



# Workplace mental health

Understanding what is needed for  
tomorrow's leaders

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April 26, 2023





## Things we know.

- Our mental health is **different** now.
- Our **productivity** has been impacted.
- There are **more challenges in the younger cohort** and younger is no long that young.
- We need **not be passive** in accepting today's challenges.

# TELUS Health's Mental Health Index (MHI).

**15,000 working individuals.**

- US, Canada, UK and Australia
- Recently added Singapore and Pan-Europe

Widely referenced and **leveraged by governments** and organizations.



**Benchmarks from 2017-2019.**

- **MHI is validated** against PHQ-9, GAD-7, WSAS, and the OLBI.
- Country differences correlate with the GLOBE Index, The Happiness Index, and the Hofstede 6D of Culture.

# Shifts in our mental health have been evident over time.



## Early pandemic

- **Anxiety**
- Adrenaline
- A sharp increase in mental health issues
- **Isolation worsens**



## 6-12 months into the pandemic

- **Exhaustion**
- Burnout
- Mental and physical health concerns become more complex
- **New coping patterns become the norm**



## Currently

- **On edge**
- Anger and cynicism
- Impulsive actions
- Isolation or apathy starts to feel more normal for some
- Mental health issues continue and some increase
- **Increased sensitivity to stress**



## High-risk mental health

of the working population was **12%** in 2019.



## High-risk drinking

of the working population was **2%** in 2019.

The group with the biggest increase in risky drinking is **between 50 and 59 years.**



# The long-term strain of the pandemic has **increased sensitivity to stress.**



of workers are more sensitive to stress in 2022

compared to 2019  
(49% see more sensitivity in co-workers).

**58%**  
under 40

**42%**  
40 and over



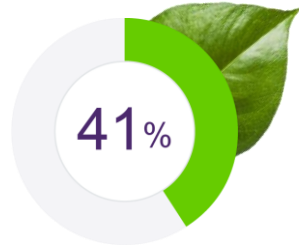
Prolonged strain over-activates the “fight or flight” response, and dampens empathy and emotional control.

This means more:

- Conflict
- Cynicism
- Anger
- Impulsiveness or apathy
- Mental health vulnerability



have felt  
**overwhelmed**  
by debt.



are concerned, or  
**unsure**, about their  
financial future.



are having to dig  
**into savings** to  
maintain their  
standard of living.



cite embarrassment as  
**the reason** for not reaching  
out for financial advice or  
coaching for debt.

Post pandemic  
declines in financial  
wellbeing is one of  
the drivers of  
continuing strain.

# There is an age difference in some areas but not all.

Proportion under 40 with concerning scores compared to those 40 years and over.

**2x**

anxiety

**2x**

helplessness

**1½x**

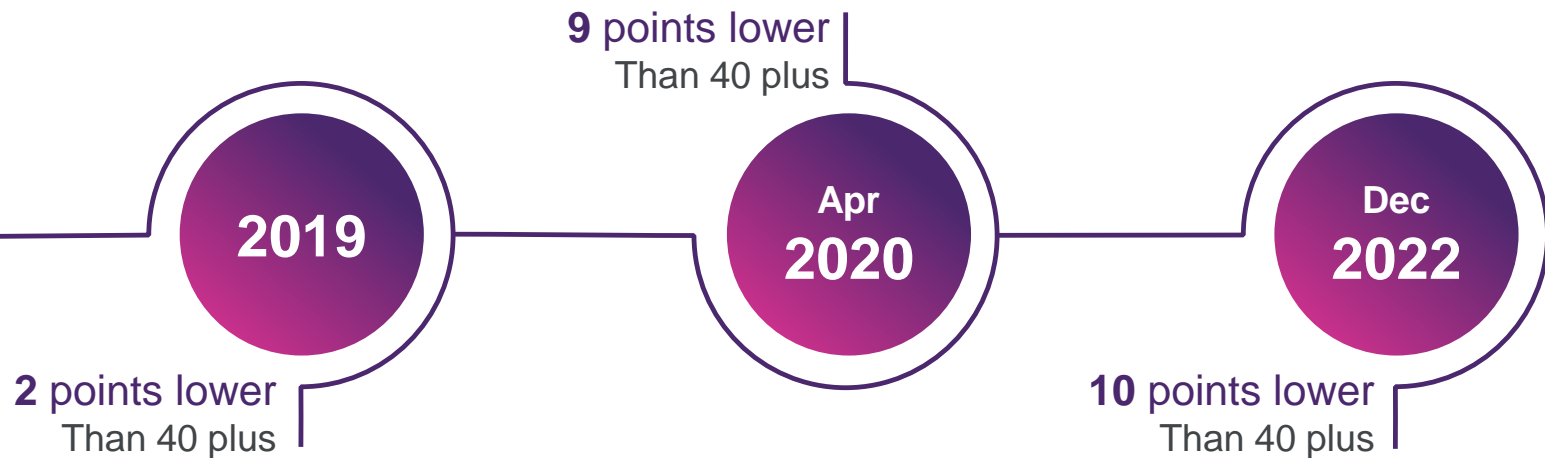
isolation

**No  
difference**  
in optimism.

**No  
difference**  
in perception of  
one's own  
mental health.

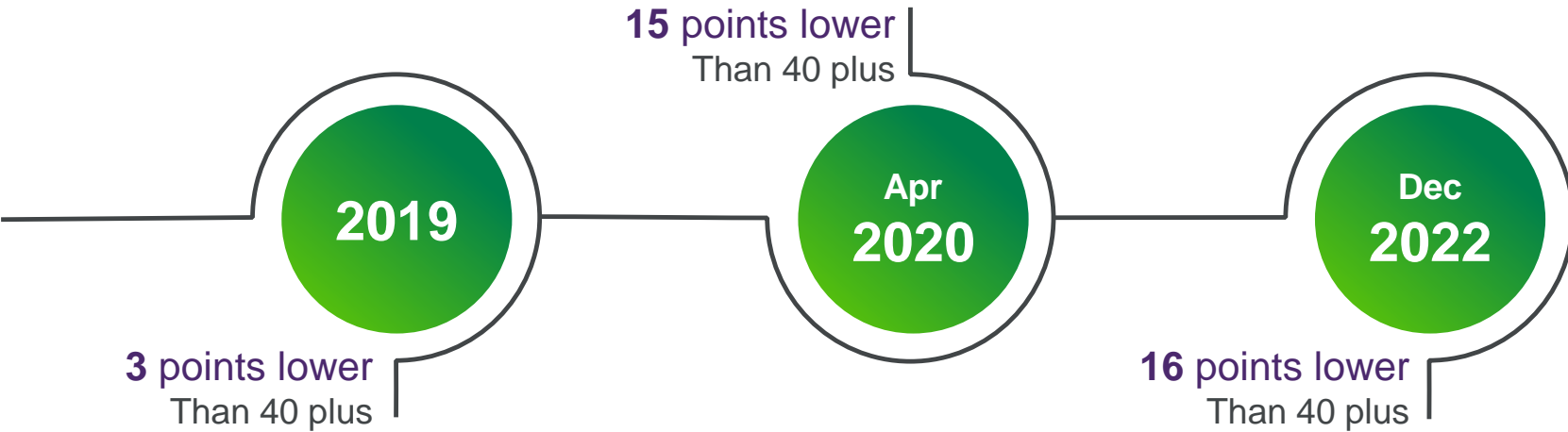


# The difference in mental health by age is greater now than it was 3 years ago.



Higher points on the Mental Health Index indicate better mental health and wellbeing.

# The same trend is also reflected in work productivity.



Higher points on the Work Productivity Scale indicate higher productivity / less mental distraction.



# The productivity difference is not related to effort.

## No difference between age groups in:

- Discretionary effort when feeling well
- Similar lower productivity for both groups when unwell



## The difference:

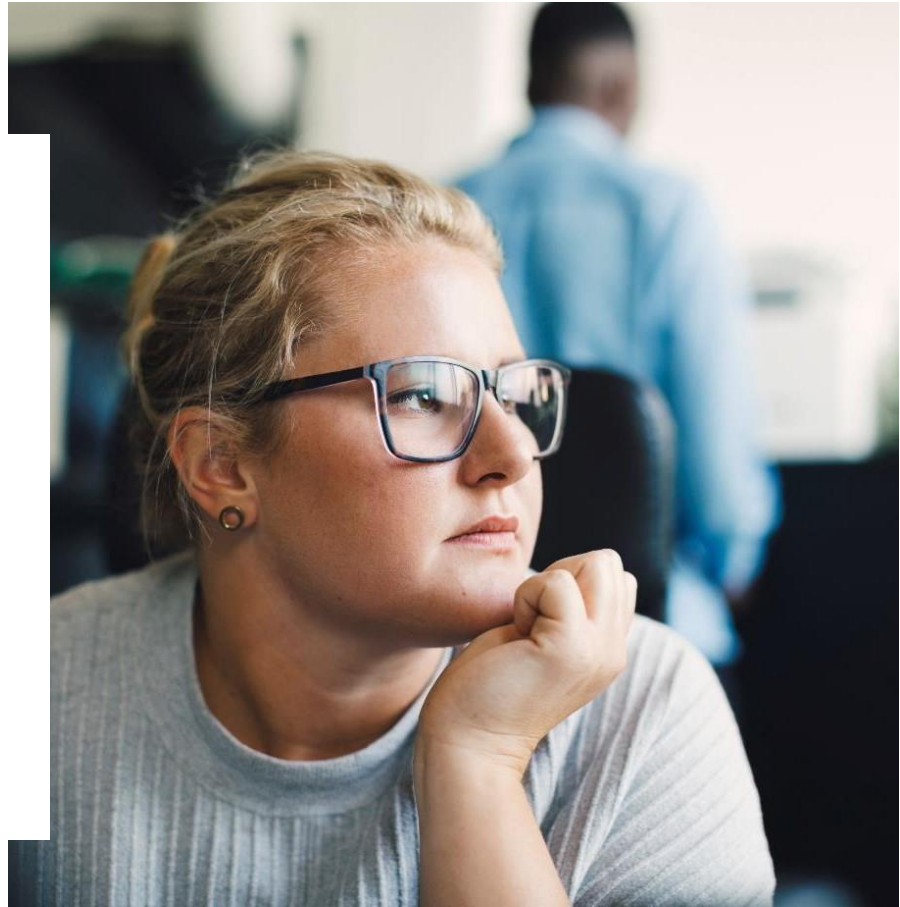
- Under 40 year olds feel **unwell 28% of the time**
- 40 and over feel somewhat **unwell 18% of the time**

# Younger workers are **less likely to have strong relationships.**



Younger workers are  
**more likely to feel  
a lack of  
connection and  
acceptance.**

2x more likely to feel isolated  
due to **lack of connection of  
acceptance** from friends.

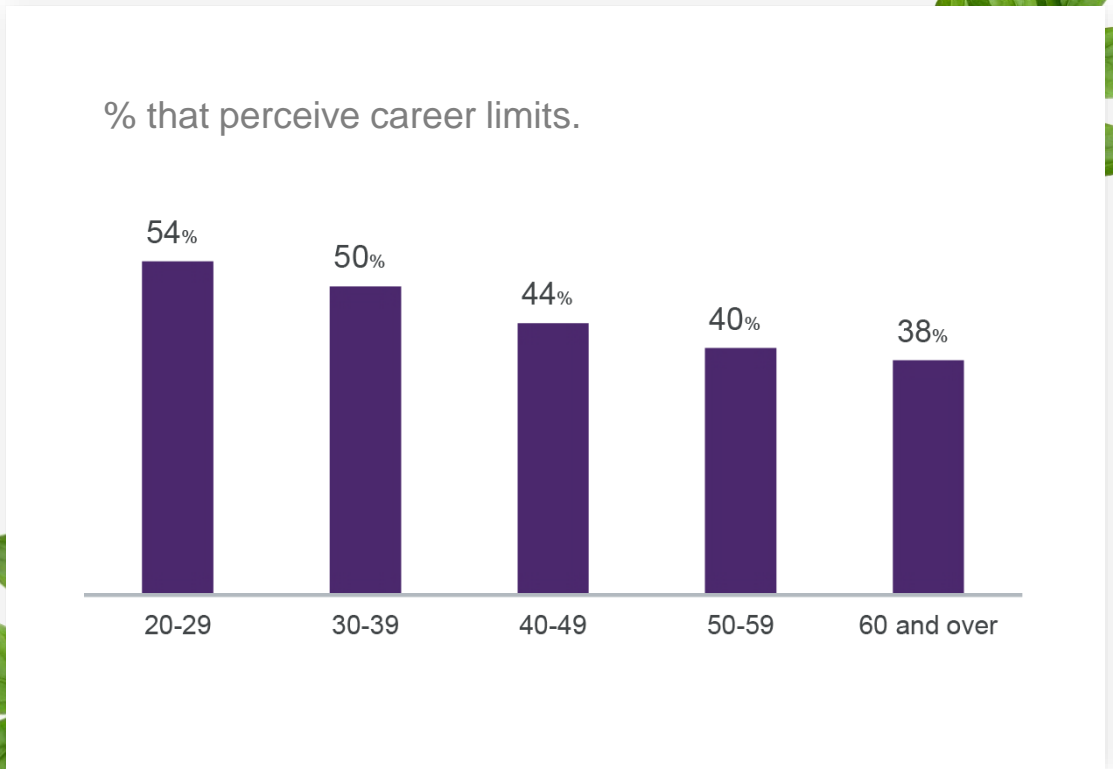





Under 40 years old &  
40 years and over.

No age difference in  
**comfort discussing  
one's mental health  
with friends and family.**

Younger workers are **more likely to perceive career limits** if their workplace knew about a mental health condition.



A close-up photograph of purple lotus leaves with numerous water droplets on their surface. The leaves are in the foreground, and the background is a soft, out-of-focus purple gradient.

#1 question from organizations:  
**What should I be doing now?**



# The good news? What employers do makes a difference.

Those with employers who support mental health **have better mental health.**

- **7 points higher** than average
- **15 points higher** than those whose employers give no support

# Support for mental health is multi-faceted.



## Policy and practices

Compliance to risk management.



## Benefits, services and programs

Reactive to proactive.



## Culture and leadership

Work experience.



# Employees' view of visible support



## Policy and practices

**Flexible work**



## Benefits, services and programs

**Increased mental health services and resources**

**Promotion of mental health services & resources**



## Culture and leadership

**Mental health communications**

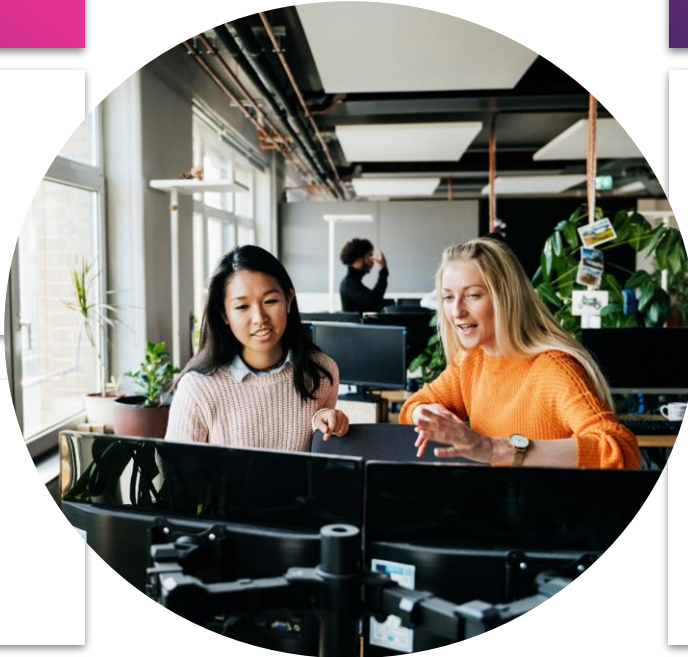
**Manager training**

# Health benefits and services are cited more than flexibility, as a reason to stay with their employer.

Under 40 years.

**31%**  
benefits and  
services.

**25%**  
flexibility.



Over 40 years.

**36%**  
benefits and  
services.

**31%**  
flexibility.



# Younger workers are more likely to **prefer better support for wellbeing** over 10% more salary.



Percent who **prefer better support for wellbeing** over a salary increase.



1 in 2 workers would be interested in a free and confidential **mental health assessment.**



**1 in 2**

Overall



**6 in 10**

Workers under 40 years.



**4 in 10**

Workers 40 years and over.

While digital modalities increase the accessibility of mental health support:

Nearly half of workers have a preference for **in-person** mental health support.

\* 37% fully in person and 12% combination of in-person and digital

**44%**

Workers under 40 years old.

**49%**

Overall\*.

**51%**

Workers 40 years and over.





# Counselling makes a difference.

Before EAP

 **57** hrs/month.

Lost hours of productivity

 **36** hrs/month.

After EAP

The Gain

**21** hrs/month

7 weeks or  
36 working days.

7 working hours per day.



# Five **manager traits** correlate with worker mental health, productivity and discretionary effort.

Positive indicators.

**Charismatic**  
vs Uninspiring.

**Autonomous**  
vs Dependent.

**Team oriented**  
vs Individually motivated.

**Inclusive**  
vs Autocratic.

**Humane**  
vs Unsupportive/hostile.

# Nine indicators of **workplace culture indicators** correlate with worker mental health.

Positive indicators.

**Collaborative**  
vs Competitive.

**Motivating**  
vs Un-motivating.

**Innovative**  
vs Stagnant.

**Inclusive**  
vs Cliquish.

**Flexible**  
vs Inflexible.

**Relaxed**  
vs Hard-driving.

**Safe**  
vs Unsafe.

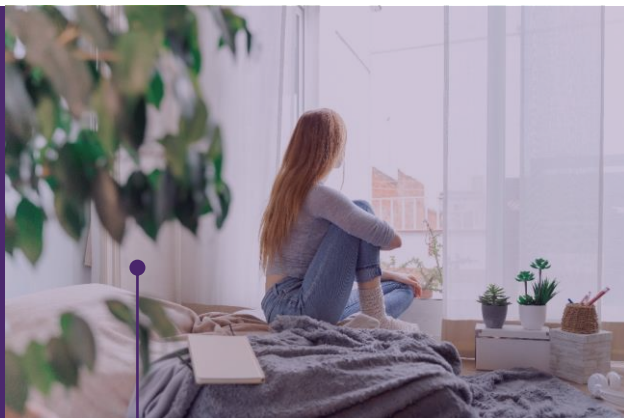
**Respectful**  
vs Disrespectful.

**Supportive**  
vs Uncaring/Hostile.

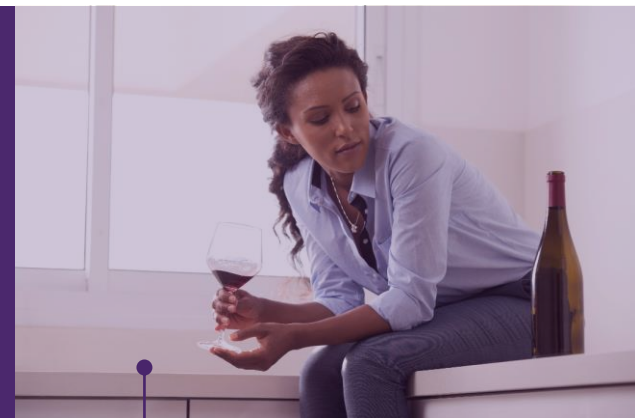
# Those working in **cultures with negative indicators.**



**2x** Symptoms of burnout.



**2x** As likely to feel unsettled/nervous.



**2x** Have concerns with alcohol.

Employees indicate that the most valuable support for **financial wellbeing** is automatic savings/investments.



# Workplace Strategy Index for Mental Health (WSI-MH).

A self-assessment tool for organizations.

## Informed by **leading practices**

- ISO-45003, the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, ILO, WHO, etc.

## **Benchmarks** against region, industry and organizational size



Workplace Strategy Index for mental health report.

Prepared for: ABC Inc.

Index completed by: John Smith  
Index completed on: Wednesday, February 22, 2023

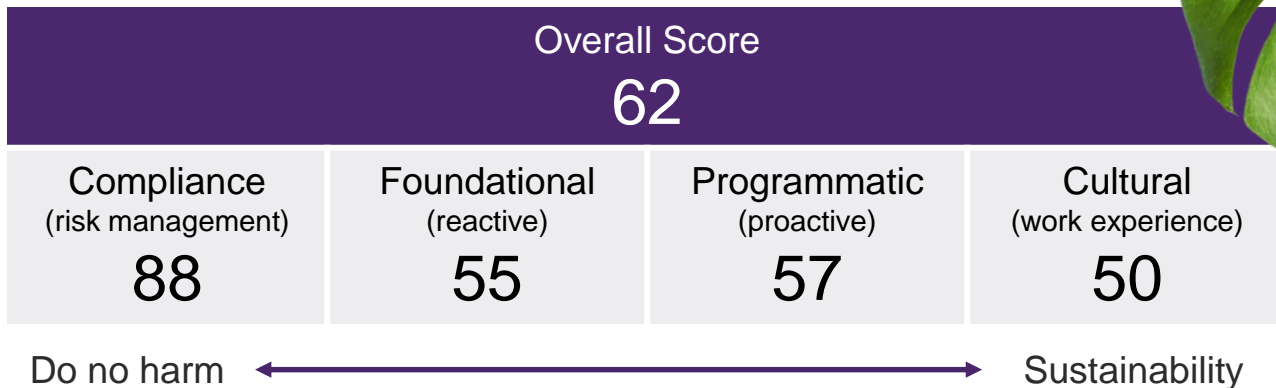
 TELUS Health

Overall score plus scores in each of four pillars

1. Compliance to basic risk management.
2. Foundational (reactive) actions and resources.
3. Programming that can positively (proactively) impact mental health.
4. Cultural integration.

Suggested next steps

# There is opportunity to align further to leading practices.



0-49 Developing  
50-79 On track  
80-100 Leading

51% of organizations  
aspire to be **leading**.

# Total Mental Health



A re-imagined experience

Includes all the support offered in EAP, plus:

- **Personalized mental health journeys**
- Choice of therapists
- **Evidence-based Care Plans**
- Integration of self-directed and therapist
- **Care Navigation**
- Plus checks and insights that connect the individual and the therapist between sessions
- Ongoing progress tracking
- Ability to move seamlessly between modalities
- **Unlimited support**

**Care Navigation** - 24/7 team with clinical BA or MA

- Coaching and support on any step in the member's Care Plan
- Booking, cancelling or rescheduling appointments on members behalf
- Recommending appropriate referrals
- Completing insurance billing on behalf of the member
- Arranging referrals and information exchange
- Completing requests for information (clinical file, attendance letters)
- Supporting Quality Assurance Reviews
- Arranging crisis support in real time

# Takeaways



The pandemic has **widened the difference between generations in mental health.**



The current concerns about **worker productivity** appear to be driven by the decline in worker mental health and wellbeing.



Anxiety, depression and isolation are **issues for younger workers that are continuing into prime career building years.**



There is **no indication that the current risk will decline** without focused mitigation.



# Key actions



**Leverage** data to help organizations understand their risk and the drivers related to mental health – subscribe to the MHI.



**Consider the risk of doing nothing** as younger workers age and the overall risk in the workforce increases.

Promote a 3-pronged approach:

More focus on high value mental health assessments and **comprehensive services**.

Promote **workplace training, communications and change management** to build mentally health workplaces.

Review the relevance of all benefits and ensure a strong focus on **financial wellbeing** given the relationship to mental wellbeing.

We need to understand trends,  
but we do not have to accept them.



# Open Q&A