

# The Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™

Canada | April 2022



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# The top 5 things you need to know for April 2022

## 1. Despite a modest improvement in April 2022,

**the mental health of Canadians appears to have been “re-set” to a level well below the pre-2020 benchmark with a negative score being the norm.**

- At -10.0, the current mental health score improved a half-point from the prior month.
- Work productivity, isolation, and financial risk scores declined from March to April 2022.
- Despite a decline of 1.3 points this month, the strongest sub-score continues to be financial risk, representing an improvement in the level of emergency savings compared to 2019.
- Mental health scores improved in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, the Maritimes, and Newfoundland and Labrador while Alberta, Manitoba, and Quebec saw declines in mental health.
- The mental health score of managers is more than one point below non-managers and nearly one point below the national average.

## 2. Almost half of Canadians say the pandemic has had a negative impact on their ongoing mental health.

- 45% indicate the pandemic has had a negative impact on their ongoing mental health and this group has a mental health score nine points below the national average.

- Canadians without emergency savings are twice as likely to report the pandemic has negatively impacted their ongoing mental health.
- There are no significant differences in the gender, age, or income profile of respondents who report a negative impact of the pandemic on their ongoing mental health.

## 3. Nearly three in five Canadians would reach out for professional help if struggling with stress or a mental health issue.

- 56% are likely to reach out for professional help and this group has a mental health score nearly two points higher than the national average.
- 17% are unlikely to reach out for professional help and this group has a mental health score more than four points below the national average.

## 4. Nearly half of Canadians are feeling more sensitive to stress.

- 46% are feeling more sensitive to stress compared to before the pandemic and this group has a mental health score nearly 10 points below the national average.
- Younger employees (under 40) are 50 per cent more likely to feel more sensitive to stress compared to before the pandemic.
- 49% notice their colleagues are more sensitive to stress compared to before the pandemic.

**56%**

are likely to reach out for professional help for stress or a mental health issue

**46%**

are feeling more sensitive to stress compared to before the pandemic

**45%**

feel the pandemic has had a negative impact on their mental health

**4 in 10**

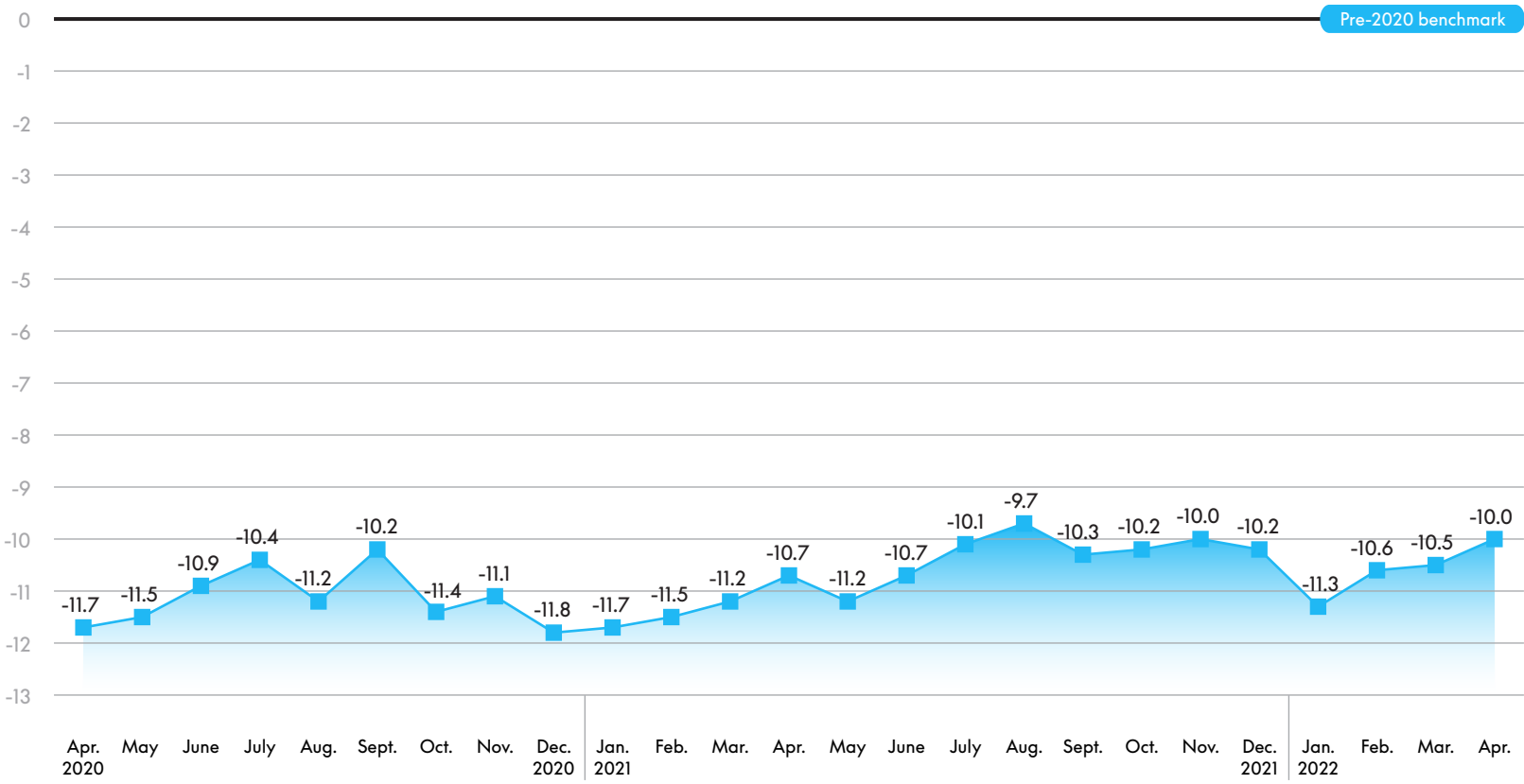
say the conflict in Ukraine is negatively impacting them

**5. Almost four in ten indicate that the conflict in Ukraine is impacting them personally.**

- Those who indicate that the conflict is impacting them personally have the lowest mental health scores.
- 38% report the conflict in Ukraine is negatively impacting them.
- 36% are most concerned about long-term disruption and suffering of those involved.
- 30% are most concerned about the escalation and broadening of conflict.
- 22% are most concerned about the economic impact of the conflict in Ukraine.

# The Mental Health Index™

The Mental Health Index™ (MHI) is a measure of deviation from the benchmark<sup>1</sup> of mental health and risk. **The overall Mental Health Index for April 2022 is -10.0 points.** A 10-point decrease from the pre-2020 benchmark reflects a population whose mental health is similar to the most distressed four per cent of the benchmark population.



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

MHI Current Month  
April 2022

-10.0

March 2022

-10.5

## Mental Health Index™ sub-scores

The lowest Mental Health Index™ sub-score is for the risk measure of depression (-12.2), followed by work productivity (-11.5), isolation (-10.8), anxiety (-10.4), optimism (-9.8), and general psychological health (-2.4). Despite a decline of 1.3 points from the prior month, the most favourable mental health sub-score, and the only measure above the historical benchmark, continues to be financial risk (2.7).

- Work productivity, isolation, and financial risk scores have declined from March 2022.
- With a 1.0-point increase, the optimism sub-score had the greatest improvement over the prior month.
- The financial risk sub-score declined for the second consecutive month; however, it continues to be the strongest of all sub-scores, at nearly three points above the pre-2020 benchmark.

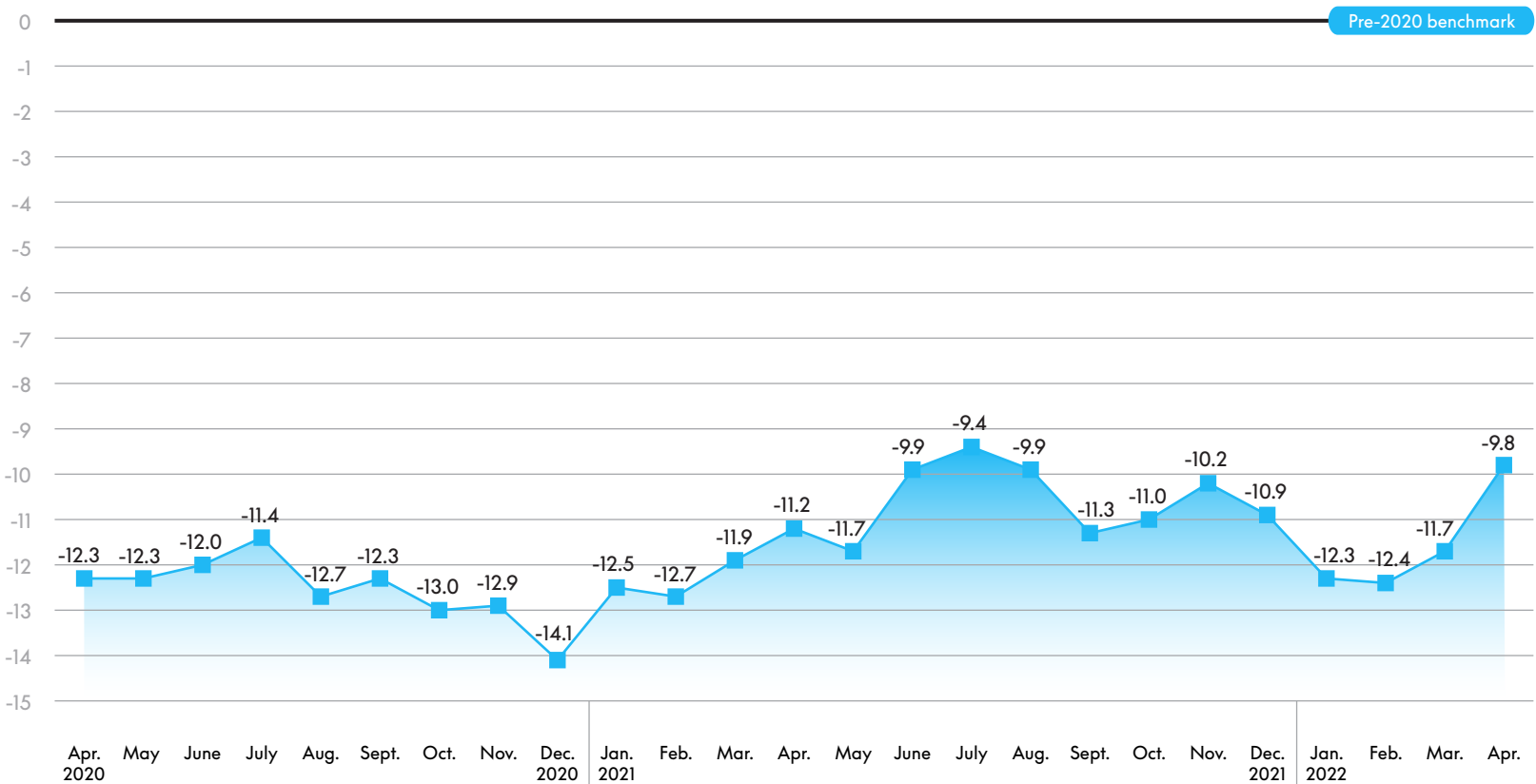
Mental Health Index™ Sub-scores <sup>2</sup> 2022	April	March
Depression	-12.2	-12.2
Work productivity	-11.5	-10.7
Isolation	-10.8	-10.4
Anxiety	-10.4	-11.4
Optimism	-9.8	-11.7
Psychological health	-2.4	-3.5
Financial risk	2.7	4.0

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

# Optimism

Since April 2020, optimism sub-scores have remained significantly below the benchmark. Despite some months of modest improvement, including a peak in July 2021, scores have fluctuated between nine and fourteen points below the benchmark.

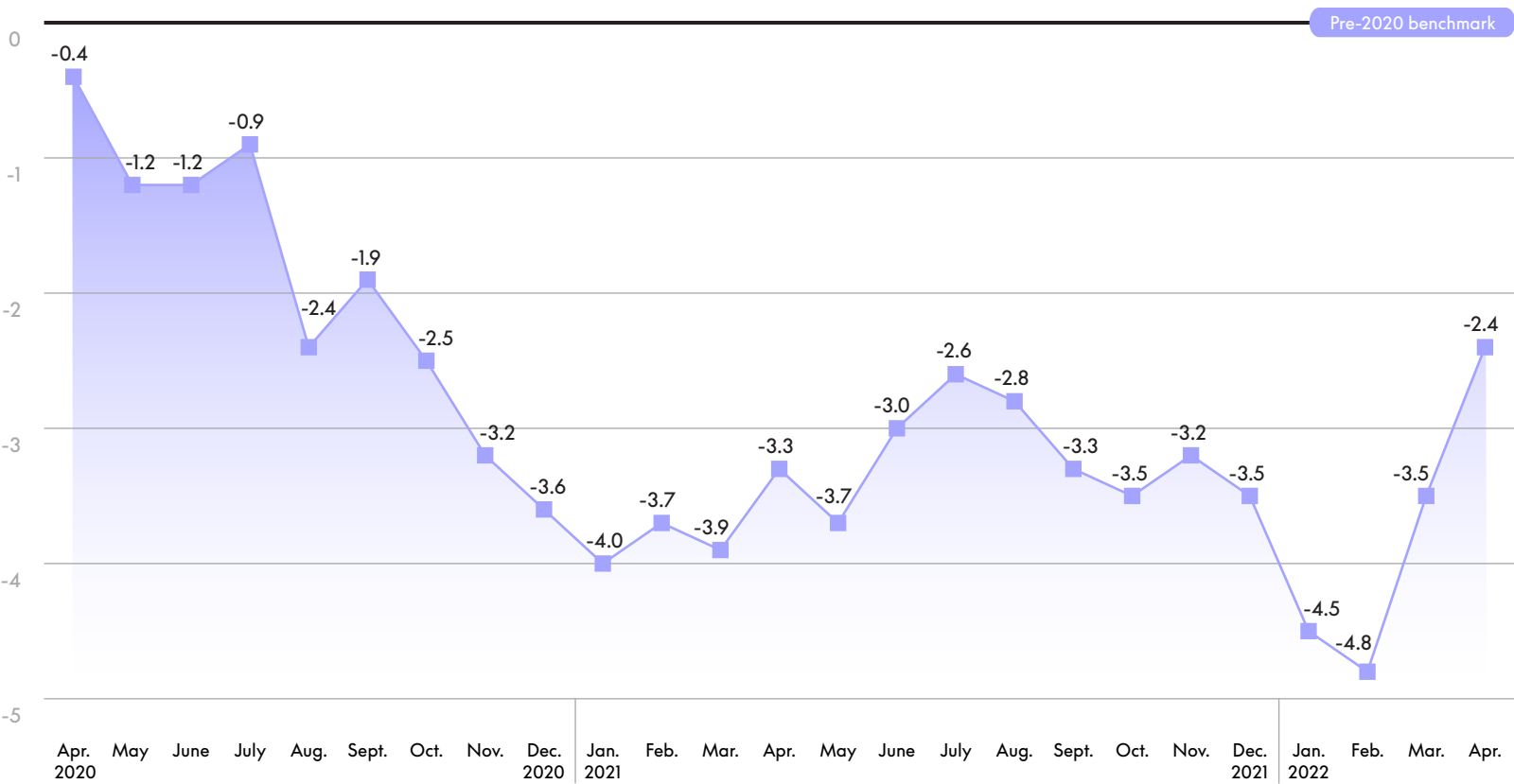
In April 2022, the optimism score continues to improve for the second consecutive month; however, remains nearly 10 points below the pre-2020 benchmark.



# General psychological health

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

From November 2020 to December 2021, the psychological health score of Canadians fluctuated modestly. A low of nearly five points below the pre-2020 benchmark was observed in February 2022 and the optimism score has continued to improve in March and April 2022. At -2.4 points, the score is at a level not seen since October 2020.

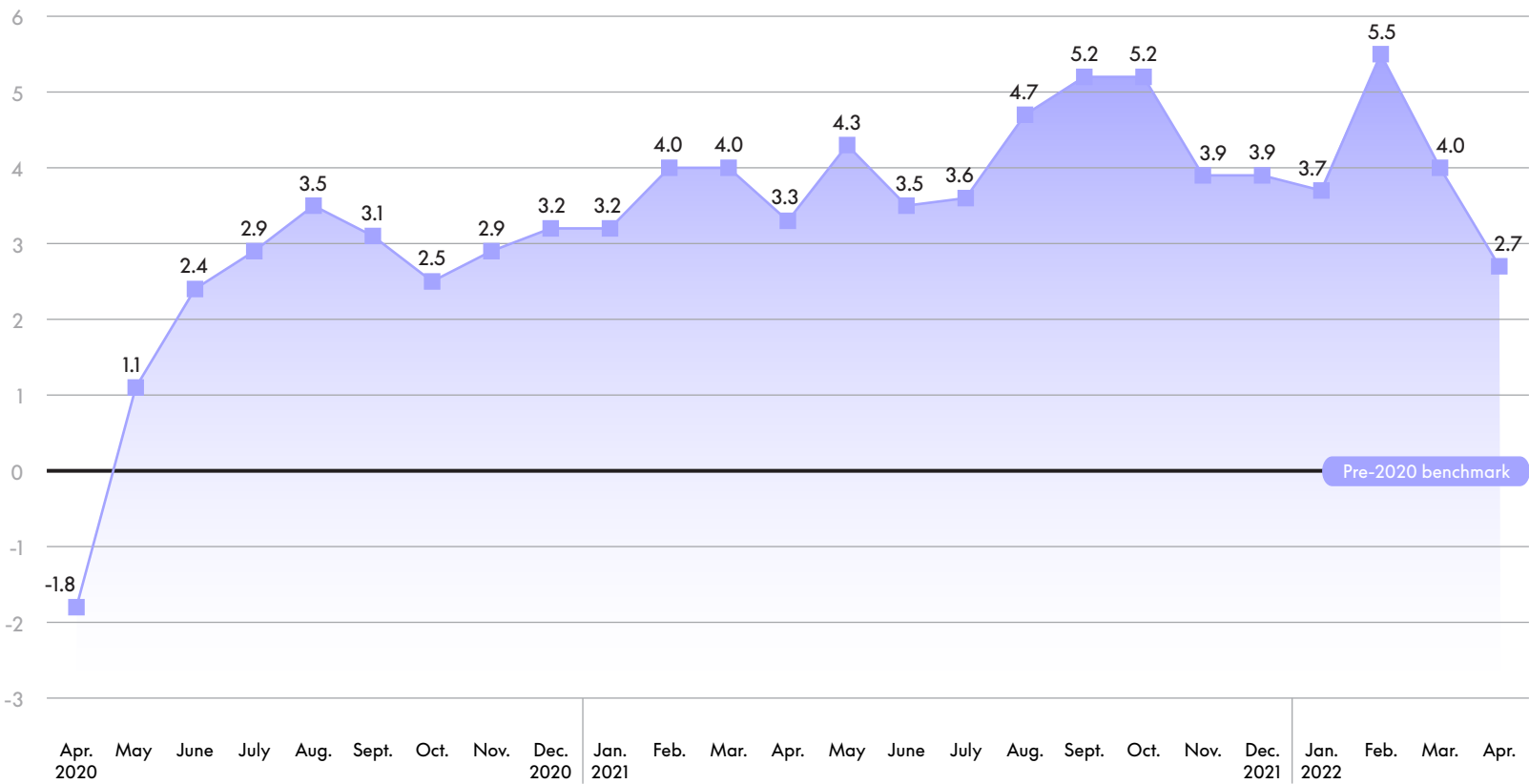




# Financial risk

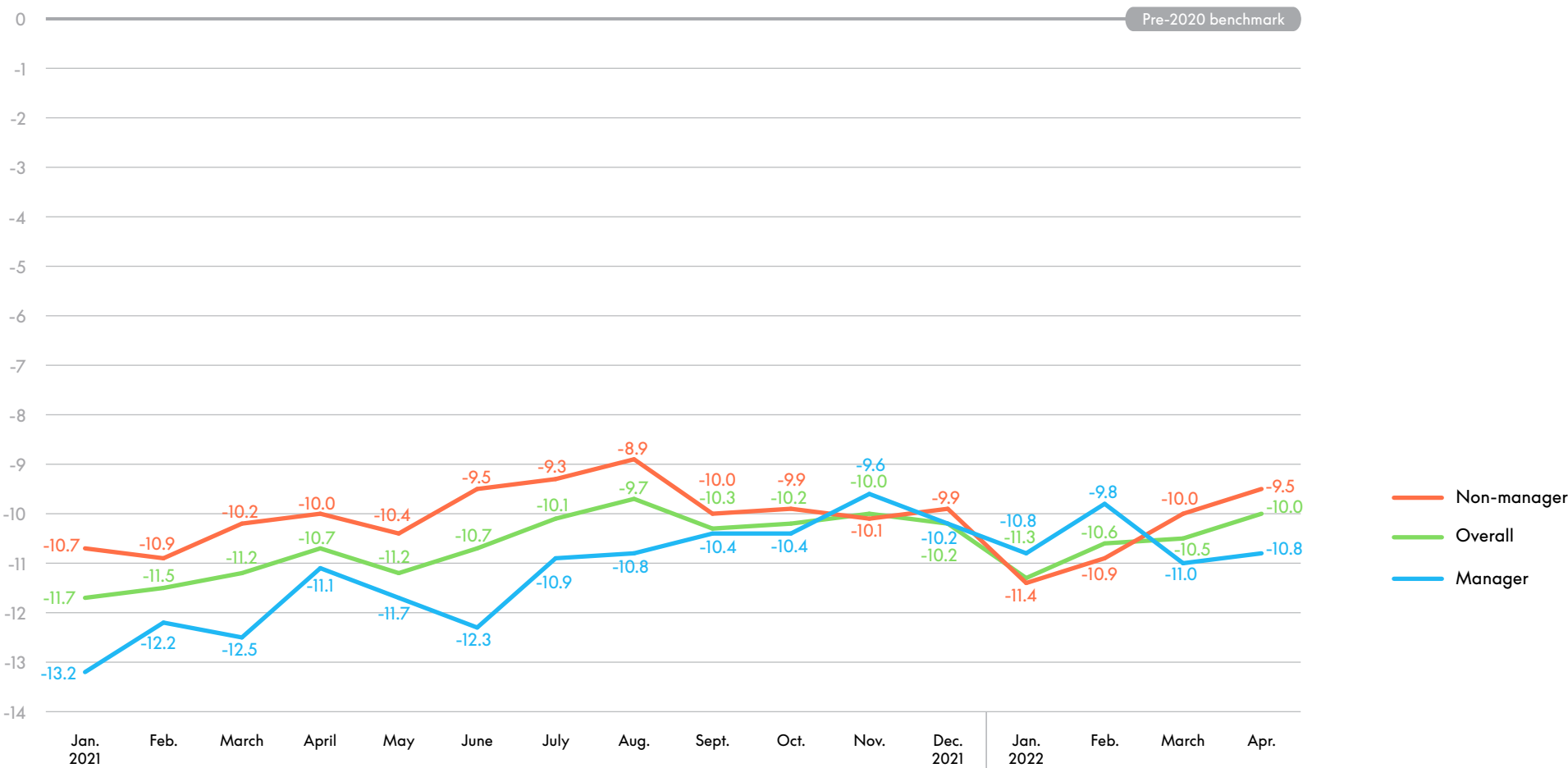
The financial risk sub-score measures the level of individuals' emergency savings.

The financial risk sub-score has shown general improvement since the launch of the MHI in April 2020. In February 2022, the financial risk sub-score of Canadians increased to a high of 5.5 but declined sharply in March and April, falling to 2.7 in the current month, a low not seen since October 2020. Despite this significant decline, at nearly three points above the pre-2020 benchmark, the financial risk continues to be the strongest of all mental health sub-scores.



# Managers compared to non-managers

From January to October 2021, the mental health scores of managers were lower than non-managers and lower than the Canadian average. In November, this trend reversed with managers reporting a slightly higher average mental health score compared to non-managers. In April 2022, for the second consecutive month, the mental health score of managers (-10.8) is lower than both the Canadian population overall (-10.0), and non-managers (-9.5).



## Demographics

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have had significantly lower mental health scores than men. In April 2022, the mental health score of women is -12.4 compared to -7.5 for men.
- Since April 2020, mental health scores have improved with age.
- Differences in mental health scores between those with and without children have been reported since the launch of the Index in April 2020. More than two years later, this pattern continues with a lower score for those with at least one child (-12.3) than those without children (-8.8).

## Employment

- Overall, three per cent of respondents are unemployed<sup>3</sup> and eight per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary.
- Individuals reporting reduced salary compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (-18.6), followed by those working fewer hours (-18.3), those with no change to salary or hours (-9.3), and those not currently employed (-9.2).
- Managers have a lower mental health score (-10.8) than non-managers (-9.5).
- Individuals who are self-employed have the highest mental health score (-4.5).
- Respondents working for companies with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (-13.1).

## Emergency savings

- Those without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (-31.1) than the overall group (-10.0). Individuals with emergency savings have a mental health score of -0.4.

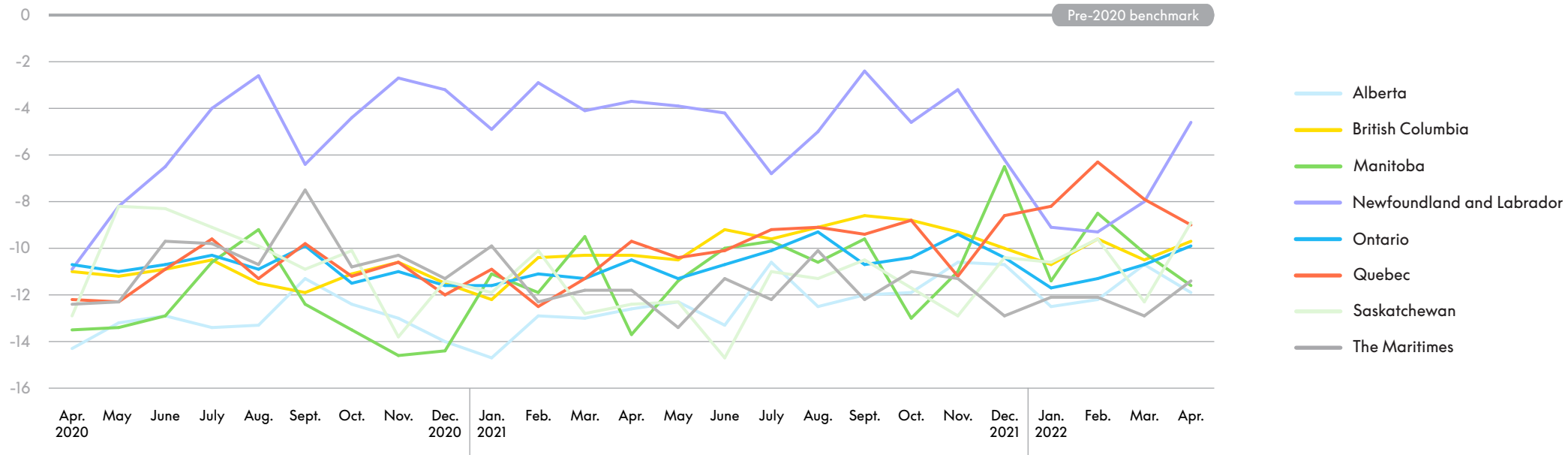
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3 MHI respondents who have been employed in the past six months are included in the poll.

# Mental Health Index™ (provincial)

Since April 2020, provincial mental health scores have fluctuated. Except for Newfoundland and Labrador, the fluctuation patterns for the provinces were similar through July 2021. In April 2022, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, the Maritimes, and Newfoundland and Labrador saw improvements in mental health while Alberta, Manitoba, and Quebec saw declines in mental health.

- The mental health score in Newfoundland and Labrador is the highest (-4.6) due to a 3.4-point improvement over March 2022.
- Alberta has the lowest mental health score in the country (-11.9), following a 1.2-point decrease from the prior month.
- For the second consecutive month, the mental health score in Quebec declined and is currently at a low not seen in five months.



Employment status	April 2022	March 2022
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	-9.3	-9.3
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	-18.3	-20.3
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	-18.6	-20.4
Not currently employed	-9.2	-11.8

Age group	April 2022	March 2022
Age 20-29	-21.2	-21.8
Age 30-39	-15.8	-16.1
Age 40-49	-10.9	-12.2
Age 50-59	-7.6	-8.3
Age 60-69	-1.9	-3.7

Number of children	April 2022	March 2022
No children in household	-8.8	-9.7
1 child	-12.9	-13.5
2 children	-11.3	-11.6
3 children or more	-13.5	-7.3

Province	April 2022	March 2022
Alberta	-11.9	-10.7
British Columbia	-9.7	-10.5
Manitoba	-11.6	-10.2
Newfoundland and Labrador	-4.6	-8.0
The Maritimes	-11.4	-12.9
Ontario	-9.9	-10.7
Quebec	-9.0	-7.9
Saskatchewan	-8.9	-12.3

Gender	April 2022	March 2022
Men	-7.5	-8.8
Women	-12.4	-12.1

Household income	April 2022	March 2022
<\$30K/annum	-19.8	-20.1
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	-14.5	-14.9
\$60K to <\$100K	-10.4	-10.9
\$100K to <\$150K	-7.6	-7.8
\$150K or more	-3.7	-3.1

Employer size	April 2022	March 2022
Self-employed/sole proprietor	-4.5	-6.2
2-50 employees	-10.3	-11.1
51-100 employees	-13.1	-12.7
101-500 employees	-10.9	-12.6
501-1,000 employees	-12.1	-13.1
1,001-5,000 employees	-9.4	-7.4
5,001-10,000 employees	-10.5	-10.6
More than 10,000 employees	-7.5	-9.3

Manager	April 2022	March 2022
Manager	-10.8	-11.0
Non-manager	-9.5	-10.0

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

# Mental Health Index™ (industry)

The lowest mental health score in April 2022 is among individuals employed in Information and Cultural Industries (-16.6), followed by those working in Utilities (-16.4), and Accommodation and Food Services (-14.3).

Those employed in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (-2.2), Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (-5.6), and Public Administration (-7.9) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.

Industry	April 2022	March 2022	Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	-2.2	-12.2	9.9
Retail Trade	-8.3	-11.5	3.2
Construction	-8.3	-11.3	3.0
Public Administration	-7.9	-10.8	2.9
Transportation and Warehousing	-8.1	-10.5	2.4
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	-10.1	-12.3	2.2
Manufacturing	-8.3	-10.0	1.6
Wholesale Trade	-11.6	-13.1	1.5
Other	-10.4	-11.7	1.3
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	-10.7	-11.7	1.1
Automotive Industry	-9.4	-10.4	1.0
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-5.6	-5.8	0.2
Information and Cultural Industries	-16.6	-16.1	-0.5
Utilities	-16.4	-15.8	-0.5
Health Care and Social Assistance	-11.8	-10.5	-1.3
Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction	-8.9	-7.2	-1.7
Accommodation and Food Services	-14.3	-12.5	-1.8
Finance and Insurance	-13.1	-11.3	-1.8
Educational Services	-11.3	-8.1	-3.2
Other services (except Public Administration)	-10.2	-6.4	-3.8
Management of Companies and Enterprises	-13.2	-1.9	-11.4

# Spotlight

## Pandemic impact on mental health

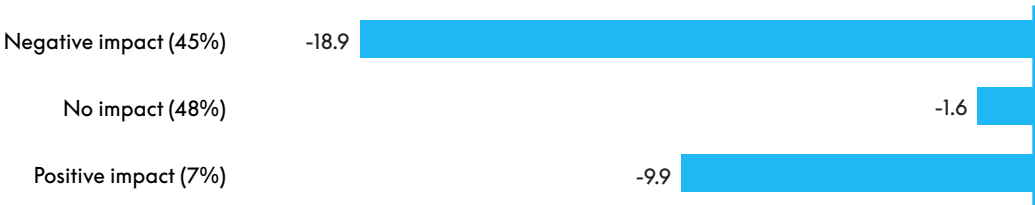
Canadians were asked whether the pandemic has impacted their ongoing mental health.

- Almost half of working Canadians (45 per cent) report the pandemic has had a negative impact on their ongoing mental health. This group has the lowest mental health score (-18.9), nine points below the national average (-10.0).
- Nearly half (48 per cent) report the pandemic has had no impact on their ongoing mental health, and this group has the highest mental health score (-1.6), more than eight points higher than the national average (-10.0).
- Individuals without emergency savings are nearly twice as likely as those with emergency saving to report the pandemic has negatively impacted their ongoing mental health.

### The pandemic has impacted my ongoing mental health



### MHI score by pandemic has impacted my ongoing mental health

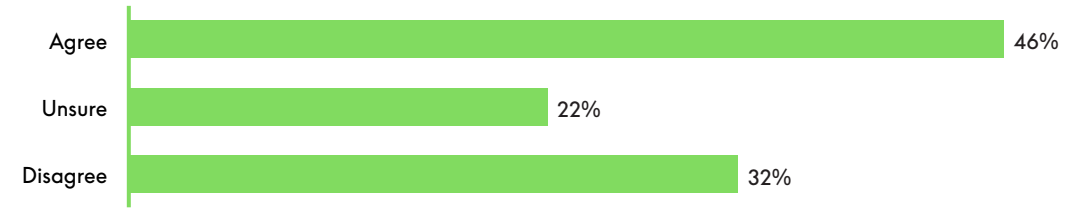


## Stress

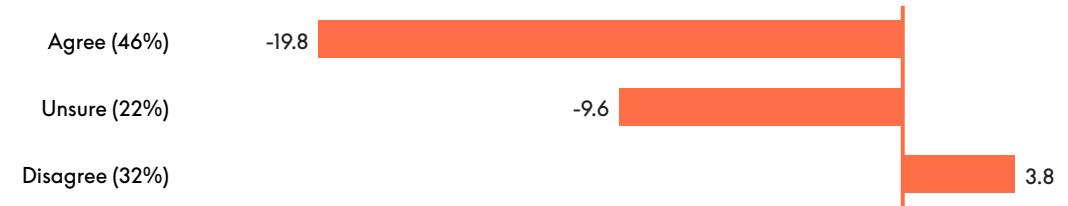
Canadians were asked whether they are feeling more sensitive to stress compared to before the pandemic.

- Nearly half (46 per cent) are feeling more sensitive to stress compared to before the pandemic, and this group has the lowest mental health score (-19.8), nearly ten points below the national average (-10.0).
- The highest mental health score (3.8) is among 32 per cent who do not feel more sensitive to stress compared to before the pandemic.
- Respondents younger than 40 are 50 per cent more likely than respondents older than 50 to feel more sensitive to stress compared to before the pandemic.
- Individuals employed with reduced salary or fewer hours are more than 30 per cent more likely to feel more sensitive to stress compared to before the pandemic.

### I am feeling more sensitive to stress compared to before the pandemic



### MHI score by I am feeling more sensitive to stress compared to before the pandemic

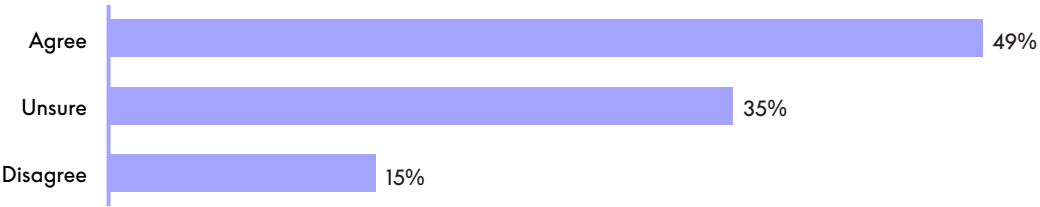




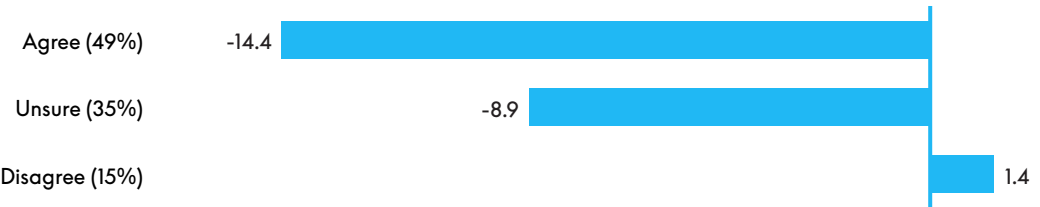
Canadians were asked whether they notice their colleagues are more sensitive to stress compared to before the pandemic.

- Nearly half (49 per cent) notice their colleagues are more sensitive to stress compared to before the pandemic, and this group has the lowest mental health score (-14.4), more than four points below the national average (-10.0).

**My colleagues are more sensitive to stress compared to before the pandemic**



**MHI score by my colleagues are more sensitive to stress compared to before the pandemic**



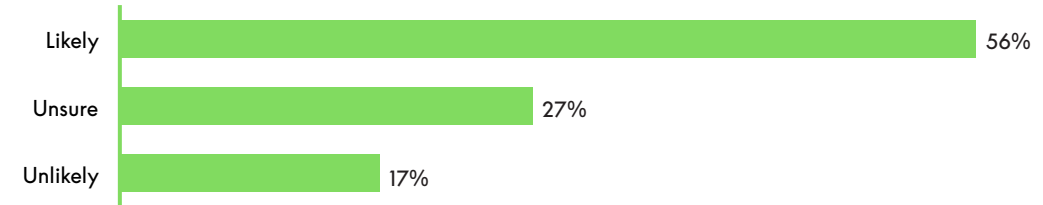
# Professional support for mental health

## Likelihood of reaching out for professional help

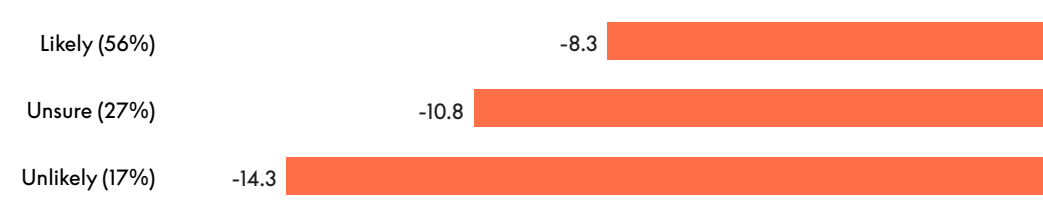
Canadians were asked how likely they would be to reach out for professional help if they were struggling with stress or a mental health issue.

- Nearly three in five (56 per cent) are likely to reach out for professional help if struggling with stress or a mental health issue, and this group has the best mental health score (-8.3), nearly two points above the national average (-10.0).
- Nearly one in five (17 per cent) are unlikely to reach out for professional help if struggling with stress or a mental health issue, and this group has the lowest mental health score (-14.3), more than four points below the national average.

## Likelihood of reaching out for professional help if struggling with stress or a mental health issue



## MHI score by likelihood of reaching out for professional help if struggling with stress or a mental health issue

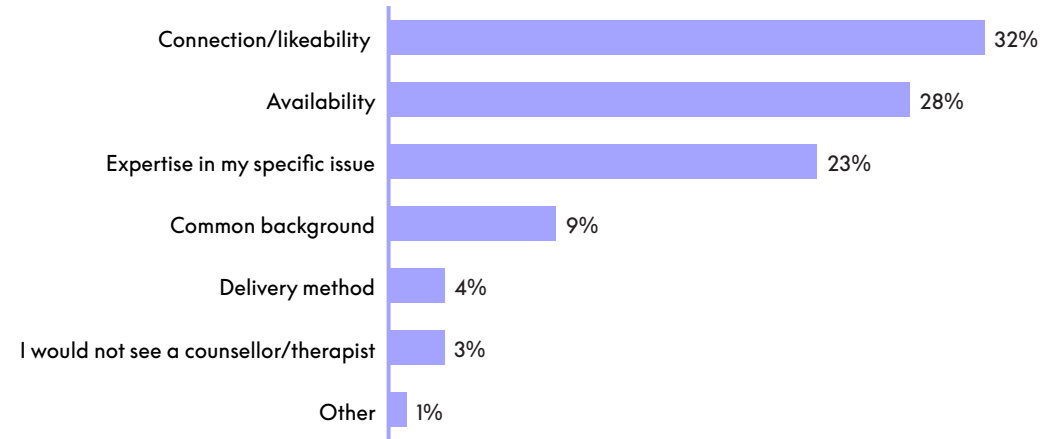


## Most important factor in choosing a mental health professional

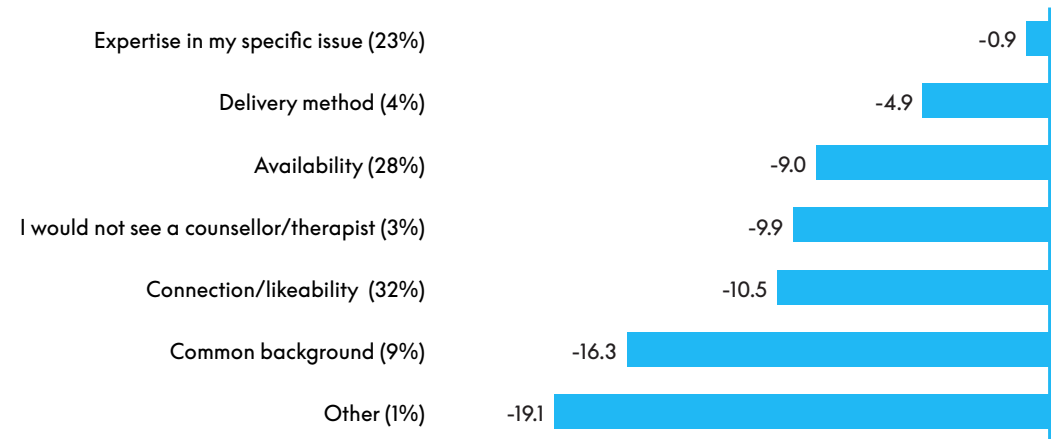
Canadians who indicated that they would be likely to reach out for professional mental health support if struggling with stress or mental health challenges were asked about the most important factor (assuming the counsellor/therapist has appropriate experience) when choosing a mental health professional.

- Nearly one-third (32 per cent) indicate connection/likeability is the most important factor when choosing a mental health professional, followed by 28 per cent indicating availability is the most important factor.
- Nearly one-quarter (23 per cent) report expertise in their specific issue as the most important factor when choosing a mental health professional.
- Respondents older than 50 are 65 per cent more likely than respondents younger than 40 to indicate that expertise in their specific issue is the most important factor when choosing a mental health professional.
- Parents are nearly twice as likely as non-parents to indicate common background is the most important factor when choosing a mental health professional.

## Most important factor in choosing a mental health professional



## MHI score by most important factor in choosing a mental health professional



# Conflict in Ukraine

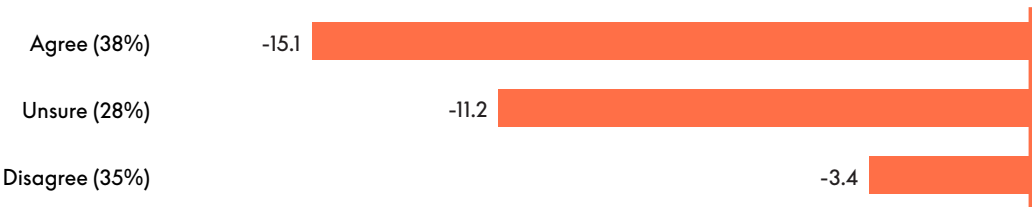
Canadians were asked whether the conflict in Ukraine is negatively impacting them.

- Nearly four in ten (38 per cent) report the conflict in Ukraine is negatively impacting them, and this group has the lowest mental health score (-15.1), five points below the national average (-10.0).

## The conflict in Ukraine is negatively impacting me



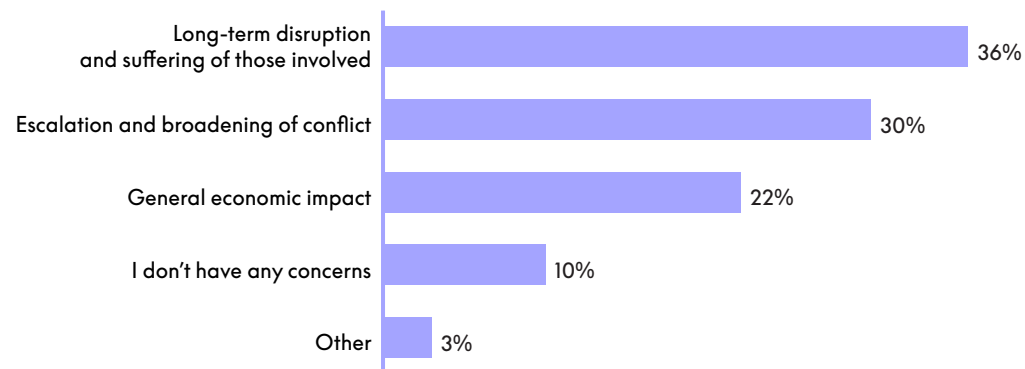
## MHI score by the conflict in Ukraine is negatively impacting me



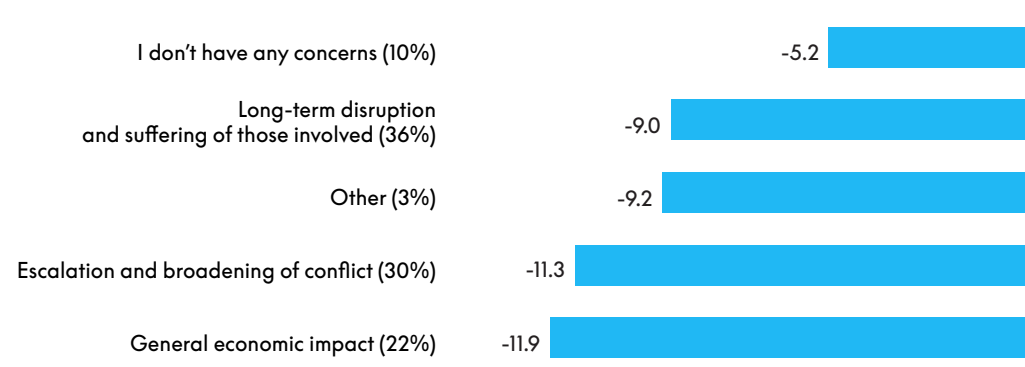
Canadians were asked about their greatest concern regarding the conflict in Ukraine.

- More than one-third (36 per cent) report long-term disruption and suffering of those involved as their greatest concern, 30 per cent are most concerned about the escalation and broadening of conflict and 22 per cent are most concerned about the general economic impact.
- Parents are 50 per cent more likely than non-parents to report general economic impact as their greatest concern regarding the conflict in Ukraine.

### Greatest concern regarding the conflict in Ukraine



### MHI score by greatest concern regarding the conflict in Ukraine



# Overview of the Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™

The mental health and wellbeing of a population is essential to overall health and work productivity. The Mental Health Index™ provides a measure of the current mental health status of employed adults in each geography compared to benchmarks collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The increases and decreases in the MHI are intended to predict cost and productivity risks and inform the need for investment in mental health support by business and government.

## The Mental Health Index™ report has two 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 spotlight section that reflects the specific impact of current issues in the community.

## Methodology

Data for this report is collected through an online survey of 3,000 people who live in Canada and are currently employed or who were employed within the prior six months. Participants are selected to be representative of the age, gender, industry, and geographic distribution in Canada. The same respondents take part each month to remove a sampling bias. Respondents are asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering each question. The Mental Health Index™ has been published monthly since April 2020. Benchmark data was collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Data for the current report was collected between April 7 and 22, 2022.

## 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.**

## Additional data and analyses

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



## About LifeWorks

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

For more information, visit:

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