

The Mental Health Index™ report

Canada, July 2020



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Executive summary

July marks the fifth month since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. Canada Day 2020 celebrations were home-based, virtual and without public gatherings, as many Canadians continued to live under a variety of social pandemic restrictions and rely on Canada's pandemic emergency financial benefits for individuals and businesses. Most provinces continue to operate under extended/renewed State of Emergency measures. The conversation on systemic racism remains front and centre in the corporate world, even while the level of protest in Canada and globally has diminished since June.

The COVID-19 virus continues to proliferate globally, with over 13 million cases¹ this month. Daily new cases in Canada continue to decline steadily and are at the lowest levels since the pandemic was declared in March. The highest daily case counts remain in Ontario and Quebec with isolated outbreaks in select communities such as among migrant agricultural workers. Across Canada, many are now enjoying a gradual easing of social restrictions as most personal services and retail establishments are available, and patios, bars and restaurants gradually re-open at different stages. As businesses and public venues reopen, physically distancing is being urged and, in some communities, mask-wearing is becoming the new norm. Many regions and municipalities, including Toronto and Montreal, now require mandatory masks and face coverings when indoors, on public transit and in public places.

With a national unemployment rate of 13.7%², decision-makers and public health officials continue to grapple with economic recovery and strategies to restart the Canadian economy while mitigating risks of COVID-19 transmission and a return to lockdown. The dialogue on safely reopening schools is intensifying as getting kids back into the classroom is central to restarting the economy. Anyone entering the country is still required to quarantine for 14 days

¹ <https://covid19.who.int/>

² <https://tradingeconomics.com/canada/unemployment-rate>



as only essential travel to Canada is permitted. The Canada-U.S. border remains closed, a position supported by a majority of Canadians as they watch the soaring number of COVID-19 cases across the U.S.

For the fourth consecutive month, the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with the increased awareness and societal response to anti-Black racism continue to have an impact on the mental health of Canadians.

Mental Health Index™

The overall Mental Health Index™ for July 2020 is -10 points. This index represents the deviation from the pre-2020 benchmark. A negative score indicates poorer mental health relative to the benchmark, and a positive score indicates better mental health. The benchmark reflects mental health data from 2017, 2018 and 2019. A 10-point decrease from the pre COVID-19 benchmark³ reflects a population whose mental health is similar to the most distressed third per cent of the benchmark population.

The lowest Mental Health Index™ sub-score is for the risk measure of depression (-12.4), followed by anxiety (-12.3), optimism (-11.4), work productivity (-11.1), and isolation (-11.0). The risk measure with the highest mental health score is financial risk (2.9), followed by psychological health (-0.9).

- All Mental Health Index™ sub-scores have improved when compared to the prior month.
- The financial score continues to improve with a score of 2.9 points and is above the pre-2020 benchmark.
- General psychological health is nearing the benchmark score with -0.9 in July.
- The most improved sub-score is work productivity (-11.1) when compared to the prior month (-12.1).
- Individuals without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (-23.4) than the overall group. Individuals with an emergency fund have an average mental health score of -5.4.

The overall Mental Health Index™ for July 2020 is -10 points, up one point from the prior month

³ The raw score for the Mental Health Index™ benchmark is 75/100. The July 2020 score is 64/100.



- Females (-11.9) have a lower mental health score than males (-8.8); and in general, mental health scores improve with age.
- Those who identify as Black had a 1.8 point decline in mental health between May and June (the height of the response to the high-profile death of Black American, George Floyd), and a 0.9 point increase in July. In comparison, those who identify as White had a 1.2 point increase in the mental health score between May and June and a 1.8 point increase in July.

Overall, 9 per cent of respondents are unemployed. While most individuals remain employed, 22 per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary since April 2020.

- Individuals reporting reduced salary when compared to the prior month continue to have the lowest mental health score (-19.1), followed by individuals employed fewer hours compared to the prior month (-16.2), and those not currently employed (-16.0).
- Individuals reporting as self-employed/sole proprietor have the highest mental health score (-5.5), followed by individuals employed in organizations with 1,001-5,000 employees (-7.6).
- Respondents who report working for companies with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (-14.3).

The highest mental health scores in July are observed in individuals employed in Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction (-6.1), Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (-6.3), as well as Construction (-7.2) industries.

- For the second consecutive month, full-time students had the lowest average mental health score (-23.7). This is significantly lower than the next lowest score, among individuals in Accommodation and Food Services (-19.1), followed by Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (-16.5).
- Individuals employed in Real Estate, Rental and Leasing, and Other services (except Public Administration) have seen the greatest improvement in mental health since last month.

For the fourth consecutive month, the two key drivers of the Mental Health Index™ are financial risk and isolation.

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Mental Stress Change

The Mental Stress Change score for July 2020 is 57.2. This indicates that 24 per cent of the population is experiencing more mental stress compared to the prior month, with 10 per cent experiencing less. This is the fourth consecutive month where the Mental Stress Change score reflects increased mental stress in the population overall. Considering geography, the greatest increase in stress month over month was for respondents living in Ontario (59.0), followed by Alberta (58.9), Manitoba (57.3), and British Columbia (57.1). Respondents living in provinces where the increase in mental stress was lower, still had significant increases. They include Saskatchewan (55.3), followed by The Maritimes (54.6), Quebec (53.9), and Newfoundland (51.1).

- The greatest increase in mental stress is seen in employed people with reduced salary (66.0), followed by employed people with reduced hours (63.3) when compared to unemployed people (59.3) and employed people with no change to salary or hours (54.7).
- As was reported in prior months, and as evidenced again in July, younger respondents are experiencing a greater increase in mental stress when compared to older respondents.
- July is the first month where the mental stress change score for females is the same as for males (57.1). In previous months, females had a greater month over month increase in mental stress than males.
- Respondents identifying as Latin, South or Central American have the greatest increase in mental stress (67.9), followed by those identifying as East Asian (62.1), and South Asian (61.8).
- Individuals identifying as Mixed (Other) have the most modest increase in mental stress (51.5), followed by respondents identifying as Indigenous/Aboriginal (52.6), and those identifying as Arab/Middle Eastern/West Asian (54.5).

Mental Stress Change scores for the Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction, and Other services (except Public Administration) industries are less steep when compared to the prior month.

- Individuals working in Accommodation and Food Services have the most significant increase in the Mental Stress Change score (64.9) followed by individuals employed Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (64.9), and full-time students (63.6).



Additional findings

Relationships in 2020

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has been widespread. Prolonged social distancing and isolation have led people to crave human interaction and in some cases, has had an impact on relationships, both personal and professional.

- 70 per cent of respondents feel that there has been no change in their personal relationships since January 2020.
- 16 per cent feel that there has been an improvement in their personal relationships.
- 14 per cent feel their personal relationships have become more strained. This group has the lowest mental health score (-27.7).
- Individuals identifying as Black are the most likely to have indicated an improvement in personal relationships (37 per cent).
- Three quarters of respondents feel there has been no change in their workplace relationships (75) while 11 per cent report an improvement in their workplace relationships.
- The lowest mental health score is among the 14 per cent of individuals reporting increased strain in their workplace relationships (-23.9).
- Data from April 2020 to July 2020 shows a worsening of mental health scores for most non-White demographic groups in June 2020, which corresponds to the period of heightened awareness of anti-Black racism in Canada and around the world.
- Increases in mental health scores are seen in the non-White groups in July 2020 as the broader impact of this awareness continues.

Racism in Canada

- Overall, nearly 70 per cent of individuals believe that racism is a problem in Canada though only 20 per cent believe that racism is a problem in their workplace.
- When considering the results by race, 80 per cent of individuals identifying as Black strongly agree or agree that racism is a problem in their country, followed by 79 per cent of South Asian as well as Latin, South or Central American. Comparatively, 65 per cent of individuals identifying as White strongly agree or agree that racism is a problem in their country.

A worsening of mental health scores for most non-White demographics is observed in June, with improvement in July 2020



- The highest mental health scores are among individuals that strongly disagree (-4.9) that racism is a problem in Canada.
- 62 per cent of individuals identifying as Black strongly agree or agree that racism is a problem in their workplace, followed by 40 per cent of South Asians and 39 per cent identifying as Arab, Middle Eastern or West Asian. Comparatively, 14 per cent of individuals identifying as White strongly agree or agree that racism is a problem in their workplace.
- The highest mental health score is among individuals that do not believe racism is a problem in their workplace (-4.0).
- Those who work for employers with between 2-50 employees are most likely to strongly disagree or disagree (69 per cent) that racism is a problem in their workplace.

Awareness of systemic racism

- 40 per cent of respondents feel that systemic racism is likely to decrease in Canada as a result of heightened awareness related to the high-profile death of Black American, George Floyd, while 33 per cent are unsure, and 27 per cent feel that systemic racism is unlikely to decrease.
- In the workplace, 27 per cent of individuals feel that systemic racism is likely to decrease, 38 per cent are unsure, and 35 per cent feel that it is unlikely that systemic racism will decrease.

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@morneaushepell.com

Forty per cent of respondents indicate that systemic racism is likely to decrease as a result of the heightened awareness related to the death of Black American, George Floyd



Overview of the Mental Health Index™

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 a given geography, compared to the benchmarks collected in the years of 2017, 2018 and 2019. The increases and decreases in the Index are intended to predict cost and productivity risks, and inform the need for investment in mental health supports by business and government.

The Mental Health Index™ report has three main 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.

Collected through an online
survey of 3,000 Canadians

Methodology

The data for this report was collected through an online survey of 3,000 Canadians who are living in Canada and are currently employed or who were employed within the prior six months. Participants were selected to be representative of the age, gender, industry and geographic distribution in Canada. The same respondents participate each month to control for changes due to different samples. The respondents were asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering each question. The Mental Health Index™, which launched in April 2020, is published monthly. The benchmark data was collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The data for the current report was collected between June 22 to June 30, 2020.



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. Each individual's scores are added and then divided by the 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 is comprised of data from 2017, 2018 and 2019. This was a period of relative social stability and steady economic growth. **The change relative 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 data compares 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, 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.



The Mental Health Index™

The Mental Health Index™ (MHI) is a measure of deviation from the benchmark⁴ of mental health and risk.

MHI

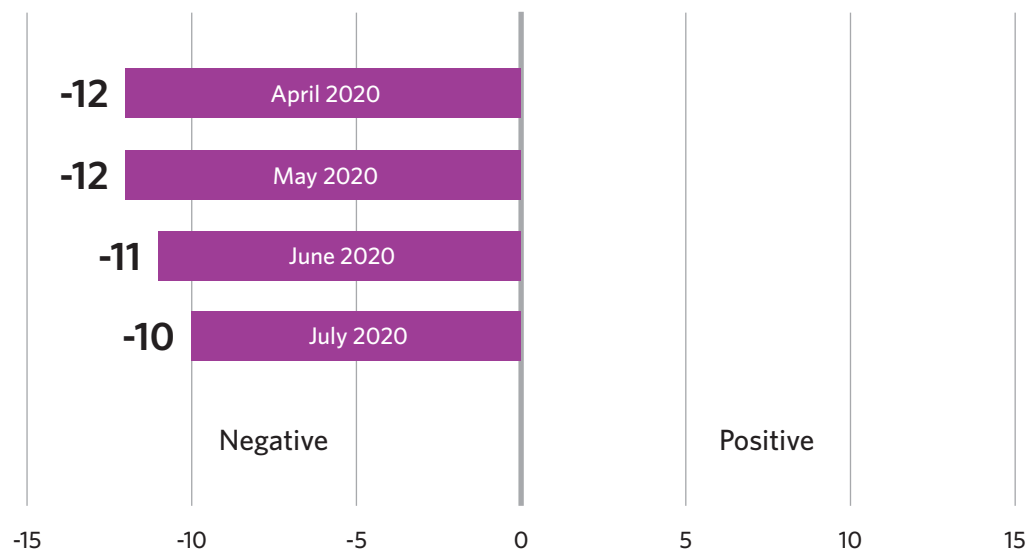
Current month
July 2020

-10

June 2020

-11

MHI sub-scores ⁵	July	June
Depression	-12.4	-12.7
Anxiety	-12.3	-12.9
Optimism	-11.4	-12.0
Work productivity	-11.1	-12.1
Isolation	-11.0	-11.6
Psychological health	-0.9	-1.2
Financial risk	2.9	2.4



The overall Mental Health Index™ is -10 and continues to reside below the benchmark for the fourth consecutive month. The current score of 64 is equivalent to the third percentile of the benchmark.

⁴ The benchmark reflects data collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

⁵ The demographic breakdown of sub-scores are available upon request.



Employment status	July	June
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	-7.6	-8.5
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	-16.2	-14.6
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	-19.1	-16.4
Not currently employed	-16.0	-16.5
Age group	July	June
Age 20-29	-20.8	-20.3
Age 30-39	-15.9	-15.5
Age 40-49	-11.1	-12.4
Age 50-59	-7.0	-7.8
Age 60-69	-4.3	-4.3
Number of children	July	June
No children in household	-9.2	-9.7
1 child	-13.2	-13.8
2 children	-13.8	-13.5
3 children or more	-8.9	-11.1

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

Province	July	June
Alberta	-13.4	-12.9
British Columbia	-10.5	-10.9
Manitoba	-10.6	-12.9
Newfoundland and Labrador	-4.0	-6.5
The Maritimes	-9.8	-9.7
Quebec	-9.6	-10.9
Ontario	-10.3	-10.7
Saskatchewan	-9.1	-8.3
Gender	July	June
Male	-8.8	-9.0
Female	-11.9	-12.8
Income	July	June
Household income <\$30K/annum	-19.4	-18.5
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	-13.8	-14.5
\$60K to <\$100K	-11.3	-11.4
\$100K to \$150K	-7.5	-8.9
\$150K or more	-3.8	-3.1
Number of adults in household	July	June
One adult in household	-13.2	-13.3
2 adults	-8.6	-9.6
3 adults	-12.0	-12.0
4 adults	-10.9	-10.2
5 adults or more	-14.5	-13.2

Racial identification	July
Arab/Middle Eastern/ West Asian	-14.2
Black	-17.7
East Asian	-12.3
Indigenous/Aboriginal	-9.1
Latin, South or Central American	-15.0
South Asian	-17.3
South East Asian	-14.6
White	-9.2
Mixed (Other)	-11.3
Prefer not to answer	-6.6
Other*	-16.7

* Included in this category are Pacific Islander and Mixed (Black and other) as the minimum threshold for reporting was not met for each group.

Employer size	July
Self-employed/sole proprietor	-5.5
2-50 employees	-10.4
51-100 employees	-14.3
101-500 employees	-11.4
501-1,000 employees	-11.6
1,001-5,000 employees	-10.0
5,001-10,000 employees	-7.6
More than 10,000 employees	-9.4



The Mental Health Index™ (industry)

The mental health of individuals across industries can differ immensely depending upon market and societal conditions. The highest mental health scores are observed in Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction (-6.1), Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (-6.3), and Construction (-7.2). Full-time students (-23.7) have the lowest mental health scores followed by individuals in Accommodation and Food Services (-19.1), and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (-16.5) industries. Improvements from the prior month are shown in the table below:

Industry	July 2020 MHI	June 2020 MHI	Improvement
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	-6.3	-10.0	3.8
Other services (except Public Administration)	-8.7	-11.8	3.2
Other	-9.1	-11.6	2.5
Public Administration	-9.1	-10.8	1.7
Finance and Insurance	-10.7	-12.3	1.6
Construction	-7.2	-8.6	1.3
Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction	-6.1	-7.2	1.1
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-9.5	-10.3	0.8
Educational Services	-11.1	-11.9	0.8
Utilities	-10.9	-11.6	0.7
Wholesale Trade	-8.0	-8.7	0.7
Automotive Industry	-7.3	-8.0	0.6
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	-16.2	-16.7	0.5
Manufacturing	-8.6	-8.8	0.1
Management of Companies and Enterprises	-13.8	-13.8	0
Retail Trade	-10.6	-10.3	-0.4
Health Care and Social Assistance	-10.5	-10.0	-0.5
Transportation and Warehousing	-10.8	-9.6	-1.2
Information and Cultural Industries	-11.9	-10.6	-1.3
Full-time student	-23.7	-21.7	-1.9
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	-16.5	-13.8	-2.7
Accommodation and Food Services	-19.1	-16.1	-2.9

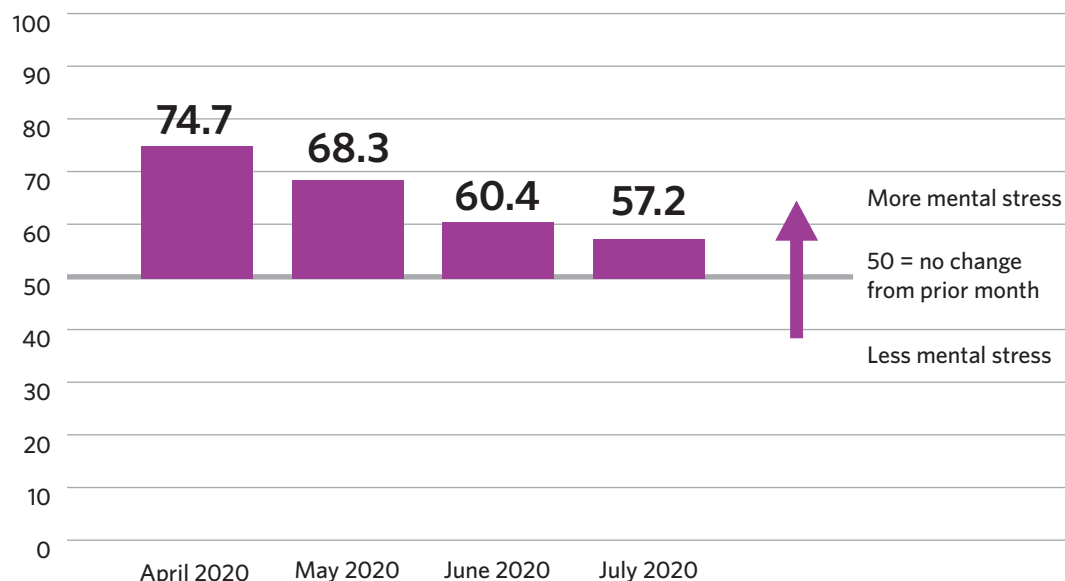


The Mental Stress Change score

The Mental Stress Change (MStressChg) score is a measure of the level of reported mental stress, compared to the prior month.

MStress Chg	
Current month July 2020	57.2
June 2020	60.4

The Mental Stress Change score for July 2020 is 57.2. This reflects an increase in mental stress when compared to the prior month. The steepness of the increase has, however, been declining month-over-month. The current score indicates that 24 per cent of the population is experiencing more mental stress compared to the prior month, with 10 per cent experiencing less. An increase in the Mental Stress Change score in the last four months, when compared to the benchmark, indicates a significant accumulation of strain in the population.

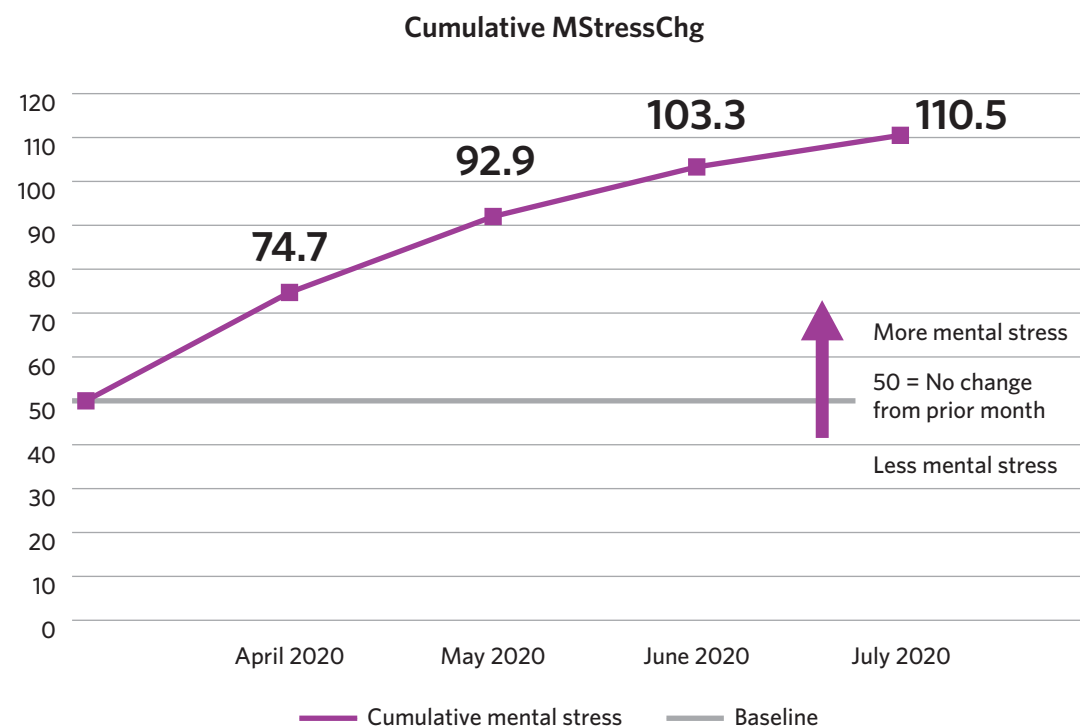




The Mental Stress Change (cumulative)

The Mental Stress Change (MStressChg) score is a measure of the level of reported mental stress when compared to the prior month. The change is rooted against a value of 50 implying no net mental stress change from the previous month, while values above 50 indicate a net increase in mental stress and values below 50 indicate a net decrease in mental stress.

The cumulative mental stress score is shown in the graph below:





Employment status	July	June
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	54.7	58.3
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	63.3	66.3
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	66.0	67.5
Not currently employed	59.3	59.7
Age group	July	June
Age 20-29	61.3	62.7
Age 30-39	60.5	65.5
Age 40-49	58.4	61.1
Age 50-59	55.5	58.3
Age 60-69	53.1	55.6
Number of children	July	June
No children in household	56.0	59.1
1 child	58.7	63.3
2 children	60.7	63.1
3 children or more	63.3	62.0

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

Province	July	June
Alberta	58.9	60.3
British Columbia	57.1	61.6
Manitoba	57.3	60.7
Newfoundland and Labrador	51.1	64.4
The Maritimes	54.6	58.0
Quebec	53.9	58.3
Ontario	59.0	61.3
Saskatchewan	55.3	61.1
Gender	July	June
Male	57.1	59.8
Female	57.1	61.0
Income	July	June
Household income <\$30K/annum	58.6	61.0
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	58.3	59.3
\$60K to <\$100K	57.5	60.8
\$100K to \$150K	57.6	62.0
\$150K or more	54.8	58.1
Number of adults in household	July	June
One adult in household	56.1	60.3
2 adults	57.1	60.1
3 adults	58.7	61.9
4 adults	57.9	61.7
5 adults or more	57.3	55.0

Racial identification	July
Arab/Middle Eastern/ West Asian	54.5
Black	57.2
East Asian	62.1
Indigenous/Aboriginal	52.6
Latin, South or Central American	67.9
South Asian	61.8
South East Asian	61.3
White	56.1
Mixed (Other)	51.5
Prefer not to answer	57.4
Other*	54.5

* Included in this category are Pacific Islander and Mixed (Black and other) as the minimum threshold for reporting was not met for each group.

Employer size	July
Self-employed/sole proprietor	54.8
2-50 employees	55.6
51-100 employees	57.3
101-500 employees	57.9
501-1,000 employees	62.4
1,001-5,000 employees	58.0
5,001-10,000 employees	55.1
More than 10,000 employees	56.0



The Mental Stress Change (industry)

The mental health of individuals across industries can differ immensely depending upon market and societal conditions. The most favourable mental stress changes observed in Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction (49), Other (51.8), and Other services (except Public Administration) (52.9). The least favourable mental stress changes are found in Accommodation and Food Services (64.9), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (64.9), and among full-time students (63.6).

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

Industry	July 2020 MStress Chg	June 2020 MStress Chg
Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction	49.0	56.3
Other	51.8	59.9
Other services (except Public Administration)	52.9	62.5
Automotive Industry	52.9	53.2
Retail Trade	53.7	56.4
Transportation and Warehousing	54.3	58.6
Utilities	54.4	64.4
Public Administration	55.1	60.7
Manufacturing	55.8	58.5
Construction	57.2	60.6
Educational Services	57.8	62.3
Finance and Insurance	58.1	59.2
Wholesale Trade	58.1	59.8
Information and Cultural Industries	59.2	57.3
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	59.8	61.7
Health Care and Social Assistance	60.0	62.2
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	61.0	59.4
Management of Companies and Enterprises	61.7	65.0
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	61.8	67.1
Full-time student	63.6	67.5
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	64.9	65.6
Accommodation and Food Services	64.9	62.1



Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on relationships

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has been widespread. Prolonged social distancing and isolation have led people to crave human interaction and in some cases, has had an impact on relationships, both personal and professional.

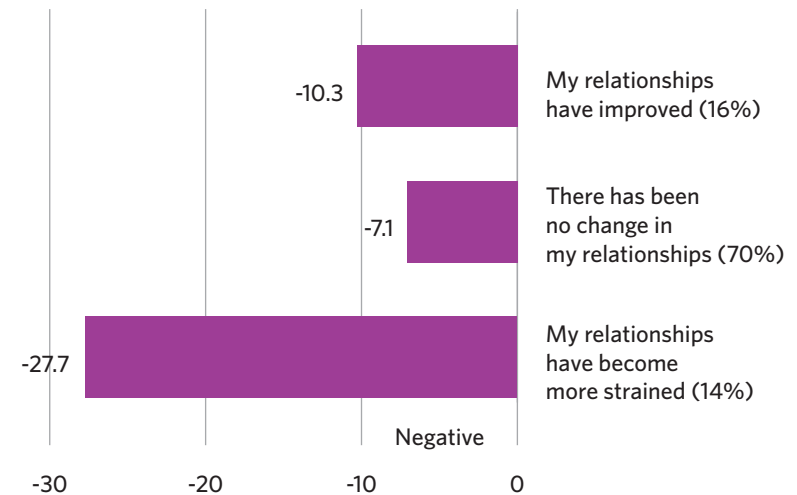
Sixteen per cent feel there has been an improvement in their personal relationships and 14 per cent feel that their personal relationships have become more strained. The worst mental health is observed among individuals who feel that their personal relationships have become more strained (-27.7), while those reporting improvements have a mental health score of -10.3 and those reporting no change have a mental health score of -7.1.

Individuals identifying as Black have the greatest likelihood of noting an improvement in personal relationships (37 per cent).

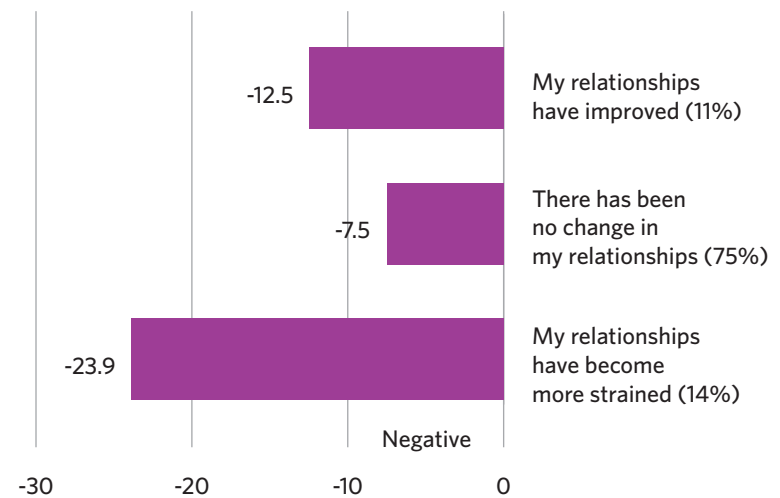
Professionally, the worst mental health scores are among the 14 per cent reporting increased strain in their workplace relationships (-23.9) while 11 per cent report an improvement in their workplace relationships. The best mental health score (-7.5) is among those who feel that there has been no change in their workplace relationships.

Individuals identifying as Black have the greatest likelihood of noting an improvement in personal relationships (25 per cent).

Personal relationship changes and MHI



Workplace relationship changes and MHI





Racism and Mental Health

Mental health trends by race

From April to July 2020, Mental health score improved for only two racial groups, White (1.7 point increase) and Arab/Middle Eastern/West Asian (1.8 point increase). Decreases were seen in all other racial groups with the largest decreases being for South Asians (3.2 point decline), South East Asians (3.2 point decline) and Black (2.0 point decline).

Considering May to June 2020, a decline in mental health scores was seen for all racial groups but White (1.2 point increase) and South East Asian (no change). The June data coincides with the height of awareness of the death of Black American, George Floyd, and the ensuing response. From June to July 2020, there was an improvement in the mental health scores of those who identify as White (1.7 point increase) South East Asian (1.3 point increase) and Black (0.9 point increase) and modest decreases for other groups but for South East Asians whose mental health scores decline 1.7 points.

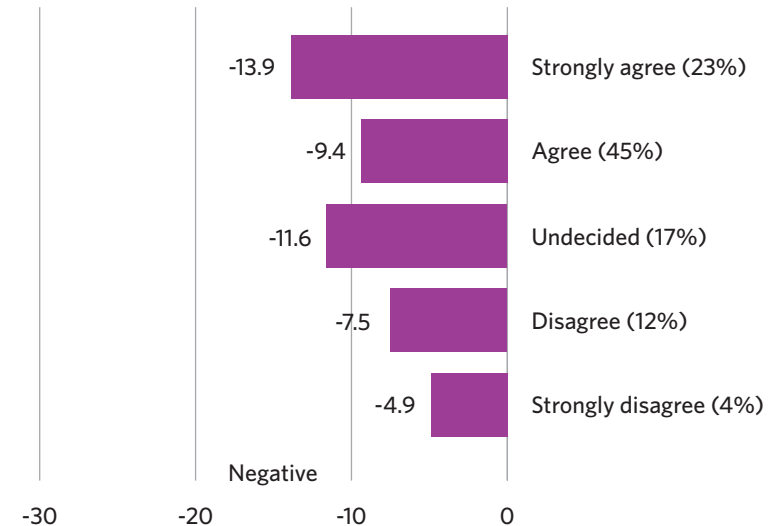
Racism in Canada and in the workplace

Nearly 70 per cent of individuals believe that racism is a problem in Canada. The highest mental health score is among individuals that disagree that racism is a problem in their country.

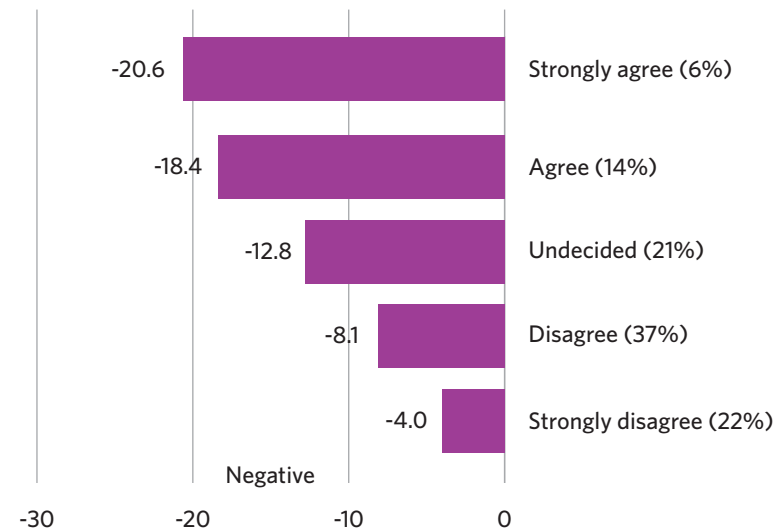
Fifty-nine per cent of respondents strongly disagree or disagree that racism is a problem in their workplace. The highest mental health score is among individuals that do not believe racism is a problem in their workplace.

Employers with between 2-50 employees are most likely to strongly disagree or disagree (69 per cent) that racism is a problem in their workplace.

Racism is a problem in my country: MHI scores



Racism is a problem in my workplace: MHI scores





Awareness of systemic racism

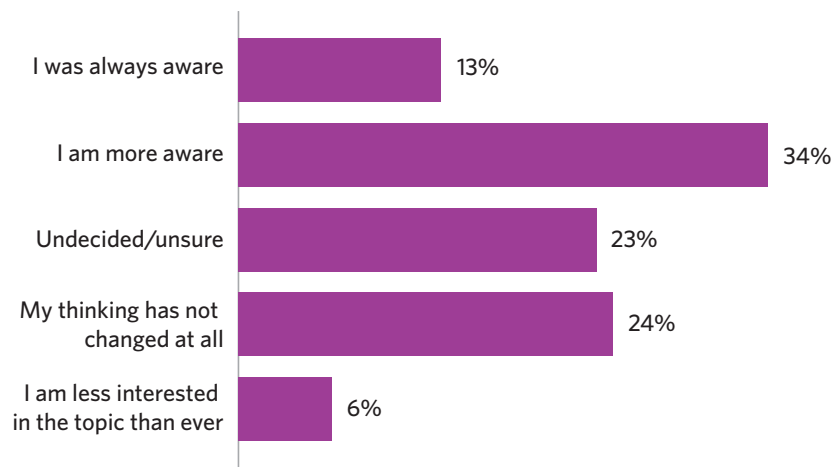
Respondents were asked how likely they feel that systemic racism will decrease in Canada as a result of heightened awareness related to the death of Black American, George Floyd. Forty per cent of respondents feel that systemic racism is likely to decrease in Canada, while 33 per cent were unsure, and 27 per cent feel that systemic racism is unlikely to decrease.

In the workplace, 27 per cent of individuals feel that systemic racism is likely to decrease, 38 per cent are unsure, and 35 per cent feel that it is unlikely that systemic racism will decrease.

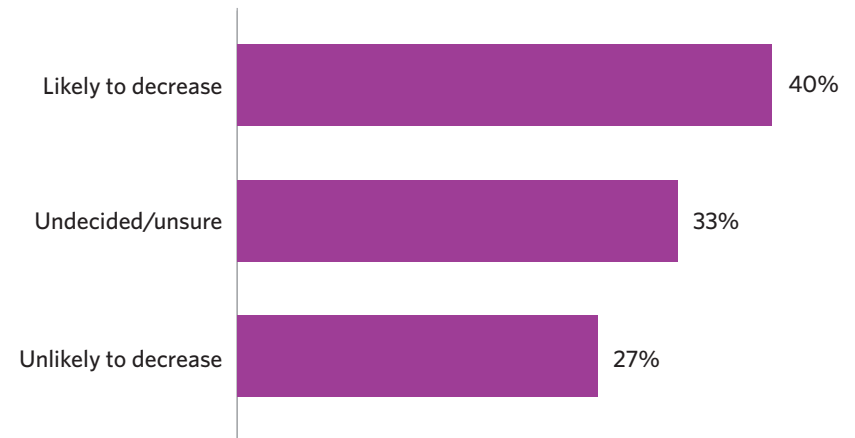
Changes in thinking about systemic racism

Thirty-four per cent of respondents report an increased awareness of systemic racism over the past month while 29 per cent of individuals report that their thinking has not changed and 6 per cent indicate that they are less interested in the topic of systemic racism than before.

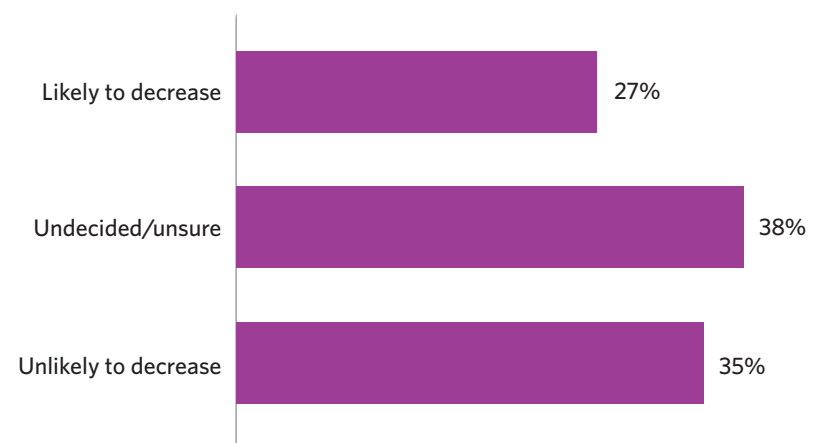
How much your thinking regarding systemic racism changed over the past month?



Will systemic racism decrease in your country as a result of heightened awareness related to George Floyd?



Will systemic racism decrease in your workplace as a result of heightened awareness related to George Floyd?



Implications

The current scores for The Mental Health Index™ are a clear warning regarding the mental health impact of race relations and the pandemic. The Index shows a significant decrease in the mental health in Canada. We also see a significant increase in mental stress compared to the prior month and a definitive link to issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the physical health risk of COVID-19 is the focus of much attention, the mental health impact requires similar attention and action. Well after the risk of infection reduces, the mental health impact may remain. This has implications for the quality of life of individuals, the stability of families, the risk of health and disability costs for organizations as well as the level of participation in the economy, which is a concern for government, given its impact on the speed of economic recovery.

To address this situation, action is required on at least three levels:

1. **Individuals** need to attend to the impact of the pandemic on their mental health. While some strain would be expected as a result of such a massive change, feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope, or feeling stuck and unable to adapt, are clear warning signs requiring support from a trusted confidant or a counselling professional.
2. **Businesses** need to attend to the risk among employees. The Mental Health Index™ measures the mental health risk and status of the working population. The current scores suggest a risk to the longer-term wellbeing of employees, which may impact business productivity, health costs and disability absence. Business would do well to increase the focus on mental health through communication that increases the awareness of mental health warning signs, campaigns to reduce the stigma of seeking mental health support, and the promotion of health plans and public resources.
3. **Governments** need to attend to the mental health of the population. A population under strain is less likely to participate fully in the economy. The current focus on health and safety needs to expand to include a significant focus on mental health. This should include clear messages regarding coping strategies and the promotion of public resources.

The Mental Health Index™ is published monthly, and measures trends over time.

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