

The Mental Health Index™ report

United States of America, February 2021



LifeWorks
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February highlights

In February, the Biden Administration announced that they had secured hundreds of millions of doses of vaccines (Robert Langreth, 2021) **and while several states have begun easing restrictions, concerns remain with respect to reports of multiple highly contagious variants of the COVID-19 virus, as well as the economic condition of a nation under strain for nearly one year because of the pandemic. February marks eleven consecutive months of diminished mental health among the American people when compared to the pre-pandemic benchmark.** The level of mental health in February indicates that **the working population is currently as distressed as the most distressed twenty-seven percent of working Americans, prior to 2020.**

The proportion of individuals reporting more stress than the prior month (19 percent) is lower than **January 2021** (23 percent), while the proportion of individuals reporting less mental stress is only 9 percent. The majority (72 percent) indicate the same level of stress when compared to the prior month, however, given the escalation in stress each month since the pandemic, this reflects an elevated level of cumulative stress for this group as well. This strain will likely continue until a sufficient proportion of the American population is vaccinated.

Financial risk is up significantly from the prior month. **In February, the financial risk score of Americans is 4.2-points better than at the start of the Index™**, in April 2020, and 4.6-points higher than in January 2021. All mental health sub-scores have improved from the prior month.

Regional mental health scores since April 2020 have shown general improvement until July; followed by general declines until December 2020. In January 2021, all the regions of the United States showed improvements in mental health, and a similar trend is observed for the month of February. With a 2.5-point improvement from the prior month, the mental health score of the West is the strongest of all regions. The lowest mental health score in February is observed in the Northeast (5.5).

For the eleventh consecutive month, full-time students have the lowest mental health score (-21.4) and the most significant increase in mental stress (59.4).

Individuals reporting reduced salary or reduced hours continue to have lower mental health scores and a greater increase in mental stress compared to unemployed people.

Despite the increasing incidence of mental health issues due to the prolonged impact of the pandemic among people of all ages, backgrounds and socio-economic status, stigma is an issue.

A positive score on the Mental Health Index™ indicates better mental health in the overall working population, compared to the benchmark period of 2017 to 2019. A higher positive score reflects greater improvement.

A negative Mental Health Index™ score indicates a decline in mental health compared to the benchmark period. The more negative the score, the greater the decline.

A score of zero indicates mental health that is the same as it was in the benchmark period.



Twenty-nine percent of respondents report that they would feel more negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue; this group has the lowest mental health score (-14.6) as well as the lowest work productivity score (-21.2). Nearly half (45 percent) of respondents aged 20-29 report that they would feel more negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue, suggesting that self-stigma is an issue.

More than forty percent (41 percent) of respondents believe that their career options would be limited if their employer were aware that they had a mental health issue; this group has both the lowest mental health score (-10.6) and the lowest work productivity score (-15.3)

More than one-third (35 percent) of respondents report that they would be concerned that friends would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue; this cohort has both the lowest mental health score (-11.5) as well as the lowest work productivity score (-17.6)

People leaders are struggling. The Mental Health Index™ score for managers (-5.9) is lower than for non-managers (-4.5); similarly, managers report a greater increase in mental stress than non-managers. Thirty-seven percent of managers, compared to twenty-five percent of non-managers, would feel more negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue. **Half of managers believe that their career options would be limited if their employer knew that they had a mental health issue** and nearly half (46 percent) believe that their friends would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue.

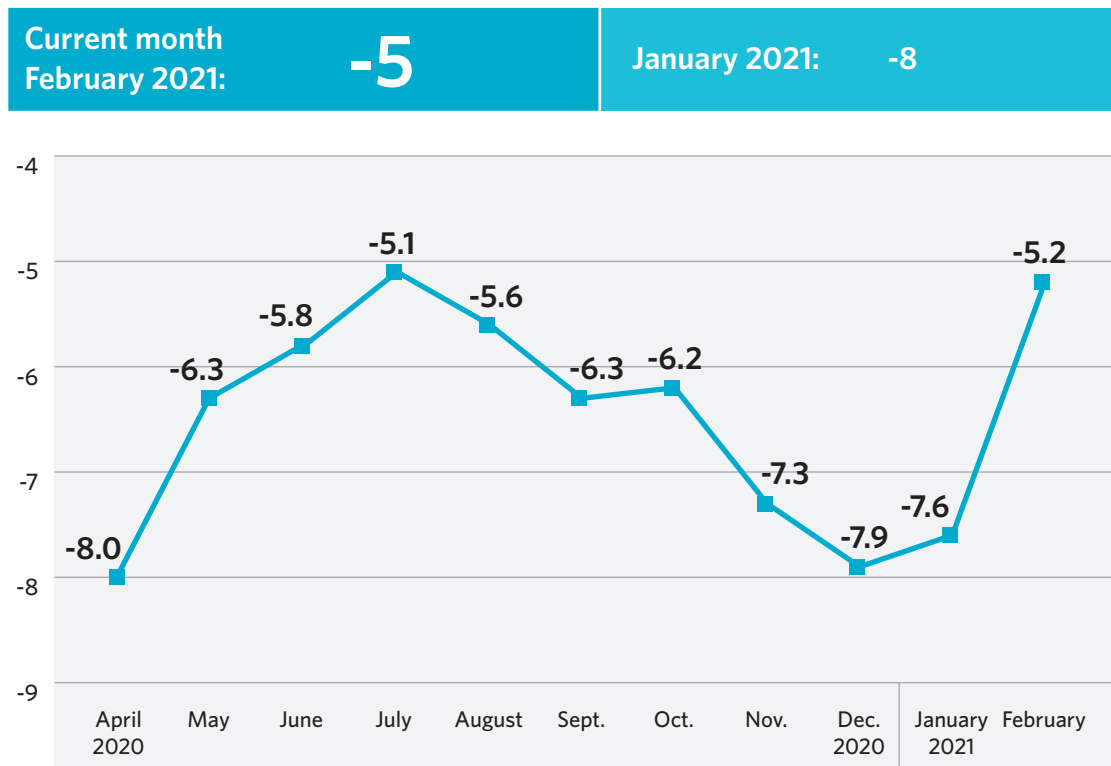
COVID-19's disruption to the mental, physical, social, and financial wellbeing of individuals has turned many to unhealthy coping mechanisms to deal with cumulative stress, and other effects of the prolonged pandemic. **Individuals under the age of 50 are twice as likely to report an increase in their alcohol intake early in the pandemic (March to May 2020) compared to later (October 2020 to January 2021). Parents are nearly three times as likely as non-parents to report that they are drinking more later in the pandemic (October 2020 to January 2021) than earlier.**

As Americans face one year of disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses across the country have had to react, change, and adapt to new processes, threats, and opportunities. A boon for some while other organizations struggle; a swing in either direction could land the business in either a fortuitous or grave scenario. Looking ahead in 2021, **nearly one-in-five (18 percent) respondents believe that their employer will struggle in 2021,** and this group has the lowest mental health score (-12.2) second only to the one percent of respondents who believe that their employer will go out of business.



The Mental Health Index™

The Mental Health Index™ (MHI) is a measure of deviation from the benchmark¹ of mental health and risk. **The overall Mental Health Index™ for February 2021 is -5 points.** A five-point decrease from the pre-COVID-19 benchmark reflects a population whose mental health is similar to the most distressed twenty-seventh percent of the benchmark population. February marks a considerable mental health score improvement of 2.2 points since last month.



February marks the 11th consecutive month in which the Mental Health Index™ reflects strained mental health in the U.S. population.

¹ 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 anxiety (-7.1), followed by optimism (-6.8), depression (-6.6), work productivity (-6.4), isolation (-5.4), and general psychological health (2.6). The risk measure with the best mental health score is financial risk (9.8).

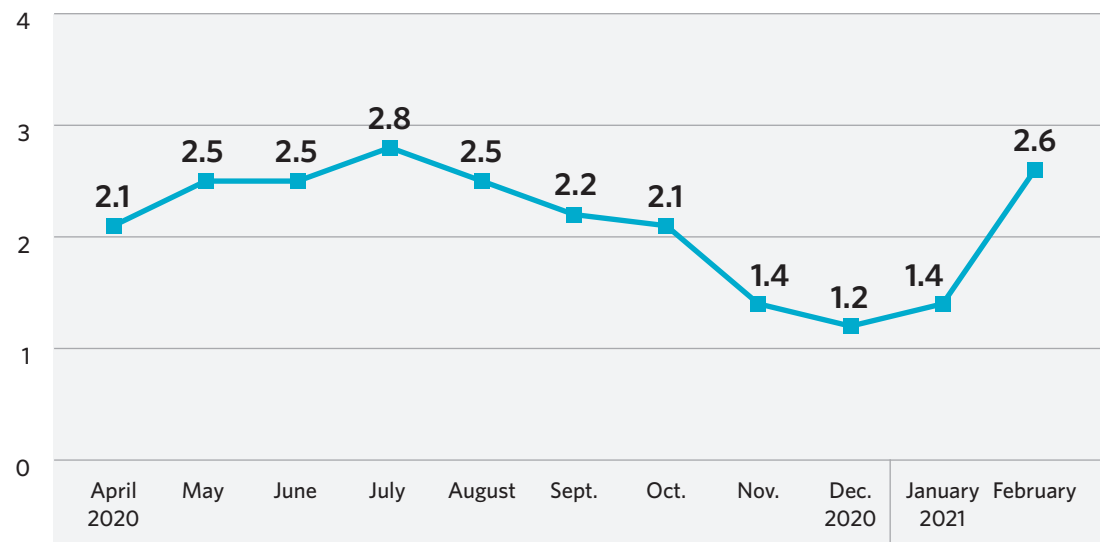
- All the sub scores have improved from January results.
- With a 4.6-point increase, the financial risk score has had the greatest improvement from the prior month.
- Financial risk continues to be the strongest of all sub-scores and is well above the pre-2020 benchmark.

MHI sub-scores ²	February 2021	January 2021
Anxiety	-7.1	-9.7
Optimism	-6.8	-7.0
Depression	-6.6	-9.2
Work productivity	-6.4	-9.2
Isolation	-5.4	-8.9
Psychological health	2.6	1.4
Financial risk	9.8	5.2

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



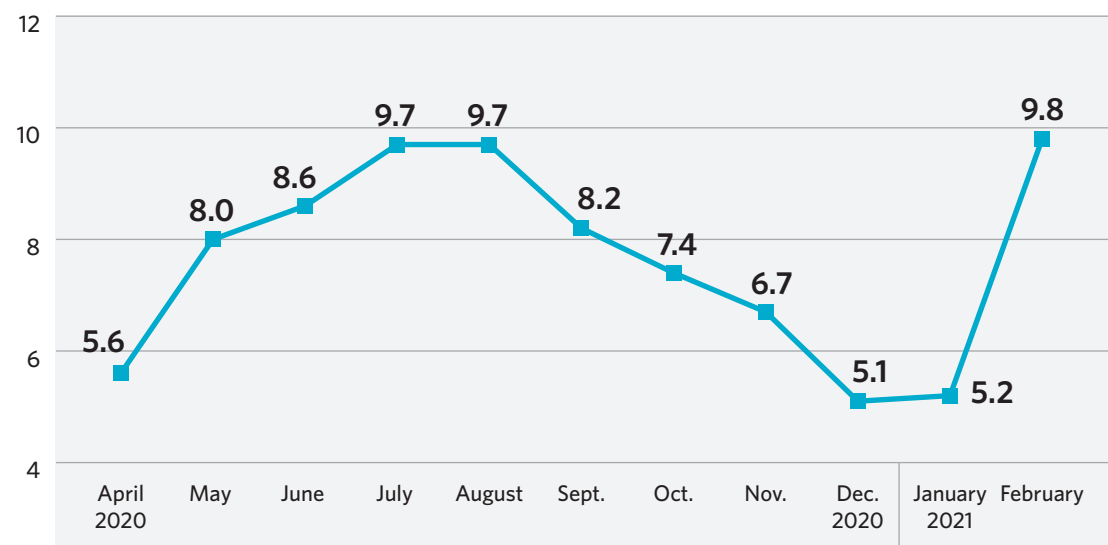
General psychological health



General psychological health

The overall trend in psychological health has been decreasing since the peak score of 2.8 in July 2020. Since July, the psychological health score declined through December 2020, when the lowest recorded score was reported (1.2). In January 2021, a slight increase in psychological health was observed (1.4). A significant 1.2-point increase is observed in February 2021.

Financial Risk



Financial risk

The financial risk score continues to be the strongest sub-scale despite a significant decline from August 2020 to January 2021. February 2021 marks the highest recorded financial risk score (9.8) since April 2020.

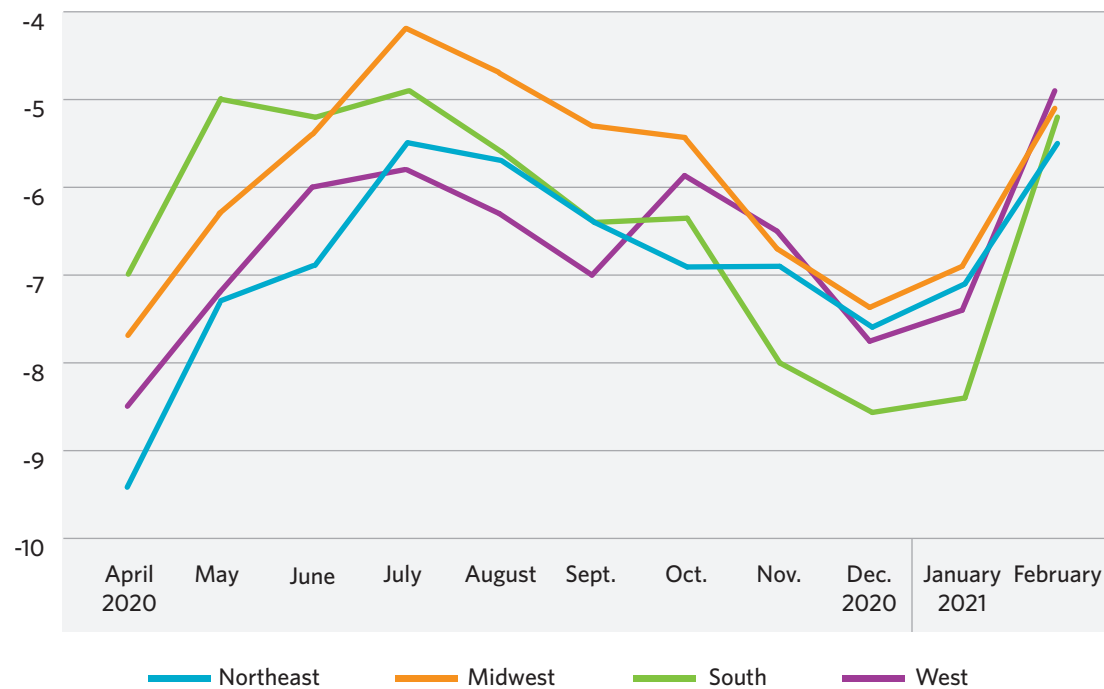


The Mental Health Index™ (regional)

Regional mental health scores have shown general improvement between April and July 2020, followed by general declines until December 2020. In January 2021, all four regions of the United States show improvements in mental health, with even greater improvements observed for the month of February. Since the start of 2021, the variation between regions has narrowed significantly.

- With a 2.5-point improvement from the prior month, the mental health score in the West is the strongest at -4.9.
- The lowest mental health score in February is observed in the Northeast (5.5).

United States regional Mental Health Index™ scores





Demographics

- For eleven consecutive months, women (-7.2) have a significantly lower mental health score than men (-3.1); mental health scores also improve with age.
- The variance in the mental health score between those with and without children has been observed since April, and results in February 2021 continue this trend with a lower score for those with at least one child (-8.9) when compared to those without children (-3.7).

Employment

- Overall, four percent of respondents are unemployed. While most individuals remain employed, fourteen percent report reduced hours or reduced salary.
- Individuals reporting fewer hours compared to the prior month (-13.1) have the lowest mental health score, followed by those who report reduced salary when compared to the prior month (-12.8), and those not currently employed (-11.4).
- Managers have lower mental health scores (-5.9) when compared to non-managers (-4.5).
- Individuals working for employers with more than 10,000 employees have the highest mental health score (-2.0).
- Respondents who report working for companies with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (-9.4).

Emergency savings

- Those without emergency savings continue to experience a lower score in mental health (-22.0) than the overall group. Individuals with an emergency fund have a mental health score of -1.0.



Employment status	Feb. 2021	Jan. 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	-3.6	-5.2
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	-13.1	-15.1
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	-12.8	-18.5
Not currently employed	-11.4	-15.5
Age group	Feb. 2021	Jan. 2021
Age 20-29	-3.6	-5.2
Age 30-39	-13.1	-15.1
Age 40-49	-12.8	-18.5
Age 50-59	-11.4	-15.5
Age 60-69	-3.6	-5.2
Number of children	Feb. 2021	Jan. 2021
No children in household	-3.7	-5.4
1 child	-8.5	-11.8
2 children	-9.4	-12.5
3 children or more	-9.5	-14.2
Region	Feb. 2021	Jan. 2021
Northeast	-5.5	-7.1
Midwest	-5.1	-6.9
South	-5.2	-8.4
West	-4.9	-7.4

Gender	Feb. 2021	Jan. 2021
Men	-3.1	-5.0
Women	-7.2	-9.9
Income	Feb. 2021	Jan. 2021
Household income <\$30K/annum	-16.1	-18.2
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	-9.4	-11.6
\$60K to <\$100K	-4.3	-6.8
\$100K to <\$150K	-2.7	-5.0
\$150K or more	2.3	0.4
Employer size	Feb. 2021	Jan. 2021
Self-employed/sole proprietor	-2.9	-7.2
2-50 employees	-5.2	-7.4
51-100 employees	-9.4	-9.6
101-500 employees	-6.2	-8.4
501-1,000 employees	-6.7	-8.8
1,001-5,000 employees	-5.0	-7.5
5,001-10,000 employees	-3.7	-4.8
More than 10,000 employees	-2.0	-4.1
Manager	Feb. 2021	Jan. 2021
Manager	-5.9	-8.4
Non-manager	-4.5	-6.4

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 Health Index™ (industry)

For the eleventh consecutive month, full-time students have the lowest mental health score (-21.4). This continues to be notably lower than the next lowest score, among individuals in Management of Companies and Enterprises (-15.9), and Food Services (-11.9). The highest mental health scores this month are observed among individuals employed in Public Administration (1.5), Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (1.0), and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (-1.1). Individuals employed in the Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction, the Real Estate, Rental and Leasing, and Food Services have seen the greatest improvement in mental health since last month.

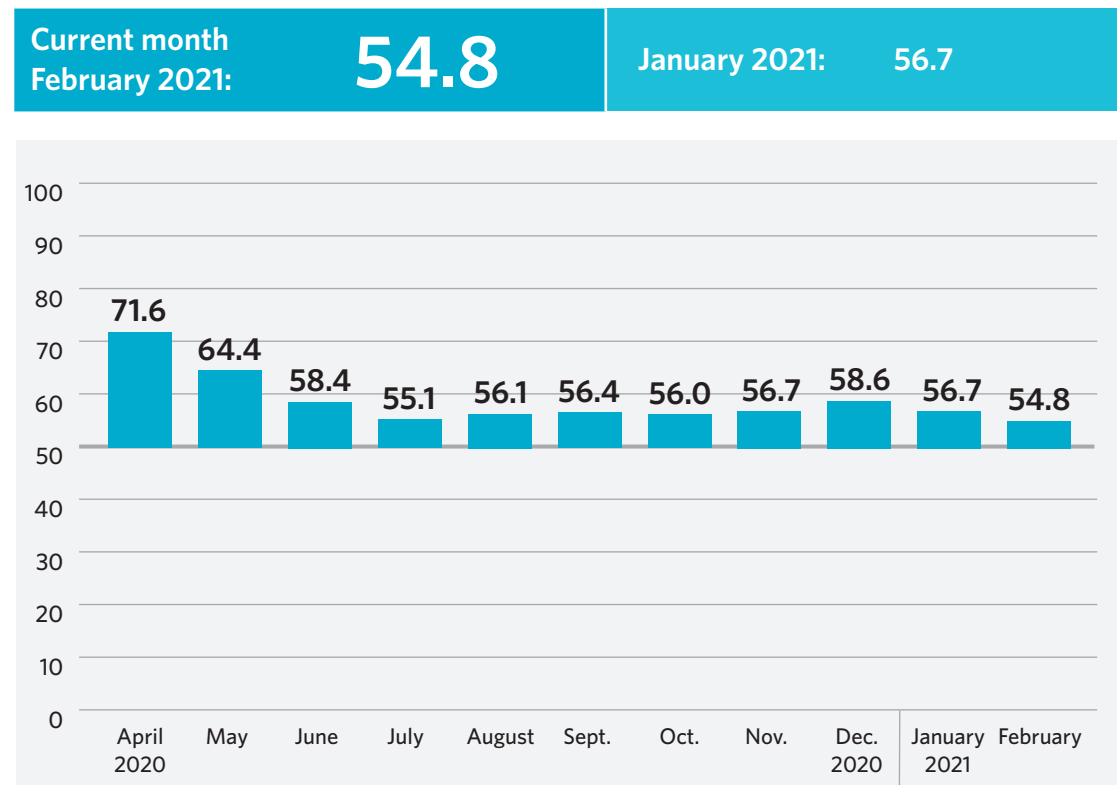
Improvements from the prior month are shown in the table below:

Industry	February 2021	January 2021	Improvement
Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction	-4.3	-12.3	8.1
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	1.0	-6.6	7.6
Food Services	-11.9	-16.8	4.9
Utilities	-7.1	-11.9	4.8
Transportation and Warehousing	-4.9	-9.5	4.7
Information and Cultural Industries	-9.6	-13.4	3.8
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	-4.8	-8.3	3.5
Wholesale Trade	-8.5	-11.9	3.5
Health Care and Social Assistance	-4.7	-8.0	3.3
Accommodation	-4.0	-6.9	2.8
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-1.1	-3.8	2.7
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	-5.8	-8.4	2.6
Construction	-8.3	-10.8	2.5
Retail Trade	-8.3	-10.6	2.3
Other	-6.3	-8.1	1.8
Manufacturing	-40.0	-5.5	1.5
I am a student	-21.4	-22.5	1.1
Educational Services	-4.8	-5.7	0.9
Finance and Insurance	-3.2	-3.8	0.6
Public Administration	1.5	1.2	0.3
Administrative and Support services	-8.7	-8.5	-0.2
Other services (except Public Administration)	-6.6	-5.6	-1.0
Management of Companies and Enterprises	-15.9	-7.8	-8.1



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 February 2021 is 54.8.** This reflects a net increase in mental stress compared to the prior month. The MStressChg score had been declining (meaning those surveyed reported less mental stress) month-over-month through July 2020, with the decline levelling off by November. In December, the score climbed slightly. The score in February 2021 is **an improvement of 1.9 points** over the prior month. The current score indicates that nineteen percent of the population is experiencing more mental stress compared to the prior month, with nine percent experiencing less. A continued increase in mental stress over eleven months indicates a significant accumulation of strain in the population.





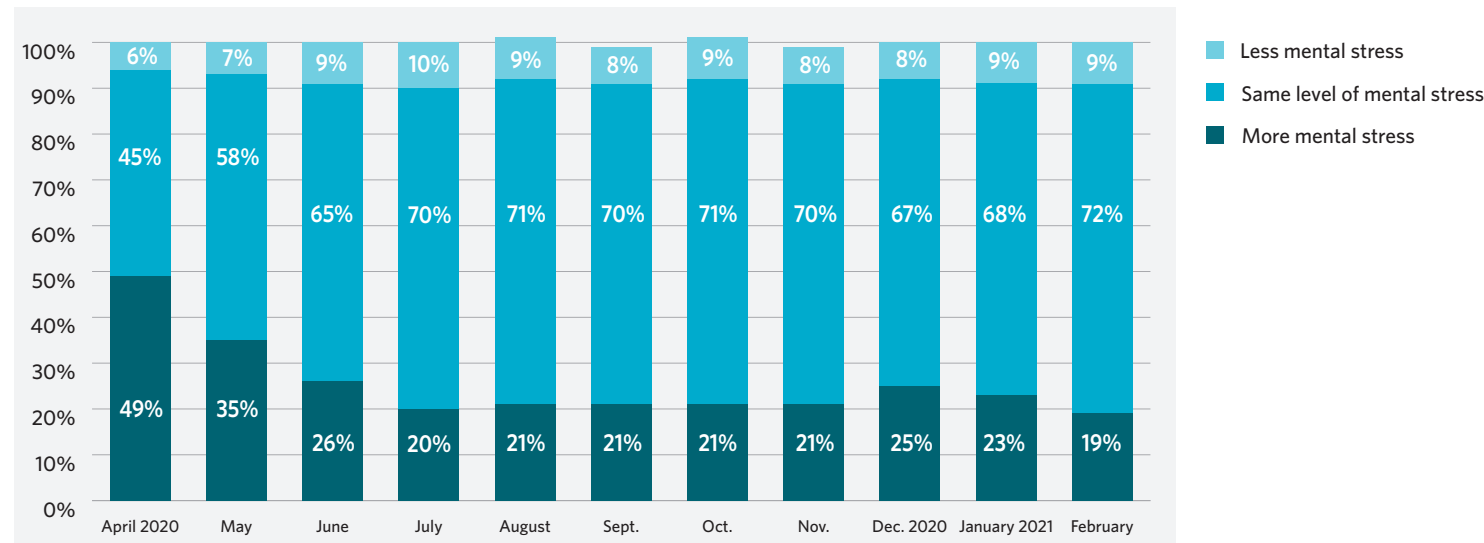
Mental Stress Change (percentages)

Mental Stress Change tracks each individual's 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 below.

Over the last eleven months, 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 significantly 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, 49 percent of individuals reported an increase in mental stress. While those reporting increased month-over-month mental stress decreased to 19 percent in February 2021, 72 percent of respondents are the same level of mental stress and only 9 percent report a decrease in mental stress.

Mental Stress Change by Month





Demographics

- As reported in prior months, and seen again in February 2021, younger respondents are experiencing a greater increase in mental stress compared to older respondents.
- Since April 2020, women have had larger increases in mental stress when compared with men.

Geography

- The greatest increase in stress month-over-month was for respondents living in the Midwest (55.8), followed by the West (54.6), the South (54.6), and the Northeast (54.1).

Employment

- The greatest increase in mental stress is seen in employed people with reduced salary (63.6), followed by employed people with reduced hours (60.8) compared to unemployed people (58.5) and employed people with no change to salary or hours (53.5).
- The greatest increase in mental stress is observed among managers (56.7) while non-managers have a more modest increase in mental stress (53.6).



Employment status	Feb. 2021	Jan. 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	53.5	55.4
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	60.8	60.7
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	63.6	63.9
Not currently employed	58.5	60.3

Age group	Feb. 2021	Jan. 2021
Age 20-29	59.5	61.9
Age 30-39	55.6	60.3
Age 40-49	54.7	56.7
Age 50-59	54.0	54.4
Age 60-69	52.8	53.4

Number of children	Feb. 2021	Jan. 2021
No children in household	54.1	55.4
1 child	55.8	59.2
2 children	57.4	59.3
3 children or more	56.6	61.4

Region	Feb. 2021	Jan. 2021
Northeast	54.1	56.5
Midwest	55.8	58.2
South	54.6	55.9
West	54.6	56.3

Gender	Feb. 2021	Jan. 2021
Men	53.8	55.2
Women	55.7	58.1

Income	Feb. 2021	Jan. 2021
Household income <\$30K/annum	55.5	57.3
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	56.4	58.8
\$60K to <\$100K	54.3	57.6
\$100K to <\$150K	55.3	55.8
\$150K or more	52.7	54.2

Employer size	Feb. 2021	Jan. 2021
Self-employed/sole proprietor	53.4	55.8
2-50 employees	55.5	56.2
51-100 employees	54.9	56.6
101-500 employees	54.8	57.7
501-1,000 employees	54.6	59.7
1,001-5,000 employees	55.4	56.9
5,001-10,000 employees	56.2	55.0
More than 10,000 employees	53.8	54.8

Manager	Feb. 2021	Jan. 2021
Manager	56.7	58.4
Non-manager	53.6	55.2

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)

Mental Stress Change scores for the Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction (50.0), Information and Cultural Industries (50.0), and Accommodation (51.1) industries are less steep compared to the prior month.

Individuals working in Management of Companies and Enterprises have the most significant increase in mental stress (60.6), compared to the prior month, followed by individuals employed in Other services (except Public Administration) (59.5), and students (59.4).

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

Industry	February 2021	January 2021
Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction	50.0	61.4
Information and Cultural Industries	50.0	57.5
Accommodation	51.1	54.1
Public Administration	51.4	54.8
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	51.5	58.2
Transportation and Warehousing	52.1	56.6
Administrative and Support services	52.8	56.5
Manufacturing	52.9	56.1
Other	54.1	56.3
Construction	54.2	56.0
Food Services	54.5	56.2
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	54.5	54.7
Finance and Insurance	54.9	55.1
Educational Services	55.2	56.0
Wholesale Trade	55.5	60.1
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	55.9	57.5
Health Care and Social Assistance	56.1	56.8
Retail Trade	56.5	57.8
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	56.9	53.9
Utilities	57.4	62.2
I am a student	59.4	62.7
Other services (except Public Administration)	59.5	57.1
Management of Companies and Enterprises	60.6	58.1



Spotlight

Mental health stigma

In the United States, one in five adults will experience some form of mental illness³ in any 12 month period. Despite the increasing incidence of mental health issues due to the prolonged impact of the pandemic among people of all ages, backgrounds and socio-economic status, stigma affects the way people perceive themselves as well as the way others perceive them. The resulting feelings can amplify an existing mental health issue and may become a barrier to seeking help.

Individuals were asked about mental health self-stigma, how a mental health issue might affect their career, and the perceived effect of mental health on personal relationships.

Self-stigma

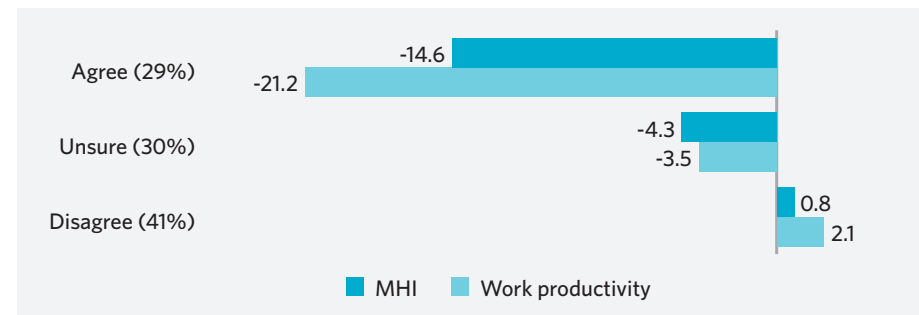
Individuals were asked whether they would feel more negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue.

- Twenty-nine percent of respondents report that they would feel more negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue; this group has the lowest mental health score (-14.6).
- Work productivity scores follow the same trend as mental health scores, with those agreeing that they would feel more negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue reporting the lowest work productivity score (-21.2), and those who

I would feel negatively about myself if I had a mental health issue



MHI and work productivity scores by agreement about feeling negatively about oneself if a mental health issue exists



³ Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/reports/rpt29393/2019NSDUHFFR1PDFWHTML/2019NSDUHFFR1PDFW090120.pdf>, 2019.



would not feel more negatively about themselves having the highest work productivity score (2.1).

- Younger people are more likely to report that they would feel more negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue. Nearly half (45 percent) of respondents aged 20-29 report that they would feel more negatively about themselves compared to twenty percent of individuals aged 60 and above.
- Managers report that they would feel more negatively about themselves if they had a mental health issue (37 percent) when compared with non-managers (25 percent).

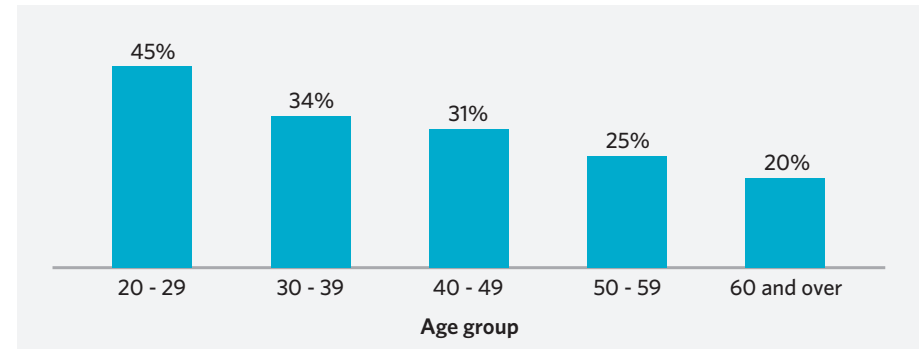
While it is widely assumed that younger individuals are more open about mental health issues, this openness does not preclude a high level of awareness of stigma, nor does it preclude self-judgment. As well, negative self-judgment may exist even though one's judgment of others with mental health issues might not be as negative.

Perceived impact of mental health issue on friendships

Individuals were asked whether they thought that their friends would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue.

- Thirty-five percent report that they would be concerned that friends would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue; this group has the lowest mental health score (-11.5).
- Work productivity scores follow the same trend as mental health, with those agreeing that they would be concerned about friends treating them differently if they had a mental health issue report the lowest

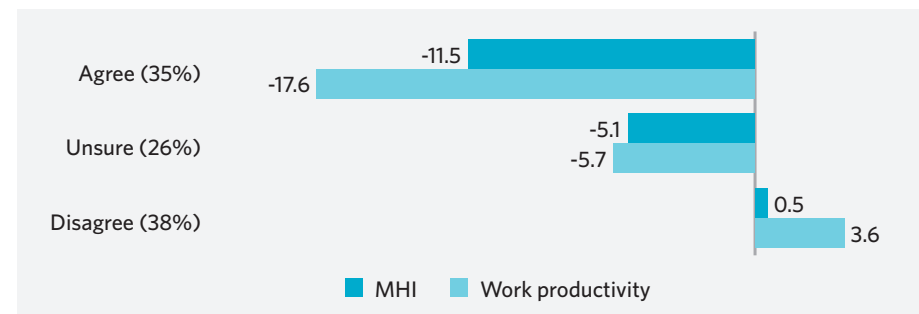
I would feel negatively about myself if I had a mental health issue



I would be concerned that my friends would treat me differently if I had a mental health issue



MHI and work productivity scores by concern that friends would treat me differently if I had a mental health issue





work productivity score (-17.6) and those who disagree that their friends would treat them differently having the highest work productivity score (3.6).

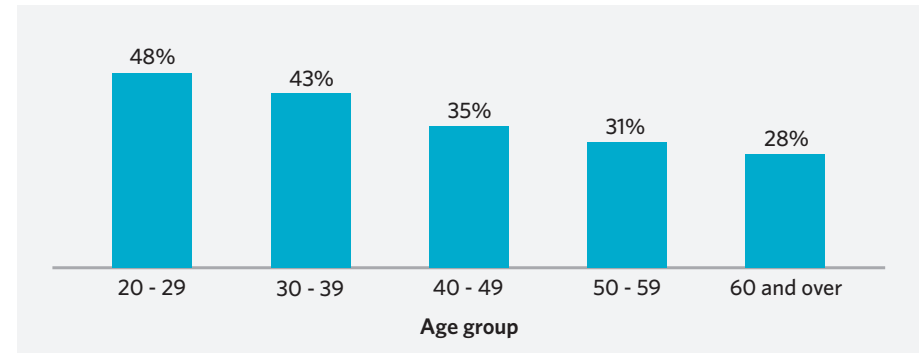
- Younger respondents are more likely to perceive that their friends would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue; nearly fifty percent (48 percent) of respondents aged 20-29 would be concerned compared to twenty-eight percent of individuals aged 60 and above.
- Almost half (46 percent) of managers report that they would be concerned that their friends would treat them differently if they had a mental health issue compared with nearly one-third (30 percent) of non-managers.

Perceived impact to career

Individuals were asked whether they thought that their career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue of which their workplace were aware.

- Forty-four percent report that their career options would be limited if the workplace were aware of a mental health issue; this group had the lowest mental health index score (-10.6).
- Work productivity scores follows the same trend as mental health scores, with those agreeing that their career options would be limited if their workplace were aware of a mental health issue reporting the lowest work productivity score (-15.3), and those who disagree that career options would be limited if they had a mental health issue report the highest productivity score (4.5).

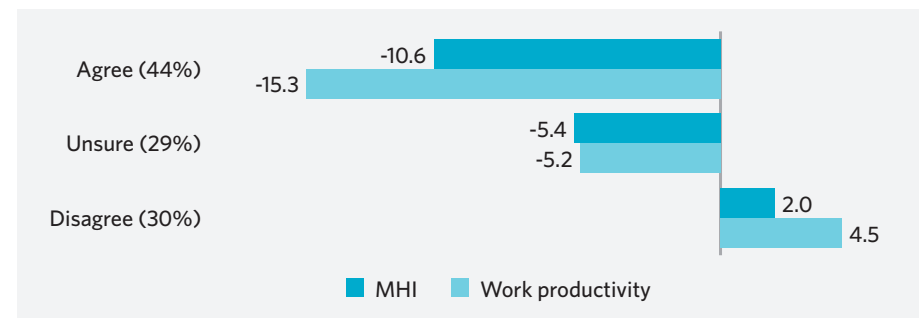
I would be concerned that my friends would treat me differently if I had a mental health issue



My career options would be limited if I had a mental health issue, and my workplace were aware



MHI and work productivity scores by agreement that awareness of a mental health issue would limit career options

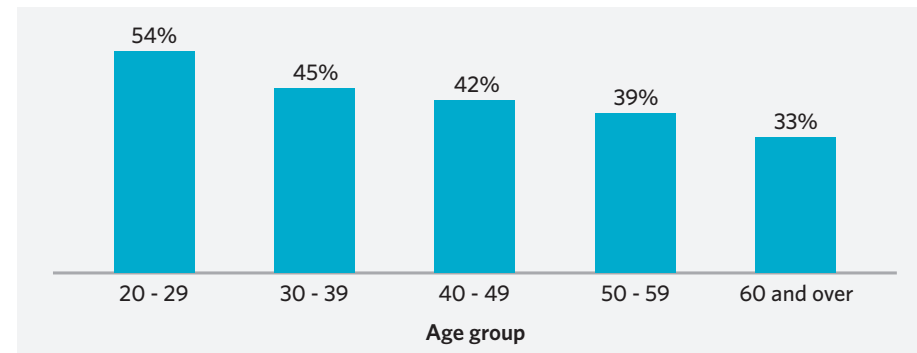




- Younger respondents are more likely to agree that their career options would be limited if their workplace were aware of a mental health issue; over fifty percent (54 percent) of respondents aged 20-29 agree compared to thirty-nine percent of individuals aged 50-59.
- Fifty percent of managers perceive that there would be an impact to their career if their employer knew of a mental health issue compared with non-managers (35 percent).

Of the three types of stigma studied (self-stigma, workplace stigma and social stigma) workplace stigma is perceived more prevalently.

My career options would be limited if I had a mental health issue, and my workplace were aware





Alcohol use during the pandemic

Since the inception of the Mental Health Index™ in April 2020, the mental health of Americans has been strained when compared to the pre-2020 benchmark. Further, the proportion of individuals reporting more stress than the prior month has persisted over 11 months. The disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the physical, mental, social, and financial wellbeing of Americans to the extent that many have turned to unhealthy coping mechanisms to deal with cumulative stress, feelings of isolation, loss, etc. Individuals were asked to consider their use of alcohol at two stages during the COVID-19 pandemic.

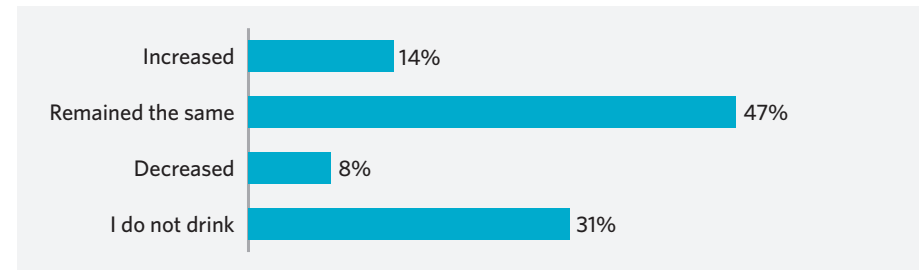
Alcohol use early in the pandemic (March to May 2020)

- Fourteen percent of respondents increased their alcohol use from March to May 2020; this group has the lowest mental health score (-15.5).
- Individuals under the age of 50 are more than twice as likely to report an increase in their alcohol use from March to May 2020, compared with those over the age of 50.

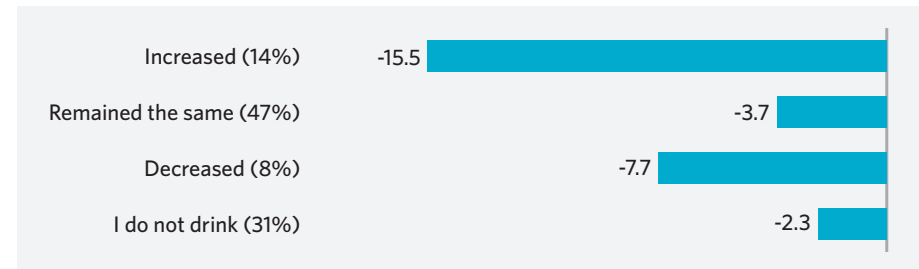
Alcohol use later in the pandemic (October 2020 to January 2021)

- Eight percent of respondents increased their alcohol consumption from October 2020 to January 2021 compared to earlier in the pandemic; this group has the lowest mental health score (-20.1).

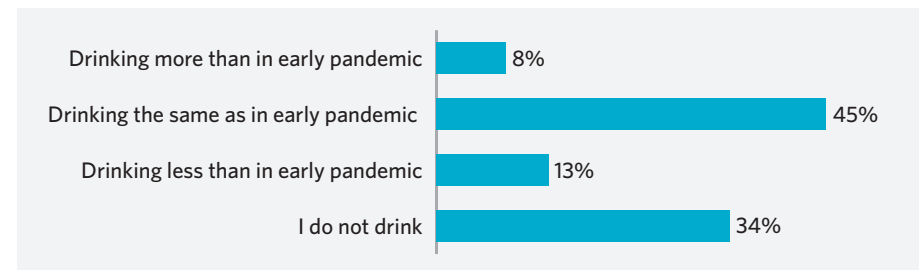
Changes to alcohol consumption early in the pandemic (March to May 2020)



MHI score by changes to alcohol consumption early in the pandemic



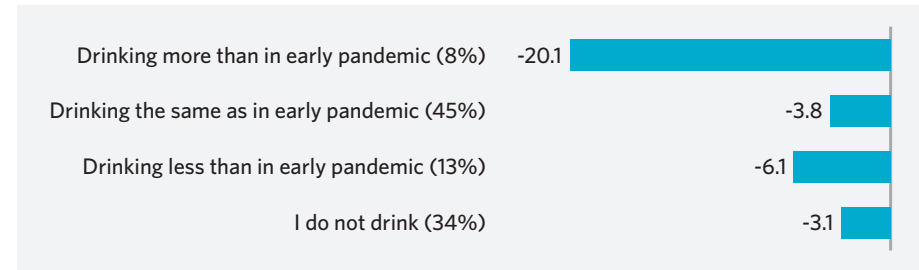
Changes to alcohol consumption more recently (October to present)





- Thirteen percent of individuals are drinking less from October 2020 to January 2021 compared to their alcohol intake earlier in the pandemic.
- Parents are nearly three times as likely as non-parents to report that they are drinking more than they were early in the pandemic.
- Managers are nearly three times more likely to report that they are drinking more than they were early in the pandemic compared with non-managers.

MHI score by changes to alcohol consumption more recently (October to present)



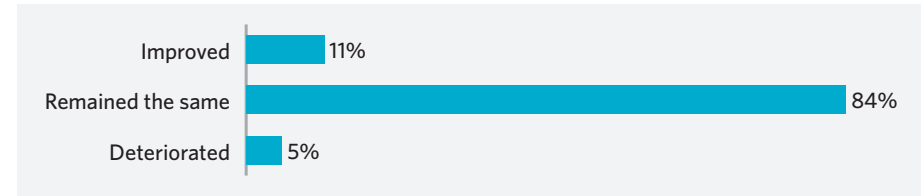


Employee – manager relationship

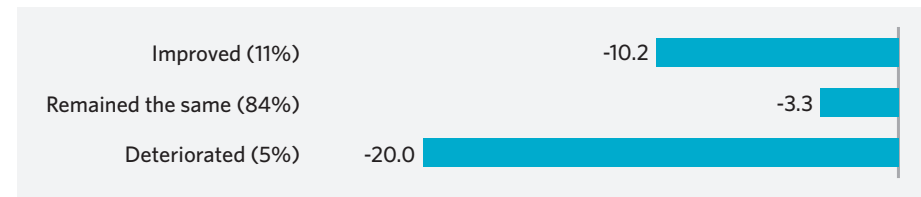
With many employees working from home and others working under modified conditions, workplace interactions have changed dramatically since pandemic began. Employees were asked how the relationship with their supervisor has changed since the pandemic began.

Eighty-four percent of individuals report that the relationship with their supervisor has remained the same since the pandemic began; this group has the highest mental health score (-3.3).

Changes to relationship with supervisor since the pandemic began



MHI score by changes to relationship with supervisor since the pandemic began



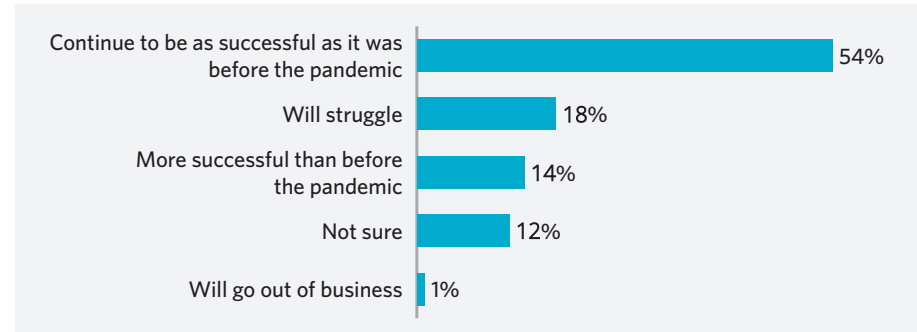


Organizational stability

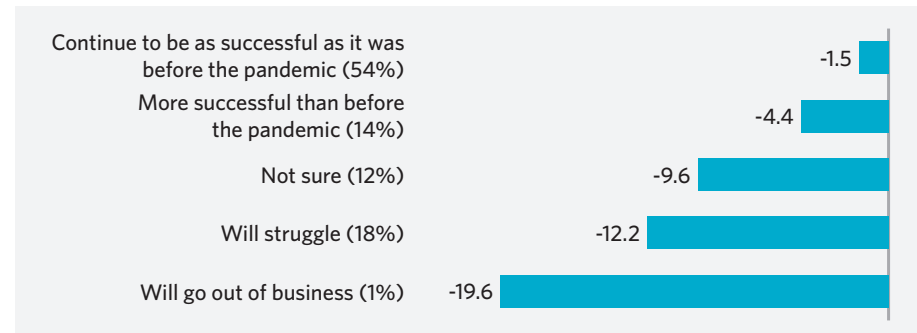
As Americans face one year of disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses across the country have had to react, change, and adapt to new processes, threats, and opportunities. A boon for some while other organizations struggle; a swing in either direction could land the business in either a fortuitous or grave situation. Looking ahead in 2021, employees were asked about the stability of their employer.

- Over half (54 percent) of individuals believe that their employer will continue to be as successful in 2021 as before the pandemic; this group has the most favorable mental health score (-1.5).
- Nearly one-in-five (18 percent) of respondents believe that their employer will struggle in 2021, and this group has the lowest mental health score (-12.2) second only to one percent of respondents who believe that their employer will go out of business in 2021.
- Individuals under the age of 40 are more than fifty percent more likely to report that their organization will be more successful in 2021 compared with those over the age of 40.

Employee expected trends of organizations through 2021



MHI score by expected trends of their employer through 2021





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.

Methodology

The data for this report was collected through an online survey of 5,000 Americans who are living in the United States 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 the United States. The same respondents participate each month to remove sampling bias. The respondents were asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering each question. The Mental Health Index™ is published monthly, starting in April 2020. The benchmark data was collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The data for the current report was collected between January 15 to January 25, 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. 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.

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

Morneau Shepell is a leading provider of technology-enabled HR services that deliver an integrated approach to employee wellbeing through our cloud-based platform. Our focus is providing world-class solutions to our clients to support the mental, physical, social and financial wellbeing of their people. By improving lives, we improve business. Our approach spans services in employee and family assistance, health and wellness, recognition, pension and benefits administration, retirement consulting, actuarial and investment services. Morneau Shepell employs approximately 6,000 employees who work with some 24,000 client organizations that use our services in 162 countries. Morneau Shepell inc. is a publicly traded company on the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX: MSI). For more information, visit morneaushepell.com.



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