# Inclusive Collaboration At Work

Understanding the Key Variables that Drive
Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intent

*A Future of Work Study by RallyBright, Inc.*

RallyBright

# Contents

# Introduction

Since the onset of the pandemic in early 2020, a significant shift has been underway as people rethink their relationships with work and organizations retool the best ways to support their people.

In June 2021, RallyBright conducted a study of 1,000 US-based working professionals to gather insights about how individuals currently think about work.

The *Inclusive Collaboration at Work Study* identifies the six key variables of organizational collaboration and inclusion and examines the correlation between job satisfaction, turnover intent, and an organization's climate of inclusion and collaboration.

# Inclusion

## The Secret Sauce of Outperforming Teams

**People collaborating or working together in groups towards a common goal** – this simple fact is at the heart of what organizations do across all industries, fields and cultures. The act of collaborating, however, is far from simple. Consider the many commonplace forms of unsuccessful collaboration: a partnership fails, a team loses a game or match, departments work in silos and are forced to backtrack when they can't integrate their work at the crucial moment; entrepreneurs go belly-up when, despite months or years of working together, they cannot adapt to fast-changing market conditions.

*In the workplace, the secret sauce that makes the difference between mere collaboration or high-performance teamwork, seamless integration or breakthrough innovation is **inclusion.***

# Inclusive Collaboration

## The Foundation of Organizational Success

In an inclusive environment, everyone feels a strong sense of belonging to the group, both in terms of the work they are doing and the relationships they are forming. Each individual is confident that the tasks they perform make good use of their skills and abilities, and that they can show up to perform these tasks as their true selves without hiding aspects of their identity or personality.

**Inclusion is also foundational for a group or organization to reap the benefits of diversity.**[1] Indeed, without an inclusive environment, the best a diverse team can be is mediocre.[2]  Whatever the current makeup of the group or organization, the investment in fostering an inclusive environment creates the conditions for diversity to thrive in all its forms.

**The foundation of organizational success, then, is *inclusive collaboration*.** When groups recognize the need to align not only on the common goals and objectives (the "what") but also on the communication

and interpersonal norms that will ensure success – both for individuals and the group as a whole ("the how") – they begin to foster inclusive collaboration deliberately.

Going through the process of forming such agreements and bringing them to life on a team fosters an emotional connection between people that makes it easier for anyone to speak up with the next great new idea or efficiency-boosting challenge to the status quo. Moreover, when someone does speak up, others in the group are apt to listen with an open mind.

An inclusively collaborative team approaches differences, conflict, and even mistakes as opportunities for innovation and excellence rather than as obstacles to avoid.

[1] Laura Sherbin and Ripa Rashid, "Diversity Doesn't Stick Without Inclusion," *Harvard Business Review*, February 1, 2017.

[2] Adler, N. J. *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior*. 4th ed. Cincinnati, OH: South-Western, 2002. C, Milton J. Bennett 2008.

## 6 Key Variables of Inclusive Collaboration

**There are six distinct and definable variables that are essential for organizational collaboration and inclusion:** alignment, cooperation, compassion, fairness, psychological safety and belonging.

**1** Alignment
Agreement on a common objective and a commitment across the group to cooperate in pursuit of that goal.

**2** Cooperation
Dividing up work into clear roles and responsibilities, communicating effectively, and sharing knowledge freely.

**3** Compassion
The willingness to help others at our own expense, and the consistent consideration of our own and others' feelings.

**4** Fairness
Awareness of bias and a willingness to address it, paired with a mindset that differences within a group are not obstacles but assets.

**5** Psychological Safety
Freedom to show up authentically and to fearlessly speak up, contribute, and make mistakes.

**6** Belonging
Confidence that we bring valuable skills and knowledge to the group, and a feeling of being intimately connected to its other members.

# Focusing on key variables impacts retention.

By focusing on the key variables of inclusive collaboration more directly, organizations can constructively impact key retention drivers.

Increased scores for inclusion and collaboration correlated with increased scores for job satisfaction and ENPS (Employee Net Promoter Score), and decreased scores for turnover intention and burnout.

| RallyBright | High Belonging | Low Belonging | High Psychological Safety | Low Psychological Safety | High Inclusion | Low Inclusion | High Collaboration | Low Collaboration |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Turn-over Intention | 1.8% | 26.3% | 5.2% | 25.2% | 2.4% | 25.9% | 5.4% | 24.8% |
| Job Satisfaction | 97.7% | 65.7% | 95.2% | 66.5% | 98.1% | 65.9% | 94.9% | 67.0% |
| Burnout | 16.4% | 43.7% | 18.5% | 43.1% | 14.4% | 44.2% | 20.7% | 41.9% |

Source: RallyBright

# Inclusion

## Job Satisfaction

If inclusion is high,* 98.1% of respondents indicated they were *satisfied or very satisfied with their job*, whereas, if it was low, only 65.9% indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their job.

## Turnover Intent

If inclusion is high, only 2.4% of respondents indicated they *thought often or very often about leaving their current job*, whereas if inclusion was low, 25.9% stated they often or very often thought about leaving.
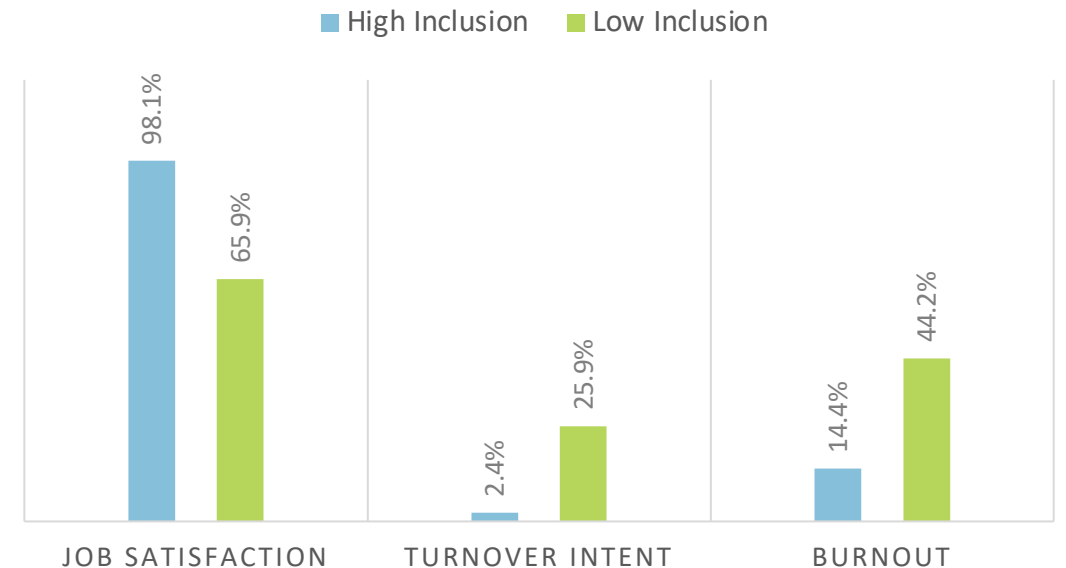
## Burnout

Employee burnout in inclusive environments was reported at one-third that of organizations with low inclusion.

If inclusion is high, 14.4% of respondents indicated that they *agreed or strongly agreed to feeling burned out from their work*, whereas if inclusion was low, 44.2% stated that they agreed or strongly agreed to feeling burned out from their work.

*\* High scores for collaboration, inclusion, belonging and psychological safety are defined as scores in the upper quartile of the response range.*

Turnover intent was more than 10 times higher among those in low inclusion organizations.

### INCLUSION'S IMPACT

■ High Inclusion  ■ Low Inclusion

| | JOB SATISFACTION | TURNOVER INTENT | BURNOUT |
|---|---|---|---|
| High Inclusion | 98.1% | 2.4% | 14.4% |
| Low Inclusion | 65.9% | 25.9% | 44.2% |

Source: RallyBright

# Belonging is the most important predictor of job satisfaction & turnover

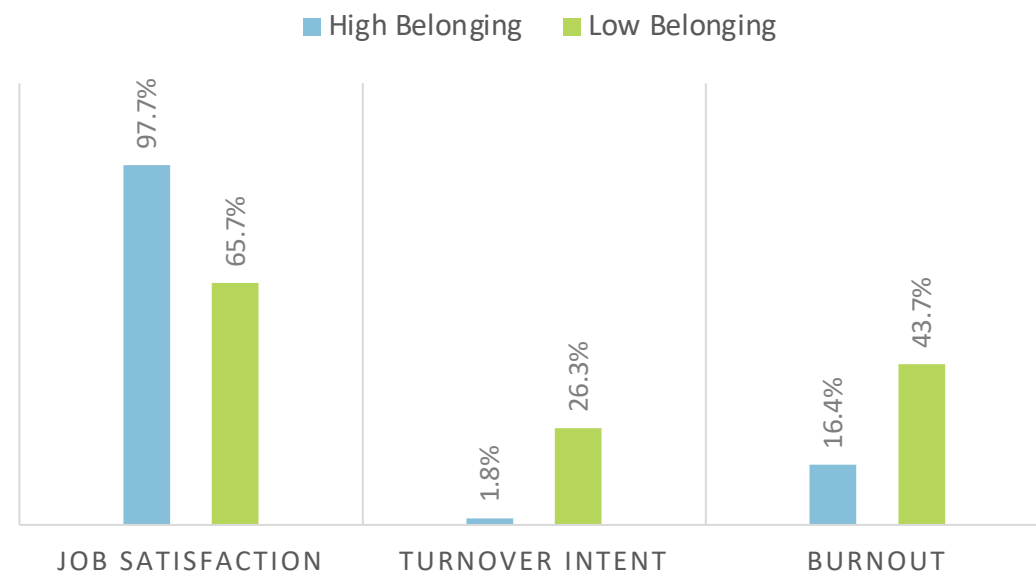## Belonging

### Job Satisfaction & Turnover Intent

Belonging plays a unique role in predicting both turnover intent and job satisfaction. In organizations where belonging was reported as high, 97.7% of respondents indicated they were *satisfied or very satisfied with their job*, and only 1.8% indicated they *thought often or very often about leaving their current job*. If belonging was indicated as low, job satisfaction dropped to 65.7%, and turnover intent increased to 26.3%.

### Burnout

If belonging is high, only 16.4% of respondents indicated they *agreed or strongly agreed to feeling burned out from their work*, whereas, if it was low, 43.7% stated they agreed or strongly agreed to feeling burned out from their work.

Though there is a positive correlation between psychological safety and belonging, **focusing only on psychological safety is not enough to create an inclusively collaborative culture**.

## BELONGING'S IMPACT

■ High Belonging   ■ Low Belonging



| | JOB SATISFACTION | TURNOVER INTENT | BURNOUT |
|---|---|---|---|
| High Belonging | 97.7% | 1.8% | 16.4% |
| Low Belonging | 65.7% | 26.3% | 43.7% |

Source: RallyBright

Key Findings

# Psychological Safety

### Job Satisfaction & Turnover Intent

If psychological safety is high, 95.2 % of people indicated they were *satisfied or very satisfied with their job*, and only 5.2% indicated they *thought often or very often about leaving their current job.*
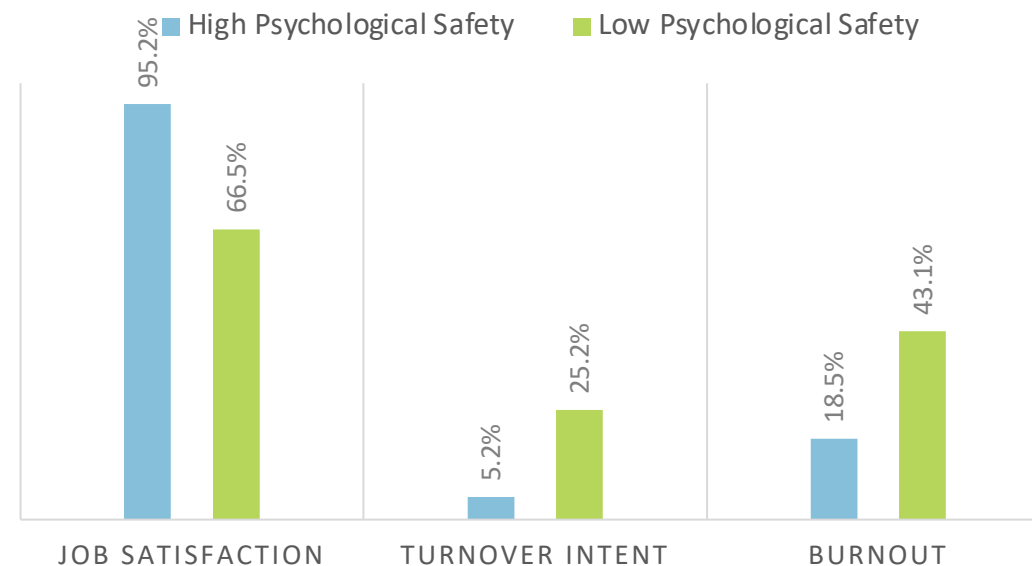
In organizations where psychological safety rated low, only 66.5% of workers indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their job, and over one-quarter (25.2%) of respondents stated they often or very often thought about leaving.

### Burnout

If psychological safety is high, 18.5% of respondents indicated they *agreed or strongly agreed to feeling burned out from their work*, whereas, in environments where it was low, 43.1% stated they agreed or strongly agreed to feeling burned out from their work.

Burnout was more than twice as prevalent among workers in environments where psychological safety was shown to be low.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY'S IMPACT



Legend: ■ High Psychological Safety   ■ Low Psychological Safety

JOB SATISFACTION — 95.2% / 66.5%
TURNOVER INTENT — 5.2% / 25.2%
BURNOUT — 18.5% / 43.1%

Source: RallyBright

# Collaboration

### Job Satisfaction

Nearly all (94.9%) respondents were *satisfied or very satisfied with their job* when collaboration was indicated as high. That percentage dropped to 67% in organizations where collaboration was indicated to be low.

### Turnover Intent

In organizations where collaboration is low, employees are 4.5 times more likely to be thinking about leaving their jobs.

When collaboration is high, only 5.4% of respondents indicated that they *"thought often or very often about leaving their current job."* That percentage increases to 24.8% in organizations where collaboration is low.

### Burnout

If collaboration is high, 20.7% of respondents indicated they *agreed or strongly agreed to feeling burned out from their work*, whereas if collaboration was low, 41.9% stated they agreed or strongly agreed to feeling burned out from their work.

Employees were twice as likely to feel burned out from their work in environments with low levels of collaboration.

## COLLABORATION'S IMPACT

■ High Collaboration  ■ Low Collaboration
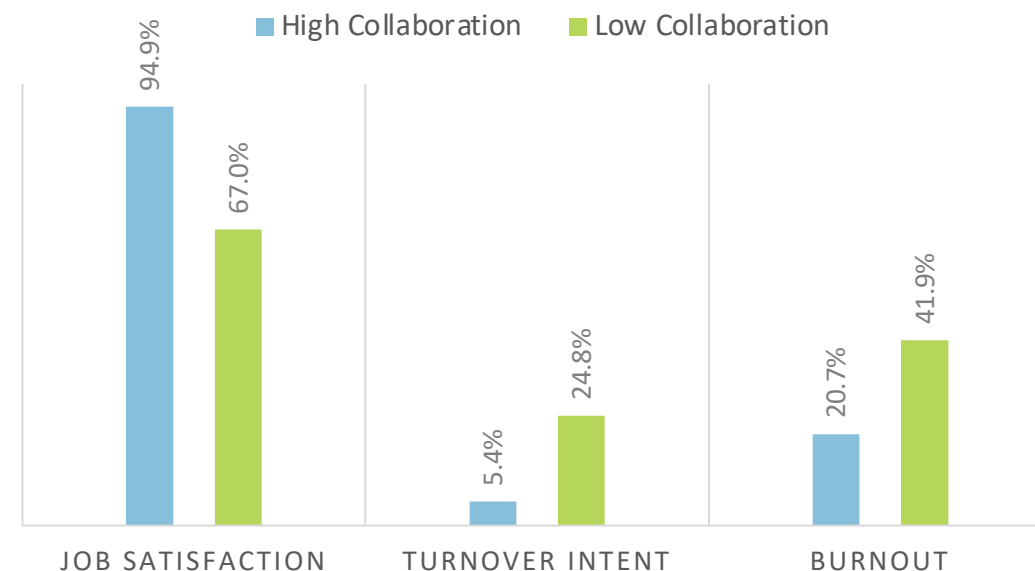


Source: RallyBright

# Few differences across race, gender & leadership.

While there were only a few areas where scores indicated a significant difference across race, role and gender, these differences are worthy of further examination as leaders aspire to inclusive collaboration across their organizations.

- **Race.** Black or African American respondents scored significantly higher than other races (i.e., White, Asian, two or more races) on *Alignment* and *Cooperation*.

- **Gender.** Males scored significantly higher on the themes of Collaboration & Inclusion. When drilling down into the constructs, the significant gender differences showed to be in *Cooperation, Fairness* and *Psychological Safety*, with males always higher than females in these areas. When drilling down even deeper into the sub-constructs, significant gender differences were seen in *Role Clarity, Communication, Embracing Failure, Speaking up,* and *Authenticity & Objectivity.*

- **Leadership.** Respondents in leadership roles scored higher on EVERYTHING, compared with those who identified as not being in a leadership role.

# Conclusion

The **Inclusive Collaboration at Work Study** reveals that improving the six key variables of inclusion and collaboration leads to increased job satisfaction and decreased turnover intent. Furthermore, the inclusion variable "belonging" is the strongest predictor of job satisfaction and turnover intent.

The research suggests that as we return to work, organizations must do more than focus on DEI and psychological safety if they want to develop inclusive collaboration. Leaders must ensure their employees feel they belong, are part of a team, and are valued.

# Methodology

The **Inclusive Collaboration at Work Study** was conducted online in June

2021 with a diverse sample of 1,000 US-based working professionals. It

examined six distinct variables of inclusive collaboration: alignment,

cooperation, compassion, fairness, psychological safety and belonging. To

field the study, we first developed a bespoke scale (instrument of

assessment), which pulls from the most recent works and research within

identity theory, social network analysis, and behavioral science.

**Research Lead**
**Laura Weis, PhD**
Data Scientist and Organizational Psychologist
Chief Science Advisor to RallyBright, Inc.

# About RallyBright

RallyBright is a team development platform that helps business leaders build better teams and deliver better results. We do this by combining behavioral science with proven team development tools to help teams perform at a higher level, strengthen their interpersonal dynamics, and reinforce the behaviors that drive their organizational values.

**Learn More**

Team Development Platform: RallyBright Resilient Teams

Inclusive Collaboration: RallyBright Inclusive Collaboration Toolkit

Insights: RallyBright Blog

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