



# The Mental Health Index by TELUS Health.

Canada | May 2023



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# What you need to know for May 2023.

## 1. With little or no change in three months, the mental health of workers in Canada has plateaued to a level in line with scores at the earliest stages of the pandemic.

- At 64.6, the mental health of workers in Canada is unchanged from the prior month
- 33 per cent of workers have a high mental health risk, 43 per cent have a moderate mental health risk, and 24 per cent have a low mental health risk
- Anxiety and isolation have been the lowest (worst) mental health sub-scores for 13 consecutive months
- Optimism, financial risk, and general psychological health sub-scores have declined (have poorer scores) compared to April 2023
- Mental health scores have declined in Alberta, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador; scores have improved or remained unchanged in other provinces
- Labourers have a lower mental health score than service and office workers
- The mental health score of managers has improved while the mental health score of non-managers has declined from April 2023

## 2. Workers collaborating with others have better mental health than those working exclusively independently.

- 87 per cent collaborate with co-workers some or all the time; 38 per cent who collaborate all the time have the highest mental health scores
- Nearly two in five (38 per cent) would prefer to work alone most of the time; this group has the lowest mental health score, nearly 10 points lower than workers who would not prefer to work on tasks alone and more than three points below the national average (64.6)
- Isolation scores are lowest/worst among employees who would prefer to work alone most of the time, nearly 12 points lower than employees who would not prefer to work alone
- 73 per cent describe positive collaboration with co-workers and this group has a mental health score 22 points higher than workers reporting a negative experience



**of workers collaborate with co-workers all the time and this group has the highest mental health scores**



**of managers have experienced team conflict in the past year**



**of workers do not feel that their mental health is as supported by their employer as it was early in the pandemic**



**of managers have experienced harassment/bullying in their teams in the past year**

### 3. More than one in four managers experienced team conflict in the past year.

- 34 per cent of managers have encountered employee mental health concerns
- 26 per cent of managers report experiencing team conflict
- The mental health scores of managers who have encountered challenges within their teams are 11 or more points below the mental health score of managers who have not experienced challenges
- 12 per cent of managers have experienced harassment/ bullying in their teams in the past year
- 18 per cent of workers have experienced workplace conflict in the past year

### 4. One in five workers do not feel as supported by their employers with respect to their mental health compared to early in the pandemic; a further 18 per cent never felt supported.

- The mental health scores of workers who do not feel supported is 14 or more points lower than workers who feel supported and eight points below the national average
- Workers who indicate that their employers' support improved have a mental health score 12 points higher than workers who indicated the support lessened
- 15 per cent of workers say employer support for mental health has improved while eight per cent say employer support has lessened

### 5. Goal attainment is elusive for a considerable number of workers, exerting a profound impact on their mental health.

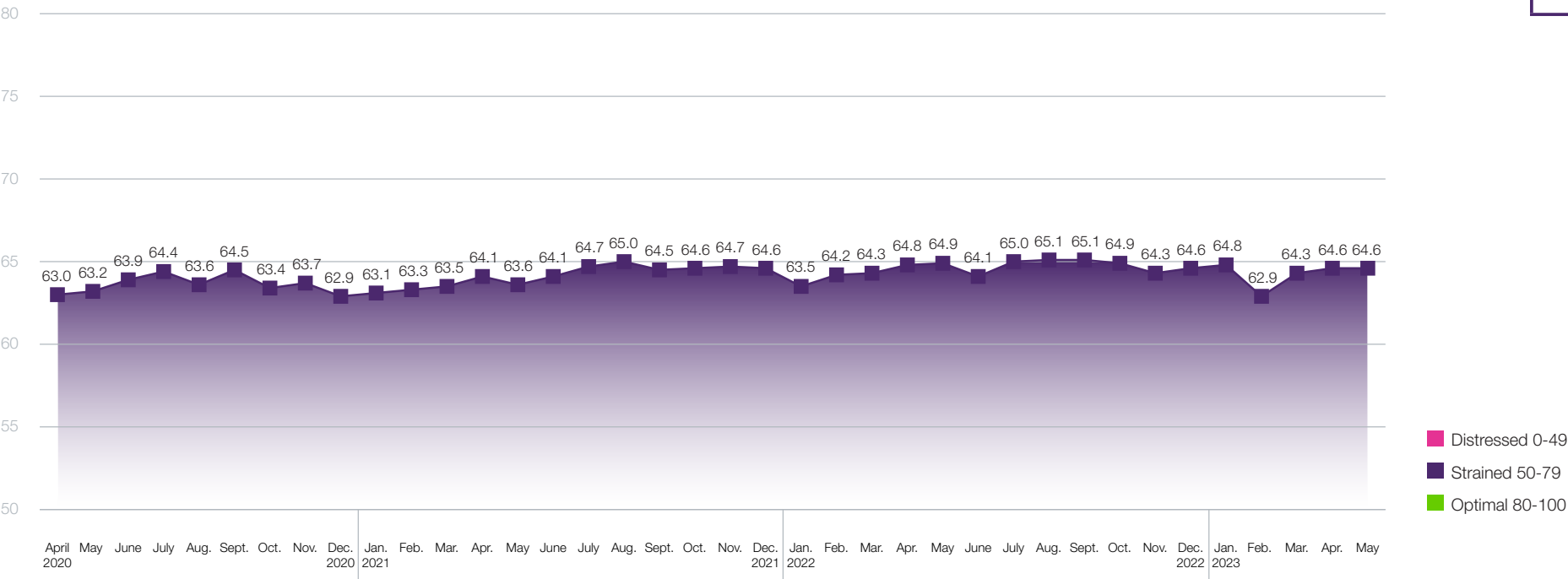
- 18 per cent do not believe they will reach their financial goals
- 15 per cent do not believe they will reach their housing goals
- 14 per cent do not believe they will reach their relationship goals
- 12 per cent do not believe they will reach their career goals
- 12 per cent do not believe they will reach their physical health goals
- 11 per cent do not believe they will reach their mental health goals
- The mental health scores of workers who do not believe they will reach their goals are 18 or more points below workers who are more likely to reach their goals



# The Mental Health Index.

The overall Mental Health Index (MHI) for May 2023 is 64.6. The mental health of workers in Canada is unchanged from the prior month.

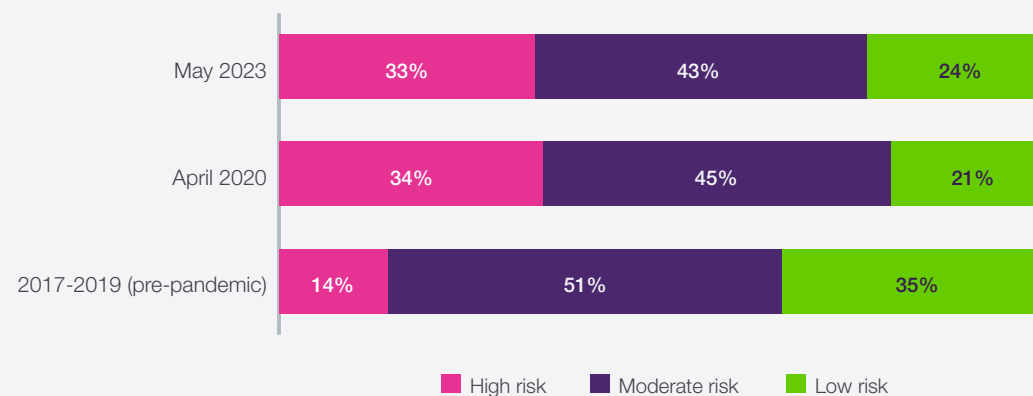
MHI Current Month May 2023	April 2023
64.6	64.6





## Mental health risk.

In May 2023, 33 per cent of workers in Canada have a high mental health risk, 43 per cent have a moderate mental health risk, and 24 per cent have a low mental health risk. Three years after the launch of the Index in April 2020, near the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been only a slight reduction in high-risk workers (1 per cent) and a modest (3 per cent) improvement in low-risk workers.



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.

**Mental Health Index sub-scores.**

For more than one year, the lowest Mental Health Index sub-score is for the risk measure of anxiety (57.5). Isolation (60.9), depression (62.5), work productivity (62.7), optimism (67.0), and financial risk (68.4) follow. Despite a modest decline, general psychological health (72.0) continues to be the most favourable mental health measure in May 2023.

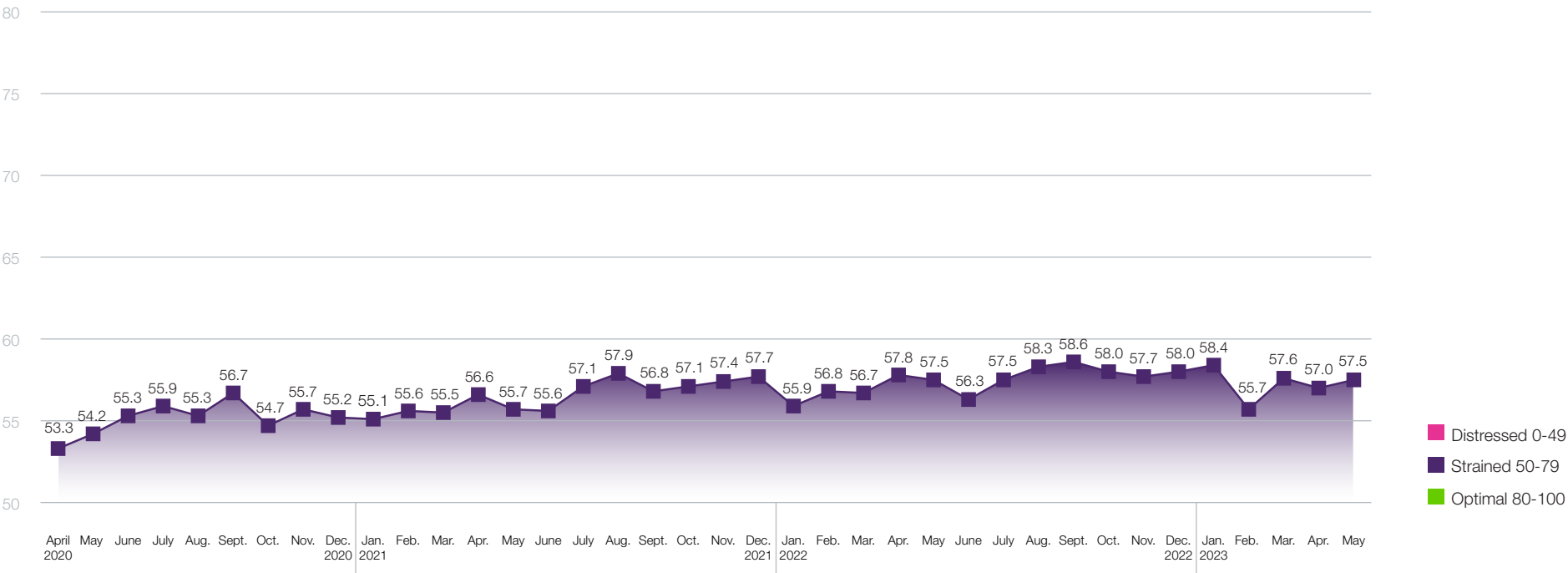
- Anxiety and isolation have been the lowest mental health sub-scores for 13 consecutive months
- Optimism, financial risk, and psychological health sub-scores have declined compared to the prior month
- The greatest improvement is observed in the work productivity sub-score, increasing 2.0 points from April 2023

Mental Health Index Sub-scores	May 2023	April 2023
Anxiety	57.5	57.0
Isolation	60.9	59.6
Depression	62.5	62.4
Work productivity	62.7	60.7
Optimism	67.0	67.4
Financial risk	68.4	69.6
Psychological health	72.0	72.6



Anxiety

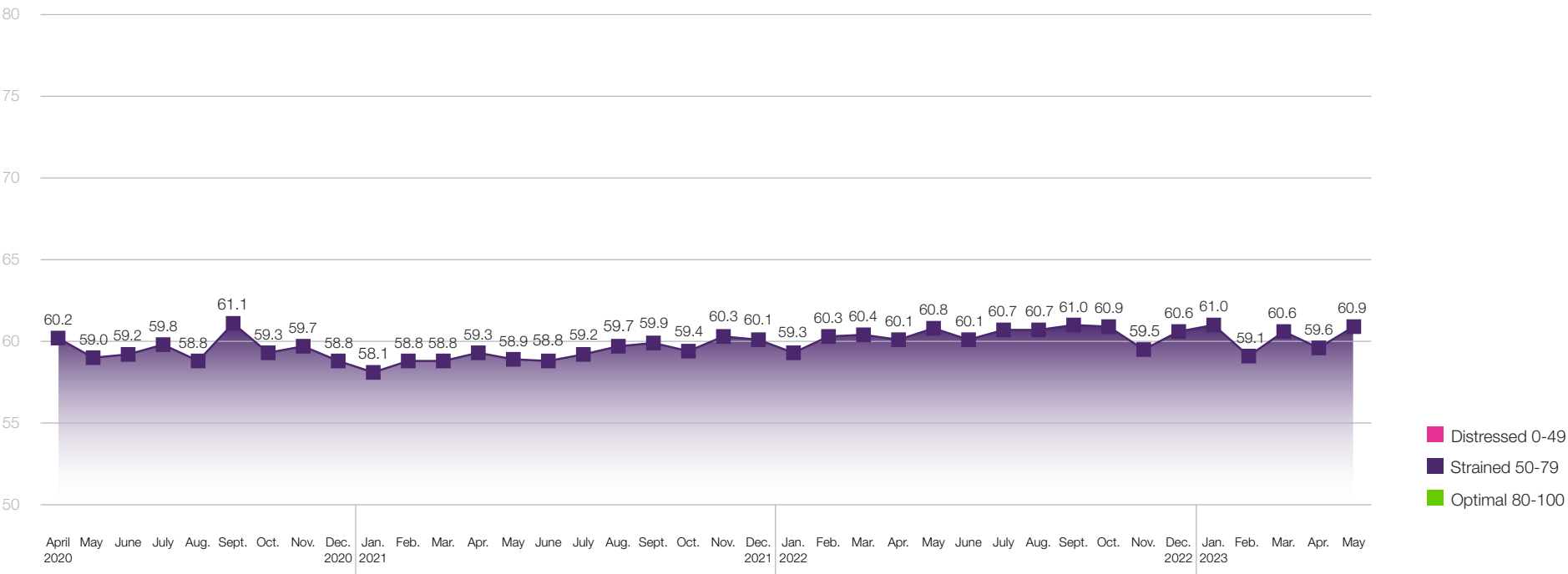
The anxiety sub-score has fluctuated since the launch of the Index in April 2020, although there has been a general trend of improvement. After reaching its high in September 2022, the anxiety score declined through February 2023 despite two months of modest improvements during this period. A significant 1.9-point improvement was observed in March 2023. In May 2023, the anxiety score (57.5) improved modestly from the previous month; however, it continues to be the lowest score across all mental health sub-scores for the 13th consecutive month.





Isolation

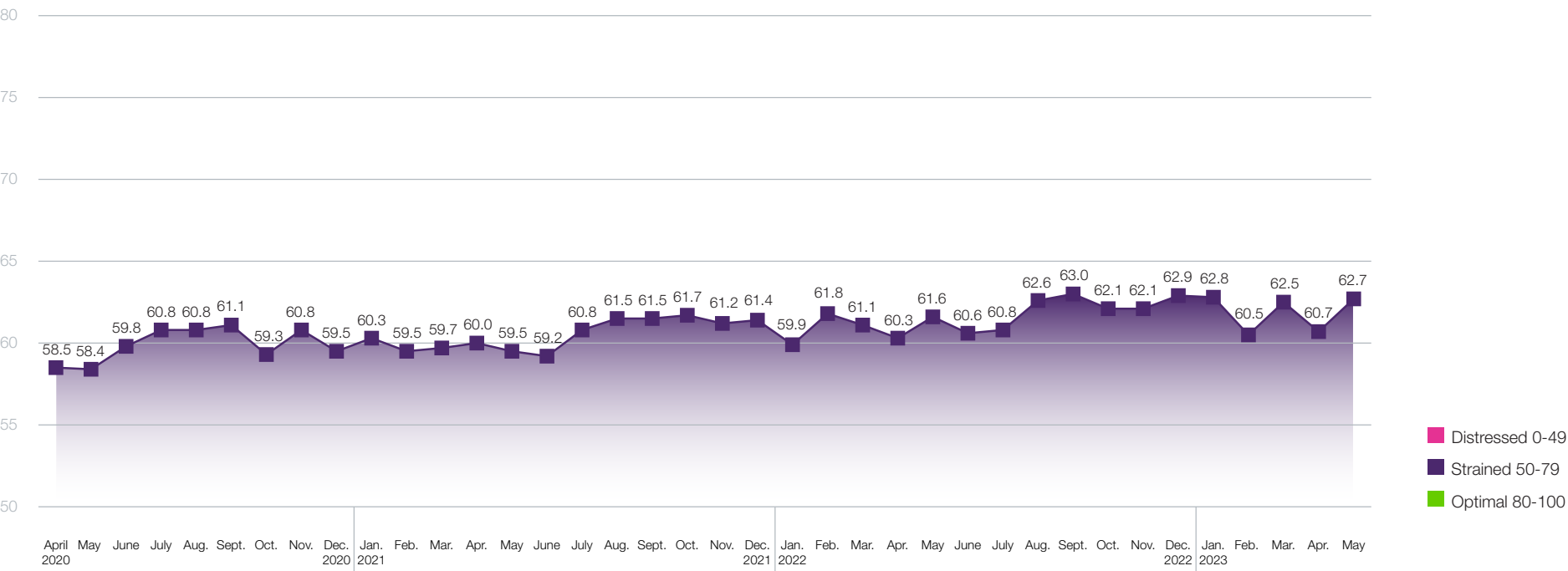
With only one notable increase, in September 2020, since the launch of the Index in April 2020, the isolation sub-score made incremental improvements through September 2022. Following a one-point decline in November, the isolation sub-score rebounded through January 2023. Since January 2023, the isolation scores have fluctuated with sharp declines followed by sharp increases. In May 2023, the isolation has improved 1.3 points from April.



Work productivity

The work productivity sub-score measures the impact of mental health on work productivity and goals.

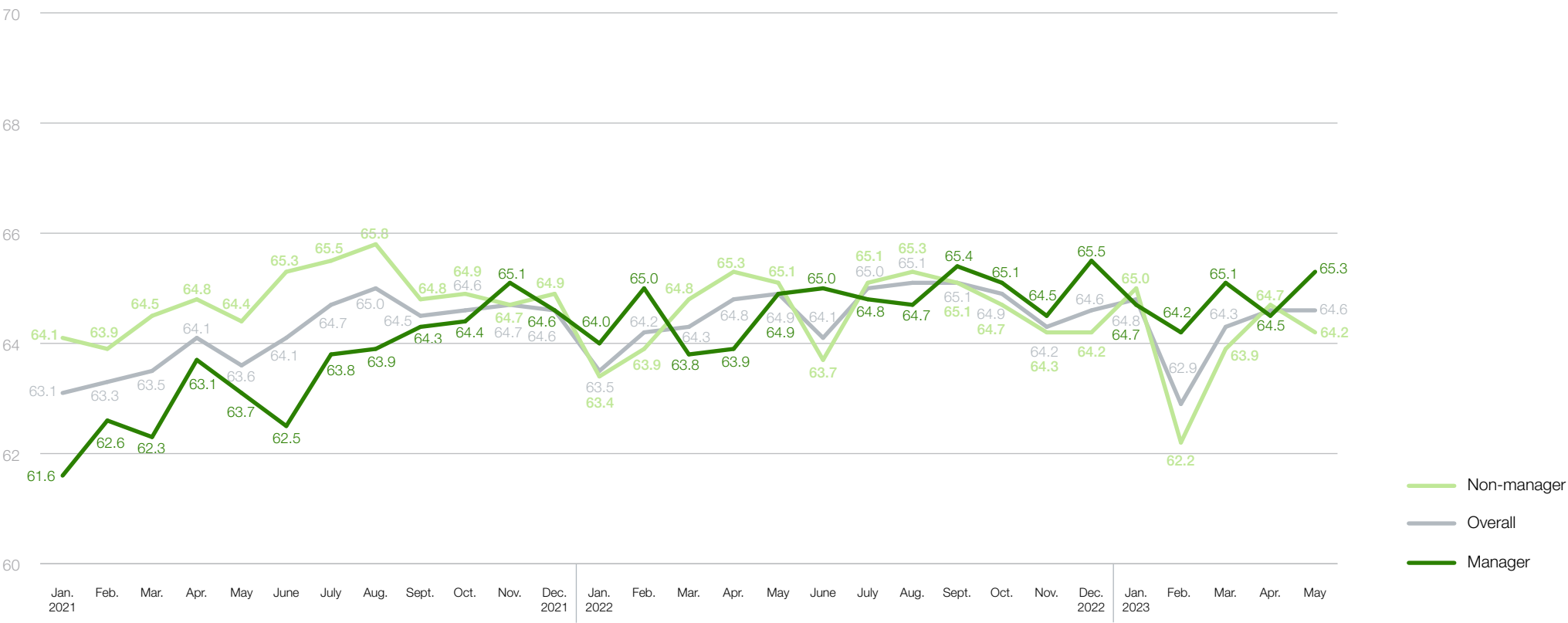
With multiple periods of improvement followed by declines, the work productivity score has been inconsistent from month to month since the launch of the MHI reports in April 2020. Overall, the impact of mental health on work productivity has shown general improvement. Similar to other sub-scores, the work productivity score declined sharply in February 2023 but recovered two points in March. In April 2023, the work productivity score declined sharply again; however, a strong two-point improvement is observed in the work productivity score in May 2023.



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. Since November 2021, there is no consistent trend and since June 2022, managers and non-managers have reported similar mental health scores.

In May 2023, the mental health of managers improved while the mental health of non-managers declined compared to the prior month.



## Mental health by gender and age.

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have a significantly lower mental health score than men. In May 2023, the mental health score of women is 62.1 compared to 67.2 for men
- Since April 2020, mental health scores have improved with age
- Differences in mental health scores between individuals with and without children have been reported since the launch of the Index in April 2020. More than three years later, this pattern continues with a lower score for individuals with at least one child (61.6) than individuals without children (65.8)

## Mental health by employment status.

- Overall, five per cent of respondents are unemployed<sup>1</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 (52.4), followed by individuals working fewer hours (58.0), individuals not currently employed (60.9), and individuals with no change to salary or hours (65.5)
- Managers have a higher mental health score (65.3) than non-managers (64.2)
- Labourers have a lower mental health score (61.8) than service (64.8) and office workers (65.2)
- Respondents working for companies with 1,001-5,000 employees have the highest mental health score (66.1)
- Respondents working for companies with 5,001-10,000 employees have the lowest mental health score (61.5)

## Emergency savings

- Workers without emergency savings continue to experience a lower score in mental health (49.0) than the overall group (64.6). Workers with emergency savings have a mental health score of 70.4

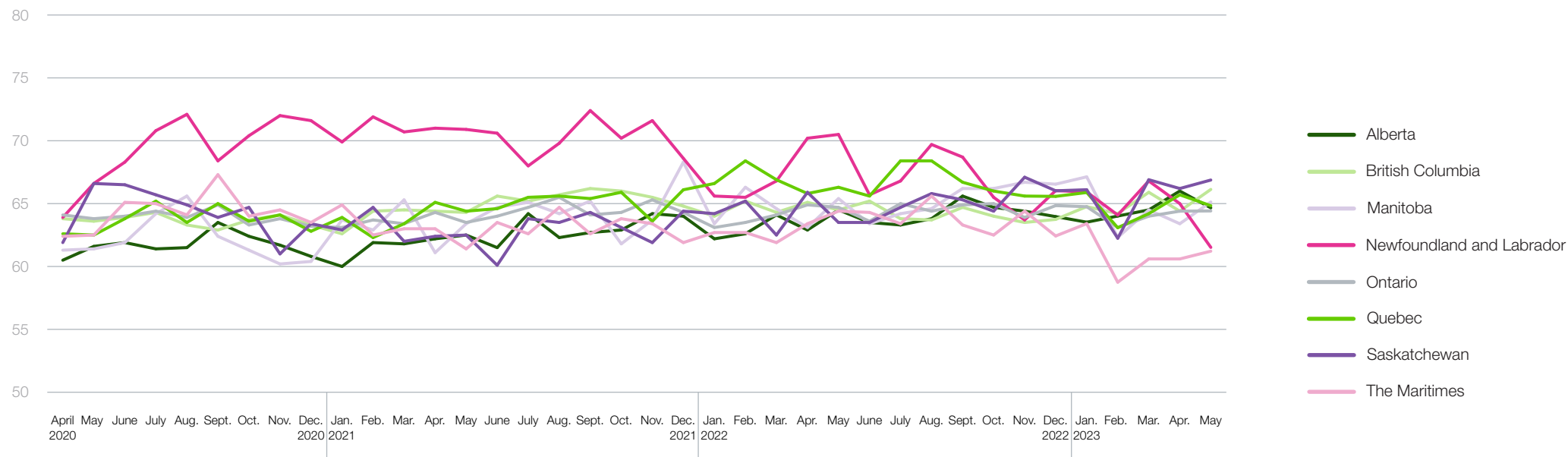


<sup>1</sup> MHI respondents who have been employed in the past six months are included in the poll.

# The Mental Health Index by province.

Since April 2020, provincial mental health scores have fluctuated. Apart from Newfoundland and Labrador, the fluctuation patterns for the provinces have been similar. In May 2023, the mental health scores in Alberta, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador have declined while scores in other provinces are unchanged or have improved compared to April 2023.

- The greatest improvements in mental health are in British Columbia and Manitoba, up 1.7-points from the previous month
- The Maritimes continues to have the lowest mental health score (61.2) despite a 0.6-point increase from April 2023



Employment status	May 2023	Apr. 2023
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	65.5	65.7
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	58.0	55.7
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	52.4	51.4
Not currently employed	60.9	62.2
Age group	May 2023	Apr. 2023
Age 20-29	54.2	52.2
Age 30-39	59.0	58.1
Age 40-49	61.9	62.4
Age 50-59	66.3	66.3
Age 60-69	71.8	73.1
Number of children	May 2023	Apr. 2023
No children in household	65.8	66.2
1 child	61.6	60.0
2 children	61.7	62.2
3 children or more	60.6	61.5

Province	May 2023	Apr. 2023
Alberta	64.7	66.0
British Columbia	66.1	64.4
Manitoba	65.1	63.4
Newfoundland and Labrador	61.5	65.0
The Maritimes	61.2	60.6
Quebec	64.8	65.7
Ontario	64.4	64.4
Saskatchewan	66.9	66.2
Gender	May 2023	Apr. 2023
Men	67.2	66.9
Women	62.1	62.3
Household income	May 2023	Apr. 2023
<\$30K/annum	52.5	52.2
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	60.9	60.3
\$60K to <\$100K	63.7	64.0
\$100K to <\$150K	66.7	67.1
\$150K or more	71.3	69.7

Employer size	May 2023	Apr. 2023
Self-employed/sole proprietor	65.9	69.3
2-50 employees	64.9	64.2
51-100 employees	63.7	62.0
101-500 employees	64.9	64.8
501-1,000 employees	63.4	63.0
1,001-5,000 employees	66.1	66.3
5,001-10,000 employees	61.5	61.5
More than 10,000 employees	65.1	65.4
Manager	May 2023	Apr. 2023
Manager	65.3	64.5
Non-manager	64.2	64.7
Work environment	May 2023	Apr. 2023
Labour	61.8	61.0
Office/desk	65.2	65.4
Service	64.8	65.0

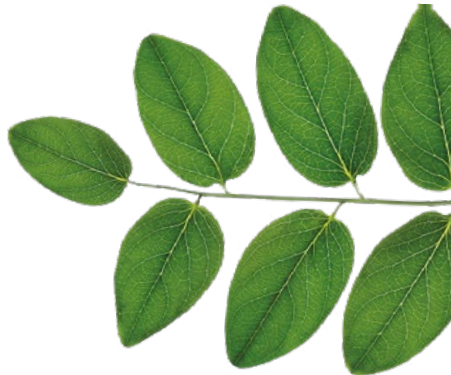
Numbers highlighted in **pink** are the most negative scores in the group.  
Numbers highlighted in **green** are the least negative scores in the group.

# The Mental Health Index by industry.

Despite a significant increase from the previous month, employees working in Information and Cultural Industries have the lowest mental health score (58.3) in May 2023, followed by individuals working in Food Services (59.6), and Utilities (60.1).

Respondents employed in the Automotive Industry (70.7), Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (70.2), and Wholesale Trade (69.9) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.



Industry	May 2023	April 2023	Change
Accommodation	66.7	58.5	8.2
Information and Cultural Industries	58.3	51.0	7.3
Administrative and Support services	60.5	55.6	4.9
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	66.3	62.1	4.1
Wholesale Trade	69.9	66.9	3.0
Food Services	59.6	58.1	1.5
Transportation	67.6	66.2	1.4
Health Care and Social Assistance	63.4	62.2	1.2
Other	63.3	62.7	0.5
Finance and Insurance	66.5	66.1	0.4
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	64.5	64.4	0.1
Automotive Industry	70.7	70.9	-0.2
Technology	65.3	65.6	-0.2
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	70.2	70.6	-0.4
Construction	63.6	64.0	-0.4
Educational Services	65.9	66.4	-0.5
Manufacturing	66.3	66.8	-0.6
Other services (except Public Administration)	60.3	61.2	-0.9
Warehousing	60.7	61.8	-1.0
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	67.6	69.1	-1.6
Retail Trade	63.2	64.8	-1.6
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	66.8	69.7	-2.9
Media and Telecommunications	61.5	66.7	-5.2
Public Administration	62.2	67.9	-5.7
Utilities	60.1	66.8	-6.7

# Spotlight

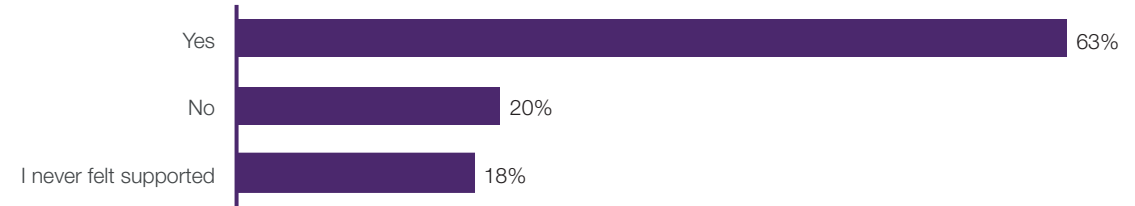
## Employer mental health support.

Workers in Canada were asked whether they are still feeling as supported by their employer as they did early in the pandemic with respect to their mental health and wellbeing.

- Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) are feeling as supported by their employer as they did early in the pandemic; this group has a mental health score (70.2) 14 or more points higher than workers who do not feel supported and more than five points higher than the national average (64.6)
- Nearly two in five (38 per cent) either never felt supported or are not feeling supported. This group has a mental health score eight or more points below the national average (64.6)



Are you still feeling as supported by your employer in terms of mental health and wellbeing compared to early in the pandemic?



MHI score by “Are you still feeling as supported by your employer in terms of mental health and wellbeing compared to early in the pandemic?”



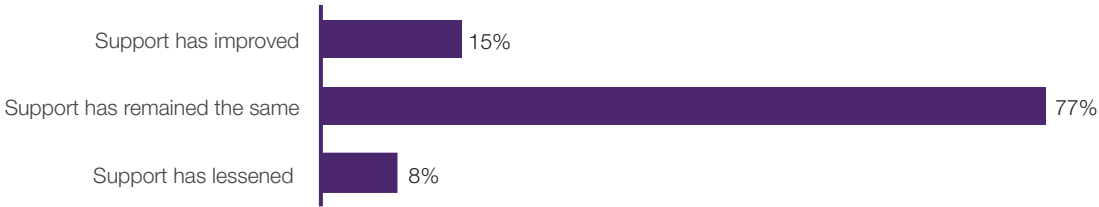


Workers in Canada were asked whether their employer has changed the level of mental health and wellbeing support offered.

- More than one in seven (15 per cent) indicate their employer has improved the level of mental health and wellbeing support; this group has the highest mental health score (66.3), more than 12 points higher than workers reporting that support has lessened (52.8), and nearly two points higher than the national average (64.6)
- Managers are twice as likely as non-managers to indicate their employer has improved the level of mental health and wellbeing support
- Labourers are 50 per cent more likely than office workers and twice as likely as service industry workers to report their employer has improved the level of mental health and wellbeing support
- Nearly one in ten (8 per cent) report the level of mental health and wellbeing support has lessened. The mental health score of this group (52.8) is nearly 12 points lower than the national average (64.6)
- Nearly four in five (77 per cent) report the level of mental health and wellbeing support has remained the same. The mental health of this group (65.5) is modestly higher than the national average (64.6)



**Level of employer mental health and wellbeing support**



**MHI score by “Level of employer mental health and wellbeing support”**

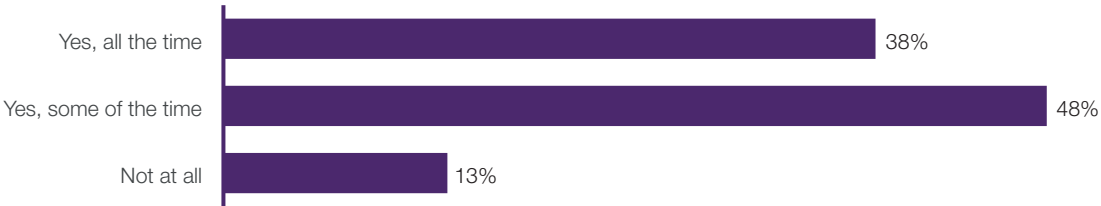


# Collaboration

Workers in Canada were asked whether their role requires collaboration with co-workers.

- Nearly two in five (38 per cent) need to collaborate with co-workers all the time; this group has the highest mental health score (66.3), three points higher than workers who do not need to collaborate (63.3) and nearly two points higher than the national average (64.6)
- Managers are 80 per cent more likely than non-managers to collaborate with co-workers all the time
- Workers older than 50 are nearly 70 per cent more likely than workers under 40 to report not needing to collaborate with co-workers
- Nearly one in seven (13 per cent) do not need to collaborate with co-workers; this group’s mental health score (63.3) is lower than the national average (64.6)

## Do you need to collaborate with co-workers in your role?



## MHI score by “Do you need to collaborate with co-workers in your role?”

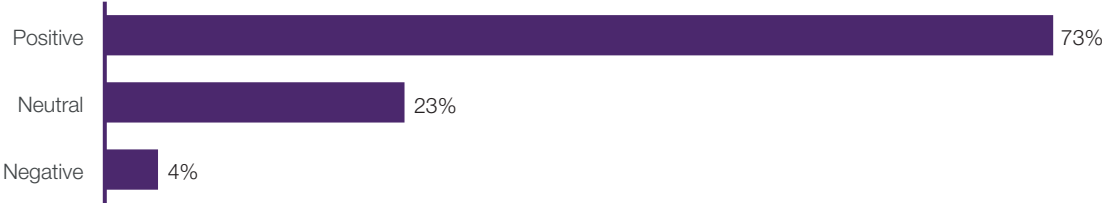


Workers in Canada were asked to describe their experience collaborating with co-workers.

- Nearly three-quarters (73 per cent) describe a positive experience collaborating with co-workers; this group has the highest mental health score (68.0), nearly 22 points higher than workers reporting a negative experience (46.4) and more than three points higher than the national average (64.6)
- Four per cent describe a negative experience collaborating with co-workers; the mental health score of this group (46.4) is more than 18 points lower than the national average (64.6)



**Experience collaborating with co-workers**



**MHI score by “Experience collaborating with co-workers”**



- Workers in Canada were asked whether they would prefer to work on tasks alone.
- Nearly two in five (38 per cent) would prefer to work alone most of the time; this group has the lowest mental health score (61.4), nearly 10 points lower than workers who would not prefer to work on tasks alone (71.0) and more than three points below the national average (64.6)
  - Isolation scores are lowest (56.5) among employees who would prefer to work alone most of the time, nearly 12 points lower than employees who would not prefer to work alone (68.2)
  - Nearly one in ten (8 per cent) would not prefer to work alone; this group has the highest mental health score (71.0), more than six points higher than the national average (64.6)



**Would you prefer to work on your tasks alone?**



**MHI score by “Would you prefer to work on your tasks alone?”**



**Isolation score by “Would you prefer to work on your tasks alone?”**

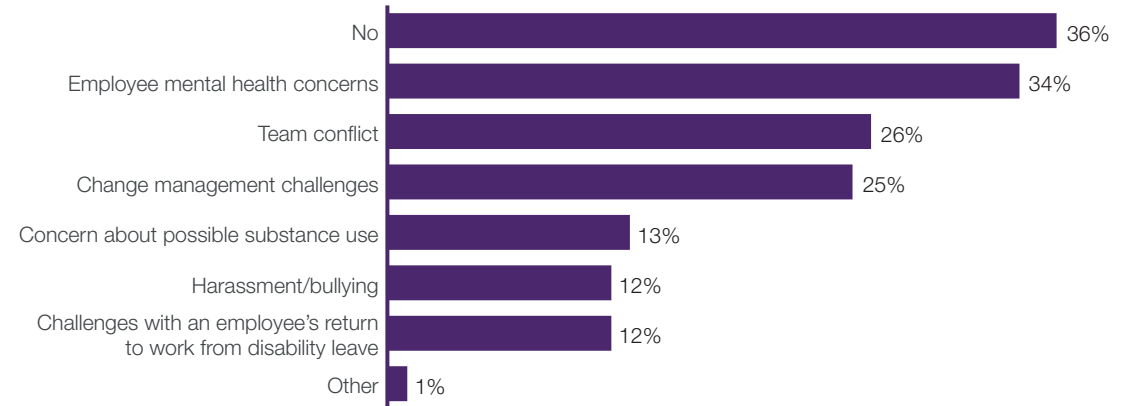


## Workplace challenges

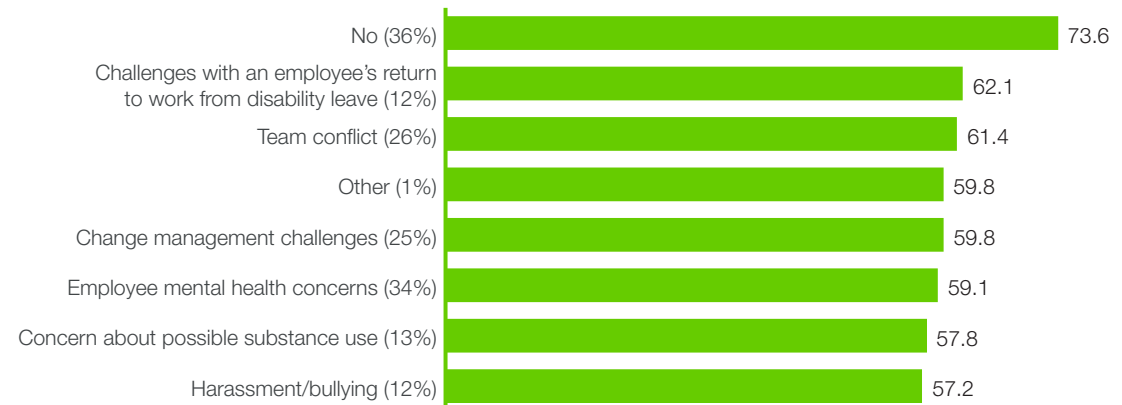
Managers in Canada were asked whether they have encountered workplace challenges within their teams in the last year.

- Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of managers have experienced one or more challenges within their teams
- More than one third (34 per cent) of managers have faced employee mental health concerns, 26 per cent have faced team conflict, and 25 per cent have faced change management challenges
- The mental health scores of managers who have encountered challenges within their teams are 11 or more points below the mental health score of managers who have not experienced challenges
- The lowest mental health score (57.2) is among 12 per cent of managers reporting harassment/bullying within their team; this score is more than 16 points lower than managers not experiencing challenges
- Male managers are 60 per cent more likely than female managers to report not encountering workplace challenges within their team
- More than one-third (36 per cent) of managers have not encountered workplace challenges. The mental health score of this group (73.6) is nine points higher than the national average (64.6)

### Workplace challenges encountered by managers



### MHI score by “Workplace challenges encountered by managers”



Managers reporting having encountered workplace challenges within their team were asked whether they have sought advice or support.

- More than two in five (42 per cent) managers have not sought advice or support for workplace challenges within their team; this group has the highest mental health score (64.3)
- Managers under 40 are 50 per cent more likely than managers over 50 to have sought advice or support for workplace challenges within their team
- Nearly three in five (58 per cent) managers have sought advice or support for workplace challenges within their team. The mental health score of this group (58.1) is more than six points lower than the national average (64.6)



Have you ever sought advice or support for workplace challenges?



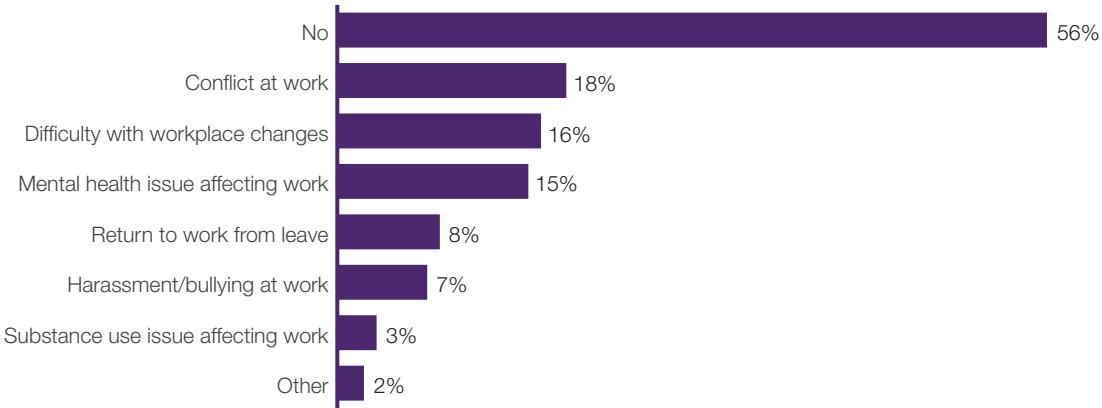
MHI score by “Have you ever sought advice or support for workplace challenges?”



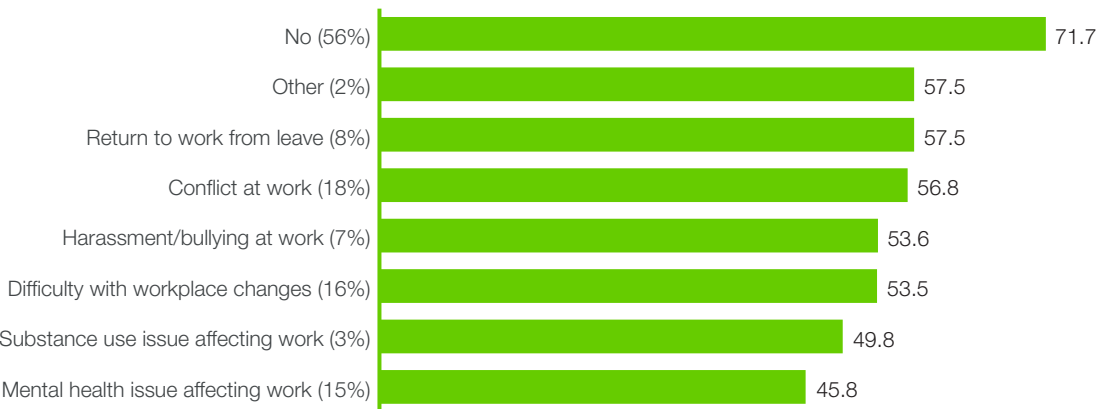
Workers in Canada were asked whether they have encountered workplace challenges in the last year.

- More than two in five (44 per cent) of workers have experienced one or more workplace challenges in the last year
- Nearly one in five (18 per cent) have experienced conflict at work, 16 per cent have experienced difficulty with workplace changes, and 15 per cent have experienced a mental health issue affecting work
- The mental health scores of employees who have experienced challenges are 14 or more points below the mental health score of employees who have not experienced challenges
- The lowest mental health score (45.8) is among 15 per cent of workers reporting a mental health issue affecting work; this score is 26 points lower than employees not experiencing challenges
- Workers 50 and older are 50 per cent more likely than workers under 40 to report not encountering workplace challenges in the last year
- More than half (56 per cent) have not encountered workplace challenges in the last year. This group has the highest mental health score (71.7), seven points higher than the national average (64.6)

Workplace challenges encountered by employees



MHI score by “Workplace challenges encountered by employees”





# Goals

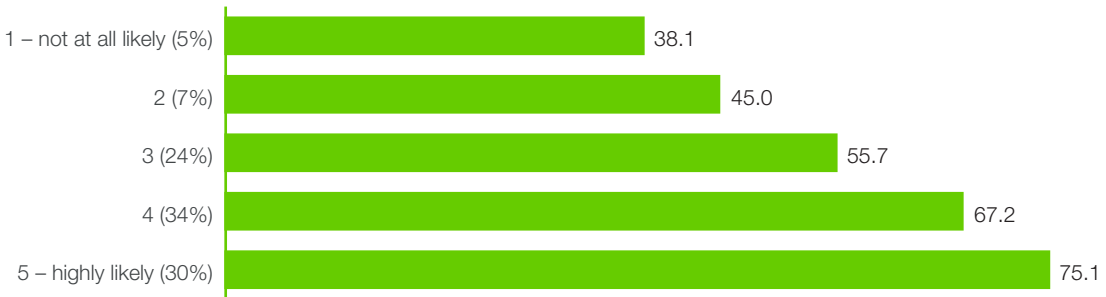
Workers in Canada were asked how likely they are to reaching their career goals.

- More than one in ten (12 per cent) do not believe they will reach their career goals; this group has a mental health score 22 or more points lower than workers who believe they will reach their career goals and 20 or more points lower than the national average (64.6)
- Non-managers are two and a half times more likely than managers to report they will not reach their career goals
- Individuals with a household income less than \$60,000 are three times more likely than workers with a household income greater than \$100,000 to believe they will not reach their career goals
- Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) believe they will reach their career goals. The mental health score of this group is three or more points higher than the national average (64.6)

## How likely are you to reach your career goals?



## MHI score by “How likely are you to reach your career goals?”

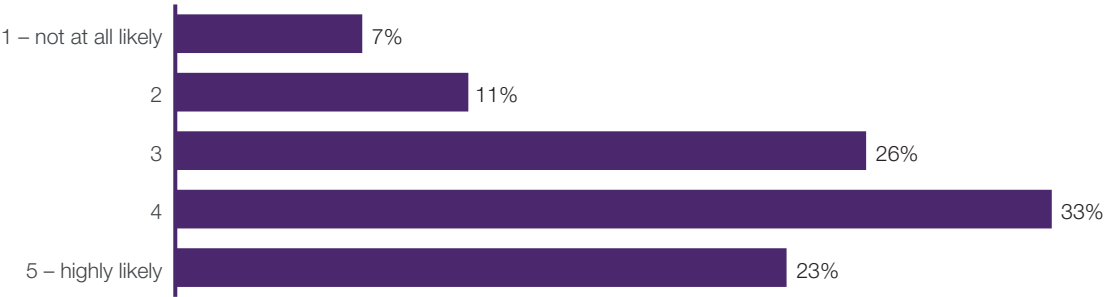




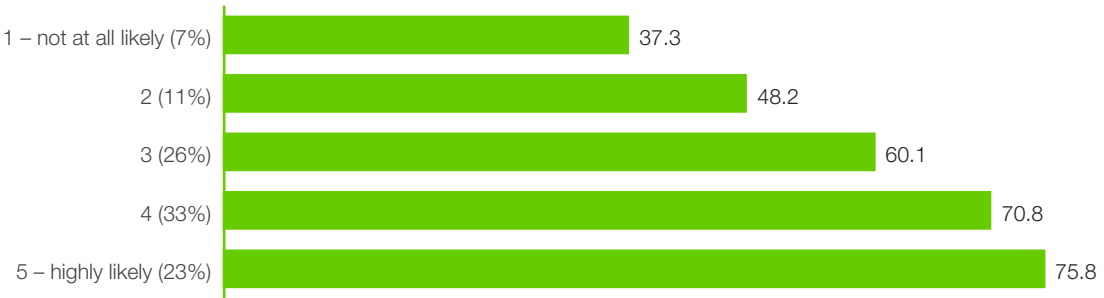
Workers in Canada were asked how likely they are to reaching their financial goals.

- Nearly one in five (18 per cent) do not believe they will reach their financial goals; this group has a mental health score 22 or more points lower than workers who believe they will reach their financial goals, and 16 or more points lower than the national average (64.6)
- Financial risk scores among workers who do not believe they will reach their financial goals are at least 26 points below workers who believe they will reach their goals
- Non-managers are 50 per cent more likely than managers to report they will not reach their financial goals
- Workers without emergency savings are twice as likely as workers with emergency savings to believe they will not reach their financial goals
- Workers with a household income greater than \$100,000 are 50 per cent more likely than workers with a household income less than \$60,000 to believe they will reach their financial goals
- More than half (56 per cent) believe they will reach their financial goals. The mental health score of this group is six or more points higher than the national average (64.6)

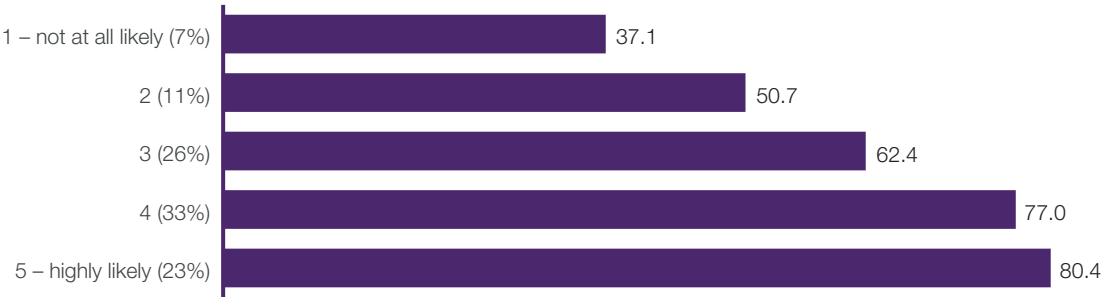
How likely are you to reach your financial goals?



MHI score by “How likely are you to reach your financial goals?”



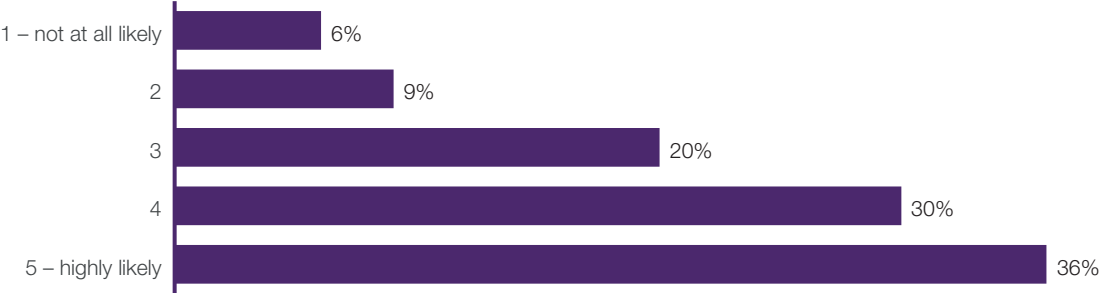
Financial risk score by “How likely are you to reach your financial goals?”



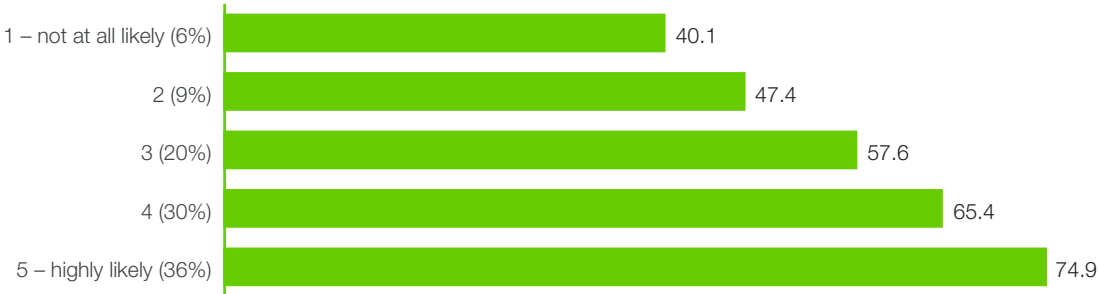
Workers in Canada were asked how likely they are to reaching their housing goals.

- More than one in seven (15 per cent) do not believe they will reach their housing goals; this group has a mental health score 18 or more points lower than workers who believe they will reach their housing goals and 17 or more points lower than the national average (64.6)
- Workers under 40 are twice as likely as workers over 50 to believe they will not reach their housing goals
- Non-parents are 40 per cent more likely than parents to report they will not reach their housing goals
- Workers with a household income greater than \$100,000 are 50 per cent more likely than workers with a household income less than \$60,000 to believe they will reach their housing goals
- Two-thirds (66 per cent) believe they will reach their housing goals. The mental health score of this group is higher than the national average (64.6)

How likely are you to reach your housing goals?



MHI score by “How likely are you to reach your housing goals?”



Workers in Canada were asked how likely they are to reach their mental health goals.

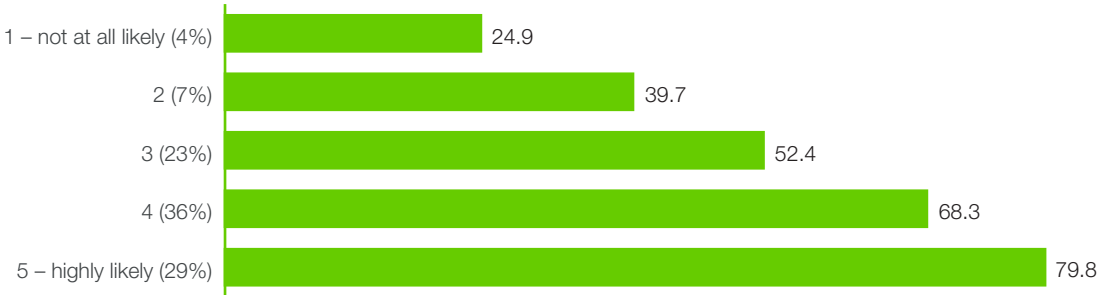
- More than one in ten (11 per cent) do not believe they will reach their mental health goals; this group has a mental health score 28 or more points lower than workers who believe they will reach their mental health goals and 25 or more points lower than the national average (64.6)
- Women are 40 per cent more likely than men to believe they will not reach their mental health goals
- Nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) believe they will reach their mental health goals. The mental health score of this group is four or more points higher than the national average (64.6)



How likely are you to reach your mental health goals?



MHI score by “How likely are you to reach your mental health goals?”

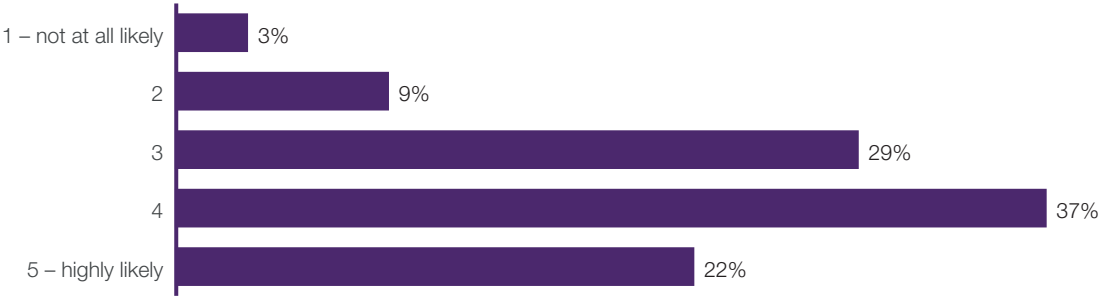


Workers in Canada were asked how likely they are to reach their physical health goals.

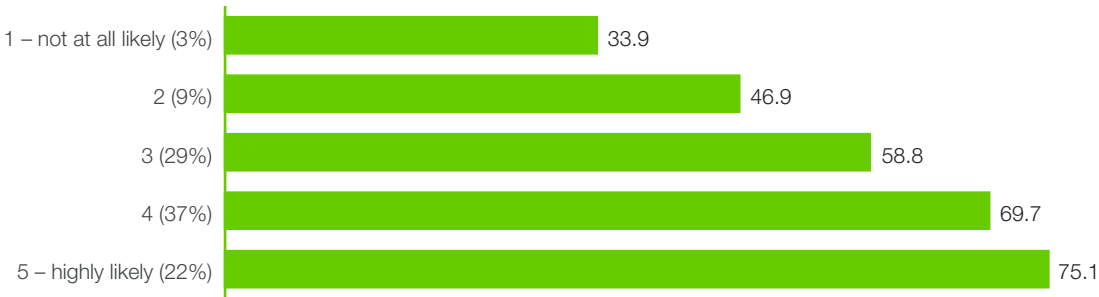
- More than one in ten (12 per cent) do not believe they will reach their physical health goals; this group has a mental health score 23 or more points lower than workers who believe they will reach their physical health goals and 18 or more points lower than the national average (64.6)
- Nearly three in five (59 per cent) believe they will reach their physical health goals. The mental health score of this group is five or more points higher than the national average (64.6)



How likely are you to reach your physical health goals?



MHI score by “How likely are you to reach your physical health goals?”

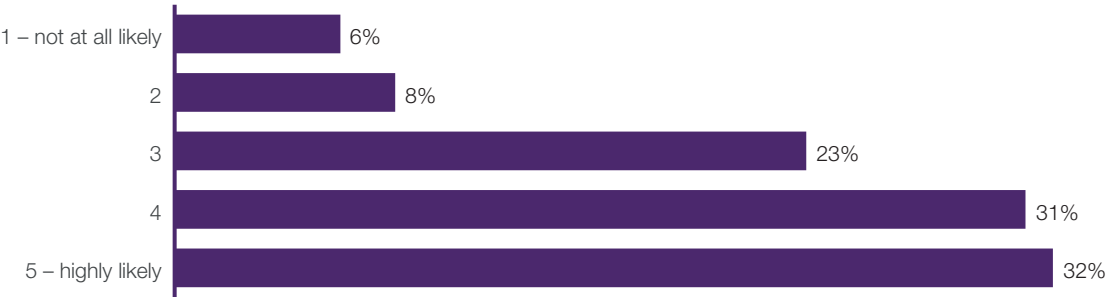


Workers in Canada were asked how likely they are to reaching their relationship goals.

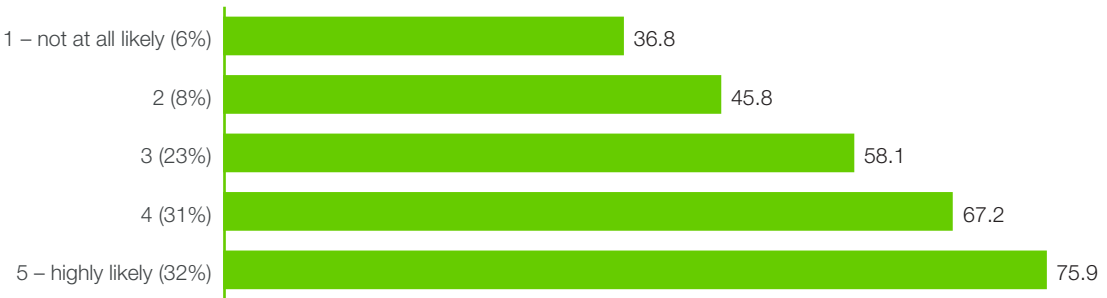
- One in seven (14 per cent) do not believe they will reach their relationship goals; this group has a mental health score 21 or more points lower than workers who believe they will reach their relationship goals and 19 or more points lower than the national average (64.6)
- Non-managers are 50 per cent more likely than managers to believe they will not reach their relationship goals
- Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) believe they will reach their relationship goals. The mental health score of this group is three or more points higher than the national average (64.6)



How likely are you to reach your relationship goals?



MHI score by “How likely are you to reach your relationship goals?”



# Overview of the Mental Health Index by TELUS Health (formerly 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 1 and May 8, 2023.

## Calculations

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.

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