

Discover Healthier Podcast: Healthy Employees and healthy businesses

Speaker	Start time	Dialogue	End time
Azania intro	0:00	Welcome to Discover Healthier. Everything you need to know about health brought to you my Discovery Health. I'm Azania Mosaka. You can join the conversation as we explore some of the most matters in the healthcare environment today. Our wide variety of topics and specialist guests will empower you to care for your health now, and in the future.	00:22
Azania	0:22	I'm now joined by two powerhouse business women with a wealth of expertise in employee wellness and resilience. They've helped local and international organizations to navigate these areas successfully. So with that, it's a warm welcome to Nonkululeko Pitje, Discovery's Head of Employee Health Solutions. And also welcome to medical doctor, Dr. Tshidi Gule. Dr. G, is also founder of Medi-scape Lifestyle Institute and she's also the author of Rough Diamond, an entrepreneurship and mentorship memoir. Welcome to both of you.	0:54
Nonku	0:54	Thank you so much. Thank you Aza, thank you for having us	0:57
Azania	0:57	So let's kick this conversation off by really unpacking and explaining what the notion of employee health and wellness is. What's it all about?	1:06
Tshidi	0:46	The brief description I can give is, you know, employee wellness, workplace wellness- depending on the term you want to use- is really geared towards designing health promotional activities or policies that improve health outcomes at the workplace. There's obviously various dimensions of workplace wellness or interventions and programs that employers can, I guess, bring out or execute. But ultimately the goal is to create a positive health culture where, 1) you're able to prevent risk, ideally, and 2) if you can't prevent risk, you obviously are able to manage risk in a way that does not damage or hurt the bottom line.	1:48
Azania	1:48	Right. And Nonku, what is Discovery's perspective on employee wellness?	1:52
Nonku	1:52	So maybe to start- we do it from two perspectives. So 1) we look after our own employees for a very straightforward reason. We want our employees to be productive, we want the return on investment and most importantly, we want to engage people. At Discovery we don't sell a product, so our IP, our people are the most important. So if you have engaged employees that can be productive. less absenteeism, less presenteeism, there's a win. But secondly, as a business, we package	2:46

		<p>these solutions and we sell them to our employers and our clients. And critical to us is that we have a suite of solutions that look at the end to end needs of employers. And that will include, yes, how do we identify risk early, minimize risk, maximize their bottom line? But we also look at how these things integrate with other financial products that we have for them, which are usually impacted if you can't get the left hand side to work with the right hand side. So that's really where we come in.</p>	
Azania	2:46	<p>And we'll unpack what you do for other organizations a little bit later on. But let's deal with this point about a healthy workforce. Why is a healthy workforce important?</p>	2:57
Tshidi	2:57	<p>I think there's two aspects that are really important to appreciate. If you value your own life, it's automatically- just from a logical point of view- easy to appreciate that you will value other human life. Not necessarily so obviously in certain environments, especially the workplace, because a lot of people approach the conversation of corporate wellness or employee wellness as talent management or talent retention. For us, maybe from a clinical background, as I'm saying, maybe I should run with our reasoning first. It's simply answering the question: What is the value of human life? For an employer sometimes it's; What is the cost of human life? So, the value for us of employee wellness programs, workplace wellness in general, is first and foremost the protection and preservation of human life. Obviously, we understand that there's benefit- there's direct benefit to an employer when that is executed well. 1) There's the obvious HR benefits that most employers look at, which is the improved productivity. there's less absenteeism, which we'll go into later. But the biggest difference for us is if you are managing the risk that affects employees on a day to day basis at the area of the workplace, you're affecting real time intervention, which saves them money and their lives. But at the same time for the employer, it increases the opportunity to maximize the talent of that employee, because happier, engaged, healthier employees produce better results.</p>	4:22
Azania	4:22	<p>As simple as that. That's a huge, of course, benefit otherwise, how else can you do business?</p>	4:27
Tshidi	4:27	<p>And you want to keep your results looking fantastic. You don't want to get to a point where you're dipping, especially if the reason is something preventable, which is what the healthcare field of wellness really, then, is able to demonstrate- both positively and negatively.</p>	4:41

Nonku	4:41	<p>Can I add something to that? The way we approached it, maybe to just give a Discovery hat to it. And I'll speak a little bit about my own experience [which is] that a human being who comes into the workplace is not one-faceted, they're multifaceted. So usually employers will say, "What activities can I do that will drive physical well being" or "What activities will I do to drive emotional well being" etc. Really, the way we've looked at it and the way we've approached it is: holistically, how is a person impacted? And the reason I say I'll put my hand up and sort of give my own example is, I went through a divorce a few years ago. And I remember the first day when you realize sort of what's happening to you, a huge amount of things happen to you. 1) Physically, you can't understand why this body feels like it's giving up on you, you were healthy the day before, you are unhealthy the next day. You don't understand what's happening. But also there's a huge emotional and mental impact. And then I guess on sort of a third component, is about financial, because you're thinking about this used to be a household of two people, this is going to be a household of one, etc. So really the way we've thought about employee well being is not employee well being just from a physical and medical perspective, is what are all the facets that can impact a human being? So we really look at how do we catch you proactively, and how to understand what's happening with you holistically, and then how do we help you navigate the financial challenges that you might face? Maybe you need to speak to a financial coach. The emotional challenges that you might face, maybe a psychologist, maybe your kids need a social worker. And also the physical impacts because while you're well, your system is going through a huge amount of strain and therefore how do you manage anxiety etc? So for me whenever we think about this topic, I think critically in the workplace is that you have to see the employee as a holistic human being. And that just because you're seeing them at work, it doesn't mean that you're getting work out of them. If I'm worried about- that husband that's leaving had the money, I'm looking at where do I find loans? So I'm present but not productive within the workplace. So I guess that's my summary. We have taken a step back and say, how do we look after people holistically? And how do we support them as a whole in order to get a- not just a return for ourselves- really a well and engaged employee who's willing to, and wants to, give back because they are well in the workspace.</p>	6:57
Azania	6:57	<p>So at a practical level- and I love the example that you just gave- it means that you have to have capacity to be able to respond to the various facets of this whole individual. Because there was a clinical response, a psychosocial response, there is a financial coaching response and potentially even a legal response that might be required depending on the nature of what's confronting your staff. Now, if we are to talk about costs, we read that South Africa loses 16 billion Rand to absenteeism. That's how much we lost last year at least and a third of</p>	7:46

		that is due to illness. So how do corporate organizations combat these sorts of losses? And what do we know about the impact of absenteeism on corporate in this country and globally? Let's talk money.	
Tshidi	7:46	So there's varying stats. In terms especially, I think, in the last four years, I've seen some varying numbers on the impact of absenteeism both at the global level- where you're talking up to \$84 billion. And then you've obviously got the South African perspective; we seem to have stuck to around the R17/16 billion figure. I think the important thing to I guess appreciate, especially on an employer level, is the impact of even one employee that is absent. In South Africa, we've taken an interesting study that seems to say, you know, if we were to take on average that it costs the employer about R450 per hour that an absent employee is gone. The greater impact is that the employer is not only paying the salary of the absent employee, they have to start paying for the temporary replacement, especially if their replacement is not in-house. So they've got to pay for an alternative resource. They've got to obviously now be very mindful that there's extra managerial time. And also the team takes on that extra burden of the absent employee, especially because if you look at even the definition of absenteeism, it's habitual and intentional absence from work. So the key isn't often just the sporadic and necessary absent employee from illness or personal reasons, etcetera it's more about that pervasive pattern that starts to happen. Certain employees decide, I'm going to be intentionally absent from work for various reasons, that has a very erosive cost impact on the entire team. Because you're paying extra time, not just for now the alternative resource, or the temporary replacement, to paying extra time for the entire team that now has to put in more work. Just put into context if people are involved in a project, and there's a project deadline. So you're launching something, and this team member is now habitually absent, if they have certain input from an intellectual point of view, how else are you going to maintain that, that project success? And people dropping in and out of projects obviously has a huge impact sometimes even on client confidence, so you might lose business. So I think as much as we have, I guess, from an actuarial point of view of ways of assessing what the cost is and the figures sound impressive, I think the real burden for that employer goes far beyond just those figures. It can really erode the morale of the team.	9:59
Azania	9:57	It just runs deep. From the picture you've painted, completely clear about how much it can actually erode value for the employer. But you both mentioned presenteeism and Nonku, you touched on it earlier on, but I want to drill down a little bit more to this so that we create a distinct, a distinction between absenteeism and presenteeism, and just the losses, the kind of productivity losses that come about from presenteeism.	10:23

Nonku	10:23	<p>Stats or research is demonstrating that presenteeism probably has three times greater impact right now than absenteeism, three times. Different figures for different countries, but in this country three times greater. And we're working with an organization that's been helping us sort of quantify what's happening with people from a financial perspective, given the times that we operate in and the economic challenges, and they've basically given us a stat that in every organization that they've worked, including our organization, at least 40% of people within that organization are financially challenged. Whether that's you are over indebted, whether you're at the point of needing debt counselling, whether you're not meeting month end. And this is across, by the way, different, I guess, managerial lines. So from staff level all the way to sort of executive directors. It's not the issue of the poor, it's across different levels within an organization. One thing that I think we don't appreciate is when people come into the workplace and are present in the workplace, but are not doing work. They're not only draining the organization from a productivity perspective and ROI, but the impact of the kind of human being that you have who's not fully engaged who's worried about other things, the impact on team morale, on team deliverables becomes quite extensive. So actually, I think absenteeism we can almost quantify. We can say this is medically related absenteeism. This is what you have in terms of performance management and incapacity. I think what organizations find incredibly difficult to quantify is what you lose from a presenteeism perspective.</p>	12:00
Azania	12:00	Because it's masked by your presence.	12:01
Nonku	12:01	<p>Exactly. But by your presence, you are looking intensely at the computer. You're typing like, what place can I get a loan of 2000 this week? And in addition to that, maybe I should state, which is something also quite important, is that your turn over rate, you'll see turnover increase in the workplace and not really understand what are the key drivers. People will often move from one employer to another so that I can cash out my pension, and I can make an extra 6000. Unfortunately, research demonstrates that a couple of months later, they're just as indebted because the problem is not confined to you haven't solved the root cause, not confined to if I get excess cash right now, it's confined to the systematic thing that we have to fix around financial well being so to speak. So yeah, presenteeism is a huge issue. And the truth is, I don't think we've also cracked how to help employers work through it. I think we are closer to cracking absenteeism because we've got data and therefore, we can tell you what's happening with your employees and when, and what's created by something related to a medical claim. But</p>	13:05

		we're not able to tell you why people- whether the people in your workplace and are not working.	
Azania	13:05	Dr. G, any thoughts on that, especially on the work that you've been doing, insights from different organizations?	13:10
Tshidi	13:10	I think for us, where we have a little bit of insight as- probably to start adding value to the conversation of why employees are struggling with presenteeism is the fact that some of them, because of concepts and tools like in-house clinics, we're able to have those vulnerable conversations. You know, if you have the opportunity as a medical doctor to sit down and build rapport and trust with an employee, in that consultation room they are your patient. And a lot of them, one of the biggest things we're seeing increasing, especially in the age groups of 25 and 42, is mental health burden. Now note I didn't say mental health disorders, and I think it's so important to also be very, very specific in how we define these conversations because there's a huge misconception out there, that all of a sudden all of us suffer from one or two mental health illnesses. Very natural in a human life to go through certain seasonal transitions and to struggle with them and go through a season of depression, or exhibiting depression symptoms without suffering from a major depressive disorder. So labeling is also one of the reasons we actually don't see a lot of employees who are exhibiting behaviour that is presenteeism-like; actually coming and consulting and confronting the issue exactly as Nonku is saying is, their opportunity to be vulnerable sometimes is triggered by support systems, which is why I loved her definition of the holistic concept. Because when you provide an ecosystem of support that looks at financial, legal, medical, and includes the psychosocial, you start to also unpack reasons that sound sometimes elusive to the employer, like presenteeism. So we're starting to see an interesting new field of data come through where we're seeing the not quite ill employee, physically, but when people also talk about their personal life, you start to see some of the triggers that lead to presenteeism behaviour.	14:56
Azania	14:56	You would need safety. Safety in the workplace for these clinics, for one to feel they can unburden; they can literally put all their problems on the table. So it speaks to culture. So it permeates right through the organization.	15:08
Tshidi	15:08	Absolutely. Which is one of the reasons I think one of the fantastic things that an organization like Discovery does with its modeling is to give both in-house and remote services. Because most human beings we've also seen from research are much better at unburdening to someone that they	16:13

		<p>physically see, touch and can test, or you know, vet in terms of a trust point of view. You're asking someone to tell you, you know, deep secrets, but sometimes they're not comfortable to only do it over the phone, especially if it's something that's been happening over a series of time and now they realize I'm not coping, especially in a culture where we're often told we've got to show up and be heroes, no matter what is happening to us, which is very synonymous with the corporate professional archetype. It's show up, even though, you know, your house is burning. And so sometimes to get a person to get to that place to say, "But I'm not okay" takes a lot, a lot of journeying in the trust department. So when you have in-house care, there is a bit of an advantage, which is fantastic when you've got organizations that say, "Okay, our matrix will have a bit of both so that we're able to capture everyone in every possible space."</p>	
Azania	16:13	<p>Before we unpack this program even further, I want to still build this picture a little bit more. And the question of non-communicable diseases is ever present, you know, in many conversations, but both locally and globally, we've seen an increasing epidemic of non-communicable diseases; diseases of lifestyle, they take a toll on any population. And so, why does a corporate culture that focuses on employee wellness matter, in tackling the fact that employees will suffer from a chronic disease? We're talking heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and obesity. The list goes on.</p>	16:53
Nonku	16:53	<p>If I can start by just saying in the world of Discovery, I think Discovery has probably changed the world of physical activity, nutrition and how people look at it. And I think the science over the many years and the fact that we are in different countries with this IP, talks to the fact that we now, I think, conclusively understand that physical activity in the main, is the biggest driver or the biggest sort of tool that you can use in terms of tackling non-communicable diseases. And so I think powerfully what organizations are doing and what we've done is you create a whole ecosystem where you force physical activity. I am very blessed to be in a very amazing building...</p>	17:36
Azania	17:36	<p>There's a track on the roof.</p>	17:38
Nonku	17:38	<p>But it's exactly that. I run from one side of the building to literally the other side of the building, which is not, which is probably a little over 100 meters if not 200 meters just on the same floor. And this you do repeated times a day. And it was deliberate in the design of the business. So the design of the businesses is such that most of the people who work within this building will not sit at any one workstation, they'll sit in multiple</p>	19:33

		<p>workstations, which forces this whole movement ongoing. The fact that we have a gym in the building, the fact that there is a track. And what is amazing is that often on the track, you won't see people running, you see people during lunch just- I have my coffee in hand and I just need to think a little bit, but it's forcing movement, it's forcing different breathing etc. So I think we take for granted what businesses can do outside of the norm, just to impact that thing called physical activity. It's the fact that we also incentivize the great behaviour. So we do it obviously, Vitality, in a very powerful way and you can see people being driven to act in a particular way they are incentivized in the shared value through that model. But we do it also as an employer. So as an employer, we have lots of things that say, "Come and do this and there's a challenge for this today and there's a challenge for this tomorrow, you get a half day if you do this." All of those things, but just drive the behaviour of saying you must just move while you impact something that's quite important. Maybe to lastly, to add, I mean, nutrition plays a big part as well. And as an employer, we have deliberately done things like salad bars, and we are moving towards remunerating people and rewarding them for choosing healthy food. So we- I mean, we're not a patriarch so we can't dictate that you have healthy food, but we can find a way to reward healthy food. And all of these things are little steps but huge in a workplace where you stay 8-12 hours of your day that stimulate movement and that stimulate healthy living, that will impact the wellbeing of our employees.</p>	
Azania	19:33	<p>Do either of you have the latest research on the global impact of ill health amongst the workforce? On productivity and on GDP; on the bottom line; because this doesn't normally stay with an organization, it translates to a national level.</p>	19:47
Tshidi	19:47	<p>I do and to just perhaps put some context on how chronic disease, especially as you were referring to non-communicable diseases' impact- the bottom line and things like GDP, you're looking at something as simple as high blood pressure that we refer to as hypertension causing incredible damage close to eating at 5% of GDP at companies globally. It's always a lot easier to look at the importance, I guess, of an intervention when you can see what not having an intervention costs you. And 5% is a lot- it's significant at a global scale. And here's the, I guess, also part of the most important thing about the physical part of keeping your workforce healthy. Something as simple as non-communicable diseases, where the opportunity's often lost is that more than 80% of them are preventable. So when you're able to intervene at the workplace, what you want to introduce is real time intervention that for the most part, actually assists a lot of these employees not fall to the other category, which is the complicated hospitalized chronic aspect- and that costs both</p>	21:27

		<p>employer and employee a lot of money. So the impact of seeing what chronic diseases do to the workforce, yes, is felt at a financial level and you looking at billions of dollars, to that degree that I've spoken about in terms of the GDP impact. But when you look at it at an employer-employee level, you're looking at hospitalization, and a lot of these guys once they get things like high blood pressure, strokes is going to knock. It's knocking very closely. The heart attacks. Hypertension is a leading independent risk factor of strokes and heart attacks and in South Africa, you're looking at a person who has hypertension is at risk of- you've got one in every two who've got severe hypertension are at risk for stroke.</p>	
Azania	21:27	<p>Give us a picture of the sort of health that the South African workforce is in.</p>	21:32
Tshidi	21:32	<p>I'll first just give you the population picture and then I'll distil it into the corporate workforce. Because if you look at the age demographic of the guy suffering from these chronic diseases, they are the workforce. So a condition like hypertension is always easy to demonstrate because people respect it, because it's violent. Also, I feel, sufficient focus on conditions like diabetes, not to say they're less important, but high blood pressure is really a very effective killer, and sometimes doesn't get enough in terms of a platform. So let's quickly look at that. 42-54% of South Africa's population have high blood pressure. It's only diagnosed clinically. As in you have to sit, have a clinical professional measure it, and we can then confirm [that] you have high blood pressure. So there is a need for intervention from a health level for us to say you've got it, let's treat it. It is preventable, it is treatable. The issue is this: the age group that hypertension is starting to now affect is getting younger and younger. So hypertension was typically a condition of 50/55 plus. In the last 20 years, it is creeping up in as early as 18 years. There's an increased prevalence in the age group of 18-29, moving now to 7.5%, which when you look at a population, South Africa has a very huge proportion of youth, almost half the population fits in this category of 18-35. And then you've obviously got what we call the peak productive age, which is there in your 30s to 49. A lot, a lot of individuals now fit in that. Problem with a condition like that is the complications. So it's not just the heart attacks and strokes. The key thing where people become aware- both employers and employees- of conditions like that is when someone at the workplace has what we call an event. So there's a heart attack, and there's a death in the workplace. A lot of employers we find that they then want to engage wellness at that level. We've had a death; everyone is traumatized. And often as clinicians we have- we come in and we say, "Death is traumatic, and the burden of people remembering that Siph</p>	24:14

		<p>who is 41 was healthy, and they drop dead during a meeting, that thing lasts forever. But there are many other Siphos in that company who can get the intervention, and we prevent those kind of things." So outside of just the cost, the value of having interventions like that at the workplace, it's life saving. And that for us is important enough to consider an employee wellness program for your company and the individuals that sometimes are affected by what we call a sudden death, because very few people expect people of a certain age to pass on. And this is happening more and more frequently, because there are certain conditions that individuals do not have time to consult for but when you offer, obviously, the kind of ecosystem of support Nonku's referring to, you're able to catch that stuff early. So that's the real- that's the real value: early detection.</p>	
Azania	24:14	<p>So let's talk about the opportunities then, because the risk factors and their consequences extend into the working population. And employee health and well being is seemingly a risk and an opportunity. So how do you balance these? And what are the appropriate interventions? As you said, the risks, you need to identify them. But I'm curious about the opportunities.</p>	24:36
Nonku	24:36	<p>I think as a business, we've been doing sort of medical scheme business and administration for a very long time. The opportunity here was almost taking a step back and saying: In this day and age, where people engage with health and wellness in a very different way, where technology is rampant, where if you call your sister and say, "How are you?" she says, "What's wrong? Why didn't you whatsapp me?" how do we play a role in that space and bring health and wellness into that space and really make it light? I think the other opportunity was that if you look at employee assistance programs, as they're called, which is what's prevalent in the workplace- employee well being programs. There's been no movement for like 20 years in terms of how do you innovate around these, how do you bring better solutions, how do you really wrap yourself around people? And, and really, where we've gone is, what is the opportunity? And I'll tell you a very simple discussion that I have with executives, when we go see them about the solution is, do you even have the baseline of your employee well being? A baseline. Do you know who's ill and who's not ill? Do you know who's struggling in terms of emotional mental illness or who is not? And the answer is often obviously not, you know, unless you are sick; unless you are off or unless what Dr. G says, you fell down and something happened, nobody knows. And what we've done is that- as sort of a first platform of innovation- we've said you can never have an employee well being program without a physical pillar. Because usually these programs are about if something's wrong, so I talked to you about my divorce call us and then somebody will try to talk to you about that</p>	29:43

thing in isolation. And we've said as a baseline, we need to have people in your business have a conversation. So our employee well being program, which we call Healthy Company, and we're very proud of, starts off by saying, Every employee should have a wellness assessment. And that's often, for certain people, the first opportunity to even have a discussion about what is high blood pressure. You know, like, when the person says [...27:19...] like, what does that mean? You know, not even understanding that hypertension and the fact that every day I pour aromat, because you know, because I aromat I don't see as salt, you know. So you get to sit down and speak to a nurse, a bio, who talks to you about real things that could impact you; you might be pre-diabetic, you might be HIV positive, you might even know you're HIV positive, but you might not have had a conversation around it. So really, I think fundamentally, we have started off by just saying, let's create a baseline of what's happening in your workplace and let's give you sort of meaningful stats and reporting around where are your risks. How much of your population's at risk? Where we've gone- I think the next step, which I think has been quite powerful is we just don't look at physical well being. In the same assessment, you're doing a financial assessment. That feels quick and easy so you're not too worried. But that assessment just says, who are the people at risk in terms of financial well being and how do we get to them? You do an emotional assessment. So we've really, I guess, transformed what would be known as a normal wellness day in an employee space to what we call a Healthy Company Day that looks at all of the risk factors. We then take those risk factors and we literally stratify you; so you will come out of the wellness day without even knowing it, stratified as maybe physically low risk, emotionally high risk, financially medium risk, and some of these things could just talk to the fact that I had a death in the family. So I'm emotionally and financially high risk because something has happened. So those are some of the innovations. 1) Embedding the understanding of the well being of your people. 2) Making sure that you stratify them. And you can say to the employer that this is how you need to intervene. And then maybe to talk a little bit on the technology side, we've done an app that I think is really sexy, where you can do your own assessment. you have checklists, you can read about diabetes, if they told you you're pre-diabetic, you can, I mean, you can do numerous things. You can talk to a doctor, and you can get advice from a doctor. But also, what has been so powerful is that we just put a chat functionality. So people would never call and say- We had a call as an example and the guy said, "It's a Friday, I'm afraid to go home because every weekend, I drink and I abuse my family." Nobody is going to talk, nobody's gonna pick up the phone and call an EAP and say, "I drink and"- because just the fact that there's a voice on the other side creates a barrier already. Some of the other stories...there was another one where we had a client who called and the client base is big, so I'm not worried about the stories. But he called and he literally said, " I'm remarried, so I'm married to someone, and I've been married before and she has a

		<p>daughter who's just turned 16. And I'm completely in love with the daughter. And I know it's wrong, I'm married." These are hard things but these are real things, the fact that the person identifies that they need help, and the fact that there's an app, and you can talk through an app and somebody answers you, and it feels anonymous and feels far. Eventually, obviously, that will progress to probably a face-to-face session with the right psychologist who will help you with it. But I just really think that we've had to move to thinking about people holistically, as opposed to thinking about people as events and as and when they need us, they'll reach into us. So really, that's the transformation of well being, as we see it and as we are sort of presenting it to our people and to clients.</p>	
Azania	29:43	<p>So let's build this a little bit more because I need to understand what the Discovery Healthy Company employee assistance program is all about. So give me the nuts and bolts. How many employees- how do you actually even measure the success of all of these initiatives and the progress or what you've introduced into improves lives?</p>	30:00
Nonku	30:00	<p>Okay, I think that's actually a brilliant question because we live it, so we often think people understand. So to give you a sense, employee assistance programs have existed since probably 20/30 years ago- 1). 2) The utilization of these programs in the African context is around 2%. In the South African context it's about 4%. So an employer pays per employee per month, and usually the value that they get is between 2% and 4%, which is staggeringly low given that we know that mental illness as a disease burden is increasing astronomically; given that we know financial challenges are increasing, something's wrong in that equation. And really, what's been wrong for us in the equation is that all of it is reactive. It's not good because you're going through a divorce, you must remember there's an EAP, then you must phone them and- God forgive me for saying this- but when I did phone them, the person I got hold of was a call center consultant, who then wanted to know what organization do you work for, what race are you, what ethnicity...and I said "If I was jumping off a bridge, like, how important are these questions?" Exactly. So I think the first thing is to know that I think there's a barrier to entry into these programs, which is why people don't utilize them. That's why utilization is low. Where we have been different- so to give you a sense, our utilization (and we've been in the market for 18 months in an industry that's probably existed for 30 odd years) we are 22% utilization, which is almost 600% more. And which is unheard of actually. But the reason we are there is what I was saying earlier: we find an opportunity to risk classify you. We will reach out to you. So you will leave an event or you would have done an assessment, and you could do it in multiple ways. You could have done it digitally on your computer, your employer might have said "I'm launching this, if you do this, there's a price"... whatever</p>	34:38

the way. We will risk stratify you. Once we've done that, at the center of our solution is what we call coaches. That's psychologists, social workers all counseling, and they are the navigators of care. So when somebody gets hold of you, firstly, which means that you don't have to- I mean, people call us and people chat to us all the time. But we identify the highest risk for the employer population, we say, "How do we intervene for you?" And I think critically in that situation is that we navigate your care. So as opposed to dealing with the episode- you're getting divorced, she says, "I'm gonna connect you to the right psychologist." My lady who I called at the time with a different EAP asked me, "So what help do you need?" Like, I have no cooking clue. All of those things are available in the EAP. But the truth is I didn't know where to start. This is happening to me for the first time. I'm a young mom. And that's exactly how we've approached it. We've said, when an episode happens to you, what are the thought processes? And so at the center of the care, what we've done is that the person who you first talked to is a qualified person who won't ask you about your demographics, because they'll know you- 1). 2) Their job is to navigate your care so, "Geez Azania, I really think that you're in trouble here, you're just not making ends meet. I need to put you to a financial coach who is going to speak to you about that. In terms of your divorce, I'm worried about your kids the most because it sounds like that's where your worry is in terms of- let's get you a social worker who is particularly focused on sort of children issues and children who are going through relationship transitions with their parents." So that person will navigate your care. And then for you, magic happens, right? Because you're now in this ecosystem where people have, you know, go to an extent where- if as an example, you were diagnosed as pre-diabetic, or you were said to be pre-diabetic in the wellness day, they'll say, "Can I let you talk to a doctor now? Do you want me to connect it to a doctor?" and then again, magic happens. So I think fundamentally, the key changes and shifts we've made in terms of Healthy Company: we're thinking of people as human beings who are part of a broader ecosystem. I have to make this example. Last year, faced with the horrific scourge of gender based violence, I mean, we had to think about how do we respond for our clients. The kind of stories and the kind of things that were coming through in terms of help were really scary. We've had to go into the system and understand how to navigate a parent who comes and says, "My seven year old son has been raped by other teenage boys." So you know, you can't sit there and say, "Okay, we know which hospital to send you to." It's the whole ecosystem. Where do I report it? Is it the police station? What if they treat me like this? Is there a place where I can go in terms of a support group? So really, as things evolve, as we keep understanding what the environment looks like, we're coming up with how do we wrap ourselves around our clients.

Azania	34:38	You know I must say, I absolutely love that intelligence, these EAPs as they get better as Nonku is saying, there's an intelligence in them that almost rescues you before disaster hits. Before we get to the real cost of presenteeism and absenteeism having an impact in the workplace.	34:57
Tshidi	34:57	The magic of a really excellent EAP program, for me, lies in being able to hit the note on two things: demonstrate empathy and provide appropriate care. So what I love about Nonku's description of the ecosystem is a lot of programs promise appropriate care but when you really need it, and exactly what you're saying, Azania, it's a traumatic experience that often brings a lot of employees to these centers. So whether it's a call center, whether it's a physical human being, you're there mostly because you need help, and you are hoping for help. So when you as a company are trying to design an effective system, you don't want to invest money on a system that doesn't actually provide those basics, first, because if you're not able to provide that kind of support, you are going to often lead your employees down a hole that very few of them recover. And anything to do with what- the category is often called 'personal reasons' because a lot of employees will cite things like, you know, interrelationship issues, childcare, elderly care, all those issues and financial issues also are regarded as personal reasons. If you're not able to provide an ecosystem that leads them quickly to the appropriate care, you lose them in that very beginning because then they lose trust in the system, and you're unable to get them back. And that's why it's also not often surprising, sometimes, that utilization of certain programs are that low because people in that moment when they pick up the phone, and they reach out online, they're seeking someone who will hear them and help them.	36:30
Azania	36:30	Now, the other side of this, of course, is a healthy employee. What sort of edge...so what sort of edge, what sort of advantage do they bring to the organization?	36:39
Nonku	37:56	So firstly, the question should be, what do you do for your healthy employees? Firstly, do you know your health employees and what do you do for them? So a lot of investment is made supporting and dealing with employees that are not healthy, quantifying the impact on productivity and organization. But how do you quantify, what does a healthy employee give you-1)? But secondly, how do you make sure that they feel valued just because they're not drawing on company resources, they should also be valued. And maybe to start off by saying, we thought about that in the design of Healthy Company and we deliberately have gone to build a world for the healthy employee. To give you a sense, we have a very sexy financial module and sort of capability on the app with little short	38:42

		<p>videos etc. It talks about wealthy capitals, wealthy kids...you're starting off after you get married, what should you invest in? How should you invest? You want a new car... So it's really about, you are in a good path here, how do you keep on the good path? We've got stuff in there that talks about physical well being and how to almost take it up a notch, so to speak. So the investment that we've made in terms of how we support people that are not well, we've made an equal and quite a powerful investment on how do we support those that are well. What we're also building onto is this chassis for employers and employees- similar to Vitality- is how do you reward them? We know all behavioural economics and Vitality has taught us that as soon as you pay for good behaviour, or you reward for good behaviour, magic sort of happens. And so that's been quite powerful. And maybe my last story on this is I met Dr. G when I went for my executive wellness medical. And I literally went back to work saying it was such a gift. It felt like this is something I should do on my birthday because it's about being a well employee. Or at least I feel like I'm well. But getting into a space where somebody spends time talking about you. What could be your risks? What are the things that you are thinking about in the future? How do we strengthen- and I mean-</p>	
Azania	38:42	-And talking about it makes it care for you too.	38:44
Nonu	38:44	<p>100%. And most powerfully, it just felt like we spend all of this time just planning for how do I- I am well, which is also a blessing, meaning that, you know, you go for anything, whether it's a pap smear, they do numerous tests...and when people say you're good, it's just such a relief. So that's already like powerful reinforcement. And then a discussion about- I mean she discussed with me, what's your life like? What's your daily life like? What are the things that keep you awake at night? What is your stress? I was just like, this feels like such an incredible gift. I get to sit and reflect about me, you know, that doesn't happen frequently. And I think that's another tool and another solution that just allows us as a business and as a chassis to offer solutions that's say to executives to just take a moment. And quite a few executives have actually been at risk. Had they not come to that intervention, they probably wouldn't be here today. So doing things on, sort of, on both sides where people think they're healthy,</p>	39:41
Azania	39:41	So tell us what Medi-space Lifestyle Institute actually does. What do you bring into this conversation?	39:47
Tshidi	39:47	The main gap, I think for us, that we recognized was, you know, in healthcare, just like in general society, there's obviously the world of the haves and the have nots. And when it comes to health care, there's been	41:43

		<p>a huge focus on what we call the have nots, and the people that don't have good health. And that's all fair and well, but we also have a tendency in healthcare on being extremely almost dictatorial in our approach. You will stop eating salt, you will stop smoking, you will stop this and there was a need for us to really look at, how do we creatively, as medical professionals, distil the message of leading healthier lifestyles? In a way that's not preachy; in a way that's accessible; and hopefully in a way that's also inspiring. Very few people will put the word, you know, the word 'doctor' and 'inspiring' in the same sentence, because usually you feel like you're going into the principal's office. And there's a lot of things that you're going to be called out on. So for us, the whole concept and approach of Medi-space was to really create preventative health solutions that are both extremely accessible but also engaging for the user. Looking at other industries, people spend time on the buy-in model and health care, I think, we've always had this assumption that you guys need us. So without fail, we will see you and so the scourge of lifestyle related diseases really push companies like us to, to come to the forefront and say, "Hey, there's the platform here to educate but there's also a more important platform to inspire." If other products and other things are capturing the same consumer's attention on, for example, something as simple as a mobile phone, why are we not occupying space there? Why are we not turning the conversation into a friendlier one? We might not be the most likable professionals on planet Earth, but that's because of a perception. So we really wanted to create a model that speaks to a roadmap of care, not just you going to come and engage once-off with your care provider. And then that's it. There's countries like Japan, where doctors are actually paid a retainer for as long as the family's well, and then you don't get paid retainer when a member falls sick.</p>	
Azania	41:43	That's such a refreshing approach.	41:45
Tshidi	41:45	<p>Very advanced models of medicine in different aspects of the world. I mean, the general practitioner, funny enough, by design, was meant to be the gatekeeper of good health. We're meant to be your providers and gatekeepers of ensuring that you stay well. Now, there's obviously specialists in the industry that are going to tackle the disaster. So I always joke that companies like us exist because we bat for the team that's trying to prevent disaster, but really at the crux of it is improving quality of life. There's very few ways science can tell you how long you're going to live. But there's many more ways that science can help you improve your quality of life. So we have different solutions for individuals and for companies and obviously, for the non-governmental organizations, because healthcare is a very important conversation there.</p>	42:30

Azania	42:30	I want to turn the attention or our focus on burnout. In 2019 the World Health Organization redefined burnout and they said that it is- they redefined it as an occupational syndrome. So it's definitely work-related stress. Right. So what does that mean to the layman? You know, let's redefine burnout, and how does it manifest at work, and how can we overcome it as a workforce?	42:55
Tshidi	42:55	Being the burnout doctor...I've been called by executives the last decade, the burnout doctor, because we obviously get an opportunity to see burnout at certain leadership levels. I'm glad, for one, I just want to put that out there, that the World Health Organization redefined it, because we were having as a medical industry a really tough time trying to get people to appreciate that it is not only serious, but that it is important to have sustainable measures to stop the negative impact of it. But in general, there's obviously three phases of burnout from the definition that matter. The one is that sense of a depletion and exhaustion of energy. The second is the apathy and complete lack of interest in the job. And then of course, the last one, which a lot of people often will discover even in consultation is that feeling of hopelessness and helplessness. These are three very important areas, that if you're an attentive employer, you want to pay attention. Because 1) you can link it to the absenteeism and presenteeism culture. Low job satisfaction is such a difficult thing to quantify until you start seeing it in more intimate settings where someone is telling you "This is how I'm feeling, this is what I'm doing." So a lot of individuals will let an experience at work continue unmanaged without any intervention. And if you leave anything unattended to long enough, you will start to have wear and tear. Burnout is the perfect description of what wearing and tear looks like physically and mentally. You are literally wearing yourself out physically and mentally, and you are tearing yourself down physically and mentally. So there are certain symptoms that start to happen. And because as doctors, we are also able to catch those symptoms early, whether it's mood swings, whether it's someone's- it's a change in temperament, whether it's someone's changing eating habits, our job is to try and connect the dots. Because it is a difficult syndrome to 1) teach to an individual who might be in denial. I'm coping fine. And a lot of people come in and say, "But I'm doing well, I'm sleeping on so many hours, this is what I'm doing" and those are the most dangerous by the way , because there are stages of burnout. And there is often a medical term around 'adrenal fatigue' That it can be linked to the experience of burnout. But the important ones to isolate is the early stages- the ones who are more wired than tired. Because burnout has a very interesting-	45:13
Azania	45:13	Cause they're so highly adrenalized all the time.	45:16

Tshidi	45:16	<p>And so the pressures that might be happening- and people often like to blame the work environment for causing burnout, that's not the case. How we respond to pressures that are happening at the workplace. So if you've got a positive coping response to stress, whether it's an increased workload, it is a project that's increased the demand on you mentally, or that you are dealing with work and you're dealing with personal stuff, we all have different coping mechanisms. So burnout is often the result of either a healthy or an unhealthy coping mechanism. And one of the simplest things that people don't do is recover properly. So burnout tends to happen when you're going through a phase where you know, you're in a high pressure environment, and you've got to perform excellently every single day and you're not building in periods of rest. And so there's opportunities that are often lost in preventing really serious episodes and seasons, where sometimes you find a whole team is burnt out, and it's a problem.</p>	46:09
Azaia	46:09	<p>How have you built this into the employee assistance program or awareness around burnout?</p>	46:15
Nonku	46:15	<p>Yeah. So we've gone from a proactive perspective. In fact, in the first quarter of this year, the focus is around managing, while being planning your year, how not to experience burnout. And what we've really done is that we've built tools and resources that employers can deploy to their employees to be able to manage this. So examples are: we have workshops for leaders to identify- because I think for me, that's the critical gap. And I speak being in the people space, because I think the biggest thing is we don't identify what's happening with people. We just see it as, geez, poor performance, this person has turned a corner, I'm not sure what's going on with them, the low morale, etc. And really where we focus is, how do we build the tools and the resources for employers to make sure that their leaders can identify this and can support their people when they go through this journey. There's also an- I'm talking again from the people space- and we call it 'people' as opposed to 'HR' because I think 'people' is sexier and, there are certain sort of hygiene factors that you have to look after. Making sure that people take their leave. People, you know, at some point in time, we used to pay out leave. So you'd leave your leave quota to 40/50 days because you want the money, because you have financial pressures. Those are really, really detrimental behaviours, not only to our staff, but also to our members. You know, we have a lot of our people that talk to our members, deal with our members on the call center. You can imagine how demanding that job is. And so if you don't take, if you don't make sure that the hygiene factors are taken care of, these people will continue to work. Other things to look at are if you look at the employee lifecycle, I would say like a critical area to look</p>	48:44

		<p>at is engagement. How do you continue to energize people? Talk to them, talking to them about strategy recognition programs, things that keep people plugged in and energized. Because often when you experience burnout, you always question your contribution, even if you're acting at the top of- but it's like I'm not contributing enough, because your mind is obviously not in a coherent place that says, "Of course, your contribution is X, and it's being recognized." So it's in the workplace, how do you create programs from an employee engagement perspective, that just re-energizes the environment all the time? Refocuses them on particular things? And how do you create the same things for people in their home life? And that's such an important one. We visited Sachs the consulting firm in the US. And you know, it was amazing how they talked about the things that they do for their employees that are not related to work at all. But that impacted highly on employee morale. People who work there for 75% the salary they'll get from the next consulting firm.</p>	
Azania	48:44	<p>So it- it just seems like the employer now is- I don't want to use the word burdened per se, but there are seriously high expectations from employers to provide so much of what we need to be thriving individuals. And 'till what point?</p>	49:00
Nonku	49:00	<p>I like that question and I think the Sachs business case for me was brilliant. The first thing is that they pay at a discounted rate of the market- 75%- but got the top talent. So people will literally- and I can't say the consulting, other consulting firms- but it's top five globally, will choose to go to Sachs. And the reason for that is that they understood that this business doesn't just take care of me, it takes care of my family. Why that is critical is that you're making up- so in the same way that you're getting a discount in terms of the person coming, that's already huge ROI, right, in terms of consulting salaries across the base. But secondly, presenteeism decreases hugely. And they had one example, parents were most frantic during SATs. I would say we're most frantic during matric exams. So parents are frantic, they want to go home early. In consulting you work until the job is done, you work in a client space, so you can't just want to go home. And they could see it was impacting their business and all they did is that they started extra classes for all the different subjects. And the kids could come into the campus to do these extra classes. And all of a sudden, people were back at work and they were present. And it's huge for them, which was a huge milestone in the sense that they've got the ROI they wanted from their consultants, the families were taken care of and they're taken care of.</p>	50:18
Azania	50:18	<p>So what's sitting at the back of your mind- if we can get rid of that, if we can clear that space, we'll have all of you.</p>	50:25

Nonku	50:25	<p>And productivity, I mean, just an increase, I'm just thinking in our business, of 5/10% productivity is a couple of million rands- it's significant and it's real. I'll give you another example of what they did. One of the biggest killers, which is the same in our country of young children is still swimming pools, right, even though only a segment of society has these things. But still drownings are quite high in terms of the death rate. All they did is they started swimming lessons for kids of X age to Y age on a Saturday. They already had a massive campus. So they just used their resources. How much does it cost for a swimming instructor? But the impact it made in terms of young mothers who are consultants, who are working 15/16 hour days, leaving the kids with the nanny, worried about the poor, worried about this, just diminished hugely. And in their particular population, that was no longer an issue. Our EAP does exactly the same. So- and it's funny because we are in our second year so we've seen the seasonality. We experience exactly the same during year-end, when people are writing matrices. We are seeing the most teenagers, there's referrals into child psychologists, there is breakdown, stress, the kids are feeling burned out. If we didn't intervene, where would that parent be? So if we didn't provide- so the EAP, even though the employer buys it for the employee and pays for the employee, it takes care of your whole household, including your helper, et cetera. But if we weren't taking care of those people, the employers will be coming back and there's an issue in terms of productivity here. And there's an issue because you're not supporting my employee whose husband is beating her. If we're supporting her, he's not going to stop beating her. So you really have to look at the entire ecosystem and if you're looking after the entire ecosystem, the ROI will take care of itself, it will present itself. I must add, this is the last thing: you can't underestimate, sort of, the social currency that you build up when you're an employee that's perceived to care about the employers. And why EAPs have to move- and I don't know why they haven't- from this low utilization that obviously makes you a lot of money because you don't service a lot of people, to where they're adding value, is because people, if they don't see the currency, they don't value the currency. So as an employer, you keep paying for this thing for which you're not getting any sort of value from, but when people are thinking- and that's how millennials think. Are you an employer that cares about the environment and that cares for me? And critically, we've seen that happen. I think if people had to say, "No, we don't want Healthy Company anymore" maybe the employer says they can't afford it. I think the employees would rebel. And I think that's the right thing. It says this is so powerful and so meaningful in our lives that we need to have it embedded in our organization.</p>	53:06
Azania	53:06	<p>And briefly from you, Dr. G, to what end, though, should all of this be- be burdened on the employer?</p>	53:13

Tshidi	53:13	<p>So often, when we approach employers, one of the ways we try and actually help them answer that question is that we ask them two questions. 1) What are the top three pain points you'd like, as an employer, to see change when it comes to employee behaviour? And then, what are the three important things you are seeing your employees do wrong? And you'll be fascinated by what the answers are because for us, it gets us to the answer of- to what end? An employer often will invest in something that is troublesome enough to them that they would like to see a change in. And that's where wellness gets to play a very important role. Because sometimes the misconception is wellness is this touchy feely, [in]tangible thing in the sky, and I'm going to keep pouring in money and I'm going to hope that people improve their health. But grown people don't change. I mean, I've been in all kinds of presentations, where you get that attitude from EXCO where they say, you know, what are we really doing here? This all sounds great, but you know, I'm already paying medical aid for these individuals, they should pretty much know what to do. The key thing is, if you're able to assist the employer or their representative appreciate that they've got pain points; they've got things that either annoy them or really aggrieve them. And most of the time because we speak to decision makers that sit in the people department, I'm now using Nonku's term, and because we sometimes insist even as a company to meet at least the three representatives of a company decision maker- so whether it's a CFO, the CEO- we want other people to give us perspective. Because if you sell it the guys who release the money, you've won the conversation on letting them appreciate that if you then measure us, our performance, on these three, whether it's quarterly annually, and because we've got tools that allow employers to actually see, this is the value of my investment in the areas of concern, you actually start to then unfold the healthier conversation of, "Okay, so they've demonstrated that they can change this for the better. What else can they do?" Otherwise, it just stays in this, you know, idealistic conversation. People want to see results. And that's really for me, where most employers make decisions like, to what end do I keep investing in wellness?</p>	55:21
Azania	55:21	<p>This is a relationship, right? And employee wellness at least should be a shared responsibility because employers, as we just mentioned, need to create an enabling environment. But staff also need to- they need to take charge. The people need to take charge of their own lifestyle choices and their own well being.</p>	55:42

Nonku	55:42	<p>I completely agree. You know, I smile because I guess, having been at Discovery for a while and having seen what Vitality was able to do, we can either go with the approach of "They should "- and yes, they should. Just like kids should not fight with each other, or they should do their homework on time. And you find other mechanisms to encourage, empower, etc. I think you asked the question initially, to what end. I think as long as it serves the employer. It's when it stops to serve the employer, when it becomes what you maybe described as a burden, then, of course, employers won't continue to invest in it. But I can tell you now I think boardrooms around the world, health care and employee well being is top of mind, because while you can create a healthy workplace, while you can unlock greater productivity, you're unlocking greater profitability, and that cycle will continue. So, in my mind, I think that we should just leverage what we have learned and what we have learned is that you need to tell people what they need to do. You then need to drive the right behaviours We did research that told us that- and I mean, it was extensive research, but we came out with- smokers- and I say this carefully, but we did it with our own people and we have a significant number of people- we found that people who smoke were less productive than people who don't smoke, and their performance was also lower. And performance [was] based on sort of objective metrics that are set out for everyone. And so, of course, what we want to do is shut down the smoking balcony. People, what are they doing? They're smoking in the basement. Do you want to shut down the basement? They're now smoking across the road. This is not, firstly, it is not beneficial to the employer who's now losing more productivity because you now have to walk far etc. So while it's not something that we want to endorse, what we do know is that if you reward the right behaviour and you tell people, this is what you do in order to get the reward, they're more likely to do that. So yes, it should be joined but where it's not, our jobs are to create the tools to understand the science, to implement that science and to make it sort of successful, and this has been successful across the board. We- it's successful in China and in Asia, and in all the markets in the US, and all the markets that we are in, we are there with Vitality because we've understood how to drive and change behaviour using rewards in the workplace. There was an employer- you asked to what end- there was an employer... so a key part of what we do which is probably critical is sort of how we use our data intelligently and create business intelligence to tell you what's happening with your employees. We integrate this across all the claims. So what's happening to your employees in hospital, what's happening to employees when they go to see a GP, when they go to a wellness assessment, so we take all of this and we create a picture for you to say, geez, this is what's happening and these are the top three things you should be agitating about, because they're impacting you in a huge way. We went to see an employer and it was through a sales process of telling them about the solution. And we were able to show them- they weren't a Healthy Company employer yet but they were on</p>	1:00:06
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Azania	1:00:06	<p>Right. You talked about data from different territories and I just remembered that data from Vitality's healthiest workplace study in the UK found that younger employees are more likely to suffer from mental well being..it said... the results signified a clear need for employers to proactively engage with young workers and adopt comprehensive strategies to ensure successful onboarding and integration into the workforce. So young people are, especially at risk of mental illness. So how do you protect them in the matrix of an employee assistance program?</p>	1:00:42
Tshidi	1:03:24	<p>I think they're very, there are three critical stages and having piloted some of them in some of the big, you know, the biggest organizations in order to finance and legal where we see a lot of administrative work. We've seen some value in 1) introducing, you know, what we call a risk stratification model at induction level. There's always seasons and companies like that in those industries of bringing in new talent and new employees. And that's a great opportunity. If you make one that's part and parcel of an induction journey, you get to immediately at the outset, start to see who might be in trouble. Because a lot of these youngsters also feel that they've got a point to prove, you know, they want to climb the ladder. They want to ingratiate themselves with the supervisors. So it's going to be very difficult for them to come to the same supervisor and say, "I'm actually not coping, I'm feeding five people at home, I'm only 24" those kinds of things. So if you're able to put in a tool that assesses it, it</p>	1:04:38

allows the employer to say, okay, this is the actual group, because there's also an understanding that you're going to see who's going to cope well, based on psychometric tests, not always the transition from studying, for example, into employment, very different. The cultures are different in each company, the cultures are different in each branch. So induction is the first step. The second one that we usually encourage is where you can tap in as an employer to see how they're doing is- we actually say that the first six months is more important than the first year, because usually the turnover of young talent is actually increasing in the first year. So you're losing your talent now sooner because a lot of people make an assumption that no, maybe the problems start in the five years when they've transitioned in life stages. It's that first year of transition that's critical. You're able to give them support because they're not really speaking openly. So once again, the demonstration of proactive intervention. Have a structured program that allows them to know that we're going to come in at the beginning, when they come in at six months, and then we're going to catch you again, let's say after 18 months to see how you're doing. It also pulls a very positive mindset in the newbies, as I like to call them, that, hey, my company actually cares how I do, how I cope. Because mental health like I said, it can stay grey if you don't have very defined ways or models of how you intervene proactively to really catch the ones who are in trouble early, but also, you know, continue to encourage the ones that are doing well. The main issue with the young guys when it comes to mental health is anxiety related to work. So you will find that he or she's performing well on the surface, but they are struggling with anxiety. What do young people tend to do- self medicate. Okay, so they're not going to tell you, there's going to be a culture and substance abuse. Huge issue, especially in the corporate circuits because it is easy. And this is the terrible thing to even say about my own fraternity- it is easy to fool a doctor, or medical professional, into writing a script. One of the most common things that young people come and present to us is insomnia. I can't sleep. They're not often willing to tell you why they're not sleeping. So what is a GP who doesn't have time going to often do? Prescribe the medication to help you sleep, because they will then give you a litany of things that they need to sleep for. I need to do my projects, my deadline, my studies, etc. So the wellness really understands...because, for example, and I love Nonku is saying, because of certain measures that you've got to almost introduce them in a firmer way than what they used to, our consultations are inherently longer because we need the opportunity to ask the why. And when you ask the why with the youngsters, at some point, the defenses obviously come down. Look, I'm actually struggling here, here and here. But because these are the issues, this is what I need to do. So the reason we're seeing the burden is because I don't think that young people are caught in that early- or what we define as the high risk stage- those first 18 months of transitioning from studying to being, or having a job, those are the most critical. And often, their destructive behaviours of coping stop

		then. So if you, if you don't catch them then, by the time they're an advocate or a senior attorney, they've learned how to cope. It's very difficult to start changing those behaviours.	
Azania	1:04:38	In the wrong ways. Yes, right. We have reached the end of our conversation, but I want to give you this power 30 seconds just to share what the driving message should be, that you would like employers to take home, both of you, but Nonku, just your driving message for 30 seconds.	1:04:56
Nonku	1:04:56	I think that the employer today is probably the most important vehicle of change in the country, particularly with some of the main challenges we face. And I think they will play a significant role in how we bridge the gap with the haves and the have nots in the medical industry, to begin with. So the state is overburdened. Where do we look, you know? So we should look in productive environments where we can keep people happy. That's number one. I think from an employee health and well being perspective, it's completely the role of the employer to be able to make sure that they can bridge that gap, not just for the workplace, but also for society. I think if you don't bridge that gap, you have this dysfunctional person that comes into what's supposed to be a high performing environment then goes back to dysfunction. Surely you can't have a functional environment. I think there are other opportunities for them to play a role in terms of employee benefits, in terms of how we structure them, in terms of how we encourage people to save, in terms of how we change behaviour, and make sure that there's long term sustainability of the health and wellness of the human being- even after they stopped working for us. So really, it's about the employer recognizing who they are, the power that they have to both influence what happens within but to also impact what's happening in our society and in this country,	1:06:16
Tshidi	1:06:16	I believe that employers are aware of the need for employee wellness programs. I think the key thing now is for us to improve on how employers act on implementing wellness at the workplace. And here's my first driver-incentive that I'd like to give them through a question. If you are willing and committed to safeguarding your family's health, then there must be a part of you that appreciates the responsibility to safeguard your employees health. Human life is a very interesting thing because depending on where we are, we value it differently; at the workplace, they are humans first and resources second, and that's really our approach from a scientific point of view, but that's looking at the whole human being. And the person who is ultimately the decision maker, whether it's a group of people, whether it's an individual, has to, at the end of the day,	1:07:53

		find it in themselves worthy enough of a conversation. So we've really filled the gap of being partners in making that conversation a reality but it's ultimately up to the employer to see the value, the necessity, and we hope that things like the compelling stats of what's happening in terms of the burden of disease, be it mental, physical, even financial, we can put under the disease category, "I want to be part of the solution. And now I want to be a member, a person who's remembered for having brought value in the company that not only creates sustainable outcomes, but is a legacy that I want to be proud of." And I think a lot of employers want to leave something behind that a lot of people will remember them for and this one is one of it, and it's worth it.	
Azania	1:07:53	Nonkululeko Pitje, thank you so much. Dr. Tshidi Gule, you've been a star. Thank you for joining me on this conversation.	1:08:00
Nonku	1:08:00	Thank you.	1:08:01
Tshidi	1:08:01	Thank you.	1:08:02
Azania promoting other episodes	1:08:02	If you have enjoyed listening to this podcast you will definitely enjoy our episode on Maintaining Your Mental Wellbeing. Listen out to hear our experts share top tips about those simple lifestyle habits that keep your mental health in check for life. We also speak to two very brave women – Laetitia du Plessis about what it takes to maintain mental wellbeing in the face of mental illness and to Letshego Zulu about how her healthy lifestyle kept her going after she lost the love of her life, husband Gugu, on Kilimanjaro three years ago.	1:08:41
Azania Outro	1:08:41	Thank you for listening to this episode of Discover Healthier, brought to you by Discovery Health. Join the conversation on social media with the #discoverhealthier and tag @discovery_sa. You can subscribe to our podcast channel, Discovery South Africa on your favourite podcast app or visit discovery.co.za to listen to our shows.	1:09:09