

# The Mental Health Index by LifeWorks™

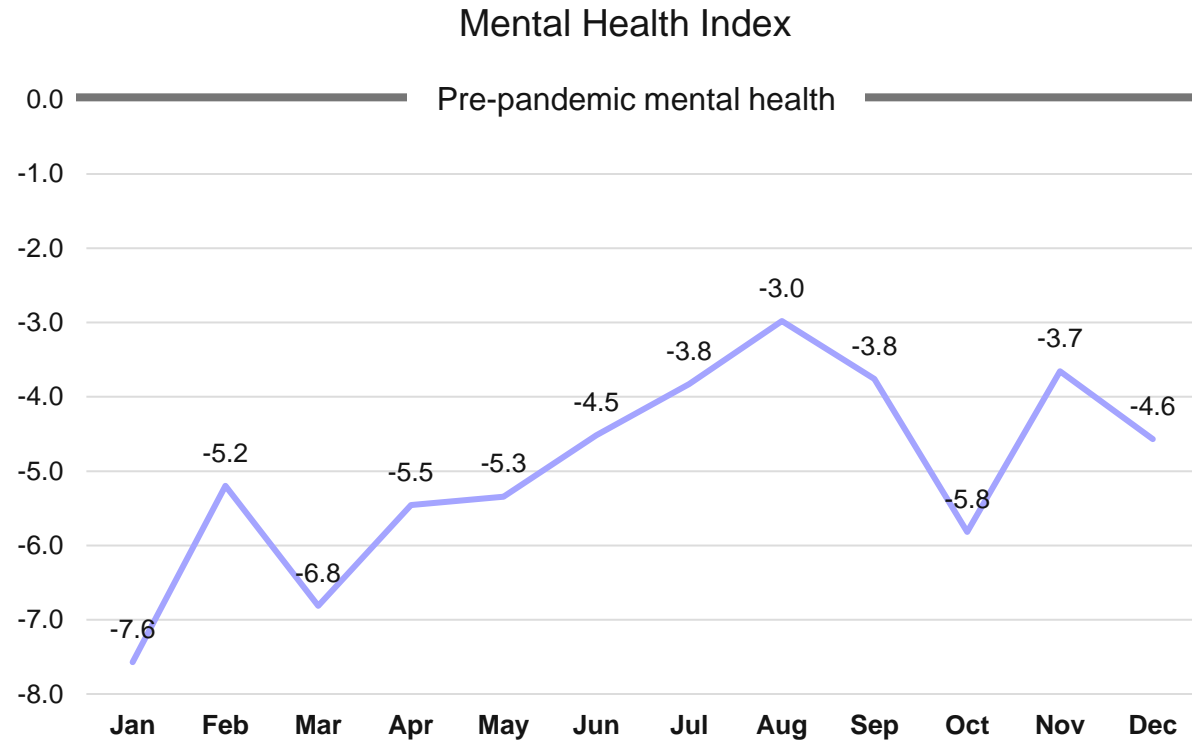
US: 2021 year-end review



# Mental Health Index trend

At the beginning of 2021, the mental health in the US was nearly equal to the lowest score recorded, at the launch of the Index in April 2020. Five months of continual improvement were observed from April to August, reaching a high of -3.0.

In the final quarter of 2021, the mental health in the US fluctuated more than two points, ending the year at -4.6. At that time, the mental health of the population was equal to the **most distressed 34%** of the pre-pandemic benchmark population.



Zero represents 2019  
Negative scores represent a decline

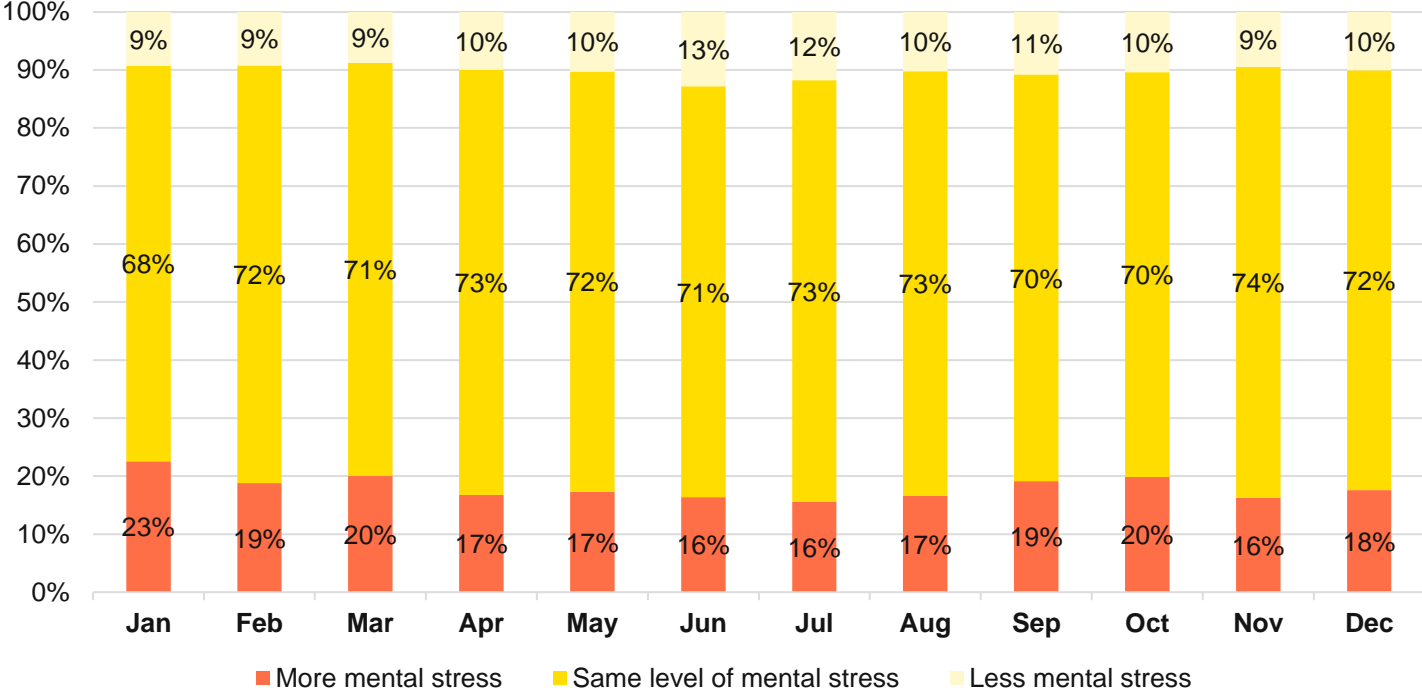
The MHI is a measure of deviation from the 2017-2019 benchmark of mental health and risk. A negative score indicates a decline in mental health compared to the benchmark period. The more negative the score, the greater the decline.

# Mental stress change

The percentage of Americans experiencing more mental stress compared to the previous month fluctuated month to month from a high of 23% in January to lows of 16%. By year-end, the percentage of those reporting more mental stress than the prior month was 18%.

The proportion of individuals reporting the same level of mental stress or more mental stress than the previous month continues to outweigh the proportion reporting less mental stress. This suggests that in 2021, the population did not have a sustainable and healthy balance of stress.

Mental stress changes by month



# Mental health of Americans in 2021

More than two in five Americans believe that their **career options** would be **limited** if they had a **mental health issue**, and their workplace was aware. (Dec)

- Nearly half of Americans feel the need for **mental health support** and roughly a third want to focus on their mental health. (Jan, Apr)
- More than one in five Americans **are less willing to access mental healthcare** during the pandemic and this group has a less favourable mental health score. (Mar)

- 31% of working Americans that use alcohol have **increased their consumption** since the pandemic and this group has the least favourable mental health and isolation scores. (May)
- There is an ancillary **isolation pandemic**. Nearly one in six Americans indicate that isolation has been the most difficult for them in terms of their mental health. (Jun)
- In addition to **women, parents, post-secondary students**, those with **reduced income**, and those without **emergency savings**, are among those whose mental health has shown the **greatest decline**. (all months)
- **Women** are more than twice as likely to report **worry/anxiety** as their primary emotion than men. (Sep)

- 20% **feel in crisis** or have concerns about their ability to cope. (Oct)
- More than one in six employed Americans report a **decline in their mental health**. (Oct)
- More than two in five Americans believe that their **career options** would be **limited** if they had a **mental health issue**, and their workplace was aware. (Dec)



# Mental health and the workplace



Those who feel a **sense of belonging and acceptance** at work have among the highest mental health scores and among the best isolation scores, both significantly better than national averages. (Aug)

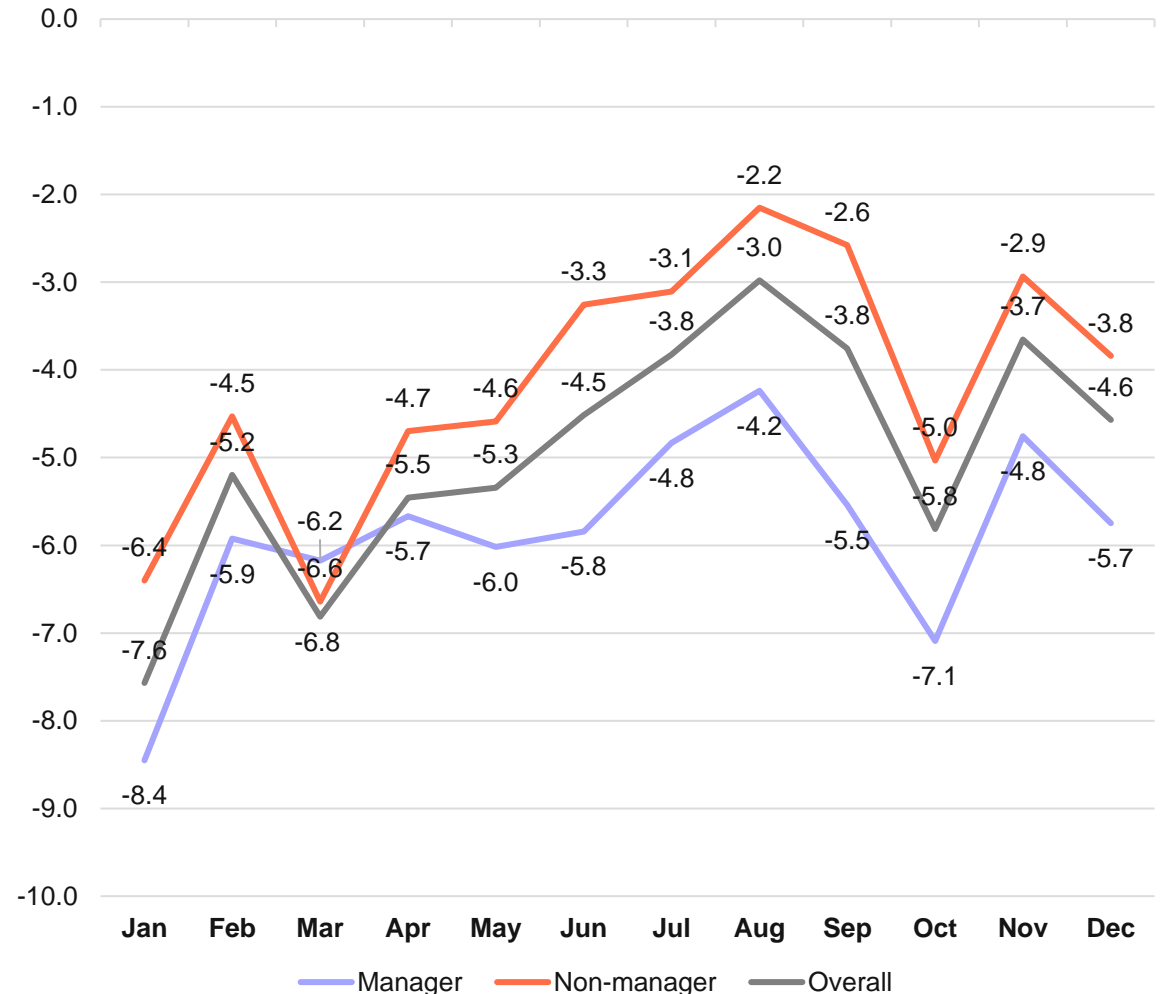
- Employees saying that their organization supports their **personal wellbeing** and is a **great place to work** have a better mental health. (Jul, Aug)
- Those who feel a **sense of belonging and acceptance** at work have among the highest mental health scores and among the best isolation scores, both significantly better than national averages. (Aug)
- Lower **mental health** scores correspond to lower **productivity** and higher mental health scores correspond to higher productivity, a difference of 30 workdays per year. (Aug)
- Nearly one-third of Americans report an increase in **job stress** in 2021 compared to 2020. (Sep)
- 30% of employed Americans are either thinking about **leaving their job** or are unsure and this group has poorer mental health scores. (Sep)
- **Manager and peer relationships** have deteriorated since before the pandemic, which has impacted both mental health and productivity. (Oct)
- The type of flexibility that is most important for Americans (31%) is the **flexibility to step away from work** to attend to personal issues. (Dec)
- Nearly two in five employees indicate that full flexibility, giving **choice in how, when and where they work** is best for their team. (Dec)

# Spotlight on people leaders as a vulnerable group

Since January 2021, the mental health scores of managers have been lower than non-managers and lower than the overall American average except for March. After two months of declines, the mental health scores of managers and non-managers improved in November 2021; however, both scores have declined notably in December, with managers at -5.7 and non-managers at -3.8 points below the pre-2020 benchmark.

- Nearly 40% of managers would **feel more negatively** about themselves if they had a **mental health issue**, compared to 25% of non-managers. (Feb)
- Managers are more likely to report an **improved relationship** with their work peers and with their leaders compared to non-managers. (Mar, Jul)
- Managers are more than 60% more likely to report **increased job stress** than non-managers. (Sep)
- Managers are nearly twice as likely as non-managers to have concerns about their mental health and their **ability to cope** or indicate that they **feel in crisis**. (Oct)

Mental health scores of managers and non-managers



# Spotlight on parents as a vulnerable group

- Parents are over twice as likely as non-parents to report being **less willing to access mental healthcare**. (Mar)
- Parents report **more substance use** than non-parents and indicate an impact on their work and home lives. (May)
- One in ten American parents report that the **mental health** of their **child(ren)** has declined. (Jun)
- 60% of parents **work when feeling unwell** at least one day per week compared to 40% of non-parents. (Aug)
- Parents are 80% more likely than non-parents to report wanting **flexibility** in **work location** and 60% more likely to report wanting flexibility in **work hours**. (Sep)
- Parents are nearly **three times more likely** as non-parents to be **in crisis** or to have concerns about their ability to cope. (Oct)

