



# TELUS Mental Health Index.

United States of America | Q1 2026

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# What you need to know: Q1 2026.

## Mental health improved marginally yet persists at Pandemic-era levels.

The mental health score among workers in the United States is up one point to 69.4. Anxiety, isolation, and work productivity remain the most significant challenges. Key indicators from this period include:

- 24 percent of workers have a high mental health risk; 43 percent moderate; 33 percent low
- All mental health sub-scores have increased from September 2025
- Anxiety, isolation, and work productivity have been the lowest mental health sub-scores for nearly six years
- 27 percent of workers report feeling anxious; 25 percent feel isolated; 19 percent feel depressed
- 25 percent of workers lack emergency savings to cover basic needs
- 22 percent of workers report that their mental health is negatively affecting work productivity
- Managers continue to score higher than non-managers, and laborers score lower than both service industry and office workers



## Younger workers disproportionately report unmet mental and physical health support needs.

At least one in five workers reports unmet needs related to mental or physical support. Workers under 40 are more than twice as likely as those over 50 to want better mental health support and are 80 percent more likely to want better physical health support.

- 22 percent of workers want career development and skills training
- 21 percent want better stress management and resilience training
- 20 percent of workers believe their employer could better support their mental and physical health
- Workers wanting better mental health support **score 17 points lower** on the Mental Health Index than those who don't need additional support; these workers also **lose 41.7 days per year in productivity**, 22 more days than workers who don't require additional support
- 40 percent of workers report no need for additional employer support; this group is older, non-managerial, and does not include parents
- Non-managers are 50 percent more likely than managers to report needing no additional support, though managers are more likely to report concern about the stigma associated with seeking help

### AI adoption is growing, with outcomes varying by employer support and frequency of use.

More than two in five workers report employer support for AI adoption, and nearly three in five report improved efficiency as a result.

- 50 percent of workers use AI tools at least several times per month
- 57 percent of workers who use AI report improved efficiency
- The lowest mental health score is among five percent of workers whose employers actively discourage AI use, seven points lower than workers whose employers encourage it
- Managers are 50 percent more likely than non-managers to report both improved efficiency from AI tools and employer encouragement of AI use

### Cost is the most cited barrier to accessing mental health support.

More than two in five workers identify cost or affordability as a barrier to accessing mental health support. More than one in ten cite a long wait/limited availability of care or discomfort sharing.

- 44 percent of workers citing cost as a barrier **score nearly 19 points lower** on the Mental Health Index and **lose 16 more days per year in productivity** compared to workers who report no barriers
- Workers who report a lack of energy as their primary barrier to seeking care have the lowest mental health score, and **lose more than double the productivity days** of workers facing no barriers
- Younger workers, managers, and parents are more concerned about stigma for seeking support
- Workers over 50 are twice as likely as those under 40 to report facing no barriers to accessing support

### Outcomes differ substantially based on whether workers perceive their organization's culture as supportive of their wellbeing.

Two-thirds of workers describe their organization's culture as supportive of their wellbeing; those who **don't lose 25 more days of productivity** annually.

- Workers who feel their organization's culture does not support their wellbeing **score 18 points lower** on the Mental Health Index and **lose 25 more days per year in productivity**
- 10 percent of workers are considering leaving their jobs; this group **scores 19 points lower** on the Mental Health Index and **loses nearly 29 more days annually in productivity** compared to workers not considering leaving
- 17 percent of workers are uncertain about staying; they **lose 14 more days per year** and **score six points lower** on the Mental Health Index than workers who are not considering leaving
- Higher compensation, better career opportunities, and improved benefits are the primary drivers of turnover intention

In this report, **productivity loss** refers to the number of workdays lost per year due to physical health issues and/or emotional or mental health challenges. Some fluctuations in productivity are inevitable, as employees naturally experience varying levels of efficiency throughout their workday.

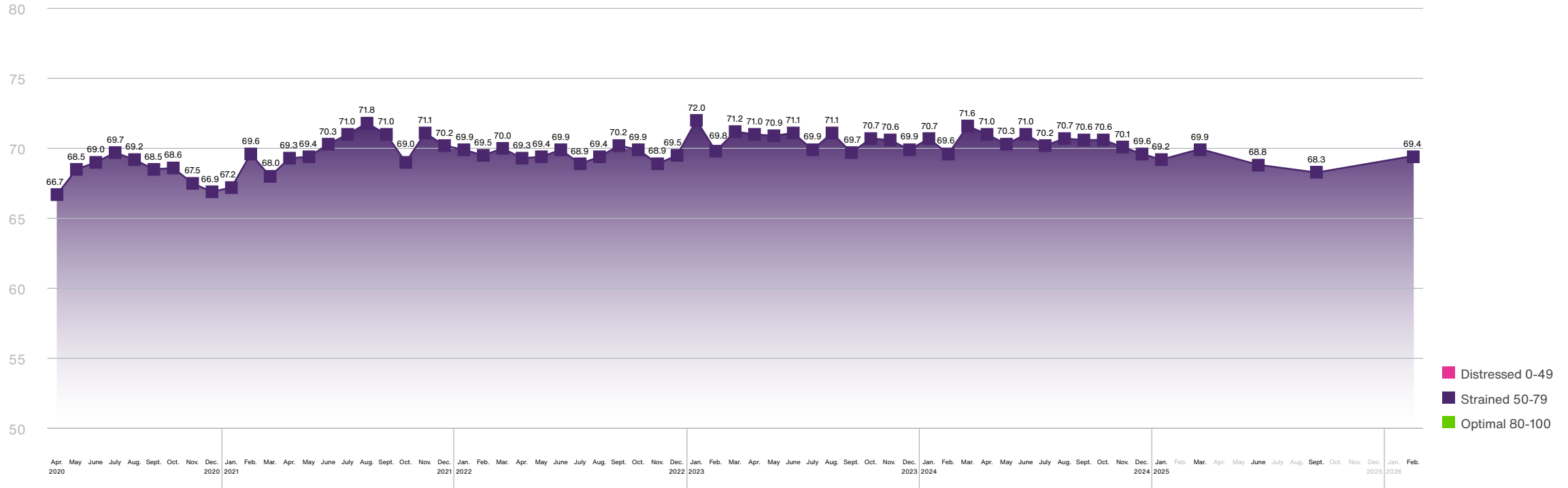


# The Mental Health Index.

The overall Mental Health Index (MHI) for the first quarter of 2026 is **69.4**.

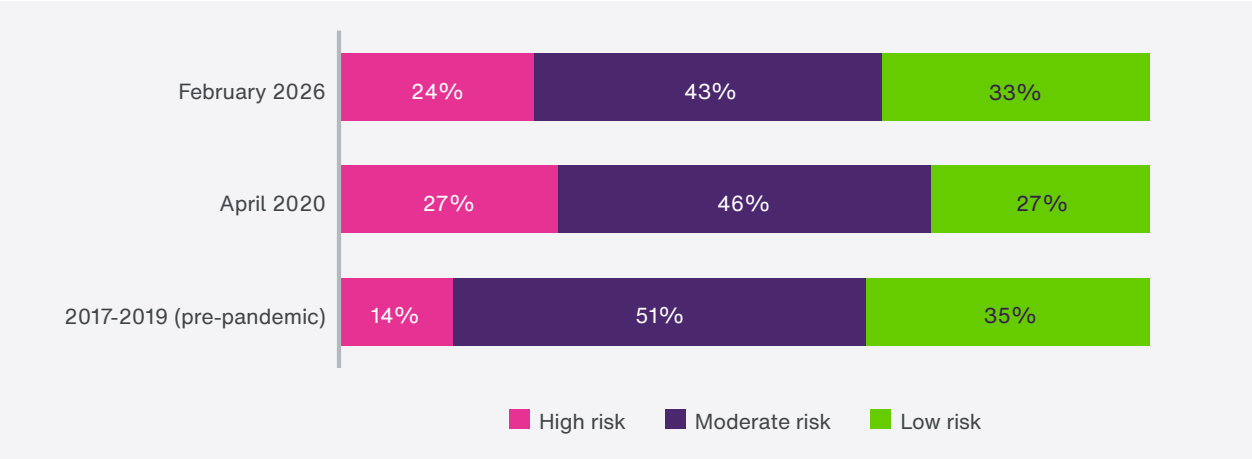
The mental health score of workers in the United States recovered by one point in February 2026 after falling to a four-year low in September 2025.

MHI Current Month February 2026	September 2025
<b>69.4</b>	<b>68.3</b>



### Mental health risk.

In the first quarter of 2026, 24 percent of workers have a high mental health risk, 43 percent have a moderate mental health risk, and 33 percent have a low mental health risk. Nearly six years after the launch of the Mental Health Index in April 2020, the proportion of workers in the high-risk group has decreased by three percent.



Approximately 30 percent of workers in the high-risk group report diagnosed anxiety or depression, seven percent report diagnosed anxiety or depression in the moderate-risk group, and one percent of workers in the low-risk group report diagnosed anxiety or depression.

## Mental Health Index sub-scores.

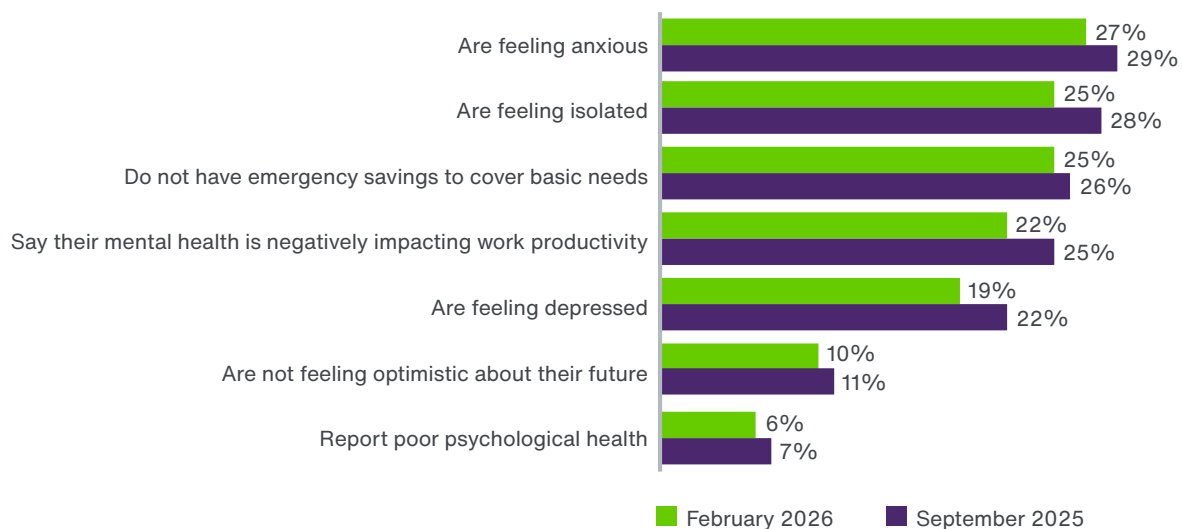
Since April 2020, anxiety (56.5) has ranked the lowest among Mental Health Index sub-scores, followed by isolation (62.9), work productivity (63.2), depression (63.6), optimism (69.1), and financial risk (71.9). General psychological health (77.7) remains the highest-performing measure in the first quarter of 2026.

- Anxiety, isolation, and work productivity have been the lowest mental health sub-scores for nearly six years
- All mental health sub-scores have increased from the previous period
- The work productivity sub-score has increased most notably, up two points from September 2025

More than one in four (27 percent) of workers feel anxious, 25 percent feel isolated, 25 percent do not have emergency savings for basic needs, 22 percent say their mental health is negatively impacting work productivity, 19 percent feel depressed, 10 percent do not feel optimistic about their future, and six percent of workers cite poor psychological health.

Mental Health Index Sub-scores	February 2026	September 2025
Anxiety	62.1	61.0
Isolation	65.8	64.0
Work productivity	69.1	67.1
Depression	69.5	67.6
Optimism	71.0	70.6
Financial risk	72.2	71.5
Psychological health	76.7	76.0

## Percentage at risk by MHI sub-score



# Anxiety

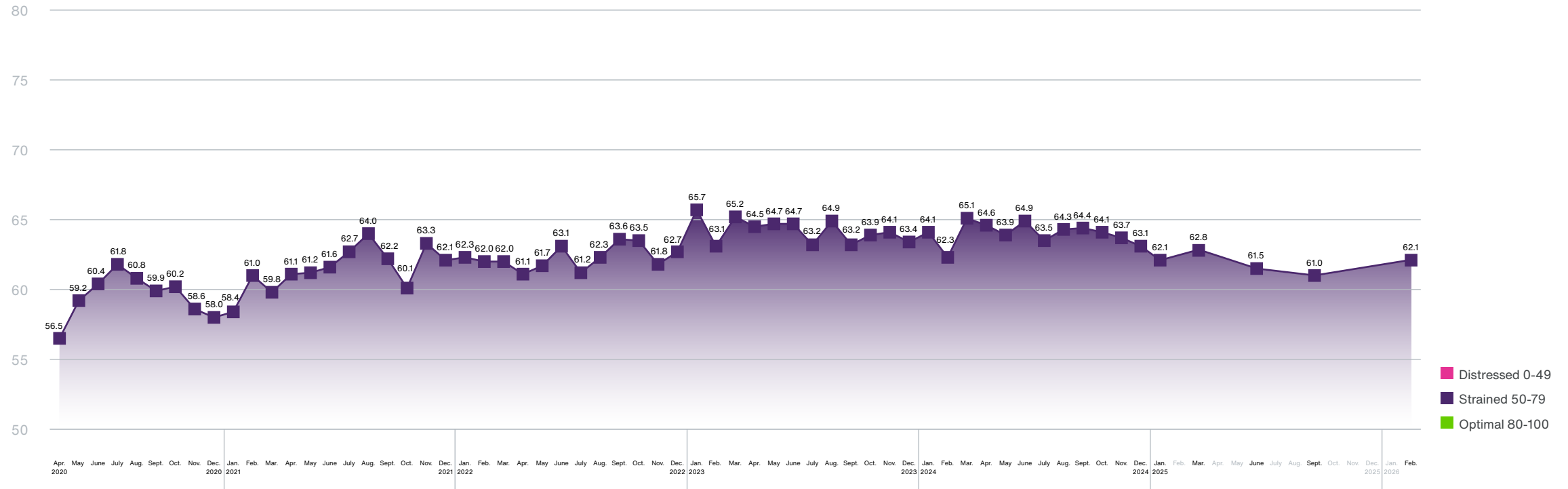
In the first quarter of 2026, 27 percent of workers report often feeling unsettled and nervous.

Despite incremental improvements since the launch of the MHI in April 2020, anxiety has been the lowest mental health sub-score for nearly six years. The anxiety score generally trended upward through mid-2024, then declined through September 2025.

In February 2026, the anxiety sub-score has improved by one point.

Sub-score  
February 2026

**62.1**



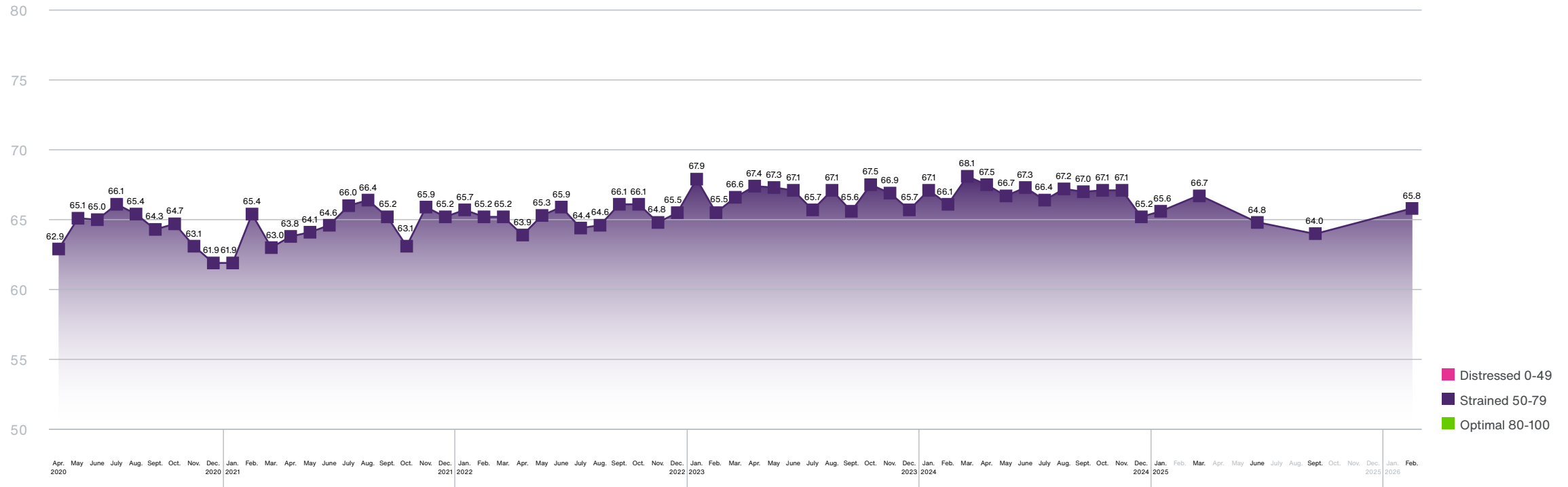
## Isolation

In the first quarter of 2026, 25 percent of workers report often feeling alone.

Despite frequent periods of volatility, isolation sub-scores generally improved from the MHI's launch in April 2020 through March 2024. Following a one-point improvement in March 2025, the isolation sub-score dropped nearly three points over two consecutive periods. In February 2026, the isolation score has improved by nearly two points. Despite this gain, isolation continues to be the second-lowest mental health sub-score for almost six years.

Sub-score  
February 2026

65.8



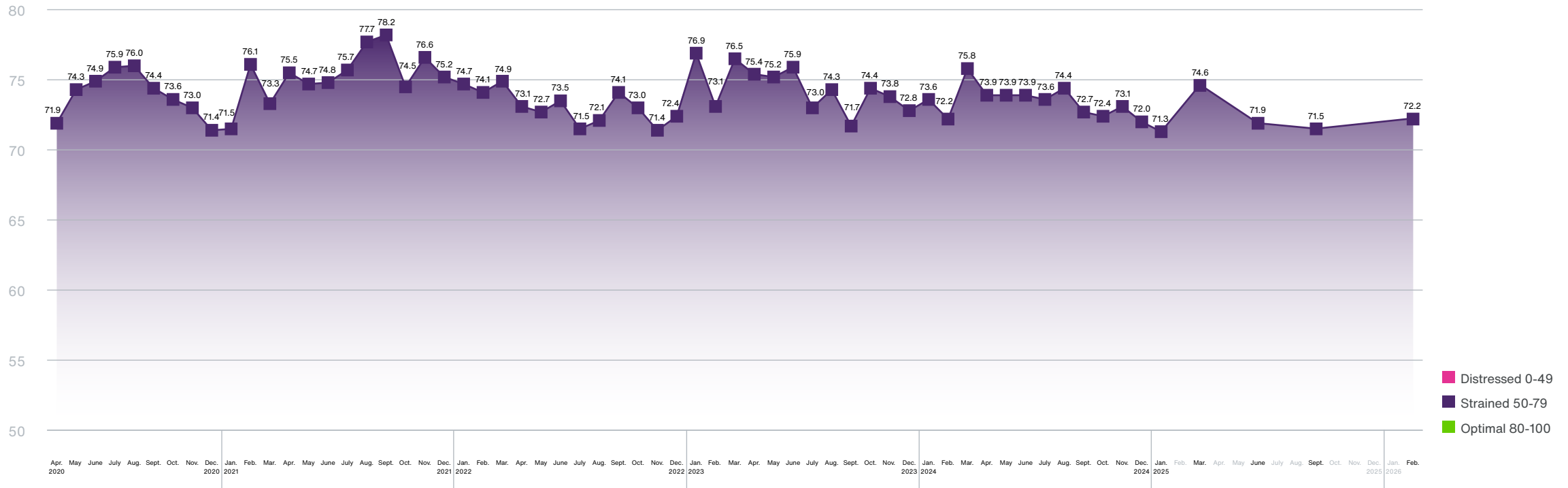
## Financial risk

In the first quarter of 2026, 25 percent of workers do not have emergency savings to cover basic needs.

The financial risk sub-score has varied significantly since the MHI's launch in April 2020. Following a nearly four-point improvement from February to March 2024, the financial risk score declined by nearly five points through January 2025. Despite a notable recovery in March 2025, the sub-score declined in two consecutive periods, June and September 2025. In February 2026, the financial risk sub-score improved modestly, yet it remains near its lowest level since the Index's launch.

Sub-score  
February 2026

72.2



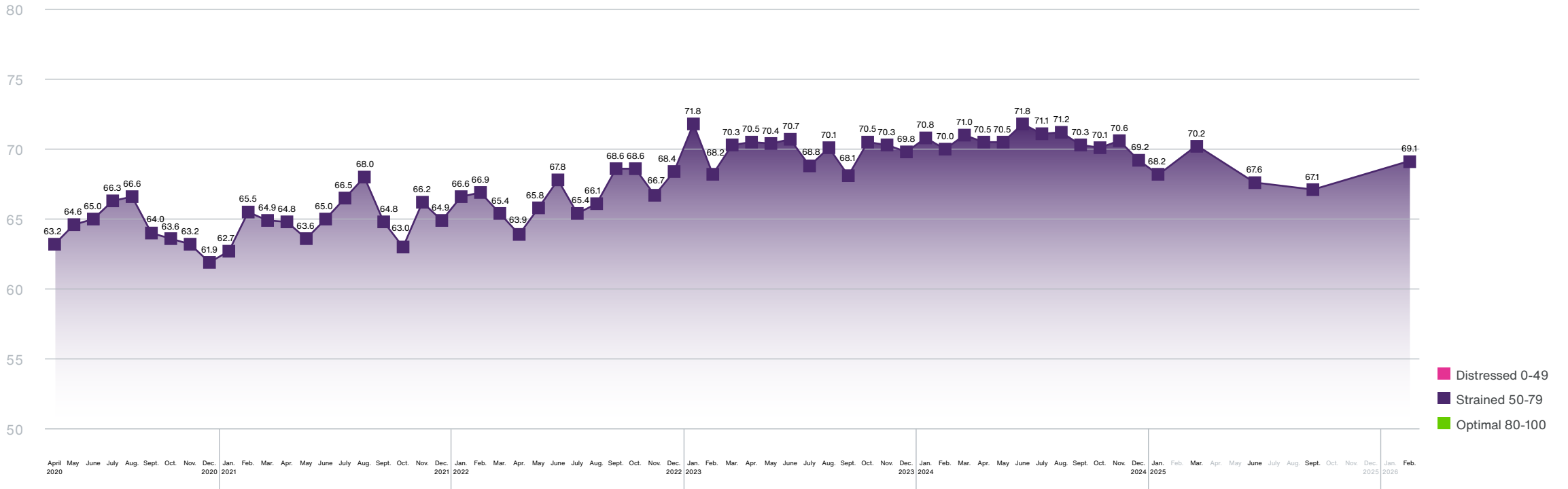
## Work productivity

In the first quarter of 2026, 22 percent of workers say their mental health is negatively impacting their work productivity and goals.

The work productivity sub-score demonstrated steady improvement from the MHI launch in April 2020 through January 2023. A shift occurred in January 2023, marking the beginning of a downward trend, except for a brief recovery in June 2024. The score declined for two consecutive periods in June and September 2025. While the score has improved by two points in February 2026, it remains below the three-year average.

Sub-score  
February 2026

69.1



## Mental health by gender and age.

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have had significantly lower mental health scores than men. In the first quarter of 2026, the mental health score for women is 67.6, compared with 71.4 for men
- Since April 2020, mental health scores have improved with age
- Differences in mental health scores between workers with and without minor children have been reported since the launch of the MHI in April 2020. Nearly six years later, this pattern persists with a lower score for workers with at least one child (66.8) compared to workers without children (70.5)

## Mental health by employment status.

- Overall, three percent of respondents are unemployed<sup>1</sup> and seven percent report reduced hours or reduced salary
- Workers reporting reduced salary compared to the previous month have the lowest mental health score (56.2), followed by workers reporting fewer hours than the last month (60.4), respondents not currently employed (65.8), and workers with no change to salary or hours (70.3)
- Managers have a higher mental health score (71.0) than non-managers (68.5)
- Laborers have a lower mental health score (66.4) than service industry (69.2) and office workers (70.6)
- Respondents working for companies with 1,001-5,000 employees have the highest mental health score (70.8)
- Respondents working for companies with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (68.0)



## Emergency savings

- Workers without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (53.7) than the overall group (69.4). Workers with emergency savings have a mental health score of 74.6

<sup>1</sup> MHI respondents who have been employed in the past six months are included in the poll.

## The Mental Health Index by region.

In the first quarter of 2026, mental health scores in the Midwest, West, and Southern regions of the United States have increased compared with the previous period, whereas the Northeast's mental health score is unchanged.

- With a sizeable 2.4-point improvement, the Southern United States has gone from having the lowest mental health score in September 2025 to tying the Northeast region (69.8) for the highest score in the first quarter of 2026

Region	February 2026	September 2025	Change
South	69.8	67.4	2.4
West	68.9	68.1	0.8
Midwest	69.0	68.4	0.6
Northeast	69.8	69.8	0.0

Numbers highlighted in pink are the lowest/worst scores in the group.  
Numbers highlighted in green are the highest/best scores in the group.



Employment status	Feb. 2026	Sept. 2025
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	70.3	69.1
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	60.4	58.9
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	56.2	55.3
Not currently employed	65.8	66.9

Age group	Feb. 2026	Sept. 2025
Age 20-29	58.7	57.3
Age 30-39	63.4	61.8
Age 40-49	64.9	64.8
Age 50-59	69.9	68.9
Age 60-69	74.8	75.1

Number of children	Feb. 2026	Sept. 2025
No children in household	70.5	70.0
1 child	67.2	63.7
2 children	66.5	66.2
3 children or more	65.7	64.7

Gender	Feb. 2026	Sept. 2025
Men	71.4	70.1
Women	67.6	66.5

Household income/annum	Feb. 2026	Sept. 2025
<\$30K	58.0	55.7
\$30K to <\$60K	64.6	62.2
\$60K to <\$100K	68.6	68.2
\$100K to <\$150K	72.7	72.9
\$150K or more	75.4	74.8

Employer size	Feb. 2026	Sept. 2025
Self-employed/sole proprietor	68.7	67.3
2-50 employees	70.0	68.9
51-100 employees	68.0	64.9
101-500 employees	70.0	68.9
501-1,000 employees	68.2	67.2
1,001-5,000 employees	70.8	70.3
5,001-10,000 employees	69.9	68.5
More than 10,000 employees	69.9	69.5

Manager	Feb. 2026	Sept. 2025
Manager	71.0	69.1
Non-manager	68.5	67.8

Work environment	Feb. 2026	Sept. 2025
Labor	66.4	64.3
Office/desk	70.6	69.4
Service	69.2	68.3

Numbers highlighted in pink are the lowest/worst scores in the group.  
Numbers highlighted in green are the highest/best scores in the group.

## The Mental Health Index by industry.

Workers in Media and Telecommunications have the lowest mental health score (61.3), followed by workers in Information and Cultural Industries (62.6) and Food Services (62.8).

Workers in Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (74.8), Manufacturing (73.7), and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (73.6) have the highest mental health scores in the first quarter of 2026.



Industry	February 2026	September 2025	Change
Accommodation	70.9	64.6	6.3
Utilities	71.4	67.3	4.1
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	70.5	66.8	3.7
Administrative and Support Services	64.5	61.1	3.4
Manufacturing	73.7	70.9	2.8
Food Services	62.8	60.0	2.8
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	74.8	72.1	2.7
Health Care and Social Assistance	69.2	66.6	2.6
Construction	69.2	66.7	2.5
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	73.6	71.8	1.8
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	69.9	68.5	1.4
Other services (except Public Administration)	67.7	66.4	1.3
Educational Services	72.3	71.2	1.1
Finance and Insurance	73.0	72.6	0.4
Technology	68.2	68.5	-0.3
Public Administration	71.4	71.8	-0.4
Retail Trade	66.3	66.7	-0.4
Other	66.8	67.3	-0.5
Media and Telecommunications	61.3	61.8	-0.5
Information and Cultural Industries	62.6	64.6	-2.0
Wholesale Trade	72.2	74.2	-2.0
Transportation and Warehousing	66.8	69.2	-2.4
Management of Companies and Enterprises	67.7	71.7	-4.0

# Spotlight

## The relationship between MHI scores and productivity.

Productivity losses are calculated using an assessment of four key metrics:

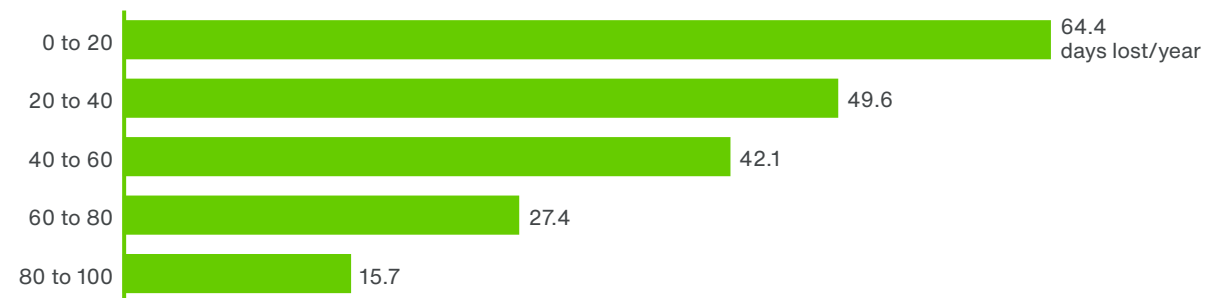
1. Work effort when feeling well
2. Absenteeism when feeling unwell
3. Instances of working when feeling unwell (commonly referred to as Presenteeism)
4. Work effort when feeling unwell

Productivity loss is reported as a percentage of working time lost and as the number of workdays lost per year, based on a standard 240-day work year.

- Mental health scores are strongly correlated with productivity. Workers with lower mental health scores experience greater productivity loss, while those with higher scores experience less productivity loss
- Nearly one in five (19 percent) workers have a mental health score of 50 or lower. The productivity loss of this group is nearly three times the number of lost workdays as 33 percent of workers with a mental health score of 80 or higher



Productivity loss in working days per year by MHI score

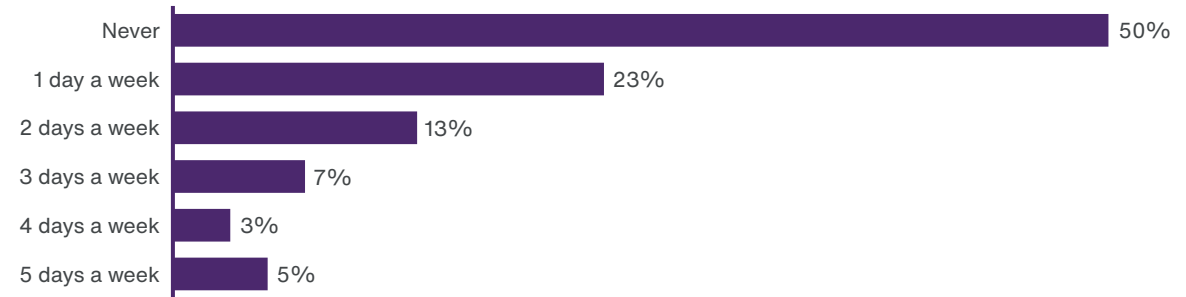


# Presenteeism

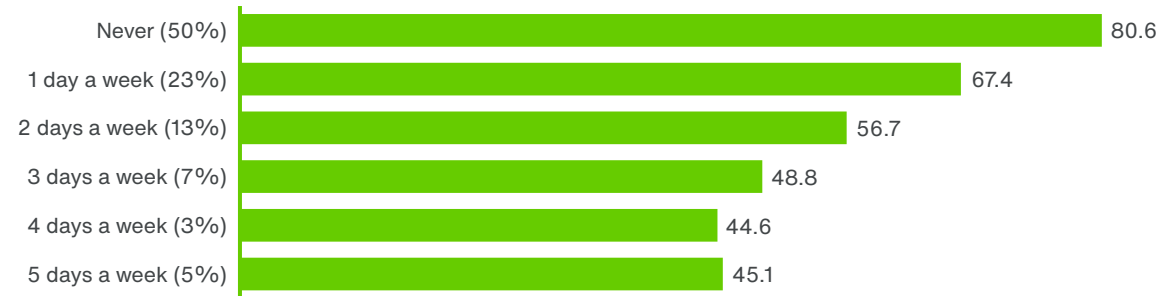
**Presenteeism refers to productivity loss when someone is working while unwell. Half of workers report doing their jobs at least one day per week while feeling unwell.**

- 50 percent of employees report working while feeling unwell at least one day per week; this group has significantly lower mental health scores and experiences greater productivity losses compared to workers who never work while unwell
- The highest mental health score (80.6) is among 50 percent of workers who never work while unwell, more than 11 points higher than the national average (69.4)
- Workers over 50 are nearly twice as likely as workers under 40 to report never working while unwell
- Non-parents are 50 percent more likely than parents to report never working while unwell

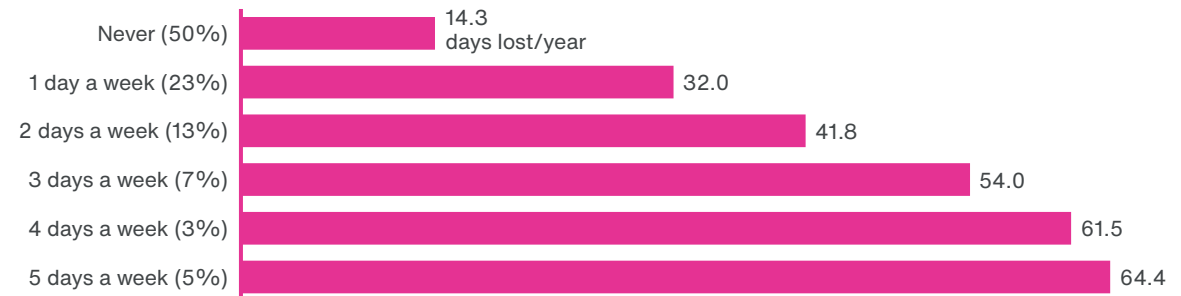
**In a typical week, how often do you do your job feeling mentally or physically unwell?**



**MHI score by “In a typical week, how often do you do your job feeling mentally or physically unwell?”**



**Productivity Loss by “In a typical week, how often do you do your job feeling mentally or physically unwell?”**



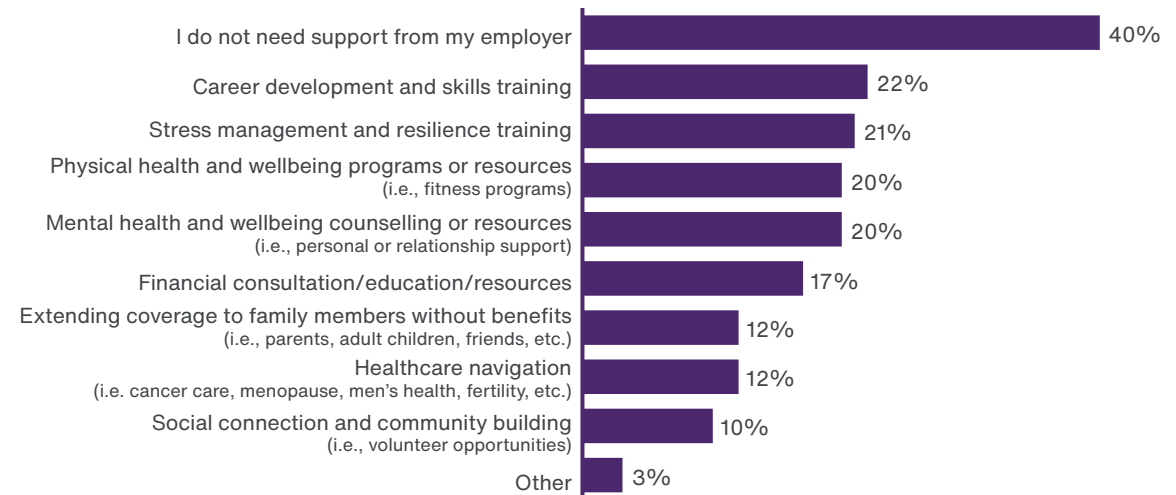
## Employer support for wellbeing

**One in five workers wants better support for their mental and physical health.**

- More than one in five (22 percent) workers want career development and skills training, 21 percent want stress management and resilience training, 20 percent want better support for their physical health, 20 percent want better mental health support, and 17 percent want better support with financial resources, education or consultation
- Workers under 40 are more than twice as likely as workers over 50 to want better support for their mental health
- Workers under 40 are 80 percent more likely than workers over 50 to want better support for their physical health

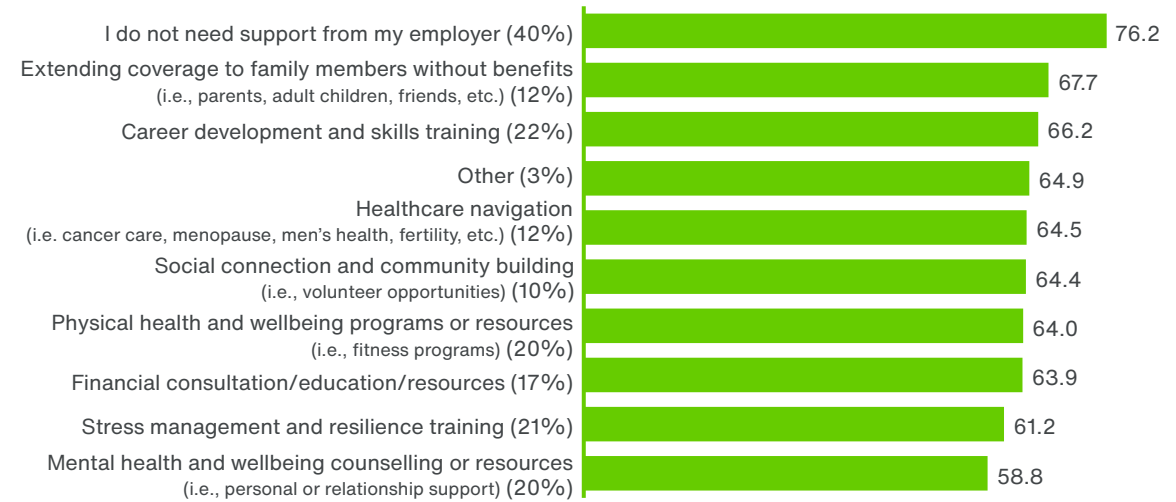


### Are there any areas where you feel your employer could provide better support?



- The lowest mental health score (58.8) is among 20 percent of workers wanting better support for their mental health, more than 17 points lower than workers not needing support from their employer (76.2), and nearly 11 points lower than the national average (69.4)
- Workers wanting better support for their mental health have an annual productivity loss of 41.7 days, 22 days more compared to those requiring no support (19.6 working days per year)
- Workers over 50 are twice as likely as workers under 40 to say they don't need support from their employer
- Non-parents are 65 percent more likely than parents to say they don't need support from their employer
- Non-managers are 50 percent more likely than managers to report they don't need support from their employer

#### MHI score by “Are there any areas where you feel your employer could provide better support?”



#### MHI score by “Are there any areas where you feel your employer could provide better support?”

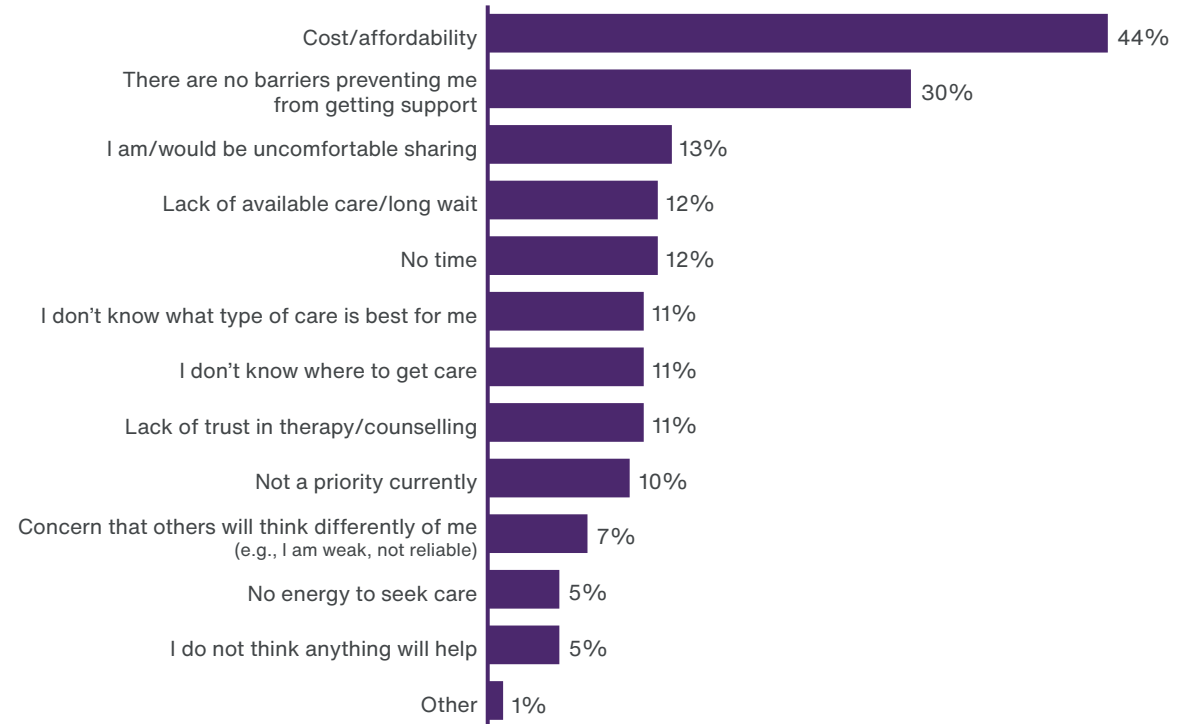


## Barriers to mental health support.

### Cost/affordability most commonly prevents workers from getting mental health support.

- More than two in five (44 percent) workers say cost/affordability is preventing them from getting mental health support, 13 percent say they would be uncomfortable sharing, 12 percent say it's a lack of available care or a long wait, 12 percent say they don't have time to seek care, 11 percent don't know what type of care is best, and 11 percent don't know where to get mental health care
- Managers, parents, and workers under 40 are at least 80 percent more likely to be concerned that others will think differently of them if they seek mental health support
- Workers over 50 are twice as likely as workers under 40 to report no barriers to support
- Non-parents are 50 percent more likely than parents to report no barriers to support

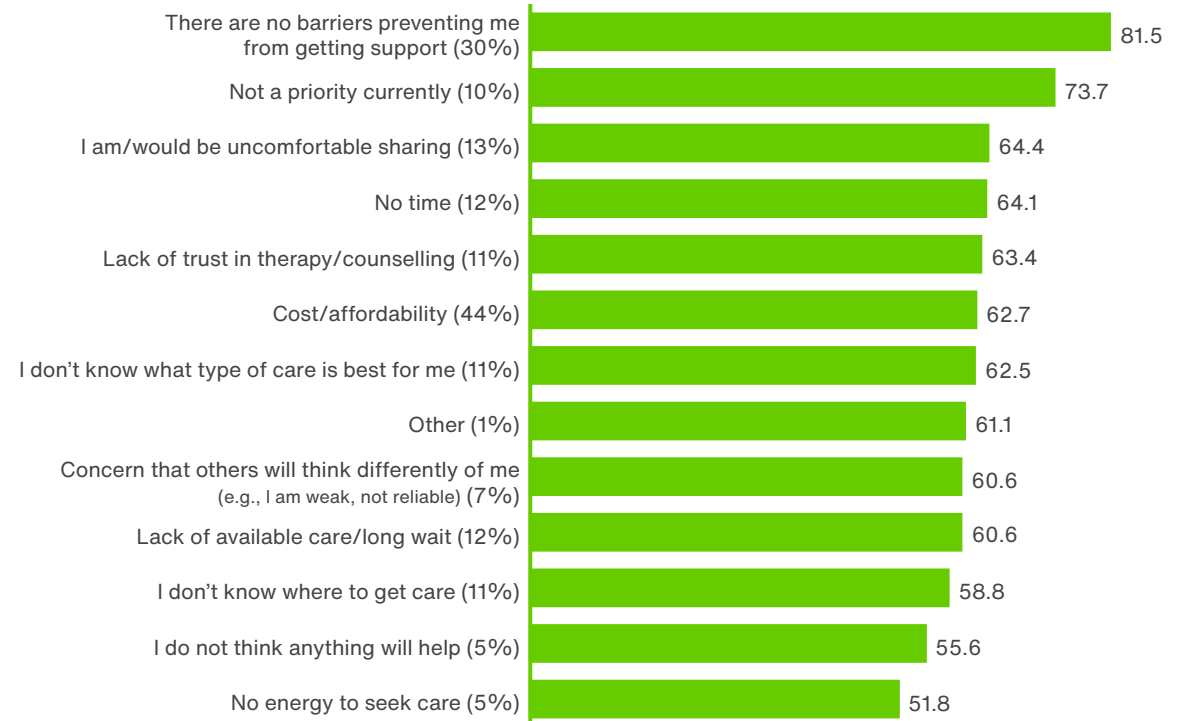
### What would prevent you from getting mental health support if you needed it?



- The highest mental health score (81.5) is among 30 percent of workers reporting no barriers to mental health support, 12 points higher than the national average (69.4)
- The lowest mental health score (51.8) is among five percent of workers who lack the energy to seek care, nearly 30 points lower than workers reporting no barriers to support (81.5) and nearly 18 points lower than the national average (69.4)



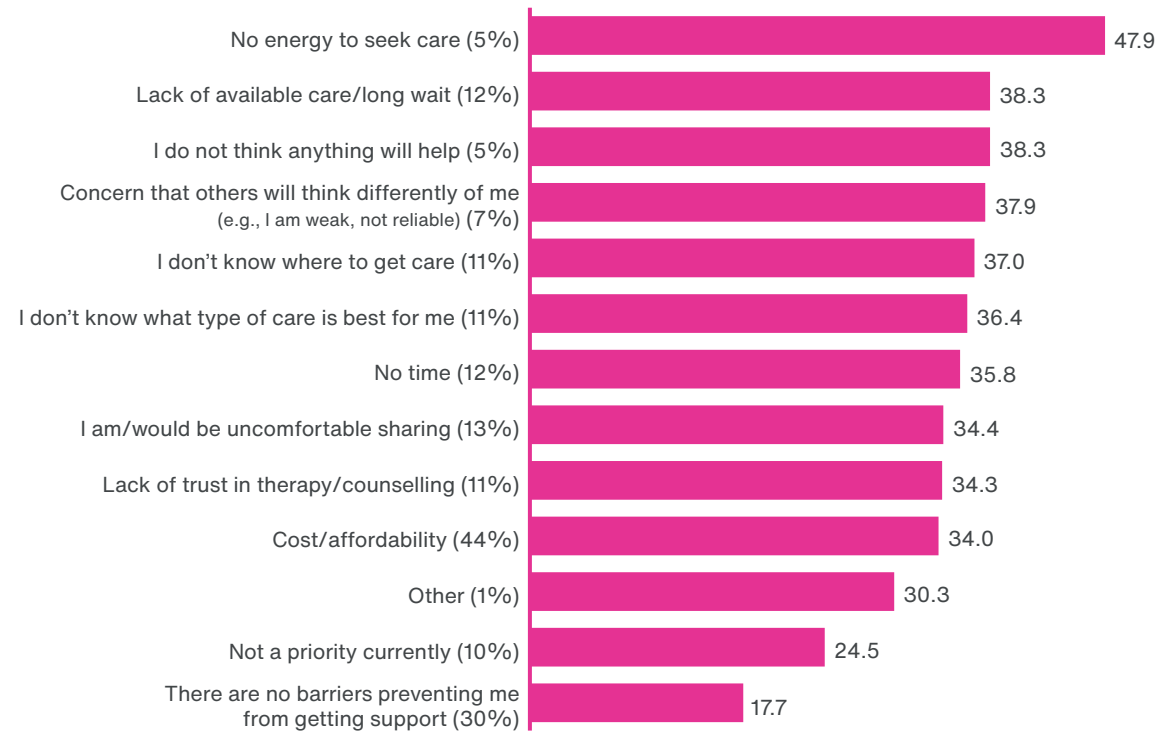
### MHI score by “What would prevent you from getting mental health support if you needed it?”



- Workers reporting no barriers to support have an annual productivity loss of 17.7 days, 30 days fewer compared to those lacking the energy to seek care (47.9 working days per year)



**Productivity Loss by “What would prevent you from getting mental health support if you needed it?”**

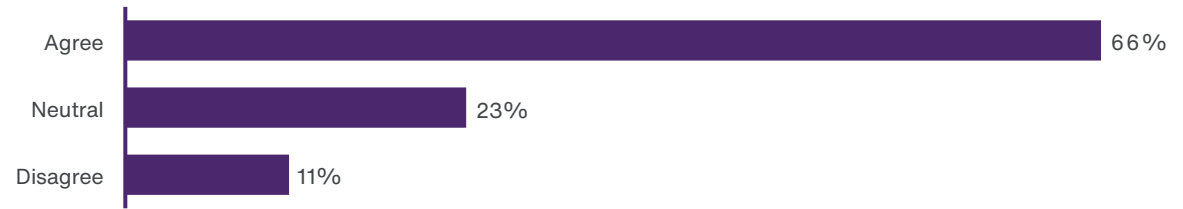


# Workplace culture

**Only two-thirds of workers believe their organization’s culture supports their wellbeing.**

- Two-thirds (66 percent) of workers perceive their workplace culture as supportive of their personal wellbeing; this group has the highest mental health score (73.9), nearly five points higher than the national average (69.4)
- More than one in ten (11 percent) don’t perceive their workplace culture as supportive of their personal wellbeing; this group has the lowest mental health score (55.5), more than 18 points lower than workers who perceive their workplace culture as supportive (73.9) and 14 points lower than the national average (69.4)
- Workers who perceive their workplace culture as supportive of their personal wellbeing have an annual productivity loss of 23.4 days; 25 days fewer compared to workers who perceive it as unsupportive (48.4 working days per year)

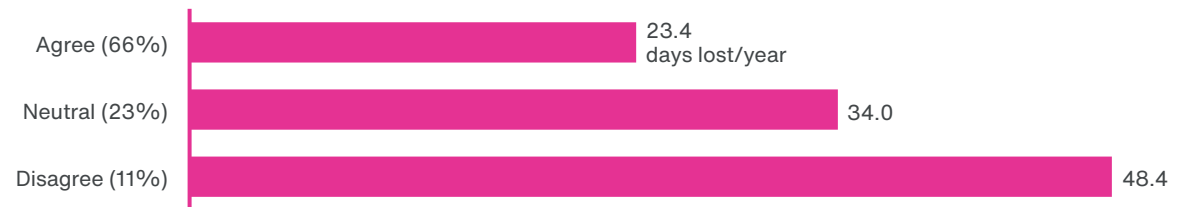
The workplace culture at my organization supports my personal wellbeing



MHI score by “The workplace culture at my organization supports my personal wellbeing”



Productivity Loss by “The workplace culture at my organization supports my personal wellbeing”



# Turnover

**More than one-quarter of workers are considering leaving their jobs or are uncertain about staying.**

- Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of workers are not thinking about leaving their jobs; this group has the highest mental health score (73.7), more than four points higher than the national average (69.4)
- One in 10 (10 percent) workers is thinking about leaving their jobs; this group has the lowest mental health score (54.9), nearly 19 points lower than workers who are not thinking of leaving their jobs (73.7) and nearly 15 points lower than the national average (69.4)
- Workers not considering leaving their jobs have an annual productivity loss of 23.0 days, a difference of nearly 29 days compared to workers considering a change (51.6 working days per year)

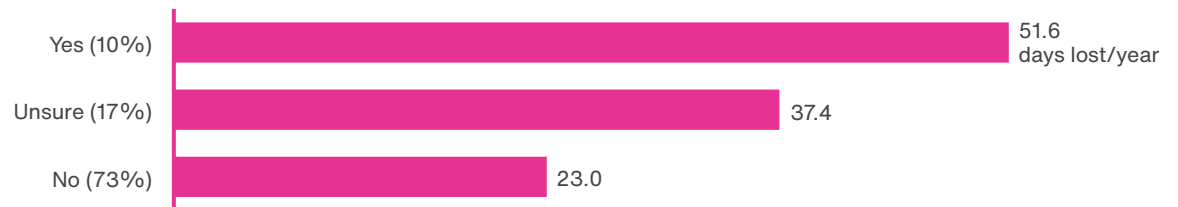
## Are you thinking of leaving your job?



## MHI score by “Are you thinking of leaving your job?”



## Productivity Loss by “Are you thinking of leaving your job?”

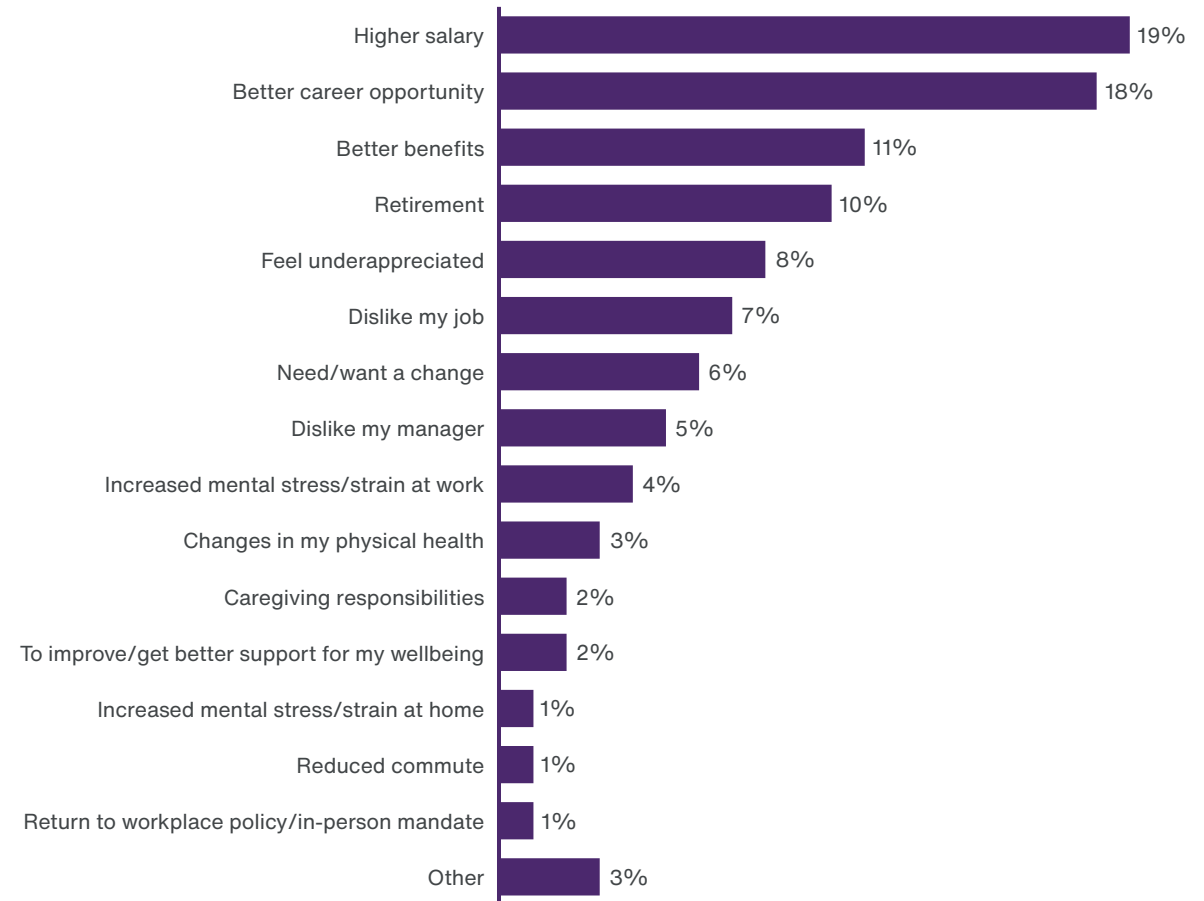


**Higher salaries, better career opportunities and improved benefits are the primary drivers of turnover intention.**

- Nearly one in five (19 percent) workers who are thinking of leaving say a higher salary is the primary reason for considering leaving their jobs, 18 percent say it's for better career opportunities, and 11 percent say better benefits are the reason
- Workers under 40, parents, and managers are more likely to report better career opportunities and better benefits as the reasons for considering leaving their jobs



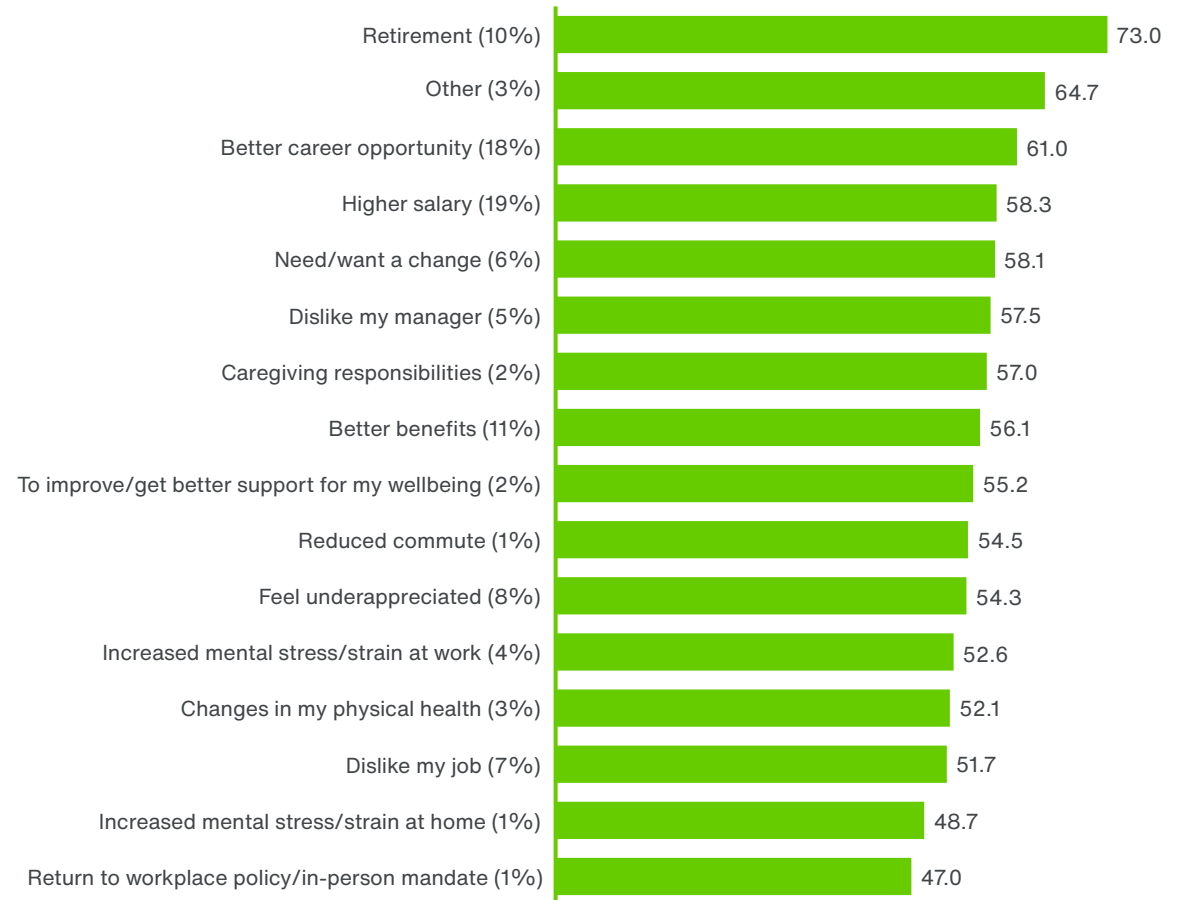
**What is the primary reason you are thinking of leaving your job?**



- The mental health score of 11 percent of workers considering leaving their jobs for better benefits (56.1) is more than 13 points lower than the national average (69.4); this group also experiences a productivity loss of 41.6 days annually

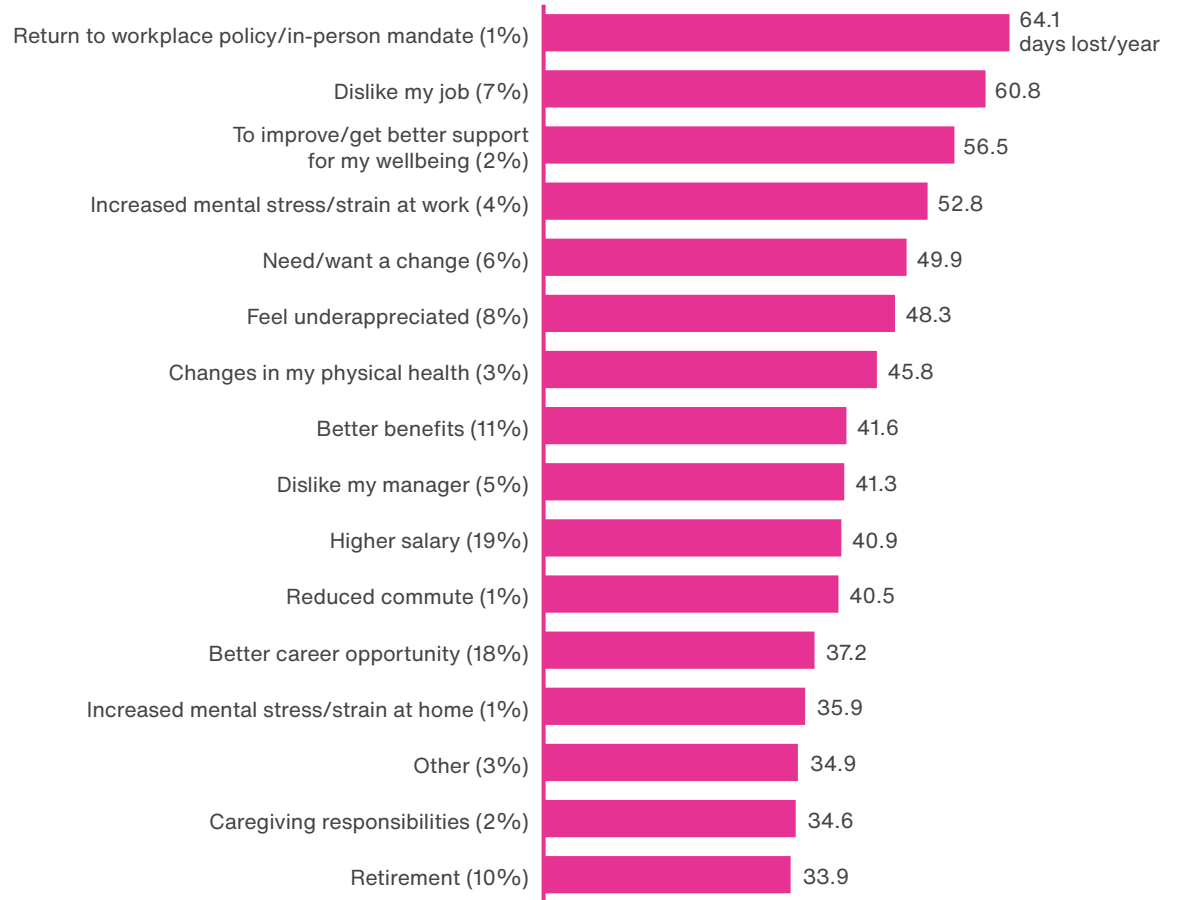


### MHI score by “What is the primary reason you are thinking of leaving your job?”





### Productivity Loss by “What is the primary reason you are thinking of leaving your job?”



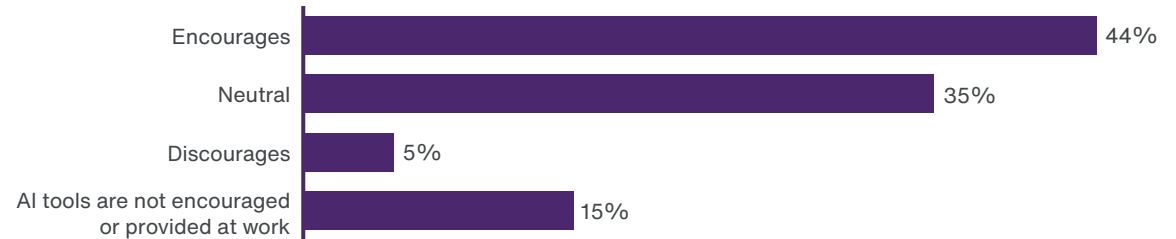
## Adoption of AI at work.

**More than two in five workers are encouraged to use AI tools in their work.**

- More than two in five (44 percent) workers report that their employer encourages AI use; the mental health score of this group (70.0) is slightly higher than the national average (69.4)
- Managers are 50 percent more likely than non-managers to say their employer supports or encourages the use of AI tools in their work
- The lowest mental health score (63.1) is among five percent of workers reporting their employer discourages the use of AI tools in their work, seven points lower than workers whose employers encourage AI tools (70.0) and more than six points lower than the national average (69.4)



**To what extent does your employer support or encourage the use of AI tools in your work?**



**MHI score by “To what extent does your employer support or encourage the use of AI tools in your work?”**



**Among workers who use AI tools or technologies at work, nearly three in five report improved efficiency.**

- Nearly two in five (37 percent) workers use AI in their work at least several times per week; a further 13 percent use AI in their work several times per month
- Nearly three in five (57 percent) workers using AI report improved efficiency; this group has a mental health score (69.3) in line with the national average (69.4)
- Managers are 50 percent more likely than non-managers to report that AI tools/technologies have improved their efficiency at work



**How often do you use AI tools or technologies in your current job?**



**How would you describe the impact of AI tools/technologies on your efficiency at work?**



**MHI score by “How would you describe the impact of AI tools/technologies on your efficiency at work?”**



# Overview of the TELUS Mental Health Index.

The mental health and wellbeing of a population are essential to overall health and work productivity. The Mental Health Index measures the current mental health status of employed adults. Increases and decreases in the MHI are intended to predict cost and productivity risks and inform the need for investment in mental health support by businesses and governments.

## The Mental Health Index report has two parts:

1. The overall Mental Health Index (MHI).
2. A spotlight section that reflects the specific impact of current issues in the community.

## Methodology

Data for this report is collected through an online survey of 5,000 people who live in the United States and are currently employed or who were employed within the last six months. Participants are selected to represent the age, gender, industry, and geographic distribution in the United States. Respondents are asked to consider the previous two weeks when answering each question. Data for the current report were collected between February 25 and March 9, 2026.

## Calculations

To create the Mental Health Index, a response scoring system is applied to turn individual responses into point values. Higher point values are associated with better mental health and less mental health risk. The sum of scores is divided by the total number of possible points to generate a score out of 100. The raw score is the mathematical mean of the individual scores. The distribution of scores is defined according to the following scale:

**Distressed** 0 - 49    **Strained** 50-79    **Optimal** 80 - 100

## Additional data and analyses.

Demographic breakdowns of sub-scores and specific cross-correlational and custom analyses are available upon request. Benchmarking against the national results or any subgroup is available upon request. Contact [MHI@telushealth.com](mailto:MHI@telushealth.com)





[www.telushealth.com](http://www.telushealth.com)

