOLOGICAL AND SUBJECTIVE AGE VS. WELL-BEING

As a society, we view age from at least several perspectives. On the one hand, we talk about biological age, which refers to the aging processes of our cells. On the other, about chronological age, or the number of years that have passed since we were born. The third is subjective age, or the perception of our age and how old we feel. In the case of chronological age – based on the results of the study – there are no apparent differences in the perception of well-being among different age groups.

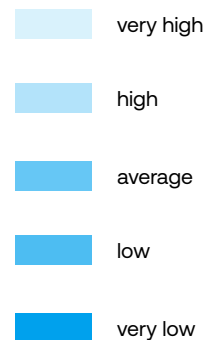
High and very high well-being is felt by representatives of the youngest generation (44% of indications) and, interestingly, despite the widespread opinion about the adaptation difficulties of older people and the challenges of retirement age, also by representatives of older generations (46% of indications for those aged 55–64 and 43% of indications for those aged 65 and over). Such a result may reflect a growing awareness of healthy aging. This is because we are dealing with a paradigm shift in the perception of old age. We are no longer treating it as a passive stage of life full of limitations, and are beginning to see it as another stage of mature life, full of opportunities and development.

Low and very low well-being is most often felt by those aged 35–44 (21% of indications). Representatives of this group are sometimes called the sandwich generation. These are middle-aged people who are economically active, have children to care for, and often take care of their ailing parents. This combination of responsibilities can lead to increased stress and strain, which negatively affects their well-being. This result also underscores the need to create a new type of benefit aimed precisely at representatives of this multifaceted active group.

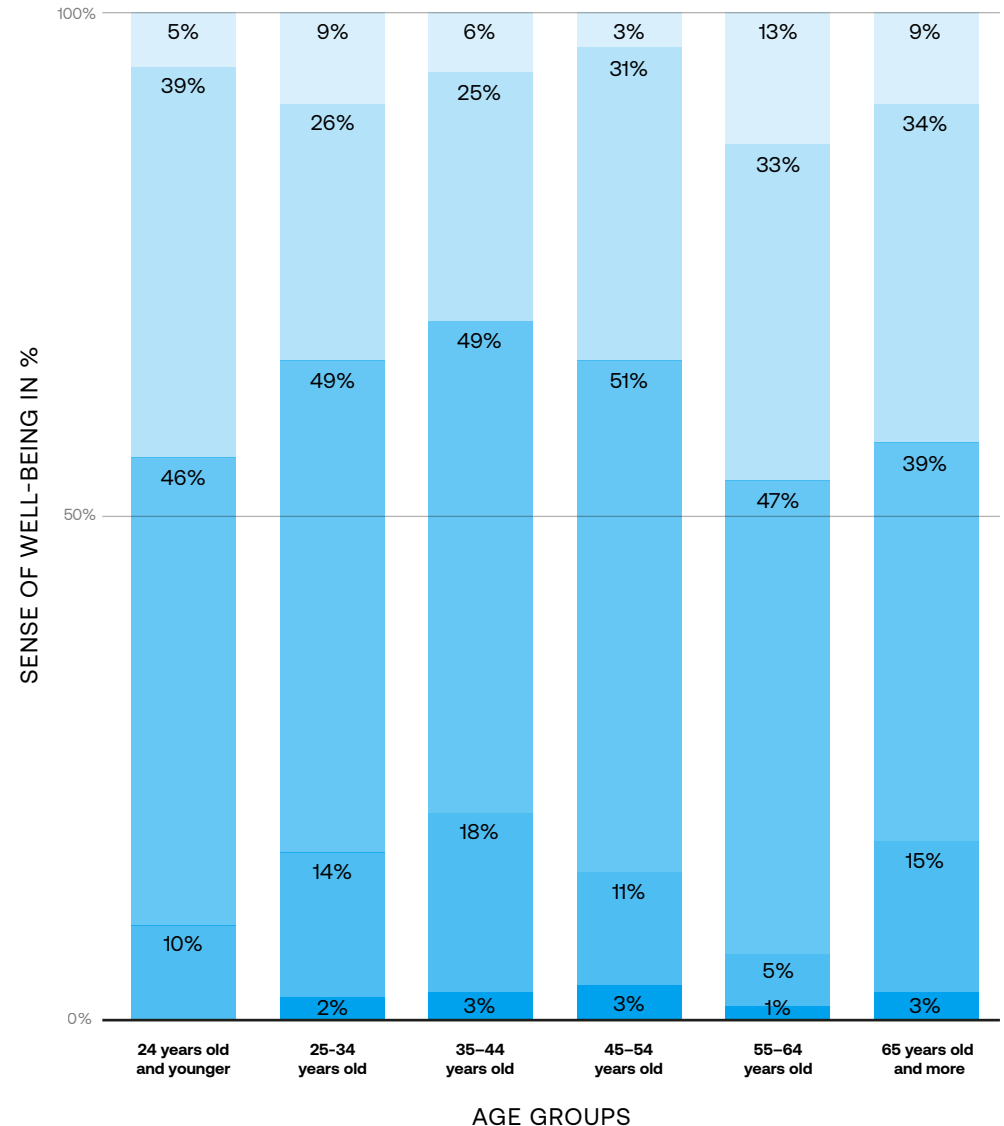
**Chart 5**

### Sense of well-being vs. age

„How do you assess your well-being?“



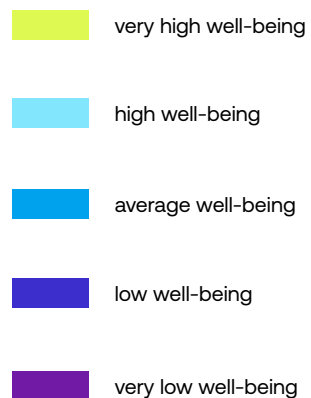
Source: A survey conducted by CAWI method on a research panel poznaj.to, representative of the population of Poland, n = 1004, between 18–22.09.2023. The question was: „How do you assess your well-being?“.



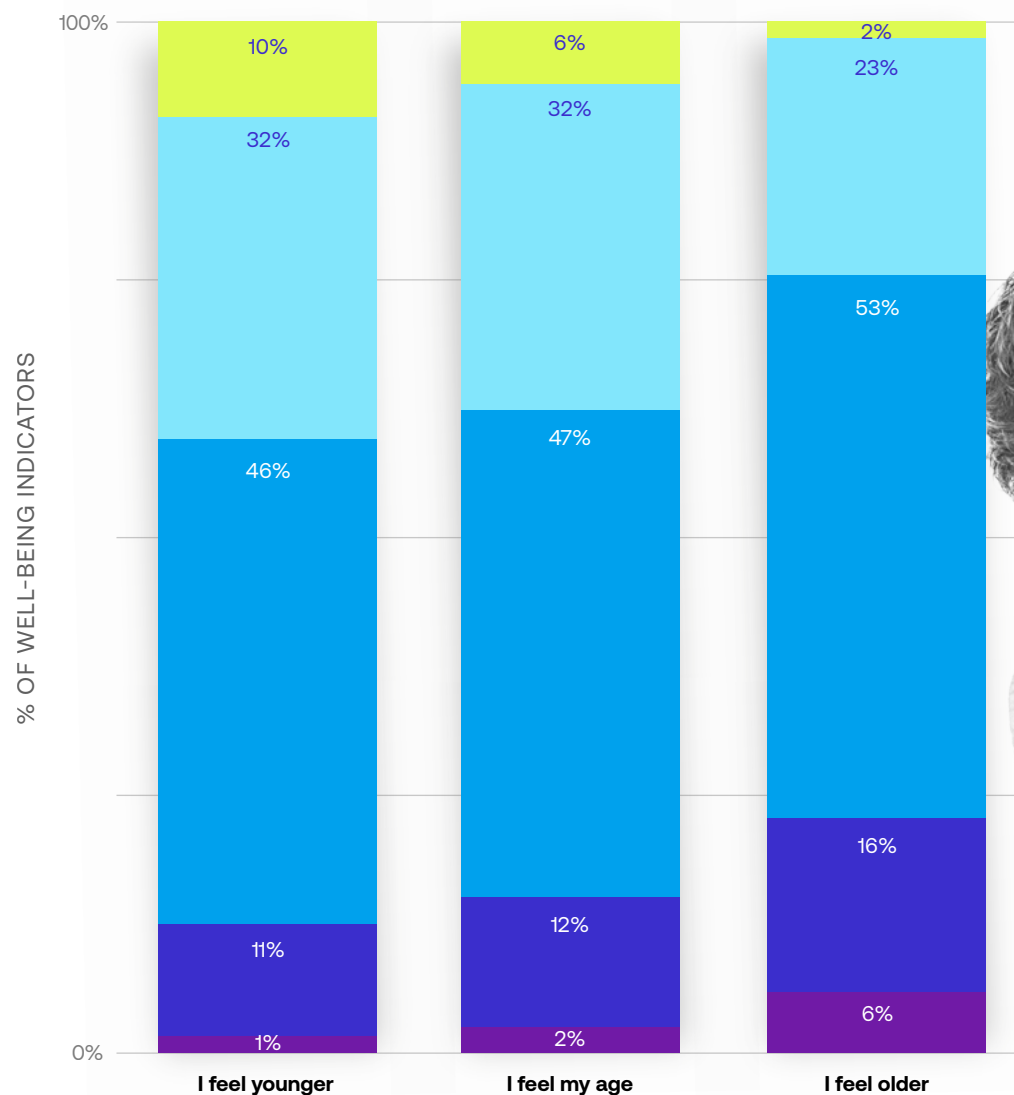
However, well-being is correlated with subjective age – how mature we feel, how we evaluate our mental abilities and physical fitness, and our overall level of satisfaction with life.

The well-being of Polish women and men is higher the younger they feel. This is particularly evident at the level of high and very high well-being, where they are indicated by the highest number of people (32% and 10%, respectively) feeling younger.

**Chart 6**  
**Sense of age vs. well-being**



Source: A survey conducted by CAWI method on a research panel poznajto, representative of the population of Poland, n = 1004, between 18-22.09.2023. The question was: „How do you assess your well-being?”.



## WHAT ENHANCES OUR WELL-BEING? WHAT DISRUPTS IT?<sup>27</sup>

Polish women and men indicated factors that support their well-being and those that disrupt it. As many as 72% of respondents pointed to financial independence as a supporting factor. 64% indicated a sense of security<sup>28</sup>. Among the factors that disrupt well-being with the highest number of indications (40%) was everyday stress. In second place (37%), Polish women and men indicated low income.

Factors such as financial independence and low income indicate the important role of finances in shaping well-being. One could assume that Polish women and men view well-being as financial independence. However, it is important to keep in mind the context of the economic crisis and the rising inflation rate. When we look at the open-ended responses of<sup>29</sup> respondents, we read about the need to maintain an apartment, not having credit, not having to live from paycheck to paycheck, or having savings for a rainy day.

Similarly, factors related to caring for and maintaining health should be placed in the right context – it could be a consequence of the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic and social isolation.

**Chart 7**

**Factors supporting and disrupting well-being**

**72%**  
Financial independence

**68%**  
Good physical health

**64%**  
Sense of security

**63%**  
Good mental health

**60%**  
Sense of happiness

What supports well-being?

What disrupts well-being?

**40%**  
Everyday stress

**37%**  
Low income

**25%**  
Own illness

**24%**  
Rush, pace of life

**21%**  
Illness of loved ones

27. infuture.institute, op. cit.

28. Ibidem

29. Ibidem

Source: A survey conducted by CAWI method on the research panel poznaj.to, representative of the population of Poland, n = 1004, in the period 18-22.09.2023. The questions were: „What elements are necessary for your well-being to be at a high level?” and „List up to three main factors that disrupt your well-being.”



## FOLLOWING PLEASURES AND MINIMALISM AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE SENSE OF WELL-BEING

Even though many of the factors supporting and disrupting well-being relate to finances, Polish women and men realize that financial independence alone cannot help them develop a high sense of well-being. When asked what influences it to a greater extent, 66% of Polish women and men said that it is the ability to focus only on essential goods. One in three respondents leans toward following the pleasures in life<sup>30</sup>. Such an approach is not surprising and is in line with theory in positive psychology, where well-being is also understood as satisfaction with and enjoyment of life. It can be enhanced by building awareness of what gives this pleasure and where to look for it.

On the other hand, the impact of focusing only on essential goods on the sense of well-being may be linked to the important aspect of leveling out stimuli and daily noise, and coping with the pressure of constant productivity. We are referring here to e.g. creating a space for boredom. Boredom, though culturally often still treated as something negative, associated with

wasting time, has a great impact on quieting and regeneration, which can result in increased attentiveness, greater understanding of oneself and one's needs, and the development of creativity, which directly affects inner peace and a sense of harmony.

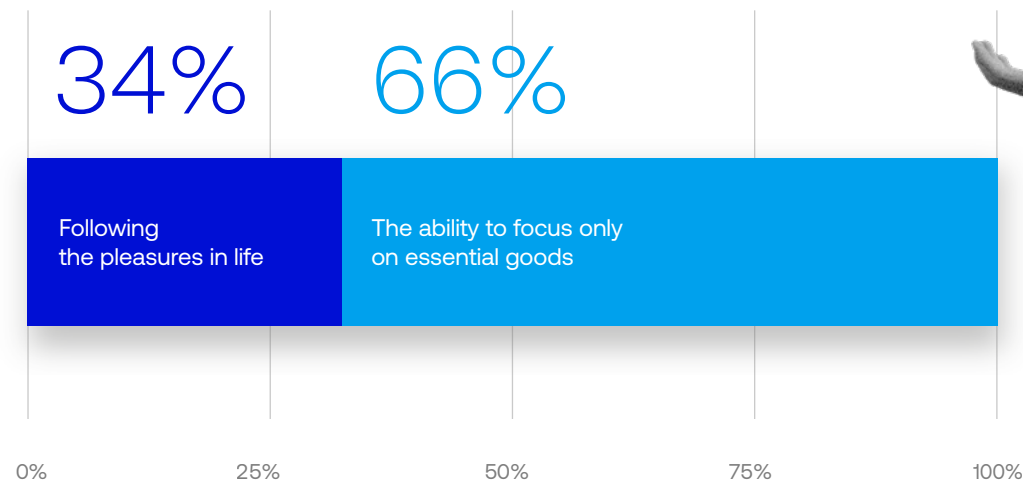
*It is worth looking at the hedonistic perspective of well-being, which speaks of a pleasant life based on, among other things, a positive balance of emotions.*

**Agnieszka Czerw, PhD**

Interdisciplinary Center for Research on Social Activity  
& Well-Being FEEL & ACT WELL, SWPS University

**Chart 8**

**Pursuing pleasure vs. minimalism**



Source: A survey conducted by CAWI method on a research panel poznaj.to, representative of the Polish population, n = 1004, between 18-22.09.2023. The questions were: „What elements are essential for your well-being to be at a high level?” and „What do you think is better for your overall sense of well-being?”.

30. Ibidem



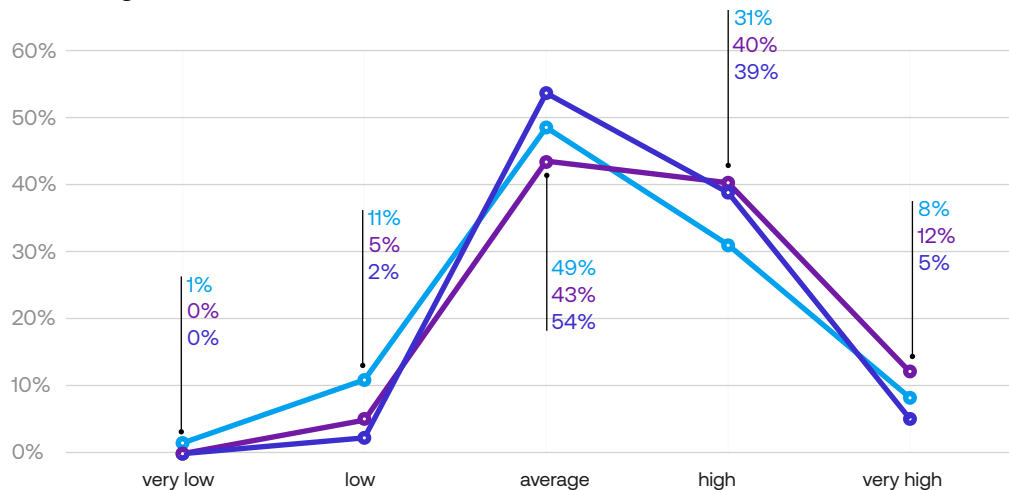
## WELL-BEING VS. WORK MODE

Over the past few years, we have seen how the way we work is changing. Remote or hybrid work is a permanent part of everyday life for more and more employees. Some representatives of the younger generation are not familiar with another form of work – these are especially those who entered the labor market during the pandemic. The survey shows that among those who work hybrid, a total of as many as 52% declare that they have a high (40%) or very high (12%) level of well-being. This compares to 44% for working from home, and 39% for

working from office. It is also noteworthy that it was among those working from home that there were the fewest indications of low or very low levels of well-being (12%). The higher level of well-being for those who work hybrid may suggest a beneficial effect of flexibility on overall well-being. Elasticity and the ability to combine working from home and the office thus seems to be a working model that allows employees to better harmonize their work and private lives.

Chart 9

### Well-being vs. work mode



We already know that well-being is correlated with subjective age. People who work exclusively from home – compared to those indicating onsite or hybrid work – feel noticeably older.

The organization of our work can have a significant impact on our subjective sense of age. So perhaps it is also related to some degree to personal development and relationships with others, which we care about more when we work hybrid or onsite. People who work exclusively remotely may experience a greater sense of isolation and loneliness and are less likely to experience spontaneous social interactions.

### WORK MODE

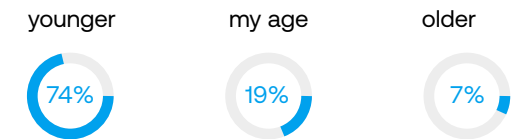
- Onsite
- Hybrid
- Work from home

Source: A survey conducted by CAWI method on a research panel poznaj.to, representative of the population of Poland, n = 1004, between 18-22.09.2023. The question was: „How do you assess your well-being?”.

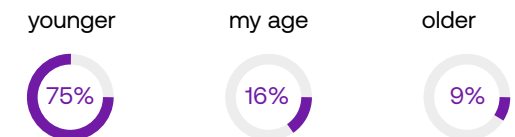
Chart 10

### Sense of age versus work mode

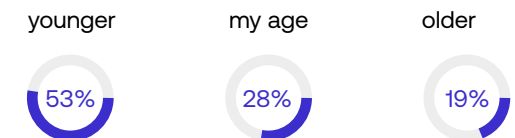
I work only onsite and I feel:



I work hybrid, part onsite, part remotely, from home and I feel:



I work exclusively from home and I feel:



Source: A survey conducted by CAWI method on a research panel poznaj.to, representative of the population of Poland, n = 1004, between 18-22.09.2023. The question was: „How old do you feel?”.

## THE KEY ELEMENTS OF WELL-BEING: EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVE

We also decided to look at what elements necessary for high well-being are indicated by female and male employees in selected positions in organizations. In each group, though in different places, are financial independence and good physical health. It is also worth pointing out the differences: among the five highest indications, employees in senior positions pointed to the importance of close relationships, those in independent positions related to managing people to a sense of meaning in life, and manual workers or those in assistant positions to a sense of happiness.

The table clearly indicates that a zero-one approach to well-being at work in the long term is not sufficient. It is worth taking into account an individualized approach based on various factors such as career stage, moment of life, and role in the organization. Tailoring solutions and benefits to the individual needs of employees can make a significant difference in their job satisfaction and well-being development.

**Table 1**

### Position and elements of well-being

#### managerial position and above

good physical health	74%
financial independence	58%
mental health	58%
sense of happiness	53%
close relations	47%

#### independent position related to people management

financial independence	83%
good physical health	69%
mental health	68%
sense of security	65%
sense of meaning in life	63%

#### independent position unrelated to people management

financial independence	77%
sense of security	69%
good physical health	66%
sense of happiness	60%
mental health	59%

#### subordinate position

financial independence	83%
good physical health	75%
sense of security	74%
sense of happiness	70%
sense of meaning in life	67%

#### manual worker

good physical health	69%
mental health	69%
financial independence	67%
sense of happiness	63%
sense of security	56%



Source: A survey conducted by CAWI method on a research panel poznajto, representative of the population of Poland, n = 1004, on 18-22.09.2023. The question was: „What elements are essential for your well-being to be at a high level?“.

# Comperhensivness and measurability of well-being



The interdependence between the well-being of society and the state of the economy is apparent: our health is a result of economic growth, but at the same time it is also a key driver of that growth. Well-being in the polycrisis era is moving beyond social categories and becoming a reason to implement new economic models like well-being economy, which focuses on the needs of people and the planet, and in which their well-being drives economic prosperity and vice versa. This also makes well-being a topic of interest to an increasing number of organizations and employers.

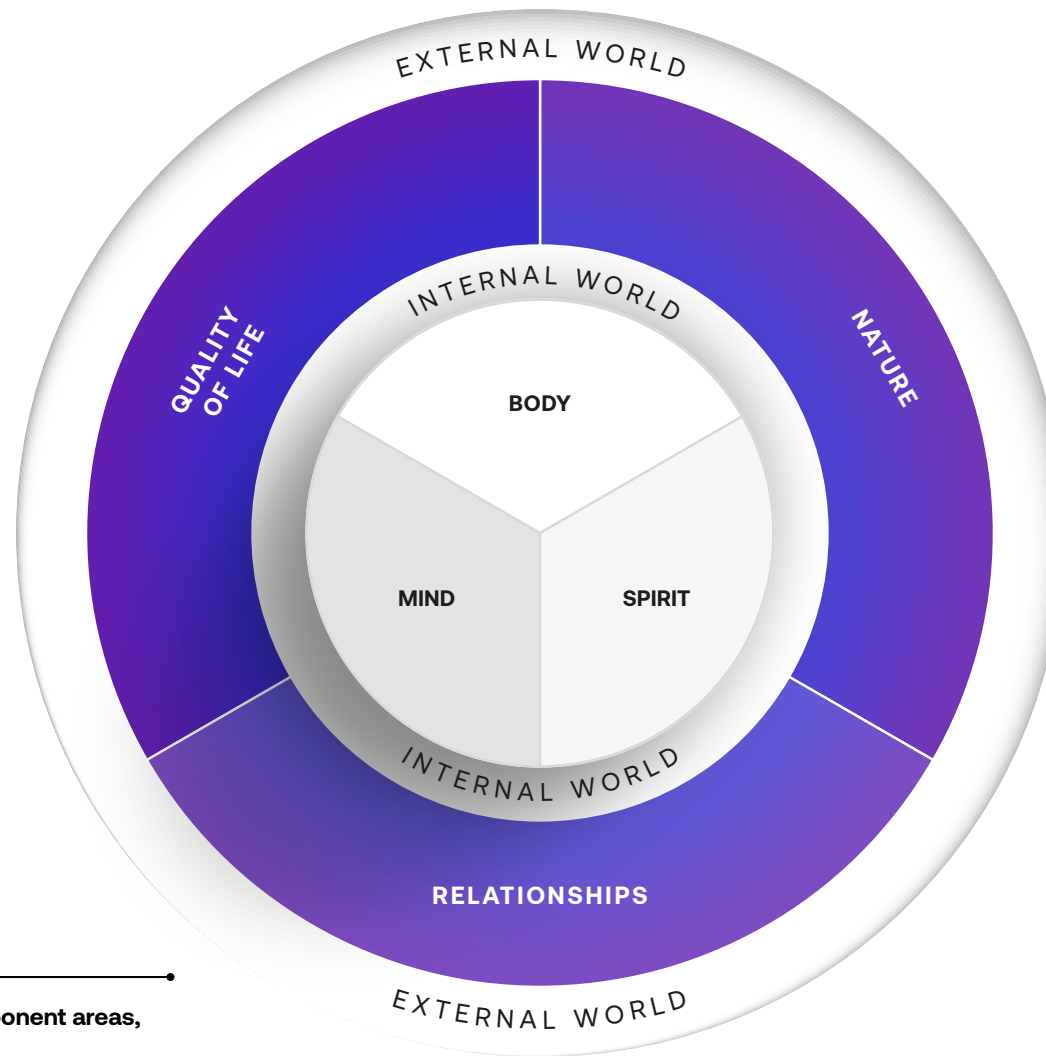
The Geneva Charter for Well-being emphasizes the urgent need to create sustainable societies of well-being. After all, human progress cannot be measured solely by economic indicators, and the issue of well-being requires a holistic view. The charter also points out that a sense of well-being (including the context of functioning in a polycrisis world) depends on an increasing number of factors – including the state of the environment and the relationship with changing nature – that must be taken into account in the development of well-being in society.



And while attempts to measure well-being are evident today, they often do not address the real problems and challenges of individuals. Most of them are standardized at the macro level – the level of countries or international organizations.

There is no single solution that addresses the needs of every person in the context of well-being. At the same time, it should be remembered that this issue is complex and comprehensive. In order to develop well-being, it is necessary to identify individual needs and build support programs aimed at specific groups.

The infuture.institute team, commissioned by Benefit Systems, has developed a well-being intelligence tool – the Wellbeing Score. This model is:



**Graph 1.** Wellbeing Score, the index model and component areas, and component areas.

Source: Wellbeing Score, the index model and component areas, infuture.institute, 2023.

- **HOLISTIC**  
considering many factors,
- **CONTEXTUAL**  
dependent on the situation one is in,
- **TIME-VARYING**  
taking into account the stage of life,
- **MULTILEVEL**  
because well-being is a spectrum.

The model includes a meso level – the organizational level of the performance of companies and communities – and a micro level – the individual level, allowing for verifying the well-being of an individual.

Human beings function in two worlds: the internal world and the external world. Based on research<sup>31</sup>, the infuture.institute team defined six key areas relevant to the development of well-being. They were then inscribed in one of the worlds. And so: physical health, mental health, and inner peace are internal areas, more subjective, reflect a person's view on the elements associated with him or her as an individual.

31. Ibidem

## PHYSICAL HEALTH

This area includes physical activity, maintaining proper sleep levels, healthy diet, eating habits, and monitoring one's health.

## MENTAL HEALTH

This area includes activities focused on regulating stress, improving sense of security, balancing work and personal life, and regeneration.

## INNER PEACE

This area presupposes acting in accordance with beliefs and values, fulfilling oneself by pursuing passions, achieving a sense of life's meaning, spiritual growth and lack of stagnation in daily life.



*You can't say that mental health is more important than physical health, and vice versa. The same is true for diet and exercise. Today we know that one is very much related to the other. If we eat low nutritional food, we are not building the resources needed for brain function. When brain biochemistry is dysregulated (we don't get enough amino acids to make neurotransmitters), we have no incentive to engage in physical activity.*

**Asia Wojsiat (Podgórska), PhD**

neurobiologist, biochemist,  
university lecturer, science popularizer

Comfort of life, relations with others, and contact with nature, on the other hand, are external areas, referring to elements of social life, finances, the economic and political situation, or relations with the environment.

## COMFORT OF LIFE

An area focusing on financial independence, adequate housing supporting one's regeneration, finding balance in a world of nanosecond culture, and a sense of security in a world of economic and political crisis.

## RELATIONS WITH OTHERS

An area concerning interaction and relationship-building with people. It includes the issue of feelings of detachment and satisfaction with the relationships, pressure on meeting the expectations of others, and feelings of uprooting and cultural belonging affecting identity formation.

**Positive relationships with people are one of the basic elements of our well-being. As humans, we have the need for affiliation and it is the foundation of our psyche, our survival, and our functioning in the world.**

**Marta Niedźwiecka**

Psychologist, sex coach, undergoing psychoanalytic training, authoress of the podcast „O zmierzchu” and the book of the same title as well as the book „Slow Sex”

## CONTACT WITH NATURE

An area concerning relations with the natural environment. It covers the issues of the impact of dynamic technological change, climate anxiety, the feeling of helplessness in the face of climate change, as well as the impact of nature on human well-being.

**The availability of areas of natural character, as well as urban greenery (green or blue environment, water reservoirs, birds, animals), has a calming, anti-stress effect on many people, improves mood, and has a positive effect on cognitive functions. Studies show that active contact with nature improves well-being and enhances psychological well-being.**

**Slawomir Murawiec, MD, PhD**

chief psychiatric specialist  
in Akademia Zdrowia Psychicznego Harmonia



Due to the fact that we spend about a third of our adult lives at work, it is something that permeates all six components of well-being and thus becomes a horizontal area. We find the thread of work in relationships with others, mental health (the issue of work burnout and stress management), inner peace (skillfully combining personal life with work), or life comfort (finances, the main determinant of which is work).

This aspect is particularly important, considering not only the well-being of individuals but also the economic dimension. According to WHO calculations<sup>32</sup> the global cost of not taking care of the well-being of workers and their mental health today is about \$2.5 trillion a year, which includes productivity loss or absenteeism and redundancy. Research confirms that a sense of overall job satisfaction, the ability to cope with challenges, and a sense of security, among other things, are correlated with financial performance, efficiency, or productivity<sup>33</sup>. Given changes in the labor market, concern for well-being is becoming another important competence of the future.

32. T. Kowalski, W. Loretto, Well-being and HRM in the changing workplace, „The International Journal of Human Resource Management” 2017, 28(16), p. 2229–2255; R. Peccei, K. Van De Voorde, Human resource management–well-being–performance research revisited: Past, present, and future. „Human Resource Management Journal” 2019, 29, p. 539–563.

32. World Economic Forum, 6 global employers on how to improve workplace mental health, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/01/6-global-employers-on-how-to-improve-workplace-mental-health/> [accessed: 31.01.2024].



# Areas of well-being

Using the Wellbeing Score, an index of well-being, we examined how Polish women and men care for the six component areas discussed in the previous section.

The table shows how and to what extent Polish women and men care about the component areas of well-being.

The maximum value within each area is 10.

The coverage of an area can be determined by placing the score in one of the five ranges:

- **0-1,99** – the area requires urgent action and awareness development,
- **2-3,99** – the area requires corrective action and a stronger commitment,
- **4-5,99** – the area needs a certain amount of additional work,
- **6-7,99** – the area is developing in the right direction, however, there are some opportunities for improvement,
- **8-10** – the area is being developed consciously and is in very good condition.

**Table 2**  
**Taking care of well-being areas**

	0-1,99	2-3,99	4-5,99	6-7,99	8-10
<b>PHYSICAL HEALTH</b>	8%	23 %	32%	22%	15%
<b>MENTAL HEALTH</b>	6%	17%	29%	<b>28%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>INNER PEACE</b>	6%	20%	32%	<b>26%</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>COMFORT OF LIFE</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>42%</b>	36%	11%	3%
<b>RELATIONS WITH OTHERS</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>42%</b>	31%	13%	5%
<b>CONTACT WITH NATURE</b>	5%	35%	48%	12%	1%

Source: infuture.institute, survey conducted using CAWI method on research panel poznaj.to, representative of Polish population aged 15+, n = 1014, November-December 2023

The calculation of the well-being index identified the least and most cared for component areas. It is clear that comfort of life and relations with others are two areas that require urgent action and greater commitment. Mental health and inner peace, on the other hand, are components that a large group of Poles develop and care for consciously.

The average well-being value for Polish women and men calculated from the Well-being Score is 4.9/10. This coincides with the result for

the average sense of well-being in almost half of Polish women and men. On the one hand, this means that we still have a lot of work to do. On the other hand, a score in the middle of the well-being scale means that we can experience improvement just as quickly.

There is no single right approach to well-being, so based on the Wellbeing Score, the infuture.institute team defined five profiles reflecting the approach to the well-being of different groups of Polish women and men. How they

develop the ability to care for well-being depends largely on the context of their life experiences and their current living situation.

**The following profiles have emerged:**

**SOLOISTS**  
**NATURE ENTHUSIASTS**  
**INTRO-FOCUSED**  
**REALISTS**  
**HOLISTS**





# Soloists

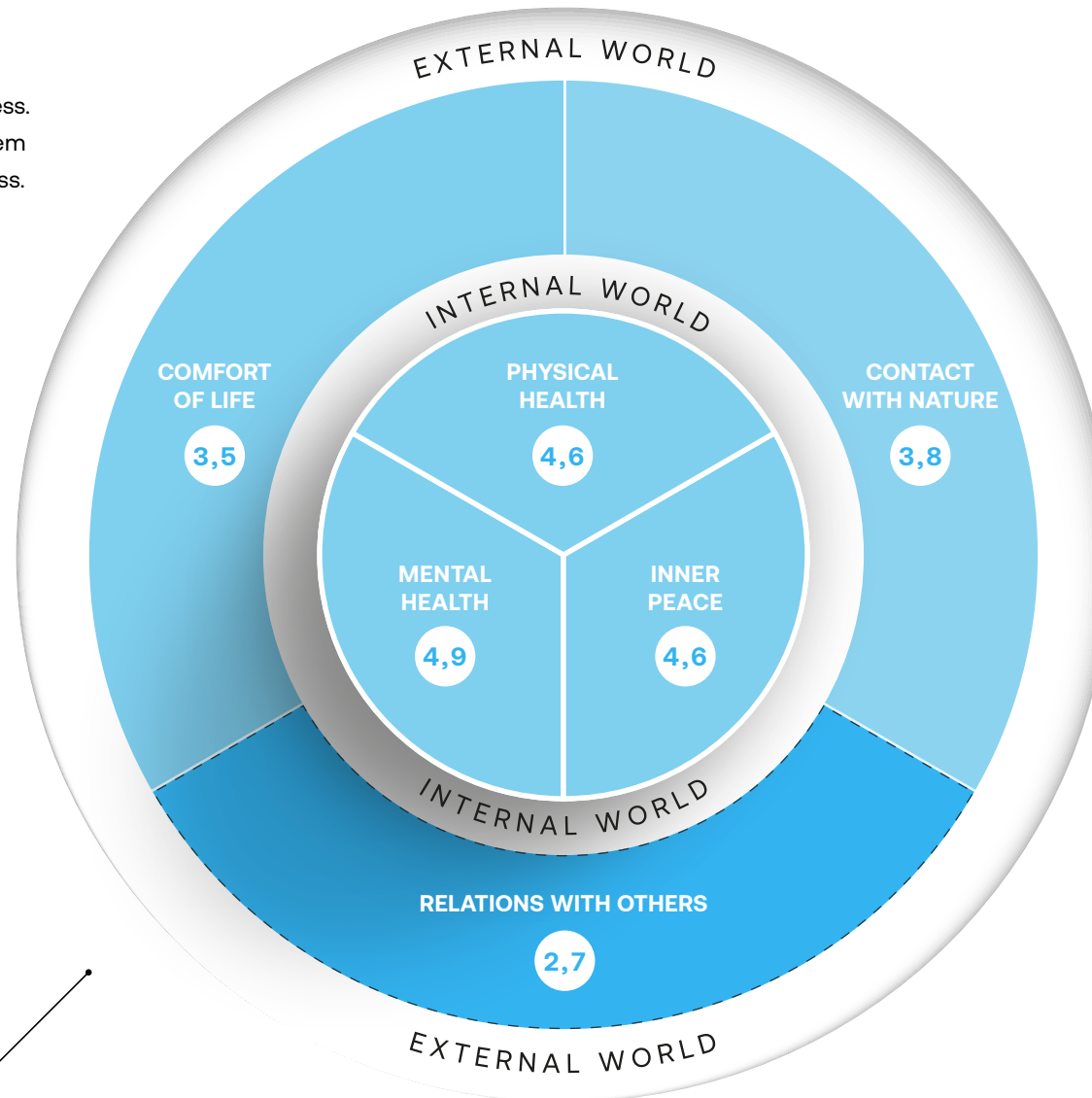
Soloists are people who often face loneliness. They feel their age or older. Some of them (30%) experience prolonged states of stress. Despite being professionally active, they spend a lot of time in solitude. Almost half of them (41%) sometimes loses track of their lives. Soloists focus on finding goals and a plan for themselves. They need bonding relationships with other people.

## AVERAGE WELL-BEING IN THIS GROUP

4,0

vs. the average well-being of Poles: 4,9

## AVERAGE COVERAGE OF AREAS IN THIS GROUP



## GROUP SIZE

n = 514

## SELECTION CRITERION

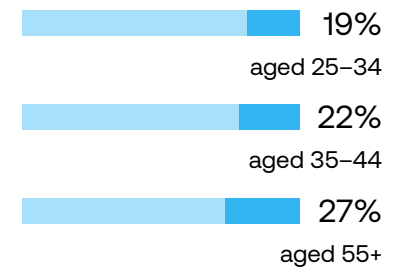
taking care of *relations with others*  
area in the range of 0–3.99

## GENDER

women  
52%  
men  
48%



## AGE



# Nature Enthusiasts

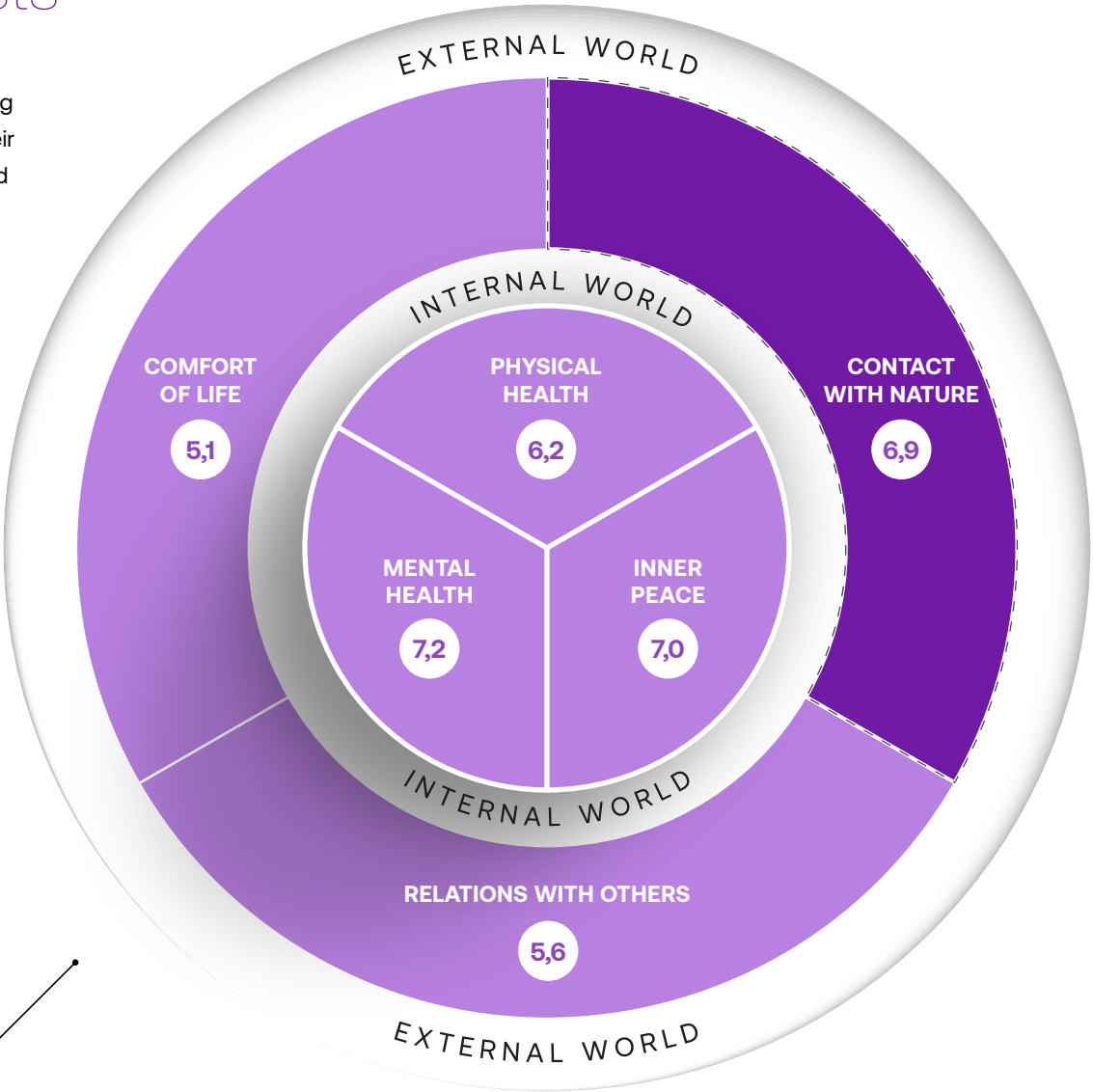
Nature Enthusiasts are people with a strong connection to nature, which helps shape their mental health and inner sense of peace and satisfaction with life. 58% of them feel younger than their age indicates. A large part of this group actively pursues their passions and relatively rarely experience daily stress.

AVERAGE WELL-BEING  
IN THIS GROUP

6,4

vs. the average well-being of Poles: 4,9

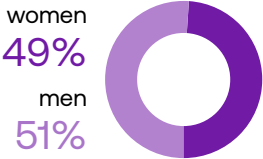
AVERAGE COVERAGE OF AREAS  
IN THIS GROUP



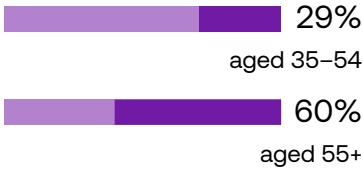
GROUP SIZE  
n = 136

SELECTION CRITERION  
taking care of *contact with nature*  
area in the range of 6-10

GENDER



AGE



## Intro-Focused

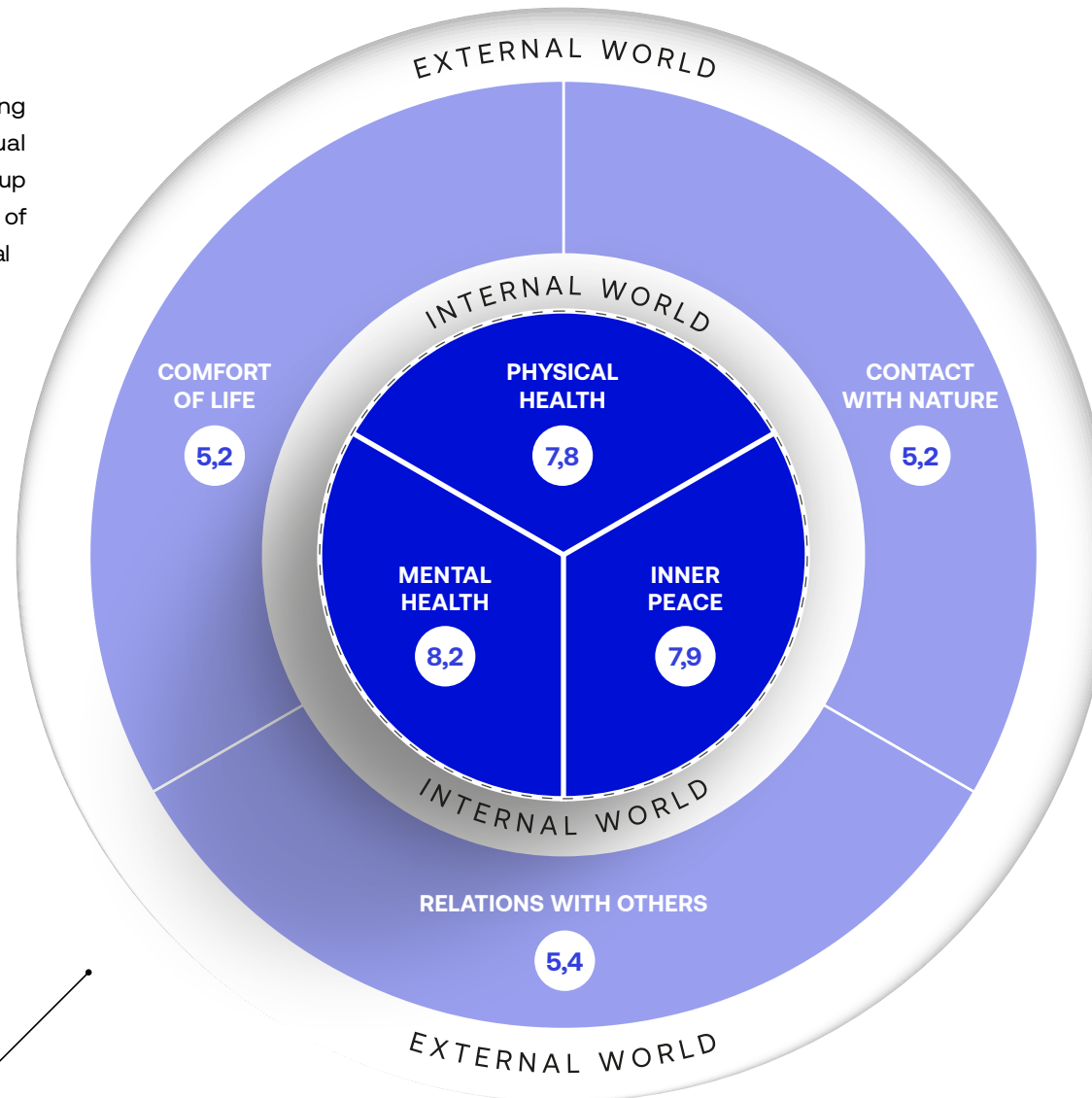
Intro-Focused shape well-being by taking care of the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions as individuals. Half of this group are in their fifties, at the same time 68% of this group feel younger than their biological age would indicate. One in three of them (38%) is actively working on themselves and their development.

### AVERAGE WELL-BEING IN THIS GROUP

6,9

vs. the average well-being of Poles: 4,9

### AVERAGE COVERAGE OF AREAS IN THIS GROUP



### GROUP SIZE

n = 236

### SELECTION CRITERION

taking care of *mental health*,  
*physical health* and *inner peace* areas  
in the range of 6-10

### GENDER

women

53%

men

47%



### AGE

53%

aged 55+



# Realists

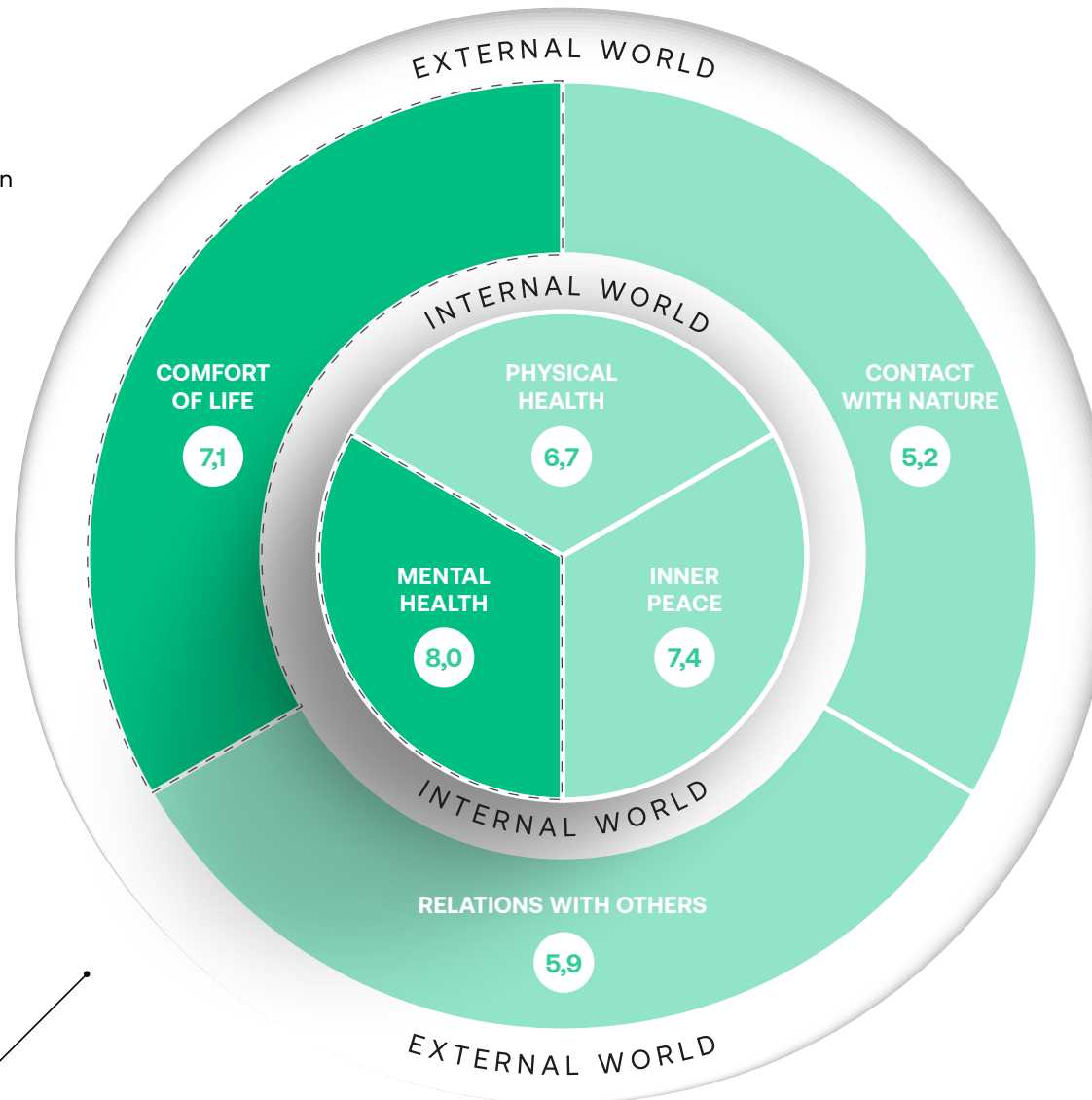
Realists prioritize the comfort of their lives and the psychological dimension of well-being. 60% of them feel younger than their age indicates. A large proportion of them actively take care of themselves and their development, which translates into a great sense of control over their own lives, taking care of the area of physical health and spiritual development.

## AVERAGE WELL-BEING IN THIS GROUP

6,7

vs. the average well-being of Poles: 4.9

## AVERAGE COVERAGE OF AREAS IN THIS GROUP



## GROUP SIZE

n = 141

## SELECTION CRITERION

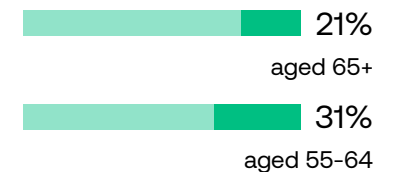
taking care of *comfort of life* area in the range of 6-10; taking care of *mental health* area in the range of 4-10

## GENDER

women  
52%  
men  
48%



## AGE





# Holists

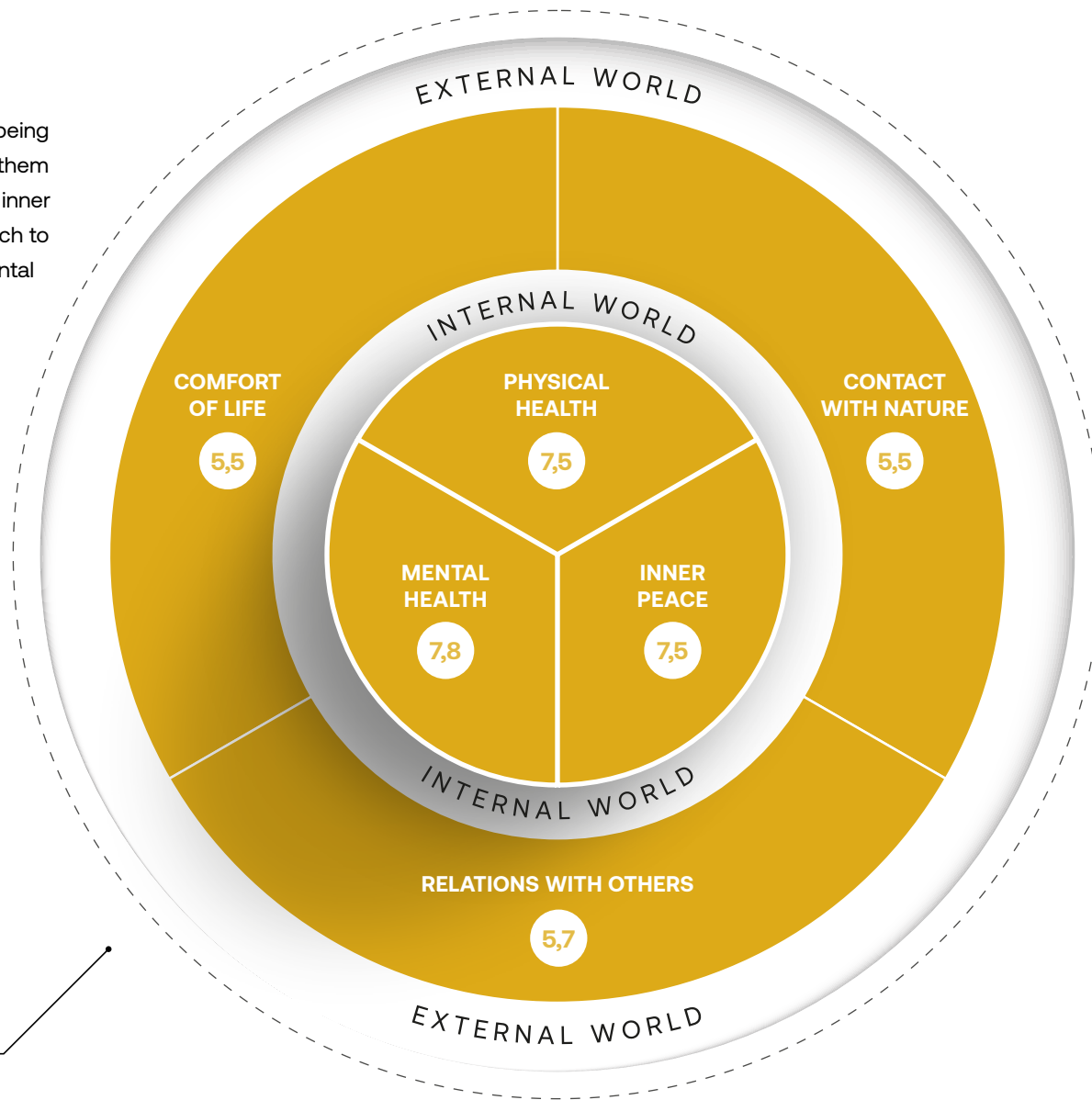
Holists take a holistic approach to well-being and component areas. One in three of them actively pursues their passions and feel inner peace in the process. A holistic approach to well-being results in taking care of mental and physical health.

## AVERAGE WELL-BEING IN THIS GROUP

6,6

vs. the average well-being of Poles: 4.9

## AVERAGE COVERAGE OF AREAS IN THIS GROUP



## GROUP SIZE

n = 113

## SELECTION CRITERION

the highest importance  
of all areas

## GENDER

women

73%

men

27%



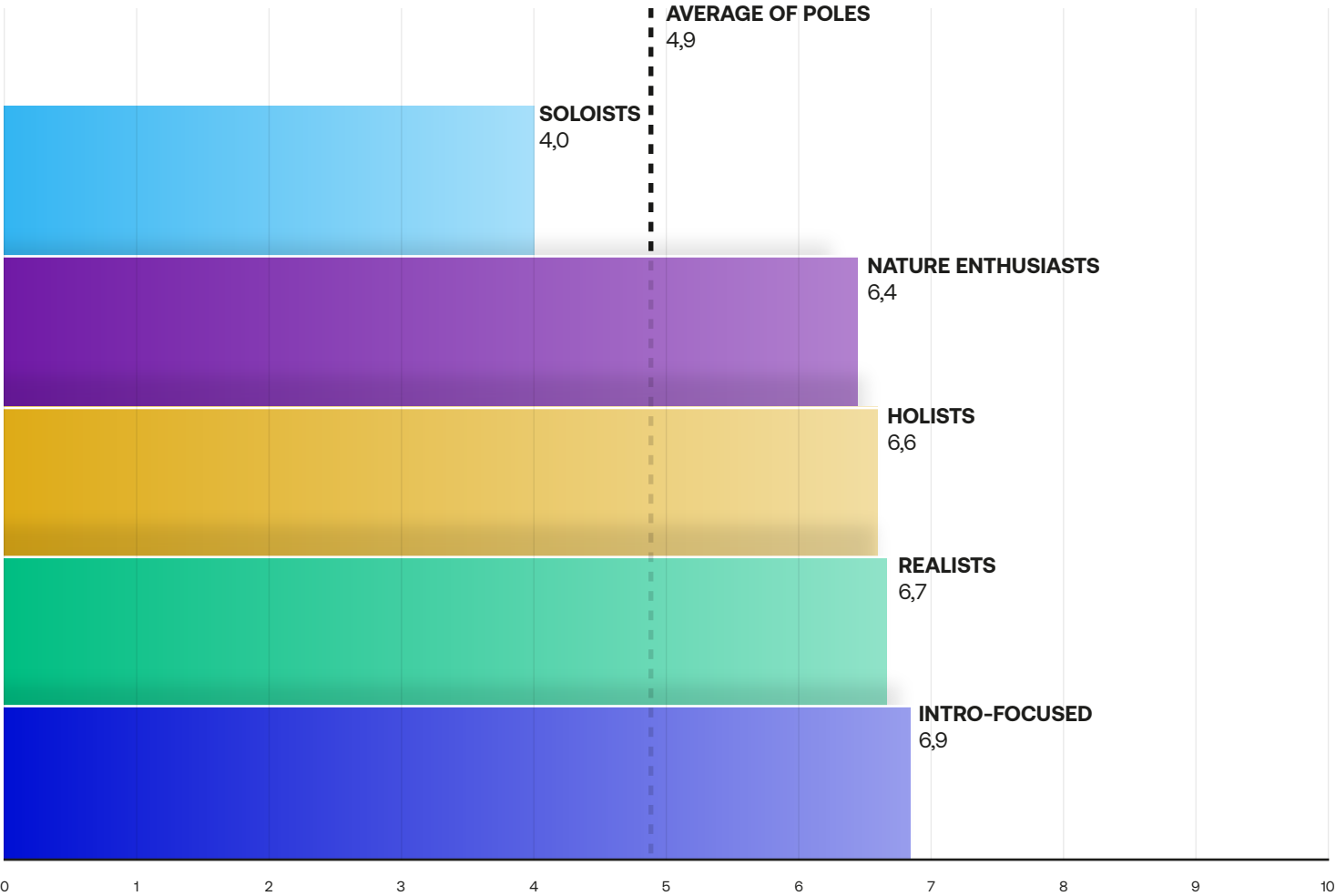
## AGE

49%

aged 55+



The following spectrum takes into account the defined profiles and presents an approach to the well-being of different groups.



Source: own study, infuture.institute, 2024.

Placing the average of well-being (not at the declarative level, but calculated from taking care of areas of well-being) for Polish women and men as a whole (4.9) on the axis, it can be seen that the average for Soloists (4.0) comes out much worse than for the other four groups. This indicates the importance of bonding relationships with others, and more broadly mitigating loneliness. 33% of Polish women and men have no one to turn to, and nearly 40% often or sometimes feel lonely. Loneliness is a phenomenon that strongly affects feelings of well-being and has an impact on mental health and physical health loss.<sup>34</sup>

In turn, it can be seen that the well-being values for the other four profiles are more than two points higher relative to Soloists and more than a point and a half higher than the average for Polish women and men in general. What unites Nature Enthusiasts, Realists, Intro-Focused and Holists is the issue of personal development and the realization of passions. Thus, it can be assumed that these two aspects, by building a positive self-image as an individual and increasing self-esteem, strongly promote well-being.

34. „Poczucie samotności wśród dorosłych Polaków” report, Instytut Pokolenia, 2022.

# Well-being as a process



Caring for well-being cannot just be about passively maintaining the level of care of the six areas included in the Wellbeing Score. When we consider the context of resilience, well-being becomes the ability to take care of these components in a constantly changing environment. It becomes crucial to map the gaps, to monitor occurring changes. Then caring for well-being ceases to be a one-time activity and becomes a process and a specific skill (well-being as a skill – Richard Davidson).

In the context of the developed index, well-being can be regarded as a kind of competence, since achieving a high level of well-being in all six areas requires certain human skills and actions. This, in turn, translates into coping in various areas of life.

***There are elements that can support well-being and its formation. These are skills that we can develop over the course of our lives. Well-being is not given once and for all.***

**Joanna Gutral, PhD**

psychologist, psychotherapist,  
psychoeducator

However, a prerequisite for the development of well-being is an enabling environment. We refer to it as the infrastructure of well-being. It consists of five factors that enhance the process of shaping well-being.

## INFRASTRUCTURE OF WELL-BEING

### • Popularization of psychoeducation

Popularizing psychoeducation in a systemic approach to shaping well-being includes providing access to expert knowledge in the area of mental health, fighting misinformation, and fake news leading to misdiagnosis, and concern for the reliability of information sources and democratization of knowledge. As part of this approach, it is necessary to develop critical thinking skills through curricula in schools and universities, the creation of educational plans, and cross-sector cooperation for effective education.

*We must keep in mind that psychoeducation in social media has two sides: on the one hand, it gives us access to knowledge and the opportunity to create awareness. On the other – it creates a dangerous basis for self-diagnosis.*

**Asia Wojsiat (Podgórska), PhD**

neurobiologist, biochemist, university lecturer,  
science popularizer

*Social media can have a significant negative impact on mental health, especially in the context of diet – and lifestyle-related sites. People who are trying to take care of their health are often exposed to idealized images of athletic bodies when browsing social media, which are sometimes retouched – nowadays also using artificial intelligence. This can significantly lower self-esteem and lead to problems with self-perception and related eating disorders. As a result, careless use of social media can not only damage self-esteem but also contribute to the formation of unhealthy eating habits – such as overly restrictive diets.*

**Damian Parol, PhD**

nutritionist and psychodietitian





- **Bridging digital and health exclusion**

Bridging digital and health exclusion includes a variety of measures to ensure equal access to technology and healthcare services for all segments of society. These are initiatives for access to digital tools and the development of digital education and telemedicine, and health benefit programs for people with lower incomes.

- **Health data security**

The use of user data derived from mobile and wearable devices over the long term enables a personalized approach to patient experience and care, and the identification of areas for improvement at the system level (e.g., pandemic detection, public health monitoring). The key issue here, however, is concern for the security of sensitive data, such as information on user habits. This is important for patients' sense of security, and thus directly affects their sense of well-being.

- **Concern for the food environment**

On the one hand, the nutritional environment is influenced by political, social, and economic factors. On the other hand, a healthy food environment has a direct impact on obesity and, consequently, chronic diseases. That is

why it is so important to spread awareness about building healthy eating habits and support research and cross-sectoral cooperation.

- **Redefining the approach to well-being at work and to employee benefits**

Lack of concern for well-being means not only a decrease in productivity for the organization but also higher costs (resulting, among other things, from burnout or turnover). In organizations today, the next quarter, revenue, plan execution, and current challenges are often more important than strategic and long-term thinking, which means, among other things, investing in and implementing strategies related to human resources. Such a long-term outlook should be particularly important today not only for the HR industry but for the entire organization. Continuity of work, high motivation, proactive teams, and healthy employees – these require a commitment to promoting a culture based on care for employees, flexible work strategies, investing in personal development, and monitoring each employee's well-being.

*Working conditions have a key impact on our well-being, physical health, and quality of life. This is experienced by workers, especially in toxic work environments. Studies show that experiencing excessive stress at work can significantly impair sleep quality and increase anxiety symptoms.*

**Mateusz Majchrzak**

certified CBT-I therapist, specialist in sleep, stress, anxiety and depressive disorders, member of, among others, Polskie Towarzystwo Psychologiczne and Polskie Towarzystwo Badań Nad Snem

*Employee well-being has important consequences for both their physical health and organizational costs. Research shows that a positively emotional and satisfying experience at work is strongly correlated with employee effectiveness and workplace safety. These are considerable organizational benefits, so it is worthwhile to take care of employee well-being in the organization. It can also be directly shaped – for example, by giving employees more autonomy, and organizational support and building an efficient and trustworthy workplace.*

**Agnieszka Czerw, PhD**

Interdisciplinary Center for Research on Social Activity & Well-Being FEEL & ACT WELL, SWPS University



## STAGE I

In the first stage of the research process, a quantitative survey was conducted on a representative sample of Poles (n = 1004). The survey was used to examine what well-being is for Poles, what comprises it, and what enhances it, what counteracts it.

The drivers of change defined from the survey became the basis for defining the six component areas of well-being:

- Comfort of life,
- Physical health,
- Mental health,
- Inner peace,
- Relations with others,
- Contact with nature.

## STAGE II

Based on the defined drivers of change and areas, the infuture.institute team developed the- ses for each of the six areas. The set of these forms the basis for calculating a well-being index. This tool was then tested in a second quantitative survey conducted on a representative sample of Poles (n = 1014). This made it possible to calculate the overall well-being of Poles and the levels of care for each area.

Calculation of the well-being index identified five degrees of care for six component areas:

### Score 8–10

A very high degree of care for the area,

### Score 6–7,99

A high degree of care for the area,

### Score 4–5,99

The average degree of coverage of the area,

### Score 2–3,99

A low degree of care for the area,

### Score 0–1,99

A very low degree of care for the area.

## STAGE III

In the third stage of the research process, infuture.institute interviewed experts specializing in the six constituent areas to develop a recommendation for the well-being index. Both Benefit Systems specialists and experts participated in the process, as well as external experts:

- Agata Chudzicka-Czupala, PhD,
- Agnieszka Czerw, PhD,
- Joanna Gutral, PhD,
- Mateusz Majchrzak,
- Sławomir Murawiec, MD, PhD,
- Marta Niedźwiecka,
- Damian Parol, PhD,
- Asia Wojsiat (Podgórska), PhD.

**Atomization of society** – a process of social disintegration, often resulting from the weakening of social ties and the rise of individualism.

**Diseases of civilization** – diseases that are caused by an unhealthy lifestyle; today we include, among others, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and obesity.

**Neurodegenerative diseases** – diseases of the nervous system that lead to a gradual loss of neuronal function.

**Digital detox** – deliberate, temporary disuse of technology to reduce digital stress and improve mental health.

**Digital stress** – stress resulting from excessive use of digital technologies or lack of digital literacy.

**Democratization of knowledge** – a process aimed at building universal public access to knowledge.

**Doom scrolling** – the phenomenon of cursory browsing in social media news, often concerning negative events.

**Eco-anxiety** – anxiety or stress related to the threats posed by climate change.

**Well-being economy** – an economy that focuses on the needs of people and the planet, and in which their well-being drives economic prosperity, and vice versa.

**Fake news** – false or manipulated information, disseminated as factual news, usually to influence public opinion.

**Digital hygiene** – a set of activities aimed at maintaining a healthy relationship with digital technologies, preventing abuse, and minimizing its negative effects.

**Nano-second culture** – also referred to as the culture of the eternal present; refers to the reality in which changes occur faster than our ability to cope with them.

**Gender inequality** – social and economic inequalities based on gender differences; includes such aspects as access to education or work, among others.

**Loneliness** – a mental state of perceived isolation, often resulting from a lack of close social relationships or lack of social support.

**The sandwich generation** – a term referring to people who have to simultaneously care for both elderly family members and their children.

**Polycrisis** – a reality in which crises occur simultaneously, interacting with each other.

**Psychoeducation** – the process of transferring knowledge about a person and their functioning in a psychosocial context.

**Resilience** – the ability to build mental toughness and flexibility to adapt to difficult situations and cope with uncertainties.

**Solastalgia** – emotional suffering caused by climate disaster.

**Biological age** – the biological state of an organism, reflecting the degree of its aging.

**Chronological age** – the number of years a person has lived since their birth.

**Subjective age** – subjective perception of age, which may differ from biological and chronological age, based on well-being and self-perception of age.

**Work-life balance** – a balanced division of time and attention between work and personal life in order to achieve harmony between them.

**Work-life blending / work-life integration** – A flexible approach to managing professional and personal responsibilities, assuming a smooth transition between them.

**Digital exclusion** – inequalities in both access to digital technologies and the ability to use them.

**Health exclusion** – lack of equal access to health care and infrastructure.

**Secondary trauma** – a state of chronic emotional distress resulting from observation or direct contact with trauma or someone else's suffering.

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· infuture  
· institute

 Benefit  
Systems