



TELUS Mental Health Index.

Canada | August 2023

Table of contents

1. What you need to know for August 2023	3
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
Mental health by gender and age	12
Mental health by employment status	12
Emergency savings	12
3. The Mental Health Index by province	13
4. The Mental Health Index by industry	15
5. Spotlight	16
Mental health support	16
Employee (and Family) Assistance Program (EAP/EFAP)	17
Caregiving	20
Vacation	24
6. Overview of the TELUS Mental Health Index	30
Methodology	30
Calculations	30
Additional data and analyses	30

What you need to know for August 2023.

1. After reaching its peak in July, the mental health of workers in Canada declined in August 2023.

- At 64.6, the mental health of workers fell more than a half point 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
- All mental health sub-scores have declined from July to August; anxiety and isolation continue to be the lowest mental health sub-scores for the 16th consecutive month
- Mental health scores in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec have declined while scores in other provinces have improved compared to July 2023
- Managers continue to have a higher mental health score than non-managers and the national average
- Labourers have a lower mental health score than office and service workers

2. One-third of workers report cost is a barrier to getting mental health support.

- Workers under 40 and parents are more likely to report cost is a barrier to getting mental health support
- 16 per cent report lack of available care or a long wait is a barrier to mental health support
- 12 per cent do not know where to get care
- The mental health scores of workers reporting cost/affordability as a barrier to getting mental health support is more than 23 points lower than workers reporting no barriers or no need for support



familiar with an Employee Assistance Program **would use it if the need arose**



do not know what an Employee Assistance Program is



say cost is a barrier to getting mental health support



of caregivers **report mental health issues**



don't believe that contact with work while on vacation is ever necessary

3. 40 per cent of workers don't know what an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is and 26 per cent have heard of it but don't know what it offers.

- 37 per cent of workers believe they have access to an EAP. This group has a higher mental health score than the national average and those who do not know what an EAP is
- 64 per cent of workers who know what an EAP is and what it offers would use an EAP, which is 10 per cent more than the 54 per cent of workers who have heard of an EAP but do not know what it offers
- Among workers who would not use an EAP or are uncertain, 34 per cent do not know what it offers, 27 are concerned about cost, 23 are concerned about confidentiality, and 21 per cent do not know how to access the service

4. Caregivers experience poorer mental health and reduced productivity, yet they exhibit greater optimism.

- 15 per cent of workers are caregivers to children or adults with disabilities or requiring support
- 50 per cent of caregivers report fatigue or exhaustion
- 31 per cent of caregivers report financial hardship
- 27 per cent of caregivers report mental health issues
- Flexible work, health benefits for the person being cared for, and mental health support are most helpful for caregivers

5. More than half of workers have been contacted for work issues while on vacation.

- 52 per cent believe contact is necessary sometimes, depending on the situation, 22 per cent are okay with it, and 26 per cent don't believe contact is necessary, regardless of the situation
- Workers over 50 are 70 per cent more likely than workers under 40 to believe contact is okay while non-managers are 50 per cent more likely than managers to believe contact is never necessary, regardless of the situation
- 40 per cent believe that a one-week vacation is most helpful to recharge from work; 35 per cent believe two or more weeks is most helpful
- Nearly half (48 per cent) indicate their organization has a formal policy to ensure that employees use available paid days off/vacation time. The mental health score of this group is higher than workers reporting no formal policy

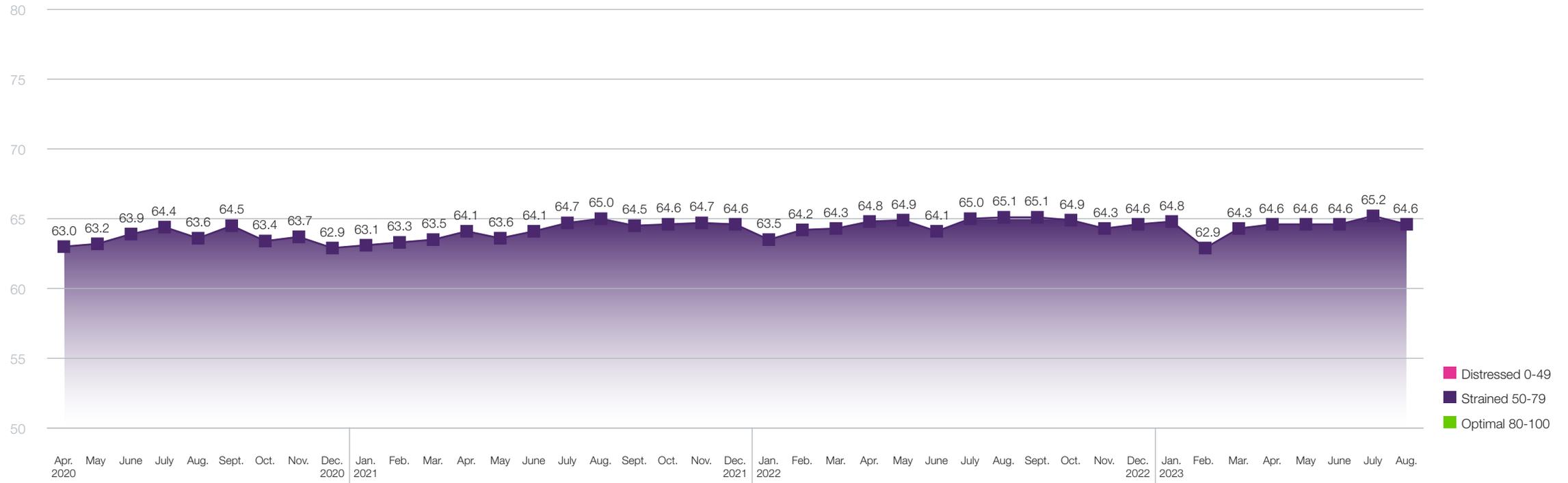


1 While 37 per cent of employees believe they have an EAP, 79 percent of Canadian employers offer an EAP (Mental health and substance use disorder benefits: Survey results 2021. Author: Held, J. International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans. 2021); EAP is a voluntary confidential service with a range of counselling and other supports and is available at no cost to employees and immediate family members.

The Mental Health Index.

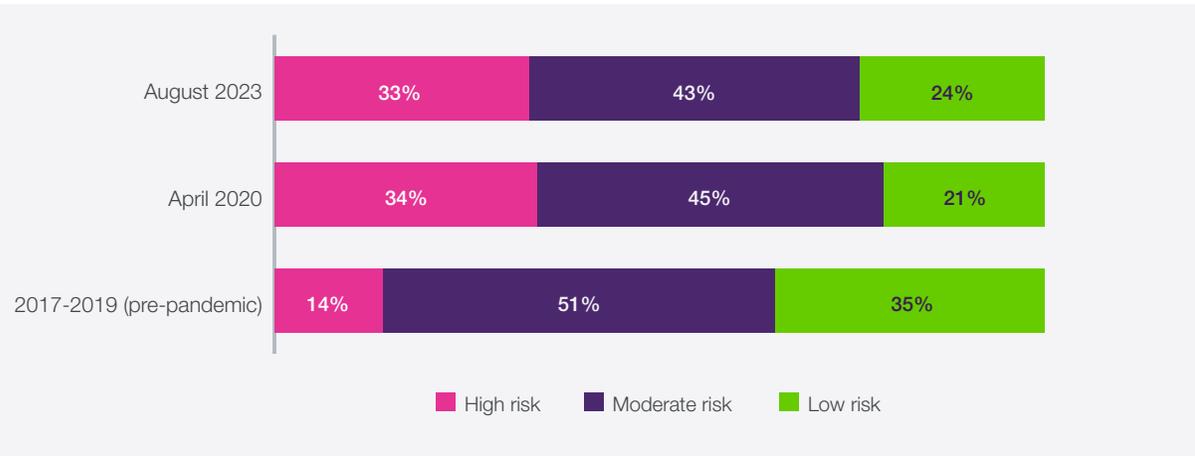
MHI Current Month August 2023	July 2023
64.6	65.2

The overall Mental Health Index (MHI) for August 2023 is 64.6. The mental health of workers in Canada declined 0.6 points, returning to a level equal to the period of April to June 2023.



Mental health risk.

In August 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. More than three years since the launch of the Index in April 2020, there has been nearly no reduction (1 per cent) in high-risk workers and a three per cent increase in low-risk workers.



Approximately 30 per cent of workers 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 workers 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 continues to be anxiety (58.2). Isolation (60.6), depression (63.3), work productivity (63.6), optimism (66.1), and financial risk (68.1) follow. General psychological health (72.1) continues to be the most favourable mental health measure in August 2023.

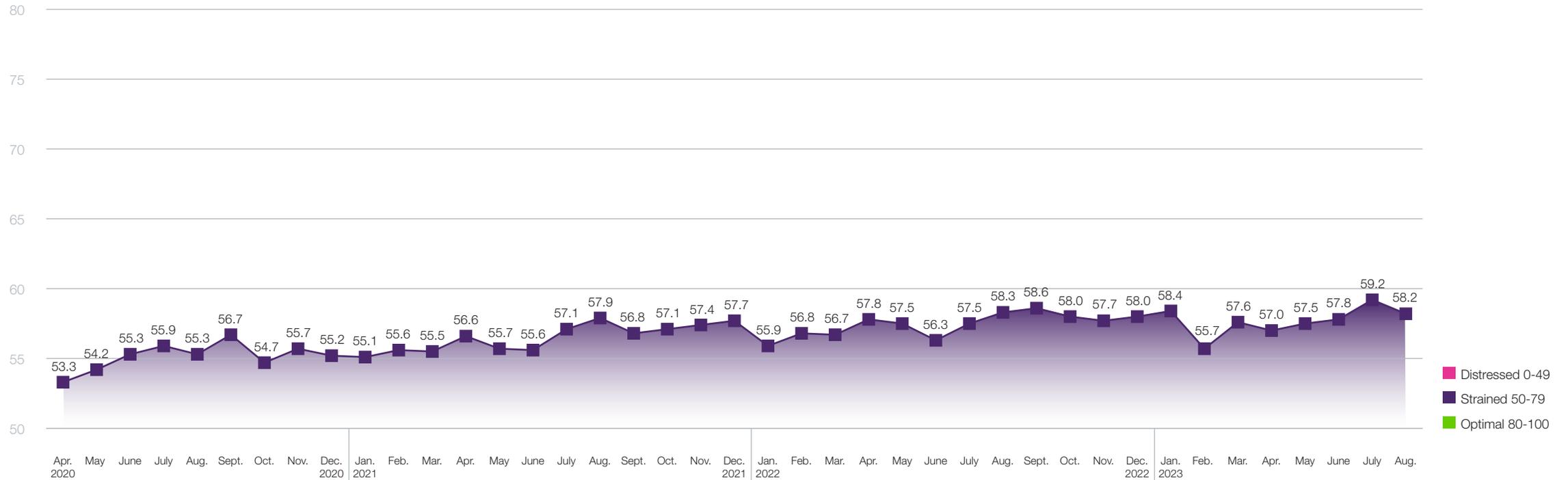
- Anxiety and isolation have been the lowest mental health sub-scores for 16 consecutive months
- All mental health sub-scores have declined from the prior month
- The financial risk score declined most significantly (1.7 points) from July 2023

Mental Health Index Sub-scores	August 2023	July 2023
Anxiety	58.2	59.2
Isolation	60.6	60.9
Depression	63.3	63.6
Work productivity	63.6	63.7
Optimism	66.1	66.5
Financial risk	68.1	69.8
Psychological health	72.1	72.5



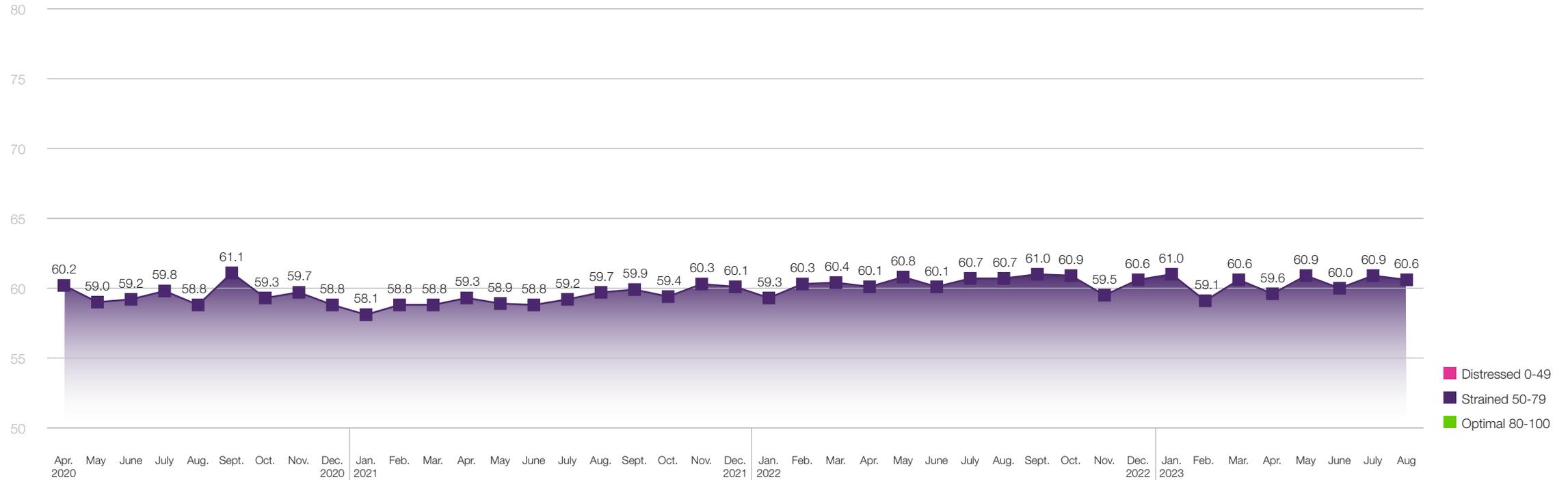
Anxiety

The anxiety sub-score has fluctuated since the launch of the Index in April 2020, although there has been a general trend of improvement. In July 2023, the anxiety score (59.2) reached its peak despite being the lowest mental health sub-score. In August 2023, the anxiety score fell one point, and continues to be the lowest of all mental health sub-scores for the 16th consecutive month.



Isolation

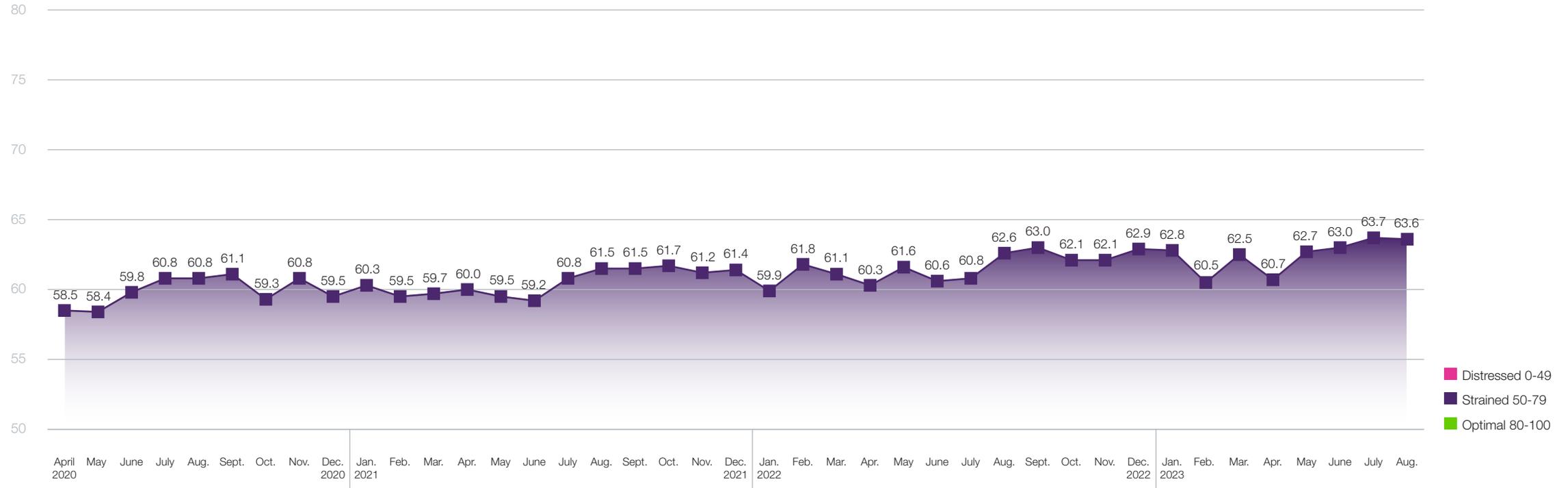
After falling to its lowest point in January 2021, the isolation sub-score made incremental improvements through September 2022. Since then, isolation scores have fluctuated with sharp declines followed by sharp increases. In August 2023, the isolation score has declined from 60.9 to 60.6.



Work productivity

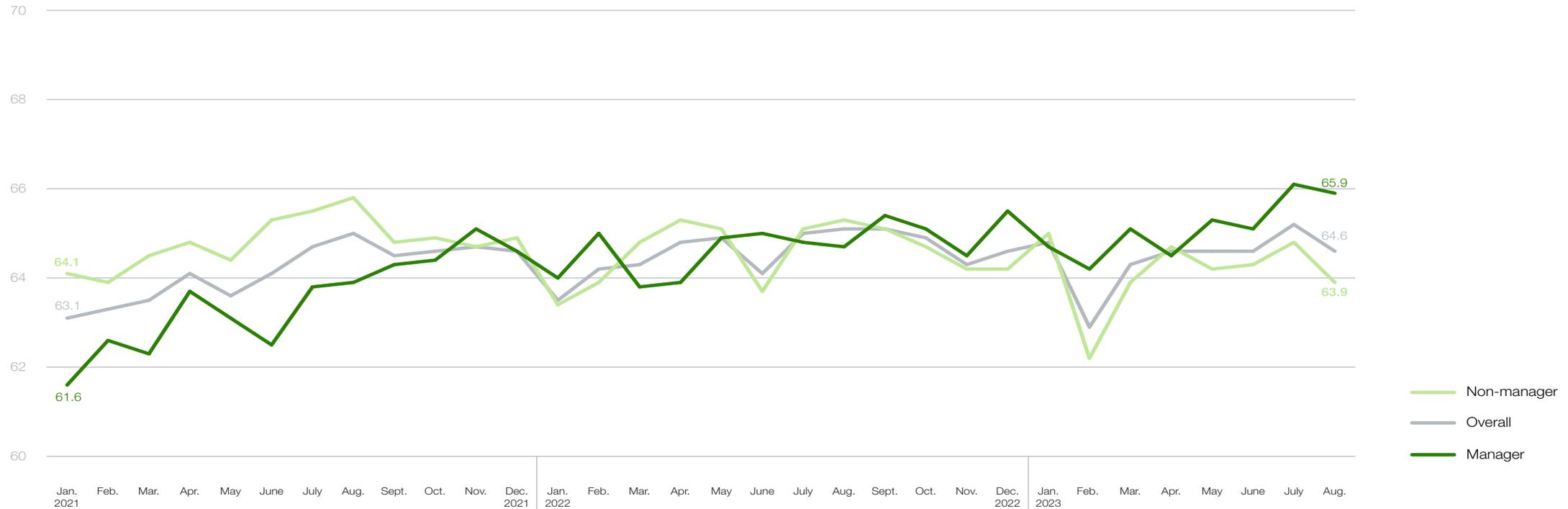
The work productivity sub-score measures the negative impact of mental health on work productivity and goals.

Overall, the impact of mental health on work productivity has shown general improvement indicating that since the onset of the pandemic, the impact of mental health on work productivity has slowly lessened. The work productivity score reached its peak in July 2023; however, similar to other sub-scores, it has declined in August.



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. From November 2021 to January 2023, managers and non-managers have reported similar mental health scores; however, in February 2023 a significant decline in the mental health scores of non-managers was observed. Since February 2023, the mental health scores of managers have typically been higher than non-managers. In August 2023, the mental health of managers and non-managers has declined compared to the prior month.



Mental health by gender and age.

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have had a significantly lower mental health score than men. In August 2023, the mental health score of women is 62.1 compared to 66.7 for men
- Since April 2020, mental health scores have improved with age
- Differences in mental health scores between workers 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 workers with at least one child (62.1) compared to workers without children (65.7)

Mental health by employment status.

- Overall, four per cent of respondents are unemployed² 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 (52.1), followed by individuals working fewer hours (55.4), individuals not currently employed (63.3), and individuals with no change to salary or hours (65.5)
- Managers have a higher mental health score (65.9) than non-managers (63.9)
- Labourers have a lower mental health score (62.4) than office (64.9) and service workers (65.3)
- Self-employed/sole proprietors have the highest mental health score (66.5)
- Respondents working for companies with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (61.4)

Emergency savings

- Workers without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (49.0) than the overall group (64.6). Workers with emergency savings have a mental health score of 70.2

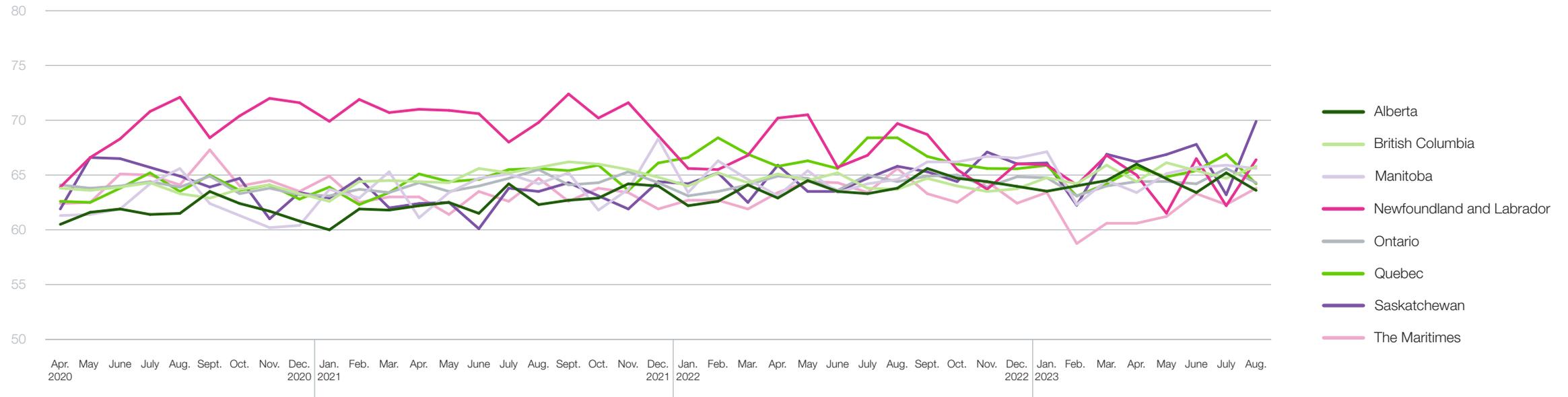


² MHI respondents who have been employed in the past six months are included in the poll.

The Mental Health Index by province.

Since April 2020, provincial mental health scores have fluctuated. Apart from Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Maritimes, the fluctuation patterns for the provinces have been similar. In August 2023, the mental health scores in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec have declined while scores in other provinces have improved compared to July 2023.

- The greatest improvement in mental health is in Saskatchewan, up nearly seven points from the previous month
- With a 2.1-point decline, Alberta has the lowest mental health score (63.6) in August 2023



Employment status	Aug. 2023	July 2023
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	65.5	66.1
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	55.4	56.3
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	52.1	53.6
Not currently employed	63.3	64.9

Age group	Aug. 2023	July 2023
Age 20-29	55.3	53.8
Age 30-39	59.0	59.8
Age 40-49	62.5	62.2
Age 50-59	65.9	66.9
Age 60-69	71.6	72.9

Number of children	Aug. 2023	July 2023
No children in household	65.7	66.2
1 child	62.1	62.7
2 children	62.1	63.2
3 children or more	59.4	60.3

Province	Aug. 2023	July 2023
Alberta	63.6	65.2
British Columbia	65.8	64.7
Manitoba	65.6	65.9
Newfoundland and Labrador	66.4	62.2
The Maritimes	63.8	62.3
Quebec	64.2	66.9
Ontario	64.3	65.6
Saskatchewan	69.9	63.2

Gender	Aug. 2023	July 2023
Men	66.7	68.0
Women	62.1	62.5

Household income	Aug. 2023	July 2023
<\$30K/annum	54.0	54.7
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	60.1	61.1
\$60K to <\$100K	64.0	63.9
\$100K to <\$150K	67.6	67.6
\$150K or more	69.9	71.8

Employer size	Aug. 2023	July 2023
Self-employed/sole proprietor	66.5	68.2
2-50 employees	64.2	66.6
51-100 employees	61.4	62.9
101-500 employees	65.6	64.2
501-1,000 employees	63.5	62.9
1,001-5,000 employees	66.3	66.7
5,001-10,000 employees	65.1	64.3
More than 10,000 employees	64.9	65.2

Manager	Aug. 2023	July 2023
Manager	65.9	66.1
Non-manager	63.9	64.8

Work environment	Aug. 2023	July 2023
Labour	62.4	63.2
Office/desk	64.9	65.5
Service	65.3	65.8

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.

Employees working in Accommodation have the lowest mental health score (56.0) in August 2023, followed by individuals working in Warehousing (56.8), and Media and Telecommunications (57.1).

Respondents employed in Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (70.0), Transportation (68.9), and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (68.9) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.



Industry	August 2023	July 2023	Change
Information and Cultural Industries	63.5	58.5	5.0
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	65.4	60.5	4.9
Utilities	64.2	60.0	4.2
Technology	67.2	64.7	2.6
Transportation	68.9	66.9	2.0
Wholesale Trade	67.9	66.2	1.7
Food Services	60.6	59.1	1.5
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	64.8	63.6	1.2
Educational Services	66.8	65.9	0.9
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	70.0	69.2	0.8
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	68.9	68.8	0.1
Finance and Insurance	64.4	64.7	-0.3
Health Care and Social Assistance	61.8	62.5	-0.7
Public Administration	67.3	68.1	-0.8
Manufacturing	66.3	67.4	-1.1
Administrative and Support services	57.1	58.3	-1.2
Construction	66.1	67.4	-1.3
Other	63.8	65.2	-1.4
Other services (except Public Administration)	65.9	67.9	-2.0
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	64.8	67.3	-2.5
Media and Telecommunications	57.1	59.8	-2.7
Retail Trade	62.1	64.9	-2.8
Warehousing	56.8	61.4	-4.5
Automotive Industry	65.9	72.3	-6.3
Accommodation	56.0	68.6	-12.6

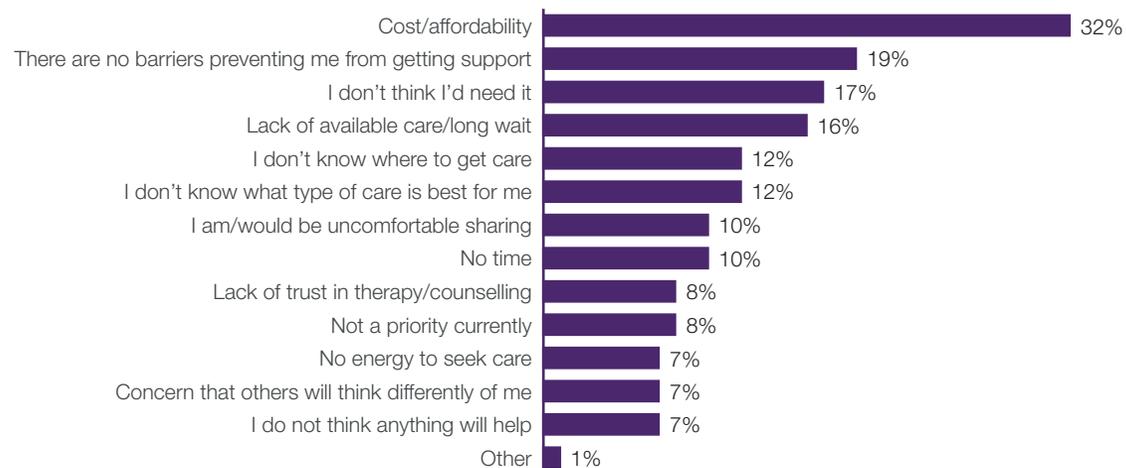
Spotlight

Mental health support.

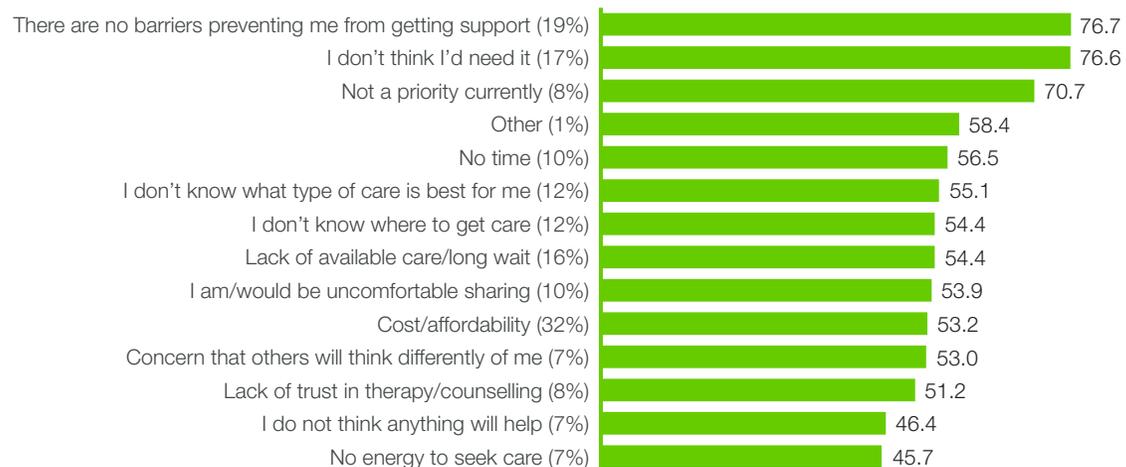
Workers were asked what would prevent them from getting mental health support if they needed it.

- Nearly one-third (32 per cent) report cost/affordability as the barrier to getting mental health support, 16 per cent report lack of available care/long wait, 12 per cent do not know where to get care, and 12 per cent do not know what type of care is best for them
- Workers under 40 are 80 per cent more likely than workers over 50 to report cost/affordability as a barrier to getting mental health support
- Parents are 40 per cent more likely than non-parents to report cost/affordability as the barrier to getting mental health support
- The mental health scores of workers reporting cost/affordability as a barrier to getting mental health support is more than 23 points lower than workers reporting no barriers or no need for support
- Workers over 50 and non-parents are at least twice as likely as their counterparts to report not having barriers to getting support

What would prevent you from getting mental health support?



MHI score by “What would prevent you from getting mental health support?”



Employee (and Family) Assistance Program (EAP/EFAP).

Workers were asked whether they know what an Employee (and Family) Assistance Program (EAP/EFAP) is.

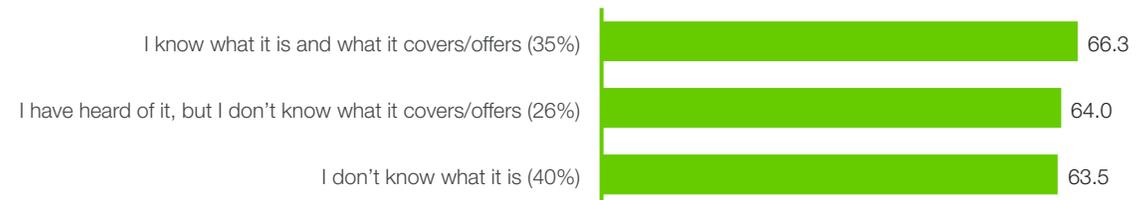
- Two in five (40 per cent) don't know what an EAP/EFAP is, 35 per cent know what it is, and 26 per cent have heard of it, but don't know what it covers/offers
- Workers who know what an EAP/EFAP is and what it covers/offers have the highest mental health score (66.3), nearly three points higher than workers who don't know what an EAP/EFAP (63.5) is and nearly two points higher than the national average (64.6)



Do you know what an EAP/EFAP is?



MHI score by “Do you know what an EAP/EFAP is?”

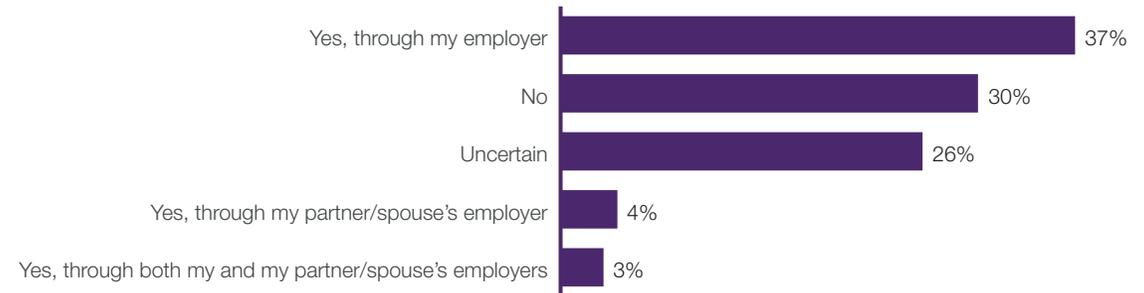


Workers were asked whether they have access to an Employee (and Family) Assistance Program (EAP/EFAP).

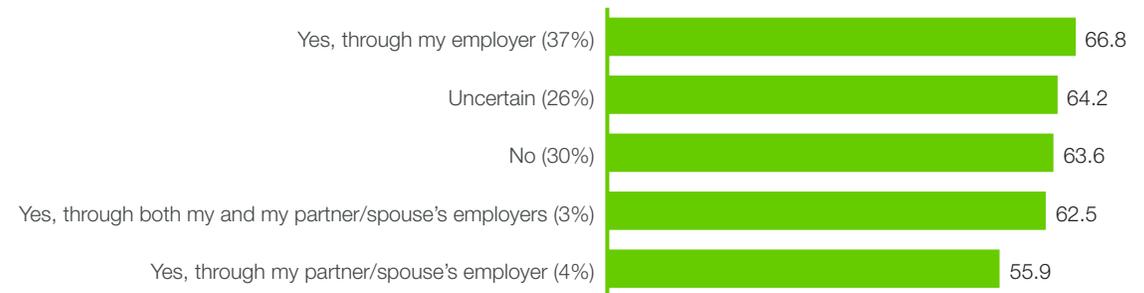
- More than half (56 per cent) are uncertain or do not have access to an EAP/EFAP
- Nearly two in five (37 per cent) believe they have access to an EAP/EFAP through their employer. This group has the highest mental health score (66.8), more than three points higher than workers who do not have access to an EAP/EFAP and two points higher than the national average (64.6)³
- Parents are more likely than non-parents to report having access to an EAP/EFAP



Do you have access to an Employee and Family Assistance Program (EAP/EFAP)?



MHI score by “Do you have access to an EAP/EFAP?”



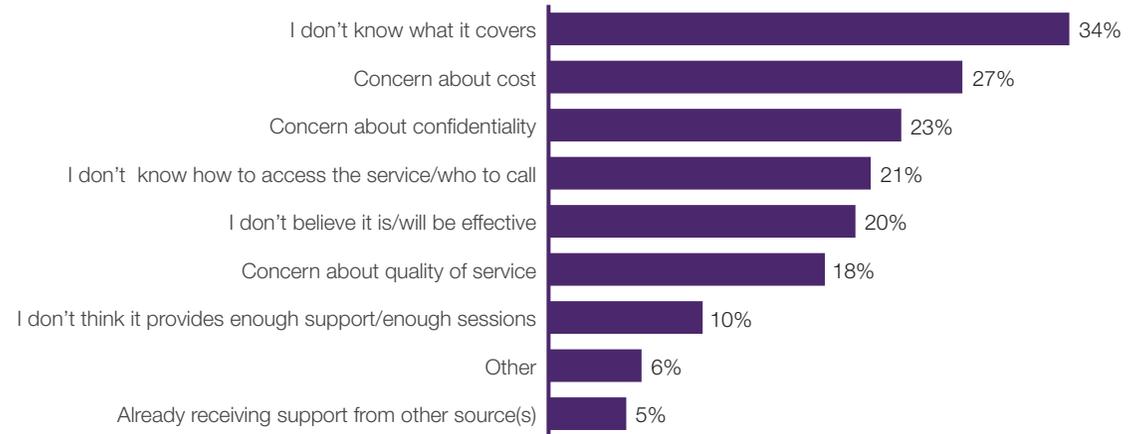
³ While 37 per cent of employees believe they have an EAP, 79 percent of Canadian employers offer an EAP (Mental health and substance use disorder benefits: Survey results 2021. Author: Held, J. International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans. 2021).

Fifty-one per cent of workers who are uncertain, or would not use an EAP/EFAP, were asked the reason.

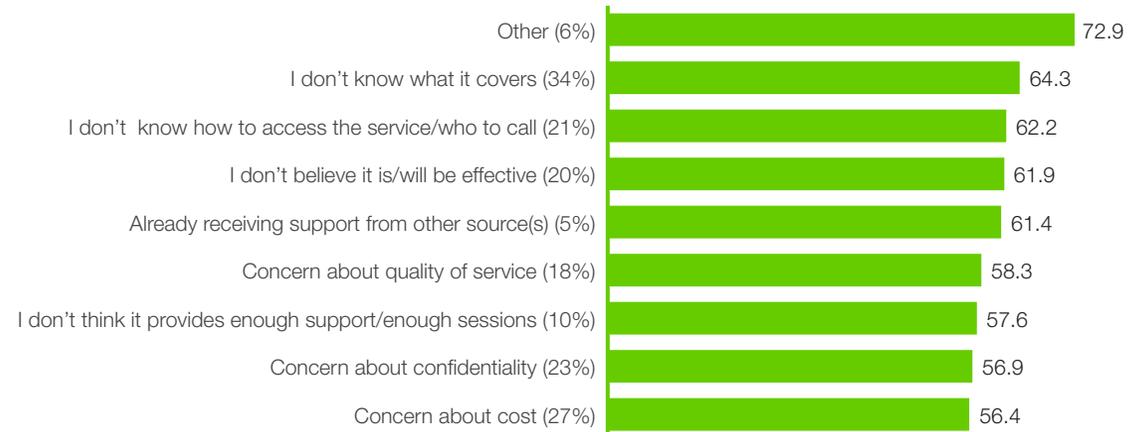
- More than one-third (34 per cent) do not know what an EAP/EFAP covers, 27 per cent are concerned about cost, 23 per cent are concerned about confidentiality, and 21 per cent don't know how to access the service
- The mental health score of 27 per cent of workers concerned about the cost of an EAP/EFAP is the lowest (56.4), more than eight points lower than the national average (64.6)
- Workers with an annual household income less than \$100,000 are 75 per cent more likely than workers with an annual household income greater than \$100,000 to report not using EAP/EFAP because of concern about cost



Reason for not using an EAP/EFAP



MHI score by "Reason for not using an EAP/EFAP"



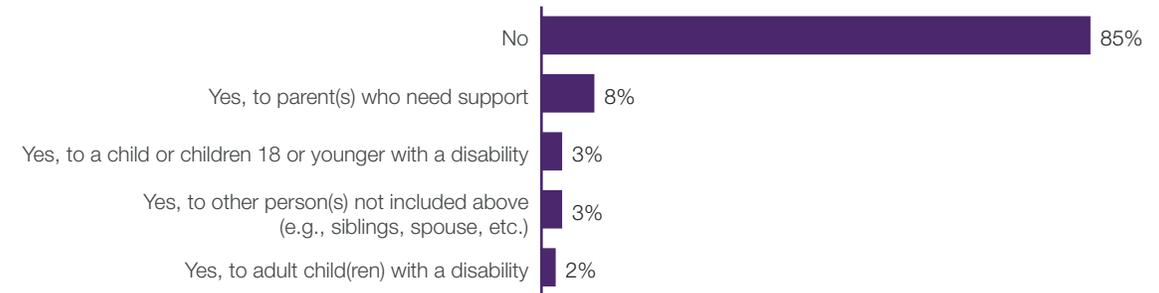
Caregiving

Workers were asked whether they are a caregiver to a child or adult with disabilities or requiring support.

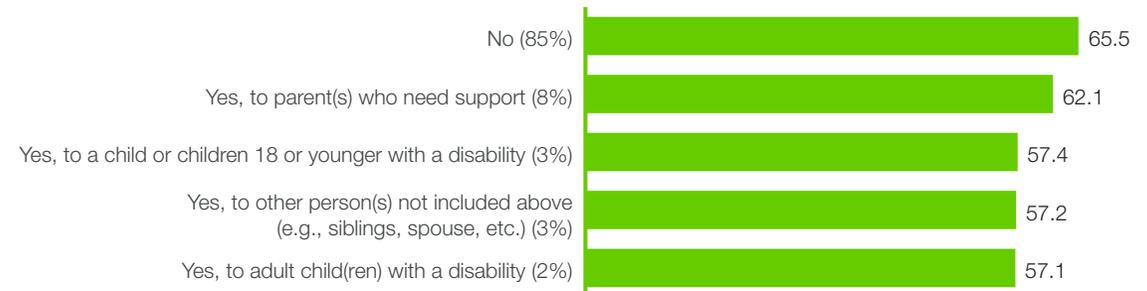
- Fifteen per cent of workers are caregivers. The mental health scores of caregivers are lower than non-caregivers and the national average
- Eighty-five per cent of workers are not caregivers. The mental health score of this group (65.5) is higher than mental health scores across all types of caregivers as well as the national average (64.6)



Are you an unpaid caregiver to a child or adult with disabilities or requiring support?



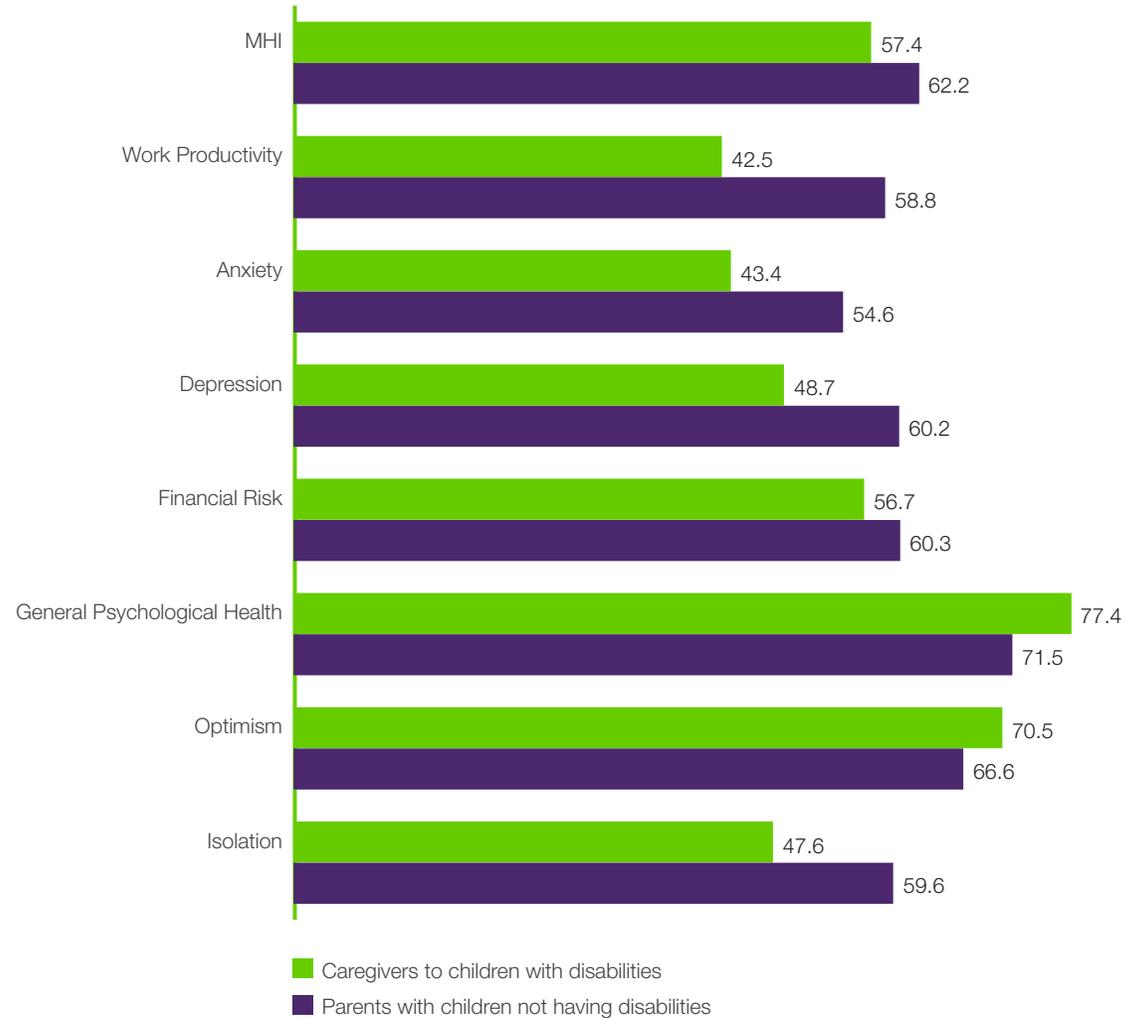
MHI score by “Are you an unpaid caregiver to a child or adult with disabilities or requiring support?”



- Caregivers of children 18 or younger with disabilities have significantly lower/worse mental health, work productivity, anxiety, depression, financial risk, and isolation scores than parents with children not having disabilities yet this same group has higher/better optimism and general psychological health scores
- Caregivers of adult children with disabilities are four times more likely to report working fewer hours and caregivers of children 18 or younger with disabilities are nearly twice as likely to report working fewer hours than other workers



Comparison between caregivers to children with disabilities and parents with children not having disabilities

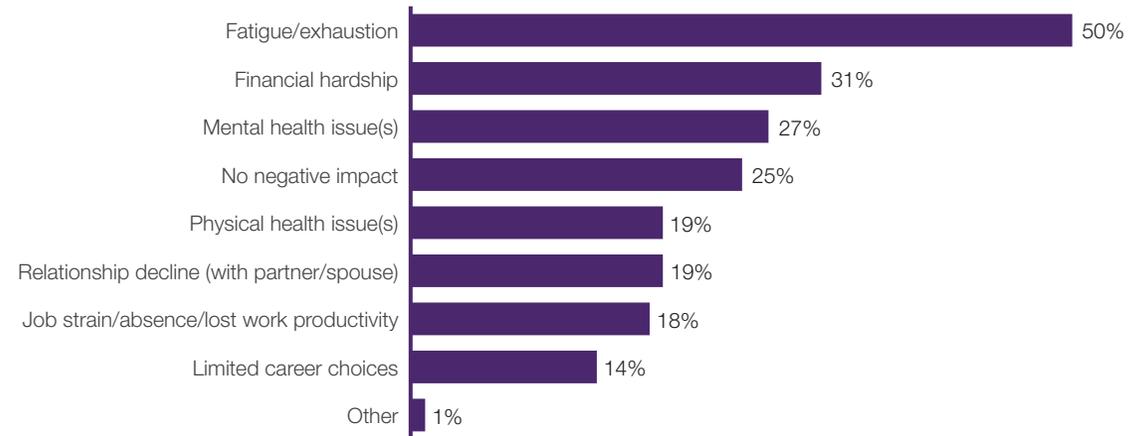


Caregivers were asked about the impact of caregiving.

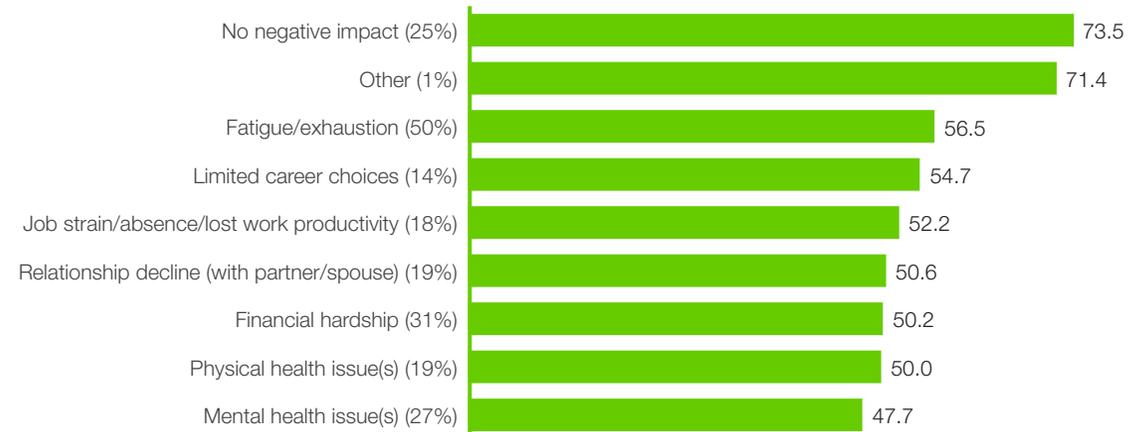
- Half (50 per cent) report fatigue/exhaustion, 31 per cent report financial hardship, and 27 per cent report mental health issues
- The mental health score of 27 per cent reporting mental health issues is the lowest (47.7), 26 points lower than caregivers reporting no negative impact (73.5), and 17 points lower than the national average (64.6)
- Parents are four times more likely than non-parents to report fatigue/exhaustion, physical and mental health issues as impacts of caregiving



What impact of caregiving have you experienced?



MHI score by “What impact of caregiving have you experienced?”

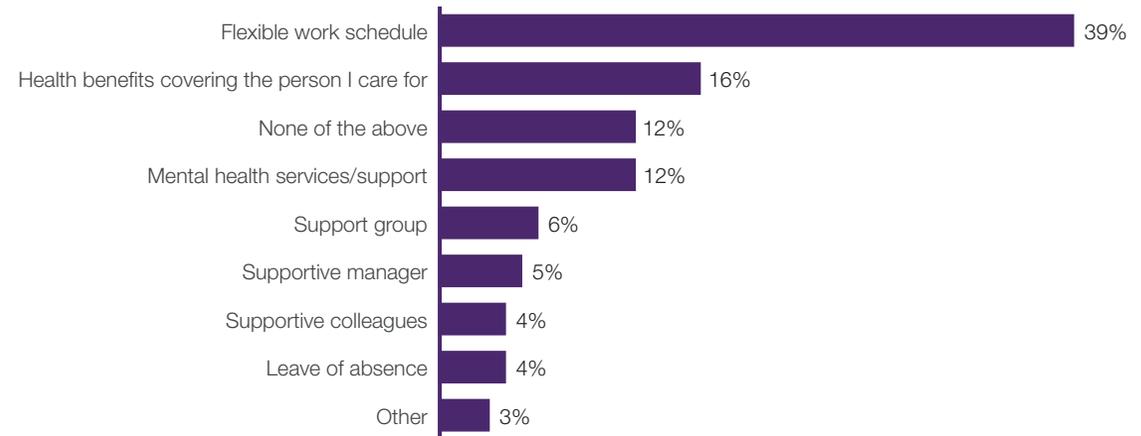


Caregivers were asked what would be most helpful to them.

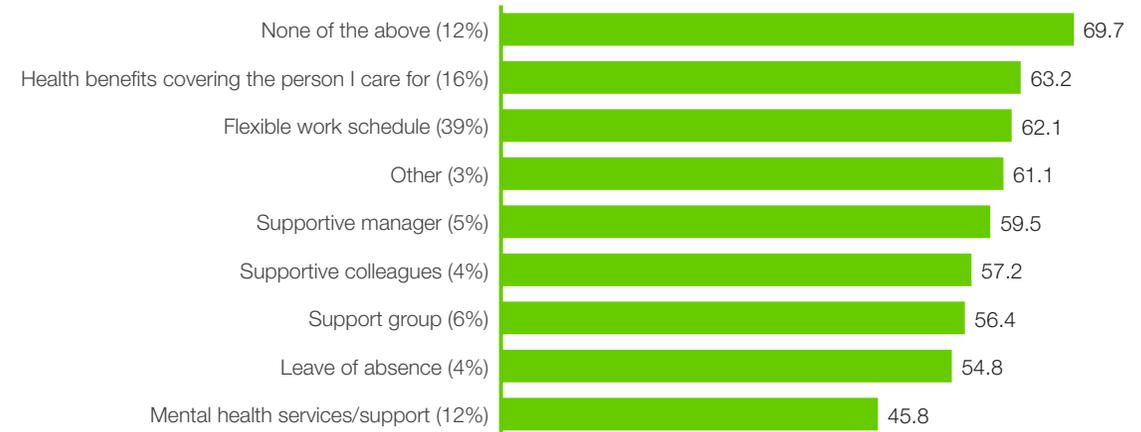
- Nearly two in five (39 per cent) report a flexible work schedule would be most helpful
- The mental health score of 12 per cent indicating that mental health services/support would be most helpful (45.8) is 19 points lower than the national average (64.6)



Which is/would be most helpful to you as a caregiver?



MHI score by "Which is/would be most helpful to you as a caregiver?"



Vacation

Workers were asked whether they are contacted for work issues when on vacation.

- More than half report being contacted for work issues when on vacation; 38 per cent are contacted infrequently and 13 per cent are contacted often
- The mental health score of 13 per cent of workers contacted often when on vacation (58.2) is nearly nine points lower than 49 per cent of workers who are never contacted when on vacation (66.9) and six points lower than the national average (64.6)
- Managers are three times more likely than non-managers to report being contacted often when on vacation



Are you contacted for work issues when on vacation?



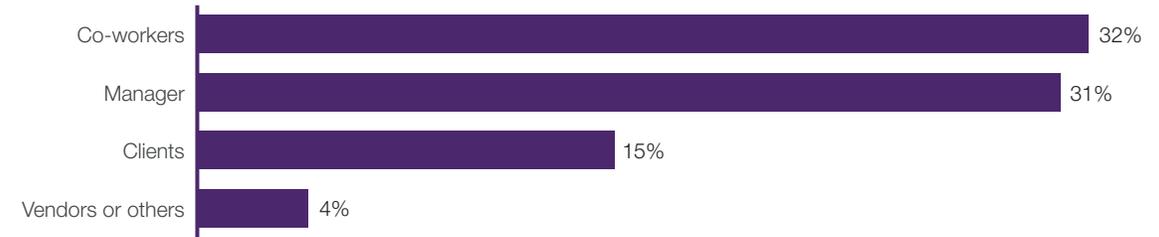
MHI score by “Are you contacted for work issues when on vacation?”



- Nearly one-third (32 per cent) of workers report being contacted by co-workers, 31 per cent are contacted by their manager, and 15 per cent are contacted by clients
- Managers are more than twice as likely as non-managers to be contacted by their leader and nearly twice as likely as non-managers to be contacted by co-workers when on vacation



Who contacts you when you are on vacation?



MHI score by “Who contacts you when you are on vacation?”



Workers were asked whether they believe this contact is necessary and/or okay.

- More than half (52 per cent) believe contact is necessary sometimes, depending on the situation, 26 per cent don't believe contact is necessary and/or okay, regardless of the situation, and 22 per cent believe that contact is necessary as needed or are okay with it
- Workers over 50 are nearly 70 per cent more likely than workers under 40 to believe contact as needed is okay
- Non-managers are nearly 50 per cent more likely than managers to believe contact is never necessary, regardless of the situation



Do you believe this contact is necessary and/or okay?



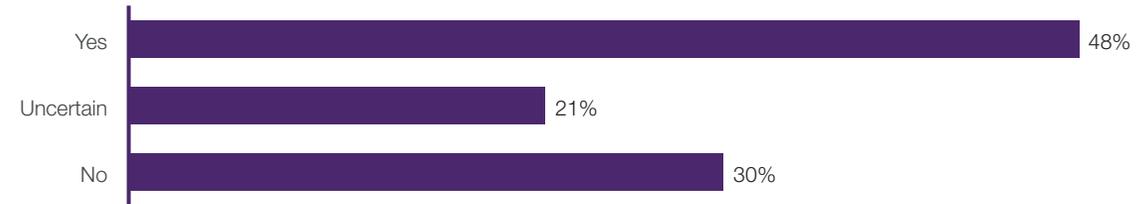
MHI score by “Do you believe this contact is necessary and/or okay?”



Workers were asked whether their organization has a formal policy to ensure that employees use available paid days off/vacation time.

- Nearly half (48 per cent) indicate their organization has a formal policy to ensure that employees use available paid days off/vacation time. The mental health score of this group (67.0) is more than two points higher than workers reporting no formal policy (64.6)

Does your organization have a formal policy to ensure employees use available paid days off/vacation time?



MHI score by “Does your organization have a formal policy to ensure employees use available paid days off/vacation time?”





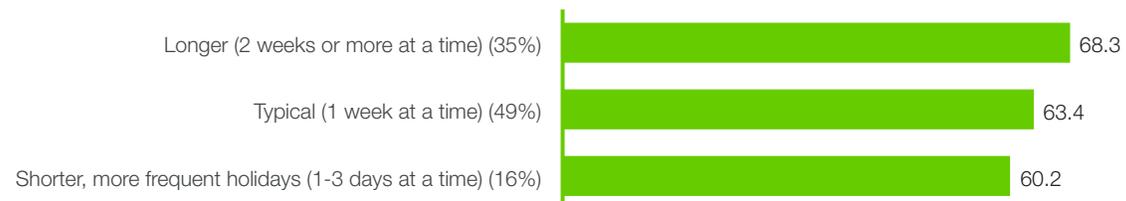
Workers were asked which type of vacation they prefer.

- Nearly half (49 per cent) prefer taking one week vacation, 35 per cent prefer two or more weeks, and 16 per cent prefer one to three days at a time
- Workers who prefer a vacation of two weeks or more have the highest mental health score (68.3), eight points higher than workers taking one to three days at a time (60.2) and nearly four points higher than the national average (64.6)
- Labourers are nearly 60 per cent more likely than office and service workers to prefer shorter, more frequent vacations (1-3 days at a time)

Which type of vacation do you prefer?



MHI score by “Which type of vacation do you prefer?”

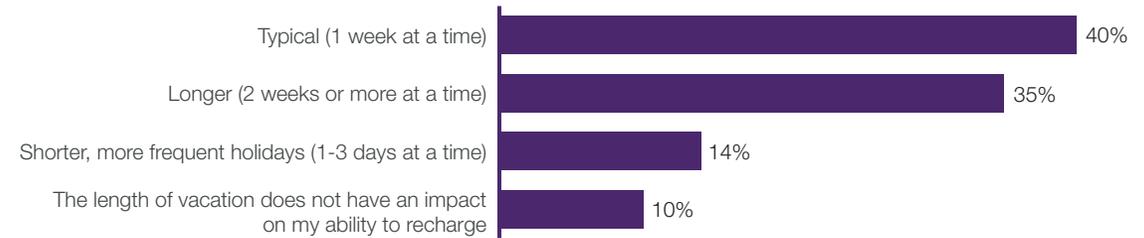


Workers were asked which type of vacation is most helpful if the goal is to recharge from work.

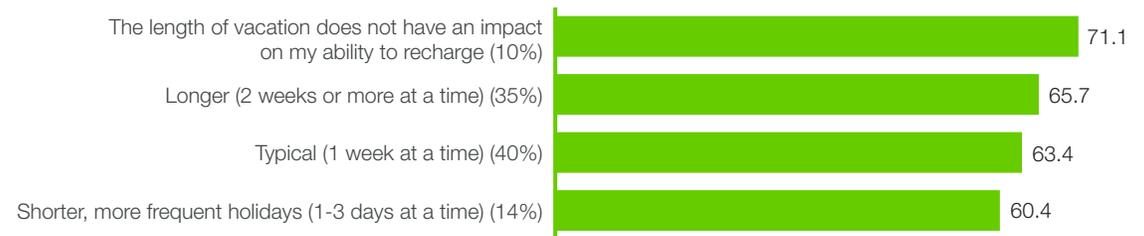
- Two in five (40 per cent) believe one-week vacation is most helpful to recharge from work and 35 per cent believe two or more weeks is most helpful
- One in seven (14 per cent) believe shorter, more frequent vacation (1-3 days) is most helpful to recharge from work. The mental health score of this group (60.4) is nearly 11 points below workers reporting the length of vacation does not have an impact on their ability to recharge and more than four points lower than the national average (64.6)
- Labourers are nearly 60 per cent more likely than office and service workers to report shorter, more frequent vacations (1-3 days) is most helpful to recharge from work
- One in ten (10 per cent) do not believe the length of vacation has an impact on their ability to recharge. This group has the highest mental health score (71.1), more than six points higher than the national average (64.6)



If your goal is to recharge from work, which type of vacation is most helpful?



MHI score by “Which type of vacation is most helpful?”



Overview of the TELUS Mental Health Index.

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 August 4 and August 18, 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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