



# The Mental Health Index by TELUS Health (formerly LifeWorks).

United States of America | January 2023



# Table of contents

1. What you need to know for January 2023 .....	3
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2. The Mental Health Index™ .....	5
Mental health risk .....	6
Mental Health Index™ sub-scores .....	7
Anxiety .....	8
Isolation.....	9
Work productivity .....	10
Managers compared to non-managers .....	11
Demographics.....	12
Employment .....	12
Emergency savings .....	12

3. Mental Health Index™ (regional).....	13
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4. Mental Health Index™ (industry) .....	15
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5. Spotlight.....	16
Inflation .....	16
Avoidance .....	17
Control .....	18
Marital/partner relationships.....	19
Wellbeing of children .....	21
Remote work.....	24

6. Overview of the Mental Health Index by TELUS Health) .....	27
Methodology .....	27
Calculations.....	27
Additional data and analyses .....	27

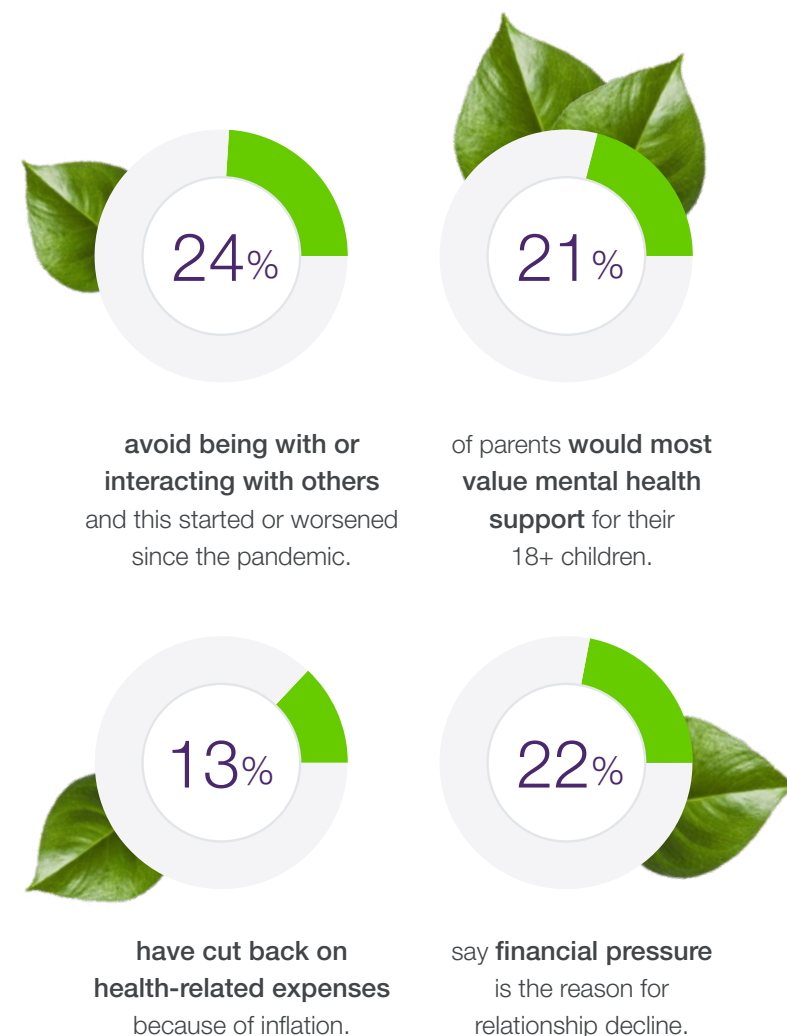
# What you need to know for January 2023.

## 1. Despite two consecutive months of improvement, the mental health of working Americans continues to be strained.

- At 72.0, the mental health of Americans improved significantly from the prior month
- 21% of Americans have a high mental health risk, 42% have a moderate mental health risk, and 38% have a low mental health risk
- Anxiety, isolation, and work productivity continue to be the lowest mental health sub-scores
- The mental health score of managers is higher than the score of non-managers and the national average
- The mental health score in all regions improved in January 2023 and are within a half point of one another

## 2. One-quarter of Americans avoid being with or interacting with others and this behavior largely started or worsened since the pandemic.

- The mental health score of respondents who avoid being with or interacting with others is more than 15 points below the national average.
- 60% say their avoidance started or worsened since the pandemic began
- 15% of Americans have difficulty controlling their emotions and the mental health score of this group is more than 23 points below the national average
- 56% say difficulty controlling their emotions started or worsened since the pandemic began
- Younger respondents (under 40 years of age) are 50% more likely to avoid being with or interacting with others and are more than three times as likely as individuals over 50 years of age to have difficulty controlling their emotions



### 3. One in eight Americans have cut back on health-related expenses due to inflation.

- 57% have cut back on discretionary spending
- 38% are staying home more
- 4% have cut back on prescription medication
- Parents are nearly twice as likely as non-parents to cut back on expenses related to their health
- Individuals without emergency savings are at least three times more likely to cut back on prescription medication and expenses related to their health compared to individuals with emergency savings
- The mental health score of respondents who cut back on prescription medication is more than 19 points below the national average; respondents who cut back on expenses related to their health have a mental health score nearly 14 points below the national average

### 4. More than one in five Americans say financial pressure is the reason for a decline in their marital/partner relationship.

- More than one in ten Americans report a decline in their marital/personal relationships since the pandemic began
- 22% say financial pressure is the reason for a decline in their marital/partner relationship
- The mental health score of respondents indicating that their marital/partner relationship has declined because of financial pressure is 20 points below the national average
- Parents are 60 percent more likely than non-parents to report financial pressure as the reason for a decline in their relationship

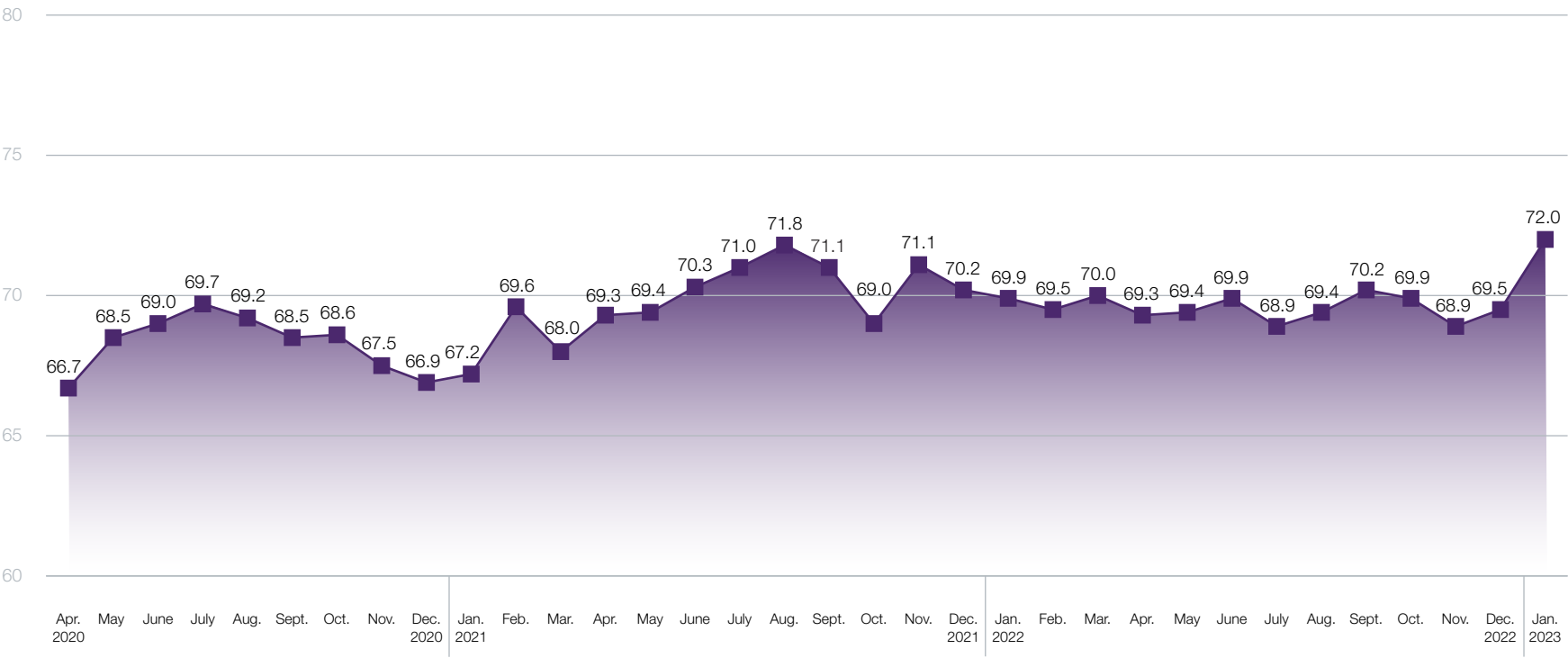
### 5. More than one in five parents would most value mental health support for their children.

- 25% of parents with children under 18 years of age are concerned about their children's behavior; among them, 59% say the behavior started or worsened since the pandemic
- 13% of parents with children 18 years of age and older are concerned about their children's behavior; among them, 46% say the behavior started or worsened since the pandemic
- The mental health and work productivity scores of parents concerned about their children's behavior are lower than parents not concerned about their children's behavior
- 34% of parents with children under 18 years of age say flexible work is the most valued support from their employer as it relates to the wellbeing of their children
- 22% of parents with children under 18 years of age and 21% of parents with children 18 years of age and older most value mental health support for their children.



# The Mental Health Index™

The overall Mental Health Index for January 2023 is 72.0 points. The mental health of Americans has improved significantly from December 2022.



MHI Current Month  
January 2023

72.0

December 2022

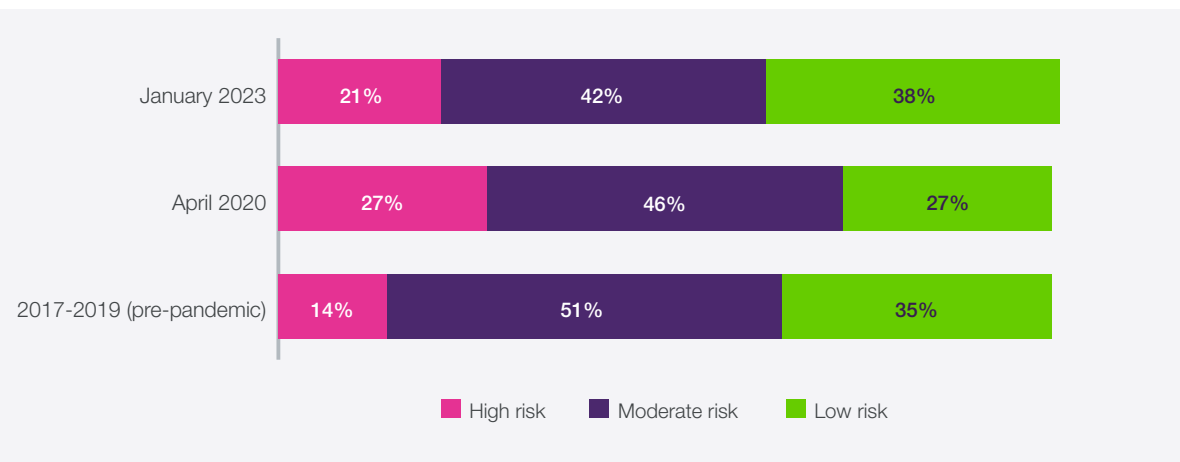
69.5

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



## Mental health risk

In January 2023, 21 percent of Americans have a high mental health risk, 42 percent have a moderate mental health risk, and 38 percent have a low mental health risk. Approximately 30 percent of people in the high-risk group report diagnosed anxiety or depression, seven percent report diagnosed anxiety or depression in the moderate-risk group, and one percent 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, 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. Prior to 2020, 14 percent of Americans had a high mental health risk, 51 percent had a moderate mental health risk, and 35 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 (65.7). Isolation (67.9), work productivity (71.8), depression (72.1), optimism (72.4), and financial risk (76.9) follow. General psychological health (78.3) continues to be the most favorable mental health measure in January 2023.

- Anxiety, isolation, and work productivity have been the lowest mental health sub-scores since May 2022
- All mental health sub-scores have improved significantly compared to December 2022
- With 4.5-point increase, the financial risk sub-score has the greatest improvement from the prior month

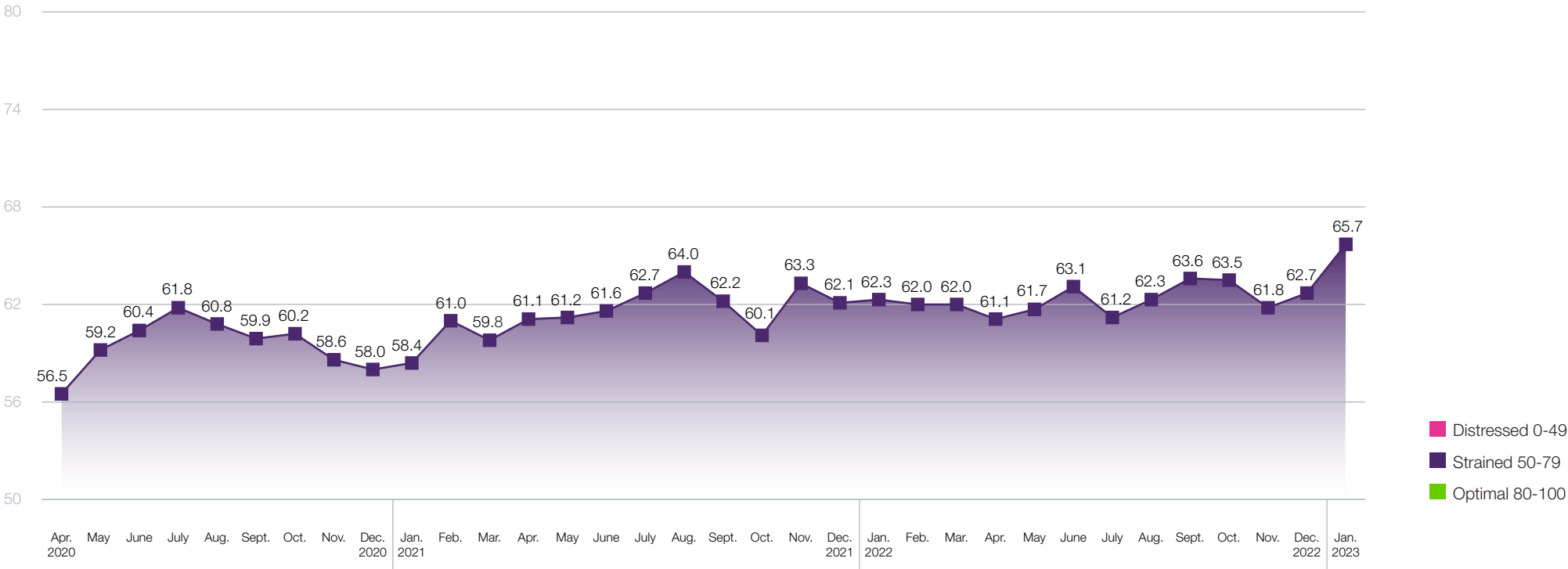
Mental Health Index™ Sub-scores <sup>1</sup>	January 2023	December 2022
Anxiety	65.7	62.7
Isolation	67.9	65.5
Work productivity	71.8	68.4
Depression	72.1	69.0
Optimism	72.4	71.1
Financial risk	76.9	72.4
Psychological health	78.3	77.0



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

# Anxiety

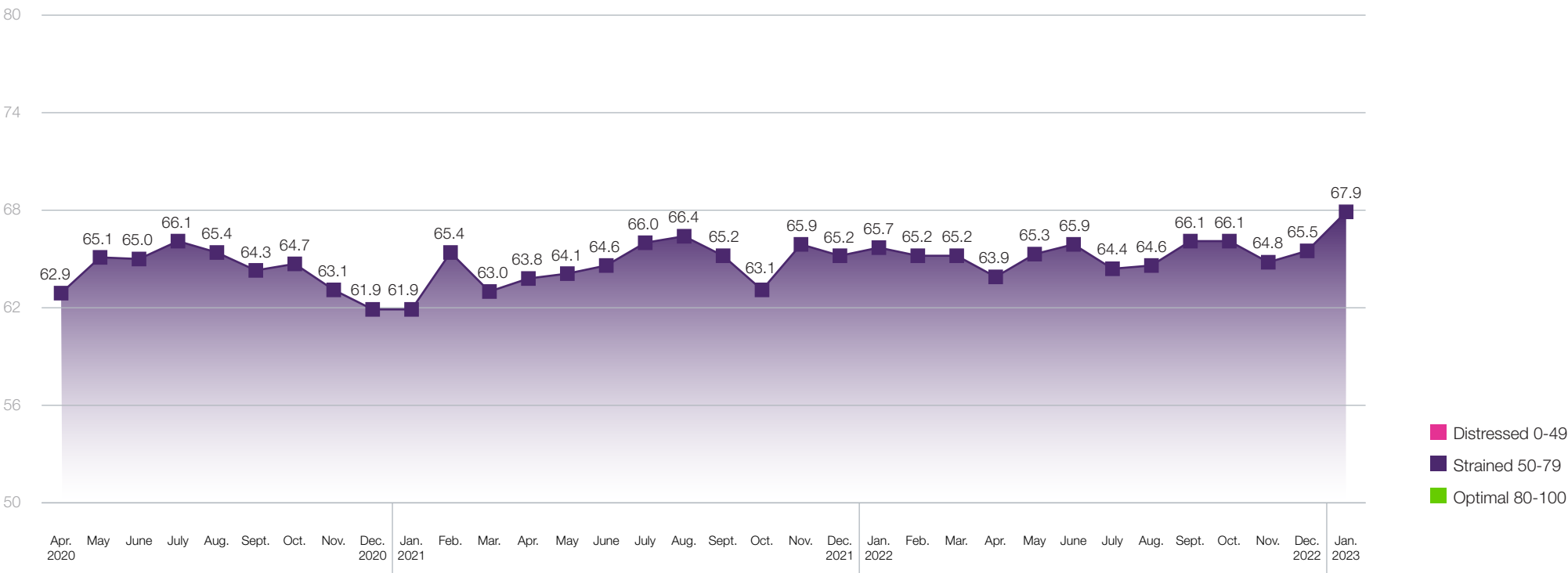
The anxiety score has shown an increasing trend since the launch of the Index in April 2020. After reaching its high in July 2021, the anxiety score declined sharply in October 2021. Since November 2021, anxiety scores have fluctuated. In January 2023, the anxiety sub-score improved for the second consecutive month to a level not seen since the launch of the Index and the onset of the pandemic.





Isolation

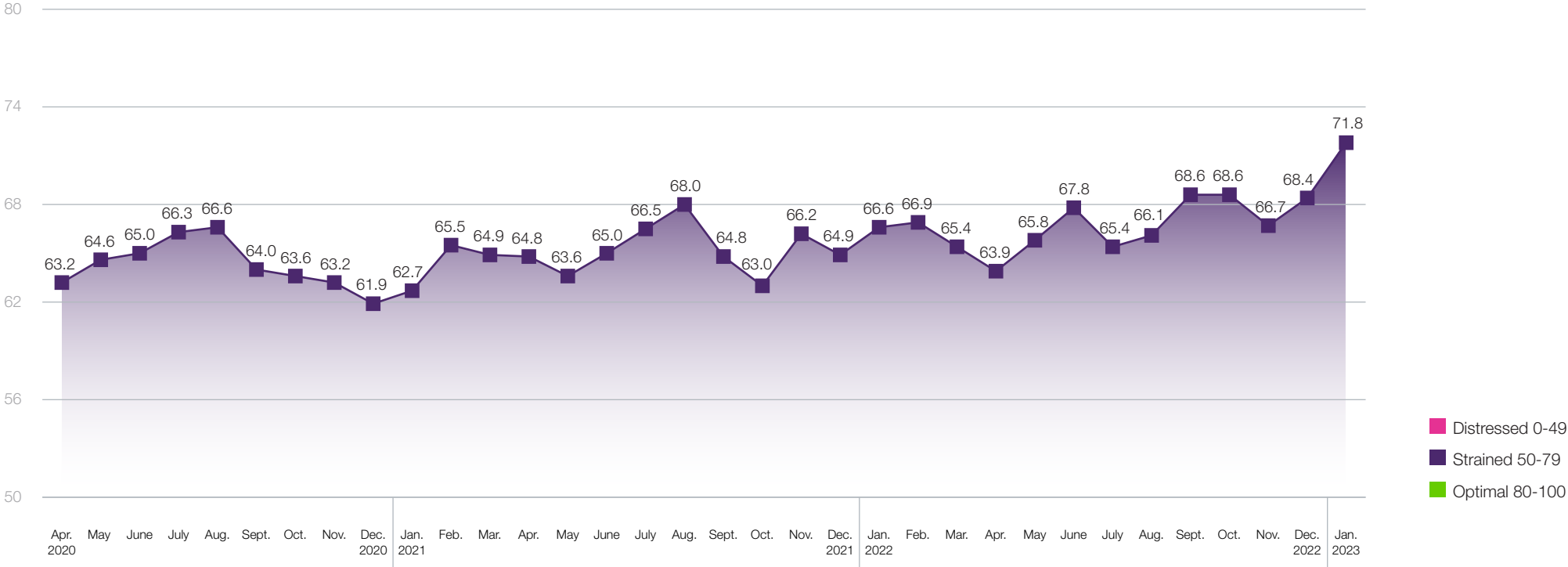
Isolation sub-scores have fluctuated since the launch of the Index in April 2020. Following a sharp decline from July 2020 to January 2021, the isolation sub-score has made incremental improvements. In January 2023, the isolation score continues to improve and has reached the highest score (67.9) since the launch of the Index and the onset of the pandemic.



Work productivity

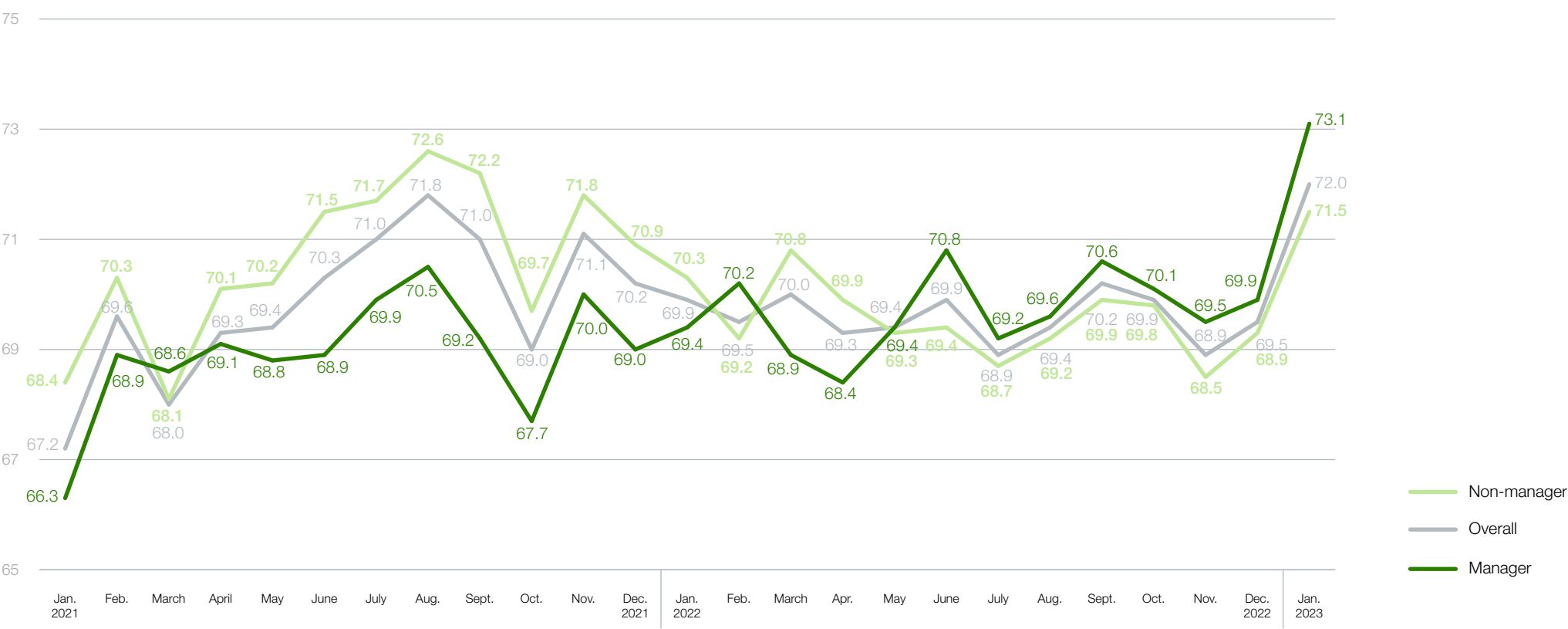
The work productivity sub-score measures the impact of mental health on work productivity and goals.

With multiple periods of improvement followed by declines, the work productivity sub-score has been inconsistent since the launch of the MHI in April 2020. In January 2023, the work productivity score continues to increase and has reached the highest score (71.8) since the pandemic began.



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 observed when the mental health score of non-managers declined along with the overall American average, whereas an improvement was observed in the mental health score of managers. A similar trend is seen from May 2022. While mental health scores declined for managers and non-managers alike in November 2022, improvements have been observed since December 2022. In January 2023, managers have a higher mental health score (73.1) than the national average (72.0) as well as non-managers (71.3).



## Demographics

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have had significantly lower mental health scores than men. In January 2023, the mental health score of women is 69.7 compared to 74.6 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. Nearly three years later, this pattern continues with a lower score for individuals with at least one child (68.0) than individuals without children (73.3)

## Employment

- Overall, three percent of respondents are unemployed<sup>2</sup> and six percent report reduced hours or reduced salary
- Individuals reporting reduced salary compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (51.8), followed by individuals working fewer hours (61.9), individuals not currently employed (69.2), and individuals with no change to salary or hours (72.8)
- Managers have a higher mental health score (73.1) than non-managers (71.5)
- Individuals working for organizations with more than 10,000 employees have the highest mental health score (71.5)
- Respondents working for organizations with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (69.0))

## Emergency savings

- Individuals without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (54.6) than the overall group (72.0). Individuals with emergency savings have a mental health score of 76.4

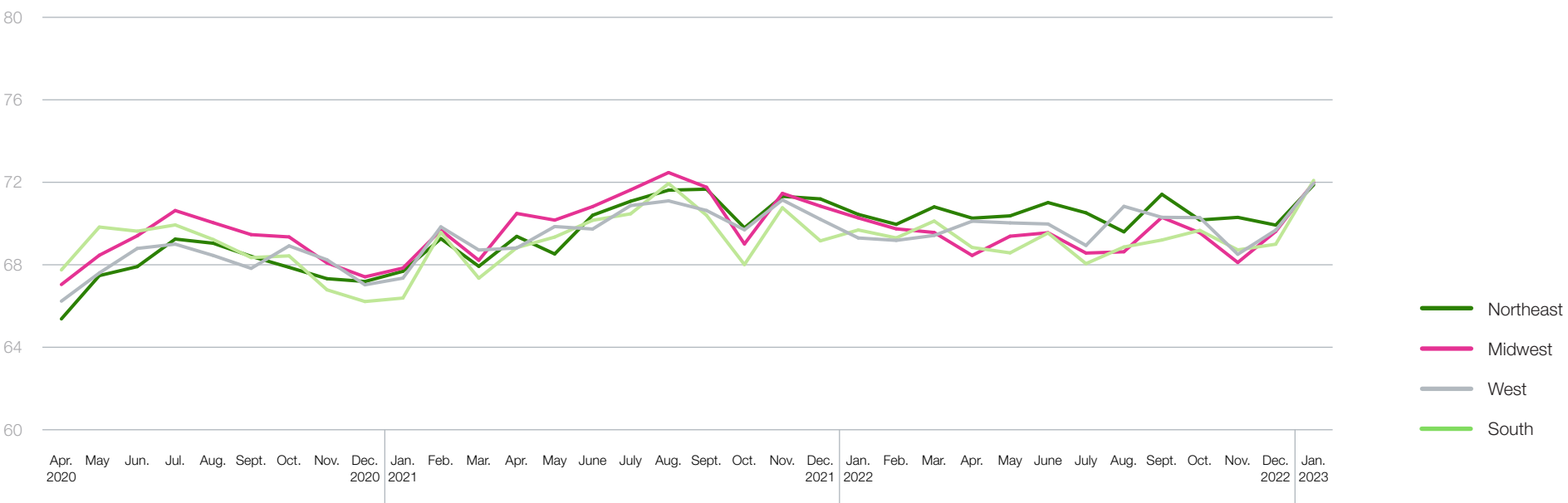


<sup>2</sup> MHI respondents who have been employed in the past six months are included in the poll.

# Mental Health Index™ (regional).

Since August 2021, the mental health scores in all regions of the United States have followed a declining trend apart from November 2021. There has been some variability in the mental health scores since February 2022. In January 2023, the mental health of Americans improved significantly in all regions of the United States.

- The mental health score in the South has seen a 3.1-point improvement over the prior month
- The scores across all regions are within a half point of one another in January



Employment status	Jan. 2023	Dec. 2022
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	72.8	70.5
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	61.9	59.8
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	51.8	55.6
Not currently employed	69.2	67.3
Age group	Jan. 2023	Dec. 2022
Age 20-29	60.6	56.8
Age 30-39	65.1	61.1
Age 40-49	68.0	65.5
Age 50-59	72.8	71.3
Age 60-69	77.9	77.4
Number of children	Jan. 2023	Dec. 2022
No children in household	73.3	71.6
1 child	67.4	63.9
2 children	68.2	64.9
3 children or more	69.9	64.4

Region	Jan. 2023	Dec. 2022
Northeast	71.9	69.9
Midwest	72.0	69.6
South	72.1	69.0
West	72.0	69.7
Gender	Jan. 2023	Dec. 2022
Men	74.6	72.6
Women	69.7	66.8
Household income	Jan. 2023	Dec. 2022
<\$30K/annum	61.8	57.8
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	66.6	63.9
\$60K to <\$100K	71.9	70.1
\$100K to <\$150K	75.2	73.6
\$150K or more	78.9	78.1

Employer size	Jan. 2023	Dec. 2022
Self-employed/sole proprietor	70.4	68.3
2-50 employees	72.1	69.4
51-100 employees	69.0	66.9
101-500 employees	72.1	69.7
501-1,000 employees	72.5	68.6
1,001-5,000 employees	71.7	70.5
5,001-10,000 employees	72.6	71.0
More than 10,000 employees	74.2	71.1
Manager	Jan. 2023	Dec. 2022
Manager	73.1	69.9
Non-manager	71.5	69.3

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

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

## Mental Health Index™ (industry).

Employees working in Management of Companies and Enterprises have the lowest mental health score (60.5) in January 2023, followed by individuals working in Food Services (66.5).

Respondents employed in Public Administration (77.7), Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (75.8), and Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (75.7) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.



Industry	January 2023	December 2022	Change
Wholesale Trade	74.8	63.3	11.5
Food Services	66.5	60.8	5.7
Accommodation	71.6	66.7	4.8
Construction	72.4	68.2	4.2
Health Care and Social Assistance	71.5	67.8	3.6
Public Administration	77.7	74.1	3.6
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	75.7	72.2	3.4
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	70.2	67.3	2.9
Manufacturing	73.9	71.2	2.7
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	71.3	68.6	2.7
Other	70.9	68.5	2.4
Finance and Insurance	74.0	71.7	2.3
Administrative and Support services	68.4	66.3	2.1
Retail Trade	70.4	68.7	1.8
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	75.8	74.1	1.7
Educational Services	72.9	71.8	1.2
Other services (except Public Administration)	68.4	67.7	0.7
Transportation and Warehousing	69.9	69.8	0.1
Utilities	71.5	72.2	-0.7
Management of Companies and Enterprises	60.5	76.6	-16.0
Media and Telecommunications <sup>3</sup>	71.3	-	-
Technology	71.0	-	-

<sup>3</sup> New for 2023: Media and Telecommunications and Technology.

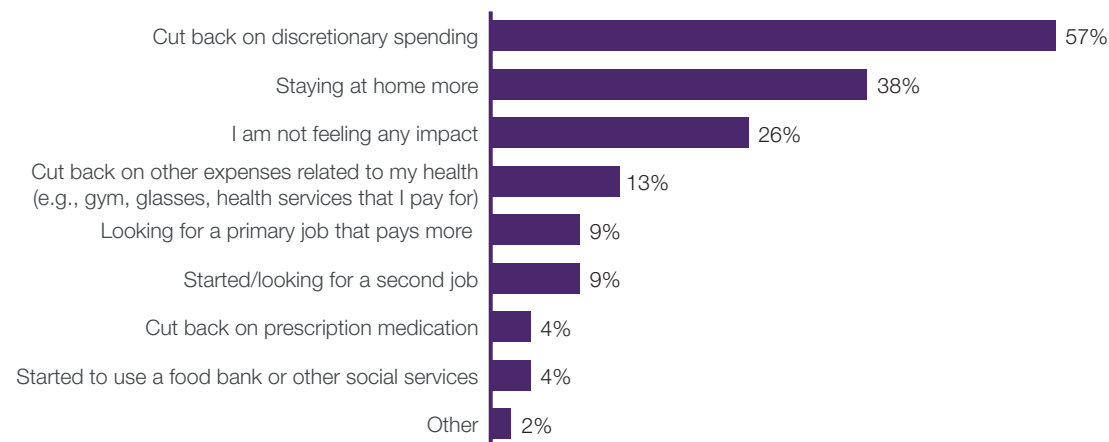
# Spotlight

## Inflation

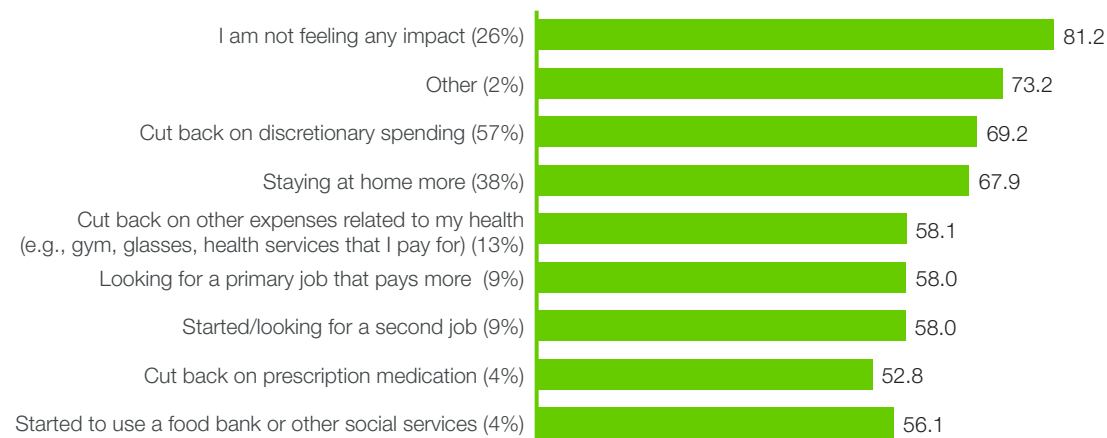
Americans were asked about the impact they have experienced because of inflation.

- Nearly two-thirds (57 percent) have cut back on discretionary spending, 38 percent are staying at home more often, and 13 percent have cut back on expenses related to their health
- More than one-quarter (26 percent) are not feeling any impact, and this group has the highest mental health score (81.2), more than nine points above the national average (72.0)
- Parents are nearly twice as likely as non-parents to cut back on expenses related to their health
- Individuals under the age of 40 are more than three times as likely as individuals 50 and older to report cutting back on prescription medication
- Individuals without emergency savings are three times more likely to cut back on expenses related to their health compared to respondents without emergency savings
- Individuals without emergency savings are more than four times as likely to cut back on prescription medication compared to respondents without emergency savings
- Individuals with emergency savings are two and a half times as likely to not feel any impact due to inflation compared to individuals without emergency savings

### Impact experienced due to inflation.



### MHI score by “Impact experienced due to inflation.”





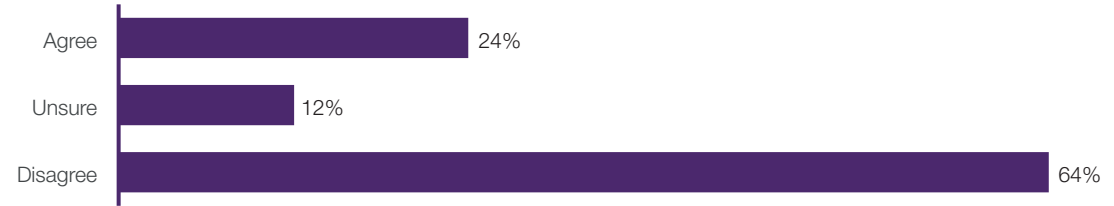
## Avoidance

Americans were asked whether they avoid being with or interacting with others.

- Nearly one-quarter (24 percent) avoid being with or interacting with others, and this group has the lowest mental health score (56.6), more than 15 points below the national average (72.0)
- Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) do not avoid being with or interacting with others, and this group has the highest mental health score (79.7), nearly eight points above the national average
- Respondents under 40 years of age are 50 percent more likely than individuals over 50 to avoid being with or interacting with others
- Three in five (60 percent) report their avoidance started or worsened since the pandemic began, and this group has the lowest mental health score (53.4), more than 18 points below the national average (72.0).



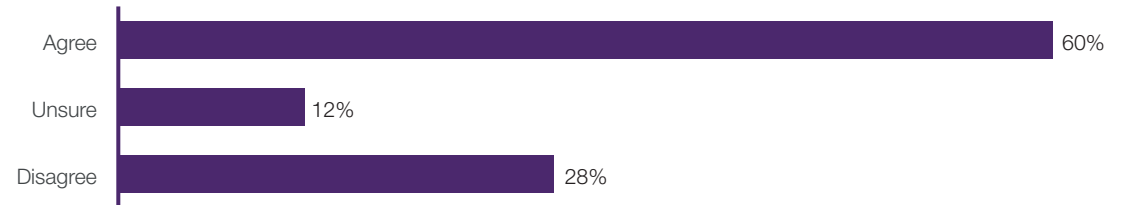
### I avoid being with or interacting with others.



### MHI score by “I avoid being with or interacting with others.”



### This avoidance started or worsened since the pandemic began.



### MHI score by “This avoidance started or worsened since the pandemic began.”



## Control

Americans were asked whether they often have difficulty controlling their emotions.

- Fifteen percent often have difficulty controlling their emotions, and this group has the lowest mental health score (48.7), more than 23 points below the national average (72.0)
- More than three-quarters (76 percent) do not have difficulty controlling their emotions, and this group has the highest mental health score (78.4), more than six points above the national average (72.0)
- Respondents under 40 years of age are more than three times as likely than individuals over 50 to have difficulty controlling their emotions
- Individuals without emergency savings are more than two and a half times as likely as respondents with emergency savings to have difficulty controlling their emotions
- Parents are twice as likely as non-parents to have difficulty controlling their emotions
- More than half (56 percent) report the difficulty controlling their emotions started or worsened since the pandemic began, and this group has the lowest mental health score (45.5), more than 26 points below the national average (72.0).

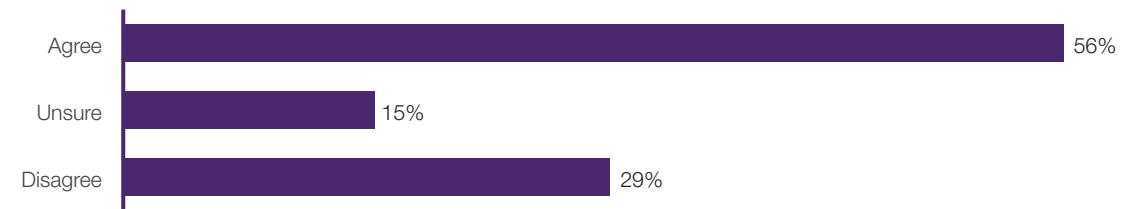
### I often have difficulty controlling my emotions.



### MHI score by “I often have difficulty controlling my emotions.”



### This difficulty started or worsened since the pandemic began.



### MHI score by “This difficulty started or worsened since the pandemic began.”



# Marital/partner relationships

Americans were asked how their marital/partner relationship has changed compared to before the pandemic.

- Eleven percent indicate their marital/partner relationship has declined compared to before the pandemic, and this group has the lowest mental health score (55.4), nearly 17 points below the national average (72.0)
- More than one in ten (13 percent) report their marital/partner relationship has improved compared to before the pandemic, and this group has a mental health score (74.6) more than two points above the national average (72.0)
- Three-quarters (76 percent) indicate that nothing has changed in their marital/partner relationship compared to before the pandemic, and this group has the highest mental health score (75.1), more than 3 points above the national average (72.0)
- Respondents under 40 years of age are more than twice as likely than individuals over 50 years of age to report their marital/partner relationship has improved compared to before the pandemic
- Parents are 50 percent more likely than non-parents to report their marital/partner relationship improved compared to before the pandemic



Change in marital/partner relationship compared to before the pandemic.



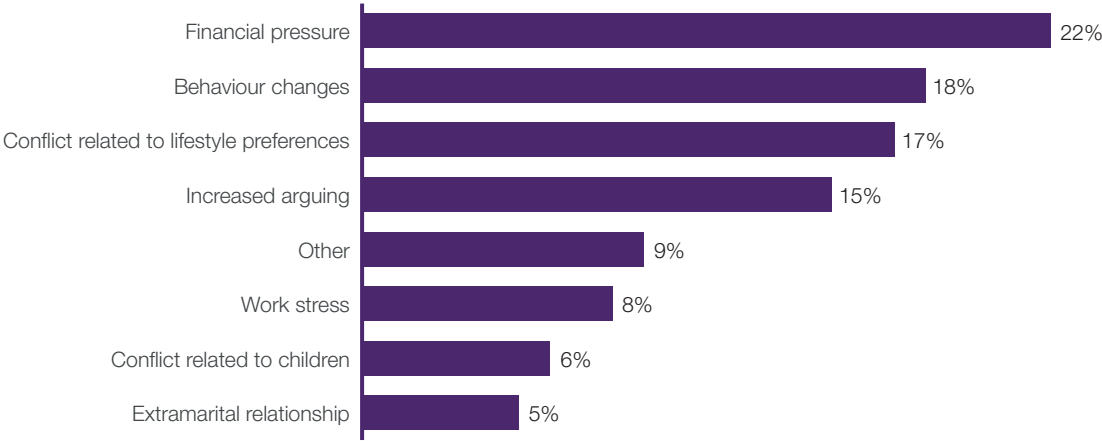
MHI score by “Change in marital/partner relationship compared to before the pandemic.”



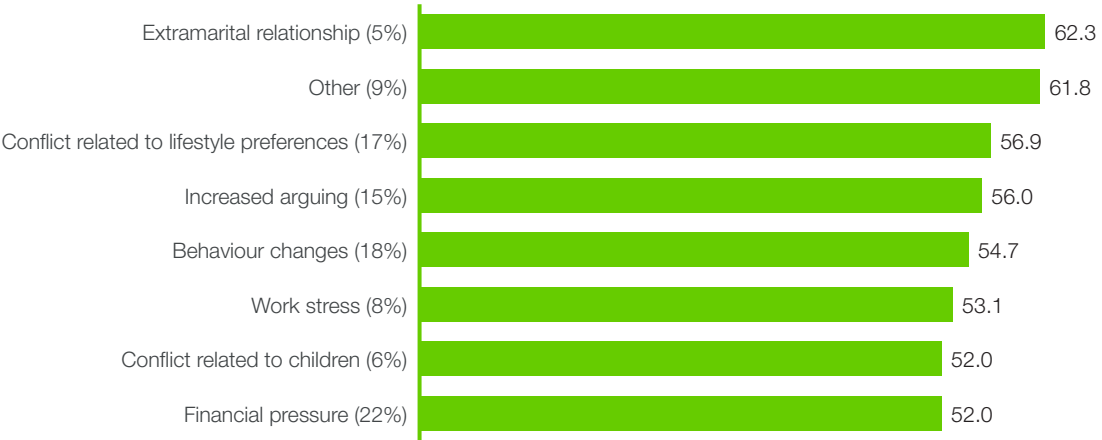
Americans reporting a decline in their marital/partner relationship were asked for the reasons.

- More than one in five (22 percent) report financial pressure, 18 percent report behavior changes, 17 percent report conflict related to lifestyle preferences, and 15 percent report increased arguing as reasons for a decline in their relationship
- The lowest mental health score (52.0) is among 22 percent reporting financial pressure and six percent reporting conflict related to children as the reason for a decline in their relationship
- Respondents under 40 years of age are three times more likely than individuals 50 years of age and older to report conflict related to children as the reason for a decline in their relationship
- Parents are nearly 60 percent more likely than non-parents to report financial pressure as the reason for a decline in their relationship

Reason for a decline in marital/partner relationship.



MHI score by “Reason for a decline in marital/partner relationship.”



## Wellbeing of children

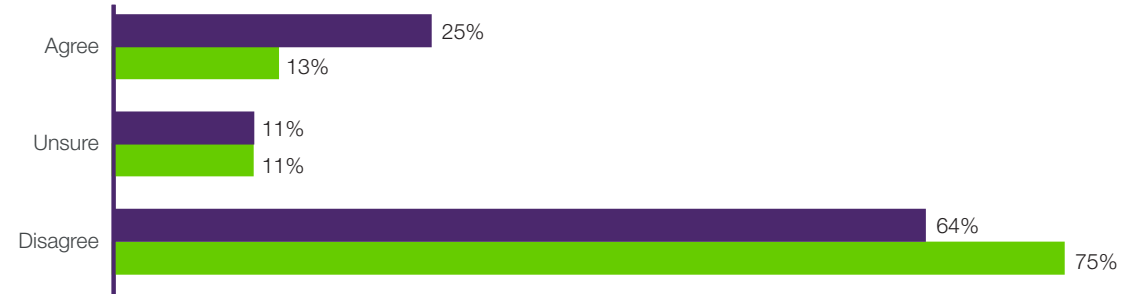
American parents were asked whether they are concerned about their children's behavior.

- One-quarter (25 percent) of parents with children under 18 years of age are concerned about their children's behavior, compared to 13 percent of parents with children 18 years of age and older
- The mental health and work productivity scores of parents concerned about their children's behavior are lower than parents not concerned about their children's behavior
- Parents with children 18 years of age and older have better mental health and work productivity scores than parents with children under 18 years of age



■ Parents with children under 18 years old  
■ Parents whose children are 18 or older

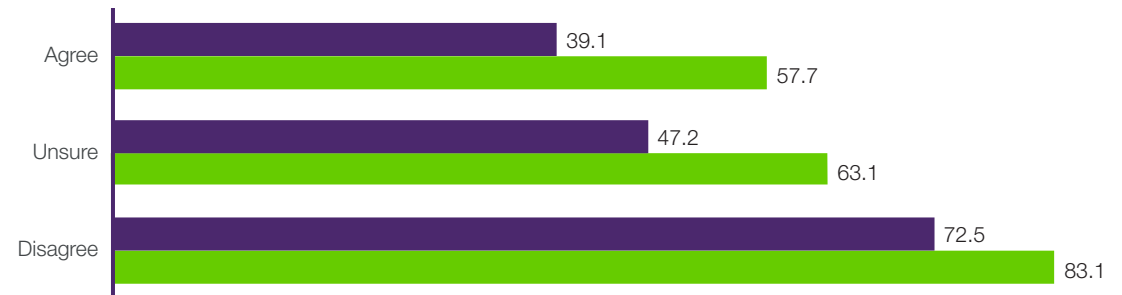
### My child or children are experiencing behaviour that I am concerned about.



### MHI score by “My child or children are experiencing behaviour that I am concerned about.”



### Work productivity score by “My child or children are experiencing behaviour that I am concerned about.”

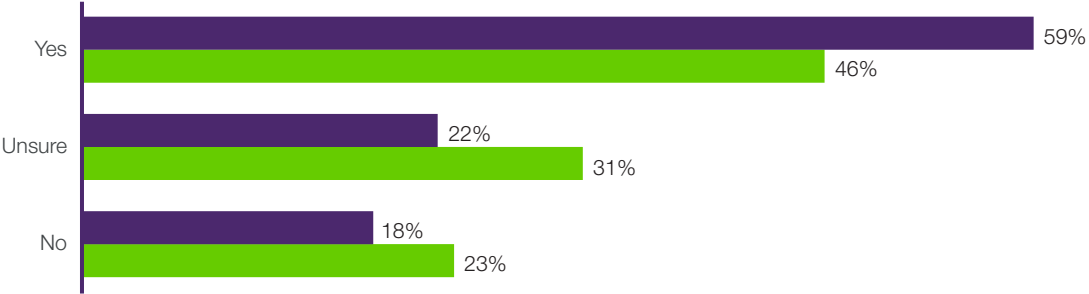


Nearly three in five (59 percent) of parents with children under 18 years of age report the behavior started or worsened since the pandemic began, compared to 46 percent of parents with children 18 years of age and older. The mental health and work productivity scores of parents reporting this behavior started or worsened since the pandemic began are lower than parents who disagree.



- Parents with children under 18 years old
- Parents whose children are 18 or older

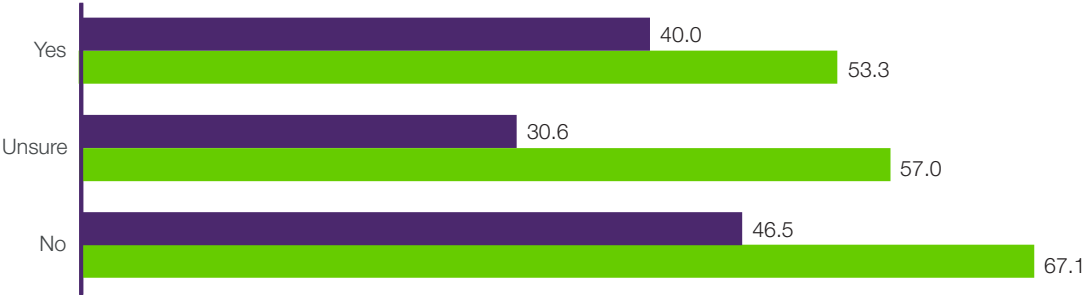
**This behaviour started or worsened since the pandemic.**



**MHI score by “This behaviour started or worsened since the pandemic.”**



**Work productivity score by “This behaviour started or worsened since the pandemic.”**

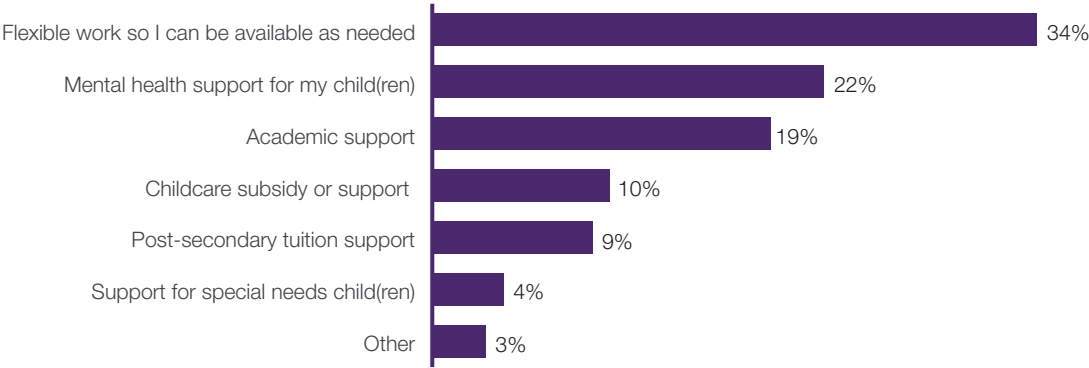


American parents were asked what would be most valuable as it relates to the wellbeing of their children.

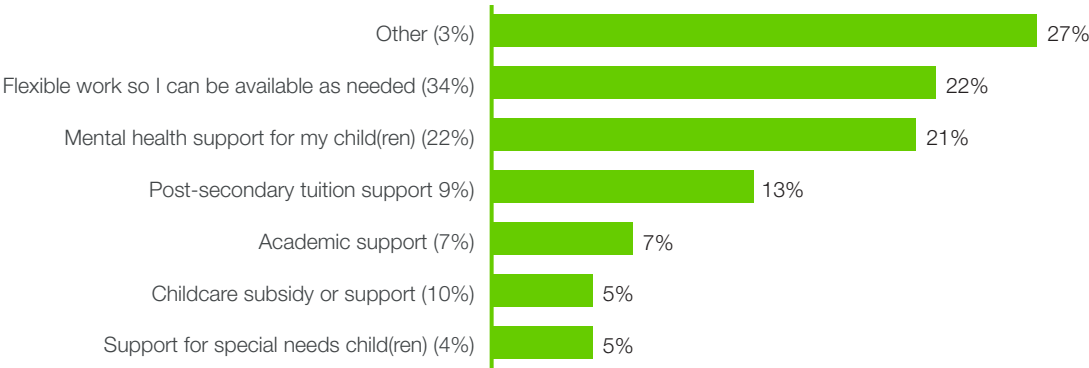
- More than one-third (34 percent) of parents with children under 18 years of age report flexible work as most valued for the wellbeing of their children, 22 percent report mental health support, and 19 percent report academic support
- Parents whose children are 18 years old or older report flexible work (22 percent) and mental health support (21 percent) as most valued



Most valued for the wellbeing of children under 18 years of age.



Most valued for the wellbeing of children 18 years of age and older.



# Remote work

Americans were asked whether they can work flexibly.

- More than one-quarter (28 percent) cannot work flexibly, and this group has a mental health score (71.3) slightly lower than the national average (72.0)
- Nearly two in five (39 percent) can work flexibly most or all the time, and this group has the highest mental health score (74.3), more than two points above the national average (72.0)
- Parents are 40 percent more likely than non-parents reporting they can work flexibly some of the time



## I am able to work flexibly.



## MHI score by “I am able to work flexibly.”



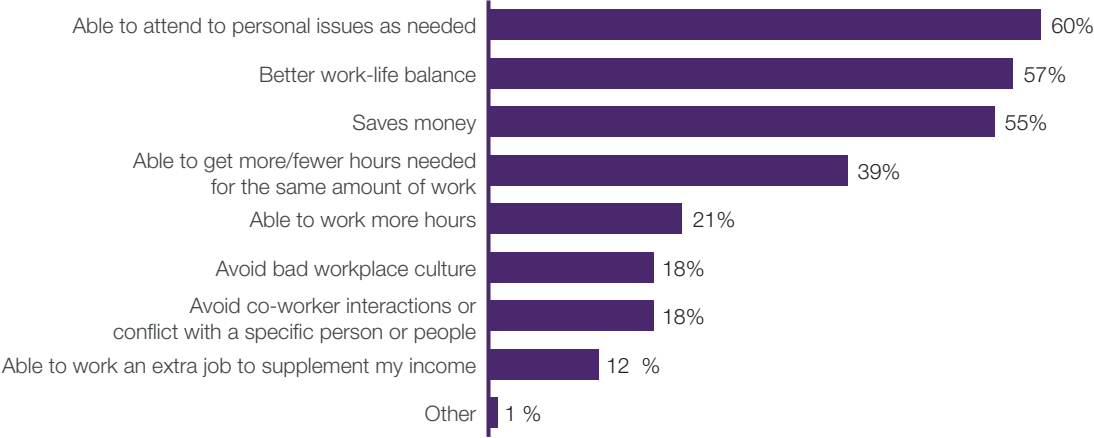


Americans were asked about the advantages they have experienced from remote work.

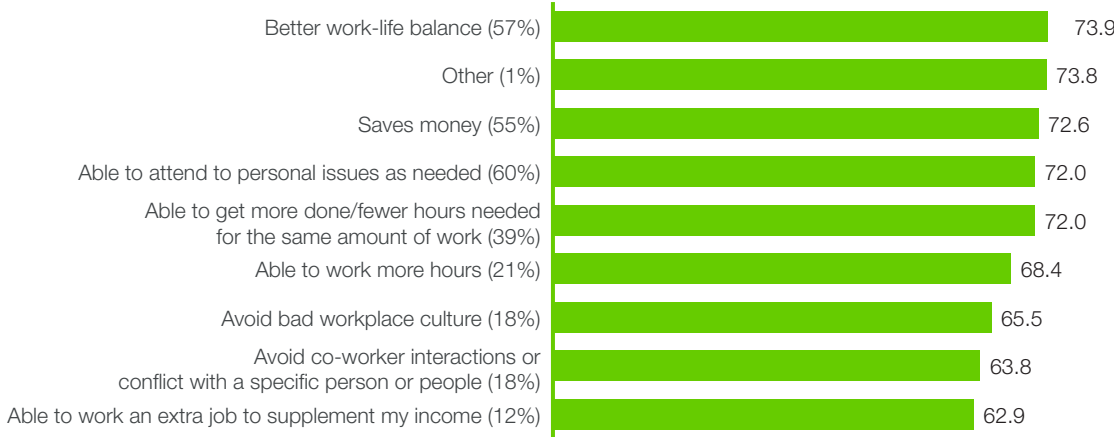
- Sixty percent report that working remotely allows them to attend to personal issues as needed, 57 percent report better work-life balance, and 55 percent report it saves money
- The lowest mental health score (62.9) is among 12 percent of respondents who report it allows them to work an extra job to supplement their income
- Managers are nearly 50 percent more likely than non-managers to report working more hours as an advantage of remote work
- Respondents under 40 years of age are three times more likely than individuals over 50 years of age to report working an extra job to supplement their income as an advantage of working remotely



Advantages experienced from remote work.



MHI score by “Advantages experienced from remote work.”

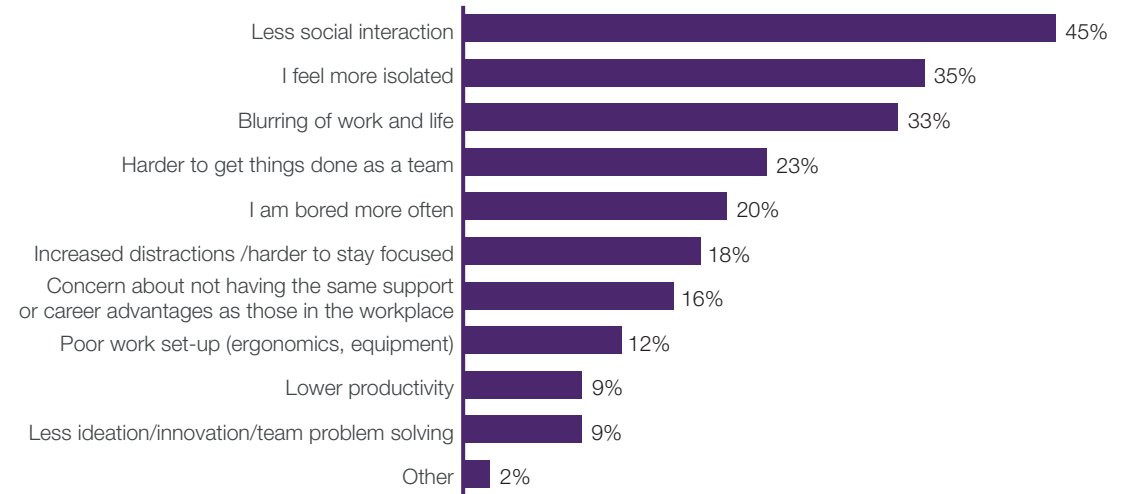


Americans were asked about the disadvantages they have experienced from remote work.

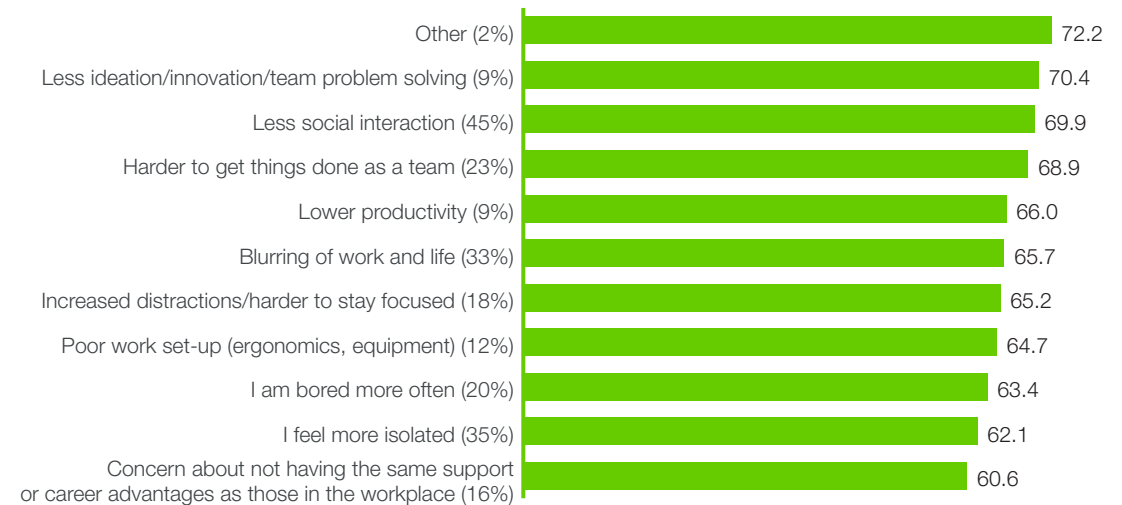
- Nearly half (45 percent) report having less social interaction as a disadvantage of remote work, 35 percent report feeling more isolated, and 33 percent report blurring of work and life
- The lowest mental health score (60.6) is among the sixteen percent of individuals concerned about not having the same support or career advantages as those in the workplace
- Managers are 70 percent more likely as non-managers to be concerned about not having the same support or career advantages as those in the workplace
- Respondents under 40 years of age are more than twice as likely as individuals over 50 years of age to be concerned about not having the same support or career advantages as those in the workplace



#### Disadvantages experienced from remote work.



#### MHI score by “Disadvantages experienced from remote work.”



# 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 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 January 17 and January 24, 2023.

## 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.

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