

# The Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™

Canada | December 2022

 **TELUS** Health

LifeWorks



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# What you need to know for December 2022

## 1. The mental health of working Canadians improved modestly in December yet remains at a level that is only modestly higher than the most distressing period of the pandemic.

- At 64.6, the mental health of Canadians improved slightly from the prior month.
- 32% of Canadians have a high mental health risk, 43% have a moderate mental health risk, and 25% have a low mental health risk.
- Anxiety, isolation, and work productivity have been the lowest mental health sub-scores for eight consecutive months.
- The mental health score of managers improved and is higher than the score of non-managers and the national average.
- With a two-point decline from November 2022, the Maritimes has the lowest mental health score while Manitoba has the highest score. Newfoundland and Labrador saw a 2.3-point improvement in mental health following three months of declines.

## 2. Inflation is the greatest concern for more than one-third of working Canadians.

- 36% are most concerned about inflation; this is significantly higher than the next greatest concern, a recession, among 14% of Canadians.

- Working Canadians without emergency savings have a mental health score 22 points below the national average; conversely, Canadians with emergency savings have a mental health score 10 points higher than the national average.
- Canadians without emergency savings are more likely to lack confidence in their ability to cope with stressors at work and in their personal lives.
- Canadians with lower household income are more likely to be concerned about their mental health and wellbeing and to lack confidence in their problem-solving abilities under pressure.
- Among Canadians reporting an increase in stress during the holiday season, 34% indicated concern about being able to afford the gifts they want to give. The mental health score of this group is 19 points below the national average.

## 3. Half of Canadians would be interested in a free confidential assessment of their mental health and wellbeing.

- 38% would prefer an in-person assessment.
- 37% would prefer an online assessment.
- 8% would prefer a telephonic assessment.
- 18% have no preference for the assessment modality.

**Half of  
Canadians**

would be interested in  
a free confidential assessment  
of their mental health  
and wellbeing.

**Video counselling with a  
mental health professional**  
is the most helpful feature  
of a mental health app.

**36%**

say inflation is  
their greatest concern  
right now.

**Anxiety and isolation**  
are the most concerning  
mental health  
sub-scores.

#### 4. Canadians are distressed over their lack of connection to and acceptance by people they know.

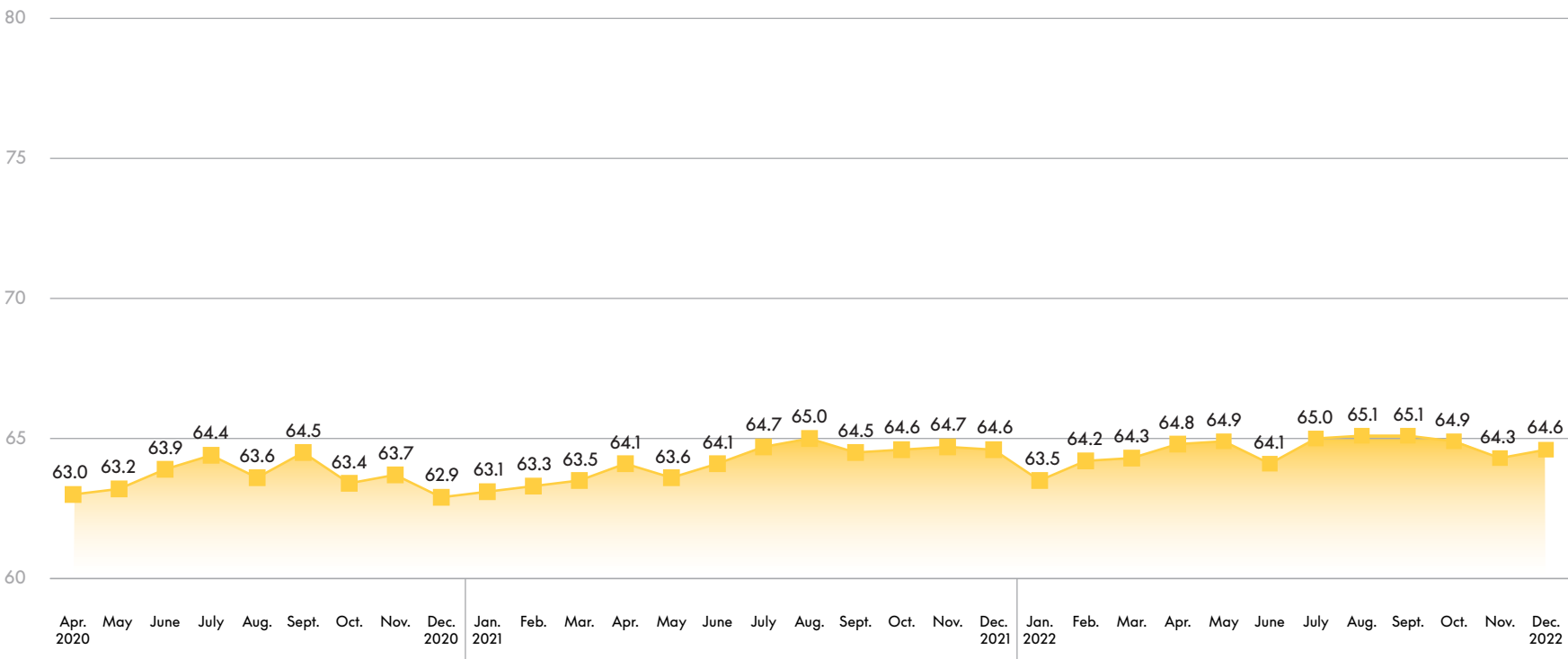
- 15% have limited opportunity to be with people.
- 13% do not feel connected or accepted by the people they know; the mental health of this group is 10 points below the national average.
- 13% do not feel mentally up to being with other people; the mental health of this group is 10 points below the national average.
- Isolation has been the second worst mental health sub-score, second only to anxiety, for eight consecutive months.
- 20% did not plan to return to pre-pandemic holiday gatherings citing a change in relationships; the mental health of this group is 20 points below the national average.

#### 5. Younger Canadian workers (under 40) are struggling to cope.

- Younger Canadians are more than twice as likely as Canadians over 50 to struggle when adapting to change.
- Younger Canadians are more than twice as likely as Canadians over 50 to lack confidence in their problem-solving abilities under pressure.
- Younger Canadians are nearly twice as likely as Canadians over 50 to lack confidence in their ability to cope with stressors in their personal lives.
- Younger Canadians are 60% more likely than Canadians over 50 to lack confidence in their ability to cope with stressors at work.

# The Mental Health Index™

The overall Mental Health Index for December 2022 is 64.6 points<sup>1</sup>, a modest improvement from the prior month.



MHI Current Month  
December 2022

64.6

November 2022

64.3

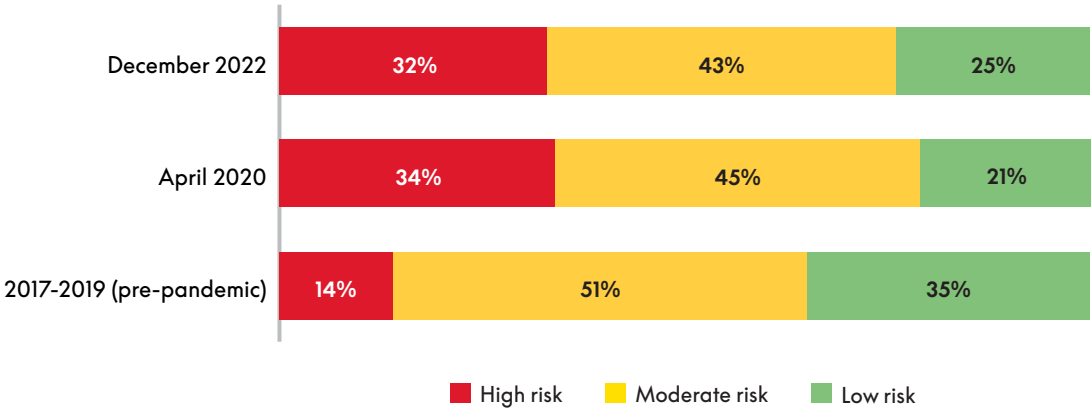
- Distressed 0-49
- Strained 50-79
- Optimal 80-100

<sup>1</sup> Beginning in May 2022, corresponding to year 3 of the Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™, scores are represented as absolute. The move to absolute scores has been taken given the degree of change that has occurred over the last two years. It is unlikely that a return to pre-pandemic levels will be realized hence the reference relative to that benchmark is no longer relevant.

# Mental health risk

In December 2022, 32 per cent of Canadians have a high mental health risk, 43 per cent have a moderate mental health risk, and 25 per cent have a low mental health risk. Approximately 30 per cent of people in the high-risk group report diagnosed anxiety or depression, seven per cent report diagnosed anxiety or depression in the moderate-risk group, and one per cent of people in the low-risk group report diagnosed anxiety or depression.

In contrast, in April 2020, at the launch of the Index and near the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, 34 per cent of Canadians had a high mental health risk, 45 per cent had a moderate mental health risk, and 21 per cent had a low mental health risk. Prior to 2020, 14 per cent of Canadians had a high mental health risk, 51 per cent had a moderate mental health risk, and 35 per cent had a low mental health risk.



# Mental Health Index™ sub-scores

For the eighth consecutive month, the lowest Mental Health Index™ sub-score is for the risk measure of anxiety (58.0). Isolation (60.6), work productivity (62.9), depression (63.0), optimism (65.9), and financial risk (69.3) follow. General psychological health (72.1) continues to be the most favourable mental health measure in December 2022.

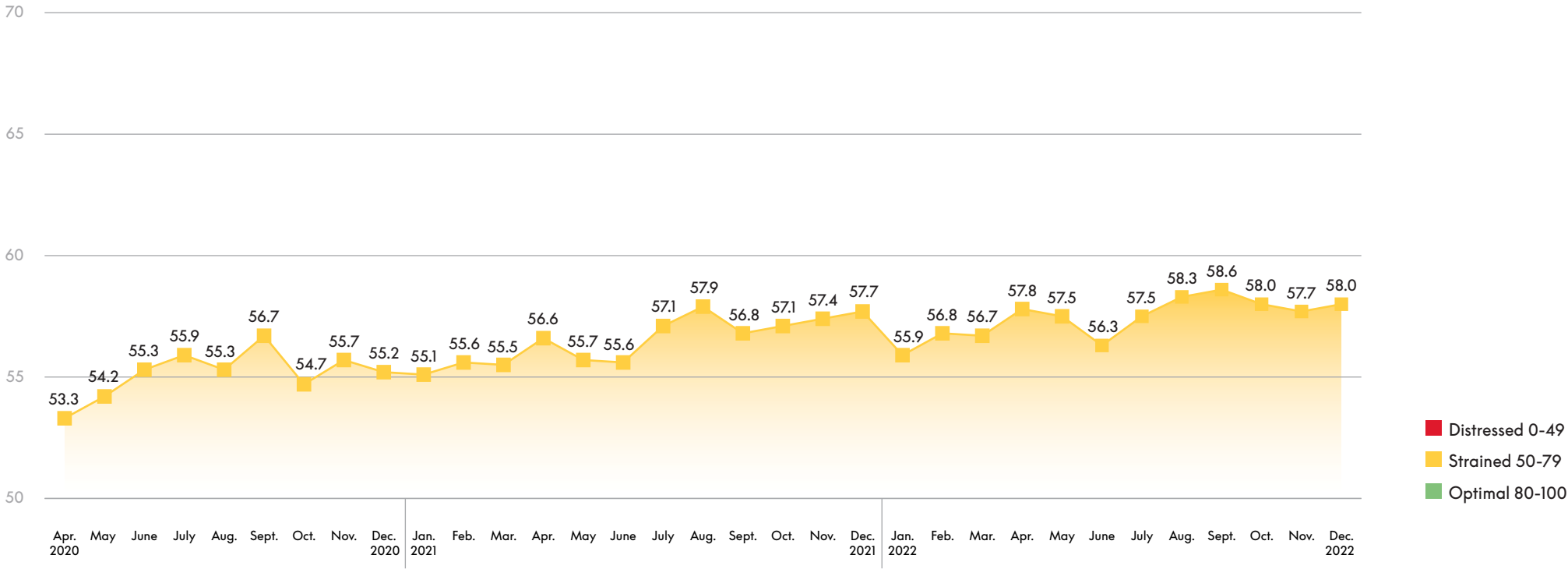
- Anxiety, isolation, and work productivity have been the lowest mental health sub-scores for eight consecutive months.
- All mental health sub-scores, apart from optimism, have improved, or remain unchanged, from November 2022.
- The isolation sub-score has the most significant improvement, up 1.1 points from the prior month.

| Mental Health Index™ Sub-scores <sup>2</sup> | December 2022 | November 2022 |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Anxiety                                      | 58.0          | 57.7          |
| Isolation                                    | 60.6          | 59.5          |
| Work productivity                            | 62.9          | 62.1          |
| Depression                                   | 63.0          | 62.2          |
| Optimism                                     | 65.9          | 66.4          |
| Financial risk                               | 69.3          | 69.1          |
| Psychological health                         | 72.1          | 72.1          |

2 The demographic breakdown of sub-scores is available upon request.

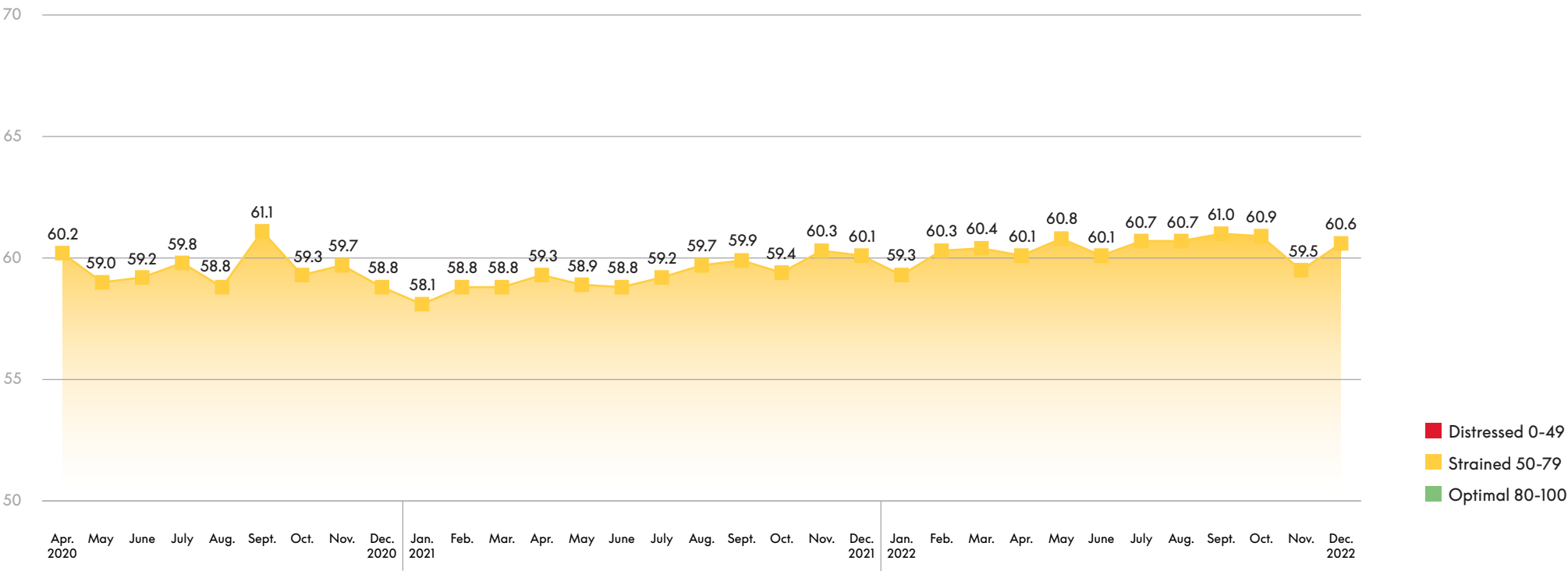
# Anxiety

The anxiety sub-score has fluctuated since the launch of the Index in April 2020. After reaching its high in September 2022, the anxiety score declined through November. Despite a modest improvement in December, anxiety continues to be the lowest mental health sub-score for the eighth consecutive month.



Isolation

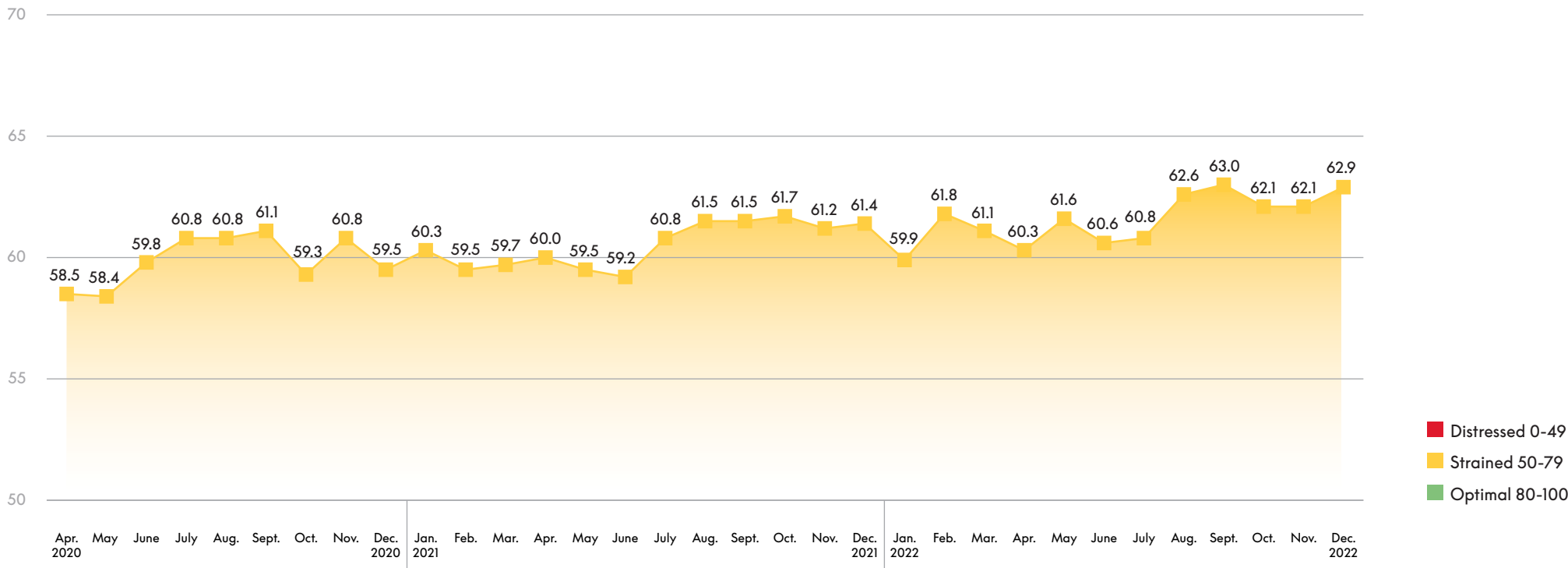
With only one notable increase in September 2020, the isolation sub-score has made incremental improvements. Following a one-point decline in November, the isolation sub-score rebounded in December 2022. Isolation has been the second lowest mental health sub-score – behind anxiety – for eight consecutive months.



# Work productivity

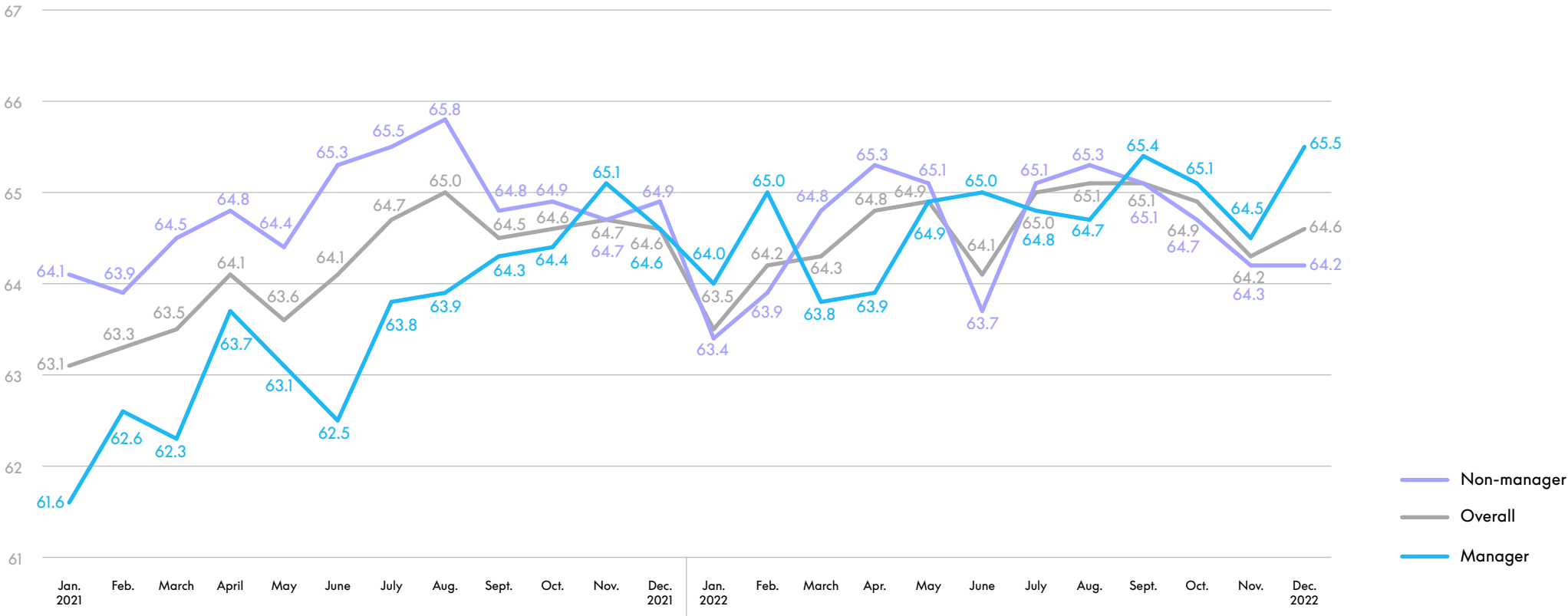
The work productivity sub-score measures the impact of mental health on work productivity and goals.

With multiple periods of improvement followed by declines, the work productivity score has been inconsistent since the launch of the MHI in April 2020. Following two months of stagnation, the work productivity sub-score improved nearly one point in December 2022.



# Managers compared to non-managers

From January to October 2021, the mental health scores of managers were lower than non-managers and lower than the Canadian average. In November, this trend reversed with managers reporting a slightly higher average mental health score compared to non-managers. From March through May 2022, the mental health score of managers was lower than that of non-managers; however, this trend reversed in June. Since July 2022, managers and non-managers have reported similar mental health scores. In December 2022, managers have a higher mental health score (65.5) than non-managers (64.2) and the national average (64.6).



## Demographics

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have had significantly lower mental health scores than men. In December 2022, the mental health score of women is 62.6 compared to 66.8 for men.
- Since April 2020, mental health scores have improved with age.
- Differences in mental health scores between individuals with and without children have been reported since the launch of the Index in April 2020. Nearly three years later, this pattern continues with a lower score for individuals with at least one child (62.3) than individuals without children (65.6).

## Employment

- Overall, four per cent of respondents are unemployed<sup>3</sup> and eight per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary.
- Individuals reporting reduced salary compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (49.6), followed by individuals working fewer hours (55.2), individuals not currently employed (63.9), and individuals with no change to salary or hours (65.6).
- Managers have a higher mental health score (65.5) than non-managers (64.2).
- Self-employed individuals have the highest mental health score (67.3).
- Respondents working for companies with 5,001-10,000 employees have the lowest mental health score (62.2).

## Emergency savings

- Individuals without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (42.6) than the overall group (64.6). Individuals with emergency savings have a mental health score of 74.6.

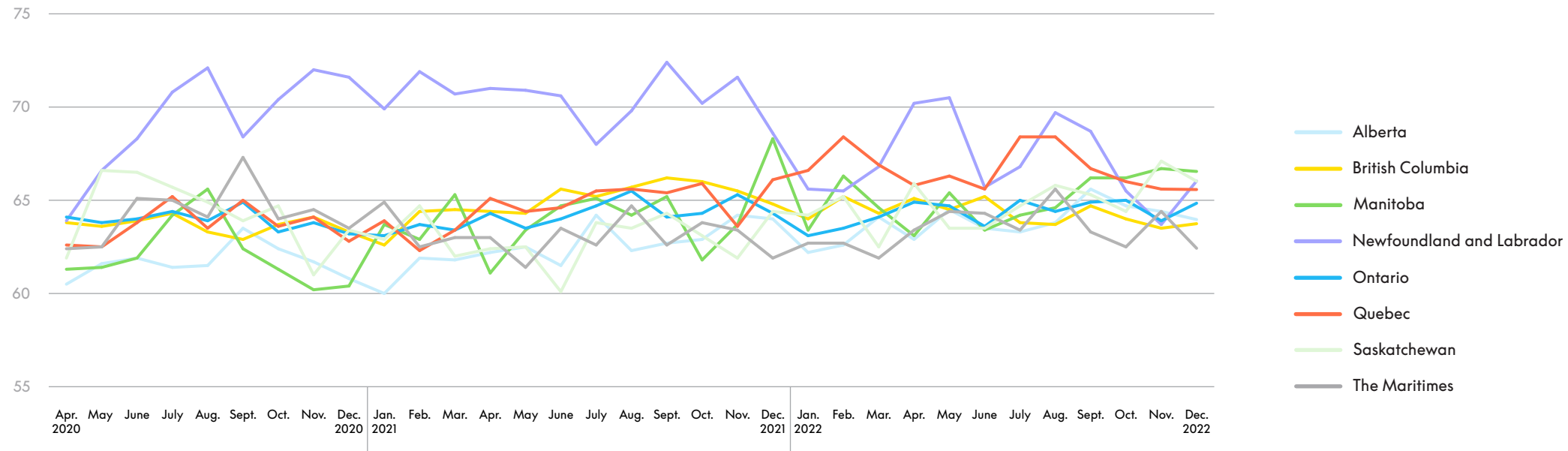
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3 MHI respondents who have been employed in the past six months are included in the poll.

# Mental Health Index™ (provincial)

Since April 2020, provincial mental health scores have fluctuated. Apart from Newfoundland and Labrador, the fluctuation patterns for the provinces were similar through July 2021. In December 2022, Newfoundland and Labrador, British Columbia and Ontario have improvements in mental health while all other provinces have declines in mental health or remain unchanged from the prior month.

- The mental health score in the Maritimes is lowest (62.4), with a two-point decline from the prior month.
- Despite a modest 0.2-point decline, the mental health score in Manitoba is highest (66.5).
- Following three months of declines, Newfoundland and Labrador had a 2.3-point improvement in mental health from November to December 2022.



| Employment status                                   | Dec. 2022 | Nov. 2022 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Employed<br>(no change in hours/salary)             | 65.6      | 65.4      |
| Employed (fewer hours<br>compared to last month)    | 55.2      | 54.5      |
| Employed (reduced salary<br>compared to last month) | 49.6      | 49.3      |
| Not currently employed                              | 63.9      | 59.1      |
| Age group                                           | Dec. 2022 | Nov. 2022 |
| Age 20-29                                           | 54.6      | 53.9      |
| Age 30-39                                           | 58.2      | 57.9      |
| Age 40-49                                           | 62.4      | 62.6      |
| Age 50-59                                           | 66.0      | 65.5      |
| Age 60-69                                           | 72.3      | 71.5      |
| Number of children                                  | Dec. 2022 | Nov. 2022 |
| No children in household                            | 65.6      | 65.6      |
| 1 child                                             | 62.8      | 61.4      |
| 2 children                                          | 61.6      | 61.3      |
| 3 children or more                                  | 61.5      | 60.9      |

| Province                  | Dec. 2022 | Nov. 2022 |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Alberta                   | 64.0      | 64.4      |
| British Columbia          | 63.7      | 63.5      |
| Manitoba                  | 66.5      | 66.7      |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 66.0      | 63.7      |
| The Maritimes             | 62.4      | 64.4      |
| Quebec                    | 65.6      | 65.6      |
| Ontario                   | 64.8      | 63.9      |
| Saskatchewan              | 66.0      | 67.1      |
| Gender                    | Dec. 2022 | Nov. 2022 |
| Men                       | 66.8      | 66.6      |
| Women                     | 62.6      | 62.1      |
| Household income          | Dec. 2022 | Nov. 2022 |
| <\$30K/annum              | 52.5      | 54.5      |
| \$30K to <\$60K/annum     | 61.0      | 60.5      |
| \$60K to <\$100K          | 64.1      | 64.1      |
| \$100K to <\$150K         | 67.1      | 66.6      |
| \$150K or more            | 71.5      | 70.2      |

| Employer size                 | Dec. 2022 | Nov. 2022 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Self-employed/sole proprietor | 67.3      | 67.5      |
| 2-50 employees                | 65.5      | 64.6      |
| 51-100 employees              | 62.8      | 63.4      |
| 101-500 employees             | 64.0      | 63.9      |
| 501-1,000 employees           | 63.7      | 61.7      |
| 1,001-5,000 employees         | 65.3      | 64.1      |
| 5,001-10,000 employees        | 62.2      | 64.7      |
| More than 10,000 employees    | 64.8      | 65.1      |
| Manager                       | Dec. 2022 | Nov. 2022 |
| Manager                       | 65.5      | 64.5      |
| Non-manager                   | 64.2      | 64.2      |

Numbers highlighted in orange are the most negative scores in the group.

Numbers highlighted in green are the least negative scores in the group.

# Mental Health Index™ (industry)

Employees working in Arts, Entertainment and Recreation have the lowest mental health score (59.8) in December 2022, followed by individuals working in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (60.6), and Wholesale Trade (61.2).

Respondents employed in Management of Companies and Enterprises (73.1), Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (70.0), and Automotive Industry (69.9) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.

| Industry                                        | December 2022 | November 2022 | Change |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------|
| Automotive Industry                             | 69.9          | 62.9          | 7.0    |
| Real Estate, Rental and Leasing                 | 70.0          | 64.4          | 5.6    |
| Retail Trade                                    | 66.7          | 63.7          | 3.0    |
| Management of Companies and Enterprises         | 73.1          | 70.6          | 2.5    |
| Professional, Scientific and Technical Services | 69.7          | 67.5          | 2.3    |
| Other                                           | 63.7          | 62.5          | 1.2    |
| Construction                                    | 62.9          | 62.0          | 0.9    |
| Wholesale Trade                                 | 61.2          | 60.5          | 0.7    |
| Other services (except Public Administration)   | 66.6          | 66.0          | 0.6    |
| Educational Services                            | 65.5          | 65.0          | 0.4    |
| Accommodation and Food Services                 | 61.3          | 61.5          | -0.2   |
| Health Care and Social Assistance               | 61.9          | 62.4          | -0.5   |
| Utilities                                       | 65.1          | 66.3          | -1.2   |
| Manufacturing                                   | 64.8          | 66.1          | -1.3   |
| Information and Cultural Industries             | 61.8          | 63.4          | -1.6   |
| Transportation and Warehousing                  | 68.1          | 69.7          | -1.6   |
| Public Administration                           | 65.4          | 67.0          | -1.6   |
| Finance and Insurance                           | 61.9          | 63.9          | -2.0   |
| Arts, Entertainment and Recreation              | 59.8          | 62.1          | -2.3   |
| Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction               | 65.3          | 68.9          | -3.6   |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting      | 60.6          | 64.9          | -4.3   |

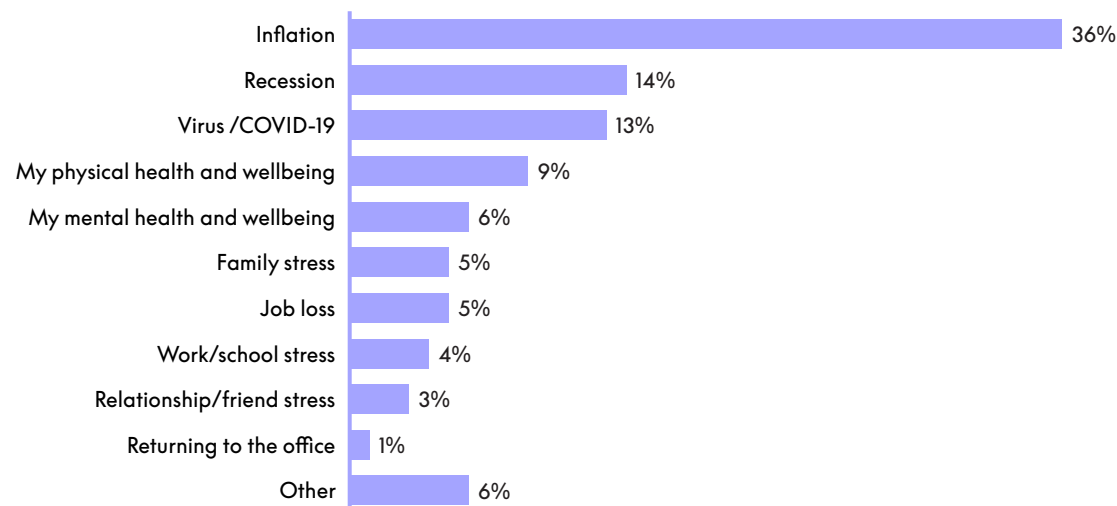
# Spotlight

## Top of mind issues

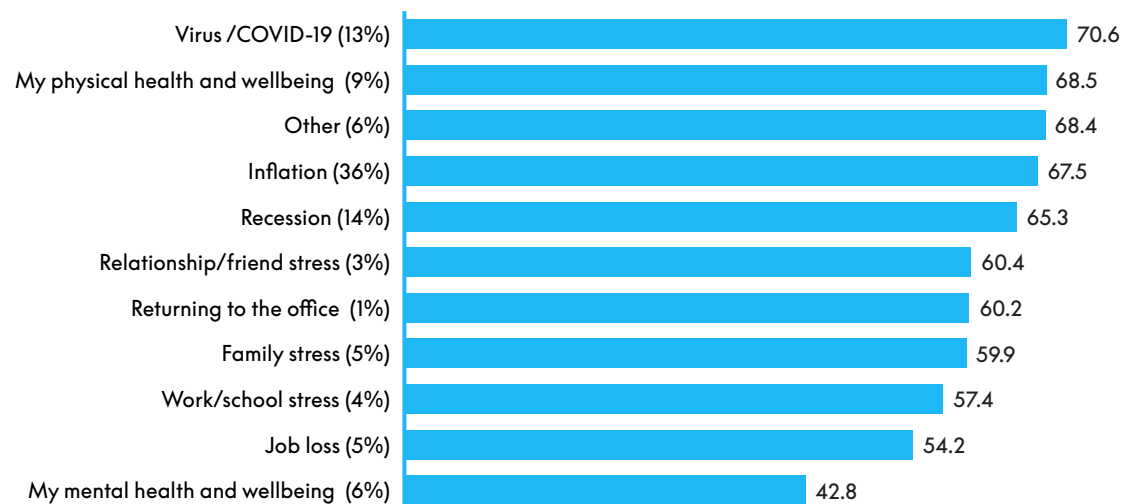
Canadians were asked about their greatest concern right now.

- More than one-third (36 per cent) are concerned about inflation, 14 per cent are concerned about a recession, and 13 per cent are concerned about virus/COVID-19.
- Six per cent are concerned about their mental health and wellbeing, and the mental health of this group is lowest (42.8), nearly 22 points below the national average (64.6).
- Respondents older than 50 are two and a half times more likely than respondents younger than 40 to be most concerned about their physical health and wellbeing and more than two times more likely to be most concerned about their mental health and wellbeing.
- Individuals with an annual household income lower than \$100,000 are 80 per cent more likely than those with an annual household income greater than \$100,000 to be concerned about their mental health and wellbeing.
- Non-parents are more than 70 per cent more likely than parents to be concerned about their physical health and wellbeing.

### What is your greatest concern right now?



### MHI score by What is your greatest concern right now



## Coping

Canadians were asked whether they are confident in their problem-solving abilities under pressure.

- Nearly four in five (79 per cent) are confident in their problem-solving abilities under pressure, and this group has the highest mental health score (68.6).
- Six per cent are not confident in their problem-solving abilities under pressure, and this group has the lowest mental health score (44.0), more than 20 points below the national average (64.6).
- Respondents younger than 40 are more than twice as likely as respondents older than 50 to lack confidence in their problem-solving abilities under pressure.
- Women are 40 per cent more likely than men to lack confidence in their problem-solving abilities under pressure.
- Individuals with an annual household income lower than \$60,000 are more than twice as likely as individuals with an annual household income greater than \$100,000 to lack confidence in their problem-solving abilities under pressure.

### I am confident in my problem-solving abilities under pressure



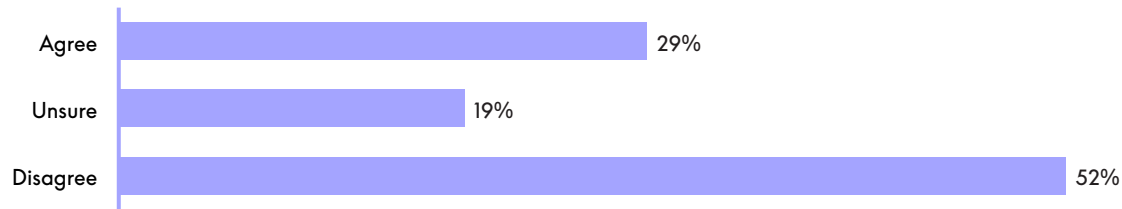
### MHI score by I am confident in my problem-solving abilities under pressure



Canadians were asked whether they typically struggle when it comes to adapting to change.

- More than half (52 per cent) do not typically struggle when it comes to adapting to change, and this group has the highest mental health score (74.6).
- Nearly one-third (29 per cent) typically struggle when it comes to adapting to change, and this group has the lowest mental health score (51.1), more than 13 points below the national average (64.6).
- Respondents younger than 40 are more than twice as likely as respondents older than 50 to struggle when adapting to change.
- Parents are 40 per cent more likely than non-parents to struggle when it comes to adapting to change.

**I typically struggle when it comes to adapting to change**



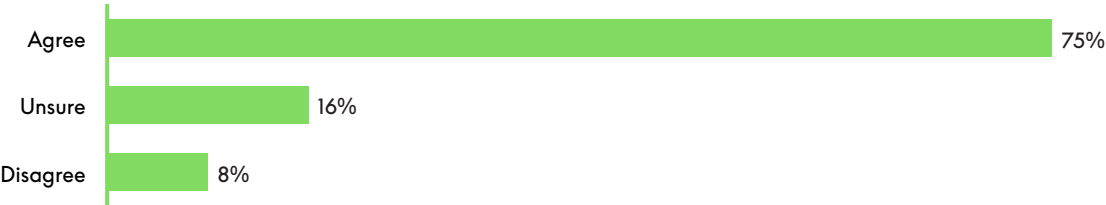
**MHI score by I typically struggle when it comes to adapting to change**



Canadians were asked whether they are confident in their ability to cope with most stressors at work.

- Three-quarters (75 per cent) are confident in their ability to cope with most stressors at work, and this group has the highest mental health score (69.8).
- Nearly one in ten (8 per cent) are not confident in their ability to cope with most stressors at work, and this group has the lowest mental health score (44.8), nearly 20 points below the national average (64.6).
- Respondents younger than 40 are 60 per cent more likely than respondents older than 50 to lack confidence in their ability to cope with stressors at work.
- Individuals without emergency savings are four times more likely than individuals with emergency savings to lack confidence in their ability to cope with stressors at work.

I am confident in my ability to cope with most stressors at work



MHI score by I am confident in my ability to cope with most stressors at work



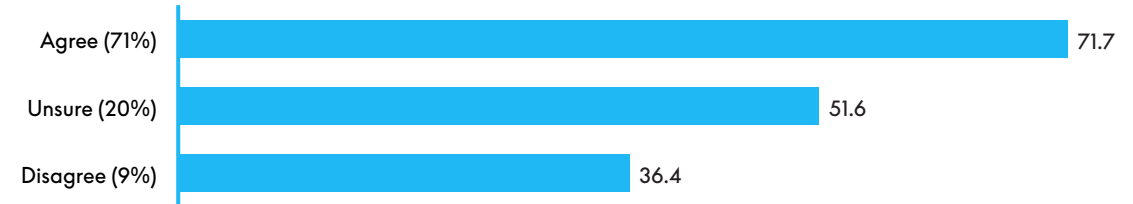
Canadians were asked whether they are confident in their ability to cope with most stressors in their personal lives.

- Nearly three-quarters (71 per cent) are confident in their ability to cope with most stressors in their personal lives, and this group has the highest mental health score (71.7).
- Nearly one in ten (9 per cent) are not confident in their ability to cope with most stressors in their personal lives, and this group has the lowest mental health score (36.4), more than 28 points below the national average (64.6).
- Respondents younger than 40 are nearly twice as likely as respondents older than 50 to lack confidence in their ability to cope with most stressors in their personal lives.
- Individuals without emergency savings are seven times more likely than individuals with emergency savings to lack confidence in their ability to cope with most stressors in their personal lives.

### I am confident in my ability to cope with most stressors in my personal life



### MHI score by I am confident in my ability to cope with most stressors in my personal life

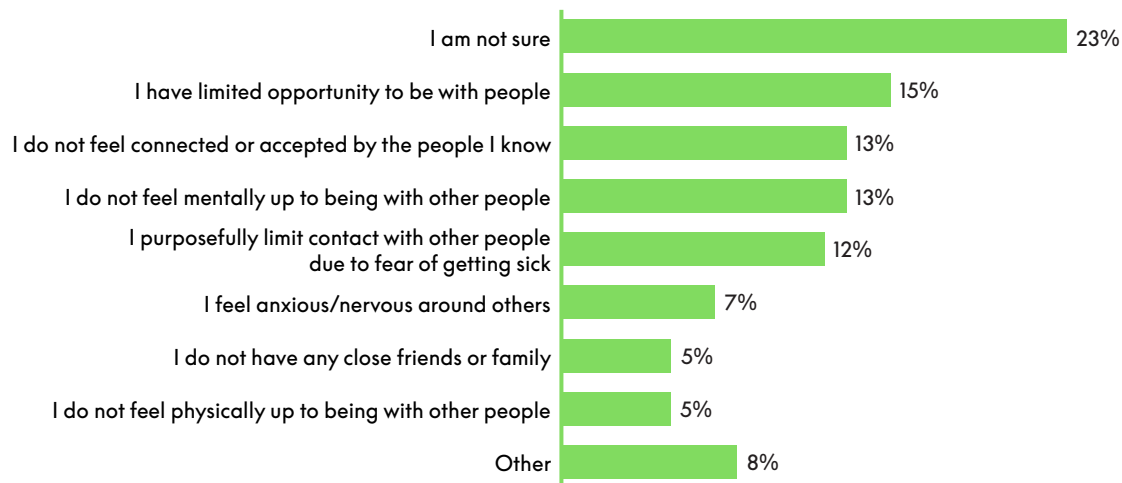


# Isolation

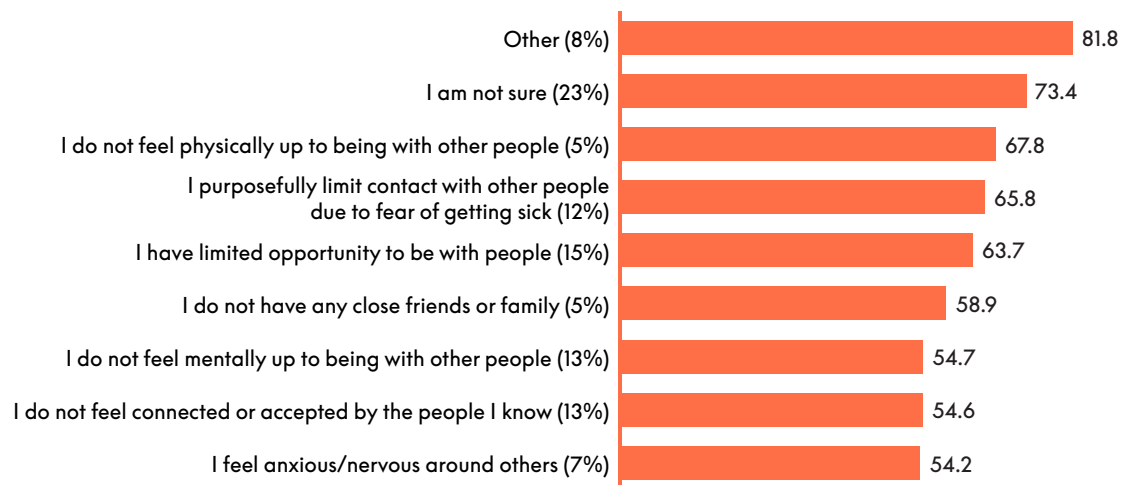
Canadians were asked about the most common reason for feeling isolated.

- Thirteen per cent do not feel mentally up to being with other people, and 13 per cent do not feel connected or accepted by the people they know. The mental health scores of these groups (54.7 and 54.6 respectively) are 10 points below the national average (64.6).
- Respondents younger than 40 are nearly twice as likely as respondents older than 50 to feel isolated because they feel anxious/nervous around others and are more than twice as likely to feel isolated because they do not feel connected or accepted by the people they know.

## Most common reason for feeling isolated



## MHI score by Most common reason for feeling isolated

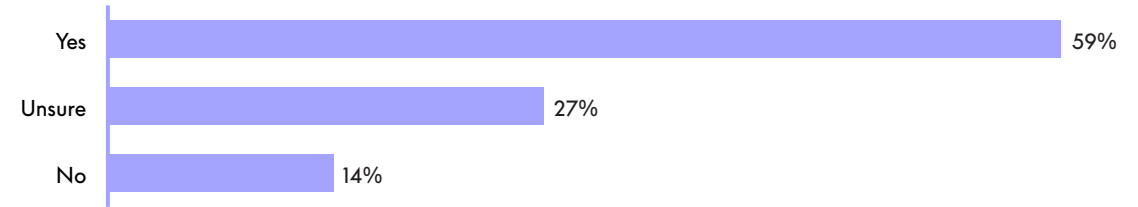


## Holiday season

Canadians were asked whether they were planning to return to holiday gatherings they had before the pandemic.

- Nearly three in five (59 per cent) had plans to return to holiday gatherings they had before the pandemic, and this group has the highest mental health score (69.1).
- More than one in ten (14 per cent) did not have plans to return to holiday gatherings they had before the pandemic, and this group has the lowest mental health score (56.7), nearly eight points below the national average (64.6).

### Are you planning to return to holiday gatherings that you had before the pandemic?



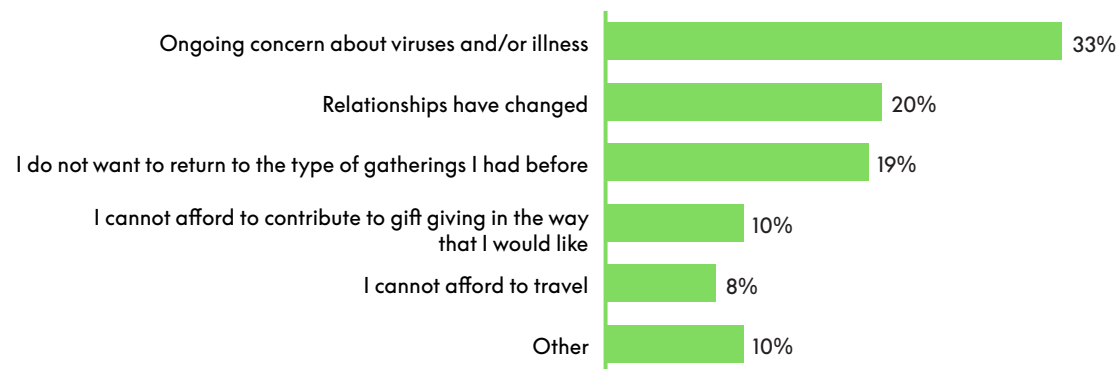
### MHI score by Are you planning to return to holiday gatherings that you had before the pandemic?



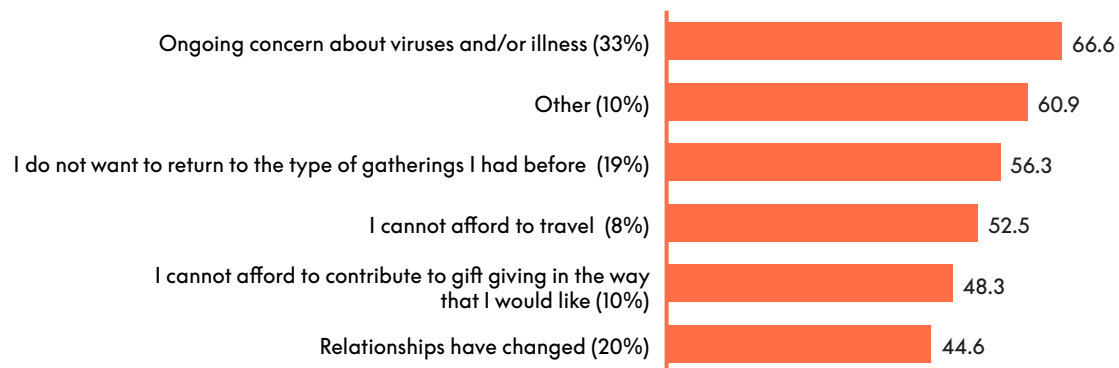
Canadians who did not plan to return to holiday gatherings they had before the pandemic were asked about the reason for that decision.

- One-third (33 per cent) have ongoing concern about viruses and/or illness, 20 per cent cite a change in relationships, and 19 per cent do not want to return to the type of gatherings they had before.
- The lowest mental health score (44.6) is among 20 per cent of respondents who cite a change in relationships, 20 points below the national average (64.6).

### Primary reason for not returning to pre-pandemic holiday gatherings



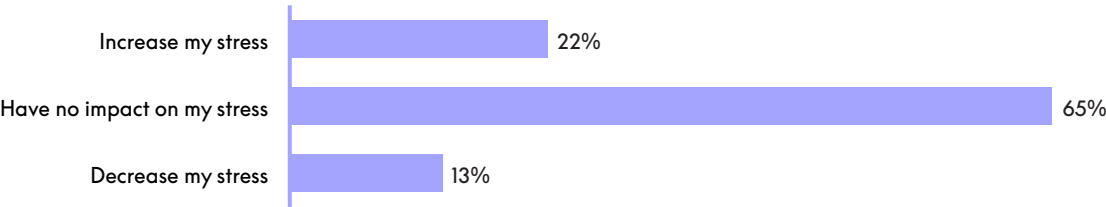
### MHI score by Primary reason for not returning to pre-pandemic holiday gatherings



Canadians were asked about the impact of friends and family on their stress during the holiday season.

- Nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) report no impact on their stress, and this group has the highest mental health score (68.6).
- More than one in five (22 per cent) report an increase in stress, and this group has the lowest mental health score (51.8), nearly 13 points below the national average (64.6).
- Women are 50 per cent more likely than men to report an increase in stress because of friends and family.
- Respondents younger than 40 are 50 per cent more likely than respondents older than 50 to report an increase in stress during the holiday season because of friends and family.

Impact of friends and family on stress during the holiday season



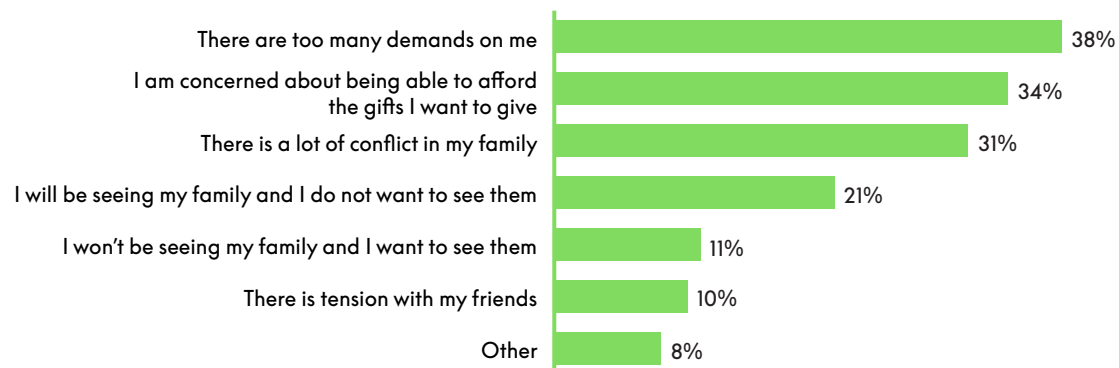
MHI score by Impact of friends and family on stress during the holiday season



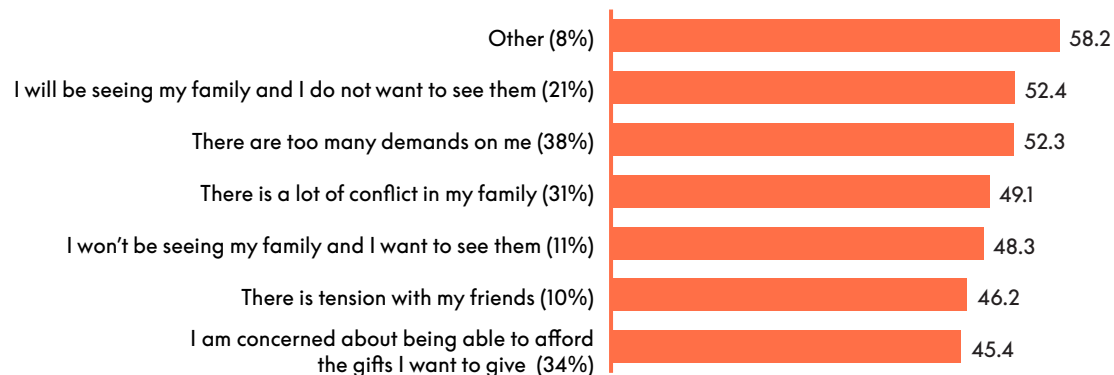
Canadians who report an increase in stress during the holiday season because of friends and family were asked for the cause.

- Nearly two in five (38 per cent) report having too many demands on them as the cause of increased stress, 34 per cent are concerned about being able to afford the gifts they want to give, and 31 per cent report having a lot of conflict in their family.
- The lowest mental health score (45.4) is among 34 per cent of respondents who are concerned about being able to afford the gifts they want to give, 19 points below the national average (64.6).

### Causes of increased stress



### MHI score by Causes of increased stress

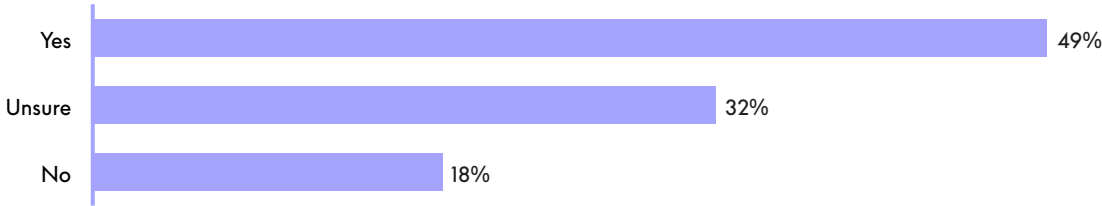


# Mental heath assessment

Canadians were asked whether they would be interested in a free confidential assessment of their mental health and wellbeing.

- Nearly half (49 per cent) would be interested in a free fully confidential assessment of their mental health and wellbeing. The mental health of this group is lowest (61.6), three points below the national average (64.6).
- More than half of individuals in the following industries report being interested in the free confidential mental health assessment: Utilities, Accommodation and Food Services, Information and Cultural Industries, Health Care and Social Assistance, Construction, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, Educational Services, and Finance and Insurance

If there was no cost, would you be interested in a fully confidential assessment of your mental health and wellbeing?



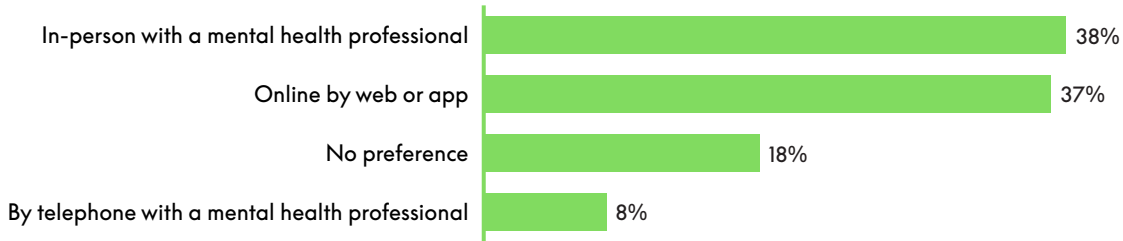
MHI score by If there was no cost, would you be interested in a fully confidential assessment of your mental health and wellbeing?



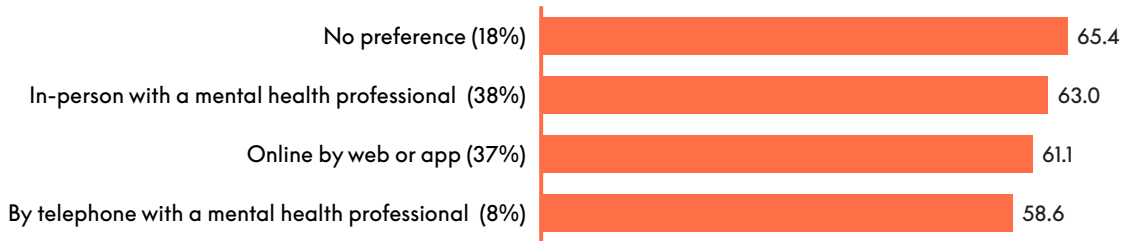
Canadians interested in a free confidential assessment of their mental health and wellbeing were asked about their preferred modality.

Nearly two in five (38 per cent) would prefer an in-person assessment with a mental health professional, and 37 per cent would prefer an online assessment.

Preferred modality for mental health assessment



MHI score by Preferred modality for mental health assessment



# Overview of the Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™

The mental health and wellbeing of a population is essential to overall health and work productivity. The Mental Health Index™ provides a measure of the current mental health status of employed adults. The increases and decreases in the MHI are intended to predict cost and productivity risks and inform the need for investment in mental health support by business and government.

## The Mental Health Index™ report has two parts:

1. The overall Mental Health Index™ (MHI).
2. A spotlight section that reflects the specific impact of current issues in the community.

## Methodology

Data for this report is collected through an online survey of 3,000 people who live in Canada and are currently employed or who were employed within the prior six months. Participants are selected to be representative of the age, gender, industry, and geographic distribution in Canada. Respondents are asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering each question. Data for the current report was collected between December 2 and December 7, 2022.

## Calculations

Beginning in May 2022, corresponding to year 3 of the Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™, scores are represented as absolute. The move to absolute scores has been taken given the degree of change that has occurred over the last two years. It is unlikely that a return to pre-pandemic levels will be realized hence, the reference relative to that benchmark is no longer relevant.

To create the Mental Health Index, a response scoring system is applied to turn individual responses into point values. Higher point values are associated with better mental health and less mental health risk. The sum of scores is divided by the total number of possible points to generate a score out of 100. The raw score is the mathematical mean of the individual scores. Distribution of scores is defined according to the following scale:

**Distressed** 0 - 49    **Strained** 50-79    **Optimal** 80 - 100

## Additional data and analyses

Demographic breakdowns of sub-scores, and specific cross-correlational and custom analyses, are available upon request. Benchmarking against the national results or any sub-group is available upon request. Contact [MHI@lifeworks.com](mailto:MHI@lifeworks.com)



LifeWorks is a wholly owned subsidiary of TELUS now operating as part of TELUS Health as a result of its recent acquisition.

## About TELUS Health

TELUS Health is a global healthcare company serving people in more than 160 countries delivering both digital innovation and clinical services to improve total physical, mental and financial health and wellness across the full spectrum of primary and preventative care. By leveraging the power of technology to deliver connected solutions and services both in-person and virtually, TELUS Health is improving access to care and revolutionizing the flow of information while facilitating collaboration, efficiency, and productivity for physicians, pharmacists, health authorities, allied healthcare professionals, insurers, employers and people globally, progressing its vision of transforming healthcare and empowering people to live healthier lives.

Our clinical team is composed of renowned and passionate health professionals around the world delivering best-in-class people-centric care to hundreds of thousands of employers, professionals and their families.

For more information, please visit: [www.telushealth.com](https://www.telushealth.com).