

# The Mental Health Index™ report

Canada, November 2020

MORNEAU  
SHEPELL 



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## November highlights

**For eight consecutive months, the mental health of Canadians is significantly lower than prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.** After the initial significant decline measured in April 2020, there were modest increases from May to July 2020. A reversal of this trend occurred in August, followed by a modest improvement in September, a decline in October, and a slight improvement in November. The level of mental health in November remains concerning as it indicates that **the working population is currently as distressed as the most distressed one per cent of working Canadians, prior to 2020.**

The proportion of individuals reporting more stress than the prior month (22 per cent) is at its lowest level, equal to September. However, the proportion of individuals reporting less mental stress is only 6 per cent, which is the lowest proportion since May 2020, and equal to September. The majority (72 per cent) indicate the same level of stress when compared to the prior month, however, given the escalation in stress each month since the pandemic, this reflects an elevated level of cumulative stress for this group as well. With recent increases in cases in many regions of the country, and the resulting restrictions, this strain will likely continue.

**Since April, general psychological health has declined.** Despite two months of modest improvement in July and September, the psychological health of Canadians is deteriorating. In November, the psychological health risk score of Canadians is 2.8 points lower than in April 2020 and is **at its lowest level since the inception of the Index.**

Provincial mental health scores since April have shown general improvement until July; however, several regions showed declines from July to August. From September to November, Alberta and Manitoba saw steady declines, while British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador saw improvements. Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes all saw declines from September to October, but November brings modest improvements. Saskatchewan shows an abrupt decline in November which corresponds to an increase in cases of COVID-19 in the province.

A positive score on the Mental Health Index™ indicates better mental health in the overall working population, compared to the benchmark period of 2017 to 2019. A higher positive score reflects greater improvement. A negative Mental Health Index™ score indicates a decline in mental health compared to the benchmark period. The more negative the score, the greater the decline. A score of zero indicates mental health that is the same as it was in the benchmark period.

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**For the sixth consecutive month, full-time students have the lowest mental health score** (-24.3) when compared to individuals across all industry sectors. Further, the most reported concerns among parents of children between 18 and 30 years old are the financial impact of the pandemic (49 per cent), the mental health of their adult children (46 per cent), and job opportunities/career impact for their adult children (41 per cent).

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused increased strain on workplaces and employees. It has compelled many employers and employees to reconsider how they conduct their business, not only with those for whom they provide goods or service, but also with their employees.

**Twelve per cent of individuals report a more positive view of their employers** whereas eighteen per cent of respondents view their employer more negatively when compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Nearly one-quarter (twenty-four per cent) of respondents indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic led them to consider a job or career change.** Individuals under the age of 40 are more than twice as likely to consider a job or career change when compared to those over the age of 50.

Workplace health and safety has risen to primary importance since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. **Seventy-two per cent of respondents believe that their employers are handling health and safety well.** Respondents from lower income households are less likely to report that employers are handling the health and safety risks of the pandemic well than those in higher income households.

One of the many consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic is the closing or reduction of in-person workplaces. With a dispersed and remote workforce, employers rely on technology to ensure business continuity and connectedness. **Sixty-three per cent of respondents report that their employers are handling the use of technology well,** whereas eight per cent report that their employers are handling the use of technology poorly.

Some employers were forced to reduce salaries, hours, or lay-off employees because of impacts to their business from the COVID-19 pandemic. **Thirty-eight per cent of respondents report that their employers are handling reductions to employee pay and hours well,** whereas eleven per cent report that their employers are handling this issue poorly. Respondents from households with annual incomes less than \$30,000 are least likely to report that their employers are handling reductions in pay or hours well.



Business models have been modified to respond to changes in demand and to adhere to health and safety protocols. **Sixty per cent of respondents report that their employer is handling changes to the way in which business is conducted well**, whereas ten per cent report that their employer is handling changes to the way business is being conducted poorly.

As the pandemic continues, the need for flexibility is critical. Employees need time for self-care, to attend to children or to other family members, and to address their daily tasks in a fluid, and sometimes complex environment. **Fifty-six per cent of respondents report that their employers are handling flexible work hours well**, while eleven per cent indicate that their employer is handling this issue poorly. Respondents from households with an annual income less than \$30,000 are least likely to report that employers are handling flexible work hours well, when compared to individuals from households with an annual income of \$150,000 or more.

In addition to flexible work hours, work from home has been driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. **Fifty per cent of respondents report that their employers are handling work from home policies well**, whereas eight per cent indicate that their employers are handling work from home poorly. Organizations with more than 100 employees are handling work from home better than organizations with less than 100 employees.

As employees come under increased strain due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many employers are reminding their people of the support and resources available to them to maintain or improve their wellbeing. **Fifty-three per cent of respondents report that their employers are handling the promotion of resources well**, whereas fifteen per cent indicate that their employers are handling this poorly.

Containing rising COVID-19 cases has forced restrictions across the country. Gyms and other recreational facilities have been required to close or to significantly reduce capacity. Previous findings (September 2020) show that almost one-third (29 per cent) of individuals indicate that the pandemic has made them less likely to participate in health care than in 2019. **Fifteen per cent of individuals report that their physical health has worsened since the onset of the pandemic and this group has a mental health score that is significantly lower than average (-27.6).**



Since the pandemic, parents of children under 18 years are finding themselves balancing work and their children’s personal and educational needs while daycares and schools have been under restrictions. The top concerns or fears that parents have regarding their children during the pandemic are the quality of education (49 per cent), followed by the mental health of their children (42 per cent) and the physical health of their children (37 per cent). **Parents who report concerns about children with special needs have the lowest mental health score** (-20.3), followed by parents with concerns about childcare/work balance (-20.1), and their child(ren)’s mental health (-18.5).

While children’s education quality is the most reported concern, **children’s mental health is the greatest concern (24 per cent) among parents of children under 18 years**, and the mental health score of this group is -20.0. The lowest mental health score (-21.9) is observed among the eleven per cent of respondents who report that their greatest concern is childcare/work balance.

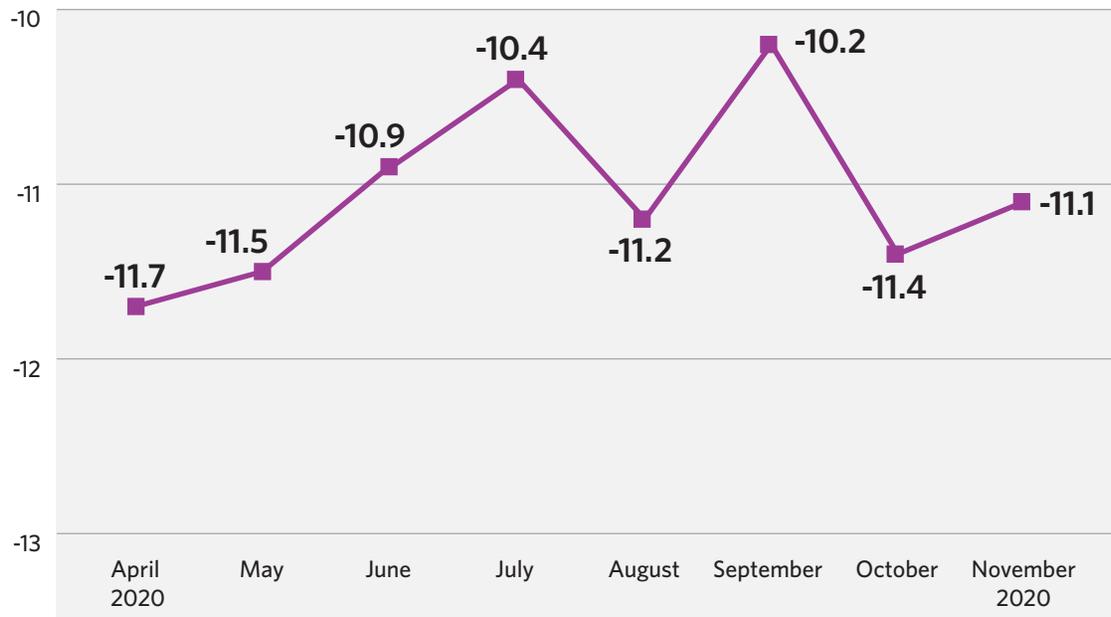
Children under 18 years present a decidedly separate set of concerns for parents than adult children. **Among parents of adult children, the lowest mental health score is observed among parents who are most concerned about their adult children’s mental health** (-14.6), followed by concern about isolation (-14.5), and their children’s physical health (-12.4). As the top drivers of mental health continue to be financial risk and isolation, parents of adult children are concerned about similar issues for those children.



# The Mental Health Index™

The Mental Health Index™ (MHI) is a measure of deviation from the benchmark<sup>1</sup> of mental health and risk. **The overall Mental Health Index™ for November 2020 is -11.1 points.** An 11-point decrease from the pre COVID-19 benchmark reflects a population whose mental health is similar to the most distressed one per cent of the benchmark population.

Current month November 2020:	<b>-11</b>	October 2020:	-11
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November marks the eighth consecutive month where the Mental Health Index™ reflects strained mental health in the Canadian population

<sup>1</sup> The benchmark reflects data collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019.



## Mental Health Index™ sub-scores

The lowest Mental Health Index™ sub-score is for the risk measure of optimism (-12.9), followed by anxiety (-12.5), depression (-12.5), isolation (-11.1), and work productivity (-11.1). The risk measure with the best mental health score is financial risk (2.9), followed by general psychological health (-3.2).

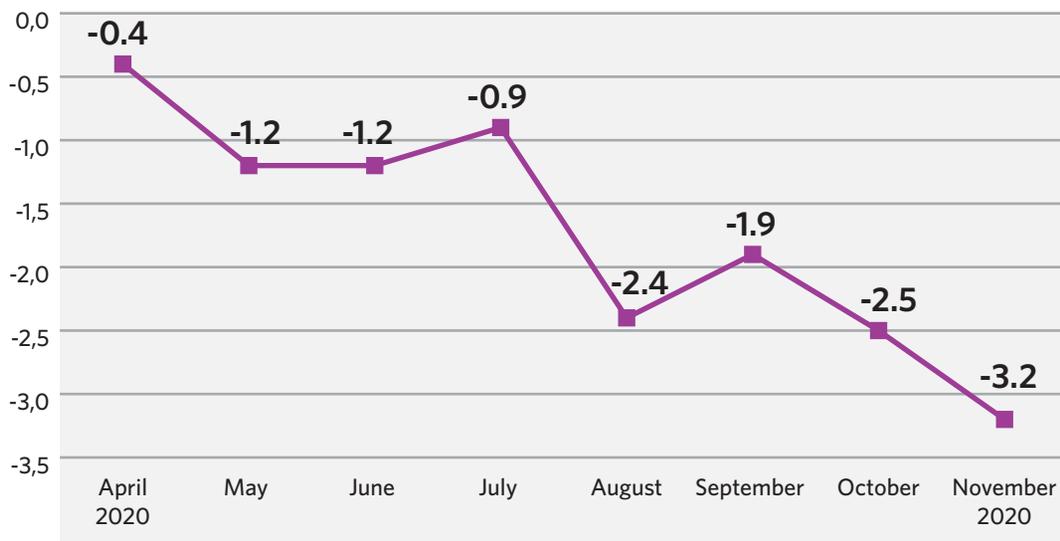
- All mental health sub-scores, except for general psychological health, improved in November when compared to October.
- General psychological health declined 0.7 points from the prior month.
- The most improved risk score is work productivity, up 1.5 points from October.
- The financial score improves in November with a score of 2.9 points; it continues to be the strongest of all sub-scores, and is above the pre-2020 benchmark.

MHI sub-scores <sup>2</sup>	November 2020	October 2020
Optimism	-12.9	-13.0
Anxiety	-12.5	-13.4
Depression	-12.5	-12.9
Work productivity	-11.1	-12.6
Isolation	-11.1	-11.5
Psychological health	-3.2	-2.5
Financial risk	2.9	2.5

<sup>2</sup> The demographic breakdown of sub-scores are available upon request.



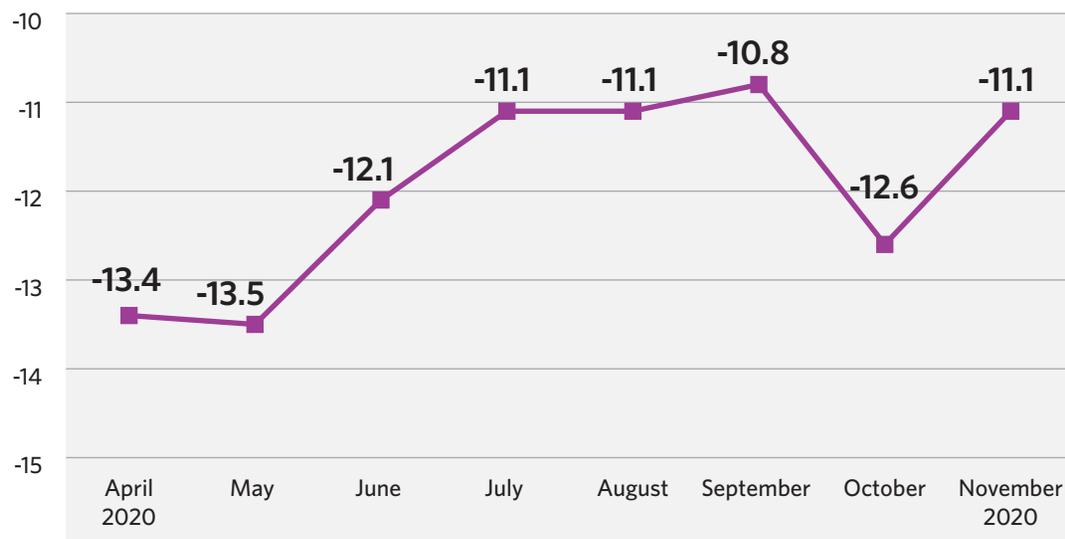
### General psychological health



### General psychological health

Since April, general psychological health has declined. Despite two months of modest improvement in July and September within the eight-month period since the launch of the Mental Health Index, the psychological health of Canadians is deteriorating. In November, the psychological health risk score of Canadians is 2.8 points lower than at the start of the Index, in April 2020.

### Work Productivity

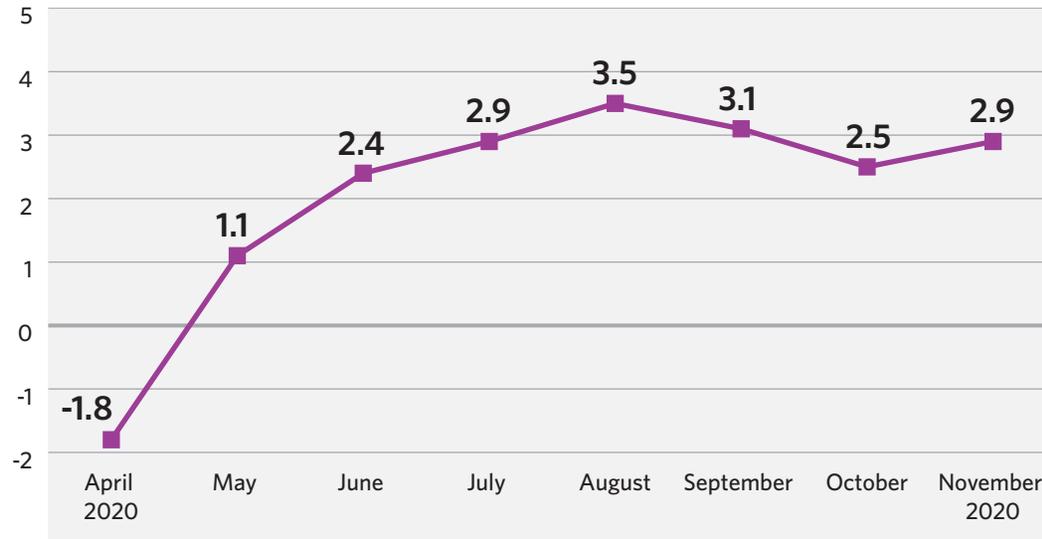


### Work productivity

After a decline in the work productivity score in October, an improvement of 1.5 points is observed in November, approaching the high of -10.8 in September. Despite this improvement, the work productivity sub-score continues to reside well below the pre-pandemic benchmark.



### Financial Risk



### Financial risk

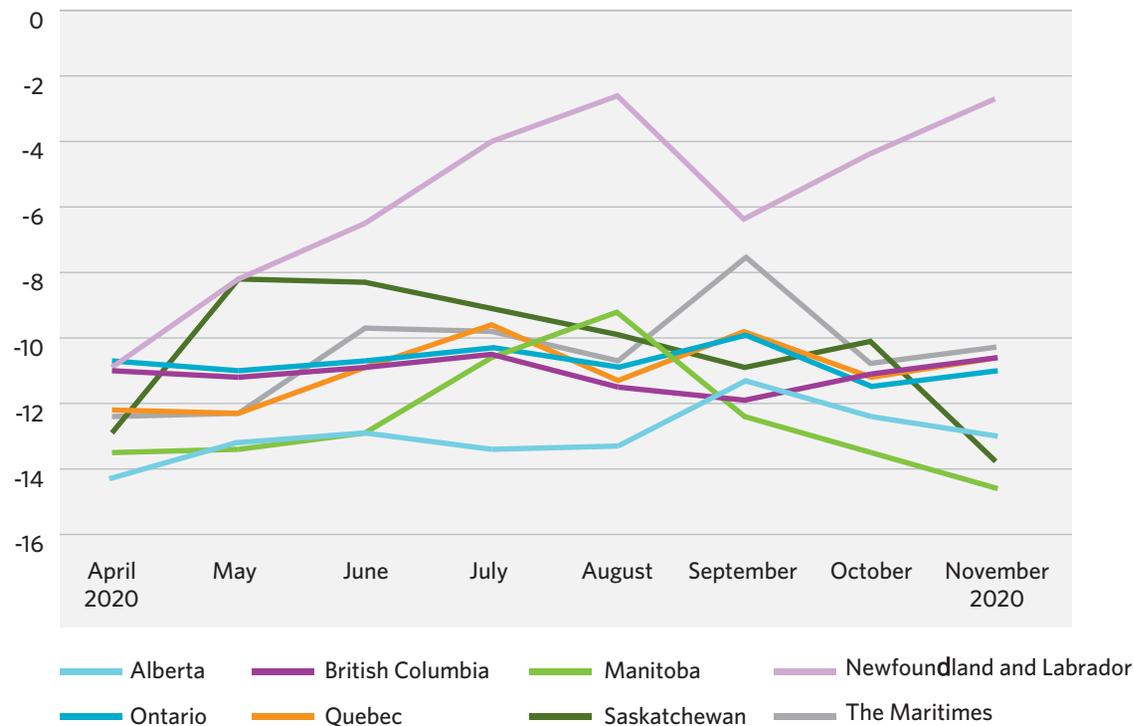
Financial risk has shown improvement since April 2020, apart from a decline from August to October. In November, the financial risk score improves 0.4 points from October to 2.9, approaching the highest score (3.5) in August. The financial risk score of Canadians, when compared to other sub-scale scores, remains the strongest and has been above the pre-2020 benchmark since May 2020.



# The Mental Health Index™ (regional)

Provincial mental health scores since April have shown general improvement until July; however, several regions showed declines from July to August. From September to November, Alberta and Manitoba saw steady declines, while British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador saw improvements. Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes all saw declines from September to October, but November brings modest improvements. Saskatchewan shows an abrupt decline in November which corresponds to an increase in cases of COVID-19 in the province.

Canada provincial Mental Health Index™ scores





## Demographics

- For eight consecutive months, females (-12.9) have a significantly lower mental health score than males (-9.4); we also see that mental health scores improve with age.
- Respondents identifying as Black have the lowest mental health score (-19.3), followed by those identifying as South Asian (-17.4), and those identifying as Arab/Middle Eastern/West Asian (-16.6).
- Individuals identifying as White have the highest mental health score (-9.9), followed by respondents identifying as East Asian (-11.7).
- The variance in the mental health score between those with and without children has been observed since April, and results in November continue this trend with a lower score for those with at least one child (-14.9) when compared to those without children (-9.9).

## Employment

- Overall, five per cent of respondents are unemployed. While most individuals remain employed, 18 per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary since April 2020.
- Individuals reporting reduced salary when compared to the prior month (-20.2), have the lowest mental health score, followed by those who report fewer hours when compared to the prior month (-18.0) and those not currently employed (-17.2).
- Self-employed/sole proprietors have the highest mental health score (-6.3), followed by individuals working for companies with 2-50 employees (-8.9).
- Respondents who report working for companies with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (-14.5), followed by individuals working for companies with 501-1,000 employees (-13.0).

## Emergency savings

- Individuals without emergency savings continue to experience a lower score in mental health (-23.6) than the overall group. Those reporting an emergency fund have an average mental health score of -6.3.



Employment status	November	October
<b>Employed</b> (no change in hours/salary)	<b>-9.1</b>	<b>-9.3</b>
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	-18.0	-19.5
<b>Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)</b>	<b>-20.2</b>	<b>-19.5</b>
Not currently employed	-17.2	-15.8
Age group	November	October
<b>Age 20-29</b>	<b>-21.9</b>	<b>-22.2</b>
Age 30-39	-15.9	-16.1
Age 40-49	-11.0	-11.6
Age 50-59	-8.2	-8.0
<b>Age 60-69</b>	<b>-4.6</b>	<b>-5.1</b>
Number of children	November	October
<b>No children in household</b>	<b>-9.9</b>	<b>-10.1</b>
<b>1 child</b>	<b>-14.9</b>	<b>-14.4</b>
2 children	-12.9	-13.4
3 children or more	-12.8	-13.0

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

Province	November	October
Alberta	-13.0	-12.4
British Columbia	-10.6	-11.1
<b>Manitoba</b>	<b>-14.6</b>	<b>-13.5</b>
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	<b>-2.7</b>	<b>-4.4</b>
The Maritimes	-10.3	-10.8
Quebec	-10.6	-11.2
Ontario	-11.0	-11.5
Saskatchewan	-13.8	-10.1
Gender	November	October
<b>Male</b>	<b>-9.4</b>	<b>-9.3</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>-12.9</b>	<b>-13.5</b>
Income	November	October
<b>Household income &lt;\$30K/annum</b>	<b>-20.5</b>	<b>-19.7</b>
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	-14.7	-14.9
\$60K to <\$100K	-12.6	-13.0
\$100K to <\$150K	-7.9	-8.4
<b>\$150K or more</b>	<b>-3.9</b>	<b>-3.9</b>

Racial identification	November	October
Arab/Middle Eastern/ West Asian	-16.6	<b>-20.5</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>-19.3</b>	-16.6
East Asian	-11.7	-11.8
Indigenous/Aboriginal	-16.2	-12.9
Latin, South or Central American	-16.3	-16.7
South Asian	-17.4	-17.0
South East Asian	-13.8	-14.3
<b>White</b>	<b>-9.9</b>	-10.3
Mixed (Other)	-16.4	-16.3
Prefer not to answer	-13.4	<b>-9.2</b>
Employer size	November	October
<b>Self-employed/sole proprietor</b>	<b>-6.3</b>	<b>-6.5</b>
2-50 employees	-8.9	-11.2
<b>51-100 employees</b>	<b>-14.5</b>	<b>-13.6</b>
101-500 employees	-12.8	-12.7
501-1,000 employees	-13.0	-11.6
1,001-5,000 employees	-9.9	-11.0
5,001-10,000 employees	-12.3	-10.0
More than 10,000 employees	-10.6	-11.0



## The Mental Health Index™ (industry)

For the sixth consecutive month, full-time students have the lowest mental health score (-24.3). This continues to be significantly lower than the next lowest score, among individuals in Information and Cultural Industries (-20.4), and Management of Companies and Enterprises (-17.4). The highest mental health scores this month are observed among individuals employed in Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (-7.0), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (-7.4), and Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction (-7.7). Individuals employed in Accommodation and Food Services, Utilities, and Other have seen the greatest improvement in mental health since last month.

**Improvements from the prior month are shown in the table below:**

Industry	November 2020	October 2020	Improvement
Accommodation and Food Services	-12.3	-18.3	6.0
Utilities	-10.6	-13.4	2.9
Other	-8.2	-10.7	2.5
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-7.9	-10.1	2.2
Full-time student	-24.3	-26.3	2.0
Finance and Insurance	-12.1	-12.9	0.9
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	-7.4	-8.0	0.6
Health Care and Social Assistance	-10.7	-11.2	0.6
Manufacturing	-9.7	-10.2	0.5
Other services (except Public Administration)	-11.2	-11.7	0.5
Transportation and Warehousing	-10.8	-11.0	0.2
Retail Trade	-11.8	-11.8	0.0
Wholesale Trade	-10.7	-10.5	-0.1
Educational Services	-13.1	-12.9	-0.3
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	-7.0	-6.6	-0.4
Public Administration	-10.0	-9.1	-0.9
Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction	-7.7	-6.6	-1.1
Construction	-11.9	-9.4	-2.5
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	-15.6	-12.9	-2.7
Automotive Industry	-9.1	-5.9	-3.2
Management of Companies and Enterprises	-17.4	-12.0	-5.4
Information and Cultural Industries	-20.4	-14.4	-6.0

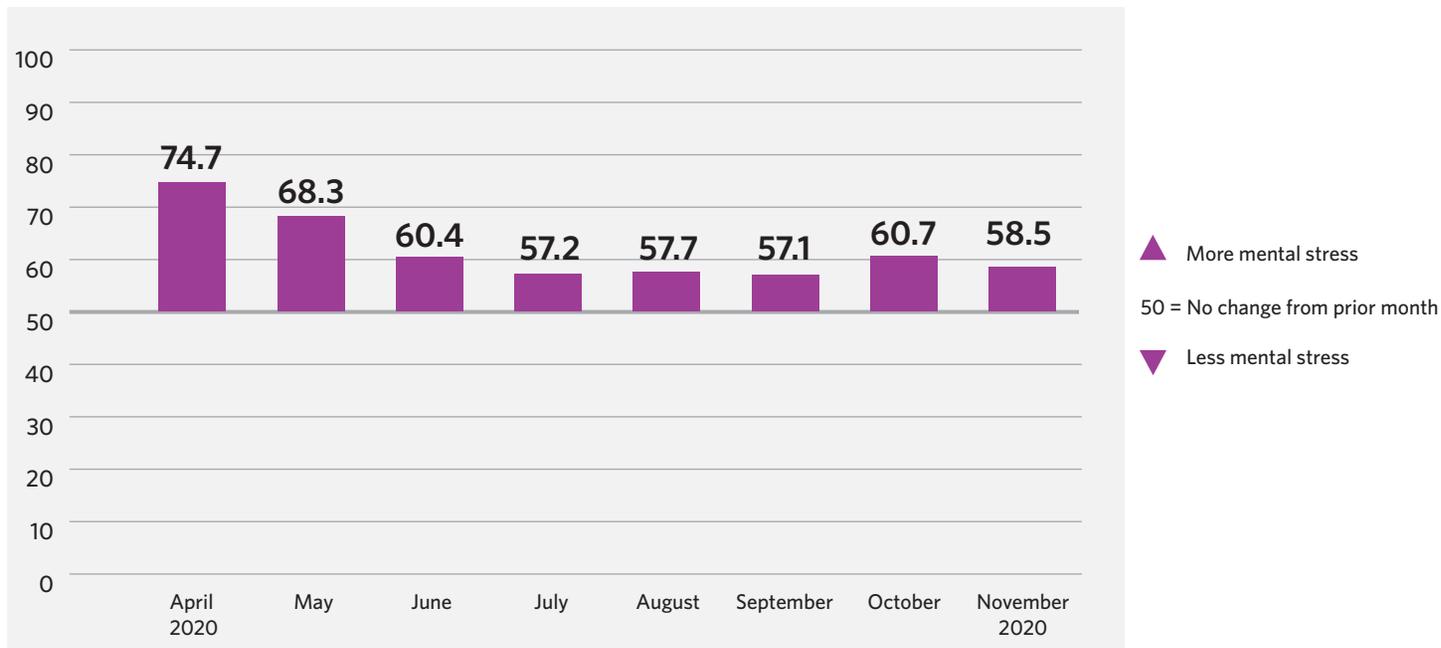


# The Mental Stress Change score

The Mental Stress Change Score (MStressChg) is a measure of the level of reported mental stress, compared to the prior month. **The Mental Stress Change score for November 2020 is 58.5.** This reflects a net increase in mental stress compared to the prior month. The steepness of the increase had been declining, month-over-month through September, then increased in October, and has declined moderately in November.

The current score indicates that 22 per cent of the population is experiencing more mental stress compared to the prior month, with 6 per cent experiencing less. A continued increase in mental stress over the last eight months indicates a significant accumulation of strain in the population.

Current month November 2020:	<b>58.5</b>	October 2020:	60.7
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# 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 graph below tracks the increases and decreases to account for the cumulative effect on mental stress.

The continual increase in mental stress demonstrates that Canadians are reporting more mental stress month-over-month. To relieve this level of accumulated stress, a sizable portion of the population must start regularly reporting lower stress.

Cumulative MStressChg





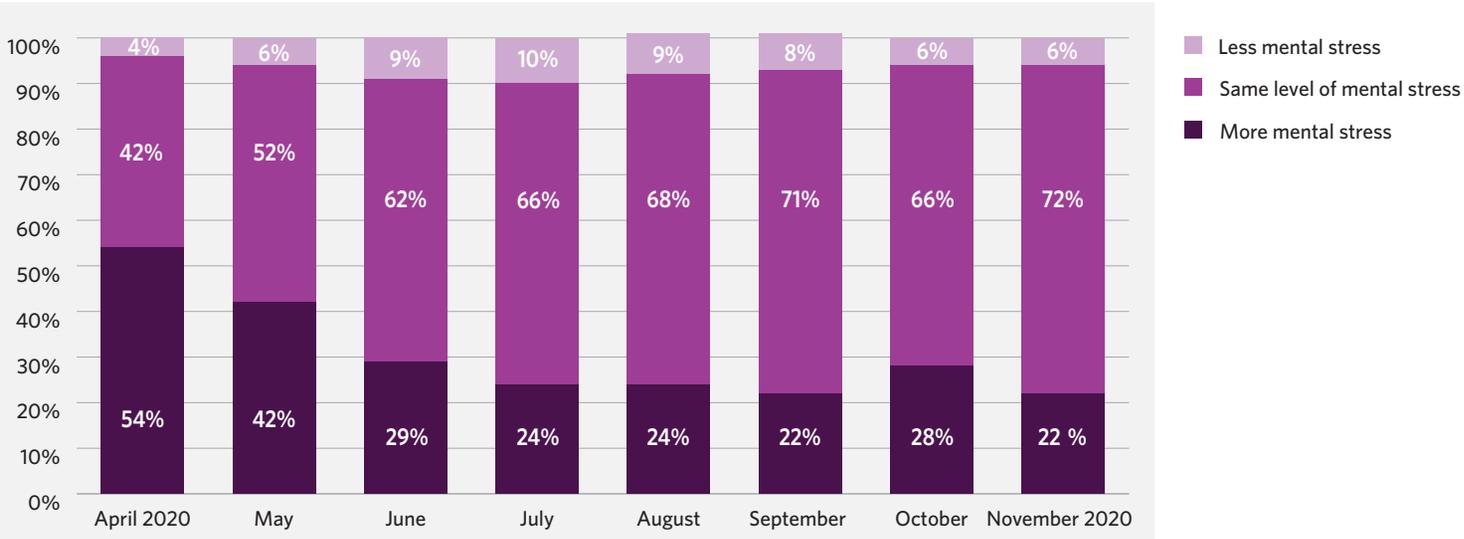
# Mental Stress Change (percentages)

Mental Stress Change tracks an individual’s stress changes each month. The percentages of those experiencing more stress, the same level of stress, and less stress for each month of the survey are shown in the graph below.

Over the last eight months, the percentage of those experiencing more mental stress than the previous month has steadily decreased; however, the data shows that those experiencing less mental stress are insufficient to lower the overall Mental Stress Change score to below 50 (the level at which stress is lower than the previous month). As the proportion of individuals reporting the same level of stress or more stress than the previous month continues to significantly outweigh the proportion reporting less mental stress, the population will continue to feel the effects of significantly increased stress and will not be able to reach a more sustainable and health level of stress.

In April, 54 per cent of individuals reported an increase in mental stress. While those reporting increased month-over-month mental stress has decreased to 22 per cent in November 2020, 72 per cent of respondents report the same level of mental stress and only 6 per cent report a decrease in mental stress.

**Mental Stress Change by Month**





## Demographics

- As was reported in prior months, and as evidenced again in November, younger respondents are experiencing a greater increase in mental stress when compared to older respondents.
- Since April 2020, females have larger increases in mental stress when compared with males.
- Respondents identifying as White have the most favourable mental stress change score (57.8), followed by those identifying as South East Asian (57.8), and those identifying as Black (58.5).
- Individuals identifying as Arab/Middle Eastern/West Asian have the least favourable mental stress change score (65.6), followed by respondents identifying as Mixed (Other) (64.1), and those identifying as South Asian (63.0).

## Geography

- Considering geography, the greatest increase in stress month over month is for respondents living in Alberta (61.2), followed by Saskatchewan (60.1), Manitoba (59.7), and Ontario (59.3). Respondents living in provinces where the increase in mental stress is less, still have significant increases. They include British Columbia (58.7), followed by Quebec (57.6), The Maritimes (51.6), and Newfoundland and Labrador (49.1).

## Employment

- The greatest increase in mental stress is seen in employed people with reduced salary (69.7), followed by employed people with reduced hours (62.0), when compared to unemployed people (60.9) and employed people with no change to salary or hours (57.1).



Employment status	November	October
<b>Employed</b> (no change in hours/salary)	<b>57.1</b>	<b>59.2</b>
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	62.0	67.1
<b>Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)</b>	<b>69.7</b>	<b>68.9</b>
Not currently employed	60.9	61.1
Age group	November	October
Age 20-29	62.5	<b>65.9</b>
<b>Age 30-39</b>	<b>62.6</b>	62.6
Age 40-49	57.8	61.6
Age 50-59	57.0	59.8
<b>Age 60-69</b>	<b>55.1</b>	<b>56.2</b>
Number of children	November	October
<b>No children in household</b>	<b>57.2</b>	<b>58.9</b>
1 child	61.5	<b>65.0</b>
2 children	60.6	64.0
<b>3 children or more</b>	<b>64.1</b>	62.5

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

Province	November	October
<b>Alberta</b>	<b>61.2</b>	<b>63.2</b>
British Columbia	58.7	59.9
Manitoba	59.7	62.0
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>53.9</b>
The Maritimes	51.6	57.7
Quebec	57.6	61.5
Ontario	59.3	61.1
Saskatchewan	60.1	55.6
Gender	November	October
<b>Male</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>59.5</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>58.9</b>	<b>62.0</b>
Income	November	October
Household income <\$30K/annum	58.5	<b>62.4</b>
<b>\$30K to &lt;\$60K/annum</b>	<b>58.2</b>	61.1
\$60K to <\$100K	58.8	61.0
<b>\$100K to &lt;\$150K</b>	<b>59.0</b>	61.5
\$150K or more	58.4	<b>58.0</b>

Racial identification	November	October
<b>Arab/Middle Eastern/West Asian</b>	<b>65.6</b>	<b>66.7</b>
Black	58.5	<b>53.8</b>
East Asian	59.0	62.1
Indigenous/Aboriginal	58.6	66.1
Latin, South or Central American	60.6	60.3
South Asian	63.0	66.1
<b>South East Asian</b>	<b>57.8</b>	61.2
<b>White</b>	<b>57.8</b>	60.2
Mixed (Other)	64.1	63.2
Prefer not to answer	60.7	60.9
Employer size	November	October
<b>Self-employed/sole proprietor</b>	<b>55.9</b>	<b>55.7</b>
2-50 employees	56.5	61.4
51-100 employees	60.6	59.8
101-500 employees	57.9	60.5
<b>501-1,000 employees</b>	<b>61.6</b>	<b>64.4</b>
1,001-5,000 employees	58.4	60.2
5,001-10,000 employees	60.6	60.0
More than 10,000 employees	57.6	61.3



## The Mental Stress Change (industry)

Mental Stress Change scores for the Other services (except Public Administration), Utilities, and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting industries are less steep when compared to the prior month.

Individuals working in Management of Companies and Enterprises have the most significant increase in Mental Stress Change (68.3), followed by individuals employed Information and Cultural Industries (63.9), and full-time students (63.4).

**Mental Stress changes from the last two months are shown in the table below:**

Industry	November 2020	October 2020
Other services (except Public Administration)	53.0	61.2
Utilities	53.8	60.0
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	54.2	56.9
Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction	54.9	56.0
Other	55.2	59.8
Retail Trade	55.7	60.3
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	57.3	58.9
Transportation and Warehousing	57.8	58.9
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	57.9	60.9
Wholesale Trade	58.1	60.9
Manufacturing	58.3	58.5
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	58.7	58.3
Finance and Insurance	58.8	61.0
Automotive Industry	59.1	51.9
Public Administration	59.3	59.1
Educational Services	60.0	65.1
Construction	60.0	59.8
Health Care and Social Assistance	60.7	62.4
Accommodation and Food Services	63.2	66.2
Full-time student	63.4	65.0
Information and Cultural Industries	63.9	61.9
Management of Companies and Enterprises	68.3	70.0



# Spotlight

## Physical health during the pandemic

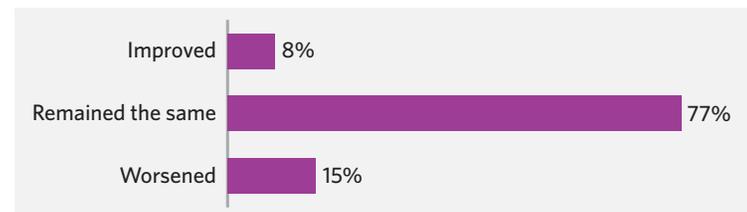
Containing rising COVID-19 cases has forced restrictions across the country. Gyms and other recreational facilities have been required to close or to significantly reduce capacity. Previous findings (September 2020) show that almost one-third (29 per cent) of individuals indicated that the pandemic has made them less likely to participate in health care than in 2019. Individuals were asked to consider the impact of their physical health since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Over three-quarter of respondents indicate that their physical health has remained the same since the onset of the pandemic and these individuals have the most favourable mental health score (-7.7).
- The lowest mental health score (-27.6) is observed among the fifteen per cent of individuals who report that their physical health has worsened since the onset of the pandemic.

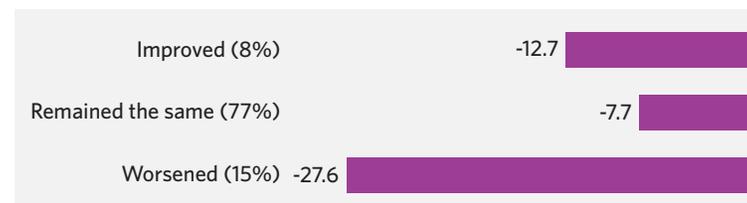
## COVID-19 diagnoses

- Ninety-six per cent of respondents have not been diagnosed with COVID-19 and this group has the highest mental health score (-10.6).
- The lowest mental health score (-23.3) is observed among the 4 per cent of respondents who report having being diagnosed with COVID-19.

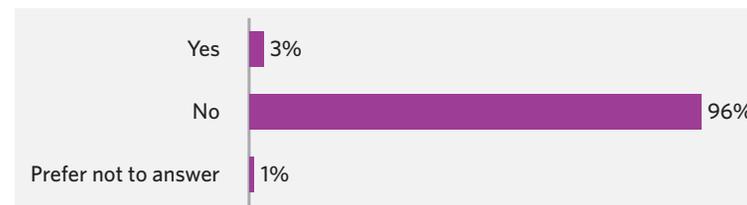
### How has your physical health changed since the onset of the pandemic



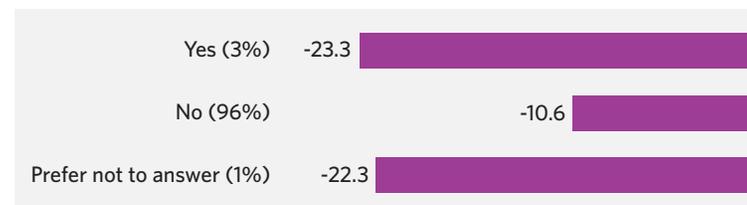
### MHI score by how physical health has changed since the onset of the pandemic



### Diagnosed with COVID-19



### MHI score by those diagnosed with COVID-19





- Six per cent of respondents report having a loved one who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. This group’s mental health score (-18.5) is much lower than those who do not report a loved one having been diagnosed with COVID-19 (-10.5).

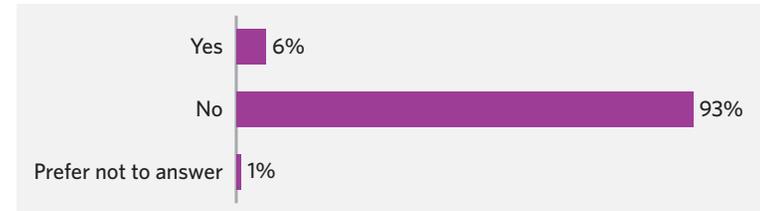
## Employees and the workplace

### Employees’ perception of their employer compared to before the pandemic

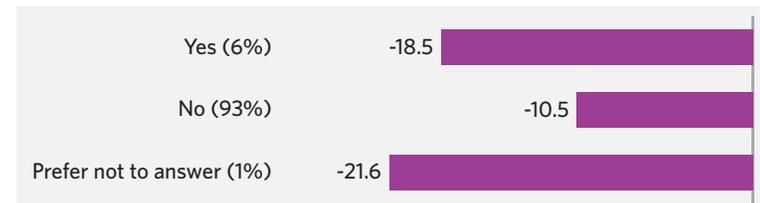
The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled many employers and employees to reconsider how they conduct their business, not only with those for whom they provide goods or service, but also with their employees. Individuals were asked how they view their employer compared to before the pandemic.

- Twelve per cent of individuals report a more positive view of their employers whereas eighteen per cent of respondents view their employer more negatively when compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Individuals working for companies that have between 51-100 employees and 5,001-10,000 employees report a negative perception of their employer when compared to prior to the pandemic.

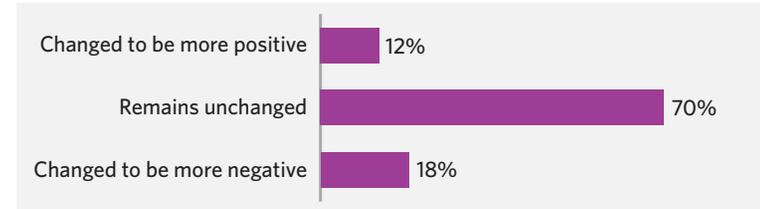
### Those with a loved one diagnosed with COVID-19



### MHI score by those with a loved one diagnosed with COVID-19



### How individuals view their employer compared to before the pandemic





### Employees considering job or career change

Personal and work-related concerns have arisen because of the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic leading individuals to consider the future of their professional and personal lives. Survey participants were asked whether the COVID-19 pandemic has led them to consider a job or career change.

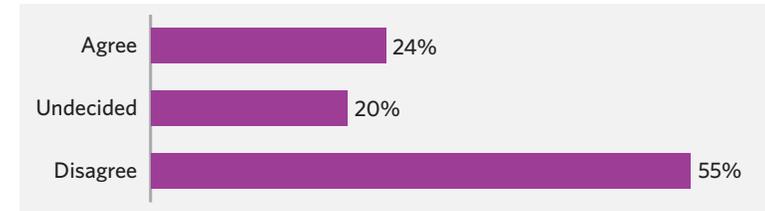
- Nearly one-quarter (twenty-four per cent) of respondents indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic led to them considering a job or career change.
- More than half of individuals (fifty-five per cent) are not considering a change while twenty per cent are undecided.
- Individuals under the age of 40 are more than twice as likely to consider a job or career change when compared to those over the age of 50.
- Respondents working for companies with 51-100 employees, 101-500 employees, and 501-1,000 employees are approximately fifty per cent more likely to consider a job or career change over other employer groups.

### Workplace handling of changes during the pandemic

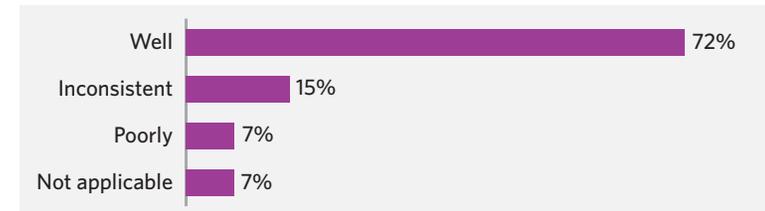
Workplace health and safety has risen to primary importance since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals were asked to consider how their employers are handling health and safety when compared to before the pandemic.

- Seventy-two per cent of respondents believe that their employers are handling health and safety well, whereas seven per cent report that their employers are handling health and safety poorly.
- Respondents from lower income households are less likely to report that employers are handling the health and safety risks of the pandemic well than those in higher income households.

### The COVID-19 pandemic led to consideration of a job/career change



### Employer handling of health & safety





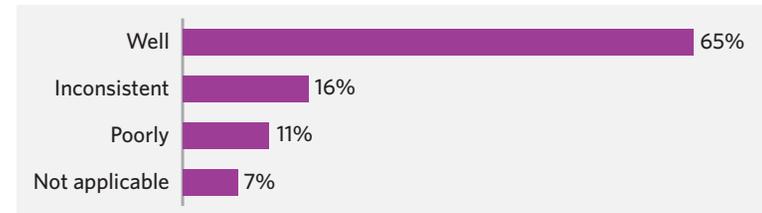
Businesses and communities are in a state of constant change as they respond to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Communicating with employees during this period of uncertainty is vital to ensure continued confidence, continuity, and engagement. Individuals were asked to consider how their employers are handling employee communications when compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Sixty-five per cent of respondents report that their employers are handling communications to employees well, whereas eleven per cent report that their employers are handling employee communications poorly.
- Younger individuals are less likely to report that employers are handling employee communications well.
- Employer size does not influence whether respondents report that their employer is handling employee communications well.

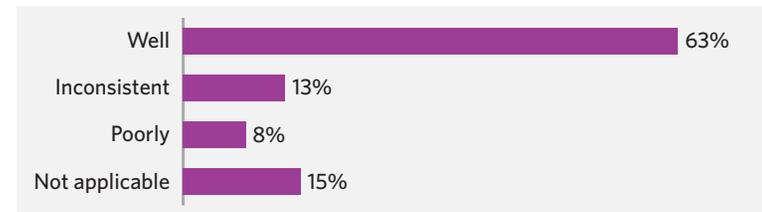
One of the many consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic is the closing or reduction of in-person workplaces. With a dispersed and remote workforce, employers rely on technology to ensure business continuity and connectedness. Individuals were asked to consider how their employers are handling the use of technology when compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Sixty-three per cent of respondents report that their employers are handling the use of technology well, whereas eight per cent report that their employers are handling the use of technology poorly.
- Individuals between the ages of 40 and 59 report that employers are handling the use of technology well.

### Employer handling of communications to employees



### Employer handling of technology used by employees





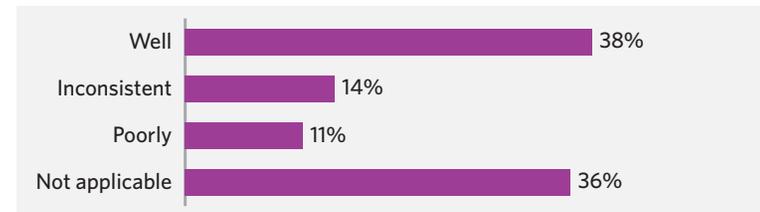
Some employers were forced to reduce salaries, hours, or lay-off employees because of impacts to their business from the COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals were asked to consider how their employers handled reductions in employee pay or hours since the pandemic. Sixty-four per cent of respondents report that the impact of employee reductions in pay or hours are applicable to them.

- Thirty-eight per cent of respondents report that their employers are handling reductions to employee pay and hours well, whereas eleven per cent report that their employers are handling this issue poorly.
- Respondents from households with annual incomes less than \$30,000 are least likely to report that their employers are handling reductions in pay or hours well (28 per cent) when compared to forty-three per cent of individuals from households with an annual income of \$150,000 or more.

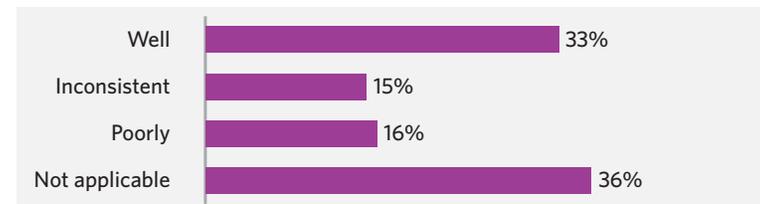
While some businesses are struggling, other employers are experiencing increased demand for their business. This is resulting in increased pay and/or hours for their employees. Survey participants were asked to consider how their employers are handling increases in pay and/or hours. Sixty-four per cent of respondents report that increases in employee pay or hours are applicable to them.

- Thirty-three per cent of respondents report that their employers are handling increases in employee pay and/or hours well, whereas sixteen per cent report that their employer is handling this issue poorly.
- Individuals between the ages of 20 and 39 are approximately fifty per cent more likely to report that employers are handling increases in pay and/or hours well when compared to those 40 and older.

### Employer handling of reducing employee pay and/or hours



### Employer handling of increasing employee pay and/or hours





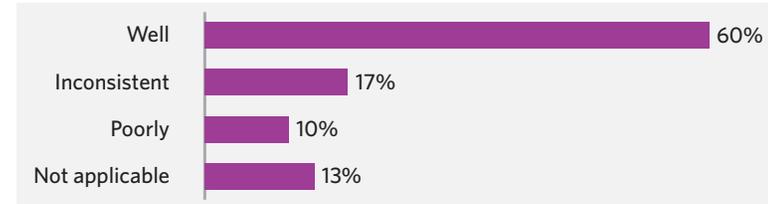
The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses are varied and, in many instances, are tied to their industry sector. Business models have been modified to respond to changes in demand and to adhere to health and safety protocols. Individuals were asked to consider how their employers are handling changes to the way business is being conducted. Sixty-four per cent of respondents report that changes to the way business is being conducted are applicable to them.

- Sixty per cent of respondents report that their employer is handling changes to the way in which business is conducted well, whereas ten per cent report that their employer is handling changes to the way business is being conducted poorly.
- Respondents were most likely to report that organizations with 2 to 50 employees, 101-500 employees, and 501-1,000 employees are handling the changes to the way in which business is conducted well.

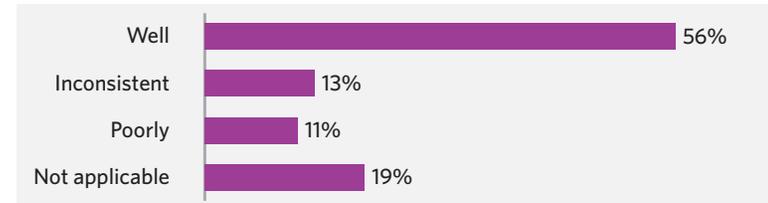
As the pandemic continues, the need for flexibility is critical. Employees need time for self-care, to attend to children or to other family members, and to address their daily tasks in a fluid, and sometimes complex environment. Individuals were asked to consider how their employers are handling flexible work hours when compared to before the pandemic. Eighty-one per cent of respondents report that the issue of flexible work hours is applicable to them.

- Fifty-six per cent of respondents report that their employers are handling flexible work hours well, while eleven per cent indicate that their employer is handling this issue poorly.
- Respondents from households with an annual income less than \$30,000 are least likely to report that employers are handling flexible work hours well (46 per cent), when compared to sixty-four per cent of individuals from households with an annual income of \$150,000 or more.

### Employer handling of changes to the way business is conducted



### Employer handling of flexible work hours





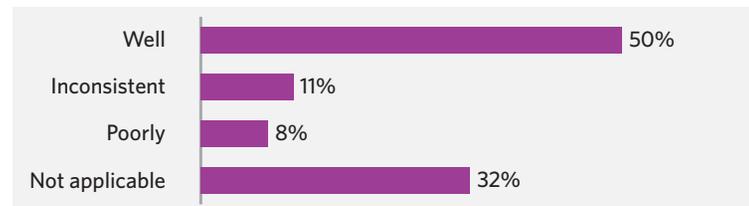
In addition to flexible work hours, work from home has been driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. Survey participants were asked to consider how their employers are handling work from home policies during the pandemic when compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic. Sixty-eight per cent of respondents report that work from home is applicable to their workplace.

- Fifty per cent of respondents report that their employers are handling work from home policies well, whereas eight per cent indicate that their employers are handling work from home poorly.
- Respondents from households with an annual income less than \$30,000 are least likely to report that employers are handling work from home well (30 per cent), when compared to sixty-six per cent of individuals from households with an annual income of \$150,000 or more.
- Organizations with more than 100 employees are handling work from home better than organizations with less than 100 employees.

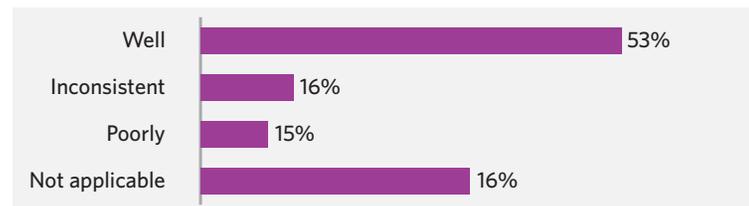
As employees come under increased strain due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many employers are reminding their people of the support and resources available to them to maintain or improve their wellbeing. Individuals were asked to consider how their employers are handling the promotion of resources when compared to before the pandemic.

- Fifty-three per cent of respondents report that their employers are handling the promotion of resources well, whereas fifteen per cent indicate that their employers are handling this poorly.
- Respondents working for organizations with 2 to 50 employees are least likely to report that their employers are promoting resources well (47 per cent), when compared to sixty-three per cent of individuals working for organizations with more than 10,000 employees.

### Employer handling of working from home



### Employer handling of promoting resources for employees





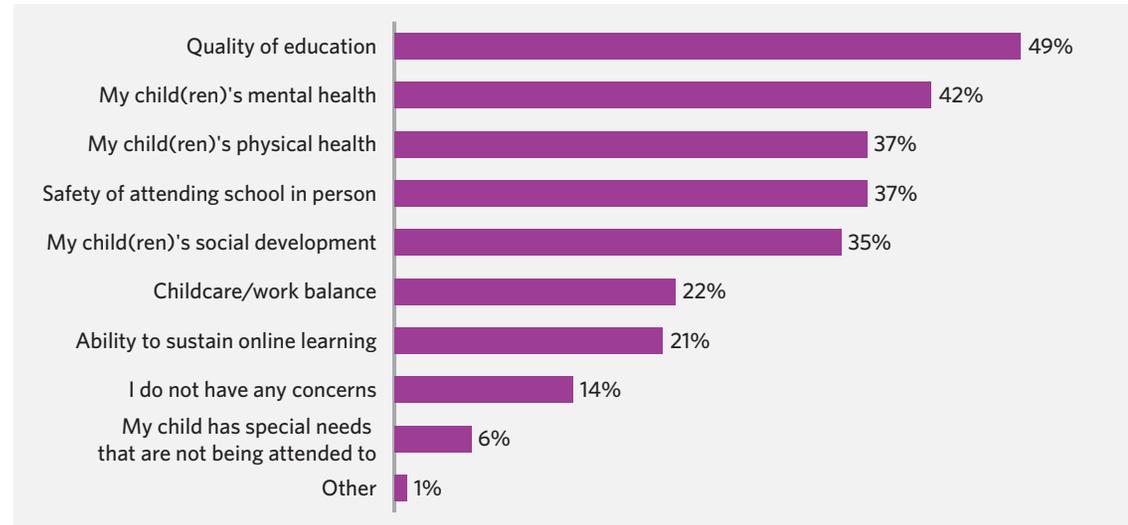
## Parental concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic

### Parents of children under 18 years old

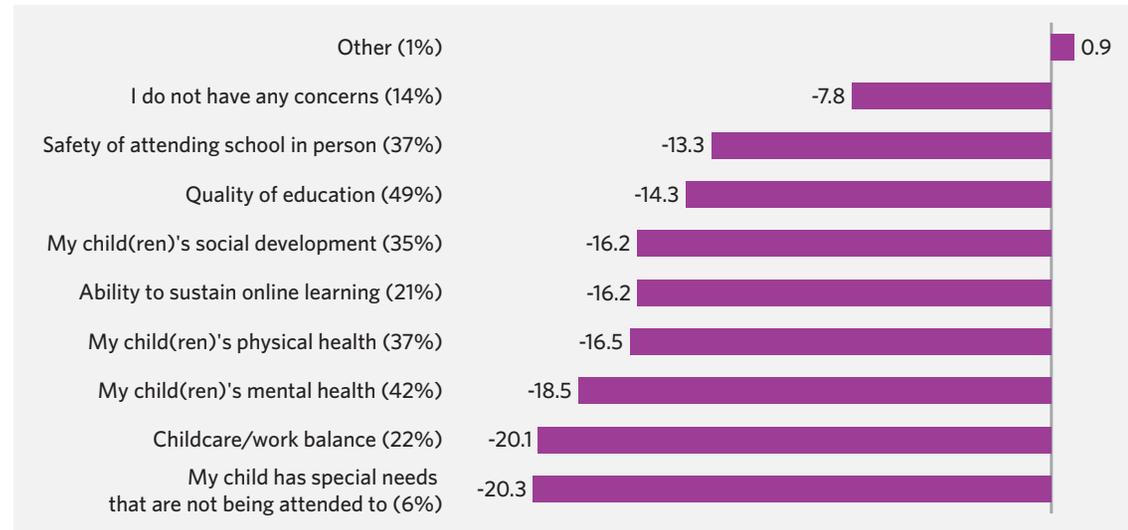
Since the pandemic, parents of children under 18 years are finding themselves balancing work and their children’s personal and educational needs while daycares and schools have been under restrictions. Survey participants with children under 18 were asked about their fears and concerns regarding their children.

- The top concerns or fears that parents have regarding their children during the pandemic are quality of education (49 per cent), followed by the mental health of their children (42 per cent), the physical health of their children (37 per cent), and the safety of attending school in person (37 per cent).
- Parents who report concerns about children with special needs have the lowest mental health score (-20.3), followed by parents with concerns about childcare/work balance (-20.1), and their child(ren)’s mental health (-18.5).

### Current concerns/fears related to children under 18 years old



### MHI score by current concerns/fears related to children under 18 years old

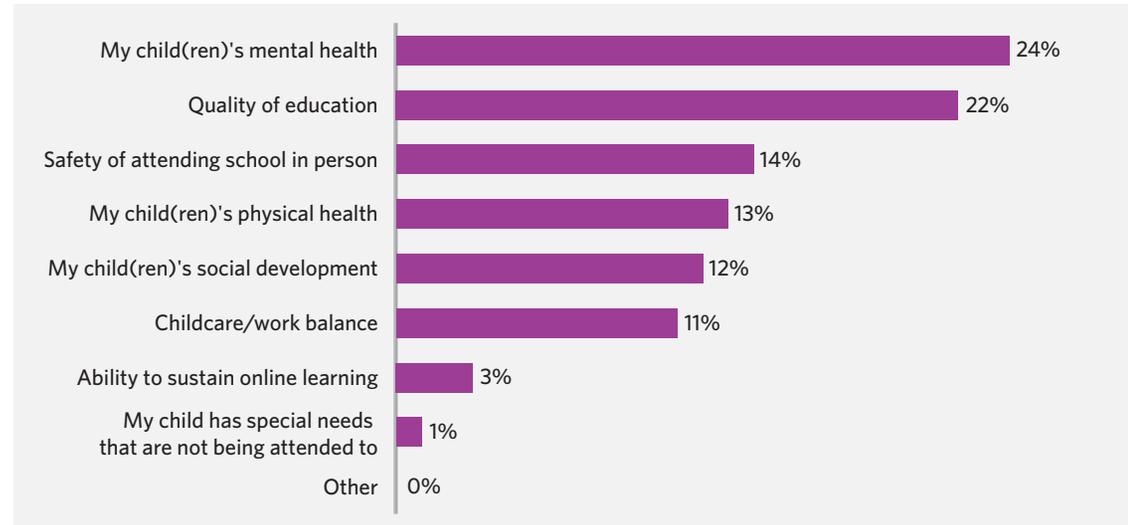




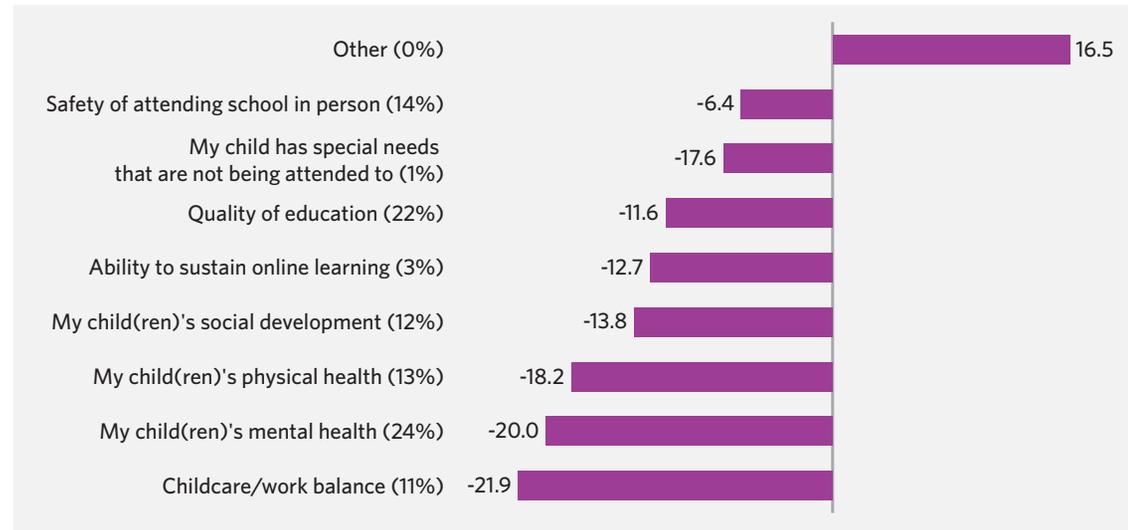
Parents who identified concerns were asked to indicate their greatest concern related to children under 18 years.

- While children’s education quality is the most reported concern, children’s mental health is the greatest concern (24 per cent) and the mental health score of this group is -20.0.
- The lowest mental health score (-21.9) is observed among the eleven per cent of respondents who report that their greatest concern is childcare/work balance.

### Greatest concerns/fears related to children under 18 years old



### MHI score by greatest concerns/fears related to children under 18 years old



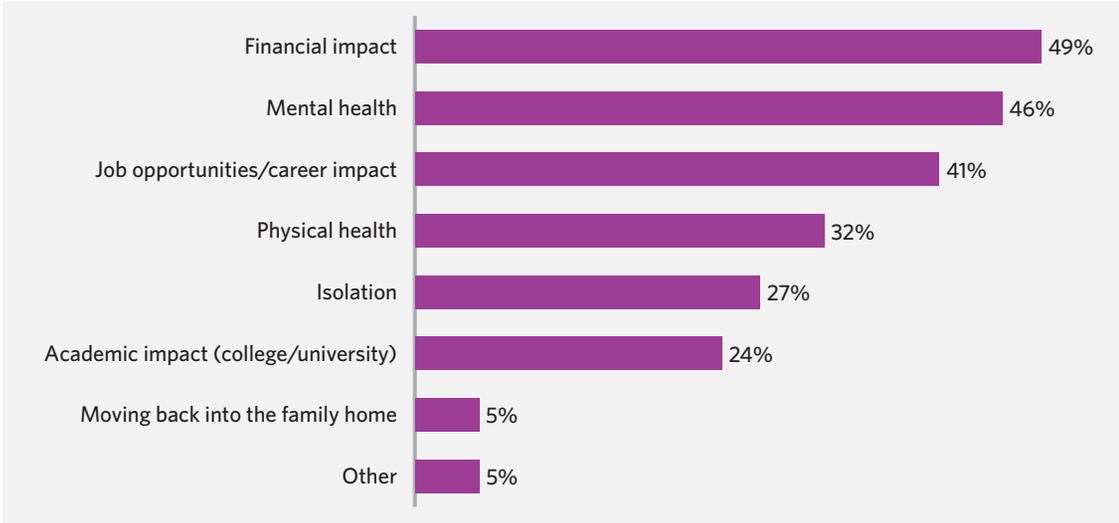


**Parents of children between 18 and 30 years old**

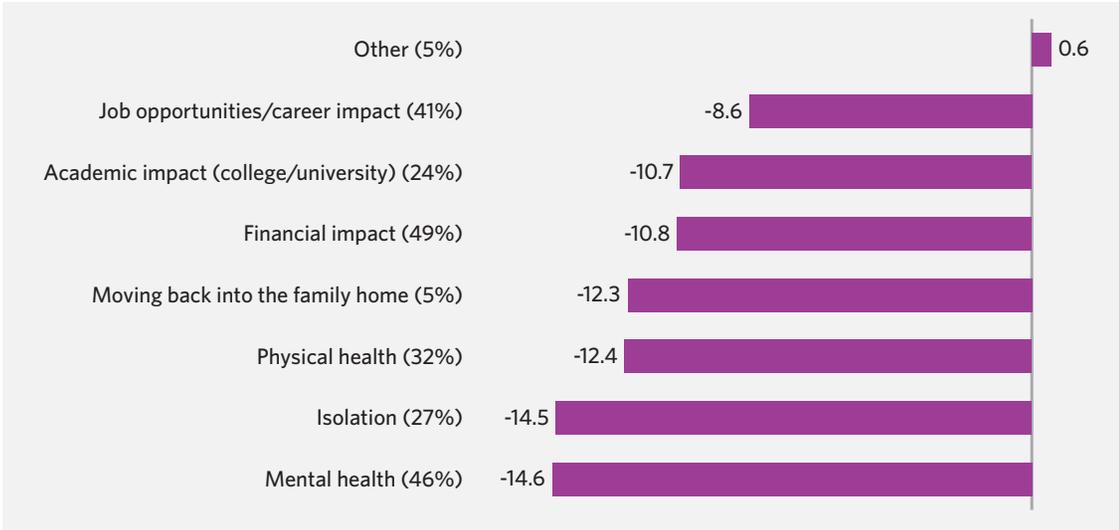
Children under 18 years present a decidedly separate set of concerns for parents than adult children. Survey participants with children between 18 and 30 years were asked about their fears and concerns regarding their adult children.

- The most reported concerns regarding children aged 18 to 30 years include the financial impact of the pandemic (49 per cent), mental health (46 per cent), and job opportunities/career impact (41 per cent).
- The lowest mental health score is observed among parents who are most concerned about their adult children’s mental health (-14.6), followed by concern about isolation (-14.5), and their children’s physical health (-12.4).
- As the top drivers of the mental health of adults continues to be financial risk and isolation, parents are concerned about similar issues among their adult children.

**Concerns/fears related to children aged 18-30**



**MHI score by concerns/fears related to children aged 18 - 30**





## 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 (MStressChg) score, 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 3,000 Canadians who are living Canada 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 Canada. The same respondents participate each month to remove sampling bias. The respondents were asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering each question. The Mental Health Index™ is published monthly, starting in April 2020. The benchmark data was collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The data for the current report was collected between October 25 to November 5, 2020.

### 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.

### 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](mailto:MHI@morneaushepell.com)

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](http://morneaushepell.com).



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