

# The Mental Health Index™ report

Canada, December 2020



MORNEAU  
SHEPELL 



## Table of contents

December highlights	1
The Mental Health Index™	4
Mental Health Index™ sub-scores	5
The Mental Health Index™ (regional)	8
The Mental Health Index™ (industry)	11
The Mental Stress Change score	12
Mental Stress Change (cumulative)	13
Mental Stress Change (percentages)	14
The Mental Stress Change (industry)	17
Spotlight	18
Living during a pandemic	18
Employees and the workplace	21
Expectations for the future	24
Brand loyalty	25
Overview of the Mental Health Index™	27
Methodology	27
Calculations	27
Additional data and analyses	28



## December highlights

**For nine consecutive months, the mental health of Canadians has been 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, a slight improvement in November, and **a decline in December to its lowest point** since the inception of the Index™. The level of mental health in December continues to be a concern 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 (26 per cent) is four per cent higher than the previous month, while the proportion of individuals reporting less mental stress is only 6 per cent. The majority (68 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 COVID-19 cases in many regions of the country, and the resulting restrictions, this strain will likely continue.

General psychological health continues its decline. **In December, the psychological health risk score of Canadians is 3.2 points lower than at the start of the Index™**, in April 2020.

Isolation scores have remained at least nine points below the pre-pandemic benchmark. **In December, the isolation score is -12.0, which is nearly equal to its lowest point (-12.1) in August 2020.**

Provincial mental health scores since April have shown general improvement until July; however, several regions showed declines from July to August. While November was marked by modest improvements for many provinces, only Manitoba and Saskatchewan improve in December. **The greatest decrease in mental health is observed in Quebec with a decline of 1.4 points from November.**

**For the seventh consecutive month, full-time students have the lowest mental health score** (-24.9) when compared to individuals across all industry sectors. Further, students have the most significant increase in mental stress change (63.8), next to individuals working in the Management of Companies and Enterprises industry.

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 nine months, since significant measures were taken in managing the pandemic, Canadians have had to adapt to changing conditions in all aspects of their lives, including at work.

**Individuals report that the most stressful part of adapting at work during the pandemic is the health and safety protocols (45 per cent),** followed by interacting with the public (34 per cent), and job uncertainty (29 per cent). **The lowest mental health score (-21.0) is observed among the twenty-nine per cent of individuals who report job uncertainty as the most stressful part of adapting at work during the pandemic,** followed by twenty-four per cent who report work strain/overwork (-19.6), and thirteen per cent who report a change in work location (-17.4).

The COVID-19 pandemic has led many Canadians to reconsider their personal and professional priorities. Previous findings (November 2020) indicated that nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) of Canadians have considered a job or career change because of the pandemic. In the current month, respondents were asked whether they have considered leaving their jobs since the beginning of 2020. Over one-quarter (28 per cent) of individuals have thought about leaving their job. **The most reported reason for considering leaving is increased mental stress/strain at work (53 per cent).** Nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) have considered leaving their current job due to their employer's response to COVID-19.

As the pandemic persists into its ninth month, Canadians are seeing the impact of the pandemic beyond their personal experience to its effect on others, including their co-workers. **Over one-third of respondents (36 per cent) report being concerned about a co-worker's mental health.**

In addition to coping with the personal impact of the pandemic, people leaders are faced with the additional strain of managing a prolonged turbulent period in their workplace. **When people leaders were asked whether they have had concerns about the mental health of employees since the onset of the pandemic, thirty-five per cent of supervisors agreed.**

**Over one quarter (twenty-seven per cent) of people leaders report that their employees are less productive than in 2019,** whereas fifty-four per cent indicate that their employees are as productive in 2020 as they were in 2019.

With restrictions on non-essential travel across the globe, taking vacation time involves staying close to home. **Nearly half of respondents (46 per cent) report not using all their vacation time in 2020,** whereas only thirty-six per cent report using all their vacation time. Individuals without paid time off have the lowest mental health score, when compared to those using all or partial vacation time.



The COVID-19 pandemic has upended organizations across the country; a boon for some while others struggle, and those doing okay but where a swing in either direction could land them in either a fortuitous or grave scenario. The perception of how an organization has treated its employees and its customers during the pandemic could have both an immediate and lasting impact on its success. **Fifty-seven per cent of respondents agree that the way they think about and interact with brands/companies has been influenced by how they treated their employees during the pandemic.**

**Nearly two-thirds (sixty-three per cent) of respondents agree that the way they think about and interact with brands/companies has been influenced by how they supported or treated their customers during the pandemic.** Females are more likely to report that the way they think about and interact with brands/companies has been influenced by how they treated their customers during the pandemic.

With the high-profile death of Black American, George Floyd, in June 2020, unprecedented awareness of anti-Black racism emerged. **Forty-one per cent of respondents agree that the way they think about and interact with brands/companies has been influenced by how they respond to social justice issues.** Individuals under the age of 40 are significantly more likely to agree that the way they think about and interact with brands/companies has been influenced by how they respond to social justice issues.

While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause restrictions and lockdowns across the country, recent vaccine developments provide some optimism for Canadians.

**Forty-two per cent of respondents indicate that they would get vaccinated as soon as they are able.** Twenty-seven per cent of individuals indicate that they would get vaccinated, although not right away. Willingness to receive the vaccine increases with age.

The disruption because of the COVID-19 pandemic has been widespread, affecting Canadians physically, mentally, socially, financially, at home, and in the workplace. Forty-four per cent of individuals indicate that most of the disruption will end for them personally in the second half of 2021, and this group has the lowest mental health score (-10.8) other than eight per cent of respondents who report not feeling any disruption. **In general, the longer the disruption is believed to last because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the more negative the mental health score.**





## 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 December 2020 is -12 points.** A 12-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.



December marks the ninth 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 (-14.1), followed by depression (-13.9), anxiety (-13.0), work productivity (-12.4), and isolation (-12.0). The risk measure with the best mental health score, as well as the only measure above the benchmark, is financial risk (3.2).

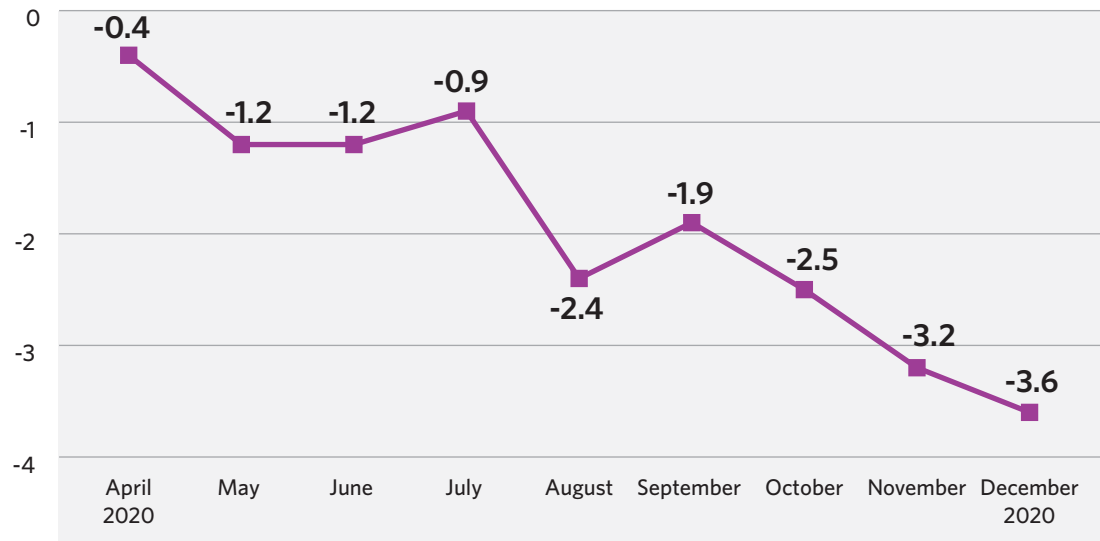
- All mental health sub-scores, except for financial risk, declined in December when compared to November.
- The depression score has the greatest decrease, declining 1.4 points from the prior month, followed by a decline of 1.3 points for work productivity, and 1.2 points for optimism.
- The financial risk score improves in December with a score of 3.2 points; it continues to be the strongest of all sub-scores and is above the pre-2020 benchmark.

MHI sub-scores <sup>2</sup>	December 2020	November 2020
Optimism	-14.1	-12.9
Depression	-13.9	-12.5
Anxiety	-13.0	-12.5
Work productivity	-12.4	-11.1
Isolation	-12.0	-11.1
Psychological health	-3.6	-3.2
Financial risk	3.2	2.9

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



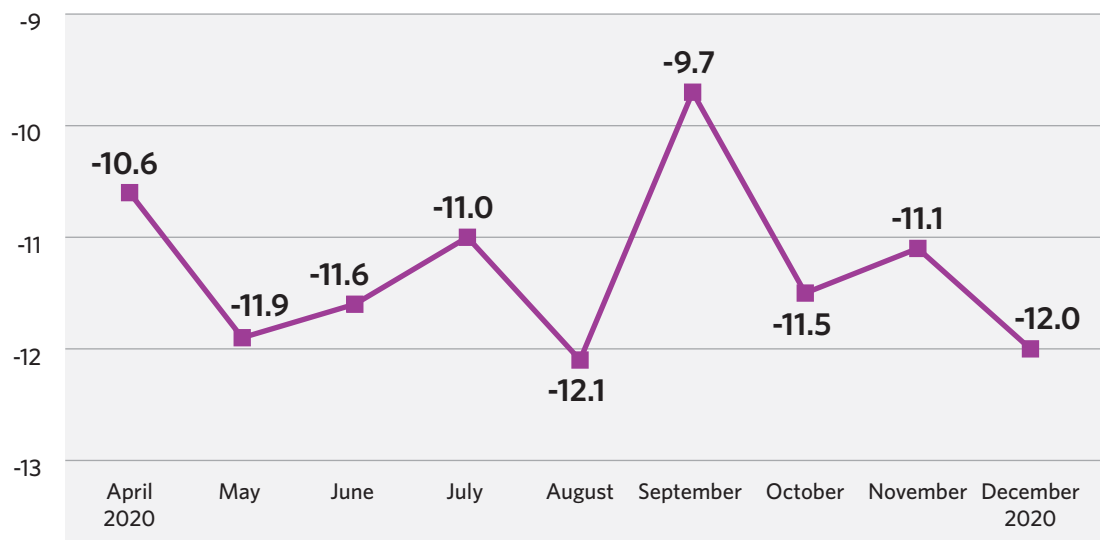
## General psychological health



## General psychological health

Since April, general psychological health has declined. Despite two months of modest improvement in July and September within the nine-month period since the launch of the Index™, the psychological health of Canadians continues to deteriorate. In December, the psychological health risk score of Canadians is 3.2 points lower than at the start of the Index™, in April 2020.

## Isolation



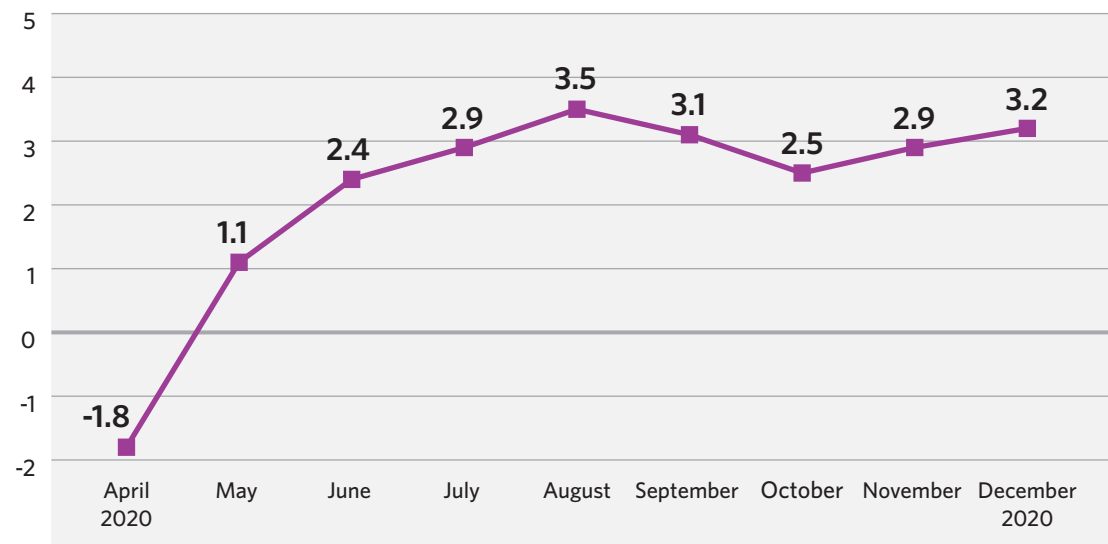
## Isolation

The sub-score for isolation has been inconsistent since the inception of the Index™ in April 2020. Isolation scores have remained at least 9 points below the pre-pandemic benchmark. In December, the isolation score is -12.0, which is nearly equal to its lowest point (-12.1) in August 2020.





## Financial Risk



## Financial risk

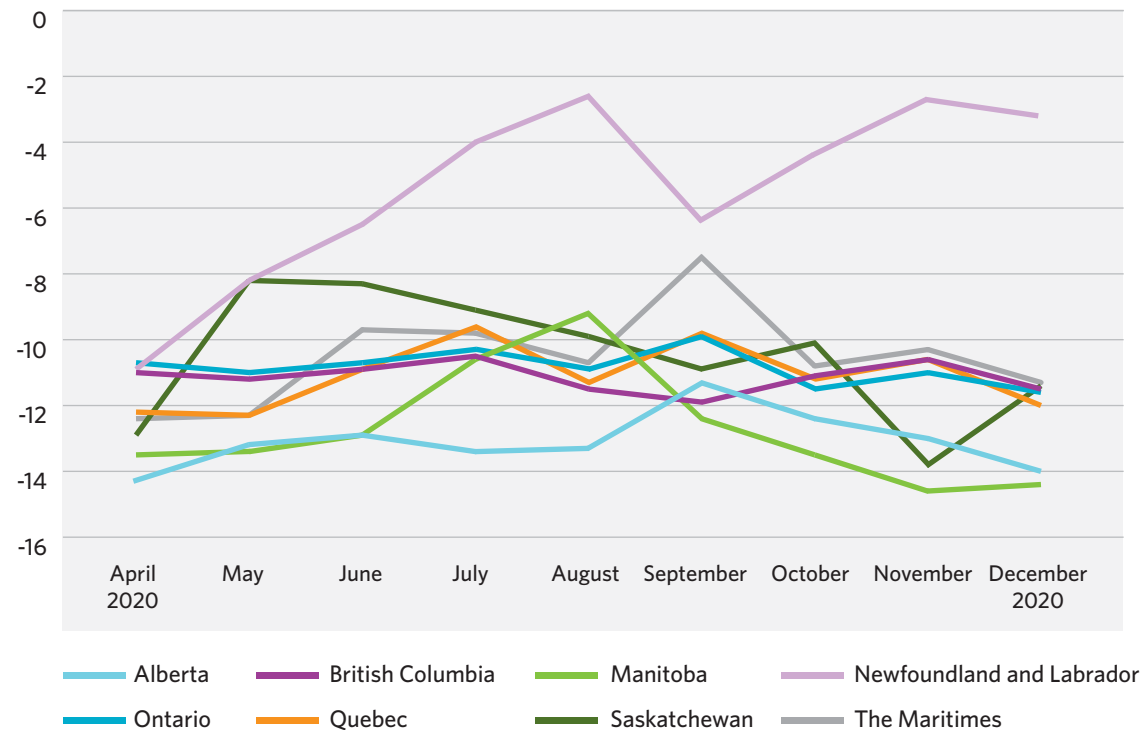
The Financial risk score improved 5.3 points from its lowest score in April 2020 (-1.8) to its highest point in August 2020 (3.5). In September and October, the financial risk score fell 1.0 point from its high but regained 0.7 points from November and December to 3.2 points, nearing its August high. 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. While November was marked by modest improvements for many provinces, only Manitoba and Saskatchewan improve in December. The greatest decrease in mental health is observed in Quebec with a decrease of 1.4 points from November.

Canada provincial Mental Health Index™ scores





## Demographics

- For nine consecutive months, females (-13.7) have a significantly lower mental health score than males (-10.0); we have also observed that mental health scores improve with age.
- Respondents identifying as Black have the lowest mental health score (-17.6), followed by those identifying as South Asian (-17.1), and those identifying as Latin, South, or Central American (-17).
- Individuals identifying as Other\* (aggregate of Pacific Islander and Mixed [Black and other]) have the highest mental health score (-8.4), followed by individuals identifying as White (-10.9).
- The variance in the mental health score between those with and without children has been observed since April, and results in December continue this trend with a lower score for those with at least one child (-15.1) when compared to those without children (-11.2).

## 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 (-22.5) have the lowest mental health score, followed by those not currently employed (-19.1), and those who report fewer hours when compared to the prior month (-17.5).
- Self-employed/sole proprietors have the highest mental health score (-6.1).
- Respondents who report working for companies with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (-15.4), followed by individuals working for companies with 101-500 employees (-13.2).

## Emergency savings

- Individuals without emergency savings continue to experience a lower score in mental health (-25.5) than the overall group. Those reporting an emergency fund have an average mental health score of -6.6.



Employment status	December	November
<b>Employed</b> (no change in hours/salary)	<b>-9.7</b>	<b>-9.1</b>
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	-17.5	-18.0
<b>Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)</b>	<b>-22.5</b>	<b>-20.2</b>
Not currently employed	-19.1	-17.2
<b>Age group</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>November</b>
<b>Age 20-29</b>	<b>-22.3</b>	<b>-21.9</b>
Age 30-39	-16.1	-15.9
Age 40-49	-12.9	-11.0
Age 50-59	-9.2	-8.2
<b>Age 60-69</b>	<b>-4.6</b>	<b>-4.6</b>
<b>Number of children</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>November</b>
No children in household	-11.2	<b>-9.9</b>
<b>1 child</b>	<b>-15.1</b>	<b>-14.9</b>
2 children	-11.6	-12.9
<b>3 children or more</b>	<b>-9.7</b>	-12.8

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	December	November
Alberta	-14.0	-13.0
British Columbia	-11.5	-10.6
<b>Manitoba</b>	<b>-14.4</b>	<b>-14.6</b>
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	<b>-3.2</b>	<b>-2.7</b>
The Maritimes	-11.3	-10.3
Quebec	-12.0	-10.6
Ontario	-11.6	-11.0
Saskatchewan	-11.4	-13.8
<b>Gender</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>November</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>-10.0</b>	<b>-9.4</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>-13.7</b>	<b>-12.9</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>November</b>
<b>Household income &lt;\$30K/annum</b>	<b>-19.9</b>	<b>-20.5</b>
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	-15.9	-14.7
\$60K to <\$100K	-13.1	-12.6
\$100K to <\$150K	-9.3	-7.9
<b>\$150K or more</b>	<b>-4.3</b>	<b>-3.9</b>

Racial identification	December	November
Arab/Middle Eastern/ West Asian	-14.0	-16.6
<b>Black</b>	<b>-17.6</b>	<b>-19.3</b>
East Asian	-12.9	-11.7
Indigenous/Aboriginal	-14.8	-16.2
Latin, South or Central American	-17.0	-16.3
South Asian	-17.1	-17.4
South East Asian	-13.7	-13.8
White	-10.9	-9.9
Mixed (Other)	-12.3	-16.4
Prefer not to answer	-11.7	-13.4
<b>Other*</b>	<b>-8.4</b>	<b>-3.0</b>

\* Included in this category are Pacific Islander and Mixed (Black and other), as the minimum threshold for reporting was not met for each group.

Employer size	December	November
<b>Self-employed/sole proprietor</b>	<b>-6.1</b>	<b>-6.3</b>
2-50 employees	-11.7	-8.9
<b>51-100 employees</b>	<b>-15.4</b>	<b>-14.5</b>
101-500 employees	-13.2	-12.8
501-1,000 employees	-12.7	-13.0
1,001-5,000 employees	-10.3	-9.9
5,001-10,000 employees	-11.4	-12.3
More than 10,000 employees	-11.9	-10.6



## The Mental Health Index™ (industry)

For the seventh consecutive month, full-time students have the lowest mental health score (-24.9). This continues to be significantly lower than the next lowest score, among individuals Management of Companies and Enterprises (-17.5), and Information and Cultural Industries (-16.8) which is consistent with the lowest scores across all industries in October. The highest mental health scores this month are observed among individuals employed in Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (-6.9), Other (-7.6), and Construction (-9.1). Individuals employed in Information and Cultural Industries, Construction, and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation have seen the greatest improvement in mental health since last month.

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

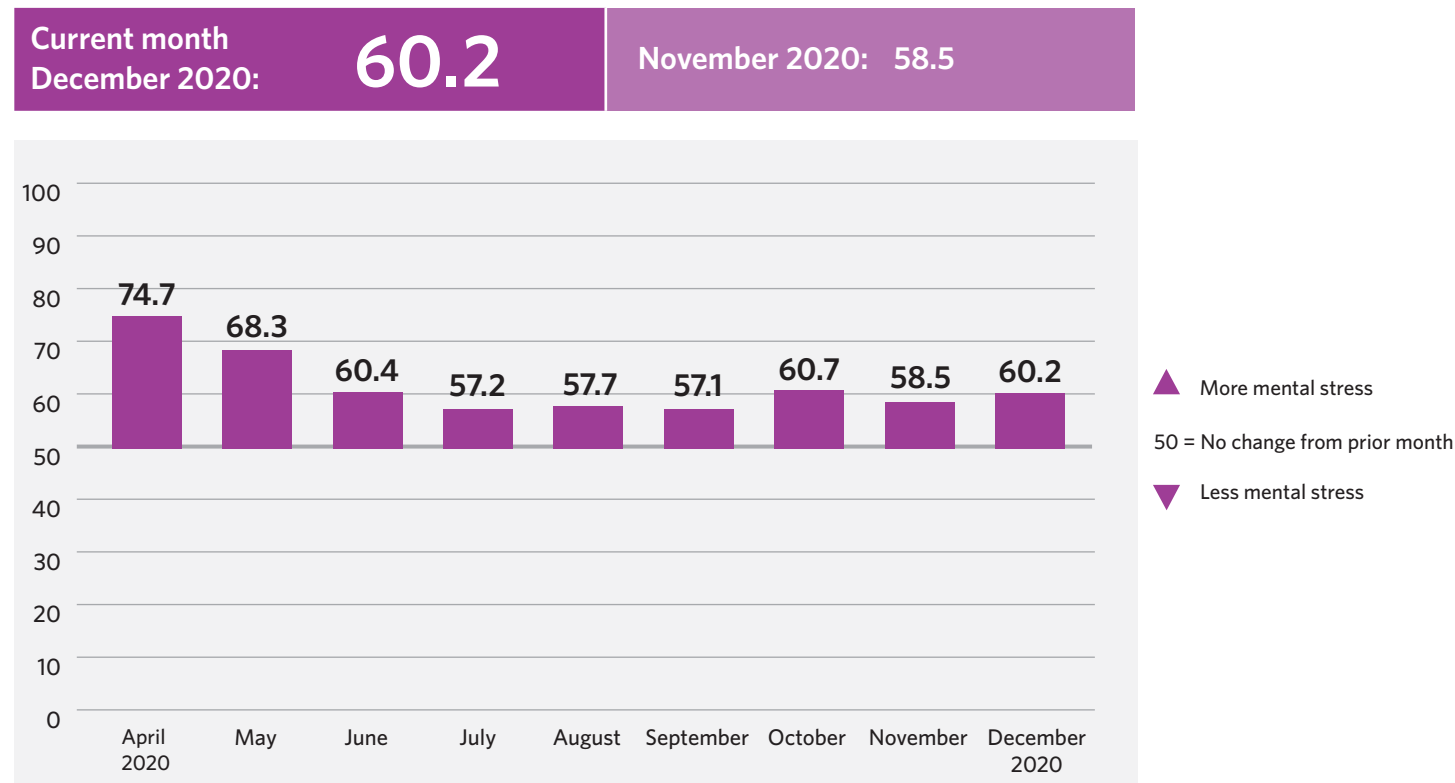
Industry	December 2020	November 2020	Improvement
Information and Cultural Industries	-16.8	-20.4	3.6
Construction	-9.1	-11.9	2.8
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	-13.2	-15.6	2.4
Other services (except Public Administration)	-10.4	-11.2	0.8
Other	-7.6	-8.2	0.6
Transportation and Warehousing	-10.2	-10.8	0.5
Educational Services	-13.0	-13.1	0.1
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	-6.9	-7.0	0.1
Public Administration	-10.0	-10.0	0.0
Management of Companies and Enterprises	-17.5	-17.4	-0.1
Full-time student	-24.9	-24.3	-0.6
Wholesale Trade	-11.5	-10.7	-0.8
Manufacturing	-10.9	-9.7	-1.2
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-9.3	-7.9	-1.3
Retail Trade	-13.6	-11.8	-1.8
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	-9.3	-7.4	-1.9
Health Care and Social Assistance	-12.8	-10.7	-2.1
Finance and Insurance	-14.9	-12.1	-2.8
Accommodation and Food Services	-15.5	-12.3	-3.2
Utilities	-14.0	-10.6	-3.5
Automotive Industry	-13.1	-9.1	-4.0
Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction	-12.0	-7.7	-4.3



## 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 December 2020 is 60.2.** 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, declined moderately in November, and increased in December.

The current score indicates that 26 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 nine months indicates a significant accumulation of strain in the population.





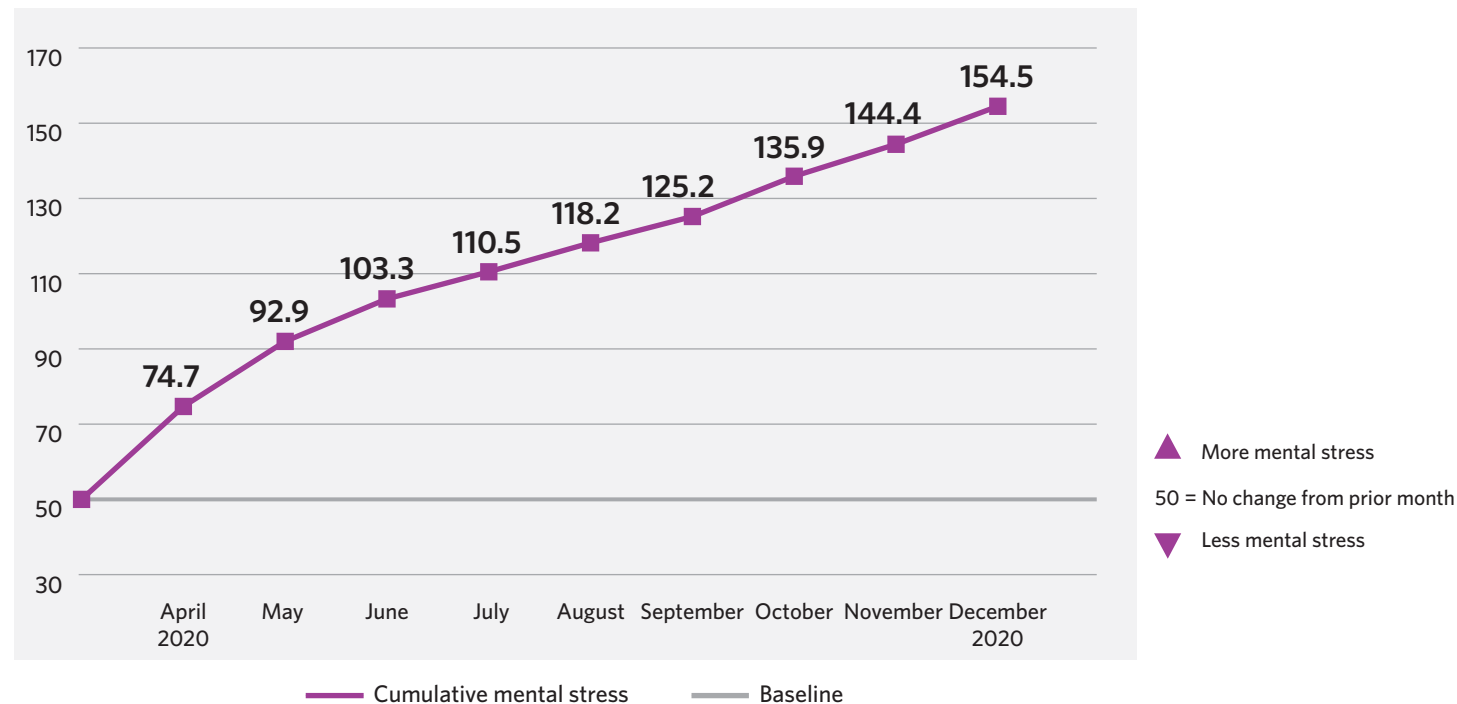


## Mental Stress Change (cumulative)

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





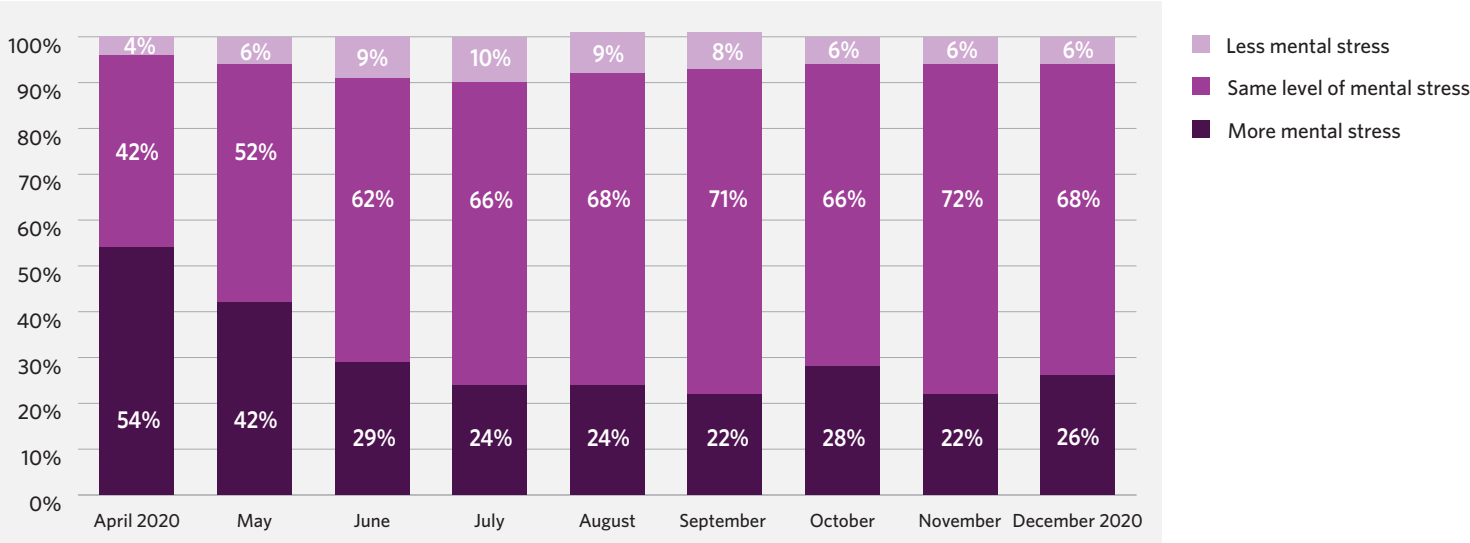
# Mental Stress Change (percentages)

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 nine 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 26 per cent in December 2020, 68 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 had larger increases in mental stress when compared with males.
- Respondents identifying as Other\* (aggregate of Pacific Islander and Mixed [Black and other]) have the most favourable mental stress change score (56.7), followed by those identifying as South East Asian (56.8), and by those identifying as Indigenous/Aboriginal (56.9).
- Individuals identifying as South Asian have the least favourable mental stress change score (62.6), followed by respondents identifying as Latin, South, or Central American (61.8), and those identifying as White (60.5).

## Geography

- Considering geography, the greatest increase in stress month over month is for respondents living in Alberta (64.3), followed by those living in Saskatchewan (64.3), Manitoba (63.8), and British Columbia (60.0). Respondents living in the provinces where the increase in mental stress was less, still had significant increases. They include Ontario (60.0), followed by The Maritimes (57.8), Quebec (56.0), and Newfoundland and Labrador (51.6).

## Employment

- The greatest increase in mental stress is seen in employed people with reduced salary (68.2), followed by employed people with reduced hours (62.7), when compared to employed people with no change to salary or hours (59.3) and unemployed people (59.2).



Employment status	December	November
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	59.3	<b>57.1</b>
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	62.7	62.0
<b>Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)</b>	<b>68.2</b>	<b>69.7</b>
<b>Not currently employed</b>	<b>59.2</b>	60.9

Age group	December	November
<b>Age 20-29</b>	<b>66.3</b>	62.5
Age 30-39	61.1	<b>62.6</b>
Age 40-49	61.0	57.8
Age 50-59	58.9	57.0
<b>Age 60-69</b>	<b>57.4</b>	<b>55.1</b>

Number of children	December	November
No children in household	59.8	<b>57.2</b>
<b>1 child</b>	<b>62.1</b>	61.5
2 children	60.2	60.6
<b>3 children or more</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>64.1</b>

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	December	November
<b>Alberta</b>	<b>64.3</b>	<b>61.2</b>
British Columbia	60.1	58.7
Manitoba	63.8	59.7
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	<b>51.6</b>	<b>49.1</b>
The Maritimes	57.8	51.6
Quebec	56.0	57.6
Ontario	60.0	59.3
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	<b>64.3</b>	60.1

Gender	December	November
<b>Male</b>	<b>58.7</b>	<b>58.0</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>58.9</b>

Income	December	November
<b>Household income &lt;\$30K/annum</b>	<b>61.5</b>	58.5
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	60.8	<b>58.2</b>
\$60K to <\$100K	60.4	58.8
\$100K to <\$150K	60.9	<b>59.0</b>
<b>\$150K or more</b>	<b>57.8</b>	58.4

Racial identification	December	November
Arab/Middle Eastern/ West Asian	60.5	65.6
Black	60.0	58.5
East Asian	58.9	59.0
Indigenous/Aboriginal	56.9	58.6
Latin, South or Central American	61.8	60.6
<b>South Asian</b>	<b>62.6</b>	63.0
South East Asian	56.8	<b>57.8</b>
White	60.5	<b>57.8</b>
Mixed (Other)	58.2	64.1
Prefer not to answer	57.8	60.7
<b>Other*</b>	<b>56.7</b>	<b>67.9</b>

\* Included in this category are Pacific Islander and Mixed (Black and other), as the minimum threshold for reporting was not met for each group.

Employer size	December	November
<b>Self-employed/sole proprietor</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>55.9</b>
2-50 employees	59.3	56.5
51-100 employees	61.8	60.6
101-500 employees	61.4	57.9
<b>501-1,000 employees</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>61.6</b>
1,001-5,000 employees	60.2	58.4
5,001-10,000 employees	60.4	60.6
More than 10,000 employees	59.7	57.6



## The Mental Stress Change (industry)

Mental Stress Change scores for Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction, as well as Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting industries are less steep when compared to the prior month.

Individuals working in the Management of Companies and Enterprises industry have the most significant increase in Mental Stress Change (67.2), followed by full-time students (63.8), and individuals in the Automotive Industry (63.7).

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

Industry	December 2020	November 2020
Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction	54.5	54.9
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	55.0	54.2
Other	56.3	55.2
Construction	57.5	60.0
Transportation and Warehousing	58.2	57.8
Utilities	59.0	53.8
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	59.1	57.9
Finance and Insurance	59.3	58.8
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	59.3	58.7
Other services (except Public Administration)	59.4	53.0
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	59.6	57.3
Manufacturing	59.6	58.3
Public Administration	59.8	59.3
Wholesale Trade	59.9	58.1
Educational Services	60.5	60.0
Health Care and Social Assistance	61.4	60.7
Information and Cultural Industries	63.3	63.9
Accommodation and Food Services	63.4	63.2
Retail Trade	63.7	55.7
Automotive Industry	63.7	59.1
Full-time student	63.8	63.4
Management of Companies and Enterprises	67.2	68.3

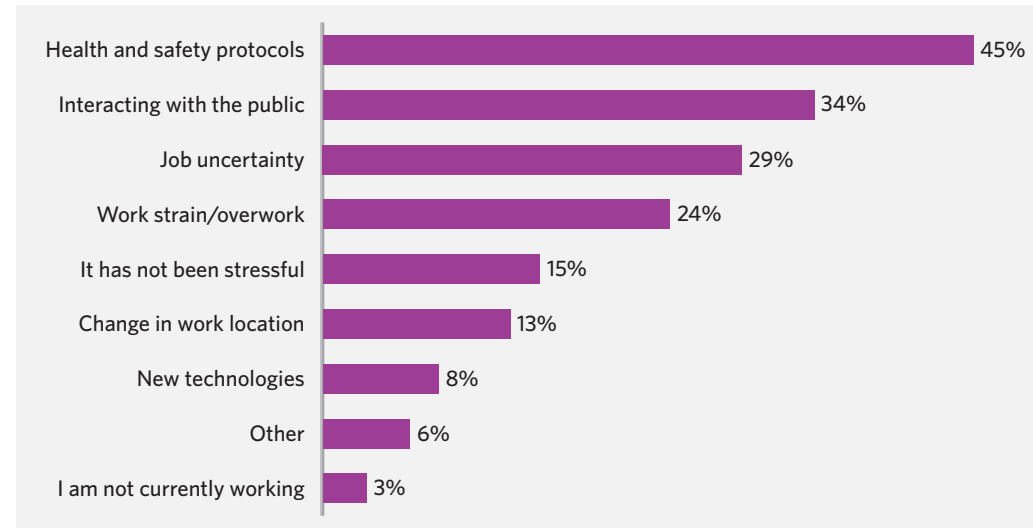
## Spotlight

### Living during a pandemic

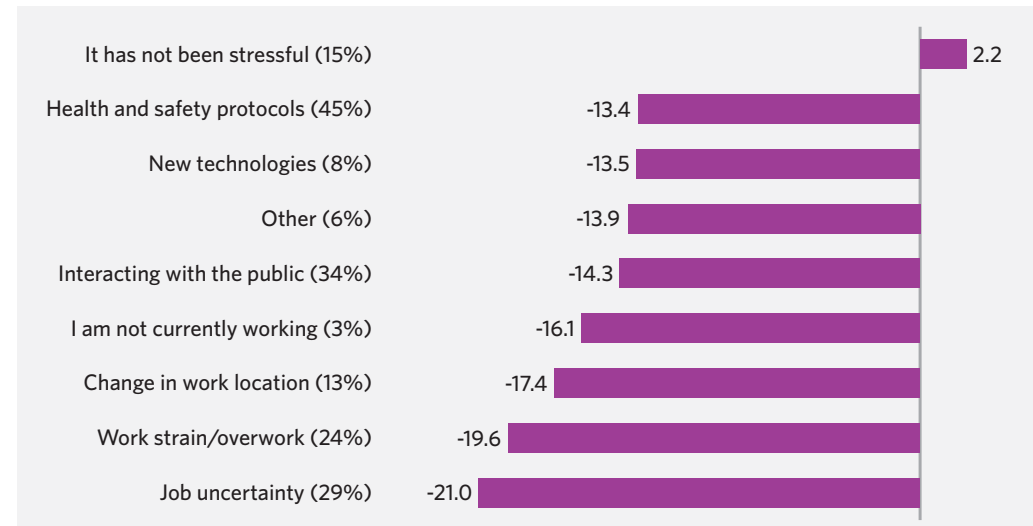
Previous findings (May 2020) show that almost three-quarters (73 per cent) of Canadians indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on their mental health. For nine months, since significant measures were taken in managing the pandemic, Canadians have had to adapt to changing conditions in all aspects of their lives, including at work.

- Individuals report that the most stressful part of adapting at work during the pandemic is the health and safety protocols (45 per cent), followed by interacting with the public (34 per cent), and job uncertainty (29 per cent).
- The lowest mental health score (-21.0) is observed among the twenty-nine per cent of individuals who report job uncertainty as the most stressful part of adapting at work during the pandemic, followed by twenty-four per cent who report work strain/overwork (-19.6), and thirteen per cent who report a change in work location (-17.4).
- Among the six per cent of respondents that selected 'other,' as the most stressful aspect of adapting at work during the pandemic, the most common responses were health, home, family, and isolation. The mental health of the group reporting 'other' is -13.9.

### The most stressful part of adapting at work during the pandemic



### MHI score by the most stressful part of adapting at work during the pandemic





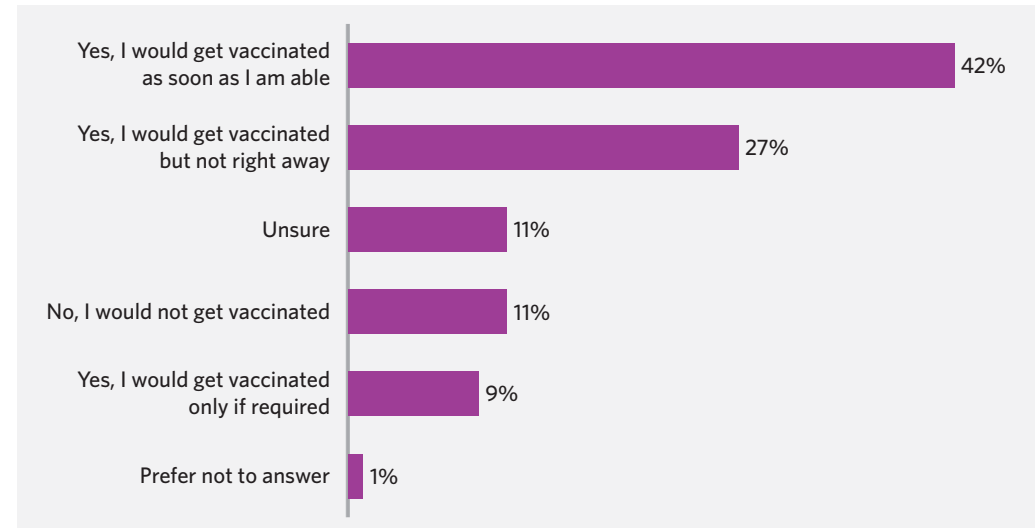


## The COVID-19 vaccine

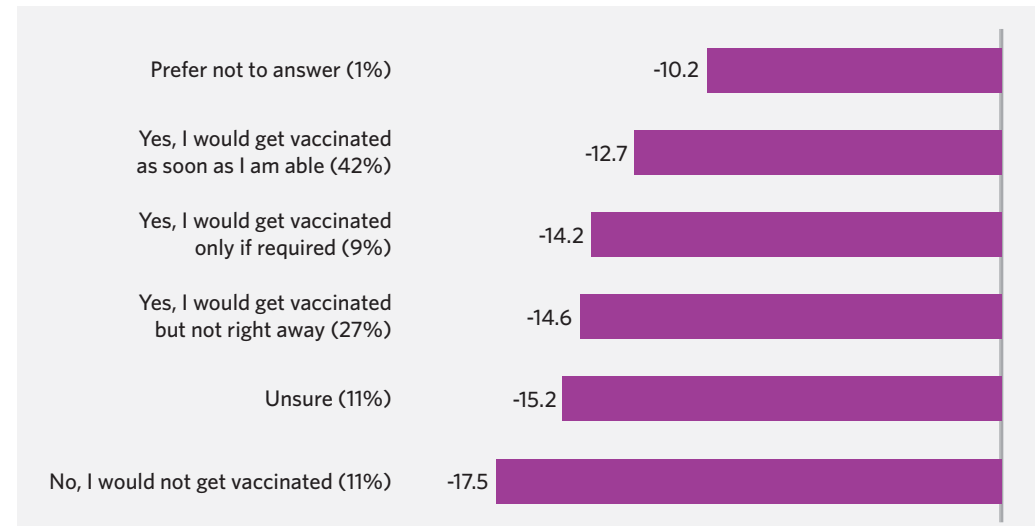
While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause restrictions and lockdowns across the country, recent vaccine developments provide some optimism for Canadians. Individuals were asked about their willingness to take a COVID-19 vaccine.

- Forty-two per cent of respondents indicate that they would get vaccinated as soon as they are able. Twenty-seven per cent of individuals indicate that they would get vaccinated although not right away.
- Eleven per cent of respondents indicate that they would not get vaccinated and the optimism score of this group is the lowest (-17.5).
- Males are more willing to get a COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible (46 per cent) when compared to females (37 per cent), and females are nearly twice as likely to report being unsure about the vaccine than males.
- Thirty-four per cent of individuals between the ages of 20 and 29 report willingness to get the vaccination as soon as possible, whereas sixty-two per cent of respondents over the age of 70 are willing. Willingness to receive the vaccine steadily increases with age.

## Willingness to take a COVID-19 vaccine



## Optimism score by willingness to take a COVID-19 vaccine





**Pandemic disruption to individuals**

The disruption because of the COVID-19 pandemic has been widespread, affecting Canadians physically, mentally, socially, financially, at home, and in the workplace. Individuals were asked when they think that most of the disruption because of the pandemic will be over for them personally.

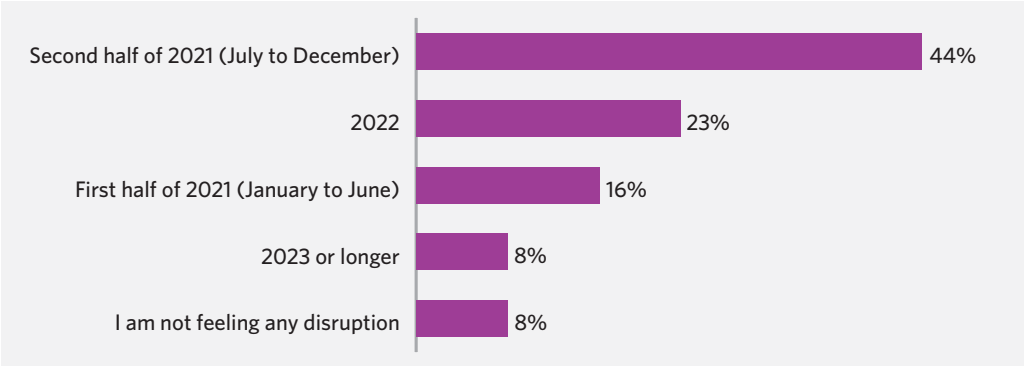
- Forty-four per cent of individuals indicate that most of the disruption will end for them personally in the second half of 2021, and this group has the most favourable mental health score (-10.8) other than eight per cent of respondents who report not feeling any disruption.
- In general, the longer the disruption is believed to last, the more negative the mental health score.
- Individuals between the ages of 20 and 29 are greater than fifty per cent more likely to believe that the pandemic disruption will end in the first half of 2021 when compared to those who are older than 60.

**Concern about the mental health of co-workers**

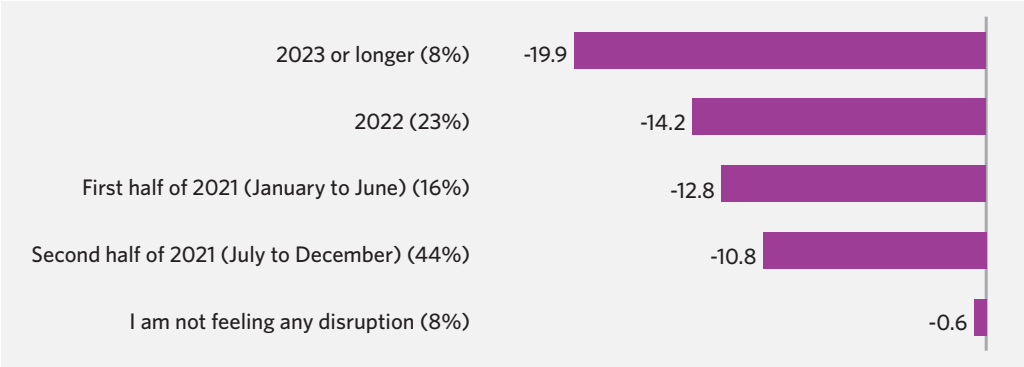
As the pandemic persists into its ninth month, Canadians are seeing the impact of the pandemic beyond their personal experience to its effect on others, including their co-workers. Individuals were asked whether they have been concerned about a co-worker’s mental health.

- Over one-third of respondents (36 per cent) report being concerned about a co-worker’s mental health.

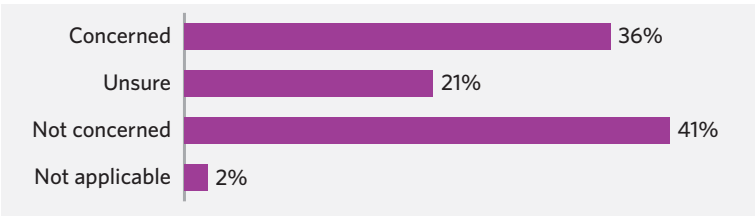
**When individuals think the pandemic disruption will end for them personally**



**MHI score by when individuals think the pandemic disruption will end for them personally**



**Concern about a co-worker’s mental health**





## Employees and the workplace

### Employees thinking about leaving their jobs

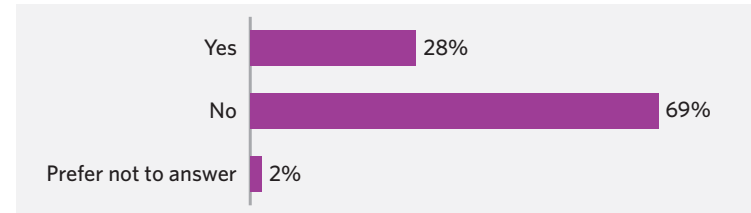
The COVID-19 pandemic has led many Canadians to reconsider their personal and professional priorities. Previous findings (November 2020) indicate that nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) of Canadians have considered a job or career change because of the pandemic. In the current month, respondents were asked whether they have considered leaving their jobs since the beginning of 2020, for any reason.

- Over one-quarter (28 per cent) of individuals have thought about leaving their job since 2020.

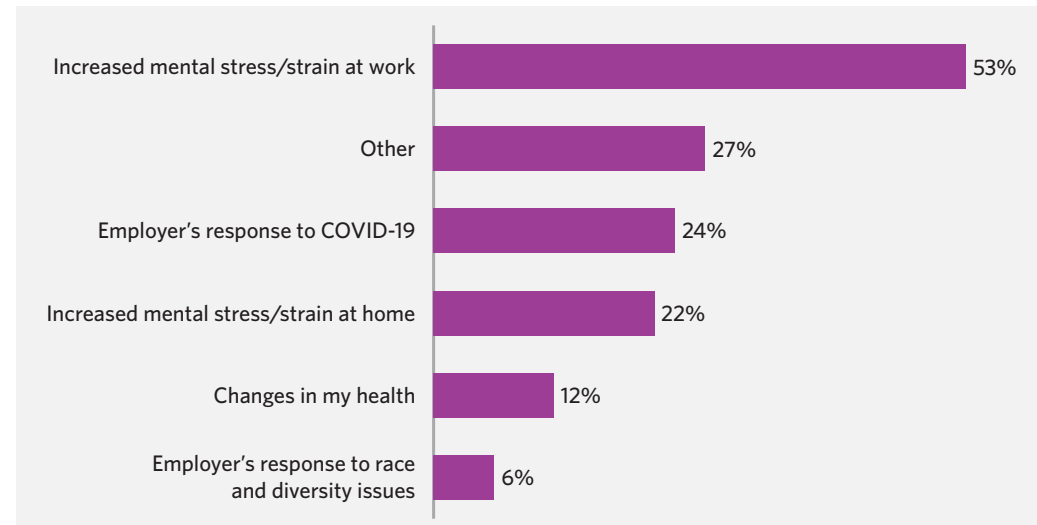
Individuals who indicated that they are thinking about leaving their jobs were asked to provide a reason for considering leaving their positions.

- The most reported reason for considering leaving is increased mental stress/strain at work (53 per cent). This group has a mental health score of -25.5, more than two times lower than the overall average for Canadians.
- The lowest mental health score (-32.7) is among twenty-two per cent of individuals who have considered leaving their jobs due to increased mental stress/strain at home.
- Among the twenty-seven per cent that selected 'Other' as a consideration for leaving their job, the most reported reason is for retirement.

### Have individuals thought about leaving their job



### Reasons employees are thinking about leaving their jobs





- Nearly one-quarter (twenty-four per cent) have considered leaving their current job due to their employer's response to COVID-19.
- Individuals working in Health Care and Social Assistance are more likely to consider leaving their jobs (33 per cent) when compared to all other industries combined (26 per cent).
- Respondents working for organizations with 51-100 employees are most likely to consider leaving their jobs (36 per cent), while those who are self-employed are least likely (16 per cent) to leave their jobs.

### People leaders

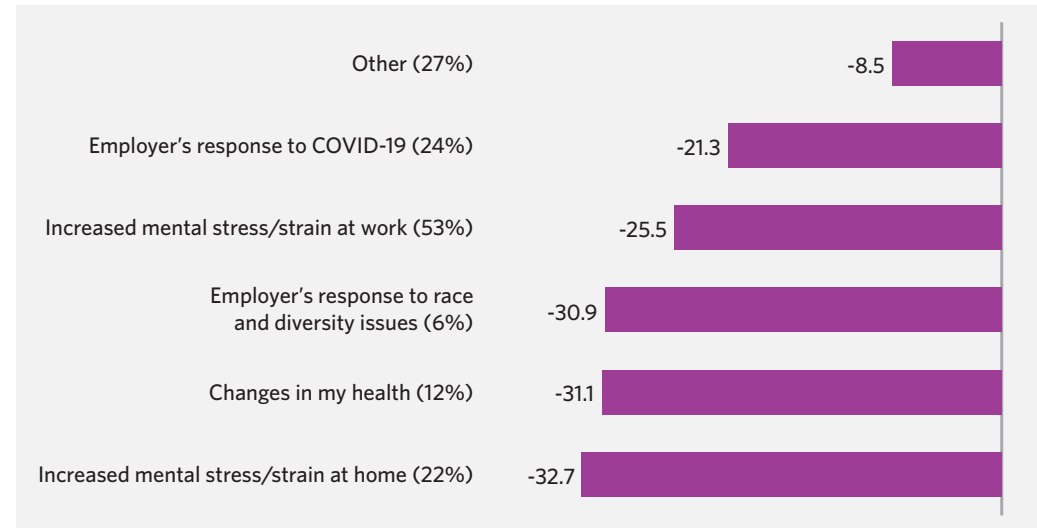
In addition to coping with the personal impact of the pandemic, people leaders are faced with the additional strain of managing a prolonged turbulent period in their workplace. Thirty-three per cent of respondents report supervising one or more people at work.

When people leaders were asked whether they have had concerns about the mental health of employees since the onset of the pandemic, thirty-five per cent of supervisors agree and fourteen per cent are unsure.

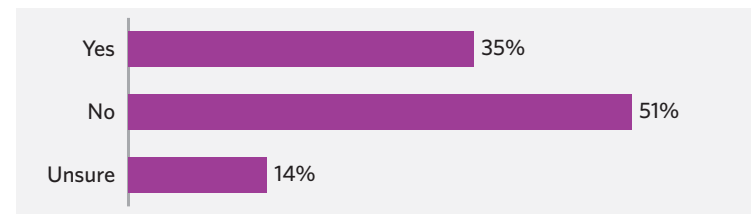
People leaders were asked to rate the productivity of their employees in 2020 when compared to 2019.

- People leaders report that over one-quarter (27 per cent) of their employees are less productive than in 2019, whereas fifty-four per cent of employees are as productive in 2020 as they were in 2019.

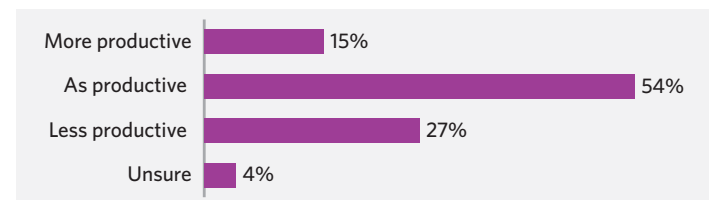
### MHI score by reasons employees are thinking about leaving their jobs



### Concerns about the mental health of employees since the onset of the pandemic



### Supervisor estimates of how productive their employees have been in 2020 compared to 2019



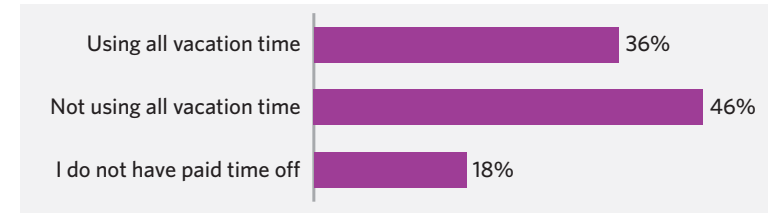


### Using employer-paid vacation time

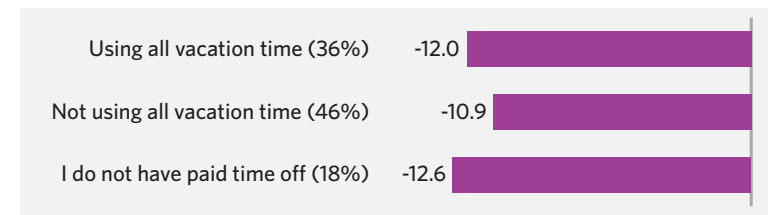
With restrictions on non-essential travel across the globe, taking vacation time involves staying close to home. With travel on hold in 2020, respondents were asked whether they will use their employer-paid vacation allotment.

- Nearly half of respondents (46 per cent) report not using all their vacation time in 2020, whereas only thirty-six per cent report using all their vacation time.
- Individuals without paid time off have the lowest mental health score (-12.6), when compared to those using all their vacation time (-12.0) and those who are not using all their vacation time (-10.9).
- Individuals who remain employed at their full salary and hours are almost twice as likely (39 per cent) to take all their vacation when compared to those working reduced hours or in a reduced pay scenario (23 per cent).

### Using vacation time in 2020



### MHI score by usage of all vacation time in 2020





## Expectations for the future

As Canadians continue to face the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the New Year brings hope for a successful vaccine program and thoughts of when a return to the pre-pandemic state will be within reach.

### Changes in work situation

Individuals were asked whether they expect changes in their work situation.

- Nineteen per cent of respondents expect an improvement in their work situation.
- Fourteen per cent of respondents expect their work situation to worsen.

### Changes in social relationships

Individuals were asked whether they expect a change in their social relationships.

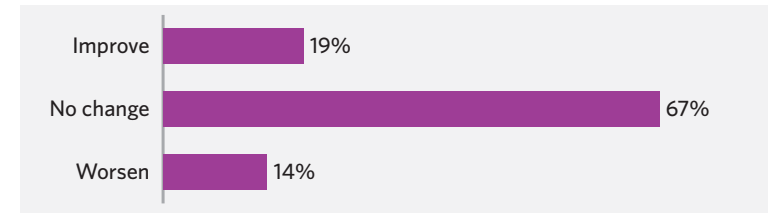
- Nineteen per cent of respondents expect an improvement in their social relationships.
- Fifteen per cent of individuals expect their social relationships to worsen.

### Changes in the financial situation

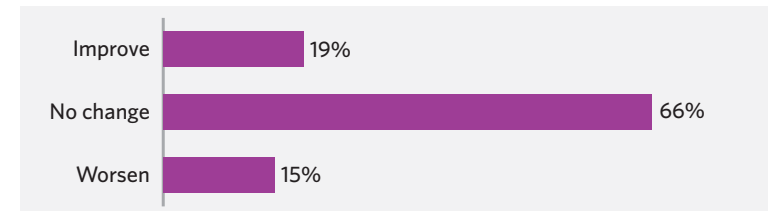
Individuals were asked what change they expect with respect to their financial situation.

- Twenty per cent of respondents expect an improvement in their financial situation.
- Twenty-one per cent expect their financial situation to worsen.

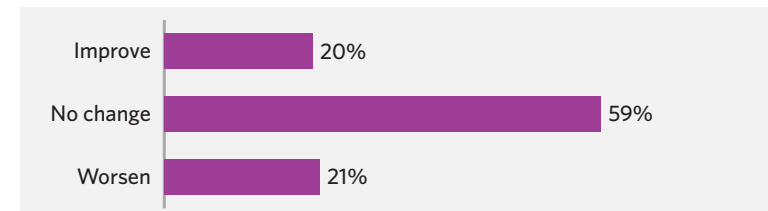
### Expected future changes in work situation



### Expected future changes in social relationships



### Expected future changes in financial situation







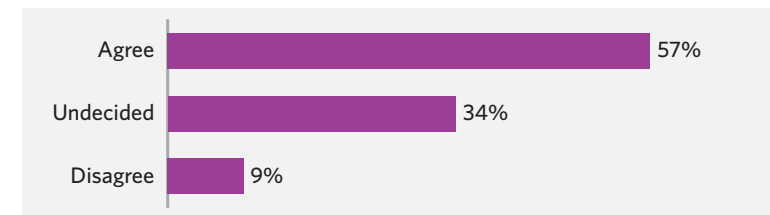
## Brand loyalty

In March 2020, Mark Cuban warned, “how companies treat employees during this pandemic will define their brand for decades”.<sup>3</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has upended organizations across the country; a boon for some while others struggle, and those doing okay but where a swing in either direction could land them in either a fortuitous or grave scenario. The perception of how an organization has treated its employees and its customers during the pandemic could have both an immediate and lasting impact on its success.

### How companies have treated their employees

- Fifty-seven per cent of respondents agree that the way they think about and interact with brands/companies has been influenced by how they treated their employees during the pandemic.
- Individuals working reduced hours or with reduced pay are most likely to report that the way they think about and interact with brands/companies has been influenced by how they treated their employees during the pandemic (64 per cent), when compared with those who are employed at their full salary and hours (56 per cent).

### The way individuals think about and interact with brands/companies has been influenced by how they have treated their people/employees



<sup>3</sup> Mark Cuban says how companies treat workers during pandemic could define their brand ‘for decades’, CNBC, <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/25/coronavirus-mark-cuban-warns-against-rushing-employees-back-to-work.html>, March 25, 2020.



### How companies have supported or treated their customers

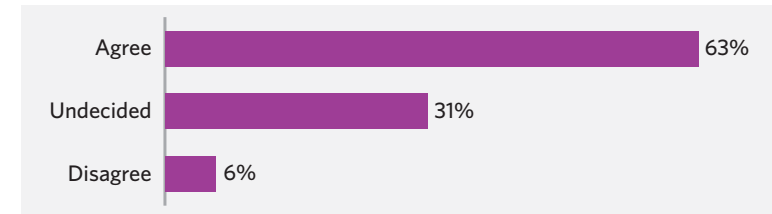
- Sixty-three per cent of respondents agree that the way they think about and interact with brands/companies has been influenced by how they supported or treated their customers during the pandemic.
- Females are more likely to report that the way they think about and interact with brands/companies has been influenced by how they treated their customers during the pandemic (67 per cent), when compared to males (59 per cent).

### How companies have responded to social justice issues

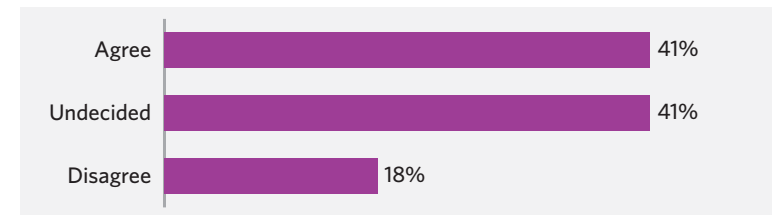
With the high-profile death of Black American, George Floyd, in June 2020, unprecedented awareness of anti-Black racism emerged. Individuals were asked whether the way they think about and interact with brands has been influenced by their response to social justice issues.

- Forty-one per cent of respondents agree that the way they think about and interact with brands/companies has been influenced by how they respond to social justice issues.
- Respondents under the age of 40 are significantly more likely to agree that the way they think about and interact with brands/companies has been influenced by how they respond to social justice issues (51 per cent) when compared with those 40 and older (37 per cent).

### The way individuals think about and interact with brands/companies has been influenced by how they supported/treated their customers



### The way individuals think about and interact with brands/companies has been influenced by their response to social justice issues





## 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 in 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 November 20 to November 30, 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)

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