

The Mental Health Index™ report

United States of America | April 2021



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April 2021 highlights

Key insight: Nearly half of Americans feel the need for mental health support

On April 3rd, the U.S. reported the highest daily record of vaccines administered (4.1 million doses), since the start of the pandemic¹. Despite rapid deployment of its vaccination program, and the broadening of eligibility for vaccines, infections in the United States have risen due to new variants, restrictions rollback, and spring break travel².

Nearly half of Americans feel the need for mental health support

- 47% of Americans feel the need for mental health support
- Of those who have not taken action on mental health in spite of the need, 28% believe that affordable care is not available, while 27% report that they do not have time to seek care, and 21% report that they do not have energy to seek care
- 14% report discomfort sharing as a barrier to care. This group has the lowest mental health score
- 68% use exercise to improve their mental health, followed by healthy eating (51%), and changing the way of thinking about things (39%)
- Women are more likely than men to report a lack of energy to seek mental healthcare or discomfort sharing

1 Teneo Coronavirus, March 29, 2021

2 Teneo Coronavirus, April 5, 2021

People believe the vaccine uptake as important to improving their outlook

- 26% report that the population reaching herd immunity would most improve their outlook, followed by 24% reporting getting vaccinated against COVID-19
- 21% report that having no more restrictions of any kind would most improve their outlook for the future

Mental Health Index™ Sub-scores/trend*

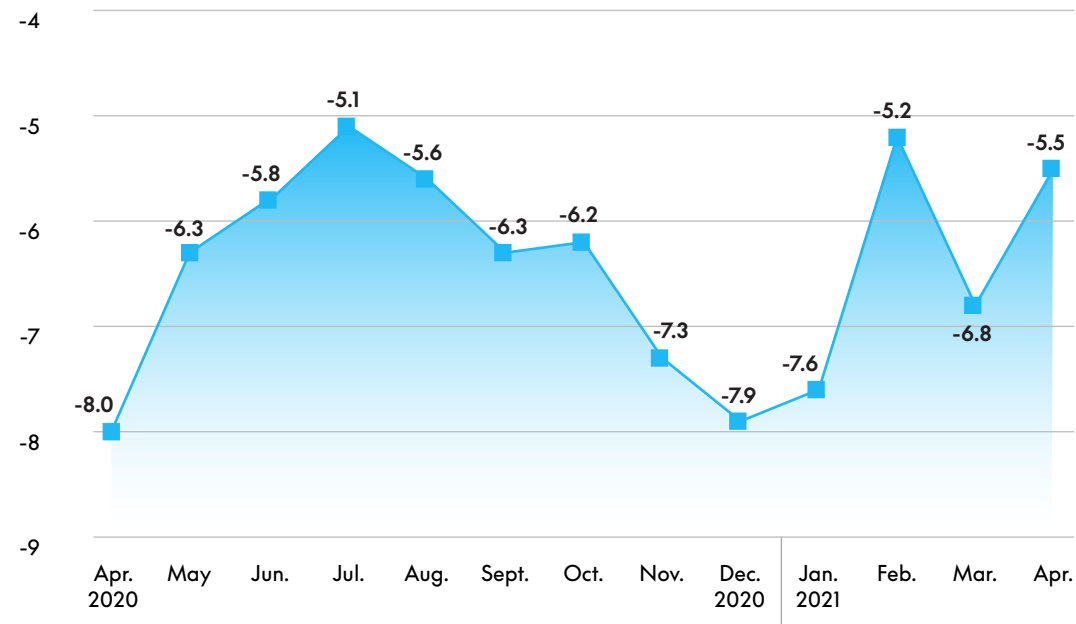
Depression	-6.7	▲
Anxiety	-7.1	▲
Optimism	-5.4	▲
Work productivity	-7.1	▼
Isolation	-7.0	▲
Psychological health	1.8	▲
Financial risk	9.3	▲

*arrows relate to the prior month

- For the thirteenth consecutive month, full-time post-secondary students report the lowest average mental health score. Full-time students also had the most significant increase in mental stress compared to the prior month
- In terms of the location of residence, the greatest increase in month-over-month stress is for respondents living in the Midwest, followed by the West, the South, and the Northeast
- People without emergency savings continue to experience a lower score in mental health (-23.2) than those with an emergency fund (-0.7)

The Mental Health Index™

The Mental Health Index™ (MHI) is a measure of deviation from the benchmark³ of mental health and risk. **The overall Mental Health Index™ for April 2021 is -5 points.** A 5-point decrease from the pre-COVID-19 benchmark reflects a population whose mental health is similar to the most distressed twenty-seventh per cent of the benchmark population.



³ The benchmark reflects data collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

MHI Current
Month—April 2021

-5

March 2021

-7

Mental Health Index™ sub-scores

The lowest Mental Health Index™ sub-scores is for the risk measures of work productivity (-7.1 points) and anxiety (-7.1), followed by isolation (-7.0), depression (-6.7), and optimism (-5.4). The two best risk measures and the only measures above the pre-2020 benchmark are financial risk (9.3) and general psychological health (1.8).

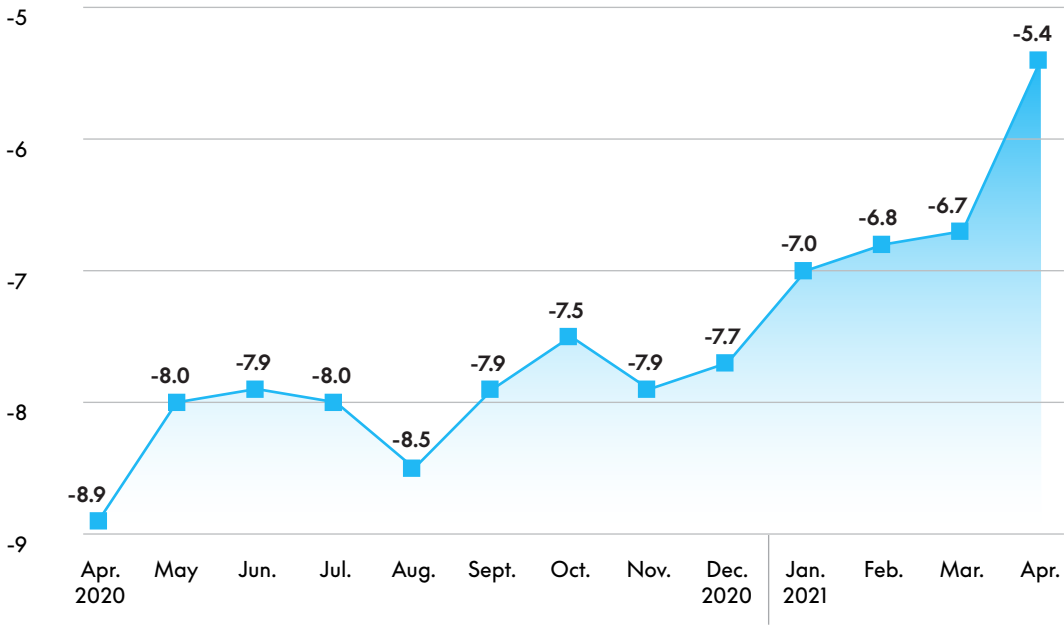
- The only decline in April is in the work productivity score (-0.1 point).
- With a 2.3-point increase, the financial risk score has had the greatest improvement from the prior month.

Mental Health Index™ Sub-scores ⁴ 2021	April	March
Depression	-6.7	-7.8
Anxiety	-7.1	-8.4
Optimism	-5.4	-6.7
Work productivity	-7.1	-7.0
Isolation	-7.0	-7.9
Psychological health	1.8	0.2
Financial risk	9.3	7.0

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

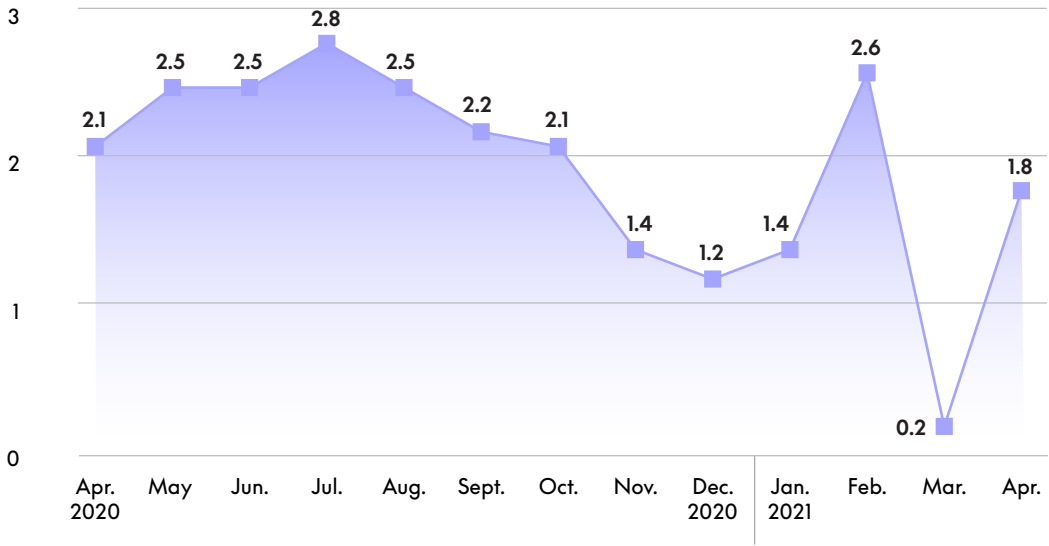
Optimism

Optimism scores since April 2020 have shown general improvement. The optimism score in April 2021 (-5.4) is the highest since the introduction of the scale, at more than 14-points higher than in April 2020 (-8.9). While optimism continues to improve, it remains well-below the pre-2020 benchmark.



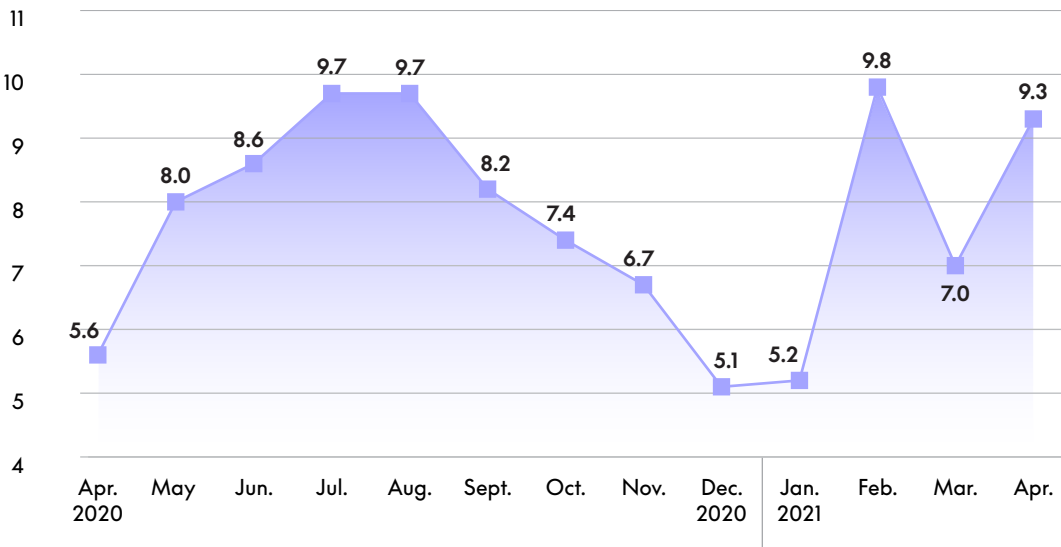
General psychological health

While modest improvements to general psychological health were observed from April to July, a steady decline was observed from July to December. Increases were observed in January and February, nearing the high in July 2020 (2.8). A sharp decline of 1.2 points was seen in March followed by a recovery to 1.8 points in April, close to its value at the start of the MHI.



Financial risk

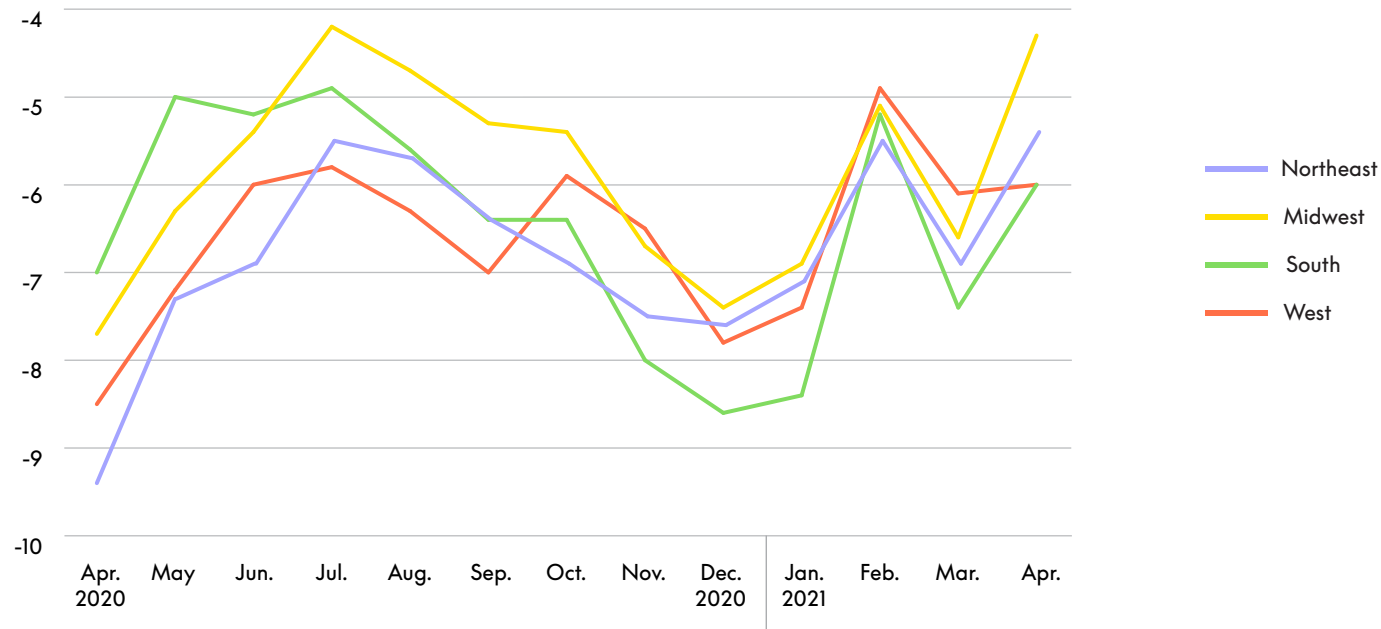
Financial risk continues to be the strongest sub-scale despite a significant decline from August 2020 to December 2020. With a 2.3-point increase, the financial risk score in April 2021 has had the greatest improvement among all sub-scales from the prior month. Financial risk has consistently been the highest sub-scale which indicates that more individuals are maintaining emergency savings when compared with the pre-2020 benchmark.



Mental Health Index™ (regional)

Regional mental health scores since April 2020 have shown general improvement through July; followed by general declines until December 2020. Since January 2021, mental health scores have been inconsistent from month to month. However, all regions show improvement in April 2021 compared to the prior month.

- With a 2.3-point improvement from the prior month, the mental health score in the Midwest is strongest.
- The lowest mental health scores in April 2021 are observed in the South and the West regions (-6.0) of the United States.



Demographics

- Since the start of the MHI, we have found that women have significantly lower mental health scores than men. In April 2021, the mental health score of women is -7.0 compared to -3.6 for men.
- In thirteen consecutive months of MHI results, we have observed that mental health scores have improved with age.
- We have seen differences in mental scores between those with and without children since April 2020. More than one year later, this trend continues with a lower score for those with at least one child (-9.8) compared to those without children (-3.8).

Employment

- Overall, five percent of respondents are unemployed and twelve percent report reduced hours or reduced salary.
- Unemployed people have the lowest mental health score (-15.5), followed by those who report fewer hours compared to the prior month (-15.1), and individuals reporting reduced salary compared to the prior month (-14.5).
- Managers have lower mental health scores (-5.7) than non-managers (-4.7).
- Individuals working for employers with more than 10,000 employees have the highest mental health score (-1.4).
- Respondents who report working for companies with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (-7.6).

Emergency savings

- People without emergency savings continue to experience a lower score in mental health (-23.2). Individuals with an emergency fund have a mental health score of -0.7.

Employment status	April 2021	March 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	-3.5	-4.3
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	-15.1	-17.2
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	-14.5	-17.8
Not currently employed	-15.5	-17.6
Age group	April 2021	March 2021
Age 20-29	-19.1	-20.7
Age 30-39	-12.1	-12.9
Age 40-49	-6.6	-8.2
Age 50-59	-1.0	-2.3
Age 60-69	2.4	2.7
Number of children	April 2021	March 2021
No children in household	-3.8	-4.9
1 child	-10.5	-12.0
2 children	-8.7	-10.6
3 children or more	-9.4	-11.7

Region	April 2021	March 2021
Northeast	-5.4	-6.9
Midwest	-4.3	-6.6
South	-6.0	-7.4
West	-6.0	-6.1
Gender	April 2021	March 2021
Men	-3.6	-3.8
Women	-7.0	-9.3
Income	April 2021	March 2021
Household income <\$30K/annum	-16.1	-20.3
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	-9.9	-11.7
\$60K to <\$100K	-4.9	-4.4
\$100K to <\$150K	-2.7	-3.5
\$150K or more	2.2	2.8

Employer size	April 2021	March 2021
Self-employed/ sole proprietor	-5.4	-7.2
2-50 employees	-5.6	-6.8
51-100 employees	-7.6	-9.8
101-500 employees	-6.8	-7.4
501-1,000 employees	-7.1	-7.3
1,001-5,000 employees	-3.3	-5.0
5,001-10,000 employees	-3.7	-5.2
More than 10,000 employees	-1.4	-3.2
Manager	April 2021	March 2021
Manager	-5.7	-6.2
Non-manager	-4.7	-6.6

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 thirteenth consecutive month, full-time post secondary students have the lowest mental health score (-25.0). This score continues to be significantly lower than the next lowest scores, among individuals in Waste Management (-19.2), and Food Services (-16.6).

Individuals employed in Accommodation (-0.5), Public Administration (-0.8), and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (-1.0) show the highest mental health scores this month.

Individuals employed in the Accommodation and Utilities have seen the greatest improvement in mental health since last month.

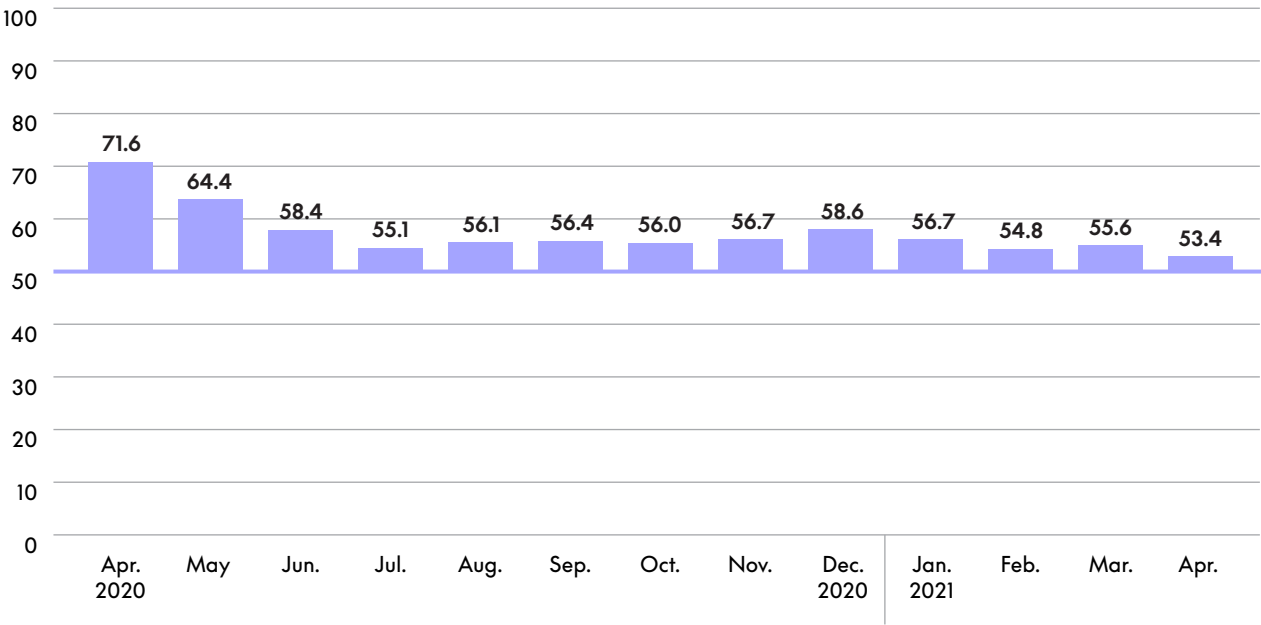
Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.

Industry	April 2021	March 2021	Change
Accommodation	-0.5	-7.8	7.3
Utilities	-4.5	-8.7	4.3
Other	-6.6	-10.6	4.0
Information and Cultural Industries	-5.8	-9.7	3.9
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	-1.2	-4.6	3.5
Other services (except Public Administration)	-3.0	-6.4	3.3
Transportation and Warehousing	-2.9	-5.7	2.9
Manufacturing	-1.3	-4.1	2.8
Management of Companies and Enterprises	-8.2	-10.5	2.3
Educational Services	-3.9	-5.8	1.8
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	-5.3	-7.1	1.8
Construction	-7.2	-8.5	1.3
Health Care and Social Assistance	-5.6	-6.6	1.0
Food Services	-16.6	-17.3	0.7
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-1.0	-1.3	0.3
Retail Trade	-8.6	-8.9	0.2
Administrative and Support services	-10.4	-10.7	0.2
Finance and Insurance	-3.7	-3.2	-0.5
Wholesale Trade	-12.6	-12.0	-0.6
Public Administration	-0.8	-0.2	-0.6
I am a student	-25.0	-21.5	-3.4
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	-6.5	-2.8	-3.7

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 April 2021 is 53.4.** This reflects a net increase in mental stress compared to the prior month.

The current score indicates that 17 percent of the population is experiencing more mental stress compared to the prior month, with 10 percent experiencing less. A continued increase in mental stress since April 2020 indicates a significant accumulation of strain in the U.S. population.



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

MStressChg Current
Month—April 2021

53.4

MStressChg Current
Month—March 2021

55.6

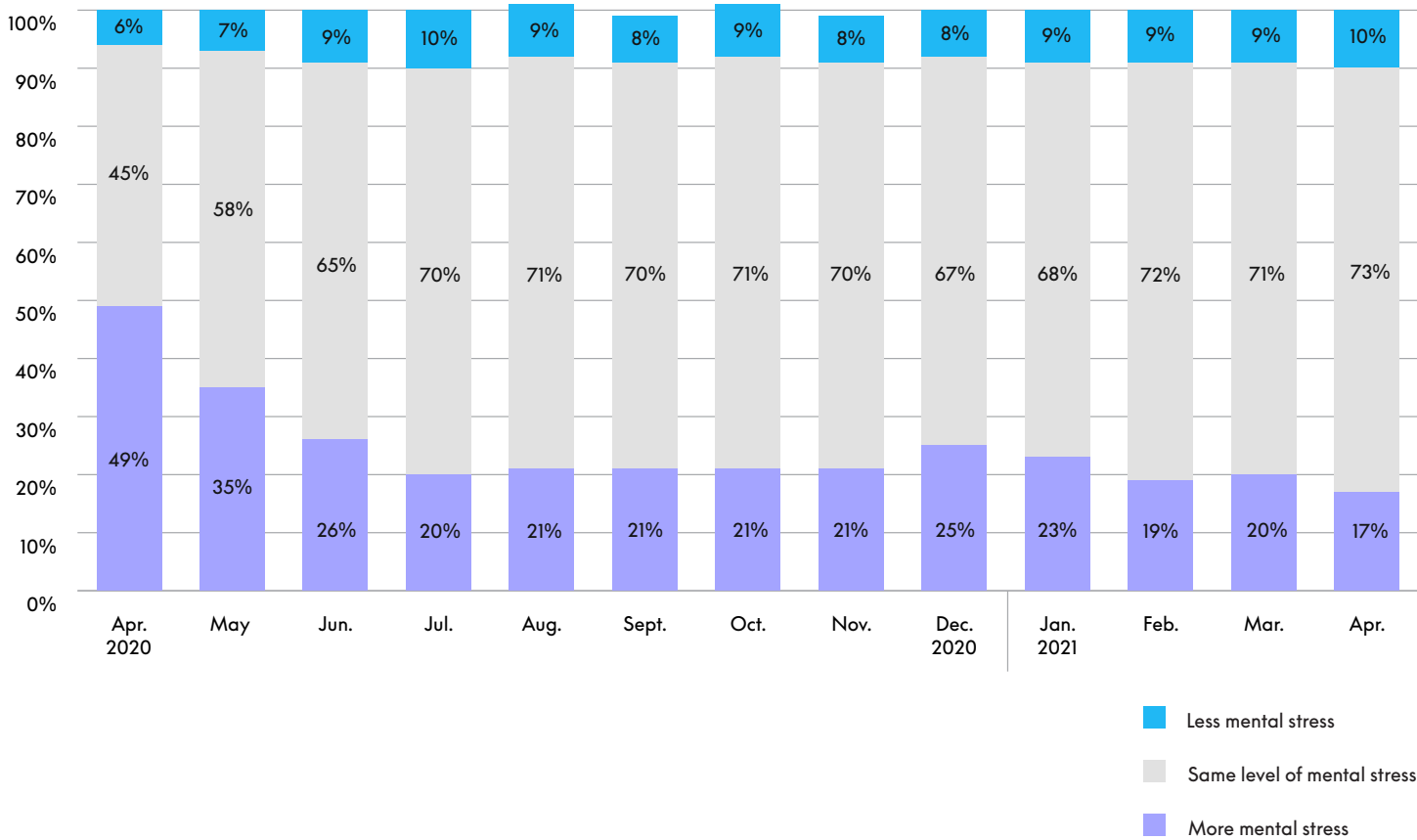
Mental Stress Change (percentages)

Mental Stress Change tracks everyone'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.

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, 49 percent of individuals reported an increase in mental stress. While those reporting increased month-over-month mental stress decreased to 17 percent in April 2021, 73 percent of respondents report the same level of mental stress and only 10 percent report a decrease in mental stress.

Mental Stress Change by month



Demographics

- Since the start of the MHI, we have observed that younger people are experiencing a greater increase in mental stress compared to older respondents.
- We have also found that women have larger increases in mental stress than men. In April 2021, the mental stress change score of women is 54.3 compared to 52.5 for men.

Geography

- The greatest increase in month-over-month stress is for respondents living in the Midwest (54.0), followed by the West (53.4), the South (53.3) and the Northeast (52.9).

Employment

- The greatest increase in mental stress is seen in employed people with reduced hours (60.0), followed by employed people with reduced salary (59.7), then unemployed people (57.6), and employed people with no change to salary or hours (52.2).
- The greatest increase in mental stress is observed among managers (54.5) while non-managers have a more modest increase in mental stress (52.5).

Employment status	April 2021	March 2021
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	52.2	54.0
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	60.0	62.8
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	59.7	63.8
Not currently employed	57.6	60.3

Age group	April 2021	March 2021
Age 20-29	60.7	64.2
Age 30-39	57.5	58.8
Age 40-49	51.9	54.0
Age 50-59	51.1	54.1
Age 60-69	50.4	51.6

Number of children	April 2021	March 2021
No children in household	52.6	54.7
1 child	57.3	57.4
2 children	52.8	57.4
3 children or more	55.6	60.2

State	April 2021	March 2021
Northeast	52.9	56.3
Midwest	54.0	55.5
South	53.3	56.1
West	53.4	54.3

Gender	April 2021	March 2021
Men	52.5	53.9
Women	54.3	57.1

Income	April 2021	March 2021
Household income <\$30K/annum	57.0	61.7
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	54.5	57.8
\$60K to <\$100K	53.8	54.2
\$100K to <\$150K	52.9	54.8
\$150K or more	50.0	51.5

Employer size	April 2021	March 2021
Self-employed/ sole proprietor	51.6	54.9
2-50 employees	53.3	56.1
51-100 employees	53.1	56.4
101-500 employees	55.2	54.6
501-1,000 employees	55.3	55.1
1,001-5,000 employees	52.5	56.6
5,001-10,000 employees	52.2	55.0
More than 10,000 employees	52.0	54.7

Manager	April 2021	March 2021
Manager	54.5	56.4
Non-manager	52.5	55.1

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

The Mental Stress Change (industry)

Individuals employed in Transportation and Warehousing (49.0) report less stress compared to the prior month, and people in Public Administration (50.0) reflect a stabilization in mental stress from month to month.

Full-time post-secondary students continue to have the most significant increase in mental stress (66.5), followed by individuals employed in Utilities (63.0), and Food Services (62.9).

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

Industry	April 2021	March 2021
Transportation and Warehousing	49.0	51.6
Public Administration	50.0	50.5
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	50.6	58.2
Accommodation	51.3	61.8
Management of Companies and Enterprises	51.6	50.0
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	51.6	53.5
Information and Cultural Industries	52.3	56.9
Construction	52.5	51.7
Manufacturing	52.7	54.5
Other	52.8	58.3
Educational Services	52.8	55.5
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	53.2	54.8
Other services (except Public Administration)	53.3	56.1
Retail Trade	53.5	58.8
Health Care and Social Assistance	53.5	56.3
Finance and Insurance	53.8	54.4
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	53.9	50.8
Administrative and Support services	54.9	55.8
Wholesale Trade	57.1	59.1
Food Services	62.9	55.6
Utilities	63.0	58.7
I am a student	66.5	61.7

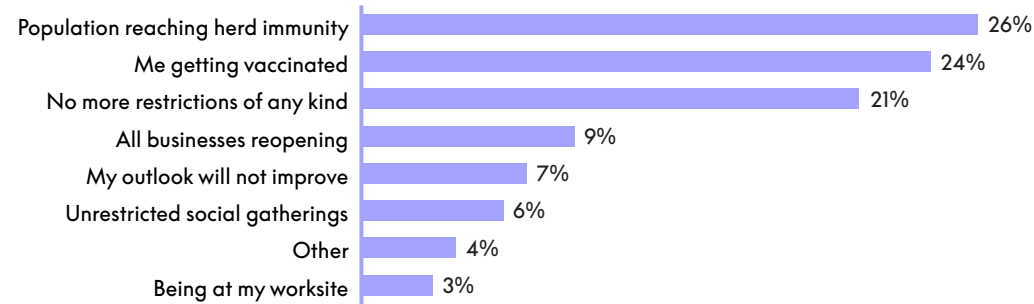
Spotlight

Future outlook

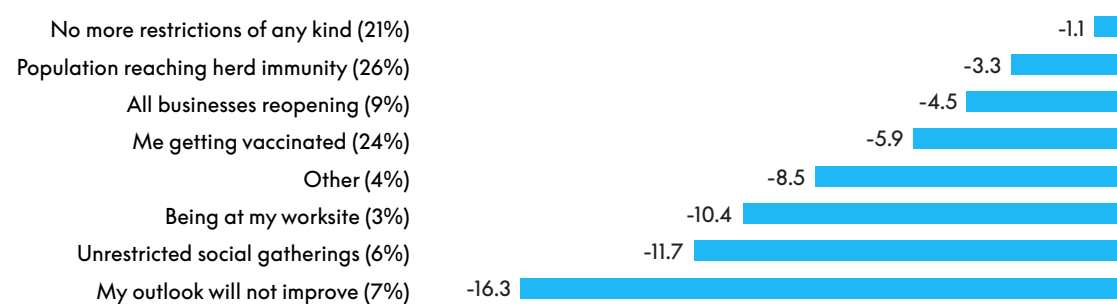
With vaccines continuing to roll-out across the United States, there is cause for optimism. Respondents were asked what would most improve their outlook for the future.

- More than one-quarter (26 percent) report that the population reaching herd immunity would most improve their outlook for the future and this group has the second most favourable mental health score (-3.3).
- Almost one-quarter (24 percent) report that getting vaccinated would most improve their outlook, followed the those reporting no more restrictions of any kind (21 percent).
- Employees working fewer hours or with reduced salary are 50 percent more likely to report that businesses reopening would most improve their outlook.

Event that would most improve my outlook for the future



MHI score by event that would most improve my outlook for the future



Supports and barriers to improving mental health

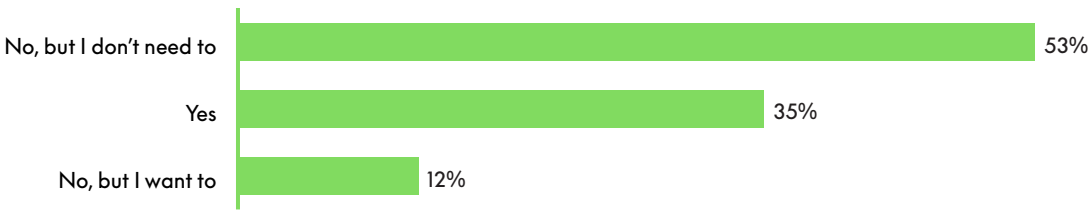
Steps to improving mental health

In March 2021, we reported that thirty-six per cent of Americans were less likely to seek mental health than prior to the pandemic or were undecided about accessing mental healthcare. This reluctance exists despite the continued availability of mental healthcare.

Respondents were asked if they were taking steps to improve their mental health.

- More than one-third (35 percent) have taken steps to improve their mental health, while another twelve percent have not taken steps but want to.
- The least favorable mental health scores are seen among the twelve percent who have not taken steps but want to (-21.1), followed by those who have taken steps to improve their mental health (-9.3).
- Individuals under 50 are nearly fifty percent more likely than those over 50 to have taken steps to improve their mental health.

Have you taken steps to improve your mental health?



MHI score by whether respondents have taken steps to improve their mental health

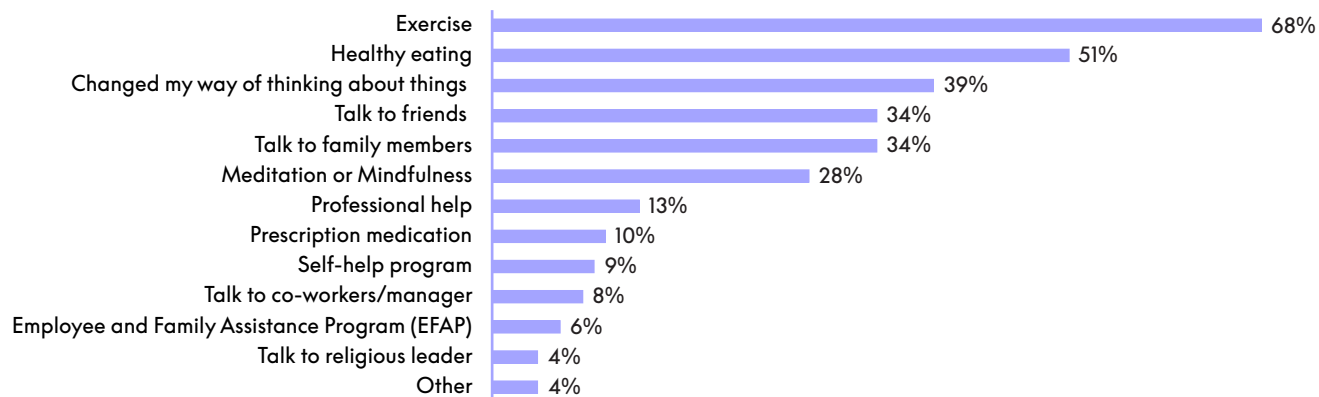


Supports to improve mental health

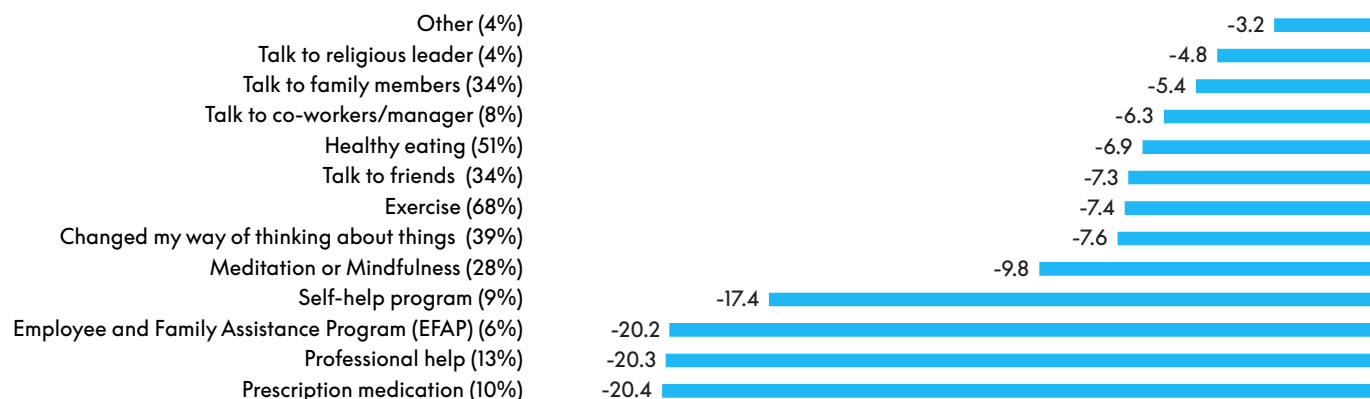
More than one-third (35 percent) of people report taking steps to improve their mental health. Respondents were asked to select the supports that they have used to manage their mental health.

- More than two-thirds (68 percent) of people use exercise to improve their mental health, followed by healthy eating (51 percent), and changing the way they think about things (39 percent).
- Aside from respondents who selected 'Other', the most favorable mental health scores are reported by people who talk to a religious leader as a means of mental health support (-4.8), followed by those reporting talking to family members (-5.4), and those talking to their co-worker/manager (-6.3).
- Women are forty percent more likely than men to report talking to friends and family members for support.

Supports to improve mental health



MHI score by supports to improve mental health

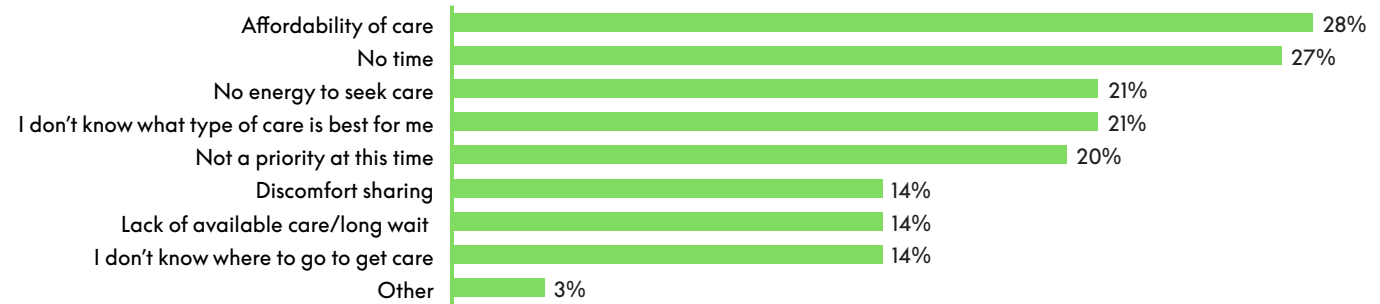


Barriers to improving mental health

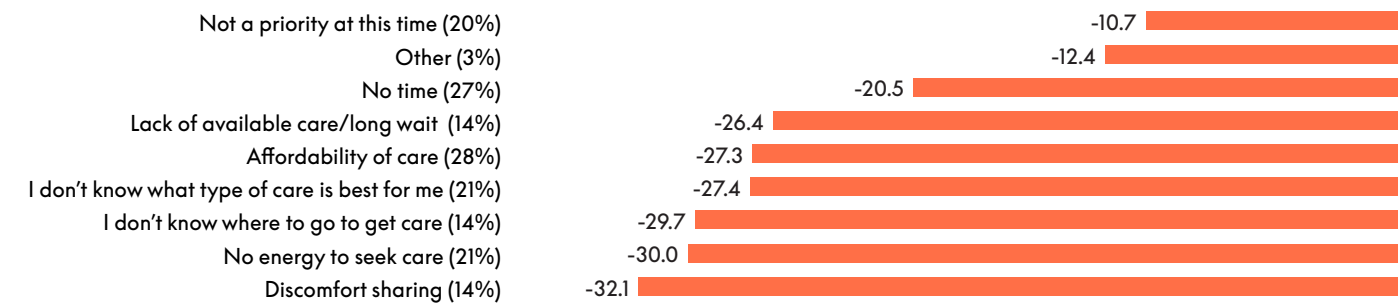
Twelve percent of people report that they have not taken steps to improve their mental health but would like to. We asked this group about barriers to mental health care.

- Twenty-eight percent believe that affordable care is not available, followed by twenty-seven percent reporting that they have no time to seek care, and twenty-one percent not having energy to seek care.
- The lowest mental health scores are seen among fourteen percent of people reporting discomfort sharing (-32.1), followed by twenty-one percent of people who do not have energy to seek care (-30.0), and fourteen percent who don't know where to get care (-29.7).

Barriers to mental health improvement

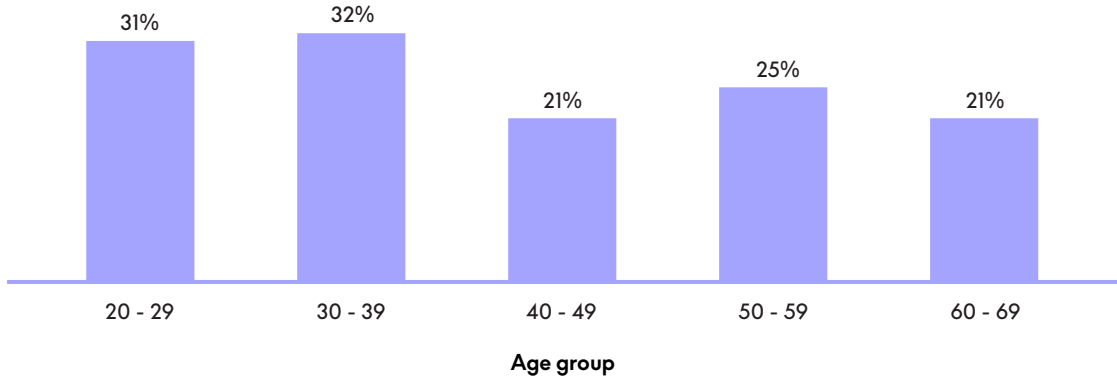


MHI score by barriers to mental health improvement



More than one-quarter (27 percent) of people report having no time to focus on improving their mental health. Almost one-third (32 per cent) under the age of 40 report that they have no time, compared to 22 percent over the age of 40.

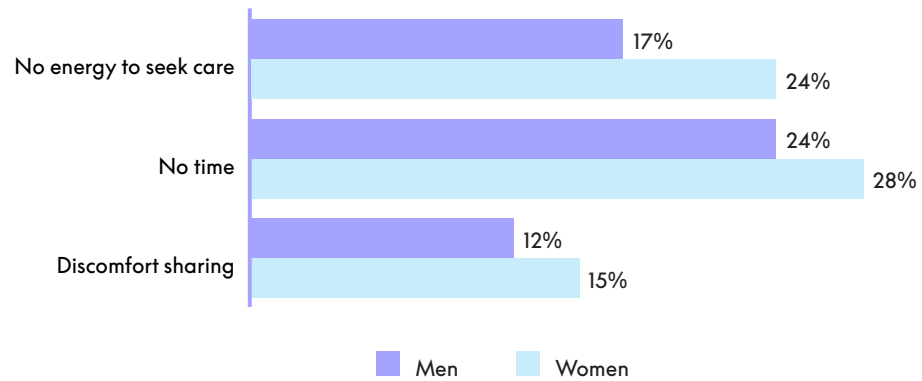
People reporting “no time” as a barrier to improving mental health



Gender differences

- Nearly one-quarter of women report lacking energy to seek mental healthcare.
- Women with children are nearly 50 percent more likely than women without children to report no time to improve their mental health.
- Men without children are two and a half times more likely than men with children to report that improving their mental health is not a priority.

Key gender differences in reported barriers to improving mental health



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 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 5,000 Americans who are living in the United States 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 the United States.

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™ is published monthly starting in April 2020. Benchmark data was collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Data for the current report was collected between March 22 to April 2, 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



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