

# The Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™

United States of America | September 2022

 **TELUS** Health

LifeWorks



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# What you need to know for September 2022

## 1. The mental health score improved modestly in September yet nearly one-quarter of working Americans have a high mental health risk.

- At 70.2, the mental health of Americans improved for the second consecutive month.
- 24% of Americans have a high mental health risk, 41% have a moderate mental health risk, and 35% have a low mental health risk.
- Anxiety, isolation, and work productivity have been the lowest mental health sub-scores for six consecutive months.
- 22% feel alone more often and this group has a mental health score nearly 25 points below the national average.
- Younger people (under 40) are more likely to feel alone more often.
- Full-time post-secondary students have the lowest mental health score for the fourth consecutive month.
- 31% of Americans say inflation is their leading cause of stress.
- The mental health score declined in the West and improved in the Northeast, Midwest, and Southern United States.

## 2. Nearly one in five working Americans report an erosion of trust with their employer since the pandemic.

- 38% indicate that a change in workplace culture is the reason for a decline in trust between employees and their employer.
- 25% indicate that a perceived change in how employee wellbeing is/was handled led to the decline in trust.
- 22% believe that perceived changes in employee commitment to work caused the decline in trust.
- Positive changes in communication, culture, and the employer's support for employee health and wellbeing are the top reasons for improved trust between employer and employees.

## 3. Mental health and wellbeing is the factor most likely to have a negative impact on the effort given to work.

- Mental health and wellbeing (11%), manager relationship (9%) and co-worker relationships (9%) are factors most likely to have a negative impact on the effort given to work.
- 25% identify co-worker relationships as having the most positive impact on their work effort.
- 14% identify their mental health/wellbeing as having the most positive impact on their work effort.

31%

say inflation  
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of stress

29%

say their mental  
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the pandemic

25%

say that a change in  
the handling of employee  
wellbeing led to  
a decline in trust

25%

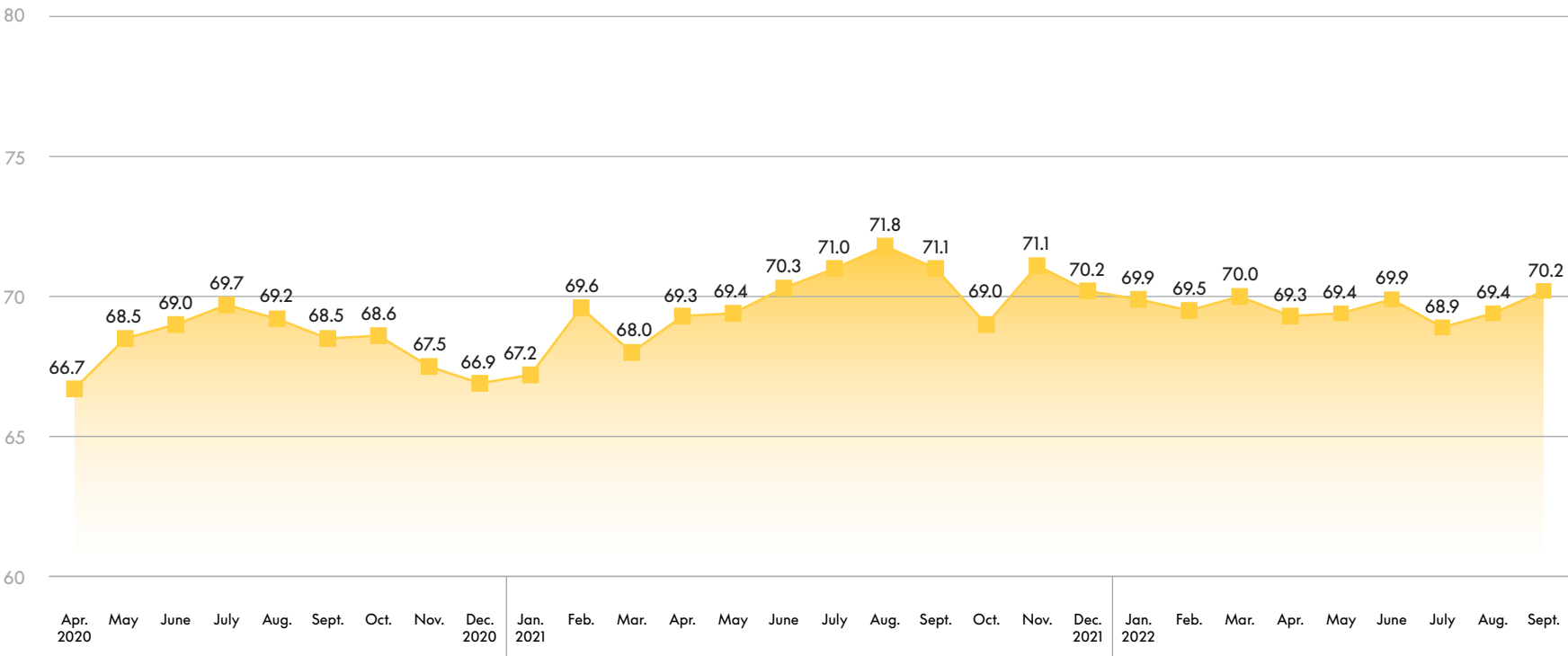
say co-workers have  
the most positive impact  
on their work effort

#### **4. Women are 60 percent more likely than men to identify personal stress as the reason for their mental health decline.**

- 15% of working Americans self-report a mental health condition or issue; a further 10% are unsure
- 29% say their mental health condition or issue worsened since the pandemic and the mental health of this group is more than 33 points below the national average.
- 52% attribute the decline in their mental health to having more personal stress.
- 16% attribute the decline in their mental health to feeling isolated.
- 15% attribute the decline in their mental health to having more work stress.

# The Mental Health Index™

The overall Mental Health Index for September 2022 is 70.2 points<sup>1</sup>, a modest improvement for the second consecutive month.



MHI Current Month  
September 2022

70.2

August 2022

69.4

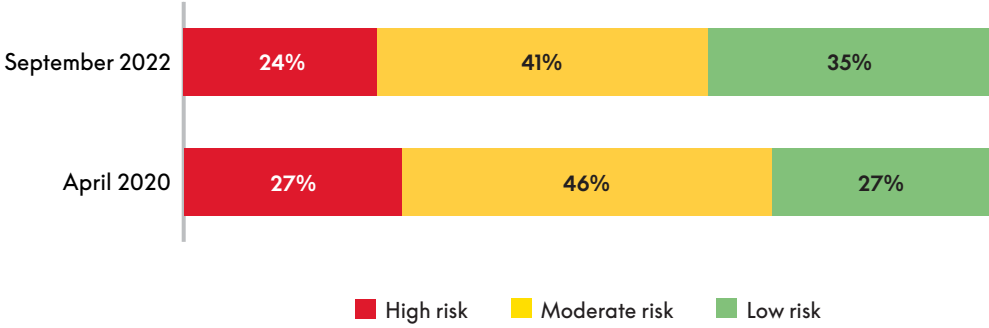
- Distressed 0-49
- Strained 50-79
- Optimal 80-100

<sup>1</sup> 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.

# Mental health risk

In September 2022, 24 percent of Americans have a high mental health risk, 41 percent have a moderate mental health risk, and 35 percent have a low mental health risk. Approximately 40 percent of people in the high-risk group report a mental health condition or issue, 12 percent report a mental health condition or issue in the moderate-risk group, and three percent of people in the low-risk group report a mental health condition or issue.

In contrast, in April 2020, at the launch of the Index and near the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, 27 percent of Americans had a high mental health risk, 46 percent had a moderate mental health risk, and 27 percent 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 (63.6), followed by isolation (66.1), work productivity (68.6), depression (69.8), optimism (71.4), and financial risk (74.1). General psychological health (77.1) continues to be the most favorable mental health measure in August 2022.

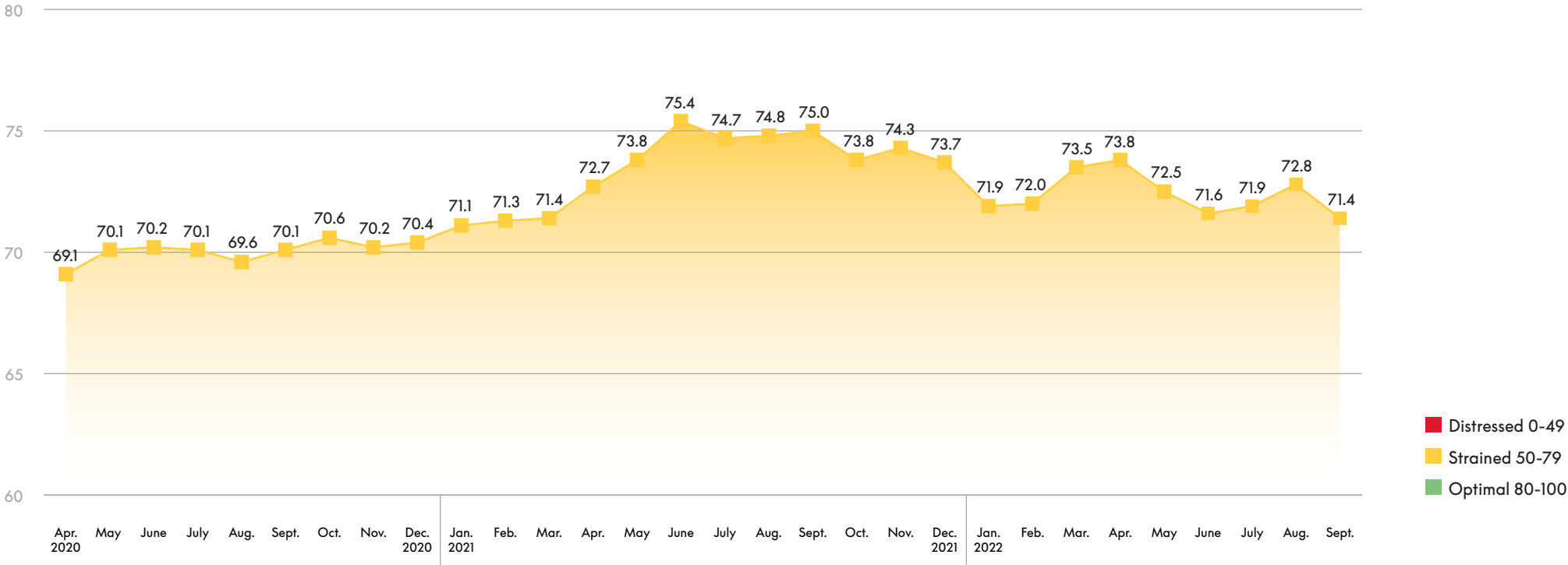
- Anxiety, isolation, and work productivity have been the lowest mental health sub-scores since April 2022.
- Optimism and general psychological health scores declined compared to August 2022.
- With a 2.5-point increase, the work productivity score has the greatest improvement over the prior month.

Mental Health Index™ Sub-scores <sup>1</sup>	September 2022	August 2022
Anxiety	63.6	62.3
Isolation	66.1	64.6
Work productivity	68.6	66.1
Depression	69.8	67.6
Optimism	71.4	72.8
Financial risk	74.1	72.1
Psychological health	77.1	77.6

<sup>1</sup> The demographic breakdown of sub-scores is available upon request.

# Optimism

Optimism scores increased from April 2020 to June 2021 and then followed a declining trend from July 2021 to January 2022. From February through April 2022, the optimism sub-score increased but fell 1.3 points in May and a further one point in June 2022 to 71.6, the lowest score in 15 months. Following improvements in July and August 2022, the optimism score declined 1.4 points in September to 71.4, the lowest score since in 18 months.

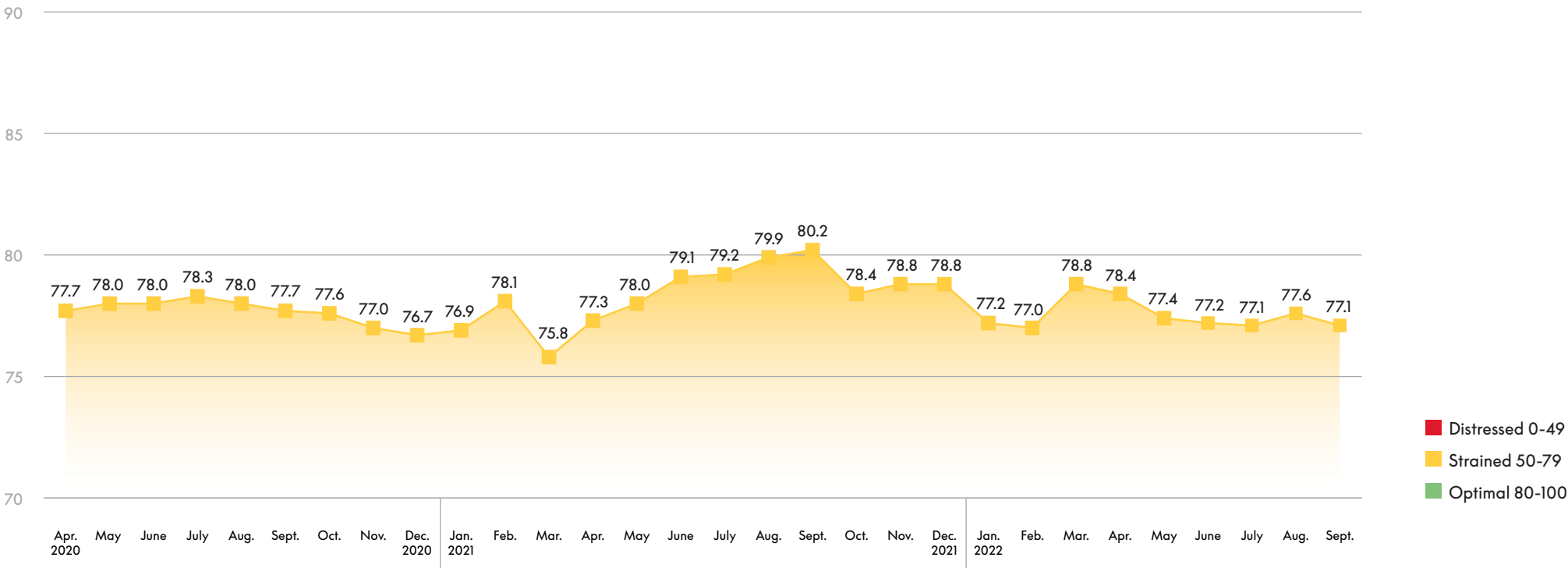




# General psychological health

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

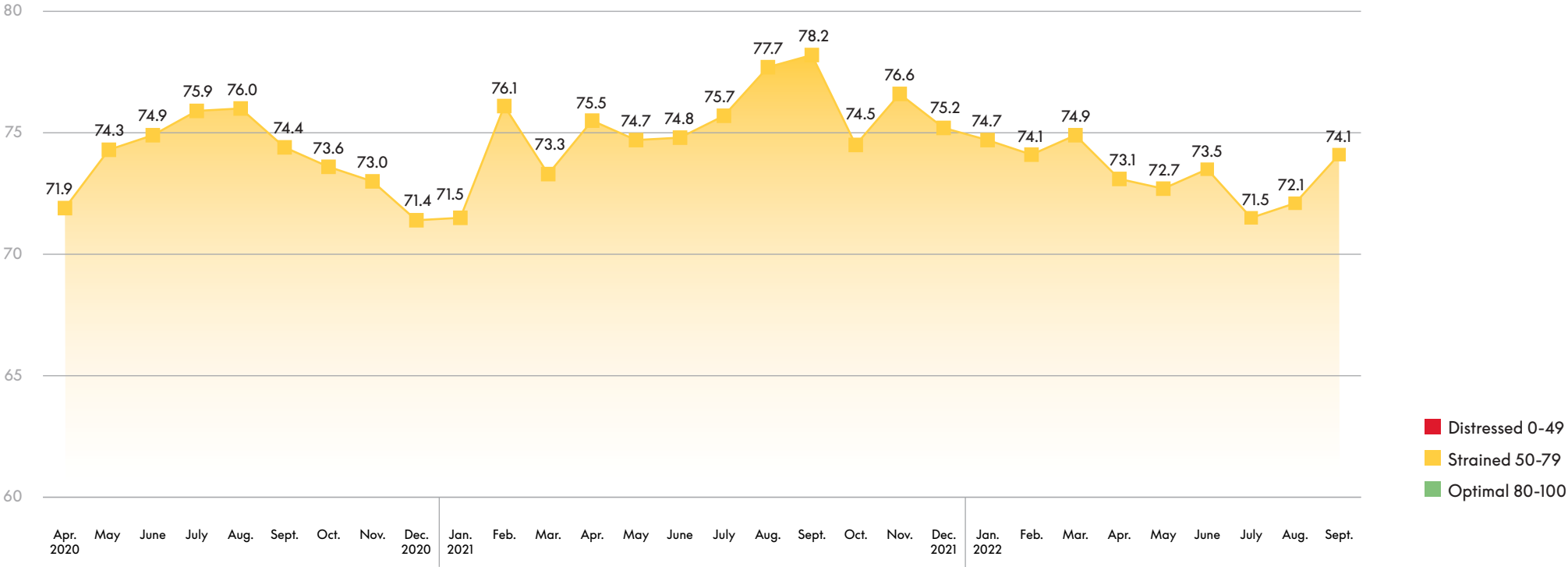
While modest improvements to general psychological health were observed from April 2020 to July 2020 and from December 2020 to February 2021, the psychological health score of Americans dropped dramatically in March 2021. Since March 2021, psychological health sub-scores showed seven continuous months of improvement, reaching a high of 80.2 in September 2021. A sharp decline of nearly two points occurred in October and following three months of stability, the general psychological health score fell in January and February 2022 to the lowest score in ten months. A sharp increase was observed in March 2022, but the score fell in April and continued to decline through July to 77.1. Following a modest improvement in August 2022, the general psychological health score of Americans declined in September to 77.1.



# Financial risk

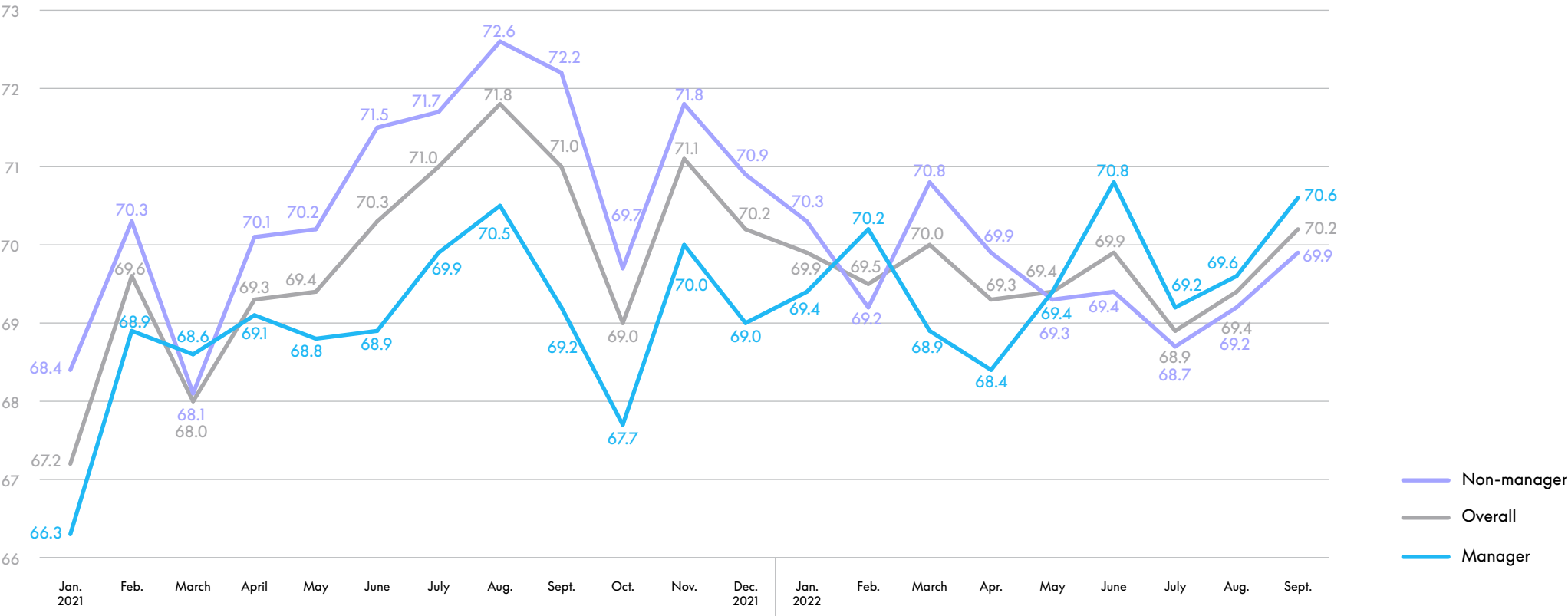
The financial risk sub-score measures the level of individuals' emergency savings.

The financial risk sub-score has been inconsistent since the launch of the Index in April 2020. Following a high of 78.2 in September 2021, the financial risk score declined sharply, then rebounded slightly, before following a downward trend since December 2021. In September 2022, the financial risk score of Americans (74.1) improved for the second consecutive month.



# Managers compared to non-managers

Since January 2021, the mental health scores of managers have typically been lower than non-managers and lower than the overall American average. In February 2022, a reversal of this trend is noted as the mental health score of non-managers declined along with the overall American average, whereas an improvement is observed in mental health score of managers. A similar trend has been observed since May 2022. In September 2022, managers report a slightly better mental health score (70.6) compared to the national average (70.2) and that of non-managers (69.9).



## Demographics

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have had significantly lower mental health scores than men. In September 2022, the mental health score of women is 67.7 compared to 73.3 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 (64.4) than those without children (72.1).

## Employment

- Overall, four percent of respondents are unemployed<sup>3</sup> and seven percent report reduced hours or reduced salary.
- Individuals working fewer hours compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (57.5), followed by those reporting reduced salary (58.1), those not currently employed (67.1), and those with no change to salary or hours (71.2).
- Managers have a slightly higher mental health score (70.6) than non-managers (69.9).
- Individuals working for organizations with more than 10,000 employees have the highest mental health score (71.8).
- Respondents working for organizations with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (66.3).

## Emergency savings

- Those without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (52.1) than the overall group (70.2). Individuals with emergency savings have a mental health score of 75.9.

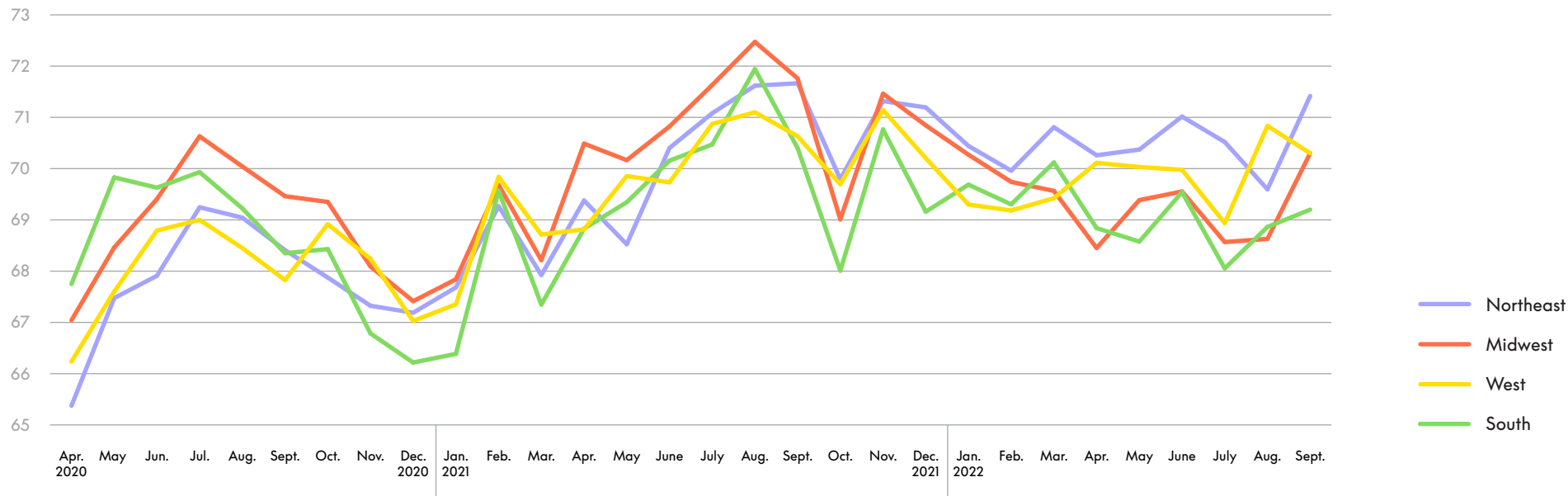
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3 MHI respondents who have been employed in the past six months are included in the poll.

# Mental Health Index™ (regional)

Since April 2020, regional mental health scores had shown general improvement through July 2020, followed by declines until December 2020. Since January 2021, mental health scores have been inconsistent although the overall trend was improving through August. Following two months of declines, the mental health scores for all regions improved in November 2021. From December 2021 to February 2022, declines in mental health were seen in all regions of the United States. Variability in mental health scores has been ongoing since February 2022. In September 2022, the mental health of Americans declined in the West while improvements are observed in the Northeastern, Midwest and Southern United States. The mental health score in the Midwest is unchanged from July 2022.

- With a 1.8-point improvement over August, the Northeastern United States has the highest mental health score (71.4).
- Despite a modest 0.3-point improvement, the mental health score in the Southern United States is lowest (69.2).



Employment status	Sept. 2022	Aug. 2022
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	71.2	70.5
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	57.5	59.8
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	58.1	56.3
Not currently employed	67.1	67.3
Age group	Sept. 2022	Aug. 2022
Age 20-29	57.9	55.5
Age 30-39	61.8	62.7
Age 40-49	67	66.4
Age 50-59	72.3	72.7
Age 60-69	77.4	77.5
Number of children	Sept. 2022	Aug. 2022
No children in household	72.1	71.5
1 child	64.4	64.8
2 children	65.2	64.7
3 children or more	65.9	63.8

Region	Sept. 2022	Aug. 2022
Northeast	71.4	69.6
Midwest	70.3	68.6
South	69.2	68.9
West	70.3	70.8
Gender	Sept. 2022	Aug. 2022
Men	73.3	72.2
Women	67.7	66.9
Household income	Sept. 2022	Aug. 2022
<\$30K/annum	58.5	57.5
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	64.3	63.4
\$60K to <\$100K	70.8	70.6
\$100K to <\$150K	74.5	72.8
\$150K or more	79.3	78.7

Employer size	Sept. 2022	Aug. 2022
Self-employed/sole proprietor	69.8	65.8
2-50 employees	70.1	69.1
51-100 employees	66.3	66.0
101-500 employees	70.3	70.8
501-1,000 employees	69.9	68.6
1,001-5,000 employees	71.3	71.4
5,001-10,000 employees	70.2	70.0
More than 10,000 employees	71.8	71.3
Manager	Sept. 2022	Aug. 2022
Manager	70.6	69.6
Non-manager	69.9	69.2

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

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

# Mental Health Index™ (industry)

For the fourth consecutive month, full-time post-secondary students have the lowest mental health score (53.1). This score is significantly lower than the next lowest score, among individuals employed in Food Services (60.4), and Wholesale Trade (64.3).

Those employed in Public Administration (75.9), Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (75.5), and Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (74.3) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.

Industry	September 2022	August 2022	Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	72.4	63.3	9.1
Management of Companies and Enterprises	70.3	64.3	6.0
Information and Cultural Industries	67.3	64.4	2.9
Administrative and Support services	67.0	64.1	2.9
Utilities	73.4	71.5	1.9
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	75.5	73.9	1.6
I am a student	53.1	51.8	1.3
Food Services	60.4	59.1	1.3
Transportation and Warehousing	70.7	69.5	1.2
Retail Trade	65.8	64.5	1.2
Other services (except Public Administration)	70.3	69.2	1.1
Construction	72.1	71.0	1.0
Health Care and Social Assistance	68.4	67.3	1.0
Other	69.5	68.5	1.0
Manufacturing	73.8	73.1	0.8
Wholesale Trade	64.3	64.5	-0.2
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	66.7	67.1	-0.4
Educational Services	72.5	73.0	-0.5
Finance and Insurance	72.1	72.8	-0.7
Public Administration	75.9	77.5	-1.6
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	74.3	78.0	-3.6
Accommodation	67.6	72.4	-4.8

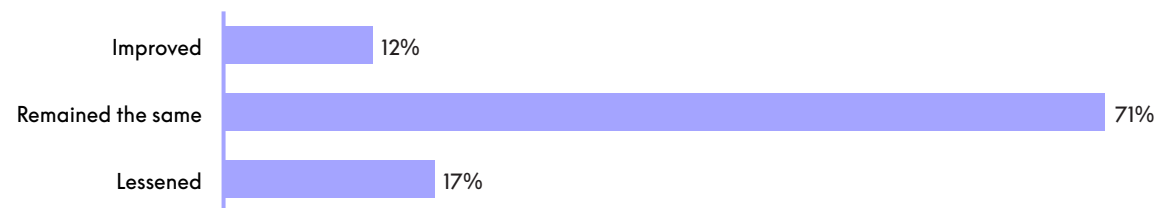
# Spotlight

## Trust between employees and employers

Americans were asked how trust between employees and their employer has changed compared to before the pandemic.

- More than seven in ten (71 percent) indicate there has been no change in trust between employees and their employer compared to before the pandemic, and this group has the most favourable mental health score (72.1).
- Nearly one in five (17 percent) report a decline in trust between employees and their employer compared to before the pandemic. This group has the lowest mental health score (62.8), more than seven points below the national average (70.2).
- More than one in ten (12 percent) report improved trust between employees and their employer compared to before the pandemic.
- Managers are twice as likely as non-managers to report improved trust between employees and their employer.
- Parents are twice as likely as non-parents to report improved trust between employees and their employer compared to before the pandemic.

### Change in trust between employees and employer compared to before the pandemic



### MHI score by change in trust between employees and employer compared to before the pandemic

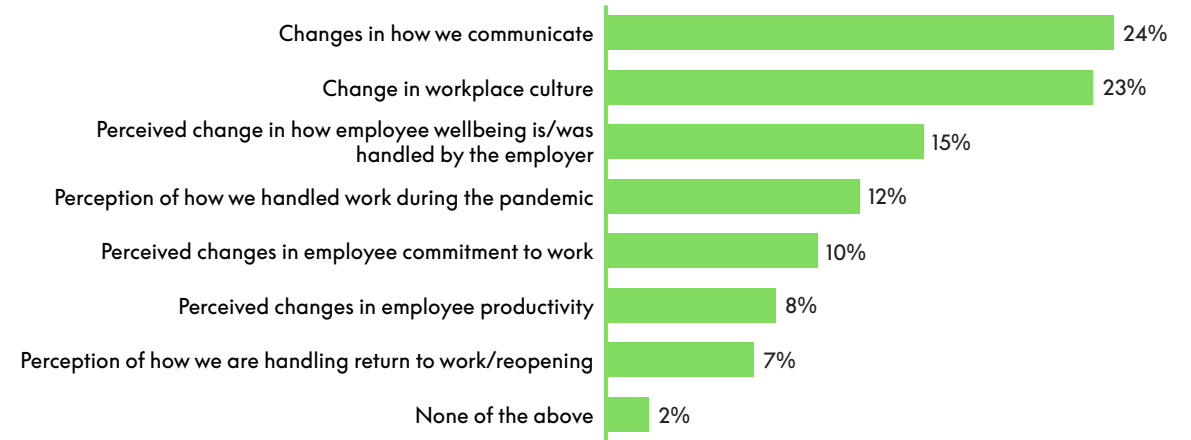




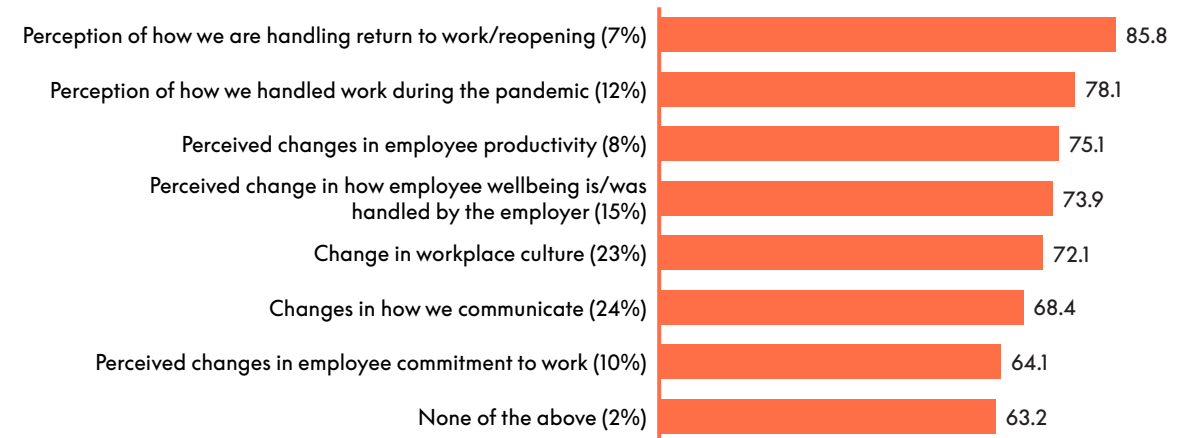
Americans reporting **improved** trust between employees and their employer compared to before the pandemic were asked why the level of trust changed.

- early one-quarter (24 percent) indicate that changes in communication is the reason for improved trust between employees and their employer compared to before the pandemic, 23 percent report a change in workplace culture, and 15 percent report a change in how employee wellbeing is/was handled by the employer.
- Respondents reporting increased trust due to the perception of how employee wellbeing is/was handled have near the highest mental health score (78.1), followed by those reporting increased trust because of how return to work/reopening is/was being handled (75.1).

## Causes of improved trust between employees and employers



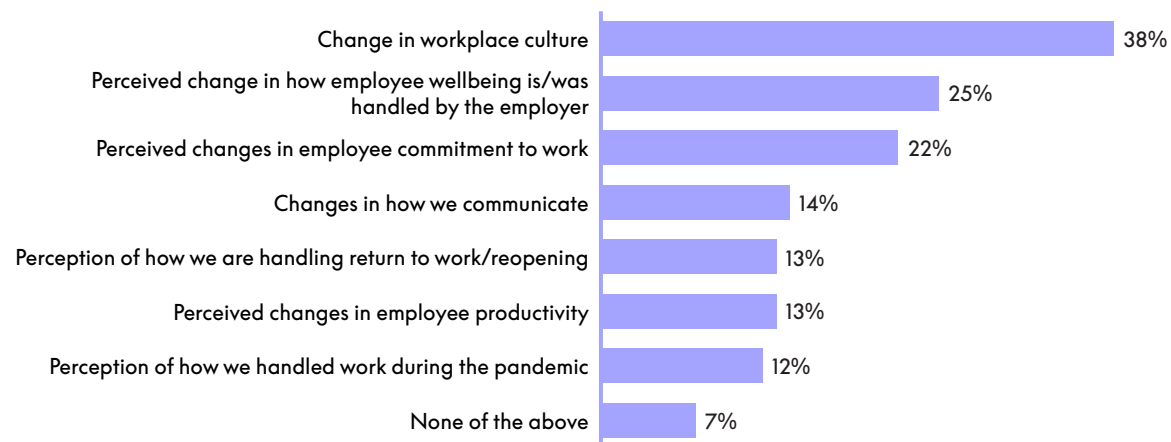
## MHI score by causes of improved trust between employees and employers



Americans reporting a **decline** in trust between employees and their employer compared to before the pandemic were asked why the level of trust changed.

- Nearly two in five (38 percent) indicate that a change in workplace culture is the reason for a decline in trust between employees and their employer compared to before the pandemic, 25 percent report a perceived change in how employee wellbeing is/was handled contributed to the decline, and 22 percent report a perceived change in employee commitment to work as the reason for the decline in trust.
- Respondents reporting decreased trust due to perception of how employee wellbeing is/was handled have the lowest mental health score (60.4), followed by those reporting decreased trust due to changes in workplace culture (62.0), and those reporting decreased trust because of changes in communication (62.3).

### Causes of a decline in trust between employees and employers



### MHI score by causes of a decline in trust between employees and employers



Managers were asked how trust of their employees has changed compared to before the pandemic.

- Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) indicate there has been no change in their trust of employees compared to before the pandemic, and this group has the most favourable mental health score (72.9).
- One in ten (10 percent) report a decline in trust compared to before the pandemic, and these managers have the lowest mental health score (59.9), more than ten points below the national average (70.2).
- Nearly one in five (17 percent) report an improvement in trust compared to before the pandemic, and the mental health of this group is noticeably better (67.0) than those who report a decline (59.9).

Managers: change in trust of employees compared to before the pandemic



MHI score by change in trust of employees compared to before the pandemic



## Work effort

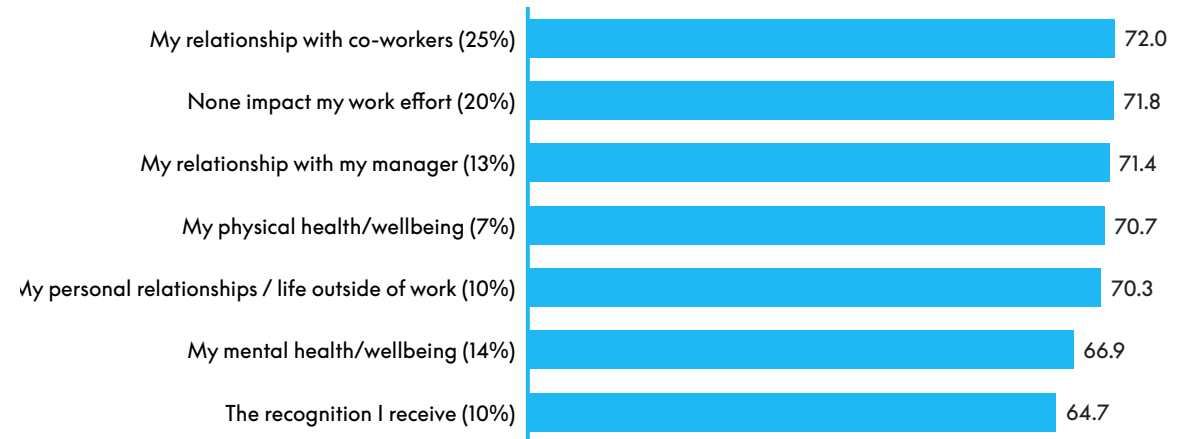
Americans were asked which factors most **positively** impact the effort given to their work.

- One in four (25 percent) indicate that relationships with co-workers most positively impacts the effort given to their work.
- Fourteen percent report that their mental health/wellbeing most positively impacts the effort given to their work, and 13 percent indicate that the relationship with their manager has the most positive impact on their work effort.

### Factors that positively impact the effort given to work



### MHI score by factors that positively impact the effort given to work



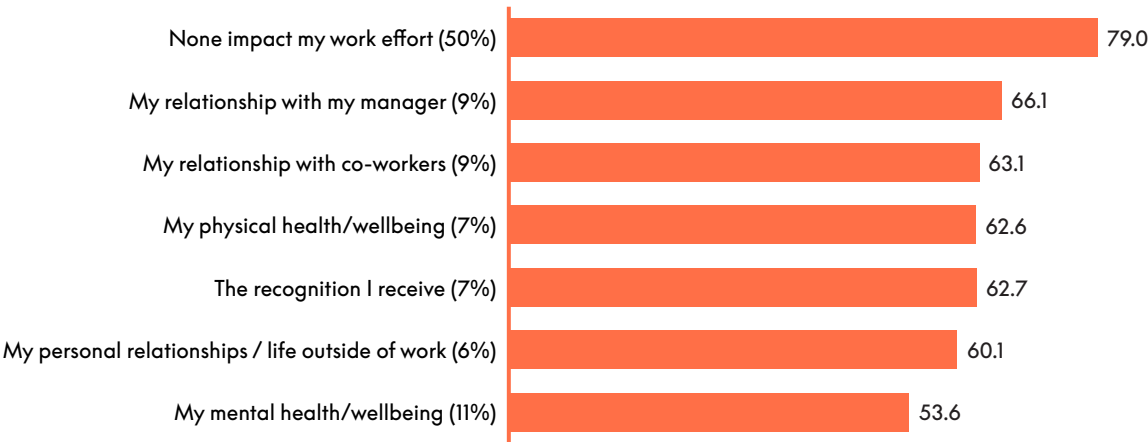
Americans were asked which factors most **negatively** impact the effort given to their work.

- More than one in ten (11 percent) report that their mental health/wellbeing most negatively impacts the effort given to their work, followed by nine percent indicating that the relationship with their manager or their relationship with co-workers have the most negative impact on their work effort.
- Respondents over 50 are twice as likely as those under 40 to indicate that none of the factors impact the effort given to their work.

Factors that negatively impact the effort given to work



MHI score by factors that negatively impact the effort given to work

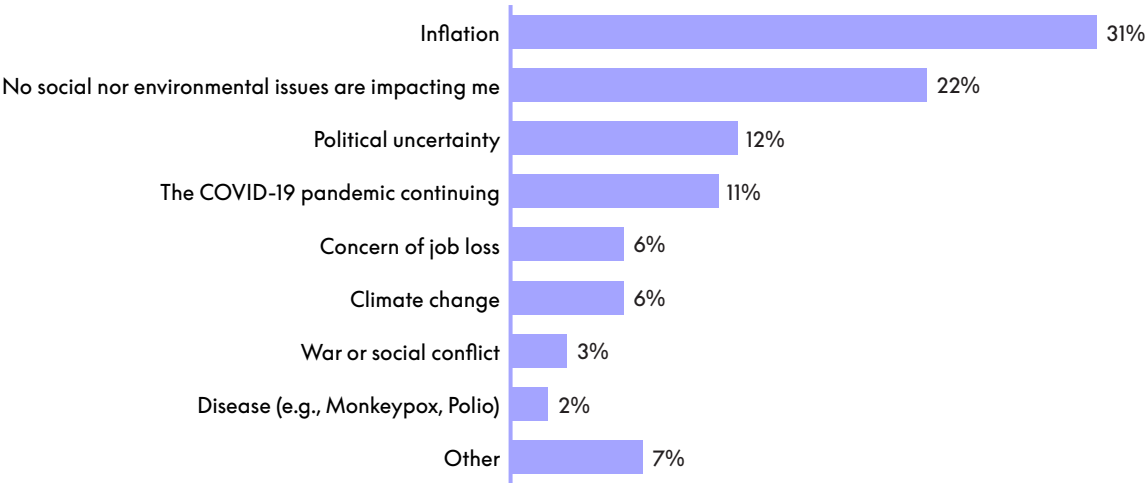


# Stress

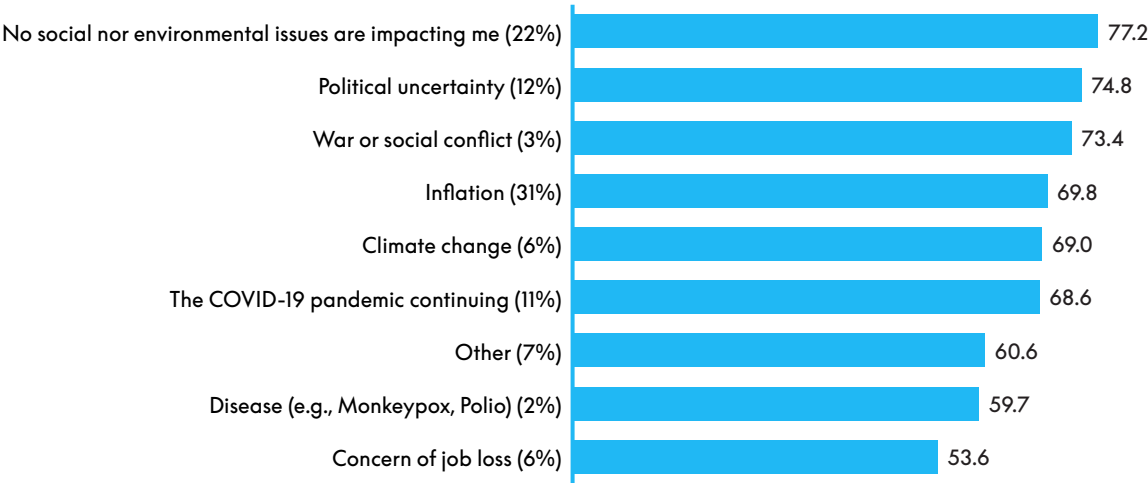
Americans were asked about issues causing the most stress.

- Nearly one-third (31 percent) identify inflation as the biggest stressor.
- Eleven percent are stressed about continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic and six percent are concerned about job loss. Those who are most stressed over the prospect of job loss have the lowest mental health score (53.6), more than 16 points below the national average (70.2).

## Issues that cause the most stress



## MHI score by issues that cause the most stress

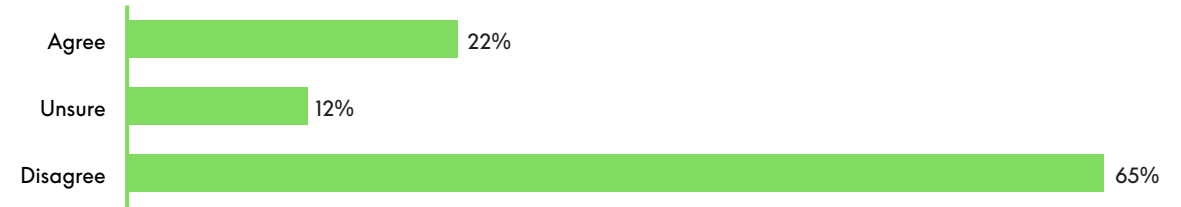


# Isolation

Americans were asked whether they feel alone more often.

- More than one in five (22 percent) feel alone more often.  
This group has the lowest mental health score (45.4), 35 points below those who do not feel alone more often and nearly 25 points below the national average (70.2). This group also has the lowest isolation score (24.6), nearly 60 points below those who do not feel alone more often.
- Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) do not feel alone more often.  
This group has the most favourable mental health score (80.8) and the most favourable isolation score (83.4).
- Respondents under 40 are more than two times more likely than those over 50 to feel alone more often.
- Parents are 50 percent more likely than non-parents to feel alone more often.

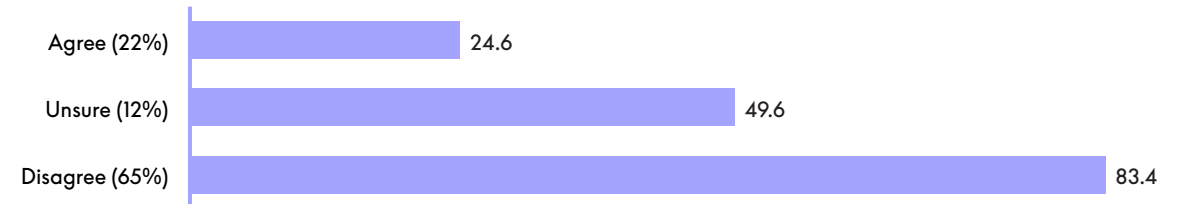
## I feel alone more often



## MHI score by I feel alone more often



## Isolation score by I feel alone more often

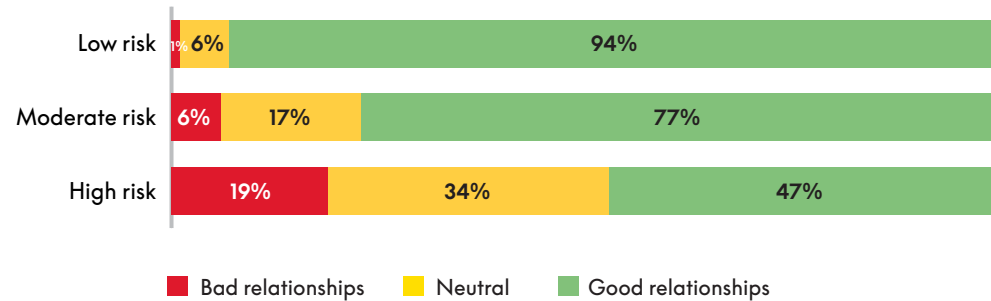


## Relationship quality

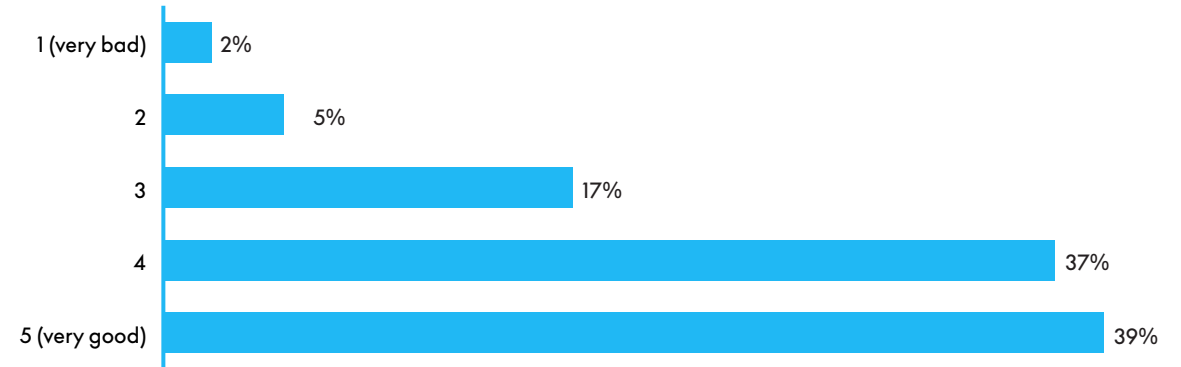
Americans were asked to rate the quality of family relationships on a scale from one to five, with one being “very bad” and five being “very good”.

- More than three-quarters (76 percent) rate the quality of their family relationships as four or more. The mental health of this group is significantly higher than those who rate the quality of family relationships as bad or very bad.
- Individuals with a low mental health risk are twice as likely as those with a high mental health risk to rate the quality of family relationships more favorably.

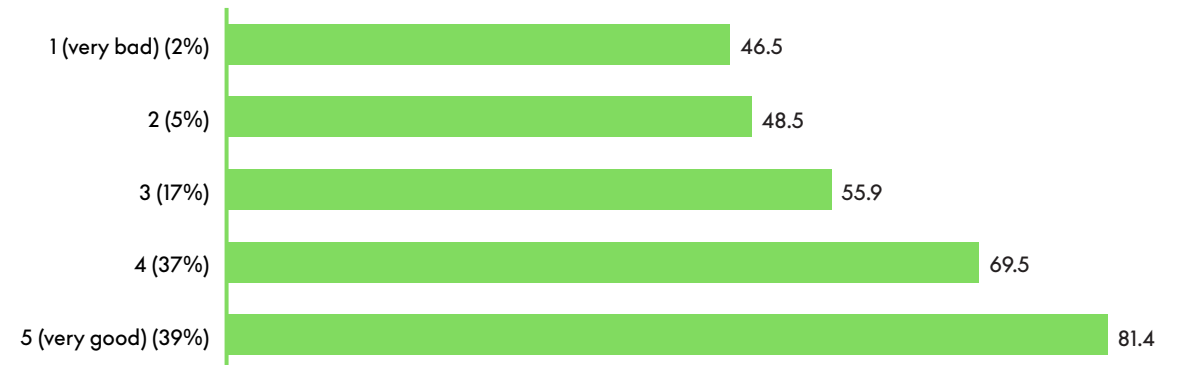
### Mental health risk by quality of family relationships



### Quality of family relationships



### MHI score by quality of family relationships

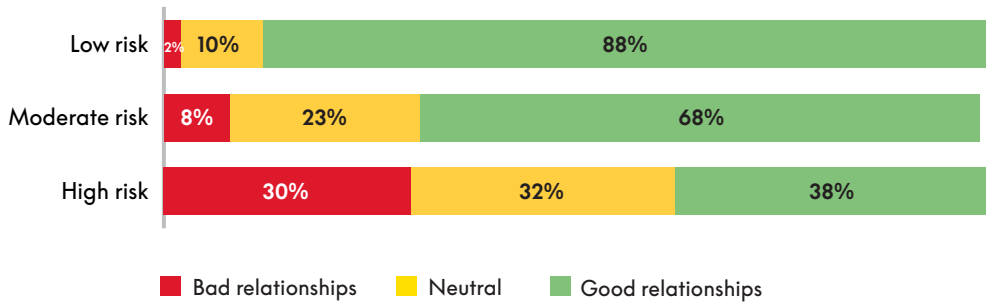




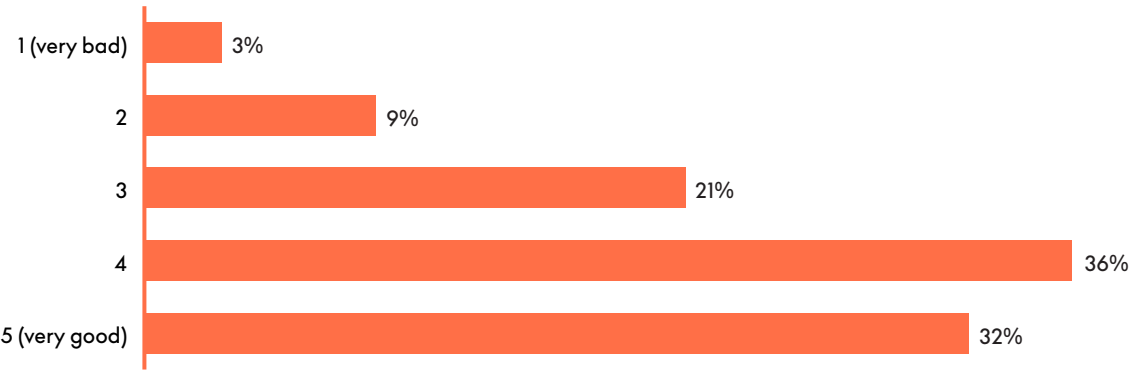
Americans were asked to rate the quality of their friendships on a scale from one to five, with one being “very bad” and five being “very good”.

- More than two-thirds (68 percent) rate the quality of their friendships as four or more. The mental health of this group is significantly higher than those who rate the quality of friendships as bad or very bad.
- Individuals with a low mental health risk are more than twice as likely as those with a high mental health risk to rate the quality of their friendships more favorably.

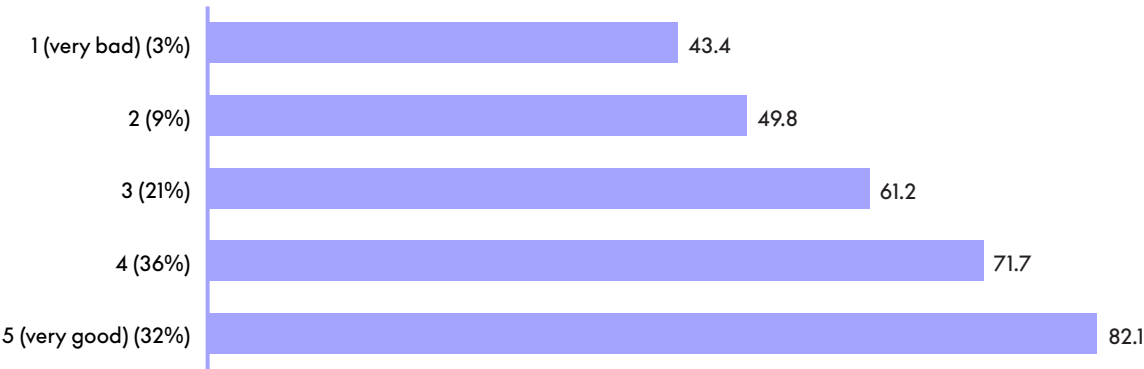
Mental health risk by quality of friendships



Quality of friendships



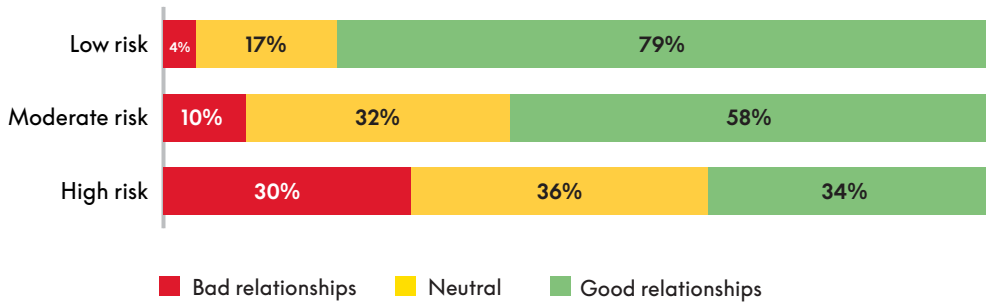
MHI score by quality of friendships



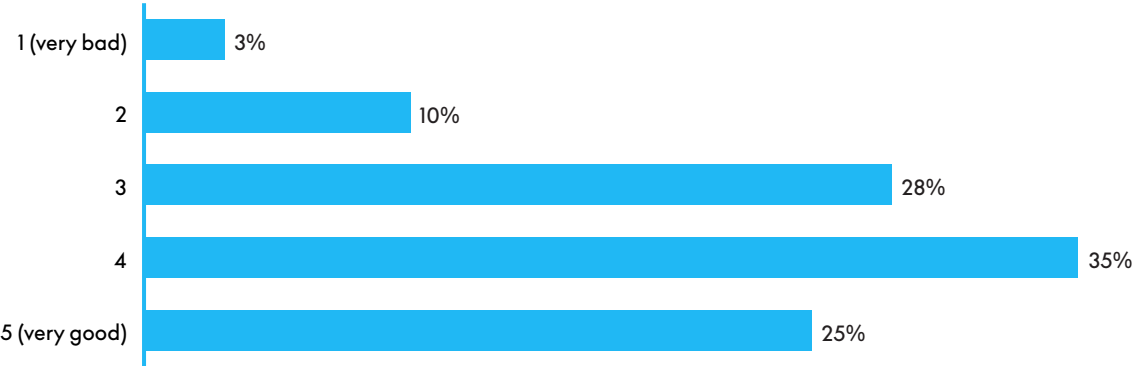
Americans were asked to rate the quality of co-worker relationships on a scale from one to five, with one being “very bad” and five being “very good”.

- Three in five (60 percent) rate the quality of co-worker relationships as four or more. The mental health of this group is significantly higher than those who rate the quality of co-worker relationships as bad or very bad.
- Individuals with a low mental health risk are more than twice as likely as those with a high mental health risk to rate the quality of co-worker relationships more favorably.

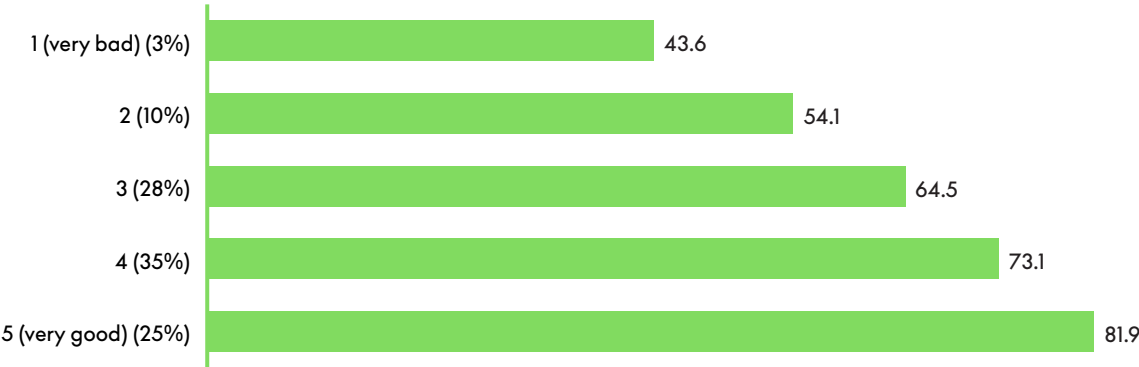
Mental health risk by quality of co-worker relationships



Quality of co-worker relationships



MHI score by quality of co-worker relationships



# Mental health issues

Americans were asked to self-report a diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health condition or issue.

- Nearly one in five (15 percent) report having a mental health condition or issue and the mental health score of this group (49.5) is nearly 21 points below the national average (70.2).
- Ten percent are unsure about whether they have a mental health condition or issue and the mental health score of this group (52.1) is 18 points below the national average (70.2).
- Respondents under 40 are three times more likely than those over 50 to have a mental health condition/issue.
- Parents are 75 percent more likely than non-parents to self-report a diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health condition/issue.

## Do you have a mental health condition or issue?



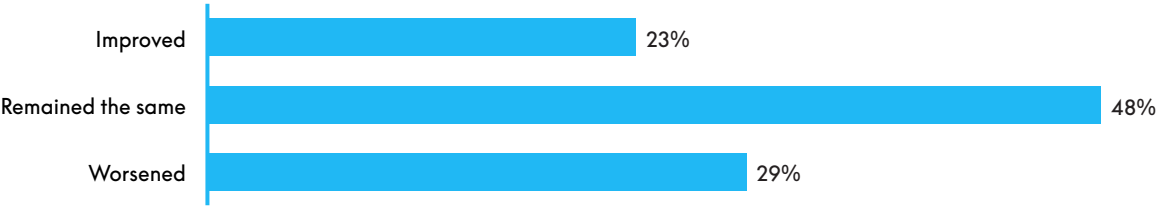
## MHI score by do you have a mental health condition or issue



Americans reporting a mental health condition or issue were asked whether it has changed compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic.

- More than one-quarter (29 percent) report their mental health condition or issue worsened compared to before the pandemic, and this group has a mental health score (36.6), more than 33 points below the national average (70.2).
- Nearly one in four (23 percent) indicate their mental health condition or issue improved compared to before the pandemic, yet the mental health of this group (56.1) is 14 points below the national average.
- Managers, parents, and respondents under 40 are more likely to report an improvement in their mental health condition or issue compared to before the pandemic.

Change in mental health condition or issue compared to before the pandemic



MHI score by change in mental health condition/issue when compared to before the pandemic



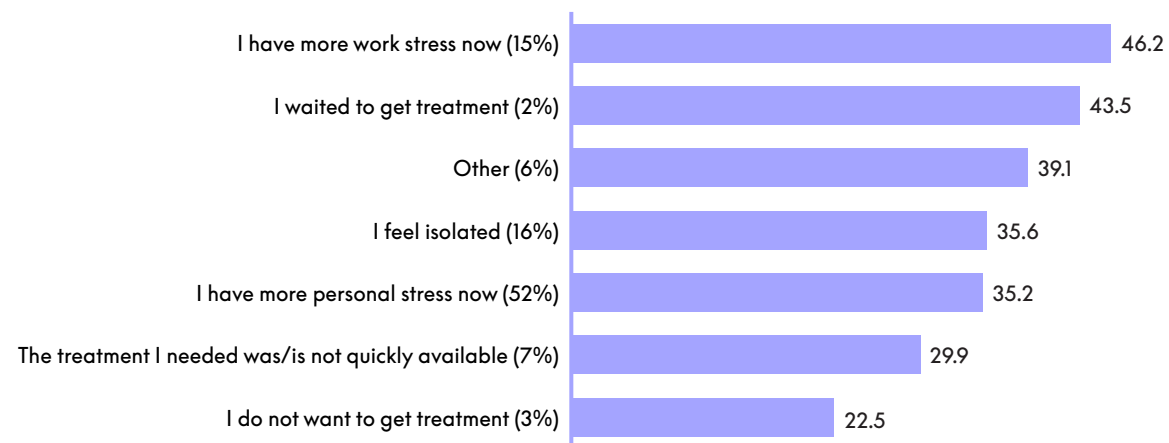
Americans reporting a worsening of their mental health condition or issue compared to before the pandemic were asked why their condition or issue worsened.

- More than half (52 percent) indicate they have more personal stress, 16 percent report feeling isolated, and 15 percent report more work stress as reasons for their worsened mental health condition/issue.
- The mental health scores of these groups are significantly lower than the national average. Most notably, the mental health score of respondents who feel isolated (35.6) is nearly 35 points lower than the national average (70.2).
- Women are 60 percent more likely than men to identify personal stress as the reason for their worsened mental health condition/issue.
- Managers are nearly 50 percent more likely than non-managers to identify work stress as the reason for their worsened mental health condition/issue.

#### Reason for worsened condition or issue



#### MHI score by reason for worsened condition or issue



# 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 5,000 people who live 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. Respondents are asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering each question. Data for the current report was collected between September 12 and September 22, 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    **Strained** 50-79    **Optimal** 80 - 100

## Additional data and analyses

Demographic breakdowns 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)



LifeWorks is a wholly owned subsidiary of TELUS now operating as part of TELUS Health as a result of its recent acquisition.

## About TELUS Health

TELUS Health is a global healthcare company serving people in more than 160 countries delivering both digital innovation and clinical services to improve total physical, mental and financial health and wellness across the full spectrum of primary and preventative care. By leveraging the power of technology to deliver connected solutions and services both in-person and virtually, TELUS Health is improving access to care and revolutionizing the flow of information while facilitating collaboration, efficiency, and productivity for physicians, pharmacists, health authorities, allied healthcare professionals, insurers, employers and people globally, progressing its vision of transforming healthcare and empowering people to live healthier lives.

Our clinical team is composed of renowned and passionate health professionals around the world delivering best-in-class people-centric care to hundreds of thousands of employers, professionals and their families.

For more information, please visit: [www.telushealth.com](https://www.telushealth.com).