



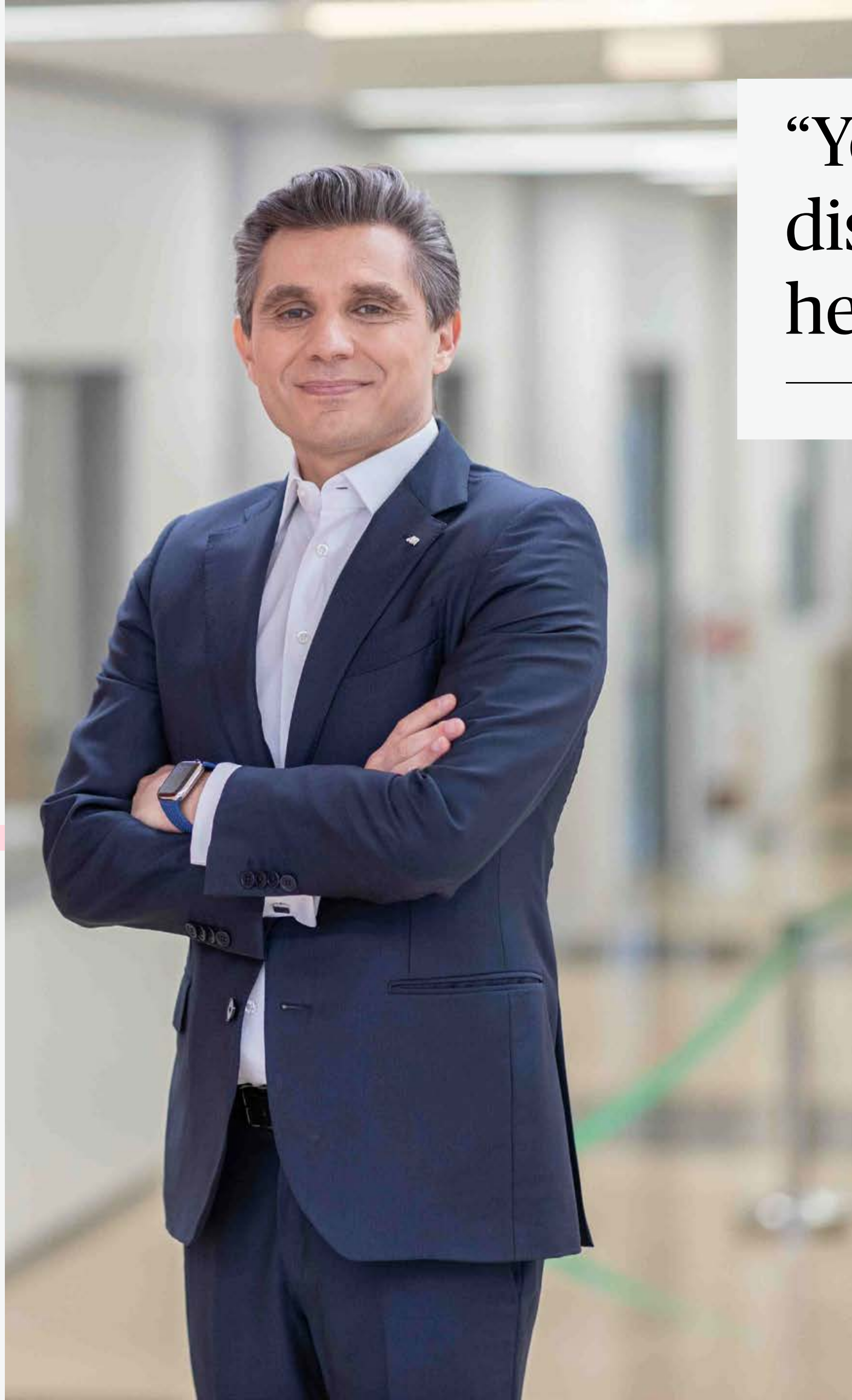
Mind Your Health in The Workplace

2024 Mind health report

Mind health vs. Mental health

Why we prefer the term "Mind health"?

The report generally uses the term mind health rather than mental health to emphasize the positive objective of the study: To help break down the stigma still associated with mental illness that can prevent people from sharing how they feel or seeking medical help.



“Younger people today seem disproportionately impacted by mind health issues than older generations”

—— Patrick Cohen, CEO AXA Europe and Health

3 questions to Patrick Cohen, CEO AXA Europe and Health

What are the key takeaways from this year’s Mind Health Study?

Overall, the mind health state in our populations is a concern. For every three people who feel they are flourishing or getting by in life, there are two who are languishing or struggling. Indeed, the proportion of people who are struggling with their mind health has returned to 2021 levels, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. Younger people today seem disproportionately impacted by mind health issues than older generations. Likewise, the gap between women and men continues to widen.

Which factors are holding back global mind health?

The study suggests that many people in need of mind health support are unaware of their need or unwilling to seek professional help due to stigma. Likewise, people at work don’t recognize mind health issues – such as extreme tiredness, lack of sleep and anxiety – as work related. This disconnect around the perception and reality of mind health presents

an opportunity to raise awareness on a more broad approach to health, acceptance and assistance across society. How can we break the cycle of high demand and low service access, and high levels of societal stigma to more open communication on the individuals needs.

What message does the study send to employers?

The AXA Mind Health Study highlights a clear business case for caring for employees’ mind health. Truly, companies have a role to play in supporting their employees to regain control over the future with an optimistic outlook. When people’s mind health improves, they flourish, and in turn, so do our businesses and economy. Work can certainly have a positive role in people's lives. Let's continue working towards a better state of mind health for everyone. ■

5 Key take-aways

The study offers a wide number of insights into the current state of global mind health. Here are the headline conclusions from society and the workplace.

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1. Mind Health Issues are globally *on the rise*

The Mind Health Index has deteriorated over the last 12 months, with fewer people flourishing and more struggling, demonstrating the continued importance of prioritizing mind health in the world today.



32%

the proportion of the population experiencing mind health conditions

2. Young people are *struggling*

Amongst the general population, young people are still the most impacted. During the Covid-19 pandemic, much emphasis was placed on the deteriorating mind health of the population, particularly young people. Four years after the epidemic, the situation has not improved and continues to worsen.

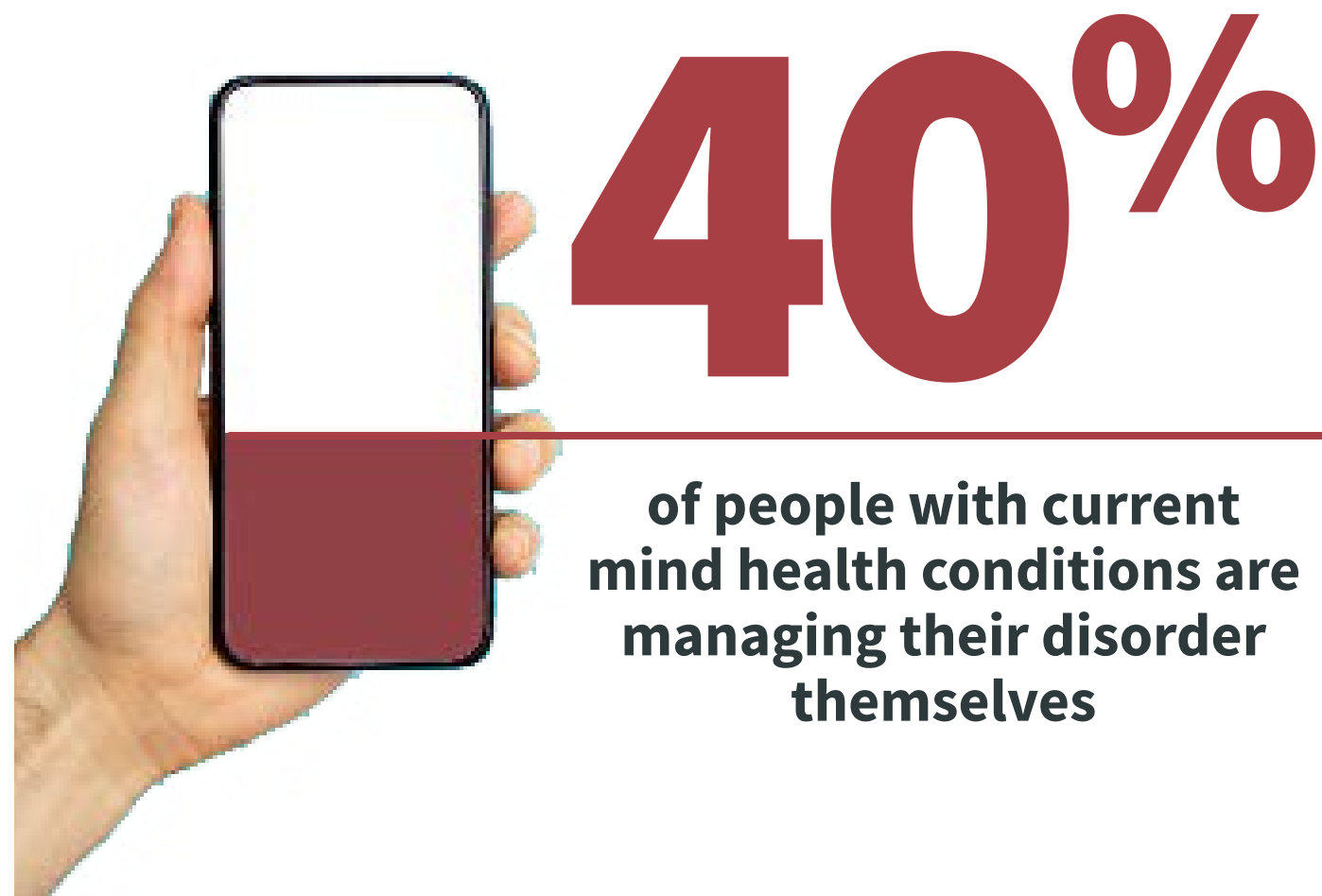


39%

of 18-24-year-olds are experiencing severe or extremely severe forms of anxiety, stress or depression

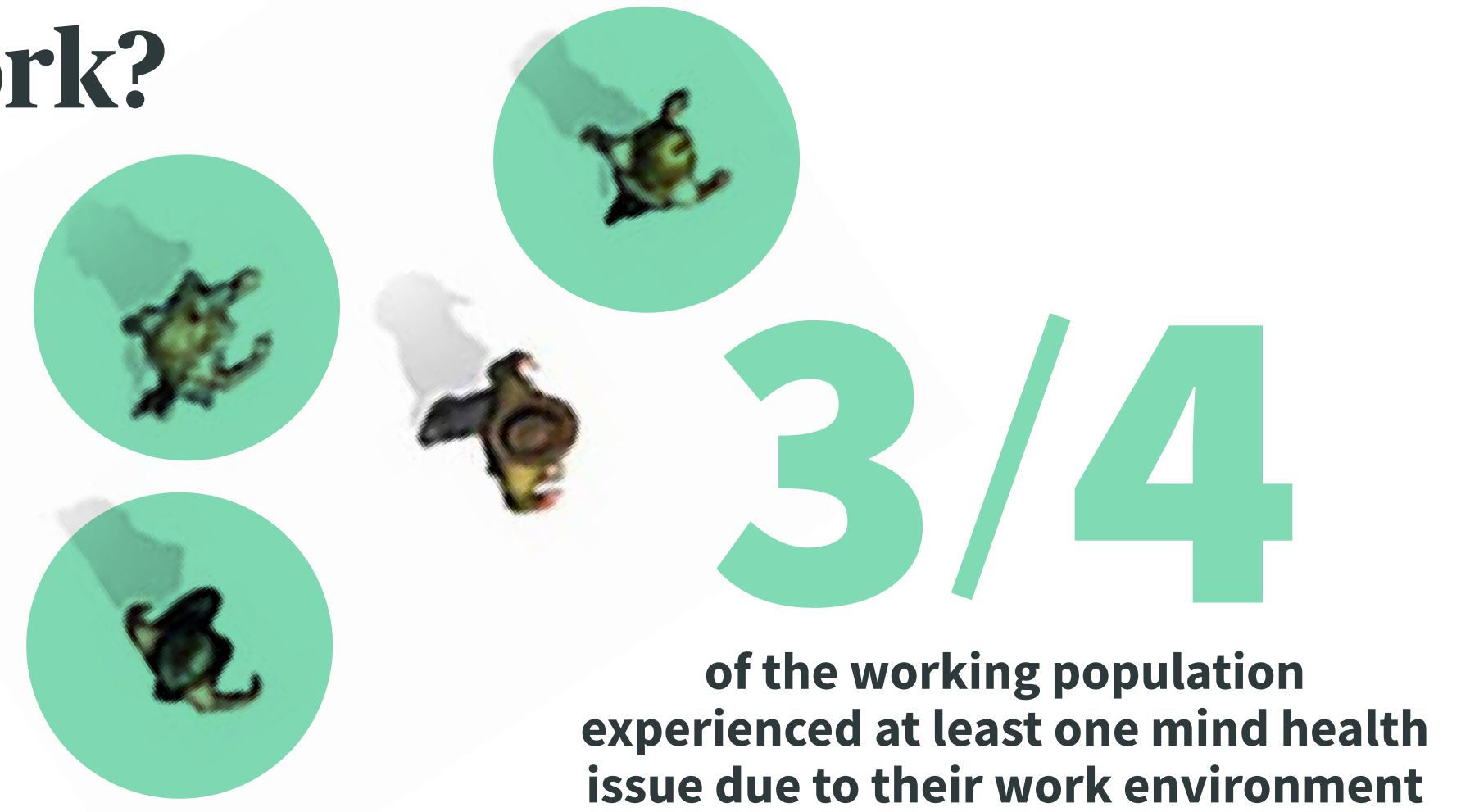
3. The seriousness of mind health problems is underestimated, to the detriment of professional care

Many people today underestimate the current state of their mind health, claiming to be fine while at the same time reporting numerous symptoms. Self care is a key aspect of one's mind health, though when conditions are serious it's important to reach for professional help.



4. Mind health: *invisible* at work?

Many of the working population is experiencing mind health problems related to work and consequently signs of disengagement are pronounced. These problems affect all categories, regardless of gender, age or socio-professional status.



5. Companies are unaware of the real consequences

Employee satisfaction with company wellbeing initiatives is fairly moderate. Workers expect concrete measures to be put in place to support their mind health.



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About the AXA Mind Health Study

This 4th edition of the annual AXA Mind Health Study charts the mental wellbeing of people worldwide.

The results are shown in the Mind Health Index, which places the global population into one of four categories:

- flourishing
- getting by
- languishing
- struggling.

The aim of the study is to amplify the conversation around mind health and uncover opportunities for individuals, healthcare professionals and policymakers to take action for a better global mind health.

SEE DETAILED METHODOLOGY P.25

1. The global evolution of mind health

Mind health is growing in importance on a global scale

Falling back to 2021 levels of mind health

How has the AXA Mind Health Index shifted over the last 12 months? Results from the 2024 Mind Health Index show a rise in the number of people struggling – up by 3 points to 15% overall. Fewer than a quarter of people in the world are now flourishing (down by 1% to 24% this year), while just a third are getting by (down to 33% from 35%). These figures have reversed the uptick in mind health recorded last year.

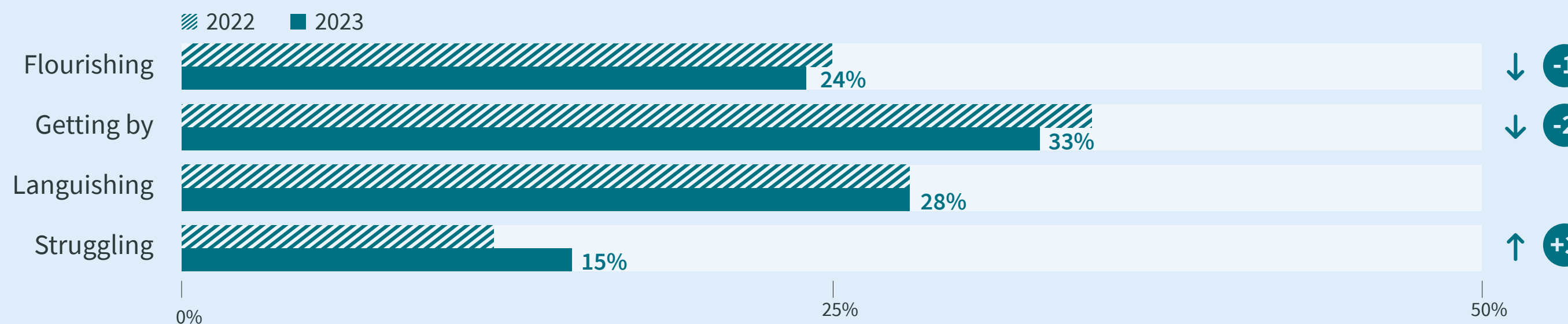
Living in anxious times

As shown in the AXA Future Risks Report 2023, we highlighted the concept of polycrisis. People today face a range of macro issues such as rising inflation, the cost-of-living crisis, concerns over climate change and geopolitical tensions. On an individual level, the 2024 Mind Health Index shows that financial worries and loneliness are the leading causes of concern. In all, 61% of the population have experienced at least one personal difficulty over the last 12 months.

+3

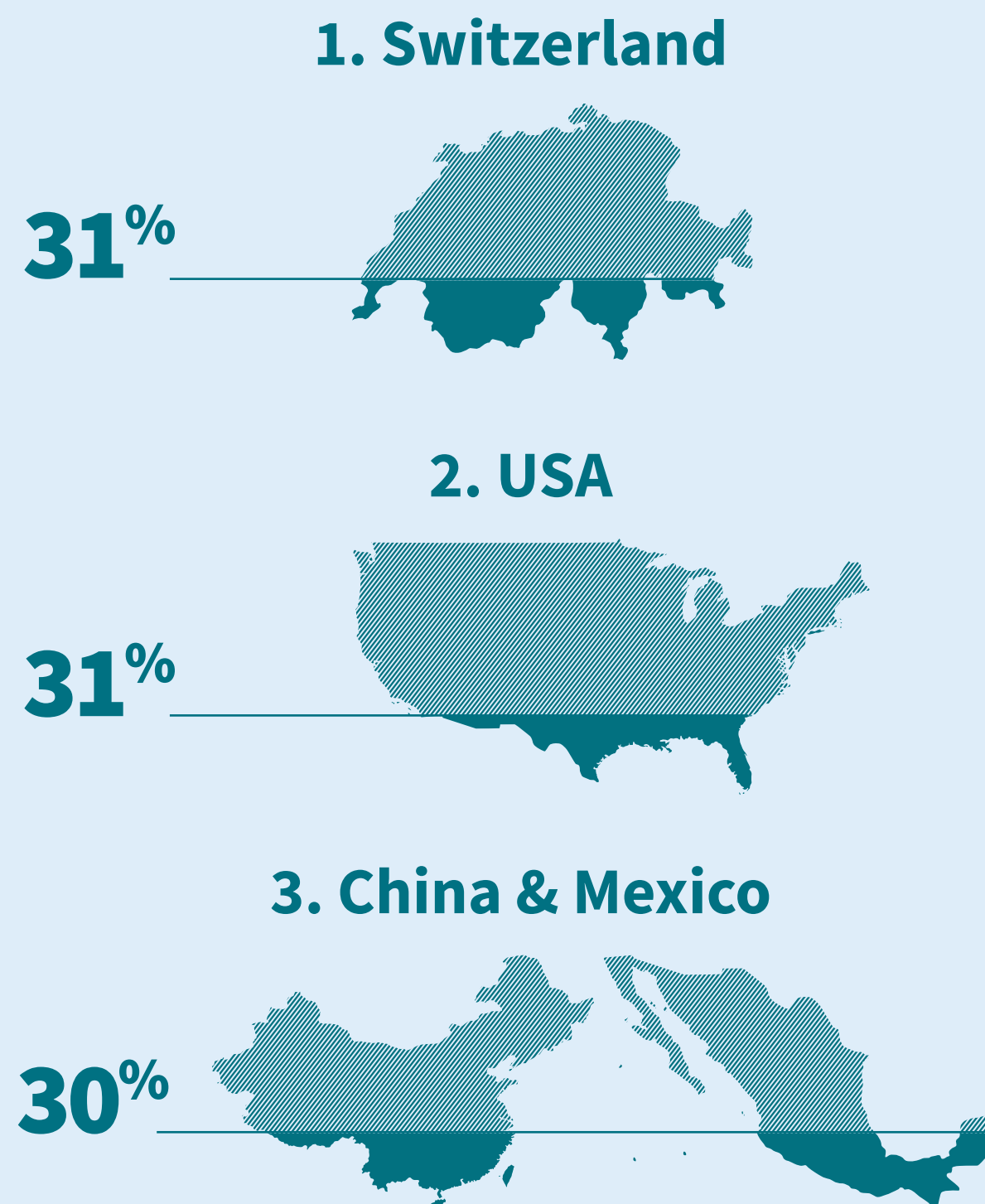
The percentage of people "struggling" worldwide has grown by 3 compared to 2023.

MIND HEALTH INDEX: 2023-2024 EVOLUTION



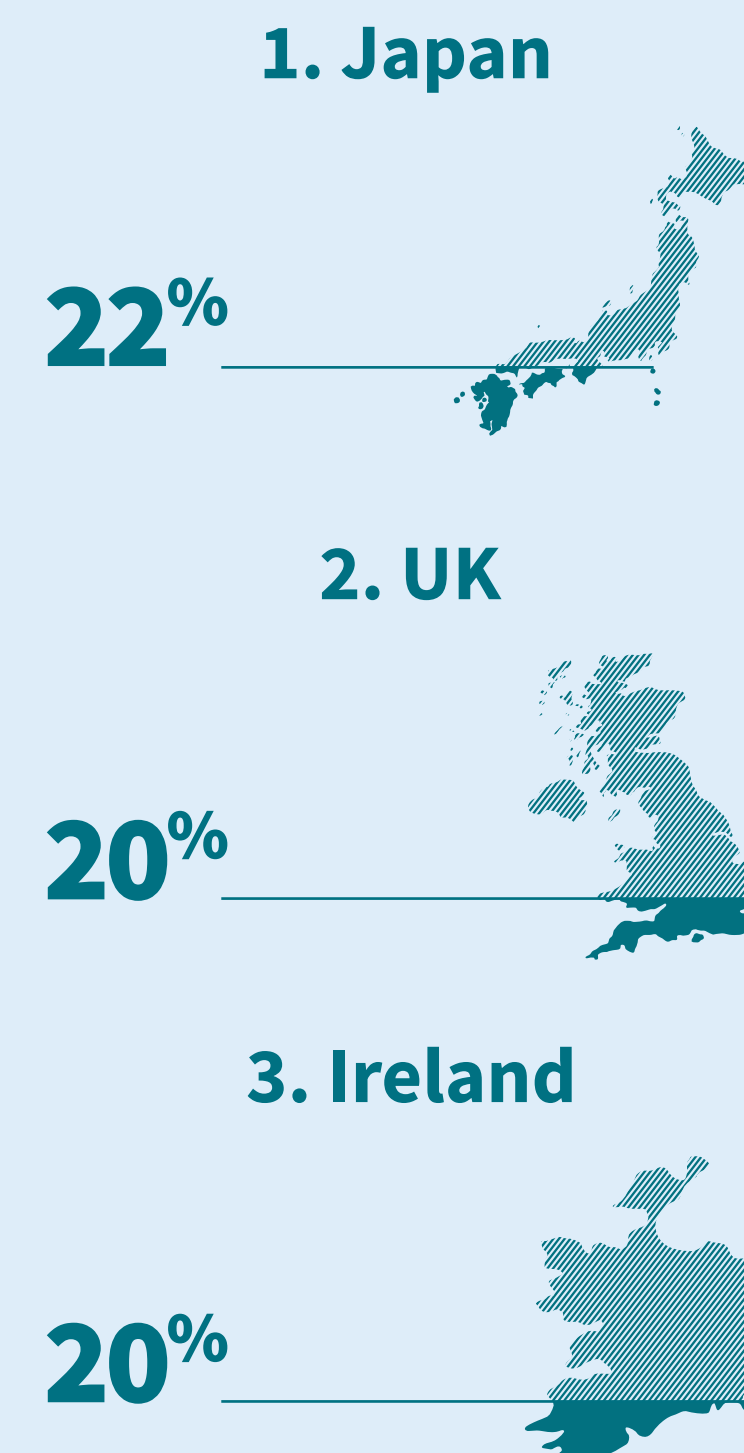
TOP 3 "FLOURISHING" COUNTRIES*

* Countries where the share of people "flourishing" is the highest



TOP 3 "STRUGGLING" COUNTRIES*

* Countries where the share of people "struggling" is the highest



Towards an epidemic of anxiety, stress and depression?

The high number of people who now live with a mental illness is up by five points to 32%.

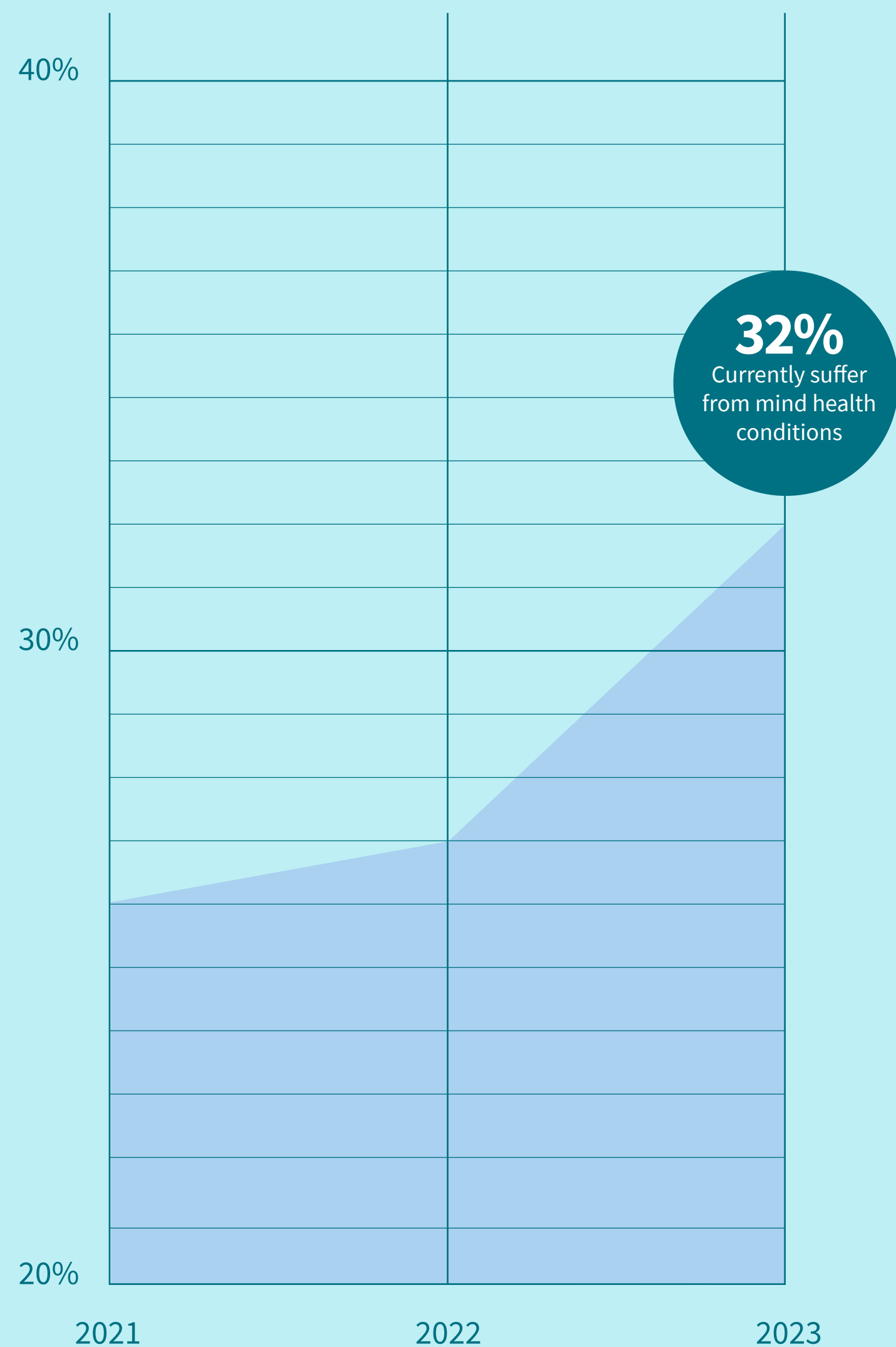
Almost a quarter of all individuals (23%) are suspected of living with severe or extremely severe depression, anxiety, or stress. Women (25%) and young people (39%) tend to be more affected than men or those over 34 years.

The gender gap keeps widening

Compared with last year, fewer women are flourishing, while more are struggling. The number of women feeling severe stress, anxiety and depression has also risen.

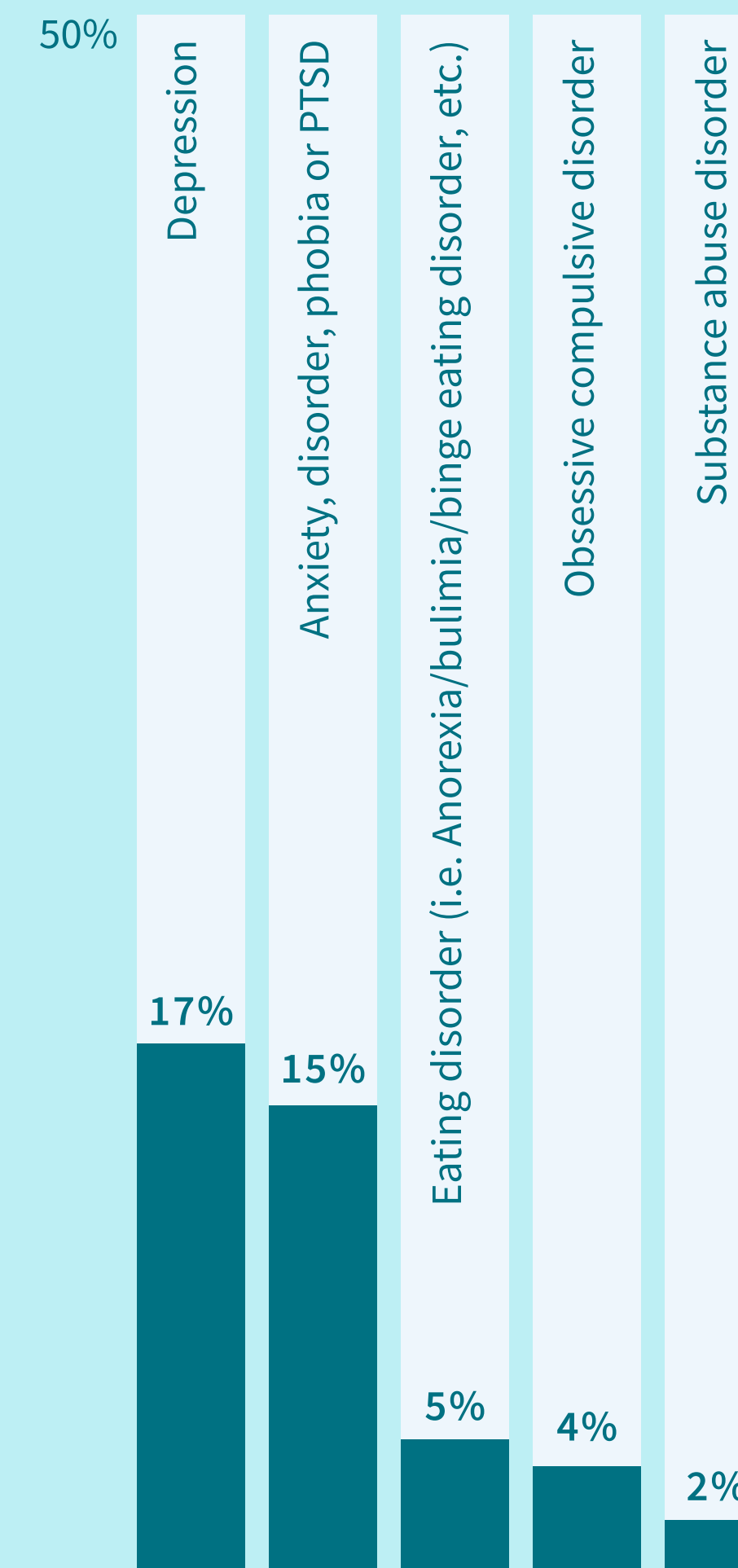
The AXA Mind Health Study has found that women typically suffer from lower levels of self-acceptance, which can expose them to mind health triggers such as body image and gender discrimination. An unfair division of chores in the household can also leave women with less time to manage their mind health through relaxation, healthy eating, exercise or social interaction.

THE RECENT GROWTH OF MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS



TOP 5 CURRENT MIND HEALTH CONDITIONS

Share of the global population experiencing one of the following mental health conditions



Young people on high alert

The mind health of young people is not improving

The AXA Mind Health Study shows that the age gap is continuing to widen, led by the worsening emotional wellbeing of younger people. Now two years on from Covid-19, the situation has yet to improve, suggesting that mind health issues among younger people were a growing cause for concern even without the disruption of a global pandemic.

Within the Mind Health Index, the majority of under-25s are among the populations identified as doing the worst:

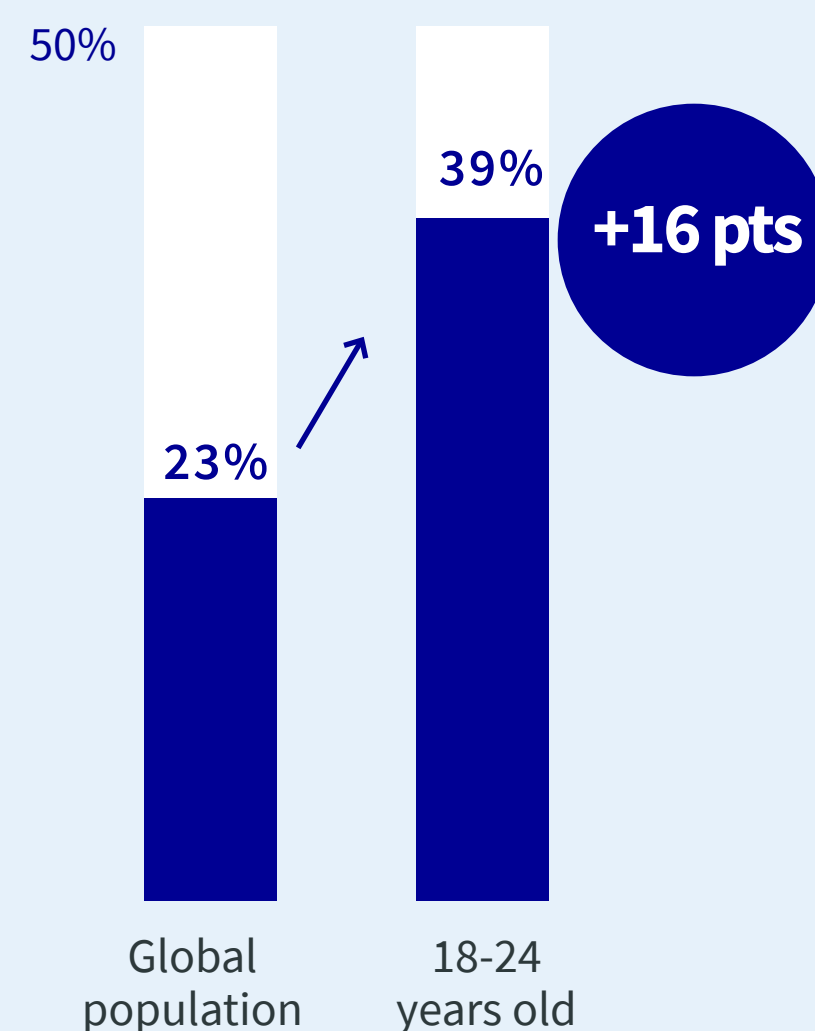
- 39% are "languishing" (+4 points compared to 2022) and 19% are "struggling" (+1 point).
- Similarly, 39% of the under-25s would be affected by severe or extremely severe forms of depression, anxiety and/or stress.

Typical barriers to care among young people include stigma, cost and concerns around confidentiality. In many cases, many lack understanding of mental health conditions and struggle to recognize their own struggles or seek help. Younger people are especially concerned about technology addiction, social media, body image and future uncertainty.



DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, STRESS

Share of the population affected with anxiety, stress or depression severely or more extremely.



More young people need to access professional healthcare services



Dr. Alex George
UK Ambassador for Mental Health. Host of @thestompcast podcast @dralexgeorge

“A 20-year-old today has lived their formative years not only in a global pandemic but also in a time of geopolitical instability, a cost of living crisis, job insecurity as well as growing concerns about climate change. If living through lockdowns weren’t difficult enough, there have also been huge changes in technology, social media and cultural norms.

It’s little surprise that many 18-to-34-year-olds feel extremely anxious, stressed and alone. The message from the MHI is that more young people need to access professional healthcare services that can help protect their mental wellbeing at such an important period of their lives.”

Care deficit: from missing the signs to self-managing problems

People often don't recognize the severity of their situation

The study reveals a trend around diagnosis, in that people tend to overestimate the quality of their mind health. Seven out of ten people who are suspected of experiencing depression, anxiety or stress at severe levels still perceive their mind health as good or average.

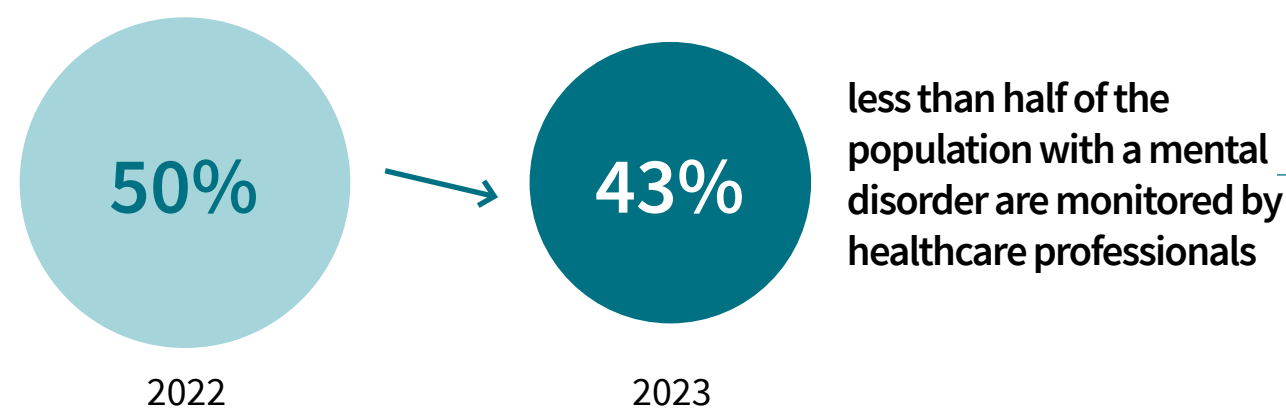
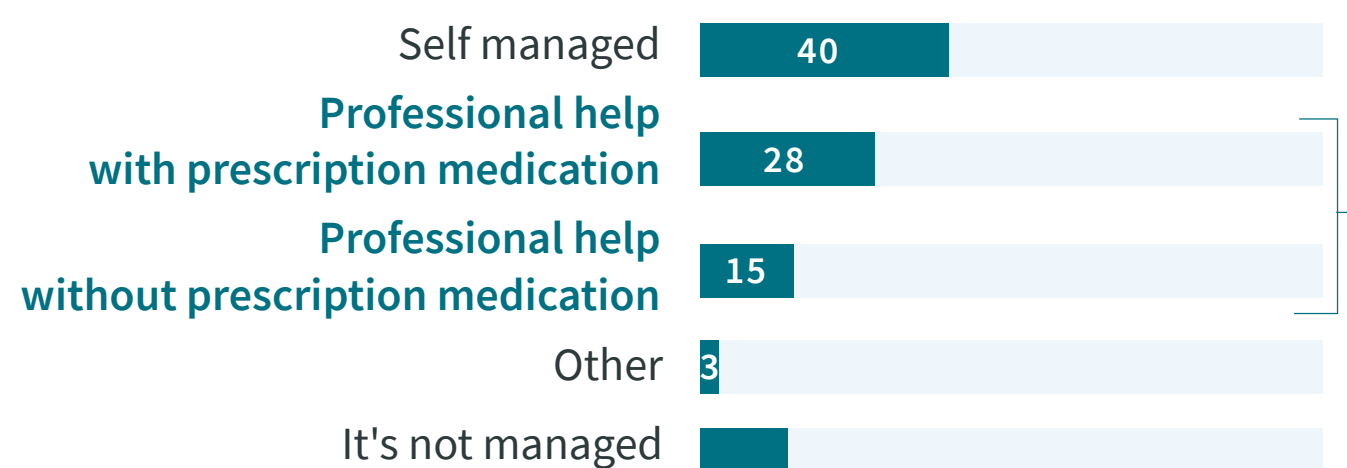
This disconnect between perception and reality points to an enduring lack of awareness around mind health issues. This leads to another problem: how can we access the care we need if we can't understand that something is wrong? Though self management is an important aspect of mind health, when the conditions become severe it's important to seek help.

Demand is growing, but fewer people are accessing healthcare

The results point towards a downwards cycle. While the number of people affected by a mind health condition is increasing, the proportion monitored by healthcare professionals is decreasing. Meanwhile, more people are managing their own condition. Four out of ten people today are self-managing their mind health, according to the study's findings. A decision to seek help can have many factors associated, such as the individuals experience, how someone is feeling and what they themselves want. However, people are less satisfied with the way their mental condition is managed than last year. 60% of those who self-manage believe their mind health is unsatisfactorily supported.

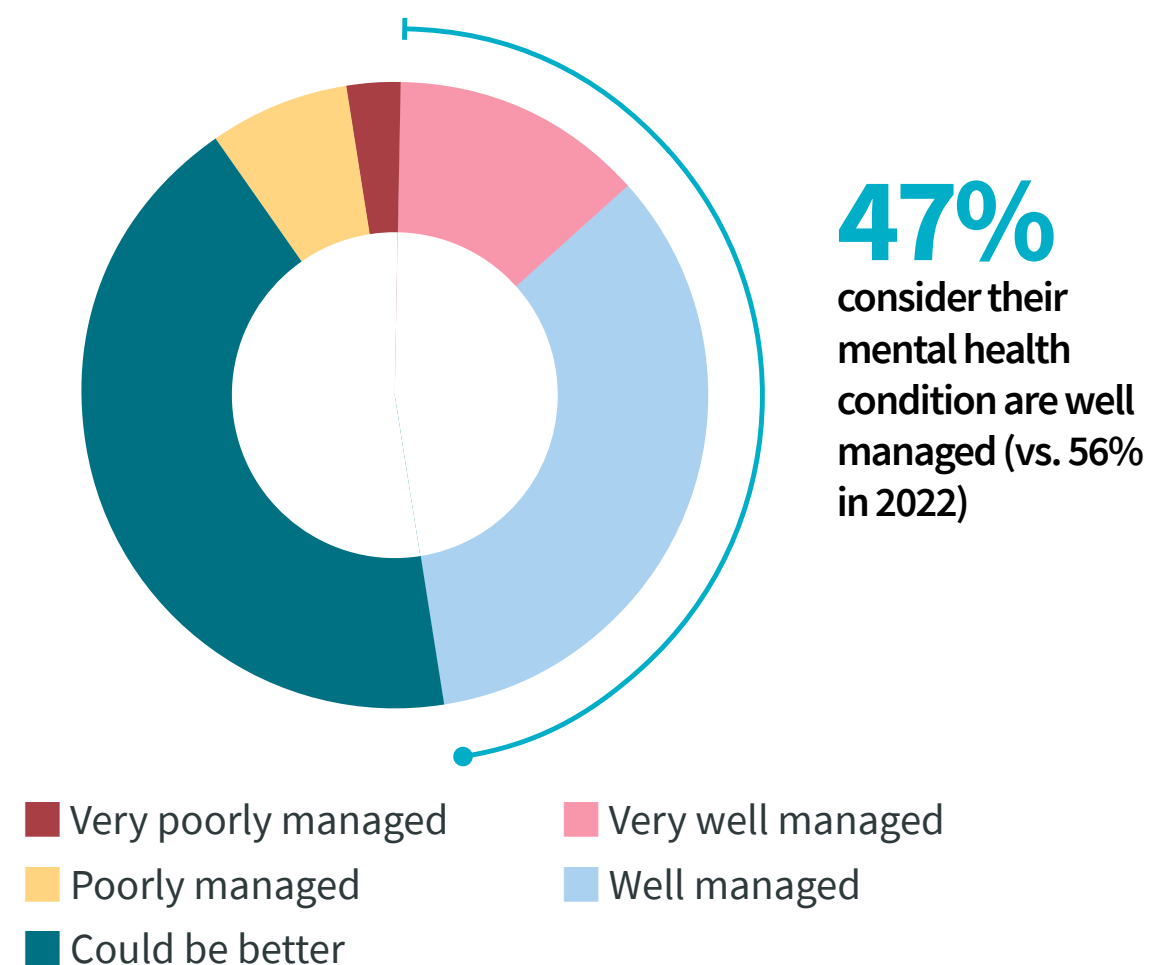
MANAGEMENT OF CURRENT CONDITIONS

How do you manage your current mind health conditions...?



MANAGEMENT SATISFACTION OF CURRENT MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

...and how well managed are they?



Opening up is a sign of strength



Claudio Gienal, chief transformation officer for AXA European Markets and Health, believes that the path to better mind health needs to start at an individual level. But if in need, seek professional help.

Mind health is just as important as physical health, and taking care of your mental wellbeing should be a priority for everyone. It's important to remember that you are your most important project, and investing time and effort into yourself will have a positive impact on your overall wellbeing and the people you care most about.

However, mind health conditions manifest and affect individuals differently. It's important to acknowledge that there may be times when you can't do it alone. Seeking help is not a sign of weakness, but rather a sign of strength and self-awareness. Just like you would seek medical attention for a physical ailment, it's important to seek professional help for mind health concerns when needed.

2. Work-related mind health concerns



Work has an impact on mind health, but problems are not attributed to it

The work place positively can contribute to mind health being the hub for innovation, camaraderie, mentorship and growth. Yet there are times when the workplace contributes to long hours, stress and anxiety, leading to a growing acknowledgment of the importance of mind health support for employees.

The AXA Mind Health Study reveals a worrying paradox at play in businesses of all sizes across the world. Although the evidence points to work-related mind health issues, the working population feel that work is not the main cause of their difficulties.

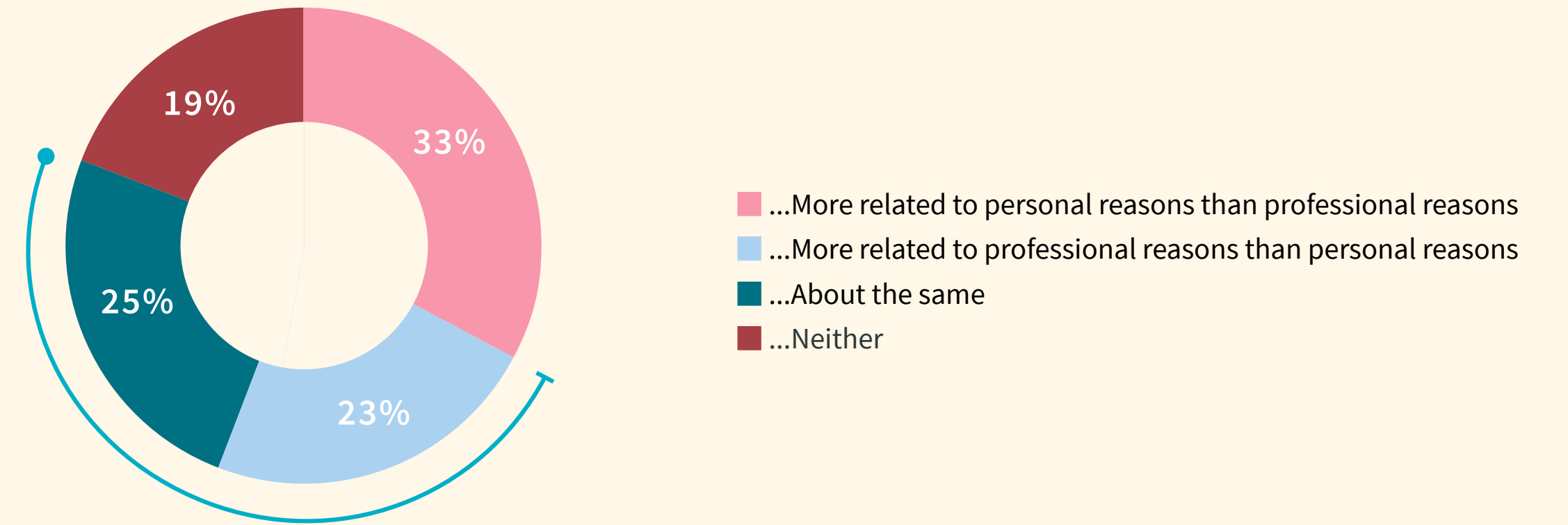
As a direct result of their work environment, three quarters of people experience one or more of the following:

- a great deal of tiredness and loss of energy
- trouble sleeping
- stress and anxiety that are difficult to control
- loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities
- difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- a loss of self-confidence
- feelings of worthlessness
- appetite or eating disorders

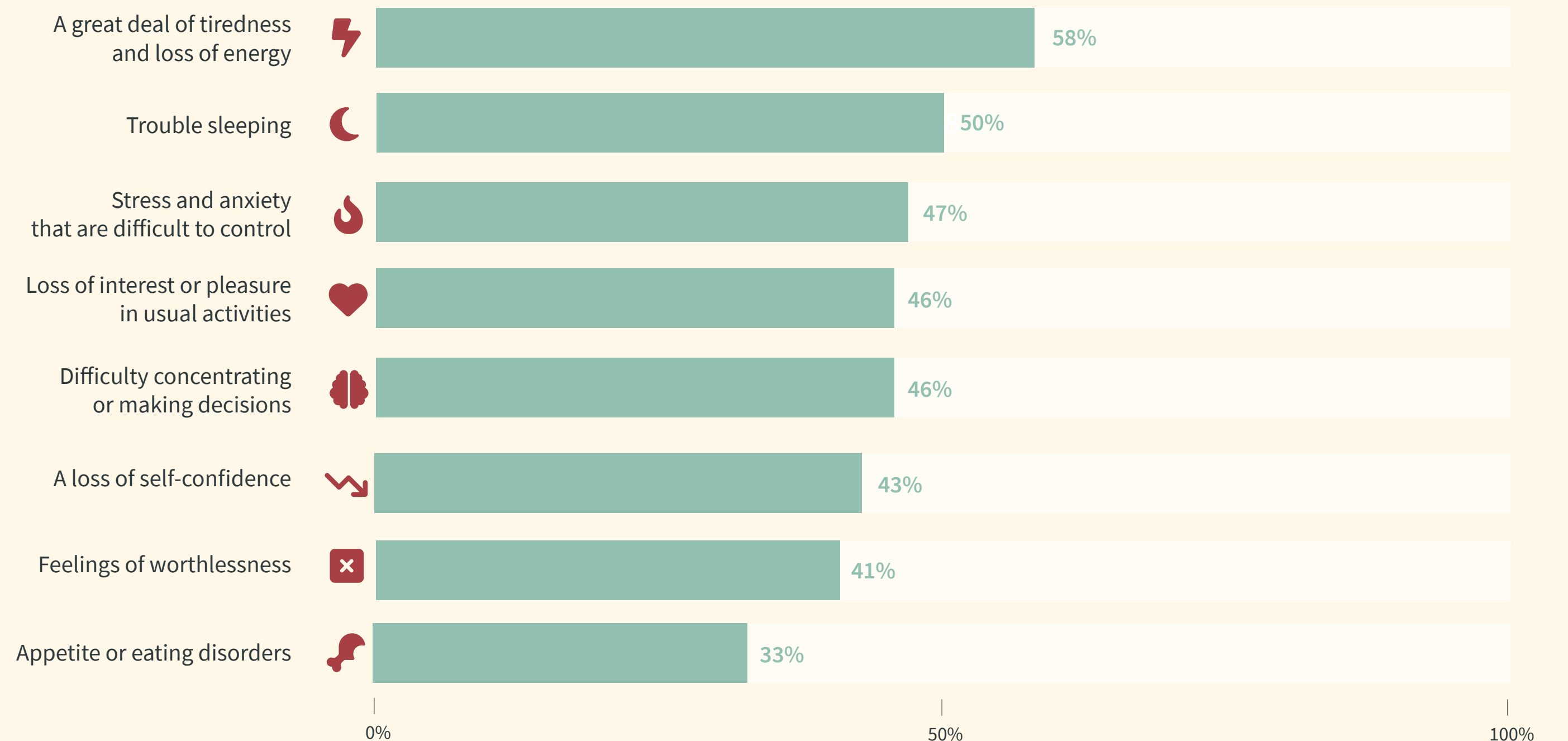
However, less than a quarter believe their mind health issues are work-related, showing a stark disconnect from the realities of their situation. Companies therefore need to take a holistic view to treating employee wellbeing by considering factors in both their personal and professional lives.

ORIGINS OF THE MENTAL DIFFICULTIES

48% of workers consider that work has an impact on their mind health



CONSEQUENCES OF THE WORK ENVIRONMENT



The paradoxical effect of remote and hybrid working on mind health

The Mind Health Index reveals a contradiction at play among people who work away from the office. On the one hand, half of hybrid and home workers say they are happy, while a majority are satisfied with their lives. However, their responses indicate higher levels of severe stress, loss of confidence and feelings of worthlessness compared to office workers.

For employers, the findings suggest that their remote workers appreciate the benefits of greater flexibility, yet they should not be overlooked in terms of mind health support – especially in regard to boosting self-confidence .

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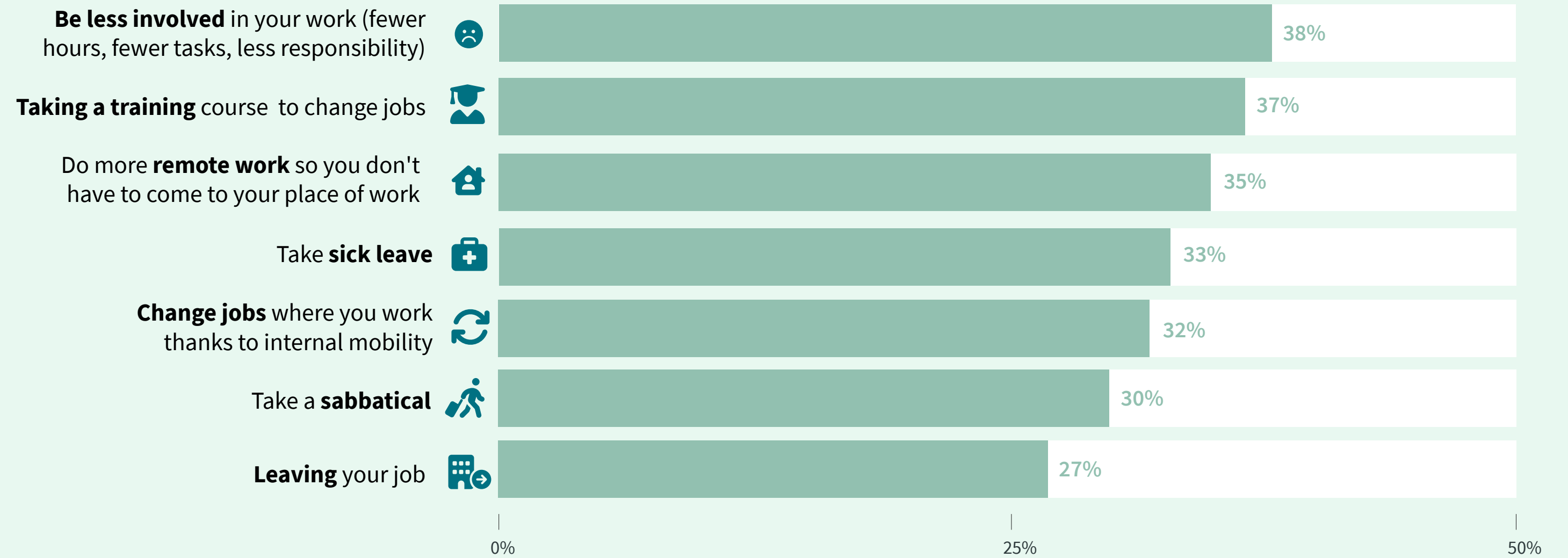


Diagnosing a root cause of employee disengagement

The Mind Health Index has substantiated the link between mind health and work engagement. Due to their emotional wellbeing in the workplace, a large majority of the working population are showing a tendency towards disengagement (69%) by becoming less involved (38%), doing more remote work so they do not have to come to the workplace (35%), taking a sick leave (33%) or sabbatical (30%).

Proactively protecting the mind health of employees can help to retain existing talent: the survey shows that half of people consider quitting or changing jobs (52%) due to the impact of work on their mind health wellbeing. Companies should be especially attentive and responsive to the needs of 18-to-24-year-olds, as two thirds (67%) are planning to change or quit their jobs due to work-related mind health conditions.

IMPACT ON WORK ENGAGEMENT



“Mind health is a complex and multifaceted topic, and there is still much we have yet to understand. The AXA Research Fund has made it one of their priority topics, funding 15 research projects, including a dedicated Fellowship. By supporting a diverse range of disciplines, from biology to sociology, we aim to empower public authorities, companies, and individuals to take informed and effective action at every level.”

— Julia d'Astorg, Head of the AXA Research Fund

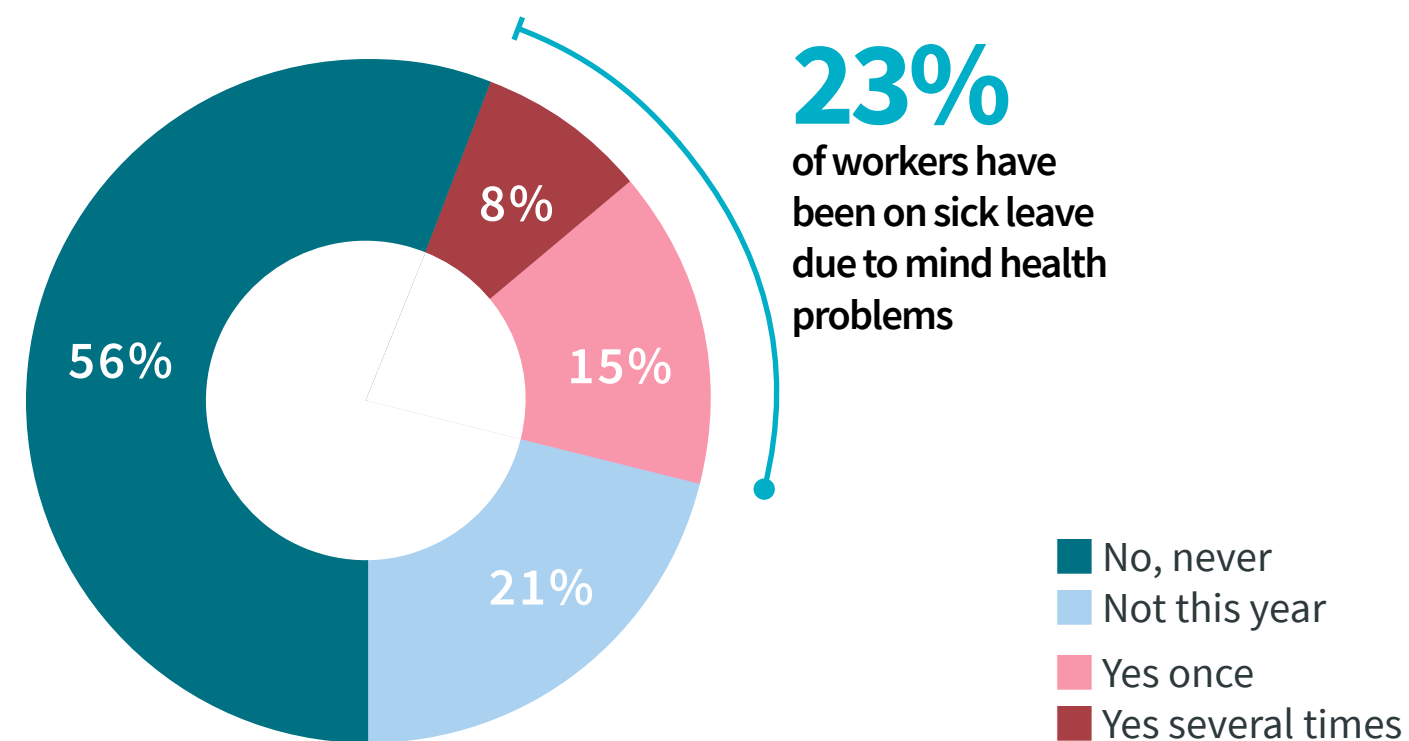
The rising toll of sick leave

The number of working days lost to sick leave due to mind health issues has continued to rise, according to the AXA Mind Health Study. In 2023, sick leave levels were alarmingly high, while recourse to health professionals was again very low.

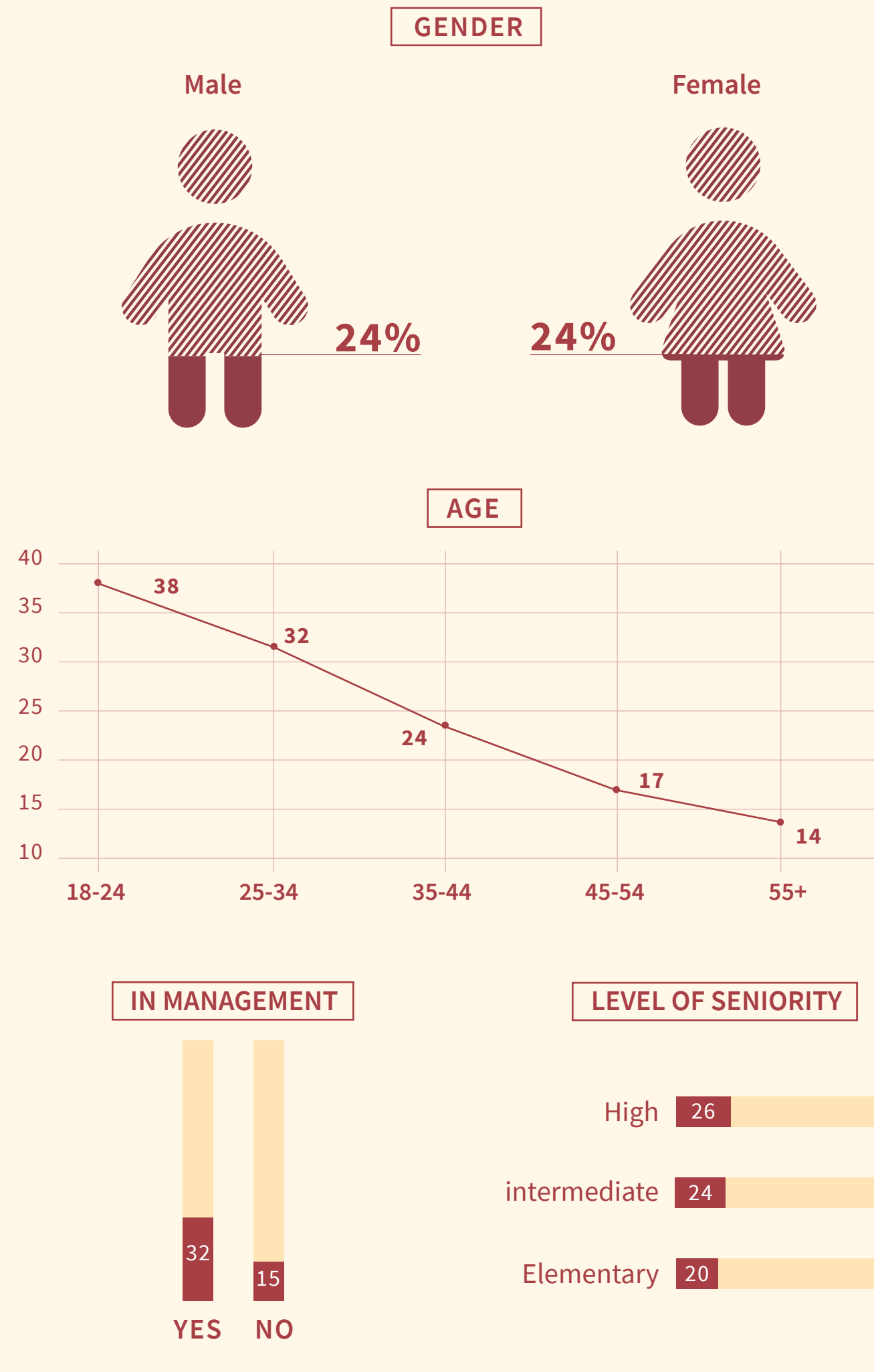
Nearly a quarter of employees (23%) have taken sick leave over the last 12 months, citing their mind health as the cause. This figure rises to more than a third (38%) among young workers.

Despite this substantial proportion, just 40% of those who have suffered illness have reached out to healthcare professionals, suggesting a lack of awareness around the causes of their sickness or a sense of shame about discussing the symptoms.

SICK LEAVE RELATED TO MIND HEALTH



SICK LEAVE RELATED TO MIND HEALTH SIGNIFICANT PROFILES



Managers are feeling the squeeze

The study shone a light on the added stress and anxiety felt by managers, who consistently reported higher rates of work-related mental health difficulties.

Managers often face intense pressure to meet targets and wider responsibilities that extend their working hours. They are also expected to help team members cope with their own mind health, which can be a stressful experience in itself without the relevant training. Middle managers on the corporate ladder can be reluctant to take necessary breaks or share their difficulties with senior leadership – until it's too late.



A conversation between Sandrine Coulange and Etienne Mercier

Sandrine Coulange, AXA Global Health Chief Operating Officer, and Etienne Mercier, Director of Opinion and Health at Ipsos, share their views.

“Mind health issues have become a root cause of disengagement at work.”

— Sandrine Coulange

For the first time, the Index is focusing on work issues. Which results do you find most striking?

Sandrine Coulange: The survey shows that not all the problems are attributed to work only but that a great many working people today suffer from a wide variety of work-related mind health problems. Once again, young people are particularly affected. What stands out is the extent to which these mind health issues have become a root cause of disengagement at work and eventually driving absenteeism.

Has the issue of mind health at work gone unnoticed?

Etienne Mercier: In the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, the impact of enforced remote working and teleconferencing were seen as the main cause of the profound change in employer-employee relationships. The so-called "great resignation" with its re-evaluation of life priorities was also attributed to the global lockdown. There's certainly truth in that.

But the report indicates that the pandemic isn't the only factor. Mind health has emerged as an "invisible enemy" that fuels disengagement at work. Moderate levels of employee satisfaction suggest that few companies appear to recognize the full extent – and risk – of the worsening mind health situation. Over a half of employees say that the level of available support will influence their decision to stay at their company, something that their employers can ill-afford to ignore.

You're pointing out on an interesting paradox: mind health issues in the workplace are reaching high levels, however many people don't identify work as main cause of their difficulties. How do you explain that?

EM: Overall, 33% of working people said their psychological problems were more likely to be of a personal origin, while 23% pointed to professional factors. That indicates a lack of awareness, especially as 41% of working people revealed they were experiencing from at least five mind health problems as a result of their situation at work.

It's worth diving a bit deeper into the numbers to see what's going on. For a start, almost a quarter of respondents said their problems were both personal and professional. That means almost half of the working population consider that their mind health problems stem wholly or partly from their work. That represents quite a significant proportion. Besides, we know that mind health problems of personal origin can have a strong impact in the professional sphere or be

aggravated by the situation at work. In the end, we know that, there is no strict boundary separating the professional from the personal.

What is the main takeaway from the report for employers?

SC: What's clear is that working people are prone to misunderstanding the seriousness of their mind health problems – and the survey shows just how important it is for employers to raise awareness to detect earlier signs – for themselves or for their colleagues, actually – and encourage them to look for help before the problems become too serious. The mind health issues we measured in the working population are unfortunately widespread, and affect all categories, regardless of gender, age or socio-professional category. This means that the support offered by employers must be taken with a quite diverse approach too. ■

“The prevalence of mind health issues is high, and it is still insufficiently taken into account in many organizations.”

— Etienne Mercier

3. Time for action



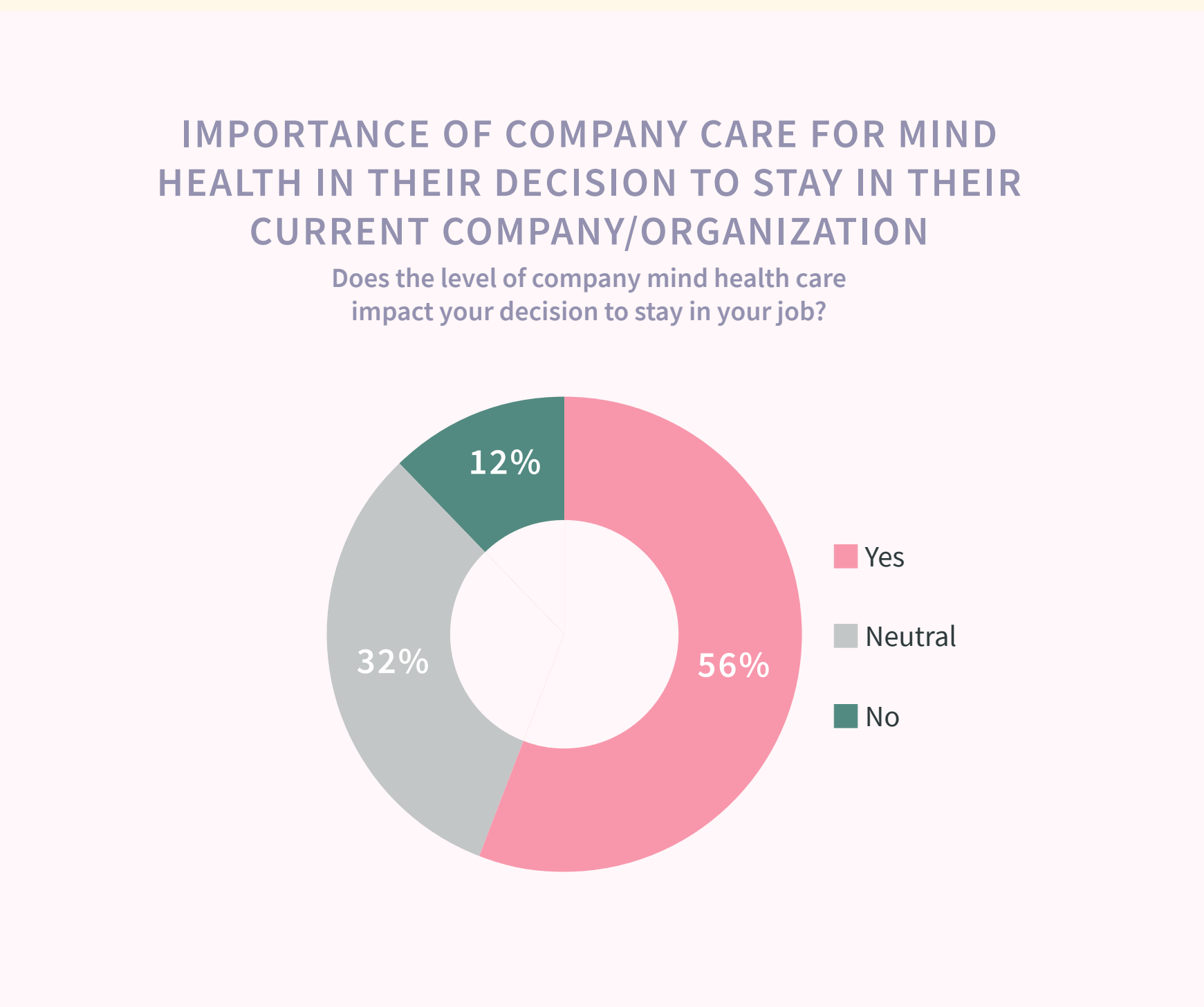
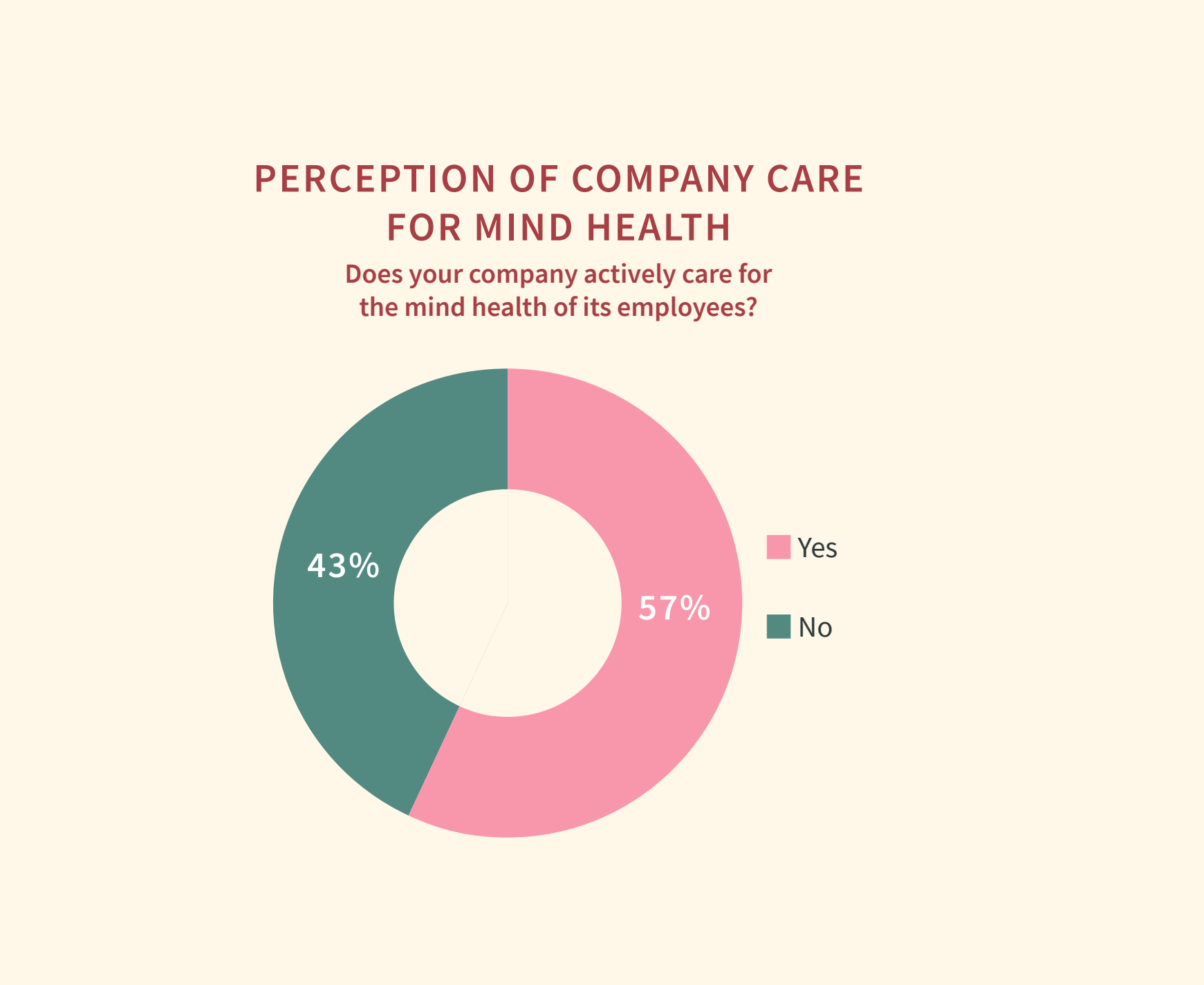
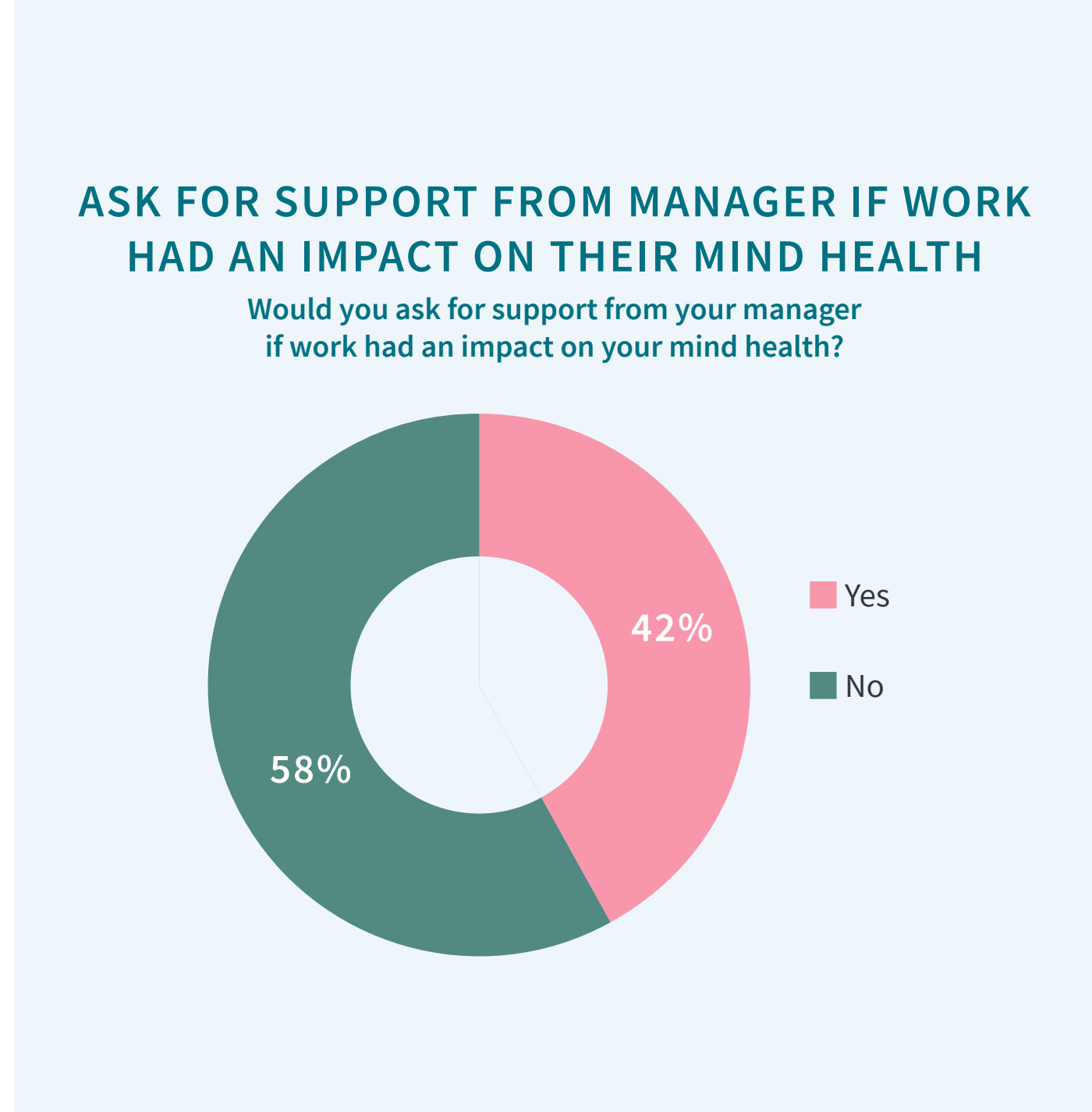
Opening the channels for mind health support at work

At the moment, most employees don't feel properly supported. Over half of workers feel shy about approaching their managers for help. Among those who are struggling, just a third (34%) are confident to approach their managers. In total, over two thirds (68%) of workers prefer to trust their friends and family for mind health support if they need it.

The study shows that while 60% of companies take mind health seriously and over a half (57%) offer assistance, satisfaction levels among employees are low, especially among those living with mind health conditions and social isolation in the past 12 months.

Employers therefore have a clear opportunity to stand out in their market by providing better and more effective support that is embraced by employees and allows them to actively engage. The company culture provides a cornerstone for improved mind health by offering a safe environment to reach out for professional help.

The incentives are clear, given that very few people (just 12%) say that mind health benefits and initiatives aren't important and won't influence their decision to stay with their current company.





“Companies that are prepared will have an outsized opportunity to make an impact.”

—— Karima Silvent, AXA Chief Human Resources Officer

What are the key findings to leverage when considering people strategy?

This report confirms what we have seen post-Covid-19: dramatically elevated levels of distress, fear, worry, anxiety, and depression, especially amongst young people. However, another pandemic is not inevitable. Companies that are prepared will have an outsized opportunity to make an impact.

What are the benefits of destigmatizing mind health at work?

Workplaces that promote mind health and support their people are more likely to reduce absenteeism, increase productivity and create team engagement. Companies have the responsibility to create workplaces where people support each other and care for each other during difficult times.

How can employers make a difference?

Introducing policies that provide paid leave for individuals dealing challenges or extending coverage to mental health therapies and counselling services, demonstrates a commitment to the holistic wellbeing of employees.

It's incumbent upon us to not merely react to current needs but to anticipate and prepare for future challenges that may impact employees' lives. This implies continuous evaluation and adaptation of the support we are providing to our people to align with the evolving needs and expectations of the workforce. ■

How can companies better support their workers?

Given the variety of mind health problems and difficulties encountered in the workplace, businesses should have a diverse range of solutions on their radar to meet everyone's needs. Respondents to the study gave a range of services and initiatives they would like to see offered by their employers.

Reaching employees at all stages of mind health is important. Flourishing employees would most appreciate trainings and seminars, according to the survey, while those who are struggling are more likely to request consultation services to support their psychological needs.

The findings show a close connection between mind and physical health, suggesting that employers should take a holistic approach to promoting health in the workplace.

EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS FOR MIND HEALTH SUPPORT FROM COMPANY



Testimonies from AXA customers

“Mental and physical health are interconnected.”



Dana Citron, Director for Global Health and Wellbeing at the delivery leader DHL outlines the importance of local empowerment to ensure employees receive the mental health services they need.

At DHL Group, our overall strategy encapsulates the understanding that mental and physical health are interconnected. We take into account the various social determinants that can significantly impact the wellbeing of our employees.

On a global level, we have established a framework, that includes mind health issues, which empowers the local business operations to implement programs based on the unique needs of their workforce. Our focus on mental health predates the challenges brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the global health crisis helped to heighten

the importance of such programs, prompting increased activity in local business operations.

At DHL Group we look to optimize the health impact of our programs. We emphasize how these programs are communicated, promoted to individuals, and most importantly, evaluated at the local level. This approach is part of our continuous improvement cycle, ensuring that our programs are not only effective but also responsive to the evolving needs of our diverse workforce.

“Being reactive and flexible in unforeseen circumstances.”



CEO Andrew Davies explains how ICAS World, a Lyra Health company, is implementing mental health services for a major US multinational.

In late 2021, ICAS was awarded the opportunity to provide services to a US conglomerate across 53 countries. In total, mind health and wellbeing support is now provided in 25 languages to over 53,000 employees and their families. We have run 98 training and awareness sessions, with close to 10,000 attendees.

We understand that a core facet of delivering effective mind health support is being reactive and flexible in unforeseen circumstances. Within a matter of days, ICAS launched support for those affected by the conflict in Ukraine in 2022, and

the conflict in the Middle East in 2023, including business continuity, remote counselling and regular check-ins to ensure adequate access to mental wellbeing services.

As part of our ongoing relationship, we have implemented a number of best practice services to protect mental wellbeing such as promotional materials across an annual calendar, clinical training, manager support, data-driven strategy and planning, and the creation of dedicated local and regional EAP (employee assistance program) champions.

4. Appendix

The Mind Health Index (MHI)

The Mind Health Index (MHI) is a proactive tool for assessing and promoting mental wellbeing. As an integral part of the AXA Study of Mind Health and Wellbeing, it provides a way of gauging people’s current mental state.

How the Index is built

The index is based on 50 questions related to thirteen separate factors affecting mind health. These factors appear in the outer circle of the MHI wheel (see above) and fall into three categories:

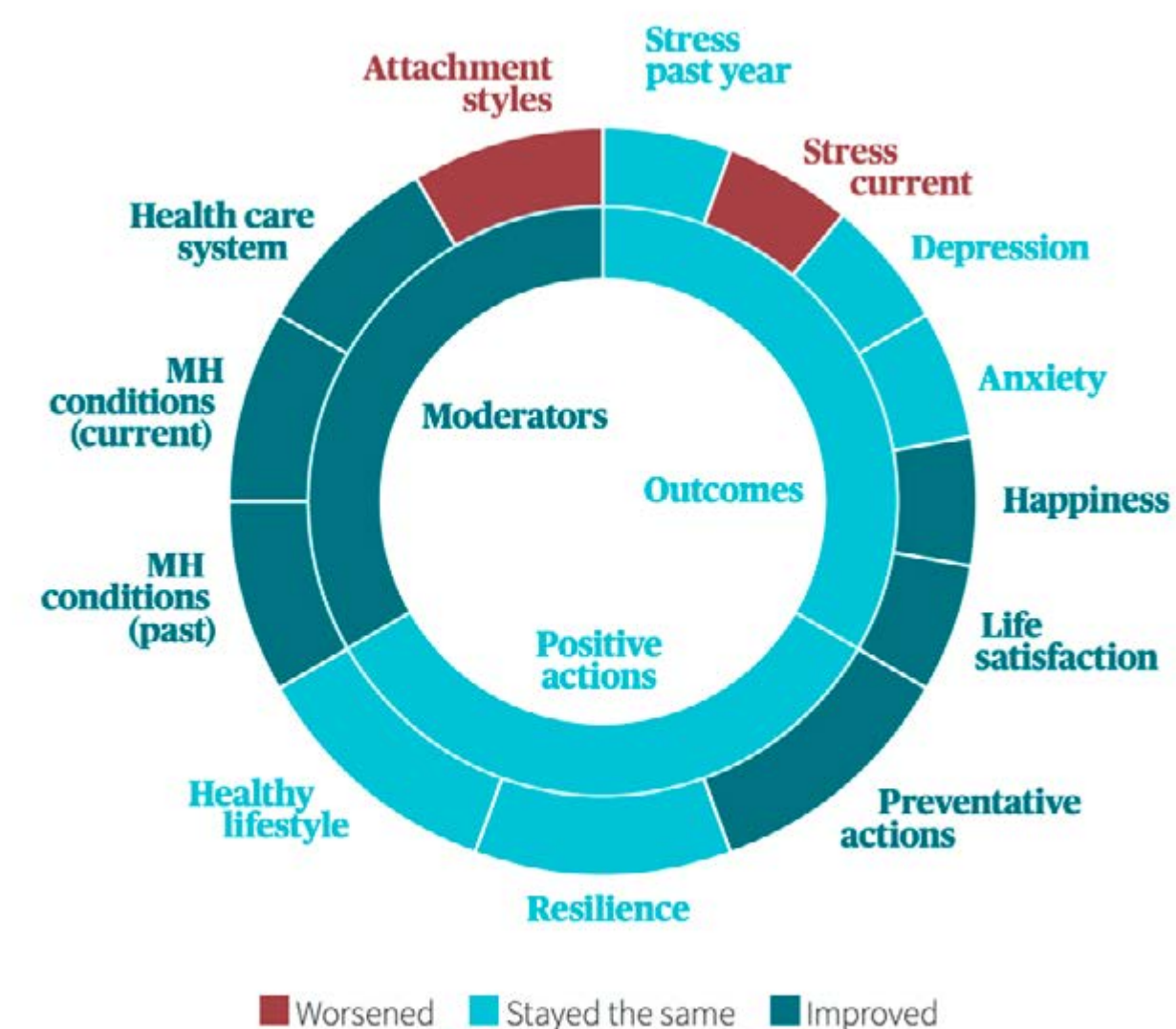
- **Moderators:** These are generally areas where people have little control – the quality of their local healthcare system, for example, or current and past mental health conditions.
- **Positive actions:** These are actions that people can take to improve their mental wellbeing – developing the skills needed to promote self-acceptance and self-efficacy, for example.
- **Outcomes:** These are the results of positive actions plus moderators – they may be positive (life satisfaction, happiness) or negative (anxiety, stress, depression). In the chart to the left, segments marked in red indicate where overall mind health has declined since our 2022 study, light blue where results are unchanged and aqua where mind health has improved over the past year.

From struggling to flourishing

The index then places people in one of four categories – from struggling mentally on one end to flourishing at the top.

- **Struggling:** The absence of wellbeing in most areas is likely to result in struggling and difficulty. Struggling is associated with emotional distress and psychosocial impairment.
- **Languishing:** Languishing represents the absence of positive wellbeing. If you are languishing you are not functioning at full capacity, you may feel unmotivated and struggle to focus. Those who are languishing are at an increased risk of developing mental illness.
- **Getting by:** Getting by describes those who may have some areas of good wellbeing but not enough to reach the state of flourishing. Those getting by may experience a dampened sense of wellbeing compared to those who are flourishing.
- **Flourishing:** Flourishing represents the pinnacle of good mind health. Classified by a Mind Health Index score greater than 75%. Flourishing individuals do well across a range of mental wellbeing determinants and outcomes.

INDEX COMPOSITION



Study Methodology

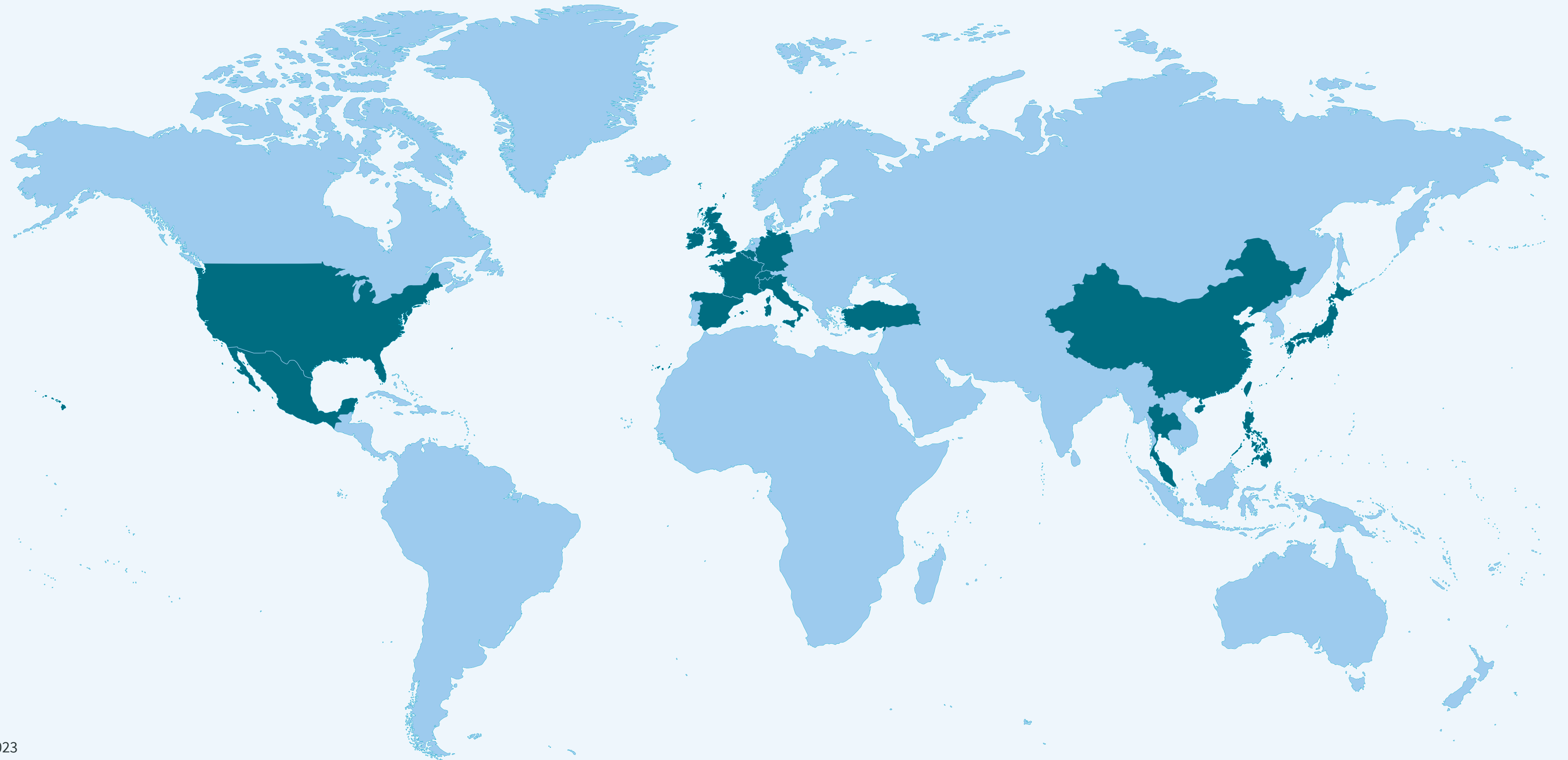
AXA Mind Health survey is carried out jointly with Ipsos France. Online interviews have been conducted between 15 November and 11 December 2023, in 16 countries.

Quota method was applied to gender, age, occupation and region. Furthermore, the data is weighted so that each country's sample composition best reflects the demographic profile of the adult population (18-75yo) according to the most recent census data.

16
countries

16,000
interviews

18-75
years old



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