The Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™

Canada | May 2022





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What you need to know for May 2022

- The mental health of working Canadians has been strained for more than two years, suggesting the emergence of a lower baseline measure of mental health going forward.
- At 64.9, the mental health of Canadians remains nearly unchanged from the prior month.
- 32% of Canadians have a high mental health risk, 43% have a moderate mental health risk, and 25% have a low mental health risk.
- Anxiety, optimism, and general psychological health scores have declined from April to May 2022.
- Mental health scores improved in Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Maritimes while British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Ontario saw declines in mental health.
- For the third consecutive month, the mental health score of managers is lower than non-managers and the national average.
- 2. Nearly one-quarter of working Canadians are having difficulty meeting their basic needs.
- 47% have cut back on optional spending because of the effects of inflation.

- 23% indicate that inflation has impacted their ability to meet their basic needs and this group has a mental health score 13 points below the national average.
- 19% indicate that inflation has not impacted them yet but expect that it will.
- Nearly one in five Canadians are unsure or are not confident that their housing will be secure for the next year.
- Canadians who rent their homes have poorer mental health than homeowners.
- 3. Three in five managers believe in offering flexible work arrangements for their employees.
- Flexibility, improving job satisfaction, productivity improvement, and feeling part of the team are the most reported reasons among managers and employees alike when asked about work location.
- 42% of managers prefer their employees work a hybrid model;
 30% prefer their employees work fully remote; and 23% prefer their employees work full-time at the workplace.
- 39% of employees think their manager believes in offering flexibility in their work location.
- 33% of employees report an improvement in their productivity when working from home.

From April 2020 to April 2022 the Mental Health Index by LifeWorks[™] reflected the deviation from the pre-pandemic benchmark data collected from 2017-2019. Going forward, scores will be reported as absolute on a scale of 0-100 where 0-49 = Distressed 50-79 = Strained and 80-100 = Optimal

- 4. One in five Canadians have experienced increased aggression or conflict when working with the public or clients.
- The mental health score of those who have experienced increased aggression or conflict is more than 10 points lower than the national average.
- Women are 40% more likely than men to have experienced increased aggression or conflict when working with the public or clients.
- 44% indicate their organization provides training, coaching or support to help deal with aggression or conflict.

- 5. Younger Canadians are more likely to have relocated, changed careers, and changed jobs during the pandemic.
- Canadians under the age of 40 are four times more likely to have changed careers or moved to a new city, and nearly three times more likely to have changed jobs during the pandemic.
- Women are 75% more likely to have moved to a new city.
- Managers and parents are 50% more likely to have changed careers during the pandemic.
- 88% of Canadians who made changes during the pandemic have no regrets about their decision.

59% 33% of managers believe in offering flexible work arrangements of employees report an increase in their productivity when working from home

23%

are having difficulty meeting their basic needs because of inflation more likely to have experienced increased aggression or conflict

Women

are 40%

The Mental Health Index™

The overall Mental Health Index for May 2022 is 64.9 points¹. Modest improvements in the mental health scores of Canadians have been observed since January 2022.



Beginning in May 2022, corresponding to year 3 of the Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™, scores are represented as absolute. The move to absolute scores has been taken given the degree of change that has occurred over the last two years. It is unlikely that a return to pre-pandemic levels will be realized hence the reference relative to that benchmark is no longer relevant.

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MHI Current Month May 2022

Mental health risk

In May 2022, 32 per cent of Canadians have a high mental health risk, 43 per cent have a moderate mental health risk, and 25 per cent have a low mental health risk. Approximately 30 per cent of people in the high-risk group report diagnosed anxiety or depression, seven per cent report diagnosed anxiety or depression in the moderate-risk group, and one per cent of people in the low-risk group report diagnosed anxiety or depression.

In contrast, in April 2020, at the launch of the Index and near the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, 34 per cent of Canadians had a high mental health risk, 45 per cent had a moderate mental health risk, and 21 per cent had a low mental health risk.



Mental Health Index[™] sub-scores

The lowest Mental Health Index[™] sub-score is for the risk measure of anxiety (57.5), followed by isolation (60.8), work productivity (61.6), depression (62.3), and optimism (67.4). Financial risk (70.3) and general psychological health (72.6) are the most favourable mental health measures.

- Anxiety, optimism, and general psychological health scores have declined compared to the prior month.
- The greatest improvements since last month are observed in financial risk and work productivity scores, both with increases of 1.3 points.

Mental Health Index™ Sub-scores² 2022	May	April
Anxiety	57.5	57.8
Isolation	60.8	60.1
Work productivity	61.6	60.3
Depression	62.3	61.6
Optimism	67.4	68.3
Psychological health	72.6	73.1
Financial risk	70.3	69.0

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

Optimism

Despite some months of modest improvement, including a peak in July 2021, and a notable increase in April 2022, optimism sub-scores scores have remained strained since April 2020.

In May 2022, the optimism score declined nearly one point from the prior month to 67.4.



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 was observed in February 2022 followed by two months of improvement. In May 2022, the psychological health score declined moderately to 72.6 and is the most favourable of all mental health sub-scores.



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 71.8 but declined through April. In May 2022, the score rebounded 1.3 points to 70.3 and remains one of the strongest 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 May 2022, for the third consecutive month, the mental health score of managers (64.9) is lower than that of non-managers (65.1).



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Demographics

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have had significantly lower mental health scores than men. In May 2022, the mental health score of women is 62.9 compared to 67.2 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 (62.8) than those without children (65.9).

Employment

- Overall, four per cent of respondents are unemployed³ and eight per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary.
- Individuals working fewer hours compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (54.4), followed by those reporting reduced salary compared to the prior month (55.0), those not currently employed (62.1), and those with no change to salary or hours (66.0).
- Managers have a lower mental health score (64.9) than non-managers (65.1).
- Individuals who are self-employed have the highest mental health score (66.9).
- Respondents working for companies with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (62.3).

Emergency savings

Those without emergency savings continue to experience
a lower mental health score (43.5) than the overall group (64.9).
Individuals with emergency savings have a mental health
score of 75.0.

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 May 2022, Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Maritimes saw improvements in mental health while British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Ontario, saw declines in mental health.

- The mental health score in Newfoundland and Labrador continues to be the highest (70.5).
- Saskatchewan has the lowest mental health score in the country (63.5), following a 2.4-point decrease from the prior month.
- Manitoba saw the greatest improvement in mental health over the prior month with a 2.3-point increase to 65.4.



Employment status	May 2022	April 2022
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	66.0	65.5
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	54.4	56.5
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	55.0	56.2
Not currently employed	62.1	65.6
Age group	May 2022	April 2022
Age 20-29	54.9	53.6
Age 30-39	58.7	59.0
Age 40-49	63.3	63.9
Age 50-59	68.2	67.2
Age 60-69	72.5	72.9
Number of children	May 2022	April 2022
No children in household	65.9	65.9
1 child	62.5	61.9
2 children	64.0	63.5
3 children or more	60.4	61.3

Province	May 2022	April 2022
Alberta	64.5	62.9
British Columbia	64.5	65.1
Manitoba	65.4	63.1
Newfoundland and Labrador	70.5	70.2
The Maritimes	64.4	63.4
Quebec	66.3	65.8
Ontario	64.7	64.9
Saskatchewan	63.5	65.9
Gender	May 2022	April 2022
Gender Men	May 2022 67.2	April 2022 67.3
		•
Men	67.2	67.3
Men Women	67.2 62.9	67.3 62.4
Men Women Household income	67.2 62.9 May 2022	67.3 62.4 April 2022
Men Women Household income <\$30K/annum	67.2 62.9 May 2022 52.5	67.3 62.4 April 2022 55.0
Men Women Household income <\$30K/annum	67.2 62.9 May 2022 52.5 61.4	67.3 62.4 April 2022 55.0 60.3

Employer size	May 2022	April 2022
Self-employed/sole proprietor	66.9	70.3
2-50 employees	65.9	64.5
51-100 employees	62.3	61.7
101-500 employees	64.5	63.9
501-1,000 employees	62.6	62.7
1,001-5,000 employees	66.8	65.4
5,001-10,000 employees	65.1	64.3
More than 10,000 employees	64.9	67.2
Manager	May 2022	April 2022
Manager	64.9	63.9
Non-manager	65.1	65.3

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

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

Available upon request:

Specific cross-correlational and custom analyses

Mental Health Index™ (industry)

The lowest mental health score in May 2022 is among individuals employed in Accommodation and Food Services (62.2), followed by individuals working in Finance and Insurance (62.5), and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (62.6).

Those employed in Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (69.3), and Transportation and Warehousing (66.9) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.

Industry	May 2022	April 2022	Change
Utilities	64.8	58.4	6.4
Other services (except Public Administration)	70.1	64.5	5.5
Information and Cultural Industries	63.1	58.2	4.9
Management of Companies and Enterprises	66.2	61.5	4.6
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	66.5	64.6	1.9
Accommodation and Food Services	62.2	60.5	1.7
Health Care and Social Assistance	64.2	63.0	1.2
Wholesale Trade	64.2	63.2	1.0
Finance and Insurance	62.5	61.7	0.8
Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction	66.5	65.9	0.6
Educational Services	64.0	63.5	0.5
Transportation and Warehousing	66.9	66.7	0.2
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	64.3	64.1	0.2
Manufacturing	66.6	66.4	0.1
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	69.3	69.2	0.1
Other	64.5	64.4	0.1
Retail Trade	65.5	66.5	-1.0
Construction	64.8	66.5	-1.7
Automotive Industry	63.3	65.4	-2.1
Public Administration	64.3	66.9	-2.5
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	62.6	72.5	-10.0

Spotlight

Inflation

Canadians were asked how inflation has impacted them.

- Nearly half (47 per cent) have cut back on optional spending.
- Nearly one-quarter (23 per cent) report that inflation has impacted their ability to meet basic needs, and this group has the lowest mental health score (52.0), 13 points below the national average (64.9).
- Those who indicate that inflation has not impacted them (11 per cent) have the highest mental health score (77.2), more than 12 points above the national average (64.9).
- Individuals under the age of 50 are twice as likely than those 50 and older to report that inflation has affected their ability to meet their basic needs.
- Individuals with household income lower than \$100,000 are 50 per cent more likely to report that inflation has affected their ability to meet their basic needs.

Impact of inflation



MHI score by impact of inflation



Housing security

Canadians were asked whether they are confident that their housing will be secure for the next year.

- Eighty per cent are confident that their housing will be secure for the next year and this group has the highest mental health score (68.8).
- Those who are unsure (15 per cent) or not confident (4 per cent) have significantly lower mental health than the national average (64.9).
- Individuals with household incomes less than \$100,000 are three times more likely to be concerned about their housing security.
- Respondents under the age of 40 are 60 per cent more likely than those 50 and older to be concerned about their housing security.

Canadians were asked whether they rent or own their home.

- The mental health of Canadians who rent their home (58.5) is lower than that of those who own their home (67.6), as well as the average national mental health score (64.9).
- Canadians under the age of 40 are 65 per cent more likely than those 50 and older to indicate that they rent their home.

I am confident that my housing will be secure for the next year



MHI score by I am confident that my housing will be secure for the next year



Work from home: The manager perspective

Ability to work from home

Managers were asked whether their employees can work from home. More than two-thirds (68 per cent) indicate that some or all employees can work from home, while 32 per cent indicate that their employees cannot work from home.

Preference for where employees work

Managers reporting that their employees can work from home were asked about their preference for where employees work.

- More than two in five managers (42 per cent) prefer hybrid work (2-3 days per week at the worksite). This group of managers has the second highest mental health score (66.3), next to 5 per cent of managers who do not have any preference (69.8).
- Nearly one-third (30 per cent) of managers prefer their employees work remotely.
- Male managers are more likely than female managers to have a preference for where their employees work.

Are your employees able to work from home?



Preference for where employees work



MHI score by preference for where employees work



Work from home rationale

Managers reporting that their employees can work from home were asked the reason for their preference.

Nearly three in five managers (59 per cent) believe in offering flexibility, 39 per cent believe their preference improves job satisfaction, and 39 per cent believe their preference improves productivity.

Work from home rationale given by Managers



Among managers who prefer employees work full-time at the worksite, their top three reasons are that it helps people feel part of the team (42 per cent), belief that it improves productivity (40 per cent), and belief that it reduces isolation/improves wellbeing (33 per cent).

Among managers who prefer employees work fully remote, their top three reasons are belief in offering flexibility (61 per cent), belief that it improves job satisfaction (41 per cent), and belief that it improves productivity (38 per cent).

Among managers who prefer employees work a hybrid model, their top three reasons are belief in offering flexibility (71 per cent), belief that it improves job satisfaction (43 per cent), and helping people feel part of the team (43 per cent).

Among managers who have no preference where employees work, their top three reasons are belief in offering flexibility (73 per cent), belief that it improves job satisfaction (46 per cent), and belief that it improves the quality of work (43 per cent).

Top three reasons managers prefer employees full-time at the worksite



Top three reasons managers prefer employees fully remote



Top three reasons managers prefer employees work a hybrid model



Top three reasons managers have no preference where employees work



Work from home: The employee perspective

Ability to work from home

Canadians were asked whether they can work from home. More than half (56 per cent) can work from home full-time or part-time.

Are you able to work from home?



MHI score by are you able to work from home?



Manager preference

Canadians who can work from home full-time or part-time were asked what they believe is their manager's preference for where they work.

- More than one-third (34 per cent) believe their manager prefers they work a hybrid schedule.
- Nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) believe their manager prefers they work full-time at the workplace and this group has the lowest mental health score (63.0).
- Nearly one-quarter (23 per cent) believe their manager prefers they work remotely.
- Those who believe their manager has no preference for where they work have the highest mental health score (68.4).

My manager's preference for where I work



MHI score by my manager's preference for where I work



Rationale for preference

Canadians were asked why they believe their manager prefers the work location previously reported.

Nearly two in five (39 per cent) think their manager believes in offering flexibility, 29 per cent think their manager believes it helps people feel part of the team, and 28 per cent think their manager believes it improves productivity.

Why does your manager feel this way?



Among employees who believe their manager prefers employees work full-time at the worksite, their top three reasons are a belief that it improves productivity (35 per cent), it helps people feel part of the team (31 per cent), and belief that it is best for innovation and collaboration (24 per cent).

Among employees who believe their manager prefers employees work fully remote, their top three reasons are belief in offering flexibility (43 per cent), belief that it improves job satisfaction (31 per cent), and belief that it improves productivity (26 per cent).

Among employees who believe their manager prefers a hybrid model, their top three reasons are belief in offering flexibility (46 per cent), helping people feel part of the team (38 per cent), and belief that it improves job satisfaction (28 per cent).

Among employees who believe their manager has no preference for where they work, their top three reasons are belief in offering flexibility (53 per cent), belief that it improves job satisfaction (27 per cent), and organizational policy (22 per cent).

Top three reasons employees believe their managers want employees full-time at the worksite



Top three reasons employees believe their managers want employees fully remote



Top three reasons employees believe their managers want a hybrid model



Top three reasons employees believe their managers have no preference where employees work



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Productivity

Fifty-six per cent of Canadians report working full-time or part-time from home. This group was asked about their productivity when working from home.

- One-third (33 per cent) report an improvement in their productivity when working from home.
- The highest mental health score is found among those reporting that their productivity remained the same (67.0).
- Eight per cent report a decline in their productivity when working from home and this group has the lowest mental health score (54.0).

Impact on productivity when working from home



MHI score by impact on productivity when working from home



Work hours

Canadians who work from home full-time or part-time were asked about their work hours.

- Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) work the same number of hours from home as they do at the worksite, and this group has the highest mental health score (67.3).
- More than one-quarter (27 per cent) work more hours from home than they do at the worksite, and this group has the lowest mental health score (62.0).
- Managers are 40 per cent more likely than non-managers to work more hours from home.

Hours worked at home compared to at the worksite



MHI scores by hours worked at home compared to at the worksite



Aggression/conflict at the workplace

Canadians were asked whether they have experienced increased aggression/conflict in dealing with the public or clients.

- More than three in five (62 per cent) have not felt increased aggression/conflict and this group has the highest mental health score (68.3).
- One in five (20 per cent) have experienced increased aggression/ conflict in dealing with public or clients. This group has the lowest mental health score (54.1), more than 10 points below the national average (64.9).
- Women are 40 per cent more likely than men to have experienced increased aggression/conflict in dealing with the public or clients.
- Managers are 60 per cent more likely than non-managers to have experienced increased aggression/conflict in dealing with the public or clients.

I have experienced increased agression/conflict in dealing with public/clients



MHI scores by I have experienced increased agression/conflict in dealing with public/clients



Respondents who deal with the public or clients in their job were asked whether their organization provides training, coaching or support to help deal with conflict/aggression.

- Nearly half (44 per cent) indicate that their organization provides training, coaching or support to help deal with conflict/aggression, and this group has the highest mental health score (66.7).
- Managers are 40 per cent more likely to report that their organization provides support to help deal with conflict/aggression than non-managers.

Organization provides support to help deal with agression/conflict



MHI scores by oganization provides support to help deal with agression/conflict



Safety at the worksite

Canadians were asked about the most important thing that makes them feel safe when working at the worksite.

- Nearly one-quarter (23 per cent) indicate that a mandatory vaccination policy is the most important thing that makes them feel safe when working at the worksite, followed by 20 per cent reporting physical distancing, and 19 per cent reporting cleaning protocols and hygiene.
- Nearly one in ten (9 per cent) will not feel safe returning to the workplace if COVID-19 is around, and this group has the lowest mental health score (58.2).

Most important thing making you feel safe when working at the worksite



MHI score by most important thing making you feel safe when working at the worksite



Change during the pandemic

Canadians were asked about the changes they made during the pandemic.

- Nearly two-thirds (66 per cent) did not make any changes during the pandemic and this group has the highest mental health score (68.0).
- Fourteen per cent changed their job during the pandemic, 10 per cent got a pet, eight per cent bought or sold a home, and seven per cent changed their career during the pandemic.
- Individuals under the age of 40 are:
 - more than four times more likely than those 50 and older to have changed careers during the pandemic.
 - nearly four times more likely than those 50 and older to have moved to a new city during the pandemic.
 - nearly three times more likely than those 50 and older to have changed jobs during the pandemic.
- Women are 75 per cent more likely than men to have moved to a new city during the pandemic.
- Parents are 50 per cent more likely than non-parents to have changed careers during the pandemic.
- Managers are 50 per cent more likely than non-managers to have changed careers during the pandemic.
- Individuals with a household income lower than \$100,000 are
 50 per cent more likely than those with a household income greater
 than \$100,000 to have changed careers during the pandemic.

Changes made during the pandemic



MHI score by changes made during the pandemic



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Canadians were asked whether they regret making changes during the pandemic.

- Nearly 9 in 10 (88 per cent) do not regret making changes during the pandemic, and this group has the highest mental health score (66.8).
- Those who regret changing their career during the pandemic have the lowest mental health score (48.6), more than 16 points below the national average.
- Among 14 per cent who changed jobs during the pandemic,
 4 per cent regret the change.
- Among 7 per cent who changed careers during the pandemic, 3 per cent regret the change.
- Among 6 per cent who ended a relationship during the pandemic, 3 per cent regret the change.

Changes made during the pandemic resulting in regret



MHI score by changes made during the pandemic resulting in regret



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. 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).
- 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. Respondents are asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering each question. Data for the current report was collected between May 2 and 18, 2022.

Calculations

Beginning in May 2022, corresponding to year 3 of the Mental Health Index by LifeWorks[™], scores are represented as absolute. The move to absolute scores has been taken given the degree of change that has occurred over the last two years. It is unlikely that a return to pre-pandemic levels will be realized hence, the reference relative to that benchmark is no longer relevant.

To create the Mental Health Index, a response scoring system is applied to turn individual responses into point values. Higher point values are associated with better mental health and less mental health risk. The sum of scores is divided by the total number of possible points to generate a score out of 100. The raw score is the mathematical mean of the individual scores. Distribution of scores is defined according to the following scale: Distressed 0-49 **Optimal** 80 - 100

Strained 50-79

Additional data and analyses

Demographic breakdowns of sub-scores, and specific crosscorrelational 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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About LifeWorks

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

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