

# The Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™

Canada | August 2021



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One in three Canadians do not feel a sense of belonging or acceptance at work or are unsure. This is an increase from one in four prior to the pandemic. 3

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# August 2021 highlights

**Key insight: One in three Canadians do not feel a sense of belonging or acceptance at work or are unsure. This is an increase from one in four prior to the pandemic.**

**More than half of Canadians do their job when feeling unwell at least one day per week**

- Those who work when feeling unwell have significantly lower isolation scores than the national average.
- 64% of parents work when feeling unwell at least one day per week compared to 36% of non-parents.
- 46% of people who never work when feeling unwell have a mental health score nearly four points above the pre-2020 benchmark.

**On average, Canadians report giving 85% of their energy to work on a typical day, compared to the benchmark of 89% prior to 2020**

- Those who report giving more energy to their work have better mental health than those who report giving less effort.
- Among the group of those who work when feeling unwell, the average amount of energy put into work is 74%, which is 11% lower than 85% of individuals who feel well.

**Employees saying that their organization is a great place to work are linked to better mental health**

- 65% of Canadians who consider their organization a great place to work have among the most favourable mental health scores.

## The mental health of Canadians reached a high in August 2021 but remains below the pre-2020 benchmark

- The Mental Health Index for August 2021 is nearly 10-points below the pre-2020 benchmark.
- Those without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (-24.6) than the overall group (-9.7) and those with emergency savings (-4.4).
- Following a significant improvement from June to July 2021, the mental health score in Alberta declined 1.9 points in August to nearly 13-points below the pre-2020 benchmark.
- For the 15th consecutive month, full-time post-secondary students have the lowest mental health score (-20.5) and this month, full-time students also have the most significant increase in mental stress (63.6).

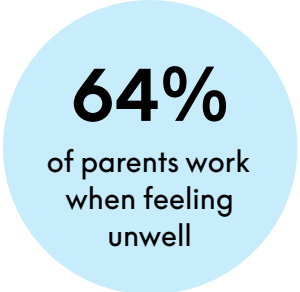
- 15% of Canadians who do not consider their organization a great place to work have among the least favourable mental health scores, more than double the national average.
- Those who recommend their organization as a great place to work have a productivity level of 86% compared to 80% among those who are unsure, and 75% among those who would not recommend their organization as a great place to work.
- Managers are more likely than non-managers to consider their organization a great place to work.

**One in three Canadians do not feel a sense of belonging or acceptance at work or are unsure. This is an increase from one in four prior to the pandemic**

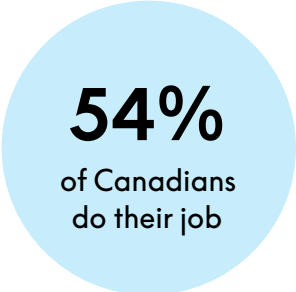
- Mental health scores for those who do not feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work are significantly below the national average and distinctly below those who feel belonging and acceptance at work.
- Across all age groups, the percentage of Canadians feeling a sense of belonging and acceptance at work has decreased from before the pandemic compared to currently.
- Those who feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work have among the highest mental health scores and among the best isolation scores, both significantly better than national averages. Further, this group has higher productivity (87%) than those who do not feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work (74%).



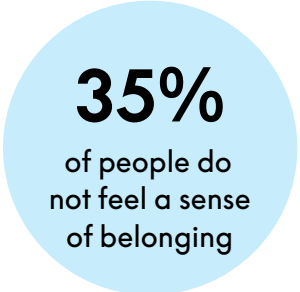
a great place to work



at least one day per week



when feeling unwell  
at least 1 day per week



and acceptance  
at work or are unsure

**Canadians who work from home have worse isolation scores than those who work from the jobsite or split their time between the jobsite and home**

- Among people working from home full-time or splitting their time between home and the jobsite, their sense of belonging and acceptance has declined from 73% pre-pandemic to 61% currently.

**Managers continue to have poorer mental health and have been experiencing more mental strain than non-managers**

- Since January 2021, the mental health scores of managers have been lower than non-managers and lower than the overall Canadian average.
- In August 2021, the mental health score of managers is -10.8 compared to -8.9 for non-managers.
- Managers also have a greater increase in mental stress (56.4) than non-managers (51.7).

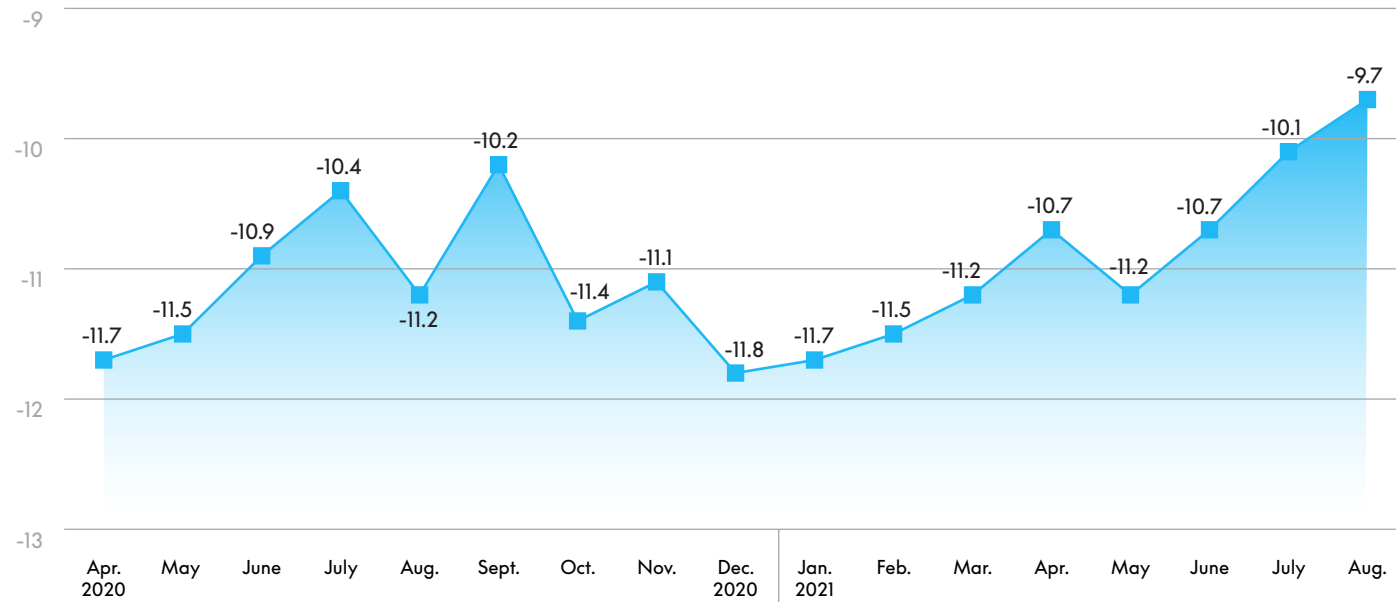
**Mental health scores are strongly associated with productivity**

- Lower mental health scores correspond to lower productivity and higher mental health scores correspond to higher productivity, a difference of 41 workdays per year.
- The lowest productivity is seen among 10% of people with mental health scores below -40. This group also has the greatest number of unwell days per year (133 days).

# The Mental Health Index™

The Mental Health Index™ (MHI) is a measure of deviation from the benchmark<sup>1</sup> of mental health and risk.

The overall Mental Health Index™ for August 2021 is -9.7 points. A nearly 10-point decrease from the pre-COVID-19 benchmark reflects a population whose mental health is similar to the most distressed four per cent of the benchmark population.



**MHI Current Month**  
August 2021

**-9.7**

**July 2021**

**-10.1**

<sup>1</sup> The benchmark reflects data collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

## Mental Health Index™ sub-scores

The lowest Mental Health Index™ sub-score is for the risk measure of depression (-11.5), followed by isolation (-11.1), work productivity (-10.3), anxiety (-10.3), optimism, (-9.9), and general psychological health (-2.8). The best sub-score, and the only measure above the benchmark continues to be for financial risk (4.7).

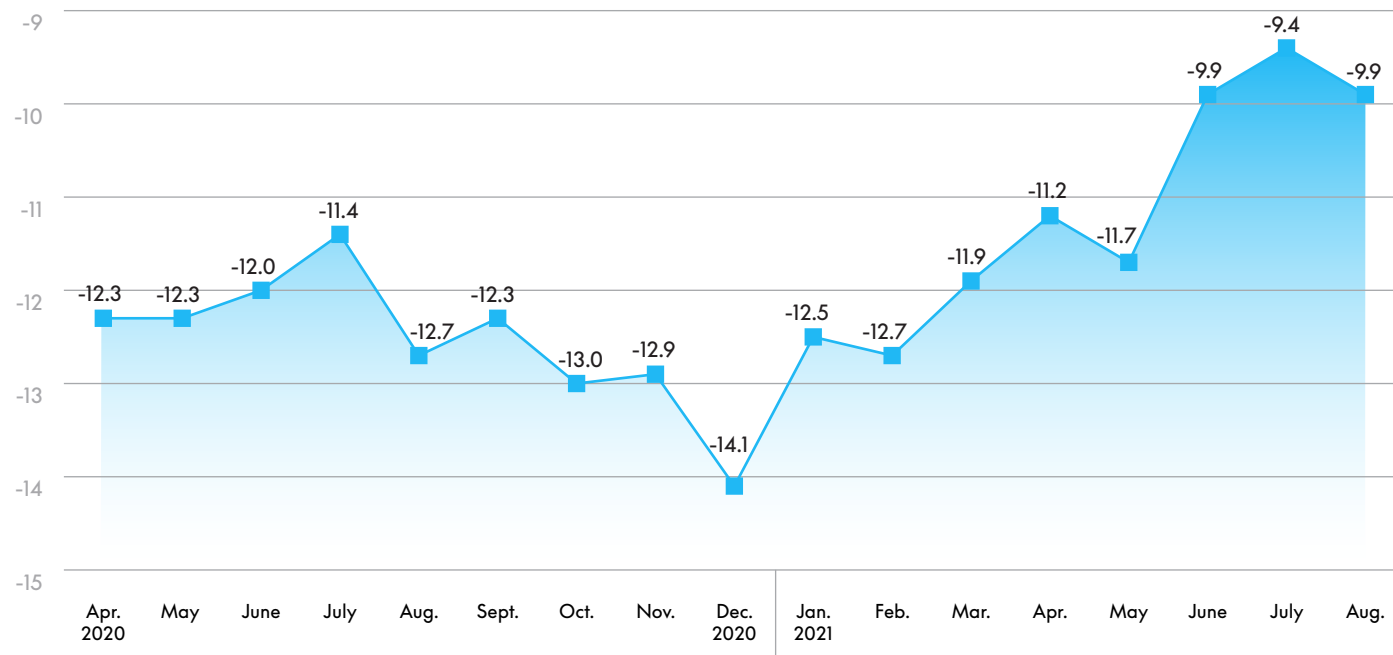
- Optimism and general psychological health sub-scores have declined compared to July 2021.
- The financial risk sub-score has seen the most significant improvement (+1.1 points) from the prior month, continues to be the strongest of all sub-scores and remains above the pre-2020 benchmark.

Mental Health Index™ Sub-scores <sup>2</sup> 2021	August	July
Depression	-11.5	-12.0
Isolation	-11.1	-11.7
Work productivity	-10.3	-11.1
Anxiety	-10.3	-11.1
Optimism	-9.9	-9.4
Psychological health	-2.8	-2.6
Financial risk	4.7	3.6

<sup>2</sup> The demographic breakdown of sub-scores is available upon request.

## Optimism

Since April 2020, optimism sub-scores have remained significantly below the benchmark. Despite some months of modest improvement, including a peak in July 2020, there was a general decline to a low point in December 2020 (-14.1). Since December, the optimism sub-score has improved, reaching a high of -9.4 in July 2021. In August 2021, the optimism sub-score has declined 0.5 points from its high, to nearly 10-points below benchmark.

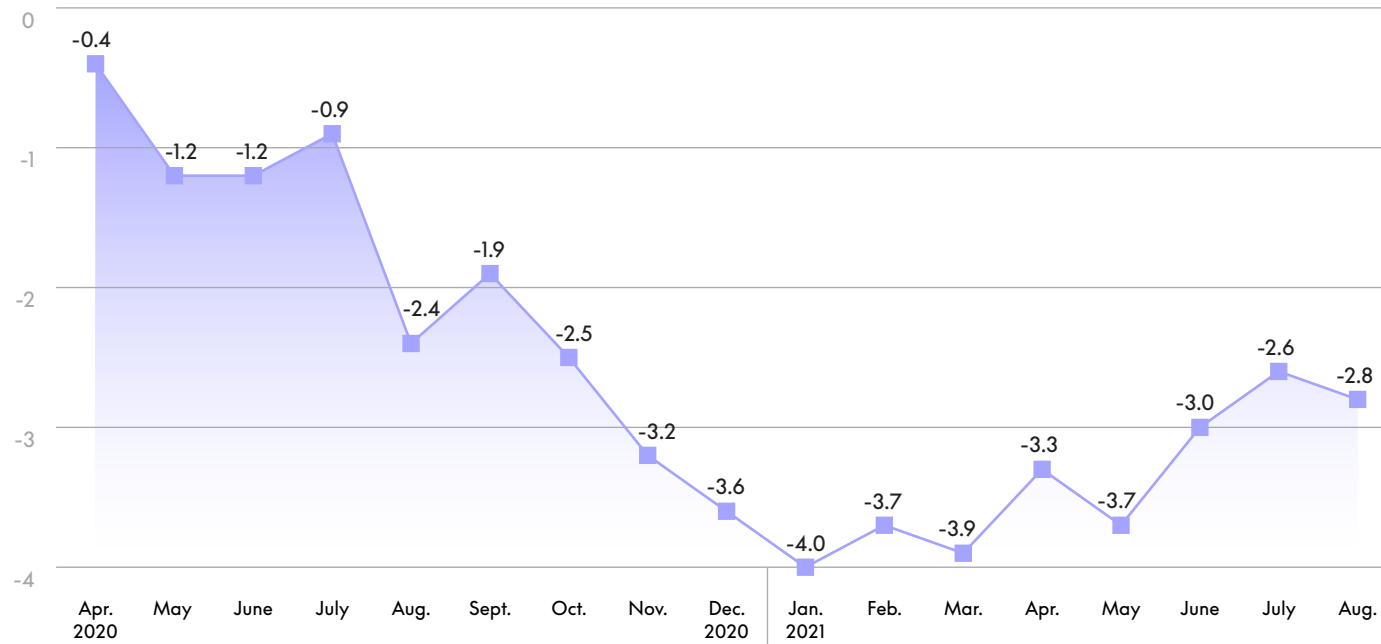




## General psychological health

The psychological health sub-score assesses individuals' self-perception of their overall level of psychological health.

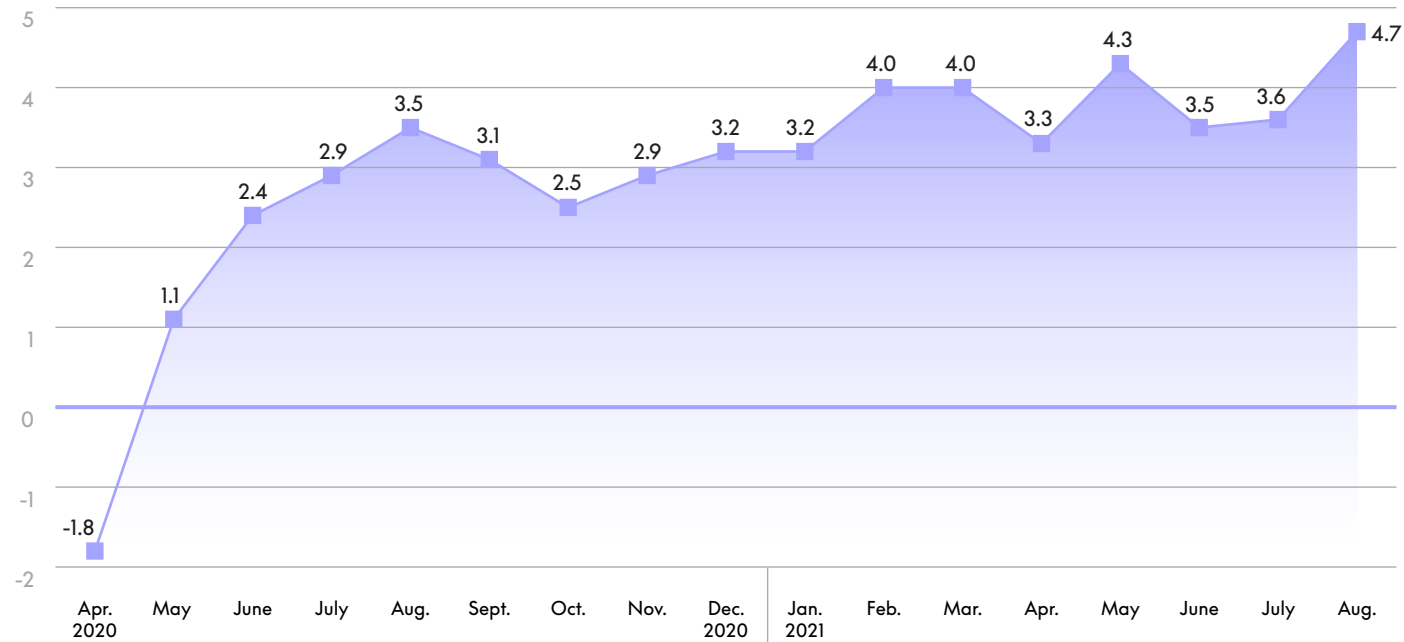
From the launch of the MHI in April 2020 to January 2021, the general psychological health of Canadians declined to a low of four-points below the pre-2020 benchmark. Since January 2021, sub-scores have fluctuated modestly. In August 2021, the psychological health score has declined slightly from July to -2.8 points.



## Financial risk

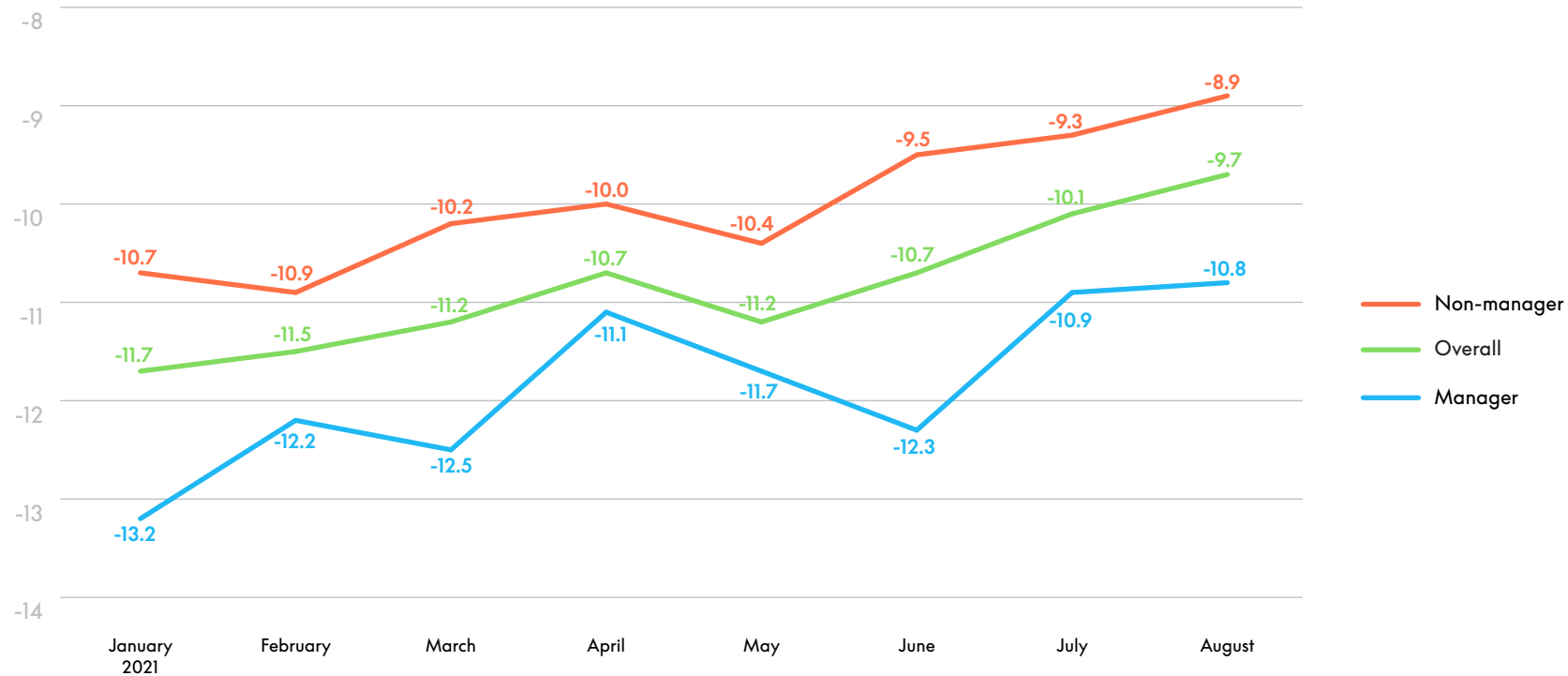
The financial risk sub-score measures the level of individuals' emergency savings.

The financial risk sub-score has shown general improvement since launch of the MHI in April 2020. In August 2021, the financial risk sub-score of Canadians is at its highest point (4.7) since the start of the Index in April 2020. At nearly 5-points above the pre-2020 benchmark, financial risk continues to be the strongest of all mental health sub-scores.



## Managers compared to non-managers

Since January 2021, the mental health scores of managers have been lower than non-managers and lower than the overall Canadian average. Non-managers have consistently higher mental health scores than the overall Canadian population. In August 2021, the mental health score of managers is -10.8 compared to -8.9 for non-managers.



## Demographics

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have had significantly lower mental health scores than men. In August 2021, the mental health score of women is -11.4 compared to -8.0 for men.
- In each of the past 17 months, mental health scores are better the older the age cohort.
- Differences in mental health scores between those with and without children have been reported since the launch of the Index in April 2020. More than one year later, this pattern continues with a lower score for those with at least one child (-11.9) compared to those without children (-8.8).

## Employment

- Overall, five per cent of respondents are unemployed<sup>3</sup> and 13 per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary.
- Individuals reporting reduced salary compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (-21.2), followed by those reporting fewer hours (-19.6), and those not currently employed (-10.3).
- Managers have a lower mental health score (-10.8) than non-managers (-8.9).
- Self-employed/sole proprietors have the highest mental health score (-6.7).
- Respondents working for companies with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (-13.6).

## Emergency savings

- Those without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (-24.6) than the overall group. Individuals with emergency savings have a mental health score of -4.4.

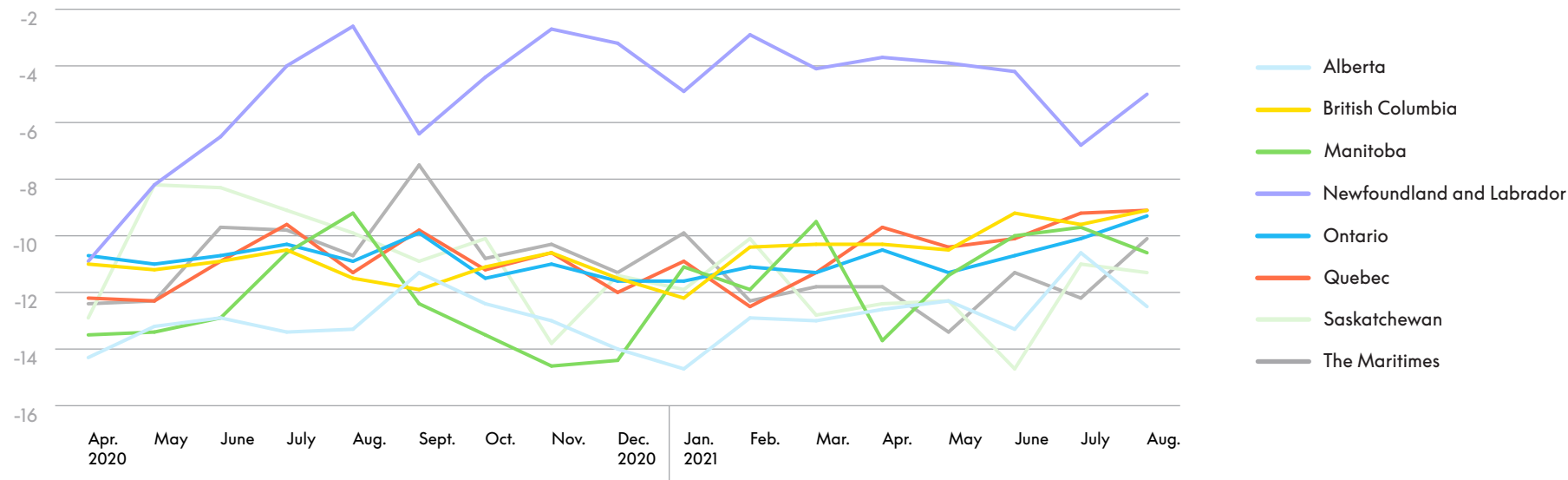
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3 MHI respondents who have been employed in the past six months are included in the poll.

# Mental Health Index™ (provincial)

Since April 2020, provincial mental health scores have fluctuated. Except for Newfoundland and Labrador, the fluctuation patterns for the provinces are similar. With respect to scores, in August 2021, there is a significant difference between Alberta's score of -12.5 and Newfoundland and Labrador's score of -5.0.

- The score for Newfoundland and Labrador is the most favourable of all provinces at 5.0, due to a 1.8-point increase from the prior month.
- The most improved provincial mental health score is in the Maritimes (-10.1) with a 2.1-point improvement since last month.
- Following a significant (2.7-point) improvement from June to July 2021, the mental health score in Alberta declined 1.9-points in August to -12.5-points below the pre-2020 benchmark.



Employment status	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	-8.2	-8.6
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	-19.6	-18.6
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	-21.2	-17.9
Not currently employed	-10.3	-14.5
Age group	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Age 20-29	-21.6	-20.4
Age 30-39	-14.7	-15.5
Age 40-49	-12.1	-11.2
Age 50-59	-6.2	-7.0
Age 60-69	-2.4	-3.1
Number of children	Aug. 2021	July 2021
No children in household	-8.8	-9.2
1 child	-13.2	-12.9
2 children	-10.8	-10.5
3 children or more	-6.7	-12.4

Province	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Alberta	-12.5	-10.6
British Columbia	-9.1	-9.6
Manitoba	-10.6	-9.7
Newfoundland and Labrador	-5.0	-6.8
The Maritimes	-10.1	-12.2
Quebec	-9.1	-9.2
Ontario	-9.3	-10.1
Saskatchewan	-11.3	-11.0
Gender	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Men	-8.0	-8.4
Women	-11.4	-11.8
Household income	Aug. 2021	July 2021
<\$30K/annum	-19.4	-19.4
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	-14.7	-14.7
\$60K to <\$100K	-10.0	-10.9
\$100K to <\$150K	-6.3	-7.7
\$150K or more	-2.8	-1.0

Employer size	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Self-employed/sole proprietor	-6.7	-6.5
2-50 employees	-9.7	-9.4
51-100 employees	-13.6	-12.8
101-500 employees	-11.3	-12.4
501-1,000 employees	-10.9	-13.2
1,001-5,000 employees	-9.8	-9.2
5,001-10,000 employees	-8.4	-8.4
More than 10,000 employees	-6.8	-8.5
Manager	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Manager	-10.8	-10.9
Non-manager	-8.9	-9.3

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

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

**Available upon request:**

Specific cross-correlational and custom analyses

# Mental Health Index™ (industry)

For the 15th consecutive month, full-time post-secondary students have the lowest mental health score (-20.5). This score continues to be significantly lower than the next lowest scores: individuals employed in Utilities (-13.7), and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (-13.4).

Individuals employed in Other services (except Public Administration) (-5.3), the Automotive Industry (-6.8), and Transportation and Warehousing (-6.9) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Individuals employed in Information and Cultural Industries and Construction have seen the greatest improvement in mental health since last month.

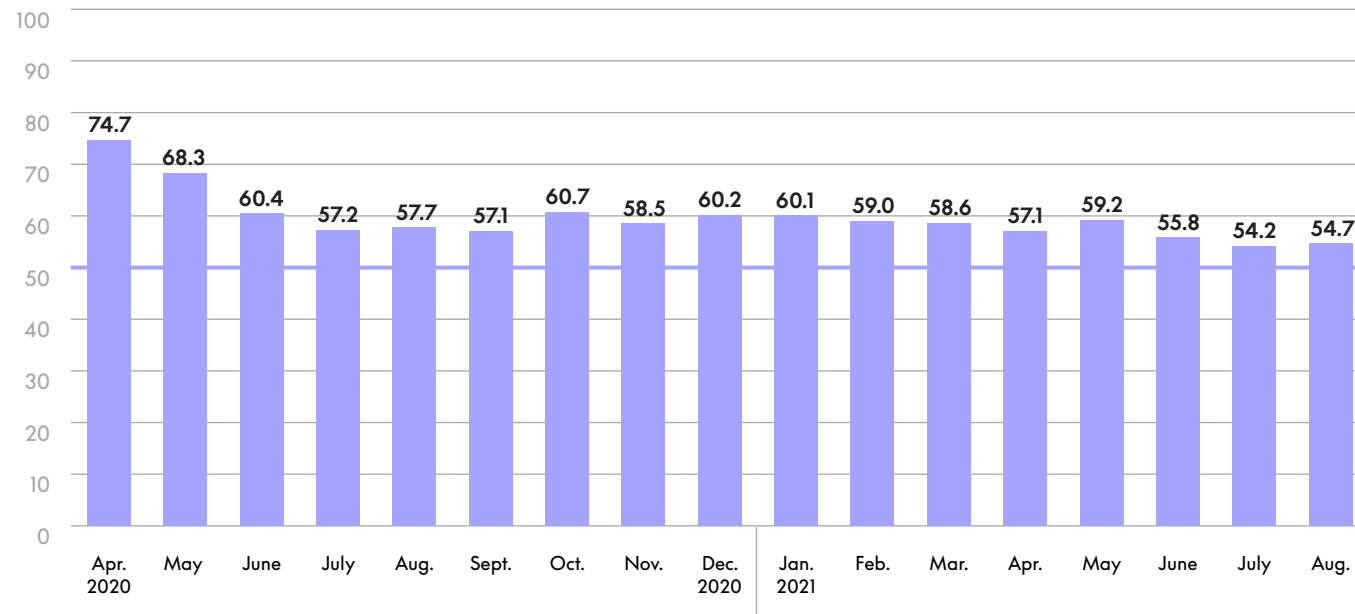
Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.

Industry	August 2021	July 2021	Change
Information and Cultural Industries	-10.6	-15.1	4.6
Construction	-8.3	-10.8	2.5
Automotive Industry	-6.8	-9.4	2.5
Utilities	-13.7	-16.1	2.4
Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction	-8.8	-10.5	1.7
Transportation and Warehousing	-6.9	-8.6	1.6
Retail Trade	-11.6	-13.1	1.6
Other services (except Public Administration)	-5.3	-6.2	1.0
Health Care and Social Assistance	-10.1	-10.5	0.4
Full-time student	-20.5	-20.8	0.3
Other	-9.9	-10.1	0.2
Finance and Insurance	-10.8	-10.9	0.2
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	-13.4	-13.5	0.1
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-7.4	-7.5	0.0
Educational Services	-9.2	-9.2	0.0
Public Administration	-8.6	-8.3	-0.3
Manufacturing	-9.3	-8.6	-0.8
Accommodation and Food Services	-13.1	-11.1	-2.0
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	-11.9	-9.7	-2.2
Wholesale Trade	-13.4	-10.7	-2.7
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	-10.6	-8.0	-2.7
Management of Companies and Enterprises	-9.6	-5.3	-4.2

# The Mental Stress Change score

The Mental Stress Change score (MStressChg) is a measure of the level of reported mental stress compared to the prior month. **The Mental Stress Change score for August 2021 is 54.7.** This reflects a net increase in mental stress compared to the prior month.

The current score indicates that 17 per cent of the population is experiencing more mental stress compared to the prior month, with seven per cent experiencing less. A continued increase in mental stress since April 2020 indicates a significant accumulation of strain in the Canadian population.



- ▲ More mental stress
- 50 = No change from prior month
- ▼ Less mental stress

**MStressChg Current Month—August 2021**

**54.7**

**MStressChg July 2021**

**54.2**



# Mental Stress Change (percentages)

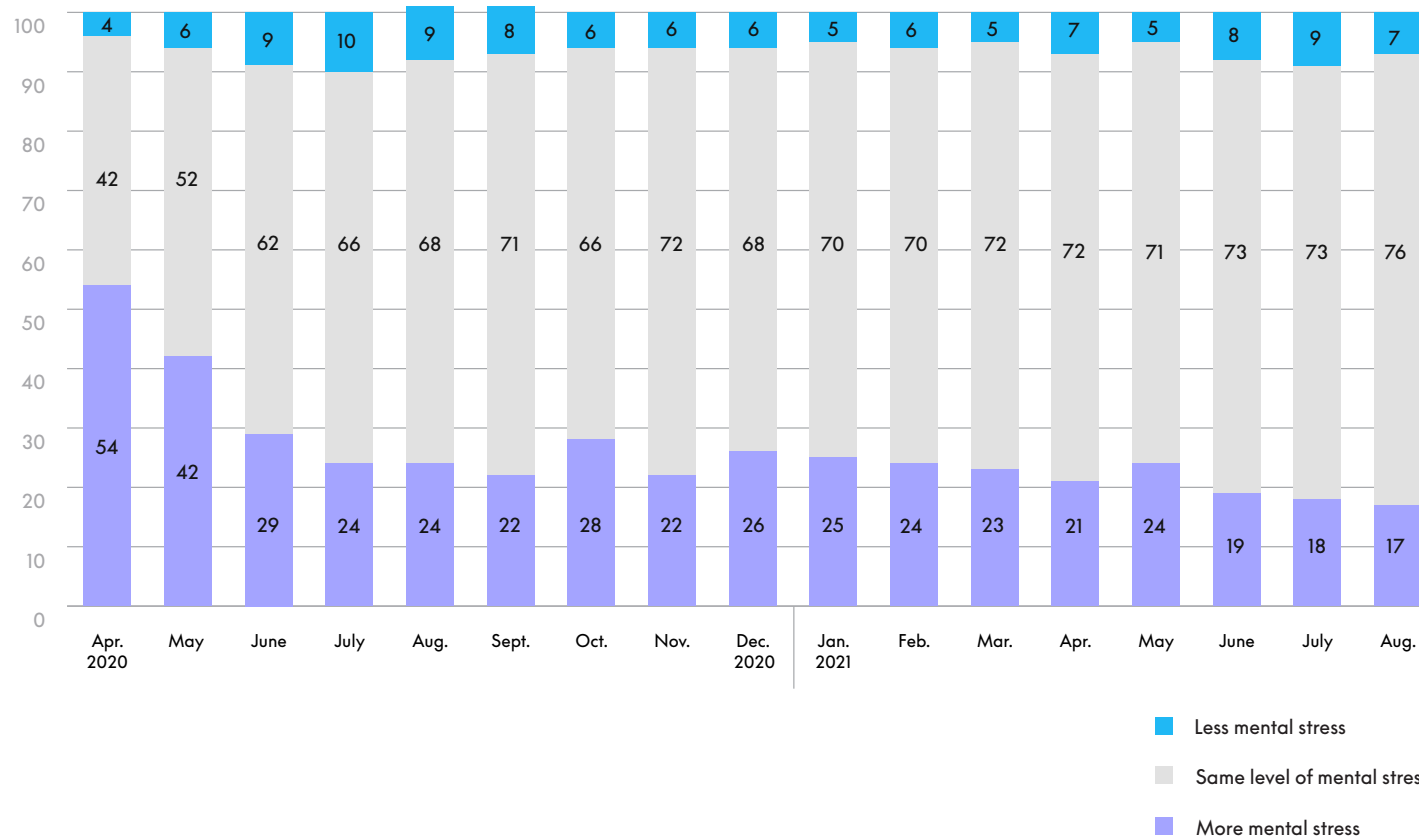
Mental Stress Change tracks stress changes each month.

The percentages of those experiencing more stress, the same level of stress, and less stress for each month of the survey are shown in the graph.

For more than one year, the percentage of those experiencing more mental stress than the previous month has steadily decreased; however, the data showing this decline is too insignificant to lower the overall Mental Stress Change score to below 50 (the level at which stress is lower than the previous month). As the proportion of individuals reporting the same level of stress or more stress than the previous month continues to outweigh the proportion reporting less mental stress, the population will continue to feel the effects of significantly increased stress and will not be able to reach a more sustainable and healthy level of stress.

In April 2020, 54 per cent of individuals reported an increase in mental stress. The number of respondents reporting increased month-over-month mental stress is 17 per cent in August 2021, while 76 per cent of respondents report the same level of mental stress and seven per cent report a decrease in mental stress.

Mental Stress Change by month



## Demographics

- Since the launch of the MHI in April 2020, younger people have experienced a greater increase in mental stress month over month compared to older respondents.
- Since April 2020, women have had larger increases in mental stress compared to men. In August 2021, the mental stress change score for women is 56.2 compared to 53.3 for men.

## Geography

- The greatest increase in month-over-month stress is for respondents living in Alberta (58.5), followed by British Columbia (55.1), Ontario (54.6), and Quebec (53.8).
- Respondents living in provinces where the increase in mental stress was lower, still had significant increases, including Saskatchewan (53.2), Manitoba (53.0), Newfoundland and Labrador (52.0) and the Maritimes (51.7).

## Employment

- The greatest increase in mental stress is seen in employed people with reduced salary (67.3), followed by employed people with reduced hours (58.9), unemployed people (55.8), and employed people with no change to salary or hours (53.7).
- Managers have a greater increase in mental stress (56.4) than non-managers (53.6).

Employment status	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	53.7	53.1
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	58.9	61.9
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	67.3	64.9
Not currently employed	55.8	51.3
Age group	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Age 20-29	63.8	60.3
Age 30-39	56.7	57.0
Age 40-49	55.5	54.9
Age 50-59	52.9	53.0
Age 60-69	50.8	49.8
Number of children	Aug. 2021	July 2021
No children in household	53.9	52.8
1 child	57.7	57.5
2 children	56.1	57.2
3 children or more	50.8	55.6

Province	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Alberta	58.5	53.2
British Columbia	55.1	53.5
Manitoba	53.0	51.6
Newfoundland and Labrador	52.0	55.2
The Maritimes	51.7	55.4
Quebec	53.8	53.8
Ontario	54.6	54.9
Saskatchewan	53.2	51.1
Gender	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Men	53.3	53.2
Women	56.2	55.1
Household income	Aug. 2021	July 2021
<\$30K/annum	55.5	54.9
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	56.3	55.8
\$60K to <\$100K	55.3	54.6
\$100K to <\$150K	55.7	54.6
\$150K or more	50.1	50.6

Employer size	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Self-employed/sole proprietor	54.8	56.1
2-50 employees	54.2	52.7
51-100 employees	56.4	55.4
101-500 employees	53.7	55.0
501-1,000 employees	56.6	58.2
1,001-5,000 employees	54.9	52.7
5,001-10,000 employees	56.2	54.6
More than 10,000 employees	53.1	52.9
Manager	Aug. 2021	July 2021
Manager	56.4	56.2
Non-manager	53.6	53.2

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

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

**Available upon request:**

Specific cross-correlational and custom analyses

# The Mental Stress Change (industry)

Full-time post-secondary students have the most significant increase in mental stress (63.6), followed by individuals employed in Wholesale Trade (61.7), and Accommodation and Food Services (58.4).

Mental Stress Change scores for individuals employed in Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction (51.1), Public Administration (52.3), and Retail Trade (52.7) industries are less steep compared to the prior month.

Mental Stress changes from the last two months are shown in the table.

Industry	August 2021	July 2021
Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction	51.1	51.1
Public Administration	52.3	50.6
Retail Trade	52.7	56.9
Management of Companies and Enterprises	52.7	57.6
Other services (except Public Administration)	52.9	52.0
Other	53.2	51.4
Construction	53.2	58.5
Automotive Industry	53.8	48.8
Transportation and Warehousing	53.8	52.8
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	53.9	54.6
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	54.2	52.9
Information and Cultural Industries	54.3	62.5
Manufacturing	54.4	50.0
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	54.6	52.6
Educational Services	55.2	52.0
Finance and Insurance	56.1	55.0
Health Care and Social Assistance	56.2	55.1
Utilities	56.3	57.5
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	58.2	62.1
Accommodation and Food Services	58.4	50.7
Wholesale Trade	61.7	62.8
Full-time student	63.6	58.3

# Spotlight

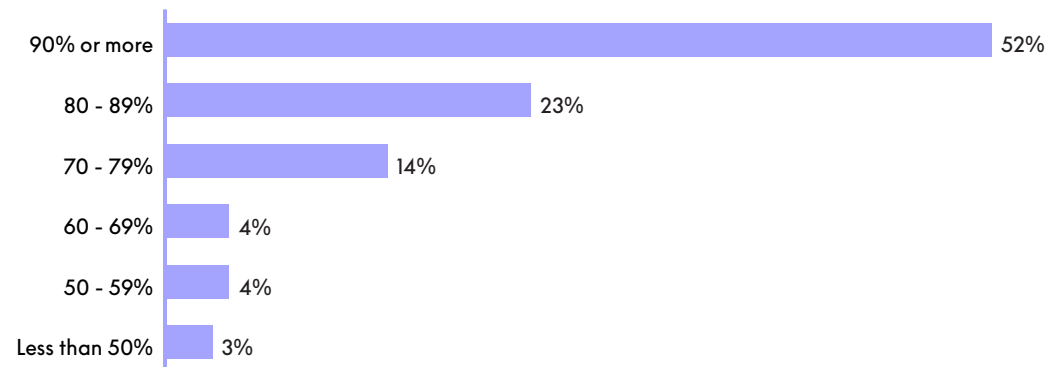
## Productivity

### Discretionary effort

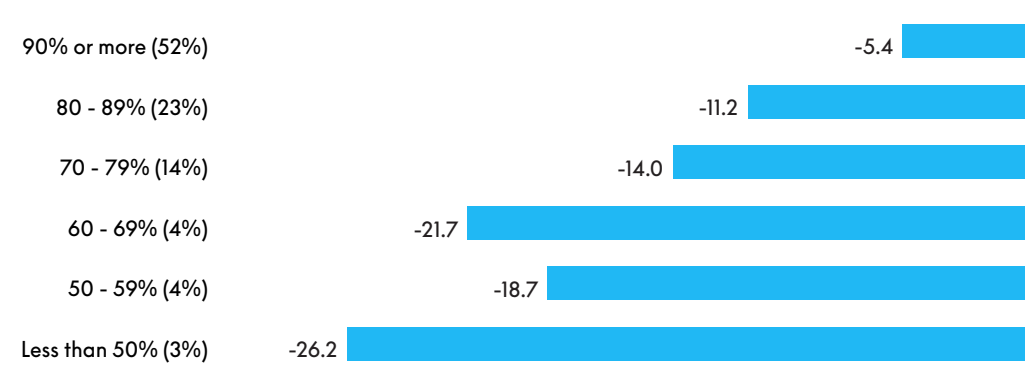
In August 2021, Canadians were asked how much energy they give to their work on a typical day. Among Canadian respondents in August, the average energy given to their work is 85 per cent compared to the pre-2020 benchmark of 89 per cent.

- More than half (52 per cent) of Canadians report giving 90 per cent or more of their energy to their work and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-5.4).
- Three per cent report putting in less than 50 per cent of their energy into work and this group has the least favourable mental health score (-26.2).
- Respondents under the age of 30 are less likely (41 per cent) to give 90 per cent or more of their energy into work compared to respondents older than 50 (56 per cent).
- Employed people with no change to salary or hours are 40 per cent more likely to report giving 90 per cent or more of their energy into work than those employed with reduced salary.

### Energy given to work on a typical day



### MHI score by energy given to work on a typical day

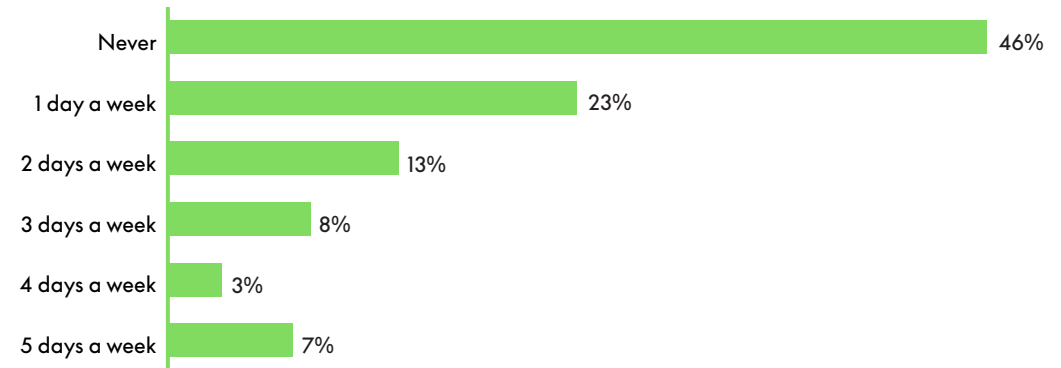


## Presenteeism

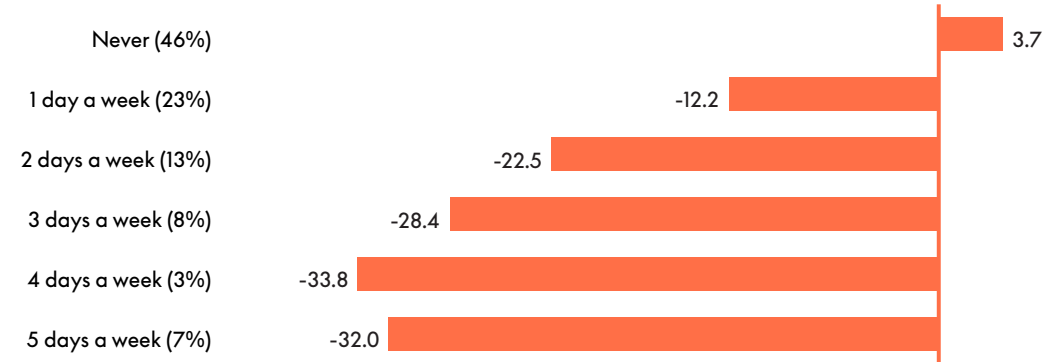
Presenteeism refers to productivity loss when someone is working while unwell<sup>4</sup>. Respondents were asked how often they worked when feeling unwell, physically, or psychologically, in a typical week.

- More than half (54 per cent) report doing their job when feeling unwell at least 1 day per week. The mental health scores among this group are significantly below those who report never working while feeling unwell.
- The most favourable mental health score, at nearly four points above the pre-2020 benchmark (3.7), is seen among 46 per cent of people reporting that they never work when feeling unwell.
- Employed people with no change to salary or hours are 40 per cent more likely to report never working when feeling unwell compared to employed people with reduced salary.
- Sixty-four per cent of parents work when feeling unwell at least one day per week compared to 36 per cent of non-parents.

## Number of days working when feeling unwell



## MHI score by number of days working when feeling unwell



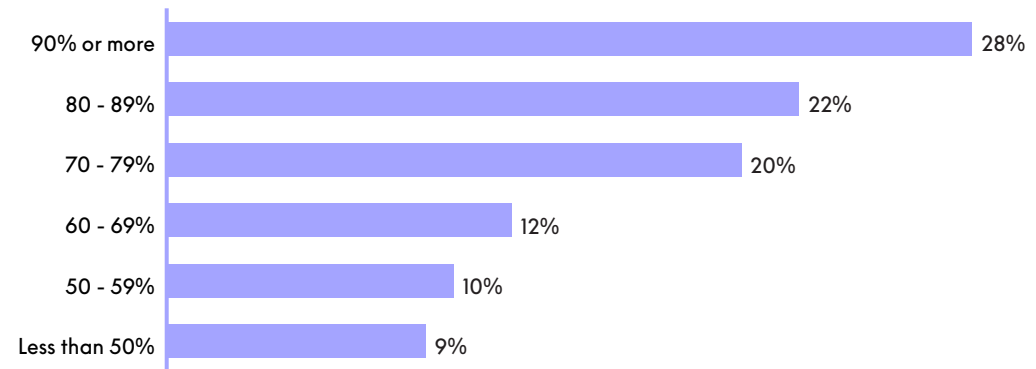
<sup>4</sup> Schultz, Chen, and Edington, The cost and impact of health conditions on presenteeism to employers: a review of the literature, *Pharmacoeconomics*. 2009; 27(5): 365-78. doi: 10.2165/00019053-200927050-00002.

## Work effort when feeling unwell

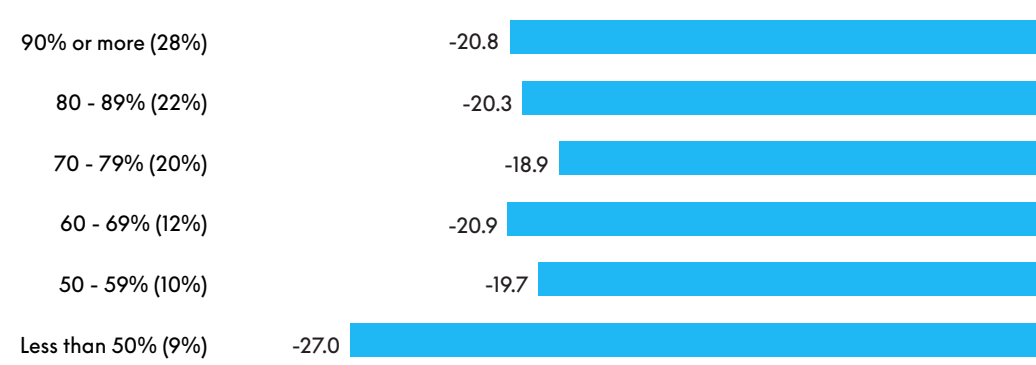
Respondents who reported working when feeling unwell, physically, or psychologically, at least one day per week were asked how much energy they give to their work.

- Among this group, the average amount of energy put into work each day while feeling unwell is 74 per cent, 11 per cent less than when they feel well.
- While more than one-quarter (28 per cent) report giving 90 or more per cent of their energy into work while being unwell, this group has a distinctly lower mental health score (-20.8) compared to the national average (-9.7).

## Energy given to work when feeling unwell

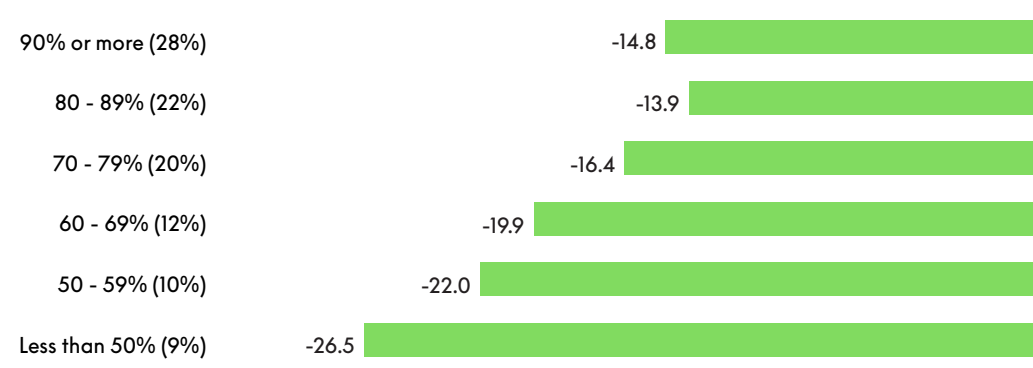


## MHI score by energy given to work when feeling unwell



- Those who work when feeling unwell have significantly lower isolation scores than the national average.
- Nine per cent give less than 50 per cent of their energy to work when they are unwell, and this group has the least favourable mental health score (-27.0) as well as the least favourable isolation score (-26.5).

### Isolation score by energy given to work when feeling unwell





## Productivity loss

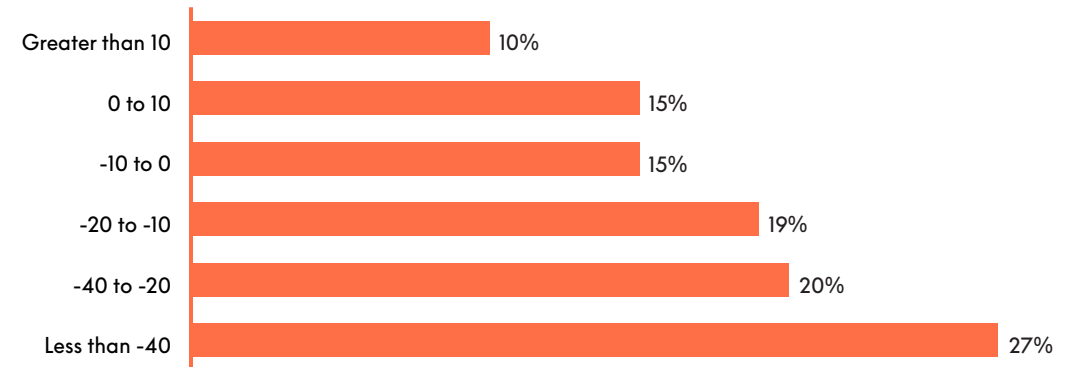
Productivity, as it is defined here, is impacted by three main elements: absenteeism, discretionary effort, and presenteeism.

While absenteeism contributes to a loss in productivity, benchmark data indicates that this is a small proportion of the overall loss.

The greater impacts to productivity loss are from discretionary effort and presenteeism. The following section estimates<sup>5</sup> the productivity loss using the discretionary effort and presenteeism data collected in August 2021.

- Mental health scores are strongly associated with productivity. Lower mental health scores correspond to greater productivity loss and higher mental health scores correspond to less productivity loss.
- Ten per cent of respondents have a mental health score of -40 or lower. The productivity loss of this group is 17 per cent lower than the 20 per cent of respondents who have a mental health score of 10 or higher.

## Average productivity loss by MHI score



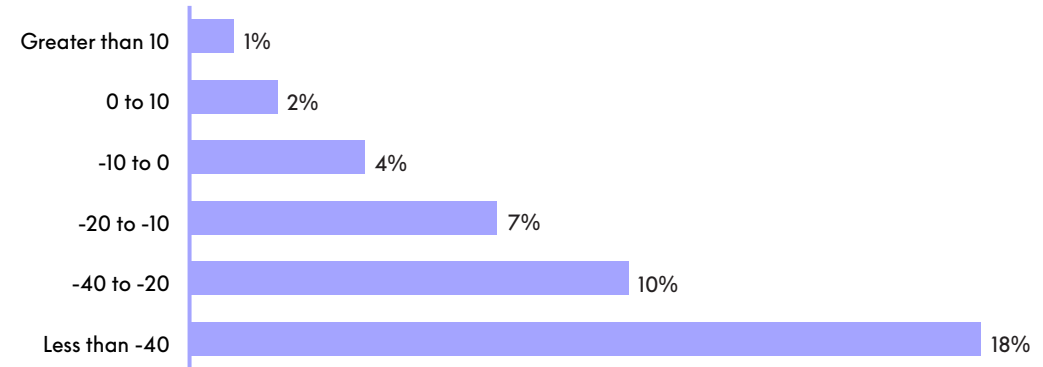
4 The premise of this estimate assumes an average of 240 workdays per year.

## Losses due to presenteeism

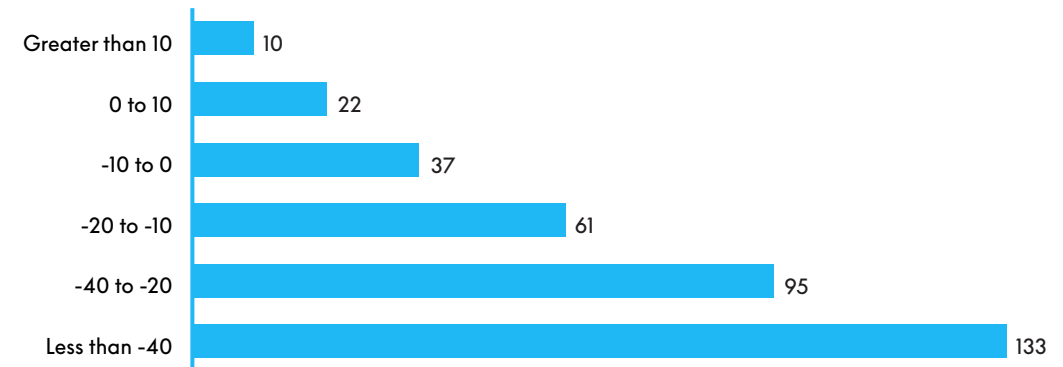
One-third (33 per cent) of the respondent group have mental health scores below -20. Among this group, presenteeism has a greater contribution to productivity loss than discretionary effort.

- Presenteeism-related productivity losses account for one per cent of those with the highest mental health scores, corresponding to an average of 10 unwell days per year.
- The highest productivity losses are seen among ten per cent with mental health scores below -40. This group also has the greatest number of unwell days per year (133 days).

## Average productivity loss due to presenteeism by MHI score



## Average days unwell by MHI score

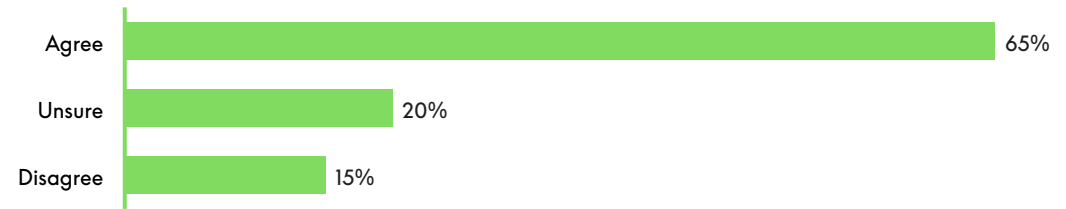


# Engagement

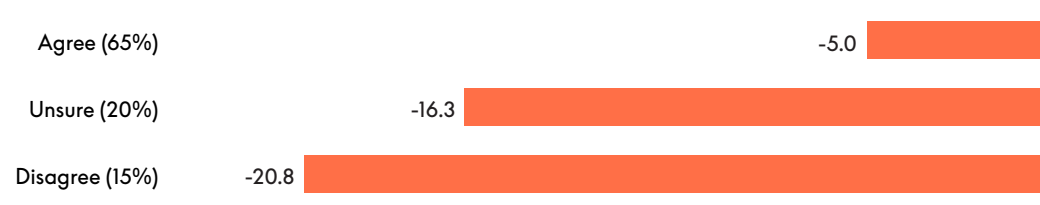
Respondents were asked whether they would recommend their organization as a great place to work.

- Nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) consider their organization a great place to work, and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-5.0).
- The least favourable mental health score (-20.8) is seen among 15 per cent who do not consider their organization a great place to work.
- Non-managers are 35 per cent more likely than managers to disagree that their organization is great place to work.

## My organization is a great place to work



## MHI score by my organization is a great place to work



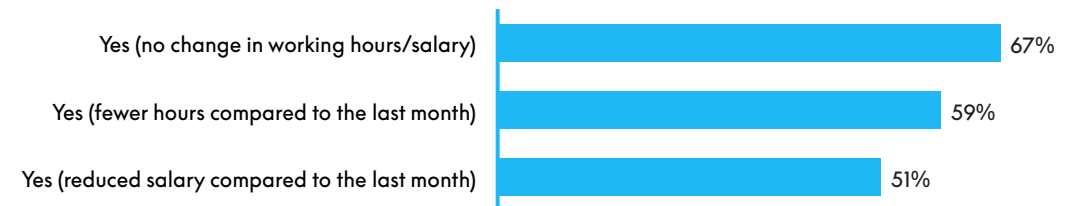
- Sixty-seven per cent of people employed with no change to salary or hours recommend their organization as a great place to work compared to 59 per cent of employed people working fewer hours, and 51 per cent of employed people with reduced salary.

Individuals who recommend their organization as a great place to work have 86 per cent productivity compared to 80 per cent among those who are unsure, and 75 per cent among those who would not recommend their organization as a great place to work.

### My organization is a great place to work (age)



### My organization is a great place to work (employment status)



### My organization is a great place to work (productivity)



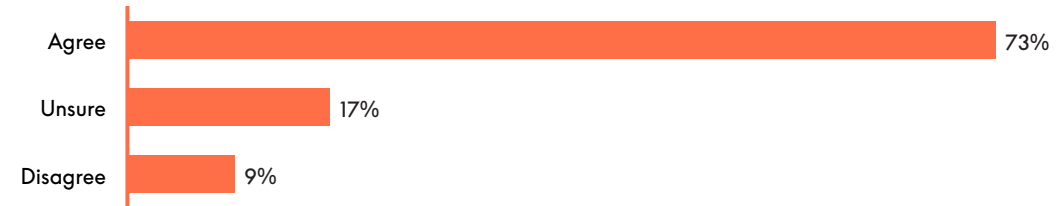
# Workplace belonging and acceptance

## Workplace belonging and acceptance pre-pandemic

Respondents were asked whether they felt a sense of belonging and acceptance at work before the pandemic.

- More than one-quarter (26 per cent) felt unsure or did not feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work before the pandemic. These individuals have mental health scores significantly below the national average and significantly below those who felt belonging and acceptance at work.
- Nearly three-quarters (73 per cent) felt a sense of belonging and acceptance at work before the pandemic and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-5.7).

### Sense of belonging and acceptance at work before the pandemic



### MHI score by sense of belonging and acceptance at work before the pandemic

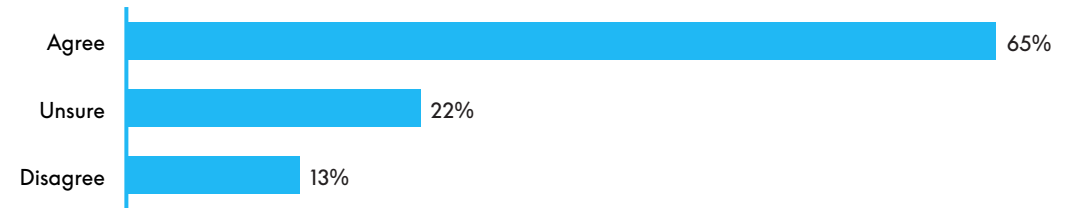


## Workplace belonging and acceptance currently

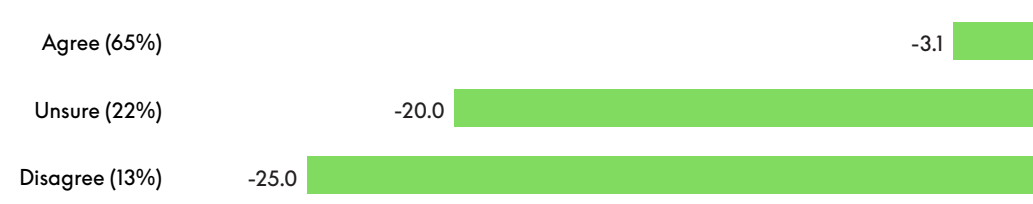
Respondents were asked whether they have felt a sense of belonging and acceptance at work during the past month.

- While 73 per cent report having felt a sense of belonging and acceptance at work prior to the pandemic, only 65 per cent have that same feeling currently.
- The highest mental health score (-3.1) and the best isolation score (-3.4) are seen among the group who feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work currently. Both scores are significantly better than the national averages.
- More than one-third (35 per cent) feel unsure or do not feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work currently. Both groups have mental health and isolation scores distinctly below those who feel belonging and acceptance at work.

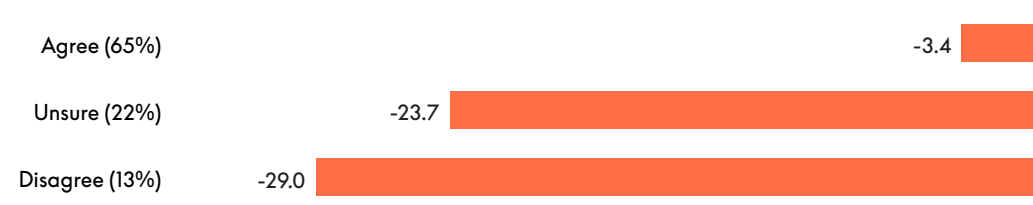
## Sense of belonging and acceptance at work currently



## MHI score by sense of belonging and acceptance at work currently



## Isolation score by sense of belonging and acceptance at work currently



Among the group of nearly 2,000 Canadians who completed both the April 2021 and August 2021 survey results:

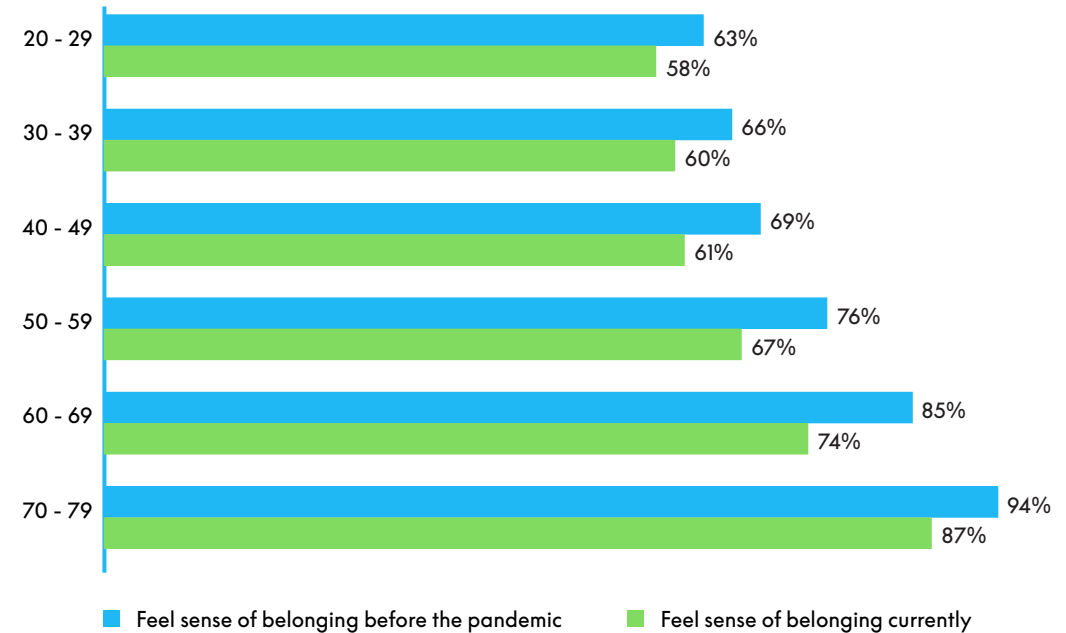
- Sixty-eight per cent who are working at the jobsite feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work.
- Those who are working exclusively from home have worse isolation scores (-9.6) than those working from the jobsite (-7.3) and those splitting time between home and the jobsite (-7.6).
- Among individuals working from home full-time or splitting their work between the home and the jobsite during the pandemic, their sense of belonging and acceptance has declined from 73 per cent pre-pandemic to 61 per cent currently.

The [July 2021 MHI report](#) showed that for 35 per cent of Canadians, working at the jobsite full-time is their ideal work situation, 33 per cent want to work from home-part-time and 32 per cent want to work from home full-time. Considering the results of July 2021 and August 2021 for the same respondents, the isolation score for those who want to work at the jobsite full-time is -6.9 compared to -10.8 for those who want to work from home part-time, and -14.4 for those who want to work from home full-time.

## Sense of belonging and acceptance: a comparison of groups

- Across all age groups, the percentage of Canadians reporting feeling a sense of belonging and acceptance at work has decreased from before the pandemic compared to currently.
- While there is a decrease in feeling a sense of belonging and acceptance at work across all age groups compared to before the pandemic, the proportion of people who report a sense of belonging and acceptance at work increases with older age groups.

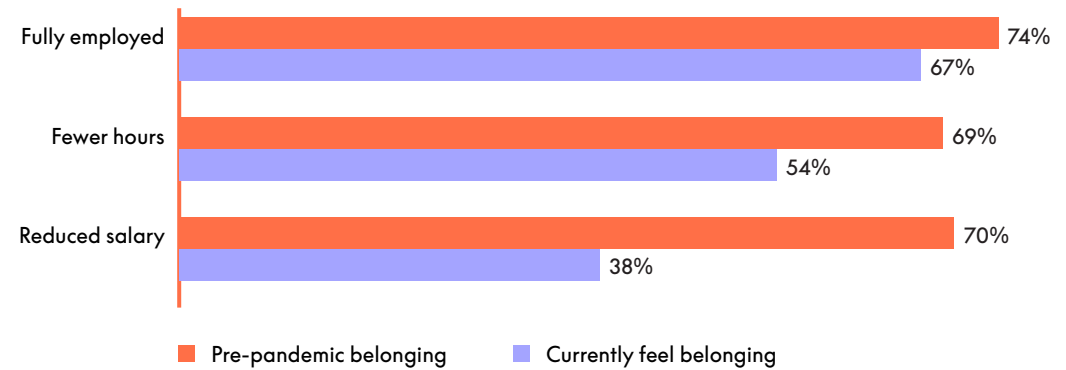
Feeling a sense of belonging and acceptance at work before the pandemic and currently (age)





Employed people with no change to salary or hours have greatest sense of belonging and acceptance at work both pre-pandemic (74 per cent) and in the past month (67 per cent) compared to those working fewer hours (69 per cent to 54 per cent) and those with reduced salary (70 per cent to 38 per cent).

### Feeling a sense of belonging and acceptance at work before the pandemic and currently (employment status)



## Sense of belonging and acceptance at work: productivity

Individuals who feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work have higher productivity (87 per cent) than those who do not feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work (74 per cent).

### Productivity among those who feel a sense of belonging and acceptance at work currently



# 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 in each geography compared to benchmarks collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. 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 three parts:

1. The overall Mental Health Index™ (MHI), which is a measure of change compared to the benchmark of mental health and risk.
2. A Mental Stress Change (MStressChg) score, which measures the level of reported mental stress compared to the prior month.
3. 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. The same respondents

take part each month to remove a sampling bias. Respondents are asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering each question. The Mental Health Index™ has been published monthly since April 2020. Benchmark data was collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Data for the current report was collected between July 30 and August 5, 2021.

## Calculations

To create the Mental Health Index™, the first step leverages a response scoring system turning individual responses to each question into a point value. Higher point values are associated with better mental health and less mental health risk. Everyone's scores are added and then divided by a total number of possible points to get a score out of 100. The raw score is the mathematical mean of the individual scores.

To demonstrate change, the current month's scores are then compared to the benchmark and the prior month. The benchmark comprises data from 2017, 2018 and 2019. This was a period of relative social stability and steady economic growth. **The change compared to the benchmark is the Mental Health Index™. A score of zero in the Mental Health Index™ reflects no change, positive scores reflect improvement, and negative scores reflect decline.**

A Mental Stress Change score is also reported given that increasing and prolonged mental stress is a potential contributor to changes in mental health. It is reported separately and is not part of the calculation of the Mental Health Index™. The Mental Stress Change score is (percentage reporting less mental stress + percentage reporting the same level of mental stress \* 0.5) \* -1 + 100. The score reflects a comparison of the current to the prior month. **A Mental Stress Change score of 50 reflects no change in mental stress from the prior month. Scores above 50 reflect an increase in mental stress and scores below 50 reflect a decrease in mental stress.** The range is from zero to 100. A succession of scores over 50, month over month, reflects high risk.

## Additional data and analyses

Demographic breakdown 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)



## About LifeWorks

LifeWorks is a world leader in providing digital and in-person solutions that support the total wellbeing of individuals. We deliver a personalized continuum of care that helps our clients improve the lives of their people and by doing so, improve their business.

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