

The Mental Health Index™ report

The United States, July 2020



LifeWorks
by Morneau Shepell





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Executive summary

July marks the fifth month since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. As the COVID-19 virus continues to proliferate globally with over 13 million cases this month, the United States continues to lead the world in the number of total cases of COVID-19. Key states of Florida, Texas, California, Arizona and Georgia are being especially hard hit. Hospitalizations continue to rise rapidly. In spite of the spike in cases, some states have continued with their reopening plans, while at least 12 states have rolled back or put a pause on their reopening as they try to mitigate the spread of the virus.¹

Many states have begun requiring people to wear masks in indoor and outdoor public spaces where social distancing is not possible. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are seeing a notable and concerning rise in infections among younger people suggesting that this age group is less concerned about the risks arising from COVID-19.² As New York, New Jersey and Connecticut slowly recover from the first wave, all have issued travel advisories requiring people arriving from states with higher case counts to quarantine for 14 days. Given the high rate of infection, Americans are also excluded from the European Union's list of acceptable permitted visitors. The Canada-U.S. border remains closed.

Economic recovery is an ongoing priority and a key focus of decision-makers, especially with a presidential election four months away. Americans are returning to work as jobless numbers decline slowly from the peak in late March,³ with gains in the leisure and hospitality, manufacturing and professional and business services.⁴ The dialogue around reopening schools is intensifying given its critical impact on restarting the economy and as an important indicator

1 Teneo-Coronavirus Daily Update, June 29, 2020

2 Teneo-Coronavirus Daily Update, June 26, 2020

3 Teneo -Coronavirus Daily Update, June 25,2020

4 <https://www.focus-economics.com/countries/united-states/news/unemployment/labor-market-continues-to-recover-in-june>



of a “return to normal life” in the U.S. While the conversation on anti-Black racism and police violence is ongoing, the level of protest and civil unrest has subsided as COVID-19 dominates the public and media agenda.

For the fourth consecutive month, the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with the increased awareness and societal response to anti-Black racism continue to have an impact on the mental health of Americans.

Mental Health Index™

The overall Mental Health Index™ for July 2020 is -5 points. This index represents the deviation from pre-2020 benchmark. A negative score indicates poorer mental health relative to the benchmark, and a positive score indicates better mental health. The benchmark reflects mental health data from 2017, 2018 and 2019. A 5-point decrease from the pre COVID-19 benchmark⁵ reflects a population whose mental health is similar to the most distressed twenty-eighth percent of the benchmark population.

The lowest Mental Health Index™ sub-score is for the risk measure of optimism (-8), followed by anxiety (-6.4), depression (-6.1), work productivity (-5.5), and isolation (-4.8). The risk measure with the best mental health score is financial (9.7), followed by psychological health (2.8).

- All Mental Health Index™ sub-scores have improved, with the exception of optimism which has remained the same, when compared to the prior month.
- The financial score continues to improve with a score of 9.7 points and is above the pre-2020 benchmark.
- The most improved sub-score is work productivity (-5.5) when compared to the prior month (-6.9).
- Individuals without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (-21.1) than the overall group. Individuals with an emergency fund have an average mental health score of -1.2.

The overall Mental Health Index™ for July 2020 is -5 points, up one point from the prior month

⁵ The raw score for the Mental Health Index™ benchmark is 75/100. The July 2020 score is 70/100.



- Females (-7.0) have a lower mental health score than males (-2.9); and in general, mental health scores improve with age.
- Respondents identifying as Arab/Middle Eastern/West Asian have the lowest mental health scores (-12.6), followed by those identifying as Mixed (Other) (-11.1), and those identifying as Pacific Islander (-10.6).
- Individuals identifying as White have the highest mental health scores (-4.2), followed by respondents identifying as East Asian (-6.6), and those identifying as Black (-7.3).

Overall, 10 percent of respondents are unemployed. While most individuals remain employed, 18 percent report reduced hours or reduced salary since April 2020.

- Individuals reporting fewer hours when compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (-10.3), followed closely by individuals reporting reduced salary compared to the prior month (-10.1), and those not currently employed (-7.4).
- Individuals working in organizations with 10,000 or more employees report the highest mental health score (-2.4), followed by individuals employed in organizations with 5,001-10,000 employees (-3.2), and self-employed/sole proprietor (-3.4).
- Respondents who report working for companies with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (-8.2).

The highest mental health scores this month are observed in individuals employed in Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (-2.5), Transportation and Warehousing (-2.8), and Other (-2.9) industries.

- Full-time students have the lowest average mental health score (-19.6), followed by individuals in Information and Cultural Industries (-13.1), and Management of Companies and Enterprises (-13.0).
- Individuals employed in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, and Management of Companies and Enterprises have seen the greatest improvement in mental health since last month.

For the fourth consecutive month, the two key drivers of the Mental Health Index™ are financial risk and isolation.

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Mental Stress Change

The Mental Stress Change score for July 2020 is 55.1. This indicates that 20 percent of the population is experiencing more mental stress compared to the prior month, with 10 percent experiencing less. This is the fourth consecutive month where the Mental Stress Change score reflects increased mental stress in the population overall. Considering geography, the greatest increase in stress month over month was for respondents living in the Northeast (55.6), followed by the West (55), the Midwest (54.9), and the South (54.9).

- The greatest increase in mental stress is seen in employed people with reduced salary (62.4), followed by employed people with reduced hours (57.4) when compared to unemployed people (54.9) and employed people with no change to salary or hours (54.2).
- As was reported in prior months, and as evidenced again in June, younger respondents are experiencing a greater increase in mental stress when compared to older respondents.
- Since April 2020, females have had larger increases in mental stress when compared with males.
- Respondents identifying as Latin, South or Central American have the greatest increase in mental stress (60.9), followed by those identifying as Mixed (Other) (60.1), and those identifying as Pacific Islander (59.5).
- Individuals identifying as South Asian have the most modest increase in mental stress (50.6), followed by respondents identifying as Black (53.4).

Mental Stress Change scores for the Transportation and Warehousing, Finance and Insurance, and full-time students are less steep compared to the prior month.

- Individuals working in Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction have the most significant increase in Mental Stress Change score (62.5) followed by individuals employed Management of Companies and Enterprises (59.2), and Wholesale Trade (58.4).



Additional findings

Relationships in 2020

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has been widespread. Prolonged social distancing and isolation has led people to crave human interaction and in some cases, has had an impact on relationships, both personal and professional.

- 10 percent feel that their personal relationships had become more strained, and this group had the lowest mental health scores (-23.3)
- 72 percent of respondents feel that there had been no change in their personal relationships since January 2020.
- 18 percent feel that there had been an improvement in their personal relationships.
- Individuals identifying as Black are the most likely to have indicated an improvement in their personal relationships (33 percent).
- A lower mental health score is observed among the 10 percent of individuals reporting increased strain in their workplace relationships (18.1).
- 79 percent of respondents feel that there had been no change in their workplace relationships since January 2020.
- 11 percent feel that there had been an improvement in their workplace relationships.
- Data from April 2020 to July 2020 shows a worsening of anxiety scores for most non-White demographic groups in June 2020, which corresponds to the period of heightened awareness of anti-Black racism. Those who identify as Black showed a 1.1 improvement in anxiety between April and May, followed by a worsening by -0.7 points in June and an improvement of 3.0 points in July. The June data was collected during the height of tension regarding anti-Black racism. Those who identify as East Asian, Latin/South/Central American, or South Asian descent follow a similar pattern of improvement in May, decline in June and improvement in July. Those who identify as White show a continuous month-over-month improvement of 1.8 from April to May, 0.9 in June and 1.8 in July.

Racism in the United States

- Overall, 74 percent of individuals believe that racism is a problem in the United States though only 17 percent believe that racism is a problem in their workplace.

A worsening of anxiety scores for most non-White demographics is observed in June, with improvement in July 2020



- When considering the results by race, 90 percent of individuals identifying as Black strongly agree or agree that racism is a problem in their country, followed by Arab/Middle Eastern/West Asian (87 percent) and East Asian (78 percent). Comparatively, 73 percent of individuals identifying as White strongly agree or agree that racism is a problem in their country.
- The lowest mental health score is among individuals who are undecided (-7.9) and the highest scores are among those who do not perceive a problem (3.4). 33 percent of individuals identifying as Black strongly agree or agree that racism is a problem in their workplace, followed by 29 percent of South Asians and 29 percent identifying as South East Asian. Comparatively, 14 percent of individuals identifying as White strongly agree or agree that racism is a problem in their workplace.
- The highest mental health score is among individuals that do not believe that racism is a problem in their workplace (-1.0)
- Those who work for employers with between 2-50 employees are most likely to strongly disagree or disagree (72 percent) that racism is a problem in their workplace.

Awareness of systemic racism

- 35 percent of respondents feel that systemic racism is likely to decrease in the United States as a result of heightened awareness related to the high-profile death of Black American, George Floyd, while 33 percent are unsure, and 31 percent feel that systemic racism is unlikely to decrease.
- In the workplace, 24 percent feel that systemic racism is likely to decrease, 37 percent are unsure, and 39 percent feel that it is unlikely that systemic racism will decrease.
- 31 percent of respondents report that their awareness of systemic racism has increased over the past month while 22 percent report that their thinking has not changed at all.

Additional data and analyses

Demographic breakdown 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. Contact MHI@morneaushepell.com

Thirty-five percent of respondents indicate that systemic racism is likely to decrease as a result of the heightened awareness related to the death of Black American, George Floyd



Overview of the 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 in a given geography, compared to the benchmarks collected in the years of 2017, 2018 and 2019. The increases and decreases in the Index are intended to predict cost and productivity risks, and inform the need for investment in mental health supports by business and government.

The Mental Health Index™ report has three main parts:

1. The overall Mental Health Index™ (MHI), which is a measure of change compared to the benchmark of mental health and risk.
2. A Mental Stress Change score (MStressChg), which measures the level of reported mental stress, compared to the prior month.
3. A Spotlight section that reflects the specific impact of current issues in the community.

Methodology

The data for this report was collected through an online survey of 5,000 Americans who are living in the United States and are currently employed or who were employed within the prior six months. Participants were selected to be representative of the age, gender, industry and geographic distribution in the United States. The same respondents participate each month to control for changes due to different samples. The respondents were asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering each question. The Mental Health Index™, which launched in April 2020, is published monthly. The benchmark data was collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The data for the current report was collected between June 22 to June 30, 2020.

Collected through an online survey of 5,000 Americans



Calculations

To create the Mental Health Index™, the first step leverages a response scoring system turning individual responses to each question into a point value. Higher point values are associated with better mental health and less mental health risk. Each individual's scores are added and then divided by the total number of possible points to get a score out of 100. The raw score is the mathematical mean of the individual scores.

To demonstrate change, the current month's scores are then compared to the benchmark and the prior month. The benchmark is comprised of data from 2017, 2018 and 2019. This was a period of relative social stability and steady economic growth. **The change relative to the benchmark is the Mental Health Index™. A score of zero in the Mental Health Index™ reflects no change, positive scores reflect improvement, and negative scores reflect decline.**

A Mental Stress Change score is also reported given that increasing and prolonged mental stress is a potential contributor to changes in mental health. It is reported separately and is not part of the calculation of the Mental Health Index™. The Mental Stress Change score is (percentage reporting less mental stress + percentage reporting the same level of mental stress * 0.5) * -1 + 100. The data compares the current to the prior month. **A Mental Stress Change score of 50 reflects no change in mental stress from the prior month. Scores above 50 reflect an increase in mental stress, scores below 50 reflect a decrease in mental stress.** The range is from zero to 100. A succession of scores over 50, month over month, reflects high risk.



The Mental Health Index™

The Mental Health Index™ (MHI) is a measure of deviation from the benchmark⁶ of mental health and risk.

MHI

Current month July 2020	-5	
June 2020	-6	
MHI sub-scores⁷	July	June
Optimism	-8.0	-7.9
Anxiety	-6.4	-7.7
Depression	-6.1	-6.8
Work productivity	-5.5	-6.9
Isolation	-4.8	-5.9
Psychological health	2.8	2.5
Financial risk	9.7	8.6



The overall Mental Health Index™ is -5 and continues to reside below the benchmark for the fourth consecutive month. The current score of 70 is equivalent to the twenty-eighth percentile of the benchmark.

⁶ The benchmark reflects data collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019.
⁷ The demographic breakdown of sub-scores are available upon request.



Employment status	July	June
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	-3.5	-3.6
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	-10.3	-9.5
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	-10.1	-12.2
Not currently employed	-7.4	-11.3

Age group	July	June
Age 20-29	-13.8	-14.2
Age 30-39	-11.0	-11.4
Age 40-49	-6.6	-7.1
Age 50-59	-2.5	-3.3
Age 60-69	1.9	1.1

Number of children	July	June
No children in household	-4.1	-4.7
1 child	-9.1	-9.6
2 children	-7.8	-8.1
3 children or more	-4.1	-6.9

Region	July	June
Northeast	-5.5	-6.9
Midwest	-4.2	-5.4
South	-4.9	-5.2
West	-5.8	-6.0

Gender	July	June
Male	-2.9	-3.3
Female	-7.0	-7.8

Income	July	June
Household income <\$30K/annum	-13.3	-12.8
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	-8.2	-8.7
\$60K to <\$100K	-5.0	-5.6
\$100K to \$150K	-2.9	-3.6
\$150K or more	1.5	0.8

Number of adults in household	July	June
One adult in household	-7.9	-8.5
2 adults	-3.1	-3.8
3 adults	-6.1	-7.7
4 adults	-7.5	-6.1
5 adults or more	-10.6	-11.4

Racial identification	July
Arab/Middle Eastern/West Asian	-12.6
Black	-7.3
East Asian	-6.6
Latin, South or Central American	-8.7
Pacific Islander	-10.6
South Asian	-7.6
South East Asian	-7.4
White	-4.2
Mixed (Other)	-11.1
Prefer not to answer	-6.7

Employer size	July
Self-employed/sole proprietor	-3.4
2-50 employees	-5.0
51-100 employees	-8.2
101-500 employees	-6.4
501-1,000 employees	-7.5
1,001-5,000 employees	-4.9
5,001-10,000 employees	-3.2
More than 10,000 employees	-2.4

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

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

Available upon request:

Specific cross-correlational and custom analyses



The Mental Health Index™ (industry)

The mental health of individuals across industries can differ immensely depending upon market and societal conditions. The highest mental health scores are observed in Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (-2.5), Transportation and Warehousing (-2.8), and Finance and Insurance (-3.0). Full-time students (-19.6) have the lowest mental health scores followed by Information and Cultural Industries (-13.1), and Management of Companies and Enterprises (-13). Improvements from the prior month are shown in the table below:

Industry	July 2020 MHI	June 2020 MHI	Improvement
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	-4.5	-9.5	5.0
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	-6.3	-9.3	3.1
Management of Companies and Enterprises	-13.0	-15.6	2.6
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	-3.4	-5.9	2.6
Manufacturing	-3.7	-6.2	2.5
I am a student	-19.6	-21.9	2.3
Utilities	-8.1	-10.0	1.9
Administrative and Support services	-8.3	-9.7	1.4
Information and Cultural Industries	-13.1	-14.5	1.4
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-2.5	-3.8	1.4
Health Care and Social Assistance	-4.3	-5.3	1.0
Transportation and Warehousing	-2.8	-3.8	1.0
Food Services	-10.0	-10.8	0.9
Educational Services	-4.1	-4.6	0.5
Other	-2.9	-2.9	0.0
Wholesale Trade	-12.3	-12.2	-0.1
Public Administration	-3.9	-3.7	-0.2
Other services (except Public Administration)	-4.3	-4.1	-0.2
Finance and Insurance	-3.0	-2.8	-0.3
Construction	-4.8	-4.4	-0.4
Retail Trade	-7.1	-6.3	-0.8
Accommodation	-11.0	-5.0	-6.0

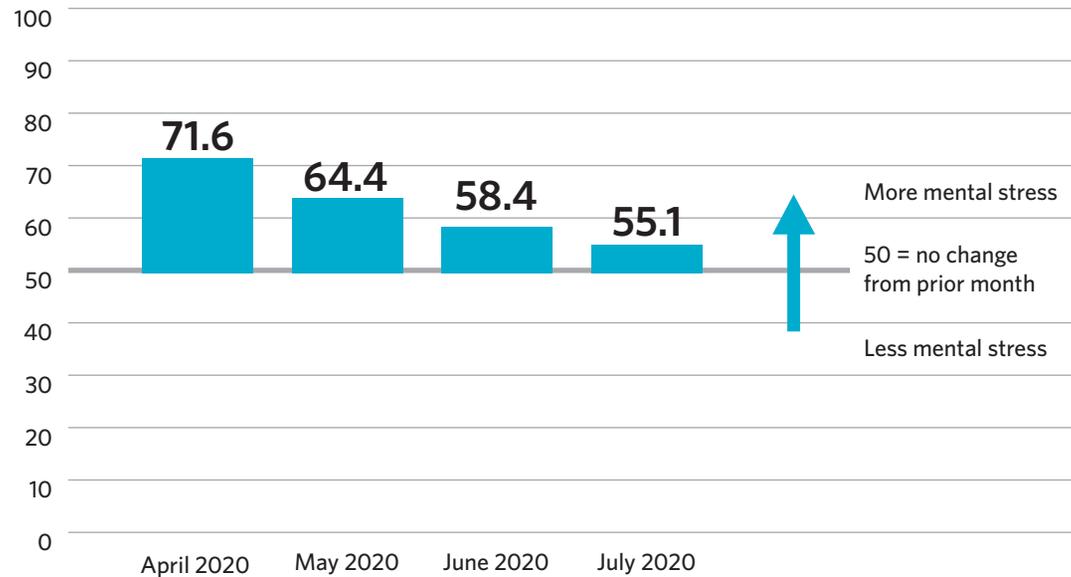


The Mental Stress Change score

The Mental Stress Change (MStressChg) score is a measure of the level of reported mental stress, compared to the prior month.

MStress Chg	
Current month July 2020	55.1
June 2020	58.4

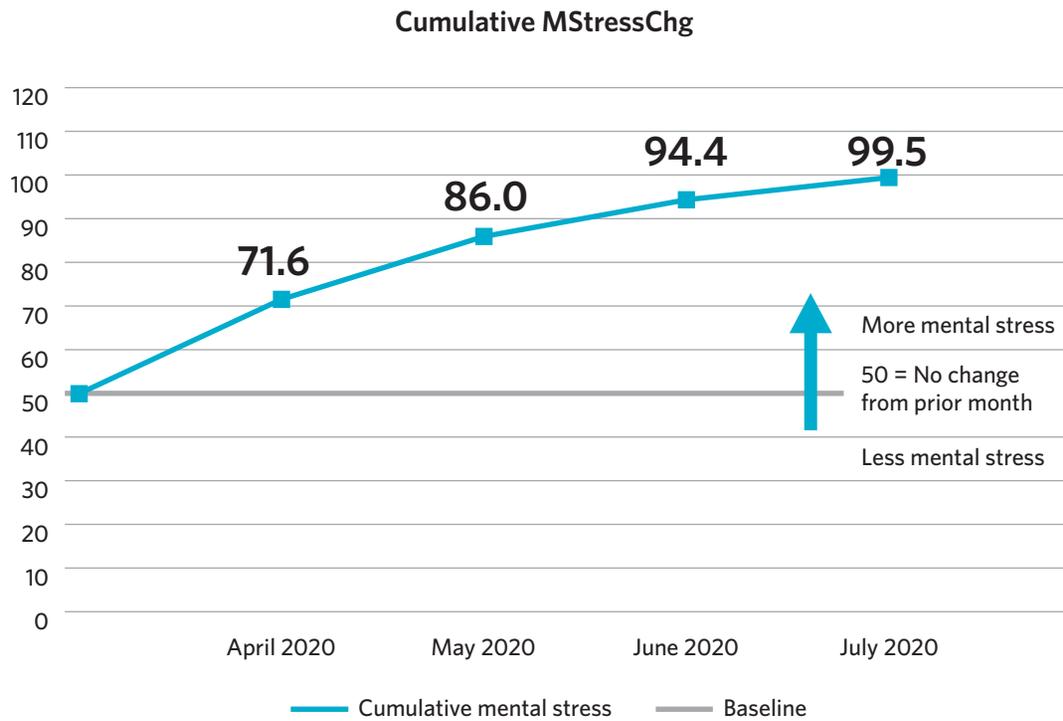
The Mental Stress Change score for July 2020 is 55.1. This reflects an increase in mental stress compared to the prior month. The steepness of the increase has, however, been declining month-over-month. The current score indicates that 20 percent of the population is experiencing more mental stress compared to the prior month, with 10 percent experiencing less. A continued increase in mental stress over the last four months indicates a significant accumulation of strain in the population.





The Mental Stress Change (cumulative)

The Mental Stress Change (MStressChg) score is a measure of the level of reported mental stress compared to the prior month. The change is rooted against a value of 50 implying no net mental stress change from the previous month, while values above 50 indicate a net increase in mental stress and values below 50 indicate a net decrease in mental stress. The cumulative mental stress score is shown in the graph below:





Employment status	July	June
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	54.2	56.7
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	57.4	61.4
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	62.4	63.4
Not currently employed	54.9	62.9

Age group	July	June
Age 20-29	58.2	60.7
Age 30-39	58.2	61.3
Age 40-49	55.9	58.4
Age 50-59	54.1	58.4
Age 60-69	51.6	55.8

Number of children	July	June
No children in household	54.4	57.7
1 child	57.4	60.6
2 children	57.1	59.2
3 children or more	56.6	63.2

Region	July	June
Northeast	55.6	60.5
Midwest	54.9	57.4
South	54.9	57.9
West	55.0	58.2

Gender	July	June
Male	54.0	56.2
Female	56.1	60.3

Income	July	June
Household income <\$30K/annum	54.2	56.8
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	56.4	59.3
\$60K to <\$100K	55.5	58.8
\$100K to \$150K	55.1	59.1
\$150K or more	53.4	56.1

Number of adults in household	July	June
One adult in household	55.4	58.4
2 adults	54.6	58.2
3 adults	56.1	59.0
4 adults	58.1	58.5
5 adults or more	51.7	64.3

Racial identification	July
Arab/Middle Eastern/ West Asian	54.3
Black	53.4
East Asian	55.9
Latin, South or Central American	60.9
Pacific Islander	59.5
South Asian	50.6
South East Asian	54.2
White	55.0
Mixed (Other)	60.1
Prefer not to answer	52.7

Employer size	July
Self-employed/sole proprietor	52.5
2-50 employees	54.0
51-100 employees	56.3
101-500 employees	54.5
501-1,000 employees	60.8
1,001-5,000 employees	55.4
5,001-10,000 employees	55.4
More than 10,000 employees	54.6

Numbers highlighted in **orange** are the most negative scores in the group.

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

Available upon request:

Specific cross-correlational and custom analyses



The Mental Stress Change (industry)

The mental health of individuals across industries can differ immensely depending upon market and societal conditions. The most favorable mental stress changes are observed in Transportation and Warehousing (52.4), Finance and Insurance (53.3), and students (53.5). The least favorable mental stress changes are found in Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction (62.5), Management of Companies and Enterprises (59.2), and Wholesale Trade (58.4). Mental Stress changes from the last two months are shown in the table below:

Industry	July 2020 MStress Chg	June 2020 MStress Chg
Transportation and Warehousing	52.4	55.8
Finance and Insurance	53.3	57.9
I am a student	53.5	60.3
Other	53.5	55.0
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	53.5	57.6
Food Services	54.1	58.3
Public Administration	54.2	54.9
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	54.6	53.5
Other services (except Public Administration)	54.6	57.1
Manufacturing	54.7	60.8
Retail Trade	54.8	57.9
Educational Services	55.5	57.9
Construction	55.9	55.5
Health Care and Social Assistance	56.4	60.7
Utilities	56.4	56.5
Administrative and Support services	56.7	61.2
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	57.2	64.4
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	57.4	57.7
Accommodation	58.1	59.0
Information and Cultural Industries	58.3	63.5
Wholesale Trade	58.4	59.3
Management of Companies and Enterprises	59.2	66.7
Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction	62.5	x

* Industries with an "x" do not meet the minimum threshold for reporting.



Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on relationships

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has been widespread. Prolonged social distancing and isolation have led people to crave human interaction and in some cases, has had an impact on relationships, both personal and professional.

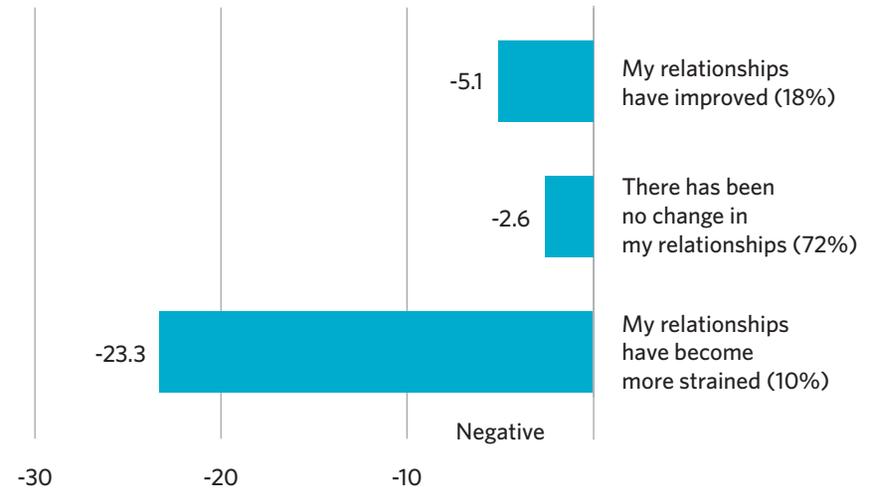
Eighteen percent feel there has been an improvement in their personal relationships and 10 percent feel that their personal relationships have become more strained. The lowest mental health score is observed among individuals who feel that their personal relationships have become more strained (-23.3), while those reporting improvements have a mental health score of -5.1 and those reporting no change have a mental health score of -2.6.

Individuals identifying as Black have the greatest likelihood of noting an improvement in personal relationships (33 percent).

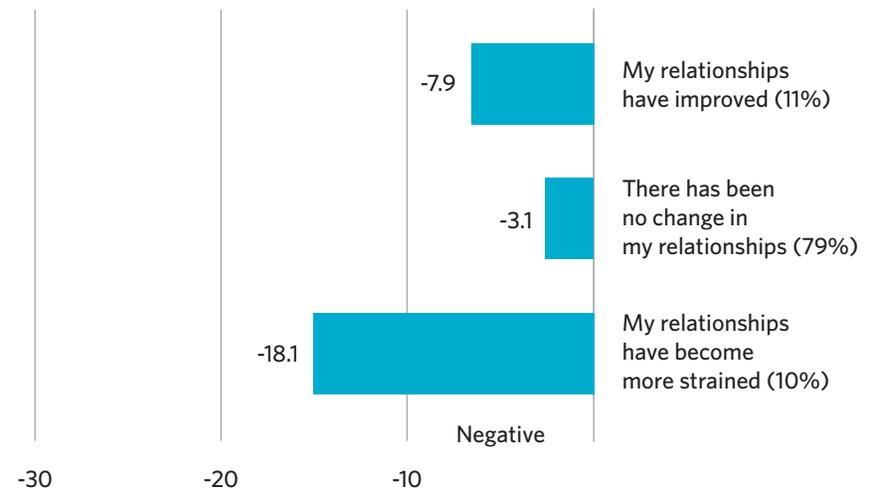
In terms of the workplace, the lowest mental health scores are among the 10 percent reporting increased strain in their workplace relationships (-18.1) while 11 percent reported an improvement in their workplace relationships. The best mental health score (-3.1) is for those who feel that there has been no change in their workplace relationships.

Individuals identifying as Arab/Middle Eastern/West Asian have the greatest likelihood of improvement in workplace relationships (35 percent).

Personal relationship changes and MHI



Workplace relationship changes and MHI



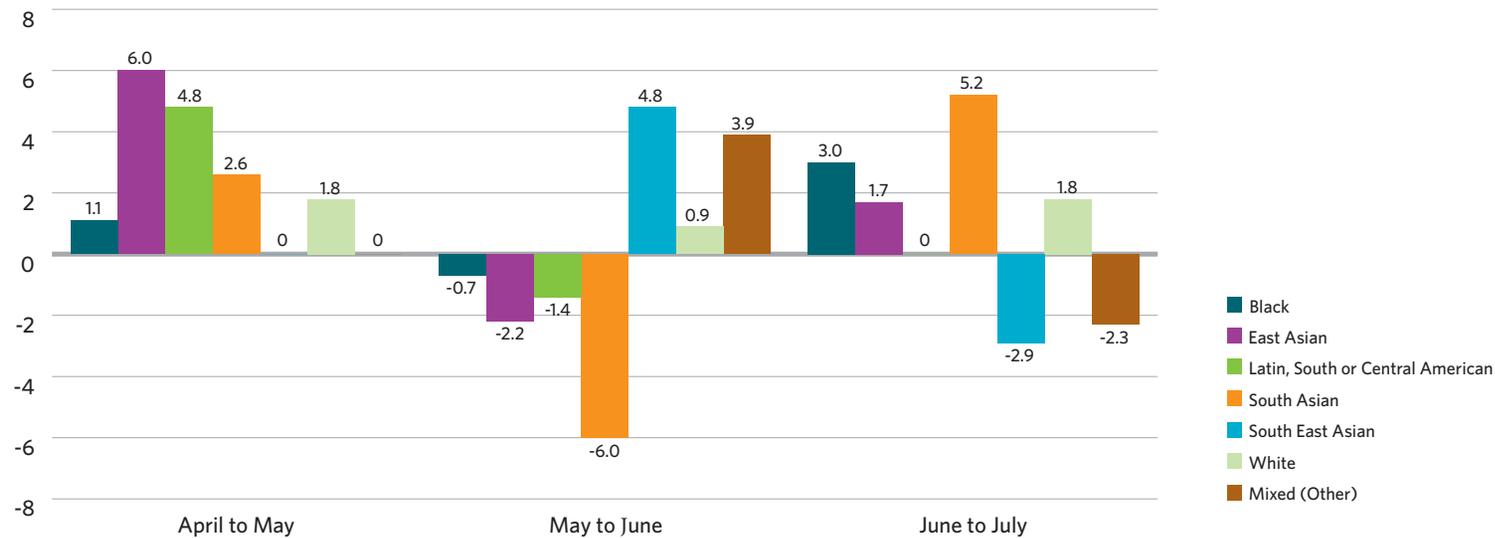


Racism and Mental Health

Mental health trends by race

Anxiety scores for individuals identifying as Black, East Asian, Latin/South/Central American, and South Asian show increases from April to May 2020, but had a distinct reduction in their scores from May to June 2020. This corresponds to the period of heightened awareness of anti-Black racism in response to the death of Black American, George Floyd. Three of these groups showed a rebound in their anxiety scores from June to July 2020, suggesting an improvement in mental health since the period of heightened awareness. Furthermore, two additional groups, South East Asian and Mixed (Other), showed a significant reduction in their anxiety scores from June to July 2020, suggesting a reaction to increased awareness of racism.

Anxiety score difference from previous month by race





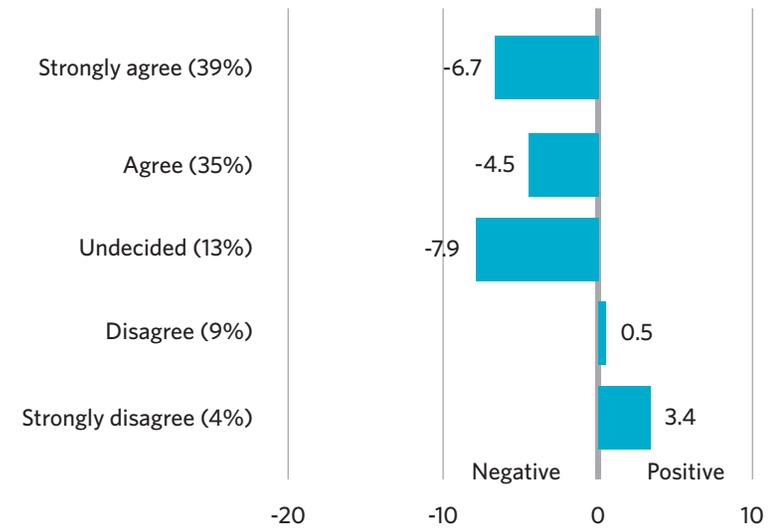
Racism in the United States and in the workplace

Seventy-four percent of respondents believe that racism is a problem in the United States. The lowest mental health score is among individuals who are undecided and the highest scores are among those who do not perceive a problem.

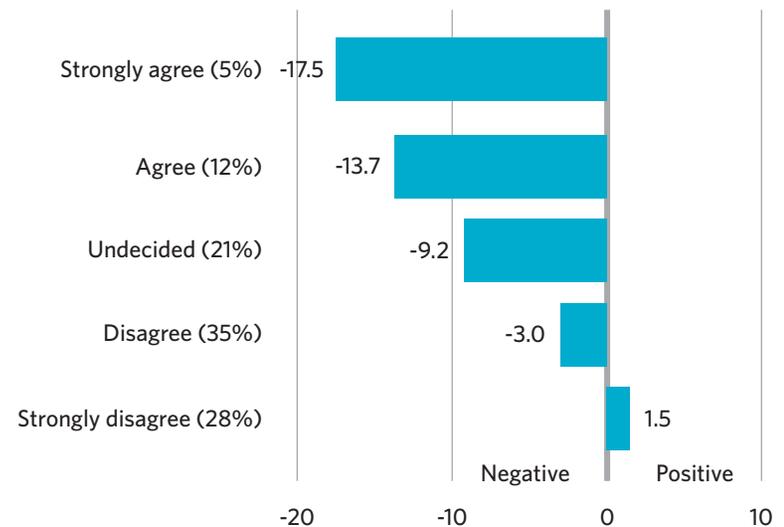
Seventeen percent of respondents strongly agree or agree that racism is a problem in their workplace. Twenty-one percent are undecided. The lowest mental health scores are among those who strongly agree that racism is a problem in the workplace. The highest mental health score is among individuals that do not perceive a problem in their workplace.

Employers with between 2-50 employees are most likely to strongly disagree or disagree (72 percent) that racism is a problem in their workplace.

Racism is a problem in my country: MHI scores



Racism is a problem in my workplace: MHI scores





Awareness of systemic racism

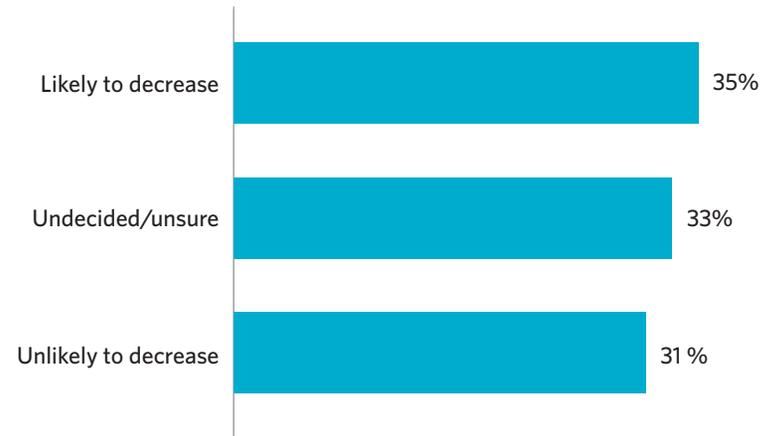
Respondents were asked whether they believe that systemic racism will decrease in the United States as a result of heightened awareness related to the high-profile death of Black American, George Floyd. Thirty-five percent of respondents feel that systemic racism is likely to decrease in the United States, while 33 percent are unsure, and 31 percent feel that systemic racism is unlikely to decrease.

In the workplace, 24 percent of individuals feel that systemic racism is likely to decrease, 37 percent are unsure, and 39 percent feel that it is unlikely that systemic racism will decrease.

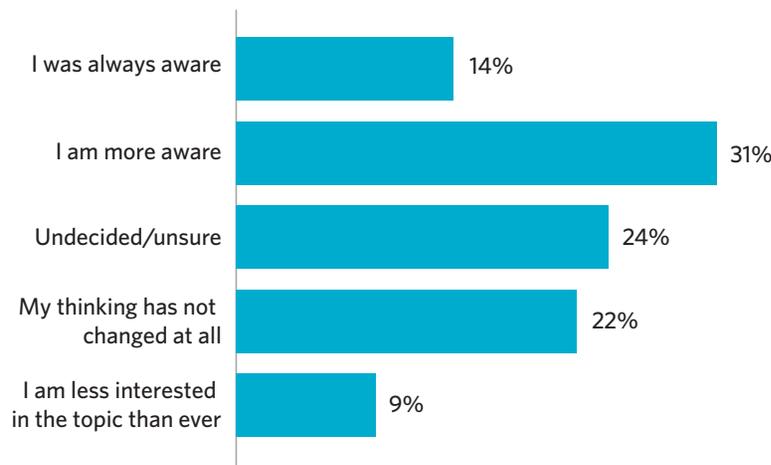
Changes in thinking about systemic racism

Thirty-one percent of respondents report an increased awareness of systemic racism over the past month while 22 percent report that their thinking has not changed and 9 percent indicate that they are less interested in the topic of systemic racism than before.

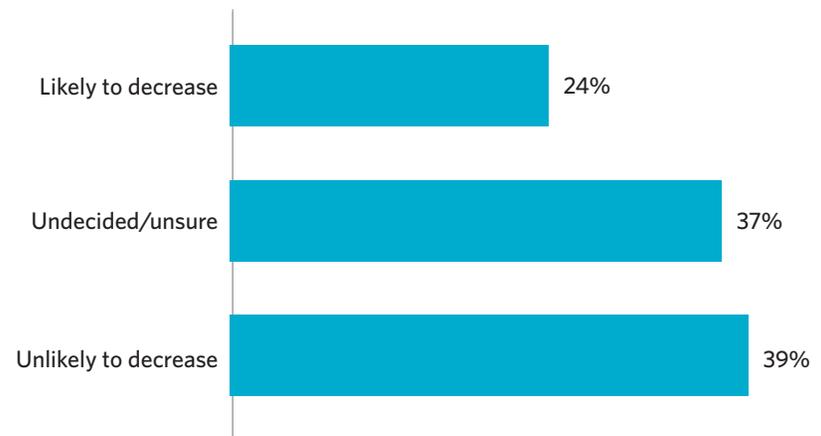
Will systemic racism decrease in your country as a result of heightened awareness related to Geoge Floyd?



How much your thinking regarding systemic racism changed over the past month?



Will systemic racism decrease in your workplace as a result of heightened awareness related to Geoge Floyd?





Implications

The current scores for The Mental Health Index™ are a clear warning regarding the mental health impact of race relations and the pandemic. The Index shows a significant decrease in the mental health in the United States. We also see a significant increase in mental stress compared to the prior month and a definitive link to issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the physical health risk of COVID-19 is the focus of much attention, the mental health impact requires similar attention and action. Well after the risk of infection reduces, the mental health impact may remain. This has implications for the quality of life of individuals, the stability of families, the risk of health and disability costs for organizations as well as the level of participation in the economy, which is a concern for government, given its impact on the speed of economic recovery.

To address this situation, action is required on at least three levels:

1. **Individuals** need to attend to the impact of the pandemic on their mental health. While some strain would be expected as a result of such a massive change, feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope, or feeling stuck and unable to adapt, are clear warning signs requiring support from a trusted confidant or a counseling professional.
2. **Businesses** need to attend to the risk among employees. The Mental Health Index™ measures the mental health risk and status of the working population. The current scores suggest a risk to the longer-term wellbeing of employees, which may impact business productivity, health costs and disability absence. Business would do well to increase the focus on mental health through communication that increases the awareness of mental health warning signs, campaigns to reduce the stigma of seeking mental health support, and the promotion of health plans and public resources.
3. **Governments** need to attend to the mental health of the population. A population under strain is less likely to participate fully in the economy. The current focus on health and safety needs to expand to include a significant focus on mental health. This should include clear messages regarding coping strategies and the promotion of public resources.

The Mental Health Index™ is published monthly, and measures trends over time.

Morneau Shepell is a leading provider of technology-enabled HR services that deliver an integrated approach to employee wellbeing through our cloud-based platform. Our focus is providing world-class solutions to our clients to support the mental, physical, social and financial wellbeing of their people. By improving lives, we improve business. Our approach spans services in employee and family assistance, health and wellness, recognition, pension and benefits administration, retirement consulting, actuarial and investment services. Morneau Shepell employs approximately 6,000 employees who work with some 24,000 client organizations that use our services in 162 countries. Morneau Shepell inc. is a publicly traded company on the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX: MSI). For more information, visit morneaushepell.com.

