



# Workplace Wellbeing

What it means and how it impacts business success

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Annual **Conference**





# Paula Allen

Global Leader & VP  
Research and Insights  
TELUS Health

# Wellness is a start. **Wellbeing is the goal.**



## Wellness

Focus – Healthy Lifestyle:

Actions individuals can take to reduce the risk of illness.



## Wellbeing

Focus – Quality of Life:

Actions and experiences that enable people to be at the best.



# The TELUS Mental Health Index



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**Ongoing** measure of mental health and wellbeing.

Only includes **working individuals**.

Fully **validated**.

Focused on understanding our level of risk and **what does and does not make a difference**.

Sensitive to both **mental wellbeing** and **significant mental distress** on a scale of **0-100**.

# Wellbeing has many components; all of which impact each other



# In today's conversation, we will focus on a few significant issues





# Financial risk is consistently one of the **strongest drivers of overall mental wellbeing.**

The MHI looks at mental wellbeing and distress from many perspectives.

- Various demographics
- Personal experiences
- Work experiences
- Attitudes and perceptions



From every perspective, those without emergency savings have lower mental health scores:

- On average by 25 points
- The smallest difference being 12 points

# 1 in 3 would leave their current employer for guaranteed income pension.

- No difference by gender
- Those **40 years old and younger** are more likely (42%) to leave their employer for a guaranteed income pension





# 3 in 10 dig into savings to maintain their standard of living.

There is significant vulnerability in the workforce:



workers in feel **overwhelmed by debt.**

Nearly



workers **have not received financial advice** for investing or retirement planning.



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



## 2 in 3 do not get advice for debt when needed.

The top reasons for not getting advice:

- I am embarrassed
- I do not know where to go
- I do not want to share my information

Those who do seek advice have better financial wellbeing.





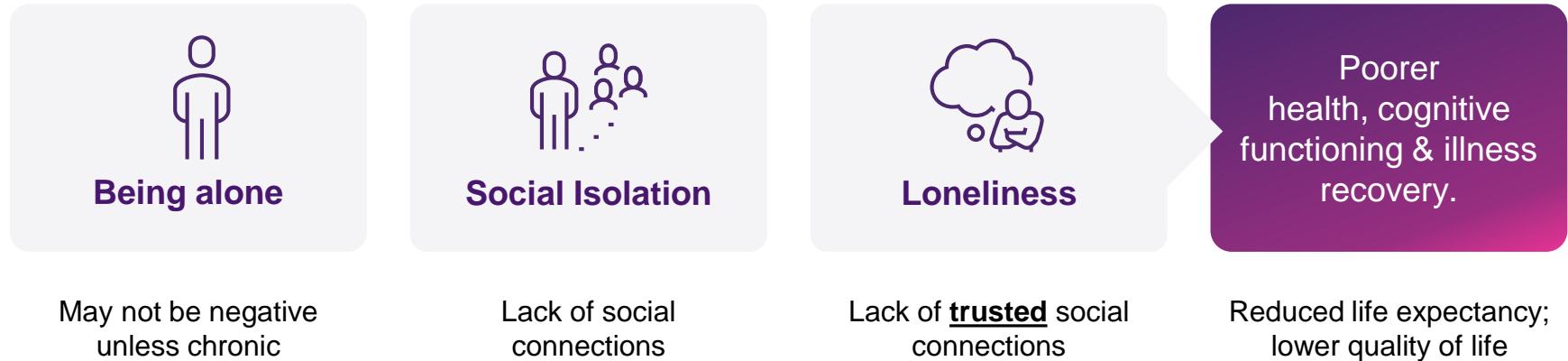
Financial wellbeing is important on its own, **but no workplace mental health strategy can ignore it.**



# Social isolation and chronic loneliness is a **world health issue**

The World Health Organization announced a new Commission on Social Connection (Nov 2023), to address **loneliness as a pressing health threat**, promoting **social connection as a priority** ...in countries of all incomes.

We have been trending toward the **current health crisis of social isolation and loneliness** for some time.



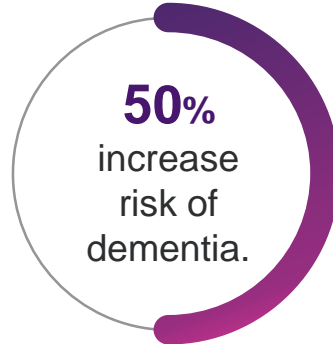
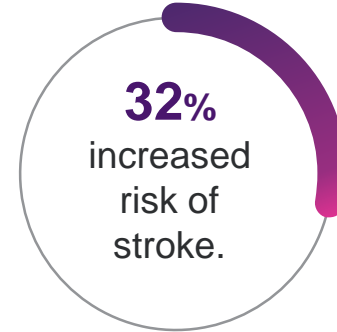
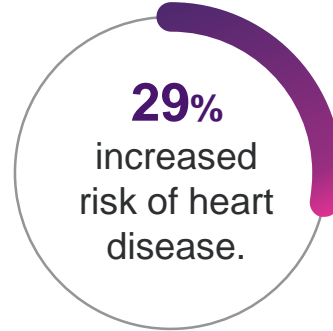
“Social isolation significantly **increases a person’s risk of premature death from all causes**, a risk that may rival those of smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity.



# Social isolation and **loneliness** can worsen **physical health.**

Ongoing fight-or-flight stress signalling can lead to: I am embarrassed:

- Impaired executive function (increased brain fog)
- Decreased immune system functioning, plus
- Other negative mental and physical health impacts





# Many are avoiding social interaction.

Overall, **32%** indicate that they **avoid social interaction with others.**

20-29 yrs	48%
30-39 yrs	42%
40-49 yrs	33%
50-59 yrs	30%
60-69 yrs	24%



indicate that their avoidance started or worsened since the pandemic.

No noteworthy difference in age band for starting or worsening of avoidance since the pandemic.

Reasons may include **social fears, lack of positive experiences** and simply **habit.**

# However, social interaction **without trust**, does not address loneliness and its risks.

Lonely individuals may have social interactions that lack trust, for many reasons:

- **Fear** of betrayal
- Intense **self-consciousness** that prevents openness
- **Impatience** regarding the time needed to build trust
- Perception of **intense competition** among “friends”
- Lack of inclusion / **lacking a sense of belonging**
- Lack of **shared experiences**
- Lack of **psychological safety**





## 45% of workers in Canada do not have trusted relationships at work.

Workers who lack trusted relationships at work are:

- **3X** more likely to report they feel **isolated**, have **lower mental health scores** and **work productivity scores** than those who have trusted work relationships

# Trust is key to countering isolation and loneliness and has several other benefits.

Compared to those in organizations with low trust, **workers in high trust organizations report:**

74%  
less stress



106%  
more energy  
at work



50%  
higher  
productivity



40%  
less burnout

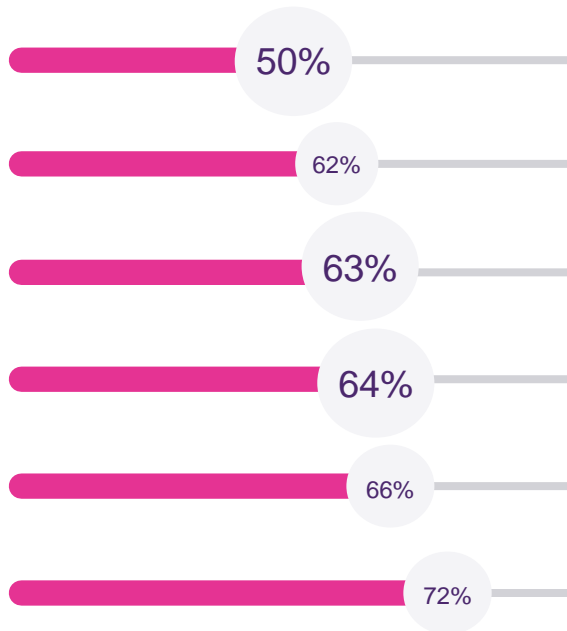
13%  
fewer  
sick days



76%  
more  
engagement

29%  
more  
satisfaction  
with their lives

# Workplace trust is impossible unless **psychosocial risk** is addressed.



**Rewards and recognition are fair and unbiased in my organization.**

My workplace is generally supportive (e.g. people help each other).

**Workers can speak up without fear of humiliation or punishment.**

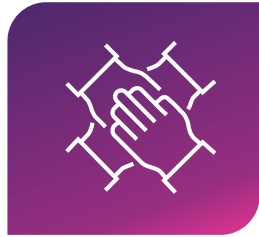
**Harassment and bullying is dealt with quickly.**

The demands of my job are realistic / not excessive.

I am satisfied with the amount to control I have in my job.



# Building trust is not hard, but **right now,** it needs to be intentional.



## **Trust** builds trust:

- Support stretch goals
- Enable control over work
- Show honest vulnerability



## **Communication** builds trust:

- Communicate frequently
- Share information
- Listen



## **Safety and Support** builds trust:

- Address psychosocial risk
- Provide resources to support wellbeing

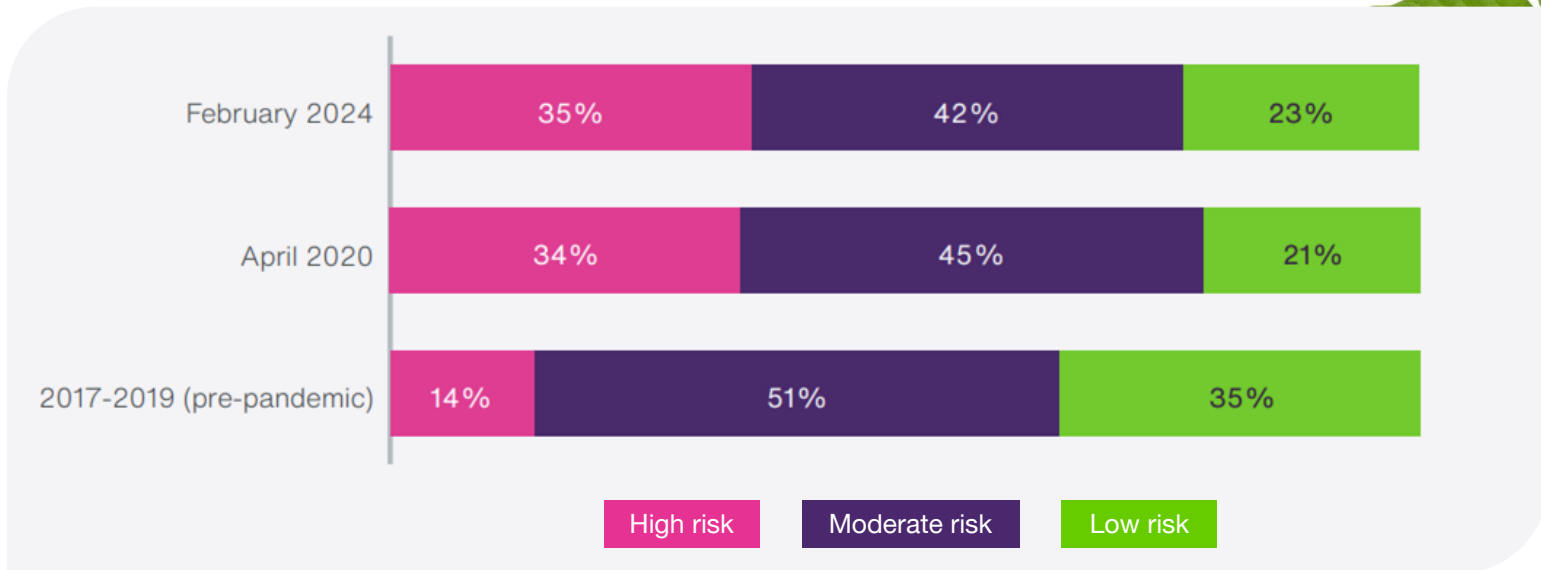




Trust is critical when addressing loneliness and isolation.  
**Workplace trust is a clear wellbeing opportunity.**

# 1 in 3 have high mental health risk.

Some are in crisis or have more complex issues, many others have increased vulnerability, **fewer are low risk.**



# Common risk factors for anxiety can be physical and/or social.



## Physical factors include:

- Poor sleep
- Chronic pain
- Certain health conditions
- Earlier puberty



## Social factors include:

- Trauma
- Learned thinking patterns
- Isolation
- Lack predictability/rapid change

# We need some change, but **we do not adapt well to rapid unpredictable, ongoing change.**

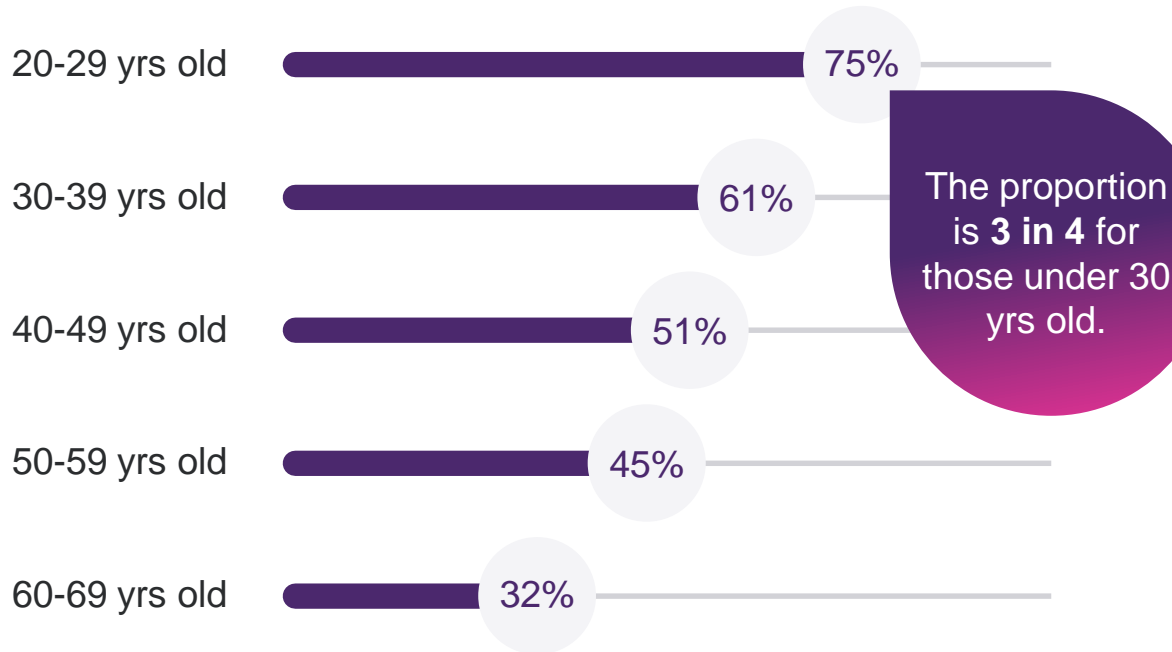
- **Each change causes our brain to adapt** and form new neural pathways – change overload makes adaptation difficult
- **When overloaded we feel anxious/threatened**, resistant, can become apathetic and may burnout

One of our greatest challenges is that an **increased pace of change is unavoidable.**

CBT - cognitive behavioural therapy (also training or coaching)



# On average half of workers indicate that they are uncertain about coping, or struggle with adapting to change.



# Only slightly more than 1 in 3 (35%) workers know what EAP is and what it covers.



**4 in 10 workers do not know what EAP is / have not heard of EAP.**



# There is significant **mismatch of medication for mental health.**



Almost 1 in 4 workers (23%) report taking **medication for a mental health issue.**



For over half (58%) **the first prescription was not effective.**



1 in 3 (32%) of those workers **tried more than a year to find the right medication.**



Wellbeing is for the entire population, at all times.  
**Supports need to be integrated into workplace systems.**

# 1 in 4 workers (24%) indicate that they have **pain on a chronic basis.**

The proportion of younger worker is 1 in 5.

Yrs old	% of the group
20-29	21%
30-39	19%
40-49	20%
50-59	26%
60-69	29%

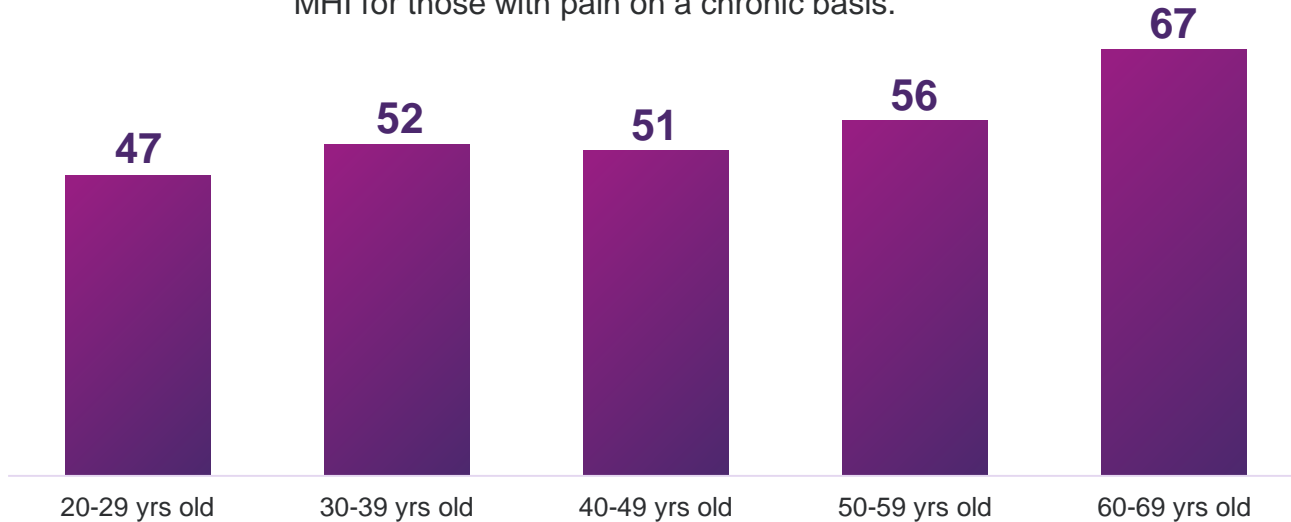


On the 100-point Mental Health Index scale, **those with ongoing pain have scores 9 points lower**, which is significant.



# The association of mental health and pain is strongest with younger workers.

MHI for those with pain on a chronic basis.





# Co-morbid mental and physical health **increases the length of recovery time and risk of adverse events.**



46%

of people with a primary mental health condition **also have a chronic physical health issue.**

- **Costs are 30% to 100% higher** compared to the cost of the mental health condition alone



30%

of people with a primary physical health condition **also have a mental health issue.**

- **Costs are 29% to 113% higher** compared to the cost of physical health alone



In all our programming, we need to always **assume that mental and physical health impact each other.**



# Wellbeing means more than meditation....

It means holistic solutions that address issues that prevent people from being at their best:

- Emergency savings support
- Psychological safety and trust at work
- Health marketing to ensure awareness of mental health resources
- Genetic testing for medication matching
- CBT for anxiety and to support pain management



Thank you!