



Change Enthusiasm Global

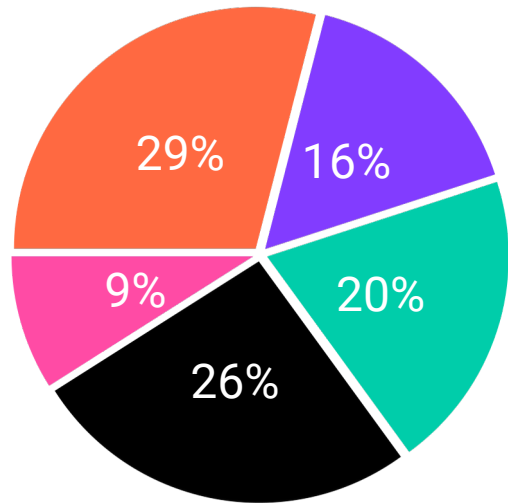
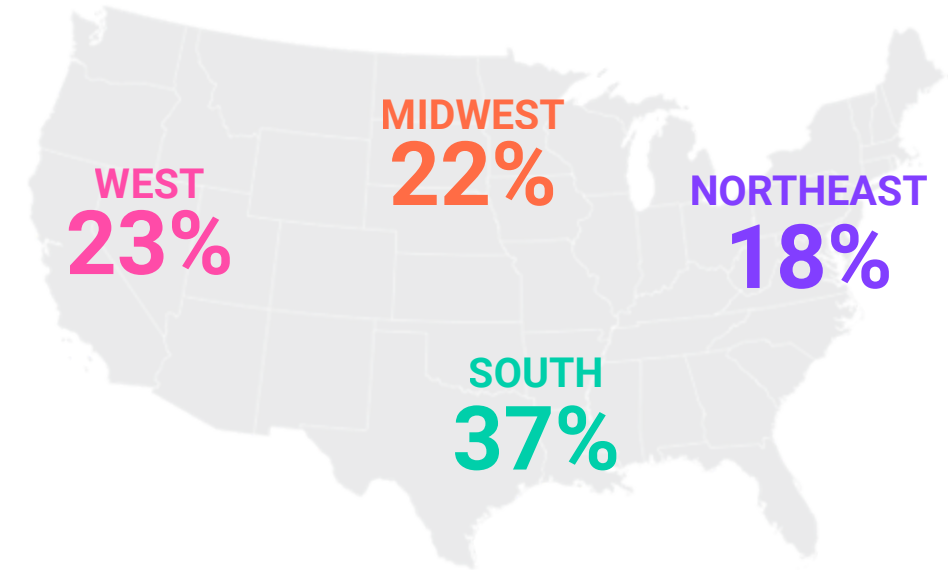
National Research Study
in Partnership with CGK

NATIONAL STUDY METHODOLOGY

CUSTOM 12-QUESTION STUDY COMPLETED BY

750

U.S. PARTICIPANTS (AGES 16-65)



29% GEN Z
AGES 16-29

16% YOUNGER MILLENNIALS
AGES 30-36

20% OLDER MILLENNIALS
AGES 37-45

26% GEN X
AGES 46-59

9% BOOMERS
AGES 60-65



2% - Non-binary or prefer not to answer

50%



*Figures are statistically *significant* at the 95% confidence level. Margin of error is +/-3.58 percentage points.

Weighted to the 2020 U.S. Census for age, region, gender, and ethnicity.

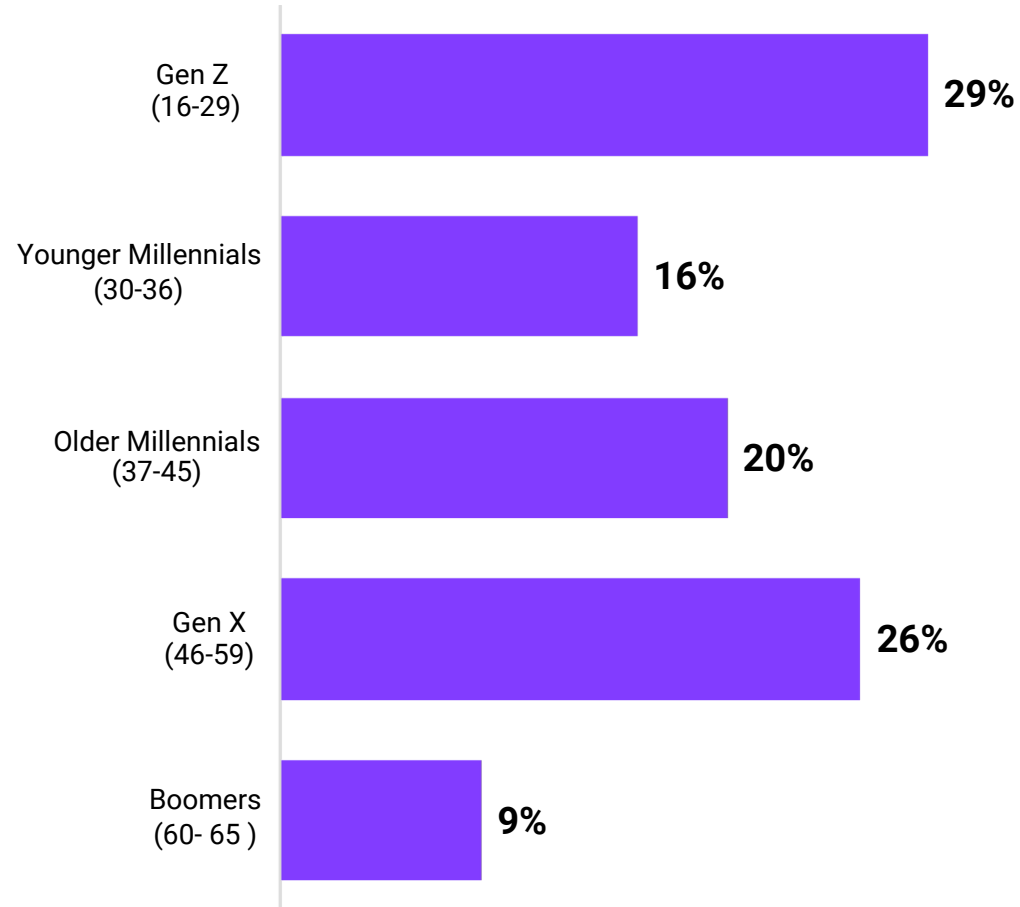
Employment quota (employed full-time, part-time, or self-employed) set at 82% of the total sample to match the 2026 with the 2022 sample data.

In an instance that a chart total for a single select question does not add to 100%, please note that this is due to the minimal effect of rounding.

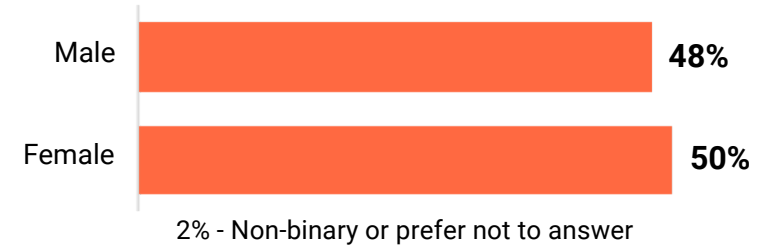
Study was conducted online from December 23, 2025, to January 12, 2026.

PRIORITY SCREENERS AND VARIABLES

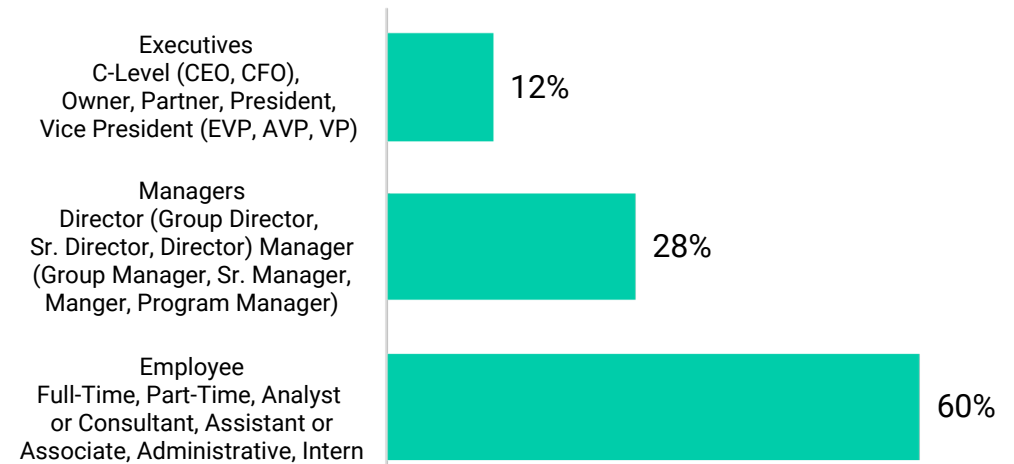
AGE/GENERATION



GENDER



JOB ROLE/LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY (ONLY INCLUDES THOSE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED; N=615)



THE RISING PACE AND IMPACT OF CHANGE

85% of those in the US think the pace of change at work will **continue to increase**.

82% of those in the US think having **strong emotional intelligence** positively impacts people's ability to navigate change.

74% of those in the US think **emotional intelligence will have increasing importance** as artificial intelligence (AI) becomes more common in their lives.



QUESTION:

When you think about change, what is the first emotion that comes up for you?

JOY
HOPE FEAR
CHANGE
GRATITUDE
ANGER GRIEF



QUESTION:

When you think about change, what is the first emotion that comes up for you?

KEY STORY ELEMENTS WE UNCOVERED

- ***Anxiety remains the dominant response to workplace change.***
- ***Change readiness is rising over time, especially among younger generations***
- ***We really don't know the impact of AI yet.***
- ***The biggest barriers to change are not technical. They are human.***
- ***Feeling heard is the biggest unlock.***



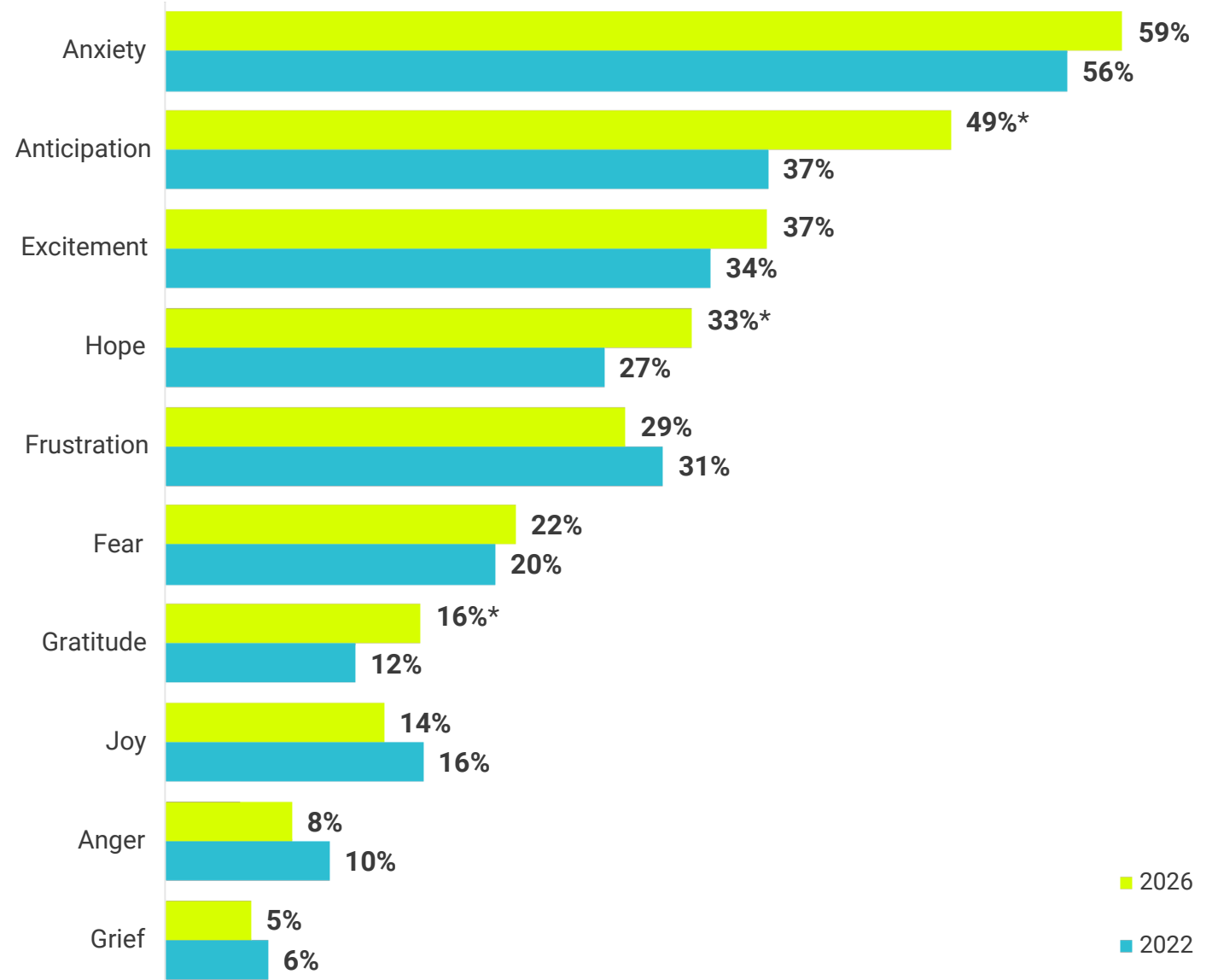


How do we feel about **change**?

When experiencing change at work, more than half (59%) of Americans in 2026 continue to feel anxiety more than any other emotion tested

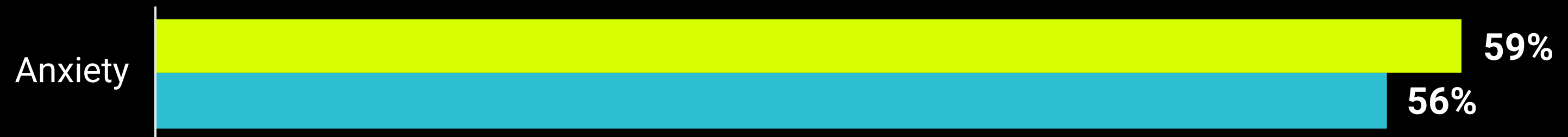
82% of Americans think people with stronger emotional intelligence handle change better.

WHICH EMOTIONS DO YOU FEEL WHEN EXPERIENCING CHANGE AT WORK?
(BY TOTAL)



Q1. Which of the following emotions do you feel when experiencing change at work?
Select all that apply. [BENCHMARK QUESTION]

WHICH EMOTIONS DO YOU FEEL WHEN EXPERIENCING CHANGE AT WORK?
(BY TOTAL)



When experiencing change at work, more than half (59%) of those in the US in 2026 continue to feel anxiety more than any other emotion tested

83% of those in the US say they're **more likely to adapt to change** if they **feel comfortable expressing their true emotions in the workplace.**

When experiencing change at work, more than half (59%) of Americans in 2026 continue to feel anxiety more than any other emotion tested

82% of Americans think people with stronger emotional intelligence handle change better.

WHICH EMOTIONS DO YOU FEEL WHEN EXPERIENCING CHANGE AT WORK?
(BY TOTAL)

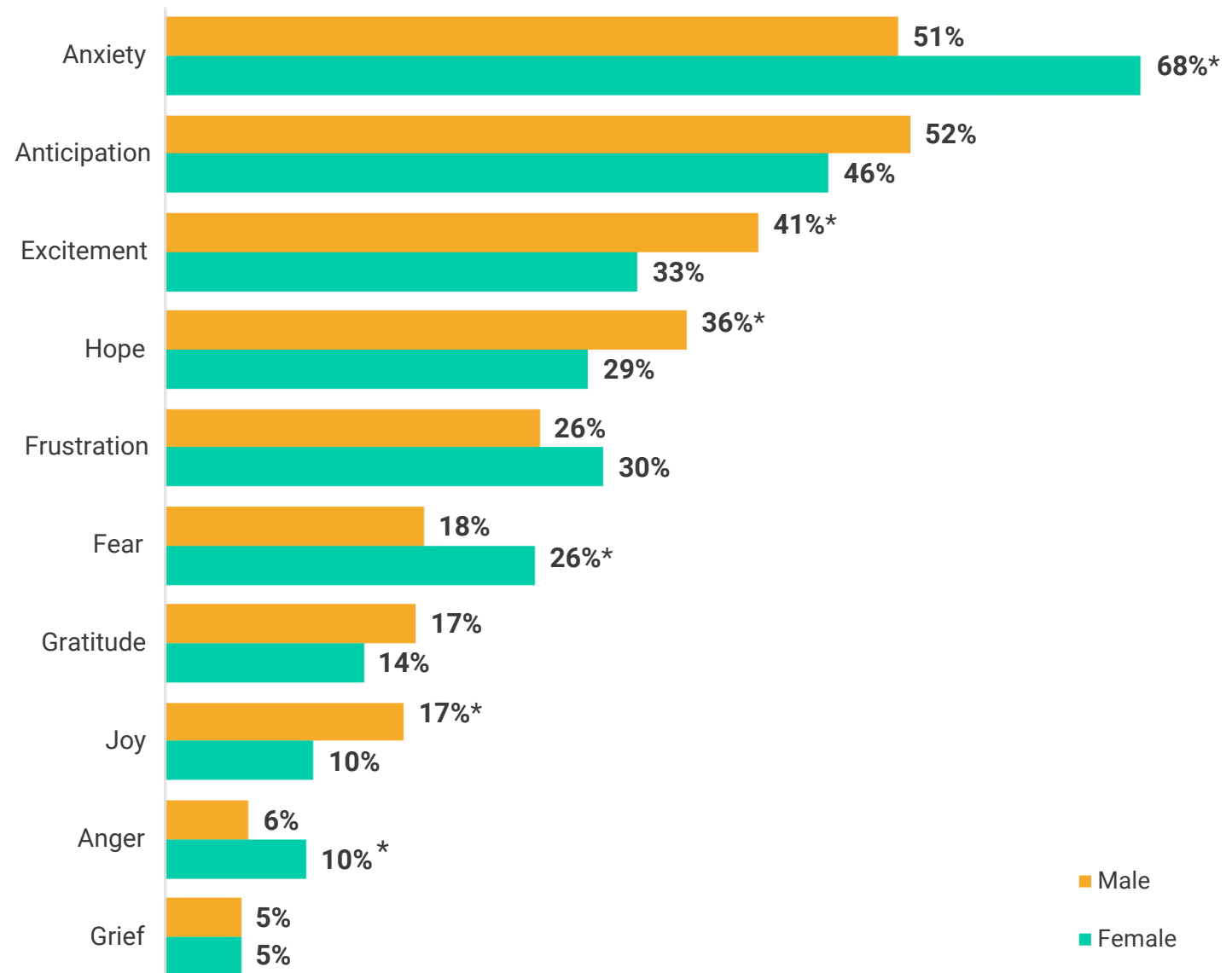


2026
2022

Q1. Which of the following emotions do you feel when experiencing change at work?
Select all that apply. [BENCHMARK QUESTION]

Men and women in 2026 feel *significantly* different emotions when experiencing change at work

WHICH EMOTIONS DO YOU FEEL WHEN EXPERIENCING **CHANGE AT WORK**?
(BY 2026 GENDER)



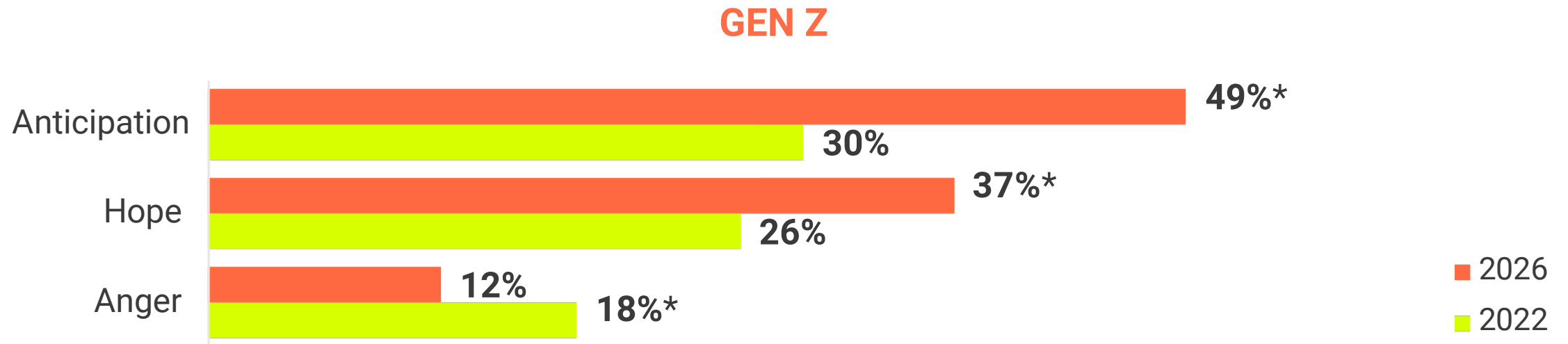
Q1. Which of the following emotions do you feel when experiencing change at work?
Select all that apply. [BENCHMARK QUESTION]



Who is ready for **change**?

When experiencing change at work in 2026, Gen Z has shifted to a more positive outlook compared to 2022

WHICH EMOTIONS DO YOU FEEL WHEN EXPERIENCING CHANGE AT WORK?
(BY GENERATION CHANGE; ONLY INCLUDES SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES FROM 2022 TO 2026)





What does **AI** have to do with it?

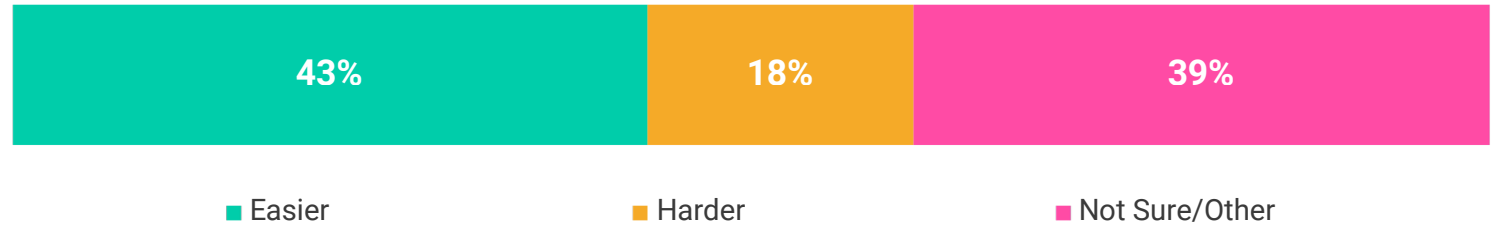
Perceptions of the impact of AI tools on change in organizations are deeply divided

"I think it will make it easier by automating less important tasks, so workers can focus on more intricate tasks."

"I truly think easier. It's going to take burdensome tasks off of employees. They just have to give it a chance."

"It will make change harder because AI will begin to replace employees, and people will be fearful they're next."

HOW DO YOU FEEL AI TOOLS WILL IMPACT *CHANGE* IN ORGANIZATIONS IN THE NEXT YEAR?
(BY TOTAL; OPEN-ENDED VERBATIM RESPONSES; N=750)



"I don't think we've seen enough yet to know."

"It depends on the people using it, not the technology itself."

OPEN-ENDED QUESTION. How do you feel artificial intelligence (AI) tools will make *change* in organizations easier or harder in the next year? *Please be as specific as possible.*



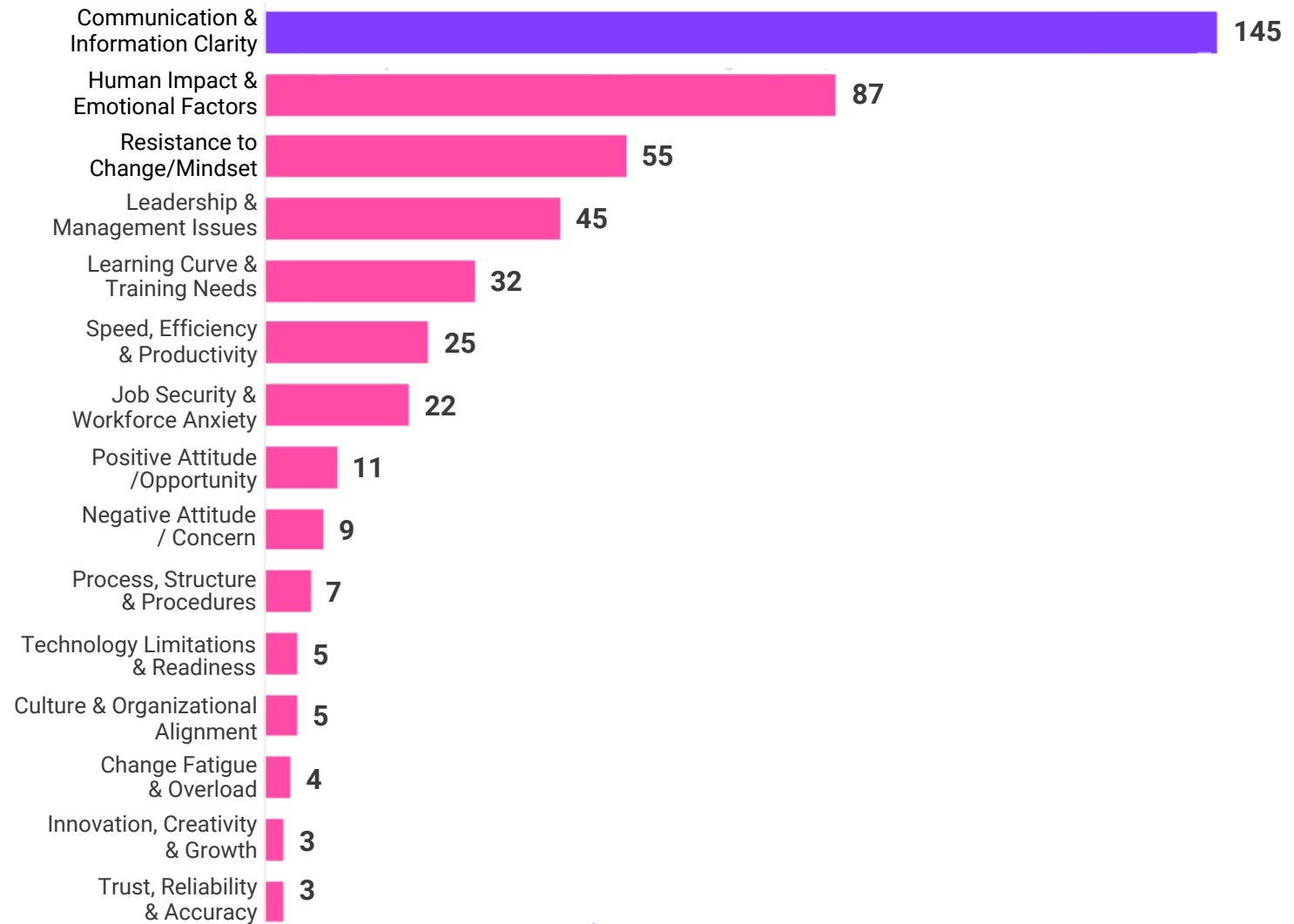
What are the biggest barriers to **change**?

The biggest barriers to change being effective in organizations aren't technical, they're human, emotional, and communication driven

"People need empathy during change, not just instructions."

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST, HIDDEN BARRIER TO CHANGE BEING EFFECTIVE IN THE WORKPLACE TODAY?

(BY TOTAL; OPEN-ENDED VERBATIM RESPONSES; N=750)



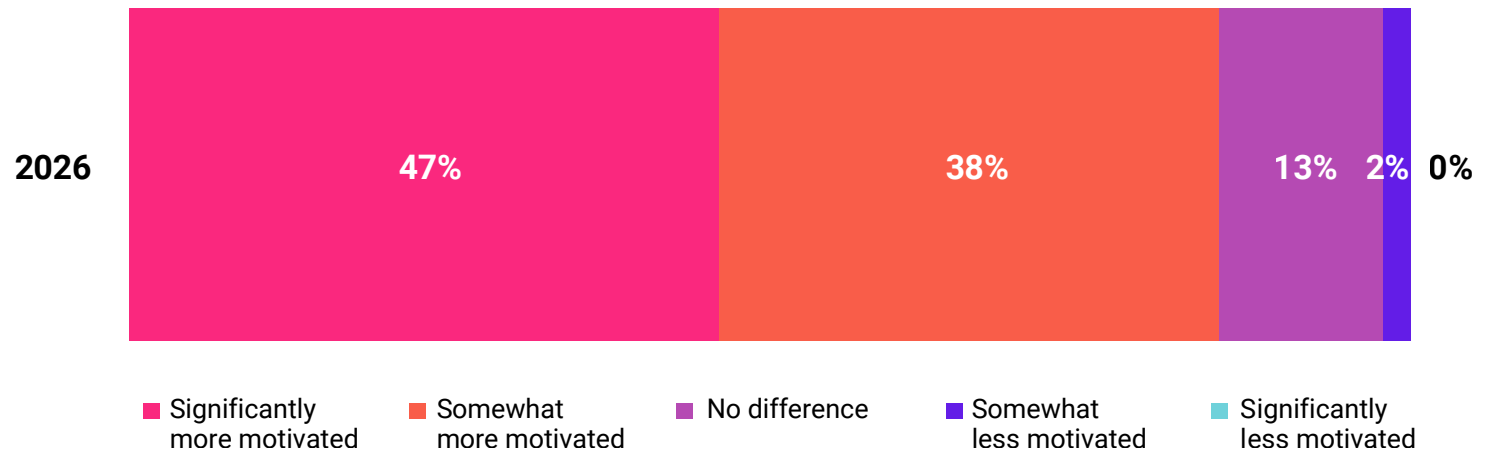
OPEN-ENDED QUESTION. What is the biggest, hidden barrier to change being effective in the workplace today?
Please be as specific as possible.



The way forward - what helps us embrace **change**

80% of Americans are more likely to engage in a change initiative when they feel safe sharing more difficult emotions about that change, including 84% of women, significantly higher than men (75%).

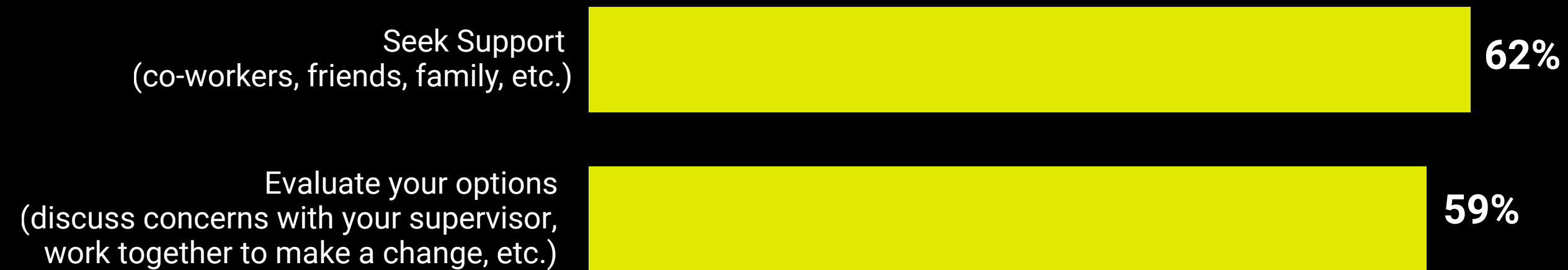
WHEN YOU FEEL TRULY HEARD AND UNDERSTOOD BY YOUR MANAGER AND PEERS ARE YOU MORE OR LESS MOTIVATED TO ADOPT A CHANGE?
(BY TOTAL)



Q8. When you feel truly heard and understood by your manager and peers, are you more or less motivated to adopt a change? Select one. [BENCHMARK QUESTION]

WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO FIGHT THE FEELING OF RESISTANCE TO *CHANGE* FOR YOU AT WORK?

(BY TOTAL; RANK #1/#2/#3)



The most effective way to fight the feeling of **resistance to change** at work is to **seek support and evaluate their options**

In 2026, **62%** of those in the US are comfortable expressing their emotions **around their coworkers**, significantly more than expressing their emotions **around their supervisors (48%)**


MANAGING **CHANGE** EFFECTIVELY IS THE NEW COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

85% of those in the US think the ability to adapt to change at work will influence **which companies survive and which companies won't.**

62% of those in the US would choose a slightly lower-paying job with a **boss who handled change well** over a slightly higher-paying job with a boss who did not handle change well.

48% of those in the US have left a job or employer because **change was not well managed.**





**How have you created space for
team members to process change?**

**What might you do
differently in the future?**